

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.

now takes place a fortnight, at least, earlier than fifty years ago and is often a month earlier. But last year owing to unfavourable weather conditions the hay harvest was the latest for many years. Will this year's returns reflect that later mowing?

The B.T.O., while they are concentrating their efforts this year on certain special areas, will welcome reports of particular interest from any quarter, but "records of individual passing birds are not required". This sentence reminds me that the only Corncrake I have seen for many, many years is a very prosperous looking individual now in the Zoo, which was picked up in Canning Town, London!

M. G.

UGANDA.

GAME DEPARTMENT'S REPORT FOR 1938.

The report of the Game Department of Uganda for the year 1938 is, like its predecessors, detailed and interesting. The report is available for members of the Society who may wish to study it. The following extracts and summary notes are of general interest.

GAME RESERVES AND SANCTUARIES.

"The Bagungu region, about 90 square miles in extent, on the north-eastern shore of Lake Albert, which was excised from the Bunyoro portion of the Bunyoro and Gulu Reserve in 1935, has been reincorporated.

"An area of approximately 130 square miles which adjoins the northern sector of the Parc National Albert (in the Congo) has been added as a westerly extension to the Lake George Game Reserve.

"Two forest reserves in the West Nile District and in the Madi Sub-district of the Northern Province respectively, the

Mount Kei Crown Forest, 170 square miles in extent, and the Aiyu River Crown Forest, 20 square miles, have been created White Rhinoceros sanctuaries.

“All the reserves continue to be well stocked with wild life. In particular the Antelope are increasing in the Bunyoro and Gulu and in the Lake George reserves. In the last-named the Buffaloes probably total thousands.”

ELEPHANT CONTROL.

“Elephants generally are as abundant as ever. The influence of effective control in most localities is reflected in the very marked decrease in total wastage, 500 fewer Elephants being destroyed this year. The estimated total wastage is 1,500.

“It is hoped that a stage has been reached in control activities when it will be unnecessary again to increase the rate of killing. There is increasing reference to less damage in most districts. At the same time as not only the game reserves, but also the extensive closed sleeping sickness areas act as Elephant sanctuaries in which the herds are rapidly increasing, one has to visualize a situation from time to time which may demand drastic measures.

“Frequent restrictions on hunting in Rinderpest infected areas have interfered considerably with normal Elephant control operations.

“Twenty-six African ‘control’ guards were employed. The high standard of efficiency of the African members of the staff has been maintained.”

The report brings out the difficulties of keeping a true balance between Elephant preservation and necessary control. As settlement and cultivation expands the confinement of Elephants in more restricted areas becomes more difficult.

“If the great herds are to be contained satisfactorily in the game reserve and the sleeping sickness area it is imperative that there be no possibility of their disturbance by licence-holders.”

Unless the Elephants find peace in their sanctuaries, they will inevitably break out into settled land, doing damage to crops. There is then, naturally, a demand for control measures and the value of the sanctuary is lost.

Control is always necessary, more or less, and the guards upon whom the responsibility rests do not have an easy time.

“One of the guards was treed for four hours by an angry herd of Elephants. He had killed two and wounded another when his extractor broke. The wounded animal made a great noise and attracted a herd which would not leave it. The guard, precariously perched in a tree, spent his time unsuccessfully pushing sticks down the barrel in an effort to free the case. At the end of his exhausting vigil he was a nervous wreck.”

On the whole, however, it is satisfactory to know that Elephants are still abundant in Uganda and that there have been fewer complaints of damage than usual.

ELEPHANT BEHAVIOUR.

The report includes some interesting observations of Elephant behaviour. Some relate to the often argued question whether it is natural for Elephants to lie down.

“*Elephant Lying Down.*—Mr. Gunn, when watching a herd of sixty in the middle of the day, saw a three-quarters grown bull lie down. He rested his head against an ant hill and stayed there for ten minutes. He only got up because a large sized female nearly walked on to him.

“The same observer witnessed a somewhat similar incident during 1937. He was standing within forty yards of three bulls, which he was watching from the top of an ant hill, when the largest of them lay down absolutely flat on his side stretched out like a dog. There he remained quietly for about fifteen minutes when he got up and started feeding again.

