

Mammals collected, or observed by the Swedish Zoological Expedition to Siam 1911—1912

by

NILS GYLDENSTOLPE.

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Though during my journey in Siam from the end of 1911 to May 1912 the greatest time was devoted to studying the bird fauna about which a report has already been published (Kungl. Svenska Vetenskapsakademiens Handlingar Bd. 50 N:r 8), I also made a small collection of mammals, and in the following pages I will give a list together with some short notes of the mammals collected, or observed by the Expedition.

The first collecting was begun in January 1912 when I had my camp near the small Laos village of Sakerat in Eastern Siam. During the whole month I explored zoologically the environs of Sakerat and Non Luum, this last-mentioned place also a small village on the Korat plateau. This part of the great Korat plateau is chiefly overgrown with dry laterite forests, but here and there some great swamps are also to be found. As a rule the vegetation on the Korat plateau is not so thick and impenetrable as several parts of Northern Siam with its great primeval forests.

When I had finished my researches at Sakerat I went to Korat, the most important town in this part of Siam, and from there I went by rail to the North and stopped for a few months at Bang Hue Hom, a place situated in the middle

of the northern primeval forest belt. Bang Hue Hom is quite surrounded by evergreen forests, but a few miles (1 swedish mile = 10 km.) further to the north there are again dry forests, although these are of quite a different type than the dry forests on the Korat plateau.

The fauna in the northern dry forests is also of a different character from the fauna in the Eastern parts of the country especially as regards the birds, but the mammals also seem to be different, although the scarce material unfortunately makes it impossible for me to give an exhaustive account of the distribution of mammals in the vast country.

However, I hope that my records will anyhow be of some interest for the knowledge of the mammalian fauna of Siam which up to date is very incompletely known.

From Bang Hue Hom I made a three weeks trip up to the Meh Lem river, the neighbourhood of which is chiefly overgrown with teak-forests.

On my way back to Bangkok in April I stopped for a fortnight at the great swamps near Tha Law, a small village south of Pitsanulok, the largest town in Central Siam.

The end of April and the first week of May were devoted to explorations in the jungles near the Eastern coast of the Gulf of Siam, and I had my headquarter in Sriracha and Nong Koh. The first-mentioned place is situated at the coast, opposite the great island Koh-Si-Chang, and Nong Koh is a very beautiful place in the middle of the vast jungles which nearly cover the whole province of Chantabon. During my stay at Sriracha I also made a short trip to Koh-Si-Chang before I left for Europe.

The study of higher animals in Siam is very difficult because the whole country is almost entirely covered with dense forests, and there is but little open country, besides the great alluvial plain along the middle course of the Menam Chao Phaya river, and it is of course in the real forests that the wild animals have their home.

In consequence of the tangle of vegetation, which makes seeing almost impossible but for a few metres, it is exceedingly difficult to get near enough especially to the larger animals without disturbing them.

Very surprising is how difficult it is to make out so large an animal as an elephant among the luxurious vege-

tation even when close to it, and it seems rather incredible, that they can slip off as quietly as they do when disturbed among the tangle which seems almost impenetrable and where one often has to cut one's way among the rich undergrowth of low trees and plants which are closely interlaced by masses of lianas and creepers.

The best time for observing the jungle denizens are the early mornings and the dusk; the best time of the year for big-game shooting is without doubt the end of the dry season when all animals assemble near the few known waterplaces. As a rule the dry grass and leaves are then burnt, which is of a great importance for a silent stalking.

Several times I passed through forests where game such as elephants, tigers, leopards, buffaloes and deer were plentiful according to the number of fresh tracks, but although I marched as silently as possible and kept a good lookout I very seldom caught a glimpse of a wild animal when it pushed its way through the dense jungles.

The only mammals which are to be seen more frequently are squirrels, and now and then some monkeys, but even these animals are more often heard than seen.

During the night-time it is, however, quite different and then the jungles are full of life.

