

KING GEORGE V NATIONAL PARK, MALAYA
NATURE NOTES FOR 1950

By A. H. FETHERSTONHAUGH

(See also *Oryx*, Vol. I, No. 2, for map, and Vol. I, No. 4)

The following notes are compiled from the Superintendent's field diaries and refer to the valley of the Tembeling river and its tributaries lying within the National Park.

MAMMALS

Gaur. *Bos gaurus* (Malay "Seladang")

Observations have been recorded in each of the twelve months under review. Newly born calves are recorded in the months of April and June and young calves in October.

Continued observation has led to a better understanding of the composition and distribution of the herds. Herds retain their individuality although those frequenting the same grazing grounds merge on occasion and may feed together for an appreciable time. An instance is that the resident herd in the Kuala Tahan area is recorded as from seven to twenty head, but the latter figure appears to show an amalgamation, when records from Kuala Atok in the south and Kuala Trenggan in the north are taken for comparison. A herd resident in the Kuala Trenggan-Jenut Kumbang area again varies in number in inverse ratio to numbers recorded from Kuala Tahan, but the basic herd does not appear to leave the area for any length of time. These movements and mergers make anything like an accurate census impossible without more intensive concentration upon the subject than staff and funds will allow at present, but two main groups have been identified :—

(i) Seladang frequenting the area from Kuala Atok to Kuala Trenggan covering the salt licks at Jenut Kumbang, Jenut Belau and Jenut Chigar Anjing, approximately eighty head.

(ii) Seladang frequenting the area from Kuala Kenyam to Kuala Spia covering the salt lick at Jenut Kelapor, approximately sixty head.

Seladang do not favour mountainous country but the depth to which they penetrate into the Park area from the Tembeling Valley has yet to be finally determined.

A verbatim report of a fight between two bull Seladang follows: "On 13th November, at 6 p.m., there were twenty-four Seladang in Pedang Rumah, consisting of two combined herds. The three bulls of these two herds are known to me. There is one old beast with an enormous dewlap which hangs down very low and square, another old beast with a pronounced roman nose and not such a pronounced dewlap, and lastly a very fine bull with a wonderful spread of magnificent pointed horns. He would be eight or nine years old and has already contended with the old one with the heavy dewlap for the post of master in the larger herd, as bear witness, the ugly wound in the right shoulder of the older animal. These two very powerful Seladang had a tremendous tussle which started at 11.40 p.m. on the 13th. At this hour I was busy writing when the silent night was rent by a sudden roaring and bellowing a very short distance behind my house.

In the light of the flood lamp of a sentry post I was able to make out these two beasts in their titanic struggle. It lasted twenty-five minutes and they had moved out of the range of the lamp so that I was unable to see the final result. The noise made during the fight was of great volume and continuous. From the contenders came, besides roaring and bellowing, stamping, blowing, snorting and snuffling; while from the rest of the combined herds came lowing, mooing, moaning and harsh bleating. When all was over silence reigned, and grazing went on quietly, as if nothing out of the usual had occurred."

The younger bull was the loser. His carcase was later found by a Ranger and the skull and horns now adorn the wall of the Superintendent's office.

Elephant. *Elephas maximus* (Malay "Gajah")

Observations recorded in January, February, March, May, July, November and December.

Two small herds are recorded, one south of Kuala Tahan and the other northwards from Kuala Kenyam. The movements of two and possibly three solitary bulls are on record. The elephant population in this area is relatively small and a great deal of work remains to be done to determine their distribution, migrations and affinities.

Tapir. *Tapirus indicus* (Malay "Chipan")

Tapir have been observed and tracks recorded throughout the area.

Rhinoceros. *Didermocerus sumatrensis* (Malay "Badak Sumbu")

Definite evidence of the continued presence of rhinoceros in the area has been obtained for the first time since the liberation. The position of these animals is to say the least precarious and this evidence is most gratifying and encouraging particularly as rhinoceros are great travellers and favour the mountainous country which we have not been able to explore of recent years.

Sambur Deer. *Cervus unicolor equinus* (Malay "Rusa")

Observations recorded in each month of the year.

Parties of up to five head observed on occasion, and Sambur frequently seen feeding with Seladang.

Does with fawns at foot seen in April and May and a pregnant doe recorded in June.

Barking Deer. *Muntiacus muntjak* (Malay "Kijang")

Observations recorded in January, February, March, May, June, July and December.

A Barking Deer was killed by Wild Dog in May.

Tiger. *Panthera tigris tigris* (Malay "Harimau")

Tiger tracks have been observed at intervals throughout the year and all over the area. A male was seen at Kuala Tahna in March. Estimated population for the Park 150 pairs.

