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Oryx - The International Journal of Conservation, is now published quarterly by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Fauna & Flora International. It is a leading scientific journal of biodiversity conservation, conservation policy and sustainable use, with a particular interest in material that has the potential to improve conservation management and practice.

The website, <http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>, plays a vital role in the journal's capacity-building work. Amongst the site's many attributes is a compendium of sources of free software for researchers and details of how to access Oryx at reduced rates or for free in developing countries. The website also includes extracts from Oryx issues 10, 25 and 50 years ago, and a gallery of research photographs that provide a fascinating insight into the places, species and people described in the journal.

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KENYA COLONY.

EXTRACTS FROM GAME DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT 1926, BY CAPT. A. T. A. RITCHIE, GAME WARDEN.

Staff.—The European staff of the Department consists of the Game Warden and four assistants ; in addition thirty-nine Honorary Game Wardens have been appointed.

Enquiries from various sources disclose the fact that it is not generally recognised that the powers conferred on an Honorary Game Warden by the Game Ordinance are similar to my own. The Game Ordinance states : “ Game Warden includes Assistant Game Warden and Honorary Game Warden.” In certain cases only, such as the issue of export permits for game trophies, is authority vested in myself alone, as seen by the use of the description “ the Game Warden ” in place of “ a Game Warden.”

The powers of an Honorary Game Warden are thus considerable, and it is a matter for congratulation that most of the gentlemen holding the appointment recognise their responsibilities and fulfil wholeheartedly the attendant obligations. To these I am most grateful for the assistance given to the Department during the year ; this gratitude should be—is, I hope—felt also by the Colony as a whole, since the work done is in the best interests of the whole community.

Native Scouts.—The employment of native scouts—frequently but improperly called “ spies ” by those who have reason to dislike their activities—provided the usual series of disappointments, irritations and, more rarely, congratulations. On the latter count, it is pleasant to be able to record that the head scout in charge of the Southern Game Reserve, a Masai called Ngoitara, who has been in the employ of the Department for a number of years, achieved well-merited fame—for surely to be mentioned in the House of Commons is fame—by a very gallant act.

.. He was accompanying the administrative officer in charge of the reserve, Mr. Palethorpe, when the latter was attacked

and severely mauled by a wounded lioness. Ngoitara rushed in and speared the animal. But for his unhesitating intervention there must have been another tragedy added to the list of Africa's toll of her invaders.

We lost during the year one old and trusted scout in the person of Wanjohi Munde. For several years keeper of the animals at Government House, when such were dispersed he returned to his normal duties, and served us faithfully till he died in November.

Agents.—The number of agents who work more or less regularly for the Department has tended to decrease, owing to the greater difficulty experienced in obtaining illegally possessed ivory and rhino horn, such difficulty naturally resulting from the "cleaning up" of the more accessible areas, and the greater care exercised by all who have contraband in their possession.

On the other hand the number of natives who drop in causally with some item of information is increasing as it becomes more widely known that information of value means backsheesh.

REVENUE.

Licences.—The sum realised by the sale of game and trout licences during the year was £16,490, of which amount some £360 was from trout licences.

Total Revenue : 1922, £5,224 ; 1923, £8,294 ; 1924, £11,499 ; 1925, £17,681 ; 1926, £16,490.

Ivory and Confiscated Trophies.—The revenue from ivory and confiscated trophies showed a slight increase over 1925, the sum of £14,680 being obtained as against £12,413.

I do not consider it probable that future years will show revenue from ivory in excess of this sum ; certainly not unless, with the close co-operation of our neighbours, we can preserve our vast bush areas and allow the herds therein to increase to their former numbers.

Revenue and Expenditure Summary.—It is unnecessary, I trust, to justify the existence of my Department on purely

financial grounds, as also to stress the fact that the indirect revenue accruing to the Colony on the score of its game is much greater than the direct revenue earned.

Nevertheless it is satisfactory to be able to show a clear working profit, as seen in the following figures :—

	£		£
Cost of Department—exclu-		Revenue from Licences	... 16,490
sive of Ivory vote ...	6,516	„ „ Ivory	... 14,680
Expenditure on Ivory vote ...	2,111		
Total Expenditure ...	8,627	Total Revenue ...	31,170

Balance of revenue over expenditure : £22,543.

