



Greater One-Horned Rhino

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Why in News

The claims by different political parties over significant reduction in poaching of Greater One-Horned Rhino has become an issue in Assam Assembly Elections.

According to the Assam Forest Department, poaching has **reduced by 86% in the last three years.**

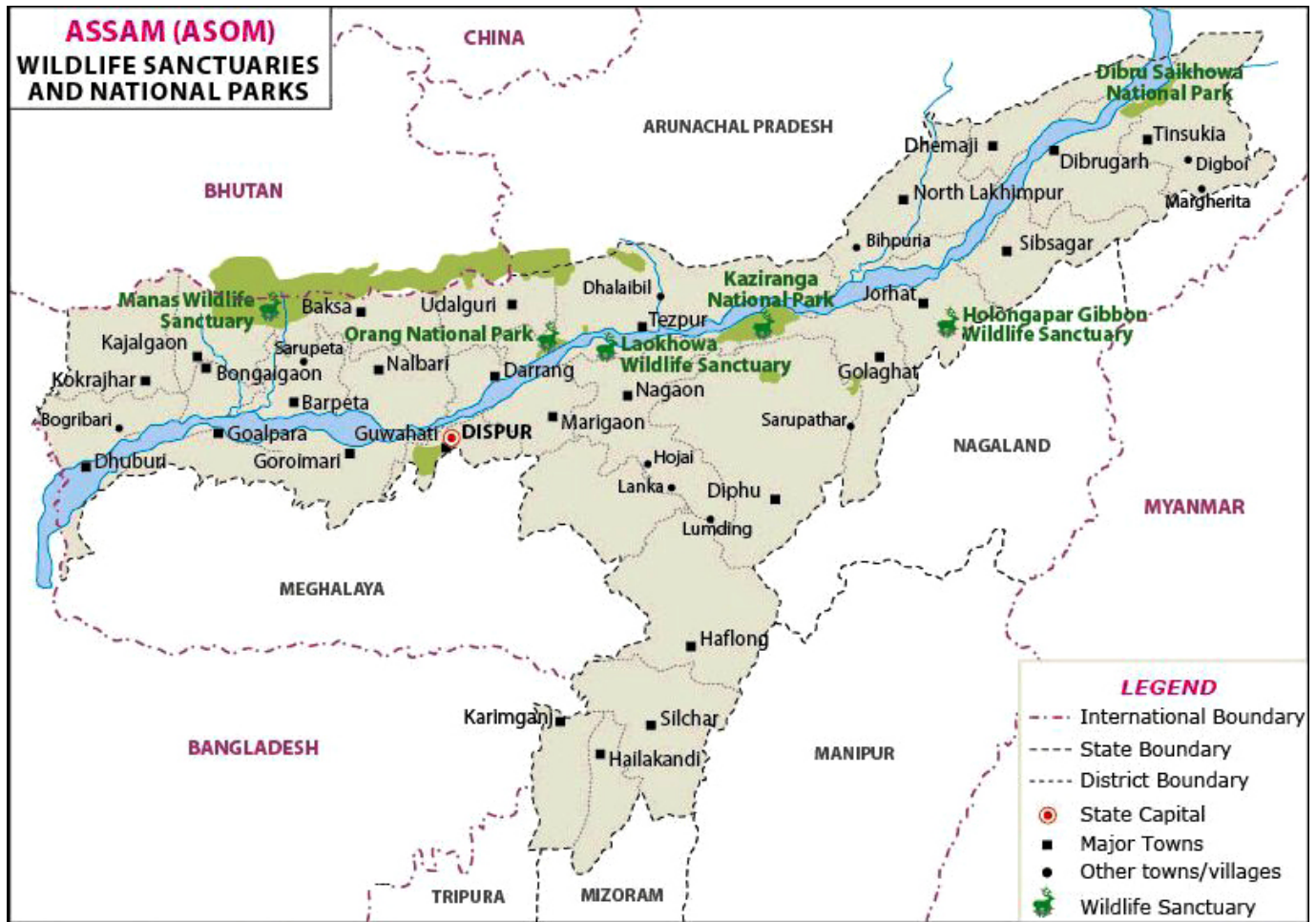
Key Points

- **About:**

- The Greater **One-Horned Rhino** is one among the **five different species of Rhino**. The **other four are:**
 - **Black Rhino:** Smaller of the two African species.
 - **White Rhino:** Recently, researchers have created an embryo of the **northern white rhino by using In vitro Fertilization (IVF) process.**
 - **Javan Rhino:** **Critically endangered** in IUCN Red List.
 - **Sumatran Rhino:** Recently gone extinct in Malaysia.
- There are **three species of rhino in Asia—Greater one-horned** (Rhinoceros unicornis), **Javan and Sumatran.**
- Only the Great One-Horned Rhino is found in India.
- Also known as Indian rhino, it is the **largest of the rhino species.**
- It is identified by a **single black horn** and a grey-brown hide with skin folds.
- They **primarily graze**, with a diet consisting almost entirely of grasses as well as leaves, branches of shrubs and trees, fruit, and aquatic plants.

- **Habitat:**
 - The species is restricted to small habitats in Indo-Nepal terai and northern West Bengal and Assam.
 - In India, rhinos are mainly found in **Assam, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.**
 - Assam has an estimated **2,640 rhinos in four protected areas**, i.e. **Pabitora Wildlife Reserve**, Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, Kaziranga National Park, and **Manas National Park**.
 - About **2,400 of them are in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR)**
- **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN Red List**: Vulnerable.
 - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix I** (Threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, for instance for scientific research).
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**: Schedule I.
- **Threats :**
 - Poaching for the horns
 - Habitat loss
 - Population density
 - Decreasing Genetic diversity
- **Conservation Efforts by India:**
 - The **five rhino range nations** (India, Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia) have signed a declaration '**The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019**' for the **conservation and protection** of the species.
 - Recently, the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has begun a project to create **DNA profiles of all rhinos** in the country.
 - **National Rhino Conservation Strategy**: It was launched in 2019 to conserve the greater one-horned rhinoceros.
 - **Indian Rhino Vision 2020**: Launched in 2005, it is an ambitious effort to attain a wild population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos spread over seven protected areas in the Indian state of Assam by the year 2020.

Kaziranga National Park



- **Location:**

It is located in the State of Assam and covers 42,996 Hectare (ha). It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.

- **Legal Status:**

- It was declared as a National Park in 1974.
- It has been declared a **tiger reserve** since 2007. It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km.

- **International Status:**

- It was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1985.
- It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.

- **Important Species Found:**

- Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are focused on the '**big four**' species— **Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo**.
- As per the figures of **tiger census conducted in 2018**, Kaziranga had an estimated 104 tigers, the **fourth highest population** in India after **Jim Corbett National Park (231)** in Uttarakhand, **Nagarhole National Park (127)** and **Bandipur National Park (126)** in Karnataka.
- Kaziranga is also home to 9 of the 14 species of primates found in the Indian subcontinent.

Source -TH