

The Fauna Preservation Society

EDITORIAL NOTES

Major W. R. Barker, O.B.E.—We record with very great regret the death of Major W. R. Barker on 24th September, 1951. Of thirty-one years service in the Sudan, Major Barker spent twenty-one years first as Assistant Game Warden and then as Game Warden. He founded the first Sudan National Park. In 1947 Major Barker joined the Executive Committee of our Society and since then has been a regular attendant at its meetings. His sound advice, based on great knowledge and love of the wild animals of Africa will be sadly missed.

The Society tenders to Mrs. Barker its sincere sympathy in her great loss.

East African Report.—We have great pleasure in publishing Captain Keith Caldwell's third report on the wild life situation in East Africa. This report, together with the first two on the same subject, make a valuable record of recent progress of wild life preservation in East and Central Africa. For further details see page 214.

New Zealand.—Following her article in *Oryx* 3, Mrs. Perrine Moncrieff writes that the first estimate of the numbers of the recently rediscovered Takahe (*Notornis hochstetteri*) was based on a count of nests. It has now been discovered that the bird makes "cock nests". Some of the nests are just made and left, others, roughly pulled together before nightfall, are made by the cock bird when the young are small, for them to sleep in. Knowledge of this habit has caused a revision of the estimate of the numbers of the Takahe in existence to about forty. This is far below the original estimate.

On the other hand, the Forest and Bird Protection Society informs us that the discovery of the Takahe existing in valleys previously unknown has greatly increased hopes for its survival. An extensive district round the Takahe habitat is still a prohibited area.

The Forest and Bird Protection Society also reports that 20,000 acres of Waipoua Forest, the last remaining substantial Kauri forest, have been proclaimed a forest sanctuary.

India.—On 23rd and 24th July there was held in Delhi a

meeting of the Sub-Committee of the Committee for Co-ordinating Scientific Work in India. The terms of reference were "to examine and suggest ways and means of setting up National Parks and Sanctuaries for the Conservation of the rich and varied Fauna of India".

On the sub-committee were two members of our Society, Mr. H. Abdulali, Joint Secretary of the Bombay Natural History Society, and Mr. E. P. Gee, of Assam.

Mr. Gee reports that much work was done. The sub-committee evolved a general conservation policy for India and for the guidance of the States. It recommended that State Governments should be advised to enact legislation on the lines of the Bombay Wild Animals and Wild Bird (Protection) Act, 1951, and advocated that protection should be given to vanishing species such as cheetahs, lions, rhinoceros, and the pink-headed duck. The opening of National Parks and the constitution of a permanent central organization to co-ordinate the activities of the States in the preservation and control of wild life were advocated.

Mr. Gee has promised a further report.

Northern Rhodesia.—Readers will remember the description and map given in *Oryx* 1, of the Kafue National Park, proclaimed in April, 1950. In the Game and Tsetse Control Department report for 1950, Mr. L. E. Vaughan, Game Ranger, who was posted to Namwala to take charge of the development of the Park, reports as follows:—

"The response of the game to protection so far is most gratifying, and a very wide range of animals may already be seen in a short tour of their favourite haunts. Carnivora are satisfactorily in evidence and the balance of nature is nowhere, I think, in any way abnormal. More elephants have been seen this year than was anticipated and I think more will come in, not necessarily from the point of view of sanctuary but because the smaller streams of this part of Central Africa are undoubtedly drying up year by year, as a result of which elephants are definitely drifting to the vicinity of the larger rivers.

It is most pleasing to have established the fact that there are rhinos living a few miles up the Musa River, the fresh spoor of two was actually seen, and next year it is hoped to confirm that there are more than these present in the park.

The following is a list of animals which may be seen in the park: elephant, rhino, hippo, buffalo, eland, sable, kudu, roan, hartebeeste, wildebeeste, waterbuck (*defassa*), zebra,

impala, reedbuck, puku, bushbuck, oribi, duiker, steinbuck, Sharpe's steinbuck, lion, leopard, cheetah, wild dog, hyena, jackals, and sundry lesser carnivora.

In the neighbourhood of the Musa and Nanzhila rivers game birds are very plentiful, and crested guinea fowl may be seen where the road passes through the dense ' musitus '."

South Africa.—In the last issue of *Oryx* there was expressed in these notes the fear that the appointment of too many experts to the administration of National Parks might result in a top-heavy bureaucratic administration to the detriment of both animals and visitors.

