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see how we live

# Elephants and other plant-eaters



 Orpheus

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## Herbivores

**M**any of us mammals are herbivores. We feed only on vegetation: grass, leaves, and other plant matter. Our enemies are meat-eaters, the carnivores. Grouping together in herds is one way to defend ourselves—that's strength in numbers, you see. Another way is to be extremely large, like an elephant ...

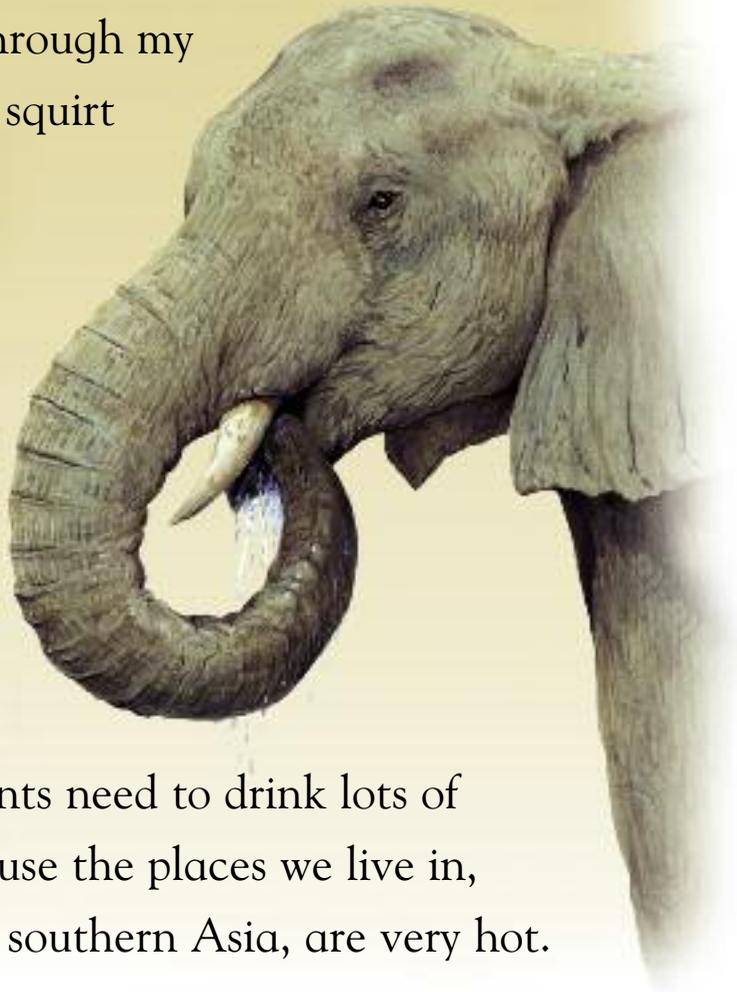
# What does an elephant use its trunk for?

**M**y trunk is like your nose. It helps me to smell things. But it has a lot more uses than that. It's very handy for picking up leaves and putting them in my mouth. With the help of my trunk,

I can reach up to high branches where the leaves are tastiest. I also like to eat fruit and, if I'm really hungry, I'll eat the branch as well!



