

## THE SABLE ANTELOPE



Order: Cétartiodactyla

Family: Bovidae

Scientific name: **Hippotragus niger**

French name : Hippotrague noir

Kiswahili name : Pala-hala

Kibemba name : pelembe, kafumbwe or Kafumbo (mâle adulte)

Sable antelopes are robust. Adult bulls are black. Cows and young bulls are browner. In both sexes, underparts as well as most of the face are white. Males shoulder height: between 116 to 142 cm, males weight: 240 kg. Females weight: 220 kg. Females are slightly smaller than males. Their majestic ridged and back-curved horns measure around 120 cm in males and 80 cm in females.

Sable antelopes mainly feed on leaves and grass, with a preferred feeding height of 4 to 14 cm. They live in savannah woodlands.

Sable antelopes are mostly diurnal but rest in shade during the hottest hours of the day.

Several types of herds exist: nursery herds of females and their young; bachelor herds of non-territorial males; herds of older non territorial males and finally isolated territorial bulls. Mature bulls allow subordinates to feed on their territories provided these are submissive and show no interest to females.

Territorial bulls defend and mark their territories.

Sizes of herds vary according to the seasons: during the dry season, individuals gather near remaining water sources, but during the wet season, when there is plenty of grass, they scatter.

Average lifespan: 16 years

Breeding season : from May to July.

Mature bulls defend a harem of females they mate with. After a gestation period of 8 to 9 months, females give birth to a single calf. The calf lies hidden among tall grasses for 3 weeks. Mothers only stay with their calves for about a week before joining back the herd.



Females reach their sexual maturity at 2 and a half years and males at 5 years.