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SPECIES

Black rhino

ONE-TONNE BROWSER

Poaching and land clearing for agriculture and human settlement in the 1970s and 80s decimated black rhinoceros populations across Africa, with numbers plummeting from 100,000 to fewer than 4,000 animals.

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BLACK RHINO FACTS

- The black rhino has a pointed, prehensile upper lip, which it uses to grasp leaves
- Black rhinos actually have dark-brown or dark-grey skin, not black, and they can weigh up to 1,400 kg
- Poaching has already driven one subspecies – the western black rhino – to extinction
- For the three remaining subspecies, poaching remains the critical threat

At a glance

Diceros bicornis



Critically Endangered



South Africa



Namibia



Kenya



Zimbabwe



Swaziland



Tanzania

Family: Rhinocerotidae

Order: Perissodactyla

Est. in the wild: 5,040 – 5,458

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Sadly, one black rhino subspecies has already been driven to extinction, and the remaining three are under severe pressure.

97%

of black rhinos were lost between 1960 and 1995, primarily as a result of poaching.

1,400 kg

Black rhinos can weigh as much as a small car.

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Black rhinos have been brought back from the brink of extinction but remain critically endangered. The primary threat to rhinos in East Africa is still illegal poaching for their horn. However, in countries with concerted conservation programmes, based on intensive protection and biological management to ensure high population growth rates, black rhino numbers are stable or slowly increasing.

A poaching crisis

Black rhinos are severely threatened by poaching for their horns. You could help us protect key rhino populations before it is too late. Time is critical for the black rhino - please act now

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HOW FEI IS HELPING TO SAVE THE BLACK

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population of black rhinos in East Africa.

The conservancy was established in 2003 when FFI, with the help of the Arcus Foundation, purchased a 364-km² cattle ranch that forms part of a key wildlife corridor at the foot of Mount Kenya. The ranch was converted into a wildlife conservancy – Ol Pejeta – and ownership was transferred from FFI to a Kenyan non-profit entity in 2005 under a long-term management agreement.

FFI has continued to work with Ol Pejeta ever since its establishment, including assisting with the translocation of black rhinos into the conservancy, and providing ongoing support to protect these animals from poaching, ensuring high standards of monitoring, and developing incentives for local support for rhino conservation through Ol Pejeta's community development programme.

Through the Northern Rangelands Trust, which FFI helped establish, we are also supporting the Sera Wildlife Conservancy and the Borana Conservancy, and their respective rhino conservation programmes.

Key to the success of all these conservancies is the support from local communities, garnered through engagement, awareness and employment programmes in each area.

“As well as providing adequate levels of protection alongside capability and resources for rhino monitoring, it will also be essential to manage existing populations well and ensure that they have enough high-quality, secure habitat to thrive and grow. If we are to offset future poaching losses, we need to see net population growth above 5% per year.”

Dr Rob Brett

Senior Technical Specialist, Africa

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CONSERVATION

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