



UGANDA PROTECTORATE

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
GAME DEPARTMENT
FOR THE
Year ended 31st December, 1947



Published by Command of His Excellency the Governor

Signed p. 65 CRS PITMAN,

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THE GAME DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year ended 31st December, 1947

SECTION I.—ADMINISTRATION

Expenditure and Revenue

1. Figures are as follow:—	£
Expenditure	10,372
Revenue (gross)	20,047

The revenue was derived as follows:—	£
* (a) Sale of ivory, rhinoceros horns and hippo teeth	14,366
(b) Game licences	5,681

Receipts from (a) show a decline of 31 per cent. and from (b) an increase of 52 per cent. in the case of (a) £14,323 was derived from the sale of ivory.

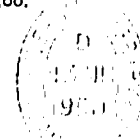
2. At the two ivory auctions, held at Mombasa, the average price realised per lb. was Shs. 13·32 and Shs. 11·88 compared with Shs. 16·31 and Shs. 16·15 in 1946; a drop in price respectively of 18 per cent. and 26 per cent.

3. Game and Special Licences issued:—

	1947	1946
Resident's (Full)	273	195
Visitor's (Full)	18	4
Resident's (Fourteen-day)	1	1
Visitor's (Fourteen-day)	4	2
Resident's or Visitor's Two Elephants	88	74
Resident's or Visitor's Third Elephant	45	41
Resident's or Visitor's Three Elephants	40	13
Native's Two Elephants	83	47
Native's Third Elephant	35	31
Native's Three Elephants	22	12
Special for One Black Rhinoceros	4	1
Bird	932	865

4. With the easing of the ammunition situation, and with ivory still at a profitable price, nearly £2,000 more revenue has been derived from the sale of licences. Licences to hunt 604 elephants were taken out as compared with 389 in 1946.

* The gross value realised: from this have to be deducted costs of internal transport in Uganda and external transport to Mombasa, auction charges and rebates to Native Administrations, totalling about £1,500.



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

	Weight	Gross price realised		Approx. average price per lb.
		lbs.	£	s. cts.
JULY—				
Ivory	11,825½	7,872	19 99	13 32
Rhino horns	21½	18 10	64	17 65
Hippo teeth	40½	2 3	06	1 07
NOVEMBER—				
Ivory	10,860½	6,450	6 13	11 88
Rhino horns	15½	17 11	50	23 05
Hippo teeth	94½	5 0	11	1 05

The total of 22,858½ lbs. is nearly 2½ tons less than in 1946, *v.g.* a decrease of 19 per cent.

6. Ivory, etc. :—

(a) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1946—	lbs.
Ivory	3,882½
Rhino horns	21½
Hippo teeth	34½
(b) Received at Mombasa between 1st Jan., 1947, and 31st Dec., 1947—	
Ivory	25,888½
Rhino horns	46½
Hippo teeth	182½
(c) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1947—	
Ivory	7,034½
Rhino horns	31½
Hippo teeth	81½
IVORY FIGURES—Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1946	3,882½
Received at Mombasa during 1947	25,888½
TOTAL	29,771½
	lbs.
Sold during 1947	22,686½
Shrinkage	50½
	22,736½
Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1947	7,034½

Illegal Killing of Game and Breaches of Game Laws

7. Illegalities in connection with elephant hunting, the acquisition of ivory, and the selling of game meat have been prevalent and are widespread.

The high price of ivory is sufficient inducement for law breaking on an extensive scale, and as there are many who share in the profits the necessary evidence to bring cases to Court is rarely forthcoming.

8. Unfortunately, owing to lack of adequate control due to the absence of the necessary supervisory staff, game guards for many years have been able to reap a rich harvest by shooting elephants for African licence holders, retaining for licence holders the larger tusks obtained in the course of control operations, and selling for high prices ammunition otherwise unobtainable by the public.

These also are offences difficult of detection as there are usually too many profitably involved. When a game guard, and especially one of long

and hitherto good service is caught out, one cannot help feeling under the circumstances, when temptation is so great and the results so lucrative, that he has been as much sinned against as sinning. It is unquestionably unfair to have to leave these Government employees so much to their own devices, and irregularities decrease as soon as it is possible once again to exercise close control.

