

LETTERS to the EDITOR

I wish to refer to "White Rhino in Kenya" on page 19 of *Africana*, Vol. 2, No. 8, June 1966.

Para. 6 of this article states "We are re-introducing the white rhino into a country from which they disappeared some time ago it is probable that they disappeared through hunting" (my italics).

This is entirely misleading. There is not the slightest evidence that white rhino ever occurred in Kenya within historical times, and it is practically certain that hunting had nothing whatever to do with their absence.

The most striking thing about the natural distribution of the species is its discontinuity. It occurred, before reduction through human agency in the 19th and present centuries, roughly from about Zululand and the Orange River, northwards to the Zambezi, and again west of the Nile from northwestern Uganda to southeastern Tchad.

This distribution does, of course, imply that at one time it occurred in the areas between, but this was in remote times, long before the dawn of recorded history, since when its range became reduced by natural causes to what it was when the earliest records were made during the early 19th century.

The exercise reported is, therefore, not re-introduction of a species destroyed by human agency, but simply introduction of what has, in post-Pleistocene times, become an exotic, and it should be understood as such.

Whether or not it is justifiable, and forms a "natural ecological experiment" is a matter of opinion but what is important is that a sense of proportion should be maintained, and that translocation—either within the original range (*i.e.* genuine re-introduction) or introduction of exotics (*e.g.* the present case)—should not obscure the underlying aim of wild life conservation.

There are many instances today where limited areas are fenced off, stocked with game from elsewhere (not necessarily indigenous), and then called "game reserves" or "national parks". They are not—at least, not in the original and usually accepted sense.

Of course it is better that there should be Père David's Deer in semi-captive conditions in an English park rather than none at all. Of course it is preferable for the Przewalski Horse, or the Arabian Oryx, to remain in enclosed conditions in foreign countries rather than become extinct.

But such consideration should not be allowed to obscure, or divert effort from, the basic and fundamental object of wild life conservation, which is the perpetuation of indigenous, genuinely wild, fauna in its natural habitat.

W. F. H. ANSELL
Livingstone, Zambia

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letters of general interest about Africa, its wildlife, its history, its people. Address them, please, to: AFRICANA, Box 9010, Nairobi, Kenya.

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We also ask people who have any books they have finished with to put them in the book box too, so that the good work goes on.

JANE STANTON

Bushwhackers Safari Camp,
Kibwezi, Kenya

IN JUNE of this year, the Zambia Game Department undertook a Red Lechwe count which showed as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Lochinvar | 7,500 |
| Research Station (south bank, Kafue) | 150 |
| Blue Lagoon (west bank (north)) | 8,500 7,000 |

Two years ago, Robinette undertook a lechwe count at Lochinvar which showed the population to be 17,500 *i.e.* 10,000 head down. For the Research Station, Robinette's figure for 1964 was 4,000.

The only place that shows any increase is Blue Lagoon, up by about 1,000. The total herd of red lechwe at Kafue Flats is now no more than 23,000.

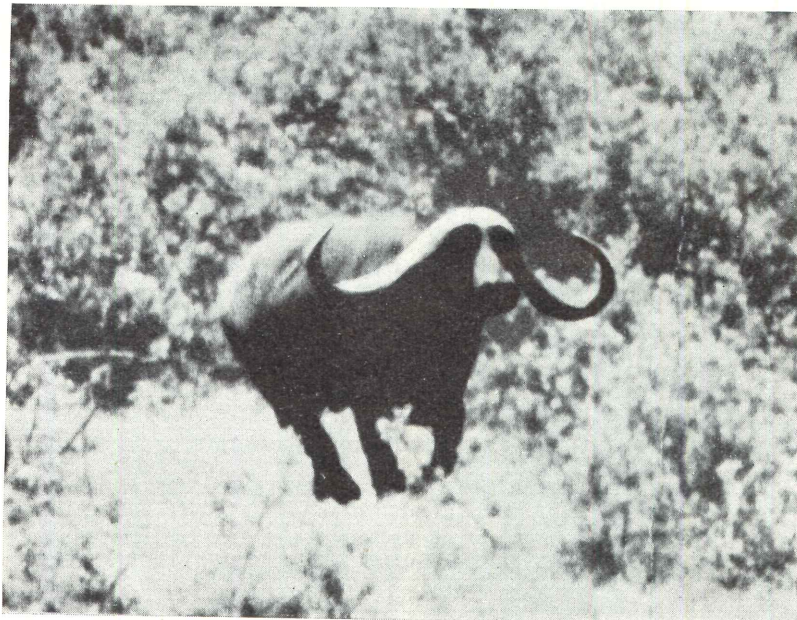
The position regarding black lechwe is even worse. The 1934 count (Pitman) showed 150,000; the 1954 count (Game Department) 15,000; 1966 count (Game Department) 4,000.

In view of the alarming position, application has been made to the Survival Commission of IUCN asking that black lechwe be placed on the list of endangered species.

Quite obviously, unless something is done *at once*, the next two years will probably see black lechwe listed as an extinct specie.

Anti-poacher patrols by helicopter were financed from a £1,000 grant by the Wild Life Society of Zambia, whose members hope the Zambia Government will carry on the work when the Society's cash has run out.

JOHN A. PILE
Nairobi, Kenya



Mr. Herne's picture of a buffalo at Lake Manyara, Tanzania.

THE MANYARA BUFFALO

IN REPLY to Mr. R. F. Tyers letter (*AFRICANA* June 1966), herewith a photograph of the Manyara Buffalo taken in 1958.

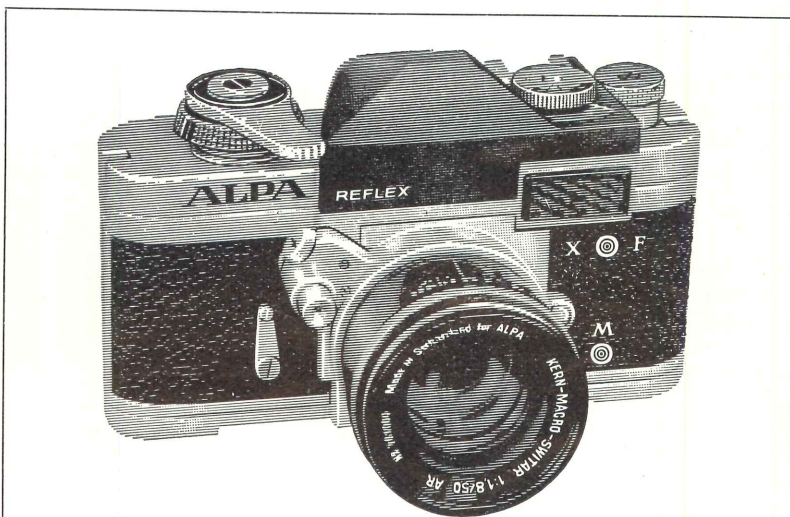
Yet another Buffalo — in my opinion still larger and with an incredibly heavy boss — was seen by me on two occasions in the Lake Mburo area, in 1963.

Unfortunately, no worthy trophy hunter has had the good fortune to shoot the Mburo buffalo and there-

fore preserve for posterity this magnificent trophy.

Since he has not been seen since, although the herd he was with has been sighted on many occasions, one may assume that he has died of old age (he had very little hair on his body and was thin), or has fallen victim to the guns of the Tsetse Department and lies in a heap of bones together with similar victims.

BRIAN HERNE
Uganda Wildlife Development Ltd.,
Kampala.



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