POACHING AND ILLEGAL KILLING.

Non-Native.—I believe that the general tendency is towards a diminution in poaching on the part of the great majority of the white community, brought about by two clear-cut causes. Of these the first is—and I hope that its influence is such as to warrant it being placed first—an increased interest in game and its protection, and a recognition of its communal ownership ; and the second the deterrent effect of fines, comparable in severity to the nature of the offence, imposed in the generality of convictions. I have used the word “generality” advisedly, for there were again several instances in which the penalty imposed proclaimed to all and sundry that the way of the transgressor is soft, as also the heart, if not the head, of the magistrate.

The most notable instance was probably that of two gentlemen who had been elephant hunting together. The first elephant killed proved small and they covered it with branches and left it as it fell. They then went on and shot four more elephants. They held four licences and had killed five elephants.

The facts came to our knowledge and they were duly prosecuted. Now the last elephant which they killed—and which, of course, they had no right to kill—was a very fine one, the ivory being sold for some £170. It is thus not

surprising that they went to court each with £100 in his pocket.

Their feelings then, on being fined £10 each and given seven days to find it in, can be better imagined than described.

Our feelings.

I have said that I believe the general tendency to be towards a respect for the game laws. There remains, however, a certain number of persons who, so long as the possibility of profit remains, will always take a risk.

I refer to those who spend much of their time in shooting, to the detriment of other and more useful activities. The professional shooter—I do not, of course, refer to the white hunter who fulfils a valuable if not essential role and is an asset to the Colony, nor to the person who undertakes to kill off animals which cause danger or damage in settled areas—is a worthless parasite. He destroys the game and takes no useful part in the development of the Colony.

He makes money, truly, but it is at the expense of the community; for he is destroying property which neither he nor the community can replace.

Nor can I, at any rate, blame him. So long as the game laws are such as to allow of a profit accruing to an individual, so long must we expect those who prefer a free and unfettered life, to live by their rifles. Shooting is much better fun than ploughing, and unhappily frequently much more lucrative.

Of the elephant licences taken out in 1926, 14 only were taken out by visitors, the remaining 216 being held by residents. I have explained on previous occasions that “stalking-horse” method whereby the professional shooter can kill any number of elephants during the year and yet remain within the law, and I have suggested certain means of preventing the extinction of the remaining large tuskers in the Colony before it is too late. I will not, therefore, labour the point further here. I have felt bound to touch on it, however, since it would not be right for me to furnish you with an annual report which omitted to state a condition which I regard as being of prime concern in the present game situation.

I do not wish to suggest that the professional shooter is invariably a law-breaker. I have no doubt that he is frequently a scrupulous individual who merely takes advantage of what the law allows. I do know, however, that in many instances the law is broken. I know also the futility of pitting the evidence of a couple of natives against the sworn statements of three or four white people.

Natives.—So far as my information goes, it tends to show that there was no very serious poaching by natives except in that most difficult of all areas to deal with—the bush.

Sporadic instances from various parts of the Colony came to light. A buffalo here, a rhino there, a water-buck somewhere else—it does not amount to very much provided it is not allowed to grow and spread.

A satisfactory feature is that there appears to be less killing by squatters and others of water-buck, bush-buck and other antelope on the forest reserve fringes of the Aberdares; while on that range itself bongo are somewhat less harried than formerly by 'Dorobo.

The credit for the amelioration is due entirely to Mr. Dent, who has an intimate knowledge of that country and as much respect from its inhabitants as a white man may from those who want nothing of civilisation save solitude and immunity from interference.

Blue monkeys were killed on the Mau, Cherangani and Mount Elgon, by the woodland folk; it is difficult to say in how great numbers, for, in the nature of things, we do not hear of more than a few instances. Undoubtedly less than formerly are bought from itinerant hawkers by settlers, it being well known that such skins cannot legally be exported, and that attempts to smuggle may result in a heavy fine, in addition to missing a boat.

So much for the general position with regard to the natives. Poaching in the bush country I shall mention later in connection with ivory.

