

Notes on the Black and White Rhino in A.E.F.

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HISTORICAL

The white Rhino existed up to 1935 in the Eastern part of Lake Chad Territories, and in Oubangui-Chari, but it has been annihilated by the Africans, also by certain Europeans, including military personnel, and officials, but above all by Levantine merchants.

The species has never gone beyond the right bank of the Chari river, from Lake Chad up to the confluence of the Bangoran and the Baringui. Without doubt, it has not even reached Lake Chad, and has not gone south of the right bank of the Bahr Aouk, from its confluence with the Chari up to the junction of the Bahr Kamer and the Gounda which is really a branch waterway of the Aouk.

This Rhino was common in all the plains and parks of Haut-Aouk, reaching the Ouadai in the north, and in the south the region of the sources of all the tributaries of the Mbomou and the Oubangui, up to the left bank of the Kotto, in favourable country.

The black Rhino has very probably pressed up to A.E.F. (Haute Volta) within historical times. At the beginning of the century it still existed in the north of Lake Chad, but had been decimated, slowly from 1900 to 1920, and very rapidly between 1920 and 1923. Since the creation of the Game Department of A.E.F. (1934) there was a progressive and positive improvement. From a hundred individuals in 1934, there had taken place an increase to at least 400, perhaps 500, in 1950.

ACTUAL SITUATION

The white Rhino can be considered as having been completely destroyed in A.E.F. If a few exist still, it can only be in the extreme north of the basin of the Oubangui Mbomou, towards the sources of the river Kotto and its tributary on the left bank, the river Va of the maps, (Bahr Kavadjia of the natives). It is by no means certain, however, that this is so, and the Game Department has not

yet had the possibility to make sure of the position. In the basin of the Chari, in any case, there are none left. The stock could only be replenished by migration from the Sudan.

The black Rhino, protected in the most efficient manner possible, exists from the Logone basin in the west, up to the Sudan frontier, but the most deeply rooted and compact group of this specie lives in the Reserves of Ndele: The natural Reserve of Vassako, the National Park of Bamingui, the Fauna Reserve of Gribingui, that of Koukourou and of the Miadiki, all of which are situated to the west and to the south of the Post of Ndele.

The black Rhino closest to the Sudan exist in the basin of the river Vakaga, partly in the Reserve of the Ouandjia-Vakaga (right bank of the Vakaga) and partly on the left bank, in country which is not a Reserve, up to the river Goro, and even up to the Gounda in the west. There should still be several along the main course of the greater Aoukale, and between the Aoukale and the Bahr Oulou, but this is not certain, and poaching is very intense, and difficult to suppress. Between the river Yata and the Sudan, to the south west of Birao, several specimens existed, even in 1934. We do not know if they are still there.

There is no news of Rhino in the basin of the Oubangui, to the east of the Haute-Ouaka there are still several between Ioamba and Mbari. Perhaps there are a few in the Haute-Kotto.

In the basin of the Kerre, tributary on the right bank of the Mbomou, there were several Rhino—Black or White?—in 1937, not far from the residence of Major A. B. Anderson, my late and deeply missed friend, who was at that time a planter in Oubangui-Chari. Did these Rhino come from the Sudan? We have unfortunately no information on this subject.