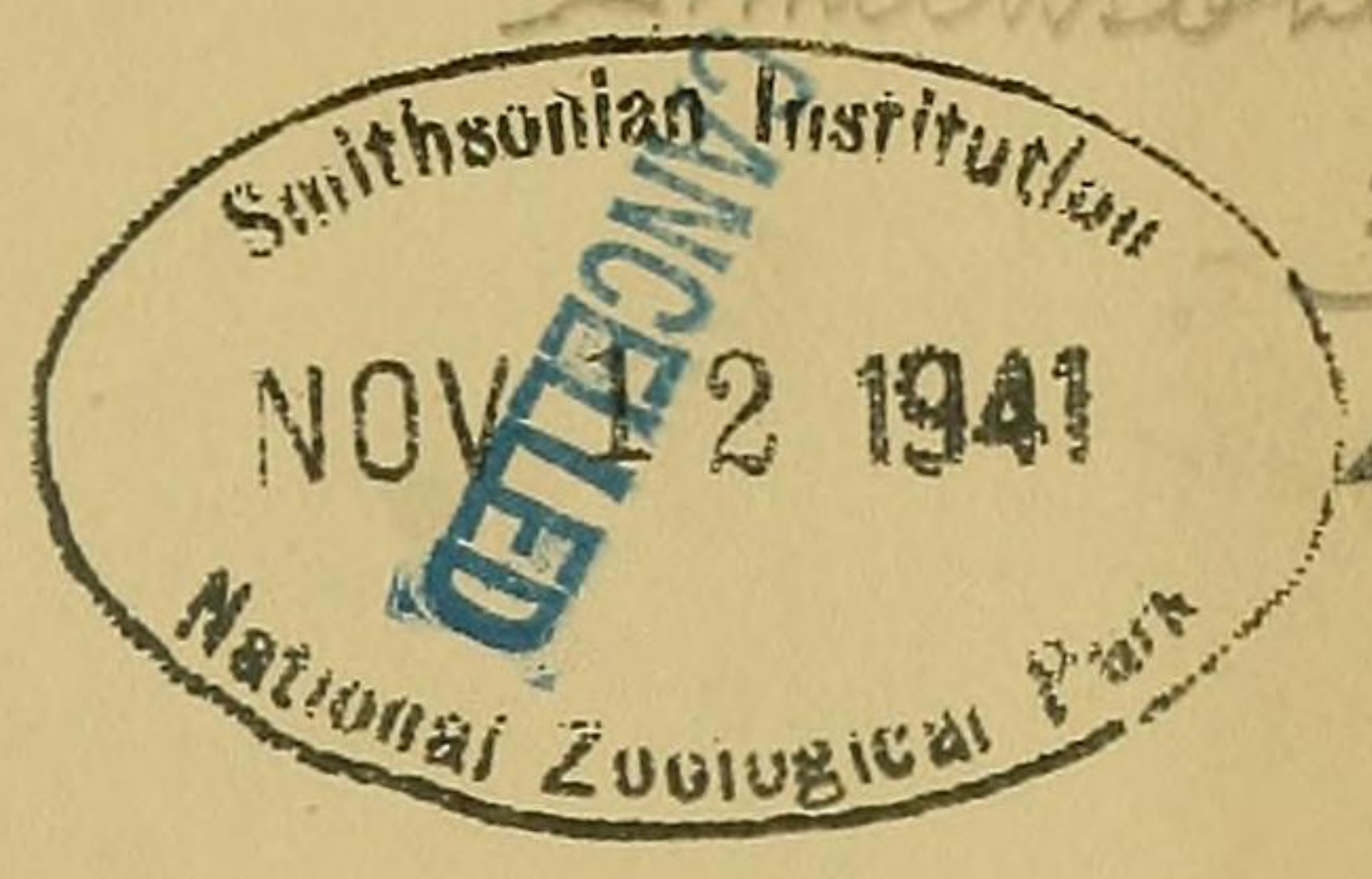


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need only visit the Pamirs to understand how a species becomes extinct. My own opinion is that about 20 out of those 200 heads will be 45 inches and over. The rest will be immature males as it is a singular fact that scarcely a female lives on the Taghdumbash. This separation of the sexes is a peculiarity which *poli* share with the Tibetan antelope and markhor, but among markhor the sexes at least occupy the same valley. My 40 inch *poli* weighed 237 lbs., stood 45 inches, and was 81 inches in length, of which 4 inches was tail. The colour is a sort of bluish-fawn, with a good deal of white, which rather gives him away. They frequent the grassy slopes at the very heads of the valleys, right under the glaciers. Their senses of sight, smell and hearing are most acute, and although the ground on which they live is not usually difficult, they generally frequent open spaces, where it is hard to approach within less than a quarter of a mile. Like all hill game they are best stalked from above if it is possible to manage it. They generally feed until 10 A.M. when they lie up until 4 P.M., usually on the feeding ground unless they have become suspicious. I never saw them singly, but a herd may be anything from 4 up to 20, and often consisted entirely of small heads. When scared they go up hill, and although their tracks are obvious enough, they travel so far that it is not worth while to follow them. One should leave one's camp as soon as it is light enough to see, as it is easier to stalk them when they are feeding than when they are lying down. One always rides a yak until one has seen one's game, and hillmen have such keen eyesight that it is rare to jump a herd. When one has sighted the herd it is most difficult to tell the size of the heads. The horns are so pale in colour as to be almost invisible and look smaller than they really are. A 40-inch head makes approximately a full circle, and anything better than that is worth shooting. They have a habit of digging shallow pits to keep out of the wind, but are cute enough to keep their eyes above the ground level. When at rest the various members of the herd graze in all directions, and they graze up wind, so always seem to feed away from one. The Paik Nullah, where I first went, seemed to me particularly unfavourable for stalking, owing to the large open spaces and lack of ravines. The Kukturuk nullah is easy stalking ground, but I saw next to nothing there, though a previous sportsman had missed a big head. If I had my choice now, I would take the Kunjerab, as the ground is fairly good for stalking, and there is enough ground and enough game for ten days shooting, whereas one would have scared all the game out of the Paik Nullah or Kukturuk in less than a week.

W. B. COTTON, I.C.S.

