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Imperial Ark? The Politics of Wildlife in East and South-Central Africa, 1920-1992

By  
Jeffrey Schauer

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
History  
in the  
Graduate Division  
of the  
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor James Vernon, Chair  
Professor Tabitha Kanogo  
Professor Thomas Laqueur  
Professor Michael Watts

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Imperial Ark? The Politics of Wildlife in East and South-Central Africa, 1920-1992

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By

Jeffrey Schauer

## ABSTRACT

Imperial Ark? The Politics of Wildlife in East and South-Central Africa, 1920-1992

by

Jeffrey Schauer

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Berkeley

Professor James Vernon, Chair

The dissertation examines the “politics of wildlife” in British colonies in East and South-Central Africa during the colonial era and after independence. By conceptualizing that “politics” around the institutions, individuals, and interests that took an interest in wildlife matters, the dissertation attends to the emergence of and changes in wildlife policy as they were shaped by the characteristics of colonial rule and a broader set of regional, imperial, and global developments, including decolonization and post-Second World War internationalism. It also attends to the influence of Africans on shaping colonial wildlife policy, whether as farmers, nationalists, or local officials. The central discovery of this dissertation is that wildlife policy moved from being the preserve of an imperial lobby to a policy sphere governed by the concerns of various sectors of local colonial society. After the Second World War, security concerns combined with a strengthened international preservationist movement to effectively internationalise Africa’s wildlife. This occurred alongside Africanization, a policy pursued by newly-independent governments in order to shore up their own control over policymaking, and the arrival of international scientists, who sought to introduce their own priorities to the wildlife sector. In this seven-decade contest between those interests which were local, colonial, or national on the one hand, and those which were imperial, international, or global on the other, a surprising array of interests sought to capture East and South-Central Africa’s wildlife sector for ambitions related to economic development, anti-colonial campaigning, preservationist advocacy, scientific inquiry, administrative supremacy, and colonial and national security. Over time, struggles for the control of this sector reflected broader trends at the global and local levels, marking the ascendancy and eclipse of colonial empires, and the rise of a neo-colonial order.

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A child of California, I spent my undergraduate years looking to escape the state. I think it took seeing the threat to the institution that has now been my home for ten years in order for me to appreciate how critical the University of California and the ideas that it represents have been to all of the opportunities I have had in my own life. Living in Berkeley, a fabled place for many Californians, has been a wonderful experience, with all of its quirks, its heady idealism, and the contrast between the shimmering campus, the powerful community, and the grubby mentality which increasingly seeks to govern the institution. It has been an honor to work with the wonderful undergraduate students who provide the life-blood of the University.

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offer support and fun get-togethers. My grandmother, Helen Schauer, and my uncle, Lloyd Clifton, were with me at the beginning of this process, but not, alas, as I finish. Their love and optimism and humour provided a mainstay that our family misses however much they remain an inspiration.

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## Introduction

### Imperial Ark? The Politics of Wildlife in East and Central Africa

“As any game warden from the Aberdare National Park will tell you, an elephant is not an animal to be trifled with. After all, it is the biggest mammal that ever walked the earth. And Kanywaji is not just another elephant. He is a terrorist. I do not know why he is not in the Most Wanted list of the police. If someone were to write a notice about him in the newspapers, he would have to say, ‘Kanywaji is dangerous and members of the public are warned to keep away from him and report him to the authorities’”.<sup>1</sup>

In 1903, a small group of elite, concerned Britons created the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (SPFE). The SPFE was created to advocate for wildlife, and defined its goal as follows: “to create a sound public opinion on the subject at home and in our dependencies, further the formation of game reserves and sanctuaries, the selection of the most suitable places for these sanctuaries, and the enforcing of suitable game laws and regulations”.<sup>2</sup> The SPFE was not an ordinary group of concerned citizens. Many of its members were aristocrats, with connections to powerful officials in the Foreign Office and other political redoubts. One of its founders, Edward North Buxton, came from a family long invested in reforming social relations in the Empire, so it was perhaps unsurprising that the Buxtons were represented on the question of imperial preservation. The SPFE had the ear of Lord Salisbury, and counted a great number of British aristocrats amongst its number. It was able to draw on the writings of imperial hunters and explorers who offered first-hand testimony of the diminished state of game in the Empire, and the need to do something to protect what wildlife remained. The imperial wildlife lobby called for a uniform, empire-wide approach to protecting wild animals. No less a figure than George Curzon, then between offices of state, articulated the relationship between a central theory of imperial rule and the protecting of wildlife. “We owe the preservation of these interesting and valuable...types of animal life as a duty to nature and to the world”, he declared, continuing, “We are the owners of the greatest Empire in the universe [and are] trustees for posterity of the natural content of the Empire”.<sup>3</sup>

Some saw hypocrisy and class interest in the machinations of the imperial preservationist. But the lobby was quick to defend itself from such accusations, taking to the pages of its increasingly popular journal to set the record straight. Henry Seton-Karr, an explorer, author, and Conservative MP wrote that “those who are specially interested, from knowledge and experience, in this question have been called ‘penitent butchers’”. The term was used “shall I say wrongly and ignorantly?”, Seton-Karr explained, to characterise

Men who, having in earlier days taken their fill of big-game slaughter and the delights of the chase in wild outlying parts of the earth, now, being smitten with remorse, and having reached a less strenuous term of life, think to condone our earlier bloodthirstiness by advocating the preservation of what we formerly chased and killed [...] Your true sportsman is always a real lover of nature. He

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<sup>1</sup> Ng’ang’a Mbugua, *Terrorists of the Aberdare* (Nairobi: Big Books, 2009), 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> “The Preservation of the Wild Fauna”, *The Times*, 21 April 1906, p. 3, Issue 38000.

<sup>2</sup> “The Preservation of the Wild Fauna”, *The Times*, 21 April 1906, p. 3, Issue 38000.

<sup>3</sup> “The Year”, *Journal Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire* (1907), 21.

kills, it is true, but only in sweet reasonableness and moderation, for food if necessary, but mainly for trophies.<sup>4</sup>

The SPFE had initial success in promoting game regulations and protections, as well as the idea of protected areas. Although it styled itself as a British imperial organisation, it maintained connections with the cultural and political elites of other western countries. In the year of its founding its membership rolls included the likes of Theodore Roosevelt, Count Hoyos of Austria, Prince Henry of Liechtenstein, and Baron Gravenitz of Russia, in addition to a host of British notables.<sup>5</sup> Although the focus of the SPFE's efforts remained on British territories—largely in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia—its journals also highlighted wildlife matters in other parts of the world and used its international members list to demonstrate the universal character of its cause. Preservationists spent their time lobbying the Foreign Office and other relevant official parties, focussing their efforts on particular species, protected areas, and issues.

To instruct the public in the logic of its campaign, the imperial wildlife lobby went beyond editorialising in the British press. When one of its foremost public advocates, Frederick Courteney Selous, was killed fighting the Germans in Tanzania, wildlife lobbyists were quick to help stage a ceremony commemorating his life in the Natural Museum. In the course of his life as an explorer, naturalist, corporate mercenary, and imperial agent, Selous had come to symbolise the best of the Empire from the perspective of its proponents. An amateur naturalist, he had for years made a living by shipping specimens back to the Natural History Museum. And so when members of the imperial elite gathered beneath the Museum's vaulted ceilings, they did so in a way which connected Selous' imperial exploits to his work as a preservationist—a status not incompatible with his hunting prowess. The Museum was festooned with the skins of the animals he had shot. And the crowd was joined by the likes of Lord Grey (sometime Foreign Secretary and a longtime SPFE supporter), E.N. Buxton (SPFE founder), a Director of the British South African Company, Robert Baden-Powell (founder of the Boy Scouts), and C E Fagan (Secretary of the Natural History Museum and SPFE supporter).<sup>6</sup> This summertime ceremony in 1920 was in some respects the high point of the imperial wildlife lobby.

Given its connections, the fact that its narrative was virtually unchallenged in Britain, and the fact that it had the fauna preservation sphere to itself, it might have been supposed that the SPFE would have been the primary engine behind matters in the Empire's wildlife sector. Indeed, many historians have assumed as much, and academics and other commentators often draw a straight line from the heyday of the SPFE in the 1900s and 1910s through to the emergence of environmental and preservationist organisations later in the twentieth century. And indeed, a few cutting remarks about 'penitent butchers' in the British press aside, at a first glance the SPFE appeared uncontested in its efforts to uphold the interests of preservationists. But by 1922, the Society's leadership was noticing a "'slump' in faunal preservation", a declining interest in their cause, and a new difficulty in making progress towards their goal of an enlightened humanity which had as one of its foremost priorities the protection of animals in Africa and Asia. In 1922, preservationists decided that their bad luck could be "attributed to the general slackening of the fibres of civilisation".<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Journal Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire* (1908), 26.

<sup>5</sup> "List of Members", *Journal Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire*.

<sup>6</sup> "Memorial to Captain Selous", *The Times*, 14 February, 1917, p. 5; "Memorial to Capt Selous", *The Times*, 24 August 1918, p. 9; NHM DF/1004/CP/665 The Selous Memorial 1917-1953.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire* (1922), 38.

While Frederick Selous' funeral provides for one way of understanding the emergence and trajectory of wildlife policy in Britain's African Empire, another story, this one from the early 1930s, suggests that the imperial wildlife lobby was not necessarily centre-stage in the creation of wildlife policy in the Empire. In 1931, a hunter employed by the Ugandan Game Department in the northern part of the colony, in the region bordering what is today South Sudan, was following an elephant which had been destroying farmers' crops. Seizing an opportunity to make a shot, the hunter fired. The shot failed to go home, and the hunter was run through by the infuriated elephant's tusk before the animal was killed by Edward Omara, who was accompanying him. Omara, who killed the elephant with a spear, received a commendation from the colonial government and a monetary reward. But his exploits did not end there. During a drought in 1937, Omara again used a spear to kill an elephant which had taken up residence at a water hole and was killing people who came down with their calabashes and tins to collect the precious resource. For an "act of calculated courage carried out for the public good in circumstances of extreme danger to himself", Omara received the Empire Medal for Gallantry. Although he was listed in Whitaker's Almanac as Edward O'Mara, and was supposed by some to be Irish, he was in fact an Acholi hunter, assisting the Game Department in Uganda, and advising the head of the National Parks, Rennie Bere, who recounted his exploits.<sup>8</sup>

The traditional story about wildlife conservation in the British Empire—and in Africa particularly—suggests that someone like Edward Omara would have been punished as a poacher rather than awarded for gallantry. Most members of the SPFE would certainly have deplored an African killing such an impressive "tusker". It was, after all, under British rule that African subjects became unwilling parties to agreements and conventions which were designed to save wild animals from the threat of extinction by strictly regulating hunting and by cracking down on poaching. In fact, people who had formerly hunted "legally" were abruptly turned into poachers at the same time that European and North American political and cultural royalty rampaged across the continent, bagging thousands of head of game in the name of science on *safaris*. But increasingly, even elite hunting fell out of favour, and photographic safaris replaced the hunting variety as informally protected areas were transformed into National Parks. To many foreigners who ventured to the "Dark Continent"—whether because it constituted a part of "their" Empire or because they wanted a glimpse of "wild Africa"—the idea of killing animals like Elephants, Rhinoceroses, Lions, or Buffalo became unthinkable, and visitors were more likely to join a chorus of international opinion urging the preservation of said species than they were to shoot meat for the night's campfire or a trophy to mount on their wall.

While preservationists had their moment in the imperial sun, I argue that it was a brief one, and that the "general slackening of the fibres of civilisation" were not to blame for their eclipse. Rather, *imperial* wildlife advocacy quickly became *colonial* wildlife policy. As such it was driven not by small groups of individuals in what has been described as the imperial centre of London, but rather by a diverse set of social, political, and economic interests operating at all levels within in the colonies. The central contention of this dissertation is that the experience of colonialism was central to shaping the character of the "politics of wildlife" in East and South-Central Africa. By "politics of wildlife", I refer to those institutions, interests, and individuals who took a hand in shaping wildlife policy. That policy shifted in relation to the changing nature of the colonial state and the changing character of colonial society. And although in a repressive colonial context British officials had the final word, debates about wildlife were not exclusive

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<sup>8</sup> Rennie Bere, *A Cuckoo's Parting Cry: Life and Work in Uganda, 1930-1960* (Cheltenham: Cedar Publishing Ltd, 1990), 119-121.

affairs. In contrast, they involved many groups from an increasingly variegated colonial society: black farmers, white hunters, European and African colonial officials from various levels of the administration, missionaries, black and white hunters, scientists, nationalists, chiefs, and even a few local preservationists. Members of colonial society were often less concerned with wildlife as such than with how administrative, agricultural, economic, political, or cultural factors or relationships were impacted by wildlife matters. And yet because in some way their interests intersected with the emerging policy arena around wildlife, these disparate interlocutors were drawn into conversation with one another.

The British Empire, both in its global iteration, and in its ground-level operations, provided the ideological framework for the emergence of imperial and global wildlife preservationists. It was within this imperial and colonial context that the kind of sanctions on the use of wildlife which existed during the pre-colonial years was more formally inscribed on the landscape in a more totalising fashion, which cut across regional and social boundaries. But the Empire's administrative apparatus, and the complexity of colonial society, simultaneously meant that whatever pretensions imperial preservationists had to an Empire-wide preservationist policy, their goals were ultimately subverted by the more local iterations of the "politics of wildlife". Preservationists' ambitions might ultimately have resurfaced in the global wildlife regime that we know today. But the universalism which they promoted could never supersede the particularism of colonies' local politics. And this politics was powerfully shaped by the push and pull of the broader historical developments which defined the history of the region during and after colonial rule. So while during the earliest years of colonial rule, when there were comparatively fewer individuals involved in the governing of a territory, the connections of the elite preservationists in Whitehall counted for far more than they would during the period when Britain was consolidating its control over its African colonies by expanding its apparatuses of administration. The management of wildlife was connected not just to an imperial environmental outlook, but also to more quotidian provincial and district governance, to the nationalist ambitions of white settlers and black subjects, to the emergence of a technocratic bureaucracy, to the process of decolonisation, and to the sweeping internationalism which took place alongside the winding down of British rule.

### **Influences, Sources, Scope**

Wildlife preservation during the colonial era has not gone unexplored by historians of Africa, of particular African nations, and of the British Empire. Imperial historians and historians of Africa have offered explorations and critiques of wildlife-related phenomena in Eastern and Southern Africa. In particular, there has been a focus on hunting and hunters. The activity has been dissected as an import from the British countryside, which was the site of a rich history of contested land-use particularly well-documented from the early modern period onward<sup>9</sup>. In colonial Africa hunting became a way of reaffirming hierarchy and racial distinction. John MacKenzie's pioneering study was wide-ranging, but most significantly identified the class links which shaped the approach of hunting and conservation by the aristocratic interests which dominated the early years of British colonialism. Hunting—and the jealous protection of those animals which were hunted—fit, MacKenzie argued, into the sets of

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<sup>9</sup> For example, D C Beaver, *Hunting and the Politics of Violence before the English Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); E P Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: the Origin of the Black Act* (London: Allen Lane, 1975).

social relations and sporting interests of the British upper crust<sup>10</sup>. This theme is drawn out more critically in the work of Edward Steinhart, who anchored his study—comprised of both archival and oral histories—firmly in colonial Kenya. While Europeans were empowered by their participation in the hunting of African wildlife, this could only be a status-affirming activity if it was restricted. And so particularly during the period dominated by imperial preservationists, and particularly in colonies dominated by white settlers, much effort was expended in transforming African hunters into poachers. This transformation was accomplished by coding different kinds of hunting practises in different manners Steinhart also examines the emergence of *safaris* as a transcultural phenomenon which helped to define what it meant to be British in Kenya<sup>11</sup>. European hunting was valorous, whereas throughout the era of colonialism, hunting by Africans was described as “indiscriminate” and “brutal”, suggesting that it was hunting by Africans rather than Europeans which threatened the extinction of wildlife populations, and that African hunting

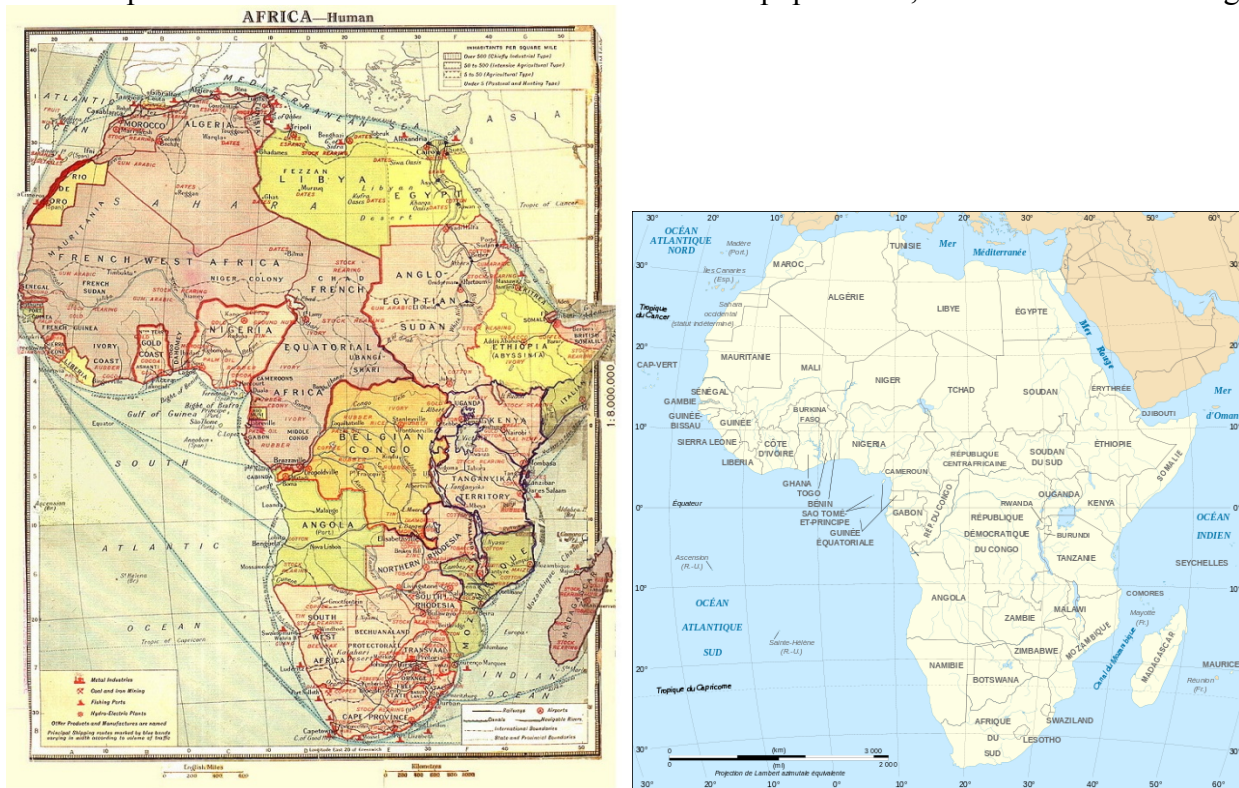


Image 1 and 2. Left: Africa after the First World War. ©2005, 2011 - Brian Taylor CBIOL FSB FRES 11, Grazingfield, Wilford, Nottingham, NG11 7FN, U.K. Right: Contemporary Africa, [courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Eric Gaba](#)

was not “sporting” (see Seton-Karr’s remarks quoted above).

Historians, as well as geographers and other social scientists have demonstrated the way in which colonial concerns for the preservation of wildlife led to the loss of land, autonomy, and access to economic and cultural resources, with serious consequences for societies or entire kingdoms. Roderick Neumann focussed on the power of imperial interests and the colonial

<sup>10</sup> John MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting and Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester University Press, 1988).

<sup>11</sup> Edward Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).

government in Tanganyika to impose an ideal of wilderness on African subjects<sup>12</sup>. Some of these works have focussed on how concepts like wilderness or nature functioned to disempower people in a colonial context.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, they have documented the manner in which contemporary community conservation projects, while ostensibly aspiring to involve local communities in conservation, often replicate the hierarchical relations of older conservation efforts.<sup>14</sup>

This project was inspired by and builds upon the insights and arguments offered by the above work on preservation policy in the early colonial era. But it simultaneously aspires to offer a corrective to the focus on preservationists and the attempt to draw a straight line from the early twentieth century to the 1960s. As the British Empire expanded in size, its rulers sought to link metropolitan and colonial economies and to develop streamlined systems of governance. As its workings were subjected to increased scrutiny, from international bodies, from colonial subjects, and from British society, imperial and colonial governments were pressed to take on an increased range of responsibilities. These responsibilities were also regarded as being critical to the harnessing of colonies in the service of Britain's economy and society. As the practise of colonial governance changed, as Britain tightened its grip on the colonies, and as colonial society developed more diverse and active constituencies, imperial preservationists lost their hold on the wildlife sphere. It is with this transformation and subsequent changes during and after the end of Empire, that I am primarily concerned. Early preservationists certainly shaped wildlife policy in Britain's African colonies. But their eccentricity, brutality, idealism, and elite pedigree should not obscure the narrow interests they represented and the comparatively fleeting nature of their impact. And 'wilderness' and 'nature' were not the most critical categories shaping wildlife policy for much of the twentieth century. For although the British Empire became the Ark onto which preservationists hoped to load Africa's wildlife, imperial policy was quickly transformed into colonial policy and, as we shall see, was later internationalised, a turn of events which was less of a break than might initially be assumed.

Historians have to a certain extent assumed that the paper trail left by the preservationists, their active presence in the media and on the fringes of the "official mind" at the Foreign Office, and their early victories set the tone for the coming decades of wildlife policy formation in Africa, and that those gains went uncontested.<sup>15</sup> Ruben Matheka has argued that we can see the "antecedents" to community conservation during the colonial era.<sup>16</sup> Assuming a similar kind of causal relationship, Bernhard Gißibl writes that the convention politics of first two decades of the twentieth century—with their strong preservationist bent—"bore a strong Anglo-German imprint and established key concepts of preservation that were to dominate African conservation throughout the twentieth century". While Gißibl is correct to note that "the [1900 Convention on

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<sup>12</sup> Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda, 1860-1955* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2006); Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: the case of Tanganyika, 1850-1950* (Nairobi: EAEP, 1996); Stuart A Marks, *Large Mammals and a Brave People: Subsistence Hunters in Zambia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976); Lotte Hughes, *Moving the Maasai: a Colonial Misadventure* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Roderick Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Dan Brockington, *Nature Unbound: Conservation, Capitalism, and the Future of Protected Areas* (London: Earthscan, 2008); Rosaleen Duffy, *Killing for conservation: Wildlife Policy in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> William M Adams, *Against Extinction: the Story of Conservation* (Earthscan, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Reuben Matheka, "Antecedents to the Community Wildlife Conservation Programme in Kenya, 1946-1964", *Environment and History* 11(2005).



the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa] represents a significant landmark in the early history of preservation”, it is misleading to assume that preservationism served as the dominant ideology during colonial rule, or even during the post-independence era.<sup>17</sup> The mistake is common in arguments which seek to draw a line from the well-documented preservationism of the early twentieth century to similar-looking conservation strategies in the later twentieth century, such as Dan Brockington’s discussion of a Tanzanian case.<sup>18</sup> Such assertions, by ignoring the intervening decades of colonial rule and decolonisation, as well as the role of Africans in shaping this politics, omit critical factors in terms of science, governance, and politics which had a profound impact on wildlife policy, and it is the forty year period between 1920 and 1960 that receives significant scrutiny here in my effort to reconsider wildlife policy in the region in terms of colonial and post-colonial politics.

Research for this project consisted entirely of an investigation of print materials, standard practise for historians of Britain, but slightly unusual for historians of Africa. I decided to focus my efforts on a diverse set of printed sources in part because of their sheer number, which already required me to make painful decisions about what to include and what to set aside. Moreover, I hoped to maintain a degree of balance between different periods by using similar kinds of sources which cut across themes and time periods.

I conducted extensive archival research in Britain, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia, and spent very brief periods in records outside of Berkeley in the U.S. and in Tanzania. Records included the official files of the Foreign, Colonial, and Dominion Offices in the British National Archives at Kew, from the eras of colonial conquest, consolidation, and post-independence. I spent the greatest amount of time in the Kenyan and Zambian National Archives, consulting records from parallel periods there. I further examined records held by universities, institutes, libraries, and Parliament in Uganda. Together, these archives provide a well-rounded picture of the workings of the colonial and independent governments which were central to the politics of wildlife between 1900 and the 1970s: they encompass the records of the imperial government in London, the colonial governments and legislative councils in colonial capitals in the Empire, the functions of colonial technical departments, records of provincial and district authorities, and the proceedings of representative organs at lower levels within the colonies. Particular attention was paid in some chapters to the records of the departments charged with managing wildlife resources. Because the politics of wildlife invited interest from a broad swath of colonial society, I have also consulted the personal papers of official and unofficial commentators, the records where available of societies with an explicit or implicit interest in wildlife (commercial or agricultural boards, fauna and nature societies, hunters societies, development boards, etc). These came from diverse locations, including the Natural History Museum (London), the Zoological Society of London (where a massive set of diaries from a Northern Rhodesian game officer are held), libraries at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the Empire and Commonwealth Museum, and the British Library. Of particular value were the records from the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology at the University Library in Cambridge, previously inaccessible to historians.

Some of the archives are new and, as critically, I have investigated material previously not connected to the wildlife sector, such as missionary accounts, and local government records. These print sources provide not only elite or government views of wildlife matters, but contain

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<sup>17</sup> Bernhard Gißibl, “German Colonialism and the Beginnings of International Wildlife Preservation in Africa”, in *German Historical Institute Bulletin Supplement 3* (2006), 122.

<sup>18</sup> Dan Brockington, *Fortress Conservation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

records of poaching arrests, compensation forms, complaints about wildlife depredations, and information about the relationship between ground-level wildlife department employees and the communities in which they worked. Other source material included newspapers, particularly in Britain, Kenya, and Zambia, largely in English but including some Kiswahili material. In Washington, D.C., the records of U.S. conservationist Russell Train, and records from the U.S. National Parks Service Office of International Affairs provided global and American contexts for the hitherto imperial politics of wildlife. Bodies like NUTAE, the World Bank, the Tsavo Project, and the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation provided information on the involvement of NGOs and other international organisations in colonial and post-independence Africa.

In addition to focussing on the relationship between Britain and its African colonies, this dissertation takes as its unit of analysis Britain's colonies in eastern and central Africa. The region comprises what are today Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania (then Tanganyika), Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia), and Malawi (then Nyasaland). Aside from the variety of practical constraints which impact the scope of any study, there are geographic and historical reasons for such a choice. There is a certain geographic coherence to the region, which is defined by the Great Rift Valley, stretching along the Arabian Peninsula, across the Red Sea, through Kenya and Tanganyika, bounded by the Great Lakes, and defined at its southern extent by Lake Nyasa in Malawi and the Muchinga Escarpment in Zambia. This area, together with Somalia, was part of a series of older ivory trading economies. In addition, nearly all of the Sub-Saharan African territory within this geographic complex became controlled by Britain following the conquests after the Congress of Berlin until independence in the 1960s. More critically, this region was seen as a unit of sorts by the initial preservationists, who through their efforts to pursue wildlife legislation, but more importantly through their initiation of studies and surveys, helped to define later wildlife policy. To the north of British East Africa (Kenya) and Uganda, Sudan was an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. The remainder of the region in the north and west was bounded by the territories of other imperial powers or the Ethiopian Empire: the Italians in Somaliland, the Belgians in the Congo, and the Portuguese in Angola to the west and Mozambique to the southeast. In some respects Southern Rhodesia would appear to be a logical choice for inclusion. However, its politics grew increasingly more like those of the white dominions (and later, like South Africa's *apartheid* state), and the doyens of the preservationist movement, sympathetic to Southern Rhodesia's pretensions to settler-colony status, often omitted it from their discussions of "Black Africa". Wildlife policy also took a decidedly different bent in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>19</sup>

The organisation of the chapters also merits some explanation. Although the themes that the successive chapters illustrate are roughly chronological—in that they move gradually from the era when Britain was consolidating its rule toward decolonisation and beyond—the thematic organisation of the chapters means that this is not a linear history of wildlife policy in the British Empire. The chapter on administration in Northern Rhodesia, for example, ends well after the following chapter on 'anti-wildlife' politics takes up its own story. Several of the chapters cut across significant periods of time, illustrating how wildlife policy during the colonial years and after was shaped by a particular set of interests, vantage-points, or factors: administration, anti-colonialism, ecology, etc. This thematic organisation is designed to simultaneously illustrate the operation of historically-contingent factors while capturing the broad, structurally-driven changes taking place in the field of investigation.

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<sup>19</sup> Roben Mutwira, "Southern Rhodesian Wildlife Policy (1890-1953): a Question of Condoning Game Slaughter?" in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15:2 (1989), 250-262.

## A Pre-Colonial Politics of Wildlife

There is not a substantial historiography on the politics of wildlife as such in pre-colonial Africa. There is, however, substantial evidence that in the pre-colonial era, Africans' relationships with wildlife were not those of a primitive people to their animal neighbours, as suggested by preservationists and colonial administrators. Rather, those relationships comprised a series of negotiations, including state efforts at environmental control within which revolved the interests of social and economic constituencies. Before describing how colonial wildlife policy emerged from the social and political stratigraphy of colonial rule, it is important to establish the relationship between the pre-colonial wildlife regimes described above and the interests, individuals, and ideologies which comprised the early twentieth-century preservationist movement. This section briefly narrates some key features and themes surrounding the ways in which wildlife factored in pre-colonial polities and societies, and describes the early incursions of Europeans, their ideas, and institutions into these spheres.

The politics concerning wildlife did not so much emerge with colonialism, as become steadily more visible to colonial rulers. It simultaneously became more formal, and as it did so, grew more expansive over time. It became interlocked with other policy spheres and ideologies delineated by the colonial government, and became connected with the art, performance, and practise of governing subject peoples. In its relationship to the wider politics of rule within individual territories as well as the region, the pre-colonial politics of wildlife bore striking similarities to what came after. In the years before the colonial conquest, and during the earliest years of colonial rule, there were a large number of social and political groups with an interest in wildlife. The common European trope of "wild" Africans living in "harmony" with "wild" animals suggests a people incapable of transforming, no less managing, their ecological niches. The supposed equilibrium was a testament to their powerlessness as historical actors and agents of change. And yet historians have ably demonstrated that control over environment and ecology was a key metric of state power and endurance in pre-colonial Africa. It was arguably only when colonial rule hamstrung the ability of Bunyoro's political leadership to actively manage its natural resources that the kingdom (in what became Uganda) experienced collapse.<sup>20</sup> The collection of ivory was central to the ambitions of both particular classes of people along the Swahili Coast of East Africa—the trade stretched from Somalia to Mozambique—and the region's interior, but also to the growth of new polities, as when the Portuguese were overthrown in the seventeenth century by Omani rulers. The trade was driven by a global market, including demand in Europe and Asia, but also by the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean world, and the interactions of the states on its coastal periphery with European sea-going powers and interior states.<sup>21</sup>

In the nineteenth century, kings like Lobengula (in present-day Zimbabwe) exerted personal control over his kingdom's wildlife resources, dispensing hunting privileges as a form of patronage.<sup>22</sup> Accounts by Europeans who sought permission to hunt from Lobengula suggest

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<sup>20</sup> This is the central argument which Shane Doyle makes in *Crisis & Decline in Bunyoro: Population & Environment in Western Uganda 1860-1955* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Alpers, Edward A. *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987).

<sup>22</sup> Frederick Courtney Selous, *Travel and Adventure in South-East Africa* (London: Rowland Ward and Co., Ltd, 1893), 156.

that when the Matabele king deliberated about allocating hunting concessions, he took into account not only whether such allocation would offend key powerbrokers within his kingdom, but also whether elephant populations at a given time could be sustainably hunted.<sup>23</sup> Game was, for Lobengula and his kingdom, a natural and political resource. Decades before King Leopold's International African Society plundered what is today the Democratic Republic of the Congo of its ivory resources, and a century and a half before the *apartheid* government of South Africa used its wars on the frontline states to capture those nations' ivory, the Zulu Kingdom recognised and acted upon the wealth associated with such a trade.<sup>24</sup> As Shaka's state simultaneously expanded and consolidated its power in southern Africa, it worked to secure access to the ivory markets surrounding Delagoa Bay in what is today Mozambique.<sup>25</sup> As the Zulu Empire expanded, the political landscape of southern Africa was reconfigured. One of the political leaders who retreated before the Zulu *impis* was Lobengula's father, Mzilikazi, who created the Matabele kingdom. Mzilikazi's father had been a supporter of Dingiswayo, the Mthethwa king who promoted Shaka to prominence, and had therefore taken part in Dingiswayo's own trade in ivory at Delagoa Bay.<sup>26</sup> These kinds of trade, and the familiarity with the animal resources they involved therefore figured in the rise and fall of kingdoms in nineteenth century southern Africa, events that resonated into East Africa.

Even smaller-scale or less formally hierarchical polities often combined exploitation and regulation of wildlife resources in a manner which demonstrated the subservience of the relation to wildlife per se to broader economic, social, and political impetuses. Bisa societies (in what is today eastern Zambia) used the Luangwa Valley—the Munyamadzi Corridor excepted, the Valley was gazetted during the colonial era as a National Park—as a hunting territory even before the colonial era. Hunting in the Luangwa Valley was not simply a matter of subsistence, but a pastime for selected men during the agricultural off-season, as well as a way of reaffirming the particular social status of hunters who were chosen by visitations in their dreams.<sup>27</sup> The management of wildlife in pre-colonial Zambia was undertaken by members of these “guilds” who simultaneously provided food and protection.<sup>28</sup> Similar specialists existed in Kikuyu and Ndorobo societies, known in what is today Kenya as *aathi* guilds, likened by some to smiths or wire workers<sup>29</sup>. David Gordon describes how fishing rights and ceremonies on the present-day border between the DRC and Zambia were layered in nature, with local control subsumed beneath the Kazembe Kingdom's tributary structure.<sup>30</sup> Mariane Ferme identified a similar array

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<sup>23</sup> H. Vaughan-Williams, *A Visit to Lobengula in 1889* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1947).

<sup>24</sup> Hochschild, Phyllis Johnson and David Martin, *Apartheid Terrorism: The Destabilization Report* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 11.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Philip Bonner, *Kings Commoners and Concessionaires: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (Johannesburg: Raven, 1983), 20-21.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Becker, *Path of Blood: The Rise and Conquests of Mzilikazi, Founder of the Matabele Tribe of Southern Africa* (London: Longmans, 1962), 9.

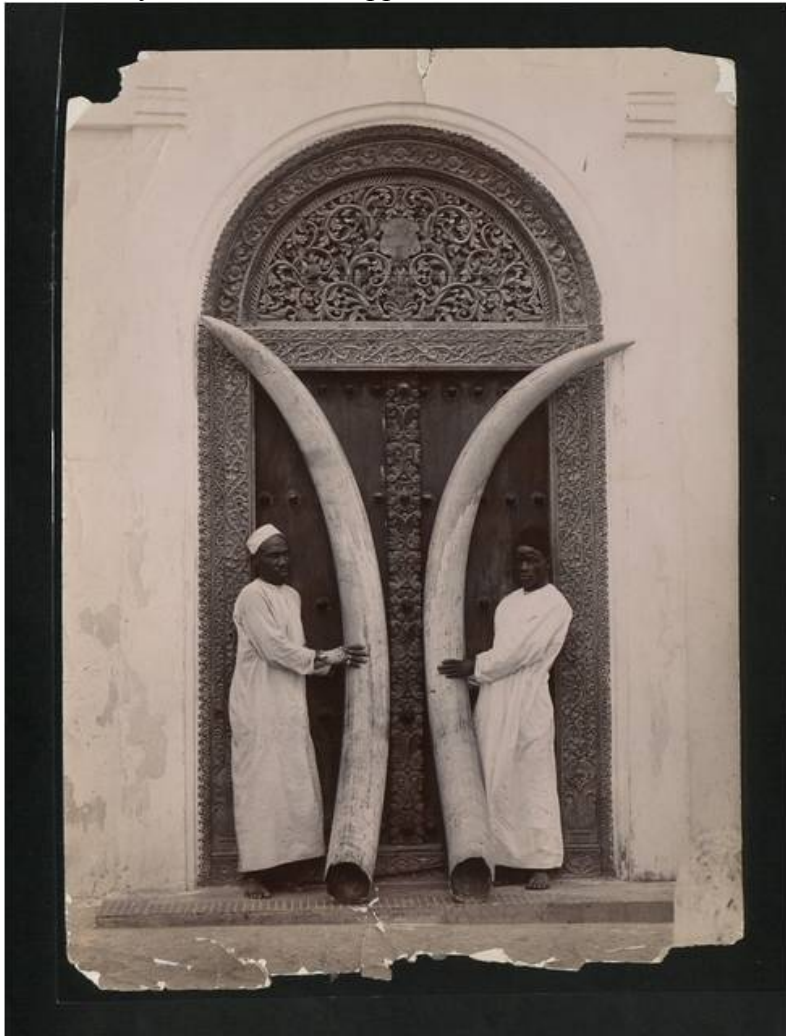
<sup>27</sup> Stuart A Marks, “Hunting Behaviour and Strategies of the Valley Bisa in Zambia” in *Human Ecology* 5:1 (March 1977), 11.

<sup>28</sup> Mwelwa C Musambachime, “Colonialism and the Environment in Zambia, 1890-1964” in *Guardians in their Time: Experiences of Zambians Under Colonial Rule, 1890-1964*, ed. Samuel N Chipungu (London: Macmillan, 1992), 12.

<sup>29</sup> L. S. B. Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903, Volume I* (London: Academic Press, 1977), 442.

<sup>30</sup> David Gordon, *Nachituti's Gift: Economy, Society, and Environment in Central Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

of social factors in play in her account of more recent life in southern Sierra Leone.<sup>31</sup> Early colonialists marvelled (somewhat misleadingly) that Maasai societies did not hunt for food. But the predominantly-pastoralist groups did actively manage wildlife which threatened their livelihood, combining ceremonies which inscribed age-related hierarchies with a practise of actively managing predators which might kill Maasai cattle. Similarly, Wanderobo hunters were misread by the colonial government in Kenya, who refused to acknowledge many of their activities as “hunting” given that hunting by farmers was seen as aberrant.<sup>32</sup> Hunting was often seen by colonial authorities as an indicator of a lack of capacity to acquire food by other means. In reality, hunting could serve diverse roles in these societies, reflecting the historical change they underwent during the pre-colonial era. Moreover, hunting could be a path to wealth, as for some Kikuyu hunters who tapped into markets for hides and ivory.<sup>33</sup>



**Image 3. Tusks in Zanzibar, a centre of the ivory trade for much of the nineteenth century. PRO CO 1069/173/37. Undated.**

As the foregoing examples demonstrate, in addition to factoring in the politics and economics of pre-colonial African states and societies, wildlife also functioned in a symbolic cultural manner. Colonial rulers were horrified by the existence of some animal societies,

<sup>31</sup> Mariane Ferme, *The Underneath of Things: Violence, History, and the Everyday in Sierra Leone* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters*.

<sup>33</sup> L. S. B. Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903, Volume I* (London: Academic Press, 1977), 441.

particularly when these manifested themselves in a manner which disrupted colonial rule.<sup>34</sup> But such associations between local and regional communities and polities and particular animals preceded their disruption of colonial rule. In the Kingdom of Buganda, clans were associated with particular animals: Buffalos, Cane-Rats, Bushbucks, Civets, Elephants, Grasshoppers, Leopards, Lungfish, Monkeys, Otters, Pangolins, and Sheep.<sup>35</sup> Clans existed in varying physical and political proximity to the Kabaka, and carried out different duties within the context of the larger Bugandan state.<sup>36</sup> Wildlife products provided not only economic returns—as in the case of elephant ivory—but also ceremonial power, as for example with capes made of colobus skins by Wakamba notables, or the Bugandan “rituals for installing a kabaka [which] involved a ceremony in which the new king sharpened a brass spear on the living body of a large python, which was held in place by many people”.<sup>37</sup> Wildlife was also the stuff of myth, legend, and cautionary tales. In the context of hunting, there were strong ritual elements. Kikuyu huntsmen sung the *Rũmbo rũa Njogu* and dealt ceremonially with each elephant tusk they acquired with reference to social hierarchies within the community.<sup>38</sup>

In the years before the conquest, Europeans were incorporated into existing natural resource management structures at first, and only transformed those structures after they had acquired formal possession of territories. The Matabele king Lobengula is amongst the more famous characters associated with Britain’s colonial wars in Africa, and he served as a foil for some of the white figures who in time became early preservationists. Amongst the recipients of Lobengula’s patronage were those on the front-line of the colonial conquest, the likes of Frederick Courtenay Selous. Selous was but one of many individuals who left Britain to make a living in the Empire or in territories which would eventually become a part of the Empire, thanks to his efforts. But people like Selous bridged the gap between privateer and imperial foot-soldier. For although his initial purpose in southern and central Africa was to make a living, he did so in part by taking part in the brisk trade in ivory, and soon found himself in the business of selling specimens to museums in Britain. But he was simultaneously beholden to local authorities, and Selous recalled how, as a part of what he characterised as a power-play in Matabeleland, Lobengula put all of the European hunters in his kingdom on trial for shooting hippopotamuses (a charge Selous denied). According to Selous, “the case lasted three days, and during that time we had to sit in the rain all day long, outside the king’s quarters in the big kraal, listening to the harangues of the head men whom the king has chosen to try the case”.

The trial brought together many of the groups who shared an interest in the wildlife sector, because “all the Griqua hunters and colonial boys who had been in the hunting veld were also present, my own two drivers amongst them...They overbore all argument with floods of vehement assertions”, Selous wrote, and “told Grant [another of the accused] when he said that

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example, K J Beatty’s *Human Leopards: An Account of the Trials of Human Leopards Before the Special Commission Court; With a Note on Sierra Leone, Past and Present* (London: Hugh Rees Ltd, 1915). Werner Junge described Leopard and Crocodile societies in his *African Jungle Doctor: Ten Years in Liberia* (George G Harrap & Company, 1953). David Pratten provides an historical account of the functioning of some such societies in colonial Nigeria. *The Man-Leopard Murders: History and Society in Colonial Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Wrigley, *Kingship and State: the Buganda Dynasty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>36</sup> Holly Elisabeth Hanson, *Landed Obligation: the Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2003), 40, 45.

<sup>37</sup> Holly Elisabeth Hanson, *Landed Obligation: the Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2003), 16.

<sup>38</sup> L. S. B. Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903, Volume I* (London: Academic Press, 1977): 444-445.

he had not killed a sea cow, that they would make him pay for walking in the king's country and drinking the king's water". The trial ended with Selous and his fellow hunters being fined.<sup>39</sup> Based on their travels and the patronage afforded them by the likes of Lobengula, Selous and other hunters developed reputations as natural historians, and also became sources of intelligence for the colonial and corporate interests that wound their way through central Africa. Selous himself led the "pioneer column" which proved central to the conquest of Central Africa.<sup>40</sup> He was absorbed as a symbol and spokesperson into the preservationist movement, becoming one of the "penitent butchers" as he entertained London society by playing recordings of a lion's roar in drawing rooms and advocating for the protection of wildlife. When Selous died in action in East Africa during the First World War, he was commemorated in a ceremony which wove together the strands of his life which also secured the alliance of preservationists: hunter, collector, naturalist, imperialist, company agent, and preservationist.

European big game hunters, who would soon be leading hunting and then photographic safaris (Selous famously guided Theodore Roosevelt on a shooting spree across East Africa), were not alone in making a living from East African wildlife. But the perspective of preservationists was tainted by the unhistorical lens through which they viewed the landscape, whether first- or second-hand. Preservationists were deeply informed by the tracts written by hunters, naturalists, explorers, and other agents of Empire. Many of these men who struggled to make a living from the receding profits of the ivory trade, or from the collection of specimens, found that the recording of their exploits—real or creatively imagined—could provide an income.

From the middle of the nineteenth century down to the present, writers long-forgotten and still-remembered penned accounts of their exploits.<sup>41</sup> The literally scores of books about hunting

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<sup>39</sup> Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings* (1893), 136-138.

<sup>40</sup> For one contemporary account, see Howard Hensman, *A History of Rhodesia* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1900).

<sup>41</sup> They include the likes of Roger Courtney, *Africa Calling: the True Account of the Author's Strange Workaday Experiences in Kenya, Uganda, and the Belgian Congo* (London: G. G. Harrap & Co., 1935) and *Footloose in the Congo* (London: H Jenkins, 1948) and *African Argosy* (London: Jenkins, 1953); John Boyes, *King of the Wa-Kikuyu: a True Story of Travel and Adventure in Africa* (London: Cass, 1968), and *The Company of Adventurers* (London: East Africa Ltd, 1928); Tabler, Edward C. *Trade and Travel in Early Barotseland: the Diaries of George Westbeeck, 1885-1888, and Captain Norman MacLeod, 1875-1876* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963); Walter Dalrymple Maitland Bell, *Karamojo Safari* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949), *The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter* (London: Country Life, Ltd, 1923); George Adamson, *Bwana Game: The Life Story of George Adamson* (London: Collins & Harvill Press, 1968); *My Pride and Joy* (London: Collins Harvill, 1986); Ken de P Beaton, *A Warden's Diary* (Nairobi: East African Standard, 1949); David Enderby Blunt, *Elephant* (London: East Africa, 1933); Mervyn Cowie, *I Walk with Lions: the Story of Africa's Great Animal Preserves, the Royal National Parks of Kenya* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), *Fly Vulture* (London: G. G. Harrap, 1961); Arthur Radclyffe Dugmore, *African Jungle Life* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1928), *Camera and Adventure in the African Wilds: Being an Account of a Four Months' Expedition in British East Africa* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1910), *The Wonderland of Big Game* (London: Arrowsmith, 1925); Ewart Grogan, *From the Cape to Cairo: the First Traverse of Africa from South to North* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1902); Brian Herne, *Uganda Safaris* (Tulsa: Winchester Press, 1979); Frederick Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969); Bruce Kinloch, *The Shamba Raiders: Memories of a Game Warden* (London: Collins, Harvill Press, 1972); Richard Meinertzhagen, *Kenya Diary, 1902-1906* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1957); Arthur Neumann, *Elephant-Hunting in East Equatorial Africa: Being an Account of Three Years' Ivory-Hunting Under Mount Kenia and Among the Ndorobo Savages of the Lorogi Mountains, Including a Trip to the North of Lake Rudolph* (London: Rowland Ward, 1898); A. Blayney Percival, *A Game Ranger on Safari* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1928); Charles Robert Senhouse Pitman, *A Game Warden Among His Charges* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1931); *A Game Warden Takes Stock* (London: J. Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1942); *A Guide to the Snakes of Uganda* (Kampala: The Uganda

and adventure came to comprise an evolving canon which instructed readers in Europe and the United States as to the kind of wildlife they could find in Africa, and how they should think about those animals. Early works provided graphic accounts of hunting exploits, which would likely have been far too sanguinary for mid-twentieth century readers, but which captivated their nineteenth century counterparts. These stories were connected to the expansion of Britain's Empire, and were often strongly moralising, judging African individuals, societies, and kingdoms harshly. As territory in Africa fell to European rule, the genre began to suggest a decline in wildlife populations, and the accounts of hunters were slowly augmented by narratives written by those who practised what we might call "wildlife management"—Game Wardens, Rangers, etc. They combined storytelling with accounts of the decline of wildlife and the threats posed by unrestricted African and European hunting. They were joined from the 1950s onwards by more publicity-savvy wildlife advocates, who combined fieldwork with close connections to the world of international conservation.

This genre served a propaganda purpose. But it also influenced the manner in which Europeans viewed landscapes. As will be described later, descriptions of landscapes from the nineteenth and early twentieth century served as reference points, examples of either exemplary or degraded landscapes and animal populations to which later preservationists could refer. It is common to allude to the conceit of most Europeans that Africa represented a landscape untouched by history, and their view that most of the continent's people lived in a fashion largely unchanged over a period of hundreds if not thousands of years. This conceit impacted the manner in which Europeans viewed African game populations. For example, on the eve of European colonialism in East Africa, epidemics swept the region. The rinderpest epidemics affected big game to be sure. But they also transformed the reach of pastoralist communities and altered the demographics of the region. When Buxton arrived on his safari, and when imperial agents mapped out their terrain, they saw dead buffalo littering the Athi Plains and other regions.<sup>42</sup> But they also saw open spaces, which they assumed had been formerly inhabited by

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Society, 1938); George Rushby, *No More the Tusker* (London: W. H. Allen, 1965); Chauncy Hugh Stigand, *Administration in Tropical Africa* (London: Constable & Company, Ltd, 1914); *Black Tales for White Children* (London: Constable & Company, Ltd, 1914); *Central African Game and its Spoor* (London: H. Cox, 1906); *Equatoria: the Lado Enclave* (London: Cass, 1968); *The Game of British East Africa* (London: H. Cox, 1913); *Hunting the Elephant in Africa, and Other Recollections of Thirteen Years' Wanderings* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913); *The Land of Zinj: Being an Account of British East Africa, Its Ancient History and Present Inhabitants* (London: F. Cass, 1913); Jim Sutherland, *The Adventures of an Elephant Hunter* (London: Macmillan, 1912); Alfred Sharpe, *The Backbone of Africa: a Record of Travel During the Great War With Some Suggestions for Administrative Reform* (London: Witherby, 1921); Frederick Courteney Selous, *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1908); *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa* (London: Richard Bentley, 1893); *Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia: Being a Narrative of Events in Matabeleland Both Before and During the Recent Native Insurrection Up to the Date of the Disbandment of the Bulawayo Field Force* (London: R. Ward and Co, Ltd, 1896); *Travel and Adventure in South-East Africa* (London: R. Ward and Co., Ltd, 1893); William John Townsend Shorthose, *Sport and Adventure in Africa: a Record of Twelve Years Big Game Hunting, Campaigning & Travel in the Wilds of Tropical Africa* (London: Seeley, Service & Co, Ltd, 1923); Martin Johnson, *Over African Jungles* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935); *Safari: a Saga of the African Blue* (New York: Editions for the Armed Services, 1928); A H W Haywood, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1964); *Sport and Service in Africa: a Record of Big Game Shooting, Campaigning and Adventure in the Hinterland* (London: Seeley, Service, 1926).

<sup>42</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 36.



game<sup>43</sup>. In reality, many of these landscapes had been inhabited and shaped by people whose societies had been decimated and driven out by disease. Europeans interpreted the open spaces in two ways, both of which would prove significant for future preservationist efforts. In the first place, they assumed that the “empty” spaces had been densely populated with game and that high game density represented the “natural” state of affairs in East Africa. They also assumed that “empty” land was unused, and therefore was theirs for the taking.

Europeans did not realise that in some places, high game density was by no means “natural” and was instead the result of epidemics reducing human population and making space for relatively quick expansions in wildlife populations, whose numbers were historical aberrations, or at least part of longer-term cycles little understood by colonialists. The result, however, was the emergence of a kind of lore about rich big game country, “happy hunting grounds”, the subsequent transformation of which—whether by European shooting or resurgences in African societies’ control over their resources—was something to be deplored and if possible halted. In later decades, preservationists and wildlife officers alike would use early accounts by explorers—which were in fact simply snapshots of dynamic landscapes and ecologies—as benchmarks and reference points for what wildlife populations ought to look like. Those accounts, in addition to the entertainment value they provided the public and the credibility they gave preservationists who could invoke “men on the spot”, thus became normative texts dictating wildlife policy, explicitly down to the time of independence, and implicitly beyond.

When they saw African hunters, colonialists and preservationists saw people whose hunting had once been sustainable because of their “primitive” relationship to wildlife and their limited weaponry. What they did not see were the societies which had actively managed their surroundings, some of them on a massive, state-centred scale over a lengthy period of time, such as Buganda. Goran Hyden wrote of colonisation as “largely a trial-and-error process [which] set in motion many unknown forces over which the human actors had little control”, leading to a breakdown in the “fragile balance between man and nature on which [pre-colonial] economies had rested”.<sup>44</sup> This was as true in the field of environmental control and what would be later described as “wildlife policy” as in any other sphere.

Wildlife preservation is today a global phenomenon, enshrined in treaties regulating the trade in species, banning the sale of animal products, and encouraging the conservation of habitats. It became so at least in part because of the preservationist movement which emerged in the British Empire during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As noted earlier, Dukes, Earls, cabinet secretaries, land owners, celebrity natural historians, and reformed hunters banded together to push for the control where not the eradication of hunting and the creation of game reserves. In the 1970s, preservationists were successful in getting the hunting of elephants

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<sup>43</sup> Two good examples of this phenomenon occur in debates during the 1950s and 1960s about lechwe and elephants in Northern Rhodesia and Kenya respectively. In the former case, the earliest survey of antelope herds by an Ugandan Game Warden provided a benchmark for the ideal lechwe population, assumed to be in its “natural” state when the warden conducted the report on the Kafue Flats in the 1930s. During the 1950s, proponents of strict protection referred to this report under the assumption that lechwe numbers in 1931 represented accurately the size of pre-colonial herds. In 1960s Kenya, when scientists, wardens, and others debated how or whether to manage the Tsavo ecosystem, they drew extensively on the accounts of early European explorers to “prove” their points about the relationship between elephant herds and an ideal ecosystem. These episodes are explored in some greater depth in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

<sup>44</sup> Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 40, 41.

banned outright in some nations. The collection of elite interests which pushed for a uniform approach to wildlife across the British Empire styled themselves as “preservationists”. “Early in 1899”, wrote E N Buxton, scion of a family of Victorian humanitarians, who turned his attention to wildlife after a hunting trip to East Africa, “a small band of travellers and sportsmen, brought together by the kindness of a prominent official of the Foreign Office, met to consider the question of the preservation of the large game of Africa”.<sup>45</sup> Buxton, bearing in mind the fate of species in the Americas and South Africa, was distressed at the prospect that some of the animals he encountered on his travels were in danger of disappearance.<sup>46</sup> Making use of his built-in connections to the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister (Lord Salisbury occupied both offices of state simultaneously), Buxton brought together a collection of the good and the great of the Empire to lobby on behalf of that Empire’s wildlife. Preservationist policy took the form of imperial commitments and international accords, most famously the 1900 International Convention on the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa, which sought to achieve international agreement on the part of European powers in Africa about fauna protection. Besides the British government, the resulting Convention was signed by the monarchs of Germany, Spain, Belgium (independently in Leopold’s capacity as “King-Sovereign of the Independent State of the Congo”), Italy and Portugal, as well as the French President. The Convention sought the “preservation throughout [European] possession in Africa of the various forms of animal life existing in a wild state which are either useful to man or are harmless”.<sup>47</sup>

Game restrictions and regulations had existed before this Conference, but there were few game reserves, and preservationists accurately believed them to be woefully inadequate to do any good, lacking as they did any relationship to the movements of game herds.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Buxton and his colleagues saw dangers in a lax administration which allowed administrative officers to shoot game more or less at will for private profit. “Personally”, Buxton wrote, “I should say that a sanctuary where people are allowed to shoot is a contradiction in terms. A vestal virgin should not be allowed to have, even two or three, lovers”.<sup>49</sup> Half-praising, half-mocking some early efforts at preservation, Buxton drew a distinction between the “semi-barbarous” nature of pre-colonial regimes and “the present civilised regime”, while skewering the class of officials who sought to keep “a private deer forest larger than Scotland” for their own use.<sup>50</sup> The move by officials to restrict private traffic across the Empire, by way of consolidating their personal authority, was seen as a negative development by Buxton, one which could prevent the kind of scrutiny his own foray into these regions had provided as to the ineffectiveness of colonial wildlife preservation. Efforts to keep critics of maladministration at bay were “inconsistent with

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<sup>45</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 117.

<sup>47</sup> “Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa, May 19, 1900”. Parliamentary Papers, vol. lxxix, 25: 89-91.

<sup>48</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 118-119.

<sup>49</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 122, 127. Interestingly, this is more or less the same critique leveled at the Kenyan government in the decades after independence. Strikingly, the two versions of “corruption” are not normally viewed as being related, and indeed, there is strikingly little attention to these examples of what amount to official corruption in the early years of the British Empire.

<sup>50</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 129, 128.

the free traditions of the Empire”, and ran contrary to “the inherent right of every well-conducted British subject to travel within the Empire, even if his only object is to enjoy himself. You cannot build a *zareba* round any part of it”.<sup>51</sup>

Having backed the imperial government against a thorn fence of its own making, Buxton’s lobby soon took institutional form with the creation of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (SPFE) in 1903.<sup>52</sup> Laying out his argument about the relationship between imperial trusteeship and the preservation of wildlife in East Africa, the founder of the SPFE drew on a universalist and humanitarian strain of thought associated with imperialism and social reform, as well as with more expansive views about the responsibilities of states. “When a nation ‘pegs out claims’”, Buxton wrote, perhaps referring to the doctrine of “effective occupation” at the heart of the European conquest of Africa, “it must incur cost to justify its right, and will not grudge whatever may be necessary to preserve that which is more precious, and less replaceable, than any catalogued collection, alive or dead”.<sup>53</sup>

There was some variation in the beliefs of the preservationists, but they largely believed that animals—rather than being seen as exploitable natural resources—should be protected in large geographic areas which should be freed of any human inhabitants. They found value in “wilderness” and “nature”, and sought to protect animals—as snapshots of an imagined Edenic past—from the advances of a predatory modernity, one paradoxically advanced by the onset of the same European rule which simultaneously offered succour to wildlife. Animals ceased to be “game” or “vermin” and slowly became “fauna” or “wildlife”, a cultural heritage. Imperialism was already predicated on an ideology of “trusteeship”, in which civilised Europeans governed Africans and Asians in “trust” until they were capable of self-governance. Wildlife became a similar imperial trust. To this end preservationists harnessed a cult of masculinity around the great hunter-explorers of the age. They simultaneously yoked themselves to a body of writings on the territorial empire, its wildlife, and the virtues of imperial domination. The rough-and-ready individuals who also wrote the preservationists’ canonical volumes had once killed game in the thousands, and many indeed made a living doing so. A suspicious press referred to them as “penitent butchers”, a designation which held some truth (having finished their shooting days they were prepared to deny the same pleasures to those who came after), but which also ignored the fact that to some preservationists it was not the killing of animals per se which was the problem. Rather, it was the “indiscriminate” nature of killing. Too many of the wrong sort of animals were being killed, they believed. As importantly, those animals were being killed by the wrong sort of people—whether Europeans who didn’t understand the finer points of sporting life, or Africans, who used “barbaric” methods.

Preservationists believed that they would be able to accomplish their mission of putting aside territory for animals from which people would be excluded—and in some cases they did—in spite of dissatisfaction from their African subjects. They believed this precisely because, in Britain’s vast domains in eastern and central Africa (the most “game rich” territories in the British Empire), they ruled without the consent of the governed. Existing accounts of wildlife preservation in the British Empire paint a picture of wildlife laws and policy which were passed and enacted with no reference to the people affected by them. Colonial wildlife policy, it is

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<sup>51</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 134.

<sup>52</sup> *Journal Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire*, Lists of Members.

<sup>53</sup> Edward North Buxton, *Two African Trips With Notes and Suggestions on Big Game Preservation in Africa* (London: Edward Stanford, 1902), 140.

suggested, steamrolled the individuals, interests, and institutions which would have an interest in pushing back against the authoritarianism of a colonial environmental policy which stripped them of their land, delegitimised their farming practises, took their weapons, and told them what (if anything) they could hunt and how they could hunt it<sup>54</sup>. It is true that in conception and execution, much colonial legislation was created in an un-consultative context and was often implemented in a shockingly violent manner. But that is not the whole story.

Imperial and colonial governments, at the urging of preservationist sportsmen, drew up game ordinances and devised hunting permits designed to exclude most Africans from hunting and ensure that European hunting was carried out in a sustainable fashion. These consisted of different hunting licenses for white colonists, African subjects, and visitors. Different licenses entitled their bearers to hunt different animals in different quantities. Special licenses might be required to hunt animals like Elephants or Rhinos. The conventions and ordinances drew heavily on European precedents like the English Forest Laws, given their concern with establishing zones free of human use, protecting female animals, and establishing seasons to avoid the off-take of young animals or the disruption of female animals during the period when their young were vulnerable.<sup>55</sup>

But the early efforts of preservationists to refashion an imperial wildlife policy in the image of royal hunting laws imported from Europe to reflect an already-anachronistic European social order were ultimately frustrated by the broader process of colonialism, much to the chagrin of the SPFE and its aristocratic patrons who saw their influence wane dramatically in the 1920s. It is with these processes that the dissertation concerns itself.

## Outline

Given its intention to explore the emergence of a wildlife policy sphere and trace the influences of colonial concerns on that sphere, the first chapter, “Unrepentant Butchers: Ugandan Elephant Control and the Making of Colonial Wildlife Policy, 1924 to 1944” begins by assessing the rationale behind the creation of Uganda’s Elephant Control Department. That rationale—to counter the depredations of elephants on African farmers’ crops and to create a physical separation between areas of the colony inhabited by people from those inhabited by wildlife—serves as a counterpoint to narratives which suggest that wildlife policy was driven by metropolitan interests. The chapter evaluates the colony’s control operations, the manner in which these weathered criticism from preservationists, and how they were eventually exported to Northern Rhodesia and served as a model for wildlife policy in the early years when the colonial governments were consolidating their authority and carving out new policy arenas. They were transported across colonial borders, ironically, thanks in part to the efforts of the SPFE, in spite of their divergence from preservationist doctrine. However, the chapter also suggests that although colonial officials were vocal about the need to adjust wildlife policy to the peculiarities of each colony or region, colonial wildlife policy—because of its increasing reliance on “expertise” and its transplantability—nonetheless possessed the capacity to be totalising and universalistic.

“Governing the Game: Expertise, Authority, and Administration in Northern Rhodesia’s Wildlife Sector, 1925 to 1960”, picks up where the first chapter left off, and concerns itself with

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<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: a Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).

<sup>55</sup> See John Manwood, *A Treatise and Discourse of the Lawes of the Forrest* (New York: Garland Pub., 1978, orig. 1598).

wildlife politics in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). I argue that the character and implementation of policy around wildlife in Northern Rhodesia—under company and colonial rule, before and after the creation of a Game and Tsetse Control Department—had very little to do with tensions between preservationists and conservationists, hunters and poachers, or social interests in metropole and colony. Instead, it was driven by its bureaucratic provenance, rivalries between provincial and technical officers, and its relationship to structures of rule. The chapter offers a close reading of the interactions between provincial and district officers, central and provincial game department officers, African personnel in the department, chiefs and headmen, and the African Provincial Councils as a way of illustrating the importance of colonial structures to the politics of wildlife. The chapter also sketches out the day-to-day operations of a game department, including the experiences of its African personnel.

If competition between colonialist and technocratic administrators was critical to the politics of wildlife, the importance of wild animals and their protection was also hotly debated in the colonies. “Government Cattle: Anti-Wildlife Politics in East and Central Africa, 1926 to 1960” focuses on the critics of wildlife preservation (and by extension some of its proponents) in Nyasaland (now Malawi), Northern Rhodesia, and East Africa. It begins by using a debate about a Nyasaland Game Ordinance in the 1920s to illustrate the range of actors from within the colonial community—missionaries, European planters, African farmers, white nationalists—who took an interest in the wildlife question, and often formed unusual alliances, which then often broke down over differing views of the colony’s long-term trajectory. The chapter also considers the efforts by the Northern Rhodesian government to restrict communal hunts on the Kafue Flats known as *chilas*, and the efforts of hunters, headmen, and chiefs, aided by some colonial administrators, to resist those efforts. The short-term successes of their efforts were ultimately too successful inasmuch as they posed a threat to colonial law and order, and led to the ultimate banning of the *chilas*. The chapter then demonstrates how the ambitions of preservationists were relegated to the colonial sidelines by the impetus of development during the construction of the Kariba dam, suggesting that where large-scale development projects were concerned, wildlife was very much a secondary consideration. The chapter concludes with an examination of parliamentary debates in East Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, illustrating the breadth of opposition to wildlife preservation.

“Deferring Uhuru: Decolonisation and the Coming of the Global Wildlife Preservation Movement, 1950 to 1964” focuses on the resurgent preservation movement, which capitalised on anxieties about decolonisation and played on older narratives about the indiscriminate killing of wildlife by Africans. I examine how the Mau Mau war in Kenya created conditions and drew on colonial notions about security which enabled the ready deployment of this racialised critique by preservationists. These anxieties were leveraged in the context of a global order defined in part by the proliferation of international institutions, many of which came to be concerned with wildlife. The preservationists created a context in which finances and the good graces of the international community were tied to the continuation of colonial-style wildlife policy, tantamount to the internationalisation of independent countries’ wildlife resources. The latter part of the chapter focuses on the College of African Wildlife Management in Tanzania, an internationally-funded institution created to ensure that post-independence wildlife officers in East Africa and beyond were trained in the style of their colonial predecessors.

“Salvation Through Science?: Ecology, Culling, Bureaucracy, and the Contradiction of National Parks in East Africa, 1952 to 1972” begins by noting the importance of national parks as a new category in colonial-era Africa, and the dilemmas this posed for Uganda’s activist

wildlife management policies. I describe how the ecological sciences came to underpin that activism in Uganda. There, the government undertook large scale culling operations within national parks for the first time following a different logic from that which had historically applied to their culling operations elsewhere in the colony. These culling operations took place alongside the creation of the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology, one of the earliest wildlife research units, which introduced new actors and agendas to the wildlife sector in Africa on the brink of independence. But the same logic applied to culling in Kenya posed serious dilemmas. In the Tsavo East National Park, expatriate wardens, a slowly-Africanising national parks department, and international scientists all struggled to address the shifting Elephant Problems. The park's managers found themselves gunning for poachers in one decade and gunning down elephants the next. While ecological researchers believed that their population studies provided a ready answer to the environmental crisis facing the Tsavo Park, it was an answer which proved unacceptable to increasingly important global opinion and, in turn, to the park's managers.

The dissertation concludes with "After Uhuru: State, Society, and Post-Colonial Wildlife Politics in Kenya". The chapter begins by examining the bureaucratic restructuring of Kenya's wildlife departments in the aftermath of the Tsavo debacle. The merger of the game and national parks departments in 1976 as part of a World Bank project also aimed at strengthening the country's tourism industry represented an effort by the Kenyan state to reassert control over wildlife policy at the expense of preservationist donors, but also an effort by international financial institutions to streamline the Kenyan state. The merger led to an intense and fractious debate in the Kenyan media and parliament, laying bare some of the cleavages operating in the country after independence. The debate took place against the backdrop of increased poaching, rumours of official involvement in that poaching, and attempts by the British government to cover up reports of high-level involvement. And a 1992 World Bank project illustrated the frailty of global efforts to regulate African wildlife policy, and the manner in which the enforced merger of Kenya's wildlife departments had created, rather than solved, a series of bureaucratic, political, and environmental problems.

The fact that this politics endures to the present day, captured in the media, in literature, and in the same kinds of relations between actors in the West and those in Africa is a testament to the manner in which colonialism proved foundational to creating relationships between the protection of wildlife and a host of other policy spheres and concerns. Prior to European colonialism in Africa, wildlife issues were similarly embedded in broader social, cultural, economic and political realms. But those relationships increasingly became structured by colonialism, its hierarchies, its agendas, and its chronological trajectories and structural changes. And yet, as this narrative shows, people were not helpless bystanders to this politics. In reality, the relationship of the politics of wildlife to a host of other concerns and agendas ensure that it was informed by a range of voices reflecting both the complexity of colonial society and the new interests and voices that emerged with and after the independence attained by African nations in East and South-Central Africa.

## Chapter One

### Unrepentant Butchers: Ugandan Elephant Control and the Making of Central African Wildlife Policy, 1924-1944

“And here, to make matters clear, I may as well explain at once that the inhabitants of Zu-Vendis are sun-worshippers, and that for some reason or other the hippopotamus is a sacred animal among them. Not that they do not kill it, because at a certain season of the year they slaughter thousands—which are specially preserved in large lakes up the country—and use their hides for armour for soldiers; but this does not prevent them from considering these animals as sacred to the sun”.<sup>1</sup>

Of all the animals on-board the imperial ark, the one that stood out most by dint of its presence both on African landscapes and in the correspondence papers of the Colonial Office, was the African elephant. The reasons for this were threefold. Charismatic megafauna have historically been the focus of wildlife campaigns, and the groups like the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE) could appeal to more people by invoking threats to elephants than those to eland, hyrax, or duiker.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the long-standing tradition of elephant hunting for ivory in Africa meant that there was a considerable financial stake in the regulation of “white gold”. Finally, being large, elephants were and are more likely to cause damage when they come into contact with people, a reality which made the “elephant problem” an administrative as well as a preservationist one. The reports of colonial officials are replete with complaints from African farmers about depredations by elephants. Elephants are particularly prominent for this story because they provided the *raison d’être* for early wildlife departments and were as a result one of the centrepieces of later policy agendas in the wildlife sphere. They also became the subject of debates about universalising preservation and game policy across East Africa. As colonies codified their wildlife policy, and as imperial networks spread across East and South-Central Africa, Elephants were important for the relationship of these new wildlife departments and the broader colonial political economy in which they emerged.

In 1930, with the support of the Colonial Office, the SPFE despatched one of its members to eastern Africa on a fact-finding mission. The SPFE’s leadership gave Colonel R W G Hingston instructions to tour five colonies and develop a set of recommendations that could be implemented to better preserve Africa’s fauna. A particular set of recommendations for Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) sparked a second survey. This time it was Captain Charles Robert Senhouse Pitman, an Ugandan Game Warden, who was the appointed investigator. But when Pitman travelled south, he was weighted with an altogether different type of baggage based on his experiences in Uganda from that which shaped Hingston’s preservationist mission. And the report that Pitman filed was filled with verbal barbs directed at the SPFE. The instigators of

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<sup>1</sup> H Rider Haggard, *Allan Quatermain* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1994), 161-2.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Charismatic megafauna’ has multiple meanings. Scientists use it to describe animals of a particularly large size. The *Economist* famously criticised scientists for using the taxonomic manipulation of charismatic megafauna (“big, showy”) to play on peoples’ emotions in advancing their agendas irresponsibly (i.e. out of keeping with Linnaeus’ intentions). “Species inflation: hail Linnaeus”, *Economist* 52 (May 19, 2007), [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p\\_product=AWNB&p\\_theme=aggregated5&p\\_action=doc&p\\_docid=11971095E9925198&p\\_docnum=1&p\\_queryname=1](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p_product=AWNB&p_theme=aggregated5&p_action=doc&p_docid=11971095E9925198&p_docnum=1&p_queryname=1)

his survey were largely well-connected aristocrats, many of them based in London and many of them with considerable connections to settler families in East Africa. They were, by and large preservationists, and as described in the previous chapter, it was these people and their ideas that until the 1920s had largely driven developments in relation to wildlife in Britain's African colonies. Like Rider Haggard's curious inhabitants of Zu-Vendis, they by turns fetishized and shot the animals which they sought to protect, sometimes with great ceremony. Pitman, on the other hand, had won some notoriety by instituting an elephant control policy in Uganda based on systematic culling.

A brief account of the chronology of wildlife departments in colonial Africa will be followed by an outline of the story of Ugandan game policy in the 1920s and demonstrate how in the 1930s, as Northern Rhodesia began the process of creating a wildlife department, the Ugandan model offered an alternative to the preservationism of the SPFE. I will offer a close reading of the two surveys by Hingston and Pitman, demonstrating how the more systematic approach to formulating wildlife *policy* offered by Pitman's survey, and his idea of a transportable methodology of wildlife control and management, shifted the approach toward wildlife in British East and South Central Africa towards the Ugandan model and away from that offered by Kenya. This marked a shift from preservation (which focussed on protecting species or populations of animals) to conservation (which focussed on the use or harvest of animals). Between 1900 and the 1920s, wildlife matters were the preserve of administrative officials operating the District and Provincial level. They concerned themselves with enforcing often-punitive game laws, and also with the control of those animals deemed vermin or a threat to crops—seemingly contradictory purposes which do not appear to have registered in the informal administrative complex in which they worked.<sup>3</sup> Historians and social scientists have variously characterised these authorities as the “men on the spot” and the “thin white line”. They have also described the wide latitude granted such figures, their paternalistic administrative frameworks, and the calculatedly arbitrary and performative qualities of their rule.<sup>4</sup> However, historians have also identified a sea change in the style and emphasis of governance, often identified as corresponding with intensified efforts at economic development—partially to render colonies self-sufficient, and partly to service the metropolitan economy—during the Second World War and its aftermath. Thus, the authoritarian and local amateurism of one generation of imperial bureaucrats gave way to a more centralised, technical, and expertise-driven regime which possessed equally authoritarian qualities a generation later.<sup>5</sup>

Like other sectors of colonial administration, the wildlife sphere tracked these administrative shifts, and developments in Uganda, as described below, illustrate that in some cases these changes occurred earlier than generally acknowledged in existing historiography. But the timing of the report on Northern Rhodesia, infused with the policy aspirations of

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006). See also district reports across Kenya, Tanganyika, and Northern Rhodesia.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Symbol of Authority: the British District Officer in Africa* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006). Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992). Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth Century Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007). Timothy Mitchell, *The Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000). Hailey's *Africa Survey*, published in 1938 and updated periodically thereafter, would be a good example of the efforts to create a new, professionalised method of administration.



Uganda's Game Department, its implementation delayed by administrative sloth and contingency, meant that when a Northern Rhodesian wildlife department was finally created in 1938, it became the department par excellence of the new, scientifically-minded and developmentally-oriented administrative ethos. In places like Kenya (as will be seen in a later chapter), what Berman has described as the Catonist character of early colonial administrators endured in wildlife departments. In Northern Rhodesia, on the other hand, the technocratic Game and Tsetse Control Department found itself at loggerheads with precisely those more paternalistic administrative officers, who saw themselves as being socially progressive (a debate explored in the next chapter).

Before exploring the different approach represented by Uganda's wildlife sector, it is important to understand the chronological emergence of wildlife departments. Kenya's Game Department was the first to be founded in the area of study with which this project is concerned. It was created in 1907, just a few years after the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire emerged as a powerful imperial lobby. In its ethos and goals, it was therefore shaped to a greater degree by the SPFE's preservationism than was the case in other departments. Tanganyika's Game Department was created in 1919, as Britain took over what had been Germany's East African colony. The nature of the British presence in Tanganyika—which was a League of Nations Mandate rather than a colony (the difference often seemed academic to Tanzanians, but it made the British wary)—and the smaller group of settlers meant that the department there more closely resembled that which would emerge in Uganda than it did its Kenyan counterpart. Northern Rhodesia's department was created in 1940, shaped as this chapter will argue by the Ugandan experience. By way of comparison, Southern Rhodesia (which does not feature in this study) did not create a Game Department until 1952, two years after Nyasaland's department came into being. In general, the later the department was created, the less it was informed by a preservationist mentality, the more closely integrated it was with the development and social goals of the colonial government, and the more it was imbued with a managerial methodology rather than the moral imperatives associated with preservationism.

Ugandan game policy in the 1920s and '30s suggests a very different picture of wildlife policy in colonial Africa than does much other historical literature.<sup>6</sup> Elephant control in Uganda was driven by a different agenda from that chronicled as having motivated the politics of wildlife in Kenya. It was not primarily social class which underpinned Elephant Control, nor was the emergent wildlife policy of Uganda and later Northern Rhodesia altruistic, particularly philosophical, or anti-modernist. Previous narratives, by emphasising hunting and aristocratic interest, and taking the safari and the formation of National Parks as their points of departure, have downplayed the role of colonial governments, the influence of local actors, and the

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<sup>6</sup> The important exception is Reuben Matheka's work in Kenya, in which he draws similar conclusions about the implementation of control programs during the 1920s. Reuben Matheka. "Antecedents to the Community Wildlife Conservation Programme in Kenya, 1946-1964" and "The International Dimension of the Politics of Wildlife Conservation in Kenya, 1958 to 1968". Roderick Neumann focuses heavily on the creation of national parks and the ideals behind them without acknowledging competing administrative demands which would offer a more rounded picture of developments of the period. Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles Over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). And Edward Steinhart's passionate denunciation of the transformation of hunters into poachers by draconian colonial law demonstrates the uniqueness of the Kenyan case, while restricting itself to hunting, and not recognising the broader fields into which concern for wildlife intruded. Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: a Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006). Shane Doyle's *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2006) is another exception, but game policy is only marginal to his claims about the dismantling of a regional Ugandan economy.

importance of emerging ideas about wildlife management. Administrative personnel enacted policies, created departments, and undertook reports in a particular historical context, in which a general developmental imperative and emerging views about science and the environment proved formative. Operating in conjunction with the paternalist-technocratic divide between administrators was an older tension between those views about wildlife that were universalist, and those that were particularist. Universalist views about wildlife were most associated with the SPFE and its allies, and were characterised by an emphasis on devising game or wildlife legislation at regional, continental, imperial, or even global levels. Universalism assumed a common set of values that could be established at these levels, and leveraged their influence in the imperial metropole to standardise wildlife policy. These views were very much in the ascendance until the 1920s.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to universalism where wildlife policy was concerned were more particularist views. These ideas, popularised in the 1920s and '30s in some colonies, stressed ostensibly local solutions to allegedly local problems. As often as not, the ideals' proponents may have viewed wildlife as a means to some further goal, rather than an end in itself.

Treating wildlife policy in Uganda and Northern Rhodesia in this context will demonstrate that it was embedded in the development ambitions of respective colonies and the Empire as a whole, a situation formally described two decades later when Lord Hailey published *An African Survey*, which located the management of natural resources in a comprehensive description of colonial Africa's political economy.<sup>8</sup> Central to Hailey's organisation of that colonial political economy was the emergence of discrete yet interlinked policy spheres. The emergence of wildlife policy as *policy* was tied to the emergence of more purposeful departments like Uganda's Elephant Control Department, and also to the transplantability of individuals and institutions across specific regions of the British Empire, as with Pitman's work in Northern Rhodesia on laying the ground for a wildlife department in that colony.

### **Wildlife Politics in Uganda Before Effective Occupation**

The origins of the "elephant problem" in Uganda pre-date Pitman's arrival. In the nineteenth century, Europeans were able to kill as many elephants as they pleased. Beginning in 1900, at the behest of groups and individuals concerned with an apparent decline in game, the government introduced legislation to restrict hunting by Africans and institute a licence system to control European hunting.<sup>9</sup> This move sat poorly with the fraternity of hunters who made large swathes of Uganda, and particularly the fabled Lado-Enclave, a contested region at the borders of the Belgian Congo, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and Uganda. Failed farmers like "Deaf" Banks had years earlier struck out for the Lado in search of ivory.<sup>10</sup> Pete Pearson, an Australian who hunted in the Lado Enclave, was typical in that "he soon discovered that ivory hunting on a

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<sup>7</sup> This emphasis is partly explicable because historians of the British Empire drew inspiration from work on game and forest laws in England, and focused their gaze accordingly in their treatment of Africa. Aristocrats agitating for preservation, and the SPFE, left a significant paper trail in archives, journals, and publications, and were clearly influential in influencing policy.

<sup>8</sup> Hailey, William Malcolm, *An African Survey: a Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

<sup>9</sup> Doyle, 118-19.

<sup>10</sup> "Deaf—But one of Uganda's Greatest Hunters", *Uganda Arbus*, 28 April 1960. "Inches from Death—and they wouldn't believe him", *Uganda Argus*, 4 May 1960. In his old age, Banks' hearing grew so bad that a friend who visited him in his London apartment had to communicate with the hunter using a pen and paper. "Crops Were Saved", *Uganda Argus*, 12 May 1960.

game licence was an unprofitable enterprise and unlikely to provide him with a livelihood”, and turned to poaching.<sup>11</sup> There, an expanding community of hunters ran rings around local administrators, exchanged fire with irate Belgian soldiers, and colluded with British collectors at the border to make a living through the ivory trade. The most memorable experience for many of the hunters occurred when Theodore Roosevelt—beloved by hunters and preservationists the world over—arrived at their camp on the bank of the Nile. The former President—who travelled on *safari* with crates of champagne—reportedly “raised his glass and gave a toast ‘To the Elephant Poachers of the Lado Enclave’. As we drank”, one hunter recollected, “one or two of us laughingly protested at his bluntness, so he gravely amended the toast to ‘The Gentlemen Adventurers of Central Africa, for that is the title by which you would have been known in Queen Elizabeth’s time’”. Roosevelt “finally left [the hunters] with evident reluctance” after they “urged him to chuck all his political work and come out like the great white man he was and join us. If he would do this we promised to put a force under his command to organise the hunting and pioneering business of Central Africa and perhaps make history”, and Roosevelt is said to have later remarked “that no honour ever paid to him had impressed and tempted him like that which he received from the poachers of the Lado Enclave”.<sup>12</sup>

But the days when itinerant hunters would be allowed to roam like Elizabethan pirates across territory claimed but ungoverned by Britain were numbered. Uganda’s political geography—unlike that of Kenya or Tanganyika—was defined by the presence of large states: Ankole, Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga, Rwenzururu, and Toro. In supplanting these polities, the British had a significant administrative void to fill, and the frustration of landlords and peasants with the unchecked movements of elephant herds filtered upwards. The response of the British government was an example of the broader trend of tightening up administrative control that occurred as European states began the work of making “effective occupation”—a key tenet of the conferences through which they partitioned the continent—a reality. That move to more formal rule would have significant implications for a wildlife sphere hitherto defined by half-hearted efforts at preservation by an uncoordinated administration.

### **“The Elephants’ Enemy”: Captain Pitman and Uganda’s Elephant Control Department**

When Geoffrey Archer arrived as the newly-minted governor of that colony in 1923, he found himself faced with the “very urgent question” of the management of an elephant population that had ballooned out of control thanks to strict preservationist policies. Himself an avid hunter of game and fowl, criticised for devoting more time to sport than to governance, Archer was informed that there were 19,000 elephants in the colony (estimates for this period are probably very unreliable), and was forced to steer a course between the Scylla of the preservationist game regulations and the Charybids of the damage caused by unchecked herds.<sup>13</sup> The colony’s council had implemented a policy of granting special licences for £50 which

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<sup>11</sup> “Mystery Man who took toll of Uganda Elephants”, *Uganda Argus*, 8 June 1960.

<sup>12</sup> John Boyes, *The Company of Adventurers* (London: East Africa Ltd, 1928), 21, 74-5, 92-3.

