

SOME EAST AFRICAN PIGS

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At present there are three or four known species of pig in East Africa, excluding the Abyssinian type of Warthog (*Phacochoerus johnstoni*) which is said to occur in the Northern Territory.

They are, firstly, the common Warthog (*Phacochoerus Aethiopicus massaicus*), which is almost too well known to merit a long description; some of whose habits, however, are of interest in comparison with those of other pigs.

Secondly, the Giant pig, as it is popularly termed, which is classified as 'Sus' in Rowland Ward's book, though from its appearance, teeth, and general characteristics it appears to be a species of Warthog.

Thirdly, the white-striped Bush pig (*Potamochoerus*), a large pig resident in the bush and forest; the general appearance blackish; the crest (on the occiput, withers and back) white; the long white hair extending down the back in old animals; the sides more or less reddish, much more so in some animals than in others.

Fourthly, the Red River hog, a well-known West African species, is said to occur in the Protectorate. This is a most striking animal, of a bright chestnut red colour, with long ears with a large tuft on each. The most noticeable points of it when observed are its compressed shape, long snout, and hairy ears, together with its colour. It is a strong swimmer and fond of living in swamps and reed beds, though it has been observed in very dense bush at a considerable distance from any large stream. The spoor appears to be 'longer' than that of either the Warthog or the Giant pig.

The above observations were made in West Africa.

There may be another species of Giant pig not yet determined, as there appears to be a very large variation in specimens obtained.

The common Warthog (*Phacochoerus Aethiopicus*), Dorobo name Buteita, is very widely distributed, the same or allied species occurring in South Africa (*P. pallosi*) and Abyssinia.

It is said to extend to the boundaries of the Semliki forest, but in forest regions it is usually replaced by the Bush pigs and River hogs. Its most noticeable features are the nearly naked skin with a crest of long hair on the withers and back, the large development of the canine teeth, the deciduous character of the other teeth excepting the last molar and lower incisors, and the development of large tubercles or warts on the skin of the face. The object of these last-mentioned tubercles seems to be protection against the tusks of rival pigs, as they are infinitely more developed in the boar than in the sow. The warts are six in number, three on each side of the face. The first pair are conical and situated near the lateral base of the nasal bones, a projection of bone (on the zygoma) supporting them. The second pair are below the orbit, also on its bone above the insertion of the lower jaw, evidently designed to protect the eye. The other pair, which are elongated horizontally, are on the skin of the lower jaw.

These in the sow and young boar usually carry a tuft of whitish hair turned upwards like a whisker; this whitish hair also occurs in the Giant pig, especially in sows.

With reference to the tusks the upper pair are used for excavation, enlarging the burrow, and to some extent as a shield; while the lower are used for offence. The upper tusks, which are of a softer material than the lower, being composed of dentine (while the lower are covered with enamel), also serve as a hone to keep the lower tusks sharp. When delivering a slash the pig sets its lower jaw much to one side, the mouth being open, the characteristic right and left 'dig' of the pig being well known.

With regard to the deciduous character of the adult teeth it has been observed that, while the young Warthog may have a nearly full complement of teeth—viz. upper jaw two to four incisors, two canines, seven or eight premolars, and four molars; in the lower jaw, six incisors, two canines, four premolars, four molars; or, in a dental formula, $\frac{1-1}{3-3}$ incisors, $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$ canines, $\frac{4-3}{2-2}$ premolar, $\frac{2-2}{2-2}$ molar—in the adult this is changed.

The variation in the premolars (when there may be more in some pigs) is that there is a 'wolf tooth,' which may or may not be present. In old fully developed Warthogs this is reduced to $\frac{0-0}{2-2}$ incisors, $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$ canines, $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$ premolars, $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$ molars, and may continue till the premolars are entirely lost, until there is the one molar left in both jaws. This tooth, however, becomes very enlarged and complex.

The above figures were taken from a young male (tusks 3 inches) and an adult male (tusks $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

It is said that in the young perfect toothed Warthog there are thirty-four teeth. The cheek teeth have all flat grinding surfaces. Mention may be made of its curious habit in descending its burrow backwards, thus keeping its head to the front of the hole.

