

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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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.

Suddenly in front of me about eighty yards away was a scuffle. A cloud of dust arose in which I could make out two moving objects, one of which seemed to be a Leopard. As I approached nearer it ran away, and I saw it was a Cheetah. The Reed-buck, a ewe, was badly bitten about the head and neck, and one eye was bitten out. When it was shot we discovered that a hind leg low down was also broken.

Early one morning I watched 8 Rhinoceroses and 6 Buffalo standing about forty yards apart from each other. At the time I was lying in short grass behind a fallen down tree about 120 yards from the Rhinoceroses. Eventually 1 Buffalo bull and 1 Rhinoceros left their respective mates and, walking a few yards, stood facing each other not more than 20 yards apart. They stood for some time and seemed to be very interested. Then the wind changed and blew from my direction towards them and they cleared off.

ZULULAND

REPORT OF THE GAME RESERVES AND PARKS BOARD FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1941.

The following passages are extracted from the Report, which is further referred to in Editorial Notes. The first nine paragraphs of the Report deal mainly with finance. The note of economy is sounded ; but the extracts will show that progress is maintained.

Fencing of Hluhluwe Reserve.—In the Board's first report reference was made to the fencing of the Hluhluwe Reserve for which service an amount of £1,000 was made available by the Province. This work involved the erection of approximately 42 miles of fencing and proved to be a very formidable task owing to the extremely difficult country, including precipitous hills, wide rivers, and thick forests. The work is practically complete and there is only a small gap left on the corridor side which cannot be closed until the question of the extension of the Reserve is finally decided. The fence consists of five and in some parts six strands of barbed

wire with wooden standards (of which there are over 9,000) with droppers and loose pieces of iron tied on the top wire; these pieces being loose tend to frighten animals which may touch the fence. It may be mentioned that the majority of the wooden standards are growing. The Board is pleased to report that the fence has proved effectual in keeping the animals within the boundaries of the Reserve. The Board wishes to pay a special tribute to the Game Conservator, who has personally supervised the erection of the fence—a difficult task for the reasons already given. In addition to the wire fence the Board has decided to plant sisal along the inside of the fence and the work has already been commenced.

Rest Hut Accommodation Hluhluwe.—Five additional Rondavels have been completed, furnished, and electric light installed. The Collins Hut has been enlarged and light installed. The lounge is completed and has been comfortably furnished. There is now accommodation available for about fifty visitors. The additional rondavels have proved particularly useful for small parties, while the lounge provides a comfortable place where visitors can rest, especially in inclement weather. In passing the Board wishes to say that all the buildings erected within the Reserve and those now in course of erection at St. Lucia, have been built by the Board's staff and no outside assistance has been used except in connection with the installation of the electric light.

Roads within Hluhluwe Reserve.—The Board has continued its policy of employing a gang of natives to keep the roads and tracks in order. The main road running through the Reserve has been kept in order and certain parts have been hardened with the result that, except in exceptional circumstances, it is possible to travel right through the Reserve without difficulty. There are many tracks which enable visitors to reach almost any part of the Reserve. The policy of the Board is to keep these tracks as far as possible free from undergrowth wide enough to enable a car to proceed and to disturb as little as possible the natural beauties of the drives.

Road Approaches to Reserve.—The Board is pleased to

report that the approach roads to the Reserve have been improved by the Provincial Administration and that streams which at times held up traffic in the past have been bridged with the result that the approaches to the Reserve from the main roads may be regarded as practically all weather roads.

Visitors to Reserve.—War conditions have, of course, resulted in few visitors from overseas. The number of visitors during the year was about 1,700 or 200 less than last year.

Rest Hut Charges.—In the Board's last report attention was drawn to the fact that with additional amenities provided it was felt that the charges for Rest Hut accommodation should be revised. The Board recommended and the Provincial Administration approved of an increase from 2s. 6d. to 4s. per day for adults while children between the ages of 5 and 16 are charged half fees. Children under 5 are accommodated free of charge. When it is remembered that these charges include the use of beds, bedding, cutlery and kitchen utensils, and that firewood, electric light, hot and cold water and the use of a native cook is free, the Board considers that the charges must be regarded as still very reasonable.

Extension of Hluhluwe Reserve.—The position regarding the proposed addition of the land known as the corridor remains unaltered. The Board hopes that when the tsetse fly operations are concluded it will be possible to reserve this land, less any part which may be required for Government purposes, in favour of the Administration. The Board records with pleasure that the amicable relations existing between the Board and the Director of Veterinary Services and his staff have been maintained during the past year. The Board has drawn the attention of the authorities to the fact that natives have entered and occupied land in the corridor without authority, and arrangements have been made for this practice to be stopped in co-operation with the Departments of Lands and Native Affairs.

Rhino Wandering from Umfolozi Reserve.—As is well known, numbers of white Rhino wander from the Umfolozi Reserve and corridor at certain times, particularly when the grazing

within the Reserve is not good. The Board considered it advisable to arrange for Game Guards to be specially employed in keeping a watch upon these animals when they wander outside the reserve. The Game Conservator is thus informed of the movements of these animals.

