

THE SHAMBA RAIDERS

**memories of a
game warden**

Revised Edition

BRUCE KINLOCH

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Acknowledgements

In the first edition of *The Shamba Raiders*, published in 1972, I said that for me the writing of this book had been a compulsion from the beginning, but that for my wife, Elizabeth, it had been sheer purgatory! I went on to emphasise that in the production of *The Shamba Raiders* my wife's practical help and support (although often strained to the limit!) had been not merely invaluable but indispensable, and I concluded by saying that, to Elizabeth, both this book and myself owe a very deep debt of gratitude. These words of appreciation are even more applicable now, in view of the additional work and problems which were involved in the production of this new edition of *The Shamba Raiders*, a revised version incorporating a substantial extra section which covers the period of twenty three tumultuous years of East African history that followed the original story that I told in the book.

I have not forgotten the patience, kindness and encouragement of my original publishers, Sir William Collins and Marjorie Villiers, both of whom, sadly, have since departed this troubled world; now, with this revised edition, their place has been taken by Jane Tatam and Lindsey Charles, respectively Managing Director and Editor of Ashford Press Publishing, for whose kindly help and interest I am also very grateful. However, I must add that, with this new edition, I am particularly indebted to Tony Jackson, former Editor of *Shooting Times and Country Magazine*. Over the last ten years I have often been asked why *The Shamba Raiders* has not been reprinted; by recommending the book to Ashford Press, Tony Jackson is the only person to have done anything about it!

A man to whom I owe a specially deep debt of the saddest gratitude is my old friend the late Charles Astley Maberly, whose line drawings do much to enliven the pages of this book. Charles, a charming and eccentric naturalist who lived alone, and who with typical generosity refused to accept any material

reward for the painstaking work he had done for me, died a month before the book was published, brutally murdered by an intruder in his farmhouse in the North Eastern Transvaal.

Most of the photographs in this book were taken by myself; the obvious exceptions are those in which I myself appear and in these cases an obliging companion pressed the button. However, I again have to thank Captain K.B. ("Robbie") Robson for his courtesy in allowing me to use his excellent photograph of a horrifying collection of poachers' snares and traps; and Tom Chorley, one of my honorary game wardens in Uganda, for the equally telling picture of a snared rhino. Acknowledgements are also due to the Tanganyika (now Tanzania) Information Service for the photographs of the Arusha Conference, of the Students at the college of African Wildlife Management, and of the elephant tusks in the Ivory Room, Dar es Salaam; and to *Shooting Times and Country Magazine* for their courtesy in permitting me to conclude the 'Afterword' with my verses, *An African Night*, which were originally published in that magazine.

Another person to whom I am particularly grateful is the late Richard Owen (T.R.H. Owen, C.B.E.), another old friend and former colleague who wrote the brilliant and amusing poem, *The Triumph of Science*, which appears in Chapter Sixteen. In my interests, Richard resisted numerous requests for the poem to be published in other books.

The writing of the additional 'Afterword' for this edition entailed a considerable amount of detailed research, work in which I received a great deal of very valuable and sympathetic help from a number of experienced and knowledgeable people to whom I owe my sincere and very grateful thanks. In particular, I have to thank my two old friends and former colleagues, Dr. Keith Eltringham and Dr. Hugh Lamprey, both of whom are very experienced wildlife research scientists who have spent many years in Africa and both of whom took endless trouble to provide me with the information I needed. In this respect, my grateful thanks also go to Dr Eric L. Edroma, Chief Research Officer of the Uganda Institute of Ecology; to Dr Esmond Bradley-Martin, Vice-Chairman of the Survival Service Commission's 'African Elephant and Rhino' Group; to Richard Fitter, Chairman of the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society; to Tony Mence, my former deputy when I was Chief Game Warden of Tanganyika and an old

friend who later became the second Principal of the College of African Wildlife Management before joining I.U.C.N.; to Colin Imray, British High Commissioner in Dar es Salaam; and last, but by no means least, to John ('Steve') Stephenson, a former District Commissioner who for twelve years was Senior Park Warden of Tanzania National Parks, and who gave me full access to his recent and very comprehensive printed report entitled *Rehabilitation of The Selous Game Reserve*, from July to September, 1986.

Finally, there are the many game wardens and others who, at my request, took the time and trouble to send me particulars of themselves, their experiences and similar relevant details, to ensure the accuracy of this book. A number of them are named in the following pages, but although, to my regret, it has proved to be impossible to mention them all, this unavoidable omission is no indication of any lack of appreciation of their most willing assistance and friendly interest; indeed, it is them to whom I have dedicated this book.

To the Game Wardens of Africa

*'They hear on the wind, as it passes,
The Call of the Veld.'*

MARY BRYON
The Call of the Veld

by the same author:

