

The Great Indian **One-horned Rhinoceros**

Kaziranga National Park in Assam is home to nearly 90 percent of the great Indian one-horned rhinoceros population. This endangered species is a target for poachers because rhino

horns are in high demand on the global black market, where one kilogram fetches around Rs. 80,000. Rhino horn is used in various Asian medicines. But while rhinos continue to be mercilessly

killed, increased security and greater anti-poaching efforts with the help of the Wildlife Institute of India, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local conservation groups have helped this endangered species survive.

The conservation of the one-horned rhino in India has been a great success. In 1905, one-horned rhinos had declined to less than 20 in Kaziranga. Through strict protection, this population increased to more than 1,850 by 2006. The World Wildlife Fund's Indian Rhino Vision 2020 Project, championed by the Assam government, in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida-based International Rhino Foun-

dation is working to build the population of wild rhinos in Assam to 3,000 by 2020.

In 1994, the U.S. Congress established the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A 2006 Congressional appropriation of \$1.5 million, along with matching funds from host countries and conservation groups, paid for 44 vital rhino and tiger conservation projects. Grants are awarded for anti-poaching programs, habitat and ecosystem management, radio equipment to facilitate communication among park personnel, development of nature reserves, wildlife surveys and monitoring, management of human-wildlife conflict, public awareness campaigns and other conservation efforts.

—S.K.



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A pair of rhinos at the Kaziranga National Park in Assam.