

# Areas to Preserve in Sierra Leone

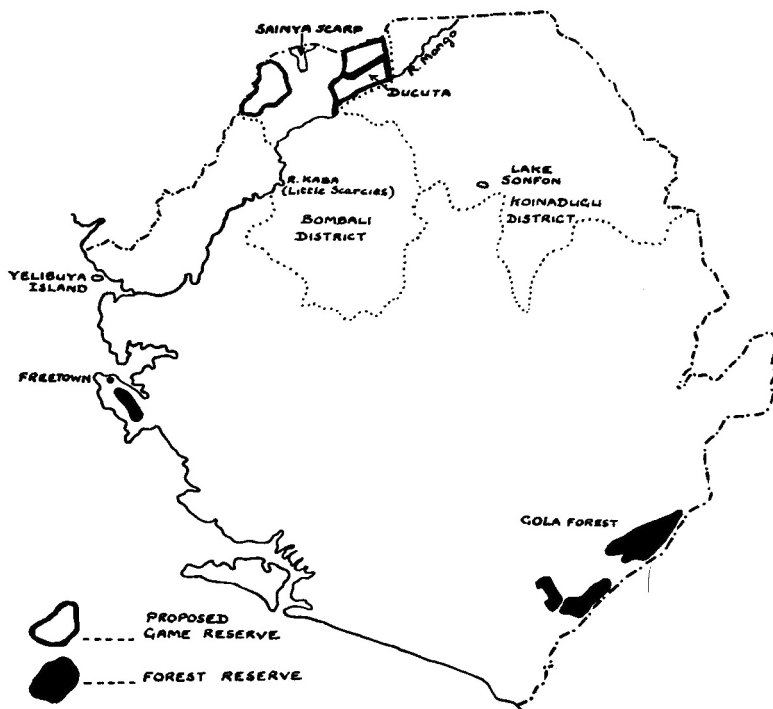
A. F. Wilkinson

Sierra Leone has no national parks or equivalent reserves. Dr Wilkinson is a geologist who worked first in the north and north-east, the Koinadugu District, where the forest destruction and hunting pressure on the larger mammals combined to endorse the gloomy picture painted by Dr Lowes in *Oryx*, September 1970, page 309. Later, working further to the east, he found the situation rather better and was able to tot up a list of twenty-nine mammals seen. He suggests, now that diamonds, Sierra Leone's staple earner of foreign exchange, are rapidly giving out, that the tourist industry is bound to burgeon and game parks will be needed. He writes:

For several weeks I worked in an area called Ducuta, Tambahka Chiefdom, Bombali District, Northern Province, which to my mind would make an ideal game park. In the wedge of land between the confluence of the Mongo and Kaba (Little Scarcies) rivers, approximately 250 sq kms long, I have seen most of the animals on my list, and this is the only place I have seen elephant and buffalo.

The terrain is varied, with large rivers and many small ones, open Guinea savanna and hills up to 13,000 ft, notably Mame and Tambara Hills. The area is clearly delimited by large rivers forming the northern, western and southern boundaries; the eastern boundary could be formed by a road joining two of the rivers which also make patrolling easy. The area is depopulated, with only one footpath through it and four small villages.

Elephant *Loxodonta africana*  
Cape buffalo *Syncerus caffer*  
Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*  
Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus*  
Bushpig *Potamochoerus porcus*  
Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes*  
Western baboon *Papio papio*  
Western black and white colobus *Colobus polykomos*  
Olive colobus *Colobus verus*  
Patas monkey *Erythrocebus patas*  
Spot-nose monkey *Cercopithecus petaurista*  
Blue monkey *C. mitis*  
Green monkey *C. aethiops*  
Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*  
Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*  
Red-flanked duiker *Cephalophus rufilatus*  
Abbot's duiker *C. spadix*  
Chevrotain *Hyemoschus aquaticus*  
Crested porcupine *Hystrix cristata*  
Giant pouched rat *Cricetomys gambianus*  
Cane rat *Thryonomys* sp.  
West African ground squirrel *Xerus erythropus*  
Jumping mouse *Rattus morio*  
Musk shrew *Crocidura* sp.  
Civet *Viverra civetta*  
Genet *Genetta* sp.  
Jackal *Canis adustus*  
White-bellied pangolin *Manis tricuspis*  
Bats *Chiroptera*



