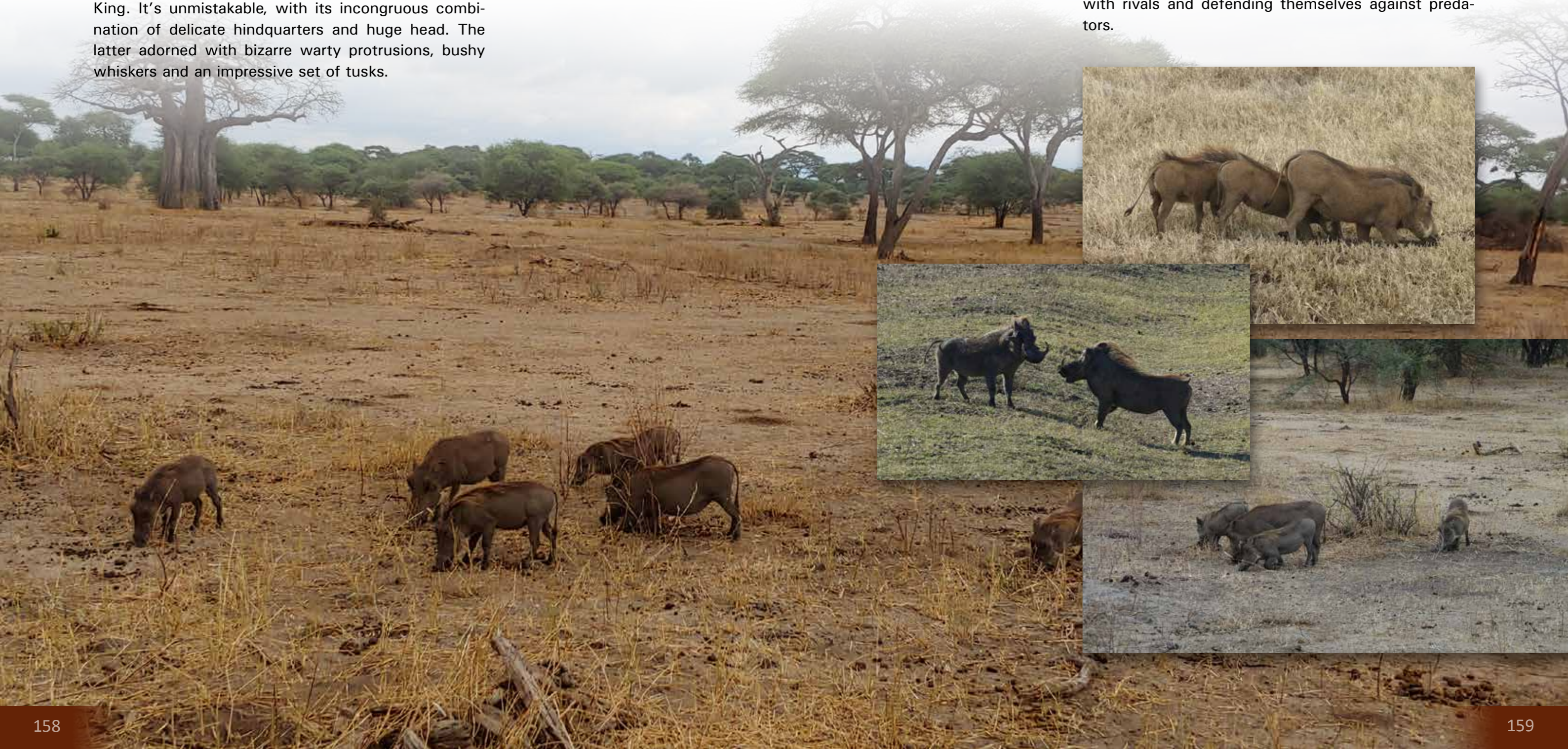


Fascinating Fool or Incredible Idiot?

Warthog is a popular porker! It was catapulted into celebrity by the unforgettable Pumba in Disney's Lion King. It's unmistakable, with its incongruous combination of delicate hindquarters and huge head. The latter adorned with bizarre warty protrusions, bushy whiskers and an impressive set of tusks.

Their tusks are enlarged canine teeth that protrude upwards from its mouth. There are two pairs: the shorter, lower pair are worn to a razor-sharp edge by rubbing against the longer, upper pair whenever the mouth is opened and closed. The upper pair can grow to 25cm. Warthog use their tusks for digging, fighting with rivals and defending themselves against predators.





A variety of predators target warthogs, including lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas, wild dogs and crocodiles. Even large eagles and owls may snatch a young piglet. But adults – especially females with piglets – will defend themselves vigorously and often turn the tables on the predator, sometimes causing serious injuries with their tusks.



Warthog sows may foster nurse piglets if they lose their own litter. This behaviour is known as allosuckling and is thought to be a sign of altruism, rather than mistaken identity or milk theft. It means that they are classed as 'cooperative breeders'.

Warthogs run with their tail straight up in the air.

The name Pumba, the warthog in Disney's Lion King, is taken from the Swahili word "pumbaa" which means fool or idiot.

