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FOURTH REPORT
of the
NATAL PARKS, GAME AND FISH PRESERVATION BOARD
for the period
1st April, 1951, to 31st March, 1952

pp 1-25

To the Honourable D. G. Shepstone, Administrator of Natal.

Sir,

1. THE NATAL PARKS, GAME AND FISH PRESERVATION BOARD has the honour to submit its report for the period 1st April, 1951, to 31st March, 1952.

A. GENERAL

Constitution of the Board.

2. The present Board, as constituted by Ordinance No. 35 of 1947, was established with effect from 1st December, 1950, by Provincial Notice No. 618 of 1950.

3. The following eight gentlemen at present hold office until the 30th November, 1953, as members of the Board :—

Mr. E. J. V. Grantham, M.E.C., *Chairman.*
The Hon. Mr. Justice J. C. de Wet, *Deputy Chairman.*
Mr. H. Hammar.
Mr. G. H. Henderson.
Mr. C. H. Hills.
Mr. D. E. Mitchell, M.P.
Mr. D. Saunders.
Mr. W. H. Simpson.

It is with extreme regret that this Report has to record the death, on 7th November, 1951, of Mr. W. M. Power, a member of the Board since its inception as well as its first Chairman. Mr. Power, who did so much to ensure Natal's enviable position and record in regard to the establishment of wild life sanctuaries, was also Chairman of the Zululand Game Reserves and Parks Board throughout its life of nine years. His unrivalled knowledge of every branch of the Board's work and familiarity with the many problems connected with the conservation and protection of Nature will indeed be sorely missed.

Committees.

4. The following is a full list of Advisory Committees with the names of members appointed with effect from 1st December, 1951, by Provincial Notice No. 581 of 1951 :—

(1)—*Berg Committee*

Mr. D. E. Mitchell, M.P., *Chairman.*
Mr. G. H. Henderson.
Mr. G. R. de Carle, M.C., M.M.
Mr. S. H. Goodwin.
Mr. C. Durose.
Mr. G. M. J. Sweeney.
Mrs. S. M. van Niekerk, M.P.C.
Mr. A. M. Wood, M.P.C.

(2)—*Inland Fisheries Committee*

The Hon. Mr. Justice J. C. de Wet, *Chairman.*
Mr. G. H. Henderson.
Mr. S. L. Boast.
The Hon. Mr. Justice A. E. Carlisle.
Mr. H. L. Crockett.
Mr. S. F. Rapson.
Mr. G. D. Ricquebourg.
Mr. J. L. Smith, M.E.C.
Mr. C. Sutton.
Mr. R. I. P. Vaughan.

8. *Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Fair*.—The Board was asked to take part in the Provincial exhibition in the Natal Pavilion at the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Fair, which was held in Cape Town from the 18th March to the 5th April.

Following instructions that its exhibit could be neither representative of Fauna nor Fish (since the former would be covered by the Transvaal and the latter by the Cape Province), it was decided that the space allocated to the Board should be turned into a lounge, and pictures of Natal Reserves should be displayed.

Cane furniture, with gaily coloured cushions, was used and the floor was covered with edge to edge Feltex, whilst on the walls were hung eight panels showing scenes from the Natal and Zululand Reserves, which Mrs. Jurgens (Barbara Tyrell, the well-known South African artist) had been commissioned to paint.

Cards and Brochures, giving a brief outline of the Board's activities were handed out to the public, who for the most part showed great interest, and in some cases, surprise that Natal had so many Reserves.

The pictures, furnishings and floral decorations were commented upon most favourably, and the comfort of the lounge was a boon to many a weary visitor to the Fair.

In addition an excellent colour film, lasting for 15 minutes, taken by African Film Productions, was shown six times daily, *i.e.*, three times with English, and three times with Afrikaans commentary. This film, entitled "The Natural Heritage of Natal and Zululand," showed scenes from the Board's Reserves and also gave an insight into the Inland and Coastal Fisheries work of the Province.

This opportunity is taken to record the sincere thanks of the Board to Mrs. Douglas Saunders whose kind assistance and advice resulted in the tasteful furnishing and decoration that led to the success of the exhibit.

C. ZULULAND RESERVES

1. General.

(a) *Staff*.—During the year additional appointments were :—

- (i) Ranger Ndumu Game Reserve.
- (ii) Ranger Bait Netting operations.
- (iii) Supervisor—Umfolozu Game Reserve.
- (iv) Housekeeper, Fannies Island.

