

HORIZONS

KENYA



Frans Hermans

Zebra drinking.

Masai Mara National Reserve

First-time visitors and *habitues* alike have come away from the Masai Mara this August astounded by the sheer numbers of game.

The migration scenes are once again spectacular. In the north-western part of the park, where there has been intermittent rain, hundreds of thousands of wildebeeste can be seen. As in previous years, they keep crossing and re-crossing the Mara River, in which, as a result, there are a lot of corpses. Zebra can also be seen in very large herds — in at least one case of about 1,500 animals.

It is not only the migrants which are present in such abundance, however. There seem to be larger numbers of topi than there have been in the past, and because of the wealth of plains' game, the lions are very common. Some visitors have even been lucky enough to see a pack of wild dogs in the Aitong airstrip area, north of Governor's Camp. It is probable that this is the same pack as featured in the article by Jonathan Scott in *SWARA* Volume 3, Number 1.

Seasoned observers are convinced that there has been a change in the elephant population, which is easier to see than it has been for over a decade. Despite the dozens of young seen in the herds — an unusual sight in itself — the elephants seem to have lost much of their fear of vehicles. Even last year they were sufficiently wary of cars to disappear into the bush as soon as they became aware of one approaching, but this year they

Wild Dogs.



Alan Binks

have allowed people to come close enough for good views.

At the moment, the Masai Mara is truly one of the wildlife wonders of the world.

Tsavo West National Park

While the birdlife at Lake Jipe this July was not as rich as it was at the same time last year, the number of mammals around the lake was quite astonishing. A herd of about 120 elephants and lots of smaller groups were seen there one weekend along with between 300 and 400 buffalo, standing on dry land and wallowing in the swamp. Each day, hundreds of braying and neighing zebras queued up to drink at the lake, their coats more red than white from the dust.

Both the elephants and the zebras, and three lions who came near the lake, seemed rather edgy and nervous. They were probably not used to cars — relatively few people go to this area of the park — and the zebra clearly appreciated their vulnerability to predators as they jostled to get nearer the water.

The presence of so many animals near the lake is explained by the shortage of water elsewhere. The small water-

holes had dried up, the grass was dry, and the small trees had few leaves.

Sources of water in other parts of the park also attracted numerous animals in July. The pool below Ngulia Safari Camp was frequented by buffalo and elephant, who usually arrived around dusk. The elephants came from all directions and seemed to prefer to drink from the stream near the pump house. On one night, when the moon was three-quarters full, a youngish elephant was seen chasing a pair of Egyptian Geese through the water for half an hour, irritated beyond endurance by their insistent honking. In and around the Ngulia Camp *bandas* there were a few hyrax, geckhos, some Agama Lizards with their red heads and blue bodies, mongooses and, unusually, two klipspringers, the African equivalent of the chamois.

Further afield, but still in the northern area of the park, a massive herd of between 200 and 400 buffalo was seen in Ngulia Valley and, an interesting sight, 12 giraffe drinking from a stream in Rhino Valley.

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Aberdare National Park

A frequent visitor to the Aberdare National Park says that in early July it was the most beautiful she has ever seen it. There were flowers everywhere, particularly red gladioli and red hot pokers, on whose orange and yellow flowers sunbirds could be seen feeding.

Late evening and early morning were perfect times of day for seeing many of the antelope: bushbuck, duiker and reed-buck gathered around the clumps of heather. Some of the bushbuck and duiker at the picnic spots are very tame so it was possible to get close to them and have excellent views. Waterbuck and melanistic (black) serval were also present as were a few buffalo.

Apart from the forest lodges in the Salient, The Ark and Treetops, the only place you can stay overnight in the park is at Fishing Camp as lions have made the camp sites too dangerous. Fishing Camp has two buildings, each with a communal room with a fire and three rooms containing bunks. Unfortunately booking cannot be made in advance; you simply pay at one of the park gates when you enter, and hope there will be room for you when you arrive at the camp.

