

# Oryx

The International Journal of Conservation

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The Society was founded in 1903 as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, and subsequently named the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society. Fauna & Flora International is conserving the planet's threatened species and ecosystems – with the people and communities who depend on them.

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.

The [Rhino Resource Center](#) posted this PDF in June 2009. We are grateful for the permission.

Others get shot, when bolted from cairns by the keepers' terriers in their annual search for fox dens.

I think members of the Society may rest assured that this, the wildest and least known of our wild animals, is likely to hold his own for many years to come.

I am indebted for much interesting information on this subject to Mr. Mortimer Batten, Mr. Seton Gordon, Mr. Dempster, Mr. Robertson, and others, to whom I should like to record my thanks.

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## ZULULAND.

### GAME DEPARTMENT.

#### EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1934.

From a climatic point of view, the year under review has been an exceptionally good one. The rainfall at the Headquarters (Hluhluwe Game Reserve) was 35·34 inches as compared with 34·8 inches in 1933. During 1934, however, it was more evenly distributed, and rain fell in every month of the year and on 88 days out of 365.

The grazing has been consistently good and no shortage of water in any of the Game Reserves has taken place.

*Locusts.*—In common with other Zululand areas, the Game Reserves have scarcely ever been free during the year from adult locusts or hoppers. The Game Guards have been employed as scouts and spotters and sometimes as sprayers and water carriers.

Extensive spraying of poison has at times perforce taken place within the sanctuaries. An idea of the operations may be obtained from the fact that during an average night's work 67 drums each containing 40 gallons of poison have been sprayed over an area of 40 acres in the Hluhluwe Game Reserve.

It has been the custom to place game guards on these poisoned areas. They patrol during the daytime and make fires and noises during the night to scare away game until rain or a grass fire removes the poison from the grass and

foliage. By these means, it has been possible, to a very large extent, to prevent deaths of game from arsenical poisoning, especially when the spraying takes place from the ground.

Two white rhino and thirty-two other game were found dead—definitely poisoned by arsenic administered by aeroplanes. In a huge scheme such as this a few deaths among the game population are inevitable. The urgency of the operations rendered co-operation difficult at first but our thanks are due to Colonel Breytenbach in that no aerial dusting over the Reserves has taken place since the rhino deaths were brought to his notice. He and his chief officers have at all times been most helpful and sympathetic, and, had it not been for their hearty co-operation, the death roll of animals from poisoning would have been very much greater than it has been.

It is a remarkable fact that no guineafowl, khorhaan, or francolin have been found dead in any of the Game Reserves as a result of locust poisoning, though baboons, monkeys, and even snakes have been so poisoned.

At the end of December, heavy hatchings of hoppers were reported, especially in the Umfolosi Reserve, and steps are being taken for their destruction.

*Lions.*—Two lion cubs with their parents were recently seen in the Mkuzi Reserve. A few complaints from natives living near the Game Reserve have been received of lions molesting domestic stock. Game guards were sent to the scene of action, but the depredations appear suddenly to have ceased and all is now peaceful again.

There are definitely *no lions* in any of the *other* Game Reserves of Zululand. There may be twenty at the most in Mkuzi.

*White Rhinoceros.*—Apart from the two deaths previously referred to, we found another young white rhino dead in the Umfolosi Reserve in April last. Cause of death unknown as the carcass was too decomposed for examination.

No deaths from shooting have occurred among white rhino during the year, though it is not unusual to see a

group of them quietly feeding close to the hunters' camps outside the Game Reserve.

A recent census of these animals was carried out in October last, when 134 were seen inside the Umfolosi Reserve and 72 outside during five days operations.

In addition there are eleven adult white rhino and two calves within the Hluhluwe Reserve.

*Nyala*.—In the Hluhluwe Reserve nyala are increasing, several calves being encountered during December.

There are more than 1,000 nyala in the two Game Reserves and some 200 or so on the private farms in the False Bay and Mkuzi sections.

*Hippopotami* are doing well and calves have been seen in the St. Lucia area. No deaths among the hippo have taken place during the year.

With the exception of a few wildebeeste bulls, a few bushbuck, and one crippled buffalo bull, no game animals have been shot in the Hluhluwe Reserve during the year.

