

N Y A S A L A N D

PROTECTORATE



# Annual Report of the Department of Game, Fish and Tsetse Control for the Year ended 31st December, 1951

## A. STAFF AND GENERAL

1. Rather more settled conditions pertained as regards staff during 1951 than has been the case during previous years, there being no secondments for other duties. There were, however, still some difficulties in the game control side caused by the abrupt departure, without notice, of one officer. His place was, however, filled without great delay.

2. Mr. Llewellyn, Game Control Officer, was on leave from February till June and Mr. Mitchell, Tsetse Entomologist, proceeded on leave on 3rd December. Mr. Rickman, Tsetse Ranger, was on leave from 17th March till 12th August, 1951.

3. The staff of the Tsetse Survey was increased by the addition of a Botanist, Mr. B. Steele, B.Sc., in October.

4. The staff position as at 31st December is set out in Appendix I.

## B. GAME

5. The main emphasis during the year was again on crop protection, but the rather more settled staff position and the progress made in destroying vermin during previous years permitted the payment of some attention to game conservation.

6. In the Northern Province the lack of housing facilities prevented the posting of a Game Control Officer till towards the end of the year and for the first nine months the Game Control Guards were under the part-time supervision of the Rumpi Administration and Tsetse Ranger, Karonga. Naturally, neither officer could spare time to give personal direction in the field and a concentrated effort was not practicable. The two teams were combined under the Game Control Officer after his arrival in October and a concerted effort was made under his direction in the rice and cotton areas of Karonga District. Total of crop marauding animals destroyed in the Province during the year were 2,298 of which 1,344 were destroyed in the course of the concerted effort under the supervision of the Game Control Officer. Of the total destroyed 2,238 were pig or baboon, 17 were buffalo and eight were hippo.

7. In addition to the above some 2,500 head of vermin were destroyed by private effort, working under the stimulus of a small bounty. Nearly all these were destroyed by the people of Nkata Bay District.

8. In the Central Province the systematic nature of the effort was continued, both the Central Province teams concentrating on the productive Lake-shore plain and low-lying parts of Kota-Kota, Dowa, Dedza and Ncheu Districts with emphasis on the cotton areas. The Lake-shore of Kota-Kota has now reached a stage when the vermin, particularly baboons, are so far reduced that they no longer merit the attention of the armed hunters. A similar result was on the verge of being achieved in the Dowa Lake-shore by the end of the year and decisive protection has been afforded to the low-lying parts of the other two Districts dealt with. An exceptionally valuable step was made by the Game Control Officer, Kota-Kota, who succeeded in establishing district netting teams in both Dowa and Kota-Kota. These teams are at present financed from the general Native Welfare and Development Fund grant for crop protection but are, in the main, directed and supervised by the Native Administrations. That in Dowa District is working particularly well under the stimulus of the interest of the Chiefs and of orders requiring the general public to turn out for vermin drives when called upon. That in Kota-Kota requires a larger measure of attention from the Game Control Officer himself, as the Chiefs have not yet seen fit to make orders compelling a turnout of the general public. The system, at least as it is working in Dowa, points the way to the establishment of a more or less permanent local effort against vermin which can be both financed and supervised by the local authorities. This is badly needed and every effort is being made to apply the system elsewhere.

9. A total of 12,500 head of crop-marauding animals were destroyed by the game control teams in the Province during 1951, of which 12,300 were vermin. A further 2,500 head of vermin were dealt with by private effort under stimulus of bounty payments, mostly by the people of Fort Manning, Dowa and Kota-Kota Districts.

10. In the Southern Province concerted efforts were made in the Shire Valley of Zomba and Blantyre Districts and in the cotton area of Chikwawa District. The abrupt resignation of the Southern Province Officer and month or two of delay in finding a replacement made a short gap in the field supervision of the teams, but on the whole the effort was more systematic and planned than in previous years. Elephant, coming down from the border hills of Chikwawa District, caused considerable damage in the crops of the Shire plain during March and April. Unfortunately, their arrival coincided with the gap between Game Control Officers, but Mr. R. B. Usher, Honorary Game Warden, undertook to lead the attack in driving them back. He shot two, at considerable personal risk, and the herd forthwith departed for the uninhabited hills from which, up to the end of the year, they did not again emerge. A permanent cordon of four hunters has now been established round the base of these hills to turn back any further sorties during the rains.