TANZANIA

Lake Manyara National Park

This small but magnificent park set in the Rift Valley floor continues to harbour huge populations of elephant and impala. The park is, however, famous for its bird-life and this season the lake has been invaded by an unusual migration of pelicans and flamingos; close to one million are estimated to be there. The pelicans were observed to be nesting in the tall acacia trees fringing the lake shore.

An interesting biological food chain is known to exist at the point where the Mto-wa-Mbu River enters Lake Manyara. Here schools of hippo permanently reside. They drop several tons of faecal matter which is rich in nutrient and supports a huge population of fish. In turn, the pelicans and the shy cormorants have found a healthy fishing ground where they concentrate in large numbers. Thus by raising the biomass and making use of the available resources, the energy cycle is being speeded up.

F.N. Pertet

Know Kenya Course

Once again the Kenya Museum Society will be running its 'Know Kenya Course' for six weeks from the beginning of October. The course consists of films and lectures covering natural history, prehistory, geology and the peoples of Kenya, and is open to everyone. Particularly welcome would be Kenyans who are willing to study to become volunteer museum guides, for whom the course would be the initial part of their training. For more information please contact the Kenya Museum Society at the National Museum, P.O. Box 40658, Nairobi, or telephone 742131.

UGANDA

Rwenzori National Park

The month of July was dry throughout Rwenzori National Park. Poachers started an illegal fire along the park's eastern boundary forcing the Chief Park Warden, Paul Ssali Naluma, to authorise burning within the park so as to prevent the animals moving out to feed on the young grass growing up in the area burnt by the poachers.

Considerable efforts were made to patrol the park for poaching and by the end of the month nine people had been arrested, twelve wire snares and spears had been recovered and eight canoes confiscated. Several of the reported poaching incidents appear to have involved military personnel or park rangers. It is known that at least one Giant Forest Hog, two hippos, two buffalos and a hyena were lost to poachers. On a more optimistic note, however, the reduction in the number of canoes south of Kazinga Channel has had the agreeable effect of improving business for the legal fisherman, thus making them anxious to support the park authorities in their ef-



Lion cubs in a tree.

forts to curtail the illegal landing of fish.

The park's elephants are now much less wary of people than they were earlier in the year; a herd of 83 who visited the peninsula for two weeks spent much of the time near staff houses. Commonly sighted during July were buffalo, waterbuck, warthogs, lions in the area of the Hippo Pool, hippos along the Kazinga Channel, Uganda Kob in groups of between ten and twenty, mostly in the burnt area, and large numbers of Topi in the Ishasha sector. Rangers reported having seen chimpanzees on several occasions in Maramagambo Forest and those of the park's over 500 visitors who went to Ishasha were all treated to views of the famous tree climbing lions.

Wider Horizons

Southern Sudan

In the September/October 1981 issue of SWARA, we published an article by Dr. Stephen Cobb on wildlife and conservation in southern Sudan. Dr. Jesse (Chris) Hillman, who is doing research on the bongo in Bangangai Game Reserve under the auspices of the New York Zoological Society, recently passed through Nairobi and gave us this progress report.

The long-awaited report on the Southern National Park by the Italian Government and Rome University, was delivered to the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in Juba earlier this year. It highlights the importance of this huge tract of country on the west bank of the Nile, between Wau in the north and Maridi in the south. Apart from the size of the area and the opportunities it offers to conserve a large portion of wooded grasslands, the area has populations of the northern race of the White Rhino and of the Giant or Lord Derby's Eland. The main human problems envisaged in conserving and developing the area are the development of timber extraction and settled agriculture in the north east and the incursion of fishermen and hunters in many places. While it is realized that in many cases this is subsistence hunting, which is necessary because the presence of tsetse fly makes it impossible to keep domestic stock, it is most disturbing when hunting parties consist of people from northern provinces mounted on horses and donkeys and well armed with machine guns. The same people have again entered the area this year, vowing to get their own back, and have reached within a few miles of Yambio town.

Other instances of commercial

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poaching by armed forces, including the Wildlife Department itself, have been reported on many occasions, and are causing decimation of the elephant population. The dangers to the small White Rhino population are great. It will be some time before the Wildlife Department is equipped physically and psychologically to cope with this very real problem. The periodic changes in the Southern government, while part of this very poor area's evolution towards development, do not give the stability needed for development in what are considered 'fringe' fields such as wildlife and environment.

