

THE FAUNA OF NIGERIA.

(Notes on its distribution, destruction, and conservation)

By

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I have just read an article in the Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, by Richard Oakley, called "Game Preservation in Nigeria" (by kind permission of The Field), and feel urged to write an article myself which I hope will be of some use to those who are ignorant of this important and interesting subject, and at the same time enlighten those who may have read Mr. Oakley's thesis. In the main he is correct, but firstly, I do not agree when he writes that "In Nigeria, as it is today, there is little to fear from the resident sportsman. Few but officials go far afield from the leading stations, save traders proceeding to some out-station, when their range is confined to the main routes. Prospectors, again, work mainly around the North Central Plateau (sic)." My observations on the above are: - "Many shootists go far afield, and quite a number have no license at all." I was myself at one time a prospector both on and off the Plateau, and know that many expeditions are frequently made very far afield by the Mining Company Employees and also Government Officials. They go to Zuru, some two hundred miles from Jos, where game abounds in almost a pristine state, and also to all parts of the Bauchi Province even up as far as Chad. Unfortunately, I have seen in the bags many immature heads, and not a few females.

Then Mr. Oakley goes on to say: - "Officials in this respect may be put into two categories - those who are interested in shikar, and those who are not; but either or both of these classes are very often naturalists whose instinct is rather to preserve than to slay wantonly, and in both cases they are usually too busy to be able to spend much time or thought on the subject." Here again I cannot agree that either or both of these classes are very often Naturalists, but I do agree that some are too busy to be able to spend much . . . thought on the subject. The Naturalists are one in a hundred Shikaris. I cannot help feeling that Mr. Oakley has dubbed the majority with the desirable qualities of the excellent few he has met. But, despite the latter, whom I know from personal experience do exist, the majority ~~with~~ are not sportsmen in the true sense of the word. Let me here record I am not trying to grab everybody and everything in Nigeria's realm of sport, but I do think that Nigerian European hunters are deficient of that sense of responsible sportsmanship which exists in East and Central Africa.

The main fault lies in the lack of interest taken by the Political and Forestry Departments in the game and the game

- The Senegal Genet. T.S. merging into the F.Zone.
 Spotted Hyaena. All Zones. This is the largest of the two species.
 Stripes Hyaena. B.S. and D.S.
 The Hunting Dog. Distributed over all Zones except Forest.
 Mr. Langslow-Cook, Chief Inspector of Mines, Nigeria, says he can identify two species, one small and one large, which he has come across in the Bauchi Province
 Giraffe. B.S. and D.S. Has been seen in the Sokoto, Kano, Bauchi, Benue, and Bornu Provinces.
 Warthog. Plentiful throughout the three Northern Zones.
 Bushpig. F. and T.S.
 Red River Hog. Ditto.
 Hippopotamus. In all the big rivers. The Chad race differs slightly from the Southern species.
 Defassa or Sing-Sing Waterbuck. T.S. B.S.
 The Kob (Western Race). Plentiful almost everywhere.
 Roan Antelope. T.S. where it meets the B.S. And the B.S. Local.
 Situtunga. F. and Chad. Fringing forests along the River Niger, especially between Agenebode and Asaba.
 Western Hartebeest. Fringe of F.Zone. T.S. B.S. Plentiful.
 Senegal Hartebeest. Not so common as above. B.S. and where B.S. meets T.S.
 Bushbuck. All Zones except Desert. S.
 Bohor Reedbuck. T.S. B.S. Chad. Mostly in North.
 Klipspringer. In the hilly country of Bauchi, Bornu, and Zaria. B.S.
 Oribi. B.S. D.S.
 Yellow Backed Duiker. F. T.S. extends from Illah on the Niger, or even further South to Jemaa. Fringes of B.S.
 Black Duiker. F
 Mazwells Duiker. F.
 The Bay Duiker. F.
 Red Flanked Duiker. T.S. B.S.
 The Duikerbok. (Western race of the typical Duiker). B.S.
 The Royal Antelope. Rare. Oyo Province and in Owerri. F.
 Water Chevrotain. F.
 The Black Rhinoceros. Very local and rare. B.S. Not far from Yola, Song Plateau.
 The Dorcas Gazelle. B.S. and D.S.
 The Korin or Red-fronted Gazelle. B.S. D.S. Chad.
 The Addra Gazelle. B.S. D.S. Chad. Plentiful between the Eastern slopes of the Northern Plateau Escarpment and the Benue.
 The Addax. D.S. Chad.
 The White Oryx. D.S. Chad.
 Lord Derby's Eland. French Chad. British Chad ?
 The Okapi
 The Bongo
 The Forest Hog } Not yet discovered in Nigeria. But why not ?
 Side-striped Jackal. B.S. Possibly D.S.
 Pale Fox. B.S. D.S.