BASTI, U. P., 23rd November 1914.

No. VI.—THE ASIATIC TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS
(*RHINOCEROS SUMATRENSIS*, Cuv.).

As far as I have been able to find out *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* and *sondaicus* occur in Southern Tennasserim in about equal numbers, and the many enquiries I have made seem to show that both species are equally well known to the natives, while they appear to exist in the same situations and to be similar in habits, although in the Dutch Indies I was always told that *sondaicus* was much more of a mountain animal than *sumatrensis*. Besides the Rhinoceros I shot I have only heard of two other instances of a Rhinoceros being shot near Victoria Point by a European, one of these specimens, of which I have seen the skull, was *sondaicus* obtained some years ago by Captain McCormick, a former planter in the district, but it is only

too well known that they are persistently hunted by Siamese and Chinese shikaris, who shoot them over water holes during the dry season for the sake of the valuable medicinal properties they are supposed to possess, which without doubt accounts for their scarcity, the thick jungles and comparatively sparse population where they still exist being probably the only things that have prevented their extermination long ago. One Siamese shikari near Victoria Point is said to have accounted for *sixteen* Rhino, probably a very high percentage of those existing in the whole district. The continued watch a native shikari is able to keep over the water holes throughout a considerable area must cause tremendous destruction among these animals and a dead Rhino is said to be worth Rs. 1,000, a fortune to most shikaris. Unfortunately, as in other places, although game laws are enforced strictly enough among Europeans, they are quite unable to cope with the secrecy with which a native is able to carry on his hunting, and although there may not be a large number of guns in the district, if there is only one in a village it is idle to suppose it is not at the disposal of any one who wants it.

The Chinese, Burmese and Siamese preserve practically every part of a Rhinoceros. The horns, hoofs, blood, urine, hide and even the intestines being dried and afterwards converted into various medicines.

Rhinoceroses are said to occasionally swim from the mainland to some of the islands near the coast, but which species, or whether both, do it I have been unable to find out. I have been told that once as many as eight were seen together on one of these islands, but this must have been a very exceptional instance, as in addition to their scarcity I believe them to be rarely, if ever, intentionally gregarious, going about as a rule in pairs and possibly often wandering about singly, although a pair will probably keep in touch and meet in the course of the night.

