The bambi’s holes

Dear children,

If your parents take you to visit the deserts of Namibia or into the Karoo in South Africa you will often see, on the side of the road, a small browny-red bambi with big ears.



When you do, take a moment to marvel at it. It is special. You won’t see a bambi like this living in such a dry place anywhere else on earth. It is called a steenbok, and it is able to live in this dry place because it does things underground that no other bambis in dry places can do. If the steenbok you see has babies, you might see it doing a surprising thing: taking the babies into aardvark burrows to give them milk in a safe and shady place.



And if a predator like a caracal were to try and catch your steenbok, it might also scurry down an aardvark hole to escape the cat.



Another surprising thing you might see your bambi do is dig! It digs, using its thin legs and small hooves, for juicy underground bulbs, which it eats, and gets a lot of its water from.



Other dry places around the world don't have as many shady burrows to escape into and as many juicy bulbs to eat – so bambis similar to the steenbok can't live there. This is why the steenbok is so special.

All the best from the Bio-edge,

Robin