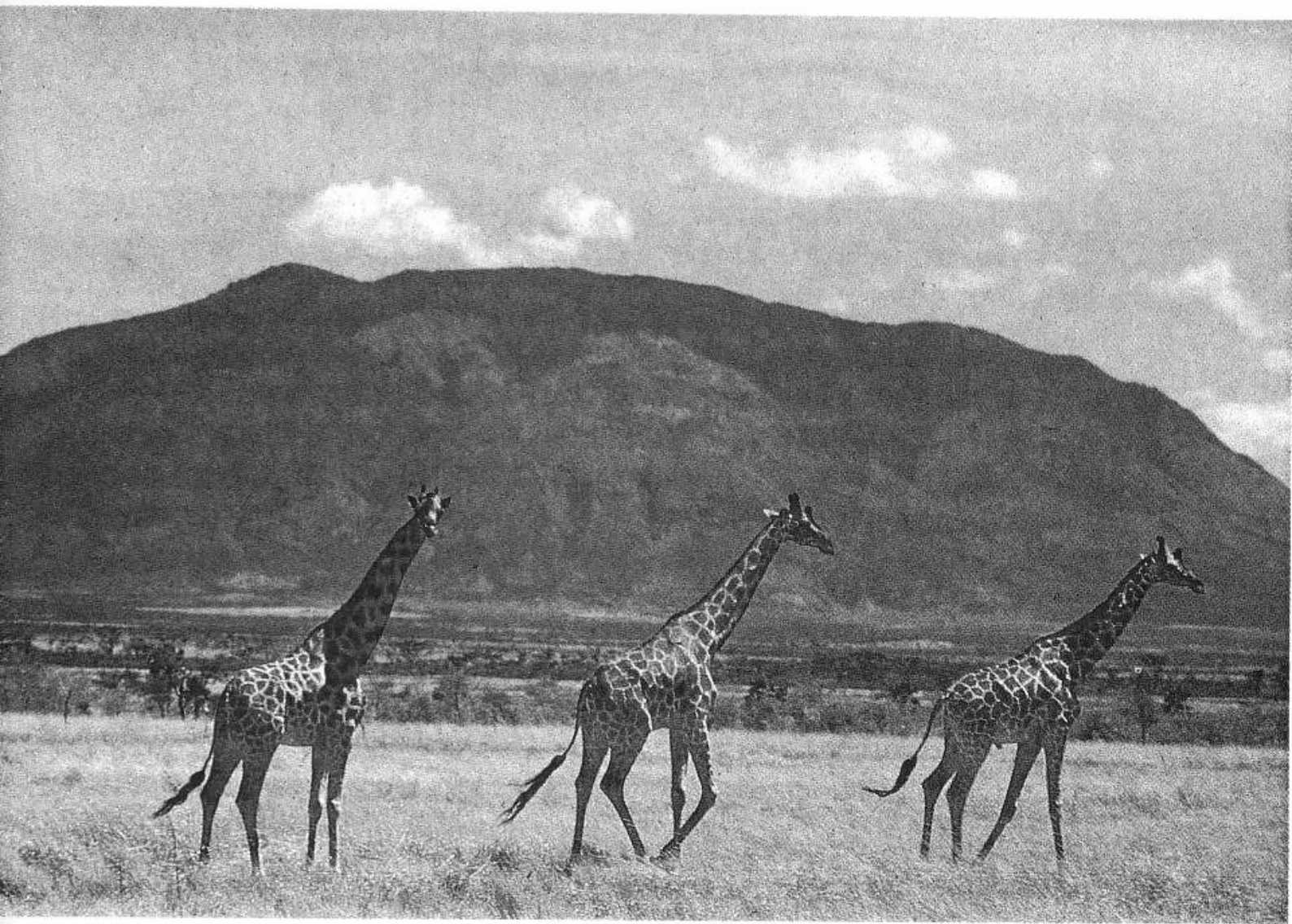
SAUCE FOR THE MONGOOSE



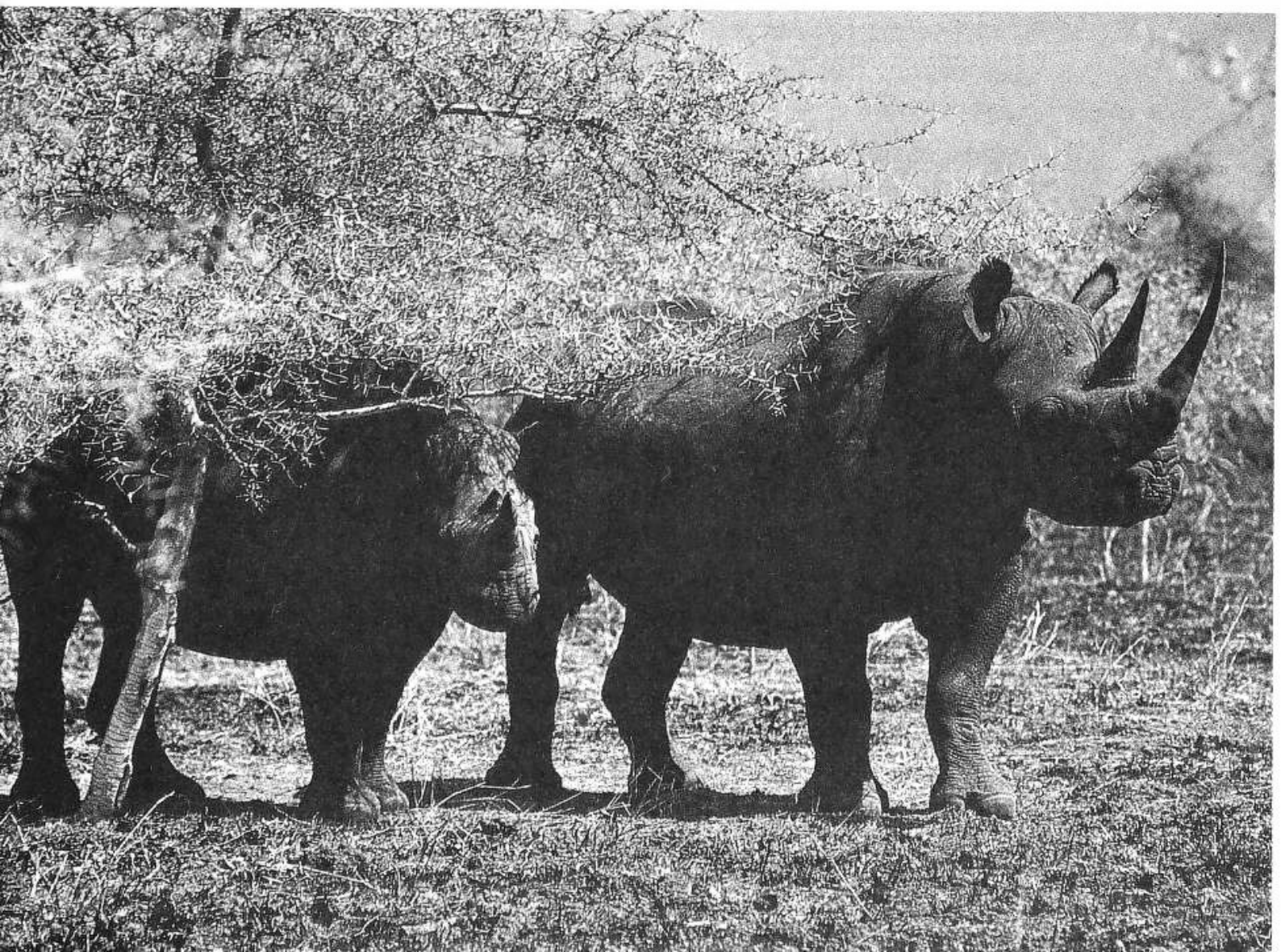
Uganda kob cruelly snared

Rhino caught in foot-snare





Rothschild's giraffe in North Karamoja, with Mount Lotuke behind
Black rhino, Karamoja



Taking Stock – 1987

"Writing about modern Africa is like trying to sketch a galloping horse which is out of sight before you have sharpened your pencil" – so wrote that famous authoress Elspeth Huxley, in a foreword to her highly acclaimed book *Forks and Hope*; Elspeth Huxley writes not only with shrewd insight but also with a deep personal knowledge of East Africa, and no truer words than these were ever penned.

Forks and Hope was published in 1964, a sad year for me since, as I have told in this book, it was then, after 17 eventful years, that my career in East Africa drew to a close and I sailed out of Dar es Salaam for the last time. Twenty-three years have passed since that sad day, and for East Africa as a whole, and more particularly for Uganda, they have been 23 turbulent and traumatic years, during which much murky and even literally blood-stained water has flowed down the Nile. Now, nearly a quarter of a century after the end of my service in East Africa, *The Shamba Raiders* is being re-printed and it was suggested to me that this would be an appropriate time to look back over what I wrote in the original edition, to think on what has happened in East Africa during the intervening years, and – most important of all – to try to take stock of the wildlife situation in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania as it is to-day.

When I first thought about it, this idea appealed to me, but I soon realised that it presented problems. Over the last 23 years there have been so many dramatic happenings and far-reaching changes in East Africa, that to describe them adequately, even between the covers of a full book, would be a testing task for anyone. So, all I can do here is to generalise and summarise, which can sometimes be misleading, but I have done my best to get my facts as accurate and as up-to-date as possible. To the latter end, I have sought the help and advice of a number of knowledgeable people, notably Dr S. Keith Eltringham, Dr Hugh Lamprey and Dr Esmond Bradley-Martin, all of whom are men not only with

long and wide experience of wildlife management in Africa, but who are also still very active in that field.

Keith Eltringham, currently Lecturer in Applied Biology, University of Cambridge, is an old friend and colleague of mine. One of the first directors of the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology in Uganda (now the Uganda Institute of Ecology), Keith is in great demand for consultancy and advisory wildlife assignments in Africa and he visits the main game areas of East Africa – particularly those in Uganda – every year, often to carry out aerial surveys of which, as a one time "Pilot-Biologist", he has much experience.

Hugh Lamprey, another old friend and colleague of mine, is also a Pilot-Biologist who has had a long and distinguished career in Africa. As I have told in this book, Hugh was not only my Biologist when I was Chief Game Warden of Tanzania, but also the man I selected to be the first Principal of the College of African Wildlife Management, at Mweka on Kilimanjaro, when I planned and launched the latter college. Later, Hugh became Director of the Serengeti Research Institute, after which he undertook wildlife research and advisory assignments in countries as far-flung as Senegal, Chad, Sudan and Kenya, on behalf of I.U.C.N., U.N.E.S.C.O., U.N.E.P. and W.W.F. At the time of writing Hugh is the World Wildlife Fund's "Regional Representative for East and Central Africa" and is based in Nairobi.

