

## UGANDA

*(Extracts from the Report of the Trustees of the National Parks for the year 1953)*

In a foreword to the report Mr. R. Dreschfield, the Chairman, writes : " There has been steady and thorough work in the field of game preservation. The wardens have got to know their areas, have set up ranger posts, have practically stopped poaching, and have carried on considerable research into the game. This is our most important work and the work to which we, as trustees, are by law committed. The long title to the Ordinance which is the fount of our existence reads : ' An Ordinance to provide for the Establishment of National Parks for the purpose of preserving Wild Animal Life, Wild Vegetation, and providing for other matters incidental thereto.' Necessary, therefore, as it is to provide transport, accommodation, and observation facilities within the parks, we and the public must remember that these activities are only incidental to our main purpose.

Once our real purpose and duty is comprehended the irrelevance of the oft repeated question ' How are you going to make it pay ? ' is apparent. Although this may appear a natural query to those who are used to state commercial enterprises being established and then, often as not, not paying their way, in regard to national parks it is in fact a query which can have no relevance. National parks are not commercial enterprises, they are a service financed by state funds, run for the benefit of the people of the state. Nobody would dream of asking the Minister of Works at home whether or not he expected Hyde Park to pay ; likewise nobody should dream of asking me or the Financial Secretary whether the Murchison Falls Park will pay.

This, of course, does not mean that the trustees do not, in administering their parks, run certain services that should pay, for in each park there will be a safari lodge and it is the hope of the trustees that the safari lodges should pay for themselves. Likewise in each park there will be launch and motor car services, designed to pay for themselves."

Of the national parks themselves, Mr. K. de P. Beaton, the Director, writes :—

### Queen Elizabeth Park

" The Warden, Mr. G. W. M. Holmes, established his camp in the Queen Elizabeth Park and started work on our initial objective—the preservation of game.

He recruited a small labour force and began instructing ranger recruits in their duties. He established temporary ranger posts and slowly but steadily began to make the residents and the people of adjacent tribes realize that the hunting of game in this 'hunter's paradise' would no longer be tolerated. His was a delicate task. There was much opposition to national parks among Africans. They resented strongly being deprived of the meat and the 'sport' which they had previously enjoyed. For although this area was a game reserve in name, it had been impossible for the game department with its then limited staff to control the area properly.

The trustees had laid down a policy requiring that in no way must the people resident within the area have any of their rights and privileges withdrawn. That, provided they did not interfere with game or disfigure the countryside by cutting down trees, they would be permitted to pursue their legitimate occupations and live their normal way of life. This required great tact and diplomacy, and I venture to think that it has been well done. There are signs that the strong opposition is dying down and that national parks are beginning to be accepted as an established fact. Only in cases of the most blatant infringements of the regulations have prosecutions been resorted to. All minor offenders have been warned and released."

*Building of Headquarters and the Safari Lodge started on 1st April*

"I decided to use local materials as far as possible. We installed a water pumping plant and an electric light plant, erected saw benches, quarried quantities of stone in the foothills, cut thousands of palms in the Rutanda forest, 12 miles distant, and stockpiled papyrus thatch. All these materials were transported to the Kazinga Channel and ferried across on pontoons and barges. The circular saws never stopped. Buffalo looked on by day; by night elephants came regularly to inspect the progress of work, wandering among the foundations and buildings, appearing to take the greatest interest in everything.

By the middle of December, 1953, we had completed my own house with office, stores, and guest house, the warden's house and stores, labour lines for some 300 men, two large bulk stores, fuel store, the main lodge, consisting of restaurant, large veranda lounge, and bar lounge, kitchen stores, and six single bedrooms with two bathrooms, lavatories, five family lodges, with accommodation for four in each, warden's office,

store, and reception office. Furniture was made on the spot by our own carpenters."

#### THE ANIMALS

*Elephants.*—Elephants are well distributed. It is difficult to estimate numbers, and there is always seasonal migration to be taken into consideration. I think I would be over-estimating, however, if I put the general number higher than 500. There are very few big tuskers. The largest seen, a beast which subsequently was found dead from a suspected bullet wound, proved to carry one tusk of 103 lb. and a broken tusk of about 90 lb.

