

D.Sc. Thesis

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE
MAMMALS OF NORTH-EAST INDIA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE ^{TO} NON-HUMAN [^] PRIMATES

A thesis submitted in part fulfillment for the degree of
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very small. **Mizoram.** Alongwith Tripura, treated as single population with unknown extant movement routes (Choudhury 1999d). Subsequent surveys revealed heavy fragmentation and survival of scattered groups in isolated pockets of W and S Mizoram. The total number is estimated only 14-15 (Choudhury, in press 4). Dampa and Ngengpui are the only PAs where the elephant still occurs. **Nagaland.** Rare. Occurs in two discrete populations totalling about 150 elephants (range: 50-200) (Choudhury 1999d). One occurs in NW areas while the other in the SE covering Intanki WS-Jalukie areas. Occasionally ascending 2400m elevation at Dzuko Valley. **Northern W Bengal.** Common. Occurs in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts totalling around 250 elephants (range: 200-300). Protected areas with elephants are Buxa Tiger Reserve, Chapramari, Jaldapara, and Mahananda WS, and Gorumara, and Neora Valley NPs. The range is heavily fragmented. **Tripura.** Alongwith Mizoram, treated as a single population (Choudhury 1999d). Although some elephants still survive their exact status is unclear. At least 184 elephants were estimated by the Forest department in 1995, which is apparently much less now. EXTRALIMITAL. Sri Lanka and S India to Vietnam and S to Sumatra and Borneo (Sukumar 1989, Corbet & Hill 1992).

REMARKS. Distribution in NE India not correctly shown on the maps in Corbet & Hill (1992) and Sukumar (1989) Poaching for ivory and also meat has threatened the species in some areas. Subspecific variations are insignificant. CITES Appendix I; IUCN EN, WPA Schedule I.

ORDER PERISSODACTYLA

Odd-toed ungulates

The Order Perissodactyla or the odd-toed ungulates consists of three very distinct families, the rhinoceroses (rhinocerotidae), horses (equidae) and the tapirs (tapiridae) Of these, the first two are represented in NE India. The ungulates or hoofed animals are divided into two orders, depending upon the arrangement of their toes. In the odd-toed ungulates, the third or middle toe of the foot is the most prominent. The rhinoceroses have also distinctive 'horns'. The evolution of perissodactyls was reviewed by Prothero & Schoch (1989). Corbet & Hill (1992) and Grubb (1993) provided a recent taxonomic and geographic reference.

Family Rhinocerotidae

Rhinoceroses

Rhinocerotidae Gray, 1821 : 306; type genus *Rhinoceros* L.

Distribution confined to Africa and SE Asia. Of the four genera, two (*Rhinoceros* and *Dicerorhinus*) are represented in NE India as well as Asia with three species. A detailed review on the classification of Asian rhinos was by Groves (1967a) while phylogenies for the family were proposed by Groves (1983) and Prothero *et al.* (1986). Penny (1987) had provided comprehensive popular account of all living rhinos. Khan (1989) had provided account on current status and conservation. Status of all the species in Assam was reviewed by Choudhury (1997e).

RHINOCEROS

Rhinoceros Linnaeus, 1758 : 56; type species *R. unicornis* L.,

155 (127) *Rhinoceros unicornis* Indian rhinoceros, Greater one-horned rhinoceros

R. unicornis Linnaeus, 1758 : 56. TYPE LOCALITY: ? Assam, India.

SYNONYMS *asiaticus*, *indicus*, *jamrachii*, *stenocephalus*.

LOCAL NAMES *Gorh* (A), *Charak* (Adi, Mising), *Gondar* (B).

DISTRIBUTION & STATUS. *Arunachal Pradesh.* No resident population but almost every year, a few animals stray into, mostly from Kaziranga NP of Assam. Some recent records were from Pakhui WS, Papum RF, Drupong RF and Panir RF (Choudhury 1997h). *Assam.* Found in the floodplains of the Brahmaputra R and in *terai* grassland of the *duars* (Choudhury 1985, 1996c). Largest concentration (c. 1500) is in Kaziranga NP. Other significant populations are in Orang NP (c. 50) and Pabitora WS (c. 70). Small number survives in Manas NP (< 5). A few are occasionally met with in Burhachapori WS, Laokhowa WS and Pani-Dihing BS. Stray animals wander across the central and upper Brahmaputra Valley, especially in winter. *Meghalaya.* One stray record from Jaintia Hills in early 1970s. *Northern W Bengal.* Occurs in two discrete populations in two PAs of Jalpaiguri dist, Jaldapara WS (>45) and Gorumara NP (>20). There was a record of straggler from Chapramari WS in 1996 (AUC). Stray animals often wander inside Darjeeling dist (one such case was recorded in 1996). **EXTRALIMITAL.** Nepal.

REMARKS. Laokhowa WS in Assam was an important rhino area but most animals fell to poachers in the early 1980s. Similarly, Manas NP has lost bulk of its rhinos to the poachers between 1989-1993. Earlier, there were small permanent populations in Sonai-Rupai WS and in Lakhimpur dist of Assam, both close to Arunachal Pradesh. Also known as the Indian one-horned or Great Indian one-horned rhinoceros. **CITES** Appendix I, **IUCN** EN; **WPA** Schedule I.

