

# 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. 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 generates 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 and national parks. 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.

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. Sumatran rhinos have decreased by 50 percent in the past 18 years leaving only about 300 surviving, primarily in Indonesia and Malaysia.

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

But while rhinos continue to be killed for their horns, increased security and

greater anti-poaching efforts have led to slight 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 loss of habitat and illegal hunting, Africa's white rhinos nearly became extinct with only about 100 surviving in the wild. Now, the population has increased to more than 11,000 and is the most abundant of all rhinos.

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 more populations of rhinos and tigers will move toward recovery.



**Black rhinos**  
Wildlands Trust

*The 2005 congressional appropriation of \$1.4 million, together with matching funds from host countries and conservation groups, funded 41 vital rhino and tiger conservation projects, including the following efforts:*

- Monitoring tigers, prey, and their habitat in India's Valmiki Tiger Reserve and conducting eco-development programs in villages around the Reserve to reduce dependency on the forest and involve local people in promoting recovery of the reserve's habitat.
- Conducting an awareness program in 105 villages in or near Simlipal National Park, India, to inform tribal youths and adult hunters of damage to wildlife resulting from an annual hunt ritual that seriously impacts regional tiger populations and their prey.
- Developing a cadre of trained wildlife managers and field personnel by training forest officers working on tiger conservation in all tiger countries at the Wildlife Institute of India – an internationally renowned center for wildlife conservation and management.
- Fostering cooperative Amur tiger conservation efforts between China and Russia by establishing corridors and new protected areas, and harmonizing wildlife and forestry practices on both sides of the China-Russia border.
- Strengthening and expanding a database on wildlife crimes used by law enforcement officials in India who investigate and prosecute endangered wildlife cases.
- Purchasing and equipping a vehicle in southwestern Kenya to provide education and outreach about the plight of the rhino to schoolchildren and adults living near important black rhino populations.
- Equipping an Amur tiger anti-poaching team, in Russia's Primorye region with a four-wheel drive vehicle, snow jet skis, night vision devices, fuel, field clothes, and satellite and radio communications equipment.
- Facilitating the re-introduction of white rhinos to Uganda by supporting sanctuary improvements, staff training, and education programs at the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary during the first year after rhino re-introduction.
- Providing emergency veterinary services to treat black rhinos in Zimbabwe for snare injuries, perform ear-notching and fit horn transmitters to aid in monitoring and translocating rhinos to sites of greater safety.

<b>Rhinoceros &amp; Tiger Conservation Funding History from 1999 through 2005</b>	
<b>Total Number of Grant Proposals Received</b>	<b>650</b>
<b>Total Number of Grants Awarded</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>Percentage of Countries with Asian Elephants that Receive Grants</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Total Amount Appropriated by U.S. Congress</b>	<b>\$7,999,500</b>
<b>Total Funds Distributed through Grants</b>	<b>\$7,591,165</b>
<b>Total Funds to Administration of Grants</b>	<b>\$408,335</b>
<b>Total Matching/In-kind Funds Leveraged by Grants</b>	<b>\$16,031,341</b>



**Amur tiger**

WCS/John Goodrich



**Greater one-horned rhino**

International Rhino Foundation

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
**International Affairs**  
**Division of International Conservation**  
**4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 730**  
**Arlington, VA 22203**  
**703-358-1754**  
**703-358-2115/fax**  
**internationalconservation@fws.gov**  
**http://www.fws.gov/international**  
**www.fws.gov**  
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