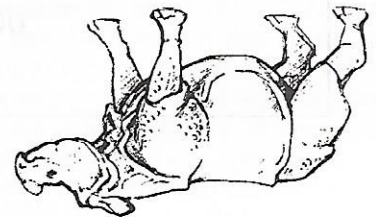


# Indian Approach to Rhino Conservation

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Rhinoceros was widely distributed in the Indo-Gangetic plains and Brahmaputra Valley centuries ago. During the time of Babar, the first Mughal emperor, it was stated to have extended from Burma in the east to Peshawar in the west all along the foothills and alluvial plains.

The conservation history has had a two pronged approach - one for conservation of habitat and other for conservation of species through legislation. The first act in this connection started in 1887 in Assam and the chronology is as below (main Acts only):

(i)	1887	Act for preservation of wild birds and animals.
(ii)	1891	Assam Forest Regulation.
(iii)	1912	Wild Birds and Animals Protection Act.
(iv)	1927	Indian Forest Act.
(v)	1932	The Bengal Rhino Preservation Act.
(vi)	1954	The Assam Rhino Conservation Act.
(vii)	1972	The Wildlife (Protection) Act followed by its main amendments in 1986 and 1991.

Habitat conservation started through the auspices of Indian Forest Act. In 1960 there were only 1% of land area under Protected Area Network (National Parks and Sanctuaries) with only about 50 Protected Areas in the country. Now we have nearly 500 numbers of Protected Area Network distributed over all Biogeographic Zones covering nearly 4.2% of land area of the country and 15% of the forest area.

Indian Action Plan for Rhino conservation include

- (i) Habitat protection and restoration.
- (ii) Creation of corridors for migration.
- (iii) Proper communication network.
- (iv) Anti-poaching squads and strike force.
- (v) Training of wildlife personnel.
- (vi) Arms training to protective staff.
- (vii) Research and monitoring.
- (viii) Eco-development works.
- (ix) Education and public awareness programme.
- (x) Relocation of enclaved villages through persuasion.
- (xi) Veterinary care.
- (xii) Translocation of animal for rehabilitation and captive breeding.
- (xiii) Development of intelligence network.
- (xiv) Reward for good work and case detection.

India is a member of CITES since 1976 and also signatory to various conventions and protocols on Environment and Wildlife Conservation.