



INTERNATIONAL  
**RHINO**  
FOUNDATION

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



FOR 30 YEARS, IT HAS BEEN ALL ABOUT PEOPLE, PLACES AND, OF COURSE, LOTS OF RHINOS!







**Ensuring the survival of rhinos through strategic partnerships, targeted protection, and scientifically sound interventions.**

## LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Dear Team Rhino,

On May 14th, 2021, the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) celebrated its 30th anniversary. IRF was born when several concerned individuals came together in response to the black rhino poaching crisis in Zimbabwe in the early 1990s.

A few years later, IRF expanded our focus to include all five species of rhinos around the world. And for 30 years, we have held steadfast in our vision of saving rhinos from extinction. Over this time, we have learned from and collaborated with many smart and dedicated individuals, including researchers, organizations working on the ground and knowledgeable community members. And, of course, our dedicated members.

Through the years there have been challenges, successes and lots of hard work. This past year was no different, as the global pandemic continued to impact the local communities and partners who we work with to protect rhinos and restore habitats.

In spite of the challenges, IRF expanded our programs in key areas, including Nepal, where we are working with local communities to restore habitat for greater one-horned rhinos, Zambia, where we are supporting important work to identify and disrupt criminal poaching networks, and Indonesia, where we expanded our long-term support of the highly imperiled Sumatran rhino. Your generous donations kept rangers in the field, funded new technology in the fight against poaching, and helped local communities that have joined efforts to improve habitats for rhinos and other wildlife.

We maintain hope and optimism for the year ahead, as countries open back up and badly needed tourism travel resumes. It will take time for local economies to recover; however, our experience over the past 30 years and our dedicated partners, staff and supporters give us confidence that we can overcome any challenge that we might face in our shared mission of ensuring all five species of rhino thrive in the wild.

Thank you,



**JOHN LUKAS**  
President



**NINA FASCIONE**  
Executive Director



# STATE OF THE RHINO

At the beginning of the 20th century, the worldwide rhino population was estimated at 500,000 individuals.

Now, just 120 years later, only 28,000 survive.



## WHITE RHINO

*Ceratotherium simum*

**NEAR THREATENED**

**17,212 - 18,915**

**POPULATION DECREASING**

**LOCATED IN:** SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA, KENYA, ZIMBABWE, ZAMBIA, BOTSWANA, ESWATINI, MOZAMBIQUE



## BLACK RHINO

*Diceros bicornis*

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED**

**5,366 - 5,627**

**POPULATION INCREASING**

**LOCATED IN:** NAMIBIA, SOUTH AFRICA, KENYA, ZIMBABWE, TANZANIA, ZAMBIA, BOTSWANA, MALAWI, ESWATINI, RWANDA, MOZAMBIQUE, CHAD



## GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINO

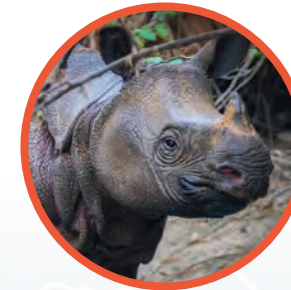
*Rhinoceros unicornis*

**VULNERABLE**

**> 4,000**

**POPULATION INCREASING**

**LOCATED IN:** INDIA, NEPAL, BHUTAN



## JAVAN RHINO

*Rhinoceros sondaicus*

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED**

**~75**

**POPULATION STABLE**

**LOCATED IN:** INDONESIA



## SUMATRAN RHINO

*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED**

**< 80**

**POPULATION DECREASING**

**LOCATED IN:** INDONESIA

## WHERE WE WORK

**< ZAMBIA**  
Wildlife Trafficking Intelligence & Analysis

**< ZIMBABWE**  
Lowveld Black Rhino Program

**< ESWATINI**  
Anti-Poaching Support

**NAMIBIA >**  
Community Rhino Ranger Program

**SOUTH AFRICA >**  
Anti-Poaching Support

### INDIA >

Protection & Wildlife Crime Intelligence

### NEPAL

Habitat Management

### < VIETNAM

Demand Reduction & Law Enforcement Capacity Support

### INDONESIA >

Sumatran Rhino Conservation

### INDONESIA >

Javan Rhino Conservation

## IRF FOCUSES PROGRAM SUPPORT IN SIX KEY AREAS:



**PROTECTION**



**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**CONSERVATION BREEDING**



**RESEARCH**



**HABITAT RESTORATION**



**DEMAND REDUCTION**



# TEAM RHINO SPOTLIGHT

## Inspiring People to Act

Fresno Chaffee Zoo traces its beginnings to the late 1920s. The Zoo has undergone many changes in the decades since, with a mission to connect people to nature through experiences and challenge them to take their own actions to support wildlife conservation.

