

**HUNTING TO CONSERVATION:
A STUDY OF BRITISH POLICIES TOWARDS WILDLIFE
IN ASSAM (1826-1947)**

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Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION

“Those who have never seen a leopard under favourable condition in his natural surroundings can have no conception of the grace of movement, and beauty of colouring, of this the most graceful and the most beautiful of all animals are in our Indian jungles- Jim Corbett”¹

The rich and varied wildlife of India became part of the popular culture. The importance of wild animals could be observed since ancient period, however, in those days protection to wild animals was provided by means of religious practices. The protection of animals and birds was considered a sacred duty. It is evident from the ancient literature that Indian sages lived in forests and their *ashrams* were seats of learning, where birds and animals also provided shelter. Jain and Buddhist literatures also gave a considerable importance on the religious sanctity of various animals and birds. The hunter moved around in the jungles to kill and capture birds and wild animals. Though hunting was practiced by the rulers of ancient India they also revered wild animals. Ashoka prohibited hunting on some days. During medieval period, Akbar, for instance forbade hunting on certain days. Even Kashmiri Sultan, Zain-Ul-Abidin gave up meat eating and tried to dissuade his nobles from hunting.² Hunting in Mughal time was not only confined to royal families. Akbar was passionately fond of hunting and pursued the noble sport. His favourites hunting were tiger hunting, leopard hunting and elephant catching. Akbar's hunting parties were extravagant and headed by the minister *Mir Shikar* (Master of Hunting). In the succeeding British period, the British officials and rulers being highly influenced by the Mughal style of living and started embraced local customs and mores of the Mughals.³ Hunting was one

¹ Corbett, Jim, (1959) *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, Bombay: OUP, (First Published 1944), P. 74

² Rangarajan , (2001), M., *India's Wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, P. 19

³ Dalrymple, William, (2006), *The Last Mughal, The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857*, New Delhi: Penguin.

such Mughal practice emulated by British officials. All these facts reveal how wild animals were integral part of the socio-cultural practices of Indian people.

The common name for wilderness in India is jungle, which was adopted into English language. The word has been also made popular in *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. The stories of the wild animals were heard by almost all of us during our childhood. Children still love to listen these tales of birds and animals and derive much inspiration to build up their character. Wildlife of India has been the subject of numerous Stories and tells such as the *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesh*, and the *Jataka* tales. Varieties of wild animals and birds such as lion, tiger, bull, jackal, tortoise, crow, mouse, monkey, crocodile, camel, elephant, crane, cat, serpent, owl, and sparrow have been characterising in these books. The British rule in India led to the start of a different phase in the history of wildlife. Hunting became a symbol of masculine identities for British officials. British official realized that wildlife could also be exploited for economic benefit. This led to the commodification of wild animals under the British Empire which resulted in the killing of a large number of wildlife. Some of the species rhinoceros, lion, cheetah, were brought to the verge of extinction and others like elephants and leopards wiped out from the areas in which once they were numerous.

The British annexation of Assam in 1826, by the treaty of Yandaboo brought the exploitation of its timber for railways. Elephants were captured for administrative purpose. Though game hunting by the British officials was not unknown in this Province but the discovery of tea in 1836 in Assam led to the clearance of huge area of jungle for its cultivation. This caused the increasing human-wildlife conflict and eventually the destruction of wild animals and vice-versa. The killing of wild animals brought some of the species like elephant and rhinoceros on the verge of extinct. The nineteenth century fauna preservation movement in the world led to the preservation of wildlife in India as well as in Assam. The need was felt to preserve rhinoceros, a harmless herbivore and elephant for which game reserve were proposed in 1905 to provide an asylum to these species for saving them from total extinct. However, the complete protection of wild animals started only after 1930s, the issue of the protection of flora and fauna were discussed in various conferences in the world forums and simultaneously in India. The present study tries to understand how the British expansion led to the wildlife-human conflict and how far British policies aggravated the extinct of various species of wild animals.

1.1 Review of Literature

The Imperial expansion of Europeans had huge ecological consequences across the world. The access of natural resource like forest, minerals and land for meeting the growing needs of industries and railways had affected the climate, water, flora and fauna.

According to Crosby the pathogens, plants and animals introduced by European settlers helped them to overwhelm and displace local peoples and ecologies to other parts of globe. Imperial success has been explained in term of biological advantages that the colonist had over the indigenous inhabitants.⁴ Similarly, Cronon argued that the utilitarian nature of European settlers introduce new forms of property in far way regions that led to environmental changes.⁵ The ecological change caused conflicts over human choices between new settlers and indigenous inhabitants. The new system of control over the natural world led to the emergence of geographical ideas. Historical works of Ranger and Beinart on Africa examines the evolution of European and indigenous attitude towards game-hunting and protection. In exploitation of nature, as explained by Beinart in his words, “British and other European consumers and manufacturers sucked in resources that were gathered, hunted, fished, mined, and farmed in a great profusion of extractive and agrarian system: sugar from the Caribbean; furs and cod from North America; ivory and Cocoa from Africa; spices, cotton, tea, and timber from India; wool from sheep of the Antipodes; rubber from South-East Asia; gold from South Africa; oil from the Middle East.”⁶ This shows how much space and labours it took to fuel European Consumption.⁷ Beinart further explores the evolution of such programmes by the European settler to control soil erosion and stock management. The rise of conservation in Africa aimed at the efficient use of soil, vegetation, and water that sharpen the conflicts between European settlers and the indigenous system of production particularly in case of hunting and animal husbandry.⁸

⁴ Crosby, A., (1993), *Ecological imperialism, the biological expansion of Europe 900-1900*, New York: Cambridge University press

⁵ Cronon, W., (1983), *Changes in the land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*, New York: Cambridge University Press

⁶ Ranger, T., (1989), Whose heritage? The case of Matobo National Park, *Journal of southern African studies*, Vol. XV, pp. 217-49, W. Beinart, (1990) Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Africa, *Past and Present*, Vol. CXXVIII, pp. 162-88.

⁷ Beinart, W. & Lotte Hughes, (2007) *Environment and Empire*, New York: OUP, p.2

⁸ Ibid.

1.1.1 Environmental History in India: A Debate

Comparatively the study of environmental history is a late phenomenon in India. Colonial writings like Ribbentrop's "*Forestry in British India*" argued that scientific forestry under imperial aegis marked the end of a 'war on the forest' and projected the pre-colonial and early colonial phases as a destructive period.⁹ Similarly, Stebbing argued that it was under the colonial period that the private interests were brought under the scientific supervision.¹⁰ He recommended that the careful management of forest under the experienced hands derived considerable profit for the government.¹¹ British officials, being not much experienced of the forest conservancy induce German experts to India to assist the management of woodlands. Environmental historian like Ramachandra Guha challenges the central premises of these colonial historians and their historical propositions. Guha argued that the practices of colonial forestry largely an outgrowth of the revenue and strategic needs of the empire. The colonial period is seen as an ecological watershed because it disrupted the relationship of forest based communities with the land.¹² He argued that the creation of forest department in 1864 was for the need of supply of timber for the construction of railway lines. The colonial need for timber led the forging of legal mechanism to debar the village communities from the exercise of their rights over forest. The customary restraints on the use of trees had earlier ensured renewal but colonial land control and commercialization led to deforestation.¹³ State monopoly over forest was safeguarded by stringent provision of the Indian Forest Act of 1878.¹⁴ Guha argued that the forest laws restricted small-scale hunting by tribal peoples, but facilitated more organized *shikar* expeditions by the British which led to the a large scale slaughter of animals, in which White *Shikariees* at all levels, from the Viceroy down to the lower echelons of the British Indian army participated.¹⁵ Similarly, Gadgil also sees the period up to 1800 as a time of equilibrium between people and nature.¹⁶ Grove questions the key assumption made by

⁹ Ribbentrop, B., (1900), *Forestry In British India*, Calcutta, Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, , pp 37, 61

¹⁰ Stebbing.E.P., (1921), *The Forest of India*, London: John lane the Bodley Head Limited, , P. 532

¹¹ Stebbing.E.P., op. cit., P. 532

¹² Guha, R., "Forestry In British And Post British India: An Historical Analysis, *EPW* Vol. XVII (1983) pp. 1882-96

¹³ Guha, R., (1989), *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change And Peasant Resistance In The Western Himalaya*, Delhi: Orient Blackswam, P.29.

¹⁴ Guha, R. and M.Gadgil, "State forestry and social conflict in British India", *Past and Present*, Vol.CXXIII (1989),p. 145

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 149

¹⁶ M. Gadgil, *Towards An Ecological History Of India*, *EPW* Vol.XX (1985), Pp.1909-13

Guha regarding the character of colonial conservation. Grove argued that the colonial conservation plan was based on more humanist ground which was motivated by growing deforestation and drought in colonies. The desiccationism promoted the idea of forest conservancy. This resulted in soil erosion, water shrinking and agricultural productivity. Official of the European trading company took note of it wherever they travelled and sought state intervention in the protection of forest. Though some official has played their materialistic interest still there were some colonial officials who have the credit to start the process of systematic forest conservation in India. Grove focused more on the contribution of colonial official towards conservation which was more humane but plays down the capitalist greed behind the forest policy. He further argued that the commitment of a section of colonial officials to conservation was more than significant than narrow materialist concerns.¹⁷ While comparing both Guha and Grove's stand, Mahesh Rangarajan identified the differences in their chronological focus of their research. Grove focuses on early colonial period while Guha focuses on late nineteenth century. There is also another difference between them. While Guha observes the broad unity of imperial interests, Grove examined the differences among colonial officials. Mahesh Rangarajan took a moderate stand and argued that the process of conservation was fostered under the imperial supervision and control but with the compliance of the land users.¹⁸ Rangarajan also agreed that the colonial era marked a watershed; there were new forces at work, with new opportunities and dangers. 'Fencing of Forest' marked a divergent line between people and forest. The pattern of settlement, agricultural production and distribution of fauna all changed in a very short span of time. The changes were not always according to the wishes of the officials but they often faced obstacles as the inhabitants often had radically different priorities. He viewed that the forester were the new face of the alien government and the edifice of formal forestry remains a major legacy of the colonial era.¹⁹ Shivaramakrishnan brought a new dimension in historiography of environment. He argued that the modern forest management in Bengal is a form of 'governmentality' or 'government rationality'. The forest management offered a unique and instructive window on process of state-making. The control over forest by the colonial government

¹⁷Grove. R., (1995), *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Edens and Origins of Environmentalism (1600-1860)*, New York: CUP,

¹⁸ Rangarajan, M., (1996), *Fencing the Forest, Conservation And Ecological Change In India's Central Provinces, 1860-1914*. OUP,

¹⁹ Rangarajan, M., (1996) *op.cit.*, p. 207

was an exploration of state-making. The dominant pattern of state-making that emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century influenced the colonial state-making in which forest was also used as a mechanism of colonial control. He considered the forest management as a part of governance and politics.²⁰

The consequences of colonial intervention had huge impact on the forest. As Ranjan Chakarbarti argued that the colonization of India seemed to be incomplete without the pacification of the jungle. To the British Indian jungles alone had the wilderness to match the valour of the masculine occident.²¹ British intervention in the forest land for various reasons caused increasing conflict between human-wildlife conflicts over their respective habitat. The growing deforestation resulted in immense flood situation and land erosion, never experienced before. All these compel the peasant communities to forcefully assert their claim over government owned forest lands and forest lands were converted into agrarian zones. In this way, the peasant community and their livelihood practice i.e. cultivation became the greatest threat to the forested space including both flora and fauna. On the other hand the enactment of forest acts made colonial state claims legitimated over forest, and hunting, food gathering or cutting trees by inhabitants became illegitimate.²² The livelihood of the forest dependent communities was totally ignored. All this resulted in the creation of two separate spaces of public debate. One group advocates greater preservation of wild animals and biodiversity. The other advocated for a rational redistribution of forest land amongst community and peasants while a few endorse government supervision over forest resources. Scarcity of agricultural land for an increasing peasant population led the forested land under human occupation but the beneficiaries include not only the peasants but also the industrial-business class.²³

A good number of historical writings have drawn attention to the rich flora and fauna of Assam.²⁴ Tucker viewed that by 1900 British government sieged a large forest areas which was one of the highest percentage of any state in India. However he also pointed

²⁰ Sivaramakrishan, K., (1999), *Modern Forest, Statemaking and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India*, New Delhi: OUP

²¹ Chakarbarti, R. (ed.), (2007), *Situating Environmental History*, New Delhi: Manohar, p. 22

²² Ibid.

²³ Sakia., A.J., *op.cit.* p.2

²⁴ H.P Smith And C.P. Purkayastha, (1946), *A Short History of the Assam Forest Service, 1850-1945*, Shillong: Assam Government Press, R.P.Tucker, "The Depletion Of India's Forests under British Imperialism: Planters, Foresters, Peasants in Assam and Kerala, in D.Worster (Ed.) 1988, *The Ends Of The Earth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. R.P. Tucker, *The British Empire And India's Forest Resources: Timberlands of Assam And Kumaon, 1914-1950*, in J.F. Richards And R.P. Tucker (Eds) 1987, *World Deforestation in the Twentieth Century*, Durham: Duke University Press. Etc.

out that the great forest zone of upper Assam was depleted more slowly than most parts of India. Sinha's 'Beyond the Trees, Tigers and Tribes' is the first work which discussed the history of the Eastern Himalayan forests. According to Sinha, the people of North-east region had established relation with the environment and there was not excess use of forest resources as it later happened in case of industrial establishment. The British government drew upon the experience of the German foresters to introduce forestry in India in the second half of the nineteenth century with a view to extract 'valuable' timber for the European sponsored industrial enterprise. According to him the traditional rights of the community over land, forests and wild-life, and even water were drastically curtailed. He stated that a 'bastard system' of tea cultivation which was neither agriculture, nor an industry was patronised at the cost of local resources and communities.²⁵ A similar view was expressed by Rajiv Handique, he viewed that there was limited use of forest resources before the establishment of British rule. The role of the state before British was limited to the collection of revenue from a few forest products but after the advent of the British forest became a resource to which for the extraction and maximization of revenue. Handique viewed that the British forest policy was primarily formulated to earn as much revenue as possible at the wanton destruction of forest wealth. He viewed that the British forest administration favoured the growth of a few commercially viable species of trees neglecting the ecological context of Assam.²⁶ Arupjyoti Saikia study highlighted the environmental loss which is too painful to record and document.²⁷ However, he argued that in the pre-colonial period the forest of Assam was not totally untouched and there were also trade in forest resources. The contest over natural resources caused conflicts and frequent clashes between Ahom and Mughal rulers. Revenue was collected on varieties of forest produce viz; cotton, elephants and birds. The state exchequer mostly relied heavily on the exploitation of forest resources like elephants and timber for constructing boats. Elephants were procured in large numbers not only to strengthen the military system but also for everyday uses of the royal palaces. He viewed that the forest management during pre-British rule in Assam had little to do with the market economy. According to him the Indian Forest programme undermined the livelihood practices of forest depended communities. Even the peasants lost their cultural rights over land and they

²⁵ Sinha, A.C., (1993), *Beyond the Trees, Tigers and Tribes, Historical Sociology of the Eastern Himalayan Forests*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication

²⁶ Handique, R., (2004), *British Forest Policy in Assam*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company

²⁷ Saikia, A.J., (2011), *Forest and Ecological History of Assam*, P.1

were pushed away for their inability to become cash-crop producer.²⁸ British government made policies to have full control over forest to use the forest products for industrial and business purpose and game for hunting purpose. Peasant claimed a share in forest land for agriculture and the rights of the forest dwellers and other forest communities were ignored.²⁹ In this way the struggle for the control over forest started. The colonial state debarred the local inhabitants from their traditional rights over forest and land and forest was converted into a commercial commodity.

1.1.2 Placing the History of 'Wildlife'

A rich body of historical literature contributed to the understanding of wildlife as an important part of environmental history.³⁰ Works based on Africa, America, Zimbabwe suggested that how the fate of wildlife changed because of state intervention. Wildlife reserves were established in the twentieth century where hunting and settlement were prohibited. These reserves were later key sites for preservation and tourism. Mark Stoll agreed that "Although preservationism has left an important legacy of protected biota and natural areas around the world, local people were often removed or prevented from traditional subsistence uses of parkland."³¹ William Beinart and Coates viewed that the colonial governments also tried to reshape African settlements and peasant economies in such a way as to develop sustainable agricultural practices. Such intervention often met with hostility by rural people because they were seen as attempts to undermine indigenous people role over natural resources. In many countries, these conflicts fed into anti-colonial struggles particularly in Africa and South America. This remained an important feature of rural politics in the region.³²

²⁸ Sakia, A.J., *op.cit.*, pp. 1-13

²⁹ Sakia, A.J., *op.cit.*, pp. 1-13

³⁰ Stoll, M., (1997), *Protestantism, Capitalism And Nature In America*, Albuquerque: University Of New Mexico R. Donner (1994) *At the Hand of Man: Peril and Hope for Africa's Wildlife*, New York: Vintage, William Beinart & Coates, P., (1995), *Environment and History: The Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa*, London, Routledge, L.W., Adam, & L.E. Dove, (1989) *Wildlife Reserves And Corridors In The Urban Environment: A Guide To Ecological Landscape Planning And Resource Conservation*, Columbia, MDI National Institute For Urban Wildlife., C.C. Gibson, *Politician and Poachers: The Political Economy of Wildlife Policy in Africa*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Uni. Press, J., Foster (1978) *Working For Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada*, Toronto, Canada: University Of Toronto Press. H.K. Steen (1999), *Forest And Wildlife Science In America: A History*, Durham, NC: Forest History Society, J. Alexander, & J., Gregor, (2000) *Wildlife And Politics: Campfire In Zimbabwe: Development And Change*.

³¹ Kerch Shepard, Et. All, (Ed) *Encyclopaedia Of Environmental History*, New York, Routledge Publication, 2004, Vol. 3 P. 1018

³² Kerch Shepard, Et. All, (Ed) *Encyclopaedia Of Environmental History*, New York, Routledge Publication, 2004, Vol. 1, P. 19

A few works in India on wildlife history discussed by linking the aspects of the forestry, shifting cultivation, tea cultivation, timber, issue of tribes, conservation etc.³³ But when talk about wildlife it not only means the conservation policies but also the existence of wildlife, wildlife hunting and its consequences and human-wildlife conflict in the past. Mahesh Ragarajan's '*India's Wildlife History*' is the first seminal work to discuss the wildlife history of India. According to him wild animals during the British rule in India was supposed as curse to be wiped out during British rule. The Practice of eradicating wild animals was new to India; no previous rulers were ever attempted to eradicate any species. According to him the idea of the British government was to push back the jungle land and to extend the area under cultivation so as to earn more revenue for British exchequer. The need of timber to meet the requirement of sleepers for railway lines led to the reservation of forest by the British. The prime motive behind the reservation of forest by the British government had little to do with fauna and in turn it had much to do with the changing significance of forest wealth in the empire's scheme of things.³⁴ Mahesh Rangarajan further argued that game protection of was not a top priority of the Government of India and much depended on the official on the spot.³⁵ Similarly, Valmiki Thapar argued that by the end of the nineteenth century a bunch of men whom he called a wild bunch not only put down their hunting records but also saw the rich natural history and because of their efforts that many of the first laws on forest and wildlife conservation were founded and amended. The hunters started to protect their wilderness and some even considered giving up the gun to save wildlife. Sanderson, Forsyth and Sterndale were the forest officers who recorded the richness of wildlife that too even without knowing if they were playing a vital role in what would

³³ For Instance, Guha, R., (2009) (Revised Edition), *The Unquiet Woods*, New Delhi: OUP, David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha (Eds), (1995), *Nature, Culture, and Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia*, New Delhi: OUP, G. Cederlof and K. Shivaramakrisnan (Eds), (2006), *Ecological Nationalism*, Delhi: Permanent Black, R. Grove, V. Damodaran, And S. Sangwan (Eds), (1998), *Nature And The Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*, New Delhi: OUP, Ramachandra Guha And Madhav Gadgil, 2000, *Ecology and Equity: The Use and Abuse of Nature*, New Delhi: OUP, Ramachandra Guha And Madhav Gadgil, (1992) *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India* New Delhi, OUP; Deepak Kumar, Vinita Damodaran and Rohan D'Souza (Eds), (2011), *The British Empire and The Natural World, Environmental Encounters in South Asia*, New Delhi, OUP, Sumit Guha, (1999), *Environment & Ethnicity In India*, USA: Cambridge University Press;

³⁴ Rangarajan, M., (2005), *India's Wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black.

³⁵ Ibid. 57

happen in the next century.³⁶ The British intervention in forest has huge impact on tribes and created the conflict between state and tribe. As Ranjan Chakarbarti argued that British were the real poachers but they used the game laws to brand the indigenous forest people as ‘poachers’, who earned their livelihood from forest. The indigenous people being deprived of the age-old forest rights, often refused to recognize the validity of government’s claims and continued to cultivate at their own will. They cut trees, burnt forest floors as they had been doing since time immemorial. Animals having been destroyed the European hunters later emerged as self-styled conservationist and also went out to romanticize the tropical rain forest and its animals.³⁷

Sinha argued that the Pre-British hill economy was village based. They used to catch wild animals for games, trade and exchange.³⁸ Arupjyoti argued that the concern of historical works over forest has changed over time. Jungle an erstwhile space for wild animals and ghost became turned into ‘ordered forest’.³⁹ The understanding of forest and the relation of human with the forest has changed over time. Earlier people used to go to the jungle very much as they pleased, hunted and fished⁴⁰ but gradually it mostly restricted to forest based communities. The nineteenth century brought a new concept of forest; earlier ignored forest products became saleable. The journey of forest from jungle to a scientific forest has passed from ignored place to petty trade in forest products like timber, bamboo, and tusk, skin of wild animals etc., and from petty trade to brisk business in international market. This led to the emergence of the concept of forest management. The main purpose of the British government was to get maximum profit from trade of forest produce on the one hand and on the other to generate revenue from expansion of cultivation as much as they could.

Primarily wild animals were seen as a threat to the expansion of agriculture and the extinction of carnivores was the main aim of the forest department to safeguard the paddy fields, cattle and human lives. With the killing of the wild animals for game, hunting and for its tusk or skin, the fate of several wild species became deplorable. The

³⁶ Thapar, V. (ed.), (2003), *Battling for Survival, India’s Wilderness over Two Centuries*, New Delhi: OUP, p.9

³⁷ Chakarbarti, R., (1998), *The Jungle, The Imperial Hunt And British Imperialism 1800-1900*, in C.Pailt and A.Bhattacharyya (ed.), *Science, Technology, Medicine And Environment*, Kolkata: Bibisha

³⁸ Sinha, A.C., (1993), *Beyond the Trees, Tigers and Tribes, Historical Sociology of the Eastern Himalayan Forests*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication

³⁹ Sakia, A.J., *op.cit*, pp. 1-13

⁴⁰ Baden Powell, B.H., (1882), *A Manual of Jurisprudence for Forest Officers*, Calcutta

nineteenth century environmental consciousness led to the emergence of some wildlife protection policies. Hunting and sports for trophies and game came under regimented control since the first few decades of the 20th century and this supervision over the uncontrolled destruction of wild animals laid down the principle of the establishment of the game sanctuaries. Though the protection of forest took much earlier but the protection of wildlife is a much later phenomena, it was only in 1912 the first wildlife protection act came which attempted to protect wildlife. However, the discussion on wildlife protection started in 1887; it was the Madras government who realised the need of putting some restrictions on the destruction of birds and wild animals.⁴¹ But the Provincial government of Assam felt that there was no need of any such rules to be implemented in the province.⁴²

The British conquest of India brought about the plunder of natural resources together with a complete indifference towards environmental protection. The early environmental legislation reveals that apart from the forest laws, nineteenth century legislation also partially regulated two other aspects of Indian environment water pollution and wildlife. However, these laws had a narrow purpose and limited territorial reach. In the field of wild life protection, early legislation was limited to specific areas and particular species, there by aiming at the conservation of biodiversity. Despite the fact that these measures were made with secret motives, British enacted legislations contributed significantly to the growth of environmental jurisprudence in India. During the colonial period human presence in the forest for fuel, grazing, the collection of minor forest produce was a departmental concern or related with the department's function. At most humans were instrumentally used to help increase the output of commercially valuable forest products. Human activities were harshly confined within hunting reserve of princely kingdoms in various parts of India, and within which the royalty and the British Officials were assured of the availability of adequate 'sport'. Thus, within the British India many reserved forests were divided into shooting Blocks where hunting for sport for a few people was allowed though under strict regulations. Many of these Reserves set up in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, have

⁴¹ (NAI) Home, Public-A, 1886, November, File No, 34/61, Sub: Preservation of game Birds and Animals in India

⁴² Ibid.

been converted to national parks and sanctuaries.⁴³ Among them in Assam are the Kaziranga, Laokhowa and North Kamrup game reserves.

The Colonial understanding and the international fauna preservation movement led to the establishment of various game reserves and wildlife sanctuaries in India. A Small section of the planters took the leading role in the preservation of the rich fauna of Assam. There was rampant killing of rhino and the threat of rhino killing had assumed frightening proportions. Forest officials noticed the declining population of rhinoceros and decried the killing of the animal. It was the time when the hunters from Bengal arrived in large number to have an experience of killing the animals resulting in reckless and indiscriminate destruction of the all game in the province. By 1905 it was found that the rhinoceros had completely disappeared from North Lakhimpur. J.C. Arbuthnott as the Officiating Commissioner of Assam Valley had written to the Chief Commissioner about the rhino and said about the decreasing number of rhino and other animals in the area. He also said that in case of rhinoceros, the killing of females and immature animals had brought the species on the verge of extinction. He suggested putting some kind of restriction on the killing of animals. This led the government to seriously take up the measure of protection of game. The commissioner admitted the necessity of banning the killing of rhino but for that a sanction of the legislative council was necessary. This forced the government to consider the formation of an asylum, which would help the rhino to take shelter during the times of crisis. This consideration of creating an asylum for the rhino led to the proposal of game reserve at Kaziranga, Laokhowa and North-Kamrup in 1905.⁴⁴

The history of Kaziranga National park in the Golaghat and Nagaon district of the state of Assam can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century, when Baroness Mary Victoria Leiter Curzon, wife of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, first visited the Kaziranga area in 1904. Concerned about the dwindling numbers of rhinoceros, she asked her husband to take the necessary action to save the rhinoceros. Lord Cuzon proposed for the creation of a reserve in Kaziranga. Thus, the Kaziranga proposed reserve forest was created on 57,273.6 acres (232 km²) of land, on June 1, 1905 by notification of the Chief Commissioner of the area. But Kaziranga was formally declared as a game reserve only in 1908. It was home for a good number of animals

⁴³ Sebarwal, V. K.. & M. Rangarajan, (2009), *Battles Over Nature, Science and the Politics of Conservation*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, P.5

⁴⁴ Arupjyoti Saikia, (2005) *Jungle, Reserve and Wild Life, A History of Forest In Assam*, Assam: Wildlife Areas Development and Welfare Trust P.269

like one-horned Asian rhinoceros, wild buffalo, elephant, wild boar, gaur, royal Bengal tiger, leopard, swamp deer, sambar, hoolock gibbon, pelican, horn bill, white throated brown horn bill, swamp birds and a few varieties of monkey. Laokhowa wild life Sanctuary located in the northern part of Nagaon District, on the southern bank of Brahmaputra to the West of Silghat declared as the game reserve 1907. The reserve provided shelter to numerous mammals and bird species such as rhino, wild boar, Asiatic water buffalo, leopard cat, civet cat, hog deer, black deer, elephant and tiger etc. North-Kamrup or Mannas wildlife sanctuary as it came to be known lies in the north western corner of Barpeta District below the Bhutan foothills on the eastern bank of Manas river was declared as North Kamrup forest reserve in 1907 which was previously preserved as royal hunting ground. The park had a great variety of wildlife including many endangered species such as tiger, the pygmy hog, the Indian rhinoceros and elephant.

Through this research work an attempt has been made to study the wild life situation and British policy towards wildlife in Assam. The present study is justified on the point that, the wildlife consist of an important part of our environment and its preservation is important for saving the world from environmental degradation and the study of conservation practice in colonial Assam will help the environmentalist, botanist and policy makers in the formulation of policies related to wildlife for maintenance of environmental balance.

The period chosen for this work is from 1826 till the year of 1947. This has been made considering the fact that the British took over Assam from the Burmese in the year 1826 by the treaty of Yandaboo till the end of the British rule.

1.2 Objectives

- To study the wild life situation in colonial Assam.
- To examine the colonial hunting practices.
- To study the conflicts between agrarian practices and the games.
- To explore the nature of colonial policies of wildlife conservation.
- To study the establishment of game reserves and wildlife sanctuaries in different parts of Assam viz: Kaziranga, North Kamrup, Sonai Rupa, Orang and Laokhowa reserve etc.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Study Area

The area of study of this proposed research will cover the study of wild life in the colonial Assam i.e. the present state of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram besides Assam, Comprising the two valleys of Brahmaputra and the Barak along with the surrounding mountain range. All these areas are within the geographical limits of Assam in the context of this research work.

1.3.2 A Note on Sources

The present study involves the empirical and analytical method of research on the basis of both primary and secondary sources which contains the colonial archival materials, and published and un-published government records, government proceedings, legislative proceedings, census reports, manuals, Forest Acts, administration reports of the province of Assam, forest administration reports and Indian National Congress proceedings, memoirs, related books and journal articles.

The primary sources like government proceedings papers, government reports, government records, government files of various departments viz. Home, Education, Health & Land, Forest, Finance and military etc., have been collected from National Archive of India, New Delhi; Directorate of West Bengal State Archive, Kolkata; Directorate of Mizoram State Archive, Aizole; Directorate of Assam State Archive, Guwahati; Assam Legislative Assembly, Guwahati; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; National library, Kolkata; Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi; and Library of the principal Chief Conservator of Forest Office, Guwahati; Secondary Sources contains published books and journal articles collected from various libraries viz., Nandatalukdar Library, Guwahati; Nabin Chandra Puthibharal, Guwahati; ICHR library, Guwahati; District library, Guwahati; Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Guwahati; Asiatic Society Library, Kolkata; Director of Assam Institute of Research for Tibals and Schedule Caste: Guwahati; Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social science and Development: Guwahati; Assam Administrative Staff College Library: Guwahati; Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti, Guwahati; Kalakhetra library, Guwahati; Baptist Mission Library, Guwahati; Indian Institute of Technology Library, Guwahati and Assam University Library, Silchar. Apart from these, Rajiv Gandhi National Park, Orang was visited and interviewed Chakrapani Ray, Forest Ranger, Rajiv Gandhi National Park and Dependra Dev, Field Assistant, Eco System India in April, 2013.

1.4 Chapteristaion

The introductory chapter discusses the debates on environment history and contextualised in the broad wildlife historiography. It also discusses the environmental historiography of Assam. This chapter identifies wildlife as an important issue to be study as a part of environmental history. It also includes the objectives, methodology and chapterisation of the thesis.

Second chapter explores the pre-1874 condition of wildlife as till this period Assam was a part of Bengal presidency so attempt has been made to study the pre-1874 condition of wildlife and the British policies towards it.

Third chapter examines the human-wildlife conflict. It has been attempted to study various causes that led to the depletion of wild animals- hunting, extension of cultivation, increase of human population and trade. It discusses how all these causes led to the deforestation of wildlife habitat that caused massive conflicts between human and wildlife. The chapter discusses the destruction caused by wild animals on human life and property including the statistical study of the number of people and cattle killed by wild animals. It also discusses flood that cause more conflicts between people and wildlife.

Fourth chapter studies the destruction of wildlife as a result of human-wildlife conflict. It discusses the British policy towards wildlife. It studies various methods like reward giving, appointment of professional *shikarees*, and issue of gun licenses and guns that led to massive destruction of wild animals of the province. It studies the statistical records of the number of wild animals killed during the British rule. It also discusses the destruction of wild animals in various districts of the province.

Fifth chapter reveals the elephant hunting as it was different from other wildlife hunting because of its administrative use. It studied the importance of elephant catching, elephant hunting under kheddah department, private lease system of elephant hunting, revenue from elephant hunting, conflict over elephant etc. It studied the starting the elephant protection polices which later led to the starting of the wildlife protection policies.

Sixth chapter analyses the protection polices for the wildlife. It reveals the circumstances under which British government adopted various polices towards the protection of wildlife. It discusses British legislation towards the protection of wildlife through which the right of the tribal people over forest were curtailed. The curtailment of their rights over forest led the tribal people to go against forest rules. They often

killed wild animals for tusk, horn and hide. The British government thus blamed the tribals for the act of poaching and tried to establish themselves as protector of wildlife. This chapter also discussed wildlife conferences of 1930's for the preservation of wildlife and their impact in Assam.

Seventh chapter discusses the formation of game reserve as an attempt to provide an asylum to the wild animals and games preserved in sanctuaries. It also discussed the conservation of wildlife in game reserves and how it led to the commercialisation the wildlife sanctuaries.

The last chapter is the concluding part of the thesis. It discusses the findings of the thesis.

Chapter - 2

LIVING WITH THE WILD

“In the greater land of Brahmapootra there is a strip of land from six to twenty miles broad on each side ... These lands are therefore uninhabitable, and so long as, the population is scanty, will remain unreclaimed. Over them grows the thick jungle of long grass and reeds and here and in the forests are the homes of tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, bison, monkeys, bears, snakes, deer and wild pig. Partridge, wild duck, and snipe are numerous; and the river itself abounds in alligators and large fish- A.C. Newcombe.”¹

The province of Assam has been endowed with valuable animals like the world famous one horned rhinoceros is native to its forests.² Rhinoceros inhabits in the densest parts of the forest.³ John M’Cosh’s ‘*Topography of Assam*’ mentioned that “wild elephants are plentiful, and, move in large herds and are very destructive both to the crops and to human life; entering villages in day light and plundering granaries, and stores of salt, of which latter they are very fond.”⁴ These jackals were numerous and they were worst night disturbers to the people of Assam province.⁵ S.R. Ward viewed that, “There were night visitors of a stronger and more dangerous kind; your cattle and horses are not safe when a leopard or tiger is prowling about your dwelling, which is not an unusual occurrence, as everyone knows who has been many months in Assam.”⁶ These animals caused massive damage and destruction of life and property. *Shikariees* were appointed by the government to kill the wild animals for saving life and property. Occasionally villagers organized themselves to kill wild animals. In view of these, British

¹ Newcombe, A.C., (1905), *Village, Town And Jungle Life In India*, Edinburgh And London: William Blackwood and Sons, p. 258

² The East- India Gazetteer (1828), by W. Hamilton also mention about the huge spread of jungle, hills and wilderness of the province

³ M’cosh, John,(1837), *Topography Of Assam*, Calcutta: Bengal Military Orphan press, P. 45

⁴ M’cosh, John, *Op.cit.*, p. 44

⁵ Ward, S.R., (1884) *A Glimpse of Assam*, Calcutta: Thomas S. Smith, P.136

⁶ Ibid.

government introduced giving of rewards for killing wild animals for saving human life and cattle which caused a large number of destruction of wild animals. This chapter discusses the condition of wildlife during early the British rule in the province of Assam and also the early British policies towards wildlife. It also includes - the existence of various kinds of wildlife species, human-wildlife conflict, damages done by wild animals and the measures adopted by British government for the destruction of wild animals prior to 1874, when Assam was under the Bengal province. In the year 1874, Assam was declared a separate province under the Chief Commissioner and consequently the separate forest department in Assam province started function though it was formed originally in the year, 1864.

The province of Assam was full of wild animals. The Assamese folk tales are also full of the stories of birds and animals which signify the abundance of wild animals and birds in this province of the country.⁷ Assamese folk tales say the story of people fear over wildlife. One folk tale entitled 'The Chief Daughter and the Snake' describes the giving of goat or other animals to snakes so that it prevents them from inflicting some terrible punishment upon the villagers. Another story entitled 'The Spirits of Animals' narrates about a hunter who killed all kinds of animals.⁸ Animals played a large role in all popular imagination.⁹ Similarly, it is ardent from the Judicial and Revenue administrative report of Assam, 1835 that there were herds of elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, tigers, leopards, jackals and numerous kinds of monkeys.¹⁰ Wild elephants and rhinoceros appear to abound in great numbers in Uiphum range tract of Lushai country.¹¹ There were also large number of jungle fowl and pheasants.¹² A large number of wild animals like elephant, tiger, leopard, sambur, hog-deer, metna, pig and monkey were found in the Lushai hills.¹³ Uiphum tract of Lushai hills has been described as,

⁷ Talukdar, Nanda, (1983), *Lambodar Bara Rachnawali*, Assam Prakashan Parishad, S.N.Barkakati (1970), *Tribal Folk Tales of Assam*, Guwahati : Assam Publication Board, J.Borooah, (1915) *Folk Tales of Assam*, Howrah: Timer & Stores, Praphulla Datta Goswami, (1960), *Ballads and Tales of Assam*, Department of Publication, University of Gauhati, Assam, , Lakhshmi Nath Bejbarua, (1988) *Bejbarua-Granthawali, Pratham Khanda*, , Guwahati: Sahitya Prakash

⁸ Barkakati, S.N., (1970) *Tribal Folk Tales Of Assam*, Guwahati: Assam Publication Board, P.7

⁹ Goswami, Praphulla Datta, (1960) *Ballads And Tales Of Assam*, Department of Publication, University of Guwahati, p. 79

¹⁰ (ASA), Judicial and Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836

¹¹ (ASA), 1872, BGP, File No. 215/523, Report on the Survey of the Lushai Country Leaving the Cold Season of 1871-71, Captain Tonner's Diary.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

“few parts of the world and certainly no country so abundantly supplied with water and shade is so destitute of game as the land we have been traversing for the past four months. Kookies destroy birds, beast and fish by every means in their power: by shooting and by every description of ingeniously devised and cunningly- conceded trap. On the Uiphum range, however where there has been no habitation for many years, game is abundant, the jungles are full of melody and resound with the strange cries and notes of birds with which the Indian traveller is quite unfamiliar.”¹⁴

The water of Brahmaputra River where ever flowed made the land fertile over which grow the long grass and thick jungles. Colonel Pollock, Madras Staff Corps viewed that “Wherever this river has once flowed and receded it has left vast beds, which are now swamps, covered with tangled and high grass, many of which are quite impassable for laden elephants. In these recesses, almost impregnable, vast herds of elephants, rhinoceros and buffaloes live unmolested, save by an occasional European hunter, who, unheeded of the stories told him by the old stay-at home residents of the deadly malaria prevent there, has penetrated their wilds.”¹⁵ Almost every district of the province was full of wild animals. Darrang swarmed with elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, buffaloes, bison, deer of many kinds, bears, pigs, etc.¹⁶ Elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, rhinoceros, buffaloes, large deer, and wild pigs were the wild animals, common in Kamrup, found especially in the north of the District, which swarmed with animals of all kinds.¹⁷ The larger sorts of game common in Goalpara were tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, bears, buffaloes, and deer.¹⁸ Wild animals and large game abounded in the Garo hills, but were rarely to be seen owing to the dense forests and jungle. Wild elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards wild dogs, deer of various kinds, wild hogs, buffaloes, and *mithun* or wild cattle were found in this district of the province.¹⁹ Tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, mithuns or wild cows, bears, leopards, wolves, jackals, foxes, wild hog, and several kinds of deer thrived in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.²⁰ The

¹⁴ (ASA), 1872, BGP, File No. 215/523, Report on The Survey of the Lushai Country Leaving the Cold Season of 1871-71, Captain Tonner’s Diary.

¹⁵ Pollack,C., & W.S. Them, (1900), *Wild Sports Of Burma And Assam*, London: Hurst and Blackett, , p.426

¹⁶ Hunter, W.W., (1879), *A Statistical Account Of Assam*, Vol.I & II, London: Trubner & Co., p.108

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, P.25

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, P.27

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, P.145

²⁰ *Ibid.*, P.214

principal wild animals found in Naga Hill District were the elephant (*Elephas Indicus*), rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros Indicus*), wild buffalo (*Bubalus arni*), tiger (*Felis tigris*), leopard (*Felis pardus*), black bear (*Ursus ferox*), *gáyal* or *mithun* (*Gavæus frontalis*), wild boar (*Sus Indicus*), *Sámbar* deer (*Rusa aristotelis*), hog-deer (*Axis pocinus*), civet cat (*Viverra zibetha*), tiger cat (*Felis marmorata*) and common wild cat (*Felis chaus*). The other mammals found in the district were the Pangolin or ant-eater (*Manis pentedactyla*), porcupine (*Histria Bengalensis*), *huluk* (*Hylobates hoolook*), *lángur* or *Hanumán* (*presbytis entellus*), common monkey (*Inuus rhesus*), bamboo rat (*rhizomys badzius*), common brown rat (*Mus decumanus*), common striped squirrel (*Sciurus palmarum*), grey flying squirrel (*Scinopeterus fimbriatus*), and black hill squirrel (*Sciurus macruroides*).²¹ Wild animals found in Sylhet district were wild elephants, tigers, leopards, wild pigs, buffaloes, sambhár deer, bara singha or swamp deer, and hog deer in the jungly tracts, besides bison in the south-eastern part of the district.²² In Lakhimpur district Wild elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, bears, buffaloes, wild hogs, *sambhar* deer, marsh deer, hog deer, and barking deer, were common. The *mithun*, or wild cow (*Bos gaurus*), was also found in the district.²³ Sibsagar district was abound of the larger sort of game, elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, bears, buffaloes, and deer were also found in abundance.²⁴ The existence of a large number of wild animals in the province of Assam in past can be observed in many other literatures.²⁵ The imperial Gazetteer of India (1908) explains,

“The most noteworthy wild animals are elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, bears, wild dogs, wild hog, deer, buffaloes, and bison (*Bosgaurus*). The mithan or gayal (*Bos frontalis*) has been domesticated by the wild tribes, but it is doubtful whether it is now found in Assam in a wild

²¹ Hunter, W.W., (1879), *Op. Cit.* Ibid.p.177

²² Ibid. 269

²³ Ibid. P.177

²⁴ Ibid., p.300

²⁵ M'Cosh, John, (Ed.) *Op. cit.*, pp. 41-51. Mrs. S.R.Ward, (1884), *Glimpse Of Assam*, Calcutta, Thomas & Smith, pp. 134-154, A.C. Newcombe, (1905), *Village, Town And Jungle Life In India*, Edinburgh And London, William Blackwood And Sons, , PP.256-295, Somerset Playne (Compiled) (1917) *Bengal And Assam Behar And Orissa, Their History, People, Commerce And Industrial Resources*, London, The Foreign And Colonial Compiling And Publishing Co., , p.374, James Inglis,(1892) *Tent Life In Tiger Land*, London: Sampson Low, Maeston And Company, Baden Powell, (1889) *Pig Sticking or Hog Hunting, A Complete Account For Sportsmen And Others*, Pall Mall: Harrison & Sons,p. 145, E.P.Stebbing, (1920) *The Diary Of A Sportsman Naturalist In India*, London: John Lane. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire, (1909) Vol I Descriptive. Published under the authority of his majesty's secretary of state for India in council, Oxford, ,p.27, Walter Del Mar, (1906), *The Romantic East Burma, Assam & Kashmir*, London, Charles black, , p. 109

state. Rhinoceros are of three kinds: the large variety (unicornis), which lives in the swamps that fringe the Brahmaputra; the smaller variety (soiidaicus), which is occasionally met with in the same locality; and the small two-horned rhinoceros (siwiatrensis), which is now and again seen in the hills south of the Surma Valley, though its ordinary habitat is Sumatra, Borneo, and the Malay Peninsula. The ordinary varieties of deer found in the Province are the sambar (Cervus unicolor), the barasingha or swamp deer (Cervus duvaucii), the hog deer (Cervus porcinus), and the barking-deer (Cervus muntjac). Goat-antelopes (Nemorhaedus bubalinus and Cemas gorat) are occasionally met with on the higher hills, but are scarce and shy.”²⁶

The abundances of large number of game, birds, grass and jungle, could be observed in the province and the hunting was occasionally practiced. The large number of wild animals seldom caused trouble to human life and property. However, this conflict between human and animal was not in large scale as it could be seen during British period. Vernacular source like ‘Buranjies’ does not mention about the human-wildlife conflict other than the capturing of wild elephants for administrative purpose.²⁷ But wild animals were used for making of ‘gati’ (a thick skin-made jacket) and shields with buffalo, rhinoceros, and deer skins.²⁸ The killing of wild animals for their flesh and ivory was common in medieval Assam. Yogini Tantra speaks of animals like buffaloes, rhinoceros, musk-deer, hair, wild birds, deer, goat, sheep, tortoise, pig, wild fowl and fishes as suitable items of diet even for the goddesses.²⁹ Occasional conflict between human and wildlife could not be ignored but there was no serious depredation by wild animals or the killing of wild animals in large numbers during medieval period. The Medieval rulers encouraged to clear the jungles for the extension of cultivation but because of heavy rain fall in the area it used to be filled with heavy jungles. The historical evidences showed that the Ahom kings encouraged the cultivators to clear

²⁶ The Imperial Gazetteer of India,(1908) Published under the Authority of His Majesty Secretary of State for India in Council, Oxford: Clarendon Press,P.20

²⁷ ‘Buranjies’ are a class of historical chronicles, written initially in the Ahom and afterwards in western Assamese dialect.

²⁸ Gogoi, Lila, (1986), *The Buranjis, Historical Literature Of Assam*, New Delhi: Omsons publication, , p. 215

²⁹ Gogoi, Jahnabi (Nath), (2002), *Agrarian System Of Medieval Assam*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, p. 113, Yogini Tantra is a 16th century tantric text by an unknown author and dedicated to the worship of Hindu goddesses Kali and Kamakhya.

jungle for seasonal and temporary crops.³⁰ The peasants were at liberty to clear off the jungles and brought them under cultivation. This way they could keep their surrounding clear and aloof from the attacks of the wild animals.

In the initial years, Assam being a peripheral area under Bengal presidency was not given prime importance that led to the administrative negligence of the area. Even the British government charge revenue for the clearance of jungle which was much needed for the survival of life as the province was full of jungles and wild animals could risk their life. The peasants were not at freedom even to clear 100 yards of jungle from their house. The clearance of jungle in the province was initiated only after the British officials realized the importance of commercial value of tea. At least till 1859 the peasants were not free to clear the jungles, when officials realised the need of clearing jungles (see page no. 6). The reason for this might be the revenue collected by the government for the clearance of jungle. Till Assam was administered under the Bengal presidency it was mostly ignored and revenue was collected even for the clearance of jungle. Though it sounds astonishing but it might be the exploitative nature of the British government that they collected revenue even for the clearance of jungle. The absence of the clearance of jungle caused the increase of the jungle (home of wild animals), which brought the wild animals and people in direct contact. The wild animals started committing serious depredations on the crops, more particularly the elephants, which often demolish granaries in the open day to get the grain and salt.³¹ Destruction of crops and cattles by wild animals made the human settlement so difficult that many villages were abandoned. The ravages by wild animals made the life very difficult.

2.1 Menace of Wildlife

The life of human being and cattle was not secured in the province due to the damage caused by wildlife. The lives and property of the people in many villages in this province were uninhibited because of the depredation by the ferocious wild animals. Wild elephants frequently damaged crops. In the winter of 1866-67, one village was abandoned as a consequence of the destruction caused by wild animals in the Kamrup

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 47, 36

³¹ (ASA), Judicial And Revenue Administrative Report Of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836

district.³² In Naga Hills a village was deserted by its inhabitants on account of the depredation by the ferocious tigers.³³ Captain Rogers, Bengal Staff cops, describe that, “No thefts or murders in India can exceed the horrors and misery caused by the wild animals, and no picture or language can give even a faint idea of the suffering of their victims. These poor creatures, living as they do for the most part in district seldom or ever visited by any European, except an occasional sportsman, are obliged to bear their losses or sufferings with little or no chance of the same being brought to the notice of the government, whose subjects they are.”³⁴ British official feared for the safety of their lives. Missionary records also reveal the depredation caused by wild animals. It was viewed that Jaipur and Sadiya were abandoned by its inhabitants to the tigers and jackals.³⁵ Wild animals caused havoc in most of the part of the province. They killed a large number of people every year. Statistical records reveal the depredation caused by wild animals.

Table 2.1 Number of people killed by wild animals during 1833 and 1834

Year	By wild elephants	By wild buffaloes	By tigers	By wild hogs	By alligators	Total
1833	17	2	4	2	0	25
1834	17	0	8	1	1	27
Grand total						52

Source: M'cosh, John, *Topography of Assam*, Ed. Laxmi Nath Tamuly, Guwahati, Bhawani Print And Publication, 2010,P. 117

³² Hunter, W.W., (1879), *op.cit.*, Vol 1 P.25

³³(ASA), Judicial and Revenue Administrative Report Of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836

³⁴ (NAI), Home Public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48

³⁵ Gammell, W., (1850),*History Of American Baptist Missions In Asia, Africa, Europe And North America Under The Care Of The American Baptist Missionary Union*, Boston: Gould, Kendall And Lincoln

Table 2.2 Number of person killed by wild animals from 1858-63

District	No. of persons killed by					Remarks
	tiger	Leopard	bear	wolves	Other animals	
Gowalparah	(a) 74		6		(b)42	(a)Eleven cubs;(b)5 by bears, 3 by rhinoceros, 30 by buffaloes and 4 by elephants;
Kamroop	229		22		41	.....
Durrung	65	44	5	3	(a)71	(a)56 by buffaloes, 4 by mad dogs, 10 by boars and 1 by rhinoceros;
Seeksagar	8				(a)21	(a)3 by elephants, 17 by buffaloes and 1 by jackals
Lukimpore	11		1		(a) 2	(a) By buffaloes
Cossyah and jynthead hills	8					.....
Nowgong	336				(a)15	(a)By buffaloes
Cachar	26				(b)4	(b)by wild boars
Sylhet	64		1		(a)21	(a)4 by buffaloes, 12 by boars, 4 by elephants and 1 by stag
Total	821	44	35	3	217	

Source: NAI Home, Public-A, February, 1870, File No. 31-48

Table 2.3 Number of people killed by wild animals from 1866-69

District	Loss of human life from several kinds of wild animals			Loss of cattle or crops from the same cause		
	In 1866-67	In 1867-68	In 1868-69	In 1866-67	In 1867-68	In 1868-69
Kamrup	110	82	77			
Durrung	15	15	40			
Nowgong	61	72	45			
Seeksagor	7	9	6			
Luckimpore	22	31	61			
Khasi and jynthead hills	28	18	16			
Naga hills			4			
Cachar	13	16	11			
Sylhet	1121	1074	1263	918	947	940
Gowalpara	37	46	70*			
Total	1413	1363	1577			

Remarks: *represents the number killed during three years Source: NAI, Home, Public-A, September, 1871, File No, 43-72

Table 2.4 Number of people killed by snakebite during 1866-69

District	1866-67	1867-68	1868-69
Kamroop	28	33	33
Durrung	2	2	12
Nowgong	14	19	27
Seeksagor	2	.....	4
Luckimpore	.....	.....	.....
Khasi and Jynteah hills	No report received		
Naga Hills	No report received		
Cachar	4	2	5
Sylhet	14	35	45
Gowalpara	.....	9	34
Total	64	100	160

Source: NAI, Home, Public-A, 1871, September, File No. 43-72

A large number of people were killed during the early British rule in the province. From 1858-63 a total of 1,120 people were reported to have been killed in various districts of Assam. In 1866 a total of 1,413, in 1867 a total of 1,363 and 1869 a total of 1,577 people were reported to have been killed by wild animals. By snake bite 324 people were reported to have been killed during 1866-1869. The reports for the cattle killed by wild animals for all the districts of Assam are not available except Sylhet where 2,805 cattle were reported to have been killed during 1866 -1869. Between 1869-70, 277 people and in 1870-71, 239 people were reported to have been killed by wild animals.³⁶ In Kamroop 135 people, 16 in Durrung, 49 in Nowgoan, 3 in Sibsagar, 9 in Luckimpore, 9 in Khasi & Jynteah hills, 18 in Naga Hills were killed in 1870-71.³⁷ Among deaths reported by snake bite 62 people were killed in 1869-70 and 72 people in 1870-71.³⁸

Tiger proved more dangerous animals which led to the killing of maximum number of people during early British rule. Followed by Buffaloes which reported to have killed 124 people from 1858-63. Leopard, bears, wild boars proved equally dangerous for life and property. Elephant, rhinoceros, jackal also occasionally killed people. The wild animals were also dangerous for livestock. Though, reports for all the districts of the province are not available. The Sylhet district reported to have been killed a good number of livestock every year as shown in the table 2.3. However, many deaths from wild animals and snakes were not reported to police and the return of wild animals killed does not include the large animals that were unquestionably annually destroyed

³⁶ (ASA), Judicial And Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

by sportsman and those persons who did not claim authorized rewards. On the other hand sudden deaths from natural causes and probably even cases of homicide and suicide were frequently reported as deaths from snake bite.³⁹ The Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills viewed that the number of casualties by wild beasts reported by police during 1835 falls far short of the actual number killed by them.⁴⁰ A large number of losses of life from venomous snakes were also observed. Even it could be observed that the casualties were more by snake-bite than the wild animals.

The reason for this increased conflict between human and wildlife was that during early days of British in the province British did not give prime importance to this land even jungle were not cleared off which led to the increased conflict between human and wild animals. Even it was not safe for the villagers to walk for 100 yards from home. Tigers were numerous in this province. The thick jungle afforded them plenty of cover; and, as sportsmen were comparatively few, they become in some parts more aggressive than usual.⁴¹ Wild animals made the existence of life and property an utter impossibility. Jungles were so heavy that it was almost impossible to track any wild animal. The lack of clearing jungles caused increase of wild animals in the jungles. Elephant mahals when disposed by auction the ryots were not allowed to cut or burn the jungles. It was also called by the government an inducement for the ryots to keep the jungle for thatching their huts etc. Therefore they were deterred from clearing so much land as they otherwise would. Lieutenant J. Lamb, District collector, Durrung wrote to J.Jenkins, commissioner of revenue Assam,

“The asamese as a body prefer money to comforts and in some instances to the necessities of life will you therefore do me the favor of submitting the matter for the further consideration of the Board as unless the ryotts are allowed to cut the jungles I fear the country will soon become so overrun with tigers, bears etc that it will be dangerous to travel on foot. It was bad enough before but now it is not without risk that a man can go 100 yards out of the station after night fall, and what must be where only 2 or 3 dozen people live is easily conceived. I was obliged to go out with several elephants a few days ago to drive away a tiger that had killed some cows

³⁹ (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871, File No.43-72

⁴⁰(ASA), Judicial and Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836

⁴¹ A.C.Newcombe, (1905), *op.cit.* P.282

close to indeed I may almost say in the station but the jungle is so heavy that it is out of the question to kill them. I have notice the dense grass jungle also close up to the villages and when I asked why they did not cut it down and burn it the reply was that they would have to pay. It was useless may having it set on fire here and there as the villages are in such matter so easily imposed upon that a word from the farmer of the mehal will lead them to imagine that they are not at liberty to burn it as I do, and even if each village was allowed to clear away 200 or 300 yards all...the farmer will have to pay the revenue out of his own pocket and by burning before the jungle is cut it is likely that the houses would take fire too.”⁴²

He therefore requested the government to withdraw the order of non-clearance of the jungle. The Superintendent of Cachar district felt the same and called the need for clearing the jungle and calling of the *shikaries* for the killing of tigers in the district. He wrote to the Commissioner of Dacca Division in the year 1836, as follows:

“The ravages committed by tigers in this Zillah this year owing to the vast increase of jungles have been most destructive. The loss of live-stock has been immense and the destruction of human life most frightful. The reports of the Daroghas return sometimes in a week 14 & 15 and I have reason to believe that many deaths occur in the more remote parts of the district which are not reported by the villages. At the Ranee house about 1½ coss from this where there is a guard, a tiger prowling about the vicinity of the bazar and one, a few mornings ago, came almost into my compound. A man was lately killed close to the large pukka bridge. The inhabitants of several villages have deserted them.” I have issued orders to the Darogahs to assemble the people and clear the jungle as much as possible but this can be partially done as the people are afraid to enter the jungle. If you would prevail on the shikaries in your neighborhood to come here, they would, in

⁴² (ASA), Assam Commissioner Papers, File No. 446, Correspondence Regarding Goorkhate Mehals From 10th March, 1858 To Jan, 1865. Letter From Lieutenant J.Lamb, Collector Of Zillah, Durrung To Coll. J.Jekins, Commissioner Of Revenue Assam, Dated Camp Lahar Barree, 20th January, 1859

addition to the reward per head from government, receive every attention from the inhabitants and be supported by them.”⁴³

The need of clearance of jungle was realised by the Government for saving the life and property of the people. In 1847 there were fourteen people reported by the police to have been killed tigers in the district of Cachar. Even the increase of rewards for killing tigers to Rs. 7/- for everyone, old or young tigers in 1848 could not work as there was lack of regular *shikaries*.⁴⁴ The Superintendent of Cachar viewed that, “I consider it very doubtful if an increase to the reward would ensure the destruction of a greater number of these animals. For this reason amongst the inhabitants there are no regular shikaries, only occasionally do they kill one, and that more for sport than for the reward. They do not understand how to use or set the bow and arrow. It is only during the cold weather that one and sometimes two regular shikaries came to cachar, I believe from Mymensing for the purpose of killing tigers and getting the reward. After killing a few they return to their homes. In January last two of them brought in eight tigers seven large and one small, for which they received 38 rupees.”⁴⁵ He further argued in favour of regular shikaries and said that, “the only way to ensure the destruction of these animals would be to entertain regular shikaries if to be had, giving them regular pay and a reward besides for every tiger they killed.”⁴⁶ G. Verner, the Superintendent of Cachar wrote to the magistrate of Tipperah (Tripura) about the increase of rewards and so as to induce the *shikariees* from Tipperah (Tripura) and Mymensing to kill the tiger of Cachar.⁴⁷

However, in case of snakes the offering of rewards for its destruction did not answer the real object in view while it entails an enormous expenditure on government. A few years ago the plan of granting such rewards was tried in the districts of the Burdwan division (under Bengal presidency) and though the reward was only 2 annas for each poisonous snake the expenditure in a short time an account of rewards amount to 30,000. The fact that the people were ready enough to kill snakes and that they even brought them from distant jungles for the sake of the reward, satisfied the government that the inhabitants of villages and town would for their own sakes destroy a snake

⁴³ *Cachar District Records*, (2007), Vol.1 D, Datta (ed.), Silchar Assam, September,p.29

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p.152,Letter No. 121

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, P.148

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Cachar District Records*, Vol, 1D, Datta, Silchar Assam, September,2007,ASB, p.152, Letter No.121

when they meet it, and as nothing was to be gained by killing those that infested jungles the reward were discontinued and have not since been resumed.⁴⁸

2.2 Killing of Wildlife

The killing of wild animals prior to British rule by local inhabitants was accidental and not intentional. The elite class used to hunt wild animals as it was supposed to up-hold once social standing fame required a more ferocious animal to be hunted. But the practice of hunting was occasionally and not a regular process. During the British rule the concept of hunting changed, they started killing wild animals for game and trophies, which later led to trade in wildlife. The increase of population because of the migrated labourer in the province especially for tea plantation caused the clearance of jungle to extend the agricultural land so as to meet the need of food of the increased population. Apart from this the need of bringing more and more waste land under tea cultivation also led to the clearance of jungle. It cannot be rejected that one of the reason for the initiative at clearance of jungle and the killing of wild animals was saving life and property but it would be wrong to say that it was the only reason. The introduction of tea plantation was the main concern of the British government. The presence of wildlife was a hurdle in this work. That caused the British government to adopt various policies for the destruction of wild animals during the British regime. Government started the system of reward giving and appointment regular *shikariees* etc. Mahesh Rangarajan argued that the administrative policies played a major role in the extermination of wildlife in British India.⁴⁹ Rewards were given for the destruction of wild animals in various district of the province.⁵⁰ Some attempts were also made to appoint *shikariees* but it was not successful. In the lack of *shikariees* the people had to suffer ravages of wild animals.

The most accepted system adopted for the destruction of wild animals was the giving of rewards. Good sums was given as rewards for the destruction of wild animals varying in amount depending on the species of animals to be destroyed and its prevalence or destructiveness in any particular part of the province. Considerable sums were paid monthly by the district commissioners for the destruction of wild beasts and professional huntsmen were engaged in the pursuit were exerting themselves in an

⁴⁸ (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871, File No. 43-72

⁴⁹ Rangarajan ,M., (1998) *The Role Of Administration: Fresh Evidence On The Cheetah (Acinonyx Jubatus) In India*, NMML, New Delhi, , P. 43

⁵⁰ Hunter, W.W., (1879), *op.cit.*

unwanted degree and it is hoped with good effects like in Kamroop (Kamrup).⁵¹ The District Commissioner of Nowgaon, believed that the grant of an increased rate of rewards in the district had the effects of inducing the people to enter more systematically and generally into the work of the extermination of wild animals.⁵² Special rewards were also occasionally given by the government for the destruction of some particular man eating tiger or a notorious dangerous elephant.⁵³ Great mischives were committed by wild boars in Gowhatty (Guwahati) town and to get away of this problem a reward of Rs. 10 was sanctioned by the government for the destruction of wild boar.⁵⁴ Tigers were numerous in Jynteah Hills. The Assistant Commissioner in charge of Jayatia Hills reported that 14 human beings had been killed by them. Among the victims was a Haviladar of the 5th Native Infantry, who was on his way to join the Detachment at Jowai.”⁵⁵ He further observed that, “In the neighbourhood of Cheera Poonjee, and in Cheera Poonjee itself tigers have also been doing considerable damage, four or five people having been killed by them within the last twelve months, besides a good number of cattle.”⁵⁶ The officiating Deputy Commissioner of the Cossyah and Jynteah Hills was ask to suggest measures for lessening the number of tigers. He suggested that the reward for killing of tigers should be increased, so as to induce people to engage actively in their destruction. The propose reward was Rs. 25 instead of rupees 5, the existing rate.⁵⁷ Captain Hopkinons, Agent to the Governor General of North-East Frontier recommended a special measure for the destruction of wild animals in Cossyah and Jynteah hills, according to him, “The reward for tiger cubs and full-grown leopards now fixed at Rupees 2-8 per head should also be increased proportionately, and be equal to half the reward given for tigers.”⁵⁸ The lieutenant-governor sanctioned the increase of the rewards killing tiger in the Cossyah and the Jyanteah Hills from Rupees 5 to rupees 20 for each tiger and also the reward for killing tiger cubs and leopards in these hills was increased from 2-8 to rupees 10 each.⁵⁹ In

⁵¹ (ASA), Judicial And Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ (NAI), Home, Public, A, September.1871, File No. 43-72, Letter From The Junior Secretary, To The Govt. of Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of India

⁵⁴ (WBSA), Proceeding of The Hon`ble The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal During July 1861, Judicial Department, Proc. No. 308 S 309, Dated 1861 19th July, P. 226-227

⁵⁵ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 5th February, 1870, File No, 31-48

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

some cases the grant of rewards for the destruction of wild animals were stopped like in Naga Hills in 1870 but in the same year itself the deputy commissioner of the district felt the need of reintroduced the practice of granting the rewards. He believed that the system of reward would help to get the exact number of people killed by wild beast.⁶⁰

The system of reward giving became one of the important issues among local officials to exterminate the wild animals. Captain Roger, Bengal staff Corps, proposed an unconventional scheme for the destruction of wild life. He introduced a gun especially for killing wild animals. Captain Rogers, Bengal staff Corps, expressed to His Excellency the Viceroy that, "Rewards cannot and will not reduce the number of wild beasts, but a regular system, such as I propose, must eventually exterminate them, or render their power of doing injury nil, as on their first appearance they find death on their road, and the missile that kills them has no power of injuring persons or property, if used with the care that the most simple-minded *shikaree* can exercise."⁶¹ He argued that the even if a *shikari* knew about a tiger and the means of killing him, he did not kill the tiger and allowed the tiger to continue his deeds of blood undisturbed. This was because he looked forward to a sahib coming and shoot it. In this case he not only got higher pecuniary reward but also ammunition.⁶² Rogers also argued that the men complained of the trouble in obtaining rewards. Native landholders, did not like wild beasts being killed on their estates, because they imagine it might gave them a chance (if these jungles contained tigers) of making friends with some influential English gentlemen. Especially when the English gentlemen behave in most amiable temper with the natives especially when after hunting wild beast the English gentlemen stand over the skin or body of a tiger he killed, and that gave him good sport. Rogers believed that the absence of the destruction of tigers allowed a tiger extra draught of human blood as well as to feed on cattle. He therefore recommended the killing of wild animals to save life and property.⁶³

He proposed a weapon for this purpose. He suggested the use of old muskets which had merely a nominal value as iron, and were constantly being broken up and sold as such. These would remain the property of the state, and could at any time be called in. A pecuniary amount would be charged when the gun while issuing a gun. The only

⁶⁰ (ASA), Government of Bengal, paper-3, File No: 205/363, Annual administrative report of Assam for 1870-71, and Naga Hills report for that year, 1871

⁶¹ (NAI), Home public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

expense in this gun was an adjustment attached to the trigger that would not exceed four annas per musket. There were three strings attached to the trigger adjustment. Describing his gun Captain Rogers said that, “ The one marked A was the fatal one, and, running along the barrel, crosses the path these animals frequent, and is set at the height of the shoulder of the beast it is desired should be killed; and that string represents the line of fire. The bullet, therefore, invariable enters the most fatal part.”⁶⁴ Wild beasts do not wander, as animals of the deer tribe do, all over the jungle, but they invariably travel by the paths and roads through the jungle when going for food or water, these animals mostly used same paths and roads. The *Shikaries* were mostly aware of their haunts and walks in the district and that they could easily determine where to set the gun, to ensure the animal’s destruction.⁶⁵

To prevent the destruction of animals that should not be destroyed, there were two other strings attached to the triggers, and these (marked BB) were laid at such a height from the ground as to allow a tiger or the other animal it wished to kill to pass underneath without touching.⁶⁶ Cattle or person coming in contact with these strings cause the gun to go off, and its fire was perfectly harmless. He further said that on an animal being killed, the man must report it to the nearest Police Station, where he would receive the authorised reward, and deposit the skin. If the skin was not found to be perfect, the reward could be withheld until the reason for the same was investigated.⁶⁷ In the event of any people or cattle being killed or injured, the headman of the village in which the same occurred was supposed to report the same (whether they belong to his village or not) at the nearest Police Station, and, in the case of cattle its value was to be stated. They were also supposed to mention by what class of animals the injury was committed, and the date, and the above was to be communicated in the form sanctioned to the District Superintendent of Police, who, if convinced of its truth, would forward it on as before to the officer superintending the destruction of wild animals.⁶⁸

But he did not fully condemn the reward system as he said, “ Eight Rupees could be given as a reward, but never more, except under special circumstances having no reference to the damage the tiger is doing, but to any extra trouble or injury the

⁶⁴ (NAI), Home public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48

⁶⁵ Ibid.

