

Missionary Travels: Animals

An educational worksheet for children ages 9-13 published by livingstoneonline.org

While travelling through Mozambique in 1853 explorer David Livingstone came across a herd of animals in a river...

It is impossible to judge of the numbers in a herd, for they are almost always hidden beneath the waters; but as they require to come up every few minutes to breathe, when there is a constant succession of heads thrown up, then the herd is supposed to be large. They love a still reach of the stream, as in the more rapid parts of the channel they are floated down so quickly that much exertion is necessary to regain the distance lost by frequently swimming up again: such constant exertion disturbs them in their nap. They prefer to remain by day in a drowsy, yawning state, and, though their eyes are open, they take little notice of things at a distance. The males utter a loud succession of snorting grunts, which may be heard a mile off [...]

The young, when very little, take their stand on the neck of the dam, and the small head, rising above the large, comes soonest to the surface. The dam, knowing the more urgent need of her calf, comes more frequently to the surface when it is in her care.

David Livingstone

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Experiences and Outcomes:

Literacy and English

Students can practice deep reading and textual analysis to explore Livingstone's books.

Social Studies and Environments

Students can investigate the habitats of African animals and compare them to the habitats of animals they find in the area in which they live.

Suggested Questions:

- 1) What kind of animals has David encountered?
- 2) Why do you think the young of this animal stand on their mothers' backs when they are in the river?
- 3) What do you notice about the words David uses to describe the animals? Do they remind you of another kind of animal that we find on land?
- 4) Can you describe the natural habitat of an animal that lives in rivers near you? How does its habitat differ from the habitat of the animal David is describing?

Further Reading:

Find out more about the famous nineteenth-century explorer David Livingstone's Victorian bestseller, *Missionary Travels*, at livingstoneonline.org

This educational resource was developed by Kate Simpson and Justin Livingstone, who are staff of *Livingstone Online* (livingstoneonline.org). *Livingstone Online* is the leading site for learning more about the life and writings of David Livingstone. Visit our site to discover an array of images and texts that supplement the educational material found in this worksheet.