<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey Archer, *Personal and historical memoirs of an East African administrator* (London: Oliver & Boyd Ltd, 1963), 144. There is some indication that Archer devoted altogether too much time to matters relating to game and fowl hunting, at the expense of governance. M W Daly, “Geoffrey Archer”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Around the same time, C F M Swynnerton estimated the number at nearer 30,000. Natural History Museum, Z.MSS.PIT C.69. Africans were disgusted with European indulgence towards destructive wildlife, and contemptuously referred to animals like hippopotami as “government cattle”. Charles R S Pitman, *A report of a faunal survey of Northern Rhodesia, with especial reference to game, elephant control and National Parks* (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1934), 27.

allowed European hunters to shoot up to 30 elephants. The problem (Pitman contended with a similar issue when he tried such a scheme some years later) was that rather than hunt the elephants that were harassing African *shambas* (gardens/farms), hunters would simply travel in search of the biggest herds or most sizable tusks, and stretch out their licenses without having an appreciable impact on the overall population density.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the Europeans who had been hunting illegally for years did so in areas distant from agricultural production, and were few enough in number that they too had no discernible impact—at least from the perspective of farmers—on overall populations. Archer became convinced that the only solution to the problem lay in severing any links that control had to individual economic gain. “In other words”, he wrote, “that would mean the formation of an Elephant Control Department”. In due course such a department was created, and to Archer’s mind “proved a complete and absolute success and served as a pattern for action elsewhere in our tropical African Dependencies”.<sup>15</sup>

The principles of Elephant Control were hammered out in consultation with a group of notable, colourful white hunters (more than a few of them former poachers).<sup>16</sup> The former poacher, “Deaf” Banks, surveyed *sazas* (counties) in Kyaka and Kitaghwata in the Toro Kingdom to determine the danger posed by *shamba*-raiding elephants in that region.<sup>17</sup> The scheme that emerged from his findings involved six hunters, directed by a Game Warden, who would camp out in *shambas* and shoot all elephants that threatened the crops therein. Ivory would no longer be the property of hunters, but would rather belong to Government. It was the sale of this ivory which kept Uganda’s wildlife department in the black until after the Second World War (the same was true of Tanganyika).<sup>18</sup> These hunters employed by the Control Department included Banks, “Samaki” Salmon, and Pete Pearson. Doubtlessly aware of their history of poaching, Pitman offered perks to the hunters to keep them in line, permitting each to “shoot three bulls each year for his own gain, in addition to a fixed yearly salary and allowances”.<sup>19</sup>

The most important principle of control was the need to circumscribe the movement of the elephants themselves. It was not enough to merely kill those elephants that trampled *shambas*. Amongst the authorities on elephants (mostly adventurers, big-game hunters and poachers-turned-wardens), there was a widespread sense that elephants’ cleverness allowed them to learn to react to the forces of destruction that men could turn upon them.<sup>20</sup> Beliefs about elephant habits and the need to restrict their movements prompted the Control Department to map their movements across the colony and create various zones which its staff would police.<sup>21</sup> Individual herds were labelled, and rangers and guards (the former white, the latter black) tracked their numbers and movements.<sup>22</sup> Rangers moved individually in circuits, but generally kept to the same set of provinces from one year to the next. Guards were distributed by province

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<sup>14</sup> Archer, 145-6.

<sup>15</sup> Archer 146-7.

<sup>16</sup> Their exploits are widely documented. Roger Courtney, *Footloose in the Congo* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1948). John Boyes, *The Company of Adventurers* (London: East Africa Ltd, 1928).

<sup>17</sup> “Crops Were Saved—But the Villagers Complained” *Uganda Argus*, 12 May 1960.

<sup>18</sup> What finally led to expenditure exceeding revenue was the assumption of responsibility for fisheries in addition to game.

<sup>19</sup> “Crops Were Saved”, *Uganda Argus*, 12 May 1960.

<sup>20</sup> For example, see Frank Melland, *Elephants in Africa* (London: Country Life Ltd, 1938), 16.

<sup>21</sup> Archer, 164.

<sup>22</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annual of the Game Department for the year ending 31 December 1928. 1929, 11.

or region according to need, with Bunyoro (in the west, bordering Lake Albert) and Toro (also in the west, between Lakes Albert and Edward) taking the highest numbers.

In 1925, having been interviewed by Archer, Pitman settled in first as the Temporary Assistant Warden to Keith Caldwell (called in from his duties as warden in Kenya to set up the new department), and in 1926 as Game Warden. Pitman's background was typical of early wildlife officers in East Africa. Born in 1890, Pitman joined the army in India and served there, in the Middle East, and in Western Europe before arriving in Uganda. Many wardens of the colonial era came to the wildlife sector from the military or police. The logic was partly that work in that sector required a vigorous disposition and an interest in the outdoors which one might be likely to find in military personnel. Moreover, as anti-poaching work came to constitute a significant part of wardens' work, the skills associated with police work looked more transferable. And in times of conflict, personnel from wildlife departments might revert to their former line of work. Kenya's Game Warden Mervyn Cowie became the director of manpower during the Kenyan Emergency. And during the Second World War, Pitman himself worked as the Director of Security Intelligence in Uganda.<sup>23</sup>

This, then, was the background Pitman brought with him to his game department duties. He grew critical of early policies, and averred that the department saw few real successes until 1928, when more systematic progress began to be made.<sup>24</sup> The numbers of elephants killed annually by staff of the department increased steadily: 587 in 1925; 657 in 1928; 1,210 in 1932; 1,626 in 1936. Between 100 and 300 elephants were also killed annually by licensed hunters, and in 1933 Pitman temporarily reinstated the policy of making special licences available to European hunters, resulting in an additional 419 elephants being killed that year on top of the 1,380 killed by control officers and 149 by normally licensed hunters.<sup>25</sup> Pitman resorted to this scheme to deal with a surging elephant population in the Toro Kingdom, ostensibly as a cost-saving measure. It became precisely the opposite, however, when it was realised that hunters were in no hurry to meet their quotas, but rather wandered around the country looking for the largest, most profitable set of tusks they could find.<sup>26</sup> Like Kenya and Tanganyika, Uganda also appointed "Honorary Wardens" who could assist the beleaguered department in keeping populations down. But the centrepiece of Ugandan Control was the large-scale work done by the department itself, directed from a central headquarters near Entebbe, on the shores of Lake Victoria.

Pitman did not have control all his own way. He saw his goal as enacting a practical "conservationist" agenda, but nevertheless came under attack from some in the SPFE, and for a time was portrayed in the British and imperial press as a cold-hearted or bloodthirsty killer.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Gardner Thompson, "Colonialism in Crisis: the Uganda Disturbances of 1945" in *African Affairs* Vol. 91, No. 365 (Oct. 1992), 605-624: 624.

<sup>24</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annual of the Game Department for the year ended 31 December 1927 (1928), 8.

<sup>25</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annuals of the Game Department, 1925-49.

<sup>26</sup> NHM, Z.MSS.PIT, C68. Copy of "Report on Elephant Ctrl and Game" in Letter, R Rankins, Chief Sec to Hon the Acting Chief Sec. 13.6.30 Interestingly, the Uganda Game Department reports that the Toro Scheme was a success. This disjuncture is suggestive of either divergences of aim between different levels of colonial administration, or of the idea that the scheme's creators had sold it as something different to each audience. Colonial Reports—Annual. Uganda, 1933: 63.

<sup>27</sup> "Uganda Game". The *Times*. 31 July 1929, p. 13, Issue 45269. The distaste was mutual, and Pitman described preservation as "an unfortunate expression which rightly or wrongly has been associated with the rigorous protection of wild animals regardless of the consequences". Conservation, on the other hand, meant "planned preservation in order to make the best use of the wild life, and at the same time providing adequate safeguards for its welfare and its future". NHM, Z.MSS.PIT, C.3

Referred to as the “elephants’ enemy” in the press, the warden was originally on the defensive.<sup>28</sup> Among Pitman’s critics was Dr Van Straelen, director of the Royal Natural History Museum in Brussels and sometime Director of the Institut des Parcs Nationaux du Congo Belge, an ardent preservationist who advocated a non-interventionist strategy where wildlife populations were concerned.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the 1920s and ‘30s, the SPFE leveraged Belgian preservation efforts in the Congo against what they portrayed as the sloth and ineptitude of the British government.<sup>30</sup> Belgian policy was a useful stick with which to beat a recalcitrant home government both because of the energetic promotion of an internationalist preservation agenda by its royalty and because of its early creation of the Parc National Albert (1925). In response to these critics, Pitman went to great pains in many of his popular publications, as well as in correspondence later in life, to stress the necessity of his method and the rationality that it reflected. In a 1960 letter, he described how upon arriving in Uganda he

worked out in amateur fashion, in consultation with Peter Pearson and Old ‘Deaf’ Banks, both of them former expert poachers in the Lado Enclave and whose knowledge of the elephant was unrivalled, and also with ‘Samaki’ Salmon, who was probably the world’s wizard elephant shot, what we reckoned was the probable annual increase—calculated as a percentage of the total elephant population—and on this we based what we considered was the total annual wastage permissible [...] I was therefore most gratified to find that the percentage annual increase differed but little from that expertly determined by John Perry from his biological data.<sup>31</sup>

By conflating older forms of knowledge about wildlife (that acquired in the course of imperial travels, hunting, and poaching) with technical “scientific” knowledge, Pitman was able use a much later study to defend and reaffirm the rigour of his earlier endeavour.

Pitman also counteracted negative publicity by carefully cultivating a different image in the media. In East Africa’s “Who’s Who”, he was described as “deeply interested in the scientific side of Natural History and the control of dangerous and destructive animals as in the routine duties of his office”.<sup>32</sup> He also addressed the SPFE directly on at least one occasion, and spoke flatteringly at times of its members and goals, also directly answering criticisms.<sup>33</sup> He also created several films to publicise the efforts of the Ugandan department and to educate the public.<sup>34</sup> Pitman was frequently mentioned in stories in British and Ugandan newspapers dealing

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<sup>28</sup> “No wholesale killing of African game: famous Uganda warden’s assurance”, *Cape Argus*, 23 December 1932.

<sup>29</sup> Pitman File—Z.MSS.PIT.C69, Letter, Pitman to Biologist in Uganda’s Game and Fisheries Department, 3 March 1960.

<sup>30</sup> This led one CO official to grumble in 1930 that, “the motif going through this symphony appears to be that anything the Belgians do must be good and that anything we do must be bad. Remembering as I do the agitation on exactly contrary lines which took place 20 years ago against the former regime in the Belgian Congo, the reaction is too extreme”. CO536/159/1—1930, Gorillas, preservation of. Memo from Perryman to Parkinson, 19 May 1930.

<sup>31</sup> Pitman File—Z.MSS.PIT.C69, Letter, Pitman to Biologist in Uganda’s Game and Fisheries Department, 3 March 1960. CO927/7/8—1945-6, Proposal for investigation on elephants in Africa. John Perry was a researcher from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who was sent out by P A Buxton to do a scientific study of elephant reproduction under Pitman’s supervision.

<sup>32</sup> Natural History Museum, Z.MSS.PIT, A.15

<sup>33</sup> “The fauna of northern Rhodesia”, *East Africa*, 16 March 1933 from NHM, Z.MSS.PIT, C.3 Z.MSS.PIT C5, reprint from C R S Pitman, “Uganda’s National Parks”, *Oryx* 1, no. 7. Here, Pitman argued that it was important to achieve a measure of control over rinderpest before focussing on the terms of the 1933 fauna conference.

<sup>34</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annual of the Game Department for the year ending 1939. 1940, 15.

with wildlife, sent snippets of his annual reports to such publications, and gave “graphic accounts” of destruction wrought by *shamba* raiding elephants.<sup>35</sup> By making his case not only in the *Times* and other wide-circulation papers, but also in more specialised publications like the London-based *East Africa* and the Uganda *Argus*, Pitman targeted audiences who would likely be concerned with East African issues. In this way he used some of the attributes which made his endeavour comparatively rigorous to reinforce a positive image of the game warden. His reports were peppered with colourful anecdotes and observations about sensational encounters with elephants and other animals, accounts which belie the days spent pen-pushing and balancing books at headquarters. He wrote two books (*A Game Warden Among his Charges*, 1931; and *A Game Warden Takes Stock*, 1942) which devote many pages to accounts of man-eating lions, bloody battles between hippopotami, and “native” worship of an ancient buffalo.

If Pitman portrayed himself as the adventure-loving warden in his annual reports, he could also adopt the mantle of the hard-nosed, boots-on-the-ground professional when necessary. For example, when the SPFE lobbied the Colonial Office to standardise the legal minimum weight of elephant tusks, Pitman stridently resisted the move, believing that it would limit the effectiveness of his elephant control policies. This incident demonstrated how Pitman could leverage his position against the SPFE and the British Museum Natural History (BMNH), which were already entrenched in an informal consultancy relationship with the CO.<sup>36</sup> Preservationists and Pitman engaged in a debate with the CO about the effects of lowering Uganda’s minimum tusk weight. Martin Hinton, of the SPFE took the somewhat inexplicable position that lowering the limit would increase the probability of bulls with larger tusks being targeted, and would further the trend of most breeding being done by adolescent males (there is a whiff of social evolution and a fear of degeneration at work in this argument). Pitman vigorously refuted Hinton, who accused the SPFE of “[taking] a gloomy view of the existing elephant situation in Uganda. His arguments”, Pitman wrote, “exhibit an almost complete ignorance of local conditions and are based mainly on fallacies, and his contention that elephant control must be exercised ‘with the aid of best science advice that can be got’ conflicts with the view expressed earlier in his memorandum that ‘it involves many factors which are either imperfectly understood or still unknown’”. And the final, cutting judgment: “It would appear therefore [...] that the technical advisers of the government—I am referring especially to the European game rangers—are better qualified to judge in these matters than the museum systematist and science expert”.<sup>37</sup> This tiff captures the conflict between particularistic and universalist conceptions of wildlife policy, the jarring disjuncture between different types of “science”, the bureaucratic manoeuvring that took place between various interested parties, and the beginning of the divergence between amateur administrators who had responsibility for particular geographic areas and technical officials who were instead concerned with more discrete policy spheres.

It also marks a shift in the balance of power. Until the creation of game and control departments, the SPFE and its allies had a monopoly on information flowing out of East Africa about the state of wildlife in the region. Their claims went uncontested, and the version of expertise they offered represented the sum total of what the Colonial Office processed as it

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<sup>35</sup> “The fauna of northern Rhodesia”, *East Africa*, 16 March 1933. He also gave interviews to or featured in the *Cape Argus* (Cape Town), the *Irish Times* (Dublin), *Weekly Northern Whig* (Belfast), *The Field* (London), and *African World* (London).

<sup>36</sup> From around 1927 the Joint East African Board was also consulted over potentially controversial game and wildlife policies. See CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill, and Hailey, *An African Survey*: 161.

<sup>37</sup> CO 536/155/3—1929 Elephant Tusks, weight limit permitted under special license.

worked out policy on an ad hoc basis. In contrast, once wildlife departments were created, they became new reservoirs of expertise. And that expertise was strengthened by the more consistent presence “on the ground” of the wildlife officers, the official imprimatur they possessed as members of the administration, and the emergence of transportable “methods”, like Pitman’s culling schemes, which could form the basis for policy recommendations. The institutionalisation of wildlife departments meant that their officers now spoke with greater authority in their colonial capitals and in London, and it is no coincidence that, to the frustration of its members, the influence of the SPFE waned from the 1920s, from which point policy was increasingly hammered out in the colonies themselves instead of the imperial boardrooms which had previously handed down edicts to Nairobi, Entebbe, Dar es Salaam, Livingstone, and Zomba.

If one hallmark of Pitman’s policies—enabled by the newfound strength of the game department vis-à-vis the SPFE— was the unsentimental culling of as many animals as necessary, another was his advocacy of the total separation of humans from animals. “The general principle”, he wrote, “is to attempt to confine the elephant herds more and more to their traditional breeding haunts (often coinciding with localities closed to human habitation on account of sleeping sickness) suitable to their requirements. The aim therefore more or less is to divide the Protectorate into elephant and non-elephant areas”.<sup>38</sup> Behind the call for such a stark division of land was the imperative of development. And it was the connection between this economic imperative and the wildlife departments which helps to explain the comparative strength of the Ugandan department when it came to establishing later wildlife departments in South Central Africa.

### **Development and the Politics of Wildlife**

The origins of the rhetoric of development which grew in strength during the twentieth century lay in visions of the Empire as a solution to British economic difficulties. In the early twentieth century, the philosophy of development became more aid-oriented, and by the early interwar years “focussed [...] on the needs of financially vulnerable territories”.<sup>39</sup> But there was another side to economic development, one which was concerned with securing both markets and raw materials. Uganda, in the eyes of various interested parties in the British government, had a number of things to offer. Its comparatively ‘settled’ population, concentrated within relatively compact boundaries, seemed to offer a market for British products.<sup>40</sup> There were push as well as pull factors that had historically driven development in Uganda. Its government was particularly keen on development for the reason that some increase in revenue was necessary to fund the administration of the colony. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was deeply dependent on grants-in-aid, and its primary export was ivory (which offset only about a tenth of government expenditure.<sup>41</sup> Already, at this time, the value of ivory was in decline, and the Uganda government was under pressure to find sources of revenue to meet the demands of the imperial administrative ethos, which held that colonies should pay their own way. In the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, investment in cotton as a cash crop, and the railroad

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<sup>38</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annual of the Game Department for the year ending 1925. 1927, 13

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Constantine, *The making of British colonial development policy 1914-1940* (London: Frank Cass, 1984), 10-11, 62.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Havinden and David Meredith, *Colonialism and development: Britain and its tropical colonies, 1850-1960* (London: Routledge, 1993), 79.

<sup>41</sup> Havinden and Meredith, 104.



that was required to facilitate transport to the coast, were the hallmarks of development.<sup>42</sup> Over the next decade, Ugandan authorities mooted a number of schemes, including oil exploration, and the Kenya-Uganda railway.<sup>43</sup> However, there was also a strong moral bent to development, as demonstrated by the role of missionaries and the associations made by them and colonial officials between civilisational potential and agricultural development in Uganda.<sup>44</sup>

Colonial officials linked development to wildlife policy in two distinct ways. In the first place, the close proximity of people to wildlife could inhibit development, which was predicated on a settled way of life. Pastoralist and hunter-gatherer people were seen as less civilised (hence, Doyle suggests, the British preference for the settled, agricultural polity of Buganda over Bunyoro). The most obviously deleterious effects of this proximity included the destruction of *shambas* by elephants, buffalo and hippopotami.<sup>45</sup> More subversive were the temptations that it presented to Africans, who were thought to be more likely to continue hunting, which might encourage “traditional” lifestyles and undermine potential progress, which depended on a consistent pool of labour for the project of the moment, and markets for metropolitan goods, which the exchange of local products undermined. The rhetoric of development was thus concerned with both economic arguments and with the moral judgments pronounced on different lifestyles. Secondly, the creation of a wildlife industry could be a spur to development (based especially on the South African model—the Kruger National Park was created in 1926).<sup>46</sup> Both of these intersections required careful control of wildlife, and were notable for their distinct lack of sentimentality or nostalgia. Neither is wildlife-oriented in the sense that wildlife is an end in itself. Rather, whilst they both demonstrate the link between wildlife and development, they also illustrate the manner in which policy around the latter drove that associated with the former. It is the sensibilities embodied in these developmental aspirations which explain Pitman’s concern to separate people from animals.

The primary feature of the “elephant areas” envisioned by Pitman was the presence of the tsetse fly. The flies carried diseases that were dangerous to people and cattle (such as sleeping sickness and nagana), and were regarded by some as the greatest existing threat to development in Africa. A range of inquiries, institutions and measures grew up around the question of how to deal with the tsetse fly in Africa, including the International Sleeping Sickness Commission (Entebbe) and the Institute of Human Trypanosomiasis Research. Game animals were regarded as carriers of the fly, and a permanent fixture of wildlife debates was whether the destruction of wildlife in a given area could drive the fly out. Southern Rhodesia’s policy of creating tsetse control areas, and attempting to destroy all of the wildlife within these areas was particularly controversial.<sup>47</sup> One newspaper article went so far as to connect the “shambles” of Southern

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<sup>42</sup> Havinden and Meredith, 104-5

<sup>43</sup> *HC Deb 11 December 1929 vol 233 cc471-2W*

<sup>44</sup> CO525/116/11—1926, Game Ordinance. Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda, 1860-1955* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).

<sup>45</sup> Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda, 1860-1955* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> Jane Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: a Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995); Jane Carruthers, *Wildlife & Warfare: the Life of James Stevenson-Hamilton* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> For example, Roben Mutwira, “Southern Rhodesian wildlife policy (1890-1953): A question of condoning game slaughter?”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15, no. 2 (January 1989): 250-262: 257. As chronicled by Mutwira, this began with the 1906-12 anti-rabies campaign, resumed with regard to baboons in 1919, and 1920s campaigns were undertaken on the advice of Swynnerton. Mutwira: 250, 254, 258.

Rhodesia's extermination policy with the perils of self-governance.<sup>48</sup> Perilous as the "fly" was, Pitman and others working for the management of wildlife envisioned it as a boon to their purpose. It was into the areas infested by tsetse, inhospitable to settlement, cattle raising, or agriculture, that elephants would be driven. Game departments would take advantage of the "natural" state of things to rationalise their policy of Elephant Control.<sup>49</sup> Not *all* tsetse areas would be left to wildlife, however. Limited game destruction and smudge huts would be necessary to control the fly.<sup>50</sup> Decisions about what sort of territory was salvageable from the scourge of the fly were informed by notions about what constituted useful terrain. Marshlands, dense forests, and humid zones could all be left for wildlife, because government agents believed it to be unproductive.<sup>51</sup> The demarcation of productivity was closely linked to development, rather than to the welfare or integrity of African communities.

The very same natural phenomena which made a clean division between "elephant" and "non-elephant" areas possible also necessitated careful husbanding of game outside of protected areas. Not only would Africans' protection from disease be contingent on the utility of their land as measured by Government. Their ability to protect their lands and crops in unproductive regions was to be restricted. Pitman reasoned that allowing Africans (or settlers) to kill game in an unregulated fashion in a tsetse area would undermine the only source of meat.<sup>52</sup> Game laws were carefully calculated to provide a balance between the needs of the colony's inhabitants and developmental ambitions. The level of development as the likes of Pitman saw it, was in turn to be determined not by the brutal application of raw state power harnessing destruction (disparaged as it was in Southern Rhodesia), but rather by a kind of ecological/economic equilibrium, which would neatly resolve the wildlife-development dilemma by linking the protection of wildlife to the environmental and social conditions necessary for development. Other amateur managers of wildlife—rangers, district and provincial commissioners, and temporarily-employed hunters—had discussed most of these things independently. But as the Annual Reports of the Ugandan Game Department show, Pitman began to weld these disparate elements into something resembling a coherent policy. Part of this policy reflected the idea that the colony needed to be mapped and organised in a way which reflected the desire of imperial administrators to govern in an orderly and scientific fashion. Another component was the desire to tap hitherto unmanaged resources to create viable colonial economies and societies.

This second relationship between development and wildlife policy was in the material gain the latter could bring the former. Edward Steinhart has described how the safari industry quickly developed in Kenya during the twentieth century, beginning as a transcultural event which combined the Swahili caravan and the aristocratic British hunt—economic and political

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<sup>48</sup> "Fauna of Africa: the tragic extermination of wild life, combating the tsetse fly", *The Times*, 13 September 1947, issue 50865.

<sup>49</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 143. In some cases, it should be noted, areas where tsetse occurred "naturally" were actually engineered by colonial governments' forced removal of Ugandans.

<sup>50</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 152

<sup>51</sup> Pitman based the suitability of the spaces recommended for protection in his Northern Rhodesian report based in part on the worth of species residing there, but the lack of settlement was what ultimately let a region pass the test. Pitman, *Report* (1934), 137. This was, at least, the case in theory. An examination of Pitman's maps shows that actually most of the reserves appear not to be in the least densely populated sections of the colony, but actually within or bordering upon some areas with comparatively higher density. However, they do often correspond with the presence of swamps, and presumably those areas would have densities proportionately much lower than the rest of the sub-district (the level at which density was estimated). See Maps I and J from Pitman's report.

<sup>52</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), iv, 82.

activities—and which got into full swing with Roosevelt’s epic 1909 expedition.<sup>53</sup> In most parts of British Africa the government was disinterested in or unsuccessful at expanding this sector, a state of affairs quickly rectified by post-independence governments. But even if a colony did not immediately develop a tourism sector, a Game Department could at least pay its own way, thereby contributing in a cost-effective manner to the separation of man from animal. The continuing (if diminished) value of ivory was central to a Game Department’s conception of itself as an administrative unit that not only managed potentially dangerous animals, but also one of the colony’s economic resources. Money came not only from the sale of ivory, but also the sale of hunting licences (although the former dwarfed the latter). It is unclear whether the surpluses realised in the Uganda Game Department during the 1920s and ‘30s were kept as a reserve or funnelled into government coffers, but highlighting the department’s solvency was clearly aimed at critics of formal wildlife management, who resented having their ability to kill game when and where they wished curtailed. Development, as it features in wildlife policy during this period, was primarily in the abstract. Thus, when Pitman described how unchecked wildlife *preservation* had the potential to restrict development, he did not articulate a particular theory of development, or certain projects in mind. Rather, he was acting in response to administrative imperatives and speaking a language which other members of the colonial and imperial administration would understand and appreciate.

He was also referring to a civilising process which, in his view, necessitated the peaceful settlement of an African population and the removal of those elements of Nature which acted as impediments to progress. Controlling the movements of elephants was also a way to control the movements of people. For example, one of the purposes of an elephant scheme implemented in the Toro Kingdom was to “check the tendency of the natives to forsake the fertile valleys in favour of the rather barren hilltops, which invariably follows the presence of too many elephants in the valleys”.<sup>54</sup> Just as the habits of elephants were documented and set in the context of wider demographic and environmental changes taking place in the colony, the habits and movements of “natives” were studied with reference to a colonial political economy. Elephant control was in this case predicated on exploiting and regulating the cultivation habits of Batoro agriculturalists in the region. This fit with efforts of imperial administrators to develop holistic views of administration, seeing the connection of different spheres—economic, agricultural, health, resource—and the harmonisation of different methodologies of governance.<sup>55</sup>

Second to agriculture, ivory drove wildlife policy. The management of ivory was tied to the science and economics of game management, as well as to international markets and conservation agreements. Ivory was seen as a critical factor in Elephant Control schemes: the limits on tusk weights restricted the impact of ordinary licensed hunters; the effects of special licence hunting were limited because of the tendency of hunters to seek out the biggest animals; and for similar reasons the ratio of males to females killed was skewed dramatically in the direction of the former, meaning that control could never achieve population control. By placing the majority of ivory taken under Government control, the department also assured sufficient revenue to justify its own existence.

## **Essential or Auxiliary? African Subjects in Colonial Game Departments**

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<sup>53</sup> Edward I. Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).

<sup>54</sup> Colonial Reports—Annual. Uganda, 1932: 59.

<sup>55</sup> See Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Before turning to an exploration of two surveys, which will shed light on what made Pitman's approach to Elephant Control and wildlife policy so distinct from the preservationist SPFE, it is worth considering the role of African peoples in the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of wildlife policy in its colonial context. Read through the accounts of both the SPFE and people like Pitman, colonial wildlife policy—whether preservationist or conservationist—represented the triumph of the European mind over a hostile environment or the hostile intentions of people in that environment towards wild animals. But as was the case with colonialism writ large, colonial subjects were not absent from this process, and they both shaped and were affected by wildlife policy as it emerged during the interwar years.

Historically, Africans played important roles in the developments of the careers of big game hunters. Even as they performed menial tasks for these men whose exploits would win them celebrity when they returned to Britain, they taught them about environments and animals, bushcraft, and the local politics necessary to negotiate hunting territories before the era of effective occupation. Many of those early hunters gradually transitioned into work for game departments. And the staff of game departments was made up predominantly of African personnel. The Ugandan case is illustrative. There, the composition of the Game Department reflected broader social and political sensibilities at work in the colony. Wardens and rangers were European, game guards African. Clerk positions were reserved for Indians, and in the first two years of the department, there was a special Indian Ranger.<sup>56</sup> Demographics alone would have dictated that much of the tracking and shooting (both often extremely dangerous exercises) be done by Africans. In 1930, for example, there were 21 Native Guards and only two European staff on duty. This year is somewhat anomalous because not only was one ranger on leave, but Pitman was in Northern Rhodesia. Nonetheless, there were seldom more than four Europeans on the active staff.<sup>57</sup> In Tanganyika, in 1933, there were eight Europeans in the field on behalf of the Game Department. Those eight officers were supported by 156 members of the “native staff”.<sup>58</sup>

European wardens and rangers (and possibly some of the African guards) hunted with gun bearers, who would have certainly been African. Countless romantic accounts by European hunters—both those hunting for profit and those in later years hunting for game departments—describe how a European wandered “alone” through the bush in search of dangerous game. Generally, careful reading between the lines reveals that the individual in question was accompanied by a gun bearer, porters, cooks, camp servants, and guides: a veritable entourage. Gun bearers' duties were particularly perilous, and it must have taken a powerful constitution to withstand the charge of a wounded elephant, buffalo, lion or rhinoceros alongside one's employer, who was the one with the license to use the hunting rifle. Bruce Kinloch's description of his hunting team was probably fairly typical, if not on the light side:

With me in camp, besides Joseph Kapere [a game guard] and Firipo, my gun-bearer, I had my safari cook, Sadi, and a local guide—a Muhima who knew every inch of the country, but was more interested in the lions that preyed on his long-horned Ankole

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<sup>56</sup> Indians traditionally occupied rather luminal positions in colonial hierarchies, often predominating in the commercial sphere, and being used as intermediary functionaries within the administration, between Europeans and Africans.

<sup>57</sup> Uganda Protectorate, *Annual of the Game Department for the year ended 31 December 1930*. 1931, 1, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Tanganyika Territory, *Game Preservation Department Annual Report for 1933*, Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1934.

cattle than in *shamba* raiding buffalo. I had also brought my dog Bhalu, a black Labrador retriever, whom I somewhat optimistically hoped to turn into a buffalo hunting dog, despite the fact that he was too fat and out of condition.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the impression created by hunting and wildlife department memoirs, control work was very much a team effort.

Throughout the 1930s, due to the ageing of European officers, the Ugandan Game Department was increasingly depending on game guards, and one wonders whether it is coincidental that during this period the department achieved its best balance between bull and cow elephants killed.<sup>60</sup> Unlike Europeans, African staff would have found it more difficult to sell what was effectively poached ivory “on the side”. Departments could become dependent on the skill, knowledge, and expertise of individual scouts in given areas, something true not just in Uganda. In 1934, Diwan bin Ahmed (of the Kenyan Game Department) died, and his obituary notes that he “contributed largely to the success of Mr MacArthur in the bush hinterland”, a rare admission of the relative expertise and competency of the parties involved in control or anti-poaching work. This would nonetheless appear to be something of an understatement, given that whilst MacArthur was on leave, Bin Ahmed spent six weeks on solo safari, returning with 1,523 pounds of ivory, 12 rhinoceros horns, and 21 prisoners.<sup>61</sup> During Kinloch’s tenure as warden in Uganda (beginning when Pitman retired in 1950), he implemented an exam required of applicants for hunting licenses. The results, Kinloch suggested, shed doubt on the achievements of some notable hunters, one of whom, sadly unnamed, “was found to be quite incapable of even loading his own [weapon]”.<sup>62</sup>

Local and regional racial politics also entered the equation when it came to the employment of African staff. Kinloch, while an Ugandan warden, travelled with a Madi guide, “who did not have a very high opinion of the courage and hunting prowess of the Baganda [who served as a guide]”.<sup>63</sup> Blayney Percival of the Kenyan Game Department assigned different qualities to guides from different backgrounds. He had “used” Wanderobo, Samburu, and Wakamba guides in the course of his journeys. Percival was dismissive of Africans’ abilities as trackers and hunters throughout his account, but his contempt was belied by the number of times that his guides seemed to find him totally lost, wandering through the bush, generally just a few yards from camp.<sup>64</sup> Because certain colonised peoples were believed to be more trustworthy or martial than others (a feature of British rule elsewhere, South Asia for example), it was almost certainly the case that scouts or guards (in particular) would have been thrust into different parts of the country, and faced with a potentially hostile constituency.<sup>65</sup> R Whittet, an assistant warden on the Northern Frontier District in Kenya complained that “any scout soon becomes known, and he is either bought or frightened by the other side and his usefulness ceases in a few

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<sup>59</sup> Bruce Kinloch, *Shamba Raiders: Memories of a Game Warden* (Southampton: Ashford Press Publishing, 1988), 177

<sup>60</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annual of the Game Department for the year ended 31 December 1932. 1933, 4, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Kenya Game Report. 1932-4: 20.

<sup>62</sup> Kinloch, (1972), 168

<sup>63</sup> Kinloch, (1972), 130.

<sup>64</sup> A Blayney Percival, *A game ranger on safari* (London: Nisbet & Co Ltd, 1928), 14-16.

<sup>65</sup> After independence, during its war with Somalia in the Northern Frontier District, the Kenyan government made a practise of moving personnel in the Game and National Parks Departments from ethnic groups known to be on poor terms with Somalis into the District, and keeping Somalis in the employee of the department restricted to the southern regions of Kenya.

weeks”.<sup>66</sup> This suggests that Africans in game department employment might have been put in untenable situations at times with minimal backup from the Game Department or District Commissioners who may, in any case, have sympathised with the economic needs of their charges.

Arming African employees was a touchy issue, and some wardens assumed that at least some of their employees were corrupt. In Kenya, it was commonplace to recruit former tribal retainers (police) as game scouts. Even so, some suggested that pay should be given solely on a “reward basis”.<sup>67</sup> A constant complaint made by Pitman and other wardens was of a shortage of staff, European and African alike. This meant that even as Departments became more formal institutions with more set policy, there remained a degree of dependence on informal measures of control. The Honorary Wardens, local hunters who could be given official imprimatur by the Game Department on an annual basis, provided one example of this phenomenon. Another example would be the efforts to attract more hunting by residents of the colony by lowering licence fees. This was particularly interesting in the Ugandan case because there—unlike elsewhere in Britain’s East or South-Central African territories—the Game Department was interested in encouraging not only Europeans, but also Africans to hunt. The Department’s 1932 report happily noted that “a growing number of responsible natives are exercising their privilege in regard to elephant licences, and no one shows more scrupulous regard for the Game Laws than do these people”.<sup>68</sup> The greater regard for the law by Ugandan hunters as compared to their European counterparts might have had something to do with the fact that before the arrival of the British, hunting had been an activity regulated by various kingdoms, and in some respects might have resembled the control schemes implemented under Pitman. European hunters, on the other hand, were accustomed to plying their trade in the more lawless environment created by Britain’s rough-and-ready conquest which was not immediately followed by the introduction of an administrative apparatus capable of enforcing colonial edicts.

In addition to those Africans who were employed directly in the work of the Game and later National Parks Departments, there were those colonial subjects who did the labour of demarcating the boundaries of protected areas that Pitman regarded as essential to separating people from animals. The following chapter explores at slightly greater length the role of labour conscription in the wildlife departments. But the character of that labour is worth exploring at some length. In 1954, as Uganda began creating National Parks in addition to Game Reserves, there was a need for roads, boundaries, and more infrastructure in protected areas. A 1954 visit by the Queen prompted an exercise in boundary demarcation, and in later years Justin Tokwara, “an Ugandan headman in the park service” was asked to tell the story of the work that he and a group of porters did to improve the condition of the park. Tokwara described in great detail the “hard work to be done in one month” as he and his men trekked through the bush, trying to find the Nile River to get their bearings. They constructed scores of cairns, and Tokwara dealt with more than one “mutiny”, once resorting to hauling the food across a river himself and telling his conscripts that if they wanted to eat they would have to follow him.

The labour was difficult, but the presence of wildlife made it worse. Elephants, typically, were the most threatening. Tokwara described the evolving relationship between the labour team and elephants. At first, when the group sighted a massive herd of 150 elephants, a novelty for

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<sup>66</sup> Kenya Game Report. 1936: 18.

<sup>67</sup> Kenya Game Report. 1936: 18.

<sup>68</sup> Colonial Reports—Annual. Uganda, 1932

most of the Ugandans, “everybody was happy, laughing and shouting”. The second time was different, “everybody is afraid and runs away”.<sup>69</sup> Tokwara went on:

I shouts, “Stop”. I count every section and none is missing. We camped there. At midnight everybody is shouting “Ho! Ho! Ho! Elephant, elephant, elephant!” There are many. They are very close. All night we lie in our tent; there are many noises and we are much afraid...[The next day] we meet many elephants. Most of the porters did not know elephants before, but now they know them.<sup>70</sup>

The group was assigned a Game Guard, who was of little help when the labour team was charged by a herd of buffalo. The elephants became regular night-time visitors, and so Tokwara “put one man in the top of a tree to watch the elephants in the long grass. All night he calls out: “They are coming, they are going. They are going this way! They got that way!” Near the morning he tells us they are going away. We had been standing all night, but now we sleep”.<sup>71</sup> Needless to say, Tokwara and his labour team were relieved when they erected the last of their cairns.

### **Exporting Elephant Control: Fauna Surveys and the Foundation of Northern Rhodesia’s Game Department**

If Uganda’s elephant control policies demonstrated that wildlife policy was driven by ambitions other than those of aristocratic big game hunters, and was enabled by the participation of an overlooked group of African employees, it is important to note the changing personnel who had a hand in shaping wildlife policy itself. Pitman, and administrators like him, acted as bridging figures in debates about policy. His success depended on a persona that spanned the gap between the fuzzy romanticism of the explorer cum naturalist described earlier and the more scientific approach that was later applied to colonial wildlife policies. The terms “game control” and “game management” implied a different sort of science with a very different end than the “natural history” of men like Frederick Selous (an early hunter and preservationist) and E N Buxton (the SPFE’s founder). At the same time, however, Pitman used his public presence to present himself and his staff as men of action. Unlike the earliest preservationists, Pitman was a government servant and an administrator with a particular kind of technical expertise. It was this expertise that made him a figure of interest to the imperial government when it despatched Pitman to Northern Rhodesia. Contrasting his tour with that of Hingston—a representative of the SPFE—will illustrate competing views of wildlife policy, one universalistic and preservationist, the other more particularistic with a stronger conservationist bent. But even Pitman’s particularism privileged his newfound “method”, making Uganda’s elephant control important for the region and for the development of wildlife policy across the continent during the interwar years.

As previously noted, it was an SPFE-inspired traverse of five African colonies by R W G Hingston which led to the call for a faunal survey of Northern Rhodesia. Richard Hingston had joined the Indian Medical Service in his early twenties, and thereafter spent time in South Asia,

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<sup>69</sup> Cambridge University Library: Royal Commonwealth Society Library. *The Story of Uganda National Parks*, RCMS 170: 7/14 to 7/18.

<sup>70</sup> Cambridge University Library: Royal Commonwealth Society Library. *The Story of Uganda National Parks*, RCMS 170: 7/14 to 7/18.

<sup>71</sup> Cambridge University Library: Royal Commonwealth Society Library. *The Story of Uganda National Parks*, RCMS 170: 7/14 to 7/18

East Africa, France, and Mesopotamia in a military-medical capacity before taking part in one of the Everest Expeditions of the 1920s as a naturalist. He later joined the Marine Survey of India, participated in Oxford expeditions to Greenland and British Guiana before being despatched to survey Britain's African colonies.<sup>72</sup> Hingston published widely during his lifetime in the fields of natural history and exploration, his ecumenical scientific experience making him the ideal investigator in an era during which no clear wildlife science had emerged.<sup>73</sup>

Hingston's initial survey differed in important respects from Pitman's follow-up tour. In the first place, Hingston departed from the premise that "the preservation of wild life in Africa is an object worth achieving".<sup>74</sup> And so although he recognised the need to make some accommodation for existing populations, it was the welfare of wildlife and not any notion of development which took centre-stage. That premise, added to Hingston's evaluation of the causes of the decline in wildlife numbers, put him in a very different position from Pitman. The SPFE's representative identified "four classes" of force which caused what he referred to as "annihilation": "the spread of cultivation; the demands of trade; the activities of sportsmen; the menace of disease".<sup>75</sup> And so before Pitman was even despatched to follow up on Hingston's work, there were key points of difference that emerged. Rather than being factors to combat, "the spread of cultivation" and "the demands of trade" were goals of Pitman's Ugandan department, which worked in the service of agricultural development and sought to benefit materially from the sale of wildlife products like ivory.<sup>76</sup> And if those two factors were goals, "the activities of sportsmen" and "the menace of disease"—in Hingston's formulation, two other threats, were in Pitman's scenario the means for achieving his ends. Hunters could be used to kill and move elephant populations, and the presence of disease proved a useful demarcation of wildlife and non-wildlife areas.

Other differences revolved around the nature of the respective tours. The SPFE's representative met with Game Wardens, governors, and "other interested persons" in each colony (these last, one suspects, representatives of the hunting, shooting, and fishing classes).<sup>77</sup> He visited a gorilla area in Uganda, toured Murchison Falls, and made social rounds.<sup>78</sup> Records of his journey show that Hingston viewed his genteel perambulation not so much as a fact-finding mission as an opportunity to impress the *a priori* views of the SPFE on a range of individuals.<sup>79</sup> Reception of the report varied. Hingston ruffled more than a few feathers, and authorities in Uganda in particular were swift to write to the Colonial Office to correct some of his

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<sup>72</sup> Obituary Notices: Major R W G Hingston, MC, MB, CHB, BAO, IMS (RETD)". *British Medical Journal*, 20 August 1966: 474.

<sup>73</sup> Works included *Darwin* (1934); *Instinct and Intelligence* (1929); *The Meaning of Animal Colour and Adornment* (1933); *A Naturalist in Himalaya* (1920); *A Naturalist in the Guiana Forest* (1932); *Nature at the Desert's Edge* (1925); *Problems of Instinct and Intelligence* (1928).

<sup>74</sup> R W G Hingston, "Proposed British National Parks for Africa", *The Geographical Journal* 77, no. 5 (May 1931): 401.

<sup>75</sup> R W G Hingston, "Proposed British National Parks for Africa", *The Geographical Journal* 77, no. 5 (May 1931): 402.

<sup>76</sup> At a later date, Hippopotamus meat and various kinds of hide would be added to ivory, although the "White Gold" retained pride of place until its sale was banned under Idi Amin.

<sup>77</sup> R W G Hingston, "Proposed British National Parks for Africa", *The Geographical Journal* 77, no. 5 (May 1931): 401-422, 401.

<sup>78</sup> CO536/159/1—1930, Gorillas, preservation of.

<sup>79</sup> CO795/39/16—1930, Game controlling and preservation.



inaccuracies.<sup>80</sup> The Colonial Office exhibited the tolerant exasperation which characterised most of its dealings with the SPFE. The *Manchester Guardian* swooned over Hingston's "labours on behalf of the mammals of Africa", and "the most impressive manifestations of the creative force that today exist [in] the scheme which he has submitted to the Government".<sup>81</sup> This "creative force" took the form of lobbying for National Parks, which were envisioned as evolving along the lines of parks in South Africa, Canada, and the United States. A successful park, in Hingston's view, depended on the meeting of ten broad requirements: adequate representation of animals in both biodiversity and numbers within a sufficiently large area; the self-sufficiency of that area in food and water; the undesirability of said land for mining or agriculture; a comparatively unpopulated space that was healthy for Europeans, accessible to tourists, and which contained spectacular scenery.<sup>82</sup> These suggestions acknowledged the need to come to terms with current and future development in the colonies, but did not integrate wildlife policy and development policy to the degree envisioned by Pitman. Nor was Pitman, when he set out on his survey, particularly concerned with accessibility and beauty when considering where to allow animals to survive. In fact, as his policy in Uganda suggests, inaccessibility would actually have been a benefit. Hingston's broad, comprehensive set of criteria were considered relevant in all five colonies, and reflected more a statement of principle than a systematic study. Pitman was commissioned to fill in the gaps and undertake a much lengthier study from a more expert standpoint. But his methods and advice differed significantly from what the SPFE's survey had yielded.

Pitman's Northern Rhodesia survey was based on an administrative and conceptual spatial restructuring of Northern Rhodesia. He undertook his survey on foot (1,700 miles), by motor vehicle (5,000 miles), and in an aeroplane (1,200 miles). [See **Figure 1.**] His tours on foot took the form of about five tight, irregular circles, linked by long stretches of motoring. The aerial survey was done across a large area (centring on Serenje in the Central Province), in long, straight lines. The process lasted for over one year. The circuit of Pitman's survey largely neglected the Western Province, and parts of Southern and North-Western Provinces. Parts of Luapula Province were also overlooked. These areas have in common considerably higher population densities, and their omission reflected the assumption that both historical population distribution and recent population increases rendered large tracts of the country unsuitable for game. [See **Figure 3.**] In his own estimation, Pitman's report sought "to reconcile various conflicting points of view, and is prepared especially so as to give adequate consideration of the game situation in relation to the existing arms policy, the alienation of certain areas as native reserves, as well as for white settlement, and the widespread prevalence of the tsetse fly".<sup>83</sup> Pitman wrote his report both on the basis of his own observations and on details which came from a variety of informants. Although he disagreed with the apocalyptic tone of Hingston's report, Pitman nonetheless considered some of the same threats to wildlife populations.

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<sup>80</sup> CO822/34/11—1931, Preservation of wild life in East Africa. In contrast, Hingston's report was well-received in Kenya, where he took part in a Game Conference, and was praised for his efforts "in correlating the diverse efforts in preservation, and his championship of the creation of national parks in Africa". Kenya Annual Game Department Report 1930: 24

<sup>81</sup> "Africa's animals", *Manchester Guardian*, 10 March 1931.

<sup>82</sup> Hingston, (1931), 401-422, 407-409. "Empire fauna", *The Times*, 10 March 1931, issue 45767

<sup>83</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), iii.

Pitman's second-hand informants varied. They included aide-de-camps to officials, veterinary officers, "cultivation protectors", planters, missionaries, and hunters.<sup>84</sup> He also consulted Africans, and because Pitman was almost constantly on the move for much of the survey period, he often relied exclusively on locals to give him a sense of the game situation in a given area. His journals give the impression of military precision, noting the exact time at which he arrived in a village, and the animals he saw along the way. At each location, he questioned informants about the number of animal species living in the vicinity, the amount of shooting, the extent of damage to crops, counter-measures against destructive game, and any and all information about elephants (which in Northern Rhodesia as in Uganda and elsewhere would be the centrepiece of policy recommendations).<sup>85</sup> Pitman trusted Europeans more than Africans,

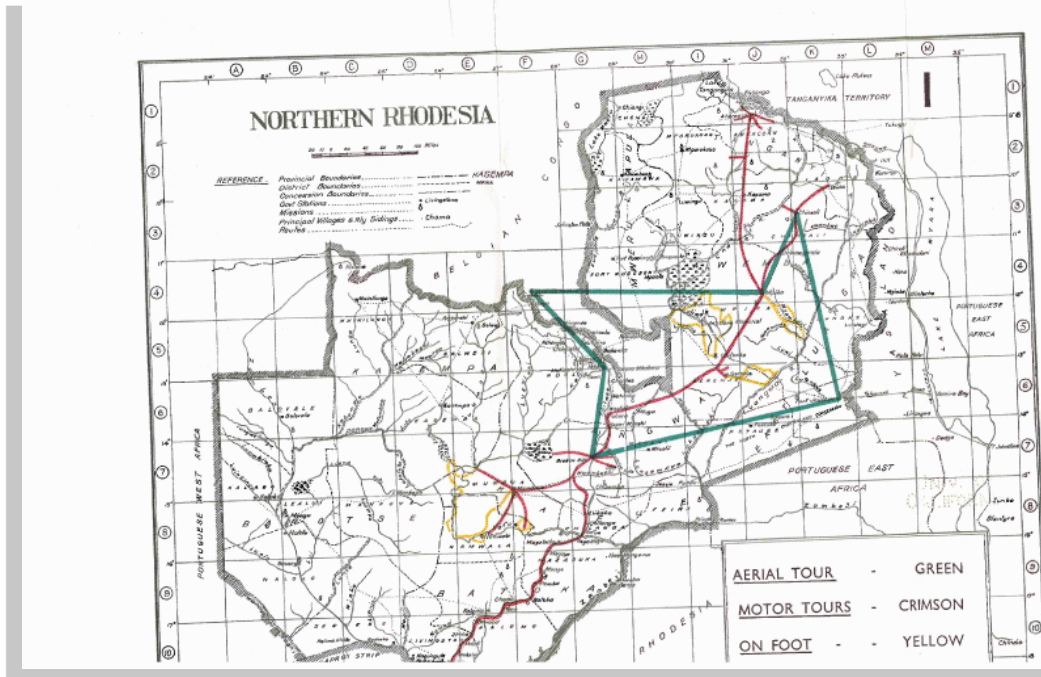


Image 4. Map I from Pitman's Northern Rhodesia report, showing the course of his survey.

and much writing about game during the period claims that Africans wildly exaggerated the damage done to their crops by game in order to get meat from the animals shot by control officers. All parties in the communities he visited had an interest in influencing Pitman's conclusions.<sup>86</sup> African farmers and some District Officers drew his attention to the destruction of crops, whilst the settler community and some missionaries emphasised the damage that Africans were inflicting on game as a way of calling attention to the perils of armed "natives". Pitman simultaneously noted the occurrence of animals with regard to location, and noted how much shooting he heard in given areas.<sup>87</sup> [See Image 5.] His aerial survey gave him a unique

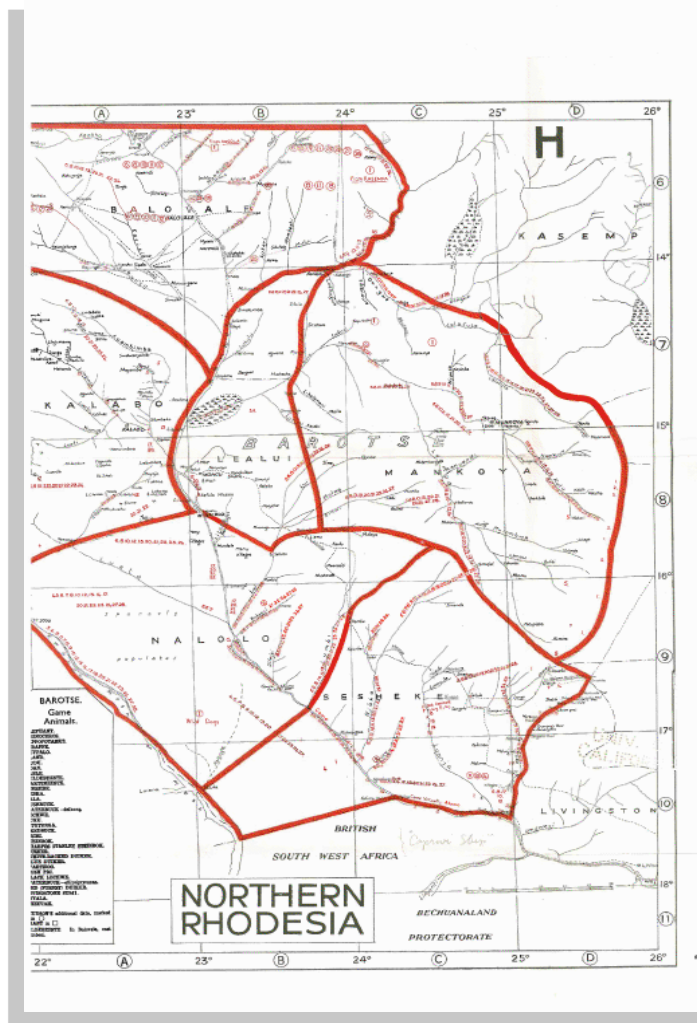
<sup>84</sup> Natural History Museum, Z.MSS.PIT, B73-80 "Game Notes, Northern Rhodesia, 1931"; Pitman, *Report* (1934), 23-5,

<sup>85</sup> Natural History Museum, Z.MSS.PIT, B73-80 "Game Notes, Northern Rhodesia, 1931"; Pitman, *Report*. It is unfortunately difficult to ascertain whether Pitman developed anything like a questionnaire that was universally distributed at each stop, or the degree to which questions he asked in a given area reflected what he had already been told by administrators.

<sup>86</sup> Natural History Museum, Z.MSS.PIT, B73-80 "Game Notes, Northern Rhodesia, 1931"

<sup>87</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 356.

perspective on the layout of the colony, including its various climatic and vegetation zones, although it is difficult to estimate how many of his conclusions derived expressly from the flight.<sup>88</sup> Pitman noted the boundaries of “the fly” and developed population estimates for the major species.<sup>89</sup> This mass of data formed the basis for a detailed set of recommendations and was represented in a series of maps that accompanied the survey report.



**Image 5. Map H from Pitman's Northern Rhodesia survey, showing distribution of fauna in Barotse.**

The tone of the report and its recommendations reflect some of the tensions between Pitman's “particularist” view and the “universalist” views held by the SPFE and its allies. Pitman scorned those who made “childishly ridiculous” claims about the ease of setting up National Parks. “Cursory investigations on the part of interested visitors have been facilitated”, he wrote, “but this does not mean that all or any of the suggestions subsequently offered can or

<sup>88</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), iii. Bruce Kinloch's memoir puts the first “scientific” aerial game count as occurring around 1956. As Pitman's protégé and successor, Kinloch would probably have credited Pitman's Northern Rhodesian flight had it been deemed sufficiently scientific. He definitely knew about the Northern Rhodesian survey, so this suggests to me that little of the survey's data was gleaned exclusively from the flight. Kinloch, (1972), 321.

<sup>89</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 331ff.

will be acted upon". He went on to reject the apocalyptic scenarios about the destruction of game, trenchantly asserting that there was "most certainly no necessity as yet for the panic which seems to exist in certain quarters and I strongly deprecate resort in any form to what I term emergency measures".<sup>90</sup> It is ironic that Pitman was at once mounting an attack on the public opinion strategies of the SPFE and conducting a survey at their prompting. He agreed that a game department was necessary, but in his proposals, that game department would not police a national park, but rather Northern Rhodesia's game populations, in and out of protected areas. He also rejected Hingston's suggestion for a South-Central African National Park, which would have straddled the border of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. Pitman believed that there were too many people living in the area, and too much "fly".<sup>91</sup>

By examining Pitman's early work in Uganda, and that of his contemporaries, it is possible to discern the influences of his Ugandan experience on his work in Northern Rhodesia. His successor as warden in Uganda, Bruce Kinloch, asserted directly that Pitman successfully transplanted Uganda's successes to a Northern Rhodesian scenario.<sup>92</sup> Pitman's books also offer methodological parallels. In discussing a "census" of rhinoceros populations in Uganda, he wrote as follows:

In order to dispel any impression that may have been gained that we set out armed with pots of paint and brushes I will outline briefly the plan adopted. The procedure was the same whether a couple of Europeans were collaborating, or only one working with reliable native assistants. The district was toured exhaustively and at each place where either native information or rhinoceros tracks indicated the presence of the animal, investigators went out simultaneously in opposite directions and recorded only what they actually saw in the flesh. Particular care was taken to avoid the possibility of counting the same animal twice and tracks seen were ignored.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to revealing the functionally critical but hierarchically auxiliary role of Africans (both in their formal administrative duties and informal status as informants), and the attempts at comprehensiveness, Pitman's methods reveal an attempt to systematise a method whereby a standard procedure allows the investigator to arrive at results comparatively unaffected by preconceptions. This was in stark contrast to the style of survey commissioned by the SPFE.

A more important source of information consisted of Uganda's annual game department reports. During their tenure as wardens, Caldwell and Pitman both undertook systematic tours of Uganda to get a sense of both the colony-wide game picture and regional trends and problems. Individual elephant herds were labelled and their movements and numbers tracked. They gathered information from a number of sources and applied it to the solution of specific "problems".<sup>94</sup> More detailed reports from later years show that game guards were assigned according to the threat posed by elephants.<sup>95</sup> The penchant for organisation reflected in these reports manifested itself in the Northern Rhodesia report, wherein Pitman mapped the

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<sup>90</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 142.

<sup>91</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 144.

<sup>92</sup> Kinloch (1972): 202-3.

<sup>93</sup> C R S Pitman, *A game warden among his charges* (London: Nisbet & Co Ltd, 1931), 22

<sup>94</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annual of the game department for the year ending 31 December 1928: 11, 26, 31.

<sup>95</sup> Uganda Protectorate, Annuals of the game department.



Another hallmark of Pitman's Ugandan approach was the willingness to institute regional schemes (such as that in Toro) to deal with problems as they arose. The Northern Rhodesia report suggests such flexibility in its call for regional modifications of the Game Schedules, very different from the totalising, continent-wide schedules that the SPFE wanted.<sup>99</sup> Pitman's recommendations for parks and reserves also reflected the particularist bent acquired in Uganda. Some protected areas were to be the existing game reserves, which he proposed expanding so that they could become self-contained. Others would be reserves catering to the protection of local populations of specific species: lechwe, wildebeest, hippopotamus, and giraffe. As development played a role in determining wildlife policy in Uganda, so would it in Northern Rhodesia. For example, Pitman was determined not to link the Luangwa Valley with the Bangweulu Swamp via protected areas. He was concerned that this would afford elephant herds too much scope for lateral movement which could take them into settled areas (or areas which promised some future agricultural return), and this preoccupation shaped the direction and size of proposed expansions.<sup>100</sup> His formulation of protected areas also required that the function and size of the area should be defined as it related to state coffers. Pitman regarded the "cash basis" of game policy as critical in light of what he referred to as his "materialistic times", noting that this would both blunt criticism and integrate the department more smoothly into the workings of the administration.<sup>101</sup>

Pitman was equally hard-nosed when it came to National parks, the pet project of preservationists. He referred to the concept as a "catch phrase", and the entity itself as a "people's playground", effectively impossible in Africa because of disease, climate, and communications. Game areas, such as they might be created, should address the conflict between economic development and wildlife, and would more profitably be called "national sanctuaries". Pitman outlined a set of steps towards the foundation of such sanctuaries: an official survey, an inquiry into political, administrative, and economic interests at stake, a definition of boundaries, appropriate legislation, and provision for the governance of said area.<sup>102</sup> Such sanctuaries should be comparatively off-limits to visitors, held in permanent trust, and *managed* by a professional staff. Development was not geared towards the production of National Parks as vast recreation areas, and Pitman's proposed sanctuaries were designed to mitigate between people and wildlife, not create a sphere for their interaction. This recommendation and others made in his Northern Rhodesian report suggest that Pitman's methods, scope, and broader ideas about the relationship between wildlife and development all reflect his experiences in Uganda. They also imply the emergence of a class of professional administrators who worked with different aims and under a different administrative ethos from before.

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<sup>99</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 134. Game Schedules were key components of most colonial game ordinances, as well as of the international conferences and treaties. They divided up animals into schedules according to which they could be hunted. In the 1900 Convention, for example, Series A of Schedule I comprised those animals "whose preservation it is desired on account of their usefulness"; Series B "on account of their rarity and threatened extermination". Schedule II comprised animals "of which it is desired to prohibit the destruction when young"; Schedule III, "the killing of the females of which, when accompanied by their young, is prohibited", and so on. Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds, and Fish in Africa. HMSO, London 1900: 12.

<sup>100</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 136, 138. The Luangwa Valley would eventually become the centrepiece of Northern Rhodesia's protected areas, but was itself not a unified reserve because of a populated corridor—critical to local trading routes—which bisected it running east-to-west.

<sup>101</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934), 62.

<sup>102</sup> Pitman, *Report* (1934): 136, 138, 62, 140.



Thus far, Pitman's approach has been interpreted as being particularist—that is, interested in tying policy to local conditions—and conservationist—that is, concerned with the strategic use of natural resources, rather than with their strict preservation. Nonetheless, there was a nascent universalism embedded in Pitman's particularism. For although he advocated for the evaluation of local circumstances, the careful analysis and description of regional trends and data, and the need to tie wildlife policy to the political economy of the colony or locality, he simultaneously believed in the universality of his method. His successor, Bruce Kinloch, wrote that “many of the basic principles of wildlife management have been known and practised since time immemorial without the reasons for them always being clearly understood [...] Only in recent years has modern science become involved”.<sup>103</sup> Pitman's tenure might not have seen the intrusion of what Kinloch regarded as “modern science”. Nevertheless, the methods that he used in Uganda were largely transplanted to Northern Rhodesia, and he was able to write about “principles” of elephant control, and the necessity for total separation of people from animals as central to colonial developmental regimes. Although Pitman attempted to account for local sensibilities in developing his wildlife policies, these sensibilities were not based on any assessment of cultural factors, but were rather filtered through the lens of a methodological approach rooted in earlier successes and of broad assumptions about how colonial economies should function in relation to Britain.

## Conclusions

I do not want to suggest that the wildlife policies implemented in Uganda and recommended for Northern Rhodesia were entirely exceptional in East or Central Africa at this time. In fact, although Pitman was the figure most associated with policies like Elephant Control, evidence suggests that they were fairly common, albeit often far less systematic, in other colonies. The Game Department's Annual Reports from Tanganyika make it clear that by at least the early 1930s there were programs in place to systematically cull elephants. A sampling of cull figures shows that it was an operation on the same scale as that in Uganda: in 1932, 413 elephants were killed, and from 1933 to 1938 the numbers were, respectively, 1,221, 2,716, 410, 2,674, 1,481, and 921.<sup>104</sup> Kenya's policy is less clear from the annual reports, but some level of elephant control was being practised by 1931, and by 1936, elephant control was taking place in the Aberdares, Kisii, Nyeri, Laikipia, Timau, Kwale, and Lamu.<sup>105</sup> This constituted a large geographical spread, from Nyanza Province (bordering Lake Victoria) to the Indian Ocean, and to the fertile ranges in Central Province. What they had in common was comparatively large agricultural production. Generally speaking, control was less publicised (and likely less organised) in Kenya than in Uganda and Tanganyika. Numbers in mid-30s Kenya were much lower than in Uganda and Tanganyika, but there were striking similarities to the Ugandan policy, with the author of the 1932-4 report claiming that “the theory of elephant control is simplicity itself: decide in which areas the existence of elephants is justifiable and then keep them in those areas”.<sup>106</sup> Nor was Uganda the only model for colonial wildlife policy, as imperial networks and the exchange of personnel between technical departments increased the flow of information around the region. For example, a document titled “Observations on

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<sup>103</sup> Kinloch (1972), 105-6.

<sup>104</sup> Tanganyika Territory Game Preservation Department Annual Reports.

<sup>105</sup> Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Game Department Annual Report 1936. Government Press, 8. Kenya Annual Game Report, 1930: 16.

<sup>106</sup> Kenya Annual Game Report, 1932-4: 31

Elephants in the Southern Province of Tanganyika”, by a Tanganyikan warden, B D Nicholson, cropped up in a range of settings around East and South-Central Africa, and provided “principles” not dissimilar to those articulated by Pitman, although they date from a slightly later period.<sup>107</sup>

Nonetheless, there were important differences between colonies, and those differences mapped onto the cultures and compositions of respective colonies. Uganda was never likely to become a settler state, and the British government recognised that it had to work with and through well-entrenched Ugandan authorities. Tanganyika was a League of Nations Mandate, and although some settlement occurred in the north after the colony was pried from German hands in a bloody campaign during the Great War, League of Nations oversight checked settler ambitions. Kenya was a very different story thanks to its larger and more politically active settler population which frequently clashed with the colony’s government and members of which believed that they would retain control over the colony after independence.

In Kenya, it was poaching, and the protection of white hunting prerogatives, which were the primary concern of the Game Department. It is impossible to imagine one of that colony’s wardens, based on the harsher tone of Kenya’s Game Reports, admitting to “a sneaking sympathy, a certain fellow feeling, for the small-time poacher”, which is what Kinloch said, adding that he never felt “able to condemn the tribesman who has speared a bushbuck to feed his hungry family”.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, Kinloch called Kenya the “one outstanding exception” amongst East African game departments.<sup>109</sup> While the 1928 Annual Report of the Kenyan Game Department recognised that “the control of game and certain vermin is a part of the duties of the department”, this recognition came later than in Uganda and Tanganyika, and more grudgingly. The recognition, the report’s author suggested, had less to do with any enthusiasm for active management or control than with “ensuring, for the future, that a reasonable degree of preservation shall be not only possible but capable of justification and enforcement in the face of attack from whatever quarter”.<sup>110</sup> It is important to recognise how these different political and demographic contexts would have contributed to the differentiation of wildlife policy across East Africa, making policies of active control more palatable in Tanganyika and Uganda than in Kenya.

The emergence of “wildlife policy” as a policy sphere in the 1920s and 1930s was crucial to setting up the debates and institutions which would emerge in the following decades. Its development as a policy sphere reflected the advance of the professional onto the preserve of the amateur; the incursion of science onto the field of hunt. As control over wildlife was consolidated in Game Departments, the influence of the titular aristocracy and the SPFE declined, and economy, environment, development, and management complicated preservation. To promote the circulation of information and policy, particularly in later decades, Game Wardens from different colonies would meet. These conferences were generally held in National Parks or Game Reserves, and brought together many participants in the region’s small conservation world. Wardens exchanged ideas at the conferences, but were also protective of their turf, and hotly debated the best methods by which their departments could achieve their

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<sup>107</sup> For example, National Archives of Zambia, B D Nicholson, “Observations on Elephants in the Southern Province of Tanganyika”. Undated.

<sup>108</sup> Kinloch (1988), 216.

<sup>109</sup> Kinloch (1988), 28.

<sup>110</sup> *Colony and Protectorate of Kenya: Game Department Annual Report 1928* (Government Press, 1929), 12.



ends.<sup>111</sup> At the same time, even where game wardens resisted the SPFE's impulses toward universalism, their very participation in Game Wardens Conferences and international conventions promoted flows of information about strategies and techniques, and made wildlife issues a shared "problem" between East and Central African colonies. Personnel were often exchanged, a process which quickened apace with decolonisation as newly-independent African nations sought to Africanise their Game Departments. Pitman finished his days as Warden in Uganda, but Kinloch, his successor, moved on to Tanganyika, Botswana, and then to Malawi. The 1920s and '30s therefore, represent a distinct moment, when a kind of particularist approach to wildlife was developed. Although this approach was later subsumed beneath a methodological universalism of its own making, it marked an important shift, and could be read as being even more significant in light of recent attempts to bring international wildlife conservation down to earth, and to force it to come face to face with the economic and social needs of people who, together with wild animals, inhabited areas worthy of protection.

In Uganda there was relative consensus about the role of the Game Department and its relationship to a broader set of colonial and imperial administrative ambitions. This was not so everywhere, and the focus of the next chapter is on the disaggregation of the colonial governing apparatus to demonstrate how, when there was dissent within that administration, it was not always the wildlife department which had its way. Pitman's report on conditions in Northern Rhodesia was published in 1934, a delay that irked both the Warden and his imperial backers. Its recommendations for the creation of a Game Department were not implemented for several additional years. Chapter Two focuses on the wildlife sector in Northern Rhodesia during the interwar years, and so the outcome of Pitman's report and the history of wildlife policy as it related to the complex colonial administration will be explored at greater length there.

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<sup>111</sup> KNA KW 8/12. Wardens' Conferences. 1961; KNA KW 1/84. Administration of Game Laws and Preservation of Game; Policy Conferences. September 1950, Fauna Conference, Victoria Falls; Fauna of British Eastern and Central African Conference, Proceedings, 18-19 September 1950. KNA KW 6/54. Minutes—Wardens' Conference, 1951-1964.

## Chapter Two

### **Governing the Game: Expertise, Authority, and Administration in Northern Rhodesia's Wildlife Sector, 1925 to 1960**

“It is the singular fate of Africa that so many of its countries should be subject to the political control of one or other of the European Powers....So far as the [British] dependencies are concerned, it has never been defined in any authoritative statement of policy. That is not merely a concession to the tradition of elasticity which has for so long been favoured by the British in constitutional matters. There is a more practical reason. The dependencies comprise a large number of units at very different stages of political progress”.<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter left off with Charles Pitman delivering a set of recommendations for the creation of a Northern Rhodesian Game Department. Pitman made a point of considering local circumstances, but the strong universalising bent to his “method” pointed to the growing influence of imperial “experts”, whose knowledge was regarded as transplantable. Pitman was, in other words, as much an expert in Northern Rhodesia as in Uganda because his expertise was in a particular policy area rather than in the sweeping kind of governance that colonial officials had practised in the earlier years of rule. He was a wildlife expert, backed by a wildlife lobby, making a recommendation for a wildlife department. His own department in Uganda had been set up by A T A Ritchie, a wildlife expert imported from Kenya. The likes of Ritchie (who went to Malaya to manage the game situation there), Pitman (who conducted his fauna survey), and Keith Caldwell (a roving wildlife ambassador for the Colonial and Foreign Offices) helped to create a growing corpus of region- and even empire-wide knowledge which suggested that the conservation of wildlife was a critical moral and administrative imperative. We might expect the departments they created or helped to inspire to have exerted unmediated influence on the control, conservation, and preservation of wildlife. That was not, in fact, the case. Although the individuals responsible for eventually creating Northern Rhodesia's Game Department did from time to time reference Pitman's report, it was no more than a tool or a reference point. Their primary concerns lay elsewhere.

This chapter will use the example of Northern Rhodesia's Game and Tsetse Control Department—from its creation to the period just before independence—to explain why it was that the Game Department and its personnel regularly found themselves frustrated and their actions circumscribed. In all colonies, the power of wildlife departments to design or implement policy were powerfully shaped by their provenance in an evolving bureaucratic stratigraphy. The bureaucratic structure which shaped the terms of debate and the implementation of wildlife policy was itself the product of intense negotiations of colonial power. Those negotiations took place between subject peoples and their rulers; between settler societies and administrative officers; between intermediary functionaries and their superiors; and between African representatives and their constituents.

This chapter seeks to disconnect the historical explanation of wildlife policy in Britain's colonies from their comparatively parochial moorings in conservation and hunting history and to associate them more closely with the colonial ship of state. That colonial state floated at some

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Hailey, *An African Survey, Revised 1956: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 145, 147.

distance from, and operated through processes distinct from, the Imperial Ark represented by the imperial government's cultural investment in wildlife preservation stemming from the late-nineteenth century. This approach takes inspiration from historians' injunction to avoid what Joanna Lewis called the "reductive and homogenized view of colonial government through illustrating the divisions" within the administration.<sup>2</sup> In his history of central African nationalism, Robert Rotberg distinguishes between the work of centralised commissions and their guidelines and recommendations; the personal rule of the commissioner himself; the "ad hoc efforts of the planters"; and the individual efforts of district officers<sup>3</sup>. Similar themes emerge from historians' account of the forced removal of Matabele farmers into the Shangani Reserve in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>4</sup> There might have been a stated policy or governing objective issued in London, but these interests together with the colonial legislative councils and the hybridised African representative bodies which emerged meant that discrete policy spheres could easily—if fleetingly—be captured by competing interests. Historians of Zambia have illustrated the variegated nature of the colonial state, Samuel Chipungu pointing out the centrality of African leadership to the functioning of the state, a point reiterated by a growing body of historical research on African intermediaries captured in Lawrance, Osborn, and Roberts' edited volume.<sup>5</sup>

There are many ways of characterising the multifold character of British administration in colonial Africa: chronological, ideological, spatial, and economical. In the first place, there were the Provincial and District administrators, who in the early years of British colonialism in central Africa governed vast territories almost single-handedly. They were jacks-of-all-trades, whose kingdoms had a geographic basis and whose rule was highly personalised. Indeed, in the context of colonial Kenya, these officers were memorably described as Catonist in their outlook by Bruce Berman.<sup>6</sup> They governed in an often-arbitrary fashion, believed that their authority grew out of their experience and understanding of their subjects, and in fact "performed" the act of governance, each year's show being slightly different to the last by dint of a disinterest in formalised administration and a conviction that their subjects needed to be impressed with erratic visual and material displays of colonial power.<sup>7</sup> They were embedded in local politics, and saw the struggle for authority and mastery as inherently political and also local in character.

<sup>2</sup> Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War & Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000):

3. Hughes (2006) provides a good account of how land use policy which impacted wildlife was caught up in administrative imperatives. See also William Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock and the Environment, 1770-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Robert I Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: the Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 31-35.

<sup>4</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 47, 60, 67

<sup>5</sup> Samuel N Chipungu, "African leadership under Indirect Rule in colonial Zambia" and "Accumulation from Within: the Boma class and the Native Treasury in Colonial Zambia" in Samuel N Chipungu, ed. *Guardians in their Time: Experiences of Zambians Under Colonial Rule, 1890-1964* (London: Macmillan, 1992). Benjamin N Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L Roberts, eds. *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Crisis and Control in Colonial Kenya*.

<sup>7</sup> For the decentralised character of rule, and the significance of individualistic styles of governance, see for example, Richard Price, *Making Empire*. Also Antony Kirk-Greene, *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Service, 1837-1997* (1999); Kirk-Greene, *Symbol of Authority: the British District Officer in Africa* (London: I B Tauris, 2006). This approach distinguishes itself from that which aspires to see colonial processes driven by an "official mind", perhaps best represented by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: the Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan, 1961).

In contrast, were the technical departments, the growth of which is most associated with the post-Second World War era.<sup>8</sup> Embracing a suite of policy areas—including but by no means limited to medical, agricultural, veterinary, forestry, geological, cadastral, educational, irrigational, financial, and juridical spheres—technical departments represented the aspiration of an activist colonial state, committed to the selective economic and social development of colonies, partly with an eye to servicing a faltering metropolitan economy, partly to associate some reality with the rhetoric of trusteeship, and partly as a way of forestalling the end of empire. Rather than having a geographic remit, these departments concerned themselves with policy areas. However, as we shall see, this did not prevent their officers also having responsibilities for geographic sub-areas so that often their work paralleled that of the Provincial authorities with whom they worked on a subordinate basis on regional development teams. Their authority derived from their transplantable expertise, the ability of their particular “science” to universalise conditions and homogenise solutions to the empire’s economic, environmental, and social problems. They necessarily regarded the world from a more bird’s eye view and aspired to reside in an apolitical stratosphere, from where they could formalise policy and iron out messy contingencies. Their success, however, was often notable by its absence. Joanna Lewis suggests that “habits of colonial authority” meant that technical departments “were subordinated to the administrative service...[and] struggled in vain to gain a foothold in the mainstream of colonial government”.<sup>9</sup> Different assessments of technical officers’ “success” exist, Tilley for example finding their work far-reaching, but also easily undermined by the capacity of their obsession with local peculiarities to break down more transformative ambitions.<sup>10</sup>

Historians have often suggested that the story of late colonialism is that of the transformation of the informal, personalised, geographic-based rule of Provincial and District Commissioners into the technocratic, abstract, and policy-based administration of technical departments—ranging from health and education to agriculture and water. With reference to colonial Zimbabwe, Alexander argues that “in general, as agricultural intervention became the hallmark of the second colonial occupation, the colonial technical branches gained dominance over the administrative”.<sup>11</sup> There was certainly a temporal element, whereby the technical departments took their place alongside the *bomas* (district or provincial headquarters) as centres of gravity and authority, and whereby their influence grew. However, the dynamic which most animated colonial wildlife policy in Northern Rhodesia during our three decades in question, was the interaction between these two modes of administration, with one another and with organs

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<sup>8</sup> Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War & Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000); Joseph Morgan Hodges, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Andrew Bowman, “Ecology to Technocracy: Scientists, Surveys and Power in Agricultural Development of Late-Colonial Zambia” in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37:01 (2011), 135-153; Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War & Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 15.

<sup>10</sup> Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the ‘Dark Forests’ of Matabeleland* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 72. The “Second Colonial Occupation” refers to the idea of the emergence of a more invigorated, ambitious, and intrusive colonial state which sought to reassert authority over geographic areas and social spheres which had hitherto been minimally impacted by the colonial government.

designed to present some version of “African opinion”. On the one hand, the administration was layered. But its often ad-hoc nature undermines such a description given often un-demarcated jurisdictional claims and competition about which had to be routed through the executive. In style and in relation to their subjects, the Governor and Chief Secretary were often more of a mind with the *bomas*, believing them to be closer to the ground. Moreover, significant tensions existed within technical departments. These tensions reflected the different kinds of personnel within their organisations, tensions between centrally-created policy and locally-enforced administration, and the character of interactions with the provincial administration.

By examining the administrative and bureaucratic character of the “wildlife sector” in Northern Rhodesia between the 1920s and 1960, I hope to demonstrate that analysis of colonial bureaucracy is essential to any understanding of both the wildlife agenda of the colonial government and the process whereby such an agenda was or was not implemented. It was an administrative cleavage, rather than one to do with hunting or conservation (although that unnecessarily-rigid binary certainly had a role to play), which most animated colonial debates in Northern Rhodesia about how to manage the territory’s wildlife. The nature of the splits in the colonial governing structure was complicated, and yet even careful analyses have often relied on certain assumptions about the character of rule. Lewis acknowledges that “the presumed division between frustrated but compassionate professionalism and die-hard racial paternalism was by no means clear-cut”<sup>12</sup>. This is certainly true, but understates the problem with a binary assumed to be basically correct if not quite “clear-cut”. As the Northern Rhodesian case demonstrates, where wildlife was concerned, this formulation could almost be turned on its head. In fact, there was significant conflict within as well as between the two parallel, coexisting forms of administration which form the basis of this distinction.

Ultimately, it is striking how little either wildlife lobbies, hunting interests, or even settler concerns, to say nothing of direct input from African subjects, featured in the quotidian administration of the Game and Tsetse Control Department, in the negotiations between the wings of the administration responsible for sculpting wildlife policy, or in the official debates which structured how that policy would be implemented. Between 1925 and 1960 at least, it appears that bureaucratic competition, divergent ideologies of administration, and the territorial and federal politics which structured that administration were the most critical factors in shaping Northern Rhodesia’s wildlife policy.

To explore the significance of this variegated administrative complex, this chapter draws on secretariat and provincial papers from the National Archives of Zambia, personal papers of wildlife officers<sup>13</sup>, and the Hansard records of the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council to provide a brief background on the emergence of Northern Rhodesia’s wildlife department. It then explores the composition of that department and the day-to-day work of its employees. It then sets out to explore the organisational ethos and character of the Game and Tsetse Control Department and its counterparts in the administration, the Provincial and District administrators, evaluating how bureaucratic contexts and administrative vantage points played a critical role in

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<sup>12</sup> Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War & Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 18.

<sup>13</sup> The chapter relies in particular on the papers of Eustace W Poles, an officer of the Northern Rhodesian Game Department from 1946 to 1957. Poles’ papers, held by the Zoological Society of London Archives, offer what I have found to be unique insight into the day-to-day workings of the department. A devoted diarist, Poles not only detailed his thoughts about his work and his colleagues and subordinates, but recorded in great detail information about distances officers covered on their *ulendos*, the amount of food consumed, the process of labour conscription, and the nitty-gritty of control work.

defining the colony's wildlife policy, arguing that that policy was measured against very local concerns. It concludes with a brief evaluation of the input offered by the African Provincial Councils in the 1950s. The comparative brevity of this treatment is occasioned by the fact that the Councils appear to have exerted very little influence over policy, and were retained within the political structure largely because of the role they served with reference to what was referred to as the "central government African pyramid" as an electoral college.<sup>14</sup>

### **Historical Background to the Formation of the Game Department**

Ruled for the early years of its existence by the British South African Company, Northern Rhodesia was turned fully over to the British government in 1924. The Company had created a handful of un-policed game reserves, but its officers were most interested in the territory's game for their personal hunting, and for the wealth that accrued from the ivory that the Company collected, paying one tusk to the finder.<sup>15</sup> The Company was not interested in expanding the scope of its administration's activities, and ensured "that whatever a man's colour, he was entitled by the law to kill any beast, elephant or buck, that he found damaging his fenced garden", by way of avoiding responsibility for crop protection or game control.<sup>16</sup> After reverting to formal colonial rule, Northern Rhodesia's government created the first Game Ordinance in 1925. Such ordinances stipulated the numbers and types of animals that holders of various hunting licences could shoot. In 1929, the Kafue River was declared a Game Reserve, but there was as yet no department to undertake its administration. Enforcement of the Game Ordinance and crop protection—the primary wildlife-related concern of the administration—were the responsibility of District and Provincial Officers. However, they expended little effort on what was regarded as an extremely non-essential activity. For example, in the District Annual Reports for Northern between 1920 and 1930, references to game matters are notable primarily for their rarity. Where they occurred, they noted the hardship visited upon Africans, and the difficulties engendered for the administration, by the presence of wildlife, whether crop-raiding elephants, man-eating lions, or destructive hippos.<sup>17</sup> When proponents of preservation discussed an ambitious scheme for the Luangwa Valley, the Provincial Commissioner poured cold water on the endeavour, writing that "in a few years time we shall need all the garden land that we can get and it will be, in my opinion, most unfortunate if this piece of country is given over entirely to antediluvian animals that are never likely, while preserved, to pay for their preservation".<sup>18</sup>

These officers undertook light control duties, and were also empowered to employ African hunters to protect crops and embark on limited control exercises.<sup>19</sup> Some simply loaned

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<sup>14</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/36. African Provincial Council—General. 1952 to 1958. Secretary of Native Affairs to Provincial Commissioners, 29 January 1952. This pyramid consisted of Native Authorities, which served as the pool from which most African Provincial Councillors were drawn. The APC in turn served as the electoral college for the African Representative Council, the ARC serving the same purpose for the small but growing number of African LegCo members.

<sup>15</sup> NAZ. SEC 2/474. Fishing and Hunting Rights in Native Reserves. 1931 to 1933. Secretary of Native Affairs to Acting Chief Secretary, 18 May 1933.

<sup>16</sup> NAZ. BSA A 2/4/3/9. Loc. 3945. Acting Administrator to Secretary BSAC, 2 November 1909.

<sup>17</sup> NAZ. NP 1/1/1/Loc. 4778. District Annual Reports, 1919 to 1932.

<sup>18</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/225. Luangwa Valley Game Reserves and Controlled Areas, 1937 to 1939. Letter, Provincial Commissioner Eastern to Officer i/c Game Investigations, 6 July 1937.

<sup>19</sup> NAZ. RC/1260. Protection of Native Crops Awemba Province (Northern), 1932 to 1935. Letter, PC Kasama's Provincial circular, 28 May 1932.

guns and ammunition to beleaguered villages.<sup>20</sup> They also contracted resident Europeans who were sent off into the bush on more comprehensive elephant control schemes. The remit of these contracted employees did not extend to enforcing game laws, and their status was sufficiently unclear that there was some uncertainty as to whether they had the legal right to collect elephant tusks and deal with the monies which accrued from control.<sup>21</sup> The threats to crops were real enough. Stories abounded of villagers having to stay up all night to guard their gardens. Some villages were reportedly deserted due to persistent raiding from elephant herds, and elephants routinely killed people who were defending their gardens.<sup>22</sup> Even in later years, reports appeared in the government-sponsored “African newspaper” *Mutende* describing crop destruction, the only reference therein to wildlife.<sup>23</sup> Older residents of the Native Authorities, who could recall the pre-colonial era, claimed that before the arrival of Europeans, there had been far less conflict with elephants. This might have been because of the protection offered wildlife by the game laws, the regulation of hunting methods, the gazettement of reserves, or forced population movement.<sup>24</sup> One European contracted for control killed 78 crop-raiding elephants in five and a half months, apparently not an unusual feat.<sup>25</sup> Some of these contracted officers (at least one of whom later played a role in the Game Department) emphasised to their supervising Provincial Commissioners that restrictive hunting regulations were creating a situation in which a dearth of knowledge on the part of African villagers about game and hunting meant that the territory would require a formal apparatus to control wildlife in the absence of viable local efforts.<sup>26</sup> In sum, in spite of the sporadic nature of control efforts during the 1920s and early 1930s, the operating assumption on the part of the administration remained constant. Namely, “where the interests of elephant or game hunters or sight-seers conflict with the interests of natives, the interests of natives should prevail...security of land is of no value without security of crops”.<sup>27</sup>

At the behest of the imperial wildlife lobby, which had much less clout in Northern Rhodesia than in Kenya, Hingston (in 1930) and Pitman (in 1931) made fauna surveys of the colony, and although the administration appeared interested in their findings, it made no move to create the Game Department that they suggested. Hingston’s survey was part of an Africa-wide project initiated by the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, and his report prompted the despatch of Pitman (an Ugandan Game Warden) to undertake a more detailed, territorial-specific survey of Northern Rhodesia. Tellingly, Hingston’s preservationist suggestions were greeted with significant hostility by the Provincial Commissioners who were asked to comment on his report. The general tenor of the objections was summed up by the

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<sup>20</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/1015. Elephant control and establishment of national parks and sanctuaries, 1934 to 1939. Letter, Provincial Commissioner Kasama to Chief Secretary, 20 January 1934.

