Sumatera Rainforest Institute

Jalan Bhakti ABRI No.34

Kelurahan Panyabungan II

Mandailing Natal

Kode Pos : 22919

Sumatera Utara-Indonesia

Sumatran Wildlife Rescue Project

This is a part of a broadscale project by the Sumatran Rainforest Institute (SRI) aiming to save Sumatran wildlife in the Southern part of Northern Sumatra. SRI is focused on looking for solutions to the multitude of factors contributing to rainforest clearing, increasing poaching, and illegal wildlife trade and hunting.

Any solutions will involve community consultation, maintaining human safety , and consider both wildlife and human welfare. It is anticipated a multitude of measures and advance planning will be part of implementation.

The photographs illustrate some of the areas in which the Sumatran Rainforest Institute, (Lembarga Hujan Hutan) is already working,

1. Wildlife rescue with an increasing focus on conflict mitigation. Increasing human conflict is occurring due to habitat modification and destruction with increasing encroachment of human inhabitation into rainforest fringes. Although the focus species is the critically endangered Sumatran Tiger, conflict with Sunbear (Helarctos malayans) and wildlife trading of Sunda Pangolin (Maris jauvenica) both Cites1 listed, are increasingly causing concern.
2. Revegetation using native species valuable especially to primates, and using local labour
3. Agricultural support (local experts educated within the region) for trials of economically viable crops such as organic coffee and new varieties of rice to encourage the development of a buffer zone with surrounding landowners protecting the central rainforest core. It is hoped these contacts will build rapport and support control of illegal logging and wildlife crime.
4. Education. This is done at a wide variety of levels.

(a)Workshops involving local Government officials and representatives, National park representatives , village heads and commercial business representatives. A workshop, (meeting) can for example address conflict mitigation, illegal logging or incursion of oil palm oil into rainforest

(b) Village meetings to clarify local concerns and difficulties and review older customs and attitudes which valued the forest as a reserve that could be harvested sustainably. The tiger was considered a “village protector”

(c) Programs in schools to show (movies or pictures) and talk to children about Sumatran wild animals. The impact of television is quite profound in some areas, for example when asked about which animals lived near-by in the forest, the answer was a “shark”. Might have been a communication problem but most people don’t come into contact with Orangutan, Gibbons, Tiger or the multitude of other animals and birds which reside in the rainforest.

The “Wildlife Rescue and Mitigation Project “ is centred around Batang Gadis National Park and the Batang Toru Forest Ecosystem in the South part of Northern Sumatra. It takes considerable time to drive around these areas as the hills are extremely steep, roads are very windy and often have severe wash outs which means it is difficult to reach incident areas . Relocating and transporting animals is extremely difficult and slow.

The aim is to train a local team to provide appropriate first aid initially and then to proceed to develop a wildlife quarantine/hospital facility to hold and assess animals involved in human/wildlife conflict , trapped or snared, confiscated, or injured, aiming to relocate them when possible and proceed with treatment if necessary.

This specific part of the project is aimed at setting up the initial equipment and medications to provide emergency first aid and Veterinary Treatment to wildlife. The materials and equipment will then be available for use later in the holding /hospital facility.

Funds raised will be used for purchase of

1) Anaesthetics and sedatives needed to catch and restrain animals and the medications to provide Intravenous fluids to dehydrated animals and treat any injuries or wounds.

2)Basic equipment to test for internal parasites such as a microscope, and suitable cages to restrain animals whilst they are receiving short-term treatment or relocation.

Early Impressions

The first visit by the volunteer vet to the coffee nurseries was amazingly followed the same day by contact by Forest police and local police to report and ask for assistance with a “human/bear conflict” problem nearby. There is very little information on the status of “sunbear” and many other Sumatran rainforest species and this brief encounter has quickly highlighted the problems occurring in the National Park as agricultural expansion intensifies in the buffer zone around the national park.

Large dog numbers in rural areas surrounding Batang Gadis National Park/ Infection of Tiger with Canine Distemper Virus is recorded and can significantly impact on individual survival. Infection with Canine Distemper Virus which can cause severe behavioral problems increasing the likelihood of human tiger conflict.

Village attitudes towards wildlife

SRI will monitor results and research alternative strategies to wildlife human conflict. – introducing multiple alternative mitigation strategies as quickly as possible is imperative. SRI is not aiming to operate a research program but is aiming to introduce active measures and involving local villagers to contribute their knowledge and opinions.