



UGANDA PROTECTORATE

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

GAME DEPARTMENT

FOR THE

Year ended 31st December, 1949



Published by Command of His Excellency the Governor

*Signed by CRS PITMAN,
Entered 26 April 1950*

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ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year ended 31st December, 1949

SECTION I.—ADMINISTRATION

General

1. *Designation.*—The title of the Department has been changed from Game to Game and Fisheries which is more descriptive of its actual functions.

2. *Staff.*—In the original Development Plan although the Department was accorded the responsibility for large scale fisheries development no provision was made for essential expansion of staff at headquarters. This has now been rectified by the appointment of an Assistant Game Warden, who unfortunately, did not materialise until November.

Expenditure and Revenue

3. Figures are as follow:—	£
Expenditure (approximately)	24,297
Revenue	21,910
The Revenue was derived as follows:—	£
(a) Sale of ivory, rhinoceros horns and hippo teeth	14,870
(b) Game licences	7,040

Receipts from (a) show a decrease of nearly 22 per cent., and from (b) an increase of 18 per cent.; in the case of (a) £14,691 was derived from the sale of ivory.

4. This is the first occasion since the establishment of the Department in 1925 that expenditure has exceeded revenue, but it must be realised that from 1933 onwards the Fisheries Section of the Department, which is non-revenue producing, has been steadily expanding. In 1949 the cost of the Fisheries' staff of three European officers, clerks and 44 fish guards, and their relevant activities, has deprived the Department of showing the customary excess of revenue over expenditure. This revenue is derived from the sale of Game and Special licences and from the proceeds of the sales of ivory, rhinoceros horns, and hippopotamus teeth.

5. At the two ivory auctions, held at Mombasa, the average price realised per lb. was Shs. 13/54 and Shs. 11/67 compared with Shs. 16/05 and Shs. 14/75 in 1948; a sharp drop in prices respectively of 15½ per cent. and 21 per cent.

6. Game and Special Licences issued:—

	1949	1948
Resident's (Full)	367	303
Visitor's (Full)	1	5
Resident's (Fourteen-day)	1	2
Visitor's (Fourteen-day)	8	2
First Elephant	271	160
Second Elephant	171	100
Third Elephant	100	96
Native's Two Elephants ... ..	...	23
Native's Three Elephants ... ..	...	14
Native's Three Elephants ... ..	...	7
One Black Rhinoceros ... ..	...	3
Bird	1,157	935



7. Owing mainly to an increase in the cost of elephant licences, combined with 20 per cent. more Resident's (Full) Game licences and 24 per cent. more Bird licences being taken out, £1,087 more revenue has been derived from the sale of licences. Special licences to hunt 542 elephants were taken out as compared with 526 in 1948.

8. The total weights of ivory, etc., sold and prices realised at Mombasa auctions were as follows:—

	Weight	Gross price realised	Approx. average price per lb.
MAY—	<i>lbs.</i>	<i>£ s. cts.</i>	<i>Shs. cts.</i>
Ivory	11,591	7,846 6 32	13 54
Rhino horns	90	121 0 14	26 89
Hippo teeth	53	3 6 17	1 25
NOVEMBER—			
Ivory	11,731 $\frac{3}{4}$	6,844 13 57	11 67
Rhino horns	30 $\frac{3}{4}$	46 10 25	31 00
Hippo teeth	111 $\frac{3}{4}$	8 6 34	1 50

9. The total of 23,322 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of ivory sold is approximately 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons less than in 1948, e.g. a decrease of 19 per cent. which is the natural result of the cessation of the elephant reduction operations in West Nile and Madi.

10. The price of rhino horn has risen remarkably, and it last attained a price of Shs. 30 and over in 1928 when it averaged Shs. 33/60 cents per lb. The only other occasions, since the formation of the Department that such high prices were realised, were at the two auctions held in 1927, when the price averaged respectively Shs. 30/30 cents and Shs. 35/05 cents, the latter being the highest ever recorded locally.

