



INTERNATIONAL  
**RHINO**  
FOUNDATION

ANNUAL  
**REPORT**  
**2019**

# 2019 HIGHLIGHTS



Javan rhino population **increased from 68 to 72** in Ujung Kulon National Park



5 Orphaned rhino calves **returned to the wild in Zimbabwe**



**Poaching losses decreased** to 3 in Assam, India in 2019



IRF helps launch **new marine patrol** in Java





## Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary Expansion Completed



## New monitoring technology tested in Africa



## 5 wildlife crime investigation trainings held in Assam, India



## Sumatran Rhino Rescue Plan surveys begin

# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

## *Together we persevere.*

As we write this letter, a global pandemic has impacted communities around the world, however, the need for the International Rhino Foundation's critical conservation mission continues. Staff at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) have undertaken safety protocols while providing the same excellent standard of care for rhinos. Monitoring and protection units are continuing their patrols safeguarding rhinos from poachers. Despite the challenges, our vital conservation work around the world goes on.

Rhinos face challenges every year and 2019 was no different. Poaching pressure intensified in certain areas of southern Africa. Sumatran rhino populations continued to be at risk. But working collaboratively with our allies, we also saw encouraging results. Strict protection and partnership in India resulted in a decline in poaching losses. The fragile Javan rhino population increased.

Perseverance is a key attribute of the International Rhino Foundation, along with our commitment to sound decision making and dedication to collaboration. Our work rests on a foundation of science.

IRF takes the approach of maximizing options and minimizing regrets, tackling the challenges facing rhinos using multi-faceted strategies. There is more work than can be accomplished in an individual lifetime, but by working together with our partners we can achieve our goal of ensuring all five rhino species survive for future generations.

That's why we call ourselves Team Rhino and we will continue to collaborate with our partners worldwide through this pandemic and until such time as rhino populations are thriving everywhere. On behalf of the board of directors and staff, thank you for supporting the International Rhino Foundation and we wish you and your family continued health.



**JOHN LUKAS**  
*President*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Lukas".



**NINA FASCIONE**  
*Executive Director*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nina Fascione".

# INTERNATIONAL RHINO FOUNDATION

Throughout our 29-year history, we have funded and operated rhino conservation programs throughout Africa and Asia.

**OUR VISION** is a world where rhinos thrive in the wild.

**OUR MISSION** is to ensure the survival of rhinos through strategic partnerships, targeted protection, and scientifically sound interventions.

**OUR CORE VALUES** are at the heart of everything we do.

## integrity

We foster honest, ethical, and trusting relationships with partners, staff, the public, and board members.

## collaboration

We partner with individuals and organizations who share our commitment to saving rhinos.

## adaptability

We resourcefully and innovatively apply expertise and funds in a changing landscape for rhino conservation.

## sound decision-making

We make decisions based on science, political realities, and available resources.

## commitment

We are dedicated to making long-term tactical investments in key partners to conserve rhinos.

# STATE OF THE RHINO



## **JAVAN RHINO** *Rhinoceros sondaicus*

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED -72; POPULATION STABLE**

Javan rhinos exist only in Indonesia's Ujung Kulon National Park where they are safeguarded by Rhino Protection Units. IRF's program of controlling the growth of the ubiquitous and dominant Arenga palm has increased available habitat. The population increased from 68 to 72 in 2019.



## **SUMATRAN RHINO** *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED < 80; POPULATION DECREASING**

There are fewer than 80 Sumatran rhinos in three small populations on Sumatra in Bukit Barisan Selatan, Gunung Leuser, and Way Kambas National Parks, plus a handful of animals in central Kalimantan. Priorities for the species include continued protection as well as capturing and translocating animals to conservation breeding facilities including the newly expanded Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary in Way Kambas.



## **GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINO** *Rhinoceros unicornis*

**VULNERABLE ~3,588; POPULATION INCREASING**

Strict protection and conservation measures have led to an increase to more than 3,600 greater one-horned rhinos in India and Nepal, from fewer than 200 in 1921. The majority of the population resides in Kaziranga, Manas, and Orang National Parks, and the Pabitora Wildlife Reserve in Assam. Poaching losses decreased to only 3 deaths in 2019. Overcrowding, invasive species, and poaching remain threats.



