

swear he'd have dropped it—and (this was the odd thing) he uttered, as he did so, the grand great bird, no scream of haughty defiance, but a shrill little tiny squeak of terror for all the world like that of a mouse or a slate pencil. Then, in half-a-dozen mighty wing beats, his ruffled dignity was recovered and on he sailed for Rannoch and a blue hare.

For it is a strange thing that though there are, happily, many eagles in the Black Mount, there are no hares (the staple stay of the golden eagle) nearer, I believe, than Rannoch. Still, twenty miles or so is nothing of a dining-out distance to an eagle, and it is thither he goes unless, I take it, braxy happens to occur on the sheep ground behind Glenkinglass.

Now, of my apparitions, I come lastly to the most surprising of all. I claim, and I do most honestly believe that my claim is justified, that I have seen in its wild state, and in Scotland, an eagle owl.

WILD LIFE IN UGANDA

The Control of Elephants and Census of White Rhinoceros

THE ANNUAL REPORT of the Uganda Game Department for the year ending December 31st, 1928, which has been compiled by the Game Warden, Capt. C. R. S. Pitman, and published by command of His Excellency the Governor, is a document which contains a very great deal of interesting information. It is a pity, however, that the necessity for a detailed report of the activities of the Game Department rather obscures many items of general interest, and we think that the object of game preservation would really be better served in the future were the report divided into two parts, the first of which might contain the summary of the purely departmental activities, and the

local residents to kill elephants which could be caught more or less red-handed, with the result that various individuals made considerable personal profits from the ivory which they obtained. The Uganda Government then decided that it would be more profitable for the country in general were the killing of marauding elephants limited to servants of the game department, and all the ivory thus obtained sold for the benefit of the Government. Accordingly, the system known as "elephant control" was inaugurated, and although it met with bitter opposition from some of those who were thus deprived of easy money, there can be no doubt that the results have proved wonderfully satisfactory.

In very general terms "elephant control" may be described as a system under which huge tracts of forests are regarded as elephant reserves in which the herds can live and roam unmolested. But once any take to marauding crops or plantations outside these reserves

they are shot by officials of the game department. The numbers which are thus killed are not sufficient to reduce the total elephant population—in fact there seems to be good evidence that the total number of elephants in Uganda is increasing—but the fact that they are killed acts as a deterrent to the others, and the great herds have undoubtedly been learning the boundaries which divide their reserves from those of civilisation.

And since accusations have at times been made against the cruelty of this system on the grounds that so many elephants escape wounded, it is interesting to note that the game warden reports that one elephant has been killed for every three to four cartridges expended. We have no reliable statistics of kills to cartridges in the case of elephants, but this does not seem to be anything like a bad average.

Another interesting activity on the part of the game department was an attempt to make a fresh census of white rhinoceros. The last census was compiled in 1925 and reckoned the total number of white rhino as being 150. Since then no less than 55 are known to have been killed, but the normal increase due to the dropping of calves has counteracted this loss to a certain extent and the present number of white rhino is believed to be 130. In view of the fact that this shows a heavy percentage decrease since 1925, it is not surprising to learn that the Uganda Government have now decided that no further licences to kill white rhino are to be issued in any circumstances whatever, a decision which will be welcomed by all who are interested in the preservation of wild life.

IN THE GUNROOM

No. 100—THE BEST SHOTGUN POWDER FOR HOT

scurrying away with the wind of their own speed ruffling their long tails. I wonder if, subconsciously, I meant to miss them. . . .

I have a queer, sneaking regard for the rascals, and they, I think, look at me with a tolerant cynicism. Each spring I blow their nest to pieces, and they go off and build again. Then, if I am lucky enough to find it, I blow that one to pieces, and so they build a third, which I never find. Each spring they rear a number of pied marauders like themselves, and grow fat upon the eggs of my pheasants. I set very complicated and shameful traps for them, which they ignore so contemptuously that I feel that in setting them I am doing a disgraceful and underhand thing. They are rogues, these magpies, but they are English rogues, and I like them.

