

Conservation Status: Endangered

Giant African Eland



St. Aiden's Home School, South Africa

cover photo: This picture is of the Giant Eland at the Houston zoo. Licensed under the Creative Commons License.

The Giant Eland (*Taurotragus derbianus* also known as the Derby Eland) is an open forest savannah antelope. It is found in Central African Republic, Sudan, Cameroon and Senegal. There are two subspecies: the endangered *T. d. derbianus*, found in Senegal's Niokolo-Koba National Park, and the low risk *T. d. gigas*, found in Central Africa.

Giant Eland stand 150 to 175 centimetres (4.9 to 5.7 feet) at the shoulder and weigh from five to nine hundred kilograms. The coat is chestnut, darker in males than females. There are around ten white vertical stripes on the body as well as a white underside and black definition around the base of the neck and along the nose. There is a bit of a dewlap under the throat and a short black mane running down the back almost to the back legs.

Both sexes have horns which are relatively straight with many twists. Males have larger horns than females, reaching 120 centimetres.

Giant Eland live in open forest and savannah where they eat grass, leaves and branches. Giant Eland are mainly nocturnal.

Giant Eland form groups of around twenty animals, although double that is possible. These herds are nomadic, migrating extensively

.The Common Eland, or Southern Eland, (*Taurotragus oryx*) is a savannah and plains antelope found in East and Southern Africa.

The Common Eland stands around two metres at the shoulder and weighs 275 kilograms (600 lb) to a tonne (2,200 lb). Females are sometimes less than half the weight of adult males.

This species and the so-called Giant Eland, which are actually about the same size as the Common, are the largest of world's antelopes.

Common Eland females have a tan coat, while the males' coat is a darker tan with a blue tinge to it, there may be a single white stripe vertically placed on the sides. The males have dense fur on their foreheads and a large dewlap. Both sexes have horns, which are about 65 centimetres (26 in) long and almost straight. The horns of the female are longer but thinner than those of the male.

Common Eland live on the savannah and eat grass, branches and leaves. They are diurnal but tend towards inactivity during the heat of the day. Herds are usually between thirty and eighty individuals but are known to reach upwards of four hundred. The Common Eland has an unusual social life. They come and go, taking advantage of herd life when they need to without forming close ties.

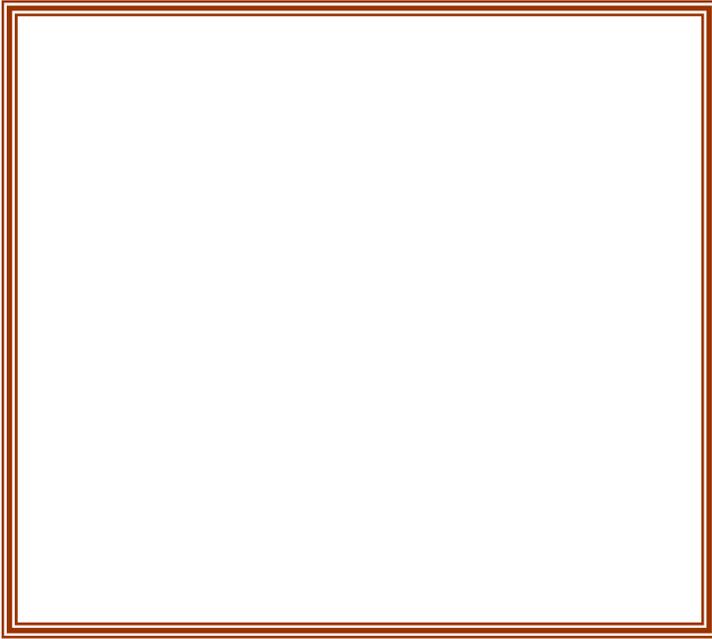
They are very agile and can easily jump a 1.5 m fence from a standing start.

Predators taking adult Eland in the wild are mainly Lion and African Wild Dog (Endangered).

Common Eland are sometimes considered part of the genus *Tragelaphus*, but it is usually categorised as *Taurotragus* with the Giant Eland.

The name eland is derived from the Dutch word for moose. When Dutch settlers came to the Cape Province they named the largest wild ruminant herbivore they met with the name of the huge northern herbivore.

In Dutch the animal is called eland antilope to distinguish it from the moose, which are found in the northern boreal forests.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten horizontal dashed lines.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of fifteen horizontal dashed lines.

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Acknowledgements

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