

# NYASALAND UNDER THE FOREIGN OFFICE

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND MAP

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humanity has been tempered by the strongest determination never to fall into its hateful clutches again.

Animal life is very abundantly represented. The game beasts I shall discuss in a subsequent chapter, merely remarking here that, besides zebras, bush-pigs, wart hogs, and dangerous animals such as elephants, buffaloes, rhinoceroses and the larger *felidae*, Nyasaland is the habitat of fifteen or sixteen species of antelope, many of which are still extremely common.

Among other mammals, we have a wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*), a jackal (*Canis lateralis*), a hyæna (*H. crocuta*), the long-legged, lynx-like serval, the civet, and the genet; an ant-eater (*Manis Temminckii*), several kinds of mongoose, and, probably, two otters. Sir Harry Johnston's list mentions the Spotted-necked Otter (*Lutra maculicollis*), but puts the Cape Otter (*L. capensis*) in brackets, with a note of interrogation, as though doubtful whether it exists in Nyasaland or not. With regard to this, I am unable to give a positive opinion, but I have certainly had in my possession the skins of two otters exhibiting differences, in respect of size and markings, more considerable than is usually found in opposite sexes of the same variety, one being that of a small animal with dull brown fur, the other nearly half as large again, also brown in colour, but showing a broad patch of silvery grey on the throat and upper part of the chest. I have heard of the Striped Hyæna (*H. striata*) in Nyasaland, but not on very good authority, and I much doubt whether

to-day, for with the South Africa of fifty or sixty years ago no modern country can compare. But those old grounds below the Zambesi, endeared to all of us by the stirring tales of the men who first broke into their solitudes, are now nearly as well known as Piccadilly, and about as rich in wild animals.

Even in comparatively new districts the game is retreating year by year into unknown fastnesses. The Cape, the Orange River Colony, and the Transvaal are practically shot out. On the once famous flats between the Orange and Molopo rivers, which less than half a century ago constituted a veritable hunter's paradise, the modern traveller may wander for days on end without catching a single glimpse of horn or hide. Many types, once numerous in South Africa, have absolutely disappeared—the white rhinoceros, for instance, and the true quagga. Others exist only in small numbers on private estates. And, with the wild creatures of those regions, the men who hunted them have passed away. Cornwallis Harris, Cotton Osswell, Gordon Cumming, are only names. Their very writings have acquired, in the short space of fifty years, something of the peculiar interest which attaches to the records of a perished epoch; for hap what hap may, it is scarcely likely that the rising generation will ever behold such sights as gladdened the eyes of those great hunters in the days when, as Sir Samuel Baker puts it, "the multitude of living creatures, at certain seasons and localities, surpassed the bounds of imagination. . . ."

In view of this rapid extinction of animal life in other parts of the continent, it is gratifying to think that, in British Central Africa at least, no indigenous species is in any immediate danger of being exterminated. The reasons of this are several. In the first place, as I have already said, there is a natural close season, extending over fully six months in every year, during which it is impossible to hunt. Again, the European population is small and scattered. There are no railways to facilitate access to the country, and no sensational industries, such as gold mining, to attract prospectors and adventurers of the type so common farther south. Moreover, there are practically no horses in British Central Africa; nor if there were, is the country sufficiently open to admit of the riding down of whole herds of game, as has been done most ruthlessly in the southern colonies. Finally, the interests of wild animals have been additionally safeguarded by stringent regulations affecting the importation and sale of arms and ammunition, and by the creation of two "reserves," one in the Elephant Marsh above Chiromo, and the other near Lake Shirwa (Chilwa) in the Shiré Highlands. For these excellent measures we are indebted chiefly to the circumstance that both Sir Harry Johnston and his successor, Mr. Alfred Sharpe, are keenly interested in the preservation of fauna; the former primarily as a naturalist, the latter as a sportsman. Mr. Sharpe's practical knowledge of African game beasts is indeed probably greater than that of any man now living, with the exception of Mr. Selous,

although, owing to his reluctance to publish any account of his adventures, his name is little known in connection with the subject outside Central Africa. Of elephants in particular he has had an almost unique experience, having devoted himself exclusively to the pursuit of these animals for several years after his first arrival in the country. They must then have been extremely numerous. Even now they are very frequently met with between Chikala and Mangochi, in many of the Lake Districts, particularly about Matiti in West Nyasa, and in parts of the Marimba district. They are often shot in Zomba district, sometimes within a few miles of the township itself, and they have been seen again lately in the marsh which bears their name.

Giraffes inhabit the Luangwa Valley in North-Eastern Rhodesia, but are not found, I think, within the Protectorate.

The rhinoceros (*R. bicornis*), though scarcely common, is to be met occasionally. I have seen his tracks several times in Zomba district; but, so far as I know, only four have been killed there by Europeans since 1898. One of these, which was bagged by Captain C. E. Luard, of the 1st battalion King's African Rifles, fell to a single Mark IV. bullet in the body—a marvellously lucky shot, considering the great bulk and strength of the rhinoceros.