**M**y trunk also helps me to drink. I suck the water up through my trunk then squirt it into my mouth.



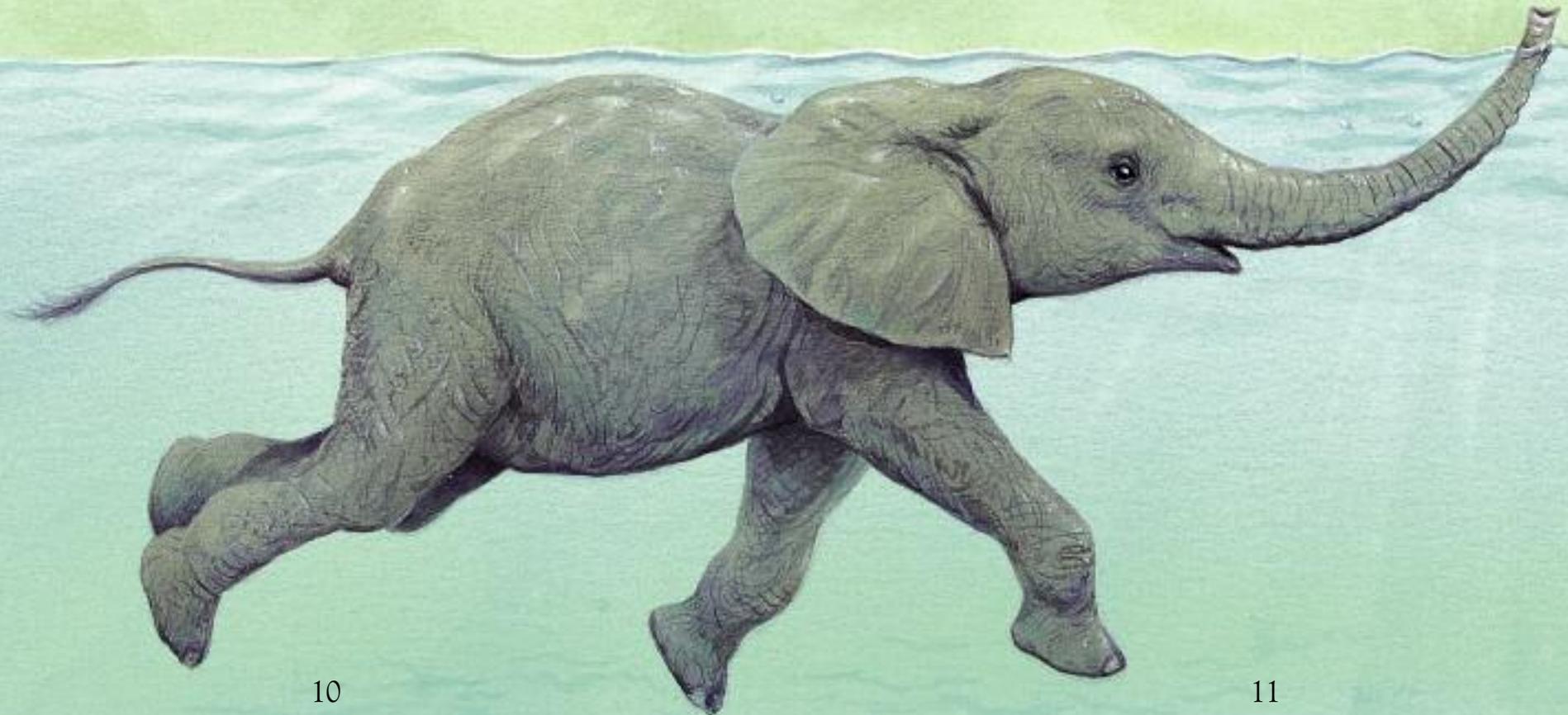
We elephants need to drink lots of water because the places we live in, Africa and southern Asia, are very hot.

**I** am the largest land animal alive, so it's not surprising that my showers take a long time! I use my trunk to suck the water up then spray it over my back. This washes off the dirt and all those pesky insects.