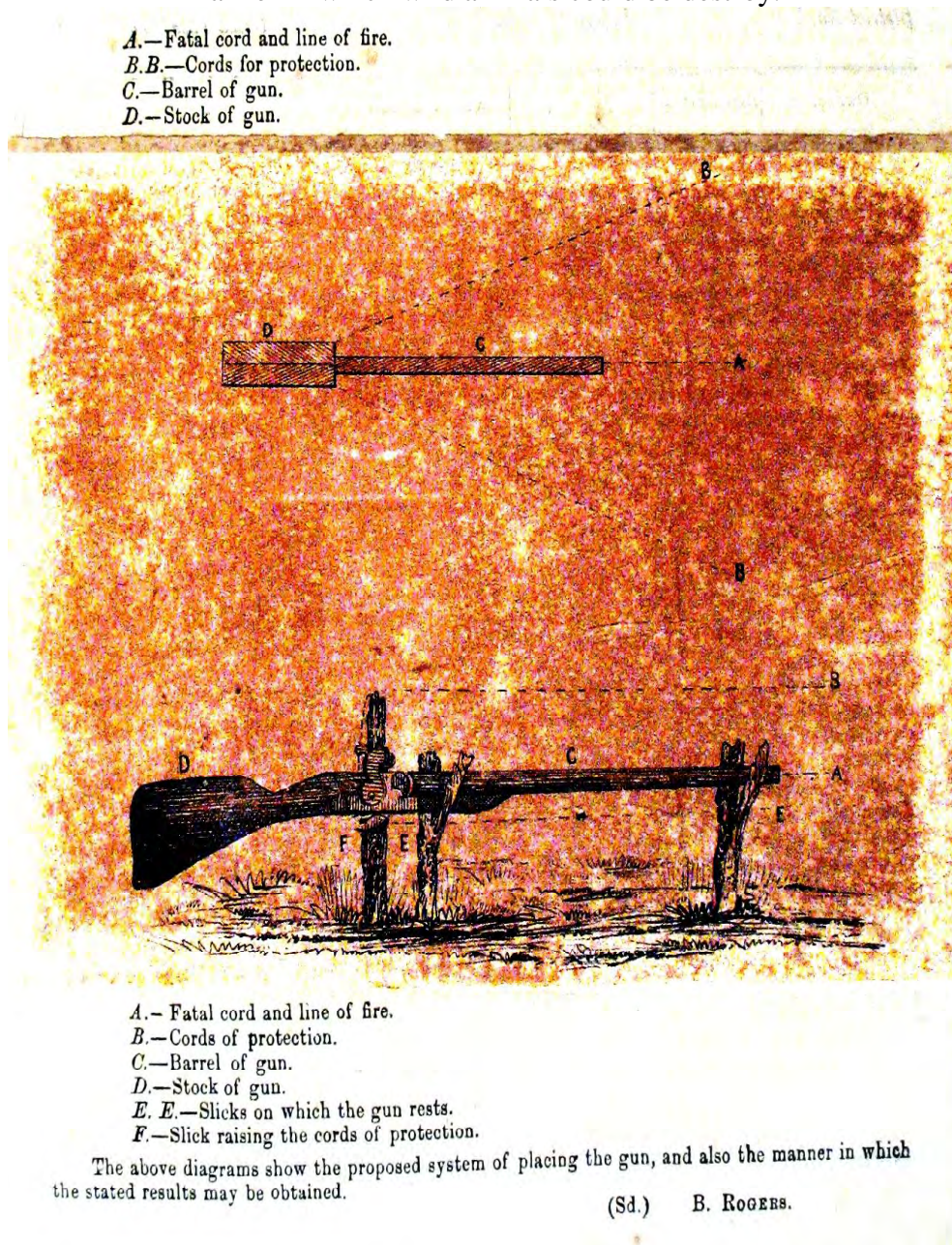
⁶⁶ (NAI), Home public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

shikaree has sustained in killing it ; for instance, if he has tied up cattle to entice the animals to pass the line of the fatal chord, and the beast kills it, I would recommend that he receive compensation in addition to the eight Rupees, which is merely a remuneration for his time and trouble.”⁶⁹

Fig.2.1. The diagram shows the proposed system of placing the gun and also the manner in which wild animals could be destroy.



Source: Reproduce from Proceedings of the government of Bengal, Judicial department, February, 1870, proceeding no. 179-180, (WBSA)

⁶⁹ (NAI), Home public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48.

But the plan of Captain Roger was highly condemned. “None of the local governments suggest any specific measures for adoption beyond the system of rewards now in force ; and almost all subordinate officers whom they have consulted agree in condemning Captain Rogers’ mechanism as unsuited to the territory under their jurisdiction, or as dangerous and full of risk to human beings and domestic animals.”⁷⁰ The Chief Commissioner of the Central provinces disapproving Captain Rogers’ plan said, “If the rewards now paid by government are high, then many persons will be induced to adopt hunting as a profession. Many animals will be killed; and the more killed, the fewer will remain, and these fewer will become more difficult to find ; the number of animals killed will decrease, and with it naturally the expenditure of government. The high reward will thus result in the more speedy extirpation of these animals. But for government to take upon itself the task of ridding the country of noxious animals, and employ a body of men for this purpose, forbidding other men to follow a hunter’s calling, would be, in the Chief Commissioner’ opinion, a mistaken measure.”⁷¹ Most of the local government consider that the system of offering rewards to be practically the best and recommended no change in this respect.⁷² It was agreed that until the jungles were cleared wild beasts would always inhabit them and secondly, nothing was better than a system of rewards. Reward giving was mostly accepted method for the destruction of wildlife.⁷³ Mahesh Rangarajan argued that the extent of killing for rewards was high. He viewed that the bounty hunting added to the declining population of cheetah in India by 1900.⁷⁴ As the government fixed a certain amount of rupees for the destruction of wild animals, people of certain castes adopted the profession of killing of wild animals for their livelihood. They generally entered the jungles at the commencement of cold weather, in parties of 12 or 16. They mostly used to kill tigers and used poisoned arrows to kill them. The number of tiger killed in this manner was so great that the amount of rewards absorbs a great portion of the revenue.⁷⁵ But the plan of employing *shikariees* though tried occasionally but without any real success. Thus, reward giving was the main reason for the destruction of wildlife. Even in some cases

⁷⁰ (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871, file no. 43-72

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ (NAI), Home, Public-A, February, 1870, file no. 31-48

⁷⁴ Rangarajan, M., The Role Of Administration In Extermination: Fresh Evidence On The Cheetah (*Acinonyx Jubatus*) In India, Reseach-in- Progress papers “history and Society” third series, number XXIX, New delhi, *NMML*, 1998,p.40

⁷⁵ M’cosh, John, (1837) op.cit.,pp. 46,47

marksmen were selected by police, and being furnished with arms and ammunition were encouraged to shoot wild animals and were allowed half the reward in each case, but that too didn't get success.⁷⁶ Sometime large hunting parties were also organized to destroy particular wild animals to those places where the loss of life and property from wild animals was great.⁷⁷ These hunting parties were organized under the guidance of local officers at a small expense to government. This besides helping to kill off wild beasts, gave people courage and incites them to organize similar hunts on their own account and teach them to make a stand against a danger and destroying their substance and their life as result of wild animals.⁷⁸

However, in spite of the provision for reward the absent of regular *shikaries* could be noticed, during 1847 only nine tigers brought in for the government reward. For six they being full grown the reward for each was Rs.5/-, two not full grown Rs. 4/- each, and for one small one Rs.3/-. Again the scale of rewards varies from time to time and district wise it depended on the atrocities by the wild animals. In 1848 scale of rewards for elephants was Rs. 10/-, for rhinoceros, tigers and leopard was 5 annas, for bear and buffalos 2.8 annas.⁷⁹ In Nowgaon Rs. 5/- was rewarded for the killing of rhinoceros.⁸⁰ Usually the amount of Rs. 5/- was given for a tiger, Rs.2.8 annas for leopard and bear and Rs. 2/- for Hyenas. These rates of rewards were given for destruction of wild animals in all the divisions of Bengal including Assam during the period of 1850.⁸¹ The special rewards were also sanctioned in 1850, especially for the destruction of elephants, rhinoceros, buffalo which was at the rate of 10/- annas, Rs.5/- and Rs.2/- and 8/- annas respectively in Assam division and in Cachar Rs. 7/- was sanctioned for a tiger.⁸² The highest amount paid as reward for the destruction of tiger under the Bengal presidency was Rs. 100/- per head.⁸³

⁷⁶ (NAI), Home, Public-A, Sept.1871, Nos. 43-72

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ (NAI), Home Public-A, September, 1871, File Nos.43-72

⁷⁹ (ASA), 1848, Bengal Government Papers, File No.340, Scale Of Rewards For The Destruction Of Wild Animals.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ (WBSA), Proceedings Of The Hon'ble The Lieutenant Governor Of Bengal During February 1870, Judicial Department, Proc. No. 179-180

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ (WBSA), Revenue Department, B., Proceedings Of The Government Of Bengal For 29th Oct 1863, Proc. No. B. 361-62

Table 2.5 The following table shows the scale of rewards sanctioned for the destruction of wild animals during 1866

Division & districts	Tiger Rs. As. P	Leopard Rs. As. P	Bear Rs. As. P	Hyena Rs. As. P	Elephants Rs. As. P	Rhinoceros Rs. As. P	Buffalo Rs. As. P	Wolf Rs. As. P
Assam division	5 0 0	2 8 0	2 8 0	2 0 0	10 0 0	5 0 0	2 8 0	0 0 0
Cachar	7 0 0	2 8 0	2 8 0	2 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0
Nowgong & Kamroop districts	15 0 0	2 8 0	2 8 0	2 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0

Source: (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871 File No, 43-72

The wild animals in Darrang used to inhabit in the large wastes of reed and grass jungle, and occasionally caused considerable harm to human life and crop.⁸⁴ An amount of Rs 416, 7 annas and 8 paise was paid by the government from 1858-63 as reward for the destruction of wild animals.⁸⁵ The yearly cost of keeping down the wild beasts amount to about £50 in 1870, and to £172 in 1875. This increase was because of the higher rates of rewards now paid for the destruction of tigers and leopards. In 1870, the rewards paid for killing these animals were Rs. 5(10S.) and Rs. 2.8.0. (5S.) respectively: but in 1873 the rewards were increased to Rs. 25 (£2, 10S, od.) for a tiger, and Rs 5 (10S) for a leopard.⁸⁶ A considerable amount of £15, 6S. od. in 1866-67, £18, 4S. od. in 1867-68 and £ 9, 5S. od. in 1868-69 was expend in the district of Nowgaon by the government to keep down the tigers and leopard, as these were the main destructive wild animals in the district.⁸⁷ The reward for killing a tiger which was only Rs.5 per head but it was felt necessary to increase it and subsequently it was increased to Rs.25 in the district.⁸⁸ Similar rewards were paid for the destruction of wild animals in the Sibsagar district which amounted to 18.4 pounds in 1859 and 4 pounds in 1869.⁸⁹ A small amount of 10 shillings was paid as reward for snake killing in the Lakhimpur district. This was something not at all done in the other districts of Assam.⁹⁰ No rewards were paid to kill snakes in any of the province under Bengal before 1874 except Sylhet.⁹¹ Thus, paying of rewards for the decreasing of wild animals was mostly accepted method for the destruction of wildlife in Assam as

⁸⁴ Hunter, W.W. (1879), *A Statistical Account Of Assam*, Vol.1, London,, P.108

⁸⁵ (NAI), Home, Public, A, February, 1870, 31-48.

⁸⁶ Hunter, W.W. (1879), *op.cit.*, pp. 108-109

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, P. 176

⁸⁸ *Ibid*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, P 232

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 300-301

⁹¹ (WBSA), Judicial Dept., September, 1873, Proceeding No. 47 -53

it has also been found that almost in all the districts of Assam, rewards were given for killing of wild animals. As a result of various attempts made for the destruction of wildlife a good number of wildlife has been destroyed. The following statistics reveals the number of wild animals killed before 1874.

Table No. 2. 6 Number of wild animals destroyed in Assam from 1858-63

District	No. of animals killed							Amount paid as rewards	Remarks	
	Tiger	Leopard	Bear	wolves	Hyaena	Other animals				
Gowalpara	225	69	50			(c)115	Rs. 1707	As. 4	P. 0	(c) 99 buffaloes and 16 rhinoceros.
Kamroop	(a) 3,402	(b)1424	(c) 345			(d)254	21,022	8	0	(a)200 and 54 cubs; (b) 98 cubs; (c)94 cubs; (d) 240buffaloes, 12 calves and 2 elephants.
Durrung	326	204	75			(b) 700	416	7	8	(b) 175 cubs.
Seeksagar	157	33	1			(b) 214	1,421	4	0	(b) 3 rhinoceros, 210 buffaloes and 1 elephant.
Lukimpore	231	36	33			472	2515	0	0	
Cossyah and jynthead hills	1	2					10	0	0	.....
Nowgong	(b)133		6			(c)12	672	8	0	(b) 21 cubs; (c)2 elephants, 1 rhinoceros (c) and 9 buffaloes.
Cachar	(a)97	7					499	7	4	(a)15 cubs
Sylhet	(b)58						178	10	7	(b) 6 cubs.
Total	4630	1775	510			1767	28443	4	3	

Source: NAI Home, Public,A, February, 1870, 31-48

Table 2.7. Number of wild animals killed and the reward paid for their destruction

	Number of various animals Killed			Cost to government for the destruction of wild animals		
	In 1866-67	In 1867-68	In 1868-69	In 1866-67	In 1867-68	In 1868-69
				Rs. As. P	Rs. As. P	Rs. As. P
Kamrup	1289	320	238	4805 0 0	3242 8 0	2640 0 0
Durrung	93	98	121	292 0 0	304 0 0	391 0 0
Nowgong	16	19	7	153 0 0	182 8 0	92 8 0 0
Seeksagor	38	33	10	153 0 0	134 0 0	39 8 0 0
Luckimpore	54	40	52	200 0 0	140 0 0	166 0 0
Khasi and Jynteah hills		9	15		150 0 0	175 0 0
Naga hills			3			
Cachar				100 0 0	49 0 0	14 0 0
Sylhet	2891	2193	1881	10,313 0 0	9776 2 0	9298 0 0
Gowalpara			425*	697 0 0	170 0 0	3054 0 0
Total	4381	2712	2752	16713 0 0	14148 2 0	17064 0 0

Remarks: (a). The returns are for 1867-68 and 1869 source: NAI, Home, Public, A, September, 1871, File No, 43-72

From the statistics it can be seen that 8,682 wild animals were killed from 1858-63. Out of which 4,630 tigers, 1,775 leopard 510 bears and 1,767 other animals like wild buffaloes, rhinoceros, elephants etc. (see table 1.6.) Other than these 9,854 wild animals were reported to have been killed from 1866-1869 for which an amount of Rs. 47925 was given as reward by government. (see table 1.7). Tigers were killed in large number as it was a more ferocious animal and caused more number of deaths of people. Other animals like leopard, bear, wild buffaloes were killed in large number as shown in the table.

2.3 Income from Wild Animals

Initially, wild animals were not a source of generating income for the British exchequer except elephants before 1874. Wild animals of Assam did not contribute towards the revenue, or rather to the wealth of the province excepts the trade of ivory in a limited sense in the Lakhimpur district where elephant catching also contributed a nominal amount.⁹² In fact elephant were always been a source of revenue for the government of Assam even in the medieval period. The making and use of ivory boxes, fans of ivory, ivory articles were common in Assam. King Rudra Singh presented mats, fans, and chessmen of ivory to the king of Delhi.⁹³ Elephant catching expedition under kheddah were conducted since the early years of the Company's rule. In fact, government had

⁹² Hunter, W.W. (1879) *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.301

⁹³ Kumar, B.N., (1970) *Assam in Ahom Age, 1228-1826*, Calcutta, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, , p. 173

monopoly over elephant catching. There were mainly two kinds of licenses that were formally granted. One was an annual lease of a particular tract of the country. It also gave the permit holder the exclusive right to catch elephants in any manner, he might choose.⁹⁴ The amount paid by such license holder as fee varied time to time. In 1869 the revenue derived from such licenses was 601 pounds and 10 shillings (approximately rupees 6,0101).⁹⁵ The other type of license was granted to capture elephants in all unreserved forest upon payment of an annual royalty of 2 pounds or twenty rupees.⁹⁶ However, revenue derived from elephant catching was not considered significant.⁹⁷ One of the earliest accounts John M'cosh's *Topography of Assam*, (1937), described the practices of trade in wildlife during early British rule. A large number of elephants were caught and transported annually to various countries. Every year around 700-1,000 elephants were exported annually from Assam and a duty of Rs. 10 was levied at Goalpara on each elephant exported.⁹⁸ The crude practice of *Singphos* to kill elephants for its ivory who used to kill then by poisoned arrows fired from a musket, and after striking out their teeth, used to leave the carcasses to be devoured by beasts of prey.⁹⁹ Every year Merchants from Bengal made attempts to visit the Province with koonkees to catch wild animals and were generally very successful. Out of the 600-700 elephants caught in Assam in 1850, around 500 were exported, where as in 1851 about 900 were caught (out of which). Newly caught elephants were often purchased, if under 5 feet in height, for Rs.100/- but the merchants seldom dispose the finer ones in the province as they realized Rs.800 to Rs. 1,00 each for them in Bengal or 'Hindustan', if they succeeded in keeping them alive for 2 or 3 years.¹⁰⁰ Both ivory and rhinoceros horn were exported from Assam. Elephant tusk and buffalo horns and hides were also exported from Sylhet district.¹⁰¹ They were not much sought for unless by some caste for eating. The old Rhinoceros were frequently killed for their skin and horn. The skin

⁹⁴ Goswami, S.D., (1987) *Aspects Of Revenue Administration In Assam*, New Delhi: Mittal Publication, P.115

⁹⁵ Hunter, W.W. (1879), Vol. I., Op.Cit. P. 301

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Handique, R., (2004), *British Forest Policy In Assam*, , New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, P. 49

⁹⁸ M'cosh, John, (1837) *op. cit.* ,p. 44

⁹⁹ Ibid.P. 42, *Singphos* were a tribe of Assam whose original settlements were on the great eastern branches of Irrawady River.

¹⁰⁰ Jenkins, F, H.K.Barpujari (Ed.), *Report on The North-East Frontier of India: A Documentary Study*, Guwahati, Spectrum, 1995

¹⁰¹ Hunter, W.W. Op.Cit.Vol.II P.270

was valuable as the best shields in the country were made from it.¹⁰² Rhinoceros horn were valuable because “Great sanctity is attached to the horn; so much so that the general belief is that there is no more certain way of ensuring a place in the celestial regions than to be gored to death by the horn of the rhinoceros.”¹⁰³ Trade in wildlife, thus could be seen during early British, however, trade in wildlife skin was not found. There are evidences were the tiger skin was cut to pieces or destroyed after reward was given for a particular tiger skin¹⁰⁴, so that the same skin might not be used for the reward for a second time.

Though all skins of animals and their claws for which a reward was paid become the property of government and no person should have the option of purchasing the same but no trade in wild beast’s skins was carried on in Assam before 1874¹⁰⁵ The British government has fixed certain amount to be paid for the sale of the Skin of wild animals. The amount was for tiger, Chita. Panther and leopard was Rs. 10/- each, for bear Rs.2/- and for wolf or hyena Rs. 1/- each.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand the government had to spend considerable amount to keep down wild animals as it was evident that the British spend more than 67.18 pounds in 1865; 401.16 pounds in 1867; 110.18 pounds in 1870; 228.10 pounds in 1871; 227.10 pounds in 1872; 182.15 pounds in 1873 and 362.10 pounds in 1874.¹⁰⁷ Amount spent as reward was Rs. 28443, 4 annas, 3 paisa from 1858-63.¹⁰⁸ In 1866-67, 1867-68, 1868-69 an amount of Rs. 16713, Rs.14148 and 2 annas, Rs. 17064 respectively was rewarded.¹⁰⁹ The number of wild animals killed was so great that, the amount of rewards absorbs a great portion of the revenue. This was only for those animals killed by *shikariees* with bows and arrows.¹¹⁰ A good sum was spend to keep down the number of wild animals in the province.

2.4 Conservation of forest vis-à-vis wildlife

The history of forest administration and conservancy in Assam was an outcome of the forest administration and conservation efforts by the British government in India. Though Assam has certain regional peculiarities and variations however it shares a

¹⁰² M^ocosh, John.,(1837), *Op.Cit.*P. 45

¹⁰³ *ibid*

¹⁰⁴ *Cahar District Record, op. cit.,* Vol. 1, No. 23, p. 97

¹⁰⁵ Hunter, W.W. (1879), *op. cit.* Vol.1, P.301

¹⁰⁶ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1870, August, Nos. 71-73

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* The Value Of One Pound Was Equal To About Ten Rupees At That Time.

¹⁰⁸ (NAI), Home Public-A, February, 1870,File Nos. 31-48

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ M^ocosh, John, *op. cit.* 47

common forest policy evolved by the British government in India. The forest policy of the British government was the development and amplification of imperial control of various resources. The most tangible outcome of colonialism was its global control of resources.¹¹¹

Though the forest products were used since their establishment of power in India but no significant attempts were made to conserve and protect them, with the exception of those in Punjab. The term 'virgin' was used by the British and by many other imperial writers to describe the forest of India as well many other colonies. The exploitive nature of the British official can be observed in the use of this terminology as has been seen that the British government exploited those species of flora which had commercial value. In case of fauna same thing can be said as British government took early initiative for the protection of elephant which was used for administrative purpose. Forest conservancy in Bengal as well as in Assam got the scant attention of the British government just prior to 1863.¹¹² In 1862 Mr. D.Brandis visited a portion of Bengal forest and made a note on the future of forest of this region. On 1st of April, 1864 he was appointed as the first Inspector-general of Forest to the government of India. He proposed three significant questions- (1) how forest products could be used in most advantageous manner? (2) What measures could be adopted for the preservation of forest? (3) what could be done for the extension and consolidation of the forestry?¹¹³ But he did not proposed any measures for the protection of wildlife. A.C.Sinha agrees that there was no distinct policy during the early British rule in North-east Himalayan foothills of which Assam was also a part. In his own words "apparently, there was no formal and distinct forest policy in the middle of the 18th century, when the British took over the region under their administration. Not only that, they did not even realize for their first fifty years of rule the necessity of having such a policy."¹¹⁴

In Assam, the forest department was formed in 1864. Initially, it was a part of forest department of Bengal and 'Bengal rules of 1865' was in force in the province till the year of 1874 when Assam was separated from Bengal.¹¹⁵ In the same year Assam was

¹¹¹ Gadgil,M., and Ramachandra Guha, (1999),*This Fissured Land, An Ecological History of India*, New Delhi: OUP, P.116

¹¹² 100 Years of Indian Forestry 1861-1961 Vol.1 Issued on the occasion of the Celebration of Indian Forest Centenary, 18th Nov. 1961, Forest Research Institute, Dehradun.

¹¹³ Sinha, A.C., (1993), *Beyond The Trees, Tigers and Tribes, Historical Sociology Of The Eastern Himalayan Forests*, Delhi: Har-Anand Publication, p. 36

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 35

¹¹⁵ Ribbentrop, B., (1900), *Forestry in British India*, Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of government printing, , p 78

upgraded to the Chief Commissioner's province when the Assam forest department came into being with a deputy conservator of forest.¹¹⁶ However, for the first time forest management was thought of in Assam in the year 1850, when the collector of Kamrup represented to the Commissioner of Assam that the wood cutters from Bengal, after having exhausted by indiscriminate felling the Sal forests in the district lower down the Brahmaputra had found their way to Kamrup in search of Sal timber.¹¹⁷ And a tax of Rs.15 per hundred logs or nearly 2½ annas for each was proposed by the collector of Kamrup as an attempt to put a control on the uncontrolled felling of timbers.¹¹⁸ But this attempt at forest management was for revenue collection only as evident from their measures undertaken subsequently regarding forest management.¹¹⁹ The first attempt at forest conservation in Assam could be seen only when the government forest of Assam were gazetted either as "reserve" or "open Forest" under Act VII of 1865 under the Bengal Forest Rules.¹²⁰ The reserved forests were the property of the government, as the chief forest officer and his subordinates had the entire management of, and control over the reserved forests and their products.¹²¹ On the other hand, in the open forest, the authority of the forest department extended only to the protection of such reserved trees as was from time to time notified in the Assam Gazette as reserved.¹²² The protection of sal forest caused the government initiation towards protecting the forest. Sal forest was considered of exceptional importance and value.¹²³ As far the conservation of wildlife before 1874 is concerned their only motive in the earlier stage was game, hunting and its destruction and there was no attempt at their conservation. This can be understood from the fact that 8,682 wild animals were recorded to be killed between 1852 to 1863 and 9,845 wild animals were recorded to be killed between 1866 to 1868. There is enough chance that the destruction was much more as many of the killings of wild animals were not reported like those which were

¹¹⁶ 100 Years of Indian Forestry 1861-1961 Vol. II, Issued on the Occasion of the Celebration of Indian Forest Centenary, 18th Nov. 1961, Dehradun: Forest Research Institute,

¹¹⁷ Mann, G., PRFA 1874-75, P.1

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Gadgil, M., And Ramachandra Guha, (1999), *This Fissured Land, An Ecological History of India*, New Delhi: OUP, P.116

¹²⁰ Mann, G., PRFA, 1875-76, p. 2

¹²¹ Part II of The Forest Rules Published In The Assam Gazette Of 16th September, 1876, P.502

¹²² Ibid. s

¹²³ Mann, G., PRFA, 1875-76, p. 3

killed for sports. Thus, until 1878 the government had no policy for the conservation of forest.¹²⁴

The human-wildlife conflict became more during British rule. Statistics reveal that the number of wild animals killed was much more than the number of human being killed by the wild animals. From 1858-63, 217 person were killed while 8,682 wild animals were killed during the same period. Again, from 1866-68, 4,353 human beings were killed by wild animals on the other hand 9,845 wild animals were destroyed during the same period. The British officials argued that the killing of wild animals was needed for the protection of life and property. However, the number of people annually destroyed was much lesser then the wild animals killed. Sport and trade in wildlife led to the destruction of a large number of wild. However, they were not much successful in trade in wildlife in initial year of the British rule. Wild animals except elephants were not item of generating revenue for government exchequer on the other had government had to spend large sum of amount on the destruction of wild animals.

¹²⁴ Sakia, R., (2001), *Social And Economic History of Assam (1853-1921)*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, P. 130

Chapter - 3

ENCOUNTERING THE WILD

“To ensure success and avoid danger, a party is generally formed of from three to twenty elephants; making a grand line in this way, tigers, buffaloes, rhinoceroses, deer, and hogs, are all beaten out of their lairs, and can seldom escape death except by flight. On many occasions, buffaloes rush down with awful fury upon the nearest elephant, when unless the sportsman happens to be an expert shot, the elephant is generally gored and lacerated in a frightful manner, and the shock sustained from the buffalo’s charge, and the sportsman with his guns is hurled prostrate on the ground with the elephant. In this predicament nothing but the immediate assistance of another elephant prevents inevitable destruction- Major John Butler.”¹

“Assam abounds with tigers, cheetahs, rhinoceros, elephants, buffalo, etc., and is the best country in the world for affording every kind of big games shooting- M.G.Barker.”²

The above quotations signify the game hunting by the British officials. Hunting is an important feature of British rule. Hunting for game and trophies, commodification of wild life and extension of cultivation led to the decrease of wildlife habitation.³ Though, the clearance of jungle was concern of the successive Indian rulers, the British gave this process a sharper edge. The systematic redrawing of boundaries for the wild land was a facet of the landscape-ordering procedure for the extension of agricultural land of colonial rule. The hunting of deer, sambur, pigs, dogs etc. by *shikariees* caused scarcity of food for the carnivore. Moreover, the extension of cultivable area in colonial times restricted the habitats of the wild mammals. This naturally reduced the wildlife

¹ Butler, J. (1855), *Travels And Adventures In The Province Of Assam, During A Residence Of Fourteen Years*, London: Smith, Elder And Co., P.216

² Barker, M.G., (1884), *The Tea Planter’s Life In Assam*, Calcutta: Thacker , Spink &Co, P.90

³Saberwal, V., Mahesh Rangarajan, Ashish Kothari, (2002), *People, Parks and Wildlife, towards Coexistence*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, p.15

habitation and caused human-wildlife conflict. As a result a large number of cattle and people were killed by wild animals. The killing of wildlife for mere sports and trophies gradually spun in wildlife trade. Though there was not much trade in wildlife in the early British rule, the goods for trade mostly consisted of musk, rice, silk, lac, bell-metal vessel, ivory, pepper, mustard seeds, fishery etc. In later part, horn, and skin of wild animals viz; deer, rhinoceros, elephants, tiger, leopard, bear, and snakes became most important items for trade which brought the commodification of wildlife. This chapter discusses the human-wildlife conflicts, hunting practices by ruling families, peasants and British officials', the causes for human-wildlife conflict such as clearance of jungle for the extension of cultivation, flood, trade in wildlife, extension of political power that resulted in the depredation by wild animals over life and property.

3.1 The Wildlife-Human Conflicts and Hunting Practices

Various reasons can be attributed to the killing of wild animals during British period. No doubt Hunting was practiced by different classes of the people who lived in close association with the nature. Over 600 different tribes and non-tribe local people who lived in Assam, depended on natural resources especially flora and fauna for their livelihood prior to the British occupation. The Assamese across their class position participated in hunting, as it was not merely confined to the higher section of the society, the poor people also killed wild animals some time for meat or sometime merely for fun. The British brought a different concept of hunting for game and trade. The British being highly influenced by the Mughal life style started imitating their lifestyle. Hunting was one such feature which was practiced by the Mughal in leisure time. This brought the concept of the British game hunting. The practice of game hunting by British officials is evident from the large number of the British records.⁴ The British soon realized that the wild life and trophies could be commodify the trade. The main purpose of the British was to earn more revenue that increased extension of cultivable in the forested land which reduced the habitation of wildlife. This Mahesh

⁴Russell, C.E.M.,(1900) *Bullet And Shot In Indian Forest, Plain And Hill*, London: W. Thacker & Co., Nuttall, W.M., Fauna, (1917) *Bengal and Assam Behar and Orissa, Their History, People, Commerce and Industrial Resources*, London: The Foreign and Colonial Compiling and Publishing Co., P.631-640, Pollok, C., & W.S.Thom, (1900) *Wild Sports Of Burma And Assam*, London: Hurst and Blackett, Moray Brown, (1887) *Shikar Sketches with Notes on Indian Field-Sports*, London: Hurst And Blackett, pp.207-280. Jguy Fleetwood Wilson,(1921), *Letter To No Body, 1908-1913*, London: John Murry, pp.119-124, Colonel Kinloch (1885) *Large Game Shooting In Thibet, The Himalays, and Northern India*, London: Thacker, Spink and Co., Pollock, C., (1879), *Sport in British Burma, Assam, Cassyah and Jyntiah Hills*, London: Chapman and hall

Rangarajan argued that there was no doubt that there were points of conflict between mega-mammals and people before the coming of European rule but these acquired a sharper edge during British rule. He further stated that “rulers who preceded the British had often asked their local officials to eliminate tigers, bandits and thieves. The idea was to help push back the jungle. It was part of the constant tug of war between axe and plough on the one hand and the incredible ability of natural vegetation to spring back. The tug of war now became a fight to the finish.”⁵ There was no attempt at the elimination of wildlife prior to the British rule but British government attempted at total annihilation of wildlife. In Assam the need for clearing jungle was felt for the extension of tea cultivation, which was not possible without the annihilation of wild animals. B.H. Baden Powell of Bengal Civil Service, viewed that “The discovery of indigenous tea in Assam gave a great impetus to the establishment of tea-gardens, and naturally the special rules for grant of considerable areas of waste to capitalists (as distinct from the ordinary miles for occupation of plots of agricultural land) had in view chiefly the extension of tea-cultivation.”⁶ The extension of tea gardens to waste land reduced the forest land for wildlife.

The British government started the system of reward giving, liberal destruction of gun licenses and gun and appointing *shikariees*. The British official justified the killing of wild animals for the safety of the life and property. P.G.Melitus, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, viewed that the decreasing population of the wildlife in the province was justified for the protection of human life. According to him, “the results fully justify the measures which have been adopted in this province for the preservation of human life, viz., the clearance of jungles in the vicinity of villages and homesteads, the introduction of a judicious system of rewards for the destruction of wild animals, poisonous snakes, the offer of special rewards for specially destructive animals, the liberal issue of gun licenses for protection against wild beasts, and the encouragement of shooting parties.”⁷ However, the safety of human life and cattle cannot be called the main concern of the British government. The natural habitation being disturbed which caused more human-wildlife conflict. A tiger became men-eater or cattle killer only when it is deprived of its natural food. *Shikariees* preferred to kill small animals like

⁵ Rangarajan, M., (2005) *India's Wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, P. 23

⁶ Powell Baden, (1990) *The Land-Systems Of British India Being A Manual of the Land-Tenures and of the System of Land-Revenue Administration Prevalent in the Several Provinces*, Vol III, Delhi: Low Price Publication, P. 410

⁷ (NAI), Home, Public, 1895, September, File No. 211-247, Sub: Extermination Of Wild Animals And Venomous Snakes, 1894

deer, pigs which led to the crisis of the herbivore on which the tigers, leopard feed. The destruction of deer and pigs in large numbers by the sportsmen brought no choice to tigers, leopard and jackals other than to come out of their natural habitation and to kill cattle and sometime human beings. Firstly, game hunting by British could be call one of the major weapon used against this enemy. Officers and soldiers in cantonments were encouraged to expend their vacations acquiring more trophies.⁸ The British officials attached the hunting of wild animals with 'their masculine power'. M.S.S. Pandian argued that *shikar* or game hunting was one of the aspect on which the colonial government tried to construct and affirm the difference between its 'superior' self and the inferior 'native' other.⁹ While they presented themselves as risk-taking, preserving and super-masculine the native people were constructed as utilitarian and effeminate.¹⁰ The other aspect which brought the destruction of wildlife was commodification of wildlife and trophies. However, what brought the war against wildlife by the British was need for the extension of tea cultivation for earning more revenue for the British exchequer.

3.1.2 Hunting- A Sign of Social Standing and Fame

Hunting by the Assamese elite went beyond the purpose of recreation and also the question of cultural negotiation with the colonial elites. The Ahom elite occasionally organized to hunt. The Practice of hunting by ruling class of Assam could be observed in medieval times. "It is said in ancient times the Assamese kings used to hunt tigers with high nets, spearmen and elephants."¹¹ Their system of hunting was extraordinarily exciting from start to finish. A tiger confronted through an apparently fragile net which he could perfectly well jump over was a stimulating spectacle.¹² British build a good social network within Assam and outside. A few illustrations would provide a better understanding of this aspect. Tarunram phukan (1877-1937), an early nationalist and *swarajist* and barrister, was known of his skill in shooting practices. This was particularly true for elephant hunting photographs with trophies from game were a familiar picture of Tarunram Phukan, Phukan also trained local people mostly

⁸⁸ Rangarajan, M., (2005) *India's Wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi, P. 25

⁹Pandian, M.S.S.,(1998) Hunting and Colonialism in the Nineteenth-Century Nilgiri Hills of South Inida, in *Nature & The Orient, The Environmental History Of South And Southeast Asia* Edited By Richer H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran And Satpal Sangwan, New Delhi: OUP

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹ Singh, K.,(1959) *One Man and A Thousand Tigers*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company,P.190

¹² Ibid., P.194

belonging to the tribes as a helping hand for his hunting. *Shikar kahini*, a memoir on hunting by Phukan vividly captures his struggle to become a good hunter.¹³ He also accompanied Mr. A.J.W.Milroy, conservator of forest, Assam, in his visit and preparing of Assam forest report as a co-representative for Assam local government.¹⁴ Progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1934-35 states, “to accompany the writer as a co-representative for Assam the local government were fortunate enough to secure Mr. T.R. Phukan, Bar-at-Law, who is not only a sportsman of wide repute but has also been for very many years one of the most prominent public men in Assam valley.”¹⁵ Other members of his family, including his father, were also known for their good hunting skill.¹⁶ Nabin Ram, elder brother of Phukan, served as a trainer for the local officers of the British in their hunting lessons. The Maharaja of Cooch Behar was also a close family friend of Phukan by virtue of their hunting practices. To obtain the reputation of a good *shikaree* such networks were important and desirable.¹⁷ Hunting was more popular in western part of Assam. Hunting in this area upheld one’s higher social status required hunting of a more ferocious animal.¹⁸ Prasannalal Chaudhury (1898-1986) an Assamese nationalist and also a well-known literary figure, from western Assam, recounted in his autobiographical memoir how he learned skills of hunting from his own family tradition.¹⁹ His father, a *tahsildar* had a glorious career in hunting. Other such example is that of the ruling families of Cooch Behar.²⁰ They regularly visited the various forests in the northern bank of western Assam for hunting. Colonial bureaucrats and a large number of peasants also accompanied into these hunting camps. Hunting was mostly for killing rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, elephant and barasingh. Between 1871 and 1907 Maharaja Bripendra Narayan shot dead 365 tigers, 311 leopard, 207rhinoceros, 48 bison, 438 buffalo, 133 bear, 259 sambhur, and 318 barasingha deer in the jungles of

¹³Phukan, T.R., 1983, *Shikar Kahini*, Guwahati: Assam Publication Board.

¹⁴ PRFA, 1934-35, Shillong,1935, P. 18, Para-113, A.J.Milroy (B.1883-D.1936): of Indian Forest Service; came to Assam in 1908.during his career in Assam, He directed his attention to the well-being of the elephant and successfully integrated this changing paradigm with the institutional practices of Imperial Forestry. He also shifted his bureaucratic focus towards the evolution of a more humanitarian elephant catching programme.

¹⁵PRFA, 1934-35, Shillong,1935, P. 18, Para-113

¹⁶Tamuli, L.N. (Compiled), 2003 *Taruram Phukan Rachanavali*, Guwahati: Assam Publication Board.

¹⁷Sakia, A.J., (2011), *Forest And Ecological History Of Assam, 1826-2000*, New Delhi: OUP, P., 262

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Choudhury, P.L., (1988) *Shikar- Nikar*, Guwahati: Bani-Prakashan.

²⁰Maharaja of Cooch Behar, (1985) (First Reprint 1908), *Big Game Shooting In Eastern And North Eastern India*, Delhi, Mittal.

Cooch Behar, Duars and Assam.²¹ The Maharaja of Cooch Behar had once shot five rhinos before lunch.²² These ruling families used to display tiger skin, elephant tusk, collected from their hunting events, in their private portico. The narratives of hunting in the families of Gauripur zamindars played an important role in the social and literary imagination of the people of Assam. Another member of these land lord families Praktish Chandra Barua, also known as Lalji, glorified how he killed 111 cheetahs between 1926 to 1965.²³ The forests of south Assam, presently Bangladesh, were also a favourite ground for elephant catching.²⁴ Elephant played a central role in political economy of social authority. Such hunting experiences collectively shared by the Assamese elite.

3.1.2 Hunting for Livelihood

Hunting was practiced even by the peasant class and the tribes. The peasant and tribes made regular expeditions into jungle to kill animals for various reasons like collection of trophies for exchange, to get meat and some to catch elephant or buffalo for domestication. The purpose of livelihood was one of the most significant reasons for the killing and capturing of wild animals by tribes and peasants. Such hunting was regulated by a wide variety of popular customs. No distinct species of fauna were targeted by native hunters. Some wild animals were killed for mere joy while many were brought down for meat. They even accompanied British official in hunting for meat. "The Assamese and bigoted Hindoos follow a sportsman about like vultures, and as soon as a rhinoceros is dead they rush upon it, fight for the tit-bits, and do not leave even a piece of the skin. This they cut into long strips, roast it over embers, and eat it as we do the "crackling" of a pig."²⁵ Colonel Pollock viewed that gangs of Assamese used to follow him when he was shooting in the Dooars for meat of rhinoceros.²⁶

The hunting by native hunters was of utilitarian nature. As for instance in western Assam buffalo were also hunted for the purpose of domestication. It was supposed that the wild animals that were domesticated gave more milk and were better suited into the ecological context of the rural side of Assam compared to the animals brought from the

²¹ Maharaja of Cooch Behar, (1985), *Op. Cit.*, P. 449

²² Choudhury, A., *Kaziranga, Wildlife In Assam*, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004, p. 6

²³ Bhattachayra, P., (1981), *Hatir Sange Panchas Bosor*, Calcutta: Ananda Publication.

²⁴ For the best example of such hunting expeditions, See, D.K.L. Chaudhury, (2006), *A Trunk Of Tales: Seventy Years With The Indian Elephant*, Delhi: OUP

²⁵ Pollok, C., (1894), *Incident Of Foreign Sport And Travel*, London: Chapman & Hall, P.67

²⁶ *Ibid.*, P.82

markets in Bengal. The hunters took extreme care not to hurt such animals while capturing. For instance, elephant catching involved many rituals and other cultural practices. Colonel Pollock believed that the wild buffaloes were captured and tamed while Dr. Mason, a British officer, believed that the wild buffaloes to be descended from tame to wild. The Assamese people used to catch wild calves in strong nets made expressly for the purpose, which they tame and incorporated with their herds. They often captured full-grown and half-grown cows and bulls which they used to kill for selling the meat to the Cacharies.²⁷ The question of enjoyment or sports came to be associated naturally herewith. Peasants also took recourse to tiger hunting as a measure to protect the agriculture field. Popular hunting was widely practiced during flood.²⁸ (It is vividly described in the later section of this chapter) The wild animals were looked upon with fear that could cause damages to everyday lives of the peasant society.

Though the killing of wild animals for saving of crops and cattle by the peasant was not uncommon but it is evident that the native of Assam feared wild animals. Only on some occasion they used to go on hunting by forming parties. They also feared that the bad spirits live in the jungle in form of wild animals and which could destroy their life and property. C.E.M. Russell, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Mysore service opined that “it is very curious how the natives inhabiting the Cossya hills in Assam fear bison. The late Major Cock—a great Assam sportsman, who was killed at the assault of Khonoma, in the Naga hills, some twenty years ago—stated that he had seen natives who had little fear of elephants or tigers, show signs of funk when called upon to follow bison.”²⁹ The ‘native people’ of Assam hearing a rumor of tiger in the vicinity they would visit the sahib bungalow and approach him to killed the tiger. M.J.Barker, a tea planter viewed that “An Assamese's stolidity is not proof against a sudden advent of wild animals in his vicinity; and if there is a motive power in existence calculated to excite and arouse a native to action, it is the rumour that a barg (tiger) has been seen about. This will instil into him that amount of activity which Nature seems grudgingly to have withheld. On receiving news of the arrival of this unwelcome visitor, a native will at once come up to the sahib's bungalow—the same sahib that he has often slighted, and for whom he flatly refuses to work—and solicit help and protection, either by borrowing guns, powder and bullets, wherewith to carry out his murderous intentions, or if he mistrusts the accuracy

²⁷ Pollok,C., (1894), *Op. Cit.*, P.126

²⁸ Sakia, A.J., (2011), *Op. Cit.* P.264

²⁹ Russell,C.E.M., (1900), *Bullet And Shot In Indian Forest Plains And Hills*, London: W.Thackar & Co.,P.22

of his aim, asking the sahib to go out and shoot the creature.”³⁰ But when they did not find any sahib to rely on and were thrown on their own resources they used to adopt a very simple but expedient method of dispatching the brute. In the words of Mr. Barker, “Having previously worked their prey into the end of a belt of jungle, where the open country extends on three sides beyond, which the tiger cannot endure, a net is stretched across the narrowest and least wooded spot, some quarter of a mile farther back. Starting from the outside of the jungle, the huntsmen skirt along in a line with the beaters, driving in the direction of the net, and by dint of much shouting and tom-tom thumping, force their enemy to retreat before them. Men are stationed at either side of the net who drive the brute into it, at the same time whipping the ends round to entangle him. In this position, deprived of the power of doing much mischief, he is speedily despatched with spears.”³¹ The Assamese people did not kill wild animals except on some occasions.

The peasant class mostly did not killed big wild animals other than to save their life and property. But the tribal life is inseparable from the forest and they depended on it for their livelihood. Most of the tribes of Assam viz. Garos, Mikirs (Karbi), Cacharese, Cossyah (Kasiahs), Meeris, Abors, Mishmis, Nagas, Akhas, Duflas, Shigphos, the Khamptis, Kukies, were mostly depended on hunting and forest products for their livelihood and did not destroy wild animals. The most common occupation of these tribes was hunting and they eat the flesh of every animal they kill including that of the elephant, rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, snakes, buffalo, dog, monkeys, deer and wild pig.³² The Kukies found the flesh of elephants, rhinoceros, beef etc. equally delicious.³³ The tribal life was very close to forest and the head dress of Kukies was covered with the skin of wild animals. The Abors ornamented their caps and helmets with the hair of the yak, boar’s tusk and the beak of the buceros.³⁴ The Meeris covered their cap of cane with the tiger or leopard skin.³⁵ The Kukies were fond of hunting and killed many elephants for tusks to sell in the markets.³⁶ Butler, viewed that the Kukies were fond of hunting, and destroy many elephant for the sake of the tusk, which always meet with a

³⁰ Barker.M.J., (1884), *A Tea Planter Life In Assam*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & co. p.88

³¹ Ibid.

³² Dutt., S.C., (1984), First print 1884, *The Wild Tribes Of India*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publication, Pp.131-169

³³ Mills, A.J., Moffatt, (1984), *Report On The Province Of Assam*, Guwahati: Publication Board Of Assam, 1984,P. 229

³⁴ Dutt. S.C., (1984), *Op. Cit.*, ,P.138

³⁵ Ibid. P.134

³⁶ Mills, A.J., Moffatt, (1984), *Op.Cit.*, P. 229

ready sale in markets.³⁷ Among the Kukies if someone was killed by a tiger they were not satisfy till they kill, cook and eat that tiger.³⁸ The *Singphos* were also depended on the sale of elephant's tusks for fulfilling their daily needs.³⁹ The Ao-Naga tribe was also the great hunters. They assemble occasionally to kill wild hogs, pigs or wild boars to save their paddy fields from the devastation of these animals.⁴⁰ They form party of men on rare occasions for hunting for bear or tiger or leopard or deer or monkey. Thus, the tribal life is inseparable from forest and wildlife and so there was no attempt by the tribes to destroy the forest. Occasional killing of wildlife did not affect the population of wildlife.

The main weapons used by these tribes were *Dao* (Battle-axe), spear, javelin, shield, bows and arrows, panjis (pieces of bamboo about a foot long)⁴¹ etc. and later spring gun. The methods for hunting were tracking, trapping, pit fall, noosing etc. The main weapon of Ao-Naga tribe used in hunting was *daos* and spear.⁴² The Mikirs (Karbi) used to hunt with spears and dogs to chase animals specially deer and wild pigs. Occasionally they also set traps for tigers.⁴³ The Garos though knew little about hunting but in tracking of animal no one was comparable with many other hill tribes of Assam. This was because of the immensely thick jungle which shelters wild animals, while impeding the movement of the hunter. This shows their ingenuity in setting traps, but even with these they did not kill a great deal of game. Prior to the occupation of the hills by the British, the Garos were in the habit of setting up trap for wild animal. These traps though effective were of much danger to human life. It took the shape of a spring bow by the side of a path in which animals were known for passing. Later this trap known as *wasala* was prohibited. On rare occasions people of two or three villages organized themselves for hunting. They used to build a V-shaped stockade, to drive into it all the games they found. In this manner they used to kill as many as sixty or seventy pig and deer in a single day.⁴⁴ They also liked to kill whatever animal might come at night, sitting over the salt licks.⁴⁵ In the Garo hills the villagers used to build

³⁷ Butler, J. (1855), *Op. Cit.*, P.89

³⁸ Dutt., S.C., (1984), *Op. Cit.*, pp.160

³⁹ Mills, A.J., Moffatt, (1984), *Op. Cit.*, p. 158

⁴⁰ Smith. C.William,(2002), *The Ao-Naga Tribe of Assam*, New Delhi: Mittal Publication, , pp.43-45

⁴¹ Dutt., S.C., (1984), *op. cit.* pp. 131-169, also see Newcombe, A.C. (1979), *Village, Town, And Jungle Life In India*, New Delhi: Tulsi Publishing House, pp.291-292

⁴² Smith, C. W., *Op.Cit.* p. 43-45

⁴³ Stack, E., (1908), *The Mikirs*, Gauhati: United Publishers, P. 12

⁴⁴ Playfair, Major A.,(1975) *The Garos*, Gauhati :United Publishers, , P. 48

⁴⁵ Ibid.

two houses one in village and other in the fields. “The Garos have, as a rule, two houses-one in the village and another in the fields. They live in the latter during the cultivating season, so as to be near their crops and protect them from wild animals, sometimes the field houses are perched in the tops of trees, 20 or 30 feet above the ground, so as to be safe from the attacks of wild animals and access is obtained by means of a bamboo ladder.”⁴⁶

The Khasis also used to kill various animals like deer, tigers, leopards, mithan by chasing, pit fall, noosing either by bow and arrows or by spring gun. Kacharis were also reported to use poison arrows. The secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, reported in 1886 that, “In Mangaldai a party of Kacharis brought in 9 tigers, 6 bear, and 2 leopard skins as the result of a month’s operations with poisoned arrows in their mauza.”⁴⁷ The British officials ascribe cruelty with such hunting practices. The best example of such emphasis on cruelty on wildlife by native hunters of Assam was M’cosh’s topography of Assam. It mentioned, “The Singphos kill them by poisoned arrows fired from a musket, and after striking out their teeth, leave the carcasses to be devoured by beasts of prey.”⁴⁸ The British officials tried to show their method of hunting as sophisticated and more civilized against the indigenous method of hunting. However, Strychnine (Poison) was extensively used by the British officials for the destruction of wild animals.⁴⁹

Hunting though practiced by the tribes but they also revered wildlife as there were some ritual that they used to perform before and after the act of hunting. In the Jaintia Hills there was a custom to perform a *pūja* (ritual) to local deity before the flesh/meat was distributed.⁵⁰ At Shangpung when a tiger or mithun was killed, the head was cut off and displayed on the altar, at the foot of an oak tree and worship offered to the god of *doloiship*.⁵¹ E. Stack, officiating secretary to the chief commissioner of Assam commenting over 37 deaths in the Mikir (Karbi) hills viewed that, “The Mikir (Karbi)s are said to make no attempts to kill or net tiger, for fear of offending their deity. If they find their village infested by tigers, they will rather desert their village than destroy the

⁴⁶ O’Malley, L.S.S., (1917), *Native Races, Bengal And Assam Behar And Orissa, Their History, People, Commerce And Industrial Resources*, London: The Foreign And Colonial Compiling And Publishing Co.

⁴⁷ (NAI) Home, Public-A, 1886, December, File No. 795, Sub: extermination of wild animals, letter from the secretary to the chief of Assam to the secretary to the government of India, home department.

⁴⁸ M’cosh, J., (1837), *Topography of Assam*, Calcutta: Bengal Orphan Military Press, P.45

⁴⁹ Pollock, C., (1879), *op. cit.* p. 120

⁵⁰ Gurdon, Major. P.R.T., (1975) *The Khasis*, Delhi: Cosmo Publications, P.48-49

⁵¹ Dutt., S.C., (1984), *Op.Cit.* p.160.

animals.”⁵² The people of Cossya hills feared bison and did not attempt to kill them. Elephant was also sold alive and not every time killed for ivory. Other than these though these people were ignorant of scientific conservation and no cause for them to preserve them, but there was no attempt at extermination of wild animals prior to the British rule. The spread of Christianity also affected the relation of human and wildlife. Earlier the tribes feared wild animals as form of bad spirit and did not attempted to kill one except on certain occasions. Mostly they killed wild animals by organizing them in groups and avoided accompany officials and missionaries in killing any carnivore. But after one embraced Christianity they accompanied the killing of carnivore. In one incident the missionaries recorded that some boys of a school in Naga hills reported a leopard on a hill beyond the school ground. Mr. Brock, a missionary and school staff taking one of the teachers went out to see if they found the leopard. After the returned one man enquired whom did they take with them, Mr. Brock answered “Umchba”. Then the man nodded, “that was all right, He’s a Christian. But if you had asked any of the non-Christians in the village above here, not one of them would have gone. They think that leopard is the embodied spirit of a witch who lives in a village five miles away. Not one of them would have dared to touch it.”⁵³ Thus, the spread of Christianity also affected the human-wildlife relation.

3.1.3 Hunting for Game

The British regarded the wildlife hunting as a sort of character- building ‘masculine power’ and marking good hunters as “potentially good soldiers, pioneers, explores and leader of empire.”⁵⁴ It became one of the aspects of elite class culture. This led to the production of hunting manuals and rules of sportsmanship designed to establish the power and civility of the elite hunters.⁵⁵ In the middle of the 19th century, Major John Butler of the 55th Regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry found the sport in Assam as an exciting pastime for the English sportsman. He describe, “From the vast extent of waste or jungle land everywhere met with it in Assam, there are perhaps few countries that can be compared with it for affording diversion, of all kinds for the English sports

⁵² (NAI), Home, Public-A, December 1884, file no. 109-140, Sub: Result of the measures adopted for the destruction of wild animals and snakes during the year 1883.

⁵³ Brock, E.E., *The Challenge of Jungle Trails*, Guwahati: Baptist Mission Library, p. 9

⁵⁴ Shivaramakrishnan. K., (1999), *Modern Forests; Statemaking And Environmental Change In Colonial Eastern India*, , New Delhi: OUP, P.90

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, P.90

man.”⁵⁶ Butler accounted various forms of sport namely, tiger, elephant, rhino and deer sport.⁵⁷ In one day hunting it was not uncommon event for three or four sportsmen to ‘shoot thirty buffaloes, twenty deer and dozen hogs, besides one or two tigers.’⁵⁸ Captain Pollock, a military engineer responsible for laying down the road networks in the Brahmaputra valley in the 19th century, an anecdote claimed, shot dead one rhino or buffalo for every breakfast.⁵⁹ Sharing his hunting experience he further says, “I followed a rhinoceros for some way, but it had got into a tangled brake, where it was safe. I then came across some buffaloes, and shot a couple of bulls, one with very curious horns, forming nearly a circle, and all but meeting at the points.”⁶⁰

Buffalo was seen as a big challenge to agriculture. Butler had no doubt that in lower and central Assam one could easily come across incalculable devastations of the paddy fields by large herds and numbers of lives were annually lost from their attacks on the people, which might sometimes compromise of hundreds of buffaloes. Colonel Pollock viewed about buffalo hunting that, “these brutes have given me more trouble to kill than any other animal, and the fights I have had with them have been innumerable. After the first year in Assam, during which I killed twenty-two or twenty-three, I kept no account.”⁶¹ Pollock considered deer shooting as most pleasant sport in Assam. All kinds of deer were found in great numbers, and in open plains many might be killed in a day. He further said that rhinoceros hunting was also very exciting. He agreed that he had killed a great many of rhinoceros off elephants and a few on foot.⁶² Of all the animals of the forest, the rhinoceros was most feared, from its destructive power; and, as it possesses an enormously thick skin, it required a good gun or rifle to bring it down. T.T. Cooper, a British sportsman in Assam while talking about the wild buffaloes said that, ‘it was so numerous and so destructive as to be an absolute pest.’⁶³ He was accounted to have killed several tigers and speared numerous hog.⁶⁴ Lt.Col. Alban Wilson, late 1st battalion, 8th Gurkha rifles, sharing his experience of sport and service in Assam viewed that when he was asked whether he would like to join Gurkha

⁵⁶ Butler, J. (1855), op. cit , P.215

⁵⁷ Ibid,pp.215-220

⁵⁸ Ibid. P.217

⁵⁹ Stracey, P.D., Quoted in Thaper, 2003, *Battling For Survivals: India’s Wilderness Over Two Centuries*, New Delhi: OUP, P. 218.

⁶⁰ Pollock, C., & W.S.Them, (1900) *Wild Sports of Burma and Assam*, London: Hurst And Blackett, P.437

⁶¹ Pollok,C., (1894), *Incident of Foreign Sport and Travel*, London: Chapman & Hall,P.128

⁶² Ibid., P.67

⁶³ Rangarajan , M., (2001), *India’s Wildlife History: An Introduction*, Delhi: Permanent Black,P.25.

⁶⁴ Pollok, C., (1894), op. cit.,P.46

regiment, station in Assam. He then went off to his skipper commonly called “Mac” to take his advice about accepting the billet. Mac then replied, “Assam is a first-rate place for all kinds of sport, the planters are first-class fellows, as a rule, and there is generally an expedition of some sort going on, but I believe most fellows there have had D.T., or else are sickening for it, so you’ll have to be careful! Still, as you are thinking of the Indian army and are fond of sport, you could do far worse than go there, especially as Gurkhas are excellent fellows to soldiers with. So my application went in without further delay.”⁶⁵ These descriptions explain the wildlife hunting by British officials. Baden Powell viewed that, “in Assam and Burma, as in many other parts, pig was plentiful, but the ground impassable. On the Brahmaputra pig are abundant, in fairly open country but it consists for the most part of paddy fields, the ground is only passable in dry weather and is then so hard, slippery and fissured, that it is unrideable even to men like colonel Pollok, accustomed to cotton silk.”⁶⁶ Colonel Pollok with seven years of experience of sports in Assam, had no doubt that there is no country- not even Africa-where there is more and varied game than Assam and Burma.⁶⁷ These descriptions depict the practice of hunting and sportsmanship of British officials.

The use of any hunting manuals in the earlier part of British rule was obscure but a 1914 work of H.B.Grant, discusses the manuals for sportsmen. It discusses how a sportsman should prepare himself for going on a hunting expedition. That a hunter should be physically fit and should be equipped with hunting equipments like table, chairs, food, Buckets, water bottle, haversacks, bed, beddings, Hatchets, lamp and lanterns etc. It also directed which guns and rifles a hunter should choose.⁶⁸ On the use of guns and rifle the H.B.Grant said that, “wherever possible, antelope, deer, etc., should be shot with the rifle: this is the true sporting way, both for the sportsman and of the game. Of course, there are quite a number the smaller forest beasts, and even some medium ones, as for instance bushbuck, that would be extremely difficult to secure in this way, and many and many a day night be spent in hunting these antelope and deer, and, although plenty may be seen, never a decent shot could be taken with the rifle, so that where these circumstances exist it is quite legitimate to use the shot-gun for

⁶⁵Wilson, A., (1981,2nd Print) *Sport And Service in Assam and Elsewhere*, Gauhati: Spectrum Publication,P.17

⁶⁶ Baden-Powell, R.S.S., (1889), *Pig Sticking and Hog Hunting: A Complete Account aor Sports Men and Others*, London: Harrison & Sons, p.145

⁶⁷ Pollock, F.W.T., (1900), *Wild Sports of Burma and Assam*, London: Hurst And Blackett, P.VIII

⁶⁸ Grant, H.B.C.,(1914), *The Shikari a Hunter’ Guide*, Westmister: The Research Publishing Co.

securing the trophies or meat.”⁶⁹ On the use of trophies Grant viewed that horns and heads were most important for trade. Skin could be used for rugs, mats or walls. The skin of hippo and rhinoceros after polished could be used for making beautiful table-tops and walking-sticks etc. The hoofs of the larger animals and feet of hippo, rhino, and elephant could be used for making ornamental articles such as inkpots, ash and match bowls, tobacco-jars, and many other things. Even the teeth of hippos, warthog, and other animals could be made to serve the uses of pegs on an ornamental hat-stand, and the tusks of elephants could be so arranged that they enclosed mirror, which makes a very handsome, though heavy, piece of furniture.”⁷⁰

3.2 Extension of Cultivation and Clearance of Jungles

British attempted to clear of the jungle for the extension of the cultivation which helped them to earn revenue. The killing of wild animals led to its commercialization. Moreover the tea plants grew wild in the jungle and the British government attempted to give tea plantation a more civilized form by establishing tea gardens over the waste lands. This subsequently brought several acres of forest land for tea plantation. The British officials were keen to spread the tea plantation where ever the jungles were cleared.⁷¹ Jayeeta Sharma argued that, “protecting nature necessitated that indigenous forests be transformed into the tea gardens which imperial science and commerce required.”⁷² The extension of Opium cultivation could also be assigned as one of the cause for the clearance of jungle. In 1860 government monopolized the opium cultivation in the state and there was no serious attempt at discouraging the opium cultivation till 1921, when Mahatma Gandhi visited the province and discourage the consumption of opium. Not only for the extension of tea cultivation but also to save the paddy fields from the attacks of the wild animals specially from elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, buffaloes and hogs attempts were made to clear off the jungles.⁷³ The numbers of the wild animals decreased fast in consequence of the people having suffered much from the destruction

⁶⁹ Grant, H.B.C.,(1914), *Op.Cit.*, pp. 54-55

⁷⁰ Ibid. p.129

⁷¹ Datta, D., *Cachar District Records*, Vol. 2, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 2007, No. 180 Of 1853, P. 308

⁷² Sharma, Jayeetha, *Making Garden, Erasing Jungle, The Tea Enterprise in Colonial Assam, The British Empire and the Natural world, Environment Encounters in South Asia*, (2011),ed. By Deepak Kumar, Vinita Damodaran, and Rohan D'souza, New Delhi: OUP, p. 126

⁷³ Grange, E.R., “Extracts from the Journal of an Expedition into the Naga Hills, *JASB*, Vol, IX, Part, II, pp. 947-53 in the Nagas in the nineteenth Century By Verrier Elwin, OUP, New Delhi, 1969, P. 214

of their crops by the wild animals.⁷⁴ Offering of a substantial monetary incentive for killing female wild animals and its cubs aimed at stopping of reproduction of these animals. In this way the eradication of the species helped in the extension of cultivated arable.⁷⁵ The gradual extension of cultivation and opening out of the country led to the decrease of population of tigers and leopard in later years.

One of the reasons of the clearance of the jungle was also the abundance of snakes in the jungles of Assam that causes the killing of a large number of people and cattle. According to available a total number of 9,880 people (see table No.3.8) and 5,350 cattle were reported to have been killed by snake during the period of 1875-1915 (see table no. 3.9). Jungles provided them enough space to escape. In connection with the deaths from snake-bite in the Sunamganj Subdivision, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet wrote that “thirteen of the 28 deaths reported by Sunamganj as due to snake bite occurred at one particular spot on the Pagala- Govindganj road. All the persons bitten were attacked from behind within a distance of about 100 yards, where the road is bordered on both sides by jungle. The road was practically closed for a portion of the year, the general public ascribing the deaths to one particular snake which they describe, and which is regarded, as a demon. The Local Board is taking steps to clear away the jungle at this spot.”⁷⁶ The idea behind the clearance of jungle was to keep it aloof from human habitation. This led to the destruction of large number of snakes.

Most of the British officials agreed that due to the gradual extension of cultivation and opening out of the country, tigers and leopards had much decreased. On the other hand some of the officers also agreed that the destruction of a large number of herbivores brought the wild animals to human habitation that caused the destruction of wildlife. Reporting on the decrease of amount of reward F.C.Daukes, Secretary of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, put the reference of remarks made by the Deputy-Commissioner of Sibsagar, (Mr. Knox Wight), “that tigers and leopard were being forced into inhabited area in consequence of the wholesale slaughter of pigs and deer in the jungle by native sportsmen. The subject matter of these remarks and the general question of the decrease in the amount of rewards paid during the year 1888 were separately enquired into during the year, and district officers were asked to report on

⁷⁴Grange, E.R., “Extracts from the Journal of an Expedition into the Naga Hills, *JASB*, Vol, IX, Part, II, pp. 947-53.

⁷⁵Rangarajan , M., Computing the numbers of tigers killed for rewards in the British India; 1875-1925, *NMML*, New Delhi, 1996. P. 6

⁷⁶(NAI) Home, Public, September, 1895, File No. 211 - 247

the matter with a view to the adoption of such further measures as might seem necessary. From the replies received it appeared that, with the exception of two planters in the Nowgaon district, none of the officers or non-official gentlemen consulted supported the theory of the Deputy-Commissioner of Sibsagar. On the contrary the general opinion was to the effect that, on the whole, With the gradual extension of cultivation and opening out of the country, tigers and leopards had much decreased of late years, or at any rate, that they had been driven back from the more populated to the less populated and remoter areas, and that the decreased in the number of tigers destroyed and rewards paid for their destruction was due to this cause.”⁷⁷ Thus, disturbance of food chain and clearance of jungle both can be attributed for the destruction of wildlife.

The extension of tea plantation was the main cause which led to the decrease of the waste land. This also caused the destruction of a large number of wild animals. “The new tea growers carved out great plantation in Assam, Ceylon, Indonesia, and later Africa and South America. Vast Tracts of forest were leveled and countless animals destroyed to make way for the orderly rows of tea bushes.”⁷⁸ E.P. Stebbing, F.Z.S., F.R.G.S, also agreed that the extension of cultivable land for tea plantation had affected the number of wild animals in Assam. He stated that “of course the clearance of great tracts of primeval forest and jungle for tea cultivation would have a natural effect on the distribution of the animals previously existing in the locality, and the probability is that at the time I am writing of the animals were nearly as abundant only they had retired to a greater distance from the areas cleared for cultural purposes. Anyway, at the period of my first acquaintance with the area it was a paradise for sport. Tiger may be said to have been plentiful, leopards numerous, bison (gaur) not yet exterminated from these western areas, and elephants yearly visitants in the monsoons months.”⁷⁹ Similarly, a tea planter Mr. Barker stated about the clearance of jungle for tea plantation.⁸⁰ He further viewed that the clearance of jungle disturbs hundreds of monkeys. The clearance of jungle also affected the population of rhinoceros in the province. Mr. Barker viewed that, “Many Rhinoceros have been shot within the last few years in the vicinity of *Julpaigori* but there, partly owing to being constantly

⁷⁷ (NAI) Home, Public, December, 1890, File No. 360-407

⁷⁸ Krech, S., J.R. Mancill, Carolyn Merchant (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of world environmental history*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 1187

⁷⁹ Stebbing, E.P., (1920), *The Diary of a Sportsman Naturalist in India*, London: John Lane, P. 129

⁸⁰ Barker., G.M., (1884), *Tea Planters Life in Assam*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 126

hunted, and partly owing to the clearance of large tracts for tea cultivation, they are rapidly becoming scarcer, and the sportsman must travel still farther east before he finds them at all plentiful. In the eastern portion of the Bhutan Dooars and in Assam, wherever there are heavy reed jungles on the banks of rivers or on the margin of swamps, Rhinoceros may be met with, and occasionally several congregate in one covert.”⁸¹ In this way rhinoceros became extinct from those places in which once they were numerous. Thus, the clearance of jungle led to the destruction of a large number of wild animals.

3.3 Increase of Human Population and Disturbance of Food Chain

E.P. Gee, a tea planter and amateur naturalist in Assam, has prescribed three main reasons for the decline of the wildlife i.e. lack of living space, greed and indifference.⁸² The first stem was because of the enormous increase in the human population of the world which relentlessly flooding all living space. When the human population extend to new places- the habitats of the wildlife was seizes for human occupation and animal life was quickly wiped out. There was huge impact of growing human population, the wildlife and food chain was disturbed. The increase in human population led to the extension of human habitation in waste land and jungle land. The labour migration for the growing tea plantation in the Province led to the increase of population. The need of shelter and cultivation to meet the need for the increased population led to the expansion of human habitation in the wildlife habitation which resulted in more human-wildlife conflicts and wild animals were destroyed to meet the need of growing population. The Deputy Commissioners of Kamrup and Darrang as regards the fall of the number of wild animals destroyed in 1888 in upper districts of the Assam valley agreed that the country was being gradually opened out by extensions of cultivation, and as a consequence, animals were driven to destroy them for the sake of reward.⁸³ The Forest Administrative Report of Assam, (1934-35), shows that the increase of population led to the reduction of the waste lands that resulted in the depredation of wild elephants.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Colonel Kinloch (1885) *Large Game Shooting in Thibet, the Himalays, and Northern India*, London: Thacker, Spink And Co.,P. 61

⁸² Gee, E.P., (1986), *The Wild Life of India*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, p. 6.

⁸³ (NAI) Home, Public-A, Nov. 1889, 236-269,

⁸⁴ PRFA for the Year 1934-35,Shillong: AGP, 1935, P.22

Another reason which caused more human-wildlife conflict and ultimately the destruction of wildlife was the destruction of herbivore which disturbed the food chain. The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, opined that, tigers and leopards were being forced into inhabited areas in consequence of the wholesale slaughter of pigs and deer in the jungles by native sportsmen. He wrote as follows, “It is the belief among many people (myself included) that tigers and leopards are every year approaching nearer and nearer to habitations and gardens. The fact is that deer and pigs are being exterminated. Any European sportsman will certify to this fact. Tigers and leopards are being deprived of their ordinary food, and so they approach nearer and nearer to gardens, where they get a supply of cattle. If the wholesale destruction of deer and pigs continues, tigers will soon have nothing to feed upon but cattle”⁸⁵ Similarly, the Magistrate of Rungpur opined that the destruction of tigers and leopards should be discouraged on the ground that the increased number of deer and pigs was causing havoc to the cultivation.⁸⁶ *Shikariees* considered it far more profitable to hunt deer and pigs as they run no risk and could dispose the flesh at more profitable rates than government could afford as rewards for killing a deer or leopard. *Shikariees* and holders of gun licenses found it more profitable to defend their crops from the ravages of these animals than to devote their time to the pursuit of large game.⁸⁷ *Shikarees* preferred to kill wild animals for their own profit and not for rewards. This way the wholesale destruction of deer, buffaloes, dogs and pigs in the jungle by native sportsmen led the more dangerous animals like tigers and leopards to approach the human habitation. The district officers were asked to encourage men of *shikaree* class to keep down wild animals. However there were very few natives of the *shikaree* class properly in Assam.⁸⁸ The number of tiger and leopards killed in the Assam valley was decreased in 1898 in comparison with the preceding years. One of the reasons behind it was that the *shikariees* generally left ferocious animals and confined their operations to the destruction of deer and pigs.⁸⁹ This disturbed the food chain and the wild animals approached towards human habitation to feed on cattle or some time on human beings which caused more human-wildlife conflict. That led to the destruction of wildlife.

