

# COLLECTING B&C BOOKS

## African Game-Lands Coming This Fall

THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB IS OFFERING African Game-Lands, A FOLLOW-UP BOOK TO ITS 1994 PUBLICATION, From the Peace to the Fraser, BY PRENTISS N. GRAY. THIS BOOK RECORDS THE ADVENTURES OF GRAY AS HE HUNTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BIG GAME FROM KENYA TO ANGOLA DURING AN EXTENSIVE 1929 SAFARI. THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTRODUCTION TO African Game-Lands BY THEODORE J. HOLSTEN:

Soon after Prentiss N. Gray became president of the J. Henry Schroder Banking Corporation in 1923, he helped make the New York bank's operation so successful during the difficult times that he was afforded the right to unlimited vacation time. This enabled him to make numerous trips throughout North America.

He was an avid photographer and many of his outstanding still photographs were used to illustrate the book, From the Peace to the Fraser, which was published by the Boone and Crockett Club in 1994 from his extensive journals of trips taken between 1900 and 1930. His travels took him to remote areas and his discovery of a new low-altitude pass through the Canadian Rockies produced a fellowship in the Royal Geographic Society in London, which published the description of "Gray Pass."

In 1929, Prentiss Gray, who was a trustee of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, undertook an extended expedition to Africa on behalf of the Academy. A special report, issued by the Academy, includes the following:

In this most interesting account of the movements of the Gray African Expedition, Mr. Gray modestly refrains from mentioning more than incidentally the success of the Expedition in securing a large number of splendid still photographs of many species of African game as well as thousands of feet of even more

valuable motion picture films. These photographs, both motion and still, form one of the most important records of wildlife in Africa ever made. With many species of these mammals becoming rarer yearly, the Academy is the fortunate possessor of a record of what has well been called the closing scenes of the "Age of Mammals." Mrs. Gray, a Life Member of the Academy, accompanied her husband in much of his East African work, and the thanks of the Academy are extended to her, as well to Mr. Gray, for the splendid results of the Expedition. Mr. W. Wedgwood Bowen, who is now a

member of the scientific staff of the Academy, was responsible for the important and extensive ornithological collection secured, as well as other new or little known zoological material.

Prentiss Gray described the objectives of the expedition as follows:

When the expedition set out from Philadelphia last March, we had three objectives: to bring back to the Academy a series of motion pictures of East African game; to secure a group of giant sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger variani*) and to obtain a representative collec-



**Theodore J. Holsten, Jr.**

CHAIR  
Editorial and  
Publications Committee

PRENTISS N. GRAY'S FOUR  
ORIGINAL AFRICAN JOURNALS.



tion of the birds of Angola. Our ideas expanded as we progressed, and while we still held to the main objectives, we did broaden our scope to include the only motion pictures taken of the total eclipse of the sun on May ninth; a group of Hunter's antelope (*Damaliscus hunteri*) from the lower Tana River in Kenya; a group of Waller's gazelle or gerenuk (*Lithocranius walleri*) from Northern Kenya; and about six hundred birds from Kenya and Tanganyika.

One of the sad aftermaths of Gray's many trips and expeditions is the total deterioration of his extensive motion picture films. As happened with so many early films

in Angola over many recent years, the species is probably now extinct. The giant sable taken by Prentiss Gray for the Academy of Natural Sciences has a horn length of 61-1/4 inches. The World's Record giant sable has 64-7/8 inch horns.

I had the opportunity to visit the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia recently where I saw the diorama of the giant sable secured by Prentiss Gray. It is interesting that Gray's 1929 expedition was unable to secure a complete family group of giant sable. The weather and season turned against him and he had to leave Angola without completing this objective. Gray subsequently

Boone and Crockett Club members. Prentiss Gray and his friend, R.R.M. Carpenter, donated the antelope diorama from specimens secured in Wyoming on behalf of the Academy in 1934. Carpenter, along with his son, William K. Carpenter, and Harry Whitney were all trustees of the Academy as well as Boone and Crockett Club members. This group of prominent sportsmen donated a great many of the Academy's impressive dioramas of big game of the world.