Next year the zoo will open Kingdoms of Asia, with a focus on Southeast Asian wildlife and habitats. The new experience will feature some animals that once or still share habitats with Sumatran rhinos, including Malayan tigers, Sumatran orangutans, songbirds, and others. The Zoo will also be highlighting its conservation partners which work to protect Critically Endangered species around the world.

Fresno Chaffee Zoo found itself in a fortunate position to provide additional funding for conservation projects at the end of 2021 and put out a call for proposals to all of its conservation partners. At the time, IRF was raising funds for our on-the-ground partner in Indonesia, Yayasan Badak Indonesia, to enlarge the maternity boma for Rosa to give birth in early 2022. The Zoo enthusiastically joined the project, providing significant funding.

***“Sumatran rhinos are amazing, and we knew we could help build the program,”*** said Dean Watanabe, Chief Mission Officer for Fresno Chaffee Zoo. “We are proud to have been a part of the birth of the new calf.”



## Directing Your Skills to What You Love

Eric Piesner’s interests in the outdoors, animals and the environment were instilled at an early age even though he was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. His father was adventurous by nature and a serious outdoor enthusiast. He fondly remembers trips to the countryside with his father.

Eric’s adventure genes took him to Hawaii for law school and to Asia for his career. At each stop, he spent his free time learning about conservation and connecting to nature. Eric serves as a firm-wide Managing Partner, Asia Managing Partner, and heads Morrison Foerster’s Asia Real Estate legal practice.

With more than 25 years of legal experience, Eric wanted to apply his skills to his conservation passion. He first connected with IRF as a donor and then as a volunteer with his Morrison Foerster colleagues. As he got to know IRF, we got to know him and value his skills and dedication to our mission. Eric officially joined IRF’s advisory board at the end of 2021.

One of Eric’s favorite quotes is from Dylan Thomas, “rage, rage against the dying of the light.” He believes, ***“We need to keep fighting for rhinos because nothing is impossible. The alternative is to do nothing, and that’s ridiculous.”***



## Running For Rhinos

*Last year, Team Rhino laced up their shoes and took to the roads and trails to help rhinos*

Founded in 2018, I Run 4 Movement has hosted more than 150+ virtual events celebrating with fitness fans across the country by creating unique opportunities to raise money and awareness for causes our community is passionate about.

In 2021, they launched the Save the Chubby Unicorn virtual run. Available as a 5 or 10k, the miles can be logged anywhere. With each entry, I Run 4 Movement makes a donation to IRF, supporting rhino conservation programs around the world. The event has proved to be very popular, raising more than \$5,000 so far, and has been continued into 2022, providing a chance for runners to earn great rewards and help rhinos.

Last summer, IRF hosted its first ever virtual challenge, asking Team Rhino to run, walk, hike or even swim 30 miles in honor of our 30th anniversary. We thought the Rhino Protection Units (RPU) of Indonesia would be the perfect inspiration for challenge participants since 30 miles is a normal day at the “office” for RPUs. RPUs spend 15 days at a time on patrol traversing rivers and climbing through dense rainforests to keep Javan and Sumatran rhinos protected.

The RPU Challenge ended on August 31 (the 26th anniversary of the beginning of the RPU program) and was a big success! More than 110 people registered for the challenge, raising more than \$5,000 for rhino conservation and logging more than 3,300 miles in support of RPUs! Participants added up their miles throughout the summer. Miles were logged by runners, walkers, hikers and even a few swimmers as well.



## Dr. Susie Ellis Honored for IRF’s Work

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens held the International Desert Conservation Summit in 2021 with a focus on “Restoring Rhinos in Africa” with a variety of expert panelists, including Dr. Susie Ellis, former executive director of IRF. Dr. Ellis also received one of the first Living Desert Conservation Hero Awards, accepting on behalf of the International Rhino Foundation.

Dr. Ellis also received the 2020 Lifetime Achievement AAZK Meritorious Service Award.





