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Foundation
2003-2004



www.rhinos-irf.org

What Is The IRF?

The International Rhino Foundation (IRF) is a non-profit organization devoted entirely to the conservation of the world's remaining five species of rhinoceros: the Black and White Rhinos of Africa, and the Indian, Javan, and Sumatran Rhinos in Asia.

IRF programs provide a diversified approach to rhino conservation that incorporates field conservation strategies, captive management, and research in various mixes depending on the needs of specific rhino populations. Programs are conducted in partnership with host countries and partner institutions. Educational initiatives and the establishment and maintenance of a rhino informational website are recent expansions of IRF's programs.

IRF is governed by a Board of Directors that represent supporting partner organizations. Over 40 partner institutions and individuals currently enable IRF to operate programs and support field staff working to conserve all 5 species of rhinos around the world. The IRF Program Office is located in Florida at the White Oak Conservation Center. White Oak, operated by Gilman International Conservation, provides financial and administrative support to IRF.

The mission of the IRF is to support and operate rhino conservation and research programs both in nature and in captivity with particular emphasis on intensive management and protection.

Rhinos In Crisis

Rhinos inhabited the earth for over 50 million years, formerly with ranges not only in Africa and Asia, but also in North America and Europe. Today, only 5 species remain, usually in small and isolated pockets of threatened habitats. Without intensive efforts, some species of rhino could face extinction during the next ten years.



In the past, there were many different kinds of rhinos, including the Woolly Rhino, which was exterminated by humans during the last Ice Age. C.R. Knight, courtesy of American Museum of Natural History Library

The major reason for the drastic loss of rhinos worldwide is illegal hunting. Rhino horns have long been sought by various Asian cultures for their perceived - but scientifically unproven - medicinal value. In the Middle East, rhino horn is used for ornamental dagger handles, which are a cultural status symbol. Although rhinos are globally protected, the high black-market price for rhino products continues to entice impoverished people to engage in rhino poaching.

Habitat destruction particularly affects the Asian Rhinos. As the rainforests and swamp forests disappear due to uncontrolled logging, agriculture, mining and forest fires, the populations of Javan and Sumatran Rhinos, which depend on large undisturbed tracts of these habitats, become more vulnerable. Similarly, the loss of natural grasslands in south Asia and savannas in southern and eastern Africa has also greatly reduced available rhino habitats. Sadly, as rhino populations become increasingly isolated from each other, reproductive opportunities are reduced, further limiting their numbers.



Black Rhino
~3,100 surviving



White Rhino
~11,670 surviving



Indian Rhino
~2,400 surviving



Javan Rhino
~60 surviving



Sumatran Rhino
~300 surviving

IRF's Response

Protection of rhinos in the wild is the optimal way to conserve these species. IRF is working hard to stabilize and increase the number of rhinos surviving in the wild through a diversified strategy that includes intensive protection, international diplomacy, and support of breeding and research programs for rhinos in captivity. Through the IRF's integrated conservation presence around the globe, we are making progress in saving the remaining rhinos, but more help is needed.

White Rhino Programs




The Southern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simun simum*) is the most plentiful of all the rhino taxa, and the one currently receiving the greatest conservation protection, particularly in its stronghold in the many protected areas in South Africa. IRF continues to support Southern White Rhino projects to a modest degree, but concentrates primarily on the severely endangered Northern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simun cottoni*) in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the only location where this subspecies still exists. In this war-torn country, IRF support has been integral to maintaining rhinos in Garamba. In fact, the population of Northern White Rhinos in Garamba has remained at a stable 30 animals despite the recent years of turmoil. Moreover, the constant presence of guards protecting rhinos has also served to protect various other species (especially elephants) that share the Garamba ecosystem.



Aerial surveys and reconnaissance flights provide guards with valuable information for immediate and effective response to protect the Northern White Rhino in Garamba National Park.

As with all IRF projects, conservation work in Garamba is conducted in association with international organizations, government agencies, and concerned individuals. Major partners in Garamba now include the UNESCO World Heritage Center, the United Nations Foundation, the Frankfurt Zoological Society, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its African Elephant and Rhinoceros & Tiger Conservation Funds.

