

area covered at least 5 acres, and the result was a game trap as devilish in its effectiveness as any devised by the mind of man. It caught practically everything that entered the area, whether they came in singles or hundreds.

Once an animal stampeded into the noose-covered area where the yellow ropes were the same colour as the yellow grass, it had no alternative but to try and break through the maze, but few indeed succeed.

We saw tons of meat ready for transport. There were remnants of all local animals from Thompson's gazelles to zebra, giraffe, and we even counted five striped unborn eland calves.

Such slaughter is supposed to be illegal, but game conservation in Tanganyika has not aroused the vital and growing interest that it has in America.

My estimate of the animal life taken by all these native hunters from the surrounding country then filled with herds on their dry season migration is 300 per day.

NOTE.—Mr. Carlisle's expedition was made in 1928. It is hoped that since that date the Tanganyika administration has been able to check these communal hunts.—ED.

KENYA.

SLAUGHTER OF RHINOS.

ARTICLE FROM "EAST AFRICAN STANDARD",
7th MARCH, 1930.

The poaching and smuggling of rhinoceros horn has become a serious problem for the Game Department in spite of the exercise of every possible precaution and vigilance by the Department, with the assistance of administrative officers and the police.

Occasionally the culprits are brought to justice and the punishment is heavy. In a recent case tried before the Mombasa Resident Magistrate five Barawa were charged with being concerned in the illicit movement and smuggling

Z 334

J. See *Biz. Fauna Empire*

no. 11 1930

pp. 51-54

of 187 rhinoceros horns. Found guilty the two ring-leaders were fined £560, or three months' rigorous imprisonment in default; one was fined £25 or in default three months' imprisonment, and the fourth and fifth were fined £10 or in default one month's rigorous imprisonment.

The horns were purchased through intermediaries, transported by lorry to Malindi, and there put on board a dhow. In the course of his judgment, the Magistrate said that there was no doubt in his mind but that all five accused were in possession of or illegally exported these rhino horns. "I imagine a case involving such wholesale slaughter of rhinoceros has never been before the Courts of this Colony," he added. "It involves no less than ninety-three rhinos. Presumably those beasts live in the Ukamba Reserve and presumably if there were no receivers like the accused the Wakamba would not destroy rhinoceros."

In the last two years there has been a tremendous increase in poaching, due to the fact that recent droughts resulting in food shortages, and the increasing inducements offered by dishonest traders (themselves prompted by the huge prices which the horns have lately realized) have tempted the native more and more to take part in these profitable ventures. Their task has been rendered easier in that droughts have forced rhinoceros to concentrate at water-holes, where they become easy marks for the poisoned arrows of the hunters.

Poisoned Arrows.—It is interesting to note that the Wakamba obtain their supply of poison from the Wagiriana, by whose hands 99 per cent of the poison is manufactured. It is bartered for sheep, goats, cattle, rhinoceros horns, and money. The main ingredient of the poison is obtained from three species of Euphorbia, and the final concoction, a congealed black substance, is retailed in neat black sachets made of dried leaves bound round with string—measuring about 3 inches in length and about half an inch in circumference. Quite recently the administrative authorities in the Kitui area collected over 400 lb. of this poison which was being peddled by Wagiriana to natives in that district.

This capture alone represents a potential supply of poison for 25,600 arrows: one can then realize the trade which is taking place in this deadly manufacture.

Removing the Booty.—Armed with poisoned arrows the marauders roam the game areas, slaughtering rhinoceros and trading them to dealers. Thereafter the horns are surreptitiously removed, concealed in petrol tins, chop boxes, trunks, bundles of hides, and other receptacles. A common method is to pack them in petrol and other tins together with ghee. The tins are then soldered up and no clues exist as to their illegal contents. Waiting their opportunity, the dealers remove their haul either by lorry or other methods, either to the coast or northwards. Transshipment by dhow is an easy task, the vast coastline offering innumerable opportunities for a boat which has obtained its clearance papers to put in again undetected.

