

blowing at the time, and some sparks from the scattered fires blew on to the roof of a hut, and soon set the village ablaze.

Whilst walking towards some hippo pools the next morning, we found fresh buffalo and koodoo spoor, but the bush was extremely dense, and we did not see either of these animals. A little later Tom nearly stepped on an enormous python, which quietly and rapidly glided away into the long grass, and then we reached the hippo pools. There was very little open water in them; and although we could hear the hippo rising and blowing in the reeds and sud, it was impossible to get a shot at one. The Luangwa River itself is a hippo reserve in this part of the country, but the water was extremely low in the river, and the hippo were in the pools off the main stream. In the afternoon I shot a bush-buck ram carrying what is a fairly good head for North-Eastern Rhodesia—11½ inches in length. The bush-buck is a handsome little animal, with his pretty spotted coat. He walks in a peculiar cramped manner with neck outthrust, and his gruff bark is one of the most familiar sounds of the Luangwa. In the evening, after waiting at the pools for some time, I got in a shot at a big hippo as he rose on the edge of the sud. He went down immediately, and Tom was con-

vinced that he was killed, but the next morning my boys could not find him. Very likely he rose again in amongst the reeds and sud, and, as there were plenty of crocodiles in the pools and the sud was most treacherous, I could not blame the "tenga-tengas" for the little enthusiasm they exhibited in the search. There are plenty of hippo in North-Eastern Rhodesia, but in many of the pools there is a small area of open water and a large extent of reeds and sud, so that they are very hard to see.

I have often been struck by the bronze-red hue of a hippo's head when he cautiously raises it above the surface of the water. When dead, however, the colour of the hippopotamus is a dirty lifeless brown. In the same manner, the gorgeous blue which one sees in some of the African lizards when alive wholly disappears with death. These circumstances are merely incidents in the wonderful work of Nature, who deprives creatures of the colour glories of their skins and plumage, just as she robs the trees of their leaves, and the bushes of much of their foliage, in autumn. Whilst on the subject of hippo, I may mention that many natives in North-Eastern Rhodesia speak of the existence of an animal named the "chimpakwe," which they

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say resembles the hippo in its amphibian habits, but possesses a horn like the rhinoceros. I chatted with one or two old chiefs on the subject of this strange animal, a beast quite unknown to science, and gathered that the "chimpakwè" existed many years ago in North-Eastern Rhodesia, but at the present day he is probably to be found only in the Luapula River and some deep pools around the borders of the Congo Free State and North-Western Rhodesia. According to natives, he is an extremely wary creature, and no white man has ever shot him, although it is stated that one or two white hunters have been so impressed with native assertions regarding the "chimpakwe" that they have spent some time in looking for the beast.

One old native chief asserted that his father shot one a long time ago. Since returning to civilization, I have been informed that during my absence not a little excitement was occasioned by persistent rumours as to the presence of a "brontosaurus" in the territories of the British South Africa Company. Judging from the following, extracted from the *African World*, it appears that what is referred to is, in reality, nothing more or less than our just-discussed friend, the "chimpakwe":

"THE 'BRONTOSAURUS.'"

"In a private letter recently received by Mr. E. C. Chubb, Zoologist at the Rhodesia Museum, the writer, a well-known Rhodesian, says:

"I have read something about a 'brontosaurus' in the Bulawayo *Chronicle*. Don't you remember my telling you of the three-horned water-rhino which the boys say kills the hippo in Lake Bangweolo and in the swamps near Leauli, and on the Kafue? I heard of it from my boys at the Falls, and we were discussing it at the District Commissioner's, when S——, who had come down from Mwomboshi to take over, told us that a week or two before two white men had arrived at his place who said they had seen it.'"

