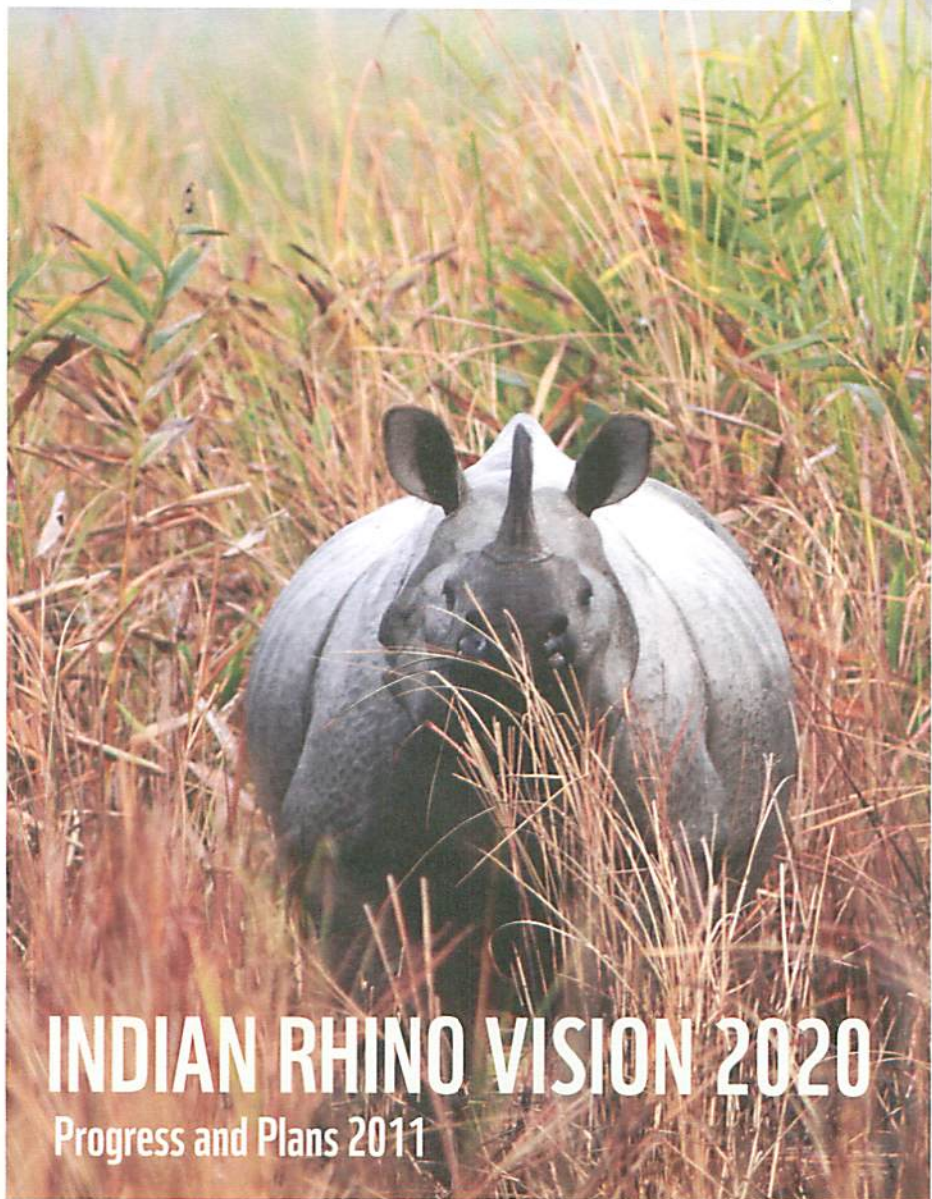




BODOLAND
TERRITORIAL COUNCIL



INDIAN RHINO VISION 2020

Progress and Plans 2011



The Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020) is a joint programme of the Department of Environment and Forests, Government of Assam, the WWF-India, the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), along with the Bodoland Territorial Council and supported by a number of local organizations and NGOs.

Specific Plans

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Phase 1

The first phase of the programme lasted from July 2005 to June 2008, when intensive field work was done to improve protection to the existing rhino populations as well as monitor all source and target Protected Areas.

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Phase 2

The second phase involved translocating rhinos from two source populations - Kaziranga and Pobitora, into three target Protected Areas - Manas, Laokhowa – Burachapori – Kochmora, and Dibru Saikhowa.