Current IRF conservation projects in Garamba include:

-  Providing financial support and training opportunities for guards who have continued to protect rhinos and other wildlife during recent years of crisis.
-  Supporting technical staff and furnishing equipment and supplies for rhino conservation efforts in the park.
-  Fund-raising and recruiting further financial support from international donors, individuals, and other partners.



The Northern White Rhino is critically endangered in contrast to the status of its relative, the Southern White Rhino, which is the most abundant of all rhino taxa known today.

Black Rhino Programs

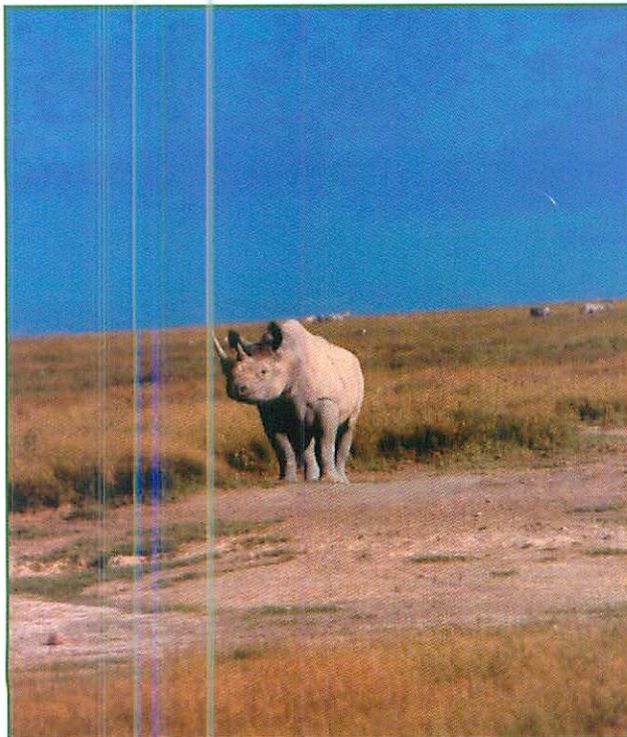
The conservation of Black Rhinos (*Diceros bicornis*) has always been a strong focus of IRF. In the late 1980s, the Black Rhino population in Zimbabwe was being heavily poached. In response to this crisis, a group of conservationists initiated the International Black Rhino Foundation, which later expanded to become the IRF. Through strong anti-poaching and related conservation activities in Zimbabwe, Black Rhino populations in Zimbabwe have recovered well. Nonetheless, Black Rhino populations are still under threat, and IRF continues to support conservation work with this species, including:



Black rhinos have a highly mobile pointed upper lip for browsing the foliage of a wide variety of shrubs and trees. These rhinos range in weight from 1,750 - 3,000 pounds.



In Zimbabwe, IRF has provided support over the years in the development and operation of Intensive Protection Zones (IPZs) where rhinos can be closely monitored and guarded from illegal hunters. Presently, IRF supports the use of a helicopter and personnel to translocate at-risk rhinos into more secure areas, and radio collars to monitor individual animals.



Not black at all, the Black Rhino probably derives its name as a distinction from the White Rhino (itself a misnomer) and/or from the dark-colored local soil covering its skin after wallowing.



In Tanzania, IRF provides support for the re-establishment and recovery of Black Rhinos in northern Tanzania. This work includes the development of sanctuaries that are enclosed with fences and extensively patrolled. Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary is the focus of these efforts, and eventually may provide a new home for captive born rhinos from the world's zoo population.