“In the latter part of July, the Game Warden, when visiting the northern sector of the Parc National Albert in company with the Conservator, saw an adult bull lying flat on his side

in a shallow pool near the exit of the Semliki river from Lake Edward. The Elephant, unaware of the presence of intruders who were standing on a cliff above, was thoroughly enjoying himself with his head slightly pillowed on a bank at the edge of the water. He was lying down when first perceived and remained so for more than half an hour, after which he got up and began to feed. This was at midday.”

ELEPHANTS AGGRESSIVE OR RETALIATORY.

“*Murchison Falls Trip.*—On 20th March, the game guard who accompanies all railway trips to the Murchison Falls, had to shoot and kill a solitary bull Elephant which charged a party of visitors under his responsibility. As a result of this and previous untoward incidents the Railway Administration, as an additional precautionary measure decided in future to double the protective unit accompanying their parties.

“In the latter part of June there were several very truculent breeding herds on either side of the Nile. The cows, especially, seemed to resent the intrusion of a launch. On one occasion, when the Game Warden was making the trip, a big female came out of the shelter of a shady tree and most determinedly charged across a few hundred yards of open ground in the direction of the launch.

“*Incendiarism by an Elephant.*—The following is a remarkable story from the Toro District :—

‘You must be inundated with tall stories about the sagacity of the Elephant and so the following may not interest you.

‘At Rwenjubu, the scattered village between Katwe and Kabatoro, an Elephant raided the crops of one of the hut-owners there. The man resented the intrusion and the pilferage and threw a burning log at the Elephant to chase it away. However, the Elephant in its turn resented such rude treatment and picking up the burning log with its

trunk it placed it on the grass roof of the hut, which as a result was burned to the ground.

‘This happened three days ago and was told to me by Edward Winyi, the Chief Salt Inspector, who added that it all went to show that Elephants had as much “magezi” (intelligence) as Europeans. There is apparently no doubt about the truth of the story, though the only evidence that I saw was the burnt-out hut.’

“*Game Guard in Buffalo Pit.*—The following amazing tale should bring a realization of the type of misadventure to which the game guards are subject:—

‘Sir,—Let me relate a story of how I had a severe fight with Elephants on 15th December, 1938. On 14th December, 1938, I had a call from Musale’s muluka where eight Elephants had been doing damage to food crops and cotton for three months. I reached the place on the night of 14th December, 1938; the Elephants came that night and destroyed some banana shambas. At dawn I followed them in a forest, and when I got to them at 9 o’clock a.m. they were walking in thick Elephant grass with their backs towards us. We thought they had not seen us, but they had. When I wanted to walk across in front of them I fell in a pit which was dug for the purpose of killing Buffalo. My companions also fell in after me. At this time all eight Elephants attacked us. As soon as I came out of the pit I shot the leading Elephant in the head, I hit the second one in the heart, and the third one in the head.

‘At this moment the other five Elephants arrived at the pit; before they actually got to the pit two of my companions had run away. When we three had safely got into the pit the biggest Elephant stood with its tusks over the top of the pit. I fired from inside the pit and hit it three times in the chest; the earth on which it stood fell in and buried our legs. My rifle was now empty so I took hold of my shot-gun, which my boy who was with me in the pit was carrying, and emptied one cartridge into its mouth, hitting its tongue. It then removed its tusks

from the top of the pit, and I once more hit it in the face, it gave a very loud cry which set the rest to flight. I made a sign of the cross to thank God and then left the pit.

'Please get this news spread all over the world. The knowledge I got from Mr. Leeke and Capt. Salmon is sound.'

"The testimony to the Rangers from whom he received his training is illuminating."

STRANGE CONTENTS OF ELEPHANTS' STOMACHS.

Stone in Elephant.—Mr. Gunn in recent years shot an Elephant in the Toro District, which had inside it a curious stone-like object. The stone was approximately ten inches in diameter and circular in shape, and weighed 15–20 lb. It was solid except for a small hole, about one inch diameter, right in the centre. It was of the same material right through, composed of what appeared to be a light murram soil, very hard and dry of a light brown colour. When handled, it left a deposit on the hand like a piece of coloured chalk. The local Africans said that the Elephant must have eaten this material in the Semliki Game Reserve.

