

two days. To do this I dipped him thoroughly in warm water, scrubbed him gently with a brush, dried him with a towel and finally put him out in the sun. Like most babies 'Pooks' is liberally plastered with baby powder thus ensuring that at all times he is sweet-smelling and presentable.

Being a baby, mischief is second nature to him, and on many occasions we have to reproach him firmly—but gently. One of 'Pooks's' more amusing performances occurred one evening when a few friends arrived for drinks. Uninvited, 'Pooks' perched himself on the rim of each glass in turn, taking a fair share from the variety of drinks. Needless to say it was not long before he retired a little unsteadily to his box which was nothing more than an old whisky box, partially boarded up and lined with old socks and handkerchiefs.

Quite often 'Pooks' abuses the law—my father—either by gnawing at his leather watch strap or repeatedly undoing his shoe-laces, in which case protection is demanded from my mother by clinging to her hair or nestling in the crook of her shoulder. When, however, the scolding comes from the unexpected quarter—my mother—all hope of sympathy is abandoned and 'Pooks' beats a hasty retreat to his so-called nest. The pathetic sight of the offended animal trying to hide from his scolding human friends always proves too much for the family and amid laughter and forgiveness he is removed from his box and his antics start all over again!

Being nocturnal, 'Pooks' denies us many of his games but often during the night I have been wakened by the little fellow jumping up and down on my bed, and it is quite common for my face to be used as a playground and my nose as a grindstone.

A firmly established member of the family now, and almost the size of a large cat, 'Pooks' is still affording us much amusement and devotion.

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## Sir Llewellyn Andersson and S.A.O.S. Essay Composition

The competition is open to any school pupils in the Republic of South Africa, South West Africa and the Rhodesias, between the ages specified below. The essays must be written in English or Afrikaans.

Candidates will be divided into three groups. The first group will consist of those candidates between the ages of 10 and 12 on the date of the closure of the competition—31st October 1963—and the second group will consist of candidates between the ages of 13 and 15; the third group of those candidates between the ages of 16 and 18.

Further particulars can be obtained from:  
Miss J. de V. Little, P.O. Box 76. Carolina, Transvaal.

## Meeting with a Rhino

34 p 3

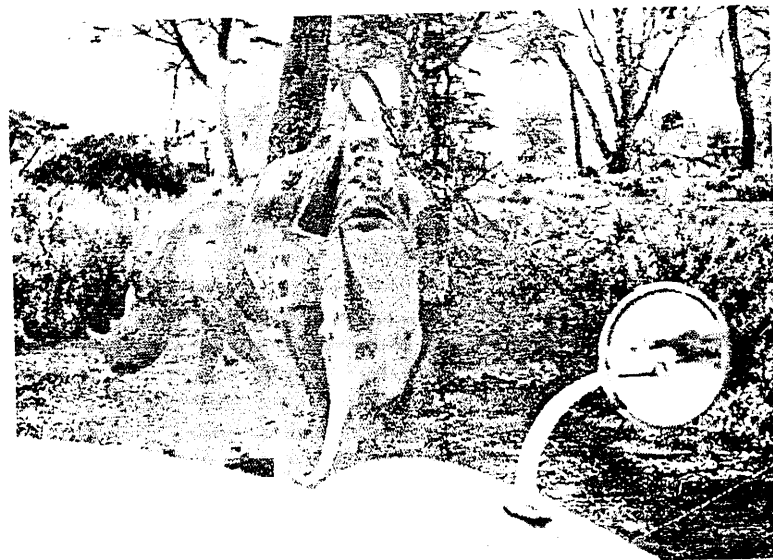
By R. M. SHIRLEY

WE had been photographing various buck and larger species of game in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, when we noticed a movement some distance away in the bush. After negotiating a few bad spots we came upon five rhino browsing, giving us good opportunity for some excellent shots and cine in colour.

Half an hour later we took up a new position in thick bush with a view of them through a gap. The filming was progressing steadily when suddenly a rhino appeared in the gap blocking our view. He must have come from another part of the bush as it wasn't one of the rhino we were photographing. Being only five yards in front of us we were unable to go forward and were also unable to turn left or right as the bush was hemming us in, while on looking back we found two more rhino some 10 yards to our rear.

The rhino began to walk straight towards the car, and we prepared ourselves for the inevitable. To our surprise he stopped with his horn inches from the bonnet, and stared at us, standing motionless. We didn't dare move, light a match or take a picture.

After a while he started moving about in the small space in front of us. A few minutes later he took up a position facing us and, motionless as a statue, began to go to sleep standing up. We started taking a few stills and even though the windows were closed his ears flicked with each click of the camera, giving confirmation of the acute hearing of rhinos.



He stood motionless facing the car.

17(3) 1963

Suddenly a very young rhino appeared in the tiny clearing and, walking up to the car, began sniffing at it. Rhinos are unpredictable, and not wanting the young one to start something to provoke a charge from the mature sleeping one, we decided it was time to leave, especially as the rhinos had departed from behind us.