Illegal Ivory Traffic.—I have recently submitted a memorandum reviewing the situation with regard to illicit ivory

dealing in the bush country, and smuggling across the international boundary. A portion of this memorandum forms Appendix A to this report. It will serve no good purpose for me to here restate the facts of the case. I may say, however, that it would seem quite impossible to stop or even hinder the activities of the Galla, Mohamad Zubeir and others and their minions, until an identical and simultaneous effort in this direction is made on both sides of the international boundary.

Even the more distant Wakamba and their allied tribes can despatch their ivory and horn overland or by sea, to the convenient market brought so much nearer by the Cession.

In this connection it is a matter for grave regret that for a considerable part of the year no administrative officer was stationed at Sankuri.

It is devoutly to be hoped that the present attempts to secure the co-operation of Italy in the suppression of smuggling will be crowned with success.

Ivory, it is true, is somewhat down in price in the world's markets, a depreciation that I believe to be but temporary. Rhino horn, on the other hand, has risen from Shs. 12 a couple of years ago to Shs. 36 at the present time—an increase that I can only attribute to the growing ambition and greater longevity of the yellow races. The inducements to smuggle are thus great, and half-measures useless.

An interesting echo of the old days was awakened by the reappearance of an historical figure in the person of Mohamed Abdulla. At one time *bwana mkubwa* of a gang of 300 of the world's toughest vagabonds, his doings are familiar to all who have read Rayne's book: "The Ivory Raiders."

Mohamed came with a story of vast stores of buried ivory, buried long before the coming of the white man. He was somewhat reticent as to his connection with the hidden hoard, but hinted that it had been cached by a friend long since dead. Under a guarantee of amnesty from us and a promise of reward, he was prepared to hand over the ivory to Government. The matter was arranged. He had produced 100 tusks before the end of the year. A remarkable man, comparable

in many respects to the glamorous sea rovers of Elizabethan days.

DAMAGE BY GAME.

General.—The year produced fewer complaints than 1925, largely in consequence of the greater rainfall. At the commencement of the year there was the usual trouble experienced in the Lukenia area owing to the northward migration of herds from the game reserves; this virtually ceased on the timely coming of the rains.

There were, however, instances of damage which it may be well to examine in detail.

Elephants.—Little damage was reported. The Plateau and Trans-Nzoia now appear immune from the destructive seasonal migrations of former years. Complaints from Southern Kavirondo and the coast were received, while Native and other shambas on the eastern slopes of the Aberdares suffered unwelcome visits on several occasions. On one or two occasions elephants travelled down from the Baringo area, along the Ol Orabel valley, carrying "fly," which dropped off at the head of the valley and caused the loss of some valuable stock. I make this statement thus positively, since not only can no other solution of the spasmodic appearance of fly there be found, but the times of elephant appearance and fly outbreak correspond, and there is no doubt in my mind as to the accuracy of the causal diagnosis.

A Ford car near Namanga was held up by an angry cow and, according to my information, severely kicked in the radiator; while Captain Caldwell buckled a wing of his Rolls near Meru against the side of a calf, which it is presumed mistakenly identified its mother.

Rhino.—At the request of the local inhabitants the department undertook to attempt to reduce the number of the forest rhino in the Nyeri area, where they had for some time been a source of danger and annoyance. The first gentleman to undertake the business on our behalf killed two. Mr. Isaac Engelbrecht then volunteered and succeeded in killing twenty-

six. He is greatly to be congratulated that he did not leave a single animal wounded, an achievement that those who know the thickness of much of the forest in which he was hunting will be able to appreciate.

Buffalo.—These animals did damage to growing crops, particularly on the Mau and Kenya slopes. Short of exterminating the herds concerned—a difficult if not impossible business in view of the dense nature of the thickets to which they retire before dawn—the only solution would appear to be to erect rough fencing. I have already addressed you in this connection.

It is also said that buffalo may have helped to spread rinderpest on Laikipia. Whatever the origin of the recent epidemic—and thereon are several theories which it is not for me to discuss here—it was certainly not started by the buffalo, but it may well be that these animals were to a certain extent instrumental in spreading it, for there was rinderpest among them and it is well known that the tendency of an animal so afflicted is to wander.

