



UGANDA PROTECTORATE.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

GAME DEPARTMENT

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1925.

Signed - C R S. PITMAN. ENTEBBE 20 SEP 1926

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1927.

Illegal Killing of Game and Breaches of the Game Laws.

As far as can be ascertained there were 23 prosecutions for breaches of the Game Ordinance in which convictions were obtained during 1925, as against 19 during 1924. There is a curious idea extant that, although laws are normally framed in order to be observed, the Game Laws can be broken with impunity, and there is often a feeling of intense resentment when cases of breaches of the Game Laws are brought into Court. A fine is of little value when considerable profit has been made out of infringements of the Game Ordinance unless it covers the extent of that profit and much more. An offender usually errs for profit and when caught out if the result is still material gain after having paid a fine, he will simply break the law again at the first opportunity.

It is very gratifying to find that Administrative Officers in the outlying districts take considerable interest in game preservation, a fact which is of the greatest help to this Department, as its activities so far have been principally confined to the more thickly populated areas. In particular the thanks of the Game Department are due to the Officers administering the districts of Karamoja, Lango, Chua, Gulu, and West Nile during the years 1924 and 1925. In 1924 sentences varied from fines of Shs. 2,000 to Shs. 2, and terms of R. I. from one month to seven days. In 1925 sentences ranged from fines of Shs. 2,000 to Shs. 20 and terms of R. I. from four months to seven days. During 1925 several exemplary sentences were imposed on offenders in Karamoja in cases of the illegal killing of giraffes.

In 1924 and 1925 cases were distributed as follows:

| St. Dist. | 1924 | 1925 | St. Dist. | 1924 | 1925 |
|-------------|------|------|-----------|------|------|
| Machakos | 4 | 2 | Entebbe | 1 | — |
| Lara | 1 | — | Moroto | 1 | 5 |
| Machakos | 2 | 2 | Arusi | — | 2 |
| Perera | 1 | — | Mombasa | 1 | — |
| Kampala | 1 | — | Hama | — | 2 |
| Fort Portal | 1 | — | Kitgum | — | 2 |
| Jinja | 1 | — | | | |
| | | | Total | 19 | 20 |

Convictions were mainly obtained of killing game without a licence and of meat selling. In the latter type of offence some heavy penalties were imposed both in 1924 and 1925.

Game Trophies.

From the 1st July, 1925, the Game Department assumed direct control of all matters pertaining to game trophies, and certificates of legal possession and export permits were only issued from headquarters. This procedure undoubtedly has had a beneficial effect on game in general as smugglers at the coast now run the risk of having their trophies confiscated, being detained at Mombasa and losing their ship, as well as courting punishment for breaking the law. At the same time this innovation provides an efficient check on the quantity of saleable trophies that are leaving the country and to a lesser extent on the wastage occurring in any species, while it also furnishes accurate and easily available data on the number and size of elephant tusks which are obtained in the Protectorate during any special period or in any particular district.

The institution of any scheme of properly regulated export permits and certificates of legal possession for game trophies must of necessity prove somewhat irksome at first, but there is no hardship in this system and all animal lovers will agree that it has gone a long way towards extending adequate protection to several harmless species which were being mercilessly done to death for gain.

Statistics are naturally incomplete during the first year of the inception of such a scheme, but in the second half of 1925 export permits for elephant tusks, buffalo hides, hippopotamus teeth, blue monkey skins and other trophies of pronounced marketable value were issued as under.

Elephant tusks (31 pairs and one single tusk).

