

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/>

The PDF is reproduced with permission from the CD version of The Centenary Archive 1903-2003, a fully searchable database of 100 years of the publications of Fauna and Flora International.

More information on: <http://www.fauna-flora.org/>

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.

The [Rhino Resource Center](#) posted this PDF in June 2009. We are grateful for the permission.

UGANDA PROTECTORATE.

GAME DEPARTMENT.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31ST DECEMBER, 1932.

EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE.

| | £ | shs. | cts. |
|---|---------|------|------|
| Expenditure | 4,380 | 17 | 73 |
| Revenue | 16,496 | 8 | 42 |
| Balance of revenue over expenditure | £12,115 | 10 | 69 |

The revenue was derived as follows :—

| | £ | shs. | cts. |
|---|--------|------|------|
| (a) Sale of ivory, rhinoceros' horns, and hippopotamus' teeth | 12,672 | 7 | 90 |
| (b) Sale of buffalo hides and other trophies | 11 | 4 | 52 |
| (c) Game licences | 3,812 | 16 | 00 |

GAME RESERVES.

The buffalo in the Lake George Game Reserve suffered severely from rinderpest during the year and their numbers were heavily depleted. They are now thriving again and should soon learn to appreciate the area provided for them. The constructing of a first-class motor road through what is now the reserve laid all the animals open to considerable disturbance, and it may be some time yet before a car can slow up or stop close to game without arousing any suspicion as to its occupant's intentions.

GAME TROPHIES.

One hundred and forty-three elephants, including two single tuskers, were shot by the holders of licences in 1932; only three elephants carried tusks over 100 lb., each, in weight.

ELEPHANT CONTROL.

The call for economy compelled a reduction in both European and native personnel, and the department functioned most of the year with two Rangers—one acting as Warden for the whole year—and 15 game guards.

Constant coaching and encouragement by the two Rangers has resulted in a depleted staff maintaining the previous year's figures, with 1,210 elephants carrying 34,196 lb. of ivory, against 1,211 elephants carrying 34,281 lb. of ivory in the previous period. Including found ivory, this year shows 30 more elephants accounted for and about 1,000 lb. more ivory obtained than last year.

Bunyoro.—These elephants, this year, have shown a tendency to surge north and south, between the Bunyoro Reserve and the Kafu River, in greater numbers and more frequently than ever before. With guards reduced by three in this area there should have been considerably less interference than usual with the herds, and this restlessness is probably due to the increasingly frequent passage of aircraft over the reserve. At any rate, it is difficult to offer any other explanation, as it has been a normal year. Although movement increased, damage has not done so, fortunately, but it is hoped the herds will settle down again soon as their constant wanderings entail a lot of extra work on the department.

West Madi.—Damage by elephants increased during the early part of the year, and the Assistant District Officer, at Moyo, undertook the supervision of a full-time native game guard. The results have been most satisfactory, and damage has almost ceased. The Sudan herd, which had made a practice of raiding Dufile, was roughly handled, and appears to have learnt to respect our border, which is more than can be said for some of the Sudan natives, who have recently twice killed elephants about 20 miles inside our territory. Six Sudanese were caught on the first occasion and six more have been arrested and sentenced for participating in the second raid.

Mengo.—An extension of areas molested by elephants took place during the year, and it was necessary to deal with a small herd in Kyagwe. A campaign against native game poachers was successful and resulted, among other things, in over 300 lb. of ivory being confiscated.

Masaka.—The curious preponderance of male to female elephants shot in this district in past years has at last ceased, and now, out of a total of 89 killed, over 40 are cows. Until this year there had always been two guards employed, but economy caused one to be retrenched. The one who was retained decided to cope with the situation by increasing his mobility. To this end he purchased a motor bicycle, and the result is shown very clearly in the respective figures of 89 elephants killed by one guard in 1932 against 32 head by two guards in 1931.

