

# Oryx

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The Society was founded in 1903 as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, and subsequently named the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society. Fauna & Flora International is conserving the planet's threatened species and ecosystems – with the people and communities who depend on them.

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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in the matter of accessibility the Kintampo region perhaps has the advantage. However, taking everything into consideration, the Krachi area is undoubtedly much the most suitable as a sanctuary. The only reason that the Kintampo region has been suggested as an alternative is in case there should be any difficulty about the land, in view of it being in mandated country. This seems, however, unlikely in the opinion of the Secretary for Native Affairs.

Finally it is very earnestly urged that both the Forest Zone area and the Orchard Zone area may be dedicated as National Parks. This would once and for all ensure these sanctuaries being preserved in perpetuity to the Gold Coast people, thus retaining for all time moderate numbers of each species of fauna which are still extant in that country.

#### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

To summarize the chief recommendations put forward in the preceding pages, these are :—

(1) Abolish the existing Game Reserves of Kwahu, Obusom Sene, and Onyim Sene.

(2) Substitute National Parks as follows: (a) in Prah Anum Forest Reserve. (b) Either in North Krachi or North-east Kintampo.

(3) Add to Schedule I (Species completely protected): "Crown Bird, Hippopotamus, Mandrill, Senegal Hartebeest, Aardvaark, Elephant."

(4) Prohibit Night Hunting and the use of Game Traps.

(5) Provide for the adequate warding of Sanctuaries.

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## KENYA COLONY: GAME DEPARTMENT.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORT, 1931.

### REVENUE.

#### *Licences.*

The sum realized by the sale of game licences during the year was £11,604, comprised as follows :—

Game, £10,098. Game Bird, £306. Trout, £910.

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

There was a serious drop in the number of visitors' full licences issued, inevitable in view of the commercial and financial muddle into which civilization has drifted. Our £100 sportsmen must necessarily be persons having considerable possessions, since the £100 licence fee is but a small part of the cost of a big *safari*; and for the most part those with great possessions were under the necessity of remaining to guard them.

The number of residents' full licences was a matter of some surprise in view of local conditions, being twenty-seven more than in 1930; there were also twenty-two more residents' fourteen-day licences issued. While the number of residents' licences remains considerable, I have no doubt that the average amount of game killed on those licences is decreasing year by year. Indeed, the interpretation I put on the figures of licences with their corresponding game returns is that the majority of residents' Crown land licences are taken out by persons who want to go on *safari* rather than by persons who want to shoot. To make it more clear: those who want to go on *safari* will also want to shoot incidentally; they do not go on *safari* because they want to shoot. I am quite certain that the average resident takes much more interest in the game of the Colony than he did a few years ago, and one result of that increased interest is evidenced by the less frequent occurrence of that soul-destroying, but fortunately usually transient, affliction—trigger-itch.

#### *Ivory and Confiscated Trophies.*

Revenue from ivory and confiscated trophies showed a heavy fall as compared with 1930 figures, the sum realized being £7,542, as against the previous £14,643.

While this reduction is attributable to some extent to the fact that rather less ivory came into the hands of Government owing to the decrease in poaching in certain areas consequent

on the return of Mr. MacArthur, it is much more the result of the sharp fall in the value of ivory and rhino horn.

Ivory and rhino horn must both be classed as luxuries—the former since for its every use an efficient substitute is available, and the latter in view of the plentitude and leisure which its satisfactory enjoyment requires—and as luxuries they early responded to the stringency of world conditions and lost their market.

It is always unpleasant to have to record a fall in revenue, and now more than ever; but I must admit that I regard the decrease in the value of rhino horn as an unmixed blessing. The rhino is of very much greater value to Kenya alive than dead. But I shall have more to say of this beast later.

#### *Revenue and Expenditure Summary.*

I feel each year that it is indeed a pity that one cannot obtain some approximate figures of the indirect revenue for which this Department can claim responsibility; for it is certain that it is many times greater than the direct, which is unfortunately all that we can show—and boast of.