I have never been told by natives that the "chimpakwe" killed the hippo, and the stories of its existence that I have heard concern the Luangwa River many years ago, when its water was deeper, the Luapula River, Lake Mweru, and a deep pool near Kapopo. But evidently the "chimpakwe" is referred to in the above, and it may here be remarked that Katova, my Awisa elephant-hunter, told me an interesting story once of a three-horned rhinoceros which lived in the Luangwa Valley. Whether there be any truth in

these stories is not for me to say, but *Semper aliquid novi ex Africa* is, it appears, just as true of the fauna of Africa as it is of its geography and its peoples. A couple of decades ago, anyone who had spoken of the existence of that queer animal the okapi would have been most emphatically disbelieved. Africa is, of course, full of interesting and weird tales, traditions, and superstitions, concerning animals and birds. I have heard, from an Awemba, of an elephant with six or more tusks; from an Angoni, of a bird with one eye; from a native in the Northern Transvaal, of a double-headed snake. On the Lower Zambesi there are tales of an antelope bigger than an eland, and many other distortions of orthodox natural history are to be heard, all accompanied by a tremendous amount of emphatic protestation as to the accuracy of the statements.

Many of these tales are mere childish absurdities imagined or invented by the native mind to interest the white man, but that a tremendous amount remains to be learned regarding the zoology of the Dark Continent no one who has lived much in Africa will attempt to deny. Only recently have the tales told regarding a giant pig inhabiting the Mau Forest of British East Africa

been conclusively proved to be true by the shooting of such an animal; and it must not be forgotten that all manner of malformations of horns and tusks, all kinds of freaks in the matters of colouring, etc., are not uncommon amongst African wild game. One-tusked and absolutely tuskless elephants are plentiful, and I have seen a photograph of an elephant shot in North-Eastern Rhodesia which had one tusk curved upwards and the other curved downwards. Curiously malformed eland and koodoo horns are in the possession of several sportsmen, and one should not be too apt to characterize a statement regarding the wonderful fauna of Africa, however strange it may seem, as "absolute nonsense," as so many do.

Of African bird-life we know but very little, and I am quite sure that a thoroughly trained and experienced ornithologist could spend ten years in the Luangwa Valley, and leave the river ignorant of the characteristics and customs of many of its feathered creatures. The same may be said of insects, reptiles, and fish, and to a lesser degree of its mammals. Sportsmen who travel as far as the Luangwa are generally after elephant or other big game, and the smaller buck and mammals, like the honey-badger, for instance,

are to be found along the banks of nearly all the larger rivers.

REED-BUCK (*Cervicapra arundinum*).

Only one type of the race is known in North-Eastern Rhodesia, the common reed-buck, which is to be found all over South and South Central Africa. The finest heads are to be obtained just to the north of the Muchinga Mountains, along the Luitakeela River, and on the fringe of the Manue swamps. Several 14-inch and 15-inch heads have recently been obtained from this locality. Reed-buck are nearly always met with in small families of an old ram, and perhaps a younger male, three or four ewes, and a few youngsters. When alarmed they give a shrill and peculiar whistle, and I am very curious to know just exactly how this noise is made.

RHINOCEROS (*Rhinoceros bicornis*).

As far as I know, the great Burchell's rhinoceros—the so-called “white rhinoceros”—has never been seen or shot in North-Eastern Rhodesia. The black rhinoceros is, however, by no means a rare animal in some parts of the country, and in the Muchingas just east of M’Pika I found



THE FOURTH RHINOCEROS  
Shot near Laveze River

To face page 198

rhino exceedingly common, so much so that I certainly think it would have been possible to have killed a score of these animals there in a couple of weeks. I have already dealt at some length with the characteristics of the Central African rhino in a preceding chapter, and I therein, I think, made it pretty clear that the rhinoceros of North-Eastern Rhodesia is not nearly such a terribly dangerous animal as is generally imagined. The rhinoceroses of East Africa are, it seems, much more bad-tempered animals than those of Central Africa, but one or two accidents have occurred to white hunters in North-Eastern Rhodesia. Captain C. H. Stigand was very badly trampled and gored by a wounded rhino, and I heard that a native woman was killed by having the front horn of one of these animals driven right into her back. In East Africa, however, accidents and narrow escapes with rhino appear to be far more common than in Central Africa. Why this should be so I cannot say, unless it is due to the long, straggling "safaris" so common in British East Africa. It has been suggested, and not without reason, that the stupid animals on encountering one portion of a caravan often dash off in search of safety, only to encounter another part of the "safari," and this they charge, imagin-

ing that they are hemmed in by foes on all sides.

