



A leguaan crosses the road and dives into an antbear hole.

In Pursuit of the White Rhinoceros

3994

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A FEW years ago it was commonplace to hear the White Rhino described as a rare beast, to be found only in Central Africa and Zululand and in danger of becoming extinct. During a recent visit to Umfolozi Reserve with my family, I was astonished at the number of White Rhino present.

We had expected a diligent search before being fortunate enough to find a stray animal and which, no doubt, would be too far off for close study. Imagine our delight to find large herds grazing contentedly in beautiful open country and at the same time showing no signs of nervousness. The privilege of being allowed to leave one's car, accompanied by a guide, of course, is welcome.

On one occasion a large number of rhino reminiscent of a herd of cows steadily munched their way towards our car. Although the herd was accompanied by a calf they showed hardly any interest in us. On the other hand there were times when rhino showed considerable curiosity and looked quite formidable as they approached nearer and nearer. Eventually they decided that we were not worth worrying about and ambled sedately away.

Although rhino were our main interest we observed the following species of game: zebra, wildebeest, duiker, reedbuck, inyala, kudu and warthog. Bird life was varied and interesting.

For those not gregarious by nature the limited accommodation provided by the camp's six huts keeps visitors to a minimum and it is possible to traverse the whole road system of this 60,000 acre reserve and seldom see another car. As may be expected the rest camp is very well run and it is a credit to the Natal Parks' Board. It is situated on the crest of a hill and commands a glorious view of Zululand's rolling countryside. An interesting innovation is the book found in every hut in which visitors are invited to record their impressions of Umfolozi wild life and incidents connected with it. (Editorial comment: See Vol. 4 No. 2 pages 155-159 which gives the official 1948 count as 554-557.)

An interesting experience befell us recently in the Umfolozi Reserve when we came upon a large leguaan (*Varanus niloticus*) in the act of crossing the road. On being confronted by humans he promptly sought refuge at the base of a tree. As we gathered round, it was necessary to warn my daughter who was about to step within striking distance of the leguaan's tail. And not a moment too soon for, with lightning-like sweeps of his powerful tail, he thrashed the grass where we were standing. Deciding to make good his escape he finally made a dart for a donga some fifty feet away. In he plunged to reappear on the further bank closely pursued by the writer who got a final photograph as the leguaan dived into what appeared to be a small antbear hole.