

TABLE II

## Recovery Series for Iceland-ringed and British-ringed Grey Lag Geese

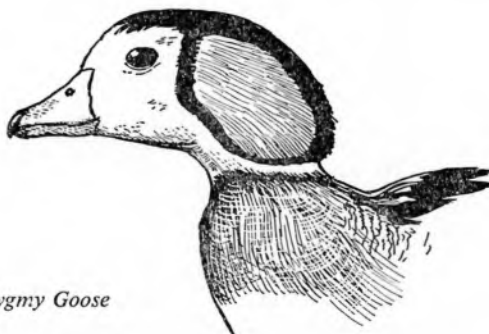
Marked	No. Marked	Recovered (years after marking)						
		0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7
Iceland 1932-36 ..	50	7	3	1	1	0	0	1
Britain 1950-51 ..	47	5	4	4	0	1	—	—
Britain 1952 .. ..	88	8	2	6	—	—	—	—
Britain 1953 .. ..	296	37	18	—	—	—	—	—
	481	57	27	11	1	1	0	1

## UGANDA

## New Year 1956

*The Director was invited by the Trustees of the Uganda National Parks to open a new Safari Lodge at Paraa in the Murchison Falls National Park. He was accompanied by Mrs Scott and in the course of a fortnight an impressive list of 145 species of birds was identified and many others were seen which were not. The Director submits the following report.*

OUR first introduction to Uganda birds was a day spent with the distinguished naturalist Dr Sandy Haddow of the Virus Research Institute. He showed us Crowned Cranes and Pelicans, Open-billed Storks, Hornbills, Touracos, the marvellous scarlet shrike known as the Black-headed Gonolek, two species of Bee-eaters, three of Sunbirds, and the delicate blue Fairy Flycatcher. But the climax of the day came during a canoe trip along the shores of one of the numerous arms of Lake Victoria which surround Entebbe. There is a fringe of papyrus swamp round these shores and outside it some thin rushes mingled with the beautiful purple waterlily. It was here that we came upon three African Pygmy Geese, *Nettapus auritus*. There is no doubt that the drake is among the most beautiful of all waterfowl. The back and crown are glossy green, the breast and flanks are rich pale chestnut, and the side of the head, which is white, has a large pale green patch edged smartly in black. This lovely pattern is set off by a bright orange bill. In flight there is a conspicuous white wing



African Pygmy Goose

bar and the bird is somehow reminiscent of a drake Goldeneye, but it also has a clear affinity with Mandarins and Wood Ducks in that the wings are not raised far above the horizontal. One of the males we found again two or three times and it flew each time a few hundred yards along the shore. Later I saw some more Pygmy Geese at the Sailing Club nearer to Kampala—but they were always in twos and threes, and it seems that they were much less numerous than formerly, though no reason for the reduction has been suggested except, perhaps, just the general extension of the human population in the area and the advent of firearms.

Two days later we motored with our host, Ralph Dreschfield, who is Chairman of the Trustees of the National Parks and Attorney-General of Uganda, to the new lodge in the Murchison Falls Park. In this park it was the trip on the Nile in a launch which provided the best view of the animals and birds, including such Anatidae as we saw. Hippo, elephant, buffalo, waterbuck and Uganda cob were in good numbers, there were troupes of baboon, a few smaller monkeys and one or two rhinoceroses. A star bird was the Shoe-billed Stork and there were Goliath Herons and three species of Ibis. The banks were lined with a great profusion of crocodiles and we saw an occasional Nile Monitor. All these wonderful creatures at close quarters are unimaginably exciting when one has never seen them before in the wild state. The first close-up view of an African elephant seems to lose none of its thrill from the hundreds of films one has seen of them. This first sight of the African 'big game' animals is still, to any naturalist, breath-taking in its impact and must inevitably make a conservationist of anyone with any imagination at all. And among these great animals were familiar birds—familiar wildfowl known so well from collections, Spurwings, Egyptian Geese, Comb Ducks and familiar waders, perhaps the very same birds which we might have seen in England, Greenshanks, Ruffs, Common Sandpipers. The Spurwinged Geese were in twos and threes, a comparatively light race with quite a lot of white on the body. The Comb Ducks were in parties of up to a dozen, with almost as many males as females. We came upon a flock of about 30 White-faced Tree Ducks whose faces were stained dark brown so that they looked quite unfamiliar.

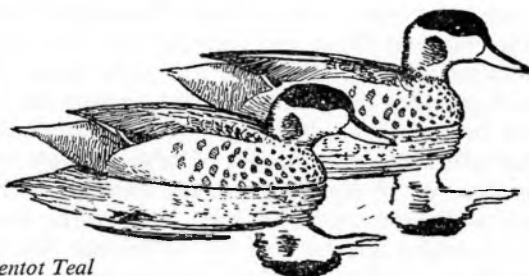
We spent three days in the Murchison Falls Park which included the opening ceremony of the new Safari Lodge at Paraa where we stayed. We fished for Nile perch in the pools below the incredible falls where the whole Nile tumbles through a cleft in the rock only 19 feet wide. Some big Nile perch of more than 30 lb. were caught while we were there, but the larger of the two I caught was only 10 lb. Near Boligi in the Park we saw big herds of antelope, including reedbuck, many warthogs, and some of the huge and improbable Ground Hornbills. We were also introduced to the spectacular Carmine Bee-eater. Here also we confirmed a previous identification of the Glossy Ibis, not apparently previously recorded in the Park.

