

Game Animals of Zande District

By HUGH WOODMAN.

Zande District may not be the best district for game in comparison with some of the phenomenal open plains and "toiches" of eastern Equatoria, U.N.P., and Bahr el Ghazal, where both the number of head and the visibility are alike remarkable.

Too much hunting by the eager Zande tribesman armed with the old muzzle-loading relics of Belgian occupation and slave raiding days, or with spear, bow and arrow, fire, nets, and game pits, have reduced down the number of animals very much since Schweinfurth's time. The thickness of the bush also greatly reduces visibility and makes observation and tracking rather difficult.

Most of Zande, Yei, and Amadi districts fall into the category "Savannah 4" (Bowen), i.e. rather close bush or secondary forest of the fourth degree of density.—Wau area being taken as an example of Savannah 1, and Kapoeta area as an example of Savannah 3.

Offsetting these points is the exciting fact that there are five interesting animals that occur only in this corner of the Sudan, in addition to the considerable list of the commoner antelopes and other game which are shared with many other parts of the country. These will be mentioned first; they are:

The Bongo, Dwarf Congo Forest Elephant, Yellow-Backed Duiker, Forest Situtunga, and Giant Forest Hog.

The Red Forest Buffalo is shared with Amadi district, and it may occur in Yei (although I think not yet recorded there).

BONGO (Zande "Mbangana." *Boocercus euryceros cooperi*).

These lovely antelopes were well described in the "Field" by Maj. P. M. Larken in the late twenties. They were pictured in colour in the "Illustrated London News" in the October 21st number, 1933; and an account of the Sudan race was given again in the "Field" in January 1940 and, more recently in "Country Life." The first record of the existence of Bongo in this country was one made in 1912 when a skin taken from tributary of the Namatina river, about twenty miles north west of Tembura, was brought in and presented by chief Renzi to the D.C. (Maj. Larken).

These antelopes frequent the densest gallery forests on the southern borders of the district west and south west of Yambio where the undergrowth is so thick that the hunter may have to follow tunnels which the beasts themselves have made. They seldom emerge from these hides except at night, and they are most likely to be seen near a salt lick or a drinking place between dawn and sunrise in the morning.

I have had a glimpse of as many as twenty in the twilight of a grey and drizzly dawn, in a small glade, but more usually they are seen in twos or threes or singly.

They have the keenest hearing and are off the second a human shape is discernible, never waiting, like some animals, to satisfy a moment's curiosity. They are a fierce as well as elusive quarry, and will charge if cornered or wounded.

The coat is a glossy, chestnut colour, with 12 to 14 narrow, white, vertical stripes on the sides; white on the face like Kudu and Nyala, and a white chevron on the front of the chest. There is a ridge of hair, two inches long, running down the back. The underparts are black.

They stand 4 feet high at the shoulder and have beautiful spiral horns with pale tips.

The record local head is to be seen at Obo on the French side of the border,—35.3 inches. The record for the Western race, to which our variety is closely allied, is 37.6 inches.

The Zande fortunately seldom hunts them as the meat as believed to cause leprosy.

DWARF CONGO FOREST ELEPHANT (Zande "Mbara Nganzi." *Elphas Africanus*).

There are several races of African Elephant. This is almost undoubtedly the smallest. It is characterized by having very small ears, not reaching down to more than about half the length of the typical Sudani race, which is notable for its very large ears. It is also much more hairy.

The ivory is never heavy although (like the Red Forest Buffalo which, for weight of horn, also makes a poor trophy) he is likely to give more excitement and cause more trouble than his handsomer and more valuable cousin.

They like to spend most of the day-light hours in the heaviest part of those tongues of gallery forest which are found on the Congo border—forest so dense that one can be within twenty yards of them

and not be able to see anything of them at all, so thick is the foliage. To get a shot an approach to within 15 yards is necessary, and to be certain of the vital spot, even this can be too far.

As their hearing is much more acute than that of the elephant of the open "toich" they are usually on the "qui vive" when approached, and quickly get nervous. As moreover they may very well previously have had a peppering from a muzzle-loader, (on one or other side of the frontier) their behaviour is unpredictable, and it is by no means unknown for them to take the initiative in the attack.

