

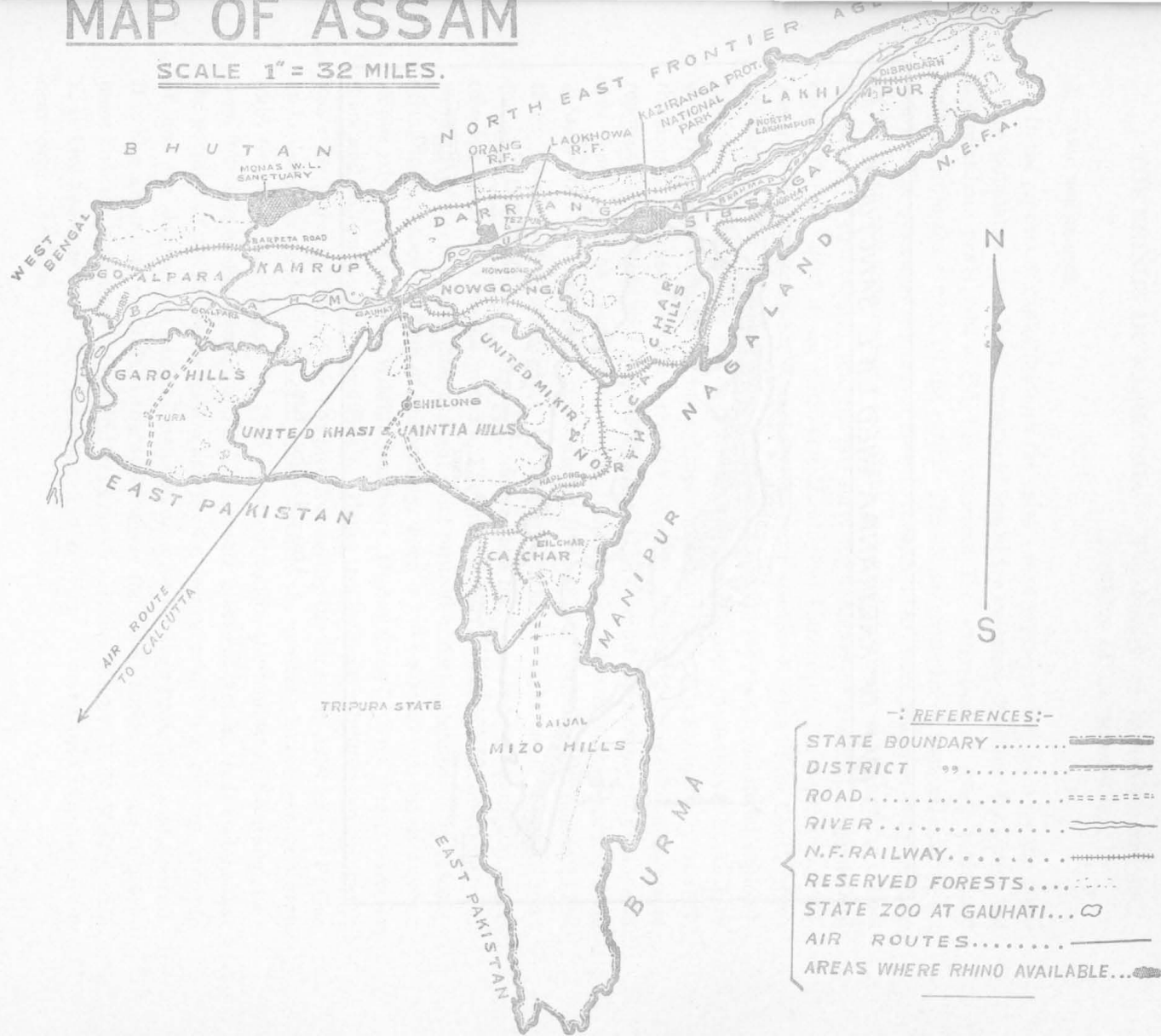
# KAZIRANGA

*The Rhino-land in ASSAM*



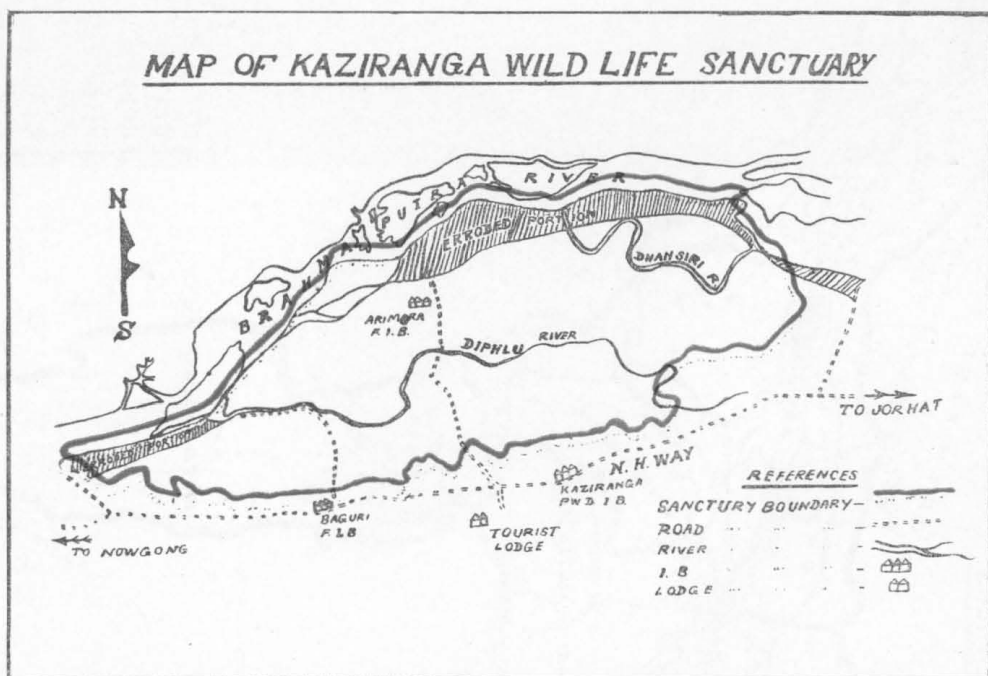
# MAP OF ASSAM

SCALE 1" = 32 MILES.



MAP OF ASSAM SHOWING KAZIRANGA ALONG WITH OTHER RHINOLANDS.

## MAP OF KAZIRANGA WILD LIFE SANCTUARY



Area—430 Sq. Km.

N599.728  
As 72

Assam. Forest Department.

**THE RHINOS OF KAZIRANGA :-** The history of its survival and the problems of its preservation.

### 1. Man and animals

In the process of exploitation of the earth's nature-preserves by man for the expanding population, and indiscriminate killing of the voiceless denizens for sport and for immediate profit, the world has witnessed the extinction of many birds and animals from the surface of the earth. The classic examples of such extinctions are many. The passenger pigeons of North America which were found in millions early in the nineteenth century when the white settlers first arrived there, became extinct by the end of that century, and the last surviving specimen of this bird, a female bird called Martha died in the Cincinnati Zoological Garden on 1st. September, 1914. Amongst the mammals, the case of the quagga a species of Zebra of the South Africa provides another example of the extinction caused by the man's unfettered exploitation. In 1800 the quagga was described as found in countless thousands in South Africa. The Boars hunted it for meat, hides and leather. In 50 years time i. e. by 1850, this animal vanished from the surface of the earth, the last surviving two animals were reported to have been shot in Cape Colony. The Cheetah or hunting leopard which was known to be very common in India in the olden days has become quite extinct. It was reported that during 1947-48, a certain "Sportsman" shot three males in the same place by artificial light at night in a locality near Bustar in the Madhya Pradesh. Since then there has been no authentic report of existence of any Cheetah in India. The great Indian Rhinoceros (*R. unicornis*) also would have met the same fate, had not strict protection been extended to the few surviving species since the turn of this century, when it was recorded that barely a dozen rhinos existed in Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary. During those days the forests were very thick and communication was difficult. Hence this estimate might be wrong, but it was evident that numbers were not plentiful during the time. In 1950 late E. P. Gee and others made a thorough search and estimated the number, though by observation only, as 250 in Kaziranga. In 1966 by actual census the number in Kaziranga had been found to be 400, besides about 200 in other places of Assam. It is evident that the position of the Rhinos in Assam had been redeemed and it is a glaring example of how the destructive hand of man can do a lot for their protection and survival. It is also an unique example in the world where the timely action of the Government and the bold stand of handful of nature lovers like Milroy, P. D. Stracey, late E. P. Gee and Late R. C. Das had resulted in reviving a prehistoric mammal from near extinct-position.

