



BLACK RHINOCEROS

Kingdom: Animalia **Phylum:** Chordata **Class:** Mammalia **Order:** Perissodactyla **Family:** Rhinocerotidae
Diceros bicornis

Description: Despite its name, the Black Rhinoceros is actually gray in color. It has two horns and a prehensile upper lip used to grasp vegetation.

Length: 10-12 feet

Height: 4-6 feet

Weight: 1,000-3,000 pounds

Horn Length: 4 feet

Lifespan: 40 years in captivity

Range: Found only in a few pockets in eastern and southern Africa

Diet in the Wild: Branches and leaves from shrubs and trees, some fruit, long grass and herbs.



Status: Endangered. Approximately 3,500 remain in the wild. It is near extinction due to poachers hunting it for the horn.

Special Features:

- Rhino horn is made of thousands of tiny strands of keratin, the same material that makes up human fingernails. Rhino horn can grow 2 to 3 inches per year.
- The two horns are fixed to a bump on the nasal bone.
- Their horns are used for traditional Asian medicines and to make dagger handles in Yemen.
- Rhinos make up for their poor eyesight with a keen sense of hearing and sense of smell.
- Communication is with snorts and puffs. A calf will bleat if it loses its mother.
- The Black Rhino is the most aggressive species in its family. It can charge at speeds of 30 mph and can kill a human.
- A group of rhinos is called a crash although they are usually solitary animals.
- Rhinos stay near water since they need to drink once a day. They can go several days without water by chewing on succulents. During droughts it digs for water with its forefeet.
- Since it cannot sweat, the rhino will wallow in the mud during the hottest hours of the day to keep cool. The mud also protects them against insects and sunburn.
- Oxpeckers will travel on a rhino's back in a symbiotic relationship. They pick off the ticks and screech loudly when humans approach.

Breeding/Care of Young:

- Sexually maturity is 4-5 years for cows and 7 years for bulls.
- Gestation is 15 months.
- They give birth to one calf at a time.
- The calf is born without a horn.
- The calf is weaned at 2 years old.
- The young calf stays close to its mother forming a strong bond.
- The calf can walk within 10 minutes of birth.
- The Black Rhino calf follows its mother while she clears a path through dense cover.
- A White Rhino calf will run ahead of its mother.

