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A REVIEW OF HUNTER PERFORMANCES.
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INTRODUCTION.

In an effort to ensure continued pressure on the residual host populations in tsetse controlled hunting areas, attention is being focused on the quality of the hunters in the teams. This factor has been the cause of some concern recently. With this in mind the following review has been prepared. It compares the original system which operated in the Nagupande area in 1963, whereby hunters were dispersed in groups of 3, and the present system in which teams of hunters operate from one camp, thus enabling stricter control.

During 1966 hunting began on the controlled team basis after a long break for security reasons. Each administrative area has a number of hunting teams, consisting of 20 hunters. Each team operates from their own camp, to which they return every night. Each team is the responsibility of a Tsetse Field Officer, and an area the responsibility of a Senior Tsetse Field Officer. Each hunter has to account for every shot fired to his T.F.O., and at the end of the month the T.F.O. submits a return which shows how many animals were killed and how many shots were fired in the process. From these figures the average number of shots fired per animal killed can be worked out. In this report this has been used as a measure of the efficiency of the hunting teams. It is acknowledged that other factors do affect the issue to some extent.

A proposed training programme to be undertaken in 1972 is intended to increase the efficiency of all hunters. This review of past performances will serve as a basis against which the success of this programme can be measured.

METHODS.

- (a) From limited records of the Nagupande operation the performance of 37 hunters was examined and an average number of rounds per kill calculated. From Hunter Team Performance records submitted in 1967 and 1971 the average number of rounds per kill for all areas combined was calculated (see Graph 1)).
- (b) The average number of rounds per kill for each operations area during 1971 is graphed (see Graph 2)

The gap in the graphs during April and May is due to the fact that the hunters were engaged on road and fence clearing at this time of year.

425 hunters have been considered. Again hosts were relatively abundant at this stage of operations. The 1971 records are good, 460 hunters were employed, but hosts were by now scarce.

RESULTS

Graph 1 shows:

- 1) a marked difference in rounds per kill between the early Nagupande operations and the controlled team system of 1967 and 1971,
- 2) little difference between the 1967 and 1971 average number of rounds per kill except at the beginning of the year.
- 3) an annual pattern of higher averages at the beginning of the year and lower at the end.

Graph 2 shows:

- 1) that the teams in the Gokwe operations area consistently return high averages,
- 2) that Sebungwe teams consistently return lower averages than other areas,
- 3) that the variation between the areas was least during the latter half of the year but widely fluctuating at the start of the year.

DISCUSSION

Although data from the Nagupande operation is limited, Graph 1 indicates that the old hunting system was less efficient than the present system. The probable cause was that as hunters were widespread, supervision was difficult. It is likely that some hunters did not declare all their kills or fired shots at non-selected species, or even fired shots randomly, simply to expend their cartridges.

As previously mentioned game was relatively abundant in 1967, yet the figures do not vary a great deal from those of 1971, when game was less abundant and more wary after years of persecution. The exception is the peak in the 1971 graph during March. This is difficult to account for as the corresponding month in 1967 shows no significant change. The peak is a product of high figures from Gokwe and Urungwe areas.

As previously noted graph 2 shows that Gokwe has consistently high figures and Sebungwe consistently low figures. At present this cannot be accounted for.

The small variation in performances between seasons is probably due to two factors. The first is that during the latter half of the year shooting is easier as there is less cover for the hosts. The second factor is that the more experienced hunters earn more money during the latter half of the year, due to the bonus scheme. This enables them to go home during the rainy season, when shooting conditions deteriorate, and remain there to avoid fence and road clearing during April and May.

Some of the variations between areas which remain unexplained may be resolved during the course of the training programme when qualitative data from target shooting becomes available.

CONCLUSIONS.

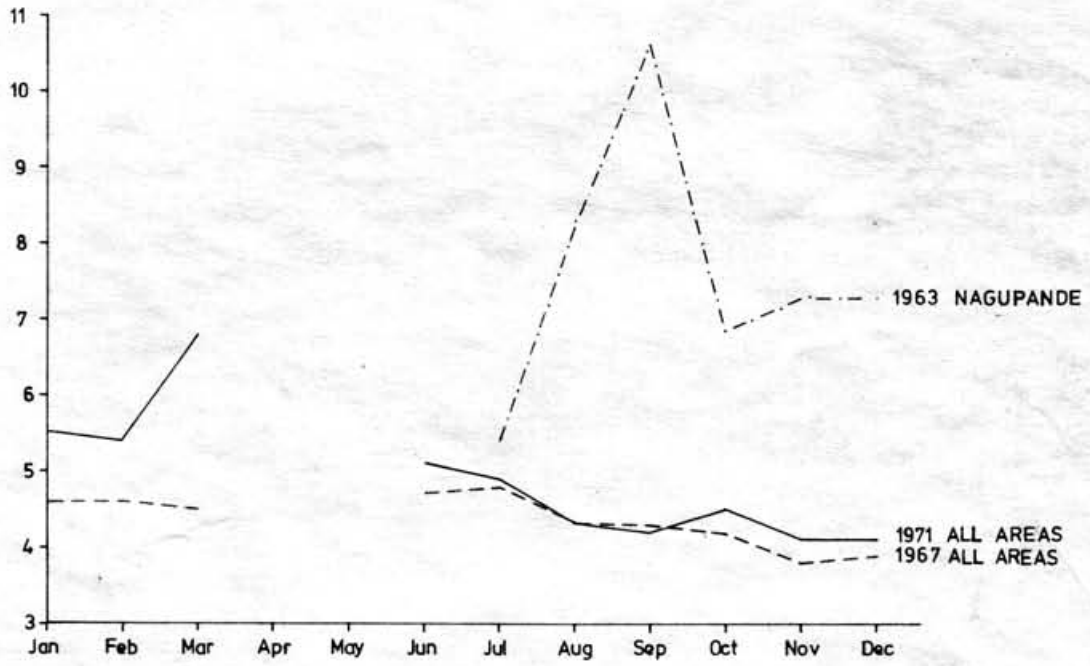
Before drawing any conclusions it must be remembered that the 1963 graph is based on 37 hunters for 6 months only and that the 1967 figures are incomplete during the first half of the year. However, Graph 1 does indicate that the present system (represented by the 1967 and 1971 lines) does give a better return than the old system as shown by the 1963 line. In addition the difference between the 1967 and 1971 lines is minimal, in spite of the fact that hosts were considerably less abundant in 1971. It appears therefore that the abundance of hosts does not affect the hunters' performance though this may become more apparent as the hosts become more scarce.

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GRAPH 1.

AVERAGE ROUNDS / ANIMAL



GRAPH 2.

AVERAGE ROUNDS / ANIMAL 1971