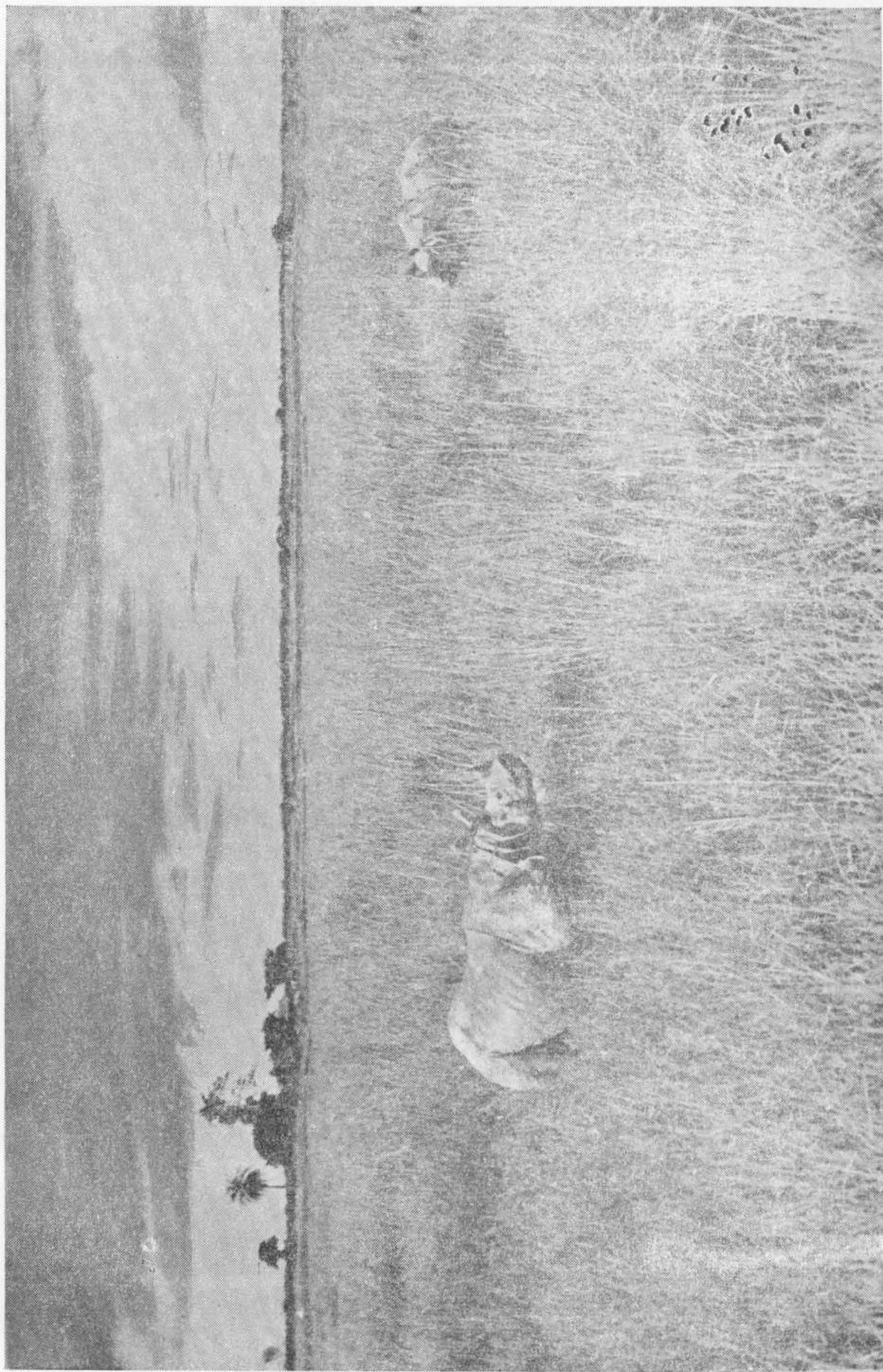
## 2. Rhino and Kaziranga

The Indian Rhinoceros (*R. unicornis*) a prehistoric mammal which has undergone very little change during the course of its evolution, had been known to the Indians from time immemorial. But the first Indian Rhinoceros to have been shown in the British Isle was in 1685 (Guggisberg).

A few years later another young Rhinoceros aged about 3 years old reached the European Continent. This animal was first brought to Holland from where it was taken in a procession in a carriage drawn by twenty horses all over the continent and it drew not only the crowds of the common people but it generated great interest amongst the learned too and thereby found mention in various literatures of those days. During the nineteenth century this animal found itself in various Zoological Gardens and menageries of Europe.

In the past rhinos occurred almost all over Northern India from Peshwar now in Pakistan in the west to Sadiya in Assam in the east. It roamed in the grassy plains and swamps and often in the hills and creeks. In the memoirs of the Emperor Babur, he had described how he hunted rhinos in the Indus Valley early in the sixteenth century. But it began to vanish rapidly from the west. Partly because of relentless shooting and killing and partly because of the clearance of the habitat by man for expansion of agriculture, settlement and grazing, the rhinos vanished from its various haunts and finally its population came to a limited number in Nepal, North Bengal and Assam.

In Assam, rhinos were found all over the land in the mid nineteenth century. Some interesting records of rhinos are found in the book 'Sportsman of India and Burma.' Vol. I (1886) by Lt. Col. Pollock. He was an engineer and was in-charge of road development projects in Assam. He had shot rhinos and other big games as these were plentiful in those days and were found everywhere he went. Sanderson who did a lot of elephant catching operations in India had recorded that he saw one-horned rhino in Garo Hills adjacent to Mymensingh district in Bengal. He also recorded that he saw two-horned rhino in Lushai Hills now called Mizo Hills. General Sir James Will-Cock shot rhinos in Kaziranga near Dhansirimukh in the latter part of the nineteenth century as recorded in his book, "The romance of soldiering and sport" (1889). With the opening up of the land for cultivation establishment of the Tea industry, the habitation of the rhinos got shrunken. Then unrestricted shooting of games by the sportsman, and poaching for rhino horns reduced the rhino population at an alarming rate.



RHINOS IN MATING SEASON ( Photo - H. K. Nath )

By the turn of this century, the rhino almost came to the verge of extinction when the then Government of Assam realised the seriousness of the situations and started thinking of conservations of the wild life. In 1908 Kaziranga was made a reserved forest and at that time it was reported that hardly one dozen rhinos was left in this forest. Another tract of forest now known as the Manas Wild Life Sanctuary where rhinos were found, was also constituted into a reserve forest for protection of its flora and fauna. Both these reserved forests were subsequently called Game reserves and since the latter part of the forties the name, Game reserve has been changed into Wild Life Sanctuaries.

