

Wild Animals Of Africa Said To Be Vanishing

Seattle, Wash., (Science Service)—The great wild animals of Africa are vanishing. Civilization, fire and lack of water take their toll. A black market in ivory and rhino horn encourages poachers.

This dark picture of the Dark Continent was drawn at the Fifth World Forestry Congress meeting here by Col. Merwyn Cowie, director of the Royal National Parks of Kenya.

"In Kenya, poaching is organized on a colossal scale, ivory and rhino horn being the main products. These are smuggled out through a highly organized ring of traders across the Indian Ocean to be sold for various purposes in the East and Far East." Col. Cowie reported that recently rangers found 1,283 elephants killed by poachers in an area only 20 miles square.

Primitive Weapons

He said the poachers may use poisoned arrows, pits, snares and muzzle-loaded guns.

"Muzzle-loaders are primitive weapons, loaded by packing powder down the muzzle and then cramping the barrel with all kinds of missiles, including bent nails, stones or anything else that can be procured.

"The result of using such weapons is that a very large number of animals are wounded in addition to those which are mercifully killed quickly." Col. Cowie said that in Tanganyika alone there are 80,000 licensed muzzle-loaders in the hands of inexperienced hunters.

Vultures Form Spiral

Arrows with poisons from trees are used in some parts of East Africa. After being hit, "an elephant sometimes dies within a few hours or lingers in pain for several days. When it eventually dies, the vultures form a spiral in the sky which indicates to the poachers precisely where to look for their prize. The tusks are then hacked out and cut up into sections and smuggled out through a highly organized smuggling ring."

Wire snares are often used to catch the wildebeest. Then, only its tail is taken to sell as a fly switch.

Col. Cowie said the African governments must stike hard at the poachers and what he called their crime against posterity.

But control of fire seems even more difficult. "I have never yet seen any part of Africa where it is entirely possible to prevent fire."

Supplies Upset

And water supplies are frequently upset by man's activities. "Lake levels are falling, rivers are drying up and springs are disappearing."

Col. Cowie sees the extinction of many wild beasts unless they can be saved by sanctuaries. But, "the sanctuaries included in the system of national parks and reserves throughout Africa are hopelessly inadequate to preserve all the species which used to roam the face of this great continent."

"Africa is a harsh master and its animals are subjected to all kinds of calamities, including epizootic diseases, floods, plagues and droughts."

"Should the species in one area be destroyed by one of these misfortunes then there is no reservoir from which to draw replenishment."

Death in 'Family'

Doesn't Bring Leave

St. Louis — Pvt. Robert Randolph, stationed at Fort Bliss, Tex., got a letter from home that said: "Sister had died."

In short order he: 1. tried unsuccessfully to reach his family by telephone; 2. asked the Red Cross for help; 3. tried to arrange an emergency leave.

When a Red Cross worker reached the Randolph family by phone and explained the problem, her reply was a shriek of laughter from the soldier's mother.

The letter, written by Pvt. Randolph's nephew, William Jarrett, 12, wasn't referring to the GI's sister, Odella, it told only of the demise of William's pet parakeet, "Sister."

Drivers Advised To Eat Light Meals

Tampa, Fla. — The Peninsula Motor club advises motorists driving on Florida's new interstate highways to eat light meals and wear loose-fitting clothes.

The club, an affiliate of the American Automobile association, suggested drivers should "avoid heavy, sleep-inducing meals and be sure clothes are comfortable."

The club also recommended stopping every 100 miles for a cup of coffee and a stretch.

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