

50/7/23

135-cc. Beez

71/09/18 Keatross

71/10/18 Keabendes

PROGRESS REPORT : AERIAL GAME COUNTS : ETOSHA.

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P.O. (ETOSHA.)

- I.1 Since the last P.O.'s meeting, two further aerial game counts were made. The first was during November 1970 and the second February 1970. A total of about 70 hours flying time was involved.
- I.2 Winter, or dry season, counts appear to be inaccurate as totals obtained from these counts are always lower than the totals obtained from rainy season counts. The reason is obvious : during the rains the animals move out onto the plains and concentrate in large herds, thus simplifying the counting. There are certain drawbacks attached to counting during the rainy season only : elephants imigrate out of the reserve and there is, presumably, an influx of other animals into the reserve. However, I do not think much importance should be attached to the influx as it can be countered by an outward movement elsewhere. Species totals might be affected but the accuracy of these counts can not determine the tendency.
- I.3 Furthermore, counts made according to the present method are inherently inaccurate and allows for large errors. Large tendencies might be noticed but as many of our species have small totals, any variations in these totals can be disregarded due to inaccurate counts.
- 2.1 These aerial counts are necessary as it provides the observer with a fair idea of veld conditions and game movements. It should be seriously considered to carry out a count by helicopter so as to ascertain accurately for the first time, precisely how much game we have.
- 3.1 The results obtained by the two counts are as follows:

|            | <u>Nov. 1969</u> | <u>Feb. 1970</u> | <u>Nov. 1970</u> | <u>Feb. 1971.</u> |
|------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Zebra      | 6,199            | 7,274            | 6,818            | 10,376            |
| Wildebeest | 3,079            | 4,789            | 3,386            | 3,740             |
| Springbok  | 1,484            | 4,181            | 1,854            | 4,409             |
| Gemsbok    | 888              | 1,582            | 1,064            | 1,717             |
| Kudu       | 267              | 161              | 400              | 195               |

|                | <u>Nov. 1969</u> | <u>Feb. 1970</u> | <u>Nov. 1970</u> | <u>Feb. 1971.</u> |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Ostrich        | 233              | 1,658            | 279              | 811               |
| Eland          | 196              | 95               | 216              | 128               |
| Giraffe        | 130              | 392              | 156              | 403               |
| Elephant       | 116              | 494              | 232              | 124               |
| Lion           | 21               | 10               | 21               | 22                |
| Rhino          | 3                | 0                | 3                | 2                 |
| Red Kartebeest | 16               | 126              | 16               | 241               |
| Warthog        | 13               | 0                | 13               | 14                |
| Mountain Zebra | 0                | 0                | 0                | 12                |
| Steenbok       | 10               | 0                | 10               | 40                |
| <u>TOTAL</u>   | <u>12,656</u>    | <u>20,762</u>    | <u>14,469</u>    | <u>22,234</u>     |

3.2 A count made recently (18/10/71 - Dr. H. Ebedes) showed the following game totals for the Koabendus camp:

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| Roan           | 92 |
| Impala         | 82 |
| Plains zebra   | 43 |
| Mountain zebra | 33 |
| Gemsbok        | 8  |
| Kudu           | 13 |
| Steenbok       | 2  |
| Eland          | 1  |
| Rhino          | 2  |
| Warthog        | 3  |

3.3 A count of the game on Kaross, made by helicopter (Dr. J. Hofmeyr - 15/9/71) gave the following results:

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Rhino          | 22              |
| Giraffe        | 212             |
| Mountain zebra | 161             |
| Plains zebra   | 115             |
| Gemsbok        | 410             |
| Kudu           | 156             |
| Eland          | 148             |
| Warthog        | 42              |
| Ostrich        | 45 <sup>3</sup> |

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Certain aspects of this count are astounding e.g. the high number of Giraffe, gemsbok and eland resident in this camp. It also shows the value of an helicopter count, especially when figures obtained from a standard plane count are compared with these. Unfortunately such a comparison has not been made, but from experience gained from earlier counts in this area it would seem that counts made from the Piper Cub are highly inaccurate (see figures for rhino, mountain zebra in 3.1).

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