

1938

38275

CO 533/498
KENYA

38275

GAME DEPARTMENT STAFF

Previous

1937

Subsequent

1939

297	9/11
309	15/11
Mr Parkin	16
297	15/12
309	16/12
Mr Parkin	18/12
303	24
299	30/12
297	

297

9

309

18/3

Mr Parkin

=

297

20/6

309

20/6

297

30/6

309

4/7

Mr. Sawyer

Mr. Parkin

5/7

R. 298

11/7

R. 297

8/8

309

16/8

297

20/8

309

19/28

Mr Sawyer

1/7

Mr Parkin

=

C.F.
GAME
ORIGINAL (3)

2
25 3 38

1. Society for Preservation of Fauna of the Empire
Encls copy of private letter, addressed by Mr. E. Hurley to Dr. J. Hurley,
drawing attention to lack of staff in Kenya Game Dept., and
requests information or action which S. of S. may think fit to take in this
regard.

Drafts submitted after speaking with
Mr. Dunge
Clerks, White 28/3

~~DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE~~
2 To Soc for Preservation of Fauna - 1 ans - 15 - APR 1938
~~DESTROYED UNDER STATUTE~~
Kenya 201 (1/1). Cons 20/6 7 APR 1938

Re of 11401 HQ regarding reversion of
Capt Ritchie to Kenya on expiration of
his secondment to Malaya

Re no reply received to no 3
297
20/6

10/11
20/4

Wait
Atm
1/11/38
20.6

W/D

H. Govs dep 359.
Replies to Mrs. Malaya's remarks about
scarcity of game, poaching by natives &
maldemeanor of Game Dept. staff.

Dept notes sent for consn.

H. Malaya
4/7/38

6 Society for Preservation of Fauna of the Empire to - 1/1/38
Ref 5, requests opportunity for interviews.

W. Bury

Mr. Sawyer and I saw Mr. Maurice, the Honorary Secretary to the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, yesterday. Mr. Maurice explained that the Society had expressed great concern at the Colonial Office letter because it did not square with the facts as presented to the Society from different sources (Keith Caldwell and Colonel Stockley). He pointed out that the letter contained information supplied by the Government of Kenya and mentioned the difficulties involved, i.e. instances, lack of staff, etc. He also said that Mr. Mitson was now back in Kenya and that the new Convention would doubtless assist matters. Finally Mr. Maurice said that he would write officially on the matter.

W. Bury

16.8.36.

Per Day

ms. 16/8 as above.

Society for Preservation of Fauna of the Empire 2/1/38
Ref 5, suggests that greater proportion of revenues be applied to provision of adequate staff.

The main contention in this letter is that it is nonsense to maintain, as was done in No. 5, that there is still plenty of rhino and other animals in the Northern Game Reserve. The force of this contention is diminished rather than enhanced by much of the rest of the letter: for instance the argument in paragraph 2, that rare species may die out if effective protective measures are not taken, is unsupported by any evidence to show that rare species are in fact present in the Northern Game Reserve and are likely to become extinct; on the contrary the rest of the letter is chiefly concerned with rhino, which it is supposed are in no danger at all of dying out in Africa taken as a whole. Again, the argument in the last paragraph, that the Game Department is revenue-producing and therefore that more should be spent on the Game Reserves, is stale; it is the same as the argument that the Post Office surplus should be used to finance Kenya postage. Further, from paragraph 9 of the letter it appears that the Committee has failed to grasp the point of trying to get the Turkana to live in permanent settlements. This point was not put as bluntly in No. 5 as it was in No. 4 (on which No. 5 was based) but even so the Committee might perhaps have realized that the basic problem is to find some alternative means of subsistence for the Turkana to their present dependence upon poaching.