The Wildlife Conservation Education Unit has got off to a very good start in Juba under the sponsorship of the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, and with the participation of James Baba and Tony Potterton. A radio programme put out every week, lectures and slide shows are being given in Juba schools, and a very active Wildlife Club has developed at the University. An additional valuable task the unit has undertaken is the training and education of incoming personnel to the Department at both Game Scout and Officer level.

Developments in Boma National Park continue under the auspices of the Frankfurt Zoological Society, together with preliminary planning and development of Badingilu Game Reserve on the east bank of the Nile much nearer Juba. A tour group from Germany paid a successful visit to the area earlier this year, showing that it can be done if you try hard enough and are prepared for a more rigorous and very different expedition than say, for example, a trip to Kenya would necessitate.

Several local visitors were received in Zangai Game Reserve as well, most of whom were able to see both bongo

White Rhino.



David Keith Jones



White-eared Kob.

and chimp at close quarters. The best night so far brought in 49 bongo to Nagbagi salt lick, where we have built a tree platform as part of our research on the species under the auspices of New York Zoological Society. The White-eared Kob research, also sponsored by NYZS in the Boma area of the plateau and National Park. The main research of the Jonglei Research Project is now being written up, while the canal machine inexorably moves towards its destination on the banks of the Nile at Bor. No formal conservation areas have been planned there as yet, but the wildlife populations, particularly of tiang, are remarkable, and will be affected in various ways by the canal construction.

Things may happen slowly in this undeveloped part of eastern Africa, but they do happen, and we hope progress will continue to be made in wildlife and environmental conservation in southern Sudan

Award for research on tropical African plants

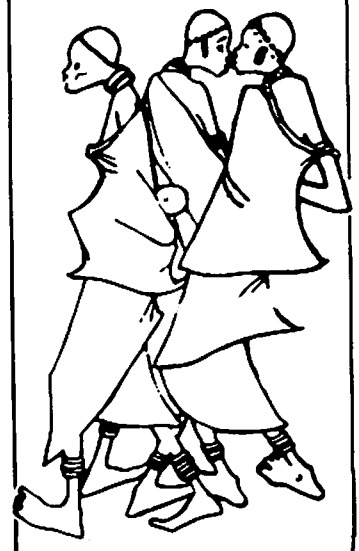
The Dennis Stanfield Memorial Fund has been established to assist persons of scientific merit to undertake botanical research on tropical African plants. Awards were made in 1974, 1977 & 1980, and the award in 1983 will be £250. Application forms should be obtained from the Executive Secretary of the Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0LQ, United Kingdom, and should be returned to the same address by 31st March 1983. The award is to be used for such items as travel, equipment, books, computing time, research expenses and the like, in connection with any aspects of botanical research. The award is open both to amateurs and professionals.

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Book Reviews

LAND-ROVER The Unbeatable 4X4
K & J Slavin, G. Mackie.
 Gentry Books Ltd., London, £10.95 sterling.
 Hard back; 9 3/4" x 7"; 256 pages; many photographs.

Anyone interested in the wildlife of East Africa has been influenced by Land-Rovers. Even if you have not bumped around the bush in one of these ubiquitous vehicles yourself, you must have enjoyed films and seen photographs taken from them.

All Land-Rover (and Range Rover) owners will find it fun to look through this book with over 150 black and white plus eight colour photographs. Here we can see Land-Rovers carrying Queens and snow-ploughs, Land-Rovers on railway lines and suspended from helicopters, Land-Rovers lifting whole trees and transporting racing cars. There is even a miniature Land-Rover made for



I would be working exclusively for *National Geographic* or the *Audubon Society*, perhaps living in a penthouse in Rome with my own helicopter pad on the roof!

