Sable Antelope (*Hippotragus niger*)

**Conservation Status:** Least Concern

The sable antelope is a rotund, barrel-chested antelope with a short neck, long face, and dark mane. They are best known for their impressive ringed horns that rise vertically and curve backward. Sable antelopes have a short, glossy coat that appears black in males and sorrel to rich chestnut in females and young. As they grow older, sable antelopes change their coloration. Calves are born reddish-brown, with virtually no markings. As they age, white markings will appear and their coat darkens.

**Fun Facts**

1. A sable antelope’s horns can reach 5.5 feet in length.

**Habitat**

Sable antelopes are dependent on drinking holes and are often associated with termite mounds. They are generally found in broad-leafed, deciduous woodlands, interspersed with floodplain grasslands.

**Diet**

Primarily grass, sometimes herbs and leaves from shrubs and trees

**Predators**

Lions, leopards, hyenas, hunting dogs, crocodiles, and humans

**Behavior**

Sable antelope females and their young are typically found in small social groups that can contain upward of 75 individuals. A cow herd’s home range is generally between 10 and 25 square km (4-10 square miles) and will overlap with the territory of up to five bulls. Males with the best territories generally have the best mating success.

**Breeding**

Sable antelopes give birth annually to one calf born after a gestation period of about 9 months. When a female is ready to give birth, she will leave the herd and seek a secluded place in the bush. After giving birth, the mother will leave the calf hidden in the tall grass or bush, returning once or twice a day to nurse. After a couple of weeks, once the calf is strong enough, the calf will accompany its mother back to the herd.

**Size**

Length: 1.97-2.1 m

Height: 1.15-1.4 m

**Weight**

204-263 kg

**Life Span:** 20 years

**Gestation Period:** 9 months

**Average number of offspring:** 1