

# NOW

## SKYCAST

Overhead this month  
in parts of the world

- ☾ February 25  
✦ The crescent moon and Venus—the sky's brightest planet—appear in proximity tonight.

In 2011 a replica horn was stolen from this rhino in England's Natural History Museum at Tring.



**Horn Heists** Until recently, stuffed rhinoceroses stood intact in Europe's museum halls, a heritage of hundred-year-old hunting expeditions. But then the black market value of rhino horns rose, fueled in part by Asian rumors that they cure cancer. Now, with horns said to be fetching as much per ounce as gold or cocaine, postmortem poachers are making the imperiled species an imperiled specimen as well.

In the first eight months of 2011 alone, thieves broke into multiple museums, an auction house, a zoo exhibit, and a Czech castle (map). In some cases they sawed off the horns; in others they made off with whole 200-pound mounted heads. Museums are being advised to hide their rhinos or install replicas. Christian Michel of Belgium's Liège University Aquarium-Muséum says a sign now informs visitors that the rhinoceros there is fake "due to human stupidity." —*Kelly Enright*