## **BLACK RHINO** *Diceros bicornis*

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED 5,366 - 5,627; POPULATION STABLE**

The black rhino, which is found primarily in southern and east Africa, is slowly coming back from horrendous losses. By 1993, fewer than 2,300 rhinos remained from populations of more than 65,000 in the 1970s. Today, black rhino numbers are increasing slightly, but poaching remains the largest threat. The majority of the population is in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya and Zimbabwe.



## **WHITE RHINO** *Ceratotherium simum*

**NEAR THREATENED 17,212 - 18,915; POPULATION DECREASING**

Over the past two years, the white rhino population has been declining after ten years of increases. South Africa holds more than 90% of the population, with other significant populations in Namibia, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. It is critical that range countries intensify protection and enforce their wildlife crime laws.

# WHERE WE WORK

More than 84% of IRF's funds go directly to local partners who implement rhino conservation programs in India, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, and Southern Africa.



IRF focuses program support in six key areas:

PROTECTION

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

CONSERVATION BREEDING

RESEARCH

HABITAT RESTORATION

DEMAND REDUCTION

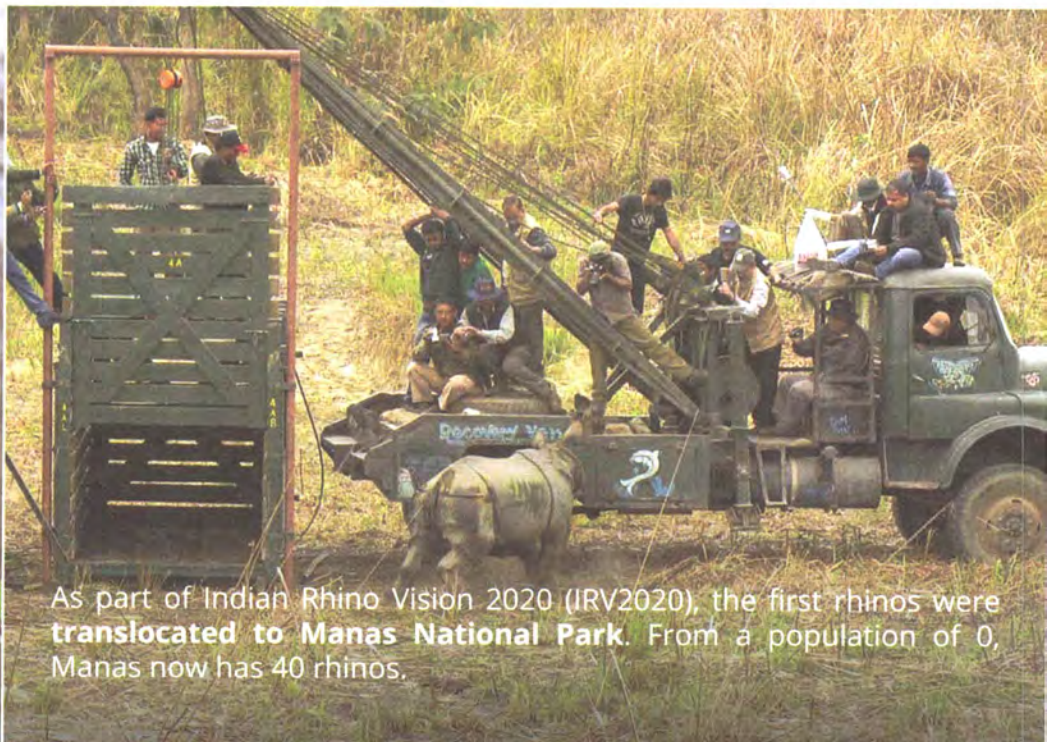
# TRIBUTE TO DR. SUSIE ELLIS

Dr. Susie Ellis retired as IRF's Executive Director after 13 years of dedicated and passionate service. Her achievements in wildlife conservation are numerous and significant. Through Dr. Ellis' leadership, the organization expanded its global reach and programs, working with all five rhino species in Africa and Asia.

