

UGANDA PROTECTORATE.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

GAME DEPARTMENT

FOR THE

Year ended 31st December, 1935.

Signed p 57 - C. R. S. PITMAN, ENTebbe 25 MAR 1936

Published by Command of His Excellency the Governor.



ENTEBBE:

PRINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, UGANDA.

1936

(7680)

pp. 1-57

In order to make elephant hunting more attractive and also to assist in the sale of Full Licences by virtue of which application can be made for Special Licences, two elephants may now be killed for a £10 licence when formerly the fee for one was £10. The fee for the Third Elephant is the same, £10, as that for the Second Elephant under the previous arrangement. Similarly the Native Special Licence for Two Elephants is £5 (the fee for one previously), and for a third, £10.

4. The revenue from the sale of game and elephant licences shows an appreciable and welcome increase (£649 16s.), and if it had been possible to introduce earlier than mid-October the legislation altering the Special Elephant Licence materially in favour of the licence-holder, the improvement doubtless would have been greater.

There was a definite increase over the normal monthly average in the value of licences taken out during the last two months of the year, and it is anticipated that in 1936 revenue from licences will exceed £3,000, and it is hoped be nearer £3,500.

Many sportsmen only take out the (Full) Game Licence to enable them to obtain Special Elephant Licences, and a considerable increase is expected in the demand for Full Licences, of which 1935 issues exceed those of 1934 by twelve.

Bird Licences are as popular as ever.

5. Uganda Government ivory was sent to Mombasa for sale, and during the year two auctions were held at which the total weights sold and average prices realised were as follows:—

| | | Weight. Lbs. | Gross price realised. £ sbs. cts. | Approximate average price per lb. | |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| | | | | Sbs. | cts. |
| May— | Ivory | 25,291½ | 7,584 15 67 | ... | 6 00 |
| | Rhinoceros horns | 5½ | 3 6 37 | ... | 12 00 |
| | Hippopotamus teeth | 137 | 9 8 92 | ... | 1 38 |
| November— | Ivory | 23,564½ | 7,717 1 61 | ... | 6 55 |
| | Rhinoceros horns | 10 | 7 12 68 | ... | 15 27 |
| | Hippopotamus teeth | 87½ | 3 13 47 | ... | 0 53 |

Rhinoceros horn shows a marked advance on 1934 values; Sh. 1/38 cts. per lb. for hippopotamus teeth is abnormally high and the usual rate is well below a shilling.

6. The total of 48,856 lbs., or nearly 22 tons of ivory sold, is a few tons in excess of the quantity disposed of in 1934. These figures are unlikely to appeal to the bigoted protectionist, but anyone who takes the trouble to study carefully the elephant control section of this Report will realise that our organised methods at present barely control the situation, and if we are to afford the inhabitants of this fertile land the measure of protection which is their due, an annual slaughter of elephants on a large scale is not only necessary but imperative. It is undoubtedly an unpalatable pill for many, though it has to be swallowed. There is more on this subject in other parts of this Report.

7. Critics who delight to shut their eyes to the seriousness of the local situation and deliberately ignore that there are such important factors as man and his crops, are, from the recesses of their comfortable armchairs accustomed to level the accusation that our methods are directly influenced by revenue-making considerations.

Such an idea is entirely erroneous and the general policy of organised elephant control in Uganda has never deviated from the original intention that its first and main consideration is the protection of the interests, *i.e.*, the lives and property of the inhabitants.

It so happens that the situation still warrants what might at first appear to be excessive killing, and so long as this is considered necessary the annual toll exacted is bound to be heavy, but as soon as changing conditions permit there will be a definite reduction in the rate of killing, though, from the evil which at present is of daily occurrence, it is difficult to visualise when a slacking off in control effort will be possible.

8. Hostile critics should try and realise the ever-increasing difficulties of control—it is not a matter of just strolling out and shooting dozens or hundreds of elephants in nice open country. Present day protective and reductive operations entail extraordinarily exacting work under incredibly unfavourable conditions, and practically every elephant destroyed is the result of hard work without rival, which has to be

experienced to be appreciated. For reasons which should be obvious no one would be happier than those engaged in control if it were practicable to call a halt and stop this intensive elephant destruction. One of the Game Rangers, with over forty years' experience of extensive elephant shooting has recorded at the end of 1935: "The first consideration now is for native cultivation and reduction of elephant numbers."

