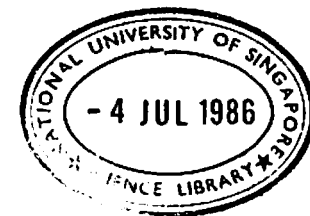


NATURE CONSERVATION
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THE DISTRIBUTION OF ELEPHANT, RHINOCEROS, SELADANG AND TAPIR IN MALAYA'S NATIONAL PARK

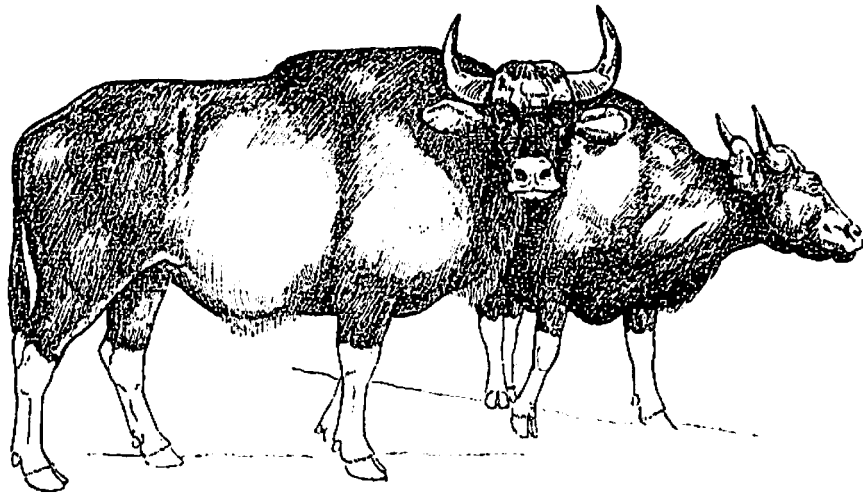
By

J. A. HISLOP*

Taman Negara or King George V National Park, Malaya's National Park, was set aside as a wild life sanctuary in 1937 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V from whom its name was given. It is situated in the States of Kelantan, Pahang and Trengganu and surrounds the Tahan massif (7,186 ft.), Malaya's highest mountain. The portion accessible to visitors is that contained in the State of Pahang, bounded on the south-east by the Tembeling river. The head-quarters is at the confluence (*kuala* in Malay) of the Tahan with the Tembeling river; it is reached by train to Tembeling Halt and then by boat up the Tembeling river.

