

# AFRICANA

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## ACTION TO SAVE RHINO

**T**HIS ISSUE of AFRICANA contains an emphasis on the plight of rhino throughout the world — and it is timely for the whole of humanity to consider the situation facing this species. The great message which comes through from contributors' articles is that it is not yet too late!

In East Africa, the governments are aware of the great dangers which exist and they have taken action. Perhaps the boldest move was that of Tanzania, some years ago, when the island of Rubondo was allocated specifically as a sanctuary for these craggy animals from another age.

In their natural habitat, rhino in northern Tanzania were causing delay in the urgent plans for food production which the Tanzanian United Republic desperately needed to put into operation. But Rubondo Island was a masterly solution and the big beasts were caught, transported and released to the safety of this new exclusive breeding ground.

By comparison, Kenya shot over 1000 rhino some 20 years ago, to make way for cultivation; but the score is now being set right in new Kenyan efforts — aided by the East African Wild Life Society — to ensure survival with due regard to human needs.

In all such forward-looking ventures, adequate finance is the essential factor and the world has its opportunity to contribute to conservation through the Society's Christmas Cards, reproduced in the middle pages of this issue.

They are beautiful and would be received delightedly by your friends everywhere. They are excellent value and every one of them carries the conservation movement a fraction of a shilling ahead. Look them over, make your selection EARLY this year and order now, if you can.

CHARLES HAYES

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# ANIMALS

successor, Marcus Aurelius, secured 100 lions for the same reason.

And the capture expeditions had to tramp deeper into Africa — into the Upper Nile and Ethiopia — to keep up the supplies.

Even then, many species were becoming scarce and expensive. Finally, as the momentum of the Roman Empire began to fail, Europe's greatest capital was unable to afford the escalating costs of animal import.

The respite was welcome. And it was not for another 1,500 years — until the availability of cheap firearms in the 19th Century, in fact — that Africa's game populations were again endangered.

Legislation to control shooting had been introduced in many parts of the continent of Africa by the turn of the 20th Century; but it was often ineffectual and only during the past two decades have the dangers facing the world's last great wildlife legacy been fully recognised.

**THE EXPORT** of live animals and birds is now strictly controlled in East Africa. As Kenya's Chief Game Warden David Brown puts it:

"We are particularly concerned about the destinations of animals leaving this country and would not normally license the export of any wanted as pets, for instance.

"Reputable zoos, with their scientific educational roles, are favoured; but we have set up strict control on trapping in Kenya."

East Africa's best trappers are highly skilled men, with deep appreciation of wildlife conservation needs. In their tough, often-lonely lives, their prime consideration is the wellbeing of the animals which will become ambassadors to many different parts of the world.

They are anxious to ensure that capture is as free from stress and shock as is possible; their captives are studied intently at all stages, to avoid discomfort.

Some well-known trapping organisations maintain holding grounds, where animals straight from the wild are acclimatised for their future existence in public confinement.

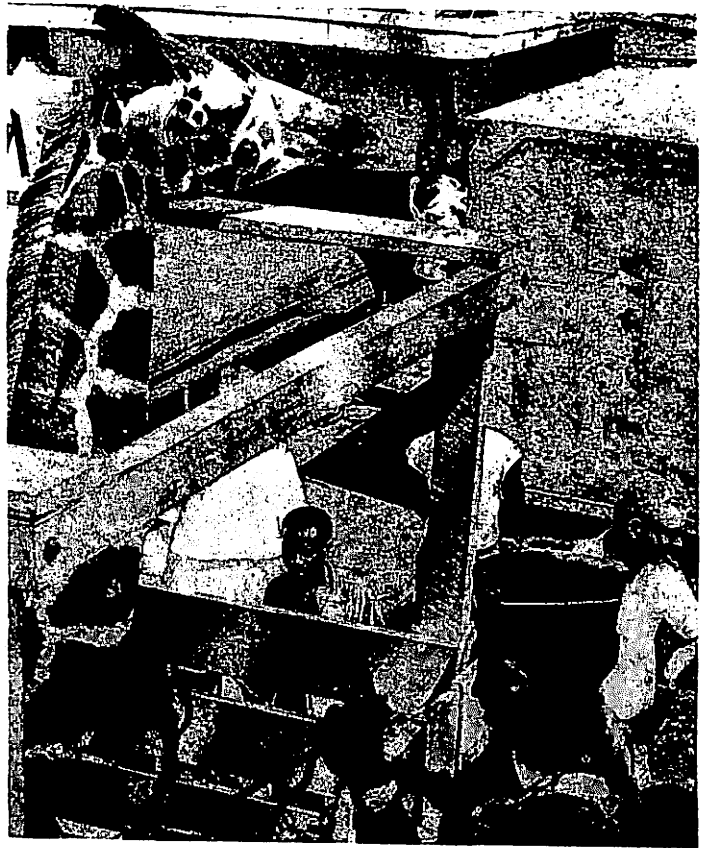
The contribution to science by some species of East Africa's wildlife is also immense. The ubiquitous baboon for instance, is of major assistance in research programmes on diseases like cancer, since it has many physiological similarities to human beings. Its psychological responses, circulatory system, even social patterns too, match up in the research clinics with those of Man.

