

found in the Bainuna country between the base of the Qatar peninsula and the Trucial coast.

The foregoing account shows that none of the Arabian fauna, with the exception of the Ostrich, has yet become extinct, though all are now menaced by the rapid expansion of motorized hunting parties. But it is feared that the next decade may see the end of its valiant struggle to survive in the deserts of the peninsula.

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## NATURE RESERVES OF NATAL AND ZULULAND

(With acknowledgments to the Report of the Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board, April, 1950–March, 1951.)

Throughout the report the Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) is referred to as the Square-lipped Rhinoceros and not as the White Rhinoceros. Both terms have been in common use for many years; the former is the more descriptive and it is hoped that the latter, which is a complete misnomer, may fall into disuse.

### THE NATAL RESERVES

Of the Natal Reserves the Royal Natal National Park, with which Rugged Glen is combined, is famed chiefly for its scenery and its attraction to the geologist and the botanist, while the purpose of the Krantzklouf is to preserve a unique area of natural vegetation. It is only in the Giant's Castle Reserve that the larger wild animals exist in great numbers. Notes on some of them follow.

*Eland* (more than 1,500).—The position is satisfactory, although the eland's wandering propensity causes continuous anxiety. Being exposed to illegal hunting when out of the Reserve, particularly in the south, some attempts have been made to drive the wanderers back and other similar projects are contemplated in the near future. Aerial reconnaissance proved cheaper and more reliable than ground parties to locate stray animals, and elicited the information that journeys to age-old natural mineral licks may be one reason for the wanderings of small troops of eland.

Studies of the diet of eland are being made with a view to augmenting, perhaps by planting, those foods which they favour.

So far, although a few of the larger shrubs forming their winter diet are known, little has been established concerning their summer foods. Although they may appear to graze, close examination shows that little grass has been cropped, and it is probable that most of their food consists of small plants growing in the grass. The only places where there is a noticeable cropping of the grass are in certain patches where "wild rhubarb" grows freely. Bracken shoots are eaten in limited quantities.

Generally speaking the eland feed high on the foothills and ridges close to the face of the Berg during spring and summer. In autumn they commence moving into *Leucosidea* scrub covered, sheltered valleys, and usually remain within such a specially favoured and circumscribed area for the winter.

First calves are born in late August, with calving continuing into October. Cows with calves form into troops and the bulls join them towards the middle of October, by which time troops may number as many as 150 cows and two or three bulls. Yearlings herd separately and are usually led by a few aged cows; such troops are most difficult to approach, the cows being very shy and suspicious, and will lead the yearlings away as soon as any danger is seen or scented.

Bulls are invariably less shy than cows, and a number of the former winter regularly in the Bushmans River valley and in the vicinity of the rest huts. There they become increasingly tame, although visitors are well advised to take no liberties with them. Eland cows, which are always difficult to approach and invariably keep their calves on the "blind" side, seldom enter the Bushmans Valley and calves not at all; it is not improbable that lessons learned in the past when calves were caught in this area for zoos and the like have not been forgotten.

When surprised at close quarters eland invariably stand stock still for some time before stampeding. Younger animals will sometimes stampede at once, but having discovered that their elders have not run away with them will often hurriedly return and in ludicrous manner join the others in staring at the intruder. On being surprised eland give vent to a low coughing snort. These animals seldom gallop; their usual fast pace is a rapid trot. They are capable jumpers and find no difficulty in clearing a fence of normal height without preliminary run.

*Reedbuck* (100).—Fairly numerous but seldom seen by visitors on account of their propensity for vlei ground with good cover. Judging by the rate at which these animals are being illegally killed in many parts of the Province, and the rapid disappearance of suitable habitat, this species is perhaps the most likely to be

exterminated within the foreseeable future, and every attempt will be made to ensure a measure of survival within the Reserves.

*Bushbuck* (100–150).—The only reason for these animals being no more numerous is the paucity of forest cover at the high altitudes of the Giant's Castle Reserve. Although receiving full protection within the Reserve bushbuck remain wary and clever enough to avoid detection, particularly the rams. It is of some interest to note that even hounds trained to vermin and accustomed to ignore other buck are with difficulty restrained from following the scent of bushbuck.

*Mountain Reedbuck* (1,500–2,000).—Although considered scarce in most parts these attractive antelopes are happily plentiful in this Reserve, where they may be found in groups of from five to twenty. They not infrequently mingle with the Vaal Rhebuck, a species from which they are not easily distinguished by the tyro. The principal differences in field identification are slightly forward-curving horns, larger ears, hair-like coat, and large fan tail.