Very little is known of the habits or life history of this dwarf elephant. The Belgian naturalists recognize it as *Elphas* (or *Loxodonta*) *pumilio*, "L'Elephant Nain," and it is believed to extend in range from our borders down to Lusambo, and to be the same race as the Liberian Dwarf Elephant.

He is only half the weight of the Sudan race, and eleven year old specimens stand only just over 6 feet at the shoulder. The Belgian authority M. Jobert, records that the tusks of the Congo Dwarf Elephant are so small that the diameter never exceeds 4 to 5 cms. The following are the measurements of the tusks of a fairly old bull which I recently shot in the Zande country :

Length of tusk 45 ins. and $45\frac{1}{2}$ ins.

Circumference at base 12 ins.

Diameter at base 4 ins. x $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins.

(= $10\frac{1}{4}$ cm. x 9 cm.)

It may be therefore that, at this northern limit of their range, they run bigger than in the Congo, or that the variety is different from that of the Lusambo region.

There is one in captivity in the Antwerp zoo.

Four-Tusked Elephant. The Zande name for this is "Slamaa". (vide No.1 of this Journal) a name sometimes applied to other creatures with very old teeth.

The existence of freak Four-Tuskers in many parts of Africa is now well recognized, but some of the first, if not the first, records are believed to have come from the Zande country. The phenomenon is also probably less of rarity there than elsewhere in the continent.

I am indebted to Maj. Larken for the following note.

— In 1912 a Four-Tusker was reported from chief Zungumbia's and was actually seen by Father Bertola (then at Mopoi mission). An S.D.F. medical assistant, Abdel Farag, also saw it. Another was described by the Tembura interpreter.

A few seasons later four Four-Tuskers were said to have been seen crossing the border into F.E.A., and a note was sent to the Administrateur offering a big reward if one was obtained. He replied confirming that they had been seen in his district too but none were killed.

Larken's first report in the "Field" at this time was published with some scepticism on the part of the editor, who wrote a footnote that "the skull was awaited with interest."

The most recent report was one brought in in 1949 of a Four Tusker in the neighbourhood of Sakure, 30 miles south west of Yambio. There are again repeated accounts of one that has been seen by a native game scout in the Gangura-Sakure area this year. This latter animal is in company with three or four other elephants (as they usually are). He has even been seen by Mr. Wilkinson but no clear and certain view has yet been obtained of his head.

After this date other Four-Tuskers were reported and published from East Africa. Then in 1926, Capt. Phillips of Uelle District of the Congo near the Sudan Border, described in the "Times" one that had been killed there.

Capt. Brocklehurst illustrates one from the Moru district in his "Game Animals of the Sudan." They have also been seen, though apparently much less often, on the East bank of the Nile in Torit district.

From the size to which the tusks can run the phenomenon does not occur so much in the Forest Dwarf Elephant, but appears to be commoner among the ordinary race of Central African Elephant than anywhere else. At least nine records are known between our Zande district and the Uelle (also Zande country) of the Congo since 1912, and the Belgians probably know of many others.

There must be many photographs of this curiosity now in existence. One of outstanding merit was published in the "Field" in 1949 and here, with permission, reproduced.—Another was the one in the first number of this Journal accompanying the Belgian note translated by Mrs. Stanton.

YELLOW BACKED DUIKER (Zande "Mbio." *Cephalophus sylvicultrix*).

This is the largest of the African Duikers, standing nearly 3 ft. at the shoulders. It is a dark brownish black colour, with a tuft of hair between its relatively thick, short, horns (record $7\frac{7}{8}$ ins.)

From the middle of the back to the rump extends a yellowish triangular stripe.

This Duiker was never common in the gallery forests in modern times but is now unfortunately getting very rare. Its tracks may be seen in the forest, especially near salt licks associated with Bongo and Forest Hog, but it has become so wary that it only moves about at night.

Duikers are among the chief victims of hunting parties with nets, and expeditions to collect meat on the Congo side of the border (before certain regions were recently made reserves) have reduced their numbers to the danger line.

Capt. Brocklehurst got the second prize for a Yellow Backed Duiker head from this district in the international game trophy exhibition, Berlin, in 1937.

