







That mixture of emotions includes both joy and anxiety, Long explains, due to the ongoing fragility of this last population. On one hand, Javan rhinos have come a long way from the 1960s, when as few as 20 were left. This progress is due to hard work by conservationists and by Ujung Kulon National Park, which has so far managed to protect the rhinos from poachers. It's partly a good thing that all 68 survivors live in a protected park, but it also means species has all its eggs in one basket.

"Even though there's been no poaching, it could be vulnerable to poaching any day," Long says. "As we know from the poaching crisis in Africa, poachers are out there trying to kill rhinos all over the world."

The region is also home to livestock that can spread diseases to the rhinos, Long adds, whose dense concentration means a single outbreak could doom the species. And on top of that, Ujung Kulon is located just south of Krakatoa, the infamous volcano that devastated the region in 1883. Anak Krakatau, or "Son of Krakatoa," is an active volcano near the original eruption site, and if it erupts, it could easily wipe out the species in an instant. Even if the volcano didn't directly threaten the rhinos, an eruption or an earthquake could flood their habitat with a tsunami.

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Although their habitat is legally protected, the last population of Javan rhinos remains highly vulnerable to threats ranging from disease to volcanic eruption. (Photo: Robin Moore/Global Wildlife Conservation)

Discussions are underway to relocate some Javan rhinos, Long adds, in an effort to buffer the species. But in the meantime, he hopes this rare glimpse will help raise public awareness of these often-overlooked rhinos.

"When people think about rhinos, they think about African rhinos. They don't think about Sumatran and Javan rhinos, which are by far the species most threatened with extinction," he says, noting the two species number fewer than 150 individuals put together, compared with thousands of white and black rhinos in Africa. "That's why we're releasing these images. The real rhino crisis is in Indonesia. We need to get attention and support to these species, but most people don't even know they exist."

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