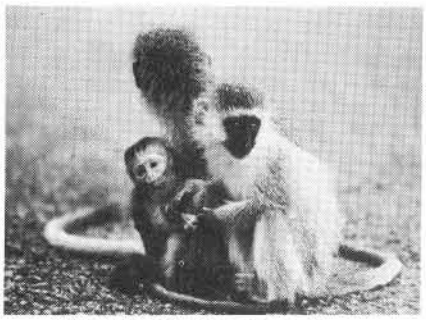


A HERD of tourists approach . . . .



in Nakuru National Park . . .



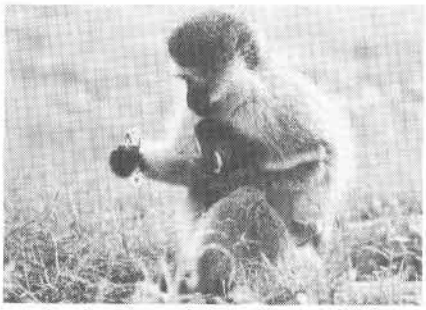
Not exactly exciting . . .



in themselves . . .



But tolerable on inspection . . . .



for the economic benefits they bring.

FROM Rev. Miceal Noone, the Catholic Church, Box 829, Nakuru.

WE DON'T NEED WILDLIFE IN KENYA

Sir — John Eame's article on *Conservation and Politics*, in the previous issue, was more honest than most such general appraisals of the conservation situation.

He points out, basically, that Tanzania preserves its National Parks because of high principles, in spite of the fact that they are a heavy national liability. In other words, the people of Tanzania are suffering in their own stomachs, so that foreigners who have exterminated the game in their own countries can have the enjoyment of seeing the remainder which is being kept alive here.

He points out, honestly, that the overriding justification for wildlife conservation in Kenya is tourism, and that burgeoning tourism is bringing serious social and environmental problems with it. Opposed to this is a certain financial gain to Kenya.

Some time ago I wrote to a daily newspaper, requesting those interested in wildlife to give a clear reason why conservation of that wildlife should have any kind of priority in a developing country. I particularly discounted the tourism argument, since tourism brings with it unacceptable social and environmental debits which cannot be compensated for by financial gain.

Nobody wrote in reply. Why? Was it because what I wrote was puerile rubbish? Was it because most wildlife conservationists here are only dimly aware that they are operating in a developing country? Or is it because there really is *no reason* for according wildlife conservation any kind of priority in a nation struggling to make ends meet? Could someone put forward a clear reason if there is one.

A. J. TROUGHEAR,
Box 14853,
NAIROBI.

•There is no "clear reason;" or at least no unassailable argument for wildlife conservation in East Africa. It is no more relevant in the local human context than, say, the imminent collapse of the Acropolis or the vanishing toes of the Pieta.

Nobody replies to the man because there's nothing to be said against his classic justification of destruction for reasons of "economics," living space and the further advance of the master species.

As he says, related to any profit and loss account, the game ought to be finally exterminated and consigned to foreign, romantic history.

We argue this of course, most effectively by fiddling the tourism books (leaving out the debits in social costs) and making it appear worthwhile for the governments of Tanzania and Kenya to carry their parks and reserves for a while longer.

But this is strategy — nothing to do with the real but obscure reason why we bother which is in the area of unquantifiable philosophy. In Sir Kenneth Clark's concepts of "Civilisation;" or, strictly on the subject, in Sir Frank Fraser Darling's Rieth Lectures on "Wilderness and Plenty."

We try to sell these ideas, but it's not easy to convince politicians of the value of wildlife and wilderness as a distinction in East Africa, something that sets the area apart in the world. With one notable exception, which might interest our Fabian correspondent...

Aboud Jumbe, Vice-President of Tanzania, is convinced and a few months ago wrote in this magazine the same substance and in something of the same prose style as Churchill, of all unlikely soulmates:—

"The actions of men and nations," they said, *"may also be dictated, not by methodical calculations of profit and loss, but by moral sentiment... and by that gleaming flash of resolve which springs from the spiritual foundations of life itself."*

—J. E. (Ed.)