In 2019, Dr. Ellis was honored as the 2019 Ulysses S. Seal Award Winner for Innovation in Conservation. **Here are just some of the many highlights during her tenure:**



In 2018, IRF co-founded the **Sumatran Rhino Rescue project** with other global partners to help further efforts to save this endangered species.



As part of Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV2020), the first rhinos were **translocated to Manas National Park**. From a population of 0, Manas now has 40 rhinos.

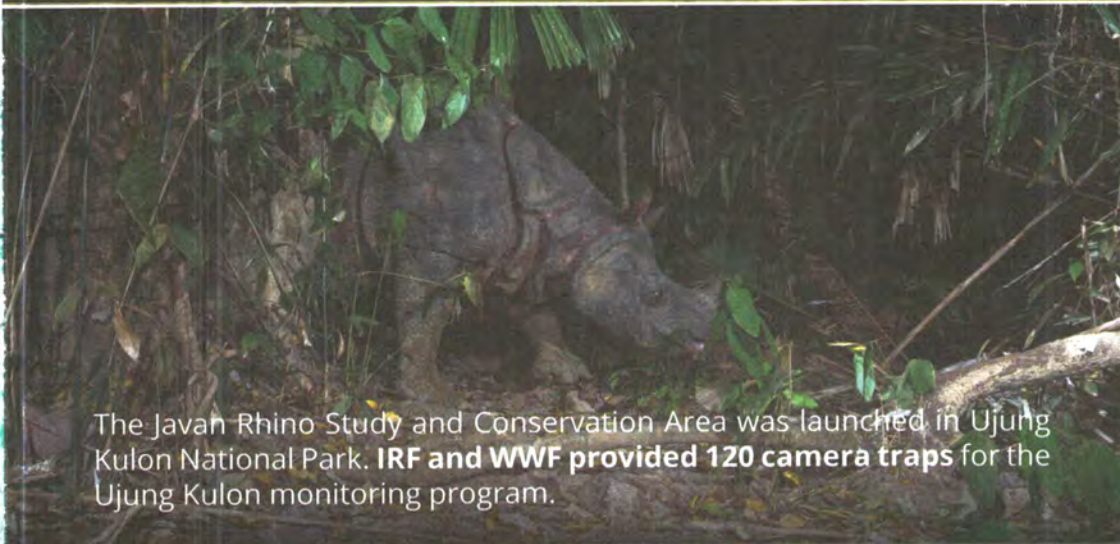




The Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) had two births, Andatu and Delilah.



Supporting scientific solutions, IRF has invested more than \$1 million in research grants to support rhino conservation.



The Javan Rhino Study and Conservation Area was launched in Ujung Kulon National Park. IRF and WWF provided 120 camera traps for the Ujung Kulon monitoring program.



We launched **OPERATION: Stop Poaching Now** to support anti-poaching teams on the ground in South Africa.



We created a universal brand - **Team Rhino**, to ensure that everyone could play a role in supporting rhino conservation.



**Yayasan Badak Indonesia (YABI)**, which translates to the Indonesian Rhino Foundation, was formed.

*Thank you Susie!*

# OUR PROGRAMS

## GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINOS success is the result of collaboration

*From fewer than 100 to more than 3,600 rhinos today in India and Nepal*

Every year, during the last three months of the year, there used to be fear. Fear of losing rhinos during the winter months. As the water level in the Brahmaputra River lowers, the wild animals begin traversing the river in search of food, raising the risk of poaching.

