

2836

THE FAUNA OF THE EMPIRE

BURMA.

GAME PRESERVATION.

Extracts from report on, for year ending 31st March, 1931.

By E. E. PEACOCK (*Warden*).

<i>Revenue.</i>		<i>Expenditure.</i>	
1929-30.	1928-9.	1929-30.	1928-9.
<i>Rs.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>
72,356 <sup>1</sup>	65,887	22,745	21,524

SANCTUARIES.

*The Pidaung Sanctuary.*—The game staff reported the following numbers of animals :—

	<i>In</i> 1929-30.	<i>In</i> 1928-9.
Elephants . . . . .	142	99
Bison . . . . .	197	188
<i>Saing</i> . . . . .	119	102
Sambhur . . . . .	312	293
Hog-deer . . . . .	132	198
Tigers . . . . .	11	9
Leopards . . . . .	8	8
Wild dogs . . . . .	27	25
Bears . . . . .	15	12
Pig . . . . .	180	192

These figures are of little value, but show that in the opinion of the game staff there has been some increase in the number of game other than hog-deer.

The question of introducing *thamin* to the Pidaung Sanctuary has not been lost sight of and it is hoped that this will be effected in the near future.

*The Shwe-u-daung Sanctuary.*

The Shwe-u-daung sanctuary was visited during the year by the Game Warden and the Divisional Forest Officer, Mogok, both of whom saw a rhinoceros near Sagadaung camp at an altitude of 5,000 feet. Unfortunately, the animal was too far off to distinguish whether it was a *Rhinoceros summatrensis* or a *Rhinoceros sondaicus*. It is suspected

<sup>1</sup> Note.—Rs. 37,650 was derived from royalty on elephants captured.

and hoped that a specimen or two of the latter very rare species exist in this sanctuary.

It has not been possible to make even an approximate estimate of the numbers of game within this sanctuary, but many interesting observations have been recorded; Mr. H. C. Smith has written a very full and instructive note on the sanctuary, which will shortly be printed. The sanctuary contains large numbers of almost every known species of big game in Burma, and many of these can be observed on the open grassy hill-slopes found at high elevations within the sanctuary. The scenic value of the sanctuary is said to be almost unequalled within the province; many of the hills within it being over 5,000 feet above sea-level. The Shwe-u-daung hill from which the sanctuary takes its name, rises to an altitude of 6,223 feet. In course of time as communications and protective measures are enforced this sanctuary should be unrivalled as a popular resort for those who are interested in the wild fauna of the province.

#### *The Kahilu Sanctuary.*

The Kahilu sanctuary was constituted primarily for the protection of a few members of *Rhinoceros sondaicus* which were known to exist in that area. The sanctuary was visited by the Divisional Forest Officer, Thaton Division, during the year; but beyond the finding of fresh tracks of one adult rhinoceros no useful information was obtained. The Divisional Forest Officer, Salween Division, within whose jurisdiction part of the sanctuary lies, reports that two rhinoceros were actually seen by the gamekeepers and that the tracks of two others were found, one of which appears to be the young rhinoceros reported to have been born in 1928. The Divisional Forest Officer, Salween, further comments as follows: "With villages both in and around the sanctuary the range of the animals is extremely limited, and it is doubtful if they can increase to any appreciable extent. However, as one of the rarest mammals in the world, they are well worth the cost of protection."

#### *The Maymyo Sanctuary.*

Barking-deer, jungle fowl, and partridges are plentiful and nothing more has been heard of the pack of wild dogs seen in the sanctuary in August, 1928.

