

inhabit swamps and periodically flooded land, but most of them have white undersides, and the color of their backs is a rich reddish brown. Like the waterbucks, their horns have an O-shaped gesture, but their curvature is also similar to those of some gazelles. Some species and subspecies demonstrate visually enhanced sexual dimorphism in that only the bucks can be dark-colored above. The **Uganda kob** (*Kobus kob thomasi*) is wonderfully balanced in form, a magnificent compromise between the grace of a gazelle and the stockier body of a waterbuck.

The **puku** (*K. vardonii*) of the interior of southern Africa, with its shorter horns and golden-brown coloration in both sexes, is a more sense-oriented sister species, as is the **red or southern lechwe** (*K. leche*), of the same area, to an even greater extent. The larger, unusually long-horned **Nile lechwe** (*K. megaceros*) is a more metabolically oriented relative. As its German name, *Weissnacken-Moorantilope* (white-necked bog antelope), indicates, it has patches of white on its head, neck, and shoulders and a dark underside—a prominent display of inverse coloration. The horns of fully developed males are very long and point backwards. With increasing metabolic emphasis, middle-system representatives seek the water all the more strongly. The Nile lechwe's preferred habitat is the swampy areas along the upper Nile; like the sitatunga, it has splayed, cloven hooves that have become longer and broader, reducing the danger of sinking in the mud.

Figure 9.17. The puku (*Kobus vardonii*) of Angola. (Photo: B. Cillié)





Figure 9.18. A red lechwe (*Kobus leche*) in Namibia.

Figure 9.19. A male Nile lechwe (*K. megaceros*) in the Bojnice Zoological Garden in Slovakia, with its especially large horns and the patch of white at the base of its hind neck that repeats itself in the coloration of its head. (Photo: Michal Sloviak)



Now imagine a *Kobus* type with an even greater propensity toward active movement. The result is the **impala** (*Aepyceros melampus*), which looks at first glance like a large, slender, long-legged gazelle with wonderfully long, lightly ridged, gracefully curved horns that open out to form a circular space, revealing its kinship to the *Kobus* species. Apparently for the sheer joy of it, impalas leap over each other's backs and over tourist vehicles in the national parks of East Africa. Jumps of 3 m (10 ft) high and 10 m (33 ft) long pose no problem for them. The power of the sensory and motor poles is even more pronounced than it is in the already harmonious form of the *Kobus* antelopes, which in the impala seems transformed into a miracle of nature. The English name comes from the Zulu *mpala*, an imitation in sounds of the animal's spring-like potential to explode into movement.

Figure 9.20. A female impala with her leaping offspring. (Photo: J. Metzger)



Figure 9.21. An impala buck with its black “heels” marking the spots where its lateral hooves, the dewclaws, would have been. At first its slender horns grow vertically upward. Only when the buck has reached maturity do they begin to grow toward the sides and back and form rhythmical ridges along their front edge. (Photo: ISV)



Figure 9.22. An impala in Nairobi National Park—“music on hooves”! Black spots are located on the fetlock glands above the hooves. (Photo: W. Schad)