# OUR PROGRAMS

## GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINOS



Poaching losses decreased to only one in Assam, India



Population increased to more than 4,000 total across India, Nepal and Bhutan

### 2021 Highlights:

### IRV 2.0 Takes Shape

The Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV2020) program came to a close, with the translocation of two rhinos from Kaziranga National Park to Manas National Park in April of 2021. IRV2020 was established in 2005 with a goal to increase the rhino population in India's state of Assam to 3,000, by establishing populations in seven protected areas. Rhinos are now found in four Protected Areas in Assam: Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Orang National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and Manas National Park.



Over the last year, the IRV 2020 partners met to outline goals for the coming years with plans to build on the successes and learnings from the previous program. Meetings to approve the plan, affectionately called IRV 2.0, have been delayed due to the global pandemic, but the hope is that the new program will begin in 2022 under the leadership of Assam Forest Department, along with supporting partners, and translocations could commence again by the end of the year.



© Assam Forest Department and Indian Rhino Vision 2020

## Working with Local Communities to Restore Habitat in India

One of the most significant landscape-level threats to greater one-horned rhinos is the prevalence of invasive species, which choke out native rhino food plants and limit the amount of habitat available for rhinos and other wildlife. IRF is collaborating with our NGO partner, Aaranyak, and local community members to remove these invasive plants from Manas National Park in India as a pilot phase, where around one-third of the rhinos' grassland habitat has already been taken over by invasive species.

Over the past year, local community members successfully restored 50 acres of prime rhino habitat under the supervision of Aaranyak and Manas National Park officials. We plan to restore another 250 acres over the next two years. Engagement of local people in removal of invasive plant species also offers them livelihood and in that way it helps park officials to garner better support from local communities along with improvement of grassland habitats.



### IRF Expands to Nepal

IRF expanded our greater one-horned rhino conservation program to Nepal in 2021 by making our first grant to the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC). The project has so far helped remove invasive plants and restore 100 hectares of rhino habitat in Chitwan National Park, home to the second largest population of greater one-horned rhinos in the world. Over the next two years, NTNC will remove invasive plant species from 250 hectares of grassland areas in the Park. Funds will be used to pay the wages of local community members, who manually uproot invasive species, and for supplies such as grasscutters, fuel, camera traps and batteries, as well as staff salaries of NTNC to monitor wildlife activity across the project sites.



# SUMATRAN RHINOS

## 2021 Highlights:



More than 20,000 native rhino-food seedlings were replanted in Way Kambas National Park in Sumatra.



Provided protection to one of the last viable wild Sumatran rhino populations, located in the Leuser Ecosystem in Sumatra, Indonesia.

## The Sumatran Rhino Breeding Program Expands

On Nov. 12, 2021, Indonesian government officials and conservation partners broke ground on a new Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) in the Leuser Ecosystem in Aceh Province, on the island of Sumatra. The new SRS will be the third breeding facility, joining the current facilities in Way Kambas National Park in southern Sumatra (home to seven rhinos) as well as the small sanctuary in East Kalimantan that houses “Pahu,” a female Sumatran rhino captured in 2018. The Aceh sanctuary is scheduled to be completed by October of 2022.



## Sumatran Rhino Rescue Prepares for Captures

*Sumatran Rhino Rescue is an international alliance supporting the Government of Indonesia's national Sumatran rhino conservation breeding program.*

Despite ongoing delays caused by the pandemic and travel restrictions, Sumatran Rhino Rescue is moving forward with plans to begin capturing and translocating rhinos into the rhino sanctuaries in late 2022. During 2021, trainings were held via Zoom, with plans to convene in-person training as soon as possible. Topics include capture scenario planning, post-capture husbandry and immobilization drugs, some of the most critical skills required to safely capture rhinos.

Sumatran Rhino Rescue supports the Government of Indonesia's Emergency Action Plan for Sumatran Rhino Conservation, which lays out a roadmap for bringing this species back from the

brink of extinction. Despite COVID restrictions, the government approved survey teams continue to patrol the rhinos' range area, documenting signs of rhino activity to ensure that captures, which could begin in late 2022, are as smooth as possible.

It is critical that these activities continue, despite the challenges of the global pandemic, for the survival of the Critically Endangered Sumatran rhino. IRF strongly feels that survival of the remaining population of Sumatran rhino is ever challenging, but not impossible to secure its future. IRF will continue to work closely with the Indonesia government and local partners to help secure the future of critically endangered Sumatran Rhinos.