(b) *Revenue*.—The total income from Zululand resorts was £10,815 18s. 9d., an increase of £727 9s. 2d. over the previous year ; whilst the figures in respect of the Hluhluwe Game Reserve are £4,470 9s. 3d., an increase of £346 6s. 8d. over the year 1950/51. It was confidently expected that the gross revenue would have risen higher but the closing of the mouth of the St. Lucia Estuary and the resultant deterioration in fishing conditions throughout the lake area resulted in a general reduction of the length of time visitors were prepared to remain there.

2. Hluhluwe Game Reserve.

(a) *Buildings*.—A new office block was completed, with telephones and light installed. This proved so great a boon to staff and visitors that a retrospective view is of wonderment that a single rondavel for so long fulfilled the same purpose. The acute shortage of cement obviated many proposed works but a new latrine block was completed, and a start made with a Native compound. During the coming year it is planned to provide some housing for Non-European drivers and/or nursemaids accompanying visitors.

(b) *Fencing*.—Drought conditions have prevented noteworthy extensions to the sisal barrier but boundary fences have been maintained and repaired.

(c) *Visitors*.—Once more a marked increase in the number of visitors has to be reported, particularly of those from countries outside of the Union. It should be mentioned that the Board has pleasure in being able to record visits from the Marquess of Willingdon, President of the Fauna Preservation Society, with Lady Willingdon ; the Hon. the Minister of Forestry ; the Canadian High Commissioner ; and Mr. Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor of the " Geographical Magazine " for 52 years, with Mrs. Grosvenor. The Board was also able to entertain the touring English Association Football Team, the Wolverhampton Wanderers. The year under review brought more film units to the Reserve than hitherto, and at least six firms sent their representatives to obtain animal photographs.

(d) *Rainfall and Grazing Conditions*.—A precipitation of 28.85 inches marks one of the most serious drought seasons to be recorded in the Reserve. The figure is not the lowest hitherto noted but it does constitute the sixth year of meagre rainfall out of the past eight years, and drinking pools never previously known to fail have dried up this year. It is of some interest that the past eight years of rainfall records have shown six bad or dry years, one average, and one good year whereas the previous eight years indicated precisely the converse with six good, one average, and one bad. As might be expected these continued droughts are having an adverse effect upon the grazing in many areas and some animals will undoubtedly suffer if such conditions continue.

(e) *Poaching*.—Poaching by Native Africans has at times been prevalent and many convictions have been obtained. In addition more than forty Native dogs have been destroyed within the Reserve, many of them having entered with would-be poachers. The commonest offences have been the killing and snaring of warthog and it is felt that the fines imposed in many instances

are inadequate to act as a deterrent. Only two serious cases have to be reported—the first, the killing of a buffalo cow by a Native poacher who was arrested, convicted and fined £15 or 3 months—the second, the killing of a nyala bull within the Reserve by a European poacher accompanied by three Natives. Fortunately all these last were caught and in this instance fines totalling £230 were imposed.

(f) *Fatalities*.—Pride of place for expression of regret in this sub-paragraph must go to an announcement of the unfortunate death on 29th August, 1951, of "Matilda" the famous old bull Black Rhino who, in recent years, must surely have become the most photographed individual animal in the world, and been directly responsible for visits to the Reserve by innumerable tourists. It is perhaps apposite that a brief obituary notice should here be recorded: Matilda has been known to Capt. Potter since 1929 at which time, although already very old, the animal had both his horns. It was not until 1934 that the posterior horn was lost, presumably as the result of a fight, and thereafter Matilda was looked upon as an easily identified freak and often referred to as a one-horned species! Although this Rhinoceros was so widely known as "Matilda" it is not generally realised that his name dated only from the visits of Australian troops during World War II. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that over the years hundreds of persons have been put to flight by Matilda's shuffling charges; for although he has never been unduly bad tempered or caused any damage, he was apt at times to resent intrusion when his admirers and their motor cars became too numerous or persistent. Generally speaking, however, he treated visitors and staff alike with complete indifference if they kept a reasonable distance from him. To estimate his undoubtedly great age would be pure surmise, but the winters of recent years have seen him lose much condition and agility, and it came as no surprise when he passed away after an unusually long spell of cold and wet weather.