Wild Dog. *Cuon alpinus* (Malay "Seri gala")

Signs of Wild Dog have been recorded from several parts of the area and observations made of a small pack on the Tahan River.

Wild Pig. *Sus scrofa* (Malay "Babi hutan")

Common throughout the area and frequently observed.

Otters (Malay "Memerang")

Otters believed to be *Aonyx cinerea concolor* are common in all rivers. The size of specimens observed during 1950 both by the Superintendent and the writer lead to the belief that *Lutra perspicillata* may also be present, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Gibbons

Hylobates syndactylus (Malay "Siamang") observed in every month of the year in suitable localities.

Hylobates lar (Malay "Wak-wak"). Also seen in considerable numbers and heard all up and down the river where the high ground they favour comes down to the riverbank.

Monkeys

The Crab-eating Macaque, *Macaca irus* (Malay "Kera") is common on all rivers.

Banded Leaf Monkey *Presbytis melalophos* (Malay "Seneca" (Phg.))

Dusky Leaf Monkey *Presbytis obscurus* (Malay "Lotong", "Chengkong" (Phg.))

Both these Leaf Monkeys are common and have been observed in suitable localities throughout the year.

The Slow Loris *Nycticebus coucang* (Malay "Kangkong, Kera Duku"). Observed on one occasion only at Kuala Tahan.

MAMMALS WHOSE PRESENCE IS ASSUMED FROM TRACKS AND SIGNS OR FROM REPORT BY RANGERS

Serow. *Capricornis sumatraensis* (Malay "Kambing grun", "Kambing hutan").

Malayan Bear. *Helarctos malayanus* (Malay "Beruang").

Leopard. *Panthera pardus fusca* (Malay "Harimau Kumbang", "Harimau Bintang" light phase).

Clouded Leopard. *Neofelis nebulosa* (Malay "Harimau Akar").

Marbled Cat. *Felis marmorata* (Malay "Harimau Dahn").

Golden Cat. *Felis temmincki* (Malay "Harimau Anjing").

Leopard Cat. *Felis bengalensis bengalensis* (Malay "Harimau Belang").

Flying Squirrels. *Petaurista* spp.

Pangolin. *Manis javanica* (Malay "Tenggeling").

Porcupines. *Hystrix* spp. (Malay "Landak", "Landak Bakoe", "Landak Kelubi").

Binturong. *Arctictis binturong* (Malay "Binturong").

Note.—The scientific names of the above mammals have been brought into accord with the Checklist of Palaeartic and Indian Mammals. Ellerman and Morrison-Scott. November, 1951.—ED.

BIRDS

Of particular interest was the identification of a specimen of the White-necked Stork *Dissoura episcopus episcopus* in the salt lick at Jenur Kumbang on 20th and 21st June. This is believed to be the most southerly point at which this bird has been observed.

REPTILES

Prior to 1941 Mr. G. R. Leonard, M.B.E., made a study of snakes in the National Park, and when circumstances permit it is hoped to record his observations in a permanent form. Observations at present are confined to chance encounters.

The only item of interest recorded during 1950 was the appearance of a specimen of the "Flying" Gecko, *Ptychozoon kuhli* at Kuala Tahan on 29th October. Another specimen appeared on 8th November.

WILD LIFE IN ARABIA

By DESMOND FOSTER-VESEY-FITZGERALD

Open plains, scorching and shadeless during the summer, windswept and freezing during the winter night, present a hard environment indeed. The surprising fact is that any form of wild life has been able to exist in such utterly waterless places. Yet up to the beginning of the present century an interesting assemblage of animals existed in the Arabian desert. Even when modern rifles came into general use the species held their own in the vast spaces to a very satisfactory extent. But the last decade has witnessed the advent of a shocking predator, namely the "Mighty Jeep". It cannot be long now before motorized hunting parties will sweep Arabia's fauna into uttermost corners, where a subsequent drought will whiten its bones.

It may be of interest therefore to record the status of the more interesting animals during recent years.

The Arabian Oryx is now extinct in the northern sands of the Great Nafud. As a memorial some interesting pictures of this species have been scratched by idle shepherds on sandstone outcrops in the vicinity of Hail. In the southern sands of the Rub Al Khali the Oryx still exists.

Three species of gazelle are still widespread and reasonably numerous. The northernmost species is Loder's Gazelle, the "Rhim" of the Arab (*Gazella leptoceros marica*) which inhabits the gravel plains, limestone plateaux and sands of Central Arabia. This is a gazelle of the steppe where perennial dwarf shrubs are supplemented by abundant annual herbage following winter rains. It is a stocky, whitish animal which congregates in large flocks composed of fifty to a hundred individuals. It has not been observed to leap or bound like the other species but travels nevertheless at a deceptively fast speed,