Mubende.—The elephant of this district go on from strength to strength, the more we kill the more there appear to be and the bigger their tusks, as the returns for the past three years show :—

| | No. of of Tusks. | Weight. lb. | Average per Tusk. lb. |
|------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1930 . . . | 468 | 5,657 | 12 |
| 1931 . . . | 502 | 6,341 | 13 |
| 1932 . . . | 548 | 7,557 | 14 |

The last results have been achieved with one native guard less, three against four, and the Mubende Game Ranger has continued to act as Warden for the whole year. One of the native guards, most unfortunately the best of the whole Game Department native personnel, was caught by an elephant and rather severely mauled and has been no use since.

Toro.—As the Toro herds had apparently increased, in spite of the intensified killing during 1931, the Acting Game Warden devised a scheme, based on the principle of a very limited number of specially selected European elephant hunters being allowed cheap licences for a very considerable number of elephants, which he hoped would result in a drastic thinning out of the herds, particularly of the immature stock which is in such unwieldy numbers. In order to preserve, to a certain extent, the best of the male elephant stock, the cheap licences left adult bull ivory forfeit to Government, while the female and immature male tusks became the property of the hunter on payment

of a fee per tusk, but to ensure the killing-off upon every possible occasion of the very small stock, the ivory resulting from it was made free to the hunter. By the time the necessary sanction to try out the scheme for six months had been obtained, the year was well on and the shooting did not begin until the middle of October. By the end of the year about 200 head had been accounted for, and as the hunters were acquiring knowledge of where the elephants would go under the pressure applied, their performances were improving and it seems that the object aimed at will be achieved.

Prior to the start of the special scheme, Mr. Banks, who had continued to direct control in Toro, with a staff reduced to three native guards, had accounted for practically 200 head of elephant in nine months. With the special scheme well under way, the Game Ranger and his staff were transferred to West Nile, to initiate control there.

Ankole.—This district has had a game guard available for its own use during the whole twelve months, but there has been practically no demand on his services, and it is probable that quite a lot of the Ankole elephants have migrated into Toro in recent times, thus complicating matters there and leaving the Ankole staff with nothing to do. The heavy shooting in Toro will soon settle the question of migrants, as although resident elephants will generally die rather than be driven out, elephant memories are long and migrants flee to their old pastures when persistently alarmed.

The results are almost exactly the same as last year, with similar total weights and average weight per tusk, which once more shows that the Uganda elephants are not yet suffering in quality from the measures taken to control them. The ability of a reduced staff to maintain the previous year's figures for elephant killed may help to explode the fallacy that where there are too many elephants the surplus should be dealt with by throwing open the shooting and letting everyone have a few. Unlimited hunters, good, bad, and indifferent, would doubtless slay vast numbers of elephants in a flat and open bit of country, but that form

of control in Uganda would merely result in all the elephants disappearing into swamps and long grass, where no one would follow except the Game Department personnel, who would have to do so because elephants left undisturbed in such country soon learn to lurk happily there by day, emerging at night to raid cultivation. Under the present control system, the Game Department hits comparatively infrequently, but as all the hunters are very effective, its hitting is generally severe. Contributory causes for the heavy killing this year are harder individual working, better armament, and increasing knowledge of how to deal with any situation which crops up. Knowledge is being acquired more rapidly now because there are fewer hunters, and the individual is called upon more frequently.

One very satisfactory feature of the year's working is the narrowing of the gap between the number of male and female elephants killed by control. We have more than regained the ground lost during 1931, and with a difference of just over 100 are approaching equal numbers, which is encouraging. When we are regularly killing more cows than bulls we shall feel the situation more assured, and can perhaps relax from our endeavour actually to reduce total numbers, apart from preventing damage.

