

Oryx

The International Journal of Conservation

The original paper was published in the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire* (1903-1925 and 1926-1950) or in *Oryx*, the journal of Fauna and Flora International (from 1951).

The website of the journal is (from 2008):

<http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>

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Oryx - The International Journal of Conservation, is now published quarterly by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Fauna & Flora International. It is a leading scientific journal of biodiversity conservation, conservation policy and sustainable use, with a particular interest in material that has the potential to improve conservation management and practice.

The website, <http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>, plays a vital role in the journal's capacity-building work. Amongst the site's many attributes is a compendium of sources of free software for researchers and details of how to access Oryx at reduced rates or for free in developing countries. The website also includes extracts from Oryx issues 10, 25 and 50 years ago, and a gallery of research photographs that provide a fascinating insight into the places, species and people described in the journal.

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KENYA COLONY.

GAME DEPARTMENT REPORT, 1930 : EXTRACTS FROM.

By CAPTAIN A. T. A. RITCHIE.

STAFF.

1 Game Warden.

3 Game Rangers.

1 Fish Warden

2 Game and Vermin Control Officers.

In addition, 66 Honorary Game Wardens.

REVENUE.

Licences.

The sum realized by the sale of game licences during the year was £11,754, comprised as follows :—

Game, £10,566 ; Game Bird, £556 ; Trout, £632.

The following observations may be made on the licence figures for the year.

The number of visitors' full licences taken out was greater than in any year except 1925, and this in spite of world-wide financial unrest. Two main causes probably contributed to this result. The first was the visit to Kenya, early in the year, of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The second was the tightening up, by Tanganyika, of conditions on their Serengeti Plains.

With regard to residents' licences, a general falling off was evident, reflecting the somewhat difficult times through which the Colony was passing. This decrease did not extend to trout licences, which showed an increase of : yearly, 353 to 386 ; fortnightly, 128 to 144 ; and twenty-four-hourly, 254 to 347, as compared with 1929.

Ivory and Confiscated Trophies.

The revenue from the sale of ivory and confiscated trophies amounted to £14,643. It is a perpetual source of astonishment to me that the revenue under this head achieves

the large figures which it does ; it is, at the same time, a cause of very doubtful congratulation, for it provides evidence, if such is needed, of our inability to stop elephant poaching by natives so long as the present system of rewards for " found ivory " is continued.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY.

A handsome margin between revenue and expenditure is still evident. The balance as seen from the summary below is, in fact, £15,022, as against £13,684 for 1929. Each year in making this comparison of our figures, I ask that the measure of our success or failure may not be taken with a golden rod. The earning of direct revenue by this Department must not be considered in my view, as other than incidental to its two major functions: the conservation of fauna, and the earning of indirect revenue as a result of the judicious exploitation of our faunal resources.

Direct revenue comes from the sale of licences to kill and from the sale of parts of dead beasts ; both of these sources will diminish. Indirect revenue comes largely—and will in increasing degree—from those who wish only to see, and are content with the more satisfactory, if less easily acquired, trophies of the film.

It is on this account that I deprecate the oft-repeated statement that the Department should be allowed to spend a larger sum than it is at present, in view of its considerable direct earnings. For the time may come when such direct earnings will be less than the cost of the Department, and the argument would then rebound to our disadvantage.

There can be no doubt that it is in the best interests of the Colony to allow all the money that can be spared to this Department ; but I should not like to see our direct revenue made the pretext or reason for an increase.

	£		£
Revenue from Licences	11,754	Expenditure	11,378
Revenue from Ivory, etc.	14,643	Expenditure, Extraordinary	154
Revenue from Fry	3		
	-----		-----
Total Revenue	26,400	Total Expenditure	11,532

Balance of Revenue over Expenditure, £15,022.

POACHING AND ILLEGAL KILLING.

Non-native.

I think that poaching by non-natives has ceased to be an important factor in the real game country. Certain individuals consistently overshoot their schedules, the motive as a rule being to feed their labour on a cheap meat ration.

Cases of the unwarrantable use of motor cars or lorries to chase game occur chiefly in the vicinity of townships; the Kedong Valley and the Athi Plains suffering more than elsewhere in this respect.