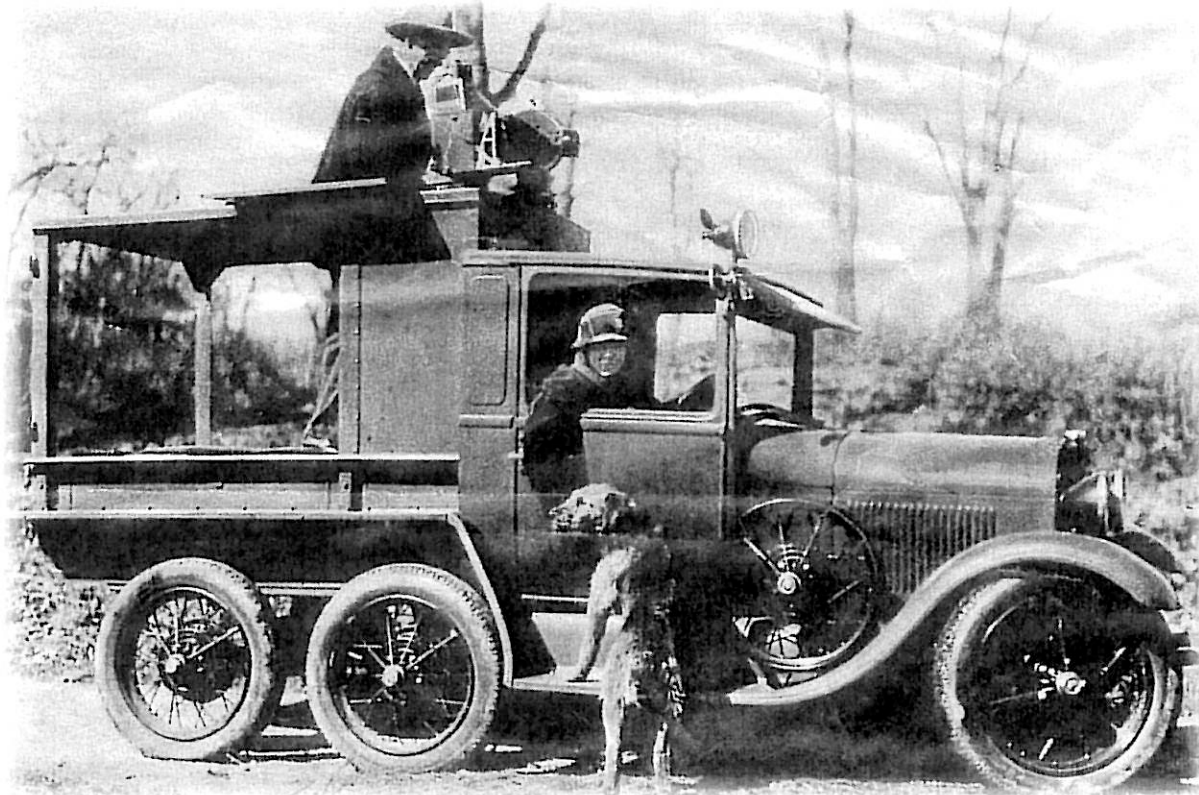
In 1927, Prentiss Gray was elected to associate membership in The Explorers Club. His sponsor, William M. Newsom, wrote, "I

might mention he has the finest still and motion pictures of deer I have ever seen and at present is working on a series of motion pictures of horned game of North America of which deer, elk and antelope are completed."

Gray's nomination was seconded by Harold McCracken, well-known author and associate editor of *Field & Stream* magazine. His nomination was also seconded by James L. Clark. In 1931, Gray applied for and was elected to full active membership in the prestigious organization. His sponsor was

William J. Morden who, along with James L. Clark, was one of the best-known names associated with the American Museum of Natural History as well as the Boone and Crockett Club.

Prentiss Gray was killed in 1935 in a tragic boating accident while enroute to join his friend, R.R.M. Carpenter, for a hunting trip in the Florida Everglades. He packed a lot of adventure and accomplishment into his short, fifty-year life.



"IN SEARCH OF PICTURES OF AFRICAN WILDLIFE AND SPECIMENS OF RARE ANIMALS AND BIRDS, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA, ARE NOW ON AN EXPEDITION INTO THE HEART OF THE WILD CONTINENT. PRENTISS GRAY, LEADER OF THE PARTY, AND HIS WIFE, ARE SHOWN IN ONE OF THE ALL-STEEL PHOTOGRAPHIC AUTOS WHICH ARE BEING UTILIZED ON THE EXPEDITION."