During the early years of our Elephant Control we expected to be able to slow up our rate of killing as soon as the habitual shamba marauders had been dealt with. This state is now reached, and if the area under cultivation remained stationary and unchanged, we could carry on without any very active operation. In practice, however, it is proving desirable to eradicate elephants from certain areas. We are finding that the more adequately our control system prevents damage the more elephants we have to kill, a somewhat melancholy paradox deriving from the fact that information of a fertile valley being freed from the elephant menace usually results in an influx of natives from the adjacent comparatively barren hill-tops, and the resultant fresh cultivation soon extends to where the ejected elephants have taken up their abode. This necessitates

further killing. The harassed elephants, likely enough, return to their previous haunts, now probably thickly inhabited, and drastic measures have to be taken. Although the overwhelming majority of elephants do learn, very quickly, not to raid cultivation, it seems doubtful whether natives living cheek by jowl with such big companions can ever acquire that sense of security of life and property which Government strives to confer, and it may be found, eventually, that the elephants have to content themselves with the excellent lands already reserved for them, in addition to the huge area which the tsetse fly at present only too effectively denies to the native.

Under present conditions, Uganda can accommodate more than half its elephant population in uninhabited and uninhabitable areas, but the future may complicate the problem. The passing of aircraft over these empty lands may possibly create so much disturbance that the elephants will attempt to find peace and quiet elsewhere. It happens that both land and water machines visiting Uganda from the north traverse the main elephant reserves and sanctuaries, and signs are not wanting that the elephants there are already ill at ease. Until three years ago there was an annual mustering of majestic old bulls on the East Nile opposite Packwach, but it has ceased now, and this is not to be accounted for by the amount of hunting which has taken place there. This year the wanderings of the main herds indicate that the unrest has now spread inland. With increasingly frequent use of this air route the elephants may become accustomed to the noise and clatter and come to ignore it, but as the trained elephants in the Congo Belge apparently do not achieve indifference to the rattle of motor engines, the probability seems rather against our elephants ever learning to browse peacefully as the air mail goes by. Certainly the pictures of the Bor herd, taken from the air, which constantly appear in the illustrated papers, do not inspire one with hope in elephants becoming blasé to the overhead presence of aeroplanes. If the worst happens and the huge Uganda herds do attempt to leave the

uninhabited lands and to enter the settled areas, it seems that a very much more drastic reduction in total numbers than we ever anticipated will become inevitable.

In November a young Muganda in North Singo whose shamba was being spoiled by elephants went out by himself at night and speared one of the herd in his banana garden, returning to his hut with the shaft only of his spear. In the morning the elephant, with the head of the spear embedded in his neck, was found stone dead a few hundred yards away. The elephant was a big male, carrying tusks of 43 lb. each, and the young man's effort in killing it, entirely single-handed, was a very stout one, particularly as he was being worried by elephants because the local game guard had just previously come to grief in spite of being armed with about the best big game rifle made. This guard had been an outstanding member of the Game Department native staff for five years, and his being mauled goes to show that there is still some truth in the old adage about man having only to hunt elephants long enough to be caught by one of them eventually. This man's rifle barrel was very badly bent by the elephant concerned, and the makers, after examining the rifle, wrote: "The extraordinary thing about this occurrence is that beyond the actual barrel being bent so badly the weapon does not show the slightest sign of any other injury, and there was not even a scratch of any kind on the barrel, or damage to the sights." Actually the absence of any marking is not unusual, as an elephant's foot and trunk are very soft, and it is generally weight of former or strength of latter that does the bending. Some of the men who have been killed by elephants in previous years have not shown any marks at all, though others of course have been terribly torn about, generally by the tusks, which would not come into use against a rifle.

FOUND IVORY.

Found ivory from uncontrolled areas amounts to 27 tusks of a total weight of 346 lb.

The found ivory from control areas amounts to 293 tusks, weighing 5,182 lb.

