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Government of Bengal

Annual Report on Game Preservation in Bengal

For the year ending 31st March 1936

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ANNUAL REPORT ON GAME PRESERVATION IN BENGAL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 1936.

Part I—Protection of the Fauna.

CHAPTER I—SANCTUARIES.

(1) *Name, Situation and Area.*

1. **Northern Circle.**—There are at present five areas notified as Sanctuaries distributed as follows:—

Name of Sanctuaries.	Area in square miles.	Forest Division in which situated.	Species for which the Sanctuary is primarily constituted.
Senchal ..	10	Darjeeling ..	All species except bear.
Jaldapara ..	23	} Buxa ..	Rhinoceros.
Bhutri ..	8		All species of animals and birds.
Pana ..	5		
Gaburbasra ..	15		

(2) *Alterations to Boundaries.*

2. Bhutri, Pana and Gaburbasra Reserved Forests, comprising an area of 28 square miles, were declared at the request of the Toorsa Sankosh Fishing and Shooting Association closed to all shooting for a period of 3 years, to be Game Sanctuaries as per Notifications Nos. 11087-For., dated the 4th September 1935, and 12953-For., dated the 30th October 1935.

(3) *Establishment.*

3. Besides the normal strength the following staff is entertained in the Buxa Division for the protection of Sanctuaries:—

(a) Ten Forest Guards specially sanctioned for the purpose of rhinoceros protection, *vide* Government of Bengal letter No. 10622-For., dated the 25th August 1932.

(b) Ten Forest Guards entertained in the Temporary Establishment and engaged as Game and Fish Wardens whose pay and expenses are met by the Toorsa Sankosh Fishing and Shooting Association.

This staff of 20 men is under the control of an efficient Forest Ranger, Babu Annada Nanda Roy, who acts as Honorary Game Warden in addition to his other normal duties.

(4) *Offence.*

4. No offences were reported during the year in Sanctuaries, but poachers armed with bows and arrows were noticed by the patrolling staff in the newly-closed areas in the Buxa Division and occasional gun shots were heard at nights.

(5) *Infectious Diseases.*

5. There has been no infectious disease in the Sanctuaries during the year.

(6) *Number, Distribution and Habits of Animals.*

6. A good number of rhinoceros (male, female and calf), tiger, leopard, hog-deer, swamp-deer, sambhur, bear, bison and pig were seen by the Game Wardens roaming quite freely within the Jaldapara Sanctuary. During the course of his inspections the writer has noticed the marked increase in the head of sambhur, hog-deer and pig and their extreme lack of fear indicates successful preservation and protection.

(7) *Proposals for Improvement of Protective Measures.*

7. No proposal for new Sanctuaries is contemplated, but a suggestion to extend the South Borojhar Reserve—an extension which will increase the area of the Jaldapara Rhinoceros Sanctuary, was referred to the Civil authorities for consideration.

The shape of the Jaldapara Rhinoceros Sanctuary, which is in the form of a two-pronged fork with village cultivation in the cleft, is not ideal and as the head of game in the forest increases, interests are bound to clash and a decision will have to be made one way or the other. As this forest area is one of the few remaining in Bengal where the rhinoceros is to be found now and as the *khas* cultivation area concerned is of poor quality, it would seem that it will be best as soon as possible to reserve the whole block enclosed in the fork.

8. **Southern Circle.**—Nil.

CHAPTER II—FORESTS OTHER THAN SANCTUARIES.

(1) *Name, situation, approximate area and description of any Reserved Forest for Sanctuaries.*

9. **Northern Circle.**—The foundation of the Sanctuaries mentioned in the foregoing chapter has contributed to a large extent to the successful preservation of existing wild life.

10. The reserved forests in the Darjeeling district except those falling under Class III have been leased to the Darjeeling Shooting and Fishing Club for the better protection of game and fish. The Club pays the Forest Department Rs. 350 annually for the lease. The area covered by the lease and the divisions in which the area lies are given below:—

Forest Division.	Area in square miles.
Darjeeling	113
Kalimpong	210
Kurseong	112

Part II.—Exploitation of Fauna.

CHAPTER IV—PERMITS ISSUED AND BIRDS AND ANIMALS SHOT OR KILLED.

(1) *Permits issued.*

44. **Northern Circle.**—The number of shooting permits issued is given below:—

Division.					Number of permits issued.
Darjeeling ..	..	..	..	..	..
Kalimpong ..	..	..	..	..	..
Kurseong ..	..	..	..	..	76
Jalpaiguri ..	..	..	..	..	..
Buxa ..	..	..	..	..	..

Three organised beats were held by permit holders in Samardanga, Jhenaikuri, Chowa and Gola Blocks of the Sevoke Range of the Kurseong Division.

45. **Southern Circle.**—During the year the following shooting permits were issued by the Divisional Forest Officers:—

Division.					Number of permits issued.
Sundarbans ..	..	..	..	..	107
Chittagong ..	..	..	..	..	3
Chittagong Hill Tracts ..	..	..	..	..	..
Dacca-Mymensingh ..	..	..	..	..	..

(2) *Details of birds and animals killed or shot.*

46. **Northern Circle.**—Hitherto no proper record of game shot by the members of the Clubs and Associations was kept. They are considering the matter. As the information furnished to the Divisional Forest Officers as to the number of animals shot or killed cannot be considered as accurate they have been asked to maintain a proper record from the year 1936-37.