Last but not least, Esmond Bradley-Martin is the Vice-Chairman of the Survival Service Commission's "African Elephant and Rhino' Group", also with headquarters in Nairobi, and therefore a valuable source of information on the elephant and rhino' situations in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

*

With Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania – the three countries of the original East African Community – all gaining their independence within a year or so of each other in the mid-sixties, that period marked the end of a colourful era in the game world of East Africa, but the long awaited granting of independence was not the reason that East Africa's game wardens, together with other seasoned supporters of the wildlife conservation lobby, entered the new era on the crest of a wave of high hopes, if not of euphoria. The reason

for the optimism of the wildlife lobby was that – as I wrote at the beginning of this book – contrary to the forbodings of the pessimists, the new African governments had recognised and accepted with alacrity the fact that, as the basis of a tourist trade that was capable of enormous expansion, their countries' wildlife was one of their most valuable natural assests, and they had acted, or tried to act, accordingly. Alas, as the poet Robbie Burns would have it, "the best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft a' gley", and it was in Uganda first that things went wrong – and horribly wrong.

Tourism – and wildlife-related tourism in particular – is a fickle and sensitive industry, quick to shy away from the slightest hint of political instability, and in Uganda's case less than four years after the Protectorate had been granted its independence, internal political troubles, long simmering below the surface, erupted violently. The cause of the trouble was the bitter personal rivalry between Milton Obote – then Prime Minister – and HH Sir Edward Mutesa, the Kabaka of Buganda, who was then the President of Uganda – and one of my keenest Honorary Game Wardens when I was Chief Game Warden of the Protectorate! But the savage and explosive manner in which this rivalry came to a head shocked the outside world.

I clearly recall the 24th May, 1966, the day I travelled to London Airport to board a flight to Uganda's administrative capital Entebbe, the first leg of my journey to Rwanda where I was due to carry out a wildlife management advisory assignment in the Parc National de la Kagera. On the way to the airport I bought an evening paper and from the front page banner headlines seemed to leap out at me; "KING FREDDIE UNDER ATTACK," they shouted, and the text went on to describe the attack on the Kabaka's palace that morning, an assault carried out by the 1st Battalion, Uganda Rifles led by Idi Amin, later to become notorious, then a Lieutenant-Colonel acting on the orders of Milton Obote. Twelve hours later, as I landed at Entebbe, the morning sky over nearby Kampala was darkened by the billowing columns of dense, black smoke rising from the Kabaka's palace. The Kabaka himself had fled, escaping to England by the skin of his teeth, but his people, the Baganda, never forgave Milton Obote, and from then on serious political trouble, arising from tribal differences and jealousies, continued to foment beneath the surface.

Four and a half years later, in January, 1971, Idi Amin, by then promoted to Major-General and Chief of Defence Staff, launched a successful coup while President Milton Obote was away in Singapore, attending the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. It is said that Idi Amin had discovered a plot to remove himself, and officers loyal to him, because he was of "the wrong tribe". Whatever the truth of the matter, Amin and his supporters – mostly Mahdi or Kakwa from West Nile Province – acted with typical ruthlessness and ferocity; a large proportion of the Acholi and Langi officers were murdered, or fled, and Amin – appointed President by "the soldiers" – clung on grimly to the reins of power for eight, blood-soaked years.

What has all this got to do with Uganda's wildlife? The answer is *everything*! To the outside world Idi Amin was a complex and macabre figure, a sinister and unpredictable clown who was a cruel and ruthless tyrant who ruled Uganda by a combination of primitive cunning, irrational impulse and unbridled savagery, with the result that the country rapidly lapsed into barbarism and near anarchy. With the consequent general breakdown of law and order, poaching increased and flourished and Uganda's previously spectacular and world-famous wildlife populations suffered accordingly, none more so than the elephant and the rhino.

However, even Idi Amin, who was a man of great vanity*, was sometimes sensitive to world opinion and there are a few things (but sadly few!) which can be said to his credit. For instance, as I have mentioned briefly in the body of this book, in September 1971, Amin cancelled the Obote government's grandiose plan for a hydro-electric scheme at the famous Murchison Falls, in the heart of the popular national park of that name, a scheme which caused a worldwide outcry because it was a purely prestige project that would have destroyed the spectacular and historic Falls merely to produce electricity for which there was no demand!

Again, three years later, on 3rd December, 1975, Idi Amin – reacting in typically violent fashion to international concern over the elephant situation in Uganda – issued a decree which ordered death by firing squad for anyone found guilty, by a judicial authority, of elephant poaching. In fact, the decree went further

*Amin assumed the rank of Field Marshall and awarded himself the V.C.; if pressed, he explained the latter away as being the "Lake Victoria Cross"!

for it also ordered that anyone found *in the act* of hunting elephant or shooting elephant would be shot on the spot! The slaughter of elephants stopped overnight, but the killing gradually crept back to its former level as poachers – lured by the world prices of ivory and rhino' horn, which had soared to the equivalent of £31 per lb and £240 per lb respectively – began to realise that the authorities, many of them corrupt and themselves involved in the illegal trade in ivory and rhino' horn, could not or would not enforce the decree. In fact, it is said that during Amin's regime his troops killed most of the elephants in the national parks to pay for the maintenance of the army! But it was not the ordinary forms of poaching that did the horrendous harm from which Uganda's formerly teeming wildlife resources were reduced to a pathetic shadow of their former glory: the holocaust was the result of total war, the invasion of Uganda by the army of Tanzania.

After Idi Amin's coup in January, 1971, Milton Obote had taken refuge with his friend President Julius Nyerere, in Tanzania, who had given him political asylum. Having his old enemy on his doorstep did not please Idi Amin and this led to much sabre rattling and contrived border incidents. Finally, in 1979, Julius Nyerere, tiring of these provocative irritations, launched the Tanzanian Army in an all out offensive designed to topple Amin and restore Obote to power in Uganda. The fighting raged over many of Uganda's finest game areas; the soldiers slaughtered game indiscriminately for food, for profit and as living targets on which to test their weapons; and by the following year, when Idi Amin and the remains of his ill-disciplined army had fled northwards and Milton Obote was back in office, much of Uganda's wildlife had been decimated.

According to Dr Keith Eltringham, a survey carried out in 1980 showed that, in the Queen Elizabeth National Park alone, the buffalo population had shrunk from 18,000 to around 3,000, hippo from 14,000 also to about 3,000, and elephants – which numbered some 4,000 in 1973, but had fallen to 1,200 by 1975 – had been reduced to a remnant population of little more than one hundred by 1980. Furthermore, with the virtual elimination of elephants from the park, the vegetation had changed considerably, with much more and thicker undergrowth and dense acacia woodland springing up on what was once open grassland. So much so, that the

formerly spectacular concentrations of topi – an open grassland antelope here found at the southern end of the park – which had been savagely reduced from an original population of some 5,000 to around 500, in 1980 were seen to have to thread their way through the trees!

Elsewhere in Uganda the story was much the same, with antelope species reduced to a minimum and the total elephant population down to around 2,000 in the whole country. Worse still, the rhinoceros – both black and white – because of the insatiable demand and astronomical prices paid for its horns to make prestige dagger handles in North Yemen, and as an aphrodisiac and prized medicant in Asia, the Far East and China, had been exterminated. Needless to say, Uganda's tourist industry which, until 1972, had been the country's third most important foreign exchange earner after coffee and cotton, had collapsed years before.

Sadly, the overthrow of Idi Amin and the re-establishment of the Obote government did not bring peace and tranquillity, let alone prosperity, to Uganda. The government had a strong bias in favour of the Nilotic tribes of the north of the country and in consequence it was mistrusted, even hated, by the Baganda and the other Bantu tribes of southern Uganda; the Baganda, in particular, had never forgotten or forgiven Obote and his henchmen for what had happened to their Kabaka 15 years before. Covert resistance grew and it was not long before anti-government guerilla bands were operating in the countryside, bands which developed into the well-disciplined National Resistance Army (the N.R.A.) under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni, a force which eventually was to prove more than a match for the U.N.L.A., Obote's ill-disciplined Uganda National Liberation Army, a bullying mob, savage and sadistic, which practised intimidation and extortion and terrorised the countryside, committing atrocities reminiscent of the worst days of the Amin regime.

