



UGANDA PROTECTORATE.

---

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
GAME DEPARTMENT

FOR THE

*Year ended 31st December, 1937.*

---

*31-12-37 p. 51 C 125 Pitumira*

*Entered 27 Jan 1938*

Published by Command of His Excellency the Governor.

ENTEBBE:

PRINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, UGANDA.

1938.

(2796)

*p. 155*

THE GAME DEPARTMENT.

ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year ended 31st December, 1937.

SECTION I. ADMINISTRATION.

Expenditure and Revenue.

1. Approximate figures for 1937 are as follow:—

	£
Expenditure .. .. .	6,554
Revenue (gross) .. .. .	21,071
Balance of Revenue over expenditure .. .. .	12,818
(after deducting £1,700 estimated cost of internal and external transport of ivory).	

The revenue was derived as follows:

	£	s.	d.
(a) Sale of ivory, rhinoceros horns and hippopotamus teeth .. .. .	16,507	3	17
(b) Game Licences and Governor's Permits .. .. .	4,565	0	00

Receipts from (a) show an increase of about £3,000 on the 1936 figures; and from (b) nearly £900.

2. At the two ivory auctions the average price realised per lb. was Shs. 7/68 and Shs. 7/10 compared with Shs. 6 and Shs. 6/55 in 1936.

Prices realised at the quarterly auctions in London generally showed a steady rise until the final (October) auction when there was a drop.

The year closed with local prices for the larger bull tusks at Shs. 8 to Shs. 7 per lb. Owing to the Sino-Japanese conflict the ivory market at the end of the year was most unstable.

3. Game and Special licences issued:—

	1937	1936
Resident's (Full) .. .. .	264	214
Visitor's (Full) .. .. .	5	6
Resident's (Fourteen day) .. .. .	5	5
Visitor's (Fourteen-day) .. .. .	4	..
Resident's or Visitor's Two Elephants .. .. .	127	82
Resident's or Visitor's Third Elephant .. .. .	52	30
Resident's or Visitor's Three Elephants .. .. .	20	22
Native's Two Elephant .. .. .	41	42
Native's Third Elephant .. .. .	13	8
Native's Three Elephants .. .. .	12	5
Special for One Black Rhinoceros .. .. .	2	..
Bird .. .. .	750	674

\* The gross value realised from this has to be deducted costs of internal transport in Uganda and external transport to Mombasa, totalling about £1,700.



4. The increase of revenue from the sale of licences is almost entirely due to the steady rise in the value of ivory, which at one time attained a maximum local price of Shs. 12 50 per lb., resulting in many more Special elephant licences being taken out. Correspondingly there has been a considerable jump in the sale of Resident's (Full) licences.

5. Government ivory was, as usual, sent to Mombasa for sale. Two auctions were held at which the total weights sold and average prices realised were as follows:

	Weight	Gr. Price realised.	Approx. average price per lb.
	Lbs.	£ shs. cts.	Shs. cts.
MAY—			
Ivory .. .. .	21,952	8,430 11 79	7 08
Rhino horns .. .. .	5	5 5 20	17 04
Hippo teeth .. .. .	53	5 14 85	7 10
NOVEMBER			
Ivory .. .. .	22,625	8,039 10 05	7 10
Rhino horns .. .. .	26½	17 1 75	13 14
Hippo teeth .. .. .	256½	19 1 93	0 78

#### 6. Ivory, etc.:

	Lbs.
(a) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1936	
Ivory .. .. .	10,821½
Rhino horns .. .. .	—
Hippo teeth .. .. .	—
(b) Received at Mombasa between 1st Jan., 1937, and 31st Dec., 1937—	
Ivory .. .. .	40,955½
Rhino horns .. .. .	52½
Hippo teeth .. .. .	400½
(c) Balance in store at Mombasa on 31st December, 1937	
Ivory .. .. .	7,170½
Rhino horns .. .. .	21½
Hippo teeth .. .. .	93½
(d) Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1936	10,821½
Received at Mombasa during 1937	40,955½
	51,777½
S.H. during 1937 .. .. .	44,577
Shrinkage .. .. .	29½
Balance at Mombasa on 31st December, 1937	7,170½

#### Illegal Killing of Game and Breaches of Game Laws.

7. It is gratifying to record that serious infringements of the Game Laws have again been conspicuous by their absence, though the same cannot be said of minor offences, mainly concerned with the unlawful killing of game and illegal dealings in trophies, which have resulted in the usual convictions. It is evident that there is still a good deal of illicit trapping of antelopes in some of the outlying areas.

