



White vs Black Rhino: What are the differences?

Description

South Africa has two species of rhino: the White Rhino which is the largest population and most commonly seen and the Black Rhino which is not as numerous and harder to spot.

The two species are distinct and here are a few of the differences most important to photographers.

Quick Comparison

White Rhino / Square-lipped Rhino	Black Rhino / Hooked-lipped Rhino
weight up to 2 tons	weight up to 1.2 tons
2 Horns	2 Horns
1.8m tall	1.6m tall
Grazer: Eats grass	Browser: Eats trees, shrubs and herbs
has a wide mouth suitable for grazing	Has pointed upper lip that can grasp
poor eyesight, good hearing & smell	poor eyesight, good hearing & smell
can live 40 – 45 years	can live 40 – 45 years
Social	Mostly solitary



A young black rhino grasps some leaves



White Rhino demonstrates grass chewing



Black Rhino: the lip can grasp like the tip of an elephant trunk



White Rhino: wide mouth and 2 horns

White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*)

- Has a wide mouth suited to grazing.
- Lives in social groups. Tends to be found in groups of 10 – 15 or smaller groups such as mother and small and juvenile calves, or young males.
- 2nd largest land mammal next to African Elephant

- Has long necks and wide mouths for eating grass. Can not lift head very high – this can cause drowning when in deeper water.
- When threatened or nervous they stand in a circle with their rears together forming a barricade with calves near the centre.
- The calf walks in front of the mother, with the mother using her horn to direct the calf by tapping it on the rear



White Rhino: standing in a defensive position with an ear and nose in each direction.



White Rhino: Mother with baby



White Rhino

Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)

- Browsers. Use their pointed upper lips like a miniature elephant trunk to twist off low growing branches of trees and shrubs. A short neck makes reaching possible.
- Have a reputation to be bad tempered, but are actually just shy and inquisitive. They will run towards anything unusual in their surroundings, but usually run away if they smell humans if unfamiliar to them. Some individual rhinos are very nervous and a female with a calf will charge anything she considers a potential threat
- It is the fastest rhino with top speed of 55 km/ hr
- More likely to be found in solitary keeping to the bushy areas
- Has long necks and wide mouths for eating grass. Can not lift head very high – this can cause drowning when in deeper water.
- Must drink at least every two to three days unless succulent plants are part of their diet
- The female will often walk in front of the calf possibly because she is clearing a pathway of danger and hazard for the baby.



Black Rhino



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Black Rhino: two rhino cautiously check out our vehicle

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