

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

DEPARTMENT OF GAME

of the

DIVISION OF IRRIGATION AND LANDS

for the year ended
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REPORT No. 6

Signed A. D. FRASER, Salisbury, June 1959

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About this time it was decided that the Matusiadona Range had little agricultural potential, and was of no value for the purpose of African resettlement. The Department was invited to survey the area as a potential game sanctuary, and later it was agreed that it should be developed as a game reserve. For these reasons all hunting in the area was suspended, after which law enforcement patrols were introduced.

Final closure of the Dam wall was made on the 2nd December, 1958, and terminated the period of waiting for staff who had been stationed there to make observations and take such measures as they thought necessary to save animals which were endangered by the rising waters.

For months prior to this much speculation had taken place, but as there was no precedent on which to work, neither the pattern of flooding nor the reactions of the animals could be anticipated. Maps had been prepared in considerable detail which gave an indication of the areas to be flooded first, but it soon became apparent that these would have severe limitations. Boats and equipment were untried, techniques had still to be developed — the whole prospect was rather awful.

During the first two weeks after "plugging" water banked up the river beds and there was little spill-over. It was eerie, indeed, to witness rivers flowing in a direction opposite to their normal course, creating an atmosphere of tenseness and excitement. Staff, accompanied by representatives of the Museum, the Department of National Parks, and a Colonial Office Scholar patrolled the rivers, keeping a close watch on developments. Soon islands began to form, and clumps of trees became isolated. The Sanyati Island, although rather too large for the purpose, was used for initial experiments. It was here that the first vervet monkey was seen to swim and that baboons gave indications that they previously had become accustomed to flood conditions. One troop, found up partly submerged trees, were quite unconcerned. After considerable trouble they were persuaded to swim for the mainland about one hundred yards distant, but by the next morning they had returned to the same trees of their own accord, presumably in the expectation that the "early" flood would soon subside.

The animals first to become cut off from the mainland were of the species which normally inhabit riverine forest. Bushbuck, baboons, monkeys, genets, dassies (hyraxes), lizards, snakes and rodents were in evidence, and staff engaged themselves in developing techniques for their capture, care and release on safe ground.

By the end of December a number of bushbuck, grysbok, duiker, baboons, monkeys, dassies (hyraxes), monitor lizards and genet cats had been captured and taken to safety while others had been driven from islands onto the mainland.

Live snakes were taken for the Salisbury Snake Park and others collected as specimens. Some baboons and monkeys were shot.

The experience gained by staff in the initial operations will be invaluable during 1959, and will greatly assist in the formulation of a plan of campaign. Some ideas have been obtained in regard to equipment suitable for rescue work and items will be purchased as required.

Considerable importance is attached to the proper recording of observations. Valuable information on animal behaviour and attributes is obtainable from the unnatural conditions created by this man-made flood, all of which will be of great interest to research workers in many different fields of study. It is hoped that the Fulbright Large Mammal Research Unit and the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland will be able to participate in this work.

3. BREACHES OF THE GAME LAWS

The war against poachers continues and, no doubt, will go on for a long time to come. It will be a proud day indeed for the Department when it can claim that poaching has been brought under control, but this is still a long way off. The country is so vast, and now that one time inaccessible areas can be reached by modern four-wheel drive vehicles, it is quite beyond the capacity of staff effectively to patrol all areas.

SECTION II

Game Conservation

I. GENERAL

Hunting rights on Crown land situated in the Hartley, Chipinga, Darwin and Bulalime-Mangwe Native Districts were leased to the Southern Rhodesia National Hunters' and Game Preservation Association. No other Crown land areas were made available for hunting, and sportsmen generally had to confine their activities to private land.

It is hoped that some other areas of Crown land in the Colony will be made available for hunting purposes in the not too distant future, to cater for both the local resident and overseas visitor. Tentative suggestions have been made for an area in the Wankie Native District to be set aside as a controlled hunting area for overseas visitors, but no final decisions have been reached.

The Prohibition placed on the export of game products from animals shot under licence was reinforced by the promulgation of the Control of Goods (Import and Export) (Commerce) Order, 1958, published under Federal Government Notice No. 309 of 1958. Under this Order control is imposed over both the import and export of wild animals, wild animal trophies and wild animal products, and in so far as imports are concerned, over live fish including the eggs and spawn thereof.

Fairly good rains were experienced in the southern lowveld during the 1957-58 season, relieving the drought conditions which prevailed in 1957, and animals in the Mkwadini River area fared well. It is evident, however, that a number of problems arising in the south-east lowveld will require attention. This matter is commented upon further in Section III.

The experiments on the domestication of eland are proceeding. Mr. J. Posselt's herd is progressing satisfactorily and by the end of the year he had acquired 25 head, made up of 17 females, five males and 3 oxen. In all, four calves have now been born to cows held in captivity, and have progressed remarkably well, showing better growth when compared to captured animals of about the same age.

Due to difficult conditions in the southern lowveld Mr. R. Sparrow was unable to add to his herd, which, following the death of the heifer calf captured in 1957, is now reduced to seven bulls.