9. The Toro District has been the focus of game meat selling on an unprecedented scale, a state of affairs which has not been assisted by the attitude of some of the Native Authorities who have set a shocking example. If the rulers set the fashion in law breaking, the public will follow suit. It is hoped that the measures taken to cope with this menace have had a salutary effect.

10. Several parties of undesirable visitors from a neighbouring territory indulged in most objectionable methods when elephant hunting in the Northern Province; and, in consequence, remedial measures have been taken to prevent a repetition of such behaviour.

11. There have been some successful prosecutions for illegal elephant hunting and the unlawful possession of ivory. A European who helped himself to three elephants from the sanctuary in Acholi found it to be a very costly misdemeanour.

12. Singo, Buganda, continues to suffer from the activities of well-armed native poachers. Systematic poaching has been going on there for many years without let or hindrance from the Native Administration. The apprehension of the culprits who are well known, is said to be impossible on account of their threatening, revengeful attitude; but there is little doubt that their immunity from arrest is mainly due to the fact that most of the local authorities are hand in glove with the poachers.

Legislation

13. Legislation affecting game was as follows :—

(i) *Legal Notice No. 20*, by virtue of which three islands in Katwe Bay, Lake Edward, which are frequented by elephants, were added to a Game Reserve.

(ii) *Legal Notice No. 53*, which provides for the Control of Shooting on Dams in the Busoga and Teso Districts of the Eastern Province, the Acholi and Lango Districts of the Northern Province, and the Ankole District of the Western Province.

(iii) *Legal Notice No. 92*, proclaiming, in the interests of tsetse control, in certain areas of Buganda, that, with the exception of the elephant, no animals are to be hunted.

(iv) *Legal Notice No. 139*, increasing the fee for a Visitors' (Full) Game Licence from £25 to £50.

(v) *Legal Notice No. 169*, which obliges the holder of a Visitor's Game Licence to present for registration, before the Administrative Officer-in-Charge of the District in which it was obtained, any ivory lawfully acquired.

a pest, but now it is a veritable menace. Tens of thousands are killed annually but without making any impression on its overwhelming numbers. Tsetse control has had only limited success against this elusive marauder. In the lake-shore areas of western Teso it is said to be increasing at an alarming rate. The intellectual advancement of the local populations is not conducive to the encouragement of pig hunting. Efforts have been made to foster a trade in wild pig skins, which will fetch a few shillings when properly prepared.

In 1940, at 2 p.m. one day, a solitary wild pig was seen feeding in a garden at Soroti. When approached by a dog it charged and butted like a goat, and then went on feeding. The dog was no longer interested!

138. *Hippopotamus*.—Seasonally, the hippopotamus takes to shamba raiding, and has to pay the price for coming into conflict with man and his works. In this way annually a few hundreds are killed in defence of property, but the toll taken is negligible in view of its continued abundance. In some of the localities less accessible to authority many hippos have been shot in order to make profit from meat selling. According to locality a hippo sells from Shs. 60 to Shs. 200. Every few years the hippo herds above the Ripon Falls on account of their depredations in Jinja township, have to be thinned out, but there are always plenty more to take the place of those which have gone. The Township Authority when necessary, with the approval of the Game Warden, permits only strictly controlled and limited shooting.

139. In the River Nile between Lake Albert and the Sudan border, where this species is not protected many hippos are killed annually; in fact the total killed must be very high judged from the quantity of hippo teeth originating from the West Nile District. The average weight of marketable teeth per hippo is about 18 lbs. One ton of hippo teeth represents about 125 hippos. Yet there are always plenty of hippos to be seen in this stretch of the Nile.

140. Reference to hippo mortality will be found in paragraphs 188–193.

From time to time an aggressive hippo appears off the fish landing at Katwe, in Lake Edward, and has to be liquidated. Occasionally canoes have been attacked, and lives lost. In 1946, a canoe was overturned at Kazi, not far from Port Bell, and four Africans were drowned.

