



THE WHITE RHINO OF THE LADO

SOME INTERESTING NOTES CONCERNING ITS LIFE HISTORY AND HOW IT DIFFERS FROM ITS COUNTERPART OF THE AFRICAN WILDS, THE BLACK SPECIES

By Major C. H. STIGAND

IN the old days numbers of so-called "white" rhinoceros used to roam the plains of South Africa. The chief difference between this and the "black" species is that the white rhino is a grass eater, and has a square lip, whilst the black rhino has a pointed and prehensile lip, which enables it to strip the thorn trees of their leaves. In size the two animals are much the same, the white rhino is perhaps a little larger and stouter than its counterpart. The terms "white" and "black" seem to have been given to the two species from the fact that the square-lipped kind, being a grass eater, was generally seen in the bright light of an open plain, whilst the pointed-lipped species was more often seen in the shadow of thorn trees. In reality the two are of much the same color—a blackish grey, when clean, and the color of the soil, when dirty. They are both fond of taking mud baths and in the laterite soil, so common in Africa, they often appear bright red in color.

The base of the anterior horn of the white rhino is squarish in front, like the lip, and a single horn of this species can be easily distinguished by this characteristic. A section of the base of the horns of the two species would be something like the diagrams below.

In recent years, after the white rhino had become practically extinct in South Africa, it was found to exist in considerable numbers in the district known as the Lado Enclave. It is now known to occur on the west bank of the Nile from Shambe, just south of the sudd region, to Lake Albert, and also ranges westward some distance into the eastern Congo. It is strictly confined to the west side of the Nile, no specimen having been recorded from the east bank.

NOT long before the war Lord Kitchener asked me to try to catch a young white rhino for the Cairo Zoo. As soon as I could find time to leave my duties in the north of the Enclave I went with my wife to a spot known as rhino camp, on the upper navigable stretch of Nile, not far from Wadelai. The country is uninhabited; there is much game and rhino are especially abundant there. I took with me a party of Madi, whom I enlisted at Dufile, with their game nets—nets made of thick locally-made rope. On arrival at the camp we went through a few rehearsals of putting up the nets quickly and without noise. A fallen tree or a bush was

MAJOR STIGAND is one of the most noted of recent African big game hunters and explorers, and he is also a field naturalist of unusual powers. His studies of the tracks of animals have been almost unique. The only studies approaching them are those about the tracks of game of continental Europe, in the hunting books of the seventeenth century. He has the keenest appreciation of the vivid and extraordinary beauty of the teeming African wild life and has made close first-hand observations of the life histories of very many species of big game.—[Theodore Roosevelt in foreword to Major Stigand's book, "Hunting the Elephant in Africa."]

made to stand for the rhino and the natives put up the nets in a semi-circle downwind of the object representing the quarry. Cases of tinned milk had been taken with us to feed the young animal in the event of capture. The next thing was to find a suitable rhino calf. After much hunting about and changing of camp a female rhino and her calf were located. I shot the mother and, as expected, the calf remained standing over her body.

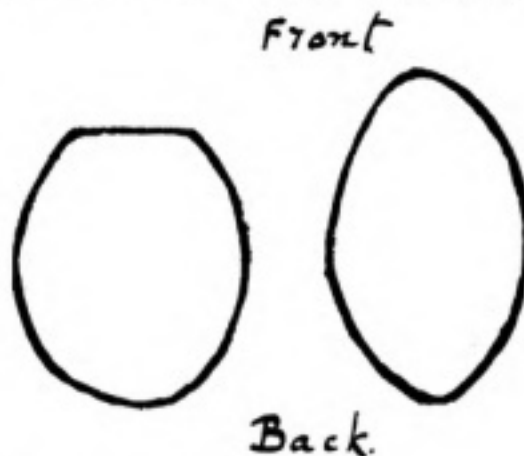
A runner was sent for the nets and presently a crowd of Madi arrived. In spite of the rehearsals there was a certain amount of noise and confusion and not enough was made of the available material, the nets being spread on too short a frontage. As the rhino showed signs of being alarmed there was no

breaking away to a flank. We then gave him our scent. He threw up his head and charged, not for the nets, but for the natives standing to one side. The snorting young animal, about as big as a cow, was such a good imitation of a full grown rhino which, in its turn, is such a good imitation of a locomotive roaring through its funnel, that the natives broke away and it went straight off.