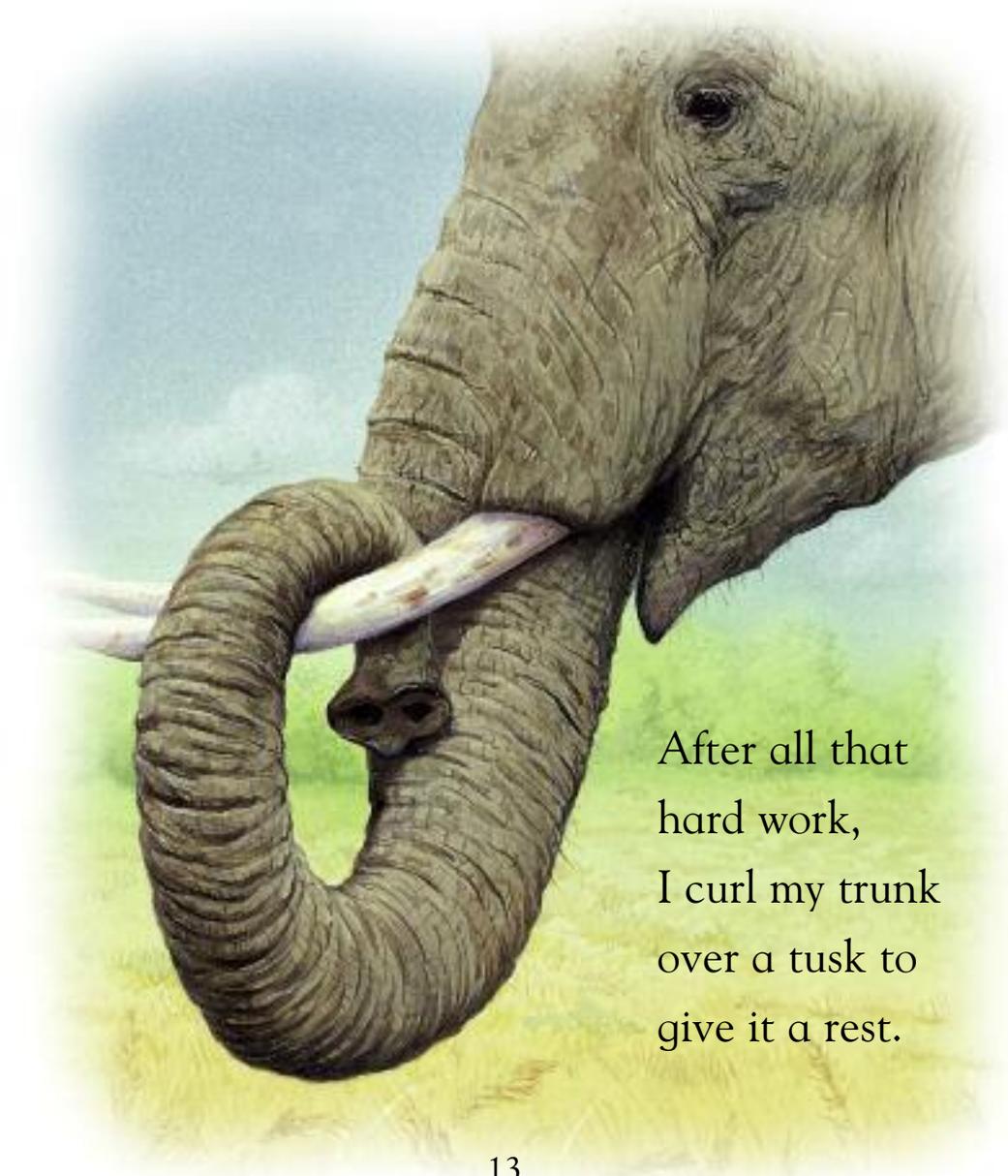
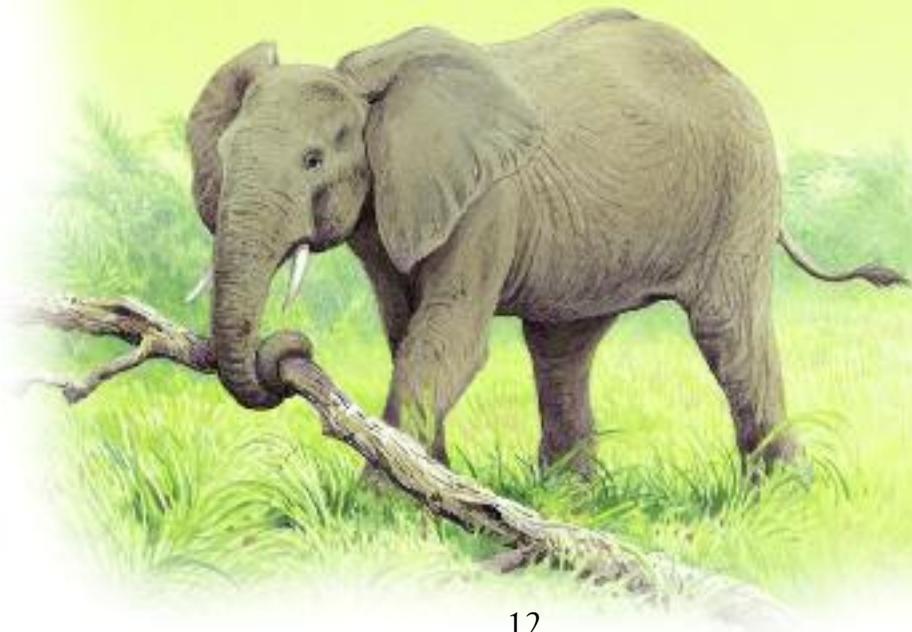


Swimming is one of my favourite activities. I am a great swimmer. My mum taught me to swim from a very early age. Splashing around in the water is so much fun!