© Nick Garbutt

# JAVAN RHINOS

## 2021 Highlights:



Four new Javan rhino calves were born.



Javan marine patrol halted more than 225 illegal fishing activities in its second year of operations.

## Monitoring Program Spots New Javan Rhino Calves in Ujung Kulon National Park



Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry announced in August that the world's only remaining population of Javan rhinos has increased to 75 individuals in Ujung Kulon National Park (UKNP).

In April and June 2021, two Javan rhino calves were spotted on camera by the Park's Javan Rhino Monitoring Team. This is the second set of births in 2021, and offsets natural deaths in the population.

Cameras are positioned throughout the Park to identify individual rhinos and assist park officials in tracking new births for population counting. Through its on-the-ground partner, Yayasan Badak Indonesia, IRF provides support for this program, and donated one hundred new cameras last year to replace damaged or missing cameras.

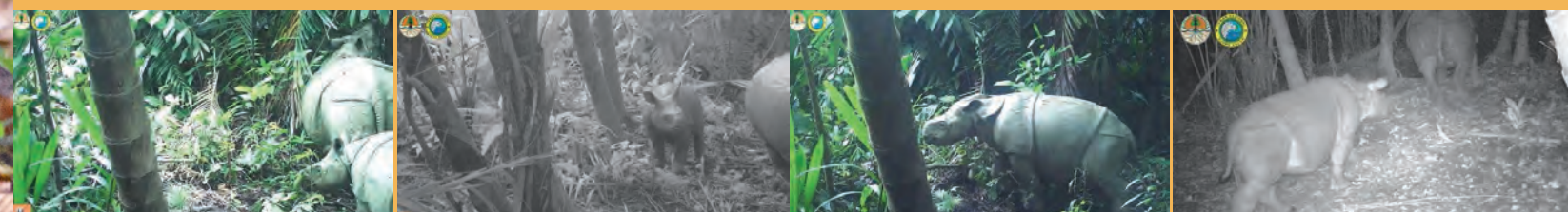
Ten years ago, there were fewer than 50 Javan rhinos in UKNP, but with the Park's conservation efforts, the rhino population has been gradually increasing, with at least one new calf every year since 2012.

Javan rhinos are found only in Indonesia's UKNP, where the population appears to have stabilized, largely because they are guarded by terrestrial and marine-based Rhino Protection Units.

IRF appreciates the efforts being taken by Indonesia's Ministry for Environment and Forestry to secure the future of critically endangered Javan rhinos. IRF is committed to support the efforts of the Indonesian government where needed.



© Stephen Belcher



Images of Sumatran and Javan rhinos are courtesy of the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry



# BLACK & WHITE RHINOS

## 2021 Highlights:



Twenty-nine black rhinos translocated, through a team exercise in which IRF funded planning and operational inputs, to reestablish a population in Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe.



Provided legal training for 281 rangers and reserve managers in South Africa, empowering them to develop stronger court evidence against poachers and to ensure arrests are safe and effective.



In Zimbabwe's Lowveld, which contains three growing black rhino populations rated as "Key" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, rhino poaching was kept at a low level in 2021, mainly through proactive work to disrupt poaching gangs, in which IRF provided funding support. **More poachers (eight) were dealt with through this effort than the number of rhinos that they managed to poach in the Lowveld (five).**

## Ranger Support and Training in South Africa

IRF's partner in South Africa is Stop Rhino Poaching (SRP), a local NGO that works with selected reserves throughout South Africa to improve security and anti-poaching efforts. A key component of SRP's work is facilitating specialized training on tracking, tactical first aid, information gathering, legal issues and other topics for rangers and reserve managers, all of which is enabled by the IRF's core support of the organization.

In 2021, amongst many other projects, SRP provided tactical first aid training and specialized trauma first aid kits for Kruger National Park's advanced night operations

team, and trained 32 rangers from Welgevonden Game Reserve and Addo Elephant National Park on human tracking and operational readiness. Thanks to IRF's funding, 281 rangers and managers from over twenty rhino reserves across the country participated in SRP's innovative legal training program, developed to contribute to "technicality free" arrests and more successful prosecutions of rhino crimes. IRF's support has also enabled the roll out of a new training session, which aims to better equip managers and supervisors with the necessary legal knowledge of the journey a case takes beyond arrest. Important because of concerns surrounding the judicial process in some areas, this full-day session informs managers as to how they can keep a watchful eye on the court process and what they can influence if law enforcement officials are underperforming.