As the atrocities continued, so did Museveni's N.R.A. grow in strength and efficiency until, slowly but surely, the greater part of the southern half of Uganda had come under its effective control. In fact, by early 1985, virtually the whole of the south-western part of the country had become a no-go area for Obote's U.N.L.A.. Sadly for Uganda's wildlife, the influence and dominance of

Museveni's crusading forces did not extend to the country lying to the north of the Albert Nile: in that region, units of Obote's army, based in Gulu and Pakwach, remained in full control and the animals in the Murchison Falls National Park had suffered accordingly ever since 1980. During this period, poaching by U.N.L.A. soldiers was rife, and as their war with Museveni's N.R.A. gained momentum, the U.N.L.A. began training recruits in the Murchison Falls National Park itself and they were all fed on game meat!*

In July, 1985, the Obote government was toppled by an internal military coup, but peace was not restored to Uganda until Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army stormed Kampala in January, 1986. Although the peace was a fragile and uneasy one, Museveni then formed an entirely new government, with a brand new Ministry of Environmental Protection which took Uganda's national parks, game reserves and other wildlife areas under its protective wing. At the same time, the defeated and demoralised soldiers of the U.N.L.A. fled northwards, on their way looting everything they could carry from the safari lodges in the Murchison Falls National Park and destroying the remainder. Fortunately, at that time the Kidepo Valley National Park escaped serious damage for, by the time the demoralised troops reached the Kidepo, they were only interested in gaining the border to seek safety in the Sudan.

What is the wildlife situation in Uganda now, in 1987, and what of the future? Keith Eltringham, who did a survey in the Queen Elizabeth National Park recently, is cautiously optimistic about the main game areas in the southern half of Uganda, although he is uncertain about the north of the country. In the south the antelope species, he says, are breeding fast, and there is a healthy nucleus of the larger species of game, such as buffalo and hippo. He even saw a herd of forty elephants (a rare and unusual sight in recent years!) in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, and these great beasts appear to be slowly but surely infiltrating the park from across the nearby border with Zaire. He was also impressed by the effects on animal species of the very

* Professor Frederick I. B. Kayanja, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Uganda National Parks (and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Veterinary Medicine at Makerere University), writing in *Swara*, the Journal of the East African Wildlife Society, in 1986.

noticeable change in the nature of the habitat in the park, a change caused by the virtual elimination of the previously great herds of elephants, with their destructive feeding habits. For instance, he saw many more Uganda kob than ever before, while in the hippo wallows he observed, for the first time, numbers of giant forest hog, a comparatively rare and normally shy species which I myself have never seen in that national park!

Elsewhere in Uganda the wildlife situation is not yet clear because, in striking contrast to the south, at the present time that region of Uganda which lies to the north of the Albert Nile, and including most of the Murchison Falls National Park, can best be described as "bandit country", a no-mans-land with roving bands of well-armed, dissident soldiers, the savage remnants of the former armies of both Amin and Obote, raiding and looting virtually at will. In that region, Museveni's troops, almost all of them Bantu southerners like himself, are having an up-hill struggle trying to restore peace, law and order, an object which they can only achieve by defeating the elusive guerillas who infest this wild region of Nilotic tribes, an alien populace basically suspicious of and even hostile to the new regime. As a result (for what are euphemistically described as "security reasons"!) it is virtually impossible at present for any outside observers to visit and properly assess the wildlife situation in areas such as the Murchison Falls and Kidepo Valley National Parks. For instance, Keith Eltringham recently had to abandon, with great reluctance, his carefully laid plans to carry out an aerial survey of the Murchison Falls National Park; as he said at the time: "These guerilla bands are well armed and they could be anywhere. Therefore, as I would always be flying low on a steady course, the risk of being shot down by ground fire was just too great."

So, how does one sum up the present wildlife situation in Uganda, that beautiful and once peaceful country, Churchill's "Pearl of Africa", whose people were once happy and contented and the elephant reigned supreme? It is safe to say that, as long as peace continues to be maintained in the southern half of Uganda, in that part of the country there is real cause for hope, even for the elephant. In the north however, unless the last flickering flames of a long and tragic internecine struggle are smothered soon, the future for wildlife in that part of the country will be bleak. As for

Uganda's rhino – both black and white – it is clear that the long day is already done; sadly, it is them for whom the bell tolls.

*

Compared with Uganda, over the last twenty-three years Kenya has been a veritable "haven of peace", but that does not mean that this dynamic and flourishing country, often held up as a shining example to the rest of Africa, has not been without its own serious internal problems. In fact, since independence Kenya, whose government (unlike that of Tanzania) from the beginning enthusiastically embraced capitalism, has had to face some big challenges; and of these challenges none have been greater than those arising from the problems of conserving and managing the country's commercially valuable wildlife resources, a natural asset which has long formed the basis of a flourishing and steadily expanding tourist industry. In this sphere, the biggest and most serious problem has been an alarming increase in highly organised commercial poaching, particularly of elephant and rhino'.

Human nature being what it is and basically the same the whole world over, in the countries of East Africa, after independence, the heady and unaccustomed taste of new-found power, together with the inherent temptations of authority, have all too often led to avarice, graft and corruption in official circles, sometimes in high places. In Kenya, as in Uganda and Tanzania, in the first decade or so of independence this led, among other things, to a massive increase in the age-old but largely illegal trade in ivory and rhino'-horn. During this period, poaching of elephant and rhino' increased by leaps and bounds until – often with the help of false documents issued and stamped by corrupt government officials – stocks of illegal ivory and rhino'-horn were regularly being exported by the ton, sometimes in plane loads.

Reliable evidence suggests that the sad era of corruption in Kenya reached its peak in the seventies, since when Kenya's government, alarmed by mounting criticism both at home and abroad and the consequent threat to its tourist trade, has made valiant efforts to bring the situation under control. Although exact dates are misleading, available statistics indicate that the worst poaching of elephant and rhino' in Kenya took place in the period from around 1975 up to 1980. In 1972, Kenya still had a massive elephant population of some 165,000; to-day this population is

believed to number no more than 30,000 elephants, although ironically, in some areas such as the Maasai Mara and Amboseli, there is said to be a local surplus of elephant! The black rhino' situation is worse. In 1968, there were known to be at least 18,000 rhino' in Kenya; to-day there are no more than 500 rhino' left in the whole country and even these are under constant threat from avaricious poachers.

It was in 1977, that the Kenya Government first took really drastic steps to put its wildlife house in order. In that year Kenya set up strong, well equipped anti-poaching units, highly mobile teams designed to track down and eliminate the aggressive and well-armed poaching gangs (a large majority of them Somalis) and to seek out and bring to justice all members of the powerful illegal ivory cartel. In addition, with the object of improving efficiency and effectiveness, the government amalgamated the National Parks and the Game Department to form a new, unified "Wildlife Conservation and Management Department", in the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife. Finally, at the stroke of a pen and with no prior warning, on 19th May, 1977, the government issued a decree banning all hunting in Kenya with immediate effect.*

The hunting ban was applauded by anti-field sports groups and the Kenya Government may have been pressurised by the blinkered but financially powerful total preservation lobby, but the reasons given for the ban were over simplistic and their validity open to question. The basic theory behind the ban appeared to be that if all legal hunting was banned, then anyone found hunting, or even if gun or rifle shots were heard, he or they must be a poacher and could therefore promptly be dealt with. Not surprisingly, both the ban itself and the summary manner in which it had been imposed caused a storm of protest, not least from that honorable and highly respected body "The East African Professional Hunters' Association", whose members and their safari staff had had their livelihood wiped out literally overnight.