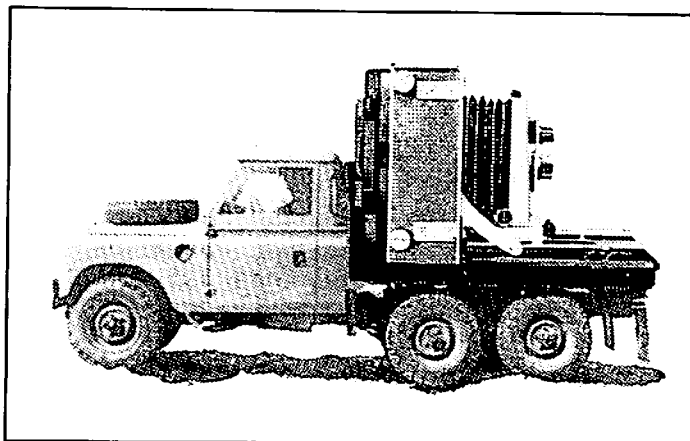
My eyeball-to-eyeball photographs of giraffe, taken from a hydraulically elevating work platform (page 105) would have been published world-wide and I could have sold the film rights of those gorgeous long lashes to Helena Rubenstein or Coty.

Using a Cuthbertson conversion with hollow drums (page 114) I would have traversed the mud-flats of Magadi and Natron and cruised down the Omo river to become the leading authority on flamingos, crocodiles and hippo before driving off to pan gold in comfort in the Turkwell river.

At night I would have set up a Mobile Cinema (page 119) showing my own stunning films to tourists, thus increasing my enormous profits. And by using a post-hole borer (page 150) I could have obtained new material on the secret life of termites and others who live underground thus putting Alan Root out of business.



"World authority on hippo."



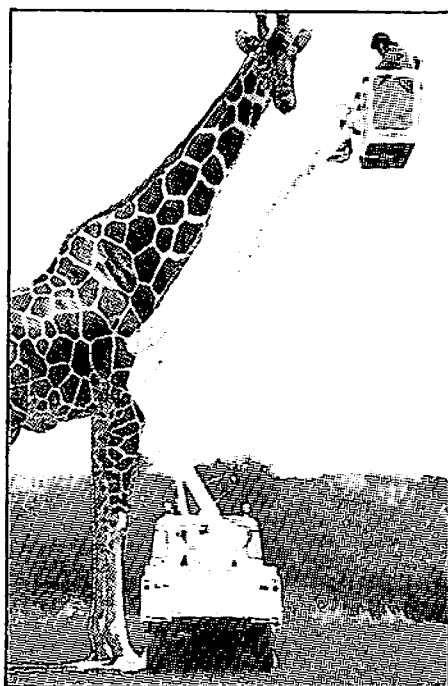
"I use a Land-Rover, madam, with 88 inch film."

the King of Jordan's children.

You will need a little more mechanical insight than the average owner-driver to absorb all the tables of gear ratios, capacities and other technical data; but most of the book is written in a chatty, readable style and covers the complete story of Land-Rovers from the Rover Electric Carriage, built in 1888, up to the latest Range Rovers of the 1980s.

Perhaps the most fascinating chapter is on *The Special Projects Department*. How I wish I had read this some years ago when I first started bumping around Kenya with the added security of those extra red and yellow gear knobs — not, to be honest, used all that often, but always giving more confidence than a conventional saloon.

Of course I have always considered the Land-Rover my most important piece of photographic equipment; but how much more effective it would have been had I bought a few of the extras! By now



"Eyeball-to-eyeball. . ."

Then, by adding engine and transmission breathers and doing special things to the ignition, I could have waded across Lake Victoria (page 168) to get into the *Guinness Book of Records*.

Next time one of those formidable American ladies asks me 'What kind of camera do you use?' — before she can give me that withering look because I fail to say Hasselblad or Leica — I'm going to say, 'I use a Land-Rover, madam, with 88 inch film'.

To be serious; it is surprising that in Chapter 5, entitled *The Expedition Workhorse*, there is no mention of the Land-Rover's role in wildlife conservation and management, and there are no pictures of Land-Rovers in National Parks or near big game.

There does not seem to be a single photograph in the whole book taken in the southern hemisphere, although in