



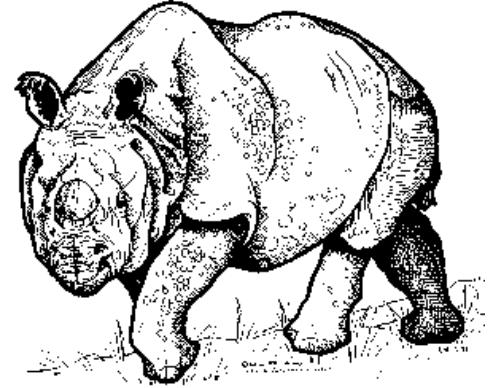
INDIAN RHINO



Phylum: Chordata, Class: Mammalia, Order: Perissodactyla, Family: Rhinocerotidae
Rhinoceros unicornis

The Greater one-horned rhinoceros is the second largest species of rhinoceros. The Greater one-horned rhino is commonly referred to as the Indian rhino. The name “rhinoceros” comes from a Greek word meaning “nose-horned”.

There are 5 species of rhinos in the world. Three of the species are found in Asia - the Sumatran, the Javan, and the Indian rhino. Two of the species are found in Africa - the white rhino and the black rhino.



Weight: 3,500 - 6,000+ lbs. **Height** (at shoulder): 5.5 - 6 feet
Horn length: 8 - 24 inches **Lifespan:** up to 40 years

Habitat: forests and floodplains; prefers to be near swamps and rivers

Range/distribution: Greater one-horned rhinos are found in parks and reserves in Nepal and India.

Diet in the wild: primarily a grazer, but will consume some browse

Status: *ENDANGERED*

- As few as 2,000 Greater one-horned rhinos survive in the wild.
- All of the world’s rhino species are endangered. Today fewer than 14,000 rhinos are found throughout the world.

Threats to survival: Greater one-horned rhinos are endangered due to **poaching** and **habitat loss**. Their horns are used for traditional Asian medicines and to make dagger handles in Yemen. Indian rhinos are also threatened by habitat loss. India and Nepal are very densely populated areas and the ever-increasing human population continues to encroach on wildlife habitat. The floodplains where the rhinos live are often used for agriculture. The remaining areas of the flood plains are subject to severe floods and are not suitable year-round habitats for the rhinos. Continued destruction of forests increases the severity of the annual flooding.

Special features:

- The Greater one-horned rhinoceros has a semi-prehensile upper lip, specially adapted for grasping branches, twigs, and other food sources.
- The skin of Greater one-horned rhinos is covered with many round bumps. Their skin forms folds that give the animal the appearance of being covered in armor plating.
- Rhino horn is made of thousands of tiny strands of keratin, the same material that makes up human fingernails. Rhino skulls have a large bump on the front that helps anchor the horn to the head. Rhino horn can grow 2 - 3 inches per year.
- Rhinos have poor eyesight but well-developed senses of hearing and smell.
- Rhinos walk and run on their toes, making them similar to horses. In spite of their size, rhinos are able to turn quickly and run fast - up to 35 mph.
- Greater one-horned rhinos are excellent swimmers and can cross wide rivers.
- Rhinos enjoy wallowing in the mud. The mud creates a coating on their skin to protect them from sunburn and insect bites. Mud wallowing is also an effective method of heat loss.



- Greater one-horned rhinos have high-crowned molars and two tusk-like incisors on the lower jaw.
- In the wild, the Greater one-horned rhino's habitat is an ever-changing ecosystem. During the rainy season, large parts of its home range may flood. During the dry period, small sources of water may completely dry up or become cut off from large rivers.

Social Structure:

- Scent marking is important in rhino communication. Greater one-horned rhinos mark the paths of their territories with secretions from special glands that are found above and behind the ball of the foot on all 4 legs. Rhinos will also mark their areas with urine or dung.
- Aside from a cow and calf pair, Greater one-horned rhinos are basically solitary animals. Occasionally temporary groups will form.
- The continuous seasonal changes make it virtually impossible for a bull to defend a strictly defined territory. A bull will, however, enforce dominance as he shifts his main areas of activity. He will scent mark his area and challenge other dominant or inferior bulls as they approach.

Breeding & Care of young:

- Females become sexually mature at 5 -7 years of age; males at 10 years.
- Dominant males will often fight with each other over a breeding female.
- Gestation = 15 - 16 months
- Calves weigh approximately 150 pounds at birth.
- Calves are usually weaned around 18 months of age.

Efforts to save Greater one-horned rhinos:

While Greater one-horned rhinos are still threatened with extinction, their numbers are up from an all time low of 900 individuals in 1970. The rhinos are important in rites accompanying the accession of kings in Nepal. Over 400 rhinos are guarded in Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal, although areas around the park are densely populated by humans. A second population of rhinos has been established in Royal Bardia National Park in southwestern Nepal. Although the Nepalese government has provided guards for the parks, some poaching still occurs.

The American Zoo and Aquarium Association has a Species Survival Plan organized for the Greater one-horned rhino. SSPs are special programs designed by a team of zoo and wildlife professionals. The plans outline breeding plans, work to increase public awareness and education, help conduct research, and in some cases, organize programs to reintroduce captive-bred wildlife into secure habitats.

Other Asian Rhinoceroses:

Javan rhino: Javan rhinos look like a small version of the Indian rhino. Their population has been reduced to a small number of individuals living at the western tip of Java. Fewer than 100 individuals survive. There are no Javan rhinos in captivity.

Sumatran rhino: Sumatran rhinos differ greatly in appearance from all other rhinos. Whereas other rhinos have hair only on the tips of their ears and tail, the Sumatran rhino has hair all over its body. The Sumatran rhino is often called the "woolly rhino". Like the African rhinos, but unlike the other two species of Asian rhinos, the Sumatrans have two horns. Sumatrans are the smallest rhinos, weighing around 1,600 pounds. Fewer than 400 individuals survive in the wild. Fewer than 30 individuals are in captivity.