47. The following birds and animals, as shown by the present incomplete records, were killed during the year by permit holders and those entitled to shoot:—

Division.	Elephant.	Tiger.	Leopard.	Bear.	Pig.	Deer, including Sambhur.	Jungle fowl.	Total.
Darjeeling ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kalimpong ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kurseong ..	..	5	1	..	10	13	15	44
Jalpaiguri ..	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	5
Buxa ..	1	12	4	3	42	13	..	75
Total ..	1	22	5	3	52	26	15	124

48. Reports of the natural death of 1 elephant, 1 rhinoceros, 2 bison and 1 tiger were received from the Buxa Division. The tusks of the elephant were sold for Rs. 145 and the horn of the rhinoceros weighing 140 tolas and the skin were collected and preserved for sale.

49. **Southern Circle.**—The number of animals killed during the year is given below subject also to incomplete records:—

Division.	Elephant.	Tiger.	Leopard.	Pig.	Deer, including Sambhur.	Total.
Sundarbans ..	..	43	..	..	261	304
Chittagong ..	7	3	..	..	..	10
Chittagong Hill Tracts ..	1	..	..	1	10	12
Dacca-Mymensingh ..	..	..	6	..	..	6
Total ..	8	46	6	1	271	332

Six crocodiles were killed in the Sundarbans Division.

Within reserve forests Rs. 3,796 was paid as rewards for killing 39 tigers, but no reward for killing 4 tigers could be paid for want of funds. No reward was paid by the Collector of Khulna, but Rs. 200 only was paid by the Collector, 24-Parganas, as rewards for killing tigers outside the reserved forests.

50. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts one female elephant and one calf were found dead, but the cause of death could not be ascertained.

(3) *Special, methods employed for the destruction of carnivora.*

51. **Northern Circle.**—No special method was employed for the destruction of carnivora during the year.

southern Circle.—Rewards are paid for the destruction of tigers to approved shikaris in the Sundarbans.

(4) *Criticisms and future proposals.*

52. **Northern Circle.**—The Honorary Secretary, Tista Torsa Game Association, points out that grazing is very harmful mainly in the riverain forests. Unfortunately the riverain forests are as a rule long tracts of forests of narrow width, and the efficient patrolling of such is extremely difficult, there are usually no paths or roads and distances are considerable. Cultivation or tea gardens are to be found on both sides of such reserves and grazing offences are frequent, most of the damage being done at night. The matter so far as riverain forests are concerned will receive special attention in the near future.

53. In pursuance of the policy of the Tista Torsa Game Association for the more efficient protection of game and the stricter regulation of firearm licenses issued for sporting purposes, Government have again been addressed on the subject of appointing certain members of this Association Honorary Range Officers. They have also been addressed on the matter of the recommendations of the Commissioners' Conference, 1934, with reference to firearms. These are as follows:—

"(1) It was agreed that in thanas adjoining reserved forests, the District Magistrate should consult both the Forest Department and the local shooting club, if any, before issuing a gun license.

(2) Licenses for sport should be issued only to *bona fide* sportsmen, who should ordinarily be expected, in addition, to take out permits to shoot in the area within which they reside when such area contains shooting grounds.

(3) In areas adjoining reserved forests, licenses for self-protection should allow shot guns only, not rifles. Where the license is given for protection of crops, the weapon licensed should be a cut down shot gun, the barrel limited to 12 inches in length, measured from the breech in a breech-loader and from the base of the firing chamber in a muzzle loader.

* * * * *

(5) The existing rules restricting licenses for retainers to persons of exceptional position should be strictly followed.

(6) The question of amending the Arms rules so as to allow restriction of the issue of ammunition for shot guns and gun powder for muzzle-loading guns should be examined, with special reference to the case of areas adjoining reserved forests and also as a general question."

The Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire have been approached for an expression of its views on the formation of an All-Bengal Society for the Protection of Wild Life, with a branch in North Bengal. Two members of the Executive Committee were nominated to discuss and draw up plans for its formation in conjunction with members of the Darjeeling Shooting and Fishing Club and the Torsa Sankosh Fishing and Shooting Association.

CHAPTER V—EXPENDITURE.

54. **Northern Circle.**—The direct expenditure incurred on protective staff and borne by the Torsa Sankosh Fishing and Shooting Association was as follows:—

<i>Nature of expenditure.</i>	Rs.
(1) Pay and allowance of 10 Forest Guards (Game Wardens) ...	1,269
(2) Miscellaneous (rewards) ...	46
Total ...	1,315

55. The expenditure borne by Government for game protection solely in the Baxa Division was as follows:—

<i>Nature of expenditure.</i>	Rs.
(1) Pay and allowance of Game Wardens (the post was honorary) ...	Nil.
(2) Pay and allowance of 10 Forest Guards specially employed for rhinoceros protection ...	1,531
(3) Miscellaneous (rewards, collection of rhino horn and skin, etc.) ...	60
Total ...	1,591

56. **Southern Circle.**—For the reason put forth in paragraph 20 of the report no expenditure was incurred.

W. MEIKLEJOHN,
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