### **3. Poaching of rhino**

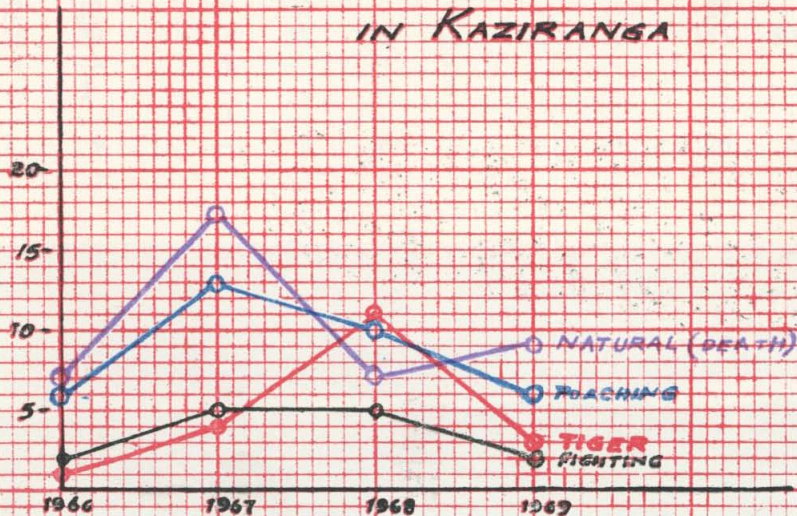
Rhinos could not however escape persecution from the hands of the poachers even in these reserves. Poaching for rhino horn was not easily controllable because of the high value the horn fetched. It was in those days worth half its weight in gold. Some time in 1935 the Government of Assam had to send a company of Assam Rifles under a British Officer to Manas Wild Life Sanctuary to control poaching of rhino by the local tribal population. Similarly Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary also was subjected to poaching in the early year of its constitution. While it was almost inaccessible to the others, the poachers could operate without roads. It was generally left to itself without much attention on its proper protection and as a result it was the happy hunting ground of the poachers. Sometime in the mid 1930 when it was inspected by a Forest Officer, he found 40 (forty) carcasses of rhino with the horns removed. ( Gee ). It was only a few years latter that the Assam Legislative Council had to pass a legislation declaring the rhino horn a forest produce wherever it is found so that anybody found with a rhino horn without any authority could be prosecuted in the Court of Law. It was in 1938 only that Kaziranga was opened to the visitors. Since then greater attention was given by the Govt. for the protection of rhinos.

### **4. Protection of rhino and increase in its population**

Under the gradual intensified protective measures taken by the Forest Department the rhino population began to recoup. Its number which was estimated not more than one dozen in 1908 rose upto an estimated figure of 250 after 50 years and 400 in 1966, This population is now considered quite optimum for the area under Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary. Thus in about 60 years time Kaziranga has regained its lost populations of rhinos as a result of vigorous protection given to it.

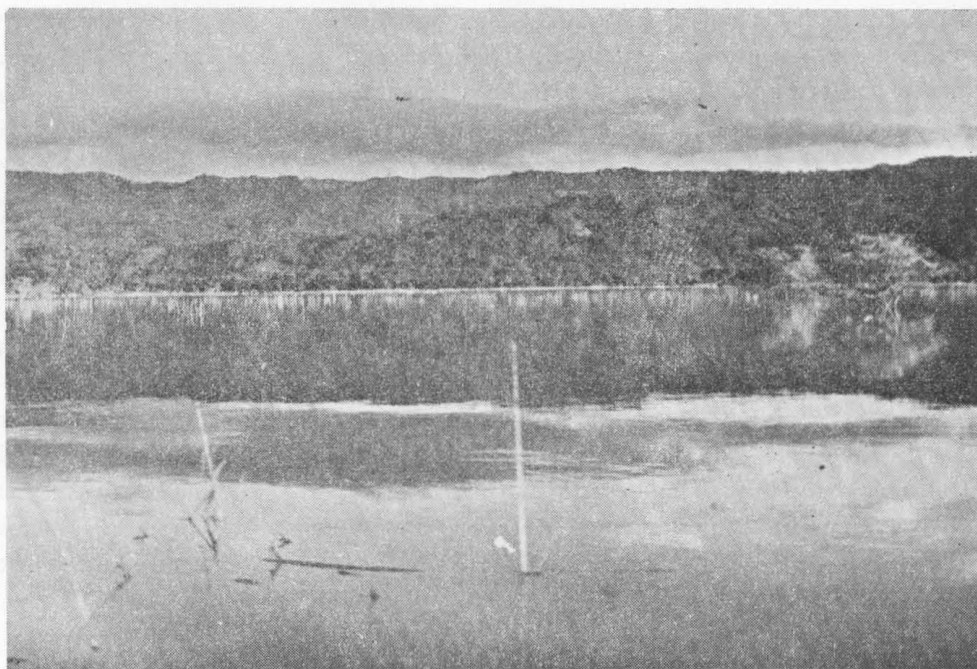
The systematic enumeration carried out in 1966 by the Govt. in which Mr. Juan Spillet participated gives the following population, species-wise :-

GRAPH SHOWING CASUALTIES OF RHINO  
IN KAZIRANGA





Kind of Animal	Block.								Sanctuary.	
	Bagu- ri	Haldhi- bari	Kazi- ranga	Pan- bari	Chari- gharia	Bhaw- ani.	Barali- mora	Tamuli- pathar.	Total counted	Estimated Total
Rhino	157	49	32	30	22	59	8	9	366	400
Elephant	45	—	29	7	—	257	5	6	349	375
Wild Buffalo	337	41	23	17	17	6	—	30	471	550
Gaur.	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	20
Swamp deer.	72	25	16	69	19	1	11	—	213	250
Sambar	43	8	1	1	2	61	1	3	120	300
Hog deer.	485	77	95	122	223	282	5	22	1,311	4,000 5,000.
Barking deer.	12	10	—	7	—	—	—	—	29	100
Wild Pig	45	29	33	18	10	—	10	10	155	500-600
Bear	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	30
Tiger	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	20
Leopard	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	12
Otter	7	9	—	1	8	1	—	—	26	200-300



FLOOD IN KAZIRANGA (Photo - S. Debroy)

## 5. Problems of protection.

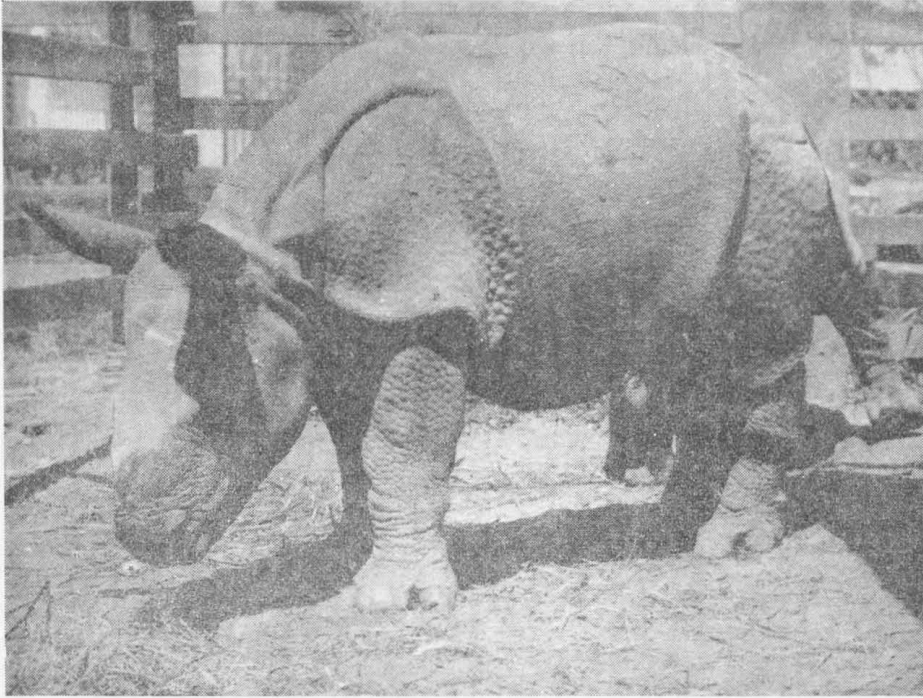
The Great Indian Rhinoceros is the animal that attaches to itself all enticements and environments which make it vulnerable from all fronts. Yet it has escaped so far complete annihilation unlike some other animals and birds which do not appear to offer so much enticements to poachers and yet got extinct.

