

Planet Earth is home to five different species of rhinoceros, who are found in the wild in either Africa or Asia. They are:

- The white rhino
- The black rhino
- The Sumatran rhino
- The Javan rhino
- The Indian rhino, which is also known as the greater one-horned rhino



About Rhinos

Rhinos are herbivores, which means they only eat plants. They are the second-largest land mammal in the world; the largest is the elephant. They can weigh up to 2,500kg, which is the same as thirty adult humans. They are named after the great horns which stick out from their snouts.

Planet Earth is home to five incredible species of rhinoceros, namely the white rhino and the black rhino, which live in Africa, and the Sumatran rhino, Javan rhino and Indian (commonly known as the greater one-horned) rhino, which all live within the tropical rainforests and swamps of Asia.

These magnificent herbivores, which are known to weigh up to 2,500kg (the equivalent of thirty adult humans), are named after the great horns which protrude from their snouts, with the word 'rhinoceros' translating from its Greek origins as 'nose-horned'. They are the second-largest land mammal in the world after the elephant.

Interestingly, both black and white rhinoceroses are grey, despite their names. Their difference comes not from the colour of their skin but from the shape of their lip; the black rhino has a pointed upper lip suited to retrieving leaves and berries from trees, whilst the white rhino has a squared lip more suitable for grazing.



Scientists believe that around 500,000 rhinos roamed across Europe, Africa and Asia at the beginning of the 1900s. However, this number is now a lot smaller; only around 30,000 are alive today around the world and very few live outside of national parks and protected reserves.

Conservation Status

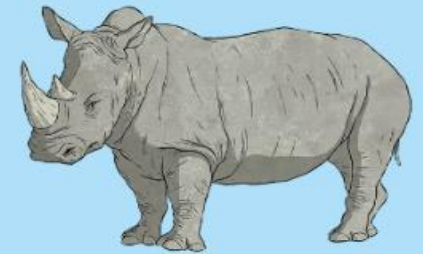
Each type of animal around the world is given a conservation status rating. The different conservation status ratings are:

Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	Critically Endangered	Endangered	Vulnerable	Near Threatened	Least Concern
Worst			Best			

Did You Know...?

The word 'rhinoceros' literally means 'nose-horned' in Greek.

Once roaming freely across Europe, Africa and Asia, the estimated 500,000 rhinos alive at the beginning of the 20th century have now significantly dwindled to approximately 30,000 globally, with very few surviving outside of national parks and protected reserves.



All known animals worldwide are classified according to their conservation status – the number of the species which still exist and their likelihood of becoming extinct in the near future. The scale of classification of conservation status is:

Extinct	Extinct in the Wild	Critically Endangered	Endangered	Vulnerable	Near Threatened	Least Concern
Worst			Best			

The different species of rhinoceros are classified:

Species of Rhino	Javan Rhino	Sumatran Rhino	Black Rhino	Indian Rhino	White Rhino
Conservation Status	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Vulnerable	Near Threatened
Number Alive	Approx. 67	100	5,040 – 5,458	3,500+	19,666–21,085

Although, at first glance, it may appear that the white rhino is the least endangered species of rhinoceros, this is not strictly accurate. Within the white rhino species are two sub-species of rhinoceros: the southern white rhino and the northern white rhino. Although very similar in both name and appearance, the conservation status of these two sub-species could not be further apart:

	Southern White Rhino	Northern White Rhino
Conservation Status	Near Threatened	Critically Endangered Possibly Extinct in the Wild
Number Alive	Approximately 20,000 southern white rhinos remaining in the wild.	Only two northern white rhinos are known to exist worldwide

Once thought to be completely extinct, southern white rhinos now thrive in protected sanctuaries across Africa and make up the majority of all rhinos worldwide. However, the northern white rhino is thought to be entirely extinct in the wild, with the only two known surviving rhinos kept in captivity.

The number of northern white rhinos has reduced because of two significant factors:

- **Habitat destruction:** The natural home of rhinos in Africa and Asia is being destroyed so that towns and cities can be built.
- **Poaching:** Hundreds of rhinos are killed by poachers every year so that their horns can be sold.

Until recently, the last three northern white rhinos on Earth resided at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya, looked after by a specialist veterinary team and protected from poachers by armed security guards.

Name	Sudan	Najin	Fatu
Age	45	28	18
Sex	Male (bull)	Female (cow)	Female (cow)
Place of Birth	Sudan, Africa	Born in captivity	Born in captivity

Unfortunately, on 19th March 2018, the last male of the sub-species, Sudan, became poorly and was put to sleep to end his suffering. With no northern white bulls alive worldwide, chances of any new off-spring within the sub-species are incredibly slim – meaning that the northern white rhinoceros could become extinct entirely before the year 2050.

Although scientists work tirelessly in an attempt to discover ways of ensuring a future generation of northern white rhino, time could be running out for one of the most majestic and extraordinary creatures on our planet.



Scientists are working hard to find a way of stopping the northern white rhinos becoming extinct but time could be running out for one of the most extraordinary creatures on our planet.

Glossary

captivity: When an animal is kept somewhere and not allowed to leave, e.g. a zoo or a nature reserve.

conservation status: A title which says how likely a group of animals is to become extinct based on the number of them which still exist and the change in that number over time.

endangered: In danger of being harmed or lost.

extinct: No examples alive anymore.