	£		£
Revenue from Licences . . . . .	11,604	Expenditure exclusive of Ivory vote . . . . .	8,595
Revenue from Ivory, etc. . . . .	7,542	Expenditure on Ivory vote . . . . .	1,759
Revenue from Trout Fry . . . . .	169		
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Total Revenue . . . . .	£19,315	Total Expenditure . . . . .	10,354
	Balance of Revenue over Expenditure, £8,961.		

#### POACHING AND ILLEGAL KILLING : CONVICTIONS UNDER THE GAME ORDINANCE.

The year provided a heavy crop of convictions under the Game Ordinance—477 being recorded.

##### *Non-Native.*

A striking refutation of the charges levelled, sometimes carelessly, but occasionally I fear maliciously, against the sportsmanship of the European community in Kenya is provided by the fact that, out of those 477 convictions only nine were Europeans. Indeed, as I stated in my last report,

I think that serious poaching by the immigrant races has almost ceased. I say "serious" advisedly, for I know, of course, that a number of minor offences pass undetected. That is inevitable; but it does not greatly affect game preservation as a whole throughout the Colony.

*Native.*

The chief menace to game in Kenya from direct human attack—by direct, I mean slaughter as opposed to peaceful ejection—is, nowadays, the poisoned arrow. So long as native poachers hunt game on foot with bow and arrow, the damage done, while serious, still remains within some bounds. It becomes more formidable when—from hides and platforms in trees—waterholes and game-paths are subjected to the ceaseless vigilant twang of bowstrings. It reaches the stage of complete destructiveness when every game-path and drinking-pool bristles with arrow-traps set off by trip cords. These arrow-traps are the most diabolical devices. They are very simple to set: four pegs, a rough bow—any piece of springy branch will do—two pieces of cord, and a poisoned arrow are all the essentials. And they are exactly 100 per cent efficient. No animal, from an elephant to a porcupine, can touch a trip wire and escape death; neither for that matter can you or I, for there is no known antidote to the poison used. I should have said more correctly that the antidote—a charm with appropriate incantations—for which infallibility is claimed, has never so far been able to prove itself, owing to the supervention of death before the completion of the essential ritual.

It is matter for grave consternation that the practice of setting these arrow-traps has grown apace. Five years ago they were almost unknown. To-day they exist by the thousand, in spite of the perpetual war waged on them and their setters by the Assistant Game Warden in charge of the Coastal zone. I have reason to fear that before long the Wakamba will copy their Wanyika neighbours and start using these infernal contrivances—a grim prospect indeed, for the Wakamba wander over an enormous area, from Tanga

to the Tana, and arrow-traps in numbers spell annihilation to all but the smallest living things.

It is much to be hoped that the recent empowering legislation on the subject of poison used for tipping arrows will be invoked to put an end to the wholesale preparation and distribution of this foul substance, which, so far as I know, has no beneficent use whatever.

In addition to poison troubles in the bush zone there was a certain amount of communal hunting in the Trans-Mara zone during the year, a continuation of the large-scale hunting noted in my last report. Firm action by the Administration, together with such assistance as we were in a position to give, fortunately succeeded in quelling this organized poaching early on in the year.

The Northern Frontier, particularly Tanaland, was, as always, the scene of diverse poaching. In the Northern Game Reserve we rounded up several Turkana, who were trapping giraffe and rhino, as well as smaller game, by means of the cruel foot snares which they construct with much skill. These snares are most horrible things, since an animal caught in one may live for days dragging a log the weight of which will just allow it to trot; the animal, unless killed at once by the poachers, is usually found with a leg broken and all chafed away by the end of the log.

#### *Illegal Ivory and Rhino Horn Traffic.*

The illicit ivory and rhino horn trade conditions were much better in many parts of the Colony, owing doubtless to several large captures and sensational prosecutions in 1930, as also to the constant activity of the Assistant Game Warden in charge of the Coastal zone.