The habitat of an Indian rhino is open and swampy grass lands which are eminently suitable for paddy cultivation and hence such areas are in constant demand for agriculture. Thus to the common agriculturist the rhino is an intruder and hence it is an unwanted animal. The body of the animal itself is of immense value. While the horn is now almost as valuable as gold, its meat is eaten by some people because of belief that this would purify their blood and enable them to attain heavenly bliss after death. The urine is also preserved by some people for its alleged medicinal value. Even the bones and nails are supposed to carry some charms against evil spirits. That an animal with such value on its body could have survived its complete annihilation by men in this earth, is really a matter of pride for those who took the responsibilities of its preservation.

The rhino's chance of protection against poachers is also slender as it appears to be slow-witted and fool-hardy. It does not possess the instinct of moving away from human encroachers for self defence, rather it exposes itself to danger by charging the intruder. In addition to this, its habits of depositing its excreta in the same place by walking backwards make it a vulnerable object for poachers. The bulky body of a rhino is an easy target for the gun of any poacher. The apparently tough looking skin is really not as hard and so does not afford any protection. It is interesting to learn that an Indian soldier during the days of Indian Mutiny had to face a court martial as he shot a tamed rhino of his regiment to prove that a rhino's skin was too tough for a bullet, as was the notion at that time. Besides the above factors unfavourable for the rhino's existence the other factor that may have to be reckoned with, is the protection from the infectious diseases that might be carried by the domestic cattle and buffaloes grazing in the sanctuary. Rinderpest and anthrax are the two fatal diseases which are normally carried by domestic cattle and buffaloes, and may take a heavy toll of wild life in the sanctuary. In 1944, heavy casualties amongst the rhino populations took place in the sanctuary due to some unidentified disease. In 1947, the bodies of 14 victims of Anthrax were found in Kaziranga.

## 6. Rhinos and Zoos.

The circumstances stated above do not present a very secure status for the great Indian Rhinoceros. But the state Government is quite alive to the necessity of pre-

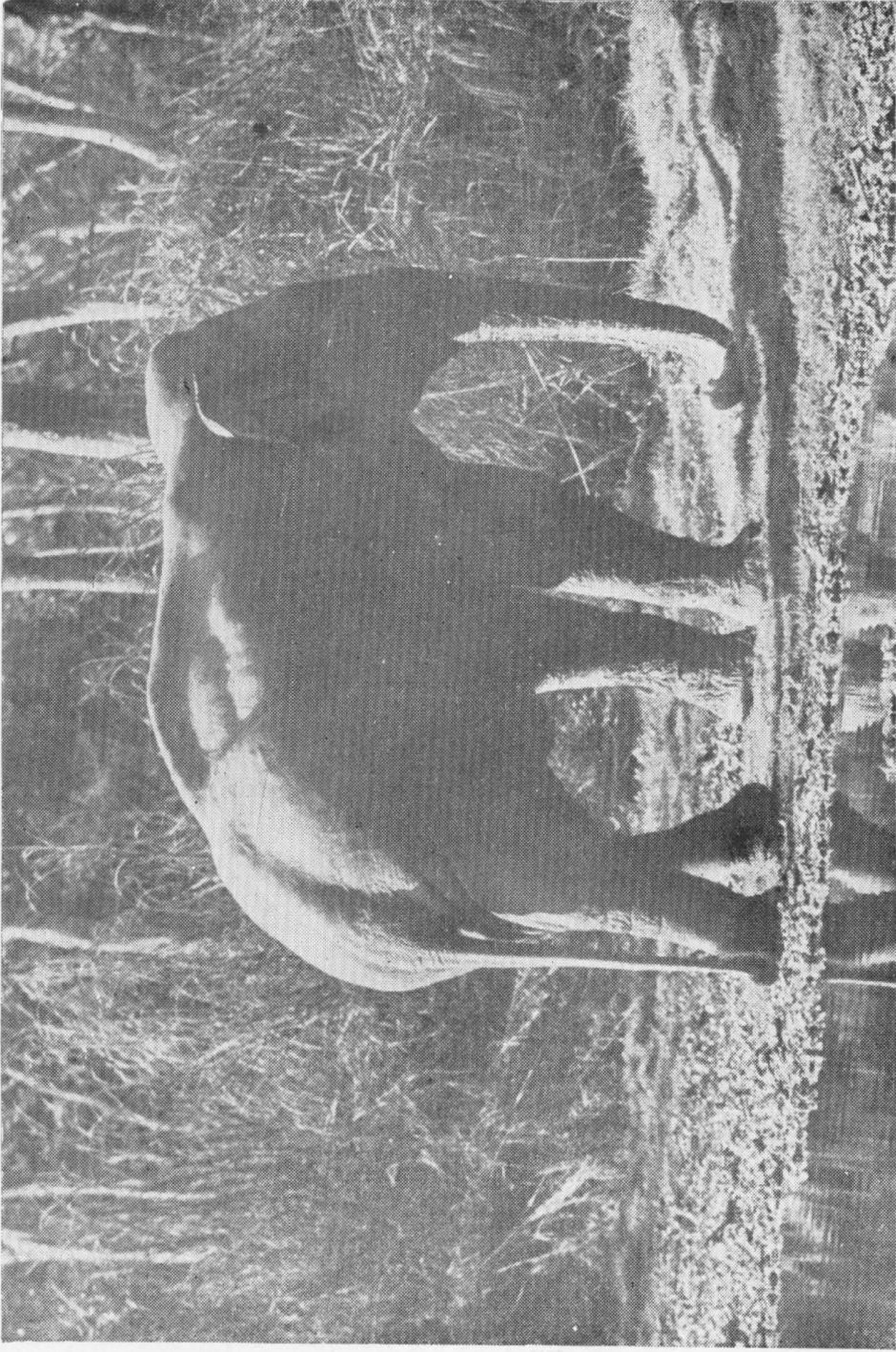


Gotongi, the Baby Rhino rescued from the clutches of tiger, now in Gauhati Zoo



erving this great Unicornis as a great heritage of Assam's forests. Kaziranga or more precisely the rhinos have made the map of Assam more prominent in the World's atlas. Rhinos of Kaziranga have gone to the various Zoos of the world. Besides earning thereby the much needed foreign exchange, the rhinos have made Assam better known to the outside world. A list of rhinos sent to various Zoos as shown below would be of interest to many.

Sl. No.	Year of capture.	No.	Sex.	Zoos		Remarks
				India	Foreign	
1	1947	1	male.	X	London	
2-3	1948	2	male/female	X	Chicago	
4-5	1949	2	male/female	X	Cairo	
6	1950	1	male	X	Brazil	
7	1950	1	male	X	Milan	
8	1951	1	female		Alipore.....	
9	1951	1	female	X	London	
10	1951	1	female		Bombay.....	
11	1951	1	female	X	Brazil	
12	1952	1	male		Madras.....	
13	1952	1	female	X	Philadelphia	
14	1955	1	male	X	.....do.....	
15	1956	1	male	X	Berlin	
16	1957	1	male		Mysore.....	
17	1957	1	male		Trivendrum.....	
18	1958	1	female		Bombay.....	
19	1958	1	male		Calcutta.....	
20	1958	1	female		Lucknow.....	
21	1959	1	male	X	Humburg.	
22.	1959	1	male	X	Washington.	
23	1960	1	male	X	Humburg.	
24	1960	1	female		Gauhati..... Assam,	a calf born in stockade on 7.4.60
25-26	1960	2	male		.....do.....	.....
27	1960	1	female	X	Tokyo.	
28	1960	1	female	X	Tokyo	(Gave birth to a calf at Alipore Zoo Calcutta).
29	1962	1	female	X	Paris	
30-31	1964	2	female		State Zoo..... Assam	
32	1965	1	male		Mysore	
33-34	1967	2	female		Hyderabad Delhi.	
35	1969	1	female		Bombay.	



