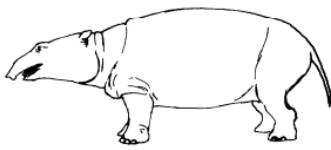


Following the Beasts

A long time ago (12,000 years) there were Hippo, Lion, Rhino, Bison, Giant Deer, Red Deer, Bear, Hyena, Wolf and Elephant living wild in England.

Red Deer are the only animals from this list which still live wild in England but you can see some of the others at West Midland Safari park!

Millions of years ago (mya) many animals looked very different from those we see now. The animals on this page are descendants to animals which live in the Safari Park. Can you work out which modern animals match these ancient creatures, write their names next to the pictures below. When you see the living animals at the Park, think about their long history!



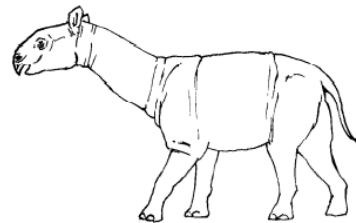
Moeritherium

(36-33mya)



Smilodon

(1.5-1mya)



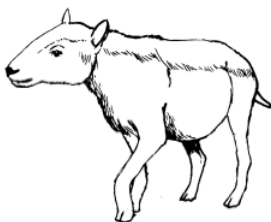
Indricothere

(30-25mya)



Megaloceros

(4-0.009mya)



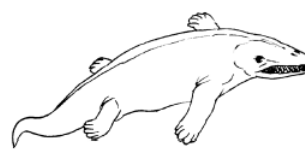
Propalaetherium

(49-43mya)



Procoptodon

(approx.2mya)



Enaliarctos

(approx.20mya)



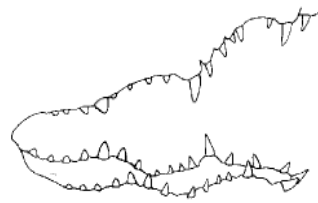





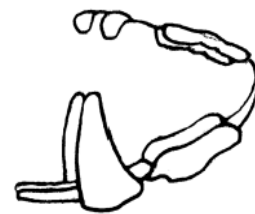






Merycoidodon

(approx.25mya)

Crunch! Munch! Lunch!

Match the teeth to the animal. Draw a line between the name of the animal and the picture of its teeth.

	Giraffe		
	Wolf		
	Crocodile		
	Camel		
	Tiger		
	Hippopotamus		

Animals have teeth which suit their diets – what they eat. Draw an arrow to the sharp teeth that the Tiger, the Wolf and the Crocodile use to tear the meat on animal prey which they catch. Giraffe, Camel and Hippo have some pointed teeth. Can you work out why? They also have large back teeth to grind up the tough plants which they find. Colour in these teeth.

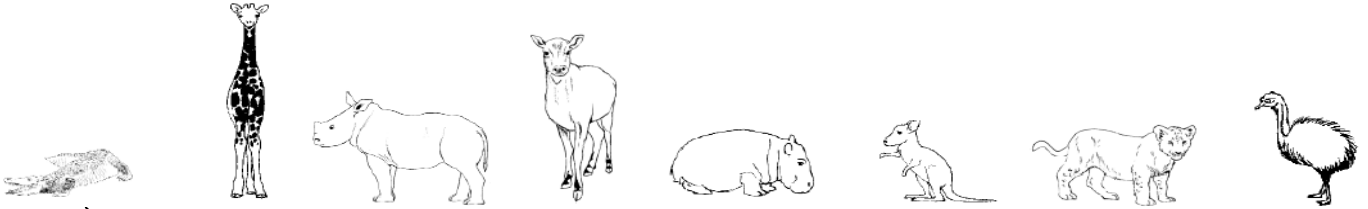
Which of the animals above best fits each of the following statements? Write names beside the sentences.

1. I hunt for food with others in a pack and we co-operate to catch our prey!
2. In my lifetime I have 45 sets of teeth which grow to replace the ones which break or wear out.
3. I have a tongue 45cm long so I can reach leaves which grow behind large thorns.
4. I feed only at night and can eat 60kg of food in five hours!
5. I can survive for two weeks without water and then drink 104 litres of water in one go.
6. I creep up on my food very quietly so they don't hear me!

