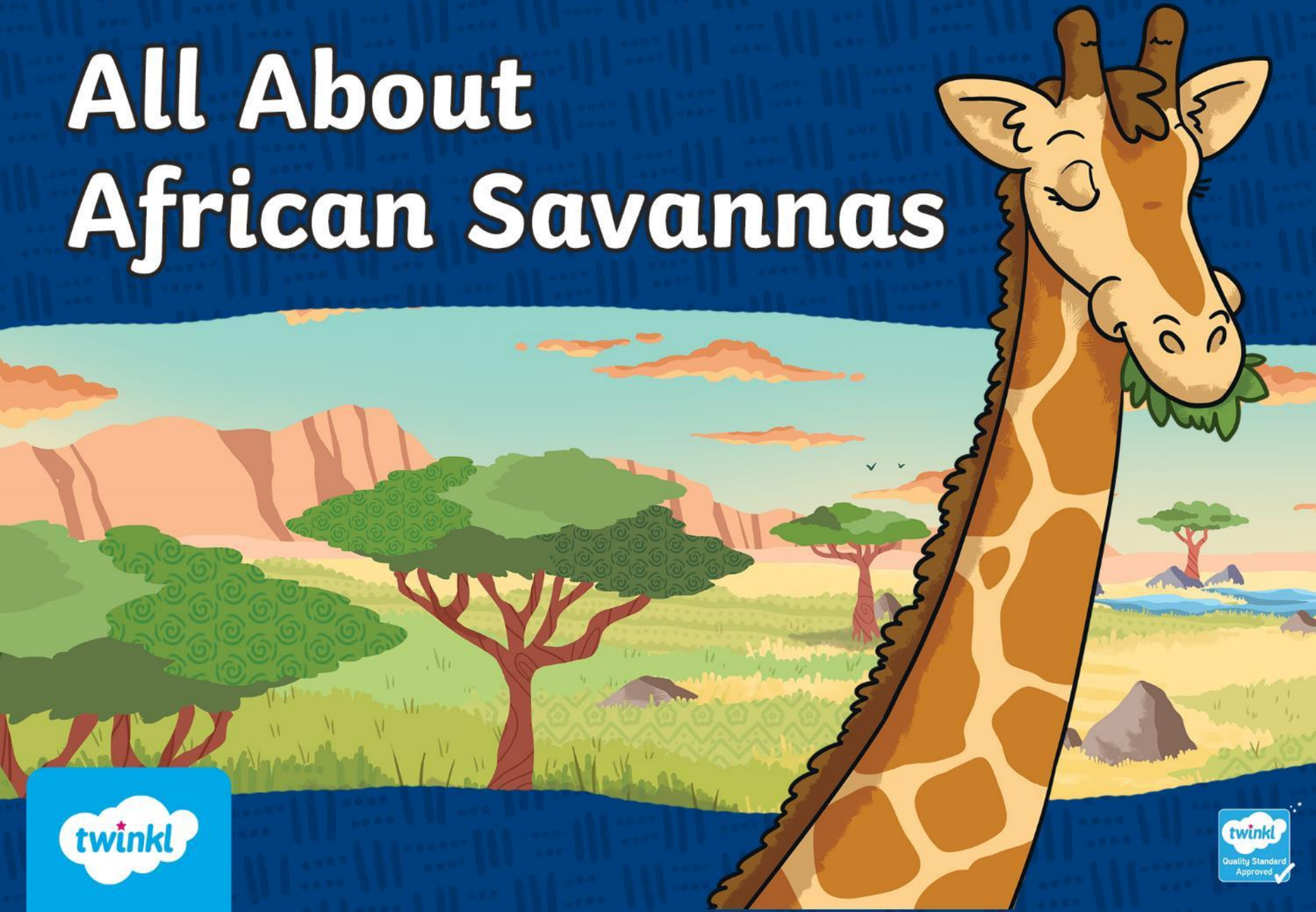


# All About African Savannas



# What Is a Savanna?

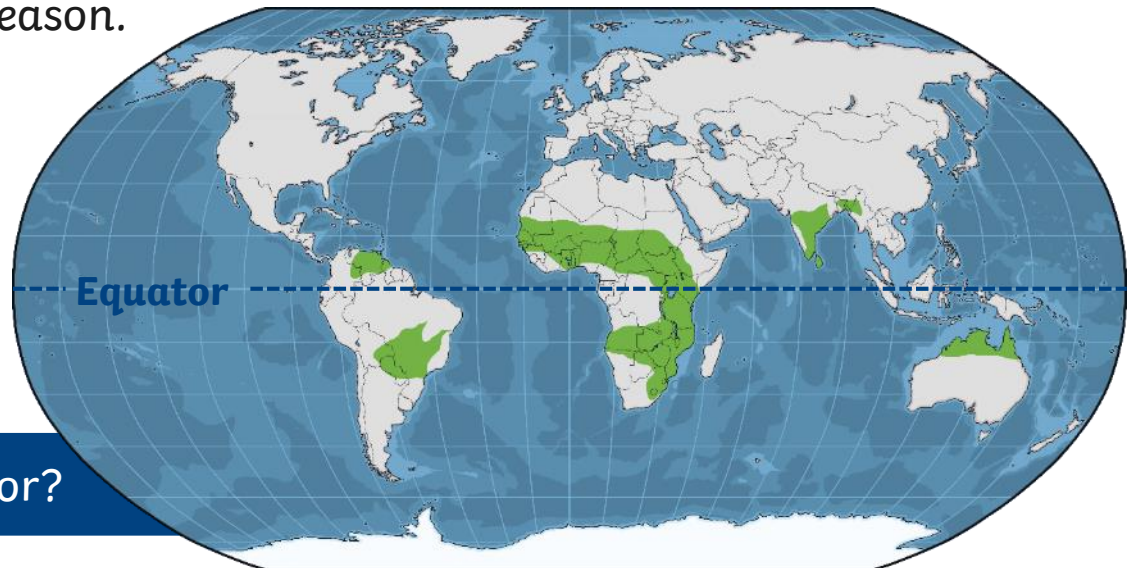
A savanna is a large flat area of tropical grassland. There are savannas in lots of different countries. They are found near to the equator.

