

Black Rhinoceros

Scientific Name: *Diceros bicornis michaeli*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Perissodactyla

Family: Rhinocerotidae



Rhinoceros' head & body length is 10 to 12 feet. The shoulder height is 4.5 to 6 feet. They weight between 2,000 to 3,000 lbs. with a tail length of about 2.3 feet. They have two horns, with the anterior horn larger than the posterior, being about 1.6 feet long. Occasionally the beginning of a third posterior horn is evident. The upper lips are triangular shaped, prehensile, and very mobile. Hair is present on the ears and tail only. Both this rhino and the white rhino are dark in color, but the black rhino is somewhat darker. The coloration is dark yellow-brown to dark brown or dark gray. The female is generally the same as the male, with the horn usually longer and more slender. The skin is thick. Birds, called oxpeckers, ride on the rhino's back and eat ticks from the skin. They are also believed to warn the rhino of danger.

Range

Kenya, South Africa, Namibia

Habitat

Grassland and forest, generally in thick thorn bush or acacia scrub, but also in more open country within about 25 km of permanent water.

Gestation

Approx. 15 months

Litter

1

Behavior

Although its pugnacity has been exaggerated, the black rhino is unpredictable and can be a dangerous animal, some-times charging a disturbing sound or smell. The sense of smell is the primary method of detecting danger. It is very vocal in its communication, using growls, grunts, and most commonly a puffing snort. The usual gait is a fast walk or a bouncing trot. When charging it gallops. Territory is marked with dung piles, and also by spraying urine. They wallow frequently, and roll in dust. They feed primarily in the morning and evening, and have become more nocturnal. Females are usually found together with a calf and sometimes an older daughter. Those without young join a neighboring female. The young of both sexes also attach themselves to other animals. They are usually tolerant of others that they know in adjacent ranges.

Reproduction

Breeding occurs generally throughout the year, with females usually giving birth every 2 to 5 years. The single calf weighs about 88 lbs. at birth. Mating is often preceded by the female attacking the male. A premating bond develops between the male and female, and they remain in close proximity to each other, even sleeping in contact.

Wild Diet

Branches, bark, leaves & vines; fallen fruit, long grasses, and green clover