

OUR GREAT OUTDOORS

MAMMALS

By

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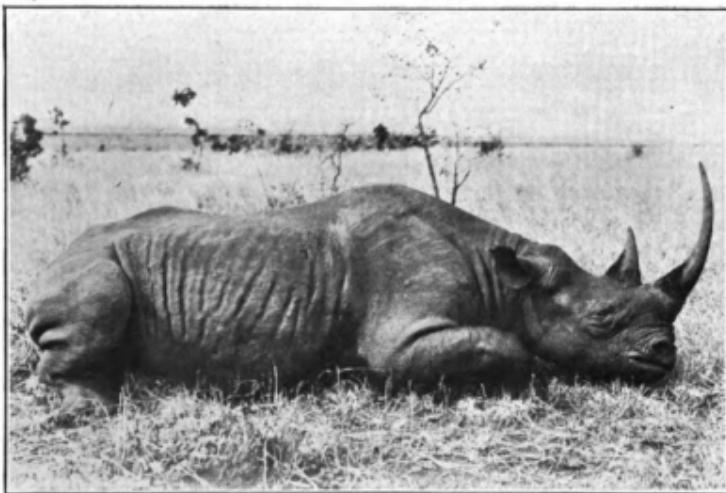


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Courtesy Field Museum

FIG. 102. *A black rhinoceros*

therefore it is used as a carrier of burdens over rough, narrow mountain trails. For this it is used much in Spain, Palestine, Mexico, and South America. Here it carries people and bags of ore or other freight over the dangerous mountain paths where a misstep would mean being dashed to pieces hundreds or even thousands of feet below.

RHINOCEROSES

The rhinoceros. Rhinoceroses are huge, ungainly beasts. They belong to the odd-toed ungulates because they have three toes. These are not incased in hoofs like the one toe of the horse, but have rather large horny nails in front of each toe. The rhinoceros is a heavy animal, being from five to seven feet high at the shoulder. Because the body is so heavy, the legs are short and stout, without much shape, more like low pillars than legs. The skin is thick



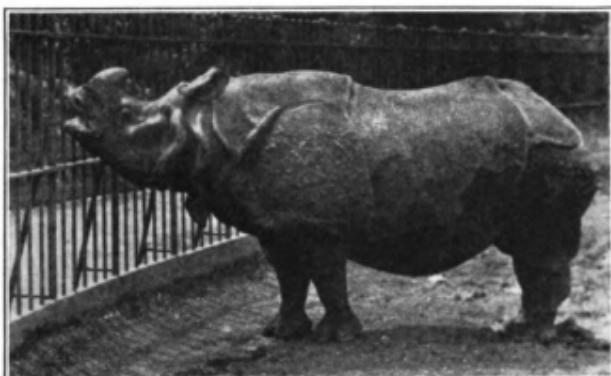
FIG. 103. *The leopard's mistake*

This leopard was attacking a young Indian rhinoceros in the absence of its mother, when she suddenly returned and wreaked vengeance

and rough, so that the thorns of the jungle cannot hurt the animal. There is next to no hair, except possibly a little on the ears or on the end of the tail. The eyes are small and weak, so they cannot detect an enemy—which in their case can only be man—by sight, but only through scent. They are stupid animals, and not so dangerous as their size might lead one to think. In most cases they will run away before man, but there is something erratic about them; sometimes they will turn around again, provoked or

unprovoked, and charge furiously. However, as they are weak of vision and cumbersome in their movements, it is not very difficult to escape from them.

There are five species of rhinoceroses, three in Asia and two in Africa, the best known being the *Indian rhinoceros*.



Photograph by Akeley: courtesy Field Museum

FIG. 104. *An Indian rhinoceros*

Note the pleats or folds in the skin of this animal

It is found in the jungles along water courses in India and the large islands south of Asia. It is often seen in zoological gardens or circuses, where it can at once be recognized by the fact that the skin seems to be hung on the body in square pleats or folds. It has one horn about twelve inches long on the nose. The name rhinoceros means "horn on nose."

The white or square-mouthed rhinoceros is the largest one of all. It is found in the plains of central Africa, and not so often in jungles. On the nose it has two horns, which are from eighteen to sixty inches long over the curvature. The female has the larger horns. The height at the shoulder is six to seven feet. The rhinoceros feeds on leaves of bushes

and trees, which it can very adroitly pull down and off by means of an elongated, prehensile upper lip.

TAPIRS

The tapir. The tapir is an odd-looking creature, apparently part pig, part rhino, and part horse. The snout is piglike, the legs horselike, and the body reminds one of the rhinoceros, although it is much smaller.



After Schmell
FIG. 105. *An American tapir*

Tapirs are only three to four feet high. There are two kinds of tapir, the Malayan, living in southern Asia and the adjoining large islands, and the American tapir, which lives in South America. Both are inhabitants of the dense

jungles along the rivers. The tiger and leopard are the chief enemies of the Asiatic tapir, and the jaguar of the American. The jaguar often lies in wait for the tapirs on the limb of a tree. When a small herd or pack passes underneath, the jaguar jumps down on the back of one and tries to fasten his claws in the skin and body and bite through the backbone. But the terrified tapir is sometimes successful in passing below a low limb of a tree and scraping off its unwelcome rider. The tapir's skin is very thick, as is true of all jungle animals. This is to prevent laceration by thorns and branches. The American tapir is entirely black, whereas the Malayan has a wide white belt around the body. There are four toes on the front feet and three on the hind feet.