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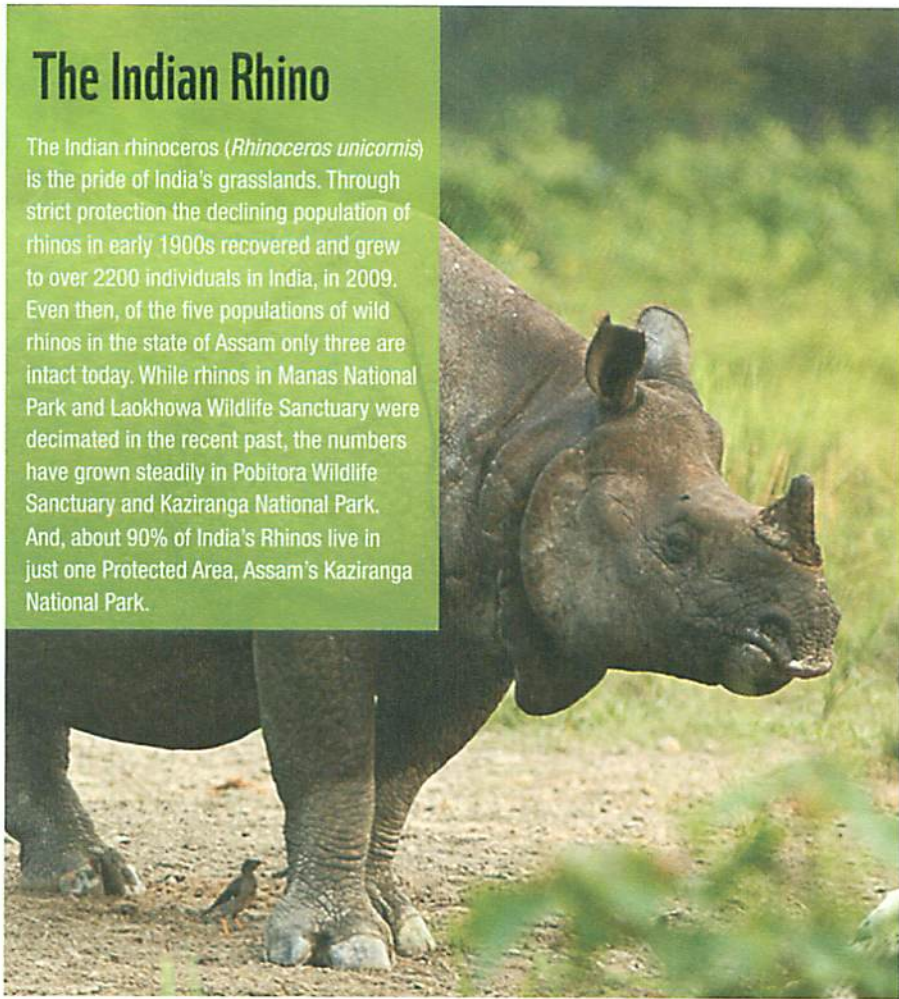


Phase 3

Strengthen existing rhino habitats, secure additional potential habitats for rhinos and scientifically manage the existing populations.

The Indian Rhino

The Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is the pride of India's grasslands. Through strict protection the declining population of rhinos in early 1900s recovered and grew to over 2200 individuals in India, in 2009. Even then, of the five populations of wild rhinos in the state of Assam only three are intact today. While rhinos in Manas National Park and Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary were decimated in the recent past, the numbers have grown steadily in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaziranga National Park. And, about 90% of India's Rhinos live in just one Protected Area, Assam's Kaziranga National Park.



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MAJOR THREATS



Poaching and habitat loss



Straying of wild rhinos into unprotected areas



Other risks like disease, in-breeding depression and mass mortality.

The vision

ATTAIN A POPULATION OF 3000 WILD RHINOS IN ASSAM DISTRIBUTED OVER SEVEN OF ITS PROTECTED AREAS BY THE YEAR 2020

IRV programme aims to

- a) Improve the security of all wild rhino bearing Protected Areas in Assam.
- b) Expand the distribution of rhinos to reduce risks like disease, in-breeding depression and mass mortality as well as reduce the pressures on rhino population in any single habitat.

Implementing agencies

The IRV 2020 is implemented by the Department of Forests, Government of Assam as guided by the Task Force and Translocation Core Committee in partnership with WWF and IRF. There is active technical and financial support from all the partner organisations taking the program forward.

The Progress

A Task Force was constituted by the Government of Assam for translocation of rhinos in Assam in 2005. This Task Force formed two special committees, one each for assessment of security and habitat. The support it has given includes infrastructure development, strengthening manpower, intelligence gathering and communication network, enhancing of patrolling and mobility of patrol staff as well as training to improve enforcement and technical skills. It has also helped in building relationships with the communities.