The unauthorised trade in ostrich eggs is virtually dead.

8. An increase in the market value of ivory is always a temptation to licence-holders to acquire the heavier tusks by means which would not pass the test of close investigation: unfortunately this type of offence is difficult to detect.

#### Game Ordinance.

9. The reduction of the fee for a Visitor's (Full) Game licence from £50 to £25, and for a Visitor's (Fourteen-day) licence from £15 to £5, are the most important alterations in the law.

Other amendments refer to the legal size of mesh of fishing nets, and to the removal of "trout" from the Game Ordinance.

10. A new edition of the Game Department Handbook was issued incorporating the Game Ordinance, the Trout Protection Ordinance, 1936, the Sleeping Sickness (Fishing) Rules and the Sleeping Sickness (Registration of Vessels) Rules. Amendments and Notices in force as on the 31st July.

#### Game Reserves.

11. All the reserves continue to be well-stocked with wild life, particularly the Bunyoro and Gulu reserve. The new motor road to the Bwamba region has made the *Semliki* reserve accessible.

The Lake George reserve was visited four times and an abundance of game—particularly elephants, buffaloes and waterbucks—observed on each occasion.

In February, in the Semliki reserve, plenty of game was seen, much of it very tame.

The Damba Island reserve was closely studied in January.

12. In recent years it has been frequently suggested that poaching by natives is the rule and not the exception, so that it is interesting to record that in the favoured localities of this island never have situtunga been so plentiful, or so tame, testimony to the fact that they can be rarely subjected to undue molestation. Along the sheltered shore line and in the open glades in the north-east numbers were observed grazing fearlessly throughout the day.

13. Hippopotomuses abound—there are probably about a hundred—and were often noticed fully exposed feeding in the shallow in the middle of the day. There are numerous troops of the common, black-faced grey monkeys in the forest, as well as many squirrels. The only predatory land mammal is a species of mongoose, not identified, which discovered the camp on the first night, and thereafter was a most persistent raider. Otters are common.

Crocodiles are generally distributed around the shores, though luckily not in large numbers.

A few unauthorised fishing camps—one just abandoned—were found and destroyed.

Bird life is plentiful and varied, including spur-winged geese, Egyptian geese, pygmy geese, knob-billed duck and African snipe; many migrant waters were also observed.

14. As it is impossible to guard Damba Island effectively and as its south-western end adjoins the inhabited island of Kome, one has to rely to a great extent on the co-operation and goodwill of the local natives to respect the sanctuary. It is gratifying to know, as revealed by the situation in January, that the sanctity of the reserve is generally respected.

100. In 1936 (not previously recorded) a hippopotamus overturned a canoe near Kutebo, and the four occupants were drowned. Other fatalities due to the attacks of hippopotamuses have been reported from this locality and the neighbouring Katonga bay in previous years.

101. Near Kinywante on Basi Island, at the various landings on Bunjako Island, and at Kutebo along the Victoria Nyanza coast, in Western Mengo, the depredations of crops have assumed alarming proportions, and the hippopotamuses roam far inland nightly.

Seven were killed, two on land after dark, in the vicinity of Kutebo: one big bull, a persistent garden raider, was by far the biggest so far seen in this lake.

The herd instinct is stronger in the hippopotamus than in most species, and in each case of the five killed in the water, the remainder of the herd or party kept in the vicinity after the carcass had floated to the surface until either it was cut up or had been towed away.

102. At Kichwamba in Bonyaraguru, Ankole, a native was killed by a hippopotamus which he was trying to drive away from his crops. It frequented a small crater lake near by and was eventually killed by the victim's friends. In October a hippopotamus overturned a canoe near Jinja, and the sole occupant was drowned.