⁸⁵ (NAI), Home, Public-A, November, 1889, file no. 236-269, Letter from the offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the secretary to the secretary of India, Home department

⁸⁶ (NAI), Home, Public-A, November, 1892, file no. 227-260, Sub: extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, 1891

⁸⁷ (NAI), Home Public, Dec, 1885, file No. 69-101

⁸⁸ (NAI), Home Public Dec, 1882, file No. 332 - 70.,

⁸⁹ (NAI), 1899, Government Of India, Home Public-A, Sept. 272-285

Increase of human population density had a direct result on the depletion of wildlife. The increase in human population means decrease of the population of wildlife. The mortality by wild animals shows a gradual decline during the British rule. "During 1894, 1 person in every 37,771 of the population was killed by wild animals, compared with 1 in 35,334 in 1893 and 1 in 25,965 in 1885. The proportion as regards deaths from snake-bite in 1894 was 1 to every 34,230 of the population, compared with 1 to 26,586 in 1893 and 1 to 27,424 in 1885."⁹⁰ A gradual increase in population led to the decrease of the mortality by wild animals. According to E. P. Gee, "With the increase population has come increased poaching and slaughter of game."⁹¹ A similar reason had impact on the wildlife of Africa.⁹² The increase of population pushed the wild fauna into marginal and desert lands.

3.4 Commodification of Wildlife

Human greed, trade and political expedience led to the destruction of elephants. Rhinoceros were killed for ivory and their horns to far eastern market sold as raw materials for making decorating materials and also dubious medical remedies. Rhinoceros horn was used in oriental medicine since long back.⁹³ The main user of this was China. It was also used as traditional Tibetan medicine. It was mainly used as an anti-pyretic and also as an aphrodisiac. It was used for making dagger handle and other decorative materials. During the *Ahom* period, skin of buffalo, rhinoceros, and deer was used to made *dhal* (shields) as an instrument of self-defense.⁹⁴ According to Captain Welsh's Report on Assam (1794), elephants' teeth, was always been an article of export. Rhinoceros horn were trifling article of export.⁹⁵ The horn and skin of wild animals were extensively used for making decorative articles as describe by Captain J.T Newall, a soldier and sportsman, in his words, "Samber {*Ccifus aristotelis*).—The largest of the deer tribe, which is common to all parts of India. In Cashmere, the noble Barasingha, and some other allied species in Assam, and the South Eastern parts of Bengal, can compete with this fine animal in size and appearance ; but they are not

⁹⁰ (NAI), Home, Public, September, 1895, file no. 211-247

⁹¹ Gee, E.P., (1964), *The Wild Life of India*, London: Collins, p. 84

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Choudhury, A., (2004), *Kaziranga, Wildlife in Assam*, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., ,P.8

⁹⁴ Gogoi, Lila,(1986) *The Burangjis, Historical Literature Of Assam, (A Critical Survey)*, New Delhi: Omsons Publication. 214

⁹⁵ Acharyya, N.N., (1983) *Historical Documents of Assam and Neighbouring States*, New Delhi: Omsons Publication, P. 24

distributed generally as is the sambur. The horn of the stag is three-typed, and when mature very massive. Its skin, when dressed as leather, is in great esteem for the manufacture of shoes, belts, saddle covers, and numerous other things. It is far softer, yet tougher, than common cow leather ; and in consequence articles made of it fetch a higher price.”⁹⁶

Ivory carving was one of the thriving professions during the British rule. The ivory carvers were known as Baktars or Baktar-Khanikars. Ivory articles constituted of major portion of royal gifts to visiting grandees as well as distant dignitaries. The Baktars also used to work on deer horns along with ivory carving. Deer horn artifacts were mainly made only for decoration.⁹⁷ But later by the end of the nineteenth century the number of ivory carvers declined in Assam. The Census report (1881) reported 917 number of elephant dealer in Assam. This was an important profession in Assam. However, it says that the number could have been more than what censused. The capitalist people were mostly involved in this business whose main profession was not elephant catching and those which were called elephant dealers were professional employees of the capitalist who took hunting licenses from government.⁹⁸ But, this profession declined in the later part of the nineteenth century as the Census Reports (1891) reported only four ivory carvers.⁹⁹ The decline of elephant population by the late nineteenth century could be the probable reason for the decline of the profession of elephant catcher. The decline of ivory was said to be cause of disappearance of the art. Tribal hunters beyond the inner line sold out tusks to the traders who in turn sold them in Calcutta (Kolkata) with a good margin. The Marwari dealers used to buy tusks in Assam and sold them in Calcutta which fetched them more profit.¹⁰⁰ Colonel Pollock stated that, “Although the horns are contemptible as trophies, the native Assamese and Marwaries prized them greatly, and will give as much as Rs. 45 a seer (2 lbs.) for them. They were also greatly prized by the Chinese. Two officers, Cock (afterwards killed in the Naga campaign) and Bunbury, just before I arrived at Gowhatty, made a good bag of these beasts, and by the sale of the horns more than repaid all their expenses. They live in apparent harmony with wild elephants, and I have seen them lying down in the same mudhole

⁹⁶Newall, J.T., (1866), *The Eastern Hunters*, London:Tinsley Brothers, p. 453

⁹⁷Saikia, R., (2001), *Social And Economic History of Assam (1853-1921)*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, P. 56-57

⁹⁸*Report of the census of Assam for 1881*, (1883)Calcutta: Office of Superintendent of Government of India, p. 122, section, 224

⁹⁹ Saikia, R., (2001), op.cit, P. 56

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

with a buffalo.”¹⁰¹ Debrugarh was an important center of the tusk trade. Ivory articles were luxury items for the common men. The price of the ivory articles shows that these were beyond the means of average household. From 1898-1900 the well-known ivory articles and their price was as follows, (a) comb for Rs. 5 to Rs. 20, (b) back-scratcher Rs.20 to rs.50, (c) spoon and fork Rs 30 to Rs. 50, (d) toys- elephant from Rs. 30-35, horse Rs 8 to Rs 10, fish Rs 1.8 to Rs. 8, cart Rs. 50 to Rs.60, (e) bracelet Rs. 8 to Rs. 10, (f) knife handle Rs. 3 to Rs. 8 (g) ring rs. 4 to Rs. 6 (h) Tema (small box) Rs. 4 to 6 etc.¹⁰²

Rhinoceros horns were also profitable good for trade. A confiscated Rhinoceros horn weighing 40 *tolas* has been sold by auction for Rs.600 in Darrang. Almost every portion of a rhinoceros has a ready market value, the dried blood being especially prized. It is for this reason poaching was so rife.¹⁰³ Rhinoceros horns have always been valuable in India because of some supposed aphrodisiacal virtue but apparently still more so in China, the demand for horns in market caused the extermination of *Rhinoceros sondaicus* in Burma except for a few individual specimens closely guarded by the forest department. China was undoubtedly after one horn rhinoceros (rhinoceros Indicus) with the consequence that a rhinoceros horn became worth more than a good pair of elephant tusks.¹⁰⁴ British officials agreed that there was too much money in this business.

The business was so thrive that it appeared that snags were common in connection with the trade. For at one time the local Marwaris were lamented that the Cacharis had palmed off on them bamboo roots, blackened and faked to look like rhinoceros horn the Cacharis went one better and sold them faked pieces of buffalo horn, it was not known if any ‘acid test’ was devised by that time.¹⁰⁵ A rhinoceros horn was worth about half its weight in pure gold in the open market, but the value of ivory was decreasing very greatly by 1931.¹⁰⁶ Other than this, taxes were also imposed on elephant hunting, elephant catching, rhinoceros hunting etc.¹⁰⁷ Killing of tiger for trade was also existed.

¹⁰¹ Pollok,C., (1894), *Incident of Foreign Sport and Travel*, London, Chapman & Hall,P.67

¹⁰² Ibid., P. 58

¹⁰³ Quennial Review of Forest Administration of the Province of Assam, 1924-25 To 1928-29, Shillong,1929

¹⁰⁴ PRFA for the year 1929-30, Shillong: AGP (1930) P.4 Para. 20,

¹⁰⁵ PRFA for the year 1930-31, Shillong: AGP (1931), P.5, Para- 20

¹⁰⁶ PRFA, for the year 1930-31, Shillong: AGP (1931), P.5, Para- 20

¹⁰⁷ Sakia, R., (2001), *Social and Economic History of Assam, 1853-1921*, P. 30

Tiger's skin value was more in the market than the amount paid as bounty¹⁰⁸ and thus it was in large number. Even as early as 1871 Captain Rogers agreed that there was lakhs of amount in selling of skin of wild animals and he subscribed sum for the skin of each animals (see earlier chapter).¹⁰⁹ The killing of wild animals for trade was common. F.C. Daukes, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam also agreed that wild animals were killed for trade specially the smaller animals like pigs, deer etc. In his words, "It is, however, observed from the returns received from all districts in which Government guns are given out these guns are more frequently used for purpose of sport and the killing of buffaloes, pigs and deer for sale than for the destruction of dangerous animals."¹¹⁰

3.5 Affect of Flood

Natural causes like flood, earth quake, epidemics also have impact on the wildlife. Flood was one such cause which had affected the human- wildlife conflict. Because of high floods the wild animals were driven to high lands where the villages were situated and that led to the more human-wild animal encounter. That resulted in destruction of more life and property and also the killing of more wild animals in the flood affected areas. Cultivators had to suffer badly during the severe floods, as it exposed the places to tigers and cultivators had to flee.¹¹¹ Snakes proved more dangerous to human life than to wild animals during flood as jungle provided them enough chance to kill people and escape. Sylhet and Cachar being flooded by of Barak River suffered much by snake-bite on the other hand Goalpara and Kamrup suffered from being flooded by the Brahmaputra River. In Lakhimpur there were very few cases of snake bite. The high flood recorded the killing of large number of human being in these areas on the other hand absence of flood recorded less number of killing by snakes. In 1878, a total of 255 people were killed only by snake bite against 188 in 1877, an increase of 67 noticed in (Sylhet) district alone. S.O.B. Ridsdale, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam viewed that "It is possible that this increase was due to the unusual floods in that district having driven the snakes to the high lands on which the villages are situated."¹¹²

¹⁰⁸H.P, Dec.1890, Nos. 360-407, Note By JP Hutchins, 30 Sept. 1890, Cited By Mahesh Rangarajan In *Wildlife In India: Two Essays. NMMML*, New Delhi, 1996.

¹⁰⁹(NAI), Home, Public, 1870, August, File No. 71-73.

¹¹⁰(NAI) Home, Public-A, November, 1889, file no. 236-269

¹¹¹Cederlof, G, (2014), *Founding an Empire on India's North-Eastern Frontiers 1790-1840*, New Delhi: OUP, p.186

¹¹²(NAI)Home, Public-A, December, 1879, File No. 266-295

The highest numbers of people were reported to have been killed in the year 1877 (see Table no.3.8). Deaths from snake bite rose from 178 in 1885 to 254 in 1886. The increase was attributed to the prevalence of floods, which drove the snakes up to the high ground on which the villages were built. The decrease in the Sylhet District could also be observed in 1894 when the number of deaths fell from 95 in 1893 to 66 in 1894. It was attributed to the unusually low flood- levels of the year. The Deputy Commissioner viewed that, “by the absence of high floods during the year under report [1894], snakes being on that account much more rarely met with in places frequented by human beings.”¹¹³ He further said, “it would seem that the prospect of a reward is little, if any, inducement to the general public to kill snakes.”¹¹⁴ Though rewards were sanction in little amount but it did not affect the killing of snakes. People merely killed snakes whenever they came in contact with them. Commenting on the decrease of number of snakes killed in 1907, J.B.Webster, esq., ICS, Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam viewed that “It seems probable that the decrease may have some connection with the absence of high floods, which drive animals and snakes to the uplands where they are more easily found and killed.”¹¹⁵ Some officers viewed that the killing of snake- bite was more as jungles provided them more opportunities to escape. C.J. Lyall, The Commissioner of Assam valley district remarked that, “the immunity of jungle districts from deaths by snake- bite is perhaps due to their offering infinite chances of escape to the snake.”¹¹⁶ The following table shows that average rainfall, number of people and cattle killed and the number of wild animals killed during 1892-1903.

¹¹³(NAI) Home, Public, 1895, September, File No. 211-247

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵ (NAI), (1908), Govt of India, Home Dept, Public- A, File No.110-125, Letter From J.E.Webster, Esq., ICS, Secretary To The Government Of Eastern Bengal And Assam To The Secretary To The Government Of India, Home Dept..Shillong, The 27th April 1908.

¹¹⁶(NAI) Home , Public, December,1887, File No.126-164, ,

Table.3.1.shows the average rainfall, person and cattle killed and wild animals and snakes destroyed.

Year	Average rainfall in Inches	No. of person killed			No. of cattle killed by wild animals and snakes	Number of wild animals destroyed		Total
		By wild animals	by snakes	total		Of wild animals	Of snakes	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1892	139	209	208	417	16497	1685	2329	4014
1893	113	155	206	361	17583	1608	9443	11051
1894	122	145	160	305	19654	1606	1808	3414
1895	111	168	182	350	19749	1674	4466	6140
1896	94	113	154	267	17830	1916	1624	3540
1897	101	164	177	341	15946	1672	4406	6078
1898	105	151	153	304	16523	1638	2432	4070
1899	131	145	193	338	17010	2032	6272	8304
1900	91	119	170	289	15261	2063	3164	5196
1901	107	147	169	316	14311	1238	3132	4370
1902	127	149	164	313	15617	1195	6768	7963
1903	114	138	172	310	14402	2176	4325	6501

Source: NAI, Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, (1893-1904)

It can be observed that the rainfall was highest in 1892 viz. 139 inch and the number of people killed was also highest in the same year viz. 417. In 1903 there was a decrease in the number of snakes killed. F.J.Monahan, esq, ICS, Secretary to the Government of Assam, stated that “with a decrease in the rainfall 1903 there was a decrease in the number of snakes destroyed.”¹¹⁷ Floods drove snakes to the precincts of human habitations, where they were more easily destroyed. In 1895 the mortality from snake-bite shows an increase in all the plains districts except Cachar, Sylhet, Darrang, and Sibsagar. In the district of Goalpara and Kamrup snake-bites were responsible for nearly half of the total number of deaths. The increase was attributed to the continued high floods of the Brahmaputra River during 1895, snakes having there by driven to take refuge on high lands which were frequently occupied by houses. During the same year decrease was noticed in Sylhet. It was because floods did not rise as high nor they of such long duration as usual.¹¹⁸ On the other hand absence of high floods led to the decrease of the number of the wild animals killed as floods drove the wild animals and snakes to uplands where they were mostly found to be killed. In 1887 C.J.Lyall, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam reported that “The falling off in the Surma Valley is owing to there having been no high floods in 1887, as was the case in

¹¹⁷ (NAI) Home, Public-A, 1904, File No. 50-16,

¹¹⁸ (NAI) Home, Public, September, 1896, File No. 756

1886 when the villagers killed many animals from boats.” In this way flood affected the human-wildlife conflict.

As the wild animals were driven to the high land in human habitation it was possible to kill them with little efforts. Thus, the popular hunting was practiced during flood. During high floods tigers and leopards were driven to take shelter in high lands where they were easily killed. E.A.Gait, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam pointed out that during high floods in 1895 in Kamrup, tigers and leopards were driven to take shelter in small patches of high land, where they were easily killed and that led to the increase in the figures reported from the district.¹¹⁹ In 1895 Kamrup reported killing of 188 wild animals against 166 in 1894 and 167 snakes against 100 snakes in 1894. Pollock has viewed that, “there was a grand old man at Burpettah (Barpetta) was credited with having killed over one hundred tigers during the annual inundations.”¹²⁰

3.6 Depredation by Wild Animals

The British rule witnesses growing human-wildlife conflict. The need for increasing land under tea plantation led to the clearance of jungle as a result wild animals started coming out of the natural habitat and committed huge destruction on the human life and property. The Missionaries’ evangelistic activities suffered badly from the attacks of wild animals. Mildred, Marston, an American missionary viewed that, “Wild animals abound in the dense jungles, and human life is not 'safe while travelling even short distances. The huge man-eating Bengal tiger has found his way into these mountains, and is ever on the alert for human flesh. The elephant, rhinoceros, the buffalo and the bear are numerous, and leopards, jackals and monkeys are as thick as peas in a pod.”¹²¹ Missionary records further reported the killing of missionaries by wild animals. It says, “man-eating tigers have been busy around Rongjeng and Dalu, killing many people. Assamsing, one of the most faithful evangelists, was killed by one of these man-eaters a little over a year ago.”¹²² It also reported the destruction of mustard and rice crops by large deer and pigs in the Mikir (Karbi) hills. This is an interesting story of the tribal beliefs on sacrifice to save their paddy fields from the attacks of wildlife. Mr. Moore,

¹¹⁹ (NAI) Home, Public, September, 1896, File No. 756

¹²⁰ Pollok, C., (1894), *Incident of Foreign Sport And Travel*, London, Chapman & Hall, P.83

¹²¹ Mildred, Marston, (1889) *Korno Siga, The Mountain Chief or Life in Assam*, Philadelphia, The American Sunday-School Union, P.55

¹²² Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report (1941), *American Baptist Foreign Mission Society & Woman's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society*, Thirty-Eight Session, Kohima, Assam, (Jan. 23-28), P. 40

an American Missionary shared an interesting incident. Mr. Moore says, “yesterday, Lindokoso came to me bringing some nice venison and a story- ‘Yesterday two of my heathen neighbors and I were talking of our losses in rice crops and mustard and how hard it is to kill the destroyers-large deer and wild pigs.’ Lindokoso, now a Christian, was formerly a great sacrificer, and the father of two neighbors was and is considered among the most successful sacrificers. All agreed that sacrificing would not keep the deer out of the mustard and that they must try to kill them. But as deer are very shy and keen in ear and nostril, it is hard to bag them, and so sacrificing was suggested as the best means of help. After a long discussion, Lindokoso getting in considerable preaching, it was decided that the neighbors give their promise and oath to the god of their field, giving him a goat in sacrifice, if he would let their two guns kill a deer. Lindokoso would ask all his little chapel-school house heard the petition of seven Christian for riddance of the deer that was most destructive of mustard crops. Then Lindokoso and his companions went to their field. They were scarcely ready for their all-night watch when they fine buck came up within about thirty yards of them and was killed instantly by a well aimed shot. Four others were bagged by Christians within the week of the prayer, causing not a little talk. Possibly this week of prayer will be considered the week of the year for deer shooting after this. All night long the two heathen watched without getting a single shot, and now after four days, we have not heard of their making a score.”¹²³ This story depicts how the crops were destroyed by wild animals and people struggle with wildlife to save the crops. Many Villages were abandoned because of tigers and wild beasts.¹²⁴ Jackals, tigers, leopards were the night visitors. Jackals were very good scavengers but when nothing was left to scavenge they were levy on Moorgie-Khana. Though not frequently but the horses of the tea planter were also had to lose their life. “Rhinos are fairly plentiful in some out-of-the-way districts, and in their erratic course through a garden (a place that under usual circumstances they steer clear of) play fearful havoc with their unwieldy carcasses amongst the tea.”¹²⁵ A *gwala* (milk men) explained to Colonel Pollock, when he was on his hunting expedition that a family of tigers had killed no less than six of his cattle.¹²⁶ Colonel Pollock stated “Now an Assamese cow or bullock is a miserable little beast.

¹²³ Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, (1947), Mission Society And Woman’s American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Forty Four Session, Jorhat, Assam, Dec.10-14, P.5

¹²⁴ Steddard, I.J., & D.D., Pella, Bago And The Garos, (June, 1901), The Baptist Missionary Magazine, Vol. LXXXI, No. 6, P.210

¹²⁵ Barker, G.M., (1884), *op.cit.*, Ibid., P.211

¹²⁶ Pollock, C., (1894), *Incident Of Foreign Sport And Travel*, London: Chapman & Hall, P.41

One would scarcely suffice as a meal of leopard, so is therefore little more than a flea-bite for his royal relation. On this account very often tigers will kill a lot of cattle- more than they can consume-drag them into densely wooded nullahs or jungles, where they are safe from the ken of carrion birds, and there ate them at their leisure. The higher the meat the more tigers seem to like it, and woe betide any stray jackal that dares to encroach on their larder, for the proprietor is never far off.”¹²⁷In 1910, no less than 197 cattle were killed in Kamrup and 27 in Nowgaon districts.¹²⁸

Deer, pigs, buffaloes were very destructive for crops. Wild pigs led to the great damages to crops mostly in Sylhet, Nowgaon, Lukhimpore, Kamrup and Lushai hills. They led to so much destruction that in 1881 the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet ordered the police to kill them. It resulted in the killing of 555 wild pigs.¹²⁹ C.J.Lyall, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, reported that, “these animals cause great damage to the crops, and their destruction were much appreciated by the peasants.”¹³⁰Elephants did great damage to human life and property particularly the destruction of crops.¹³¹ They damaged the crops when the crops were ripe.¹³² A reward of Rs. 100 was offered for the destruction of a man-killing elephants, but it is doubtful whether any special measures were adopted to secure its destruction.¹³³ The discontinuation of kheddah operations for several years led to the increase of death by wild animals in Garo hills. Shillong was found to be disturbed by jackals and for checking the rabies a special rate of Rs. 4 per head was brought in to force for the destruction of jackals in the vicinity of Shillong.¹³⁴ Kamrup and Nowgaon districts were also affected by jackals.

Wild animals were also dangerous to human life and killed a number of people every year. In Chapari mahals of Nowgaon district 10 people were killed by tigers. In 1895 the increase in the number of people killed by wild animals was more in comparison with preceding years mainly because of deaths caused by wild elephants in the Mangaldai division. Life was not secure in villages because of the depredation by wild

¹²⁷ Pollok,C., (1894), *Incident Of Foreign Sport And Travel*, London: Chapman & Hall,P.41

¹²⁸ (NAI), Home, Public, 1911, August , File No. 73-88, ,

¹²⁹ (NAI), Home, Public, 1882, December, File No.332- 370,

¹³⁰ (NAI), Home, Public, Dec, File No.332 To 70, 1882

¹³¹ Badan, B.H., *A Manual Of Jurisprudence For Forest Officers Being A Treaties On The Forest Law And Those Branches Of The General And Civil And Criminal Law Which Are Connected With Forest Administration With Comparative Notice Of The Chief Continents Laws*, Calcutta, 1882, 1903, Assam Secretariat Proceeding, Military B, Progs;- July, 1903 Nos.,85-88.

¹³²Kamrup District Gazetteer, B.C.Allen, Shillong, 1905

¹³³ (NAI), Home, Public, 1896, September, No.756,

¹³⁴ (NAI), Home, Public, Aug, Nos. 73-88, 1911, Simla Records 2

animals. In 1919 in the villages in neighbourhood of Rongrengiri and Songsak in Garo Hills Division 48 persons were killed.¹³⁵ In Garo hills many people were killed by tigers. It has also been found that in some cases the reserves were deserted by the forest villagers on account of the depredation of the man eating tigers such as Songsak reserve in 1922.¹³⁶ Tigers appeared more as cattle killer than man eaters.¹³⁷ Wild animals killed 3,35,329 cattle during the period 1875- 1915 (see Table No. 3.9) against 4306 people during 1875-1927 (see Table No. 3.8). The presence of a man-eating tiger in certain district also led to the increase number of people killed by wild animals. In Khasi and Jyantia hills there was increase in the number of people killed in 1894 comparison with the proceeding years due to a man eater having killed four persons in the Jyantia hills subdivision. A police party was sent out to shoot the animal, but without success.¹³⁸ Buffaloes and wild hogs were also dangerous to human life like tiger. Buffaloes were chiefly destructive in the Assam valley, where they caused loss of life in every district except Lakhimpur. Rhinoceros was naturally not a destructive animal. It is a timid beast considering its huge bulk, great weight, and its awe-inspiring and formidable head and generally endeavours to escape from close quarters with human beings. However, if it is suddenly disturbed or wounded, it will make a series of most ferocious charges which result in death to any living creature with which it comes in contact. On the other hand it is easier to kill rhinoceros than many other wild animals as it does not have the persistent to life than the wild boar, which probably affords finer sport than any other inhabitant of the jungle.¹³⁹ The natives of the Province were very keen upon securing its flesh, as they had a profound belief in its medicinal properties. Two varieties of leopard (*Felis Pardus*) were usually found in India. They differed slightly both in colour and size. The former varies in length from six feet to nearly eight feet, with skins of light yellow colour, while the latter rarely exceeds six feet, and has darker spots placed close together. The black specimen was rare in Assam but British officials reported that the animal was occasionally seen in the district of Cachar in the Surma valley. Both types destroyed and eat cattle, dogs, deer, pigs, monkeys and other animals of a smaller

¹³⁵PRFA, for the year 1920-21, Shillong: AGP, 1921,P. 14, Para-76

¹³⁶PRFA, for the year 1922-23, Shillong,1923, AGP, P. 14, Para-62

¹³⁷ (NAI) PRFA, for the year 1895, Assam Secretariat Proceeding, Home –B, Proc. Noc. 921/923, March, 1895

¹³⁸ (NAI), Home, Public Simla Records, 1895, Sept, 211-247

¹³⁹ Nuttall, W.M., Fauna, (1917), *Bengal And Assam Behar And Orissa, Their History, People, Commerce And Industrial Resources*, London: The Foreign And Colonial Compiling And Publishing Co., P.632

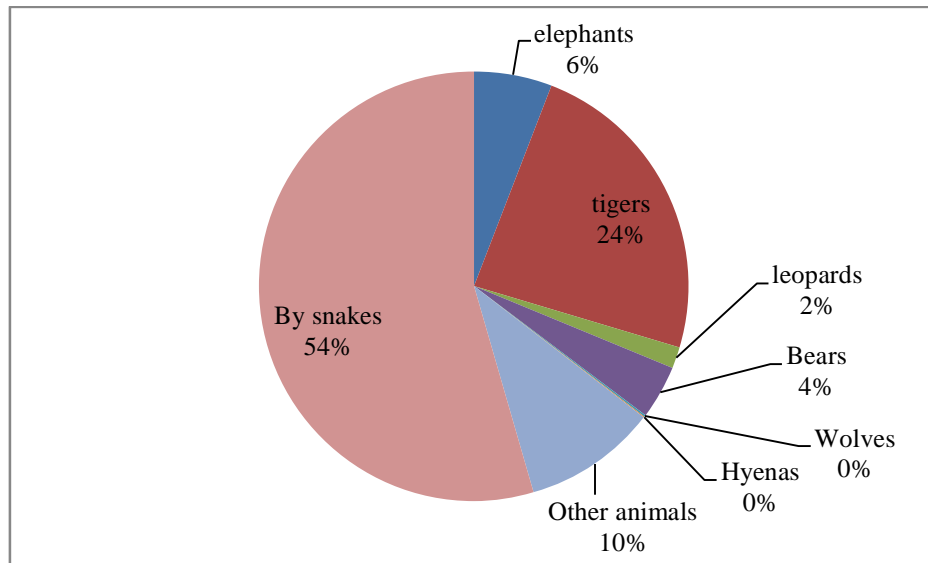
size, and their boldness was manifested by their entering villages and carrying away their prey from the houses of natives.¹⁴⁰ This way the wild animals proved destructive to the human life. But it was human interference in wildlife habitation that brought these destructions. If the natural food chain was not disturbed by the British to full fill their greed the destruction by wild animals might be missing in the history except occasionally. The killing of herbivore like deer, pigs, and dogs caused natural food crisis for the large carnivore. These animals were not destructive to life or property except on certain occasion when they were proved destructive to crops. *Shikariees* destroyed these animals in large number as there was little risk in killing them and secondly their skin, horn and hide had good market value. There is no statistical records of the destruction of herbivore might be because they did not kill cattle or human beings.

3.7 Statistics of Deaths of Human Life and Cattle Killed by Wild Animals

The British authority wanted to understand the conflict between nature and human. The killing of human beings and cattle became more so the British government asked the provincial governments to prepare statistics of number of people and cattle killed so as to understand the level of destruction by wild animals which helped them to adopt such measures to prevent them from causing destruction. Wild animals were destructive to human life and cattle. Wild animals killed less number of people than cattle. According to the available statistics (1875-1915) wild animals accounted to have killed an average of 14,931 cattle each year. On the other hand human beings were killed on an average of 358 each year during 1875-1927. Snakes were very destructive for human life. According to the available statistics 18,604 people were killed during 1875-1927 by wild animals including snakes. Out of it 9,880 were killed by snake alone which is 0.9 percent of the total number of people killed by snakes and 8724 by wild animal which is 6.3 percent of people killed by wild animals in India. Snakes alone caused more than half of deaths of the total death of people during 1875-1927. The following charts explain the killing of people and cattle by wild animals and snakes.

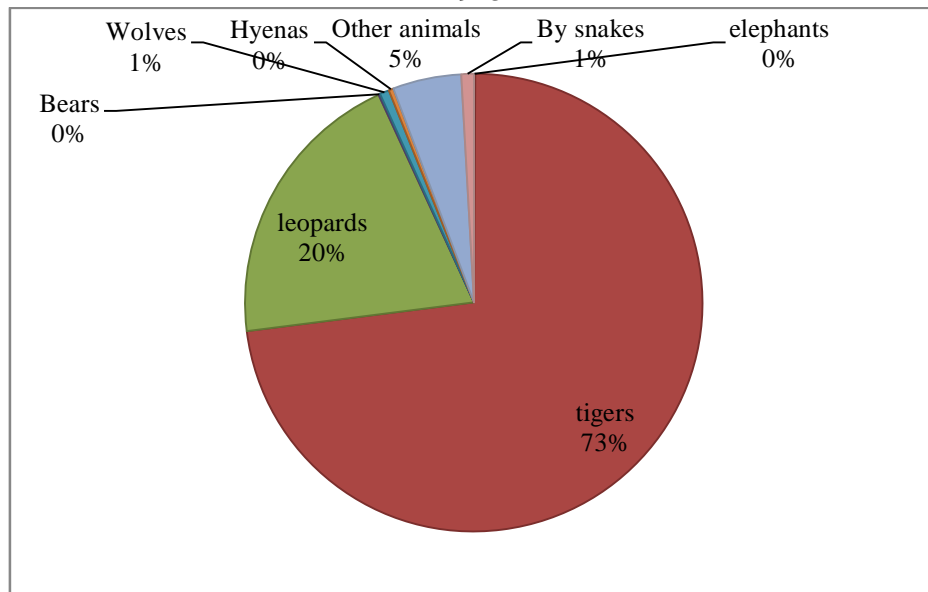
¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 633

Chart 3.1 Showing the number of people killed by wild animals and snakes from 1875-1927



Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes (1876-1928)

Chart 3.2 Showing the number of Cattle killed by wild animals and snakes from 1875-1915



Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes (1876-1916)

Among wild animals, tiger was more dangerous to human life than any other wild animals. It killed 4,306 people, elephant killed 1,065 people and bears killed 738 people. Colonial Pollock viewed that in Assam more people were killed by bears than by tigers.¹⁴¹ But the available statistics shows that tigers took more life than bears (see

¹⁴¹Pollok,C., (1894), *Incident of Foreign Sport And Travel*, London: Chapman & Hall,P.220

table No. 3.8). The statistics of number of death by wild animals was underreporting. Leopard was less dangerous for human life. It took 288 lives during 1875-1927 (see table no. 3.8.). Other than these wild animals Buffaloes, Boars, wild pigs, wild dogs, alligators, wild bulls, bison, jackals, Crocodile, deer, rhinoceros also caused deaths of human being. The statistics of the of cattle during 1875-1915 reveals that a total number of 5,00,781 cattle were killed. Out of that 5,350 were killed by snake which is 4.1 percent of cattle killed by snakes and wild animals killed 4,95,431 cattle which is 18 percent of the number of cattle killed by wild animals in India. Snakes were less destructive for cattle in comparison with human being. Tigers were equally dangerous for cattle and human life. It killed a total number of 4,19,100 cattle during 1875-1915, which is 83 percent of the total number of cattle killed. Leopard was more destructive for cattle than to the human life. It killed 1,17,655 cattle during the period of 1875-1915 which was 23 percent of the total number of cattle killed. Bears caused less number of deaths of cattle than to human. Bears killed 716 cattle during 1875-1915. Wolves, hyenas and elephants also killed cattle; they killed 3,802, 1,969, 698 cattle respectively.

Wild dogs, wild pigs and jackals were also destructive for cattle. Though Sir, E. Stack, the chief commissioner of Assam expressed doubt on the existence of wolf or hyenas in Assam valley in 1881 yet it reported to kill 1,969 cattle from 1875-1915 though the number of people killed by hyenas were very few, it was just 8. Wild dogs led to the destruction of cattle in large numbers. But wild dogs did not caused killing of more number of human being. Kamrup, Darrang, Goalpara, districts were much disturbed by this animals compare to other districts. Occasional killing of cattle by wild dogs was reported in Sibsagar, Nawgaon, Lakhimpur, Sylhet, Khasi and Jyantia hills. In Nowgaon wild dog reported to have killed 37, 79 and 14 cattle in 1894, 1897 and 1902 respectively. In Sibsagar, wild dog reported to have kill 7, 45,10, 14, 2 and 55 cattle in 1888, 1892, 1894, 1897 and 1901 respectively. In Khasi & Jyantia hills, dog reported to have kill 17, 87, and 35 cattle in 1897, 1901 and 1902 respectively. In Lakhimpur dog reported to kill 7, 3, 8, 15, 7 in 1894, 1895, 1897, 1901 and 1902 respectively. In the Province dog reported to kill 681 cattle in 1904, 516 in 1912, 802 in 1913, 932 in 1914, 1352 in 1915 and so on. These animals caused a large number of deaths of cattle and human being. Elephants were not as dangerous for cattle as for human life. It caused

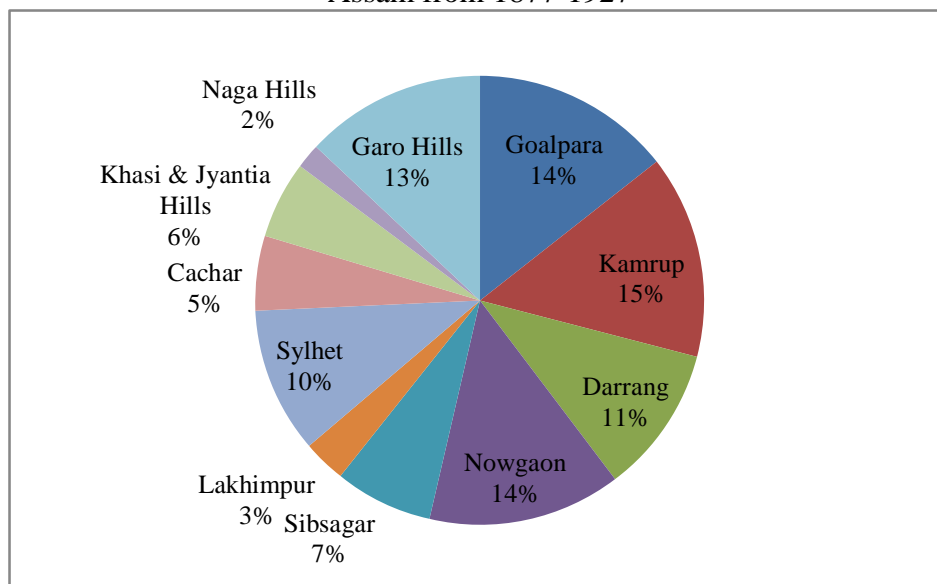
deaths of people and cattle while attacking villages. Elephant caused killing of 698 cattle and 1,065 human beings during 1875-1927 (see table no. 3.8 and 3.9). Each year around 20-30 people were reported to be killed (see table no. 3.8) by elephants. Except for some years elephants were not much destructive for cattle. In 1891 and 1892 it reported killing of 81 people each year. In 1,900 and 1901 elephants reported maximum number of cattle killing. It was 89 and 99 in 1900 and 1901 respectively. From 1875-1886 very few cases of cattle destruction were reported viz. 1 in 1875, 3 in 1877, 1 in 1878, 5 in 1882. The reason for this was the lack of proper reporting as no remuneration were given by the government for the loss of cattle. From 1887 the statistics varies from year to year. Tigers were destructive both for cattle and human life. It took 17,316 human life during 1875-1927 and 4,19,100 cattle from 1875-1915. It killed an average of 333 people and 8060 cattle during the said period. Tigers killed highest number of people viz. 619 in the year 1921 and lowest number of people in 1926 viz. 168. The highest number of cattle killed was 111085 in 1886 and 968 in 1875 but the less number were recorded in 1875 not because of less destruction by wild animals but because of lack of proper reporting. Leopard is as destructive for human life as for cattle. It reported to have been killed a total of 21,541 human life and 1,17,655 cattle from 1875-1927. An average of 414 people and 2,262 cattle were killed from 1875-1927. The highest of 618 people were killed by leopard in 1902 and 150 the lowest number of people were killed by leopard in 1875. On the other side if the number of cattle is seen the highest number of cattle were killed in 1913 viz. 6,376 and the lowest number of people were reported to have been killed in 1875 viz. 167. Bears proved more destructive for human life. It reported to have killed 12,823 people from 1875-1927. An average of 247 people were killed from 1875-1927. The highest numbers of people were reported to have been killed in 1927 viz. 621 and the lowest number of people killed in 1875 viz. 46 only. But bears were not as much destructive for cattle as for human life. It reported to have killed 716 cattle in 52 years, an average of 14 cattle each year. Thus, bears killed highest number of cattle in 1891 viz. 66. The wild animals caused large scale destruction of to life and property which led the British government to take initiatives for the destruction of wildlife.

3.7.1 District-wise Statistics of the People Killed by Wild Animals

Almost all the districts of Assam witnessed a large number of wild animals viz. elephants, rhinoceros, Bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pigs and

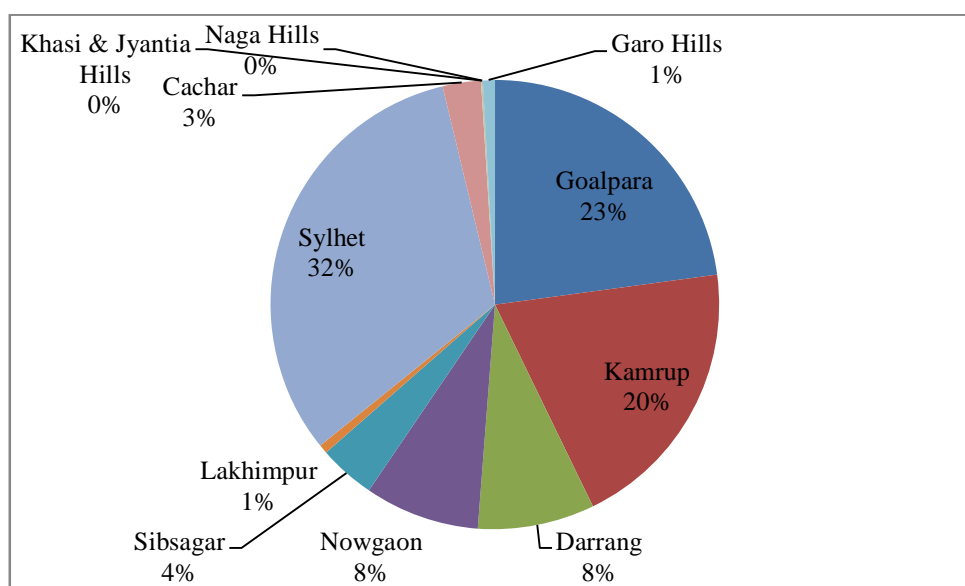
different kind of deer of which the principal varieties were the barasingha or swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*), the sambar (*cervus unicolor*), the hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), the spotted deer (*cervus axis*) and the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). Almost all the districts of the Province suffered from the attacks of wild animals. The following charts show the number of deaths caused by wild animals in the Province.

Chart 3.3 Showing the number of people killed by wild animals in various districts of Assam from 1877-1927



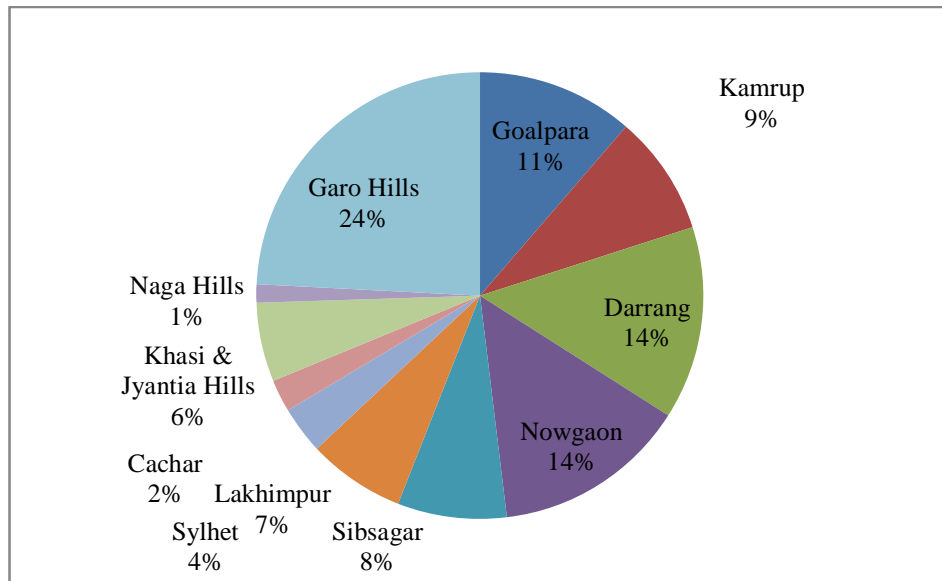
Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1928)

Chart 3.4 Statistics of the number of people killed by snakes during 1877-1927



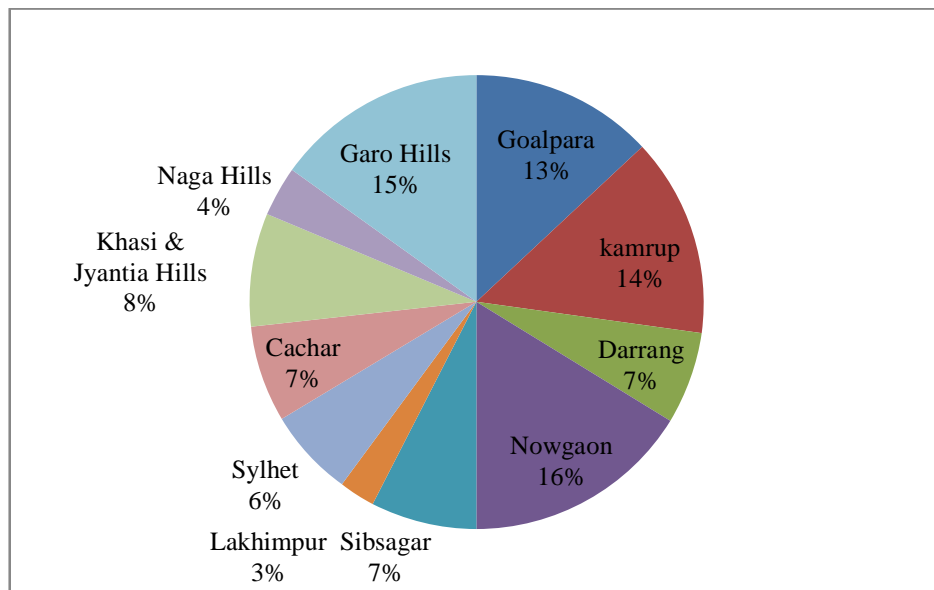
Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1928)

Chart 3.5 Showing the number of people killed by elephants during 1877-1927



Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1928)

Chart 3.6 Showing the number of people killed by tigers during 1877-1927



Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1928)

Wild animals caused massive destruction in all the districts of the province. In Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgaon the maximum number of people were killed by wild animals viz. 1004, 1021, 1002 (with an average of 23 approx.) respectively from 1877-1927 (see. table No. 3.11). Garo hill was also not less affected by wild animals. From 1877-1927, 925 people (with an average of 21 approx.) were reported to have been killed in Garo hills. Other than these districts in Darrang 747 (an average of 17

approx.), in Sylhet 661 (an average of 15 approx.), in Khasi and Jyantia Hills 398, in Cachar 372, in Lakhimpur, 222 and in Naga hills only 127, the minimum number of people were reported to have been killed. The earlier reports for Lushai hills are not available. According to the available statistics 79 people were reported to have been killed from 1903-1927 in Lushai Hills. Nowgaon, Kamrup, Garo hills and Goalpara were seemed to be most affected by the attacks of tigers. It reported the killing of 600 people (at an average of 14 each year), 557 (at an average of 13 per year) in Garo hills, 522 (at an average of 12 approx. each year), 480 (at an average of 11 approx. each year) people in Nowgaon, Kamrup, Garo hills and Goalpara respectively. In Sibsagar 277, in Darrang 243, in 297 in Khasi & Jyantia hills, in Cachar 253, in Sylhet 231, in Naga Hills 132 and Lakhimpur 95 people were recorded to have been killed by tigers.

The number of people killed by elephants was maximum in Garo hills, Nowgaon, Darrang, and Goalpara viz; 217, 126, 125 and 102 respectively. In Kamrup 78, in Sibsagar 71, in Lakhimpur 63, in Khasi & Jyantia hills 51 people were reported to be killed. Minimum number of people was reported to have been killed in Sylhet, Cachar, and Naga Hills viz. 31, 21 and 12 respectively. Bears reported to have killed 180, 161, 134, 65, 64 people in Goalpara, Darrang, Kamrup, Nowgaon and Garo hills respectively. In Khasi and Jyantia hills 24, 19 in sibsagar, 13 in Lakhimpur, 11 in Sylhet, 5 in Cachar, 3 in Naga hills were reported to have been killed by bears. Leopard did not kill much people. It reported to kill 48 people in Goalpara, 38 in Darrang, 24 in Kamrup, 14 in Sylhet, 13 in Sibsagar, 4 in Garo hills, 2 in Naga hills and 2 in Cachar etc Almost every year a few cases of people killed by Boars and Buffaloes were reported in almost all the district of Assam and Surma Valley.

Table 3.2. Statistics of the number of people killed by Boars.

Year	Goalpara	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Luakhimpore	Cachar	Sylhet	Kamrup	Garohills
1884	3	3	2	4	2				
1885		2	1	4	3			2	
1886	4	1	11					2	
1887				3					
1888	3	2	2				1	2	
1890			3		1			2	
1891			8	1	3				
1892	1	2	6	4			1	2	
1894	2			2	1		2		3
1895		1	2	2	2				
1897	2	3						1	
1898		1	1		3				
1900	1	3		1			1	1	
1901		7		1					2
1902	2	1	2		1	2		1	
1903	2	6	4	1	1			3	
1904		2	3	1		1			

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1885-1905)

Table 3.3. Statistics of the number of people killed by buffaloes.

Year	Goal-para	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Luakhimpore	Cachar	sylhet	Kamrup	Garohills	Khasi & Jyantia Hills
1884						1				
1885	2	1	3	2	1			2		
1886	5	1	3	1			6	2		
1887							3	1		
1888							6	4		3
1890					1			1	1	
1891							3	1		
1892	1			1				2	1	
1893	2						3	2		
1894					2		1	4	1	
1895	3	1	1	1	1		2		1	
1897	3	2	1	2			3	4		
1898	3							2		
1901	1						4			
1902		1	2	1			8	1		

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1885-1903)

Occasional killings by jackals were also reported in Kamrup, Goalpara, Sibsaagar, Sylhet and Nawgaon. In 1884 it killed 4 people in Kamrup and 3 in Goalpara. In 1885 it killed 4 killing in sibsaagar and 1 in Goalpara. In 1886 it reported to have killed 3 people in Sylhet and 6 in Kamrup. In 1895 it reported to have killed 2 in Nowgaon, 1 in Goalpara and 3 in sylhet so on. Killing by deer were also reported it reported to have killed 1 people in cachar, 1 in lukhimpore, and 1 in Darrang in 1884. In 1888 it reported

to have killed 1 people in sylhet. These are a few case of people killed by deer were reported. Crocodile also occasionally killed people. In 1887 it killed 2 people in sylhet, 1 in Lakhimpur in 1888, 1 in Kamrup in 1890, 1 in Goalpara in 1897, 1 in Darrang in 1898 and 1 in garo hills in 1903. Mithun reported to have killed very less number of people 1 in nawgoan in 1890, 1 in Goalpara in 1892, 1 in garo hills in 1894 and 1 in darrang in 1897. Alligators also reported to have killed occasionally 1 in Garo hill in 1884, 4 in Kamrup in 1884, 1 in Goalpara in 1895. Wild dogs occasionally killed people in large numbers. 43 in Goalpara district in 1891, 80 in Goalpara in 1890, 10 in sylhet in 1892 etc. wild pigs also occasionally killed people viz. 2 in 1887 in darrang, 2 in 1898 in sylhet, 2 in Kamrup in 1903 and 14 in sylhet in 1904 etc. Goalpara, Nowgaon, also witness case of people killed by rhinoceros. In 1885 1 people was killed in Goalpara and 1 in Nowgaon in 1892. Snakes proved to be more destructive in Sylhet. Statistics reveals that snake bite caused death of 2600 people from 1877-1927. Each year around 80 percent death of people by snake-bite in the province was reported in Sylhet. (Refer table No.1.1) One of the reasons behind it was flood. In 1878, a total of 255 people were killed by snake bite against 188 in 1877, an increase of 67 could be noticed and this increase of 67 deaths caused by snake bite. It was reported that the increase was due to the unusual floods in that district having driven the snakes to the high lands on which the villages were situated.¹⁴² In Goalpara 1853 people were killed by snake-bite, it was around 65 percent of the total number of people killed by snake bite. In Kamrup 1905 people were killed by snake bite which was 61 percent of the total number of people killed by snake-bite. In Darrang 682, in Nowgaon 671, in Sibsagar 329, in Cachar 231, people were killed by snake bite. In other districts like Lakhimpur, Khasi and Jyantiya hills and Naga Hills very few people were killed by snake bite viz. 52, 9 and 1 respectively. In Sylhet where the largest number of snakes was killed, the deputy commissioner said that the figures depend a good deal upon whether the district was visited by professional snake-catchers from Bengal.¹⁴³ Sylhet district alone accounted for 85 percent of the total number destroyed.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² (NAI), Home Public-A, 1879, December, File No. 266-295,

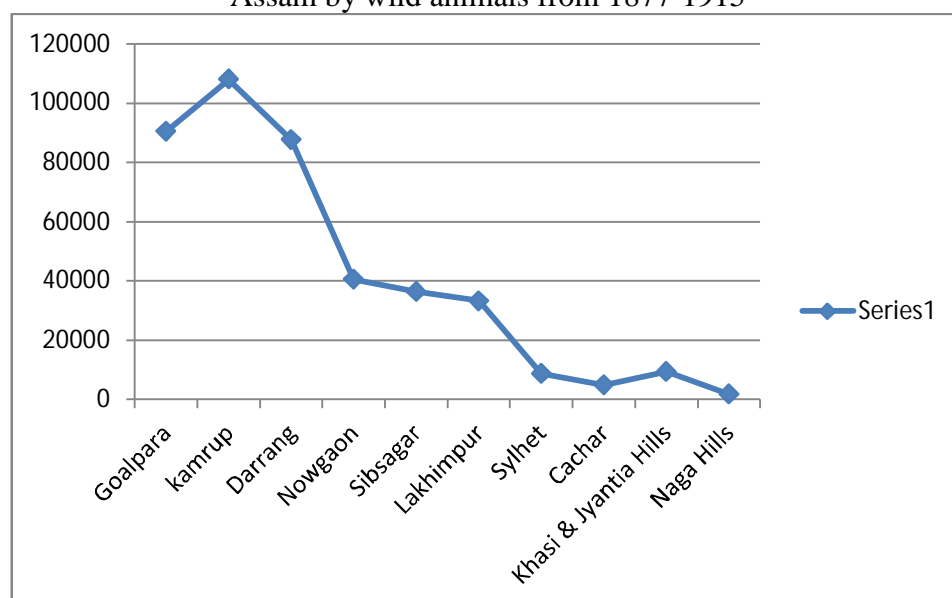
¹⁴³ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1904, File No. 50-16

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

3.7.2 District-wise Statistics of the Cattle Killed by Wild Animals

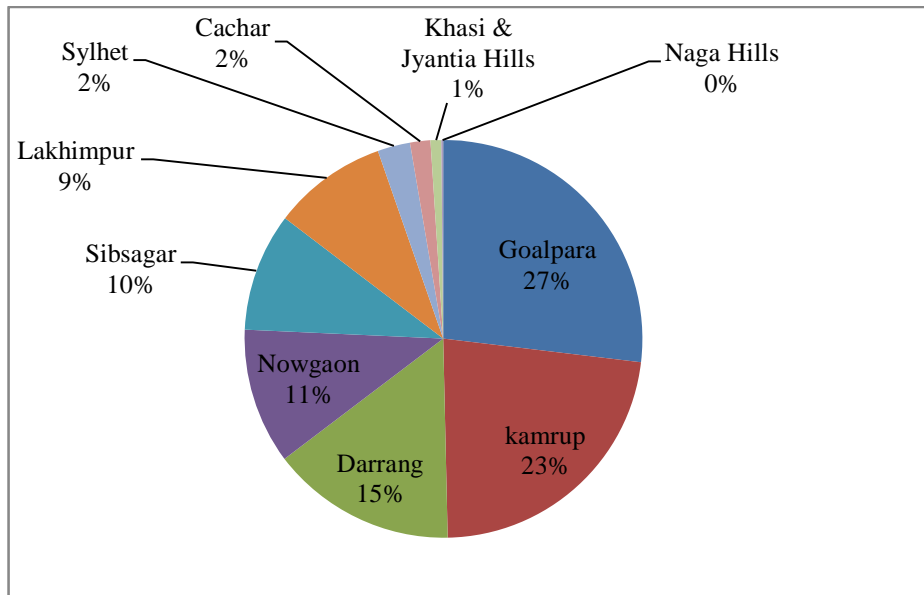
Every year a large number of cattle were killed by wild animals in each district of the province. Kamrup and Goyalpara reported to have killed maximum number of cattle by wild animals viz. 1,08,020 and 90,402 respectively from 1877-1915. Darrang and Sibsagar reported to have killed 87616 and 40520 cattle from 1877-1915. 36331 cattle were killed in Sibsagar, 33237 in Lakhimpur, 8771 in Sylhet, 4902 in Cachar, 9552 in Khasi and Jyantia hills and 1991 in Naga Hills. Earlier records for Lushai hills are not available according to the available records 18051 cattle were reported to have been killed from 1903-1915 of which record for 1911 is not available (see table no. 2.4).

Chart 3.7. The given chart explain the number of cattle killed in various district of Assam by wild animals from 1877-1915



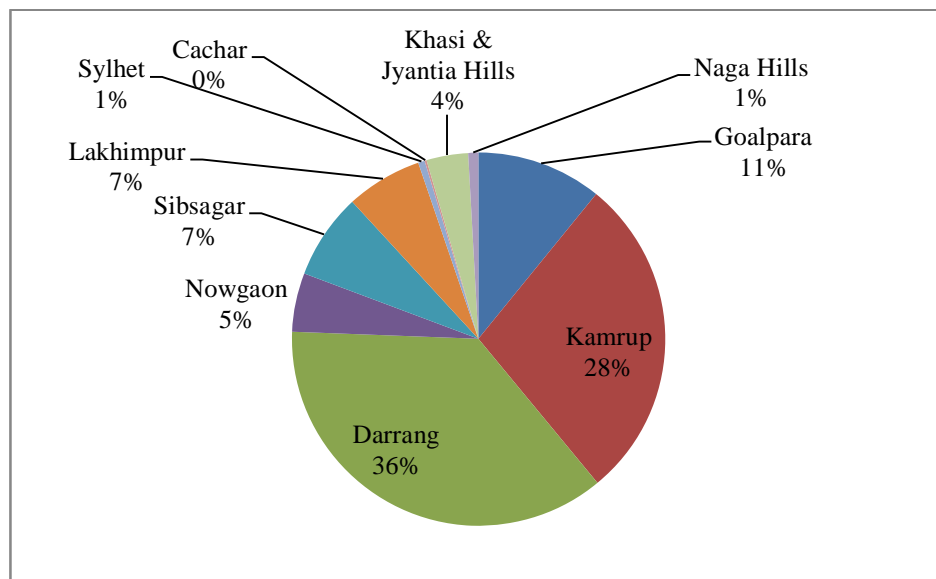
Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Chart no. 3.8 Showing the number of cattle killed by tigers during 1877-1927



Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Chart no. 3.9 Showing the number of cattle killed by leopard during 1877-1927



Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes (1876-1916)

Maximum number of killing of cattle by tigers was reported in Goalpara and Kamrup viz. 76,777 and 64,990 respectively. 43,046 cattle were reported to have killed in Darrang and 31,463 in Nowgaon, in Sibsagar 27,544, in Lakhimpore 26,520, 4,848 in Cachar, 2,436 in Khasi & Jyantia hills, 494 in Naga Hills and 53 in Garo hills. Though Garo hills was also affected by the attacks of tiger the cases of cattle killing was not properly reported. Elephants were not much a destroyer of cattle except in few districts

viz. Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgaon. It reported to have killed 267, 193, 135 cattle respectively. (Ref. table) Bears were less dangerous for cattle. It reported to have killed 182 cattle in Kamrup, 172 in Darrang, 84 in Nowgaon, 79 in Goalpara, 47 in Sibsagar, 20 in Lakhimpur, 14 in Khasi & Jyantia hills and 6 in Sylhet. Kamrup and Goalpara were most affected by wolves. In Kamrup highest number of cattle were reported to have been killed viz. 1427. Goalpara also accounted for 1001 cattle killed by wolves. Darrang, Nowgaon, sibsagar Naga Hills also reported killing of cattle by wolves. Hyenas were most destructive for the cattle of Goalpara it reported to have killed 1210 cattle from 1877-1915. Other than Goalpara, Nowgaon account for the killing of 414 cattle by hyenas and Sylhet account for 243 cattle killed by hyenas. Leopard was more a cattle killer than people killer. Darrang, Kamrup and Goalpara districts were the most affected by leopard. It reported to have killed maximum number of cattle viz. 38472 in darrang, 29680 in Kamrup, 11388 in Goalpara. It reported to have killed 7835 cattle in sibsagar, 6927 in Lakhimpur, 5373 in Nowgaon and 3842 in Khasi & jyantia hills. Sylhet, naga hills, cachar, reported to have killed less number of cattle viz 584, 923, 145 respectively. Wild dogs were no less dangerous for the cattle. The following table shows the destruction of cattle by wild dogs.

Table no.3.4 Statistics of the number of cattle killed by wild dogs in Goalpara district

Districts	1891	1890	1891	1897	1898	1900	1901
Goalpara	326	80	326	669	201	61	55

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1892-1902)

Table no.3.5 Statistics of number of cattle killed by wild dogs in Kamrup district

Districts	1886	1892	1894	1895	1897	1898	1901
Kamrup	128	96	2129	1864	1266	1171	74

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1887-1902)

Table no 3.6 Statistics of the number of cattle killed by wild dogs in Darrang district

Districts	1885	1887	1889	1892	1897	1898	1900
Darrang	22	53	105	28	267	302	563

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1886-1901)

Nowgaon, Khasi and jyantia hills, and sibsagar also reported the killing of cattle by wild dogs. 87 and 35 cattle were reported to have been killed in Khasi & Jyantia hills in

1902 and 1901 respectively. 22 and 55 cattle were reported to have been killed in Sibsagar district in 1889 and 1901 respectively. 37 and 79 cattle were reported to have been killed in Nowgaon district in 1894 and 1897 respectively. Jackals also accounted for the destruction of cattle. 48, 30, 25 cattle were reported to have been killed by jackals in Goalpara in 1884, 1892 and 1897 respectively. 70, 36 cattle were reported to have been killed in Nowgaon 1885, 1894 respectively. 41, 33, 26 cattle were reported to have been killed in Kamrup in 1886, 1901, 1897 respectively. 26 and 24 cattle were reported to have been killed in sibsagar in 1892 and 1895 respectively. 50, 80, 171, 46, 44 cattle were reported to have been killed in Darrang in 1885, 1887, 1900, 1897 and 1898 respectively. Buffaloes also occasionally led to the destruction of cattle in Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Darrang, Nowgaon, Sibsagar and Goalpara. But the year 1900 proved more dangerous for cattle of Kamrup when it reported to have killed 1196 cattle unlike the other years viz. 5 in 1901, 3 in 1884 etc. In Sibsagar it reported to have killed 3 in 1888, 3 in 1889. In Darrang it reported to have killed 1 in 1885, 14 in 1895, 3 in 1897 etc. In Goalpara it reported to have killed 21 in 1892, 9 in 1894, 7 in 1895 etc. Goalpara and Sylhet occasionally reported the killing of cattle by Boars, viz. 26 and 1 in Sylhet in 1886 and 1888 respectively and in Goalpara 39, 12 and 13 in 1892, 1894 and 1895 respectively. Other than these Sylhet, Darrang, also reported few cases of cattle killing by foxes and wild pigs. 27 cattle were killed by wild pigs in Sylhet in 1887, in Darrang 1 cattle each were reported to have been killed in 1887 and 1888. Foxes reported to have killed 10 cattle in Darrang in 1888 and 4 in 1888 in Sylhet. Snakes were not a cattle destroyer. It reported to killed maximum number of cattle in Nowgaon viz. 1693 and Kamrup viz. 1123 from 1877-1927 (Table.no.3.10). In Goalpara reported to have killed 793 cattle, Darnag 591, Sibsagar 275, Sylhet 225, Lakhimpur 180, Cachar 45 and Khasi & Jyantia hills only 12 cattle were killed by snakes. Garo hills did not record the killing of cattle by snake except in 1877 when 2 cattle were reported to have been killed. The inhabitants of Khasi and Jyantia hills enjoyed comparative immunity as destructive animals were rarer on high central plateau of these hills than in the jungles of the plains. Darrang was a district which was peculiarly liable to the ravages of wolves, which descend in packs from the lower slopes of the Himalayas.¹⁴⁵ Because of the absence of information from Darrang the

¹⁴⁵ (NAI), Home, Public, Dec. NO. 332 To 70, Dec. 1882,

figure shows an extraordinary decrease in the number of deaths reported to have been by wolves. Only 8 deaths of cattle were reported against 115 in the year before.¹⁴⁶ A large number of people and cattle were killed by wild animals. However it was only a portion of people and cattle actually killed by wild animals as not all the cases were reported to police. In case of cattle it was not possible for the local people to go to police station only to report the death of people or cattle. No concession was given for the cattle killed by the wild animals. So, people found it useless to go so far just to make an entry of the cattle killed. In case of human killed by wild animals or snake-bite it has been found that sometimes cases of homicide and suicide were reported as killed by wild animals or snakes. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, illustrated the difficulties experienced generally by district officers in the matter of obtaining accurate information on this point. "The villagers did not report at the police stations the destruction of their cattle by wild animals during the past year, notwithstanding the publication of the usual notice about the district; consequently, I am unable to give figures for this head of return. It is a well-known fact that during the first six months of the year the ryots allow their cattle to roam about the country without restraint, and do not take notice of what befalls them until the ploughing season comes round again, and the consequence is that I believe there are a great number of cattle destroyed yearly by tigers."¹⁴⁷ Even though the reports are not totally trustworthy as there were problems in accurate reporting of the number of people and cattle killed by wild animals and snakes still these statistics provide an idea of the large scale destruction of cattle by wild animals. In initial years the statistics were underreport but later more accurate statistics were drawn with the help of *chaoukidars*, *gaunburas* and *tahsildars*. However, it was because of the wholesale destruction of herbivore that cattle were killed in such large number as the carnivore had to feed upon them. The statistics shows that 18,604 people were killed, which even if included the cases of homicide and suicide, is not a big number if compared with the number of wildlife and snake destroyed. However, the destruction by wild animals was the result of growing interference by the British in wildlife habitation. The relation of people with nature before British annexation of the province was mutual and did not disturbed the balance of nature but after the province came under British rule the balance of nature was disturbed because of the exploitation of nature by the British for earning more revenue.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷(NAI), Home, Public-A, 1879, December, File No. 266-295

The annexation of the province by the British changed the idea of hunting in the province. The British officials killed wild animals like rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, elephants and bison for game and trophies. The realization of the commercial value of horns and skin of wild animals led to the adaptation of various measures of the destruction of wild animals by the British government. Though the safety of life and property was one concern for the British official but that cannot be the main reason for the elimination of wildlife. The colonial need to bring more lands under tea plantation for earning more revenue led to the clearance of jungle which caused the decrease of land for wildlife habitation and they started interfering in human habitation. Again, the killing of herbivore for its commercial value and meat left no choice for the carnivore then to feed on cattle. This led to more human-wildlife conflict.