Not so the little owls. Against them I have a great bitterness, for I have seen them beating a field of roots for my young partridges, beating it row by row like trained dogs. Also, they are Foreigners, and they have most unmusical voices. I do not believe there is any decency or honour in them. I should even be prepared to credit it if anybody told me that they devoured carrion, had their mates in common, and ate their own young. They flutter down a hedgerow like wicked, sly spirits, and I shoot them at sight without compunction.

But in a way I am grateful to them, because they make me lose my temper and forget the reproach of the May morning, with its cuckoos and its chiff-chaffs and its shy willow-wrens. . . . The jays scream at me fearlessly, as they do at cats and foxes and all murderous things; but they dodge among the branches so quickly that it is hardly ever possible to get a shot at them, and if I do kill one, the limp thing is

FARRALINE.—On August 19th, 102½ brace of grouse were killed by nine guns: Mr. H. B. Sedgwick's party. High wind and rain.

QUOICH.—On August 15th, 54½ brace of grouse and 8 hares were killed over dogs by three guns: Sir John T. Cargill, Bart., Major R. Ross and Mr. R. T. Neilson. A very poor show of birds for this generally the best beat on the hill. On August 19th, 46 brace of grouse and 6 hares were killed over dogs by four guns: Sir John T. Cargill, Bart., Col. H. Medlicott, Mr. R. Medlicott and Capt. W. H. A. Webster. Another very poor show of birds, hardly a stock for the ground covered.

SHERRAMORE.—Up to August 20th 150 brace of grouse, 5 ptarmigan and usual sundries, including 3 stags (1 royal, 1 eight-pointer, 1 six-pointer), were killed by Major G. W. Davey, Com. C. H. Davey, R.N., E. G. F. Davey, Capt. C. E. Woodnam, Alan Tickle. There are more grouse than were expected, but they are scarce; a fair proportion of quite big coveys, up to 13 in number, and about the usual proportion of early and late second broods. A great many of last season's stock left the glen in the winter and did not come back to nest. On the higher ground, from 1,800ft. upwards, which in other seasons provided quite a number of grouse, there are none.

KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE

KIRKCLAUGH (GATEHOUSE OF FLEET).—On the Kirkcough Moors, on the glen and Whiteside beats, 72½ brace of grouse were killed on the 20th. Guns: Lord Clarina, Sir James Baird, Bart, Gen. A. Maxwell, C.B., Col. W. Kirby, D.S.O., Col. Woodbine Parish, C.M.G., Brig. A. J. McCulloch, D.S.O., Mr. Clarke, Mr. W. E. Clift McCulloch. Birds strong, but bag greatly curtailed by heavy fog.

LANARKSHIRE

LAMBHILL, STRATHAVEN.—Shooting with Mr. J. P. Loudon—Sir Sydney Alexander, Capt. Roland Phillipson, Mr. G. H. Wilson, Mr. D. A. Rogers and Mr. Ben Day, had 60 brace and 14 hares on the 12th. Later hatched birds are in evidence.

NEWHOLM, DUNSYRE.—The following is the bag for four days' driving and two days' walking up (up to 17th) by Mr. A. Marsh and party of six guns: 177½ brace of grouse and 217 head of other game. Rough weather. Show of birds disappointing and some rather backward.

MORAYSHIRE

COULMONY.—On the 21st, 72 brace of grouse, and on the 22nd, 70½ brace were killed by seven guns: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Crossman and Messrs. G. R. C. Foster, E. I. Mann, I. Bell, A. F. Towgood and R. L. Farley. More birds than last season, and all very healthy.

PERTHSHIRE

DALCHOSNIE.—On the 12th, 10 brace of grouse, 12 hares and 3 snipe were killed by Capt. J. P. Whiteley and Mr. C. C. Naumann.