



INVESTIGATE THE (TO HIS EYES) STRANGE
SENSITIVE LARGE ANIMAL IN CREATION"

NOCEROS

young male, caught near Tonj and named Algernon, who flourished for some time and reached Khartoum, where change of climate and lack of playmates seemed to conquer his desire to live. Several cousins, however, have lately been caught by a Kenya expert, Mr. Carr Hartley, operating near Shambe. These better-grown young have been taken by lassoing from a power-wagon, with which they are quickly run down. The mother, who may show fight at first, is eventually driven off unhurt (capture of the young by natives is apt to mean the death of the mother). They have taken readily enough to milk and solid food such as gruel and millet-flour, and may yet make zoological history.

By Logan Hook

RESIDENTS of Nanyuki—thriving townlet on the North-Western foothills of Mt. Kenya—have lately been privileged to view at close quarters a couple of white rhino from Shambe in the Southern Sudan. On May 22nd a party visited the pair in their compound, some 48 miles to the westward, kept by Mr. and Mrs. Carr Hartley. When we arrived at the rhino's paddock, the gate was flung open and we strolled in, the girls in brightly coloured summer frocks, and wearing a large assortment of Parisian perfumes. But both rhinos were so deeply engrossed in a pile of freshly cut veld grass that they hardly troubled to look up. They were tamer than pigs—Mitzi, the young female of 25 months, and Bobby, the male of 19 months—so much so that children can and do ride them.

Following the African and Indian elephants, this species of rhino ranks next in order of size among the largest of living land mammals. The story goes that when the Boers first saw these monsters in South Africa they were grazing out on the open veld in vivid sunshine and were so named "white" rhino. But with their square-lipped mouth, very different from the pendulous upper lip of the black rhino, they are more aptly named wide-mouthed or "wide" rhino.

Recently the Sudan Government issued licences to Mr. Hartley for the capture of four rhino—two of each sex—of which one pair was to be handed to the Government.

When Mr. Hartley reached the haunts of the white rhino, in the Southern Sudan, some delay was caused

by lorry breakdowns, but later, when the time came for him and his highly-trained squad of Kenya natives to go into action, no difficulty whatever was experienced. Having selected four suitable beasts they were lassoed and crated in a matter of minutes. One mother rhino expressed mild disapproval at the removal of her offspring and ranged up alongside the lorry wearing a 40in. horn, but frightened by vigorous shouting and by clods of earth she soon sheered off, and the danger of her horning the truck radiator was averted. Mr. Hartley counted in all twenty rhino, and estimated that there must have been at least a hundred within the horizon radius.

In this zoo a five-year-old black rhino cow, "Molly," was in the next enclosure to Bobby and Mitzi and could easily be compared with these two. Their slate grey colour, to the layman's eye seemed identical, though their dispositions were poles apart, for while "Molly" would usually feed out of Mrs. Hartley's hand, she became restive when strangers were present and they were always warned to give her a wide berth. At noon Mitzi and Bobby each received a bowl of gruel mixed with sweetened condensed milk, after which they completely ignored the party of sightseers.

We were told that, in their own country, the female rhino will lie on her back when suckling her young, and this must be an amazing spectacle.

Soon after the capture of the four specimens Mr. Hartley had a strange experience. Whereas the black rhino dungs every eight hours, retiring to his lavatory to do so, the larger species does so every twenty-four hours. Of this strange and unexpected difference Mr. Hartley was unaware but after a day or so's anxiety all was well.

White rhinos are believed to be full grown at five years, when they come into season every four months.

By P. Z. Mackenzie

EVERYONE interested in big game in my corner of Africa was talking about white rhinos. An expedition from Scandinavia had been to collect a specimen for a museum, an American expedition had photographed them, a visiting collector of wild animals had captured some young ones and we had been attempting to rear some very young calves brought in for sale by natives. I had always considered the white rhino to be a very rare animal and very difficult to locate in a normal day's travel, but more and more evidence came in that, where they did occur, they were fairly numerous and not too difficult to find and not at all alarming in their behaviour if one did find them.

I became determined to see a white rhino and one day I found myself near one of their most likely haunts with an unexpected half-day to spare. I had been given a fairly accurate description of where to go and had been advised that about noon was the best time, for then by climbing high trees one could see them resting in family parties during the heat of the day.

Having dropped my kit and passengers at a nearby rest-camp and taken on a guide, I set off across country on a very rough woodcutters' track in my car. It was cool and cloudy in spite of it being midday, for it had rained the previous night. The track was sandy and showed up the footprints of every animal that had been across it that morning. Before long we found the tracks of buffalo, and round a corner we came into a small herd of giraffe, one being so close and so unconcerned that he looked down on the car as we passed.