Table.3.7. Statistics of the number of people killed by wild animals during 1875-1927 in Assam

Year	Number of person killed by wild animals								By snakes	Grand total
	elephants	Tigers	leopards	Bears	Wolves	Hyenas	Other animals	total		
1875								251	169	420
1876								273	210	483
1877	21	135	2	11			60	229	188	417
1878	15	138		15	1		64	233	255	488
1879	17	107	2	27			47	200	221	421
1880	26	151		16			41	234	211	445
1881	22	131	4	13	3		38	211	189	400
1882	28	120	5	22			39	214	167	381
1883	26	159	2	20			*52	259	210	469
1884	15	138	2	13	2		42	212	175	387
1885	25	97	11	13			42	188	178	366
1886	15	81	4	19			48	167	254	421
1887	20	55	7	30			27	139	198	337
1888	20	89		19			36	164	213	377
1889	17	112	2	9			39	179	230	409
1890	20	119	5	17			40	201	214	415
1891	15	124		17			44	200	209	409
1892	26	107	2	15			59	209	208	417
1893	21	72	7	16			39	155	206	361
1894	24	69	..	23			29	145	160	305
1895	23	88	4	24			29	168	182	350
1896	18	46	7	14			28	113	154	267
1897	23	82	1	12		2	44	164	177	341
1898	11	98	7	15			20	151	153	304
1899	11	78	9	12			35	145	193	338
1900	13	57	2	20		1	26	119	170	289
1901	24	88	2	7			26	147	169	316
1902	21	63	8	11			46	149	164	313
1903	17	55	1	17			31	121+17=138	172	310
1904	18	50	1	17			32	118	185	303
1905	17	40	2	14			32	105	248	353
1906	21	47	3	11			28	110	172	282
1907	12	37	1	15		1	33	99	134	233
1908	21	66		19			8	114	146	260
1909	26	49	5	11		1	35	127	217	344
1910	24	42	7	14			46	133	239	372
1911	Not available									
1912	22	45	3	12			30	112	150	262
1913	20	33	4	13			32	102	167	269
1914	24	49	4	11			38	126	150	276
1915	29	62	2	16	1		37	147	256	403
1916	33	79	3	19	1		35	170	170	340
1917	22	75	5	16			20	138	151	289
1918	32	80	3	19			39	162	206	368
1919	17	117	12	9			43	198	173	371
1920	19	118	20	10	1		48	216	208	424
1921	26	76	4	11			35	152	217	369
1922	19	95	4	18			45	181	183	364
1923	27	118	3	16		2	43	209	172	381
1924	19	110	6	17			30	182	207	389
1925	41	100		10			26	177	188	365
1926	20	80	3	15		1	25	144	179	323
1927	22	79	5	8			31	145	163	308
Total	1065	4306	288	738	24	8	1825	8724	9880	18604

*Boars—22 a. include 17 persons killed in Lushai hills

Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes (1876-1928)

Table no. 3.8. Statistics of the number of cattle killed by wild animals during 1875-1915 in Assam

Year	Number of cattle killed by wild animals								By snakes	Grand total
	Elephants	Tigers	leopards	Bears	Wolves	Hyenas	Other animals	Total		
1875	1	968	167		45	2	61	1244		1244
1876		1940	428		150		16	2534		2534
1877	3	2586	396				9	2994	9	3003
1878	1	1663	228	1	82		67	2042	11	2053
1879		1812	625	2	42	2	8	2491	2	2493
1880		1971	1143		115		40	3269	57	3326
1881		2274	408		8	4	108	2802	16	2818
1882	5	3033	730	11	116	38	39	3972	30	4002
1883		2749	668	15	93	63	231	3819	20	3839
1884		5168	1180	5	8	61	209	6631	39	6670
1885		11038	1168		1053	579	293	14131	56	14187
1886		11085	2671	47			260	14063	208	14271
1887	21	13038	2498	3			563	16123	190	16313
1888	16	12764	2062	13	23		415	15293	185	15478
1889	14	11884	2465	11	2		298	14674	71	14745
1890	5	11427	3097	22		29	327	14907	257	15164
1891	81	11174	2743	66		21	519	14604	50	14654
1892	81	12084	3809	16		9	402	16401	96	16497
1893	20	12840	4102	25	24		435	17446	....	17446
1894	50	12620	2338	31	13	12	4529	19593	60	19653
1895	18	14930	2276	61	3	7	2259	19554	205	19759
1896	41	11978	2475	58	6		3082	17640	190	17830
1897	15	9954	2580	9		780	2600	15938	39	15977
1898	11	10876	2894	14	195	81	2195	16266	257	16523
1899	7	11886	3613	48		5	1247	16806	199	17005
1900	89	10832	2083	3	3	8	2117	15135	126	15261
1901	99	8383	4752	4	4		793	14035	123	14158
1902	1	9303	5174	2	1		213	14694	238	14932
1903	6	8633	5068	23		8	177	13915	105	14020
1904	12	7654	4207	15		43	681	12612	126	12738
1905	9	8546	4052	18			832	13457	150	13607
1906	18	7183	5507	17	8	30	855	13618	149	13767
1907	18	8281	5321	45	11	1	822	14499	182	14681
1908	1	7370	5500	39			644	13554	187	13741
1909	3	8709	2929	43	580	47	909	13220	139	13359
1910	1	8100	3600	21	604	17	611	12954	229	13183
1911										
1912	27	8261	5478	41	24	103	673b	13934	545	14479
1913	4	9069	6376	22	244	25	992b	15740	263	16003
1914	15	10010	5907	20	316		1471	17739	208	17947
1915	23	11253	7580	5	145	3	2079	21088	333	21421
Total	716	335329	120298	776	3918	1978	28866	495431	5350	500781

Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes (1876-1916)

Table No. 3.9. Statistics of number of people killed by wild animals including snakes in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goal-para	Kamrup	Darrang	Now-gaon	Sibsagar	Lakhim-pur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	64	66	16	80	28	5	102	11	13		32
1878	80	87	34	104	16	5	110	11	20		21
1879											
1880	57	59	21	49	18	5	129	9	18		82
1881	70	54	29	56	11	3	83	10	31		53
1882	88	56	22	56	14	7	85	12	15		44
1883	73	80	32	88	26		88	14	18		56
1884	62	64	34	52	16	8	81	21	15		24
1885	65	54	25	62	34	12	73	20	6		15
1886	87	78	23	57	20	7	117	14	6		12
1887	65	72	37	36	21	2	84	6			13
1888	54	64	34	54	17	3	104	17	15		15
1889	62	74	26	53	12	2	140	27	22		24
1890	65	65	28	47	6	2	116	48	15	6	17
1891	71	76	33	56	9	9	77	45	11	3	19
1892	66	75	24	60	16	8	108	18	9	3	30
1893	38	59	32	56	20	4	116	17	8	1	11
1894	42	60	30	31	13	3	81	12	12	3	28
1895	59	70	33	43	14	7	64	22	8	16	14
1896											
1897	80	64	26	36	6	7	62	12	24	7	17
1898	56	48	17	19	7	6	73	25	13	16	24
1899											
1900	46	36	34	20	11	9	87	16	10		20
1901	67	43	37	22	12	4	67	12	8	25	19
1902	44	57	28	19	6	5	92	13	7	18	25
1903	44	48	48	24	8	8	78	11	10	1	13
1904	45	49	31	29	10	2	84	12	0	2	20
1905	73	46	20	43	18	12	51	8			9
1906	46	38	30	43	13	3	68	13	1	6	18
1907	34	51	33	20	13	4	35	20	2	5	7
1908	60	46	20	25	18	5	45	11	7	7	14
1909	97	83	45	13	23	4	48	12	3	2	11
1910	66	88	47	26	20	9	85	14	7	2	9
1911	0										
1912	50	52	32	20	22	8	54	6	3		12
1913	47	41	44	28	12		64	8		2	21
1914	42	67	35	25	21	8	49	5	11		13
1915	103	71	34	38	33	6	88	4	7	5	14
1916	76	51	33	26	40	12	66	6	4	2	20
1917	67	44	31	19	26	9	40	7	8	1	36
1918	115	54	50	33	25	10	35	10	5	1	25
1919	86	57	49	35	23	13	49	9	6		44
1920	90	76	35	40	62	9	56	5	18	4	27
1921											
1922											
1923											
1924	98	98	61	5	31	15	40	15	6		18
1925											
1926	79	55	51	14	25	2	40	10	5	1	36
1927	78	57	45	11	32	12	47	5			13
Total	2857	2633	1429	1673	828	274	3261	603	407	139	993

Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes (1876-1928)

Table no. 3.10 Statistics of the number of cattle killed by wild animals including snakes in various districts of Assam during 1877-1915

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills
1877	74	1357	389	845	203	22	37	43		
1878	33	1180		652	9	59	28	92		
1879	Not available									
1880	112	1212	637	619	252	111	159	35	167	
1881	288	1251		761	180	145	82	29	72	
1882	726	1176	612	849	329	130	71	30	79	
1883	723	1113	277	1065	275	169	115	52	40	
1884	2022	2137	532	946	263	157	371	196	46	
1885	6120	3292	1152	1226	1499	387	327	125	50	
1886	6893	3215	857	497	2050	144	399	161	55	
1887	6710	3121	2093	1022	1974	844	323	161	65	
1888	3832	2965	2185	808	2059	937	390	220	82	
1889	5666	2660	2453	732	1658	998	318	155	105	
1890	5371	3628	2270	703	1431	1129	389	159	144	
1891	5528	3048	1915	738	1629	1011	352	101	330	
1892	5377	4641	2335	640	1322	1282	388	119	393	
1893	6037	5676	1859	1323	1007	1206	189	86	200	
1894	5836	8295	1849	1097	777	1234	384	75	107	
1895	7164	6077	1839	1655	992	1469	325	133	95	
1896	Not available									
1897	4059	4586	2010	1989	549	2038	299	237	39	140
1898	2875	5080	2415	2002	787	1776	238	472	67	811
1899	Not available									
1900	2983	4439	3252	1297	818	1601	380	336		155
1901	1746	3982	3861	1190	1097	1472	351	147	280	185
1902	1756	4604	3992	1483	1247	1851	312	174	184	14
1903	1338	3840	4067	1037	1296	1730	158	97	439	18
1904	708	2720	3936	1288	992	1563	281	108	116	27
1905	903	2957	3787	1431	1116	1312	321	72	405	4
1906	809	2875	3806	1629	1041	1474	341	70	291	11
1907	1203	3044	3900	1742	1215	1289	128	102	507	3
1908	1001	3079	3499	1650	1289	1099	176	82	382	10
1909	1439	3246	2859	1287	1287	1028	162	159	277	1
1910	928	2977	3233	1596	1282	960	210	115	179	6
1911	Not available									
1912	1629	2060	4598	1852	1207	1296	314	128	488	
1913	1538	2997	5094	1915	1311	1087	230	235	2015	
1914	1983	2948	5234	1913	1695	870	254	367	188	
1915	1852	3341	7269	2057	1475	743	383	191	1698	418
Total	90499	107967	87595	41364	36277	33287	8925	4948	9306	1803

Source: (NAI), Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes (1876-

1916)

Chapter - 4

FACING THE WRATH

“Both the Asian and African rhinoceroses have been murdered for their horn to provide the Far Eastern market-and formerly the European market too-with raw materials for dubious medical and magical remedies. Once it would have been unthinkable that these two magnificent animals would ever be in danger of extinction, so great were their numbers and so extensive their ranges. But, today, both are in grave danger. Bans imposed on trading in these products are flouted by the international racketeers in the business-E.P.Gee.”¹

Wildlife is a part of human ecology and they live in close proximity. They did not affect the life of each other till their food chain was disturbed but once it was disturbed they started killing each other. The extension of human population to the natural wild animal habitats led to the displacement of the natural wildlife territory. The density of wildlife and humans population overlapped growing their interaction which resulted in increased physical conflict. By products of human existence offer unnatural opportunity for wildlife in the form of food and shelter, resulting in increased interference and potentially destructive threat for both men and animals that resulted into animals deaths, damage to property and crops, injuries to people, injuries to wildlife, livestock depredation and loss of human. The human-animals conflict existed since long back. But prior to British rule the conflict between human and wildlife was not huge because people did not interfere much in the wildlife habitation. After the annexation of the province the British government started a tag of war against wildlife as it was considered as hurdle to the extension of cultivation. But the process of the destruction of wild animals did not start abruptly as Mahesh Rangarajan argued that the British rulers were initially concerned with eliminating carnivorous and collecting trophies.²

¹ Gee. E.P., (1986), *The wildlife of India*, New Delhi, Sterling Publisher, p.7

² Mahesh Rangarajan, (1996), *Fencing the Forest, Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces, 1860-1914*, OUP, New Delhi, , p.139

The commodification of wildlife and need for extension of cultivable land led the adaptation of measures for the extermination of wildlife. British government introduced the system of reward giving, appointed *shikariees* and distributed guns for the destruction of wildlife. Similarly, Ramachandra Guha and Madhav Gadgil also argued that “the British, as proponents of shikar on a large scale, had very little interest in wildlife-conservation. The consequences of record-breaking shikar sprees and habitat destruction were apparent by the time India gained independence. The tiger population, estimated at 40,000 at the turn of the century, had slumped to 3000. The cheetah was extinct in 1952. Other large mammals, such as the elephant and rhino, had disappeared from areas in which they were formerly quite numerous, while the Asiatic lion survived only in the Gir Forest.”³

The Christian Missionaries records also reveal the decrease of the wildlife population. According to one missionary record, “Only a few years ago it was considered unsafe for anyone to come here even in daylight. Wild animals were very numerous. Now there are thousands of settlers located on these rich lands.”⁴ Though the casualties by wild animals cannot be ignored but the statistics shows that the destruction of the wild animals was more in comparison with the casualties by the wild animals. This chapter discusses the British policies towards wild life and its consequences, various measures adopted by the British viz, reward giving for the destruction of wild animals and poisonous snakes, the offer of special rewards for especially destructive animals, calling of professional *shikarees*, encouragement of shooting parties, liberal issue of gun licenses and guns to kill the wild animals etc. It also discusses the impact of British policies towards wildlife.

4.1 British Policies towards Wildlife

The British government raised a war of fight to destroy wildlife. The exploitation of forest resources and clearance of jungle for cultivation led the British government adopt measures for the extermination of wildlife. Wild animals like tiger, buffalo, stags and other animals made the cultivation difficult which was main source of revenue.⁵ The British officials argued that the killing of wildlife is needed for the safety of life and

³ Gadgil. M. & Guha, R., (1999), *This Fissured Land, An Ecological History of India*, New Delhi: OUP, pp. 232-233

⁴ Downie, D., (1915), Do Missionaries Die Young, *The Baptist Missionary Review*, June, Vol. XXI, No.6. p. 256

⁵ Cederlof, Gunnel, (2014), *Founding Empire on India's North-Eastern Frontiers 1790-1840, Climate, Commerce, Polity*, New Delhi: OUP, p. 183

property. This led the British government to initiate various measures for the destruction of wildlife. At the initial stage, there was debate among British officials as to what measures to be adopted for the destruction wildlife. After some of the earlier experiments (as discussed in chapter I) it was decided by the Government of India as well as by the Provincial governments that giving of reward was recognized as effective method. Reward giving became the most popular method of the destruction of wild animals during the British rule. Prior to British rule the reward giving was never practiced by any ruler. Mahesh Rangarajan argued that the system of reward giving for the destruction of wild animals was ‘utterly unknown to the original rulers of India.’⁶ The British began fresh infringements on the animal world with their systematic measures of extermination.⁷ The introduction of reward involved the local inhabitants, *shikariees* called from neighboring province in the process of extermination of wildlife primarily for the sake of rewards and secondly for trade purpose. Mahesh Rangarajan argued that “Bounties aimed to eliminate cattle-marauding tigers. Saving draught cattle would help extend the area that was under the plough. Fewer tigers meant more cultivation and more revenue, their elimination a blessing of imperium after the elimination of an oriental despot. Unprecedentedly, larger rewards were given out for killing tigress, and special prizes for finishing off cubs. This was to be a war where no quarter was given.”⁸ Large sum was given for the destruction of female and cubs of wildlife to stop the reproduction of wildlife. The pattern of use of weapons changed with the introduction of modern weapons. Prior to the British rule, the local inhabitants used traditional weapons like bow and arrows, spear, and *daos* through which not many wild animals could have been killed but the supply of modern weapons like gun and rifles made the killing of wild animals easier than ever before. The use of poison for killing wild animals was also in practiced during British rule. This resulted in the destruction of wild animals in large numbers.

The scale of reward varies animal to animal. Reporting on the measures adopted in the province for the destruction of wild animals, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner stated the following measures- different rates of rewards were paid for the destruction of wild animals according to the nature of animals. For example highest reward was

⁶ Rangarajan , M., (1996), *Fencing the forest, conservation and ecological change in India's central provinces 1860-1914*, Delhi: OUP, p. 145

⁷ Anon., (1888) ‘The Game and Game Laws of India’, *Qly Review*, vol. CCCXXXIII, p. 91, cited from Rangarajan , M., (1996), *op.cit.* p. 145

⁸ Rangarajan,M., (2005), *India's wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, p.23

paid for the destruction of rogue elephant viz. Rs.100 compare to other wild animals. The lowest reward paid was Rs. 2 for the destruction of hyenas. The paying of rewards also depended on the nature of destruction in any districts. For the destruction of a full-grown tiger was paid Rs.25 in North Cachar Hills, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Garo and Naga Hills but in other district only Rs.20 was paid. For the killing of leopard Rs. 5 was paid in all districts of the province, for wolves and bears Rs.10 was paid. For the destruction of snakes rewards was not paid in all the districts but in some districts like Gauhati and Sibsagar a reward of Rs. 2 annas was paid. Other than, reward giving the gratuitous distribution of guns and ammunition in Assam Valley, Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts for the protection of human lives, cattle and crops from wild beasts also caused the destruction of wild animals in large number. The free licensing of guns also foster the destruction of wild animals.⁹ The appointment of the professional *shikariees* was very important as the success of reward giving mostly depended on the existence of the professional *shikariees* in the province as there was no native *shikariees* in Assam. The use of poison like ‘cobra poison’ and *dakara* (aconite), was also in practice for the destruction of wild animals.¹⁰ Apart from these, sports by the British officials and elite class also contributed in the destruction of wild animals. According to Rangarajan, “the deliberate and organized destruction of carnivores under government patronage was a novel feature of British period.”¹¹

4 2 Bounty Killing

The practice of reward giving was started by the British since 1840s. The inference of British government in forest for timber and other natural resources brought the wild animals in open country and that caused menace to human life and their property. Wild animals were also hurdle in the extension of tea plantation. The colonial projects like means of communication particularly roads and railways led the government to adopt measures for the killing of wild animals. The practice of the reward giving for the destruction of wildlife was popular during British rule. But there were no accurate statistical records to conform the number of wild animals killed for sports. Mahesh Rangarajan argued that “bounties were not the sole or the major cause of decline, but

⁹ (NAI), Home, Public-A, December. 1885, file no. 69-101

¹⁰ Smith,A.M., (1904), Sports and Adventure in the Indian Jungle, London: Hurst and Blackett, pp103-104

¹¹ Rangarajan , M., Computing the Numbers of Tigers Killed For Rewards in the British India; 1875-1925, *NMML*, New Delhi, 1996. P. 6

they are too an important factor to be left out in a story of the past.”¹² The practice of reward giving was introduced as a measure to encourage people for killing wild animals. The reward giving was practiced since Assam was under Bengal presidency. Though the scale of reward paid for the destruction of wild animals was much less prior to 1874, still the total amount paid was much higher than the amount paid after the formation of the forest department in Assam. An amount of Rs. 16,713, Rs. 14,148, Rs. 17,064 was paid as reward in 1866, 1867, 1879 respectively (see. Table no. 2.7.). After 1874, however, there was a gradual decline of the amount of rewards given. A sum of 10,640, 10,210, 8,385, 7,022 was paid in 1877, 1878, 1879, and 1880 respectively (see. table no.4.11). There was decline in the number of wild animals killed for reward after the formation of forest department. This is evident that a total of 4,381, 2,712 and 2,752 wild animals were reported to have been killed in 1866, 1867, 1868 respectively for rewards. On the other hand after 1874, a total of 7,72, 800, 772 wild animals were reported to have been killed in 1875, 1876, 1877 respectively for rewards (see table no. 2.7 and 4.12).

Other than the ‘bounty killing’ wild animals were also killed for trade. However, the statistics of the wild animals killed for reward was under reported. People from interior places did not take the trouble of reporting the killing of wild animals as the market value of dead wild animals was more than the amount given as reward. F.C. Daukes, Secretary to Chief Commissioner of Assam, reported that, “tigers, leopards, bears, and other animals are frequently shot by persons who do not take the trouble to obtain the Government reward or to report having shot them, and professional shikaris often find it more profitable to dispose of the animals killed by them to private persons than to bring them into the station to obtain the rewards. These cases are seldom reported.”¹³ Moreover trade in wildlife brought more sum than the amount paid as rewards. The reward for killing poisonous snake was not given prior to the 1874 but later it a small amount of two *annas* was introduced in some of the district for the destruction of snake.

4.2.1 Scale of Reward

A good sum of amount as reward was given for the destruction of wild animal. It varies according to animal and district. The rewards were given occasionally for killing those wild animals which were more destructive in particular district. Each Deputy

¹² Rangarajan, M., (2005), *India's wildlife history, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, P.32

¹³ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1890, December, File No. 360-407.

Commissioner had freedom within the limits of his allotment to pay rewards but the rate should not exceed the amount specified in the annexed schedule for the destruction of especially dangerous animals or of particular kinds of animal in certain localities. Deputy Commissioners were permitted to authorized subordinates - Districts Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Inspectors of police, Sub-Inspectors, head constables, Tahsildars and Mauzadars to certify the deaths of wild animals. Deputy Commissioners and Sub-divisional officers were allowed to pay the rewards on the production of such certificates together with the skulls of the animals killed.¹⁴ In other parts of the provinces, rewards were paid on the certificates of police, revenue and magisterial officers.

Table No. 4.1 The amount paid as reward mostly remained the same except on certain occasions and in certain district. The amount mostly given was-

Wild animals	Districts	Rs.	A.
Tiger (full grown) [rate to be doubled when special need exist]	Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, North Cachar, Garo Hills and Naga Hills	25	0
Ditto	All other districts	20	
Leopards	All districts	5	0
Wolves (rate to be double when necessary)	Ditto	10	0
Bears	Darrang and Sibsaagar	10	0
Ditto	Other districts	5	0
Hyenas	All districts	2	8

Source: (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1881, October File No, 104-117

For cubs and young ones half of the rates for full grown animals were paid.¹⁵ In the case of a rogue elephant a reward of Rs. 50 when the animal causes injury to crops or houses and property and if it was destructive to human life an increased reward of Rs. 100 was given. If the animal was a tusker the tusk became the property of the person who kills him.¹⁶ The reward was offered with a description of the elephant should be notified in the local Gazette and also locally at the offices of the Deputy Commissioner and at all police stations. The paying of reward was also informed to Chief Commissioner.¹⁷ For the destruction of venomous snakes an amount of 2 annas each

¹⁴ Supplement to the Manual of local rules and orders made under enactments applying to Assam to the 31st march 1901, Shillong, Assam Secretariat Printing office. P. 132

¹⁵ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1881, October, File No. 104-117

¹⁶ (NAI), Home, Public, 1890, December, File No. 360-407

¹⁷ Supplement to the Manual of local rules and orders made under enactments applying to Assam to the 31st march 1901, Shillong, Assam Secretariat Printing office. P. 132

were given within the limits of the Gauhati and Sibsagar municipalities.¹⁸ However, there was no specific policy to distinguish between venomous and harmless snakes in paying rewards.¹⁹ Government of India distributed the book by Sir Joseph Fayerer “*Thanatophidia of India*” for the identification of common classes of deadly snakes. The clearance of jungle and under growths received attention in localities where snakes were more than usually numerous.²⁰ Government of India insisted on clearing of surroundings to kill snakes.

In Karimganj subdivision, rewards were granted for the destruction of wild pigs at the rate of Rs.1-8 for full grown animals, Rs 1 for half grown and 8 annas for young ones. The same rates were extended to the Sunamganj Subdivision during 1894. In the North Lakhimpur Sub-division, a reward of Rs. 20 was sanctioned for any wild buffalo, as declared to be especially dangerous. For the destruction of wild boars which were proved dangerous to human being, a reward not exceeding Rs. 1-8 per head was paid in all the districts. After 1894 the North Lushai Hills were brought under the operation of the reward system. A rate of Rs 25 for the destruction of each full grown tiger was sanctioned experimentally for a period of two years.²¹ The rates for killing tigers and wolves were doubled whenever, according to Deputy Commissioner, “special need exists for so doing.”²² In 1891 the rate for killing tigers ranged from Rs.50 to Rs.100, which was normally ranged from Rs.20 to Rs.25.²³ The reward for the destruction of tigers in Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, North Cachar, Garo Hills and Naga Hills was Rs. 25/- but because of the disturbances by the wild animals special reward was asked by the Comptroller of Assam. The reward was thus, extended to the double rate for tiger i.e. Rs.40 or Rs.50 by the Deputy Commissioner.²⁴ Thus, an amount of not less than Rs.25 and not more than 50 could be rewarded for killing a tiger. In the year 1904 the rate for reward was increased for some wild animals and was made more specific, as shown in the table.

¹⁸ (NAI), Home, Public, 1885, December, File No. 69-101

¹⁹ (NAI), Home Public- A , October, 1903, File No. 237-235,

²⁰ (NAI), Home, Public, 1895, September, File No. 211-247

²¹ (NAI), Home, Public, 1895, September, File No. 211 to 247

²² (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1895, September, File No. 211-247

²³ (NAI), Home, Public, 1892, November, File No. 227-260

²⁴ (ASA) PRFA, Assam Secretariat Proceeding, Home –B, proc. November, 921/923, march, 1895,

Table No. 4.2 Showing the scale of reward in paid for the destruction of wild animals in 1904

Wild animals	Districts	Rs.	A.
Tiger full grown	Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, North Cachar, Garo Hills and Naga Hills	25	0
Tiger cubs	Ditto	12	8
Tiger full grown	Other districts	20	0
Tiger cubs	Ditto	10	0
Leopard, bears and wolves	All districts except Lushai hills	10	0
Lepard, bears and wolves cubs	Ditto	5	0
Leopard, bears	Lushai Hills	5	0
Lepard, bears and cubs	Ditto	2	8
Hyaens	All districts	2	8
Hyaena cubs	Ditto	1	4
Wild dogs	Mokochang subdivision and Naga Hills	3	0

Source: Assam Executive Manual, 1905, p. 131

Rewards were not given for all the cases of wild animals killed but a distinction was made between killing for self-protection and killing for sport. A lump grant was placed annually at the disposal of each animal. Within the same limits a Deputy Commissioner had to get approval from the Commissioner, in special cases of rewards in excess of the rates laid down. Man-eating tigers or rogue elephants might constitute special cases. The 'political officers' could also grant rewards on those lines subject to budget and allotments.²⁵

The special rewards were also paid occasionally for the destruction of specific wild animals in some districts. A special reward was sanctioned on experimental base when situation arose for the destruction of a particular animal depends on the disturbance by animal. A special reward of Rs.40 was paid for the destruction of a man-eating tiger in the district of Kamrup, and a reward of Rs.50 for the destruction of a rogue elephant in the Golaghat subdivision. In 1881, Rs.8, Rs.4, Rs.2 was sanctioned respectively for the destruction of boars, sows and sounders in Sylhet district.²⁶ The discontinuation of awarding for the killing of a particular animal led to the cease of reporting about their death. The Secretary of the Chief Commissioner of Assam viewed that in 1880 the rewards for wild buffaloes having been discontinued because the number of wild animals killed were considerably diminished.²⁷ On the other hand the number of persons killed and cattle destroyed by wild beasts and snakes were increased. Bounty killing played a vital role in the destruction of wild animals. However, the increase in

²⁵ Manual of Executive Rules and Order in Force in Assam, Shillong, AGP-1928, Department, General, Section-XII

²⁶ (NAI) Home, Public-A, 1882, December, File No. 332 to 70

²⁷ (NAI) Home, Public-A, 1881, October, 104-117

rewards did not affect much the killing of wild animals for instance, in 1880 the scale of rewards for the destruction of bears was increased from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 for Darrang and Sibsagar districts. In Darrang district the number of bears killed was only eight in excess of the figures of the year 1879, and in Sibsagar five bears were returned as destroyed during 1880 against none in 1879 which was not much in compare with the previous year.²⁸ The wild pigs committed great damages in Sylhet district. Rewards were sanctioned for killing wild pigs in Karimganj but not in the Sunamganj subdivision of Sylhet which was most affected by the attacks of wild pigs. In this division wild pigs committed a greater number of deaths annually and huge damage to crops. To deal this the rewards for the killing of the wild pigs was extended to Sunamganj subdivision.²⁹ The killing of wild animals could be observed till 1947. In 1944-45 a total sum of Rs. 440 and 12 annas was given as reward in the Lushai Hills for killing 7 tigers, 65 wild dogs, 7 leopards, 1 king cobra and 3 cobra.³⁰ This caused the destruction of a large number of wild animals for reward.

4.2.2 Amount Spent on Reward

Statistics revealed the nature and amount of rewards given for the destruction of wild animals for 1875-1927. The rewarding giving caused a large number of killings of wild animals. Mahesh Rangarajan argued that the “there is no question that it tipped populations over the edge in places where habitat was under increased pressure. In fact, the numbers of animals killed for rewards were often a good index of the land deforested for agricultural expansion.”³¹ The available statistics shows that a sum of Rs. 6,12,665 was paid for the destruction of 1,68,112 number of wild animals including snakes for a period of fifty year from 1877 to 1927. Out of it Rs.5,95,955 was paid for the destruction of 78,010 number of wild animals and only Rs. 16,710 was awarded for the destruction of 90,102 number of snakes. The number of animals killed for reward was possibly only a fraction of actual number of wild animals killed. Officials recorded only those cases for which reward was paid. Delay in claiming the reward meant the killing went unrecorded.

²⁸ (NAI), Home, public-A, 1881, October, 104-117

²⁹ (ASA) ASP, Home, Public-A, May 1894, File Nos.151-156, Sub: Extension to the Sumanganj Subdivision of the scale of rewards sanctuary for the destruction of wild pigs in the Karimganj subdivision.

³⁰ (MSA), General department, CB-54, G-668, 1946

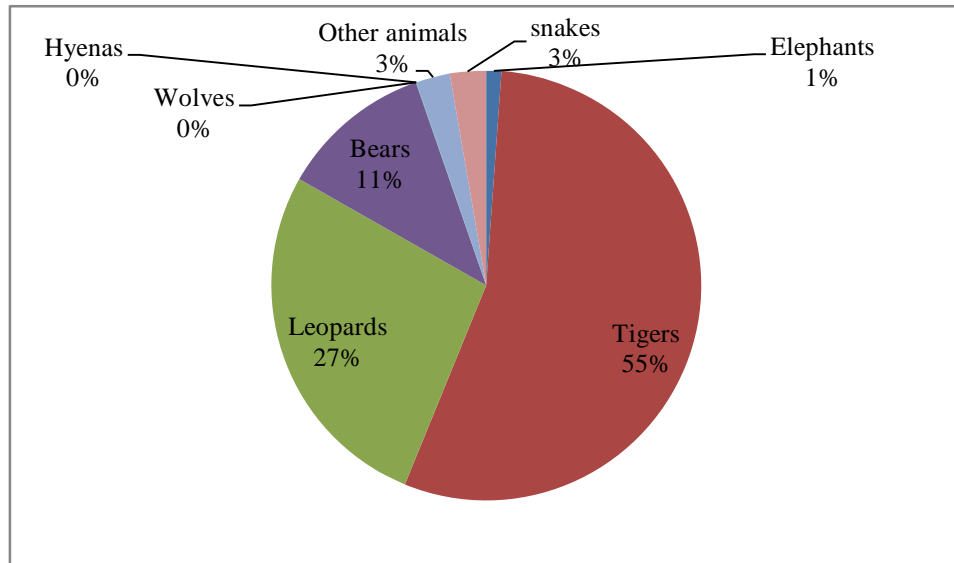
³¹ Rangarajan, M., (2005), *India's Wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, p.32

For the destruction of a snake on average only 19 paise was spend. No rewards were given for the killing of snake in the province till 1880. Only in parts of Sylhet district higher rewards were paid for the destruction of snake. A reward of Rs. 1 was offered by the North Sylhet Local Board for each poisonous snake. This high rate of reward was introduced in 1893, previous to that no rewards were offered. Inspite of this the number of snakes destroyed fell from 495 in 1892 and 289 in 1893 to 99 in 1894, and the amount of rewards paid was also fell from Rs. 45 in 1893 to Rs. 9 in 1894 in this Sub-Division. The Government of India expressed that no general system of rewards for the destruction of snakes was of much practical efficacy.³²

Highest amount was paid for the destruction of tigers which was Rs.3,37,125, followed by amount paid for the destruction of leopard Rs.1,65,738, followed by amount paid for the destruction of bears Rs. 70,179, followed by amount paid for the destruction of elephants Rs. 7,044, followed by amount paid for the destruction of wolves Rs. 244 and lastly amount paid for the destruction of hyenas Rs. 52. Other than these occasionally rewards were paid for the destruction of wild pigs, rhinoceros, wild boars and jackals, etc. In 1882 a sum of Rs. 545 was paid for the destruction of buffaloes, wild boars and rhinoceros. For the destruction of mad jackal a sum of Rs. 5 was paid in 1885 in Kamrup district and for wild dogs Rs. 3.8 was paid in 1886. Occasionally some amount was also paid for the destruction of wild dogs but that was very less. In 1900, a sum of Rs.23.8 was paid as reward for the destruction of 91 dogs in Kamrup district. An amount of Rs. 5 was paid for the destruction of a single wild dog in Sibsagar and Rs. 6 was paid for the destruction of 2 wild dogs in Nowgaon district in 1901. In Darrang a sum of Rs. 2.8 was paid for the destruction of a wild dog in 1894. No reward were paid for the destruction of jackals in Sylhet but in Darrang district a sum of Rs. 15 was paid for the destruction of 2 jackals. Some amounts were paid in Sylhet district for the destruction of wild boars which was not paid in other districts. A amount of Rs. 38.8 was paid for the destruction of 514 wild boars in 1895 in Sylhet. Thus, the amount varies from district to district depending on the atrocities by any particular animals in any particular district.

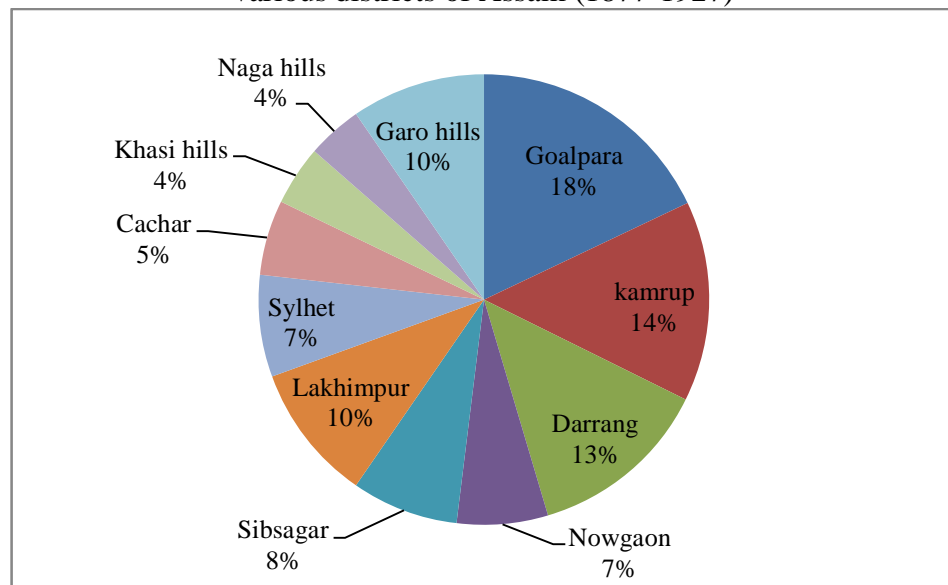
³² (NAI), Home, public, 1895, September, 211 to 247

Chart No. 4.1 Showing the amount of reward paid for the killing wild animals in the province of Assam (1877-1927)



Source: (NAI), Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927

Chart No. 4.2. Showing the amount of reward paid for the killing of wild animals in various districts of Assam (1877-1927)



Source: (NAI), Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927

The maximum sum was spend on the destruction of tigers and leopard, might be because the atrocities were more by these animals, as seen in earlier chapter 93per-cent cattle and 24per-cent people were reported as killed by tigers and leopard. The amount paid for the destruction of these animals was also higher in comparison with the other animals. Occasionally the rates for the destruction of tiger and leopard was also

doubled which also increased the destruction of this animal for reward. Bear was next in the list as 11 per-cent of the total amount paid for the destruction of wild animals was paid for the destruction of bears. Though it was not much destructive for the cattle as it reported to have killed only 0.12 per-cent of the total number of cattle destroyed by wild animals but it was dangerous for human life. It reported to have killed 14 people (approx.) every year. In case of the destruction of snakes amount paid for its destruction was very less and that too was paid only in some districts of the province. The amount paid for the destruction of snakes started only in 1881. The amount was paid for the destruction of poisonous snakes only. Rewards for the destruction of poisonous snakes were paid by Chairmen of Local Boards in the plains districts and by the Deputy Commissioner or Sub-Divisional officers in the hill districts. Municipalities were not required to pay rewards. The scale of payment sanctioned was Rs. 1 for each Ophiophagus and four annas per head for any of the following five species- Cobra, Krait (*Bungarus Caruleus*), Sankin (*Bungarus Fasciatus*), Russel's Viper (*Daboia Russellii*), Kupper or Phursa (*Echis Carinata*). Rewards were not paid for any other species of snakes.³³ It reported to have killed highest number of people almost 53 per-cent of the total number of people killed by wild animals still not much reward were section for its destruction. 1 per-cent reward was also paid for the destruction of wild Elephant though it was mostly preferred to capture than to kill. But in case of rouge elephants certain amount were paid for its destruction as it proved dangerous for human life. it reported to have killed 20 people (approx.) each year. It proved more a destructive animal which destroyed the crops, paddy fields and granaries etc. Other than these 3 per-cent of reward was also paid for the destruction of other animals in some specific district like for snake and wild boars in Sylhet, for wild dogs in Kamrup, Sibsagar, Nowgaon and Darrang etc. Killing for reward was not the only force at work, killing for trophies reached unprecedented levels during the British rule.³⁴

4.3 Use of Modern Weapons

One of the reasons for frequent killing of wildlife was liberal issue of gun licenses and hunting licenses. Pre-colonial weapons like bows and arrows, spear, dao etc. did not cause more destruction to wildlife but after British came into this province guns were

³³Suppliment to the Manual of Local Rules and Orders made under enactments applying to Assam to the 31st march 1901, Shillong, Assam Secretariat Printing Office. P. 132

³⁴Rangarajan, M., (2005), *India's wildlife history, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, P.33

made available for the people to kill wild animals. This made the killing of wild animals much easier than the earlier. The increase in the destruction of wild animals was more particularly after the distribution of guns among the villagers. In initial years of the distribution of guns it has been found that most of the gun licenses were given to cultivators in order to protect their crops, cattle and their life, who rarely go in search of game or participate in wildlife hunting. C.J.Lyall, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, viewed that,

“many of the guns in use can hardly be described as weapons of precision. Flint-locks and match locks still abound among the rustics who live on the borders of the great forests of the province, and these are used quite as often for scaring away, as for slaying, the nocturnal depredators of the ryots’ crops.”³⁵

In 1884, Government of India sanctioned 40 musket for distribution to such persons as were likely to make use of them in Assam Valley districts for their protection and their crops from wild beasts. Out of these 40 guns, 38 were distributed in various districts. After use of these guns one tiger, five buffaloes, five pigs, and thirteen deer were killed by two guns issued in Lakhimpur, while in Nowgaon ten guns, succeeded in killing only one tiger, one bear, seven pigs, and one deer. The twenty muskets which were distributed in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills was not used much but only one leopard was killed. Though guns were distributed but tribes mostly used traditional methods kill and catch wild animals. Two leopards were caught in a trap near the Deputy Commissioner’s bungalow in Shillong during the winter of 1884.³⁶ The government of India recommended the killing of wild animals by guns as it was gratuitously distributed, the reason for this could be firstly if they killed with guns it was more responsible and the killing of wild animals should be recorded. Moreover, it was easier to kill wild animals by using guns and rifle. However, Babu Bipin Chndra Pal argued in the INC session of 1886 that Arms Act prohibited the use of arms by country men. Cultivators appealed the government to protect their crops from the ravages of wild animals especially by tigers and leopard for the arms act deprived them of means by

³⁵ (NAI), Home, Public, 1882, December, File No.332 to 70,

³⁶ (NAI), Home, Public, 1885, December, File No. 69-101

which cultivators could protect their crops and themselves.³⁷ Gradually it was realized that the guns should be distributed among the cultivators to protect their crops and their lives. In 1902 a resolution was taken in Allahabad session of INC that the rules under the Arms Act should be amended as to make them equally applicable to all residents in or visitors to India without distinction of creed, caste to ensure the liberal concession of licenses wherever wild animals habitually destroy human life, cattle or crops, and to make all licenses granted under the revised rules of life-long tenure revocably only on proof of misuse and valid throughout the provincial jurisdiction in which they were issued. In 1891 guns were distributed in various districts under the Arms Act in form XI i.e. for the possession of arms and ammunition for the purpose of the destruction of wild animals or protection of crops. However, The Commissioner of Assam valley had objection on the free grant of gun licenses In his words “I am altogether opposed to the granting of licenses for more than one year. In this frontier province it is necessary to exercise strict check on the trade in arms and ammunition. The only check we have or can have is that we compare the endorsement on the backs of gun licenses with the entries in the vendor’s books. Unless gun licenses are filed annually, no proper examination of the endorsements on these can be made.”³⁸ He feared that guns and ammunition could be misused if were supplied without restriction. However, gun licenses and guns were distributed and used by the British officials to killed wild animals which led to the killing of a large number of wild animals.

Guns were mostly used by *shikariees* and license holders for killing of game for trade and not for the protection from wildlife. In addition to the free grant of licenses under the Arms Act (1878), government guns were gratuitously distributed to persons living in dangerous localities for protection from wild beasts. It was not only used for the purpose for which it was given out but it was used for the purpose of sport and pleasure.³⁹ Moreover, prior to 1889 Provincial Government had not given any instruction for the use of these licenses. In 1889 instructions were issued to the district officers to exercise strict supervision over the holders of the Government guns, so as to secure the object for which they were distributed i.e. the destruction of wild animals. Later it was required for the holders of each government gun to kill in each year a certain number of noxious animals for which rewards were paid under the penalty of

³⁷Indian National Congress Proceeding for the year 1886, December, Calcutta

³⁸(NAI), Home, Public, 1891, October, file no. 316-353

³⁹(NAI), Home, Public, 1890, December, 360-407

having the gun taken away from him.⁴⁰ But no rules were made to restrict the use of the government guns for game hunting which led to the large number of killing of wildlife for hunting for which no record is available.

The result of the liberal distribution of guns could be seen as in 1894 though the total number of wild animals killed was almost same of that of the 1893. A total of 1,608 wild animals were killed in 1893 and 1,606 in 1894. But of the larger number of “other animals” 524 wild boars were destroyed in Sylhet and Garo Hills report shows the number of wild boars killed was larger than the 1893. In the words of the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, “this increase is said to have been chiefly to the more liberal grant of gun licenses and hunting licenses in the year under report.”⁴¹ Eight weapons were needed for killing a single animal, which shows that the licenses were in most cases not held by persons who use the weapons habitually for the purpose of hunting or even for self-protection, but more commonly for show and the name of the thing though district officers were instructed to search more diligently for man of *shikariee* class, and to offer them licenses and assistance in pursuing their profession and keeping down the wild animals which causes serious loss to life and property.⁴² Licenses under the Indian Arms Act were given and the number of licenses was steadily increased by 1887. Government guns were also distributed gratis for protection against wild beast in infested localities. It was however; observed from the returns received from all districts in which government guns were given out that these guns were more frequently used for purpose of sports and for the killing of buffaloes, pigs and deer for sale than for the destruction of dangerous animals.⁴³ Guns were distributed for keeping down the number of wild animals when it was danger to life and property. During 1884 thirty one guns were distributed in four districts of the Assam valley and with these 156 wild animals were shot.⁴⁴ In 1886, 52 guns were distributed with the help of which 201 wild animals were killed, most of these were pigs and deer, but in Nowgong 12 tigers and in Sibsagar 7 tigers were killed with these free guns. On some occasions the killing of wild animals was necessitated for the safety of crops, cattle and human lives and the killing of wild animals was appreciated by people. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur writes-“when I was at Sisi and Dhemaji last December,

⁴⁰ (NAI), Home, Public, 1890, December, 360-407

⁴¹ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1895-September, File No., 211 to 247.

⁴² (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1881-October, File No.104-117

⁴³ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1889-November, File No. 236-269

⁴⁴ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1886-December, File No.795

the people were loud in their expressions of gratitude for all the good that the guns (two in number), which I had given out for that part of the district, had done, especially in respect of the slaughter of wild pigs.”⁴⁵

4.4 Calling of the Professional *Shikariees*

Appointment of the professional *shikariees* for the keeping down the number of wild animals was common during British rule. There were attempts to encourage men of *Shikariee* class to keep down the wild animals. However, very few natives of the *Shikariee* class were in the province. It was confirmed by Colonel Pollock, Madras Staff Corps, during one of his hunting expedition in the province said that, “we had no shikaries, as no exist in Assam.”⁴⁶ Thus, *shikariees* from neighboring province, Bengal were called up to Assam to keep down wild animals. Earlier also *shikarees* used to visit the province in search of wild animals. In Goalpara alone a few men of the *Shikariee* class, visitors from the district of Purneah (Bengal), came in search of game. They were induced to take out licenses for a term of five years.⁴⁷ These *shikariees* visited Goalpara as it was near to Bengal but Cachar and Sylhet, being on other side were not visited by these *shikariees* and thus the British government called up *shikariees* from purnea (Bengal) to these districts to keep down wild animals. These *shikariees* however used gins, poisoned arrows, and other primitive contrivances than guns.⁴⁸ The use of traditional weapons by the *shikariees* was also because killing by bullet they had to be registered and they could not sold it in market.

Even the reward giving was not successful to control the wildlife in the absence of professional *shikariees*. The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam viewed that “The success of the system of rewards, in fact, depends a good deal upon the existence of a professional *shikari* class, who can be attracted by them to engage in the destruction of wild animals as a means of livelihood.”⁴⁹ Even the increase of the amount of reward paid was not successful in keeping down the wild animals in the absent of professional shikariees.⁵⁰ In case of elephants highest reward of Rs. 50 and 100 offered for the destruction of mischievous or dangerous “rogue” elephants but it did not produce any better effects. Similarly, the increased reward offered for bears in

⁴⁵ (NAI), Home , Public-A, 1887-December, File No. 126-164,

⁴⁶ Pollok, C., (1894), *Incident Of Foreign Sport And Travel*, London, Chapman & hall, p.42

⁴⁷ (NAI), Home, Public, December, 1882, File No.332 to 70,

⁴⁸ (NAI), Home Public, ,December, 1882, File No. 332 to 70,

⁴⁹ (NAI), Home, Public, December, 1884, File No. 109-140

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Darrang (Rs.10, instead of Rs,2-8) was attended in 1883 with an absolute decrease in the number of bears destroyed.⁵¹ In 1882, 41 bears were killed in Darrang district which decrease to 33 in 1883. The killing of wild animals brought large sum of amount for the *Shikariees*. In 1883 the shikariees from Purnia and the neighboring parts of Bengal hunted in the district, and made large bags but their absence in 1884 led to the decrease in the amount of reward, awarded for the killing of wild animals. In 1884 Rs. 9422-14 were paid as reward against 10864-13 in 1883.⁵²

In addition to the professional *shikariees* tribal chiefs were also volunteered by British officials to hunt down wild animals. The Dolloi or the chief of Nartiang, in the Jaintia Hills were volunteered to hunt down wild animals particularly large tigers which were infested near the highways to the plains of Nowgaon. The arms and ammunition were also supplied to them by the government.⁵³ Occasionally, the Kacharies also used to trapped or poisoned wild animals for rewards. In Mangaldai in 1885 a party of Kacharies brought 9 tigers, 6 bears and 2 leopard skins as a result of a month's operations with poisoned arrows in their mauza.⁵⁴

Shooting parties were also organized to keep down the wild animals. In 1894 in Lakhimpur shooting parties were organized for pursuit of some tigers, which killed many cattle on the churs of the Brahmaputra, near Dibrugarh.⁵⁵ Police parties were also given the task of keeping down the numbers of the wild animals. In 1894 a police party was send to Khasi and Jaintia Hills to kill a man-eater which reported to have killed 4 people but it was without any success.⁵⁶

Other than these the killing of wildlife for sports by British officials as discussed in preceding chapter also contributed to the destruction of wildlife as they did not observe the true sportsman's rules or ethics. "The Deputy-Commissioner remarks that tigers and other animals are constantly being killed by Europeans, but as no application is made for reward, nothing is known of the occurrence."⁵⁷ E.P. Gee viewed that true hunting for sports when licenses were obtained and shooting rules were observed was never been a depletory factor on the other hand the presence of genuine sportsmen in a forest area on a regular basis could be deterrent to poachers. He also viewed that, "but in a

⁵¹ (NAI), Home, Public, December, 1884, File No. 109-140

⁵² (NAI), Home-Public, December, 1885, File No. 69-101

⁵³ (NAI), Home, Public-A, December, 1882, File No. 332-70

⁵⁴ (NAI), Home, Public-A, December, 1886, File No. 795

⁵⁵ (NAI), Home, Public, 1895, September, 211-247.

⁵⁶ (NAI), Home, Public, 1895, September, 211-247.

⁵⁷ (NAI), Home, Public-A, December 1884, 109-140,NAI

country like India where wildlife has been so much consumed that there can be no more shooting.”⁵⁸ The destruction of wild animals in Assam was the impact of British policies. However the elite class and native tribes also participate in it. The hunting was a part of tribal culture. But the common Assamese people did not participated in the process of the extermination of wild animals.

4.5 Impact on Wild animals

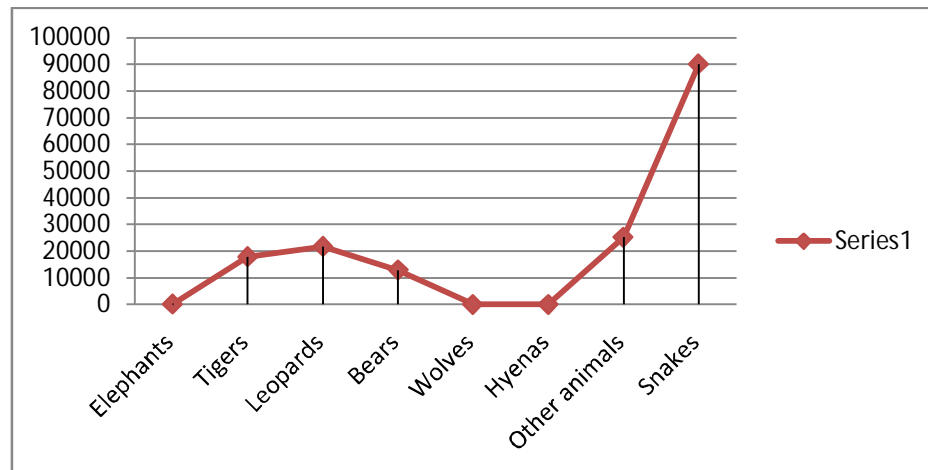
The annexation of the province of Assam by the British brought the province under the process of wildlife extermination as in other provinces of Indian subcontinent. As argued by Mahesh Rangarajan that “The British came to Indian Subcontinent with a long history of systematic campaign to exterminate carnivores in the British Isles.”⁵⁹ The policies of government of India led to the destruction of a large number of wildlife and also brought some of the animals on the verge of extinction. Balakrishna Seshadri argued that, “nowhere in the world has destruction of the natural wilderness-the habitat of wild life- proceeded with such speed and totality as on the Indian sub-continent. It has been the most decisive factor in the catastrophic diminution of India’s wild life-within and outside the sanctuaries-in the last twenty-five years.”⁶⁰ The clearance of jungle was mainly to provide timbers for the newly constructed railways. In the initial years of the British rule wild animals were seen as pest whose elimination was encouraged with monetary incentives. Each year around thousands of wild animals were killed for rewards. According to the available statistics a total number of 1,68,112 wild animals including snakes were killed in fifty years (1877-1927) [See table No. 4.12]. Out of which 90,102 were snakes which is 1.1 percent of total number of snakes killed in India and 78,070 were wild animals which is 9.2 percent of the total number of wild animals killed in India. Out of 78,070 wild animals 21,541 leopard, 17,316 tigers, 12,823 bears and 155 elephants were killed. Wolf or hyenas were very less in Assam valley unlike in other provinces of India where the British government attempted to exterminate wolf along with tiger and leopard. In Assam the destruction by wolves or destruction of wolves was very less. Only 48 hyenas and 53 wolves were reported to have been killed during 1877-1927.

⁵⁸ Gee, E.P., (1986) *The Wildlife Of India*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, p. 8

⁵⁹Rangarajan , M. (1996), *Fencing the forest, conservation and ecological change in India’s central provinces 1860-1914*, Delhi: OUP, p. 145

⁶⁰Seshadri, Balakrishna, (1969), *The Twilight of India’s Wildlife*, London: John Baker Publishers, p.13

Chart No. 4.3. The following chart explain the trend in the destruction of wildlife (1875-1927)



Source: (NAI), Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927

Other than these wild boars, wild dogs, wild pigs, gharial (Crocodile) was killed in large numbers. The killing of these animals was not properly reported. The reason for it might be the absence of rewards for the destruction of these animals. Whenever rewards was granted by the government the killing of these animals were reported. In 1900 a reward of Rs. 23 and 8 annas was paid for the destruction of 91 wild dogs in Kamrup district. The killings of wild dogs were not properly reported during early years. The following table shows the destruction of wild dogs in Assam.

Table No. 4.3 Showing the destruction of wild dogs-

Year	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1924	1926
Wild dogs	108	123	115	164	156	133	104	131	117	154

Source: NAI, Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1914-1927.

Wild boars were also killed in large numbers, 600 in 1912, 691 in 1913, 949 in 1914, 1390 in 1915 and so on. Occasionally buffaloes and crocodile were also killed. Buffaloes were also killed occasionally, 94 and 21 buffaloes were killed in 1912 and 1913 respectively. "The extermination of the arna or the great wild buffalo often found enthusiastic support among rice-growers and cattle-herders in the wet savannahs along the Brahmaputra and the Ganga rivers."⁶¹ Occasionally crocodile were also killed for rewards like 3, 21 and 54 crocodiles were killed in 1913, 1914 and 1915 respectively.

⁶¹Rangarajan ,M., (2005), *India's wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi: OUP, p.29

In 1926 five wild pigs were killed. The lack of proper reporting of these animals could be observed. Elephants were mostly captured and not killed because of its strategic needs. Though reward was given to kill rouge elephant but the killing of elephant was discouraged and in some case fined. In Nowgaon shikariees were fined for the one unclaimed killed elephant.⁶² Still the killing of 155 elephant for reward was recorded. An average of 3 elephants was killed each year for reward during 1875-1927. Tiger, leopard, bears were mostly destroyed for reward. A total of 17,316 tigers were killed during 1875-1927 with an average of 333 per year. In 1921 highest numbers of tigers were reported to have been killed, 619 and the lowest number of tigers were reported to have been killed in 1924 which was 175. Among all the wild animals leopards were reported to have been killed in highest number at an average of 414 per year. The highest of it were killed in 1902 which was 618 and lowest in 1875 which was 150. Bears were also destroyed in large numbers. A total of 12,823 bears were reported to have been killed from 1875-1927 with an average of 247 per year. The highest of it was killed in 1927 which was 621 and lowest in 1876 which was 46.

The statistics varies from year to year. Though the total number of wild animals destroyed was less during 1877 than the preceding year, still it could be noticed that the more ferocious and destructive kinds of animals were accounted for in 1877⁶³. In 1877, 434 tigers were killed against 410 in 1876, 188 leopards were killed in 1877 against 175 in 1876 and 58 bears were killed in 1877 against 46 in 1876 (see table no. 4.12.). Highest numbers of wild animals including snakes were killed in 1893. It was 11051. But this is because this year 9443 snakes were killed and only 1608 wild animals were killed. It was in the year 1915 that the highest number of wild animals were reported to have been killed. Out of it 533 leopards, 327 tigers, 253 bears, 9 elephants, 3 hyenas, 1390 wild boars, 115 wild dogs, 54 gharials and 376 unidentified animals were killed. The rate of destruction of wild animals was very high. Sometime the destruction of a single animal in a single district almost double the total number of wild animals destroyed. In 1881, 555 wild pigs were destroyed in Sylhet by the frontier police under the direction of the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet which led to the increase in the number of wild animals killed from 541 in 1880 to 1,176 in 1881.⁶⁴ Thus, the destruction of wild animals was in large numbers. The number of wild animals killed

⁶² (NAI), Home, public-December, 1886, no. 795

⁶³ (NAI), Home, Public-A, December, 1878, file no. 244-280

⁶⁴ (NAI), Home, Ppublic, December, 1882, File No. 332 to 70

for reward was no doubt very large still many were not went unrecorded like those which were killed for sports or for horn and hides.

Wild animals were destructive towards people and cattle. The statistical records shows that a total of 18,604 people were killed against 1,68,112 wildlife including snakes killed in fifty two years from 1875-1927 in Assam. Thus, the numbers of wild animals killed were more than nine times the number of people killed by wild animals. The following charts explain the killing of people and cattle by wild animals and killing of wild animals during 1875-1927. Wild elephants reported to killed more people than the number of elephants killed. It reported to have killed 1065 people but only 155 wild elephants were reported to have killed during the said period. If wild elephants were dangerous for people why it were not killed in large numbers because of its strategic need for administrative purpose, it was preferred to captured than killed and this is the reason it was used not as game animal but for the game of other animals.

Tigers reported to have killed 4,306 people against 17,316 tigers destroyed which is approx. 4 times more than the number of people killed by tigers. Tiger normally does not eat human flesh. It is only when it is old or wounded, it became a man-eater. Tigers wounded by gunshot turned to preying on livestock, and more rarely, on people.⁶⁵ It was the British policy of the extermination of tigers and other wild animals that led to the menace by the wild animals. The Leopard killed 288 people against 21541 leopard killed which is 75 (approx.) times more than the number of people killed by leopard, bears killed 738 against 12823 bears killed which is 17 time more than the number of people killed by bears. Thus, it can be seen that wild animals were killed in large numbers. Number of people killed by snakes was 9,880 against 90,102 snakes killed during the said period which is approx. 9 times more than the number of people killed.

Though the killing of boars, jackals, wild dogs, and wild pigs were noticed occasionally but it was in large numbers. The following table shows the number of people killed by wild boars and wild boars killed. Wild buffaloes reported to have killed 7 and 9 people in 1912 and 1913 respectively on the other hand 94 and 21 wild buffaloes were reported to have been killed in the same years.³⁹ and 99 wild hogs were reported to have killed in the year 1891 and 1892 against no casualties by this animal. So, there is no justification for the killing of these wild animals in such large numbers. If there were not much causality from these wild animals as seen from the statistics there was no

⁶⁵ Sivaramakrishnan, K., (1999), *Modern Forest: StateMaking and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India*, Delhi:OUP,pp.91-100

reason for killing wild animals in such large numbers. The ferocious wild animals like tigers, leopards, bears were killed for sports or for rewards and also for trade but the smaller wild animals like wild hogs, wild dogs, deer, wild buffaloes were killed for trade in skin.

On the other hand if the destruction of cattle has been taken in to consideration the number of cattle killed by wild animals was much larger than the number of wild animals itself was killed. In this case the reports are available only from 1875 to 1915. During this period 5,02,666 cattle were reported to have been killed against 1,68,112 wild animals during 1875-1927. But if look at the question why the wild animals killed cattle in such large numbers, the answer is because of the destruction of wild pigs, wild dogs, deer etc. by the Shikariees. The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsager reported “Shikaries consider it far more profitable to hunt deer and pigs as they run no risk and can dispose of the flesh at more profitable rates than government could afford as rewards for killing a deer or leopard. Shikaries and holders of gun licenses also find it more profitable to defend their crops from the ravages of these animals than to devote their time to the pursuit of large game.”⁶⁶ The wild dogs were also killed for rewards. Rs. 2 and 8 annas were paid as reward for each wild dog.⁶⁷

4.5.1 District-wise Destruction of Wild animals

Killing of wild animals was found in all the district of the province. The destruction of wild animals in any district depended on various conditions like the damages by any wild animal, rewards sanctioned for the destruction of wild animals and existence of *shikariees*. Even the occurrence of flood also affected the destruction of wild animals in districts. In 1887 the number of wild animals killed decreased in comparison with the preceding year. C.J. Lyall., Esq., Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam reported that “The falling off in the Surma valley is owing to there having been no high floods in 1887, as was the case in 1886 when the villagers killed many animals from boats.”⁶⁸ The statistical study reveals that people killed by snake-bite was highest in Sylhet (almost 32 percent). The probable reason for this could be the occurrence of flood in Sylhet district. The other reason could be the reward given for the destruction of snake in the district. Wild boars were killed in large number in Sylhet because

⁶⁶ (NAI), Home, Public, December, 1885, File No. 69-101

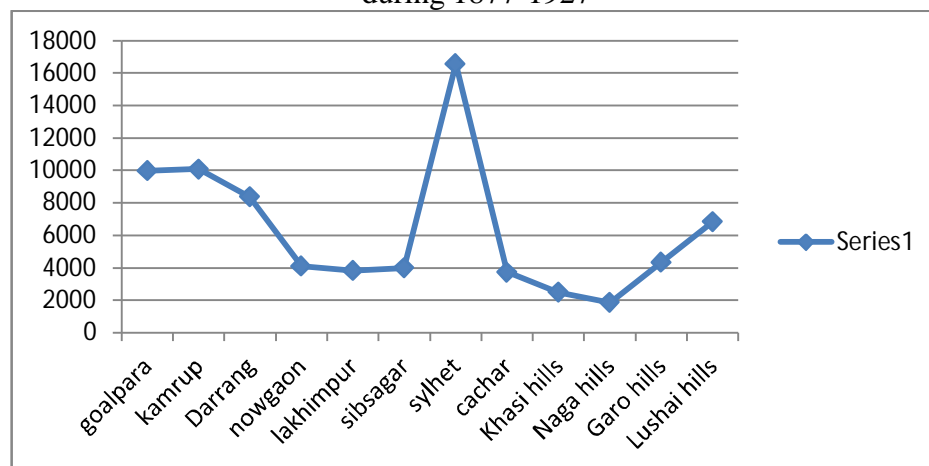
⁶⁷ (NAI), Home, Public-A, December, 1890, File No. 360-407

⁶⁸ (NAI), Home, Public-A, November, 1887, File No. 149-184

rewards were given for the destruction of the wild boars in the district. Though very small amount was given for the destruction of wild boars but it was not sanctioned for other districts. In 1894 Rs. 81 and 8 annas and in 1895 Rs 38 and 8 annas was paid for the destruction of 521 and 514 respectively. The existence of professional *shikariees* also affected the number of wild animals killed in district. The increase in the number of tigers and leopards killed in the Garo Hills in 1890 was because of the presence of professional *shikariees* from Bengal.⁶⁹

The destruction of wild animals varies from district to district. Sylhet recorded the highest number of killing of wild animals viz. 16562. In Kamrup 10,074, 9,976 in Goalpara, 8,369 Darrang, 4,393 in Garo Hills, 4,103 in Nowgaon, 3,829 in Lakhimpur, 3,996 in Sibsagar, 3,732 in Cachar, 2,500 in Khasi & Jyantia Hills and 1,869 in Naga Hills. Earlier records for Lushai Hills are not available. According to available statistics 6,834 wild animals were killed in Lushai Hills from 1903-1927 of which 1911 record is not available. The following chart explains the destruction of wild animals in different districts.

Chart 4.4 Showing the destruction of wild animals in the districts of the province during 1877-1927



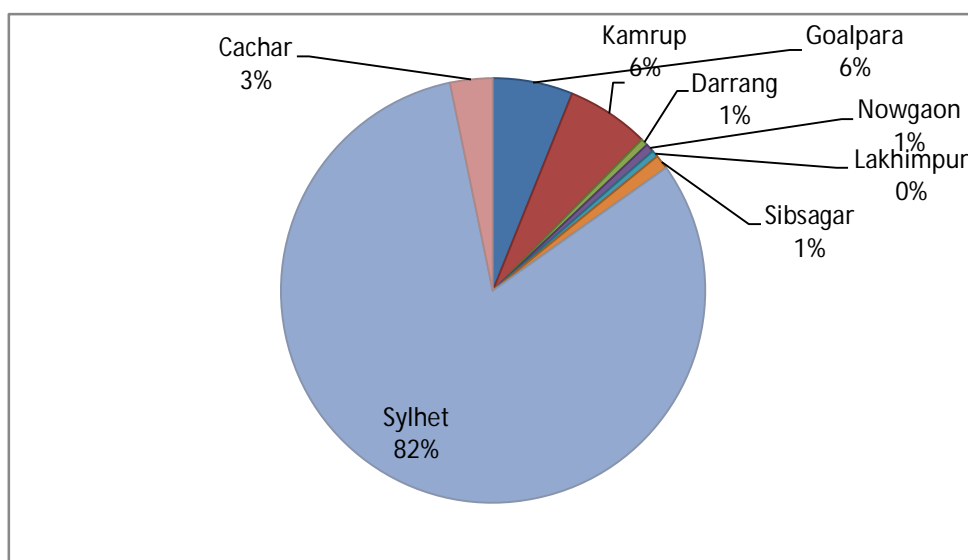
Source: NAI, Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927.

The chart explains that maximum numbers of wild animals were killed in Sylhet. This is because a large number of wild boars, wild pigs, hogs and wild dogs were killed in the district. Kamrup, Goalpara and Darrang come next in which tigers and leopard were reported to have been killed in large numbers. Then comes the Lushai hill where bears

⁶⁹(NAI), Home, Public-A, October, 1891, File No. 316 to 353.

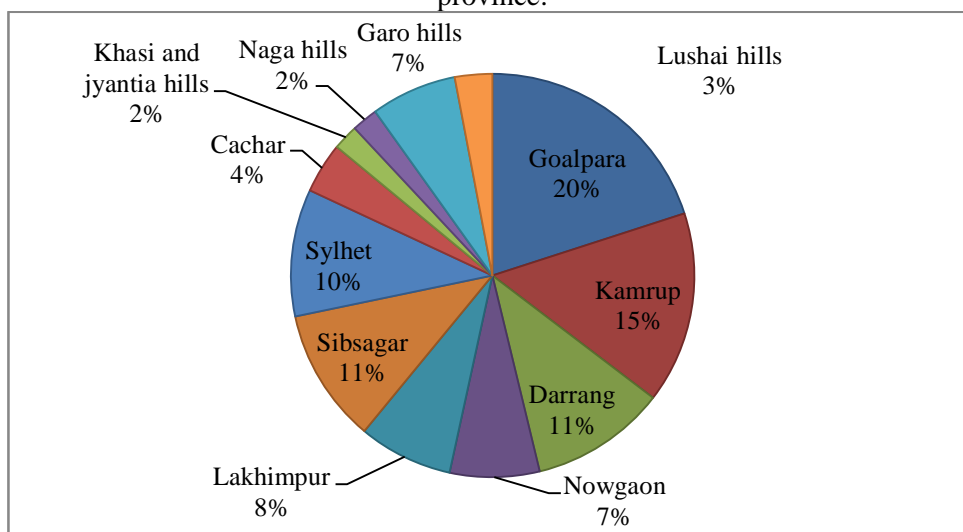
were killed in large numbers. Nowgaon, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Cachar and Garo Hills presents the almost the similar figures and the numbers of tigers, leopards and bears killed in these districts was almost same. Naga Hills and Khasi Hills shows lowest number of killing of wild animals in compare to other districts. This situation was because of underreporting. The following charts explain the destruction of wild animals like snake, tiger, leopards and bears during 1877-1927.

Chart 4.5 The following chart explains the destruction of snake in various district of the province.



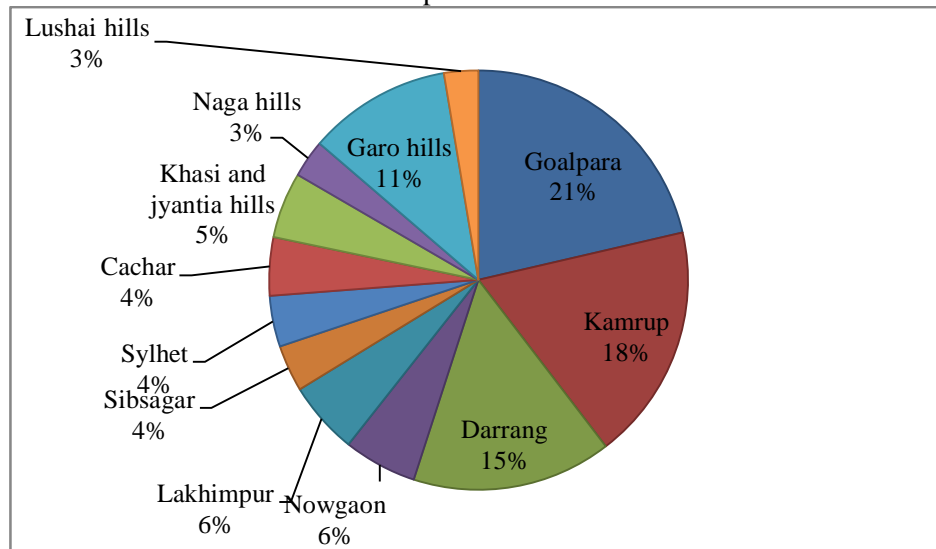
Source: NAI, Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927.

Chart 4.6 The following chart explains the destruction of tigers in various district of the province.



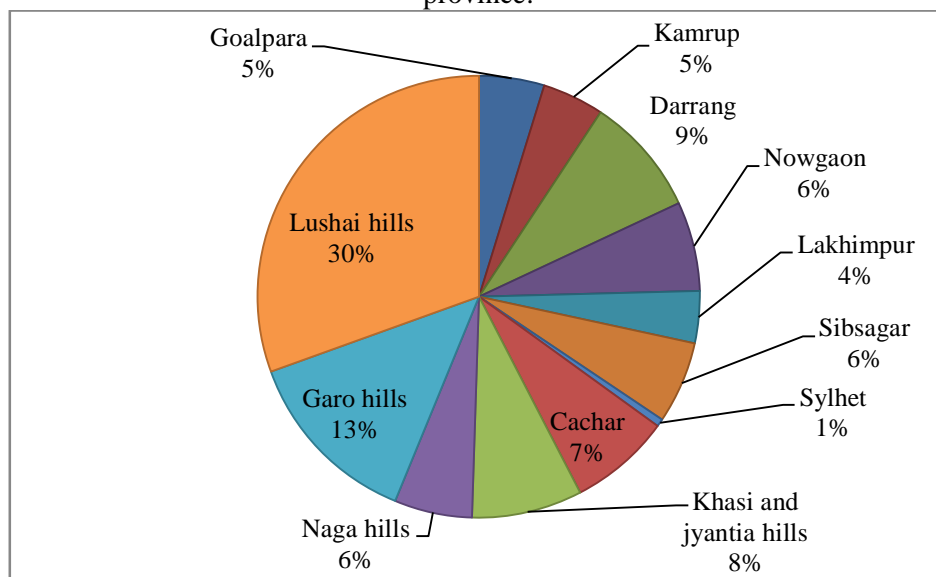
Source: NAI, Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927.

Chart 4.7 The following chart explains the destruction of leopards in various district of the province.



Source: NAI, Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927.

Chart 4.8 The following chart explains the destruction of bears in various district of the province.



Source: NAI, Home Public-A, Report of the measure adopted for exterminating wild animals and poisonous snakes in British India, 1877-1927.

