

SHELL GUIDE TO THE WILDLIFE OF ETHIOPIA

BLACK RHINOCEROS (*Diceros bicornis*)
Amharic: AWRARIS (፬)

PL. 1

One of the largest of the African mammals, with a weight of about 2000 kg., the rhinoceros is so familiar in general appearance that it should not require detailed description. Its main characteristics are its two horns situated one behind the other on the front part of its long rather pig-like head, the complete lack of hair apart from tufts on the ears and the end of the tail, and the pointed prehensile upper lip. The horns are not a part of the skull, as is the case with antelope, but consist of very closely compressed hair growing from slight bony protuberances. The front horn is considerably longer than the posterior horn and sometimes reaches a length of 100-130 cm. The three broad toes on each foot produce an easily recognizable clover-shaped track. The skin is of greyish colour though if the animal has been wallowing in a mud hole it may appear brown or even pink, depending on the colour of the soil.

The black rhinoceros is inclined to be aggressive and ill-tempered, and is one of the few African animals which may attack without provocation. Usually found singly or in pairs, rhinoceros are browsers, living mainly on *sauzeviera*, roots, the thorny shoots of acacias, and other fibrous vegetation. Their eyesight is poor though they have keen senses of hearing and smell. Once fairly widely distributed in most of the lower-lying country, the rhino is now one of Ethiopia's rarest species, found only in certain areas of the southwest, such as the lower Omo Valley. It is in serious danger of extinction in this country unless effective steps can be taken for its future protection.

SPOTTED HYAENA (*Crocuta crocuta*)
Amharic: DJIBB (፯)

PL. 1

One of the commonest of Ethiopia's wild animals, the spotted hyaena is frequently seen in the headlights of a car at night, both in open country and also foraging amid the garbage on the outskirts of towns and villages. The hyaenas of Harrar and the "hyaena men" who feed them are famous and are one of the "musts" for any visitor to the old walled city.

About 80 cm. in height at the shoulder, this species has a somewhat mangy-looking dark tawny coat spotted with brown, a broad dog-like head with small rounded ears, a short muzzle, and extremely powerful jaws. Unlike the striped hyaena, it has no crest of long hair on its back, which slopes markedly downwards from the shoulders to the rather weak hindquarters. The tail is short and nearly always carried low.

With its shambling gait and bedraggled appearance, the hyaena is hardly an attractive animal. However, though it does a certain amount of damage to domestic stock and sometimes also kills young game animals, in balance it is almost certainly beneficial in killing sick animals and disposing of carrion, thus discouraging the spread of disease. Though largely nocturnal in habit, hyaena may sometimes be seen in the day, particularly in the early morning and just before dusk. Generally encountered singly or in pairs, they will sometimes band together in packs of a dozen or more, hunting and pulling down fully grown antelope and other animals. The extraordinary range of weird nocturnal cries and eerie shrieks made by the hyaena are among the most familiar sounds of the African bush.

COMMON WATERBUCK (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*)
Amharic: DEFARSA (፳)

PL. 1

The common waterbuck is similar in size, general appearance, and habit to the Defassa waterbuck also described in this book. The chief differences are the more greyish colour, compared with the reddish brown of the other species, and the conspicuous elliptical ring on the rump, as distinct from the wholly white rump of the Defassa. Although generally referred to as the "common" waterbuck, it is, paradoxically, far less common in Ethiopia than the Defassa, and is known to occur only in the region of the Webe Shebelle River and in neighbouring areas of southeastern Ethiopia.

PANGOLIN (*Smutsia temminckii*) (4)

PL. 1

The ground pangolin or scaly ant-eater is a curious-looking animal of almost prehistoric appearance. Its stout body is of medium size, averaging about a metre in length. The entire animal is protected from