<sup>21</sup> NAZ. RC/1260. Protection of Native Crops Awemba Province (Northern), 1932 to 1935. Letter, Secretary of Native Affairs to Chief Secretary, 13 January 1933. See also NAZ files RC/1262; RC/1261; RC/1263;

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, NAZ RC/1263. Miscellaneous Groups, 1927 to 1932. Letter, James D Ross to Chief Secretary, 11 February 1930; NAZ. SEC 1/1014. Tour Report Regarding Damage Done by Elephant to Native Crops, 1931 to 1933.

<sup>23</sup> *Mutende*, for example, February 1948 edition, February 1949 edition, July 1949 edition, November 1949 edition.

<sup>24</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/996. Reports on Elephant Control. 1936 to 1939. Letter, Lancaster to PC Fort Jameson, 20 September 1938.

<sup>25</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/1017. Report on Control of Operations of Elephants, 1934 to 1936. Rangeley, Report on Elephant Control, Fort Jameson and Lundazi Districts, season 1933 to 1934.

<sup>26</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/1018. Game Protection of Crops, Awemba—Northern Province Reports, 1936 to 1938. Letter, Langham to Provincial Commissioner, Kasama, 1 June 1938.

<sup>27</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/1015. Elephant Control and Establishment of National Parks and Sanctuaries, 1934 to 1939. Letter, District Commissioner Mporokoso to Provincial Commissioner Kasama, 16 December 1933.

Provincial Commissioner at Fort Jameson who wrote to the Chief Secretary that “the interests of the native population must take premier place”, adding per one of Hingston’s suggestions for the creation of a reserve that “it would be not only unreasonable but out of the question to evict 34,500 or possibly 60,000 natives in order to obtain a national game park”. Others added that Hingston was wrong to blame Africans for game slaughter, saying that Europeans had played at least as great a role.<sup>28</sup> However, by 1933, a more formal system of elephant control, further codified in 1935, began to take shape under Provincial Commissioners, relying in part on suggestions from Pitman’s report. In 1936, T G C Vaughan-Jones (a District Officer) was assigned the responsibility of implementing Pitman’s recommendations. In 1938 Vaughan-Jones published a memo outlining what would be established in 1940 as the Game and Tsetse Control Department.

Thus, by the time that a technical wildlife department was established in Northern Rhodesia, well over a decade after the creation of similar departments in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, Provincial and District Officers had already been handling the management of crop destroying animals (chiefly elephants, hippopotamus and buffalo) for some years. Colonial subjects had a clear idea of where the sympathies of the administration should lie when they took their complaints to the *boma*. Other Game Reserves were gazetted over the years, at Kafue, the Luangwa Valley, Livingstone Memorial. As the Game Department began to actively manage these reserves for the first time, it took a hostile view of the poaching that took place at their fringes and sometimes in the heart of the reserves, and of the settlements that existed in the reserves.

Northern Rhodesia’s political geography was telling. General policy ambitions were articulated by the imperial government and the Secretariat. The latter was for some years based in Livingstone, a town near the border with Southern Rhodesia formed by the Zambezi at the Victoria Falls. However, it was later transferred to the dusty high-altitudes of Lusaka, located between Livingstone and the increasingly-important Copperbelt at the border with the Belgian Congo. The central government’s regional representatives were the Provincial and District Commissioners<sup>29</sup>, who presided over large swathes of Northern Rhodesia with minimal attention to discrete “policy” spheres. These administrative officers governed with reference to large issues around land tenure, agricultural development, “native” welfare, law and order, and not least the maintenance of their own authority. This meant walking a fine line, and their autocratic rule depended on a basic level of consent. In a crisis, brute force could be applied, but was thought to represent administrative failure<sup>30</sup>. It was enough, generally, that they managed to avoid antagonising local leaders—chiefs and headmen. But to placate these intermediaries, they had to take care that policies did not antagonise intermediaries’ subjects to the extent that those subjects would exert pressure on intermediaries to reject colonial authority. Living as part of the “thin white line” amongst their subordinates, Provincial and District Commissioners were

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<sup>28</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/996. Reports on Elephant Control. 1936 to 1939. Letters, PCs to Chief Secretary. PC Fort Jameson to Chief Secretary, 24 March 1931. Letter, PC Mongu to Chief Secretary, 17 June 1931.

<sup>29</sup> Northern Rhodesia’s provinces were divided up into districts. Within these were “tribal” territories, where Native Authorities governed with the guidance of DCs and PCs. Barotseland was administered as a protectorate on a separate basis.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, early correspondence on the appropriate manner of dealing with unrest near Kafue. NAZ. BSA2. HC 1/2/65. 613. Loc. 138. 1907. Similarly, the investigation into the violent suppression of resistance to the forced removal of people from the Gwembe Valley in the late 1950s was motivated less by dismay at the fact that people had been killed than by unhappiness that there had been an administrative breakdown which necessitated the application of force.



vulnerable to swings in public opinion in a way that those who set technical departments' policies were not. Technical officers in the field were similarly less constrained in their activities by 'public opinion' because ultimate responsibility lay with the Secretary. And as Berman's characterisation of their Catonism suggests—that is, the administration's was a feudal, hierarchical rule, allergic to change from without, and enamoured of the ideal of trusteeship—Provincial and District Commissioners were less committed to any particular policy outcome than to the security of their rule.

For example, some of these administrators frowned on the introduction of too much legalism into their fiefdoms. Writing in the early 1940s, the principal of a school designed with the input of Provincial Commissioners to train chiefs wrote that “we feel that too much formal training in the laws of the country might tend to hamper the free growth of native law and custom”, which were easier for Provincial and District Commissioners to negotiate.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, administrative officers regarded the protection of “tradition” and “custom” as part of their responsibilities, because before and even up through the 1940s and 1950s, the colonial government was intensely wary of urbanisation and its perceived ills, which they felt complicated their rule. In discussing the balance between territorial law and local custom (some of the latter was bolstered by treaties signed between the British or the Company and chiefs), the Secretary of Native Affairs noted that his Provincial Commissioners were in favour of gradual reform rather than rigid or immediate implementation of the law. “In many parts of the territory”, he wrote, “the issue [of chiefs' hunting and fishing rights] has not been raised and in such cases there is no need to take action. Where the issue is raised by quarrels or complaints it would be best dealt with not by way of a general declaration that the old rights no longer exist but by tactful dealing with individual cases”. He went on, “Government would have, of course, to refuse to support the claims of the chiefs affected but they would be advised to make every effort to arrive at an amicable settlement which would avoid the necessity for direct governmental interference”.<sup>32</sup> From the perspective of the Provinces and Districts, law and governance were things which should be flexible rather than brittle, and which should be based on negotiations between individuals rather than handed down abruptly, and which needed to be neither uniform in execution and enforcement nor developed within any particular kind of policy framework.

In contrast, although technical departments like Game and Tsetse Control were prepared to acknowledge local circumstances in policy, that policy was laid down at the centre—albeit with consultation from officers in the field—and afforded its executors little latitude in terms of its implementation. Officers had to submit detailed tour itineraries well in advance, and had to request permission from the Game Department's director if they wished to deviate from the itinerary<sup>33</sup>. Moreover, there was less inclination to diverge from the policy developed at headquarters. Most game officers, whatever their background, proved fairly committed to wildlife conservation and anti-poaching. And despite the Department's aspirations to practise “fauna economics”, most of the officers' duties consisted of control and anti-poaching. However, they were less anchored in place than their counterparts in the regional

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<sup>31</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/448. Correspondence on Jeanes School Courses for Chiefs. 1941 to 1943. Report on Chiefs Courses 1942, Jeanes Principal, 25 September 1942.

<sup>32</sup> NAZ. SEC 2/474. Fishing and Hunting Rights in Native Reserves, 1931 to 1933. Secretary of Native Affairs to Acting Chief Secretary, 15 July 1932.

<sup>33</sup> NAZ SEC 6/99. Rinderpest. Luangwa Valley Survey Reports. 1939. Letter, G Davidson-Lungley to Veterinary Officer, 28 December 1939; NAZ. SEC 6/316. Game and Tsetse Control—Administrative Notes, 1954. N J Carr, “Administrative Notes for the Guidance of Field Officers”, 18 March 1954.

administrations, and those who made policy at headquarters in Chilanga near Lusaka had no precise counterpart in the administration, further insulating them from the goals of the Provincial governments.

### **Founding the Game Department**

When the Northern Rhodesian government eventually decided to follow up on Charles Pitman's fauna report, they seconded a District Officer, T G C Vaughan-Jones, to look into the creation of a department or the implementation of some of Pitman's suggestions.<sup>34</sup> Vaughan-Jones eventually became the first Director of the Game and Tsetse Control Department which was formally created in 1940, two years after he delivered his memorandum to the government. His appointment was in many respects telling. In Kenya and Uganda, most personnel in the wildlife departments had hunting or military backgrounds, most having served as soldiers or police either in the colony where they then worked for a wildlife department, or in other regions of the Empire (India, for example). They tended to be more evangelical on the question of preservation, more impatient with fellow officers of the administration, and more militaristic in their outlook. In Kenya, for example, they were responsible for the militarisation of anti-poaching measures, which set off a kind of arms race in the wildlife sector, the ramifications of which are felt today. Vaughan-Jones' secondment was decided not by the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, or by the Colonial Office, or by local preservationists, but by Provincial Commissioners at their 1936 conference in June.<sup>35</sup> In appointing one of their own—a subordinate, in fact—the Provincial Commissioners ensured that what would become a specialised technical department would not stray too far from the prosaic concerns of day-to-day administration. They also reserved to themselves the rights to “delimit” reserve boundaries “in respect of each province with the Provincial Commissioner concerned”.<sup>36</sup> At the end of the day, the administration, though generally sympathetic to Pitman's views, was not comfortable with all of the Ugandan warden's prescriptions. For example, the Secretary of Native Affairs wrote that it would be impossible to simply move populations at will to effect the clear-cut separation between people and wildlife that Pitman envisioned (and which was central to Uganda's emerging philosophy of aggressive management and wildlife control).<sup>37</sup>

The Chief Secretary's office imagined that Vaughan-Jones might not even stay with his new department once it was created, believing “the Game Department [to be] rather in the nature of a dead end...his prospects are certainly much brighter in the administrative service”.<sup>38</sup> And when Vaughan-Jones left the department in 1956, it was to serve as the Rural Development Commissioner, back in the more conventional wing of the administration. Indeed, there was some discussion early on as to whether the administration should even create a separate department. Vaughan-Jones, in spite of his roots in the administration, argued that “officers of the administration have neither the time nor the necessary technical knowledge to cover properly even the ground now covered—elephant control and protection of game reserves”.<sup>39</sup> And one of

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<sup>34</sup> See NAZ. SEC 1/994. 1938. Memorandum on Policy Concerning the Foundation of a Game Department and the Conservation of Fauna in Northern Rhodesia.

<sup>35</sup> NAZ SEC 1/993. Formation of Game Department, 1934 to 1948. June Session, Provincial Commissioners' Conference 1936. “Game”.

<sup>36</sup> NAZ SEC 1/993. Formation of Game Department, 1934 to 1948. June Session PC's Conference 1936.

<sup>37</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/1008. Game Preservation in Mumbwa. 1931 to 1941. Internal Memo, 16 March 1935.

<sup>38</sup> NAZ SEC 1/993. Formation of a Game Department, 1934 to 1948. Acting Financial Secretary to Chief Secretary, 20 December 1939.

<sup>39</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/993. Formation of Game Department, 1934 to 1948. Note, Vaughan-Jones, 4 August 1939.

the chief selling points of the new department was that it aspired to adopt a much broader, more ambitious version of conservation, harnessing the colony's wildlife as a primary natural resource and practising what Vaughan-Jones somewhat vaguely referred to as "fauna economics".<sup>40</sup> This ambition was tied in part to self-interest. Vaughan-Jones recognised that "the only security a game department or the fauna it controls is likely to have is the realisation of its economic justification".<sup>41</sup> But it also likely reflected the recognition—from his administrative vantage-point—that wildlife concerns were necessarily tied up in issues around land use and agricultural development. In the end, handing down its decision, the Executive Council opted for a new technical department, explaining that "control of game could no longer continue as one of the incidental duties of the Provincial Administration". Those responsibilities should, instead, be directed to a new Game Department which would work "in close cooperation with the Provincial Administration and the Medical and Veterinary Departments".<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Game Guards, often the department personnel closest to the ground, were instructed to report to the *bomas* (where the administration officers resided) and to cooperate with the Native Authorities.<sup>43</sup>

Vaughan-Jones was not alone in coming to the Game Department with an administrative background. His successor as Director, F Parnell, had served as an assistant District Officer in Basutoland for 11 years before arriving in Northern Rhodesia to become Vaughan-Jones' assistant. One of the next most senior officers, Ian Grimwood, had a background which demonstrated the ease with which some officers shifted between fields. An Indian Army officer, the Imperial College graduate became the department Biologist and then assistant Director of the department under Parnell. Later he became the Chief Game Warden in Kenya (a position analogous to the Director in Northern Rhodesia), and thereafter lived in Kenya, serving as a UN FAO consultant and a vice-president of the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society.

### **From Day-to-Day: the Composition, Character, and Work of the Northern Rhodesian Game Department**

Before exploring the complex and fraught relations between the game department and the provincial administration, it will be helpful to understand something of the department's make-up in its early years, and of the day-to-day operations of department personnel in the field. The department was directed from headquarters at Chilanga, now essentially a suburb of Lusaka on the road to Kafue. Its staff included wardens, rangers, provincial game officers, and provincial biologists. All of these employees were European. In addition, there were a large number of African employees, who were categorised as Game Scouts and Game Guards. There were relatively few scouts, and they served in a supervisory role between European staff and game guards. In 1944, the department consisted of the director, an assistant game warden, a European elephant control officer, three game rangers, four temporary staff, one temporary part-time clerk, six under rangers, three African clerks, six African scouts, 74 game guards, as well as (because of the tsetse control and fisheries element) 24 fish guards, 43 fly picket orderlies, and four officer orderlies.<sup>44</sup> The establishment increased steadily, so that by the late 1950s, there were 25 European administrative and game staff, 17 European fisheries officers, and 224 African game

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<sup>40</sup> NAZ. Game and Tsetse Control Department progress report to 31 December 1943.

<sup>41</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/451. Game Conservation Policy—General, 1937 to 1938.

<sup>42</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/993. Formation of Game Department, 1934 to 1948. Executive Council, 22 November 1939.

<sup>43</sup> NAZ. CNP 2/13/10/Loc. 5390. Game Conservation, 1938 to 1947. Notes on the Game Laws for Coloured and Native Conservation Staff, undated.

<sup>44</sup> Government of Northern Rhodesia. *Game and Tsetse Control Department, Report for the Year 1944*.

staff. Ten years later, there would be an additional 35 African administrative and game staff, and the number of African field staff concerned with game had grown to 539.<sup>45</sup>

Rangers were the highest ranking officers in the field. They spent part of their time on desk work such as managing accounts, planning works projects, developing tour itineraries, and despatching staff as needed while undertaking light control duties locally or as required by the administration. The remainder of their time was spent on field work. Some of them appreciated both sides of their work, while others loathed the time behind the desk and a few grew frustrated with life in the bush, which could be difficult. African staff formed the backbone of the department. In one of the early departmental reports, Vaughan-Jones theorised about the difficulty the department had in finding staff who combined an interest in the hard labour the department required with some interest in scientific fieldwork, writing “for most Africans the purpose of education seems to be to gain an office stool...as a result the department tends to gain strength mainly on the uneducated side, which indeed includes some fine men, but the gap in competence between African and European will inevitably remain wide for a long time to come”. Only Game Scouts faced educational requirements for employment: they needed to have completed Standard VI at a minimum.<sup>46</sup> Another officer also observed that the game department “was not considered a rewarding career by African school leavers”, and in general, turnover of personnel was high.<sup>47</sup> One way of incentivising employees of the “right sort” was the salary scale, which was more generous for literate game and tsetse control guards, and also paid more to senior game guards who were literate.<sup>48</sup> Personal reports on staff help to illustrate the qualities colonial wildlife authorities sought in their levies: employees were praised for a “pleasant disposition” or for being “reserved and respectful”. Officers were more critical of those who found “it hard to believe that the ‘good old days’ are gone”, and of “chancers” and “loafers”, or those who were “untidy”. Other employees were dismissed as a “cheerful type but inclined to be lazy”, and as too “dependent” on their colleagues.<sup>49</sup>

Guards, who made up the majority of staff, faced a difficult task. They were charged with suppressing activities of significant social and economic importance in the face of public opposition across an enormous area. In the southern section of the Luangwa Valley, for example, two game guards patrolled several thousand square miles.<sup>50</sup> Game Guards spent much more time on patrol than European officers, and were charged with building temporary camps for their use. Guards were discouraged from socialising with locals, and thus were not, as a rule, supposed to stay in villages. An examination of some of the tour reports submitted by guards indicates, however, that in practise they spent the night in villages where possible.<sup>51</sup> Guards were permitted to bring their families with them, so long as they did not seek to put down roots

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<sup>45</sup> Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Game Department, Reports for 1959 and 1968*.

<sup>46</sup> Government of Northern Rhodesia, *Game and Tsetse Control Department, Annual Report for the Year 1947*; NAZ. 6/316. Game and Tsetse Control, Administrative Notes. Administrative Notes for the guidance of field officers, 18 March 1954.

<sup>47</sup> NAZ. ML 1/02/23/Loc. 4137. Game and Fisheries: Advisory Board Minutes. 2 June 1964 Minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Kafue National Parks Advisory Board.

<sup>48</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/541. 1954 to 1957. Departmental Part I Orders. Circulate Minute No. TSN 287, Secretariat, 7 June 1957; NAZ. SEC 6/85. Serenje Tour Reports, 1952 to 1953. Game Ranger annual report for 1951, 10 January 1952.

<sup>49</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/85. Serenje Tour Reports, 1952 to 1953. Game Ranger annual report for 1951, 10 January 1952.

<sup>50</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/163. 1939 to 1955. Game Ranger to Director, 9 March 1948.

<sup>51</sup> NAZ. CNP 2/3/2/Loc. 5355. 1949 to 1957. Game Department Policy. See, for example, Aaron Musana’s tour report (20 October 1948) and Mubanga Mutosa’s report (31 January 1949).

in protected areas.<sup>52</sup> In the early years, guards' training was only rudimentary, but later, some of the rangers held courses with increasingly-formalised structure, including lectures, exams, and firearm drills.<sup>53</sup>

Rangers were particularly dependent on their Game Guards and Scouts, and generally came to rely on particular individuals. Ranger Eustace Poles, for example, wrote that Sandiford Njovu was his best employee, and was particularly impressed by his physique and physical presence. Although often rangers' relations with their employees seemed uneasy, rangers were aware of their dependence on them, and a kind of paternalism lurked below the surface-level contempt. When Mukuka, a young departmental employee hanged himself, Ranger Eustace Poles helped to organise the funeral of what he described as "the best man I ever had", and arranged a ceremonial send-off complete with land-rovers, uniformed escorts, a guard of honour, a Union Jack, Mukuka's war medals, and volleys of rifle-fire. Mukuka's death also illustrates the difficulties of game department staff's lives. He worked some distance removed from his community. Although Mukuka's wife lived with him when he was in regional headquarters, his father had to walk all through the night and much of the next day to arrive at headquarters for his son's funeral.<sup>54</sup> Guards held a certain amount of local power because of their law-enforcement activities, but even their supervising officers realised that their low salaries could create a problem. One officer observed that if a game guard shot one elephant and split the proceeds of the ivory with a friend, he could double his salary.<sup>55</sup> In spite of the difficult working conditions, and the temptations offered by the illicit ivory economy, many guards took their work seriously. Alfred Kapangala, for example, lectured villagers on the game laws and on the benefits of conservation whenever his tour took him through a settled area.<sup>56</sup> Others risked their lives to enforce the widely-despised game laws

In addition to their independent work in the field, Game Guards also accompanied Rangers on *ulendo*. The centrepiece of the Ranger's work was the *ulendo*, the lengthy patrol known in East Africa as the *safari*.<sup>57</sup> *Ulendos* replicated colonial hierarchies and were the centrepiece of the Game Department's work in the field. An *ulendo* involved the Ranger and his staff trekking out into the bush for an extended period of time, evaluating the condition of the game stocks, checking in with chiefs and headmen in the region in question, and undertaking control operations where necessary. In a few parts of the territory, some of these journeys could be undertaken by vehicle, but for the most part, the Ranger would set out on foot, across difficult, often fly-ridden terrain, supported by a game scout, two game guards, and the standard complement of 29 carriers, plus a cook and a gun bearer, a massive operation requiring considerable logistical preparations, and also skilful management of personnel on the part of the Ranger, Scout, and Guards. The journals of Eustace Poles, a Ranger based at Mpika in north-eastern Zambia, at the edge of the Muchinga Escarpment which formed the western boundary of the Luangwa Valley, the colony's densest game region, provide an illustrative snapshot of *ulendos* in colonial Zambia. Because Poles and his journals will feature prominently in this

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<sup>52</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/999. 1937 to 1939. Game Department, Organisation of. Duties of Game Guards, 27 July 1938.

<sup>53</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/550. 1949 to 1958. Central Province Reports—Ranger, Mumbwa. Ranger to PGO Central, 23 July 1954.

<sup>54</sup> Poles, Private Field Journal, 15-18 May 1956.

<sup>55</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/163. 1939 to 1955. Poaching, complaints and prosecutions. Game Ranger to Director, 9 March 1948.

<sup>56</sup> NAZ. NP 1/1/122. 1959 to 1960. Administration—Mpika Tour Reports. Mpika Tour Report No. 9 of 1959.

<sup>57</sup> *Ulendos* were undertaken not only by Game Rangers, but also administrative officers, and were of a similar scale in those cases.

chapter, it is worth providing some background on the man who worked for over ten years as a Ranger in Zambia. Poles was born in 1902 and worked for the British South African Police until the Second World War, during which he served in Burma. After the war he joined the Game and Tsetse Control Department in Northern Rhodesia, and when he left the department in 1957, he worked in the Kafue Flats, managing the Blue Lagoon Ranch before retiring to Britain.<sup>58</sup> A veteran of many *ulendos*, Poles described each foray into his domain in the Luangwa Valley in great detail. On a standard expedition, each carrier carted 34 pounds of supplies through the bush in addition to his own kit, and an *ulendo* of 34 African staff would be allotted 68 pounds of meat per day. While Poles saw the absurdity of weighting carriers down with luxuries, he maintained that a Ranger's mental health required some indulgences, including reading material to while away long evenings, citing the adage, "boredom is the lonely man's drinking partner". He begrudged his carriers' their own entertainment, complaining bitterly if they sung into the night.<sup>59</sup>

The length of *ulendos* varied depending on its purpose, the season, and the ambitions of the officer. Between June and August of 1953, to take one example, Poles travelled for 56 days. He—likely with his guards and scouts—covered 1,060 miles in total. The carriers covered 474 miles.<sup>60</sup> In the course of the nearly two-month *ulendo*, Poles shot the following animals for meat and control: four impala, four zebra, six elephant, four waterbuck, 12 buffalo, one hippopotamus, one kudu, one roan, one crocodile, three puku, and two painted dogs, which were considered vermin.<sup>61</sup> On another occasion, the carriers covered 203 miles, and the ranger 397.<sup>62</sup> Sometimes *ulendos* headed for areas particularly troubled by poaching, and the ranger would make an effort to keep his movements secret from surrounding villages to gain an element of surprise over the poachers.<sup>63</sup> But the movement of 35 men through the bush, making camp every night, going on shooting forays during the day, noisily fording rivers and hacking through bush going up escarpments could hardly have escaped the notice of headmen and chiefs who had runners and *kapasus* supplied by the *boma* or Native Authority at their service.

Guards were charged with finding the way, managing porters, procuring food from villages along the way, and assisting the Ranger. When not on *ulendo*, guards undertook control duties, assisting Native Authorities with crop protection and pursuing menacing game. There was also a special category of guards—Elephant Control Guards—who as their name suggests, specialised in defending agricultural land from elephants and when necessary, pursuing herds. Their work was recognised as necessary by department officers, but was also a source of frustration, because some of them used their position as a means to accumulate local influence. On at least one occasion, Guards stole ammunition from the department's storehouse to hunt on the side<sup>64</sup>. Guards could provide meat to villages plagued by hunger, they could use their policing powers punitively if they so desired, and even deal illicitly in ivory. However, they were sometimes recruited from areas other than where they worked and were viewed as hostile government intermediaries, and sometimes so seldom ventured away from their headquarters that they did not learn the geography of the region well.<sup>65</sup> Those who did carry out their duties

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<sup>58</sup> "Obituaries: Major Eustace Poles" in *Daily Telegraph*, 15 August 1990.

<sup>59</sup> Poles Field Journal 1, 7 May 1947; Field Journal May 1949 to July 1949, 19 June 1949.

<sup>60</sup> Poles, Private Field Journal No. 14, 2 August 1953.

<sup>61</sup> Poles, Field Journals No. 13 and 14.

<sup>62</sup> Poles, Private and Confidential Field Journal No. 16. 18 December 1954 to 6 January 1955 *Ulendo*.

<sup>63</sup> Poles, Private Field Journal No. 17, 18 June 1955.

<sup>64</sup> Poles, Field Journal No. 15, 5 August 1953.

<sup>65</sup> Poles, Field Journal 1, 28 June 1947.

conscientiously might find themselves in the unenviable position of prosecuting a headman or chief, which put them in an awkward position.<sup>66</sup> Some of the ivory rings that Guards had to investigated were elaborate affairs, consisting of chiefs and former chiefs and their personal hunters, former game department employees, as well as black, white and coloured traders from Northern Rhodesia, the Congo, and Tanzania<sup>67</sup>. Their isolation created logistical difficulties as well. E C G Mubanga Mutosa, a game guard based at Mpika, recounted how he discovered a *musasa* (a temporary hunting shelter) and apprehended several hunters. He brought them to a village, but while Mutosa was storing their firearms, they tore out the pages of his notebook containing their names and managed to force their way past the game guard into the bush, taking their guns with them.<sup>68</sup> In Ndola and other Copperbelt towns, Game Guards joined police in raiding homes and businesses looking for illegal firearms or biltong for sale, making them amongst the most hated officials by people who sought to make a living selling game meat along the line of rail or in the towns.<sup>69</sup> Guards were also charged with overseeing controlled burning in game reserves.



**Image 7. Game Ranger Les Vaughan with an unnamed Game Guard. PRO INF 10/381.**

<sup>66</sup> Poles, Field Journal May 1949 to July 1949, 27 June 1949.

<sup>67</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/163. 1939 to 1955. Statement by Guard Sanyenera Banda, 9 July 1948.

<sup>68</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/163. 1939 to 1955. Statement by E C G Mubanga Mutosa, 15 February 1948.

<sup>69</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/163. Patrol of the Lamba Lima Native Reserve, Ndola Rural District, 26 February 1954 to 27 March 1954.



The *ulendos* were supported by conscripted carriers. In some cases, villagers joined willingly, but in others, the Ranger, or more likely the District Commissioner on his behalf, would use powers of coercion with the result that carriers might comprise the very old or very young from villages. Carriers and other staff carried the Ranger's equipment, chopped wood, made fires, found and hauled water, cooked meals, and took care of the Ranger's every need.<sup>70</sup> Poles' son occasionally accompanied him on *ulendo*, and was carried for twenty minutes of every hour in a *mechile*, further adding to the burden of carriers.<sup>71</sup> When the Ranger shot game for the column, he and his scout would make the kill, and then carriers would be expected to come and find the carcass and haul it back to camp while the ranger and scout or guard retired for the day. As it ventured over often-unmapped terrain, the *ulendo* might find itself facing an impassable river, an un-navigable escarpment, or unrecognisable terrain, and might wander for hours or days before finding a landmark which would then allow rangers and scouts to make sense of the territory they had covered and integrate it into existing knowledge of their territory. In the dry seasons, the landscape was parched and brown, the earth cracked, the days warm, and the nights frigid. In the wet seasons, rain filled up *dambos*, which overflowed and turned huge swathes of lands, particularly at lower altitudes, but also up to elevations of over 2,000 feet, into swamps which inhibited movement. In the early dry season, palls of blue smoke hung over the land as villages began annual burnings.

*Ulendos* would often struggle to maintain sufficient rations. Carriers could not bring along sufficient food for a lengthy journey, and as a result, the Ranger occasionally had to shoot meat to feed his levies. For maize meal, the party relied on villages. However, depending on the rains, the harvest, and game predation, villages often didn't have sufficient food for the community, let alone to support a train of 35 colonial employees for a week or longer. Rangers were seldom sympathetic to such concerns, and their efforts to commandeer food often led to tension. Poles, for example, once threatened to camp out with his *ulendo* at a village and "commandeer [Chief Kikumbi's] grain..and grind it myself" if the chief didn't turn over supplies sufficient for four days.<sup>72</sup> But while some chiefs resented the intrusion, others sought to string the *ulendo* out, selling the officer small amounts of food at a time to keep him dependent. Chief Mukungule greeted a ranger and his train wearing a suit and hat, in contrast to the bedraggled appearance of Poles and his column. Poles sought to reassert his authority by "[making] up a parable about two men, each of whom had two sons and also a detribalised, over-dressed coon from the Copper Belt, the villain of the piece, an agitator. It was rather a long story containing an obvious moral point".<sup>73</sup> Game officers and their guards also occasionally sought to turn a profit from the meat they could shoot, selling it illegally to other local officials, or the Ranger selling it to his staff as supplements to their existing rations.<sup>74</sup>

Carriers, and even game guards travelled over long distances without the use of shoes. The Game Department aborted an experiment to provide them with boots when it realised it lacked the resources to replace or refit them, one officer also warning against "pampering" its employees, arguing that "our efforts should be directed in keeping our guards 'junglies'...bare feet is the natural order of things for natives who live in the bush".<sup>75</sup> Dealing with thorns,

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<sup>70</sup> See for example, Poles, Field Journal 1, 3 Feb 1947.

<sup>71</sup> Poles Field Journals, Plate 13.

<sup>72</sup> Poles, Field Journal 1,

<sup>73</sup> Poles, Private Field Journal No. 15, 27 August 1953.

<sup>74</sup> Poles, Private Field Journal No. 9, 13 September 1952.

<sup>75</sup> Poles, Field Journals 6, 20 June 1951.



insects, marshy or hot surfaces and the like was seen as keeping employees ‘in character’. Other dangers on *ulendo* ranged from bad cuts from thick grasses to malaria. The territory was also dotted by commemorative headstones to officers and hunters who had been killed by elephants while trying to control the animals.<sup>76</sup> Runners, carrying messages between provincial and game staff also faced dangers. One messenger had his bicycle dismantled by a rhinoceros, which then chased him up a tree, forcing him to spend the night there.<sup>77</sup> Simon Musakula, an elephant control guard, was less lucky, and near the Congo border, an elephant “charged him after three shots had been fired and it picked him up with its trunk and hit him against a tree. His right ribs and right leg were broken”, and he died while being carried to a village near Serenje.<sup>78</sup> Poachers could also be violent. Vermin Hunter Aaron Chisenga recounted how in the company of a game guard, Samson Musonda, he cornered a six-man poaching team. He and the guard needed to bring both the men and their trophies into camp, but one of the poachers’ carriers, Harrison Mwewa, persuaded his companions to refuse to carry the meat. Musonda threatened to shoot them if they didn’t carry, but the men stood firm. Eventually, fearing the fate that would befall them if they were caught out after dark with the group of poachers, Musonda and Chisenga forced the six men to make the walk to camp, reflecting that a wildlife officer out on his own would almost certainly have been killed by the poachers.<sup>79</sup> Back in camp, Patson Bwalya, the Game Scout, took over, first interrogating the group to little effect, and then taking the men individually, managing to turn one of them against his compatriots to secure a confession.<sup>80</sup> Mubanga Mutasa, the same guard from whom poachers had effected their escape once before, was eventually killed by elephant poachers after 13 years with the department. During his career, Mutasa had killed over 100 elephants on control, knew the game laws well, and was exceptionally successful in securing arrests and convictions for poachers.<sup>81</sup> Guards at Mweru Marsh were beaten, poachers shot at another guard, and at Bangweulu, poachers attacked two guards and destroyed their notebooks and the incriminating evidence.<sup>82</sup>

The colonial levies who were conscripted into the *ulendos* were not entirely powerless. The Ranger depended on their goodwill, and they could and did “strike” if they wanted a longer rest, were worried about food supplies, or lacked confidence in the general approach of the *ulendo*.<sup>83</sup> On one occasion, the carriers came to Poles’ camp at night (normally they made their own camp at some distance, replicating the colour bar which governed race relations in Northern Rhodesia) and expressed their lack of confidence in his leadership and their dissatisfaction with the conditions of the *ulendo*. Such situations were often diffused by the conflicts between the carriers, low-ranking colonial employees, and game guards and scouts, who were more integrated into the administrative apparatus and ideology.<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, some Game Guards and Scouts were also drawn to anti-colonial politics, though it is difficult to assess whether this was because of their experiences in the department. In the 1950s, at least two staff members in Mpika attended meetings of the African National Congress, the more moderate of the two

<sup>76</sup> Poles, Private Field Journal No. 12.

<sup>77</sup> Poles, Field Journal No. 19, 26 October 1955.

<sup>78</sup> “Elephant Control Guard Killed by Elephant, in *Mutende*, 6 March 1947.

<sup>79</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/599. Poaching—Complaints and Prosecutions. 1960 to 1952. Statement by A Chisenga, 13 July 1960.

<sup>80</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/599. Patson Bwalya’s letter to cover A Chisenga’s statement, 17 July 1960.

<sup>81</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/599. SEC 6/85. Serenje Tour Report. Game ranger’s annual report for 1951, 10 January 1952.

<sup>82</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/593. Game Legislation, 1957 to 1958. PGO Kasama to Director, 13 February 1958.

<sup>83</sup> Poles, Field Journal 7, 3-5 October 1951.

<sup>84</sup> Poles, Field Journal No. 15, 12 September 1953.

primary nationalist parties (the Zambian African National Congress, later the United National Independence Party which governed the country after independence until 1991, was the more radical of the two).<sup>85</sup> Such formal politics seldom intruded into the daily workings of the game department, but Poles at least once refused to render assistance to a Chief who was a known Congress supporter.<sup>86</sup>

If there were often tensions between European Rangers and their African subordinates, other tensions surfaced in relation to other bureaucratic divides. Structurally, field officers in the game department came to occupy what could easily be a difficult position. They occupied space somewhere between the headquarters of their home department and the *bomas* out in the field. They put forward the department's point of view in the provinces, and served on the area development teams, which sought to integrate the work of the various technical departments under the aegis of the provincial administration. It was at this level that the Game Department needed to make its case most cogently, for initiatives passed at the provincial level were less likely to be derailed by official intervention at a later stage. Similarly, any locally-based game initiative would need to be approved by the provincial team. And if game officers based in the districts were constrained by administrative officials on the one hand, they needed to clear anything they put before the provincial team with headquarters at Chilanga.<sup>87</sup> Floating as they did between the Scylla of the administrative apparatus and the Charybdis of a preservationist department, field officers' presence was almost guaranteed to spark conflict. This was all the more likely if they were outspoken and aggressive in enforcing the game laws. Their embedding in this bureaucratic morass was telling when it came to training priorities. Upon promotion after a probationary period of employment, officers of the department had to study "theory of conservation", but only having already devoted time to studying the civil service regulations which governed their working routines. For example, six copies of the tour reports which officers filed periodically (there were monthly, quarterly, and annual versions) needed to be submitted, three for the touring officer (who would pass one on to the DC), two for the provincial officer, and one for the director. This latter could not be sent directly to the director from the officer on tour, but rather had to be routed through the provincial administration, which was thereby able to monitor discussions within the technical department.<sup>88</sup> It was the provincial officer, as well as the Director of the department, who had to approve tour itineraries and their alteration.

Ever practical, Vaughan-Jones equated game with "a weed: game is an asset in the right place but the reverse where it is unwanted".<sup>89</sup> He was clearly attentive to the segregationist thought which was popular in some quarters within the territory, and his proposals for the colony's game department recognised that different communities within the territory viewed wildlife in different ways. He envisioned separating European interests in game from African interests in game. Game reserves would represent the preservationist impetus. Controlled areas were located on Crown Lands, which usually adjoined both native and game reserves, were divided into classes, and were roughly the inspiration for the massive Game Management Areas which surround Zambia's national parks today. These "buffer zones" would be open to hunting

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<sup>85</sup> Poles Private Field Journal No 12, 30 March 1953.

<sup>86</sup> Poles, Private Field Journal No. 18, 7 September 1955.

<sup>87</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/316. Game and Tsetse Control—Administrative Notes, 1954. N J Carr, "Administrative Notes for the Guidance of Field Officers", 18 March 1954.

<sup>88</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/316. Game and Tsetse Control—Administrative Notes, 1954. N J Carr, "Administrative Notes for the Guidance of Field Officers", 18 March, 1954.

<sup>89</sup> Game and Tsetse Control Department Progress Report to 31 December 1943.

and would be controlled by the community in whose land they were based.<sup>90</sup> This meant that in the Native Reserves, the Native Authority controlled hunting, and could decide whether to conserve wildlife or not.<sup>91</sup> Vaughan-Jones acknowledged “the charge of being mercenary”, noting that “aesthetics...are not separable from true economics and indeed are essential to the structure of the economic state. So when it is stated that faunal conservation should be economic rather more is meant than that revenue should balance or exceed expenditure”.<sup>92</sup> Other departments in other colonies came to a similar realisation about the need to make wildlife a paying proposition. It also had to be rendered politically palatable while contributing (at least rhetorically) to broader economic development. Usually, however, this realisation took longer. As late as 1967, such views remained heretical in Kenya.<sup>93</sup> In places like Uganda they often contributed to calculations, but were not formally embedded in policy documents or in administrative frameworks. In Northern Rhodesia, on the other hand, they were written from the outset into the department’s culture. This was thanks on the one hand to the timing of the department’s formation at a moment when Colonial Development was ‘in’ and when strict preservationism was seen as untenable. But it was also a result of the culture in which it was born, one tied through personnel and rationale to the administration rather than to a preservationist lobby or old-style hunters.

Nonetheless, game officers saw a world of difference between the “controlled”, “rational utilisation” of “stocks” of game that their department practised, and what they regarded as the tendency of Africans and Native Authorities to “squander” the “country’s” natural resources through “uncontrolled exploitation”.<sup>94</sup> The administration contested this narrative, and invoked its longer presence in the territory, drawing on an historical argument which asserted that the introduction of their benevolent rule had halted war and famine, facilitating the increase and expansion of a population which now had the primary claim to land, over game which was protected by “illogical” rules which exacerbated “racial difficulties”. These difficulties were, in the years which spawned writing about the creation of a “plural society”, seen as the colony’s

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<sup>90</sup> Licenses came in different categories. The more expensive version allowed would-be hunters to shoot throughout the territory. The license most popular amongst African hunters restricted them to hunting within their Native Authority’s controlled area, a constant source of frustration for hunters and their representatives on the African Provincial Councils which developed in later decades. In some areas, Chiefs took the initiative and, with the assistance of European Rangers, set up game-viewing camps for tourists. The best-known case was that of the partnership between Chief Nsefu and Norman Carr, resulting in the Nsefu Game Camp which continues to operate in the South Luangwa National Park today. NAZ. SEC 6/442. Nsefu Game Camp and Game Reserve. 1949 to 1958.

<sup>91</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/994. Memorandum on Policy Concerning the Foundation of a Game Department and the Conservation of Fauna in Northern Rhodesia. 1938. Memo, Vaughan-Jones, 31 January 1938. This principle had already been partially embodied in Government Notice No. 149 of 1928. See NAZ. SEC 1/1011. Game Preservation of International Convention, 1929 to 1933. Letter, Secretary of Native Affairs to Chief Secretary, 18 May 1933.

<sup>92</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/994. Memorandum on Policy Concerning the Foundation of a Game Department and the Conservation of Fauna in Northern Rhodesia. 1938. Memo, Vaughan-Jones, 31 January 1938: 1. In mulling over the creation of the department, Executive Council concluded that “the optimum scope of a game department’s should be the whole relationship of wildlife to human progress, not merely the orthodox ‘game keeping’ and shooting of superfluous elephant which was the current idea of such a department”. NAZ. SEC 1/993. Confidential Note for Executive Council.

<sup>93</sup> See, for example, KNA KW 5/1. Administration of Game Laws; Association Clubs Committees; East Africa Wildlife Society. 1964 to 1967. Memo by I S C Parker and A D Graham on “Conservation Policy”.

<sup>94</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/296. Misc. Fauna Policy Matters, 1952 to 1959. Director to District Commissioner Gwembe, 7 May 1957.

primary challenge.<sup>95</sup> In one version, wildlife policy was a part of the larger territorial development project, and in the other it was an obstacle to the same. Crime and punishment, as much as management, was determined relative to bureaucratic vantage point. Game officers believed that punishment for infringements on the game laws should be swift and punitive, whereas the provincial administration preferred a less stringent approach. In this vein, the provincial game officer of Central Province sought to persuade the Provincial Commissioner based at Broken Hill (now Kabwe) that “every game case [warranted] the maximum punishment”. The officer provided a list of those chiefs who were deemed “cooperative” in terms of dishing out punishments in native courts, and those who were “prejudiced” when it came to hearing game cases (the assumption being that they sympathised with the accused).<sup>96</sup>

As suggested above, it would be wrong to imply that the administration and the technical department operated as totally closed bureaucratic systems. In fact, officers close to the ground and distant from respective headquarters in Lusaka and Chilanga shared a dislike for a tight leash, if not their policy goals. Regionally-based game officers began to chafe at “hard and fast rules” in much the same way as their counterparts in the regional administrations did. Eustace Poles, the Game Ranger at Mpika, reminded a colleague that “an office responsible for a sector must be given discretionary powers. Until the contrary is proved it must be supposed that the officer is conscientious and will not abuse those powers. The duties of a game ranger are arduous enough without his being tied down by innumerable rules and regulations for his conduct”. In making the case for broad discretion, Poles drew out local peculiarities and contingencies, suggesting that the department headquarters could not possibly develop a policy which could account for the wide variety of circumstances in which its regional officers operated<sup>97</sup> In 1954 Norman Carr (a ranger) wrote a circular titled “Administrative Notes for the Guidance of Field Officers”, which made a similar case for broad discretion and initiative tempered only by informal suggestions about consultation.<sup>98</sup> The Provincial Biologist, employed at a higher scale by the Game Department than Rangers, did not concur, and argued that “far too much is left to the discretion of the individual man concerned”. In his view, the department needed “a clearly defined policy laid down...on many topics including the future of game reserves, bush burning, game guards’ hunting, dealing with poachers, etc”.<sup>99</sup>

Like other Game Department staff, Poles submitted regular reports to the Director at Chilanga, near Lusaka, as well as to Provincial Commissioners with whom he liaised. However, he also kept voluminous diaries, which provide a (rather colourful) sense of the tensions that operated at the local level, where policy implementation and inter-departmental cooperation depended as much on personal relationships as they did on the policy laid down at the centre. Crucially, however, these personal relations were filtered through expectations, responsibilities,

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<sup>95</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/296. Misc. Fauna Policy Matters, 1952 to 1959. DC Gwembe to Director (undated, but a reply to the above). For an articulation of the thesis of “pluralism”, see L H Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society: the Development of Northern Rhodesia Under the British South African Company, 1894 to 1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958). For a dissenting thesis, see Fergus Macpherson, *Anatomy of a Conquest: the British Occupation of Zambia, 1884-1924* (Harlow: Longman Group Ltd, 1981).

<sup>96</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/593. Game Legislation: Game Ordinance Regulations, 1957 to 1958. Provincial Game Officer Central to Director, 12 September 1957.

<sup>97</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/11. Luangwa Valley (North) Game Reserve (Mpika). 1939 to 1955. Letter, 14 Sept 1951, Poles to Northern Province Biologist.

<sup>98</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/316. Game and Tsetse Control—Administrative Notes, 1954. N J Carr, “Administrative Notes for the Guidance of Field Officers”, 18 March 1954.

<sup>99</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/11. Luangwa Valley (North) Game Reserve (Mpika). 1939 to 1955. Letter, Biologist Kasama to Director, 8 Sept 1951.

and assumptions created by the structural relationships between the different sectors of the administration. Poles directed particular ire at “officials” (meaning members of the Provincial and District administration), whose attitudes, he believed, prevented his department from protecting game. Poles mocked administrative policy as “‘Let [the African] do as he pleases. Don’t interfere with his RIGHTS—after all he is the lord of the soil’. What blasted hypocrisy!”<sup>100</sup> Like others in his department, Poles wanted to excise the last inhabited section of the Luangwa Valley, the Munyamadzi Corridor, in order to unite the game reserves to the north and the south. He blamed administrators for standing in the way of a forced removal.<sup>101</sup> And it was certainly the case that although the Provincial Commissioner of Northern Province (Howe) was sympathetic in principle to the idea of conservation, he also recognised the need for cognisance of villagers’ interests, and the need to obtain their consent before any move.<sup>102</sup> The then-District Commissioner was even more stridently opposed, and argued that he could not “see that the whole sale removal of 800 people to an area not well adapted to support them would be justified by any minor benefits to be gained by animals. The human food supply seems to be a more important consideration than water facilities for game which as I have suggested would not be seriously affected”.<sup>103</sup> Some people were moved from the game reserves, and the District Commissioners pressed for them to retain some rights of cultivation within the parks, a move which was anathema to wildlife officials. The Provincial Commissioner joined the wildlife officers in resisting these claims, although some fishing rights on the rivers which formed the boundaries of the park were permitted.<sup>104</sup> There were other even more prosaic administrative politics which mitigated against the inclusion of the Munyamadzi Corridor in the game reserves. One of the chiefs concerned, Chironga, resisted the move on the grounds that it would eliminate most of “his country”, thereby undermining his tenure and authority.<sup>105</sup> The District Commissioner wrote to his superior in frustration at the refusal of the game officers to understand how the gazetting of game reserves affected local political stakes, trade routes, and chiefly patronage and power.<sup>106</sup>

Poles’ criticisms of the what he regarded as the laissez-faire, un-ambitious attitude of the administrative officers who he believed were holding the territory back echoed veiled criticisms in Pitman’s 1934 report, wherein the Ugandan Game warden expressed dismay that villagers were permitted to shift their habitation at will, a lax state of affairs which he regarded as encouraging crop destruction by elephants.<sup>107</sup> Vaughan, another Game Ranger, from Serenje, complained during the 1950s of the administration’s abuse of the responsibilities of game

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<sup>100</sup> Field Journal 1. Poles, 7 May 1947.

<sup>101</sup> Private Field Journal, 19 May 1949 to 30 July 1949. 30 June 1949.

<sup>102</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/112. Luangwa Valley (South) Game Reserve (Mpika Section). Letter, PC Northern to DC Mpika, 13 October 1942.

<sup>103</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/112. Luangwa Valley (South) Game Reserve (Mpika Section). Letter, DC Mpika to PC Northern, 16 October 1942. These correspondence files suggest that the Provincial Commissioners were more sympathetic to the creation of reserves, and that they shared the scepticism of the Game Department officials about claims regarding the hardships generated by forced displacements. District Commissioners cited their greater proximity to ‘their’ people in making their case.

<sup>104</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/112. Luangwa Valley (South) Game Reserve (Mpika Section). 1942 to 1945. Letter, PC Northern to DC Mpika, 15 September 1943.

<sup>105</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/200. Luangwa Valley (South) Game Reserve (Serenje Section), 1939 to 1953. Letter, Vaughan-Jones to Director of Medical Services, 29 July 1940.

<sup>106</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/226. Luangwa Valley Game Reserves, 1943 to 1946. Letter, DC to PC Northern, 22 October 1947.

<sup>107</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/1019. Reports of elephant control, 1934 to 1938. Extract from Captain Pitman’s report on game.

department staff (also bemoaning toxic relations with the District Commissioner<sup>108</sup>). “It was the practice of certain government officers whilst touring”, he wrote, “to use game guards as hunters, and even to keep them supplied with fresh meat upon their return to station”.<sup>109</sup> This was a bureaucratic sin on two counts. In the first place, it distracted game guards from their normal duties, turning them into the auxiliaries of an administrative apparatus which was often hostile to the conservationist agenda of the Game Department. Moreover, Game Rangers believed that guards and elephant control officers should not be in the habit of dispensing meat to locals. They were concerned that such a practise encouraged the invention of complaints of crop damage. Whereas the provincial administration was interested in embedding itself in the community on favourable terms—this being crucial to its ability to govern—the Game Department saw the execution of its policy as being of preeminent importance. Such patronage, embedded in local colonial political practise and critical to the Catonist administration, was anathema to the technical department. Even when not conscripted by the administration, game guards came under considerable pressure from chiefs and villagers to provide meat, meaning that while the rules governing their conduct pulled guards in one direction, their daily interactions<sup>109</sup> with the communities amongst which they moved pulled them in another. Procurement of meat was of particular concern to local communities in those areas where the presence of tsetse flies prevented people from keeping stock. Aware of the difficulties occasioned by the combination of the lack of stock and the restrictive game laws, the administration’s interpretation of the role of game guards contrasted sharply with that articulated in the departments instructions to its employees: “the main duty of a game guard is to see that no person infringes the game laws...any native found breaking the law must be taken to the chief’s court and prosecuted...you are issued with a rifle to protect yourself against dangerous animals NOT to shoot game for yourself”.<sup>110</sup>

Poles constantly complained of constantly being asked to kill game for villagers during the course of his *ulendos*. He recorded how Bernard, one of the elephant control officers under his responsibility, was particularly unpopular “on account of his refusal to kill meat indiscriminately”. Bernard also reported that villagers and chiefs bypassed him, going over his head to the *boma*, where their complaints would presumably have been more sympathetically received, and from where they were more likely to get material returns from control efforts.<sup>111</sup> In certain circumstances Game Rangers were sticklers for formalities and all in favour of implementing the law to its letter. In other cases their dislike for the substance of the law led them to prefer a more informal interpretation. A particular complaint, reflecting hostility to trends in territorial law, surfaced when the practise of labour conscription was modified. The Serenje ranger complained 1953 that it was becoming difficult to recruit carriers. He put this frustration down to the *boma*’s informing the chiefs that, as per the law, “no longer would Africans be forced to carry for government officials on tour, they would be asked instead and their decisions voluntary”. This state of affairs was nothing less than anarchic from the ranger’s perspective, and he blamed the provincial administration for caving in to political protests, bemoaning “the ill luck of being in a country where the policy of the government is so lenient

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<sup>108</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/85. Serenje Tour Reports, 1952 to 1953. Letter, Game Ranger Serenje to Provincial Biologist, 23 September 1952.

<sup>109</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/85. Serenje Tour Reports, 1952 to 1953. Game Ranger Serenje’s annual report for 1951, 10 January 1952.

<sup>110</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/232. Internal Organisation of the Department, 1938 to 1951. Game and Tsetse Control Department—Instructions to Game Guards (undated).

<sup>111</sup> Private Field Journal, May to July 1949. 26 June 1949.

and gutless, as is the majority of the provincial administration officers who implement it”.<sup>112</sup> In essence, field officers of the game department were as opportunistic as their administrative counterparts in their view of the bureaucratic apparatus which governed their activities. They appreciated or reviled it according to whether or not it protected their personal prerogatives in a particular context.

At other times, the hostility between the technical department and the administration was more open. Poles went so far as to complain that “unfortunately it appears that the Provincial Administrative officers control the policy of our department.”<sup>113</sup> To his mind, the District Commissioners’ attention to African views made them weak administrators, which Poles believed undermined his own authority. He believed that Tredwell, the DC at Mpika, particularly disliked the Game Department, and so “[condoned] breaches of contract by people employed by me regardless of the fact that by so doing he is doing a considerable disservice to the administration of the colony”.<sup>114</sup> Poles found the DC at Lundazi no less amenable, referring to him as an “ill mannered boor”. The DCs were jealous of their prerogatives, and Farwell, at Lundazi, informed Poles that he “should know that no Civil Servant came into a district without reporting his presence to the DC”, and proposed to report him to the Provincial Commissioner. The Provincial Authority seemed to back up Farwell in the dispute, and chastised Poles for “criticising the civil service in general terms to members of the press”.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, Poles accused the Governor (“definitely anti-game”)<sup>116</sup>, the Secretary of Native Affairs, the Chief Secretary, and the Secretary of Native Development of all opposing the creation of a National Park in the Luangwa Valley.<sup>117</sup> To the disgust of Poles and his colleagues, land in the corridor was not alienated. Poles wrote to the biologist, asking, “Are half a dozen native villages to stand in the way of the welfare of so many animals; some of them very rare? I feel that we have a very good case and that it is worth plucking up a bit of courage and fighting for it”.<sup>118</sup>

In his complaints about the obstructionism of district and provincial officials, Ranger Poles went so far as to link what he regarded as the decadent and indulgent administration by DCs to the decline of the British Empire, writing that the administrators failed “to realise that it is such as they who are losing their grip which alone holds the ‘lesser breed without the law’”.<sup>119</sup> One administrator “has no knowledge of how to handle Africans [‘niggers’ scratched out]”. Others were “ignorant fools and tools of those yellow Fabians who rule our colonies”. “God”, he confided at one point, “if we could but hang the lot starting with all the Foreign Secretaries past and present”. He bemoaned the visit of “the Governor with a host of lip-spittle hangers on in his train, including several spivs and odd women who might have been better employed” to his

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<sup>112</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/85. Serenje Tour Reports, 1952 to 1953. Letter, Game Ranger Serenje to Biologist Central Province, 10 September 1953. Indeed, unconnected to this particular incident, a DC did comment to the effect that anti-federation activists sought to connect deeply-rooted discontent with the game laws amongst their constituents to the newer process of federation. Letter, DC’s comments on game laws, 20 October 1953.

<sup>113</sup> Private Field Journal 6. 11 May 1951.

<sup>114</sup> Private Field Journal No. 9. 5 May 1952.

<sup>115</sup> Private Field Journal No. 17. 15 July 1955 and 25 July 1955.

<sup>116</sup> Private and Strictly Confidential Field Journal No. 19. 23 November 1955.

<sup>117</sup> Private and Strictly Confidential Field Journal No. 19. 28 October 1955.

<sup>118</sup> SEC 6/112. Luangwa Valley (South) Game Reserve (Mpika Section). 1942 to 1945. Letter, Poles to Northern Provincial Biologist, 30 October 1951.

<sup>119</sup> Private Field Journal No. 11. 18 August 1952.

headquarters, noting that he had “never had such misfortune as to be present at such an exhibition of ignorance and inanity.”<sup>120</sup>

Poles was particularly prolific in his writings, and though it is impossible to assess whether his views were representative (although he hints at the general discord between Game Rangers and the administration, a tension which surfaces constantly in official archives), his outlook provides an example of how empirical examination of such correspondence disrupts the narrative of sympathetic technical officers running up against a regressive administration. In expressing his fears that the administration would dominate the proposed Board of Trustees for the colony’s prospective national parks, Poles wrote:

If any board of trustees should be elected it is certain that the Secretary of Native Affairs will be one of its members, perhaps chairman, with the Secretary of Native Development or some other negrophile civil servant together with some black, curly headed gentleman, indoctrinated at the London School of Economics, as fellow members.<sup>121</sup>

Tellingly, Poles’ antipathy (albeit indiscriminate) extended to the department’s Director, Vaughan-Jones. Criticising assurances offered by the Director to “certain circles” about “native owned firearms”, Poles accused Vaughan-Jones of telling “a downright lie”, adding, “I trust he is one of those who will inevitably be shot by a native-owned gun”.<sup>122</sup> This might be interpreted as speaking to Vaughan-Jones’ orientation towards the administration, and to the ethos of the upper levels of the Game Department, which was imbued, by dint of its mission that transcended preservationist measures, with some sense of administrative responsibility. An ardent preservationist with no time for accommodating African hunters, Poles also attacked development schemes viciously. The Governor’s “latest nonsense is a project for building an ‘African Town’ in the Northern Province, complete with flats and shops and tar-mac roads”. Poles called the development scheme “crass idiocy”, and regarded it as a “squandering of public funds”.<sup>123</sup> In advance of a public meeting at which he could not speak as a civil servant, Poles supplied friends with hostile questions to direct at Vaughan-Jones successor, F Parnell, over his waffling about national parks.<sup>124</sup>

And yet at other moments, Game Department staff were not averse to using arguments about development to make the case for the necessity of game protection. For example, in 1939, the Economic Advisory Council’s Committee on Nutrition published its report, “Nutrition in the Colonial Empire”, which alluded to a looming nutrition crisis that would soon plague Britain’s colonies.<sup>125</sup> Both levels of the administration explored here quickly became fixated with the idea of game meat as an antidote to this crisis. This idea undoubtedly informed the department’s deliberate emphasis at its formation (and the commitment appears to have endured at

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<sup>120</sup> Private and Strictly Confidential Field Journal No. 19. 25 February 1956. Field Journal No. 7, 20 August 1951. Contempt for the administration was not restricted to reactionaries like Poles. Peter Fraenkel suggested that “liberal” whites were equally frustrated by the outlook of the administration. In James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 29.

<sup>121</sup> Private and Strictly Confidential Field Journal No. 19. 28 October 1955.

<sup>122</sup> Private Field Journal No. 12. 6 February 1953.

<sup>123</sup> Private and Strictly Confidential Field Journal. 23 November 1955.

<sup>124</sup> Private Field Journal No. 19, 22 November 1955.

<sup>125</sup> Economic Advisory Council, “Nutrition in the Colonial Empire”, 1939.



headquarters) on the exploitation of wildlife as a natural resource<sup>126</sup>. In discussing the need for preservation in the Luangwa Valley, Ranger Attwell argued that “fauna represents the staple source of first class protein [in the Valley], and its wholesale slaughter must tend to produce malnutrition in a people who are already under-nourished, and who often live not the borderline of starvation”. He was also quick to note that crop destruction by wildlife in no way contributed to food deficiencies).<sup>127</sup> Officers in Eastern Province made the same complaint later in the decade, remarking that the connection between game conservation and “the fundamental problem of widening the ‘protein-carbohydrate ration in the diet’...has probably not even occurred to those in high authority”.<sup>128</sup> Food, however, was not the domain of the Game Department, and try as its officers might to dabble in technical areas which they thought might help them to build their case for conservation, they were easily outflanked by rival technical departments who didn’t always experience the same uneasy relationship with the provincial administration. The Provincial Agricultural Officer in Eastern confessed quite freely “that the policies of the agricultural department and game and tsetse department are in conflict in the Luangwa Valley”. In his view, the presence of game in the valley was a direct and “insurmountable” impediment to development, and elephants were known to destroy as much as 25% of a season’s cultivation.<sup>129</sup>

Policy disagreements were interspersed with accusations of bad faith, which cut both ways, though the Game Department was, more often than not, on the defensive against the bureaucratically better-entrenched administration, which seemed often to reserve to itself the right of final reply. In the course of investigating an incident of violence against game guards in 1960, the Provincial Administration and the District Administration at Balovale dismissed claims levelled against their Native Authority counterparts. Two game department staff complained of being assaulted by men hired by Chief Kaingu “to beat up anyone from the park if they came into Kaingu’s country”. As will be explored at greater length below with reference to communal hunts, game department staff were often extremely unpopular in the areas where they worked. Neither man was a game guard—one was a *capitao* and the other a labourer—but their association with a game reserve was, if their story was to be believed, enough to condemn them in the eyes of their assailants. Game Ranger Shenton took up their case, and described a further incident involving an assault on a game guard.<sup>130</sup> The District Commissioner, Alan Prior, refused to act against Kaingu or “his people”, accepting the chief’s assurances that nothing of the kind could have occurred, least of all with his incitement. In rebutting Warden Shenton’s claims, the District Commissioner called attention to the “high handed actions by certain park staff in the past”, warning that “it behoves your staff to behave circumspectly when visiting the east bank

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<sup>126</sup> Beginning in the 1950s, and with greater frequency during the 1960s, the department embarked on a series of experimental cropping schemes which sought to determine whether buffalo, hippo, or elephant meat was a marketable proposition.

<sup>127</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/33. Luangwa Game Reserve, 1951 to 1959. Memorandum on Agricultural Development vis a vis game conservation in the Eastern Province, Attwell, 10 October 1954.

<sup>128</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/95. Poaching Complaints and Prosecutions, 1950 to 1958. Letter, Provincial Game Officer Fort Jameson to Provincial Commissioner, Eastern, 14 April 1958.

<sup>129</sup> Appendix to Minutes of a Fort Jameson meeting on game preservation and agricultural development, 9 September 1954.

<sup>130</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/599. Poaching—Complaints and Prosecutions, 1952 to 1960. Statement by John Kapangula of Kalengwa, 10 October 1960; Statement by Chitenge Lukama of Matokashingumbe, 10 October 1960. Letter, Shenton to District Commissioner Namwala, 11 October 1960.

areas”.<sup>131</sup> A few years earlier, Kaingu’s people had been forbidden from entering the park to collect honey, a move which the former District Commissioner, K Chittenden, had opposed as being too harsh.<sup>132</sup>

This incident was illustrative in multiple respects. In the first place, it demonstrated the alliance forged between the District Commissioners and their Native Authority counterparts. It also provided a further example of the manner in which District Commissioners viewed the informal relations through which they governed as more important than the letter of the law. Prior’s remarks almost suggest a tacit acceptance that the charge must have foundation, invoking as he did the “high-handedness” of the department as a justification. And yet in spite of the legal context in which the alleged assault occurred, Prior regarded the administrative context as transcendental, making a greater claim on the administration’s credulity, and dictating the behaviour of the technical department.<sup>133</sup> Finally, it demonstrated that African officials within the Native Authorities might have on occasion worked to subvert the game laws. This subversion was acknowledged in the year of independence, when Prime Minister Kenneth Kaunda made an appeal to Zambian authorities: “In the past, many people killed game unlawfully and interfered with the work of the Game Department. They did this as a way of helping in the struggle for independence. Now we have our own government and it is we who employ the game guards and game scouts and game rangers. Now it is the duty of everyone to assist our Game Department in catching poachers and bringing them before the courts for punishment, and I want it clearly understood that the officers and men of my Game Department have my full support in their difficult and important task of looking after the national herds”.<sup>134</sup>

A similar case occurred in 1953, in the Ushi-Kabende area, where the administration launched an investigation into complaints by chiefs and councillors who argued that the technical departments which operated in the region—Game, Forestry, Agriculture—were punitive in their attitudes towards local inhabitants. In particular, the creation of the nearby game reserve was said to have absorbed cultivation land from farmers.<sup>135</sup> In laying out his findings, the Provincial Commissioner criticised the behaviour of the Game Guards, noting that “while game guards will never be popular if they carry out their duties conscientiously...there is no reason for them to become the object of bitter dislike to the local people”.<sup>136</sup> The friction which occurred at the borders between game reserves and legally-inhabited areas demonstrates that these borders were more than legal. They were equally bureaucratic frontiers, and ones which were particularly poorly-defined. Conflicts of administrative jurisdiction, legal interpretation, and policy implementation shaped the character of wildlife policy in these areas perhaps more than anywhere else.

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<sup>131</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/599. Poaching—Complaints and Prosecutions, 1952 to 1960. Letter, Alan Prior, DC Namwala to Senior Game Ranger Kafue National Park (Shenton), 15 November 1960.

<sup>132</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/590. Provincial Administration Reports, 1957. Letter, DC Namwala, 18 September 1957.

<sup>133</sup> In a similar episode two years after independence, another chief on the edge of the Kafue National Park was accused of handing around “permits” allowing people to hunt in the park. Again the district officer took the word of the chief (who denied giving the permit) over that of the Game Department. NAZ. ML 1/04/17/Loc. 4538. Kafue National Park and Boundaries Policy, 1966 to 1971. Letter, Director to District Secretary Namwala, 23 July 1966; Letter, District Secretary to Director, 16 August 1966.

<sup>134</sup> NAZ. EP/1/1/21. Loc. 465. Game Reserves and Controlled Areas—Policy, 1953 to 1976. Memo from Kaunda, 17 September 1964.

<sup>135</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/122. Complaints from Africans, Ushi-Kabende, 1951 to 1953. Report by Provincial Commissioner, Kasama, 17 October 1953.

<sup>136</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/122. Complaints from Africans, Ushi-Kabende, 1951 to 1953. Report by Provincial Commissioner, Kasama, 17 October 1953.

Earlier, when Rangers were less locally entrenched, the administrative conflicts often occurred between Game Department headquarters and the district commissioner concerned. For example, when Vaughan-Jones complained in his annual report about the “irresponsible nature of the local labour” in Namwala in implementing a buffalo cropping and meat scheme, the District Commissioner of the area took umbrage at criticism which he believed reflected poorly on his ability to manage “his” people.<sup>137</sup> Vaughan-Jones defended his articulation of what he described as an “anthropological fact” regarding a “people...though with plenty of fine characteristics [are] not amenable to close discipline”. Getting to the nub of the matter, Vaughan-Jones asked rhetorically in his reply, “Must every technical officer ask the District Commissioner’s permission before commenting even broadly on the nature of the natives with whom he has to deal? Surely no one holds him responsible for their nature?”<sup>138</sup> While tensions in the field were often about policy, those at the centre could be just as intense when they revolved around matters of hierarchy, administrative formality, and bureaucratic turf. The following chapter, partly concerning itself with lechwe *chilas* on the Kafue Flats, will provide an in-depth case study of one particular policy divergence relating to the enforcement of game laws. In that case, the split occurred along administrative lines, with the Game Department generally arguing for hard-nosed enforcement of hunting restrictions while the administration advocated for a more expansive interpretation of legal exceptions which took account of broader provincial and colonial political circumstances. Critically, during the episode, game department staff were seen as provoking untenable ill-feeling on the Flats. They were subjected to taunts, threats, and even violence from hunters, with the result that the department temporarily was relieved of its responsibilities in the area, which were taken over by the Provincial Administration.<sup>139</sup>

### Changing Administrative Jurisdictions

The year 1959 marked a significant administrative change for the department and its position within the administration, one which demonstrated that with the gradual, grudging move towards self-government, the game department might move bureaucratic homes in a manner which reflected shifting priorities. Along with an election (which continued to rely on a mix of elected and appointed victories to assure loyalist control—the pro-federation UFP won a majority of seats), the year saw the creation of ministries to replace the old executive council secretaries. The government took advantage of the change in status to shift departments, and later in 1959, the Game and Tsetse Control Department was split. Responsibility for tsetse control went to the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, while the Ministry of Native Affairs took over responsibility for game. The other ministries created by the restructuring were Legal Affairs, Finance, Labour and Mines, Transport and Works, Local Government, African Education, and African Agriculture. The breakup and the shift of tsetse control to the Natural Resources ministry suggested that in spite of the game department’s commitment on paper to an expansive commitment to developing wildlife as a natural resource, only the tsetse control branch offered a committed and practical framework for contributing to territorial development.

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<sup>137</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/174. Game Conservation Policy—General (Memorandum), 1938 to 1953. Letter, District Commissioner Namwala to Vaughan-Jones, 19 January 1945.

<sup>138</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/174. Game Conservation Policy—General (Memorandum), 1938 to 1953. Letter, Vaughan-Jones to District Commissioner Namwala, 24 January 1945.

<sup>139</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. PGO Livingstone to Director, 3 July 1957; SEC 6/26. Game Preservation—General Policy, 1957 to 1960. Officer i/c to southern, 1 October 1958; Hansard (Northern Rhodesia), Questions to the Member for Natural Resources, 2 April 1958; NAZ SEC 5/79. PC (Southern) to member, 27 January 1958. NAZ. SEC 6/16. Parnell to Member, 7 August 1957.

The move deeply upset the director (now Parnell), who feared that the centralisation would mean a loss of autonomy for the department, and that the split would impede its work.<sup>140</sup> In practical terms, another consequence of the move was the creation by the minister of a Wildlife Committee, an advisory committee which would focus on the “need for rural development planning to provide for the institution of game management schemes to conserve and utilise wildlife resources”.<sup>141</sup> Such a move was in keeping with the goals of the department as outlined by Vaughan-Jones in the late-1930s and in the department’s foundational documents. However, the shift of emphasis from the law enforcement to the natural resources component of the department’s mission suggests an effort to use bureaucratic positioning to enforce a role which the department had been reluctant to embrace.

Some members of the Legislative Council (LegCo), particularly European members, many of whom were committed to a preservationist wildlife policy, opposed the move and attempted to engineer its reversal. The representative for Lusaka West (Grindley-Ferris) invoked world opinion and administrative coherence, arguing that the game and fisheries functions should not be separated from the tsetse fly control responsibilities because it made sense to have one minister mediating between the competing claims of those two divisions. He referred the Ministry of Natural Resources as the Game Department’s “rightful home”. Grindley-Ferris and other opponents of the move also raised the issues of efficiency, finances, and administrative harmony.<sup>142</sup> A representative from South Western (Nkumbula) rose to oppose the European members, reminding them that Northern Rhodesia “is not a normal country. We have to-day...a ministry of African education, we have a ministry of African agriculture and a ministry of Native Affairs. I wish”, he went on, “there could be another ministry of European affairs...the game department, which now falls under the Ministry of Native Affairs covers, I think, the areas which are now occupied by the Africans in the territory”.<sup>143</sup> Harry Nkumbula was a prominent nationalist who was the leader of the African National Congress, a more moderate wing on the spectrum of Zambian nationalism. He saw the Ministry of Native Affairs as the administrative locus most likely to preserve Africans’ rights of land tenure, at a time when Northern Rhodesia was part of an intensely-disliked Federation consisting of Nyasaland and the settler-dominated Southern Rhodesia. Nkumbula was backed in his opposition by John Moffat (Eastern Rural) who dispatched the other European members’ arguments about administrative coherence by arguing that the two wings of the department (game and tsetse control) conflicted “only because the game department has consistently followed the wrong policy since its inception”. What was “wrong” with this policy, in Moffat’s view, was that it insisted on protecting game at the expense of development.<sup>144</sup> Turning the typical assessments of the administration on their heads—hidebound administrators, holding up development pitted against forward-thinking technical officers, eager to push social, agricultural, and economic engineering—the terms of the 1959 debate suggest that where wildlife was concerned, it was the technical officers who were seen as impediments to “progress”.

The Chief Secretary sought to broker a deal whereby the Native Affairs Minister would have a year’s notice to satisfy his critics, but this was rejected by African representatives, one of

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<sup>140</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/519. Internal Organisation of Department, 1958 to 1961. Letter, Director to European Staff, 21 March 1959. Secretariat notice “Government Ministries Breakdown”, undated.

<sup>141</sup> Game and Fisheries Annual Report 1960.

<sup>142</sup> Hansard. Motions, Game and Fisheries Departments, 22 July 1959: 535-538.

<sup>143</sup> Hansard, Motions, Game and Fisheries Departments, 22 July 1959: 543.

<sup>144</sup> Hansard, Motions, Game and Fisheries Departments, 22 July 1959: 544. Moffat had long been a member of LegCo designated to represent “Native interests”.

whom (Ng'andu, representing Northern) suggested that this new administrative division was in keeping with past practise. "In my part of the country in all matters relating to game or fish it has always been the members of Provincial Administration who have negotiated with Native Authorities [...] Although", Ng'andu allowed, "members of the Game and Tsetse Control Department have at times been in attendance, it is submitted with due respect...that they have done very little to induce the Native Authorities to come to their side".<sup>145</sup> Mulonda, the representative of Barotseland<sup>146</sup> was even blunter: "The thing is, we Africans have no confidence in the ministries run by members of the United Federal Party". His contribution was greeted by cheers from Ng'andu, and he spoke over protestations by European members to accuse them of working with Roy Welensky, the federal Prime Minister who was detested by most Africans.<sup>147</sup> The tenor of the Legislative Council debate, and the references to the emerging political parties and their concerns with federation demonstrate that not only the substance of wildlife policy in Northern Rhodesia, but its political and bureaucratic provenance reflected assumptions and understandings about the workings of the colonial government and the tensions between the regional administrations and the technical departments. The debate was held six years into the ten-year experiment with federation which was most intensely resisted in Northern Rhodesia, where people feared the creep of settler influence, and believed that the political arrangement was a ploy to put off majority rule. Administrative responsibilities were divided into territorial issues and federation issues, and although "national parks" were officially matters for federation, officials north of the Zambezi successfully argued that legally speaking, because it was largely on Native Trust land, Kafue did not hold formal park status, meaning that game matters remained within the sphere of territorial governance.<sup>148</sup> The intertwinement of wildlife issues with the politics of nationalism and federation were made clearer as the debate progressed, and revolved increasingly around rival members' views on the nature of government in the territory, with European members calling the capability of the Native Authorities into question, and African members accusing their European counterparts of being a front for the Southern Rhodesians.

One year later, during a debate on a motion to approve the government's wildlife policy, European members returned to the fray, asking why the Game Department remained with the Ministry of Native Affairs.<sup>149</sup> African representatives were not entirely satisfied with the administrative make-up either, because even after control had been transferred to the Department of Native Affairs, some representatives in the Legislative Council pressed the government to turn the game reserves over to Native Authority control, a further degree of localisation. This move

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<sup>145</sup> Hansard, Motions, Game and Fisheries Departments, 22 July 1959.

<sup>146</sup> The region enjoyed a special status within Northern Rhodesia by dint of treaties its leaders signed with the British. The anomaly endures today, although the rumblings of a secessionist movement from the westernmost province in Zambia are usually seen as bargaining chips rather than serious in their nature. Regarding wildlife specifically, ownership in game and game products (i.e. ivory) resided in the person of the province's Paramount Chief. See, for example, Letter, NAZ. SEC 1/1011. Game Preservation of International Convention, 1929 to 1933. Governor to Colonial Office, 13 June 1933.

<sup>147</sup> Hansard, Motions, Game and Fisheries Departments, 22 July 1959

<sup>148</sup> On this legal and political debate, see, for example, NAZ. SEC. ML 1/13/08/Loc. 4559. Game and Fisheries, National Parks under federation, 1954 to 1958. Memo, Arthur Stoke, Chairman of NER Chamber of Commerce and Industry on special meeting of the same at Fort Jameson, 25 November 1955 to discuss proposed Luangwa Park; Letter, Department of PM and Cabinet Office to Chief Secretary Northern Rhodesia, 22 April 1954; Extract from the draft minutes of the Exec Council meeting, 11 May 1954; Letter, H Nigel Parry, Dept of Prime Minister (Salisbury) to Chief Secretary Northern Rhodesia, 26 June 1954.

<sup>149</sup> Hansard. Wildlife Policy Motion, 26 July 1961.

was ultimately and successfully opposed by the government which cited the lack of technical expertise in the NAs as an impediment to the move.<sup>150</sup>

### **African Input: Game Control and the African Provincial Councils**

The workings of the game department were shaped not only by the restrictions imposed by the administration and by its own policy matter, but also by the less formalised demands of another level of administration. Land which was not alienated for white settlement might be Crown Land, Native Trust Land, or Native Reserve Land. This latter was run by Chiefs and Native Authorities, with the input of District Commissioners. One of the most traditional duties of the Game Department—and the same was true of most other such departments across Anglophone Africa, particularly in Uganda and Tanganyika—was game control and crop protection. Chiefs and headmen would send for game guards when their villagers' crops suffered depredation. This created for a reluctant Game Department a kind of constituency, and put the equally grudging Native Authorities and Chiefs in a position in which they relied on the department. While control of baboons and bush pigs (unprotected species) was recognised to be the responsibility of communities, landholders, or individual farmers, larger protected game, particularly elephants, were to be handled by game department personnel. European rangers undertook control work in the course of their tours, but they were spread thin over vast areas and so the bulk of this work fell to their subordinate African and coloured staff. Chiefs often complained that the department was slow to respond, or didn't take their claims seriously, and department staff grouched that too many claims were false alarms, or that villagers invented claims to obtain meat from the elephants shot on control.<sup>151</sup>

Game Department officials, including Vaughan-Jones, saw all manner of difficulty with African self-government. With reference to African hunting, Vaughan-Jones remarked:

The official policy of encouraging Africans to participate in their own government is given a twist which if not checked early and effectively may soon stultify all our efforts at developing this territory. Autarchy, the governing of oneself, implies a high degree of intelligence and self-control; dispense with these implications and the net result is anarchy.<sup>152</sup>

The Game Department was able to cast itself as a forward-thinking (within the colonial context, at least) technical entity, which found itself working at cross-purposes with a traditionalist administration which shared the retrograde outlook of its African subjects. It is in this mode that the department conformed to the more traditional assessment of the administration-technical department duality, and illustrates the highly un-democratic nature of colonial welfare.<sup>153</sup> However, this narrative was frequently contested by African members of the colonial community.

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<sup>150</sup> NAZ, SEC 5/184. 1954 to 1960. Game Preservation.

<sup>151</sup> See for example NAZ, SEC 6/117. Elephant Control Instructions and General Correspondence. 1953 to 1960. Letter, G E Taylor, PGO to PC Broken Hill, 5 April 1957. Letter, J E H Orr-Ewing, DC Petauke tour report 9 of 1957. DCs, in contrast, took complaints about crop destruction seriously, and it was at their agitation, after being lobbied by chiefs, that the earliest control measures in the 1920s had been undertaken. For example, NAZ. RC/659. Protection of Crops from Elephant, 1927. Letter, Acting DC Abercorn to Chief Secretary, 27 June 1923.

<sup>152</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/163. Poaching, Complaints and Prosecutions. 1939 to 1955. Letter, Vaughan-Jones to Member, 16 June 1950.

<sup>153</sup> See Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War & Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000).

The institutional organs which offered some of the most stinging criticisms of colonial wildlife policy were the African Provincial Councils. These councils emerged as policy scrutiny bodies, elected by the Native Authorities (usually their members served as members of Native Authorities before being elected to the African Provincial Councils).<sup>154</sup> The primary function of the African Provincial Councils came to be their status as an electoral college for the next level of the African government pyramid, the African Representative Council, which in turn served the same role for the Legislative Council members. Although their motions did not bind the government, they were a forum for criticism, which was aired freely, passionately, and often quite eloquently. Government did feel an obligation to respond to criticisms aired at the Councils, even if the response normally took the form of explaining why the council's members were wrong, or trying to persuade them to see things in a different light. Questions and motions to be raised at a given meeting were circulated in advance, and the African Provincial Council meetings themselves were attended by their members, the Provincial Commissioner, and representatives of the technical departments to which questions or motions pertained. Occasionally, the Governor himself might be in attendance if a particularly "hot-button" issue was to be discussed (for example, matters concerning federation). Failing that, the Chief Secretary or the Secretary of Native Affairs was likely to turn up. Depending on the size and composition of the Province, members (who derived their membership from various qualifications) might be speaking several different languages (for example at a 1950 meeting in the Eastern Province, members spoke in Chisenga, English, Chinyanja, and Chitumbuka). Some of them might have attended the courses on local government and chieftaincy offered by Jeanes School.<sup>155</sup> The Native Affairs department and the administration hoped to re-work the nature of the African Provincial Councils, which they thought dabbled too much in territorial politics, and became too political (government, they said, needed "'doers' rather than 'debaters'"), but throughout much of the 1950s, members trenchantly debated territorial policy and its regional implications.<sup>156</sup>

Game-related motions which arose at meetings included the protection of sable, the protection of leopards, an allowance for residents to hunt hippos, the increase in the percentage of funds from ivory which should accrue to the Native Authorities, the legalisation of the sale of game meat, and the creation of an awards scheme for people who killed elephants.<sup>157</sup> A recurring complaint was that the system of hunting licences created artificial divisions within communities (divisions which mimicked the arbitrariness of Native Reserves), and effectively restricted the area in which members of different authorities could hunt.<sup>158</sup> Mr Mbewe, of the Chewa Native Authority's submitted question was typical: "Why are we restricted from hunting in *bomas* of Lundazi and Petauke, seeing that those *bomas* are children of Fort Jameson? The

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<sup>154</sup> They occupied a somewhat anomalous place. One European official pointed out that it would be difficult for APCs to concern themselves primarily with "local affairs" as the Native Affairs department desired, because that was already the preserve of the Native Authorities, which dealt with "control of the treasury; the making of laws; the maintenance of law and order and the administration of the tribal area". Moffat (the official in question) suggested that members be disconnected from the Native Authority and instead selected by "some system of direct election either by parishes or villages". NAZ. SEC 5/36. APC—General, 1952 to 1958. Letter, Moffat to Secretary of Native Affairs, 1 February 1952.

<sup>155</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/35. African Provincial Council—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings, 1952 to 1956.

<sup>156</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/36. APC—General, 1952 to 1958. PC Eastern to Secretary of Native Affairs, 18 February 1952.

<sup>157</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/35; SEC 5/34; SEC 5/38;

<sup>158</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/33. African Provincial Councils—Eastern Province, 1949 to 1958. Eastern African Provincial Council, 1955, Questions and Answers on Game; NAZ. SEC 5/35. APC—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings 1952 to 1956. APC Meeting 11-13 April 1950; SEC 5/34.

same with us too, we are of one race. Why are we restricted from hunting game in our brethren country?”<sup>159</sup>

Representatives were also generally critical of preservationist efforts. In attacking a motion to support government’s protection of leopards, A Phiri referred to the animals as “a nuisance”, the menace from which was “very important in the minds of the people”, and Chimkoko (a former game guard) concurred. They were backed up by the Lundazi chief, Soko, and Ndhlovu (a local headmaster), and in spite of the efforts of the council president to find a dissenting vote the motion was scrapped in favour of one which condemned the government’s protection. The alternative motion was passed unanimously.<sup>160</sup> The African Provincial Council in Eastern Province also passed a motion calling on the government to undertake more vigorous game control. They cited the dysfunctional relationship between the game guards and the *boma*, which caused shortages of ammunition for game guards. Complaints to agricultural and district officers were apparently re-routed through the game department, where the troubles began once again.<sup>161</sup> The conflicting messages of the various branches of the administration were also drawn out in a debate on the hunting of hippos. Kapole, one of the representatives, put farmers’ dilemmas into the larger developmental and administrative context. On the one hand, he explained, the government was pressing people to grow particular crops—groundnuts and rice. On the other, these crops were being destroyed by the hippos that came out of the river to feed at night. “We are wasting our time for nothing in growing monkey nuts and rice”, Kapole hectored the meeting chair (normally the highest-ranking European authority present). “The government told us that they wanted monkey nuts and rice, but where are those things to come from if the animals are coming to destroy them, and they do not want us to destroy the same animals? Would it not be better then for the government”, he asked sardonically, “if it said that the cultivation of rice and monkey nuts must be stopped because they love hippos? Starvation and other things like that which are not needed come from the hands of the government”. The chair chastised Kapole for his strong language, a rebuke which in no way diminished the strength of his illustration of the contradictions built into game policy by dint of its precarious perch in a technical department that was often at odds with both the supposedly-retrograde administration and the ostensibly more forward-thinking technical departments.<sup>162</sup>

Chief Mpamba was a former agricultural assistant who represented the Tumbuka Native Authority. He wielded what became a common trope of wildlife critics when he raised the question of ownership and responsibility. Game, it was often argued, was a kind of “government cattle”, and Mpamba drew out this comparison to make his point. “If these raiders were tame elephants and they raided somebody else’s gardens”, he proclaimed to the council, “the owner would be summoned, but because these animals are protected by the government they are allowed to get away free”.<sup>163</sup> Mr Mubitana, a former finance councillor, representing Namwala in the Southern Province, made the similar point, actually using the term “government cattle”

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<sup>159</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/34. APC—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings, 1950 to 1952. Record of APC Eastern meeting, 13-14 April 1955.