Hippos swarm in all the considerable rivers and lakes. On the Zambesi and Lower Shiré, where they are subjected to continual persecution, they have grown rather shy and are not

seen quite so frequently as they used to be; but on some reaches of the Upper Shiré, notably between Pampindu and Kalambizi in the neighbourhood of the Murchison Cataracts, in Lake Nyasa, and in the Bua and other rivers to the west of that lake, they are still very numerous, and may be killed without the least difficulty. Shooting hippos is, however, rather poor fun in any case, and in particular the common practice of firing indiscriminately at them from passing steamers is one which deserves severe condemnation.

The dead bodies of hippos, as everybody is aware, remain under water for some hours<sup>1</sup> before finally rising to the surface; and unless the hunter can afford to wait to recover them, he will do well to let the poor beasts alone. Hippos are purely herbivorous; and after darkness has fallen, they will often leave the water and wander for short distances inland, where they sometimes do great damage to native crops. Otherwise they are harmless enough, except for a playful habit of upsetting canoes. I was, however, charged on one occasion by a small hippopotamus on the banks of the Likangala River near Lake Chilwa. I had cut off his retreat from the water, and it was doubtless this that made him so desperate. It would have been easy to kill him; but as he was only about three parts grown and had poor teeth, I dodged aside, when he ran straight on to the river without attempting to follow me. The ivory of the hippo is of

<sup>1</sup> The length of time varies, according to circumstances, from one or two to six hours.

excellent quality, and nothing but its inferior size prevents it from equalling that of the elephant in value. The hide is capable of taking a very fine polish, although it is surpassed in this respect by the hide of the rhinoceros, which, under proper treatment, assumes all the appearance of delicately clouded amber.<sup>1</sup> Central African natives are extremely fond of hippo flesh, and to watch them cutting up and devouring one of these monstrous animals is a memorable, if somewhat disgusting, sight. The news that a "Mvu" has been killed spreads like wildfire among the neighbouring villages. Crowds assemble rapidly. Fires are lit about the spot. The air grows pungent with wood smoke and the reek of blubber. Night falls, and in the glow of blazing logs the dark figures of the feasters show in demoniac silhouette, brandishing knives, laughing, gesticulating, squabbling, gobbling, until, within what seems an incredibly short time, the whole huge carcase, weighing perhaps two tons or more, has been entirely demolished. Apropos of hippos, let me quote the following odd story, which was told to me by Major F. B. Pearce. A large hippo made its appearance one day in a certain village near Lake Chilwa. It was at once attacked by the inhabitants, severely wounded, and at last driven off; but, with singular obstinacy, it persisted in returning again and again to the same place, where it was eventually killed. On examination of its skull, one of the large teeth was found to

<sup>1</sup> As may be seen in the beautiful circular shields manufactured by certain Abyssinian tribes.

be badly decayed and malformed, and it would seem as though the pain resulting from this drove the poor beast to an act as nearly like deliberate suicide as any that can be related of the lower animals.

The buffalo (*Bos caffer*, "Njati" of the natives) may be found without much difficulty in certain neighbourhoods. Great herds frequent the Elephant Marsh Reserve, where they are protected. Patamangas, near the limestone hills on the Lower Shiré, was also for some time a favourite haunt of theirs, and may be so still. I have seen them also in the Limpasa Valley in West Nyasa, but perhaps the best place to seek them is the district of Chikala, where it marches with Portuguese territory.

Lions and leopards are plentiful all over British Central Africa, and do a good deal of damage, though, owing to the general prevalence of thick cover, they are less often seen than might be supposed. The lion of the country does not, as a rule, carry a fine mane; and this seems to bear out the theory advanced by several travellers and sportsmen, that the hair of the mane is apt to be pulled out by thorns and bushes, and attains its full abundance only in open regions.<sup>1</sup> Both the lion ("Simba": "Nkango") and the leopard ("Chisui": "Nyalugwi") often show great boldness in Central Africa, and are in the habit of

<sup>1</sup> Fine manes are, however, not unknown in Central Africa. The late Mr. R. G. Beswick shot a large lion at Zomba in 1896, whose full yellow mane would have done credit to any Somaliland specimen.

SCHEDULES.<sup>1</sup>

## FIRST SCHEDULE.

*Animals not to be hunted, killed, or captured by any person, except under special licence.*

1. Giraffe.
2. Mountain Zebra.
3. Wild Ass.
4. White-tailed Gnu (*Connochoetes gnu*).
5. Eland (*Taurotragus*).
6. Buffalo.
7. Elephant (female or young).
8. Vulture (any species).
9. Secretary-bird.
10. Owl (any species).
11. Rhinoceros-bird or beef-eater (*Buphaga*), any species.

## SECOND SCHEDULE.

*Animals, the females of which are not to be hunted, killed, or captured when accompanied by their young, and the young of which are not to be captured, except under special licence.*

1. Rhinoceros.
2. Hippopotamus.
3. Zebra (other than the Mountain Zebra).
4. Chevrotain (*Dorcatherium*).
5. All antelopes or gazelles not mentioned in the First Schedule.