It is hot all year round in the African savanna. It only has two seasons: summer and winter.

The winter is the dry season. It doesn't rain at all during winter.

The summer is the wet season.  
This is when it rains.

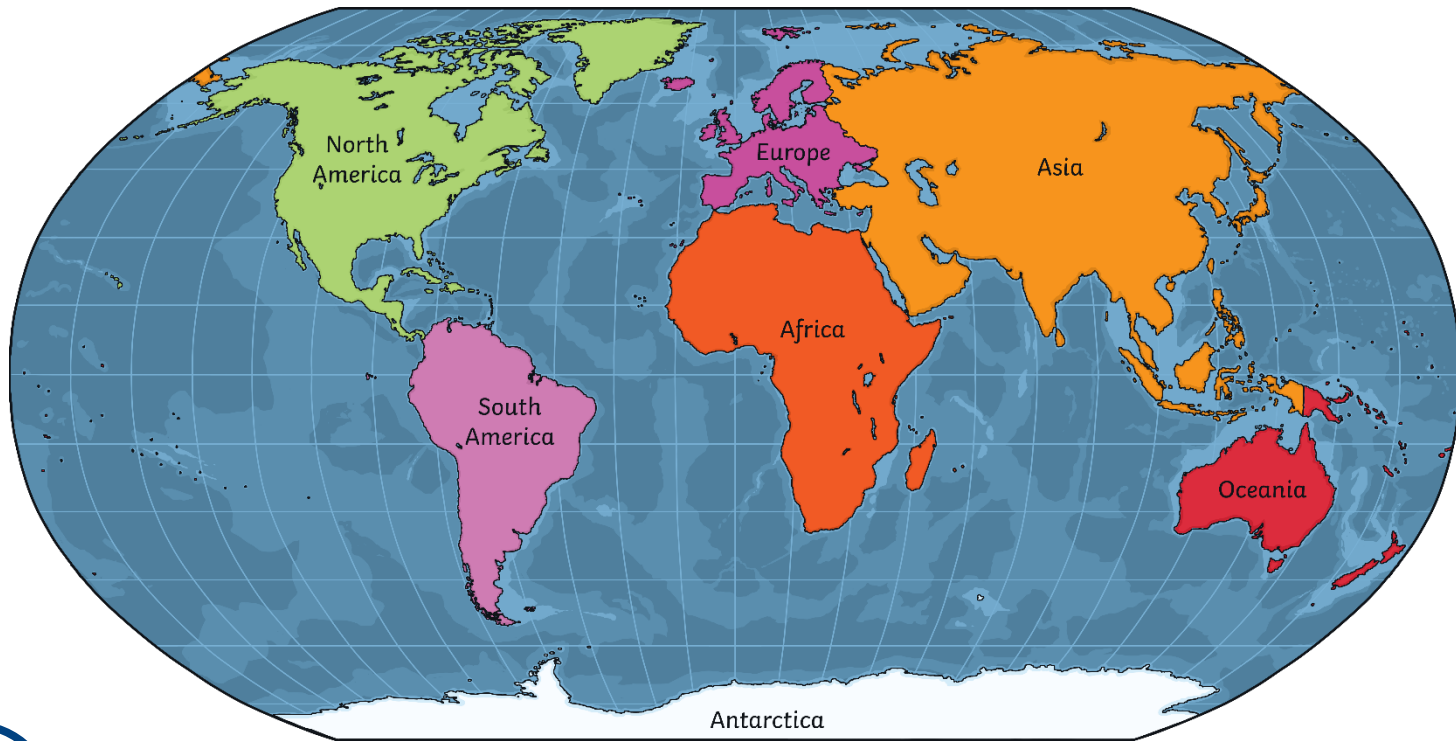
The largest savannas in the world are in Africa.



