

Oryx

The International Journal of Conservation

The original paper was published in the *Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire* (1903-1925 and 1926-1950) or in *Oryx*, the journal of Fauna and Flora International (from 1951).

The website of the journal is (from 2008):

<http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>

The PDF is reproduced with permission from the CD version of The Centenary Archive 1903-2003, a fully searchable database of 100 years of the publications of Fauna and Flora International.

More information on: <http://www.fauna-flora.org/>

The Society was founded in 1903 as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, and subsequently named the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society. Fauna & Flora International is conserving the planet's threatened species and ecosystems – with the people and communities who depend on them.

Oryx - The International Journal of Conservation, is now published quarterly by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Fauna & Flora International. It is a leading scientific journal of biodiversity conservation, conservation policy and sustainable use, with a particular interest in material that has the potential to improve conservation management and practice.

The website, <http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>, plays a vital role in the journal's capacity-building work. Amongst the site's many attributes is a compendium of sources of free software for researchers and details of how to access Oryx at reduced rates or for free in developing countries. The website also includes extracts from Oryx issues 10, 25 and 50 years ago, and a gallery of research photographs that provide a fascinating insight into the places, species and people described in the journal.

The [Rhino Resource Center](#) posted this PDF in June 2009. We are grateful for the permission.

hence losses tell hard upon its ranks. It is an intensely restless, active creature, wandering far over hill and dale even in the course of its ordinary hunting. In the mating season it will travel for many miles. This means that even if protected in one area it will probably journey into dangerous zones. And, as already hinted, it is peculiarly liable to fall victim to the vermin trap, for its inquisitiveness drives it to investigate everything in its path. So long as any trapping of vermin is undertaken martens are bound to fall victims, and I do not hesitate to ascribe the present low ebb of this species in Great Britain to the gamekeeper and his trap. Moreover it is my opinion that it is in danger of extermination in England, Wales, and Scotland unless landlords, occupiers of land, and shooting tenants, can and will stop all trapping for a while, which seems beyond practical possibility.

NOTES ON THE FAUNA OF BURMA.

By SIR ALEXANDER RODGER.

A country which has such a variety of animals as Burma is well worth the attention of those interested in the Fauna of the Empire. Elephants, rhinoceros of two kinds, serow and goral, bison and banting, deer of five kinds, monkeys, pig and tapir, tiger and panther, beautiful wild cats, otters and bears, as well as a splendid assortment of game birds, make up a total which it would be hard to surpass outside Africa. Among the rarer animals are the binturong, the pangolin and the slow loris. The author had a pangolin and loris for some time as prisoners in his camp, but they were unsatisfactory pets and were liberated. He has never been fortunate enough to see a takin, which lives in the remote hill forests of Upper Burma. It is unfortunate that two of the animals which are peculiar to Burma, the banting (also found in Malaya, etc.) and the brow-antlered deer, inhabit as a rule open forests near cultivated land, where they are very easily followed and killed, and the increase in guns

which has taken place of recent years makes it all the more difficult for those who wish these animals well to protect them.

With wild elephants it is probable that their preservation is of less importance than regulation, as they have become in parts of the Province a serious menace to the welfare of the cultivators, and we read in the last Annual Report on Game Preservation in Burma that the Acting Game Warden is anxious to have some measure of elephant control introduced. It must be remembered that the wild elephants are a great asset to Burma, as nearly all the teak logs are extracted from the forests by elephants captured or bred in captivity, and owing to their special cleverness and adaptability it will be a calamity if the supply of elephants is ever seriously diminished. At the same time when, as has happened in recent years, the demand for elephants almost entirely disappears, owing to the difficulty of selling teak, it must be recognized that the herds may become more a nuisance than an asset. The Game Warden notes that information is now being collected for a comprehensive plan which will regulate the preservation, exploitation, and control of wild elephants, and he proposes that areas in which the permanent maintenance of a stock of these animals is practicable must be clearly differentiated from areas from which elephants should be expelled.

In Upper Burma at one time the brow-antlered deer was very common in the dry open forests on both banks of the Irrawaddy to the south of Mandalay, but it is to be feared that it has largely disappeared from these areas. This has been caused by the spread of dry-zone cultivation and the continual hacking down of the patches of forest which used to shelter the deer. And it must be confessed that in past years some Europeans have given a bad example to the Burman villagers in useless slaughter of these animals. It is satisfactory to note that the Game Warden expects that suitable areas for sanctuaries for these deer may be found in the above areas, as well as in Shwebo, north-west of Mandalay. He remarks that this is a most urgent requirement. There were formerly many brow-antlered deer in the dry forests

near Prome, but they have almost disappeared. It is possible that the shooting of stags and sparing the females may have something to do with this. The writer saw many of these deer in the Prome forests about 35 years ago, and there were usually a fair proportion of good stags. It is said by local observers that stags are now seldom seen and that they are far out-numbered by the does. The same thing has been observed in some of the forests in Upper India in the case of spotted deer.