These engaging creatures are devoted parents; their warning signal is a shrill whistle, often heard on misty evenings.

Areas most favoured are the sandstone terraces in the protea belt.

*Grey or Vaal Rhebuck* (1,200–1,500).—These antelope with straight horns, smaller tail and ears than the last-mentioned, and furry coat, are found almost everywhere within the Reserve and are increasing most satisfactorily. It is not generally known that the males of these dainty creatures are most ferocious fighters in the rutting season. Their fights more often than not end with the death of one of the contestants, since the victor will pursue the vanquished over an immense distance until the latter is exhausted, and then kill him.

*Klipspringer* (200–300).—Every attempt is being made vigorously to preserve these animals, which maintain a somewhat precarious existence high up on the face of the Quathlamba-Drakensberg. Their only human enemies are the Basuto, and a great deal of the Rangers' time and endeavour is taken up with preventing attempts by them to destroy klipspringer, as well as to put out the dangerous fires these natives start in inaccessible areas to aid their hunting plans.

A klipspringer travelling at full speed on an almost sheer rock face is an unforgettable sight. The animals appear to favour caves as sleeping quarters and as shelters during snowstorms, and it is felt that the presence or absence of suitable caves may be a deciding factor in their choice of habitat.

*Grey Duiker* (200–300).—Grey duiker are well able to hold their own throughout the Province, even in the more intensively settled areas. They occur in fair numbers in those portions of the Reserve where adequate shrub or grass cover is to be found.

*Oribi* (400–500).—This is becoming a scarce species throughout the Natal grassveld and must be nearing extinction in most areas. Its extermination is attributable only to the native and to so-called “sportsmen”, from whose point of view the oribi is ideal game since it “hides” in full view, runs a few yards on being disturbed, and then turns about and stands stock still. It may happily be reported that at least within the Giant’s Castle Game Reserve these pretty and amusing antelope are plentiful and ubiquitous.

On the approach of a horseman oribi will often spring to their feet from a “form” in short grass and then, doubtful that this was a good move, will sink back to a recumbent position to watch in abject fear as the intruder passes a few yards away. When surprised at close quarters oribi crouch and then expel their breath in a short sharp hiss before bounding away.

*Grysbuck*.—No attempt is made to guess at the numbers of this rare species, which inhabits thick scrub and is rarely seen.

Generally speaking, no fears are entertained for the future of any antelope in this Reserve. Eland have but two major enemies, man and degeneration; the former is becoming subject to increasingly effective control, whilst the latter can be obviated in due course by selective culling. The smaller antelope have of course to contend with a variety of natural hazards such as leopards, eagles, baboons, various types of cats, and jackals. But such enemies *are* natural ones and within the Giant’s Castle Reserve it may be said that the balance of nature is fully maintained. Baboons alone have increased to an unnatural degree because their arch-enemy the leopard has become so scarce. The result has been, as elsewhere throughout Africa, that baboons eke out a somewhat precarious existence and catch, kill and eat any small creature they may find.

#### ZULULAND RESERVES

The greatest variety of animals and, except for the Square-lipped Rhinoceros, the greatest numbers also, are found in the Hluhluwe Reserve. It contains approximately the following :—

Black Rhinoceros . . . . .	190
Square-lipped Rhinoceros . . . . .	20
Burchell's Zebra . . . . .	Over 1,000
Blue Wildebeeste . . . . .	Over 1,000
Black Wildebeeste . . . . .	2
Duiker . . . . .	Between 250-500
Blue Duiker . . . . .	Between 250-500
Red Duiker . . . . .	Between 250-500
Klipspringer . . . . .	Under 100
Steenbuck . . . . .	Very few
Common Waterbuck . . . . .	300
Reedbuck . . . . .	Between 100-150
Mountain Reedbuck . . . . .	Under 100
Impala . . . . .	400
Bushbuck . . . . .	Over 1,000
Nyala . . . . .	600
Greater Kudu . . . . .	300
African Buffalo . . . . .	700
Giraffe . . . . .	4
Ostrich . . . . .	3
Warthog . . . . .	Over 1,000
Bushpig . . . . .	Numerous
Leopard . . . . .	Few
Hyena . . . . .	Few
Wild Cats, Mongoose, Monkeys, Baboons, Crocodiles, Monitor Lizards } . . . . .	Numerous

NOTES ON THE ANIMALS OF THE ZULULAND RESERVES

*Square-lipped Rhinoceros.*—There are now about 500 Square-lipped Rhinoceros in the Umfolozi Reserve and twenty in the Hluhluwe.

