

The interesting points that arise from this brief observation are :

1. They do not appear always to remain completely dormant during the hours of daylight.
  2. The Yellow-bellied House Bat falls into the category of bats that emits its high-frequency notes through the open mouth and not through the nose.
  3. I think that there is every probability that the one that joined my captive upon its release was its original companion, and the pairs thus appear to lead a fairly attached life. As it was kept captive in my room, it may have kept in contact by means of sounds inaudible to me.
  4. They were intelligent in their efforts to avoid capture, and were not the sleepy, easily caught things that they are supposed to be in the daytime.
- I am pleased to say that I have heard them in my roof since.

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## MASAI SAFARI

By ROGER BROWN

In the great area of African veldt to the south-west of Narok district lies a country visited only by the migrating Masai shepherds and inhabited by game and tsetse fly. Vague tracks exist made by tsetse investigation and game officials, but they soon peter out and the whole brooding land seems unfriendly to human beings and vaguely oppressive to the one European who lives there.

Leaving his camp one day, we moved west towards the Mara River along a faint game track and at one point came through a hilly bent of close-standing whistling thorn. Looking down across another sheet of waving grass we could see, far away, other similar patches of thorn showing the dry course of a stream, or rocky donga. As usual, the grass teemed with great herds of plains game: topi, kongoni, wildebeeste and tommy spaced out here and there with bat-eared foxes, jackals and warthog, all excited and inquisitive to see a vehicle and not really frightened at all, for there is no shooting there.

One pair of warthogs, father first and mother second, followed by a litter of eight little replicas, trotted stolidly across the track—tails and snouts up. Father, however, forgot that the babies could not trot so fast. Before he knew it, there he was ahead with mother and three little *totos*, while the others turned back by the Land-Rover and fled in confusion the way they had come, followed by our little

dachshund 'No-more' well in front of half-a-dozen Africans from our lorry which was following us. Vainly we shouted and yelled to stop the chase and then gave up as the procession raced across the plain. The dachshund caught one little baby about the size of No-more himself and rather than leave him to a solitary death in the bush he was put squealing into a cardboard box, where he stayed, bumping beside us, until we pitched camp by the river. Three times a day spoonfuls of condensed milk and water kept a little life in him, but after dark, while the lion coughed, grunted and roared around us, making the night with its other noises eerie and strange, the little piglet grew weaker and it was obvious that an early return to civilisation would be necessary if his life was to be saved.

The next morning, leaving the lorry behind to pack the camp, the big Land-Rover, with the canvas sides and the back rolled up, held two Africans and our children, David and Anne, the latter nursing in her arms a very feeble warthog piglet. At one point we stopped to see if it was dead and it was nearly jettisoned, but it squealed faintly and Anne clung closer to him, so he had a reprieve.

Some ten miles before we reached a used track we came to another thorny donga lined by small close-set thorn trees and large boulders through which one narrow track wound its way. There was no way round. To the side of this track lolled eighteen lions, lazy and half-playful, the sleepy tawny eyes gazing at the Land-Rover. Some were only half-grown, but there were no cubs among them. A superb lioness sitting on an ant-hill beside the track gazed at us with lazy disdain. One lay with its chin on a rock asleep with eight inches of pink tongue extended along the ground before it. We drove slowly closer and photographed them, and then found behind us a very large male stalking the Land-Rover through the long grass. We backed away and waited. Then, on the track ahead, an immense old male, black-maned and lowering at us, appeared. For a moment there was tension in the air, until the first male lay down by the ant-hill and several of his young came up and patted him with their paws, while above him his mate gazed at us unblinkingly.

The other male still blocked the track and we sat and waited until at last he moved ten or fifteen yards away and lay down under a small tree. Slowly we moved out of the rocks and scrub back on to the track towards the stream. As we did so the old male moved back, quick as lightning, to the path and stalked towards us. He had only a great black hole where his left eye should have been and the other was dark like a glowing coal. As I stopped, the others closed in on us on either side and behind . . . but I had no time to look, for the old male was already on the wing of the car, crouching tense, ready to spring into the back, where David and Anne and the two Africans sat as though petrified. Quickly I yelled for the little pig and stretching my arm out wide through the open window, hurled it out as the lion leapt, so that his attention was distracted. He bounded to the side. As he did so I slammed the car into gear and drove like Jehu over the rocky track into the dry watercourse. It appeared that the other lions were so close behind that the old male had not even been the first to reach the pig.

At night Anne said: "I prayed to God to look after the little pig." All I could say was "Amen".