Rhinoceroses are to be found in various parts of North-Eastern Rhodesia besides the Muchingas. Whilst Leonard and I were hunting pookoo and impala on the Luangwa, Timmler shot one only a few miles from our camp, and one of my "tenga-tengas" saw one close to Nansulu's. On my return journey to Fort Jameson, rhino spoor was very plentiful at the foot of the Muchingas, and any persevering hunter who spends a few months in North-Eastern Rhodesia should have a chance of securing at least one of these curious animals.

The Central African rhino do not carry such long horns as those of the East-African Protectorate. I do not believe that any horns have been obtained in the country which are much longer than those of the big bull that I secured near Mansewamba's village—the rhino that "rose from the dead" and tried to kill Tom. These measured in length  $22\frac{1}{4}$  inches for the front horn, and 12 inches for the rear horn.

#### ROAN ANTELOPE (*Hippotragus equinus*).

Roan, eland, and hartebeeste, are the most widely distributed and plentiful of the larger

antelope in North-Eastern Rhodesia, and the former animal is to be found everywhere. They are game, handsome beasts, and I have seen two of them put up plenty of fight when wounded. The best roan head I secured measured a little under 26 inches. Leonard, however, did much better, and obtained a head of about 31 inches, the best, I believe, that has come from North-Eastern Rhodesia. It seemed to me that on the whole the roan north of the Muchingas carried better heads than those to the south and in the Luangwa Valley. A full-grown roan antelope weighs about 6 hundred-weight, and stands 58 or 59 inches high at the shoulder. They are not particularly speedy animals, but very wary. I should think that on the whole trip I saw about 150 to 200 roan, and I generally found them running in herds of from eight to thirteen.

#### SABLE ANTELOPE (*Hippotragus niger*).

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*Faithfully yrs Owen Letcher*

# BIG GAME HUNTING IN NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA

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(51)

Peter Capstick, Series Editor



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New York

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Eastern Muchingas I saw no buffalo or fresh buffalo spoor, but elephant and rhino were there in great numbers, and tsetse flies in millions. Shortly after finding this blood-covered leaf, one of my "tenga-tengas" rushed down to me, saying that the rhino was in the village. Scarcely crediting his statement, I ran up to the kraal, and my boys pointed out the rhino standing in amongst some trees, only about 100 yards away from the huts. As I could not see him very well, I attempted to get closer to him, but he got my wind and made off. We then started spooring him, and, after an hour and a half's tracking, found a muddy pool where the rhino had just wallowed, a thing these extraordinary beasts are especially fond of doing. A few minutes afterwards I observed him standing under a big tree on the edge of a little "dambo." Creeping up to within 80 yards of him, I took a steady sight just behind the shoulder with a double '450, and fired; then had the satisfaction of seeing the rhino drop. I waited a moment to see if he rose again, but he did not; and I then ran up to him with Tom, Mansewemba, and Katova, the two young Awemba being in close attendance. The rhino, though down, was obviously not dead; the bullet had not found a vital spot, but had gone into the



"MANSEWEMBA THEN PLUNGED A SPEAR INTO THE RHINO"

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THE FOURTH RHINOCEROS  
Shot near Luveze River

The three best pairs of North-Eastern Rhodesian rhino horns which I retained weighed in all  $23\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. It is interesting to note the different shapes and forms of the horns.

The horn measurements are—

	LENGTH ON OUTSIDE CURVE.		CIRCUMFERENCE.	
	Front Horn.	Rear Horn.	Front Horn.	Rear Horn.
Rhino shot near Mansewemba's	Inches. $22\frac{1}{4}$	Inches. 12	Inches. $20\frac{1}{2}$	Inches. $22\frac{1}{2}$
Rhino shot near N'Tupa's ...	$15\frac{1}{2}$	$13\frac{1}{2}$	$15\frac{1}{2}$	$16\frac{3}{4}$
Rhino shot near Luveze River	14	10	18	16

Some authorities of the last century on Central African game inclined to the view that there were two distinct kinds of the black rhino: the "Borili," in which the front horn was longer than the back horn, and the "Keitola," in which the back horn was the longer. This view now finds little support, and I certainly observed no difference, other than sexual distinction, in the length and shape of the horns and the size of the beasts (naturally evident, since one was an old bull, and the other animals were apparently much younger), in the four rhino I shot in and



HEAD OF THE FOURTH RHINO, AND A YOUNG AWEMBA

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