Other losses among game animals included two known cases of buffalo dying from natural causes; one buffalo bull destroyed on having become old and dangerous; and one cock ostrich that had to be killed after sustaining a broken leg. The last mentioned regrettably reduces the introduced ostriches to one cock and one hen only, but more harmony may result and it may well be that the surviving pair will breed, because the Ostrich is a monogamous species and the odd bird was a constant problem. It may be added that the latter was also somewhat vicious, an unfortunate trait in a hand-reared bird unafraid of humans: once during the year under review he attacked an employee and tore most of his clothes off.

During the year two Black Rhino additional to Matilda died from natural causes, one during December, an old cow with heifer calf known to be 17 months old, which latter for some time pugnaciously guarded the carcase; the other a one-week-old heifer calf that died on 20th August. The last together with a number of smaller game animals, undoubtedly died as a result of the quite exceptional cold and wet spell already referred to, and experienced during mid-August, 1951.

(g) *Roads*.—Several new tracks were opened up, leading to areas not previously accessible to visitors. The main road through the camp has been in good condition, and the kind activities of the Provincial Roads Department, in hardening those sections inclined to be muddy in wet weather, have greatly improved the route from Mtubatuba to the rest camp.

3. Ndumu Game Reserve.

(a) *Poaching, etc.*—A full-time resident ranger was appointed to this Reserve in October, with instructions to ensure that every clause of the wild life protection ordinances was to be strictly enforced, to ensure the survival and increase of those animals that have survived years of snaring and hunting. The subsequent results have shown the necessity of his presence and afford ample proof of the good work he is doing.

Prosecutions and convictions have been too numerous for detailing in this report and have covered a variety of offences, many of them serious. Two Europeans were convicted of shooting in the Reserve and although fined only £1 a jeep and two rifles were declared forfeit. Convictions against natives have been for illegal fishing, trapping with snares, hunting with dogs, tree cutting, veld burning, and a most despicable practice of destroying fine wild fig trees on the banks of the river by burning debris and brushwood piled around them. It should be added that many Native dogs have been shot when hunting.

The seriousness of illegal veld burning is indicated by the prosecution of two Native women in March, 1952, who had burnt approximately 2,000 acres. It may also be mentioned that for illegal fishing it was found that Natives had endeavoured to interfere with the drainage of pans. It is a matter for sincere regret that approximately one thousand Natives are still living within this fine Reserve and until they can be moved relentless control must continue. Even with the latter, snaring and other malpractices will be difficult to eliminate because of the dense vegetation and large area involved.

It has been noticed that with the increased supervision within the Reserve many of these Natives have transferred their illegal fishing attentions to the other side of the Portuguese border.

(b) *Building*.—The cement shortage obviated a start being made with quarters for the Ranger, who has at present to live within a temporary reed shack, but it is hoped that conditions may shortly permit a more satisfactory building and a start being made with accommodation for visitors.

The Ndumu Game Reserve although at present undeveloped and far off the beaten track constitutes an undoubted attraction for the future. Its potentialities far exceed those of any comparable Reserve because of the extensive bird life that results from its pans and lakes.

(c) *Mammals*.—Poaching activities have obviated any accurate or comprehensive census

The Board's estimates for the year under review made provision for a start to be made with a bridge to replace the Pont at St. Lucia, and engineers of the Provincial Administration drew up the necessary plans and specifications. Unfortunately, however, a suitable tender has not yet been obtained.

10. Richard's Bay.

Although unavoidably a little more distant from the actual sea than might have been preferred the new camping sites proved popular and in the winter season accommodated over 1,500 campers. One more latrine block was erected to complete the sanitary facilities and by general consent the area is preferred to the old camp sites now condemned.

Since December a Ranger of the Board has been employed in a full-time capacity catching bait for anglers. In addition much experimentation has been carried out both with shrimps and shrimping with a view to bringing the question of bait supply on to a reliable footing. These experiments have included investigation into the best methods of preserving bait, without causing deterioration of quality or palatability so far as the fish are concerned, as well as research into the most economical preservatives.

It is, of course, impossible to overcome many natural phenomena that cause bait shortages, although it is difficult to persuade some visitors that there are times when the best will in the world cannot result in a catch being obtained. A case in point was that the Christmas rush coincided with the period when the crustaceans had "gone to ground" for their "moult," and it is such things that render the Bait Ranger's task at times an invidious one.