Makhna Elephant (Photo-M. Krishnan)

## 7. Rhinos and Enactments :—

A special enactment called the Assam Rhinos preservation Act of 1954 was passed under which the killing or capturing of a rhino in any place in Assam is punishable. This Act has given a fair amount of protection to the rhinos found to wonder about in the land outside forest reserve. Kaziranga and North Kamrup Life Sanctuaries were constituted originally as reserved forest but to give better protection primarily to rhinos living therein, these two reserves were in due course converted into Wild Life Sanctuaries. Besides these forests, the other Forest Reserve like Laokhowa Reserve and Orang Reserve where rhinos are found in fairly appreciable numbers have also been treated as Wild Life Sanctuaries and rhinos have been given protection in these forests too.

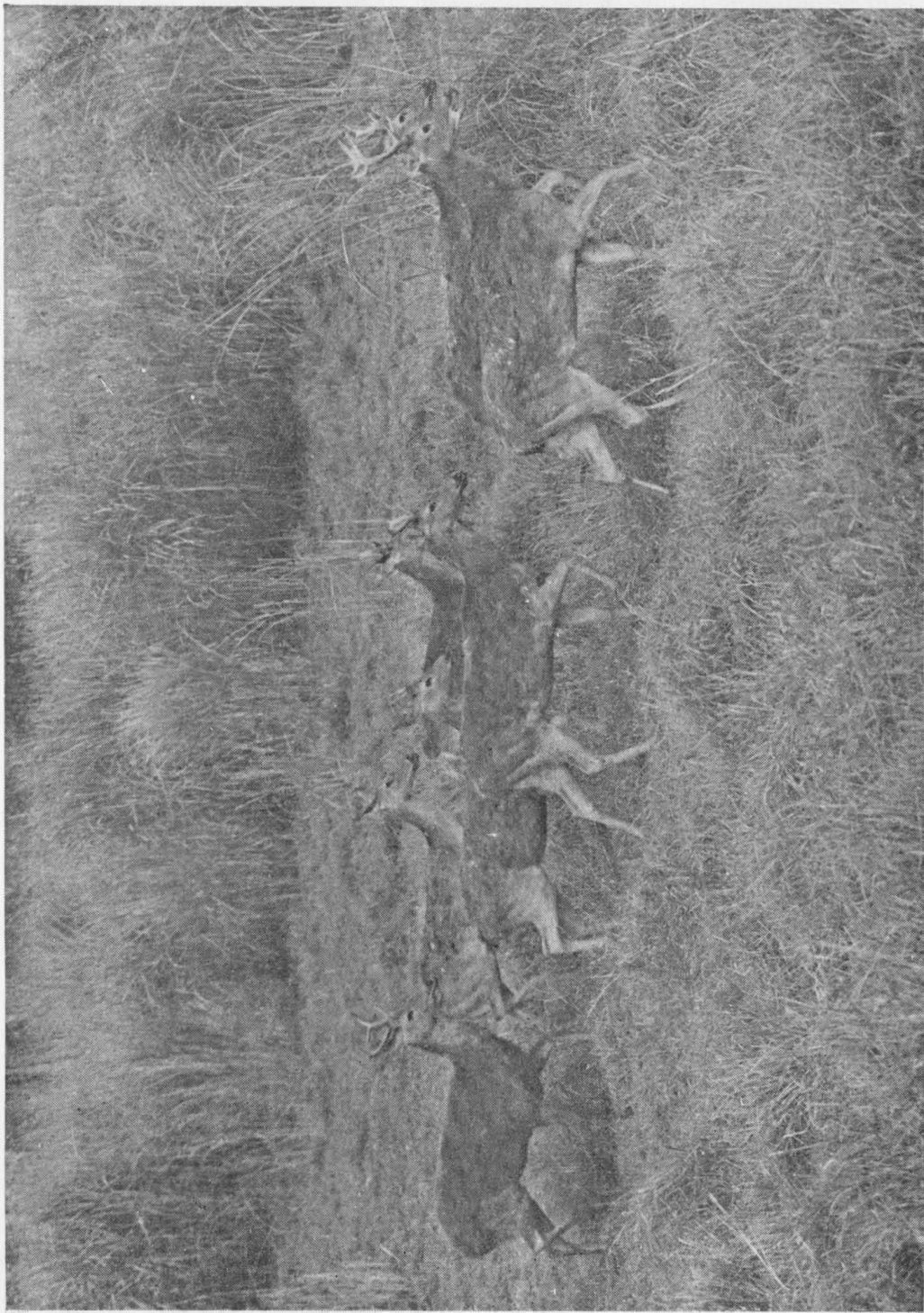
To give the rhinos a more permanent home with inviolable boundaries, the State Government have again enacted another legislation namely The Assam National Park Act of 1968 under which Kaziranga is being now constituted into a National Park. Rhinos would be more secure now in the Kaziranga National Park.

## 8. Methods of poaching and fund for antipoaching works

Rhinos are however not safe in the sanctuary also. Man remains their main enemy. The poachers will not leave any chance for hunting the rhino for its horn. The anti-poaching staff of Kaziranga has been strengthened by deploying armed guards. It has curbed the poaching activity to a considerable extent. But it has not been able to stop the same altogether. The number of rhinos poached during the last few years are as follows :-

1966.....	6
1967.....	13
1968.....	10

The poaching of rhinos was till recently done by digging pits on rhino tracks but this is more time taking and hence they have discarded this method in favour of shooting with guns. One fatal shot with a hand made bullet from any gun is good enough to kill a rhino. The poachers are mostly people accustomed to walk through mud and water under the tall grass. It is their easy mobility through terrains normally difficult for quicker movement by the Forest patrolling staffs that has rendered antipoaching works difficult, Construction of more roads through the sanctuary might be useful in curbing the poaching activity. The questions of building up wireless communication systems in the sanctuary was also considered but for want of fund this proposal could not be pushed through. An estimate of fund required for such works was framed by the State Forest Department and this came to Rs. 45,000,00.00 But this scheme could



HERD OF SWAMP DEER ( Photo - M. Krishnan )

not be given any serious consideration for difficulty in getting funds. But if Kaziranga is to be maintained as the home of the great Indian rhinoceros, then inadequacy of funds should not be kept as the obstacles.

## 9. Suggestions

### (a) Density

Is the present estimated population of 400 rhinos in Kaziranga estimated 430 sq. km. in the area in the ecological equilibrium stage? This is a matter for study. For sustaining a healthy population of rhino in Kaziranga this aspect requires proper study. To what extent the human interference in controlling the population of rhino in Kaziranga would be necessary is required to be found out. This would only enable the authority to dispose of the surplus population if any or to increase the available area for them and even to find an alternative home. Amongst the natural predators of rhino population the tiger which is very fond of rhino calf has come to be very prominent. In the last few years the casualties amongst the rhino calves caused by the tiger were as follows :-

1966.....	1
1967.....	4
1968.....	11

To what extent the activity of this natural predators needs to be watched and controlled, is also a matter for consideration. So far tiger is having his ways without any interference from the authority.