See my trunk poking out of the water? It works like a snorkel, enabling me to breathe underwater. Now I don't need to surface for air and can stay in the cool water for ages!



**M**y trunk is extremely strong.  
I can pick up heavy objects  
with it. For me, this branch is not so  
difficult to lift out the way. I show  
off my strength in trunk-wrestling  
matches with my friends.

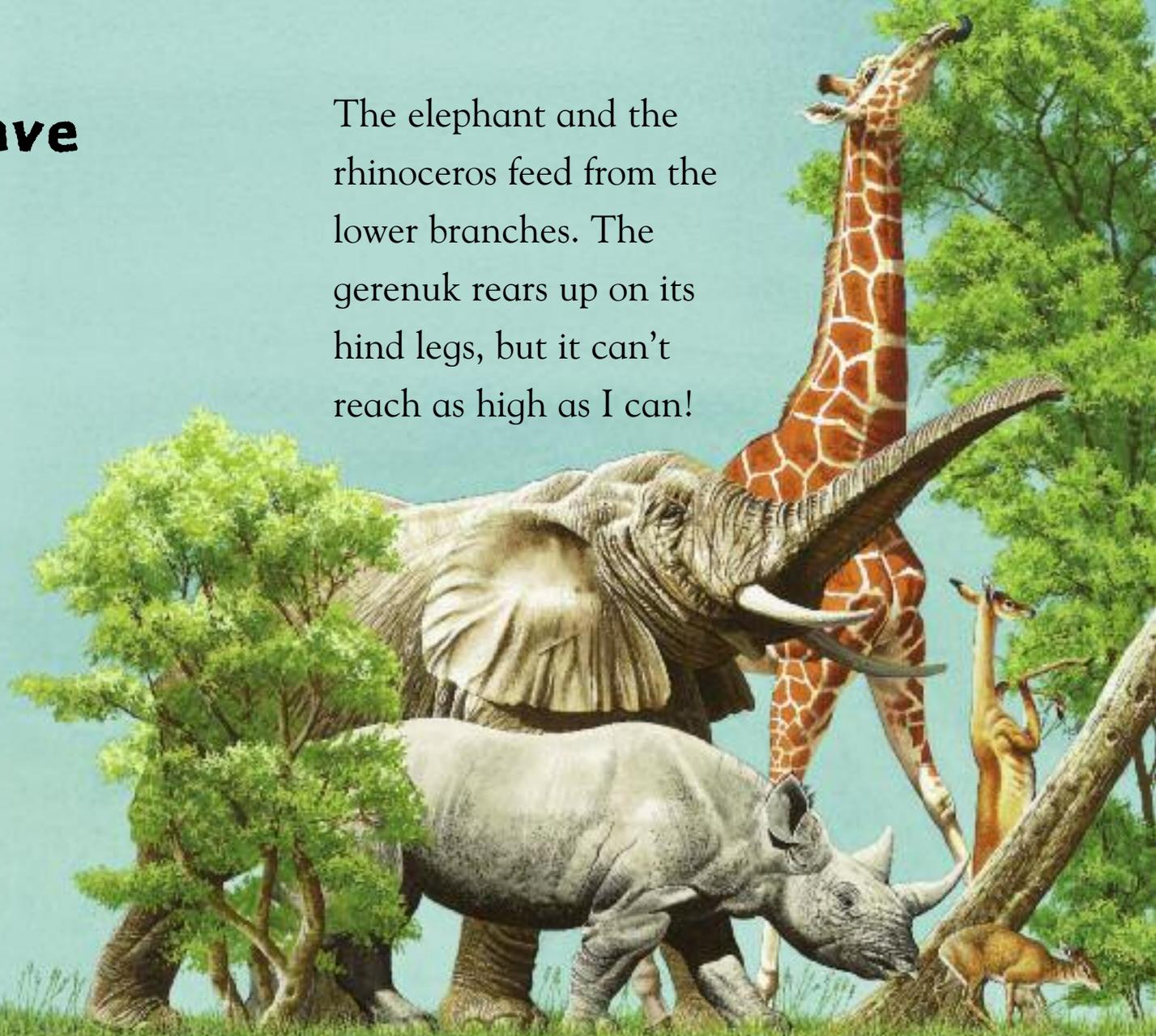


After all that  
hard work,  
I curl my trunk  
over a tusk to  
give it a rest.

