

# ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



**REFERENCE**

**RETROCONVERTED**  
**B C. S. C. L.**

**অসম জিলা গেজেট**

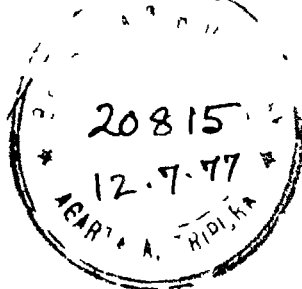
LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT  
(PRESENT LAKHIMPUR & DIBRUGARH DISTRICTS)

By

Late Prof. K. N Dutt, M.A., B.L.

&

Shri N. C. Datta, M.A., A.C.S.



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
GAUHATI : : : ASSAM  
1976

© Government of Assam

**ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS UNIT**

ZOO ROAD, GAUHATI-781003.

PRICE RS.  
**RS. 40 - 00**

Published by the Editor-in-Chief, District Gazetteers,  
Government of Assam, Gauhati.

Printed at the Tribune Press, Gauhati-781003.

working plans has yielded rich dividends, both in generation and sustenance of superior type of tree forest. Due care is taken in maintaining the forests so as to encourage the growth of the forest based industries. The forest products of these two districts are exported to other parts of the state.

(f) **Fauna** : Wild animals are numerous and include elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, bears, buffaloes, wild hogs, bisons, leopards, wild pigs, and different kinds of deer of which principal varieties such as the *somber*, the *barasingha* or swamp deer, the hog deer, and the barking deer are common throughout the district. The *mithun* or wild cattle is also found. Elephants are fairly common, especially near the hills and when the crops are ripening, do much damage unless the number of herds is regularly kept down by elephant catching.

Rhinoceros are becoming now scarce, but are occasionally met with in the swampy grounds in the wilder portions of the district. They breed slowly, and their horns are worth more than their weight in silver. The two horned variety of rhinoceros is said to be found in the desolate hills which lie between Assam and the Khampti Valley.

Herds of wild buffaloes are found north of the Brahmaputra and wild bulls often meet the tame cows that are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of the tree forests; tigers, leopards and bears are seen within the wilder parts of the district. A curious animal called the *Takin* is found in the Mishmi Hills. It appears to be allied to both goats and antelopes.

Over and above them, species found in the district are black panther, Sloth Bear, Small Govetcat, Fishing cat, wild dog, monkey, Langoor monkey, Hollok monkey, Parkapien Ant Eater, Hares, Squirrel, Mongoose, Civercat and Binturong. Among the reptiles found in the district mention may be made of Crocodile, King Cobra, Lizard, and Python. The names of birds found in the district are Pelican, wild fowl, wild Goose, wild duck, Blue coot, green pigeon, peacock, parrot, patridge, quail, Florican, Pheasant, Scarlet and Yellow Mi, and Hornbill.

**Elephant catching** : Mainly two processes are adopted in the district for catching elephant, known as *Mela Shikar* and *Kheda Shikar*. In *Mela Shikar*, *mahouts* mounted on staunch and well trained elephants pursue the herd, which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or were he not very agile to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time the younger animals begin to lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the

pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants one on either side and swiftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kukis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and as they close in on either side, the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to the camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. It is said that the system of *Mela Shikar* was introduced at the time of Purandar Sinha.

The principle of the *Kheda* operation is simple one. In the very thick jungle, near a path used regularly by a herd of wild elephants, the trap or stockade is erected. It consists of a large circle of very strong high fencing, made of tree trunks firmly embedded in the ground and securely roped together. On the outside, to strengthen this fence, a bulwark of earth is thrown upon it about the height of an elephant and, at intervals, there are buttresses of wood. The entrance is a very strong gate and also made of tree trunks and large branches. Outside the gate-way, on either side, there are barricades leading away from the stockade and away from each other to form a funnel. These barricades are not too obviously foreign to the surrounding jungle, so that elephants do not notice them till it is too late.

When all is ready and a herd of wild elephants is reported to be approaching the area, men on tame elephants create a disturbance behind the wild elephants and stampede the herd. In the ensuing excitement, the men drive the younger smaller members of the herd into the funnel made by the two barricades. By the time the elephants realise, that they are in a trap, it is too late, and the only opening they can see, free from men and noise and torches (made of burning branches) leads to the stockade, and the gate is crashed shut behind them. Every effort is made to exclude the large tuskers as they are of no use for training and can cause unlimited troubles and danger. After trapping the younger elephants in the stockades, they are brought out with difficulty and taken to the stockade camp where they are kept till they are made ready for the training camp.

To tie up the wild elephant, a noose is slipped round its neck and the end is fastened to a strong tree whose bark has been removed and the trunk smoothed, so that the rope does not fray readily. The hind legs of the elephant are tied together the rope being passed a number of times from one leg to the other; then the rope is securely fastened to a tree behind the elephant. This is done in such a way that the elephant is unable to bring its hind legs well under its body, in which position it would obtain more advantage when struggling to break its bonds.

### **Games law and measures for the preservation of wild life :**

There are various laws and measures for the preservation of wild life. Shooting, hunting or trapping in a sanctuary is absolutely prohibited except under special licenses issued by the Conservator of Forests to approved sportsman for the exclusive purpose of hunting and killing carnivorous animals. The killing and capture of wild animals and birds are prohibited during the closed seasons as prescribed in Assam Forest Manual of 1947, Under Sections 34(2) (f) and 35(2) of Assam Forest Regulations (VII) of 1891, killing of the rhinoceros in the unclassed State Forests was prohibited, except with the previous sanction of the State Government. The Rhinoceros Preservation Act, 1954 prohibits killing, capturing and injuring rhinoceros. Rules ensuring the protection of fish have also been framed. Under sections 25(g) and 72 of Assam Forest Regulation (VII) of 1891, the killing of fish by the use of explosive or poison, the netting of fish except under special license issued by the Divisional Forest Officer, the taking of eggs and trapping of birds are absolutely prohibited.

Hunting, shooting or fishing within a reserved forest is prohibited except under license issued in accordance with certain rules. The Conservator of Forests with the previous approval of the State Government may declare any reserved forest or part thereof to be Class I or Class II reserve where the restrictions on hunting, killing or injuring forest animals are made more stringent from time to time to preserve rare birds and animals. Class I forests are in turn divided into shooting blocks none of which remains open for more than 15 consecutive days to be reopened only after a gap of another 15 days. No person or member of a party reserving a block is permitted to kill in any one year more than (1) two buffaloes, (2) two bisons, (3) four sambars, (4) two swampdeers and (5) one spotted deer.

There are also certain legal restrictions with regard to shooting implements. Use of rifles of bore less than 300 for shooting game is prohibited. Cart-ridges loaded with shot larger than No.4 is not be used in reserved forest.

#### **(g) Climate :**

The climate of undivided Lakhimpur district is characterised by the absence of a dry hot summer season, the highest temperatures being experienced during the southwest monsoon season along with abundant rains and a highly humid atmosphere throughout the year. The cold season from December to February is followed by the season of severe thunderstorms from March to May. The southwest monsoon season is from June to about the beginning of October. October and November constitute the post-monsoon season.