

WHITE RHINOCEROS

Ceratotherium simum
Burchell, 1817

The largest of the five rhino species. Is said to have got its name from a mistranslation of the Dutch “wijd” or wide, describing the shape of its upper lip.

CHARACTERISTICS

Unlike the Asian species, white rhinos are poor swimmers and can drown if they lose their footing in deep water.



Rhino grazing lawns affect the fire regime, since they do not carry enough dry grass biomass to burn.

CONSERVATION

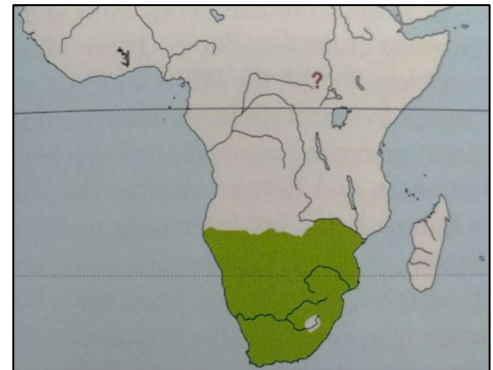
Cites appendix I in most countries in its range, and on Appendix II in South Africa and Swaziland.

The white rhinoceros consist of two subspecies: the southern white rhinoceros (near threatened) and the northern white rhinoceros (apparently extinct in the wild).



NEAR THREATENED

DISTRIBUTION



BEHAVIOUR AND POACHING

Communication: Rhinos have acute senses of hearing and smell and relatively poor eyesight. They use urine and faeces when communicating with others of their own species.

Combats: Most encounters between territorial White Rhinoceros Bulls are highly ritualized: Bulls meeting at their common border repeatedly advance towards one another with raised heads, touch horns, then retreat to wipe the forward horn on the ground. This fights can end in serious injury or death. If the incumbent male loses but survives, he may move to an adjoining territory or be allowed to occupy a small area of his old territory, but will cease urine marking and dung scattering behaviours.

Poaching: Almost all the rhino horn sourced from Africa is sold to countries in East and south-East Asia for use in traditional medicine and to Yemen for making “jambiya” (traditional dagger) handles.