Both these forms of law-breaking are somewhat difficult to bring to book, as they cannot easily—more especially the violation of schedule—be dealt with on native evidence alone. The provision of bicycles for certain scouts, and the new legislation dealing with motor vehicles in relation to game—I have touched on this at the appropriate place in this report—will do much, I believe, to stop the more flagrant forms of motor game-banditry.

Cases of shooting without licence may, and doubtless do, occur, especially on private land, but I believe infrequently, for I am convinced that the majority of people recognize and respect their obligations to the community in this respect.

Several instances were reported of shooting taking place on private land without the consent of the owner.

I consider this a mean form of poaching, for there is still in Kenya ample game on Crown land for everyone who cares to take out a licence, and it is unnecessary to blow up someone's herd of semi-tame tommy, impala, or whatever it may be. I should like to take this opportunity of saying that this Department will always give any help it can to aggrieved landowners in such cases.

It is now an offence under the Game Ordinance to shoot game on private land without permission of the owner or his agent, and I hope that before long this provision will be extended so as to include game birds also, thus bringing the Game Bird Ordinance into line with the Game and Trout Ordinances.

Native.

I regret to have to report that conditions in several parts of the Colony were very bad ; worst perhaps in the Northern Frontier Province.

This latter area presents a difficult problem. A huge area of 92,000-odd square miles (or nearly one-half of the total area of Kenya) of bush is inhabited—if one can use the word in relation to a population of less than one (actually 0·67) per square mile—by a great variety of wholly or almost wholly nomadic peoples. It has five Government stations on points of its periphery : Siolo, Bura, Wajir, Mandera, and Moyale, and one, Marsabit, in its heart. Roads of access to these stations, and such other roads as are administratively essential, have been made. Apart from these nibbles of civilization, the vast area remains as untroubled and as intractable as the pyramids—Africa at its most primitive and most relentless.

As well expect a native *toto* with a stick to keep a swarm of hungry locusts off a five-thousand-acre maize crop, as hope that an Assistant Game Warden, with a Ford car and a dozen scouts, can control poaching over this area. The “home” provided by international boundaries makes the game of “Tom Tiddler’s ground” still more hopelessly one-sided.

The solution ? If counsels of perfection could be translated into practical facts the matter would be simple :—

(a) Close the international boundaries by the confiscation of all smuggled trophies wherever found. This would not prevent the passage of individuals, but it would make it unprofitable to carry trophies from one territory into another.

(b) Establish a chain of armed scout posts, each with its own camel transport in addition to motor transport ; and base on these posts a number of armed flying patrols, the whole under frequent white supervision. Not difficult to organize, and delightful to run ; but short of a fairy godmother, impossible to pay for !

The part of the Northern Frontier Province that suffered most severely during 1930 from bands of poachers was the Garba Tula and Kinna River area, and the Tana River in that vicinity. From one camp alone, some forty armed poachers were reported to be operating, their object ivory, rhino horn, and giraffe skin, which latter, incidentally, has a value throughout the nomadic peoples as being the raw material for bucket-making.

For the most part, such camps fade away before the coming of a patrol.

“ . . . and,
Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wrack behind ”.

except some charred bones, and, further afield, rotting carcasses. On one occasion, however, Captain Whittet came on a party unawares in the thick bush, but even so was unable to lay hands on them ; for they saw him as soon as he saw them, and, short of a bullet in the leg, he had no means of arresting their flight : in these enlightened days one does not use such primitive methods, even though they may be the only ones effective for dealing with primitive peoples—and the ivory and rhino horn which they dropped in their flight were poor consolation.

During the year, organized hunting by large bands of Kisii in the Trans Mara corner of the Masai Reserve assumed serious proportions. As in the Northern Frontier Province, the administrative officers concerned were anxious to help but, in view of the cutting down of their police personnel, were able to do little to check the forays.

The withdrawal of police from native areas and their replacement by tribal police has had an adverse effect on game preservation in many parts of the Colony.

