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A GAME DRIVE IN THE NAGUPANDE SHOOTING OPERATIONS AREA:

A game drive was carried out in the north-west section of the Nagupande Shooting Operations Area on the 28th August 1963. The area covered by the drive was approximately 9 square miles in extent.

The drive was carried out with two objects in mind.

1. It was an attempt to clear the area of the remaining animals.
2. It was an attempt to make a rough census of animals remaining within the section.

Staff available for the operation were as follows:--

1. European Officers:

Messrs MacKeown, Kerr, Pearson, Slement, Coulson and Lovemore of this department and Mr. Davison of the Agricultural Research Council. Mr. Child of the National Museum and Dr. Roth, Game Research Officer of the Veterinary Research Branch were also present to collect scientific specimens.

2. African Staff:

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| a. | Field Assistants and senior "casual" Africans | 15 |
| b. | Other Staff (hunters, fence guards, labourers etc.) | 220 |

The drive was carried out in a north-easterly direction between the game fence and the road linking the Bemsee track with Chebira. The starting line was the Bemsee track. In order to make the road linking the Bemsee track with Chebira into a barrier very large heaps of wood had been built previously along the road at intervals of 50 yards initially and for the last mile before Chebira at intervals of 30 yards - these were lit systematically from west to east as the beaters progressed.

There were 180 beaters on the shooting line including 10 field assistants and senior "casual" Africans. These field assistants and senior "casual" Africans were placed at equal intervals along the line and their job was to coordinate the line and maintain the enthusiasm. They were also required to record animals seen.

It should be noted that in order to ensure direction two traces had been laid previously between the fence and the road linking the Bemsee track with Chebira; this gave four control lines for the beaters, namely the fence, the two traces and the road linking the Bemsee track with Chebira. Two of the field assistants whose job it was to coordinate the beating line followed these internal traces, one on each.

It should also be noted that a north-south line had also been marked across the line of the drive about two miles west of Chebira. This was for the reforming of the beater line before the final drive towards the beaters.

Two European Officers were responsible for the organisation of the lighting of the fires along the road linking the Bemsee track and Chebira.

Fifty Africans were involved on the fire work, 10 on lighting fires and the remaining 40 were placed along the last mile or so before Chebira, one African between every two fires.

One European Officer acted as an observer on a small hill overlooking the Chebira area.

Three European Officers were placed at strategic points at the gap between the road and the fence at the end of the drive and their job was to shoot the driven animals (particularly kudu, bushbuck, warthog and bushpig).

Two European Officers drove along the fence road keeping next to the beater line. Their job was to control any build-up of game on the fence and to observe the movement of game through the fence - generally one could see at least half a mile along the fence when standing up in the back of the Land Rover.

European Officers were all armed with shot-guns with SG cartridges. There were a number of .425 rifles available in case of the appearance of dangerous game.

Two "walkie talkie" type radios were available for the operation.

The drive commenced about mid-morning and was completed by mid-afternoon.

One female reedbuck and three male duiker were shot in the drive, and of these the reedbuck and one duiker were shot by the shooters at the end of the drive and the other two duiker were shot by the Land Rover party following the fence road. It should be noted that these two species are not normally being shot in the Nagupande Operation but in this case they were shot for study purposes.

The game seen records were as follows:-

Recorders Number.	Recorders Name	Function	Bushbuck	Warthog	Bushpig	Reedbuck	Impala	Duiker	Grysbok	Hyena
1	D.F. Lovemore	fence patrol				2	30 ⁺	7	1	
2	Sore	Beater line coordinators		2			6	13	7	
3	Bobo		1	1	1			1	5	
4	Chenga		1	1			3	11	2	1
5	George				2		6	6		
6	Amos			4			2	3		
7	Fabian			1	1		5	4	2	
8	Romigio			2	2	3		8		
9	David					1	18	2		1
10	Hatichke					1	11	3		1
11	Kapuyu			1	1		13	2		1
12	J. Kerr	observer		3	1		a number			
13	G. Davison	Shooters				3	2			
14	J. Mackeown					6		4		
15	J. Slement						herd,	1	1	

Also seen - 1 large unidentified antelope

The following observations were made on the above records.

1. It is likely that there were 3 bushbuck in the section. These animals broke back through the beaters.
2. The records indicate that 15 warthog were seen. It is probable though that any single warthog was seen by at least two recorders so I think we can half the figure and say that there were 8 warthog in the section. It is of course possible that there were warthogs in holes but Mr. Davison of National Parks has told me that he would have expected warthog to leave their holes with the approaching noise of the beaters. The warthog broke back through the beaters.
3. The comments made for warthog also apply for bushpig. The bushpig broke back through the beaters.
4. Two of the reedbuck recorded were seen several times. It is likely that there were about 6 reedbuck in the area. The animals occurred near Chebira only.
5. The impala ran about a lot and crossed from one end of the beater line to the other a number of times. Mr. Child and I did however see between 20 and 30 together all at one time and on this basis I would say that there were about 30 in the section. A few of the impala broke back through the beaters, two charged the fires and escaped that way and the remainder must have gone through the end gap between the shooters. It is of interest to note that 6 - 8 did try the fence but were unable to get through - they in actual fact charged the fence and were thrown back half stunned.
6. Duiker were fairly common but it is likely that individuals were recorded several times. The impression obtained when looking down the line from the fence patrol Land Rover was that generally a duiker would jump up in front of the beaters and run a little distance forward, then lie down only to be put up again a short while later.
7. There are no special comments for grysbok.
8. It is probable that it was one and the same hyaena seen four times but at the most there could have only been two hyaena.
9. Messrs Slement and MacKeown both recorded seeing a large unidentified antelope just as the beaters were approaching the end of the drive. This may have been a kudu. This animal was not seen by any of the beaters. No other large antelope were seen.

Generally the drive can be considered a success. Only a few animals were shot but the information obtained on numbers of animals remaining in the section was most useful. It is particularly pertinent to note that though the section covered by the drive was on the very edge of the shooting area where one would expect the greatest immigration of animals the density of animals was low. This is very encouraging when one considers the remainder of the shooting area, particularly the interior of the area.

Before concluding mention must be made of two major mistakes which occurred in the operation. The first of these was the use of a reforming line for reorganising the beater line. There was a considerable delay at this point while we reorganised the line and consequently the beaters were inclined to stiffen up and become distracted. The beaters never achieved the same enthusiasm after the reforming line that they had had when they arrived at that line. The other mistake was the organisation of the shooters. These people were too far apart and consequently animals were able to slip between in comparative safety. We should have had more shooters and they should have been posted on platforms raised ten foot or more above the ground.

I acknowledge with thanks the help given by Mr. G. Davison of the Agricultural Research Council (this was kindly arranged by Dr. Phelps) and by Mr. G. Child of the National Museum and for the loan of the "walkie talkie" radios by the Dept. of Wild Life Conservation.