



## TAXONOMY

**Scientific name:**

*Diceros bicornis bicornis*  
(South Western Black Rhino)

**Common name:**

Black Rhino ; hook lipped rhino.

## DESCRIPTION

**Body Weight:**

1,000 - 1,800 kg  
(2200 - 3970 lbs)

**Body Length (head/body):**

2.9 - 3.75 m (114-148 in.)

**Tail Length:**

60 - 70 cm (24 - 28 in.)

**Shoulder Height:**

1.4 - 1.8 m (55 - 71 in.)

## GENERAL

Very thick, gray skin with deep folds. Heavy, stocky body; short neck, large head; almost hairless. Three hooved toes, central toe is largest and takes most of the weight. Small tail with tuft of hair at tip. Large, robust cheek teeth; no canines or incisors. Skin colour often obscured by dirt due to wallowing in mud or dust. Poor eye sight, good sense of smell. Difficult to tell male from female. Two horns on the rostrum, one in front of the other. Made of keratin (like true horns). No bony core; not attached to skull; not shed. Horns ever growing.

## HABITAT

Savannahs with a high diversity of woody shrubs and herbaceous plants. Not generally found in closed canopy forests or open grasslands. Prefer thicket.

## BEHAVIOUR

Active day and night, most activity early morning, late afternoon and night. Inactive during hottest part of day. Can be aggressive due to poor eye sight. Do not form social groups but may congregate in areas. Female with calves do not socialize. Adult males socialize the least, will tolerate other males in territory if proper submission behaviour shown.

## VISITOR BEHAVIOUR

Do not approach Black Rhino. Do not walk in river beds and area of thick vegetation. Be aware – other rhino or other animals may be in the vicinity. Walk in areas where visibility is greater than 50m. Black rhino can reach 45km / hr within 2 metres. Always ensure that escape route is available – climb a tree. Move away should the rhino show aggressive behaviour – snorting, raised tail, ears erect and forward.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK RHINO

White rhino larger, up to 2,5 tonnes, has wide square jaw with large head. Gregarious, often found in groups. Found in open savannah.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Wayne Erlank, Baviaanskloof Cluster Manager  
Tel. 042 283 0630  
Fax 042 283 0636  
E-mail: [wayne@ecparksboard.co.za](mailto:wayne@ecparksboard.co.za)



**EASTERN CAPE**  
PARKS

# Black Rhino

## Fact Sheet





## CONSERVATION BACKGROUND

The black rhino is an endangered species with the global population having dropped from over 70 000 to under three thousand between 1970 and 1995. Found only in Africa, there are four sub-species of the black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) of which two (the south central sub-species *D. b. minor* and the south western sub-species *D. b. bicornis*) are indigenous to South Africa. The two subspecies have different geographic domains and historically were separated from each other probably by harsh terrain and river valleys, preventing cross breeding. Thus it is important for biodiversity conservation reasons to retain their genetic and geographic integrity. According to current scientific knowledge and interpretation the *D. b. bicornis* sub-species historically occurred in the Baviaanskloof and in an arc sweeping westward and north through to Namibia. *D. b. minor* is understood to have occurred in the Fish River valley and east and north ward through the savannah areas of South Africa, through Zimbabwe and north into Zambia.

## BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION BENEFITS

*D. b. bicornis* was shot out of the Baviaanskloof over 100 years ago. *D. b. minor* was similarly exterminated from the Fish River, but following a very successful re-introduction of the species there is now one of the fastest growing populations in the country in the reserve and it is rated as a key population globally.

The are significant conservation benefits and management implications of the ECP swapping 6 black rhino (sub-species *D. b. minor*) which would come out of the Great Fish River Reserve (GFRR) for 6 black rhino of the sub-species *D. b. bicornis* which would be re-established as a new population within the Baviaanskloof Nature Reserve and would serve to reverse the local extinction for the first time in 100 years.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR BAVIAANSKLOOF NATURE RESERVE

The black rhino will be introduced into specially designated rhino zone between Geelhoutbos and Grassnek pass near Doornkraal. This zone contains approximately 7000 ha of valley thicket and thorn veld habitat that rhino prefer. A combination of cable fencing and topography will be used to contain the rhino in this area. Continuously manned access control booms will be set up at Coleske, Poortjies and Geelhoutbos. The rhino will be introduced in June 2007 and on introduction, a dedicated, trained and equipped monitoring team will be in place to ensure rhino and visitor safety and security. Each rhino will be individually monitored using the latest radio tracking technology.



## TOURISM IMPLICATIONS

Rhino being introduced into area with limited tourism facilities. Road users should be aware that rhino may be encountered on or close to the R332 between Grassnek pass and Geelhoutbos. Monitoring teams will be on the road to raise awareness of rhino locations / proximity, however walking and mountain biking in this 22 km stretch of the reserve should be done with caution and is not recommended. The core tourism area of Rooihoek, Doodsklip, Smitskraal and Bergplaas will lie to the east of the rhino zone and tourism in these areas should not be affected by this introduction. Visitor facilities at Geelhoutbos will be appropriately secured. Hiking, walking and mountain biking activities in the mountain fynbos and grassland areas will continue to be safe as the rhino habitat is primarily in the valley thickets. Visitors wanting to walk, hike or mountain bike in the valley areas, especially the rhino introduction zone, should exercise vigilance. Visitors are reminded that over 100 buffalo are already present in the Rooihoek, Doodsklip and Smitskraal areas, vigilance should be exercised throughout the reserve.

## BAVIAANSKLOOF MEGA RESERVE

The BNR is the core of the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve and as such the introduction of the black rhino should be seen as confirmation that the ECPB is serious about the management of the Baviaanskloof as a flagship reserve for the province. The introduction is a priority for the ECPB as the management authority for all provincial reserves in the province as part of Eastern Cape Parks Board's strategic commitment to biodiversity conservation. The Eastern Cape Parks Board & Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve Project Management Unit will together with various stakeholders seek to integrate the black rhino introduction with the range of projects and initiatives currently being implemented in the Baviaanskloof Mega Reserve

