

Indian Rhino: *Rhinoceros unicornis*. Population: 2,850

The Indian (greater one-horned) rhino was reclassified in 2009 from Endangered to Vulnerable, thanks to dedicated conservation efforts. In the early 1900's, less than 200 Indian rhinos remained.

Indian and Nepalese wildlife authorities have been instrumental in the recovery of the Indian rhino. However, illegal killing of rhinos in national parks has increased in recent years.

This species' proximity to China, where unfortunate superstitions attribute medicinal properties to rhino horn, leaves the Indian rhino in a precarious position. Vigilant law enforcement efforts will be required if the Indian rhino is to survive in the wild.

Indian Rhino Distribution

Indian rhinos are found only in national parks and protected areas of India and Nepal.

Distinguishing Characteristics

The Indian rhino is grayish, with distinctive skin folds that make the rhino appear to be wearing plates of armor. Indian rhinos are hairless, except for eyelashes, ear tufts, and the tail tip.

The Indian rhino has one horn comprised of keratin - just hair and fingernail material. The horn is typically 8" - 24" in length.

A semi-prehensile lip enables the Indian rhino to feed on a very wide variety of grasses, leaves, branches, aquatic plants, and fruit.

Like all rhinos, the Indian rhino is an odd-toed ungulate and has three toes on each foot. Also in common with other rhinos is a superb sense of hearing and keen sense of smell - but relatively poor eyesight.

Size of the Indian Rhino

The Indian rhino, along with the roughly equal-sized white rhino, is the largest species of land mammal after the elephant.

The Indian Rhino's weight ranges from 4,000 - 6,000 pounds, and stands from 5.75 - 6.5 feet high at the shoulder. End-to-end, the Indian rhino can be 10 - 12.5 feet in length.

Activity

The Indian rhino is both fast and agile, running up to 25 mph for short distances and able to make sharp turns when necessary.

Indian rhinos may spend 60% of their day in the water. They dive and feed under water; it is not uncommon to see just their snouts, eyes, and ears above the water.



Females and calves of varying ages often reside together in small groups, known as a "crash", while males are frequently solitary.

Life span

- Indian Rhinos can live 30 - 45 years in the wild, and the captive life span record is 47 years.

Scientific Name and Origin

Rhinoceros unicornis - there are no Indian rhino subspecies.

- Rhinoceros: from the Greek rhino, meaning "nose" and ceros, meaning "horn"
- unicornis: from the Latin uni, meaning "one" and cornis, meaning "horn"

Sources: Asian Rhino Project, International Rhino Foundation, Save the Rhino International & Rhino Resource Center