No improvement was to be noted in the area adjacent to the Italian border. I have dilated on this serious matter, in the past, *ad nauseam*; I do not intend to do more than mention it now, in view of the Anglo-Italian Commission which has recently met in Nairobi to draw up recommendations to be placed before the British and Italian Governments, for the suppression of all unauthorized movement

of ivory and rhino horn across the international boundary. The attitude of the Italian delegates was so helpful that I have every hope that with this co-operation substantial progress may be made.

#### DAMAGE BY GAME AND VERMIN AND ATTEMPTS AT CONTROL.

Reports of damage and requests for assistance were as widespread as ever.

Two control officers were employed throughout the year. Captain Oulton commenced operations in the Nakuru district, where bush-pig were again giving much trouble. Thence he dealt with some marauding leopards in Kikuyu, and pigs at Limuru. After a short trip to assist with baboons in the Ithanga, where amongst other crimes they were eating young sisal, he started on what may well be described as a major operation near Naivasha. The situation there was as follows : The Karati Forest, which adjoins Naivasha Township, is a small but thickly overgrown area, and in it a large herd of buffalo were domiciled. Now the Karati Forest is an island of wilderness in a sea of settlement, and the presence of this large buffalo herd added a somewhat doubtful element to the residential attractions of the area, as it did also provide formidable rivals to the imported pure-bred bulls for the favours of domestic stock on neighbouring farms. More importantly, these buffalo were a source of apprehension as potential disseminators of disease, for there was constant movement between elements of the herd and their relatives on the Aberdares. Taking all the facts into consideration, and at the earnest instigation of neighbouring farmers and their veterinary adviser, we decided to attempt to clear the buffalo from this enclave. I may say at once that we failed signally, though I believe that the herd at present in the Karati is smaller than it was a year ago. How far we are justified in claiming cause and effect it is difficult to say.

Captain Oulton's plan was to work from west to east, shooting buffalo as he went ; the effect of this would be to drive the buffalo out of the Forest, along the normal migration route on to the Aberdares. The plan was admirable, and

Captain Oulton's efforts no less so. But the buffalo wouldn't play. Day after day, nothing more tangible, from a ballistic point of view, than swinging branches or perhaps a brief leafy glimpse of a rounded black stern rewarded Oulton's painstaking stalks. He soon realized that a rifle was not a possible weapon for his purpose, even when used in conjunction with dogs. We decided accordingly to try pits; these had been found most effective in parts of Uganda in driving animals, particularly buffalo, from an area. We obtained particulars of the method and its employment from the Uganda authorities; and Oulton's porters were turned on to dig. A large number of pits were dug, and several buffalo fell into them; but it had little moral effect on the remainder, and we were forced to the conclusion that we were dealing with beasts of sterner stuff than our neighbours.

Since no other plan promising any hope of success could be evolved, we were forced to admit defeat, leaving the buffalo in possession of the field.

After leaving the Karati, Captain Oulton spent two months in the Rift Valley, where hyenas had again become very numerous and troublesome. At the end of October he proceeded to Kipini, operating at first in that vicinity and subsequently working up the Tana. His concern was, at and near the mouth of the river, mainly with elephant and hippo, both of which animals had occasioned much damage to *shambas*. Further up the river, baboons were outstandingly the greatest menace to cultivation, and he found it necessary to poison on an extensive scale. The end of the year found him working up towards Garissa.

The second control officer, Mr. W. A. Hilton, was at the beginning of the year in the area north of Lamu, attempting to deal with the *shamba*-raiding elephants, of which mention has been made in previous reports.

Mr. Hilton, on leaving the Lamu area, responded to an S.O.S. from the Digo district. He left there at the end of April, and came up to Nairobi; on his arrival he handed me his resignation, and this I was reluctantly compelled to accept.

