

THE
INDIAN FIELD SHIKAR BOOK

COMPILED BY

W. S. BURKE

Late Editor of "The Indian Field," Calcutta

SEVENTH EDITION

CALCUTTA AND SIMLA
THACKER, SPINK & CO.

1928

THE GREAT ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS.

Rhinoceros unicornis or *indicus*.—Indian names : *Gainra*, Hind. ; *Gonda*, Beng.

Habitat.—Assam.

Period of gestation.—Seventeen or eighteen months, a single one being produced.

Description.—Skin naked, except on the tail and ears. The skin is divided into shields on the shoulders, over the neck, the centre of the body, the rump and the thighs, and is studded with convex tubercles. The colour is blackish grey throughout. The horn is well developed in both sexes. It inhabits grass jungles ; never ascends the hills, has a preference for swampy ground and wallowing. It is quiet and inoffensive, but when wounded or driven will occasionally charge home. It can trot and gallop at a fair speed. The day is passed in sleep, the feeding time being morning and evening. Its principal food is grass. It is very long lived and its flesh is excellent. It is easily killed, and a bullet from any ordinary sporting rifle will drop it dead at once. The spot to aim at, for the neck shot, is about half-way along and tolerably high up. The head shot, if successful, is a certainty, the shoulder shot should not be attempted unless with a large bore rifle.

Measurements.—Average height at shoulder, 5 feet 9 inches ; average horn measurement, 14 inches. Length from nose to root of tail, 10 feet 6 inches ; tail, 2 feet 5 inches ; girth, 9 feet 8 inches.

Record horn measurements.—There are only three authenticated records of over 20 inches—one of 24½ inches shot by Mr. Tom Briscoe in Assam, one of 24 inches credited to Jerdon, and one of a fraction over 21½ inches shot by Lord Curzon in the Nepal Terai. The late Maharajah of Cooch Behar shot and was at the shooting of a great many rhino, but his best record is about 16 inches. The horn of the huge specimen in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, is 13 inches. Mr. W. H. R. Doxat gives me the following dimensions of a specimen he got in Assam in 1903 :—Length of horn (front curve), 13 inches ; circumference at base, 21½ inches ; weight, 3 lb. 2 oz. ; circumference of foot, 33 inches. The record height at shoulder is 6 feet 6 inches—specimen shot by His Highness the late Maharajah of Cooch Behar, but this animal had a horn of only 13 inches. Another rhino shot by His Highness measured 6 feet 4½ inches at the shoulder, with a horn of 16½ inches. Mr. Briscoe's specimen measured 6 feet 4 inches at the shoulder.

THE SMALLER ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS.

Rhinoceros sondaicus.—Indian names : *Gainra*, Hind. ; *Gonda*, Beng. ; *Kunda*, Naga ; *Kyeng*, Burma.

Habitat.—The Sundarbans, Eastern Bengal, from Assam throughout Burma and the Malay Peninsula.

Period of gestation.—Same as *R. indicus*.

Description.—Skin nearly naked, not tubercular, the epidermis is divided by cracks into small scale-like discs. The surface of the body is divided into shields by folds, but the neck folds are only slightly developed. The horn is small and always wanting in the female. Colour, dusky grey throughout. It inhabits tree forests and has been found at considerable elevations in Burma. It is a timid and inoffensive animal.

Measurements.—Smaller than *R. indicus*, and at the shoulder measures from 5 feet to 5 feet 6 inches. Mr. A. C. Green, some years ago, shot one in Assam which carried a horn of $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches; the horn of the specimen in the Calcutta Zoological Gardens is under 9 inches.

THE TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS.

Rhinoceros lasiotis or *sumatrensis*.—Indian name: *Kyan*, Burma.

Habitat.—Occasionally found in Assam; it ranges to Siam, and is common in Sumatra, Borneo and the Malay Peninsula.

Period of gestation.—Nine months.

Description.—This is the smallest of the Rhinoceroses and the most hairy, the greater part of the body exhibiting sparse hairs, the ears and tail being the most hairy parts. The horns are slender and curved backwards. The skin is rough and granular; the folds being less marked than in the one-horned species. In colour, it varies from earthy brown to almost black. Its habits are similar to those of the other species; it inhabits forests and ascends to considerable heights. It is easily tamed even when adult.

Measurements.—The average height of adults is a little over 4 feet and the front horns range from 20 to 30 inches. The best specimen in the British Museum is about 32 inches.

THE GAUR.

Bos gaurus or *Gaveus gaurus*.—Indian names: *Gauri gauri*, Hind.; *Gayal*, Orissa; *Gaur*, Chota Nagpur; *Khulga*, W. Ghauts; *Ban boda*, Central India; *Karthi*, Mysore; *Mithun*, Assam; *Pera-mao*, Gond; *Gowai*, Kurku; *Seloi*, Chittagong; *Pyoung*, Burmese; *Kad koma*, Canara. The Indian "Bison" of sportsmen.

Habitat.—Nearly all the great hilly forest tracts of India, Assam, Burma and Malay States.