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THE STATUS OF UNGULATE MAMMALS IN THE UGANDA NATIONAL PARKS

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THE NATIONAL PARKS

There are two national parks in Uganda, the Queen Elizabeth National Park (756 square miles) and the Murchison Falls National Park (1,150 square miles). These two areas (previously game reserves) were declared to be national parks in 1952 and are administered by a board of Trustees appointed by the Governor. In addition to the Trustees there is a number of Honorary Trustees, including persons resident outside the country. There are also, in Uganda, several Game Reserves and Sanctuaries, but these are not administered by the Trustees and have not, for the most part, been opened up for visitors. The National Parks occupy approximately 2 % of the land area of the protectorate.

The purpose of national parks in Uganda may be summarised as:

(1) To preserve, in perpetuity, the wild life of the country for the benefit of this and future generations, whilst providing access together with suitable opportunities for study and research.

(2) To encourage visitors to the country and thereby contribute to its economy, through the tourist trade. The contribution is of course indirect, for the parks must be supported by public funds.

(3) To provide for the recreation, under suitable conditions of the native people of Uganda and thereby assure their support for the national parks and preservation in the future.

THE UNGULATE MAMMALS

These are on the whole well represented in Uganda's national parks although certain important species found elsewhere in the

country are not present. These will be mentioned, seriatim, under their appropriate families.

ODD-TOED UNGULATES (PERISSODACTYLA)

Equidae

The only representatives of this family found in Uganda are the Zebras (*Equus burchelli*). These are not present in either of the parks, although a small number is to be found just beyond the eastern boarder of the Queen Elizabeth Park.

Rhinocerotidae

Both the African Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) and the northern race of the White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simium coltoni*) are present in Uganda, the latter in an extremely limited habitat in the West Nile District. The Black Rhinoceros is comparatively common in the northern section of the Murchison Falls Park and is well distributed throughout the area to the north of the River Nile. A rough estimate puts their number in the region of one hundred and fifty. They are frequently to be seen and appear to be holding their ground well.

There has been a certain amount of discussion recently as to the possibility and desirability of introducing the White Rhinoceros into the Murchison Park. Some preliminary biological work has been carried out to ascertain suitability of habitat. In its own area the White Rhinoceros is threatened, to a certain extent, by poaching and the increasing pressure of a dense human population. The move to the Murchison Park will only be carried out, should it prove impossible to control these factors and should it be necessary for the preservation of this rare species in Uganda. Whilst the present writer would welcome this interesting and friendly species in his park, he hopes that the move may prove unnecessary for several reasons, which need not be entered into here.

EVEN-TOED UNGULATES (ARTIODACTYLA)

Suidae

The Bush Pig (*Potamochoerus porcus intermedius*), Giant Forest Hog (*Hylchoerus meinertzhageni meinertzhageni*) and