<sup>160</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/35. APC—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings 1952 to 1956. APC Meeting 11-13 April 1950; SEC 5/34. APC—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings, 1950 to 1952. APC Meeting 28-29 May 1952.

<sup>161</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/35. APC—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings, 1952 to 1956. APC Meeting, 16-18 May 1951.

<sup>162</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/34. APC—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings, 1950 to 1952. APC Meeting, 16-18 May 1951.

<sup>163</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/34. APC—Eastern Province Minutes of Meetings, 1950 to 1952. APC Meeting, 28-29 May 1956.



with reference to hippopotamus. He added, “If a person had a valuable cow and it became mad and started knocking people about, I think government will tell the owner to shoot that cow”.<sup>164</sup>

There is little indication that the African Provincial Councils had a significant impact on game policy. But they did provide scrutiny of that policy in a public forum where debates were often passionate and unaffected by the same decorum which often ruled in the Legislative Council. They were also a conduit of information: the African Provincial Councils’ members conveyed the views of their constituents to both the administrative and technical wings of government, and carried the government’s reply back to their home areas. But if there were no formal repercussions which stemmed from what we might think of as the “anti-game” motions which members frequently passed, the foregoing examination of those motions might help to explain the administrative divide that has been at the heart of much of this paper. From the administration’s perspective, the African Provincial Councils provided insight as to the thinking of their rural “subjects”. The bodies allowed them to identify points of contention and controversy which could indicate areas in which they might wish to either change policy or to water down its implementation to avoid having their authority challenged. The technical officers might help to supply empirical data to the African Provincial Council meetings, but it was the administrative officers who were in the direct line of fire when it came to the vigorous questioning. Thus, although we might look in vain for direct evidence of the impact African Provincial Council debates and motions had on wildlife policy, they were the most formal and forceful manifestation of the criticisms of preservationism which were in turn reflected in the administrative manoeuvring by the provincial authorities and district commissioners as they sought to constrain the more preservationist ambitions of the Game Department.

## Conclusions

In some respects, the Game and Tsetse Control Department was atypical in the colonial context of Northern Rhodesia. Strictly speaking, it was a technical department, both in terms of its stated ambitions, and in terms of its bureaucratic locale. It received the same rough ride dealt out to its counterparts in the agricultural and education departments (to take just two examples) at the hands of the Provincial Administration. But as its own founder recognised, its “rank and file” would not be comprised of men of any particular expertise, and the qualities necessary in field officers would be more of a law-and-order/administrative than a scientific nature.<sup>165</sup> Thus, in terms of its reliance on locally-conscripted labour for its projects, its dependence on cooperation at the village level for its law-enforcement activities, and its officers’ constant efforts to assert their independence both of firm diktats from Chilanga and the *bomas*, it came to resemble the administrative structure at the provincial and district level alongside which it functioned.

This structural similarity, and the corresponding functional difference, might help to account for the conflict between the two arms of the colonial governing apparatus in Northern Rhodesia when it came to shaping wildlife policy. When in the 1930s the administration began to cede control of wildlife to a purpose-built department, it did so in a manner which ensured that it would maintain a hand in shaping policy, and using personnel (who in turn adopted a philosophy in line with administrative thinking) who they believed would govern in the same

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<sup>164</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/42. APC—Southern Prov (Minutes of Meetings), 1953 to 1957. Record of Fourth meeting of Third APC Southern, 10-13 April 1956.

<sup>165</sup> NAZ. SEC 1/993. Formation of a Game Department, 1934 to 1948. Memo, “Organisation and functions of the Game and Tsetse Control Department” (undated, probably ca. October 1941).

informal, political spirit which inspired the administration. By its nature, however, the technical department bridled at being instructed to ignore the strictures of the law to accommodate the politics of patronage, practicality, and federation. In embracing the law-enforcement component of its activities, the Game and Tsetse Control Department set itself at odds with not only the provincial and district levels of the administration, but also with the executive (which reasserted control over the department in 1959 by putting it under the authority of the Ministry of Native Affairs), and its African ‘constituents’, represented by the African Provincial Councils.

The big policy issues facing the Game Department between its creation in 1940 and 1960 concerned how to combat small-scale poaching, particularly in the reserves, which fed a growing urban population on the Copperbelt and along the line of rail; the creation of new game reserves, particularly in the Luangwa Valley; the regulation of anomalous hunting loopholes, like the *chilas* (communal hunts) on the Kafue Flats; and the removal of human populations from areas demarcated for wildlife. In all of these matters, the central question became the extent to which the Game Department could pursue its favoured policy in light of virtually-inevitable opposition from Provincial and District Commissioners. The traditional players in colonial wildlife policy identified by historians—hunters, preservationist lobbies in London and the colonies, settlers—are almost entirely absent in these most critical of debates. Instead, the battle lines were bureaucratic in character and reflected the organisational stratigraphy of the colonial government, and the provenance of the interested official middens within the sedimentary structure of colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia. Governing the game was a very political endeavour, but its politics were as much if not more about patronage as preservation; as concerned with control as with conservation; and as wrapped up in the prosaic concerns of governance as in the more poetic aspirations of a universalist preservationist movement.

## Chapter Three

### Government Cattle: Anti-Wildlife Politics in East and Central Africa, ca. 1926 to 1960

“In the Kafue Hook, in the game reserve, the late Chief Kayingu, one of the oldest chiefs, used sarcastically to refer to the hippopotamus as ‘government cattle’, as the government protects them and takes no notice of the damage they do!”<sup>1</sup>

1951 was a dry year in northern Kenya. Water was scarce, and pastoralists who relied on their sheep, goats, cattle, and camels as sources of wealth were particularly hard-pressed. The low-lying Lorian Swamp dried up, and according to the local game officer, the “air was heavy with the stench of death and corruption, decaying carcasses and the bodies of dying animals”. Local Somalis were forced to dig wells near the dry riverbeds, and even in the swamp itself, but the wells and water holes which sustained stock also drew wildlife. As night fell, “elephants would come and fearlessly push their way through the waiting stock and drink the water out of the clay troughs as the tribesmen filled them. One in particular”, wrote George Adamson, who cut his teeth in the vast northern district of Kenya before finding fame with his lions, “had been troublesome, and killed a number of cattle. I waited up for him and sure enough, along he came soon after dark. He paid not the least attention to the yelling Somalis who greeted him with a shower of sticks and clods of earth”.<sup>2</sup> “Without pause”, the elephant “swept in among the stock from one well-head to another sucking up the water in the troughs, regardless of the yelling Somalis...the stock moved to give him way. It seemed imperative to shoot him before he killed someone”.<sup>3</sup> During these dangerously dry months on the Lorian Swamp, people lived in terror of elephants. Many men and women laboured down in the wells, extending them or shoring up their sides to maintain a water supply for their community. But they feared to return to the village “until their clothes had dried as the elephants would scent the water and give chase. Women carrying water would often have to throw down their pots and fly for their lives while the elephants smashed up the containers. On another occasion”, Adamson wrote, “an elephant trying to get at the water in a well caused the sides to fall in burying three men who were working below”.<sup>4</sup>

Adamson’s account of the hardship wildlife could cause is exceptionally harrowing, and indeed was read by “all and sundry” at headquarters, according to his superior.<sup>5</sup> But the conflicts it captured were typical of regions where people and animals lived in close proximity, and where colonial laws had protected dangerous animals, in some cases allowing them to increase in numbers. Those animals might destroy crops, prey on livestock, or kill people. Pre-colonial African societies dealt with dangerous wildlife in a variety of ways. Larger-scale, centralised polities had wildlife laws which sought to manage populations with reference to the polities’

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Pitman, *A Report on a Faunal Survey of Northern Rhodesia, with Especial Reference to Game, Elephant Control and National Parks* (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1934): 27.

<sup>2</sup> KNA. KW 23/175. Reports of Activities During the Month. 1949 to 1955. Letter, Adamson to Hale, 23 March 1951.

<sup>3</sup> George Adamson, *Bwana Game: the Life Story of George Adamson* (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1968), 190.

<sup>4</sup> KNA. KW 23/175. Letter, Adamson to Hale, 23 March 1951.

<sup>5</sup> KNA. KW 23/175. Letter, Hale to Adamson, 4 April 1951.

political and economic agendas.<sup>6</sup> In other places, hunting itself was central to a society's political economy.<sup>7</sup> And in others, hunters comprised "cults" or "societies" which vetted members and played ceremonial as well as managerial roles.<sup>8</sup> Under pressure from imperial preservationists, colonial governments eroded these checks. Together with epidemics which transformed demographics around the time of the colonial conquest, preservationist policy led to increased game numbers and increasing instances of conflict between people and wildlife. Colonial governments developed different attitudes towards intervening in such situations. As the first chapter described, control and culling operations quickly became central to most wildlife departments as the colonial state replaced earlier authorities as the agent responsible for managing what today would be called human-wildlife conflict. Uganda's Elephant Control Department is a good example of how these priorities emerged. And yet many colonial subjects remained dissatisfied with colonial wildlife policy, and found a variety of ways to express that dissatisfaction.

The final section of the last chapter explored how the African Provincial Councils in Northern Rhodesia provided a conduit for critics of the colony's wildlife policy. This chapter will use that kind of criticism as a point for departure in exploring what I conceive of as the "anti-wildlife" politics which had wide purchase across colonial communities in East and Central Africa between the 1920s and the 1960s. This chapter sets out to explore the diverse ways in which a wide range of actors across colonial society stated and acted upon their "opposition" to wildlife. I use the formulation of "anti-wildlife politics" warily, given the diversity and complexity of critics' opposition. Some of these actors, as we shall see, were opposed to animals being in certain places and doing certain things. Others were opposed to particular policies that emerged from the 1920s and '30s and which protected wildlife. Still more were irritated by the categorical transformation of "game" and "vermin" into "wildlife" and "fauna", such were the policy and ownership implications embodied by this terminological shift. What many of these actors had in common was a desire to stake claims to wildlife resources. Those claims could be ethnic, communal, regional, or national.

At some points in time, these actors made common cause across racial, class, and official-unofficial boundaries.<sup>9</sup> At other times, these differences kept them apart. The range of actors on which this chapter shall touch is broad, and includes missionaries, hunters, African farmers, European planters, headmen, chiefs, colonial officials, nationalists (black and white), and other members of colonial society. This anti-wildlife politics has not gone unremarked by historians, but their gaze has been comparatively narrow. Previous accounts of 'anti-wildlife' sentiment in colonial Africa have focussed on the conflict between white hunters and black poachers in East Africa. There, people who had long hunted and taken part in hunting-oriented economies were forbidden from using old hunting practises, and sometimes from hunting at all. Aristocratic and settler culture claimed game for itself, and those newly stigmatised as poachers responded by, well, poaching. Put another way, two groups of people were doing the same thing: killing animals. But these communities stood in different places in relation to the dominant cultural and political ideologies of the day.<sup>10</sup> Historians have also described how

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<sup>6</sup> Doyle.

<sup>7</sup> Steinhart.

<sup>8</sup> Marks.

<sup>9</sup> "Officials" were European members of the colonial administration. "Unofficials" referred to those members of settler societies who gained a foothold in the formal authority structure of colonies.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: a Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (London: James Currey, 2006).

pastoral peoples in particular were resettled to make way for game reserves and national parks. Their grazing rights, access to water, and freedoms of movement were often sharply curtailed, and at times people responded by killing wildlife in protest.<sup>11</sup>

This chapter will examine anti-wildlife politics using four case studies. The first will explore widespread and popular antipathy to what was viewed as a prohibitively-restrictive game law in Nyasaland in the 1920s. This example will serve to demonstrate the manner in which colonial wildlife policy—although ostensibly shorn of its preservationist overtones—continued to be viewed as authoritarian and rigid by those subject to its rules. Opposition to the 1927 Game Ordinance united a wide range of actors in their condemnation. These actors remained divided, however, by the kind of society they hoped would be created by the repeal of the ordinance, and ultimately these divisions proved fatal to their cause. The second case study will concern official attitudes—and by official I mean those held by both white and black representatives of colonial power—towards contesting claims leveraged in the name of “tradition” and “modernity” in 1950s Northern Rhodesia. In one case, hunters, chiefs and some members of the colonial administration opposed wildlife protection which they saw as punitive in the context of political flux, social change, and industrialisation in the colony, while preservationists and other members of the administration argued that “backwards” hunting “traditions” were both morally offensive and held colonial subjects back from development. In another case—that of the creation of the Kariba Dam on the Zambezi—claims for the welfare of wildlife were swept aside by a massive federal development project, ameliorated only by an ultimately-futile public relations effort, and ultimately were most conspicuous by their absence. Finally, this chapter will briefly explore the place of wildlife in parliamentary politics in British colonial Africa during the run-up to independence. As previously monochrome Legislative Councils began to be populated by African representatives (or in some cases by those representing “African interests”), the importance of wildlife protection was increasingly called into question. This criticism, levelled by those who would, it was assumed, shortly assume control of the colonies in question, helped to spark a revitalisation of the preservationist movement in the 1950s (a development which will be explored in the following chapter).

Ostensibly, the wildlife debates during the colonial era were about what to do with wildlife. As these debates demonstrate, however, wildlife only assumed this importance in the context of changing administrative and economic sciences, concerns about spiritual and material development, and contests around the nature of colonial authority and ownership. The conflict over what to do with colonies’ fauna was effectively a proxy war, fought at heart over access to the levels of power within the colonial state, and the boundaries of that state. By accessing wildlife resources, different parties demonstrated that they were capable of exercising state control; that they exercised control over their own plot of land, however large or small; that they were capable of dispensing patronage; that they understood their constituents; and that they understood and controlled the trajectory of development. The increasing success of the anti-wildlife interests demonstrated the importance assumed by development as the personalised, “anti-modern” Catoist administrative ethos of the 1920s and ‘30s (evoked by Berman in its colonial Kenyan context) gave way to one characterised by a greater degree of (or at least invocation of) technical expertise in the 1940s and ‘50s<sup>12</sup>. But if administrative shifts (elaborated on to a greater extent in the previous chapter) played a significant role, changes in

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<sup>11</sup> Lotte Hughes, *Moving the Masai*.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*.

the nature of anti-wildlife politics also reflected changes in the nature and character of resistance to colonial rule.

Historians often break the forms of resistance to European colonialism into different stages. In the period of European conquest—dating from a decade or more before European states met in Berlin in 1884 to parcel out the continent’s territories—many peoples and polities mounted stiff armed resistance to colonial rule, although some members of African societies found things to welcome in colonial rule. In the years after conquest, however, resistance is often characterised as taking on a more passive form, wherein those subject to colonialism were forced by virtue of their subjugation to use more subtle forms of resistance to undermine the edifice of colonial rule. This changed during the 1920s and 1930s with the emergence of specific grievances related to the experience of colonialism as well as new avenues for advancing those grievances—trade unions, ethnic associations, urban associations, and proto-nationalist groups—although the anti-colonialism of these years is often characterised as “reformist” rather than outright anti-colonial. It is generally assumed that the years after the Second World War saw the birth of nationalism, and a resort to armed struggle in the face of imperial obduracy and violence. This is a contested characterisation, but seems to broadly capture the contours of anti-colonial history across European-controlled Africa.<sup>13</sup>

In this context, opposition to the Nyasaland game ordinance looks like an example of a reformist critique based on particular grievances. The critiques came from different sectors of colonial society, and in some respects—rather bizarrely—the most explicitly anti-colonial statements came from European nationalists who rejected imperial paternalism. The complaints of African subjects—mediated as their perspectives were by missionaries—were asking for reform of colonial law rather than an end to colonial rule. In their rejection of efforts by the state to regulate *chilas* (communal lechwe drives), hunters in Northern Rhodesia were taking a more active approach, which extended to rejecting colonial intermediaries like chiefs and headmen, ignoring representatives of the colonial hierarchy like District and Provincial Commissioners, and attacking the enforcers of colonial law, the game guards. Their anti-colonialism was still based around particular grievances and injustices, but was both more open and more explicitly opposed to colonial rule. The sidelining of wildlife concerns in the course of constructing the Kariba Dam represented an effort by the colonial government to construct a more durable, development-state, purporting to prioritise the material concerns of subjects, although animal rescue efforts demonstrated the lukewarm support of colonial officials for this new development regime. But their efforts came too late because, as the increasingly hot-tempered parliamentary debates demonstrated, anti-wildlife sentiment was by now one of a suite of complaints connected to demands by nationalists for the dismantling of colonial rule.

### **Shooting Pests and Saving Souls: Missionaries, Planters, and a Brief Anti-Wildlife Consensus in Nyasaland**

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Jonathan Derrick, *Africa’s ‘Agitators’: Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918-1939* (London: Hurst & Company, 2008); Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence: the Wars of Independence in Kenya and Algeria*, trans. Dona Geyer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 17-19, 30-31; Leroy Vail and Landeg White, “Forms of resistance: songs and perceptions of power in colonized Mozambique”; Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: a Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999); Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa* ;

Buried deep amidst a list of legislation for the year in the 1927 Annual Report for Nyasaland is an allusion to the modification of the 1911 Game Ordinance.<sup>14</sup> The brevity of the reference belies the furore which the modification sparked. The imperial government in Britain, the colonial government in Nyasaland, fauna preservation societies, local and British newspapers, planters' societies, farmers, and missionaries all lent their voices to a conversation which grew increasingly impassioned and which touched not only on wildlife policy, but on nationalism, spiritual well-being, land politics, development, and administrative questions.

The 1911 Game Ordinance had laid down a series of hunting schedules and fees in relation to the colony's game. That is, depending on whether they appeared numerous or threatened, animal species would appear on different schedules, available to be hunted by the purchase of differently-priced licences, or sometimes not at all. Often, licenses for African subjects were cheaper than those available to white settlers or visitors to the colony. In 1926, at the instigation of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (the London-based organisation at the forefront of the preservationist movement), the Colonial Office began the process of modifying the 1911 Ordinance. The results of this tinkering, manifest in the 1927 Game Ordinance, included the introduction of higher fees for hunting licences, the imposition of stricter schedules (changes which amounted to less game for more money), and the levying of stricter penalties for those who contravened the ordinance.<sup>15</sup> Although these changes represented little that was new in character, they did signify a more ambitious approach to enforcing game legislation. And it was the symbolism of the revised ordinance—with its implications of imperial meddling and the censure of local livelihoods—which generated strong feelings in Nyasaland.

Opposition to the proposed changes was immediate, widespread, and reflected the colonial experiences of different segments of society in the small, densely-populated colony. In its early years, Nyasaland had been explored and settled by missionaries, who set themselves up as political brokers offering a new way of life to inhabitants who were soon absorbed into more explicitly colonial polities and economies. Discontent with a colour bar, frustration with conditions in the settler-dominated highlands, and the percolation of “seditious” (from the standpoint of the colonial government) ideas led to an anti-colonial rising 1915. The colony was divided geographically into distinct economies, including a plantation economy in the southern highlands, smallholder farms in the central regions, and a labour reservoir in the north, which served the more industrialised colonies, particularly South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.<sup>16</sup> The prominence of this latter economy led one historian to refer to the colony as an “imperial slum”.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, the settler lobby lacked the power of its Kenyan counterpart, and its members historically agitated for inclusion in a federation (eventually realised in 1953) with neighbouring Northern Rhodesia and settler-dominated Southern Rhodesia. The imperial government in London—together with many of its emissaries in Nyasaland and many missionaries—was wary of such a scheme, committed in theory as it was to the uplift of its African subjects and to the notion of trusteeship as a rationalisation of empire in an era when imperialism was more easily called into question and subjected to scrutiny.

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<sup>14</sup> Annual Report 1927, Nyasaland. Government Printer.

<sup>15</sup> Laws of Nyasaland Protectorate, No. 1 of 1927, “An Ordinance Relating to Game and Wild animals”, 22 February 1927.

<sup>16</sup> John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859-1966* (James Currey, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Leroy Vail, “The Making of an Imperial Slum: Nyasaland and its Railways, 1895-1935” in *The Journal of African History*, vol 16, no 1 (1975): 89-112.

What is now Malawi had been a comparatively affluent region fifty years before the arrival of missionaries. However, the combination of demographic shifts generated by cataclysmic wars of conquest in southern Africa and the spiralling of their consequences, the impact of the slave trade which extended increasingly inwards from the eastern coast, the swift rise and fall of powerbrokers with Ngoni conquest, and the famine and movement generated by these developments meant that Europeans found it easier to divide up territory. Nonetheless, the density of population in the colony made it difficult to achieve the same separation of humans from wildlife to which colonial governments aspired. As a result, farmers were particularly vulnerable to depredations by large game. It was also a polity on edge. In 1915 a small rising led by John Chilembwe, an American-trained Baptist pastor, shook Nyasaland's colonial community, deepening distrust of both missionaries and African subjects. Chilembwe and many of his supporters were killed during the brief rising which targeted the plantocracy, and the colonial government responded with great and indiscriminate brutality.<sup>18</sup> This, then, was the context in which the 1926 ordinance sparked such outcry in Nyasaland.

The *Nyasaland Times* opposed the ordinance on the grounds that it was misplaced legislation being pushed by an uninformed metropolitan government and interests. Planters assailed the bill because they interpreted it as an infringement on their rights. Farmers objected because the bill protected the hated animals which could, in the course of one night's foraging, annihilate a year's livelihood. And missionaries disapproved because they believed that the bill posed a threat to the social and economic welfare of their African charges. The common criticism was of a government that was seen as listening to the wrong lobbies whilst moving in the wrong direction. But gradually, differences opened up between critics of the bill. Missionaries, farmers, planters, and journalists had different ideas about the appropriate trajectory for Nyasaland, and it was on these differences that their temporary alliance foundered. Much was at stake in the debate for all parties, as wildlife preservation was increasingly defined not only in terms of control over animals and their parts, but also in terms of control over access to space and land. The very terms of colonial power relations were up for negotiation in such debates: colonial governments attempted to assert control by designating land as reserves, creating institutions like game departments, formalising rules in ordinances, and co-opting new agents; metropolitan societies scrambled to re-insert the imperial into what was quickly becoming local debates about wildlife, and when they failed, to fashion an international conservation regime; local societies sprang up, eager to leave their mark on policy; Europeans in Africa (missionaries, planters, journalists, settlers) discovered a range of ways to thrust into the debate and combat or shape wildlife policy in its various iterations.

Thinking of wildlife debates as struggles for power within colonial society helps to make sense of the interest of one constituency, the involvement of which at first seems inexplicable: missionaries. Long-established missions delivered a powerful salvo against the new ordinance in Nyasaland. In 1927, J A Dickinson of the Nyasa Mission wrote to Dr. Hetherwick at Fort Johnston, expressing bewilderment that the colonial government would defend "a sentimental policy which preserves animals at the expense of the population". His sentiments were akin to those of G H Wilson, Archdeacon of the Shire, who was in turn echoing W H Murray of the Dutch Reformed Church when he wrote that "[the ordinance] seems to be a horrible injustice". And theirs was a view shared by J R Martin of Ekwendeni Mission, who contended that "if the advocates of game protection knew a little of the condition in the Northern Province they would [instead] pass a native protection ordinance". These four church worthies were not exceptional:

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<sup>18</sup> John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859-1966* (James Currey, 2012).



some twenty missions in Nyasaland expressed hostility towards the ordinance in question, and Hetherwick of Blantyre Mission in Zomba compiled their complaints in the form of a petition.<sup>19</sup> Why, then, did missionaries trouble themselves with a bill about wildlife?

The answer lies at least in part with the concern with the spiritual health and material well-being of missions' members. However paternalistic and complicit in the colonial project missionaries may have been, they frequently fought the corner of their African members against what they saw as impingements and abuses by the colonial government and officials of the chartered companies which blazed the trail for colonial expansion into Central Africa.<sup>20</sup> From the early stages of missionaries' involvement in Central Africa, the spiritual health of potential converts (whose conversion would facilitate their reconfiguration as colonial subjects) was linked to the industry of those converts, to the need for them to master "superior" European modes of agricultural production, to the reorganisation of African families, to the restructuring of communal life, and to the reconceptualisation of authority.<sup>21</sup> Missionaries arrived in Africa with strong ideas about what an improved society should look like, and their subsequent interest in agriculture and land politics is not so strange given their emphasis on missions' self-sufficiency.<sup>22</sup> Proponents of industrial missions bemoaned what some regarded as the overly-strong emphasis on spirituality at the expense of the "industrial training of the natives which would not only prepare them for the new life which Christianity opens to them, but would also go far towards putting the mission upon a self-supporting basis".<sup>23</sup> The civilising ethos

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<sup>19</sup> PRO/CO 525/119/6—1927. Game Bill (Nyasaland). Petition from the Churches.

<sup>20</sup> There is an extensive literature both on the role of missionaries in Central Africa and beyond, as well as more episodic treatment of their efforts to ameliorate the systematic abuses perpetuated by the corporate and colonial states. Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: the Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Markku Hokkanen, *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries in the Northern Malawi Region 1875-1930: Quests for Health in Colonial Society* (Queenstown: the Edwin Mellen Press, 2007). Fergus Macpherson, *Anatomy of a Conquest: the British Occupation of Zambia, 1884-1924* (Harlow: Longman, 1981). John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, 1965). Andrew Porter, *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions* (Grand Rapids: W B Erdmans, 2003). Andrew Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004). Andrew C Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi* (Blantyre: Christian Literature Association, 1996). Robert Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: the Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969). Aylward Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa: the 'White Fathers' during the Colonial Scramble (1892-1914)* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006). Brian Stanley (ed.), *Missions, Nationalism and the End of Empire* (Cambridge: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003). Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollon, 1990). James Stewart, *Livingstonia and its Origins: an Account of the Establishment of that Mission in British Central Africa* (Edinburgh: Andrew Eliot, 1894). James Tengatenga, *Church, State and Society in Malawi: the Anglican Case* (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2006). F B Welbourn and B A Ogot, *A Place to Feel at Home: a Study of Two Independent Churches in Western Kenya* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). F B Welbourn, *East African Rebels: a Study of Some Independent Churches* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1961). Landeg White, *Magomero: Portrait of an African Village* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>21</sup> See for example White (1996); Beverly Carolease Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labour and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2006); Allen F Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Mozambique, 1938-1961* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Andrew C Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi* (Blantyre: Christian Literature Association, 1996); White (1996).

<sup>23</sup> Wayland D Wilcox, 'The Need of Industrial Missions in Africa' in *The Biblical World*, 41:2 (February 1913), 103-108: 106.

encapsulated here required mastery of the environment, which in turn eradicated social wrongs like slavery.

Missionaries in Africa were not immune to the strong emotions (running the gambit from wonder to fear but generally containing a combination of both) evoked in other Europeans by large African fauna. Yet the nature of their calling (which in Africa included not just the development of Christian communities, but the eradication of the slave trade, associated with a competing Islamic presence in Africa) meant that missionaries viewed wildlife through a particular lens which qualified their awe. Writing in 1888, Free Church of Scotland evangelist Henry Drummond described the sight of “the elephant at home” as a sight to remember. “The stupendous awkwardness”, he remarked, “of the menagerie animal, as if so large a creature were quite a mistake, vanishes completely when you watch him in his native haunts”. In musings not dissimilar to those of many preservationists, Drummond remarked that “the question of the elephant here and throughout Africa is, as every one knows, only one of a few years”. In a moment of economic theorising starkly different from the mindset of the preservationists, Drummond then noted that it was the very “success” of the “sagacious creature[‘s]” ivory which marked it for distinction and elimination. “The average elephant”, the missionary noted, “is therefore worth in pounds sterling the weight in pounds avoirdupois of one of his tusks, so that a herd of elephants is about as valuable as a gold mine”. The conclusions Drummond drew were a firm statement of the unsentimental view many missionaries took of the largest of the continent’s megafauna:

The sooner the last elephant falls before the hunter’s bullet the better for Africa. Ivory introduces into the country at present an abnormal state of things. Upon this one article is set so enormous a premium that none other among African products secures the slightest general attention; nor will almost anyone in the interior condescend to touch the normal wealth, or develop the legitimate interests of the country so long as the tusks remain [...] Wherever there is money there is temptation, covetousness and war [...] For every tusk an Arab trader purchases he must buy, borrow, or steal a slave to carry it to the coast.<sup>24</sup>

For Drummond, the departure of the elephant from the African landscape would serve as a coda for the missionary endeavour begun by Livingstone, for in the missionary’s estimation “the extermination of the elephant therefore will mark one stage at least in the closing down of the slave trade. The elephant has done much for Africa. The best he can do now for the country is to disappear forever”.<sup>25</sup> The elephant was a novelty of the African landscape, the disappearance of which would serve as one marker of the transition to civility.

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<sup>24</sup> Henry Drummond, *Tropical Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons: 1908), 18-21.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Drummond, *Tropical Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons: 1908), 18-21. This is interesting given that it might have been supposed, because of the link in Britain between evangelical humanitarianism and moves to address cruelty to animals, that missionaries would have evinced a similar concern for animals they encountered in Africa. But the broad remit for their activities in Africa, together with the need to transform a supposedly unsettled African population and an unproductive African landscape meant that humanitarianism pointed in another direction where animals were concerned. Brian Harrison locates the British connection between humanitarianism and prevention of animal cruelty in the context of the ideal of self-discipline... that Christian subjects should maintain an upstanding posture in their efforts to civilise the lower orders (which in Britain included animals). In Africa, the issue of killing elephants had little to do with cruelty, and much more to do with a civilising mission. Brian

Abhorrent though these sentiments would have been to ardent preservationists, they merely built on even earlier missionary thought about the ivory trade. James Stewart of Livingstonia Mission wrote in 1880 that

The ivory trade is not capable of development, though it may be transferred from the Arabs to English hands. Even though that were done it will never do the country much good, as it diverts the attention of merchants from other articles, the production of which would be more beneficial to the country. It is a saying among the Portuguese that the slave trade and the ivory trade have been the curse of Africa. I fully agree in that opinion.<sup>26</sup>

Missionaries had a consistent track record in Nyasaland on the issue of game. In 1913, a Major Pearce wrote to the colony's Governor expressing irritation at the "fanatics" who took part in the debate over sleeping sickness. Squarely in his sights were the missionaries, "who are the most bloodthirsty with regard to their demand for the extirpation of game and every living thing".<sup>27</sup> So Hetherwick and his brethren, in organising a petition against the Nyasaland game ordinance, were acting very much in character. In October of 1926, the Conference of the Federated Missions of Nyasaland met at Blantyre and discussed the matter. It was at this meeting that they developed a petition.<sup>28</sup>

Their critique drew on the notion of local knowledge and moral legitimacy, asserting the ignorance of the ordinance's proponents. Martin's critique about the need for a "native protection ordinance" cited above is a clear blow at the knowledge of the colonial government (but also at the planters). The petition drew similar distinctions, pointing out that "game laws in Europe have been based on Class Distinction and privileges, which are in most countries now modified or abolished. Game laws in this country become not merely class privilege, but lead to racial distinction and animosity, as the natives cannot see why they are not allowed to kill game".<sup>29</sup> Missionaries were able to substantiate their complaints with the kind of empirical evidence favoured by colonial administrators, and they were able to do so because African farmers were active in reporting depredations by wildlife. These reports, carried to government *bomas* as well as mission stations, formed the basis for game and vermin control efforts carried out initially by district officials, and later by game officers.<sup>30</sup> Missionaries collated this data, and passed it on to government. Michand, of the Catholic mission, wrote to the Chief Secretary detailing the effects of restrictive hunting ordinances on a village-by-village basis. In one village, for example, five cattle and two pigs were killed by lions. In another, two cows and two pigs by lions, four goats and two dogs by leopards. The list went on, and other missionaries wrote in, documenting similar levels of predation on African herds.<sup>31</sup> Un-enumerated in these

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Harrison, "Animals and the State in Nineteenth Century England" in *The English Historical Review* 88:349 (October 1973), 786-820: 788.

<sup>26</sup> James Stewart, "Observations on the Western Side of Lake Nyasa, and on the Country Intervening Between Nyasa and Tanganyika" in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* (London: Edward Stanford, 1880), 430.

<sup>27</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Major Pearce, confidential notes on Nyasaland, August 1913.

<sup>28</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Missionaries' petition against the Game Ordinance.

<sup>29</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Missionaries' petition against the Game Ordinance.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, the diaries of Eustace Poles in Northern Rhodesia, ZSL Eustace W Poles Material, Field Journals 1946 to 1957.

<sup>31</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). A Michand to the Chief Secretary, 12 March 1927; Letters from missionaries to Dr Hetherwick, compiled 18 March 1927.

lists, but ultimately more damaging, was the crop destruction meted out by buffalo, hippopotamus, and particularly elephants. The knowledge deployed by missionaries and African smallholders stressed the importance of control over rights in land (represented by the ability to defend that land), demonstrating both why they were formidable opponents of the game ordinance and why they were political players who contested the authority of the colonial and imperial governments, so much so that they eventually forced the planters into an alliance with government.

Missionaries were joined in their efforts by a handful of metropolitan sympathisers. Tom Johnston, the Labour MP for Dundee, raised the restrictive nature of the ordinance in Parliament. A critic of Conservative imperial policy, Johnston worked with Josiah Wedgwood to ambush William Ormsby-Gore, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, on other occasions regarding what he saw as unfair land policy in Kenya, and so was no friend to the settler cause.<sup>32</sup> On 28 November he asked Ormsby-Gore “whether his attention had been called to the hardship arising from the operation of the game rules in Nyasaland”, singling out the fact that “natives are only allowed to kill wild animals which destroy their crops upon the condition that they carry the trophies to the resident, who in some cases is 50 miles away”. Ormsby-Gore defended the ordinance, pointing out that “the object of this Order is to prevent certain species of animals from becoming extinct, and there is nothing in the Order to prevent natives killing bush pig or baboons or things which do damage to crops”. Johnston fired back, asserting that he had “reports of trials in which poor natives have been sent to six months’ imprisonment with hard labour for failing to produce these trophies”. Wedgwood piled on, wondering whether “if [these animals] do damage, is it not well that they should become extinct?” He went on to suggest that the reports to which Johnston referred illustrated the poor law-making history of proponents of the modified ordinance. Ormsby-Gore was able to deflect criticism, and in fact told another concerned parliamentarian that he did not “think that [the ordinance was of] sufficient public interest to justify the expense of printing [a White Paper]”, but the fact that three parliamentarians raised the issue in the House of Commons suggested active lobbying by missionaries or perhaps chiefs.<sup>33</sup> But on another occasion (discussing the case of a man called Mwachumu), the under-secretary of state at the Colonial Office was forced to concede privately that it was “impossible for me to defend such a state of affairs [...] I am afraid I am not at all happy about the ordinance or its workings”.<sup>34</sup> In 1928, Johnston led an abortive attempt to change the basis on which African farmers could be convicted under the ordinance.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to being the heartland of missionizing, Nyasaland was the site of an impressive plantation system, a system that played a key role in structuring the emergent colonial society. In 1894, one million acres were alienated from Africans for use by Europeans, who styled themselves “planters” (a nod to the grandeur of the now-eclipsed Caribbean system) rather than mere “settlers”.<sup>36</sup> These planters used a variety of formal and informal labour recruitment methods, including manipulating the colony’s administrative rules, and often found themselves at loggerheads with the colonial government over the conscription practises (missionaries were by turns supportive and critical of labour practises, demonstrating their dual positions as

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<sup>32</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—Game Bill (Nyasaland), Letter. To Green, 29 November 1927 regarding questions from Tom Johnston. House of Commons debate, 30 April 1929, vol 227, cc 1389-510.

<sup>33</sup> House of Commons Debate, 28 November 1927, vol 211, cc 33-4; House of Commons Debate, 24 November 1927, vol 210, c 2085W.

<sup>34</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—Game Bill Nyasaland, Letter. Ormsby-Gore to Bowring, 8 December 1927.

<sup>35</sup> PRO CO 525/123/1—Game Ordinance, 1928 (Nyasaland). Internal CO memo of 11 May 1928.

<sup>36</sup> Bruce Fetter, “Malawi: Everybody’s Hinterland”, *African Studies Review*, 25:2/3 (1982), 79-116: 82.

landholders and moral crusaders).<sup>37</sup> Under pressure from global markets (which forced the shift from cotton to tobacco in the 1920s), Nyasaland's planters found themselves in a vulnerable position. So it was against the backdrop of economic uncertainty, conflict with colonial authorities, and anxiety in the aftermath of a 1915 uprising that the planting class launched its assault on the Game Ordinance.

Ironically, the story behind the very rising which put planters' nerves on tenterhooks helps to explain why they found themselves allied uneasily with African farmers and missionaries in their opposition to the stricter ordinance. John Chilembwe was the African minister who led the uprising, and a part of his embitterment with European rule stemmed from the fact that he and his independent mission had been denied a gun licence, disallowing him a critical tool for the procurement of game.<sup>38</sup> Chilembwe's mission apparently relied on his ability to sell meat and ivory, the products of his shooting, and he viewed his inability to get a licence as nothing less than an assault on the mission's autonomy. Chilembwe's interaction with W J Livingstone (the chief target of the failed 1915 rising) took the form of an altercation over hunting rights on Magomero, a large estate south-west of Zomba (then the colonial capital of Nyasaland).<sup>39</sup> The rising was put down quickly, but memories of the event, in which several Europeans were killed, lingered on in the European mind.

Nonetheless, R S Hynde, of the Nyasaland Chamber of Commerce, initially led the Chamber's members into an embrace of the missionaries' petition, which noted "the toll of human life from lions, leopards and buffalo", the "menace" posed by game to "the agricultural prosperity of the country", and which ended with a rousing claim: "From an economic point of view, nothing can so impede the progress of the country as the indiscriminate preservation of game".<sup>40</sup> "Indiscriminate" is a key word here. This was a favourite word of preservationists, ubiquitously invoked to characterise hunting by both Africans and Europeans, and petitioners must have been aware of what they were doing when they turned the preservationists' words against them. The Bill, they suggested, actually took a different tack from the suggestions of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (suggestions which provided the motivation for re-working the ordinance). "Game preservation", the quoted, "should be on a 'rational basis and properly managed', and with due consideration to the population of the country". They also manipulated one of the SPFE's recommendations to arrive at the conclusion that it was "recommended that the settlers should be allowed to control game which destroys their crops", the missionaries adding that "in this case we should include along with settlers Natives resident on Crown lands".<sup>41</sup>

Invoking the colony's developmental potential, a local paper penned an editorial called "Common Sense", noting that "if Nyasaland is to progress, and if the Government is contemplating the large expenditure involved in the proposed railway bridge and Northern

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<sup>37</sup> Chijere Chirwa Wiseman, "Child and Youth Labour on the Nyasaland Plantations, 1890-1953" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19:4 (December 1993), 662-680: 667. Planters resented the government's increasing unwillingness to be used as a labour conscripting agency, and also its practise of facilitating the funnelling of cheap labour to South Africa's Mines. Chirwa, 668.

<sup>38</sup> George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1958): 232-3.

<sup>39</sup> Landeg White, *Magomero: Portrait of an African Village* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 127.

<sup>40</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland), R S Hynde to the Acting Chief Secretary, 24 Feb 1927, petition against the game ordinance.

<sup>41</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). R S Hynde to the Acting Chief Secretary, 24 Feb 1927, Petition against the game ordinance.

Extension, then the idea of keeping the country as a happy hunting ground for the Big Game Hunter will have to be abandoned and common-sense take the place of faddism”.<sup>42</sup> The settlers smarted at the ordinance not simply because it seemed to subordinate their version of economic development to the whims of a metropolitan society in the thrall of a titular aristocracy, the policies of which they believed favoured Africans, but also because it seemed to mark an assault on the way they did business. The Joint East African Board, a regional economic and agricultural lobby which was also one of the parties routinely consulted by the Colonial Office on questions regarding wildlife (the others were the SPFE, the Zoological Society of London, and the British Museum-Natural History), got at the nub of the matter in attempting to find a consensus. “The effect of a Game Ordinance”, its secretary wrote to an under-secretary at the Colonial Office in 1927, “depends entirely on the spirit in which it is administered and that although an ordinance may appear to contain a number of restrictive provisions, these provisions are not directed against the law abiding citizen”.<sup>43</sup> But for planters, unlike African farmers, it was less the specifics of the legislation which rankled than the principle by which the metropolitan government sought to regulate their informal manner of conducting business in the colony.

While planters and missionaries invoked material well-being in their arguments against the Ordinance, Hynde, wearing a second hat as the proprietor of the *Nyasaland Times*, constructed a local and nationalist argument against the ordinance. The Governor found him, “on the subject of game [...] quite rabid”.<sup>44</sup> The *Times* took the view that “it seems impossible for the average European, more especially the average Britisher, to shake himself free from the ideas regarding game which are current in Britain. We all know the power of ingrained ideas and on no subject are they more exemplified than in this obsession that game is a royal prerogative and that the killing of it is a crime”.<sup>45</sup> The editor’s distinction between Britons and colonists was a consistent tactic used by the paper to make the case that colonial society was—or would be if settlers could escape from imperial oversight—more democratic than Britain’s. A 5 November 1926 headline read: “The Game Bill: Outcome of ‘a Society in England; Unanimous Public Opinion Flouted; Members of the Government go back on their Word’”. The body of the article suggested that the ordinance “[would] become law on 1 January 1927 primarily

As the result of a society for the preservation of African fauna making representations to the Colonial Office, which the Colonial Secretary has thought fit to humour rather than to take heed of the unanimous public opinion of the country whom it is going to affect [...] The Bill is the outcome of representations made by a Society at home to the Secretary of state, for the protection of game throughout Africa. You know quite well that as development takes place, game disappears. I cannot really believe that game in Nyasaland is going to interfere seriously with the development of the Protectorate’s agricultural resources.<sup>46</sup>

The article offers a stratigraphy, through a critique of what was seen as imperial wildlife policy, of what was perceived as the uneven relationship between white colonists and the home

<sup>42</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—Game Bill (Nyasaland), “Common Sense” in *Nyasaland Times*, 15 March 1927.

<sup>43</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—Game Bill (Nyasaland), Letter, Secretary of the JEAB to US State at the CO, 4 June 1927.

<sup>44</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Letter, Governor to Amery, 15 June 1927.

<sup>45</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). *Nyasaland Times*, Blantyre, Friday, 21 October 1927.

<sup>46</sup> PRO CO 525/119/11—1926, Game Bill (Nyasaland), *Nyasaland Times*, Blantyre, 5 November 1926.

government in London. The concerns of the SPFE were rooted in an abstract idealism that was portrayed as out of touch with the gritty reality of the needs of a developing country. The paper's argument that public opinion should trump the enforcement of law demonstrated that the white population of Nyasaland was calling the legitimacy of the present system of government into question. It is indicative of the desire of the planter class to forge an alliance of white settlers across Central Africa, something which came briefly to fruition in the form of the 10-year federation project of the 1950s and '60s, the penultimate gasp of settler nationalism, prefiguring Southern Rhodesia's 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

The *Times* followed up with its nationalist argument even more directly when it suggested that the Legislative Council was run by a "Government majority", arguing that the "non-official members" (white residents on the Legislative Council) were more representative of the colony's interests because they argued for "the interests of the European and Native inhabitants of the Protectorate".<sup>47</sup> The Governor partially sympathised, citing the colony's historical peculiarity, noting that "large areas [of land] were acquired by individuals with private treaty with native chiefs and others before the British Government took over the protectorate", adding that "the rights of these freeholders over their land are very jealously regarded and it was brought to my notice that they resented greatly any attempt by government to interfere with their attitudes towards the question of game protection on their land".<sup>48</sup>

In defending government policy against its critics, one Colonial Office official wrote to another, averring that the contents of a recently received telegram "reveals...the true nature of the agitation raised by the unofficial Europeans in Nyasaland against the new game ordinance. The objectors are not so much interested", he fumed, "in checking the spread of sleeping sickness or in the protection of native crops (as might be supposed from the space devoted to these points in [their petition] as in securing for themselves the privilege of absolutely unrestricted shooting on private lands".<sup>49</sup> Parties on both sides of the debate recognised that if ideas about wildlife were the excuse for this particular disagreement, the stakes of the discussion were higher. For missionaries, this was a debate about the legitimacy of their knowledge, their claims to autonomy, and the rights of their African protégés. For African farmers, it was a struggle for rights and livelihood. And for planters and white nationalists, it was part of a longer debate over rights in land, labour, and the ability to define racial difference.

In his efforts to head off resistance from planters, the Governor attempted to persuade the imperial government to attach an amendment to the bill which read, "provided further that any person may without a game licence hunt any game on freehold land of which he is the owner occupier". In writing to London, the Governor added, having "duly considered the effect of the legislation I proposed as a precedent for exemption from any general law of local application", he had reached the view that "no such claim could be substantiated if the concessions were to be granted, and [that] the privilege appeared to me to be one which could be gracefully conceded by government and would go a long way to allay local resentment against the 1927 ordinance".<sup>50</sup> Such a move transformed an unseemly concession into a stately retreat, and pirouetted around the claims to power and legitimacy made by the colony's outspoken settler population. Bowring was likely not the only party to recognise the row over the ordinance for what it was: the CO's rejection of his amendment was in part an effort to squash what it regarded as the self-interested

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<sup>47</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—Game Bill (Nyasaland), "Common Sense" in *Nyasaland Times*, 15 March 1927.

<sup>48</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—Game Bill (Nyasaland), Letter, Governor to Amery, 28 May 1927.

<sup>49</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland), Letter, Green to Downie, 27 May 1927.

<sup>50</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927. Game Bill (Nyasaland). Letter, Governor to Amery, 28 May 1927.

claims of the planter community. This was not easily done because like the missionaries and farmers, the planters could appeal to a particular kind of local knowledge and know-how: they, not governments in Zomba or London, understood what was necessary for the economic well-being and future of the colony.

If planters were offered concessions (which were then withdrawn), missionaries were treated with contempt. Bowring invoked the historical character of particular missions to delegitimize their complaints, writing

Without attempting to minimise in any way the damage done by game to native gardens or the heavy toll of human life taken by the larger carnivore, I regret that I cannot accept the protests of the members of the Dutch Reformed Church as altogether disinterested. Most of the members of the Mission staff have brought with them from South Africa the traditions of their race which has led to the wholesale slaughter of game in that part of the continent for the purpose of the preparation of ‘biltong’ and ‘Rheims’ and shoe leather.<sup>51</sup>

He also characterised the missionaries’ views as “extreme”, and the missionaries themselves as “deaf to any argument against them”.<sup>52</sup> African complaints were rejected using the formulaic excuse that reports of crop damage were serially exaggerated.

The temporary alliance against the Ordinance, which made the CO squirm, did not last. On 8 March 1927, G H Wilson of the Shire Mission wrote to Hetherwick, noting that “more guns were now being provided for natives. I was wholly in sympathy with that policy and quite at a loss to understand the outcry which it caused in some quarters [...] It is the native’s own home land”.<sup>53</sup> This did not sit well with Europeans, and the Cholo Planters’ Association voted to repeal the petition drafted by the missionaries, and requesting that an investigatory commission be created to reconsider the ordinance.<sup>54</sup> Five days later, the Nyasaland Planters’ Association had also come out against the petition, citing the missionaries’ support for “the doctrine unnecessarily enunciated therein that the Native has any greater rights in regard to Game than the European settler”.<sup>55</sup> This complaint referred to the petition’s demand that “the Native should have the right to kill game of either sex at any time, in season or out of season, for food, without any restriction whatsoever”. In a startling volte face, the Cholo Association asserted that “were such a regrettable policy adopted it would mean, in actual practise, the wholesale extermination of game”, and that it would only foster “racial hatred”.<sup>56</sup> In the end, the planters and settlers found that they had more in common with the home government than they did with the missionaries and farmers, despite their shared opposition to the ordinance. The broader political climate in Nyasaland speaks to this divergence of interests. Whites in Nyasaland—officials and unofficial—were unified in their support for the prosecution of Isa Macdonald Lawrence under

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<sup>51</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Letter, Governor to Amery, 15 June 1927.

<sup>52</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Letter, Governor to Amery, 15 June 1927.

<sup>53</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Letter, G H Wilson, Archdeacon of the Shire to Dr Hetherwick.

<sup>54</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Copy of resolutions passed at a meeting of the Cholo Planters’ Association, 16 January 1927.

<sup>55</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Letter, Secretary of the Nyasaland Planters’ Association to the Chief Secretary, 21 January 1927.

<sup>56</sup> PRO CO 525/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Copy of resolutions passed at a meeting of the Cholo Planters’ Association, 16 January 1927.



the Seditious Publications (Prohibition) Ordinance of 1918 (Macdonald imported copies of “The Negro World” and the “Workers Herald” into Rhodesia).<sup>57</sup> African subversion was often linked to missionary education, and particularly after the Chilembwe rising, the missionaries engaged in extensive soul-searching over their inadvertent role in the creation of what to their mind was a sordid character. They also came in for much criticism, and were seen by some as a destabilising force in Nyasaland.<sup>58</sup> Thus, as much as there was a well-cultivated space for an alliance between missionaries and planters, there was a pre-seeded field (centring on the empowerment of African subjects and labourers) that ultimately mitigated against the success of such an alliance.

There were nonetheless some consequences of agitation by missionaries and farmers. In 1928 an amendment to the 1927 ordinance was enacted which repealed the need for a permit to use “nets, gins, traps, snares, pitfalls, poison or poisoned weapons” to kill game so long as that killing was “in self defence or in defence of [Africans’] crops or property”.<sup>59</sup> The CO also commissioned a region-by-region study of crop depredation by game across the colony in an attempt to isolate the effects of the 1927 Ordinance. The resulting report was authored by F D Arundell (himself a Cultivation Protector in Tanganyika’s Game Department) who, in addition to penning a broad vindication of the modified ordinance and making suggestions about the modification of reserve boundaries, recommended the formation of a Cultivation Protection Service.<sup>60</sup> There is a certain irony in this: the result of an outcry sparked by missionaries and planters against the encroachment of the state resulted in an investigation and report that called for further intervention by that state. Although the report took complaints of crop destruction in particular seriously, the officials charged with acting upon it were not prepared to respond by ceding autonomy to local actors. Instead they opted to expand the remit of the colonial government, taking up a greater degree of responsibility for the protection of crops. This demonstrates among other things the extent to which although the 1940s and ‘50s represented the florescence of an administrative culture based on technical expertise, such expertise was already beginning to percolate between colonies two decades earlier.

In the case of the Nyasaland Game Ordinance, the various interested parties refereed development in a loose fashion. Nationalist editorial writers, missionaries, African farmers, and planters all invoked a vague image of a more prosperous, equitable, independent, or forward-moving polity. Here, critics of wildlife preservation and colonial officials found themselves on opposite sides of the debate. Investigating the construction of the Kariba Dam and the regulating of *chilas* (communal hunts) in neighbouring Northern Rhodesia in the 1950s will provide bridging examples to the post-colonial politics of wildlife by suggesting that given an increasingly-professionalised administrative ethos, development trumped preservation. However, what Berman refers to as the Catonist instincts of district and provincial officials (as

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<sup>57</sup> House of Commons Debate, 19 July 1927, vol 209, cc257-300.

<sup>58</sup> George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting, and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1958).

<sup>59</sup> PRO CO 525/123/1—Game Ordinance, 1928 (Nyasaland). Letter, Governor of Nyasaland to Colonial Secretary, 24 October 1928.

<sup>60</sup> PRO CO 525/123/1—Game Ordinance, 1928 (Nyasaland). Letter from the Governor of Nyasaland to the Colonial Secretary, 9 May 1928. PRO CO 525/123/1—Game Ordinance, 1928 (Nyasaland). Internal Memo, 28 April 1928. The transfer of Arundell to Nyasaland to make his survey and report was characteristic of the development of wildlife policy in the 1920s and ‘30s when wardens, rangers, and controllers circulated between colonies, taking with them now-in-vogue experience. Arundell drew on the work of Charles Pitman when formulating his own recommendations, providing further evidence that innovations in Uganda resonated well beyond that colony’s borders.

distinct from officials representing the technical departments) could still, at this stage, trump cries for cultural modernisation because of the important place of patronage networks and security to colonial governance.

### **Popular Dissent and Official Reactions: Chilas in Northern Rhodesia**

The view of various colonial officials towards wildlife matters were to a large degree shaped by where they sat in the colonial bureaucracy, and how they viewed conservation, preservation, or control as impacting not just the duties they were responsible for discharging, but also their relationships with the people they were supposed to govern. Because of their geographic (as distinct to policy) locus, members of the Provincial Administration were more vulnerable to “African opinion”. Efforts by the colonial government to restrict or even ban lechwe *chilas* in the late-1950s in Northern Rhodesia upset many people in local communities (albeit for different reasons), and pushed the administration’s back to the wall. Deciding how to handle the anti-wildlife backlash sparked by their efforts to regulate *chilas* pit provincial and game staff against one another, required the intervention of the Governor, called in preservationist opinion from abroad, and ultimately became more about the security of colonial rule and the maintenance of official authority than about the *chilas* themselves. The anti-wildlife agitations of hunters, headmen, and chiefs was ultimately too successful: their agitation against colonial wildlife control actually posed such a threat to colonial authority in the province—at a time of great strain on the colonial edifice—that even though it largely disagreed with the game department, the provincial administration joined with technical officers in backing an eventual ban on the *chilas*.

*Chilas* were communal hunts of lechwe which occurred on the Kafue Flats.<sup>61</sup> Efforts to reform or ban the *chilas* during the 1950s were driven by a combination of preservationist sentiment—wildlife preservationists abhorred the mass hunt—and ecological sciences—officials in the Northern Rhodesia game department who dabbled in ecology feared that the off-take of lechwe was unsustainable. Their campaign was informed by a moralising ideology of development and progress and an historical snapshot of a landscape which they viewed as representing ecological equilibrium. At stake for both the Game Department and the Bwengwa hunters who resisted the government’s efforts was the question of who controlled the country’s wildlife. At issue for the colonial officials who had to mediate these competing claims were the legitimacy of their rule, imperial law and order, and the need to balance their development ethos with their paternalism. Bwengwa leaders were concerned to maintain patronage networks and to secure their own standing with their people, and hunters sought to preserve an activity significant for its social prestige and material returns.

The *chilas* of the 1950s were nothing new on the Kafue Flats, an open plain in central Zambia which floods after the rainy season. Charles Pitman, an Ugandan game warden commissioned to make a study of Northern Rhodesia’s fauna, described them in his 1931 report.<sup>62</sup> It was this same report—in which Pitman estimated the number of lechwe on the flats at 150,000 as compared to the 25,000 estimated by the Game Department in 1954—which served

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<sup>61</sup> The lechwe on the Flats were Red Lechwe. *Chilas* also occurred on the Bangweulu marshlands in the northern part of the colony, where endemic black lechwe were hunted to the verge of extinction. DC Gordon Tredwell supposedly put an entire village on trial at Mpika to discourage hunting of the black lechwe herds in the area. D G Coe and E C Greenall, *Kaunda’s Gaoler: Memories of a District Officer in Northern Rhodesia and Zambia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003: 94.

<sup>62</sup> Charles R S Pitman, *A Report of a Faunal Survey of Northern Rhodesia with Especial Reference to Game, Elephant Control and National Parks* (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1934).

as the benchmark for later conversations about the appropriate size of the herds. During the 1950s debates, Game Department personnel took frequent recourse to Pitman's reports, and made regular reference to his counts, assuming that they represented a kind of equilibrium—the optimum number of lechwe in what they regarded as a static, primeval African environment. In the early days of the colony wildlife was treated primarily as an issue of administrative control rather than preservation. District Officers were occasionally detailed to drive away elephant herds or undertake larger scale cropping operations, but there was no colony-wide wildlife policy or ambition to manage game herds. When the game department was formed in 1940 it developed a managerial bent, and aspired to use the colony's game in the most "rational" and profitable manner possible. This ambition put the game department and the preservationist lobby on the same side of the debate on the *chilas*.

In the 1950s, Game Department officials began to notice a decline in the lechwe numbers, and decided that the *chilas* were the cause. Simultaneously, preservationists cited the Game Department's annual reports in the British press to draw attention to the lechwe decline, also condemning *chilas*, in statistical as well as starkly moral terms.<sup>63</sup> Game Department officials also wrote to the Fauna Preservation Society, outlining the scale of the problem and the SPCA protested to the colonial government, calling the *chilas* un-Christian.<sup>64</sup> The Game Department even sought to cooperate with a National Geographic film team to deliver a propaganda message about the "savagery" of "native hunts".<sup>65</sup> Frank Fraser Darling, an eminent British ecologist brought to Northern Rhodesia in the 1950s to update Pitman's survey, described how the "hunts had degenerated from fairly restricted tribal affairs to free-for-all Roman holidays, with much of the killing being done by firearms". Fraser Darling echoed frustrated members of the Game Department when he called for aerial patrols of the Flats. He wrote

I was given to understand that aerial patrol would arouse feelings among the tribes, that it was not considered 'sporting' and so was not acceptable, [but] colonial rule must decide what it stands for: appeasement of local opinion incapable of seeing beyond the moment and the expenditure of natural resources as pawns of appeasement, or the higher conception of exercising administrative and scientific judgement humanely towards conservation of a resource for the continuing good of the people, until such time as the people can take over such conservation themselves.<sup>66</sup>

Game Department Biologist Ian Grimwood concurred, referring to the modern form of *chila* as "an intensely wasteful form of hunting, repugnant in the extreme to any civilised community".<sup>67</sup>

Game Department officials acknowledged the argument made by local officials that *chilas* afforded hunters an outlet of sorts for their energies.<sup>68</sup> But they contended that forces of modernisation were at work. *Chilas* now involved guns, and larger numbers of people than before. Officials grouched that people from outside the designated chieftaincies were taking part

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<sup>63</sup> *Guardian*, 28 March 1955. "Oriental Sik and Red Lechwe Animals in danger".

<sup>64</sup> W F H Ansell, "The Declining Red Lechwe", *Oryx*, vol 3, 1955-6; National Archives of Zambia (NAZ). SEC 6/16. Secretary, SPCA to Member, 15 October 1957.

<sup>65</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/79. 1956 to 1960. Agriculture and Natural Resources—Game. Letter, Grimwood to PC (Southern), 9 June 1956.

<sup>66</sup> Cambridge UL. RCMS 348/2/8/1. Fraser Darling Report, Extracts (1958): 82, 84.

<sup>67</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. 1955 to 1958. Fauna Conservation Ordinance; Chilas; Game Diaries. Letter, Grimwood to Member, 25 January 1956.

<sup>68</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. 1955. DC Namwala District Tour Report, 22 May 1956.

in the hunts, and worse, selling meat along the railroad for commercial gain.<sup>69</sup> In other words, the moment that *chilas* lost their “traditional” character, they also lost what little utility they once had from the perspective of some administrators.

But as in Nyasaland, preservationists and their allies ran into stiff resistance and criticism, some of it from official quarters. District Officers and District and Provincial Commissioners formed the body of the official chorus warning that the Game Department and preservationists might be making a mistake. They were joined, occasionally, by the Governor and one or two members of the Legislative Council, generally those representing “native interest”. Their perspective placed wildlife not centre stage—they were irritated by the Game Department’s obsession with game<sup>70</sup>—but as a policy sphere which impacted on the efforts of the colonial and federal government to manage its patronage relationships and to stifle dissent. During the 1950s, the spectre of a war against nationalists like that which was raging in Kenya to the north loomed large in the official mind. In the south, officials were managing opposition from those being forced from their homes by the construction of a vast, artificial lake on the Zambezi. Opposition to the forced move would briefly take the form of armed conflict thanks to the ham-fistedness of the colonial government in 1958, and officials remained convinced that such resistance was inspired by the African National Congress as a way of hitting out at the hated federation seen as subsidising Southern Rhodesia and entrenching white rule. In Nyasaland, another federation state, ANC activities would lead to a state of emergency in 1959. The colonial government was, in other words, on edge.

But there were other reasons to oppose banning the *chilas*, reasons which reflected the ambitions of different departments. The head of Veterinary Services argued that *chilas* actually helped to disrupt contact between game and cattle, assisting him in his fight against trypanosomiasis and foot and mouth.<sup>71</sup> The Namwala District Commissioner, countering the ecological arguments of the Game Department, contended that the well-controlled *chilas* which took place in 1956 could be made to resemble scientific cropping, adding that “any observer can see how much these shila [sic] mean to people by way of enjoyment, and relaxation from the humdrum routine of rural life”. Administrators, from their paternalist perspective, saw *chilas* as necessary not just from a law-and-order standpoint. In their theorising about the place of their rural charges in a colony being changed by developments in the industrialising copperbelt to the north, they understood part of their duty to be the protection of “traditional” people’s lifestyles. They proposed that the continued practise of what one official referred to as “a counter-attraction to the rootless, shoddy, and synthetic glamour that draws Africans to the town” could not only avert aspects of a damaging modernity in rural areas, but could simultaneously achieve the ambitions of a modernising, scientific government interested in natural resource control.<sup>72</sup>

But as the foregoing suggests, colonial officials were pushed into these positions by the outright opposition of other parties to the control or ban of the *chilas*. Hunters, headmen, and chiefs took the lead in resisting the transformation of lechwe into “government cattle”, and fired the first shots across the bow of the colonial government. In 1955, a Game Ordinance had taken the first steps towards banning *chilas*. But the legislation left the communal hunts restricted rather than shut down. *Chilas* were even then regarded as the exception to the rule (rules

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<sup>69</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. Extract from the Report on Joint Tour by the DC Namwala and the DC Mazabuka, 14 September to 23 September 1955.

<sup>70</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. Internal, undated memo. February 1956.

<sup>71</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. 1955. Letter, Acting Director of Veterinary Services to Member, 21 April 1956.

<sup>72</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. DC Namwala Tour Report, 22 May 1956.

governed to prevent “indiscriminate” hunting, and the “cruelty” associated with many “traditional” methods of hunting). But even the exceptions left chiefs unhappy. For one thing, chiefs saw favouritism in the allocation of the limited number of *chilas* each year. In 1955, *chilas* were granted to the Namwala chiefs, a move which Siamusonde resented strenuously, and used as a bargaining chip. District Commissioners wrote of ominous “rumours of war if the Namwala chiefs went to *chila*”, and before a baraza called to discuss the differences between chiefs, administrators were told that spears and knobkerries had been hidden in the grass at the meeting point. At this time, administrators considered banning the *chilas* altogether, but the DC Namwala estimated that the danger of the disorder that a ban might spark outweighed the inconvenience engendered by managing competing claims. *Chilas*, he wrote, “are among the most jealously regarded customary rights of the participants and to deprive them of these rights at one blow would lead to considerable disgust and possibly flagrant breaches of the law resulting in disturbances”.<sup>73</sup> For example, the Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources decided to refuse National Geographic permission to film a *chila*, feeling that the move could put the government in a difficult spot if it portrayed *chilas* in the “wrong” way.<sup>74</sup>

Efforts to manage the threat posed by the *chila* debate tested the whole colonial model of administration. Chiefs and headmen were supposed to be the theoretically loyal intermediaries through whom officials reached their charges. But in this case chiefs and headmen were the (often unwilling and uncomfortable) conduits for dissent from below. In 1957, the Fauna Conservation Ordinance was amended to tighten up the methods and scope of *chilas*. Participating chieftaincies were asked to sign up to the conditions imposed by the colonial government before being allowed to hunt. But the hunters did not knuckle under. Instead of managing and stifling dissent and conveying the decorous and dignified assent of the hunters and headmen to the District Commissioner, Bwengwa Chief Siamusonde co-signed a letter with 62 of his headmen and handed it to the District Commissioner at Mazabuka. The letter laid down conditions for a *chila* that would be acceptable to the people taking part. Signatories demanded that the conditions of previous years (where control had been more dispersed) pertain, and that they be allowed to use guns, dogs, and canoes. They also demanded that the *chila* be allowed to take place over more than one day.<sup>75</sup> Negotiations came down to the wire. Special Branch patrolled the locality to gauge the extent of dissent to better strengthen officials’ negotiating hands. The Provincial Commissioner, in constant conversation with the Governor himself in Lusaka, explained that the problems lay not with the leaders of the Native Authority, who were prepared to restrict the new restrictions, but with the local leaders and hunters who pressured the colonial intermediaries to stand up for what they regarded as their rights.<sup>76</sup> In the final hours of negotiations, Siamusonde himself was expelled from deliberations by hunters who condemned him as “only a mouth of the government”. His senior headmen and the court clerk forced an extension, and the PC threatened to call in the police—not now because of the *chila* per se, but because of the threat to colonial hierarchy.<sup>77</sup> In the end, he caved in and the *chila* took place.

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<sup>73</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. Extract from Report, 14 September to 23 September 1955.

<sup>74</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/79. PC to Secretary for Native Affairs, 27 June 1956; Memo in Office of the Member, 22 August 1956.

<sup>75</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. 1955 to 1958. Fauna Conservation Ordinance. Telephone Record, PC Livingstone, 10 am on 11 May 1957.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. Letter, Provincial Game Officer, Livingstone, to Director of Game and Tsetse Control, 3 July 1957.

However, the 1957 *chila* went poorly. Hunters refused to inspect their kills, declined to extricate the District Officer's land rover from the mud, and at night surrounded the tents of the game guards, shouting obscenities and throwing sticks. Game Guards were African employees who were generally hated by locals, and the refusal of Game Department staff to be accompanied by *kapasus* (chiefly retainers), who had better local knowledge of the communities, was thought to have exacerbated the problem. The District Officer at Mazabuka was likely speaking for other officials of his rank when he bemoaned ham-fisted intervention by the Game Guards who stirred up resentment when they scattered lechwe herds the day before the *chila*. But he fell into the same trap which captured many colonial officials when he blamed "the unruly attitude of the people" on "the influence of political agitators", remarking that "it was clear on the day [of the *chila*] that the chief had very little control over his people" (a sin of the first order in the minds of the provincial administration).<sup>78</sup>

So intense was the hunters' fury with the Game Guards that the government took the drastic step of recalling all game guards from west of Lochinvar Ranch at the request of the Provincial Commissioner.<sup>79</sup> Other game guards requested to be transferred because their families were threatened, and at least one case of violence against a game guard made it to court.<sup>80</sup> As the dates of the 1958 *chilas* neared, tensions flared again, and this time the Governor wrote to Chief Mukobela (Siamusonde's superior), invoking his reciprocal relations with the chiefs, and the manner in which they all depended on the maintenance of order and patronage networks. The Governor, following the advice of the Provincial Commissioner (Southern), begged Mukobela to cancel the *chila*, writing that if it were held it would be subject to severe restrictions.<sup>81</sup> The District Commissioner of Namwala protested, worrying that pressuring chiefs into stopping *chilas* would compromise his standing amongst his charges. He went so far as to warn that the Governor would be breaking his own word to the chiefs. The exchange suggested a deep administrative rupture between those closest to the ground and those more removed.<sup>82</sup>

The disorder of the 1957 *chilas*, and the frustration officials felt at being so easily out-manoeuvred by the hunters seems to have pushed them closer to the Game Department's point of view. Ironically, the very strength of the alliance which resisted efforts to turn lechwe into "government cattle" proved the undoing of Bwengwa hunters, for they found themselves able not only to have their way where the hunt was concerned, but able to strike a blow at the foundations underpinning colonial patronage networks and threaten the stability of Southern Province. There were no *chilas* held in 1958 or thereafter. As early as the aftermath of the 1957 *chilas* the District Commissioner at Mazabuka for one was experiencing a change of heart, writing that although "it has been suggested that it gives the African the opportunity to work off his primitive instincts, in all conscience the slaughter of ewes by the most primitive means heavy in calf and hampered by water and weed is repugnant to morality and justice and world opinion...Further, if we are to develop these people, then the primitive instincts of the individuals must be subordinated to the demands of modern society and not perpetuated!"<sup>83</sup> In the years that followed, as debates about hunting regulations continued, the recently-formed Game

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<sup>78</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. Provincial Game Officer, Livingstone, to Director of Game and Tsetse Control, 3 July 1957; Report on the Siamusonde/Nalubamba Chila, 20 June 1957, 5 July 1957.

<sup>79</sup> Hansard (Northern Rhodesia), Questions to the Member for Natural Resources, 2 April 1958; NAZ. SEC 5/79. PC (Southern) to Member, 27 January 1958.

<sup>80</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. Parnell (Director) to Member, 7 August 1957.

<sup>81</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. Governor to Chief Mukobela, 5 May 1958.

<sup>82</sup> NAZ. SEC 5/79. DC (Namwala) to PC (Southern), 28 March 1958.

<sup>83</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/16. D Mazabuka to PC Southern, 13 July 1957.

Preservation and Hunting Association flexed its muscles, arguing that permitting *chilas* amounted to a misuse of a national resource.<sup>84</sup>

Though it often reads like some manifestation of paranoia in the official mind, it was not entirely outlandish for the government to assume that there was an explicit anti-colonial dimension to hunters' and headmen's desires to fight for their hunting rights against the colonial government. Just one month before Northern Rhodesia became Zambia, Prime Minister Kenneth Kaunda, facing an increase in poaching, circulated a memo to government officers, warning them that his government took the protection of Zambia's wildlife seriously:

In the past, many people killed game unlawfully and interfered with the work of the Game Department. They did this as a way of helping in the struggle for independence. Now we have our own government and it is we who employ the game guards and game scouts and game rangers. Now it is the duty of everyone to assist our Game Department in catching poachers and bringing them before the courts for punishment, and I want it clearly understood that the officers and men of my Game Department have my full support in their difficult and important task of looking after the national herds.<sup>85</sup>

The post-colonial government expected that independent citizens would have a different relationship to their country's wildlife than subjects had with the colony's fauna. This assumption often proved misplaced as Zambians, Kenyans, Ugandans and Tanzanians struggled to appreciate the distinctly subtle differences in outlook between the colonial state and its successor, but this question will be taken up in greater depth in a later chapter. Kaunda's reference to the independence struggle also demonstrated that for some nationalists and anti-colonialists, colonial wildlife laws could be a good stand-in for many of the broader ills and injustices associated with colonialism, and provided one arena in which those subject to colonial rule could strike back, breaking the law in a way that defended a custom, acquired wealth, and undermined the colonial government.

That colonial intermediaries and their subjects were frequently hostile to the protection of wildlife, and might even have conceived of communal hunts as a form of civil disobedience, demonstrates how demotic displays of anti-wildlife sentiment could fuse with increasingly popular and effective nationalist politics. Moreover, the debate over the *chilas* showed that a colonial preservationist lobby, however vigorous and however well-connected to metropolitan interest, was insufficient to enable preservationists to accomplish their goals. During the final years of colonial rule in particular, changes in wildlife policy were driven primarily by the needs of colonial administrations reacting to changes in other areas: colonial development, colonial security, the decolonisation process, and negotiations with African intermediaries. In the example of the *chila*, this could give greater leverage to critics of wildlife preservation. In other scenarios—as will be described in the following chapter—this same broad set of events actually had the effect of empowering the hitherto moribund preservationist lobby.

## **The Kariba Dam and Operation Noah: the Primacy of Development**

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<sup>84</sup> NAZ. ML 1/13/12/Loc. 4560. 1958 to 1965. Lechwe Chila. Game Preservation Assoc to Minister, 3 March 1960.

<sup>85</sup> NAZ. EP/1/1/21. Loc. 465. Game Reserves and Controlled Areas—Policy, 1953 to 1976. Memo from Kaunda, 17 September 1964.

In the late-1950s, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (consisting of Northern and Southern Rhodesia as well as Nyasaland) built a dam at the Kariba Gorge on the Zambezi River. As a result, Lake Kariba formed behind the dam, flooding the Gwembe Valley and forcing the evacuation of around sixty thousand people on both sides of the river. In Southern Rhodesia, the move went smoothly according to official reports. But in Northern Rhodesia, Tonga villagers who had lived in the Gwembe Valley for at least several generations offered stiff resistance to colonial authorities.<sup>86</sup> The dam, meant to generate hydroelectric power to run the Federation's mines, was a great point of contention within the already-fraught political relations that characterised Federation. Its location, fears of dominance by Southern Rhodesia, and the path to either pluralistic or majoritarian politics plagued the unwieldy polity, which was created in 1953 and dissolved a mere ten years later, one year before Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland became independent as Zambia and Malawi, and two years before Southern Rhodesia issued its Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain, ushering in a decade and a half of regional instability and civil war.

The most obvious controversy once construction began at Kariba was about the displacement of people from the valley. But the development which captured the imaginations of the global public, and moved the governments of the two territories which shared the border (Northern and Southern Rhodesia) to take action, was the plight of the wildlife inhabiting the Gwembe Valley. The construction of the dam was of obvious economic importance to the Federation, and there was never any consideration about halting the project for the sake of wildlife. But as the Zambezi was slowly stopped up, questions began to mount regarding the fate of the wildlife. This concern took two forms. In the first place, there was the issue of the protection of wildlife, and in the second, as to whether wild animals were obstructions to development. The issue of game conservation was not new in Federation politics, and had ramifications in London, where parliamentarians in the House of Lords debated the "slaughter of game in Northern Rhodesia" in 1953.<sup>87</sup> These debates highlighted the tension between game conservation and development because of the close association between the presence of game and that of disease-carrying tsetse flies. Northern Rhodesia embarked on substantial (although still small compared to Southern Rhodesia) campaigns to clear "the fly" from swathes of the country, and this involved the extermination of wildlife in some of these areas. These debates took on a new twist when the resettlement of Tonga evacuated from the valley required the clearance of new lands of tsetse fly (and therefore game).<sup>88</sup>

In a book recounting what was described as an "animal Dunkirk", authors described how "with the building of the dam, the Kariba Gorge had become a far more deadly trap for wild life".<sup>89</sup> It might seem astonishing that in a region where the Game Departments of both Northern and Southern Rhodesia had expended considerable effort to exterminate or at least reduce game populations there should suddenly be such outcry over the fate of animals in the valley. And yet preservationists sought to make this their cause. Evocative descriptions of the rising water, invocations of a Biblical Ark, and skilful use of press and propaganda meant that newspaper readers abroad, and particularly those with an interest in wildlife, were far more likely to hear

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<sup>86</sup> See Elizabeth Colson, *The Social Consequences of Resettlement: the Impact of the Kariba Resettlement upon the Gwembe Tonga* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971).

<sup>87</sup> HL Debate 21 January 1953, vol 179 cc 1141-4.

<sup>88</sup> "Land (Transfer of Africans), HC Debate 29 February 1956 vol 549 cc1169-70.

<sup>89</sup> Eric Robbins and Ronald Legge, *Animal Dunkirk: the Story of Lake Kariba and 'Operation Noah' the Greatest Animal Rescue Since the Ark* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1959): 32.



about the plight of the valley's wildlife than about the animals being exterminated down the road by anti-tsetse operations, no less the people being driven—sometimes violently—from their homes in the valley. The British press followed events closely, with the *Times* of London providing dutiful updates to readers.<sup>90</sup>



**Image 8. The evacuation of Tonga villages in the Gwembe Valley. PRO INF 10/380.**

There is one episode in particular which captures this disconnect. Even as “villagers clambered aboard lorries with their possessions for resettlement at Lusitu, leaving their *kraals* to the hyenas, the rats, and the waters”, a far greater difficulty plagued the game officers of the two departments which, with the assistance of volunteers, were managing the “evacuation” of animals from the islands formed by the rising waters. “The game officers had found”, it was recorded, “that the ordinary hemp ropes they had been using to tie the legs of captured buck were too harsh and gave the animals chafing sores”. They substituted nylon stockings, but quickly ran short. A Southern Rhodesian game officer “mentioned the matter to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who issued an appeal to women of the Federation to hunt through their old clothing and give stockings for which they had no further use so they could be put to this humane use”. The appeal quickly gathered steam:

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<sup>90</sup> “The Animals ‘Dunkirk’”, 8 May 1959; “Operation Noah”, 8 May 1959; “W Charles Lagus’ Film Kariba”, 12 November 1959; “Operation Noah to be resumed”, 18 December 1959; 7 April 1961; “Kariba Lake Traps 100 Elephants”, 29 May 1962; “Game Warden Gored by Rhinoceros”, 9 August 1965; *The Times*.

The immediate response was phenomenal. One thousand pairs of old stockings arrived within the first 24 hours. Hundreds more came pouring in by every post. But the appeal went much farther afield than the Federation. The world's Press featured the story of wild game 'wearing' silk stockings. Other African territories immediately began making their contributions—from Cape Town alone came a gift of a thousand pairs. And, quite soon, consignments began to arrive from Britain, then America. African messengers at the Game Department were kept busy for weeks plaiting the stockings into ropes.<sup>91</sup>

Not everyone bought into Operation Noah, as the “rescue” effort was dubbed. One Southern Rhodesian MP argued that its work was for nought, given that the animals were put ashore in the same location where control operations were in action, making it all but certain that the “saved” wildlife would be shot.<sup>92</sup> Parnell, the Northern Rhodesian department head, also alluded to the fact that “it has always been known that there was something rather illogical in rescuing animals to put them ashore in a heavily settled country where they were liable to be hunted legally and at will by the local residents”, noting that “the illogicality of the situation has been brought home forcibly by reports of legal hunting as well as intensive illegal snaring”.<sup>93</sup>

“Operation Noah” might have captured the imagination of a global public, and caused considerable logistical difficulties for Game Department personnel who were fairly indiscriminate in the animals they chose to save—elephants, antelope, snakes, and even a ratel (a notoriously fearsome species of badger). But it was small fry compared with the years-long operation to clear game from the area around the construction site (to protect federation and Italian workers from tsetse fly) and in the nearby resettlement zones to which displaced people were being directed. In 1956, the senior entomologist in the control operations authored a report explaining “that as a principal elephant be excluded from the resettlement area and destroyed if they persist in entering it”.<sup>94</sup> Control operations also targeted buffalo, baboons, monkeys, porcupines, civets, hippos, and crocodiles—these species all capable of doing considerable damage to the crops and gardens of farmers. There was some controversy about how many elephants killed was “enough” to achieve the developmental goals of clearing a region. The Game Department and some of the provincial officers believed that the destruction of too much wildlife was unconscionable, and that rather than resettling displaced people in some regions, they should be left for the “rational exploitation of wild life resources”.<sup>95</sup> But these suggestions were mowed over as surely as the vegetation in the valley was destroyed by the massive steel balls hauled across the landscape by battleship anchor chains dragged by bulldozers. Even the Director recognised the problems with his department personnel's outlook, and wrote to the Game Ranger at Gwembe criticising him for focussing too much on enforcing the game laws instead of control work. Parnell reminded the Ranger that “the department is committed to

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<sup>91</sup> Eric Robbins and Ronald Legge, *Animal Dunkirk: the Story of Lake Kariba and 'Operation Noah' the Greatest Animal Rescue Since the Ark* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1959): 58.

<sup>92</sup> Eric Robbins and Ronald Legge, *Animal Dunkirk: the Story of Lake Kariba and 'Operation Noah' the Greatest Animal Rescue Since the Ark* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1959): 102; Frank Clements, *Kariba: the Struggle With the River God* (London: Methuen, 1960): 184.

<sup>93</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/432. Game Rescue Operations Kariba Dam (1959). Letter, Parnell to Minister, 4 August 1959.

<sup>94</sup> NAZ. SP 4/2/126/Loc 5113. 1956 to 1958. Report. Kariba-Gwembe and Tsetse Control. W S Steel, Interim Report of the Sinazongwe Fly Area, February 1956.

<sup>95</sup> NAZ. SP 4/2/126/Loc 5113. 1956 to 1958. Letter, PGO Livingstone to Director, 4 September 1957.

giving all possible assistance...in the protection of stock, crops, and property against raiders. In the Gwembe Valley this obligation assumes an even greater urgency and importance in view of the major resettlement which is taking place”.<sup>96</sup>

The administration faced considerable pressure on this point. People affected by the forced moves were already highly sceptical of the process for obvious reasons. But they feared being resettled in areas with lots of tsetse flies or high game populations. Chief Chipepo, whose villages were amongst those being forced onto the road, complained that game staff were “spending their time looking for guinea fowl feathers” (referring to their policing work) rather than protecting crops. The frustration worked its way up the chain of colonial authority, and the Provincial Commissioner in the Southern Province wrote that he was “most impressed by representations from Africans in process of resettlement in such areas; they fear the future, the unequal struggle of sharing gardens with elephants. The need”, he went on, “is for the elephant to be resettled, dead or alive”. The Provincial Commissioner reiterated that the responsibility of game rangers was “protection of the people from game and not game from the people”.<sup>97</sup> Administrators were more sympathetic to the plight of displaced people than game department personnel. Many administrators expressed disquiet with the move, although they behaved like “good” civil servants and provided only disinterested advice during the process. Nonetheless, flashes of irritation showed through when dealing with game department personnel who suggested that displaced people should simply build better fences to keep game out. Acting Provincial Administrator snapped at the director in a 1958 letter, “The people in the Gwembe Valley have been removed from their old homes by government and their whole lives have been upset...If it were thought that people should protect their own crops, game department staff would not be employed to protect them”.<sup>98</sup>

The combination of the resettlement and control efforts made elephant herds restive. The Gwembe Ranger described them as “very restless and bad tempered”.<sup>99</sup> To cut down on depredations, resettlement personnel set up a Zambezi cordon to keep elephants from crossing the river, shooting the animals and using thunderflashes.<sup>100</sup> It is difficult to estimate overall kill numbers. But in one month alone, control officers shot 587 baboons, 15 monkeys, 14 pigs, eight elephant, and eight ‘other’. In a two month period in 1957, the Gwembe Ranger shot 49 monkeys, one pig, 22 crocodiles, two elephants, one hippo, and four of other species. The same officer reported the following numbers for August and September: 50 baboons, 345 monkeys, one pig, four elephants, five hippos, 25 crocodiles, and four of other species. Two officers, one after nearly two years of work, and the other after a year and a half, killed 2,950 baboons, 852 monkeys, 49 bushpigs, 89 elephants, nine hippos, and 19 of other species.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> NAZ. SP 4/2/126/Loc 5113. 1956 to 1958. Letter, Parnell to Game Ranger Gwembe, 6 September 1957.

<sup>97</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/45. 1957. Elephant Control—Southern Province. Letter, Acting PC Southern Prov to Director of G&TC, 2 September 1957.

<sup>98</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/515. 1957 to 1960. Reports—Game Ranger, Gwembe. Elephant Control—Southern Province. Letter, Acting Prov. Admin. To Director G&TC, 12 December 1958.

<sup>99</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/515. 1957 to 1960. Reports—Game Ranger, Gwembe. Monthly Report, Gwembe Ranger, February 1959.

<sup>100</sup> NAZ. SEC 6/515. 1957 to 1960. Reports—Game Ranger, Gwembe. Zambezi Cordon and Lusito Meat Supply, 1959.