Do you hunt for food? How many sets of teeth do you have in your lifetime? How long is your tongue? What mass of food could you eat during five hours? What volume of water can you drink in one go? (Drink lots of water – it's great for your brain!)

Whose Baby?

Here are some of the animals which were born or hatched from eggs at the Safari park. Look at the list of animal names and try to match the name to the animal. Draw a line between the name and the picture. The first one is done for you.



Ostrich

Crocodile

Hippo

Lion

Nilgai

Rhino

Giraffe

Wallaby

You can sort these animals into three groups:

The **Birds** have **feathers**. Write **B** (for bird) beside any bird picture above. Bird eggs give food to the young until they hatch. Then the mother or both parents help the young to feed until they can find their own food.

The **Reptiles** have **scales** on their bodies. Put **R** beside any reptile picture above. Most kinds of reptiles lay eggs. Some kinds of reptiles (some snakes) have young that grow inside the mother and are born looking like small adults. Some kinds of reptile young find their own food and other kinds are helped by the mother to get food.

The **Mammals** have **hair**. Write **M** beside every picture of a mammal above. Most mammals have young which grow inside the mother's body. Some of them are very tiny and take a long time to grow – usually inside a pouch (pocket) on the front of the mother. Mammals feed their young with milk which the mothers make in their bodies. At the Safari Park there are also young Zebra, Gnu, Ankole Cattle, Eland, Lechwe, Emu, Bison, Wapiti, Wolf, Llama, Camel, Yak, Pere David's Deer, Highland Cattle, Sea Lion, Snake and Alligator at various times of the year. Come and watch how they feed!

Fascinating facts

Hippo young can drink their mother's milk under water!

Zebra young learn the pattern of their mother's stripes which are different from every other Zebra!

All these animal have backbones. The **backbones** are called **vertebrae** so all animals with them are **vertebrates**. Can you feel your backbone? You are a vertebrate! Have you some hair? If so, you are a **mammal**. There are four more groups of animals with backbones. They are **birds** which have feathers, **reptiles** and **fish** which have **scales** and **amphibians** which have cold **skin**. Most fish and all amphibians lay eggs in water. When the young hatch they find their own food.

Babies are very different

These figures show the average mass (weight) of each of four animals when born (birth mass), average adult mass and the average time (from birth) each animal takes to reach adult mass.



Lion

Rhino

Wallaby

Human

Birth Mass (kg)	1.5	70	0.001	3.5
Adult Mass (kg)	150	1800	200	75
Time in years	3	3.5-4	2	18

Which animal has the heaviest adult mass?.....

What is the difference between the heaviest animal's birth mass and adult mass?.....Kg

Which animal increases its mass on hundred times?.....

Which animal has the lightest birth mass?.....

How long does this animal take to reach adult mass?.....years.

Which animal shows the greatest mass increase?.....

Which animal takes the longest to grow to adult mass?.....

Why do you think it takes so long for this animal to grow?.....

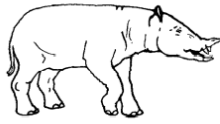
Find out what mass you were when you were born and write it here.....kg. If you become average mass when adult how much will be your increase in mass?.....kg.

Your mass now and when you are adult depends on your parents and also on what you eat and how you exercise. You will be just right if you balance the energy you take in as food with the energy you use up in exercise. This is how all animals stay fit – and balanced!

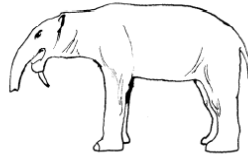
Elephant Tales

What is grey and wrinkly and has an amazing memory?

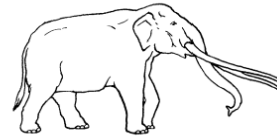
Did you spot that Moentherium was an ancestor of the Elephant? It was like a small Hippo, living in water. There have been many different kinds of Elephant. These pictures show some which lived on Earth in the past.



Phomi



Deinotherium



Mastodon

The three Elephants which live in the West Midland Safari Park are from Africa. They are orphans because the poachers killed their poachers for their 2-3metre tusks. Tusks are top front teeth (incisors) and are the same hard material which forms part of our teeth. In Elephant and Whale it is called ivory and is carved into various objects including piano keys. Ivory trade is banned. Elephant have huge back (molar) teeth as big as house bricks for grinding tough leaves. When a molar wears away the one behind it grows to take its place.