© Welgevonden Game Reserve

## Black Rhinos Return to Gonarezhou



© Lowveld Rhino Trust

After nearly 30 years of absence, Critically Endangered black rhinos were reintroduced to Gonarezhou National Park by the Gonarezhou Conservation Trust's team of experts and partners. In July 2021, the International Rhino Foundation's partner in Zimbabwe, the Lowveld Rhino Trust (LRT), participated in a translocation to re-establish the initial population in Gonarezhou.

In all, 29 rhinos were translocated from three other areas of Zimbabwe - Buby Valley Conservancy, Malilangwe and Save Valley, to establish the new population in Gonarezhou. The new population is doing well, in fact, towards the end of last year the first calf was born in the park.

The Gonarezhou Conservation Trust (GCT) is an innovative conservation partnership between the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and the Frankfurt Zoological Society that is responsible for the management of Gonarezhou National Park. IRF supported a feasibility study to assist in planning for this reintroduction and provided funding to support the translocations through the Lowveld Rhino Trust.



© Lowveld Rhino Trust



# BLACK & WHITE RHINOS

## Technology Deployed to Combat Wildlife Crime

Rhino reserves and neighboring communities faced huge economic losses as COVID-19 restrictions ground travel and tourism to a halt and governments reduced their conservation budgets. Many local reserves lost 70-90% of their conservation funding, jeopardizing their ability to keep critical intelligence and law enforcement operations in place. It will likely take them years to recover.

In 2020, IRF provided emergency funding through the Reserve Relief Fund to help bridge financial gaps. This year, IRF continued funding these critical protection and monitoring programs.

With the emergency grants to selected reserves, they have been able to maintain ranger salaries and proactive security patrols, maintain analyst capabilities, provide needed equipment and in some cases deploy technology to help counter the criminal syndicates involved in rhino poaching.

IRF has supported security clusters consisting of more than 20 rhino reserves in South Africa to install real-time security cameras and surveillance cameras, resulting in the apprehension of 22 poachers to date.

IRF supported Stop Rhino Poaching's mobile radar unit with high-tech surveillance capabilities that can be moved to poaching or incursion hotspots. Having flexible and responsive technological tools such as the mobile radar unit allow security teams to react quickly to poaching syndicates' ever-changing attacks on rhino reserves.

Poaching remains a highly-organized, well-funded and syndicated threat to rhinos' survival. IRF's nimble and responsive support ensures that reserve and security managers are better prepared to take on the poaching threat.

# RESEARCH UPDATE

The International Rhino Foundation (IRF) provides the only source of research funding devoted exclusively to rhinos, and over the past 20 years, we have issued more than **\$2 million** in research funding that is directly applicable to management, propagation and conservation of rhinos under protection and management in the wild.

During our last research grant cycle, we awarded \$262,326 for eleven rhino research grants, including five grants to graduate students, which fell within six target areas, including:

- Improving rhino population monitoring and/or tracking;
- Economic analysis of rhino conservation;
- Determination of the conservation value of different rhino populations;
- A desk study on the Sumatran rhino captures in the 1980s and 1990s; and
- Investigating factors affecting health, well-being and reproduction *ex situ*.



© Jesse Jeune | courtesy of Nicholas Harvey

These target areas were identified by international rhino conservation practitioners as the greatest need in the field. \$50,000 of this funding was generously bequeathed from Mark Hopkins Schell.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LATEST RESEARCH CYCLE



In South Africa, scientists examined how capture and translocation physiologically affects black rhinos and whether there are physical changes or stress responses for the animals. The findings have been immediately integrated into some capture and translocation practices in the field in order to reduce disease or injury and to improve the animals' success in their new habitat.



In Zambia, conservationists are working with international partners in three protected areas to refine a new rhino tracking system that uses a transmitter implanted in rhinos' horns. Once perfected, this monitoring system will allow for park managers to track rhinos' movement patterns and interactions. This critical information ensures the rhinos' safety and health.



The Rhino Research Center reviewed the Sumatran rhino capture and translocation operations in the 1980's and 1990's to develop recommendations for capture in the Sumatran Rhino Rescue project.



Researchers from Taronga Conservation Society Australia and the University of Sydney determined safe and efficacious dose rates for several NSAIDs (non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs) in black rhinos.