*Rhinoceroses.*—During the Christmas holidays a large party of Durban visitors went into the Hluhluwe Reserve in two cars, accompanied by Native Game Guard Zeta, who has been employed there for sixteen years. On a side track in the Amanzibomvu area the party came upon nine Black Rhino and were compelled to stop. One rhino, a battle-scarred old female, approached the leading car and, apparently without malice, placed its head under the rear mudguard and commenced to rock the vehicle. The Game Guard, with commendable courage and presence of mind, got out of the car and dealt the rhino a blow on the head with his belt, to which latter his handcuffs are always attached. Surprised at this attack the rhino moved off and was encouraged in its retreat by the Game Guard who threw his belt at the animal, which carried the handcuffs round its horns for some 100 yards before freeing itself and disappearing into dense bush. (This may perhaps be regarded as the first occasion upon which a rhino has been placed under arrest!) The car was not damaged, and the occupants, having recovered from their fright, regarded the episode as an unique experience.

Intense dislike would seem evident on the part of both species of rhino for any non-indigenous plant, shrub or article. A Black Rhino which entered the Chief Conservator's garden on numerous occasions persistently destroyed oleanders, tree dahlias and other exotic shrubs. In one night the animal flattened six out of seven Chinese Guava trees, but on all occasions indigenous trees and shrubs were left undisturbed. In the Umfolozi Reserve, where at one time processed timber poles were being used, the Square-lipped Rhino made a regular habit

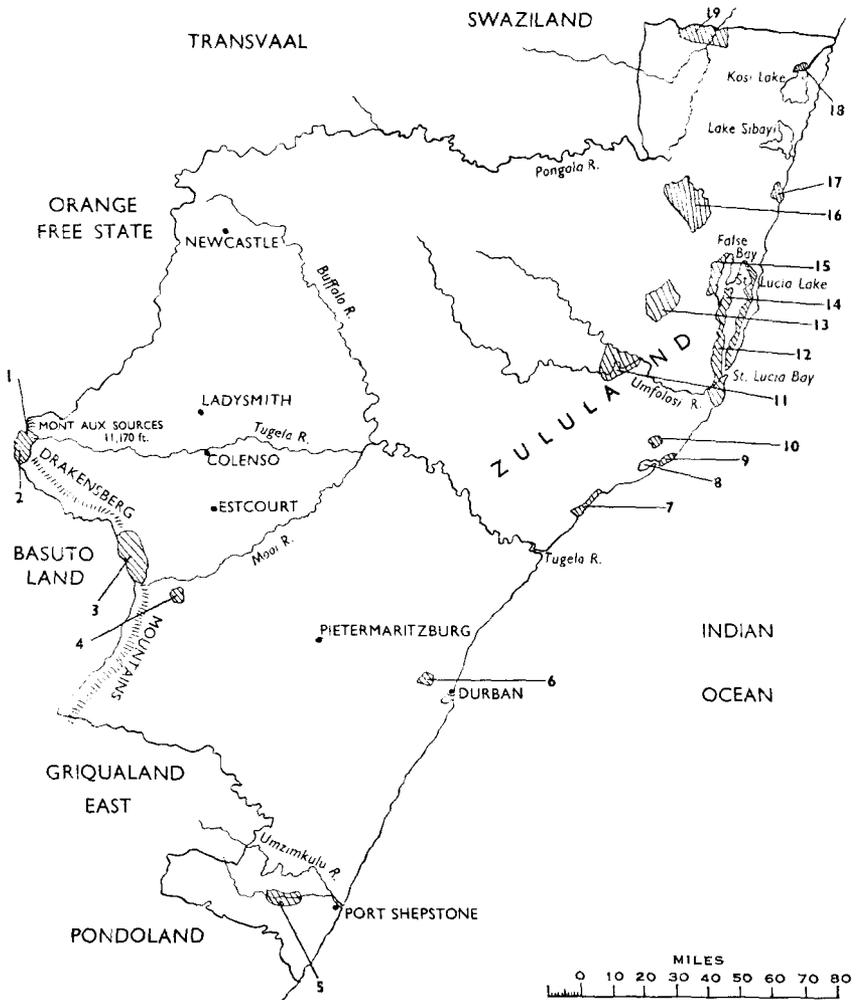
RESERVES AND PARKS		
No. on Map.		Approx. area in sq. miles.
<i>Natal.</i>		
1	Rugged Glen Nature Reserve . . . . .	3
2	Royal Natal National Park . . . . .	31
3	Giant's Castle Game Reserve and Park . . . . .	78
4	Kamberg Nature Reserve . . . . .	8
5	Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve . . . . .	6
6	Krantzkloof Nature Reserve . . . . .	2
<i>Zululand.</i>		
7	Umlalazi Nature Reserve . . . . .	3
8	Richards Bay Game Reserve (the waters of the Umhlatuzi Lagoon and Estuary).	3
9	Richards Bay Park . . . . .	7
10	Enseleni Nature Reserve . . . . .	1
11	Umfolozi Game Reserve . . . . .	112
12	St. Lucia Park (country surrounding St. Lucia Lake to the depth of half a mile).	48
13	Hluhluwe Game Reserve . . . . .	89
14	St. Lucia Game Reserve (the waters and islands of St. Lucia Lake).	142
15	False Bay Park . . . . .	3
16	Mkuzi Game Reserve . . . . .	97
17	Sordwana Bay Park . . . . .	2
18	Kosi Bay Nature Reserve . . . . .	50 acres
19	Ndumu Game Reserve . . . . .	39
	Total . . . . .	<u>674</u>