Many experienced game wardens, as well as the professional hunters themselves, pointed out that the ban ignored certain

* The ban, which was extended a year later to cover all trading in wild animal trophies as well as hunting, was recently relaxed very slightly to allow licenced bird shooting only.

important facts. First, that as a result of the ban the former hunting zones, which were often important reservoirs or overflow areas for the game animals in neighbouring national parks or game reserves, and also earners of substantial amounts of foreign exchange from hunting licences and trophy fees, as well as from the many expenses connected with costly Kenya hunting safari, had immediately lost all economic value, so their retention as wildlife areas was at serious risk. Next, there was the indisputable fact, endorsed by experienced game wardens, that most of the professional hunters did a valuable job as "honorary game wardens", so much so that poachers gave areas occupied by legal hunting parties a very wide berth. Furthermore, it was important not to ignore the fact that the licenced hunters, unlike the poachers, only took a severely restricted number of carefully selected trophy animals and always attempted to kill them humanely.

Sadly, the protests of the professional hunters and their supporters fell on deaf official ears, and after the ban the poachers moved into the previously controlled hunting areas, slaughtering game indiscriminately, often by the most barbarous methods, thereby adding to the problems of the new and already sorely tried Wildlife Conservation and Management Department. For the professional hunters the outcome could not have been worse; for them, on 26th August, 1977, three months after the ban was announced, the Committee of the East African Professional Hunters' Association, under the veteran chairmanship of Tony Dyer, met for the last time. On the agenda in Nairobi there was only one item. The livelihood of the Association's members had been destroyed abruptly and without warning by the stroke of an official pen, which had thereby removed the Association's basic *raison d'être*. The discussions were brief, sad and to the point. Quietly and without fuss the East African Professional Hunters' Association was formally disbanded. Dedicated to maintaining the strictest possible code of sporting ethics and to working for the practical conservation of East Africa's valuable wildlife resources, a world famous and exclusive organisation, whose members for many years were so colourful and popular a part of the contemporary Kenya scene, faded unobtrusively into history. Many believed that the Association was the unfortunate victim of misguided policy; few do not regret its passing.

For Kenya the ban on hunting was an expensive move; it cost the country dearly in lost foreign exchange and it was three years before the mass tourist industry filled the gap left by the absence of the traditional, high priced hunting safaris. But Kenya's tourist industry as a whole, an industry which is based on the country's dramatic wildlife areas, has continued to grow at a surprising rate. In the first edition of this book, I commented that in 1963, the value of Kenya's tourist industry, in foreign exchange, was £8 million per year; by 1976 however, this figure has climbed to over £41 million; ten years later it had risen to a surprising £209 million per year, well above the value of tea and exceeded only by the export earnings of coffee, which topped the £230 million mark. But despite this success story, the game wardens and scientists are worried.

On the surface, which is what the tourist sees, the wildlife scene in Kenya looks set fair. Poaching, although not eliminated – which it never will be entirely anywhere as long as humans and wild animals co-exist in close proximity to each other – appears to have been reduced to what might be described as a more manageable level than for some years past. As a result, in the national parks and game reserves the numbers and species of animals on display, although not as numerous and spectacular as in days of yore, are still more than enough to keep all but the most critical and discerning tourists happy. Sadly, the great elephant herds, once such a common and dramatic sight, are now largely a thing of the past, but poachers now keep well away from safari lodges and the motorable tracks, in the vicinity of which animals tend to concentrate in consequence, to the benefit of the tourist.

On the administrative side, Kenya's new unified Wildlife Conservation and Management Department – in theory the most practical and effective organisation for managing a country's wildlife resources – after a bad start when it was widely accused of serious inefficiency, ineffectiveness and even corruption, has had a new director appointed in the person of the redoubtable Perez Olindo, the former Director of Kenya National Parks. Appointed early in 1987, by presidential decree, with orders to clean up the Wildlife Department, Olindo, a highly respected man of the greatest integrity, came in like a new broom and by all accounts he has already wrought near miracles in getting a moribund department motivated and into action again. However,

there is another and more sober side to the coin, a side which reveals that there are a number of more insidious and in the long term more dangerous threats to Kenya's wildlife resources than poaching is ever likely to be; these are threats which have arisen as direct result of Kenya's biggest long term problem – that country's human population explosion.

There are a number of danger signs in the wildlife sphere. For instance, as Keith Eltringham points out, the change from traditional pastoralism to commercial wheat farming in the Narok area is going to have serious consequences for the animals of the Mara Reserve, as their normal range is thus being rapidly reduced. Shambas are also spreading into former prime wildlife areas, such as the Kitengela Reserve. The latter development means that the number of animals which used to move into the popular Nairobi National Park is also being greatly reduced. This pattern is bound to spread and, in fact, is already doing so, another recent example being the case of the Kora Reserve, the personal kingdom of that great "lion man" George Adamson of Born Free fame. The Kora Reserve, which is supported by the small Kora Trust (of which I myself am a Trustee) and the Elsa Trust, has recently been overrun by Somali nomads with their destructive herds of camels, goats and cattle but, faced with such a potentially explosive political problem, the Kenya Government has shown little stomach for a confrontation with the traditionally militant Somalis.

All in all, if I had to summarise, I would say that the future for Kenya's famous wildlife resources, on which that country's valuable and flourishing tourist industry directly depends, appears to be like the proverbial curate's egg, good in parts. With its human population explosion leading to ever increasing demands for more and more land for settlement and food production, the Kenya Government is faced with a difficult balancing act between conflicting problems; and, unless practical solutions are found and implemented, solutions which will almost certainly involve the firm grasping of some very controversial and probably unpleasant political nettles, it will not be long before it is discovered that this golden egg has become addled.

To prevent this insidious decline, draconian measures may well be called for. In the absence of such strong measures, the plains game (always resilient) and their predators will still survive for

a very long time, albeit in steadily decreasing numbers, but for Kenya's once famous elephant herds the long term future will become increasingly precarious. As for the few remaining black rhinoceros in Kenya, as long as one ounce of gold can buy little more than one pound of rhino' horn on the world market, the future for this pitiful remnant of an almost prehistoric species will remain stark indeed. Everything depends on what the Government of Kenya is not merely willing but also able to do. The will appears to be there, the rest remains to be seen, but as long as Kenya continues to enjoy strong and pragmatic leadership, such as that of President Arap Moi, there is real cause for hope.

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A quarter of a century has now passed since the former Mandated Territory of Tanganyika, the old German East Africa, was granted its independence. Under the visionary leadership of Julius Nyerere, first as Prime Minister and then as President, the Republic of Tanzania* followed a very different path from the Republic of Kenya, its former partner in the now defunct East African Community, and it is now generally accepted that, piloted by Nyerere, Tanzania took the wrong course. Julius Nyerere, an idealist and a dreamer who had been inspired by his visits to Communist China, shied away from capitalism and steered Tanzania into what, for Africans, were new and uncharted political waters. The outcome can only be described as calamitous.

The economic problems affecting Tanzania, over the last 15 years or so of Nyerere's term as President, were severe, partly due to his radical "African Socialism" policies – policies which were based on what he had seen in China – but also as a result of his early attempts at financial independence. Nyerere resented Nairobi's status as the recognised centre of the East African tourist industry, the focal point to which virtually all foreign tourists were drawn before visiting any other parts of East Africa; he also resented, with some justification, the fact that the long established and well organised Kenya based safari firms, which made maximum use of Tanzania's spectacular attractions,

* The name adopted after Tanganyika amalgamated with Zanzibar subsequent to the Zanzibar Revolution, followed by the mutiny of the Tanganyika Army, both of which occurred in January, 1964.

invariably met their clients and outfitted their safaris in Nairobi, thus leaving Tanzania with a pauper's share of the profits. So, late in 1977, with the object of making Arusha and Dar es Salaam, with their respective international airports, the bases for all tourist traffic in Tanzania, Nyerere ordered Tanzania's borders to be closed to all tourists from Kenya. The results were disastrous.