The vacancy caused by Mr. Hilton's resignation was filled



by Mr. Horace Dawson, who is an elephant hunter of considerable experience. To him I entrusted a considerable work for which he was eminently fitted, since it comprised elephant control in an area with which he was well acquainted. In brief, his orders were as follows : To attempt to clear elephant out of the Lambwe Valley ; then to drive them from the Kuja River area ; and to continue the push from west to east along the Magor (or Gori) River, doing all possible to frustrate their attempts to break back.

He had astonishingly hard and dangerous work, and achieved a large measure of success. I shall not now describe the campaign, for it was scarcely more than fully launched before the close of the year ; and it can more easily and intelligibly be dealt with as a whole in my next report. Suffice to say that, between July and the end of 1931, Mr. Dawson shot twenty-nine elephants. He succeeded in saving considerable areas from the devastation which had been before an annual certainty ; and, best of all, he had laid the foundations for successful operations during the present year. It is impossible to speak too highly of his energy, courage, and patience.

In considering other damage by game and vermin which we attempted to combat, directly or indirectly, mention must be made of the Meru elephant control scheme, which was continued until the end of the year. The working of this scheme was fully explained in my report for 1930, and it is not necessary to recapitulate it here. Under it Governor's permits for forty elephants were issued during 1931, twenty for bulls and twenty for cows, and the average weight of the sixty-five tusks exported as a result of such permits was approximately 34 lb.

The operations, under the able direction of the District Commissioner, Meru, had proved an unqualified success ; so much so, indeed, that it was considered justifiable to suspend the further issue of permits as from the end of the year. Up to the time of writing this report it has not been found necessary to reopen the campaign, though it may well be that we shall be compelled to do so at some not far distant time.

Governor's permits for the capture of eighteen giraffe on

Trans Nzoia were issued during the year. If it is necessary for the numbers of these fine beasts to be reduced in the heart of a settled area—and it is necessary, unfortunately, in parts of the Trans Nzoia—it is obviously better that zoological societies rather than the hyenas, should reap any incidental benefit. I am sorry to say that misfortune attended the catching and subsequent operations. Lions, injuries, and sickness took heavy toll of the captives, and the enterprising permit-holder was, I fear, badly out of pocket in consequence.

Buffalo near Escarpment became troublesome to *shambas* and their husbandmen, and a regular series of attacks on them was organized by the Police. Captain Cochrane rendered this Department most valuable assistance in this connection.

#### OUTSTANDING EVENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTIVITIES.

The outstanding event of the year was Mr. MacArthur's dramatic campaign in Wagalla country. These favoured folk had previously enjoyed complete immunity from interference in their ivory operations ; and had boasted, with some reason, that they could not be divested of their freedom from restraint.

Mr. MacArthur, whose plans had been laid thoroughly and well beforehand, gave them a rude shock. He arrived at Kipini in mid-April with—I quote his words to me : “ Ninety prisoners and witnesses. Some seventy Wagalla and Wapokomo, seven Wagiriama, and two Wakamba were convicted. Total fines amounted to about £1,400. In my presence about £600 was paid in cash.” In addition to the fines, much ivory and some rhino horn were recovered from the Wagalla, and a first lesson given to them on the ethics of ivory poaching, as taught by an—at times—unsympathetic Government. Further lessons are, I regret to say, necessary ; they will be given by the same pedagogue in the near future.

#### *New Legislation.*

On the 8th May, 1931, a proclamation dealing with motor cars and aeroplanes in relation to game was issued.

The importance of this proclamation lies in the fact that it provides a solution, as I believe, to the vexed question of what is ethically and legally permissible in the use of motor-cars and planes in connection with game—perhaps the most controversial question with which I have had to deal.

The previously existing legislation stated that it was “illegal to use a motor vehicle for the purpose of pursuing or capturing game”. This was definitely unsatisfactory. No one knew what it meant, or even what it intended—not even I. No two magistrates could interpret it identically. In its widest extension it might well prohibit a visiting sportsman from riding in a taxi from his ship to Mombasa railway station; in its narrowest, you could do everything but drive a car on top of a fleeting beast. Even the most law-abiding had no idea what they could and could not do; and the lawless didn’t care, for they could get away with most things under such a cryptic law.