### (b) Disease

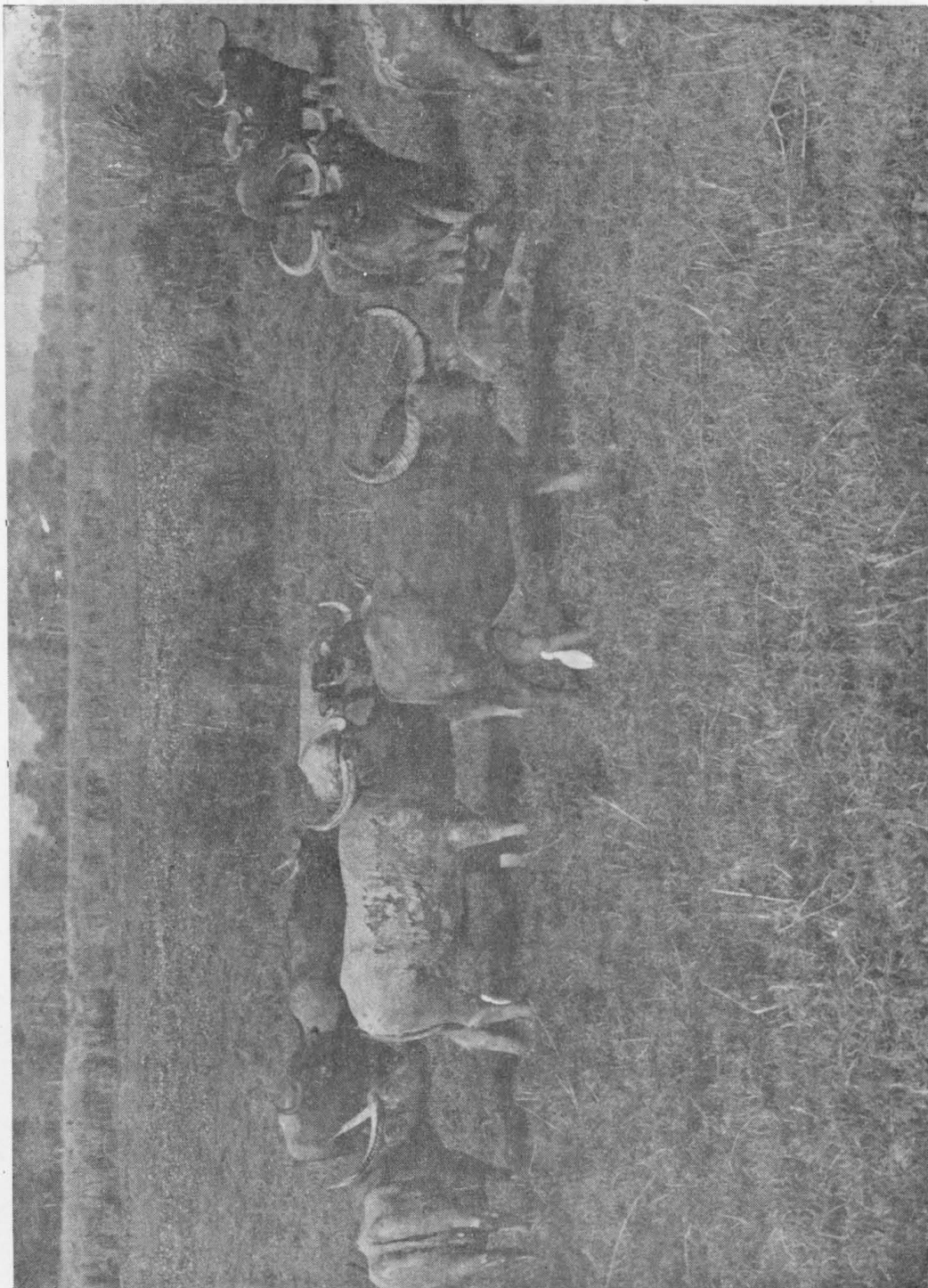
The chance of spreading infectious disease amongst the rhino population by the domestic cattle is also to be kept in check, if the rhino of Kaziranga is to be saved from serious depredations. The long standing system of allowing grazing by domestic cattle and buffaloes in the sanctuary though limited in number remains a threat to the rhino population.

This menace has been kept away so far by adoption of preventive measures by giving prophylactic treatment to the domestic cattle in the surrounding areas of Kaziranga sanctuary. But sooner such source of infections is altogether removed, the better for the sanctuary. But such proposal aiming at eliminating grazing might again meet with stiff opposition from the people concerned. This problem would again need proper tackling for the good of the sanctuary.

### (c) Goodwill of local people

The safety of rhinos of Kaziranga would greatly depend on the attitude of the people living near the sanctuary. These people are mostly agriculturists and they





HERD OF BUFFALOES ( Photo - M. Krishnan )

suffer a certain amount of depredations to their crop due to the rhinos coming out of the sanctuary for grazing in their fields. Any practical measures to stop the rhinos straying out of the sanctuary does not appear to be very successful. The possibility of winning the co-operation of these people might have to be worked out by arranging some kind of compensation for their loss of crops. Late E.P. Gee was of the opinion that some development works in the villages surrounding Kaziranga like giving some school building or other public institution by the Kaziranga authority might be useful for winning the public co-operation. Uptill now no such scheme has been thought of.

**(d) Flood :—**

The annual floods during the rainy season of Assam have caused some depredations amongst wild life including rhino in Kaziranga. Fortunately the Mikir Hills on the southern boundary of the sanctuary have been the refuge of the rhinos and other animals during flood time. It would have been an excellent National Park if these hills could have been made a part of Kaziranga, and the rhinos and other animals could have made their stay in this tract free from any danger of floods. This proposal would again involve a considerable amount of money for compensation to be paid to the settlers within this strip of land. Again inadequacy of fund stands in the way of implementing such a desirable plan.

**(e) Publicity :—**

The poaching of rhinos has taken place mostly because of high value of the horn. These horns are used in the Eastern world rather than locally. Though it has not been proved, the Eastern world has a superstition that the rhino horn has got aphrodisiac property. Therefore they have been smuggled out from India at very high rates. The smugglers could afford to pay very lucrative amount to the local people who are used to roam about in these forests. The smugglers also help these local hunters with guns and ammunitions.

While the local staff are trying their utmost to detect the hunters and punish them as far as practicable, the tempo of poaching can, however, be stopped if the price of these horns are lessened. To achieve this, the only way is to propagate an idea that these horns have got no medicinal properties worth the name, and this will have to be done in Eastern Asiatic countries. This problem, therefore, is a world problem and a suitable problem for the world body like the I.U.C.N. to take up propaganda work in all these countries, to which these rhinoceros horns are exported. If we can dispel such an idea amongst the people who mostly use rhino horns, the status and survival of the rhinos not only in India, but also perhaps in Africa, can be ensured.

**10. Appeal**

Let the world body of IUCN conduct an ecological survey of rhinos of Kaziranga and also consider various proposals hinted above and put forward necessary

recommendations for the preservation of rhinos of Kaziranga for all time to come. Unless such a body comes for help in a big way with all the resources the future of rhinos could not be definitely ensured.



Viewing rhino from elephant back

## How to Visit Kaziranga

It is approachable both from the Gauhati (Borjar) and Jorhat (Rowriah) air-ports wherefrom one may proceed to the *Sanctuary* by motor car. From Gauhati the *Sanctuary* is 135 miles (216 Kms.) distant and from Jorhat 60 miles (97 Kms). Motor transport to the *Sanctuary* is available at both the air-port by previous arrangement with the Tourist Information Officer, Tourist Office, State Transport Building, Gauhati (Phone : 4475) and the Tourist Information Officer, Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary, P. O. Ko'ara Via Bokakhat, (Phone : Kaziranga 3).

It is possible to leave Calcutta by the morning plane and arrive at *Sanctuary* the same afternoon via Gauhati or via Jorhat.