Buffalo were further accused of being responsible for fly in Subukia. This charge appeared to be unfounded, but nevertheless I gave all possible permits to those concerned to allow them to drive back the beasts from their vicinity, where they were numerous, having been dispersed from their usual forest haunts by the heavy shooting in the former “unlimited” Baringo area.

Hippo.—Hippo were responsible for some damage on the shores of Lake Victoria. In Kisumu itself, I quote the words of the Senior Commissioner, Nyanza: “We have had to dedicate one of our flower beds as a wallowing place for the pachyderms of our premier pool.”

It is a remarkable fact that hippo, all save the hardened old shamba raider, are more easily fenced out than any other animal, a single strand of wire with a few tins on it usually sufficing to divert them from their desired dainties.

Zebra.—Early in the year the various campaigns against Zebra in settled areas began to slacken, the majority of the

animals having been killed, or dispersed, or become so wild as to render further attacks futile. I believe that the menace to most cultivated areas on this score is now removed, though damage still results on West Kenya and the Kinankop Plateau, and possibly elsewhere.

A number of those engaged in the campaigns transferred their activities to Crown land far from cultivation and there "shot up" the neighbourhood. This was particularly the case in the Masai Reserve, where many thousands of zebra were killed before a limit was again set by law.

Vermin.—As I reported to you last year, many complaints are received of the damage done by baboons and bush-pig. I have received no reports of the success or otherwise of the poison method I suggested, so that I cannot yet testify to its efficacy. I have recently, however, been told in all good faith of a method of scaring off baboons, which my informant had seen used in Southern Africa with unvarying success. It is as follows :—

A baboon is caught, a cage trap or gin with muffled jaws being used, and a thick sack or rug thrown over its head. Several persons then hold the animal which is shaved, so far as possible, all over. This operation being completed the baboon is painted with a thick coat of Cambridge blue, and liberated. No member of his troop will again approach the scene of the indignity for an indefinite period.

Considering the highly organised intelligence of baboons I cannot but feel that the proceeding savours of cruelty, more especially in the colour used. However, if all other means fail, some modified form of this method might merit a trial, for truly they are a curse to those whose shambas they are in the habit of visiting.

NEW LEGISLATION.

The following legislation was enacted during the year :—

Thomas' Cob was placed on the protected list (Schedule I) on the Uasin Gishu Plateau and in Trans-Nzoia.

Jackson's Hartebeeste and Topi were also placed on Schedule I on the Uasin Gishu Plateau.

Zebra were taken off the unlimited list and reduced to 25 except on land within 10 miles of alienated land where they remain unlimited.

Lion were also taken off the unlimited list and reduced to 4, except as provided in section 36, Game Ordinance, 1921.

Section 12 of the Game Ordinance was cancelled and new section 12 substituted, giving certain badly needed discretionary powers to the Governor.

An amendment to section 33, Game Ordinance, 1921, giving power to the Game Warden to permit the hunting of game on Crown land with dogs.

The powers conferred on the Governor by the Game Ordinance were delegated to the Game Warden. The general routine of the Department has been greatly facilitated in consequence.

The Game Bird Ordinance drafted in 1925 was passed in July, 1926.

Rules made under the Fish Protection Ordinance, 1908, were passed in February, altering the fees payable for trout fishing licences Shs. 40/- to Shs. 60/- for the yearly and Shs. 15/- to Shs. 20/- for the fortnightly.

ZOOLOGICAL EVENTS OF INTEREST.

The outstanding feature of the year was mystery, and that on several distinct counts. The first unexplained crime was against property. The following report gives such details as are known.

"The natives of South Kavirondo inform me that a number of animals, about twenty-five in all, crossed over one night recently from Tanganyika Territory and completely ate up a field of wimbi in one of the border locations.

They say that the animals, which were only seen at night, were white and made a noise like hyaenas and were about the size of goats. They were very fierce and if anyone went near them they drove them away. They also state they have done a lot of damage to crops in Tanganyika

Territory and they are under the impression that they are devils, as they have never seen anything like them before."

Inquiries from the authorities in Tanganyika Territory failed to throw light on the mysterious midnight marauders; and a request that they should increase the number of ghosts and devils allowed on a licence has so far resulted in no effective action.

