



Care For Us
White Rhinoceros
(*Ceratotherium simum*)



Animal Welfare

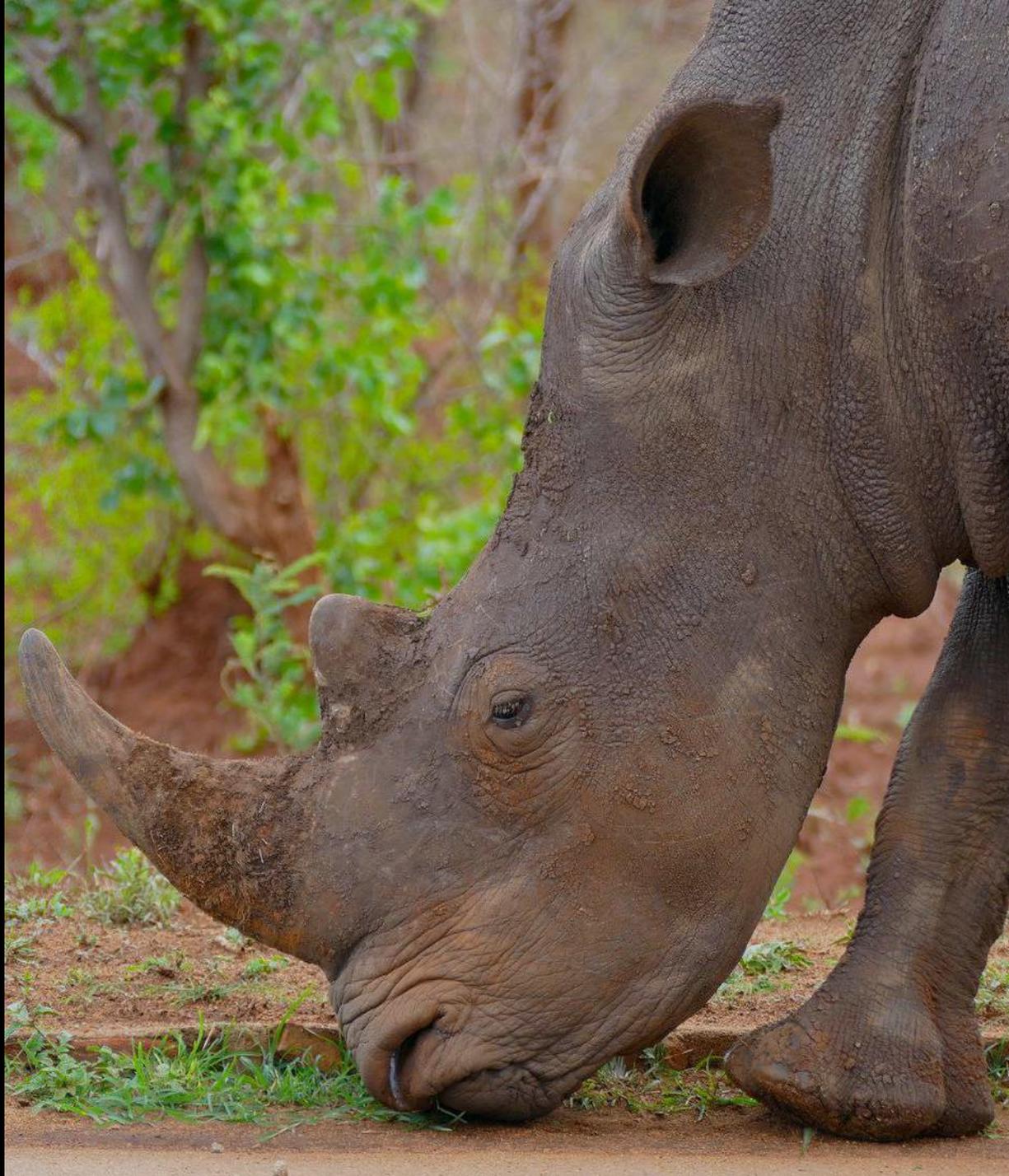
Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be good, neutral or bad.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have good welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare throughout their entire life.