I have hopes, however, that the migratory tendency, especially of the big bulls, will tend to cease, as they find there is absolute sanctuary within the parks. I am convinced that certain individual beasts have learnt this lesson already. There is one herd of six bulls, for instance, that now for over a year have never wandered more than a mile or so from the Mweya peninsula, which is their home. There are other individuals which we are now getting to know well and are almost always to be found in certain fairly restricted localities. The breeding herds tend to roam further afield. If by chance they move beyond the boundaries of the park and carry ivory of any size, there, waiting his opportunity, is always the lout with the gun.

*Buffalo.*—Buffalo are plentiful. Unaffected by rinderpest now for many years, they have multiplied and the park may hold well over 5,000. In the short time we have been here they have become noticeably less wild.

*Hippopotamus.*—Hippopotamus are very plentiful indeed and again I would estimate their number at well over 5,000. I am certain that in time, if they continue to increase, they will present a real problem. The balance between their numbers and the available food supply is a matter for concern, and will have to be watched carefully. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the remarkable numbers of fish which thrive on the algae, fertilized by the thousands of tons of manure introduced by hippo, will be a factor in their favour if, and it is a big if, the surrounding country can stand the heavy cropping.

*Lion and Leopard.*—These great cats are well distributed, but their numbers are not excessive. Leopards, although heard often by night, are seldom seen. The lions are gaining confidence and are being encountered more and more, frequently by day.

As time goes on I believe they will be a common sight for visitors.

*Antelope.*—Waterbuck are well distributed and plentiful. Kob are numerous in certain areas. Bushbuck and reedbuck are numerous in certain localities only. The common duiker, the red duiker, and the blue duiker are also present in their particular habitats.

*Pigs.*—Wart-hog are plentiful, and are probably the main food supply for the lions. Bush-pig and giant forest-hog have also been seen.

*Monkeys.*—Baboons are present but are nowhere plentiful. The grey vervet monkeys are more numerous. Colobus, both the black-and-white and the red, have been seen in small numbers, also the copper-tailed monkey. Chimpanzees exist in the Maramagamba forest and I have had reports of Sykes monkeys, although I have not seen them myself.

*Birds.*—Near the mouth of the Kazinga Channel, in Katwe bay, the mouth of the Nyamagasani river, and along the eastern shore of Lake Edward, are a number of magnificent bird beaches. Here a great variety of residents, such as Egyptian geese, pelicans, and cormorants are always to be found among a host of lesser birds. At certain seasons migrants come and go in thousands also. The wooded shores hold a variety of beautiful birds; lesser bustard, guinea-fowl and francolin are everywhere. Pelicans and marabout storks were found nesting in great numbers in tall trees among the swamps to the north of Lake George.”

### Murchison Falls Park

This park presented a different problem. Here was a wild uninhabited area with no roads or tracks. As there was already a bi-weekly tour by launch to the Falls themselves, there was no urgency in further opening up the area for visitors.

“The urgent problem was to demarcate the boundaries and organize game preservation. Here was an area in which it was known much poaching was going on. The north-western section was particularly vulnerable to shoot-and-run poachers crossing the Nile from the west and disposing of the trophies in Belgian territory.

To the north-east, the likeable, but inveterate hunters of the Acholi tribe cannot be blamed for persisting in their ancient sport of hunting game. One of our duties was to bring home to them that here, as everywhere else, the times were changing.

The two great aids to poaching control are road communica-

tions and efficient patrolling by a loyal ranger force under constant supervision. Warden J. R. F. Mills' first tasks were to recruit and train a ranger force, establish ranger posts, and organize foot patrols, make a thorough reconnaissance of the park and survey good alignments for tracks to open up the area. By the end of the year a small but well trained ranger force was in being and patrols were being regularly carried out. A large labour force under African headmen was working well in several sectors. A good aerodrome, 10 miles north of the Falls, capable of landings by Dakotas, and some 90 miles of good motor roads had been completed. A good site 10 miles below the Murchison Falls on the north bank of the Victoria Nile had been chosen for the safari lodge."

#### THE ANIMALS

"*Elephants*.—Warden J. R. F. Mills puts the number of elephants at 800. There is much movement at certain seasons. The most serious of these migrations is the annual exodus to the south-east where elephants pass through Bunyoro, west of Atura, and move towards the Kafu River. Each year many never return. There is a sprinkling of large tuskers about, but I am certain many of the great bulls have been killed and their ivory spirited away. There should be many more.

*Hippopotamus*.—I attempted to count the hippo in the Victoria Nile from the Murchison Falls to where the sudd commences, a distance of probably about 12 miles. I was assisted in this by three other Europeans. We all used field glasses and counted as carefully as possible. The count came to 1,257 or just over 100 to the mile. These were beasts actually counted, but there must have been many more hidden in the pools and lagoons behind papyrus fringes and unseen from the launch.