General Remarks Regarding Hluhluwe Reserve.—The grazing in the Reserve has been very good throughout the year. From January to December, 1940, the total rainfall was 56·42 inches, and rain fell during each month with the exception of July. The rainfall for the preceding years was :

1936 .	.	50·45
1937 .	.	50·81
1938 .	.	32·98
1939 .	.	50·24

The Game Conservator reports that there are 18 adult white Rhino with three calves living in the Hluhluwe Reserve, and a further 10 or 11 come and go from the corridor. In three days during February, 75 White Rhino were actually seen in the corridor by reliable game guards. In March, however, in four days only 37 were counted in the same area. The Game Conservator states that this proves that these animals wander out of the Umfolozi Reserve and corridor. During February the patrol reported the presence of 34 White Rhino outside the Umfolozi Reserve in Mahlabatini area (Native Reserve). These animals appear to have taken up their abode in that area, and efforts to drive them to the Umfolozi Reserve proved of no avail. Although during the periodical droughts in the Umfolozi Reserve the animals have in the past wandered into the surrounding country, particularly into the corridor, the Game Conservator is of the opinion that the activity in connection with the tsetse fly operations is responsible for the animals wandering further afield than before. This matter is mentioned in support of the Board's plea for the provision of a permanent home for these animals as soon as circumstances permit. The Board does not suggest that all the White Rhino will take up their abode in the corridor, but there can be no doubt that quite a

considerable number will do so where there is good grazing during the whole year. There have been no deaths among the White or Black Rhino in the Hluhluwe Reserve during the year. It is, however, reported that five were lost due to varying causes in the Umfolozi Reserve.

The Game Conservator reports that Buffalo, Nyala, and all other species of game in the Reserve are increasing reasonably, and he adds that with the completion of the fence the increase in the game population should cause no anxiety in areas outside the reserve. Hyena and Baboons have been poisoned in large numbers, and a few old Buffalo Bulls and a very old Black Rhino may have to be destroyed. Warthog are unduly increasing although eight or ten are shot every week for rations for the Tsetse Fly Natives and the Board's servants. These warthog and an occasional wildebeeste or bush buck are the only animals shot for meat, and these are always destroyed near the boundary fence.

The Board is satisfied with the progress made in many directions in the Hluhluwe Reserve during the past year, and is more than ever convinced that in this Reserve Natal has an asset in incalculable value of great beauty and a permanent sanctuary where species of Zululand Fauna will be preserved for all time for the enjoyment and education of not only the people of the Union, but of those visitors from overseas who may be expected as soon as normal conditions prevail.

Reservation of Land Surrounding St. Lucia Estuary, Lake, and False Bay.—This matter has been the subject of correspondence over a very considerable period, in fact since October, 1938. The Board has long been convinced that a strip of land, say half a mile in width, should be reserved all along the shores of the Lake and False Bay, excluding Native areas, and possibly Forest Lands. In this connection the Board quotes paragraph No. 31 of its first report :—

“Representations have been made regarding the desirability of controlling and regulating camping, particularly at certain places on the shores of the Lake and False Bay, e.g. Listers Point and Fannies Island. Large numbers of people

camp at these places during the holiday months, and the Board is satisfied that it is imperatively necessary that steps be taken to control such areas if only from a health point of view. The conditions existing are very unsatisfactory, due to lack of control and the absence of sanitary conveniences and water. The Board has in mind the provision of sanitary conveniences, the allocation of camping sites, and general control. It is, however, not possible to take any action until such time as the area surrounding the Lake is placed under its jurisdiction. Representations have been made with the view to placing a strip of about half a mile wide under the Board's control, but no decision has yet been reached."

The area has been visited by officers of the Land Forestry Departments, and the desirability of control was pointed out to them. The Board has now been advised of the decision of the Department of Lands after negotiations covering a period of over two years as follows :—

“ MINUTE DATED 31ST FEBRUARY, 1941, FROM LAND DEPARTMENT TO PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

St. Lucia Lake.—With reference to your application for the reservation of a strip of land surrounding the St. Lucia Lake, I have to inform you that your request has received the careful consideration of the Department which regrets that it is unable to accede thereto.

I am to state, however, that the Department is prepared favourably to consider the reservation of areas at places where you may desire to establish camping grounds, and if you will indicate such places on a plan, the matter will be further dealt with."

With regard to the suggestion contained in the second paragraph of the minute, it has been pointed out on more than one occasion that no useful purpose would be served by demarcating camping places on the shores of the Lake and False Bay. It seems obvious that unless power is given to the Board to control all the land alongside the water, people who object to being controlled in recognized camping places will merely move to some other point and create

insanitary conditions which the Board is endeavouring to obviate. No good purpose would seem to be gained by pursuing the matter further and the Board can only express the hope that the Land and Forestry Departments will themselves take steps to see that the insanitary and harmful conditions now prevailing will be speedily remedied. There is an impression in the public mind that the Board has some responsibility in this matter, but this, of course, is not the case as the Board has no jurisdiction over the land in question.

BIRDS AND MEN

By R. H. SPENCER SCHRADER.

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How many of us, I wonder, give thought to the fact that birds play a very important part in human affairs? Perhaps it would be worth while spending a little time in examining the questions relating to the effects of man's activities on bird life, and nature's reactions to those activities.

There are two conditions essential to the existence of all living things, an adequate food supply and adequate living room. In a state of nature we find that there is perfect equilibrium, and that the population is limited by these conditions. Should there be an increase in both food supply and living space, there will be a corresponding increase in the population; the numbers will not be affected by an increase in only one of the conditions, but a decrease in one, even though there were an increase in the other, will be followed, inevitably, by a shrinking in numbers. These are facts which must be borne in mind if many of the problems arising from the presence or absence of birds are to be clearly understood.

Another point worth remembering is the fact that, if there were any alterations in living conditions, there would be