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|----|------------------|-----|-----|----|
| 50 lbs. and over | ... | ... | 1 | 50 lbs. and over | ... | ... | 7 |
| 70 " " " | ... | ... | 9 | 40 " " " | ... | ... | 19 |
| 60 " " " | ... | ... | 17 | 30 " " " | ... | ... | 16 |
| | | | | Total | ... | ... | 63 |

| | | | |
|--|------|------|-----------------------|
| Hippopotamus teeth | .... | .... | 218 lbs. and 80 teeth |
| (this does not include sportsmen's trophies) | | | |
| Rhinoceros horns | .... | .... | 2 |
| Buffalo hides | .... | .... | 58 |
| Blue monkey skins | .... | .... | 187 |
| Colobus monkey skins | .... | .... | 13 |
| Blue duiker (ntalaganiya) skins | .... | .... | 144 |
| (mostly made up into karosses). | | | |

The HIPPOPOTAMUS is classed as vermin in Lakes Victoria, Albert, Edward and George, and in the River Nile, and as there is a ready sale for its teeth a certain amount of trading takes place in this commodity, but so far this fact has resulted in no undue slaughter, and the hippopotamus is quite as plentiful, and in many places as great a nuisance, as ever.

The BUFFALO is far more common in Uganda than might at first appear as it is an animal which haunts papyrus swamps and dense cover, and with few exceptions is almost entirely nocturnal in habits. Unless thinned out by steady shooting buffaloes increase with great rapidity and in numerous localities this species is an undoubted scourge and not infrequently becomes a menace to the existence of the peasant himself as well as to his crops.

In the past periodical outbreaks of rinderpest have been the principal factor in tending to keep in check the numbers of buffaloes.

BLUE MONKEY.—It is hoped that the protection which will be afforded this species under the new Game Ordinance will help to stop the unnecessary destruction of a beautiful animal. In future a very limited number will be permitted to be killed or captured under licence and this fact should act as a deterrent to natives who hitherto have been in the habit of making no inconsiderable profit from the sale of these skins. At the request of the Kenya Game Department duly certified export permits have been insisted on for some time past before such trophies can be taken out of the country. This measure was adopted to safeguard the blue monkey—a scheduled animal—in Kenya, as it was discovered that large quantities of illegally acquired skins were being exported from that colony on forged permits purporting to emanate from offices in Uganda.

COLOBUS MONKEY.—Occasionally these handsome skins obtained in contravention of the Game Laws are produced by natives for sale or barter. Little damage however has been done to the species which is widely distributed and common in its habitat. Natives in possession of shot guns, in the hope of profit, might prove a menace to this animal, which is otherwise not likely to be secured except by the use of the bow and arrow.

BLUE DUIKER (NTALAGANIYA).—The ntaganiya is a little creature which, although appearing in the schedules of the Game Ordinance, has been illegally persecuted in the past for the sake of its soft skin, numbers of which are sewn together to form handsome rugs and karosses. There is no doubt that this species is most mischievous and destructive where cultivation is concerned, but as it is a forest haunting creature such damage is confined to localities where crops are raised on the outskirts of forests and offers no excuse for the wholesale destruction of this animal by means of snares placed in its runs in the depths of the cover it frequents. With skins realising from Sh. 1 to Shs. 2 apiece no wonder the local inhabitants find ntaganiya trapping a profitable pastime. It is believed that this trade has now virtually ceased.

DIK-DIK SKINS.—It has been the practice for some time to import large quantities of dik-dik skins from Italian Somaliland. These delicate skins have always found ready purchasers. In future their sale will be illegal and it is hoped that with co-operation from neighbouring British Territories it will be possible to suppress this trade. So long as there is a demand, so long will there be an only too ready source of supply.

SPORTSMEN'S TROPHIES.—There is little of striking interest amongst the lists of sporting trophies for which export permits have been granted though it is noted that bags of game occasionally include sitatunga.

GORILLA and WHITE RHINOCEROS are dealt with elsewhere.

As there is no material from Uganda in the National collection it is possible that the Karamoja and Lango animals are different from those found elsewhere in the Protectorate and that both can be racially separated from Grant's variety.

67. *Diceros Bicornis Holmwoodi*—The Black Rhinoceros.—Widely distributed throughout Karamoja and parts of Chua; more sparingly in Gulu where it is reported to reach the Albert Nile in North Acholi and is also found in South Koich. In South Lango, in the sleeping sickness area on the Kioga peninsula between Lakes Kwania and Kioga there are considerable numbers.

