

OP. 33710. 799. 01 (12)
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ATA RITCHIE

pp 3, 72



COLONY AND PROTECTORATE OF KENYA

GAME DEPARTMENT
ANNUAL REPORT

1932, 1933 and 1934



Price 2/-

1935

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER,
NAIROBI, KENYA COLONY

To be purchased from the Government Printer, Nairobi, or
The Crown Agents for the Colonies, Millbank, London, S.W.

LICENCES	European			Indian			Goan			Arab and Somali			Native			Total		
	1932	1933	1934	1932	1933	1934	1932	1933	1934	1932	1933	1934	1932	1933	1934	1932	1933	1934
10, 2nd (under resident's Full) £10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10, 2nd (under visitor's Full) £10	4	4	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	4	1	
15 (under Resident's Full) £15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
15 (under Visitor's Full) £15	1	1	3	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	6	10	
15 (under Resident's Full) £15	6	3	6	—	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	6	—	
15 (under Visitor's Full) £15	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	2	
24 (under Visitor's Full) £24	24	57	21	5	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29	58	21	
Permits for Elephant in District—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Bull	—	54	106	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	54	106	
Cow	—	6	72	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	72	
Permits for Elephant in District—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Yearly	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	
Fortnightly	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	
24-hourly	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	—	—	
Sh. 10	635	509	581	1	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	641	612	606	
Sh. 25	191	193	215	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	193	195	218	
Sh. 10	592	767	663	9	2	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	651	818	683	
Sh. 3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
TOTAL	2,753	2,824	2,772	182	123	119	138	155	106	73	57	59	143	123	108	3,289	3,282	3,164

*£75 †£7/10s. ‡£2 §Distinction between Visitors and Residents abolished.

The trout licence figures for the last eight years are as follows :—

LICENCES	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Yearly ..	74	94	334	390	551	643	612	606
Fortnightly	154	83	134	147	207	199	195	218
24-hourly ..	—	73	257	379	651	666	818	683
Total Revenue £	374	370	570	632	910	1,018	985	973

It would, I think, serve no good purpose to examine closely the reasons for the rise and fall in certain licence figures; since anyone reasonably conversant with affairs in Kenya and elsewhere can explain them as accurately as I can. Game licences are, up to a point, in the nature of luxuries and accordingly react readily to economic conditions.

The increase in Visitors' Full Licences from 9 in 1932 to 22 in 1933 gave rise to hopes which 1934 did not see fulfilled: for this, reasons can be described more psychological perhaps than economic. Big-game hunting is a fine antidote to the boredom of a settled civilization; but when the tedium of hyperorganized existence is dispersed by threats of impending cataclysm there is no longer need to seek thrills in the baiting of the African wilds.

B.—IVORY AND CONFISCATED TROPHIES.

The sums obtained from the sale of ivory and confiscated trophies were: in 1932, £8,818; in 1933, £7,261; and £9,709 in 1934.

The total weight of Government ivory sold in 1932 was 22,582 lb. and 578 lb. of rhino horn; in 1933, 31,156 lb. of ivory and 546 lb. of rhino horn; and in 1934, 28,931 lb. and 2,418 lb. of rhino horn. As indicated by these figures the value of ivory was low during 1933. Indeed it reached a record low point about May that year when large (100 lb.) tusks of soft ivory fetched only some Sh. 4/50 per lb.—a striking contrast to the prices obtaining in 1925, when such ivory fetched round about Sh. 20 a lb. Rhino horn also was low at

In 1933, at the request of the Nyeri District Committee, we prevailed on Mr. J. A. Hunter to thin out the rhino in the Muringato Forest, where these animals were far too numerous. One estimate I received put them down as 200 in an area of some six square miles. Actually there were probably a score; and some of them took to waiting about the Nyeri-Nanyuki and the Nyeri-Rumuruti roads, and amusing themselves chasing motor cars or pedestrians.

Mr. Hunter shot 11, and the remainder moved off; I heard subsequently that several had returned, but complaints as to their behaviour were not serious.

We have reason to be most grateful to Mr. Hunter for the work he did. It was essential that it should be done by the most expert hunter available, since the forest there, especially in the rhino thickets, is incredibly dense; and a wounded animal at large in so populous an area would have been a terrible menace. I may say that Mr. Hunter handed in to Government the horns of the animals he shot, and accepted for his work his bare out-of-pocket expenses only.

Rhino gave unprecedented trouble, especially during 1934, in the Southern Game Reserve, and the District Commissioner, Kajjado, had a difficult and trying time on their account. The reasons for their unusual truculence were probably in the main as follows:

Drought conditions dried up a number of water-holes, and concentrated game and humanity at the remaining drinking places. In consequence, these morose creatures were forced into a proximity with man which they normally avoid, and bitterly resent. They thus became very bellicose and ready to contest every encounter—a sad change from the normal behaviour of Masailand rhino. Add to this perpetual gout-like irritability the fact that the lack of grazing in open country drove the Masai to herd their beasts further and further into the dense thickets that are the rhinos' chosen retreat, and the explanation of the frequency of attacks and casualties is plain.