The first essential, then, in an adequate law, was that it should make perfectly clear the exact limits of legal use of a car or plane.

The second was that the law should—

(a) Allow all reasonable use of the modern means of transport, for these had replaced—indeed, rendered almost unobtainable—the old.

(b) Prevent, so far as possible, animals from associating motor-cars with danger. For an obvious duty is for us to try to leave game fearless of cars, so that future generations of photographic and other students and sightseers may benefit and enjoy the same pleasures amid the wild life as we do to-day.

(c) Maintain as high a standard of sportmanship as the easier conditions of modern *safari* routine allow.

A third essential was that the law should not impose undue hardship, and so court disobedience; nor should it be impossible to enforce.

I believe that the new proclamation fulfils these three essentials, and is as nearly an ideal solution of a most difficult

problem as exists. I may say that Tanganyika has followed our lead in this matter, and brought in identical—save for one small alteration—legislation. I think that other territories may well do likewise.

Other new game legislation during the year included the publication, to come into force on 1st January of this year, of revised First and Third Schedules of the Ordinance. A considerable number of alterations were made in each schedule. One of the most comprehensive changes was the abolition, for every game animal except Greater Kudu, of the sex distinction; the reason for this is that experience has shown that "males only" has often tended to promote breeding by immature males and the deterioration consequent on pædogenesis.

The fees payable in respect of elephant licences were reduced, such reduction to take effect from the beginning of this year. The first elephant now costs £25 in place of £50, and the second £50 instead of £100. This course was rendered justifiable by the fall in the value of ivory and the number of tuskers available considered in relation to the number of licences issued in the last four years. It is clearly the function of a special licence fee, not to extract the largest possible sum from the individual sportsman, but to regulate the number of animals killed per year.

#### GENERAL.

##### *Game Birds.*

The preservation of game birds in Kenya is a matter of considerable difficulty. Landowners themselves admit the impossibility, in many areas, of preventing the killing of young birds by the children and dogs of squatters. If this is true on private land, the problem in the native reserves appears to be beyond solution. I addressed a letter during the year to the Executive of the Convention of Associations, pointing out the amount of damage done by squatters' dogs in settled areas—the children factor I did not touch on, since direct action, other than castigatory, did not appear immediately feasible,

however justifiable, against these destructive young devils—and suggested that the only way of dealing with the matter would be for all settlers to limit strictly the number of squatter dogs allowed and to insist that these be fed by their owners and kept under some control. Something must be done on these or similar lines; otherwise game birds and smaller mammals, such as hares—why are they so seldom eaten in Kenya?—will become extinct in settled areas before many years are past.

### *Fish.*

There is one matter in this connection which I myself may touch upon; I refer to angling clubs and associations. A certain amount of misconception exists as to the status of clubs in respect of Crown land waters, and as to why such status has been granted to them.

The principle on which this Department works is as follows: If there are—the “if” is pseudo-conditional, since there *always* are—keen fishermen in an area where there is the potentiality of good trout fishing who are willing to form a club to look after, and improve the water, the fishing rights in such water are handed over to the club. Government stipulates, however, among other things, that due provision must be made allowing all fishermen who are not full members of the club to fish on temporary membership terms. In brief, a club, in return for certain rights in water, is entrusted with the duty of providing good fishing for its members *and* any visiting individuals who may wish to fish, upon their contributing a reasonable sum to the club in return for its work and the consequent improved facilities. Government obviously cannot itself care for all the streams as they should be cared for. I believe accordingly that clubs, properly run, are in the public interest. In other words, the principle involved is a monopoly of service, and not, as some have supposed, a monopoly of privilege. Incidentally, the rights over water granted to clubs may be withdrawn without notice, in the unlikely event of the privileges being abused or conditions not fulfilled.