11. Ivory, etc. statistics:—

(a) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1948—	<i>lbs.</i>
Ivory	1,083 $\frac{3}{4}$
Rhino horns	68
Hippo teeth	53
(b) Received at Mombasa between 1st January, 1949, and 31st Dec., 1949—	
Ivory	29,106 $\frac{1}{2}$
Rhino horns	62 $\frac{3}{4}$
Hippo teeth	213
(c) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1949—	
Ivory	6,666
Rhino horns	10
Hippo teeth	101 $\frac{1}{4}$
IVORY FIGURES—	
Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1948	1,083 $\frac{3}{4}$
Received at Mombasa during 1949	29,106 $\frac{1}{2}$
TOTAL	30,490 $\frac{1}{4}$
	<i>lbs.</i>
Sold during 1949	23,322 $\frac{3}{4}$
Destroyed being valueless	400 $\frac{3}{4}$
Stolen from Ivory Room	100 $\frac{3}{4}$
	23,824 $\frac{1}{4}$
Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1949	6,666

Illegal Killing of Game and Breaches of Game Laws

12. Illegalities in connection with elephant hunting, the acquisition of ivory, and the selling of game meat though still prevalent are on a considerably reduced scale thanks to the unremitting efforts of the Game Rangers and their African staff, combined with the much appreciated support of the Provincial Administration and the Protectorate Police.

13. A few recoveries have been made of small scale stocks of illegally possessed ivory.

14. The Departmental staff have achieved some remarkable success in the recovery of illegally possessed firearms.

Legislation

15. Legislation affecting game was as follows:—

(i) *Legal Notice No. 61*, which—

(a) imposes a close season for Duck, Geese and Teal throughout the Protectorate every year from 1st April to 30th September, a very necessary provision as resident species have been greatly reduced by overshooting, besides being shot during the breeding season.

(b) It also revokes a six months' annual close season for the protection of guineafowl in the Lango District on the grounds that these birds cause considerable damage to crops.

(ii) *Legal Notice No. 64*, which proclaims Lake Chahafi in south-west Kigezi to be a Bird Sanctuary for an initial period of three years. This swampy lake supports a wonderful variety of interesting bird life. In recent years it has been unnecessarily heavily shot over, especially in the duck breeding season.

(iii) *Legal Notice No. 209*, which orders that any ivory lawfully obtained must be produced for registration before the District Commissioner of the District in which it was obtained. This tightens considerably the control of ivory, as previously a licence-holder could produce his ivory before any Administrative Officer for registration, thereby enabling a law breaker to leave the Protectorate before his misdeeds were discovered.

Game Reserves and Sanctuaries

16. *Bunyoro and Gulu*.—On the whole this reserve continues to be well stocked particularly in the vicinity of the River Nile. That parts of it are still poached is unquestionable, but it is a moot point whether a conspicuous, local shortage of kob and hartebeest is due to poaching or to the depredations of lions. Baboons in the Murchison Falls Nile region have shown an astonishing increase in recent years which is almost certainly attributable to the widespread harrying to which the skin-valuable leopard has been subjected. Hippopotamus poaching in the Nile has by no means ceased, and the remote control which is only possible cannot be really effective. Authentic reports have been received of several buffaloes having been killed by lions.

17. On one launch trip to the Falls a lion was seen feeding on a buffalo which it had killed. The vessel's crew landed and, quite

irregularly, deprived the poor old lion of its hard earned meal. The disappointed creature withdrew to some high ground and gazed wistfully at the robbing of its spoils. One wonders whether the intruders had the decency to leave even a small portion for the hungry lion.

18. The recently opened Anaka-Pakwach road is providing a most interesting spectacle of wild life, and kob in particular are abundant at the roadside. Elephants in the vicinity of the Nile section of the road are apt to be a nuisance by refusing to give way to the traveller by car. Lions at night are frightening the residents in the maintenance camps to such an extent that it has been necessary to resort to shooting a few to dissuade them from their unwelcome activities. These maintenance camps are apt to indulge in a great deal of poaching but it is believed that the situation is well in hand as a result of the action taken to suppress this irregularity. It would be the greatest pity if poaching was to deprive the passer-by of the spectacle of all manner of unsuspecting wild life.

19. There have been few excursions by elephants and other crop raiders northerly into the settled areas of East Madi from the extensive closed sleeping sickness area and elephant sanctuary lying to the north of the Gulu portion of the reserve. There is reason to believe that this large closed area is well-stocked with game, and that in parts of it interesting and rarer species such as the giraffe, black rhinoceros and roan antelope are common.

20. *Toro (or Semliki)*.—There is little fresh to report from this somewhat inaccessible reserve, which contains a few small elephant herds, many buffaloes, considerable quantities of kob, and smaller numbers of waterbuck and hartebeest. It still supports an unduly large lion population. The shore line of this reserve is frequented by Lake Albert fish poachers from the Congo.

