

# The Fauna Preservation Society

OCTOBER, 1962

---

## EDITORIAL NOTES

“OPERATION ORYX” (see *Oryx*, VI, 4, page 209).—The expedition set out from Mukalla on 23rd April, 1962, and remained in the field for a month. Transport and signals were assured by a detachment of the Hadhrami Bedouin Legion under Lt.-Col. J. W. G. Gray; without their help navigation in the desert would have been impossible. The expedition scoured an area of some 6,000 square miles in the north of the Eastern Aden Protectorate and found tracks of eleven oryx. Three males and one female were caught, but unfortunately one of the males died: it was found to have a .303 bullet embedded in the thigh.

The other three, “Pat,” “Edith” and “Tomatum,”\* were taken by air to Nairobi on 25th May. Temporary quarters had to be rigged up for them as foot and mouth disease had broken out at Isiolo. The weather was wet and cold. Heating was difficult since infra-red lamps could not be obtained over the week-end. The team solved this problem by hanging electric ovens round the walls and worked throughout a night of pouring rain to keep the oryx alive.

On 17th July the oryx were moved by road to Isiolo and settled into their new stalls without difficulty. One European and four Africans are employed to look after them, two acting as sentries by night and by day. The question of their destination is still being considered.

A press conference on the expedition was held at the Linnean Society in London on 26th June, where the following telegram was received from H.R.H. Prince Philip:

Buckingham Palace.

“Ian Grimwood, Fauna Preservation Society,  
c/o Linnean Society, Burlington House, W. 1.

Very glad to hear of your remarkable success in capturing three Arabian Oryx so that they may breed in captivity and thereby save the species from extinction. The co-operation of the Fauna Preservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund in this Noah’s Ark operation is a splendid precedent for future efforts to save the world’s endangered species.—Philip.”

The next issue of *Oryx* will describe the expedition in full.

GREAT BRITAIN—*Brownsea Island*.—To the credit of the many bodies concerned, including the Treasury, which has accepted it in part-payment of death duties, Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour will be transferred to the National Trust and will remain a wild life sanctuary.

\* Named after Lt.-Col. Gray, his wife, and the chief of the Arab guides.

*Cave Research.*—Following the purchase of Higher Kiln Quarry, Buckfastleigh, Devonshire, by the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, the Pengelly Cave Research Centre has been founded by the Devon Naturalists Trust and the Devon Spelaeological Society. Its headquarters are at the quarry.

The caves are of great geological and zoological interest. Joint Mitnor Cave is the richest interglacial bone-cave in Britain. Remains of hippopotamus, straight-tusked elephant, slender-nosed rhinoceros, giant deer, bison, cave lion, cave bear, and other interesting animals have been found there.

*The Animals (Cruel Poisons) Bill*, first introduced into Parliament in November, 1961, by the Earl of Cranbrook, passed its final stages at 3.40 p.m. on 1st June, 1962, just 20 minutes before the expiry of the time allocated to back-benchers' Bills for the current session. It empowers the Home Secretary to prohibit or restrict the use of poisons which cause suffering, when more humane alternatives exist—for example, red squill, 1080 and phosphorus, when Warfarin could be used.

The Bill which was promoted jointly by the Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare and the RSPCA means that after the Home Secretary has decided what poisons to prohibit, small wild mammals will not be poisoned indiscriminately.

*The University of London* awards yearly a Certificate of Proficiency in Natural History. This certificate is available to all persons interested in the study of living things in their natural habitats. The work involves a directed course of private reading at home, attendance at a practical course of four weeks' duration in the spring and summer, an approved plan of field-work suited to the student's locality to be written up in the form of an essay, and examinations.

Further details and an application form may be obtained from the Secretary, Natural History Certificate Course, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of London, Senate House, London, W.C. 1.

**TANGANYIKA.**—The African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, formed by Judge Russell E. Train, of Washington, D.C., has announced a grant of \$25,000 to start a field school in wildlife management at Moshi, Tanganyika, not far from the Serengeti National Park. The Tanganyika Government, with the noteworthy leadership of Mr. T. S. Tewa, Minister of Lands, Forests, and Wildlife, has allocated land and buildings.

The school is intended to train Africans to take responsible positions in game and national park departments, so that Africanization of these services will result in continued and increased conservation of Africa's wild life. The opening is planned for January, 1963, with thirty students from Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda, but it is intended that eventually 100 students from many parts of Africa will attend a course of eighteen months to two years.