The Department of Tourism, Government of Assam, maintains two Tourist Bungalows to provide accommodation for visitors. Both the bungalows are fully furnished with bed, linen, bath, electricity and lounge to relax with family and friends. Bungalow Number One has 5 double-bedded living rooms and Bungalow Number Two has 6 doublebedded living rooms. Rates are fixed as follows :

**Bungalow No. I—** Rs. 10/- per bed per diem.  
Rs. 18/- for two members of same family occupying one room.

**Bungalow No. II—** Rs. 6/- per bed per diem.

*Children sharing parent's bed are not charged.*

*Food charges are as follows :*

	Indian Style	Western Style
Bed Tea	0.25 P. per cup	0.25 P. per cup
„	0.50 P. per pot	0.50 P. per pot
Breakfast	Rs. 2.50	Rs. 2.50
Lunch	Rs. 3.00	Rs. 5.00
Afternoon Tea	Rs. 1.25	Rs. 1.50
Dinner	Rs. 3.50	Rs. 6.00
Full Day Meal	Rs. 10.00	Rs. 15.00

*Children below 12 years are charged half the above rates.*

The above charges are inclusive of light, linen and are subject to alteration.

### Charges and Fees for Sanctuary Visit

- Elephant Charges—** (i) Rs. 15/- per trip per elephant for a single visitor.  
(ii) Rs. 16/- per trip per elephant for two visitors.  
(iii) Rs. 18/- per trip per elephant for three visitors.

(More than three persons on the same elephant are not allowed)

**View Permit**

Rs. 5/- per diem per person.

**Camera Fees—**

Still Camera— Rs. 2/- per person.

Rs. 5/- per person for Professionals.

Movie Camera— Rs. 5/- per person.

Rs. 10/- per person for Professionals.

**Road Fees**

Jeep or car from Mihimukh onwards to any distance and back.

Rs. 3/- per vehicle.

Truck or bus from Mihimukh onwards to any distance and back.

Rs. 7.50 per vehicle.



Prime Minister Nehru in Kaziranga — 1956

## SOME INTERESTING INCIDENTS IN KAZIRANGA.

### Past.

In 1886 one Army Officer posted at Golaghat which is situated at a distance of 30 miles from Kaziranga came on elephant back for shooting rhinos in Kaziranga. He spotted one and fired about a dozen shots. The rhino was wounded but escaped into the bush. As it was late in the evening, the officer left for his camp to return to follow the wounded animal in the next morning. Accordingly as he was following the blood spoor of the wounded rhino, the following morning he suddenly found that a wounded rhino was fighting with two tigers. It was also observed that both the tigers had injury on their bodies. On the sight of the officer the tigers made good their escape but the poor rhino was not clever enough to run away from the man with the gun and it fell a victim to the gun of the officer.

( Source : The Romance of  
Soldiering and sport  
by  
General Sir James Willcock  
1889 )

### Present.

1. On 24.7.68, the Sanctuary Staff posted at Gotonga Beat of Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary in course of patrolling duty discovered a baby rhino lying in a pool of blood near a "Beel". It was almost dying with wounds all over the body. The staff could notice near by pugmarks of a tiger and also foot prints of rhino and blood stains on the ground. It was therefore presumed that the rhino calf was attacked by a tiger which must have also met with stiff opposition from the mother rhino.

The dying calf was immediately removed and sent to the Assam State Zoo, Gauhati situated at a distance of 200 K.M. in a Station wagon.

The Veterinary Doctor in the zoo examined the animal and began treatment. It was found to have its cervical bone on the neck broken with 3(three) holes of 2½" deep wounds on the upper surface of the neck and lacerated wounds all over. The weight of the body was about 85 LBS.

The baby rhino recovered completely of its injury and is now growing up well in the Zoo. This rhino is now being offered to some zoos for sale.

2. A female rhino calfd aged about 4 months was seen on 28.7.68 at Hatimura village near Jakhlabandha within the buffer zone of Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary.

The mother of the calf was nowhere in the vicinity. The Forest Staff of Jakhala-bandha Beat with the help of local people caught the calf and then sent to the Gauhati Zoo. The calf is now doing well.

3. In the early morning of 25.2.68, Shri Boloram Dutta, Fgd. i/c of Rongamatia Camp under Bokakhat Beat of Kaziranga Range came with 2(two) labourers to Barbeel camp ( about 5 K.M. away) and met Shri Biresch Chandra Hazarika, Fgd. i/c Barbeel Camp and decided to make a joint patrolling. Accordingly, they went out with 4(four) labourers . Only one S.B.B.L. gun with 3(three) cartridges was with Shri Dutta.

From Barbeel Camp they went to the Garaimari beel where they took a little rest and proceeded again. After proceeding a short distance they came to a place where the grass was burnt by them on the previous day. There on the ground they saw fresh foot prints of 3(three) poachers. In a hush-hush voice they decided to follow the foot prints in a single file.

Shri Hazarika in front followed by 2(two) labourers and Shri Dutta followed by other 2 (two) labourers went on looking at the foot prints. After about 50 (fifty) metres, they saw the track bifurcated. Shri Hazarika followed the foot prints along the lefthand track and Shri Dutta followed, with the gun in hand, the right hand track, followed by his labourers. From that junction at the distance of some 50 (fifty) metres the burnt area ended and the track was thickly covered with the tall grass. Still Shri Dutta went on following. He went about 10 (ten) metres only when he confronted with a poacher and shouted "Here it is". Probably, he called all others to catch the poacher, but simultaneously the poacher shot Shri Dutta by a gun from his back from a very close range of about 3 (three) metres. The bullet hit him on the lower portion of the right hand back, went through the heart, through neck, broke the jaw bone on the left. He fell down flat on his back and died instantly.

Shri Arjun Sabal, (one of the labourers) who was following him, was at a distance of 3 (three) metres behind, but could not see him as it was a very narrow track, covered with Ekra grass. When he heard Dutta's voice and simultaneously the gunshot, he rushed towards him only to see Dutta lying flat. Immediately he knelt down and while doing so, suddenly he looked up to see the back side of the poacher with chocolate colour shirt and white neck who was running away. He picked up the gun from Dutta's hand and kneeling down aimed the gun at the direction of the poacher. But he simply heard the rushing sound of the poacher frantically at his heels like sound of breaking the jungles by one animal.

Shri Hazarika, Fgd. and all others also heard Dutta's shouting and the gunshot and all rushed to the spot. There they found Shri Dutta lying dead on the ground

and Arjun (Casual labourer) with gun in hand aiming. The incident took place about 12.0 clock at noon.

They informed Beat officer Bokakhat, Range Officer, Police officer i/c Bokakhat Police Station and then brought the dead body out of the Sanctuary. Ezahar dated 25.2.68 was lodged and case No BKT. 13 (2) 66 under section 447/302 I.P.C. was registered. There were two unused cartridges in the pocket of the deceased and one was found loaded in the gun.

The Divisional Forest Officer and police Circle Inspector checked all the suspected guns and persons in their homes in the nearby locality but could not detect anything (25.2.68)

After performing the post-mortem, the dead body was taken to the home of the deceased and delivered to the relatives.

Late Dutta son of Shri Gerela Dutta comes from the village Namtikush, Bamunbari Gaon P.O. Khemdai Pukhuri, District Sibsagar (Assam),

4. On 1.7.68 about fifty Miri people from the North Bank of the Brahmaputra came by boat to Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary. They came near Rongamatia Forest Camp which was manned by three home guards with rifles, two Forest Staff and four casual labours. The poachers threatened them and opened fire. The Forest staff also returned fire. It was found that 4(four) poachers were badly injured besides injury to the others. The poachers without further resistance withdrew carrying the injured ones in their boats.

5. On 24.3.69, at 10.30 P.M., it was noticed that 2(two) notorious poachers namely Shri Mangala Saikia and Shri Gerela Miri were discussing something at a place half a mile away from Bokakhat sitting over a bridge. At that time the local Police was informed by some students of Bokakhat about the suspicion they had on those two persons. The police went and brought them to the police station. On searching their pockets, the police found some handmade shot gun "Ball type cartridges", which probably they had made personally for shooting of rhino. The police immediately arrested them and on the following day i.e. on 25.3.69, they were sent to the court at Golaghat.