Said a Human Genetics branch scientist at America's National Institute of Health: "For his immunological characteristics, the baboon is now one of the most thoroughly-investigated of nonhuman primates."

The South-west Foundation for Research and Education, in San Antonio, pioneered meticulous detailed medical histories of baboons trapped at Kenya's Darajani centre and shipped to Foundation laboratories and other United States' research units.

The work on Africa's baboons may some day lead to the development of a cancer vaccine.

In San Antonio, as in the Institute of Experimental Pathology and Therapy at Sukhumi, USSR, (which received its first supplies of baboon from Ethiopia in 1927), baboon breeding colonies have been set up, simulating as nearly as possible the original African natural conditions and engendering calm reactions from these primates.



AN OFFICIAL of the Malaysian National Zoo travelled to Mombasa in order to accompany giraffe, rhino, zebra and birds on the long sea journey to Malaya and Japan.

But, in East Africa, Game Department officials and representatives of the East African Wild Life Society keep close watch on trapping methods in what had become a lucrative trade, after it was found that carelessness and disregard for the welfare of the animals was leading to a disproportionate number of "shipping" deaths.

The development of fast air services between Nairobi, Europe and the United States meant shorter "stress" journeys for vervet monkeys and baboons. Even so, there were outstanding examples of unnecessary suffering, which were the subject of drastic action by the authorities.

Only recently, the export of Red Colobus monkeys from Zanzibar caused a swift re-evaluation of the conditions surrounding the trapping of rare species. Six of these beautiful animals were found in poor health — one already dead in its cage — at Nairobi Airport, en route from Zanzibar to two European zoos.

An official of the Kenya Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, making a routine call at Nairobi Airport, first sounded the alarm. The results of that call show how suffering may occur, even in the best-regulated circles.

**IN ZANZIBAR**, the Minister of Agriculture licenses the capture and export of animals and, a few months ago, issued such a licence to a shipper in respect of Red Colobus monkeys (*Colobus badius kirkiti*), required by a West German zoo and an institution in Belgium.

The Red Colobus is rare and protected under government decree in Zanzibar. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and

Natural Resources made representations, some years ago, asking that complete immunity from trapping be granted to the species, in order to allow a falling population to recover.

The Zanzibar Red Colobus is accustomed to tropical climate at sea level; it suffers greatly if taken to high altitudes and cold climates, and often dies unless special arrangements are made for its living conditions.

Very few of them survive in the world's zoos, although the International Zoo Yearbook lists Frankfurt Zoo as having three females and no males in mid-1965.

The only Red Colobus recorded in captivity by any zoo was a male at Antwerp. Numerous deaths amongst the species in captivity were reported by the Yearbook.

The few Red Colobus found in Zanzibar form an isolated group, living in conditions ecologically very different from those of relatives in West Africa.

East African researchers urged that not only should this well-defined race be saved in the island — the only place it occurs in East Africa — but that its habitat, the Jozani Forest, should also be preserved, untouched. The species is leaf-eating and unlikely to harm the island's cultivated areas.

Dr. Cynthia Booth, director of Kenya's Tigon Primate Research Centre (an organisation founded by world-famous Dr. Louis Leakey and financially aided by, for instance, East African Wild Life Society Vice-President Sir Malin Sorsbie) went to investigate.

(Continued overleaf)

# TRADE IN WILD ANIMALS

(Continued from previous page)

Commenting on the possibility of setting up a breeding colony of Red Colobus somewhere away from danger, she said last year that she would not recommend any attempt to trap live adults.

"They have little adaptability, either physical or psychological," Dr. Booth reported, "and those which do not die almost immediately, usually become apathetic.

"Their complex stomachs, adapted to the digestion of a high-cellulose diet, are easily upset, and drugs administered to correct infections often fail through not penetrating into every part of the complicated, sacculated stomach."

