



Greater One-Horned Rhino

Why in News

The claims by different political parties over significant reduction in poaching of Greater One-Horned Rhino has become an issue in Assam Assembly Elections.

- According to the Assam Forest Department, poaching has **reduced by 86% in the last three years.**

Key Points

▪ About:

- The Greater **One-Horned Rhino** is one among the **five different species of Rhino**. The **other four are:**
 - [Black Rhino](#): Smaller of the two African species.
 - [White Rhino](#): Recently, researchers have created an embryo of the **northern white rhino by using In vitro Fertilization (IVF) process.**
 - [Javan Rhino](#): **Critically endangered** in IUCN Red List.
 - [Sumatran Rhino](#): Recently gone extinct in Malaysia.
- There are **three species of rhino in Asia—Greater one-horned** (Rhinoceros unicornis), **Javan and Sumatran.**
- Only the Great One-Horned Rhino is found in India.
- Also known as Indian rhino, it is the **largest of the rhino species.**
- It is identified by a **single black horn** and a grey-brown hide with skin folds.
- They **primarily graze**, with a diet consisting almost entirely of grasses as well as leaves, branches of shrubs and trees, fruit, and aquatic plants.

▪ Habitat:

- The species is restricted to small habitats in Indo-Nepal terai and northern West Bengal and Assam.
- In India, rhinos are mainly found in **Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.**
- Assam has an estimated **2,640 rhinos in four protected areas**, i.e. [Pabitora Wildlife Reserve](#), Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and [Manas National Park](#).

- About **2,400 of them are in the [Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve \(KNPTR\)](#)**

▪ Protection Status:

- [IUCN Red List](#): Vulnerable.
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix I** (Threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, for instance for scientific research).
- [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#): Schedule I.

▪ **Threats :**

- Poaching for the horns
- Habitat loss
- Population density
- Decreasing Genetic diversity

▪ **Conservation Efforts by India:**

- The **five rhino range nations** (India, Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia) have signed a declaration '**The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019**' for the **conservation** and **protection** of the species.
- Recently, the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has begun a project to create **DNA profiles of all rhinos** in the country.
- **National Rhino Conservation Strategy:** It was launched in 2019 to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- **Indian Rhino Vision 2020:** Launched in 2005, it 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.

Kaziranga National Park



▪ **Location:**

- It is located in the State of Assam and covers 42,996 Hectare (ha). It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.

▪ **Legal Status:**

- It was declared as a National Park in 1974.
- It has been declared a [tiger reserve](#) since 2007. It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km.

▪ **International Status:**

- It was declared a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) in 1985.
- It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.

▪ **Important Species Found:**

- Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are focused on the '**big four**' species— **Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo.**
- As per the figures of [tiger census conducted in 2018](#), Kaziranga had an estimated 104 tigers, the **fourth highest population** in India after [Jim Corbett National Park \(231\)](#) in Uttarakhand, [Nagarhole National Park \(127\)](#) and [Bandipur National Park \(126\)](#) in Karnataka.
- Kaziranga is also home to 9 of the 14 species of primates found in the Indian subcontinent.

▪ **Other National Parks of Assam:**

- [Dibru-Saikhowa National Park](#),
- [Manas National Park](#),
- [Nameri National Park](#),
- Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park,
- [Dehing Patkai National Park](#)

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