The burrows are very often enlarged from the burrow of the Ant bear (*Orycteropus*); and while digging it clears the soil by rapid scratching with its fore feet, but when some distance down will shove the earth in front of it with its snout and tusks.

Its food seems to consist of grass bulbs, such as gludrol and lily bulbs, and it apparently is sometimes fond of digging in the bare cleared nests of the 'harvester' ant.

Many of the 'scrapes' observed on these bare patches are due to the Ant bear, but the footprints have been observed (after rain) just in front of turned-up earth in these places. They are generally observed in small family parties, but the boars are frequently met with alone.

Hylochoerus meinertzhageni, or Giant pig, native name 'Tomda.'

The Giant pig was only discovered a few years ago, and little is known of its habits.

Sir Harry Johnston, in his book on the Uganda Protectorate, mentions that he had heard stories of a gigantic pig-like animal in the forests of the Mau, but suggests that this might be the Pigmy Hippopotamus which occurs in the West African forests. However, later the pig was discovered by Lieutenant Meinertzhagen and named after him.

The general characteristics of the Giant pig inhabiting the Mau are as follows :—

A very large, thickset pig, very short on the legs and long in the body. The general colour is black with long sparse black hair covering the whole of the body and legs, longest and thickest on the edge of the back in the young animal, but worn off or absent in the old animals, doubtless through passing under boughs.

There is usually a white tuft of hair in the sow and young on the horizontal tubercle of the face, and this remains in the boar as a few scattered white hairs. There are a few white bristles on the belly and rump.

The skin is very thick and strong, indeed of such strength and toughness that the Dorobo and the Kakumega people prefer this hide to any other, even buffalo, for making their shields.

The face carries two large tubercles or warts on each side, which, however, coalesce. The conical warts of the common Warthog are absent.

Tubercles on the face of the Giant pig are situated below the eye on an enlargement of bone (zygoma), and are very large and massive. They are covered with short, bristly black and white hairs.

The second pair, which are practically joined to the first pair, run from just below the ear forward about half-way along the jaw covering the masseter muscle.

These warts, together with the great lateral development of the skull, are a very noticeable point in the Mau species.

The skull of the Giant pig is large and massive. One specimen (ricnasal) measured 19 inches from the 'rooting bone' to the occipital crest and 13 inches between the projections of bone below the eye (measured between uprights not following the curve). The orbit of the eye is set low, not high as in the Warthog, and is not closed. It is small in diameter ($1\frac{3}{4}$ inch vertical by 2 inches horizontal) though deep. On the roof of the skull there is a curious depression capable of holding nearly a cupful of water. This, however, is not present in the young animal, the skull being distinctly rounded.

The lower jaw is massive and shows many ridges for the attachment of the masseter muscle.

The tusks, as a rule, do not show the development of the Warthog, and the upper canines are set horizontally in the plane of the jaw, not at an angle with it as in the Warthog. They are massive and thick in perfect specimens, curving back to a point (more often in sows), though generally worn and broken in old boars. They are rough and ridged, usually discoloured black, and have a large wearing surface for the lower tusks. These latter are thick and strong and of a fair length—four to six inches—projecting from the jaw.

The teeth in the adult appear to be deciduous, as in the Warthog.

The figures taken from an old boar were as follows:

Incisors $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$; canines $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$; premolar $\frac{1-2}{2-2}$; molars $\frac{2-2}{2-2}$.

In one specimen of an immature pig the incisors were $\frac{1-1}{2-2}$; canines $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$; premolars $\frac{2-2}{1-1}$; molars $\frac{2-2}{2-2}$.

Though it is doubtful whether this latter specimen did not belong to another species of Giant pig.

In the adult the grinding surfaces are nearly flat, only slightly tubercular, but in immature specimens they are strongly ridged.

