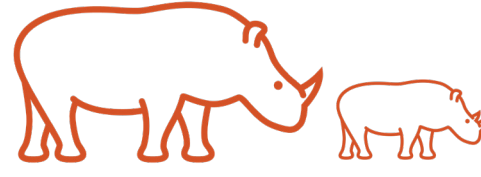
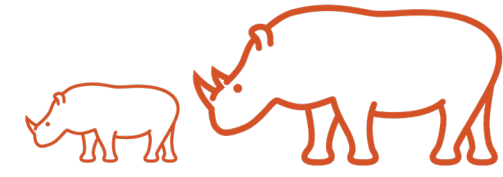


RHINOCEROS



Out of 20 species of rhinoceros, only five species survive today: the black rhino, greater one-horned rhino, Javan rhino, Sumatran rhino and white rhino.

DSWF works to protect Africa's black rhino and the greater one-horned rhino from India, so we will focus on these species in this factsheet.

LATIN NAME:

- Black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)
- Greater one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*)

POPULATION:

- Black rhino – 3,142 remaining.
- Greater one-horned rhino - 2,100-2,200 remaining.

*Figures from IUCN website, based on number of adult rhinos.

WHERE TO FIND THEM:

- Black rhino: Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana.
- Greater one-horned rhino: India and Nepal.

HABITATS:

- Black and white rhino - savanna grassland, shrubland and desert.

- Greater one-horned rhino - floodplain grassland, and sometimes swamps and forests

IUCN STATUS:

- Black rhino: Critically Endangered
- Greater one-horned rhino: Vulnerable

The IUCN Red List is a critical indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity.

EX	EW	CE	EN	VU	NT	LC
EXTINCT	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	ENDANGERED	VULNERABLE	NEAR THREATENED	LEAST CONCERNED

LIFESPAN: Between 35-50 years depending on the species.

SIZE: The white rhino is the largest species of rhino weighing 2,700kg and standing 1.8m tall. The smallest rhino species is the Sumatrain rhino weighing between 500-960kg.

DIET: All rhinos are *herbivores**

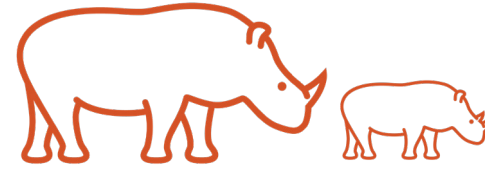
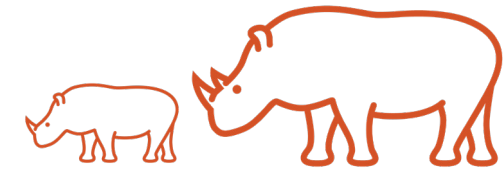
- Black rhino: mainly feed at night, they eat leaves and twigs from woody plants using their *prehensile** top lip.
- Greater one-horned rhino: eat over 180 plant species, mainly grass but also leaves, fruit and branches from shrubs.

Rhinos drink from waterholes but can survive for several days without water if necessary.

PREDATORS: Adult rhinos don't have natural *predators** because they are too large to attack and they can defend themselves with their horn; however, calves are at risk from predators like, leopards, lions, tigers, hyenas and crocodiles.



RHINOCEROS



COMMUNICATION:



FOR YOUNG READERS: Rhinos make lots of different sounds such as grunts, snorts and squeals. They also use their dung to let other rhinos know where their home is.

Sounds: rhinos communicate using different sounds including roars, squeals, growls, grunts and snorts.

Dung: rhinos mark their territory with *middens**- these are piles of dung which can be one metre high. They will also spray urine and drag their horns along the ground to mark their territory.

Scientists have found that rhinos can communicate through chemicals in their poo - telling other rhinos whether they are male or female, their age, or if they are ready to mate.

BEHAVIOUR:



FOR YOUNG READERS: Even though they look big and tough, rhinos still need to protect their skin from sunburn and insect bites by rolling in mud and letting the mud dry on them!

Wallowing: rhinos will *wallow** in muddy pools, even though their skin is quite tough, in places their skin is 75 times thicker than human skin. The outer layer is sensitive to sunburn and insect bites, so the dried mud helps to protect their skin.

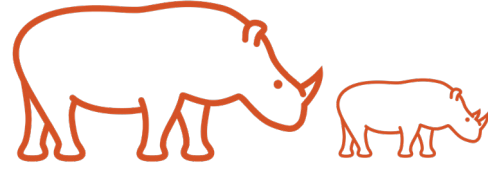
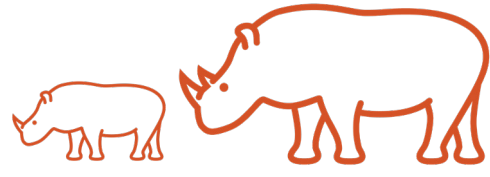
Oxpeckers: you often see small birds, called oxpeckers, riding around on rhinos. Oxpeckers feed on the bothersome insects and ticks nestled in the rhinos' skin. So the rhino benefits from a debugging and the birds get an easy meal. These loud birds also sound the alarm if any danger is present, alerting the rhino.