Although this animal is still quite plentiful immediately south of the River Kagera there appears to be no authentic record of a single animal ever having been killed or seen north of that river.

A settler who has been in the country nearly thirty years informs me that he has heard of Black Rhinoceros being killed in the Masaka District but can adduce no conclusive evidence. Similarly, the report of specimens of this Rhinoceros occurring in the past in Bunyoro, south of the Victoria Nile, is probably founded on fact, though as yet I can find no evidence in support of this.

A controversial point is whether or no any Black Rhinoceros occur in the West Nile District or in the West Madi area of the Gulu District on the left bank of the Albert Nile.

There is no reason why they should not, for this species is known to reach the neighbouring right bank of the river, while it also occurs further north and north-west on the opposite side.

There are many claimants to notoriety in this respect, who are prepared to swear that they have seen a Black Rhinoceros at a distance of a few yards in this debatable area. So far I consider their claim not proven.

On the evidence of experts who have been familiar with this southern portion of the old Lado Enclave for many years there is no reason to believe that it occurs there.

Captain Stigand in his book on "Elephant Hunting" does state:—

"I have shot a good many Rhinoceros in East Africa and in the Lado when under the Belgians during the ordinary course of trekking either when in want of meat or because they came uncomfortably close to ones porters."

He was evidently referring to the unpleasant habits of the "Black" Rhinoceros, as the "White" variety is of a placid and peaceful disposition. However, nowhere else in his various publications can I find record of his observing or shooting Black Rhinoceros in the Lado, though in the days of which he writes much of his travelling was done in that portion of the Lado now owned by the Sudan, and the inference is that it was in the far north that he must have come across this species.

68. *Ceratotherium Cottoni*—The White Rhinoceros.—Dealt with fully elsewhere.

69. (a) *Rock* and (b) *Tree*—*Hyraxes*.—Material from Uganda is scanty, though probably many forms occur.

(a) *Procavia Ruwenzori*, from the Ruwenzori Mountains, named in 1902.

Procavia Damon, from Mt. Elgon, described in 1910.

Heterohyrax Brucei Bakeri, in Gulu, Chua and Karamoja.

Heterohyrax Brucei Kempf, Mt. Elgon (1910).

(b) *Dendrohyrax Marmotta*, Entebbe (1910).

Dendrohyrax C. Crawshayi, Uganda (1901) (no stated locality).

Tree Hyraxes are believed to occur in all the large forests.

70. *Loxodonta Africana*—The African Elephant.—The elephant is dealt with at length elsewhere. It is not proposed to enter into a discussion on the merits of the racial separation of elephants as at present exists. The majority of the Uganda elephants belong to the race *Albertensis*. Those in Eastern and Southern Karamoja probably belong to the East African race: those from North Karamoja to the Sudan type. The Sudan type occurs again in parts of Gulu and also in West Nile, in which latter district the elephants have a fair admixture of Congo animals, and where hard ivory is liable to occur.

Edward in the Belgian Congo at the end of 1924. The utmost sympathy is extended to his plucky daughter who insisted on completing the collection of Uganda specimens which her father had set out to obtain.

3. *Mysterious Mammals*.—In spite of the wide-spread interest manifest in recent years as to the likelihood of certain forms of prehistoric species still eking out a precarious existence in a few obscure areas in Africa nothing tangible has so far come to light in Uganda.

Investigations are carried on unremittingly in this respect, but as yet with no result.

The most fruitful source of rumour is located in the wild, volcanic regions of the Kigezi District in the S.W. corner of the Protectorate; while the discovery in 1924 of the fossil bone of a species of Chalicothere (a creature which must originally have been the model of the unobtainable "Nandi Bear" of Kenya Colony of the present day) in the Kaiso beds on the Eastern flats of Lake Albert tends to give credence to some of the weird stories which have evidently been handed down for generations by certain tribes.

4. *White Rhinoceros Census*.—It was in early 1924 that an article published in the Bulletin of the Zoological Society of New York drew the attention of the public in general to the fact that the recently "re-discovered" northern race of the white rhinoceros was in imminent danger of following the fate of its southern relative, i.e., virtual extinction.

