



UGANDA PROTECTORATE

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

GAME DEPARTMENT

FOR THE

Year ended 31st December, 1939.

Signature of C. S. D. MATH, CHIEF

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THE GAME DEPARTMENT.

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For the Year ended 31st December, 1939.

SECTION I.—ADMINISTRATION.

Expenditure and Revenue.

1. Figures are as follow:—

	£
Expenditure	6,254
Revenue (gross)	12,171
Balance of Revenue over Expenditure	5,917

The revenue was derived as follows:

	£
* (a) Sale of ivory, rhinoceros horns	9,191
(b) Game licences and Governor's Permit	2,980

Receipts from (a) show a slight increase but not sufficient to offset a considerable shortfall in (b).

2. At the two ivory auctions, held at Mombasa, the average price realised per lb. was Shs. 6 and Shs. 6/71 compared with Shs. 5/43 and Shs. 6/54 in 1938, an increase which though small was as welcome as it was unexpected.

3. Game and Special licences issued:—

	1939	1938
Resident's (Full)	191	238
Visitor's (Full)	1	4
Resident's (Fourteen-day)	3	2
Visitor's (Fourteen-day)	1	5
Resident's or Visitor's Two Elephants	69	88
Resident's or Visitor's Three Elephants	31	12
Resident's or Visitor's Three Elephants	8	7
Native's Two Elephants	39	67
Native's Three Elephants	16	14
Native's Three Elephants	6	9
Special for One Black Rhinoceros	1	2
Governor's Permits	6	1
Bird	721	716

4. In spite of ivory prices having improved, revenue from Game and Elephant licences declined by about 25%, as once heathlic started the value of those taken out dropped from a monthly average of about £320 to £110.

* The gross value realised; from this have to be deducted costs of internal transport in Uganda and external transport to Mombasa, and auction charges, totalling about £1,000.

5. The total sold and prices realised at auction were as follows:—

	Weight	Gross price	Average price
	lbs.	£	Shs. cts.
MAY—			
Ivory	13,805	4,174	6 00
Rhino horns
Hippo teeth	94½	4	0 79
NOVEMBER—			
Ivory	14,849½	4,988	6 71
Rhino horns	21½	20	18 93
Hippo teeth	121½	5	0 84

The total of 28,654 lbs. is practically the same as in 1938.

6. Ivory, etc.:

(a) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1938	Lbs.
Ivory (832 lbs.)	9,344½
Rhino horns
Hippo teeth (21)	31
(b) Received at Mombasa between 1st Jan., 1939, and 31st Dec., 1939	
Ivory (2,208 lbs.)	28,033
Rhino horns (21)	84½
Hippo teeth	188
(c) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1939	
Ivory (701 lbs.)	8,723
Rhino horns (15)	63½
Hippo teeth
IVORY FIGURES— Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1938	9,344½
Received at Mombasa during 1939	28,033
	37,377½
Sold during 1939	28,654½
Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1939	8,723

Illegal Killing of Game and Breaches of Game Laws.

7. Tribal hunting in Bunyoro by visitors from Lango on three occasions resulted in many hundreds of antelopes being killed in areas which until recently had not suffered from this form of persecution. During one excursion into their neighbours' preserves the Lango went south and west and annihilated the semi-domesticated kob herd which used to be a very attractive sight on the main Masindi-Bombo road.

8. The activities of the recently appointed Honorary Game Ranger, Mr. L. T. Gunn, resulted in 13 persons being convicted for hunting in the Semliki Game Reserve.

There have also been several successful prosecutions for unlawful possession of ivory.

9. A graffe hunt in Teso proved a costly affair, the eight participants being each fined 40 shillings.

Game Ordinance.

10. In order to conform precisely with the mandatory provisions of the International Convention for the Protection of Flora and Fauna an amending Ordinance was enacted in April.

The principal changes in the regulations include a re definition of the term "trophy"; the ban on certain objectionable methods of hunting to

be extended to all animals and not, as formerly, confined to game; and a new schedule of species and subspecies which though not occurring in Uganda are protected by the terms of the Convention.