A number of rhino paid the penalty for their lack of forbearance, and we may hope that the "survival of the fittest" temperamentally will be evident in their subsequent behaviour.

Various other of our fauna, from buffalo to Kavirondo crane, came in for abuse, in many cases doubtless well earned, in some quarter or other of the Colony.

It says much for the spirit of Kenya with regard to game that, in spite of drought and other troubles, when the matter of the removal of bush-cats and leopards from the District

came up for discussion in August before the Uasin Gishu District Association it was turned down by a unanimous vote.

8.—ANIMALS AND THE RAILWAY.

September, 1933, was an unusually bad month for giraffe along the Railway, five being killed by trains; the total bag for the year was 18. The result of this was that there were very few weeks in the year when the purlieus of my office had not the pungently organic whaling-station soap-factory smell, so beloved of the larger and buzzier form of green blue-bottle. I have indeed frequently regretted the kindness of the Kenya and Uganda Railways in agreeing to deliver to me, free of charge, the hides of giraffe which have fallen victim to this latter-day lust for speed. However, a more serious problem even than my olfactory comfort is involved, since it is always conceivable that one of these animals, being hit square, will fall beneath the cowcatcher and derail the train.

During the dry times of the last two years at a number of stations the overflow from the water tower provided free drinks for a variety of guests. I may mention a few of the more interesting:—

Konza and Sultan Hamud.—Lions at times.

Makindu.—Lions and leopard regularly.

Mtito Andei.—Lions and many waterbuck.

Buchuma.—Lions and impala regularly.

Maungu.—Lions and sometimes elephant.

Mackinnon Road.—Elephant, waterbuck, lions, small antelopes and warthogs were all regular nightly visitors for weeks on end.

Maktau.—Lions regularly.

On two station platforms at least (Kenani and Tsavo), rhino took nocturnal strolls. At the latter station one added injury to insult by pulling up and breaking the signal wire.

9.—ZOOLOGICAL AND VARIOUS DISCONNECTED NOTES.

A NEW DUIKER.

The outstanding zoological event I have to record was the discovery by Mr. Raymond Hook, Nanyuki, of a new duiker.

For some time past, Mr. Hook had believed in the existence of an uncollected duiker on Mount Kenya; and I told him that there would be no objection to invoking the aid of Wanderobo, with whom he was in touch in order that specimens might be obtained.

In September, 1933, Mr. Hook forwarded to me the skin and skull of a female, with the following remarks:—

"Its native name is *Kichachu*, and it seems to live exclusively in the bamboos on the south-west of Mount Kenya, at an elevation of 8,500 to 10,000 feet."

The outstanding peculiarity of the animal was the typical *Cephalopus* skull and the *Sylvicapra*-like texture and annulation of the hair.

Mr. Hook subsequently obtained an adult male, which he sent me together with some further observations:—

"*Kichachu* differs from *ignifer* in having noticeably smaller and more insignificant horns, with much less annulation. As far as is at present known, all females are horned. All accounts agree that *Kichachu* is a gentle soul and, when snared, awaits capture in a very calm manner."

I forwarded the skins and skulls to the British Museum, and in due course (September, 1934) the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* contained a description by Miss J. St. Leger of the new duiker, which has been named *Cephalopus hooki*. A description of the *Cephalopus fosteri* from Mount Elgon appeared in the same publication; and Miss St. Leger states that *hooki* and *fosteri* appear to be closely related to *nigrifrons* of the Congo and *rubidus* of Mount Ruwenzori.

We must congratulate Mr. Hook on his discovery and its perpetuation.

SPOTTED LIONS.

Mr. Trent, of Ol Kalou, brought me in 1933 two lion skins, one of an oldish male and one of an apparently full-grown female which were of some interest. The animals had been shot in the bamboo zone of the Aberdares. Both skins showed the same peculiarity, dark pigmentation, more particularly along the dorsal median area, the pigmentation being in rosette patterns as in leopards and very young lions, and distinct from the dappling which is still found on the flanks and legs of many old lions. A further peculiarity was that the legs appeared, from the dry skins, to be remarkably short. Unhappily, no skulls nor parts of the skeleton were available.

I am in doubt as to whether the dark markings are the result of mere individual or family tendency to some degree of melanism; or are the result of environment acting on the individual; or are "set" in sufficient degree as to constitute a claim to racial status. If the first possibility is the case, we find a family trait comparable to that displayed by the herd of

white waterbuck which in pre-War days lived near the Lorian; if the second is correct, any cub from the plains loosed in the bamboo would show similar markings on reaching maturity; and if the last proves to be true, then individuals from the bamboo zone, placed in hot open plain country, would grow up true to the dark type and would breed true.

I may mention that animals as darkly marked have on occasions been seen in low plain country, but very uncommonly.

Further specimens and, importantly, skeletons will be needed to decide finally the matter.

ELEPHANT.

A white elephant was killed by Mr. Cunningham in the course of control operations during 1934 on Laikipia. The skin was as white as a substance of such texture can be; all hairs were white, and the eyes pink—an instance of complete albinism.