Understanding that animals have both sentient and cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry for all captive animals, to ensure good welfare.

In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.





White rhinoceros are very large ungulates, weighing up to 2,500kg with a body length of up to 5 metres and shoulder height of 1.8 metres. Their horn can reach 1.5 metres long.

They are grazers. Their wide lip helps to crop the grass but they will eat other foliage and browse from trees and shrubs too. In the wild white rhino prefer savannah and open woodland where there is short grass.

White rhino are classified as near threatened by the IUCN

White rhinos need to graze



Rhinoceros' are hind gut fermenters. They have a large stomach to help them digest the huge amount of vegetation they ingest. In the wild they live in savannah and open woodland where they will graze on the short grasses and occasionally browse from low trees and shrubs.

Positive behaviours to encourage

White rhinos will spend much of their time using their wide mouth to graze on grasses. To allow them to exhibit these natural behaviours they need open areas of grassland. Scatter feeding of grass and hay and offering grass and hay throughout the day and night can help replicate their feeding behaviours.

A photograph showing three white rhinos in a muddy wallow. One rhino is standing in the background, while two others are lying down in the foreground, partially submerged in the mud. The ground is a mix of brown earth and water.

White rhinos like a mud wallow

Mud wallows are good environmental and behavioural enrichment but they also help with skin health. The mud helps protect the rhinos skin from the sun and biting insects.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Social interaction and play are stimulated in and around a mud wallow. As well as health benefits to the rhino's skin, mud wallows are important for mental and physical health.

Care must be taken to monitor the mud to make sure it does not become stagnant and ensure the sides of the wallow do not become too steep.

White rhinos like to socialise

In the wild white rhino are found living in large groups or herds. They are very social animals and enjoy the company of other white rhino. To keep white rhino in a natural herd you need large enclosures. Depending on the size and complexity of the rhino facilities, the herd structure can be one adult male, two or three adult females and their calves.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Keeping white rhino in natural family groups is very important but they need to have choice to be able to move away from the herd if they choose. Ensure the enclosures are large and have visual barriers (plenty of foliage)



A white rhinoceros is shown in profile, walking from left to right across a grassy field. In the background, a large herd of flamingos is gathered near a body of water under a clear sky.

White rhinos like to roam

Because white rhinos are so large and live in herds of several individuals, it is vital they have space to decide who, when and where interactions take place. Rhinos spend much of their day grazing so space to roam as they graze is important.

Positive behaviours to encourage

The size of the enclosure is important in keeping a large, herd species well in captivity. It needs to be complex as well, with plenty of grazing opportunities, logs and rocks, different substrates and mud wallows.

White rhinos like shelter

White rhinos need to be able to shelter from the extreme weather such as sun, wind, rain and cold. If the climate is cold they need heated housing as they cannot tolerate cold temperatures for long periods.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Giving rhino the space and opportunities to decide where they want to spend their time is important. Having shelters and housing gives the rhinos choice in different weather conditions.



A white rhinoceros is shown in profile, facing left, in a grassy field. It is rubbing its left horn against a large, dark, weathered log that is leaning vertically. The rhino's skin is thick and greyish-brown. The background consists of a vast, flat, green landscape under a clear sky.

White rhino like to scratch

Rhino horn is made of keratin and continually grows. Rhinos need to be able to rub their horns on rocks and logs to keep their horns in good condition. Care must be taken to ensure structures in the enclosure will not cause the rhino to rub grooves into the horn. Rhinos will use their horns to play with objects.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Giving the rhinos opportunity to rub and scratch their horns and skin keeps them in good condition. This is a natural behaviour which will keep the rhino's horn and skin healthy. Toys for the rhino to interact with will encourage exploratory, manipulative and play behaviours.



White rhinos enjoy...

Space to graze naturally. They will spend much of their time with their heads low, grazing on grasses. To do this they need large enclosures where they can graze and socialise with members of their herd.

It is important to consider the amount of space a large, herd living animal will need to give them the best possible welfare.

WILD
WELFARE