A study of the ecology of eland is included in the work plans of the Fulbright Large Mammal Research Unit.

2. KARIBA DAM

Ever since the early stages of construction the Department has been closely associated with the building of the Kariba Dam. Initially the activities of the Department included law enforcement, control of animals interfering with ground insecticide spraying as an anti-tsetse measure, and the supply of meat for labourers.

In 1955 consideration was given to the possible effect of the flooding of the Dam on the wild animal populations. It was thought that if hunting was permitted in that part of the Zambezi Valley which would ultimately become inundated that the effect would be to push the larger animals back to the escarpment foothills. To this end the "Hunting of Game in the Sebungwe Controlled Shooting Area, Regulations" were promulgated and hunting, under permit, commenced in August, 1955. From observations made, however, it soon became apparent that big game animals had to rely on the riverine vegetation for their dry season food requirements, and that little short of a major hunting campaign would be likely to succeed.

PERMITS ISSUED, 1958

1. EXPORT OF GAME PRODUCTS

(i) *Ivory*

<i>Number Issued</i>	<i>Number of Tusks</i>	<i>Weight, lb.</i>	<i>Importing Country</i>
2	18	403	United Kingdom
4	37	1,448	United States of America
4	31	1,156	Zanzibar
1	1	60	Union of South Africa
<u>11</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>3,067</u>	

(ii) *Rhinoceros Horn*

<i>Number Issued</i>	<i>Number of Horns</i>	<i>Weight, lb.</i>	<i>Importing Country</i>
2	18	76	Singapore
1	1	—	United States of America
<u>3</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>76</u>	

(iii) *Trophies, Horns, etc.*

<i>Number Issued</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Importing Countries</i>
147	92 Leopard skins	United Kingdom, Sweden.
	13 Lion skins	South Africa, Japan
	55 Elephant feet	United States of America
	306 lb. Elephant fat	Belgium, Canada
	16 Elephant ears	Denmark, France
	4 Elephant trunks	Italy, Australia
	800 lb. Hippo strips	Finland, Germany
	20 Karosses	New Zealand
	29 Springbok skins	Switzerland, Holland
	14 Impala skins	China and Czechoslovakia
	2,282 Zebra skins	
	1,000 lb. Zebra fat	
	5,535 Crocodile skins	
	250 Wildebeeste tails	

Notes.— (i) Export value of wild animal products is on the increase.

(ii) Miscellaneous assortment of horns, hides and skins has been excluded from list. Springbok and crocodile skins were exported following import from adjoining territories.

2. CAPTURE OF WILD ANIMALS

<i>Number Issued</i>	<i>To whom Issued</i>	<i>Number and Species</i>
1	R. L. Sparrow	20 Eland
1	Provincial Native Commissioner, Matabeleland	20 Eland
1	H. Lourenz	Leopard Cubs
1	C. Wintle	4 pairs Whitebacked duck.
<u>4</u>		

ANALYSIS OF ANIMALS DESTROYED IN TSETSE-FLY CONTROL AREAS UP TO 1958

Species	Total up to 1955	1956	1957	1958	Total
Elephant	345	121	93	54	603
Rhinoceros	370	4	—	—	374
Buffalo	5,757	426	118	141	6,442
Hippopotamus	6	—	—	—	6
Giraffe	3	—	—	—	3
Zebra	8,551	304	133	75	9,063
Eland	9,795	266	82	54	10,197
Koodoo	79,438	4,247	1,816	1,641	87,142
Roan	5,132	179	55	60	5,426
Sable	35,261	1,168	430	320	37,179
Waterbuck	13,500	343	81	63	13,987
Hartebeest	1,101	28	7	—	1,136
Wildebeeste	52	2	1	1	56
Tsessebe	2,541	238	4	7	2,790
Gemsbok	1	—	—	—	1
Impala	32,910	1,903	440	539	35,792
Reedbuck	17,830	615	164	114	18,723
Bushbuck	34,141	2,252	1,172	1,047	38,612
Duiker	164,407	9,239	6,310	5,180	185,136
Sharpe's Steinbuck	32,596	548	2	4	33,150
Klipspringer	13,948	316	1	—	14,265
Oribi	2,962	7	42	71	3,088
Livingstone Suni	146	1	—	—	147
Warthog	61,821	4,704	3,091	2,712	72,328
Baboon	41,781	5,414	2,619	2,071	51,885
Bushpig	16,561	1,721	1,288	683	20,253
Lion	124	1	—	1	126
Leopard	443	23	11	7	484
Cheetah	38	2	1	—	41
Hyena	257	36	25	18	336
Wild Dog	466	39	16	30	551
Wild Cat	1,567	—	—	—	1,567
Jackal	805	—	—	—	805
Lynx	19	—	—	—	19
Monkey	2,272	—	—	—	2,272
Antbear	31	—	—	—	31
Steinbuck	4,877	60	1	4	4,942
Nyala	7	—	—	14	21
Unclassified	615	—	—	—	615
TOTAL	592,483	34,207	18,003	14,911	659,604