The following figures represent the number of tusks of below and over 10 lb. of weight obtained in the course of control operations :—

| | Under 10 lb. | Over 10 lb. | Over 20 lb. | Over 30 lb. | Over 40 lb. | Over 50 lb. | Over 60 lb. | Over 70 lb. | Total No. of Tusks. |
|-------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Total | 1,047 | 750 | 288 | 162 | 87 | 29 | 8 | 2 | 2,373 |

BUFFALOES.

Although in the very open country a rinderpest epidemic must take heavy toll, many buffalo live permanently in dense grass and bush country, which sets up an automatic sanitary cordon around each isolated group, so that even repeated epidemics, in a country such as Uganda, fail materially to affect the total buffalo population. To any one looking at a rinderpest stricken herd, noting the dead lying about in the grass, and the staring coats of the terribly emaciated remainder, it would appear certain that disease would more than off-set natural increase, but in five years the herds are fully established again. In 1926 all the buffalo on the West Nile appeared doomed, as there seemed none but the sick and the dead. On one occasion every member of a herd of over a hundred, which went shuffling past to water, left the impression of a loathsome hairy bag filled with rattling bones. After drinking, a dozen or more were unable to pull themselves out of the stream, but to-day there is plenty of adult breeding stock about and quite a lot of calves. Judging by what has happened in the West Nile, the Lake George buffalo will be as plentiful as ever in a year or two, as the epidemic there was mild compared with that of the West Nile.

An experience on the Busia-Tororo road rather indicates that the Eastern Province buffalo may adopt the ways of the Jinja hippopotamuses, which are notoriously contemptuous of lighted automobiles. Mr. and Mrs. Moody were travelling by car, on a very wet night, and as they came down a gentle slope on the main road, met a pair of buffalo.

As there was no possibility of going round the animals, they stopped the car with the driving lamps shining on the buffaloes' eyes, hooting hard the while. After a minute or two, as the buffaloes, 10 yards away, were giving every indication of assuming the offensive, Mr. Moody tried the effect of putting the lights out for a few seconds, to find when he switched on again, an enormous buffalo head actually over the bonnet of his car, with the other animal a few yards back. To Mr. Moody's relief the more inquisitive one was shocked into flight by the sudden glare at such close quarters, and his mate eventually gave way as the car moved slowly forward with the lights going on and off all the time.

The kindly behaviour of Mr. Moody's animals makes additionally sad the story of an unfortunate buffalo which decided to swim to Bugoma from Bukakata. As he entered the water and headed for the island the meat-hungry Basese hastened to assemble in readiness to receive him with spears and stones and many strong men. Faster and faster swam the buffalo in his endeavour to make a landing before the eager islanders should be assembled in full force, but just as he seemed to have more than a sporting chance of not being too heavily out-numbered, his speed suddenly slackened, and the Basese groaned at the thought that the cowardly animal was not going to attempt a landing. A moment later, however, they realized that the reduction in the rate at which their prospective dinner was approaching was due to its tail having been seized by a large crocodile. Gallantly the buffalo struggled towards the shore, and as the water shallowed the crocodile was dragged partly out, to fall back and disappear, as a now tailless buffalo was set upon by hordes of local inhabitants. Tired, almost exhausted, and, one can imagine, by now entirely in despair, the buffalo, an adult bull with a small head, succumbed to mass attack after tossing one of his many foes sufficiently high to make hospital his next stop.

A curious case of a buffalo being drowned in a papyrus swamp was reported from Bunyaraguru. In another part

of Ankole a herd of buffaloes and native cattle were grazing in close proximity. As the domestic cattle were uneasy, their herd bull came out in solitary state, in the most convincingly aggressive manner, and put the buffalo to flight.

LEOPARDS.