Prior to the border closure, the number of tourists visiting Tanzania was about half of the number recorded as visiting Kenya. After the closure however, the number of visitors to Tanzania slumped to less than one third of the Kenya figure and this discrepancy continued to increase until, in 1985, the Tanzania figure had fallen to as low as 58,000 visitors per year, compared to Kenya's figure of over 413,000. By then the financial difference was even more marked, with Tanzania recording a tourism related foreign exchange value of £8 1/2 million per year, compared with Kenya's dramatic figure of £209 million! In fact, by this time Tanzania was in dire financial straits.

With very little money and a corresponding loss of morale, both Tanzania's Wildlife Department and its National Parks could achieve very little and poaching virtually got out of control. In 1978, an aerial survey of the 20,000 square mile Selous Game Reserve revealed a massive elephant population of 110,000 animals; a similar survey carried out in 1986, indicated that in eight years this figure had been halved to 55,000, a staggering loss from poaching of nearly 7,000 elephant a year. In the same period, the black rhino' population of the Selous fell from an estimated 3,000 to what is believed to be little more than 500 rhino', while in the Serengeti National Park elephants were reduced from around 4,000 to a mere 400 (a 90% loss) and rhino' from 300 animals to a pitiful remnant of six endangered individuals.

The accuracy of some of the Selous aerial counts may be suspect, but very large numbers of elephant and rhino' carcasses have been found in the Game Reserve by foot patrols, indisputable proof that, over a very long period, this vast reservoir of elephants has been subjected to intensive and systematic poaching by determined and well organised commercial ivory poachers. Furthermore, it is important to realise that the above statistics are just examples of the extremely serious commercial poaching trend which has been affecting the whole of Tanzania for a number of years. Another

example is that of the buffalo population in the northern extension of the Serengeti National Park, a population which has been reduced from 25,000 buffalo to a mere 1,500 animals over the same period. Perhaps the saddest loss was the killing, in 1971, of one of the biggest tuskers that has ever been recorded; this old bull elephant, whose enormous tusks were each over nine feet long and over two feet in girth, and weighed 198 lbs and 204 lbs respectively, is believed to have been shot in the Ruaha National Park.

In welcome contrast to all these depressing statistics, it is reported that the wildebeeste population in the Serengeti ecosystem has increased to a staggering total of 1,600,000 animals, a figure which undermines the fact that the species which are the main targets of the poacher are those the trophies of which have considerable commercial value outside Africa. It is well known that, over the last ten years, the supply of tusks for the mainly clandestine ivory trade from Africa to the Far East, has been kept up at a high level, with the poacher in the field making as much as £12 for every pound of ivory that he poaches – a total of £240 for one 20 lb tusk alone – and of course with the fence or middleman receiving considerably more. In fact, it is also known that a well organised illegal trade in ivory is still flourishing under the management of a variety of unscrupulous businessmen assisted, it is believed, by corrupt politicians.

In the early seventies, Kenya was a prominent source of illegal ivory and it was during this period that 80% of the Tsavo National Park's elephants were poached. However, in 1977, when the Kenya Government's efforts to combat this problem finally met with considerable success, many of the ivory poachers moved south to operate in the Selous Game Reserve and the Luangwa Valley in Zambia. It is widely accepted that the main operators in the field are Somalis, working in association with unscrupulous local politicians and corrupt government officials, while most of the illegal ivory and rhino' horn is known to have been exported through Burundi, as it still is.

However, Burundi is not the only outlet for the illegal trade. Container-loads of ivory from Tanzania have also been intercepted in Kenya and in Holland, while on one occasion, when a tanker lorry, on its way from Dar es Salaam to Burundi, crashed near Mikumi 120 miles from Dar es Salaam, spilling its load all

over the road, the load was found to consist of hundreds of pieces of elephant tusks! In many countries, the current laws and regulations governing the export and import of ivory, make this type of brazen and audacious smuggling all too easy. C.I.T.E.S. (the "Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species") is making tremendous efforts to bring all legal ivory trading under effective control, to achieve which it is attempting to get all the countries concerned to set and control really strict quotas of exports and imports of ivory. The Convention is achieving some success, but there still remains an enormous loop-hole through the illegal ivory trade and Tanzania is still in the front rank as far as the latter is concerned. Nevertheless, and despite the country's many other daunting problems, all is not now doom and gloom in Tanzania, for the closing months of 1985, heralded what might fairly – if rather poetically – be described as a new dawn for Tanzania, preceded by a sad sunset reminiscent of a Greek tragedy.

In October, 1985, Julius Nyerere, the idealist and visionary who had created T.A.N.U. (the original "Tanganyika African National Union"), guided his country into independence, and led Tanzania first as Prime Minister and then as President for a quarter of a century, retired from the Presidency and faded quietly into the background. By the time Nyerere vacated the leadership however, the bottom had fallen out of Tanzania's economy, its wildlife-based tourist industry was in tatters, morale in the country was low, and it was clear that on all counts, and despite his personal sincerity and integrity, Nyerere's dreams had ended in nightmares, while his experiment in African Socialism had proved a costly failure.

On 4th November, 1985, Nyerere was succeeded by his former Vice-President, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, a Zanzibari. The new President, a realist and a pragmatist who realised that the African temperament is more inclined to favour capitalism than socialism, wasted no time in tackling Tanzania's crippling problems, but first of all he acted promptly to change the country's image. For a start, quietly and without fuss the name of Tanzania's ruling party was changed from the "Tanzania African National Union" (T.A.N.U.) to "Chama Cha Mapinduzi" (C.C.M.), which being translated means the "Party of the Revolution" – a singularly appropriate choice in view of the new President's Zanzibar background – while the tiller of the ship of

state was swung firmly over so that its bows were pointing well to starboard of its previous course, to head steadily for the glittering shores of capitalism. Although the country's economy is still very weak, the results in two years have been encouraging, particularly in so far as Tanzania's valuable wildlife resources and their long term management is concerned.

Before the year 1985 drew to a close, the Director of Tanzania's National Parks had been replaced, the new incumbent being Daniel Babu who is widely reported as doing a praiseworthy job, as a result of which, with greatly increased morale, the efficiency and integrity of the Parks' staff is said to have improved considerably. Although it is early days yet, this development, following hard on the heels of the re-opening of Tanzania's border to tourists from Kenya,* bodes well for the future of Tanzania's national parks themselves, their spectacular wildlife, and the country's related tourist industry. Late in 1986, the Wildlife Department and the "Tanzania Wildlife Corporation" (T.A.W.I.C.O.)** were the next to attract the attention of the new broom, when the local press, waking up to the terrible poaching situation in Tanzania, blamed both the Wildlife Department and T.A.W.I.C.O. for gross dereliction of duty, corruption and mismanagement. As a result, a government enquiry was held into the affairs of both organisations and, although the findings have been kept secret, a new minister to oversee wildlife matters was appointed from among the top ranks of C.C.M. politicians.

The new Minister, a Mrs Gertrude Mongella, acted swiftly to clean up the mismanagement and tackle the poaching problem. To begin with, because it was believed that a lot of elephant were being killed illegally to support the long established trade in ivory carvings, the local ivory carving industry was closed down abruptly, and for the first time in eight years really vigorous anti-poaching patrols began operating in the Selous Game Reserve with money provided by the Tanzania Treasury – after much table thumping by the new Minister! According to recent reports, the

* The reopening of the border, a bitter pill for Julius Nyerere to swallow, was one of his last despairing bids to halt Tanzania's steady economic decline by attempting to salvage the country's tourist industry.

** Originally named the "Tanganyika Wildlife Development Company", a government owned tourist safari company conceived and started by the author early in 1964.

result was most encouraging in that poaching was almost stopped in the Selous, but this intensive effort used up all the Tanzanian funds in four months, since when great efforts have been made to keep up the campaign and obtain the necessary funding – hopefully with the aid of outside sources – for the poachers are undoubtedly just biding their time to resume their lucrative illegal operations.