The Task Force constituted the Translocation Core Committee to take forward the IRV 2020 program, implement the rhino translocations and effectively monitor the rhinos in Assam.



The community outreach programs have been implemented successfully and such efforts by all the partners of IRV 2020 have helped garner support for the conservation of the rhino population in the rhino bearing Protected Areas.

BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Manas National Park is experiencing a tourism revival after facing years of political and social instability.



The revival of this park has created opportunities for local tourism entrepreneurs who provide tourism services. Another example is the revival of local arts – locals from a village near the park entrance perform the traditional Bihu dance for tourists visiting Manas. These locals were trained as part of community support activities under IRV 2020.



POPULATION OF WILD RHINOS IN ASSAM

	Name of PA	1999	2006	2009
1	Kaziranga NP	1552	1855	2048
2.	Pobitora WLS	74	81	84
3.	Rajiv Gandhi Orang NP	46	68	64
4.	Manas NP	nil	2	5
	TOTAL	1672	2006	2201

Source : Assam Forest Department

The Translocations



In mid-2008, two male rhinos were re-introduced into the Manas National Park from the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, while six rhinos were re-introduced between December 2010-January 2011. Efforts will be made to translocate 12 more rhinos from Pobitora and Kaziranga to Manas before the end of April 2012.

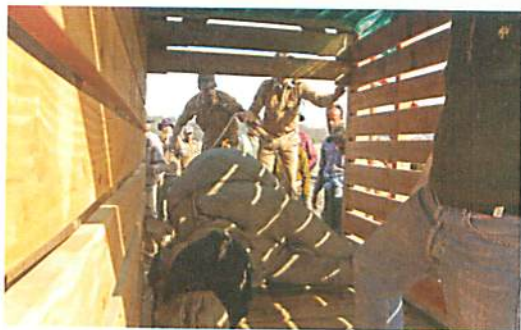
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The Team

The translocations are carried out by six dedicated teams with members drawn from multiple backgrounds and organisations that have come together to conserve the rhinos in Assam.

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The Transportation

The rhinos are transported to their destinations in specially designed crates; each in a separate truck under strict security provided by the Assam Police and the state Forest Department as well as veterinary assistance.

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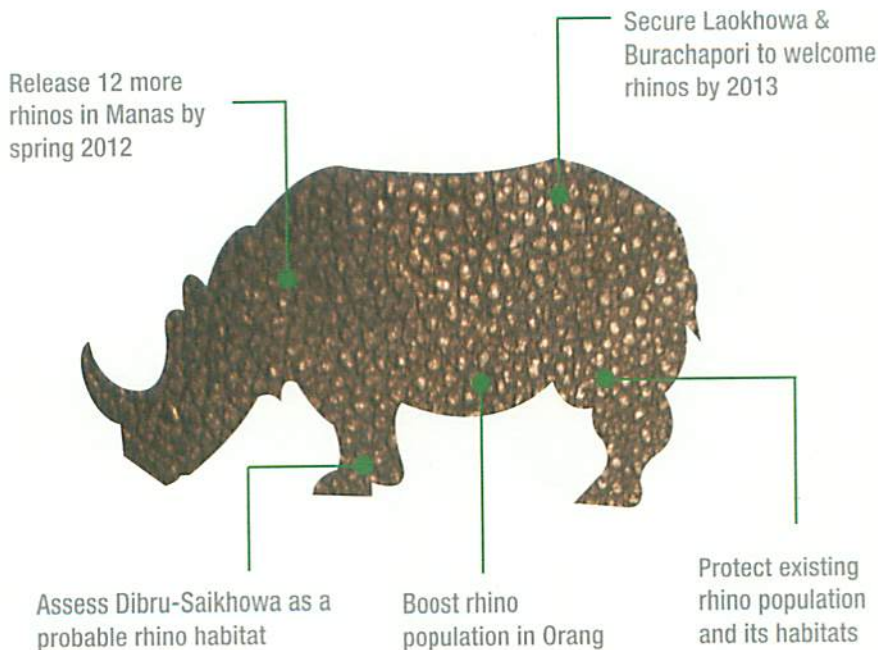


Release and Monitoring

A specially trained team releases them while another team ensures the radio-collared rhinos are monitored on a daily basis. Attempts are being made to document their behaviour and habitat use in Manas National Park.

The Future

In subsequent years, more rhinos will be translocated to Manas National Park, while Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary and Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuary will also be taken up. A feasibility study will also be done to translocate rhinos to Dibru Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary.



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