Teeth: the greater one-horned rhino uses its teeth instead of its horn to defend itself from other rhinos. They have sharp *incisor** teeth up to 8cm long on their lower jaw, which they use to slash. It is not unheard of for a rhino to die from the injuries caused by these sharp incisors in a territorial conflict. Black rhinos don't have these incisors.

Greater one-horned rhinos are excellent swimmers and will dive underwater to munch on aquatic plants.*



RHINOCEROS



LIFECYCLE:



FOR YOUNG READERS:

A rhino baby is called a calf, rhinos usually have one calf at a time, they stay with their mother for three years.

Baby rhinos can run very soon after they are born.

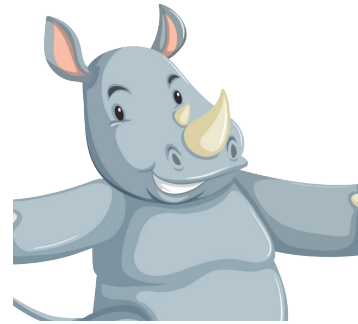
Greater one-horned rhinos: prefer to live by themselves unless they have young calves. The males will aggressively defend their territory.

Black rhinos: some live on their own and won't tolerate other rhinos, others are more sociable. Males can be aggressive when defending their territory and will kill rivals.

Rhino calves: a female rhino is pregnant for 15-16 months and produces a single calf (baby rhino). Black rhinos will give birth every 2-4 years, while greater one horned rhino produce a calf every 1-3 years. Calves are ready to run very shortly after they are born, they then stay with their mothers for around three years. A female rhino is known as a cow and a male rhino is called a bull.



ADAPTATIONS:



FOR YOUNG READERS: Rhinos have one or two horns at the end of their nose, depending on what type of rhino they are. Horns are useful for keeping them safe from predators and for digging up water from under the ground. Even though rhinos are big and heavy, they are very fast!

Horns: Rhinos have either one or two horns depending on the species. Black rhinos have two horns while, as the name suggests, the greater one-horned rhino has one.

Rhinos are not born with a horn, they start to show when they are 1-2 months old and grow throughout the rhino's life (2.5-7.5cm a year). Rhino horns are very tough and strong, they are made of a protein called *keratin*.* Rhinos use their horns to:

- defend themselves and their calves from predators
- defend their territory from other rhinos
- dig for water or help them to get tree branches for feeding
- help guide their calves

Skin: rhinos have many layers of skin which, in some places, are 5cm thick. This thick layer of skin protects them from thorns and sharp grasses as well as attacks from other rhinos and predators.

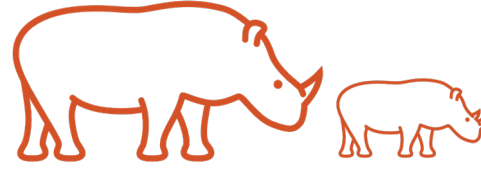
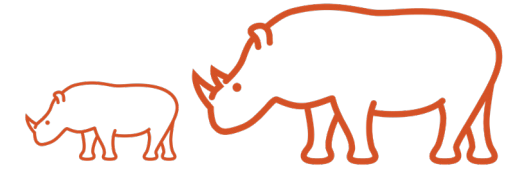
Feet: padded to protect against thorns.

Ears: large and able to rotate to pick up sound.

Nose: rhinos don't have very good eyesight, so having a good sense of smell is important to help them to detect danger.

Speed: despite their size and weight, rhinos are fast, the black rhino can reach speeds of up to 55km an hour over short distances of approximately 100 metres.

RHINOCEROS



WHY RHINOS ARE IMPORTANT:



FOR YOUNG READERS: There are no other animals quite like a rhino, by looking after rhinos we can help lots of other animals and plants. Rhinos help to keep the places where they live healthy and they are also good at spreading the seeds that they eat in their poo.

Unique: it would be a tragedy if rhinos were to become extinct as they have been around for 50 million years.

Umbrella species:* because rhinos have large habitats, by protecting them and their habitats, many other species of plants and animals are also protected.

Healthy ecosystem: rhinos are a keystone species; they have a big impact on the *ecosystem** where they live.

They produce a lot of dung, this attracts insects which feed on the dung, birds and reptiles then feed on those insects. The dung also acts as fertiliser, putting nutrients back into the soil.

