

# Rhinoceros & Tiger Conservation Fund



Rhinos and tigers are magnificent creatures: big, powerful, and charismatic. Unfortunately, these same qualities make

them popular targets; rhino and tiger body parts are in high demand on the global black market. Tiger organs and bones and rhino horns are used in Asian medicines, which are sold to consumers who believe these animal products convey strength, health and virility. The tiger's beautiful orange pelt commands a high price. Rhino horns are also carved for dagger handles as a coveted status symbol in the Middle East. The illegal trade in animal parts is a profitable business and the demand for these products creates an ongoing temptation for poachers. Rhinos and tigers also fall victim to poachers' snares, set to trap other animals for bushmeat or trophies.

In addition to poaching for profit, tigers are killed by local villagers who fear attacks on humans or livestock. As human populations encroach further into the habitats of wild animals, the resulting conflict poses a serious threat to both human and animal safety.

Wild tigers, once abundant throughout Asia, now live in small fragmented groups, mostly in protected forests, refuges, national parks and their corridors. Experts estimate that more than 500 tigers are killed each year. Recent surveys indicate the South China tiger may have become extinct in the wild, with only 47 remaining alive in China's zoos. Sadly there are fewer tigers in the wild now than there are in captivity.

Wild rhinos can still be found in parts of Asia and Africa, but they too live in small fragmented populations which may not be viable (due to lack of breeding opportunities and risk of random events or disease). The Javan rhino persists in Indonesia's Ujung Kulon National Park (27-44 individuals) but the last known individual of the Vietnamese subspecies of this rhino was poached in April 2010.

Before 1900, hundreds of thousands of black rhinos occurred throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa, but between 1970 and 1992, rhino populations declined 96%. Black rhinos went extinct in many range states, and by 1992, only 2300 individuals survived in seven countries.

Increased security and greater anti-poaching efforts have led to increases in some populations over the past decade. Recovery of Africa's white rhino demonstrates the benefits of strong law enforcement and conservation management. Decimated by hunting, white rhinos nearly became extinct with only about 100 surviving in the wild. Now, with good protection and successful management, the subspecies has increased to more than 18,000 and is the most abundant of all rhinos.

However, a recent resurgence in poaching threatens to reverse these successes. If poaching continues to skyrocket as it did in 2010 and 2011, when more than 300 rhinos were killed per year in South Africa alone, rhino populations will once again be at risk of extinction.

In 1994, the U.S. Congress passed a law to establish the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund. Grants are awarded from this fund for anti-poaching programs, habitat and ecosystem management, development of nature reserves, wildlife surveys and monitoring, management of human-wildlife conflict, public awareness campaigns and other conservation efforts related to rhino and tiger survival. With this assistance there is hope that rhinos and tigers will return to healthy numbers.



Above: Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) relaxes in Assam, India  
Credit: Aaranyak



Right: Southern black rhino (*Diceros bicornis minor*) is darted during veterinary check in Namibia  
Credit: Michelle Gadd/USFWS

In 2012, Wildlife Without Borders awarded 50 grants from the Rhinoceros & Tiger Conservation Fund totaling \$2.6 million, which was leveraged by \$3.3 million in matching and in-kind funds. These funds supported innovative conservation projects, including:

- Initiate a five year education and outreach program in the Sundarban forests of Bangladesh directed at improving the sense of ownership of the tiger population among the men, women and children living in and adjacent to the habitat. Year one activities including meetings for local opinion leaders, community camps and boat races for men, women's festivals, school based painting contests for children and other cultural events which will address the complex social and economic drivers behind behaviors that threaten the human tiger relationships.
- Strengthen collaborative efforts on the Vietnam/China border to fight tiger and other illegal wildlife trade on. This will be done by: (1) developing multi-agency monitoring systems for transnational wildlife



Critically endangered Sumatran rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*)  
Credit: International Rhino Foundation

crimes and law enforcement; (2) strengthening capacity and building conservation support among frontline border enforcement officers; and (3) building support within national and regional government agencies to more effectively address cross border wildlife crimes.

- Monitor the recovery of the tiger and its prey base in India's Manas National Park by: (1) estimating tiger population densities in the park using photographic captures and recaptures; (2) estimating the densities of key large mammal herbivores that constitute prey species of the tiger in the park using line transect sampling; and (3) sustaining the monitoring and research program on vegetation dynamics in the park to inform habitat management. This project is a unique collaboration between one government research institute, the state forest department and three non-government organizations. The information obtained will be used to adaptively manage the park.
- Strengthen protection of wildlife, particularly tigers, in Indonesia's Bukit Tigapuluh Landscape by establishing a permanent and sustainable patrol and monitoring system. This will: (1) improve the knowledge on presence, density, movement patterns, and habitat selection of the Sumatran tigers in the landscape; and (2) protect the habitat through patrols by wildlife protection units.
- Purchase, train and house a unit of tracker dogs to track poachers in Kenya, to construct a base for security personnel including a central

radio control room, and to construct housing for security staff.

- Support rhino protection and monitoring in the Chyulu Hills National Park and in neighboring Mbirikani Group Ranch in southern Kenya. Specific activities include supporting patrolling by local community game scouts, following up on any illegal wildlife activities, and monitoring individual rhinos and habitat use.
- Support essential patrol and aerial surveillance costs for security purposes in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, South Africa.



Critically endangered Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) is filmed in the forests of Indonesia.  
Credit: Fauna and Flora International

Rhinoceros & Tiger Conservation Funding from 2007 through 2012	
Total Number of Grant Proposals Received	527
Total Number of Grants Awarded	287
Total Amount Appropriated by U.S. Congress	\$14,110,140
Total Funds Distributed through Grants	\$14,105,296
Total Funds to Administration of Grants	\$578,440
Total Matching/In-kind Funds Leveraged by Grants	\$22,112,273

\*Amount includes funds from the Save Vanishing Species Stamp

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