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# EXPLORE!

Our free poster resource for youth groups and young people is designed to get you thinking about one of WWF's key species. This issue focuses on rhinos and looks at some fascinating facts, where they live, the threats they face and what you can do to help safeguard their future. What's more, all group members that take part in the activities and become an expert, can earn a special 'Rhino' badge.



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## CALLING BUDDING GREEN CHAMPIONS!

Green Ambassadors for Youth –GA4Youth – is a fantastic badge programme to help 5-14s take the lead on green issues in their groups and their community.






Our friendly Green Ambassador team – Leafy, Wheel, Switch, Crush, Smith and Tap – will help them get informed, get involved and get sharing on six topical green issues. Designed with the help of over 100 leaders, it offers six themed activity sets, a suite of posters to help you plan your green journey, and a badge scheme to reward young people for their achievements.



Sign up at [wwf.org.uk/ga4youth](http://wwf.org.uk/ga4youth)

All our resources are accompanied by a badge. Find out more at [wwf.org.uk/ygresources](http://wwf.org.uk/ygresources)

## DID YOU KNOW?

-  Rhinos make their own mud sunscreen by rolling around in waterholes. The mucky coating keeps them cooler and repels flies too.
-  Just like dogs, rhinos communicate through their poo and wee, often doing their business in a 'latrine': a communal loo allows these usually solitary animals to work out who's in their area.
-  All, bar the greater one-horned, have two horns which are made of keratin, just like horses' hooves and human hair and fingernails.
-  The Sumatran rhino, the rarest, is hairy, but all its cousins have smoother skin. Asian rhinos have characteristic skin folds which look like armour.
-  Both black and white rhinos are actually grey.

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# RHINOS

These ‘living dinosaurs’ have been around for millions of years. Their eating habits make them true landscape engineers, critical to maintaining healthy and varied habitats on which many other animals depend. Protecting the rhino and its habitat helps other wildlife and people to thrive – as well as keeping a magnificent creature part of our future as well as our past.

## SPECIES

There are five species of rhino – white and black rhinos in Africa, and the greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran rhino species in Asia.

### White rhino

Hunted almost to extinction by 1900, there are around 20,000 white rhinos in the wild today, almost all found in just four countries – South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Kenya. They’re on the IUCN RedList as “near-threatened”.

### Greater one-horned rhino

Named after their one horn, most of these “vulnerable” rhinos are found in India, Nepal and Bhutan – hence the nickname, the Indian rhino. Numbers have increased by around 1,000 in the past 10 years, and there are approximately 3,500 of them in the wild.

### Black rhino

Extensively hunted, black rhino numbers have fallen from several hundred thousand in 1900, to only around 5,000 in the wild. Classed as “critically endangered”, the majority live in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

### Javan rhino

Javan rhinos are extremely rare and “critically endangered” – there are only around 60 left in the wild, in just one place, Java. The other known population of these rare animals was in Vietnam’s Cat Tien National Park, but these became extinct in 2010.

### Sumatran rhino

Sumatran rhinos are “critically endangered” with only around 100 left in the wild, scattered in highly fragmented populations in Indonesia. Sumatran rhinos declined at least 70% since 1990, but this decline has slowed down because they’re now better protected.

## VITAL STATISTICS

Rhinos are big! A fully-grown male white rhino – the biggest variety – can weigh in at a hefty 3.5 tonnes and can be up to 1.8 metres tall. The smallest species, the Sumatran rhino, weighs up to 950kg when fully-grown. The average horn from a white rhino weighs 4 kg. That’s the same as 20 big bars of chocolate.

## SPECIAL SKILLS

Rhinos have poor vision – they can’t see a motionless person more than 30 metres away – but a fantastic sense of smell and good hearing; each of their large ears can swivel independently. Asian rhinos can swim but their African relatives are poor swimmers and can drown if they lose their footing in deep water. Despite their bulk, they’re pretty sprightly and can run up to 34 miles per hour for brief spurts.