The situation appeared to be so serious that the voices of many eminent scientific bodies, naturalists and sportsmen were raised in protest at the unnecessary destruction of so interesting a species, with the result that energetic action was taken in Uganda to preserve the remaining specimens of this inoffensive and particularly helpless animal, especially noteworthy on account of its connection with the fauna of a remote past.

The last stronghold of this race is located in the S. W. of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and in the adjoining fringe of the Congo basin under French and Belgian rule, extending as far west as the Cameroons and south up the White Nile almost to Lake Albert. The locality with which this department is concerned is the West Nile District and that portion of Gulu (West Madi) situated on the left bank of the Nile, the whole area being a portion of the erstwhile Lado Enclave and forming the N.W. corner of the Protectorate.

The main haunt of the white rhinoceros in Uganda is along the left bank of the Albert Nile and the species is particularly plentiful in the neighbourhood of certain swamps and marshy areas.

Permission to kill or capture specimens of this rare creature can now only be accorded by H.E. the Governor and such sanction is sparingly granted to representatives of recognised scientific institutions which are in urgent need of a specimen, the stipulation being made that the whole skin, together with sufficient of the skeleton for purposes of setting up, is taken away.

These safeguards, as well as the fact that only an extremely limited number of permits are granted each year, have acted as an effective deterrent and only two white rhinoceros were killed by licence-holders during 1925 (both before the imposition of the present severe restrictions as to the disposal of the trophies).

Every endeavour has been made to put a stop to the illegal destruction of this animal by the natives and the result is distinctly gratifying.

No rewards are paid when "Found" rhinoceros horns are brought in to Government, in fact the finder invites punishment by not reporting his discovery and handing in the trophies with the least possible delay. There are few incentives left to kill so bulky an animal, though the horns are of considerable commercial value being used for medicinal purposes in the Far East, and Indian traders will pay high prices for them. Rhinoceros horns cut into small pieces are by no means difficult to smuggle out of the country.

During the year under review two white rhinoceros fell into a deep salt-lick in West Madi and were drowned. Also, a certain number of these animals probably fall victims to game-pits.

Until quite recently considerable quantities of white rhinoceros horns were brought into the Kibiro Salt Mines on the eastern shores of Lake Albert as a medium of barter. Quite a number of the horns must have come from British Territory though

it is not unlikely that the greater portion emanated from the Belgian Congo. Careful watch is being kept on the salt-mines area for such contraband which is now conspicuous by its absence.

During 1925 twenty-nine white rhinoceros horns were brought into West Nile District Headquarters at Arua.

In the same year the weight of rhinoceros horns sold at Government auctions held at Kampala amounted to a total of 242½ lbs. representing 45 horns.

In addition, on December 31st, 1925, there were six horns weighing 31½ lbs. in store at Kampala. Of this total of 51 horns:—

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|----------|----|------|------|---------|---------|------|---|
| 15 | horns | weighing | 83 | lbs. | were | brought | forward | from | 1924. |
| 23 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | originated from West Nile (white rhinoceros). |
| 5 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | Gulu (probably white rhinoceros). |
| 10 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | Karamoja (black rhinoceros). |

This gross total of 274 lbs. weight of rhinoceros horns in store during 1925 compares most favourably with the figures for 1924, when at the October sale 376½ lbs. were disposed of and represented 81 horns from West Nile, the quantities being slightly less at the February auction and respectively 289½ lbs. and 55 horns while the source of origin was the same.

All horns from the West Nile District are of course those of the white rhinoceros.

So little was known about this interesting species that it was decided to take a census of the numbers still existing within Protectorate limits; while any reliable data as to general habits, breeding, grazing grounds, migrations and other points of special interest which could be accumulated in addition would prove invaluable in any endeavour to fix the status of this race in Uganda.

Accordingly, at the conclusion of the Royal Safari in March, Captain Salmon was detailed to put into effect this plan and was instructed to make an extensive tour through the animals' habitat and report as accurately as possible on the numbers of white rhinoceros he estimated as still remaining in the Protectorate.

