



PANGOLIN

RHINO



Hi Alex

Hope you had a 'roar-some' Christmas?! To end the year we're celebrating creatures great and small, by taking a look at two ancient species – pangolins and rhinos.

Unchanged for 70 million years, the pangolin is the only mammal with scales. These pine cone-like scales are made out of keratin, a hard protein found in your hair and fingernails. Pangolins curl into a ball if attacked by a tiger or lion – the sharp scales acting as armour. In fact their name means 'something that rolls up'.

Rhinos haven't changed for 50 million years. The name 'rhinoceros' means 'nose horn' and you can see why! There are two species in Africa and three in Asia. These huge herbivores love to eat their greens, feeding almost all day long. The white rhino's favourite food is grass, but other species chew on leaves, twigs and shrubs.

Hope you've enjoyed your year with Born Free? Have fun celebrating New Year, but please encourage family and friends not to light floating lanterns. These can scare animals, and wildlife can become entangled in the frames, or accidentally eat fallen lantern parts.

We really look forward to spending 2019 going wild with you!

From

Laura

Laura Gosset
Wild Crew



Meet the pangolin

Solitary and secretive, there are four species in Asia and four in Africa – from 30cm to 100cm in size. Found in tropical forests and savannah grassland, some live in hollow trees others in deep burrows. Sharp front claws help them climb or dig but are no good for walking, so pangolins mainly walk on hind legs. Using a long 40cm sticky tongue they scoop up ants and termites. Each one guzzles 70 million insects a year! Mostly nocturnal (active at night), they rely on great hearing and sense of smell because their eyesight is terrible.

[Bibi] was just a small starving baby when rescued by Sangha Lodge in the Central African Republic in 2014. She needed regular bottle-feeds of milk, but quickly grew and now hunts ants in the rainforest. Sadly pangolins are threatened with extinction. Every year thousands are killed for meat and scales – used in traditional medicine. Born Free works hard to stop this terrible trade and protect pangolins in the wild.



Rhinos rock!

They might look a little fierce, especially when they charge to scare off an intruder, but rhinos are mostly quite timid. With bulky bodies and one or two horns depending on the species, their short necks have big muscles to support huge heads. Despite their short legs rhinos can run fast, at up to 28mph. Their skin is 2cm thick, but still very sensitive and easily sunburnt! Rhinos wallow in mud to protect their skin – just like we can use sunscreen.

Like pangolins, rhinos are mostly solitary and can't see that well, relying on a great sense of smell and hearing. Like a pangolin's scales, their horns are made of keratin. And sadly, like pangolins, rhinos are threatened with extinction. In 1918 there were half a million, but today just 25,000 remain. Rhinos are killed for their horns – also used in traditional medicine. Born Free campaigns to stop the trade in their horns and funds conservation.



You can help wildlife too

Why not make a winter cake for hungry birds in your garden? Ask your parent's permission to melt some lard, butter or high-fat margarine. Then stir in some bird seed, nuts, grated cheese, raisins and oatmeal. Make sure there's enough fat so everything sticks together. Put the mixture into washed yoghurt pots and leave in the fridge to set. Tie the pots with string onto your bird feeder or tree and watch the birds enjoy their cakes!

This is also a good way to reuse yoghurt cartons but please, when finished, either use them again or recycle the container.

IF YOU ARE AGED 13 OR UNDER PLEASE ASK PARENTAL PERMISSION TO FOLLOW BORN FREE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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