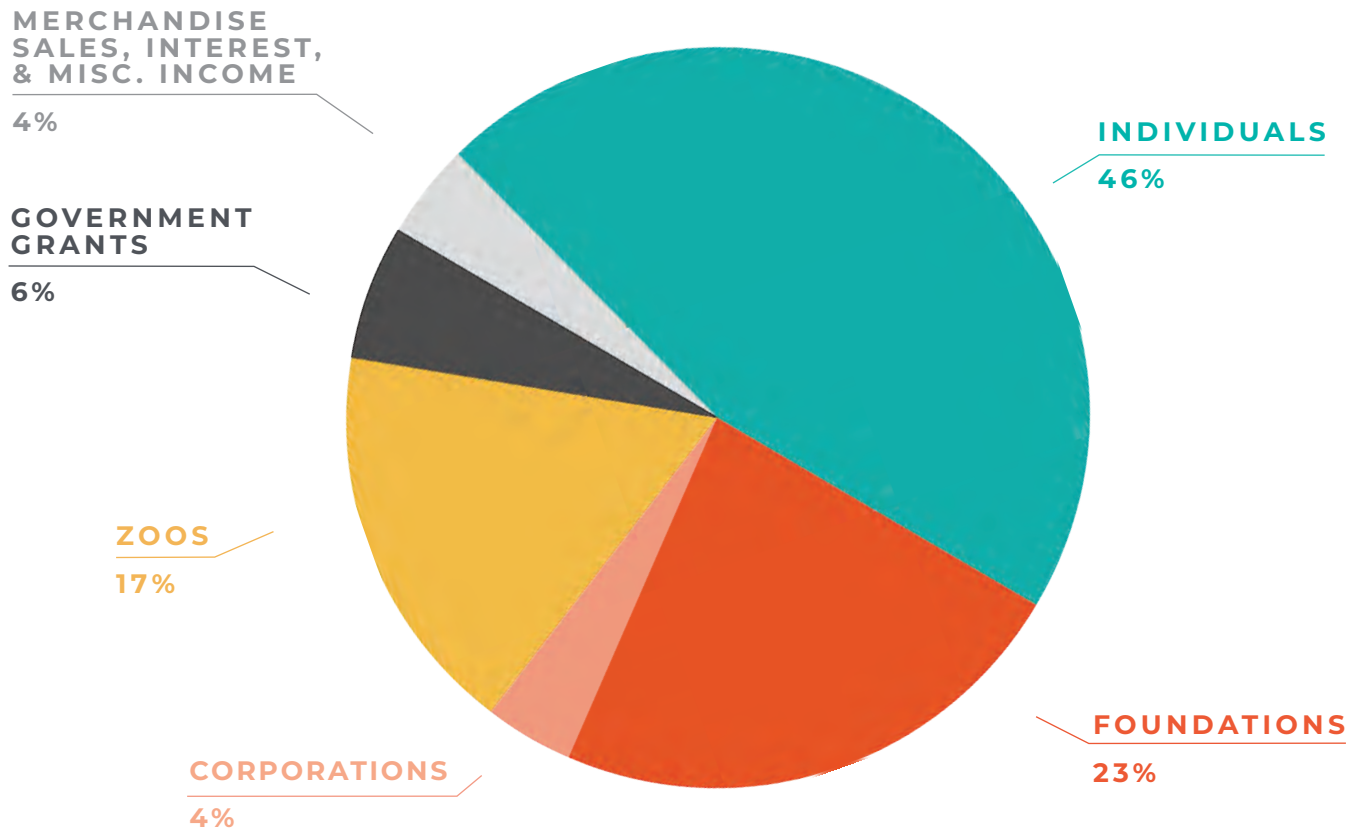
At the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, scientists explored how southern black rhinos' gut microbiota are affected by *ex situ* management.