The main contention of the Committee, however, namely that the fauna in the Game Reserve is rapidly diminishing in numbers, would appear

*They certainly are. The white rhinoceros occurs absolutely profusely in the Park (as do many other kinds of mammals).
7/1/38
A but since the loss of some of the rhinos (as to Kenya) the Government should...*

* appear to carry conviction. The Governor's attempt in paragraph 3 of No. 4 to show that there is plenty of game if it is looked for is rather weak; in fact in the latter part of the same paragraph it is admitted that game (zebra) has been deliberately shot in order to preserve the Samburu grazing, and there is no attempt made to disguise the fact of large scale poaching by the Turkans. The upshot of No. 4 really appears to be this, that if it were possible to make provision for the Samburu and Turkana without (a) killing game to preserve the grazing of the former and (b) allowing the latter to kill rhino as an alternative to starving, then there would be no difficulty in making the Game Reserve as safe for animals as any reserve can be. At the moment, however, it is not possible to deal with the natives except by (a) and (b), and so the game has got to be sacrificed. All that is possible will be done to get the Game Reserve in order in the future, as was promised in the final paragraphs of Nos. 4 and 5.

The position at A. has not been explicitly explained to the Committee and although they would perhaps not very much like it if it were, it would ~~be~~ be more acceptable to them than the present state of affairs in which we are attempting to show that game exists when in fact there is very little. Before writing to the Committee, however, it would perhaps be best to send copies of (5) and (7) to the Governor, observing that it appears that the Committee has made its point about the scarcity of rhino and other game and saying that if he has no objection it is proposed to explain to the Committee

as at A. above; and acknowledge (7) saying that it has been referred to the Governor.

Clark White

19.38.

we cannot explain to the
Committee as at A above because
(I would be tentatively
to saying that Kenya
cannot carry out its obligations
under the 1933 Convention.
If Kenya can say definitely
that the hunting of protected
species by the Samburu and
Turkana in certain areas,
areas within the limits of
the Game Reserve that is
another matter but
those areas ought not to be
within a reserve. If you
can't stop them hunting
in certain areas within the
reserve then you must
either remove them from
those areas or alter the
boundaries. The latter is
include those areas - but
a very desirable step if
it can be avoided.

But the difficulties
with the Samburu and
the Turkana really show

that in the best interest effective
in a sanctuary such as Kenya
protection of rare species can
be secured only by the
establishment of a national
park or parks in which
all the rare species in
Kenya may find sanctuary
coupled with a staff sufficiently
strong to prevent any
poaching within the park
and to enforce game laws
in acc. with the Convention
outside the parks.

1 submit Draft, enclosure

J.P. Pasarin
18/11

B.L. still no reply to No 9.
J. Jackson 29/11
15/12

? now resumed

Clark White 19/11

J.P. Pasarin
18/11
above

10, 20 - Kenya - 1/2 enclosure - 30/12/38

To Sec. State for the Colonies (Kenya) 7 SEP 1938

Kenya 337 (1/2 enclosure) - 1/2 enclosure - 9/9/38

B.L. no reply to No 9.
J. Jackson 29/11
9/11

? wait a month

Clark White
15/11

J.P. Pasarin
12/11

C. O.

Kenya.

38275/38.

Mr. Bowyer. *1/9*

Mr. Pashun *1/9 +. Ansd: 1a 1939 pp*

Mr.

Mr. A. J. Dawe.

Sir H. Moore.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

2 Sept 1938

DRAFT. DESPATCH.

KENYA.

NO. 537

GOVERNOR.

To Society
11th July
(No. 5.)

From Society
26th August
(No. 7.)

FURTHER ACTION.

Downing Street,

9 September, 1938.

Sir.

I have etc., to

(No. 4.) refer to your despatch No. 359

of the 21st of June, on the question of the preservation of game in the Northern Game Reserve in Kenya, and to transmit to you,

the accompanying copies of further correspondence on the

subject with the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of

the Empire. In ^{the} letter of the

26th of August, the Society

appear to me to make out a

suitable

fauna faunae *their*
able case for contention that the
position with regard to the preservation
of rare species in this reserve is unsatisfactory,
and I should be grateful for your further
observations in the matter.