Highest numbers of snakes were killed in Sylhet. The number of snake killed in Sylhet during 1877-1927 was 67,368, which was 82 percent of the total number of snake killed in Assam. Other than Sylhet snakes were also killed in Goalpara, Kamrup, Cachar. In Goalpara 5,026, in Kamrup 5,219, and in Cachar 2,708 number of snakes were killed. A few cases of snakes killing was also reported in Darrang, Nowgaon, Lakhimpur and

Sibsagar, whereas other districts did not reported more number of killing of snake. Snakes were not much destroyed in Naga Hills, Garo hills, Khasi hills and Lushai hills. These areas were most probably underreporting.

Tigers were also killed in large numbers and almost in every district. The highest number was killed in Goalpara followed by Kamrup. Darrang and Sibsaigar shows equal percentage of tigers killed. In Goalpara highest number of tigers were killed viz. 2810 at an average of 65 each year during 1877-1927. Khasi and Jyantia hills recorded to have killed minimum number of tigers which was 285. In Kamrup 2,148 number of tigers was killed, in Darrang 1,538, in Lakhimpur 1,507, in Sylhet 1,428, in Sibsaigar 1062, in Nowgaon 1,005 number of tigers killed during 1877-1927. Cachar, Khasi & Jyantia hills, Naga Hills and Garo hills recorded minimum number of tigers killed viz. 571, 285, 292 and 964 respectively. Lushai hills recorded to have killed 426 tigers from 1903-1927. The number of wild animals killed in these districts was underreporting.

Maximum number of leopards was killed in Goalpara which was 3,822 with an average of 88 each year. It reported to have killed 3,261 in Kamrup, 2,749 in Darrang, 1975 in Garo Hills, 1016 in Nowgaon and 1,004 leopards in Sibsaigar. In Khasi and Jyantia Hills 910, in Cachar 805, in Sylhet 701, in Lakhimpur 642, in Naga Hills 523 and in Lushai hills 473 leopards were killed during 1903-1927. The chart shows that leopards were killed in almost every districts of the province. Goalpara Kamrup and Darrang reported maximum number of leopard killing. Garo Hills reported to have killed 11 per-cent of the leopard of the total number of leopards killed in the province. Other districts also reported to have killed almost same numbers of leopards.

Lushai Hills accounted for the destruction highest number of bear. From 1903 to 1927 it reported to have killed 3,226 numbers of bears. Garo Hills was second in the list. In Garo Hills 1,407 bears were killed. In Darrang 925, in Khasi & Jyantia Hills 855, in Cachar 783, in Nowgaon 689, in Goalpara 507, in Kamrup 480, in Sibsaigar 402 and in Sylhet only 62 numbers of bears were killed. It shows that the maximum numbers of bears were reported in Lushai Hills, followed by Garo Hills. Darrang reported to have killed 9 per-cent and Khasi & Jyantia Hills reported to have killed 8 per-cent of the total number of bears killed in the Province. Sylhet reported to have killed minimum numbers of bears. Other than these animals wild boars were killed in large numbers in Sylhet. Elephants were mostly captured and not preferred to be killed thus not much elephants were reported to have been killed. Wolves and hyenas were also killed in though very less in numbers.

Table no. 4.4 Showing the destruction of wild boars in Sylhet district

Year	1881	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1894	1895	1897	1898	1901
No. of wild boars killed	555	166	232	70	224	657	571	521	514	529	617	152

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1882-1902)

Occasionally wild boars were also killed in Goalpara, Nowgaon and Lukhimpore. In Goalpara 38 boars were reported to have killed in 1897, 38 in Nowgaon in 1898 and 6 in Lukhimpore in 1898. Sylhet also reported to have killed wild pigs in large number. In Sylhet 728 and 923 wild pigs were killed in 1903 and 1904. In Lushai Hills also 166 wild pigs were reported to have killed. Kamrup also reported to have killed 90 and 70 wild pigs in 1903 and 1904 respectively. In Nowgaon 8 wild pigs were reported to have been killed. The killing of Jackals was also reported. In Sylhet 19, 22 and 9 jackals were reported to have killed in 1888, 1892 and 1897 respectively. Wild hogs were also reported to have been killed in Sylhet viz. 39 and 99 in 1891 and 1892. Wild dogs and buffaloes were also killed in the districts of Assam Valley and Khasi and Jyantia Hills. The available statistics shows that a large number of wild animals were killed in the province however these statistics are not complete as most of the areas were underreporting. Various reasons were attributed for this; people residing in interior areas did not take the trouble of going to police station for reporting the destruction of cattle, the market value of wild animal's skins and trophies was also more than the rewards paid by the government. For this reason individuals preferred to sell it to private people rather than to claim the reward amount. In case of snakes before 1881 no rewards were paid for its destruction and hence there was no means of ascertaining the number of these reptiles destroyed. The country people however, usually kill venomous snakes when they come across them.⁷⁰ Commenting on the accuracy of the figures showing the number of noxious animals killed and the rewards paid for their destruction, the Commissioner, Assam valley district remarks:-“There can, I think, be little doubt that people in outlying and remote tracts do not take the trouble to bring in skins and heads for the sake of the rewards. The Deputy Commissioner (Darrang) says that when he was in camp at Gohpur two or three dead animals or skins were brought to him every day. This confirmed his belief that there are probably as many wild beasts killed in the mauzas of Gohpur and Kolabari as in rest of the districts put together, but

⁷⁰ (NAI), Home, Public-A, December, 1878, File No. 244-280

they escape registration. Some arrangements might, perhaps, be made for the payments of rewards and the renewal of gun licenses in the outlying and more remote tracts. I am consulting other Deputy Commissioners about this. Tahsildars certainly, and selected mauzadars perhaps, might be allowed to certify deaths, if not to renew gun licenses”⁷¹

The figures are not complete; still it provides ample information regarding the destruction of wild animals and the methods adopted by the British for the destruction of wild animals.

The Commissioner of Assam Valley District wrote on this subject, “These figures of loss from wild beasts are no doubt understated, as it is well known that people living at a distance from police-stations and outpost do not trouble themselves to report the deaths of cattle. I am inclined to think that it would be desirable to get the *gaonburas*, and in Goalpara the *chaukidars*, to report the cattle-deaths of their villages at the same time that they report vital statistics, distinguishing between deaths from cattle-disease and those from wild animals. The figures would, of course, not be fully reliable, but they would be much more so than they are now, and I think we ought to try and get more reliable information than we do now upon a matter which affects the prosperity of the people so largely. I have already called upon district officers to report whether they could not see their way to getting more accurate statistics than they do now of the destruction of cattle by cattle-disease, and whatever is done in this direction might, I think, also be done in the direction of getting more reliable information regarding the destruction of cattle by wild animals.”⁷² Still the information given regarding the destruction of cattle was not totally inaccurate. In 1902 more accurate statistics was drawn in Kamrup district through the agency of *Tahsildars*.⁷³ Other districts also submitted more accurate statistics. The Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills ascribed that, “the increase in his district to the collection of more accurate statistics than in the previous years.”⁷⁴

The colonial rule witnessed huge destruction of wildlife. The need of the extension of tea cultivation led the British government to adopt measures like Rewards giving, sanction of special rewards, liberal distribution of guns and gun licenses, calling up of professional *shikariees* and use of poison. This resulted in the killing of a large number of wild animals, as the given figures indicate. The method of killing of wild animals

⁷¹ (NAI), Home, Public-A, October, 1891, File No. 316-353

⁷² (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1883, December, File No. 109-140

⁷³ (NAI), Home, Public-A, October, 1903, File No. 237-235

⁷⁴ Ibid.

changed with the British rule. Earlier traditional arms like bows and arrows, spear, dau etc were used for hunting but availability of gun during British rule made it easier to kill wild animal. Because of the wholesale killing of wild animals in the province elephants, rhinoceros and leopard were brought to the verge of extinct.

Table no. 4.5. Statistics of the amount paid in Assam for rewards (in rupees) in each calendar year from 1877-1927

Year	Wild animals								Snakes	Grand total
	Elephants	Tigers	Leopards	Bears	Wolves	Hyenas	Other animals	Total		
1877		9362	905	142	20		210	10639+1		10640
1878		8724	872	156	5		452	10209 +1		10210
1879		7175	725	142	47		295	8384+1		8385
1880		5822	755	440			5	7022+1		7022
1881		6021	913	556			61	7551+1	34	7586
1882	150	6375	725	552			51	7853+1	33	7887
1883	100	9060	1181	481	20			10842	22	10864
1884	300	7457	1036	598			2	9393+1	28	9422
1885		7041	1402	665		2	5	9115+1	23	9139
1886	300	8710	1452	619			3	11084+1	26	11111
1887	150	9340	1597	702				11789+1	14	11804
1888	300	6500	1342	750			17	8909+1	16	8926
1889		6562	1412	777				8751+1	23	87758
1890	50	7545	1815	887			3	10300+1	14	10315
1891		7701	3520	1038				12259	20	12279
1892	100	7335	4220	1117	60	5	4	12841+1	509	13351
1893	100	7752	5159	1332		2	17	14362+2	2657	17021
1894	150	7500	4903	1255			88	13896	303	14199
1895	100	7137	4715	1450			39	13441	1108	14549
1896		7024	3860	1318			27	12229	199	12428
1897		6905	4260	1370		4	14	12553	1177	13730
1898		5958	3880	1450		1	90	11379	814	12193
1899	50	8075	5650	2060		2	46	15883	1199	17082
1900		8050	5048	1805			261	15164	623	15787
1901	100	6952	4818	1503			11	13384	557	13941
1902		6020	4837	1741			62	12660	1268	13928
1903	200	5586	4244	2949			25	13004	678	13682
1904	100	5513	4304	3308			42	13267	656	13923
1905	100	5939	6028	4060			262	16389	687	16215
1906	200	7109	4646	3074			329	15358	423	15773
1907	150	5245	5102	2699		12	460	13668	149	13818
1908	200	5280	3856	2910		2	576	12824	35	12789
1909	200	7102	4662	1891		2	153	14010	65	14124
1910	100	7517	4023	1286			333	13259	836	13208
1911	Not available									
1912	50	5860	4920	1025	2	5	420	12282	148	12430
1913	69	4528	4280	1135	10	7	555	10584	132	10716
1914	100	5385	4703	1058	47	5	700	11998	71	12069
1915	275	6788	4520	1078			959	13620	212	13832
1916	275	8012	4805	2068	10	1	802	15973	202	15275
1917	350	5463	4740	2005		2	728	13288	131	13419
1918		6212	4197	1553	18		589	12569	834	13403
1919	200	7235	4630	1885			504	14454	331	14785
1920		9577	4772	1924			617	16890	116	17006
1921	450	12748	4803	1592			615	20208	115	20323
1922	200	6671	4290	2034			1267	14462	65	14527
1923	150	4594	2101	926			366	8137	22	8159
1924	300	2645	1095	784			760	5584	86	5670
1925	525	3252	1071	1043			739	6630	29	6659
1926	200	3020	1316	1296	5		926	6763	14	6777
1927	700	3741	1628	1690			1067	8826	6	8832
Total	7044	337125	165738	70179	244	52	15557	595955	16710	612665

Rs. 1 is added as a sum for amount paid as reward in annas. Source: Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1928)

Table No. 4.6. Statistics of the number of wild animals and snakes destroyed in Assam in each calendar year from 1875-1927

Year	Wild animals								Snakes	Grand total	
	Elephants	Tigers	Leopards	Bears	Wolves	Hyenas	Other animals	Total			
1875		458	150	68	3	1	92	772		772	
1876		410	175	46	3		166	800		800	
1877	1	434	188	58	5		86	772	135	907	
1878		375	189	65	1		185	815	25	840	
1879		305	154	57	4		119	639	33	672	
1880		273	160	67			41	541	202	743	
1881		289	192	76			619	1176	300	1476	
1882	2	316	157	73			545	1093	313	1406	
1883	2	565	249	78	2		7	896	200	1096	
1884	4	364	221	100	3	4	139	835	428	1263	
1885		347	300	92	1	1	320	1061	582	1643	
1886	5	436	308	96			573	1418	777	2195	
1887	4	438	351	110			168	1071	269	1340	
1888	3	323	295	114			265	1000	516	1516	
1889	2	337	329	113			70	851	395	1246	
1890	1	384	415	129			256	1185	478	1663	
1891	1	377	439	130			724	1671	828	2499	
1892	2	343	484	134	12	1	709	1685	2329	4014	
1893	1	367	591	155		1	493	1608	9443	11051	
1894	4	356	564	140			542	1606	1808	3414	
1895	2	360	541	173	1	1	596	1674	4466	6140	
1896	4	353	448	153			958	1916	1624	3540	
1897		337	500	159		2	674	1672	4406	6078	
1898		293	445	163		1	736	1638	2432	4070	
1899	2	411	653	231		1	734	2032	6272	8304	
1900		414	597	210			842	2063	3164	5227	
1901		345	554	176		4	155	1234	3132	4366	
1902	2	344	618	212			1010	2186	6961	9147	
1903	3	342	534	438			859	2176	4325	6501	
1904	5	342	548	513		2	1178	2588	3591	6179	
1905	2	339	612	617			803	2373	3805	6178	
1906	3	406	537	392			578	1916	2507	4423	
1907	4	293	608	312		5	796	2018	1452	3470	
1908	10	368	552	343		1	896	2170	965	3135	
1909	4	346	564	351		1	847	2113	1305	3418	
1910	8	366	500	289		3	805	1971	4081	6052	
1911					Not Available						
1912	2	251	539	230	1	2	695	1720	1983	3703	
1913	4	256	523	295	3	10	897	1988	1981	3969	
1914	9	285	558	305	5	2	1447	2611	2168	4779	
1915	9	327	533	253		3	1935	3060	2952	6012	
1916	5	373	555	460	4	1	164	1562	1409	2971	
1917	5	248	580	498		1	158	1490	332	1822	
1918		279	491	354	4		133	1261	3187	4448	
1919	4	321	545	348			104	1322	1214	2536	
1920		461	547	467			131	1606	388	1994	
1921	4	619	565	353			126	1667	353	2020	
1922	4	296	508	599			180	1587	141	1728	
1923	4	241	310	284			72	911	38	949	
1924	5	175	188	303			117	788	308	1096	
1925	5	209	168	419			134	935	53	988	
1926	3	168	193	515	1		161	1041	30	1071	
1927	11	194	227	621			173	1226	16	1242	
Total	155	17859	21752	12937	53	48	25206	78010	90102	168112	

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1928)

Chapter - 5

HUNTING THE GIANTS

“Elephants are found in considerable numbers in the Assam Valley and in the lower slopes of the Assam Range. They are also occasionally hunted with success in South Cachar and in South-eastern Sylhet. Extensive operations have been undertaken by the Government Khedda department ; and mahals, or the right of hunting within certain areas not reserved for that department, are leased by auction sale to the highest bidder, who pays a royalty of Rs. 100 on each animal captured. During the period when the Government kheddas were working in the Garo Hills about 400 elephants were annually captured in the Province-The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908.”¹

Elephant hunting was different from wildlife hunting. Wild animals like rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, bears, wolves, hyenas, wild boars, wild pigs, hogs, wild dogs, deer, and bear were hunted for games but elephant was preferred to be captured. Still it was killed for the sake of ivory. Rouge elephants were killed for which a reward of Rs. 50 to Rs.100 was sanctioned by the government. Other than administrative purposes elephant was used as a hunting friend. This chapter deals with the elephant hunting, how it was different from other wildlife hunting, elephant catching, kheddah department, private lease system, the management of elephants, elephant protection policies, conflict over elephants and revenue from elephants.

Elephant have always played an important role in the history of the province of Assam. A part of being a royal gift it was a sign of royal prestige and magnificence. It formed a major item as war booty in the pre-colonial period. It was considered as a major item of generating revenue in the colonial period.² Elephant hunting was a great

¹ The Imperial Gazetteer of India, (1908), Published Under The Authority Of His Majesty Secretary of State for India in Council, Oxford, Clarendon Press,P.20

² Sakia, A.J., (2011) *Forest and Ecological History of Assam, 1826-2000*. New Delhi, OUP, 278

leisure pursuit of Ahom kings.³ They were caught not only for riding, hunting, and war purposes but also for carrying loads and dragging wood and for their tusks before coming of the British. Elephants were considered as an inevitable part of the army during the Ahom period.⁴ They were also used for clearing jungles to make new paths.⁵ Catching elephant for domestication was an old practice in the province.⁶ The importance of elephant during the Ahom age can be understand from the fact that the Ahom king Pratap Singha had an ambition of becoming the owner of one thousand elephants and assuming a title of pride, “Gajapati”. Though his ambition remained unfulfilled but he raised a small township (near to present Jorhat) known as Gajpur (a town of elephant). There was considerable research on elephant during the Ahom age. The Hastividyanava (treaties on elephant) was prepared under the royal patronage of the King Siva Singha by Sukumar Karkayastha.⁷ According to the Nitisara of Kamandaka, the function of elephant is to help the soldiers in war against the enemy.⁸ Elephant hunting in the early part of the nineteenth century was primarily for the administrative purpose as it was a major part of military that time. They were also used for transportation by the colonial administrators into remote areas. Elephants were also caught in Assam for its supply in the markets of Bengal⁹. Killing of elephants for sports and for its ivory was common. Even there are evidences of killing elephants for its flesh. Some of the tribes of Assam like Kookies (Kukis), Nagas and Mikirs (Karbi) used to kill the elephants not only for the sake of their teeth but also consider the flesh as a delicacy and eat it with great relish.¹⁰ Butler viewed that “The Kookies are fond of hunting, and destroy many elephants for the sake of the tusk, which always meet with a ready sale in our markets.”¹¹ Ivory armet (a complete

³ Basu Nirmal Kumar, (1970) *Assam in the Ahom age, 1228-1826, Being political-economic and socio-cultural studies*, Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, P.173

⁴ Gogai, Lila, (1986) *The Buranjis, Historical Literature Of Assam (a critical survey)*, New Delhi, Omsons, 217

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Sakia, R., (2001) *Social And Economic History Of Assam (1853-1921)*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, p. 130

⁷ Ibid.p.131

⁸ Choudhary, P.C., (1976) *Hastirvidyanava*, Assam Publication Board, Gauhati, p.101

⁹ Campbell,A.,(1896) *Notes on the mode of capture of elephants in Assam*, Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, February 25.

¹⁰ (ASA), 1851-64 K.W to file No.36/43, Bengal Government papers, papers relating to asserting of rights by government to hunt elephants in government territories. Letter from Lieut.Col.F. Jenkins, Commissioner of Assam to the Board of revenue, Fort William, Dated Gowhatty, the 12th Aughust, 1854.

¹¹ Butler,J., (1854) *Travels And Adventure In The Province Of Assam, During A Residence Of Fourteen Years*, London: Smith, Elder and Co.,p. 89

section of elephant's tusk from 2 ½ inches to 3 ½ inches deep) was used as the principal arms ornament by the Angami Naga tribe.¹² Elephant teeth were also used as an item of gift. The chief of Luchye Kookie tribe residing to the South of Cachar presented to Mr. G. Verner, a British officer, two elephant teeth, as a symbol of their friendly relation.¹³ More over the clan like Kookie are accustomed to kill an elephant on the death of their Rajahs and men of rank and consider it to be a sacred duty indispensable for the due performance of the obsequies of the deceased.¹⁴ Zamindars also used elephants in their estates as an essential transport in those areas which were without roads or which were liable to water logging during the rains.¹⁵ Handicraft industries specializing in ivory were also flourished in the region.¹⁶

It was also strategic importance that led the British government to take initiatives towards the preservation of elephant. Gradually British took over its management in its own hands and played monopoly over it. However, earlier it was mere part of their sport. This change in their attitude towards a wild species and their desire to establish their control over the access of the animal led to conflicts between the state and the indigenous people for their rights over the animal. The government initiated the preservation of the animal and finally the legal act for the preservation of elephant came only in 1879. In 1854 Lieut.H.S. Bivar emphasized the need of putting some restriction on the killing of the animal and to preserve the noble race of animals which was fast decreasing and peculiarly fitted for the wants of a country like Assam.¹⁷ Elephant played an important place in the history of the fauna preservation movement of Assam as well as in generating revenue.¹⁸

The elephant hunting was different as they were used for other wild animals hunting. Sir. William Jardine Bart showed the picture of elephant as early as 1836 which

¹² Hutton, J.H., (1921), *The Angami Nagas, With Some Notes On Neighbouring Tribes*, London: Macmillan and co.,p.24

¹³ Datta, D., (2007), *Cachar District Records*, vol. 2, Kolkata: The Asiatic society, No. 282 of 1853, letter to the secretary to the government of India, fort William, p. 288

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Lahari- Choudhury, D.K., (2006) *A Trunk Full Of Tales*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, p.10

¹⁶ For a detailed study on this see. Rajen Saikia, (2001) *Social and Economic History of Assam (1863-1921)*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, p.53-58

¹⁷ (ASA), 1851-64 K.W to file No.36/43, Bengal Government papers, papers relating to asserting of rights by government to hunt elephants in government territories.letter from Lieut.H.S. Bivar, Assistant Agent, Governor General in Charge of Northern Cachar, to Col.F.Jenkins, Agent Governor Genral and Commissioner of Assam, Gowhatty.Dated North Cachar, 28th July 1854.

¹⁸ Sakia, A.J., (2011), *Forest and Ecological History of Assam, 1826-2000*, New Delhi: OUP, D.K.Lahiri-Choudhury, *The Great Indian Elephant Book: An Anthology of Elephant In The Raj*, New Delhi: OUP, R.Sukumar, 1989, *The Asian Elephant: Ecology And Management*, Cambridge: CUP.

depicted the conflict between tiger and people sitting on howdah (See fig. No. 5.1).¹⁹ It served strategic need it was mostly preferred to capture than to kill. It became an important part of army, it was used as a beast of burden, it was used to clear off the jungles, it was used for transportation in remote areas and it was used as a friend for hunting. Elephants were in constant requisition for garden service and cannot be spared for the hunt.²⁰ They were used to roam the jungles of the hill tracts in considerable number.²¹

Elephants were also used to hauling logs from the forest to the railways. A.C..Newcombe, Civil Engineer, viewed that “Elephants are better when the journeys are in jungly parts where the large trees and bamboos are not too thick, or over the rough and sometimes swampy ground where the tall reeds grows.”²² Barker, a tea planter viewed that, “A few words concerning the most useful brute in Assam, the elephant, will not be out of place. If they were to die out, I really can form no idea how the Eastern world would get on without them, or what could take their place.”²³ Colonel Pollok viewed that “There is splendid sports to be had in Burma and Assam ; but without elephants it is much wiser not to go to those remote provinces for shooting or without these necessary slaves you can neither see nor approach the localities where game abounds.”²⁴ The Assamese elephants were large and handsome, and as ‘shikaries’ second to none.

¹⁹ Bart, W.J., (1836), *The Naturalist Library*, Vol. V, Lodon: Edenburg

²⁰ Barker, M.G., (1884) *The Tea Planter's Life In Assam*, Calcutta: Thacker : Spink & co,p.90

²¹ Stebbing, E.P., (1920) *Diary Of A Sportsman Naturalist In India*, London: John Lane,p.99

²² Newcombe, A.C., (1905), *Village Town And Jungle Life In India*, London: William Blackwood And Sons,P.268

²³ Barker, M.G., (1884) op.cit.,p. 204

²⁴ Pollok,C., (1896), *Fifty Years Reminiscences Of India, A Retrospect Of Travel, Adventure And Shikar*, London: Edward Arnold,P. 167



Fig. No. 5.1. Picture showing conflict between tiger and people, source: Bart, W.J., (1836), *The Naturalist Library*, Vol. V, London: Edinburg

5.1 Kheddah Department

Though elephant-human conflict cannot be ignored during British rule, as discussed earlier, it was mostly preferred to capture than to kill. With the progress of administration of elephant catching and its management the responsibility of capturing elephants was entrusted either to the kheddah department or private lessees (auctioned by the government for hunting rights of the elephant mahals to private lessees). The right of catching wild elephants in the jungles of Assam was a state monopoly.²⁵ The kheddah department established in Dacca began to work in the early part of the nineteenth century which not only monopolized the capture of elephants but also their training and sale. In its initial phases the kheddah department was run by the private contractors for the service of the commissariat department in Bengal. In the mid-19th century, elephants were generally brought to Dacca from Burma either in sailing vessels or overland but the large mortality of wild elephants could not be within the subcontinent especially in southern and north-eastern parts of the country. European management was introduced around the same time to lessen fatalities. The

²⁵ Goswami. Shrutidev, (1987) *Aspects of Revenue Administration in Assam, 1826-1874*, Delhi: Mittal Publication, p. 127

kheddah department however did not prove to be economically remunerative. The department was abolished in 1862 for some time due to the failure of market supply. It started working properly only from 1866. Since then the area of Garo hills in Assam was considered to be the best place for elephant hunting. It was only from 1882 onwards that the department became self-supporting. The kheddah department with the help of 'koonkies', trained elephant and native hunter used to worked out in the forest of Assam along with the other areas of the region in the cold season. After that the captured elephants had to march to Dacca before the commencement of rain in the month of May. These elephants were trained in Dacca till about November and then they were sent to Barrackpore from where they were allotted to different commissariat stations. E.P. Stebbing, British sportsman and naturalist viewed, "Although protected now by Government their numbers were sadly thinned by the Kheddah Department, a Department which has probably done more to destroy game and thin out elephants during the last score of years dozen of British sportsmen could do in double the period of time."²⁶

The Dacca kheddah could never established its credentials as it was bore heavily on the state's coffer. Despite being function on a self-supporting basis and profitably contributing to the imperial revenue G.P.Sanderson, officer in charge of government elephant catching established in Mysore, and his successors had to consistently articulate a justification for the existence of the department. Many factors were led to the existence of the kheddah department and its operation in Assam. First, Assam had proved to be greatly advantageous in capturing the wild elephants and because of Kheddah operations in Assam, the market price of the animals had been kept low. It was also argued that the purchase of elephants for the government service would be more difficult and expensive. Secondly, the kheddah department formed a reserve of transport which was maintained at no extra expanse and thus proved valuable for small military expedition operating on the north-eastern frontier since 1864. Thirdly, the long experience of kheddah department made the department the expertise of capturing, training and managing elephants.²⁷

In spite of all these arguments, the question of the abolition of the Kheddah department was raised from time to time. The local official argues that elephants could be obtained at lower prices through the lease system. From the economic point

²⁶ Stebbing, E.P., op. cit., p.99

²⁷ (NAI), Revenue and Agriculture Department, Kheddahs Branch, A Pros Nos, 663-64 April 1891.

of view the Government Officials, the loss of revenue could have been gained through the leasing of elephants mahals to private lessees. The existence of kheddah department was not without hindrance. It was established mainly for managing and regulating the elephant catching in the hands of government. In spite of that it also fulfilled the need of elephants for military without any extra expenses of the government. Thus, the kheddah department functioned as an institution through which government controlled/regulated the elephant catching.



Fig.5.2. Captured elephant in stockade, Source: reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1945-46

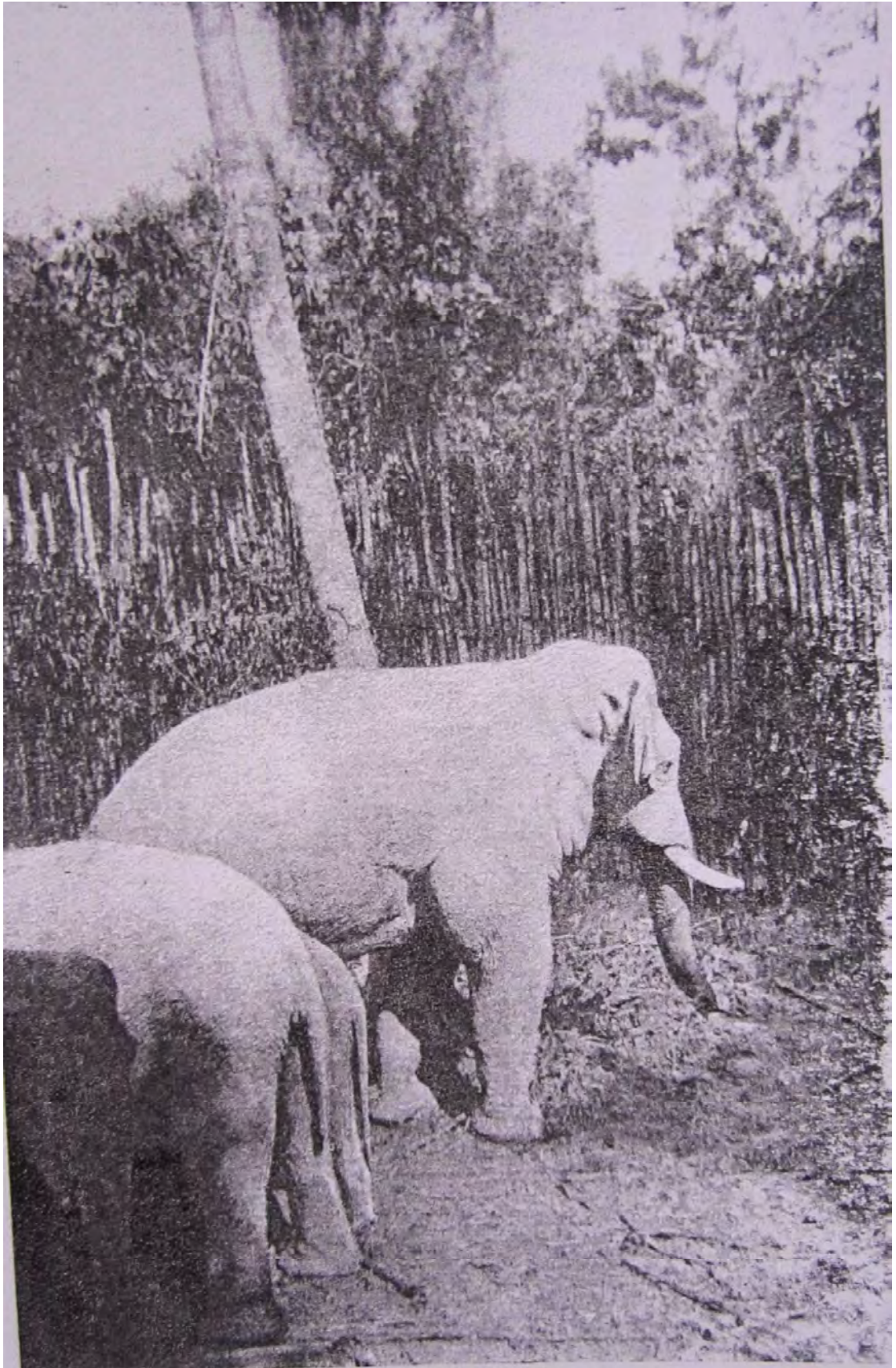


Fig.5.3. A large tusker soon after capture, source: Photo by M.C..Bhattacharjee, P.F.S. Reproduced from annual progress report on forest administration of Assam, (1939-1940)

5.2. Private Lease System

Apart from Kheddah department, the right of capturing elephant was also given to the private lessees. The free-to-hunt and catch policy continued till 1874.²⁸ After 1874-75 new regulations came into existence under which the government created elephant mahal or operational partition in the districts and the right of elephant catching in those tracts was sold by auction to private leases.²⁹ Large jungles inhabited by the elephants were divided into mahals and the right to capture elephants in those mahals was sold by public auction to the highest bidder. During 1917-18 the mahals or each hunting area was open for a period of two years and was then closed for eight years.³⁰ Mainly the British officials, local chiefs or mahaldars used to buy the Mahals. License for hunting in any Mahal was granted for particular hunting season which was mainly supposed to be from October to March. Simultaneous rest was also supposed to given to every elephant mahals. In many aspects the private lease system was an extension of the kheddah department. Both system functioned as complement to each other for the supply of elephants to the government commissariat department in Bengal yet very often their contradictory strategies created tension. Under the kheddah system the licenses in the form of elephant mahals were granted to the natives by its superintendent. But the lessees were subjected to the rules and conditions granted under the elephant preservation policy. The license holders were liable to the forest department rules with regard to the catching of elephants in all reserved or protected forests falling within the Mahals. Lessees were allowed to hunt elephants only in those forests which were not worked upon by the government kheddah. The lessees were granted permission to hunt in particular Mahals on a royalty of Rs.100 on every elephant caught and a sum of Rs. 50/- for every calf.³¹ The government reserved the right to purchase all elephants from Mahal owner on payment of Rs. 600/- for each elephant.³² Even elephants measuring 7 feet and over in height were first offered for sale to the government at the under mentioned prices, and could not be taken or disposed of by the lessees or any authorized person without first making such offer of

²⁸ Sakia, R., (2001), *Social and Economic History Of Assam (1853-1921)*, New Delhi: Manohar, p. 130

²⁹ Sakia, R., (2001), *op.cit.*, p. 130

³⁰ Assam Legislative Council Proceeding, 5 October, 1918 cited in Revenue Administration In Assam by D.D.Mali, *op.cit.*, p. 209

³¹ (WBSA), Proceeding of The Governor of Bengal, Revenue Dept., June 1873

³² Sakia, R., *op.cit.*, p. 133

sale to the government and only after government decline to exercise its right of purchase.

From 7 and ½ feet to 8 feet at.....Rs. 300

From 8 feet to 8 and ½ feet at.....Rs. 400

From 8 and ½ feet to 9 feet at.....Rs. 500³³

These license holders were not allowed to catch elephants by noosing or destroy any for the sake of its tusk, under penalty of the confiscation of the elephants caught in one case and of a fine of Rs. 500 for every elephant killed. The license holders had also to report to the deputy commissioner end of all the elephants caught by him or on his behalf at the end of every month and if these conditions were violated the license of the lessees were liable to get cancelled.³⁴ A fee of Rs.20/- for each elephant, per year was also taken from the owner of the elephants whose elephants were used for dragging timber.³⁵ Thus, even though it was a private leased system but mainly controlled by the government. But as it was necessary to keep down the number of elephant to save the crops as when crops were ripening elephants could do much damage unless the numbers of the herds were regularly kept down. For this reason hunting rights continued to be sold.³⁶

The whole Assam valley was divided by the Chief Commissioner, into blocks to be worked in succession for two years at a time and then to rest for two or more years, with a view to ensure that every year a certain number of elephant-hunting grounds in Assam proper should be offered on lease, so as to provide opportunities for continuous employment to the professional hunters who maintain large numbers of very valuable hunting elephants.³⁷ The private leases were mainly bought by the British official or local chiefs used to buy the Mahals.³⁸ License for hunting in any particular mahal was granted for particular hunting season which was mainly supposed to be from October to march and simultaneous rest was also supposed to

³³ (WBSA), Proceeding of the Governor of Bengal, Revenue Dept., June 1873

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Allen B.C., (1905) *Kamrup District Gazetteer*, Shillong,

³⁷ RAPA, 1876-77, Shillong, 1878, p.134

³⁸ Rune of Rambrai was permitted to catch elephant in his Elaka. (ASA, Assam secretariat, military B proceeding September, 1891 Nos. 41/42) in another case Mr. G.Earrol Gray was granted a license to hunt elephants in two elephant Mahals of the North Lakhimpur subdivision known as Nos, 14 (A) and 14 (B) for the season ending, the 31st march 1899 (ASA, II E (fin.) Assam Secretariat, Military B, Oct. 1898 nos.25/29)

give to every elephant mahals. It was mainly for a period of two years.³⁹ In many aspects the private lease system was an extension of the kheddah department. Both functioned as complement to each other for the supply of elephants to the government commissariat department in Bengal yet very often their contradictory strategies created tension. Under the kheddah system the licenses in the form of elephant mahals were granted to the natives by its superintendent but the lessees were subjected to the rules and conditions granted under the elephant preservation policy. The license holder were also liable to the forest department rules with regard to the catching of elephants in all reserved or protected forests falling within the Mahals.⁴⁰ Thus, lessees were allowed to hunt elephants only in those forests which were not worked upon by the government kheddah. Generally the lessees had to give half of the elephants measuring over 6 feet and below 8.5 feet at the shoulders to the government as rent. Sometime the lessees were also granted permission to hunt in particular Mahals on a royalty of Rs.100 on every elephant caught and a sum of Rs. 50/- for every calf. Elephants measuring below 6 feet and over 8 feet in height were allowed to remain in the lessees possession but the government was free to purchase any of these elephants and that too at a much lower price than that of the animals newly captured. But it is worthy to note that if for any reason the lessee did not capture any elephant from the Mahal he could claim the refund. A refund of Rs. 4275/-was ordered by government to the lessee Mahadev Saikia as he did not catch elephants from the Mahals Jaintia.⁴¹ It is also interesting to note that even the local rulers were not permitted to hunt in their own Elaka or estate without the permission from the government as all the elephants were supposed to be the property of the government. They were also supposed to pay royalty for every elephant they capture.⁴² Thus, even though it was a private leased system but mainly controlled by the government.

In the second half of the 19th century the government of India directed that the administration of elephant hunting to be done through the military department and the

³⁹ In 1891 the marginally noted elephant mahals of Nowgong, khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills and the North Cachar were given simultaneous rest for two years.(ASA, II E (Fin.) Assam Secretariat, Military B, Progs, August 1891, Nos.148-156) the Panisagar and Nichantpur elephant mahals in Cachar were given Simultaneous rest during 1889-90. It was further extended in 1892 for the next cold season. (ASA. Assam Secretariat, Revenue, No.1795, 1892)

⁴⁰ (ASA), Assam Secretariat, Military B, Fin.IIE, Proc. Oct.1893, Nos. 7/8,

⁴¹ (ASA), Financial department II E, file no.III f 291, 1907.

⁴² The Rune of Rambrai was permitted to capture elephant in his Elaka for a term of two years upon payments of Rs 100/- on every elephant caught. ASA, Assam Secretariat, Military B, proce. Sept.1891 Nos. 41/42

capture of elephants became privilege of this department only. During this period the department used to receive supply of elephants from Assam. The provincial government could also meet their requirement of elephants for transport by taking it from the government after paying value fixed for the same. This shows the dissatisfaction of government with the existing systems viz., Kheddah and private lease though elephant hunting was not in the hands of the Military department for a long time.

5.3 Methods of Elephant Catching

As far the methods of elephant capturing is concerned mainly kheddah system and Mela Shikar were used⁴³. In the first method the elephants were captured mostly during the months of October and March. In this method, kheddah or stockades were built around the water bodies or in some strategic locations where herds of wild elephants can be driven into and trapped in such stockades. In this method it was possible to capture a herd of elephants at a time. There are evidences of capturing of forty, sixty and even eighty elephants at a time in the Sylhet forest.⁴⁴ Around 20 to 25 people were required to work to construct the stockades which were placed in close proximity to any pung which showed the signs of being visited by the wild elephants. It mainly took time of five to six weeks. After that these people had to wait patiently for the advent of the herd of elephants at the lick. This wait might sometimes exceed to 2 or 3 months but sooner or later one night a herd would turn up and as it was unsuspectingly feeding at the lick it would be quietly surrounded and the firing of one or two guns and the blowing of a few hours would be enough to make it rush off in the required track. Before the herd of elephants could recover from its alarm it would find itself inside the stockades and they would be lost to the jungles forever. Kheddah work required a primary expense of Rs.8000 to Rs.10,000 and the lessee was required to have in possession a large number of elephants to tame the wild elephants so that they could be used for various works. Sanderson viewed that such a huge investment was practicable only for the government and native princes.⁴⁵ The kheddah system of elephant capturing was similar to that of the guruh shikar as it also implies the capture

⁴³ For more detail please see, Daniel. J.C., “*The Asian Elephants- A Natural History*”, Dehradun: Natraj Publishers, P. 210-228.

⁴⁴ (ASA), 1851-64, Home dept. file no.36/43, Bengal Govt. papers relating to asserting of rights by government to hunt elephants in govt. territories. No. 259 of 1854, letter from C.S.Davidson, Commissioner of Revenue to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, lower provinces.

⁴⁵ Saikia.A.J., (2011), *Forest and Ecological History of Assam, 1826-2000*, New Delhi: OUP, , p.284

of the wild elephants by decoying them into stockade enclosures called gurhs.⁴⁶ The kheddah method was also used in other region like Mysore for capturing wild elephants.⁴⁷

The second method of elephant catching is known as Mela shikar, one of the oldest methods of elephant catching along with the pit fall system.⁴⁸ “The process adopted under this system is that the wild elephants are pursued by men mounted on tame elephants and are hunted down and noosed.”⁴⁹ The process sounds very simple although elephants were caught often in some dangerous situations. In this method one or two parties consisting of three koonkie (tame elephants trained to hunting and catching wild ones), two of which must be selected for speed and endurance, called uthanee and one for its strength, named khoonti were sent to the resorts of the wild herds. Sometimes the catching is possible with only one khoonki and if the quarry is a small one but it is better to do with two or three khoonti to catch and master a big one. These parties mainly reconnoitre in open places at early morning or in the evening for the wild elephants always keep to heavy forest during the heat day and come out in open place only in the morning and evening time. These, on nearing a ‘Khanja’ or herd put on full speed to single out an elephant and then give an immediate chase. The khoonki chased the animal until one khoonki gets along side of the wild elephants. When the khoonki were alongside the phandi or noosemen seeing his opportunity noosed the wild ones. If the noosed animal is a powerful one it struggles long and violently before it is choked and down. After the animal was choked the running nooses were loosed to give breath to them and a stopper was put on each to prevent their running. Two khoonki were again press on each side and one or two more pushing from behind forcibly dragged away the captured animal to a kheddah where it was strongly picketed and starved into tameness. After a month or two it became quite and tractable enough to be marched homewards, in the mean time they were led out frequently by the koonkies and gradually became accustomed to a rider. M’cosh astutely describes the catching of wild elephants. In his words “The plan adopted for

⁴⁶ (NAI), Foreign, Political branch, Political A, Dec. 1876, Nos. 82-87, from- S.O.B. Ridsdale, Esq., C.S., Secretary to Chief Commissioner of Assam to T.H.Thornton, Esq, D.C.L, Offg. Secy to Govt. of India, foreign Dept. No. 3680 dated Shillong, 6th Nov. 1876.

⁴⁷ Danial.J.C., (1998), “*The Asian Elephant-A Natural history*”, Dehradun: Natraj Publishers, , p.210

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ (NAI),Foreign, Political branch, Political A, Dec. 1876, Nos. 82-87, from- S.O.B. Ridsdale, Esq., C.S., Secretary to Chief Commissioner of Assam to T.H.Thornton, Esq, D.C.L, Offg. Secy to Govt. of India, foreign Dept. No. 3680 dated Shillong, 6th Nov. 1876.

catching them is by female elephants, called Koonkis. The female are driven into the haunts of the wild ones, where they are joined by the wild ones, where they are driven into the haunts of the wild ones, where they are joined by the wild males. In the course of the courtship the Mahouts so contrive shackle the unsuspecting gallants to some convenient tree, that they are fixed to the spot immoveably, and thus are allowed to remain till confinement and want of food render them easily tameable.”⁵⁰ The fresh elephants become thin and weak during the first six month. During the first rainy season there are most chances of elephant being ill and then die. If the elephant passes this stage the chances of their demise decrease after which they were called Pucka i.e. safe and acclimatized. There is no certainty about the mortality of fresh elephants and it is therefore always attributed to kismet or chance. This is why a kheddah wala or an elephant catcher is called to be an Ameer or Fugeer i.e. a prince or a beggar so proverbially his gains were uncertain and his trade was so full of risk.⁵¹ This is because many of the elephants died before they were domesticated.⁵² A well-known appellation Hati-dhani i.e. rich in elephant wealth became very famous during British rule. There were many who made their pile out of earning from elephant hunting. Notable among them were Gangagobinda Phukan, Bhagyamalla Barua, Earl Grey, Kingsley, Radhakanta Phukan, Dhanbar Gam, Sadhanchandra Hazarika, Lankeswar Gohain and Manik Hazarika.⁵³ Tarunram Phukan, earned fame and money by hunting elephants.

Other than these two methods there was minor mela shikar arranged from 1934 onwards. It was the name given to the system under which a few Koonkies were stationed with fixed camps near paddy fields which were likely to be raided by herd elephants. Permanent protection could only be given to crops by the removal of the offending herds by the means of kheddah operations, but mahals could only be opened in rotation on account of the market for elephants being limited. Koonkies stationed nearby are a positive safeguard to crops, but this new system is unpopular for the elephant catchers, who naturally would prefer to go and seek for the herds instead of waiting, without any certainty, for them to approach the fields.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ M’Cosh, J., (1837) *Topography of Assam*, Calcutta: Bengal Military orphan press, p.44

⁵¹ Campbell, A., *Notes on the mode of capture of elephants in Assam*. Proceedings of the Zoological society of London, February 25, 1869.

⁵² John.M’Cosh, (1837) ,*op.cit* p.41

⁵³ Sharma, B.(1987), *Tokora Bahar kuta*, Guwahati, p.288

⁵⁴ RPFA for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP (1936), p.22

This system was more popular because of its low capital investment. The people who keep koonkies and supply the funds for catching elephants were known as 'kheddah walas'. An elephant catcher or kheddah walas's establishment consists of the following things. First, Koonkis i.e tame elephants trained to hunting and catching wild elephants, second, phanaits i.e noosemen, third Lohattias i.e. elephant driver, fourthly, mates i.e under drivers and fifthly an abundant supply of ropes and cables for catching and tying up their massive quarry.⁵⁵ Thus though the process sound easy but it's not like that. It took tough work and patience for capturing herd of elephants at a time.

Other than these the pit fall system of elephant catching was also prevalent the oldest method of trapping wild animals.⁵⁶ Even sometimes a 'rogue' elephant was captured by this method.⁵⁷ Later British government restricted the elephant catching by this method. Government ignored those methods in which the chances of death of elephants were more. They preferred to capture them alive than dead. But the rogue elephants were preferred to be shot. Sometime it was necessary to shoot one that went 'must' and was pillaging the crops and attacking villages.⁵⁸ The progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1937-39 accounted one such killing of elephant in Haltugaon division by Mr. Gyles Mackrell. The elephant was reported to kill several people and had caused a good deal of damage to timber extraction carts. The report says "one particularly large and troublesome bull (male elephant) known locally as the 'Bishmuri goonda' was accounted for by Mr. Gyles Mackrell, who was good enough to report details of its measurement as follows:- Circumference of forefoot 5'-4³/₄", height 10'- 9¹/₂", tusks 6'-0¹/₂" and 4'-11¹/₂" (the latter having been broken off) and girth of tusks 17 ³/₄" and 18". This animal was known to have killed four people and had been followed up by Mr. Mackrell on nine separate occasions but he had only seen it once.⁵⁹ The rogue elephants wonder about the country doing an immense amount of mischiefs but it was easy enough to get the permission to shoot the dangerous brutes.⁶⁰ A.J.Milroy, the Conservator of forest,

⁵⁵ Campbell, A.,(1869), *op.cit.*

⁵⁶ Danial.J.C. has mentioned that the Pit trap was a method used by men for thousands of years to trap and kill animals until the later part of the current millennium, in his book "*The Asian Elephant-A Natural history*", Dehradun, Natraj Publishers, 1998, p.196

⁵⁷ Danial.J.C.,(1998), *The Asian Elephant-A Natural history*, Dehradun: Natraj Publishers, p.209

⁵⁸ Newcombe, A.C.,(1905), *Village Town And Jungle Life In India*, London: William Blackwood and sons,p.274

⁵⁹ RPFA for the year 1937-38, Shillong: AGP, 1938, ,p. 20 para 143

⁶⁰ Barker, M.G., (1884), *The Tea Planter's Life In Assam*, Calcutta: Thacker , Spink &Co, p. 205

Assam, expressed that nothing could be done other than to thinning out of the herds by shooting. At the initial stage he reported that 28 elephants were destroyed all of them were crop-raiders and some of them man-killers in 1936.⁶¹ It was very difficult to kill a rogue elephant. Colonel Pollok remarked that nothing could be worse than a rogue elephant.⁶²



Fig.5.4. Rogue elephant killed by Mr. Gyles Mackrell, Source: Reproduced from the Annual progress report on Forest Administration of Assam (1937-38)

5.4 The Management of Elephants

The Assamese people had good knowledge of the maintenance of elephant health and wellbeing.⁶³ “*Hastirbidyanarba*”, treatise on elephant, prepared under patronage of Ahom Kings, thoroughly describes several methods of elephant keeping, the types of elephant, its breeding, domestication and the mode of training etc.⁶⁴ Under the British rule the everyday affairs of the elephants was looked after by the district administrator and supervised by a district superintendent. A record of captured elephants in various shikar was maintained by the district forest offices including its name, size, health and

⁶¹ RPFA for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP, 1936, p.16, para, 115

⁶² Pollok, C., (1894), *Incidents Of Foreign Sport And Travel*, London: Chapman & Hall, P.125

⁶³ Sakia, A.J.,(2011), *op.cit.* p. 278

⁶⁴ Choudhary, P.C., (1976) *Hastirvidyarnava*, Gauhati: Assam Publication Board.

details about its owner. Looking after health and working capability was an affair of Mahaut (caretaker). He was responsible for the all the affairs related to the health of elephant and its working capability. If for any reason the health of an elephant deteriorated, which was mainly happens because of heavy workload, was ascribed to the negligence of Mahaut. There are some evidences when the Mahaout's services were dispensed because of the death of elephants.⁶⁵ Mahaut and grass cutter were maintained for the entertainment of elephants at the expenditure of government. Jamadar used to get Rs. 12/- per month.⁶⁶

The elephants were maintained at the cost of the state. During 1869-70, the total cost of keeping and maintaining 5 elephants was found to be approximately Rs. 2,214. The expenditure was for keeping jammaddar, mahout, grass cutter, cost of medicine and ration. If for any reason elephants died the responsibility fall upon the Jamadar. In case of elephant establishment in Goalpara Jamadar was dismissed from his service where two out of four government elephants were died.⁶⁷ Thus, no case of negligence in the maintenance of elephants was tolerated by the government.

Buying of elephant mahals were not afforded by the Hunters. Sanderson admitted that most of the hunters were of poor economic background and could not invest resources. The hunters of the Miri community had mainly income from agriculture. The mahaldars belonged to rich social class who used to lease out their rights to skilled hunters. They often under quoted the number of elephants they captured and earned extra income. According to Sanderson these middle strata i.e. mahaldars used to have huge profit and thus, played an important role in elephant management.

5.5 Elephant Protection Policies

Though the preservation of wild animals started much later the attempts at preservation of elephant started in the mid of the nineteenth century because of its strategic needs. Various strategies and techniques were adopted by the government to exclude the local people from the high ranked zamindars and native chieftains to the local inhabitants and forest dwellers, to gain the maximum profit from elephant hunting. The establishment of kheddah department and the private lease system were

⁶⁵ Elephants establishment in Goalpara, government of Bengal papers, file no.71/111 papers-2 agriculture department (ASA), as mentioned by Arup Jyoti Saikia, op.cit.p.286.

⁶⁶ (ASA), Bengal Government papers, Agriculture dept., 1873, paper-2, file No. 72/111, Elephant establishment in Goalpara.

⁶⁷ ibid

the instrument through which restrictions were put on the open access of the animal. However, this monopoly over the animal was of utilitarian⁶⁸ nature.

The first attempt at the preservation of wild animals or to put some restriction was started only in case of 'Elephant', that is only because of its strategic needs, as no restriction was put on the killing of other wild animals. On the other hand a good sum was expended on the killing of wild animals to pay the rewards. Though the Elephant preservation Act of 1879 was first legal attempt at the preservation of the animal, the Act of 1865 also put a fine of Rs. 500/- may also be inflicted by the sections 4 and 5 of Act VII of 1865 for the infringement of forest rules one of which may provide for the issue of a prohibition for the "collection and removal of elephants' tusk;" but these rules would only apply to "government forests," declared to be such under section 2 of the Act, and not to open forests generally. But as the rule was not applicable open forest, an immoral trade was found to have grown in the province. Many people for the sake of ivory were seen engaging in wilful destruction of the animal.⁶⁹ Apprehending that the indiscriminate killing would increase the chances of the extinction of this useful animal, the commissioner apprehended the board of revenue for the adaptation of certain preventive measures with immediate effect.⁷⁰ Hopkinson, submitted a draft embodying certain provisions of law to restrain the capture and killing of elephants. He recommended a fine of Rs.200/- on those who intentionally kills or maims or capture an elephant in Assam⁷¹. To portion of the draft underlying the penal provision was as follows, "whoever, without the written permission of the officers authorities by government to grant such permission, in any way intentionally kills or maims or captures an elephant in Assam, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 200 for each animal so killed, maimed or capture; and any animal

⁶⁸ Here the term "utilitarian" relates the dictionary meaning in terms of pragmatic use and does not resemble the idea of "English Utilitarians". Natasha Nongbri has also pointed out that the utilitarian notion of the British was the result of the extension of British monopoly over wild in her article "Elephant Hunting in late 19th Century North-East India, Mechanism of Control, Contestation and local Reaction". *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 26 2003, p. 318

⁶⁹ Goswami, S., (1987), *Aspect Of Revenue Administration In Assam (1826-1874)*, New Delhi: Mittal,P.128

⁷⁰ (ASA), 1851-64 Home Dept.,K.W to file No.36/43, Bengal Government papers, papers relating to asserting of rights by government to hunt elephants in government territories. Letter from Colonel H. Hopkinson, Agent Governor-General, North East Frontier, and Commissioner of Assam, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Province, the 12th Dec. 1872

⁷¹ (ASA), 1851-64 Home Dept.,K.W to file No.36/43, Bengal Government papers, papers relating to asserting of rights by government to hunt elephants in government territories. Letter from Colonel H. Hopkinson, Agent Governor-General, North East Frontier, and Commissioner of Assam, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Province, the 12th Dec. 1872

killed or captured shall be confiscated to government.⁷² But before the British obtain possession of any province or so long as the province was governed by its own Rajah, as we see in case of Cachar there was an immemorial custom of giving the sole right of catching wild elephants to the Rajah till it was ruled by its Rajah. Without his authority no person dared to catch one, indeed no person had even a right to keep one except the Rajah, unless it was given to him.⁷³ Even in some cases the attempts made by British officers to capture elephants in Cachar were failed.⁷⁴ The Rajah had not only right over the catching of wild elephants but also all elephant teethes found in the District belong to the Rajah and all parties finding them were obliged to give them up. It also appears from the records of 1830 that the parties allowed to keep the teeths were required to pay three annas on every rupees worth of ivory to government.⁷⁵ Thus, it can be understood that the restrictions on the elephant hunting was only for generating revenue and not the preservation of the animal. Though these hunting regulations later became an important adjunct to the forest conservancy but earlier it was only an attempt to generate revenue.

The Elephants Preservation act of 1879 can be called as the first attempt for the preservation of fauna in the late nineteenth century colonial India of wild elephants. It came into force on the first day of April 1879. The increasing awareness of the decline in wildlife and the fear of elephant extinction led to the passing of the act which restricted the killing and capture of elephant. With the extension of this act elephants became one of the earliest species of wildlife or most probably the first wild animal that was transformed from an open access resource, whose use had been loosely regulated by native rulers and landed classes into an exclusive privilege of the colonial rulers. The gist of regulation mention in the act clearly distinguishes between the act of shooting and that of hunting. License holders could hunt the elephants but not shoot. However, the rogue elephant or elephants that became dangerous to human life and property could be shoot but at the same time the wild elephant captured and the tusk of wild elephants killed by any unlicensed person shall be the property of the

⁷² (ASA), 1851-64 Home Dept.,K.W to file No.36/43, Bengal Government papers, papers relating to asserting of rights by government to hunt elephants in government territories. Letter from Colonel H. Hopkinson, Agent Governor-General, North East Frontier, and Commissioner of Assam, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Province, the 12th Dec. 1872

⁷³ *Cachar District Record*, published by D.Datta, Silchar Assam, 1869, No. 113 letter to the Superintendent & remembrance of legal affairs, fort William from G.Verner, Suprintendent, Cachar, August, 1851.p. 180

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

government. The licenses of killing or capturing wild elephants could be granted to any person by the collector or the deputy commissioner in their district but no such license shall authorizes any one to enter upon any land without the consent of the owner or occupier thereof. The act also put fine of Rs. 500/- or more if any one violates the above condition for the hunting of wild elephants.⁷⁶

In Assam the act has been extended to the district of Kamrup, Darrang, Naugon, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Cachar, the Naga hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo hills (with the exception of certain portion of the estates of the Zamindars of Bijni), the Eastern Duars in the district of Goalpara, that part of the District of Sylhet which has not been permanently settled, Makokchang subdivision of the Naga Hills District and the Lushai Hills.⁷⁷ Bijni Tract is regarded useless for the purpose of Kheddah operations and the government of India does not, therefore, wish to interfere with the rights of the owners to catch elephants in it.⁷⁸ In case of Mechpara and Karaibari estate (transferred to the Garo hills from the Goalpara district) the government failed to make any settlement with the zamindars.

The growing number of wild elephants in the later part of the nineteenth century necessitated a conscious policy to regulate the animal. In spite of meeting the requirement of the state need was felt to regulate their hunting in order to defend the local inhabitants from the havoc caused to their lives and property by the wild elephants. In the meantime the decreasing number of the wild elephants in the south necessitated the protection of elephants. Sanderson ardently admitted that “protection and utilization should go hand in hand.”⁷⁹ Thus, though the state’s control over the extension of Elephant Preservation Act was necessitated for the protection of the life and property but it was not without the colonial interest of accreting state monopoly over elephants. It can be call an instrument of the government to play monopoly over elephant catching. Sanderson admitted that all elephant hunting regulations were grossly violated in spite of fixed regulation for the capture of wild elephants in the Assam more rigorous than in any other province. He mentioned an instance where an individual not himself a hunter purchased a lease for Rs.2000 at public auction.⁸⁰ Thus, hunting regulations can be called to be an important adjunct to the forest

⁷⁶ The Elephant Preservation Act, 1879 (VI Of 1879) , Government Of India Press, New Delhi. 1934

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ (NAI), Home dept., Judicial Branch, March 1899, Nos. 697 to 702.

⁷⁹ (NAI), Revenue & Agriculture Department, (Kheddahs), A Pros, Nos 1001-1027, Novemeber 1881.

⁸⁰ Sakia,A.J., (2011), op.cit., p.286

conservancy. The state control over forest led to the extension of wildlife protection to other species like elephant and rhino in the north east region. But the elephant cases were more ought to be of revenue and not Judicial.

5.6 Conflicts over Elephants

Conflict over elephants was common amongst various branches of administration.⁸¹ The right of kheddah department over the elephants led to the dissatisfaction for the district administration as they could not procure elephants inspite of their need in various works. While in case of Goalpara it was possible to have elephants on hire from the houses of Zamindars but it was not the same in case of Kamrup.⁸² Even there were clashes between the Assamese privileged class and colonial authorities on the issue of right of elephants catching. Hostility was common before the commencement of any effective rule to supervise the elephant catching operations. The hostility was so much that the forest department could not keep the right of elephant capturing in its hand for a long time. But the main rival claimants of the wild elephants were the state on one hand and the native Zamindars on the other. The zamindari forest of Goalpara specially the estate of Mechpara and Karaibarizamindars has their independent rights over their estate and the state has no claim over them. In 1882 the Elephant Preservation Act 1879 was extended to the Garo Hills but the Zamindari tracts were not included under the said act. The government's particular interest over these estates was abundance of wild elephants. Garo hills was an important center of elephant hunting and trade.⁸³ Sanderson also consider it desirable for the government to acquire the sole right to hunt over them.⁸⁴ Sometime the government used to get

⁸¹ (ASA), 1873 Govt. of Bengal Papers-6, file no. 6/9a, Prohibition against catching of elephants without a licence. Letter from Messrs J. Mackillican and Company to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Calcutta, the 21st January 1873, Elephant captured by Mr. James Hossack, Manager of the Attabarrie tea estate, on the tea grant No.143 was claimed and sold by the Deputy Commissioner on the ground that all wild elephants are the property of government. Later the assistant Secretary to the govt of Bengal, Agricultural Department viewed that by established custom the elephant in Assam is a royal beast and can only be hunted under Government license. however he directed the commissioner of Assam, to sanction a payment of Rs. 100, as an act of grace to Mr. Hossack which elephant might have fetched. (no. 1241, letter from the Assistant Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal in the Agricultural Department, to the Commissioner of Assam, Calcutta the 9th June 1873). A draft regulation under Cap.33, Vic., forbid the capture of elephants without a license. And it was expected to apply to the districts of Assam, cachar and Sylhet including Cooch Behar Division. No. 2024, letter from the Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, in the Agricultural Department, to the Commissary-General, Calcutta the 28th July 1873.)

⁸² ASA, Goalpara papers, file no 62 Govt of Bengal papers 1868

⁸³ Sakia, R., (2001), *op.cit.*, p. 133

⁸⁴ (NAI), R &A Dept., Kheddah Branch, A Nos. 424-31 Nov 1883.

assistant from zamindars for elephant hunting as in case of elephant hunting in sylhet and cachar district in 1873. The superintendent of kheddahs, Dacca asked for the assistance from the zamindars of sylhet and cachar, to get the full number of coolies to conduct government kheddahs, on the terms that after the government kheddahs are successfully completed they would be allowed to have a kheddah in the same fields on their own account under the usual contract conditions that they pay the usual royalty to government, and government also retains the pre-emption to all elephants captured, that is they promise to sell any or all of the same rates allowed for new capture for taken from the elephant kheddah lessees in Assam.⁸⁵

The state's control over the Zamindari estates was long debated. Had the Government has right to catch elephants on the Zamindari estates and if not, what share, as royalty of the captures could the zamindars claim? Certainly the zamindars had no right to catch elephants on their own lands without a license, but the zamindars could bring an action against the government for trespass, but not for the value of the elephants, which are certainly not the property of the zamindars but "fera nature."⁸⁶ In this case the zamindars could argue that if they have no right to catch elephants in their own land, the government has no right to come on to my lands to catch them without payment of compensation.⁸⁷ The Commissary-General J V Hunt and Mr. Sanderson stated that the zamindars has no more right to catch elephants on his zamindari than the English farmer has to shoot his landlord's pheasants and the elephant hunting is the prerogative of the government and if it would be applicable to all the case what would become of the right of government to hunt elephants anywhere except in waste lands.⁸⁸ A conflict on the issue of trespass was also not neglected. In one case a wild *muchno* elephant captured by the zamindar of Gauripur in the district of Mymensingh was detained on the ground that he caught it in a portion of his zamindari within the permanently settled part of the Sylhet district where the Elephant Preservation Act of 1879 was not in force on the other hand the local officer thought that the elephant was actually caught within the limits of the district of Mymensingh but there was no more evidence to prove the same and to prevent any similar capture of elephants in future it was proposed that the act should be extended to the permanently settled part of

⁸⁵ (WBSA), proceeding of the governor of Bengal, revenue dept., October, 1873

⁸⁶ (NAI), Home, Forest, Oct. 1883, 20/B Note by Accounts Branch, Military Department.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ (NAI), Home, Forest, October. 1883, 20/B Note by Accounts Branch, Military Department

Sylhet.⁸⁹ Thus, the government wanted to establish monopoly over the elephant hunting and protection of life and property from the ravages and depredation of the animal was not their main concern. This monopoly was established probably under the Elephant Preservation Act. This would also exclude any rights to destroy elephants, an assessable asset.

On the other hand the zamindars claimed that they had been capturing elephants without hindrance for over 60 years and therefore had acquired a right for the elephant hunting.⁹⁰ The zamindars were also in conflict with the wild tribes for whom elephant was dangerous beast and the contemporary protection policy used to give them the power to kill the animal in defense of life or property.⁹¹ The zamindars were not only against the government hunting but also to the tribes capturing and destroying of the animal. Thus, the zamindar's main interest was only in obtaining whatever small tax they could from the elephant hunting.

Prior to the extension of zamindars right on elephant hunting within their own estates, the kheddah practices were often evoked hostile reactions from the native zamindars to what appeared to them as an incursion of their rights. During the commencement of these operations in the Garo hills district some tribes, who were tenants of the Zamindars were persistently threatened against taking up employment in the Kheddah.⁹² In fact the labourers were recruited from Chittagaon and its adjoining areas to work out the kheddahs. Over the years the native zamindars tried to disrupt the activities of kheddah department in their territory by various means. In one side the kheddah department was in competition with the zamindars in their hunting activity on the other side the zamindars even tried to prevent elephants from being captured by the department.⁹³ Other than the zamindars the local tribes were also put hurdle not the kheddah operations. Mr. Wight pointed out that the hunting grounds all lie outside of the inner line and though they could and did prevent natives of Cachar district slipping across that line during Kheddah operations to any extent, it was absolutely out of their power to prevent the hill tribes outside of their jurisdiction

⁸⁹ (ASA), Assam Secretariat, 1891 Diary no. 1 Rgr No:12985 g., Rev Dept., Forest, No.586.

⁹⁰ (NAI), Revenue and Agriculture Dept, Kheddahs, A pros nos 1601-11, November, 1885 mentioned by Natasha Nangbari, Elephant Hunting in late 19th Century North-East India, Economic and political weekly July 26, 2003

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² (NAI), Revenue and Agriculture Department, (Kheddahs), A Pros, Nos. 426-27, May 1878, Pro No.426

⁹³ (NAI), Revenue and Agriculture Dept. (Kheddah), Pros Nos. 379-82, Mar 1899, Annual Administration of the Dacca Kheddahs for 1897-1898.

from traversing the hunting grounds in search of game. Only a continuous system of frontier outposts along the outer line would help the British officials in this matter and both political and financial considerations forbid such a course.⁹⁴

The elephants are said to be a terror to the inhabitants, whose crops are exposed to their ravages though a large numbers were captured annually by the Kheddah department.⁹⁵ The local people were also unsatisfied with the British policies towards elephant hunting as it hinders their usual work of cultivation. The existence of government kheddah operations in Assam provide evidences of conflicts with the local people claims on forest use and the scientific forestry operations claimed to have an upper hand. Even though the instances of such conflicts were not abounding yet it did exist though not necessarily under the rubric of resistance per se.⁹⁶ The private license or lease system of elephant conservation, which was created as a fundamental regulatory instrument for the preservation of elephants provided tough competition to the traditional local and tribal *shikariees*.

Even the creation and reservation of elephant mahals was an abstraction in the agriculture work of local inhabitants and was not without local reaction though passive in nature. In 1881 a petition was made by the Durar Mirsan Chaudhari and other inhabitants of Nagdigram in the district of Cachar praying for the removal of the restriction on the extension of cultivation on land that was reserved for Kheddah operations.⁹⁷ But the petition was rejected on the ground that the tract in question was one of the best hunting grounds of the kheddah department and its reservation had to be continued for future elephant capturing operations. Thus, government had an upper hand here also and not only the zamindars and native rulers had to compromise with the government policies but also the interest of local inhabitants, wild tribes and forest dwellers were also curtailed.

The awareness of conserving fauna led to the preservation policy of elephant from 1879 in the north-eastern region. It also meant that elephant hunting and its management is a governmental concern. The contest over game thus went in favour of the state. The local shikaries were put in its margin and the exclusive hunting rights of

⁹⁴ (NAI), Revenue and Agriculture, A, December, 1885, file no. 2884-85,

⁹⁵ (NAI), Home, Forest branch, 20/B, Oct., 1883, note by Accounts Branch, Military department.

⁹⁶ Nongbari.Natasha, "Elephant Hunting in late 19th Century North-East India, Mechanism of Control, Contestation and local Reaction". *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 26 2003, p. 3196

⁹⁷ (NAI), Revenue & Agriculture, Kheddahs, B, April 1881, 1652-53. Prayer from inhabitants of Nagdigram Cachar for the removal of the restriction by which cultivation is prohibited in certain tracts in that district which are reserved for elephant hunting.

the kheddah department denied the hunting access of the native population consisting of native estate- holders and the local inhabitants including forest tribes. Conflicts and tension were common because of various contradictory selfish interests.