- P&A TIMES

produced by Hollywood, chemical deterioration with age reduced them to dust.

The giant sable or "royal sable" as described in Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* occupied a limited area in Angola between the Upper Cuanza River and its tributary, the Luando, on a wooded tableland about 3,700 feet high. No new specimens have been recorded since the 1950s and with a lack of conservation efforts resulting from the continuous civil war

sponsored the Gray Second African Expedition of 1930, which was led by Harold T. Green, curator of museum exhibits for the Academy. Gray did not personally participate in the Second Expedition. This expedition achieved the desired results and also enabled W.W. Bowen to more extensively complete his ornithological studies and collection.

An interesting aspect of the Academy of Natural Sciences is the heavy involvement of several

# AFRICAN GAME- LANDS

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PRETISS N. GRAY  
AN EXCERPT FROM · The Academy of Natural Sciences of  
Philadelphia · 1929 Year Book

On June first we landed at Mombasa, where Mr. W.W. Bowen, the ornithologist of the Expedition, who sailed from New York on April twelfth, joined us. Shortly thereafter our safari was in the field, starting from Nairobi. We were fortunate to obtain the services of Philip Percival as white hunter and he took us first to the Serengeti Plains in Tanganyika, two hundred and forty-eight miles southwest of Nairobi. Our visit there was well timed, for we were fortunate in locating the line of the great wildebeest migration which each year moves across the Serengeti from south to north.

Literally thousands of these black lumbering beasts were always in sight during our stay. Their strange croaking noise, which resembles nothing so much as innumerable frogs in a swamp, was audible both day and night from our camp. From any eminence the plain as far as we could see in every direction was dotted with herds, always moving slowly northward in search of grass and water. It recalled the stories we had heard our fathers tell of the bison on our own plains, before the westward movement of settlement practically wiped out this splendid American animal.

This migration was probably the most interesting sight of our trip, but it was impossible to photograph so as adequately to convey any idea of the tremendous number of animals that made it up.

Pictures of the smaller herds gave no idea of the vast throng of which they formed a part; distant views of the landscape with the plain covered with black dots required an

We saw and photographed seventy-one different lions in twenty-six days, at ranges never exceeding forty yards and on one occasion twelve feet.

