

30th April, 1954

The Director of Tsetse Fly Operations.

EASTER HUNTING TRIP : NGONGA RIVER AREA.

Our shooting trip over Easter (14th - 19th April) to the Ngonga river area proved to be rather interesting from a Tsetse Fly Operations point of view and I have therefore decided to write a short report on it.

The Ngonga river drains a rather isolated area lying as it does between the Gache Gache/Naodsa rivers and the Sanyati and consequently very little is known about it. The urge to explore was therefore very much stronger than usual and the result was a number of most interesting observations and records, e.g. the discovery of G. pallidipes.

Camp was made on the Ngonga river very near Mperiwa's kraal - he is the local headman and comes under Chief Nematombo. This point was reached by a track made originally by the Kariba Gorge surveyors and which leaves the main Reserve - Kariba Gorge road at the Naodsa drift - see map. Each day from this camp we went out in search of elephant and consequently covered great distances. The area covered lay chiefly to the west and south-west of the Ngonga, but one walk was made towards the Sundi/Gache Gache rivers junction.

Vegetation.

Five major associates were noted to occur in the area - namely "jesse" thicket, riverine fringe, mopane woodland, a mixed mopane, Terminalia commiphora spp. woodland, and what I call an intermediate sandveld vegetation.

1. "Jesse" thicket. This covers a large part of the area between the Ngonga and the Sanyati rivers and is generally very dense - there is a low ridge of a deep, rather reddish sandy soil between these two rivers and this is the type of situation where one usually gets "jesse" occurring.

The "jesse" here varies from a very dry one where leaf-fall is already almost complete to a "wetter" one on the lower slopes on each side of the ridge where the tree and shrub spp. are still carrying about 70% of last season's leaves. The spp. forming these two "jesses" are the same except that Triplochiton zambesiacus is more common in the wetter one and grows to a large size.

Species forming the "jesse" are as follows :-

Trees - Entandophragma caudatum (a tall tree), Pterocarpus stevensonii, Ostryoderris stuhlmannii, Commiphora spp.

Thicket spp. - Combretum elaeagnoides, Taranea luteola, Strychnos sp., Popowia obouata, Delbergia glandulosa, commiphora spp., Capparidaceous shrubs, Accie ataxacantha, Ptelopsis sp., Strophanthus sp. (climber), Artabotrys sp. (climber), Vangueria sp., Croton sp., Citropsis dawsoni, Perotis acruginescens - these were all identified but there were other spp. which I was not able to identify because, either they were leafless or new to me.

2. Riverine Fringe. A marked riverine fringe of both tall trees and thicket occur along the Ngonga river and its tributaries and also along the Sanyati in this area, though in the case of the Sanyati it tends to be rather broken due to clearing for cultivation. The vegetation fringing the pans such as Gama and Chinga should also be included in this associate.

Species recorded along the Ngonga, its tributaries and the Senyati, are as follows :-

Trees - Zizyphus sp., Tamarindus indica, triplochiton zambesicus, Lonchocarpus capassa, Kigelia pinnata, Garcinia sp., Croton sp., Diospyros mespiliformis, Cordyla africana, Pterocarpus stevensonii, Mimusops sp., Combretum imberbe.

Thicket spp. - Artabotrys sp., Combretum mossambicense, Combretum microphyllum, Combretum obovatum, Popowia obovata, Feretia seruginescens, Bridelia sp., Grewia sp., Cordia heudelotii., Cenanthium frangula, sp.392.

Species recorded in the pan fringe around Game and Chinga pens :-

Trees - Cordyla africana, Tamarindus indica, Diospyros mespiliformis, Triplochiton zambesiacus, Lannea stuhlmannii, Maba sp., Acacia nigrescens, Garcinia sp., Ficus sp.

Thicket spp. - Bridelia sp., Popowia obovata, Feretia seruginescens, Capparis sp., Combretum mossambicense, Combretum obovatum, Dombeya kirkii, Gardenia sp., Antidesma venosum, Artabotrys sp., Diospyros senensis.

3. Mopane Woodland. A vast mopane area occurs to the east of the Ngonga.

This is more or less a pure mopane woodland though patches of mixed mopane, Terminalia commiphora spp. woodland, do occur. Small patches of pure mopane occur to the west in some of the breaks in the "jcsac".