Game Reserves and Sanctuaries.

11. *Bunyoro and Gulu*.—A trip was made to the Murchison Falls on 26th–27th March by which dates considerable rain had fallen, and there were daily, torrential downpours. In consequence many of the ungulates had moved away from the river bank, which was only to be expected, and fewer kob and waterbuck than usual were in evidence. Most gratifying, however, is the fact that nearly all the females seen of these species had young at foot. The same two buffaloes were seen both days on the Bunyoro bank. One party of wart hog was noted, but no hartebeest.

12. On the first day elephants were scarce, only a cow herd (on the Gulu bank) and a solitary bull (in Bunyoro) being sighted. On the 27th March eight separate herds of elephants were seen between 11-0 a.m. and 3-0 p.m. They were mainly cow herds and a conspicuous feature was the abundance of young stock.

13. There was a small, nesting colony of black crowned herons (*Ardea melanocephala*) opposite Euhet (Gordon's camp at Marumou); and a few more of these herons were nesting in company with a number of sacred ibis (*Threskiornis a. aethiopicus*) near Fajao.

14. As it was the breeding season the crocodiles were somewhat dispersed and the great concentrations of these saurians which normally present such an interesting though loathsome spectacle were absent. Young crocodiles were hatching from some of the nests at Fajao. A dozen monitor lizards were observed unearthing turtles' eggs on an isolated sandspit. Fierce fights frequently ensued as to who should have the next egg, and not only teeth but the formidable, razor edged tails were used freely. Reference is made respectively in paragraphs 57 and 66 to the occurrence of an albino hippopotamus and a whale headed stork.

15. *Semliki*. Mr. Gunn, was on several occasions (*vide* paragraph 8) successful in apprehending poachers in this Reserve. His report indicates that the most common antelope is the kob, which in parts is plentiful in herds of 30 to 100. This species has evidently been much hunted, as it is exceptionally wild. There is a fair quantity of waterbuck and hartebeest. Locally there are many buffaloes, the biggest lot seen totalled 100, and several small elephant herds. Lions were heard. On the whole the grazing is very poor.

16. *Lake George*.—The extension of the Lake George Reserve, referred to in paragraph 10 of the 1938 Report, was gazetted in January.

The general conditions in this Reserve continue to be puzzling and merit further investigation. Apart from elephants and buffaloes, and the masses of hippopotamuses in the adjacent waters, there is little game. The numbers of antelopes remain disappointingly small though there are very few lions. Two Honorary Game Rangers made a trip to the Reserve, but did not find evidence of serious poaching.

17. *White Rhinoceros Sanctuaries*.—It is reported that the small Aiyu River sanctuary is particularly well stocked with white rhinoceros.

54. *Bush Pig*. In spite of regular, organised pig drives in many districts, the bush pig continues to be the cultivators' worst enemy. In certain counties in Kigezi potato crops have been planted inside strong palisades with great success. Two men were killed in the course of hunts in the Central District.

55. *Hippopotamus*.—The hippopotamus is one of the species which continues to increase steadily. Wherever it occurs in the vicinity of cultivation it is a constant source of complaint. In the Masaka District the game guards have had to destroy 21 marauders. At Katebo, an enraged hippopotamus attacked a canoe smashing it to pieces, but fortunately the occupants escaped either injury or drowning. In Bunyoro, a man was killed when out hippopotamus hunting.

56. During the latter part of January an adult hippopotamus used to come out and graze on the shore at Entebbe some considerable while before dusk. Happily it was doing no damage so was left unmolested. Its extraordinary behaviour in a populous locality can be attributed to the probability of its being blind.

57. On the 27th March, in the Nile several miles downstream of the Murchison Falls, an adult hippopotamus was seen mainly bright pink in colour. It presented a truly revolting spectacle, and it must be a remarkable sight when ashore completely exposed in daylight. The head and parts of the body are sparingly mottled liver colour. The curious coloration is evidently due to a lack of the necessary pigment. It was with a herd of a few dozen, and was studied close at hand for over an hour while the "Livingstone" was at anchor.