We searched for this young rhino for some days and sighted it three times, but it would never stop long enough for us to bring up the nets. Once I crawled up within ten yards of him with a rope but was unable to hitch it onto him. The day before we had to leave, another rhino and calf were sighted. The calf was rather bigger than we wanted but it was the only one available. I shot the mother and this time the nets were run up quickly in a wide semi-circle and when we gave the young rhino our wind he charged straight for one of the middle nets. He struck it and when I saw it stretch and envelop his whole body, reminding one of a rabbit in a purse net, I congratulated myself on having him safe. The next moment, however, we saw him careering away the other side of the net, he had gone straight through without even stumbling, or breaking his stride, leaving us nothing as a souvenir except a great hole bordered by broken strands of rope. It was evident that one should have either stronger nets or a double line, or get the animal earlier in the season when younger. I never had a chance of going down there again.

The natives of Nyasaland say that the female calf runs with the mother and the male with the father, but this is not so. The calf always runs with the mother and stays with her until it is almost as big as herself. If one meets with two rhino of about equal size it is almost certain to be a female and a grown calf and not a male and female. The male is not often seen with the female; he seems to graze in the same area but rests under different trees. He is generally not far away and probably always knows the female's whereabouts, partly by scent, partly by instinct and partly by a knowledge of their joint habits.

MANY writers have remarked on a habit the rhino is supposed to possess of tossing his dung with his horn. I cannot help thinking that whoever started this story made it in all good faith from jumping to a mistaken



time to readjust the nets, so a line of natives was drawn up on each side with the object of shouting to stop the animal

conclusion and that subsequent writers have religiously copied this without testing its truth. I have seen hundreds of both black and white species and watched them for hours at a time from close quarters and through field glasses, but never witnessed such a proceeding. In point of fact the rhino deposits his dung in rather a singular manner. He is very fond of using the same paths and in all rhino country these well beaten tracks may be seen. At intervals along the main routes one notices little sidings which they use as retiring places and they almost always return to one or the other of the places. They back in stern first, deposit their dung on the great pile already there and then go through a perfunctory scratching up of earth, by executing a back shuffle with the hind legs. Thus each of the little sidings to the main track are marked by furrows, or

scratches on the soil appearing all around.

Another point on which different writers are at variance is as to the range of vision. From many encounters with rhino I am convinced that they are as short-sighted as elephant and cannot see well beyond twenty yards or so, therefore that they cannot see, or charge the hunter on sight, from distances of one, two and three hundred yards, a performance they have often been credited with. Either they have got the hunter's wind, or have been alarmed by birds and are running away blindly in whichever direction seems best. The rhino's hearing is only mediocre but its scenting powers are very good. A rhino will often charge on scent but also, owing to its habit of rushing blindly in any direction when alarmed, it is often accused of charges which it never intended. For instance, the hunter is approaching a rhino from

downwind. The rhino has no notice of his approach until it is warned by birds. It then gets up and looks earnestly in several directions, seeing nothing but perhaps bluffing the hunter that he has been observed. Then it decides on running away, it puts down its head and gallops off downwind, puffing loudly, and passes close to the hunter.

There is a very flat and large tick, about the size of a dime, with bright red markings. This tick, known as the rhino tick, is peculiar to rhino and its presence on the grass is indicative that these animals are, or have been, in the locality. The rhino is generally infested with these and other ticks and, on opening up the intestines, they are generally found to contain thousands of large maggots—circumstances which afford a sufficient excuse for his occasional fits of irritability and rather unseemly conduct.