Rhinos are great at spreading seeds which they eat as a part of their vegetarian diet. After eating seeds in one area, the rhino will travel vast distances before going to the toilet in another area. The seeds come out in the rhinos dung and are spread a long way from the parent plant, helping new plants grow in different areas.

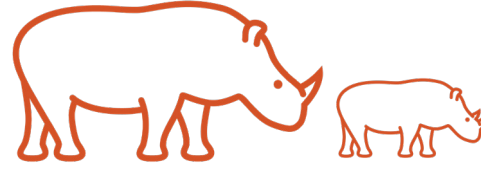
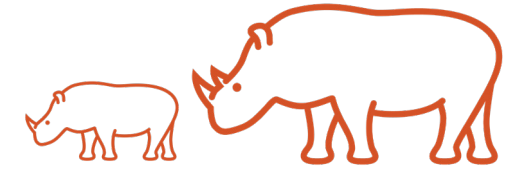
When rhinos move through scrub and forests, they make spaces in the vegetation with their large bodies, other animals can use those spaces to find food and shelter, and light-loving plants are then able to grow there.

Rhinos are picky eaters, choosing to feed on certain plant species, rather than consuming all types of vegetation. This means that they leave behind lots of different plant species for other animals to eat and stops fast growing plants from taking over whole areas, which would be bad for biodiversity.

Tourism: people will travel from far away to see rhinos as they are part of the Big Five. This brings jobs and money into the local economy. Local people can be employed as guides, in hotels and within the national parks.



RHINOCEROS



The collective noun for a group of rhinos is a *crash of rhinos*.

WHY DO RHINOS NEED OUR HELP?



FOR YOUNG READERS: Sadly, people want rhino horns because they believe that they can be used as a medicine, even though they are made out of the same thing as our fingernails. There is also not enough space left for rhinos to live in.

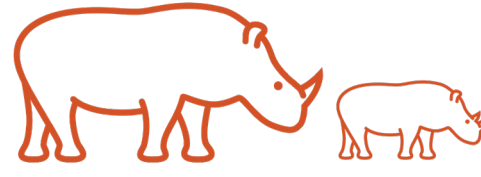
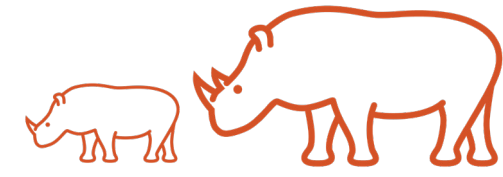
Poaching: The biggest threat to rhinos comes from humans, and the main reason for this is because of their horns. The demand for rhino horn has driven the rhino close to extinction. People want the horn because they believe that rhino horn can be used as a medicine to cure all sorts of ailments, even though there is no medicine in rhino horn. The horn is worth a lot of money, and *poachers** are prepared to kill the rhino to get it. It is illegal to trade rhino horn between countries.

Habitat Loss: With the ever-increasing number of humans on the planet clearing more and more land for towns, farms, roads and factories, there is less space for wildlife. Rhino habitat is rapidly shrinking, making it even harder for them to survive.

Climate Change: Climate change is altering weather patterns around the world. Increases in temperature will make life very difficult for rhinos who need to stay cool during the hottest parts of the day. Hotter temperatures also mean there would be less time in the day to forage for food. Changing rainfall patterns could also seriously affect rhinos, less rain could cause drought, meaning that there would be less available food and water, and fewer waterholes to wallow in to keep cool. In other areas increased rainfall is leading to more severe flooding and the rhinos are not able to escape the floodwater and drown.



RHINOCEROS



HOW DOES DSWF HELP?

DSWF help to fund projects across Africa and Asia that are monitoring and researching rhinos, as well as funding species protection and anti-poaching units.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

ADOPT - by adopting a rhino you will directly fund DSWF's ground-based work protecting rhinos in the wild.

USE YOUR VOICE - to let others know about the problems rhinos are facing and how you can help protect them.

BE MORE GREEN - there are lots of things that we can all do to help the planet and it's incredible wildlife, [click this link](#) to find out what you can do!

*GLOSSARY:

- *Aquatic plants*: vegetation that is adapted to living in water.
- *Ecosystem*: living things interacting with one another and their environment.
- *Herbivores*: animals which only eat plants.
- *Incisors*: teeth at the front of the mouth which are adapted for cutting (e.g twigs)
- *Keratin*: a fibrous protein which makes up hair, fingernails, horn, talons, hooves, claws, scales and feathers.
- *Midden*: a heap of dung or a dunghill
- *Poachers*: people who kill animals illegally
- *Predator*: an animal that preys on other animals.
- *Prehensile*: capable of grasping.
- *Umbrella species*: by protecting one species and it's habitat, lots of other species of plants and animals are also protected.
- *Wallow*: rolling or lying in mud or water.

World
Rhino Day is
celebrated
annually on 22
September.