FOREST SITUTUNGA (Zande "Doroga." *Limnotragus spekei larkeni*).

This is the most romantic and mysterious of the game animals of the Zande country. Some cling hopefully to the belief that it is still to be found in the primary forests on the Sudan side of the border but it is my impression that it has disappeared.

Local trackers, if asked, are familiar with the animal called "Doroga" but do not admit to having seen one in recent years or its tracks, although faint and vague reports may still be gleaned of one having been heard of some miles away in another place.

The type specimen came from near the head of the Yabongo stream near Yambio. It was an immature male which had been wounded by a spear and tracked down by a C.M.S. boy who brought in the skin and some of the meat to Maj. Larken.

One or two heads were later brought in to him from chief Madi's and Ezo country.

This forest species was named after Larken by the British Museum in 1931, and he presented the Situtunga head which now hangs on the wall of the governor's office in Wau. This head is Larken's Situtunga, the rarest trophy exhibited in the Sudan, although no one now realizes it!

The American mammologist, Dr. Schwartz, believes this sub-species is indistinguishable from the West African race (*L. spekei gratus*). This latter species is said to be known as a not exceptionally rare animal in the swampy khors running out from the Congo side of the Divide.

At all events the Sudan variety seems to have occurred near small forest streams, where swamps are an exception and always very small in area. It seems therefore to have become adapted to conditions quite distant from those associated with the other river and swamps loving races of *situtunga*. I have not had opportunity of studying its hoofs and other characteristics in the British Museum, but there is so little material to work on that it would be exceedingly valuable to the collection if a further specimen could be obtained from the Belgian Authorities from the Haute Uelle.

If the primary forest can be successfully conserved and the destruction, which fires in recent years have caused, can be excluded, it is always possible that stray Larken's *situtunga* may turn up again in the Zande district.

Mr. R. C. Wilkinson has very recently seen a large, dark, "Bushbuck" at Miangoara, and he thought this might be the W. African race of *Situtunga*, and Col. Molloy considers it answers to the description. I have also shot a very dark and handsome variety of Bushbuck, about 1936, at Bengengai with a black dorsal crest and black on the legs. The horns were perhaps a little more spiral than the common Bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) but it was certainly not any variety of *Situtunga*.

The British Museum would not have confused a *Tragelaphus* with a *Limnotragus*, and the Zande trackers of the border forests would not confuse a "Bodi" (Bushbuck) with a "Doroga."

It sounds possible therefore that, although in a new and unexpected locality, Mr. Wilkinson actually saw the Larken's, or West African, *Situtunga*.

GIANT FOREST HOG (Zande "Makuru." *Hylocherus*, probably, *ituriensis*).

This is a jet black pig, much larger than the Wart Hog although few full grown adults have been seen, and it is not certain how high it can stand at the shoulder. Its tusks are smaller than those of the Wart Hog but it lacks the warts behind the tusks which the latter carries, but has very large ones like a fungus growth below the eyes. One of its most remarkable features is its large, disc-like, snout. In the Zande border forest its tracks are not uncommonly seen but,

like the Yellow-Backed Duiker, it usually only moves about nowadays at night. It appears to be more common on the French side. My boys have recently eaten the dried meat of this animal obtained from the French Zande.

Although included in game which only comes into the Zande district of the Sudan there are also possible Giant Forest Hogs in the Didinga, in the Dongotona mountain, and at Beili (south of Wau) the sub-species determination of which has not yet been made, but it is probably not the same as the Zande district one and is more likely to be *H. meinertzhageni*.

Of other large game the Red race of Buffalo has been described in the third number of volumes 1. of this journal by Mr. J. P. S. Daniell. The country over which this animal roams overlaps that of the Common Buffalo. Whereas the latter may be found in the savannah bush anywhere, and also in the edges of the gallery forests, the Red Buffalo is found *only* in the latter.

The Red Forest Buffalo (*Syrencus nanus*) is regarded as an animal quite distinct from the ordinary Buffalo (*Syrencus caffer aequinoctialis*) by the Azande, who calls it "Zunguma" instead of "Gbe." It is not peculiar to the Zande corner of the Sudan; it is also in Meridi sub-district.

