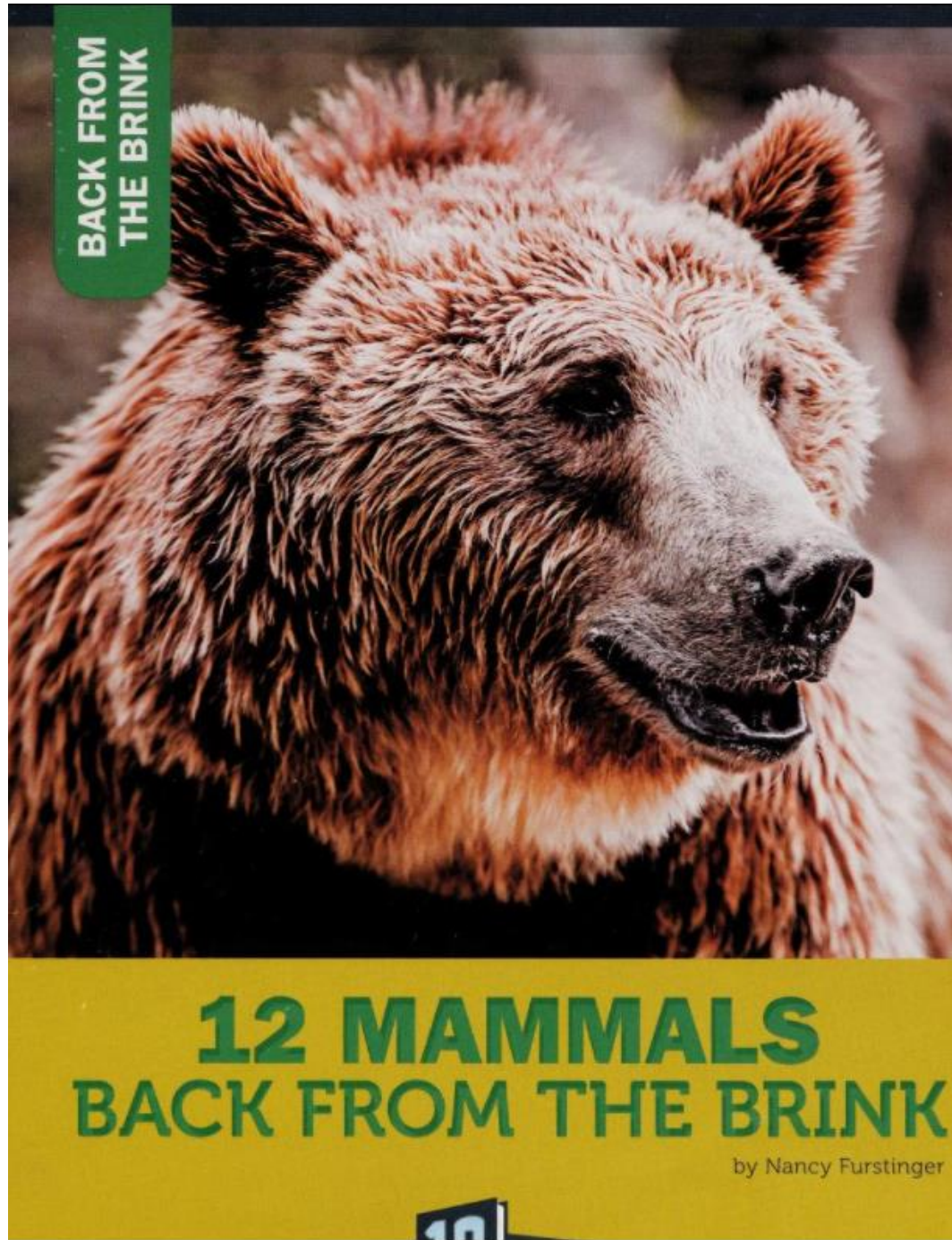


2014

12 mammals back from the brink

by Furstinger, Nancy, author



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SOUTHERN WHITE RHINOS SAVED FROM EXTINCTION


Southern white rhinoceroses are actually gray, not white. Their tough-looking skin is very sensitive to bug bites and sunburn. Rhinos roll in the mud because it is soothing. These animals are one of the biggest on Earth. They can weigh up to 6,000 pounds (2,722 kg). Their huge heads

make up 2,000 pounds (907 kg) of that weight. They graze about half the time that they are awake. But their size made rhinos easy targets.

These rhinos once ranged across southern Africa. By 1892, they were believed to be extinct. Hunters



Male rhinos use their horns to fight off attackers.



White rhinos
use water and
mud to soothe
their skin.

had shot most of the white rhinos. People in Asia prized the horns and paid a lot of money for them. They ground them up to make medicine. But there is no proof that rhino horn cures any illness.

Yet the rhino had survived. In 1895, a group of approximately 100 rhinos turned up in South Africa. People started breeding them on ranches. Some of the rhinos were then relocated to protected areas. By 2013, their numbers had increased to 20,000. They are no longer considered endangered, but African

countries where they live continue to have laws against hunting them.

120

Pounds (54 kg) of
grass a southern
white rhino eats in
a day.

Status: Near threatened

Population:

Approximately 20,000

Home: South Africa,
Namibia, Zimbabwe,
and Kenya

Life Span: 40 years