Such a census for the first year can only be based on insufficient data and computed on the broadest lines; but as it is to be followed up by similar procedure in 1926 and again in 1927 or a subsequent year, it is hoped that after three counts it will have been possible to obtain a fairly exact record of their numbers, general habits and possible migrations.

The result of the first census leads Captain Salmon to believe that there are possibly no more than 150 of these grand animals left in Uganda at the present time.

But there is a portion of the extreme N.W. corner of the Protectorate adjacent to the Sudan border which he did not visit and where it is reputed that a thriving colony of these creatures exists, so it is hoped that his figures will eventually prove to be considerably below the mark.

The main difficulty which Captain Salmon encountered in carrying out his task was the confusion caused by the extensive and aimless wanderings of this species.

This habit is most noticeable in the vicinity of roads and paths, and to a casual observer not suspecting the truth the presence of numerous tracks crossing and re-crossing a path along a stretch of some miles would indicate an abundance of white rhinoceros in that locality.

However if the tracks are followed up they will almost invariably prove to be those of the same animal or of the same party of animals wandering backwards and forwards from time to time across the roadway.

Captain Salmon reckons that he must have seen 60 different white rhinoceros along the Nile between Dufile and Pakwatch.

What was most inexplicable to him was the fact that he only saw one animal which had a front horn measuring more than 30 inches, and this led him to believe that either the animals with good trophies were practically shot out or else, more likely, that he had seen a mere fraction of the actual numbers of these animals in that area, which consequently he hopes are considerably greater than his estimate.

In February and March, Baron Blixen Von Finnecke made a trip of some weeks' duration in the locality north of the Arua—Gulu (West Madi) road, and he estimated that there must be fully 30 white rhinoceros remaining in that area.

In regard to size of horns he reports that he saw one bull with a very fine front horn of 40 inches, another animal with one of 36 inches and a third of thirty inches. In this species it is unusual for the bulls to have the longer horns, and those attaining the greatest length have usually been obtained from female specimens.

A few extracts from Captain Salmon's notes as to methods employed, etc., are of interest:—

"At each place where either native information or rhino tracks indicated presence of white rhinoceros, I sent out and went out myself to see what number of rhino appeared to be in the neighbourhood. I had three thoroughly reliable natives with me and in addition made use of any locals who appeared interested.

"The figures I show (60) are of rhino actually seen by me or one of my own men and are not open to much question. Care was taken to avoid counting the same animal more than once.

"Speaking generally I have found the counting of tracks of little assistance in computing the actual number of rhino about an area.

"Upon several occasions I followed a given rhino track for some hours and always found that these animals cross and recross their own tracks when feeding. While moving along a well-defined native track I found it continually cut into by rhino tracks and thought the animals must be numerous, but by following their actual tracks was able to make certain that three animals were doing it all.

"From Rogem to Panyango is about 12 miles and during the night preceding my doing this march three rhino had walked to and fro across the road for practically the whole distance, eventually walking into the camp compound at Panyango and out by a very narrow entrance on the opposite side.

"If I had not been investigating the habits of rhino I would have judged by appearances on the road and felt sure the country was full of rhino.

"This curious wandering habit must cause this animal to be greatly overestimated in numbers.

"Apparently rhino leave some places completely at times. For instance last April at Moyo there were, according to native report, many rhino about, but though I spent three days there this March and had natives out in all directions, I could not find a single recent track. At Rhino Camp the contrary seems to apply and the animals are almost certainly close by. At Mutir I saw five rhino, one group of three animals having recently arrived and the other two being known to every native in the vicinity as having always been there.

"Certainly a native came into my camp at midday and assured me that at 3.30 he could take me direct to a pair of rhino which were always at the same spot at that time. I went out with him that afternoon and he convinced me that this pair of rhino had regular habits.

"There are of course a number of rhino I have not accounted for this trip. There is a big stretch of country reported to carry rhino along the Sudan border which I did not visit.