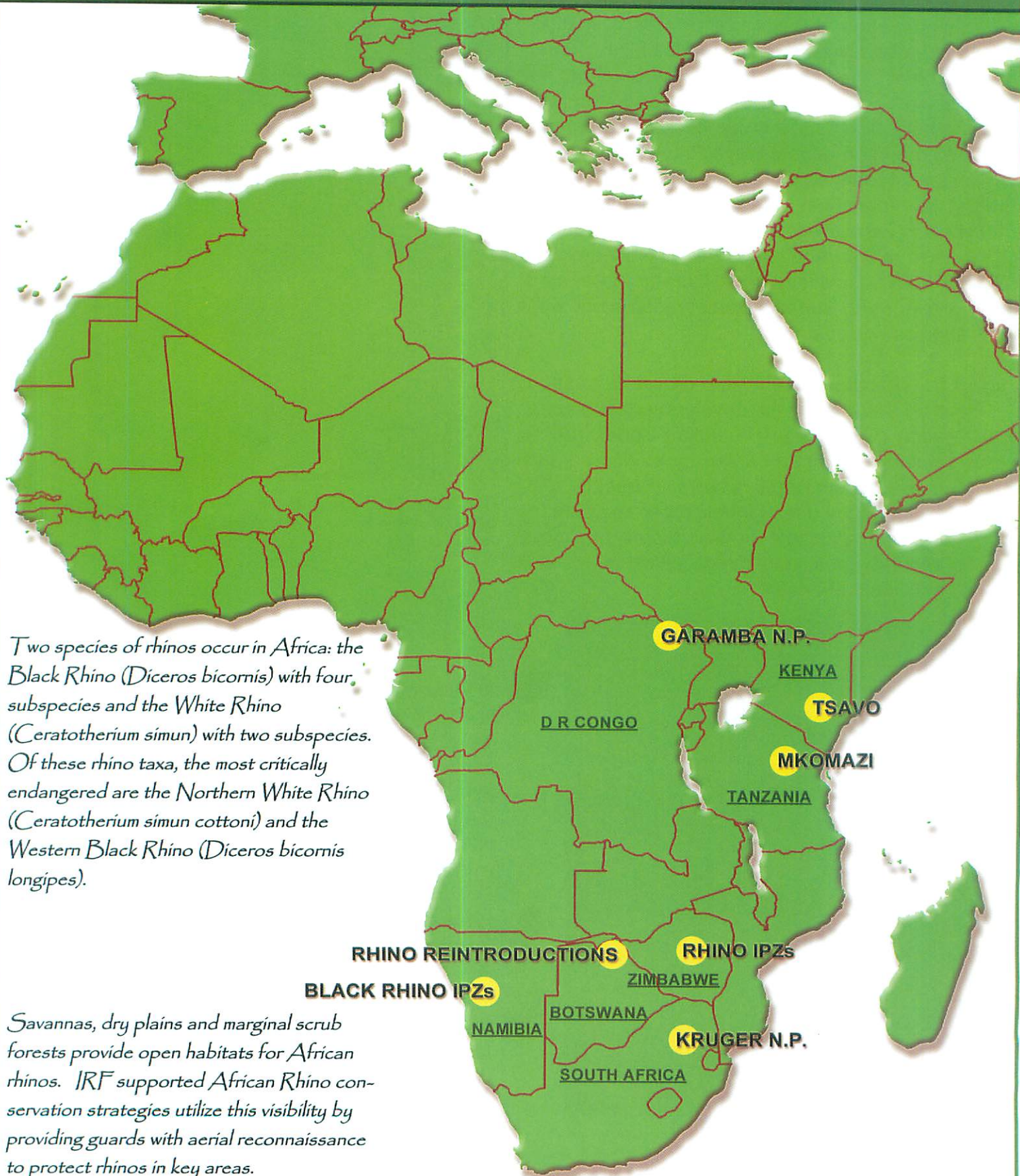


In Kenya, IRF provides support for Black Rhino programs at Ngulia in Tsavo East National Park.



Throughout the region, IRF is also assisting with projects which intend to move captive-born rhinos from the United States to Africa for introduction into IPZs and other sanctuaries.