5.7 Revenue from Elephants

The British government used to get revenue from certain miscellaneous sources. One of the important sources was the elephant mahals.⁹⁸ The Administrative Report of Assam (1892-93) says that among the “commercial Staples” of Assam, elephants should also be mentioned.⁹⁹ The colonial officials marked the abundance of elephant in this region. John M’Cosh mentioned in his book “*Topography of Assam*” that about 700-1000 elephants were exported every year at an average value of Rs.300.¹⁰⁰ The elephants were largely captured by the private contractors and were bought by Bengal government for commissariat department. The revenue derived from this source was originally not very significant. Gradually more and more speculators engaged in this profession and capitalist from outside began pouring into the province with a view to obtain licenses from the government.¹⁰¹ Revenue thus derived in 1866-67 amounted to Rs. 1623 in Cachar, 200 in Khasi and Jaintia hills, 220 in Darrang, 340 in Goalpara, 60 in Lakhimpur, 180 in Kamrup, 340 in Nowgaon, and 1558 in Sibsagar.¹⁰² The amount decreased considerably in 1871-72 and a sum of Rs. 1,420 only was collected from the licenses issued to catch elephants in Assam proper.¹⁰³ Since then the revenue increase considerable as shown in the table no. 4.1. The revenue from elephants mahals was always been shown as ‘miscellaneous land revenue’ but after Assam was separated from Bengal the revenue from elephant mahals was included in the forest branch by Gustav Mann, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Assam. He too mentioned that if this revenue had to transfer under land

⁹⁸ Mail.,D.D., *Revenue Administration In Assam*, New Delhi, Omsons,1985, p. 209

⁹⁹ Physical and Political Geography of Assam,(1893) reprint from Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam 1892-93, Shillong: The Assam Secretary Printing Office,p. 43

¹⁰⁰John M’cosh, ed. Tamuly, L.N.,2010, *A Revealing Mirror Of North-East Topography Of Assam*, Bhabani Print & Publications, Guwahati.p.42

¹⁰¹ Bengal Revenue Proceeding, January, 1868, No. 12 Appendix A-2, Report on the land revenue administration in lower provinces for 1866-67 cited by Shrutidev Goswami in Aspect f revenue administration in Assam (1826-1874)

¹⁰² Bengal Revenue Proceeding, May, 1873, Head No, 7, file 8, 1-3, Appendix B, McNeil to secretary to government of Bengal, revenue department, 18 september,1872, cited by Shrutidev Goswami in Aspect of Revenue Administration in Assam (1826-1874)

¹⁰³ RAPA for the year 1878-79, Shillong: AGP,1879, p.133

revenue it would seriously affect the forest budget.¹⁰⁴ On October, 1876 the government of India declared that the revenue from elephant Mahals and royalty levied on its capture would remain under the department of “forest”.¹⁰⁵ Each year a good sum was of amount was made from elephant hunting which were uses for various administrative purposes. The following table shows the number of elephants captured and revenue earned from elephant catching during each successive year.

Table no.5.1.Statistics of elephant captured and Revenue collected from elephant hunting during 1875-1938

Year	Number of elephants captured	Total revenue	Year	Number of elephants captured	Total revenue
1875-1876	Not available	Rs. 55137	1911-1912	359	Not available
1877-1878	264	Rs.31870/-	1914-1915	195	Not available
1878-1879	332	Rs.108656/-	1915-1916	270	Not available
1879-1880	265	Rs.45177/-	1916-1917	424	Not available
1880-1881	Not available	Rs.63108/-	1917-1918	500	Rs.105450
1881-1882	187	Rs.39269/-	1920-1921	104	Rs.32000
1882-1883	475	Rs.85735/-	1922-1923	292	Rs.230301/-
1883-1884	Not available	Rs.83891/-	1923-1924	524	Rs.202922/-
1884-1885	469	Rs.87160/-	1924-1925	130	Rs.67340/-
1885-1886	338	Rs.51654/-	1925-1926	Not available	Rs.63872/-
1886-1887	323	Rs.68335/-	1926-1927	Not available	Rs. 58170/-
1887-1888	270	Rs.43412/-	1927-1928	411	Rs.195700/-
1888-1889	321	Rs. 38547/-	1928-1929	476	Rs.184250/-
1889-1890	188	Rs.28899/-	1929-1930	299	Rs.1,25000/-
1890-1891	259	Rs.35677/-	1930-1931	490	Rs.77300/-
1892-1893	Not available	Rs.18102/-	1931-1932	146	Rs.24600/-
1893-1894	105	Rs.47592/-	1932-1933	136	Rs.26900/-
1894-1895	369	Rs.50452/-	1933-1934	324	Rs.44050/-
1895-1896	238	Rs.39155/-	1934-1935	208	Rs.32562/-
1896-1897	280	Rs.45701/-	1935-1936	394	Rs. 63000/-
1897-1898	328	Rs.48019/-	1936-1937	437	Rs. 58000/-
1898-1899	213	Rs.30750/-	1937-1938	209	Rs. 40000/-
1899-1900	176	Rs.23390/-	1938-1939	395	Rs. 63000/-
1903-1904	Not available	Rs.54997/-			

Source: Report on the administration of the province of Assam during the year 1877-1940

Income from elephants remained a key source of generating revenue. The amount of revenue realized in 1875-76 on account of elephant mahals and royalty on capture of elephants was Rs. 45,431-8.

¹⁰⁴ (ASA), 1877, Assam Secretariat proceeding, Revenue department, A, progs. nos.2/3, Revenue derived from elephant Mahals, Letter from Gustav Mann, Deputy Conservator of forest, Assam to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, No.158, dated Shillong, 1st January, 1877.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. letter from S.O.B. Ridsdale to the government of India, Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department, no. 527 dated Shillong the 19th February, 1877.

If this item had not been transferred from land revenue to forest the forest revenue would have been as follows-

Amount credited in 1875-76.....	Rs. 107,302
Deduct elephant mahals	<u>Rs. 45,432</u>
Actual forest revenue	61,870

This shows a falling off compared with 1874-75 in which year the revenue was Rs. 65,949.¹⁰⁶ Elephant was an important part of generating forest revenue during the British rule.

The given table shows that elephant hunting was a good source of revenue. The difference in the elephant captured was because of the sale of elephant mahal varies from year to year. It was not possible to lease all the mehals every year, as such a course would rapidly ruin the mahal by driving the elephants away entirely. It was therefore necessary to allow a period of rest after every two years for the mahal to recover itself.¹⁰⁷ The catching of elephants continued till the end of the British rule. Answering to the question of Mr. E.W.B.Kenney, during the Legislative Assembly session of 1947-48, Revenue Minister J.J.M.Nichols-Roy replied that, a total of 233 elephants (141 female, 47 tusker, 45 Makhana) were caught during the year.¹⁰⁸ Thus, a large number of wild elephants were caught under the British rule.

Being an essential adjunct of warfare and royal gift elephant played an important role in the pre-colonial period. The colonial expansion led to the change of their perception towards the animal from a mere sport to a strategic resource not only for the military needs but also for generating revenue and thus, to play monopoly over it, was crucial for the colonial state. No doubt the awareness of game preservation gave rise to protective legislations in India however the Elephant Preservation Act of 1879 also helped in establishing monopoly over the animal. It was an instrument through which the government established their control over the animal and Dacca Kheddahs was an institution through which the capture, training and the sale of elephants was put in control of the government. "The aim of the monopoly was not protection *per se* but a means to garner and keep alive a critical resource. Capturing combined with the clearance of the elephant's jungle for plantation became a powerful depletive force,

¹⁰⁶ (ASA), 1876, Assam Secretariat proceedings, Revenue department, Progs. 190 Nos 20/23. Revenue derived from elephant Mahals and royalty on Captures, No. 186-2, 287 dated Shillong the 30th August 1876.

¹⁰⁷ RAPA, 1878-79, Shillong 1879, p. 134.

¹⁰⁸ Debate of the Legislative Assembly, 1947, March session, vol. 1 No.1 Sub. Number of wild elephants caught in each district. P., 850

the former whittled down the herds, the latter their natural home.”¹⁰⁹ Every year a good number of elephants were captured (see. Table no. 5.1) in the province which ultimately led to the demise of the animal from where once they were very numerous. The necessity to put some restriction on the open access of the animal generated the need of regulating elephant hunting in the province that was done through the Kheddah and the private lease system as controlled by the government. Various strategies and techniques were adopted by the government to exclude the local people from the high ranked zamindars and native chieftains to the local inhabitants and forest dwellers, to gain the maximum profit from elephant hunting. Though the government strategies to play monopoly over a strategic natural resource was not without local reactions from every strata of people. Though the Elephant Preservation Act was not in any case an absolute right on the part of the government, still it was used as an instrument to gain the full control of a wild species in the province as all the elephants were supposed to be the property of the government and once the said act was extended to a particular area the right of the zamindars or native chieftains over the elephants of their estate was also curtailed. Thus, Kheddah department or The Elephant Preservation Act etc., were various means through which the colonial government established its monopoly over a wild species. This monopoly over the animal was of utilitarian nature.

The monopoly over strategic natural resources though not direct but contested, also strengthened the administrative power of the British over the province. May be for any reason the British government started the preservation policies, it also harnessed the ideas like preservation, conservation, utilitarian concepts and the maintenance of ecological balance that ultimately brought consciousness about forest management and conservation. In case of wildlife it led to the emergence of term like game reserve, wildlife sanctuaries and national park for the preservation of wild species. It also provided a systematic management of wild animals. Thus, the contest that was started over a strategic wild animal ultimately led to the evolution of fauna preservation movement in India.

¹⁰⁹ Rangarajan, M., (2005) *India's Wildlife History, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, P. 47

Chapter - 6

PROTECTING THE WILD

“I conclude that, while admitting the need for a legislative measure for the protection of animals, consonant with the wishes and feelings of the most cultivated classes in India, and of itself a sign of advancing civilisation and morality, it would be a task as difficult as hateful to prove that the people at large have any abnormal and inborn tendency to cruelty. The shadow of evil days of anarchy, disorder, and rapine has but lately cleared away and given place to an era of security, when, as the country proverb says, “the tiger and the goat drink at one ghat.” The people are better than their creeds, but it is not easy to defend their practice, though it is often more due to necessity, custom, and ignorance than to downright brutality of intent- J.L.Kipling.”¹

The protection of the wildlife started with the agenda of protecting life of the people, cattle and property which was germinated after the formation of forest department and enactment of forest acts after 1874. The formation of reserve forest formally excluded them from their traditional rights over forest. These contributed to bring the idea of so called ‘scientific forestry/ conservancy’ of forest and wildlife. Colonial state used forest rules as a means to debar the local inhabitants from using forest produce including wildlife. This led to a rift between local inhabitants and the state. The preservation of fauna was not the main concern of the British government towards the reservation of forest. It was more an attempt to brought forest land under the British administration so as to maximum exploitation of forest produce. The colonial interventions also changed the attitude of the indigenous people and other communities towards the access of forest resources including wildlife. This chapter discusses the British policies and legislations towards wildlife protection, wildlife conferences, cases of poaching, conviction and protection of wildlife. This chapter

¹ Kipling, J.K., (1904), *Beast and men in India, A popular sketch of Indian animals in their relation with the people*, London: Macmillan & co., p. 14

also reveals the role of local inhabitants in the protection of wildlife and their response towards British policies towards wildlife.

A mutually interdependent relationship binds men, plants and animals together as an essential part of eco-system. But this relationship was hardly realized by men who have through the ages destroyed the forest for their benefit. Destruction of one part of this system can lead to serious repercussion on the human life and cause imbalances in nature. This was apparently known to people, which is evident from religious taboos and restrictions of indiscriminate felling of trees and killing of animals in ancient and medieval India. But the forest conservation of the modern age suggests that the policy makers were not aware of the importance of interdependence. A good number of mammals were extinct and many were put in the list of endangered animals. In 1620 catalogue of living species 4226 mammals were included of which 46 are already extinct and 152 are endangered.² Man's so called love for sports, trade and his greed for magical powers, for ivory, for bones, oil meat for fur and feathers for horns and antlers has endangered the elephant, the rhino, whale, tiger, the giant panda and others.³ Men tried to create a new order in which he can be the master, which ultimately caused miseries to human life. Wildlife is always been used as natural wealth since the ancient period. The worship of nature and some of the wild animals like buffalo, lion etc., indicates the importance of wildlife in Assam. Human beings have always either set aside areas for protection and conservation of species or followed lifestyles and cultural values that are harmonious with the needs of other species. In India wildlife were also protected for their religious sentiments.⁴ The earliest known examples in India of areas being set aside to provide protection to the species living in them are from around 300 BC, during the time of Emperor Ashoka. The administration of Emperor Ashoka is known to have had a clear-cut policy of exploiting and protecting natural resources (including wild fauna), with specific officials tasked with protection duty. In the subsequent years, many different rulers followed similar policies. In addition, over 600 different tribes and non-tribe local people who lived in and depended on natural resources and wild flora and fauna for their subsistence, livelihoods, cultural and religious way of life have also been practicing conservation in different ways one such example was the conservation of

² Chakrabarti, K.,(1991) *Man Plant And Animals Interaction*, Darari Prokashan, Calcutta, p.3

³ Ibid. p.1

⁴ (NAI), Home, Public-A August, 1900, File No. 299

nature in mangroves by the *Jaintias* in Meghalaya. But after the annexation of Assam by the British, the tribes and the forest dwellers were considered as the greatest threat for the wild animals as they shared the same place and resources. Gradually through a process of forest legislations they were debarred from any kind of rights over forest and were deprived from the access of the forest products including wild animals.

Wild animals and birds are a very valuable form of forest produce and need to be conserved every bit as much as timber, fuel and bamboos. In any country the perpetuation of an indigenous fauna is necessary for commercial, agricultural, scientific, aesthetic or sporting reasons and it cannot ignore the beauty of nature without these magnificent wildlife as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that "...life would become very dull and colourless if we did not have these magnificent animals and birds to look at and to play with."⁵ Theodore Roosevelt said, "the nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."⁶ Julius Nyerere, speaking of the wildlife in Africa, said, "The wild creatures, and the wild places they inhabit, are not only important as a source of wonder and inspiration, but are an integral part of our natural resources and of our future livelihood and well-being."⁷ These statements depicts that the preservation of wildlife is not only necessary for protecting natural beauty or balance of nature but it is also important for our economic needs. Hunting for food was common among various tribes of the province. Many species provided clothing and a host of other useful products. Meat of elephant, rhinoceros, deer, birds and even snakes were eaten by the human beings. The wildlife preservation for its spiritual and aesthetic values could be observed in the statement of Dr. Olaus J. Murie, noted American naturalist. According to him, "Nature gives spiritual values no one can do without, although many think they can or haven't the chance to find out. People become different in the wilds-more helpful and happy."⁸ This way the preservation of wildlife is essential for various purposes but conservation does not mean blanket protection to all floral and faunal species.⁹ It means proper control. Lack of proper control over game hunting led to the acceleration of various wild species.

⁵ Gee, E.P., (1986), *The wildlife of India*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, p.11

⁶ Ibid. p.11

⁷ Ibid. p.11

⁸ Ibid. p.10

⁹ Gee, E.P., (1986) *op. cit.*, p.11

The 'scientific conservation' of wildlife in sanctuaries started during British rule. Though it was a very late phenomena in India. During early period of their rule the British government attempted to exterminate the wild animals as it was supposed to be a hurdle in the task of the extension of cultivation being main source of revenue. The nineteenth century movement for the protection of wildlife forced the government of India to take steps for the protection of wildlife. It was in 1869-72 that the question of legislating for the preservation of game in India was for the first time considered in India. But the government of India decided that such legislation was neither necessary nor desirable. At this time the Madras Government solicited a reconsideration of this decision, and was informed that, while averse to the introduction of game licenses, which would interfere seriously with the means of livelihood of a large number of wild tribes, the Government of India would not object the declaration of a "close season" for certain kinds of game.¹⁰ But the Government of Assam viewed that no such rules is needed in the province.¹¹

The nineteenth century witnessed a huge discussion the subject of wildlife along with the forest and landscape. Wildlife was not only a favourite game but the very survival of forestry programme began to be contested by the wild animals. Similarly the people of Assam practiced both hunting and revered them. The folktales of Assam tell how the villagers often stayed away from dense forest for fear of wild animals. However the expansion of the agrarian frontier by the British government led the vermin eradication became an official policy in regard to the wildlife management. Even when the forest conservancy became an important issue in the agenda of British history, wildlife conservation occupied a back seat. Since the early 19th century there was significant change in the history of wildlife in Assam. The British policy of vermin eradication for the expansion of cultivation not only excluded wildlife from the forest but also excluded native people from their rights over forest. The British interest in the protection of wildlife is a much later phenomenon. The occasional legislative pieces show the increasing interest of the British officials in protecting wildlife. The arrival of both amateur wildlife lovers and professional zoologist changed the understanding of wildlife beyond the parameters of game or mercantile trade. The value of birds recognized as insect eaters and thus valuable for planters and

¹⁰ (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1886, November, 34/61, Sub: Preservation of game birds and animals in India

¹¹ Ibid.

agriculturist as it saved paddy fields from insects.¹² The early initiatives in this regard can be seen in 1830s when the Asiatic society of Bengal carried out investigation into zoological behavior of mammals of the region.¹³ In 1845, Edward Blyth (1810-73), the British Zoologist and curator of the museum prepared a draft of the Animals of Himalayan Mountains, those of the valleys of the Indus of the province of Assam, Sylhet, Tipperah, Arracan and of Ceylon.¹⁴ He further reported extensively on the mammals, birds and reptiles in khasi hills in 1851.¹⁵ A note was also prepared by T.C.Jerdon, civil Surgeon and naturalist, on some of the species of birds of north-Eastern Frontiers of India.¹⁶ In 1876, Major, H.H.Godwin-Austin, Deputy Superintendent of Topographical survey of India, prepared a list of the Birds collected on the expedition into Dafla hills and the adjacent part of Darrang Terai.¹⁷ Later the journal of Bombay Natural History Society issued a series of essays based on some amateur observations and notes, mostly on birds and reptiles. Birds came to capture the imagination of the people from mere meat to natural life. E.C.Stuart Baker spent a considerable part of his career in Assam and adjoining localities. His interest mostly focused on the birds and their nesting habits and towards this end, collected their specimens in great detail. Between 1892 and 1901 he published a number of essays on the birds of North Cachar hills and Cachar.¹⁸ His report- Fauna of British India, completed during 1922-30 helped in cataloguing of the Birds of India particularly of Assam. Similarly, Henry Neville Colart, a medical officer employed with Makum Tea Company, studied birds since the late nineteenth century. Then, Charles Mcfalane Inglis (1870-1954), a planter, Dorothea Craigie Milburne, wife of a tea-planter also spent times in studying the birds. The British Ornithologist mostly concentrated on

¹² (NAI), Home, Public-B, 1884, October, Sub. Need for a wild bird protection act.

¹³ J.T.Pearson, (1838), Assistant Surgeon, A letter to Dr. Helfer: On the Zoology of Tenasserim and The neighboring provinces, *JASB*, vol.viii, pp. 357-67 cited from Arupjyoti Saikia's Forest and ecological history of Assam.

¹⁴ Blyth, E., (1845) Draft of Fauna Indica, (Comprising the Animals of the Himalaya Mountains, those of the valley of the Indus, of the Province of Assam, Sylhet, Tipperah, Arracan and of Ceylon with occasional notion of species from the Neighbouring countries), *JASB*, Vol. XIV, pp. 845-878

¹⁵ E.Blyth, (1851) , " Notice of a collection of Mammalia, Birds and Reptiles, procured at or near the station of Cherra Punji in the Khasi Hills, North of Sylhet", *JASB*, No. 6, Calcutta: Baptist Mission press. (1852) pp. 517-19

¹⁶ Jerdon, T.C., (1870), Notes on some new species of birds from the North-eastern frontiers of India, Proceeding of *JASB*, Calcutta: Baptist Mission press

¹⁷ Godwin-Austin, H.H., (1876), List of Birds collected on the Expedition into the Dafla hills, Assam, together with those obtained in the adjacent Darrang Terai, *JASB*, Vol.XLV, part II, Nos, I to IV, Calcutta: Baptist Mission press.

¹⁸ He began with a report on the Bulbuls of North Cachar, see. E.C.S. Baker, 1892, the Bulbuls of North Cachar, *Journal of Bombay Natural History Society*, Vol. &, No. 1, part I, pp. 1-12. Later he published another eighteen pieces on Assam Birds.

collection and preservation of Bird's skin, classification, identification, and geographical distribution of birds. The gradual shift from an aggressive damage to the appreciation of wildlife came to be reflected in the works of H.S.Nood, belonging to the Indian medical service and a civil surgeon and hunter, who passionately recorded and commented on animals, birds, reptiles, and insects.¹⁹ Edward Blyth prepared a memoir on the Asiatic species of Rhinoceros in 1862. This note also discusses about elephants, hippopotamus, large deer and antelopes but carnivore were not discuss in this memoir. According to Blyth no carnivore is worthy of much note.²⁰ In the meanwhile, the translated versions of English works were also made available in Assamese. Till the middle of the 20th century zoology and science of conservation was primarily regulated and shaped by the Europeans. It was Birds and reptiles played a key role in drawing attention to this region and not the mammals. Gradually the forest officers, who managed the forest department, began to show keen interest in the lives of animals away from the powerful paradigm of animals as an element of anti-forestry. A.J.Milroy, forest conservator, directed his attention to the well-being of the elephant and successfully integrated this changing paradigm with the institutional practices of the imperial forestry. P.D. Stracey also advanced the cause of the elephant.²¹ From that time the subject of wildlife gained further institutional support and the fauna of the region became part of the larger science. Similarly, making a departure, E.P.Gee, British planter, helped in comprehensively reorienting the space given to fauna within the political practices of the province.

By the early nineteenth century the extension of rhinoceros from Kamrup and Goalpara has hastened by the yearly incursion of large shooting parties from Bengal, which has led to the reckless and indiscriminate destruction of all game.²² These parties included novices who fire at anything that get up in front of them. In the case of rhinoceros the slaughter of female and immature animals brought the species to the verge of extinction. In case of rhinoceros it was felt by the British officials quiet necessary to preserve the few that were left.²³ The shooting of rhinoceros was

¹⁹ Nood. H.S., (1936), *Glimpses of the wild: An Observer's Notes and Anecdotes on the wildlife of Assam*, London: Witherby

²⁰ Blyth, E., (1862), A Memoir, on the living Asiatic Species of Rhinoceros, *JASB*, vol. XXXIX (2), pp. 243-263

²¹ Stracey, P.D., (1991), *Elephant Gold*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p. 63

²² (ASA), AARP, (1905) Agriculture and Revenue Dept, Revenue-A, Sub. Rules for the regulation of sport in reserved forests. Letter from J.C.Arbutnott, commissioner of Assam valley districts to, the secretary to the chief commisioer of Assam

²³ Ibid.

prohibited in Bengal before 1905 and it was urgently felt to stop the destruction of rhinoceros in Assam by shooting or by pitfalls. The British officials felt that unless sufficient efforts should be made otherwise, the complete extinction of a comparatively harmless and most interesting creature would be a question of a very short space of time. In such situation J.C.Arbutnott, Commissioner of Assam Valley district, suggested absolute prohibition of the destruction of the animal in certain tracts where it was still known to exist anyhow for a period of years.²⁴ The other reason for the extinction of the animal was that they breed slowly and their horn is worth more than its weight in silver, and its flesh is prized as food, they presented a tempting mark to the native hunter.²⁵ Rhinoceros live in the swamps near Kajiranga but were so much scarce by 1905 that the animal was extinct on the South bank and very nearly so on the north. Buffalo were reduced to a few small and scattered herds. The spotted deer were rare and the swamp deer were also becoming so. On the other hand owing to the spread of Hinduism, the population of bison was slowly increasing by 1905, while tigers were common and leopards were plentiful at least in Goalpara district.²⁶ Bison were generally found in the Mikir Hills and in the cold weather, sometimes descend to the jungles at their feet. It was mostly the concern over decreasing population of rhinoceros and elephants that led to the start of protection policies towards wild animals in Assam.

6.1 Policies and Regulatory Acts towards Wildlife

The colonial interest in the protection of wildlife is a much later phenomenon. The occasional legislative pieces by colonial administrators only tried to control the access of wildlife in their hands. The British forest policies and legislations seek to extend their extensive powers over the forest resources including wildlife, to control the extraction and transit of forest produce and to enable the acquisition and management of forests. The need of timber for ship building, railway, other industries and exports made it essential for the government to get control of the forest. The forest control was also necessitated for the extension of agricultural lands to be able to maximize taxes from peasants, and the extermination of carnivores that preyed on herbivore species that were preferred for hunting by the elite. The British took control of most

²⁴ (ASA), AARP, (1905) Agriculture and Revenue Dept, Revenue-A

²⁵ Allen, B.C., (1905), *Kamrup District Gazetteer*, Shillong, , p.17

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14

forests in India as part of the need to earn revenue from timber and other forest resources and restricted the use of forests, grasslands and other areas as local people believed destroying the forests. The British forest policy tried to have full control over the access of forest resources by eliminating the local tribes from the cultural rights over the access of forest resources. The first Forest Act was enacted in 1865 which mainly facilitate the acquisition of such forest areas as could supply timber to the railways. This act, merely sought to establish the claims of the state to the forest land if needed, subject to the provision that the existing rights not be condensed.²⁷ A fine of Rs. 500/- was inflicted by the sections 4 and 5 of Act VII of 1865 for the infringement of forest rules one of which might provide for the issue of a prohibition for the “collection and removal of elephants’ tusk;” but these rules would only apply to “government forests,” declared to be such under section 2 of the Act, and not to open forests generally. So the attempts of the British officers to capture elephants in the *Zamindari Elakas* and in the provinces which were governed by the *Rajahs* thus could not satisfy the expectation of the British authorities to have complete access of the forest resources which resulted in the forest conference of 1874. It discussed the defects of the act of 1864. It was found that the major lacuna of this act was related to the extent of control over forests exercised by them.²⁸ The forest act of 1864, provided that for the protection of the forest only after it was selected and declared a government forest. But for effective control, it was argued that the state should have the power to protect any forest in anticipation of its demarcation and management.²⁹ It resulted in the passing of the forest act of 1878. It outlined an elaborate procedure for the settlement of the respective rights of ‘private persons’ and government, in the land being reserved. The provisions of the act of 1878 assert the absolute control and ownership right of the state over forest and waste land but at the same time some kind of flexibility was adopted to deal with the diverse socio-political circumstances in which different state forest has to be managed.³⁰ The exercise of flexibility particularly with regard to the settlement of rights led to some kind of freedom in some regions in regard to the access of forest products³¹ but it did not allow the access

²⁷ Guha., R., *Forestry In British And Post-British India: A Historical Analysis*, *EPW*, vol. 18, no. 45/46 (Nov. 5-12, 1983), P.1940

²⁸ Guha., R., *Forestry In British And Post-British India: A Historical Analysis*, *EPW*, vol. 18, no. 45/46 (Nov. 5-12, 1983), P.1940

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.* p.1942

³¹ *Ibid.*

of wild animals by the forest dwellers or local tribes. Forest Act No. VII of 1878 given right to the local government to restrict the killing or catching of elephants, hunting and shooting, poisoning water and setting traps or snares in reserve and protected forest from time to time. If anyone found guilty of violating any of these rules shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine not exceeding five hundred rupees or with both, in addition to such compensation for damage done to the forest as the convicting court may direct to be paid.³² The forest act of 1878 led the full control of British over forest as well as wildlife by the British government and the local inhabitants were curtailed from the access of the forest resources including wildlife. The Indian arms act of 1878 provided for the control of guns and cartridges used against wild animals.

The hunting and access to forest were debarred by the government forest regulation. The Assam forest regulation in 1891 debarred any one from using forest produce of any land at the disposal of the government, which was not included in a reserved forest or village forest in Assam. The forest rules also prohibit the poisoning of water and regulate or prohibit hunting, shooting and fishing and setting of traps or snares and any person who was found to violate these rules were punished with fine which might extend to fifty rupees.³³ Though these regulations put some restrictions on hunting of elephants or fishing but these regulations did not attempted to put restrictions on the killing of mega fauna. The killing of wildlife for rewards continued till 1927. But by the early twentieth century attention were paid by the British official towards the declining population of mega fauna like tiger, rhinoceros and elephants. It led to the emergence of a new interest group. These were the 'conservationists', mainly rulers and hunters who were concerned about depleting wildlife populations. Most of these people had no connection with the common masses and local tribes nor did they understand their needs, knowledge and practices. Local people were largely considered the greatest threat to wildlife populations as they shared the same space and resources as wildlife. The formation of game reserve, game sanctuary, wildlife sanctuary and then National Park led to the shifting of the villages and people of the periphery. They were no longer allowed to enter these areas and in this way through a process they were totally excluded from their indigenous right over forest. The British monopolized the wildlife not only before the formation of the game sanctuaries but

³² Forest Act No. VII of 1878.

³³ (NAI), Revenue and Agricultural Department, Branch- forest, A, 1892, January, File No. 1-2

even after its formation. The tribes were excluded as they were called to be the destroyer of wild animals on the other side the restricted hunting was permitted to British officials and to elite class though with some restriction.

The first act which attempted to preserve any wild animal was Elephant Preservation Act, 1879 as discussed in the previous chapter. But the Act did not put any steps towards the preservation of other animal. The attempt to preserve elephant was for its strategic use and not for the preservation of the animals. The wildlife protection act was a much later phenomenon. In this attempt the British Government passed “The Wild Birds and animals Protection Act, in 1912. Through this act, the local government was authorized to restrict by notification in the local official gazette the killing of any wild birds or animals which in its opinion was desirable to protect or preserve. They could also declare the whole year or any part thereof to be a close time throughout the whole or any part of its territories for any kind of wild bird or animals to which this act applies or for female or immature wild birds or animals of such kind and capture or killing of any such birds or animals during close season would be unlawful according to section 3 of the act. The possession, sell or buy or to offer to sell or buy any plumage of any such bird captured or killed during such close time was unlawful. Whoever does or attempt to do any act in contravention to these rules were punished with fine which may extend to fifty rupees. Secondly whoever having already been convicted of an offence under this section is again convicted there under shall on every subsequent conviction be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or with fine which may extend to one hundred rupees or with both.³⁴

Under the provision of rule 8 of the rules for the preservation of wildlife in reserve forest, published under notification no. 154-R., dated 19th January, 1937, certain shooting blocks in the reserve forests were declared for the purpose of limiting the members of particular species of game, that might be killed or hunted or in some case absolutely protecting the entire species.³⁵ Revised shooting rules came into force from the 1st June 1938. The rules were framed to preserve animals and birds in the reserves and yet at the same time to afford facilities for shooting at reasonable rates.³⁶ The objective appears to be collection of more and more revenue even at the cost of

³⁴ Act of VIII of 1912, passed by the Governor General of India in council.

³⁵ The Assam Gazette, 4 August, 1937

³⁶ RAPA, for the year 1938-39, Shillong: AGP, (1939), P.20

exploitation of forest resources and eliminating tribes from the forest, their natural habitat. The forests department never ardent as much importance to the protection of wildlife as it did for the other forest resources. There were only a few isolated cases in which the fauna of Assam were protected protection. That was probably because of the importance given by the forest department to timber operations more than anything else for its commercial use. The wild Birds and animal Protection Act, 1912 was, therefore, not effectively put into force in the province of Assam.³⁷ The non-implementation or the irresponsible administrative attitude towards the effective implementing of the act led to disastrous impact especially in the case of the swamp deer which had been exterminated over large areas where formerly they were numerous. Consequently, it was rapidly becoming extinct in the province.³⁸ Thus, it has been found that the issue of wildlife protection was taken casually and no strict steps were taken against those who used to kill wild animals in total contravention of the rules of the Act. Only the passing of legislations was not sufficient for the protection of wildlife but implementation of the rules was never taken into consideration. Burton viewed that the “existing game laws are excellent in themselves but it is in their efficient application that the trouble arises.”³⁹ On the other hand by forming forest reserve or wildlife sanctuaries in the name of scientific conservation, eliminated the tribes and forest dwellers from their cultural habitats and the British government established their full control over forest resources to play its monopoly and earn revenue as much as possible even at the excessive destruction of forest resources.

The local government argued that the act was in the interests of scientific research but the reality on the ground is different. By 1917-18, 4,500 licenses had already been issued in the Eastern circle of Assam’s forest department alone.⁴⁰ Though the licenses were issued to protect crops from wild animals but the issuing of gun licenses in such number undoubtedly enhanced the offences against wildlife as it has been found that the number of wild animals in certain districts where they were in large numbers became scarce.⁴¹ Even with the exception of a few cases reported by the forest department, no action was taken under the act to protect deer or other animals against

³⁷ Hadique, R., (2004), *British forest Policy in Assam*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2004, p. 139

³⁸ Tottenham, W.F.L., and Blunt, A.W., RAPA, for the year 1917-18, Shillong: AGP, (1918) P.29

³⁹ Burton, R.W., (1953), *The Preservation of wildlife in India*, Bangalore: Bangalore press, p. 155

⁴⁰ Tottenham, W.E.L., RAPA, for the year 1917-18, Shillong: AGP, (1918), p. 28.

⁴¹ Hadique, R., Op.Cit., p. 85

their wholesale slaughter during the close season.⁴² The revenue and police officials apparently did not realize that they had any responsibility as far as enforcing of the provision of the act was concerned, and a divisional forest officer had even reported that a large drive took place during the close season within a few hundred yards of a police station and a number of deer were killed while the police looked on.⁴³ There used to be absurdly small fines imposed even on those convicted of killing deer. In 1917-18, for example there were two convictions of killing deer where the persons accused had to pay Rs. 15 and Rs.5 only, although in latter case, the offender realized Rs. 80 by the sale of the flesh⁴⁴. In this way the punishment did not serve as a deterrent to the violators of the rules. Two sanctuaries viz. Kaziranga in the erstwhile Sibsagar district and Manas were established by 1920s to provide adequate protection to the animals they shelter.⁴⁵ The amendment of Section 24 of the Assam forest regulation prohibited the killing of rhinoceros. If anyone killed a rhinoceros within a reserve forest was convicted and punished with imprisonment for a term which extended to six months or with a fine which might be one thousand rupees or both⁴⁶. There were instances of omission and commission in implementation of the law.⁴⁷ As for instance, in Sibsagar district, there was a case of rhino shooting in the Kaziranga Reserve where the poachers were detected, accused and later on acquitted. The guns were confiscated and the horn was sold in auction for Rs, 1,230. The divisional forest officer appealed to the deputy commissioner for a retrial of the case on the ground that the magistrate's decision was not in accordance with the evidence of the case, but the government ruled that no appeal could be file. That was a very good instance of how lightly some magistrates were apt to regard cases of poaching. Under such circumstances the efforts made for the protection of rhino were bound to fail.⁴⁸

6.2 Poaching, Conviction and Protection

By the early nineteenth century romanticists of United Kingdom concerned about the excesses of industrialization and urbanization. This movement was called 'Return to Natural Environments' and steps were adopted for protecting sensitive eco-system.

⁴² Tottenham, W.E.L., RAPA for the year 1917-18, Shillong: AGP, (1918), p. 28.

⁴³ Ibid.P.86

⁴⁴ Ibid.p.86

⁴⁵ Milroy, A.J.W., RAPA, for the year 1922-23, Shillong: AGP, (1923), p.12

⁴⁶ Leg Jacob, W.R. RAPA, for the year 1922-23, Shillong: AGP (1923) P. 12

⁴⁷ Hadique, R., *op.cit.*, p. 139

⁴⁸ Leg Jacob, W.R. RAPA, for the year 1922-23, Shillong: AGP, (1923) P. 12

By the middle of nineteenth century a form of environmentalism emerged in Germany which advocated the efficient utilization of natural resources through the application of science and technology which is coined as 'Scientific conservation'. This approach was applied in all the countries of the world with varying degrees. By the later part of nineteenth century it became clear that in many countries wild areas had either disappeared or were in danger of disappearing. This realization gave rise to the conservation movement in USA and later to all the countries. British government also had to take some steps for the protection of flora and fauna though it was not their main concern. In the name of 'scientific forestry' forest were reserved and British Empire was extended to forested land. In this way the indigenous people were denied of their traditional right. This created a rift between indigenous people and the forest rules. The local inhabitants refused to follow state rules. Their access of forest which they were practicing since pre-British rule was remarked as 'the act poaching'. The British government also remarked that preservation would not be possible in the presence of indigenous people. According to British government, preservation of wildlife was possible only in reasonable numbers in places, such as the interior of reserves, where they could do no harm to any one and to study about their habits are source of great interest and delight to men of real culture throughout the civilized world.⁴⁹

The access of forest resources including wildlife by the local inhabitants were termed as act of poaching. The cases of poaching were registered and convictions were obtained. However, in the lack of evidences and in some cases because of the negligence of the forest staff some cases were left without any conviction and finally in most of the cases rhinoceros horns were retained by the government and accused were left un-convicted. Rhinoceros horn had good market and through the legal activities government has legalized their act of poaching on the other hand the access of forest resource by local inhabitants were illegal activities. Nine cases of infringement under the Wild Animals Protection Act were detected in 1921 in Darrang and Sadiya division and tried in court during the year. But convictions were obtained in 7 cases and 2 acquittals were due to want of sufficient evidence.⁵⁰ Four cases under the Wild Animal's Protection Act were detected in 1923 in the Sadiya

⁴⁹ PRFA, for the year 1929-30, Shillong: AGP, 1930, p.4. Para-20

⁵⁰ PRFA, for the year 1921-22, Shillong: AGP, 1922, p.4, para-21

Division and convictions were obtained in all of them.⁵¹ Two cases of infringement under the same act were detected in 1924 in Sadiya. Both cases were prosecuted and convictions obtained. In Darrang one case of shooting deer was compounded by the divisional forest officer.⁵² Sometime forest subordinates had to pay for vexatious prosecution. A forest subordinate in 1927 in Sylhet who ran a case in court against offenders alleged to have killed a deer in close season was ordered by the magistrate concerned to pay Rs.96 compensation for vexatious prosecutions, though the judgment was quashed by the appellate court.⁵³ Similar case was registered in 1928 in Nawgaon where the trying magistrate directed the deputy ranger who detected the alleged offence to pay Rs.50 compensation to the accused for vexatious prosecution. But the case appeared genuine and was lodged to the High Court where the magistrate's order was set aside.⁵⁴ Two cases of rhino shooting in Kamrup were disposed of by fines of Rs. 20 and Rs.25. The divisional forest officers recommended that, game sanctuary cases should be tried at Gauhati (Guwahati) instead of at the sub-divisional headquarter but no steps were adopted for it. Four cases of shooting deer, 3 in Darrang and 1 in Sadiya were detected during 1928 and compounded.⁵⁵ Three cases of rhino-horn smuggling were detected in Goalpara but prosecutions could not be made for want of sufficient evidence; the horns have however, been retained by government. In 1932 conviction was obtained in 4 poaching cases of the previous year as well as in one case of the year. Two cases of the year were compounded. The punishments inflicted were adequate and a number of guns were confiscated, but confiscation automatically followed conviction in all cases.⁵⁶ The largest number of cases acquitted was in Nowgong. In the year 1934-35, three cases of illegal shooting of elephants were reported from Nowgong.⁵⁷ Eight cases of elephant shooting occurred in Nowgaon, some of which had undoubtedly been killed for their tusks. Ivory poaching was always been prevalent in Nowgaon and the North Cachar hills, and unfortunately received stimulates from the creation a few years ago of an ill-advised Ivory Mahal in Nowgong. Government stated that it was almost impossible to

⁵¹ PRFA, for the year 1923-24, Shillong: AGP, 1924, p.15, para-20

⁵² PRFA, for the year 1924-25, Shillong: AGP 1925, p. 4, para- 21

⁵³ PRFA, for the year 1927-28, Shillong,: AGP, 1928, p. 5, para. 20

⁵⁴ PRFA, for the year 1928-29, Shillong: AGP, 1929, p.4, para, 14

⁵⁵ PRFA, for the year 1928-29, Shillong: AGP, 1929, p.4, para, 14

⁵⁶ PRFA, for the year 1932-33, Shillong: AGP, 1933, p. 4, para-25

⁵⁷ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong, AGP, 1935, p. 4, para-32

obtain witnesses in such case.⁵⁸ British government viewed that there was so much money in this business, that various organizations at the back of the poachers made it impossible to stop all killings of rhino and tuskers.⁵⁹ In many cases it was seen that through the ‘poachers’ were caught red handed they were left without any conviction. Though the cases of poaching was registered almost every year but conviction was not obtained in all the cases. The problem was with the efficient implementation of laws. In some cases even if the accused persons caught red handed no action was taken against them. In Sibsagar, a case of Rhino shooting in the Kaziranga reserve was detached where the accused persons were caught red handed. In spite of this the accused persons were acquitted. The guns were however, confiscated and the horn was sold in auction for Rs.1230. the Divisional Forest Officer appealed to the Deputy Commissioner for a retrial of the case on the grounds that the magistrate’s decision was not in accordance with the evidence of the case but government ruled that no appeal could be filed. This was a very good instance of how lightly some magistrate regarded cases of poaching of this nature. J.S.Owden, the Conservator of Forest agreed that, “Unless something can be done to ensure that when the few cases of this sort which are discovered will receive a proper trial and adequate sentences will be passed, our effort at protection of rhinoceros are bound to fail.”⁶⁰ The rules against the ‘poachers’ were not successfully implemented because of the negligence of officers and secondly as they retained the horn. However, it was not in every case that conviction was not obtained as cases of poaching after 1931 were taken seriously and accused were punished. Adequate punishment was inflicted and a number of guns were confiscated during 1932 in four poaching cases of the previous year.⁶¹ In 1946 one culprit of poaching of 1945 was convicted with 2 months rigorous imprisonment. Official recorded that by the end of British rule cases of poaching became less and the forest officers tried to prevent the cases of poaching as far as possible.⁶²

The government took various steps for the protection of wildlife. Detachment of the Assam rifles were send year to year to have an eye on the poachers and regular patrols certainly had a deterrent effect and it made it more difficult for the poachers to indulge in indiscriminate slaughter of animals. In order to stop smuggling of both

⁵⁸ PRFA, for the year 1933-34, Shillong: AGP, 1934, p. 3, para- 28

⁵⁹ PRFA, for the year 1930-31, Shillong: AGP, 1931, p.5, para-18

⁶⁰ PRFA, for the year 1931-32, Shillong, AGP, 1932, p.5, para-26

⁶¹ PRFA, for the year 1932-33, Shillong: AGP, 1933, p. 4, para- 25

⁶² PRFA, for the year 1946-47, Shillong: AGP, 1947, p. 14, para- 107

rhinoceros horn, which was extremely valuable and ivory, the question of classification of these two articles as forest produce where ever found was raised in 1931.⁶³ For the protection of two horned Rhinoceros in Cachar, special steps were taken to patrol the country where these animals were supposed to live.⁶⁴ Section 24 of the Assam forest regulation was also amended and by the new regulation anyone who killed a rhinoceros in a reserved forest was punishable with imprisonment for a term which might extend to six months or with a fine which might extend to be thousand rupees or both.⁶⁵ Anti-poaching campaigns were conducted from 1930 onwards. A detachment of Assam Rifles under a British Officers was sent to spend some 6 weeks in North-Kamrup, while an anti-poaching campaign was successfully conducted in Goalpara by Mr. M.C. Jacod, Assistant Conservator of forest, who entered upon his duties enthusiastically.⁶⁶ Government stated that the Cacharis and Meches, buried their unlicensed guns and remained peacefully at home during the occupation of their district by the Assam Rifles, but the visit of the latter had an excellent effect in giving the quires, any vague ideas about local Game rule, while the forest subordinates knew that the poachers could resort again to threats of violence, the Rifles were speedily return.⁶⁷ The anti-Poaching campaign in Goalpara and Kamrup continued during 1931. Mr. M. C. Jacob, Assistant Conservator of forest, was in charge of the campaign in Goalpara up to the end of January 1932 when he proceeded on leave. Mr. M.M. Srinivasan, Assistant Conservator of Forest, took charge of the campaign up to the close of the year.⁶⁸ The anti-poaching campaign was vigorously pursued in Eastern Goalpara with every gratifying result. Staging huts have been erected along the previously unpatrolled long stretch of southern boundary and the situation was brought under control. Government congratulated the divisional forest officer and the sub-divisional for their efforts not only to stop active poaching but also to get into touch with the promoters in the back-ground. Finally, rhinoceros horns were declared forest produce which debarred others from the access of rhinoceros horn and legalized government access of it.⁶⁹ Throughout the British rule in the Province government took all the possible measures to exploit wildlife.

⁶³ PRFA, for the year 1931-32, Shillong: AGP, 1932, P.5,para-25

⁶⁴ PRFA, for the year 1931-32, Shillong: AGP, 1932,p.5, para-26

⁶⁵ PRFA, for the year 1931-32, Shillong: AGP, 1932 p.5, para 25

⁶⁶ PRFA, for the year 1930-31, Shillong: AGP, 1931, p.5, para-18

⁶⁷ PRFA, for the year 1930-31, Shillong,: AGP, 1931, p.5, para-18

⁶⁸ PRFA, for the year 1931-32, Shillong: AGP, 1932,p.5, para-24

⁶⁹ PRFA, for the year 1932-33, Shillong: AGP, 1933, P.4, para-25

One of the obstacles in successfully protecting the wild animals from poaching was the lack of sufficient staff. In western Goalpara the campaign against poaching was not successful because of the lack of sufficient staff and in such case poaching could not be reduced there at any rate.⁷⁰ With the inadequate staff it was hardly possible for the government to prevent the poaching within the reserve forests but it was reported by the government to have been reduced.⁷¹ Special steps were taken with the help of the commissioner, Surma valley and Hill Division and the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, to try and afford protection to the few specimens of two-horned Sumatrensis Rhinoceros left in the Hati-Thal in Cachar, for the killing of which some organization gave financial help to Lushai poachers.⁷²

Forest staff faced difficulty in keeping out deer-poachers from the reserved forests in the Kochugaon and Haltugaon division (formally known as Goalpara). The leases for catching snakes and monitor lizards for their skin in these divisions were instrumental in allowing poachers to mark down the habitats of game, but also upset the balance of nature, resulting in serious damage by rats in plantation.⁷³ The greater encouragement was given to the breeding of the Half wild stock buffalo for which Assam has been famous which needs crossing with wild bulls from time to time to preserve its size and milking quality.⁷⁴ The government of Assam did all that was possible for the wild buffalo and though the herds still existing outside reserved forest were certain to be killed out in the course of time, the species any how would be preserved from extinction inside the reserve.⁷⁵ Still sometime animals were killed for the protection of life and crops. In 1945 it was reported that one rhino was killed in protection of crops.⁷⁶ Total protection of wildlife was impossible because of 'poaching'. The shooting of wild animals continued till 1946 the reason for which is uncertain. However, the protection of crops other than the cases of poaching could be probable reason for the shooting of wild animals. The PRFA (1946-47) shows the following statistics of wild animals shot in Assam during 1946 and 1947.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 25

⁷¹ PRFA, for the year 1931-32, Shillong: AGP, 1932, p.5, para-24

⁷² Ibid., p.5, para-20

⁷³ PRFA, for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP, (1936), p.15, para-110

⁷⁴ PRFA, for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP, (1936), p.15, para-110

⁷⁵ PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong,: AGP (1941), p. 26, para 149

⁷⁶ PRFA, for the year 1945-46, Shillong,: AGP (1946), p. 22, para 123

Table No. 6.1. Statistics of the number of wild animal shot in 1945-46

Year	Tiger	Tigress	Leopard	Cheetah	Wild cat	Wild dog	Himalayan black bear	Wild elephant	Rhinoceros unicornis	mithan	Wild buffalo	Barking deer
1946	46		62		24	45	2	28	4	9	4	398
1947	147	7	13	1	24	3	11	20		2		88
Year	Swamp deer	sambar	Cheetal	Hog deer	Goral	porcupine	pigs	monkeys	Boar	Squirrel	jackal	Sloth bear
1946	3	180	2	46		233	279	500		89	27	63
1947		23		27	2	32	1	12	18			

Source: PRFA, 1946-47, Shillong: AGP, 1947, p. 19-20

The real efforts to preserve the great Indian rhinoceros as a living species was perhaps best made in the political area in Darrang where only 7 rhinoceros found alive, and the British official agreed that it requires more consideration. A bill was passed in the local legislative council during the year by which rhinoceros horns were included in the category of forest produce whether found in or brought from a forest or not. The council did not see its way to include elephant tusks under the same category though this would have greatly strengthen the hand of the law against the smuggling of elephant tusks and rhinoceros horns is being carried on regularly and extensively by a professional gang of dacoits and poachers in the Goalpara district, their trade in rhino horns was more easily checked, but with the law remaining as it was little could be done to stop the illicit trade in ivory which was carried on in the more *jungly* parts of the province.⁷⁷ To control the illegal shooting and sale of flesh, skin and trophies of wild animals without restrictions and also of wild animals themselves were needed legislation.⁷⁸ By 1938 the numbers of fauna were well protected and stock also increased. The fact was testified by the numbers of young rhino which was observed by the visitors in Kaziranga.⁷⁹ In spite of all these there were articles from time to time in the press deploring the whole sale destruction of game in and out of season.⁸⁰ Other than these flood still continued to ruin the wild animals and death of wild animals by

⁷⁷ PRFA, for the year 1932-33, Shillong: AGP, 1933, p.4, para,27-28

⁷⁸ PRFA, for the year 1937-38, Shillong: AGP, 1938, p. 19, para-137

⁷⁹ PRFA, for the year 1938-39, Shillong: AGP, 1939, p. 28, para-146

⁸⁰ PRFA, for the year 1937-38, Shillong: AGP, 1938,p. 19, para-139

train accident was also common by the 1920s. One elephant was reported to have been killed as a result of injuries from a train on the Tezpur-Balipara Railway against whom a civil suit was instituted for compensation in 1933.⁸¹

6.3 Tribes, Wildlife and British Policies

The life of the tribes could not be separated from forest. They were mostly depended on forest products for their livelihood. They caught animals for games, trade and exchange but their practice of hunting did not destroy the wild animals. They occasionally organized themselves to kill wild animals which did not affect the population of wildlife. Even they also preserved animals in mangroves. The *Jaintias* of Meghalaya protected wild animals like- leopards, wild cats, civet cats, porcupines; mongoos, foxes, rabbits, hares, Phythons , lizards, monitor and animals of the mole (talpidae) and vole families (recrfidae), in groves along with various trees and stream water for irrigation.⁸² These groves were also fire protected.⁸³ Though there was no proper reason for the conservation of wildlife by tribes but their hunting practices did not destroy the wild animals. Some of the Assamese people also took active interest in wildlife conservation. They wrote eloquently on hunting and wildlife conservation.⁸⁴ The tribes of Assam showed respect to wild animals in everyday life though they did not organize their conservation.⁸⁵ The number of people who practiced professional hunting was marginal, only for a few it was a part of their leisure. The tribes of colonial Assam were not ignorant of the importance of the forest as well as wild life. What they were ignorant about was the concept of ‘scientific conservation’ that was used by the British to control the access to forest resources. To meet the growing needs of industries, railways and elephants government extended their empire up to the forested land and the aboriginal inhabitants were debarred from their rights over forest. The local tribes had their traditional rights over forest resources including wildlife but the colonial wildlife legislations gradually eroded the rights of local inhabitants over forest as well as wildlife. Not only this they also considered that

⁸¹ PRFA for the year 1933-34, Shillong: AGP, 1934, p. 19

⁸² Pramod, G. ‘Forestry and Wildlife Heritage of Assam’ in *Man and Environment in Northeast India*, Heritage Issue I, Anthropology, Archaeology and Heritage, Ed. By. Dilip K. Medhi, Guwahati, EBH Publishers, 2008, p.89

⁸³ Ibid. p.89

⁸⁴ Saikia, A.J., (2011), *Forest and Ecological History of Assam, 1826-200*, New Delhi: OUP, p.268

⁸⁵ See, S.Chaudhari, (2008), “*Folk Belief and Resource Conservation: Reflections from Arunachal Pradesh*, *Indian Folk life*, Serial No. 28, January, pp. 3-6

wildlife conservation was not possible in present of them. They were considered as 'poachers'. In reality their right over forest was seized by the British and they were deprived of their traditional livelihood. The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, in a letter to the Conservator of Forest, Assam and to the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi and Jaintia hills expressed the deplorable absence of birds and animals life owing to the sporting instinct of the Khasi population.⁸⁶ The destruction was so much that Mr. Fuller, the then chief Commissioner of Assam, was doubtful indeed as to the possibility of checking the destruction of animals' life by means of prohibitions or restrictions imposed upon general population. Local inhabitants were blamed for violating forest laws but their access of forest resources was part of their socio-cultural and economic life. The British were the real poachers who snatched the rights of the local inhabitants over forest.⁸⁷

The scientific management of forest came with the forests rules which restricted the rights of the tribals over forest and which served the purpose of the British government very well. Local inhabitants were a hindrance in the exploitation of forest on which the British defense relied heavily.⁸⁸ The British authority accused forest dwellers of causing trouble and subsequently acquired their lands under the legal acts.⁸⁹ Thus, each successive policy and legislations formulated and adopted by the British government resulted in increased restrictions on tribals.⁹⁰ Even the British officials themselves accepted that it was essential to declare certain areas as reserve forest so as to give the necessary the legal powers to the authorities. The establishment of the game reserve restricted the hunting in the reserves. Though it was an attempt to protect wildlife from the indiscriminate slaughter but it was also for giving necessary legal powers in the hands of government.⁹¹ It was found that the best way to prohibit killing and snaring of game without special licenses in any tract was to make it a reserve forest which would gradually stock wildlife back in any tracts.

⁸⁶ (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, September, 1905, sub. Preservation of game in pine forest round Shillong.

⁸⁷ (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, sept. 1905, sub. Preservation of game in pine forest round Shillong.

⁸⁸ Arora Manju, (2009) *Forest and Wildlife Laws and Rights of Indigenous People*. New Delhi, Hope India, p.24

⁸⁹ Grove, R., Colonial Conservation, Ecological Hegemony and Popular Resistance: Towards A Global Synthesis', in Mackenzie (ed), (1990), *Imperialism and the Natural World*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 15-20

⁹⁰ Ghate, S. Rucha, (1995), *Forest Policy and Tribal Development*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, ,p. 30

⁹¹ (ASA), AARP, Revenue-A, September 1905, preservation of game in pine forest round Shillong,

Since 1905, attention was paid by the government to put restriction on the free access to wildlife in reserve forest.

Local officials agreed that game could be restocked in the sanctuaries if the shooting or snaring of birds and animals were stopped. However, this protection was also not possible without the support of the local inhabitants and the local tribes. The colonial state accused indigenous people for the destruction of wildlife. However, the protection of wildlife was not possible without their support. Mostly local inhabitants or who were familiar with the local language were preferred for the task of game Keeper. F.C.Henniker, Director of Land Records and Agriculture, suggested the name of one Rabha man who also knew Khasi for the job of gamekeeper.⁹² The game Keepers and watchers were successful in protecting the game from local people. Though it was the British officials who had taken steps for the protection of the wildlife, the number of people who benefitted from the felling of tress or killing of animals was much more. Thus people who destroyed environment were more than those who wanted to maintain ecological balance.⁹³ Local tribes were mostly appointed as Game keepers and assistant game keepers. They were paid Rs. 25 for head game keeper and Rs. 12 or Rs. 15 for assistant game keepers a month for the preservation of game in reserve forests. In case of Shillong Khasis were appointed as game keepers.⁹⁴ People of other tribes were also appointed as game keepers if they were familiar with the local language. It has been found that Rabhas, Garos, Hadems etc who knew Khasi were appointed in forests of Shillong⁹⁵. Though the tribes were called for their sporting instinct but they supported the government in the preservation of wildlife. F.C.Henniker, Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture suggested the name of a Rabha man who knew Khasia for the work of a game keeper.⁹⁶ An attempt was also made by the government to generate consciousness among the people towards the preservation of wildlife. The Statesman reported, “at the same time it is generally admitted that if man impoverishes his environment he loses in mental and moral capacity and becomes a poorer being.”⁹⁷ The *London Times* reported the speech delivered by the Duke of Brabant (now the King of The Belgians) at a dinner in his honour presided over by His Royals Highness

⁹² (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, September,1905, Preservation Of Game In Pine Forest Round, Shillong.

⁹³ Chakrabarti, K., (1991), *Man Plant and Animals Interaction*, Darari prokashan, Calcutta, , p.8

⁹⁴ (ASA), AARP.Revenue-A, Sept. 1905, Sub. Preservation of game in pine forest round Shillong.

⁹⁵ (ASA), AARP.Revenue-A, sept. 1905, Sub. Preservation of game in pine forest round Shillong.

⁹⁶ (ASA), AARP, revenue-A, sept 1905, Sub. preservation of game in pine forest round Shillong

⁹⁷ PRFA, for the year 1933-34, Shillong: AGP, 1935, P.18 para-99

the Prince of Wales, “we Belgians are still novices in the matter of the protection of Nature. We lack experience, for our first national park has only recently been established. To whom can we turn for guidance with greater confidence than to you [the British] who have been our precursors in this field? In course of my travels I have seen the many splendid results you have obtained. You have undertaken a real mission which stands out as an example and encouragement to all other. The English people themselves are imbued with a love of nature. They are brought on from earliest childhood to the lowest creatures, has left an indelible mark on the British character and heart. May I be allowed to suggest that it is this sentiment which underlines the chivalrous ideal of your nation—a nation whose solicitude for the weak has not been limited to its own frontiers.”⁹⁸ These writing convinced the patriotic Assamese to recognize that government is only doing their duty towards the rest of the world in following out a policy of preserving a strictly reasonable number of wild animals at no unreasonable cost in places where they can do no harm to the interests of mankind.⁹⁹ The materially minded too, who could be convinced by none except material arguments, were comforted by the reflection that the famous National parks of Africa, Canada, America and elsewhere are already visited every year by thousands of tourists (the tourist is everywhere recognized as a source of wealth to the country visited), and that there is no doubt but that the Assam Rhinoceros will in the course of time prove an attraction as profitable to the province as the Loch Ness Monster now is to Inverness-shire.¹⁰⁰ Here, two main points related to the protection of wildlife in India. Firstly, though protection of wildlife was not the main concern of the British but it led the start of what it is called ‘Scientific conservation’ of wildlife and secondly, it brought a consciousness among the local inhabitants of the preservation of wildlife and nature. The protection of wildlife was attempted by the British government but it could not be achieved without the support of local inhabitants.

6.4 Wildlife Conferences

A new phase of wildlife preservation was started in 1930s. The British administration started organizing All-India conferences for discussing various issues related to the better preservation of wildlife. The main agendas of these conferences were firstly, to

⁹⁸ PRFA, for the year 1933-34, Shillong: AGP 1935, P.18 para-99

⁹⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.,

review the existing position of the fauna and flora of India and to consider generally their protection and in particular to the protection of animals peculiar to India. It also discussed about what could be done for saving the rhinoceros, lion, asses and other such animals from extinction. It included the laying of the duty of preserving the forest to forest department and destruction of such wild animals such as dogs as tend to harm other more important game in the forest. Outside forest it focused on three issues- inclusion of history of wildlife in school text books, collection of statistics of important and rare wildlife in India, lastly on the ornithological societies for the protection and study of bird life and nature. The second agenda involved- inculcation of village cattle against infectious diseases particularly in the vicinity of game preserves for the protection of the wildlife. Thirdly, special legislation for the preservation of wildlife (other than the Indian forest act) enacted in various provinces that needed to be implemented. Fourthly, measures to restrict the possession or use of weapons which might be used for poaching and the feasibility of amending the arms rules. It emphasized to limit the length of the barrels of guns used for the protection of crops etc. and the use of such arms to certain seasons. It also put emphasis to limit the number of cartridges in the case of licenses taken out for protection or display. Fifthly, to consider the extent to which India could accede to the convention drawn up by the international conference for the protection of the Fauna and flora of Africa and the modifications necessary to make it suitable for India. Lastly, to consider whether the convening of an Asiatic Conference in London was desirable or not.¹⁰¹ This is the first time when the matter of the preservation of wildlife was taken into consideration. The conference for the protection of wildlife in India was held in 1934 in Delhi.

The society for the preservation of the fauna of the empire, Zoological Society of London, after five years of its work on wildlife in India, viewed that the stock of wildlife was progressively declining and there was need for reviewing the matter without any delay. The improve means of transport and communication led to the decrease of wildlife population. The society viewed that, "...during recent years every civilized country in the world has considered it necessary that this matter should receive greater attention than hitherto: for improved facilities of transport, closer settlement, etc., have all tended towards the unnecessary reduction of the wild life of

¹⁰¹ (NAI), EHL dept., Forest Branch, file no. 24-5/34, F, part X, Sub: All India conference for the preservation of wildlife 28th to 30th January, 1935, p. 5

the world.”¹⁰² The society recognized the economic interest of people and also aware of that at times wild animals did damage crops but it agreed that some ‘modus vivendi’ could be reached as was done in British Africa, where wild life was more numerous than in India. The society viewed that the Indian government would always consider it necessary to conserve large areas of forest for its economic reasons (e.g., the supply of timber, fuel etc.). In such forest wild animals found refuge and if they were afforded better protection they could be saved from extinction and balance of nature could also be maintained. The society recommended that the constitution of India should recognize the importance of wildlife as national asset. In the words of the society, “with great respect, we venture the opinion that as momentous changes in the constitution of India are now under consideration, it is fitting that the future of wealth of wild fauna with which Nature has endowed that country should be under considered, for all nations are agreed that the wild life of a country must be regarded as an important national asset.”¹⁰³ The society owes the works of the British officials towards the preservation of wildlife and also praised the work of forest department as bulwark of fauna preservation. It enquired the prevailing condition of wildlife in some of the provinces of India. As the condition considerably differs in various provinces, the society’s suggestion for the protection of wildlife varies from province to province. The description given by the society for the province of Assam is as follows.¹⁰⁴

The society viewed that some of the parts of Assam had an interesting assemblage of the large wildlife, but local authorities agreed that its destruction was in excess of reproduction and therefore it was as in other parts of India, doomed to destruction unless suitable steps were taken for its better conservation. The most notable animal in the province was the great Indian rhinoceros. This creature which earlier roamed all over the country was then restricted to a remote strip along the south side of the Himalayas and the number survivors was a fraction of what it was some twenty years ago. There was a few in the extreme north of Bengal and some were also existed in Nepal. By that time the existence of rhinoceros in Assam was limited to a few places near Brahmaputra River and in a few other spot that was also in limited number. British officials argued that their survival in Assam was probably due to a protection,

¹⁰² (NAI), EHL dept., Forest Branch, file no. 24-5/34, F, part X

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.pp.7-8

which was enacted after the slaughter of about 100 rhino by Kacharies and Assamese in the forest, reserve, Ripee sanctuary and N.Kamrup. However group hunting was a part of local culture. The society doubted that the effectiveness of legal protection and it said that if the vigilance was not maintained the species would disappear. Other species which according to the Society, needed careful protection were elephants, the bison (mithun), buffalo, sambur, takin, serow, swamp deer, spotted deer (this was very rare), hog deer and barking deer. The Society criticized the possession of firearms among villagers as they were obtained in the words of the Society, "...they are obtained with the main object of destroying every living thing which is encountered."¹⁰⁵

Game laws though existed but their enforcement appeared to be the exception rather than the rule. Owing to the local condition the society advocated the appointment of a special officer as game warden, preferably be seconded from the forest service but have jurisdiction outside the government forest areas. The sale of hides, meat and trophies derived from wild animals should be greatly restricted and adequately controlled. The existed small sanctuaries made solely for the rhinoceros should be extended so that they could provide shelter for many of the other faunal species then being slaughtered to excess. It was viewed by the Society that the cooperation of the native authorities and the chiefs in the outlying districts should be enlisted; otherwise it would be difficult to control of the destructive operations of the wilder tribes. The Society also recommended that some agreement should be made with the Bhutan state in regard to poaching incursions from that state to Assam. Lastly the society said that if these suggestions would not be taken into consideration the existence of fauna of Assam would be doubtful.¹⁰⁶

In 1933 the need of an All India conference for saving the country from extermination of the fauna with which she was so richly endowed was felt.¹⁰⁷ The First Conference for the preservation of wildlife in India was held on 28th January of 1935. This conference was the outcome of the agreements concluded at the conference for the protection of the fauna and flora of Africa held in London (1933). Mr. Stuart Baker

¹⁰⁵ (NAI), EHL dept., Forest Branch, file no. 24-5/34, F, part X

¹⁰⁶ (NAI), EHL dept., Forest, file no. 24-5/34, F, part X, sub: All India conference for the preservation of wildlife 28th to 30th jan, 1935.

¹⁰⁷ PRFA, for the year 1933-34, Shillong: AGP, (1935), p.18, para-99

attended the conference on behalf of India.¹⁰⁸ The primary object of the conference was to arrange for international protection for the fauna and flora of Africa but at the same time, it was also hoped that the convention if agreed by the countries attended, should form a basis for protective legislation for other countries and for other parts of British Empire. The main proposal of the conference was the setting of certain areas as sanctuaries in order to ensure effective protection of flora and fauna varying in some extent in degree of protection afforded. Three principal types of reserves were recommended in the conference, (1) National Parks in which destruction of flora and fauna should be totally restricted (2) Strict Reserve in which forestry operations would be permitted (3) Other Reserves included suitable areas in which fauna should be completely protected. The convention of the conference for the protection of wildlife in Africa (London) formed the basis for international and national preservation of flora and fauna worthy of consideration by the government of India.¹⁰⁹ The Inspector General of Forest in his opening speech at the opening of the conference discussed the subject of the protection of wildlife in India. He discussed how much India could adhere that convention to protect the fauna in general and in particular those animals peculiar to India which required the most stringent measures to be adopted lest they would extinct. He pointed out that in many ways India was far advanced over Africa- the reserved forests of India most of which were established for many years past might be considered as the National Parks of this country. In his view because the dense population of India and the limited area of the reserved forests it would be impossible for government to consider closing of all forest operation in the interest of game. He agreed that there might have savannah forests where time was of no consequence and which were suitable for game sanctuaries; but under normal condition local governments were not least likely to forego the revenue from available forest estate merely in the interests of wild animals. The strict natural reserve was also impossible.¹¹⁰ He pointed out that strict shooting rules existed for all government forest. Other than rhinoceros emphasis was led to protect the all animals including reptiles for commercial purposes. Use of vehicles or air-craft and other

¹⁰⁸ (NAI), EHL, forest, file no. 150-1A/35, 1935, proc. 1-32, Notes. Report of the committee on- Protection of Terrestrial fauna and flora of Asia.

¹⁰⁹ (NAI), EHL, Forest, Mysore resident papers, Bangalore, file no. 161, Proc. No. 1-39, Memorandum No. D., 802-R/34, Dated Simla the 18th May, 1934, Sub.- International conference for the protection of fauna and flora of PRFAica, 1933.

¹¹⁰ (NAI), EHL Department. Forest. File no. 24-21/34F. 1934 sub. All India conference for the preservation of wildlife, 1935, hon'ble members speech at the opening of the conference.

unsporting methods in the hunting of game was banned. IGF viewed that this matter received attention in some provinces and no doubt other provinces would also follow it.¹¹¹

As a result of All India Conference for the preservation of wild life at new Delhi on 28th, 29th and 30 January, 1935, a draft convention was prepared. The convention has sixteen articles for the protection of wildlife in India. It also provided two lists of animals depending on the how much protection they needed. The first article authorized the provincial governments to deal with the protection of wild animals in their province. According to the convention the provincial governments were given freedom to adhere all the provisions or a part of the draft but it did not in any way restrict forest operations in the territories to which the convention may become applicable. This was for the first time the draft defined the term wildlife sanctuary. it says “The expression ‘Wild Life Sanctuary’ shall denote an area constituted by the competent legislative authority in which the hunting, shooting or capturing of any wild bird or animal, or specified bird or animal, is prohibited except by or under the control of the highest authority in the department responsible for the management of the Sanctuary, and the boundaries, ownership, or character of which shall not be altered without the sanction of the competent legislative authority.”¹¹² But while defining the term wildlife sanctuary the commercialization of the sanctuary was also considered by the British authority as the draft also says that “ In accordance with the above provisions facilities shall so far as possible be given to the general public for observing the fauna in wild life sanctuaries.”¹¹³ According to the draft “the expression ‘animal’ shall include all the vertebrate and invertebrates in their wild state and part thereof as well as eggs, egg-shells and nest.”¹¹⁴ The provincial governments were suggested to explore the possibility of establishing in their territories wildlife sanctuaries. Forest areas were also put under the direct control of the Contracting government (provincial governments) and were maintained as wild life reserve in which all killing, capturing, hunting and shooting of animals or fishing was prohibited. Hunting, shooting or fishing might be allowed to such limited extent as might be prescribed by rules for such area. These rules might limit the number, sex

¹¹¹ (NAI), EHL Department. Forest. File no. 24-21/34F. 1934

¹¹² (NAI), Department of education, health and lands, No. F.36-4/35-F, The 7th August, 1937. Sub. All-India conference for the preservation of wild life. Draft All-India Convention.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

and size of animals permitted to be killed and might prescribe suitable close seasons and other regulations where such rules were necessary. The draft provided two list of Birds and animals to be protected depending on their level of protection the endangered species needed. Rhinoceros, leopard, Monitor lizard, pigmy hog were put in the annex 'A' which required rigorous protection. Monitor lizard of Assam was not put in the rigorous list. Elephant, bison, buffalo, deer, antelope and Gazelles, tigers including other birds and animals were put in the Annex 'B' were not required such rigorous protection as of Annex A but count not be hunted, killed or captured in any part of the territory of the Contracting Governments except under rules made by the competent authorities. The import and export of animals or trophies except at places where there is a customs station should be prohibited.¹¹⁵ This can be called a first formal step towards the preservation of wildlife in sanctuaries.