These pests have been particularly active among the Bagishu. The Acting Game Warden visited the most troubled area and found the people very invigorating. Without any pressure from him, natives were out at dawn in all directions, looking for kills, and having located a duiker which had just been caught, instead of devouring it as so many would have done, posted a guard over the remains and hastened with the news to the Warden, who now turned poisoner, and by means of some judiciously introduced strychnine, terminated the mischievous careers of two leopards that evening, to the enthusiastic delight of the local inhabitants. Opportunity was taken to show some of the chiefs how to use strychnine against leopards, and it is expected to rid the villages of the worst of the offenders. It will certainly not be due to lack of effort on the part of the Bagishu if the poison campaign fails, as these people spare neither time nor trouble.

WHITE RHINOCEROS.

It seems almost inevitable that at least one of these grand animals will be shot each year by some person who has overlooked or disbelieves in the mass of accumulated proof of the utter harmlessness of all rhinoceros found west of the Nile in Uganda. It is a great pity that the term "White" ever came to be used as descriptive of the square-lipped rhinoceros, because people who see one for the first time naturally feel a little dubious about it being of the harmless variety, as it is not particularly light-coloured in reality. Residents in the West Nile district become accustomed to meeting these enormous brutes, but even they have their moments of doubting at times. Recently the

District Commissioner there, while following an elephant, met a rhinoceros cow and calf. Being accompanied by an armed native game guard, he warned him on no account to fire, and then waited quietly for the animals to get out of his way, intending to show his followers that the local rhinoceros was quite harmless even when with a small calf. In his own words: "The mother saw us almost at the same instant as we saw her and (presumably) cautioning the child to keep on its way, for it did so, she turned towards us with the head down and no diminution whatever of the speed which appeared to be rather faster than a trot. I may confess at once that in spite of what I had just said to the game guard I clipped a cartridge from the magazine to the chamber of my rifle, but remembering also all that I had been told about these beasts and not at all wishing to lose my game and elephant licences, and perhaps district into the bargain, I had enough faith to shift my rifle to my right hand and gesticulate wildly with my left, uttering loud *shoos* at the rhinoceros as I did so. It was not until she was eight yards away that she took any notice of the invitation which had by now swelled to a chorus, but when she did she acted promptly and turned off after the young one and was rapidly gone. I must admit that if I had not had it so well drilled into me that white rhinoceros are not dangerous I should unhesitatingly have classified this as a charge."

HIPPOTAMUS DYING IN LAKE ALBERT.

A mysterious disease broke out among the hippopotamuses at the south-east end of this lake, and at one time, early in the year, sixty dead were counted on a short stretch of shore. The cause of this mortality was never settled, and whatever the disease was, it passed away and the herds that were decimated a few months ago are now thriving.

NOTE OF GENERAL INTEREST.

Visit of His Majesty the King of the Belgians.—The visit of His Majesty the King of the Belgians, although in no way

a hunting trip, as His Majesty firmly refused to slay any animal, was of great interest to the Game Department, as the Acting Game Warden was directed to meet His Majesty near Ruchuru and accompany him to Entebbe. Professor van Stralen, Vice-President of the Parc National Albert, was accompanying His Majesty, and much interesting discussion on game preservation took place.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE FAUNA AND FLORA OF AFRICA.

By CAPT. KEITH CALDWELL.

(Reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of Game and Gun and the Angler's Monthly.)

Amongst the many and various conferences which have taken place lately, there was one, a quiet little one, that most people have never heard of, concerning African game. This conference sat for ten days in the House of Lords in November and, unlike some other conferences, signed a convention at the close of its labours.

International conferences for the protection of the fauna of Africa are not new. The first one was held in London in 1900 but, since none of the Powers would ratify its provisions, it did not achieve much. Another effort was made in 1914, but the war intervened before ratification could be carried out. Bitter experience has shown that one country cannot preserve its game without the co-operation of its neighbours, and some agreement was therefore necessary to concert methods:—

- (a) To establish national parks.
- (b) To control the trade in animal trophies.
- (c) To preserve the rarer species.
- (d) To prevent unduly destructive methods of hunting.

In theory it looks so easy, when every delegate is anxious to help, to get agreement; but the snags are many. Take