*Crocodiles*.—Crocodiles are very numerous. It is curious, however, that very few small crocodiles are seen. While great beasts up to 12 feet and over are common, anything under 6 feet is exceptional. The small crocodiles, which are probably chased and hunted by the adults, must seek sanctuary among the papyrus and small pools. I visited some pools south of Fort Mugungu and about a mile back from the river, where I saw numbers of small crocodiles a foot or so in length. Monitor lizards must also take a heavy toll of crocodile eggs, as they do of the eggs of the soft-shelled turtle and of geese and other birds.

*Rhinoceros*.—Black rhinoceros are thinly distributed in the northern sector. Seven were seen in one day.

*Giraffe*.—A small number of Baringo giraffe live in the north-eastern corner. One solitary beast was seen on the track just north of the Falls. One albino has been seen from the air.

*Antelopes*.—Jackson's hartebeest, kob, and waterbuck are fairly plentiful in certain areas. The mown grass of the aerodrome is now a popular resort for kob. Oribi are plentiful, bushbuck, reedbuck, and duiker are thinly distributed.

*Buffalo*.—Buffalo occur in all areas.

*Monkeys*.—Baboons are fairly widely distributed and a fair number of black and white colobus live in the forests along the Nile. Vervet monkeys and troops of Patas monkeys have been seen in the savannah country in the northern sector.

*Pig*.—Warthog and bushpig are present, but I have had no evidence yet of giant forest hog.

*Carnivores*.—Lions are widely distributed, but not in great numbers. Leopards are common and particularly bold. On three occasions I have found the spoor of leopard right up to the opening of my tent, and between the tent and the fire, where they had patrolled unseen during the night. Hyænas are present, but I have had no report of wild dogs yet. A cheetah is reported to have been seen near the Anaka-Pakwach road, but they are certainly not common.

*Birds*.—Whale-billed storks have been seen, and the big black ground-hornbills are common. Greater bustard and secretary birds have been reported. Louries, lesser hornbills, honey guides, and a variety of other beautiful birds are present."

### Game Incidents

A pure white buffalo calf with black ears has often been seen in Queen Elizabeth Park.

Lions attacked and killed a hippo cow and her calf close to the Mweya safari lodge. There is evidence that this is no uncommon occurrence. A lion was found dead near the Nyamasagani river with one shoulder bitten out. This can only have been the work of a hippo.

A warthog sow with a piglet was seen trotting away, followed by a leopard. She suddenly turned round and charged towards the leopard who decamped. On two occasions elephant were seen chasing warthog with a great show of anger and trumpeting loudly. Once, after several short charges, the warthog turned round and rushed towards the elephant, who backed away and seemed quite surprised.

The writer, while driving a Land Rover, was charged from close quarters by a lone buffalo bull. The buffalo gave the vehicle a good battering and attempted to overturn it. In doing so he wrenched the door open. After several attempts the door was closed with a bang, alarming the bull who made off grunting.

A marabout stork was seen stealing fish from a crocodile larder. The crocodile made several attempts to catch the bird, leaping towards it and snapping its jaws.

### Extracts from the Diary of a Headman of the Uganda National Parks Service

This Headman, Justin Tokwara, was sent out with a porter safari to demarcate the surveyed boundary of the north-eastern portion of the Murchison Falls Park. This area is a trackless region of trees and elephant grass infested with big game. He carried out a difficult task conscientiously and with one object only, to carry out his orders.

“Hard work to be done in one month. It was on 29th April, 1953, that Mr. Mills, the Warden, sent me with twenty-five porters by lorry to Chendago village. On arrival there the porters refused to enter the bush or proceed on foot or to carry my loads. I asked them if they were afraid, or if they thought they would be killed by the Bunyoro people, also if they were not going to work did they think they were going to eat that day. ‘Answer Yes or No.’ They changed their minds then and picked up the loads and we proceeded 7 miles into the bush.”

The diary then goes on to give details of the work carried on over the next seven days, the building of cairns and the nailing of notices to trees at 100-yard intervals. It continues:—

“Hard work to be done in one month. In the morning I say we advance but the porters say we go back. It is the 9th of May and I say ‘Please we go on I will lead you and you will follow me’. That day we meet many elephants. Most of the porters did not know elephants, but now they know them also buffalo and lions and hippo. Yes they know them well. On that day we saw them all. But I say ‘We must work on, if we die we die, life is life from the day and in the night’.

