

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF RHINOCEROS SONDAICUS DESM. IN SUMATRA

BY

L. F. DE BEAUFORT

Zoöl. Museum, Amsterdam

(Communicated at the meeting of Jan. 28, 1928).

Up to the present date the distribution of *Rhinoceros sondaicus* Desm. has puzzled the zoologists. It was known to occur on Java and again in Malacca and farther west, but had never been found either in Sumatra or Borneo. As other animals, especially birds and reptiles, had the same discontinuous distribution, several hypotheses have been suggested to explain this anomaly. In the course of time however most of these species have been discovered in Sumatra and in later years it has been supposed that the javanese Rhino had formerly lived in Sumatra, but was now extinct by some reason unknown.

It is true that *Rh. sondaicus* has been mentioned as living in Sumatra, but none of these records were absolutely certain. GRAY e. g. (Cat. Carnivorous, Pachydermatous etc. Mammalia, 1869) mentions a skeleton in the British Museum of this species "received from the Leyden Museum through M. FRANK as *R. sumatranus*, from Sumatra", but the author was so convinced that it did not occur there, that he supposed "that some mistake in the name and habitat" must have been made. In the same catalogue he describes *Rhinoceros Floweri* (a synonym of *R. sondaicus*), which was presented by Sir STAMFORD RAFFLES and therefore was supposed to come from Sumatra. To strengthen this opinion he cites RAFFLES as follows: "There is another animal in the forests of Sumatra never yet noticed, which in size and character nearly resembles the Rhinoceros, and which is said to bear a single horn. The animal is distinguished by having a narrow whitish belt encircling the body". It is apparent that not a Rhino, but *Tapirus indicus* has been described to RAFFLES, but the "single horn" suggests, that stories about the javanese Rhino also reached RAFFLES and that he thought it was one and the same animal. From Borneo also some very doubtful records of the occurrence have been published. G. BUCK described at length two subfossil molars from Serawak, as belonging to this species. EVERETT failed to get any informations on the occurrence of the javanese Rhino in Borneo, but thought it not impossible that it still might be discovered there. JENTINK (Notes Leyden Museum, XVI, 1894, p. 231) has given a critical

recapitulation of what had been said about the distribution of the Rhino's in the Greater Sunda islands. He came to the conclusion, that *R. sondaicus* only occurs in Java, but is absent from Sumatra and Borneo, where *sumatranus* is found.

Lately DAMMERMAN said that he had reason to believe that *R. sondaicus* occurred in Sumatra. ROBINSON and KLOSS added this species to their "List of the mammals of Sumatra" (Journ. Fed. Malay States Museum, VIII, 1923, p. 317), without saying why and KLOSS, when recording two specimens of this species from Perak, says: "it exists, though apparently only in small numbers, in Sumatra" (Journ. Fed. Malay States Mus., XIII, 1927, p. 207).

Lastly Dr. P. VAGELER wrote in "Die Umschau", XXXI, 1927, p. 289, that the big game hunter G. C. HAZEWINKEL had shot 8 specimens in Sumatra of a new variety of *R. sondaicus*, differing from the javanese specimens by the deciduous scales of the skin and the enormous development of the incisivi of the lower jaw. The accompanying reproductions of photographs show an animal, which does not seem to differ from *R. sondaicus* and a skull, of which the same can be said.

Now Mr. RUIE presented to the zoological museum of Amsterdam the complete skeleton of a female *Rh. sondaicus*, shot by Mr. KRETH 250 KM southwest of Palembang, Sumatra. I cannot see any differences with Javanese specimens. The incisors of the lower jaw are not larger. For comparison I give below the measurements of the skull with those of an apparently female specimen of *R. sondaicus*, those of the latter in brackets. The measurements are in centimeters.

Tip of nasals to occipital crest 53.5 (54.5).

Lower border foramen magnum to occipital crest 22.5 (21.5).

Greatest jugular width 36.5 (34.5).

Lower border foramen magnum to end of nasals 59 (59).

Lower border foramen magnum to posterior border of the bony palate 28 (30).

Length of molar series (measured at base) 24.5 (24).

Distance right and left molar series: anteriorly: 6 (7), posteriorly 10 (11.5).