

The Rhino of Vatera

The Etruscan rhinoceros (*Stephanorhinus etruscus*) was an inhabitant of the forests around Vatera two million years ago. This rhinoceros was small and had relatively long limbs. It bore two horns: one larger horn on its nose and one much smaller horn on its forehead. The Etruscan rhinoceros was a browser, and thus has low-crowned molars (brachyodont) without complex enamel pattern. Rhinoceroses are odd-toed ungulates (Perissodactyla), and remote relatives of the horses (Equidae). Today, there are two-horned rhinos (Africa and Asia) and one-horned rhinos (Asia), but they are all endangered because of hunting and deforestation. The living two-horned rhinos are the white rhino (*Ceratotherium*) and the black rhino (*Diceros*) of Africa, and the hairy rhino (*Dicerorhinus*) of Sumatra. The African white and black rhinos are closely related, yet the first one is a grazer, and the second one a browser. The Sumatran hairy rhino is closely related to the woolly rhino (*Coelodonta antiquitata*) of the Pleistocene and the Etruscan rhino (*Stephanorhinus etruscus*) of the Pliocene. The living one-horned rhinos are the great Indian one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), after which the whole family was named, and the smaller Asian one-horned rhino, or Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*). They are not closely related to the lineage of the Etruscan rhino. Help Save Rhinos