2. I appreciate the difficulties
with regard to *the* Turkana and Samburu to which
you allude in your despatch under reference,
and if it is, I understand, far from being the
wish of the Society to suggest that the
preservation of *the* fauna should take precedence
over the needs of the human inhabitants. Nor
is this the intention of the International
Convention for the protection of Fauna and
Flora of 1933, the provisions of which *and appear*
to be capable of being implemented without
reference to the needs of *the* native communities.
I would invite your attention in this connection
to

C. O.

- Mr.
- Mr.
- Mr.
- Mr. A. J. Dawe.
- Sir H. Moore.
- Sir G. Tomlinson.
- Sir J. Shuckburgh.
- Permt. U.S. of S.
- Parly. U.S. of S.
- Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

FURTHER ACTION.

to article 8 paragraph 2 of the
Convention.
3. The difficulties
referred to above do, however,
lend strength to *a* fundamental
consideration which was in the
minds of those who framed the
Convention, namely, that in the
last resort effective protection
of *fauna* ~~rare species~~ in a territory
such as Kenya can be secured
only by the establishment of
permanent areas ~~National Park or Parks~~ in which
refusing *petition* all the rare species *in Kenya*
may find sanctuary, and I feel
that it *would* ~~will~~ go a long way to
dispose of representations such

Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire

Patron:

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI.

PRESIDENT:

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ONSLOW, P.C., O.B.E.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEDFORD, K.O., F.R.S.

SIR PETER CHALMERS MITCHELL, C.B.E., F.R.S.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ABERCORN.

THE EARL OF LONSDALE, K.C., G.C.V.O.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF CREWE, K.G., K.P., P.C.

MADISON GRANT, Esq.

THE RT. HON. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

All communications to be addressed to
The Secretary

Telegraphic Address:
SECFUNA MAIDA,
LONDON

Telephone:
PRIMROSE 3333

10 ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON,
REGENT'S PARK,
N.W. 8.

26th August, 1938.

The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
Downing Street, S.W.1.

Sir,

I am directed by the Executive Committee of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire to refer to your letter of the 11th July, 1938 (38275/38) and to say for the information of the Secretary of State, that the tenour of your letter causes them concern. The letter, as they understand, is based on a despatch from His Excellency the Governor of Kenya, and, if the Committee has rightly understood it, His Excellency is satisfied that there is no cause for apprehension about the conservation of the fauna of the province or about the administration of the Northern Game Reserve.

2. The Committee are unable, in the light of the first-hand information at their disposal to share

His Excellency's equanimity. Before discussing points of detail, I am to say that, as it is hoped that Mr. Secretary Macdonald is already aware, the Committee fully appreciate the difficulties, economic and political of a policy of fauna preservation. Although they believe that, ultimately, such a policy will be better justified than that which may, for the moment, appear to be dictated by practical common sense, they recognise that first place must always be given to proved human necessities. On the other hand they desire to suggest that the ultimate good of the community may too readily be sacrificed to what may appear to be the necessity of the moment, and I am to remind the Secretary of State that the sacrifice of interesting, often beautiful and, as events may prove, useful species, which are the product of aeons of evolution, can never be made good. These species are, therefore, much more precious than any work of human art, which, if it cannot be reproduced, can at least be substituted by some other product of human genius.

3. This, as the Committee conceive it is the reason why His Majesty's Government ratified the Convention of the 8th November, 1933 relative to the preservation of the fauna and flora of Africa, and unless and until His Majesty's Government decide to denounce this Convention, it appears to the Committee that it is incumbent upon them to press for its

implementations in all their Colonies to which it applies. The Committee are, with regret, unable to accept the view that it is satisfactorily applied in Northern Kenya, and they feel that His Excellency's despatch was written under more than one serious misapprehension.

4. With reference to the third paragraph ^{of} ~~in~~ your letter, which suggests that the absence of game referred to by Mrs. Huxley may have been the result of temporary emigration of animals from the reserve, I am to point out that Mr. Huxley's letter refers in particular to the scarcity of Rhinoceros which are not normally migratory animals. In this connection I am to suggest that the attention of the Secretary of State be drawn to Captain C.H. Stigand's book "To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land", from which it will be seen that when Captain Stigand visited Kenya in 1909 he found Rhinoceros everywhere in profusion.

