

WCPO covers Sumatran rhino's journey to save his species

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CINCINNATI – The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is on a mission to save the Sumatran rhino. And only one journalist was given behind-the-scenes access to share 8-year-old rhino Harapan's incredible journey.

Emily Maxwell, a photojournalist for WCPO.com, traveled along with a crew from the Zoo carrying precious cargo – a Sumatran rhino named Harapan – to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Indonesia in late October. Maxwell is available for interviews about her experience, and photos and video footage are available to other media outlets upon request.

In a story exclusive to WCPO Insider, along with photo galleries and video, Maxwell takes readers along for the emotional and courageous adventure of Harapan (also known as Harry). The Zoo transferred the 1,800-pound Sumatran rhino from its breeding program to the sanctuary in hopes of expanding the dwindling population. There are fewer than 100 Sumatran rhinos left in the world.

The Cincinnati Zoo had success breeding the Sumatran rhinos, producing three calves, including Harapan, between 2007-2011. The Zoo's program started in 1984 and ended with Harapan's departure.

Emily traveled with a crew of doctors and zookeepers 10,000 miles over 42 hours to deliver Harapan to the sanctuary, where they hope he will successfully breed with a female named Rosa. If he doesn't, it could mean the end of the species.

"The story of Harapan and the zookeepers is one of passion and hope, and WCPO was honored to be at the forefront in sharing this important moment," said Mike Canan, editor-in-chief of WCPO.com. "From images to words to video, Emily captured what it was like to be along for the journey, and we think our readers will connect with this very human tale."

The story, "From Cincinnati to Sumatra: Taking a rhino across the world in a cargo plane," is now available on WCPO.com and will air in part on WCPO's television broadcast today. It contains both heartwarming and humorous moments, including:

- What it's like to fly around the world with a rhino on board a cargo plane
- How the Rhino Protection Unit, a group of men with machine guns who patrol the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary, keep rhinos safe from poachers
- How the crew said their final goodbyes to Harapan. Don't think a rhino can be cuddly and sweet? Just watch him saying farewell to one of the zookeepers

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