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THE LAND AND WILD-LIFE OF AFRICA

by Archie Carr
and The Editors of TIME-LIFE BOOKS

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About the Author

Archie Carr first visited Africa in 1952 as a member of a team studying malaria, bilharziasis and filariasis in Nyasaland. Being a biologist whose sense of curiosity is so highly developed as to be almost wayward, he began soaking up information about pythons, fly spouts, lions and fishes as fast as he did about mosquitoes. Everything about the continent obsessed him. He went back in 1955, 1956 and 1963 to study turtle migrations, doubling on the last as a delegate to the meetings of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, held in Nairobi. From these visits, from the catholicity of his interests and from the extensive studies that they have stimulated, Dr. Carr has become widely informed about African ecology and is understandably concerned about it. "The most stirring thing I learned about Africa", he wrote recently, "was how fast its classic landscapes are being lost." This is Dr. Carr's second book on Africa; the first, *Ulendo*, was published in 1964. He is also the author of *The Reptiles*, an earlier volume in the LIFE Nature Library.

ON THE COVER: Two giraffes are silhouetted against an East African sunset. Giraffes prefer dry savannah country where the ground is hard and can support their great weight —up to two tons—without their relatively small hoofs sinking in.

Contents

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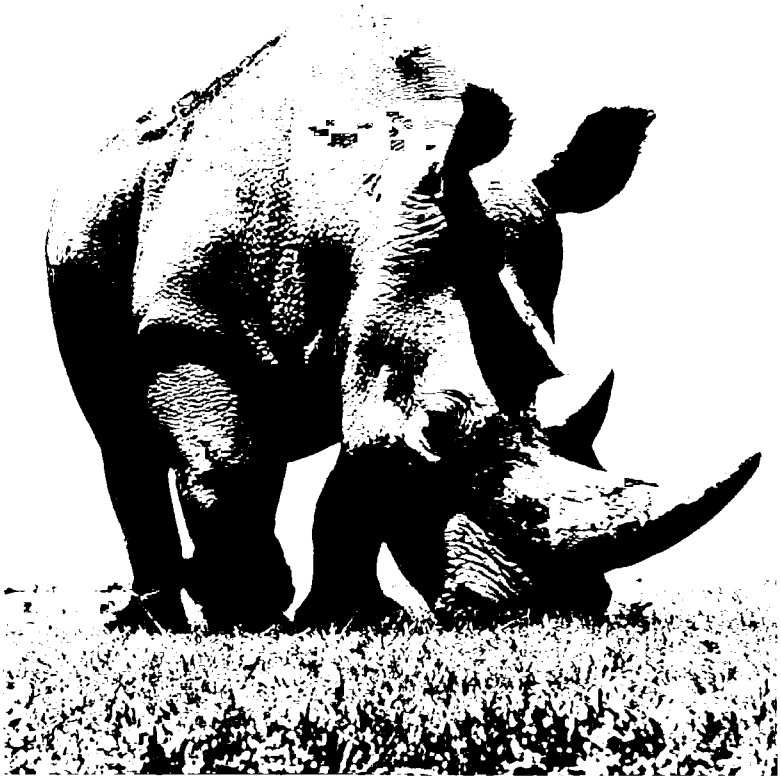
The Ill-tempered Titans

As long as it had only other animals to deal with, the rhinoceros did well. Great bulk, an inch-thick hide, a sharp horn on its nose and a willingness to charge have ensured over the aeons that this tank-like creature be unmolested in its daily routine. These characteristics do not guarantee protection against man, however, and today rhinos are disappearing. Africa has two kinds. The bigger and gentler, the

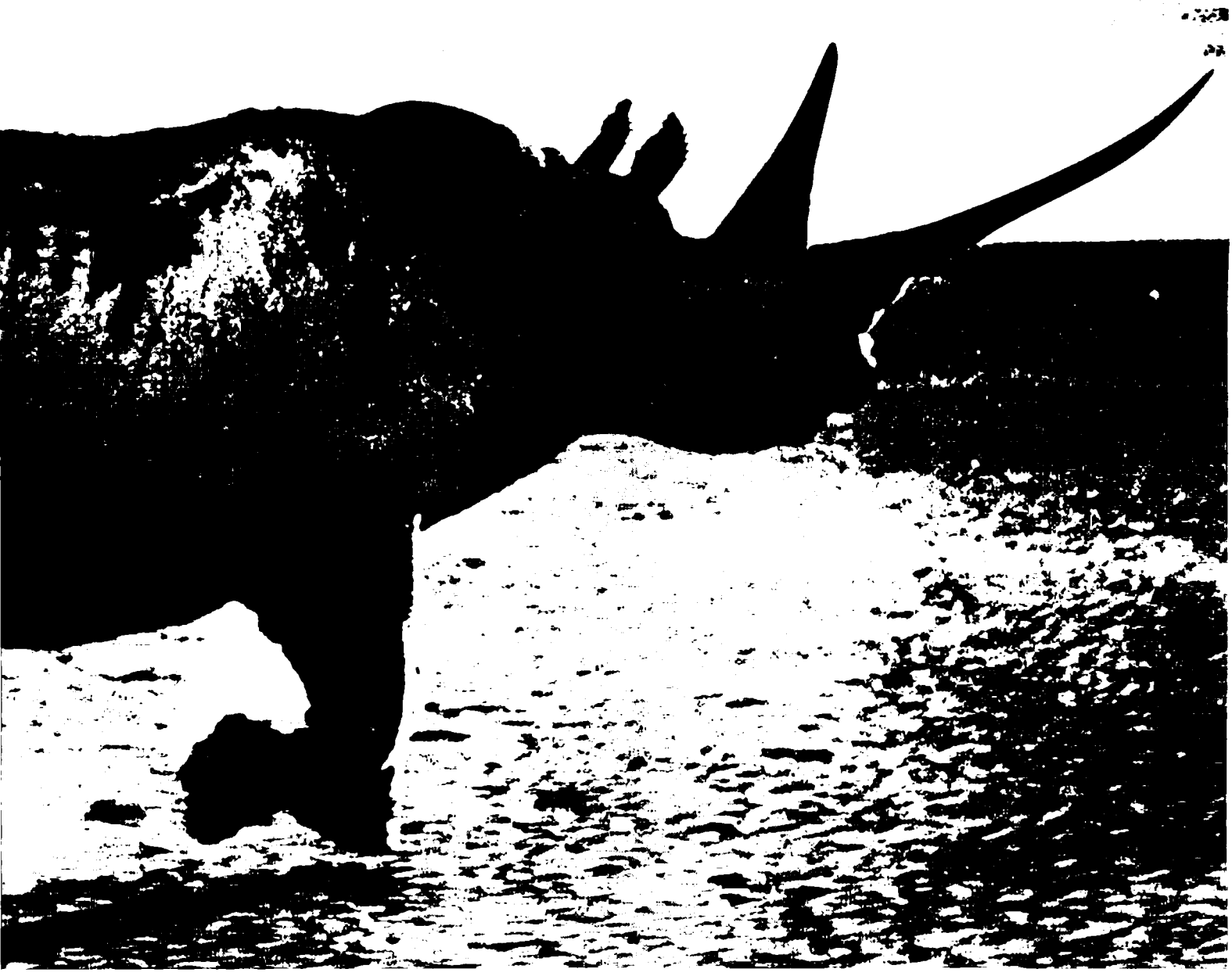


THE WHITE RHINO, the second largest land mammal, is not white but dark grey. Its name—derived from the Boer *wyt*, or wide—refers to a broad, square jaw adapted to grazing.

THE BLACK RHINO has a narrower face with a prehensile upper lip for eating leaves. It too is grey, but both animals often look very light in colour from wallowing in the mud or dust.

CHARGING ON THE AMBOSELI PLAIN, a black rhino reaches 30 miles per hour. For its bulk, the rhinoceros is extremely agile. It takes off like a sprinter and turns like a polo pony.

so-called white rhino, is a grass eater of the plains, now nearing extinction; only about 2,000 live in South and Central Africa. Its more common and peppery relative, the black rhino, is a browser usually found in dry, brushy country, where it delicately nibbles leaves from shrubs and trees. Black rhinos may still be seen in most of the game parks of East Africa, but elsewhere they are almost gone. Rhinos operate under numerous handicaps in modern Africa. They have a very low reproductive rate —one calf about every three years. They do not readily adapt to changed diet or living conditions. Their solitary habits do not give them the herd protection that many other herbivores enjoy. Finally, their horns are prized for their medicinal qualities, and they are heavily poached by natives.



It is an odd mixture of short temper and curiosity. These traits, plus poor eyesight, have encouraged the habit of charging first and investigating later, and, curiously, have served it well against such hereditary enemies as the Wakamba tribesmen, who hunt it with arrows. When chased into the thorn bush by a rhino, the hunters cannot use their bows effectively.