

Name: _____

Rhinoceros Beetle

By Guy Belleranti

Have you ever seen a rhinoceros at the zoo? A rhino is a large, strong animal, which is famous for its distinctive horns. There is also an insect with similar characteristics - it's very large, very strong, and even has horns! It's the rhinoceros beetle.



There are many species of rhinoceros beetles. The strongest is the Hercules rhinoceros beetle which can lift up to 850 times its own weight. That would be like you lifting 850 people your size! This makes the Hercules

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lock horns with each other. They will try to push each other and even flip each other over. When they're not duelling, rhinoceros beetles use their horns to dig through leaf litter in search of food.

Many male rhinoceros beetles are over 2½ inches long, however Hercules rhinoceros beetles can be over 6 inches long!

The rhinoceros beetle's size and fearsome appearance help protect it from predators. It will also hiss and squeak if it feels threatened. These squeaks

aren't made by its mouth. Instead, they are made by rubbing wings against abdomen.

During the day, this big beetle hides under logs and other vegetation. At night, it comes out to look for food. It's favorite foods include plant sap, nectar, fruit, and decaying plants.

Rhinoceros beetles live on every continent except Antarctica. Most of the largest species, like the Hercules beetle and the elephant beetle, live in warm, tropical regions. Some smaller species, such as the unicorn beetle and Grant's beetle, live in the



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About the Author

Guy Belleranti works as a docent at Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences working with wild animals and teaching others.

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1. List three ways mentioned in the article that rhinoceroses and rhinoceros beetles are alike.

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. What can you determine about the rhinoceros beetle in the picture to the right?

- a. It has eight legs.
- b. It can't fly.
- c. It is male.
- d. It is poisonous.



3. Of course, a lion, bear, or elephant could crush a rhinoceros beetle. However, the article says that the rhinoceros beetle is "the strongest animal on Earth." How can this be?



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4. Are rhinoceros beetles herbivores, carnivores, or omnivores?

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. _____

c o s e r i n o h r

hint: large mammal with horns

2. _____

o a r t x h

hint: middle part of an insect's body

3. _____

a r e f s e o m

hint: frightening

4. _____



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5. _____

6. _____

m l h e a s s r

hint: antonym for dangerous

7. _____

a r i c o p t l

hint: from a hot and humid place

ANSWER KEY

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1. List three ways mentioned in the article that rhinoceroses and rhinoceros beetles are alike.

- Both have horns.
- Both are strong.
- Both are large.

2.



3.

4.

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5.

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