SCIENTISTS TRACK CRATER'S MISSING RHINO

SIR — In the recent past there has been an outcry from the local Maasai and other residents in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority about the ominous situation of poaching of rhinos in the area.

This outcry is punctuated by repeated allegations from tourists that some prominent rhino individuals that have for decades been seen to utilise the Crater are no longer seen. These allegations prompted the local scientific community and the management to urgently investigate the status of rhinos in the Ngorongoro Crater.

From the total ground counts and previous air censuses of rhinos carried out in the Crater itself and the surrounding areas, initial results clearly showed that the mean density of rhinos steadily declined by 68.9 per cent between 1966 and 1978. The major factor responsible for this notable decline was mortality due to poaching.

In the course of this investigation alone, six rhinos at the Crater floor were found speared to death and their horns removed. The Crater floor is particularly vulnerable to poaching since it is out of bounds between 6.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. and any patrol vehicle coming down from the Conservation headquarters at the rim of the Crater is easily spotted by prospective poachers down below. Foot patrol is advocated during these hours.

All available means were used by the various poachers to kill these animals. Surprisingly enough even the traditional

continued overleaf.

RHINO

From Page 23

wildlife conservationists — the resident Maasai — are now finding it increasingly difficult to resist the temptation of engaging in this apparently lucrative business.

The change in their outlook is manifest in their changing life-styles. Whereas previously the Maasai were content with earning their income, food and social security solely from their livestock, it is now increasingly apparent that this source does not adequately meet their increased social demands such as exotic foods, drinks, garments, vehicles, medicines, cosmetics, cigarettes and other related amenities. This change in life-styles may have been as a result of easier mobility of the Maasai and their consequent contact with Western culture.

Furthermore, these contacts with the non-Maasai tourists have facilitated the creation of a readily available market for poached rhino horns and other wildlife trophies. The Maasai are therefore caught up between the expensive luxuries brought by western culture to their doorsteps and their innate desire to conserve wildlife.

We recommend that a vigorous re-education campaign be wholeheartedly undertaken at the grassroots — the Maasai in their villages. This may be achieved by lectures, seminars, film shows and other audio-visual aids. The resident Maasai must be actively involved by the management at all stages of planning and development in the area.

Competitive incentives in the form of financial rewards and other tokens should be made available to individuals and villages that evidently conserve the environment in general and the rhino in particular. Tangible alternative sources of income for the resident Maasai must be found so that in the event of drought or any other calamity, income from livestock can be adequately supplemented.

The sentences now being meted out to convicted poachers are not deterrent enough. We suggest that all poachers apprehended in a particular area should, if possible, be convicted in the same area so that the villagers may have the opportunity of hearing and participating in the court proceedings.

The recent Government directive to ban all farming activities, previously undertaken solely by non-Maasai tribes in the Ngorongoro, and further to re-settle them outside the Conservation area is to be applauded. Perhaps similar action should be taken against the non-Maasai "potential poachers" still residing in the Conservation area and ostensibly engaged in animal husbandry.

We urgently appeal to international conservation organisations to bring pressure to bear on overseas markets for rhino horns. These international organisations should further support morally and materially the research and management endeavours now being directed at rhino conservation in the Ngorongoro and similar areas.

We remain with the hope that if all these and other remedial measures are timely and judiciously instituted, the present rhino situation in the Ngorongoro may revert to normal since the grassroot conservationists — the resident Maasai — know very well that, after all, the survival of the Ngorongoro rhino is their survival too. They need our help NOW!

— C.L. Mollel, Serengeti Research Institute, P.O. SERONERA, via Arusha, Tanzania.

— S. Makacha, Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority,, P.O. Box 1, NGORONGORO CRATER, Tanzania.

MY PRIVATE PART, SIR, IS NOT OBSOLETE

SIR: — I have read, in turn and with interest, the letter by a "Maasai Africana Reader" which was a response to my article on cliterodectomy in the previous issue.