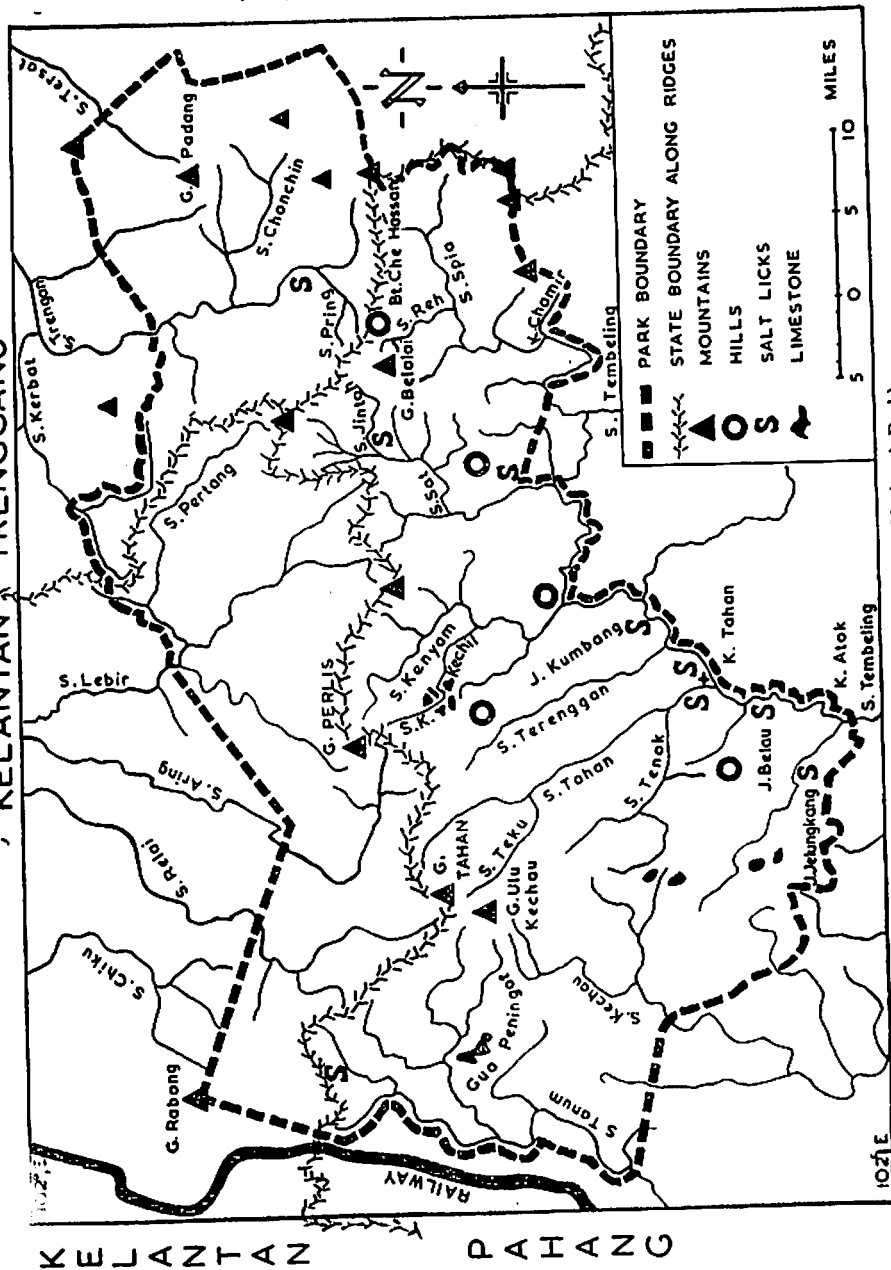
The Park covers an area of 1,677 square miles of typical Malayan mountain, forest, river and stream, and contains most species of indigenous wild life and vegetative growth excluding that typified by estuarine and coastal areas. Of this vast expanse, however, only that portion lying within the State of Pahang is relatively well known, since there has been little opportunity in the past for exploration and research. It is therefore impossible to arrive at any accurate conclusions regarding the populations of the various animals, their seasonal movements and destinations, favourite habitats and so on, but over the years sufficient information has been gleaned to conjure up a rough picture of the distribution of the large wild life within the Park. Wild animals, however, are quite indifferent to boundary lines, marked or unmarked, and the population is therefore a shifting one, but it is safe to say that there are large areas within the Park perimeter which contain very few of the larger animals, and that the numbers of the various species may be considered small in relation to the area available.

Elephant (Elephas maximus). A herd of from twelve to fifteen animals frequents the lowland southern part of the Park from Kuala Atok to Kuala Tahan, moving on both sides of the Tembeling possibly as far upstream as the Terenggan. Periodical visits are made to the Tahan salt licks, especially Jenut Belau. The valley of the Tahan beyond Kuala Tenok is seldom frequented by elephant except for wandering lone bulls, but to the south and west as far as the upper Kechau, there exists an unknown number. Further west still in the vicinity of the Tanum river and its tributaries, and around the limestone



* Chief Game Warden, Federation of Malaya, 1957-60.

T R E N G G A N U P A H A N G



Taman Negara (King George V National Park).
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massif of Gua Peningat, there are several salt licks and the elephant population there and north to the Park boundary in Kelantan is probably the most intensive of anywhere in the Park.