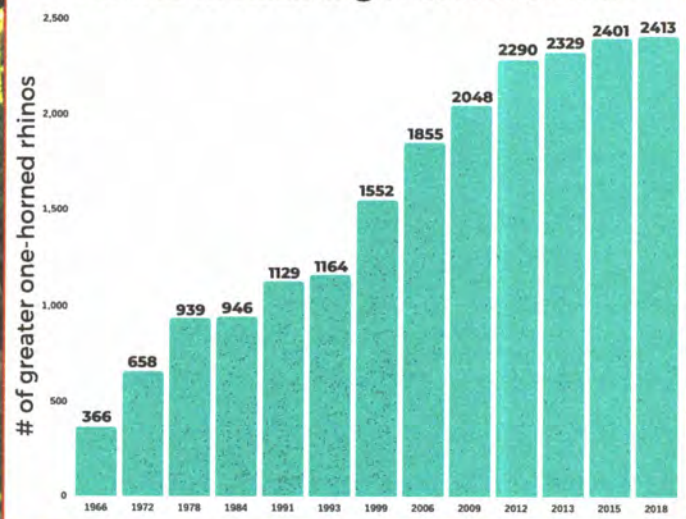
But not this year. Coordination by national park staff with local and national police forces intensified the fight against wildlife criminals in Assam, India, home to the majority of the world's greater one-horned rhino population. Forty-eight arrests were made in 2019.

Forestry authorities in Kaziranga National Park in Assam, India were excited to report a significant reduction in poaching. In 2014, 27 animals were lost to poaching. In 2019, officials reported that just 3 rhinos were poached.

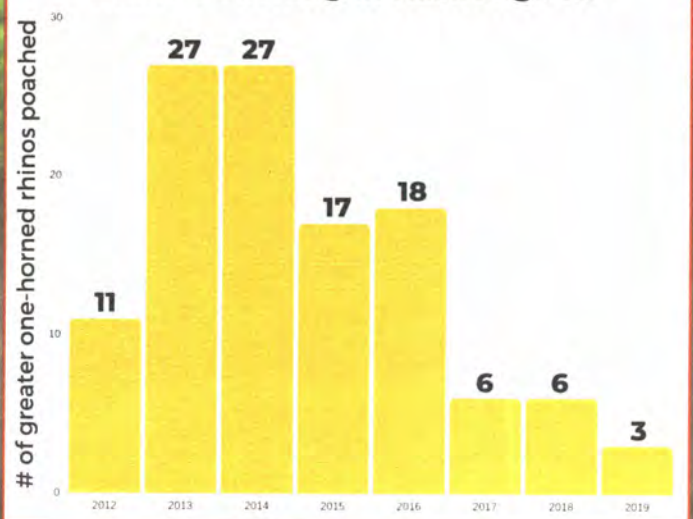
To continue to increase success in wildlife crime prosecutions, Rahul Dutta, IRF's intelligence specialist, created an intensive three-day training program for park personnel tasked with combating poachers. The training covers everything from forensics at a crime scene, proper handling of evidence from the field to the lab and interrogation techniques, as well as how to give testimony and judicial procedures.

**Collaboration in combating wildlife crime ensures protection for greater one-horned rhinos for the future.**

### Rhinos in Kaziranga National Park



### Rhino Poaching in Kaziranga NP



## SUMATRAN RHINOS

### last chance to save sumatran rhinos

*Three-year emergency plan to secure the remaining rhinos and develop the infrastructure to care for and grow their population.*

In October 2019, IRF and Yayasan Badak Indonesia (YABI) cut the ribbon on the expansion of the Way Kambas Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) in Indonesia. The expansion of this sanctuary will provide a home for more rescued rhinos and support the Indonesian government’s national breeding program to help the species survive for generations to come.

The SRS expansion is integral in the work to save the Sumatran rhino and is step three of the emergency action plan developed under the guidance of the Indonesian government. A coalition of international conservation organizations, including IRF, has launched the Sumatran Rhino Rescue Alliance, a multi-faceted, multi-year effort to survey, translocate, breed and ultimately return rhinos to the wild to protected, sustainable habitats.



## OUR PLAN TO SAVE THE SUMATRAN RHINO



STEP 1



Survey and capture isolated wild rhinos

STEP 2



Translocate to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary

STEP 3



Breed rhinos to increase population

STEP 4



Return rhinos back to secure protected areas

STRENGTHEN PROTECTION IN WILD RHINO HABITAT

# JAVAN RHINOS

progress through adaptability

## *Population grows from 68 to 72 with 4 new calves*

There has been no reported poaching in Ujung Kulon National Park (UKNP) in more than 20 years, where the last population of Javan rhinos are protected by Rhino Protection Units (RPU). That did not deter UKNP staff from considering future threats. They estimate that around 50% of people committing illegal activities in the park are now entering from the coast, pulling up on the same beaches that rhinos also frequent.