Individual poaching by Wanyika and Wakamba, which reached its peak period at the end of 1929 as a result of drought and famine conditions in that year, gradually diminished in intensity until, by the end of 1930, it had almost died away. The greatest help was given to this

Department by the administrative officers in Ukambani, and we are immensely grateful for the amount of work done by them in thorough and wholesale round-ups of killers of the more valuable game animals.

ILLEGAL IVORY AND RHINO HORN TRAFFIC.

I regret to state that ivory and rhino horn smuggling from Kenya into Italian territory continued unabated. Some idea of the amount of slaughter for which this traffic is responsible may be gauged from the figures of ivory and rhino horn importations into Zanzibar from Italian Somaliland ports.

In view of the fact that there are, as I understand, not many elephants and very few rhino in this Italian territory, the following figures are illuminating:—

Imports from Italian Somaliland Ports into Zanzibar.

1929	Ivory, 81 cwt.	Rhino Horn, 27 cwt.
1930	Ivory, 62 cwt.	Rhino Horn, 24 cwt.

The above figures are taken from the Zanzibar Trade Report for 1930, and may consequently be relied upon.

CONVICTIONS UNDER THE GAME ORDINANCE.

I have details of 495 convictions under the Game Ordinance during the year, in which fines totalling Sh. 65,739 were inflicted, and/or imprisonment for 862 months and 10 days. I believe that this is much the heaviest crop of convictions that the Game Ordinance has ever borne.

It may be of interest to recount details of one or two of the more outstanding cases.

By far the biggest and most important was the capture of a consignment of rhino horn at Malindi.

There were 218 horns, weighing 955 lb.—worth, at that time, some £600.

The conviction of the “owner”, a Barawa—he is still paying instalments of his fine, which amounted to £560!—led to the break-up to the gang, of which he was chief, and the conviction of fourteen of his fellows. The headquarters

of his organisation was at Mariakani, a village which has long been notorious for the facilities it offers, lying as it does at the junction of three districts—Kilifi, Mombasa, and Kwale.

The only unsatisfactory point in an otherwise excellent case lay in the fact, as we learned subsequently, that the horns captured were only the second half of the shipment, the first having got clear away.

Another large haul was staged in Nairobi, 38 horns being captured by the Criminal Investigation Department with all the accompaniments of a modern crook play: a bland stool-pigeon, detectives behind hedges, motor cars being abandoned and the booty transferred to rickshaws, and the rest. The unsatisfactory point in this case was that the real culprit was not brought to book, his guilt being taken by an underling; or so it appeared to me.

A third case, and one in which I took a somewhat unsatisfactory part—unsatisfactory to me, at least—may be recorded in some detail, since it has points of interest.

I got information that there were rhino horns hidden in or about a certain *duka* in the Masai Reserve, a couple of miles from Konza Station. Accompanied by Inspector Sweeney, of the Criminal Investigation Department, I raided the place, which consisted of several buildings and a small *shamba* within a double and very thick thorn fence,

It was clear from the demeanour of the various inhabitants that the stuff was on the premises somewhere, but search as we would—and we made a job of it—we could find nothing but a piece of the nasal bone of a rhino, the bone which supports the front horn. The bone had been picked up by a dog, and carried in—so we were told.

At last, with a couple of crowbars, we prodded the ground in and around the buildings; and searched as thoroughly as possible in a near-by huge heap of cattle manure brought from neighbouring Masai *manyattas*. I thought I had found the cache when the crowbar touched something hard at the bottom of the heap, but on looking at the end of the bar there was nothing but some particles of stone. At last, dispiritedly indeed, we returned to Nairobi. I had set out at dawn feeling

the complete sleuth ; I returned after dark feeling a complete fool.

We got our own back, however, two days later, when, as a result of some further information, Sweeney and the Game Department head scout, Saa, went down again—I couldn't spare the time—and found 34 horns in a thicket a couple of hundred yards from the *duka*. From the disorder of the manure heap, and subsequent admissions, it appeared that when the crowbar hit the stone it had been a few inches only from the horn, which was hidden in a hole covered with stone at the base of the manure heap.

Sweeney's capture was only just in time, for the horn was to have gone to the coast that night.