<sup>101</sup> NAZ. SP 4/2/126/Loc 5113. Report. J McGregor Brooks, monthly report for aug 1956; SEC 6/515. 1957 to 1960. Reports Gwembe Station report for July 1957, report for September 1957; SP 4/2/126/Loc 5113. Letter, Parnell to PC Southern, 6 September 1957;

From the perspective of the departmental officials and volunteers making trip after trip between the bank and the islands in the centre of the rapidly-emerging Lake Kariba, as the valley filled up behind the massive dam, wildlife were front and centre. However, in spite of the outpourings of support, effort, and sentiment that it generated, “Operation Noah” was ultimately nothing more than a sideshow in the construction of the Kariba Dam and Lake Kariba. The future of federation, the powering of the Copperbelt, and the creation of a “modern”, “developed”, “industrial” economy was at stake. In a seven-page quarterly update during 1959 on the Resettlement Project, “Game” merited six lines (and those were all about progress in destroying animals). There were far lengthier sections on Agriculture, Administration, Water, Education, Communication, Tsetse Control, and Health.<sup>102</sup> Official and demi-official publications about Kariba might footnote Operation Noah as an amusing anecdote, but most space and time was devoted to the impressive statistics of the dam or lake. Where controversy arose, it did not have to do with the killing of wildlife, but rather with questions of cost or timing when it came to construction, or with the fact that British bids were so uncompetitive, and were easily beat out by South African and Italian firms.<sup>103</sup>

The case of Kariba illustrates how when wildlife interests conflicted with large-scale development projects, those wildlife interests gave way. Broader anti-colonial movements, settler nationalism, and the refusal of the imperial government to countenance immediate independence meant that the balance of anti-wildlife politics had shifted further still against the preservationists. In a way, the actions of preservationists in the game department in Northern Rhodesia during the clearing operations to make way for Kariba prefigure later efforts (the subject of the next chapter) by preservationists to recapture the wildlife agenda from those who subordinated it to administrative, nationalist, or developmental politics for much of the colonial era. Their ‘resistance’ to the marginalisation of preservationist thought follows a similar trajectory to resistance to colonial rule, in that this period they simply sought to undermine policy by dragging their feet when it came to culling operations and focussing on law enforcement rather than control until pressured to follow instructions by their superiors. However, the process by which their ‘resistance’ grew more structured, and took the offensive, is the subject of a later chapter, because with regard to both the *chilas* and the Kariba Dam, preservationists were subject to the flow of events rather than determining their course.

### **The Onset of *Uhuru*: Wildlife and Nationalist Politics in Kenya and Northern Rhodesia**

As Julia Tischler has demonstrated, projects like the Kariba Dam were designed to provide a technocratic template for the engineering of a new, multiracial nation, powered by natural resources, and promising a sort of prosperity which might conceivably help to undercut claims being made on land and representation by African subjects.<sup>104</sup> Because after the Second World War, those subjects were increasingly assertive in critiquing colonialism. It was during this period of time that more disparate expressions of discontent and resistance began to cohere into an anti-colonial movement in many parts of Africa. During this process, African-based political parties began to gain footholds in colonial “representative” institutions. Among these

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<sup>102</sup> PRO. CO 1015/1486. Report on Work Undertaken in Connection with the Resettlement of Africans in the Gwembe District for the Period 1 April 1959 to 30 June 1959.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, *Kariba: the Story of the World's Biggest Man-Made Lake* (Bloemfontein: The Friend Newspapers Limited), 5, 16, 17.

<sup>104</sup> Julia Tischler, *Light and Power for a Multiracial Nation: the Kariba Dam Scheme in the Central African Federation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

institutions were the Legislative Councils, long redoubts of settler interest which harangued “soft” colonial governments. As Africans gained membership in Legislative Councils, they used their positions to attack the foundations of colonial rule, developing sweeping critiques of British rule. They came to see the wildlife sector as one around which they could appeal to their constituents, demonstrating the relationship between the political and economic disempowerment of Africans and the colonial governments hold on a natural and cultural resource.

Colonial Legislative Councils served as forums for colonial interests to voice their views. Their composition was mixed, and varied considerably over time. But they generally contained some mix of ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ members. The former were members of the administration and the latter generally represented settler interests. Later, members were appointed or elected to represent “African interests”. Early on, these were largely Europeans, often missionaries. Later, Africans themselves found seats in the Legislative Councils. Here I will briefly survey how even in the very undemocratic colonial era, critics of wildlife policy could use the highest representative forum in the colony—in Kenya, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, and Northern Rhodesia—to criticise colonial wildlife policy and demand accountability of administrators responsible for overseeing the wildlife sector. Interestingly, in Uganda, the colony where the settler lobby was weakest, and where a strong culling and control ethos was most developed, there were very few instances of strong complaints against wildlife policy in the Legislative Council.

Legislative Councils served different purposes at different times. In Northern Rhodesia, Legislative Council emerged as an Advisory Council under the South African Company, totally subordinate to the High Commissioner who could legislate by proclamation.<sup>105</sup> Under direct British rule, increasing numbers of “unofficials” joined the body and made increasingly claims on the colonial power once dominated by the Secretariat, dominated by the Governor and the Chief Secretary. In Kenya, the Legislative Council came to be dominated by settler interests, with about one-third of the seats in the early years reserved for Indians.<sup>106</sup> Tanganyika and Nyasaland’s Legislative Councils were designed in a similar fashion. The critiques of wildlife policy articulated in these settings were similar across the colonies and touched on a series of themes.

One such critique dealt with the issue of damage by wildlife to crops. Critics of colonial wildlife policy used debates on spending to highlight what they saw as a misconceived use of resources in light of the colonial government’s refusal to protect its African subjects’ livelihoods. African parliamentarians and their allies repeatedly made the point that the colonial government should not be protecting wildlife at the expense of people. As discussed above, in Nyasaland, there was a much older tradition of criticism of wildlife preservation in the Legislative Council with reference to development. As early as 1910, in responding to the annual Governor’s Address, Dr Hetherwick (representing African and missionary interests) described how preservation of wildlife resulted in a position in which 15 million people lived alongside an expanding wildlife population. Of those 15 million Hetherwick claimed, only 47 Africans and 203 Europeans were able to legally kill game. This increase in game, he argued, had led directly to an increase in tsetse fly, which was causing a tremendous hardship for people in the colony. Hetherwick “suggested that all licenses be done away with, and the right of natives to kill game destroyed”. The Acting Deputy Governor referred to the “abysmal ignorance” of Hetherwick

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<sup>105</sup> J W Davidson, *The Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council* (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 18.

<sup>106</sup> “Kenya Legislative Council: Polling for European Seats”, *The Times*, 4 April 1934, p. 11, issue 46719.

and the co-sponsors of his bill, and managed to head off Hetherwick's bill with some moderating amendments.<sup>107</sup>

Although the most critical politicking about the 1926 Game Ordinance in Nyasaland took place between administrators, there was also lively debate in the Legislative Council, where officials defended the ordinance by invoking studies and colonial authorities, and its detractors described the manifold ways in which they believed it would adversely impact the colony. W H Murray, for example, believed that the spread of game would also lead to the spread of man-eating lions. The rhetoric in such debates tended to greater histrionics than in the more mellow correspondence between officials in London and their counterparts in Zomba. "How", Murray intoned, "can I conscientiously vote for a bill which will result in the increase of game? Would we not lay ourselves open to a charge of inhumanity, in the face of these considerations, in regard to the destruction of the food and the risk to life in the case of the natives concerned?" The efforts of officials to point out the holes in the arguments levelled by critics of the ordinance were no match, rhetorically, for such impassioned claims.<sup>108</sup> Parliamentary schisms mirrored those in the colony at large, with a representative who had been lobbied by the Chamber of Commerce joining the missionary in opposing the bill.<sup>109</sup>

In later decades, as nationalists gained traction in public debate, the issue of compensation surfaced in other colonies. In Kenya, the normally uncontroversial "head"—that is, the apportionment of revenue to various governmental departments—became an increasing point of contention once parliamentarians representing "African interests" were able to make their voices heard in the colonial Legislative Council. This was as true of funding for wildlife departments as it was of other more obviously controversial policy areas—education, agriculture, "Native Affairs", etc. In a 16 December 1948 debate, Mr. Jeremiah Nyaga, an "African" representative, pointed out the destruction caused by game, arguing that wildlife destroyed crops, that legislation made it difficult for farmers to defend their property, and that forcing communities to patrol their fields to keep out game kept children home from school.<sup>110</sup> In this case, Jeremiah actually supported the control work of the department, suggesting that it might even require more funds to exterminate dangerous game. But there was not always such happy agreement. Increasingly, representatives brought up the issue of compensation for crop destruction, an issue which had long been anathema to game officers in all colonies, who believed that African farmers would invariably invent stories of massive depredation to receive compensation, and that these pay-outs would set a bad precedent, get out of hand, and threaten the revenue-generating status of wildlife departments. In December of 1949, once again debating the estimates, Nyaga remarked that he was "sorry to see in these estimates that there is nothing provided as compensation". He was echoed by Mr Chellmallan, another representative of "African interest", who recounted the depredations visited by game on Masai and Samburu cattle, pointedly remarking, "I am sure there is no intention at all to preserve game at the expense of the lives of people or their animals".<sup>111</sup>

The During the 1950s, when European Legislative Council "members" and government ministers were debating the threat posed by poaching, and urging the formation of a Game Policy Committee, which sat throughout 1956 (and concluded in 1959 that compensation should not be

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<sup>107</sup> Nyasaland Legco, Sixth Session, 8-12 November 1910, 14.

<sup>108</sup> Nyasaland LegCo, 32<sup>nd</sup> Session April 1926. Game Bill, 14.

<sup>109</sup> Nyasaland LegCo, 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 1 November 1926. Game Bill, 6.

<sup>110</sup> Kenya LEGCO, 1948 to 1949, Third Session, 16 Dec 1948.

<sup>111</sup> Kenya LEGCO, 1949-50, Fourth Session, 15 December 1949.

permitted), now-elected African members began ramping up the pressure on the government to take action with regard to crop destruction and cattle killing. Mr. Ngala, the elected member from the Coast Province, moved “that in view of the loss caused to crop owners by wild game, this council urges the government to introduce legislation to enable compensation to be paid on crop damages and/or destruction caused by wild game”.<sup>112</sup> This came only a week after Mr Muimi, the member from Akamba, brought the issue of compensation to the attention of the Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries. The Minister responded with what had long been the colonial government’s line: that there was “no legal liability and the government does not recognise any liability to pay compensation to crop owners for damage by wild game...[or] liability to pay compensation to the families of deceased persons in the event of one being killed by straying wild game”.<sup>113</sup> The juxtaposition of debates about poaching—with little participation by African members—and those about crop depredation—which drew little more than annoyance from European members—demonstrated the parallel political symbolism of Kenya’s wildlife for these two groups trying to stake claims to the resource.

Ngala and other parliamentarians repeatedly pointed out that restrictions on hunting put farmers in an untenable situation wherein they were unable to freely protect their crops from depredation, and simultaneously unable to hunt for alternative food sources as freely as they would have liked.<sup>114</sup> Daniel Arap Moi, a minister and future deputy president and president of Kenya, pointed out that game laws which left sufficient leeway for people whose livelihoods were menaced by one variety of pest (for example porcupines, baboons, bushpigs) did not accommodate deterrent action by people who had to contend with other threats (lions and leopards, for example).<sup>115</sup> In the late 1950s, the tenor of criticism by leading African members in the Legislative Council changed from outright hostility to more targeted criticism, as when Tom Mboya, another post-independence cabinet member, qualified his criticism, noting, “I am not in any way saying that Africans should go around killing every animal they find; on the contrary, we appreciate the advantages that our national parks have for our national economy in terms of the tourist trade...But we cannot,” he went on, “encourage this at the expense of our own people and expect that everyone will support us in the process of encouraging such a measure”.<sup>116</sup>

The tourist trade that Mboya referenced was increasingly central to East African economies in particular. But as Mboya suggested, there were other models for development, some more focussed on the agricultural production of colonial subjects who their representatives hoped would soon be citizens. African representatives increasingly linked protection of people from game to the colony’s development—at a time when it was clear that Kenya, for example, would only remain a colony for a comparatively short period of time. Mr Kathurima, a nominated member, pressed Government as to why “there is no game warden in Mweru to control game spoiling crops in newly settled areas?” He was backed by Mr Nyagah and Mr Argwings-Kodhek (Central Nyanza), while Mr Mathenge and Mr McKenzie, the highest profile European to serve in Kenya’s post-independence government, made sympathetic noises.<sup>117</sup> Representatives also continued to raise the question of compensation, questioning whether animals were a greater “asset” to Kenya than “the man who gets killed and the crops that get

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<sup>112</sup> Kenya LEGCO, Second Session 1957, 7 November 1957.

<sup>113</sup> Kenya LEGCO, Second Session 1957, 24 October 1957.

<sup>114</sup> Kenya LEGCO, Motion, Game Policy for Kenya, 10 December 1959, 730-731.

<sup>115</sup> Kenya LEGCO, Motion, Compensation Game Damage, 21 November 1957, 1030.

<sup>116</sup> Kenya LEGCO, Motion, Compensation Game Damage, 21 November 1957, 1033.

<sup>117</sup> Kenya LEGCO, 11 July 1961.

spoiled”. Ominously, from the point of preservationists in government, parliamentarians suggested that people might “remove [wildlife] in their own way until this department or this ministry has got into force the measure” to allow the Game Department to do so.<sup>118</sup> Questions about compensation occurred regularly throughout the early sixties, not only with regard to the fertile regions of central and northern Kenya, but also with reference to the western provinces.<sup>119</sup> And it was a theme which arose often in other colonies.

During the 1950s, similar questions—about the right to hunt, the right to dispose of meat, tsetse control, and crop depredation—came up in Tanganyika’s Legislative Council. That new African members raised these issues marked a departure from debates on wildlife and game in earlier decades, when the focus had been almost exclusively on preservation, poaching, and enforcing hunting ordinances. Whereas earlier interventions had relied on more ideological views of the importance of preservation, and a law-and-order approach to poaching, interventions by African members evoked lived experiences. Mr Emmanuel noted that he had “seen women and children watching a small patch of maize for a couple of months and doing nothing else in order to take care of the vermin”.<sup>120</sup> As independence neared, African parliamentarians increasingly raised individual instances of crop damage. On 14 February 1961, for example, three members discussed how protected areas were increasing the damage done by wildlife to the crops of people living in the vicinity of such reserves. At the same time, preservationists in the Legislative Council fretted about stock-raisers in the Ngorongoro Crater (gazetted as a conservation area, loosely connected to the Serengeti National Park) who were taking matters into their own hands and spearing rhinoceroses in protest of what they regarded as overly strict conservation measures.<sup>121</sup> When Kenyan and Tanganyika African representatives discussed development, they could not do so in the abstract. Unlike European members of the Legislative Council, they had constituents who had their livelihoods affected by wildlife control measures.

Another line of critique from nationalist leaders concerned their association of wildlife policy with settler or expatriate interests. Those associated with preservationism were seen as particularly anachronistic, holding back even the modest efforts of the colonial government to harness wildlife for developmental purposes. In Kenya, for example, there were rumblings from nationalist quarters about the leeway which the National Parks and their Director, Mervyn Cowie, enjoyed. At a Conservation conference in Arusha, Cowie excoriated the Kenyan government for sending no formal representation to provide its view to delegates from other colonies and countries. Tom Mboya, one of the foremost nationalists in parliament, criticised the government for being unable to bring Cowie to heel for making remarks “which reflected adversely on Kenya’s government policy”.<sup>122</sup> While Mboya came to see wildlife tourism as critical to Kenya’s postcolonial economy, not all parliamentarians were persuaded, and some, Mr Mwendewa of Kitui, for example, suggested that National Parks could only be tolerated if action was taken to protect and compensate the people who suffered from their existence.<sup>123</sup> On the eve of independence, the African-led government took the same line as its colonial predecessor on the question of compensation.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Kenya LEGCO, 25 May 1961.

<sup>119</sup> Kenya LEGCO, 19 October 1961

<sup>120</sup> Tanganyika LegCo, 32<sup>nd</sup> Session, 30 April to 6 June 1957. 29 May 1957.

<sup>121</sup> Tanganyika LegCo, 36<sup>th</sup> Session, 14 February 1961, Mr Buhatwa, Mr Kundya, Mr Tumbo, Mr Hunter.

<sup>122</sup> LEGCO, 30 November 1961.

<sup>123</sup> LEGCO, 20 July 1962.

<sup>124</sup> LEGCO, 11 December 1962.



Attacks on European dominance of the wildlife sector could work as cultural as well as political and economic critiques. One Northern Rhodesian parliamentarian for South Western noted that “there is a certain aspect of the African way of life which government overlooks. The Africans by nature are a generous people, and if I have a gun myself, and I have a licence I go out and shoot game and I have game meat, whether it is dried or fresh; a relative of mine comes, then it is part of our way of life that I must give him something to take home for his kiddies to eat”.<sup>125</sup> Hunting, therefore, was portrayed not just as a defence of property, but as a way of reaffirming social relations and providing hospitality. Preservationist representatives responded to such attacks. In Northern Rhodesia, they attacked African members for bringing sordid politics into a debate they wished to pretend was apolitical in its consequences. The Minister of Labour and Mines said, “I think, Mr Speaker, that the way the whole debate has taken a political trend is quite tragic”.<sup>126</sup> In a 1961 debate in Northern Rhodesia, Mr Katilungu was accused by both Mr Ng’andu and Mr Carlisle of being a poacher himself. He shot back, “I wish I was, sir!” Playing with the word “poacher”, Katilungu said that most poachers were European, Asian, and Coloured, and not African, previewing racial splits which would deepen as the colony made its way towards independence. He also freely admitted that “some people took advantage of using mass game hunting as a method of approach to express their political disappointment”.<sup>127</sup> Parliamentarians like Katilungu saw themselves as providing cover for and explaining the actions of their constituents who in some cases resorted to a kind of “direct action” to protest the manner in which restrictions on their access to wildlife resources represented an unwanted intrusion by the colonial government on their livelihoods. These critiques were increasingly couched in terms which reflected the shifting balance of power towards nationalist leaders and the concerns of their constituents. As subsequent exploration will demonstrate, these critiques were fodder for resurgent preservationists, and also lost the support of powerful nationalists who became enamoured of the potential offered by wildlife tourism. But they represented an important change in the expression of anti-wildlife sentiment as colonies in East and South-Central Africa moved towards independence.

## Conclusions

In situating the developments in anti-wildlife politics, we find both change and continuity in relation to the events and processes described in Uganda and Northern Rhodesia in the 1920 and ‘30s in the first chapter. Pitman’s particularism in Uganda was akin to the rejection of imperial universalism that the reaction against the Nyasaland ordinance would embody. However, Pitman represented a branch (albeit one in its infancy) of the colonial government, whereas the missionaries who objected so strenuously to the game ordinance were contesting the expansion of state control heralded by the advent of Control and Game Departments. A new administrative logic, based around the power of the colonial state to designate different sections of the colony as fit for different types of economic activity foregrounded land whilst undermining vested interests (i.e. missionaries, planters and settlers) that flourished in what had been a more informal climate. Chapter two explored how the variegated nature of the colonial government—an administrative apparatus which included the provincial administration, technical departments, legislative councils, and various levels of representative councils for colonial subjects—affected the understanding and implementation of wildlife policy. This

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<sup>125</sup> NR Legco, The Fauna Conservation (Amendment) Bill 1962, 21 August 1962.

<sup>126</sup> NR Legco, Motions, Game and Fisheries Departments, 22 July 1959.

<sup>127</sup> NR Legco, Wildlife Policy Motion, 26 July 1961.

chapter demonstrated how opponents of wildlife policy were able to exert pressure on various points of that apparatus, whether that pressure came in the form of petitions to the Governor, questions in the Legislative Council, hunts held in defiance of the law, physical assaults on game department personnel, or the symbolic killing of animals in protected areas. And it indicated that the steamroller of development could subordinate wildlife to the ambitions of industrialising colonial economies.

I would also suggest that these various forms of “anti-wildlife” politics mirrored broader changes both in the colonial history of Africa and in resistance to colonial rule on the continent. Particular grievances, aired through European intermediaries in the form of petitions gave way to acts of civil disobedience which side-lined not only European members of colonial society, but also “customary” authorities endorsed by the colonial government. And opposition to wildlife preservation was eventually framed as part of a double-edged nationalist project, a project which—as Kaunda’s words suggested—demanded that with independence, hunting as a form of civil disobedience must cease. Between the 1920s and 1960, colonial subjects made claims on wildlife as a resource being mismanaged by the colonial government. When Kaunda called for a cessation of those claims by anti-colonialists, he was in some respects replicating the colonial claim to wildlife for the state rather than for the individuals who had sought to reassert control via resistance during the colonial years. Kaunda hoped that claiming the “herds” for an African nation would be sufficient to put a halt to poaching, but as subsequent events would show, not all citizens of the new nations were placated by a transfer of power when they had expected more movement of resources. In Tanganyika, Julius Nyerere, who would later be feted by conservationists for his Arusha declaration, used a reply to the Governor’s 1958 address to explain that “there is a very great grievance amongst African people in connection with game reserves...sometimes it appears as if Government is more keenly interested in wild life than human life”.<sup>128</sup> As the following two chapters demonstrate, these grievances would soon be on the plates of nationalist leaders and the presidents and cabinets of independent nations. The process whereby preservationists—beleaguered between the 1920s and 1950s by a range of interests hostile to one degree or another when it came to protecting wildlife—regained the ascendancy relied, as will be explored next, on the ability of those interests to link opposition to colonial rule to the spectre of the mass extinction of Africa’s wildlife.

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<sup>128</sup> Tanganyika LegCo, 15 October 1958, 45.

## Chapter Four

### Deferring *Uhuru*: Decolonisation and the Coming of the Global Wildlife Preservation Movement

“There are three current schools of thought in Kenya about the future of game. One view holds that, with the onset of *Uhuru* (‘freedom’ all conventions and restrictions and regulations will at once go by the board. There will be a period, it is said, of absolute chaos. Commercial poaching and organised hunting will quickly wipe out all game outside stipulated sanctuaries, and the boundaries of these—National Parks or National Reserves or Game Reserves—will soon become meaningless, the game within them destroyed in a mad rush for political loot and a carve-up of all Kenya’s land....Secondly, would the African leaders who permitted any butchery of game wish to be dubbed barbarians? Thirdly, it is submitted, the economic value of game is a factor that many of the African nationalists have come to recognise [...] Might not American capital, bound to commence its ingratiating flow into Kenya as it is doing in Tanganyika, sponsor extensions of game conservation work and facility”.<sup>1</sup>

In 1957, Bernhard Grzimek, a German preservationist who had spent many years advocating for the creation of national parks in East Africa wrote of the danger posed to Africa’s wild animals by the “ever-rising tide of humanity” and invoking the builder of the Biblical Ark, called on the world to “enter the lists on behalf of the animals”.<sup>2</sup> This chapter sets out to explain how it was possible for preservationists—on the defensive during the interwar years, their influence eclipsed by that of colonial administrators, increasingly pressured by the anti-wildlife lobbies, and having supposedly lived out their heyday in the 1910s—to issue such a call. What did it mean to claim trusteeship along global rather than imperial lines? How did preservationists envision a global public taking up cudgels on behalf of African wildlife? And what were the historical bases for the critique of the current trajectory of the politics of wildlife, the critique which made the global assumption of trusteeship so urgent? Who or what were the individuals or agents lobbying for what amounted to the internationalisation of Africa’s wildlife, and what was their relation to the lobbies and bodies which preceded them?

As described in the preceding chapters, for a short but critical period in the history of the politics of wildlife in eastern and central Africa, the idea of Empire served as the Ark onto which preservationists piled their ambitions and hopes. The fact that Empire provided the fulcrum for the emergence of preservationist thought meant that preservationists were always influenced by colonial concerns. But the moment discussed here is one at which preservationists were abandoning the imperial ship of state for the more seaworthy-looking craft represented by international channels and institutions. This shift accompanied the rise of anti-colonialism and nationalism (discussed above), the process of decolonisation, and the intense proliferation of international organisations which followed the end of the Second World War (organisations which, historians have argued, were in some respects based on the imperial world from which they supposedly marked a departure)<sup>3</sup>. But the affirmative wave that it rode was underpinned by

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<sup>1</sup> Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game: the Story of the Destruction and Attempts at Preservation of the Wild Life of East Africa* (London: Jarrolds, 1960): 108.

<sup>2</sup> Bernhard Grzimek, *No Room for Wild Animals* (New York: W W Norton & Company Inc, 1957), 271.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: the End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). There is also a growing literature on the history of human rights

more reactive undercurrents. These undercurrents reflected a series of deeply-rooted narratives about African subjects and the protection of wildlife, narratives which had merged in military responses to anti-colonialism and would combine in the narratives that preservationists constructed in the 1950s and '60s. They were linked to the institutional form and administrative practise of colonial governments in their participation with the politics of wildlife.

One narrative relied on an old linkage between race, security, firearms and wildlife to raise the spectre of game slaughter. The only thing worse from the perspective of Europeans than African “savagery”, a long-standing preoccupation of colonial governments and settlers, would be “savage” Africans who were well-armed. The indiscriminate violence associated in colonisers’ minds with pre-colonial cultures as well as anti-colonial uprisings, was used to predict Africans’ response to the devolution of authority over wildlife matters. Preservationists combined these racialised views of African subjects with the threat to colonial rule posed by nationalist and anti-colonial uprisings to make a new argument about why global trusteeship was important. This narrative was laid before a world-wide public, and was used to spur the international institutions which maintained an interest in conservation matters in general and wildlife matters in particular.

This chapter will begin by outlining the anxieties of colonial cultures in eastern and central Africa as they related to the question of firearms, the concept of race, and the interests of security, taking Northern Rhodesia as an example. It will then outline how, in Kenya throughout the colonial era, on the Northern frontier, and more particularly during the Mau Mau war in the 1950s, security concerns fused with wildlife protection and management. The chapter will continue by examining the rhetoric deployed by the newly-empowered preservationist lobby, the emergence of some of the influential international institutions concerned with wildlife, and the creation of one institutional example of the internationalisation of Africa’s wildlife in the form of the College of African Wildlife Management (CAWM) at Mweka in Tanzania.

### **Guns and Rebels: Firearms in Northern Rhodesia and the Wildlife-Security Nexus in Colonial Kenya**

Early colonisers in Africa, recognising the tenuousness of a rule that was based on the alienation of vast acreages of arable land from its African owners, and which often relied on force, were anxious about their positions. “Respect”, Elspeth Huxley wrote, “was the only protection available to Europeans who lived singly, or in scattered farms, among thousands of Africans accustomed to constant warfare and armed with spears and poisoned arrows”. The sight of labourers who came to work with spears in hand was enough to alarm European farmers who relied on this semi-conscripted labour to get their start in an unfamiliar land.<sup>4</sup> Early settlers were not the only ones to feel these anxieties. They were worries at the bedrock of colonial rule as established in the late nineteenth century. Early efforts at codifying the colonisation of Africa called for restricting the flow of guns into the continent. This was ostensibly an attempt to stamp out the slave trade that flourished in eastern and central Africa during the late nineteenth century,

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which debates the novelty of the moral impetuses and institutional forms which emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. For example, Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Gary J Bass, *Freedom’s Battle: the Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Elspeth Huxley, *The Flame Trees of Thika: Memories of an African Childhood* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1959): 14, 33.

but was also an effort to establish an orderly regime.<sup>5</sup> A fuller elaboration on the restriction of firearms cited their relationship to the slave trade and to “internal war between the native tribes”. Colonial administrators sought to maintain a monopoly on any import of firearms, and commentators on colonial affairs agreed that it was necessary to reach an agreement about importing weapons in order to forestall “a gigantic revolt of all the coloured peoples against any white-man interference with Africa”.<sup>6</sup>

If firearms worried colonial administrators who were concerned about the prospects for revolt in their colonies and with enforcing colonial security, their possession by Africans was deplored by those interested in preservation because it was assumed that African hunting was responsible for the apparently precipitous decline in game that commentators observed during the closing years of the nineteenth century, and continued to bemoan throughout the first half of the twentieth. Charles Pitman, an Ugandan game warden charged with preparing a report on the condition of fauna in Northern Rhodesia (who had more sympathy than many wardens with African subjects), wrote in 1934 that the recent decline in the number of elephants in the colony was due to Africans having access to weapons. In fact, one of the central questions that his report sought to address was “the game situation in relating to the existing arms policy” of the colony.<sup>7</sup> Other preservationists contended that the salvation of wildlife in Northern Rhodesia was contingent on disarming Africans altogether. One resident of the colony echoed this sentiment: “Everything boils down to the gun. There are 1,000 Africans living in the southern area of [Kafue National Park who] are allowed arms and shooting licences and even have their own gunsmiths”.<sup>8</sup> Anxieties about poaching waxed in the late years of empire. The Northern Rhodesian Game Department expended much effort apprehending Africans for illegal possession of firearms, and constantly complained to district officers about the lack of restrictions on muzzle loading guns, which were not subject to the same restrictions as rifles and shotguns.<sup>9</sup> In spite of its frustrations with the legal process, the Northern Rhodesian Game Department was generally able to secure convictions for possession of unlicensed firearms. To take one example,

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<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary Papers, Africa No. 7 (1890). *General Act of Brussels Conference, 1889-90, with annexed declaration*: 21. The efficacy of these efforts is largely undocumented, and can only assume to have been sporadic where not flouted outright, events in the Congo in the late-nineteenth century providing one example of a case in which the import of firearms was both deliberate and officially-sanctioned. E D Morel. *King Leopold's Rule in Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1904).

<sup>6</sup> Parliamentary Papers, Africa No. 7 (1890). *General Act of Brussels Conference, 1889-90, With Annexed Declaration*: 22; J Cathcart Wason, “The African Colonies: What is to be their Future?” in *Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol 17(66), Jan. 1918: 146. Much of this anxiety stemmed from highly-racialised views of the “African psyche”, which suggested that violence and disorder were the default conditions of both individual Africans and of African society. These views, as has been well-documented, informed ideas about security as well as interaction between races and obsessions about the sexuality of African men. See, for example, David Pratten, *The Man-Leopard Murders: History and Society in Colonial Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995);

<sup>7</sup> *Northern Rhodesia Report*, Pitman, iv, iii.

<sup>8</sup> CO822/321—1952. Game Preservation in Northern Rhodesia. See also CO323/1609/3—1938. Protection of the Fauna and Flora of the Empire.

<sup>9</sup> SEC 6/599. 1960 to 1962. Poaching—Complaints and Prosecutions. SEC 6/574. General Committee Meetings—Hon. Game Rangers, 1957 to 1963. Minutes of a meeting of the controlled area committee, 22 November 1957.

in 1959, in Sumbu, Mweru Marsh, Lusenga Plain, and Chisengwa Island Game Reserves, of the fourteen individuals accused of hunting without licences, all were convicted, and all fined.<sup>10</sup>

In Northern Rhodesia, both those colonial administrators concerned with game and those preoccupied by ‘law and order’ issues, as well as settler lobbies, expended considerable effort seeking to restrict and regulate firearm ownership. Giacomo Macola describes early efforts at firearms regulations in the 1910s and ‘20s, none of which were particularly effective.<sup>11</sup> In the late 1950s and early ‘60s, the colony’s government issued a number of rulings in an effort to streamline policy, inhibit Africans’ ability to acquire ammunition, and control the issuance of permits. The roll call of correspondence dealing with firearms and ammunition left a considerable archival presence, some of the files leaving no doubt through their titles alone as to the link between guns and colonial security.<sup>12</sup> Licences that allowed purchasers to hunt across the territory were priced out of the reach of most Africans, in an effort to localise their shooting. At one point, the Northern Rhodesian government, at a meeting attended by the Member for Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Secretary for Native Affairs, the Solicitor General, the Commissioner of Police, and the Director of Game and Tsetse Control, considered trying to “withdraw existing firearms from owners”. This drastic action, considered in light of the “emergency” in Kenya (a connection which will be drawn out at some length below), was ultimately regarded as “impracticable”, but the fact that wildlife preservation, everyday law and order, and colonial security were so easily elided gives some sense of the inextricability of the issue (tellingly, representatives of the security state, the native administration, and the game department were all present).<sup>13</sup> Although the Northern Rhodesian government decided against confiscating Africans’ firearms, attendees at the same meeting decided to institute a moratorium on firearm imports, a measure to which even the Native Affairs Department—often defensive of infringements on the rights of “its” Africans—acceded enthusiastically. Only the poor condition of the colony’s finances prevented the creation of a central firearms registry.<sup>14</sup> Supported by the police, but discouraged by the district and provincial authorities, Game Department officers pressed for authority to impound all guns in townships on the Copperbelt (from which many people ventured into the bush to gather supplies of game meat to sell to the swelling urban workforce). In fact, such confiscation would have been legal, but neither regional authorities or Native Authorities were enthusiastic about its implementation.<sup>15</sup> The Secretary of Native Affairs took to the pages of *Mutende*, the government propaganda organ, to explain to African subjects why restrictions on firearms were necessary.<sup>16</sup>

Concerns about the effects of hunting on game were, through the linkage to security, racialised. Wardens across British colonies in Africa worried about European hunters shooting haphazardly and not meeting quotas. But even when illegal hunting by Europeans led to lengthy

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<sup>10</sup> SEC 6/567. Annual Reports by Departmental Officers. 1959 to 1960. Annual Report from 1969, Office of the Game Officer Mporokoso, 3 January 1960.

<sup>11</sup> Giacomo Macola, “Reassessing the Significance of Firearms in Central Africa: the case of North-Western Zambia to the 1920s” in *The Journal of African History* 51(03), Nov. 2010: 301-321.

<sup>12</sup> ZNA. SEC 5/178, SEC 5/179, SEC 5/180, SEC 5/181. SEC 6/47. SEC 6/29. SEC 6/371. SEC 2/1151. RC/19.

<sup>13</sup> ZNA. SEC 6/371. Arms and Ammunition Security and Control. 1954 to 1959. Record of a Meeting held on 8 January 1954 to consider the question of a reduction of firearms held by the public in Northern Rhodesia.

<sup>14</sup> ZNA. SEC 6/371. Arms and Ammunition Security and Control. 1954 to 1959. Record of 8 January 1954 meeting.

<sup>15</sup> SEC 5/184. Game Preservation. 1954 to 1960. N J Carr, PGO to Director of Game and Tsetse Control, 29 December 1953.

<sup>16</sup> “African Provincial Council” minutes, in *Mutende*, 29 November 1945.

correspondence in Colonial Office papers, that concern was always about the illegal nature of the hunting, and not about any intrinsic threat to stability or security, and seldom was about the survival of wildlife.<sup>17</sup> The possession of firearms by Africans, on the other hand, was connected to the slave trade, disorder, internal subversion, the destruction of natural resources, and threats to European rule. Interest groups used the spectre of armed Africans to mobilise support for particular policies, as when Nyasaland's leading paper suggested that the only alternative to a "commonsense [ordinance] on the lines of proper reserves or sanctuaries for game" would be the "[distribution] of *guns of precision on a wholesale scale to the natives to protect themselves and their crops*".<sup>18</sup> The italics seem calculated to inculcate fear into the paper's readership, as was the SPFE's intervention in a Tanganyika Territory effort to allow Africans greater leeway in shooting animals. Allowing "the native to shoot meet for himself and his family with his own rude weapons", the SPFE intoned, was tantamount to "racial discrimination" (a claim oft-invoked by white minorities in British colonies over what settlers purported to see as favouritism towards Africans).<sup>19</sup>

In the heart of Kenya, anxieties about the work of Africans in the Game Department surfaced. Officials and settlers were uneasy about the culling work done by both African rangers and by local Africans to whom such work was occasionally sub-contracted on private land.<sup>20</sup> The East African Professional Hunting Association attacked government employment of Africans for culling work, while the Kenya Game Warden warned the manager of Ol Pejeta estate (formerly owned by Lord Delamere) off using Africans in culling operations.<sup>21</sup> And as late as 1953, at the Bukavu Conference, British delegates listed "Restrictions on the use of muzzle-loaders" and "Restrictions relating to other firearms" as two of the major "Problems of Conservation" to be addressed, while French delegates suggested that "la seule façon efficace de limiter l'usage des fusils se chargeant par le canon, est d'interdire l'entrée dans les Territoires intéressés des armes se chargeant par la bouche, des pièces de rechange et surtout de la poudre et des amorces".<sup>22</sup>

Settlers felt vindicated when the Mau Mau War broke out in Kenya during the 1950s. Louis Leakey felt "certain that stockpiling of arms and ammunition for Mau Mau purposes must have started a good many years before the State of Emergency was declared, and that is one of the reasons, among others, why, from the outset, Mau Mau tried to enlist into its membership as many domestic servants as possible".<sup>23</sup> Even the Africans closest to Europeans, most exposed to their "civilised" ways, it was thought, were susceptible to "primitive" inducements and capable of betrayal.

Clearly, widespread hunting on the part of armed Africans worried both preservationists and game departments. Moreover, the makeup and personnel of game departments reflected the close link between colonial security and wildlife conservation. Most early East African game

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<sup>17</sup> *Northern Rhodesia Report*, Pitman, 62. TNA. CO536/152/1—Gorillas, preservation of, 1929.

<sup>18</sup> CO523/119/6—1927, Game Bill (Nyasaland). Italics in the original.

<sup>19</sup> CO691/151/4—1936. Game preservation legislation, Tanganyika.

<sup>20</sup> This does not appear to have been the case in Uganda, Tanganyika or Northern Rhodesia, where such control work by Africans was routine and indeed, central to the efforts of the Game Departments in these colonies to manage their Elephant and Buffalo populations in particular.

<sup>21</sup> KNA. KW 5/48. The East African Professional Hunters Association, 1934-1938. Box 15, Shelf 5477. KNA KW 27/3. Game, Preservation of Game, 1930-1934. Box 81, Shelf 5567. KNA, KW 15/16.. Administration of the Game Laws, Game and Vermin Control, 1951-1956. Box 73, Shelf 5565.

<sup>22</sup> *Troisième Conférence Internationale Protection de la Faune et de la Flore en Afrique*, Bukavu, 1953: 266-7, 283

<sup>23</sup> L S B Leakey, *Defeating Mau Mau* (London: Methuen, 1954): 94.

departments were staffed by hunters, poachers-turned-wardens, or former military men.<sup>24</sup> This meant that from the outset game and control departments were quasi-military in character, and came to prize certain characteristics in their officers. A military background bespoke competence and firmness in governing subject peoples, and hunting experience was thought to prepare wardens for “bush life”.<sup>25</sup> The work of game departments was virtually always military in character (things were originally different in the National Parks departments, but these didn’t emerge until decades later): undertaking patrols, making arrests, creating intelligence networks, and hunting down those animals which were perceived as threatening security. During times of unrest, wardens and their staff were co-opted into military and intelligence networks. Perhaps atypical in his enthusiasm for spycraft, Kenya Control Officer Captain J T Oulton nonetheless represented the manner in which, during moments of crisis, the space between police and military work on the one hand, and the work of the wildlife departments on the other, was easily collapsed. In 1938, with war looming on the horizon, Oulton began spying on Germans in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, convinced that something was afoot. At the Gazi Plantation Sisal Estate, one of Oulton’s informants elicited a confession from an inebriated German, newly arrived from Tanganyika Territory, that “Nazis in Tanganyika Territory held a number of secret meetings at various places round about midnight and it was planned that if war came, raids on administrative bomas should be made and that such raids were to concentrated on capturing the District Commissioners for the purpose of holding them as hostages”. In Marangu, Oulton found Germans “bitterly hostile to all Britishers”, and was quickly bombarded by accusations suggesting that closet Nazis lurked under every stone.<sup>26</sup> While Oulton’s spying career was checked by an intervention from Ritchie in Nairobi (not before he approached a “witch doctor” for assistance in rooting out Nazis), Game Department work ground to a virtual halt during the Second World War when its funds and membership were directed at the war effort, something which also occurred during the Mau Mau war, when the wildlife departments played a significant role in the war against anti-colonial fighters (more about this below).

Wildlife departments became ever-more militaristic as they responded to poaching crises and border incursions (as in northern Kenya from the 1920s onwards and northern Uganda during the 1950s and ‘60s). Moreover, their efforts empowered certain members of local settler communities. A common method employed by under-funded and –staffed departments was the delegation of control duties to local notables (known as ‘honorary wardens’). This involved allowing local Europeans to undertake culling projects and to serve as government proxies where wildlife matters were concerned. This practise was not without its controversies. There were

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<sup>24</sup> Charles Pitman, the long-time warden of Uganda, came from a military background, as did his successor, Bruce Kinloch. A T A Ritchie, Kenya’s warden, had served in the French Foreign Legion. Kinloch wrote at some length about the recruitment process he underwent. His evidence suggests that game departments favoured former military personnel. Many rangers and wardens joined the Departments from the police or administrative wings of colonial government, while of those who had military experience, many arrived from South Asia. This was somewhat less the case in Northern Rhodesia, where although some of the rangers arrived from military backgrounds, administrative officers were also well represented, particularly at the top. There were also middle-ranking officers, Provincial Biologists, whose qualifications included a scientific degree.

<sup>25</sup> KNA, KW 4/2. CAWM, 1972-1974. Box 8, Shelf 5475.

<sup>26</sup> Oulton may have been slightly out of his depth as a spy. Rival guesthouse owners in Marangu slung accusations at one another, likely motivated more by business acumen than by pro- or anti-Nazi sentiment, leaving the Control Officer so bemused that he made the acquaintance of “USENI, the Taveta witch doctor [...who] will likely prove a useful medium for acquiring information”. KNA, KW 15/7. Game and Vermin Control, Movements and Reports of Control Officer Captain J T Oulton, 1936-1941. Box 38, Shelf 5485.



accusations of abuse, and colonial officials worried about taking responsibility for their proxies.<sup>27</sup>

The example of Kenya's Northern Frontier demonstrates how anxieties over armed Africans had the potential to fuse with concerns over territorial integrity, border security, and illegal hunting. From its early years, Kenya's Game Department expended significant effort policing the northern border for ivory poachers, working to infiltrate networks, and solving the administrative problems that this disorder posed. The SPFE and multiple administrative units of the Kenya government were involved.<sup>28</sup> In 1919, the government attempted to "disarm" the Somalis living along the border with Italian Somaliland. "The local Somali", one District Commissioner noted irritably in a letter to the Game Warden in Nairobi, "has now been taught to add murder and plunder to his list of accomplishments". What began as a poaching problem (firearms were imported to facilitate elephant poaching to fuel the trade which stretched to Yemen and beyond) became an administrative and security issue. Provincial Commissioners kept known ivory poachers under surveillance and aided the game department by providing information, personnel and vehicles. Violence along the border was not uncommon, and on more than one occasion Askaris rather than Game Department Staff enforced both game and border policy by killing poachers along the amorphous line dividing Kenya from Italian Somaliland.<sup>29</sup>

For our purposes, it is important to note that by the time preservationists began to campaign for the Empire's fauna, and in the era when wildlife officials were beginning to hammer out early wildlife policy, there was already a well-established way of discussing the threat posed to security, law and order, and white society by armed Africans. So when preservationists blamed African hunting for the depletion of game, there was a narrative in place to which they could turn, the better to outrage supporters. The more general racial anxiety combined with specific fears about the damage armed Africans could and would do to wildlife populations to create a potent story about who should manage wildlife, and what threats its trustees were defending it against. As we will see below, this had great implications in the years around independence, and proved influential in sometimes-contradictory ways during the Mau Mau war.

It was against the back-drop of the greatest military challenge to British rule in Africa, the so-called Emergency in Kenya, that wildlife policy assumed a greater importance with regard to colonial security. In 1952, the colonial government began to recognise what would become known as the Mau Mau insurgency as a serious threat. Mau Mau fighters referred to themselves as the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, and although Mau Mau was far from being the first expression of Kenyans' grievances against colonial rule, it was the most powerful. The Kikuyu Central Association was formed in 1927, and the Kenya African Union emerged in 1944.

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<sup>27</sup> This controversy persists, as honorary wardens are still used by the Kenyan Wildlife Service today. In the wake of several recent killings near Naivasha by rogue buffalo and accusations of general incompetence levelled at KWS, a seventy-something-year-old honorary warden stepped into the breach to shoot the animal in question. See <http://www.africahunting.com/latest-hunting-news/4149-tanzanian-ph-rick-hopcraft-game-scout-killed-buffalo.html> In the years leading up to and after Independence, honorary wardens became a different source of controversy, as Africans complained that their numbers remained overwhelmingly European or white Kenyan.

<sup>28</sup> CO533/498/14—1938, Game Department Staff.

<sup>29</sup> KNA. KW 14/3, 14/4. Ivory and Rhino Horns. Smuggling of in the Northern Frontier Province; Tanaland and Jubaland, 1924-1926.

Grievances centred on massive land alienation that a series of legislative acts had enforced.<sup>30</sup> Open warfare between Mau Mau fighters and the colonial government erupted in 1952 when, in reaction to the killing of a number of European settlers and, crucially, loyalist chiefs, the Governor declared a state of emergency. Unsuccessful in the short-term, this struggle, waged over some eight years by a loosely-organised group of guerrilla fighters, ultimately forced the British to recognise the impossibility of retaining Kenya Colony by force in the long-term. Centred on the so-called White Highlands, the war was both an anti-colonial struggle and a civil war, given both the large number of Africans who fought alongside as well as against the British, and the intensely local reasons for which people fought.<sup>31</sup>

The colonial response to Mau Mau was twofold. Materially, there was a massive military build-up, culminating in Operation Anvil in Nairobi and the mass internment of Kikuyu in the system of concentration camps known as the “Pipeline”. But the propaganda response reflected historical concerns about the latent violence seen as inherent in African societies. One example, by no means unique, of the attack on Mau Mau fighters came from Lord Tweedsmuir during a parliamentary debate. “Mau Mau”, Tweedsmuir declared:

Is one of the diseases of Africa. It is a secret society which lifts the curtain on the old dark days before the white man came. As I say, it is a disease. Some of the societies, like the Hyena Society, the Baboon Society and, last of all, the most widespread and sinister, the Leopard Society, have been going on, if not for hundreds of years, at any rate for generations. Societies that have sprung up in recent years have in nearly every case come from relaxed Christians [...] So the first objective must be to restore the rule of law, one of the greatest gifts we ever brought to the African Continent. We must make it clear that we will take every step to restore it [...] We should make the gravest error if we were to make any apparent concession which could be construed to reacting to the terrorism of Mau Mau. If you appear to react to the threat of arson, mutilation and murder, you strike at the very basis of the rule of law. There always have been murderers and there always will be murderers, but let it never be said that we tried to traffic with them.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> These included the 1896 Land Acquisition Act, the 1902 and 1915 Land Ordinances (the latter created Native Reserves), the 1921 Crown Lands (Discharged Soldiers Settlement) Ordinance, the 1937 Resident Labourer ordinance, and 1939 amendments to the Crown Lands Ordinance. Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau* (London: James Currey, 1987); W T W Morgan, “The ‘White Highlands’ of Kenya” in *The Geographical Journal*, vol 129(2) (June 1963): 140-155.

<sup>31</sup> Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: the Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005); Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Micere Githae Mugo, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976); Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005); E S Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale, *Mau Mau & Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003); Greet Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997); Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *A Grain of Wheat* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1970); Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau: a Revolution Betrayed* (Nairobi: Mau Mau Research Center & Vita Books, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> House of Lords Debate, 29 October 1952, vol 178, cc 1091-1142, Lord Tweedsmuir.

Similarly one-sided explanations of Mau Mau, relying on long-held ideas of Africa as a continent of darkness and anger were exported, together with mythic narratives of settler heroism.<sup>33</sup> Accounts of the Mau Mau war place great emphasis on the brutality of the killings of both European farmers and loyalist Chiefs, and eschewed all attempts to explain Mau Mau or the motives of its adherents. Anthropologist Louis B Leakey, who took a more explanatory approach than most towards Mau Mau, nonetheless described how in his view the movement twisted “relatively harmless” precolonial oaths and made them “more elaborate and bestial [involving] concomitant acts of incredible beastliness and depravity”.<sup>34</sup>

The historically security-oriented character of wildlife officers proved significant during the Emergency, and some involved in shaping colonial wildlife policy felt that their staff had something unique to offer to the war effort. Shortly after the declaration of the Emergency in 1952, Mervyn Cowie, then-Director of the National Parks organisation, called up a group of irregulars from Parks and Game Department staff, combined with professional hunters. These men were, Cowie reasoned, “eminently qualified for hunting down elusive terrorists” because of their knowledge of the terrain and tracking skills. He sent them after the killers of a Thompsons Falls settler. The events that followed were unclear, but Cowie’s breezy account suggests that officials were uncomfortable with the latitude and/or methods the wildlife services personnel had taken: “My team [...] achieved their objective in a surprisingly short time, but not without incurring a painful but quite unjustified reprimand from the authorities concerned”.<sup>35</sup> Grumbling about “principles”, Cowie saw his paramilitary force dispersed across armed forces and police services and was himself despatched to coordinate manpower in the colony.<sup>36</sup> The parks themselves were affected by the war. Part of the Tsavo National Park was given over for the creation of a prison camp meant to house those on the rough end of the Pipeline. The Aberdare Range was bombed heavily, and Cowie suspected that both security services and anti-colonial fighters were involved in poaching.<sup>37</sup> Ian Henderson, one of the military officers charged with leading one of the “pseudo-gang” operations at the heart of the colonial government’s brutal response to the rising, and later accused of torturing prisoners in the Gulf, remarked that “after many months of bombing by the R.A.F. the animals were extremely aggressive”, and believed that the region’s wildlife had been so traumatised by the bombing that thereafter they reacted violently to thunderstorms. At least two Kenyans under his command were killed by an injured buffalo, and Henderson noted grimly that some of his command were suggesting that Mau Mau general Dedan Kimathi had “oathed” the game on the Range.<sup>38</sup>

But the colonial government could not afford to alienate the entire Kikuyu population. Its counterinsurgency efforts were actually dependent on “loyalist” Kikuyu in several respects: in combating the insurgency (through the Home Guard); in helping to staff the “Pipeline”; and in continuing to administer territory in Central Province.<sup>39</sup> This dependency on Kikuyu “loyalists”

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<sup>33</sup> See Robert Ruark, *Something of Value* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955). Will Jackson, “White Man’s Country: Kenya Colony and the Making of a Myth” in *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol 5(2), May 2011: 344-368.

<sup>34</sup> Leakey admitted that the Kikuyu did not have enough land, but recommended cultural adjustments as much as he did land reform. L S B Leakey, *Defeating Mau Mau* (London: Methuen, 1954): 77, 142ff.

<sup>35</sup> Mervyn Cowie, *Fly, Vulture* (London: G. G. Harrap, 1961): 193-4.

<sup>36</sup> Mervyn Cowie, *Fly, Vulture* (London: G. G. Harrap, 1961): 194-5.

<sup>37</sup> Mervyn Cowie, *Fly, Vulture* (London: G. G. Harrap, 1961): 197.

<sup>38</sup> Ian Henderson and Philip Goodhart, *Man Hunt in Kenya* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958): 113, 117, 149, 151.

<sup>39</sup> See Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: the Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005).

meant that colonial officials had to take care when addressing day-to-day grievances. As early as 1939, the Chairman of the East African Professional Hunters' Association noted that "the Association cannot afford to antagonise the [African] farmers of the Colony".<sup>40</sup> This concern, often generally articulated at the tail-end of the interwar era, took on a much greater significance during the years of the Mau Mau war.

Once Britain began to bring massive military force to bear on Mau Mau insurgents, the guerrillas retired to the slopes of Mt Kenya and the Aberdare Range in Central Province. Both of these areas, high, forested, cold and misty, had been designated as National Parks by the time the Mau Mau war broke out. They were areas which at the best of times were hotspots for what is today called human-wildlife conflict, given amorphous park boundaries, occasionally disinterested game control efforts, the stretched budgets of the Game and National Parks agencies, and the ample settlement on the park borders in what is one of Kenya's more fertile regions. The air and ground operations undertaken by the British against Mau Mau fighters in the forests hampered National Park staff operating within the parks, as well as the efforts of the Game Department staff who were charged with protecting *shambas* outside of the park. Staff inveighed against "trigger-happy" security services, and military units dreaded having patrols interrupted by encounters with elephant, buffalo and rhino.<sup>41</sup> Mau Mau forces ran into Game Rangers near Isiolo from time to time before they were withdrawn, and on one occasion bluffed their way through by pretending to be on an anti-poaching sting operation.<sup>42</sup> Mau Mau generals who shot animals during the war hid ivory away in the hopes of accessing it in the aftermath of the conflict, and in 1964, Muthoni wa Kirima and some compatriots badgered President Kenyatta, finally resorting to a hunger strike until they were allowed to speak to him about recovering the ivory. Kenyatta acceded to their request, and Muthoni embarked on a project of recovery (which might, in her rather opaque account of the process, have included further poaching) allegedly involving an unnamed European, a man referred to only as Kimiti, Attorney General Charles Njonjo, and first Lady Mama Ngina, and Minister of Tourism and Wildlife Jackson Shako.<sup>43</sup>

But as brutal as the colonial response to Mau Mau was, the government could not afford to alienate the entire Kikuyu population. European officials came to see a potential (and troubling) connection between inaction in response to complaints about damages done by animals to crops on the one hand, and the continued allegiance of loyalist Kikuyu around the Aberdare on the other. In September and October of 1952, the Director of National parks, the Provincial Commissioner, and the Minister for Natural Resources grappled with the question of compensation to farmers for damage done by elephant herds on the edge of the Aberdare Range. Cowie, the National Parks Director, advised strenuously against compensating one Chief Muhoya, citing standard practise in the National Parks Department and Game Department. The

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<sup>40</sup> KNA, KW 5/49. The East African Professional Hunters Association, 1938-1947. Box 15, Shelf 5477.

<sup>41</sup> KNA KW 5/49. The East African Professional Hunters Association, 1938-1947. Box 15, Shelf 5477. KNA KW 15/16. Administration of Game Laws, Game and Vermin Control, 1951-1956. Box 73, Shelf 5565. Dennis Holman, *Bwana Drum* (London: W H Allen, 1964), 118, 129, 140; Frank Kitson, *Gangs and Counter-Gangs* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960): 87; Ian Henderson (with Philip Goodhart), *Man Hunt in Kenya* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958).

<sup>42</sup> "Field Marshal Musa Mwariama" in David Njagi, *The Last Mau Mau Field Marshals: Kenya's Freedom War 1952-1963 and Beyond* (Limuru: Kolbe Press, 1991): 10-11.

<sup>43</sup> "Field Marshal Muthoni Kirima" in David Njagi, *The Last Mau Mau Field Marshals: Kenya's Freedom War 1952-1963 and Beyond* (Limuru: Kolbe Press, 1991): 119-120. Muthoni and her colleagues would sell the ivory back to government, having been aided by the likes of Njonjo to supply transport to do so.

Provincial Commissioner on the other hand, invoked the spectre of colonial security, writing to the Minister that “in this case perhaps I have not made the circumstances clear enough. Muhoya’s location is one of the most developed and prosperous areas of smallholdings in Kenya. The inhabitants have continued to be remarkably loyal to Government during these present disturbances [...] I must therefore renew my request [for compensation]”. The worst possible outcome, he argued, would be “a series of genuine grievances against the Government in that location”.<sup>44</sup> The relationship between wildlife, loyalism, and colonial security in Emergency Kenya demonstrates the extent to which wildlife policy was as much about administrative and security concerns as it ever was about the actual animals.

But the new (albeit limited) solicitousness with which the government regarded claims against dangerous wildlife in war-time is only the first half of the story. The war saw the intensification of old claims about the “African psyche”, and the settler community grew increasingly anxious about its fate after impending independence, to the point that just months before independence, Jomo Kenyatta entered the lion’s den, addressing 400 settlers in a Nakuru town hall, proclaiming that “there is no society of angels, black, brown or white. We are human beings and as such we are bound to make mistakes. If I have done a mistake to you, it is for you to forgive me. If you have done a mistake to me, it is for me to forgive you [...] Harambee!” Lord Delamere, a settler leader, described Kenyatta’s speech as “a ‘unique and historic event’”, but many worried all the same.<sup>45</sup> With the advent of independence much quickened by a brutal war, military victory against Mau Mau proved purely pyrrhic. But even as it became increasingly obvious that *Uhuru* was just over the horizon, the preservationists, on the defensive since the 1920s, returned to the field with a vigour inspired by a new set of institutions. As described below, they carried the rhetoric wielded against Mau Mau into the politics of wildlife as they were informed by decolonisation.

### **The Last Best Hope: the Internationalisation of Wildlife Policy**

Wildlife preservationists experienced their early ascendancy in the years between 1900 and the First World War when, led by the SPFE, they pressed for strict game ordinances, imperial and international treaties, and the creation of parks and reserves with an aim to preserving animal populations and species.<sup>46</sup> Their influence waned during the 1920s and ‘30s

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<sup>44</sup> KNA, KW 15/16. Administration of Game Laws, Game and Vermin Control, 1951-1956. Box 73, Shelf 5565.

<sup>45</sup> “Black and White—Harambee!” in *Time*, 8/23/1963, 28.

<sup>46</sup> For some of the literature on wildlife conservation/preservation, see Adams (2004); William Beinart and Lotte Hughes, *Environment and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jane Carruthers, *Wildlife and Warfare: the Life of James Stevenson-Hamilton* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001); John MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Reuben Matheka, “Antecedents to the Community Wildlife Conservation Programme in Kenya, 1946-1964” in *Environment and History*, vol 11, no 3 (August 2005: 239-267) and “Decolonisation and Wildlife Conservation in Kenya, 1958-68” in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol 36, no 4 (December 2008, 615-639); Roderick P Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Edward Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006). Much other writing deals with imperial sciences. Peder Anker, *Imperial Ecology: Environmental Order in the British Empire, 1895-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Joseph Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Thaddeus Sunseri, “Reinterpreting a Colonial Rebellion: Forestry and Social Control in German East Africa” in *Environmental History*, 8(3): July 2003: 430-51; Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950*.

when the ‘politics of wildlife’ became oriented towards the *management* of animals, and redefined the “game problem” as an “administrative problem”. Governors and game wardens utilised game and control departments to embark on massive culling projects in Uganda and Tanzania, aimed at resolving the human-wildlife conflict which they saw as inhibiting agricultural, economic, social, and cultural development in Africa. Furthermore they argued that the elimination of game in settled areas would remove one of many “temptations” which kept Africans from modernising. But as we will see, the more universalist preservationists, who always had something of an internationalist bent, were able to capitalise on political conditions in the 1950s to stage a comeback.

They found expression in institutions like UNESCO, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and the World Wildlife Fund—founded respectively in 1945, 1948 and 1961. Personnel in these institutions had a track record of interest in wildlife and embraced the universalist language of the preservationists. The 1950s and ‘60s marked the return of the high-profile preservationist in the form of figures like Bernhard and Michael Grzimek, Anthony Cullen and Sydney Downey, who resuscitated the preservationist literary canon, which could be turned on foes of wildlife everywhere.<sup>47</sup> They were joined by high-profile ecologists like Julian Huxley and Frank Fraser Darling, and by the 1970s, broadly preservationist projects had secured the support of funding bodies like the Nuffield Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the World Bank, as well as the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation.

These new organisations aided the preservationists in two ways. Firstly, by attaching the spectre of the mass extermination of Africa’s fauna to Independence, and by targeting colonial and African governments for apathy where preservation was concerned, they provided preservationists with a *casus belli* for their efforts to internationalise Africa’s wildlife. Secondly, they promoted a universalist approach to wildlife policy (embodied in the Morges Manifesto of 1961), which promoted the notion of wildlife as a global trust—the international having firmly displaced the imperial as the preferred institutional framework for organising preservation. The Morges Manifesto (a declaration of WWF’s purpose, which promoted the notion of wildlife as a global trust) was billed as “An International Declaration”. It envisioned a movement that had no firm geographical centre, but rather a policy setting, one which was clearly in the collectively-imagined West. Its goal was to raise the money. Funds would be used

to carry out mercy missions and to meet conservation emergencies by buying land where wild life treasures are threatened [...] to pay guardians of wild life refuges [...] money for education and propaganda among those who would care and help if only they understood. Money to send out experts to danger spots and to train more local wardens and helpers in Africa and elsewhere. Money to maintain a sort of “war room” at the international headquarters of conservation, showing where the danger spots are [...]<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game: the Story of the Destruction and Attempts at Preservation of the Wild Life of East Africa* (London: Jarrolds, 1960); Bernhard Grzimek, *Rhinos Belong to Everyone*, trans. Oliver Coburn (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965).

<sup>48</sup> Morges Manifesto, 1961.

Theirs was a vision of wildlife preservation that sought to address threats to wild animals from a supra-national standpoint. The wild animals it was protecting were, moreover, a kind of global trust. This language mirrored the language of empire of a half-century earlier.<sup>49</sup>

Mark Mazower has convincingly demonstrated that the internationalism of the post-war era and the imperialism usually thought to have gone into decline during those same years were by no means incompatible or mutually-exclusive phenomena.<sup>50</sup> Just as the League of Nations and the United Nations were imbricated with imperialist assumptions, ideologies, and mechanisms which privileged certain outlooks and interests, global conservation organisations carried baggage that would have looked familiar to their imperial counterparts. They were deeply paternalistic, totalising in their claims, and privileged the survival of animals over the welfare of African citizens, who were still discussed, more often than not, as subjects. Even when their aspirations pointed in one direction, a combination of continuity in personnel and institutional culture (as the example of the College of African Wildlife Management at the end of this chapter will demonstrate) often subverted more democratic or expansive impulses.

The WWF's manifesto declared that "in the name of advancing civilisation [wild animals around the world] are being shot or trapped out of existence on land taken to be exploited, or drowned by new dams, poisoned by toxic chemicals, killed by poachers for game, or butchered in the course of political upheavals".<sup>51</sup> Thus the attributes of "civilisation" to which many post-independence African governments aspired, were read by many preservationists as unacceptable because of their effects on African wildlife—wildlife, of course, which in the view of preservationists didn't actually belong to African nations. Nationalist and liberation struggles which led to Independence were assumed to possess a disorderly, dangerous character, making them liable to spiral out of control. There was a strong anti-modernist bent to the preservationist canon and to preservationist thought more generally, which co-opted critiques of population growth and unchecked economic expansion.<sup>52</sup> Preservationists found material evidence for their unease in the Congo, where a rushed Independence, following on decades of political and social underdevelopment by the Belgians, and sabotage by Belgium and the United States, led to conditions of great uncertainty. Dr Kai Curry-Lindahl went on a mission into the Congo, and excoriated the behaviour of UN troops, Katangan gendarmes, the Congo's military, and opportunists who shot for meat. The Albert National Park in eastern Congo was in better shape, but that didn't stop preservationists from worrying.<sup>53</sup>

The coming of *Uhuru* was linked to deep-seated anxieties about the ability and willingness of Africans to look after what had become "an issue of vital scientific and

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<sup>49</sup> See, for example: "African game, the problems of preservation" in *The Times*, 18 October 1933, p 9, Issue 46578, col c; "Protecting Nature from Progress" in *The Times*, 8 February 1936, p 7, Issue 47293, col c. No less a figure than Lord Curzon had once proclaimed, "We are the owners of the greatest Empire in the universe," and therefore "owe the preservation of these interesting and valuable [...] types of animal life as a duty to nature and to the world [we are] trustees for posterity of the natural contents of the Empire" ("The Year" in *SPWFE Journal*, 1907: 21).

<sup>50</sup> Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: the End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> Morges Manifesto, 1961.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, E Barton Worthington, *The Ecological Century: A Personal Appraisal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); Fairfield Osborn, *Our Plundered Planet* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948); William Vogt, *Road to Survival* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1949).

<sup>53</sup> Katanga was a mineral-rich region of the Congo which attempted to secede from the country, prompting war, a UN intervention, and the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. "News from the Congo" in *SPFE Journal*.

inspirational consequence to the whole of mankind”<sup>54</sup>, rather than a national trust. “It always astonishes us”, one set of authors wrote in a book they assured their readers “is not a book about politics”, “how people [...] pontificate about East Africa without knowing anything at all about how the vast mass of Africans live and think”. They went on:

In east Africa now there have been new political awakenings. But it is salutary to confront those who prate European ‘privilege’ with frank definition of what has long been the African ‘privilege’. And whereas the European variety might bring—as is so often claimed—‘frustration’, the African ‘privilege’ is infinitely more dangerous, calculated to ruin the land on which all life depends. In the case of the Tanganyika Masai—our present context—this ‘privilege’ has been permitted, through vacillation and weakness, to become a menace to interests far greater than temporary political peace.<sup>55</sup>

These ardent preservationists restated the old claim of colonial administrators: that they knew Africans and their ways better than Africans did themselves. Their argument became, in effect, one about the need to keep African countries permanently underdeveloped, with their economies reliant on revenues from National Parks (revenues contingent on a continuous influx of European and American tourists, and influx itself dependent on “approval” of European and North American publics, governments and institutions of African wildlife policies), and little consideration given to the questions of employment or the material well-being of the countries’ citizens.<sup>56</sup>

The Fauna Preservation Society, successor organisation to the SPFE, also expressed anxiety over the direction of wildlife policy in Africa as independence neared. A 1960 FPS minute to council members in 1960 noted, “Our political friend [in Nyasaland]—Dr Hastings Banda—who appears to have the Colonial Secretary under his thumb and, in consequence the Nyasaland government is, in the course of his many virulent speeches [...] advocating the abuse of wild life conservation laws of all kinds”. A minute from later that year expressed the Society’s anxiety over “the danger that when government passed into African hands, many of the existing measures for wild life preservation and conservation would not be maintained”.<sup>57</sup> These fears, as noted in the section on the anti-wildlife lobbies above, were not without foundation. But the important point is that whether American polemicists with mud on their boots in East Africa or imperial advocates working from London, the men and women behind the resurgence of the global preservationist movement painted an apocalyptic picture of the state of African nature post-Independence. “We are certainly not politicians, racialist or otherwise”, one set of authors averred, insisting that “all we must be concerned with is the likely influence of Kenya’s pending ‘Freedom’ or ‘Democracy’ or ‘Independence’ (whichever is the favoured word) on what remains of Kenya’s game”. But the potential for chaos, they insisted, was real.<sup>58</sup> And the

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<sup>54</sup> Cullen and Downey, *Saving the Game: the Story of the Destruction and Attempts at Preservation of the Wild Life of East Africa* (London: Jarrolds, 1960): 107.

<sup>55</sup> Cullen and Downey, 108.

<sup>56</sup> Cullen and Downey, 149.

<sup>57</sup> CO 847/75—1960-1962, Colonial Game Policy in Africa.

<sup>58</sup> Downey and Cullen, 212, 213ff. Downey and Cullen predicted either a period of “absolute chaos”, “a mad rush for political loot”, arguing that only the fear of being labelled “barbarians” might prompt African leaders to check such “butchery”. But they also hoped that nationalists might appreciate “the economic value of game”.



language invoked a heavily racialised idea of Africa and Africans: “tribalism”, “butchery”, “barbarians”, “African supremacy”.

Even those preservationists who wrote relatively sympathetic accounts of post-Independence wildlife policy in the decades after *Uhuru* acknowledged the fears that had pervaded preservationist circles in the run-up to independence, noting that “African adults with even only a basic education have long since got over their attitude of regarding game parks and controlled areas as mere relics of colonialism [...] nomadic tribespeople [who only a couple of decades earlier had been a threat to the integrity of colonial borders] are being taught by their more enlightened fellow Africans to settle down increasingly in agricultural communities and to give up the deadly over-grazing of their large herds of cattle on the game plains”.<sup>59</sup> There was even continuity in terms of the individuals and families lobbying on behalf of wildlife. Cara Buxton, niece of the SPFE’s founder (E N Buxton), wrote repeatedly to the Kenyan Game Warden during the 1920s and ‘30s to advocate for a preservationist line of policy. Julian Huxley (related by marriage to Elspeth Huxley, whose literary efforts were an integral part of the preservationist canon) worked at the United Nation’s IUCN, and was frequently drawn into debates on behalf of preservationists.

The language deployed by these international organisations was by turns deeply emotional and highly technical, and different organisations saw their mission in a slightly different light. In early ICUN proceedings, administrators contended that the conservation project was, at the end of the day, “more of a cultural than of a technical order”.<sup>60</sup> The IUCN’s ancestral organisation, the International Office for the Protection of Nature, was founded in 1928. The IUPN was reconfigured in 1948, and its name was changed shortly thereafter.<sup>61</sup> Like UNESCO, it focussed on education, and on emotive species-based campaigns. WWF often took a more technical focus, and many of its funding endeavours were geared towards giving local wildlife authorities the tools to do their jobs. For example, WWF grants no. 59 and 261 provided for light aircraft to the Kenya National Parks and Game Department. Other grants included funds for anti-poaching campaigns, in which the WWF set few conditions as to the use of funds, perhaps because of the close, ground-level connections between officials in wildlife departments and local representatives of the WWF.<sup>62</sup>

It is telling that the character of organisations like WWF and IUCN, their by-laws, their ambitions, and their structure were all developed at a time when the global map looked markedly similar to the colonial era. For example, at the second session of the IUCN General Assembly in 1950, the countries represented were Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Luxemburg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Venezuela. Only three of these represented former European colonies of the early twentieth century, and the one that was African was in the process of implementing one of the most far-reaching and intrusive forms of colonialism seen on the continent. There were eleven organisations represented at the Assembly, all of them either connected to the new United

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<sup>59</sup> Eric Robbins, *The Ebony Ark: Black Africa’s battle to Save its Wildlife*, xix, xvii.

<sup>60</sup> IUPN, *Proceedings and Reports of the Second Session of the General Assembly, 1950*. Brussels: IUPN, 1951: 17.

<sup>61</sup> Alexander B. Adams, ed. *First World Conference on National Parks* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1963): 406-7.

<sup>62</sup> Fritz Vollmar and Alan McGregor, *The Ark Under Way* (S.I., 1968): 90, 95, 109.

Nations organisation or else, like the International Committee for Bird Preservation, representing 19<sup>th</sup> century conservation organisations.<sup>63</sup>

Preservationists recognised that funding clout and international public opinion were important tools in enshrining preservationist policy in Africa after independence. But they were also aware of the limits of such an approach, and sought to inculcate the “right” sort of thinking in the minds of African subjects who were rapidly being reconfigured as citizens. Writing about the emergence of “dynamic conservation” in *Oryx* (the magazine of the Fauna Preservation Society) in 1961, E B Worthington acknowledged that “most of this [new ecological thinking and study] is at present in the heads of white men”. But he sounded an optimistic note: “here and there are indigenous Africans who are contributing to these ideas, and are prepared to spread the news to their colleagues”. One vehicle for “increasing their numbers” was the Africa Special Project.<sup>64</sup> Devised by the IUCN, the Special Project comprised a series of studies in multiple phases, designed to “help [African] Governments to help themselves to develop their wild life resources”.<sup>65</sup> The Project’s ambassador, G G Watterson (employed by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization), made a tour of East and Central African colonies in 1961 to evaluate how best to pursue the Project’s mission. In Kenya, he encouraged Masai efforts at African District Council conservation schemes, and noted the need to pre-empt Africanisation by selecting “suitable men” for promotion after independence.<sup>66</sup> Watterson also identified a problem which would bedevil preservationists and policymakers in the coming decades: how best to organise wildlife departments after independence. The dispersed nature of decision-making in Kenya made it difficult for the Special Project to know where to direct its efforts, and Watterson suggested that “consideration should therefore be given to closer integration of all interests in wild life”.<sup>67</sup> Policymaking was similarly divided in Tanganyika, Uganda, and Northern Rhodesia. In the latter colony, Watterson bemoaned bureaucratic organisation based on “administrative convenience rather than by principles of conservation”.<sup>68</sup> His analysis of Uganda took the nascent critique to its logical conclusion, inasmuch as Watterson identified colonial institutions and practises as part of the problem faced by preservationists, instead of seeing African cultural predispositions as the difficulty. He was troubled by the culling programs—“game extermination”, he called it—that continued to operate in the aim of controlling the fly and opening up areas for agricultural use. Watterson didn’t entirely abandon the more typical critique, for he noted that such officially-sanctioned “extermination” could only encourage Africans’ bad habits, and would work at cross-purposes with propaganda efforts.<sup>69</sup>

Where the Special Project differed from the efforts of the WWF, the FPS, and similar organisations, was in its more comprehensive approach. It eschewed anti-development language, didn’t shy away from embracing the “harvest” of wildlife, and readily recognised that African states would harbour legitimate economic ambitions, ambitions which the ASP believed could be married to grand conservation schemes. What is difficult to evaluate is the extent to which the embrace of development and large-scale conservation (encompassing water, soil, agriculture, and

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<sup>63</sup> IUPN, Proceedings and Reports of the Second Session of the General Assembly, 1950. Brussels: IUPN, 1951.

<sup>64</sup> E B Worthington, “Dynamic Conservation in Africa”, *Oryx*, vol 5, issue 6, 345.

<sup>65</sup> “The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources: African Special Project, Stage I”, *Oryx* (1961): 143.

<sup>66</sup> “The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources: African Special Project, Stage I”, *Oryx* (1961): 156.

<sup>67</sup> IUCN Special Project Stage I, *Oryx* (1961): 156.

<sup>68</sup> IUCN Special Project stage I, *Oryx* (1961): 162.

<sup>69</sup> IUCN Special Project stage I, *Oryx* (1961): 164.

forestry, nutrition) reflected a genuine faith in conservation broadly defined, or a strategy for promoting preservationist goals. The report from the 1961 Arusha Conference (designed to hammer out conservation goals for the region) was, after all, able to claim that “the African is a realist. The use of game as a source of food is not only more easily understood than the idea of conserving wild animals for aesthetic, scientific or sentimental reasons—it also fulfils in many instances a strong instinct and a way of life and, if properly controlled, provides the most effective instrument of management”.<sup>70</sup> Much of the focus was on youth, with UNESCO, an organisation that devoted significant effort to re-education about the value of wildlife, noting that children were more susceptible than adults who had “bad habits firmly entrenched by the passage of time”.<sup>71</sup> At the Arusha Conference of 1961, a large number of representatives discussed the need for pro-wildlife propaganda: Bernhard Grzimek of the Frankfurt Zoological Society on tourism; Julian Huxley of UNESCO on the cultural and economic value of wildlife; H S Mahinda of Tanganyika’s Game Department on “propaganda amongst indigenous people”; J S Owen of Tanganyika National Parks on public opinion; A Gille of UNESCO on “teaching people about nature and natural resources”; John A Pile of the Southern Rhodesia Natural Resources Board on fostering appreciation of conservation; Jacques Verschuren of the Congo National Parks on the same; and David Wasawo of Makerere University College on the global interest in African wildlife.<sup>72</sup>

At the first World Conference on National Parks, the head of Tanganyika’s National Parks, John Owen, described the publicity operations undertaken with the support of the Tanganyikan government. These involved the production of films and other promotional information in Swahili, the construction of affordable park accommodation, and the effort to “build up an image in the public mind of the parks as a source of genuine national pride”.<sup>73</sup> Colonial-era wardens found some allies in the generation of mid-ranking African park employees and university researchers. Perez Olindo and David Wasawo in Kenya, H S Mahinda in Tanganyika, and Francis Katete in Uganda, all products and producers of the institutional and public relations drive to globalise Africa’s wildlife, played a central role in the promotion of the national parks ideals. Wasawo, at the World Conference, reflected on Africa’s “crisis of the soul” which he believed was brought on by decolonisation, urbanisation, and “a development based initially on tribal culture, but seasoned by what is coming in from outside”. One of the problems facing new African nations, Wasawo predicted, would be the “healthy development of a national culture”, part of which, in his view, must be the “opportunities to see for oneself, reflect on and study the beauties of nature”.<sup>74</sup> Wasawo was by no means typical of Ugandans

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<sup>70</sup> IUCN. “Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States. Report of a Symposium organized by CCTA and IUCN and held under the auspices of FAO and UNESCO at Arusha, Tanganyika, September 1961”. Morges: IUCN, 1963: 20.

<sup>71</sup> “Teaching people about nature and natural resources”, A Gille, UNESCO, in IUCN. “Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States. Report of a Symposium organized by CCTA and IUCN and held under the auspices of FAO and UNESCO at Arusha, Tanganyika, September 1961”. Morges: IUCN, 1963: 172. UNESCO ambassador Sir Julian Huxley presented a paper at Arusha on “Wild Fauna and Flora of Africa as a cultural and economic asset, and the world interest therein”.

<sup>72</sup> “Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States: Report of a Symposium Organized by CCTA and IUCN and held under the auspices of FAO and UNESCO at Arusha, Tanganyika, September 1961” (Morges: IUCN, 1963).

<sup>73</sup> Owen, Alexander B. Adams, ed. *First World Conference on National Parks* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1963): 55.

<sup>74</sup> Wasawo, Alexander B. Adams, ed. *First World Conference on National Parks* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1963): 141-2.

who were expected to feel the urge to “breathe the fresh air” of the parks. He had travelled widely in Europe, conducted research in Hawai’i in his capacity as a Makerere scientist, and had imbibed of mountaineering culture (perhaps no coincidence since the likes of Rennie Bere, sometime head of the Uganda National Parks, was himself a devoted mountaineer and did his best to interest his African friends and young Ugandans in the hobby). He was, from the perspective of the global conservation community, just the right kind of African: cosmopolitan, spiritual in his relation to nature, and ostensibly apolitical.

Like the more stringent preservationists, and their allies in the WWF and FPS, the IUCN sought to imagine the kind of African society and culture necessary for wildlife to flourish. They drew on different strands of thought which existed at large amongst theorists and scientific as well as social commentators. There were those who drew on increasingly apocalyptic visions of the world’s future. These were often concerned with overpopulation and its effects on the environment, or even the planet.<sup>75</sup> Fairfield Osborn, a well respected environmentalist, was representative of this line of reasoning when he wrote a book which, in his own words, sought “to show what man has done in recent years to the face of the earth and the accumulated velocity with which he is destroying his own life sources”.<sup>76</sup> The second broad category comprised those who, while they believed that population expansion—associated with Africa and Asia—posed a threat to the environment in broad terms, that was easily overcome by the application of modern technology and central planning, and that what was really needed was the “modification of traditional practice in the light of new demands”.<sup>77</sup> The crisis theorists like Osborn believed that science and technology could well prove useless if “natural processes” (code, it would seem, for addressing the population issue) were not simultaneously tackled.<sup>78</sup> The years after African countries gained their independence saw not only a florescence of game management ecology, but also the emergence of variants of the “deep” ecologies and green movements which would come to greater prominence in later years. These fields—philosophies more than traditional sciences—saw economic and population growth as deeply problematic, but in these early years of their development, were nonetheless compelled by the fetishisation of planning and large-scale development embodied in the work of the United Nations, and later the World Bank and IMF (the participation of which in the politics of wildlife will be explored elsewhere).<sup>79</sup>

If one way of evaluating the success of the global and international institutions in shaping wildlife policy in the post-Second World War era is to follow the trail of their funding, another is to evaluate the change in rhetoric that accompanied discussions of wildlife issues in legislative bodies as they were transformed from colonial bodies into post-independence chambers. As discussed earlier, both those Europeans charged with representing “African interests” in colonial legislative councils, and the earliest African members—many of them prominent nationalists who would lead their countries in the years after independence—were hostile towards wildlife departments when those departments were preservationist, and critical of their limited remit when those departments were oriented towards control. They attacked the colonial government for refusing to countenance compensation for crops destroyed, animals eaten, or people killed by

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<sup>75</sup> Akira Iriye, *Global Community: the Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>76</sup> Fairfield Osborn, *Our Plundered Planet*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948: 10.

<sup>77</sup> IUCN. “Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States. Report of a Symposium organized by CCTA and IUCN and held under the auspices of FAO and UNESCO at Arusha, Tanganyika, September 1961”. Morges: IUCN, 1963: 45.

<sup>78</sup> Osborn, 69.

<sup>79</sup> For example, William Vogt, *Road to Survival*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1949.

wildlife. They criticised preservationist policies which seemed to put the welfare and interests of animals before those of people. And they struck a populist tone when it came to discussing the rights of hunters.

In the post-independence parliaments of the 1960s and '70s, members, particularly backbenchers, continued to criticise governments in terms little different than those invoked during the 1950s and early '60s, both with regard to crop destruction and with reference to abuses meted out by game scouts.<sup>80</sup> The very fact that they felt compelled to do so suggested that to their minds, the onset of *uhuru* had changed very little in terms of the relationship between governments, wildlife legislation, and their constituents. By 1962, the year before independence, many of the same Kenyan politicians who had spent the previous several years raising the issue of crop depredation in the Legislative Council now made supportive noises about the importance of game (for example, Tom Mboya and Jeremiah Nyagah, both ministers after independence). Tom Mboya, regarded as a contender to follow Kenyatta to the presidency (and perhaps murdered for that precise reason) declared African politicians' commitment to wildlife, and laid out the case for making tourism central to Kenya's development prospects.<sup>81</sup> The parliamentary secretary for tourism and wildlife mocked the tourist attractions of Egypt ("the pyramids and a few dead kings lying in the Cairo Museum") and Moscow ("little to offer on the part of tourism apart from communism, which I do not think has anything to do with tourism at the moment") when compared with Kenya's bounty.<sup>82</sup> European members remarked on this sea change with a little sarcasm, a member for West Kenya recalling the "endless battles that those of us who love game have had for so many years".<sup>83</sup>

On the eve of independence, the African-led government had taken the same line as its colonial predecessor on the question of compensation, and they sought to hold this line in the coming decades.<sup>84</sup> One year after independence, parliamentarians representing rural districts pleaded with the government to allow people to shoot destructive wildlife outside of the National Parks, and the Minister's response—"I am shocked because once you allow people to kill the animals that way, you will not stop it anywhere. It is against the policy altogether. Animals are a wonderful heritage. That cannot be allowed"—differed very little from the rebukes offered by his colonial predecessors.<sup>85</sup> Like their colonial predecessors, Minister Sagini cited the "scattered shambas" which "makes control difficult". His critics responded that justice was justice, irrespective of people's land tenure system. An 11 June 1964 debate on the subject became so intense that the Speaker had to call for order, rebuking members for "jumping around". MPs responded by calling the minister pro-animal and anti-people. In a later debate, they pressed Mboya, by then Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, on why no compensation should be paid to "children who have been orphaned, and as a result of their parents' death had to leave school".<sup>86</sup>

Throughout the '60s, the central government maintained that it had no responsibility to provide funds for those killed, made homeless, or whose crops had been ruined. The protection of animals, respect for the law, and the mounting revenues from tourism took precedence over the rights of smallholders. And punishments grew increasingly draconian, as MPs who took the

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<sup>80</sup> For example, National Assembly (Kenya), 1 April 1968.

<sup>81</sup> LEGCO (Kenya), 20 July 1962.

<sup>82</sup> LEGCO (Kenya), 20 July 1962.

<sup>83</sup> LEGCO (Kenya), 20 July 1962.

<sup>84</sup> LEGCO (Kenya), 11 December 1962.

<sup>85</sup> National Assembly (Kenya), 18 March 1964.

<sup>86</sup> National Assembly (Kenya), 30 September 1964.

preservationist side lobbied the government to introduce capital punishment for poachers. The Minister replied that no such provision existed, but that there were ways that poachers could be made to pay in any case, remarking that “poachers must be regarded as robbers, and whenever they are found in game reserves or national parks, if they refuse to stop when they are challenged, they must be shot”.<sup>87</sup> When backbenchers alluded to the fact that their constituents might justifiably feel compelled to take the law into their own hands if government refused to act, ministers—who had themselves been making the same point just a few years ago—interrupted their speeches with cries of “*Shifta!*”, equating them with Somali rebels and cattle rustlers on the lawless northern border who were seen as enemies of the state and ruthlessly hunted down by Kenya’s military and police.<sup>88</sup>

In the early 1960s, some county councils (Samburu and Kajiado, for example) had established a fund for compensation.<sup>89</sup> By the mid-1970s, the Game Department was budgeting small sums of money for compensation, and the government mooted local Compensation Committees, consisting of the District Commissioner, the Clerk of the City council, the Game Warden, and representatives from the Ministry of Health.<sup>90</sup> A component of the massive World Bank-funded Kenya National Parks and Tourism project also included funds for a compensation program.<sup>91</sup> It is perhaps telling that when compensation finally was inscribed in law, it took place under the auspices of an organisation that was funding the programme in the context of a larger conservation endeavour. Increasingly, policy changes required the imprimatur—and not coincidentally the financial backing—of the large global and international institutions. It is impossible to draw a direct connection between the lobbying by the emerging international preservationist lobby and the remarkable change of heart exhibited by many post-independence leaders, it seems very probable that the combination of the threat of a global campaign and the allure of considerable financial returns—two factors emphasised by preservationists—committed post-independence governments to policies which were as preservationist as those of their predecessor colonial governments.