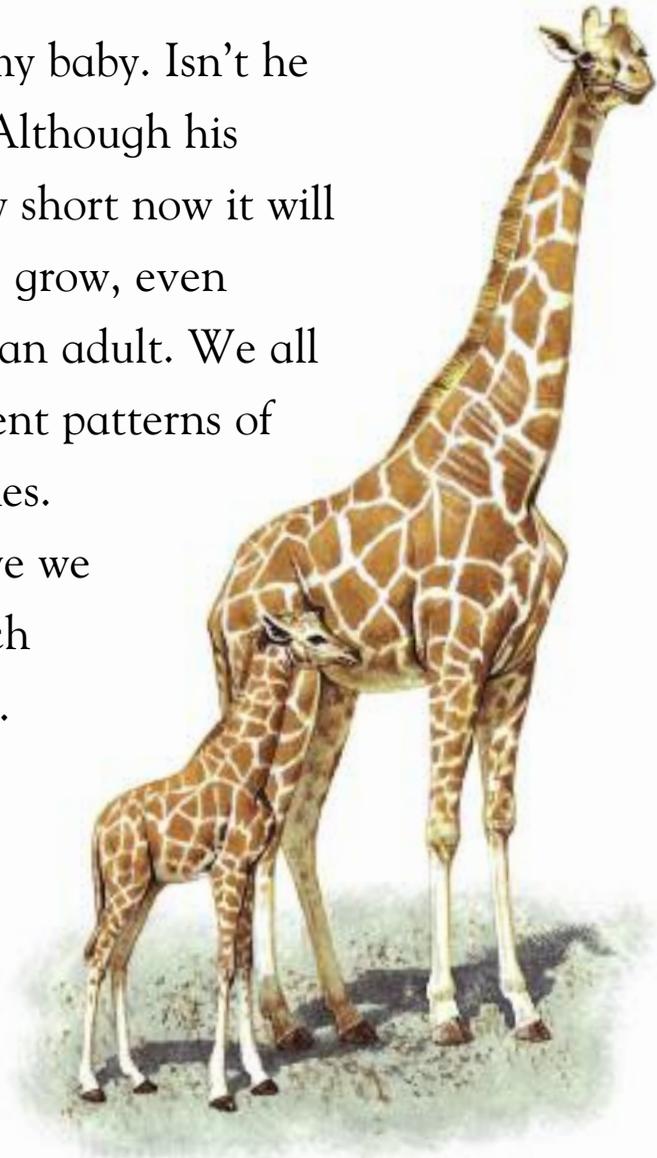
# Why do giraffes have such long necks?

Compared to other animals, we giraffes have very long necks indeed. Leaves are our main food. Thanks to our long necks, we can reach up to the highest tree-top branches where the shoots and leaves are juiciest. I use my long black tongue to strip them off.

The elephant and the rhinoceros feed from the lower branches. The gerenuk rears up on its hind legs, but it can't reach as high as I can!



This is my baby. Isn't he cute? Although his neck is only short now it will continue to grow, even when he is an adult. We all have different patterns of on our bodies. This is so we we can tell each other apart.

