



DNA Database for Indian Rhinos

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The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has begun a **project to create DNA profiles of all rhinos in the country.**

- The project is a subset of the Centre's larger, ongoing rhino conservation programme.
 - By 2021, the project's deadline, the Indian rhino could be the first wild animal species in India to have all its members DNA-sequenced.
 - The project will help in **curbing poaching** and gathering evidence in wildlife crimes involving rhinos.
 - **The database will be hosted in the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) headquarters in Dehradun.**
- There are three species of rhino in Asia — **Greater one-horned, Javan** and **Sumatran**. Javan and Sumatran Rhino are critically endangered and the Greater one-horned (or Indian) rhino is vulnerable In IUCN Red List.
 - They are spread across India, Nepal, Bhutan, Indonesia and Malaysia. These countries are also known as **Asian Rhino Range Countries**.
 - Only the Great one-horned rhino is found in India.
 - At present, there are about 2,600 Indian rhinos in India, with more than 90% of the population concentrated in Assam's Kaziranga National Park.

National Rhino Conservation Strategy

- It calls for active engagement between India and Nepal to conserve the Greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- The plan said the single population of rhinos in Sukla-Phanta (Nepal), Valmiki Tiger Reserve (India) and Chitwan National Park (Nepal) and Dudhwa (India) is separated by the political boundary between the two countries.
- It asks for the **management of the two population under the same protocol**, instead of managing the two population separately.

- The plan calls for **expanding distribution range as the occurrence of 90% of the rhino in one protected area is a cause of concern** and conservation of existing and potential rhino habitats need to be made a national priority.

Indian Rhino Vision 2020

- **Launched in 2005**, Indian Rhino Vision 2020 is an ambitious effort **to attain a wild population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos spread over seven protected areas in the Indian state of Assam by the year 2020.**
- Seven protected areas are Kaziranga, Pobitora, Orang National Park, Manas National Park, Laokhowa wildlife sanctuary, Burachapori wildlife sanctuary and Dibru Saikhowa wildlife sanctuary.
- It is a collaborative effort between various organisations, including the International Rhino Foundation, Assam's Forest Department, Bodoland Territorial Council, World Wide Fund - India, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.