The need for a marine patrol unit was clear to continue the success of the terrestrial RPUs in protecting rhinos. In October 2019, a boat builder in Sumatra delivered the finished marine patrol boat and a smaller pursuit boat. Two new marine RPUs, funded by IRF, were recruited from the local area and trained. The new units launched their patrols at the beginning of 2020.



In addition to continued protection, habitat management is critical to the success of the Javan rhino. Arenga palm is a fast growing, dominant plant species that naturally occurs in UKNP, but it chokes out other native plant species, including Javan rhinos' favored food plants. The Arenga palm removal program has been successful in increasing viable Javan rhino habitat, allowing for wider movement of the population, encouraged by the growth of more food plants.

The program, begun in 2011, utilizes local workers to manually control the Arenga palm using basic equipment including chain and hand saws, shovels, hoes, and pruning shears. The Javan rhino's preferred food plants regenerate naturally, and quickly, in the removal areas, attracting rhinos.

## *Surrounding Area Recovers from Tsunami*

The area was the site of a devastating tsunami that hit the west coast of Java in Indonesia on December 22, 2018, which was triggered by an underwater landslide set off from an eruption of the volcano known as Anak Krakatau. The coastline of UKNP consists of primarily mangrove plants, which act as a natural buffer to storm surges and extreme weather, and no Javan rhinos perished.

However, surrounding communities did see severe damage as a result of the storm surge. In 2019, IRF made emergency community grants to help rebuild, including the reconstruction of a jetty that was destroyed. RPU members reside with their families in these communities. IRF is thankful that no staff was hurt and assisted a member in rebuilding a home lost to the storm.



# BLACK & WHITE RHINOS

## responding to poaching pressures in zimbabwe

Over 50 rhinos were killed by poachers in Buby Valley Conservancy (BVC) in early 2019. This heavy poaching pressure resulted in population declines for both black and white rhino populations there. Responding to the increased threat, Buby Valley Conservancy dramatically increased its anti-poaching efforts. At the same time IRF's partner, Lowveld Rhino Trust (LRT), also stepped-up rhino monitoring efforts. Continued vigilant monitoring and protection activities remain in place with the hope that the rhino populations can recover their losses.

Regular rhino operations are important to rhino population health as well. IRF's local partner in Zimbabwe, LRT immobilized 81 black and white rhinos in BVC for various medical and conservation

purposes; 29 were ear-notched for identification, 50 were dehorned to reduce poaching incentive, 21 were fitted with horn transmitters, and 20 were translocated to "safer" areas during the year. Six rhinos were also treated for poaching-related injuries.

African rhinos can benefit from greater collaboration to combat poaching across borders. LRT is working with TRAFFIC, a leading nonprofit organization combating illegal wildlife trade, to manage wildlife crime data. LRT also met with the Acting Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe to discuss joint Chinese-Zimbabwean investigations of wildlife crime syndicates. Partnerships like these will provide long term solutions to protecting white and black rhinos in Zimbabwe.





## equipping and supporting rangers in south africa

Working under constant pressure can take its toll on rangers, the frontline of protection for rhinos in South Africa. For many rangers, this war has been relentless, requiring the skills of a battle-honed soldier. Compounding the challenges faced in the field, family life is put on the back burner, resulting in a breakdown of family relationships. Rangers and their families are often isolated within the communities they live, which also harbor poachers. Rangers often face death threats and their families are threatened.

StopRhinoPoaching.com (SRP), IRF's partner in South Africa, has developed relationships and trust amongst the ranger units and developed Project Embrace. Focusing on the psychological well-being of rangers in Kruger National Park, the project was developed in partnership with the Game Rangers Association-initiated Ranger Wellbeing Project. The wellness program works directly with rangers and their families, tailoring support to their needs.

In addition to supporting the mental health needs of the teams, SRP also works to instill confidence in rangers

by equipping them with what they need to survive and thrive in their protection roles. Items like first aid kits that we take for granted are sometimes in short supply and essential for rangers health.