Old elephant tracks made our progress very difficult and over one particularly bad stretch I got out and walked; then, just as I was about to get into my car again, I saw the unmistakable "ace of clubs" footprints of a rhino, going down the track in front of me. We carried on for a bit and came upon a rhino midden, an area of several square yards covered with droppings; a reed-buck dashed across the track, then some oribi, more giraffe and then—"Ah-hoo" (the

local equivalent of "there they are") from my driver, and I saw two white rhino trotting off parallel to us in the scrub some fifty yards away.

I gave chase on foot, with binoculars, but never got very close to them, for they were down-wind of the car and all its accompanying smells. They were big and fat and very dark grey in colour, almost like giant black pigs, with their tails curled up in a ring at their stems. Their front horns were of moderate length, but the hind horns were only a few inches long, in fact nothing to compare with the horns of a black rhino I had seen.

On returning to the car I asked the guide where the famous trees were from which the experts always saw the rhino. "Still a long way," was the answer and we bumped along for another mile or two, seeing many fresh rhino tracks on the ground and passing several more middens. Then, coming up a slope from a dry stream-bed, we suddenly ran into three more rhino, a family party of mother, father and an almost full-grown young female. We had a very good view of them, but again they were down-wind of us and lumbered off into some tall grass.

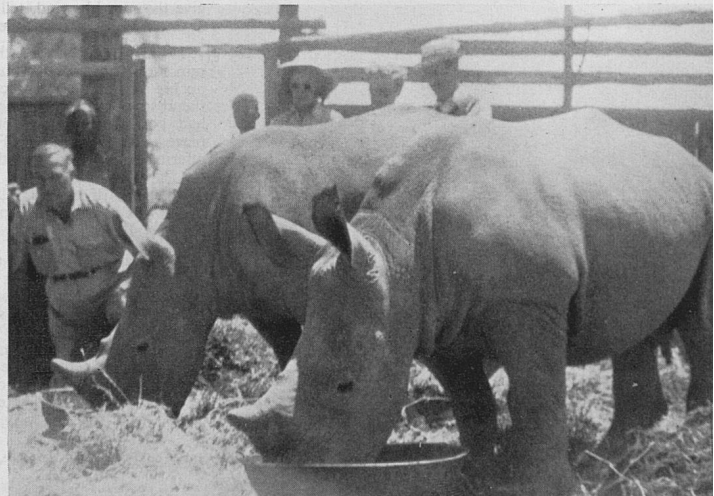
Eventually we arrived at the tall trees, which were landmarks in an otherwise scrubby plain of recently burned grass and bush. Up we scrambled but not a thing could we see except a very distant herd of buffalo. We tried another tree, with the same result. The ground was literally covered with fresh rhino tracks and at the base of our second tree was the morning's evidence of where a rhino had stood, stamped, rolled and slept. Local opinion thought that as it was such a cool day, the rhino had gone off grazing instead of having their usual midday siesta, for, said my guide, it was unusual to see the rhino where we had seen them, and still more unusual not to find them in their habitual resting country.

We retraced our steps to near where we had seen the three rhinos earlier and this time the wind was in our favour. Fortunately close to the patch of unburned grass there was a big tree, which we climbed, and after a very few minutes were rewarded by the appearance of the young rhino, followed by its parents. They were all grazing, with the calf always leading, father following and mother bringing up the rear. The guide volunteered the information that it was high time the youngster untied the apron strings, for the parents really wanted to sleep and were only grazing because the young lady was so hungry. We watched them for almost twenty minutes while they grazed and moved slowly across our front, at one time coming within about sixty yards of our tree.

Our journey home was uneventful except for fresh rhino tracks on top of our old tyre marks and the extraordinary sight of a giraffe without a tail, probably the result of an encounter with a lion.

I was disappointed not to see any very small rhino calves with their mothers, for the babies are most enchanting creatures. Where they have been reared in collecting zoos they are friendly, attractive and confiding, complete miniatures of their parents. They are hornless and also hairless, except for a fringe of black, eyelash-like hairs around the edge of each ear and two fringes of longer hair down each side of the dangling tail, which is screw in its length so that the fringes lie fore and aft between the calf's hind legs.

Five white rhino seen in a three-hour excursion off the main road seemed fair enough, although it was pronounced by the guide "a bad day." I was, however, very glad to see the rhinos in their proper surroundings and to learn that they were plentiful and undisturbed. Long may they remain so.



TWO YOUNG WHITE RHINOS
IN MR. HARTLEY'S COMPOUND