



# AWF RHINO CONSERVATION FACT SHEET

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**AWF Mission:** African Wildlife Foundation's mission is to ensure that wildlife and wild lands thrive in modern Africa. This includes the imperiled rhinoceros, an iconic species of immense value to Africa.

**Our goal:** AWF's long-term goal is to conserve the African rhino within viable and ecologically functional populations in their natural environments.

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## I Black and white rhinos

There are two species of rhino in Africa – Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*). The black rhino is represented by four subspecies: Western black rhino (*D. b. longipes*), Eastern black Rhino (*D. b. michaeli*), South-Western rhino (*D. b. bicornis*) and Southern black rhino (*D. b. minor*). The White rhino is represented by two subspecies: The Northern white rhino (*C. simum cottoni*) and the Southern white rhino (*C. s. simum*).

## I Rhino status in Africa

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List categorizes the black rhinoceros's status as 'Critically Endangered' and that of the white rhino as 'Near Threatened'. The rhino species has suffered some major losses: The Western Black Rhino that existed in Cameroon and Chad was declared extinct in 2011 and the northern white rhino is at the brink of extinction with only one population of less than ten individuals left. The white rhino population is estimated at 20,544 individuals and the black rhino population is estimated at of 5,261 individuals.

## I Two iconic species at peril!

Once widespread throughout Africa, white and black rhino populations have been severely depleted because of poaching for their horns. Between 2006 and 2016, Africa lost 7,246 black and white rhinos to poachers. The number of black rhinos have been reduced by 90% over the last three generations. Rhinos are also facing the challenge of massive habitat loss and isolation. Rhino populations that now have to live in protected sanctuaries and fenced areas are expensive to maintain and challenging to expand.

Frank A.F. Petersens



**AFRICAN WILDLIFE  
FOUNDATION**





## | AWF Rhino Conservation Program

AWF has a comprehensive rhino conservation program that hinges on the three-prong approach of addressing the poaching crisis in addition to in situ conservation.

- **Stop the killing** – AWF aims to reduce and ultimately stop rhino poaching. AWF partners with wildlife authorities and other organizations to protect rhino populations which includes preparing rhino conservation and management strategies to stabilize or increase populations. Since 2014, AWF has supported ten rhino populations across Africa with an estimated cumulative population size of 4,688. These include: Hluhluwe Umfolozi (South Africa), Great Fish River Reserve (South Africa), Sabi Sand Wildtuin / Kruger (South Africa), Kunene (Namibia), Save Valley (Zimbabwe), Limpopo (Mozambique), Tsavo West / Ngulia (Kenya), Ol Pejeta (Kenya), Chylu N. Park (Kenya), and Mosi oa Tunya (Zambia).
- **Stop the trafficking** – AWF, under the Wildlife Law Enforcement Program, works to strengthen law enforcement and coordination at national and regional levels to ensure rhino protection and security. And under the Canine for Conservation Program, AWF works to enhance the detection of illegal rhino products at transit points of entry and exit of key countries
- **Stop the demand** – AWF partnered with WildAid and other local organizations on the “Stop the Demand” campaign in Vietnam, raising awareness about rhinos and the horn trade. Available in English, Vietnamese and Mandarin, “The Sickening Truth” featured graphic footage of a rhino left for dead after poachers hacked her horn off. The public service announcement was released across television networks as well as social media sites.

## | Successes

Overall rhino poaching is trending down since 2015. The white rhino population is steadily increasing and the black rhino has also had a significant increase. All 10 populations of rhino supported by AWF since 2014 have been stable or increasing.

## | Call to action

Protecting and preserving rhinos are key to their survival and AWF’s efforts have clearly led to stabilized and increased populations of rhinos. Additional resources are needed to expand AWF’s rhino conservation programs to ensure that they survive and thrive in a modern Africa.

Please support AWF efforts to protect these iconic animals! Visit our website: [www.awf.org/donate](http://www.awf.org/donate).



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