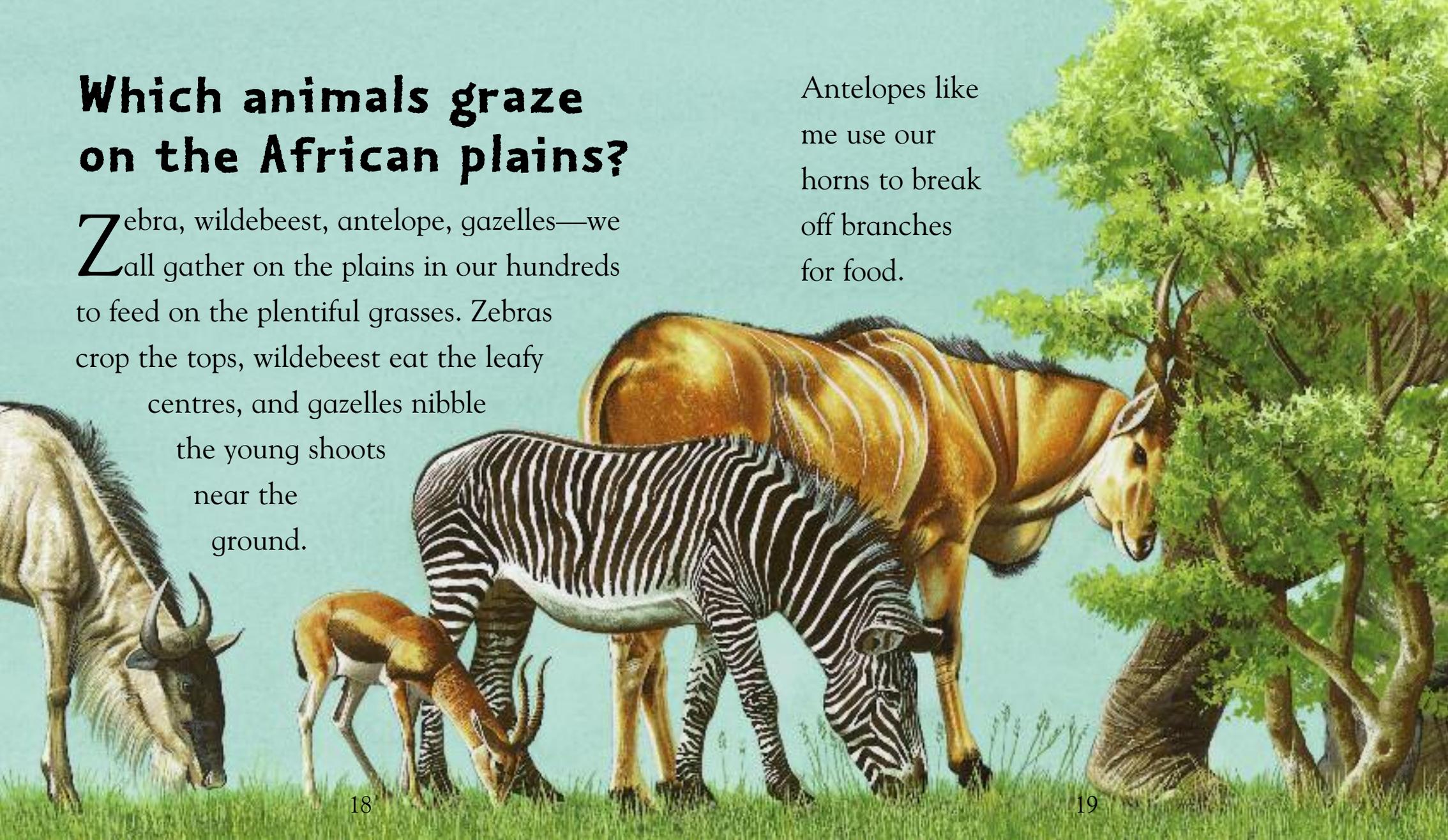


OK, I know I look funny, but this is the only way I know how to drink! Because my legs are so long I have to spread them far apart to reach down to the water. Now you can see another reason why I need such a long neck.

## Which animals graze on the African plains?

Zebra, wildebeest, antelope, gazelles—we all gather on the plains in our hundreds to feed on the plentiful grasses. Zebras crop the tops, wildebeest eat the leafy centres, and gazelles nibble the young shoots near the ground.

Antelopes like me use our horns to break off branches for food.



## Where do reindeer live?

In the summer, we reindeer live in the tundra, the northernmost parts of Asia and North America bordering the Arctic Ocean.

Here we feed on grasses and other low plants. Our babies, called calves, are normally born at the beginning of summer. Look at those hungry ones drinking their mother's milk!