21. *Lake George*.—This reserve, traversed as it is by main motor thoroughfares, is becoming more and more popular as a showground for wild life. Visibility is never obstructed by long grass, and after the seasonal burning all manner of wild life congregates on the lawn-short grassy plains, at which time the graceful kob in its handsome rufous pelage can be seen grazing in large concentrations. It is quite ridiculous to see groups of buffaloes, that villain of ill-reputed ferocity, peacefully grazing at the very roadside or lying down contentedly chewing the cud not deigning to pay the slightest attention to passing vehicles.

22. Almost daily about 11-00 a.m. it can be guaranteed that a herd of elephants six to a dozen strong will cross the main road within half-a-mile of the prosperous Katwe fishing settlement. Visitors are accustomed to park their cars in the vicinity of this crossing point and to await the opportunity of taking wonderful pictures at point blank range. The elephants usually put in an appearance at least two hours before they cross and in extremely leisurely fashion browse their way towards the road. Then the great moment comes and the huge beasts with a certain amount of diffidence, as if somewhat apprehensive of the masses of silent onlookers, shamble across the highway, and throwing off all caution drink and disport

themselves in Lake Edward a few hundred yards distant at a place where there is not a vestige of cover. Seldom in Africa can the sightseer witness so extraordinary a spectacle of the normally timid wild elephant at its ease, absolutely regardless of man and his noises and scent, and of the motor traffic which with blaring horns roars along the road often at only a few yards' distance.

23. *Lake Edward*.—Owing to an oversight no reference to this reserve was made in last year's Report. It still constitutes a reservoir of well-endowed tuskers which occasionally emerge to their own detriment but to the considerable benefit of some lucky licence-holder. Buffaloes are abundant, while waterbuck, hartebeest and kob are not uncommon.

It has been agreed that when the Rwensama fishing settlement is ready for opening on the Lake Edward shore a suitable area will have to be excised from this game reserve in order to ensure satisfactory development.

24. *Ankole*.—There is nothing to add to the remarks recorded in paragraph 17, 1948.

25. *White Rhinoceros Sanctuaries*.—In April the Game Warden visited the white rhinoceros sanctuary in the Mt. Kei Crown Forest Reserve in Aringa County of the Lugbara in West Nile. It was estimated that there are probably about two dozen white rhinos in this sanctuary. Unfortunately lack of time prevented a visit to the Mt. Otze Crown Forest Sanctuary, in West Madi, which is said to contain a larger stock of these big creatures. But it is in the Era Crown Forest Reserve in West Madi which has not yet been created a sanctuary that the white rhinoceros is most plentiful.

26. *Gorilla Sanctuary*.—From all accounts gorillas are fairly plentiful in and above the elevated forests on the Birunga Mountains in south-west Kigezi.

27. *Bird Sanctuaries*.—Vide paragraph 15 (ii) an additional and exceedingly valuable Bird Sanctuary has been proclaimed at Lake Chahafi in south-west Kigezi. Great crested grebes, the lesser grebe or dabchick, coots, purple coots, moorhens, lily-trotters, pigmy lily-trotters, black crakes, yellow-wattled plovers, white-backed diving ducks, hottentot teal and yellow-billed duck all breed here, as well as many small species of birds. Crested cranes, various herons, African pochard, pigmy cormorants, snipe, francolins, quail, crows, birds of prey and a host of other species also occur.

28. *Area of Game Reserves and Sanctuaries*.—Below are tabulated the areas of the various game reserves and sanctuaries:—

	sq. miles
(i) Bunyoro and Gulu Game Reserve	1,750
(ii) Toro (Semliki) Game Reserve	202
(iii) Lake George Game Reserve	523
(iv) Lake Edward Game Reserve	538
(v) Gorilla Sanctuary (S.W. Kigezi)	17
(vi) Ankole Reserve	121
(vii) White Rhinoceros Sanctuaries:—	
(a) Otze Crown Forest (West Madi)	80
(b) Mount Kei Crown Forest (West Nile)	170
(viii) Bird Sanctuary at Old Entebbe approximately	4
(ix) Lake Chahafi Bird Sanctuary—less than	1
(x) Bulamagi Dam Bird Sanctuary	(a few acres)
TOTAL	3,406

by the exhaust, the vehicle meanwhile remaining stationary. Eventually the two parted company, no doubt to the mutual relief of hippopotamus and driver.

165. *White Rhinoceros*.—As a result of strict protection the white rhinoceros is thriving and it is believed that during the past twenty years there has been a fifty per cent. increase.