The sequel to this capture was unsatisfactory, since the owner of the *duka*, an Indian, fled the country before the case came on. I regret that he did not remain to enjoy the period of enforced leisure which would have allowed him to meditate on his misdoings and manure heaps.

DAMAGE BY GAME AND VERMIN, AND ATTEMPTS AT CONTROL.

Reports of damage by game and vermin were somewhat less numerous than usual, though as varied and widespread as ever, ranging from elephants at Lamu to porcupines near Kisii.

The two game and vermin control officers were hard at work throughout the year.

Captain Oulton operated in the following areas : Naivasha, Nakuru, and the Mau in that vicinity, Kaimosi, Kakamega, and finally Kisii. He worked well and consistently, poisoning hyena, baboon, bush pig, leopard, and porcupine, as well as dealing with a herd of marauding buffalo ; for this latter work he found it necessary to invoke the aid of certain Wanderobo, the nature of the country making it impossible to influence them by ordinary methods of hunting.

Mr. Hilton commenced with four months' work, hyena poisoning in the Southern Game Reserve. He then went

up to the Nyeri area, where serious trouble with elephant and also rhino had been reported. From there he went to the Wadigo country near the Tanganyika border, to attempt to check the periodic descent of elephants into the young coconut and banana *shambas*.

The last three months of the year he was on elephant work in the Kiunga-Wangeh area, north of Lamu, where he had a difficult and dangerous time trying to teach the *shamba* raiders to keep away from the coastal belt.

He shot eight elephants in all there; was once knocked down; another time trampled on; and finally laid up with a stiff go of fever.

The elephant control work of Mr. Gilbert Colville, honorary game warden, on Laikipia, was continued by him with great success. I cannot do better than quote his own report:

“*Elephant Control, N.W. Laikipia, 1930.*—The same two Dorobo were employed on this work as in 1929. No complaints were received of damage to crops during the year. The policy adopted was to try and hold the elephants to the northern line of settlement, and to shoot an elephant when any herd attempted to cross this line. Previously, in 1928, we only shot elephant when damage was actually reported. The number of elephants shot during 1930 was 28, chiefly old cows.”

Elephants in the Meru district continued to be a menace to cultivation, causing destruction to native *shambas*, and spreading alarm and despondency. In my Report for 1929 I described the position there fully, so that it is not necessary for me to do so now. Suffice to say that, in consultation with the District Commissioner, Meru, Mr. Hopkins—himself an elephant hunter of considerable experience—and after a careful survey of the ground, I decided to try the experiment of issuing a number of cheap licences on certain rigid conditions. The experiment proved an unqualified success, and on this account the period set provisionally for its termination has been extended from March this year till the end of October. If necessary it will be continued beyond that date.

It is seldom that any system of cheap licences to effect elephant control has proved successful in Africa, and the fact that Meru has benefited to a remarkable extent must be attributed to the peculiar circumstances of the case and the close supervision given to the scheme by Mr. Hopkins. It may be of interest to quote here the conditions and restrictions governing the issue of these licences. They are as follows :—

“ Governor’s permits to shoot elephant in certain areas of the Meru district will be issued to commence on October 20th, 1930, valid until March 31st, 1931, under the following conditions :—

“ 1. The fee, payable in advance, for a permit to shoot a bull elephant is Sh. 200.

“ 2. The fee, payable in advance, for a permit to shoot a cow elephant is Sh. 100.

3. The fee, payable in arrear, for a permit to capture alive a young elephant is Sh. 500.

“ 4. A person who shoots at and wounds—however slightly—an elephant, shall be considered to have shot such elephant. And the holder of a permit to shoot a bull or a cow elephant, who wounds an elephant of either sex, shall be considered to have filled such permit.

“ 5. A person who shall have, for however short a period of time, laid hands on, or otherwise hampered the free movement of, a young live elephant, shall be considered to have captured such elephant, and shall pay forthwith the sum prescribed above for the capture of a young elephant.

“ 6. The shooting, wounding, or capturing of an elephant must be reported at the earliest possible moment to the District Commissioner, Meru, and any ivory obtained produced for inspection and registration.