One focus of international and global institutions was on impressing upon a global public the potential threat that decolonisation posed to Africa’s wildlife. A second was on the “hearts and minds” of Africans. Yet another paid attention to the legislators who would make decisions about wildlife policy. And finally, there was concern for the need to foster expertise in wildlife management. Some colonies and nations despatched personnel to training facilities in the United States, Canada, China and elsewhere, with the support of wildlife or conservation NGOs. Nonetheless, IUCN administrators believed that the “general feeling [was] that initial training at least should be provided in the environment in which the student will later be required to work”, and that what they referred to as “Tropical Africa” needed to develop its own training infrastructure.<sup>92</sup> The foremost iteration of such localised training infrastructure was the College of African Wildlife Management.

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<sup>87</sup> National Assembly (Kenya), 24 October 1973.

<sup>88</sup> National Assembly (Kenya), Budget Debate, 17 June 1965.

<sup>89</sup> National Assembly (Kenya), 30 September 1964.

<sup>90</sup> Annual Reports for 1975 and 1976. KNA KW 1/6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977. 5 May 1975 Memo on Compensation for Injury or death by Wildlife.

<sup>91</sup> KNA KW 21/14. World Bank. May 1974 to March 1975. Kenya National Parks and Tourism Project, Project Identification Report.

<sup>92</sup> IUCN. “Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States. Report of a Symposium organized by CCTA and IUCN and held under the auspices of FAO and UNESCO at Arusha, Tanganyika, September 1961”. Morges: IUCN, 1963: 35.

### **On the Slopes of Kilimanjaro: The College of African Wildlife Management, Mweka**

The resurgence of the preservationist movement with a new internationalist bent to accompany an old racial narrative was one reaction to the onset of *Uhuru*. Another, the creation of the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka, on the slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanganyika, reflected a different history of colonial wildlife to that which played out in Kenya and in the parks of northern Tanzania.<sup>93</sup> The College's founder was Bruce Kinloch, first deputy to Ugandan Warden Charles Pitman and later his successor. Kinloch, like Pitman, was a proponent of wildlife conservation rather than preservation. No doe-eyed sentimentalist, the Ugandan department's wardens were known for ruthlessly culling animals whenever necessary—whether that necessity stemmed from an administrative standpoint (to protect agriculture) or a biological imperative (to restore perceived population imbalances).

In 1960, Kinloch had moved to head Tanganyika's Game Department, bringing with him the philosophy of management and control. In 1962, his supervising minister, Tewa Saidi Tewa, passed on a letter from the Prime Minister, Rashidi Mfaume Kawawa, calling for the accelerated Africanisation of the Game Department. Seeing political patronage behind the move, Kinloch envisaged “the horrors of the Congo as a sobering example of what can happen when discipline goes, training is forgotten, and armed men go on an extended rampage”. In protesting to the minister, he noted “that there were over six hundred, tough, well-armed game scouts in the Tanganyika Game Department; a force which could terrorise the countryside if they got out of control”.<sup>94</sup> The language of internal security was one which newly-independent governments spoke as fluently as their colonial-era predecessors, given anxieties about national breakup and well-founded fears of neo-colonial interventions in the Cold War context<sup>95</sup>. Realising that European wardens would not be welcome for very many years after Independence, Kinloch embarked on a project of creating an institution, complete with specially-designed coursework of both an academic and practical variety, to educate and train the first generation of African wardens. To this point, Africans had served in Uganda as rangers, undertaking control duties themselves, only occasionally actively supervised by European wardens. The situation was similar in Tanganyika and Zambia. In Kenya, the leash on African participation was tighter. All of that would have to change in the coming years. Kinloch proceeded to develop a training program, identified a site at an old school at Mweka, and set about gathering the necessary funding, most of which had to come from outside of the Game Department's budget. The global supporters of the College, as it emerged, were varied, and included Bernhard Grzimek's Frankfurt Zoological Society, Russell Train (later director of the U.S. Environmental Protection agency and head of WWF-USA) and his African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, the UNDP and USAID.

Train was a U.S. judge who had been inspired by two safaris to East Africa. Upon his return to Washington, D.C., he resolved to contribute something to the region's wildlife scene. Citing unsustainable population growth, a desire to foster a concern for nature, and his own love of wildlife, Train took steps in 1961 to develop and organisation devoted to “the most important

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<sup>93</sup> There had long been concern about the failure of Africans to value wildlife on the same terms as Europeans (Europeans perhaps forgetting that their forebears in the continent during the nineteenth century had a very different view of animals than they did). As early as 1952, the Kenya National Parks were promoting essay competitions amongst African and Asian students on the subject of “Why do we preserve wild life in this colony?” KNA KW 5/46. Game Department, 1951. Box 15, Shelf 5477.

<sup>94</sup> Bruce Kinloch, *The Shamba Raiders*: 331.

<sup>95</sup> For a good overview of these perils, see Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

wildlife conservation task in Africa, [to] help Africans equip themselves with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to manage their own wildlife resources”.<sup>96</sup> The African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, run out of Train’s own D.C. office in its early years, provided funds for the education of promising Africans (Perez Olindo, future director of the Kenya National Parks, was an early “find”), but was also instrumental in funding CAWM. Train was a consummate networker, at home in Washington D.C.’s back rooms, and his work brought together socialites, Paul Mellon and his Old Dominion Foundation (now the Andrew W Mellon Foundation), the Rockefellers, the African American Institute, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, A Starker Leopold (UC Berkeley Professor and son of renowned wildlife scientist Aldo Leopold).<sup>97</sup>

Instruction at the College drew on the ethos of colonial game wardens, supplementing classroom learning with significant “boots on the ground” time. Classroom subjects included law, administration, wildlife management, vertebrate zoology, natural history, firearms and ballistics, office work, national parks administration, vehicle mechanics, wildlife biology, astronomy, survey and mapping techniques, biology, climatology, forestry, road construction, range management, animal ecology, geology and botany. Field subjects ranged equally widely, and included hunting and control of dangerous animals, orientation safaris, capture and handling of animals, collection, taxidermy, safari organisation, mountain work, game counts, vegetation analysis, marine ecology, marine invertebrates, algae and angiosperms, recognition of birds, post-mortem procedures of birds, parasite collection, field dressing and trophy preparation, and road surveying.<sup>98</sup> This vast curriculum was clearly designed at transforming the future wardens of Africa into the jacks-of-all-trades that their European counterparts had aspired to be—albeit with far more rigorous scientific training. This aspiration demonstrates that even if wildlife policy was informed by ecological sciences during the 1950s and ‘60s, the administrative division of responsibility had not yet been learnt. In fact, as outlined by Hugh Lamprey, CAWM’s early principal, the college emphasised “protection and control”, the historic mainstays of Game, Control, and Parks departments over the last half century or more.<sup>99</sup>

The College also sponsored a range of social programs and outings. Sports included soccer, basketball, volleyball, and students debated the motion “that a one party system was better than a multi-party system” (Nyerere undoubtedly approved).<sup>100</sup> Thanks to the largesse of the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation and the U.S. Department of the Interior, some students were able to visit the United States. An un-named student met with National Parks and Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife personnel on a 1965 visit, participated in tracking a grizzly bear, visited the Grand Canyon training site, and “attended a conference at UC Berkeley on the support of wildlife management teaching at a university in East Africa”.<sup>101</sup> He also delivered lectures and sought to drum up support for conservation schemes.<sup>102</sup> Joseph Mburugu,

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<sup>96</sup> Russell E Train, *Politics, Pollution, and Pandas: an Environmental Memoir* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003), 41.

<sup>97</sup> Russell E Train, *Politics, Pollution, and Pandas: an Environmental Memoir* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003), 40-49.

<sup>98</sup> KNA KW 4/8. Mweka Training College for African Wildlife Management, 1969-1972. Box 9, Shelf 5475.

<sup>99</sup> H F Lamprey, “College of African Wildlife Management: A Syllabus” in *African Journal of Ecology*, 1964, vol ii, issue i: 76

<sup>100</sup> KNA KW 4/4. Administration of Game Laws, Courses of Instruction in Wildlife Management, Mweka Training School. 1967 to 1969. Box 8, Shelf 5475.

<sup>101</sup> KNA KW 4/5. Administration of Game Laws, Courses of Instruction in Wildlife Management, Mweka Training School, 1963-1968. Box 8, Shelf 5475.

<sup>102</sup> KNA KW 4/5. Administration of Game Laws, Courses of Instruction in Wildlife Management, Mweka Training School, 1963-1968. Box 8, Shelf 5475.



another visitor to the U.S., suggested that parks in Africa adopt the visitor-friendly approach of North American parks by opening visitor centres and museums, hosting night-time programs, and developing master plans. He also described “a game commission set up for dealing with damage claims by wildlife” organised in Colorado, and suggested that it was contradictory for the Kenyan government to claim to support the human interest in wildlife while refusing to take responsibility for damage caused by those animals.<sup>103</sup> One wonders (but can do little more than wonder) whether Mburugu’s views were shaped by having experienced the sharp end of wildlife policy. Department of the Interior personnel teaching at Mweka were joined by German Volunteer Service instructors, illustrating the further globalisation of wildlife policy in Africa.

While on the one hand CAWM was dedicated to the Africanisation of game and national parks departments across Africa (by 1988 it had taken in students from nineteen African nations), there were times when it appeared to be reconstructing the very colonial relationship that it was meant to replace.<sup>104</sup> Many members of its staff were wardens or directors who, feeling the pinch of Africanisation in their home departments, struck out for Mweka the better to maintain a role in the wildlife sphere in Africa. There were even a few old-time big game hunters who were hired on to teach at the College.<sup>105</sup> And their habits, like those of their compatriots in Game and National Parks Departments, died hard. In 1963, two years after they had begun the process of Africanisation by sending students to CAWM, Kenya’s Parks Department continued to use old criteria for seeking candidates. In reviewing the candidacy of Hassan Said, Cowie, the parks Director, wrote that although Said “has not had a great deal of experience in dealing with tourists [...] he is a very sensible man and I think has great loyalty for European officers and Europeans in general without, as far as I know, any strong political views”. Elisha Kavulavu was a “stable and reliable chap”, although Cowie admitted to knowing nothing of his politics.<sup>106</sup>

By its founders’ definitions, CAWM was a success. Rennie Bere, sometime Director of the Uganda National Parks, wrote in the 1970s that “in 1964 Francis Katete, the first Ugandan director and first of us to be properly qualified for his job [thanks to his training at CAWM], took over [the parks service]”.<sup>107</sup> S K Eltringham (founder of the Nuffield Unit for Tropical Animal Ecology in Entebbe) believed that the training offered at Mweka was superior to that available at the University of Dar es Salaam.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps most important for the basic question of survival, CAWM had the support as well as the signature of *Baba Wa Taifa*, *Mwalimu* Julius Nyerere, the revered Tanganyikan President. Even before Nyerere signed the “Act to Establish the College of African Wildlife Management” in March of 1964, preservationists, anxious to sound Nyerere out on the wildlife question, paid a call on the leader of Tanganyika’s ruling party. The reply that came back reflected the economic reality of the post-independence era. “Personally”, Nyerere said, “I don’t care much about wild animals [...] I can’t imagine myself spending my leave looking at crocodiles. But I know Europeans and Americans like doing so, I know they want to see elephants and giraffes. Tanganyika still has most of the wild animals in all Africa. I will ensure that tourists can see them. In my judgment, after sisal and diamonds, Tanganyika’s wild

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<sup>103</sup> KNA KW 4/4. Administration of the Game Laws.

<sup>104</sup> Bruce Kinloch, *The Shamba Raiders*: 391.

<sup>105</sup> UL Cambridge. RCS Library, *The Story of Uganda National Parks*, RCMS 170: 7/20, 8/9.

<sup>106</sup> KNA KW 4/4. Administration of Game Laws.

<sup>107</sup> UL Cambridge. RCS Library, *The Story of Uganda National Parks*, RCMS 170: 8/9.

<sup>108</sup> S K Eltringham, “Recommendations for a Comprehensive Wildlife Research Program, Tanzania”. UNEP/IUCN, 1980: v, 48.

animals will become the third most important source of income our country has".<sup>109</sup> Nyerere's *Arusha Manifesto* (in which he stifled his cynicism) became an oft-cited statement of good faith on the part of African leaders:

In accepting the trusteeship of our wildlife we solemnly declare that we will do everything in our power to make sure that our children's grand-children will be able to enjoy this rich and precious inheritance. The conservation of wildlife and wild places calls for specialist knowledge, trained manpower, and money, and we look to other nations to co-operate with us in this important task the success or failure of which not only affects the continent of Africa but the rest of the world as well.<sup>110</sup>

Nyerere too, amongst the new generation's most trenchant critics of the colonial order, was forced by economic expediency to embrace the language of universalism.



**Image 9. Hastings Banda (Malawi) and Julius Nyerere, (Tanzania), two post-independence leaders of African nations whose comments about wildlife by turns frightened and heartened preservationists. PRO CO 1069/165/9. Undated.**

<sup>109</sup> Bernhard Grzimek, *Rhinos Belong to Everyone* (trans. Oliver Coburn), (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965): 173-5.

<sup>110</sup> J K Nyerere, "The Arusha Manifesto", 1961.

He was not alone. Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta set himself up as a patron of his country's wildlife, and even offered an exceptionally large-tusked elephant—Ahmed—a presidential guard.<sup>111</sup> Striking a slightly different tone, and openly locating historical hostility to wildlife in the context of first the nationalist struggle and then post-independence state-consolidation and development, Zambia's Prime Minister Kenneth Kaunda provided an even more elegant statement of African leaders' dilemmas. In a memo circulated to government officials just one month before independence, Kaunda wrote:

In the past, many people killed game unlawfully and interfered with the work of the Game Department. They did this as a way of helping in the struggle for independence. Now we have our own government and it is we who employ the game guards and game scouts and game rangers. Now it is the duty of everyone to assist our Game Department in catching poachers and bringing them before the courts for punishment, and I want it clearly understood that the officers and men of my Game Department have my full support in their difficult and important task of looking after the national herds.<sup>112</sup>

The growth of the same links which harnessed economic development in Africa to the whims of the West continued to present any significant re-thinking of wildlife policy in the post-independence era.<sup>113</sup> Many newly-independent African countries remained, ironically, shackled by narratives that had been forged under colonial rule.

If Mweka realised its founders' vision, it was not without bumps along the way. Some students felt that they were getting the short end of the stick, and wrote to the Chief Game Warden in Kenya in 1967 to point out the unwillingness of that department to find them secure work after they finished the certificate course at CAWM. The letter was forwarded by CAWM's Principal, who exasperatedly noted that he had warned the students in question "that the matter was not worth pursuing".<sup>114</sup> More seriously, the year before, seventeen students had signed a protest to the Principal, saying that "at this stage we are greatly fed up with series of threats given by some Instructors both in and outside classes". The grievances were several-fold: students resented being addressed in what they considered "the most humiliating and disrespectful language", charged that "threats and ridicule have become the habitual weapons of certain instructors", believed that they were deliberately made to drink unclean water, begrudged the rules that permitted instructors to bring radios on safari whilst forbidding students to do the same, and explained that they "detest greatly the idea of forcing students to erect instructors' tents apart from erecting our own even after very long and tedious journeys to camp sites".<sup>115</sup> Deliberately or not, this last indignity directly reconstructed the chain of command and authority structure of *safaris* during the colonial era, in which servants performed all of the major labours

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<sup>111</sup> John Clemans, *The Sunday Post*, "The Life and Death of Ahmed", 20 January 1974.

<sup>112</sup> NAZ. EP/1/1/21. Loc. 465. Game Reserves and Controlled Areas—Policy, 1953 to 1976. Memo from Kaunda, 17 September 1964.

<sup>113</sup> See, for example, Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1972); James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Duke University Press, 2006).

<sup>114</sup> KNA KW 4/4. Administration of Game Laws, Courses of Instruction in Wildlife Management, Mweka Training School, 1967 to 1969. Box 8, Shelf 5475.

<sup>115</sup> KNA KW 4/5. Administration of Game Laws, Courses of Instruction in Wildlife Management, Mweka Training School, 1963-1968. Box 8, Shelf 5475.

of setting up camp after a long day's journey, while the hunter or warden (and many CAWM instructors were former hunters or wardens) rested.

Moreover, even the financial sponsors of CAWM recognised a certain reluctance to turn the page on the colonial era. Support from UN and U.S. organisations generally came with what amounted to oversight, which would be linked to the likelihood of receiving aid in the future. The joint UNDP/FAO evaluation mission to Tanzania in 1969 was stinging in the evaluation of the College's failure to "fully appreciate the true nature of the fellowship system. At present", the report's authors wrote, "no Tanzanians have been earmarked to take over from the UNDP staff [...] There is also", the report went on to argue acidly, "what seems to be a psychological obstacle to the appointment of local instructors to the college staff". When the evaluating team pointed this out to CAWM instructors, the reply was that "adequate calibre", "wide experience and expertise", "dourage—so that when in charge of students they would not panic" were the characteristics necessary in instructors (the implication being that Africans lacked such characteristics). The report concluded: "The mission...admits ignorance regarding the psychological requirements of a wildlife manager, but it *cannot imagine how these may be presumptively recognised*. The mission therefore suggests that this particular problem be resolved by recruiting qualified Tanzanians to the staff as soon as possible" (emphasis in the original).<sup>116</sup>

Finally, though intended to achieve Africanisation and created by the executive will of Tanzanian authorities, the governing structure of the College ensured that authority was widely disseminated. There were government representatives from Tanzania (four), Kenya (two), Uganda (two), Zambia (one) and Nigeria (one), as well as regional representatives from the East African Community (one), the OAU (one), the FAO (one), UNDP (one), AWLF (one), and IUCN/WWF (one). And this make-up had managed to tilt the balance away from external control, which had favoured fewer members from African states and more private members and those representative of regional bodies that acted as vestigial structures of colonial interest.<sup>117</sup>

Even by the late 1960s, it was clear that international organisations and the international community were a force in African conservation debates. Sometimes this was for good and sometimes it was for ill. Always, the good and the ill varied according to perspective. On the one hand, Nyerere chafed at the orientation of North American and European tourism towards Nairobi, an orientation that reflected Cold War politics and favour. This resentment and larger disputes with Kenya prompted him to close the border to tourists, sending Tanzania's controversial and less-developed tourism industry into a tailspin.<sup>118</sup>

On the other hand, Francis Katete, Director of the Ugandan National Parks, led a fierce protest against plans to develop a hydro-electric project at Murchison Falls in 1966. In leading what is perhaps East Africa's first home-grown preservation effort of the type characteristic of the colonial era, Katete used established techniques: he built a large mailing list of the good and great of the international conservation scene, he lobbied the World Bank (its head, Robert McNamara visited the site), and persuaded the World Wildlife Fund and other groups to come on-board.<sup>119</sup> Katete also drafted internal memoranda, aiming to demonstrate and quantify the

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<sup>116</sup> KNA KW 4/8. Mweka Training College for African Wildlife Management, 1969 to 1972. Box 9, Shelf 5475.

<sup>117</sup> S K Eltringham, "Recommendations for a Comprehensive Wildlife Research Program, Tanzania". UNEP/IUCN, 1980: 48.

<sup>118</sup> David F Gordon, "International Economic Relations, Regional Cooperation and Foreign Policy" in *Beyond Capitalism vs. Socialism in Kenya and Tanzania* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1994): 245.

<sup>119</sup> Story of the Uganda National Parks: 8/20-8/26.

negative effects of both the construction process and the damming of the Nile. Katete calculated that the hydro-electric station could deprive Uganda of \$10 million in foreign exchange each year, a figure that could well rise as the country's tourism industry expanded. More aware than international actors of the significance of economic development to Ugandans' security, Katete also proposed—rather desperately—that the Ugandan government instead construct three separate power stations, which together, he argued, could produce the same megawatts as Murchison Falls, possibly with less expenditure.<sup>120</sup> The joint effort of Katete and the international preservationist organisations successfully tapped international opinion, while also acknowledging the development imperatives which faced newly-independent governments.

Whether the halting of the project was ultimately due to Katete's campaign or to a whim of Idi Amin, who staged a coup in 1971, is difficult to say. But armed with outside money and celebrity support, Africa's preservationists were showing a vigorous proclivity for preservationism of which their colonial-era predecessors would have strongly approved. And for our story, their reliance on the institutional framework that emerged during the 1950s and '60s is telling. Preservationists were not shy about trumpeting what they saw as the victories of their enlightened philosophies over the misguided efforts of post-independence governments to "mismanage" their wildlife and scenic resources. In their version of events at Murchison Falls, there was no mention of Katete, but rather a narrative which placed WWF and IUCN efforts centre-stage in halting the hydro-electric station.<sup>121</sup>

From the perspective of the hard-nosed wildlife management school, the unleashing of global public opinion could be more than a little convenient at times, and occasionally backfired. Throughout 1962, the Kenyan National Parks Director was busy fending off attacks from the Fauna Preservation Society, local notables, and international publications on plans to cull elephants in the colony to control population increases (see the following chapter).<sup>122</sup> Sentimentality could still trump science. In spite of these setbacks, European proponents of wildlife conservation in Africa hoped that an extensive program of training at somewhere like CAWM (the carrot), combined with on-going propaganda (the stick), would have the effect of inculcating new sensibilities into Africans, and lead to the kinds of cooperative conservation efforts that began to emerge in the 1960s.

## Conclusions

Prior to the era of decolonisation, the Empire had been the primary unit of organisation for the wildlife preservationist movement, driven by the SPFE and its allies in the colonies and dominions. By the 1950s and '60s, appeals were increasingly being made to international institutions, and to the United States, as well as to an amorphous if increasingly attentive and wealthy global public opinion. These appeals were made by drawing on a particular type of

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<sup>120</sup> The origin and accuracy of Katete's figures is unclear. "Uganda National Parks: There are Alternative Schemes to the Proposed Hydro-Electric Dam at Murchison Falls", Makerere University Library. Compiled and issued by the Director's Office (Uganda National Parks), 19 July 1968. Lobbying around the Murchison Dam makes one wonder why the same organisations did not marshal their forces to oppose the construction of the Kariba Dam in Zambia a decade earlier, instead, in that scenario, confining their efforts to the "rescue" operation. It is difficult to say whether the selective lobbying is primarily a question of timing which had most to do with the slow coherence of the international wildlife lobby; with the extent to which that lobby "trusted" colonial as opposed to "African" governments; or with practical matters, such as the likelihood of success.

<sup>121</sup> Fritz Vollmar and Alan McGregor. *The Ark Under Way: Second Report of the World Wildlife Fund, an International Organisation for Saving the World's Wildlife and Wild Places*. S.I., 1968: 238.

<sup>122</sup> KNA KW 10/1. Elephant Problems, 1961 to 1962. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

language that emerged both out of older preservationist discourses around wildlife and concerns about colonial security which had historically focussed on the possession of firearms by Africans, and the potential disorder and danger implied in that possession. During the colonial era, the danger was to game populations and an imperial order. In the aftermath of decolonisation, the threat was directed towards wildlife populations and an international order, which has been demonstrated to be defined by colonial vestigial structures, built into its institutional DNA.<sup>123</sup> Racial anxiety, fuelled by the Mau Mau war in Kenya, meant that although colonial security informed the practise of wildlife policy in diverse and contradictory ways, by the end of the colonial era in East Africa, the global preservationist movement was able to rely on a set of stories about the place of wildlife in Africa, the ownership of that wildlife, and the threat that Independence and majority-rule would pose to it. This was re-worked into a new narrative which combined racial paranoia with global trusteeship. “Africa is a million years ago”, the SPFE approvingly quoted the American Museum of Natural History, “Alone of the seven continents it presented to the earliest discoverers and travellers even within living memory a spectacle of life on earth as grand as that of the Tertiary period”.<sup>124</sup> That animal life was under threat, and it was as much the property of an international and global public as of African nations.

But in the face of political reality, another form of trans-national institution was needed, to work on the ground in Africa, and the College of African Wildlife Management filled this role by seeking to train the first generation of African wardens with international financial support. And CAWM was but one of many wildlife-oriented projects that received funding in the years after independence. The World Wildlife Fund gave substantial grants to projects during the 1960s. Thirty-five percent of all projects funded were in Africa (the largest of any region), and 17.3% of all funds went to Africa (coming in, as a whole, behind Europe and North and Central America). Of the top six recipients of WWF funds between 1962 and 1967, Kenya ranked third and Tanzania fifth. And East Africa occupied a favoured position in the continent. Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were the sites of 33 projects, and five more were directed at “East Africa general”. That is, 38 out of a total of 65 projects for the continent. If the area is expanded to encompass Malawi, Rhodesia and Zambia—those regions which were the focus of the SPFE’s efforts in an earlier era—the total number of projects rises to 43. And the dominance is even more pronounced when measured in the funds spent. Seventy-nine percent of the money directed to Africa went to this region.<sup>125</sup> And some of the WWF projects—fuelled by anxiety about the inability of Africans to manage the world’s wildlife—were supported by the mainstays of the preservationist lobby: the WWF and the Frankfurt Zoological Society (home to the redoubtable Grzimeks). The former sponsored the purchase of aircraft for Kafue National Park in Zambia, and the latter directed funds towards Mikumi National Parks in Tanzania, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania, Meru National Park in Kenya, and Kidepo National Park in Uganda.<sup>126</sup> WWF administrators remarked that “from no other continent have so great a number of applications and essential projects been submitted for consideration and support”.<sup>127</sup> The volume of applications is a testament to the work of the WWF, IUCN, AWLF, and EAWLS, as well as national governments, all of which sponsored and encouraged applications from in-

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<sup>123</sup> See Mazower.

<sup>124</sup> *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire*, Part LIX, 1949: 6.

<sup>125</sup> Fritz Vollmar (ed.), *The Ark Under Way: Second Report of the World Wildlife Fund*, 48-51.

<sup>126</sup> Fritz Vollmar (ed.), *The Ark Under Way: Second Report of the World Wildlife Fund*, 54-5.

<sup>127</sup> Fritz Vollmar (ed.), *The Ark Under Way: Second Report of the World Wildlife Fund*, 49.

country and international scientists and conservationists. The “essential” character of these projects can be tied to the narrative constructed around the imminent threat to Africa’s wildlife and natural resources by expanding population, irrational politics, and poaching pandemics.

WWF, IUCN, and AWLF came to develop projects or campaigns which revolved around particular species, parks, or crises, the better to tap donors, focus efforts, and draw attention to their cause. One mechanism that the IUCN used, part scientific and part public relations, was the “Survival Service”. Today known as the Species Survival Commission (SSC), this division was charged with monitoring animal species and assessing which were sufficiently threatened to merit inclusion on various lists, each of which represented the different level of threat to which the species was subjected. Sub-groupings of the SSC focussed on providing the data about different species which provided the basis for categorisation. The Survival Service dated from 1950, and in 1963 the Red List, chronicling the risks of extinction to various species of animals, was developed.<sup>128</sup>

The combination of narratives, funding, and institutions during the 1950s and ‘60s led to the internationalisation of Africa’s fauna after Independence. Between the rise of an aid economy and the inadvertent reliance on tourism engendered by the safari industry during the latter decades of colonial rule, post-Independence governments were faced with limited options. This ensured the entrenchment of a range of colonial-era philosophies and practises, and meant that there was little occasion, during the years surrounding Independence, to debate the future of policy in any significant way. Bernhard Grzimek’s fabled lobbying for the Serengeti was but one example of how preservationists, new international organisations, colonial officials who felt the ground shifting beneath their feet, and a global public opinion “entered the lists” on behalf of Africa’s wildlife—the very concept of which had not existed a mere half-century before. Their strategy was to “incite and wield and utilise” that “greatest weapon, perhaps the last weapon, in the armoury of East Africa’s game [—] mass public opinion and outrage, on a worldwide scale”.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> IUCN Proceedings 1950. 48.

<sup>129</sup> Cullen and Downey, 149.

## Chapter Five

### Salvation Through Science? Ecology, Culling, Bureaucracy, and the Contradiction of National Parks in East Africa, 1952 to 1972

“It is generally believed, except perhaps in the Congo, that National Parks are artificial areas requiring careful management for their perpetuation and the realisation of their productive potential. Sound management can only be based on scientific fact”.<sup>1</sup>

The narrative which fused racially-fuelled anxieties about security with fears about the integrity of eastern Africa’s wildlife populations seemed a million miles away from the world of “scientific fact”. But it brought the preservation movement roaring back and created an emotive link between wildlife and an emerging global public. This linkage, backed by increasingly active international and global wildlife organisations, served to severely circumscribe the latitude of emergent governments in newly-independent African states. Parties and leaders who had inveighed fiercely against the protection of game and the racial privilege that accompanied that protection suddenly found themselves backed into making fulsome statements of support for their new nations’ wildlife populations. To do otherwise might have curtailed the flow of funds associated with wildlife conservation and engendered undesirable criticism by European and American nations and their publics. In much the same manner as internationalisation and globalisation brought the problems associated with human rights to the fore—through what has been called a “pornography of suffering”—so too global publics became outraged over images of snared and suffering animals, piles of skins, tusks, and bushmeat, and the relentless stream of apocalyptic-sounding statistics rolling out of the continent.<sup>2</sup>

But this emotional brand of preservation was not the only form taken by the politics of wildlife in the post-Second World War era of internationalisation and globalisation. There were, in fact, those who saw the second coming of the preservationist movement as more than an annoyance (the view of many African politicians), and believed that it posed a direct threat to the very wildlife these groups sought to save. Journalist Glen Martin argues that the preservationist movement today has become an “animal rights” movement, and although this is only part of the story, it is certainly true that care for individual animals became a cornerstone of preservationist thought and practise in parallel to the rise of global conservation and preservation.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the global public was, in the view of its critics, fickle and uninformed. What was really needed, these critics said, was a healthy injection of hard-nosed science into the process. This chapter takes place during the emergence of a new type of internationalism and competing visions of universalism, and seeks to explore the tensions that arose as wildlife scientists came into their own and made increasingly assertive—and to some, troubling—claims about the need to manage wildlife. It is critical to undertake this exploration with one eye on the transformation of administrative sciences and bureaucratic institutions. This transformation includes both that from the personalised administration which dominated governance in the early days of colonial

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<sup>1</sup> NUTAE C/iii (UL Cambridge). Queen Elizabeth National Park Research and Management, memo from C R Field, NUTAE investigator, 13 February 1967.

<sup>2</sup> See Carolyn J. Dean. “Empathy, Pornography, and Suffering”. *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 14:1 (Spring 2003): 88-124.

<sup>3</sup> Glen Martin. *Game Changer: Animal Rights and the Fate of Africa’s Wildlife* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).



rule and the rise of the technical departments, but also the shift between colonial and independent governments.

I will first outline the state of ecological sciences—the primary scientific lens through which wildlife scientists approached the ‘problem’—and then provide two examples of how the ecological sciences functioned within a broader set of debates—about sovereignty, administration, management, the role of science, development, and preservation—and historical processes—decolonisation, internationalisation, globalisation, and the rise of conservation—arguing that the panacea of ecology, supposedly aloof from parochial politicisation, was actually inseparable from the politics which swirled around wildlife around the time of decolonisation. In Uganda, older ideas (discussed above) about national parks which were transplanted to the colony ran headlong into the management imperative—something long embraced by Uganda’s game department, but something of a departure in the context of East African National Parks. The collision of these imperatives and ideals was made all the more explosive because they occurred in an era during which older administrative structures were being overhauled first by the gradual process of decolonisation and then by the post-independence process of Africanisation. In Kenya, efforts to address the “Elephant Problem” in the Tsavo (East) National Park highlighted the efforts of the new nation to pursue an activist wildlife policy in the context of massive cultural and bureaucratic shifts in government, and the rise of a cadre of international scientists whose ambition, culture, and prescriptions offended other administrative interests.

Culling, an old and largely uncontested practise in colonial Uganda, assumed new significance as its rationale was stated in scientific terms, driven by an ecological imperative. It was treated, oddly at a first glance, as an historical novelty, but this novelty stemmed from its implementation in National Parks—institutions which were themselves new in Uganda. National Parks, anchored in a series of historically discrete places and moments, brought with them an attendant logic and ethos which made culling problematic and controversial, even when carried out on the same animal populations in the same places as 30 and 40 years before. Culling (of elephants) was also central to the Tsavo story, where (imitating the earlier Irish Question) administrators could never find the answer to the Elephant Question, because scientists, bureaucrats, preservationists, and the behaviour of elephants themselves continually changed the question. In crisis for two decades, Tsavo East confounded its would-be managers not just because of the changing nature of its problem, but because the problems needed addressing at a moment of administrative, bureaucratic, and scientific flux, in which context there appeared to be no solution capable of satisfying the diverse parties with a stake in Tsavo’s fortunes. Describing the chain of events in Uganda and Kenya, and the administrative, scientific and moral logics that they reflect, throws light not just on an alternative to preservationist anxieties. It is also a further illustration of the extent to which the politics of wildlife in Africa were informed by broader historical processes: decolonisation, the proliferation of international organisations and funding sources, the emergence of an internationalised group of professionals, the interests of newly-accountable bureaucracies and departments, and the difficulties that these new constituencies had in interacting with one another in the post-Second World War world.

Finally, ecologists believed that the scientific nature of their discipline allowed them to draw a line under many of the cultural and political struggles around wildlife from an earlier era. They believed that with the support of international funders, their research and their findings could be allowed to speak for themselves. In reality, ecologists found themselves in a Catch-22. International and global donors believed in the importance of leveraging ecological studies to advance their conservation/preservation agenda. Yet they were also beholden, through their

networks of donors, their institutional ancestry, and their membership, to individuals and to a public which was likely to frown on some of the methods which their funds might sponsor. In both Uganda and Kenya, ecologists saw advantages to working with African governments that were more attentive to their ambitions than colonial governments. But they failed to understand that these governments and their bureaucrats were also seeking to harmonise their countries' wildlife policy with ambitions related to democratic governance, development, and their view of the national interest.

### **The Emergence of the Ecological Antidote**

Historically, Natural History dominated scientific thought in British-ruled Africa where wildlife management was concerned. Indeed, it is in many respects anachronistic to think of "wildlife management". Game wardens, by and large, did not intervene with an eye on scientific ends (as opposed to administrative ends, as shown in the discussion of early culling efforts in Uganda). They looked after animals, when necessary checked their destructive habits, and when possible protected them from illegal forms of hunting. Natural history was primarily based on observations of animals and their habits, and as a genre was often indistinguishable from travel stories and hunting tales. It was highly anecdotal, and yielded few insights that could be used to manage animal species or even populations at the level of a colony. In contrast to natural history, ecology promised something more concrete. One of its early practitioners, acknowledging the discipline's concern with relationships between organisms in a given environment, discussed its holistic and systematic nature. Frederick Clements, writing in 1905, asserted the need to blend ecology and physiology to remedy the "superficial" nature of the former and the restrictive "specialization" of the latter: "the one is chaotic and unsystematized, the other too often a minute study of function under abnormal circumstances".<sup>4</sup> Clements called for "special training" to accompany the application of ecology in the field, but his most relevant contribution for our purposes might be his ideas about "the connection between the habitat and the plant".<sup>5</sup>

At the heart of ecology's contribution was its interest in the relationship between organisms and their habitats. This was of central interest to those people in Africa who sought to make decisions about managing wildlife, and assumed an even greater importance when those decisions had to take account of the impact of populations of wildlife on habitats. Clements and later ecologists suggested that it would be far more productive to approach those relationships by examining (in Clements' original treatise) plants not as individuals, but as "the unit of a complex from the formational standpoint, the formation itself may be regarded as a sort of multiple organism, which is in many ways at least a direct effect of the habitat". Clements' further observations would, in the context of wildlife management in Africa, have the effect of empowering those who approached Africa's wildlife areas as an immovable and historically-static terrain: "a third element must always be considered...the historical fact, by which is meant the ancestral structure". Clements' holistic superorganism, thought to be the culmination of ultimately harmonic interactions between organisms in a given ecosystem, deeply informed the approach of wildlife personnel to the "problems" posed by their faunal charges. Until the 1970s, the idea of a climax stage dominated thinking in east and central African parks, although in the

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<sup>4</sup> Frederic Clements, *Research Methods in Ecology* (New York: Arno Press, 1977 (1905)): 1.

<sup>5</sup> Frederic Clements: 6, 17.

debates around management in Ugandan and Kenyan parks, the nascent ideal of constant flux and change began to surface, some years before such ideas came into fuller ecological vogue.<sup>6</sup>

Debates about the aesthetics of ecology were not the only ones which bedevilled scientific practitioners. At the heart of the work that ecologists performed in African settings during both the colonial and post-independence eras was the question of whether their ecological research was best undertaken on a “pure” or “applied” basis. This debate, in turn, tended to reflect differences in the scientific community between those concerned with discovering conditions of stability and those interested in describing trophic levels and energy flows. In the Ugandan National Parks, where much ecological research was undertaken by the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology, this issue became a central concern both in Uganda and in Cambridge. Members of the Cambridge committee which oversaw the Unit differed as to the best ecological practise that should be deployed in Africa. Zoologist George Salt was the most critical of the study methods which focussed on large herbivores (which he also referred to as “animals of economical importance”), which he saw as operating in the same tradition of natural history. The strength of NUTAE’s framework, Salt believed, was that it “provided for ten years’ continuous study of ecological problems in the tropics with no strings attached, and demanding no immediate practical results”.<sup>7</sup> Carl Pantin, Salt’s colleague in the Zoology Department, took a different view, arguing that the study of large herbivores presented a “clear cut phenomenon”, a good starting point for “beginning any investigation of a complex system”.<sup>8</sup> Salt disagreed, arguing that focus on the hippopotamus led down the road to applied research, which was not the same thing as good research, and which would miss out on the “energy approach” which would throw more light on ecological principles rather than economic problems.<sup>9</sup> As the fissure between proponents of pure and applied research deepened in a bureaucratic and political context, described in more detail later, it eventually became such that it threatened the future of the research Unit.

There was greater consensus amongst ecological practitioners when it came to practise. Like the Natural Historians who studied African environments during the first half of the twentieth century, Ecologists relied on survey work. But they asked different sets of questions and used very different methodologies than their predecessors. To evaluate the state of an ecological zone, its health, and its equilibrium, ecologists used the notion of biomass (often relative to carrying capacity, crudely the amount of biomass an ecosystem was estimated to be able to handle), a measure of organisms or organic material (often by weight) within a given habitat. In Queen Elizabeth National Park, for example, ecologists evaluated biomass in what they regarded as distinct habitats as a way of examining how plant forms affected feeding choices of different animal species, and how the habits and numbers of various species affected vegetation composition (which in turn restricted which animals could feed in a given area).

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<sup>6</sup> Donald Worster. *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 158-160.

<sup>7</sup> NUTAE/B/iii (UL Cambridge), Salt’s memo on the programme of the NUTAE, 6 November 1961.

<sup>8</sup> NUTAE B/iii (UL Cambridge). Pantin’s memo on NUTAE, 4 December 1961.

<sup>9</sup> NUTAE C/iii (UL Cambridge). Notes of a discussion of the NUTAE committee, 25 February 1961. Not everyone agreed that focus on a single species precluded serious ecological discovery. A J Haddow, also of the Cambridge Zoology Department, noted that “about 90% of the casually gleaned information of past years is inaccurate, subjective, sentimental and anthropocentric. In addition it is confined mainly to a few of the more obvious and easily observed aspects, mainly in the field of behavior”. There was, consequently, much room for study of affects of those animals their vegetation habitats, carrying capacity, and ecological diversity, as well as food chains. NUTAE H (UL Cambridge), Dr A J Haddow, not eon Memo by Dr Salt. 26 March 1962.

Long grass (distant from the lakes), short grass/thicket (closer to water), short grass (distant from lakes), short grass/thicket (near water), under varying degrees of management, were compared. Elephants made up markedly different proportions of biomass in each of the four areas (61.23%, 5.12%, 12.13%, and 24.95% respectively). Where Elephants and buffalo dominated, smaller antelope tended to give way and comprise very small proportions of biomass. Ecologists seeking a “balanced” ecosystem drew conclusions accordingly.<sup>10</sup> It was no longer enough to “eyeball” a landscape and proclaim it devoid of game compared to an earlier era. Ecologists perused the reports of early wardens in an effort to make data extrapolations<sup>11</sup>, or to evaluate historic habitat usage by given species, the better to draw up conclusions about ecological separation and niche feeding which could prevent the occurrence of “monoculture”, another ecological (and not coincidentally, aesthetic) symptom of a ecosystem out of balance.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth noting that if in the twenty-first century the politics of ecology are most generally associated with nature ethics, anti-modernism, and critiques of growth, they have historically been as much caught up in histories of Empire. Peder Anker has described the role of South African premier and arch-imperialist, Jan Christian Smuts, in promoting a version of ecological holism which contained strong racial overtones. Smuts, who was at the heart of debates about ecology in the British Empire, saw himself as a proponent of a brand of ecology both well-suited to South Africa and justificatory of the racial politics which were increasingly seen as a South African peculiarity and a threat to the unified Empire of which Smuts was supposedly a proponent.<sup>13</sup>

### **Ugandan Management Precedents**

Between 1925 and 1934, the Ugandan Game Department destroyed 13,096 elephants in the colony in spite of the hue and cry raised in the colonies and in Britain. In 1958, the Ugandan National Parks authorised the destruction of 7,000 hippopotamuses in a single year in a move the Parks’ Director heralded as “revolutionary”.<sup>14</sup> But how could such a cull mark a shift (no less one that was revolutionary), given both the extensive cropping of elephants that took place between 1925 and 1934, and the subsequent destruction of over 13,000 elephants (and buffalo in the thousands) between 1935 and 1949? Many of the same personnel, in the same colony, in departments organised by many of the same men, were doing the same things—killing Uganda’s large mammals (creatures, said the departments’ critics, that were supposedly their charges) on an immense scale. In its Ugandan context, this seemingly basic contradiction—whereby custodians of wild animals slaughtered those animals in their thousands—opens up a series of further questions. What was the basis for these large-scale culling operations, who carried them out, and how? Did National Parks Director Rennie Bere not know about the earlier culls, or did he have other reasons for calling those of the 1950s “revolutionary”? Why elephants and

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<sup>10</sup> C R Field and R M Laws. “The Distribution of the Larger Herbivores in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda”. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 7, 273-294, August 1970.

<sup>11</sup> Buss.

<sup>12</sup> C R Field. “A Study of the Feeding Habits of the Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius* Linn.) in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda, With Some Management Implications”. *Zoologica Africana* 5 1970(1): 71-86.

<sup>13</sup> Peder Anker. *Imperial Ecology: Environmental Order in the British Empire, 1895-1945*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. Incidentally, Smuts has also been identified as being at the heart of internationalism, his presence assuring that the institutional forms which began to emerge during the Second World War reflected an older world order and set of power relations. Mark Mazower. *No Enchanted Palace: the End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Uganda Game Department Annual Report 1934: Rennie Bere 9/3.

hippopotamuses? Was this conservation, or was it something else? Why was this occurring in Uganda, and what was its relationship to larger changes taking place around the world between the 1920s and 1960s?

The explanations for the culling operations lay not only in the animals that populated Uganda's countryside, but also in the internationalism and its ideals that were spreading around the world during the interwar years and after the Second World War. They were embedded in ideas about colonial development and colonialism itself that were emerging during the same period. They could be found in the conservation movements that were emerging at both the local and global levels. They would be incomplete without investigating the independence and nationalist movements that swept across Africa and other continents during this period, and the efforts of newly-independent nations to devise economic models in the wake of colonialism and bearing in mind their birth into an internationalised world. And they relied on new scientific ideas, practises, and institutions which were themselves shaped by colonialism, internationalism, the Cold War and the growth of environmentalism.

As described in an earlier chapter, elephant culls were the earliest and most important component of Uganda's wildlife control efforts, and their importance for colonial development and administrative rule played a key part in the emergence of "wildlife policy" as a discrete sphere, even as that policy was increasingly informed by wider processes and concerns, and debated by a widening circle of interests. Elephants were killed to protect African farmers and their crops. They were killed to make certain areas of Uganda habitable and to rationalise land use. And they were killed because their official exploitation as a resource could fill government coffers. Uganda's Game Department staff, particularly Charles Pitman, believed that Elephant control was necessary for the colony's development, and had no qualms about killing off elephants to move that process of development forward. Indeed, they were concerned to systematise control to enable them to achieve a large off-take.

The large-scale Ugandan culling projects of the 1950s and '60s were also informed by a developmental ethos, albeit one informed by slightly different political and economic conditions, and which sought to integrate the use of wildlife into broader natural resource endeavours. Northern Rhodesia's game department, created at the very moment when such ideas were coming into vogue, was the prime example of an institution which saw its *raison d'être* as several-fold: on the one hand to protect agriculturalists from game depredation; on the other, to maintain appropriate population levels of representative wildlife; and thirdly, to make sustainable use of these animals as meat resources, whose numbers could be managed in much the same way as a herd of cattle. A similar sensibility took hold in Uganda around the time of the hippopotamus culls authorised in the 1950s. At the 1961 Arusha Conference, George Blower (the chief Ugandan Game Warden) and A. C. Brooks (the Game Biologist) described how during the 1950s their department advertised hippo meet in the press and harnessed the skills of a "local African butcher who has been given a contract for the cropping of 360 hippo during the course of a year; in return he pays the African Local Government Shs 150/- per hippo taken". The Ugandan Game Department staff noted that "it appears probable that the hippo population could continue to sustain an offtake of in the order of 1,000 animals a year indefinitely".<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> IUCN. "Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States. Report of a Symposium organized by CCTA and IUCN and held under the auspices of FAO and UNESCO at Arusha, Tanganyika, September 1961". Morges: IUCN, 1963: 99. At the same time, wildlife ecologists in Africa and elsewhere were increasingly focussing on "game meat" as the answer to Africa's "nutritional crisis".

Given the long history of culling and the increasing acceptability of sustainable cropping for the exploitation of wildlife products it is, perhaps, no wonder that when faced with recommendations to cull 7,000 hippopotamuses, the Board of Trustees of the Uganda National Parks felt able to give its assent. But what the history of control does not explain is *why* the recommendation was given in the first place. The hippopotamuses in Queen Elizabeth National Park were not threatening human habitation in the same way that elephants had—they were, after all, in a National Park, in which human settlement was largely forbidden. Their teeth were not in anything like the demand as were Elephants’ tusks. And the days when Europeans could wield the *sjamboks* made from their hide with impunity were rapidly drawing to a close. So here, perhaps, we can begin to explore why Bere might have been justified in claiming that a 50% reduction in the number of hippos in the park was, “in the context of the 1950s [...] a revolutionary suggestion [which] reversed all existing ideas about running national parks and game reserves throughout eastern Africa”.<sup>16</sup> In some respects, hippopotamuses were being killed *because* of the existence of National Parks in Uganda (designed to protect wildlife) rather than due to a lack of protection. For this reason, it is worth briefly exploring the origins of National Parks in Uganda.

If Uganda led in the area of control, it followed where National parks were concerned. A Royal National Parks Ordinance was passed in Kenya in 1945 (and this followed the creation of parks in South Africa and the Belgian Congo in the 1920s), and the Serengeti was declared in Tanganyika in 1951, three years after a National Parks Ordinance was passed in the protectorate. The Kafue National Park was declared in 1950 in Northern Rhodesia (following the 1949 National Parks Act in Southern Rhodesia), although this is somewhat illusory as park status meant very little in the colony, and no “real” parks were declared until 1971. Uganda National Parks legislation was passed in 1952, and its first park, Muchison Falls, was gazetted in that year. Two years later, the Queen Elizabeth National Park was gazetted. The system’s first director was Ken Beaton, and he was followed by Rennie Bere, who took the park reins in 1955. As noted above, the conception of National Parks was heavily influenced by developments in the United States and South Africa, and the 1933 London conference laid down the inviolability of parks—as spaces incompatible with human settlement—as one of the primary principles behind their management. Uganda did put its own stamp on its national parks, instituting a consultative process before gazettement that was absent in Kenya, and emphasising that “parks were to be sanctuaries for wildlife ‘preserved in perpetuity for the recreation and edification of the people of Uganda’”, an emphasis Bere claimed was “a new idea in this connection in the world of colonial east Africa in 1952”.<sup>17</sup>

It was in this particular context, four years after the park was declared, that authorities in Queen Elizabeth National park contemplated the hippo cull. If the ultimate factors leading to the cull were an interlinked set of processes, involving novel institutions (parks), emergent disciplines (ecology), and new imperatives, the proximate cause had been the decision of Uganda’s Minister for Natural Resources to apply for Fulbright aid in 1956. This brought several biologists from the United States in the coming years. Although Dr. H K Buechner made the Uganda Kob his specialty, Drs G A Petrides, W G Swank, and W H Longhurst focussed on collecting “preliminary data on the ecology of [the parks] and noted areas in which future

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<sup>16</sup> Bere 9/3.

<sup>17</sup> Rennie Bere. *A Cuckoo’s Parting Cry: Life and Work in Uganda, 1930-1960*. Cheltenham: Cedar Publishing Ltd, 1990: 230-31.

wildlife management would be required”.<sup>18</sup> Crucially, “while recognizing the ideal of leaving nature alone”, heretofore the mainstay of the National Parks ideal in Africa, “they pointed out that the parks were simply ‘islands’ in a countryside devoted to other purposes and that wild lands often require management to preserve their wilderness character”. More pointedly, they realised that the hippo population, wildly out of control in their estimation, was causing severe erosion in the park and had the potential to drastically alter the park’s ecology. Finally, the biologists argued that overpopulation would inevitably lead to a population crash in any case (as a result of starvation), and so active management would allow the National Parks to control events (‘nature’, as it were), and avert an ecological crisis on the basis of sound management.<sup>19</sup> In this key respect, the Trustees’ decision *did* mark a decisive shift. There was now a scientific and ecological, rather than merely an administrative and political economic argument underlying culling. The early work of Fulbright Scholars laid the ground for projects undertaken in later years by the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology and its successor, the Uganda Institute of Ecology, and the Scholars, who continued to arrive in Uganda for some years, were later absorbed into the structure of these scientific and managerial units.<sup>20</sup>

If management and control were nothing new to executors of wildlife policy in British African colonies before the 1950s, there had been limits to the areas in which culls had taken place. Part of the purpose of National Parks was that they be different from Game Reserves and other categories of protected area. Prior to the 1950s, permanence and inviolability were the two cornerstones of national parks in Africa. At the 1953 Bukavu Conference (attended by representatives of colonial governments and interested parties from across Africa to discuss conservation), wildlife areas geared towards strict preservation (as opposed to the kind of management that Game Departments practised) was defined by “the need to maintain a typical environment”. Preservation areas also differed in that other areas (forest reserves, game reserves, etc) “might imply the idea of cropping and exploitation in the future”, something decidedly not on the table in national parks.<sup>21</sup> Every control issue that conference attendees discussed related to protection of crops and people or the prevention of disease (trypanosomiasis, for example). The ‘strict reserve’ mantra associated with national parks was particularly pronounced because Africa’s preeminent national park outside of South Africa, the Albert National Park (today the beleaguered Virunga National Park) in the Congo was run very much in that mould. Visitors had to apply to Brussels for seldom-granted permission to enter the park which had been conceived to protect the increasingly rare Mountain Gorilla, and which was monitored along the lines of a *reserve integrale*.<sup>22</sup>

The PNA’s mercurial chairman in Brussels, Victor Van Straelen (Bere called him the “high priest of non-intervention in the world of nature”), irritated everyone from Rennie Bere to officials in the British Colonial Office with what the latter regarded as his “hidebound” methods

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<sup>18</sup> Bere 9/3.

<sup>19</sup> Bere 9/3, 9/4.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, C R Field and R M Laws. *The Distribution of the Larger Herbivores in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda*. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 7, 273-294, August 1970.

<sup>21</sup> Bukavu 83.

<sup>22</sup> Bere 6/2. Mary Jobe Akely, *Congo Eden: A Comprehensive Portrayal of the Historical Background and Scientific Aspects of the Great Game Sanctuaries of the Belgian Congo With the Story of a Six Months’ Pilgrimage Throughout That Most Primitive Region in the Heart of the African Continent* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1951), 163-4.

and “passionate belief that there should be no interference with the balance of nature”.<sup>23</sup> In promoting his brand of preservationism, Van Straelen clashed with Keith Caldwell, the British Empire’s preeminent wildlife *guru*. The latter, who served in Kenya’s Game Department, helped Pitman to set up Uganda’s department, and usually served as British representative at international wildlife or conservation conferences, propounded (with Pitman) the view that there was no such thing as undisturbed nature. “It should not be forgotten”, he remarked while defending vegetation management techniques, “that grass has been regularly burned throughout tropical Africa ever since man understood the use of fire. The conditions of vegetation now being brought into being [by strict preservation] are unlikely to have existed since an early date and might even be considered artificial”.<sup>24</sup> The recognition of the artificiality inherent in the creation of protected areas put Caldwell and Pitman decades ahead of trends which are still coming into their own, but the debate was one increasingly at the heart of decisions about how wildlife policy should work.

Uganda’s parks, in spite of being described with a rhetoric of openness and accessibility, were designed along the preservationist lines drawn up for their counterparts in Kenya and elsewhere. Kenya warden Ken Beaton was instrumental in making recommendations for park sites and designs.<sup>25</sup> But it was probably inevitable that in Uganda the closed conception of National Parks was bound to be challenged both because the institutional culture of its wildlife politics was so geared towards management and because strict preservationism was beginning to creak under the weight of its own contradictions on a larger scale. At the 1953 Bukavu Conference, “Game Control” and “Problems of Research” comprised two of the sub-committees formed by representatives from most European colonial powers. Although the conference as a whole was largely concerned with protecting animals, it accepted the need for control outside of parks, and outlined potential programmes of faunal study which would necessitate interference with wildlife in protected areas.<sup>26</sup> In Uganda in particular, a colony which had a history of actively managing its wildlife populations, and which accepted the premise that parks should be as accessible as possible to visitors, National Parks were unlikely to remain “untouched” by man.

In spite of half-hearted efforts at prevarication in the face of public scrutiny by administrators, culling in Uganda moved forward.<sup>27</sup> The decision to cull in the absence of any threat to people was framed as a choice between “whether to allow the animal population to go on increasing and so endanger the natural grazing, or to go against the principle of preserving animal life in order to prevent the park becoming a desert”. Officials took to the local press to praise the work of the Fulbright scientists who had at last forced a decision on park administrators and the government.<sup>28</sup> In 1958, the National Parks launched their hippo cull, publicly stressing the benefits which would accrue to locals (meat) and to the government purse (surplus meat would be sold to help meet the cost of the project) in addition to those which

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<sup>23</sup> Memo from Government of Uganda to Henry Hopkinson, CO, 7 Sept 1953, CO 822/315—1951. Preservation of Game and Establishment of National Parks in Uganda. Van Straelen directed Belgium’s Royal Natural History Museum, worked at the universities of Brussels and Ghent, served on the Executive Board of the IUCN, and was an honorary Vice-President of the International Commission on National Parks. Obituary, *Oryx*, 7-5, 1964: 212.

<sup>24</sup> Akely, 163-4.

<sup>25</sup> Bere 6/9. One component of this design was the independence of the Board of Trustees. The rationale behind this was that “Trustees and their staff can and should be prepared to criticise government if the need arises and to do so publicly. No government official can do this”. Bere 6/10.

<sup>26</sup> Bukavu, 8-9, 140, 150ff.

<sup>27</sup> *Uganda Argus*, 5 October 1957. “Scientists Studying Mweya Erosion; ‘Not Caused by Game Park’”.

<sup>28</sup> *Uganda Argus*, 30 November 1957. “World Advice Sought on Game Parks Dilemma”.



would aid the still-fuzzy notion of ecology. Trustees emphasised the lengthy consultation that had preceded the cull, and highlighted the expertise of the Fulbright scholars on whose recommendations culling was undertaken.<sup>29</sup> Officials and the hunters to whom they contracted some of their work cleared hippos from along two spots in the park: an inland wallow, and a stretch of bank at the Mweya Peninsula along the Kazinga Channel (the natural body of water which connects Lakes George and Edward, both of which help to define the borders and ecology of the park) which had suffered the worst erosion. In the opening stages of the project they sought to use thunder-flashes to drive them away, but after realising that it would be too labour-intensive to stand guard over riverbanks and wallows to keep hippos away, they reverted to shooting.<sup>30</sup> Over one-third of the hippopotamuses at Mweya were shot. Accounts vary, but in the process of the extended culls which took place between 1958 and 1967, the hippo population in the park was reduced by as many as 10,000, although in the eyes of parks officials, the rate of increase proved frustratingly robust even in the face of determined shooting.<sup>31</sup>

From an ecological standpoint, the experiments with hippo culling yielded results, though they were often more difficult to interpret than officials had hoped. Scientists observed that on the one hand, other species of animal which had been driven out by the destruction of so much vegetation began to return on a more permanent basis when the hippos were kept away from the Channel. They saw a 22.7% increase in biomass.<sup>32</sup> Developments were less promising at the wallow, a series of small pools and channels maintained and expanded by hippo use on areas inland from the Channel, where investigators noted that the hippos actually helped to fertilise the plain and create a water source for the plains game that lived too far from the Kazinga Channel to visit it regularly. The implication was that hippos shouldn't be eliminated altogether, but that rather their populations should be managed continuously and consistently, to achieve some sort of equilibrium.<sup>33</sup> This, with the expenditure and manpower requirements that it implied, was not what park officials wanted to hear, and so they promptly began another experiment near what is now the village of Katunguru to see whether it would yield different results. Even the study at Mweya raised some troubling questions when scientists looked to the long term. The removal of the hippos would mean a shift in vegetation, and the emergence of a "high stem to leaf ratio, low protein content or the accumulation of unpalatable chemicals in the mature leaf", which might impact herbivores in unanticipated ways.<sup>34</sup> This was, in a nutshell, the enduring dilemma of ecological studies—that they always seemed to raise more questions than they answered for parks officials. They would not be the last to address this dilemma by commissioning a seemingly-never ending stream of studies, a move that appeared as often designed to defer a decision than to enable one.

But the problematic outcomes of the hippo survey did make the National Parks officials aware of the need to develop a more structured approach to ecological study. As early as 1957 there had been efforts to establish a research institute in Uganda. Those efforts bore fruit in 1961 with the creation of the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology, which functioned until it was

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<sup>29</sup> *Uganda Argus*, 17 May 1957. "Hippos To Be Moved from Erosion Areas; Many May Have to be Killed". Rennie Bere offered high praise for the park Trustees on the basis of their willingness to accept scientific advice and stick by the implications of that advice even when it proved potentially controversial. Bere 9/3.

<sup>30</sup> *Uganda Argus*, 9 July 1958. "Control of Park Hippos by Shooting".

<sup>31</sup> Bere 9/5-9/8.

<sup>32</sup> C R Field, "A Study of the Feeding Habits of the Hippopotamus (*hippopotamus amphibius*, Linn.) in the Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda, With Some Management Implications". *Zoologica Africana* 5(1): 71-86. 1970.

<sup>33</sup> "Control of Park Hippos by Shooting", *Uganda Argus*, 9 July 1958.

<sup>34</sup> Field, "A Study of the Feeding Habits...", 83.

replaced by the Uganda Institute of Ecology in 1972. Its first head was Richard Laws, a Cambridge-educated scientist. He served until 1966, when he left Uganda to head the Tsavo Research Project in Kenya. His replacement, Keith Eltringham, arrived in 1967. Laws had presided over controversial Elephant culls in Uganda during the early 1960s, and one Senior Fulbright Scholar, Irvén O Buss, recalled that his unease over the “collection” of 200 elephants was allayed by assurances from colleagues that Elephant populations posed a serious threat to the habitat they shared with other wildlife.<sup>35</sup> Laws did not leave Uganda happily, and his resignation and departure demonstrated the inextricability of the ecological and administrative sciences in the years immediately following decolonisation.

Africanisation within Uganda’s wildlife departments took place more quickly than in neighbouring Kenya after independence, Francis Katete—only about 31 when he was appointed—was leading the parks by 1964. Attempting to assert control over the management of the park, Katete clashed with Laws when he attempted to ensure that the NUTAE investigations yielded results which could be of practical use for park management. Katete felt that he had been misled, and reiterated the trustees’ understanding that NUTAE’s research “would be in relation to the large mammals [because] the survival of these large mammals is the principle problem of the trustees. It therefore looks to me”, he went on, that the unit cannot entirely shut its eyes off a certain amount of applied research even if only to the advisory level”.<sup>36</sup> In spite of Laws’ own assertion in 1961 that one of the central problems he would seek to address was “as regards the large mammals [and] how their populations are kept in balance. When this balance is upset by man’s activity, how can it be restored and maintained?”, he resented what he saw as unwarranted interference from Katete, and the director’s suggestions that “pure research had no place in the national park.”<sup>37</sup>

There were also disputes when Laws attempted to have the unpopular European chief warden, Captain Poppleton (who appears to have been sacked for insubordination to Katete), reinstated<sup>38</sup>. Katete and the Africanised park trustees refused, and the NUTAE committee itself advised Laws to let the matter lie. Angry at the rebuke from the Trustees and smarting at the Parks’ efforts to guide his research, Laws resigned.<sup>39</sup> Demonstrating the difficulty that many Europeans felt under a new dispensation, and unable to see how his own interference in parks affairs subverted the new department’s efforts to control its own affairs, Laws wrote to Cambridge that “like all the Baganda, [Katete] is a wily politician and he has more time for these matters than most of us”.<sup>40</sup> This administrative conflict, sparked by the tension between “practical” and “pure” sciences, by the anomalous place of scientists employed by NUTAE, and the turf struggles engendered by park administrative structures which encoded more formal procedures which curtailed the leeway of expatriate employees, would be replicated over a similar ecological, political, and preservationist dilemma in Kenya during the same decade. If the complicated nature of culling in a new ecological era, one which coincided with the creation of National Parks, is best illustrated in Uganda at Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National

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<sup>35</sup> Irvén O Buss, *Elephant Life: Fifteen Years of High Population Density* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1999): x.

<sup>36</sup> NUTAE—University Library (Cambridge). NUTAE/Q/i. See, for example, Katete to Laws (letter), 9 December 1964; Laws to Katete (Letter) 12 December 1964.

<sup>37</sup> NUTAE—University Library (Cambridge). NUTAE/B/iii. NUTAE, Initial Programme of Rsearch, Laws, May 1961; NUTAE/O. Letter, Delany (Makerere) to Pantin, 5 February 1966.

<sup>38</sup> NUTAE—University Library (Cambridge). NUTAE/O. Letter, Delany (Makerere) to Pantin, 15 February 1966.

<sup>39</sup> NUTAE—University Library (Cambridge). NUTAE/A/i. NUTAE. Summary of Present Position, May 1966.

<sup>40</sup> NUTAE—University Library (Cambridge). NUTAE/Q/i. Laws to Pantin (letter), 28 April 1965.

Parks, the conflicts between scientific culling and the broader political landscape find their most powerful expression in the Tsavo National Park in Kenya.

### **Elephant Problems at Tsavo**

The “Hippo Problem” in Uganda’s National Parks simmered, and although it posed a conceptual difficulty in the context of the national parks ideal, that difficulty was ameliorated by the long history of aggressive management in Uganda, by low public interest, and by the willingness of Uganda’s park trustees to make a decision and stick by it. Laws may have tendered his resignation, but the events he helped to set in motion outlasted his presence in Uganda. In contrast to the contained difficulties represented by Uganda’s experience, the “Elephant Problem” in Kenya’s Tsavo (East) National Park exploded, generating enormous public controversy, exposing deep divisions in an administration undergoing “Africanisation” in the wake of independence, and highlighting the tensions that could arise when international scientists provoked division rather than decision. As noted above, Elephants were the target of the earliest Control and Game Departments in eastern Africa, and colonial administrators sought to limit their numbers and push them away from settled areas where African farmers and European plantation owners sought to make a living. Their protection served as the basis for some of the most stringent conservation efforts which drew on international funds and the resources of Game and National Parks Departments as well as the police, armed forces and security services of East African countries like Kenya. Efforts to halt the large-scale poaching of Elephants in Kenya led to a total ban on hunting in that country in 1977.

Between 1955 and 1975, the Elephants of Tsavo National Park in southern Kenya were caught up in a series of intense debates about the character of National Parks, appropriate forms of conservation and preservation, and the roles of international scientists and funding bodies. These debates highlighted the strength and influence of international public opinion, the question marks hanging over the wherewithal of African governments to assert control over ministries, departments, and parastatal organisations in the years following independence, and the highly contested nature of ecological sciences. One year the staff of the Kenya National Parks would be scrambling to put together a quasi-military force to combat Elephant poachers. The next it would be debating how many Elephants its own staff could kill, sometimes in the name of scientific study, at others in the name of management. The “Tsavo Story” is an emblematic illustration of the flux in which wildlife policy found itself in Kenya during the decades before and after Independence. There were several key constituencies involved in the struggle over how to run Tsavo National Park, some of them operating from outside Kenya and others of them from within.

In Kenya, the various ministries which had responsibility for National Parks formed one constituency. Before 1963, the civil servants and politicians who populated these ministries were European. Independence saw their gradual Africanisation. Government policy on Africanisation was “to aim towards a position where the proportion of the racial structure of the colony’s population is reflected in the composition of the civil service”.<sup>41</sup> The second

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<sup>41</sup> Kenya National Archives (KNA). Deputy Secretary of Civil Service Commission’s circular. KW 1/15. All Staff Matters, 1962 to 1967. Box 2, Shelf 5798. In light of insufficient trained personnel, the government sought to use extensive training schemes to hurry the process along. Not all expats accepted this process gratefully. D W J Brown, Chief Game Warden in 1966, wrote a commissary letter to one of his wardens, explaining “that Africanization is INEVITABLE and that African officers are viewed by fellow senior Africans in a different light to that mirrored by you and I. they have not got to achieve the same high standards that we have set ... We must all of us face up to the realities of the situation”. KNA. KW 1/15. 10 October 1966 letter.

constituency comprised the officials of the National Parks: their Trustees and their Director. The quasi-autonomous status of the Parks meant that the Trustees could potentially wield considerable influence over policy, but also that a strong Director could dominate the formulation of policy. Of course, this policy was always implemented and often driven by events on the ground, and the expatriate wardens who ran Tsavo, together with their staff of rangers, were the eyes and ears of the ministry, the trustees and the director, as well as the arm of the law. Outside of Kenya, international donors and funders became increasingly important after Independence. They funded research projects, sponsored the training of the African staff who would shortly take over the administration and running of the National parks, and thereby shaped the priorities of the wildlife administrators. These international funds provided for the presence of international scientists, who formed an entirely separate constituency as they conducted ecological studies in the Serengeti in Tanzania, Murchison Falls in Uganda, and Tsavo in Kenya. Their agendas were not always those of the ministries, departments, or organisations where they made their homes, and scientific research became a business and an industry of its own, one which saw scientists cycle through multiple projects and parks. Finally, and most amorously, there was international public opinion, which had its own ideas about African wildlife. These ideals were shaped by the romance of the safari, the urgent appeals for the preservation of wildlife, and the reports of scientists and journalists from the field.

Examining these constituencies allows us to think through the administrative shifts that characterised late-colonialism and the early post-independence years in Kenya. Emphasizing the wide latitude granted colonial administrators in Kenya, Berman described how “generalized rules or maxims” came to comprise the “conventional wisdom of the Provincial Administration”, and I would argue, of Kenya’s wildlife departments.<sup>42</sup> Wardens, like District and Provincial Officers, relied on a highly personalised style of rule, and believed that their authority grew out of their experience and their understanding of their subjects, and in fact “performed” the act of governance. In contrast, the technical departments which emerged particularly after the Second World War, the outlook of which was not dissimilar to the scientists who took up residence in Kenya’s parks, embraced a suite of policy areas and represented the aspirations of a more activist state to foster an authority derived from transplantable expertise and the power of their particular “science” to universalise conditions and homogenise problems. Berman characterised Provincial and District authorities as Catoist in outlook, allergic to change from without and enamoured of the ideal of trusteeship.<sup>43</sup>

These constituencies met in Tsavo during the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s. They grew interlocked, fed off one another, and were instrumental in setting up the tight-rope walk which those charged with formulating and implementing wildlife policy then and since must walk, keeping one eye on an international constituency, another on funders, and a third on events on the ground as they impacted the ecological health of the Park as well as the people who run it and live on its borders. The previous chapter discussed the anxieties which swirled around the creation of Africa’s National parks. Europeans thought that by separating the Parks’ administration from the crude world of politics, over which feared African nationalists were shortly to assume control, preservationists could retain a greater measure of control in the period following Independence. It is highly doubtful that Mervyn Cowie and his compatriots believed that they could maintain indefinite control over the Parks. Rather, they hoped to buy some time whilst working on efforts to ‘educate’ the African public: they sent off rangers to the College of

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<sup>42</sup> Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Crisis and Control in Colonial Kenya*, 233.

<sup>43</sup> Berman and Lonsdale, 233-5.

African Wildlife Management established at Mweka; they encouraged school visits to the park; they invited students to participate in essay writing contests; and they undertook a massive propaganda effort which involved creating films and sending Cowie on speaking tours to Britain.<sup>44</sup> The parks were conceived as “areas set aside in perpetuity—or in as near an approach to perpetuity as can be legally arranged—for the preservation of wild life, other than man”, and its Trustees were charged with the duty of “cater[ing] to visitors by the construction of roads and rest houses, and to do everything possible to throw [the Parks] open to the enjoyment of the world at large”. In the main and in their mentality, the Parks were preservationist creations.<sup>45</sup> As the Ugandan context illustrated, faith in such creations would swiftly be called into question.

The park at Tsavo was gazetted in 1948, and then split into two when its first warden retired. Tsavo West and Tsavo East each had their own warden. William Taberer took Tsavo West, and David Sheldrick commanded Tsavo East, which is where the story of the Tsavo Elephant problem unfolded. Sheldrick started his East African life as a soldier, and after a stint working with Safariland, he became an assistant warden, and then a Warden in his own right when he took over Tsavo.<sup>46</sup> In the early 1950s, the problems posed by Tsavo’s Elephants were not much different from those associated with Elephants elsewhere. Elephants living in close proximity to people, especially people who farmed, generally caused problems. There were large sisal estates adjoining the Tsavo National Park, and the Elephants regularly dined there, to the annoyance of their owners who, in conjunction with Game Department and National Parks staff, used selective shooting, thunder flashes, and electric fences to deter them, with little luck.<sup>47</sup> Strictly speaking, control work of this kind was the preserve of the Game Department (which was responsible for all animals outside of the National Parks), but because some of the offending animals were “Park Elephants”, National Parks got involved as well. But the first novel manifestation of the Tsavo Elephant Problem was related to poaching. This was nothing new, but it is suggested that there was intensification during the mid-1950s in the Tsavo region. Newly-arrived wardens were horrified to find the carcasses of Elephants slain by poisoned arrows strewn across the landscape in their charge. Bill Woodley, Sheldrick’s assistant, recounted how a local man, Elui, who became something of a tutor, informed him that hundreds of Elephants were being poached in the parks, and his first patrol revealed that “the sky over some sections of the park was literally black with vultures”.<sup>48</sup> From an anti-poaching perspective, Sheldrick and Woodley were fortunate in their allies. The newly-formed Kenya Wild Life Society had identified poaching as one of the key problems it aspired to address, and within months, together with the Royal National Parks, and with the support of the Game Department, the Kenya Police, the KPR Air wing, the Ministry of Forest, Game and Fisheries, a “field force” was created.<sup>49</sup> This military-style force was quartered at Voi and headed by Sheldrick.

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<sup>44</sup> KNA. KW 6/54. Minutes—Wardens’ Conference. 1951 to 1964, Box 21, Shelf 5479. KNA. KW 5/46. Game Department—Associations and Societies. East African Professional Hunters Association. 1951. Box 15, Shelf 5477. Mervyn Cowie. *Fly, Vulture*. London: G G Harrap, 1961.

<sup>45</sup> KNA. KW 8/7. Administration of Game Laws, Conferences, and Conventions. The Royal Commission and Game Preservation. 1953 to 1955. Box 25, Shelf 5480.

<sup>46</sup> Daphne Sheldrick, *The Tsavo Story* (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1973): 15, 19-20.

<sup>47</sup> KNA. KW 23/31. Warden’s Report—Tsavo Park (East), 1949 to 1956. Box 54, Shelf 5490.

<sup>48</sup> Dennis Holman, *Massacre of the Elephants* (New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1967): 9, 29.

<sup>49</sup> *Kenya Wild Life Society*, First Annual Report, 1956, 17.

The field force consisted of three teams, two based around Parks personnel, and two around Game Department personnel.<sup>50</sup> In the initial stages of the operation, Sheldrick had control of all teams. Later, each organisation (Parks and Game) stuck to their normal spheres of control.<sup>51</sup> The National Parks officials deplored the breaking-up of the campaign, and Cowie wrote to Sheldrick complaining of the attitude of Game Department leadership.<sup>52</sup> Mechanics of command aside, the methods of the field force are worth a brief description. The approach to the problem was two-fold. On the one hand, the Field Force engaged in what one participant later uneasily called the “Gestapo technique”, which involved “waking up households in the middle of the night, terrifying women and children, then getting the men to spit on their companions”. One of the two branches of the Field Force was even insensitively named Hola Force, before it was realised that the invocation of the notorious concentration camp where British security services massacred prisoners during the Mau Mau war was probably not the most effective propaganda.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, it was recognised that the initial approach of locking up “nearly every adult male” amongst “the Waliangulu” (a group thought to be largely behind the Elephant poaching) was impracticable, and so the Game Department embarked on what would eventually be known as the Galana River Game Management Scheme.<sup>54</sup> Ultimately a flop, this must represent one of the earliest efforts at something resembling “community conservation”. Taking inspiration from the work of the Meru African District Council, and relying on a £10,000 grant from the Nuffield Foundation (a mainstay amongst international funders of wildlife initiatives in East Africa), the Galana Scheme was born. Its mantra was “sustained yield”, and it demonstrated little of the squeamishness often associated with the preservationists who gave it their tacit backing: by killing a “sustainable” number of Elephants on an annual basis, the scheme was designed to show “that land useless for agricultural or pastoral purposes is capable of yielding a worthwhile return from its wild life resources if properly managed”, to “[rehabilitate] the Waliangulu tribe by providing as many as possible of its members with employment”, and to manage Elephants on the edges of the park by “controlling the increase of and if necessary reducing the Elephant population...during the period when herds move out of that sanctuary”.<sup>55</sup> By 1960, around 2,000 animals of a variety of species had been killed in the course of the scheme.

The scheme’s proponents had high hopes for success, and Ian Parker, a Game Warden, defended it against a District Commissioner who accused the Game Department of trying to allow the Waliangulu to “revert”. Parker replied that “the Scheme is no modified reversion to a

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<sup>50</sup> KNA. KW 1/36. Administration of the Game Laws.

<sup>51</sup> KNA. KW 1/38. Administration of the Game Laws.

<sup>52</sup> KNA. KW 17/7. Poaching. January 1957 to October 1961. Box 40, Shelf 5485.

<sup>53</sup> Ian Parker, “The anti-poaching campaign” in eds. Ian Parker and Stan Bleazard, *An Impossible Dream: Some of Kenya’s Last Colonial Wardens Recall the Game Department in the British Empire’s Closing Years* (Moray: Librario Publishing Ltd, 2001): 101, 112. Holman (1967): 214.

<sup>54</sup> *Game Department Annual Report, 1960. Colony and Protectorate of Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printer, 1961. Even the Kenya Wild Life Society noted that the predilection of Waliangulu hunters for flaunting the Game and Parks Laws might have had something to do with the fact that the Game Department was already shooting elephants outside of the park on control work, and that people whose livelihoods had been based on hunting saw “themselves in competition with the Game Department for the limited number of elephants”. KWLS, 1956, 26. It is also worth noting how the singular article “the” was routinely applied to tribal groupings by colonial administrators as part of a reductionist mindset and governing ideology.

<sup>55</sup> *Game Department Annual Report, 1960. Colony and Protectorate of Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printer, 1961. The notion of ‘rehabilitation’ was an instrument from the colonial government’s toolkit which became increasingly theoretically and practically developed during the Mau Mau War, as the colonial government erected a sequence of camps designed to identify, break, and then rehabilitate detainees. See Elkins.

decadent way of life, but a conversion to one of the most modern concepts of land use".<sup>56</sup> Parker, Noel Simon (of the Wildlife Society), and Sheldrick worked for a number of years at the scheme, but the fluctuating support of Waliangulu participants and the refusal of the Government to allow the sale of ivory and rhino horns (by far the most lucrative products, the prerogative to market these items was jealously guarded by colonial authorities, and the ivory from Kenya and Uganda was all sold at the Ivory Room in Mombasa) handicapped their efforts.<sup>57</sup> Sheldrick carried on commanding the Field Force, and Simon redoubled his efforts at the Wild Life Society. Parker, on the other hand, perhaps taking inspiration from the Scheme, set up a company called Wildlife Services Limited.

Sheldrick's anti-poaching campaign was regarded as a great success, and served as the model for similar efforts in the Northern Province. It was also brought back to life in the 1970s when poaching again reached what were considered crisis levels in Tsavo East. I would argue that it embodies the proprietary, personalised rule of the regionally-based colonial administration of the early days—whether District and Provincial Commissioners, or park wardens. In the meantime a new threat to the Tsavo Elephants materialised. When the National Parks were created, preservationists in Kenya conceded, however reluctantly, that wildlife outside of the National parks would probably eventually cease to exist. A growing population and the expansion of settlement, together with heavy poaching conspired to push an abnormally large number of Elephants into Tsavo East. Sheldrick's annual report in 1955 had already noted the impact that these Elephants were having on the park's environment, and he "observed that certain trees such as baobab were beginning to be destroyed". By the early 1960s, with rainfall at dangerously low levels, more apocalyptic warnings emanated from Tsavo. The entire park, it was said, would be transformed into a desert by the ravages of the Elephants the Field Force had fought so hard to save.<sup>58</sup> Rhinoceros populations in particular were being adversely affected by the elephants, and in one year over 300 of them died because a drought was compounded by a lack of vegetation.<sup>59</sup> In 1962, James Glover delivered a paper on the Elephant Problem which formed the basis for discussions that took place at Voi on 11 July 1962. There, attendees decided to kill one-third of Tsavo's Elephants over a period of two years. Revised aerial counts meant that 3,700 Elephants might have been killed had Trustees followed through with these plans.<sup>60</sup>

Cowie prevaricated. He may very well have believed that a more systematic scientific study was necessary before undertaking action. But from the very outset he was keenly aware of the public relations disaster the killing of nearly four thousand elephants would have brought down on his head. He immediately wrote to Julian Huxley, an eminent British scientist and former UNESCO Secretary General, asking him to do propaganda work in Britain to explain why such a step might be necessary. Cowie thought that a study by a "high powered" scientist should precede any culling. The Nature Conservancy disagreed, and said that because Tsavo's ecological survival was on the line, action needed to be taken promptly. Huxley concurred with the Conservancy, and said that the World Wildlife Fund should not be encouraged to fund a

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<sup>56</sup> I S C Parker, Letter of 28 May 1960. KNA. KW 17/3. Administration of Game Laws. Returns of Prosecution. Tribal Hunting. 1959 to 1963. Box 40, Shelf 5485.

<sup>57</sup> Daphne Sheldrick, 91-2.

<sup>58</sup> KNA. KW 24/32. Tsavo Research Project, 1970 to 1972. Box 61, Shelf 5492.

<sup>59</sup> KNA. KW 5/1. Administration of the Game Laws. Minutes of an emergency meeting of the council of the EAWLS, 6 November 1964.

<sup>60</sup> KNA. KW 10/1. Elephant Problems. 1961 to 1962. Box 29, Shelf 5482.



study for which the basic problem had been identified and a sensible solution had been devised.<sup>61</sup> The plight of the Tsavo Elephants did not go un-acknowledge around the world, as the hour for the culling operation approached. The Fauna Preservation Society (formerly the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire) wrote to Cowie to tell him that their members were disturbed by the prospect of the impending slaughter.<sup>62</sup>



**Image 10. The Royal Navy helps to count Tsavo's Elephants. PRO INF 10/161. November 1962, Kenya News Press Release No. 50**

Stories about the Tsavo Elephants appeared in the headlines of numerous overseas papers, even as National Parks backed down from the culling plans for the time being. A sampling of headlines reflect the extent of interest in the cull: "15,000 Elephants Set Problem; Experts Meet Today" (*The Times*, 14 September 1962); "Elephant Herd Worries Conservators" (*Irish Times*, 13 September 1962); "Appeal for Kenya Elephant Enquiry" (15 September 1962); "Elephants May Have to Be Slaughtered" (*Guardian*, 15 September 1962); "Kenya Experts to Tackle Elephant Surplus" (*Daily Telegraph*, 13 September 1962); "Death for 5,000 Elephants?" (*Deccan Chronicle*, 2 July 1962); "Guns to Halt the Hungry Elephants?" (*Manchester Evening News*, 17 September 1962); "Elephants are Reprieved" (*Daily Telegraph*, 15 September 1962); "Kenya Reprieve for Elephants" (*Western Evening Herald*, Plymouth, 15 September 1962); "Elephant Concentration May Mean Starvation" (*Irish Times*, 15 September 1962); "Reprieve

<sup>61</sup> Letter, Cowie to Worthington, 6 Dec 1962. KNA. KW 10/1. Elephant Problems. 1961 to 1962. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

<sup>62</sup> KNA. KW 10/1. Elephant Problems. 1961 to 1962. Box 29, Shelf 5482.



for Kenya Elephants” (*Birmingham Mail*, 15 September 1962); “Jumbo Stumbles Into Politics” (*Manchester Evening News*, 7 September 1962).<sup>63</sup> There was opposition within Kenya as well, and various “experts” took to the pages of the papers. Waruiru Gichuku Andwati, who had worked as a tourist driver in Tsavo, contended that there were only 2,000 Elephants in the Park, and that “imperialists have given the figures” which made a cull seem necessary. He called for a public appeal and warned that culling threatened to turn the elephants “wild”.<sup>64</sup> Another letter writer to the *Standard* complained that “an atmosphere of unreality surrounds the entire scheme. How can one talk of a ‘population explosion’ among animals” so soon after a poaching crisis?<sup>65</sup>

It was not just the fear of adverse public opinion which gave Cowie, the Trustees, and the Warden pause. To undertake an operation of this scale, which might have resulted in the killing (‘cropping’ and ‘removal’ were favoured euphemisms) of 5,000 elephants would have been a blow at the ideal of the National Park. Although Kenyan parks differed from their Belgian counterparts in that their administrators readily allowed—indeed actively encouraged—visitors, they were nonetheless designed as places set aside from the influences of man, places where nature was supposed to be able to operate unchecked, however brutal the results. The idea of parks as islands, untouched by their surroundings, was a deeply flawed one given that they were subject to pressures generated by the movement of humans and animals outside of the parks. Moreover, unless they were completely fenced—a daunting task for a park the size of Tsavo which encompassed over eight thousand square miles—wildlife was likely to move in and out of the park in search of food. Plains game in particular undertakes extensive migrations during the course of each year—literally heading for greener pastures. Charles Pitman, the Ugandan game warden who presided over that colony’s department for decades, and who influenced the creation of reserves and departments in Central Africa, had long recognised the artificiality of a reserve or park as a unit.<sup>66</sup> Cowie had admitted as much with reference to the Nairobi National park, which famously borders the largest city in the region.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, the National Parks ideal retained a certain amount of power, and was probably behind David Sheldrick’s later objections to the large culls that were proposed.<sup>68</sup>

The growth of an ecological sensibility, and the insights it purported to offer into the natural order of things, cut both ways—describing an ecological equilibrium which could simultaneously deplore dramatic intervention and require balanced administration. If they deplored man’s interference in the Parks for sentimental reasons, proponents of the Parks ideal were even more horrified at the idea of “Nature” being tipped out of balance. There was ecological evidence to support their desire to maintain some kind of balance in the Park. As noted above, until roughly the 1970s, ecologists believed that organisms worked in harmony within a given ecosystem, and that the culmination of this harmonious coexistence was a climax

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<sup>63</sup> KNA. KW 20/11. Overseas Press Comment, 1962 to 1963. Box 46, Shelf 5487.

