# **BLACK RHINOS**

# "HOOK-LIPPED RHINOS"

The smaller of the two species of African rhino, black rhinos are agile, shy and aggressive. Their small, protruding heads and pointed lips give them the nickname 'hook-lipped rhinos'.

The black rhino population suffered a devastating decline between the 1970s and mid 1990s caused by rampant poaching. From 65,000 individuals to under 2500, the species suffered a staggering 96% loss.

Their numbers remain incredibly low, approximately 6195 individuals. Encouragingly however according to the '2022 State of the Rhino Report' by the Internation Rhino foundation (IRF), the population increased around 12% between 2017 to today largely thanks to increased protection and translocation efforts.

#### **SCIENTIFIC NAME**

Diceros bicornis

Diceros bicornis: "Di" meaning "two", "cerato" meaning "horn" in Greek and "bi" meaning "two", and "cornis" meaning "horn" in Latin

#### **SUB-SPECIES**

Southern black rhino (Diceros bicornis minor)
Eastern black rhino (Diceros bicornis michaeli)
Southwestern black rhino (Diceros bicornis bicornis)
Western black rhino (Diceros bicornis longipes)

#### **CONSERVATION STATUS**

Southern Central: Critically endangered Eastern black: Critically endangered South Western: Near threatened Western black: Declared extinct in 2011

# POPULATION INCREASE/DECREASE

Overall, there has been an encouraging growth increase of approximately 12.5% in the last five years. Kenya exceeded its population projection according to its most recent Black Rhino Action Plan. Uganda, Zambia, Malawi and Eswatini have all retained populations despite ongoing threats from poaching. Sadly, numbers in Botswana have plummeted by just over half (27 recorded losses) in just 5 years.





# **HISTORICAL RANGE**

Once prolific across southern, eastern and central Africa (except the Congo Basin) in strongholds such as South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Nigeria, Cameroon, Uganda, Central African Republic.



# **POPULATION**

• South Africa: 2056

• Zambia: 58

• Zimbabwe: 616

• Uganda: 35

• Tanzania: 212

• Rwanda: 28

• Mozambique: 7

Namibia: 2156

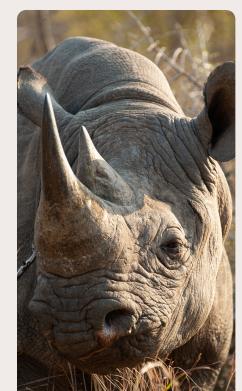
• Botswana: 23

• Eswatini: 48

Kenya: 938



The black rhino occupies a variety of habitats, including grasslands, savannahs, tropical bush lands, thickets, and dry forests, as well as mountain forests and moorlands at high altitudes.





#### **AVERAGE LIFESPAN**

35 - 50 years in the wild. A female eastern black named Fausta died in 2019 at the age of 57

#### **HEIGHT**

Females: 14-16 m Males: 1.4-1.8 m (Height to shoulder)

#### WEIGHT

Calf birth weight: 27-45 kg Females: 700-1,300 kg Males: 1,000-1,800 kg

#### **AVERAGE SPEED**

Black rhinos can charge up to speeds of 35mph

#### SOCIAL

Males are mainly solitary and territorial. Females with young don't tend to socialise with other adults

# **HORNS**

Front length: 50-130cm Rear length: Up to 55 cm

### **HEARING**

They have well developed hearing and are very sensitive to low-frequency sounds

# **VISION**

Their vision is poor. They're unable to see a motionless person at a distance of 30m

#### COMMUNICATION

They have a complex range of visual, audible and olfactory communication, including snorts, wheezes, squeals and pants, foot pounding, horn prodding and ritualised defecation in the form of middens which are communal dung heaps used like a social network

# DIET

They consume approximately 2.5% of their body weight daily. Their diet consists of twigs, branches, leaves, shrubs and bark



#### REPRODUCTION

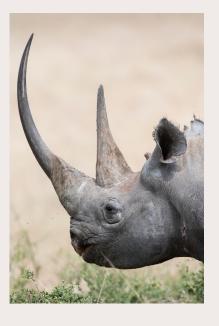
First birth: 4-7 years Gestation: 15-16 months Birth numbers: Single calf Calf birth weight: 27-45 kg Eating solids: Within 7-10 days Weaned: Around 2 years Birth interval: 2.5-4 years Female sexual maturity: 4-7 years Male sexual maturity: 7-10 years



#### **CURRENT RANGE**

The two countries with the largest black rhino populations are South Africa and Namibia, which account for almost 70% of the entire wild black rhino population.

In previous range states where black rhinos were declared extinct, such as Mozambique, which had no population for over four decades, reintroduction programs have been implemented.



#### **HORNS**

Unlike tusks, which are teeth, and antlers, which are bone, rhino horn is made of keratin. Keratin is the same fibrous protein found in human hair and nails. As essential tools, they are used for digging for water, foraging, guiding their young, and displaying dominance & defence.

The horns grow continuously throughout the rhino's life at a rate of around 7cm per year. Horns are worn through general wear and tear or by an intervention known as de-horning (the partial removal of horns as a deterrent against poaching) although the practice is not as widespread as with white rhinos.

The longest black rhino horn was recorded in Kenya & reportedly measured 51 inches.





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