**African big five facts for kids**

[Kids Encyclopedia Facts](https://kids.kiddle.co/)

The phrase **African big five** or **Big Five game** was coined by [hunters](https://kids.kiddle.co/Hunter) and refers to the five most difficult animals in [Africa](https://kids.kiddle.co/Africa) to hunt on foot. The term is still used in most tourist and wildlife guides that discuss African wildlife [safaris](https://kids.kiddle.co/Safari).

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| Lion waiting in NambiaLion  | African elephantAfrican Elephant  | African BuffaloAfrican Buffalo  | Ngorongoro Spitzmaulnashorn edit1Black Rhinoceros  | Leopard africaLeopard  |

The collection consists of the [lion](https://kids.kiddle.co/Lion), the [African elephant](https://kids.kiddle.co/African_elephant), the [African Buffalo](https://kids.kiddle.co/African_Buffalo), the [leopard](https://kids.kiddle.co/Leopard) and the [rhinoceros](https://kids.kiddle.co/Rhinoceros), either the [black rhinoceros](https://kids.kiddle.co/Black_Rhinoceros) or the [white rhinoceros](https://kids.kiddle.co/White_rhinoceros). The members of the big five were chosen for the difficulty in hunting them and not their size, which is why the leopard is on the list and the enormous [hippopotamus](https://kids.kiddle.co/Hippopotamus) is not.

The big five are among the most dangerous mammals:

* The [**Lion**](https://kids.kiddle.co/Lion)  is a large [carnivorous](https://kids.kiddle.co/Carnivore) [feline](https://kids.kiddle.co/Felidae) of Africa and northwest [India](https://kids.kiddle.co/India), having a short tawny coat, a tufted tail, and, in the male, a heavy [mane](https://kids.kiddle.co/Mane) around the neck and shoulders.
* The [**African elephant**](https://kids.kiddle.co/African_elephant) is a very large [herbivore](https://kids.kiddle.co/Herbivore) having thick, almost hairless skin, a long, flexible, prehensile trunk, upper [incisors](https://kids.kiddle.co/Incisor) forming long curved tusks of [ivory](https://kids.kiddle.co/Ivory), and large, fan-shaped ears. There are two distinct species of African elephant: [African Forest Elephant](https://kids.kiddle.co/African_Forest_Elephant) and the [African Bush Elephant](https://kids.kiddle.co/African_Bush_Elephant) (*Loxodonta africana*).
* The [**African Buffalo**](https://kids.kiddle.co/African_Buffalo) or [**Cape Buffalo**](https://kids.kiddle.co/Cape_Buffalo) (*Syncerus caffer*) is a large [horned](https://kids.kiddle.co/Horn_%28anatomy%29) [bovid](https://kids.kiddle.co/Bovid). It is the most dangerous of the Big Five, reportedly causing the most hunter deaths.
* The [**Leopard**](https://kids.kiddle.co/Leopard) is a large, carnivorous feline having either tawny fur with dark rosette-like markings or black fur. Leopards are the most difficult to acquire hunting [licenses](https://kids.kiddle.co/License) for and are often difficult to hunt due to their behavior and their nocturnal feeding habits. Leopard hunting usually overlaps several weeks of baiting.
* The [**Rhinoceros**](https://kids.kiddle.co/Rhinoceros) is a large, thick-skinned, herbivore having one or two upright horns on the snout. In Africa, there are two distinct species of rhinoceros; the [**Black Rhinoceros**](https://kids.kiddle.co/Black_Rhinoceros) and the [**White Rhinoceros**](https://kids.kiddle.co/White_Rhinoceros). Both of these species have two upright horns on the snout.

Countries where the big five can all be found include South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Botswana. According to recent studies it is difficult to spot the Rhinoceros in Botswana.

**Conservation status**

If the white rather than black rhinoceros is chosen, the Big Five do not include any endangered species. However, the lion and African bush elephant are classified as vulnerable (the African forest elephant is not yet evaluated as of 2008); African buffalo are conservation dependent. The leopard and white rhinoceros are of less concern.