In order more efficiently to discharge his patrolling duties the Ranger has been issued with a light dinghy with outboard motor and convictions have been obtained for illegal fishing, hunting with assegais, and interference with the carcass of a hippo.

During the year one young bull hippo died in this area.

Richard's Bay Park like many other Zululand Reserves was adversely affected by lack of rain, and one indication of the abnormally dry conditions is that a runaway fire burnt a considerable area of veld during the month of February.

It unfortunately has to be reported that during January the small pan known as the Black Bass Pool had completely dried up. The fact that the rains appeared to have no effect upon this pan leads to a suspicion that local boreholes may have affected the underground water table so as to cause a draining away; at least it is evident that to have attempted pumping water there, as at one time suggested, would have been unavailing.

It is perhaps of interest to put on record that silt from the Umhlatuzi Flats and nearby areas is now being deposited at the head of the Bay, to a degree that although not comparable with St. Lucia may nevertheless be called alarming. As pointed out by the Board's Marine Research Officer any further reduction of the resistance to the flow of this silt, such as by the rumoured drainage for rice cultivation will greatly hasten its encroachment over the lagoon.

11. Umlalazi Nature Reserve.

As at all of the Board's other coastal resorts the resident Ranger has been constantly engaged with anti-malaria spraying measures. In addition his time has been much taken up with measures against contraventions of the Game and more particularly the Fisheries Ordinances. European wrongdoers have not been numerous and no serious breaches of the law have to be reported, but there has been a regrettable persistence on the part of non-Europeans; a state of affairs that has not been improved by the presence, for some time in the area, of a large gang of railway labourers.

Convictions have been for fish trapping both within and without the Reserve, illegal operation of fish nets and the catching of undersized fish, whilst several unlicensed nets have been confiscated.

An unusual offence laid to the charge of one European by the Ranger, was that of killing a Goliath Heron for the mere sake of shooting. It is difficult to realise the mentality behind the dastardly wish to destroy, for no purpose, so magnificent a bird, and it is unfortunate that at the moment the sentence does not fit the crime.

Seasonal campers overflowed the limited, but hitherto adequate, camp sites, when some 60 persons were present at one time, but the problem would have been a simpler one had it not been for the presence of as many as twenty-two Native servants among that comparatively small number of campers. These last may have contributed to complaints by bathers in the bush adjacent to the beach, and bathing booths have subsequently been erected. Picnic parties on holidays and Sundays have greatly increased in numbers, and their activities in the Siyai Lagoon areas have to be carefully watched to obviate the spread of drifting sand.

In the matter of game affairs, hippo from the Igupu Lake had to receive attention to halt their visits to cultivated fields. The death of one hippo calf during the year has to be reported.

During December the Ranger here had the unusual task of investigating straying buffalo, when two animals (a bull and a cow) were reported in the Dhlangubo Store area north of the Ngoye Forest. It is not known whence these buffalo came and they moved off to the south-eastward without doing any harm or damage. It has regrettably to be reported that both animals were subsequently killed by Natives in Reserve No. 21 in the south-eastern portion of the Eshowe district. It is understood that a conviction was obtained by the Police at Inyoni in the case of the cow, but details of the Police investigations from Eshowe have not yet been obtained.

It may here be mentioned that the menace of the water hyacinth, a noxious plant species that is regrettably still to be seen in ornamental ponds, is now evident in very marked degree in the Inyoni Lagoon, as well as in the Nonoti River in Natal proper.

12. Umfolozi Game Reserve.

A permanent patrol with European Ranger in charge has been constantly maintained in the "Southern Buffer Zone" of this Reserve, and satisfactory control kept up over the Square-lipped Rhinoceros. During September, 1950, a count of the population of these unique animals was published as being 554 (including 97 calves under 2½ years old); this was effected from the ground at the end of 1948, and the Board hopes to carry out a check count in the near future, probably from the air. With the appointment of a Supervisor to maintain more effective control over the Square-lipped Rhinos, attention has been given to the all too frequent infiltration into the Umfolozi Reserve, on its western borders, by both Europeans and non-Europeans in search of game. Few successes in catching them have so far been achieved but a large party of Native poachers apprehended in December received fines varying from £2 10s. 0d. to £12 and had their weapons confiscated. Some prosecutions for setting snares have also been obtained.