Having the car in reverse gear before pressing the starter was a good idea as the rhino awoke at the first noise from the engine but saw us already retreating so made no threatening movement towards us. By this time the way was clear behind so we were able to drive off back to camp with a memory of an experience we shall not forget, especially as that day a rhino had charged a car which was passing at some distance.

## Honorary Game Rangers

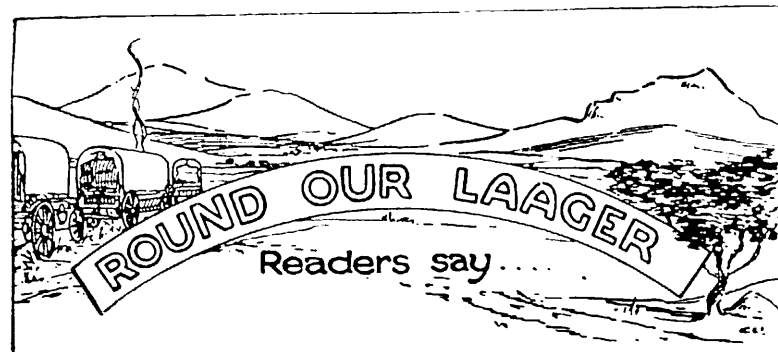
FOR some years consideration has been given to the desirability of using lovers of nature who make regular visits to the Kruger National Park to assist in controlling the small percentage of visitors who misbehave themselves. The Board has now approved a scheme to appoint a few hundred honorary game rangers to assist the staff to exercise control over visitors who do not always realise how to behave themselves. Many of the offences are due to ignorance—it is believed this applies especially to offences such as driving animals off the road or getting out of cars. The scheme cannot be put into operation immediately, since application forms will have to be printed and those wishing to co-operate will have to make application, give certain undertakings, etc. such as be prepared to act as witnesses and attend the courts if the accused deny guilt, and special care will have to be taken in the choosing (of the rangers). Such selected persons will then obtain official pennants for their cars whenever they enter the Park and return these on leaving the Park. There will be no privileges for the Hon. Game Rangers under the scheme since the Board will appoint those persons who offer their services out of a genuine love for our wonderful heritage.

(Extract from National Parks Board Newsletter).

## Python and Cattle

MR. W. S. B. BASCH of Thabazimbi (Transvaal) reports that Mr. J. J. Marais of the farm Rooipan in the Rustenburg district went out one day to inspect his cattle. His attention was attracted by a number of animals busily licking something on the ground. As he approached nearer he observed that it was a large python in the process of sloughing. The snake was lying extended on the ground and was being licked by the cattle. When Mr. Marais was spotted by the snake it retreated into a hole.

(Extract from Newsletter of the Nature Conservation Department of the Transvaal).



## A TRIP TO OKAVANGO

The Editor, "African Wild Life",

Sir,—I would like to tell you something about the New Kwaai Game Reserve and the area around it. It is situated on the North-Eastern tip of the Okavango Swamps in Bechuanaland between the Kwaai River and the Swamps. In a party, comprising a dozen school-boys, two masters and a parent we went to the Okavango Swamps during the holidays in two seven-ton trucks. First we went to the Mababe Depression which is full of wild life. It is a flat grassy plain to the North of the Swamps. To the eastern side is a thick belt of Mopani bush. On this depression we saw tremendous herds of buffalo and wildebeest as well as impala, warthogs, ostriches, giraffe, zebra, jackal and a fantastic amount of bird life.

We then proceeded to the Kwaai River region. This part is very grassy with thorn trees and Mopani bush scattered around. For approximately a quarter of a mile on either side of the Kwaai River there is a belt of reeds. Here we saw hundreds of lechwe (the very rare buck that live in swampy areas). Besides these we saw tsessebe, kudu, sable, antelope, impala, wildebeest, jackals, baboons, warthogs and wild dogs. To cool off and wash one day we swam in the Kwaai River—driving down it the next day we saw hippo and crocodile!

This part of Bechuanaland is well worth seeing. I think, for on the way across the Makarikari Pan we saw eland and gemsbok and more buffalo which completed our trip. So, if anyone would really like to see a good amount of game and bird-life, I recommend the area around the Okavango Swamps.

71 Waterfall Ave., Craighall, Johannesburg.

COLIN DANCER

## THE KING OF THE BIRDS

The Editor, "African Wild Life",

Sir,—May I tell you this old Xhosa story about how a tiny bird in Kaffraria became "King of the Birds". It was told to us 70 years ago by our nurse, a Khosa of 20, who came from St. Matthews Mission, Keiskhama Hoek:

One day all the birds of the air met to decide who would be the "King of Birds"—the one who flew the highest would be King. At a certain hour all aspirants set off, up, up and up, in circles, until the great Eagle was high above all the other birds. He shouted triumphantly: "I am the King of the Birds—I am highest!"

"No you are not!" squeaked a tiny brown bird, sitting on the Eagle's back. "I am higher than you. I am King of the Birds!" He had been carried on the Eagle's back.

From that day the tiny brown bird was called by the natives "Inceda" (the assisted). We boys called it "Incedakie". It is a grass bird which I have not seen in any South African bird book.

Addington Hospital, Durban.

G. F. COURT, Captain.