

addition to being destructive of game the larger traps are a menace to man and his livestock. Legislation prohibiting the possession and use of the larger and more dangerous traps was under consideration at the end of the year.

10. Recommendations for a comprehensive revision of the Wild Animals Preservation Ordinance, Cap. 203, were submitted for consideration.

PART IV—STAFF

11. The Game Warden, the only established officer in the department, was in charge throughout the year.

12. The training of Game Scouts for control purposes was hampered at the beginning of the year by lack of rifles and ammunition. Three .404 rifles and 1,500 rounds of ammunition were received in the middle of July, but only one man of the six required for Game Control was passed as being fully trained by the end of the year.

13. No permanent labour force was employed: casual labour was used on the inspection of areas selected as Game Reserves.

14. Total expenditure by the department during the year was £2,222.

A CRITICISM

By G. S. CANSDALE

PART I—GAME RESERVES

To those unaware of the position in the Gold Coast the first reaction to the above report is probably one of satisfaction that a game department has at last been established and that work has started, but a careful examination of the report raises a number of doubts as to the value of the work that has been done. It is perhaps worth while commenting on the Report in the light of personal knowledge, and after detailed discussion with other officers interested in game, who know the areas concerned.

The Proposed Black Volta Reserve.—No mention is made of the game found in this area and one wonders to what extent the area was actually traversed and whether any detailed work was done on its fauna and ecology. Nothing is said about the objects for which this reserve is to be made.

The Proposed Sisili Game Reserve.—It is a little misleading to speak of the comparatively rare Senegal hartebeest (*Damaliscus korrigum*); this is very common north of the Gold Coast and the area in question is, in fact, on the very southern edge of

its range. The common hartebeest in this area and the south is the western hartebeest (*Bubalis major*).

Those familiar with parts of the Northern Territories will find much to criticise in the section on game control. The two lines on the subject of elephant do not represent the true position, as in parts of the Northern Territories elephants can be a very serious pest. It is quite certain, for instance, that in the year under review very serious damage was done to yams, millet, guinea corn and other crops in a number of areas of Tumu and eastern Wa districts and also along the Red Volta, in Nangodi area. In the more southern areas, namely in North Ashanti and in the southern parts of the Northern Territories, the picture is completely different, as the elephant is being severely poached for both ivory and meat; here syndicates of meat-sellers employ good southern hunters armed with rifles which have been stolen from the army and the police. It is interesting to note that it is far easier to buy (stolen) 303 ammunition in any of the big Ashanti towns than it is to buy the 12-bore cartridges which hunters may legitimately use. I have a report of seven cows and calves shot from a breeding herd on the Black Volta, in one day within the year under review.

On the subject of lion one must assume that inquiries about attacks on livestock were not pursued very far, because there were kills in the Lawra district during the whole of the year. In the Tumu area the lion were distinctly numerous and were causing considerable damage.

As regards hippopotamus, it is rather astonishing that a man who has spent a long time in the Gold Coast should fall for one of the fishermen's stock ways of getting hippo meat. Hippos are everywhere scarce in the Gold Coast, but as they yield a large quantity of meat they are always in demand. All newly-arrived Europeans in areas where the occasional hippo survives are likely to be approached by fishermen with the tale that just one hippo is attacking their canoes and should be shot.

The report on crocodile damage is purely an estimate by the Chief of Lawra and it is generally admitted to be a fantastic over-estimate. The devotion of two whole months to shooting crocodiles seems rather doubtfully useful, in view of the fact that the Game Warden is the only established officer in the Department.

Under *legislation* the use of spring traps is mentioned and it is suggested that the larger sizes of these traps are estimated to be the biggest factor in the destruction of game in the southern part (i.e. the forest part) of the Gold Coast. This appears to be

very wide of the mark. It may not be generally known that a very large number of breech-loading 12-bore guns is licensed, as well as an infinite number of muzzle-loading cap guns. The large quantities of gunpowder imported into the Gold Coast are used to some extent for ceremonial purposes, and it is therefore difficult to estimate with any accuracy the number of shots fired at game, but it seems probable that towards two million shots per annum are fired by breech- and muzzle-loaders. The very large majority of these are fired by Africans hunting purely and simply for meat ; they think it sheer folly to fire at a moving bird or animal and they will seldom, if ever, fire at anything smaller than a guinea fowl. As cartridges and gunpowder are extremely expensive, shots are generally reserved for virtual certainties, and it is likely that well over a million animals per annum are shot. This is beyond doubt the most important factor in the destruction of game.

The southern part of the country is the area where some degree of protection is most desperately needed before it is too late, and it seems thoroughly unfortunate that the Game Warden did not set up his H.Q. there and undertake a thorough survey of the situation. Several careful memoranda had been prepared in recent years, but it is quite obvious from his report that they have either not been seen or else have been completely neglected. Work such as this is likely to do more harm than good.