"It later transpired that some of the Baamba had taken away pieces of the stone to grind up and make into medicine for their women and children. When a child is born, the man, when it is three days old, smears it all over with some of the powder mixed with water. They say it makes the child strong in after life.

Elephant Eating Pebbles.—Mr. Gunn sent the Game Warden a number of pebbles and lumps of stone of various shapes and sizes which he had found embedded in the dung of a moderately sized Elephant. There was no doubt that the pebbles had passed through the Elephant, and they had probably been swallowed accidentally at a lick. They were, however, numerous. Such a record is quite out of the ordinary in Uganda, although in certain parts of Africa to find plenty of pebbles inside an Elephant is more the rule than the exception."

FAUNA NOTES (MAMMALS).

“*Gorilla*.—A male and female Gorilla with ‘toto’ are reported to have been seen by Capt. Paul Chapman near his shamba at Bwito in Busongora, on the southern slopes of Ruwenzori. They appeared to be completely unafraid of human beings, who came in fair numbers to inspect them. There have previously been unconfirmed rumours that Gorillas occur in the southern portion of Ruwenzori.

“*Chimpanzee*.—A Gorilla was reported to be present near Mubende. No trace could be found of the animal when an effort was made to ascertain the truth. From the description it seemed to be a Chimpanzee.”

“*Lion*.—Man-eating Lions have been a nuisance in South-Western Ankole for most of the year, and in June extended their unwelcome operations into Eastern Kigezi.

“The trouble seems to have started early in the year (or at the end of 1937) when a pair of Lions with cubs turned to man-killing. When the parents were destroyed, the cubs, by then full-grown, and evidently accompanied by some others, carried on the menace. Special efforts have been made to eradicate these murderous brutes, and eight have been killed by the game guard in the vicinity of Lwasamaire. Unfortunately, it is believed that some are still at large, though for the time being they have moved away from their normal field of activities.

“Four human fatalities are reported from the Masaka District. In April two Lions, which were alleged to have killed an African a few days before, were shot by a Sanitary Inspector.

“Lions, judging from the following incidents, are still fairly plentiful and troublesome in the Mengo District. In Busuju at the end of February two cows, five cows, and six goats, respectively, were killed in adjacent villages. Two months later, in the same locality, a Chief, using a shot-gun, wounded a goat-killing Lion. Next day with three friends he tracked the animal and wounded it again. The Chief was attacked and badly mauled about the head and legs, but his com-

panions succeeded in beating the Lion to death—a stout effort. In Singo, in November, a Muhima herdsman speared and killed a Lion which attacked his herd: in the same locality one of a party of goat-killers was trapped and killed.”

“*Cheetah*.—The Game Ranger, Toro, confirms the report that the Cheetah used to occur, and perhaps still occurs, in the Lake George Game Reserve. As far as is known no examples, alive or dead, have been seen there for many years. In the neighbouring Belgian Congo in the sector of the Parc National Albert to the north of Lake Edward it is still found, and not long ago a youngster was brought in alive to the Parc Conservator.”

“*Uganda Kob*.—In the Lake George Game Reserve and adjacent Sleeping Sickness areas the Kob appears to be on the increase. In one locality from which Kob have been absent for many years there are now a few solitary examples and a herd of eighteen females and youngsters.

“In the last three years there has been an astonishing increase in the numbers of Kob along the banks of the Nile, particularly on the left bank, in the Game Reserve *en route* to the Murchison Falls.

“In Western Acholi the reopening for settlement of a large area in the neighbourhood of the River Aiago has resulted in the hordes of Kob which used to haunt this region being well hunted. Those which have not sought sanctuary in the Game Reserve are now exceedingly timid and speedy.

“Similarly, the rapid expansion of settlement and cultivation in the vicinity of the Kibangya crossing of the Kafu river, has resulted in a serious depletion of the Kob in the past year. Excessive hunting far afield is also a contributory cause.

“The Kob is a curious species, for unlike the Reedbuck it does not easily recuperate. Its partiality for living almost in the villages, even where it is persistently persecuted, is sufficient reason in certain localities for its failure to recover its numbers.”