In the vicinity of Kuala Teku, however, on the east side of the Tahan, tracks of a small herd of up to half a dozen head have been recorded on one or two occasions, but they undoubtedly come over from the upper reaches (*Ulu* in Malay) of the Kenyam Kechil, a pleasant valley containing many large limestone outcrops, and much frequented by a large herd distinct from the small one of twelve to fifteen animals already referred to in the Atok-Tahan area. Their tracks have been noted a short way up the main Gunong Tahan ridge, eventually heading down into the Tahan some distance above Kuala Teku, but the tracks of lone bulls have been seen much higher on the ridge and also at over 6,000 ft. on the Tahan massif itself.

Proceeding up the Tembeling river from Kuala Tahan, the next valley is that of the Terenggan which contains the large salt lick of Jenut Kumbang. In years gone by this lick was well patronised by elephant but it has become much less popular and is now seldom visited. Several miles further upstream there is the much larger valley of the Kenyam which although it has the appearance of being suitable for elephant, does not seem to be inhabited by any herd, the nearest being the large herd already mentioned and which is located in the Ulu Kenyam Kechil. There is no evidence that this herd comes down into the Kenyam at all, and a number of personal journeys on foot have failed to find used trails although the terrain is not in the least bit difficult. Lone bulls, of course, wander in many places where herds do not go, and damage to fishing camps in the Kenyam has often been done by them.

Further east still is the Sungei Sat in which are located one or two salt licks, the most important being Jenut Jintoh, well away in the upper reaches of the river and well patronised by elephant. There is no information available as to the size of the herds in the Sat valley, and it is most probable that these animals wander northwards across the low divide via the Pertang into Kelantan. A lot of rough country divides the Sat from Spia to the east, especially in the upper reaches, and elephants are few. A small herd occasionally appears in the vicinity of Kuala Chamir, and doubtless odd ones wander about the ridge trails over to Trengganu, but in general the population from the Sat eastwards to the high range dividing Pahang and Trengganu is small.

A survey in 1952 of the upper reaches of the Reh and Kenering in Pahang, thence over Bukit Che Hassan into Trengganu and the valleys of the Kenering, Pring, Ulu Trenggan, and Chonchin rivers and on the plateau (4,000 ft.) of Gunong Padang produced little or no evidence of

elephant apart from the occasional tracks of lone bulls, and these were few and far between.

Herd elephant undoubtedly exist in some numbers in Trengganu to the north of the Park boundaries, notably in the valleys of the Kerbat and lower reaches of the Trenggan, but nothing is known of their visits to the Park and although some of the country traversed was quite suitable for them, there being an abundance of bamboo and other food, indications of herd elephant were conspicuous by their absence.

Elephants are fairly numerous in that part of the Park which lies in Kelantan and which contains the rivers Aring, Relai and part of the upper reaches of the Lebir.

It is not possible to estimate the numbers of elephant which from time to time inhabit the National Park, but it is certain that there are other parts of the country where they are more numerous, for example in Upper Perak, some parts of north-west Pahang and parts of Johore. It appears evident, however, that the elephant population in the National Park is greatest in the western sector, that the north-eastern area on both sides of the Pahang—Trengganu watershed and the valley of the Tahan river contain very few, particularly the latter which is poor elephant country, and that the best known part of the Park, the mid-Tembeling area, holds a few small herds.

