

## Pronghorn

Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) are the only animal in the world with branched horns. They are the fastest land mammal in North America, able to run at speeds of 60 miles per hour. Both the males and females have horns although the females may not be visible through the hair. Adult males weigh 100 to 145 pounds while females only weigh 75 to 100 pounds. They have large eyes that are said to have the equivalent vision of eight-power binoculars. In the 19th century, pronghorn population numbers were extremely low due to unregulated hunting practices and habitat destruction. By 1920, their population was at an all time low of 12,000 animals. Currently the population has greatly increased, and there are now nearly one million animals.

Pronghorn are considered living fossils because they are the only surviving member of the family Antilocapridae. Though pronghorn are sometimes referred to as antelope, they are not closely related to the rest of the world's antelope. Antilocaprids evolved in North America during the Miocene and Pliocene epochs, 23.3 to 1.8 million years ago, and were a diverse and successful group.