“*Giant (Forest) Hog*.—In the Toro District this interesting species is evidently increasing rapidly, and is reported to be

abundant in the dense cover throughout the length of the Ruimi river from its mouth in Lake George to the high altitudes of Ruwenzori.

“The report of a passer-by that he had seen from the road a herd of about twenty Rhinoceroses in the Lake George Game Reserve probably refers to a gathering of giant Hogs.

“In the vicinity of the Kibale Forest, in Toro, giant Hogs, being most persistent shamba-raiders, are frequently trapped in pits protecting the cultivation.”

“*Hippopotamus*.—At Old Entebbe, a Hippopotamus started the year badly by so frightening a herd of ninety head of cattle that they rushed through their kraal fence in a panic, and three of them broke their necks.

“Complaints of damage by Hippopotamuses have been numerous from the Entebbe peninsula, and from the Entebbe-Kisubi neighbourhood particularly in January, at the end of April, in June, July, and October. About a dozen of these animals have been destroyed on land in the course of their night raids.

“Although complaints in this locality have been more frequent than usual, personal investigations and inquiries carried out from time to time have revealed a minimum of damage, most certainly no more than normal. On the other hand, the utter apathy of the local inhabitants to attempt to protect their property has been instanced time and again. Most of the plots visited are in the vicinity of an abundant timber supply, but rather than lift a finger to help themselves by erecting a suitable fence, plot-owners prefer to cycle miles to ask someone else, i.e. the Government, to look after them. And, of course, the tale grows in the telling.

“In Lake Edward, from the populous Katwe landing, the thriving fishery is carried on with hordes of complacent Hippopotamuses infesting the shallows in all directions. On rare occasions a disgruntled Hippopotamus will cause trouble, as happened on 21st March, when a Hippopotamus upset a canoe, and one of the five occupants was drowned. On the following day another canoe was attacked and sunk, but luckily without loss of life. A further attack was made on

a canoe on 9th December and one man was drowned. In April Mr. Banks investigated the situation and came to the conclusion that probably owing to the familiarity which breeds contempt the fishermen often took their canoes recklessly close to the Hippopotamus herds. Canoes which could easily give the Hippopotamuses a wide berth would needlessly pass within fifteen yards of them, which is asking for trouble.

“In the latter part of January Mr. W. J. Eggeling, Assistant Conservator of Forests, had an odd encounter on the Masindi-Mutanda road, where he met a Hippopotamus in the middle of the road at 12.30 noon on a blazing hot day. All the surrounding bush was a black powder after a fire, and it seemed that the beast might have been burnt and had fled from the fire right away from the water. There was no water near the scene of the meeting which was close to the Katalakiri turn. As a bleeding wound was visible the unfortunate animal was shot to put it out of pain, and it was then discovered that it had been injured by a drop spear which it had managed to shake out.

“In September, in the vicinity of Nsongezi and the Kagera river, about $47\frac{1}{2}$ miles out on the main road from Mbarara to Mwirasandu, a Hippopotamus attacked and badly damaged the mail van. The story is that the van came round a corner on to a couple of Hippopotamuses which were fighting on the road, and one promptly attacked the car. Six weeks later there was a similar incident at this corner. An aggressive Hippopotamus got almost under the van, but luckily failed to overturn it. On each occasion the attack took place just before midnight. Steps were taken to rid the locality of these dangerous creatures.

“The abundance of Hippopotamuses in Lake Edward, the Kazinga Channel, and Lake George has to be seen to be believed. At the end of December the Game Warden killed a particularly bold and fearless bull which had become a nuisance at the Mahyoro landing in Lake George. This animal paid not the least attention to shots fired at him, and it was obvious that his removal was the only remedy.”

“*White Rhinoceros*.—A bull White Rhinoceros which had been speared was found dead near Bulukatoni in the West Nile District in January. In this district there is a general impression that the White Rhinoceros is increasing and spreading over a wider area. Some have been seen south of Midigo in Aringa. At Rogem, in Jonam County these creatures are accused of causing some damage to crops.

“In West Madi the species continues to be numerous.”

BIRDS.