#### *The Popularization of Sanctuaries.*

The purpose and aim of Game Sanctuaries are sometimes misunderstood. Game Sanctuaries serve to concentrate measures for preserving in perpetuity at least a few members of each kind of the fauna; and in doing so preclude the fear of any one or more species becoming extinct. It is this fear of certain species being exterminated by the advance of civilization that leads in some instances to a stricter application of the Game Rules than is appreciated by agricultural and other interests. The formation and development of sanctuaries undoubtedly lead towards relaxation of some of the rules necessary at present, and to the reconciliation of conflicting opinions. The development of sanctuaries into national parks furthers these aims and provides not only healthful and interesting resorts for the recreation of the indigenous population, but points of interest which induce a flow of outside visitors who bring with them all the benefits attending friendly contact with the people of other countries. In these times no country can afford to be entirely self-sufficient, and this fact has been so well recognized by the majority of the British Colonies that the constitution of national parks has become a feature of these colonies. In one colony with no greater facilities for travel and communication than is available in Burma, the number of outside visitors to its national parks rose to 20,000 in one year, and 300,000 including local visitors. It is unnecessary to comment on the financial aspect of game conservatism in the face of such figures.

The Pidaung and Shwe-u-daung Game Sanctuaries in this province lie on the main lines of communication and are in many respects suited to development as national parks: further development must lie in both official and unofficial

The following figures show the percentages of casualties amongst elephants of varying heights.

Of eight elephants over 8 feet in height 50 per cent died or were released.

Of one hundred and eighteen elephants from 7 to 8 feet in height, 38 per cent died or were released.

Of ninety-nine elephants from 6 to 7 feet in height 16 per cent died.

Of one hundred and seventy-seven elephants from 4 ft. 6 in. to 6 feet in height 10 per cent died.

Of fifty-three elephant calves, below 4 ft. 6 in. in height, 32 per cent died.

These figures show clearly that the percentage of casualties is extremely high amongst large elephants and calves.

Reasonably young and healthy animals can be trained with a minimum of severity and cruelty; old animals have lesser powers of recuperation, and are liable to die after capture.

Failure to release animals which are unlikely to survive capture, and careless handling of young calves, which are not a great source of profit, appear to be responsible for much of the heavy casualty percentage. The methods of capture employed and the ability of the khédah force are sufficiently adequate. The reduction of the casualty percentage and elimination of cruelty during capture and training can be effected by close supervision and punishment of careless work. Licensees are beginning to realize that their operations are now subject to careful record and analysis, apart from actual supervision; and the quality of their work is bound to improve in due course.

#### *Methods Employed.*

The majority of licensees employed the Karen method which dispenses with the use of trained elephants. In a few cases elephants were captured by "mela shikar". There appears to be little to choose between the different methods, provided the operatives are efficient and careful in their work. This is also the opinion of authorities in Assam to whom

reference has been made with a view to obtaining further ideas on the subject, and whose prompt assistance in this respect is gratefully acknowledged.

#### *Number of Elephants Shot.*

A total of 104 elephants were shot during the year, of which:—

Forty were killed by Game Rangers under the Elephant Control Scheme in the Katha, Mansi, Mu, and Mogok Forest Divisions, including six elephants found dead as a result of wounding by Game Rangers.

Ten were killed under special post paid licences in connection with the Elephant Control Scheme in the Mansi and Bhamo Forest Divisions.

Twenty-three were killed under sporting licences.

Sixteen were killed under Rule 6 in self defence or defence of crops and property.

Seven were proclaimed rogue elephants.

Eight were illicitly killed.

#### *Details of Animals Shot.*

The following protected animals, other than elephants, were reported to have been killed during the year. The figures are compared with those reported last year.

	Under sporting licences.	Illicitly killed.	Total.	Total in 1928-9.	Difference.
Rhinoceros . . . . .	—	2	2	—	+ 2
Tapir . . . . .	—	1	1	—	+ 1
Bison . . . . .	28	6	34	20	+ 14
Saing . . . . .	41	3	44	44	
Serow . . . . .	2	—	2	4	— 2
Goral . . . . .	2	—	2	3	— 1
Thamin (in reserved forests)	1	—	1	1	
Hog-deer (in reserved forests)	2	—	2	1	+ 1
Total . . . . .	76	12	88	73	+ 15

There is little doubt that the actual numbers of protected animals illicitly killed are greater than the numbers reported.