9. *Ivory, etc.*—

| | |
|---|---------|
| (a) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1934— | Lbs. |
| Ivory | 18,290 |
| Rhinoceros horn | 54 |
| Hippopotamus teeth | 103½ |
| (b) Received at Mombasa between 1st January, 1935, and 31st December, 1935— | |
| Ivory | 41,383½ |
| Rhinoceros horn | 44 |
| Hippopotamus teeth | 220½ |
| (c) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1935— | |
| Ivory | 18,387½ |
| Rhinoceros horn | 34 |
| Hippopotamus teeth | 108½ |
| (d) Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1934 | 18,290 |
| Received at Mombasa during 1935 | 44,983½ |
| | 62,673½ |
| Sold during 1935 | 48,876 |
| Shortage | 420 |
| | 49,296 |
| Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1935 | 18,387½ |

Illegal Killing of Game and Breaches of Game Laws.

10. Serious breaches of the Game Laws are no longer numerous, and the majority of convictions are for petty offences.

Illicit dealings in ostrich eggs are frequent, and there has been a distinct revival of the trade in blue monkey skins.

A close watch is being kept in certain localities from which there is a possibility of ivory being smuggled, and in this connection developments are expected which are likely to discourage future illicit trade in this commodity.

Early in the year there was a case of giraffe killing in the Northern Province.

11. At the end of the year, although no rhinoceros horns had passed through the Merama Hill Customs Post in Ankole in transit, it was discovered that considerable quantities of this valuable commodity, purporting to originate in the Congo, were leaving Uganda supported by documents no less than two years old and of doubtful authenticity. The matter was still under investigation when the year closed, but the necessary steps are being taken to prevent fraud of this nature in the future. The export of rhinoceros horn from Ruanda-Urundi was completely prohibited by decree as far back as June, 1933, so that the existing situation in connection with the consignments of horn which have been leaving Uganda is, to say the least of it, curious.

Game Ordinance, 1936.

12. Minor alterations in legislation concern fishing (these are mentioned on a later page) and the declaration of a closed area in Southern Ankole for the purpose of assisting veterinary research.

13. An amending Ordinance which was long overdue was added to the Laws on 15th October.

Its principal features are:—

- (a) The control of the photography of scheduled animals;
- (b) An alteration in the terms of the Special Elephant Licences to the advantage of the sportsman, and it is hoped to the ultimate benefit of Protectorate Revenue.

Game Reserves.

14. *Bunyoro and Gulu.*—The wild ungulates in this Reserve are definitely on the increase, and it remains to be seen whether rinderpest which appeared in West Madi on the Sudan border at the end of the year crosses the Albert Nile as has been customary in previous epizootics and infects the susceptible species in the Game Reserve and in the vast restricted sleeping sickness area to the north.

Game Trophies.

20. The approximate number of elephants obtained by licence-holders during the year can be estimated from the permits issued for the export of tusks.

21. Uganda continues to provide plenty of reasonably good bulls as the appended return shows, and although many residents and some visitors are quite satisfied to fill their licences with moderately endowed tuskers, especially now that it is possible to obtain three elephants for the fee previously paid for two, there has been in the course of the year a grievance ventilated in the Press to the effect that outside the reserves and closed areas there are no longer any big tuskers left in Uganda.

22. That such an idea is entirely erroneous will be obvious to anyone who studies the figures in the table which follows and who delves further into this Report. Disgruntled elephant hunters frequently result from inexperience coupled with an unwillingness to accept and act upon expert advice offered. To this may be added unfamiliarity with local conditions, a reluctance to pay for the necessary assistance, and a disinclination to allot adequate time for the search for a big tusker.

23. Big elephants in the past, it is granted, were often obtained in the course of a short period of hunting, some by good management and others by chance; but though naturally the really heavy tuskers are nowadays far fewer there are still a fair number left, and widely distributed all over the Protectorate.

It is quite true as a harassed junior wrote to his superior officer that in some cases licence-holders evidently expect big tuskers to be tied up along the roadside waiting to be killed; and if the hunters go away empty-handed after a rush visit it is the fault of the Government!

24. Return of tusks from elephants shot by licence-holders:—

| District. | Over 10 lb. Under 20 lb. | | Over 20 lb. Under 30 lb. | | Over 30 lb. Under 40 lb. | | Over 40 lb. Under 50 lb. | | Over 50 lb. Under 60 lb. | | Over 60 lb. Under 70 lb. | | Over 70 lb. Under 80 lb. | | Over 80 lb. Under 90 lb. | | Over 90 lb. Under 100 lb. | | Over 100 lbs. | TOTAL. |
|--------------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------|--------|
| | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | | |
| Mengo | ... | ... | 2 | 14 | 13 | 9 | ... | ... | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 42 |
| Mubende | ... | ... | 2 | 9 | 15 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 36 |
| Masaka | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 |
| Ankole | ... | ... | 3 | 3 | 9 | 12 | 4 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 34 |
| Toro | ... | ... | 2 | 13 | 6 | 8 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 30 |
| Hoima | ... | ... | 6 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 56 |
| Masindi | ... | ... | 2 | ... | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10 |
| West Nilo | ... | 1 | 3 | 14 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 48 |
| Gulu | ... | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 28 |
| Chua | ... | ... | 2 | ... | 4 | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14 |
| Soroti | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Karamoja | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Bugishu | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Busoga | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| TOTAL | ... | 3 | 24 | 68 | 80 | 75 | 43 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 318 | | | | | | | | |

The above represents 159 elephants, almost a 60 per cent. increase on last year's figures.