THREE TYPES OF CRIPPLED BIRDS

A LITTLE MORE CARE ON THE PART OF THE HUNTER IN FOLLOWING UP SHOTS WOULD HELP GREATLY IN THE CONSERVATION OF ONE OF OUR FINEST GAME BIRDS

By J. ARTHUR DUNN

LAST season I went quail hunting with two rabbit hunters. Perhaps this statement isn't quite clear. I mean this: Two of my friends are fond of rabbit shooting and, at the same time, take quail hunting as a sort of side issue. They occasionally ask me to go with them and, although the rabbits don't interest me much, yet for the sake of companionship I go with them and try for quail; while they spend most of their time with the cotton-tails. I have long hunted quail without a dog, using only my own native whistle; so there is no fear that my friends will spoil a quail dog through rabbit shooting.

Shortly after we had come into the fields and had separated, I flushed a covey of birds. They scattered nicely and I was getting some good results when my friends came upon me. They saw me working with a lone bird which had gone to a point considerably removed from the general expanse where the majority of the flock had stopped. The quail arose at my feet and I shot at him only once with my double-barreled gun. He didn't stop. However, I shouted to my friends: "I got him!"

Imagine my state of mind when those rabbit hunters hooted at me! They could see the bird flying, by this time fully two hundred yards away. Of course they thought it strange that I should claim a monopoly on that bird.

The quail went perhaps fifty yards farther and went down. I marked him carefully by a tree and by an unusually high weed in the weed patch.

"Come, go with me," I said to them.

They did; and I introduced them, within four or five minutes time, to a perfectly good dead quail.

The fact that they didn't know I had hit that bird made me think that possibly the subject I have chosen might be one of interest to inexperienced quail



hunters as well as to those who have found out for themselves what I am here setting down.

I want almost to say that more dead and crippled birds are left in the field than are taken out. That statement may be a bit too strong. But undoubtedly there are a great many birds left, which, in my humble opinion, would fill the bags of hunters almost as full as those which, at the crack of the gun, fall stone dead. And in this day of scarcity of game, it behooves us to conserve to the extent of using these cripples.

THERE are three distinct types of crippled birds. There is the wing-cripple, the brain-cripple, and the bowel-cripple. Each of these three types shows unmistakable peculiarities at the crack of the gun. It is important for the quail hunter who wishes to conserve, or even to keep within the limit observed in most states, to be familiar with these cripples.

The cripple most easily detected is the winged bird. He goes down at once, of course, with a peculiar side slant due to one wing doing full duty while the other is not working. With a dog, he is easy to find; without a dog easy to catch, if speed and caution are observed. However, even with a dog, I have known these cripples to be lost.

When a winged quail goes down he hides himself, almost always, under the first cover. He doesn't run far. If the hunter watches where he falls and goes immediately and quietly to the spot, he

will, in eight cases out of ten, have no trouble in finding him. But if he delays going, because of other birds, he may lose the crippled bird; if he makes a great splutter and hustle he may alarm the bird and confuse the dog so that the bird may be lost or great delay in catching him may be caused. In hunting for five years exclusively without a dog, the writer has lost but few of these winged birds.

The quail shot through the head, the second type of cripple I have named, is easily bagged if he is watched. Almost invariably, at the explosion of the gun, he rises high. He may fly straight up in the air for fifty yards or so, or he may fly high up and soar, gradually coming to the ground from a high point. He will not be stone dead when you pick him up; but he is past going before he hits the ground. When you get your hands on him, and you can in most cases easily do so, for he is usually blinded, hold him tight; for he may, after his rest, take another high flight.

The most common cripple and the one most often abandoned is the quail which has been shot through the bowels. As soon as he is hit, he gives a peculiar twist of the hind part of his anatomy and, almost invariably, drops both legs.

After he has done this he may fly fifty yards or he may stretch it out to a thousand. Rest assured he'll go just as far from his foe as he possibly can. But when he drops he is as dead as he'll ever be. For the reason that quail thus hit fly so far, the hunter of little experience will conclude a miss; just as my friends did when shot only once at the bird I mentioned at the beginning.

A bit more of patience in working with these types will be no small item in the conservation of one of our finest birds. And not only that; many a hunter will go home with a much fatter hunting-coat.