“ 7. The ivory and other trophies obtained in accordance with the permission granted by a permit shall, irrespective of the weight of the ivory, be the property of the holder of the permit ; always provided that no breach of these

conditions or of the Game Ordinance, 1921, has taken place, or takes place subsequently in any matter in connection with these permits.

“ 8. Elephants may be hunted, shot or captured only by the holder of a permit, and only in such areas as may be described by the District Commissioner, Meru.

“ 9. Every holder of a permit must report to the District Commissioner, Meru, before commencing operations, and obtain from the District Commissioner instructions as to where he may hunt; he must abide rigidly by such instructions, and by any further conditions which the District Commissioner, Meru, may see fit to impose then or subsequently.

“ 10. Any permit may be refused or be cancelled by the Game Warden or by the District Commissioner, Meru, without notice or reason being given.

“ 11. The acceptance of a permit by any person shall be held to constitute the acceptance by such person of all and every condition attached to such permit. Any person who violates any of these herein contained conditions or any conditions or instructions laid down by the District Commissioner, Meru, shall be considered to have committed a breach of the Game Ordinance, 1921, and shall forfeit any ivory, trophy or animal which he may have obtained, and shall in addition be subject to prosecution under the Game Ordinance, 1921.

“ 12. These permits are issued in accordance with the provisions of section 25, Game Ordinance, 1921, and save as herein otherwise specially provided, the holder of a permit shall be subject to the provisions of the Game Ordinance, 1921.”

The District Commissioner's report on the scheme, received during January this year, runs as follows :—

“ Owing to a record rainfall in Meru during the past three months, the crops here are very backward, and will not ripen until much later than usual. This fact, and the

presence of much water and green food in the low country, makes the return of the elephant to Meru in large numbers unlikely until about March.

“In the circumstances, I would ask if you could see your way to extending the period of the special licences.

“So far, this control campaign inaugurated by yourself has been most successful. The elephant ceased to come out into the open shortly after the shooting started, left the district about six weeks earlier than they do normally, and have not yet started to return.

“Licences for seventeen cows and fourteen bulls have been issued. Twenty elephants have been killed. Only three have been wounded and lost—two of these by the same man, who will not be issued with further licences—and licences for five cows and three bulls have not yet been filled.

“The total weight of ivory produced by the twenty killed is 477½ lb., an average of just under 12 lb. per tusk.

“The animal carrying the heaviest ivory amongst the twenty shot was a bull with tusks weighing 24 lb. and 25 lb.

“Government has raised £225 in licences.

“Now that the campaign has proved successful and possible to control, I think that it would be a great pity to stop it too early, as without doubt this would soon result in the elephant returning to their old habits.

“As you have kindly allowed me discretion in the issuing of licences, areas, etc., I may add that I do not intend in future to issue licences for more people to shoot than appear necessary to keep the elephant under control, and at no time, I think, should there be necessity for more than ten people shooting in the district at the same time.”

It may not be out of place to quote here instructions on the best method of poisoning hyena, as worked out by Captain Oulton, who has tried a number of different plans :—

“The best way to make a clean sweep of a mob of hyenas is to trail, say, a leg of an ox, attached to a rope,

over a wide area, and at distances of every quarter to half a mile cut off and drop about 1 lb. of the meat, inserting about as much strychnine powder as will cover a three-penny-bit in each piece dropped. The more numerous the hyenas are believed to be the greater the quantity of meat and the more numerous the 1 lb. pieces.

“This trailing, etc., should be done towards dusk, and if there is the least possibility of dogs being about the pieces should be counted, places where they are being dropped marked with a stake, and early next morning all uneaten peices collected and the following night or nights again distributed, until all the hyenas are finished.

“The trailing part of the business is as essential on subsequent nights as it is on the first. The poisoned pieces cannot be used for this, as the poison may, in part, fall out. Therefore use another leg or chunk of meat. Any hyena passing over a trail will follow and get the poisoned bits immediately, whereas without the trailing they may not be found until the meat putrifies.”

DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES.

