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# MOUNT KENYA: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIOLOGY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION.

When recently I began to attempt some comparisons between Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya, with especial reference to their biology, I quickly found that the information for Mount Kenya was excessively scrappy and uncoordinated. The solitary book devoted to the mountain (Dutton, 1930) makes no real attempt at a scientific description of the mountain as a whole and contains nothing for the zoologist. Like so many who have written about mountains, Dutton's attention was fixed upon the snow-peaks: the life-zones which intervene are little more than a nuisance. Half Vivienne de Wateville's book (1930) is devoted to Mount Kenya. She was vibrantly aware of the life around her on the upper slopes, but she is disappointingly and unnecessarily unspecific.

The present position is, so far as I can ascertain, that such information as exists about the biology of the mountain has not been collated and made accessible in any way. It is impossible to refer to any conspectus of its mammals or its birds. No climatic records exist above about 7,000 ft. (*teste* British East African Meteorological Service). No bibliography of the mountain has been published. The small amount of attention Mount Kenya has received in this *Journal* is altogether surprising: in fact nothing original at all about the mountain has been contributed since MacGregor Ross's four pages of notes over thirty years ago.

The present compilation has grown out of notes about the mammals and birds that I brought together for my own purposes. That I am able to include a certain amount of information not hitherto published is mainly thanks to Mr. Raymond Hook. He has put his unequalled knowledge of the Mount Kenya mammals at my disposal and also enabled me to see something of the upper slopes in June, 1943. On the principle that half a bibliography is better than none at all I append to this paper a list of the references I have come across. I most emphatically do not claim to have provided a complete bibliography. Several friends have been good enough to give me information and comments on my draft: I have especially to thank G. H. E. Hopkins, D. G. B. Leakey, D. G. MacInnes, R. W. Hayman (of the British Museum), the Kenya Game Department (Hugh Copley), and, for checking my statements about the vegetation, P. J. Greenway. Literature not available at Amani has been lent by G. H. E. Hopkins, the MacMillan Memorial Library and Natural History Society.

KLIPSPRINGER is mentioned by Chapin (1934) at about 10,500 ft., but Raymond Hook believes this is a misidentification of the preceding species (Duikerbok).

SUNI (DWARF ANTELOPE).

*Nesotragus moschatus akeleyi* Heller.

Type locality south-east slope of Mount Kenya at 7,000 ft. A widespread species of thick bush, probably nowhere really montane. Not seen on Mount Kenya by Raymond Hook above 8,000 ft., but recorded by Lönnberg to 8,800 ft.

STEINBUCK.

*Raphicerus campestris neumanni* Matschie.

Another rare straggler to the northern moors (Raymond Hook).

BONGO.

*Boocercus eurycerus* subsp.

A species apparently found only in and near bamboo; but less common in the Mount Kenya belt than in the Aberdares. However they are not rare at the south end of Mount Kenya (Game Department) and Raymond Hook has evidence that they occur on the west side. Subspecies probably *isaaci* Thomas (type locality Eldama Ravine).

ELAND.

*Taurotragus oryx pattersonianus* Lydekker.

The eland of Mount Kenya are regarded by the Game Department as this subspecies (which inhabits Kenya generally), and as moving up and down the mountain seasonally. According to Raymond Hook several herds are resident on the moorland.

BUSHBUCK.

*Tragelaphus scriptus delamerei* Pocock.

The type of *T. haywoodi brunneus* Matschie, regarded as a synonym, came from 7,400 ft. on West Kenya, Bushbuck go up as far as the upper edge of the timber, i.e., about 10,700 ft. (Raymond Hook).

BUFFALO.

*Syncerus caffer caffer* (Sparrman).

Mackinder found a skeleton at 14,200 ft., tracks at 14,500 ft.; Ross found a carcass at 14,500 ft. (Both these remains are marked on the map in Dutton's book.) It is evidently unusual for buffalo to reach such heights. Raymond Hook has not seen a living one above 12,000 ft. They work up from the upper edge of the forest following the new growth on the moorland after a burn.

BLACK RHINO.

*Diceros bicornis bicornis* (Linnaeus).

At any rate towards the north end of the mountain, where the forest is comparatively dry and open, rhinos frequent its upper edge (ca. 10,500 ft.) but Raymond Hook has never seen them more than half a mile out of the moorland. Also on the wetter south side D. G. B. Leakey "can vouch for rhino occurring on the lower edge of the moorland on the southern slopes between Kiringa and Sagana Rivers, above the bamboo belt."