New technology is also under testing to provide rangers with the latest advancements in wildlife crime monitoring and apprehension.



# DEMAND REDUCTION & POLICY



## CITES 18TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Spirited and sometimes heated discussions were held in August, 2019 at the 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES. Representatives from nearly every country gathered in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss trade issues pertaining to rhinos and many other species of animals and plants. Significant attention was also paid to discussions on combating wildlife crime.

Global cooperation is essential for monitoring and regulating trade for critically endangered species. Illegal wildlife trade involves multiple countries and enforcing laws across shared borders. The US, the UK, and a number of other countries have elevated wildlife crime to the same level as terrorism and other high-profile international crimes.

There are 183 country signatories, or Parties, to CITES, with the ability to vote on proposals. The CoP convenes every 3 years, and includes the signatory countries as well as non-voting observers, including IRF and other wildlife conservation organizations.

### THREE RHINO PROPOSALS WERE BROUGHT FORTH TO THE PARTIES:

1. By Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) to allow the country unrestricted international commercial trade in its specimens of white rhino, their horn and products. The Parties rejected the proposal;
2. By Namibia to allow the country to conduct live trade in southern white rhinos to appropriate destinations. The proposal was rejected;
3. And by South Africa to allow it to change its trophy hunting system for black rhinos, requesting the hunting quota be increased from five adult males to a total number of adult males not exceeding 0.5% of its total black rhino population. The Parties approved the proposal, with amendments.

**IRF will continue work to ensure that governments are held accountable for their commitments as CITES signatories and enforce wildlife crime laws.**



## SOCIAL MEDIA LEADS TO ARRESTS IN VIETNAM

Wildlife traders have turned to social media to attract customers for their illegal products like rhino horn, leading to a rise in Internet crime in Vietnam. But wildlife crime investigators can use the same methods to catch them. Education for Nature - Vietnam (ENV), IRF's partner for demand reduction in Vietnam, works to find rhino horn ads on social media and shut them down.

ENV recruits volunteers to log any active violations that are found. If the violation is over one year old, ENV partners with Facebook to remove the link and suspend the user's account. However, if the violation is recent, an investigative team involves the police to arrange a meeting with the seller in an operation to seize the illegal goods and arrest the suspected trader.

In the second half of 2019, ENV operations led to 22 internet crime cases on websites, Facebook, YouTube, and Zalo - a Vietnamese social media platform. To date, 11 of these cases have resulted in successful outcomes, including prison time for the offender.

These modern day sleuthing techniques as well as collaboration on wildlife crime with other countries resulted in an additional five cases of rhino horn trading and smuggling prosecutions in 2019 outside of Vietnam.



# OUR DONORS

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\$100,000 +

AAZK-Bowling for Rhinos  
Anonymous  
Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund  
Lee and Ramona Bass Foundation  
Daniel Maltz  
Oak Foundation  
US Fish and Wildlife Service

## DEFENDERS

\$25,000 - \$99,999

Anna Merz Rhino Trust  
Bama Green Conservation Fund  
Columbus Zoological Park Association  
Facebook  
Global Wildlife Conservation  
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Nashville Zoo  
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Save the Rhino International  
Taronga Conservation Society Australia  
Wilhelma Zoo  
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## PROTECTORS

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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Fort Worth Zoological Association  
Fossil Rim Wildlife Center  
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Tulsa Zoo Management, Inc.  
Zoo Cerza  
ZooTampa at Lowry Park Zoo