Three other areas for consideration are: Part of the western coast and tidal creek area—e.g. Yelibuya Island, Mahela Creek, Sasiyek Creek—with magnificent birdlife and easy access by launch from Freetown; the Sainya Scarp, an extension into northern Sierra Leone of an extensive plateau in Guinea, and one of Sierra Leone's most prominent physical features. The scarp is small—the periphery can be walked round easily in two days—but precipitous towards the top. The lower slopes are farmed on the slash and burn method, but much forest still remains. Chimpanzee, baboon and other monkeys abound, leopard have been recently reported, and the flat summit supports a very varied fauna. The third suggestion is a part of the Gola Forest, in the south-east, almost certainly a pipe dream, for the government seems intent on felling all the remaining primary forest, which without doubt was Sierra Leone's greatest asset. The Gola Forest is the largest remaining patch.

Elephant are extremely shy and probably not very abundant. Buffalo are probably more common, but heavily hunted. Hippo are restricted to stretches of the Great Scarcies river, and I have seen a dozen or more animals together at one time. I have the impression that these three species are 're-stocked' from neighbouring Guinea where they are relatively unmolested, although this is pure supposition. Chimpanzees are locally common, although normally confined to remnant strips of riverine forest; baboons are ubiquitous and sometimes extremely common. Monkeys, not being acceptable food, are the most abundant element, but the black and white colobus is under increasing pressure for its skin to supply the infant tourist trade.

## Zoo Yearbook

A substantial section in the *International Zoo Yearbook*, volume 14, edited by Nicole Duplaix-Hall (Zoological Society of London, £9.00; paperback, £6.80), is devoted to Animal Trade and Transport with articles by conservationists and zoo men, including Barbara Harrisson, René Honegger (reptiles), Wayne King (crocodiles), Warren King (Indonesian birds), Oliver Graham-Jones (air transport), John Seago on the responsibilities of an animal catcher, and Geoffrey Schomberg on the responsibilities of everybody involved. In the conservation section Dr I. W. Rowlands, of the Wellcome Institute in London, discusses progress in artificial insemination for captive mammals—a field of study in which ‘there are no short cuts to success’, and four authors, including Russell Mittermeier, describe and evaluate the much criticised ranching of squirrel monkeys *Saimiri sciureus* on an island in the Amazon in Colombia, by the animal dealer Mike Tsalickis. The usual invaluable reference section includes a register of animals bred in captivity in 1972, including multiple generation captive births, and a census of rare animals in captivity.

## IUCN Publications

IUCN Occasional Paper No. 8, a *List of Mammals which have become Extinct or are Possibly Extinct since 1600*, by H. A. Goodwin and J. M. Goodwin. It is the lineal descendent of a paper prepared by the late James Fisher, and it is an extraordinary oversight not to have acknowledged him as a co-author. While it is useful to have such a list, it contains altogether too many forms that are not really extinct, such as the Sinai leopard, and the Caspian tiger.

Other publications by the International Union for Conservation of Nature include:

*Proceedings of the 2nd World Conference on National Parks* at Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks in September 1972;

*1974 UN List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves*, New Series No 29;

Two Environmental Policy and Law Papers: *Emergence of Proposals for Recompensing Developing Countries for Maintaining Environmental Quality*, compiled by Yvonne I. Nicholls, No. 5; and *Financing Environmental Measures in Developing Countries: the Principle of Additionality*, by Scott Macleod, No. 6;

*Classification and Use of Protected Natural and Cultural Areas* and *A System for Defining and Classifying Natural Regions for Purposes of Conservation*, both by R. F. Dasmann, Occasional Papers Nos 4 and 7; *An Ecological Survey of the proposed Volcano Baru National Park, Republic of Panama*, by Anne LaBastille, Occasional Paper No. 6.

## New Quarterly

Apart from its coloured cover the new *Environmental Conservation* quarterly appears almost indistinguishable from the editor's (Nicholas Polunin's) previous baby, *Biological Conservation*, with the same format, a very similar and 'meaty' content, and the same publishers (Elsevier) in association with IUCN and WWF. Main articles in the first issue include: Cloudsley-Thompson on the expanding Sahara; Paul Ehrlich on population and the environment—‘the race between population growth and food production has been lost’, he says, and what do we do about it? Sir Joseph Hutchinson on land restoration in Britain, and Warren Richard and Jerry Brown on vehicles in the Arctic tundra with some illuminating photographs. Subscription: 120 Swiss francs.