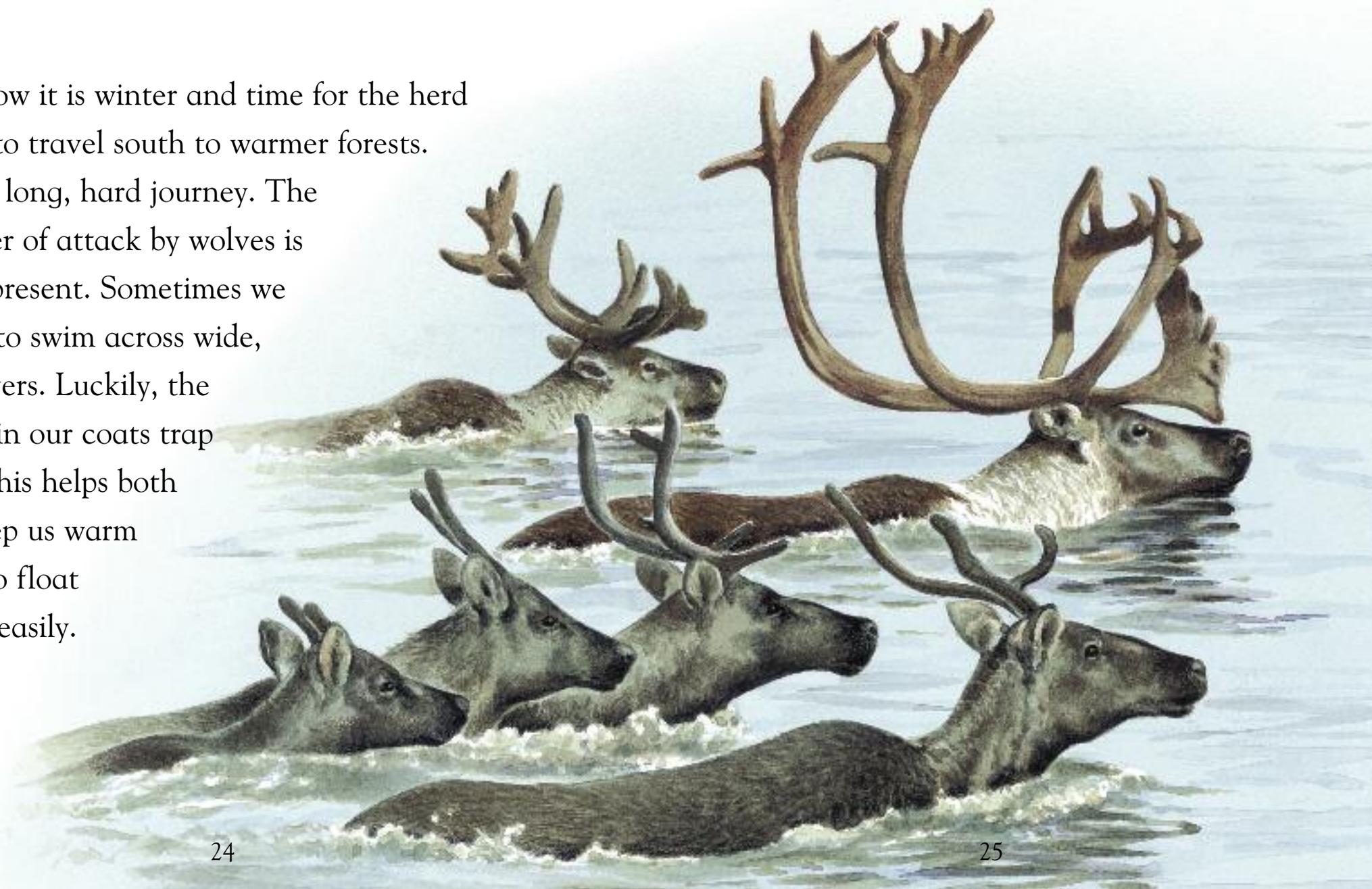
At the beginning of autumn, adult males join the herd. It is the mating season for the reindeer and we stags are out to prove who's strongest ...

We roar and push each other about with our antlers. Eventually, one of us will emerge the winner. He will have the pick of the females.



Now it is winter and time for the herd  
to travel south to warmer forests.

It is a long, hard journey. The  
danger of attack by wolves is  
ever-present. Sometimes we  
have to swim across wide,  
icy rivers. Luckily, the  
hairs in our coats trap  
air. This helps both  
to keep us warm  
and to float  
more easily.



## How do kangaroos raise their young?

**W**e kangaroos are called marsupials. Like other mammals, we give birth to live young, but our babies are tiny and have to be cared for inside their mother's pouch.

