



Overview of the International Rhino Foundation (IRF)

The International Rhino Foundation (IRF) is a conservation organization devoted exclusively to the conservation of all 5 species of rhinos. The IRF evolved in 1993 as an expansion of an earlier organization, the International Black Rhino Foundation.

Specifically, the mission of the International Rhino Foundation (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. IRF considers both in situ protection and ex situ propagation are integral, and ideally should be integrated and interactive, components of rhino conservation strategies. In terms of in situ programs, IRF has been concentrating on the most endangered species and subspecies: in Africa, northern white and black rhino; in Asia, Sumatran and Javan rhino.

Since 1995, IRF has been the primary supporter of guards for northern white rhino in Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo, the only place in the wild where this kind of rhino survives. IRF also initiated and continues as the largest funder, a major coordinator, and technical adviser for the anti-poaching teams for Sumatran rhino and also Javan rhino. In terms of ex situ programs, IRF provides technical, administrative, and financial services for the captive propagation programs for rhino in North America.

Indeed, the relationship between the IRF and the AZA Rhinoceros Taxon Advisory Group (Rhino TAG) and Species Survival Plan (SSP) Programs has been very close over the last decade. The IRF also facilitates the cooperation at the global level among the various regional captive propagation programs, e.g. exchanges of rhinos to improve demographic and genetic management. Arrangements for exchange of rhinos between wild and captive populations is also a significant IRF activity. The Foundation is a major catalyst for and funder of applied research programs directed toward improvement of rhino management and conservation. Currently, the focus is on research that will solve some of the health, husbandry, nutrition, and reproduction problems so that captive populations can achieve viability and truly become an integral part of the conservation strategy for rhinos. Currently, the IRF provides and/or recruits over \$1 million/year for rhino conservation.

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