Mr. Cunningham also killed a cow elephant which was found to be carrying well-developed twin foeti. I am not aware to what extent such lavishness is unusual or unique.

RHINO.

Mr. Horace Dawson saw two curious incidents connected with these animals when he was elephant hunting. On one occasion he saw a pair of rhino among a herd of elephants; some of the very young elephants were actually playing with the rhino, who seemed friendly and flattered. This ill accords with my experience of the relationship, or lack of it, between these two great beasts, which has been to the effect that rhino were terrified of elephant, and invariably gave them a very wide berth, making way with more haste than dignity at their approach. Incidentally, a rhino cow and her young calf were killed by elephant on the Tsavo River in January, 1933.

The second incident seen by Mr. Dawson was as follows: He was in long grass, working into a herd of elephant, when he was charged at point blank range by a rhino, which he was compelled to shoot. The elephant at once came for the sound of the shot, and Mr. Dawson got out quick. It was then late, and Mr. Dawson did not return till the morning, when he found that the rhino carcass had been dragged over a hundred yards by elephant into some trees and covered with branches. This latter habit, covering a corpse—be it one of their own kind, or a human or other—with branches, is of course well known, but to drag a full-grown rhino a hundred yards is, I imagine, unusual.

In 1932, a three-horned rhino was killed by a Mkamba. Incidentally, I met a Msanye who stated that in the course of his hunting career he had killed three rhino so equipped.

GIRAFFE.

Mr. Stanton gave me a few notes on giraffe which are of some interest:—

"A giraffe calf can and does bawl like any healthy cattle cow's calf when caught, and further it will low at intervals when separated from its mother. Other than a raucous noise, apparently made through its throat, which we have observed from the mature male giraffe when proclaiming his lordship over a herd, we have not heard adult giraffe make any guttural sound."

Mr. Stanton caught his giraffe by driving them into a "V" enclosure. He found that males tame more quickly than females. He found that giraffe can strike upwards as well as forwards and downwards; he also observed them to kick with the hind legs.

BUFFALO.

There was great mortality among these animals from rinderpest during 1933 and 1934, notably in the Tsavo, Sabaki, Kasigau area. A curious feature of the disease in the area around Kibwezi, Athi, Chulu Hills, was the fact that animals appeared to be dying from it over a period of some two years. I say "appeared", for although I myself have no doubt of the facts the statement is so odd that I felt it needed qualification.

KUDU.

I fear that both Greater and Lesser Kudu have suffered severely from rinderpest during the last two years. A Greater Kudu, probably a sick animal, was seen in 1934 by a competent observer on the southern slopes of the Ngong Hills; it had probably come up from the Narosura country.

In 1932 I saw on Kulal a Greater Kudu which carried a head that I place at 60 in. at least, and believe probably ran to 63 in. or 64 in.; it was one of five adult bulls lying together in a small clearing. A head of 58½ in. was recently obtained in the southern part of the Northern Frontier District.

Lesser Kudu I believe to be much less numerous in several areas than they were ten years ago, notably in Tanaland and in the Voi-Taveta country. The killing off of leopards should have led to an increase, and I can only attribute the diminution to a combination of drought and rinderpest, the former rendering the latter more fatal.

BONGO.

I am happy to be able to state with confidence that Bongo have increased in number considerably during the past five years, and more noticeably during the past three. In this connection I should like to say that we have to be grateful to the Forest Department for a much fuller measure of assistance and co-operation recently than we were formerly accorded, and we may hope accordingly that the Bongo herds will continue to thrive and increase.

Mr. F. T. Gill, Kericho, kindly gave me an account and photographs of a male Bongo found by him in Mau Forest. It had clearly, as shown by its wound and the surrounding spoor, been killed in fair fight by a rival. There is perhaps nothing astonishing in this occurrence, but as being, I believe, the first recorded instance of Bongo fighting it is noteworthy.

HUNTER'S ANTELOPE.

This interesting and attractive animal appears to have slightly increased its numbers in recent years, though any exact census is difficult if not impossible.

A head half an inch over the previous record (27 in.) was obtained in 1933 by Mrs. McMartin.

KENYA ORIBI.

I find that the distributional range of this delightful antelope is wider than was at one time believed, and there does not appear to be any danger of its extinction.

HARTEBEESTE, COKE'S, ETC.

These animals are usually the first to succumb to the effects of drought and partial starvation, their lowered condition making them susceptible to a lung infestation to which they appear to be immune under favourable circumstances. Many died during the last two years.

WATERBUCK.

Within three or four miles of Nairobi Aerodrome the distributional ranges of *C. ellipsiprymus* and *C. defassa* meet. From there across on to the slopes of the Ngong Hills herds of waterbuck may be seen in which individuals show every degree of gradation between the types of the two species, and there is no doubt that cross-breeding is general.

LYNX.

I have always believed this animal to be of very sparse occurrence in Kenya. The intensive leopard trapping in the Northern Frontier Province in 1932 disclosed the fact that they were numerous in the Wajir area, several hundred skins being brought in there.