When transporting overland, the impossibility of any proper patrol of the Italian Somaliland frontier enables the smugglers to cross the border with impunity. There is little doubt but that practically all the smuggled ivory and rhinoceros horn finds its way into Italian Somaliland either by dhow or overland by camel or lorry, and until that market is closed the authorities are faced with a tremendous task.

Italian Position.—One naturally asks, "Why do the Italian authorities allow it?" At the moment ivory or rhinoceros horn can enter Italian territory in any way. It is thereafter thrown on to an open market, purchased and re-exported in ordinary trading vessels to all parts of the world, often to British possessions. Quite recently a coastal trading steamer which had come down from Kismayu, called at Lamu carrying 500 lb. of rhinoceros horn. Quite legitimate export from Italian Somaliland, but where did they come from in the first place? Again, in January, a visitor to Kismayu found the whole of the floor of the custom house covered with rhinoceros horns, many of them obviously from recent kills.

When it is realized that rhinoceros are very scarce in Italian Somaliland, the conclusion is obvious. Unless and

until the Italian authorities follow the Kenya Government's example and prohibit all dealings in ivory and rhinoceros horn, other than that purchased from Government, or obtained from an animal killed on a licence, there is little hope of the Game Department being able to suppress the trade and cope with this terrible slaughter of Kenya's game. Recently smugglers have found rhinoceros horn more profitable than ivory. This is mainly due to rhinoceros horn being more easily concealed and handled, and also to its having at present a greater commercial value than ivory. In past years rhinoceros horns realized Shs. 6 per lb. A year ago it had jumped to Shs. 40 per lb., and at a recent Government auction rhinoceros horn was withdrawn after the bids had reached Shs. 19/25.

It is impossible to leave the position as it is. In spite of every effort by the Game Department, police, and administrative officers, hundreds of rhinoceros are being slaughtered yearly and the horn smuggled out of the country.

It has been suggested that the Government of Kenya should prohibit the manufacture, carrying, or use of poisons by natives, except under permit from competent officers, who would naturally allow the natives to avail themselves of their ancient weapon of defence against marauding animals. It is understood that this has been done in Tanganyika.

A number of rhinoceros still remain but they are by no means inexhaustible. The rhinoceros is perhaps one of Kenya's most typical animals, and in the vast bush areas does no harm to anyone.

THE NORTHERN ELEPHANT SEAL.

By CHARLES HASKINS TOWNSEND.

(From the *Bulletin of the New York Zoological Society*.)

It is gratifying to be able to report that this species—largest of all seals, and now found only on Guadalupe Island, Lower California—is increasing in numbers.

A careful count made at Guadalupe Island on 27th September, 1929, showed that there were on the beach 469 of these animals. These were seals of varying sizes, from young of the year to adult males and females. An inspection of the different groups showed that they were composed chiefly of immature animals. The relative scarcity of seals of adult size was probably due to the fact that the breeding season, beginning about 1st March, was long past. The young of the year had already lost the black colour of the nursing pup.

The Guadalupe herd of elephant seals, when visited by the writer in March, 1911, consisted of about 150 animals, as based on counts of adults and young present, and estimates of intermediate sizes assumed to be absent from the rookery. Since 1911 the seals of Guadalupe Island have been protected by the Mexican Government.

It is possible that the number of animals present on 27th September, 1929, represents but half of the herd belonging there. It is certain that the number of breeding adults was far short of those seen there in March, 1911. There was no evidence that the herd had been disturbed, as the seals were as little concerned about our presence among them as during our visit eighteen years before, when they were altogether fearless.

During the past year a few large elephant seals have been observed at sea as far north as the latitude of San Diego, California, where one was killed by fishermen in September, 1929. This seal, a large male, is now in the Museum of Natural History at San Diego. An examination of its stomach contents showed that it had been feeding on fishes, one of which was skate.