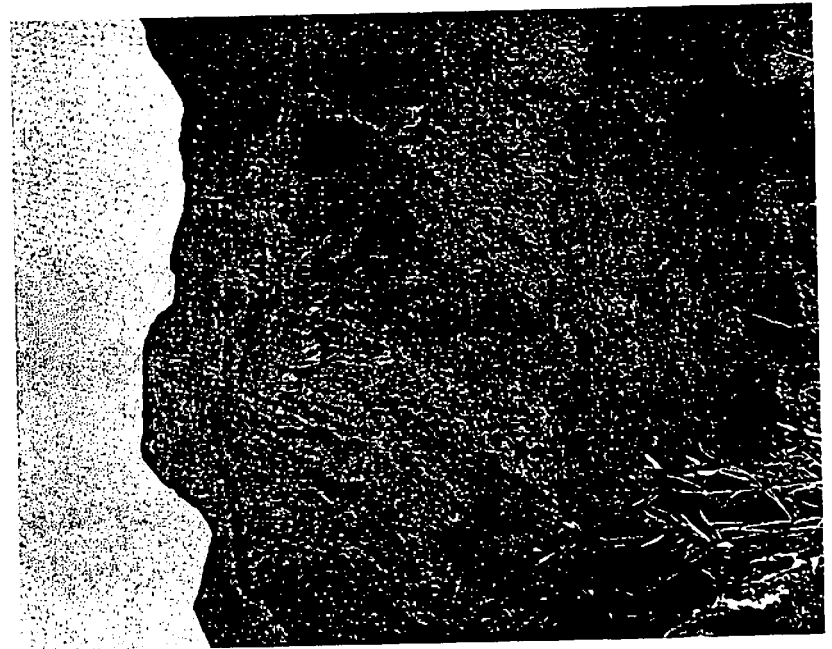
Rhinoceros (Didermoceros sumatrensis). It is certain that very few individuals exist within the boundaries of the Park. C. S. Ogilvie has recorded tracks from the valley of the Spia in the Kuala Chamir area in the eastern part of the Park and a visual record was reported by a ranger from a few miles further up the Spia. G. R. Leonard made a survey of the country to the east of the Spia up to Trengganu border. He found many wallows but very few indications of anything fresh, but the evidence nevertheless was conclusive that one or two animals still wander around the upper reaches of the Spia. In the writer's opinion there would be more chance of finding them in the very rugged and broken country to the north of the Spia surrounding Gunong Ulu Reh (Belalai).

The writer has personally covered a great deal of country from Gunong Tahan eastwards to Ulu Trengganu, and has found no evidence of existing rhinoceros although old wallows are common. Aborigines have told me that there are one or two in the steep country of the source of the Kenyam, but these reports have never been verified.

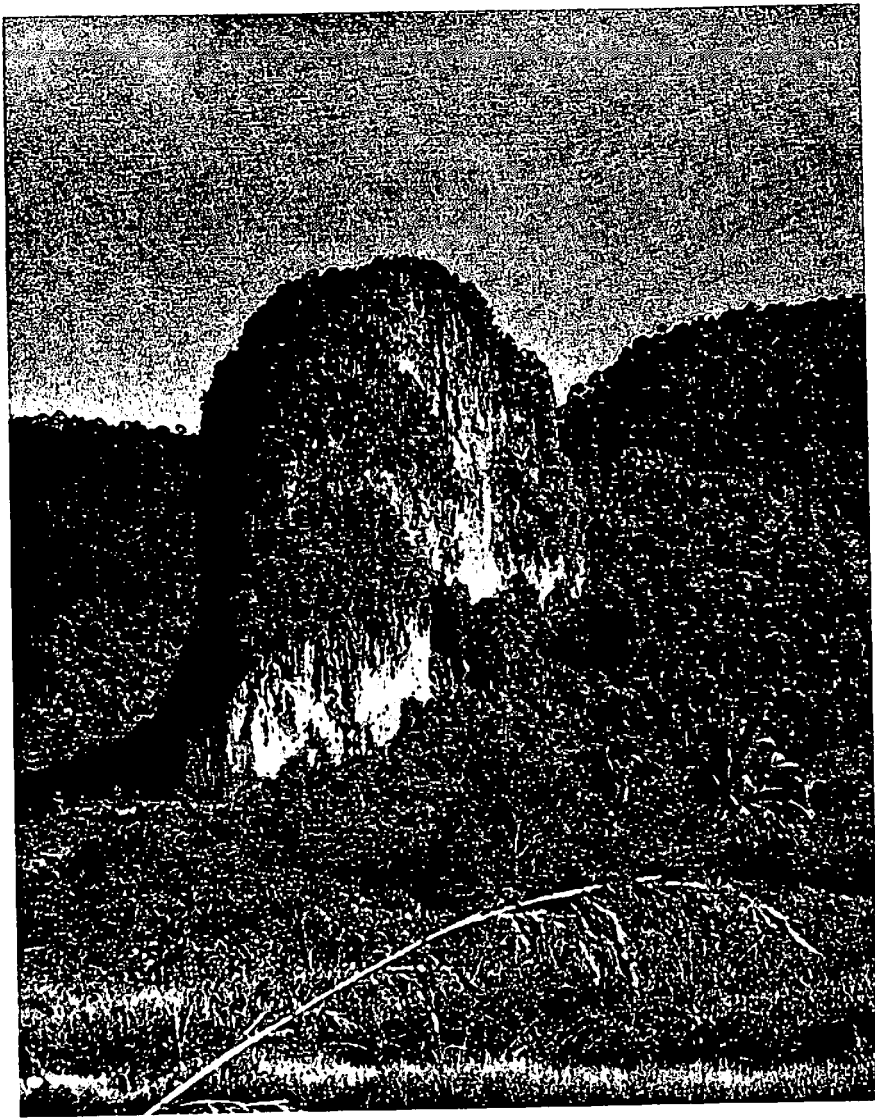
Seladang (Bibos gaurus). It would be relatively simple given time, to estimate the numbers of Seladang, since the herds tend to be more localised than those of elephant and to spend more time in any one particular place.