<sup>64</sup> “Tsavo Elephants” in *East African Standard*, 23 September 1965. KNA. KW 20/9. Press Cuttings, 1965. Box 46, Shelf 5487.

<sup>65</sup> Anthony Lavers, “Fate of the Elephants” in *East African Standard*, 1 October 1965, KNA. KW 20/9.

<sup>66</sup> See Ugandan Game Department Annual Reports. His ideas were further distilled in an undated paper (likely from the mid-1960s) titled “African Wildlife”, from Natural History Museum, Pitman File—Z.MSS.PIT C3.

<sup>67</sup> KNA. KW 13/31. Nairobi National park—Advisory Committee, 1946 to 1961. Box 33, Shelf 5483.

<sup>68</sup> Sheldrick was accused of sentimentalism when he noted his disapproval of the large-scale culling operations that were proposed, but because he had been the first to suggest the need for culling in Tsavo, this seems inadequate as an explanation for his opposition. His wife recorded his belief that nature should be allowed to “take its course”. Sheldrick (1973): 150. As late as 1964, Sheldrick was advocating the use of helicopters to kill as many as 5,000 Elephants in Tsavo. KNA. KW 10/2. Elephant Problems. 1964 to 1966. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

stage or superorganism.<sup>69</sup> Eminent British ecologist, Frank Fraser Darling (who, incidentally had joined Huxley and others at the 1962 Voi conference which recommended culling, much to Cowie's consternation) had, after all, made the creation of a land commission using "modern socio-ecological coordination of land use activities in natural geographical areas" the cornerstone of the policy he recommended for Northern Rhodesia in 1957.<sup>70</sup> As custodians of National Parks, Wardens were therefore responsible for intervening when necessary to maintain the natural balance, a fuzzy idea now given a veneer of scientific respectability by the ecological sciences which formed the basis for most studies of National Parks in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda in the coming years. The Trustees' statement of purpose indicated "that Tsavo East should, if possible, be retained as an area of woodland and bush mainly for the protection of elephants and rhinos and, where suitable, for small numbers of plains game".<sup>71</sup> Any culling, by the logic of this statement, was aimed at maintaining a supposedly "natural" or "traditional" habitat, and was undertaken for the Elephants' own good. More meetings were called, and an "emergency" session in 1964 brought together park managers from Uganda, Tanganyika, and Kenya, where most members expressed trepidation at the thought of a cull.<sup>72</sup>

In the end, Cowie got his study, and it came in two stages. The first was a small-scale grant of USD 11,059 from the World Wildlife Fund (this grant came in two parts, from the U.S. National Appeal, and from Sir Malin Sorsbie) designed to cover the cost of a year-long survey.<sup>73</sup> The second grant marked the transformation of project funding in East Africa, and was funded not by the Kenya Wild Life Society, the World Wildlife Fund, or one of the British-based preservation groups. Instead, it was the Ford Foundation which funded what would become the Tsavo Research Project to the tune of £70,000 (\$195,800). The project (the application for funding had been made by the Kenyan Government) was to run from October of 1965 to January of 1967. A research committee was formed, and launched the search for a qualified scientist.<sup>74</sup> But by 1966, when the committee located the lead scientist for the project, Kenya had been independent for some years. The Trustees were no longer dominated by expatriates, and the Ministry nominally responsible for the Parks (at the eleventh hour before Independence the Trustees had relinquished their autonomous status and requested to be taken under the wing of a government ministry<sup>75</sup>), Tourism and Wildlife, appears to have been dominated by the Permanent Secretary, Aloyo Achieng. Cowie had bowed out, and the new director of the National Parks was Perez Olindo, who had received a B.Sc. in the United States from Michigan State University and proved no shrinking violet in the fierce policy debates that were to follow. Known for his sense of style, Olindo once tackled a panga-armed fleeing poacher in "the best

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<sup>69</sup> Donald Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 158-160.

<sup>70</sup> University Library (Cambridge), RCMS 348/2/8/1 Fraser Darling Report (Extract): 98.

<sup>71</sup> National parks Advisory Committee Meeting on Elephant Problem in Tsavo, 13 June 1963. KW 6/61. Kenya National Parks Executive Committee Trustees, 1963 to 1965. Box 22, Shelf 5479.

<sup>72</sup> KNA. KW 5/1. Administration of the Game Laws. Minutes of an emergency meeting of the council of the EAWLS, 6 November 1964

<sup>73</sup> *The Ark Under Way* 89.

<sup>74</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482. The committee comprised Achieng, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry; M Hyder, the Chairman of the National Parks Board of Trustees; J Ole Tipis, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. Olindo, Sheldrick, and Stewart, a senior research biologist in the Game Department, were to attend as needed (as would Richard Laws once he took up his post as Project Director).

<sup>75</sup> KNA. KW 1/62. Policy Confidential. 1960 to 1962. Box 6, Shelf 5474.

rugby tradition”—dressed in a pin-striped suit.<sup>76</sup> An early beneficiary of Judge Russell Train’s African Wildlife Leadership Foundation (created in 1961), and part-way through his course of study at Lansing, Olindo was sent back to Kenya by the AWLF to tour schools and give a series of propaganda talks on conservation.<sup>77</sup> He won the admiration of Game Warden Ian Grimwood, who wrote that Olindo “[worked] like a slave”—in his three months, Olindo visited three schools each day, seeking to convey the virtues of wildlife conservation to 6,500 young Kenyans. While perhaps not seen as “one of us”, Olindo’s hands-on attitude (in later years, as Director of National Parks, after a stint as a warden on the coast, Olindo even participated in a joint Field Force-GSU operation in Tsavo) appealed to the expatriate wardens.



**Image 11. Wildlife propaganda by the Northern Rhodesian Game and Tsetse Control Department. PRO INF 10/381**

Those same wardens, however, remained possessive of their terrain, which they were accustomed to ruling with little oversight from the central government and few specific directives from the Trustees or the Director. The policies—such as they were—that wardens executed in their parks tended to be based on continuing established routines of management, and had little reference to the colony-wide picture, to ecological health, or to a discrete policy sphere. The formation of the Tsavo Research Project introduced a markedly different approach to management, and one which worked uneasily from the beginning because it paralleled the

<sup>76</sup> Stan Bleazard, “Call me Al” in Parker and Bleazard, 291-2.

<sup>77</sup> Library of Congress, Russell E Train Papers, Folder 5.

more personal, informal, generalist administration of the game wardens. The scientist chosen to lead the Tsavo Research Project was not an American, as some on the committee had wanted, but rather Richard Laws, the Cambridge-educated scientist who had been running the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology at Murchison Falls in Uganda. Although Kenya's first National Park was created some six years in advance of Uganda's, the Uganda National Parks were ahead of the game where ecological research was concerned—perhaps because the history of energetic control practised in that colony made Park administrators less squeamish about inviting in scientists whose recommendations might ruffle the feathers of the preservationists (Noel Simon suggested that in Kenya, Mervyn Cowie kept Fulbright Scholars away because an early batch had the temerity to produce results which contradicted his own theories).<sup>78</sup> In any case, Laws took up his appointment at Tsavo in February of 1967 after some hard-nosed bargaining on his part over the salary the National Parks were prepared to offer (in the end they had to request top-up funds from the Kenya government).<sup>79</sup> But before then, at his direction, 300 elephants had already been killed for use as a “sample”. Laws’ enemies (and they multiplied faster than the elephants) would question the necessity of this “sample”, but at the time, the Trustees, the Director, and the Wardens were content to let their “expert” call the shots.

In Uganda, Laws had headed NUTAE, and in that capacity, had ordered the killing of 2,700 Elephants for a sample. Laws’ general methodology appears to have been widely respected, and his work is much cited in other ecological studies of megafauna during his era. David Western, who would later head the Kenya Wildlife Service, referred to Laws’ “prodigious talent”, “relentless statistical detail”, and “painstaking” accumulation of data from the samples that he amassed—data which, Western wrote, made Laws’ studies “the standard work of reference on elephant reproduction and population dynamics for two decades”.<sup>80</sup> Ian Parker, formerly of the Galana River Game Management Scheme, and now of Wildlife Services, Limited, had undertaken the culling work in Uganda. Laws requested that Parker also do the culling work at Tsavo, and the National Parks authorities acceded to this request. The Uganda cull had been controversial, and the very mention of a cull at Tsavo in 1962 had set the headlines afire, so Laws, Parker, and the National Parks authorities were all keen to avoid publicity. One of the key points in the negotiations that led to Parker’s employment was the language surrounding access to areas where culling was to take place. Parker pushed for even stronger language than Olindo had originally drawn up, noting that “through our Uganda work we have already received a great deal of harmful publicity in the European press (even Sheldrick’s wife, sympathetic to the need to cull, referred to Parker as the Elephants’ “executioner”). In the end, Parker demanded (and received) assurances that any visitors to the culling sites needed permission from both the Trustees and Wildlife Services. The contract between the National Parks and Wildlife Services also laid down heavy restrictions on the circulation of photographs.<sup>81</sup>

Daphne Sheldrick recalled that “the actual method of cropping took advantage of the unit structure of the population and was gruesomely efficient”. Helicopters (and sometimes, it seems,

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<sup>78</sup> Noel Simon, “New Directions in the 1950s” in Parker and Bleazard (89-90). Although Cowie ruffled plenty of feathers and particularly offended fellow East African preservationists by grabbing much of the limelight around the creation of Kenya’s National Parks (at one stage he even received hate-mail on the subject—See *Fly Vulture*), criticism was mostly muted, probably because he was undoubtedly committed and was undeniably a skilled publicist for the National Parks cause.

<sup>79</sup> “Notes on the Second Elephant Committee Meeting”, 28 March 1966. KNA. KW 6/71. D W L Sheldrick Elephant Committee, 1966 to 1967. Box 23, Shelf 5480.

<sup>80</sup> David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 1997), 117-120.

<sup>81</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482. Sheldrick (1973): 125.

planes) were used to spot the elephants, and when necessary, to drive them to a suitable location. Sheldricks' account of the destruction of a herd made clear why Olindo, David Sheldrick and Parker all feared vivid press accounts:

The leader [elephant herds are matriarchal in structure] was shot first, and her sudden death reduced the others to a panic-stricken, bewildered mob, who clustered around her in complete confusion, utterly demoralized and not knowing what to do next. Any remaining adults were then selected, leaving the calves clambering over their mothers' bodies in pathetic terror until they, too, died, and all that remained of the family was an inert herd of carcasses, the blood spilling out to form a sticky maroon pool before blending with the red Tsavo soil.

The speed of the shooting, which could apparently take as little as two minutes, was one saving grace, though from a public relations standpoint it was probably of little importance.<sup>82</sup> At least some accounts made the press, although it is not clear whether they were written by eyewitnesses, or based on reconstructions. *Time* magazine reported, in a sanitised account of one operation, how a light plane would identify a herd, and "white hunters" would descent from a helicopter and "[disappear] into the tangle of thorn trees. There was a burst of high-powered shots, a flutter of startled egrets. The hunters reappeared. Behind them lay a family of ten elephants, from a yearling calf to its great-tusked grandfather, all dead".<sup>83</sup> Headlines ranged from the blunt ("300 Elephants Slaughtered", *Daily Express*, 20 October 1966) to the clinical ("White Hunters Shoot Surplus of Elephants", *Guardian*, 20 October 1966), to the more sentimental ("Hunters Wipe Out Elephant Families", *Toronto Globe*, 11 October 1966).<sup>84</sup>

There was already a project team in place when Laws arrived on the ground to examine his samples and take up his post as director. Stewart, a senior research biologist in the Game Department, was seconded to the project, and an ex-forest officer was appointed to perform vegetation transects. There were four research assistants, an accountant, and various subordinate staff. Sheldrick also lent the teams a hand when needed. Murray Watson, also of Cambridge, was appointed the team zoologist. Dr. P E Glover was eventually appointed as a biologist.<sup>85</sup> From the outset, Glover questioned the scientific rationale for culling the first 300 elephants, for Laws' request for a second 300 on the outskirts of the park, and for his later request for 2,700 further elephants for the study, but the full implications of this and other divisions both amongst the project team and between the team and the Warden and Director, would not become apparent immediately. Laws saw the research problem in the following terms. The Tsavo Elephants, "by uprooting, barking and destroying trees have opened up the bush in certain areas". Grass replaced acacia, and this process allowed bush fires to make dangerous inroads. He would use his "cropped" Elephants to "obtain scientific data on the structure and dynamics of the elephant population, on its reproduction, growth, social organisation and feeding habits". In addition to analysing stomach contents, Laws measured weight, growth curves, conditions of the population, puberty statistics, calving intervals and general age-structure.<sup>86</sup> The project gradually took

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<sup>82</sup> Sheldrick (1973), 187-8.

<sup>83</sup> "The Great Elephant Hunt" in *Time*, 4 November 1966. In KNA. KW 20/13. Overseas Press Comment 1966. Box 46, Shelf 5487.

<sup>84</sup> KNA. KW 20/13. Overseas Press Comment 1966. Box 46, Shelf 5487.

<sup>85</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

<sup>86</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

shape, and its infrastructure comprised four houses, a generator, three laboratories, a dark room, and toilets. And yet despite the promising beginnings, as the headlines that derailed the early culls (and Laws' own experience in Uganda) should have made clear, there could be no "pure" science, abstracted from politics, in such a context, and the disputes that followed illustrate how bureaucratic organisation, preservationist politics, and ecological sciences became tightly bound at Tsavo.

Laws' early clashes with Olindo, who was working to assert control over an institution that Cowie had dominated for over a decade, were over small matters. The Director nixed Laws' proposal that a number of junior scientists should be brought in from overseas, refused his request to keep found ivory (the post-independence government was as jealous of this prerogative as its predecessor), and asked that instead of relying on Wildlife Services, Laws should train several staff members to form a culling team.<sup>87</sup> Laws, as he would in the future, reacted furiously to what he saw as interference on his turf, and immediately dashed off a letter to Achieng, proclaiming that Olindo's letter had "grave implications for the future of the research project". His most stinging accusation was that "the Trustees and their staff do not want an effective research project, but one merely for show".<sup>88</sup> This barb might have been close to the truth. After all, the "study" designed to postpone the full culling operation, was fast turning into a public relations disaster on its own. Olindo reprimanded Laws for breaching protocol, and raised the high-handed manner in which the overseas scientists departed on leave at their whim, ignoring directives of the Kenyan government and declining to inform the Parks Director when they would be absent from duty. He followed up by referring Laws and Watson to Bert Billingsley, the Parks' fastidious and sarcastic Chief Accountant.<sup>89</sup>

The straw that really broke the Professor's back was, however, a letter introducing John Mutinda. Officially, Mutinda's labours would have made Laws' life easier, as he was charged with taking care of the administrative duties that the eminent Doctor clearly felt beneath his station. Mutinda arrived at Tsavo having finished a stint at Homa Bay as Game Warden, where he clashed with the neighbouring warden, Temple-Boreham. Laws regarded Mutinda as a spy, sent to interfere with him and undermine his research.<sup>90</sup> Laws reacted by submitting a report titled "The Tsavo Research Project—Current Problems and Future Needs". This report dealt only cursorily with the scientific aspects of the project before turning its fire on all other parties. He refused to train Parks' staff for cropping duties, asserted that he should be responsible directly to the Trustees ["wrong" wrote Olindo in red ink on the report], and expressed outrage that he should be consigned to the position of "senior biologist". He also complained that the Trustees had been slow to hold meetings at his request, and accused Olindo of "interfer[ing] with the expenditure of funds". Not content with alienating Olindo and the Trustees, Laws took on David Sheldrick as well, burning the last of his bridges. First he called him an "estate manager" (a red flag to wardens of this era who were sensitive about their general lack of scientific training), and then noted that "in some cases the estate management practises may conflict with the conservation needs", also suggesting that Sheldrick's prize anti-poaching campaign had been carried out sloppily, without regard for the ecological consequences (an accusation which on the

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<sup>87</sup> Letter, Olindo to Laws, 14 July 1967. KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

<sup>88</sup> Letter, Laws to Achieng, 18 July 1967. KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

<sup>89</sup> Letter, Laws to Olindo, 27 October 1967. KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

<sup>90</sup> Letter, Olindo to Laws, 4 December 1967. KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.



face of it was fair enough).<sup>91</sup> Laws submitted his report together with a letter to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees in which he gave his opinion that “the work of the Tsavo Research Project has been severely hampered by administrative delays, obstructions and active antagonism from certain officers of the board”. Unwilling to heed the Trustees’ injunction to let bygones be bygones, Olindo “pledged to continue religiously to safeguard, and interfere with, efforts to misuse public funds”.<sup>92</sup> This was not merely a clash of personalities, but of two styles of administration: one based on the well-rounded amateur, the other on scientific and technical expertise; one which regarded centralised control as an axiom of management, the other demanding technical autonomy.

On 26 February, 1968, Laws wrote to the Trustees offering his resignation. They accepted, in a move which allegedly surprised Laws.<sup>93</sup> Laws’ departure—caused in part by personal antagonism, but also by his view that as an international scientist of repute he stood outside the chain of command established by the Kenyan Government and practised a more rigorous, serious brand of science than his Kenyan colleagues—was only the beginning of the fight as far as he was concerned, and he launched a series of biting attacks on the Trustees, Olindo, David Sheldrick, and the terms under which the National Parks were run. One was a direct response to a 4 October 1968 article (“Reprieve for Tsavo Elephants: Nature Plays Tricks on the Massacre Advocates”) in a local magazine, *The Reporter*. Laws’ reply came in the form of two articles in the *Nation*, in which he castigated *The Reporter* as a mouthpiece for Olindo and accused the Kenya National parks of subscribing to a “policy of *laissez-faire* as against ‘scientific conservation’”. His critics, Laws went on to write, were “sentimental”, and their arguments “in favour of non-intervention are not based on any published or verifiable evidence”. In fact, he continued, “the results of recent research indicate that, paradoxically, ‘strict preservation’ may well lead to the disappearance or gross reduction of the Tsavo Elephant population within a few decades”.<sup>94</sup> Olindo responded, and the cycle continued.<sup>95</sup> Laws continued to harass the National Parks, writing in *Oryx* and the *Times of Zambia*, and although the Parks expressed persistent optimism that the controversy would die down, it continued to smoulder into the 1970s. The central aesthetic, moral, and scientific dilemmas of ecological management continued to lurk beneath the personalised attacks in these warring articles.

“Laws”, a ministry hand sardonically noted, “has proved himself beyond all reasonable doubt to be an able scientist. But he is not—so far as is known—the Almighty”, and deplored Laws’ condemnation of Kenya wardens’ efforts as “estate management by an expatriate squirearchy” (though here Laws was probably closer to the mark than the Ministry cared to acknowledge, given that Africanisation had been far less successful at the wardenial level than amongst bureaucrats). Olindo took an equally personal approach to rebutting Laws, asking, “Could it be that he hopes to cover his mistakes and justify his actions elsewhere?”<sup>96</sup> This attack on Laws revealed a divergence of interests and of aims between Laws and other international researchers on the one hand, and local administrators on the other. The latter *were* interested in

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<sup>91</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem. 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

<sup>92</sup> KNA. KW 24/35. Tsavo Research Project, 1968. Box 62, Shelf 5493.

<sup>93</sup> KNA. KW 6/72. Working Papers for Meeting of Executive Committee of the Trustees, 1967.

<sup>94</sup> “Scientist Again Warns on Tsavo Elephants” in *Sunday Nation*, 27 October 1968. “The Last of the Elephants in Our Lifetime”, *Daily Nation*, 3 November, 1968. KNA. KW 20/21. Daily Nation Press Cuttings, 1968. Box 76, Shelf 5566.

<sup>95</sup> “Parks Director Incredulous at Laws’ Letter” in *Sunday Nation*, 17 November 1968. KNA. KW 20/21. Daily Nation. Press Cuttings 1968, Box 76, Shelf 5566.

<sup>96</sup> KNA. KW 24/31. Tsavo Research Project 1968 to 1970. Box 61, Shelf 5492.

doing large-scale comparative work (hence Laws' eagerness to transfer from Murchison to Tsavo), they had scientific reputations to maintain, and they sought generalisable conclusions. Their first loyalty, as became painfully obvious at Tsavo, was not necessarily to their political and administrative superiors in the context of a specific project, and they believed that the scientific practise (in their view a neutral process) should be independent of political concerns. Laws' impatience for what he saw as the pandering of administrators to public opinion to the detriment of science was a product of their transience. Ian Parker, whose own career straddled these two worlds, took up cudgels against the National Parks in 1972 in *Africana*. Walter Leuthold, a project scientist, responded, noting that

Perhaps it might be useful to inform your readers that Mr Parker is the head of 'Wildlife Services Ltd', a Nairobi-based firm that specialises in 'wildlife research and management' (according to its letterhead), and that, in the past few years, has carried out several game cropping projects on a commercial basis, including the culling of 2,000 Elephants in Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda. Mr Parker's comments and 'philosophy' must be evaluated in this context.<sup>97</sup>

In private, there were more explicit expressions of discontent with Parkers work. Daphne Sheldrick, drawing an explicit link to the "corruption [that] was creeping into the top echelons of independent Kenya", recalled Parker telling her husband, "The elephants are going to go anyway...and those of us who protected them all these years deserve some of the spoils".<sup>98</sup> Where Laws had been interested in a purely ecological approach to the Tsavo Elephant Problem, Parker had hoped to deliver economic returns from what he regarded as highly scientific elephant culling. Leuthold and the other members of the Tsavo project were not alone in their unease with a frank discussion of the relationship between wildlife and economics. Keith Eltringham, who replaced Laws in Uganda, later wrote a book titled *Wildlife Resources and Economic Development*, which Parker reviewed searingly for its failure to tackle the link suggested in its title. He attacked Eltringham for handling data uncritically, for generalisations, and the "numerous errors" which he claimed resulted, for "glaring omissions", condemning the whole project as a "woolly and shallow treatise".<sup>99</sup> Thus erstwhile allies fell out over the chain of command, the mixture of material profit and scientific knowledge, and the economic as well as scientific bases for large-scale culling.

P E Glover, the Tsavo botanist who assumed a lead role in the project after Laws' departure, reckoned that the "Laws episode" had far-reaching implications. The "prima donna attitude" of the scientists caused other high profile international figures to warn Glover and others that "Kenya wild life biologists have such a bad name for disagreement and back-biting among themselves. Several people", he intimated in a letter to Elspeth Huxley in which he defended Sheldrick and the Parks, "have told me quite bluntly that this fact has seriously affected their willingness to donate funds for wildlife research over here".<sup>100</sup> Such second-hand remarks are obviously open to multiple interpretations, one other being that wardens and administrators participated in back-biting, which inhibited the ability of scientists to do what they regarded to be

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<sup>97</sup> Leuthold to *Africana*, 26 April 1972. KW 24/33. Tsavo Research Project, 1972 to 1973. Box 62, Shelf 5493.

<sup>98</sup> Daphne Sheldrick, *Love, Life, and Elephants: An African Love Story* (New York: Picador, 2012), 168.

<sup>99</sup> "Wildlife Resources and Economic Development by S K Eltringham", reviewed by Ian Parker. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, vol 60, No 3 (Sept 1985): 399-400.

<sup>100</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem, 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.



“their job”. But even the Ford Foundation’s man on the ground wrote that “Dick Laws may be a good scientist, but his public relations are horrible”. And public relations, it turned out, very much mattered. Glover also repeatedly (though mostly privately) called Laws’ science into question, writing that he hadn’t been on the ground long enough to be sure that culling was necessary and that, in fact, Laws had tackled the problem the wrong way around by failing to first conduct a systematic vegetation study to determine the real state of the ecosystem and the Elephants’ impact thereon. As others would do, Glover also invoked his own greater “experience of Africa”, suggesting (as the wardens of an earlier era had done when confronted by the evidence of what they derisively referred to as the “museum systematist and science expert”<sup>101</sup>) that a certain kind of boots-on-the-ground, wind-through-your-hair experience, and the amateur natural history that went with it, trumped ecology and any other science the likes of Dick Laws could marshal.<sup>102</sup> For Glover, Sheldrick and Laws, this was only partly about changes in the Tsavo ecosystem. As much at stake was the kind of knowledge that would carry weight with the Trustees, Olindo and Achieng (all of whom were engaged in an attempt to establish control over what had until recently been an autonomous, European-dominated institution), to say nothing of international funders.

The other (and more ecological) counter to the Laws argument for culling was the assertion that yes, culling might have checked the transformation of the Tsavo ecosystem if it had been begun in the 1950s. But now it was too late. Laws had also, his critics contended, failed to account for the influence of fire, such was his and Parker’s fixation with killing Elephants. Fire had superseded the Elephant as the primary agent of ecological change in the Park. Elephants had been responsible for creating the conditions in which fire played this starring role, but reacting to the cause of those conditions rather than the conditions themselves was a mistake. It was fire which now needed to be understood. So on the one hand, Laws’ critics argued that he was somehow *too* scientific, and didn’t understand, at a visceral level, the animals, the parks, or Africa. Instead of analysing conditions on the ground, he was importing abstract theories to explain what only long tenure could actually make clear. At the same time, his critics (often the same ones) suggested that Laws was *insufficiently* scientific. That is, he and the “Ian Parkers of this world”, who set out to “[crop] wild animals to justify their existence”<sup>103</sup>, were so intent on burnishing their reputations and on expanding their work (i.e. from Murchison Falls, where conditions were considered to be different), that their approach was anything but ecological. The principle of ecology, after all, was to gather knowledge on an entire ecosystem, and to act on that information. This holistic component was supposedly lacking in Laws’ work. Moreover, killing was crude, and qualitative observation would, the critics wrote, reveal far more that was of use to science. Others, acting on their “deeper” knowledge of place, leveraged historical arguments. According to David Western, Sheldrick rebutted Laws at an early meeting, saying, “The area [Tsavo] was under grassland when the Gala grazed cattle in Tsavo last century. Their graves are still visible. The area later turned to bush after they abandoned the area and is in the process of becoming grassland again. What’s happening in Tsavo today is part

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<sup>101</sup> PRO. CO 536/155/3—1929. Elephant Tusks, weight limit permitted under special licence.

<sup>102</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem, 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482. Glover, for one (perhaps his eye was on the prize), was vehemently opposed to recruiting an American to replace Laws. Even though ecology was recognised as being better-developed in the U.S., Glover doubted whether “a man with adequate experience of Africa” existed in the U.S.

<sup>103</sup> KNA. KW 10/3. Elephant Problem, 1966 to 1968. Box 29, Shelf 5482.

of a natural cycle and there is no need to cull”<sup>104</sup> Laws was contemptuous of Sheldrick’s historicism, and devoted eleven pages of an unpublished autobiography to debunking the warden’s reading of historical accounts of travellers in the Tsavo region which the National Parks had used to argue against a cull.<sup>105</sup>

At the administrative level, tensions between scientists and administrators did not die down with Laws’ departure (although they certainly lessened), indicating that the problem was as much structural as personal. Billingsley, the accountant, grew impatient with Glover’s lack of respect for accounting procedures and his refusal to “toe the line”.<sup>106</sup> Billingsley identified the same creeping hubris that had caused so much damage to the Park’s reputation through Laws’ person in the high-handed manner of other scientists. Walter Leuthold blithely required that his wife be authorized to use Project vehicles and “carry out supplementary observations at times when I myself had other work to do”.<sup>107</sup> The ever-vigilant Billingsley fumed over the attitude of Leuthold and Glover, who in his mind “fondly imagine that they have only to ask for something and it will be granted! It is about time, I suggest, that they were disillusioned!! This particular frame of mind stems from the rather ‘slap-happy’ administrative minds of scientists in general”. He encouraged Olindo to refuse Leuthold’s request, and wondered what “other work” he was doing that took him away from his Project duties.<sup>108</sup> Once again, Kenyan officials got the impression that the international scientists were less than totally dedicated to their current assignment, and were busy trying to put out extra publications, with one eye always fixed on their next position. The formalisation of administrative structures and procedures, and the efforts to professionalise wildlife departments with an aim of taking a more activist approach to management, left little room for the informal culture which had characterised the Game and National Parks departments during the colonial era, when they bled, in terms of attitudes and personnel, fairly seamlessly into settler society and a much smaller and more homogenous wildlife lobby.

Glover, perhaps unsurprisingly, saw things differently from the Park bureaucrats. In 1971, he wrote to Olindo expressing concern that the disdain that wardens had for scientists would ruin the Parks’ reputation. He saw the wardens as pettily interfering in his attempts to host visiting scientists, find accommodation, and bring groups of students from Nairobi University. “It has”, he grouched, “been made abundantly clear to us that we [the scientists] are not wanted!”<sup>109</sup> An unsigned note by a Parks administrator gave voice to what might have been the wardens’ fears, namely that “the whole concept of management...is slowly but surely being under-mined by the horde of scientists who are now seeking fame...by adding their voices to those who have already made pronouncements on various aspects”. This trend would have apocalyptic consequences if not checked, the writer added, and “unless the activities within the

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<sup>104</sup> David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro*, 117-120. I would hesitate to accept Western’s account as resembling what occurred, verbatim, at the meeting. He was writing years after the fact, and misidentified the year of the early meeting. The quote might very well, however, capture the spirit of Sheldrick’s rebuttal.

<sup>105</sup> Richard M. Laws, *Large Animals and Wide Horizons: Adventures of a Biologist. The Autobiography of Richard M. Laws*, ed. Arnoldus Schytte Blix (Scott Polar Research Institute: 2012), 252-263.

<sup>106</sup> Billingsley to Glover, 13 March 1970. KNA. KW 24/31. Tsavo Research Project 1968 to 1970. Box 61, Shelf 5492.

<sup>107</sup> Leuthold to Olindo, 15 July 1971. KNA. KW 24/31. Tsavo Research Project 1968 to 1970. Box 61, Shelf 5492.

<sup>108</sup> Billingsley to Olindo, 19 July 1971. KNA. KW 24/31. Tsavo Research Project 1968 to 1970. Box 61, Shelf 5492.

<sup>109</sup> Glover to Olindo, 7 December 1971. KNA. KW 24/31.

research sphere—and their attendant scientists—can be kept within reasonable limits, then the warden and his staff might just as well relegate themselves to a secondary role in the eastern section of the park, since they will find themselves completely dominated by scientific research”.<sup>110</sup> Here then, was another disjuncture. International scientists failed to appreciate that National Parks were not simply their laboratories or playgrounds. They belonged to the public, their facilities had to be designed to cater to the public, and to a certain extent at least, they had to look like what the public expected of a National Park. That, in the view of many, required management along the jack-of-all-trades lines long favoured by European wardens.

The Tsavo Project also encountered financial difficulties. When the Ford Foundation grant expired in 1969 the project had to rely on a temporary fixed allowance from the Kenya Government. Eventually the Ford Foundation came back on board. Daphne Sheldrick, for one, suspected that the divergent loyalties of scientists might have contributed to the difficulties the Project experienced in getting funding. Members of the East African Wild Life Society, which funded a range of projects in the region (heavily tilted toward Kenya) in the late-1950s, worried that “far too much of the funds, donated by people with a genuine desire to improve the lot of wild animals, was channelled instead into nebulous and drawn-out research projects, whose benefits to the cause of conservation, management of parks, or the animals themselves, were very difficult to see”. This concern illustrates a further pressure—one exercised on funding bodies which drew their support from public donations. Their priorities (“the cause of conservation, management of parks, or the animals themselves”) were very different to those of scientists who did not view conservation as a “cause” (they viewed their science as detached from moral questions) and were not particularly interested in the fate of individual animals. Sheldrick believed that her husband wanted researchers to become actual members of Parks’ staff, and not just “privileged birds of passage”.<sup>111</sup> The accusation that researchers were high-flyers, more interested in their careers than in conservation was, of course, only part of the story. The administration of the Kenya National Parks was fragmented, with the publicity-conscious Trustees having the final word on matters of policy, and the PR-savvy Director being equally conscious of the need to keep one eye on feeling in the Kenyan and international publics. The “study”, like the visit of the “high-powered scientist”, had become a way to put off making a decision, and a method of avoiding action. It was a cover-up of sorts, and as the Tsavo story demonstrates, scientists and administrators revised their opinion of what the Elephant Problem *really* was, and of what should *actually* be done about it, every few years between the 1950s and the mid-1970s.

By the 1970s, the pendulum had swung yet again, and the Elephants were seen as badly threatened by poaching activities. So much so that in 1973, Elephant hunting was banned altogether in Kenya. The ban was lifted the following year, but under pressure from poachers and the international community the Kenyan government instituted a full ban on hunting in the country in 1977.<sup>112</sup> The World Bank sponsored a series of anti-poaching efforts that relied on Sheldrick’s earlier militarisation of the National Park staff in Tsavo (a militarisation which, it is suggested, extended to the culture of the National Parks as a whole because by the ‘70s over half of the Parks’ wardens spent time at Tsavo East under Sheldrick<sup>113</sup>). Part of the price for a

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<sup>110</sup> KNA. KW 24/32. Tsavo Research Project, 1970 to 1972. Box 61, Shelf 5492.

<sup>111</sup> Sheldrick (1973), 224, 284.

<sup>112</sup> This ban remains in place and has been alternately hailed as a forward-thinking approach which saved the elephant and as a misplaced PR-oriented move which will doom Elephants over the long-term.

<sup>113</sup> KNA. KW 1/6. Miscellaneous. Correspondence, 1957 to 1977. Box 1, Shelf 5797.

\$17,000,000 loan from the World Bank was the reorganisation of the wildlife departments in Kenya, which in 1975 were folded together into a single organisation.<sup>114</sup> The Kenyan government sold its reorganisation in the form of a Tourism and Wildlife Project which promised to overhaul wildlife policy as Kenya knew it. Not only would there be administrative reorganisation. The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife also wanted to put the Parks on course to increase tourism and the revenue that flowed from it. The Project also allowed for overlapping land use by local communities (this stemmed from the work of David Western in Amboseli), and was pitched by the Treasury to the World Bank as a plan “far in advance of any park plan for U.S. or Canadian parks”.<sup>115</sup>

In the end, the consolidation of the Parks did away with the trustees and strengthened the position of the Director, also creating a single clearing house for the requisition of funds. An AWLF report had recommended the somewhat uncertain position of the Director be clarified, but it is not clear whether this recommendation had any bearing on the reorganisation.<sup>116</sup> The other Elephant Problem hadn’t gone away, but the Parks were basically committed to a “wait-and-see” approach, to be accompanied, of course, by “scientific studies of various aspects of the situation”. The move confirmed Laws’ worst fears from the ‘60s. The Trustees and their successors were afraid to act on research, and simply commissioned more and more of it, confident that any palatable conclusions which one set of researchers drew would be undermined by the next round of studies. The primary purpose of the Tsavo Research Project, its supervisors admitted, was to provide a “monitoring service”.<sup>117</sup> This was illustrated by the character of the studies the Project undertook in the aftermath of the 1969 to 1970 drought which killed a number of Elephants and Rhinoceroses. The studies dealt with “elephant behaviour, population dynamics and movements”, with an aim to assessing “the approximate numbers and proportion of different age groups affected”. The Project also studied the feasibility of radio tracking, and conducted further vegetation studies.<sup>118</sup> But there were no concrete objectives in the terms of reference for these studies, no commitment to applying the findings, and no real sense of the kind of application the Project would countenance. While not “science for science’s sake”, the failure to link an array of research agendas to a concrete management scheme might be interpreted as reflecting a resignation to the cyclical nature of the droughts, the population explosions, the poaching epidemics, and the bureaucratic battles that characterised decision-making on the Tsavo Elephants between the early 1950s and the ‘70s. In this respect, Sheldrick’s views had won out.

So why this reticence to act? Why the confusion about what the Elephant Problem was, no less how to answer it? The reasons were both local—that is, peculiar to Tsavo East—and general—that is, reflective off the broader trajectory of wildlife policy in eastern Africa. At the

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<sup>114</sup> KNA. KW 1/6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1957 to 1977. Box 1, Shelf 5797.

<sup>115</sup> KNA. KW 21/14. World Bank, 1974 to 1975. Box 49, Shelf 5488. Local management was becoming all the rage, and was embraced at different times by different people. In a particularly bizarre twist, Anthony Cullen, who only years earlier had been warning that Africans would savagely butcher all of the region’s game after Independence, called for Tsavo National Park to be de-gazetted and handed over to various communities for management. Letter, Cullen to Mwanyumba, 9 November 1962. KNA. KW 1/62. Policy Confidential, December 1960 to November 1962. Box 6, Shelf 5474.

<sup>116</sup> Howard E McCurdy, “Administering Kenya’s National Parks”. KNA. KW 21/7. AWLF, 1975. Box 48, Shelf 5488.

<sup>117</sup> Tsavo Research Coordinating Committee Working Paper on Plans for Future Research at the Tsavo Research Project. KNA. KW 24/34. Tsavo Research Project 1974 to 1975. Box 62, Shelf 5493.

<sup>118</sup> P E Glover, “Tsavo Research Project” (undated), KNA. KW 13/37. Tsavo East General Correspondence 1971 to 1976. Box 34, Shelf 5483.

local level, the incompatibility of Richard Laws with his co-workers was clearly a factor which contributed to the conflicts that plagued Tsavo during the '60s and '70s. But even these personal issues stemmed from a larger set of questions and issues. Just because they had independent, international funding, could international scientists be allowed to dominate the park? To whom did they report, and were their superiors obliged to take their advice? "No", was clearly the immediate answer to the above questions, but as Laws' vindictive campaign demonstrated, it was as much about who could control the narrative that spun out in the newspapers, official correspondences, and international gossip-channels as it was about official hierarchies.

The importance of narrative speaks to the other major factor: "public opinion". It was this, more than any uncertainty in the conclusions of scientists, which influenced the approach of the Parks to the Elephant Problem. In committing itself fully to National Parks (and the revenue from tourism that came with them), the post-Independence government broke with the practise of the colonial government, much to the pleasant surprise of Wardens and the Director. But paradoxically, because it was invested in the Parks' success, a success which depended on revenues from tourism<sup>119</sup>, the Director, the Trustees, and the Ministry were all unwilling to countenance a course of action which would jeopardise the standing of Kenya's National Parks in Europe and North America. Allowing too much "science" into the picture, with its cold calculations, was one such threat. In essence, the Tsavo Problem (not really about Elephants) was a product of its particular moment. Observations about Elephants (whether poaching or overpopulation) occurred at a moment of transition for the National Parks, and for the Kenyan Government. Although being a part of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife put the Parks on firmer financial footing, it also meant the loss of some independence, and the new African Director sought to assert himself in the face of pressure from scientists who regarded him as a mere bureaucrat. Both Director and Ministry, in the context of the new importance of tourism for Kenya, were acutely sensitive to adverse criticism from abroad, and vetoed requests to cull thousands of Elephants. The other side of the international coin comprised international funding bodies which do not, in the Tsavo case, appear to have exerted real influence on the course taken by research, or to have intervened in the bureaucratic wars that flared up. Research scientists, on the other hand, resented the controls imposed on them, asserted their independence (or at least sought to do so), and attempted to use their research in individual parks to make generalisable claims about species, habitats or ecology writ large.

## Conclusions

The transition from the colonial to the post-colonial eras occurred alongside a shift from an era of park management dominated by control operations in Uganda and anti-poaching campaigns in Kenya (the latter designed to appeal to a specialist international audience) to one characterised by the need to bear in mind the broader public now interested in wildlife, and also the international funding organisations, which used economic and ecological benchmarks to determine whether to support wildlife departments rather than the aesthetic standards employed by a less discriminating public. The boom in scientific research in Uganda brought Fulbright Scholars who undertook research with an aim to addressing specific "problems", problems which the government there was willing to tackle. But they were also interested in using ecological

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<sup>119</sup> Indeed, 1966, the same year of Laws' Elephant cull, was also the year that the Kenya Government sought to brand its country as the Africa Riviera. See articles in *South Wales Argus*, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, *Herald Express*, *Worcester Evening News*, *Oldham Chronicle*, *Telegraph and Argus*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Cape Times*, etc. KNA. KW 20/13. Overseas Press Comment 1966. Box 46, Shelf 5487.

tools to draw more generalisable conclusions, and hoped to be able to engage in “pure” as well as “applied” research. In Kenya, a far larger number of students and faculty from a range of universities filed applications to do work in the National Parks. Between 1966 and 1970, Tsavo East alone processed dozens of applicants from many academic institutions and departments, as well as adventure-seekers, hoping for a stint of work in East Africa’s “bush”.<sup>120</sup>

This boom introduced a new constituency with its own agenda, impatient with the bureaucracy that emerged as permanent secretaries and Directors struggled to get their new policy briefs under control. All of this took place as the National Parks were coming into their own as the preeminent form of wildlife zone. The National Parks, their origins in South Africa, North America, and the Congo, brought with them an ideology which was hostile to active management, undermining the efforts of parks officials to apply the lessons of ecology, the discipline which was supposed to introduce a scientific ideology backed by sufficient rigour to tackle the dilemmas that emerged from earlier efforts to manage Africa’s wildlife populations. In Uganda, a tradition of aggressive control enabled administrators to follow through on the recommendations of Fulbright Scholars (although the ultimate effects of their ecological agenda were obscured by the uncertainty introduced by Idi Amin’s rise to power). In Kenya, on the other hand, the better-entrenched preservationist lobby and the global public which saw the country as the embodiment of *safari* culture and the plains game, things bogged down spectacularly. The combination of new constituencies, disconnected research agendas, new administrative structures, new sciences, new funding channels, and new priorities, combined with the variety of “problems” posed by the Tsavo Elephants to produce a set of institutions and interests that were incapable of identifying no less acting on “solutions”. The “study” became their preferred process of prevarication, and the Kenya Wildlife Management Project their ultimate panacea, in which they placed their hopes for the future of National Parks and tourism in a country not yet twenty years old.

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<sup>120</sup> A partial list includes: Michigan State University (Anthropology, Geography, Pathology); University of Durham (Zoology); University of Washington (Zoology); University of Wisconsin (Zoology); Harvard (Museum of Comparative Zoology); Tel Aviv University (Zoology); University of California, Berkeley (Anthropology, Zoology); Arcadia University; Oxford University; Memorial University of Newfoundland (Environmental Biology); London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; California State College, Dominguez Hills (Neuropsychology); Emory University; Universitat Basel (Zoology); Duke University; University of Goteborg; University of British Columbia; University College of North Wales, Bangor (Zoology); Vrije Universiteit (Zoology). KNA. KW 24/25, 1966 to 1970. Research Applications.

## Chapter Six

### **After *Uhuru*: The post-colonial state and wildlife in Kenya, 1972 to 1992**

“The multi-lateral arrangements through international agencies could help greatly. The only snag here is that Africa is moving on to the international scene at a time when most of the international agencies have been established, and no attempt is being made to reorganize them to take account of the emergence of Africa...Until African states are given appropriate representation on these bodies, and can have a proper say in the running of the International Finance Corporation and the International Monetary Fund, as well as many United Nations committees and agencies, we cannot agree that this form of aid is completely free of dangers and entirely acceptable”.<sup>1</sup>

In March of 1975, officials in the British Foreign Office leapt into action to react to the efforts of World Wildlife Fund officials to persuade Prince Philip to pay a visit to Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta. The WWF was one of the world’s preeminent conservation organisations, and Queen Elizabeth’s husband was the head of the UK branch. The WWF was concerned about a poaching epidemic sweeping East Africa, and on the heels of innuendo-laced accusations that the Kenyan President was at the heart of Kenyan poaching rings, the WWF improbably hoped to arrange a show-down. On one side would be President Kenyatta, alternatively described by British officials as “the African leader to darkness and death”, and hailed as the country’s best hope for a smooth transition to independence.<sup>2</sup> On the other would be a representative of the global preservationists and the British elite. Unsurprisingly, the Foreign Office was not amused, and the High Commissioner in Kenya “did what he could to pour water” on the idea, his contacts in London clearly flustered by the knowledge that the preservationists were “seriously considering every possible means of bringing pressure to bear on the president”.<sup>3</sup> In the end, a diplomatic crisis was averted, but the poaching crisis—and the crisis of postcolonial Kenya’s politics and its neo-colonial relations with preservationist groups and foreign governments—remained unresolved.

Tom Mboya, whose sentiments are captured above, was one of the younger generation of political leaders in Kenya after independence. Originally a leader of the People’s Congress Party, which merged with Jomo Kenyatta’s Kenya African Union, Mboya was a member of the ruling government. The trade unionist nonetheless represented an alternative version of national leadership to the upper echelon of the ruling party, in part because of his age and increasingly because of his ethnicity. He served as the Minister of Justice in the post-independence cabinet but is today perhaps best known for sponsoring the “Airlift” which brought Kenyan students and eventually students from other African nations to study in the United States. The choice of country was indicative of how the balance of power had shifted in the post-war order. Mboya’s ideological rival, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, organized another “Airlift” of students to the Soviet Union, the divide providing one indicator of the arrival of the Cold War in Africa. Mboya’s assassination in 1969 is often portrayed as a loss of innocence for a country which had only been

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, Ltd, 1963): 181-2.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, BBC, “Kenyatta to be Kenya’s first Premier”, 27 May 1963. [Accessed online, 17 Feb. 2014.](#)

<sup>3</sup> PRO, FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. Letter, Mansfield to Evans, 5 March 1975.

independent for six years.<sup>4</sup> But the reality is that the break between the arbitrary and authoritarian nature of the colonial state and independent Kenya was less clean than might have been supposed, in the wildlife sphere as elsewhere, and the governing structures and cultures of new nations were not necessarily “innocent” of the ills associated with colonialism. There is a growing scholarship on neo-colonialism, neoliberalism, and the persistence of a colonial-style state in post-independence Africa. Some scholars focus on economic relations which maintain the structural dominance once enshrined by colonialism and now by trade agreements, structural adjustment, and sometimes military intervention. Others focus on institutional continuities and the practise of power.<sup>5</sup> The emerging structures associated both with neo-colonialism and reactions against it, as well as global environmentalism and preservationism, played a major role in structuring the politics of wildlife in Africa in general and Kenya in particular from independence onward.

In the 1950s and once again in the 1970s and 1980s, Kenya’s wildlife departments faced what they defined as a poaching crisis. International market demand for Elephant tusks and rhinoceros horn drove new actors into poaching networks that had been hitherto more localised, and in some cases more subsistence- and less market-driven.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the wildlife departments had been caught up in debates about how to analyse changes in vegetation and habitats that pointed to overpopulation by Elephants in certain regions. Simultaneously, the newly-independent Kenyan government sought to build up the tourism industry into a mainstay of the nation’s economy. The focus on tourism as a prospective engine for economic growth and development, together with active preservationist efforts to manage Kenya’s wildlife policy from off-stage after sympathetic colonial governments faded away, meant that a wide range of international actors entered the fray, particularly during the 1960s. Many of these were specifically oriented towards environmental and wildlife matters: the Fauna Preservation Society, the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, and the World Wildlife Fund were all primarily interested in protecting East African wildlife. The funds they provided, however, tended to be geared toward particular projects, parks, or studies. From the perspective of national governments, interested not in wildlife for its own sake, but rather in how to harness just one of several natural resources to advance political and economic agendas, there were more important institutions striding over the horizon. Amongst these were the Ford Foundation and the World Bank, who entered the fray in the course of participation in the Tsavo Project and its aftermath, as documented in the previous chapter.

These organisations were prepared to grant much larger sums of money, and their grants often had a particularly developmental bent. But unlike the funds from the smaller wildlife-oriented bodies, the Ford Foundation and the World Bank in particular did not shrink from imposing conditions. The reform of the wildlife sector in Kenya—engineered in part by the contributions of the World Bank—represented key trends in both local and global versions of the politics of wildlife from the 1970s onwards. During the 1970s, the Bank funded multiple

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: a History Since Independence* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012); Joseph Karimi, *The Kenyatta Succession* (Nairobi: Transafrica, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> See James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996); J. A. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Historically, ivory had been part of a global market, but in the 1950s colonial authorities believed that poaching in the Tsavo National Park—their largest concern—was driven by cultural hunting practices. See the previous chapter, for example.



conservation efforts in Kenya, and much of their support came in the form of a massive Tourism and Wildlife Project (to the tune of \$10 million). One of the conditions for this loan was a reorganisation of the wildlife departments in Kenya<sup>7</sup>. In Kenya, the wildlife sector comprised two organisations: the Game Department and the National Parks Departments. These organisations had different relations to the Kenyan government. The Game Department was an actual department of government whereas the National Parks remained quasi-parastatal. They were, as a result, run along different lines. On the one hand, the Game Department was integrated into the normal ministerial chain of command. The National Parks, on the other, had a governing Board of Trustees. This institutional chaos undoubtedly offended the sensibility of the Bank. To an organisation concerned with maximising efficiency and cutting cost to ensure that its loans were spent to the greatest effect with a minimum of “waste”, it made complete sense to fold the two organisations into one governmental department and to fuse their responsibilities. Because not only did the two wildlife organisations operate along different lines, they actually had different responsibilities: the Parks were concerned with operations within their borders, and hence dominated the tourist trade; the Game Department was concerned with animals outside of the parks, and with most control operations. Both undertook poaching operations, but a bureaucratic divide hampered their efforts.

But when the World Bank demanded reform, which when embraced by the Kenyatta government took the form of a merger, the political and financial lending agency did not take account of the different histories, cultures, and institutional ambitions of the two wildlife organisations. Nor did the Bank anticipate the explosive fight that the merger would unleash in bureaucratic backrooms, the media, and Parliament. This fractious infighting reflected growing political chasms within Kenya, and shed light on burgeoning official corruption. It led to the creation for the first time of an environmental narrative associated with wildlife preservation. An examination of the wildlife merger, the resulting political debates, and the official corruption which some argued the merger was designed to cover up, provide an opportunity to explore the post-colonial politics of wildlife in Kenya. The merger itself demonstrated the enduring influence of lobbies in the west, even if their character was now ostensibly global rather than colonial. The debates in the press and in parliament illustrated how actors competing to capture Kenya’s wildlife sphere leveraged a language rooted in competing ideas about what Kenya’s wildlife was good for and to what extent actors outside the country should have a ‘say’ in its management. And the role of Kenyatta and others in the legal and illegal ivory trades exemplified not only the manner in which an increasingly imperial president related to his subjects and their resources, but characterised relations between Kenya and Britain, its former colonial power. The existence of neo-colonial relations meant that imperial interests or their international replacements continued to exercise significant power in Africa. But neo-colonialism, as it privileged the economic interests of former colonial powers, also diminished the influence of those powers to dictate to former colonies in terms of governance and official practice, something not lost on officials in the British Colonial Office.

In addition to the above, the Tourism and Wildlife Project and the debates around the institutional merger that follow offer a useful lens through which to approach the post-colonial politics of wildlife in Kenya in which new actors took more important roles. The media campaign which was waged against the government grew to focus not only on wildlife, but on “environmentalism” more broadly, a marker of how debates about conservation had shifted by the mid-1970s. Independent newspapers were critical sources of information for the public, and

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<sup>7</sup> KW 1/6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1957 to 1977. Box 1, Shelf 5797.

also allowed members of the public a forum in which to express their views, something of which many Kenyans took advantage. The debates became increasingly explicit in their invocation of neo-colonial relations, as well as the ethnic or tribal fissures increasingly salient in Kenyan politics. The chapter will begin by outlining the state of wildlife departments across Eastern and Southern Africa on the eve of independence by way of context, before discussing the Tourism and Wildlife Project in Kenya, and its mandated merger in particular. This is followed by a discussion of the debates within the park, in the press, and in parliament. After exploring some of the consequences of these debates, the chapter will briefly treat the issue of corruption in the context of post- and neo-colonial relations in Kenya, including the continued close interest of the British government in events on the ground. The chapter will conclude with a brief examination of a second World Bank project in 1992 in the context of developments in the wildlife sector—locally and globally—during the intervening years. Attention to the project report from 1992 will give some sense of how the international dispensation which by then had firmly replaced the imperial reacted to and shaped the politics in the wildlife arena in the final decade of the twentieth century.

### **Pre-Independence Departments**

As noted above, wildlife departments on the brink of independence took a variety of forms in British colonies. The general trend was to divide responsibility between Game and National Parks departments. The former dealt with game reserves and with wildlife outside of the parks, while the latter had control of the national parks. Departments comprised a variety of types of employees: directors, wardens, and field staff, categorised in a variety of ways (scouts, rangers, guards, etc. Game Departments in particular also relied on ‘Honorary Wardens’ to do policing and monitoring work. In addition to these more traditional members of departments, there were also biologists and education officers, products of the need—which had begun to emerge from the 1940s onwards before taking form more fully after independence—of Parks and Game Reserves to justify their existence to a sceptical public. Parks derived revenue from a variety of sources. Most received some grants from the government, and these were generally not offset at this early stage by revenue from visitors and licenses. For example, neither Kenya’s Game Department nor National Parks were in the black at this point. In Tanganyika, on the other hand, while the National Parks relied on government grants, the Game Department cost £95,000, while it brought in £150,000 from shooting licences, ivory, and trophies. Uganda’s National Parks also relied on grants, but its Game Department broke roughly even thanks to revenue from ivory and licences, as well as fisheries during the years when the Game and Fisheries departments were combined.<sup>8</sup>

The African Special Project Report from 1961, published in *Oryx* (the journal of the Fauna Preservation Society), offered a snapshot of Game and National Parks Departments across Africa on the eve of, or shortly after, independence. The chart below gives some sense of the size of the protected areas, and the relative strengths of staff across different colonies and countries. The division of labour suggested by the colonial organisation of wildlife departments had served colonial states well. The Game Departments focussed on administrative and extractive activities: protecting crops and collecting ivory. And with their generally smaller staffs the National Parks departments, such as they existed, focussed on developing tourism and overseeing the National Parks in their charge, which grew in number from the 1950s onwards.

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<sup>8</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.: African Speical Project, Stage I” in *Oryx*, (1962: 148-170): 157, 164.

**Table 1: Size of Personnel and Area of Wildlife Departments in British/Former British Africa, 1961<sup>9</sup>**

	<b>National Parks in square miles</b>	<b>Other protected areas in square miles*</b>	<b>National Parks Staff</b>	<b>Game Department Staff</b>	<b>Honorary Wardens</b>
<b>Kenya</b>	8,569	NA	197-217	364	300
<b>Tanganyika</b>	4,595	69,400	116	467	?
<b>Uganda</b>	2,271	16,372	95	169	?
<b>Northern Rhodesia</b>	8,650	125,610	?	238	126
<b>Southern Rhodesia</b>	6,250	NA	526	37	?
<b>Nigeria</b>	NA	720	NA	16	NA
<b>Sudan</b>	5,790	?	?	131	?
<b>Ghana</b>	NA	915	NA	30	NA

\* Includes “controlled areas” not exclusively for use in wildlife-related activities

### **Creating the Wildlife Management and Conservation Department: the Merger**

In 1972, for the first time in several years, the Kenyan Parliament debated expenditures on the Wildlife Departments. Emphasis was twofold, firstly on the inability of the government to spare more money on staff for the two departments, and secondly on the need to increase spending on the tourism sector in keeping with the 20% increase in the tourism traffic (the increase in spending by the department was, in contrast, 4%).<sup>10</sup> Part of the effort to streamline the department and improve its efforts were related to a proposed Wildlife Bill, backed by the World Bank and based on recommendations made as early as 1964-65 by the Minister for Natural Resources, and on the advice of a United Nations Development Program/Food and Agriculture Organization report from 1968<sup>11</sup>. J M Kariuki, the Assistant Minister in the Department of Tourism and Wildlife was challenged by his colleague, the Assistant Minister for Labour Mr Kibisu, on the organisation of the ministry. Kibisu argued that funding from the central government should be contingent on the assertion of greater control over the National Parks Department, seen by many Kenyan MPs as a hide-out for expatriates who went about their business unaffected by decolonisation and Africanisation, the policy of replacing Europeans staff with African staff in key posts.<sup>12</sup> A Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill was introduced in 1972, and began to work its way through the political process.<sup>13</sup> While there would be no concrete outcome for some years, there were other factors at work which made a merger of some sort increasingly likely in the years ahead.

<sup>9</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.: African Speical Project, Stage I” in *Oryx*, (1962: 148-170).

<sup>10</sup> National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 17 October 1972, 1080-1082.

<sup>11</sup> “Ogutu Moves new bill; Nature Parks in Big Merger”, *Standard*, 15 March 1975.

<sup>12</sup> National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 17 October 1972, 1084.

<sup>13</sup> KW 2/22. Meetings on Wildlife Policy, 1972-1973. The Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill of 1972.

Tourism to Kenya increased steadily during the late-1960s and early 1970s, reaching 292,897 visitors in the first nine months of 1974. According to the World Bank, 25,000 Kenyans were employed in the fast-growing industry.<sup>14</sup> The World Bank project identified the eleven important countries sending tourists to Kenya as follows (beginning with the largest, and decreasing): the United States, Britain, Germany, Switzerland, France, Canada, Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Denmark and Belgium. Although not disaggregated on the basis of nationality, “East Africa” despatched over 70,000 visitors during that period, as many as the U.S. and Britain combined. It is unclear whether Kenyan visitors are counted amongst these. It is possible that other countries sent more visitors, but were not regarded as worthy of notice in the plan: a footnote notes that nearly 10,000 visitors from Zambia came to Kenya.<sup>15</sup> Amongst national parks, Nairobi—derided by some as more of a zoo, located just outside the capital—was by far the most popular, drawing 168,274 total visitors (73,000 more than the next park, Tsavo West) during the 1973/4 season. Of those visitors, 68,664 were “adult non-residents”, the category which most interested promoters of Kenya’s tourism industry. It was these tourists who could be lured to luxury hotels in Nairobi and the parks, and to Kenya’s coastal attractions. Other parks followed in order of popularity with international visitors: Tsavo East (known for its elephants), Lake Nakuru (famous for flamingos), the Aberdares (a mountainous park home to “Treetops”, where Britain’s Princess Elizabeth had become Queen on the death of her father), the Marine Reserves, Shimba Hills, Meru, and Mount Kenya.<sup>16</sup> The growth of the tourism sector was accompanied by a poaching crisis (alluded to in the previous chapter). Finally, the Kenyan government faced pressure from Kenyans who hoped to gain access to land after independence and who resented having their livelihoods sidelined by concerns about tourists and animals. The Kenyan government, eager for \$17 million in funds from the World Bank for anti-poaching, tourism development, and community wildlife schemes, was happy to accede to conditions calling for a merger which, in any case, the government saw as likely to “result in financial savings and overall efficiency”.<sup>17</sup>

The Kenyan government sold its reorganisation using the vehicle of the Tourism and Wildlife Project, which promised to overhaul wildlife policy as Kenya knew it. Not only would there be efficient administrative reorganisation. The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife also wanted to put the National Parks (the entities rather than the governing body) on course to increase tourism and the revenue that flowed from it. The Project also called for overlapping land use by local communities, building on earlier work in Kajiado that had been funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Such a call was simultaneously a populist nod to communities which felt justifiably marginalised by colonial-era wildlife policy which had not changed significantly with independence and a gesture towards a conservation philosophy which in many senses proved to be the predecessor of the now in-vogue ‘community conservation’ movement. The work of ecologist David Western in Amboseli particularly seems to have inspired the Ministry, which pitched the new structure and philosophy to the Treasury

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<sup>14</sup> KNA KW 21/14. World Bank. Letter, Report from J F A Russell, RMEA of IRBD to Chairman of National Parks and Tourism Project Working Group, 7 June 1974.

<sup>15</sup> KNA KW 21/14. Progress Report Since 3 February 1975, Wildlife and Tourism Project, 19 March 1975: first chart following p. 5

<sup>16</sup> KNA KW 21/14. Progress Report Since 3 February 1975, Wildlife and Tourism Project, 19 March 1975: second chart following p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> KNA KW 1/6. Misc. Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977. Undated memo, “Benefits of the new wildlife policy as opposed to the old system”.

and the World Bank as a plan “far in advance of any park plan for U.S. or Canadian parks”.<sup>18</sup> The project was designed to provide “a management consultancy unit, a planning unit, a wildlife training institute, research personnel funds, and development of dispersal areas in tourist circuits”, demonstrating an aspiration to incorporate into the new department not only the attributes of the National Parks and Game Departments, but also the aborted ambitions of the Tsavo Project.<sup>19</sup> This project was also described as being designed to:

further the controlled exploitation of the wildlife resource, and in particular to develop data and a planning capacity to prepare programs which will permit the exploitation of game as a complement to domestic stock in game dispersal areas. (Failure to do this and to ensure that reasonable returns accrue to the pastoral peoples would condemn game to extermination and destroy the potential contribution of wildlife to rural development.) The Project would develop infrastructure in existing and new Game Parks and Reserves, training and research, and planning units”.<sup>20</sup>

From the perspective of the World Bank, the project “[placed] considerable importance on the growth of tourism, consistent with maintaining a balance between maximising economic returns and maintaining an orderly rate of growth, with expanding employment for citizens”. While the Bank saw some benefits associated with the parastatal status of the National Parks, it was dismayed by the lack of cooperation between the Parks and the Game Department, and thought such a move long overdue.<sup>21</sup>

The proposed merger did not go uncontested. Late in 1975, Director of National Parks Perez Olindo expressed his fear that amalgamation would diminish the ability of the National Parks—in his view the more successful of the two organisations—to perform its duties. According to the *Daily Nation*, which reported on his remarks at a ceremony opening an exhibition of wildlife photos, Olindo argued that rather than forcing the National Parks to become part of a government department, the government should “formulate a government corporation with a board of trustees”, perhaps bearing in mind the model adopted shortly after independence in Uganda.<sup>22</sup> By publicly stating his opposition to the merger, Olindo might have burned his bridges, for he would become a casualty of the merger, as described below. Irrespective of his motives, proponents of the merger would repeatedly accuse Olindo of treating the bureaucratic reorganization as a turf war, and of colluding with international conservationists to undermine and sabotage the process.

The bill reorganising the wildlife sector was moved by its sponsoring minister, Matthews Ogutu, in March of 1975 and passed in December. It was based on Sessional Paper No. 3 of that

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<sup>18</sup> KW 21/14. World Bank, 1974 to 1975. Box 49, Shelf 5488. Local management was becoming all the rage, and was embraced at different times by different people. In a particularly bizarre twist early on, Anthony Cullen, who only years earlier had been warning that Africans would savagely butcher all of the region’s game after Independence, called for Tsavo National Park to be de-gazetted and handed over to various communities for management. Letter, Cullen to Mwanjumba, 9 November 1962. KW 1/62. Policy Confidential, December 1960 to November 1962. Box 6, Shelf 5474.

<sup>19</sup> KW 1/7. Game Department. Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 19 August 1974.

<sup>20</sup> John Burrows (Chief of Mission and Coordinating Author), *Kenya: Into the Second Decade, Report of a Mission sent to Kenya by the World Bank* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, for The World Bank, 1975): 500.

<sup>21</sup> KNA KW 21/14. World Bank. Letter, Report from J F A Russell, RMEA of IRBD to Chairman of National Parks and Tourism Project Working Group, 7 June 1974.

<sup>22</sup> “Government urged to rethink on wildlife bill”, *Daily Nation*, 31 October 1975.

year. In February of 1976, President Kenyatta gave his assent, and the merger was implemented according to the Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill. The result was a Wildlife Conservation and Management Department (WCMD). The WCMD would consist of a director, two deputies (one for finance and administration, the other for research and education), five assistant directors (responsible for research; education extension services and training; finance and personnel; projects; commercial), and a series of regional units.<sup>23</sup> The National Parks trustees were disbanded. Integration of the two departments into the WCMD was tricky because of their different relationships to the administration. Game Department personnel were already civil servants, and so they posed no difficulty. But the National Parks had operated as a parastatal, and so its employees had the option of joining the new operation under conditions which many of them regarded as less favourable. Once the spats over the merger became public, park employees who chose not to join the WCMD were vocal in their complaints, which focussed on the halving of their salaries, and the questionable manner in which they had been offered the option of joining the civil service or retiring.<sup>24</sup> *The Weekly Review* reported just months after the merger was enacted that “at a meeting in which senior officials of the former parks system were briefed by a senior official of the ministry on the new merged establishment, the parks people got more abuse and threats than words of advice”. One attendee noted an atmosphere “as one almost of vengeance”.<sup>25</sup>

During the Divisional Wardens’ meeting four months later, the Minister described his proposed listening tour, offered words of encouragement, also warning employees that “whatever you do reflects very vividly in the eyes of *wananchi* and the world”, and reassuring them that there was no room for failure. Ogutu, the Minister, added that Kenya’s wildlife areas “must now be managed by Kenyans without interference from outside....Kenya’s natural heritage”, he proclaimed, “can only in the final analysis be maintained by Kenyans and not by outsiders or people who survive on Kenya’s economy but with their hearts abroad obeying their master’s voice which is to destroy Kenya’s image through malicious propaganda”.<sup>26</sup> Most of the focus during the implementation of the merger was on the goals laid out by the World Bank, but the Minister’s aggressive remarks at his first meeting with the WCMD’s new staff foreshadowed some of the political conflicts that would grow out of the merger, and indicated that these politics were about more than salaries and retirement benefits.

In keeping with Ogutu’s desire to prove that Kenya could manage its wildlife, a central plank of the bill, in both its 1972 and 1975 versions, was the centralisation and formalisation of finances. Previously, international and regional conservation organisations had been able to give money directly to the National Parks, and to sponsor—and effectively build from the ground up—particular projects and research agendas. Part of the WCMD dealt with a “wildlife fund”, overseen by a group of appointed trustees. The Wildlife Fund was designed to receive money from “trustees, licences, profits from sale of government trophies, donations, loans, etc, money from parliament”. The Fund was charged with assessing priorities and dispensing funds.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> KNA KW 1/6. Misc. Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977. Minutes of Wardens conference at Maralal on 5 November 1976.

<sup>24</sup> “We are Mistreated”, from anonymous park employees, *Daily Nation*, 10 August 1976; “Morale very low among former parks staff”, *The Weekly Review*, 5 April 1976.

<sup>25</sup> “Morale very low among former parks staff”, *The Weekly Review*, 5 April 1976.

<sup>26</sup> KNA KW 1/12. Miscellaneous Correspondence. Minutes of Divisional Wardens meeting held at Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 12 August, 1976.

<sup>27</sup> KW 2/22. Meetings on Wildlife Policy. The Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill of 1972; KW 2/22. Meetings on Wildlife Policy. Draft Statement on Future Wildlife Management Policy in Kenya, undated.

Although the administrative terms of the merger described above, and the management-orientation of the new WCMD meant that the Game Department personnel occupied a privileged position, the former Game Department came in for some criticism. The Permanent Secretary in Ogotu's ministry remarked that the Game Department's records of its control operations revealed that some of its "killings were totally unjustified...the former game wardens were killing wildlife under the pretext of control. This myth is dead and buried. We have to conserve wildlife for the present and future generations". He declared the "philosophy of wildlife conservation of the former game department" to be "outmoded and...no longer acceptable".<sup>28</sup> Others, as we shall see later, saw the Game Department's traditional approach as representing more than a philosophical difference: some read it as representing the increasing institutionalisation of corruption in post-colonial Kenya.

Kenyan officials increasingly recognised the value of pitching themselves against the notion of neo-colonialism. Therefore, even though the merger had been initiated, funded, and directed by the World Bank, a powerful, Western-controlled international financial institution, the Kenyan government was able to transform its adherence to the Bank's dictates into a victory against neo-colonialism. It was popularly held that the National Parks was still a "foreign"-dominated organisation, with close ties to international conservation organisations, with an expatriate-heavy staff, and several white wardens. And so the Kenyan government claimed that the merger "nationalised...[and] place under government control" the National Parks.<sup>29</sup> Matthews J Ogotu, the Minister for Tourism and Wildlife, was particularly deft at using such claims, as subsequent events would demonstrate. Read in the context of a longer history of wildlife politics in the region, the reclamation, or "nationalisation" of the wildlife which had been "internationalised" in the 1950s was not entirely without precedent. From the 1920s and '30s onwards, colonial governments had asserted their autonomy against Whitehall by taking control over a sector hitherto dominated by imperial preservationists. In an earlier era, preservationists had been unsuccessful for around three decades in pushing back against local control of wildlife, which they saw as antithetical to their purposes. But those who believed in the need for international oversight, if not control, of Kenya's wildlife sector, were able to take advantage of a changed situation in the 1970s. They were joined in their criticisms of the Kenyan government by an increasingly active media, an outspoken public, and members of dissolved institutions like the National Parks who felt aggrieved by the merger. This proved a powerful combination in 1970s Kenya.

### ***The Nation V. Ogotu: The Press, the Public, and the Minister***

By the time the country attained its independence in 1963, Kenya's press had developed considerably from the early days when it had been dominated by settler papers and one or two Asian presses. There was at least one early Kikuyu-language paper (*Wathiomo Mukinyu*, 1916), and the growth of African newspapers tracked the emergence of nationalism, the Kikuyu Central Association begetting pamphlets in the 1920s. Liberal and radical Asian newspapers gave assistance to nationalist papers. These organs ran alongside a series of versions of the *East African Standard* and other smaller papers reflecting the views of the settler class. Hostile to liberal and nationalist papers, the colonial government responded by creating organs for

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<sup>28</sup> KNA KW 1/6. Misc. Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977. 14 September 1976, Minutes of the Wardens' Conference held at Kilaguni Lodge on 20 August 1976.

<sup>29</sup> KNA KW 1/6. Misc. Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977. 14 September 1976, Minutes of the Wardens' Conference held at Kilaguni Lodge on 20 August 1976.

propaganda dissemination like *Habari*, which found counterparts in other colonies.<sup>30</sup> But the settler press was ahead of the settlers themselves in anticipating the coming of *Uhuru*, and the *Standard* moderated its tone and began its transition to respectability after independence. In 1958, a Briton had launched a weekly, *Taifa*. This was purchased by what would become a massive regional media group owned by the Aga Khan (spiritual head of the Nizari Ismailis), and was re-launched as a daily paper, *The Daily Nation*, in 1960. The Aga Khan was hoping to create a press vehicle capable of discussing nationalism and coming independence in a more sympathetic tone than the still largely hostile European press.

*The Nation* aspired to national prominence, but fell afoul early on of the leadership of the Kenya African National Union (KANU)<sup>31</sup>, the party dominated first by future-President Jomo Kenyatta, and later by those jockeying to succeed the President as he ailed through much of the 1970s. Nonetheless, by a few years after independence, the paper's circulation began to take off, surpassing the better-entrenched *Standard* by 1968.<sup>32</sup> The *Nation*'s first African editor, Hilary Ng'weno, resigned in protest of the government's restrictions on the press in general and his paper in particular. His successor, George Githii, nonetheless pressed ahead with the *Nation*'s campaign to assert its independence, and "broke the taboo" surrounding the corruption that appeared to have grown since the colonial era, rebuffing the paper's official critics.<sup>33</sup> Although Githii left *The Nation* around the time the debate about wildlife flared up in its pages, his approach seems to have laid the groundwork for its campaign. As they flexed their independent muscles after *uhuru*, newspapers became forums for citizens discontented with the state of post-independence Kenya. Those citizens sent in a barrage of letters during the early 1970s expressing outrage at the increasingly-bloody poaching epidemic, the endless battles with *shifita*, and the seeming inability of the government to do anything about these ills.<sup>34</sup>

*The Daily Nation*, by now one of Kenya's two most prominent papers, had long cast a sceptical eye over the work of the government in general and of the wildlife sector in particular. According to the Nation Media Group's officially-commissioned history of its foremost paper, Githii, the editor during the years surrounding the debate about the wildlife merger, was close to Vice-President Daniel Arap Moi (who would soon become President), and to Attorney General Charles Njonjo, who was allied with leading preservationists in international circles and in Kenya in his capacity as country chairman of the World Wildlife Fund.<sup>35</sup> Whether or not this would explain the paper's taking up cudgels on behalf of the country's wildlife, as early as 1973 the paper was questioning the ivory figures provided by the Game Department, and called for an investigation of the handful of people handling the export trade.<sup>36</sup> As it slowly ratcheted up its critique of the government, the paper painted a flattering portrait of the international

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<sup>30</sup> John B Abuoga and Absalom A Mutere, *The History of the Press in Kenya* (Nairobi: African Council on Communication Education, 1988): 8-17. In some cases papers like *Habari* combined their espousal of a conservative political line with instructions about domestic work for women, correct methods of agriculture, and the like.

<sup>31</sup> Gerard Loughran, *Birth of a Nation: the Story of a Newspaper in Kenya* (London: I B Tauris, 2010): 34-35.

<sup>32</sup> Gerard Loughran, *Birth of a Nation: the Story of a Newspaper in Kenya* (London: I B Tauris, 2010): 91-92.

<sup>33</sup> Gerard Loughran, *Birth of a Nation: the Story of a Newspaper in Kenya* (London: I B Tauris, 2010): 84, 85, 105-106.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, "Man dies during police shoot out with poachers", *Daily Nation*, 22 August, 1973; Kris Edward, "Letter to Editor: High Time we Stop This Slaughter", *Daily Nation*, 28 August 1973.

<sup>35</sup> Gerard Loughran, *Birth of a Nation: the Story of a Newspaper in Kenya* (London: I B Tauris, 2010): 127.

<sup>36</sup> "Cracking down on the poachers" in *Daily Nation*, 10 September 1973. The article maintained that "the truth is that too many officials and the business community are involved in this get-rich quick scramble for the full facts to be released". Gossip held that members of the Kenyatta family were involved in ivory rings.



conservationists who supported Kenya's own preservation lobby, referring to Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands (a top WWF representative) as "ambassador extraordinary and champion of the silent minority—wildlife".<sup>37</sup> Discontent rumbled on through 1973, 1974 and 1975, with much discussion of the "war" on poaching that the government had declared, imploring the *wananchi* (citizens) to do their bit for Kenya's wildlife and tourism.

Things really got going in July of 1976 when a young rhinoceros died in the animal 'orphanage' attached to Nairobi National Park. *The Nation* reported that the merger of the Game and National Parks departments had left the parks so strapped for cash that they were unable to purchase sufficient feed, and the rhino had died "of hunger". *The Nation* followed up the next day with a full editorial about conditions at the orphanage. This proved too much for Matthews Ogutu, the Minister responsible, and he responded with an attack on the paper. The same day, the *Nation* ran a story titled "Why I died, by Rhino Kioko", successfully anthropomorphising the unfortunate animal which the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife claimed had died of pneumonia in spite of a budget increase.<sup>38</sup> Irrespective of the real cause of "Rhino Kioko's" untimely demise, the battle was joined, and the *Nation* launched the opening stages of what would become a full-scale press war against the Tourism of Wildlife Department, and its minister, Ogutu. Their campaign took on a more environmental bent when the paper added to its list of grievances a copal factory which it claimed was poisoning Lake Nakuru. But it focussed most intently on allegations of official corruption and incompetence, citing staggering figures about the numbers of elephants killed annually in Kenya.<sup>39</sup>

When Ogutu fired back at the *Nation*, he didn't meet them on their own terms, but changed the course of the debate away from the efficacy of his management, tapping instead into the frustration that many Kenyans felt with the slow pace of change after the end of colonial rule. The minister bemoaned their personal attacks, suggesting that they were trying to sabotage the World Bank loan for development and wildlife, and said that the paper had been bought by the World Wildlife Fund. The conservation group, he claimed, used its money to buy political influence in the country. "This type of harassment and confrontation, as well as blackmailing a sovereign state", Ogutu wrote in the *Nation*, "does not do the so-called conservationists any good". He dismissed the *Nation's* campaign as "an unbalanced literary performance on wildlife", and suggested that the paper was working on behalf of Olindo rather than in the public interest.<sup>40</sup> Some members of the public supported Ogutu. Chris Rukwaro of Mombasa wrote that he found "something funny about the current press war against Mr Ogutu and his ministry", noting that inefficiency in government was by no means restricted to the Wildlife and Tourism Ministry. The single-minded attack on this one ministry supported, Rukwaro went on, "Mr Ogutu's claim that the press is hounding him on behalf of nameless people with vested interests in our fauna and who regard him as a threat to their interests".<sup>41</sup> As the debate grew increasingly dramatic, Ogutu declared of his critics, "They will not dictate to the government. I am firm. Yes! I am not afraid of them".<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Daily Nation*, 3 September 1973.

<sup>38</sup> "Orphanage Rhino dies 'of hunger'" in *Daily Nation*, 30 July 1976; "Dead rhino and lions", 31 July 1976; "Resource Minister Slams the Nation", 31 July 1976; "Why I Died, by Rhino Kioko", 31 July 1976; "Rhino calf 'died of pneumonia'", 31 July 1976.

<sup>39</sup> For example, "Ogutu...now answer or resign!", *Daily Nation*, 26 August 1976.

<sup>40</sup> "Ogutu slams Nation's wildlife editorials", in *Daily Nation*, 4 August 1976.

<sup>41</sup> "The Press and Mr Ogutu", letter to the editor from Chris Rukwaro, *Daily Nation*, 2 September 1976.

<sup>42</sup> "I am Doing my Job, Says Ogutu", *Daly Nation*, 4 September 1976.

Escalation continued, with the *Nation* demanding that Ogotu should “answer or resign” in its editorial, accusing him of being “evasive, sarcastic and libellous”. The paper went on to articulate a series of critiques of the merger, noting that park wardens were forced out, and that parks staff were not integrated fairly into the new structure.<sup>43</sup> This move suggested that the paper was taking sides, not only against Ogotu, but with the aggrieved vestigial structures of the National Parks against the Game Department which many believed had emerged by far the stronger of the two institutions from the merger. In the reporting on working conditions and the state of the orphanage that followed, it became increasingly transparent that disgruntled former Parks employees were feeding the *Nation* with fodder for its war on Ogotu. Letters from the public poured in, some supporting Ogotu, but most backing the *Nation*’s campaign—for such it had now become. Ogotu did not help his case by refusing to allow employees of the ministry to speak to the press, suggesting, some pointed out, a guilty conscience.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps sensing a story that was too good to pass up, Kenya’s other large paper, the *Standard*, took up cudgels, initially for the Minister, noting that he had given wildlife a “new lease of life”.<sup>45</sup> Ogotu retook the offensive, using the *Nation*’s own pages to accuse international preservationists of “boasting like Pharisees’ while his officers were ‘dying in the bush defending Kenya’s wildlife...making a tremendous sacrifice’”. Preservationists, he wrote in the *Standard*, were “wildlife do-gooders” and nothing more.<sup>46</sup> Undeterred, the *Nation* moved its editorial to the front page, blaring in massive black letters, “Ogotu...now answer or resign!”, pointing to a number of 16,000 elephants killed in just over two years.<sup>47</sup> Other media took up the story. Taking a calmer approach, Hilary Ng’weno used a column in the *Weekly Review* to re-write the episode as a story about the “public’s right to know”, and “a corresponding right, or even duty, on the part of the press to report and comment on issues affecting the future of wildlife in the country, and in general on all issues pertaining to the performance of government ministries and officials”.<sup>48</sup> Ng’weno detected a creeping authoritarianism in the behaviour and reaction of the minister in question. The WWF responded in the pages of the *Nation* with a veiled threat, noting that “over the years, Kenya has been the recipient of more financial aid than the rest of the Third World put together”.<sup>49</sup> While not particularly accurate, the claim was accompanied by the insinuation that what had been given could be taken away if confidence was not restored. The *Nation* implied that Ogotu took his critique of neo-colonialism too far when he fired the (European or expatriate) honorary wardens who had staffed the animal orphanage at Nairobi.<sup>50</sup>

Whether because it suspected Perez Olindo (former director of the National Parks) of being the source of leaks, or because it suspected him of orchestrating a campaign to become the head of the merged department, Ogotu put Olindo on leave and launched an investigation into “irregularities”.<sup>51</sup> Recently honoured by the Dutch royal family and the President of Liberia, as

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<sup>43</sup> “Wildlife: Minister should answer or resign!” *Daily Nation*, 7 August 1976.

<sup>44</sup> “Ogotu slaps a ban on giving news to the press” in *Daily Nation*, 13 August 1976.

<sup>45</sup> “Ogotu gives wildlife new lease of life” in *Standard*, 23 August 1976.

<sup>46</sup> “Men are dying’ to defend wildlife” in *Daily Nation*, 26 August 1976; “Ogotu slams wildlife do-gooders” in *Standard*, 26 August 1976.

<sup>47</sup> “Ogotu...now answer or resign!” in *Daily Nation*, 26 August 1976.

<sup>48</sup> “Come off it Mr Ogotu” in *Weekly Review*, 23 August 1976.

<sup>49</sup> E T Monks (of WWF Kenya), “Only Action Will Restore Faith in Tours Ministry”, *Daily Nation*, 23 August 1976.

<sup>50</sup> “Watching from Touchline”, *Daily Nation*, 26 August 1976.

<sup>51</sup> “Big Game Men make the news; wildlife chief faces inquiry” in *Standard*, 28 August 1976.

well as the African Safari Club of Washington, D.C., Olindo had been only 27 when he took control of the Parks, and was the darling of the international conservation organisations.<sup>52</sup> On being accused by Ogutu, he tacitly admitted that his sin was speaking to the press, but he maintained that he had not done so after the minister imposed the ban on communication.<sup>53</sup> Ogutu was perhaps more honest about his own aims in investigating Olindo when he inveighed against the “disgruntled elements [who] were trying to frustrate the merger”, simultaneously lashing out against donors, warning that they “should not seek to dictate to the government merely because they had given some money for wildlife conservation”.<sup>54</sup> “Outsiders”, Ogutu declared in an interview with the *Nation*, “will come and we will tell them what we want to do not them to tell us what they want us to do”. The critique of the neo-colonialism of the WWF and other organisations was sure to resonate with a broad spectrum of the public, and Ogutu warmed to the theme: “Previously, the wildlife was tampered about by outside interests, perhaps people who might have been using their connections with the wildlife as their source for individual earning...After 13 years of Kenya’s stable independence, wildlife...being state resources, should be controlled and managed by central government”.<sup>55</sup>

The theme of neo-colonialism was one oft-aired in Kenya’s Parliament, particularly with reference to the wildlife sector. In one 1972 debate, Mr Mwengi-Nzelu accused white figures in the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife of “blocking the way for our young men because they do not want to hear somebody being called a chief game warden within a year or so”. The MP went on at some length about perceived obstacles to promotion for Africans:

[The *wazungu*]<sup>56</sup> want to cut his legs; they want to cut their legs to prove that *mwafrica* or *Wafrika* cannot lead. I think it is very stupid of our political leaders to allow these *wazungu* to stay there and block our people so that they do not come up. We do not want them there. We have plenty of young men in Kenya and unemployment in Kenya is already too high.<sup>57</sup>

As the fight in the papers dragged on, the *Nation* began calling for a hunting ban, suggesting that this was the antidote to the rampant poaching supposedly sweeping the country. Concerned citizens took up this cause, some of them identifying a connection between manoeuvres in Ogutu’s ministry and the escalation of poaching. Eventually, in 1977 an ivory ban would be enacted, but before that occurred, Kenya’s newspapers expanded their campaign beyond traditional wildlife preservation matters, to give it an environmental bent.

