

Top-10 Countdown

Africa's Most Deadly Animals



By U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters

Africa is known for its diverse wildlife. Here is a countdown of the top-10 most deadly African animals.

#10: Rhinoceros

Rhinos are the second-largest land mammals. White rhinos weigh around 5,000 pounds. Both white and black rhinos live in Africa. They are critically endangered. Their numbers drop everyday due to poaching. Poaching is illegally hunting the rhinos—usually for their horns.

Rhinos can't see very well. They also have short tempers. This makes them dangerous. Rhinos will charge at full force and use their horns to attack. The number of people killed by rhinos is unknown. But it is best to be careful near rhinos.

Top-10 Countdown

#9: Lion

Lions kill around 70 people a year in Africa. Not all lions target humans. The ones that do are usually sick, injured, or old males. Scientists think that they attack humans because humans are an easy meal. Humans can't run as fast as animals like zebra or gazelles. Humans don't have hooves or horns that can injure a lion.

#8: Cape Buffalo

Cape buffalo are huge. They live in large herds. They protect each other using their large horns and formidable strength. Even lions don't bother the Cape buffalo. It's too risky for them. Cape buffalo protect themselves by attacking in groups. They kill 200 people per year.



By Goulingken (Own work) via Wikimedia Commons

#7: Elephant

Elephants are also critically endangered. African elephants are the largest land mammals on earth. They can weigh up to 13,000 pounds. Elephants that feel threatened by humans will not hesitate to attack. Males are responsible for the most human deaths. Elephants kill around 500 people each year.

Top-10 Countdown

#6: Hippopotamus

Hippos live in and around the water in Africa. They are fiercely territorial. They will attack anyone nearby. Hippos can run 20 miles per hour. They have massive jaws with 20-inch tusks. Hippos kill around 3,000 humans each year.

#5: Nile Crocodile

This fearsome beast grows up to 16 feet long. It weighs around 500 pounds. Humans share the same water sources as the crocs. So crocs and humans run into each other regularly. People go to the water to wash clothes, fish, or bathe. This is when the most crocodile attacks occur. Nile crocs kill at least 3,000 people per year.

#4: Tsetse Fly

The tsetse fly is a bloodsucker. It doesn't look too different from a common housefly. Yet kills around 10,000 people each year. The tsetse fly carries a parasite. It causes Sleeping Sickness. It also carries another a parasite that kills livestock like cattle. If Sleeping Sickness isn't treated, it causes death.

#3: Black Mamba

The black mamba isn't actually black. It is a light grayish-brown. The inside of its mouth, however, is as black as coal. The black mamba is one of the most venomous snakes in the world. One bite has enough venom to kill 12 full-grown men within an hour. The snake is also known to chase people. It can move up to 12 miles per hour. Growing up to 8 feet long, the black mamba is one of the most feared snakes in Africa.

Top-10 Countdown

#2: Puff Adder

The puff adder is one of Africa's most deadly snakes. It kills the most people each year. It is a well-camouflaged snake. It freezes when someone approaches. People don't see it lying there. Most bites occur when a person accidentally steps on the snake. It's not known exactly how many people the puff adder kills each year. But snakes kill more than 30,000 Africans each year.



By Bernard Dupont from France via Wikimedia Commons

#1: Mosquito

The mosquito is both the smallest and most deadly animal on this countdown. It kills more people than all the other animals on this list combined. Mosquitoes carry diseases. These kill more than 1 million people each year. These diseases include Malaria, Dengue Fever, and Yellow Fever. Malaria alone kills more than 3,000 African children each day.

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Rhinos can't see very far or very well. They also have short tempers. This makes them dangerous to humans. Rhinos are known to charge at full force and use their horns to attack. The number of people killed by rhinos is unknown. But it is best to use caution near rhinos.

Top-10 Countdown

#9: Lion

Lions are responsible for killing around 70 people a year in Africa. The lions that target humans are usually sick, injured, or elderly male lions. Scientists think that these males attack humans because they are an easier meal. Humans can't run as fast as zebra or gazelles. Humans don't have dangerous hooves and horns that can injure a hunting lion.