5. As recently as 1921 Captain Keith Caldwell, who spent over five weeks on safari in the same area, saw an average of two or three Rhinoceros a day.

6. A letter recently received from a reliable correspondent of the Society stated that: "The Northern Game Reserve is only such in name now. The Turkana and Samburu have killed off nearly all the game and nothing whatever has been done about it."

7. With reference to the suggestion that "The Northern Game Reserve is said to be a disappointment

to those who tour it by motor, but large game animals nevertheless exist in abundance off the beaten track and indeed on it for those who have eyes to see", I am to state that Captain Keith Caldwell reports that last year (1937) he covered 1,200 miles within this reserve, and visited places where no car had ever been, and during the whole of his safari, although he searched the vicinity of water holes, he did not see one Rhinoceros and only found the tracks of four or five.

8. With reference to His Excellency's observations on the occasion of his flight over the Reserve, I am, with all respect, to suggest that the species of game in the Northern Reserve, other than the oryx, do not, as a rule, gather into large herds.

9. The Committee are unwilling to labour points of detail, but I am to say that they are completely at a loss to understand the suggestion that the preservation of the fauna of the reserve will be effectively promoted by inducing the Turkana to take up agricultural pursuits in a permanent settlement. Nor is it reasonable in the opinion of the Committee, based on the observations of experienced Game Wardens, to rely upon native game scouts for the protection of the fauna, unless they are under close European supervision. Indeed, in the opinion of the Committee, making all allowances for the valuable and willing help of the District Commissioner

26th August, 1938

~~no~~ ^{can} supervision ^{be} really effective in an area like the Northern Game Reserve, except that of a Game Department Officer, supported by an adequate and competent European staff.

10. In conclusion I am to say that the Committee are grateful for His Excellency's undertaking further to consider the most effective means of supervising the Game reserves of the Colony. In this connection, I am to say that the Committee, from a perusal of the Annual Report of the Game Department of Kenya for 1937, find that there was an excess of revenue over expenditure of £8,218, and that the average excess of revenue for the last twelve years has been more than £11,000. These figures do not take into account revenue collected by means of licenses for explosives, guns and ammunition. Nor the customs duty collected on arms and ammunition.

The Committee desire very respectfully to suggest that a greater proportion of the revenue derived from these sources might properly, having regard to the obligations which His Majesty's Government have accepted under the Convention of 1933, be applied to the provision of a staff adequate for the fulfilment of these obligations.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


Secretary, S.F.P.E.

Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire

Patron:

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI.

PRESIDENT:

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ONSLOW, P.C., O.B.E.

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LONDON

Telephone:
PRIMROSE 3333

c/o ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON,
REGENT'S PARK,
N.W. 8.

4th August, 1938.

PERSONAL & UNOFFICIAL.

W.B. Bowyer, Esq.,
Colonial Office,
London, S.W.1.

My dear Bowyer,

I have been wondering what to do about the Colonial Office letter of July 11th (38275/38) in reply to our letter of March 25th enclosing a copy of a letter from Mrs. Elspeth Huxley on the subject of the game situation in Northern Kenya.

I don't know who is responsible for this letter, but I can only say about it that I find it difficult to deal with because it is impossible to take it seriously.

We have abundant evidence at first hand that the game situation in Northern Kenya is deplorable, and any endeavour to keep up the pretence that it is anything else does little credit to the Colonial Office. The simple fact is, according to our information - I

E.B. Bowyer, Esq.

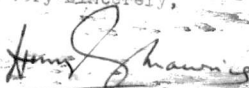
15
4th August, 1938.

have no doubt whatever that it is correct - that the Northern Game Reserve of Kenya only exists on paper and, as one well-informed member of the Society puts it to me - "Its only value consists in the fact that it looks well on the map when exhibited at International Conferences".

I know perfectly well that there are all sorts of difficulties to be encountered in an endeavour to protect a Game Reserve in this and in many other areas, but H.M.S. have ratified the African Conference and I think that they ought to put up a better show.