103. In April hippopotamuses had become such a nuisance to the Sese islanders, not only raiding cultivation but attacking canoes, that a hunter was detailed to deal with the situation and accounted for twenty-two.

In Buddu (Masaka) a hippopotamus was killed in the course of a fight with another.

On Christmas Day the game guard had to shoot a hippopotamus which refused to give way on a narrow path when a party of visitors were walking back from the Murchison Falls.

104. At the end of May a number of carcasses, seventeen were counted, were reported floating down the Kazinga Channel from Lake George towards Lake Edward. There is further reference to this mortality in the section dealing with *Diseases of Game*.

105. In spite of the persistent hunting in the Nile, in which river (outside the game reserves) it is not protected, the hippopotamus is plentiful all along the Albert Nile from Pakwach to Nimule.

106. *White Rhinoceros*. There is no definite information at present available of existing white rhinoceros numbers, but reliable observers report a noticeable increase over the 1935.

Young were found to be unusually numerous in the Rigbo region of the West Nile District during 1936.

107. In mid-March a white rhinoceros was found dead near the mouth of the Poligo or Gango river, just north of the Rigbo swamp in the West Nile District.

In all, four were found dead in the West Nile District and one in West Madi; in no instance was there reason to believe that the cause of death was other than natural.

The Assistant District Commissioner of Madi reports that the white rhinoceros continues to be numerous in all except the more hilly parts.

Arrangements are being made in the West Nile District and in West Madi to set aside as sanctuaries certain areas which are being converted into forest reserves.

108. *Black Rhinoceros*. In East Madi the black rhinoceros is steadily increasing and can always be found in considerable numbers near Liri. It also occurs near Zaipi and Gwere, where unfortunately it has had a lapse from virtue and has been guilty of damaging cotton. It is of course a browser which would account for its taste for cotton bushes.

In Lango, also, complaints of damage to cotton plots have been general in some parts.

109. It goes to show how difficult it can be to try and preserve a species in spite of itself, and one must sympathise with the District Commissioner's plea: "I would urge that the claims of *Homo sapiens* should receive more attention, even at the expense of the unduly favoured *Diceros bicornis holmuoodi*".

There are still many black rhinoceroses in Eastern Acholi.

110. *Giraffe*. The giraffe undoubtedly is increasing. In East Madi there now appear to be two herds instead of one: in Eastern Acholi, in Karamoja and in Sebei it is reported to be plentiful.

In East Madi giraffes have been responsible for some damage to cotton plots.

111. A guard, who is a keen and capable naturalist, returned from the Lake Gedge region with a most amazing story which there is no reason to disbelieve. Unsolicited he volunteered the information, which incidentally he considered a great joke, that the Karamojong in that locality wanted giraffe hair as formerly but being afraid to kill the animals for which they would be severely punished by Government, now use large scissors to cut off the coveted long tail hairs from the sleeping giraffe!

112. *Zebra*. Complaints of damage to crops by zebra in Gomba in Western Mengo, are still frequent.

#### (B) Birds.

113. *Pelican*.—Several hundreds of pelicans are accustomed to roost on the islets of Lake Karenje, a secluded expanse of water in Western Ankole. They usually start arriving from a northerly direction about two o'clock in the afternoon. The local fishermen say the birds go to Karagwe to lay their eggs. There is in fact a vast breeding ground in Karagwe amongst the swampy sources of the Kagera river, near where the kings of Karagwe are buried.

It is reported that sometimes there is a large flock of pelicans to be seen on the Albert Nile at Laropi (West Madi).

On Lake Edward they are usually plentiful in Katwe bay, at the mouth of the Nyangasani river, and in the Kaianja lagoon.

114. *Whale-headed Stork (Balaeniceps rex)*.—This is evidently a widespread species and by no means rare, though, being of a retiring disposition, it is not often encountered. Examples have been reported from the Koich swamps (West Madi), the Katonga delta, Lake on Lake Kyoga and on the Mpologoma in the vicinity of Kaliro.