The nineteenth century consciousness towards preservation of wildlife fostered the movement for the protection of wildlife developed in the country. However, it was the provincial forest officers who took initiative for the protection of wildlife. In Assam it started in 1902 though earlier forest Acts put some restriction on hunting of wild animals in reserve forest but practically it did not protect wild animals. Through forest acts government had full control over forest as a part of the extension of their empire over forested land and excluded the aboriginal people who had traditional rights over forest. It created a rift between the local inhabitants and forest policies. This led to the violation of such acts by local inhabitants; they even involved themselves in the acts of poaching. But the real 'poachers' were the British governments but their act of 'poaching' was legalized by the forest acts and their claim over forest and forest produce. Though the British government's main aim was to exploit the forest resources at their best but the attempts of local officers towards the protection of wildlife could also not be ignored. These official's attempts led to the creation of forest reserve and subsequently game reserve for the protection of wildlife.

¹¹⁵ (NAI), EHL, file no. 81-1/37-F, Delhi records-1, Serial Nos. 1-42. Sub. Preservation of wildlife in India- All India convention.

Chapter - 7

SANCTUARING THE WILD

“Most civilized countries have now recognized that no policy of wildlife protection can hope to be a permanent success unless it is built on a foundation of secure sanctuaries. Inviolable sanctuaries must be constituted to ensure that a limited number of representatives of every species of an indigenous fauna are perpetuated for all time- H.C.Smith”¹

A group of Europeans naturalists and conservationists during second half of the nineteenth century felt the responsibility towards depleting wild animals and raised their concerns over the impending fate of wildlife. Though small in number they worked towards providing a better and secure place for the existed wildlife in the country. The preservation of natural resources was far more important than its consumption. European nation and the American people realized the importance of preserving wild animals in the mid-nineteenth century and set an example to the world as to what could and ought to be done to preserve wildlife within their lands. The rapid development of the country, spread of agriculture, and industry threatened the destruction of indigenous fauna in United States of America. For preserving the wildlife National Parks or reserves were established which not only gave inviolable sanctuary to wild animals but also offered the people an added attraction towards wildlife sanctuaries because of its scenic beauty, their historical, geographical or archaeological interest. These national parks provided the means by which the clash of interest between human and wildlife was obviated and security was provided to wild animals without restraining human progress.² This concept led to the formation of forest reserve in India. Forest reserve means, an area in which both flora and fauna receive some degrees of protection; the term did not indicate the category of protected area. But complete protection was not provided even in the reserve forest or in game

¹ (NAI) Smith H.C., A memorandum on wild life protection in Burma, E.H.L. Department, forest, 1934, file no. 24-5/34 F part X

² Burton,R.W., (1953), *The Preservation of Wildlife In India*, Bangalore: Bangalore Press, p. 37

reserve. The movement for the protection of wildlife actually started with the International Conference for the protection of nature held at Paris in 1931 which led to the formation of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.³ The second International Conference for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa, held in London (1933) proposed that in order to ensure effective protection of the flora and fauna it is expedient that certain areas should be set aside as sanctuaries, varying to some extent in the degree of protection afforded.⁴ The Conference emphasized that sanctuaries must be constitutionalized to ensure that a limited number of representative of every species of an indigenous fauna are perpetuated for all time. The conference for the protection of wildlife in Africa inspired the organization of wildlife conferences in India. In 1935 through the efforts of The Society of the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire, Zoological society of London, first conference for the protection of wildlife was held in Delhi. The society agreed that every civilized country considered it necessary to have better facilities of transport and closer settlement so that unnecessary reduction of the wildlife could be stopped. The Indian Board of Wildlife defined a wildlife sanctuary as “an area where killing or capturing of any species of bird or animal is prohibited except under orders of the competent authority and whose boundaries and character should be sacrosanct as far as possible.”⁵ It further said that though the management of sanctuaries did not involve suspension and restriction of normal forest operations it was desirable to set aside a completely sacrosanct area within a sanctuary to be known as “Abhayaranya”.⁶ These attempts of forming wildlife sanctuaries indicate the commercialization of wildlife and wildlife sanctuaries. The conference for wildlife preservation in India held in Delhi resulted in the formation of Hailey National park in Uttar Pradesh in 1936. The Indian Board of Wildlife defined a National Park as, “an area dedicated by statute for all time to conserve scenery, natural and historical objects of national significance and wild life, and where provision is made for the enjoyment of the same by the public.”⁷ The principal underlying a Wildlife Sanctuary and a National Park is essentially the same, i.e., maximum protection, but the status and degree of permanency and protection is higher in national parks than a sanctuary,

³ Gee,E.P., (1964), *The Wildlife of India*, London:Collins, p.112

⁴ (NAI), EHL Department, Forest, File No. 161, proceeding No. 1-39

⁵ Gee, E.P., (1964), *op. cit.* p. 117

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

the reason is that a sanctuary is created by order of a competent authority, who may be the Chief Conservator of Forests or minister of a state, while a national park is created only by the legislature of a state.⁸ The concern over wildlife in Assam started only in 1902, when J.C.Arbutnut, the Deputy Secretary of Assam Valley Districts and Joseph Bampfylde Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, agreed that something need to be done urgently to save rhinoceros from total extinct. This chapter discusses the establishment of game reserve, protected games in sanctuaries, conservation of wildlife in game reserves, sports in game reserve/wildlife sanctuary and commercialization of wildlife sanctuary.

7.1. Formation of Game Sanctuaries

The establishment of wildlife sanctuaries was a gradual process. The nineteenth century protection movement for wildlife led to the start of the protection of wildlife in India. The formation of forest reserve under forest Act of 1878 for the first time restricted the killing of wild animals in Reserve Forest. In India the protection of wildlife meant the closing of ‘shooting-blocks’ from time to time by the conservator of forest.⁹ Though the main intension behind the formation of reserve forest was not the protection of wildlife but it led to the start of providing some kind of protection to wild animals. As argued by Mahesh Rangarajan that, “the prime motive had little to do with fauna and had much more to do with the changing significance of forest wealth in the empire’s scheme things.”¹⁰ The need for timber for the extension of railway lines necessitated the reservation of forest by the government. The construction of underground colliers also generated a vast demand for timber to construct pit props in the mines. The creation of Imperial Forest department in 1864 aimed to control the use of forest by private users like traders, peasants and tribes.¹¹ In Assam the forest department started functioning only in 1874 when Assam was declared a Chief Commissioner state. However the protection of game was not given maximum priority and was mostly depended on the efforts of provincial officials.¹² In Assam it was J.C.Arbutnut, the Deputy Secretary of Assam valley districts and Joseph Bampfylde Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam during 1902, who felt

⁸ Gee, E.P., (1964), *op. cit.* p.117

⁹ Ibid. 116

¹⁰ Rangarajan . M. (2005), *India’s wildlife history, An Introduction*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, p. 49

¹¹ Ibid.51

¹² Ibid.57

the urgent need to save rhinoceros from total extinct. Mr. Fuller, considered the possibility of establishing an asylum for the rhinoceros by taking up a suitable land in reserve forest. By 1905 rhinoceros became scarce which was the main concern of the local officials. J.C. Arbuthnott, viewed that the animal which was formerly common in Assam, was exterminated except in remote localities at the foot of the Bhutan hills in Kamrup and Goalpara and in a very narrow tract of country between the Brahmaputra and Mikir Hills in Nowgaon and Golaghat where a few individual were left. The extinction of rhinoceros in Kamrup and Goalpara was hastened because of the incursion of large shooting parties from Bengal, which led to the reckless and indiscriminate destruction of all game. British officials argued that the hunting parties included novices who fire at anything that came up in front of them which led to the indiscriminate destruction of wildlife. In case of rhinoceros the slaughter of female and immature animals brought the species to the verge of extinction. The shooting of rhinoceros by that time was prohibited in Bengal and that led the *shikariees* from Bengal to come to Assam. J.C.Arbutnott, suggested that the destruction of rhinoceros in Assam by shooting or by pitfall should be prohibited till further order of government. He viewed that unless an order of this kind was issued the complete extinction of a comparatively harmless and most interesting creature would only be a question of a very short space of time. He therefore requested the Chief Commissioner to take measures for the preservation of a species which was rapidly verging towards extinction before it too late.¹³ He felt it very necessary to absolutely prohibit the destruction of the animal in certain tract where it was still known to exist anyhow for a period of years.¹⁴ Mr. Fuller, the Chief Commissioner convinced with Arbuthnott concern over saving the animals from extinction and he agreed that it would be most regrettable if the rhinoceros became extinct in Assam, but it would be impossible without special legislations to penalize the unlicensed shooting of this animal. Thus, he gladly considered the possibility of establishing an asylum for the rhinoceros by taking up as reserve forest a sufficient area of suitable land and asked Mr. Arbuthnott to suggest some locality and area which could be selected for this

¹³ (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, September,1905, Sub-Rules for the regulation of sports in reserved forest, Agriculture and Revenue proceeding, Letter from J.C.Arbutnott, Commissioner of the Assam Valley districts, to the secretary to the chief commissioner of Assam. Dated 4th Nov. 1902

¹⁴ Ibid.

purpose.¹⁵ Stebbing viewed that the “creation of Game Sanctuaries has been commenced with a view to affording protection to certain animals, such as the gaur or bison and rhinoceros and elsewhere to deer.”¹⁶ In Assam the concern over the depleting rhinoceros population led to the formation of wildlife sanctuaries.

Mr. Arbuthnott therefore suggested three tracts in 1903, among which one was proposed by Major Gurdon in North-west Kamrup.¹⁷ Major Gurdon, Deputy Commissioner of Eastern Bengal and Assam Commission and Superintendent of Ethnography of Assam gave the following description of the tract which covers an area of 379.68 square miles-“All along the foot of the hills there is a strip of Khair and Karai forest varying in breadth from about 4 miles to about ½ a mile with some swamp, near Ooala and Lahapara. The whole area does not contain a single village, for people will not live there for fear of the Bhutias. The Kacharis have no rights in the proposed reserve, but they go up sometimes to fish and also to shoot.”¹⁸ The formation of sanctuaries was done with an intension of excluding the tribes from the access of wild animals. Mr. Gurdon proposed this tract to remove the Kacharies from shooting and fishing in the reserve. He argued that if the reserve is constituted the Deputy Commissioner would be made responsible for hunting in the tract and was given the authority to issue shooting licenses only on certain condition that would provide protection to wild animals in the reserve.

Mr. Arbuthnott suggested two tracts one in Goalpara district and other in Nowgaon. He viewed that though the existing reserve in the district provided a certain amount of protection, however, he observed that, “in the past the shooting parties from Bengal or elsewhere are allowed to enter these forest, it is absolutely necessary to place a limit on the game to be shot and to discourage the unsportsmanlike practice of indiscriminate shooting to swell the bag.”¹⁹ He recommended the formation of a reserve to the west of Laokhowa and north of Juria between the Leterijan and the Brahmaputra River and in the Goalaghat subdivision of Sibsagar in the vicinity of Kaziranga. This tract was selected because the rhinoceros were not found elsewhere

¹⁵ (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, September, 1905, Letter from the secretary of the chief Commissioner of Assam to the J.C. Arbuthnott, Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet, dated, 18th dec. 1902

¹⁶ Stebbing, E.P., (1920), *The Diary of a Sportsman Naturalist in India*, London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, p. XII

¹⁷ Ibid. dated, 15th March, 1904.

¹⁸ Ibid. Letter from F.J. Monahan, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Commissioner of the Assam Valley District, Dated. 15th March, 1904.

¹⁹ Ibid.

on the south bank of the Brahmaputra between Dibrugarh and Dhubri. Rhinoceros by this time were exterminated in North Lakhimpur and in the country the Dikhu, Jhanjimukh, Disang and Dehingmukh.

Mr. Arbuthnott, suggesting these tracts considered the point that the formation of game sanctuaries would however not prejudice cultivation. He therefore proposed that only those areas which were not fit for cultivation and waste land could be consider for the preservation of wildlife. As the formation of the reserve might prejudice the development of cultivation. Officials viewed that only those areas which were uncultivable and suitable as habitats for the rhinoceros where considered for the formation of game reserve. J.C. Arbuthnott viewed that near Kaziranga and Laokhowa in Nowgaon suitable land of uncultivated and uncultivable waste was available for the formation of game reserve. These lands were destitute of inhabitants and could be reserved without prejudice to cultivation. For which he provided a map indicating the tracts and roughly describe the boundaries (see map.7.1)

The proposal of Mr. Arbuthnott was debated among British officials. Mr. F.J.Monahan, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam informed the Commissioner of Assam Valley Districts that Mr. Arbuthnott and Mr. Gurdon suggested the setting of certain waste land as reserve forest for preventing the extermination of the rhinoceros. Mr. Arbuthnott recommended the reservation for providing asylum to rhinoceros- (1) The Kaziranga tract which was situated partly in the Sibsagar and Partly in Nowgaon district, with an area of 89.49 square miles, (2) a tract of chapari land situated in the riverain area of the Nowgaon district located in the west of Laokhoa, with an area of 40.25 square miles. He also advised the reservation of a small tract of forest in the Nowgaon district, forming a wedge between the Dimaru and the Dikhumring rivers (with an area of 37.40 square miles), for the protection of the swamp deer. (3) Major Gurdon recommended the making of a reserve along the foot of the hills east of the Manas in the Kamrup district. He also argued that in Assam the area of reserved forest was very small in comparison with either the area of unreserved waste or with the area of reserved forest in Central provinces. In central province forest reserve included a good deal of country which contained much game and were really afforested with a view to the preservation of game. But in Assam the Forest Department had not done enough towards providing an asylum to the wild fauna of the province. Therefore the Chief Commissioner felt the need of preserving some tracts of the province to provide protection to game

provided the tracts fulfill these conditions. (1) that these tracts did not injure existing cultivation, (2) that those tracts which were suitable for cultivation were not selected for game preservation (3) that not much public money were not expand on these undertakings.²⁰

The Chief Commissioner of Assam valley district asked the opinion of local officers their view on the reservation of the recommended tracts. Mr. F.E.Jackson, Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup district urged the need of a game reserve in the recommended tract of the district as he agreed that if the tract would not be reserve the rhinoceros and to lesser degree other large game would extinct from the district. But he argued that the proposed area was altogether too large and it did not satisfy the conditions laid by the Chief Commissioner in regard to the formation of game sanctuaries. The land contained a very considerable amount of cultivation and the southern part contained a land suitable for cultivation.²¹ The Commissioner of Assam Valley agreed with Mr. Jackson and asked for further enquiry in this matter.²²

Regarding Kaziranga tract J.Donald, Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar viewed that there would be no difficulty in creating this reserve. Within this tract was only one village which would be affected. This was the village of Kandulimari, which lied on the North of the Diffloo River and South of Mariahati Mirigaon, and was inhabited by 6 or 7 families. There would have no difficulty experienced in removing the villages as the land was not suitable for cultivation. The land might be made fit for cultivation if the old embankment, constructed in the time of the Ahom rajas, were repaired, but that would prove an expensive undertaking and in view of the fact that the province was infested by wild animals the question of repairing the embankment was hardly considered. The Commissioner of Assam also argued that the villagers in the Kaziranga tract holding cultivation might be induced to move elsewhere receiving compensation for expenses of movement and the cultivated area was excluded by a slight alteration of the boundaries of the proposed reserve.²³

²⁰ (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, September,1905, letter from F.J.Monahan, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Commissioner of the Assam Valley District, dated, 15th March, 1904

²¹ Ibid. letter from F.E.Jackson, Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup to the Commissioner of Assam Valley Districts, dated 31 may, 1904

²² Ibid. Memo by-The commissioner of Assam Valley Districts, dated 7th June, 1904

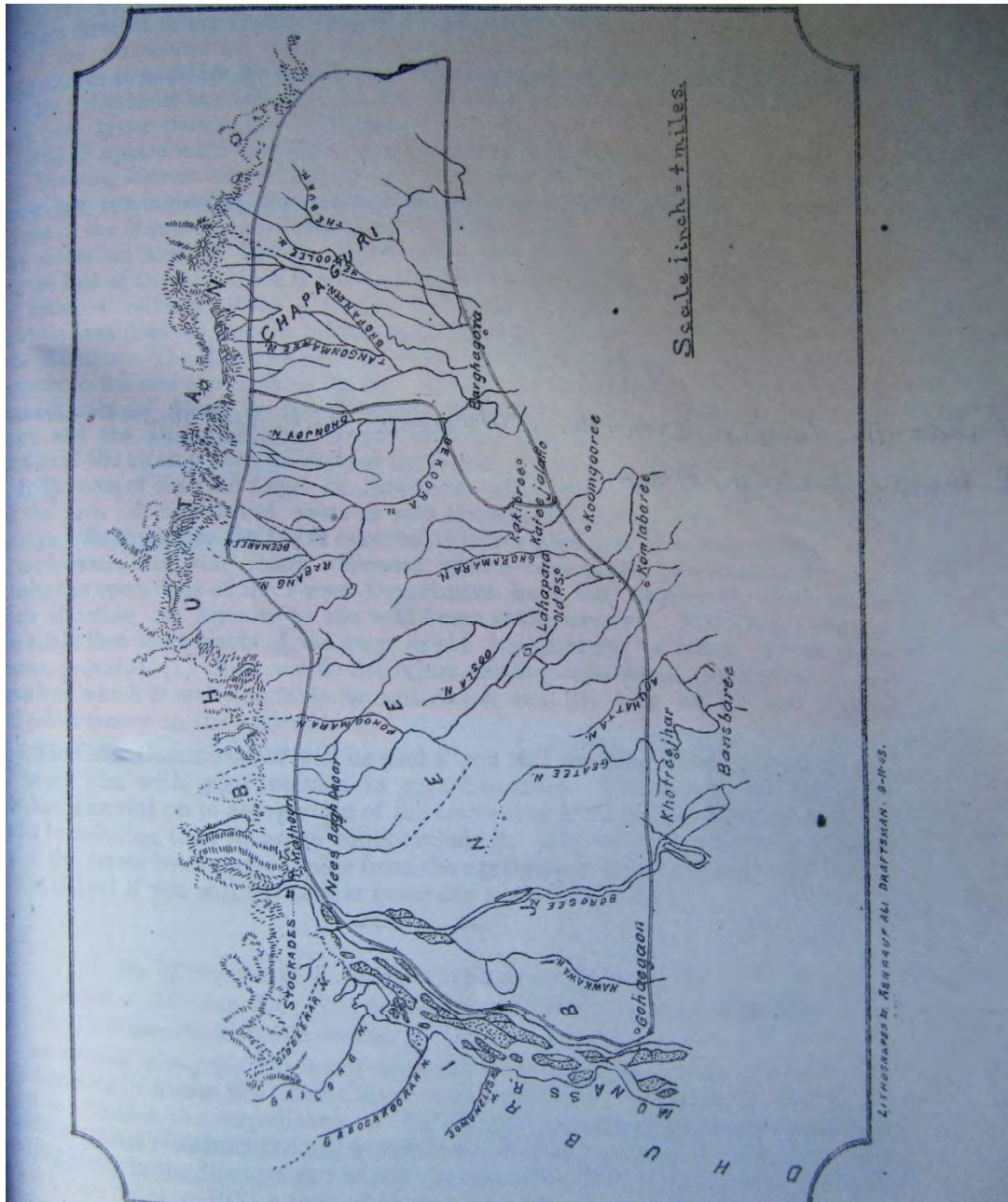
²³ Ibid. letter from J.Donald Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar to the Commissioner of Assam Valley districts

Major H.M.Halliday, Deputy Commissioner of Nowgaon, also did not show any objection towards the proposed Kaziranga and Laokhowa tract for preservation. He viewed that the portion of Kaziranga tract falling within Nowgaon district forms a part of Mauza Duar Bagori. It contained two non-cadastral villages of an area of 411 bighas with revenue of Rs. 218. Regarding the Laokhowa tract he viewed that it contained 2 cadastral and 2 extension survey villages once cultivated, but by then were almost entirely deserted, having only about 2 bighas *pam* cultivation. He suggested that the southern boundary of the Kaziranga tract might be extended to the government road. He believed that would not trouble the travellers as the bil in the reserve was a favorite resort of big animals.²⁴ The Chief Commissioner agreed that the few raiyats who hold 411 bighs of *pam* cultivation in the Kaziranga block should be altogether excluded from the reserve as their presence temporally of permanently within the border of Kaziranga might create problems. The British officials also denied the compensation for their land which was coming within the boundary of proposed reserve. Officials argued that the men were ex-tea garden coolies holding upon annual leases and were not entitled to compensation. But the Deputy Commissioner given authorities to allow them to take up land elsewhere revenue free for one year. A similar course was proposed to follow in regard to the men who hold 20 bighas of *pam* cultivation in the Laokhowa block.²⁵ Major H.M.Halliday, Deputy Commissioner of Nowgaon discussed that “all raiyats cultivating within these boundaries are required to evacuate their lands immediately after reaping their crops. On application such raiyats would be given an equal quantity of land elsewhere revenue free for one year.”²⁶ The reservation of forest thus excluded the cultivators from their land which caused conflicts between agrarian practices and game.

²⁴ (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, September, 1905, letter from H.M.Halliday, Deputy Commissioner of Nowgaon to the Commissioner of Assam Valley districts dated, 18th June, 1904

²⁵ Ibid. letter from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Conservator of Forest dated 22nd December, 1904

²⁶ Ibid. Letter from Major H.M.Halliday, Deputy Commissioner of Nowgaon to the Commissioner of Assam Valley Districts



(Map. 7.1.) Map indicating the tracts and roughly describe the boundaries of proposed Game Reserve
 Source: (ASA) Assam Agriculture and Revenue proceedings, Revenue-A, September, 1905

Finally, E.S.Carr, the Conservator of Forest viewed that three tracts in the Nowgaon district viz. (1) Kaziranga (2) Laokhowa and (3) Dimoru, all of which were proposed by Mr. Arbutnott should be made reserves. The tract in the Sibsagar district called Kaziranga which was a continuation of the Nowgaon tract. As regard the tract proposed by Major Gurdon it would include a line drawn from west to east which included with the Manas River. It would have the north boundary of the Kamrup district, and the eastern boundary of the Chapguri mauza, all the area proposed

reserved for game. Regarding establishment Mr. Carr suggested the following staff to be employed throughout the whole year on temporary establishment-

For North Kamrup proposed reserve

One forester on Rs. 20 per mensem	Rs.240 per annum
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Three forest guards on Rs. 8 per mensem each	Rs.288	,,
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For Kaziranga, Sibsagar and Nowgong districts

Two foresters on Rs. 15 per mensem	Rs.360	,,
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Two forest guards on Rs. 8 per mensem	Rs.192	,,
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For Laokhowa and Dimoru(Nowgong district)

Two forest guards on Rs. 10 per mensem each	Rs. <u>240</u>	,,
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The total annual expenditure would thus amount to	Rs. <u>1320</u> ²⁷
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These amounts was sanctioned for meeting the expenditure of forest guards in Reserve Forest, however this amount was not sufficient. The Chief Commissioner felt that the game keeping staff proposed for maintaining the reserve was not sufficiently strong. Officials agreed that efficient game-keeping was the essence of the scheme, and government should be ready to sanction the expenditure of about Rs. 800 a year for the Kaziranga and of Rs. 400 a year for the Laokhowa reserve. That would provide a keeper on Rs. 35 per mensem with three forest guards for the Kaziranga and a keeper on Rs. 20 with one guard for the Laokhowa reserve. It was also proposed by the officials that the Kaziranga reserve should be placed under the forest divisional officer of Nowgong or Sibsagar but preferred to keep with Sibsagar.

In regard to the Dimaru block, the Chief Commissioner asked the Deputy Commissioner make some further local enquiries in regard to (1) The amount and kind of game to which it now affords shelter or to which it may be expected to afford shelter, (2) The character and extent of the permanent rice cultivation which the block apparently includes and (3) The possibility of forming a reserve without enclosing this cultivation. The chief commissioner showed his reluctant to dispossess royts of established fields. The North Kamrup tract was frequented by buffalo and mithun. But common report stated that it was cultivated within comparatively recent times, and was depopulated because of the depredations committed by the Bhutias in former

²⁷(ASA), AARP, Revenue-A, September 1905, rules for the regulation of sport in reserved forests. Proposed reservation of the Laokhowa, North Kamrup, and Kaziranga reserve forests in Nowgaon, Kamrup and Sibsagar respectively.

days and by mortality occurred in from kala-azar. As the cultivable lands were not suffered because of the formation of reserves the tract was not disturbed. Mr. Fuller agreed, however to the reservation as a closed sanctuary for game of the northern portion of the Bijni mauza, lying to the north of the line indicated by the Chief Commissioner, which was located in the north of a line running from Gohaingaon on the Manas to the north-west corner of Kalegaon in mauza Chapaguri. This tract, the Chief Commissioner was informed, consisted of wilder country than that in the north of chapaguri and included a swamp which was one of the present habitats of the rhinoceros. Chief Commissioner asked the inclusion of this tract in the reserve forest for the protection of wildlife. Meanwhile, the tract was closed to shooting. Its area was apparently about 90 square miles, and the chief commissioner was prepared to sanction the entertainment of a game-keeping establishment on a similar scale to that appointment for the Kaziranga reserve. Therefore three game reserves namely Kaziranga, North-Kamrup and Laokhowa were proposed in 1905 the boundary of which was as follows and map was also provided.

Laokhwa game reserve:

District	Paragana or other subdivision	Name of the forest	Appropriate area in acres	Description of boundaries
1	2	3	4	5
Nowgaon	Chapori-mahal	Laokhawa	25,760	North- the Brahmaputra river from Laokhawa in a westerly direction, to the junction of the LeteriNadi with the Brahmaputra river. West- from the junction of the LeteriNadi and Brhamaputra river up the LeteriNadi to its junction in a southerly direction up the Lurijan, thense in a southerly direction up the Lurijan to its junction with the Rasotijan. South up the Luri Jan to the Point where it crosses the Laokhowa- nowgaon road. East- along the above road to Laokhawa.

Kaziranga game reserve

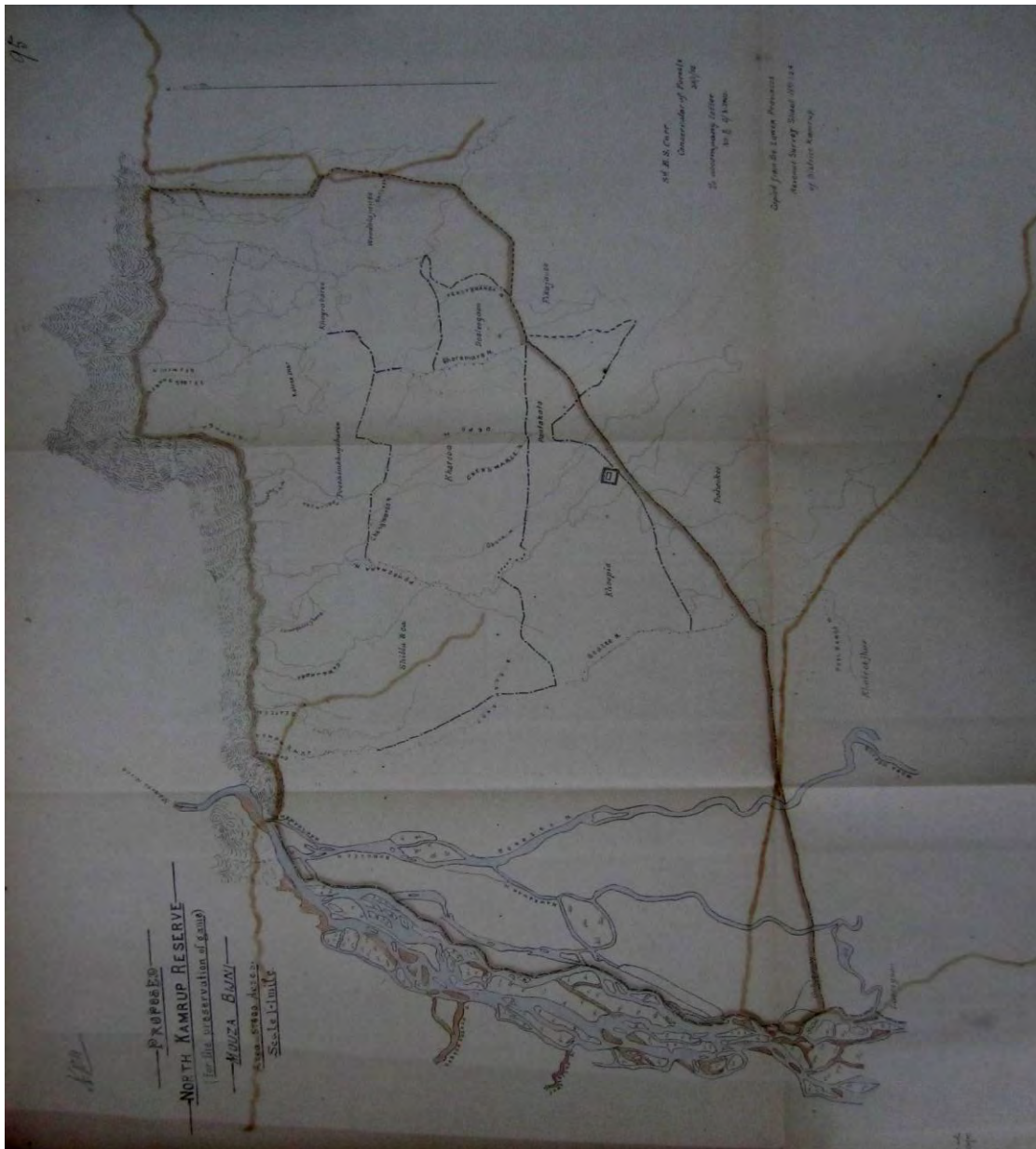
District	Paragana Or other sub-division	Name of the forest	Appropriate area in acres	Description of boundaries
1	2	3	4	5
Sibsagar and Nowgaon	Mauzanamadyong, Kaziranga (Sibsagar) and Rangalagarh (Nowgaon)	Kaziranga reserve	57,273.6	<p>North- the Maro Dhansiri from its junction with the Garumarasuti to its junction with the DiphlooNadi. Thence along the Diphloonadi to its junction with the Brahmaputra river. Thence along the Brahmaputra river from the mouth of the Diphloonadi to that of the Gutunganadi in a westerly direction.</p> <p>West- from the mouth of the GutungaNadi up that river to the base of the Malni hill, along the western base of the Malni hill to the Sibsagar- Nowgong road.</p> <p>South- Along the Sibsagar- Nowgaong road to the Hattechooli grant no.14 thence along the north-western boundary of the grant to the DiphlooNadi. Thence along the diphlooNadi to its junction with the Mathoneekhora or bibijiajan.thence in an easterly direction along theBibijiajan for a distance of 1½ Miles.</p> <p>East- from the Bibijiajan in a direction due north to the DiphlooNadi, a distance of about ¾ miles. Down the DiphlooNadi for a distance of about 2 ¼ miles. Thence in a direction due north to the Garumarasuti a distance of about ½ a mile, thence down the Garumarasuti to its junction with the Mora DhansiriNadi.</p>

North Kamrup reserve:

District	Paragana or other subdivision	Name of the forest	Appropriate area in acres	Description of boundaries
1	2	3	4	5
Kamrup	Bijnimaauza	North Kamrup reserve	57,600	<p>North- the Bhutan boundary from the Manos river in an easterly direction to the eastern boundary of the Bijnimaauza.</p> <p>East- The eastern boundary of the Bijnimaauza from the Bhutan boundary in a southerly direction to the north-west corner of Kaligaon village lands in mauzachapguri.</p> <p>South- A line running due south-west from the north-west corner of kalegaon village lands to the GeateeNadi and then due west to Gohanigaon on the river Manos.</p> <p>West- Up to east bank of the Manas river from Gohaigaon to the foot of the Bhutan hills.</p>

The trace maps are the following-

North Kamrup sanctuary



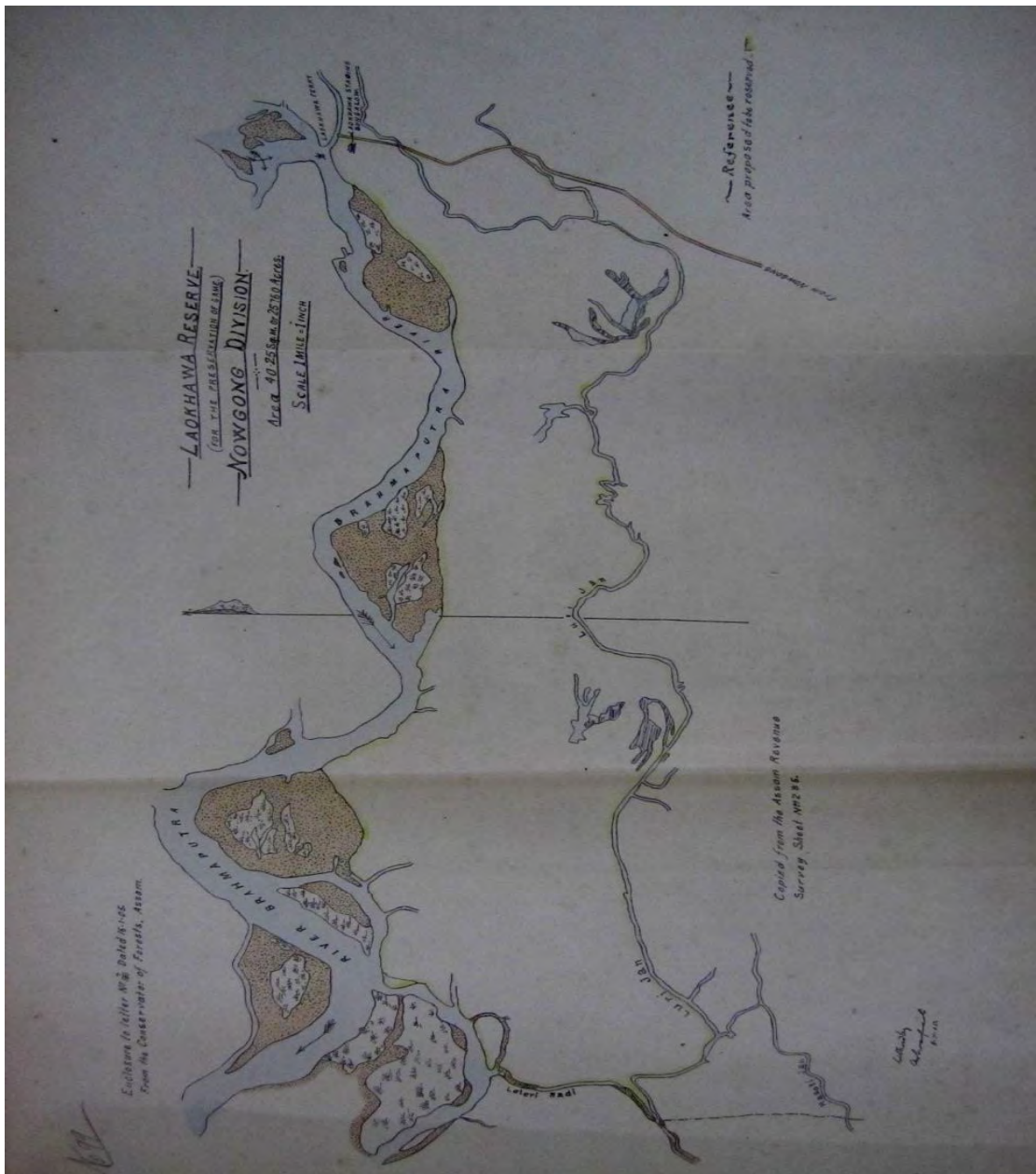
Map. 7.2. Map of proposed North-Kamrup Game Reserve, Source: (ASA) Assam Agriculture and Revenue proceedings, Revenue-A, September, 1905

Kaziranga



Map. 7.3. Map of the proposed Kaziranga Game Reserve, Source: (ASA) Assam Agriculture and Revenue proceedings, Revenue-A, September, 1905

Laokhawa



(Map. 7.4.) Map of proposed Laokhawa Game Reserve, Source: (ASA) Assam Agriculture and Revenue proceedings, Revenue-A, September, 1905

7.2 Sanctuaries during British Period

Though the formation of game sanctuary or protection of wildlife in India as well in Assam was the outcome of the international movement for the protection of wildlife, but protection of wildlife in India was a concern of provincial government. It is believed that Lady Curzon was instrumental in the declaration of Kaziranga reserve forest, in the passing of the preliminary notification about the government's intension of announcing the reserve forest on 1st June 1905. It was in this year that Lady

Curzon, wife of the then Viceroy of India, Lady Curzon, had visited the area to see the rhino but was not lucky enough to have a closer look. However, three toed footprints were enough to convince her of the existence of the beast. It is also believed that on her return she convinced her husband to take steps for the preservation of the rhino that was fast disappearing due to poaching.²⁸ Lord Curzon's role in preservation of the Indian lion in Gir forest is well known. He refused to shoot after hearing that their population had dwindled and urged the Nawab of Junagadh to give them stricter protection.²⁹ However, Arupjyoti Saikia argued that none of them played a central role in the story of Kaziranga.³⁰ However, the declining numbers of rhinoceros caused the formation of reserve forest for the protection of rhinoceros. The Renowned naturalist, late E.P. Gee believed that 'only about a dozen rhinos were left' (perhaps a few dozens) in around 1908 in Kaziranga.³¹ This led to the preservation of the game in a tract of jungle land, about 90 square miles in area, in the northern part of Bijini mauza near Kaziranga.³² Wild buffalo and wild bulls were also found in that locality. It was only in 1908 the dwindling rhino-population caught the attention of the British administrators, that a small area on the flood plains of the Brahmaputra River was declared a reserved forest.³³ Both Kaziranga and Manas were originally selected for the great one-horned Rhinoceros (*R.unicornis*). Kaziranga, the more low-lying, was particularly suited for buffalo too, the Manas for bison along the Bhutan boundary.³⁴ However, that there were six game sanctuaries in Assam during pre-independence period viz; The North Kamrup sanctuary, Manas sanctuary, Ripu Sanctuary, The Kaziranga sanctuary, Laokhowa sanctuary and Kaki sanctuary by 1929. Later Orang Game Sanctuary, Sonairupa Game Sanctuary and Pabha Game Sanctuary were also included in the list. Officials recorded that these sanctuaries contained a very fine stock of wild animals which was raised as the result of the protection afforded. Kaziranga game sanctuary remained the most popular sanctuary in the province. It was situated in the Nowgaon and Sibsagar districts on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, the river forming the northern boundary and the trunk road running

²⁸ Chooudhury, A., (2004), *Kaziranga, wildlife in Assam*, , New Delhi, RupaCo.p. 1

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ Saikia, A., (2009), *The Kaziranga National Park: Dynamics of Social and Political History, Conservation and Society*, Vol. &, Issue:2, p113-129

³¹ Chooudhury, A., (2004), p. 7

³² Allen, B.C. (1905), *Kamrup District Gazetteer*, shillong

³³ Chooudhury, A., (2004), p. 1

³⁴ *The Preservation of Wildlife In India, Bombay Natural History Society*, (2008), New Delhi: Biotech Books, originally published 1934-36, p.23

parallel and very close to the southern boundary.³⁵ The sanctuary was closed to shooting and made a reserved forest in 1908. In 1926 it became a game sanctuary.³⁶ This sanctuary occupied about 30 miles long and average 5 miles in breadth with its northern boundary on the Brahmaputra River and separated on the south from the Mikir hills by a narrow strip of cultivation. In 1929 it reported to have an area of 166 square miles. The country in the Kaziranga sanctuary comprised an open low lying grass plain formed by the Brahmaputra. The country was interested with a number of streams and water courses, and there were numerous swamps and bils which provided ample water throughout the year. There was a very heavy growth of grass and reeds from 6 to 24 high, with a few scattered tresses.³⁷ Later it spread to 130sq.kms.³⁸ In 1966, Kaziranga was upgraded to a game sanctuary and in the late 1940s its name was officially altered to 'Wildlife Sanctuary' because the word 'game' referred to those animals and birds which were shot for trophies and for meat, whereas the term 'wildlife' embraces all living creatures and implies their conservation.³⁹

North Kamrup sanctuary was situated on the east bank of the Manas River in the district of Kamrup, south of Bhutan having an area of 104 square miles. The country in which the sanctuary was somewhat similar to the Bhabar and Terai of the Himalayas in other parts of India and was formed of gently sloping ground from the outer hills of the Himalayas down to the plains proper. There was light forest with thin undergrowth to the North-West and North-East, elsewhere the uplands were covered with grass which was burnt every year. There were rivers running through the sanctuary which were rushing torrents during the rains and were dry in the cold weather. As the Terai was reached these rivers become a series of pools and in the terai itself spring water bubbles up and the ground was often marshy and covered with dense and tall grass. The foot hills contain salt licks which were frequented by game but these lied outside the sanctuary north of the boundary.⁴⁰

³⁵ PRFA, for the year, 1934-35, Shillong: AGP, 1935, p.19, para-118

³⁶ Ibid. p.50

³⁷ (NAI), Government of India, EHL Department, Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proceeding Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94

³⁸ *Hand book of Assam*, Directorate of Information & Public Relation, Government of Assam. 1976,p. 33

³⁹ Gee. E.P., The Rhino of Kaziranga, in Mahesh Rangarajan (ed.) *The Oxford Anthology of Indian Wildlife Vol.II watching and Conserving*, New Delhi: OUP, (1999), p. 216

⁴⁰ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94,

The Manas reserve was declared as game sanctuary in 1929 situated on the west bank of the Manas River in the Goalpara district, south of the Bhutan border and adjacent to the north Kamrup sanctuary with an area 40 square miles.⁴¹ The Manas Sanctuary on the Bhutan boundary consisted of 159 square miles lying partly in the Haltugaon and partly in the Kamrup divisions and was in charge of Mr. C.A.R. Bhadran, Assistant Conservator of forests, throughout the year.⁴² It provided most fascinating natural sceneries having the beautiful Manas River with excellent camping and fishing sites.⁴³ In 1928 proposal was made for the amalgamation of two sanctuaries in order to bring them under unified control and it was also considered that if the two sanctuaries were amalgamate 'poachers' would have been brought under reasonable control.⁴⁴

Laokhowa sanctuary was situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra River in Nowgong district about 30 miles west of the Kaziranga sanctuary. It was about 14 miles long, with an average width an average width of about 3 miles.⁴⁵ It was having an area of 40 square miles.⁴⁶ The country was flat and low lying somewhat similar to the Kaziranga sanctuary being covered with a dense growth of high grass and was intersected with overflow channels from the Brahmaputra which became dry during the cold weather. There were about a dozen swamps and bils. Tree forest was represented by a scattered growth of simul and khair, the former of which was said to be regenerating itself satisfactorily. Along the southern boundary the country was now fairly thickly populated and the reserve was subject to incursion.⁴⁷

Other than these sanctuary government records also show the existence of Ripu and Kaki game sanctuary by 1929. Ripu wildlife sanctuary consisted of parts of the Ripu reserved forest and lied on the south of Bhutan border in the district of Goalpara. One portion lied between the Sankosh and Jakati rivers and the other between the hel and Saralbhangha Rivers. The total area was 102 square miles. The country was similar to that on the North Kamrup and Manas sanctuaries but a good deal of ground was

⁴¹ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20

⁴² PRFA for the year 1934-35, Shillong : AGP, (1935), p.19, para-116

⁴³ Handbook of Assam, Directorate of information & public relation , Government of Assam, 1976,p.36

⁴⁴ PRFA, for the year 1928-29, Shillong: AGP (1929), p. 19, para-71

⁴⁵ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National Parks and Game Sanctuaries in India, p.93-94, NAI

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

covered by sal forest.⁴⁸ The Kaki sanctuary was situated in Nowgong district to the south west of the Mikir hills and about 7 miles of the Assam Bengal railway having an area of 71 square miles. Half the area was broken country, full of hillocks and the other half was open plain. The former consist of tree jungle and the latter grass land. The whole area was liable to be burnt annually for saving the tracts from 'poaching'.⁴⁹ One of the oldest sanctuaries of the region is Orang wildlife sanctuary located Darrang district, about 145 km away from Guwahati on the Northern bank of the Brhamaputra. It was declared a game sanctuary in 1915. It was a small sanctuary. The most important animal of the sanctuary was the Indian One-horned rhinoceros and the elephant. A few tigers and leopard were also found there. Other animals in the park were porcupine, the leopard cat, the golden jackal, the wild pig, the Black-naped hare, the hog deer, to name a few. In 1938 the minister of forest saw a considerable number of forests to his visit to the sanctuary.⁵⁰

The Sonai-Rupa Sanctuary of 67 square miles on the Aka hills was constituted in 1934 out of already existing reserved forest Chariduar reserve forest in Darrang division on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. It consisted of bils and open grassy plain with dense evergreen forest to the east and west (which remained untouched as forest preservation plots), the Himalayan foothills to the north and settled areas to the south.⁵¹ The SonaiRupa game Sanctuary was extended to 5,738 acre to include well-stocked game country. In 1923, A.J.W. Milroy was instrumental in having declared this reserve forest 13 square miles of country in which a number of solitary bull buffalo could always be found. Owners of the Assamese stock were invited to graze their animals in this reserve forest under advantageous terms on condition that they used no bulls for breeding but relied entirely upon the wild blood. But this promising scheme was not successful, however owing to the complete apathy of the public towards this enterprise. In July 1935, a resolution was passed in the legislative council asking that better protection should be afforded to wild buffaloes in order that the magnificent breed of half-wild Assamese buffalo could be saved. The formation of this sanctuary was one of the most striking example of how the public consciousness was awakened by 1934 and also an indication of favorable atmosphere in which

⁴⁸ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., B.Sranch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94, NAI

⁴⁹ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94, NAI

⁵⁰ PRFA for the year 1938-39, Shillong: AGP, 1939, p.28, para- 149

⁵¹ PRFA, for the year, 1934-35, Shillong: AGP, (1935), p.20, para-119

indigenous people cooperated with the government towards the better preservation of wildlife.⁵² By 1934 there was a growing recognition by ‘more cultured Assamese’ that nature has endowed their province with a large number of magnificent and beautiful animals which it was the duty of Assam as a civilized country to preserve for the edification and enjoyment of the rest of the civilized country.⁵³ The Forest Report of 1934-1935 remarked that, “some Assamese gentlemen interested in the matter regarding localities where wild buffalo protection could be effected following forest reservation.”⁵⁴

The concern over the preservation of wild buffaloes was initiated during 1920’s. It is said that late Mr. Milroy, conservator of forests originally initiated this project of a sanctuary for the preservation of wild buffalo and improvement of local stock of the domesticated animals.⁵⁵ However, the Assamese people were also concerned about its formation. But there were no Rhinoceros in North-Lakhimpur. A resolution passed by Legislative Council asked that greater protection should be afforded to the wild buffaloes, and greater encouragement was given to the breeding of half-wild stock for which Assam has always been famous. This needed the crossing with wild bulls from time to time to preserve its size and milking qualities. For which one tract in North-East corner of Kamrup was put up for reservation and another in the North Lakhimpur i.e Pabha Sanctuary was gazetted as it contained wild buffalo and was suitable for breeding Assamese buffalo.⁵⁶ The government of Assam did everything possible for the protection of wild buffalo. These animals existing outside reserve forest were killed but government assured that they would be preserved from extinction inside the reserve.⁵⁷ Finally the Pabha reserve was added to the list of sanctuaries during the year 1940. It was supposed to be named on Mr. A.J.W.Milroy, Conservator of Forest because of his contribution towards the formation of this sanctuary.⁵⁸

7.3 Conserving Wildlife in Sanctuaries

The nineteenth century movement for the protection of wildlife also forced the government to think about providing some kind of protection to wildlife to save some

⁵² PRFA, for the year, 1934-35, Shillong: AGP (1935), P. 21, para 121

⁵³ Ibid. para, 120

⁵⁴ PRFA for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP (1936), P.15, para- 110

⁵⁵ PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong: AGP (1941), P.26, para- 147

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ PRFA, for the year 1936-37, Shillong: AGP (1937), p. 13, para-108

of the endangered animals from total extinct. Forest officials reported that the existence of wildlife outside the reserve forest could not be hoped. This resulted in providing an asylum to the wild animals in areas under the control of forest department.⁵⁹ There were only two main game sanctuaries in Assam before 1930, Kaziranga in Sibsagar and the Manas sanctuary, made of the two former contiguous sanctuaries on each side of the Manas River. A.J.W Milroy, Conservator of forest, western circle, Assam viewed that “these are destined to become famous places in the course of time, provided adequate protection can be afforded to the animals they shelter.”⁶⁰ But the total protection to wildlife did not come at a time. It was a gradual process that led to the total protection and preservation of wildlife in sanctuaries. Sports in reserve forest were practiced till those areas were declared as wildlife sanctuaries. However, certain rules and regulation were framed by the government for practicing sports inside the forest reserve. The Chief Commissioner of Assam viewed that the forest department had not done much towards the preservation of game and the sporting rules applied till the time was ‘dead letter’. He therefore after studying the rules in central provinces and discussion with various sportsmen proposed a set of rules which was supposed to substitute the existing rules to regulate the hunting and shooting in reserve forests.⁶¹ Certainly the enforcement of a set of rules for sports in reserve forest restricted the hunting of wild animals. With the proposal for the establishment of game reserve regulations were also put on hunting in reserve forest.

7.3.1 Sports in Reserve Forests

With the proposed game reserve, came a set of new rules for sport in reserve forest. It was felt necessary that the new regulation should form to protect wild animals. A specific time period was also set by government for hunting in reserve forests. Sometime reserves were close altogether for shooting and later on when the reserves were opened for hunting, it was allowed on daily or weekly permits, for which a fee was charged and the use of which would be subject to limitations as to the amount of game to be shot.⁶² The forest regulation prohibited the dynamiting of rivers, streams,

⁵⁹ PRFA, for the year 1930-31, Shillong: AGP (1931), p. 5, para-20

⁶⁰ PRFA, for the year 1929-30, Shillong, (1930), p. 4, para- 20

⁶¹ (ASA) AARP, Revenue-A, September, 1905, Sub-Rules for the regulation of sports in reserved forest, Agriculture and Revenue proceeding, letter from E.S.Carr, Conservator of Forest, Assam to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam

⁶² (ASA) AARP. Revenue-A, September, 1905, Sub. Preservation of game in pine forest round Shillong. ASA

tanks, bils or such like of water. The conservator of forest were authorized to close shooting and hunting in any reserve forest or portion thereof where the extinction of any species was feared or where for other reason it might appeared necessary either to form a sanctuary for game or for other reasons. In closed season hunting, shooting and fishing was absolutely prohibited in forest by anyone under any pretense whatever.

The conservator of forests was authorized to close any reserved forest or portion thereof for hunting, shooting, etc., against the public generally, and in such forests hunting, shooting, fishing, netting, or setting traps or snares were prohibited except under a license in the form hereinafter given and in accordance with the prescriptions noted thereon granted by the conservator of forests, Deputy Commissioner of the District, or by the divisional forest officer. The rules were supposed to be published in Assam Gazette and a copy was to be hung up for public information in the offices of the deputy commissioners and divisional forest officers of the different districts. Licenses under rule 3 shall not ordinarily be granted between 1st January and 30th June in reserved forests except to approve sportsmen and *shikariees* for the exclusive purpose of hunting and killing carnivorous animals and such other animals as may be expressly mentioned in the licenses. These licenses were (a) non-transferable, (b) available for the period specified thereon not exceeding one month, (c) apply to a portion or the whole of any one reserve provided that if for a portion only and game is not found in that portion the permit may be made available within the period for which it is issued to another portion of the same forest and (d) provided that wounded game may be followed into another portion of a reserve than that to which the license applies. A scale of fees as under would be charged for licenses issued under the above rules.

To non-residents of Assam	Rs. 50
Outside the district in which the forests were situated	Rs. 30
Residents of the district	Rs. 20

It Provided that gazette forest officers, officers of the Assam commission, and gazetted officers of the Assam police, having to discharge duties the forest regulations were exempted from taking out licenses. The permit holders had to made a declaration as to what other animals other than carnivore they desired to hunt during the time of taking out the permit. In addition to the fees charged for the licenses the following

scale of charges would be made for certain animals hereinafter mentioned, hunted shot at or killed by the license-holder within the area to which the license applies:-

Subsequent licenses	For the first animal killed	For a second or every animal killed under the same
Rhinoceros	Rs. 50	Rs. 100
Buffalo	Rs. 10	Rs 20
Mithan	Rs. 5	2s.10

It Provided that by order of the local government these fees might be reduced if for any cause game was plentiful or became a menace to any crops surrounding the reserves. The number of animals permitted to be killed ordinarily under any one license and in any one shooting season would be regulated by the Divisional Forest Officer of the district or in consultation with him if the license was issued by any other officer. The following close seasons were to be observed for the following animals.

Rhinoceros and buffalo when accompanied by young	whole year
Female Bison (mithan)	whole year
All deer	1 st may to 31 st October
Hornless male deer or deer with horns in velvet and females of all deer	whole year

Shooting any of the above animals in the close season were liable to prosecution under the forest regulation, and if found guilty punished with the penalties, viz., up to two years' imprisonment or 500 rupees fine or both. In any reserve not closed under forest rules, shooting, hunting, of all game and fishing was prohibited except under a licenses in the form hereto annexed, provided that no animal could be shot in the close seasons, as described in rules.

The permit holders also had to follow some rules. They had to observe the close season. The holder of the permit had to camp only on such regular camping grounds which were set apart by the forest authorities, or in places specially pointed out to him by a forest officer. A permit holder might be cancelled at any time by order of the officer granting it or by the conservator of forest of the circle. Any breach of the forest regulation or of any rule made under that regulation, if committed by the holder of the permit, or any of his retainers or followers rendered the permit liable to cancellation. Permit also liable to declared invalid in regard to any particular forest in

case of fire breaking out in any part of that forest. The holder of a permit was not exempted from liability under the forest regulation or any other law, for anything done in contravention of such regulations or laws, or for any damage caused by him, his retainers or followers. Permit-holder might not enter any forests without previously giving 24 hours' notice to the local forest official. Every permit-holder had to pay for a forest guard to accompany him, and his camp during the time he was within government forest limits, whose sole duty would be to see that none of the forest rules were infringed by the permit holder or his followers. Punishment with imprisonment for a term which might extend to six months or with fine not exceeding Rs. 500, or with both, in addition to such compensation for damage done to the forest as the convicting court might direct to be paid under section 25 of Assam forest regulation.⁶³ The killing or hunting of wild animals by permit holder though restricted the destruction of wildlife but it continued at least till 1930's or even after it.⁶⁴

In spite of these rules wild animals were not provided total protection. It was only after wildlife conference for the preservation of wildlife in India that steps were taken for providing total protection to wildlife no shooting or hunting was allowed in wildlife sanctuaries. P.D.Stracay, IFS, sharing his experience of first visit in Kaziranga when it was first opened for visitors said that, "when Kaziranga was opened to visitors in the year 1938, I was one of the first to go and see it. Two friends and the Range Officers accompanied me, and we had a most exciting time on our two riding elephants. When I first saw rhino, they appeared to be most improbable-looking and prehistoric-like with their quaint features and thick armour-plating. Our party carried two rifles, one on each elephant, for "self-defence", but this practice of taking defensive weapons into a sanctuary was soon discontinued, and since then I have never taken a rifle or gun with me in self-defence at any time anywhere in India."⁶⁵ Thus, setting of rules from time to time for the protection of wildlife resulted in the conservation of wildlife.

⁶³ (ASA), AARP, Revenue-A, September 1905, Rules for the regulation of sport in reserved forests. Proposed reservation of the Laokhowa, North Kamrup, and Kaziranga forests in Nowgaon, Kamrup and Sibsagar respectively.

⁶⁴ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94

⁶⁵ Stracay, P.D., (1963), *The Wildlife in India, its Conservation and Control*, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, department of agriculture, Government of India, New Delhi, p.154

7.3.2 Preservation of Wildlife inside the Sanctuaries

With the establishment of game sanctuaries wild animals were provided better protection. Still the steps taken for the preservation of wild animals was not sufficient. The Conservator of Eastern Circle remarked regarding the protection of rhinoceros in Kaziranga as follows, "I do not consider this sanctuary alone is adequate for the purpose of protecting the rhino indefinitely from extinction. In breeding would possibly militate against this species continuing satisfactorily. It should however be possible if necessary to transfer animals from other sanctuaries or even those reared in zoological gardens for the purpose of introducing fresh blood."⁶⁶ The rhinoceros was perhaps the only animal whose extinction was at sight if adequate measures were not taken in time to prevent the killing of the animal. However, British officials recorded that they were increasing in numbers. Shooting was not authorized in any of the existing game sanctuary. Undoubtedly shooting took place when animals strayed outside the sanctuary and there was a certain amount of poaching. As this particular area had south trunk road running in the vicinity of the southern boundary with tea gardens and cultivation situated along it and also the Brahmaputra river on the north, where it was difficult to detect boating parties of poachers, and forest officers felt it necessary to provide proper game keepers if poaching was to be stopped.⁶⁷ The lack of finance or unwillingness of the British Government to spend money for the preservation of wildlife caused less number of game keeper or protective staffs employed in Kaziranga sanctuary. However, the range staffs did a certain amount of patrolling. Forest officers like Messrs, Milbourn and Scott afforded valuable help to game staff in providing protection to wildlife in sanctuaries.⁶⁸ Except for the larger swamps, the whole area was liable to be burnt between January and May to save the wild animals from poachers.⁶⁹ Facilities were also done to provide protection to wild animals in sanctuaries. Game keepers including a deputy ranger was appointed with a small staff of forest guards in these sanctuaries.

Manas wildlife sanctuary was protected by a part of the staff of the Goalpara division.

The conservator western circle makes the following remarks-

⁶⁶ (NAI), government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.99

⁶⁷ (NAI), government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94

⁶⁸ PRFA for the year 1940-41, Shillong, 1941, AGP, P. 27, para, 151

⁶⁹ (NAI), government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94

“Very little has been done towards the preservation of this game sanctuary or the enforcement of the game laws in recent years. This was due largely to the divisional officers time and attention being concentrated entirely on the Goalpara tramline and exploitation of the sal forests in other parts of the division, and to sheer apathy on the parts on the eastern range subordinates. At one time there were large quantities of rhinoceros, mithun and buffalo in this sanctuary. These have now apparently almost entirely disappeared having been poached or driven across the Monas river into Kamrup. This poaching was done by cacahries from south. The greatest danger however lies in the north where large number of Nepalese have settle in Bhuatn, where they have built machans over all the salt licks. A good many machans built by them have also been seen 6-7 miles inside the sanctuary itself. Tigers and other carnivoros are seldom destroyed by them.”⁷⁰

The officials also agreed that if adequate steps were not taken it would have not been possible to preserve a good number of wild animals in North-Kamrup Sanctuary. There were a few rhinoceros, mithun and buffalo left in the sanctuary. A good deal of illicit shooting was seen in this sanctuary.⁷¹ However, officials recorded that poaching was not serious and was confined to the killing of deer and occasional fishing.⁷²

Kaki sanctuary was worded by a forest guard. As the area was far away from villages and surrounding country was sparsely populated there was little danger from poaching. Shooting was not authorized in this sanctuary. As the area was surrounded by thick jungles and there was very large area of low hills close to thinly populated and jungle covered. No species in this sanctuary was in danger of extinction. Regarding Ripu sanctuary very little was done in matter of warding. Rhinoceros which were once plentiful in this locality, were almost all shot out before the formation of the sanctuary. The protection in this sanctuary was not cared off partly because of the lack of staff to allot to the duty of game preservation and partly on account of enormous amount of poaching done by Nepalese settled across the border in Bhutan. They killed great numbers of the animals visiting the salt licks outside the sanctuary in Bhutan territory and some years ago they assaulted a forest guard who

⁷⁰ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and Game Sanctuaries in India, p. 95

⁷¹ Ibid, p.93-94

⁷² PRFA for the year, 1935-36, Shillong: AGP, (1936), p.14 para-103

ventured to interfere with some of them whom he caught poaching in the sanctuary. However, no authorized shooting was carried on except that occasional permits were issued to kill tigers.⁷³ In Laokhowa sanctuary there was a deputy ranger and a game keeper in charge. This sanctuary alone was not considered adequate for protecting the rhino from extinction, but situated as it was not too far from Kaziranga, it was possible for animals from one sanctuary to gain access to the other. The rhinoceros was the only species at that moment in danger of extermination.⁷⁴

There are enough evidences of rhinoceros poaching in Kaziranga sanctuary by shooting and pitting. Poaching was noticed in Kaziranga sanctuary particularly by riverain Miris who took a large toll of deer annually. The divisional forest officer with the support of the government tried to suppress the illicit operations and even government made adequate arrangements for the safeguarding of the fauna in Kaziranga sanctuary. An Assistant Conservator of Forest was attached to Kamrup to be in charge of the Manas sanctuary under the conservator and to attend in court whenever poaching cases were being tried. Divisional staff also rendered valuable assistance to the Assistant Conservator.⁷⁵ Official recorded that by 1933 rhinoceros was effectively protected in the Manas sanctuary of 159 square miles and measures are being taken to ensure its protection in the Kaziranga sanctuary of 165 square miles.⁷⁶ The Laokhowa Reserve was small and not of the first class importance, the villagers often offended specially the immigrants Mymensinghians in the neighborhood of Laokhowa Reserve, continued to give trouble either by grazing or by burning the forest in the hope that by so doing they would induce the forest department to disforest the area and the same tactics was followed elsewhere like Doboka.⁷⁷

Poaching was also reported during 1940s and 3 guns were seized.⁷⁸ Poaching was reported in Kochugaon and Darrang (orang Sanctuary) were 2 rhino were destroyed.⁷⁹ Kaziranga remained fairly free from poachers, but the reverse was the case on the Manas which was infested by bands of Cacharis armed with unlicensed guns for the destruction of rhinoceros and so they aver, of any human who dares to interfere with

⁷³ (NAI), Government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and Game Sanctuaries in India, p.93-94

⁷⁴ (NAI), Government of India, EHL Dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94

⁷⁵ PRFA, for the year 1933-34, Shillong: AGP (1934), P.3, para-28

⁷⁶ PRFA, for the year 1933-34, Shillong: AGP (1934), p.17, para-99

⁷⁷ PRFA, for the year 1934-354, Shillong: AGP, (1935),p.3, para-31

⁷⁸ PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong: AGP, (1941), p. 26, para 148

⁷⁹ PRFA for the year,1940-41, Shillong: AGP, (1941), p. 26, para 149

them.⁸⁰ In Sonai-rupa Sanctuary the deputy range reported that there were 12-13 rhinoceros in 1935 and also reported that the number of the animals was increasing as he found foot prints in localities which did not usually visit.⁸¹

In 1940 the number of tigers were increased so much that the divisional forest officer reported as follows- “tigers have increased to such an extent that there must have been a good deal of fight amongst themselves for booty. The carcass of a hog deer with the skin over, was seen by the writer, hanging from the branch of a tree about 15’ from the ground. Apparently when several tigers were fighting for enjoying the kill one must have taken it up and hung it by putting the head of the deer in between the branch and the main tree, so that he along can enjoy while the rest will be watching him. Innumerable scratching on the bark over the trunk of the tree showed that attempts were made by the rest also to have a part of the booty.”⁸² A good number of red dog were also some time reported and game particularly deer were undoubtedly scared-attempts were made to destroy or drive out these pests.⁸³ In the game sanctuary of Laokhowa reserve in the Nowgong division 3 rhinos were drifted during flood and reported to have been killed by villagers. Two horns thereof were recovered but no trace could be found of the third. In the North-Kamrup Game sanctuary near the Bekiriver a very old Rhino was found dead but the horn could not be recovered even with the help of police. It appeared to have been died of old age.⁸⁴

The cases of poaching in reserve were also common. A serious offence was committed the North Kamrup Game Sanctuary and elephant was killed and the tusks surreptitiously removed. Even though rhinoceros poaching by shooting and pitting was being prohibited in the reserves of Assam, it was found carried on systematically in the Kaziranga sanctuary. Poaching occurred in the North- Kamrup game sanctuary on a serious scale. The Cacharis living along the south boundary of the sanctuary in an areas that has been very much neglected from the administrative point of view proclaimed that they intended to kill rhinoceros, consequent on the dismissal by the sub-divisional officer of several minor cases where poachers had been caught practically red-handed, on the grounds that there were no witness other than game sanctuary staff. Two cases on the very men who had been reported several years

⁸⁰ PRFA, for the year 1929-30, Shillong: AGP (1930), p. 4, para-20.

⁸¹ PRFA, for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP (1936), p.14, para, 105

⁸² PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong: AGP, (1941), p. 26, para 150

⁸³ PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong: AGP, (1941), p. 26, para 151

⁸⁴ PRFA, for the year 1946-47, Shillong: AGP, (1947), p. 17, para-108

before, were willing to put down Rs.1000/- from time to time for the carcass of a rhino. The world had gone out that the civil department would not back up the forest department and naturally the Cacharies, who were a fine, brave lot of men, sized their opportunity. It was not known how many rhinoceros were killed but rumour had that one man alone disposed of 8 horns.⁸⁵ The Nepalese inhabitants who were brought in 1927 to make road for the Maharaja and the political officers, also led to poaching in the Manas game sanctuary by crossing.⁸⁶ During flood most part of the Kaziranga sanctuary went under water and the game moved towards the hills and took to high ground.

Epidemics were also if not common could be seen often. Many rhinos were died and not less than 16 carcasses were discovered in 1947 in the Kaziranga sanctuary as a result of an epidemic of anthrax. That represents a serious diminution of the existing stock of rhinos and emphasized the danger of grazing of cattle in a sanctuary, as such diseases were transmitted by cattle.⁸⁷ The rhino of kaziranga were also knocked down by running train near Furkating railway station.⁸⁸ By the end of the British rule the cases of poaching decreased, no cases of poaching was detected in Sonai-rupa Sanctuary and in the Orang reserve in the Darrang Division which contained a few rhinoceros.⁸⁹ But in the Laokhawa reserve persistent cases of poaching were reported. Gun licenses were cancelled caught in the reserve.⁹⁰ In spite of occasional poaching cases a good number of animals were protected in the reserve. In 1935 Mr. Miri, Deputy Assistant Forest Officer, was of the view that there were not less than 50 pairs of adult Rhinoceros in the Sanctuary. The most favorable areas were restricted. Steps were also adopted for pitting live specimens for the sale to zoological gardens that would brought profit to the department and relieve the congestion and overcrowding of the animals that was otherwise would occur.⁹¹ A non-official expedition made into the sanctuary saw 15 rhinoceros in one day, all more or less in the same place.⁹² In 1938 the governor and Minister of forests inspected the Kaziranga sanctuary for 2 mornings and seen 35 rhinos on the first day and 24 on the second day.⁹³ Again

⁸⁵ PRFA, for the year 1928-29, Shillong: AGP, (1929), p. 19, para-71

⁸⁶ PRFA, for the year 1928-29, Shillong: AGP, (1929), p. 19, para-71

⁸⁷ PRFA, for the year 1947-48, Shillong: AGP, (1947), p. 19- para-124

⁸⁸ PRFA, for the year 1947-48, Shillong: AGP, (1947), p. 19- para-124

⁸⁹ PRFA, for the year 1946-47, Shillong: AGP, (1947), p. 19, para- 122

⁹⁰ PRFA, for the year 1946-47, Shillong: AGP, (1947), p. 19, para- 122

⁹¹ PRFA. for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP (1936), p. 14 para-104

⁹² PRFA. for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP (1936), p. 14 para-104

⁹³ PRFA. for the year 1938-39, Shillong: AGP (1939),p. 28 para-148

another party saw 31 in one morning.⁹⁴ Because of these protection policies that Kaziranga in present days is perhaps the highest conservation success in India, if not Asia.⁹⁵ Game preservation was very successful owing to the efforts of the Deputy Ranger. Cachari poachers constantly raid the sanctuary from the south but are seldom successful. It was recorded that during 1929 none of the species of the North Kamrup sanctuary was in danger of extermination and no shooting was, though suggestions were made that a limited amount of shooting be allowed to prevent over stocking.⁹⁶ The preservation of wildlife in game reserve led to the increase of the numbers of wild animals in the reserve. The numbers of Buffalo increased very markedly since the Caharies were prevented from shooting them, and were common on the two branches of the Manas River: there was suitable country both east and west into which they could spread.⁹⁷ Tamed buffalo herds were grazed under control along the Brahmaputra River. Their presence must have deterred the rhino to some extent from reaching the river and crossing to almost certain doom in Darrang, and their continuance there was only permitted on the understanding that the *goalas* actively assisted the department in keeping out marauding parties that might arrive in boats from across the river. These tamed buffaloes were immunized by the veterinary department against rinderpest. Several suspicious deaths of wild buffaloes were noticed by the forest officers. Mr. M.C. Miri Extra Assistant Conservator, reported several herds in bad condition but they were recovered after the Mr. Milroy the conservator of forest inspected the principal buffalo area.

