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*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis harrissoni* | Photo by: Azniza Mahyudin

## SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS

(*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis harrissoni*)

By Fiffy Hanisdah Saikim

The Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis harrissoni*) or two-horned Asiatic rhino is the smallest of five rhinoceros species living today, standing 0.9 - 1.4 m tall. It is also the most primitive species of rhino, and is a descendant of the woolly rhinoceros. The characteristics has remained unchanged for the last 2 million years.

The animal is solitary, with males being the most nomadic wandering along streams and game trails. It feeds before dawn and sunset, moves mostly by night and spends much of the day in mud wallows or rainwater ponds usually created by the animal itself. Its native habitat is the dense tropical forest but also survive in regenerating forests.

The Sumatran rhino is the most endangered of all rhinoceros species and was classified as critically endangered species under IUCN Red List. The major threats to our rhinos are habitat loss and poaching. The rhino is often hunted for their horn for traditional Chinese Medicine! The rhino, which once ranged from Assam in India to Indochina, Malaysia and the islands of Sumatra and Borneo, lost at least half its population in the decade from 1985 to 1995. Today, scientists estimate that there may be fewer than 300 wild Sumatran rhinos left in scattered pockets in Sumatra, Borneo and peninsular Malaysia.

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