I should like to come and talk to you about it, and see if something cannot be done.

Yours very sincerely,



Secretary, S.P.F.S.

G. O.

38275/38 Kenya

576

Mr. Surridge

4/7/38

Mr. Parkin

577 f.

Mr. ~~...~~

Sir H. Moore

Sir G. Tomlinson

Sir C. Bottomley

Sir J. Shackleton

Parlt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State

DOWNING STREET,

11 July, 1938.

O. D.
R 5 JUL
11 8

Sir,

(1)

DRAFT.

CONSON

THE HONORARY SECRETARY,

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION
OF THE FAUNA OF THE EMPIRE.

copy for Kenya L.P.

copy to Huxley ②

I am etc. to refer to your letter of the 25th of March enclosing a copy of a letter to Dr. Julian Huxley on the subject of the preservation of the rhinoceros and other game in the Northern Game Reserve of Kenya and to inform you that the matter has now been considered by the Governor of Kenya who has reported as follows.

2. In her letter Mrs. Huxley refers to the scarcity of game, in particular rhinoceros, in that part of the Northern Game Reserve which she visited over a year ago, and ascribes this scarcity to two causes, the poaching activity of the Turkana

and

FURTHER ACTION.

and the alleged inadequacy of the staff of the Game Department.

3. In the first place the Governor points out that competent observers have often remarked that the explanation of the absence of game from an area which normally holds a large number of game animals, is often merely that the game have gone elsewhere for grazing and watering or from purely migratory tendencies. That this explanation may have held good at the time of Mrs. Huxley's visit is shown by the following extract from the Annual Report for the year 1937 of the District Commissioner in charge of the area:-

"The Northern Game Reserve is said to be a disappointment to those who tour it by motor, but large game animals nevertheless exist in abundance off the beaten track and indeed on it for those who have eyes to see. A foot safari round the Matthews Mountains showed

G. O.

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Sir H. Moore.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

FURTHER ACTION.

showed elephant like cattle and rhino less uncommon than supposed. In few districts in these days, save Samburu, can dangerous game be always a factor to be considered when marching and pitching camp".

His Excellency, when recently flying over the southern portion of this Reserve, himself commented upon the herds of game which appear to have increased beyond measure and are doing considerable damage to the grazing and, indeed, to the water supplies upon which the inhabitants of the area depend for the maintenance of their stock.

4. The Governor admits that there has been a considerable amount of poaching and killing, especially in the larger game animals in certain parts of the Reserve, but at the same

time

time it is common knowledge that it is extremely difficult to prevent such poaching. As Mrs. Huxley observes, the culprits are mainly Turkana natives whose presence in this area is due to economic circumstances. In an effort to strike at the cause for their poaching activities, rather than punish them for offences against the game laws which they are forced to commit or ^{as many as possible} several of these persons have been collected in a permanent settlement and have been induced to take up agricultural pursuits. The establishment of this settlement will, it is thought, prove far more effective than any number of game wardens and scouts.

5. With regard to the alleged inadequacy of the staff of the Game Department, one of the difficulties has

Mr.

Mr.

Mr.

Sir H. Moore.

Sir G. Tomlinson.

Sir C. Bottomley.

Sir J. Shuckburgh.

Permt. U.S. of S.

Parly. U.S. of S.

Secretary of State.

DRAFT.

FURTHER ACTION.

has been to find suitable persons for employment as native game scouts in the area. Last year some suitable persons were found and the number was increased. These new game scouts have been most successful and through their activities several poachers were arrested, convicted and sentenced. ^{The Governor} His Excellency adds that 6. on the return to the Colony of the Game Warden from Malaya at the end of this month, he will give the closest consideration to the most efficient means of supervising the Game Reserves of the Colony, but for financial reasons it is impossible to contemplate any large increase in the expenditure of the Department.

I am, etc.

(Signed) J. J. PASKIN.