Photos: J. Wyatt-Smith
Sungei Teku gorge.



Teku gorge, Taman Negara.



J. Wyatt-Smith

The limestone hill Bukit Takun standing in Forest Reserve behind Templer Park, Selangor.

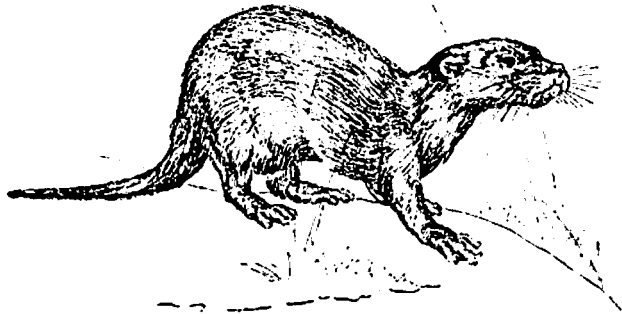
In the southern part of the Park, from the Trenggan river to Kuala Atok it is estimated that there is a population of no more than thirty animals. The well-known herd which frequents Kuala Tahan, and which remains in the vicinity for periods of up to a month or more, has been known to contain as many as twenty-four head, although usually fewer. This herd is prolific and calves numerous, but the number of mature animals in the herd never seems to increase in proportion to calves produced, and it is possible that casualties to the youngsters are relatively high. It would seem reasonable to assume that young bulls not yet strong enough to compete with the master for leadership of the herd, may break away with a few cows to form the nucleus of a new herd. If this were so a gradual increase in population would result, but there is no evidence to show that new herds are in fact being formed. On the other hand, observations made at Kuala Tahan since 1947 show that particular animals remain with the herd for years, and one well known cow, named 'Curly Horn' produced several pairs of twins before she passed away. The master bull also remains in charge for years, until beaten in battle, and C. S. Ogilvie has recorded a clash which resulted in the death of both contestants, it being quite an appreciable time before a new herd bull appeared.