141. There is probably no other country, excepting the neighbouring Parc National Albert in the Belgian Congo, where the tourist can so easily see the hippopotamus in large numbers. In the vicinity of Katwe, on Lake Edward, a brief stroll from the main road brings one within sight of a hippo pack of 100 or more right at the waters edge.

142. Sometimes a hippopotamus gets caught in a seine net as it is pulled in on the north-eastern shore of Lake Albert. A couple have actually been pulled ashore, but the others, after giving the fishermen a dirty look which usually puts them to flight, step over the net to return to deeper water, while it is still some distance from the land.

143. In April, 1943, in the course of a trip to the Murchison Falls the Game Warden counted 2,500 hippopotamuses in the River Nile

between the head of the delta and the Fajao anchorage, e.g., in a river stretch of about 20 miles. At the time the water was exceptionally low.

144. Hippo bulls and pairs are apt to wander far and wide, suddenly appearing in the most unexpected places. As an example, in 1940, two hippopotamuses turned up in a banana *shamba* six miles from Fort Portal and made an unprovoked attack on an African whose hip was badly gashed. The County Chief Kahuma went out to deal with them. He killed one with his first shot and wounded the other. As he ran forward to finish it off he slipped and the enraged creature was on him before he could get up. He also suffered a severely gashed thigh, and in addition had two ribs fractured besides receiving a nasty wound in his neck. His *askari* fired several more shots into the beast, and other onlookers speared it many times. It went off and was later found dead in a swamp.

145. *Giraffe*.—The giraffe continues to be persecuted for the sake of its tail, the barter value of which in N. Acholi is considerable. A tail is readily and easily disposed of by converting it into bracelets and necklaces. But to kill a giraffe for the sake of its tail is just wanton butchery, for it has been reported that nowadays carcasses have been found intact except for the tail. Resort has been had to the use of iron lion traps for the illegal trapping of these animals.

In East Madi, where these ungainly creatures periodically emerge from the sleeping sickness area and elephant sanctuary to raid cultivation, two have had to be shot.

146. A three days' old juvenile which was captured in December, 1944, in a lake-shore area in the Lango District, was successfully reared, and eventually found its way *via* Kabete research centre in Kenya to the Zoological Society of London. It was a representative of the race *cottoni*. This youngster, then over two years old, was seen by the Game Warden at Regent's Park in the spring of 1947. It was in company with five other East African juveniles of similar size, and each one of them was comfortably *sitting down* in the roomy communal pen.

147. *Zebra*.—In the Acholi-Lango tsetse control operations a few have been destroyed. Reports from various parts of the Protectorate report that this gaudy species is not only holding its own, but in some localities is increasing.

148. *White Rhinoceros*.—According to reliable sources there are still plenty of white rhinoceros—one of Uganda's "sacred" species—in West Nile and West Madi. Periodically a white rhino meets its end through misadventure, but fortunately such cases are rare. Whenever possible the skulls and lower jaws of these casualties are collected and distributed to scientific institutions.

The Conservator of Forests suggests that there are probably more white rhinoceros in the Era Crown Forest Reserve in West Madi than in the proclaimed sanctuary in the Otze Crown Forest Reserve.

149. According to a report received from the Assistant Game Warden in the Southern Sudan there are about 50 white rhinos in the narrow Sudan strip, 30 miles long by 2 miles broad, between the Uganda border

and the left bank of the Nile. Further, he estimates that there are at least two hundred of these splendid animals in the white rhino habitat northerly from West Madi (including the Nile strip previously mentioned).

150. *Black Rhinoceros*.—In the lakeside areas of Lango the black rhinoceros besides being common is both destructive and dangerous, and for some years it has been necessary annually to destroy a few. In this region in 1946 seven had to be killed, and a similar number in 1947.

In western Karamoja in 1947 a few were killed in the course of tsetse control operations: others have been destroyed in Acholi for shamba raiding.

Periodically punitive action is necessary in East Madi against marauders from the sleeping sickness area and elephant sanctuary. In this locality a few have been shot annually by game guards during the years 1945, 1946 and 1947.

