

UGANDA PROTECTORATE.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

GAME DEPARTMENT

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1926.

Published by Command of His Excellency the Governor.

Signed on - C. R. S. B. 1927



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B. 17

The ivory market was in a very depressed state during the latter half of the year and the usual October auction was not held, in consequence of which at the close of the year there was in store at Kampala 23,935 lbs., or a little over 10½ tons of ivory.

The price of the best bull ivory dropped sharply each quarter until October, when there was a slight improvement, and at one time the maximum offered was £88 per cwt., a marked contrast to that of £135 per cwt., a figure which was reached not long ago, and to £120 per cwt. which appears to be the average maximum price (English sales).

At most of the auctions of the year there was no demand for cow ivory, while bangle ivory, the type chiefly represented from Uganda, had to face a steadily falling market, though a slight improvement was shown in October.

At the Government auction held at Kampala in May, 15,001½ lbs. of ivory were offered, of which only 7,881½ lbs. were sold.

The large bull ivory sold well, but there was no demand for smaller male or female tusks, of which classes all the former and nearly all the latter had to be withdrawn, *i.e.*, 624 tusks.

Ivory prices were adversely affected by:—

- a) No demand for female ivory in London.
- b) Outbreak of the general strike in England the day prior to the sale.
- c) Drop in Bombay prices (bangle ivory).
- d) General depression in the bangles which affected Asiatic buyers.

Rhinoceros horns sold at Shs. 17/60 cts. per lb. and

Hippopotamus teeth at Shs. 2/- per lb.

The value of rhinoceros horn soared at the end of the year, Mombasa prices having reached Shs. 36/- per lb.

At the end of 1926 there was in store at Kampala:—

	No.	Weight. lbs.
Rhinoceros horns	16	90½
Hippopotamus teeth	70	49

Ivory Receipts and Sales during the Year.

Receipts.		Sales.		Balance 31st May		lbs.
	lbs.	lbs.				
1st January	8,139½	—	June	...	...	10,089½
January	1,685½	—	July	...	...	925½
February	2,208	—	August	...	...	2,666
March	2,792½	—	September	...	...	1,965½
April	702½	—	October	...	...	3,045½
May	2,484½	7,881½	November	...	...	859½
		40½	December	...	...	1,628½
						2,754½
TOTALS	18,012	7,922½	TOTAL	...	...	23,935
			Balance in store on 31st December	...	...	23,935

Illegal Killing of Game and Breaches of the Game Laws.

During 1926 there appear to have been the same number of convictions for breaches of the Game Ordinance as were obtained in the previous year, *i.e.*, 23.

Musaka	...	...	...	...	...	1
Toro	...	...	...	...	...	8
Lira	...	...	...	...	...	4
Mitarara	...	...	...	...	...	5
Gulu	...	...	...	...	...	1
Entebbe	...	...	...	...	...	4

There can be little doubt that the illegal killing of game is on the decrease, and in the majority of prosecutions the offences were of a minor nature.

It is gratifying to find that in certain districts such as Toro, Ankole and Entebbe, which contain sparsely populated or uninhabited areas well-suited to game, the tendency of the local inhabitants to indulge in illegal hunting and meat selling has received a check.

In Karamoja the exemplary sentences inflicted in 1925 appear to have acted as a deterrent in so far as the slaughter of giraffes is concerned, but in the Lango district certain numbers of this fine animal are still being killed in contravention of the Game Laws. The maximum sentences imposed were two months R.I. and fines of Shs. 300/-. The most serious breaches of the game laws occurred in the Ankole and Toro districts, Europeans being the offenders.

In Ankole an Italian prospector was fined Shs. 300/- for killing game without a licence and for selling game meat, and in addition his licence was cancelled. This person is a menace to game, as he is known to have contravened the game laws in Uganda at other times, but there was insufficient evidence to warrant prosecution; while at a later date, but when still working in the Protectorate, he was charged at Bukoba with killing more than one hundred black rhinoceros in Tanganyika Territory just across our border and convicted and fined Shs. 1,000/-. In Toro, a Frenchman grossly exceeded the numbers of certain species he was entitled to kill under licence, and was fined Shs. 300/-. The illegal killing of white rhinoceros in West Nile district still continues, as the number of "found" horns that are brought in to district headquarters cannot be the result of deaths from natural causes.

Horns brought in during 1926 were:—Arua 22, Gulu 12; total 34.

Horns from Gulu presumably originate from West Madi and would be those of white rhinoceros.