The second inexplicable occurrence was of a more serious nature. A child of the Kamasia tribe was killed by a "Kerit," or Nandi bear. The details of the matter are doubtless well known since the local press and also *The Field* published full accounts of the whole episode; a remarkable feature was the spoor, which was most distinct, and clearly shows the inconceivable beast to have six digits. Since this tragedy a number of persons have informed us that they have seen the Nandi bear at one time or another.

It would appear that the quasi-fabulous beast bears a charmed life. For on every occasion when it is seen some quite unusual circumstance saves it from identification and a latin name. A rifle jams, or the ammunition is finished, or an elephant is seen down-stage. There is always something. I believe in the Nandi bear. It may be a giant hyaena. It may be something different from anything we know. I incline to the former idea. Why a hyaena, however giant, should have six digits I cannot guess. It may be that equatorial Africa makes for six. I have had two natives in my employ showing this peculiarity in their distal anatomy, and my head scout has seen a lion killed having the same extravagant equipment.

Whatever the secret may be, I believe it will be cleared up before long, for great interest has been aroused by this latest development, and efforts will be made to obtain a specimen.

Whether or no the Nandi bear is a giant hyaena remains to be seen. It is, however, now clear that the perpetrator of a third series of hitherto unexplained crimes is a hyaena of huge size. This beast, which has recently killed twelve cattle near Tusu, does his work in a most unprofessional manner.

In every case the mode of attack has been the same. He, having entered a boma, savages the shoulder of the unfortunate victim until the beast is incapacitated and falls. He then eats through the ribs behind the shoulder down to the heart. The carcase is found almost unscratched except for the shoulder, the near-by ribs and the heart.

The Kikuyu say that one of these redoubtable animals was killed at Tuso some four years ago. That it was as big as a lion and had ten spears through it before it died. Mr. Dent, who has investigated the matter most carefully, has no doubt that the animal is similar to the Strandwolf (*Hyaena Brunnea*) of South Africa, a specimen of which he obtained many years ago in the Kalahari, and which he describes as being very large, of a dark-brown colour with darker spots, and hair four or five inches long hanging down its flanks. So far as I am aware, no person has ever killed this giant hyaena in Kenya. It remains for some enthusiast to do so and achieve fame.

There were other occurrences during the year, worthy of mention.

The enterprise of Sir John Ramsden is responsible for a most interesting experiment. He has brought out 17 young red deer from his deer forest in Inverness-shire and placed them in a large paddock on Kipipiri, that attractive Western spur of the Aberdares, which he has made the model—but on no small scale—stock farm of the Colony. His idea is to keep these deer in semi-captivity and to breed from them. The offspring will be liberated on the slopes and foothills of Kipipiri; the hope is that, if all goes well, they will subsequently spread up on to the Aberdare range itself.

Certain unreasoning folk have criticised the importation of red deer into Kenya. "Coals to Newcastle," and so forth. The same individuals do not confine themselves to flowers, shrubs, and trees of purely English origin in their home gardens; but they undoubtedly do speak English in France, and speak it very loud in the belief that volume of sound will penetrate the stupidity of the foreigner. The parochial view.

Sir John Ramsden has earned the congratulations of us all on his success in bringing out 17 animals without a single

loss, and similarly our thanks for what should be a source of interest and, we hope, sport in future years.

I am anxious to try an experiment of the same nature on the Kajiado plains in the Southern Game Reserve. My idea is to import, from the best district in India, a few blackbuck and to turn them down. I can see no reason why they should not thrive. Lord Egerton of Tatton has generously offered me £100 towards the cost of obtaining these graceful antelopes, and I am at present in communication with certain persons who can assist. I hope that in the course of this year the project will materialise.

THE GAME RESERVES.

I have little to report on the subject, with the exception of one unhappy observation. In the Southern Game Reserve lions have ceased to be a menace, they are a source of very considerable damage. Grown overbold as a result of immunity from molestation, they attack cattle and their drovers impartially, and that with the sun at high noon. Stringent measures will have to be devised in order to reinsert some measure of respect for humanity into their now contemptuous outlook.