Some years ago Maj. Noel Brown (D. C. Amadi) and I watched a small herd of Red Buffalo coming in to a waterhole down the slope of a glade in the Aza Forest. From another corner of the same slope were coming a herd of the Common or Black Buffalo.

Maj. Larken, Owen Bey, and others have mentioned sometimes seeing a few Red mixed in with a herd of Black. The temperament of the Red is always said to be more irritable and pugnacious than that of the Black, and the name in Zande is supposed to indicate something ferocious, so much so that they say that he is always angry and shows this attitude towards the Black, with whom he is usually not on good terms, as well as towards the human to whom he usually objects on sight.

The horns of the Red (as illustrated by Mr. Daniell) are of quite different shape from the common race and they make a poor trophy. They seem to lie, as regards dimensions and shape, between those of the West African Bushcow and those of the Congo Dwarf Buffalo (*S. nanus nanus*). The latter is a small animal whereas our variety of Red is a large and heavy animal, and Larken records that the heaviest buffalo he ever saw was one of the Red ones.

It seems possible that the Congo Dwarf and the Sudani Buffalo may have crossed and the local Red race is a direct result, or the product of evolution from it. Whether there is one variety that mixes with the Black and is more closely related to it, and another which is distinct and won't have anything to do with the Black, is open to question. In any case it seems to be a very distinct variety (or sub-species) of Buffalo; much more clearly demarcated than the various sub-divisions of Black.

Dr. C. Christy, who was in these parts during the first world war, suggested that the two extreme types of Buffalo throughout the African continent are represented by the large Black South African, and the Central and West African small Red, such as we have in the south-western Sudan. The former is *Syncercus caffer* and the latter *Syncercus nanus*. This agrees with the last edition of Lydekker and there seems little point in sub-dividing these into too many intermediate varieties.

RHINOCEROS (Zande "Kunga," *Rhinoceros simus*).

The white Rhinoceros still occurs in the Zande section of the Southern National Park. Although its tracks have been seen by many, few have seen the animal itself and it is uncommon there.

It is interesting to note that the old Bahr el Ghazal Handbook, 1911, mentions both Black and White Rhino as occurring in that province (which then included Zande district), although the Black has only recently been re-discovered in Aweil district.

Some believe in the possibility of a few Black being also in the Southern National Park.

White Rhino used to be fairly common between the Sue river and Tembura, and there were a lot, in the earliest days of administration, in Mbiri's country between the game Park and the Mopoi-Tembura road (logit. 27° 50'). Maj. Larken shot one there during the first world war.

No white Rhino is now known in this latitude west of jebel Topi in Amadi district.

GIANT ELAND (Zande "Mvure," *Taurotragus derbianus gigas*).

Although found in many of the West Bank districts, and too well known to be described in detail here, this exceedingly handsome animal is worthy of a few special notes.

He is the heaviest of all antelopes (with the exception of the Common Eland which runs to much the same weight) and stands 5ft. 8 inches at the shoulder, and is thus six or more inches higher than the average buffalo. His head ranks with Sable Antelope and Greater Kudu as one of the three most magnificent in Africa.

In the Zande district there are Giant Eland in the game park. There are also some along the river Sue north and north east of Yambio, and a few on the borders of chief Dika's country and F.E.A., and along the Namatina, and there used to be a herd of over 60, which was much the biggest, to the north west of Madebbe, i.e. about 70 miles north west of Meridi, and there were some fine old bulls among them.

I spent an Easter holiday looking for these again in 1946 and only found the tracks of a few animals. It is feared that this fine herd has been decimated by rinderpest and accounted for by the Buguru hunters of chief Bangazegino.

The dark greyish dun colour of the old cows is practically identical with that of the old bulls and makes it difficult to distinguish one sex from the other in the mature animal. There is no difficulty in differentiating the light dun, Jersey cow, shade of the young female from that of the old bull but the old cow, in addition to being the same colour, also has a dewlap and her horns may even be longer than those of a good male. But the great thickness of horn around the base is always a distinguishing feature in a good male; this may be as much as 13 inches.