Mr. Clarke's activities may be quoted in his own words :—

“*The Loita Plains.*—This area has been shot very little indeed, and the herds of wildebeeste, tommy, granti, zebra, topi, and eland are larger to-day than I have ever seen them before.

“*The Mara Valley.*—This comparatively small area has been very much shot over indeed, and four or five parties are almost constantly hunting there. Game of all kinds is very wild. Car tracks are to be seen all over the place. Camps, with empty petrol tins littered about, rather spoil the landscape. Lions are now comparatively rare here. I have reason to think that they have not nearly been exterminated, but that they have migrated in a northerly direction, where only a real live hunter can get at them. I shall give this area a great deal of attention in

the future ; I shall probably establish a base camp there, and keep a party of scouts always there.

“ *The Rift Valley.*—In spite of Nairobi trippers giving the Rift Valley such a deal of attention, the head of game there is good. Numbers of granti have come north from the Game Reserve, and large numbers of them have been shot. Granti in the Rift Valley nearly all suffer from measles.

“ *The Loita Hills.*—This is the area that has suffered most in the last two years. These hills are well scattered with trading stations, and the traders have had a good time of it, I think. I have received one report of a trader who has been extensively trading in rhino horn. I am investigating very carefully for corroboration.

“ *Leopard.*—I should very much like to see these animals placed on exactly the same basis as lion and cheetah. The indiscriminate slaughter of leopards during 1929 and 1930 has upset the numbers greatly, with the result that pig and bush-buck have increased considerably. There will be an epidemic of rinderpest amongst Masai cattle in the near future for a certainty (I am going on the usual cycle after any good cattle year like 1930) ; then the wise men will say that pig and bush-buck and the Game Department are the cause.”

Mr. MacArthur, who returned from leave free of fever once more, and full of energy, proceeded forthwith to spread panic among the ivory and rhino-horn community ; the comparative immunity they had enjoyed during his absence had allowed them to increase their nefarious dealings, and his bag was a heavy one.

His report is as follows :—

“ I returned from leave in March, 1930, and, hearing bad reports from Malindi-Mariakani, went on *safari* to that area within a month of my return. Camped on the Voi River some 50 miles east of Voi, and commenced inquiry and investigation of really bad poaching of the year 1929. Several poachers admitted killing three to as many as

fifteen rhino in six to twelve months, with an odd elephant or two, the rhino horns being sold at Mariakani and other trading centres. The meat of the animals was left to rot in the bush country. The cases were heard in Mombasa and Malindi, and there were many convictions. From September to the end of the year, the Wakamba at Masongaleni, Ziwani and Taveta were visited, and many offenders brought to court.

“*Rhino*.—The Wansanye, Wakamba, and Wagiriama hunted chiefly for rhino, owing to the high value of the horn and an easy market at Mariakani. Several areas suffered badly, but the more impenetrable thorn-bush country happily still contains a very fair number of the great beast.

“*Elephant*, too, were hunted by these tribes, but not nearly so badly as in previous years. His ivory is the hunter’s private banking account, as it keeps for years when buried in sand and near water.

“*Leopard*.—This animal has, in many areas, been practically wiped out by trappers, and in consequence baboons and pigs have increased to incredible numbers. I have met native trappers with as many as fifteen steel traps, and ten a common number, moving over large areas, waterhole to waterhole. The Wasanye and Waboni set poisoned arrow traps on game paths for leopard, and there are several cases where innocent human beings have fired the arrows into their legs and died. The whole country from Voi to Sankuri is a very dangerous area for these bow-and-arrow traps, and presents a most difficult problem to deal with.”

THE GAME CONFERENCE.

The Game Conference, convened and presided over by Sir Edward Grigg, in July and September, was perhaps the most important event there has ever been in the history of game preservation in Kenya.

Game policy in all its aspects, past, present, and future,

passed under review, and in consequence I received valuable advice and guidance. In particular the question as to the legitimate use of motor vehicles and aeroplanes in relation to game was considered ; this problem, which has so far proved insoluble, has now as I believe disappeared in the new legislation on the subject—legislation which will in all probability become the universal model for dealing with this complex question.