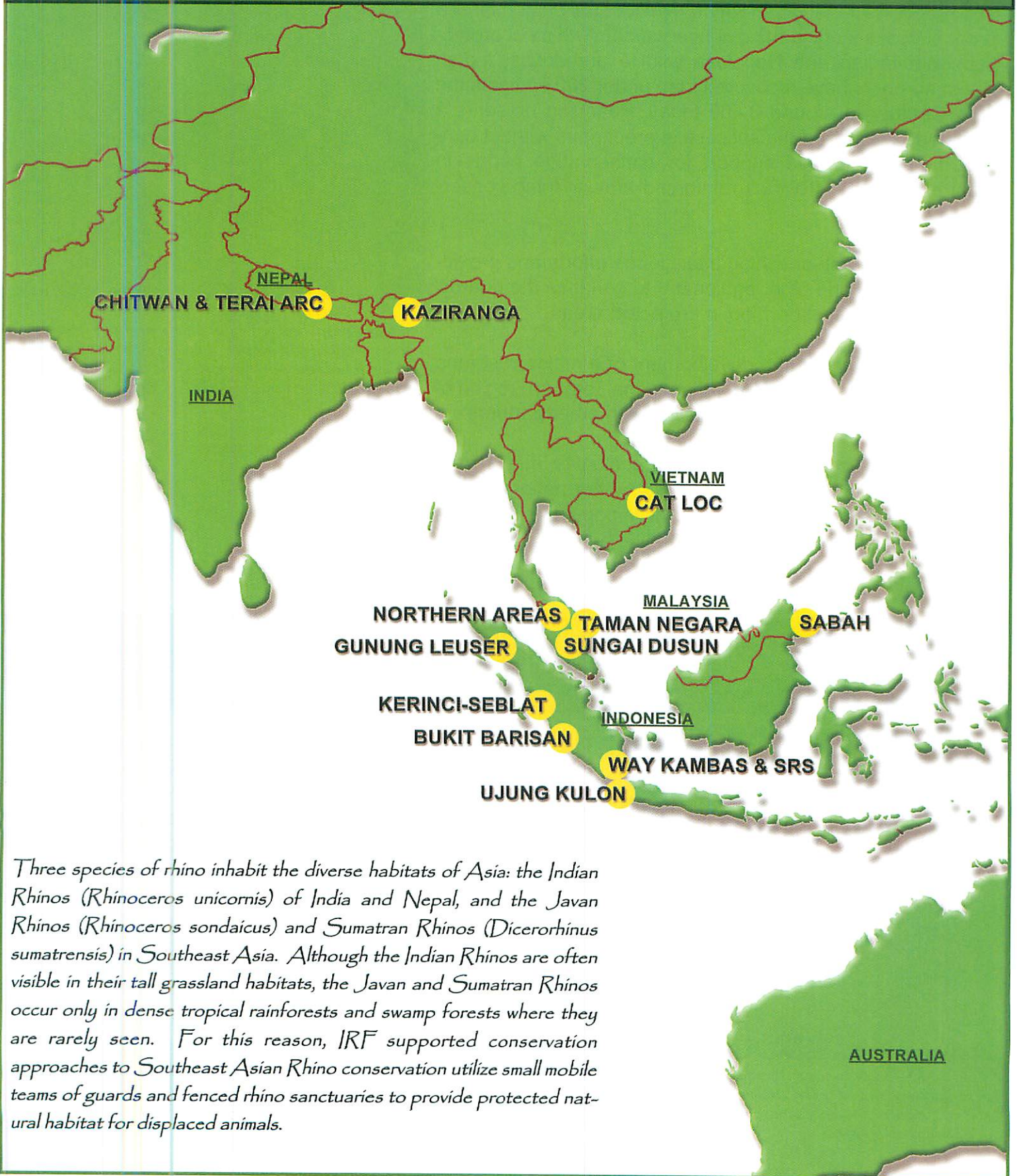
African Rhino Programs



Two species of rhinos occur in Africa: the Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) with four subspecies and the White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simon*) with two subspecies. Of these rhino taxa, the most critically endangered are the Northern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simon cottoni*) and the Western Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis longipes*).

Savannas, dry plains and marginal scrub forests provide open habitats for African rhinos. IRF supported African Rhino conservation strategies utilize this visibility by providing guards with aerial reconnaissance to protect rhinos in key areas.

Asian Rhino Programs






Three species of rhino inhabit the diverse habitats of Asia: the Indian Rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) of India and Nepal, and the Javan Rhinos (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) and Sumatran Rhinos (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) in Southeast Asia. Although the Indian Rhinos are often visible in their tall grassland habitats, the Javan and Sumatran Rhinos occur only in dense tropical rainforests and swamp forests where they are rarely seen. For this reason, IRF supported conservation approaches to Southeast Asian Rhino conservation utilize small mobile teams of guards and fenced rhino sanctuaries to provide protected natural habitat for displaced animals.

Indian Rhino Programs

The recovery of the Indian Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is a great success story in rhino conservation. With strict protection from Indian and Nepalese wildlife authorities, Indian Rhino numbers have recovered from under 200 earlier in the 20th Century to around 2,400 today. Poaching presents a continued threat and the success is precarious without continued and increased support for conservation efforts in India and Nepal. IRF has reinforced Indian Rhino conservation efforts by:



Indian Rhinos inhabit floodplains and tall grassland areas of India and Nepal. Mostly active at night, the Indian Rhino passes the heat of the day submerged in ponds, lakes, and mud wallows.

