

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

# World

NOVEMBER 1976

Rhinos  
Caving  
Ice Age  
Circus





# Rhinos in danger

THE INDIAN RHINOCEROS looks like a horned dinosaur. It has thick, folded skin, like armor. A sharp horn juts from its forehead. When fully grown, it may stand six feet high and measure 14 feet long.

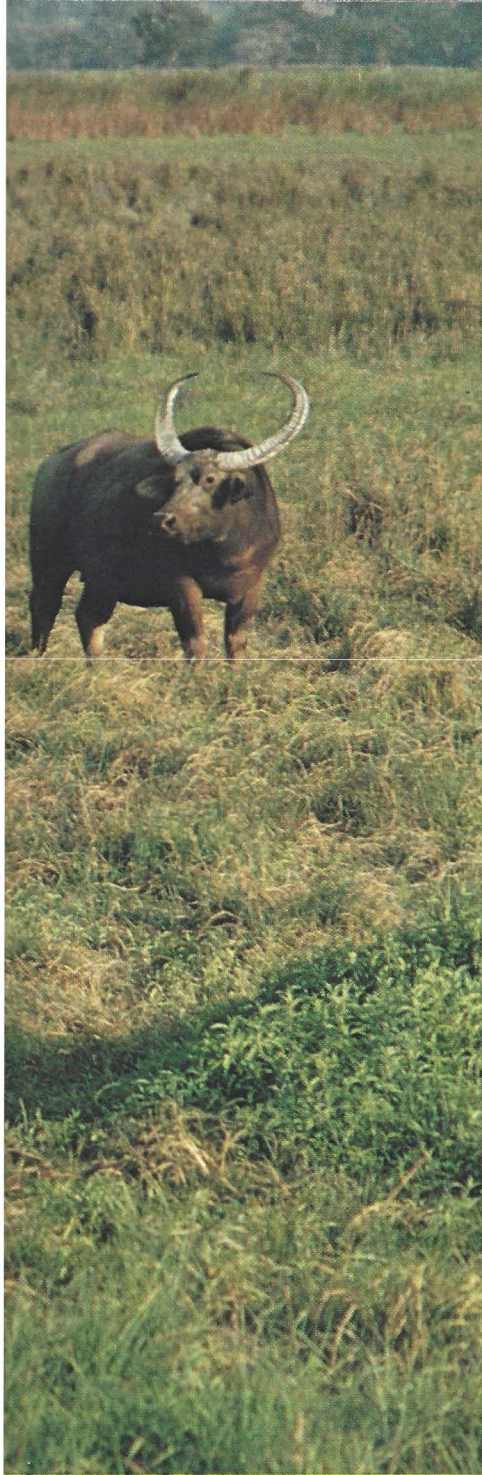
In prehistoric times, these huge animals roamed over large areas in Asia. But as the human population

grew, Indian rhinos retreated. Today, fewer than a thousand survive in the wild. They live in small areas of India and its neighboring country, Nepal. There, they must compete for food and space with people, farms, and farm animals.

To protect the rhinos, the governments of India and Nepal have set up

national parks. But animals can't tell where parks end and farms begin. The farmers' cattle wander into the parks. They eat the grass rhinos need. Rhinos roam across the farmers' fields. They trample and eat crops. Fences don't help much. A two-ton rhino can easily walk through most fences.

Some hunters ignore park borders,



INDIAN RHINOCEROS grazes among water buffalo (left). The animals live in a national park in India. Young visitors at left ride an elephant around the park. Because Indian rhinos often live in swampy areas, elephants provide a good way of getting around where cars might get stuck. This rhino—an old male—ignores the visitors. Most rhinos won't let elephants or humans come this close. Young males or females with calves will charge or run away.

WALLOWING IN WATER helps rhinos keep cool on a hot day (above). Mud from the bottom of the water hole coats their hides and helps protect them from biting insects. Rhinos usually graze alone, but they often come together at water holes.

HEAD DOWN, a rhino feeds on waterweeds (below). Birds called mynahs ride on the rhino's back. Mynahs often pick insects from the hides of these animals.

