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Ordinary hippopotamus of a mammalian animal, which belongs to the family of hippopotamidae. Hippos prefer to dwell in freshwater reservoirs, in which they spend most of the time, only occasionally leaving the water to feed. Hippo is often referred to as hippopotamus that translated from the Greek means a river horse. The name is very accurate, given the thrust of the hippo to water and the impressive dimensions of these animals.

Hippo alone of their largest ground animals, the mass of the adult male often exceeds three tons, in some sources it is argued that four-ton giants met. Around the ten-year-old age, the mass of males and females does not differ much, but in adulthood, males begin to gain weight much faster. In the wild, the life expectancy of hippo rarely exceeds 40 years, and in captivity, with appropriate care, animals are able to live up to 60 years.

Currently, you can meet wild hippopotamus only in Africa, and in recent decades their number is reduced. According to approximate calculations of biologists, the total number of animals does not exceed 150,000, the fourth part of them lives in Zambia. But on the territory of South Africa, wild hippos, several decades ago completely disappeared, they can only be found in the National Park.

The main enemy of hippos is man. Among the animals are a bit of those who risk attack on this giant. Sometimes lions and crocodiles are solved on it. But, even with these ferocious predators, it is not always possible to win over the hippopotamus, which seems to seem to be lazy and nervous. Crocodiles attack hippos in water, and lions on land.

The fall of the hippopotamus is capable of opening almost 180 degrees, and its scope in adult animals reaches one and a half meters. The power of jaws has a hippopotamus that he can snack the spine to adult crocodile. With such a huge mass, the animal requires up to 50 kg. Feed per day. The bulk of the hippo consists of grass. But, hippos can be powered by meat of other animals.

In the zoo hippos began to appear in the middle of the XIX century. The first animal was delivered to the London Zoo on May 25, 1850. The delight of the citizens was not the limit, to see such a miracle came to ten thousand people per day. Now hippo successfully multiply in captivity, but the content of these animals is not cheap.

From ancient times, people hunted hippos for meat, skins and bones. Meat, especially a young animal, tasty and to taste resembles a veal. Durable skins, up to four centimeters thick, often used warriors for covering shields, and the bone goes to the manufacture of souvenirs. Currently, given the sharp decrease in the number of animals, trade is limited to rigid quotas.

When Hippopotama goes to the land, his body is quickly dehydrated, so they prefer to go out in

search of food when the heat falls. In search of food, hippo is able to overcome up to ten kilometers, and with the onset of heat again plunge into the reservoir. Despite the impressive mass, hippos are capable of developing speeds at short distances to thirty kilometers per hour.

For people, hippos are very dangerous. They are often settled next to the seeded fields, and in a short time they can destroy a significant part of crops, as these animals have a very good appetite. At this time, hippos are aggressive and can pounce on people passing by. In water, animals sometimes attack swimming boats. Most often, female female, fearing for their cubs. In the park, South Luangwa, which is located in Zambia, more than 100 people become victims of the attacks of hippopots.

Most of the hippopots prefer not to leave their native reservoirs, therefore, they strongly suffer from drought when the water level falls rapidly. But among these animals there are lovers of travel. For example, a female named the province for three years, from 1928 to 1931, he decided on a desperate step overcame 1,600 kilometers south of Africa. And she was shot by hunters, whom were then sentenced to a fine of \$ 25.

Hippopotam head is about the fourth part of the whole animal. It turns out that in the largest males, its weight can reach one ton. And the weight of the hippid skins is about 500 kg. The biggest land animal on Earth is an elephant, but for second place compete with hippos and white rhinos. Not in vain in my famous children's poem the phone of the roots Ivanovich Chukovsky wrote: "Oh, it is not necessary to drag hippopotamus from the swamp." It should be noted that the hippos is often the characters not only children's poems, but also cartoons. For example, hippo could often be seen in the legendary Soviet animated series Well, wait!.