It is not likely that carnivora will diminish much in Burma for a long time to come as they are mostly found in the very extensive forest tracts. It is reported that 79 tigers, 205 leopards, 146 bears, and 47 wild dogs were killed during the year.

Such animals as bears, serow, and goral can usually only be obtained by a sportsman by a good deal of hard work in remote localities, and there is little likelihood of their numbers being seriously diminished. An exception may perhaps be made in the case of serow, which in certain tracts in Upper Burma have been too much persecuted, although anyone who shoots a serow almost certainly earns the trophy by a great deal of hard work. In the extreme south of the Province, the boundary between Siam and Burma lies for many miles in dense forests, and, however much officials in Burma are willing to protect the few remaining *Rhinoceros sondaicus*, their efforts are almost sure to be nullified by the Siamese from over the border. The fact that a dead rhinoceros is worth a great deal of money as medicine causes the death of many of these unfortunate animals, and the remoteness of the country and the denseness of the forest makes control most difficult. A small sanctuary of 62 square miles in the Thaton district, to the east of the Gulf of Martaban, is reported to harbour six of these rhinoceros. Wild buffalo used to exist in one or two places in the Delta of Burma, but they do not seem to be mentioned in the last Report on Game Preservation. The large sanctuary in the extreme north of Burma, covering an area of 260 square miles, continues to serve a most useful purpose, and is reported to

contain as many as 300 bison, 200 banting, 400 sambur, 350 hog-deer, and many other animals.

It is often stated that the preservation of wild life depends on the development among the people of a feeling that the animals are a great asset to the country and that they should be preserved by wise measures of protection. The writer records, with regret, his opinion that this is not likely to come to anything in India and Burma. The average villager regards the wild animals from two points of view, first, as being a source of danger to his crops, second, as a source of money, meat, and skins. The matter of the interest and beauty of their existence is a closed book to him. Meat can usually be sold and the skins are of great use in the villages. It is difficult for a villager to understand why a European sportsman should spend a week after a good head, when there are dozens of females (which provide equally good meat) waiting to be shot. It is suggested that the only way to protect the animals is, first, to have well-kept sanctuaries, and, secondly, to restrict the issue of guns and to punish the licence-holders if they are used for poaching. This can only be done if the members of the superior staff in each district in all departments (civil, forest, and police) are keen on preserving wild life and will do their best to see that poaching with guns, nets, traps and dogs, is prevented. It would help if the guns licensed are shortened so that they are of little use except at close quarters, and also if sportsmen would give the villagers the meat when animals become plentiful and can be killed without unduly diminishing the stock.

If it were not for the sporting instincts of the Burman and the fact that he is extremely fond of meat, game preservation ought to be easier in Burma than in India. He is forbidden by his religion to take life, and an encouraging beginning has been made by enlisting the help of some Buddhist Monks in one of the forest areas near Moulmein. It has been proposed to make the western slopes of Mount Mulayit into a Game Sanctuary. This is a measure which deserves the warmest support, and in a country like Burma,

the feeling may spread. The old men and the monks would probably be found willing to help in any scheme of this kind, and it seems to the writer that in the provision of sanctuaries, and in the active interest of the ruling officials in all the Civil Departments in each district, the future of the Fauna of Burma must lie.

GAME PRESERVATION IN BURMA.

EXTRACTS FROM ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR
ENDING 31ST MARCH, 1935.

SANCTUARIES.

There was no change during the year in the number of game sanctuaries. There are at present five areas notified as sanctuaries distributed as follows :—

Name of Sanctuary (1)	Area in Square miles (2)	Forest Division in which situated (3)	Species for which the Sanctuary is primarily constituted (4)
Pidaung . . .	260	Myitkyina . . .	Elephant, bison, <i>saing</i> , sambur, hog-deer, barking-deer, pig, tiger, leopard, bear.
Shwe-u-daung . . .	*80	Mogok . . .	<i>Rhinoceros sumatrensis</i> , elephant, bison, <i>saing</i> , sambur, serow, barking-deer, pig, tiger, leopard, bear.
Maymyo . . .	49	Maymyo . . .	Barking-deer, birds.
Moscós Islands . . .	19	Taboy . . .	Sambur, barking-deer, pig.
Kahilu . . .	62	Thatôn . . .	<i>Rhinoceros sondaicus</i> .

* The total area of this sanctuary is 126 square miles, of which 80 square miles fall within the Mogók Forest Division (Burma) and 46 square miles are in the Môngmit Forest Division (Federated Shan States).

Numbers, Distribution, and Habits of Animals.

Pidaung.—The following table shows the numbers of animals reported to have been seen in the sanctuary during the year as compared with the numbers seen in 1933–34 :—