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\$1,000 - \$4,999

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Abilene Zoological Gardens  
African Lion Safari and Game Farm Ltd.  
Amazon Smile Foundation  
Anela Kolohe Foundation  
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Beast Relief Committee at PS 107 John W. Kimball  
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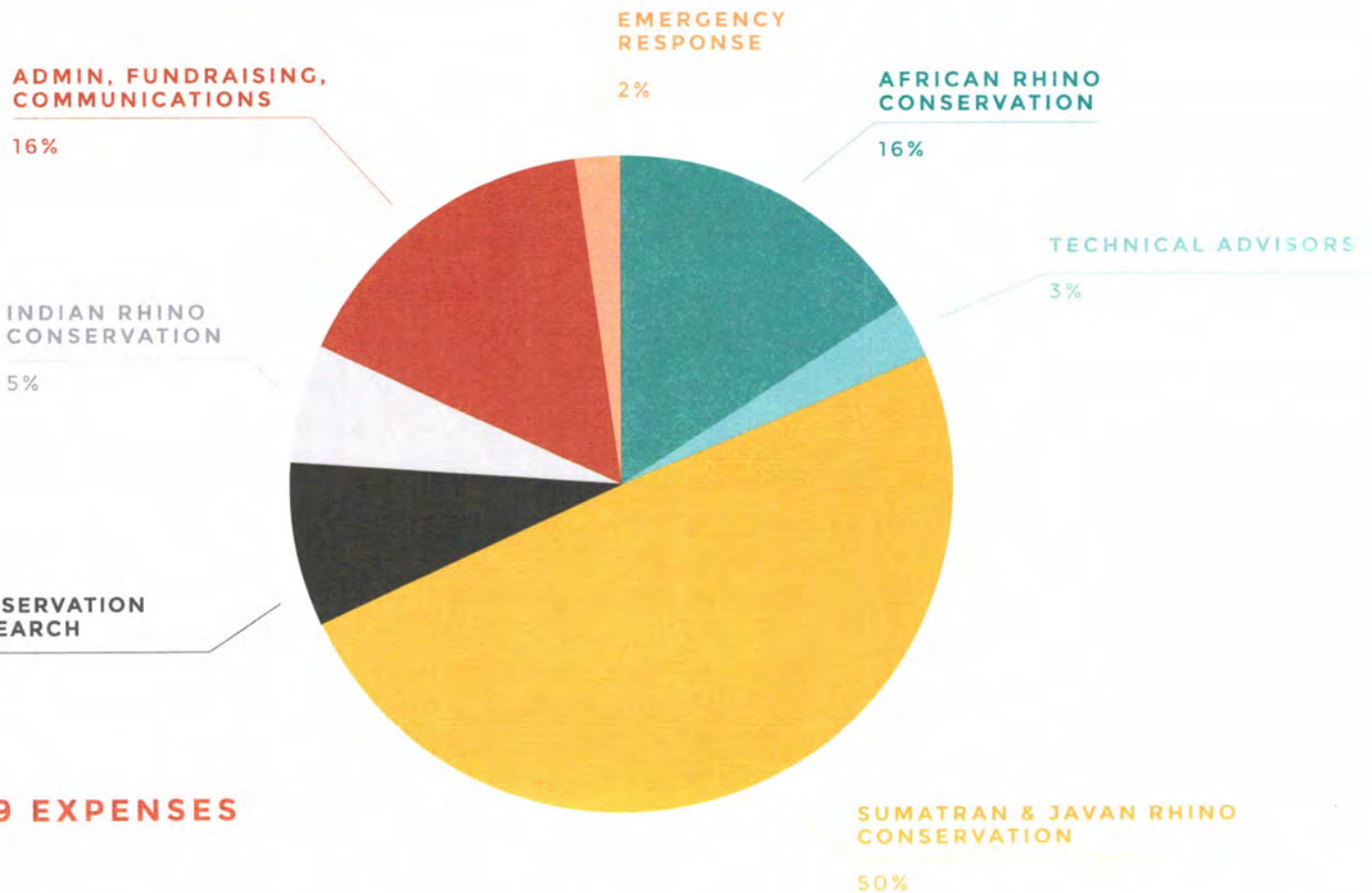
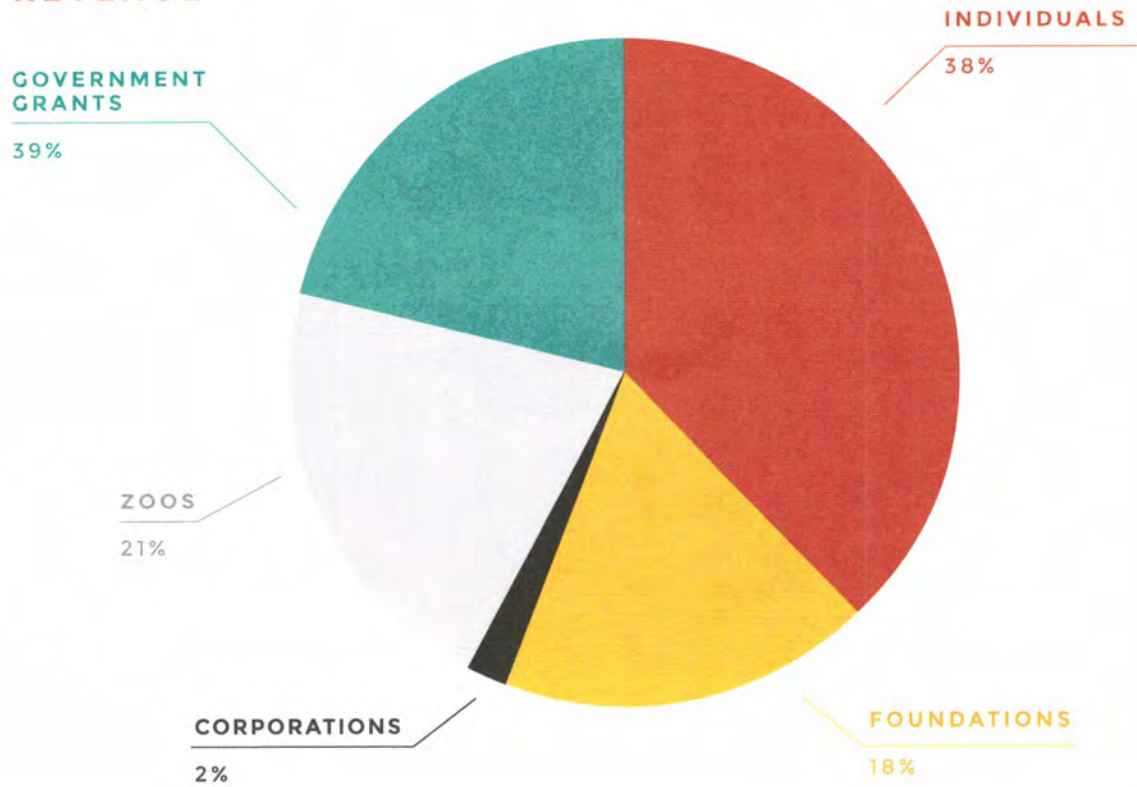
## 2019 REVENUE

