

# WORD RHINO DAY

22 September 2021



## ***Background***

Word Rhino Day Each is celebrated yearly on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September and sees NGO's, Zoos, Governments, business and concerned individuals come together to raise awareness about the risk of extinction the worlds rhinos continue to face.

This year will see World rhino Day celebrate its 10-year anniversary with the slogan "Keep the five alive", a reference to the plight of the world's five rhino species. World Rhino day was first announced by WWF- South Africa in 2010 to celebrate and raise awareness of threats South Africa's rhino species are facing. The following year all five of the world's rhino species: the white, black, Indian, Java and Sumatra rhino were included and ever since World Rhino Day has grown into a major awareness event.

### ***Rhino facts:***

- The word rhino means "horned nose"
- **The horn** is primarily made up of keratin
- The Indian Rhino is the 2nd largest land mammal, after the elephant
- The closest living relate to rhinos are horses and zebras



## *The plight of the rhino*

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more than 500 000 rhinos roamed across most of Africa and Asia. Today less than 28 000 rhinos remain. It is a sad reality that all rhino species are endangered while the black, Java, and Sumatra rhino are critically endangered. Since the 1960's Africa's black rhino population has decreased by more than 90%. The Sumatra and Java rhino experienced similar declines and are now range restricted to only a few small intact rainforests fragments in South-East Asia. The past ten years has also seen the extinction of two rhino subspecies, the mainland subspecies of the Java rhino and Western black rhino were both declared extinct in 2011. Fortunately, there has also been some conservation success stories. Both the Indian and White rhino were brought back from the brink of extinction. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century only 200 Indian rhinos and less than 100 White rhinos remained. Today there are more than

<b>White rhino</b>			Vulnerable
			Sub-Saharan Africa
			± 18 000
			1,800 - 2,700 kg
<b>Black rhino</b>			Critically endangered
			Sub-Saharan Africa
			± 5 500
			900 – 1,400 Kg
<b>Indian rhino</b>			Vulnerable
			Northern India, Nepal
			± 3 5000
			1,800 - 2,700 kg
<b>Sumatran rhino</b>			Critically endangered
			Java, Indonesia
			less
			550- 900 kg
<b>Java rhino</b>			Critically endangered
			Sumatra, Sabah
			75
			900 – 2,300 kg



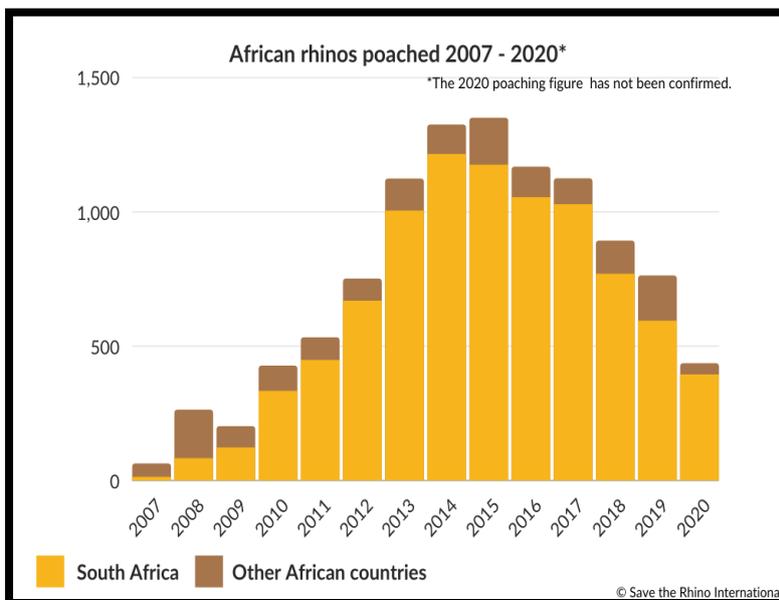
3 500 Indian rhinos and over 18 000 white rhinos.

Poaching remains the biggest threat to rhinos. growing consumer demand for rhino horn in Asia, particularly in China and Vietnam, has driven the unsustainable increase in poaching across Africa and Asia.

Rhino horn is coveted in parts of Asia for its supposed traditional medicinal qualities and as an ornament indicative of status and prestige. Other major threats include habitat loss, inbreeding and climate change. The coastal Ujung Kulon National Park, which is home to all remaining Java rhino, is highly vulnerable to tsunamis. A major explosion of the nearby Anak Krakatau volcano could easily wipe out the entire population in a single event.

## ***Poaching in South Africa***

South Africa is often hailed as the world leader in the rhino conservation and is home to the largest number of rhinos in the world. Unfortunately, South Africa has also bared the brunt of the global rhino poaching scourge that rapidly escalated since 2008. The Kruger National Park, home to the largest wild rhino population in the world, has particularly been hard hit. The latest census found



that Kruger's rhinos have declined by a staggering 59% since 2013. Today there are just 3,529 white rhinos and 268 black rhinos left in the Park. Fortunately, since 2015 when the number of rhinos poached reached an annual high, the number of animals poached has continued to decline yearly