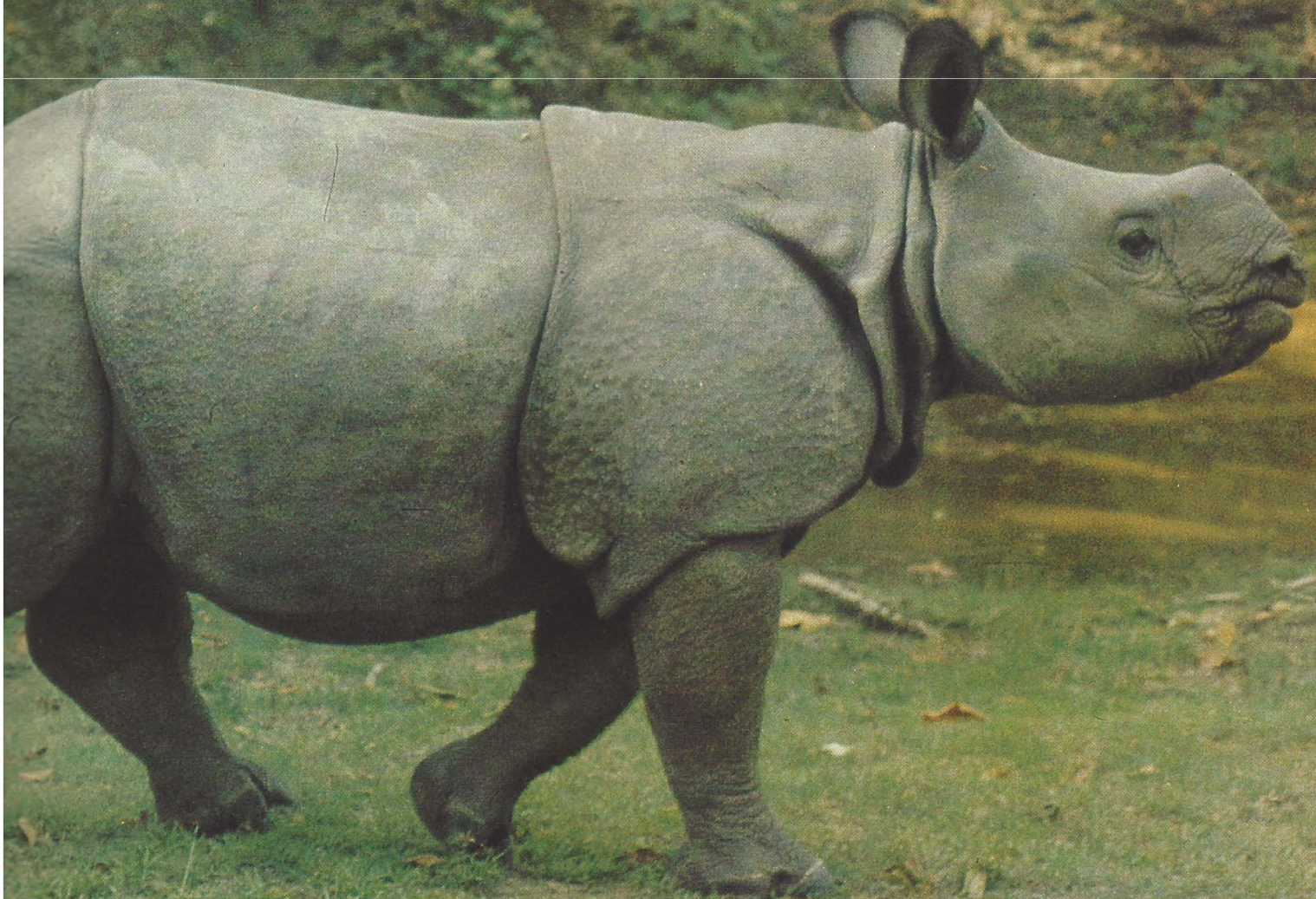


too. They want the rhinos' horns. Many people believe powder made from these horns has healing powers. They pay as much as \$900 a pound for it. Killing rhinos for their horns is against the law in India and Nepal. But some people still hide out from park patrols and shoot the rhinos.

In spite of these problems, the Indian rhinoceros is holding its own. In some areas, the rhino population is even growing. As conservationists continue to study this shy animal, they hope to find new ways to help it survive in the crowded, modern world.



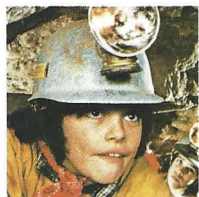
*Sensing danger, a baby Indian rhino turns to run away. Its mother faces the threat—a photographer hiding in a blind about eight feet away. Seconds later, the mother and her calf trotted off. The calf, about six months old, will stay near its mother for two or three years. The mother will drive it away when another calf is born. A bump on the calf's head shows where its horn is beginning to form.*



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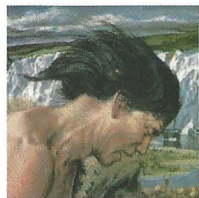
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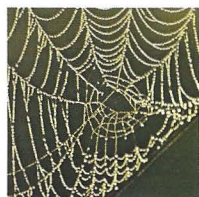
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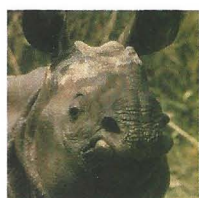
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**COVER:** An Indian rhinoceros stands in a water hole after a cooling wallow. Only about a thousand rhinos like this one survive today. Read about these rare, one-horned relatives of African rhinos on pages 4-7.

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ANSWERS TO WHAT IN THE WORLD...? (See back cover.) Top row, left to right: cheetah, Appaloosa horse, bobcat. Middle row, left to right: harbor seal, baby deer (fawn), snow leopard. Bottom row, left to right: jaguar, ground squirrel, giraffe.

## THE MAILBAG

**DEAR WORLD:** Two of us made your "solar system" in the June issue. We decided that we would make a sun in the same scale as the planets.

First we found the diameter of the sun by looking in an encyclopedia. The sun's diameter is 869,000 miles. We then divided the earth's diameter into that and came up with 109.6. The cardboard earth in your issue measures about half an inch. We multiplied 109.6 by one-half and got 54.8 inches. That was the diameter of our sun. We cut it out of paper and hung it up on the wall with the planets.

John Allee and Erik Mandl, Scarsdale, New York

**DEAR WORLD:** I bet you can't say these tongue twisters five times *fast*: (1) This is a zither. (2) Unique New York. (3) Illuminate aluminum linoleum.

Jack Martin, Tucson, Arizona

**DEAR WORLD:** We went to a wild animal sanctuary. We saw wild elephants, a bison, and deer. But the best part was when we saw a wild, half-grown male elephant being taught how to eat from a man's hands. The wild elephant had followed the camp elephants and refused to leave. He ate about 11 balls of rice the size of watermelons!

Sonali Bhatia, Bombay, India

**DEAR WORLD:** I would like to read about the circus. I was in a small one myself. Would you put in an article about the circus, please?

Jackie Murray, Hanover Park, Illinois

*We have a story about young circus performers in this issue. We hope you will enjoy it.*

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