Each day an Elephant eats at least 150kg plant material and drinks up to 150litres. Its trunk holds 9litres of water. The trunk is part of the upper lip and the tip is very sensitive. It is used to smell, touch and pick things up.

Elephants fan their ears to keep cool and have good hearing. They use many different sounds to keep in touch with each other including some sounds which are too low for us to hear without special instruments.

Elephants have many stories told about them. One story from Kenya tells us that the Elephant was once normal size but was so rude that it was beaten by all the other animals until it swelled up and never returned to its smaller size. Another from Kenya tells of the day that Rabbit tied Hippo and Elephant together but pretended to each that he was at the other end of the rope. When the rope broke, Hippo was too frightened of this powerful Rabbit to ever come out of the water again in daylight and Elephant started to uproot trees angrily in order to find Rabbit!

Elephants are used by Humans, to carry tree trunks for example. In the past, important people such as rulers in India rode an Indian Elephant which were dressed up in colourful, jewelled clothing. Elephants were considered wise, intelligent chiefs which lived for a long time – like those Humans! Many people living near Elephants feel that there are close bonds between Elephant and Humans.

You could try this activity. When you have finished reading this paragraph, close your eyes. Imagine an Elephant. What colour is it? What does it look like? Is it dressed up? Where is it standing? How did it get there? What is it doing? What is its story? Think about it for three minutes!

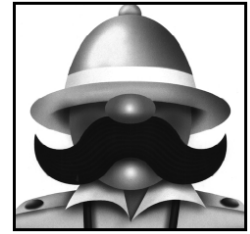
Tell someone your story or write it down. When you have done this, you could think about your Elephant leaving that place. Why has it gone? Where? How? Finish the story!

There are other stories which you could write about Elephants. How did the Elephant get its trunk? Why are Elephants tusks so long? How did Elephants become so big? Why has the Elephant have such wrinkled and grey skin? Why are elephant ears so huge? Why do elephants use such deep voices that humans cannot hear them? Why do pictures of elephants show them flying? – or pink?

Set the scene. What is the landscape? Who or what is the main character in your story? What or who is the problem? Who or what helps to solve the problem? What is the solution – the happy ending?

It is said that elephants never forget. Tell us a story we will never forget!

Warden Bob



Bob Lawrence is Head Warden at the West Midland Safari Park. You may have seen him and some of the animals on television or read his book. People ask him about his job. Here are some of their questions and his answers. Some of the answers are expanded in the teachers' notes.

What have you been doing today?

Well, I have just returned from walking the Elephants!

Do you walk the Elephant every day?

Yes, but this was a special walk for them to knock down trees! Part of the Park is a S.S.S.I. (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and is a place where certain unusual plants will only grow in the open with no trees shading them. From time to time the Elephant have fun removing the trees!

How many animals are there at the Safari Park?

About 1000 animals – more than 60 different species.

What do they eat?

The 60 or so carnivores eat about a tonne (1000kg) of meat in a week plus a special powder which brings the diet closer to that which they would have in the wild where they eat whole animals. Herbivores and omnivores have grass and hay, fruit and vegetables, fresh bread (500 loaves a week) and cereals. The right vitamins and minerals for each animal are added. Elephants are given 'Elevite'! Visitors can buy special food suitable for many of the animals.

What is the question you are asked most often?

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What is the question you get asked most often?

People ask if the animals are really wild and dangerous. The answer is that yes they are. We treat them with respect. While visitors are in the park we double the number of keepers. They watch over people and animals to make sure all is well.

What do the Keepers do when the park is closed?

This is the busiest time of the year! New animal houses are built and old ones repaired. We make sure that each animal is fit and in good condition by correct feeding and cleaning and checking them regularly. We take blood samples and check dung to find out if any animal has worms inside. Many of the African animals have young in the cold winter months.

Have all of the different animals had young?

Nearly all of our animals were born at the Safari Park. All of the animals have had young except the Elephants. We check them regularly by body scanning and by taking blood and urine samples. We have been asked to stop the Tiger and Przewalski's Horse from breeding

I thought Tiger and Przewalski's Horse were rare. Why do you not breed more?

