



WATER BUFFALO
VIETNAM
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PHOTO ENTRY
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Wasserbüffel, Sumpfbüffel (G), *Buffle d'eau*, *Buffle de l'Inde* (F). Also called **Asian water buffalo** or **Indian buffalo**. Scientific name is from the Greek *bouhalos* (buffalo). Some authorities distinguish between the domestic (including feral) water buffalo as *Bubalus bubalis* and the wild Asian water buffalo as *B. arnee*, while others, including ourselves, do not. As it was the domestic form that was first described for science, the name *bubalis* Linnaeus, 1758 takes precedence.

DESCRIPTION Head and body length 8-10 feet (2.4 to 3.0 m). Tail length 24-39 inches (60-100 cm). Shoulder height 59-75 inches (150-190 cm). Weight 1,550-2,650 pounds (700-1,200 kg).

A large, heavily built animal with stout legs and large, splayed hoofs. The skull is relatively light, long and narrow, and has a nearly straight profile. Muzzle is large and hairless. Ears are relatively small and not heavily haired. Tail reaches to the hocks and ends in a small tuft. General color is black or gray, with the lower legs a dirty white, and there often is a narrow white "V" on the throat. The coarse, sparse coat is moderately long and directed forward from hindquarters to head.



The horns (both sexes) are heavy at the base, triangular in section, flat on top with conspicuous wrinkles, and grow out from the sides of the head without forming a boss. At one time two distinct types of horn curvature were recognized in wild water buffalos, and were given subspecific rank. In one, which was considered the typical race (*bubalis*), the horns formed a regular curve in the shape of a semicircle. In the other (*macroceros*) they were characterized by their great length, growing directly outward and turning up only near the tips.

The long-horned buffaloes were found in Assam and Cooch-Behar; however, they have apparently been extinct as wild animals for many years, and *macroceros* is no longer considered a valid subspecies in any case. The horns of females are rounder in cross-section and lighter than those of males, but may be considerably longer. The longest horn of record (Rowland Ward, 1913) is 70-1/2 inches (179.1 cm), the largest circumference (1909) 23 inches (58.4 cm), the greatest outside spread (1933) 93-1/2 inches (237.5 cm).

BEHAVIOR A gregarious animal, with females and their young forming stable herds led by an old cow, and males in separate bachelor groups. Very old bulls are usually solitary. Males move into cow areas during the breeding season; dominant males mate with but do not control the females, and are subsequently driven off. Normally, one calf is born after a 10 to 11-month gestation period, and it nurses for 6-9 months. Life span in the wild as much as 25 years.