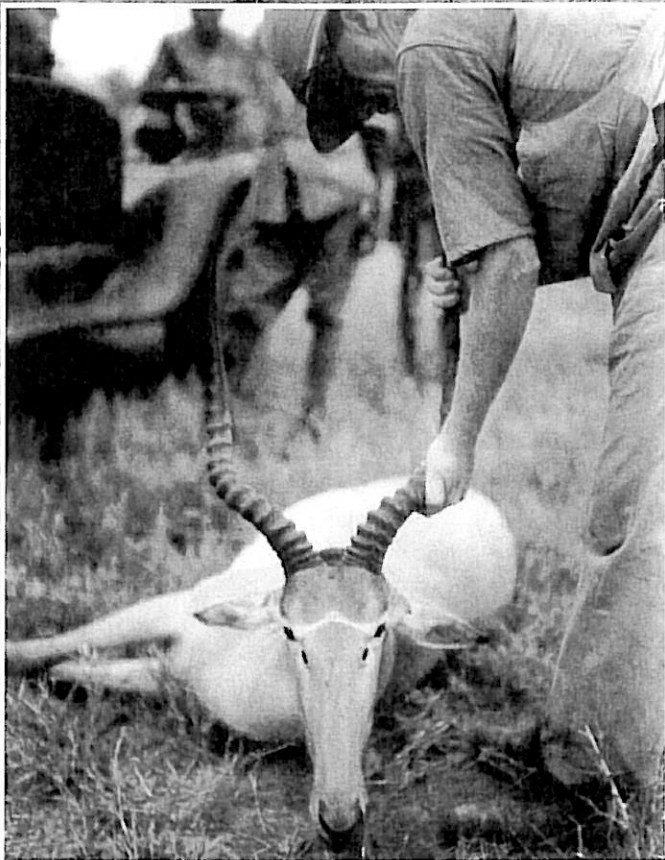
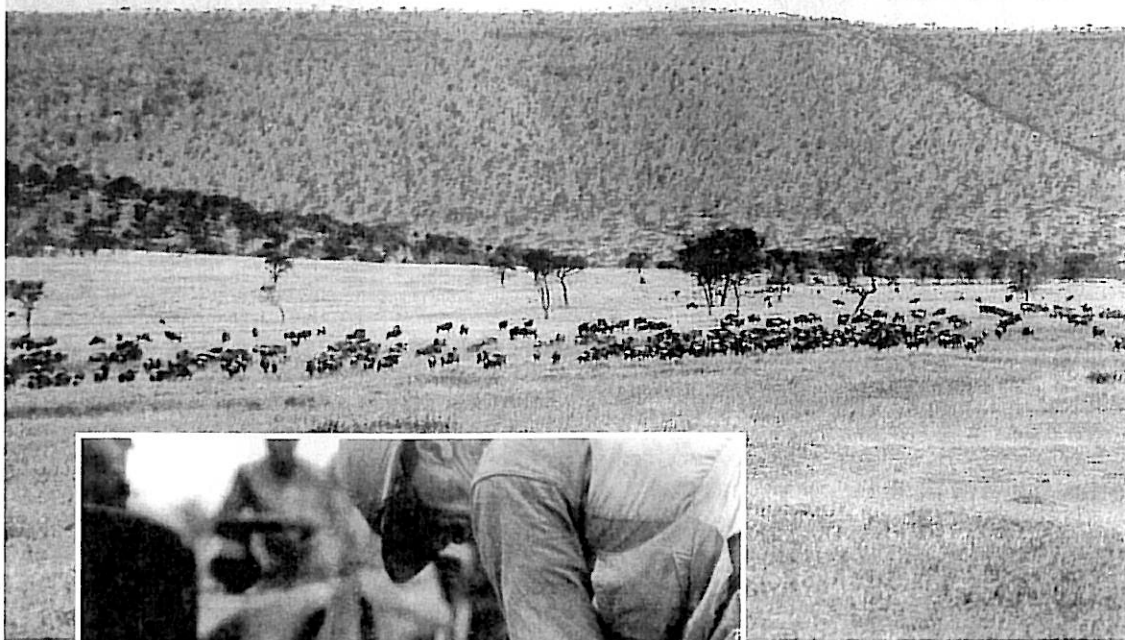


THREE LIONESSES FEED ON A GRANT'S GAZELLE.

explanation that the dots were wildebeest.

We were particularly interested in this migration because on its flanks traveled a great number of lions growing fat and lazy with the easy killing. As pictures of lions were one of our objectives, we devoted most of our time during the next thirty days towards this end.

One interesting incident we witnessed, which Percival assured us he had never heard that a white man had seen before. This was a lioness actually making a kill. We had shot a wildebeest for meat, but with the remarkable vitality of all African game, it staggered on forty or fifty yards although fatally hit. We hurried after it, but stopped in



TOP: A MIGRATION OF WILDEBEEST PASSED. THE LIONS FOLLOWED AS DID THE MEN.

LEFT: A HUNTER'S ANTELOPE WAS DROPPED AT 230 YARDS. FEW SPECIMENS HAD EVER BEEN COLLECTED, SO PRENTISS WAS DELIGHTED TO COLLECT ONE FOR THE PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES.

Meanwhile, an old male trotted out and sat down on his haunches nearby to watch the lioness finish off her job. Finally, as the wildebeest gave a final shudder, she stood up licking her chops. The lion then fell to the feast. The lioness suddenly discovered us standing about seventy yards away. She snarled and crouched on the farther side of the kill where, as she fed, she could keep an eye on us.

our tracks when we saw a flash of yellow, as a lioness dashed out of a clump of bush and in a long leap landed squarely on the wildebeest's back.

The buck staggered on, even with this extra load, for some yards before both went down in a tangle of hoofs and tawny legs. We had the distinct impression that it was taking the lioness a long time to kill the beast, although it was all over in probably not more than a minute.