What is the equator?

# Where Is Africa?

Africa is a continent made up of 54 countries.



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Which continent do you live on?

# Where Are the African Savannas?

Nearly half of Africa is covered with savanna.

The Serengeti is one of the most well-known savannas in Africa. It is on the border between Tanzania and Kenya.



**Serengeti National Park**



# Plants and Animals

There are very few trees that grow in the savanna. The ones that do grow are very spaced out.

Lots of time can pass without rain so the plants here need to survive without a lot water.

Some plants store water in their stems or trunks. Others have very long roots to reach water deep down in the soil.



There are lots of different animals that live in the savanna. They often have to travel a long way to find water to drink. They drink from pools called 'watering holes'.

# Lion

Lions are powerful hunters. They live in groups, called 'prides'. A male lion is the head of the pride.

Male lions have a mane of hair around their head. This protects them during fights with other lions.

It is the job of the male lion to protect its herd. The female lions hunt together for food for the pride. They also look after the lion cubs.

Lions are most active at night, when it is much cooler. During the day, they spend most of their time resting in the shade.



**Did you know?**

A lion's roar can be heard up to five miles away!

# Thomson's Gazelle

Gazelles are very fast. They are preyed on by many other animals so they rely on their speed to escape.

They sleep for just five minutes at a time, for a total of one hour per day.

They sometimes form herds with zebras and wildebeest.

**Did you know?**

Some types of gazelle 'honk' when they're nervous!



# Hippo

Hippos spend most of their time in the water during the day. This is to keep them cool. They come onto land at night to eat.

A hippo's eyes, nose and ears are all on top of its head. This helps them to see, breathe and hear when the rest of their body is underwater.

Hippos mostly eat grass but they have been known to eat small animals too.



**Did you know?**

A hippo's mouth can open up to a metre wide!

# Giraffe

There are four different types of giraffe – northern, southern, Masai and reticulated. Each type has a different pattern on their skin.

Giraffes are the tallest living animal. They have very long legs and necks. This helps them to reach the leaves on high tree branches.

**Did you know?**

Giraffes sleep standing up!



**northern giraffe**



**southern giraffe**



**Masai giraffe**



**reticulated giraffe**



# Warthog

Warthogs are a type of pig. A male warthog is a boar. A female is a sow. Baby warthogs are piglets.

They have four big tusks which they use for defence. However, they will often choose to avoid a predator by running away or hiding in a burrow, rather than fighting.



**Did you know?**

Warthog's can run 30 miles per hour. That's as fast as a car!

# Zebra

Zebras are a type of wild horse. They are a different species to horses you would see on a farm.

Just like humans have unique fingerprints, each zebra has its own unique set of stripes.

Zebras live in herds, which helps to protect them from predators, such as lions.

There are three species of zebra. They each have different stripe patterns.



**Did you know?**

A herd of zebras is called a 'dazzle'.



**Grevy's zebra**



**mountain zebra**



**plains zebra**

# Hamadryas Baboon

Hamadryas baboons are a type of monkey. They live in large groups.

Hamadryas baboons have special areas in their cheeks that stretch to hold food. This lets them quickly store food until they find a safe place to eat it.

They're very good climbers but they spend most of their time on the ground.