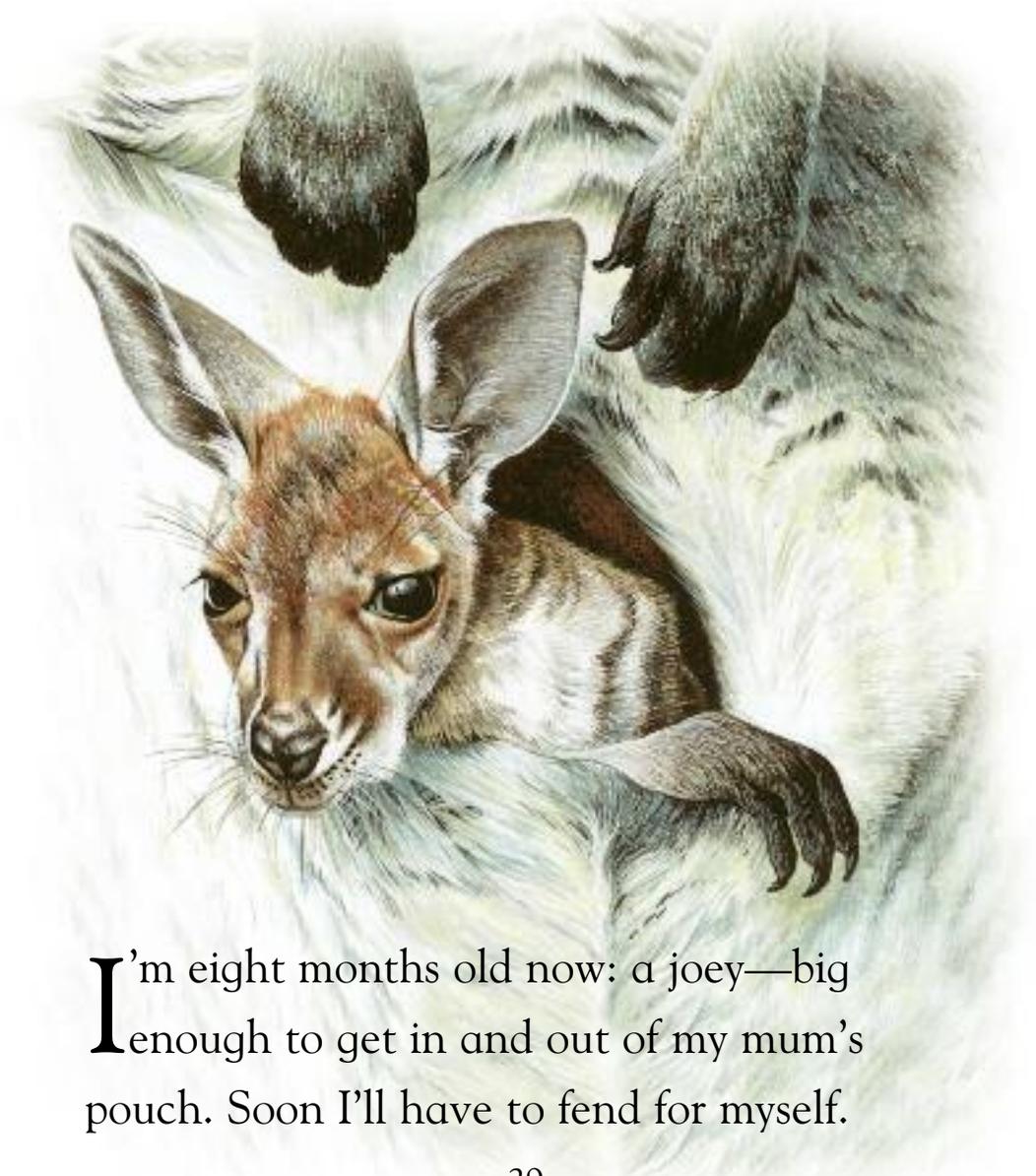
**W**e live in groups called "mobs" on the hot, dry plains of Australia. There may be several mothers with their young, plus a single adult male. We can cover enormous distances hopping along on our strong back legs in search of fresh grasses. We prefer to eat mornings or evenings, when it's cooler.



This is me, newly born, the size of a bean. I am blind and hairless. I climb up my mum's fur and into the pouch on her belly.



It's warm and safe in here. I can feed on milk by sucking on my mother's nipples. Now I am sure to grow quickly.



I'm eight months old now: a joey—big enough to get in and out of my mum's pouch. Soon I'll have to fend for myself.