RECEIVED

21 June, 1938.

Sir,

3 I have the honor to refer to despatch No. 201 of the 7th April from Mr. Ormsby Gore (now Lord Harlech) transmitting for my consideration copies of a letter from the Honorary Secretary of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, on the subject of Mrs. Elspeth Huxley's remarks on the Northern Game Reserve in this Colony.

2. In her letter Mrs. Huxley refers to scarcity of game and particularly rhinoceri in the part of the Northern Game Reserve visited by her over a year ago in the company of the District Commissioner in charge of the area, and ascribes this scarcity to two causes, the poaching activity of members of the Turkana tribe and the alleged inadequacy of the staff of the Game Department.

9
3. Competent observers have often pointed out that the explanation of the absence of game from an area which normally holds a large number of game animals, is frequently that the game have gone elsewhere either for grazing and water or from purely migratory tendencies. The following extract from the Annual Report for the year 1937 of the District Commissioner in charge of the area points to the possibility that this explanation may have held good at the time of Mrs. Huxley's visit:-

"The Northern Game Reserve is said to be a disappointment to those who tour it by motor, but large game animals nevertheless exist in abundance off the beaten track and indeed on it/

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET,
LONDON. S.W. 1.

it for those who have eyes to see. A foot safari round the Matthews Mountains showed elephant like cattle and rhino less uncommon than supposed. In few districts in these days, save Samburu, can dangerous game be always a factor to be considered when marching and pitching camp.

The Governor himself, when recently flying over the southern portion of this Game Reserve, commented upon the herds of game which appear to have increased beyond measure and are doing considerable damage to the grazing and, to a lesser extent, to the water supplies upon which the inhabitants of the area depend for the maintenance of their stock.

In fact the presence in this area of large numbers of game is proving an obstacle to the success of grazing control, and it has recently been necessary to shoot some hundreds of zebra, whose presence was quite inconsistent with the measures to be taken to preserve the grazing. It must be a matter of some uncertainty whether portions of this Reserve can in future remain as Game Reserve, if efforts are to be continued to develop the only assets of the Samburu, their cattle and land.

4. It is admitted that there has been a considerable amount of poaching and killing, especially of the larger game animals in certain parts of the Northern Game Reserve. As Mrs. Huxley observed, the culprits are mainly Turkana natives whose presence in this area is due to economic circumstances. They are the poor and destitute of their tribe, driven by economic pressure to migrate southwards and to lead a wandering life, subsisting mainly upon the meat of the animals they kill. In an effort to strike at the cause for their poaching activities, rather than punish them for offences against the game laws

which/

which they are forced to commit or starve, as many as possible of these persons have been collected in a permanent settlement and induced to take up agricultural pursuits. In the interval before their first crops ripen, they are being fed at the Government's expense. The establishment of this settlement is a valuable step which should be more effective than any number of wardens and scouts.

5. With regard to the alleged inadequacy of the staff of the Game Department, I would point out that one difficulty in connection with the supervision of the Northern Game Reserve in the past has been to find suitable persons for employment as native game scouts in the area. In 1937 not only were suitable persons found but the number of such game scouts was increased. These new game scouts have been most successful. Through their activities several poachers were arrested, convicted and sentenced and seventy-two tusks of ivory, weighing 2174 lbs. and forty-two rhinoceros horns were recovered. In 1936 only thirteen tusks of ivory, weighing 202 lbs. and fourteen rhinoceros horns were recovered.

The majority of the senior European staff of the Game Department have just retired or are due to retire shortly. Provision for temporary assistance has been made in this year's Estimates. On the return to the Colony of the Game Warden, Captain A. A. Ritchie, at the end of next month, the closest consideration will be given to the most efficient means of supervising the Game Reserves of the Colony, but for financial reasons it is obviously impossible to contemplate any considerable increase in the expenditure of the Department.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant;

W. N. ...

308fr

Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire

Patron:
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI.

