



WHITE RHINOCEROS AND ELEPHANTS

Game Animals of the Sudan

Their Habits and Distribution

*A Handbook for Hunters and
Naturalists*

BY

CAPT. H. C. BROCKLEHURST, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.

Late 10th Royal Hussars

GAME WARDEN TO THE SUDAN GOVERNMENT

ILLUSTRATED WITH TWELVE COLOURED PLATES BY W. H. RIDDELL,
FORTY-FIVE SKETCHES BY H. R. MILLAIS, W. D. M. BELL
AND F. WALLACE, PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAP

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WHITE RHINOCEROS

(*Rhinoceros simus cottoni*)

ARABIC NAMES—*Khartit* or *Abu garn*

AZANDE NAME—*Kanga*

THE White Rhinoceros, which formerly ranged over most of South Africa, south of the Zambesi, was first discovered by Dr W. B. Burchell in 1812, in Batlapan District near Kuruman.

In 1836 Sir Andrew Smith, while travelling in the country north of Magaliesberg, saw between 100 and



150 during a day's march ; but now they have almost entirely disappeared and, I believe, at the present time, considerably less than thirty exist south of the Zambesi.

Between 1873 and 1877 Selous mentions that the White Rhinoceros, which was by no means uncommon, had, in 1879, completely disappeared from the Upper Chobe Rivers.



WHITE RHINOCEROS BULLS (2)

It is still comparatively plentiful in certain parts of Uganda and the Sudan, west of the Nile, and owing to their strict preservation they are certainly on the increase. In one year, in Mongalla Province alone, I have seen no less than eight cows accompanied by calves. The natives seldom kill them now as it is not easy to kill so rare a beast without the fact being known sooner or later by the District Commissioner, who inflicts a heavy punishment on anyone infringing the law.

Owing to the fact that the cow carries the longest horn, they were more sought after by hunters, which would account for their rapid decrease and almost entire extermination.

The description "white" is apt to be misleading, as in colour it is to all intents and purposes the same as the black species, that is, a slaty, almost battleship grey.

Unlike the Black Rhinoceros they are extremely inoffensive, depending entirely on scent and almost invariably seek safety in flight.

The most distinguishing features are, firstly, their greater size, full-grown specimens standing from 6 feet 6 inches to 6 feet 8 inches at the withers; secondly, the square mouth and square base and front of the horn.

Their sole food consists of grass, and, while grazing, they push the front horn along the ground causing quite a deep furrow, and at the same time wearing a flat surface on the front of the horn.

The horn has an even higher marketable value than ivory, being used for making door handles, for the interiors of limousine motor-cars, and the hilts of presentation swords, etc. The horn is also very much valued by the Chinese and other Eastern

ances, who grind it into powder for the manufacture of what is considered to be a very powerful medicine. The Wapiti horn in velvet is used for the same purpose.

There is also a superstition that cups, made of Rhinoceros horn, are capable of detecting the presence of poison; this idea probably arose from the effect of certain acids on the horn.

There are very few instances where the White Rhinoceros has been kept for any length of time in captivity, and it is difficult to ascertain, with any accuracy, to what age they live.

The period of gestation of the Indian Rhinoceros is eight months, and in all probability the period is more in the case of *Rhinoceros simus*.

The longest horn on record was shot by R. Gordon Cumming in South Africa, and measured $62\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The longest horn recorded from the Sudan measured 41 inches, and I have one in my possession just over 40 inches.

This northern race, *R. s. cottoni*, is distinguished from the southern or typical race by the proportions of the skull and the sculpture of the skin.



WHITE RHINOCEROS COW

BLACK RHINOCEROS

(*Rhinoceros bicornis*)

ARABIC NAMES—*Khartit* or
Abu garn

BARI NAME—*Muy*

ACHOLI NAME—*Amuga*

LATUKA NAME—*Imwei*

NUER NAME—*Kil*

Dambo *Cal*

THE Black Rhinoceros formerly ranged from the Cape to Somaliland, Abyssinia and the Sudan, and thence to the dry regions of Central and Western Africa. Only a comparatively short time ago it was found as far north as Kassala and, in 1867, Sir Samuel Baker describes in his book, *The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia*, many a thrilling chase after these animals in the neighbourhood of Gadaref, then spelt by him Katariff.

The Black Rhinoceros is considerably smaller than the so-called White species and is possessed of a prehensile, instead of a square, lip.

They feed chiefly on the young shoots of small trees and bushes, whereas the White variety subsists solely on grass.

Rhinoceroses are very blind but very keen of scent, and they are helped considerably by the Rhinoceros birds, which are generally to be seen hunting for ticks on their rough hides.

The two African species differ in many respects from their Asiatic cousins; they lack, for instance, the heavy folds in the skin, like plates of armour, which are characteristic of the latter, and they likewise have no front teeth in their jaws, which are conspicuous in the Asiatic variety.

Black Rhinoceroses with more than two horns are by no means uncommon, and one remarkable head with four horns was killed by Captain J. W. Hallowe, of the King's African Rifles, not many years ago near Meru in Kenya Colony.

They stand from 4 feet 9 inches to 5 feet 5 inches at the shoulder, and attain a length of 9 to 12 feet.

The record horn for a Black Rhinoceros is $53\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The best head shot is 4 or 5 inches in front of the ear towards the eye. One of the most deadly shots is in the neck, a foot behind and a little below the root of the ear.

I have noticed that they almost invariably run up-wind. This peculiarity has, no doubt, given rise to many so-called "charges."

A Rhinoceros, taking his siesta in the bush, is suddenly disturbed by the smell of some caravan or string of carriers passing to windward of him; he dashes blindly up-wind in his efforts to get away, and this is so often described as an unprovoked charge.

I have seen cinematograph films of big game where a charge has undoubtedly been provoked, and the lecturer calmly describes how a couple of well-placed bullets turned the animal in the nick of time. We are left to imagine the ultimate fate of the Rhinoceros, who probably suffers for several days, and eventually dies from loss of blood. The game has a poor chance against the modern, high-powered rifle, and it can almost be compared to a man armed only with a bayonet, attacking a nest of machine-guns.