-  Funding anti-poaching intelligence efforts and providing GPS and other equipment to enhance the guards' ability to monitor rhino in protected areas.
-  Participating in the development of a major trust fund for Indian rhino conservation in the Terai Arc region of southern Nepal, in association with other partners.
-  Helping to develop plans to translocate rhinos from large source area populations to other national parks and protected areas where new populations can be established and protected.

Javan Rhino Programs



The 2,000 - 3,000 pound Javan Rhino is a native of lowland tropical forests. Individuals are usually solitary, except in the cases of a female with a dependent offspring.

The Javan Rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) is the rarest of the rhino species with fewer than 60 animals surviving in only two known locations: one in Indonesia and the other in Vietnam. Rhinos have been poached from these small populations in recent years and much more intensive protection is needed if this species is to survive.

The IRF works closely with the World Wildlife Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners to provide technical assistance and further support for the development and implementation of a conservation strategy for this rhino species. Much of the attention is now concentrated on the tiny remnant of the Javan Rhino subspecies that survives in Vietnam, which is presently under the most severe threat. Rhino Protection Units with IRF support are now in place in both Indonesia and Vietnam.

Sumatran Rhino Programs

Sumatran Rhinos (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) survive in the wild in a few isolated areas in Indonesia and Peninsular Malaysia, as well as in two zoos and three managed breeding centers. The estimated total remaining population is about 300 animals. Due to the dire threats confronting wild populations and the difficulties of breeding captive ones, conservation of Sumatran Rhinos has long been a cornerstone of IRF conservation activities.

Rhino Protection Units (RPUs)



Mobile teams comprised of four to six trained guards read signs indicating the presence of rhinos, identify and remove traps and snares, and apprehend any poachers that they may find in rhino areas.

IRF supports the operation of Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) of trained personnel in key wild areas in Indonesia and Peninsular Malaysia where Sumatran rhinos still exist. These RPUs are anti-poaching teams consisting of four to six guards that are trained to read the signs indicating the presence of rhinos, to identify and remove traps and snares, and to apprehend any poachers that they may find in rhino areas. IRF works with various partners including; World Wildlife Fund, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, AAZK Bowling For Rhinos Program and the Save the Tiger Fund that together supported 24 RPUs in Sumatra and 13 RPUs in Peninsular Malaysia. These trained field teams are working side by side with similarly focused Tiger Protection Units and Orangutan Protection Units to expand anti-poaching coverage in protected areas where these species coexist.

For the last decade, IRF has supported reproductive research and other collaborative efforts to ensure the propagation of the few Sumatran Rhinos in captivity as one strategy towards survival of this species. In addition to the two zoos that maintain Sumatran Rhinos, managed breeding centers in Way Kambas (Sumatra), Sepilok (Borneo) in Indonesia and Sungai Dusun in Peninsular Malaysia have now been established in a few natural areas within the species' current range. These centers maintain Sumatran Rhinos in large enclosures in natural forests where they are closely protected and managed for captive breeding. IRF has worked with governmental partners and provided funding and technical assistance crucial to the operation of these managed breeding areas. IRF has been the leader in coordinating these efforts into a global collaborative program. This collaboration has contributed greatly to the recent birth of a male calf at the Cincinnati Zoo.



The Sumatran Rhino is the most endangered of the rhino species because its numbers are low, the population is very fragmented, and poaching in this region is intense.

Research & Captive Management



An international team of reproductive specialists from US zoos and Bogor University assist veterinary staff from the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary to diagnose and treat a female Sumatran Rhino. IRF supports this research and the global captive breeding program for this very rare and endangered rhino species.



The birth of a healthy Sumatran Rhino calf in 2001 at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden was a historic event that could contribute to saving this endangered species. Photo by Dave Jenicke

Since its inception, IRF has provided support for applied research projects to enhance the health and viability of captive rhino populations and to increase their contribution to field conservation efforts. Projects are supported in areas related to the health, social structure, and reproduction of rhinos through a competitive grant program and through targeted technical assistance. Recent major efforts include:



Investigating causes and developing cures for various health problems affecting Black Rhinos in captivity.