4. A Mixed Mopane, Terminalia commiphora spp. Woodland. Patches of this occur to the east of the Ngonga with the pure mopane and there are occasional patches to the west in the breaks in the "jcsac".

5. Intermediate Sandveld Vegetation. This is the term I actually gave to an associates which is common at Kariangwe in the Sebungwe. It is an associates which occurs on ridges of whitish sand and here it is found occurring just along the foot of the escarpment - at Kariangwe it occurs as fingers jutting out from Kariangwe hill into the mopane areas. There is a tendency to clumping of the individual trees and shrubs so that the associates has a broken appearance.

Species recorded in the intermediate sand-veld vegetation :-

Trees - Crossopteryx febrifuga, Pseudolachnostylus maprouneifolia, Schrebera trichoclada, Terminalia sericca, Combretum spp., Pterocarpus N. Sp., (large leafed escarpment sp.), Strychnos sp.

Shrubs - Randia sp., Vangueria tomentosa, Combretum spp.

### Tsetse.

The capture of two male G. pallidipes, one on the Senyati and the other at Chinga pan is important as this is the first definite record for the Senyati. Four other pallidipes were seen, two on the Senyati and one at Mpariwa's and one between the Senyati and the Ngonga. This last was on one of the elephants we shot.

It is of interest to note that the pallidipes we saw on the elephant was feeding on the chest - that is, just in front of the two forelegs - and it fed until it was fully gorged and then flew away.

Generally speaking the G. morsitans density in the area is fairly high especially to the east of the Ngonga in the mopane and towards the escarpment where the mopane meets the intermediate sand-veld associates - at Kariangwe the intermediate sand-veld/mopane contact was found to be particularly suitable as a habitat for morsitans. Occasional morsitans were seen along the Senyati but generally the vegetation is too thick there for them.

The various pans in the area and especially the Gama - Chimuyu group are almost certainly important dry season concentration areas for morsitans. The tall trees forming the pan fringe have numerous pupal sites at their bases and with ample shade and the game coming down regularly to drink, what more could the fly ask for.

#### Game.

Animals can be described as fairly numerous in the area though at this time of the year they are still widely scattered and after last years concentration of European hunters on this area, tend to be rather wild.

Animals seen were - kudu (4 small herds), elephant (2 herds), bushbuck (1), bushpig (10 -), baboons (many).

Spoor recorded - kudu, buffalo, elephant, rhinoceros, sable, impala, hippopotamus, wildpig,eland, warthog.

According to the natives the following species occur in the area - elephant (numerous), kudu (numerous and spend their days in the "jessie"), bushbuck (numerous), sable (numerous especially towards escarpment on intermediate sand-veld), eland (a few), buffalo (in herds), warthog (numerous), hippopotamus (numerous along Sanayati), lions (numerous), impala (numerous), leopard (the odd one), rhinoceros (the odd one), bushpig (numerous).

It is of importance to mention separately the seeing of 10<sup>+</sup> bushpig at Chinga pan. These were drinking at mid-day and were presenting themselves as food hosts to tsetse - they had been feeding all along the pan edge, probably for an hour or so before we saw them. Apparently, according to the natives, this is a common thing in wild country, their feeding and drinking during daylight. I might add that this is only the second lot of bushpig I have ever seen. We killed three out of the bunch.

It is interesting to note, that the natives say that the elephant, though still numerous, do not crop raid so much now, after the way they were shot up last year - we noticed a distinct tendency for them to spend their days on the Sebungwe side of the Sanayati.

#### Settlement and Crops.

There are a few small kraals along the Ngonga in the vicinity of Mperiwas and a number along the Sanayati. These natives cultivate along the river banks.

Crops along the Ngonga river are generally poor this year owing to the early ending of the rains - the sun burnt the crops up, especially the Mepfundi. Their munga and mealie crops are fair but will be insufficient. On the other hand the crops along the Sanayati are good and there should be a surplus so that the Ngonga natives will be able to go and live on their relatives.

Desmond F. Lovemore.

ENTOMOLOGIST.

U. Phillips: Ngonga River  
Desmond F. Lovemore  
1937.