

Game Warden's Notes

By Lt.-Col. A. FORBES.

DARFUR PROVINCE.

Some of the best news we have had for many years comes in a report, from Bimbashi R. Paton, Western Arab Corps, on a trek in the North Western Desert.

We had feared that the Addax were nearing extinction. Mr. C. J. Ionides, who did three safaris there only just managed to secure one on his third attempt, and considered that there were very few surviving.

This year however there was no "gizzu" (grazing) and the Arabs who usually graze their herds there did not go.

Bimbashi Paton writes : "Addax. There were a really splendid quantity of these north of the Wadi Howar. Owing to the failure of the Gizzu the area was free from herds and I only met two parties of hunting Bedayat with dogs, out after addax.

It is difficult to estimate the number I saw—herds averaged about 20 but I saw one of not less than 60 with calves. From one high bit of ground near the Darfur/Northern Province border I counted eight herds—they shew up incredibly clearly at a distance.

The herds with calves of which I saw a lot were very shy but the others were easy to approach and I got to within 50 yards of one lot and was able to watch them closely. Single beasts always appeared to be cows with small calves.

They did not seem to be persecuted although I believe there are masses of arms up there." Bimbashi Paton's route was Wadi Howar at Wadi Handel to the Darfur Northern Province border then west to the French Frontier and down it to the Wadi Howar west to Furawiya wells and then to Musbat. He also saw small herds of Riel (Addra Gazelle) all over the area but only two oryx.

I think the deduction must be that the addax can live without the "gizzu" and have a refuge further north when the area is full of Arabs but that the oryx need the "gizzu" and are swift enough to be safe from hunters.

Mr. Ionides in a full "gizzu" year reported that there were plenty of oryx.

EQUATORIA PROVINCE.

Col. Stanton saw 3 black rhinoceros in the proposed Nimule game reserve on the west bank of the Nile. It was originally thought that our east bank rhino were black and those on the west bank white, but in 1947 the Copenhagen Museum expedition shot a black rhinoceros near Gogrial 350 miles west of the Nile. It is thought that these rhino must have crossed over from Chad where they exist.

Col. Stanton's theory is that the black rhino, which he saw must have crossed from the East bank by the "elephant Bridge" south of Shukoli.

This bridge is formed of waste matter swept down in the flood, which collects on a rock in the river and eventually forms a solid structure which can be crossed by men and animals. It sometimes lasts for 10 years. It has not formed this year.

Bimbashi Zaphiro came across many thousands of dead Kob near Koelli in October last year. He writes: "I shudder to think how many died. We found a corpse every few yards in an area nearly 5 miles square and I expect we saw only a part of it."

It had happened, to judge from the bodies, about three weeks before we arrived during the Kob's northern migration so we had little chance of discovering the cause of their death."

I hope if anyone comes across dead game animals especially in such numbers that they will endeavour to find out the cause. Slides should be taken of blood and of any discharge and sent to the nearest Veterinary Inspector.

KHARTOUM PROVINCE.

The Wild Sheep reserve at Sebaloka is well worth a visit.

Sheep had always existed in the mountains round the gorge but the last were killed off in Mahdist times.

About 28 years ago 7 sheep were put out on the west bank and have now multiplied until there are probably at least a hundred. They are reasonably tame and can be seen with ease. Some of them appear to have fine heads.

The best way to visit them is to do the journey (9 to 10 hours outwards and 12 to 14 to return) by launch, but as most people cannot spare that amount of time it is possible to motor to Wad Bassal on the east bank and pick up the launch there and complete the journey (1½ to 2 hrs.) by it. On arrival one should sleep on a sand bank on the west bank and get up as soon as it is light to see the sheep which will not have returned from watering. Besides the sheep, which make a lovely picture golden brown against the red of the hills, the bird life is well worth seeing.

On a recent trip I saw a goliath heron, African Skimmers, a glorious flock of about 100 Pintail, which flew down the river just in front of us, and also the biggest Crocodile that I have ever seen.

It is a lovely trip and a most pleasant change from Khartoum.