It is impossible to believe that seventeen of these long-lived animals are likely to die naturally in a year. Spiked foot-traps combined with nooses are still freely used in parts of Ankole, Masaka, and Bunyoro. These are set in game paths or round game licks, and sometimes salt is put down on ant-hills set about with snares, in order to lure animals to their destruction. Topi and hartebeest are the most frequent victims of this method of trapping. Game netting on a fairly extensive scale occurs from time to time in the uninhabited areas, but on the whole the attentions of the game-netter are confined to the cultivated localities and to species not included in the list of scheduled animals.

The smaller game in the Gulu sleeping sickness closed area on the right bank of the Albert Nile still suffers from incursions by the population dwelling on the left bank. Situngu are freely killed on the Sese Islands of Victoria Nyanza with the aid of canoes, dogs and spearmen, in the majority of cases lawfully in defence of crops. Where poaching takes place in uninhabited areas or on islands without population offences are difficult of detection, and there is definite proof that frequent visits have been made to Damba Island—a closed area, now a game reserve—for the purpose of illegal game-killing, though no evidence is forthcoming as to the identity of the culprits. At one period of the year nearly every lake steamer from Mwanza was bringing for sale quantities of giraffe hair bangles or giraffe tails, evidently trophies from numerous animals illegally killed in Tanganyika Territory. The necessary action was taken to stop this traffic.

Although it is apparent that poaching and trapping in the Lake Nakivali area of the Ankole district has markedly decreased, it was noted in October that a seasonal fishing camp, which is held at a time when the lake is high and fills all its feeder channels and floods the adjacent low-lying flats, constitutes a serious threat to the game, for foot-traps and nooses were found freely distributed in its vicinity. Tribal hunts, on a grand scale, conducted by the Acholi at certain seasons, continue. Besides the harm done to the game by such wholesale methods it is understood on the authority of the Specialist Officer in-charge, Sleeping Sickness, that these organised hunts which take place in the vicinity of or actually within sleeping sickness areas may be directly responsible for the spread, and for fresh outbreaks, of sleeping sickness. Game scouts have proved their value by helping to reduce the poaching in uninhabited areas where game is plentiful.

Game Trophies.

Export permits for elephant tusks, buffalo hides, hippopotamus teeth, blue monkey skins and other trophies of pronounced marketable value were issued during 1926 as under:—

TUSKS OF ELEPHANTS OBTAINED BY LICENCE-HOLDERS AS REPRESENTED BY EXPORT PERMITS ISSUED DURING 1926.

	Over 20 lbs. etc.	Over 30 lbs. etc.	Over 40 lbs. etc.	Over 50 lbs. etc.	Over 60 lbs. etc.	Over 70 lbs. etc.	Over 80 lbs. etc.	Over 90 lbs. etc.	Over 100 lbs. etc.	Total for District
Mengo	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Mubende ... ..	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Masaka ... ..	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Ankole	3	7	6	...	2	1	1	...	...	20
Kiziba	4	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Toro	15	7	1*	4	...	1*	...	...	...	28
Bunyoro	12	14	7	11	8	10	...	2	...	64
West Nile	24	17	34	24†	16	10‡	4	2	...	131
Gulu	13	6	4	3*	5	3‡	...	...	...	34
Chua ... ..	...	5	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	10
Karamoja	2	2	...	...	...	1	2	1	...	8
Lungu	6	3	3	2	2	2	...	...	...	18
Toho ... ..	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Bugisha ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	77
Busoga ... ..	...	...	1‡	...	1	...	...	...	...	2
TOTALS	85	66	73	45	34	28	7	5	...	353

* Includes one single tusk. † Includes two single tusks. ‡ Portion of 70 lb. tusk damaged by bullet.

N.B.—(a) Totals include those of 7 single-tusked elephants.

(b) Five pairs of underweight tusks—errors of judgment on the part of licence-holders—were returned to sportsmen, thus filling their licences.

(c) The above list represents a total of 170 elephants obtained by licence-holders, to which must be added the five elephants with underweight tusks referred to in (b).

Hippopotamus teeth 1,288 lbs. (this does not include sportsmen's trophies).

Rhinoceros horns (black rhinoceros) 24 (sportsmen's trophies).

Buffalo hides 158 (includes 50 hides the property of Government).

Blue Monkey skins 287 (nearly all from Bugisha district).

Colobus Monkey skins 53 (includes sportsmen's trophies from Ankole, Bunyoro, Mount Elgon, West Nile, Toro and Eastern Province).

Blue Duiker (*Ntalaganya*) skins 32 and 14 karasses.

The hippopotamus teeth originate from the River Nile vermin area in the Northern Province.
i.e.—Gulu 450 lbs., West Nile 423 lbs., Bunyoro 415 lbs., total 1,288 lbs.