GAME BIRDS.

As mentioned above, the Game Bird Ordinance became law in July.

It is disappointing to note that one of its most important provisions, the total prohibition of the sale of game birds or their eggs, has so far had little if any effect, settlers and others buying any bird brought to them. As I have repeatedly pointed out, any attempt to protect the disappearing game birds of the Colony can not hope to succeed unless supported by the loyal co-operation of the whole community; such in this matter, I regret to say, has not so far been forthcoming. I intend, in the near future, to make efforts to arouse interest and call forth assistance.

APPENDIX A.

ILLEGAL KILLING OF ELEPHANTS AND RHINOCEROS, WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ITALIAN BOUNDARY OF KENYA.1. *General Principles.*

(a) With certain minor exceptions, among which a temporary blood lust forms the major factor, animals are not killed without the existence of some definite incentive.

(b) The incentive to kill most valuable and irreplaceable animals—elephant and rhinoceros—in the past existed to a limited extent among certain indigenous peoples. The meat fed families, while the ivory and horn were used for implements and ornaments.

(c) Since the advent of civilisation with its attendant concomitants—the possibilities of trade and the opening of markets—a new incentive has arrived. Animals carrying valuable materials are now killed, not only for the use of the hunter, his family and his tribe, but also with a view to larger gain.

(d) Elephants and rhinoceros are thus, at the present time, regarded as potential wealth alive; and, granted a ready means of disposal, a certain fortune dead. For ivory now stands at approximately Shs. 20/- per pound in the world's markets; and rhinoceros horn Shs. 36/- per pound.

(e) It is thus clear that given a facile market and inefficient sanctions, these old-world animals will die out.

2. *General Application.*

(a) In the recognition of the inevitable extermination that must follow unless the strongest possible measures were adopted, the British possessions in Africa in which were found the two animals concerned, early proclaimed ivory and rhinoceros horn a Government monopoly.

This means in effect that, unless the ivory or horn is from an animal killed on a licence issued by Government entitling the licensee to kill such animal, the ivory or horn is the property of Government.

(b) There is thus no dealing whatever—legally—in ivory or rhino horn unless :—

(i) The ivory or horn is supported by the appropriate licence.

(ii) The ivory or horn has been sold by Government.

(c) Were it not for the fact that the possibilities of smuggling exist, the measures outlined above would be adequate to offset the results of the opening up of Africa in protecting the elephant and rhinoceros. For, should it appear at any time that the stock in any area is becoming unduly reduced, such area may be excluded from all licences.

(d) Smuggling, as must always be the case where the gains are large and the risks almost negligible, is rife in certain places. In this respect Kenya has been, indeed still is, most unfortunate.

3. *Particular Application.*

(a) The main ivory areas in Kenya are those lying in the north-east of the territory. It has always been a matter of grave concern that, abutting there on our boundaries, there lay an open market for ivory and rhinoceros horn.

The nature of the country and the impossibility of adequately administering or policing the border and northern coastal area resulted in the slaughter of innumerable animals, and the disposal of their trophies without let or hindrance.

(b) Since the cession of the major portion of Jubaland, the international boundary runs through the centre of the most important ivory—and when speaking of ivory I generally include rhinoceros horn—areas, and there is no possibility of suppressing the killing of the animal concerned so long as a free market exists over our borders. Extermination, unless conditions alter, will be the conclusion.

4. *Detailed Application.*

(a) The only possible means whereby the illegal killing of these great beasts may be checked is for the power concerned to adopt similar principles to those in force here, namely, to declare ivory and rhinoceros horn a Government monopoly; and to confiscate all such as may be found unsupported by licence, or papers showing legality of ownership, with adequate

punishment for persons concerned in illicit possession or transaction.

(b) Unless such principles are adopted and rigorously enforced, it must obtain that we shall lose our elephant and our rhinoceros.

(c) For some time past expressions of sympathy and the desire to co-operate have emanated from Italy in this matter.

(d) Should such conditions continue, it is not only British territory that will be denuded. For any animal killed from the very considerable herds still existent in the ceded zone will be "from over the border," and it will need a much closer administration than the uneconomic character of the border area warrants to exercise supervision.