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ASSAM. FOREST DEPT.



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Progress Report of Forest Administration in the Province of Assam for the year 1947-48



SHILLONG:
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1953

[Price Rs. 3-2-0 or 4s. 8d.]

119. *Elephants*.—At present there are 25 elephants in the department against 0 in the preceding year. Five new elephants were purchased during the year and a Sundarmala elephant of Lakhimpur which escaped some years back was fortunately recaptured with a calf. Two elephants died.

120. The subordinate staff in general were united in their demands for better scales of pay, allowances and equipment. Certain Divisional Forest Officers reported that the health of their staff was generally poor due to poor food supplies. Anti-malarial measures on a wide scale were introduced with the purchase of a large quantity of Paludrine, D. D. T. and sprayers steps were taken to install sanitary latrines and wells, and many quarters were reconstructed with increased accommodation.

121. Relations between the Revenue and Forest Officers continued to be satisfactory on the whole.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESERVATION OF WILD LIFE AND ELEPHANT CONTROL

I.—The Preservation of Wild Life

122. All sanctuaries were maintained during the year and the numbers of Game Watchers were increased in some cases. No poaching cases were detected in the Sonai-Rupa Sanctuary, and in Orang Reserve, in Darrang Division which contains a few Rhinoceros and the Divisional Forest Officer, Darrang, reports that some three packs of wild dogs numbering about thirty animals were seen in the Sonai-Rupa Sanctuary. The Divisional Forest Officer, Nowgong, reports that persistent attempts at poaching in the Laokhowa Reserve continued throughout the year, and in this connection four guns were seized. The Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, has been requested to cancel the licences of guns caught in the Reserve to set an example to others. One Old Rhino that had apparently died of old age was found in this Reserve but the horn had been removed and could not be traced in spite of Police help.

123. The Kaziranga Game Sanctuary of the Sibsagar Division continues to be the most popular Sanctuary in the Province, and as usual attracted several visitors. Efforts are being made to improve the conditions for visitors and to increase control over trespass and poaching, and to remedy the rather neglected state of this and other sanctuaries in the past, but unless a Game Warden is appointed and Game Staff are made permanent and placed on a better scale of pay, progress in the desired direction is impossible. The Department is indebted to Mr. E. P. Gee, Naturalist and Tea Planter, who was always eager to assist and advise, and to His Excellency the late Sir Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam who with his family visited this sanctuary during the year and made some useful suggestions. Sir Akbar was instrumental in securing the interest of the Bombay Natural History Society who are sending a party of experts to visit this and other sanctuaries in the Province next year and to advise on their improvement and control.

124. Probably as the result of an epidemic of anthrax many Rhinos died during the year in the Kaziranga Sanctuary and no less than 16 Carcasses were discovered. These were buried and burnt under the instructions of the Veterinary Department. This represents a serious diminution of the existing stock of Rhinos and emphasises the dangers of grazing of cattle in a sanctuary, as such diseases are transmitted by cattle. One Rhino died in an ordinary way. Another Rhino was knocked down by a running train near Furkating Railway Station and died.

125. A male and a female Rhino were captured successfully and sent to the Chicago Zoo during the year. This time special arrangements were made to keep the animals in stockade for some time after capture to get them accustomed to their new life, and they were transported to Calcutta by Steamer under the personal supervision of the Zoo representative Mr. Ralph Graham.

126. In the Goalpara East Division where a Deputy Ranger lost his life at the hands of poachers, measures for control of illicit shooting by erection of gates on different access roads and regular patrolling, were taken.

II.—Elephant Control

(a) Kheddah and Mela Shikar

127. The following table gives the result of Elephant Hunting Operations during the year :—

District	Method of hunting	No. of elephants captured including releases and shots			No. of elephants shot or released or death (Royalty payable)			No. of elephants shot or released or death (Royalty not payable)			Total No. of elephants which Royalty is payable
		Tusker	Makhna	Female	Tusker	Makhna	Female	Tusker	Makhna	Female	
Nowgong	Mela Shikar.	17	18	28	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Kamrup ..	Mela Shikar.	8	7	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Khasi and Jaintia Hills.	Mela Shikar.	3	6	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	16
Lakhimpur	Mela Shikar.	11	3	15	..	..	..	..	..	..	29
Darrang ..	Kheddah and Mela Shikar.	9	19	19	..	..	..	..	..	..	47
Sadiya ..	Kheddah and Mela Shikar.	16	20	55	..	..	1	..	..	..	91
Cachar ..	Kheddah and Mela Shikar.	3	5	14	..	..	..	..	..	..	22
Goalpara East.	Mela Shikar.	11	4	14	..	..	..	..	..	..	29
Sibsagar ..	Kheddah and Mela Shikar.	6	13	14	..	1	3	..	..	..	33
Khasi States	Kheddah and Mela Shikar.	5	2	7	1	..	..	..	..	..	14
		80	97	184	1	1	4	..	..	..	370

Royalty realised Rs. 2,50,520
 Monopoly fee realised Rs. 1,92,812

Total .. Rs. 4,43,332

This is exclusive of Rs. 13,395 being the outstanding royalty and monopoly fee for the previous year realised during the year and inclusive of Rs. 16,940 realised as royalty and monopoly fee in the Khasi States and credited as revenue under XD(b) during the year under report.