11. A total of 3,735 crop-marauding animals were destroyed in the Province of which 3,600 were pig or baboon.

12. A detailed analysis of animals destroyed throughout the Protectorate and staff employed is set out in Appendix II.

13. Appendix III shows the value of ivory collected in the course of crop protection, also revenue to the Native Development and Welfare Fund from sale of meat and value of meat handed over to District Headquarters, Kota-Kota, for distribution to Hospitals, Prisons, etc. In addition considerable quantities were delivered to Native Administrations for their use.

14. Crocodile destruction continued in the Southern Province, under the charge of Mr. Jollyman but work was much hampered in the closing months by the failure of the launch supplied to him and it proved impossible to find another. Nevertheless, some 252 reptiles are known to have been destroyed and the western shore of the S.E. arm has been almost entirely cleared. This represents a very valuable contribution to the effort to foster the gill net fishery. In addition to this Government-sponsored effort, one private operator began the commercial exploitation of crocodiles in the Central and Southern Provinces and another in the North. These two dealt with some 598 reptiles between them in the last six months of the year.

15. Experiments were made with a chemical known as Strigatox which there was reason to believe might have properties of repelling game from fields round which it was sprinkled. It did seem to have some such effect, but of too transient a nature to make it of practical value. The Agricultural Department reported unfavourably on the efficiency of the electric fence unit lent to them for experiment and there has not been time to find a suitable place for further experiment.

16. During the year the progress in vermin control made it possible to pay more attention to the game conservation side of the picture and to take some steps towards the enforcement of Licence Regulations and the safeguarding of Reserves. Appendix IV sets out the number of various types of licences issued during the year. Unfortunately, comparative figures for previous years are not available in most cases, but an increase from £33 worth in 1950 at Kota-Kota to £214 worth in 1951 seems of significance. Nevertheless, the total of 1,492 game licences taken out in 1951, as against 4,331 firearms other than revolvers registered for 1950, suggests that there is a good deal of unlicensed hunting. Nineteen-fifty-one arms registrations are not available, but are unlikely to be below those of 1950. Naturally all firearm-owners do not hunt game but it is considered that the proportion is considerably more than the 30 per cent. indicated by the Game licence figures.

17. In addition to the insistence on the possession of Game licences efforts were made to re-establish the sanctity of Game Reserves, particularly the important Kota-Kota Reserve, which had been heavily poached in preceding years, and concurrently suggestions were put forward to Government for the recession of its eastern and extension of its western boundaries, in order to make a more logical allocation of the land for agricultural and game preservation purposes.