**Did you know?**

Baboons yawn when they are angry!



# Elephant

African elephants are the largest living animal on land. They can grow to be three metres tall.

Elephants eat roots, grasses, fruit, leaves and tree bark. They are so strong, they can push down trees to reach their leaves.

Elephants are very intelligent and have the biggest brain in the animal world.



**Did you know?**

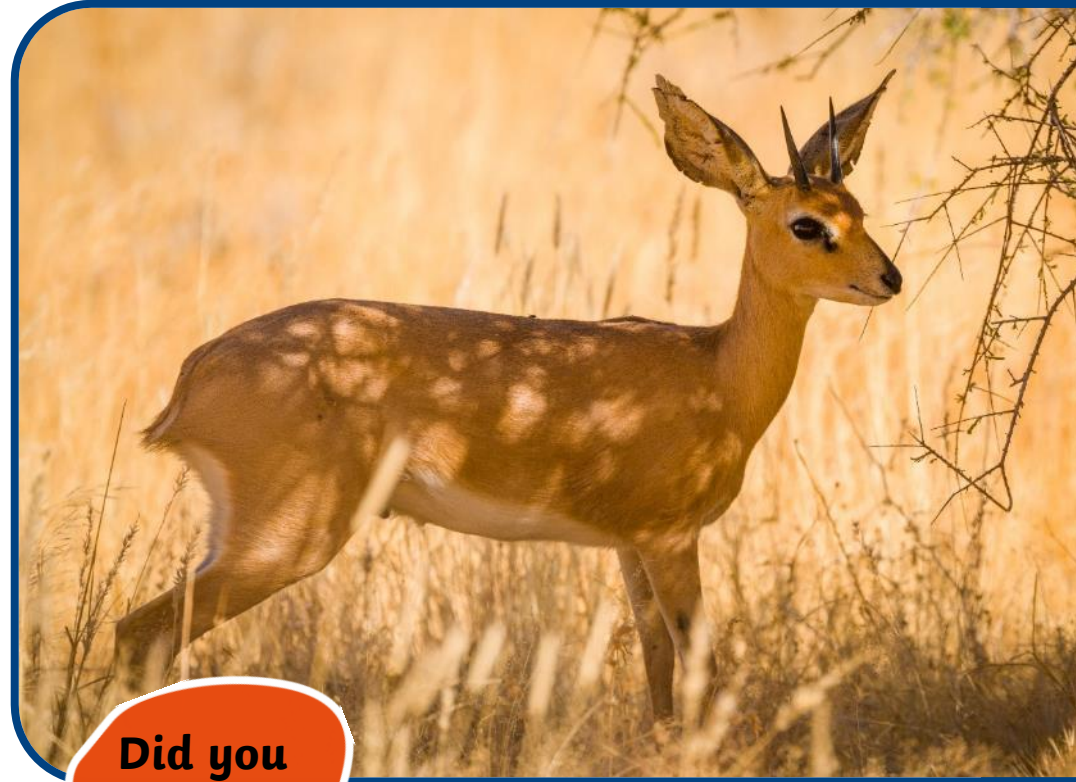
Elephants are so heavy, they can't jump!

# Steenbok Antelope

Steenbok antelopes have very large ears and eyes. This means they have excellent hearing and eyesight.

Steenboks eat leaves, grasses, berries and seeds. They rarely drink and get all the water they need from their food.

When a predator is nearby, steenboks will stay completely still in the grass. If a predator gets too close, they will run away very quickly.



**Did you know?**

There are 91 different species of antelope!

# Wildebeest

Wildebeests are a type of antelope. They live in huge herds. They migrate (travel) hundreds of miles every year to find fresh grass to eat.

Both male and female wildebeest have horns. They use these to defend themselves.

Wildebeest are fast, which means they can often outrun predators.



**Did you know?**

Every year, more than 1 million wildebeests migrate across Africa together!

"Blue Wildebeest" by Derek Keats is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

# Cheetah

Cheetahs are the fastest land animal. They can reach 70 miles per hour in three seconds. That's the same speed cars travel on a motorway!

Cheetahs get tired quickly, though, and can only run at this speed for about 20 seconds.

To save energy, cheetahs stalk their prey very carefully before jumping out and chasing them.