Advancing the knowledge of the reproductive biology and relevant captive management of all rhino species, with a special focus on White and Sumatran Rhinos. Projects include:

- ~Facilitation of captive gene pool management (including importation of new genetic material from the wild) via artificial insemination.
- ~Identification and management of sex ratio skews towards males in Black Rhino.
- ~Development of high tech approaches to revitalize the captive Northern White Rhino program.

Beyond support for the applied research to enhance viability of captive populations, IRF provides many technical and coordinating services to the organized programs for management and propagation of rhinos in captivity.



IRF supports the maintenance of regional studbooks for all rhino species in North American zoos and also maintains the International Studbook for the Sumatran Rhino.



The IRF Program Office provides technical support for population management by the American Zoo Association's Species Survival Plans and Rhino Taxon Advisory Group and coordinates work with similar regional groups in Europe, Australia, and elsewhere.



IRF facilitates regional exchanges of rhinos to maximize the genetic diversity and demographic vitality of the global captive rhino population.

How You Can Help?

Rhinos need your help. Protecting rhinos from poachers, developing new technologies to help save them from extinction, and providing quality care, not only requires hard work and dedication, it's expensive. By supporting the global conservation work of the International Rhino Foundation, you can significantly contribute to preserving the earth's five remaining species of rhino within their natural habitats. There are a number of ways that you can get involved in IRF programs.

Contributors

Funding is critical to ensure the sustainability of rhino conservation programs worldwide. All contributions to IRF are tax deductible and 100% of your donation will be used for IRF rhino programs. With your donation, you can specify the species or program that you want to support. For more information on how to make a donation, check our website or call the IRF Program Office at 1-877-IRF-5392.

Adopt a Rhino

By adopting a rhino, your contribution will help save these animals for future generations. When you adopt a rhino, your family, class, team, or company will have the opportunity to become personally involved in the fight to save rhinos. You will also receive updates on the individual rhino that you adopt, and feel a closer connection with one member of this species.

Support a Guard

More funds are urgently needed to help train, equip, and recruit additional guards to protect the surviving five rhino species from poachers. Your contributions will help expand anti-poaching efforts in range countries where the conservation needs are the greatest.

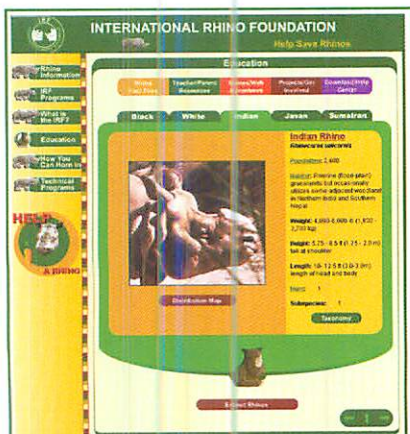
Rhino Rangers

Rhino Rangers is an innovative program for education, involvement, and empowerment of school children in rhino conservation. This program operates both in participating schools and via the IRF website.



IRF Website
www.rhinos-irf.org

Visit the IRF website for more details and continual updates on IRF programs and rhino conservation efforts. The website is also a wealth of general information on rhinos and provides links to many IRF partners.



IRF Partners



GILMAN INTERNATIONAL
CONSERVATION
WHITE OAK CONSERVATION
CENTER

Lee & Ramona Bass Foundation

UNITED NATIONS
FOUNDATION



PATRIMOINE MONDIAL
WORLD HERITAGE
PATRIMONIO MUNDIAL



RHINOCEROS & TIGER
CONSERVATION FUND



DALLAS ZOO



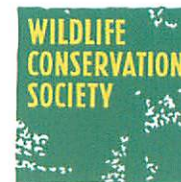
INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT
FOUNDATION



FRANKFURT ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



Brookfield Zoo
Chicago Zoological Society



SUMATRAN TIGER PROGRAM



AFRICA CONSERVATION
SCIENCE CENTERS



PEACE RIVER REFUGE



MALAYSIAN RHINO FOUNDATION

Indonesian Rhino Conservation Program

Brad & Susan Raffle

Ledder Family Charitable Trust

Tapeats Foundation



International Rhino Foundation

White Oak Conservation Center

3823 Owens Road
Yulee, Florida, 32097

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