# THE FINANCIALS

## 2021 REVENUE

INDIVIDUALS	\$1,369,322
FOUNDATIONS	\$685,367
CORPORATIONS	\$123,214
ZOOS	\$509,816
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	\$168,474
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$2,856,193
MERCHANDISE SALES, NET	\$9,214
INTEREST & MISC. INCOME	\$110,206
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,975,613



## 2021 EXPENSES

AFRICAN RHINO CONSERVATION	\$648,272
INDIA & NEPAL RHINO CONSERVATION	\$179,495
INDONESIAN RHINO CONSERVATION	\$2,008,936
RESEARCH & TECHNICAL SUPPORT	\$11,500
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$2,848,203
MANAGEMENT	\$274,672
COMMUNICATIONS	\$207,209
FUNDRAISING	\$299,504
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSES	\$3,629,588

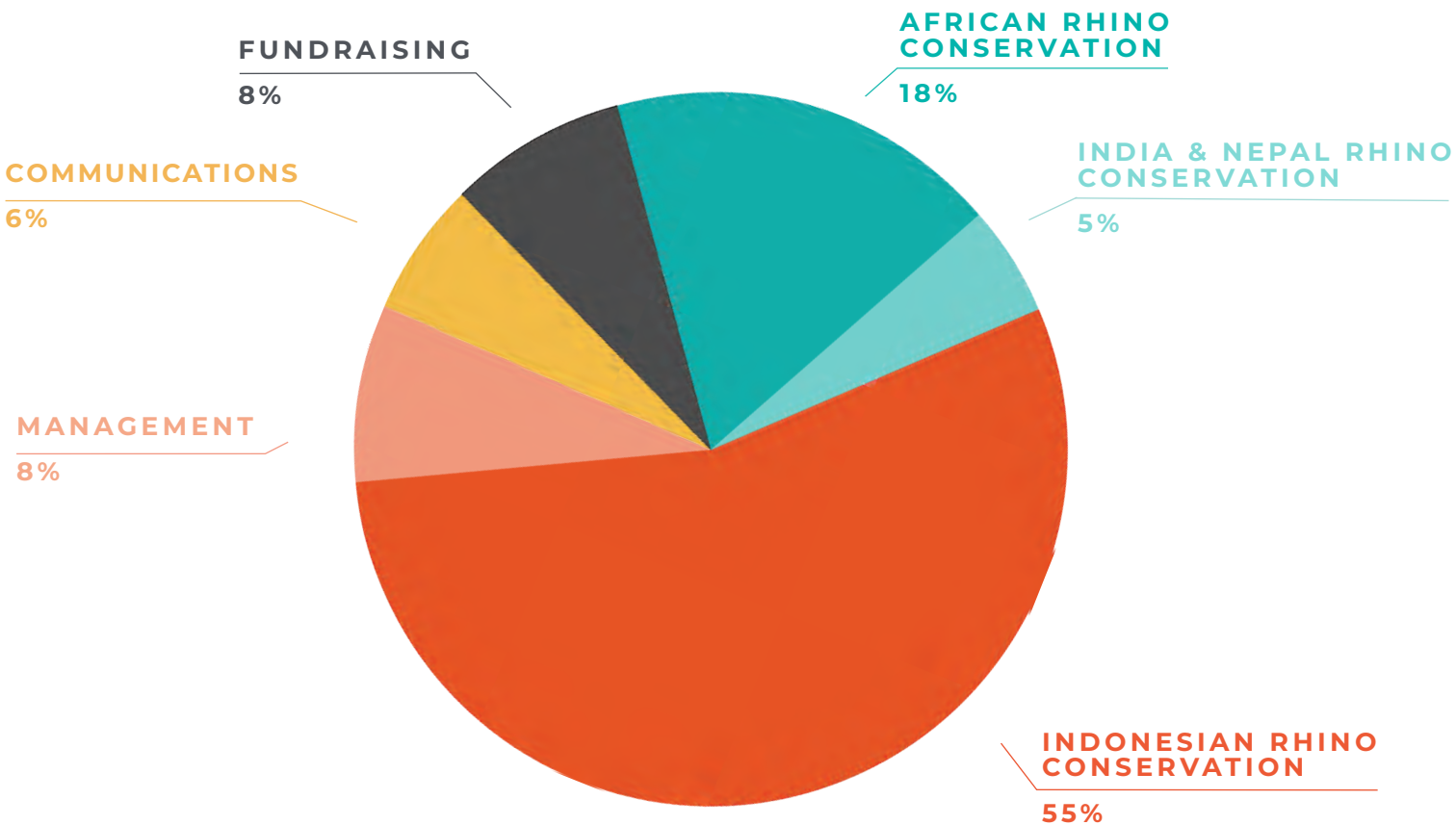






photo by Nico van Strien | International Rhino Foundation

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current as of printing

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Guwahati, India

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