

WHITE RHINOS

"SQUARE-LIPPED RHINOS"

One of two species of African rhino, white rhinos are the most populated of all five rhino species, although their numbers have plummeted in the last decade. They can be found in several range states across Africa, although about 98% of the entire population is concentrated in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland).

White rhinos are the larger of the two species of African rhino and the world's second-largest land mammal after elephants. They have the most complex social structure of all five species of rhino and are less aggressive than their black counterparts.

Easily identifiable by their large square or long mouths, which lends them the nickname of "square-lipped rhino", the white rhino isn't actually white, but grey. There are several theories as to where their names are derived. The most popular is thought to be a mistranslation of the Afrikaans word "weit" which means wide (referring to the wide muzzle and not their colouring as was once thought).



SCIENTIFIC NAME

Ceratotherium simus

SUB-SPECIES

Southern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simus simum*)

Northern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simus cottoni*)

CONSERVATION STATUS

Southern: near threatened (*IUCN Redlist - last updated 2012*)

Northern: functionally extinct

POPULATION

Southern: 15,940 individuals (*estimated*)

Northern: 2 females (*Najin & her daughter Fatu live at Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya*)

POPULATION INCREASE/DECREASE

The southern white rhino population has plummeted approximately 24% since 2014

4 northern white rhinos have died in the last 9 years. Suni and Sudan, the last 2 northern males died in 2015 and 2018 respectively at Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya. In 2015 females Nabire and Nola died in zoos in the Czech Republic and San Diego

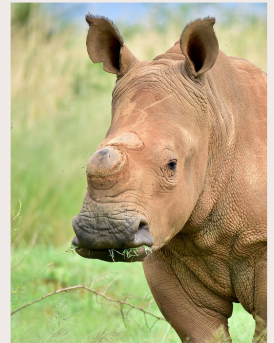


CURRENT RANGE

Around 98% of southern white rhinos are found in; Namibia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Eswatini, Zambia and South Africa, which has the largest concentration and is also the only country in the world which allows private ownership of rhinos. Small populations can also be found in Mozambique and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) thanks to relocation efforts in 2022 and 2023.

HISTORICAL RANGE

Southern white rhinos roamed large swathes of southern Africa, including South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, where they became extinct around 40 years ago before being reintroduced in 2022. They could also be found in north African countries including Kenya and Uganda.



Northern white rhinos were once found in southern Chad, southwestern Sudan, Central African Republic, northwestern Uganda and Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the last known sighting of 4 individuals was in the Garamba National Park in 2006.



AVERAGE LIFESPAN

35 - 40 years in the wild
or 50 years in captivity

HORNS

Front length: 94-101cm
Rear length: Up to 55 cm

HEIGHT

Females: 1.6-1.8 m
Males: 1.7-1.9 m
(Height to shoulder)

HEARING

They have well developed hearing and can hear noise frequencies lower than the average human

WEIGHT

Calf birth weight: 40-70 kg
Females: 1,800-2,000 kg
Males: 1,800-2,500 kg

VISION

Their vision is poor. About a 10th as good as the average person

AVERAGE SPEED

Walking: 1.9-2.4 mph
Trotting: 18 mph
Males can charge up to 24.8 mph (for short distances)

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

SOCIAL

Males can be social, but usually live alone. Females live in groups of up to 15 individuals

DIET

More efficient at shearing grass than an electric lawn mower they can eat up to 55kg of food (almost exclusively grass) each day



REPRODUCTION

- First birth: 6.5-7 years
- Gestation: 16 months
- Birth numbers: Single calf
- Calf birth weight: 40-70 kg
- Eating solids: 2 weeks to 1 month
- Weaned: 12-16 months
- Birth interval: 2-3 years
- Female sexual maturity: 4-5 years
- Male sexual maturity: 10-12 years



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).

The longest white rhino horn was recorded in South Africa & reportedly measured 59 inches.

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