The need for the efficient management and effective protection of the Selous Game Reserve is only one of the serious wildlife problems faced by Tanzania, but it has probably become the single biggest. The level of poaching in the Selous Game Reserve in the decade from 1977 onwards, within which period, as I have observed earlier, 55,000 elephants are believed to have been poached, was on the face of it horrendous and certainly very serious. However, it is important to consider this whole matter in its true perspective, for it should be remembered that the Selous, with an overall length from north to south of some 200 miles and an average width of around 100 miles, is a vast area of 20,000 square miles of wild, remote and largely trackless bushland literally swarming with elephants and other game, in all one of the largest wildlife sanctuaries in the world. In my day as Chief Game Warden of Tanzania, when my department was obliged to kill on average upwards of 3,000 elephants every year on crop protection, a large proportion of these animals came out of the Selous Game Reserve which often seemed to be bulging with elephants. As I have mentioned before, the most recent aerial count, undertaken in 1986, recorded a population of 55,000 elephants in the Selous, which gives an average of 2.75 elephants per square mile; taking into account the size, the feeding habits and the amount of food required by these great beasts, by any reckoning that is still a lot of elephants for any stretch of country to maintain.

It is also of interest to note that the multi-use wilderness area project for the Selous Game Reserve, a project involving strictly controlled hunting and game viewing in most of the 20,000 square miles of the Reserve, is still functioning as planned and launched by myself, with the able assistance of Brian Nicholson, way back in 1964. Even in those days, it was clear that any wild areas as large as the Selous could not survive the ever-increasing threat of human encroachment unless, in some way, they could be shown to

have an alternative economic use. On the grounds that it was too remote for the bulk of tourists and too difficult to protect and manage on their limited budget, the National Parks had declined to accept responsibility for the care and protection of this great game reserve; I had therefore had to think up an alternative plan, a scheme in the planning of which I had to bear in mind the oft' forgotten fact that the enormous Selous Game Reserve covers some 6% of the total land area of Tanzania, and that therefore, for the long term security of this great game reserve as demands for land inevitably increased, it was essential to be guided by the wise dictum of that famous ecologist the late Sir Frank Fraser Darling: "Conservation Through Wise Use."

So, early in 1964, after much heated argument and strong opposition from certain other wildlife interests, a government-owned company, the "Tanganyika Wildlife Development Company" (or T.W.D. for short) was formed with its headquarters in Dar es Salaam and myself seconded from the Game Department to act as its first General Manager, my initial brief being to develop and manage the Selous Game Reserve for all aspects of tourist hunting and game viewing. Like a number of the Game Department's more radical and unusual ideas, the launching of this project (financed by a massive bank overdraft!) had some hilarious and bizarre aspects, with a number of nail-biting crises, the full story of which must await another day; but in the end even the harshest critics had to admit that the Chief Game Warden's "mad idea", developed by the indefatigable Brian Nicholson, was at least a qualified success.

Now managed and controlled (in theory at least) by T.A.W.I.C.O., the successor in name to T.W.D. and T.W.S., the Selous Game Reserve – despite the vociferous local press accusations of mismanagement and corruption, in addition to the serious poaching problem – is bringing in a very healthy two million dollars (or about £1,250,000) in foreign exchange each year. To achieve this, the whole of the Selous is divided up into 47 controlled hunting blocks, two of which have been excised in the northern sector for game-viewing tourists and two others in the eastern sector for research, while three of the four permanent hunting camps are located on the banks of the Rufiji River, with the fourth camp at Beho Beho, near the site of Selous' grave in the northern part of the Reserve.

In addition to managing the Selous, T.A.W.I.C.O., which is now based in Arusha, also has the responsibility for the administration of hunting licences throughout Tanzania, as well as for the supervision of certain commercial game cropping schemes in various parts of the country. The importance of T.A.W.I.C.O. to the rational conservation of Tanzania's wildlife resources should not therefore be under-estimated, which highlights the fact that, when it comes to the questions of efficiency and integrity, it is equally important that T.A.W.I.C.O. should be seen, in the eyes of the general public, to be like Caesar's wife – beyond reproach! In view of the variety of temptations inevitably faced by T.A.W.I.C.O.'s staff, to cynics such perfection may appear to be an Utopian dream, but it is still a target to be aimed at and the new Government of Tanzania has shown both its muscle and its determination to put its country's house in order. This latter fact has already attracted the attention of the big international aid organisations such as the British O.D.A. and the American U.S.A.I.D. as well as B.M.Z., N.O.R.A.D., and the E.E.C. all of whom are beginning to take a great interest in conservation programmes in Africa, and who are already circling Tanzania like a flight of expectant fairy godmothers, with their hands deep in their bulging purses, the modern equivalent of the traditional magic wand. According to experienced observers on the spot, the results, even at this early stage, are encouraging, as Tanzania has now embarked on an "Economic Recovery Programme" linked to an Agreement with the International Monetary Fund, one of its implications being that the country is focussing more sharply on the priority of the tourist sector and on the need for conservation of wildlife.

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Before I can conclude my stocktaking, there are two subjects which still remain to be reviewed, one is the current state of wildlife research in East Africa, the other is the present condition of wildlife management training in the same region, both of which are important matters that are vital to the long term interests of the wildlife resources, not merely of Tanzania, or even of East Africa, but of the African continent as a whole. Among the fluctuating political fortunes and even turmoil which have

bedevilled the three countries of East Africa during the last quarter of a century, wildlife research is one activity that has not only remained virtually unscathed, but has actually progressed, sailing stubbornly on like a well-found ship in troubled waters. Even in Uganda, where a comparison with a wave-lashed rock in stormy seas would be more appropriate for its often beleaguered wildlife research unit, the Uganda Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology,* in the war-torn Queen Elizabeth Park, has continued doggedly to pursue its essentially practical scientific work, the applied research whose aims are to find feasible answers to the increasingly complex and difficult problems which continue to bedevil the task of conserving and managing Africa's still incomparable wildlife resources, threatened by a steadily shrinking environment. In search of these elusive answers, many scientists of different nationalities have worked with the Uganda research unit over the years, and in 1986, it proudly celebrated its Silver Jubilee.

In Tanzania, Uganda's wildlife research counterpart was the Serengeti Research Institute, which was established in 1966. Sited at Seronera, in the heart of the Serengeti National Park, its first director was Dr Hugh Lamprey, my Biologist when I was Chief Game Warden of Tanganyika and the man who, four years earlier, I had persuaded to accept the daunting task of running my favourite "brain child", the College of African Wildlife Management, as its first Principal. In Kenya, at this time, the often controversial Tsavo Elephant Research Project was initiated under the very able directorship of Dr Richard Laws, and overall this period was a time of rapidly expanding wildlife research in East Africa, with the production of a great deal of good quality field work in all three countries. This important research work still continues, with the majority of the permanent scientific staff now consisting of highly trained and dedicated Africans; and a number of notable scientific books and papers, on wildlife biology, have been written by scientists working from the three separate East African research institutions. Furthermore, in Tanzania, where the research administration has recently been reorganised and expanded, there is now a "National Serengeti Wildlife

* Originally named the "Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology" which was started in 1961, its first director being Dr Richard Laws, who was succeeded in 1966, by Dr Keith Eltringham; it finally became the Uganda Institute of Ecology.

Research Institute", with headquarters in Arusha under the control of a Director General, and there are a number of subsidiary wildlife research centres in the field, mainly in national parks.

All in all, for wildlife research in East Africa, a field of research which attracts keen interest not only in scientific circles but also among the general public world-wide, the future looks to be full of promise. However, with wildlife management, as with all scientific disciplines, the value of applied research is nullified if there are insufficient trained professional and technical staff to implement the findings and recommendations of the scientists. Hence the need which arose in East Africa, as independence for the three countries rapidly approached, for properly established facilities to train Africans as game wardens and rangers, an urgent need which led me, in 1961 to 1963, to conceive, plan and finally to launch the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka, on the slopes of Kilimanjaro. As I have described in Chapter 16, because of a quirk of fate the whole process of planning, funding and then physically creating this training college, which was a revolutionary idea in 1961, became a race against time, a race in which, until the closing stages, I was a lone runner.

