

Article  
hope you approve. J. Whellan  
A Visit to the G. morsitans area west of the Urungwe  
Native Reserve (May 1951).

Camp was pitched near the junction of the Msukwi and Mtoragwechi rivers which lies about 4 miles N.E. of the Msukwi/Badze junction and from here a survey was made of the area.

The purpose of the visit was to make a short study of the fly in the area with a view to planning a proposed insecticide experiment against them, also to investigate the possibilities of discriminative clearing in the area and at the same time recruit and train African assistants, so essential in fly work, especially survey. Proper survey work is essential for the assessment of the progress of control.

The impression received almost immediately was that the area is a very much disturbed one and this of course is to be expected from the game destruction that has been and is still being carried out there. Now it is felt that for experimental insecticide or discriminative clearing work an untouched, moderately heavily infested fly area is required, for before any work of this type can be carried out an intensive study should be made of the fly and its requirements and for this one requires a normal fly population. The Urungwe is therefore unsuitable for preliminary work of this type.

During the time spent there it is regretted to say that no accurate survey of the fly distribution and concentrations could be carried out owing to an acute shortage of labour. The hunters were tried but it was found that they were quite incapable of wielding a fly net successfully especially in heavy fly and would require much practice. From observations made though while deflying the car between the camp and Badze store the fly seems to be dense to about 3 miles east of the camp and then soon peters out. Further, from observations made while on foot surveys the fly seems to be confined more to the drainage lines i.e. vleis and rivers and this became especially more noticeable on the vleis once the tall grass had been burnt off (A number of the vleis were burnt while I was in the area).

The proposed insecticide experiment was a cattle dipping one using a new B.H.C. preparation. This was to be first carried out at the Badze dip which lies some miles east of the known fly belt, but from where cases of cattle Trypanosomiasis have been reported. It was felt however that it would be very difficult to work up a successful experiment here as the chances of obtaining conclusive results would be almost nil. It therefore seemed permissible to suggest that the experiment would be a waste of time and money as far as control or research into Tsetse control is concerned.

Further the use of modern insecticides by the more promising methods west of the reserve where fly is numerous would be a difficult if not impossible proposition owing to the terribly broken country and size of the area.

It is difficult to say much about the possibilities of discriminative clearing in the area as, as has been said before, no accurate catches were made, so that concentration sites could not be picked out, but, as has also been said before, the flies seemed to be confined more to the vleis or river lines. If this is true then in the light of the experience which has been gained in E. Africa and N. Rhodesia discriminative clearing would be successful, but before it is tried it is suggested that work along these lines should be carried out in an untouched area, so that it would be certain that it was the clearing and not the game destruction which reduced or knocked the fly out.

A number of tree and shrub specimens were collected and when these have been identified...

forwarded as an appendix to this report.

The scarcity of game in the area is probably more apparent than real. To walk through the area one would say game animals do not exist there (Animals seen. 4 Klipspringer, 1 Kudu Bull), but if the ground where grass is absent is examined, spoor of animals can usually be found. The spoor of the following animals was recorded - Warthog, Kudu, Elephant and one Rhino. According to the hunters Sable spoor is common on the tops of the hills but I saw none while in the area. At first speaking to the hunters the impression gained was game is now virtually non-existent in the area, that is it has all been shot out, but with further talks and questioning each day when they came in from their hunts, it became obvious that the trouble is that the game is so wild that it is never seen, even though it is there. Towards the end of my stay they would tell me about the spoor seen and how the signs showed that this or that animal had dashed off at the slightest changing of the wind or breaking of a twig. From this it seems that the point at which game animals should have become too scarce to support a fly population was missed, due probably to not intensive enough shooting at the beginning, i.e. not enough hunters and now the game population is maintaining itself quite successfully by its alertness and is really quite settled and inured to this existence. Probably no matter how much more the shooting is intensified it will maintain this balance.

A map of the area is attached. The surveyed map seems to be rather inaccurate especially as regards rivers, their tributaries and their names. The attached one is simply a sketch map to show the rivers and general lay out of the country and is based on information obtained from local inhabitants or hunters. The reserve boundary seems very indefinite. The hunters showed me the line (surveyor's) which they reckoned to be the boundary and this is the one shown on the attached map, but the N.C. says not to put too much <sup>cut</sup> faith on this as the hunters like their villages to be considered in the reserve and if one went according to the surveyor's map they would be out.

Desmond F. Lovemore.