If a breeding colony were to be set up — and there was no record of Red Colobus having bred anywhere in captivity — infants should be the targets, Dr. Booth recommended, since the shock of capture was minimised in them and they would take readily to human foster parents.

But although it would be "a criminal waste of some of the precious few remaining *Colobus badius kirkii* to allow the commercial trappers of animals for zoos to obtain them," said Dr. Booth, ultimately the attempt to maintain a breeding nucleus in captivity should be made — by those with long experience of the more difficult African monkeys.

Careful handling on capture; immediate prophylactic treatment against intestinal infections; the feeding of vitamin supplements; and constant vigilance against infections of the respiratory organs — those would be the requirements, advised Dr. Booth.

**A** GAINST that background, six Red Colobus arrived from Zanzibar by air, at Nairobi Airport 5400 feet above sea-level. Hours afterwards, one was dead.

A delay in documentation despatch, it was later claimed, led to the animals being left overnight in the cold airport building.

In Zanzibar, they had been supplied with "a whole carton consisting of Bananas and Beetle (sic — beetle?) leaves", the shipper stated, and a certificate of fitness had been issued by a Zanzibar veterinary officer two hours before their departure for Nairobi.

Nevertheless, a Nairobi veterinary surgeon, called by the KSPCA official, found the five remaining animals in an advanced state of malnutrition and said that the dead monkey had suffered from dehydration as well.

The consignment had been purchased from Zanzibar farmers by the shipper, who later claimed that they were "all in good condition" at that time. Crates supplied by the shipper for the animals' air-journey were also confirmed by the Zanzibar authorities as adequate.

The KSPCA official, under powers accorded by a Kenya Ordinance, seized the consignment and reported the matter to a Nairobi magistrate. Next, Dr. Booth was asked to care for the animals at the Tigoni Primate Research Centre and to try to save the lives of the five who had survived the three-hour trip from Zanzibar.

One adult male — "extremely apathetic and sunken-eyed on arrival here," recorded Dr. Booth — died a few days afterwards. A juvenile male — with "a mark round its neck such as is made by a noose," said Dr. Booth — died three weeks later. Post-mortem examination revealed "a very enlarged heart."

That left three animals all female. Two had damaged tails and later lost portions of them. One had damaged fingers, which turned septic but eventually healed.

One, in an extremely weak condition, was found to have a shotgun pellet embedded in her head. The pellet was removed, but it was

considered unwise to attempt surgery on parts of her body where five other pellets were also observed.

One female, in early pregnancy, aborted and all three were suffering from shock, said Dr. Booth.

Yet deaths amongst the unfortunate animals had been halted.

The Tigoni research centre is situated in cool uplands at about 7000 feet above sea-level and emergency arrangements were made to provide the Red Colobus with the warmth and humidity to which they were accustomed in their natural habitat.

Dr. Booth and her four research assistants set up a 24-hour-a-day vigil over the delicate animals and the three Red Colobus now appear to have every chance of survival.

**B**UT Dr. Booth is critical of the events which led to this situation.

She wonders whether the Zanzibar farmers could possibly be experienced enough to deal with delicate animals under stress. She sympathizes with veterinarians called upon to pronounce on the fitness of confined animals whose capture history is not available.

She points out that no evidence was produced to her that special care and treatment — "so desperately required between capture and shipping" — had been made available to the animals. She thinks that, in the circumstances, bananas fed to these leaf-eaters might cause death.

"In my opinion, it is not enough merely to observe the regulations when dealing with rare species," says Dr. Booth. "It is essential that

every step of the capture should be supervised — by experienced handlers and, where there is any doubt, by representatives of the organisation placing the order for the animals.

"I am not against capture for scientific research," Dr. Booth went on. "But I detest unnecessary suffering and I'm against any waste of precious wildlife resources.

"An animal caught by humans deserves our best efforts to keep it alive," she commented.

Some of East Africa's most respected trapper organisations refuse to handle overseas' demands for vervet monkeys, for instance. They say they cannot provide the care and treatment required, against prices allowed by research institutions.

They deplore the casual fashion in which captures are sometimes made, the way females in milk are sometimes caught and abortions occur.

Despite the toughness of vervets, thousands have died before they reached their research destinations and scandals have shocked East Africa.

Many reputable trappers turn down orders when the price offered for birds and animals precludes the provision of that element of travel comfort regarded as essential for the creatures' well being.

But there are other cases where safety does not rate so high — traps containing frightened, enraged animals, left unvisited and starving to death; brutal handling after capture; thoughtless exposure in conditions to which the creatures cannot adapt quickly enough.

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