

far south : but a cheetah passed me within thirty yards in a reed bed near Katagum, when I had an empty shot-gun in my hand, and I was later given two cubskins. A hunter offered me a lynx cub in Hadejia and when I refused it, he released it, but it stayed near my house and I tamed it sufficiently to take raw meat off a plate on my knee though I could not touch it. Unfortunately I was transferred before this interesting experiment could develop.

Most of the details on North-East Muri given in this article are taken from a diary kept during the Political and Military Wurkum-Tangale Border Patrol of May/June 1909. There were some strange rumours current in those parts. In the Bashar-Yuli neighbourhood there was a story of a subterranean river which formed a morass, covered with luxuriant grass, in which an elephant and an antelope were said to be engulfed.

The Patrol was followed into the Wurkum hills by a number of Hausa traders. In addition to salt trading, they were said to be seeking a hoard of elephant ivory, collected and hidden in the hills after the rinderpest epidemic mentioned above. They had no success. But there was a sequel to this story. Two or three years later I was touring the Tiv Country with a W.A.F.F. escort, one of whom was a giant of a man known on the Company's strength as Pte. Moma Wirikin (sic). He turned out to be a Wurkum pagan and told me he was the son of Sarkin Kirum and proposed to return home when he was time-expired and succeed his father. He assured me that the ivory story was true, and that he knew where the tusks were hidden. This man was immensely powerful and carried me on his shoulders through many rivers and swamps.

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## Regional Governments and Wild Life

By P. A. Allison

**I**T is a great credit to the present Regional Governments of Nigeria that during the past few years they have done more for the preservation of wild life than was achieved during all the years of Colonial rule, and I feel that it is high time that mention was made of this fact in *The Nigerian Field*, whose readers must be supposed to have these matters very much at heart.

On the 1st of December, 1955, Mr. R. Coulthard, a retired Senior Veterinary Officer, was appointed Game Warden by the Government of the Northern Region. Since April the 1st, 1957, provision has been made

in the Western Regional estimates for a similar appointment, though this has unfortunately not yet been filled. In February 1958 the first Nigerian Wild Life Preservation Conference was held at Enugu in the Eastern Region.

The intention in all Regions is that the Preservation of Wild Life shall be in the charge of the Chief Conservators of Forests, under their respective Ministers. As no existing legislation makes any mention of a Game Warden, Mr. Coulthard has been gazetted Supernumerary Assistant Conservator of Forests. Since his appointment he has mainly been engaged on the constitution and demarcation of the Yankari Game Reserve, an area of 720 square miles in the South of Bauchi Emirate, which has been gazetted as a Forest Reserve, free from all rights to hunt, farm or graze. The area is well stocked with game, including Elephant, Hippopotamus, Bushcow, Giraffe, Roan, Senegal and Western Hartebeeste, Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Hunting Dog and representative communities of smaller game.

Little progress can be made in the West at present but, when a Game Warden is appointed, the aim will be to concentrate attention on one or two areas of Forest Reserve where no rights to hunt or farm have been established, where it is hoped to be able to preserve representative communities of all the fauna of the Region. Three such areas are in fact already legally constituted Game Reserves, though they cannot be said to function effectively as such.

Since, in spite of Government's good intentions in this respect, very little can be done in the West until a Game Warden is appointed, we can hardly appeal for the assistance of members of the Field Society, but in the meanwhile can only ask for their good wishes and moral support in the matter.

During 1957 the Chief Conservator of Forests, Eastern Region, was appointed *ex-officio* Chief Game Warden of the Region, all Forest Officers were appointed Game Wardens, and a Wild Life Advisory Committee was set up.

The Boshi Extension Forest Reserve, in which all hunting rights have been extinguished, is in process of constitution and will serve as a Gorilla Sanctuary. An interesting article on the Gorilla population of this area, by E. N. March, Chief Conservator, Eastern Region, recently appeared in *Oryx*.

During my last leave (March-April 1958) I spent six weeks in East Africa seeing something of their methods of wild life preservation. I visited the Serengeti National Park in Tanganyika, the Nairobi National

Park, Kenya, and the Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth Parks in Uganda. I was given every opportunity of collecting information and was most hospitably entertained by members of the National Parks Organisations and Game Departments and also by two members of the Nigerian Field Society: J. C. Mallam and R. M. Leslie, now of the Tanganyika Forestry and Co-operative Departments.

## Some Breeding Records of Birds at Calabar, Eastern Nigeria

by Dr. W. Serle, O.B.E.

THIS note is based on a small collection of eggs made by Mr. Alastair Macdonald at the Calabar Oil Palm Estate eleven miles north of Calabar during various periods of residence between 1940 and 1955.

Calabar,  $4^{\circ} 58' N.$ ,  $8^{\circ} 21' E.$ , has a hot humid climate. Although less than five degrees from the equator the climate is seasonal, with a distinct dry season from November till April, when the relative humidity is considerably lower and the mean screen temperatures are slightly higher than in the wet season months. Calabar lies in the high forest belt but certain savannah species penetrate there, and Macdonald's breeding records of certain typical savannah forms as *Francolinus bicalcaratus* subsp., *Centropus senegalensis senegalensis* (Linnaeus) and *Tchagra senegala pallida* Neumann are of interest. The average annual rainfall, calculated on forty-five years' observations, is 119.62 inches, distributed throughout the year according to the following averages, also in inches:—

January	1.62	July	17.86
February	3.04	August	16.04
March	6.07	September	16.86
April	8.41	October	12.32
May	12.50	November	7.29
June	15.81	December	1.80

As mentioned in a previous paper, Mr. Macdonald's records were not supported by skins but by very careful field identification. The racial