

# Pronghorn Antelope – An American Original

## Story and Photographs by Susan C. Morse



Northwest of Augusta Montana the Rocky Mountains meet the plains in a series of titled sedimentary and igneous plateaus and escarpments. I was here to study and photograph pronghorn, *Antilocapra americana*, - an American original – a creature like no other. Though distantly related to Eurasian ancestors, our uniquely North American pronghorn has continued to evolve and occupy open plains and shrub-steppe habitats on this continent since the Pleistocene. It developed its astonishing speed (55 to 60 mph) escaping predators no longer with us – dire wolves, American cheetahs, tigers and giant short-faced bears. The pronghorn's uncanny eyesight enables it to elude today's predators with an 8-power binocular magnification and nearly a 300-hundred-degree peripheral vision. With huge beautiful eyes, the pronghorn can spot a skulking coyote over a mile away and NOTHING gets to sneak up from behind – including me!