Six old impala rams and eighteen wildebeeste have been shot by the staff in the Mkuzi Reserve, four impala rams had to be destroyed on account of injuries received in fighting and one nyala ram was found dying from a similar cause.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of wildebeeste, zebra, etc., are shot annually by shooting parties outside the Game Reserves. Six per cent of all game die annually of old age and from fighting and other injuries, 3 per cent from snake bite, leopards, crocodiles, hyenas, baboons, and eagles; and 5 per cent wildebeeste are shot by the staff each year.

This means a casualty total of 24 per cent for wildebeeste and 19 per cent for other game annually which is somewhat less than the normal annual increase. (Rhino are obviously not included in the above calculations nor are hippo, lion, or buffalo.)

On several occasions during the year, the unusual sight of baboons catching, killing, and eating young reedbuck and mountain reedbuck has been witnessed. All except the skull bone was in each case devoured. Baboons are now shot at sight as vermin and over 400 of them have been destroyed

during the year. There are still hundreds of them which must be got rid of as, apart from the destruction of young buck, they are mainly responsible for the scarcity of ground game and other birds. The baboons hunting systematically "in extended order" miss very little in the shape of young birds and eggs.

I was very pleased to see four young impala does in the Hluhluwe Reserve a few weeks ago. They were not more than 40 yards from us and were about three-quarters grown. This indicates that the impala does, captured in Mkuzi and brought to Hluhluwe by motor two years ago, have bred here and not, as feared, returned to Mkuzi. The tame impala ram roams at will near Headquarters and follows us about the precincts with our two dogs just like one of them. He is a great favourite with visitors.

*Rest Huts.*—Accommodation for twenty visitors is now available in the Hluhluwe Reserve. The Rest Huts are situated at an altitude of 2,000 feet near Headquarters, where malaria has not been known to the Game Conservator or his family who have resided there for nearly six years.

The charges for Rest Hut accommodation have been fixed at 2s. 6d. per head per day or part thereof, plus 2s. 6d. per day per party requiring the services of a game guard. An unfurnished cottage to accommodate twelve visitors is also available in the Mkuzi Game Reserve.

*Visitors.*—Their Excellencies, the Governor-General and Lady Clarendon, and their staff paid a visit to the Game Reserves early in August and were the first occupants of the Rest Huts. Their Excellencies expressed themselves as very pleased with the beauties of the Reserves, the Rest Huts, and "with the amazing amount of game seen in the two Reserves". They were fortunate in seeing both black and white rhino in the Hluhluwe Reserve, and numbers of nyala in the Mkuzi Reserve.

Over 300 visitors came during the year. No accidents occurred. White and black rhino, nyala, and buffalo are the chief sources of attraction and very few visitors failed to obtain good views of these and other species of game.

*Poaching.*—There have been four cases of poaching by Europeans, five by natives, and one by coloureds, during the year.

*Roads.*—Approximately 5 miles of new track through the heart of the Hluhluwe Game Reserve and 15 miles through the Mkuzi Reserve have been made available for motor traffic.

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## LOCUSTS.

### POISON SPRAYING.

#### EFFECTS ON INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS.

By C. W. H.

A controversy has, during recent months, occurred in regard to the alleged poisoning of insectivorous birds by the arsenical spraying undertaken in South Africa with the object of reducing the terrible visitations of locusts.

Observers over a wide range of country have furnished statements and these have been of a conflicting nature. It has, for instance, been alleged that the absence of the great flocks of European migrant storks in Rhodesia towards the end of 1934 was due to their having been poisoned.

Observers in Uganda, however, tell us that the storks were present in their usual numbers but, owing to the superabundance of food in the form of locusts, they stayed over there much later than usual. It would therefore appear that their habits had been temporarily modified by the glut of supplies. Further it was reported that large flocks of the lesser locust had appeared in the northern part of Cape Colony as usual towards the end of 1934. In any case if large numbers of storks had been poisoned in South Rhodesia, being very conspicuous birds, it is likely that someone would have seen their carcasses.

There is little doubt that considerable numbers of cattle and game animals have died as a result of arsenic spraying,