We welcome the bulletin now being issued by the Conservator of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Mr. H. A. Fosbrooke. Among other items we read (June and August, 1962):

“ Exceptional weather conditions in the Ngorongoro Crater permitted the biting fly, *Stomoxys*, always present in small numbers, to breed up to epidemic proportions. Though not a carrier of disease, the flies had serious effects on the game. Lions took refuge from the pest either in hyaena holes or up trees and their hunting habits were so affected that several died, whilst others turned cattle raiders; two of these were speared and two shot. Rhino likewise were affected by the fly and one was found dead with its body showing many open sores. Another rhino, incurably ill, had to be shot by Conservation staff.

A concentration of rhino has frequently been seen east of Lerai, between Hippo Pool and the Salt Lake, ten or more being visible within one mile radius. No spearing of rhino has occurred since September.

Apart from the above, wildlife has not seriously disturbed pastoral activities, any more than pastoral activities have disturbed wildlife. The number of bomas and of cattle in the Crater have remained constant.

A small dairy herd is being established in the crater as a co-operative effort by Conservation and the local Masai. The idea is to demonstrate the possibilities of better cattle management in the areas of high potential, and at the same time provide a milk supply for visitors and resident staff.

Relationships with the Masai have taken a turn for the better. The indigenous ‘ spokesman ’, i.e. the Chief or Headman, with jurisdiction covering the whole area, has become an ardent conservationist.”

An important development, though one which at first sight may shock visitors to Ngorongoro, is a plantation of eucalyptus trees, designed to produce firewood for staff and visitors. The ninety-two families in the area alone consume more than a lorry-load a day and, as the Conservator says, it is paradoxical to preach conservation to the Masai and, in the course of setting up a Conservation Unit, denude their country of trees. The eucalyptus will be screened by more ornamental species.

*Freedom from Hunger Campaign.*—The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization have launched a research project in the Serengeti area. The purpose is both to help in saving the wild life of Africa and to find out how the wild game may be used to help feed the African people.

Two scientists are at work, Dr. Jacques Verschuren (frontispiece), straight from the Albert National Park in the Congo, and Mr. R. N. Watson, an English zoologist who recently led an expedition into British Guiana. They seek to know the life and habits of the Serengeti herds; their numbers and annual increase and the capacity of the area to carry wild animals.

There is no question of sacrificing animals indiscriminately for the FAO statement on the project states clearly, “ The game and the national parks of East Africa can only grow as an important factor in the economy of that region if the herds are maintained in large numbers. For this, the pastures must be preserved and the migration routes of the herds of

wild game protected. To advise the Tanganyika Government on these questions will be the first task of the FAO experts now in the field."

[NOTE.—Readers may wish to consult *Report on an Ecological Survey of the Serengeti National Park*, by Professor W. H. Pearsall. Published by the Fauna Preservation Society. 5s. August, 1957.]

U.S.A.—We read in the *National Parks Magazine* for February, 1962, of the establishment of Buck Island Reef National Monument, a tiny uninhabited islet in the United States Virgin Islands which is surrounded by a coral barrier reef and shallow waters rich in tropical fish and plant life. The island, which also houses a rookery of the man-of-war or frigate bird, is a mile long and has a maximum width of a third of a mile. It lies  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles off the north-east coast of St. Croix Island and is clothed with tropical vegetation, including several species of cactuses. Protection of Buck Island will also contribute to perpetuation of the green turtle, which is threatened by over-exploitation.

The June, 1962, number of the same magazine tells of the formation of two new national wildlife refuges. They are the Anahuac Refuge of 9,907 acres in Texas, primarily for protection of the Canvasback duck (Pochard) and several species of geese, and the Delavan Refuge of 5,664 acres in California, established in the heart of the wintering habitat for migrating waterfowl using the Pacific flyway.

CANADA.—The *National Parks Magazine* (May, 1962) also reported the establishment of six new sanctuaries in the Canadian Arctic for protection of migratory birds and their habitat from the anticipated effects of increased mineral exploration in the Far North.