“*Ostrich (Struthio camelus)*.—In June, Mr. H. Cronly, of the Veterinary Department, took to England a couple of young Ostriches which he had found by the roadside in Karamoja a few months before. Unfortunately one died at the end of the voyage; the other is now on view at Regent's Park.

“These Ostriches presumably belong to the northern race *molybdophanes* distinguished by the bare, horny patch in the centre of the crown.”

“*Migrant Storks*.—Large quantities of White Storks were reported from Kabale, Kigezi, between 18th and 27th April, unusually late. There was also one Andim's Stork with them.

“On 29th January a White Stork, suffering from a sore leg due to being ringed with too small a ring, was caught on an Indian-owned estate near Jinja. The ring was removed and the leg was disinfected with iodine and was treated for three days, after which the wound was quite cured. The bird was very tame and fed freely on locusts which were at that time infesting the estate. As soon as the leg had healed the bird was released. It had been ringed at the University of Kaunas in Lithuania.

“In February when two Royal Air Force Vickers Gordon machines were taking off from Lira, one of the machines, at a height of about 50 feet, struck two Storks. This apparently caused a loss of engine power, for the machine crashed about 300 yards from the landing ground. The machine burst into flames and was completely burnt out. Fortunately the three

occupants managed to jump clear and escaped without serious injury.

“Subsequently a general warning to aircraft was issued inviting attention to the prevalence of large birds on aerodromes and landing grounds in Uganda, and stressing that such birds are likely to be plentiful during the seasons of migration, from September to May.”

“*Secretary Bird (Sagittarius serpentarius)*.—On 20th March, Mr. Eggeling saw a Secretary Bird at Bagungu in Bunyoro on the north-eastern shore of Lake Albert. Although this species is found sparingly in West Nile and Acholi, this appears to be the first record from the Lake Albert plain in Bunyoro.

“*Co-operation with European Bird-Marking Stations*.—Twelve rings from White Storks ringed in Europe have been received by this Department. A table shows when and where the rings were found, and when and where the birds were marked.”

REPTILES.

A Guide to the Snakes of Uganda, compiled by Captain C. R. S. Pitman, was published last November by the Uganda Society.

CROCODILE.

“‘Lutembe’ in spite of advancing years and failing strength still survives. Thanks to the Buganda Native Administration a new road to ‘Lutembe’s’ haunts was opened at the end of the year. The Game Warden saw not only ‘Lutembe’ but also a smaller Crocodile, probably at least thirty years old, on 20th April, when cinema films were being taken for the Empire Exhibition at Glasgow. ‘Lutembe’ seemed very ancient and decrepit, while the youngster was most bold and active and inclined to be nasty. This newcomer had arrived about a fortnight before—it was not there on 6th April—and seemed to be quite ‘one of the family’.

“On 8th May, a youngster was being fed in front of an admiring crowd, but it appeared markedly smaller than the one seen on 20th April. Meanwhile, ‘Lutembe’ and another fairly large Crocodile were floating in the water just off the shore—three in all. The latest gag on the part of her ‘owner’ is that he and his forefathers have had ‘Lutembe’ under their control for 150 years, and that she is 240 years old.”

DISEASES OF GAME.

“Acknowledgments are due to the Acting Director of Veterinary Services for the following résumé of the incidence of Rinderpest, with particular reference to game.

‘In the outbreaks in Teso and Budama game animals were not implicated.

‘In the main epizootic, affecting the Districts of Mengo, Mubende, Toro, and Ankole, species of susceptible game were the principal agents of spread, and deaths of Buffaloes were recorded in all these districts except Ankole. Deaths of Warthog and Bushbuck from Rinderpest were also reported from Toro.

‘Pitting in the Butiti area of Mwenge, Toro, was recommended as an adjunct to the vaccination of a belt of cattle there but no reports have been received of any Buffaloes having been taken. No other anti-game measures were undertaken.’”

The endeavour has been made above to extract from a report covering fifty-six pages and including 246 paragraphs, as well as tables, some of the passages most likely to interest the general reader. Those who are interested in the details of the administration of the game laws, and of Elephant control, in fish and fisheries, and in details of revenue and expenditure will find the report fully informative.