During the year three Square-lipped Rhinos died from natural causes, and a bull approximately three years of age that had sustained a broken leg and shoulder whilst fighting in January, had to be destroyed. Two animals that for some quite unaccountable reason travelled purposefully as far west as the Mahlabatini-Melmoth main road were without difficulty returned over approximately twenty-five miles to the Reserve by the Ranger.

Drought conditions have been experienced in this Reserve as in most others in Zululand. During March, 1952, when the water table should have been at its maximum only 6 inches of running water were reported in the White Umfolozi River, whilst many pans appeared to be drying up. The largest of these pans, the Mqizweni about one hundred acres in extent, was completely dry for the first time since 1936, and countless barbel and bream perished.

To summarise monthly reports from the Umfolozi Game Reserve as well as from many other individual areas would regrettably be to say that poaching attempts by non-Europeans are, if anything, on the increase. It can only be hoped that time will bring some enlightenment to the Native African, and that he may come to realise that it would be the height of criminal folly to eliminate so valuable an asset as the country's wild fauna. It is doubtful whether anything but a partial and somewhat unsatisfactory amelioration of the present so common attitude, that every wild creature is of importance only as something to be shot at or killed, can be achieved by legislation. The real answer to wild life conservation is undoubtedly an enlightened public, and perhaps the day may come when some study of natural history may be possible for all sections of the community.

13. Random Wild Life Notes of General Interest.

(a) *Hippo*.—Some damage to crops by hippopotami is unfortunately a not infrequent occurrence and this involves land cultivated by both European and Native African. In all reported cases investigations have been carried out, whilst assistance towards keeping the animals out of fields has been given where possible. In many instances the hippos have been persuaded to change their feeding grounds after being fired at by game guards with a shot gun, using very light shot.

In a few other cases, where the nature of the ground permits such measures, a low cable type of fence has been erected with marked success. Although the Board continues itself to erect some of these fences, it is, of course, impossible to do so in all areas where hippos occur. On two occasions the destruction of lone bulls, most persistent in their disregard of shot guns, was contemplated, lest their actions should cause undue damage, but both were ultimately forced to return whence they had come: one of them was even persuaded to move his habitat a distance of seven miles.

There is no denying the fact that further worries lie ahead: they are inevitable because of increased settlement and cultivation, to a degree that means it is not the encroachment of the mammal on human preserves so much as man's invasion of the animals' age-old habitat. It is regrettably becoming all too apparent that one cannot say a certain area, such, for instance, as an estuarine lake system, is more than adequate for the conservation of hippopotami, and that the animals should not be permitted elsewhere, because many such areas are incomplete as an ecological niche for the species. Some lakes and pans are or become essentially saline and hippos may be forced to seek fresh water not only to drink, but also for their calving and the rearing of their young.

In the Zululand area the year recorded the death of seven hippos, most of them the result of wounds sustained in fighting. As might be expected a large proportion of such casualties is made up of young bulls, or even bull calves, such as are frequently killed by the older bull when they attempt to join a "school." Doubtless this is a provision of Nature to ensure a keeping down of the numbers of males, and it is of interest to have noted that hippo cows would seem well aware of this danger threatening male offspring. Cows with heifer calves are seen in close proximity to numbers of adult animals, but cows with tiny bull calves have been noticed keeping very much on their own and often far from any others.

Similar diminishment of their colt foals is commonly affected by zebra stallions, and like practices among gregarious mammals are perhaps of more common occurrence than generally believed. The whole subject is one deserving of further study and in the same regard it was of interest to have read an account of a vicious attack against a colt foal by a New Forest pony stallion in England, that described the mare's vain endeavours to drive off her spouse.

These few notes on hippo incidents would be incomplete were they not to record the regrettable death on 20th March of the young hippo bull (also killed by an older male), affectionately known as "Peeping Tom." This animal, who, because of his wanderings and adventures in the St. Lucia Township, was admired by many and cursed by a few, had become quite notorious and it is unfortunate that he, like the more famous "Matilda," should be no longer with us.

(b) *Elephant*.—Natal's last herd of these fine pachyderms continues to flourish in the out of the way area the animals have chosen as their refuge, and fortunately the terrain is one wherein there is little reason why they should not remain undisturbed. A little damage to Native crops is occasionally reported but extensive investigation of complaints has been carried out by a Ranger of the Board and in almost all cases they proved to be either gross exaggerations, or thefts by a creature whose footprints bear no resemblance to those of *Loxodonta*! No elephant casualties have been reported and it is hoped that some refugees from farther North may have augmented the herd.

