

Nevertheless, there still are areas in Somalia with a rich and diverse fauna, as well as the rarities such as the wild ass, which could be built up and become a valuable asset. The authors of this report have listed and mapped thirteen such areas, and recommend that they be made either nature reserves or controlled areas. One, the Lower Juba-Lower Shebeli area in the south, they suggest could become one of the finest national parks in Africa and a considerable tourist attraction.

Clearly there is a great opportunity in Somalia; the problem is of course economic. The task is beyond the powers of the Somali Government, and it is urgent that the government should seek international help and funds to start the necessary measures. The authors of this report have provided an admirable blueprint on which to begin work.

News from the Congo

IN the course of two visits to the Congo in February/March and May/June this year, Dr. Kai Curry-Lindahl visited both the Upemba National Park in Katanga and the Albert National Park twice. His visits were made at the invitation of the Congolese Government, and in the company of His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture, M. Alphonse Zamundu, on behalf of IUCN and aided by an FPS grant.

From the southern sector of the Upemba park he reports a sorry tale of destruction, dating back to 1960. Between 1960 and 1962 UN troops invaded this sector and killed large numbers of animals, particularly zebras and antelopes, with automatic weapons. Their example was followed by Katangan gendarmes, and later still by the Congolese National Army; commercial operators also killed large numbers of animals, often more than their lorries could carry away, and carcasses were left to rot. Inevitably local poaching increased, and even the park guards became involved. The result is that, whereas in 1960 this part of the Upemba park swarmed with wildlife, today the numbers of animals are seriously reduced, and those that are left are exceedingly shy, fleeing at the sound of a vehicle. One consolation is that this part of the park is still territorially intact, with no villages and no pressure to start settlements.

In the northern sector of the park the situation is reversed: despite the presence of at least eight villages, Dr. Curry-Lindahl saw plenty of animals which were not in the least shy, with numerous large herds of zebra, hartebeest, roan and baboons; oribi and reedbuck were common, and vervet monkeys, mongooses, warthogs, waterbuck, puku, bushbuck and eland were seen. But hippo were notably absent; buffalo, duiker, klip-springer and sable were rarities.

This northern sector of the park, however, has suffered seriously in equipment. Invading Baluba warriors had plundered the main station at Lusinga, burned the rangers' quarters in the park interior, and destroyed a road bridge and the vital ferry on the Lufira River, thus breaking the road link between the northern and southern sectors of the park. The Baluba were still occupying about a third of this sector, and the lack of vehicles made it exceedingly difficult for the rangers to keep control.

Well-armed poachers find it easy to avoid rangers patrolling on foot.

Despite the vicissitudes of the last few years, however, the Upemba is still a very valuable national park from all points of view – scientific, aesthetic, touristic and economic, and the wide variety of animals, properly exploited outside the park, could become a valuable source of meat. Curry-Lindahl's recommendations to the Congolese Government include measures concerning the Baluba settlement, the construction of tourist facilities, the appointment of a scientist on a permanent basis to study the urgent problems, and the reintroduction of black rhinos.

A rich area for wildlife, particularly ungulates, in south-east Katanga is the Kundelungu Nature Reserve. On this high plateau 250 km. by 30 km., with gallery forests, savanna grasslands and woodlands and many river valleys, there are roan, sable, hartebeest, reedbuck, duiker, oribi, bushbuck, eland, zebra, bushpig, warthog, elephant, lion, leopard and cheetah (rare elsewhere in the Congo), and a rich bird and reptile life. But there are several threats to this valuable area. Following discussions with the provincial authorities Curry-Lindahl's chief recommendation was that the southern half of the reserve be declared a national park.

In Katanga as a whole Curry-Lindahl strongly recommended that enormous areas of savanna and woodland, which once supported a numerous, rich and diversified fauna and are all seriously depleted thanks largely to the flood of weapons, should be restocked with wild herbivores, and that these should be utilised as a natural resource for food. In his recommendations to the government he also advised protection measures for crocodiles which had been reduced to a precarious situation due to over-hunting. On his return visit to the Congo in May he found that the government had acted on this advice and all three species were protected.

In the Albert National Park, which he visited in May and again in June, he found that the situation in the southern and central sectors was as good as ever, but that the northern sector was again a zone of military operations, the soldiers having moved in as a result of rebel activities. Nevertheless, he found no signs of poaching, and the animals at Ishango by Lake Edward and along the upper Semliki River, including large numbers of hippo, elephant, Uganda kob and waterbuck, were unafraid.

The Mountain Gorilla's Sanctuary

A MEETING of representatives of the three governments concerned in the protection and management of the mountain gorilla's territory on the slopes of the Virunga volcanoes – Congo, Rwanda and Uganda – was urged at the IUCN Lucerne conference last summer, and arranged in Goma last May. Unfortunately the Uganda representatives did not take part, but Congo and Rwanda agreed a number of points: regular consultations, co-ordinating patrols on their common frontiers, agreement on the right of guards to pursue poachers across the frontier and outside park boundaries, and the creation of a permanent joint Commission for the three national parks to ensure close collaboration. The IUCN representative at the meeting, Dr. Kai Curry-Lindahl, urged that the Rwanda government should evacuate all people and cattle in their part of the area and prevent burning, allowing the vegetation to recover naturally. It is hoped that the Uganda government will accede to these resolutions.