

SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS AND WILDLIFE SURVEY EAST OF SEGAMA, DANUM VALLEY, SABAH, MALAYSIA

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INTRODUCTION

In 1987, it was estimated that about 5 to 8 individuals of Sumatran rhinoceros, including two juvenile, were found in the vicinity of the Danum Valley Field Centre (DVFC) (Ahmad 1987) and later the animals seemed to have disappeared from the area (Payne 1990). In another study, Abd-Hamid (1991) observed two rhinoceros around Palum Tambun area, south of the centre. In 1992, a survey team led by John Sale had found fresh tracks and signs of rhinoceros on the north and south of DVFC (Rabinowitz 1992).

The purpose of this survey which was conducted between 10 to 20 May 1995 was to assess the Sumatran rhinoceros population occurring around DVFC, on the eastern part of Sungai Segama, Sabah.

STUDY AREA

The DVFC study area is located about 85 km west of Lahad Datu. About 50% of the area remains unlogged. The primary rain forest is located on the south; secondary and logged over forest on the north and east of DVFC (Figure 1). Elevation in the area ranges from 170 m at DVFC to 700 m a.s.l on the south. The dissecting effect of the various dendritic stream networks has produced the high relief and undulating features in the study area (Waidi 1991).

METHOD

During the course of the survey in the Danum Valley, east of Sungai Segama, the survey team was based at DVFC. The team comprising of nine individuals was divided into two subteams to survey certain routes (Tables 1 and 2, Figure 1). In the morning, the subteams either walked a looping route or were dropped at certain point, traversed towards DVFC on a compass bearing, along ridges, game trail or marked footpath. Spot lighting were conducted in early morning (c.0400 - 0600 hours) and late evening (c.2000 - 2300 hours) along logging tracks using hand held 100 watt 12 volt lamp. Direct and indirect observations of wildlife were recorded in a standard survey data sheets (Appendix 1). Mammals were identified using Payne *et al* (1985) and birds using Smythies (1981).