156 (128) *Rhinoceros sondaicus* Javan rhinoceros, Smaller one-horned rhinoceros

R. sondaicus Desmarest, 1822 : 399; TYPE LOCALITY: Sumatra, Indonesia (Sody, 1946); usually given as Java.

SYNONYMS *annamiticus*, *floweri*, *inermis*, *javanicus*, *nasalis*.

SUBSPECIES. *R. s. annamiticus* Heude, 1892 : 75, 113, pl. xixA; TYPE LOCALITY: unknown, presumably Annam, Vietnam.

REMARKS. Extinct in NE India since late 19th century. Current populations occur only in Java and Vietnam (Khan 1989). Historic range extended from West Bengal (including north Bengal; specimen from Moraghat in Jalpaiguri dist; Colin Groves, *pc*) and Bhutan to Java. A detailed account on the species is given by Sody (1959). One shot by Gordon Fraser, a tea planter in Sylhet dist (now in Bangladesh, then a part of Assam) (Rookmaker 1980; Wood 1930). Skeleton in ZSI from Jessore dist, also in Bangladesh, which was obtained by J. H. Barlow in 1834. **CITES** Appendix I; **IUCN** CR.

DICERORHINUS

Dicerorhinus Gloger, 1841 : 125; type species *R. sumatrensis* Cuvier = *R. sumatrensis* Fischer. Conserved by Opinion 1080 (1977).

= *Didermoceros* Brookes, 1828 : 75. Rejected by Opinion 1080 (1977).

157 (129) *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* Sumatran rhinoceros, Asian two-horned rhinoceros

Rhinoceros sumatrensis Fischer, 1814 : 301. TYPE LOCALITY : Bencoolen Dist, S Sumatra, Indonesia. Conserved by Opinion 1080 (1977).

SYNONYMS *blythii*, *harrissoni*, *lasiotis*, *niger*.

SUBSPECIES. 157a. *D. s. lasiotis*

R. lasiotis Buckland, 1872 : 89. TYPE LOCALITY Chittagong, E Bengal (now Bangladesh).

DISTRIBUTION & STATUS. Extinct from most of NE India in the last century. However, stragglers were reported from India-Myanmar border (Choudhury 1997b). **Arunachal Pradesh.** There were two definite records (Rookmaker 1980), at Nam tsai, c. 27°30'N, 97°00'E in 1895 (Henri 1898), and in Noa-Dihing R, c. 27°20'N, 96°20'E in about 1953 (Shebbeare 1953), former probably in present Lohit dist while latter in Changlang dist, and were in or around Namdapha NP. In the adjacent areas of Myanmar (Burma), there are reports of continued occurrence from Hukawng valley (Choudhury 1997b). **Assam.** Present in small numbers till the first few decades of the 20th century. In 1967, a stray rhino was recorded in the evergreen hill forest of Sonai RF of Cachar dist in S Assam, which was in all probability a *sumatrensis* (Choudhury 1997b). Till 1890, the species was infrequently encountered in the Katakhal and Innerline RFs of Hailakandi dist in S Assam (A Majid Choudhury, *pc*). It was occasional in NC Hills in 1930s (Milroy 1935). **Manipur.** Common in 1930s (Milroy 1935). Subsequently it was believed to be extinct till stragglers were reported (Choudhury 1997b). **Mizoram.** Common in 1930s (Milroy 1935). Subsequently it was believed to be extinct. Stragglers were there probably till 1960s. **Nagaland.** Not mentioned in Mukherjee (1982). Stragglers are reported from Saramati area (Choudhury 1997b). **Other areas.** Historically also occurred in northern W Bengal, and Tripura (Mukherjee 1982), and Meghalaya. **EXTRALIMITAL.** Myanmar to Vietnam and S to Sumatra and Borneo (Khan 1989).

REMARKS. Included in the genus *Didermoceros* (Brookes 1828; Ellerman & Morrison-Scott 1951) Although believed to have become extinct in the Indian subcontinent in the first half of 20th century, one was killed in 1967 near Cox's Bazar in the Chittagong dist of Bangladesh (Cubitt & Mountfort 1985) and stragglers are still encountered in Nagaland and Manipur, especially near the Indo-Myanmarese border (Choudhury 1997b). **CITES:** Appendix I, IUCN CR

Family Equidae

Horses

Equidae Gray, 1821 : 307, type genus *Equus* L.

Distributed in Africa and Palaeartic. Of about 7 species, only one occurs marginally in NE India. Groves & Willoughby (1981) reviewed the classification of Equidae. Only one genus, *Equus* is recognised (Groves 1986, Corbet & Hill 1992) although often another genus, *Hemionus* for the Asian asses is recognised.

EQUUS

Equus Linnaeus, 1758 : 73; type species *E. caballus* L. Conserved by Opinion 271 (1954).

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