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**THE MAMMALIAN FAUNA OF THE SOMALI REPUBLIC:  
STATUS AND CONSERVATION PROBLEMS**

(Ricerche sulla Fauna della Somalia promosse dall'Istituto di Zoologia  
e dal Museo Zoologico dell'Università di Firenze: XXVII) (\*)

(with 23 text figs.)

INTRODUCTION

The present report is, in some ways, a follow-up of our paper « Statut actuel des Ongules en Somalie » (FUNAIOLI & SIMONETTA, 1960); the Mammalian Fauna of Somalia is, indeed, among the less known of Africa both in its composition and in distribution, so that both mammalogists and the Somali and International Authorities concerned with the conservation and scientific exploitation of wildlife are greatly interested in obtaining information on the present status of the Mammals of Somalia and on possible future developments of the situation.

We have been asked by colleagues working at the Smithsonian African Project, as well as by F.A.O. Offices and by Officers of the Somali Government to make available the information we had gathered in these years of study of the Fauna of the Somali Republic and to give advice as to the more effective measures to take for its conservation.

Indeed, such a report, if it could combine the more relevant data on the whole Mammalian Fauna of the Republic (within its present political borders), with an objective evaluation of the present and possible future economic significance of wildlife for the People of Somalia, might prove of some use to the pure zoologists as well as to those involved in planning the economic development

(\*) Lavoro eseguito col contributo del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche.

50% of the wood so accounted for was considered as being destroyed by age, parasites, bush fires, establishment of temporary subsistence agriculture, timber for construction of native huts, charcoal and fire wood used «in situ» by the population. The remaining 50% is traded either as wood (20% almost entirely used by the Somali population, chiefly by hospitals, Army, Police and other public services) or as charcoal (30%, one half of which is exported mainly to Arabia).

As a whole therefore it can be estimated that some 350.000 tons of wood are yearly exported from a country which is arid and subject to erosion.

### THE MAMMALIAN FAUNA: STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION (Somali names in brackets and small capitals) (1)

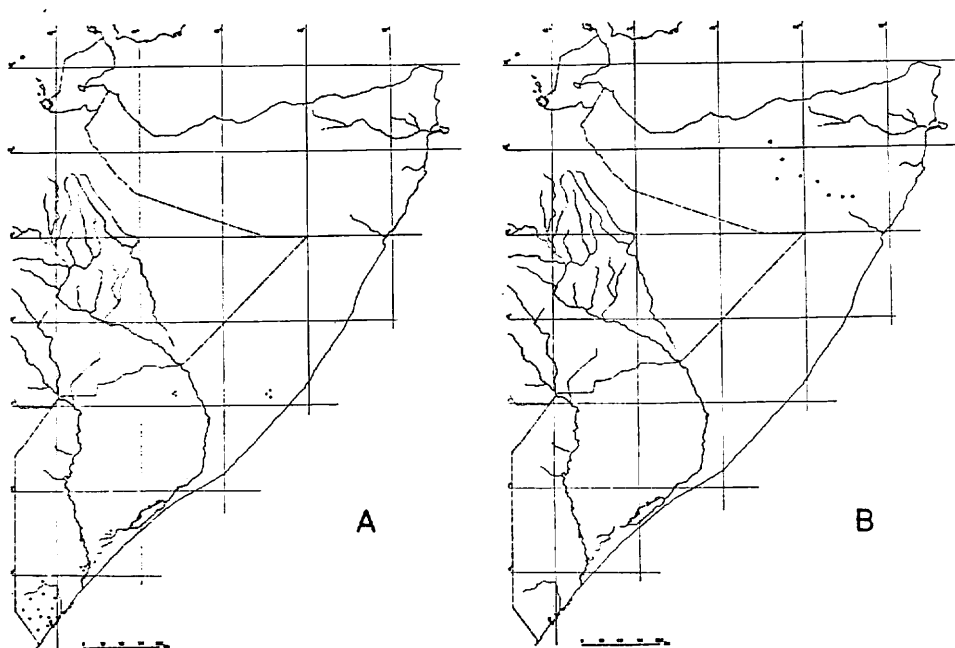


Fig. 4. — Present distribution of *Diceros bicornis* (A) and *Equus asinus* (B).

(1) Subspecific names which appeared either as doubtfully valid (SIMONETTA & AZZAROLI, 1966 and in preparation) or, eventually, based on insufficient evidence, have not been used when dealing with the Artiodactyla, Perissodactyla, Proboscidea, Carnivora and Sirenia.

*PERISSODACTYLA*

RHINOCERONTIDAE

*Diceros bicornis* (Linnaeus) (1758) (Fig. 4 A) (UHL, UIYI, NÈGÈL).

Rhinos are almost extinct in Somalia and even those living in the Bubashi Game Reserve (estimated at about 20 individuals) are in imminent danger of extermination owing to the unsettled situation along the border.

An estimation of 50 Rhinos surviving in the whole of the country is probably optimistic. In the first years of this century rhinos were present almost all over the Oltregiuba and on the right bank of the Webi Shebeli at least all the way from Bulu Burti to the Giuba.

Records from the remaining parts of Somaliland are so unsatisfactory that it is impossible to ascertain both their former range and numbers. The last positive record from North of the Webi Shebeli is from the southern part of the El Bur District towards Harardera in 1952, when three were seen by a policeman on duty service. A few may survive there just as a few might still exist in the swamps of Bugda Cosar between Belet Uen and Tigieglò. Some survive certainly in the thick bush bordering the swamps of the lower Webi Shebeli and between the Juba and Afmedù where, to our certain knowledge, one was poached in 1955.

In the Northern Provinces, where they were formerly widespread along the Ethiopian border, they have been exterminated since about 1930

EQUIDAE

*Equus asinus somalicus* P. L. Sclater 1885 (Fig. 4 B) (DAMÈR DUR, DAMÈR DIBÀADED, GUMBURI).

Somali Asses are exceedingly rare, though it is not clear what is the cause of the steady decline in their numbers, which, apparently, has been going on since the last century. Asses are very wary animals and the areas where they live are almost uninhabited; they are strictly protected by law and the Somali, apparently, are not interested in hunting them, so that poaching should be irrelevant. We suspect that habitat conditions affect their numbers: Asses have always preferred comparatively desert areas, yet they need to drink every second or third day. On the other hand, these animals are predominantly grazers and watering places and edible grass during prolonged droughts are much frequented by the sparse human population, which factor may increase the difficulty of survival during such hard periods.

4°40' N, 43°15' E -  
4°31' N, 44°40' E -  
~~0°37' N, 42°57' E~~ -  
0°44' N, 43°57' E -  
0°45' N, 42°21' E -

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