"It appears probable that in Uganda to-day there are not more than 150 white rhino but a repetition of my trip, done at the same time next year, would, if the numbers were approximately the same, afford strong evidence of their correctness. My only reason for doubting that I have seen the majority of the rhino is that so few even reasonably long horns were seen. I expected to see several well over 30 inches but actually only saw one. It is obvious that either I was unlucky or that the good specimens are about shot out or that I have not seen more than a comparatively small proportion of the total."

The persecution of the white rhinoceros is as good an instance as any of the deplorable results which are likely to occur from killing game for profit, for I understand that prior to the demand for rhinoceros horn this species was scarcely molested.

It might be as well to note a few of the characteristics of this animal—a species which is markedly different to its petulant, black cousin.

Attention has previously been drawn to its inoffensive and harmless nature, but in common with all animals it may turn nasty if interfered with unduly.

It is inquisitive, inclined to be very local, and in some areas migratory. In many places its fixed habits—instanced by the fact of pairs or parties often being confined to a comparatively tiny area—enable it to be found with ease, and as there is little difficulty in approaching one when once located there can be no sport in killing a beast of so placid a disposition.

Although its sight is bad, its senses of smell and hearing are particularly acute.

It is the third largest land mammal still living, only being exceeded in size by the African and Asiatic elephants; and, although its huge bulk is unlikely to be a sufficient guide to immediate identification, yet the square mouth lacking the prehensile muzzle of the black variety is unmistakable. It is the great mouth, peculiarly adapted for cropping food and denoting at once that the species is a grass-feeder, which is the outstanding feature in distinguishing Burchell's (or the white) from the black rhinoceros.

The question of colour is most misleading and little if any difference exists in this respect between the two varieties. In the grass country which these animals inhabit, the juveniles can easily be mistaken for giant hog.

The species is reputed to be a slow breeder, and although a cow is often accompanied by a three-quarter grown youngster, evidently some years old, it is unusual to find a second and smaller calf accompanying the dam.

These animals usually move about in pairs or parties of three: so-called herds consist of several family parties which have inadvertently joined up on the grazing grounds.

The base of the front horn is very square (this is round in the black rhinoceros) and the rear horn often attains a great length: the horns of female specimens as a general rule are longer and more slender than those of the males. This creature is in the habit of moving with its head close to the ground, and in cases where the front horn takes a forward curve the tip is liable to become worn owing to contact with the ground.

The majority of front horns are considerably flattened at the sides.

The largest horns of the northern race which appear in Rowland Ward's list of records are:—

| | | |
|-----|--------|-----------------------|
| 41 | inches | (from Mongalla) |
| 40½ | " | (from Bahr-el-Ghazal) |
| 36½ | " | (from Lado) |

Many horns of over 30 inches in length are shown as having been obtained in the Lado Enclave.

Cow-horns of 38 inches are recorded from the Bahr-el-Ghazal, and of 37¾ inches from the Belgian Congo.

Trophies from the southern race far exceed the above measurements.

Gordon Cumming had horns from cows which attained a length of 62¼ and 52¼ inches.

C. S. Schillings, the German naturalist-explorer, mentions one of 6 feet 9 inches.

The question as to whether or no the black rhinoceros occurs on the left bank of the Nile in Uganda Territory is discussed elsewhere—let it suffice that cases of sportsmen shooting white rhinoceros in the West Nile District on the assumption of their belonging to the black variety has resulted in the latter species being placed on the list of animals completely protected in that area, in order to obviate the possibility of such mistakes occurring in the future.

The white rhinoceros is not found on the right bank of the Nile and there are no records to show that it has ever frequented that area—at least within modern times.

Water barriers are apparently strictly respected by both types of rhinoceros.

The Status of the Gorilla within British Limits.

Until quite recently there was little reliable information as to the occurrence of the gorilla within Protectorate limits.

It was reported that this fine animal—known to be fairly plentiful on Mt. Mikenno, a neighbouring volcano in the Belgian Congo—occasionally strayed into Uganda from the Belgian portion of the Birunga volcano group, and could be found from time to time along the saddle of Mt. Muhavura.