

# The Fauna Preservation Society

NOVEMBER, 1957

---

## EDITORIAL NOTES

*Secretary's Visit to Africa.*—The following letter has come from the Secretary, who is touring East and Central Africa on behalf of the Society. We hope to publish a complete account of his tour in the next *Oryx*.

“ I am now at Treetops Hotel, Nyeri, Kenya. It is 1.0 a.m. and I have just come into the dining-room from the veranda where, thirty-three feet from the ground, an artificial moon lights up the salt lick and the forest pool below.

For the last hour three rhinos have been sharing the salty earth more or less amicably, but never allowing one another within three feet or so without a tremendous demonstration of squealing, grunting, and stamping—all clearly without the slightest intention of really going into battle. There have been six rhinos to-night; two at least were females, one with a young calf.

Soon after dark a herd of buffaloes came to the far side of the pool and remained there, only just visible, until nearly midnight. Then they came quietly round the pool into the true moonlight to share in the attractive salt. First came ten cows with two calves; later three bulls in a separate party. It was interesting to see that the rhinos allowed the buffaloes to approach more closely than their own kind, about two feet seemed the tolerable distance. Once when a cow came nearer than this, the rhino snorted and demonstrated at her. But when the buffalo lowered her head and stood her ground, the rhino quickly took a pace or two backwards.

Earlier in the night an elephant visited the pool and disliking the rhino, as is the custom of elephants, had driven off any one of them which dared to approach him. The rhino ran off into the darkness, as easily dismissed as a farmyard pig might have been. Similarly the rhino objected to the near presence of a family party of giant forest hog, male, female and four young of two different ages, which have been the rarest animals to visit the pool this evening. Bushbuck have crept in to enjoy the salt

also, but have only occasionally dared to join the other animals in the open.

Ten minutes ago something frightened the animals and a jumble of rhino and buffalo made off helter-skelter into the darkness.

Though Treetops is literally armchair nature observation and some may prefer a rougher way, there can be no denying that here there is a wonderful opportunity of watching animals going about their lives unconscious of man's presence.

Treetops is only twelve miles from the town of Nyeri. Although it is part of the Aberdare National Park, farmland borders it on three sides, so that human and domestic animal noises can occasionally be heard. Treetops shows how near to civilization even the largest wild animals can live, when both they and their environment are undisturbed."