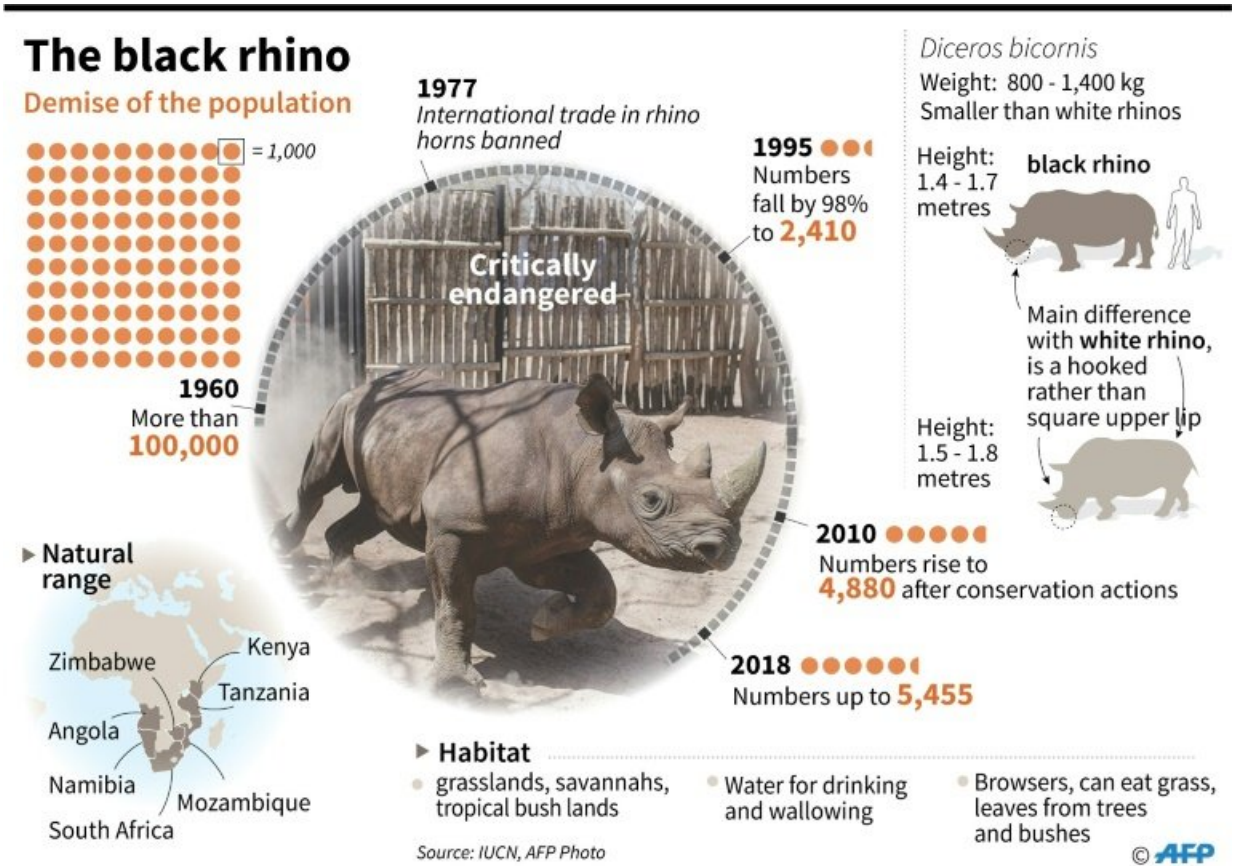


Rhinos and their conservation in Kenya

August 30 2018



Factfile on the black rhino

Once it roamed Asia and Africa in the tens of thousands. Today, the rhinoceros has been driven to near-extinction.

Three of the five species of rhino are listed as critically

endangered—their numbers decimated by poachers who kill the giant mammal for its horn, used in traditional Chinese medicine or as a supposed aphrodisiac.

The two species found in Africa are the black rhino and larger white rhino, with genetically distinct northern and southern subspecies. Together they number between 25,000 and 30,000 on the continent today.

Kenya is home to one of the largest populations of rhinos in Africa, after South Africa. It also has only two remaining female northern white rhinos, whose species is on the brink of extinction after the last male died in March.

In 1970, Kenya boasted 20,000 black rhinos—a number which plummeted 98 percent to only 350 in 1983, but has steadily crept up to over 700 due to conservation efforts.

Kenya is a pioneer of the sanctuary approach, placing rhino in fenced-off areas under the close watch of armed rangers equipped with thermal imaging cameras and drones.

Ironically, this success comes with its own set of problems as there is limited space for these rhinos. As a result, faced with a burgeoning human population, they cannot roam and expand their gene pool.

With black rhino populations thriving in parks in Nairobi and Nakuru, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) this year decided to move 14 [rhinos](#) to a new sanctuary in Tsavo East, in the southeastern Kenya, in an operation funded by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

KWS has successfully carried out numerous so-called translocations of this kind.

But in this case, all 11 animals which were moved died. The three others were not transferred.

The figure represents more than the nine rhino poached in the country in 2017.

Despite the tragedy, officials underline the country's success in bringing down poaching in recent years, with 59 rhino killed in 2013.

South Africa, home of the largest rhino [population](#), has lost over 1,000 of the animals annually over the past five years, according to the group Save The Rhino.

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