

ELEPHANTS
AND
OTHER BIG GAME STUDIES

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CAMERA STUDIES OF ELEPHANTS AT HOME

This series of camera studies of elephants in the bush was secured during two short *safaris* in Kenya, when I was accompanied by Captain C. Palmer-Kerrison, whose great experience was invaluable.

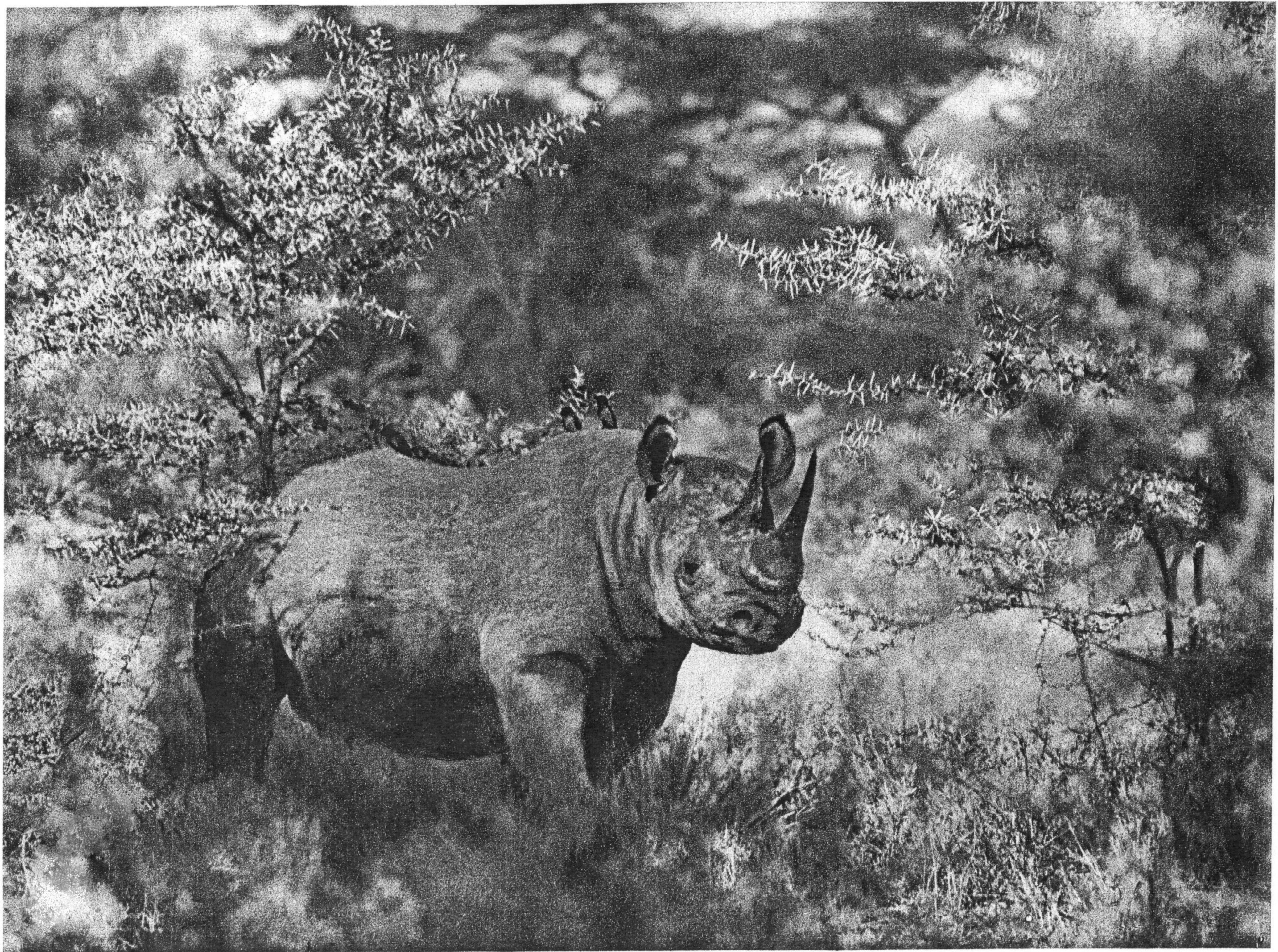
From the photographic point of view, I consider the lion the most pleasing, the rhino the most interesting, and the buffalo the most exciting. But the elephant possesses all these attributes in a high degree, and, in addition, is extremely amusing and intelligent. Hence I consider elephant photography the most fascinating of all. The elephant is often easy to photograph, yet the wind must be right—and in elephant country how seldom is the wind right for any time! Usually, it is gusty, and any small eddy may send you flying, with your subject at your heels. Still, in all its moods the elephant is a joy to watch, from a bold charge to the peace of a family gathering at a waterhole, with the concomitant scenes of compulsory bathing and chastisement of the *totos* (youngsters) and the toilet of the elders. Most impressive is it to see large trees give way like twigs before an elephant's trunk, and then to note how delicately the small shoots only are taken off for food.

