

not been reintroduced into the Kruger Park.

Apart from safeguarding this species from becoming extinct and providing an obvious attraction for tourists, it is most essential from an ecological view point that there should be black Rhino in the K.N.P. Being browsers and needing large quantities of food, black rhinos must have a marked effect on the vegetation. We read and hear a great deal about the bush encroachment that has taken place in the Park and, although other factors also play their part, I am sure that if the Park had the number of black rhino that area carried before they were exterminated, the bush encroachment problem would be solved and the vegetation would revert to normal "open bushveld."

An interesting thought is that antelopes such as roan, tsessebe and sable which prefer "open bushveld" and are mainly grazers, have slowly diminished in numbers since the beginning of this century, most probably because of the gradual replacement of the grass by bush. Is it possible then that the introduction of black rhino would be beneficial to these rare antelope species? I think so.

Blomfontein

DR. M. J. HAVENGA

*A spokesman for the National Parks Board states:*

"The black rhino is the only species of large mammal which used to occur in this portion of the Transvaal Lowveld at present lacking in the mixed community of large mammals in the Kruger Park. It is not only our intention but our duty to reintroduce them into the Kruger Park.

"The sad fact is that we have for many years now been unsuccessful in finding someone prepared to donate black rhinos to the Park. In view of veterinary restrictions we cannot import these animals from beyond our borders (where they are obtainable) and we have to rely on the goodwill of the Natal or South West African authorities to supply us with a breeding nucleus.

"The numbers in South West are so low that this does not appear to be a likely source of supply. The Natal authorities are also concerned about the numbers of their black rhino population, but I am confident that they will eventually be in a position to supply us with a sufficiently large number of black rhinos for a successful recolonisation of the Park.

"All these things take time, and although I feel certain that black rhinos will again roam through their old haunts in the Transvaal Lowveld, we will have to be patient for a while yet."

#### DISTRIBUTION OF WHITE RHINO

The Editor, "African Wild Life".

Sir,—In No. 2 of Volume 24 of "African Wild Life", Dr. M. J. Havenga states that he has been unable to find any record of the white rhino having occurred anywhere north of the Save River in Portuguese East Africa. I would like to draw attention to the following extract from Miss J. Sidney's treatise entitled "The Past and Present Distribution of Some African Ungulates, Transactions of the Zoological Society of London, Vol. 30, December, 1965":

"The white rhinoceros has been said to be extinct in Mozambique for some time (M. A. Andrade Silva, personal communication). However, the photograph (Fig. 10) taken by Judge Beadle (Bulawayo, personal communication) was of a bull white rhinoceros shot in Portuguese East Africa about 1935. It was shot in an area midway between Gauveia and Marcorsa and the species was then apparently quite numerous, at least nineteen being seen in one day. It appeared to be more numerous than the black rhinoceros which was living in the same area. Judge Beadle believed that the white rhinoceros occurred near Tega Kraal, about seven miles from Marcorsa and forty miles from Gauveia at the foothills of the Gorongosa Mountains. He was certain of his identification, having

compared the dead white rhinoceros with a black rhinoceros which he killed on the same day." (Note: The photo referred to clearly shows the broad upper lip of the white rhino.)

Both places mentioned lie sixty or more miles north of the Pungwe River that flows into the Indian Ocean at Beira, whereas the mouth of the Save River at Mambone is about 100 miles south of Beira.

Brooklyn, Pretoria.

R. BIGALKE

The Editor, "African Wild Life",

Sir,—With reference to Dr. M. J. Havenga's letter on page 171 of the June 1970 issue of "African Wild Life", he is of course quite right to deplore the introduction of exotic wild animals into national parks, which should provide for the perpetuation of the indigenous fauna and flora.

He is, however, not correct in stating that the white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) was unknown north of the Savé River in Mozambique. Vaughan-Kirby found two skulls on the south bank of the Zambezi River, above the Shiré confluence (*Ann. Durban Mus.*, 2, 20, p. 220, 1920), while Sidney (*Trans. Zool. Soc. Lond.*, 30, p. 61, Fig. 10, 1965) recorded that it survived between Gauveia and Marcorsa to at least 1935, and she illustrated a specimen shot about that time. This was in the general area of Gorongosa, though I am unable to say whether the species actually occurred within the national park boundaries. Player & Feely (*Lammergeyer*, No. 1, Map 1, 1960) indicated a putative former distribution in Mozambique as far north as the Zambezi, which was its limit in historical times.

Chilanga, Zambia.

W. F. H. ANSELL

#### NESTING SITE OF GREAT SWIFTS

The Editor, "African Wild Life",

Sir,—As a keen bird watcher I should like to pass on information, gained on a recent expedition, about a nesting site of African great swiftness.

The site is in the Orange River Gorge, in the Colesberg district, in an area which will be flooded after the construction of the P.M.K. le Roux dam.

Cliffs rise from the river bed to a height of about 200 ft. and about 20 ft. from the top, under an overhang, there is a crack about five feet broad and about four inches high. In this crevice there are many nests.

Twenty birds were counted visiting the nests and more were disturbed from the crack. Five white eggs were seen — undoubtedly eggs of African great swiftness.

The nests are in the shape of a half-moon and are made entirely from the feathers of Cape vultures. The vulture nesting site is about a mile upstream. It was once frequented by a pair of lammergeyers.

Thank you for your pleasant reading.

Colesberg.

J. BELL

#### CROCODILE'S FIGHT

The Editor, "African Wild Life",

Sir,—I have recently spent a most interesting and enjoyable week in the Kruger Park.

One afternoon, whilst I was sitting at Orpen Dam watching some impala and waterbuck drinking, one of the 16 or so crocodiles which inhabit the dam at present caught a large barbel, which, at a guess, could quite easily have tipped the scales at 40 lb. After some time the croc went back into the water and with one flick of the head had "topped and tailed" the fish in one operation, and proceeded to devour it. The water around the croc became blood-stained, and whether this induced the following incident or not, I have no idea.

Two crocodiles, one fairly large and the other of medium size, on the opposite side of the dam began fighting. There was much splashing and thrashing of tails.