As the buffalo appears to be increasing rapidly both in, and in the vicinity of, the populated areas it has been found advisable to grant permission for the sale of all hides lawfully obtained under game licences.

Government-owned hides originate from the activities of native guards employed on cultivation protection.

The hides were obtained in the following areas:—Mengo 34 (Bugerere, Koja and Bulemezi); Masaka 1; Ankole 18; Toro 46; Bunyoro 7; Busoga 2; total 108; Government 50 (Ankole Masaka, Mubende, Toro and Bunyoro); total 158.

Blue Monkey.—The total of skins exported is large, but mainly represents the accumulations of past years when this species was not afforded protection.

Colobus Monkey.—The skins enumerated above were principally obtained under recent game licences. The accumulations of past years are represented by two karasses, each containing twelve skins.

Blue Duiker (Ntalaganya).—Trading in these skins appears to have ceased, and those exported are past accumulations.

Sportsmen's Trophies.—That trophies of outstanding merit can still be obtained in the Protectorate, the following measurements will show:—

Species.	Maximum horn length, inches.	Locality.	Species.	Maximum horn length, inches.	Locality.
Situtunga	26	Sese Islands	Buffalo	47	Mubende
Impala	28½	Ankole	Bushbuck	16½	Karamoja
Eland	29½	Karamoja	Waterbuck	35	Toro
"	24	Ankole	"	35½	"
White Rhinoceros (front horn)	42½	West Nile (found)	"	34	"
Buffalo	44½	Karamoja			

As far as can be ascertained from export permits that have been issued, the numbers of the more interesting species obtained under licence during the year are as under:—

White Rhinoceros 1 (West Nile), Black Rhinoceros 12 (Gulu, Karamoja and Lango), Greater Kudu 3 (all with heads of over fifty inches), Lesser Kudu 4 (Karamoja), Grant's Gazelle (Bright's) 15 (Karamoja), Oryx 13 (Karamoja), Chimpanzee 2 (one in Ankole, one from Bugoma Forest, Bunyoro), Klipspringer 5 (Ankole and Karamoja), Eland 10 (Ankole and Karamoja), Impala 5 (Ankole and Masaka), Situtunga 27 (includes 13 old trophies, and 8 obtained in a closed area for research purposes).

These figures can only be taken as a guide, and are certainly considerably below the actual numbers killed by sportsmen. However, under the provisions of the 1926 Game Ordinance in regard to the submission of game registers, it is hoped in future to obtain accurate returns of all game killed each year under licence.

Elephant Control.

If various happenings can be accepted as a direct result of elephant control, then the methods of the department in its endeavour to safeguard the interests of the native population are meeting with a measure of success which were hardly expected at so early a date. In Bunyoro, the huge Budongo herd for the last three years has emerged later and later from the sanctuary of the game reserve, though for climatic reasons it cannot remain out any longer than before. This herd when moving through cultivated areas or even when remaining stationary in their vicinity for considerable periods is avoiding the shambas, and in spite of the large numbers of elephants of which it consists the damage attributed to it is now extremely small.

The Bugoma herd, evidently on account of continued, steady pressure on the part of native guards from the south-east, south and south-west, at one period abandoned the cultivated areas and the forest and for several weeks was located on the open plain at Kaiso on the shores of Lake Albert. According to native report such an incident is without precedent. In Toro there is a marked tendency for the somewhat large herds, which for years have had their main refuges in the Kibale Forest and the dense areas of Busongora, to move southerly into the uninhabited areas in the vicinity of Lake George, whence the majority of these elephants are reputed to have originally come.

In Masaka, the Mawogola herd shows less and less inclination to break out of the closed area which constitutes its breeding ground, though the elephants based on the River Katonga remain as truculent as ever.

In the south of the district small parties of the Toro Forest elephants make periodical forays into Koki and also move along the River Kagera into Ankole, where they have a rallying-point in the "fly"-infested Kabiganda Valley, the westerly limit of their wanderings.

A herd established in Kabiganda is easily moved, for a few shots send the animals back to the Toro in headlong flight and they are not likely to return for several months.

The Mawogola elephants when they do come out into the populated areas cause far less damage than before and appear to avoid the shambas. A herd of nearly three hundred animals took up its abode in the vicinity of the main road to Mbarara near Kyasanga for some weeks without doing any harm.

Extraordinarily heavy shooting on the part of licence-holders in the West Nile district has had the effect of driving the breeding herd across the Albert Nile into the Gulu sleeping sickness closed area and the majority of the bigger bulls that are left have followed.