**Sumatran Rhino Chat**

**Animal Bio:**

Name: Harapan

DOB:

Weight: 1800 lb

Diet: Ficus browse, local browse (mulberry, elm, hackberry), grain, produce (apple, banana, papaya, carrot)

**Introduction:**

Hello and welcome to the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden and to Wildlife Canyon, home to our Sumtran rhino! My name is Juliette, and I am very excited to introduce you to Harapan, the 3rd Sumatran rhino born in captivity in over a century! Even though you may not be familiar with him, Harapan is very familiar to the Cincinnati Zoo, because he was one of 3 Sumatran rhino calves born here, and has spent much of his 8 years of life in Wildlife Canyon.

**Similarities/Differences to Others:**

Sumatran rhinos are a very secretive species, and not too much is known about them. How many of you have ever seen Harapan out in his yard while you were at the zoo? If you’ve never seen him before, that’s probably because he is actually inside during the afternoon, after 1. In the wild, Sumatran rhinos live in a dense canopy in Southeast Asia and do not encounter much sun, unlike the African rhinos. The trees there can block out up to 96% of the UV light that filters down from the sun! Even with these canopies you can see above his enclosure, the late Cincinnati afternoon sun is just too bright, and we want to make sure the sun does not damage his sensitive eyes.

If you’ve ever seen any of our other rhinos, you may notice Harapan is quite a bit smaller. Sumatran rhinos are the smallest species of the 5 extant, or living, species of rhinos, weighing somewhere between 1100-1800 lbs. Harapan weighs right around 1800 lbs, and, although that is impressive, he would be dwarfed by our female black rhino, who weighs almost 2500 lbs, or the weight of a small car! As you can see on him, Sumatran rhinos also have two horns, just like the two African species of rhinos, making him the only Asian rhinoceros to have two horns. Just like all rhinos, however, Sumatran rhinos love to wallow and roll around in mud puddles as a way to stay cool and keep flies away. If you ever see a giant mound of mud moving around in there, it’s probably Harapan! When he is not in his mud wallow, you all can see just how furry Harapan is; he has a nice coat of reddish hair, and much more hair than our other species of rhinos! That’s because Sumatran rhinos are actually more closely related to the ancient Wooly rhinos from the Ice Age than the other living species of rhinos!

**Cincinnati Zoo Involvement:**

Here at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden we have been very involved and important in the survival of Sumatran rhinos as a species. Unfortunately, Sumatran rhinos like Harapan are critically endangered with less than 100 individuals in the world due to poaching and deforestation. The rhino you see today is actually the only Sumatran rhino in North America, and one of only 9 in captivity! Thankfully, there have been amazing efforts to save this species, and the Cincinnati Zoo has been one of the most important and successful for raising Sumatran rhinos in captivity! Between 1984 and 1990, 40 Sumatran rhinos, including Harapan’s mother, Emi, were brought into captivity throughout the world in an effort to breed them and save the species. At the time little was known about the species and no one really knew how to take care of them. Luckily, it was actually the keepers at the Cincinnati Zoo that were the first to discover the proper diet for a Sumatran rhino: 120 lbs of fresh produce a day!

**Diet:**

Unlike the other more well-known species of rhinos, Sumatran rhinos cannot live on a diet consisting of mainly alfalfa; Harapan gets his own personal smorgasbord of fresh ficus browse imported from Florida and California every single day, making him the most expensive animal at the zoo! In addition to those trees and shrubs, he also gets browse from local plants twice a week, including elm, hackberry, and mulberry in addition to 6 lbs of grain and 10 to 15 lbs of apples, bananas, carrots and papaya. So when you bought your admission today or take a ride on the train, know that some of your money is being used to feed this magnificent animal.

**CREW Research:**

In addition to being the first zoo to discover how to care for Sumatran rhinos, the Cincinnati Zoo was also the first institution to breed a Sumatran rhino in over 100 years. Much of that success was due to the research CREW, the Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife, performed on Sumatran rhino hormones. Since so little was known about Sumatran rhinos, our scientists at CREW had to start at the beginning, with just simply making observations about their behaviors. They discovered that there can be quite a bit of aggression from males when breeding, so in order to prevent injury to any of our rhinos they had to first discover when the right time was to put the male and females together. By conditioning Harapan’s mother, Emi, to participate in ultrasounds and blood collections, CREW was able to determine exactly when a breeding pair of Sumatran rhinos should be in the same space. Then, after discovering that Sumatran rhinos often had fluctuations in hormone levels, they were able to add a progesterone supplement to Emi’s diet. And with that, Harapan’s first sibling was born – his brother Andalas. Even though Harapan is the third born calf, there is still research being done with him and CREW will continue working to save his species. There are also a few easy things that YOU can do to help save Sumatran rhinos! You can download the Sustainable Shopper app to your smart phone, so that you can avoid buying products made with palm oil, since unsustainable palm plantations are one of the major reasons habitats for Sumatran rhinos are disappearing. In addition, you can also take some time during your day at the zoo to visit CREW and learn more about their work saving species.

**Personality**

Back to Harapan himself, he is one of the sweetest rhinos you can meet. He is quite playful, and will try to grab and chew on anything he can get his prehensile lip around – especially hoses! When he’s in his yard and there are no hoses for him to steal, you might see him reach up and grab a bunch of honeysuckle or bamboo to munch on if it’s leaning over the edge too far! Since he’s been around people his whole life, he’s very comfortable around his keepers and others. He knows his name and will come when called, but unlike other animals that don’t like to be touched, he often comes right up to the bars of his enclosure to get a good rub! If you want to get to know Harapan even better for yourself, be sure to check out our Endangered Excursion behind the scenes experience on the zoo’s website!

**Conclusion**

I hope you all enjoyed getting to know Harapan and the rest of his species today, and have come to realize what a rock star he is he. But since he is such an amazing animal, he also provides hope for the future of his species with the possibility of fatherhood. For this reason he will eventually be travelling back to his roots in Indonesia to a Sumatran rhino reserve. Since there are no other Sumatran rhinos in North America, the only opportunity to continue his species is to move across the world. Even though we will all miss him, know that he will be joining his brother Andalas, who has already sired a calf, to a sanctuary armed with a breeding program and veterinary staff trained by CREW so that he may one day soon become a father, and contribute to ensuring that his species will be around for generations to come.

**Side notes:** I think a mic would be beneficial, to draw people in since not many people come to Wildlife Canyon. If it could be coordinated,

have browse out for him or fresh mud to wallow in on the chat day, so that he would be up close and visible.

**Sources:**

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Paul Reinhart, interview

Terri Roth, interview