166. A survey carried out by a Game Ranger in West Madi and the northern part of West Nile District as far south as the Arua-Rhino Camp road, indicates a total of between 150 and 200, made up approximately as follows:—

West Madi:—				
Metu-Dufile-Leya Valley area	...	...	...	30
Kale-Waka-Liwa area	...	...	...	70
Laufori-Moyo area	...	...	...	25
West Nile:—				
Aringa county: Kei-Midigo area	...	...	...	25
Bahala swamp: Bulakaton-Rhino Camp-Rigbo	...	...	...	20
Various places: individuals and small groups	...	...	...	20
Total				190

167. During a three days' tour at the end of May an Administrative Officer saw in the Kale-Waka-Liwa area at least 20 family groups of white rhinoceros.

168. Although normally quiet and inoffensive these great beasts, on rare occasions, become aggressive. A game guard on patrol near Laufori in West Madi came on a white rhinoceros cow which had shortly before given birth to a calf. She not unnaturally resented his intrusion and chased him into a river.

169. A tragedy occurred at Rigbo to a man who was cultivating his shamba. He had started work when he saw two white rhinoceros under a nearby tree. He began to run for his house and the cow rhino gave chase, gaining rapidly. Realising that he was being overtaken the man turned round and hit the rhino over the head with his hoe. This failed to turn the animal which gored him causing fatal injuries.

170. At Kale, West Madi, a white rhino was killed in a snare set for buffalo. The poacher concerned was prosecuted and fined in the District Court.

171. *Black Rhinoceros*.—In south-west Lango the black rhinoceros is still common. In the lakeside areas in particular they have been a real nuisance, causing considerable damage to both economic crops and the morale of the local people whom they frequently chase. On one occasion in Kwania County two members of the local council were forced to spend two hours up a tree on their way to the District Commissioner's lukiko. Several of these animals have had to be destroyed.

172. *Giraffe*.—Although still poached for the value of their tails these inoffensive animals manage to hold their own in the parts of the Protectorate in which they exist.

Reports indicate that there are plenty in south-west Lango where a game guard observed two herds, one of 20 and another of 12, in one

small valley. Smaller numbers are frequently seen in this area. In Mbale District also a small herd is a prominent feature of the Atar-Greek river track.

173. In August a large male giraffe was found caught in one of the irrigation drains on the outskirts of Lira. The animal, in falling, had wedged its front legs beneath itself, and so was unable to get up again in the confined space.

When found it was very exhausted and, despite efforts to raise its head clear of the drain water with ropes, it soon after died.

Tracks indicated that the animal may have wandered in from Kwania or Maruzi counties. It was a remarkable incident as giraffe are not known to come within 50 miles of Lira.

(iv) RODENTIA

174. *Yellow-toothed Mole Rat (Tachyoryctes)*.—This rodent has been identified on the lower slopes of Mount Kadam in Karamoja, where it is reported to be common. It is also found on Mount Moroto and is believed to be the same race as is found on Mount Elgon. It is a new record for Karamoja.

(B) Birds

175. *Rosy Pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus)*.—At the request of Dr. James P. Chapin of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, a series of rosy pelican skins from birds shot in the course of fisheries investigations were submitted to him for expert examination. The material sent consisted of fourteen birds, all but one being males, which had been killed during June and July. The state of their organs indicated that they were getting ready to breed, presumably somewhere in Africa, but an East African breeding ground of this species has yet to be discovered.

176. The expert report on their identity states that there is no recognisable characteristic whereby African and European birds can be separated, and accordingly the theory previously held by some systematists that there is an African race of this pelican is untenable.

177. *Pink-backed Pelican (Pelecanus rufescens)*.—The occurrence of a few pink-backed pelicans on some of the Teso and Masaka dams requires investigation in order to ascertain on which species of fish these voracious birds are feeding.

178. *Night Heron (Nycticorax n. nycticorax)*.—Three night herons, possibly migrants, were seen by a pool near Chei Hill in northern Aringa, West Nile, in early April.

179. *Whale-headed Stork (Balaeniceps rex)*.—At the end of July the Game Warden saw three whale-headed storks close to Awoja ferry, Lake Salisbury, at 10.30 in the morning.

180. *Woolly-necked Stork (Dissoura episcopus microscelis)*.—A solitary example of the woolly-necked stork, which occurs sparingly only in northern Uganda, was seen at the Koich bridge, Aringa, West Nile, in mid-April.