There are now so few areas where the Tiger is secure in its natural home that it would not be safe to release them and all the suitable zoos are full. We do breed White Tigers though. In the future we might supply young Przewalski's Horses when a suitable habitat is made for them in Mongolia which is their native country. They will have to learn to eat the sort of food they would find in the wild.

How do you get close to the animals to take samples and treat them?

I am licensed to dart them and know how much 'sleeping' drug to give for each examination or operation. This varies from animal to animal and also on many other factors which I have learned over 30 years. We operate on injuries, give drugs and vaccinations, and put in microchips to 'label' the animals. This 'chipping' is now a legal requirement so that trade in the world's most endangered animals, like the Tiger, can be monitored. Our Elephants needed microchips before leaving Africa. D.N.A. profiling is important too. We've sampled our White Tiger to check that they are pure Bengal Tiger and also our Rhino. Recent D.N.A. checks on wild African Elephant have shown that there are two species of these – Forest Elephant and Savannah (plains) Elephant.

Have you ever seen these animals in the wild?

In 1998 when I had been at the Safari Park for 25 years, my family and I were taken as a surprise holiday to Namibia in Africa. We saw Wildebeest, Giraffe, White Rhino, Lion and Elephant among many others. Our Landrover got stuck in the sand when we were surrounded by Lions! It was the trip of a lifetime and we want to return.

Did you take any photographs?

Yes! I have been photographing animals since I came to the Safari Park. Many of the photographs and films which I have taken have been used to promote the park or in advertising. You may have seen one of our Rhino, Sea lion or Elephant in commercials!

What is the strangest photo you've ever had to take?

A Rhino's bottom! It was difficult but I managed and it appears on advertising hoardings all over the Midlands.

Do you get any other strange requests?

Yes. Fisherman like Emu feathers for their flies. Deer antlers are used for walking stick handles. Spinners and weavers want Camel wool. Lion dung is in great demand to keep cats off lawns and wild Deer out of gardens where they love eating roses!

When do you take your holidays?

I haven't had a holiday this year!

Why do you not have time off?

There is always something happening with animals – and with the weather. Floods, droughts and severe cold affect everything. Transport strikes and petrol shortages make it difficult to bring in food and reduce the number of visitors. The foot and mouth epidemic put all our hoofed animals at risk. We isolated the Park from the rest of the country. Food was winched or carried in. Some vehicles were used only outside the Park and the others stayed inside. I live on a farm so I had to shower, change clothes and change vehicles between work and home. I lived in oil skins for three months, looking more like a lifeboat man than a warden! When we re-opened, visitors toured around the animals in special buses. It was hard work and a worrying time.

Why keep animals in captivity?

Hundreds of millions of people in the world go to see animals in captivity every year. They could not view animals in the wild without severely disturbing them and their habitats. Animals mature younger and live longer in Safari Parks because in the wild there are more diseases and more extremes of climate as well as predation and lack of food supply. Some animals like the Przewalski's Horse and the Pere David Deer no longer exist in the wild anyway.

What do people remember about West Midland Safari Park?

They remember clearly the contact with the animals. Some enjoy the sights best, some the smells, some the feeling of the animal coats and the amazing tongues, some the sounds. One man told me about his memory, 25 years ago, of a Giraffe putting its head through the open sunroof of his car!

Do animals ever get out of the Park?

There was a Sea lion which used to visit the local fish and chip shop as soon as it smelled fish cooking! However it doesn't happen as much as people think. On a single day a Siamese cat was mistaken for a Monkey, a Husky dog for a Wolf and a Golden Labrador for a Lion. That evening, some sightings of Deer did turn out to be a real Deer, but not ours! There are many stories of large, wild (often black) cats roaming around England but very little evidence of them.

You could use the conversations above as the basis for a play – perhaps for an assembly?

There are probably many questions you would like to ask Bob. You could write some of these down. Zoos and Parks often produce newsletters about what is happening at them. You could design the front page of a newspaper or newsletter about the West Midland Safari Park using the information above. Compose some catchy headlines (which often contain a joke or a pun) and snappy articles. You might be able to find some animal pictures or scan some photographs. The Safari Park staff would be very interested to see your results!