For this reader and perhaps others I would like to clarify one point. When I used the word "pagan" I did NOT mean "an ignorant unbeliever" which is how he defines the word. The word "pagan" merely refers to anyone not of the Christian religion or sometimes more broadly the Christian-Judaic-Islamic religions. It refers with equal impartiality to the highly complex pantheons of the ancient Greeks and Romans and to the monotheistic religion of the modern Maasai.

Unfortunately, "pagan" seems to be a word like "native", a perfectly useful, neutral descriptive word which has for some people taken on derogatory and negative overtones. Next time I use the word I will remember to give its correct definition in brackets. Anyway, I assure the "Maasai Africana Reader" that I meant no disrespect whatsoever for the religious beliefs of the Maasai.

I do, however, find it hard to respect the same reader's statement that "It is generally held that the clitoris itself is pretty much 'an obsolete thing but harmless and not worth the bother to remove it'."

I would like to know who is quoted in that statement. Certainly not the Maasai, because they do consider it worth the bother to remove it! Certainly not the European, because they consider it outrageous to remove it.

As the possesor of a clitoris I would like to state categorically that I do NOT hold it as obsolete. I suggest that the reader indulges in the pleasant perusal of a few of the recent American books on female sexuality to see how the clitoris is "generally held" in at least that part of the the non-cliterodectomised world.

—Cynthia Salvadori Box 40526, Nairobi.

STOP THE LAST CURIO PEDDLERS

SIR — I have recently returned from a safari holiday to Kenya and was thoroughly delighted to have witnessed the variety of wild game and scenery of that country. Throughout the tour we were often told that "back in the old days," there had been more game (in number and variety) to see; but I have an uneasy feeling that what I saw may someday be recalled as the "good old days."

While in transit between several National Parks, I witnessed people at the Namanga and Thompson's Falls curio shops openly offering for sale lions teeth (we were told that they were camel teeth), dik-dik horns and elephant hair bracelets (we were told that it was giraffe hair or plastic).

The illegal sale of poached hide, hair or horns of protected species is a distressing problem in itself, but to the unsuspecting or gullible tourist, it is more distressing if these items are confisticated at a point of arrival. This is not good advertisement for a country heavily dependent on tourist dollars.

Tourists assume that wherever their tours take them, that they are patronising shops that are "safe". (Why would a tour agency deliberately tempt group with "hot" items? — Not good for repeat business.) I realise that this is an amoebic problem and offer the following Utopian suggestions:

1. Ask rest, tea and lunch-stop owners to clean up their shops, or others on or near their property. If they don't inform tour operators to boycott these shops and offer their clients alternatives that do not provide these temptations.
2. Distribute pamphlets at airports, hotels and lodges to better inform the tourist as to what products are prohibited and ways to distinguish a substitute product (elephant hair *vs* giraffe hair *vs* plastic)
3. Have better communication with tour leaders so that if they spot a transgression of the wildlife conservation regulations they have a prescribed procedure to follow.

You are a watchdog to an extremely valuable resource that too few other countries have. I hope that you continue to be as persistant as a tsetse fly to remind the Kenyan Government of their responsibilities so that the protected species laws are strongly and diligently enforced.

Linda Despres. P. O. Box 377, Woods Hole, Mass. USA

FACTS AND FURY

SIR "When the elephants fight the grass gets trampled". And so does the cause of wildlife conservation.

Would it be possible for you and the other wildlife magazine to explain simply and straightforwardly the basic differences of viewpoint which separate the "end of the game-ers" from the "new *ecologists*".

When one is witnessing an in-family *argument, it is helpful to know the facts behind the fury.*

—Roy Shaffer, M.D., Box 14227, Nairobi.

•*As defined and explained by Peter Beard in the last issue of "Africana"....*

1. The "end of the game-ers" are independent observers of the local wildlife scene who tell the truth as they see it.

2. The "new ecologists" are observers who tell the truth as the East African authorities see it.

There is often an extreme conflict of facts and opinion put forward by the two groups, notably on elephant mortality in Tsavo.

3. The fury is related more to personalities than to issues. The conservation family in Kenya is a fractious lot; not one of them likes anyone else.

In fact, there is more drama in local conservation than there is in theatre — say "Titus Andronicus" — in terms of character assassination, violent jostling for position and general bloodletting.

— Editor.