PRESIDENT:
THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ONSLOW, P.C., O.B.E.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEDFORD, K.G., F.R.S.
HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF BEDFORD, D.B.E., R.R.C.
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ABERCORN.
THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF CREW, K.G., K.P., P.C.
SIR PETER CHALMERS MITCHELL, C.B.E., F.R.S.
THE EARL OF LONDONDERRY, K.G., G.C.V.O.
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The Secretary

Telegraphic Address:
SECFauna MAIDA,
LONDON

Telephone:
PRIMROSE 3331

c/o ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON,
REGENCY PARK,
N.W. 8.

25th March,

193 8.

The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
Downing Street,
S.W.1.

Sir,


I am directed by the Executive Committee of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire to forward for the information of Mr. Secretary Ormsby-Gore the enclosed copy of a private letter addressed by Mrs. Elspeth Huxley to Dr. Julian Huxley, and referred by him to this Society.

The Committee will be greatly obliged for any information on the steps, if any, which the Secretary of State may think fit to take in this regard.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,


Honorary Secretary, S.P.F.S.

COPY.

112, St. Mary Abpots Court,
London, W.14.

February 9th, 1938.

Dear Julian,

About the rhinos in the Northern Game Reserve in Kenya: about a year ago I went up from Isiolo north of the Guaso Nyiro River, and was travelling about for three weeks entirely in the Game Reserve. I was with the District Commissioner, Rumuruti, in whose area this country lies. We camped at about five or six different places of which I can send you the location if you like. We went out every day, I think, and were looking for game as I was trying to get some photographs. In the whole time we saw exactly one rhino in the Reserve. The D.C., Sharpe, who was known that country well for some time, said that five years ago we should have seen rhinos every day in whatever direction we had chosen to go - it was famous, or notorious, for being crawling with rhino; it was all ideal rhino country. A woman who was with us, who is a great game enthusiast and I think reliable, said that when she was there four years before she had seen countless rhino, and could hardly believe her eyes for what they didn't see.

Everyone confirmed this, and Sharpe said that at the present rate rhinos would be simply extinct there in a few years. The trouble is Turkana poachers who are out of control. They come across the borders of his area all the time and of course he can do nothing; he hasn't the staff, and anyway they have to be caught red-handed. He had himself

caught one party of Turkana not long before with the tails of eight rhinos which they had got in as many days, in a place where a sort of previously overlooked cache of rhinos had existed.

The trouble is that the Game Department is hopelessly understaffed. The nearest European officer to the Northern Game Reserve is at Meru, which is not even in the Reserve itself, but south of the southern boundary. There is an enormous area north of the Guaso Nyiro without any form of effective wardenship, a few native spies or guards only, who naturally cannot do much. The Turkana are excessively nomadic. I understand that before he left, Ritchie was continually trying to get additional funds to provide for one or two young and completely mobile European wardens who would be continually on safari in the Reserve, but that he wasn't able to extract the money from Government. (This is second-hand in that I haven't seen Ritchie since I was up there, but I know that he has always had this difficulty, even though the Game Department earns revenue over and above all its expenses). At the present moment the position is farcical, in that everyone for hundreds of miles around hears when the Game Warden at Meru is about to make one of his periodic forays into the Game Reserve, and of course all the poachers evaporate like the dew until the Warden has returned to Meru, when they emerge again and slaughter more rhinos.

Another trouble is that the Turkana are game-eaters, unlike many natives, and kill anything that they

can see for food. Sharpe said that this is already having its effects on game other than rhinos; there is a good deal of giraffe slaughter going on, for instance.

It is obviously an absurd position having a so-called reserve with no law-enforcement staff inside it, and a tribe of game-eating poachers, plus a good and ready market for rhino horn, with free access to it. Certainly after three weeks there we could only feel that as a game reserve it was rather a joke. We did see lots of elephant, very tame, but that was about all; day after day we saw no sign of animal life at all. And we were with a man who knew the country, and were looking for it. Of course there is game there, but everyone agrees on its marked decrease in the last five years. As soon as we got out of the Reserve we started to see game again; apparently because as it is shot at by safaris, the poachers keep away. I do hope you can do something.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed). ELSBETH HUXLEY.