

# AFRICANA

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**A** FILM ON AFRICA, made by an Italian company, has been shown in Europe; it purports to survey this continent and some scenes are believed to have been shot in East Africa. But it is unlikely to be screened in these countries.

The film caused riots in West Germany, where massive protests by African and German students demanded that it be withdrawn. In Italy, a Minister of the Government publicly dissociated himself from its premiere, reportedly castigating the film theme as in line with neither his own views nor those of his government.

The film is said to depict Africa as a place of hopelessness, its peoples bent only on destruction — especially of wildlife.

If the reports be true — and at least one East African ambassador gives confirmation in his strenuous official protest — the facts must be given speedily to the world and the motives of the film-makers bared to the public gaze, before this libel-on-film gains credence.

The plain truth is that conservationists living and working in Africa have nothing but praise for the efforts of Government leaders of the East African countries in safeguarding wildlife.

Each of the Governments of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda inherited from the colonial administrations a situation in which conservation plans might easily have gone wrong. The reason? For the most part, Africans themselves had not been concerned with those plans.

For many Africans, indeed, the admission charges (necessarily levied in attempts to make the new sanctuaries self-supporting) had the effect of putting the National Parks out of their reach.

They neither knew why people travelled across the world to thrill to the sight of wild game in its natural surroundings, nor did they care, for they could not share the experience themselves.

But to-day, the situation is vastly different. Conservation foundations established in Eastern and Central African countries report a growing awareness of the trust which the African governments have undertaken.

Whereas it might be true to say that, a few years ago, only government leaders could see the purpose of the pledges given, to-day Kenyans, Tanzanians and Ugandans are learning that the exciting heritage of wildlife in their countries is part of their culture and of the East African contribution to the enjoyment of the rest of the world.

The change is attributable to two notable advances: First, the spread of wildlife education amongst the African peoples — many of whom knew wild animals only by their dangerous reputations. Secondly, a growing appreciation of reasons why East Africa's wildlife is essential to the world.

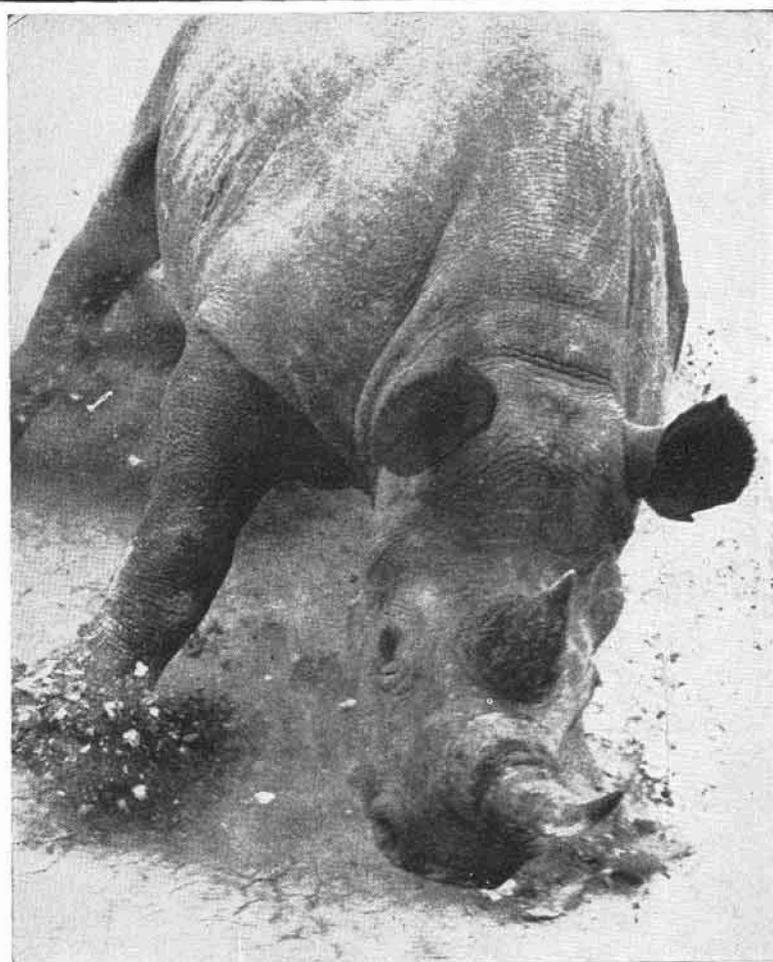
As Robert Milne, African Wildlife Leadership Foundation's Education Warden in the Nairobi National Park, points out elsewhere in this magazine, thousands of children are making long journeys to see wildlife education exhibits. They will not regard wildlife in the way their fathers did — as the meat larder on the doorstep.

But Mr. Milne stresses that, in this battle to explain, time is not on the side of the conservationist. The problem is indeed still urgent, for there are many millions of people in East Africa who — despite their willingness to trust their leaders' judgment on wildlife — are not yet convinced, because they have had no personal contact.

The whole world can help in this situation. And help is easy to give. Safeguard this last great concentration of African wildlife by enrolling your friends in the East African Wild Life Society.