## BREEDING

Male and female rhinos are bulls and sows. Usually males are solitary, only joining a female to mate. Breeding females of most species have calves every 2-4 years, carrying their young for up to 16 months and once born the calves stay with their mothers for up to 18 months.

## WHY ARE RHINOS UNDER THREAT...?

Rhino populations of all species have been ravaged by poaching. Around 96% of black rhinos were lost to large-scale poaching between 1970 and 1992. In South Africa, nearly three rhinos are poached, on average, every day with 1,054 animals killed in 2016. That’s a 8700% increase in the past 9 years.

Poaching gangs are sophisticated and ruthless. They use helicopters to track the rhinos, shooting them with guns or tranquilising darts, removing the horn with chainsaws and quickly airlifting away – all in as little as 10 minutes. It takes just 48 hours for a poached rhino horn to get to the global market. The trade has been helped by technology, as the internet helps keep poachers anonymous and mobile phones are ubiquitous. Keeping up with the poachers and their sophisticated methods is crucial.

Rhinos are killed for their horns. Most are bound for Vietnam, the world’s largest consumer. It’s seen as a status symbol and is promoted as a trendy hangover cure.

Rhinos are also in danger from climate change. Tiny, fragmented rhino populations in Asia are vulnerable to disease, natural disasters or any change in their habitat. Development in the area could lessen the chances that solitary rhinos meet to breed, and their tiny numbers mean an increased chance of

## FEEDING

Rhinos need large amounts of foliage every day to get enough energy for their massive bodies. White rhinos are grazers, using their flat broad lower lip to crop grasses and vegetation from the ground. The other species are browsers, with a pointy, prehensile upper lip to pick vegetation from trees and bushes. All use their horns to rootle around for interesting food in ground cover. Asian rhinos have sharp incisor teeth too, which they use for feeding, but also for defence. African rhinos can survive up to 5 days between visits to watering holes.



# ACTIVITIES

To earn an 'Explore rhino' badge, complete at least two of the activities below. Go to [wwf.org.uk/ygresources](http://wwf.org.uk/ygresources) for all our resource and badge links.

## TAKE ON THE TECHNOLOGY

Ask your group to think about how technology has made poaching easier – from night vision binoculars to smartphones – but how could it be used effectively to help stop it? Do they have ideas for an app which could help?

## MAKING YOUR CASE

Think about a product or activity in this country that people would find difficult to give up. How would you persuade them? Take what you've learned from this to develop a letter or design a poster or advertisement targeting those that believe rhino horn is a status symbol and give it out at parties as a trendy hangover cure. How could you make a strong case for why they should stop buying rhino horn or products made from them?

## TERMITES, EAGLES AND RHINOS GAME

This is a great game for the start of a meeting and is best played in a large area with a range of apparatus for the children to climb on, under or behind. Divide the group into the three species. The players wander around the hall, and when the leader shouts out a danger – fire, storm or poacher – they have to protect themselves. The termites have to 'dig' their way under something; the eagles perch up high and the rhinos try to hide behind something and make themselves as thin as possible! The last person to assume the position is out of the game. The ultimate winner is the last one playing.

## ADOPT A RHINO

They're a little large for the back garden, but adopting a rhino will really help our vital conservation work to help protect these animals by:

- restoring and connecting fragmented areas of habitat in key rhino ranges
- setting up better anti-poaching tactics
- helping us reduce consumer demand for rhino horn
- improving the management of rhino horn stockpiles to stop illegal trade.

**£60 (or £5 a month)** could pay for one immobilisation dart to sedate a rhino for transportation.

**£120 (or £10 a month)** could cover training for one field officer in anti-poaching techniques and rhino monitoring in Nepal.

[wwf.org.uk/rhinoadopt](http://wwf.org.uk/rhinoadopt)

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TOGETHER TO  
BUILD A FUTURE  
WHERE PEOPLE AND  
NATURE THRIVE