**Did you know?**

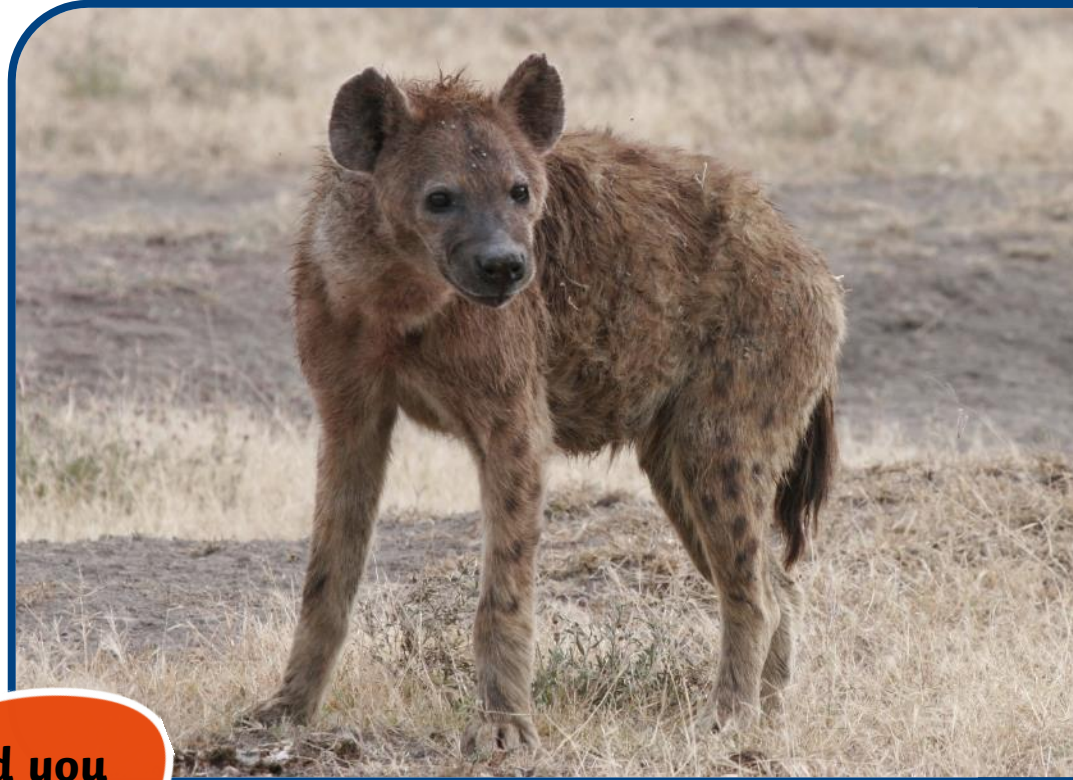
Unlike all other big cats, cheetahs don't roar!

# Spotted Hyena

Although they look like dogs, hyenas are more closely related to cats.

Hyenas can hunt but they are mostly scavengers. This means they pick up the food left behind by other animals.

When they do hunt, they work together in a pack. It takes a group of 10 to 25 hyenas to catch a zebra!



**Did you know?**

A spotted hyena's call sounds like a human laughing!

# Rhino

There are two types of rhino in Africa – black and white. Black rhinos are much smaller than white rhinos.

Black and white rhinos both have two horns on the front of their face.

Although they are incredibly big, they only eat plants.

Females and baby rhinos live in small herds. Adult males tend to live on their own.

**Did you know?**

Both black and white rhinos are actually grey in colour!