We have received the following comment from one of our members, Dr. Victor Cahalane, Chief Biologist to the National Parks Service of the U.S.A., who has recently visited the South African Reserves :—

“ No sound conservationist can find fault with the principle that an administrative organization should be only a means to an end. Perhaps South Africa's machinery for park preservation and operation was sufficient for conditions of a decade or two ago. Unfortunately for Nature, those conditions are changing rapidly. Increasing population pressure, increasing land values, greater need for food, faster and easier transportation facilities, changing ideas of land management, and many other factors have resulted in greater pressure on and more serious problems for South Africa's parks. Far-seeing men in that country realize the need for able, well-trained scientists to cope with these questions in relation to preservation of the reserves, and to guide such changes in past procedures as are necessary to meet shifting conditions. A vast amount of effort has been exerted in an effort to convince conservative authorities that scientific direction is needed. There is little danger that too many scientists will be brought into the tiny park organization, at least for the present. The conservationists still need all the help we can give them to secure adequate guidance for the park preservation programme and for such development as is essential to meet increasing visitor needs.”

We agree, provided it is always remembered that there is one object only of a National Park, the preservation of the wild life which lives therein.

We hear that the first bird observation station of South Africa will be opened on 1st January, 1952, at the Ronde Vlei Bird Sanctuary, 14 miles from Cape Town. A member of our Society,

Mr. Ernest Middlemiss, has been appointed the first Warden; he is continuing the Secretaryship of the South African National Section of the International Committee for Bird Preservation and, we are glad to say, of the Western Province Branch of the Wild Life Protection Society of South Africa.

Bermuda.—In January, 1951, the Cahow, *Pterodroma cahow*, a Bermuda petrel whose extinction had been feared, was rediscovered by Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy, of the American Museum of Natural History. A member of our Society, Mr. Peter Smithers, M.P., who immediately raised the question of the bird's protection, has sent us the following information which he received from the Colonial Secretary :—

“All the islands and areas upon which the Cahow is believed to nest and the waters surrounding them to a depth of 50 yards, have been declared bird sanctuaries, except the Inner Bear Rocks which are within the United States Base leased area. The United States authorities have been requested to prohibit the landing of persons on these rocks so that they may be preserved as if they were statutory bird sanctuaries.”

Members may recollect the report in *S.P.F.E. Journal*, Part XVII, of the rediscovery in Dominica of the Capped Petrel, or Diablotin, *Pterodroma haesitata*. The two species are very closely allied.

The Quagga.—In *The Times* of 3rd August there appeared a report of the possible existence of the Quagga in South-West Africa and a statement that a reward had been offered for the skull and skin of any specimen delivered to the Transvaal Museum. We are glad to report that in answer to an inquiry from our Society the Director of the Transvaal Museum disassociated the Museum from the reward, saying that if the offer was, in fact, made it was without authority, and the Museum was in no way responsible. The Secretary for South-West Africa has also written to say that the originator of the offer, Mr. B. Carp, has been asked to withdraw it, and that the resident officials in the area have been instructed to ensure that no action is taken as a result of the offer being made.

Although it is most improbable that the Quagga now exists anywhere, or ever did exist in South-West Africa, no surer way of making certain of its complete extinction could be devised than the offer of such a reward. But more important is the effect of the offer on Hartmann's Zebra which does still exist in the area and which, in certain lights, may easily be mistaken

for the Quagga. Very interesting in this connection is the report by C. G. Hahn, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Ondangua, published in our *Journal*, No. XXXIX, of April, 1940.

Red Deer.—The British Field Sports Society informs us that they have drafted a bill to deal with the protection of deer in Scotland. Their opinion is that it would be best to get the bill for Scotland through before considering the position of the English deer.

REPORT ON A VISIT TO EAST AFRICA

By Captain KEITH CALDWELL

(Late of the Kenya and Uganda Game Departments)

I reached Nairobi on 29th December, 1950, and left on 4th May, 1951, after covering about 4,000 miles. With the exception of a visit to Dar-es-Salaam the whole of my time was spent in Kenya.

I should like to express my thanks to the Government of Tanganyika for their kindness and also for the patience with which they have borne with me and, once again, to the Game Department of Kenya for acting as my godparent.

Kenya.

I am glad to say that Captain Ritchie, whose retirement became effective last October, has almost completely recovered from his serious illness. His great knowledge and wise counsel will always be at the disposal of his successor Mr. William Hale.

To the latter I am indebted for continuous help and kindness during all my time in Kenya. He faces a difficult task. More and more land is required for development—more and more complaints pour in on account of genuine or alleged damage by animals—more and more problems arise daily.

The general attitude toward game in Kenya—taken by and large—continues to be good.

The new Kenya Game Ordinance has at last become law, and even if not perfect (what Game Ordinance ever is?), is an immense improvement on its predecessor.

I am indebted to the editor of *The Field* for permission to reproduce the following comments which I wrote just after leaving Kenya :—

The Legislative Council of Kenya has just passed a “Wild Animals Protection Ordinance” which will, it is expected, come into force within