While we were photographing we shot specimens of topi, wildebeest, Grant's and Thompson's gazelle, waterbuck, reedbuck, eland, impala, zebra, hartebeest, bushbuck, dik-dik, klipspringer, warthog, cheetah, and lion. Bowen, during this period, had collected two hundred bird specimens and was delighted that he had found many of the species nesting, thus affording opportunity for numerous field notes on breeding

habits, as well as adding a number of eggs and young to the collection.

The bird-life of this region was typically characteristic of open plains and grassland. Ostriches were often seen, and bustards of three kinds were numerous. One species (*Choriotis struthiunculus*) stood about three feet in height. It probably ranks amongst the largest flying birds. One day we came upon a gathering of some thirty or more of these great birds in an open hollow, the floor of which was encrust with salt.

Larks, coursers and sandgrouse, all characteristic birds of open plains, abounded everywhere.

The little Serronea River with its banks clothed in a thick belt of trees and undergrowth, supported an avifauna more characteristic of the bush country further north. Yellow-shouldered parrots, love-birds, superb glossy starlings, buffalo weaves and a host of other savanna species were here found in fair numbers. In the richer grass close by grass-warblers and bishop-birds were nesting.

Early in July we decided to move to the desert country of northern Kenya. Returning to Nairobi, we then motored two hundred miles north around the western side of Mount Kenya to a base camp at Meru. Here we left Bowen and his native bird skimmers to work in the Mount Kenya forest, while we struck off into the desert to the water-holes south of the Guaso Nyrio.

We took our motor cars over a new track which had just been opened and found the travel, which was over lava, extremely hard on tires. However, the photographic results at these desert drinking places well repaid our effort in reaching them. We secured about six thousand feet of film and ten dozen still pictures of oryx, Grant's gazelle, gerenuk, waterbuck, Grevy's zebra and giraffe. We also collected a group of six Waller's gazelle or gerenuk, which the Academy's museum desired.

We had heard some rumors at the Government posts along the route, of a rare animal called Hunter's antelope that ranged on the lower Tana River. We decided that as only one group of these had ever been collected (by de Watteville for the Berne Museum), we would have a try for them. Their range was thought to be only thirty-five to forty miles wide and to extend from the north bank of the Tana River to Lak Dera, west of Afmadu, in Jubaland, about a hundred and sixty miles.

It was a desert country and we were advised by the District Commissioner at Bura that no rain had fallen there for some time. Therefore we loaded every receptacle we could carry with water, and prepared for a dry camp. However, Africa is a land of contradiction and twenty-four hours after we pitched our camp, the heavens opened and it poured steadily for three days. Only with the greatest difficulty did we get our trucks through the sea of mud back to Bura, after we had collected as many specimens of Hunter's antelope as the law allowed us.

This antelope is a hartebeest, but its horns resemble those of an impala in shape and length. Its pale almost cream colored coat is in marked contrast to the reddish hue of all the other hartebeest. It has, however, all of the hartebeest tenacity of life and we found that to get them down took a considerable amount of shooting.

As we had dropped in elevation to only a hundred feet above the sea, which was eight miles away, it was very hot. It re-

quired fast work to measure, photograph and skin the animals which we killed, before the heat should cause the hair to slip.

We turned back after the Hunter's antelope group was completed, collecting an elephant, rhino, buffalo and oryx on our way back to Meru. Here we found Bowen reveling in the wonderful bird life of the mountain forest. He had taken three hundred and thirty-five specimens, although the native skimmers had been down with fever a good part of the time. These birds were mostly of a different type from those collected in Tanganyika. Forest birds such as the narina trogon, Hartlaub's turaco, forest guinea-fowl and bulbuls formed the bulk of the collection. On the outskirts of the forest and in the clearing yet another ecological association was encountered. This consisted of mostly small birds, such as chats

and warblers, characteristic of the higher elevations.

The objectives of the East African trip having now been attained, we commenced our transcontinental journey to the west coast of Angola, starting from Dar-es-Salaam in the middle of August.

To order your copy of African Game-Lands, by Prentiss N. Gray contact the Boone and Crockett Club, 250 Station Drive, Missoula, MT 59801 or call 406.542-1888. The book is \$31.95 for Associates. The regular price is \$39.95. Add \$4.25 for shipping and handling.



ZEBRA LOOKED LIKE TOASTED HORSES ACCORDING TO PRENT.