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Contact us on: Tel:

(014) 736 9000 - Fax: (014) 736 9001 - E-mail: info@mabalingwe.co.za

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Impala - Rooibok



Impalas prefer living in light woodland with little undergrowth and grassland of low to medium height. They have an irregular distribution due to dependence on free water, soils with good drainage with a firm footing and gentle slope.

They usually switch between grazing and browsing depending on the season. During wet seasons when grasses are green and actively growing they graze. During dry seasons they browse foliage, shoots, forbs and seed. Impalas can also adapt to different habitats by being a grazer in one habitat and a browser in another.



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Females and young can form herds of up to two hundred individuals. When food is plentiful, adult males will establish territories.

Territorial males round up any female herds that enter their grounds, and will chase away bachelor males that follow.

They will even chase away recently-weaned males. A male impala tries to prevent any female from leaving his territory.

Young male impalas that have been forced to leave their previous herd form bachelor herds of around \pm thirty individuals. Males that are able to dominate their herd are contenders for assuming control of their territory.



The breeding season of impalas, also called **rutting**, begins toward the end of the wet season around the end of April beginning of May. The entire affair typically lasts approximately three to five weeks.

Male contenders from the bachelor herd now go into a WWE smack down battle to find out who the strongest contender will be at the end – that male will then be in line to battle the territorial male for everything he possesses.



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The winning male then has to do his best to keep all the ladies occupied and happy, covering them, keeping them safe and chasing away other male contenders.

Young are usually born after 6-7 months late November / December.

Females help each other by forming a nursery. A few females will look after the youngsters to allow mom some much needed social time! The ladies will take turns daily. The fawns only go to their mother to drink and when predators are near. Fawns are suckled for four to six months before they are weaned.

As males mature they are forced out of the herd by the territorial male and will join bachelor herds.

When frightened or startled, the whole herd starts leaping about to confuse their predator. The white marking on the tail can be used as a visual warning signal which is visible from afar (the tail is normally hidden away between the legs).

They can jump distances more than 10 meters (33 ft) and 3 meters (9 ft) high.

Impalas can reach running speeds of about 80 to 90 km/h (50 to 56 mph) to escape their predators.

When escaping from predators, they can release a scent from glands on their heels, which can help them to regroup. This is done by performing a high kick of their hind legs.



It's a way of life!



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