## THIRD SCHEDULE.

*Animals, limited numbers of which may be hunted, killed, or captured under Licence "A" only.*

KIND.	NUMBER ALLOWED.
1. Elephant (male) ... ... ... ... ...	2
2. Rhinoceros ... ... ... ... ...	2
3. Wildebeest Gnu (except white-tailed species)...	6

<sup>1</sup> These Schedules may contain the names of some species or varieties not found, or only occasionally found, in British Central Africa.

## APPENDIX

## FOURTH SCHEDULE.

*Animals, limited numbers of which may be hunted, killed, or captured under Licences "A" and "B."*

KIND.		NUMBER ALLOWED.
1. Hippopotamus	...	6
2. Zebras (other than the Mountain Zebra)	...	2
3. Antelopes and gazelles—		
Class A—		
<i>Hippotragus</i> (sable or roan)	...	6
<i>Strepsiceros</i> (Kudu)	...	6
4. Colobi and other fur-monkeys	...	6
5. Aard-Varks ( <i>Orycteropus</i> )	...	2
6. Serval	...	2
7. Cheetah ( <i>Cynælurus</i> )	...	2
8. Aard-wolf ( <i>Proteles</i> )	...	2
9. Smaller monkeys of each species	...	2
10. Marabous	...	6
11. Egret	...	2
12. Antelopes and gazelles—		
Class B—		
Any species other than those in Class A	...	15
13. Chevrotains ( <i>Dorcatherium</i> )	...	10
14. Wild pig of each species	...	10
15. Smaller cats	...	10
16. Jackal of each species	...	10

## FIFTH SCHEDULE.

*Animals, limited numbers of which may be hunted, killed, or captured under Licences "A," "B," and "C."*

KIND.		NUMBER ALLOWED.
1. Hippopotamus	...	6
2. Wart-hog	...	6
3. Bush-pig	...	6
4. The following antelopes and gazelles only—		
Hartebeest	...	
Impala	...	
Reedbuck	...	
Duyker	...	
Klipspringer	...	
Steinbuck	...	
Waterbuck	...	
Bushbuck	...	
		30 animals in all, under 1 licence, made up of animals of a single species or of several.

## SIXTH SCHEDULE.

No. 1.—*Licence "A"* (fee, 25*l.*), or *Licence "B"* (fee, 4*l.*), or *Licence "C"* (fee 2*l.*).

*A.B.*, of , is hereby licensed to hunt, kill, or capture wild animals within the British Central Africa Protectorate for the period from the date hereof until the 31st March, 19 , but subject to the provisions and restrictions of "The Game Regulations, 1902."

(The said *A.B.* is authorized, subject to the said Regulations, to kill or capture the following animals in addition to the number of the same species allowed by the Regulations, that is to say:—

Fee paid ( ).

Dated this day of , 19 .

(Signed)

*Commissioner.*

## SEVENTH SCHEDULE.

*Game Register.*

SPECIES.	NUMBER.	SEX.	LOCALITY.	DATE.	REMARKS.

I declare that the above is a true record of all animals killed by me in the British Central Africa Protectorate under the Licence No. "A," "B," or "C" granted me on the

, 19 .

(Signed)

Passed

19 .

(Signature of examining officer.)

## EIGHTH SCHEDULE.

*Game Reserves.*1. *The Elephant Marsh Reserve.*

Commencing at the junction of the Ruo and Shiré rivers, the boundary of the Elephant Marsh Reserve shall follow the right

bank of the River Ruo as far as the Zoa Falls, and shall thence be carried along a straight line in a north-westerly direction until it strikes the left bank of the River Shiré opposite the junction of the Mwanza with the Shiré ; the boundary shall then cross the River Shiré and follow the right bank of the Mwanza River up-stream to a point distant from the Shiré twelve miles in a straight line ; thence the boundary shall run in a southerly direction, keeping always at a distance of twelve miles from the right bank of the Shiré River until it reaches the boundary line dividing the Lower Shiré district from the Ruo. It shall then follow that boundary line in an easterly direction until it strikes the right bank of the Shiré River ; the boundary shall then follow the right bank of the Shiré River up-stream to a point opposite the point of commencement, namely, the junction of the Shiré and the Ruo rivers.

*2. The Lake Chilwa Reserve.*

Commencing at the source of the River Palombe in the Mlanje district, the boundary of the Lake Chilwa Reserve shall be carried in an easterly direction to the source of the most southern affluent of the River Sombani, and from this point shall be carried along a straight line in an easterly direction to the Anglo-Portuguese frontier, which it shall follow to the shores of Lake Chilwa. The boundary shall continue along the shore of the lake southward, westward, and northward, as far as the confluence of the Likangala River. It shall then follow the course of the Likangala River up-stream as far as the eastern boundary of Messrs. Buchanan Brothers' Mlungusi estate, thence along the said eastern boundary of the said estate southwards to a point on the left bank of the Ntondwe River. It shall then follow the northern boundary of Mr. Bruce's Namasi estate eastwards until the said boundary reaches the Palombe River, thence along the right bank of the Palombe River up-stream to its source.