(c) *Rhino*.—During May a black rhino cow and half-grown calf had to be driven back from a point some four miles down the road to Mtubatuba from the Hluhluwe Reserve boundary. Investigation revealed the astonishing fact that far from being afraid of the vehicle grid crossing at the Reserve fence, these animals had found they could cross it by stepping gingerly on the narrow cement support at the side of the rails. To do this the animals had literally to squeeze their way along with one side of their body leaning heavily on the adjacent wall, and that a calf had been persuaded to emulate its mother's feat, or vice versa, was indeed remarkable. The practice was obviated by redesigning the grid support and no further attempts to cross have been made.

The two rhinos abovementioned in their peregrinations ate a little haulm of both groundnuts and sweet potatoes—unusual food for the species. For purposes of record it may also be mentioned that during September a black rhino was seen to eat a quantity of *Euclea lanceolata*.

Three accidents involving black rhino occurred within the Hluhluwe Game Reserve during the year. The first was during April when a Native woman was gored in the thigh and had to receive hospital treatment. The second, in June, when a Native male was killed; this accident occurred at dusk and it is not known what he was doing at the time, since the deceased was accompanied by dogs and was not near any recognised road. The third accident resulted in a dislocated shoulder to a Native male, this man being knocked over and trodden on by a black rhino in thick bush near the Chief Conservator's house.

An unusual accident befell a square-lipped rhinoceros near the Umfolozi Game Reserve. This animal became stuck in a small river and, in spite of terrific struggles, of which the signs were plain to see, it remained there for approximately twelve hours almost completely submerged in the water. Fortunately the ending was a happy one because a Native constable, to whom the thanks of all conservationists are due, on his own initiative and with the help of some local Natives, levered the animal free with long poles. The rhino suffered no ill effects.

To include these reports on rhino incidents it may, for purposes of record, be mentioned that mating of the black rhino was noted on the dates 13th May, 8th September and 6th December; also that one square-lipped rhino was known to have been born during the last week of August.

(d) *Miscellaneous*.—

- (i) The bull giraffe whose tameness is becoming notorious continues his role as a fairly regular contributor of news items, and two of the latter would seem worthy of record; the first concerning his love of human attention, the second his overweening curiosity or airmindedness. On one occasion a Nagana Research official out in the Reserve noticed that the animal was carrying many ticks. As this official had been hand-dressing and spraying the tsetse fly bait cattle he had the necessary equipment in his jeep and decided to spray the bull giraffe. By standing on top of his vehicle it was possible to reach high enough to do this and far from resenting the liberty the giraffe appeared so to enjoy the treatment that it insisted upon following the jeep about for some while afterwards. The second incident took place when the giraffe was on the landing strip where plane refuelling takes place. As soon as a helicopter had landed the animal walked across to it, first viewed the rotors from above, next craned his neck down for a close inspection of the interior of the cockpit, and finally gave the tail rotor a good licking over before moving off into the bush.
- (ii) For some time in the dry season a large warthog habitually grazed on the lawns around the Chief Conservator's house: this uninvited guest refused to be driven off or intimidated by a setter dog and not infrequently chased the latter away.
- (iii) On 20th August an unusual precipitation of 4.60 inches of rain took place, accompanied by a heavy fall in temperature. This cold damp spell was of unusual duration for the time of year, and caused the death of a surprisingly large number of animals. Most of those concerned were one-year-old zebra and wildebeeste, but Nyala of all ages were affected, and a one-week-old female black rhino was unfortunately among the total.
- (iv) During July a still-born zebra foal was dropped at the roadside some miles from the camp. Without delay a vehicle was sent for it but it was found that a tourist had removed the carcass and neither he nor his car could be traced. It may, of course, be entirely coincidental that this strange and quite illegal pilfering took place during a meat shortage.
- (v) During 1945 a Game Guard was drowned or taken by crocodiles in the Banzi pan in the Ndumu Game Reserve. This occurred when the boat in which this guard was crossing the pan was capsized by a whirlwind. The man's two brothers wearing skins only were able to reach the shore, but the guard with a rifle and uniform was never seen again. During April, 1951, the Banzi Pan dried up completely and revealed a very rusted .303 rifle still cocked and presumably with cartridges in the magazine and chamber.
- (vi) In May a waterbuck bull died fighting, and the carcass was later recovered from the