58. *White Rhinoceros*.—During February and March Captain Salmon investigated the white rhinoceros situation in the West Nile District and West Madi. As far as numbers are concerned, there appears to be a fifty per cent. increase since the last investigation was made ten years ago—the situation is satisfactory, but, unfortunately, the organised hunt which sweep through the country side during the dry season have changed the placid, fearless rhinoceros of a decade back into a timid, suspicious creature. In only one locality, indicating freedom from the disturbing influence of the tribal hunt, did the investigator come across an extremely complacent lot of animals, reminiscent of the old days. The longest horn seen was estimated to be about 38 inches. Captain Salmon is of the opinion that in these localities there must be at least two hundred and twenty examples of the white rhinoceros. According to season this interesting species is likely to be found throughout West Madi and in a greater part of the West Nile District, its range extending from the Sudan border in the north to Pakwach and Panyamur in the south.

59. The percentage of young generally is satisfactory, though in the southern portions of the rhinoceros habitat, where innumerable spiked and leather thong foot traps were found, scarcely a juvenile was seen. A pair was observed mating.

60. The local inhabitants still refuse to believe in what, from long experience, is known as fact, and that is the almost absolute harmlessness of the white rhinoceros. In the vicinity of Rhino Camp a distinct lessening in the rhinoceros population is certainly due to the greatly increased native settlement which is encroaching heavily on the erstwhile rhinoceros areas. In contrast, in other localities considerable increases are now apparent, and

in some places where this animal was a rarity years ago there are now well established colonies.

61. In the Koich river area the increase is particularly noticeable, and in this locality Captain Salmon came across a cow with two calves, each of about 4 months old. His guide told him he had first seen them when they were just able to stand up, probably within a day of birth, so that there can be no reasonable doubt that they are twins. In the Rogem area, another cow was seen to be accompanied by two calves about a quarter grown, but from their behaviour it is possible that one was an orphan.

62. In West Madi, in October, a white rhinoceros was found dead as a result of a fight with one of its own kind. There were sixteen horn wounds on the body.

At the end of the year four of these strange animals were seen together near Pakwach.

63. *Black Rhinoceros*. In April, a black rhinoceros chased and injured a Karamojong who was on his way to Achwa from Usuku.

64. *Giraffe*. *Vide* paragraph 121 (1938 Report) owing to the persistent depredations to the cotton crops in East Madi nine giraffe had to be destroyed before the herds curbed their appetite for the country's one economic crop.

It is estimated that there are at least one hundred and fifty of these big creatures in the vicinity of the inhabited areas of East Madi.

The lone giraffe on the left bank of the Nile between Dufile and Nimule is still in evidence.

(iv) RODENTIA.

65. *Porcupine*.—From the Bunyoro and Mubende Districts there have been frequent reports of the persistent damage caused to crops by porcupines. Experimental smoke candles were sent to Mubende for dealing with occupied burrows. It is not known whether this method achieved any success.

(B) Birds.

66. *White-headed Stork*.—A magnificent specimen of *Balanicorax* was seen on the left (Bunyoro) bank of the Nile at 2-30 p.m. on the 27th March several miles downstream of the Murchison Falls. It was standing at the edge of a large expanse of dry flats, a most unusual locality and time for this sudd-frequenting species.

67. *Abdim's Stork*.—Thousands of Abdim's storks, evidently on northern passage, were observed in the vicinity of Fajao, below the Murchison Falls, on the 26th-27th March, which is unusually late.

68. *Lesser Flamingo*.—Flamingoes have been reported from Lake Kikorongo at various times throughout the year. During their periods of absence they are usually to be found on a small saline lake on the south-eastern shore of Lake George. There is still no evidence of these birds breeding in Uganda. As at the end of the year Lake Nakuru had dried up the Uganda flocks are likely to be considerably augmented.

69. *Duck*. It is reported that a remarkable feature at the end of 1939 has been the non-appearance on Lake Saka of the large flights of pochard which normally visit the lake from September to January. At no time has a total of twenty-five of this species been seen.