

Topic Page: [Antelopes](#)

Definition: **antelope** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Hollow-horned, speedy ruminant found throughout the Old World except in Madagascar, Malaysia and Australasia; most antelopes occur in Africa. They range in size from that of a rabbit to that of an ox. In some species both sexes bear horns of varied shapes and sizes; in others, only the males are horned. Family Bovidae.

Summary Article: **antelope**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

name applied to any of a large number of hoofed, ruminant mammals of the cattle family (Bovidae), which also includes the bison, buffalo, sheep, and goats. Found in Africa and Eurasia, they range in size from pygmy antelopes, 12 in. (30 cm) high at the shoulder, to the giant eland, with a shoulder height of over 6 ft (180 cm). Most types stand 3 to 4 ft (90–120 cm) high. The horns of antelopes, unlike the antlers of deer, are unbranched, consist of a chitinous shell with a bony core, and are not shed. Africa is the home of most antelopes.

The spiral-horned antelopes are the bushbucks (including the nyalas and the sitatunga), kudus, bongo, and more distantly related eland. These oxlike animals have patterns of light and dark stripes on the body, and most have them on the face as well. The duikers are a group of small, straight-horned antelopes of forest and thick brush country. Marsh antelopes are deerlike animals of marshes and reedbeds; they include the waterbuck, kob, puka, lechwe, and reedbuck.

The gnu (or wildebeest) and the closely related hartebeest and damalisks are horselike antelopes of the grasslands. The name oryx is applied to smaller horselike animals of the desert and scrublands, including the gemsbok and the beisa; the addax is a related desert antelope. The sable antelope and the closely related roan antelope have enormous, backward-curved, scimitar-shaped horns. The term gazelle has been used for a number of small, delicate antelopes with spreading horns, inhabiting deserts and grassy plains, such as the pale brown impala, the antelope best known from motion pictures; the impala is now classified in a different subfamily. True gazelles belong to the genera *Gazella*, *Eudorcas*, and *Nanger*. Antelopes related to the gazelles as well as the gerenuk, dibatag, springbok, and blackbuck. The blackbuck, found in India, was the first antelope to be described by zoologists, and has the generic name *Antilope*.

The delicate pygmy antelopes include the royal antelope, beira, klipspringer, oribi, grysbok, steenbok, dik-dik, and suni. Males have tiny, straight horns. The nilgai and the four-horned antelope are found in SE Asia. Other antelopes include the saiga of central Asia, which has an enlarged nasal structure, and the chiru, or Tibetan antelope. The North American pronghorn is sometimes called an antelope, but it belongs to a separate family (Antilocapridae) more closely related to the giraffe.

Antelopes are classified in the phylum Chordata, subphylum Vertebrata, class Mammalia, order Artiodactyla, family Bovidae.

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