

ALL ABOUT ANIMALS

From A to Z

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"THE HUNDRED BEST ANIMALS" "ALL ABOUT PETS"
"TRUE STORIES ABOUT HORSES" ETC.

WITH NEARLY TWO HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY

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RHINOCEROS

In America, where he still runs wild, he is known as the caribou, and moves from one feeding-ground to another in herds sometimes five hundred strong.

RHINOCEROS

An ugly animal with a huge, ungainly body and pig-like eyes, the rhinoceros is found in Africa and India, and there alone. Thousands of years ago a woolly rhinoceros, much larger than any alive to-day, shared the land we call the British Isles, then part of a great continent, with ancient men who made their home in caves. His half-charred bones have been found beneath the floors of these, so he must have served them as food; and though the cave-man could not write, he drew pictures of the rhinoceros on his own horn, as he did others on the horns of reindeer and even on the tusks of elephants.

The horn of this old rhinoceros was sometimes five feet long. Like those of his descendants, it was not really 'horn,' but a mass of hair tightly welded together, like the tough brown scales of a pangolin, and harder than any bone could be. Instead of growing out of his head the horn of a rhinoceros grows from his snout, and could be sliced off with one stroke from a sharp knife. To prevent it from being injured when he uses it as a battering-ram there is a strong arch of bone on his skull immediately underneath it.

The charge of a rhinoceros is strong and terrible. He is very short-sighted, but to balance this he has a keen sense of smell. So, when he scents an enemy he dreads, unless he decides to bolt into the thicket, he makes a sudden rush at him, tossing a hunter and goring him to death before he has a chance to shoot. Even without the smallest provocation he often flies into a passion.

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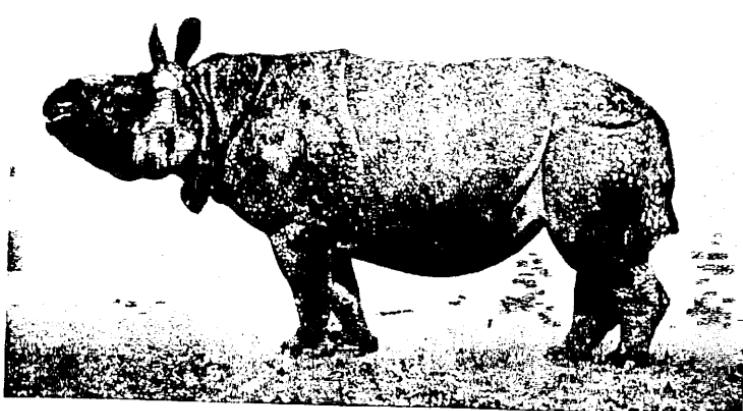
Watched from a distance, he has been seen to stop feeding and to tear up a bush or tree with every appearance of rage. Once, when a tiger caught in a trap was being carried away in a very strong cage made of branches and the trunks of small trees, a rhinoceros suddenly dashed from the jungle and charged at it with lowered head. Not only did he smash the cage to pieces and rip up the tiger's side with his horn, but he hurled both cage and tiger some twenty yards before, with a bellow of rage and triumph, he bolted back to his lair.

His hide is at least two inches thick, and lies round his body in broad folds. It is almost as good as a suit of armour to him, but it cannot protect him from the insects who are his worst enemies. These creep down between the folds where the skin is not so thick, and bore right down to his flesh. There is only one way in which he can fight them—by lying down in the river, well under water, so that most of them may be drowned. To get rid of the remainder he then rolls in the mud, which soon cakes over in the sun and keeps others from getting at him.

Birds sometimes come to his rescue—‘rhinoceros birds,’ about the size of thrushes, who perch on his back and earn their living by picking out the pests that torture him. They are useful in another way too, for if they rise in the air with a shrill cry he knows that there is some one coming. Then, according to his mood, he bolts to the jungle or puts down his head and charges.



AFRICAN RHINOCEROS



INDIAN RHINOCEROS