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Comparative Studies of the Black and the White Rhinoceros

(Photographs on pages 124—126 by Dr. Schmidt Schaumburg.)

Diceros bicornis (Black Rhinoceros).

Ceratotherium simum (White, or Square-lipped, Rhinoceros)

(1) Brief Notes on Differentiation:

The white and the black rhino differ first in size, the former being larger, with a longer skull and larger ears. Further, in the black rhino the skin forms folds around the neck and at the base of the limbs, absent in the white rhino. The anterior horn of the white rhino is situated further forward on the nasals than that of the black rhino, and is consequently sometimes worn away in front. The upper lip of the white rhino is squared, while that of the black rhino protrudes and appears slightly puckered. Finally, in the white rhino the front portion of the mandible is more depressed and spatulated and the angle between the sagittal and lambdoid crests is more acute than in the black rhino.

(2) Report on Investigations by Dr. Schmidt Schaumburg.

IN August, 1952, it was reported that a white rhinoceros cow was lying dead in the dry bed of the Umfolozi, and that a female calf of nearly 8 months was keeping guard, pathetically chasing away the vultures which had gathered in expectation of a meal.

As the calf was still too young to feed itself, arrangements were made with the Pretoria Zoo for its capture. A keeper was sent, and, aided by a hunting party from Masimba, the young



Left: White rhinoceros.

Right: Black rhinoceros.

animal was captured. It was given the name Dengesi because it was caught at the foot of the Dengesi Hills, and it is now growing up as the third Zululand square-lipped rhinoceros in captivity.

Later, when Dr. Schmidt-Schaumburg flew over the scene, the



Above: White rhinoceros skull. Below: Black rhinoceros skull.

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carcass of the dead cow was still lying in the riverbed, apparently uneaten because the vultures could not manage to tear away the thick skin. Permission was gained to collect the skull for scientific purposes.

The task of reaching the body turned out to be far more difficult than expected, entailing as it did a long drive through dense bush. When the remains were reached, the skin was found to be almost intact, and was so hard and dry as to be like sheet iron. The intestines, however, had been eaten by maggots,



Skull and horns of female white rhinoceros.

and innumerable beetle larvae (*Dermestes*) were eating the dried remains.

An axe was used for cutting off the head—a difficult task made worse by the nauseating stench. In fact the smell was so overpowering, and the skull so heavy, that eventually it had to be dragged away by means of ropes attached to the transport vehicle. The party succeeded in getting their trophy to Masimba, where they had things very much to themselves, the smell being too much for the local inhabitants.

An even more difficult and unenviable task was that of chipping away the remnants of skin without damaging any of the bones. This took a full day, using a hatchet and two chisels.

From investigation of the teeth, which were not fully developed, it was assumed that Dengesi was the first calf to be born to the dead cow.

Shortly after completion of work on the skull it was learnt that a white rhinoceros bull, with skull attached to the corpse, had remained for six months at a spot not far removed. A second journey was made, and it was found that the big bull had a bullet hole in the forehead. At first it was thought to be the work of poachers, but it was reported that the beast had suffered a broken leg and had been put out of its misery by the authorities.

This second skull was added to that of the previously obtained cow skull, making a useful comparative study.

Nature Notes (I)

By C. J. P. Ionides

(Senior Game Ranger, Tanganyika Territory.)

Nature Notes made during two trips in the Southern Sudan; February, 1937, in Wau and Tonj districts, and March and April, 1951, in Yei, Yirol and Amadi districts.

Introductory

From the naturalist's point of view, the Southern Sudan is a wonderful area. Not only are large herds of many species of big game to be seen, but the bird life near the rivers is magnificent.

Several of the most interesting species of antelope are found in the area, and two species, i.e. the Nile lechwe (*Onotragus megaceros*) and the white-eared kob (*Adenota kob leucotis*) are confined entirely to the Southern Sudan so far as is known.

The Northern White Rhinoceros

(*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*)

Description. This species is considerably larger than the black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) from which it differs in several ways, though little, if at all, in colour. The head is