128. It was difficult to resist the demands for elephant catching from Kunkidars and elephant catching Companies, and the idea seems to be growing that it is necessary to provide employment for them by opening Mahals in every District every year. Nothing could be more harmful to the future of the elephant catching industry than such un-restricted catching, and the public must learn to accept the fact that not all Companies and not every Kunkidar can be provided with work and the chance to earn profits continuously.

129. A start was made with the compilation of a Koonkie register District by District, to put a stop to the malpractices of false and duplicate applications, bogus ownerships, etc., and in tightening up the whole system of control over the operations themselves, and for this a small pamphlet giving the main points for human control of elephant catching and training was prepared by the writer of this report for the guidance of the subordinate staff.

130.(a) Prices of elephant continued to be high.

(b) Control of elephant depredations.

131. This continues to be a problem which defies complete solution, and it will probably go on being so. In a province like Assam with the main Reserves lying along the foot-hills, it is impossible to exterminate elephants or completely eliminate damage to adjacent cultivation, as some legislators expect us to do. The most that can be done is to keep herds down to reasonable limits by catching and to destroy the persistent and dangerous crop-raiders. It is admitted that the high price and unobtainability of suitable rifles and ammunition makes this latter a difficult problem for the public, at the present time, and the Department is prepared to undertake the task if it is provided with the necessary staff (Game Rangers under a Game Warden), weapons and funds. Meanwhile the public must be encouraged to defend their own property and crops, and the enterprising sportman encouraged to spend the large amount of time, energy and money required to go after bad elephants by the offers of suitable and adequate rewards for killing proclaimed elephants and by being permitted to keep the tusks of other elephants killed in defence of property on payment of their value.

SHILLONG :

The 31st May 1949.

P. D. STRACEY,

Senior Conservator of Forests Assam.

Statement of Wild Animals shot in Assam during 1947-48

All-India Serial No.	Species	Number
1A	Tiger	147
1B	Tigress	7
2	Leopard or Panther	13
3	Wild Cats (species to be given if known)	24
4	Lynx	...
5	Hunting Leopard or Cheetah...	1
6	Hyena	...

All-India Serial No.	Species	Number
7	Wolf	...
8	Wild Dog	3
9	Martens	...
10	Ratel	...
11	Brown Bear...	...
12	Himalayan Black Bear	11
13	Malayan Bear	...
14	Sloth Bear	...
15	Wild Elephant	20
16	Rhinoceros (species to be given)	...
17	Gaur or bison	...
18	Goyal or Mithan	2
19	Banting or tsine	...
20	Wild Buffalo	...
21	Urial or sharpu	...
22	Bharal or blue sheep...	...
23	Ibex	...
24	Markhor	...
25	Tahr	...
26	Nilgiri wild goat or Nulgiri Ibex	...
27	Serow or Himalayan goat antelope	...
28	Goral	2
29	Nilgai or blue bull	...
30	Four horned antelope	...
31	Black buck	...
32	Indian gazelle or chinkara	...
33	Barking deer or kakar	88

All-India Serial No.	Species	Number
34	Kashmir deer or hangul ... ..	...
35	Swamp deer or gondor barasingha ... ..	...
36	Brow-antlered deer or thamin... ..	...
37	Sambar	23
38	Cheetal or spotted deer or axis deer ... ..	...
39	Hog deer or para	27
40	Musk deer ... ..	...
41	Mouse deer... ..	...
42	Pangolin ... ..	...
43	Crocodile (muggar) ... ..	...
44	Gharial	6
45	Python	6
46	Others (species to be given)—	
	Boar	18
	Pig	1
	Porcupine	32
	Monkey	12
	Peacock	1
	Pheasant	68
	Green Pigeon	111
	Fruit Pigeon	42
	Wild Fowl	117
	Partridge	86
	Wild duck	23
	Rhinoceros hornbill	9
	Turtle dove	236
	Kite	1
	Other small birds	200
	Foxes	30