Whenever possible the skulls and lower jaws of black rhinoceros killed in the course of control operations are collected and distributed to scientific institutions.

(iv) TUBULIDENTATA

151. *Ant Bear*.—Although on account of its nocturnal habits it is not often seen, the ant bear is still widespread and not uncommon in parts of the Protectorate. The occasional specimen which is killed through human agency naturally evokes considerable comment on account of its grotesque appearance.

(v) NOMARTHRA

152. *Ground Pangolin or Scaly Ant-eater (Smutsia temminckii)*.—In 1943, a specimen of this strange, prehistoric-looking species was killed in Lango where it was unknown to the local inhabitants. Its remains were presented to Makerere College for scientific study. This species is well-known in Teso amongst the less sophisticated. It is widely distributed in Karamoja though nowhere common.

153. *Tree Pangolin*.—The arboreal pangolin is a common species in most of Uganda's forests. It has been recorded that the same tree is used for a diurnal resting place for as long as a fortnight. In recent years several attempts to keep this curious creature in captivity have proved unsuccessful.

154. *Blue Duiker or Ntalaganiya*.—This minute and graceful, forest-haunting antelope is incredibly agile, and its jumping powers really phenomenal. With a take off of a couple of feet above ground level it is capable of getting over a fence about eight feet high. It is also able to squeeze through astonishingly small holes.

(vi) RODENTIA

155. *Porcupine*.—In recent years many thousands of porcupines have been killed in Bunyoro in communal hunts. The porcupine can be wickedly destructive to certain types of growing crops, mealies being one of its favourites.

An endeavour to find a market for porcupine quills proved futile.

(B) Birds

156. *Whale-headed Stork (Balaeniceps rex)*.—During October, 1944, as many as eight at a time could be seen near the Awoja ferry, on the direct road from Soroti to Kumi. European residents had not previously seen them there. According to the local fishermen the abnormally low level of Lake Salisbury had forced these strange birds out of their secluded, swamp haunts.

In 1945, continued low water conditions resulted in more reports than usual of sight records of this unmistakable species from its habitat in the Mpologoma area, Lakes Kyoga, Kwania and Salisbury, and the Koli swamp in Lango.

157. *Balaeniceps* still occurs near Entebbe and is believed to be not uncommon, but to get a glimpse of it is not easy, as it is unusual for it to emerge from its swampy retreat until late evening—just when mosquitoes and other insect pests are becoming unpleasantly active. Reliable observers have seen it occasionally—a chance encounter—at the swamp edge in Nakiwogo Bay, as well as at Busi.

158. *Marabout Stork*.—Breeding colonies—all in trees—of the marabout stork not previously recorded are to be found at:—

(i) Near Nakitoma, in Buruli, Buganda.

(ii) About mile 15 on the Hoima-Fort Portal road, in company with the black-crowned heron, *Ardea melanocephala*.

(iii) At the edge of a forest patch near the Ruimi river in Toro, on the Game Reserve boundary; in association with pink-backed pelicans (see paragraph 160).

159. *Rosy Pelican (Pelecanus onocrotalus)*.—The rosy pelican for a greater part of the year is abundant on Lakes Edward and George, and is believed to cause considerable harm to the economic fisheries. Its correct identity is at present obscure as it has not yet been determined scientifically whether or not there is an African race of this fine bird. According to a reliable report these pelicans which had been plentiful on Lake George and Lake Edward during October-December, 1946, were scarce the following January and February, which may indicate a move to the European breeding haunts where nesting takes place from April to June. In South Africa this species has been found nesting, on the ground, in July, and despite exhaustive enquiries no other breeding locality is known in Africa. Adults examined from Lake Edward/George have shewn little sign of breeding activity, yet in November, 1946, a rosy pelican's egg was found casually deposited on the ground near Katwe in a locality where pelicans are accustomed to congregate. This does suggest the existence of an African breeding ground not very remote from Uganda. Investigations continue. The control campaign against the large numbers of rosy pelicans which had been attracted to Lake Kijanebalola by the introduction of *tilapia* proved so successful that by the end of 1945 these voracious birds had been driven away. One stomach examined contained five *tilapia*.