The new refuges and their areas in square miles are: Kendall Island, in the MacKenzie River Delta (234); Anderson River, near the mouth of the Anderson River (418); Cape Parry, along the Amundsen Gulf coast of Cape Parry (1); Queen Maude Gulf (24,240); Banks Island, section 1, south-west parts of Banks Island between coast and Bernard River (7,922); Banks Island, section 2, Thomsen River and Castel Bay (55).

The hunting of big game animals by Indians and Eskimos in the reservations will not be affected, but sledge dogs will not be allowed to run at large in the areas while migratory birds are present.

APES.—Both the Orang-Utan and the Mountain Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*) are on the Survival Service Commission's list of animals in danger of extermination. Will the Lowland Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*) and the chimpanzee be next?

In June, Dr. James Jenkins, Associate Professor of Wildlife Management at the University of Georgia, visiting us on his way back to America from West Africa, reported a very noticeable shrinkage in the gorilla's range in Cameroun during the last six years—local inhabitants who eat the gorillas now have firearms.

A correspondent in Sierra Leone fears that if the export of baby chimpanzees continues at the present rate—100 to 200 a year—the population may decline to the point of extermination. As the only practical means of capturing baby chimpanzees is to shoot the mother, and as many

of the captives die of malnutrition before being shipped abroad, our correspondent estimates that 300 to 400 chimpanzees are yearly sacrificed for export from Sierra Leone alone.

The chimpanzee is still not uncommon in certain parts of Sierra Leone but seems to be becoming less so. Its range in West and Central Africa is a very large one, including most of the tropical rain forest, but—to quote Glover M. Allen\*—“A similar process (burning and cutting back the forests) is slowly going on both within the rain forest and at its edges, with slow but gradual clearing of trees for agriculture, and subsequent abandonment. Continued long enough, this results in final destruction of the high forest, first in spots, then in local areas, and finally over large tracts, all of which will eventually much curtail the available living areas for chimpanzees.”

On the other hand, T. S. Jones and A. J. E. Cave say in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*, Vol. 135, 1960, that the chimpanzee seems able to adapt itself to secondary forest and to subsist very largely upon a variety of farm crops. These authorities add that the availability of a wider range and more plentiful supply of softer, more easily masticated food most probably tends towards an extension of the average chimpanzee life span.

**THE COLOBUS MONKEY.**—For the past year or more the Kenya Government have been concerned by the large number of skins of the rare Colobus Monkey entering Kenya from Ethiopia—over 26,000 skins in 1960. Inquiries were made and the Ethiopian Minister of Agriculture has informed the Chief Game Warden of Kenya that his Government are appalled by the numbers which have been disclosed to him, especially because the skins of legally killed monkeys would have been accompanied by an official certificate of lawful possession and therefore these monkeys must have been killed illegally.

The Government of Ethiopia is taking action to prevent this illegal killing and has asked for co-operation from Kenya. This has enabled the Kenya Government to prohibit the import of all Colobus skins not accompanied by the required certificate.

**WHITE RHINOCEROS.**—We are happy to report that eight white (or square-lipped) rhinoceroses have been successfully transported from Umfolozi reserve, Natal, where there was a surplus, to Southern Rhodesia, once a home of this rhinoceros.

One male and three females were moved to Matopos national park, two males and two females to Kyle game reserve outside Fort Victoria. There was a severe snowstorm at Umfolozi on the day of their departure but the animals stood very well the 1,000 mile journey in 5-ton trucks.

The Society gave £250 towards this project.

**GREAT INDIAN RHINOCEROS.**—R. G. M. Willan, lately Chief Conservator of Forests in Nyasaland, now in the same position in Nepal, reports that

\* *Extinct and Vanishing Mammals of the Old World*, by Francis Harper, 1945. Special Publication No. 12, American Committee for International Wild Life Protection, New York 60, N.Y.

the present estimate of rhino in the Rapti and Chitawan areas is about 160. A number of young rhinos have been seen recently.

Early in March a big gang of poachers was broken up by Major Thapa, Rhino Protection Officer, and his rhino guards who have been issued with modern rifles. A more serious threat to the species is extensive immigration and settlement in the Rapti Valley which is restricting the former rhino habitat.

**ANIMAL-BOOK PRIZE.**—Our author members may like to know that E. P. Dutton and Co., 201 Park Avenue South, New York 3, N.Y., inspired by the favourable public reception of Gavin Maxwell's *Ring of Bright Water*, are offering \$7,500 annually for a book of adult fiction or non-fiction relating to animals.