On our first *safari* the light was bad and the animals went into thick bush on a mountain-side, where the wind was hopeless. Although the photographs were poor, two axioms were usefully impressed upon me: the necessity of a knowledgeable companion and the need for vigilance before moving in thick bush. In the first case, two apparently peaceful animals, after being approached to within 15 yards, lost their tempers, unbeknown to me, between two exposures. I had to depart hurriedly on my companion's warning. In the second, a female, walking peacefully away into thick bush, turned suddenly with a vicious charge. The reason for her behaviour was explained on developing the day's plates, for one of them showed the same animal elsewhere with a two days' calf.

The second trip was luckier, as the elephants were found in more open country at the base of mountains. I happened to see a breeding herd going through the bush to a waterhole. By running I arrived first, and prepared the camera. It was most interesting to watch one animal slowly approach, first testing the wind with its trunk. It saw us on the opposite bank 15 yards away and regarded us with suspicion; but, deciding that peace was meant, it returned with the herd to the waterhole. They delighted us with their antics, but on a slight change of wind they moved off, slowly at first, and then quickly on getting the full scent.

The next day I found a young bull herd at a presumed saltlick, sucking up dust and blowing it down their throats. I watched the performance for half-an-hour, when a changed wind sent them running. During that day a big elephant which we were seeking wandered into our camp and terrified the cook, but the intruder was summarily ejected by my bull-terrier, whose bark terrified it. Not a shot was fired on this peaceful trip.

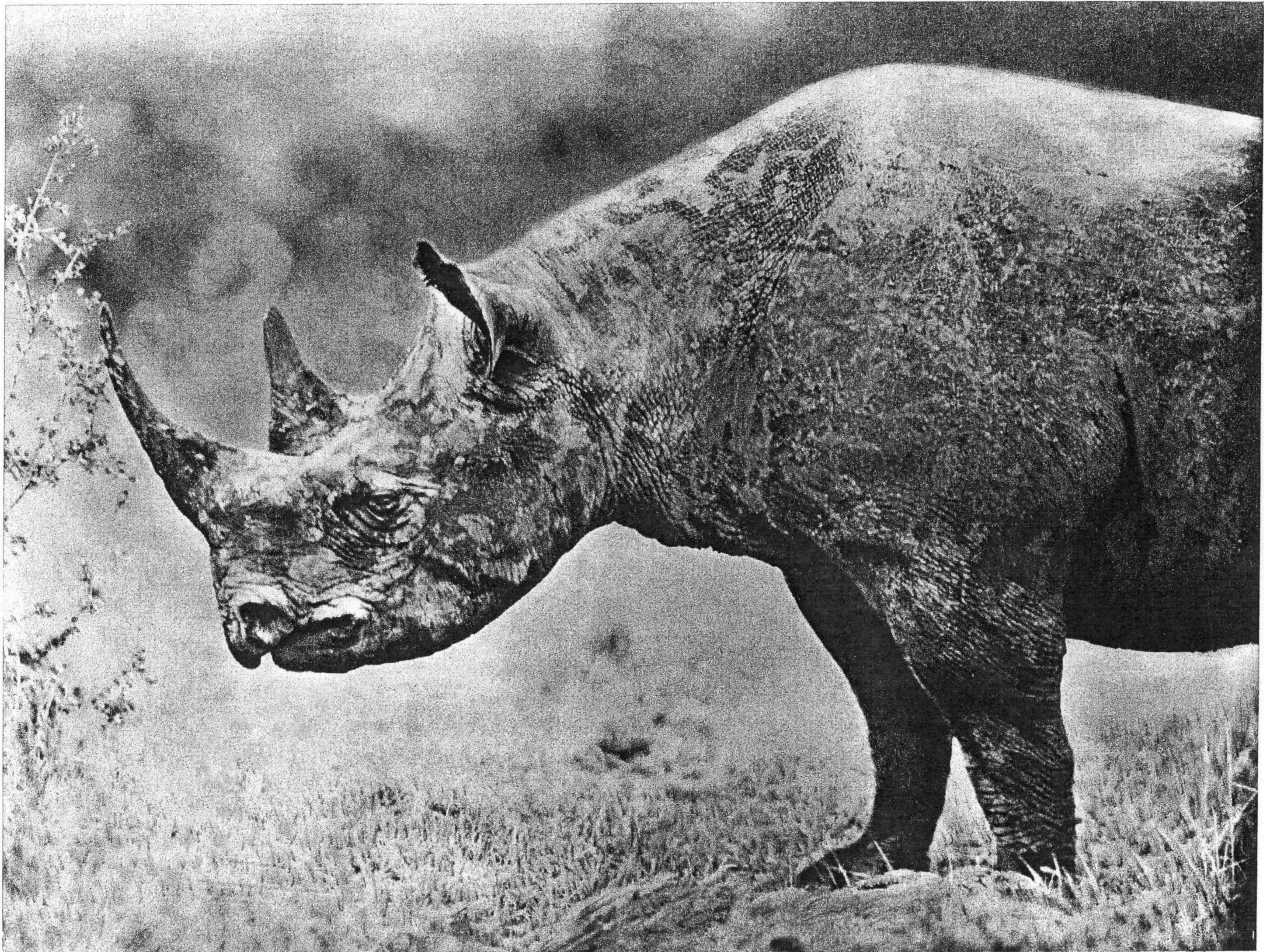
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A RHINOCEROS IN THICK BUSH—WITH TICK BIRDS



ON THE MOVE



PROFILE OF A RHINO