For Christmas, make a subscription to the East African Wild Life Society your really worthwhile present to your friends. That subscription (and their gifts, where possible) will be put to work immediately in projects such as wildlife education extension work, in ensuring that East Africans are provided with the tools to combat misuse of a priceless wildlife resource.

CHARLES HAYES



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# LETTERS to the EDITOR

I wish to refer to "White Rhino in Kenya" on page 19 of *Africana*, Vol. 2, No. 8, June 1966.

Para. 6 of this article states . . . . . "We are re-introducing the white rhino into a country from which they disappeared some time ago . . . . . it is probable that they disappeared through hunting . . . ." (my italics).

This is entirely misleading. There is not the slightest evidence that white rhino ever occurred in Kenya within historical times, and it is practically certain that hunting had nothing whatever to do with their absence.

The most striking thing about the natural distribution of the species is its discontinuity. It occurred, before reduction through human agency in the 19th and present centuries, roughly from about Zululand and the Orange River, northwards to the Zambezi, and again west of the Nile from northwestern Uganda to southeastern Tchad.

This distribution does, of course, imply that at one time it occurred in the areas between, but this was in remote times, long before the dawn of recorded history, since when its range became reduced by natural causes to what it was when the earliest records were made during the early 19th century.

The exercise reported is, therefore, not re-introduction of a species destroyed by human agency, but simply introduction of what has, in post-Pleistocene times, become an exotic, and it should be understood as such.

Whether or not it is justifiable, and forms a "natural ecological experiment" is a matter of opinion but what is important is that a sense of proportion should be maintained, and that translocation—either within the original range (*i.e.* genuine re-introduction) or introduction of exotics (*e.g.* the present case)—should not obscure the underlying aim of wild life conservation.

There are many instances today where limited areas are fenced off, stocked with game from elsewhere (not necessarily indigenous), and then called "game reserves" or "national parks". They are not—at least, not in the original and usually accepted sense.

Of course it is better that there should be Père David's Deer is semi-captive conditions in an English park rather than none at all. Of course it is preferable for the Przewalski Horse, or the Arabian Oryx, to remain in enclosed conditions in foreign countries rather than become extinct.

But such consideration should not be allowed to obscure, or divert effort from, the basic and fundamental object of wild life conservation, which is the perpetuation of indigenous, genuinely wild, fauna in its natural habitat.

W. F. H. ANSELL  
Livingstone, Zambia

**WE WELCOME**  
*letters of general interest about Africa, its wildlife, its history, its people. Address them, please, to: AFRICANA, Box 9010, Nairobi, Kenya.*

ANYONE getting rid of paper backs (or other books for that matter)? People with hotels, lodges or clubs might like to try this idea.

We have a box of books in the Camp's lounge. A notice invites people to buy a book and to put 50 cents in a tin in aid of EAST AFRICAN WILDLIFE FUND.

We also ask people who have any books they have finished with to put them in the book box too, so that the good work goes on.

JANE STANTON

Bushwhackers Safari Camp,  
Kibwezi, Kenya

IN JUNE of this year, the Zambia Game Department undertook a Red Lechwe count which showed as follows:

Lochinvar	7,500
Research Station (south bank, Kafue)	150
Blue Lagoon (west bank (north))	8,500 7,000

Two years ago, Robinette undertook a lechwe count at Lochinvar which showed the population to be 17,500 *i.e.* 10,000 head down. For the Research Station, Robinette's figure for 1964 was 4,000.

The only place that shows any increase is Blue Lagoon, up by about 1,000. The total herd of red lechwe at Kafue Flats is now no more than 23,000.

The position regarding black lechwe is even worse. The 1934 count (Pitman) showed 150,000; the 1954 count (Game Department) 15,000; 1966 count (Game Department) 4,000.

In view of the alarming position, application has been made to the Survival Commission of IUCN asking that black lechwe be placed on the list of endangered species.

Quite obviously, unless something is done *at once*, the next two years will probably see black lechwe listed as an extinct specie.

Anti-poacher patrols by helicopter were financed from a £1,000 grant by the Wild Life Society of Zambia, whose members hope the Zambia Government will carry on the work when the Society's cash has run out.

JOHN A. PILE  
Nairobi, Kenya



Mr. Herne's picture of a buffalo at Lake Manyara, Tanzania.

## THE MANYARA BUFFALO

IN REPLY to Mr. R. F. Tyers letter (*AFRICANA* June 1966), herewith a photograph of the Manyara Buffalo taken in 1958.

Yet another Buffalo — in my opinion still larger and with an incredibly heavy boss — was seen by me on two occasions in the Lake Mburo area, in 1963.

Unfortunately, no worthy trophy hunter has had the good fortune to shoot the Mburo buffalo and there-

fore preserve for posterity this magnificent trophy.

Since he has not been seen since, although the herd he was with has been sighted on many occasions, one may assume that he has died of old age (he had very little hair on his body and was thin), or has fallen victim to the guns of the Tsetse Department and lies in a heap of bones together with similar victims.

BRIAN HERNE  
Uganda Wildlife Development Ltd.,  
Kampala.



# ALPA

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