

Wild Life and Shooting in Nigeria.

I have been asked by the Editor of the Journal of the Nigerian Field Society to write something about the shooting, and wild life in general, of Nigeria. Whilst appreciating the compliment he has paid me, I am a little inclined to depreciate the value of my response, not that I am a tyro, for the past 23 years I have been on and off all over Africa, but because I have so much more to learn about Nigeria's wild life, its classifications, breeding, and general life cycle, etc.

I do not personally know of many good books on the subject I am daring to approach, nor, unfortunately, of many good men surviving who have considerable knowledge of the subject as a whole, but nevertheless, there is one name all of us could and should refer to, "Timber Thompson."

There are, roughly speaking, sixty different kinds of animals in Nigeria, not including the smaller rodents. Some of these are genera and species peculiar to the South, but most are common to both groups of Provinces. For example, you do not find the gazelles (Dorcas, Red Fronted, and Dama) in the South, nor the water-chevrotain, royal antelope, gorilla, chimpanzee, manatee, or mangrove otter in the Northern Provinces. As far as I know giraffe are peculiar to the North, and I make so bold as to say only in the Bornu, Yola, and Benue Provinces. The Senegal Hartebeest is also, I think, a Northern animal, whilst I should narrow the habitats of the bay duiker, Ogilbys, and the red river hog to Southern Nigeria. However, I confess I do not know the faunal line between North and South. But then who does?

The klipspringer and the rhinoceros are definitely located in the North, and the white oryx, addax, and Lord Derby's eland in the Chad territory, but will someone please tell me if addax nasomaculatus and taurotragus Derbiansus Congolanus are ever found west of Chad? Again, has the bongo or okapi been found in Nigeria? Or Meinertzhagen's forest hog? I have hunted in many districts both of the Northern and Southern Provinces, but as the reader will have noted, I can only write in a general sort of way of the range of the fauna. However, if this article breeds controversy, or elicits the much needed information, I and other humble sportsmen seek, then it will not have been written in vain.

Having touched on game distribution, I will now name a few good shooting districts, where I have either been myself or have had such reliable information that I can take up my pen and write about them without fear of contradiction.