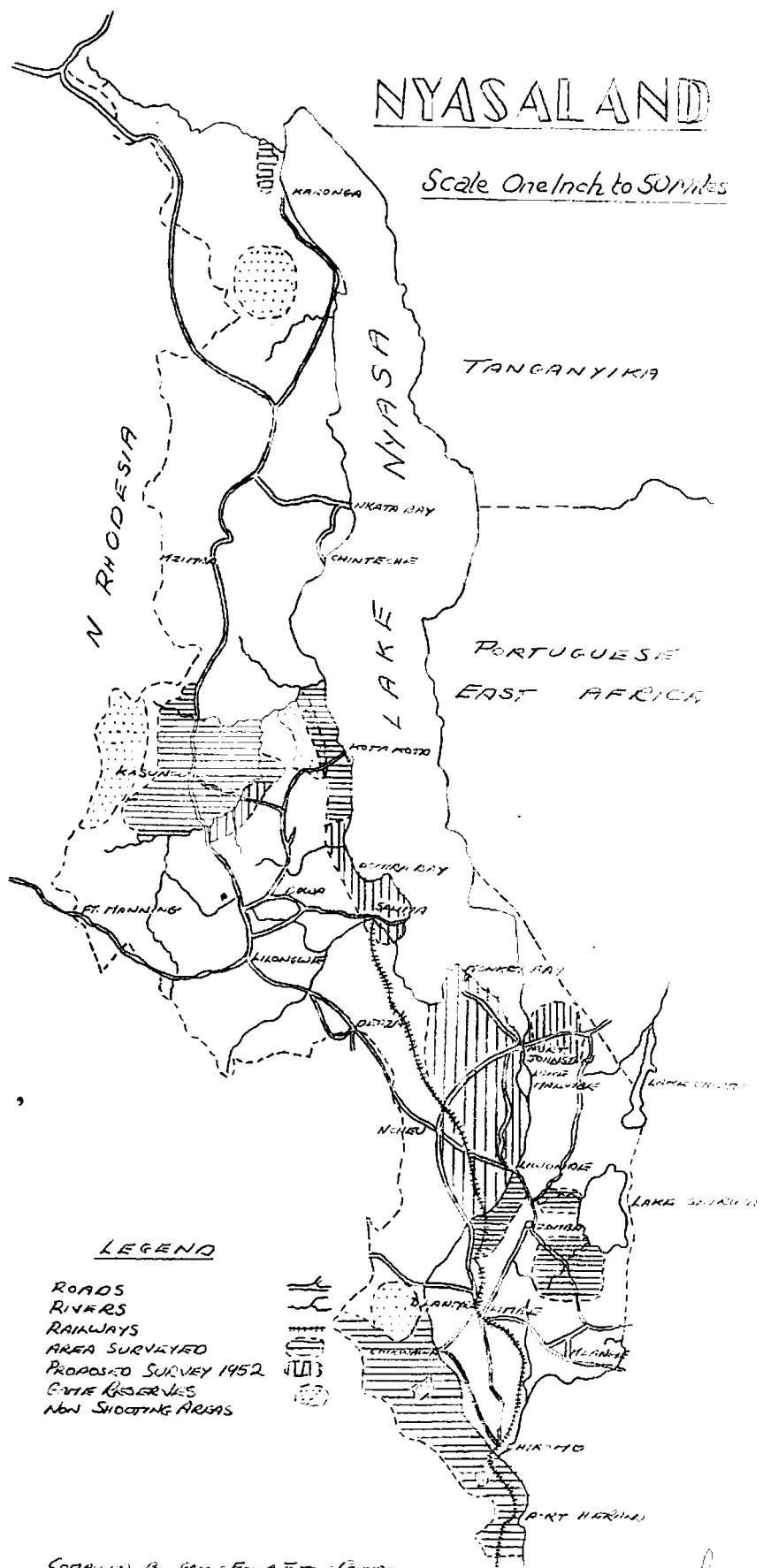
18. In spite of the heavy poaching which has gone on in many of the Reserves during recent years the number of animals remaining appears not too discouraging. Elephant, Buffalo, Sable, Hartebeeste, Waterbuck and Eland seem to be fairly plentiful in most parts of the Kota-Kota Reserve while Zebra and Roan are locally plentiful. Rhinoceros were also seen in many areas. In Kasungu, Elephant, Hartebeeste, Buffalo, Roan and Zebra are quite well represented. In the Lengwe the Nyala are now very numerous and appear undisturbed.

19. A new Reserve on the headwaters of the Mwabvi and Dandi Streams in Port Herald District was proclaimed during the year. This is small in extent but contains a number of Rhinoceros and is reported by Africans to contain Nyala. These last have not yet been seen by a European.

20. The area surrounding Majete Hill in Chikwawa District was closed to hunting during the year, largely with a view to keeping the Elephant in it undisturbed so that they may be encouraged to stay there rather than wander down on to the fertile plains.

21. Proposals to prohibit hunting on the open grassland part of the Nyika Mountain mass, were put before Government towards the end of the year and a Proclamation effecting closure was made early in January, 1952. Game in the area was severely depleted during the interval between the opening of an access road and the closure of the area to hunting, but granted the proper enforcement of the closure, it will certainly recover and the area offers considerable possibilities as a tourist attraction. It is unfortunate that it was necessary to reduce the establishment of Game Control Officers at the same time as this area was proclaimed, as enforcement difficulties were thus increased.

22. Proposals for a new Game Ordinance were put before Government in June of 1951. These are still under consideration and discussion.



COMPILED BY Game Fish & Fauna Survey