INDIVIDUALS	\$ 1,371,215
FOUNDATIONS	\$663,793
CORPORATIONS	\$67,399
ZOOS	\$751,297
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	\$738,698
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>\$3,592,402</b>
MERCHANDISE SALES, NET	\$9,253
INTEREST INCOME	\$79,828
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$3,681,483</b>

## 2019 EXPENSES

<b>AFRICAN RHINO CONSERVATION</b>	<b>\$568,691</b>
ZIMBABWE BLACK RHINO CONSERVATION	\$302,774
ZIMBABWE BLACK RHINO SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$128,517
SOUTHERN BLACK RHINO SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM OPERATION: STOP POACHING NOW	\$7,500
	\$129,900
<b>INDIAN RHINO CONSERVATION</b>	<b>\$196,855</b>
INDIAN RHINO CONSERVATION	\$196,855
<b>SUMATRAN &amp; JAVAN RHINO CONSERVATION</b>	<b>\$1,801,614</b>
SUMATRAN RHINO CONSERVATION	\$1,311,771
JAVAN RHINO CONSERVATION	\$489,843
<b>CONSERVATION RESEARCH</b>	<b>\$270,996</b>
TECHNICAL ADVISORS	\$93,991
EMERGENCY RESPONSE	\$66,858
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,999,005</b>
ADMINISTRATION	\$250,875
FUNDRAISING	\$207,104
COMMUNICATIONS	\$123,565
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,580,549</b>

## 2019 REVENUE



## 2019 EXPENSES

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current as of printing

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*Former board member and founder of the Marwell Zoo, John Knowles passed away in 2019. John dedicated his life to saving endangered species and left a legacy in conservation.*

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