**black rhino**

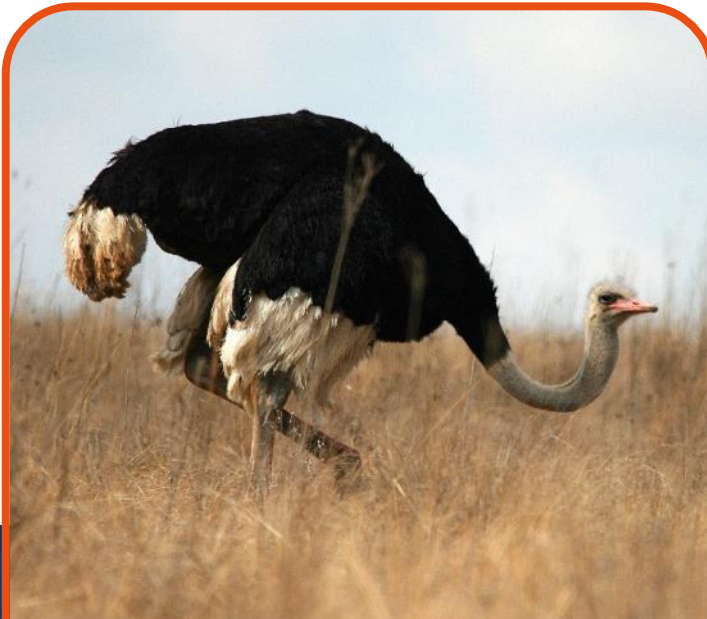


**white rhino**



# Birds

The **grey crowned crane** is a large bird with long legs and a long neck. They have a 'crown' of golden feathers on their heads. They like to rest in water or high up in trees. A male and female crane will dance together!



The **common ostrich** is the tallest and heaviest bird in the world. Although they are birds, they can't fly. They can run very fast though!

An ostrich holds its wings outstretched when it runs to help it to balance.

"Grey Crowned Crane" by Ray in Manila is licensed under CC BY 2.0

# Reptiles

**African rock pythons** are the largest snake in Africa. They live in open areas, near water. African rock pythons can grow to almost seven metres long! They eat small and large animals, from rats to antelopes.



**Nile crocodiles** are dangerous predators. They can grow to almost five metres long. They like to live near large areas of water, where they can easily hide from their prey. A Nile crocodile's only predator is humans.

**Mwanza flat-headed rock agamas** are a type of lizard. They are known as the 'Spider-Man lizard' because of their colours. When threatened by a predator, they can change their colour to brown so they blend in with their surroundings.



# Insects

**African flower beetles** are big beetles that come in lots of different colours. Male flower beetles have a large horn on their head. They're often found on flowers looking for pollen and nectar.



There are more species of **termites** in African savannas than anywhere else in the world. Termites live in big groups called 'colonies'. They build huge dirt mounds that can be over a metre tall.

**Dung beetles** like to eat animal poo! When they find animal dung, they shape it into a ball to roll it away. They then bury it to eat later or to lay their eggs in.



# Protecting the Savannas

Unfortunately, there are lots of things threatening the African savannas, such as farming and hunting.

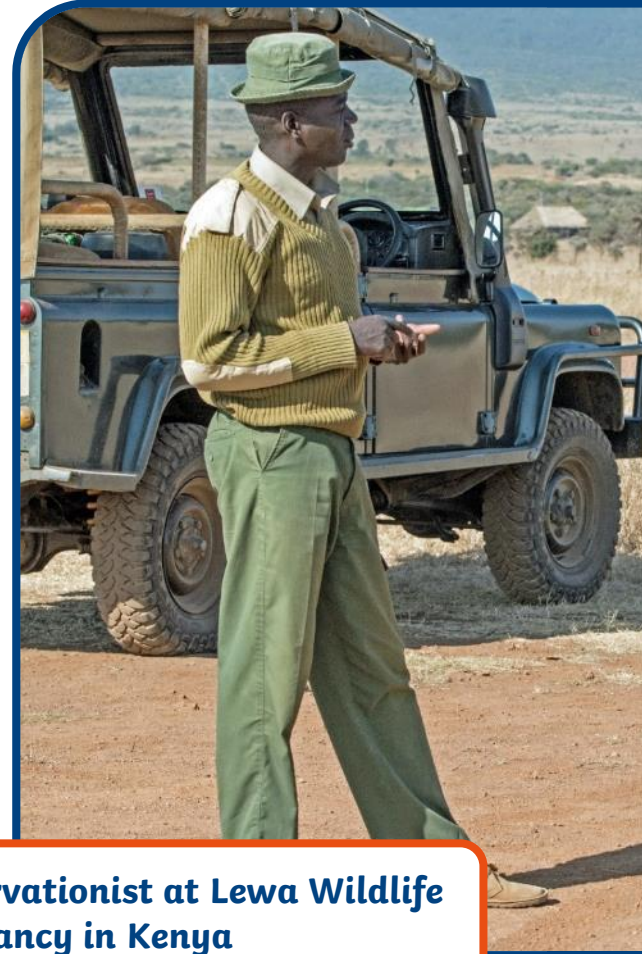
Luckily, there are many people who are fighting to save them. Special groups are working hard to track endangered animals to protect them from hunters.

There are also national parks that have laws stopping people from farming and hunting there.

With the help of these people, we can protect these special habitats and their animals for many years!

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What else do you think people can do to help protect the savannas?



**A conservationist at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya**