

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 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.

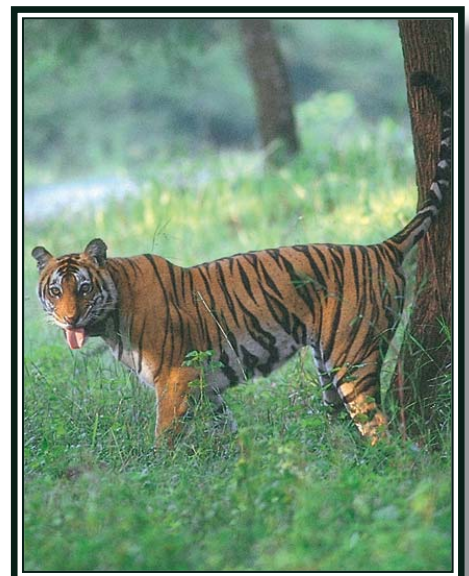
Wild rhinos can still be found in parts of Asia and Africa, but they too live in small fragmented populations which may not be viable (due to lack of breeding opportunities and risk of random events or disease). Sumatran rhinos have decreased by 50 percent in the past 18 years leaving only about 300 surviving, primarily in Indonesia and Malaysia.

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.

But while rhinos continue to be killed for their horns, 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 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 rhinos and tigers will return to healthy numbers.



Left: *Black rhinos at Mkomazi National Park, Tanzania* Richard Ruggiero/USFWS
Right: *Young Bengal tigress* © Ullas Karanth/WCS

The 2009 Congressional appropriation of \$2.5 million, along with matching funds from host countries and conservation groups, in excess over \$4.4 million funded 52 vital rhino and tiger conservation projects, including the following efforts:

- South Africa has generously donated eighteen southern black rhinos since 2003 to reintroduce black rhinos to Zambia. Funding will be used for the capture and care of six black rhinos to be captured in Kwa Zulu Natal province and given to Zambia, and six more rhinos to be captured in Eastern Cape province to restock Kwa Zulu Natal.
- Supporting the development of a black rhino management plan for the newly reintroduced population in North Luangwa, Zambia. Activities will include an updated assessment of the habitat quality and security in the region, and a workshop convening experts and representatives of Zambia's Wildlife Authority and experts from various African countries to develop a ten year management plan.
- Initiate activities to address serious threats to the black rhino population in northern Tanzania's Ngorongoro Conservation Area including protection of Acacia woodlands, restoration of natural hydrology, removal of invasive plants, and outreach to local communities and visiting tourists to prevent depletion of the water supply.
- Modify existing radio transponders, designed for other animals, so that they can be implanted in horns to facilitate remote tracking of live rhinos and to improve law enforcement detection of poached rhino horns. The transponders and receivers will then be field tested on rhinos in Zimbabwe to determine if this is a viable alternative to existing horn transmitters.
- Building local incentives for tiger conservation in Lao PDR's Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area through creation of opportunities for local employment and income generation from tourism development that places a value on living wildlife as an alternative to illegal wildlife trade.
- Strengthening anti-poaching efforts to protect rhinos and tigers through development of dedicated armed anti-poaching units and provision of training on actions to be taken at the scene of a wildlife crime in the protected areas of the Terai of Nepal.
- Initiating environmental education and law enforcement to reduce poaching and illegal logging and protect the Amur tiger at the newly declared Udege Legend National Park located in the Russian Far East.
- Reducing threats to the Amur tiger in Russia's Khabarovsk Krai by presenting training and resource materials on conservation and hunter ethics to hunters and violators, interacting with the media to produce articles supportive of tiger conservation, and conducting an assessment of changes in attitudes resulting from the program.
- Collecting data on wildlife crime, assisting enforcement agencies in detecting wildlife crime, and supporting prosecution of apprehended criminals in India.



Sumatran rhino and young

© The Cincinnati Zoo



Eastern black rhino, Laikipia, Kenya

© Brendan Hill/FFI

Rhinoceros & Tiger Conservation Funding History from 2005 through 2009	
Total Number of Grant Proposals Received	406
Total Number of Grants Awarded	214
Percentage of Countries with Rhinoceros and Tigers Receiving Grants	82%
Total Amount Appropriated by U.S. Congress	\$9,100,881
Total Funds Distributed through Grants	\$9,063,000
Total Funds to Administration of Grants	\$437,259
Total Matching/In-kind Funds Leveraged by Grants	\$15,781,000

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 International Affairs
 Division of International Conservation
 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 100
 Arlington, VA 22203
 703-358-1754
 703-358-2115/fax
 internationalconservation@fws.gov
 http://www.fws.gov/international
 www.fws.gov
 CFDA# 15.619

February 2010