The fine valleys of the Kenyam and Kenyam Kechil rivers in the central part of the Park seem not to hold any resident herd, although tracks of solitary bulls have been recorded, and the writer once crossed fresh tracks of a fairly large herd along the Permai river in the lower reaches of the Kenyam, but it is not known where they went. There are in the valley of the Sat some animals which visit Jenut Jintoh, but no Seladang have been recorded from the Spia, and the next herd of any size is found over the divide, inhabiting the valley of the Pring and upper Trenggan in Trengganu in the eastern part of the Park. There is a salt lick a few miles downstream from Kuala Pring, and a well used route from there to the upper reaches of the Trenggan and across a low divide into the Pring. Further into Trengganu, on the great sand and pebble banks of the Chonchin at the foot of Gunung Padang, tracks of Seladang may be found, but since the Chonchin and Trenggan are only a short distance apart and separated by relatively low ground, it is thought that periodical visits are made by the Trenggan herd.

Tapir (Tapirus indicus). Tracks of tapir are often mistaken for those of rhinoceros, and these wary animals are quite numerous in the National Park from lowland swamps to the steepest slopes and high ridges up to an elevation of at least 4,000 feet, and are quite evidently holding their own.

plant successfully to their garden, and they have the necessary sustained interest to keep it alive, they could so easily have taken it from neighbouring forest or roadside, and have left the plants in Templer Park alone for the enjoyment of other visitors.

The Friends of Templer Park Society, of which the Malayan Nature Society is a founder member, is the only voluntary body in Malaya devoted solely to the cause of conservation. The work it is doing is related to that of the old-established Friends of the Lake District in Britain, a society that has played so large a part in preserving that beautiful area from mining, overhead electric cables, ugly buildings, erosion, pollution, and all the same threats that constantly menace Templer Park. The Friends of Templer Park even anticipated the British "Conservation Corps", by persuading youth clubs to send volunteers to clear river beds, cut steps, and repair bridges. The Park comes under the portfolio of the Ministry of Rural Development, which has recognised the special part that the Friends of Templer Park Society plays in developing the Park, and gives many of their decisions legal force. This Ministry also pays into the Society's funds a subvention to cover the wages of a fore-man park-keeper and four labourers. The Templer Park project is rural development in the best sense; by demonstrating to the townspeople that the rural areas are not just a wilderness, but contain much of interest and beauty. It is, after all, the conservation of nature that marks rural development from merely a transporting of town to country.



THE SHWE U DAUNG, A RHINOCEROS SANCTUARY IN BURMA

By

OLIVER MILTON*

With the approval of the Survival Service Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the author approached the Burmese authorities in January 1958 and sought permission to carry out an initial two-year study of the fauna with the intention of offering ideas and suggestions for its continued and improved preservation. One particular feature of the proposed survey was to find out, if possible, how many *Rhinoceros sondaicus* and *Didermoceros sumatrensis* still existed in the country and what steps could be taken for their future protection and prevention from extinction in Burma.

In 1955 Lee M. Talbot, an ecologist, undertook an extensive mission for the Survival Service in the Middle East and South East Asian countries to look into the status of certain endangered species. Lack of time in Burma prevented any field trips and so he gathered his information from sources in Rangoon, in particular, U Tun Yin, a retired government servant who is greatly interested in conservation. The number of rhino estimated as a result of these enquiries was between thirty-five and forty-six(1).

Estimating the population of a certain species is extremely difficult in a country such as Burma where so much of the land is covered with dense jungle. Figures produced by local inhabitants are, unfortunately, often incorrect as they are apt to overestimate the number of animals in a herd; by hazarding a guess rather than by individual counting (which, admittedly, is not always possible); through counting the same animal more than once; by incorrect interpretation of the tracks or by relying on information from other natives.

Once the Burmese Government had agreed to our Survey I was able to visit the Shwe U Daung sanctuary—as well as other areas—since this used to be a confirmed habitat of *Didermoceros sumatrensis*. I spent from 16th. July until 18th. August, 1959, in the reserve, but owing to the inclemency of the weather a future visit is necessary.

The first steps to preserve the rich fauna and flora of the Shwe U Daung were taken in 1918 when eighty-one square miles of the East Katha District were declared a Reserve. Eleven years later another forty-five square miles in the Mongmit Division were added, thus

* Burma Wild Life Survey 1958-60; now in Malaya.