Hard work to be done in one month.

It is on the 10th of May, arrived one Peter, a Game Guard. I said to him when he comes ‘Who are you’. He says ‘My officer Mr. Mills has sent me to guard you’. I says ‘Do you know your job?’ He says ‘Yes’. I says ‘What is your job?’ He says ‘Guarding you people of the National Park on working

during the day and by night'. Then I say 'Do you know that we people of the National Park are not allowed to kill animals?'

The next morning we work on section by section and every day we work. Hard work to be done in one month. Always every few hours we are frightened by animals. Every day the porters say 'Please now we go back we will come some other time to finish'. I say 'No we are not going back till we see the Nile', and I become very angry that we never see the Nile.

It was on the 18th May that we came into very hard country and up a steep hill. I say to the porters 'When we get to the top we will see the Nile. I shall call you to-day and say there is the Nile'. I therefore called everyone to the top of the hill. When we got there I opened my eyes, the country ahead was very flat and level and we could not see the Nile which was about 8 miles away. The porters were sad, some of them were saying 'We cannot work to-morrow' and others 'Please we go back to-morrow and return everything to Mr. Mills'. 'No,' says I, 'You are not going back until we finish this line to the end.' My officer says 'Finish this line. I will go in front and see how far it is to the Nile. When we come to the river we will stop'.

In the morning I call up every section and I say 'Take food for five days and the rest we will leave here and to-day we will see the Nile'. Hard work to be done in one month. We go for a long way and very hot. At about 6.30 in the evening we reach the Nile. I orders the porters to bathing and to collect wood for cooking and for guard fires. It was the 23rd May. Hard work to be done in one month.

Then we start working back but all remember the hot and hard walking and the dangers of the way. In the night the elephants come again. I heard them shout 'Okello, Okello, Okello, elephants, elephants, elephants'. And I say to the guard 'Don't shoot'. He is very angry and he throws his rifle down and says 'Why you tell me this?' Then I put one man in the top of a tree as a guard to see the elephants in the long grass. All the night he calls 'They are coming'. 'They are going.' 'They go this way.' 'They go that way.' Then near the morning he says 'They are going away' and we had been standing all night but now we sleep.

So we finish our work, or round the Nile and back again in twenty-nine days. Hard work to be done in one month. I reported to Mr. Mills on the 1st June, 1953.

'Why do we Africans do the same hard work?'

'Why the peoples of many tribes are still so backwards?'



‘ Why do we people wish the money ? ’

This is important. Please think if you are Christians or Roman Catholics or C.M.S. or C. of E. or many different Churches.

‘ Work hard and fear in God. Amen.’ ”

Written by J. TOKWARA.

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## THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURE

The fourth General Assembly of the I.U.P.N. was held at Copenhagen from 25th August to 3rd September, 1954, under the presidency of Dr. C. J. Bernard, who may be called the founder of the Union. His term of office being over, he is succeeded by Professor Roger Heim of France. Delegates and observers came from the U.S.A., Japan, India, Peru, New Zealand, U.S.S.R. and nearly all European countries. Among the British delegation were Lord Hurcomb, President of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, Mr. Max Nicholson, Director-General of the Nature Conservancy, Dr. J. Berry, Director of the Nature Conservancy for Scotland, and Lieut.-Colonel C. L. Boyle, Secretary of the Fauna Preservation Society.

Among the reports submitted to the Assembly was that of the Survival Committee, which is concerned with animals and plants in immediate danger of extermination. This Committee presented to the Assembly its new illustrated book, *Les fossiles de demain*, produced as a by-product of its work. It is hoped shortly to publish an English edition, amended in accordance with the information given by delegates during the course of the Assembly.

In spite of extensive inquiries the Committee had failed to obtain any information of the continued existence of the bubal, a desert hartebeest from Morocco and Tunis, and it is feared that this animal is now extinct. But cheering news came from Western Australia of an increase in the banded ant-eater, or numbat, so it is hoped that this little marsupial need no longer be regarded as a “fossil of to-morrow”. Another animal to which the Union had directed the Committee’s attention was the Asiatic lion, now surviving only in the Gir Forest of Saurashtra. The Committee was able to report the great interest taken in India in this lion, and the steps which the Indian Board for Wild Life has proposed to ensure its survival.