When it was finally launched in 1963, and for a long time afterwards, the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka was not only the first but also the only establishment of its kind in the world; its success as a centre for practical training, first under the able leadership of Dr Hugh Lamprey and then under Tony Mence, my former Deputy who succeeded Hugh as Principal, attracted a host of international aid organisations, all keen to get in on the act. For me however, after the College was well under way, my reward was the one so often experienced by the pioneer. Deliberately or by accident, I found myself eased into the sidelines by the powers that be and I soon discovered that, although my personal interest in Mweka remained as enthusiastic as ever, I no longer had any official or formal connections with the College, even in an honorary capacity; as the conceiving and creating of the College of African Wildlife Management was one of the highlights of my career as a game warden in Africa, and arguably the most important thing I have personally achieved in a life which has been rich in variety, this was a bitter disappointment to me.

Years later, I was shown what is purported to be an "official history" of the College at Mweka, a story in which the events leading up to the creation of the College are gilded and glossed over, leaving the reader with the impression that the College of African Wildlife Management came into being in a vague form of immaculate conception, inspired by several fairy godmothers in the shape of certain international aid organisations. Perhaps memories are short or, since truth is said to be often stranger than fiction, perhaps the true story of how the College came to be created, and of my own leading role in its conception and creation, are a little too colourful and bizarre to be considered respectable!

However, and despite my personal disappointment, I have retained a very keen interest in the College at Mweka. Sadly, I have been unable to re-visit the College since I flew back there, to attend the very first graduation ceremony, in June, 1965, on my way to a wildlife advisory assignment in Bechuanaland;* but from all accounts, over the last 25 years graduates from Mweka have played a very important role, often a key role, in the management of the wildlife resources of a great many African countries. In fact, there is hardly a single country in English speaking Africa which has not had students trained at the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka, and the College has frequently been held up as a shining example of one of the real success stories of post-colonial Africa. All this has given me immense pleasure and personal satisfaction.

From time to time, I have received personal reports on the progress of the College from Hugh Lamprey, Tony Mence, Keith Eltringham and others. As recently as April, 1987, Hugh Lamprey wrote to me and said "I visit the College from time to time as a member of the Governing Board. The present Principal is Bakari Mbano, and the Deputy Principal is John Boshe; they are both very able men who are assisted by eleven Instructors, all of whom are Tanzanians. There is also one expatriate biologist, an American. I meet ex-Mweka students in all the countries I go to in Africa, many in top positions in their parks and wildlife departments. The College has a tremendous reputation and is still doing a very good job. On my last visit to Mweka, there were students from more than a dozen countries attending the two and three year certificate and diploma courses, while in the

* Now Botswana

post-graduate diploma course there was one Nigerian, one Ethiopian, one American – and eight Cubans!"

Dr Keith Eltringham, who was commissioned by the World Wildlife Fund, in agreement with the College authorities, to visit Mweka in April, 1986, on a consultancy to review the syllabus and the training programme of the College of African Wildlife Management as an independent and unbiased observer, recently gave me his views on Mweka. He told me that he had stayed at the College and that he had therefore obtained a good insight into its affairs, describing it to me as "a lively place", remarking that he had noticed that the students included one from Japan and one from Hong Kong! He spoke highly of the teaching standards and the only real criticism he voiced to me was that, in his opinion, the teaching had become rather too academic and that he felt that more field training was needed. This comment interested me greatly because, way back in 1963, when I was discussing the very first training syllabus with Hugh Lamprey, Hugh and I had been in full agreement that the training supplied by Mweka had to be mainly in the field, with a firm backing from the classroom and the lecture hall!

In 1988, the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka is due to celebrate its Silver Jubilee, but in the 23 years up to 1986, a total of 1,552 students from 31 countries spanning four continents attended courses at the College, most of them graduating to become holders of key wildlife posts in their countries of origin. Of these countries, 19 have been in Africa, the remaining 12 being Australia, Columbia, Cuba, Denmark, Hong Kong, Japan, Nepal, Panama, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. This is an impressive record and although Mweka still flourishes, it is beginning to suffer from financial problems, like so many institutions in Africa.

The 19 African countries concerned are Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Gambia, Ghana, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cameroon and Mozambique.

In the case of Mweka, its financial problems have been exacerbated by what appears to have become a rival training institution on Lake Naivasha in Kenya. Originally started as a school to train staff for the tourist industry, personnel such as tour operators, drivers, guides and rangers, the Kenya project has

recently been expanded to provide courses for game wardens. With its cheaper (subsidised) fees and easier access to supplies and equipment, the Kenya school is beginning to attract some of the students who hitherto would have gone to the College at Mweka. To counter this challenge, Mweka has decided to try to diversify its own activities; and in view of its past impressive record as a training institution which filled a very important gap, just in time, and has continued to fill this gap successfully for a quarter of a century, there are few who will not wish this College well for the future.

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The purposes of all stock-taking is to establish facts, and as I have lifted the covers to reveal what has happened to the wildlife scene in East Africa over the last 25 years, one major factor has become increasingly apparent – that in one way and another, from ivory poaching to crop protection, the African elephant has continued to dominate the overall scene, straddling the stage like some mammalian colossus, as these great beasts have always done since time immemorial. Certainly, if it was not for the fact that there are many thousands of elephants in East and Central Africa even to this day, still raiding shambas and still being hunted and poached for their ivory, *The Shamba Raiders* would never have been written, while the greater part of my own life would inevitably have taken a very different course.

Forty years have now passed since, in the dense forests of Kenya's Coast Province, I first came face to face with an African bull elephant, and over this troubled period the world, and the African scene in particular, has changed dramatically. For the elephant this change has not been for the better. Recognised experts, such as Drs Keith Eltringham, Hugh Lamprey, Richard Laws and Iain Douglas-Hamilton, are in general agreement that over the last 15 years or so the elephant population in Africa has been reduced by two-thirds, from a dominant population estimated at anything up to one and half million, down to often beleaguered remnants totalling no more than five hundred thousand.

Dr Richard Laws, the first Director of the Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology in Uganda, and later the leader of the research project investigating the problem of the apparent over-population of elephants in the Tsavo National Park in Kenya, has summed up

the present elephant situation in a few well-chosen words: "In Africa, the distribution of man and elephant populations has changed from one characterised by human islands in a sea of elephants, to increasingly small islands of elephants in a sea of people." Without the elephant the African wildlife scene would seem empty indeed, a landscape strangely devoid of character, but as my stocktaking has revealed, the threat to these great beasts comes not from the legitimate hunter, but from the avaricious commercial ivory poacher, together with the demands of an exploding human population hungry for more land.

Happily for me, in the days when I was a game warden in Uganda and Tanzania, and later in Botswana, Rwanda and Malawi, the elephant situation then was very different from what it is to-day. At that time the problem was not that there were too few elephants, but too many; large herds of these great animals often filled the landscape, sometimes stretching to the horizon, and African folk-lore was full of tales of legendary elephants, ancient bulls with tusks so long that they swept right down to the ground, leaving tell-tale grooves in the soil when these great beasts were weary and their massive heads drooped. Some of these tales were true and in 25 years in Africa, both as a game warden and as a hunter, I had the good fortune to meet up with several of these mighty tuskers, secretive beasts often accompanied by one or more mature young bulls as sentries and bodyguards.

A few of these mighty but ancient tuskers were loners, and recently, when the ivory poaching situation in East Africa became so bad, the memory of one of these great beasts inspired me to write some evocative verses, a reaction which I attribute to that strange mixture of respect and affection which the true hunter has for his quarry, not forgetting that so many of the old time game wardens began their careers as elephant hunters. I entitled the verses *An African Night*, and now, as then, I hope that they will remind all lovers of the African wilds of the ugly menace of the commercial poacher. For me the verses are a small token of my deep respect and appreciation of the animal to which I owe so much – the African elephant.



The Ivory room, Dar es Salaam.

The author at his home in Herefordshire, 1987.