- Hluhluwe River with at least ten horn wounds in its body. Col. Stevenson Hamilton in his *Wild Life* records waterbuck among prey taken by crocodile but a common Native superstition exists that waterbuck are not molested by the saurians and local inhabitants were not surprised that the carcass in the river had not been touched. Many Natives wear anklets made from waterbuck hide for wading in crocodile infested waters: their theory is that a waterbuck when pursued by dogs will make for water, and, knowing this, the crocodile will ignore the buck and await the dogs, a favourite food, that it assumes will follow.
- (vii) Among a number of Native casualties from crocodiles that during the year have come to the notice of rangers in various areas was one woman taken at night on dry land and dragged 193 yards to the water. No trace of the victim was found, but spoor where the struggle took place and drag marks to the river edge clearly told the gruesome story. One of the Board's rangers driving his vehicle on a night patrol encountered a crocodile over 300 yards from the nearest water.
 - (viii) During August a large baboon was seen to eat a four-months-old Nyala that it was presumed to have captured.
 - (ix) The Magistrate at Ubombo reported untold damage to Native crops by baboons on the Ubombo Mountain. On his request for assistance one European ranger and two Native guards were seconded to him for two weeks to shoot some of the animals. Seven of these cunning marauders were destroyed but further damage is reported from the area and Native guards will again be lent to assist in their reduction. It is feared that the all too evident increase in the baboon population, like that of the wild pig, will continue and that one factor in this particular upset in the Balance of Nature has been the elimination of leopard. The same problem faces the authorities in other African territories, where the damage done by the new threat far exceeds that by the feline formerly dubbed the major culprit. The problem is now a more real one because whereas leopard would have had no difficulty in keeping the numbers of the more cunning destroyers within very reasonable bounds, the steps now available, such as shooting, will never cope even with natural increase.
 - (x) On 18th August an immature Rockhopper Penguin *Spheniscus demersa* was washed ashore at St. Lucia Estuary; an unusually northern record for this bird.

D. NATAL RESERVES

1. Giant's Castle Game Reserve.

(a) *Weather*.—The Autumn of 1951 saw an early cessation of rains, a rapid drop in water levels, and early deterioration of grass and other herbage. Such conditions continued throughout the Autumn season and were followed by a severe Winter, with heavy frosts beginning early in May and persisting until late August. A normal Winter in the area sees cold snaps interspersed with spells of comparatively warm weather, but that of 1951 was abnormally cold throughout. Although moderate rains fell during September, the months of October and November were very dry; fortunately, however, normal rains recommenced in December and continued for the rest of the season. The unusually low rainfall in the early Summer, of course, had an adverse effect on the fish and fishing.

(b) *Building*.—As in some other Reserves the cement shortage brought building construction to a virtual standstill, and only towards the end of the year under review was a new start able to be made with bringing the capacity of the huttet camp up to the immediate target of 40 beds.

(c) *Visitors*.—The flow of visitors has steadily increased now that the road communications with Estcourt and Mooi River are so vastly improved. But as elsewhere the maximum demand is entirely seasonal, and so far it is only during school holiday periods that would-be visitors have had to be turned away.

It may be mentioned that an astonishing belief would seem to exist that an actual "Castle" is to be found at this Reserve, since requests are reported for bookings "on the top floor"!

(d) *Communications*.—Excellent progress has been made by the Provincial Roads Department with the widening of the road from Drakensberg Location No. 1. The entire route is completed except for a distance of approximately one mile nearest to the Game Conservator's residence, and two short stretches of steep gradient.

In addition to the satisfaction of the road it is gratifying to be able to report that the year saw a telephone installed. As may be imagined this has filled a long-felt need, particularly for accommodation bookings, and it is hoped that more than one instrument may later be obtained to facilitate communication with the Game Conservator as well as with the rest camp.

(e) *Fires*.—As in previous years the burning of immensely long firebreaks for some weeks occupied much of the Game Conservator's mind and time. Unseasonal gales during June meant that the breaks had to be burnt under unusually difficult conditions, and to some extent obviated their being as comprehensive as had been hoped for. The early Spring saw some strenuous work putting out fires that had entered or were approaching the Reserve from outside, but the efforts were happily successful in all instances. As usual no help was obtained from neighbours either with fire fighting or firebreak burning, and the Board continues to have to employ tog labour to assist with combating the fire hazard.