1. *Pithecus fascicularis* RAFFLES. — Small parties of the Crab-eating monkeys were observed several times during my travels along the coast of the Gulf of Siam and along the Menam Chao Phaya river south of Bangkok. They were not shy and were often seen running about on the muddy shores at low tide in search of food. They frequent most often the mangrove swamps, and their food consists chiefly of the mangrove fruits, crabs and shellfish.

The Crab-eating monkeys like water much more than other members of the same family, and I once observed some specimens happily tumbling in the river. All the Crab-eating monkeys I observed along the Menam Chao Phaya river south of Bangkok seemed to be very accustomed to the sight of boats, and they never fled into the mangrove forests even when a big steamer or a motorboat passed at a close distance. At such occasions they only left off feeding for a few minutes curiously gazing at the passing vessels.

In my collection there is only a skin bought from a Laos hunter, who had shot the bear near the village of Muang Long. The dried skin measures 1010 mm. from nose to root of tail.

34. *Melursus ursinus* SHOW. — According to a statement of my friend Doctor HÖGBOM the Sloth Bear also occurs in Siam.

When HÖGBOM was travelling from the town of Utaradit towards the Mekong river (hence in North-eastern Siam) he was informed by the natives that a big bear with a very thick fur and a long snout had been observed several times in the vicinity of a neighbouring village. A mistake with the Malayan Honey Bear (*Helarctos malayanus* RAFFLES) is not possible, because this is a well-known species among the Siamese and Laos. Doctor HÖGBOM also had with him two small cubs of this Bear which were shown to the natives who at once answered that it was quite another species they had seen.

35. *Elephas maximus* L. — Great herds of wild Elephants are still to be found in many parts of Siam, especially in the uninhabited districts in the north and east. The Chantabon province is a very good refuge for the Elephants with its vast almost impenetrable jungles. In Siam every wild Elephant belongs to the King and therefore they are strictly forbidden to be shot without a special license from the Government.

As the wild Elephants mostly keep in very thick jungles they are seldom observed by the European travellers. I only once got the opportunity of observing a small herd of six animals and among these was an old bull with very fine tusks. The Indian species does not seem to break down trees as often as the African Elephant, and I only once remember having seen trees broken down by Elephants though I several times followed their tracks through the jungles.

36. *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* CUV. — Rhinos are only to be found in the most northern parts of Upper Siam, but here they seemed to be not uncommon according to a sta-

tement of Doctor HÖGBOM, who observed several tracks in the jungles surrounding the towns of Chieng Kong, Chieng Sen and Muang Fang.

The horns and the greatest part of the intestine are highly valued by the Chinese and Laos for medicine, so that these parts are said by the natives to be worth their own weight in gold.

When staying at Bangkok I was shown a very small horn of this species. This horn was possessed by a German engineer who in his turn had got it from a Shan hunter, but the exact locality where the animal had been shot, was impossible to make out.

During my stay at Sakerat in Eastern Siam I was told by the Chief of the village that a very large and fierce Rhino had been shot some years ago quite close to the village, after first having killed two of the hunters.

Two species are said to inhabit Siam. The most common form, however, seems to be the smaller One-horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus* CUV.) the distributional area of which extends from India down to the Malayan Islands.

Rhinoceros sumatrensis CUV. on the contrary is only confined to the Burmese countries, the Malay Peninsula and some of the Great Malayan Islands.

The Laos name for a Rhinoceros is »Rat».

37. *Sus* sp. — Numbers of foot-prints of wild pigs were seen on different localities during my travels in Siam, but though I made several efforts to get a specimen I was always unlucky. The wild pigs are very shy and are seldom seen or shot either by Europeans or natives. Therefore it is impossible for me to state which species inhabits Siam, but FLOWER (P. Z. S. 1900 p. 375) gives *Sus cristatus* WAGN. to inhabit Siam as well as India, Ceylon, Burma and the Malay Peninsula.

38. *Tragulus kanchil affinis* GRAY. — GRAY: Proc. Zool. Soc. 1861 p. 138. — Several times during my travels in the interior of Siam, I observed fresh tracks of mouse-deer, but I never was lucky enough either to shoot a specimen, or to see it in its real wild haunts. When I went down by rail to Bangkok from Northern Siam there was on the train a