In studying a herd in the bush, it is not so easy, as it is only when heads can be seen side by side that one can be certain of the greater thickness of the bull's horns.

The one feature, in my experience of the Zande race of Giant Eland, which distinguishes the old bull from the old cow is the heavy tuft, or bush, of black hair on the forehead between the horns in front and which only the bull carries. This can easily be seen at one hundred yards.

Brocklehurst, however, points out that even this feature is not infallible and the record head for the Bahr el Ghazal (not from the Zande district) had no frontal bush at all.

Giant Eland often keep on the move all day and may lead one 25 miles in the not always successful attempt to come up with them. They glide, remarkably quietly for their size, through the bush, occasionally uttering a soft whinnie.

The record head for the Sudan race is $41\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Brocklehurst won a first and special prize at the Berlin international trophy exhibition, 1937, with his 39 inches head.

The following antelope abound and require no special mention, —Waterbuck ("Mbugga"), Jackson's Hartebeeste ("Nzumba"), Uganda Kob ("Ngbuno"), Bushbuck ("Gbodi"), Oribi ("Bombaria"), Blue Abyssinian Duiker ("Gbafu"). Good Kob heads may be seen but I have never seen a really big Waterbuck head.

Buffalo ("Gbe"), Bushpig ("Zukubile"), and Warthog ("Zigba") are common throughout the district.

Lelwel's Hartebeeste is distinguished by some from Jackson's. The main point of difference being that the horns are parallel instead of the tips pointing inwards. I have obtained hartebeeste on the northern edges of the district, and in what is now the game park, which had this distinction and slightly different markings. If *Lelwel's* is accepted as distinct from Jackson's the northern edge of the district marks its southern limit of range.

ROAN ANTELOPE ("Bisu") is not very common. They are mostly in the northern parts of the district and south to chief Dika's (Tembura) border road. To the east they are seldom seen so far south. They like similar country to Giant Eland.

TIANG ("Tanga") T. R. H. Owen mentions seeing four Tiang at Gomuko in the game park (Vol. I. No. 4.). The only Tiang I have ever seen in ten years in this district was in Mvuta's, north of the Ibba. Larken saw one also in the game park.

On the west side of the Nile the southern limit of range of this animal seems therefore to be about lat. 6° ., and it is a rarity.

REEDBUCK ("Ngbandua"). Like Tiang Reedbuck is common elsewhere but in this district is a still greater rarity. It is only found on the northern edges. I have only seen one pair, on the Tonj—Ibba line north of the Ibba.

GIRAFFE ("Dikara," Singba") There are a few small herds of Giraffe scattered all through the district.

GREY DUIKER ("Mvuru." *Guevei motecola*) is common only in the well forested southern parts. In F.E.A. it is the commonest Duiker and it is systematically hunted for sale to government who exports the skins to Paris.

RED DUIKER ("Kpanghaningba." *Cephalophus na alensis harvei*) is considerably less common than the Abyssinian Blue Duiker. The French catch one Red to 40 Grey. In this district they are commonest towards Meridi and Amadi and do not seem to extend into the drier ironstone parts.

Hippo, Crocodiles and Leopard, are common in all the likely localities. Lion are scattered about but not in great numbers. There are more in the game park than elsewhere.

THE BUSH PIG (Zande "Zukubili." *Choiropotamus* or *potamchoerus*) is common everywhere near the forest e ges.

Hunting-dogs are not often seen, although Larken witnessed a number of instances of young hartebeeste and other animals being hunted down by them. They are commonest on the river Sue north of Tembura.

CHEETAH. It is very doubtful if Cheetah occurs in the Zande district. I can trace no authentic instance of the animal being seen by a European, or any Zande who describes an animal exactly like a cheetah.

The name "Ngaramoma" has been translated as "Cheetah" but in fact it seems to refer to a smaller variety of the cat family. There are superstitions about "Ngaramoma." It is said to visit the vicinity of human graves and to associate with departed spirits. It is bad luck to see one. Its call is said to be like that of leopard.

When killed the hero covers himself with woodash and holds a special dance in celebration. The only other denizens of the forest sharing this honour being Lion and Leopard.

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