



## Relationship #17



The oxpecker bird eats ticks living on the hippopotamus's back.

Oxpeckers use their bills to make quick scissoring movements through the hair or across skin but they also spend lots of time working deep in the ears (sometimes only the tail shows) or around the muzzle, eyes or nose. Most ungulates (hoofed animals) seem indifferent to this foraging but elephants and a few species of antelope will not tolerate them. Oxpeckers spend most of their lives on their hosts, using them for protection from predators (such as moving to the back side of the animal when approached) and sitting on them to roost and preen.

Both species benefit from this relationship.