On the sameday i.e. on 25.3.69 at about 12 noon, when some boys were collecting fuel at a distance of about 2 (two) furlongs away from the residence of Shri Mangala Saikia, they found one motor tube lying in the jungle, and they also noticed that within the same tube something was also visible. Out of curiosity they called some aged men of the locality and on searching the tube they found that one gun was lying within the same. Immediately the villagers informed the police at Bokakhat about this. The police went to the spot and recovered the gun.

After investigation it was proved that the said gun was stolen from the house of Shri Nandeswar Bora about 2(two) years back. Shri Nandeswar Bora also identified the same.





U. S. Ambassador in Kaziranga — 1961 ( Prof. & Mrs. Galbraith )

Apparently this gun would have been used for shooting of rhinos.

6. On 2nd October 1969, on the day of Gandhi Centenary, a gun-shot was heard at Barbeel camp, about six miles from Baguri Beat right in the heart of the sanctuary. It was very early in the morning, just at dawn and the direction of the gun report could not be ascertained but suspicion naturally arose. Message was passed on to Baguri Beat at about 11 A.M.

The Beat Officer Shri Goswami received another information from elephant Mahut Shri Mahendra Tanti about a suspicious human track nearly 4 (four) miles north of Baguri at about 12 noon. Shri Mahendra Tanti like almost any Mahut has very keen observation and was confident that this was not the foot tracks of any of our men. Moreover this place was about 4 miles from Barbeel where gun shot was heard early in the morning. Goswami, therefore, co-related the two happenings and decided to make a probe, instead of celebrating Gandhi Jayanti and Wild Life Week. But he was that moment short of staff. Some-how he managed three more forest personnel and set out in pursuit of the suspicious human track.

On keen and through observation it was found that 6 (six) persons in a party had moved earlier in the day leaving behind their tracks. He was now sure that this party had anything but good intention in their minds.

Following these tracks was quite risky. Every moment Goswami and his men had to be extremely careful to avoid detection by the poachers, ahead. These were rhino poachers and were most desperate and ruthless in the nature and would not hesitate to shoot at our men if they can locate them earlier. Each of the 6 (six) poachers had moved singly in parallel tracks obviously to avoid easy detection of a group moving together. In fresh muddy areas where the foot prints were likely to be clear, the poachers had walked back-wards just to misguide our men about the true direction.

At about 3 P.M. Goswami and his party found out the place where the poachers had eaten their meals short while ago. From here the party had moved south, towards the boundary of the sanctuary, which indicated that the party was trying to move out. Goswami and his men had to become more careful and all the nerves were strained. Any rumbling or slight noise in the tall grass through which they were moving on foot, leaving the elephant about two furlongs behind, were making their heart jumps. Slowly and steadily they came very near the southern boundary, a small river and were thoroughly exhausted,

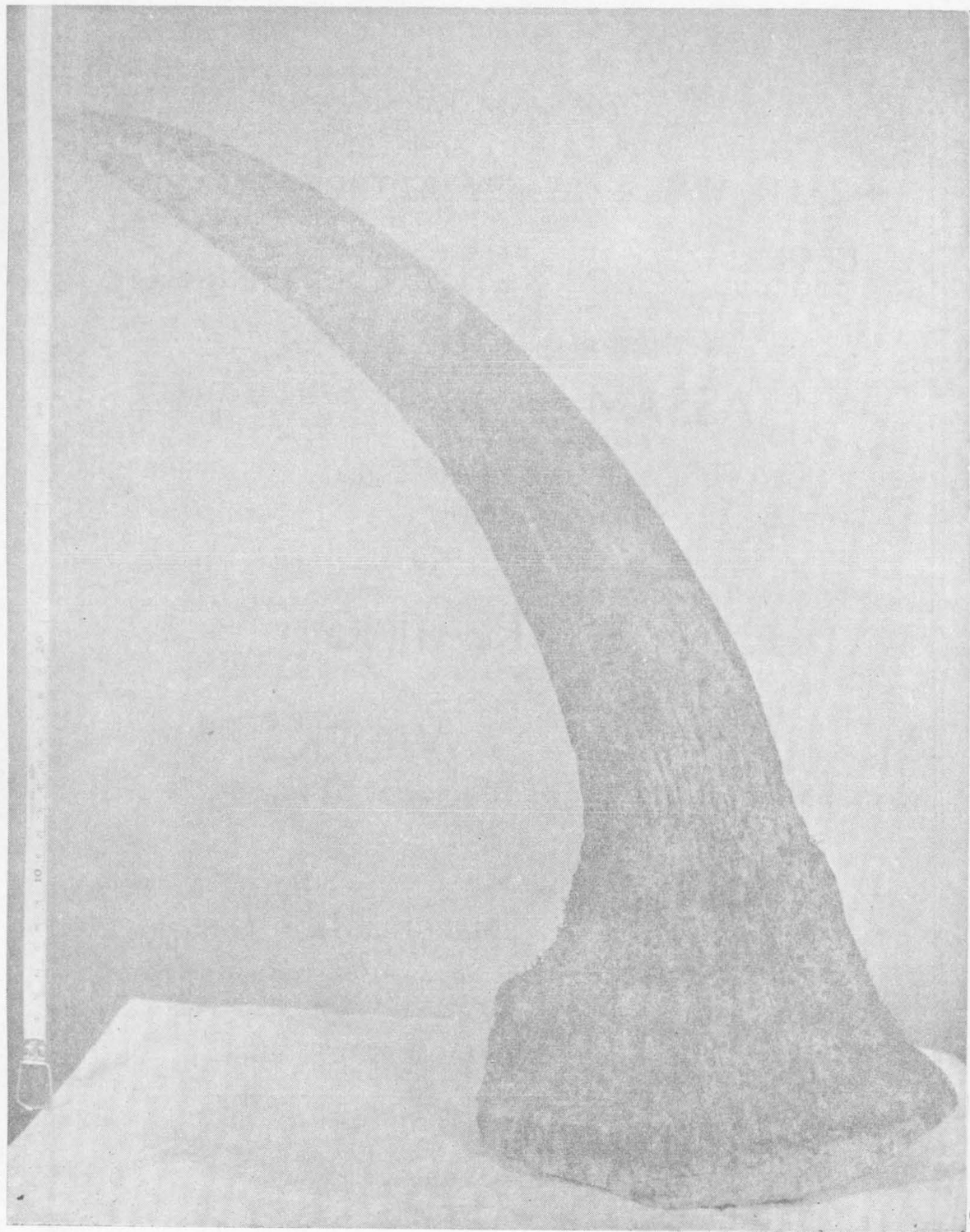
Suddenly on an ant hill they found two figures sitting. Obviously these were the poachers. The light was very poor, being almost dusk. Two guns were lying handy with the two poachers. The poachers also sighted our men almost simultaneously. Immediately the poachers reached for their guns. But before they could do any harm forest guns boomed from the hands of Goswami and his Game Watcher

Dutta. The poachers also fired , and it is difficult to say who shot first. Goswami and his men wanted only to scare the poachers, but the poachers really meant business. One of their shots, went past Goswami and Dutta, standing at a distance of only about 30 ft and got lodged in a tree behind. As the poachers tried to reload their guns our party charged on them. Finding the situation pretty bad the poachers ran into thick grass leaving behind their guns. In a bag two huge rhiono horns freshly removed were also found in the spot. The horns weighed more than 2500 grams, the value of which would be around Rs 30,000.00.

The Wild Life Week in the Gandhi centenary year could not have been celebrated in any better way by the brave and skillful party of Goswami for which good reward awaits them.



Indira Gandhi's Visit to Kaziranga



Record horn of One-horned Rhino in Assam Forest Museum (height 61.5 Cm. weight 2622 Gramms.)



Mother Rhino with her calf

( Photo - M. Krishnan )

*Front cover :* The Himalayan View behind Kaziranga in a bright winter morning

*Back cover :* MONAS WILD LIFE SANCTUARY—ANGLERS PARADISE

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