In Natal and Zululand the terms Park and Reserve have little difference in meaning.

of dispersing the stacks of treated timber, some poles being found up to fifty yards from the pile with horn marks clearly evident.

It is commonly believed that the Black Rhino feeds exclusively on acacia thorn trees. The Chief Conservator watched an adult bull in the Hluhluwe Reserve leave the acacia scrub and for ten minutes feed on the strong-smelling, mint-like weed *Lantana salvifolia*.

*Giant Rat.*—This rare animal, *Cricetomys gambianus*, a large coarse-haired rat with an overall length of just on three feet,



was noticed in the Hluhluwe Reserve. Few examples have been recorded in Southern Africa and none south of Inhambane. A nocturnal mammal, it feeds on tree fruits and seeds, has characteristic cheek pouches not found in other Muridae, and is said to be excellent eating.

*Nyala*.—When the Board transported some of these antelopes to the Hluhluwe Game Reserve it was said that they would not

“do” there as the locality was unsuitable for the species. In actual fact the Nyala have increased remarkably well and it is of interest to record that in F. R. N. Findlay's *Big Game Shooting and Travel in S.E. Africa* (1903), mention is made of one Cecil Emmett having shot a Nyala bull from seven or eight which he saw on a very misty morning “on the mountains near the junction of the Manzibomvu and Hluhluwe rivers”. In other words Nyala at that time occurred at or near the site of the present Hluhluwe Game Reserve camp.

*Giraffe*.—During December, 1950, Mr. D. E. Mitchell, M.P., the Secretary and the Chief Conservator, proceeded to the Kruger National Park to accept some young giraffe for the Hluhluwe Reserve, kindly offered by the National Parks Board of Trustees. Two small heifers and one juvenile bull were caught and after a 28-hour journey, non-stop except for frequent halts to rest the animals, all three reached Hluhluwe in good trim. Of this valuable addition to the adult male and female giraffe already in the Reserve it is regretted that the young bull died later from bladder trouble.

*Hippo*.—Two unusual incidents connected with hippo occurred at St. Lucia during March, 1951. The first was the death of a hippo when giving birth to twin calves, for although hippo twins are not unknown they must be most rare. The second was the occurrence for some nights of a young hippo bull in the grounds of a hotel at St. Lucia Estuary. This animal had been involved in a fight with a larger bull and it would appear that for a time he had been frightened of returning to the water, and had found preferable sanctuary in the presence of human beings.

As in previous years there has been some mortality among hippos throughout the St. Lucia Game Reserve. It is invariably found that bulls are concerned and that death has resulted from injuries sustained in fighting. These fights between bull hippos often result in many grievous wounds even to the extent of broken legs or shoulders.

*Elephant*.—It seems probable that Natal's last remaining small herd of elephant have now taken up residence in the Sihangwane Forest, Ndumu Reserve, and it is to be hoped that they may find permanent sanctuary there. During the year five elephants wandered as far south as Mkuzi, and returned to their habitat without causing annoyance or damage.

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