



THE HORNED ONE

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The rhinoceros is the one animal which most people respect, because it is very aggressive and has a very short temper. Two different rhinoceros species can be found in Africa: the white rhinoceros, *Ceratotherium simum*, and the black rhinoceros, *Diceros bicornis*.

The white rhinoceros is the larger of the two species. A bull weighs up to 2 300 kg and a cow up to 1 600 kg. The white rhinoceros, like the black rhinoceros, has two horns. The back one is much shorter and smaller. The horns are not attached to the skull bone and are formed very much like hair.

Both the rhinoceros species have very bad eyesight, but they can smell and hear very well. Rhinos love taking a mud bath. Afterwards they enjoy rubbing themselves against a tree stump or a rock. This helps them to get rid of

any insects. They are usually seen together with yellowbilled and redbilled oxpeckers, which can each eat up to 300 ticks each day. The friendship (called symbiosis) benefits both parties - the bird gets enough food and at the same time rids the rhino of any bothersome parasites.

Black rhinos often lie down to sleep with their legs folded underneath their body. When the rhino does lie on its side, it has to stand up first before it can lie on its other side, because it can't roll over. Its ears move constantly while it sleeps. A white rhino never lies on its side.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Although people often confuse the two species, the black and the white rhino differ in many aspects. The most obvious difference is their



mouths. The white rhino's mouth is wide and square shaped. The upper lip is hard and the bottom lip is soft and sensitive. They are herbivores and enjoy eating short grass, which they can bite off one centimetre above the ground. They stand in one place and move their heads around in a semi-circle as they eat.

The black rhinoceros is much smaller than the white rhinoceros. The bulls weigh between 850 kg and 1.000 kg and the cows weigh 880 kg. They use their upper lip to grasp the woody branches and leaves which they eat. A white rhinoceros walks with its head close to the ground, in order to graze the grass, while the black rhinoceros holds its head up high, so that it can pull off the leaves and branches from the trees.

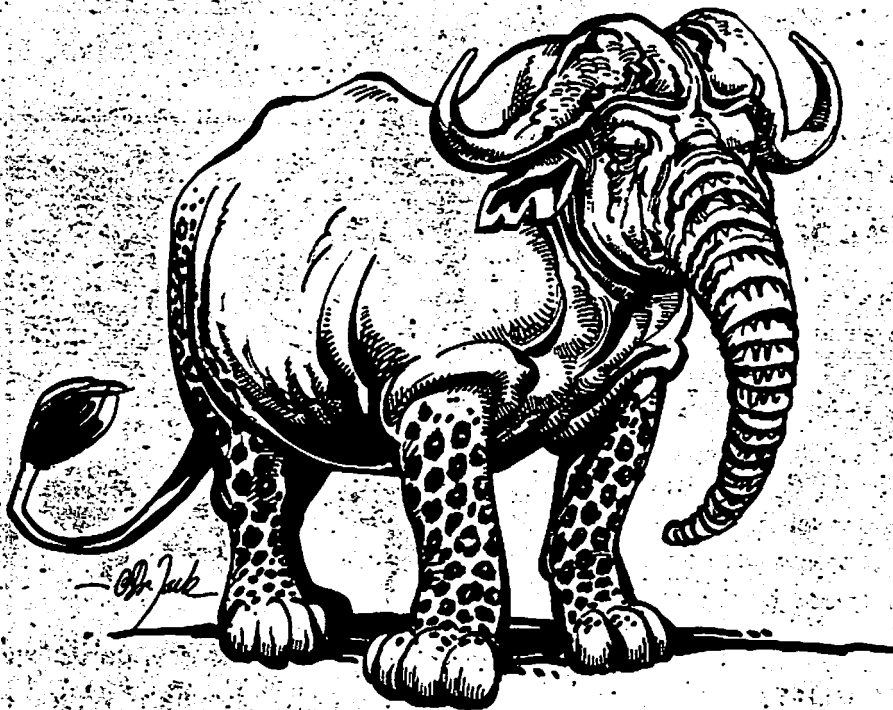
Both the black and the white rhino have only one calf at a time which weighs about 40 kg at birth. They drink from their mothers until

they are about a year old. White rhinos stay with their mothers until they are two to three years old and black rhinos until they are about four. Rhinos are usually lone animals except when it is breeding time and when the young calves walk with their mothers. A white rhinoceros calf usually walks in front of its mother and a black rhinoceros calf walks behind its mother.

Predators sometimes try to catch the young calves, but the rhino species don't have any natural enemies besides man. Man has killed thousands of these interesting animals for their horns in Africa over the past few decades.

Presently rhinos can be found in the Kruger, the Au-grabies Falls, the Marakele, Vaalbos, Addo Elephant and Karoo national parks.

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?



Can you identify the body parts of the Big Five on this strange animal?