In regard to the habits of the Giant pig, it usually lives in dense forest or bamboos, making runs through the undergrowth, though, according to several observers, it has been seen crossing from one patch of forest to another. It is a gregarious animal, going at times in large sounders, though sows with young and old boars separate out. It has been observed, or rather heard, and the tracks afterwards seen in very large mobs, though repeatedly a pair or a single adult have been met with.

It moves about in the early morning and evening and usually sleeps during the heat of the day. When asleep its snores are very audible, though, owing to the thick undergrowth, it is seldom seen. The places chosen for rest are generally under a half-fallen tree which has become covered with creepers and forms a sort of vegetable cave. In these places the female has her young, which consist of from two to six.

The Giant pig is fond of water and wallowing and will travel some distance to the brackish pools or mudholes which occur on the Mau escarpment.

Its food consists of a plant with green glabrous leaves, a thin stem, and white flowers, which grows in great profusion all through the forest. These plants grow to a height of 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet and form a dense cover. The succulent tops seem to be preferred. (It is said that this plant also forms the chief food of the Bongo.) The Giant pig does not appear to 'root' at all like the Bush pig, Warthog and domestic pig. The turned-up areas in forest clearings appear to be all made by Bush pigs. The spoor of the Giant pig may be followed up for many miles, but during that space no earth will be found turned up, or, if it is found, the spoor of the Bush pig will be much in evidence.

In the country haunted by the Giant pig rubbing trees are much in evidence. When the pig comes up from his wallow it removes the superfluous mud by rubbing round some chosen tree. These trees get much worn to a height of some $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

The spoor of the Giant pig is large and distinctive, being very rounded on the outside edges. The toes do not meet and are rather splayed, and in soft ground the posterior toes make a dent in the soil. The droppings are large and characteristic, much resembling those of the Hippopotamus on a smaller scale. When alarmed and running away the tail is hoisted vertically with the tip dropping forward in a similar manner to the Warthog.

As stated above the female has from two to six young at a birth. According to the Dorobo the older sows have the larger litters. They (the Dorobo) state that young pigs may be met at all seasons.

The colour of the young is a brownish brindle. The very young are brown, but black hairs appear to grow between the softer brown ones and the brown hairs are gradually shed. When the young pigs attain a length of some two and a half feet they are nearly all black. In smaller specimens the brown-coloured hair is very obvious. Both coloured hairs are very long and strong, being practically bristles. The tuft of whitish hair on the cheek tubercle is very noticeable in the

young and the front is whitish. The well-marked depression in the skull of the adult is absent, the cranium being rounded. Four incisors are present in the lower jaw and two above.

In some specimens of Giant pig much variation is observed, the teeth differing very much.

Certain Giant pigs have large and well-developed incisor teeth $\frac{1-1}{2-2}$. In these pigs the premolars and molars are strongly

tubercular, and on the skin, especially on the belly and rump, much more white hair is found, the ears being usually covered inside with long yellowish hair. The teeth in two specimens were as follows :—

An adult boar—Incisors $\frac{1-1}{2-2}$ very strongly developed ; canines $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$; premolars $\frac{2-2}{2-2}$ much worn ; molars $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$ very strongly tubercular ; length of fresh skin, 7 feet 5 inches.

An adult sow—Incisors $\frac{1-1}{2-2}$ strongly developed ; canines $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$; premolars $\frac{2-2}{2-2}$; molars $\frac{3-3}{2-2}$; length of fresh skin, 7 feet $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

The Bush pig (*Potamochoerus choeropotamus*) is common throughout East Africa, but is seldom seen owing to its nocturnal habits.

Its general appearance has been described above. The skull is singularly compressed and narrow. The teeth very nearly approximate to the domestic pig with flat grinding surfaces. The tusks are small, and the upper are set horizontally with a broad wearing surface for the lower tusk.

This pig has the habit of turning up large areas with its snout for feeding purposes. The land chosen for this is usually a marshy clearing in the forest. They are usually met with in small family parties or in pairs, but owing to the dense nature of the cover they inhabit are difficult to shoot.

The Red River hog has been described above.
