Northern White Rhino

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Species*

Why in News?

The death of Sudan, the last male northern white rhino, highlights both the reality of extinction and the emotional toll on his caretakers. In vitro fertilisation (IVF) offers one possible path to revive the species.

- **Scientific name –** Ceratotherium simum cottoni.
- It is a ***subspecies of the white rhinoceros*** and is considered the most endangered animal on Earth.

White rhinos *(Ceratotherium simum) – The most populous of the 5 rhino species with approximately 15,752 animals across 11 countries in Africa, 2 subspecies - southern (C.s. simum) and northern (C.s. cottoni).*

- **Family –** Rhinocerotidae.
- **Historic range –** It was once ranged across north-western Uganda, southern Chad, south-western Sudan, the eastern part of the Central African Republic and north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- **Extinct in the Wild** – Now, just 2 northern white rhinoceros remaining in the world (both female) live under constant protection from poachers in Kenya's Ol Pejeta Conservancy.
- **Habitat –** They are grazing mammals that prefer ***open grasslands, savannahs, and shrublands*** and rest under shade trees.
- **Physical Characteristics** – They are lighter and smaller than their southern counterparts, and compared to southern white rhinoceroses, they tend to have longer limbs, a shorter palate, and a flatter skull.



- **Social Behaviour –** They live in groups of up to 10 individuals and use their horns to fight.
- **Size –** Male northern white rhinoceroses are noticeably larger than females.
- The males can weigh up to 1,600 kg, stand nearly 2 meters tall, and measure between 3.7 and 4 meters in length.
- **Lifespan –** They can live ***up to 50 years in the wild*** and 55 years in captivity.
- **Cause of decline –** Poaching for horns, political instability, and habitat loss.
- **Conservation Status –**
    - **IUCN** – Critically Endangered
- Conservationists are working on techniques to create embryos to be carried by southern white rhinoceroses to prevent their extinction.

To know about the Rhino population and various measures of India, click here

References

1. A-Z Animals | The Hidden Process Behind Species Extinction
2. Britannica | Northern White Rhino
3. Flora & Fauna | Northern White Rhino

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