#8: Cape Buffalo

Cape buffalo are huge and impressive beasts. They live in large herds and protect each other using their large horns and formidable strength. Even lions don't bother the Cape buffalo. The risk of getting hurt or killed is too high. Cape buffalo protect themselves by attacking in large groups. They are responsible for around 200 human deaths per year.



By Goulingken (Own work) via Wikimedia Commons

#7: Elephant

Elephants are another critically endangered animal. African elephants are the largest land mammal. They can weigh up to 13,000 pounds. Poachers are one of the biggest threats to these sensitive and intelligent creatures. Poachers kill elephants for their tusks. Elephants that feel threatened by humans will not hesitate to attack. Males, however, are responsible for the most human deaths. Elephants kill around 500 people each year.

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#6: Hippopotamus

Hippos live in and around the water in Africa. They are fiercely territorial. They will aggressively protect their territory from perceived threats. Hippos can run 20 miles per hour. They have massive jaws with 20-inch tusks that look like huge teeth. Hippos kill around 3,000 humans each year.

#5: Nile Crocodile

The Nile crocodile grows to be 16 feet long. It weighs around 500 pounds. Humans share the same water sources as the crocs. That means that crocs and humans run into each other regularly. The Nile croc hides in the water with only its eyes or nose exposed. They are nearly impossible to see. Most croc attacks occur when people go to the water to wash clothes, fish, or bathe. Nile crocs kill at least 3,000 people per year in Africa.

#4: Tsetse Fly

The tsetse fly is a bloodsucker. It doesn't look much different from a common housefly. Yet it is responsible for around 10,000 human deaths each year. The tsetse fly carries a parasite that causes Sleeping Sickness. It carries another similar type of parasite that kills livestock like cattle. If the Sleeping Sickness isn't treated, it causes death.

#3: Black Mamba

The black mamba isn't actually black. Its narrow body is a light grayish-brown. The inside of its mouth, however, is as black as coal. The black mamba is one of the most venomous snakes in the world. The amount of venom in one bite is enough to kill 12 full-grown men in an hour. The snake is also known to chase people. It can go 12 miles per hour. Growing up to 8 feet long, the black mamba is one of the most feared snakes in Africa.

Top-10 Countdown

#2: Puff Adder

The puff adder is possibly one of Africa's most deadly snakes. This snake kills the most people in Africa each year. It is a well-camouflaged snake that freezes when someone approaches it. Because it holds so still and is so well camouflaged, people don't see it lying there. Most bites occur when a person accidentally steps on the snake. While it's not known exactly how many people the puff adder kills each year, more than 30,000 people die from snakebites in Africa each year.



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Rhinos can't see very far or very well and have short tempers. This makes them dangerous to humans who might get in their way. Rhinos are known to charge at full force and use their horns to attack. While the number of people killed by rhinos is unknown, it is best to use caution near rhinos.

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#9: Lion

Lions are responsible for killing around 70 people a year in Africa. The lions that target humans are usually sick, injured, or elderly males. Scientists think that these weaker males attack humans rather than their regular prey because humans are an easier meal. Humans can't run as fast as animals like zebra or gazelles. Humans also lack dangerous hooves and horns that can injure a hunting lion.

#8: Cape Buffalo

Cape buffalo are huge and impressive beasts. They live in large herds and protect each other using their large horns and formidable strength. Even lions don't bother the Cape buffalo because the risk of getting hurt or killed is too high. Cape buffalo are known to protect themselves by attacking in large groups and are responsible for around 200 human deaths per year.



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#7: Elephant

Elephants are another critically endangered African animal. African elephants are the largest land mammal on earth and can weigh up to 13,000 pounds. Poachers are one of the biggest threats to these sensitive and intelligent creatures and generally kill them for their tusks. Elephants that feel threatened by humans will not hesitate to attack, though males are responsible for the most human deaths. Elephants kill around 500 people each year.

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This fearsome beast grows up to 16 feet long and weighs around 500 pounds. People and Nile crocs often share the same habitat. That means that crocs and humans run into each other regularly. The Nile croc hides in the water with only its eyes or nose exposed. Humans use the same water sources. They go to the water to wash clothes, fish, or bathe. This is when the most crocodile-related deaths occur. Nile crocs are responsible for killing at least 3,000 people per year in Africa.

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