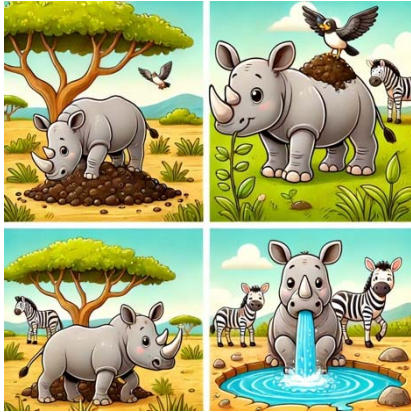


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The Role of a Rhinoceros in the Ecosystem

Rhinoceroses, or rhinos, are more than just large, powerful animals—they play a vital role in their ecosystems. From shaping the land to supporting other species, rhinos help keep their environments healthy and balanced.

One of the most important ways rhinos contribute to their ecosystems is by acting as “ecosystem engineers.” Rhinos eat a lot of plants, including grass, leaves, and shrubs. When they graze, they trim plants and clear overgrown areas. This helps sunlight reach the soil and allows new plants to grow. By doing this, rhinos maintain the health of grasslands and savannas. These areas are home to many other animals, such as zebras, gazelles, and birds.

Rhinos also help plants grow by spreading seeds. As they eat fruits and leaves, seeds pass through their digestive systems. When rhinos leave dung on the ground, those seeds are planted in the soil, creating new plants. This process is important for keeping plant life diverse and abundant in their habitats.

Another way rhinos contribute to their ecosystems is by creating paths and waterholes. Rhinos are large and strong, and when they walk through thick vegetation, they create trails that other animals can use. During the dry season, rhinos often dig into dry riverbeds to find water. These holes provide drinking water for smaller animals and birds that might otherwise struggle to survive.

Unfortunately, the roles rhinos play in the ecosystem are threatened by habitat loss and poaching. When rhino populations decrease, grasslands can become overgrown, and plant diversity can suffer. This affects not only the plants but also the many animals that depend on these areas for food and shelter.

Conservationists work hard to protect rhinos and their habitats, ensuring that they can continue to benefit their ecosystems. By saving rhinos, we help preserve the balance of nature and protect many other species as well.