In Ankole we went on safari to some artificial lakes ('dams') in order to see the ducks there. This was a three-day trip during which we were well looked after by Major John Blower, of the Game Department, and his wife. Our camp was set under a great Euphorbia tree near a dam called Kanyanya. A few miles short of it on another dam were quantities of ducks—Red-billed Pintails, White-backed Ducks, South African Pochard, Garganey, four European Pintails, and a single drake European Wigeon. On the slopes above this dam was a herd of game—zebras, kob and topi.

On the larger dam at Kanyanya White-backed Ducks were the most numerous followed by South African Pochards and Garganey (the drakes all still in eclipse

plumage). We had with us a very small fibreglass dinghy in which Ralph Dreschfield, John Blower and I set out at night with a lantern to try to catch some ducks. We managed to pick up a White-backed Duck, and we got very close to many Garganey, some Red-billed Pintails, and to one male Pygmy Goose, which could have been caught had we had a landing net.

During the next day we made a suitable net, but we were no more successful that night, though once again we got quite close to a pair of Pygmy Geese.



*Hottentot Teal*

We had ascertained during the day that there were two pairs on the dam. We had also seen Yellowbills which looked like the Abyssinian race and Hottentot Teal, which had a very characteristic behaviour under the influence of the light. They swam away at a better speed than we could normally make in pursuit (noisily rowing) and if by any chance we did catch up with them they flew ten yards and settled again. On neither of the nights was the sky overcast and on the second night we prowled on in the little boat until after moonrise, but the total catch for both nights was two White-backs, one of which was a half-grown young one and was immediately released. For most of this trip we had with us Archdeacon Bawtry, a most experienced ornithologist whose information and identifications were invaluable.

We visited two more dams near Mbarara. One was very large and had great flocks of Garganey and Southern Pochard with a little flock of Spurwings on the far side. It was near here that we saw a flock of more than 200 Crowned Cranes and watched their dancing display. The other dam was an old watercourse dammed up, long and narrow and winding. It was here that we saw the most colourful picture of the whole trip. The surface of the water was largely covered with the purple water-lily. Where the water was open it reflected a brilliant yellow flower growing in great profusion along the far bank. Hottentot Teal were everywhere in springs of a dozen or 20, and among them and the beautiful chestnut-coloured Jacanas were eight glorious Pygmy Geese. It was an unforgettable spectacle.

From Ankole we motored to the Queen Elizabeth National Park, where we stayed with the Director and Chief Warden Mr Rennie Bere. The assemblies of waterbirds on the beaches along the Kazinga Channel and at the mouth of the Nyamagasani River were most impressive—two species of Pelicans, Cormorants, Wood Ibis, Marabou, Stilts, Herons, Gulls, Terns and Egyptian Geese in great mixed flocks. It was especially impressive to watch from the stationary motorboat a group of a dozen elephants at less than 20 yards range with Egyptian Geese feeding round their feet.

The crater lake of Kikorongo had a flock of about a thousand Flamingos on it, and they were packed together swimming in the centre and feeding from the surface where the water is apparently quite deep. This was unexpected to

me. There were hippo in the lake, quite a lot of ducks—Garganey, Southern Pochard, Common Pintail and Knobnose (Comb Ducks)—and a great profusion of waders—Stilts, Greenshanks, Ruffs, Common Sandpipers, Wood and Marsh Sandpipers and a lot of Curlew Sandpipers. The setting of all these interesting birds with the pink bar of Flamingos across the calm lake and the reflections of the Ruwenzori foothills behind them was strikingly beautiful.

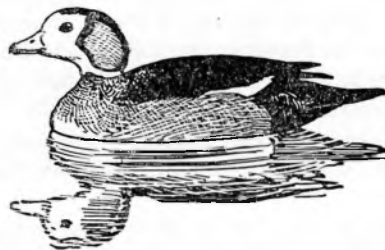
One night in our cottage in the camp at Mweya (the Safari Lodge of the Queen Elizabeth Park) we were woken by a curious 'champ-champ-champ.' Outside the window in the bright moonlight was a hippo which fed past within five feet of us and was followed by a second. Not far from the lodge on the following day we were lucky enough to be able to watch a pride of lions at close quarters from a Land Rover. There were three lionesses and a lion and they looked golden and serene in the afternoon sun with a background of the Ruwenzori. We watched them for more than an hour and saw interesting features of their behaviour, including copulation.

The last picture of wildfowl in Uganda which I must describe is a flock of about 200 Egyptian Geese grazing next to the little village of Katwe. They were close to the shore and some of them were swimming in family parties on the lake. They paid no attention to the Land Rover, and we watched and photographed them grazing on the sparse brown grass in quite a closely-packed formation. Those who keep Egyptian Geese in captivity usually respect their aggressive temperaments by isolating them in pairs, and it was therefore interesting and unexpected to see them feeding in close company just as one might see the Whitefronts on the Dumbles.

Fourteen days is a distressingly short time to spend in any country—but in Uganda with so many wild animals which were quite new to us, it was especially sad. Nevertheless it was amazing how much we were able to see. We returned with a small but select consignment of creatures for the London Zoo, including a potto, some lungfish (in polythene bags), two species of Agama lizards, two chameleons, some beautiful yellow and black tree frogs, some toads, a giant water scorpion, praying mantises, a stick insect, some long-headed grasshoppers, and a giant millipede. Unfortunately the one White-backed Duck could not be persuaded to start feeding and did not survive.

We are tremendously grateful to our hosts, the Hon. Ralph Dreschfield, Chairman of Trustees of the Uganda National Parks, Mr Rennie Bere, Director and Chief Warden of the Parks, and also to Colonel Bruce Kinloch of the Uganda Game Department for giving up so much of their time to make our fortnight such a success.

*The Director has since been appointed an Honorary Trustee of the National Parks of Uganda.*



*African Pygmy Goose*