### **Lake Nakuru and the Emergence of Environmentalism**

Early in the paper’s campaign against Ogutu, a piece in the *Nation* set out one view of the links between environmentalism and wildlife protection. The article was titled “Preserving the Conservation Movement”, and remarked that “more and more it is being realised that conservation applies not only to wild animals but the environment in which they live, an environment shared with man”.<sup>58</sup> The article was authored in conjunction with representatives of the WWF, and the view it represented spoke to the larger context in which the *Nation*’s

<sup>52</sup> “Mr P M Olindo Director of Kenya National Parks”, *Daily Nation*, 21 February 1974.

<sup>53</sup> “I’ve committed no crime—Olindo” in *Daily Nation*, 29 August 1976.

<sup>54</sup> “Dr Olindo and others being probed—Minister” in *Standard*, 30 August 1976.

<sup>55</sup> “I am doing my job, says Ogutu” in *Daily Nation*, 4 September 1976.

<sup>56</sup> *Mzungu* (plural *wazungu*) refers to “whites”. *Mwafrica* (plural *Wafrika*) refers to Africans.

<sup>57</sup> National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 17 October 1972, 1107.

<sup>58</sup> “Preserving the Conservation Movement”, *Daily Nation*, 30 July 1976.

preservationist and environmental campaigns took place. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, laid out in popular form the link between chemicals, the despoiling of ecosystems, and the health of the animals and people inhabiting those ecosystems. The Santa Barbara Oil Spill of 1969 had launched an environmental movement in the United States, which in a manner not dissimilar to the efforts of early humanitarians, focussed on human error in some process which had gone dreadfully wrong, using the identification of that preventable error as a call to action.<sup>59</sup> In neighbouring Uganda during the late 1960s, Francis Katete, director of the country's National Parks, had framed his opposition to the construction of a hydroelectric plant at Murchison Falls, in which he was backed by international preservationists, as more of an environmental cause than a wildlife preservationist campaign. Conservationists in Kenya framed their defence of Lake Nakuru in a similar fashion.

In the early 1960s, Lake Nakuru had been designated a bird sanctuary protect the hundreds of thousands of flamingos which fed on the algae in the lake. In 1968, the Lake and its immediate surroundings were gazetted as a National Park. The debate about the health of Nakuru's environment broke out when the German development Bank, KfW, despatched personnel to Kenya in advance of a loan related to a sewage treatment plant in Nakuru in 1975. At a series of meetings, the activities of Copal Ltd came under scrutiny. The company was planning to construct "a factory in Nakuru to manufacture copper-based fungicides". Complaints led to a report on the scheme which expressed worry about the possibility of leakage into the lake, noting that "any effluent emanating from this factory will cause adverse damage not only to the sewerage scheme in Nakuru, but in particular to the flora and fauna in and around Lake Nakuru".<sup>60</sup> Concerned conservationists quickly alerted Attorney General, Charles Njonjo, who was also the head of WWF's Kenya branch. Citing the danger to the lake's ecology, and particularly to the flamingos which made their home there and were the signature tourist attraction, Njonjo declared that "something must be done to stop the effluents from Messrs Copal Ltds Project".<sup>61</sup> Under the terms of the agreement with the German government, funds from KfW were imperilled by the threat to the Lake's ecosystem. Copal Ltd hit back, claiming that it emitted "less than a school lab" and suggesting that conservationists were engaging in a witch hunt that singled out one company unfairly.<sup>62</sup>

Nevertheless, the report concluded on terms unfavourable to Copal Ltd:

It is obvious that the factory cannot take priority over the welfare of Nakuru residents or the nation's heritage which is an international spectacle of major economic significance to Kenya. There appears to be no alternative but for the company to be censured in its bid to manufacture this deadly chemical at Nakuru

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<sup>59</sup> Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Robert Easton, *Black Tide: The Santa Barbara Oil Spill and its Consequences* (Delacorte Press, 1972); Thomas Laqueur, "Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative", in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989): 176-204.

<sup>60</sup> KW 1/10. General Correspondence,. Preliminary Report on Nakuru Sewerage Scheme, Committee Chairman's Report, undated, 1975.

<sup>61</sup> KW 1/10. General Correspondence,. Preliminary Report on Nakuru Sewerage Scheme, Committee Chairman's Report, undated, 1975. Njonjo had intervened in other situations, backing a Masai senior chief in 1976 when the man complained about what he regarded as arbitrary destruction by the Game Department of wildlife in Kajiado, then the location of a sustained yield game scheme. "Kenya's Wildlife—the Frightening Facts", *Nation Magazine*, 12 March 1976.

<sup>62</sup> KW 1/10. General Correspondence,. Preliminary Report on Nakuru Sewerage Scheme, Committee Chairman's Report, undated, 1975

and be asked to engage in the manufacture of more harmless products shown in its registration schedule. Alternatively, the company should be asked to locate their factory elsewhere in the Republic.<sup>63</sup>

Complaints about Copal Ltd's activities had taken off in 1975, and early in 1976 it was mistakenly reported that the "deadly threat" to Nakuru had been averted, the *Nation* praising the efforts of "environmentalists in their battle against industrialists".<sup>64</sup> The declaration of victory turned out to be premature, as the directors of the factory made clear in a letter rebutting claims that the government had reached any decision about its operations.<sup>65</sup>

The *Nation* reported on the issue, making its position clear with headlines like "Killing Lake Nakuru".<sup>66</sup> Members of the public wrote in to the paper calling for the relocation of the factory, and asking, somewhat rhetorically, "Why kill the best bird sanctuary in the world?"<sup>67</sup> Once the campaign gained steam, fuelled by WWF and the Wild Life Clubs of Kenya, the government gave in to public opinion, and the plant was forced to relocate.<sup>68</sup>

In critiquing the government, the *Nation* and the public could draw on a growing number of local and global environmental scandals, ranging from the deleterious side-effects of the Aswan Dam to the knock-on effects of killing off predators like leopards.<sup>69</sup> In total, nearly 200 pieces (including scores of letters to the editor) appeared in Kenya's two largest newspapers (sometimes as many as seven stories in a single paper in one day), the *Nation* and the *Standard* over a period of a few months, related to the scandal at the orphanage, the wildlife merger, Ogutu, and the Nakuru factory. The media and its readers had found a way to critique the Kenyan government which combined the themes of mismanagement, inefficiency, and callousness with causes like environmentalism, anti-corruption, and racialism. The connections between environmentalism, official corruption, and the health of the nation would become a staple of political debates in Kenya, allowing politicians like John Michuki to reinvent themselves as environmental reformers. Figures like Wangari Maathai would bridge the gap between grassroots and more formal political campaigns, and would define a new kind of environmentalism, less worried about wildlife than about the relationship between the health of forests, waterways, and grasslands and the health of the people living in or around those ecosystems.<sup>70</sup> But even in the mid-1970s, wildlife issues caught the eye of the formal political arena.

### **Parliament as a Forum for Wildlife Politics, and Anti-Poaching Efforts**

For many years, scholars regarded the Kenyan parliament during the Kenyatta years and the first decade under Moi as a particularly weak body. It was seen as being outflanked by

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<sup>63</sup> KW 1/10. General Correspondence,. Preliminary Report on Nakuru Sewerage Scheme, Committee Chairman's Report, undated, 1975

<sup>64</sup> Mugambi Karanja, "A Big 'No' Rescues Lake from Factory", *Daily Nation*, 15 January 1976.

<sup>65</sup> "Directors of Factory", *Daily Nation*, 19 January 1976.

<sup>66</sup> "Killing Lake Nakuru", *Daily Nation*, 31 July 1976.

<sup>67</sup> "Deeply Concerned of Nakuru", *Daily Nation*, 11 August 1976; "Why kill the best bird sanctuary in the world", *Daily Nation*, 12 August 1976.

<sup>68</sup> Laura Nurmi, "Buffer Zone Plans for Lake Nakuru National Park and for Njoro River in Kenya", Thesis for Laurea University of Applied Sciences, 2010. 30.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, "Preserving the Conservation Movement", *Daily Nation*, 30 July 1976.

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Wangari Maathai *Unbowed: a Memoir* (New York: Knopf, 2006); Wangari Maathai, *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience* (New York: Lantern Books, 2003).

KANU's party structure and subservient to the Presidency, an argument articulated most forcefully by Joel Barkan.<sup>71</sup> More recently, other scholars maintain that the strength of Parliament has been underestimated. Ken Opalo argues that "the parliament has maintained its position as a key institution of state even during periods of autocratic rule...[serving] as an arena for intra-elite competition for political power and economic resources and a link between the government and the masses".<sup>72</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s, Kenya's National Assembly debated wildlife issues from a number of vantage points: the value of National Parks and preserved areas; the issue of compensation for damage done by wildlife (these first two issues are covered in a previous chapter); conservation as it related to racial and ethnic needs; and the merger itself. These debates represent some of the ways Kenyans' elected representatives saw their role in safeguarding the nation from internal and external threats, and their vision of the nature of post-colonial politics and development. In this case, Parliament was less powerful than the presidency. But its debates do not suggest a cowed institution, but rather one which took seriously its role in evaluating the wildlife sector.

In a 1972 debate the Assistant Minister from the Vice-President's Office raised the issue of inequities from earnings and employment related to the wildlife sector. Shikuku claimed that "anybody who fought for the independence of this country should know that this money [from the tourism industry] goes to a *mzungu* or a *mhindi*", using terminology for whites and Indians in Kenya. "Who", he asked rhetorically, "have these people made the Chairman of the Kenya Tourist Development Corporation, is it not Jan Mohamed who is a *mhindi*?" He went on:

Why should we allow foreigners to accumulate wealth through this industry when our people are suffering? In fact, I am not ashamed to say that the people who benefit are the white men, some of them who are 'paper citizens' and the remainder expatriates. ...It is surprising to know how badly an African driver who drives the tourists around the country is treated. In fact, the houses given to these people are not worthy to accommodate a dog of a white man.<sup>73</sup>

Shikuku put other MPs on the defensive by going on to reference his support for Idi Amin's expulsion of Ugandan Asians, drawing angry rebukes from his colleagues for the insinuation that they "are still licking the boots of the Europeans and the sandals of the Asians".<sup>74</sup>

Other MPs joined in Shikuku's calls, with several of them arguing that Indians should be removed at once from positions of power in the tourism and development sector. Other MPs went so far as to threaten to expel members of Parliament, "black men who are agents of the white man in this very ministry".<sup>75</sup> Others were less provocative in their language, but pointed out the incongruity of foreigners working as guides in Kenya. The Assistant Minister for Education, Mr Rubia, noted that guides were not simply showing people around national parks. Guides, Rubia argued,

Are the people who explain to the tourists what the Rift Valley means to us...they are the people who tell tourists what is Lari,

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<sup>71</sup> Barkan, Joel D, ed. *Beyond Capitalism vs. Socialism in Kenya and Tanzania* (Boulder: L. Rienner, 1994).

<sup>72</sup> Opalo, Kennedy, "The Long Road to Institutionalization: the Kenyan Parliament and the 2013 Elections" in *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 27 Jan 2014.,

<sup>73</sup> The National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 17 October 1972: 1091-2.

<sup>74</sup> The National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 17 October 1972: 1093.

<sup>75</sup> The National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 17 October 1972: 1105-6, 1109.

what happened in Lari during the Mau Mau uprising; they are the people who tell the tourists how Kenya became an independent country; they are the people who tell tourists what our aspirations as an independent people are, and it is wrong that foreigners should go on acting as guides to visitors in our own land.<sup>76</sup>

Ole Oloitipitip, the Assistant Minister for Health, took up the cry, arguing that “game conservation areas” were a “colonial heritage...Why should we, Sir”, he asked, “continue to inherit these colonial tactics?”<sup>77</sup> The discourse surrounding the neo-colonial nature of many of Kenya’s post-independence institutions was tied not only to then-contentious debates about Kenya’s road to independence—the Mau Mau war was not the subject of polite conversation under the Kenyatta dispensation. It was also connected to other events in East Africa, including Amin’s ‘revolutionary’ stance in Uganda, and the reality that Kenyatta’s efforts to smooth over interracial relations with his overtures to the settlers at independence had only reassured one party to the dispute, leaving dissension brewing in his own ranks at the state of redistributive efforts in the subsequent decade.

But other members of Parliament were outraged at what they saw as the travesty of the wildlife sector. Parliament managed to win a symbolic victory in excoriating Ogotu (and through him the government) over discrepancies in ivory figures and what was becoming a poaching crisis of international notoriety. In December of 1976, backbenchers forced a vote on the “alleged mess and discrepancies in the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife”, and passed a motion to set up a select committee to investigate the matter.<sup>78</sup> The debate was reportedly conducted within a “hushed” parliamentary session.<sup>79</sup> If the investigation went anywhere, it left no paper trail, but the debate in Parliament, with its euphemistic attacks on official corruption, marked an unusually-robust critique of the government. Ogotu was harassed during the debate with shouts of “Shame! Shame!”<sup>80</sup> Ogotu, as forceful as ever, if also somewhat unoriginal, blamed MPs’ discontent on “some foreigners who are envious of the posts that are now being held by Africans since the National Parks department was amalgamated with tourism and wildlife”.<sup>81</sup>

MPs demanded that the government take concrete action, particularly to stop what was presented as a poaching epidemic. The centrepiece of efforts to combat poaching was the hunting ban. Elephant hunting was banned altogether in 1973. The ban was lifted the following year, but under pressure from poachers and the international community the Kenya Government instituted a full ban on hunting within the country in 1977.<sup>82</sup> Officials went so far as to cancel all existing hunting licenses, throwing the hunting industry into a tailspin and outraging members of the professional hunting fraternity. It is interesting that at the same time that a hunting ban was

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<sup>76</sup> The National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 18 October 1972, 1153-4.

<sup>77</sup> The National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 18 October 1972, 1157.

<sup>78</sup> Zack M’ mugambi, “MPs in uproar over poaching: wildlife minister told to quite” in *Standard*, 4 December 1976.

<sup>79</sup> “MPs Demand Wildlife Probe; It’s a matter of national importance”, *Daily Nation*, 27 November 1976.

<sup>80</sup> “Anyoma leads call for ministry to be probed” in *Nation*, 4 December 1976.

<sup>81</sup> Zack M’ mugambi, “MPs in uproar over poaching: wildlife minister told to quite” in *Standard*, 4 December 1976.

<sup>82</sup> This ban remains in place and has been alternately hailed as a forward-thinking approach which saved the elephant and as a misplaced, PR-oriented move which will doom Elephants over the long term. Uganda banned elephant hunting in 1975, and hunting and ivory trading altogether in 1979, moot moves which gave President Amin’s cronies a monopoly on the poaching which continued. Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology—University Library (Cambridge), NUTAE/C/i. Uganda Institute of Ecology, Progress Reports No. 18, 20, 30, 31 and 32 for the quarters ending, respectively, 31 March 1976 and 30 September 1976, and for the period January to September 1979.

being enacted to “save” Kenya’s wildlife, the Minister was denying that wildlife was in serious danger of extinction.<sup>83</sup> Whether the ban was a response to a public relations rather than an extinction crisis, or marked the attempt of some parties to create an official monopoly of the ivory sector is difficult to say, but these were various rumours that circulated in the press around the time of the ban. The ban did not come alone. With it came the centralisation of fundraising and grant-seeking. Controlling this process would undoubtedly have allowed the government to set its own priorities better than when the wildlife lobbies with their vested interests were involved. But for Ogotu, there was the bonus of being able to expand on his neo-colonial theme. Of the Wildlife Fund Trustees Committee he said, “We will [now] have no other organisations poking their nose into the management of our wildlife”.<sup>84</sup>

Another component of the effort to bring poaching and the ivory trade under control was the creation of an anti-poaching program which bore some resemblance to the Field Force created by David Sheldrick in Tsavo in the 1950s. The Anti-Poaching Units of the 1970s consisted of four Units (three funded by the World Bank), each with four sections of Field Forces. Two hundred forty people worked for the Anti-Poaching Units as part of a structure which ran downwards from a series of Directors, deputies and assistants to the senior warden, and thence to wardens in charge of respective groups of two units and their field forces. Tellingly, it was the commercial assistant director of the responsible department, which took charge for the Anti-Poaching campaign, suggesting that the association of wildlife with its products and commercial benefit had yet to be severed.<sup>85</sup> The responsibilities of officers and rank and file of the Units read like a military document, with its injunctions to avoid “plunder and wanton destruction”, insistence on strict discipline loyalty, and discussions of “mutiny”.<sup>86</sup> The training programme called for Field Force commanders to receive instruction from the notorious General Services Unit, for Rangers to attend an Army Training School, and for assistant wardens to receive their training from the Criminal Investigative Department, making clear that the Anti-Poaching Units combined the attributes of military and police forces.<sup>87</sup>

However, in spite of the connections associated with their training, the Anti-Poaching Units did not have particularly close links to the other security services, which made for an often disjointed approach to combating poaching. This was particularly true on the Northern Frontier, where Kenyan security services were involved in a smouldering conflict with what the state referred to as *shifita* (in this context, ‘bandits’) along the Somali border. In the 1960s, Kenya had fought a war against Somali irredentists backed by the Somali government. Its *manyatta* strategy (involving a form of villagization which resembled the British crackdown on Mau Mau fighters) had engendered little goodwill, and the poaching of the 1970s saw increased connections between poaching and “banditry”. One outcome of this state of affairs was that poachers in the northern districts were more heavily armed, something which worried wildlife department officials when they contemplated the “skeleton man power” in their outer stations.<sup>88</sup> From the 1960s, wildlife officers had begged for greater support, requesting the use of “automatic weapons in the way of Bren guns, Patches, and hand grenades”. Referring to the agitation by a particularly enthusiastic officer, the acting chief game warden, N Ngana, wrote that he did “not

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<sup>83</sup> “Wildlife Extinction Claim is Nonsense, Says Ogotu” in *Nation*, 27 April 1977.

<sup>84</sup> “Ban will put stop to illegal curios” in *Nation*, 1 June 1977.

<sup>85</sup> KNA KW 7/8. Anti-Poaching, 1976-1978. “The Side Letter”, undated.

<sup>86</sup> KNA KW 7/8. Anti-Poaching, 1976-1978. “The Side Letter”, undated: 10-11.

<sup>87</sup> KNA KW 7/8. Anti-Poaching, 1976-1978. “The Side Letter”, undated: 14-15.

<sup>88</sup> KNA. KW 1/6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977. Game Warden Meru to Head of Game Department, 24 May 1976.



approve fully the growing wish of Mr Elliott to create a special armed ‘game scout army’ to deal with this matter...Sooner or later we shall have to answer questions about ‘illegal killing of innocent Samburu people by the game department’, and the danger of conflicts with the police and the armed forces is also very real”. Ngana expressed a desire for the police to be in charge of dealing with *shifita*, more than happy to see his own department functioning in a more auxiliary role while keeping its eye on wildlife-related problems.<sup>89</sup>

In subsequent years, the cautious official’s fears were born out, as the Game Department successfully lobbied to take its place amongst the armed departments maintaining “law and order” in the north. Wildlife personnel had frequent run-ins with the local police, the military, and the General Services Unit. When villagers complained that they were beaten by members of the Anti-Poaching Units, the police hauled the wildlife department personnel to the station, and the issue caught the attention of the Provincial Commissioner.<sup>90</sup> The air was thick with accusations and conspiracies. The Provincial Commissioner wondered aloud why Anti-Poaching Units never reported to local officials, as was customary in the administrative framework which had not changed much in its character since the departure of the British. The PC also noted that “he had on many occasions received reports that the ‘game department’ employees and other officers of the government departments were personally involved in poaching rackets and sales of ivory”.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, wildlife personnel claimed that “quite often [members of the Anti-Poaching Units] had encountered police manoeuvres that tended to indicate that certain police officers wish to ‘cover up’ or protect certain poachers or ivory traders”.<sup>92</sup> These claims were nothing new. In 1968, as he agitated for the militarization of the Game Department, Elliott had launched Operation *Wanyama* (‘animals’/‘wildlife’). Less of a success than he had hoped the wildlife officer blamed failed operations on leaks, perhaps connected to General Services Unit operations in the area.<sup>93</sup> The expected excesses of the enforcement of poaching laws also materialised during the years around the creation of the Anti-Poaching Units. In 1976, Mwacharo Kubo, MP from Taveta (near the Tsavo East National Park) criticised the Minister for Tourism and Wildlife for what was described by constituents as a “barbaric raid carried out by members of the game anti-poaching units” in a village called Kitogphoto.<sup>94</sup>

### **Corruption in the Wildlife Sector?**

If Kenya’s wildlife, as a natural resource, was leveraged against development aid for national economic development, it was ostensibly used in a different manner in aid of personal economic enrichment by some amongst the country’s elite, feeding into the growing concern about official corruption in Kenya after independence. The novelty supposedly associated with this corruption belied the extent to which both white and black employees of wildlife departments, as well as police officials who handled ivory took part in enforcing hunting laws,

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<sup>89</sup> KNA KW 7/1. Poaching General. Game Warden Maralal to Divisional Game Warden (Northern), 12 June 1968; Acting Chief Game Warden to Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 15 June 1968.

<sup>90</sup> KNA. KW 1/6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977, Record of 21 July 1976 meeting between police and wildlife services officers at Garissa.

<sup>91</sup> KNA. KW 1/6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977, Record of 21 July 1976 meeting between police and wildlife services officers at Garissa.

<sup>92</sup> KNA. KW 1/6. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 5 May 1957 to 3 March 1977, Record of 21 July 1976 meeting between police and wildlife services officers at Garissa.

<sup>93</sup> KNA KW 7/1. Poaching General. Elliott to Company Commander of E Company GSU, 26 July 1968.

<sup>94</sup> “We are not poachers”, *Daily Nation*, 30 November 1976.

dabbled in corruption.<sup>95</sup> It also ignores the extent to which the personalised, arbitrary rule of many colonial authorities shaped the nature of post-independence administrative rule, which changed little in nature (District Officers in Kenya, for example, retained huge power for decades after independence). For much of the colonial era, this arbitrariness was nothing less than the method of rule. But the rise of more technical forms of government, with an emphasis on process, and the rhetorical commitment to equity after independence made those older methods of rule, along with the acquisitiveness of the new ruling elite, appear dangerous.

Early in the process of the merger of the wildlife departments which formed the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department, some citizens saw sinister doings afoot. One *Nation* reader believed that he saw a conspiracy. By using the *Nation*'s campaign as a pretext for pushing Olindo out, Ogotu assured the ascent of John Mutinda to the top of the new department. Mutinda had headed the Game Department, widely believed to have been the source of much corruption in the wildlife sphere for many years. "Spectator" ended his letter thus: "One has only to scrutinise the record of the former game department to predict the course of events from this point on. God help the elephants now! And God help Kenya's tourist industry!"<sup>96</sup> Other critics were even less elliptical. John Keen, the MP for Kajiado North, declared in Parliament that poachers could be found in Jogoo House (home to many government ministries), and was supported in his claims by Mr Konchellah and Burudi Nabwera.<sup>97</sup> In the press, citizens asked whether the Game Department was actually focussed on suppressing poachers. "In Kenya", one writer complained, "it is only the small man who gets caught. Why", he asked, "are the big time poachers getting away with this serious crime?"<sup>98</sup>

The Game Department had been dogged for years by accusations about corruption, dating back to the colonial era, when members of the department and the police who assisted the department in its duties participated in the illegal ivory trade. In Parliament after independence it was subjected to similar claims about its probity. Game Wardens were doubly unpopular with many MPs because their rural constituents passed on numerous complaints about the refusal of the wardens (legally justified given that no such legislation was passed for many years) to grant them compensation when wild animals damaged their stock, crops, or neighbours. One MP who looked favourably on the work of the Game Department, Migire, saw in these criticisms however, efforts to harass the Game Department, whose Chief Game Warden had been subjected to home invasions without due cause by Criminal Investigation Department.<sup>99</sup> Thanks to the political machinations of the ruling party and its critics, this was also an era of increased ethnic division, during which every appointment was carefully scrutinised for evidence of "tribalism".<sup>100</sup> As first Africanisation and then a series of reorganisations took place within government departments, complaints rolled in about favouritism on tribal or ethnic lines. In a 1986 review of the WCMD's first ten years, the Director, Sindiyo, noted that the WCMD was the recipient of many complaints about its own employment practises. The Director encouraged

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<sup>95</sup> Some early game departments were deliberately staffed by former poachers, both at the level of white rangers or wardens and at the lower levels populated by African game guards. See also, Ian Parker and Mohamed Amin, *Ivory Crisis* (Chatto and Windus, 1983).

<sup>96</sup> "The Minister's Policy", letter to the editor from "Spectator" in *Nation*, 14 September 1976.

<sup>97</sup> "Real Poachers are in Jogoo House, says MP" in *Daily Nation*, 22 September 1976.

<sup>98</sup> Joe Kadhi, "Why poaching is being kept alive", *Daily Nation*, 20 March 1977.

<sup>99</sup> National Assembly of Kenya (Hansard), 17 October 1972, 1101.

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

his officers to ignore those complaints which were “vague and tribalistic”.<sup>101</sup> Hints of conflict within Kenya’s communities surfaced in the press, with letter writers making reference to “certain selfish members of our society”, and “certain people” in Central Province who were able to turn a profit in the forests in spite of laws protecting trees and wildlife.<sup>102</sup>

One explanation for the emergence of the Game Department as the stronger of the two branches of the new wildlife department has to do with the rumours about corruption. There is another, simpler potential explanation. In the 1970s, because of the focus by international financial organisations on economic development, conservation projects which emphasised developmental goals were more likely to receive funding. The National Parks Department handled areas reserved strictly for animals, where the presence of people was prohibited. The Game Department, on the other hand, monitored areas where the interests of humans and those of wildlife were often in direct conflict. If a “good” conservation project which was one which should be of benefit to the community in which animals were situated, the functions of the Game Department were closer to the utilitarian approach of the World Bank, the UN, and other organisations. The Game Department had a history of working with the UNDP/FAO in the context of an early-1970s Wildlife Management Project for the Kajiado Community Project.<sup>103</sup> And the overhaul of the wildlife departments had stipulated a new framework for policy. As articulated by a World Bank/Kenya Government report on Wildlife Utilization on the Range Areas

The previous policy was to protect wildlife wherever it was not in serious conflict with human interest. The new policy is to manage wildlife so as to maximize returns from the land. To this end, it is now Government’s intention that at a minimum no landowner should suffer any net damage from wildlife whose survival in that area is judged to be in the national interest. Government is committed to assisting landowners to earn direct returns from the wildlife on their land where this is in accord with the overall objective.<sup>104</sup>

The report cited the size of the Game Department, its wide reach across districts, and its Research division as the rationale for working with the department, and under the “Organization and Management” heading, the report noted that “the implementation of the wildlife component of the project is the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, and specifically of the Game Department”, adding that “by the time the project is implemented it is anticipated that the Game Department will have been merged with Kenya National Parks into the Wildlife Management Service”.<sup>105</sup>

Reactions to the wildlife department merger and the ivory ban by two parties—the Professional Hunters’ Association and the Trustees of the National Parks—illustrated the manner in which Kenyatta’s centralised governing style made patronage politics and bribery a part of the

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<sup>101</sup> KNA KW 2/23. General Review of Departmental Performances—Minutes. Wildlife Conservation and Management Department, Minutes of the meetings of senior officers of WCMD to review performance 1976 to 1986, 16-18 June 1986.

<sup>102</sup> “Time to Stop the Slaughter of Wildlife”, *Daily Nation*, 1 August 1976.

<sup>103</sup> See for example, KNA KW 19/1. “Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Kenya Wildlife Management Project”, 20 August 1971.

<sup>104</sup> KNA KW 21/14 World Bank 1974-75. “Wildlife Utilization on the Range Areas”, 3-4. Undated.

<sup>105</sup> KNA KW 21/14 World Bank 1974-75. “Wildlife Utilization on the Range Areas”, 4-5, 41. Undated.

national political modus operandi.<sup>106</sup> Desperate to prevent the merger, which Trustees believed would erode the capabilities of a smoothly-functioning organisation and expose the National Parks to the corruption of the Game Department, the Parks board engaged in some corruption of their own. They visited Kenyatta who was convalescing in Mombasa to “present him with two pairs of mounted ivory and at the same time give £1,000 as donation to the various colleges of technology throughout the Republic”. The board also told Kenyatta that they were “considering introducing a special conservation award to be known as ‘Kenyatta Wildlife Conservation Award’”.<sup>107</sup> As described above, their efforts came to nought. But the fact that the same year, in an effort to repeal the hunting ban, the President of the Hunters’ Association used a “contribution to a suitable charity” to gain an interview with Kenyatta suggests that the President had developed a demanding manner of allocating his time to supplicants.<sup>108</sup>

### **Britain and Kenya in a Post-Colonial Era**

Although the most consistent actors throughout this story are the Kenyan government, the Kenyan public, the Kenyan press, and international and global institutions, the former colonial power was not absent. In spite of the violence of the Mau Mau War, independence, when it came, had been comparatively amicable. The British kept on military forces in the country and helped to put down a mutiny in Mombasa just a year after independence. Some settlers left, but others stayed on. And British businesses retained a considerable interest in the commercial, agricultural, and industrial sectors of the economy after independence. Records from Britain’s National Archives suggest that throughout the 1960s and 1970s, in a variety of African countries which had formerly been colonies, the British government was active in promoting the interests of British firms.

In July of 1974, the British High Commissioner contacted Alan Campbell, a Deputy Under Secretary at the Foreign Office about a looming political crisis. Various parties with an interest in wildlife conservation were in danger of coalescing around the issue of long-rumoured official involvement in ivory poaching. An NBC film team had produced a television special about the ivory trade which pointed to customs irregularities, but made no direct accusations. At the end of 1974, Ian Parker, a former employee of the Game Department and sometime head of Wildlife Services, Ltd (the company used by Richard Laws in Uganda and at Tsavo for his culling operations) distributed copies of a report claiming to detail the alleged involvement in the illegal trade of the Kenyattas, Dr. Njoroge Mungai (an occasional MP, brother of the High Commissioner, and personal physician to the President), Paul Ngei (an MP), and Charles Njonjo (the Attorney General who would later become the chairman of the East African Wildlife Society). British representatives “returned the report and explained why they could have nothing to do with it and said that if asked they would have to deny that they had seen it”. Parker was regarded as a “fanatic” capable of damaging Anglo-Kenyan relations (FCO officials believed that if corruption at State House became public, they would be the recipients of Presidential

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<sup>106</sup> Daniel Branch.

<sup>107</sup> Kenya National Parks Department Annual Report for 1974/5.

<sup>108</sup> FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. Memo, P R A Mansfield to M K W Ewans, East Africa Department of FCO, 12 February 1975.

ire).<sup>109</sup> The British High Commission believed that Parker's endeavours were being covertly funded by the WWF fund and its local chairman, Jack Block.<sup>110</sup>

The depths of official paranoia became apparent in the events that followed. Kenyatta got wind of an even more incriminating version of the report and sent Special Branch after Parker. However, Special Branch (the body implicated in the murder of Pedro Pinto—the first of Kenyan Presidents' rivals to die mysterious deaths) sought to confiscate and destroy copies of this second report to prevent Kenyatta from getting his hands on them. Parker seems to have handed over several copies to Special Branch, but the High Commission believed that there were remaining copies in Britain.<sup>111</sup> Kenyatta received at least one copy, but Parker had removed all references to the President. Furthermore, Special Branch informed Parker that they had been tipped off about his report by the British or Americans (an internal High Commission memo read, "we have reason to think it was in fact the U.S. Embassy").<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, the British Government seems to have been alerted of the report by none other than Richard Laws, who by this point had taken up a post as Director of the Antarctic Survey, and was based in London. Whether Laws (to whom Parker had given a copy of the detailed report) was a regular conduit of information from East Africa, or whether he was taking advantage of an opportunity to pay back his old foes in the preservation lobby at the expense of his friend, Parker, is impossible to say, but the Foreign Office confirmed that Laws was the source of the leak in Parker's network.<sup>113</sup>

While all of this was taking place, the East African Wildlife Society was showing films which highlighted the ivory crisis. They were forced to edit the NBC film, but were not prevented from going ahead with the showing. Simultaneously, the FCO and High Commission fretted about the bombshells they feared were about to be dropped by the *Los Angeles Times*, which was collaborating with the *Observer* on a special about poaching. British officials suspected that the newspapers were in touch with Parker, who was taking advantage of his clout with them (he was presumably their major source) to use the timing of the stories' appearance as a threat to Kenyatta. Parker and the WWF did everything they could to persuade the British High Commission of the urgency of the situation. It is impossible to know how seriously they contemplated their threat to go to Prince Philip (who was involved with the British WWF) and get him to speak to Kenyatta, but the suggestion sent the High Commissioner himself into paroxysm of anxiety.<sup>114</sup>

What was not in dispute, from the British perspective, was Kenyatta's involvement in illegal ivory trading. Much that has been written in the press over the years about the Kenyattas' participation in such rings has been couched in innuendo. But within the FCO, "the Kenyattas'

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<sup>109</sup> FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. Memo, P R A Mansfield to M K W Ewans, East Africa Department of FCO, 12 February 1975

<sup>110</sup> FCO 31/1713—Political Relations Between Kenya and the United Kingdom. Antony Duff, British High Commission, to A H Campbell, East Africa Desk, FCO, 10 July 1974.

<sup>111</sup> FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. Memo, P R A Mansfield to M K W Ewans, East Africa Department of FCO, 12 February 1975. "How Pinto Murder was Plotted...and Kisilu Framed" in *Daily Nation*, 19 June 2000.

<sup>112</sup> FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. P R A Mansfield to M K Ewans, 5 March 1975.

<sup>113</sup> FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. P R A Mansfield to M K Ewans, 5 March 1975. M K Ewans to P R A Mansfield, 7 March 1975.

<sup>114</sup> FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. P R A Mansfield to M K Ewans, 5 March 1975. The *New Scientist* would publish a story which named "the most prominent among" the "ivory queens" as the Mayor of Nairobi (the President's daughter, Margaret Kenyatta) and the President's wife, Ngina Kenyatta, or Mama Ngina, as she was known to an affectionate public. Jon Tinker, "Who's Killing Kenya's Jumbos?" in *New Scientist*, 22 May 1975, 452-455.

greed and dishonesty” was openly bemoaned as it impacted British interests, and Parker’s report was described as “a damning document”.<sup>115</sup> In September, Kenyan Agricultural Minister Bruce McKenzie<sup>116</sup> arrived in London. In the process of discussing the arms sales and Kenya’s military needs and security situation, the implication of senior officials (including Kenyatta’s family) in corruption was raised.<sup>117</sup> Memos for British Foreign Office ministers summed up the country’s priorities vis-à-vis Kenya:

a) To ensure the continued cooperation of the Kenyan Government in our policy of admitting the remaining 25-30,000 British Asians in a phased and orderly manner, and to avoid another Uganda-type exodus; b) to preserve and if possible increase our thirty-per-cent share in a steadily growing export market which currently yields an annual trade balance in our favour of about £26.6 million with invisible benefits of about a further £13 million a year; c) to protect our investment in Kenya, totalling approximately £90 million; d) to safeguard the interests of the thirty thousand British citizens resident in Kenya; e) to preserve our defence facilities in Kenya, which include over-flying and staging rights, Army training facilities and the use of Mombasa by Royal Naval Ships.<sup>118</sup>

Corruption, in other words, did not feature prominently in an agenda focussed on political stability as it was thought to create conditions for economic profits and post-colonial influence in a Cold War context.

The British government would have preferred that Kenyatta nationalise and legalise the trade. Otherwise, they feared, it was a “time bomb”. Exposure and its consequences for Anglo-Kenyan relations and British businesses, rather than corruption, was their primary concern (one High Commission official referred to Kenyatta’s “present state of mind and tendency to fly off the handle”), and the FCO engaged in fevered conversations with the U.S. State Department to

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<sup>115</sup> FCO 31/1713—Political Relations Between Kenya and the United Kingdom. Internal Memo, R A Neilson of East Africa Department, 15 July 1974. FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. M K Ewans, East Africa Department to Philip Mansfield, 21 February 1975. Officials scribbled the following on a copy of a 22 May 1975 *New Scientist* article, “Who’s Killing Kenya’s Jumbos”: “a damaging article because built on well documented facts. The ‘secret report’ on ivory smuggling, if it appears, will very clearly prove the guilt of members of the Kenyan elite and Kenyatta’s family. It could cause us a lot of bother”. FCO 31/1887. This article referred to a “private commission” initiated by “a group of local white conservationists”, and alluded to a copy of the report “secure at the headquarters of the World Wildlife Fund in Switzerland where it has so far been read by only a handful of leading world conservationists...if private pressure produces no results, the report and all the names it contains will have to be published”. The article cited specific license numbers granted for ivory exports at a time when supposedly no such licences were being issued. These licenses were allegedly granted by “senior official[s] in the Game Department of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife”. United Africa Corporation (Kenya) Ltd was based on Kimathi Street and counted amongst its prominent shareholders Margaret Wambui Kenyatta.

<sup>116</sup> McKenzie is believed to have worked as an agent for British and Israeli intelligence services, as well as having worked as a front for British corporate interests in Kenya. Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011): 40.

<sup>117</sup> FCO 31/1713—Political Relations Between Kenya and the United Kingdom. Secretary of State’s Meeting with Mr Bruce MacKenzie at 10.15 a.m. on 10 September 1974.

<sup>118</sup> FCO 31/1713—Political Relations Between Kenya and the United Kingdom. Secretary of State’s Meeting with Mr Bruce MacKenzie at 10.15 a.m. on 10 September 1974.

determine how to minimise the damage.<sup>119</sup> British officials' particular concern was with the timing, as they feared that the story might break at the very moment when Kenyatta was despatching representatives to visit British Prime Minister Harold Wilson about an impending arms deal.<sup>120</sup> "This row", an official grumbled, "if it breaks, is likely to come immediately after the projected visit of two emissaries from Kenyatta to the Prime Minister to talk about arms' purchases".<sup>121</sup> The Foreign Office also expressed worry about the security of British business in Kenya if relations went south over something as trivial as poaching and corruption, estimating that Kenyatta's personal favour was of critical importance.<sup>122</sup> This made allegations about the President and his family particularly undesirable. They were not the only ones concerned. For different reasons, Parker and the WWF seemed to be worried about how to handle the material they had compiled. They feared Kenyatta's reaction against the attack that global conservationists would likely mount on his regime. Parker and Block, whatever the High Commission and the FCO thought, were no bomb-throwers: they thought that the answer to the trade lay in backroom dealing and "quiet work directed towards a more sensible and better control of legal elephant hunting and the legal trade in ivory".<sup>123</sup>

Because Britain was focussed on the maintenance of economic and military ties, and because these ties depended on the goodwill of the Kenyan government and the absence of any backlash against the former colonial power, it focussed its capital aid to the country on, in addition to "general development", "the Land Adjudication Programme, designed to consolidate African holdings and provide security of title" and the "Land Transfer Programme, which provides for the purchase of British mixed farms on a willing buyer willing seller basis".<sup>124</sup> Land distribution was conceived as an instrument to promote political stability, and stability, for British diplomats, was what mattered most. The British press called the government out on its quiescence in the face of what it documented as official corruption in the ivory and charcoal trades in a series of articles in the *Sunday Times*.<sup>125</sup> The paper noted that although "the British government has been in a unique position to view this process...publicly...it has chosen to say nothing".<sup>126</sup> For three weeks the paper excoriated the government: "Just as the British government is aware of the misuse of aid funds designed to speed land redistribution in Kenya, and the big international companies accept that bribery is now the routine, so the wildlife lobby has become trapped in a posture of silent complicity", citing a payment by the WWF to Kenyatta to "buy out the farms surrounding" Lake Nakuru.<sup>127</sup> The Foreign Office complained about

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<sup>119</sup> FCO 31/1887—Illegal Activities by Officials of Kenya. Memo, P R A Mansfield to M K W Ewans, East Africa Department of FCO, 12 February 1975. FCO 31/1713—Political Relations Between Kenya and the United Kingdom. Antony Duff, British High Commission, to A H Campbell, East Africa Desk, FCO, 10 July 1974

<sup>120</sup> FCO 31/1713—Political Relations Between Kenya and the United Kingdom. Antony Duff, British High Commission, to A H Campbell, East Africa Desk, FCO, 10 July 1974.

<sup>121</sup> FCO 31/1713. Political Relations Between Kenya and UK. British High Commission (Antony Duff) to A H Campbell, 10 July 1974.

<sup>122</sup> FCO 31/1713. Political Relations Between Kenya and UK. Secretary of State's Meeting with Mr Bruce MacKenzie at 10.15 a.m. on 10 September 1974.

<sup>123</sup> FCO 31/1713—Political Relations Between Kenya and the United Kingdom. Antony Duff, British High Commission, to A H Campbell, East Africa Desk, FCO, 10 July 1974

<sup>124</sup> FCO 31/1713. Political Relations Between Kenya and UK. Secretary of State's Meeting with Mr Bruce MacKenzie at 10.15 a.m. on 10 September 1974.

<sup>125</sup> "How Jomo's Royal Family Grabbed the Nation's Wealth", *The Sunday Times*, 17 August 1975, p 5, Issue 7940; "Elephants, Charcoal, and the Rape of a Nation", *The Sunday Times*, 24 August 1975, p. 38, Issue 7941.

<sup>126</sup> "The Killing of Kenyatta's Critic", *The Sunday Times*, 10 August 1975, p. 11, Issue 7939.

<sup>127</sup> "Elephants, Charcoal, and the Rape of a Nation", *The Sunday Times*, 24 August 1975, p. 38, Issue 7941.

“claims that there is a conspiracy of silence on what is going on”, and noted the *Times* accusation that the British government was “the biggest and most influential investor [and deserved blame] for not speaking up”.<sup>128</sup>

The Foreign Office was quick to reassure the Kenyan government that the media reports did not reflect the view of the British government, but nonetheless received a breathless despatch from the Kenyan High Commissioner in London, who explained that the Kenyattas “are people of very humble beginnings who have had to struggle hard, together with the rest of the population in very difficult circumstances to emerge from the servitude of the past to lead a more dignified life”. Perhaps pressing the point a bit too hard, the High Commissioner maintained that “they are ordinary people leading ordinary lives and earning their living through hard work”, and taking exception to the representation of Kenya as “a country being strangled by greed, gambling, land-grabbing, unfair business practices and wholesale destruction of wildlife and trees”. The protest contained a less than veiled threat, noting that in a young democracy like Kenya, attacks by the foreign press on a leader could undermine the “foundation of the modern Kenya state” and imperil “the vast British interests in Kenya”.<sup>129</sup> The British were not the only country with a commercial interest which overlapped with wildlife lobbying. In 1976, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands was accused of taking bribes from Lockheed Aircraft Corp. for lobbying on behalf of the company in the Netherlands, causing WWF much grief over its spokesman’s dealings.<sup>130</sup>

### **Project Logic: the World Bank’s Follow-Up to the Tourism and Wildlife Project**

The World Bank thought of itself as a results-oriented institution, capable of accomplishing more than the vacillating Kenyan government or the intractable conservation organisations. Embracing a doctrine of development, it aspired to combine the engineering of the Kenyan economy with the management of the country’s natural resources. Built into its institutional framework were follow-up studies which sought to demonstrate the success of its programs. Two such studies shed light on its Tourism and Wildlife Project in Kenya, and are worth evaluating to explore the relationship between the aspirations and outcomes of what was supposed to be a signature project for Kenya and the developing world. The first document the Bank produced was the Project Completion Report, issued in April of 1989. The second was a Staff Appraisal Report of a new project, the Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project, published in January of 1992.<sup>131</sup>

The first report was largely optimistic, citing the growth in the number of tourists to Kenya, and praising as “appropriate” the Bank’s ambition to work in the wildlife and tourism sector.<sup>132</sup> In sum, the evaluators wrote, “the project has been successful in that physical execution has been largely completed and the expected benefits in the face of increased visitor

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<sup>128</sup> FCO 31/1904. Reaction of Kenya to Foreign Press Reports. Aide Memoire, 9 August 1975.

<sup>129</sup> FCO 31/1904. Reaction of Kenya to Foreign Press Reports. . Kenyan High Commissioner to British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 13 September 1975.

<sup>130</sup> “No Bribe Cash to Us, says WWF” in *Standard*, 28 August 1976.

<sup>131</sup> World Bank, “Project Completion Report: Kenya Wildlife and Tourism Project (Loan 1304-T-KE), No. 7727, 20 April 1989; World Bank, “Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project”, No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992.

<sup>132</sup> World Bank, “Project Completion Report: Kenya Wildlife and Tourism Project (Loan 1304-T-KE), No. 7727, 20 April 1989: iv, 15.



flows have been realised”.<sup>133</sup> There were a few snags. Implementation of the 1976 project took about twice as long as estimated, and blame was laid largely with the confusion of the Kenyan government, its inadequate staffing, and local problems with logistics. The sloth in implementation also affected the flow of money from the loan.<sup>134</sup> The main snag came at the tail end of the report, where it was noted that “the expected benefits in the form of improved visitor management in the wildlife areas, reduced environmental damage and the wider sharing of revenues from tourism have not yet been realized or have been realized only in part”.<sup>135</sup> Put another way, by its own admission the Bank’s efforts to foster development in Kenya had brought more tourists to the country without ensuring that anything particularly useful had been done with the associated revenue, or that revenue had reached the communities which were supposedly to be “developed” by the effort. In fact, given that more tourists meant more pressure on protected land, and given the bank’s admission that it had failed to address problems related to environmental degradation, the project might be said to have contributed to the challenges facing Kenya and its wildlife sector.

The late-1970s and 1980s had not been easy for Kenya and its wildlife sector. Kenyatta died in 1978 and was succeeded by Daniel Arap Moi, the Vice-President, who grew increasingly wary after an attempted coup in 1982, and formally introduced one-party-state status to Kenya. In the conservation world, advocates of banning the trade in ivory, who generally believed that elephants were being killed at an unsustainable rate, gradually gained ground over those who thought that regulation of the trade would be sufficient, and who downplayed the significance of the numbers of elephants being poached. In the meantime, John Mutinda, the former head of the Game Department, and the man sent to assist Richard Laws in Tsavo in the 1960s, was appointed to head the WCMD. The World Bank forced him out because of his alleged connections to poaching rings and he was replaced by Daniel Sindiyo who headed what cynics called the “Wildlife Poaching Department”.<sup>136</sup> Under pressure from international organisations and western governments, President Moi brought Olindo back to his old position, but the former head of the National Parks proved unable to perform to the satisfaction of the President or his international critics, and WCMD was dissolved<sup>137</sup>, making way for the creation of the Kenya Wildlife Service, a parastatal whose board would eventually be chaired by Charles Njonjo, former Attorney General and sometime head of WWF Kenya, who had been removed from office in the aftermath of the 1982 attempted coup.

In 1992 the World Bank commissioned a new ten-year project for Kenya’s wildlife sector. Its approach to KWS focussed on “institutional capacity...rehabilitation of park and reserve infrastructure...establishment of a Community Wildlife Program...strengthening KWS planning capacity...revitalization of KWS scientific research...expansion of the wildlife education program...[and] maintenance of an effective Wildlife Protection Unit to control poaching and ensure tourist security”.<sup>138</sup> The project was designed to reward KWS for the

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<sup>133</sup> World Bank, “Project Completion Report: Kenya Wildlife and Tourism Project (Loan 1304-T-KE), No. 7727, 20 April 1989: 16.

<sup>134</sup> World Bank, “Project Completion Report: Kenya Wildlife and Tourism Project (Loan 1304-T-KE), No. 7727, 20 April 1989: v.

<sup>135</sup> World Bank, “Project Completion Report: Kenya Wildlife and Tourism Project (Loan 1304-T-KE), No. 7727, 20 April 1989:16.

<sup>136</sup> David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 1997): 191-192.

<sup>137</sup> David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 1997): 243, 247.

<sup>138</sup> World Bank, “Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project”, No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992.

strides the Bank reckoned it had made since its creation.<sup>139</sup> It included—as had the 1976 version—provisions a “strike force” not dissimilar to Sheldrick’s army of wildlife warriors who had taken the fight to poachers in the 1950s and had served as the model for wildlife warfare across the continent.<sup>140</sup> The new viability of the wildlife sector was to be based on “growth in tourist numbers, price increases, and the development of new sources of revenue”, relying heavily in the initial stages on donors. The Bank departed from the assumption that “KWS cannot be reasonably expected to effectively tackle the wide range of emerging wildlife related conservation talks”, and so much financial management and fundraising would become the purview of the Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund, which “would be structured to represent the diverse interests of a variety of stakeholders including donors, government agencies responsible or natural resource management, the tourism industry, and domestic and international NGOs engaged in conservation and environmental activities”. The Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund would be run not by the Kenyan Government, but instead “independently by professional investment managers abroad and in Kenya”.<sup>141</sup>

So having devoted its 1970s efforts to building up the capacity of the Kenyan government to manage its wildlife resources, the Bank pirouetted neatly towards the private sector in the 1990s. The 1992 report blithely admitted that “the World Bank-financed Wildlife and Tourism project initiated in 1976 failed to reverse the sector’s continuing degradation”.<sup>142</sup> It went on to acknowledge the failure of the World Bank during that period at the precise things that were supposed to be its strengths: ensuring the smooth transfers of money; designing rational bureaucracies; linking finance and development; and organised implementation and follow-up. The 1992 report put the failure of earlier community conservation programs down to the provision of such benefits “without clear purpose or direction; they were not well targeted to the people living in wildlife areas nor were they clearly linked to the presence or conservation of wildlife”. The report went on to note that “local communities had very limited opportunities for earning income from wildlife use, since tourism revenues were captured primarily by established commercial enterprises and by national or district governments”.<sup>143</sup> The concerns the Bank expressed with Kenya’s wildlife sector almost precisely mirrored those of the 1970s, and the most significant change in the Bank’s approach was the re-creation of the parastatal which had been eliminated by the 1976 merger for which it had advocated.

The 1992 report also noted some shifts in potential partners for development projects in Kenya. In the years after independence, the key actors had been the UNDP/FAO, WWF, AWLF, the Ford Foundation, and the East African Wildlife Society. In 1992, the critical actors identified by the Bank included the European Economic Community, Official Development Assistance (via the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), the Japanese predecessor to JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), the German development agency, the Swedish

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<sup>139</sup> World Bank, “Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project”, No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 1.

<sup>140</sup> World Bank, “Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project”, No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 32.

<sup>141</sup> World Bank, “Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project”, No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 38-39.

<sup>142</sup> World Bank, “Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project”, No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 1.

<sup>143</sup> World Bank, “Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project”, No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 6-7.

development agency, USAID, and AWLF.<sup>144</sup> Like its 1970s antecedent, the 1992 project aspired to a twofold approach to linking communities and conservation efforts. On the one hand, it hoped to provide economic benefits in the form of subsidies or employment to people living near parks. It was also concerned to create barriers between people and wildlife in the form of fencing and moats, particularly in those areas where parks abutted densely populated areas. The Bank expressed faith in KWS' ability to overcome the "weaknesses of its predecessor agencies" while using its "policy and legal support" and "strong management team" to make progress where the WCMD had failed.<sup>145</sup>

One reason for the Bank's confidence was the new head of the management team at KWS. Richard Leakey, the famous palaeoanthropologist who had headed the Kenya Wildlife Clubs and run the National Museum was appointed by President Moi to reform the sector and crack down on poaching, and Leakey had the approval and backing of international actors. He wrote in his autobiography that he was indulged by the Moi government primarily because of his fund-raising abilities.<sup>146</sup> A white Kenyan whose father had assisted the colonial crackdown on the Mau Mau uprising, Leakey believed that the 1976 World Bank "money spelled the end of our National Parks" due to its forced reorganisation of the wildlife sector. But on this occasion he met regularly not only with President Moi, but was also in conversation with the Bank, urging the international lending institution to impose strict conditions upon the project to better force the hand of the Kenyan government.<sup>147</sup> The terms of the loan did indeed contain a series of "agreements" dealing with financial constraints, timing, the allocation of responsibility and authority, and conditions of disbursement.<sup>148</sup> The trust funds, the conditions, and the reversion to the parastatal model demonstrated that the Bank had no confidence in the Kenyan government and was prepared to use its clout to discipline the Kenyan state in order to effect the changes it regarded as necessary to overhauling the wildlife sector once again. It did so at a time when, in the aftermath of a Cold War 'victory' for the West, international donors were taking a longer, harder look at the nature of the state their preoccupation with outmanoeuvring the Soviet Union had helped to create. As ever, although the wildlife sector made some of its own weather, it was primarily buffeted and driven by larger trends and forecasts.

## Conclusion

The postcolonial era in Kenya is one associated with economic growth, *harambee* (self-help), but also with inequality, venality, and political uncertainty. The new Kenyan state— influenced by global conservationists, global financial institutions, and the former colonial power—sought to consolidate its control over the wildlife sector, just as colonial governments had done in the 1920s. However, the Kenyan state had to contend with a much better-organised and more formidably-funded lobby, which had allies within as well as outside of the wildlife departments. However, the government shared an ambition for reorganisation with the World Bank which allowed it to restructure the wildlife sphere in a manner which was designed to

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<sup>144</sup> World Bank, "Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project", No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 13.

<sup>145</sup> World Bank, "Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project", No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 29.

<sup>146</sup> Richard E. Leakey, Virginia Morell, *Wildlife Wars: My Fight to Save Africa's Natural Treasures* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2001): 116.

<sup>147</sup> Richard E. Leakey, Virginia Morell, *Wildlife Wars: My Fight to Save Africa's Natural Treasures* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2001): 31, 133.

<sup>148</sup> World Bank, "Staff Appraisal Report: Kenya Protected Areas and Wildlife Service Project", No. 9981-KE, 20 January 1992: 43-45.

simultaneously consolidate the government's control and introduce the administrative efficiencies of which the Bank was so enamoured. But the merger of the Game and National Parks Departments to form the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department did not account for the disparate institutional cultures of the two organisations, nor did it anticipate the explosion that a fairly routine recombination of departments would create in an increasingly polarised country.

Kenyans debated the merger in a variety of forums which demonstrated the vibrancy of post-colonial civil society in spite of the repression of the Kenyatta government. Newspapers used the occasion to flex their civic muscles and humiliate the government, while encouraging citizens to write in and express their own discontent. They did so while working with international and regional conservation groups to create a new environmental sensibility in the country. Elsewhere in the world, crises sparked the growth of environmentalism, and Kenya's case was no exception, with poaching epidemics and toxic waste in Lake Nakuru acting as the sparks. But trouble in the wildlife sector became an occasion for comment on other social and political ills associated with the ills of the post-colonial era. Rumours of official corruption abounded as conservationists struggled to enforce anti-poaching laws and secure a ban on the sale of ivory, matters which changed the discussion about the merger. The World Bank had intended the move as a demonstration of the triumph of enlightened, efficient administration over politics, but it actually became a way of talking about racialism, tribalism, corruption, and the priorities of the Kenyan state after independence—priorities which seemed off-base to parliamentarians and citizens alike.

Although it had ceded control to an independent government in December of 1963, the British government had not vanished as an actor in Kenya. It retained interests in the welfare of the expatriate community and British citizens, in the profits of British firms, and in its ability to influence the Kenyan government in a Cold War context. But it could not shake its connection to the wildlife sphere. Although international preservationist groups had replaced their imperial counterparts in lobbying for changes in wildlife policy in Kenya, those groups recognised Britain's neo-colonial interests, and looked to the country to use its influence in the wildlife sphere. The British government, aware of the comparative fragility of its influence in an era in which European, North American, and East Asian powers jockeyed to secure client states in Africa and Asia, demurred, citing a different set of priorities. But the British government, like the Kenyan government, came in for criticism from its press for its acquiescence to the state of the wildlife sector.

After the turbulent 1980s, international organisations were ready for a reappraisal. The World Bank repudiated its earlier endorsement of the Kenyan government, and initiated efforts to reclaim the wildlife sector for international financial and conservation groups, working to effectively privatise elements of the sector through the creation of KWS, the promotion of a Trust Fund controlled in large measure by external actors, and the enactment of strict controls on loans. Aid, development, good governance, conservation, and the rhetoric associated with these various spheres, provided for a powerful critique of the post-colonial state. And organisations like the World Bank possessed the mechanisms to follow up and make good on their critique.

Because of the Ivory Wars, its central position in East Africa's political economy, its Cold War alliances, its massive tourism sector, and the publicity associated with figures like Richard Leakey, Kenya was at the heart of debates about conservation during the post-colonial era as a range of institutions established what amounted to neo-colonial relations. But it was far from atypical. Tanzania's Cold War orientation helped to explain the brief collapse of its

tourism sector. Its parks, particularly Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater, have also been subjected to international negotiations and controls. Uganda's parks, in the aftermath of Idi Amin's reign, was subjected to substantial re-thinking, much of it driven by international actors. And in South-Central Africa, conservation projects often depended on the acquiescence of international funders, and contended with accusations of well-entrenched official corruption. Just as the "politics of wildlife" was shaped by broader changes within the colonial system between 1900 and the 1960s, so too it was shaped by global trends. But it was also shaped by individual countries' particular experiences of generalised phenomena: decolonisation, internationalisation, and neo-colonialism, as the Kenyan case explored above illustrates.

## Epilogue

In the middle of my first research trip to Kenya, I took a camping trip to the Aberdare National Park. Located in Central Province, the Aberdare Range looms at high altitude above fertile, rolling hills, the setting for many of the epic novels dramatising Kenya's colonial and post-colonial history, as well as of some of the liberation struggle which rocked the colony during the 1950s. In the lower reaches of the park, a mere 7,000 feet in elevation, there are dense forests, full of bamboo and vines, which look tropical even though the weather is frequently frigid. The forests, with scattered cedars among them, slowly give way to moorland reaching up to 14,000 feet which looks much like its counterparts in the Southwest of Britain, and in Yorkshire. While those English locations are known for occasional and apocryphal sightings of "big cats", in Kenya you can find the real thing, and the Aberdare Park was perhaps not the smartest choice for a camping expedition, as most visitors to the park go about accompanied by an armed ranger of the Kenya Wildlife Services.

My first night in the park I camped at a Ranger Station. In a U.S. context, a ranger station evokes a sturdy wood building surrounded by parking lots, campsites, a visitor's centre, and access to all manner of amenities. In the Aberdare Park, it consisted of three tin rondavels, set on cement blocks, in an area perhaps 500 square feet in size, surrounded by a tall, heavy-duty fence, with a partial moat for good measure. One of the rondavels served as a kitchen, another for storage, and a third as the residence for the Kenya Wildlife Service officer on duty. On a normal day, the ranger would have been alone but for the two chickens which clucked around the bare dirt, bobbing and scratching their way through the encampment. Immediately around the station, the forest had been cleared for some way to provide visibility. The way into the park was barred by a heavy beam which could be lowered or raised across the road. Just outside of the entrance, down a near-impassable muddy road, the trees gave way first to tidy rows of conifer plantations, and then to the hilly farmlands of the Highlands. Small homesteads dotted these hills, hemmed in by coffee, tea, and subsistence crops. It had been a dry year in Kenya, but you wouldn't have known it at these altitudes, where the mist alone felt like it would be enough to provide water for the farms, plantations, and gardens.

During the day, a woman led several cows up to the fence, briefly harangued the ranger, and was allowed in. She was taking a risk by allowing her cattle to graze within the park, as was the ranger by admitting her. She could have presumably been fined, or could have lost her cattle to a dangerous animal in the park. The ranger could have jeopardised the job which he described as lonely and dangerous, but prestigious and comparatively well-paid. During the day, there was little movement around the station, but at night, sleeping alongside the fence (on the inside, of course), I could hear the woods come alive. There was a tremendous snorting and the sound of some large ungulate wrenching up grass and foliage from the moist earth, making its way along the fence-line, just a couple of feet from where I had staked my tent. These were the animals which the fences were designed to keep out of people's homesteads and farms.

The Aberdare Park is not a popular game park, because the animals are more difficult to see in the forest. But you can see elephants and waterbuck congregating around ponds, hyenas, and baboons along the trails. I hiked on the moorland with my guide, I saw bushbuck, reedbuck, and a melanistic serval. Near one of the waterfalls in the park, a small picnic area and bridge had been built by British soldiers who rotate through a training facility at Nanyuki. As a result of their presence, Nanyuki was one of central Kenya's better-off communities, but the free-spending British soldiers also drove up prices for Kenyans. The Aberdare Park is known for two

of its lodges. One, the Ark, is shaped like the Biblical vessel. The other is Treetops. An older version of this latter lodge was the one up which Anglo-Indian hunter Jim Corbett guided Britain's Princess Elizabeth the evening her father died.<sup>1</sup> Treetops was burnt to the ground during the Mau Mau war, which was centred in the Aberdare Range and the lower slopes of Mount Kenya.

By my third day in the park, the weather was truly foul, and I left for some open, drier country year to Mount Kenya National Park. The landscape there looked much tamer, filled with healthy-looking corn fields, pine plantations through which the dry wind whistled, and small villages bisected by dusty roads. But these hills, like the Aberdare Range, had been an intimate part of Kenya's recent history. They were where David, my guide, grew up, and when he learned that I studied his country's history, he offered to take me to some of the places associated with this struggle that his grandfather had told him about. These were nooks and crannies, caves and hideaways, in the depths of the forest, past waterfalls, up rock gorges, and down innocuous dirt tracks. They were places from which those resisting the British staged their raids, and where non-combatants from the villages and towns brought food and information.

In virtually every respect, the landscape in Central Kenya as I was able to observe it was a product of the politics of wildlife during the colonial and post-colonial years. The Aberdare National Park (originally a Royal National Park) was created by a preservationist-minded National Parks Department which was backed by an emerging international wildlife lobby. It was created in the post-war years, at a time when independence was coming to Kenya, and when that lobby sought to head off the disaster it was sure would ensue, a view given some support by the manner in which nationalists had linked colonial protection of wildlife to their grievances about colonial injustice. The fences and barriers to human entry and animal exit were created in the post-independence era, funded by international donors at the urging of a Kenyan government which was working to be more responsive to citizens who saw little change in post-independence wildlife policy. For many people they were a poor response to the loss of land or depredations by wildlife, for which they demanded financial compensation which was slow in coming where it came at all. And being barred from access to areas which might once have been used for pasturage, fuel gathering, or crop production was a symbol of the limits of change associated with independence. And the day-to-day negotiation for illicit access by some people from surrounding inhabited areas is a marker of the uncertainty of the informal economies associated with corruption in the country.

This landscape in particular was one in which one of the most violent anti-colonial wars on the continent had been fought, a testament to the extent of land alienation in this agriculturally-rich part of Kenya. But in spite of the violence of that war, the post-colonial relationship between Britain and Kenya remained close, as evidenced by the continued presence of British soldiers at neighbouring Nanyuki, and perhaps by the link between tourism, Treetops, and the British Queen whose family remains associated with a region once terrorised by colonial security services and bombed by her government's air force. These tensions occasionally surface, as in 2012 when two British soldiers were accused of killing a Kenyan woman.<sup>2</sup> In the same year a British paper reported on a "Tribal Bar Brawl" amongst soldiers in Nanyuki,

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Corbett, *Tree Tops* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> Kim Sengupta, "Two British soldiers suspected of murdering Kenyan woman", *Independent*, 15 August 2012. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/two-british-soldiers-suspected-of-murdering-kenyan-woman-8046832.html> Accessed 4 April 2014.

showing that in the erstwhile metropole, the language of colonialism persisted.<sup>3</sup> And in 2013, during national elections, presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta used the presence of British soldiers—representing the same military his father used to put down a mutiny in the Kenyan military in 1964—as an example of the neo-colonialism against which he claimed to campaign.<sup>4</sup> Kenya is not alone in possessing such an active historical geography, onto which historical wildlife policy maps so remarkably. The land, politics, and social relations of the broader region under discussion here all bear strong traces of historical influences.

The politics associated with these parks and lands are enduring examples of the manner in which wildlife policy is connected not just to the conservation world, but to politics around access to land, neo-colonial relations, the work of international institutions, the nature of postcolonial economies, and in this case, to historical memory of a particular place. Today, crises in the wildlife sphere in Eastern and South-Central Africa are often represented as crises of governance. In literature, critics of the neo-colonial order like Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Ng’ang’a Mbugua have described the injustice they see associated with the prioritisation of wildlife. The latter equated a rogue elephant, unchecked by the Kenyan state, to a “terrorist” stalking the Aberdare forests.<sup>5</sup> In Zambia, the vociferously anti-government organ, the *Zambian Watchdog*, uses allegations of official complicity in poaching rings to attack the Zambian government for corruption as well as for its relations with China, seen as an imperial power in its own right on the continent.<sup>6</sup> The Chinese government is sufficiently sensitive to such criticism that its ambassador to Kenya has taken to the pages of the *Daily Nation* (one of the largest circulation newspapers in Kenya) to defend his country’s track record and promise support for Africa’s “dwindling wildlife”.<sup>7</sup> In other scenarios, African governments are openly aware of the limitations imposed on their ability to meet development needs associated with their constituents. The Tanzanian government has defended a proposed road through the internationally-famous Serengeti National Park in an East African court against claims by ecologists and preservationists that bisecting a critical ecosystem would be catastrophic for migratory ungulates.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Julian Gavaghan, “Shame of 200 British soldiers in ‘tribal’ bar brawl: Taunts between rival regiments explode into violence in Kenya”, *Daily Mail*, 4 April 2012. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2125094/Kenya-Shame-200-British-soldiers-tribal-bar-brawl.html> Accessed 4 April 2014.

<sup>4</sup> “Kenya elections: Kenyatta accuses UK over rejected votes”, BBC News online, 6 March 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21688220> Accessed 4 April 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Petals of Blood*; Ngang’a Mbugua, *Terrorist of the Aberdare* (Nairobi: Big Books, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, “GBM linked to elephant tusks confiscated at airport”, *Zambian Watchdog*, 13 June 2013. <https://www.zambianwatchdog.com/gbm-linked-to-elephant-tusks-confiscated-at-airport/comment-page-1/> Accessed 4 April 2014. “Masebo tells police to probe ivory diplomats but say nothing about army commander”, *Zambian Watchdog*, 11 June 2013. <https://www.zambianwatchdog.com/masebo-tells-police-to-probe-ivory-diplomats-but-say-nothing-about-army-commander/> Accessed 4 April 2014. “Government driver caught with ivory”, *Zambian Watchdog*, 8 February 2012. <http://zambianwatchdog.cums.in/government-driver-caught-with-ivory/> Accessed 4 April 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Liu Guangyuan, “How China helps Africa protect its dwindling wildlife from poachers”, *Daily Nation*, 12 March 2013. <http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/How-China-helps-Africa-protect-its-wildlife/-/440808/1718422/-/10tgf52z/-/index.html> Accessed 4 April 2014. See also, “China to help fund anti-poaching war”, *Daily Nation*, 9 August 2013. <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/China-to-help-fund-anti-poaching-war/-/1056/1942794/-/5i7qou/-/index.html> Accessed 4 April 2014. Liu Guangyuan, “China ‘helping’ protect African wildlife from poachers”, *Africa Review*, 13 March 2013. <http://www.africareview.com/Opinion/China-helping-protect-African-wildlife-from-poachers/-/979188/1718868/-/g307riz/-/index.html> Accessed 4 April 2014.

<sup>8</sup> “Tanzanian Officials Defend Proposed Serengeti Highway at Regional Court”, *All Africa*, 31 August 2013. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201309020091.html> Accessed 4 April 2014.



Dealing with poaching remains a major preoccupation of wildlife departments and governments in Africa, and citizens are quick to express cynicism about the government's commitment to protecting animals which are seen as a national trust, not unlike the imperial view of the Empire's fauna which emerged just over a century ago. As has been the case at various other moments in the region's history, efforts to halt poaching increasingly resemble an armed conflict, and are discussed in the language of war, both in regional and international media. *The Guardian* described how "underpaid, ill-equipped and outnumbered, park rangers fight a one-sided war against vicious gangs of poachers. Hundreds have been murdered in the defence of endangered wildlife, and their deaths leave their own families in jeopardy".<sup>9</sup> Based out of Australia, The Thin Green Line Foundation aims to "protect nature's protectors" by offering global citizens the opportunity to support beleaguered wildlife rangers around the world.<sup>10</sup> Under pressure to support their personnel, states become increasingly aggressive, in part to satisfy an international audience. In 2003, Tanzania's minister for Natural Resources and Tourism declared that "poachers must be harshly punished because they are merciless people who wantonly kill our wildlife and sometimes wardens...The only way to solve this problem is to execute the killers on the spot". Khamis Kagasheki was speaking not to his wildlife wardens, but to attendees at an International March for Elephants, the sort of people dismissed for their woolly politics by Ron Thomson, a prolific Southern African Warden, as the "International Animal Rights Brigade".<sup>11</sup> The response of African governments to increasing and more militant poaching in recent years has been a readier recourse to violence, with Kenya's Wildlife Services being said to have declared an "all-out war" on poachers, using "intelligence gathering", new equipment, "DNA databanks" and lab facilities.<sup>12</sup>

On my two most recent visits to Kenya, something of a change has come over Nairobi. At every entrance to a building—whether high-end malls or streetside shops; clinics, restaurants, etc—customers have their bags and persons waved down by wands designed to detect or deter explosives. The country is increasingly on the alert due to the fact that for a number of years, Kenya's security services have been combating fighters associated with Al-Shaabab, and offshoot of Al-Qaeda based in northern Africa and the Horn. Nairobi, Mombasa, and other cities have been subjected to bombings and grenade attacks, and in September of 2014, 67 people were killed in an attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. The changes in the security sphere, and their surprising conservation implications represent perhaps the best example of how the politics of wildlife remains associated with global trends in the twenty-first century. Oddly at a first glance, conservation is becoming associated with the War of Terror waged by the United States and its allies against what they define as Islamic fundamentalists. In mid-2013, conservation groups like the Elephant Action League and the Tsavo Trust, began to claim that Al Shabaab was at the heart of the international trade in ivory and the illegal shipment of ivory—with or without

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<sup>9</sup> David Smith, "Fighting the poachers on Africa's thin green line", *The Guardian*, 15 June 2013.

<http://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2013/jun/15/poachers-africa-thin-green-line> Accessed 4 April 2014.

<sup>10</sup> The Thin Green Line. <http://www.thingreenline.org.au/> Accessed 14 April 2014.

<sup>11</sup> David Smith, "Execute elephant poachers on the spot, Tanzanian minister urges". *The Guardian*, 8 October 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/oct/08/shoot-elephant-poachers-tanzania-ivory> Accessed 4 April 2014. Ron Thomson, *A Game Warden's Report: the State of Wildlife in Africa at the Start of the Third Millennium* (Hartbeespoort: Margon Publishers, 2003): vii.

<sup>12</sup> James Kariuki, "KWS declares all-out war against poachers", *Daily Nation*, 18 March 2014.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/KWS-declares-all-out-war-against-poachers/-/1056/2249234/-/mvaq1i/-/index.html> Accessed 4 April 2014.

official imprimatur—out of Eastern Africa in particular.<sup>13</sup> The claims were picked up in *The New York Times*, and gained far greater exposure when, even before the Kenyan security services has secured control of the Westgate Mall, commentators were linking poaching to the attack, and thereafter counting how many elephant tusks would have been required to pay for the attack.<sup>14</sup>

The reports by conservation groups do not cite any evidence for their claims, and rely on flimsy accounts of meetings with individuals whose connections to Al Shabaab are unproven. But in an era when—as Jeremy Keenan has demonstrated in the case of Algeria<sup>15</sup>—the invocation of terrorism does strange things to notions of proof and logic, the reports have found echoes in the White House and the U.S. State Department. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claimed that “there is growing evidence that the terrorist groups stalking Africa, including Al-Shabaab with its horrific attack on the mall in Nairobi, fund their terrorist activities to a great extent from ivory trafficking”.<sup>16</sup> Clinton’s remarks, also delivered unaccompanied by evidence, came after the Westgate Attack, but whether spurred by the conservationists’ claims or having arrived independently at the same conclusion, the White House established an Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking, following up on its issuance of an Executive Order titled “Combating Wildlife Trafficking”.<sup>17</sup> Although the Order refers to “armed and organized criminal syndicates” rather than “terrorists”, the composition of the Task Force includes the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the National Security Staff, as well as trade- and environment-related departments and agencies.<sup>18</sup>

The War of Terror has been a moral and financial boon to those industries which can articulate a link between their cause and the security aims of the United States, and there are signs that conservationists are seeking to claim some of the resources associated with the global conflict. The Tsavo Project’s Ian Saunders took to the electronic pages of the International Conservation Caucus Foundation, created for the purpose of “advancing U.S. leadership in international conservation through public and private partnerships and developing the next generation of Congressional leadership”. There, repeating the accusations about the links of

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<sup>13</sup> Ian Saunders, “The Crisis Affecting the African Elephant”. The Tsavo Trust: 8 April 2013). <http://iccfoundation.us/downloads/briefings/An%20Overview%20of%20Poaching.pdf> Accessed 6 April 2014. Nir Kalron and Andrea Crosta, “Africa’s White Gold of Jihad: al-Shabaab and Conflict Ivory”. Elephant Action League, undated 2013. <http://elephantleague.org/project/africas-white-gold-of-jihad-al-shabaab-and-conflict-ivory/> Accessed 6 April 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Johan Bergenias, Rachel Stohl, and Ochieng Adala, “Killing Lions, Buying Bombs”, *New York Times*, 9 August 2013. [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/10/opinion/killing-lions-buying-bombs.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/10/opinion/killing-lions-buying-bombs.html?_r=1&) Accessed 6 April 2014. Philip Mansbridge, “Blood on your hands, China: the link between ivory consumption and Al Shabaab”, *Huffington Post*, 25 September 2013. [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/philip-mansbridge/al-shabaab-kenya\\_b\\_3981936.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/philip-mansbridge/al-shabaab-kenya_b_3981936.html) Accessed 6 April 2014.

<sup>15</sup>  
<sup>16</sup> Rachel Streitfeld, “Hillary Clinton on link between elephants, terrorism”, CNN, 26 September 2013. <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2013/09/26/hillary-clinton-on-link-between-elephants-terrorism/> Accessed 6 April 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Barack Obama, “Establishment of the Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking”, The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 9 September 2013. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/09/establishment-advisory-council-wildlife-trafficking> Accessed 6 April 2014. The White House Office of the Press Secretary, “Executive Order—Combating Wildlife Trafficking”, 1 July 2013. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/01/executive-order-combating-wildlife-trafficking> Accessed 6 April 2014.

<sup>18</sup> The White House Office of the Press Secretary, “Executive Order—Combating Wildlife Trafficking”, 1 July 2013. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/01/executive-order-combating-wildlife-trafficking> Accessed 6 April 2014.

terrorists to poaching, Saunders discussed “mission creep”, “escalation”, and bemoaned the fact that “no wildlife agency in the world is set up to fight terrorism, insurgents, and rebel armies”, drawing comparisons between the besieged nature of the Tsavo National Park and Israel. In the title of his article, Saunders also drew explicit military links between Iraq and Afghanistan on the one hand, and Africa’s national parks on the other.<sup>19</sup> Conservationists writing in *The New York Times* suggested a similar militarisation of conservation, suggesting that they should be open to working with “non-traditional partners”, including “the Pentagon and United Nations counterterrorism units”, and “development and security organizations worldwide”. “Unarmed surveillance drones”, they remarked, would be a useful complement to the existing and inadequate toolkit of conservationists.<sup>20</sup>

State profiteering from organised poaching is nothing new. As recounted in *Apartheid Terrorism: the Destabilisation Report*, South Africa’s apartheid-era government used its wars on the Frontline States to plunder those countries’ natural resources and extract profits via ivory among other products.<sup>21</sup> It is telling that even if they tried, conservationists were unable to create a link between the South African state’s poaching and global security during those years. But now that the idiom of global terror has replaced that associated with the Cold War, conservationists suddenly find themselves on the front line of a series of armed conflicts which are steadily being expanded onto the African continent. This mirrors the earlier experience of preservationists, who struggled to connect to a global public in an era most associated with colonialism and nationalism, but whose efforts bore greater fruits when the Second World War and development politics related to the Cold War suddenly connected their mission to the well-being of new nations and the protection of the world’s wildlife.

In the first part of the twentieth century, the politics of wildlife were defined first by imperial ideology and then by colonial rule and the society that rule spawned. In the second half of that century, the ascendancy of the United States and its strong connection to international institutions increasingly defined how independent countries in the region dealt with their wildlife.<sup>22</sup> Institutions and treaties governing protection of habitat, trade, and aid all played a role in influencing events in Africa. In the twenty-first century we can already see how a war defined by the U.S. and its allies has the capacity to shape the practise of wildlife conservation, with implications for the communities involved in that conservation.

The new century shows every sign, in East and South-Central Africa and elsewhere, of combining the same features—bureaucratic, utilitarian, political, communal, and scientific—as did the previous era. Understanding the ideological and institutional origins of the relationship between the imperial, the international, and the local could prove vital to understanding changes in the conservation world today. Thinking about the relationships between bureaucracies,

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<sup>19</sup> Saunders wrote, “It is interesting to note that the Tsavo National Parks are not only approximately the same size but also the same age as the State of Israel, also situated in an arid region, although that is where the comparison ends. Israel has a defense force of over 176,000 men and women to secure its borders with a budget of approximately \$16 billion. The Tsavo Parks have approximately 300 KWS personnel and a budget that is constantly straining to support them”. Ian J. Saunders, “Applying the Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan to the Poaching Crisis”, ICCF, 8 April 2013. [http://iccfoundation.us/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=476:lessons-from-iraq-and-afghanistan-poaching-crisis&catid=70:briefings-2012&Itemid=81](http://iccfoundation.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=476:lessons-from-iraq-and-afghanistan-poaching-crisis&catid=70:briefings-2012&Itemid=81) Accessed 6 April 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Bergenas, Rachel Stohl, and Ochieng Adala, “Killing Lions, Buying Bombs”, *New York Times*, 9 August 2013. [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/10/opinion/killing-lions-buying-bombs.html?\\_r=1&\\_](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/10/opinion/killing-lions-buying-bombs.html?_r=1&_) Accessed 6 April 2014.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of these institutions and the role of the United States see, for example, Richard Peet. *Unholy Trinity: the IMF, World Bank and WTO* (New York: Zed Books, 2009).

communities, and governing systems at the level of nations and colonies in the context of conservation explains much of the trajectory of wildlife policy during the twentieth century, and will likely continue to do so in the future. The experiences of colonial officials, imperial preservationists, African subjects and citizens whether hunters, farmers, or nationalists, independent government officials, and international scientists shed light not just on the diversity of the parties who took an interest in the wildlife of a few African countries. Their experiences and travails also illustrate how colonialism, decolonisation, and internationalism affected an emerging policy sphere of enduring importance during the twentieth century in Africa.

The locus of the “politics of wildlife” quickly shifted in the early twentieth century from its locus in imperial societies in London to an increasingly complex colonial society, many members of which found some interest in wildlife questions as they related to colonial governance, development, security, or struggles for self-rule or independence. Increasingly, responsibility for managing wildlife came to rest with wildlife departments, which developed methods and rationales which cut across colonies while seeking to attend to specific developments in each colony. But while many interests saw economic, cultural, spiritual, or scientific value in protecting wildlife, many others saw the preoccupation with animals as distracting or representative of a set of ills associated with grievances against an increasingly-intrusive colonial state.

But although for a time these critics of wildlife, and the colonial administrations which sought to manage animals according to their own priorities, had the upper hand in defining wildlife policy, that changed after the Second World War as wildlife preservationists made common cause with international organisations and used the crises of decolonisation to argue for the internationalisation of Africa’s wildlife. This internationalisation occurred at the same time that the ecological sciences provided new ways of measuring habitats, ecosystems, and populations, and as global preservationists found themselves working alongside the likes of the Ford Foundation and the World Bank, larger development and financial organisations, the rise of which was tied to the rise of the United States and the Cold War context in which decolonisation occurred. The processes of internationalisation, decolonisation, and Africanisation introduced new actors onto the field, and international scientists clashed with African administrators, even as those administrators and their political superiors came under pressure from their public and the politics of post-colonialism, as well as pressures associated with neoliberal development and global environmentalism.

Examining this “politics of wildlife” against the backdrop of changes in colonial rule, decolonisation, and internationalisation shifts conversations about colonial conservation and preservation away from particular activities like hunting and a focus on imperial lobbies, and invites us to think about the manner in which developments in this and other policy spheres were driven by much broader events and trends, and simultaneously by the particularities of an increasingly complicated administrative structure which sought to deal with the inconsistencies of colonial rule. Such an approach links developments in African or colonial history to the broader trajectories of European empires, Britain’s in particular, and also insists that imperial histories attend to both their global context and the greater diversity of interests and institutions represented by the scrutiny of individual colonies in the context of their national trajectories. This dramatically expands the existing historiography for both studies of colonial conservation and general attention to colonial and post-colonial Africa, while connecting the Empire to the national pre- and post-colonial histories to which it provided a dramatic interlude.

Bearing in mind this expansion of the relevant chronologies, historiographies, and spheres of life in colonial society, much work remains to be done to fully explore the emergence of the politics of wildlife in colonial and post-colonial Africa. More detailed work on individual parks and protected areas could reveal their significance for local communities not just in terms of hunting and fishing, but also legal disputes, transportation, development, local government, and resource management. The work of the new private conservancies, which play a significant conservation role in countries like Kenya, should also be the subject of study, together with their relations to expatriates and the communities in which they exist. Such study should attend to the differing administrative contexts in which people lived under colonial rule, as well as the trajectories of those regions with special status (such as Barotseland in Northern Rhodesia). There remains much work to do in terms of constructing a “bottom up” history. The use of African Representative Council and African Provincial Council documents makes a start at constructing such a history, as do mediated accounts provided by missionaries, and the records of claims for compensation filed against the state. But oral histories could provide a much more well-rounded narrative particularly for much of the post-colonial period, when records often grow sparser.

If part of the reconstruction of this past must involve burrowing deeper into the lives of the people most immediately affected by wildlife policy, another goal must be to continue connecting these developments to the wider world. Tourism, and the parties with a stake in the growing sector, which involved not just wildlife reserves, but also sea-side resorts and city hotels, deserves close attention. The ascendancy of the United States and its connection to global conservation and financial institutions deserves closer study, as does the Cold War context in which decolonisation and internationalisation took place. The geopolitics, as well as developments within conservation science and practise, and the growth of an animal rights movement, should be examined with reference to emerging actors like the United States, the conservation industry, and the citizens of post-independence nations. Just as the economies and societies were prey to a neoliberal order and the neo-colonialism of the Cold War, the wildlife sector remained and is today subjected to a similar array of political, economic, and cultural pressures, ranging from the strings by which aid is dangled, to the impetus of community conservation, to the intense militarisation of the continent in light of the War of Terror.

Writing that “our history must properly be seen as a record of the efforts of our people to transform nature for their own use”, Kenyan historian Maina wa Kinyatti recounted how “at no point during the 70 years of direct colonial rule did our parents and grandparents passively submit to foreign domination”.<sup>23</sup> Kinyatti’s invocation of nature, and the environment in which people carry out their struggles was a brief and passing one, seen as entirely subsidiary to the struggle against colonialism. But in connecting struggles by a diverse set of interests and their concerns for nature to that land and the resources it offered, the foregoing positions that politics associated with the natural environment and wildlife at the heart of British colonialism and the history of African nations. People from different nations, races, and classes, who were concerned with very different policy areas, saw control over wildlife resources—whether defined culturally, economically, or politically—as central to the struggles they waged as individuals, lobbies, communities, or nations in the world.

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<sup>23</sup> Maina wa Kinyatti. *History of Resistance in Kenya* (Nairobi: Mau Mau Research Centre, 2008), xv-xvi.

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