Since the recommendations made by the Conference deal very largely with matters of policy, I am unable here to dilate on them. Suffice to say that, largely as a result of the Conference, there is a clear prospect that a permanence will be given to the preservation of game in certain areas which should ensure the existence of all important species in perpetuity.

The Conference gained largely by the presence, at its first meeting and subsequently at discussions of the committee thereat appointed, of Major R. W. G. Hingston, M.C., who on behalf of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, and under the ægis of the Colonial Office, was making a comprehensive tour of the British East, South East, and Central African game territories.

Major Hingston's report has already received due publicity, and no useful purpose would be served by my commenting on it here, other than to say that I consider his work in correlating the diverse efforts at preservation, and his championship of the creation of national parks in Africa, must have invaluable and far-reaching effects. Nature-lovers the world over may be grateful to him and to the Society which sent him.

FISH

Mr. Dent has prepared some notes on fish, which may be quoted in his own words :—

“*Trout Fishing.*—During the year the trout fishing has been very good throughout the Colony. Fish have been plentiful and an unusual number of large fish have been taken. Pride of place as the heaviest trout caught in Kenya

was held for several years by the 10 lb. 2 oz. Rainbow from the Katamayu River. The record was beaten during the year, and the seat of honour is now occupied by a Brown trout from the Chania River, whose weight is 10 lb. 8 oz. Hitherto most of the heavy fish have been Rainbow trout, but this year the Brown trout have been showing what they can do when given plenty of food and suitable water. The Kenya Angling Association water at Tusso in the Aberdares has produced a number of Brown trout ranging between 4 lb. and 8 lb. The rivers of Mount Kenya continue to produce good baskets to the very large number of fishermen who visit the rivers on a week-end holiday from all parts of the country. The Suam and Quitobos Rivers on Mount Elgon are providing very good sport, as are the rivers in the Cherangani Range. In the south-western watershed on the Mau Range, the streams that find their way into Lake Victoria are now providing excellent fishing for those who do not consider the use of a motor car an essential part of a fishing holiday. Most of these waters lie within the forest and can only be approached on foot with native porters and a tent at present. Doubtless in a year or so there will be excellent fishing to be had in any of these rivers running through the farms and tea plantations situated outside the forest belt.

“Increase in the number of fishermen also makes the year of special interest. The population of Kenya is realising more and more that not only is the actual sport of trout fishing most enjoyable, but that the beautiful scenery and bracing climate on the mountain slopes where the streams wind through rich forest vegetation affords the greatest contrast to their everyday surroundings. So rapid is the increase in the number of fishermen and their desire to take a holiday *en famille*, that more rivers must be stocked for the future.”

CONCLUSION.

I have, as in the past, to express my sincerest thanks to the many who have helped us throughout the year. It

is always difficult to do this, since I have a desire to recount the list of those to whom we are indebted : a never-ending task.

I cannot, however, conclude, without acknowledging the ungrudging assistance which we received from both Administration and Police : without the help of these Departments we should be powerless indeed, and the measure of their co-operation with us is very largely the measure of our success.

If this Department continues to receive the sympathy and help of the community, both official and unofficial, in the full measure which it now enjoys, there need be no misgivings for the safety of our Kenya game.

OPOSSUMS.

THE EXTERMINATION OF OUR NATIVE FAUNA.

(Extract from *The Queenslander*, 3rd September, 1931.)

The platypus is almost extinct, and would be but that it is absolutely protected. The opossum bids well to be exterminated, or reduced to insignificant numbers, like our native bear.

We have now an open season of six weeks for the slaughter of opossums, half as long again as usual, with the result that these animals, still scarce from the open season two years ago, are being cleaned right out. So-called trappers are out in exceptional numbers, many inexperienced and unable to make their expenses, though doing considerable harm to the lessees' stock in a dry time like the present ; other experienced men, barely able to make wages, and very few unemployed engaged at all, in fact an unemployed who could put together an outfit for six weeks' opossuming is not badly off, as the necessary outfit of three horses, saddle, two pack saddles, rations, camp gear, etc., at a low estimate is worth £25 to £30. This does not include cost of snares, rifle, ammunition,