For its size a Rhinoceros does not leave a big track although easy to follow owing to the pits made in the ground by their toes. I had many opportunities of following and observing Rhinoceros tracks both at Bankachon and Maliwun. The usual thing is evidently for a pair to frequent a district for a month or so, and then to move off somewhere else, their movements being probably affected by the water-supply. They apparently do not care for clear running streams and are said only to visit the low ground during the hot season when their drinking pools in the hills have dried up. Where there are plenty of well beaten tracks 'wallows' will occasionally be found which besides being drinking places are used for rolling in, owing to which habit they are always covered more or less thickly with a coating of mud which probably serves as a protection against mosquitos. Two 'wallows' found were quite small, more or less oval in shape, about 8 feet by 6 and full of stirred up mud, one near Maliwun had evidently been much used and deserted quite recently having probably got too dry. Tracks led off in all directions, the surrounding jungle was very thick and the tracks presented the appearance of large tunnels, while the trunks of standing and fallen trees and even the undergrowth for several hundred yards in every direction were white with dry caked mud, which had been rubbed off by the constant passing backwards and forwards of at least a pair of these animals.

The track made by a Rhinoceros is quite different to that of an Elephant. Where an Elephant will break a path a Rhinoceros will make a tunnel, even creepers three or four feet from the ground stretching across their path will not be broken but burrowed under.

They are evidently largely ground feeders, a number of large citrous fruits resembling oranges, merely bitten in half and swallowed, being found in the stomach of the specimen shot. With the exception of these, the stomach contained green vegetable matter, probably the fallen leaves of the same tree.

They may also feed on bamboos, but in their feeding places there is not the same amount of broken down vegetation as there is where an Elephant has been feeding.

On January 7th, two Gurkhas and I who had been doing a lot of hunting in the district, although not previously succeeding in finding any fresh Rhino tracks, came upon some that were evidently more recent than any thing else we had seen. We followed them for a few miles going slowly as in several places we came to where the animal had evidently been feeding as the tracks would circle about and cross themselves in every direction. Towards evening, as we were about five miles from camp, I decided to camp where we were for the night and follow on again next morning, half hoping that something would turn up during the night, as besides Rhino we had noticed tracks of Elephant, Sambur and Pig. It must have been well after twelve, as the moon which was very small had almost set and we had turned in having given up hopes of seeing anything that night, when we were awakened by a series of loud snorts which we at once guessed must be from a Rhino, that sounded quite close, although when first heard they were probably over a hundred yards off. The animal must have scented us or been suspicious of something from the very first, though as there was no wind it was quite unable to locate us. If it had done so it might have made straight off, instead of which it began making a series of short rushes, crashing into trees and altering its direction so often that it was difficult to tell if it was gradually coming our way or not; between each rush it would become quite silent for several minutes, probably listening, and then start off in some new direction, at one time we were able to locate it exactly, as the path a short distance away was partly under water and we heard the splashing as it crossed this spot, but although so close there was so little light that we were unable to see anything and for a short time it apparently increased its distance from us. It is astonishing how quietly even a Rhino can move when it chooses, as at last without any warning it suddenly crashed out of a bush almost on top of us. As the moon had almost set it was impossible to see the sights of my rifle so I was depending on a shot gun loaded with lethal bullet and dropped him at 7 paces with a lucky shot in the head, which smashed through the zygomatic arch and into the skull, the bullet being afterwards found inside the brain in about a dozen pieces, several of the circular steel discs used in the construction of the bullet having entirely detached themselves from the lead covering.

Several hours later when we had turned in for the second time we were awakened in exactly the same manner by a second Rhino, the snorts however coming this time from another direction, the moon had been down for some time and it was impossible to see a yard. This animal did not rush about like the first one but came along the track and had just crossed that part which was under water, when it must have either seen some movement or scented the dead Rhino, as it turned suddenly without the slightest warning and bolted, crashing through branches and hitting its feet against stones and tree trunks as it went, making as much noise as an Elephant, and on getting about a hundred yards away, it started squealing in a most extraordinary manner, the noise very much resembling that made by a dog caught in a trap.

The next day we found a 'wallow' a few hundred yards off which the tracks we had been following evidently led to.

The meat was most excellent, very like beef and remarkably tender, and not at all coarse or stringy like that of a sambur or a bison.

G. C. SHORTRIDGE.

RANGOON, 1914.