There are 78 bulls with tusks of over 40 and under 60 lbs.; 30 of over 60 lbs. and under 90 lbs.; and five with tusks over 90 lbs. (four of these tusks exceed 100 lbs. each).

This leaves 48 licence elephants, or approximately 30 per cent. of the total, with tusks of less than 40 lbs., and indicates that the sportsman taking out a licence for three elephants should be fairly certain of bagging two with tusks in excess of 40 lbs.

25. Export permits show that 258 leopard skins (ten less than last year), 14 lion skins, and just over a ton (2,278½ lbs.) of hippopotamus teeth, were sent out of the country.

26. Nine rhinoceros horns, aggregating 33 lbs., were exported which constitutes a remarkable decrease on the figures for previous years. In paragraph 11 attention is drawn to transit traffic of rhinoceros horns under distinctly suspicious circumstances.

is easier in the lake and there is less danger of hippos. fouling the lines or nets. Though I have not shot any hippo. since I came here I can endorse the statement that they are a truculent bunch (in the Kazinga Channel) and one cannot be too careful of them. They have attacked the boats on several occasions."

262. Newly-born calves were observed in the Game Reserve downstream of the Murchison Falls in the middle of August. In the same locality "nurseries" of up to a dozen immature hippopotamuses were seen evidently in charge of a professional "aunt."

263. The activities of hippopotamuses in Jinja township do not seem to have been so pronounced as in previous years.

264. In Teso there has been a certain amount of damage to cultivation due to the depredations of hippopotamuses from Lakes Salisbury and Kioga.

265. It is estimated that more than 200 hippopotamuses have been destroyed in the Victoria Nyanza, another 100 in the inland waters, and 200 or more in the waters of the Albert Nile where there are no restrictions on native hunting, and yet plenty of these big mammals are left.

266. It is believed that early in the year a big hunt penetrated the protected area in the Nile delta, but the hippopotamuses far from showing any reduction in numbers in that locality, are far more numerous than in 1934.

267. *White Rhinoceros*.—Once again there is nothing outstanding to chronicle about this remarkable species which continues to be a source of interest, and those frequenting the neighbourhood of Rhino Camp can be easily located and seen by tourists from the steamer.

268. No "found" horns have been discovered in the West Nile district, but in West Madi in the Obongi area a dead white rhinoceros was found in early September in a decomposed condition: the neck and hindquarters had been gnawed by hyenas.

It is believed that this animal died from natural causes, though the horns, weighing respectively 10 and 2 lbs., are not those of an old animal.

269. *Giraffe*.—The giraffe herd which frequents the right bank of the Albert Nile in the neighbourhood of the Zoka forest is reliably reported to have totalled 43 head in 1934.

270. *Zebra*.—Zebra have become such a nuisance in the S.W. portion of the Entebbe district that it has been necessary to destroy 63 in Gomba saza.

General.

271. *Squirrels*.—Amongst a collection of lesser mammals obtained in the Mabira forest (Kyagwe), a small striped squirrel has been identified at the British Museum (Natural History) as *Funisciurus pyrrhopus*, a West African species hitherto not known east of the Western rift.

The occurrence of this little creature provides yet another link between the Mabira forest and the parent Equatorial Rain Forest of the West.

(B) BIRDS.

272. *Pelican* (species not determined).—Pelicans were breeding at the beginning of August in the Bunyoro Game Reserve somewhere along the Waiga river in the vicinity of the escarpment. The nests are built in tall trees and the breeding colony consists of more than a 100 pairs. Each evening just before dusk a flight of about 120 birds flying south-easterly was observed passing over Bulisa camp: other parties also noted moving in the same direction from Ndandamire.

273. *Black-crowned Heron* (*Sekanyolya*) (*Ardea melanocephala*).—On 5th July a breeding colony containing several dozen occupied nests was observed on a small islet in Lake Mutanda (S.W. Kigezi) near the Government camp at Mushongero. On the same day a pair of fish-eagles (*Cuncuma vocifer*) were flying about in the same neighbourhood, and as there are no fish larger than the *nsonzi* (*Clarias carsonii*) in this lake it was difficult to account for their presence.