By 1940s British officials reported that the number of game increased in most of the sanctuaries including Kaziranga, North Kamrup where Buffalo were reported to have been increased but rhino and swamp deer were regrettably scarce due to poaching mainly it was reported by concessionaries, who used to remove produce in exchange of free labour.⁹⁸ The matter was enquired into and it was agreed that such concession would had to be withdrawn. Though the exact number of rhinos were not known but they were numerous as visitors could usually see herds of 20-30 rhinoceros in a day as well as large herds of buffaloes, deer and occasionally a tiger or elephants.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ PRFA, for the year 1938-39, Shillong: AGP (1939), p. 28 para-148

⁹⁵ Chooudhury, A., Kaziranga, wildlife in Assam, 2004, New Delhi, RupaCo. p. 1

⁹⁶ (NAI), government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94, NAI

⁹⁷ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP, (1935), p.19, para-116

⁹⁸ PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong: AGP, (1941), p. 26, para 149

⁹⁹ PRFA, for the year 1945-46, Shillong: AGP, (1946), p. 22, para- 124

Improvements in patrol in Nowgaon had satisfactory results in the Laokhowa reserve, part of which was preserved for wildlife and rhino were reported to have been frequently seen. The government was also satisfied as 3 rhinos, 8 buffalos and numbers of hog dears were seen during investigation.¹⁰⁰ Fencing of forest was also necessitated so that the animals of the reserve forest might not cross the protective area. It was in 1905 in the pine forest of Shillong it was realized by the forest officials to fence it. Otherwise it was most probable that the deer of the forests would move out of the forest. It was also felt necessary to preserve the game birds from jackals, snakes and certain other vermin's.¹⁰¹

7.4 Game in Sanctuaries

A number of wild animals were preserved in wildlife sanctuaries as a result of protection policies. Rhinoceros, tigers, buffaloes, sambhar, deer, bison and mithun etc. were the main species preserved in the sanctuaries of Assam. Rhinoceros made Kaziranga world famous and which was most endangered. At present Kaziranga is called the home of one-horned India rhinoceros and about 60 percent of its world population concentrated in this park.¹⁰² But on the eve of the nineteenth century Rhinoceros was on the verge of extinction. It was because of the gradual protection policies that the animal was saved. Elephant (probably only during cold weather months), buffalo, bison, and mithun (probably only during cold weather months), swamp deer, hog deer, Sambhar, bear, pig, hare, tiger, leopard and other cats were found in this sanctuary. At the beginning of twentieth century it was estimated that only about a dozen rhinoceros were left in Kaziranga.¹⁰³ The government records of 1929 shows that there were probably 40 or 50 rhinoceros in Kaziranga Sanctuary. It chiefly concentrated in the bil country. It fond of low lying country covered with tall thatch and *ekra* through which they roam about and wallow in the mud. But gradual opening of such places to cultivation made the existence of such animals precarious.¹⁰⁴ But that did not reduce the number of rhinoceros as the forest report of 1834-35 reveals that there were not less than 30 pairs and there might easily be as

¹⁰⁰ PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong: AGP, (1941), p. 26, para 148

¹⁰¹ (ASA) AARP. Revenue-A, sept. 1905, sub. Preservation of game in pine forest round shillong.

¹⁰² Chooudhury, A., (2004), Kaziranga, Wildlife in Assam, New Delhi, Rupa Co.p. 6

¹⁰³ *Wild life sanctuaries in India*, Issued on behalf of Department of Tourism Ministry of transport and Communication, Government of India, New Delhi, March 1961, p. 50

¹⁰⁴ PRFA, for the year 1931-32, Shillong: AGP, (1932),p.5, para-26

many as 50 rhinoceros in Kaziranga.¹⁰⁵ No estimate of other games is available.¹⁰⁶ Elephants were also found in the Kaziranga as it being low-lying. Solitary males were also not uncommon in this sanctuary. Bison were found in the higher land to the north-east, sambhur where there was tree jungle, swamp deer, hog deer and barking deer in the grassy tracts. Buffalo were very numerous, though they seem to carry surprisingly poor heads for Assam.¹⁰⁷ They display themselves in a most gratifying manner once the Jungle was burnt and the new grass come up. It was possible to approach with caution on an elephant to very close range in the open provided the wind was in the right direction, for the slightest taint of human smell is sufficient to put them in the right direction. Their native truculence, however, becomes evident as soon as they were disturbed in cover, when they were apparently prepared to charge anything that comes too near.¹⁰⁸ It was hoped that the ease with which they could be viewed during certain months and the proximity of their haunts to the trunk road would prove attractive to visitors, for whose requirements as regards elephants and guides it should be possible to cater satisfactorily. Carnivore and bear were scarce and wild dogs unknown in this sanctuary.¹⁰⁹

Though Manas sanctuary was formed for the protection of rhinoceros but later it became famous for buffaloes. It also harbored elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, bison, Sāmbhar, swamp deer, hog deer, barking deer, tiger, leopard, pygmy hog etc. However, No estimate of the number of game in this sanctuary is available, however officials records that it was numerous. As many as 159 swamp deer were counted grazing on one maiden. By 1929 it was reported that the population was rhinoceros increased so much in the North-Kamrup Sanctuary that it was a hazardous matter to go through their territory and they were in the uplands a circumstance unknown before.¹¹⁰ Wild buffaloes are the animals for which Manas sanctuary is famous at present. These animals carry larger horns and grow bigger than the wild buffalo of other parts of India. The cows have longer horns and the bulls have thicker ones. The wild buffaloes of Assam and of other parts of India like that of Orissa, Madhya

¹⁰⁵ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP, (1935), p.19, para-118

¹⁰⁶ (NAI), Government of India, EHL Dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National Parks and Game Sanctuaries in India, p.93-94, NAI

¹⁰⁷ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP, (1935), p.19, para-118

¹⁰⁸ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP, (1935), p.19, para-118

¹⁰⁹ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP, (1935), p.19, para-118

¹¹⁰ (NAI), government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, Sub. National Parks and Game Sanctuaries in India, p.93-94

Pardesh and Andhra are genuinely wild ones- the ancestors of domestic water buffalo. They are not feral (or animals which were once domesticated but which have since returned to a wild state) like the ones of Ceylon, northern Australia and some other parts of the world.¹¹¹ The domestic buffalo of Assam are similar to the wild ones due to admixture of wild blood, but slightly smaller. In other provinces of India, domestic buffalo are often totally different in conformation due to many centuries of selective breeding for the best milking strains.¹¹² In 1963, P.D.Stracey, IFS, viewed that there were hardly any rhinoceros left in Manas Sanctuary. Wild buffaloes in herds were very cagy and difficult to approach closely for photography (see. Fig. 7.1). As a general rule they were not at all destructive but solitary wild bull were usually bad-tempered, frequently due to having been harassed by disgruntled herdsmen.¹¹³ There were not many rhinos in the Manas Sanctuary because of 'poachers'. Elephants were also found in this sanctuary. They move freely in and out of the reserve, as they do not stay in one place. The elephants of Manas sanctuary are among the biggest in India, with some very large tusker. Gaurs were also seen. Tiger and leopard were preserved in the sanctuary but because of the vastness of the sanctuary it was not possible to see them.¹¹⁴ Among other animals clouded leopard, black bear, sambar, swamp deer, capped and golden langur, slow loris, common and clawless otter, hispid hare, wild boar, pigmy hog and gharial in the rivers could be seen in the sanctuary. Bison keep very much to the neighborhood of the foot hills and was always found in good numbers at certain places. Tiger, leopard and Himalayan and sloth bear were also found. Bear were very common. Wild dogs were scarcer than formally, in fact almost rare but they were probably more numerous in actual hills.¹¹⁵ The great Indian rhinoceros were mostly lived in the reedy swamps and so it was difficult for the forest officials to estimate their number. This animal was carefully looked after by the forest officials and they assured that their number would increase if they were given protection from 'poachers'. In 1934 forest officials reported that there must have 15-25 pairs of rhinoceros apart from immature animals were found in Manas Sanctuary.¹¹⁶ Mr. C.A. R. Bhadrans, Assistant Conservator of forest believed that most

¹¹¹ Stracay, P.D., (1963), *The Wildlife in India, Its Conservation and Control*, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, Government of India, New Delhi, p.138

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Ibid. P. 139

¹¹⁴ Gee, E.P., (1986), *The Wild Life of India*, New Delhi Sterling Publisher, P. 110

¹¹⁵ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP (1935), p.19, para-116

¹¹⁶ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP (1935), p.19, para-116

of the rhinoceros migrated at one special season of the year up to Bhutan but the reason for which he said a matter of further investigation.¹¹⁷

Sonairupa sanctuary contained wild elephants, bison, sambhur and barking deer in abundance, pig and pygmy Hog and wood Duck. Tigers, leopard, bear and wild dog were all found.¹¹⁸ There were solitary bulls and no buffalo herds were seen in this sanctuary. Rhinoceros and buffalo were distinctly. In Kaki game Sanctuary elephant, bison (mithun), buffalo, bear (malay and sloth), pig, sambhar, barking deer, hare, porcupine, tiger, leopard and other jungle cats were found but no estimate of its number is available.¹¹⁹ In Laokhowa the game was similar to that in kaziranga, elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, bison, and mithun, swamp deer, hog deer (sloth), pig, porcupine, tiger, leopard, and other cats were found.¹²⁰ The following are some of the animals preserved in wildlife sanctuaries of Assam.



Fig. No. 7.1 Wild buffalo in the Laokhowa Game sanctuary, Nowgaon, Photo by Mr. J.B. Rowntree, IFS, Source: Reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1939-40.

¹¹⁷ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP (1935), p.19, para-116

¹¹⁸ PRFA, for the year 1934-35, Shillong: AGP (1935), p.20, para-119

¹¹⁹ (NAI), government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94, NAI

¹²⁰(NAI), government of India, EHL dept., Branch-forest, A, July, 1929, proc. Nos. 3-20, sub. National parks and game sanctuaries in India, p.93-94, NAI



Fig. No. 7.2 Tiger in the North Kamrup game sanctuary, photo by Mr. C.G.Baron, Honorary forest officers. Source: Reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1939-40.

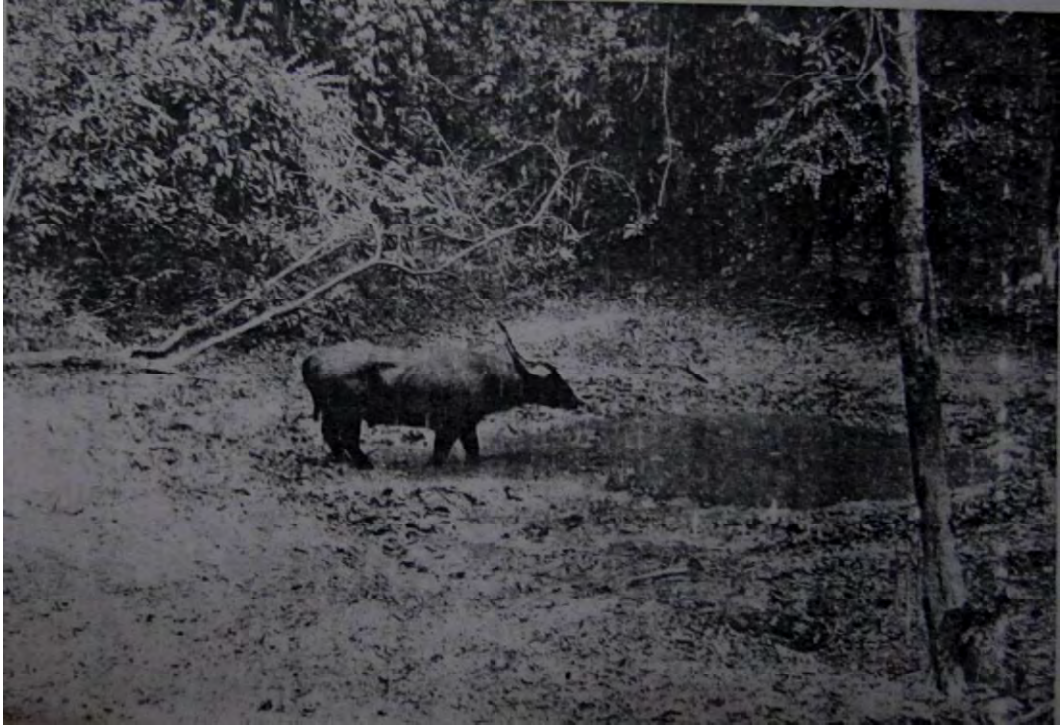


Fig.No. 7.3 Buffalo, North Kamrup Game Sanctuary, photos by Mr. C.G.Baron, honorary forest officer. Source: Reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1940-41.



Fig.No. 7.4 Buffalo, North Kamrup Game Sanctuary, photos by Mr. C.G.Baron, honorary forest officer. Source: Reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1940-41.



Fig. No. 7.5 Sambhur, in the North Kamrup Game sanctuary, photos by Mr. C.G. Baron, Honorary forest officer, source: Reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1940-41.



Fig. No. 7.6 Sambhur, in the North Kamrup Game sanctuary, photos by Mr. C.G. Baron, Honorary forest officer, source: Reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1940-41.



Fig. No. 7.7 Tiger in the Manas Sanctuary, Photo by Mr. W.Milburne, Honorary forest officer, Source: Reproduced from the progress report of forest administration in the province of Assam for the year 1940-41

7.5 Commercialization of the Wildlife

In India the scientific preservation of wildlife in sanctuaries was not an easy task. The issue of formation of wildlife sanctuary was persistently discussed by British local officials. With the ignorance and apathy of the British government the task of formation of wildlife sanctuaries was difficult. Other than these the need for the extension of cultivation to meet the need of increasing population and the government urge to earn maximum forest revenue it was difficult to persuade the authorities and the public to set aside funds for such purposes. Though the aesthetic and cultural value of wildlife was appreciated but it was the economic value of wildlife that led to the formation of wildlife sanctuaries. A useful argument was the potential economic values of India's wildlife as a source of revenue from tourism, ultimately resulted in the formation of wildlife sanctuaries. These assumed great success in Kenya as well as in Africa. According to E.P.Gee, tea planter and naturalist in India the Kaziranga wildlife sanctuary of Assam was the most convincing. Kaziranga was opened to

visitors in the year 1938.¹²¹ The sanctuary was regularly visited and appreciated by the people. Officials were also appointed who were tasked to help people to see and photograph wild animals in their natural habitat. Each year around Rs.200 to Rs.300 was received from the visitors to each reserve. In 1940 a sum of Rs. 215 (Rs.315) was received from visitors to Kaziranga reserve.¹²² Government made various facilities of providing government elephants at a fixed rate on hire.¹²³ In 1945 a sum of Rs. 960 was realized as view fees and for elephant hire by the visitors.¹²⁴ Arrangements were also made for taking colour files of the animals in 1936. However, the attempt was postponed as the party could not commence the operations before the new grass had grown too high.¹²⁵ Grazing and fishing in the sanctuaries for revenue continued till the end of the British rule. Professional graziers were still allowed to graze their herds in some sanctuaries of Assam. Fishing in certain bills inside the sanctuary also continued till the end of British rule.¹²⁶ Formation of wildlife sanctuaries commercialized the wild animals and the wildlife sanctuaries.

Wildlife became useful as a commodity since the British annexation of the Province. Wild animals were sold as goods to other countries in which Rhinoceros played the major role. Rhinoceros were sent to Washington zoo and some time to zoological society of London for a good sum.¹²⁷ In 1946 three rhinos were captured for dispatch to the London Zoo. Though most of the time these rhinoceros died in the way. Among the three rhinoceros dispatched to London Zoo two died- one died at Santahar due to injuries received by dashing against the acge and the other due to injury received in the leg of capture. The third one was sent successfully to Calcutta zoo after the close of the year for dispatch to London.¹²⁸ The amount received by the selling of rhinoceros was high. In 1933-34 a male rhino calf, which was found wandering and captured by some villagers in Darrang, was subsequently sold by the department for Rs.3,000 to a representative of the Paris zoo.¹²⁹ In 1947 a male and a female rhino

¹²¹ Staracy , *The Wildlife in India, its Conservation and Control*, Ministry of food and agriculture, department of agriculture, government of India, new Delhi, 1963. P. 138

¹²² PRFA, for the year 1940-41, Shillong, AGP, (1941), p. 26, para 149

¹²³ PRFA, for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP, (1936), p. 14, para-104

¹²⁴ PRFA, for the year 1945-46, Shillong, AGP, (1946), p. 22, para 124

¹²⁵ PRFA, for the year 1935-36, Shillong: AGP, (1936), p. 14, para-104

¹²⁶ PRFA, for the year 1946-47, Shillong, AGP, (1947), p. 17,para-111

¹²⁷ PRFA, for the year 1945-46, Shillong, AGP, (1946), p.22 para-126

¹²⁸ PRFA, for the year 1946-47, Shillong, AGP, (1947), p. 17,para-110

¹²⁹ PRFA, for the year 1933-34, Shillong, AGP, (1934),p.19, para-107

were sent to Chicago Zoo under the personal supervision of Mr. Ralph Graham.¹³⁰ Rhinoceros were also taken by the British government for display to British Zoo. The honorary secretary, Zoological garden, Calcutta, offered a sum of Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1000 for an adolescent rhinoceros. The export of rhinos continued even after the independence. In 1950 two young rhinoceros were captured and sold to the Basle Zoo, Switzerland and Milan zoo, Italy.

Thus, in Assam the formation of wildlife sanctuaries was the result of the efforts made by some provincial officials. The concern over protecting a harmless species rhinoceros led to the proposal for the establishment of three sanctuaries in Assam. They were Kaziranga, Manas and Laokhowa game sanctuaries. Later one many sanctuaries were added in the list. The formation of number of game sanctuaries provided better protection to wild animals and gradually the number of wild animals was increased in the sanctuaries. But the tribes were separated from their original habitation and their rights over forest including wildlife, which caused the cases of poaching in the sanctuaries. The staff employed for the protection of wild animals in sanctuaries was not sufficient as the government was ready to spend much on the protection of wildlife. Thus, the protection of wildlife was not the prime concern of the British government. Some of the local British officials made efforts to provide an asylum in form of forest reserve or game sanctuary. Gradually wild animals were provided total protection in wildlife sanctuaries but the large number of destruction of wildlife during British rule affected the population of wildlife in Assam which could not be brought again.

¹³⁰ PRFA, for the year 1947-48, Shillong, AGP, (1947),p. 19, para-125

Chapter - 8

CONCLUSION

“India’s heritage of wild life is fast becoming a vanishing asset and some of our notable animals such as lion, rhinoceros, tragopan, cheetah, are on the verge of extinction.”¹

The above quote indicates the huge loss of wild animal population by 1950s. The province of Assam was also once full with rich and varied wild animals but the colonialism brought a different phase in the history of wildlife. The process of destruction of wildlife that was started after occupation of the province by the British led various wild animals on the verge of extinct and some in the list of endangered animals. The history of wildlife during British rule can be divided into three phases. In the first phase attempts were made to exterminate the wildlife which continued till 1900. In second phase attempts were made to protect wild animals in reserve forest but hunting was still practiced though under strict regulations. This phase continued till 1934. The conference for the protection of wildlife in India brought the phase of maximum protection of wildlife and hunting was banned inside the sanctuaries. Though the destruction of wildlife started with the annexation of the Province by the British but there was no concrete policy towards the wildlife in Assam prior to 1874. There was no attempt for clearance of jungle till 1851 as the peasant had to pay revenue out of their pocket even for the clearance of 100 yards of jungle from their habitation. Assam being a periphery part under Bengal province was ignored. It was when the British government realized the importance of extension of tea plantation that Assam was declared as a separate province. The introduction of railways in 1850 also facilitated the cutting of large number of trees for meeting the needs of wooden sleepers. The colonial need of timber and extension of the cultivation led to the clearance of jungle and wild animals losing the natural habitation started coming into human habitation. This caused more human-wildlife conflict.

¹ Burton, R. W., (1953), *The Preservation of Wildlife in India*, Bangalore: Bangalore Press, P.IX

Forest played a very significant role in the life of the people of Assam during pre-British period. Forest provided a universe to them in which they resorted to jhumming, hunted the games, collected fruits, roots, tapped rubber juice and caught wild animals for games, trade in exchange. Most of the tribes depended on hunting for their livelihood. Tribal people of Assam i.e. Garos, Mikirs (Karbis), Cacharese, Cossyah (Kasiahs), Meeris, Abors, Mishmis, Nagas, Akhas, Duflas, Shigphos, the Khamptis, Kukies were mostly depended on hunting and forest products for their livelihood. They eat meat of almost all the wild animals including elephant, rhinoceros, tiger, buffaloes, bear, dogs, pigs etc. As these tribes were mostly depended on forest they never attempted to destroy the forest and wildlife. These tribes had their own practices to protect the nature and managed by their own. The traditional practices revered the wild animals as for instance the Mikirs (Karbi) did not kill tigers for the fear it might offend their god. The native inhabitants of Cossya hills feared bison as evil spirit. Wild animals were also preserved in mangroves by in Lushai hills. Though there was no proper protection of wild animals still they were preserved and not destroyed. The Assamese people also revered the forest and wild animals. There was no professional class of *shikariees* in Assam as there was no native *shikariees* found in Assam. This is the reason when the British government attempted to exterminate wild animals they called up *shikariees* from neighboring provinces like from Purnia district of Bengal. Prior to the British rule hunting was practiced only as leisure activity but the British annexation of Assam changed the concept of hunting in the province. The game hunting gradually transform into the commodification of wild animals when the British realized the market value of its horn and skin.

The British annexation of Assam brought a new fate for the wild animals as well as for the tribal population of Assam. The need for the extension of tea plantation caused the huge destruction of wild animals as they were a hindrance towards the extension of the tea cultivation. The killing of wild animals by local inhabitants was occasionally practiced but the after the British annexation of Assam the killing of wild animals became a gradual process. The need for the extension of tea plantation led to the clearance of jungle i.e. wildlife habitation. The extension of cultivable land was necessitated as the main motive of the colonial state was to earn more revenue. The extension of tea also led the British government to call up labourer from Bihar, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa etc. The need of labourers for growing tea plantation could not be fulfilled by the local labourers. The labourers from other

provinces were encouraged to migrate with family. This led to the increase of population. To meet the need of food of the increased population extension of agricultural land was also necessitated which caused the clearance of jungle. In addition to these the introduction of railways demanded huge amount of timber which too caused the clearance of jungle to meet the need of wooden sleepers for railway tracts. Earlier wooden sleepers were imported from Norway which was a costly proposition for the British but the main cause of the clearance of jungle was the extension of tea cultivation.

The British official polices initiated the destruction of wild animals by projecting damage caused by wild animals for the safety of life of people and property. After the discovery of tea in Assam and need for its extension led to the extermination of huge number of wild animals. Primarily the economic interests of colonial state from the forest and wildlife were driven to initiate policies for the destruction of wild animals. Simultaneously commodification of wildlife started with the tea. British officials for instance Captain B. Rogers of Bengal Corps identified that the selling of wild beast skins would bring a lakhs of rupees per annum. The selling of horn and hides of elephants, rhinoceros and buffaloes also brought good sum of amount for the government. After recognising the commercial value of the wild animals the British officials agreed that there was too much profit in the business of rhinoceros horn. The policy of extermination of wild animals was justified for the safety of life and property but it was applicable only to carnivores. Though rhinoceros is not a destructive animal but it was killed in such a large number that led rhinoceros on the verge of extinct by the early part of twentieth century. This animal was also exterminated from those places where once they were numerous. Rhinoceros was the main attraction of the British sportsmen and elites, the animal was also killed for its horn for its market value. It was also easy to kill rhinoceros because of their habit of depositing its ordure always on the same spot until a considerable mound formed. This caused the killing of rhinoceros in large numbers. Apart from these though elephants were preferred to be captured but in initial days of colonial rule they were also killed for ivory. Elephants became extinct from those places where once they were found in large numbers by the early twentieth century,. The main motive of the British government to the extinct of the wild animals was the extension of tea cultivation and commercialisation of wild animals.

Hunting was practiced by all the classes of people. For elites hunting gave them social standing and fame. The hunting by elites went beyond the purpose of recreation and could be linked with the question of cultural negotiation with colonial elite. The native rulers and zamindars did not allow the British to capture the forest within their estate as that could help them to make friendship with the British officials by giving them opportunity to hunt in their estate. Hunting was an aspect which made a good social network between the ruling families both within and outside Assam. The Maharaja of Cooch Behar was a close friend of Phukan by virtue of their hunting practice. Phukan's family were also good friend of the British by virtue of their hunting practices. Hunting for game was a popular concept during the British rule. British officials were encouraged to spend time in hunting during vacations and leisure time. A large number of wildlife sports accounts reveal the experience of hunting by British officials. The peasant did not normally involve themselves in the killing of wild animals. But only on some occasions they organised themselves to kill destructive wild animals when wild animals destroyed their crops and killed cattle. Other than this the peasant class did not involve themselves in killing wild animals. They feared wild animals and normally did not attempt to kill wild animals. They feared wild animals so much that on hearing news of tiger they approached British officials to help the villagers from its attack. The peasants appreciated the killing of wild animals by British officials as it saved their crops and cattle. They also occasionally accompanied British officials in their hunting expedition to collect the flesh especially of rhinoceros. But they themselves did not kill wild animals as they believed wild animals are a form of 'bad spirit'. For British officials wildlife hunting was a sort of character-building. It depicted the masculine power of the officials over the orient nature and indigenous people. On the other hand they criticized the hunting practice of tribal people as 'uncivilized' and 'utilitarian'. British officials depicted their cultural and ideological superiority over the indigenous people. However, British officials hunting with guns and modern arms, sometimes wounded tigers and other wild animals which were became more destructive for human life and cattle.

The clearance of jungles led the wild animals to enter the human habitation which was contributory factor for more human-wildlife conflict. It reached a stage where both wild animals and human killed each other. A large number of cattle were killed by wild animals as the killing of herbivore disturbed the food chain and wild animals started attacking cattle of villagers. Tigers, leopards started killing cattle, jackals

targeted *murgee-khana*. Elephants destroyed crops as their habitation was disturbed. Snakes killed a large number of human being. Official statistics reveals that wild animals killed 5,97,3231 cattle during 1875-1915 and 18,604 people were killed by wild animals during 1875-1927. These numbers could have been much more as the reporting was not proper. People from remote areas or faraway places did not take trouble to report to police station. Life and property became unsafe from the attacks of these wild animals.

Apart from the local inhabitants Christian missionary activities also suffered from the attacks of wild animals. Missionary gospel preachers and activists were killed when they went to interior areas and travelling into hilly region in the province. As the remedy the British government adopted measures like reward giving, calling of professional *shikariees*, supply of gun licences and liberal distribution of guns for killing wild animals. The reward system contributed to the killing of a large number of wild animals during the British rule. The calling of professional *shikarees* not only led to the destruction of carnivores but a large number of herbivores like deer, pigs, buffaloes were also killed for its skin and horn. Prior to the British rule traditional weapons like *dao*, bow & arrows, etc. were used to hunt but the British government supplied guns to the cultivators and villagers for the protecting life and property from the attacks of wild animals. Guns were also given to professional *shikarees* to eliminate wild animals. The use of traditional weapons did not contribute to the killing of a large number of wild animals prior to the British rule but the supply of guns had huge impact on wildlife. The destruction of the wild animals was justified by the British as it was dangerous for human life and property. However, there were conflict of opinions between the British officials, some of them argued that the destruction of large numbers of carnivore led to the increased population of herbivore which were destructive for crops, thus, and the food chain was disturbed. Rhinoceros was mostly killed for sport and trade. Few statistical records reveal the killing of rhinoceros. However, it was killed in large number as during the early part of twentieth century rhinoceros was on the verge of extinction. It became extinct from areas where once they were numerous.

Rewards system led to the killing of 78,010 wild animals and 1,68,112 snakes in fifty two years according to statistical records. There were a large number of wild animals killed in Assam. Compare with other provinces of the country wild animals killed in Assam was only 9.02 percent of the total number of wild animals killed in the country

and 1.1 percent snakes of the total number of snakes killed in the country for the period of fifty years (1877-1927). Assam was recorded less number of killings of wild animals because of underreporting. It was not possible for the people of interior regions to visit the police station to report the killing of wild animals and to get the rewards. Moreover, they could get more money by selling the dead animals than the amount of reward that government sanctioned. Therefore people were not ready to take trouble to report. Professional *shikariees* though appointed for the killing of carnivorous but they preferred to killed herbivore as there was less risk in killing them and secondly the herbivore animals like pig, deer, buffalo etc. had good market value. The liberal use of gun licenses and distribution of guns also caused a large number of destruction of wild animals. A large number of animals were killed during flood as high flood drove the wild animals to high land where villages were situated and that led to direct attack on villages and resulted in the killing of both wild animals and human. Snakes were killed in large number during flood and a large number of people died by snake bite during flood. On the other hand the absence of flood caused less conflicts between human and wildlife. The spread of Christianity brought a change among the tribes in the concept of the killing of wild animals. Before embracing Christianity the tribes had belief that wild animals were form of evil spirit and feared to kill wild animal. After conversion to Christianity this belief of tribes was changed and motivated to kill wild animals as they were dangerous to human life, cattle and crops.

Elephant hunting was different from other wild animals hunting. They were treated as hunting friend. Because of its administrative use it was mostly preferred to capture than hunting in wild sport game. Government monopolised the capturing of the animals through Kheddah department. The right of capturing elephant was also given to private lessees. The lessees were subjected to the rules and conditions granted under the elephant preservation policy. The government reserved the right to purchase all elephants from the owners of Mahals. Though elephant was mostly preferred to be captured, it was also necessary to keep down the number of elephants as it could be destructive for crops. For this reason hunting rights continued to be sold. However, the killing of elephants for sport was also not uncommon. Elephant were also killed for ivory. Rogue elephants were killed for which government sanctioned a reward of Rs.100 to Rs.50 was given as reward. The strategic need of elephant led the government to monopolize the access over animal. Government adopted various

techniques through which government attempted to exclude zamindars, native chieftains, local inhabitants, forest dwellers to gain maximum profit from elephant hunting. The kheddah system and the private lease system were the instrument through which the government put some restriction on the access of animal. However, final step in this regard came with the passing of Elephant Preservation Act, 1879. It was claimed to be the first attempt to preserve elephants. However, this act extended colonial state rights over the access of elephants of the province. Though the extension of the act was necessitated for the protection of life and property but colonial state monopoly over elephants was also extended. It can be call an instrument through which government played monopoly over elephant catching. However the Elephant Preservation Act (1879) was the first attempt for the preservation of fauna in the late nineteenth century which also foster the cause of the preservation of wildlife.

The conflict over elephant was also common among the various branches of administration. The right of the government kheddah department over the elephants caused dissatisfaction for the district administration as they could not procured elephants for inspite of their need in various works. There were also clashes between the Assamese privileged class and colonial authorities on the issue of their right over elephant catching. This led to hostility before the commencement of any effective rule to supervise the elephant catching operation. The hostility was so much that the forest department could not keep the right of elephant capturing in its own hand and was also transferred to military department. However, the military department did not keep the right over elephant catching for long. But the main conflict over elephant was between the zamindars on the one hand and state on the other hand. The state's control over zamindari estates was long debated. The zamindars claimed that they had been capturing elephants without hindrance for over 60 years and therefore had acquired a right for the elephant hunting. The zamindars main interest was obtain whatever small tax they could get from the elephant hunting. The zamindari estate being important for elephant catching the British government did not want to leave their right over the access of elephant. The local inhabitants were put an application against the extension of elephant preservation act as it was an abstraction in the agricultural work. But their petition was rejected on the ground that the estate was one of the best hunting grounds. Thus, Elephant Preservation Act (1879) was used by the government as an instrument to play their monopoly over elephant catching and

elephant catching was an important part of generating forest revenue during British rule.

During the early part of nineteenth century British ornithologists concerned on the collection and preservation of bird's skin, classification, identification and geographical distribution of birds. Along with this they also wrote on rhinoceros, elephants, wild dogs etc. however their writing does not include the study of carnivores like tigers, leopards and bears. Thus, they mostly concentrated on animals which are not dangerous for human life and cattle. The nineteenth century world consciousness towards the protection of wildlife led the British government to take some initiatives towards the protection of wildlife. The Forest Act (1878) thus restricted hunting in reserve forest. Though some regulations were imposed on hunting wild animals but practically it did not provide protection to wildlife. On the other hand the wholesale destruction of wild animals brought some of the species on the verge of extinction. The protection of wildlife was not the main concern of British government. The main concern of the British government was to earn more revenue from the extension of tea plantation and wild animals were hindrance toward it. The formation of reserve forest was more the extension of British Empire over forest and an attempt to debar local inhabitants from using forest produce. The Bird preservation Act came in 1887 that attempted to protection birds but the protection of wild animals came only with the Wild Birds and Animals Protection Act (1912). This act brought incomplete complete protection but enforced some restriction on the number of wild animals to be killed. The formation of reserve forests brought the forest under the control of government and debars the aboriginal people from their traditional rights. The forest acts also put restriction on the access of forest resource by the local inhabitants. This led to a rift between state and local inhabitants. As their rights were curtailed local inhabitants started violating forest laws and involved themselves in the task of poaching. But the reality it was the British government who could be called 'real poachers' as they debar the aboriginal inhabitants from their traditional rights. British used game laws to brand the indigenous forest people who earned their livelihood form the forests, as 'poachers'. No doubt that the forest and wildlife was destroyed because of the policy of the exploitation of forest resources for commercial purpose by the British. However, some efforts at provincial level initiated for the preservation of wildlife. The measures to preservation of wildlife started during the early part of twentieth century with the official concern over depleting population of

rhinoceros in Assam. As part of these measures, three game reserves namely Kaziranga, North-Kamrup and Laokhowa were proposed by Mr. Arbuthnott, Deputy Secretariat of Assam Valley and Mr. Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The protection of game in Assam, as evident elsewhere in British India, was not a top priority of the government and was mostly part of the amateur activity of local officials. These concerns on the depletion of rhinoceros gradually led to the establishment of game reserves. The wildlife sanctuaries were formed mostly in the areas where the land was not suitable for cultivation in which it should not affect the existing cultivation and not much money was to be spent on its formation. By the year of 1905 the formation of forest reserves attempted only at the protection of rhinoceros. However, the killing of carnivores like tiger, leopard, and bear continued till the year 1927. The Protection of carnivores attempted since 1930s with inspiration of various international wildlife conferences. The International Conference for the Protection of Wildlife (1931) was held in Paris. Another International Conference held in London for the Protection of Wildlife in Africa (1933) in which along with representatives of other countries India was also participated. These conference agendas stimulated to organize similar conferences for the protection of wildlife in India. It was only after these conferences there were attempts to provide total protection of wildlife and hunting was banned inside the sanctuary. From 1934 onwards, the Government of India tried to create awareness among people about the importance of preserving wild animals. Assamese elites also supported measures initiated by the colonial government as they considered these as part of providing a better environment to wild animals for its preservation and the conflict between human-wildlife could also be minimized.

The rift between state and native inhabitants however caused the occurrence of poaching both inside and outside the sanctuaries. Though the cases of poaching were also filed and fine was imposed on the people who convicted. British realized that the protection of wildlife in the Province was not possible without the support of tribal people. Tribes were appointed as forest guards as they were familiar with the local language. It helped in successful reduction of the cases of wildlife poaching. Trade in wildlife was also another factor for poaching. The staffs employed for the protection of wild animals in sanctuaries were not sufficient as the government was not ready to spend much on the protection of wildlife. By 1940s gradually wild animals were provided total protection in wildlife sanctuaries but that also brought the

commercialization of wildlife and wildlife sanctuaries by selling animals to other provinces and countries. Wildlife sanctuaries were also used for generating by allowing visitors to see and take photographs of animals.

In Assam like Africa most of the people were meat eaters and the tribes ate all meat including that of tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, elephants, pigs, deer, buffaloes etc. However they never attempted to destroy the forest or wildlife as they were depended on forest for their livelihood. The tribal practices also revered wild animals and it did not disturb the balance of nature. The British annexation of Assam can be called a watershed as it disrupted the harmony between the nature and human. The British greed to earn more revenue made a rift between people and nature in the colony. The traditional rights of local inhabitants were debar with the implementation of forest acts and legalised the access of forest products with British legislation in the name of protection of wildlife. With the reservation of forest by colonial state the rights of indigenous people over forest were curtailed. Tribes being not ready to accept the denial of their rights over forest resources started poaching. This led to a rift between colonial state and indigenous people during British rule which still continues even in post-independent India.

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GLOSSARY

Ashram	A spiritual hermitage or a monastery
Bigha	A unit of measurement of area of land
Dao	Battle-axe
Elaka	Estate
Faker	Poor People
Gaonbura	Village Head
Goala	Milch Cattle- Keeper
Jungle	Forest
Kheddah	Elephant Chasing or Threshing and Capturing
Mahal	A defined locality leased out for collection of a particular forest produce
Mahaldar	The Person who takes the lease of a particular Mahal
Mauzadar	A fiscal officer in charge of a Mouza
Moffussil	Countryside or Hinterland
Murgee khana	Chicken House
Sahib	Officer
Shikaree	Sportsmen specially a native hunter
Swarajist	A person who supports and believes in self-government or independence
Tahsildar	A revenue administrative officer
Zamindar	Landlord

ABBREVIATIONS

AARP	Assam Agricultural and Revenue Proceeding
AGP	Assam Government press
ASA	Assam State Archive
ASP	Assam Secretariat Proceedings
EHL	Education, Health and Land
GoB	Government of Bengal
GoI	Government of India
IBWL	Indian Board of Wild Life
IGF	Inspector General of Forest
INC	Indian National Congress
JASB	Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal
MSA	Mizoram State Archive
NAI	National Archive of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
OUP	Oxford University Press
PRFA	Progress report of forest administration in Assam
RAPA	Report on the administration of the province of Assam
WBSA	West Bengal State Archive

Appendix I: Reward Certificate

District no.1

Reward certificate

Dated 1st August 1869

Description of beast	When killed	Name	Caste	Beast killed by				Reward paid by				Remark	
				vocation	If govt. shikaree	Village	thanna	province	Name	vocation	Date		place
Tiger	1st January 1869	Ram singh	Brahmin	cultivator	Yeas, certificate gratis	Mundla	shapore	N.W.Province	Hoosaene	Head constable no. 3	7th February	Shapore police office	Ram singh had a bullock tied up to entice the tiger, and it was killed; value rupees 7-8. A.B. Head constable, shapore Thana Certificate regarding the above attached. A.B.

Benares;
The 22nd August 1869,}

forwarded
W.B.Capt.,
Deputy Superintendent of Police.

District no.1

Return of Animals Killed

Dated 1² August 1869

Name	Caste	vocation	Description		Date	By what beast	Where killed			Remarks
			Species	value			village	district	province	
Ram singh	Brahmin	cultivator	Two Bullocks	10 Rs. each	10 August, 1869	Panther	Teka Dhana	shapore	N.W.Province	Reported at the thana of Shapore by Murro, headman of the village of Sundla A.B. Head Constable, Shapore Police Station.

Benares;
The 22nd August 1869,}

forwarded
W.B.Capt.
Deputy Superintendent of Police.

Appendix II: Statistics of the number of people killed by wild animals in various districts of Assam

Appendix II (1) Statistics of the number of people killed by wild animals in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garohills
1877	27	41	8	66	14	5	20	3	13		32
1878	27	43	15	74	8	5	16	5	20		20
1879	NA										
1880	21	27	10	36	9	4	28	1	18		79
1881	33	22	8	29	3	3	28	2	31		53
1882	40	26	14	37	5	7	39	5	15		44
1883	32	25	16	65	21		30	2	18		56
1884	31	29	12	33	11	8	19	20	15		24
1885	21	27	17	43	24	12	13	11	6		14
1886	28	34	14	40	10	4	16	4	5		12
1887	21	30	21	24	13	1	13	3			12
1888	25	25	16	32	8	1	19	10	14		15
1889	23	37	13	31		2	40	20	22	5	16
1890	23	37	13	31		2	20	40	14	5	16
1891	25	27	14	39	3	7	17	39	11	3	15
1892	35	30	16	42	7	7	24	11	8	3	26
1893	24	33	17	16	9		95	13			
1894	15	25	16	16	6	3	15	8	11	3	27
1895	19	22	20	25	9	5	10	21	7		14
1896	NA										
1897	26	28	18	20	3	6	9	9	24	7	14
1898	15	31	11	11	1	5	6	23	13	16	19
1899	NA										
1900	10	17	21	12	1	5	15	9	9		20
1901	23	14	20	9	7	3	11	9	7	25	19
1902	19	23	14	10	3	5	18	9	7	18	24
1903	12	19	34	15	4	8	3	5	9	1	11
1904	12	12	16	8	6		18	8		2	17
1905	27	9	10	16	4	10	14	4			8
1906	16	15	11	21	3	2	12	4	1	6	16
1907	11	15	18	14	6	3	6	9	2	5	6
1908	22	10	11	10	16	4	5	6	7	7	14
1909	23	19	22	12	13	3	12	5	3	2	10
1910	21	29	23	10	5	8	9	10	7	2	9
1911	NA										
1912	15	21	15	12	13	8	10	2	3		10
1913	21	9	17	12	8		9	6		2	17
1914	23	16	18	9	19	7	10	2	11		11
1915	30	16	14	12	24	5	20	1	7	5	13
1916	21	23	22	20	31	10	17	2	4	2	16
1917	24	10	20	5	18	5	9	4	8	1	32
1918	31	14	27	17	20	6	8	9	5	1	20
1919	37	23	32	10	16	13	11	8	6		42
1920	25	27	16	15	60	6	16	3	18	4	24
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	26	50	36	5	18	9	4	12	6		14
1925	NA										
1926	30	15	20	7	13	2	9	2	5	1	35
1927	24	23	23	7	25	9	12	2			12
Total	1014	1028	749	978	497	218	735	381	390	126	914

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix II (2) Statistics of the number of people killed by snakes in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garro Hills
1877	37	25	8	14	14		82	8			
1878	53	44	19	30	8		94	6			1
1879	NA										
1880	36	32	11	13	9	1	101	8			3
1881	37	32	21	27	8		55	8			1
1882	48	30	8	19	9		46	7			
1883	41	55	16	23	5		58	12			
1884	31	35	22	19	5		62	1			
1885	44	27	8	19	10		60	9			1
1886	59	44	9	17	10	3	101	10	1		
1887	44	42	16	12	8	1	71	3			1
1888	29	39	18	22	9	2	85	7	1		1
1889	39	37	13	22	12		100	7			
1890	42	28	15	16	6		96	8	1	1	1
1891	46	49	19	17	6	2	60	6			4
1892	31	45	8	18	9	1	84	7	1		4
1893	24	33	17	16	9		95	13			
1894	27	35	14	15	7		66	4	1		1
1895	40	48	13	18	5	2	54	1	1		
1896	NA										
1897	54	36	8	16	3	1	53	3			3
1898	41	17	6	8	6	1	67	2			5
1899	NA										
1900	36	19	13	8	10	4	72	7	1		
1901	44	29	17	13	5	1	56	3	1		
1902	25	34	14	9	3		74	4			1
1903	32	29	14	9	4		75	6	1		2
1904	33	37	15	21	4	2	66	4			3
1905	46	37	10	27	14	2	37	4			1
1906	30	23	19	22	10	1	56	9			2
1907	23	36	15	6	7	1	29	11			1
1908	38	36	9	15	2	1	40	5			
1909	74	64	23	1	10	1	36	7			1
1910	45	59	24	16	15	1	76	4			
1911	NA										
1912	35	31	17	8	9		44	4			2
1913	26	32	27	16	4		55	2			4
1914	19	51	17	16	2	1	39	3			2
1915	73	55	20	26	9	1	68	3			1
1916	55	28	11	6	9	2	49	4			4
1917	43	34	11	14	8	4	31	3			4
1918	84	40	23	16	5	4	27	1			5
1919	49	34	17	25	7		38	1			2
1920	65	49	19	25	2	3	40	2			3
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	72	48	25		13	6	36	3			4
1925	NA										
1926	49	40	31	7	12		31	8			1
1927	54	34	22	4	7	3	35	3			1
Total	1853	1612	682	671	329	52	2600	222	9	1	70

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix II (3), Statistics of the number of people killed by elephants in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877		2	2			4	6		1		7
1878	1	2	1	1	1	1	1		2		5
1879	NA										
1880	3	4		3		1	1	1	1		13
1881	6	4		1		1	5		1		4
1882	4	1	2	6	1	3	5		1		5
1883	4	4	2	1	1		2		1		11
1884		2	1	1	3	3	1				4
1885		3	4	7	4	4					3
1886	1	1	2			3			1		7
1887	1	5	2	3	6						3
1888	1		7	1	3		1				7
1889	2	1	9	1					3	1	
1890		6	2	3					3		5
1891	1	5	1	1				4	2		1
1892	2	3	5	5		2	1	1		1	6
1893	NA										
1894	3		3	3			3		1		11
1895			8	4	4				1		6
1896	NA										
1897	4	2	1	21	1	1	1	1	4		5
1898	1	1	1	1	1		2	1		2	5
1899	NA										
1900	2		3	3							5
1901	6	3	5	1			1	2			6
1902	2	1	4	1	2	1			2		8
1903	2	4	2	1	1	3			1	1	2
1904	1	3	1	1	4			1			8
1905	7		1	1	1	3					4
1906	4	4		2	1	2		1			7
1907	1	2		2	2			1	2	1	2
1908	2		1	1	4	2		1	2		8
1909	3	2	3	2		3		2	3	2	6
1910	1		5	2				3	5		8
1911	NA										
1912	3	3	1	1	4	3			1		6
1913	6		1		5						8
1914	5	1	4	4	2				4		4
1915	6		6	4	2	1			3	1	6
1916	1	1	3	10	8	6	1	1	1		1
1917	2	3	2	2	1	2			2	1	7
1918	3		8	4	1	1					4
1919			5	1	1	5		1	1		3
1920	1		3	7		4			1	1	2
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	4	3	6	4	2						
1925	NA										
1926	6		1	5	2	1			1	1	2
1927		2	7	4	3	3					2
Total	102	78	125	126	71	63	31	21	51	12	217

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix II (4) Statistics of the number of people killed by tigers in various districts
of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	9	26	3	53	4		6	1	11		22
1878	12	21	4	66		1	3	2	17		12
1879	NA										
1880	14	12	2	28	6	1	10		16		62
1881	13	9	3	17		2	11	1	30		45
1882	26	12	2	22	2	3	6	5	14		37
1883	11	15	3	48	17		6	1	16		42
1884	18	13	3	29	4	27	9	19	13		28
1885	11	10	5	31	7	4	6	11	5		7
1886	15	15	6	24	7	1	5	3	3		2
1887	14	5	4	17	4		2	3			6
1888	16	10	3	28	1		6	9	13		3
1889	14	18	3	20	1	2	9	7	21		17
1890	11	11	5	22			37	7	11	5	10
1891	15	11	3	27	1	2	9	31	8		14
1892	20	16	5	29	2	1	3	5	7	1	17
1893	NA										
1894	4	66	1		3	2	12	21		17	12
1895	9	15	3	10	2		3	20	6	14	6
1896	NA										
1897	11	13	6	13		1	3	5	19	7	4
1898	5	21	5	5	1	1	4	22	8	15	11
1899	NA										
1900	5	10	4	7		3	3	8	8		9
1901	11	9	6	7	6	3	4	3	6	25	8
1902	4	8	4	3			4	6	4	18	12
1903	5	8	12	6	2	3	1	4	8		6
1904	10	3	9	2	1		4	6			5
1905	9	1	5	6	2	3	4	6			2
1906	7	2	5	11			8	2	1	6	4
1907	5	4	2	9	1	2	3	4		4	2
1908	10	6	5	9	12	1	5	4	5	6	2
1909	8	7	7	5	11		6				2
1910	3	12	9	7	2	2		3	1	2	1
1911	NA										
1912	3	9	6	9	8	2	3	1	2		
1913	5	7	4	5	2			6		2	1
1914	9	9	6		8	5	4		5		3
1915	17	12	2		18	3	3			4	3
1916	5	16	9	5	17	1	10		3	2	11
1917	10	4	8	3	15	2	3	3	5		20
1918	15	3	8	4	16	3	3	9	5	1	10
1919	23	6	15	6	13	5	3	4	5		37
1920	16	9	7	1	41	1	3		17	3	19
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	15	35	16	1	11	6	3	10	3		10
1925	NA										
1926	18	11	12	2	9		2		1		27
1927	19	12	13	3	20	2	2	1			6
Total	480	522	243	600	277	95	231	253	297	132	557

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix II (5) Statistics of the number of people killed by bears during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	4		1	1	1				1		3
1878	4	2	6		1		1				1
1879	NA										
1880	1	5	4	2	1		1				2
1881	1	4	3	2			1				2
1882	8	7	6				1				
1883	5	3	4	6					1		1
1884	34	3	1						1		1
1885	1	5	5	1					1		
1886	4	2	6			1		1		1	
1887	2	14	8	3		1	1				1
1888	5	8	2	1	1			1			1
1889	4	2	1								2
1890	4	10	1	2					1		
1891	34	7	1		1		1				
1892	6	2	4	1							2
1893											
1894	4	5	6	6							2
1895	5	4	5	7		2					1
1896	NA										
1897	1	3	3	4							1
1898	1	2	2	2					2	1	5
1899	NA										
1900		1	11	2		1			1		4
1901		2	2	1					1		1
1902	4	2	1			1			1		2
1903	2	2	9	2		1					1
1904		1	2	3							2
1905		7	1	2	4						
1906		3	2	1	1			1			2
1907	3	3	5	3							1
1908	7	2	5							1	3
1909	4	1	4	1		1					
1910	2	4	4	1	1	1			1		
1911	NA										
1912	4	1	3								3
1913	2		5	1							5
1914	2	4	1	1		1			1		1
1915	3	2	2	4					4		1
1916	1	3	5	1	2	1	1				3
1917	3		6		2		1		1		3
1918	4		5	3	1	1		2			2
1919	2		4			1	2				
1920	3	1	4	1							1
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	3	3	4		1		1		3		1
1925	NA										
1926	2	1	5		1				2		2
1927	1	3	2		1				2		1
Total	180	134	161	65	19	13	11	5	24	3	64

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

**Appendix III: Statistics of the number of cattle killed by wild animals during
1877-1915**

Appendix III (1) Statistics of cattle killed by wild animals in various districts of
Assam during 1877-1915

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills
1877	67	1357	389	845	203	22	37	43		
1878	25	1180		644	9	59	28	92		
1879	NA									
1880	112	1212	637	619	252	111	103	35	167	
1881	283	1251		756	180	145	78	29	70	
1882	696	1176	612	849	329	130	71	30	79	
1883	707	1112	277	1065	275	166	115	52	40	
1884	1986	2136	531	945	263	157	371	196	46	
1885	6084	3281	1152	1226	1498	381	325	125	50	
1886	6878	3176	857	497	2010	144	285	161	55	
1887	6639	3111	2082	975	1928	839	323	161	65	
1888	3830	2926	2181	714	2023	929	388	220	82	
1889	5651	2639	2450	709	1653	997	315	155	105	
1890	5337	3425	2268	694	1425	1126	389	159	144	
1891	5504	3033	1914	736	1626	1008	352	101	330	
1892	5333	4609	2329	634	1319	1277	388	119	393	
1893	NA									
1894	5835	8268	1848	1079	776	1222	384	75	107	
1895	7148	6049	1839	1513	991	1451	325	133	95	
1896	NA									
1897	4053	4576	2010	1989	546	2037	299	218	39	140
1898	2874	5044	2415	1792	787	1766	238	472	67	811
1899	NA									
1900	2975	4434	3209	1231	815	1601	379	336		155
1901	1741	3968	3835	1136	1095	1465	348	135	280	185
1902	1748	4582	3977	1300	1246	1848	306	174	184	14
1903	1330	3830	4053	982	1294	1720	158	91	439	18
1904	685	2709	3899	1246	990	1559	274	108	116	27
1905	871	2945	3749	1367	1116	1312	317	72	405	4
1906	785	2857	3792	1544	1036	1473	339	70	291	11
1907	1162	3010	3869	1695	1196	1270	128	102	507	3
1908	969	3042	3464	1609	1255	1091	176	82	382	10
1909	1386	3207	2839	1267	1282	1026	162	159	277	1
1910	892	2934	3160	1533	1276	960	202	115	179	6
1911	NA									
1912	1578	1730	4551	1770	1196	1276	310	128	488	
1913	1486	2977	5019	1837	1302	1066	230	227	2015	
1914	1943	2930	5186	1826	1686	864	254	367	188	
1915	1809	3304	7223	1896	1453	739	374	191	1688	418
Total	90402	108020	87616	40520	36331	33237	8771	4933	9373	1803

Lushai hills- 1993 (15), 2015(13), 1580 (12), 1636 (10), 1614 (09), 1405 (08), 1548 (07), 1420(06),1300(05), 999(04), 382 (03)

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1876-1916)

Appendix III (2) Statistics of number of cattle killed by snakes in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills
1877	7									
1878	8			8						
1879	NA									
1880							56			
1881	5			5			4		2	
1882	NA									
1883	16	1				3				
1884	36	1	1	1						
1885	36	11			1	6	2			
1886	15	39			40		114			
1887	71	10	11	47	46	5				
1888	2	39	4	94	36	8	2			
1889	15	21	3	23	5	1	3			
1890	34	203	2	9	6	3				
1891	24	15	1	2	3	3				
1892	44	32	6	6	3	5				
1893	NA									
1894	1	27	1	18	1	12				
1895	16	28		142	1	18				
1896	NA									
1897	6	10			3	1		19		
1898	1	36		210		10				
1899	NA									
1900	8	5	43	66	3		1			
1901	5	14	26	54	2	7	3	12		
1902	8	22	15	183	1	3	6			
1903	8	10	14	55	2	10	0	6		
1904	23	11	37	42	2	4	7			
1905	32	12	38	64			4			
1906	24	18	14	85	5	1	2			
1907	41	34	31	47	19	19				
1908	32	37	35	41	34	8				
1909	53	39	20	20	5	2				
1910	36	43	73	63	6		8			
1911	NA									
1912	51	330	47	82	11	20	4			
1913	52	20	75	78	9	21		8		
1914	40	18	48	87	9	6				
1915	43	37	46	161	22	4	9		10	
Total	793	1123	591	1693	275	180	225	45	12	

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix III (3) statistics of cattle killed by elephants in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877		3									
1878		1									
1879	NA										
1880											
1881											
1882		3				1	1				
1883											
1884											
1885											
1886											
1887			4	10	5	2					
1888			1	13	2						
1889		10	2	2							
1890		2			3						
1891		72	7	1				1			
1892		18	62		1						
1893	NA										
1894		9	27	14							
1895		2		15		1					
1896	NA										
1897		7	8								
1898		8	3								
1899	NA										
1900		45	44								
1901		72	25			2					
1902			1								
1903			1	1		4					
1904				12							
1905			1			8					
1906		1	3		1	13					
1907				18							
1908				1							
1909			3								
1910			1								
1911	NA										
1912		15		10	1	1					
1913				4							
1914				14	1						
1915		2		20		1					
Total		267	193	135	14	32		1			

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix III (4) Statistics of cattle killed by tigers in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	58	1196	389	617	202	14	37	42			31
1878	20	1046		437	7	38	23	92			
1879	NA										
1880	103	197	637	466	248	66	31	35	166		22
1881	222	1053		578	170	106	41	34	70		
1882	525	781	572	590	323	94	40	30	78		
1883	605	736	142	671	255	134	105	52	49		
1884	1783	1421	380	635	263	145	299	196	46		
1885	4126	2666	971	954	1497	373	281	125	45		
1886	5187	2242	839	487	1761	144	210	160	55		
1887	6035	2068	1441	795	1508	721	286	154	30		
1888	5604	1898	1581	635	1692	759	350	220	25		
1889	5466	1635	1487	670	1372	1819	291	129	15		
1890	5084	1915	1256	635	1081	902	354	157	43		
1891	4942	1761	1217	725	1221	831	391	100	58		
1892	4734	2736	1439	611	975	1025	375	119	70		
1893	NA										
1894	5143	3421	1210	782	645	891	365	75	88		
1895	6568	3618	1237	1053	772	1164	207	131	80		
1896	NA										
1897	2544	2649	117	1181	418	1473	216	216	20	80	
1898	2478	2953	1457	1115	611	1346	233	439	20	217	
1899	NA										
1900	2914	2778	1752	888	600	1188	336	306	70		
1901	1583	2251	1635	817	631	982	304	135	45		
1902	1307	2590	1611	973	916	1407	259	123	68		
1903	1004	2464	1863	835	770	1346	125	88	136	2	
1904	583	1921	1474	1047	657	1236	181	108	65	2	
1905	529	1989	1649	1212	816	1066	63	315	158		
1906	342	961	1630	1323	734	1087	265	70	67	9	
1907	799	1322	1843	1477	878	877	125	98	53	2	
1908	583	1003	1577	1433	954	776	172	80	44	1	
1909	865	2095	1948	1110	840	714	145	136	113	1	
1910	626	2186	1336	1330	938	623	184	114	26	2	
1911	NA										
1912	1036	1215	1690	1262	985	643	273	128	173		
1913	1021	1640	1814	1130	705	1018	211	193	272		
1914	1278	1952	1956	1893	1178	825	334	237	104	45	
1915	1080	2631	2896	1096	921	687	373	191	84	133	
Total	76777	64990	43046	31463	27544	26520	7485	4828	2436	494	53

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix III (5) Statistics of number of cattle killed by leopard in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	9	158		220	1	7		1			
1878	5	133		64	1	20	5				
1879	NA										
1880	5	1014		61	3		60	2			
1881	61	198		84	5	21	37	2			
1882	171	259		258	2	9	30				
1883	97	268		282	8	13					
1884	154	699	151	176							
1885	407	552		202	1		1		5		
1886	1675	729			227		39	1			
1887	420	1021	501	96	362	73	10	2	13		
1888	128	937	536	35	296	51	23		56		
1889	156	949	815	8	253	158	16	25		85	
1890	163	1399	803	26	330	173	2	10		10	2
1891	257	1114	656	7	349	174	7		229		
1892	508	1709	774	19	260	250	4		285		
1893	NA										
1894	671	431	576	203	121	323	7		6		
1895	545	448	516	298	181	275		8	5		
1896	NA										
1897	259	626	565	302	126	555	83	2	2	60	
1898	115	945	604	316	171	402		33	6	404	
1899	NA										
1900		405	671	292	214	413	26	29	33		
1901	158	1530	1785	219	409	466	37		148		
1902	435	1977	1628	242	330	434	47		81		
1903	324	1352	2136	123	508	364	25		236		
1904	103	772	2309	122	333	304	50		30		
1905	342	929	2080	88	206	17			89		
1906	435	1705	2114	97	264	318	68		162		
1907	350	1634	1982	90	306	392	3		314		
1908	385	1984	1890	57	299	314	4		251	6	
1909	516	292	718	64	434	312	17		145		
1910	267	176	1810	151	334	337	11		83		
1911	NA										
1912	530	365	2841	359	209	622			194		
1913	449	1329	3041	374	435	46		13	496		
1914	616	978	2937	292	337	38	2	17	103	105	
1915	672	663	4033	146	520	46			869	253	
Total	11388	29680	38472	5373	7835	6927	614	145	3842	923	2

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix III (5) Statistics of cattle killed by bears in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877											
1878						1					
1879	NA										
1880											
1881											
1882	11										
1883	5	10									
1884						5					
1885											
1886	7	36					4				
1887			1	2							
1888		13									
1889		11									
1890		20	2								
1891		47	19								
1892		1	15								
1893											
1894									13		
1895	11	2	10	25		3					
1896	NA										
1897						6	2				
1898	1	5		8							
1899	NA										
1900		3									
1901		3	1								
1902	1	1									
1903		4	4	5	10						
1904			5		10						
1905		3		13		2					
1906			16			1					
1907	13	1	20			1					
1908	1		37			1					
1909	1	5	22	11	4						
1910	18	2	1								
1911	NA										
1912	10	7	19		5						
1913		8		6	7				1		
1914				11	9						
1915				3	2						
Total	79	182	172	84	47	20	6		14		

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix IV: Statistics of the number of wild animals killed for rewards during 1877-1927

Appendix IV (1) Statistics of the wild animals including snakes destroyed in different districts of the province during 1877-1927

year	Number of wild animals including snakes destroyed												
	Goalpara	kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Lakhimpur	Sibsagar	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garohills	Lushai Hills	Total
1877	161	146	158	42	83	38	198	22	7	5	47		907
1878	131	219	198	46	45	71	36	7	13	2	72		840
1879	NA												
1880	91	78	94	45	44	32	214	50	8	5	82		743
1881	77	172	133	223	72	45	607	75	17		55		1476
1882	80	262	134	45	119	99	586	5	10	66			1406
1883	89	276	113	51	71	55	306	52	11	4	75		1103
1884	136	235	120	38	81	157	412	10	11	6	57		1263
1885	181	247	146	60	26	84	807	19	22	7	43		1642
1886	268	288	128	50	65	86	1221	11	8	12	63		2200
1887	284	186	142	50	60	76	391	25	3	5	118		1340
1888	169	156	133	49	70	60	564	218	12	9	81		1521
1889	87	248	150	44	68	59	279	193	12	14	92		1246
1890	142	198	175	49	70	69	599	157	22	18	164		1663
1891	226	143	157	38	66	82	1512	112	34	31	97		2498
1892	308	222	115	49	67	91	2853	132	30	41	106		4014
1893	287	308	157	42	63	125	9685	183	42	35	124		11051
1894	269	266	147	57	74	118	2066	162	41	40	174		3414
1895	239	355	189	67	93	147	4643	187	35	38	141		6134
1896	NA												
1897	265	339	177	128	74	93	4540	263	29	46	114		6068
1898	186	278	163	98	70	124	3617	151	37	49	83		4856
1899	NA												
1900	300	475	133	93	68	117	3627	164	67	22	161		5227
1901	286	225	179	84	73	109	3138	40	52	24	160		4370
1902	119	1085	141	76	52	130	6031	71	75	38	142		7960
1903	205	902	113	68	92	133	4423	117	78	25	107	238	6501
1904	279	527	147	55	77	54	4282	78	93	32	105	446	6175
1905	314	537	146	97	107	79	4123	191	118	26	91	350	6179
1906	160	342	127	140	96	99	2875	144	134	24	145	135	4421
1907	552	163	122	153	73	62	1814	164	130	39	115	93	3480
1908	469	116	133	93	103	78	1580	169	78	33	150	140	3142
1909	1681	3312	2842	1310	1040	1294	897	255	278	1	1	1614	14525
1910	452	285	107	133	99	86	4395	111	111	45	31	137	5992
1911	NA												
1912	1193	198	121	135	95	84	1410	124	114	45	71	113	3703
1913	934	211	142	133	68	85	2292	257	124	59	120	188	4613
1914	2054	667	149	167	97	83	569	131	114	79	94	205	4409
1915	1693	259	180	94	133	151	1641	1421	65	105	147	157	6046
1916	186	163	143	111	119	123	1210	176	106	136	168	302	2943
1917	110	170	233	52	90	157	56	147	97	102	169	400	1783
1918	134	243	237	55	100	73	2785	216	125	117	95	223	4403
1919	120	243	225	82	102	89	1013	141	116	122	84	154	2491
1920	60	409	113	73	99	45	319	123	69	190	125	318	1943
1921	NA												
1922	NA												
1923	NA												
1924	10	55	29	69	21	15	282	44	8	67	103	337	1040
1925	NA												
1926	3	34	62	40	14	41	17	55	8	67	84	609	1034
1927	12	50	85	36	43	18	15	87	18	47	148	676	1235
total	15002	15293	8838	4620	4242	4916	83930	6440	2583	1878	4404	6835	159000

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix IV (2), Statistics of the number of wild animals killed in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Number of wild animals and snakes destroyed in different district of Assam											
	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Lakhimpur	Sibsagar	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garo hills	Lushai Hills
1877	161	146	158	42	83	38	63	22	7	5	47	
1878	131	219	198	46	45	71	11	7	13	2	72	
1879	NA											
1880	91	78	94	45	44	32	12	50	8	5	82	
1881	77	77	133	76	54	45	567	75	17		55	
1882	80	81	134	45	51	99	522	5	10	66		
1883	89	110	113	51	71	53	306	20	11	4	75	
1884	136	89	120	38	81	78	209	10	11	6	57	
1885	181	110	140	60	26	77	376	19	22	7	43	
1886	268	100	128	50	65	84	629	11	8	12	63	
1887	284	110	142	50	60	75	199	25	3	5	118	
1888	169	79	133	49	70	59	306	33	12	9	81	
1889	87	131	150	44	68	59	180	14	12	14	92	
1890	142	140	175	49	70	51	301	53	22	18	164	
1891	226	118	157	38	66	51	820	32	34	31	97	
1892	308	132	115	49	67	47	726	64	30	41	106	
1893	287	178	157	42	63	71	553	56	42	35	124	
1894	259	166	147	57	74	67	551	30	41	40	174	
1895	221	188	189	67	93	87	560	52	35	38	138	
1896	NA											
1897	207	213	177	128	74	44	579	52	28	46	114	
1898	179	203	157	98	70	47	667	48	37	49	83	
1899	NA											
1900	300	282	133	93	68	72	789	76	67	22	161	
1901	285	96	179	84	73	47	198	40	52	24	160	
1902	114	284	141	76	52	76	123	71	75	38	142	
1903	197	345	113	68	92	73	750	95	78	20	107	238
1904	273	303	142	55	77	40	953	69	93	32	105	446
1905	297	250	145	89	99	65	737	107	118	26	91	350
1906	142	314	126	87	84	78	565	81	133	24	145	135
1907	359	113	122	94	70	50	772	82	118	39	115	93
1908	362	110	133	70	92	71	856	75	78	33	150	140
1909	1386	3207	2839	1267	1026	1282	162	159	277	1		1614
1910	246	182	103	90	85	70	752	69	103	44	30	137
1911	NA											
1912	288	134	119	111	82	66	524	63	104	45	71	113
1913	385	116	141	105	61	68	595	86	109	58	120	188
1914	596	195	144	106	77	66	886	63	102	78	93	205
1915	654	159	166	63	95	145	76	1268	60	105	145	157
1916	144	111	131	97	75	107	77	88	103	136	168	302
1917	77	95	135	46	57	141	32	113	87	102	169	400
1918	107	129	93	50	49	54	83	99	124	117	94	223
1919	103	166	106	76	65	63	128	101	115	122	84	154
1920	58	279	94	70	80	42	146	88	67	189	125	318
1921	NA											
1922	NA											
1923	NA											
1924	5	53	24	69	21	15	12	42	8	67	103	336
1925	NA											
1926	3	34	47	40	11	41	15	52	8	67	83	609
1927	12	48	76	35	43	18	14	87	18	47	147	676
Total	9976	10074	8369	4103	3829	3996	16562	3732	2500	1869	4393	6834

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix IV (4) Statistics of number of snakes killed in various districts of the province during 1877-1927

Year	Number of snakes destroyed in different districts of Assam											
	Goalpara	kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Lakhimpur	Sibsagar	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garo hills	Lushai Hills
1877							135					
1878							25					
1879	NA											
1880							202					
1881		95		147	18		40					
1882		181			68		64					
1883		166				2		32				
1884		146				79	203					
1885		137	6			7	431					
1886		188				2	592					
1887		76				1	192					
1888		77				1	258	185				
1889		117					99	179				
1890		58				18	298	104				
1891		25				31	692	80				
1892		90				44	2127	68				
1893		130				54	9132	127				
1894	10	100				51	1515	132				
1895	18	167				60	4083	135			3	
1896	NA											
1897	58	126				49	3961	211	1			
1898	7	75	6			77	2950	103				
1899	NA											
1900		193				45	2838	88				
1901	1	129				62	2940					
1902	5	801				54	5908					
1903	8	557				60	3673	22		5		
1904	6	224	5			14	3329	9				
1905	17	287	1	8	8	14	3386	84				
1906	18	28	1	53	12	21	2310	63	1			
1907	193	50		59	3	12	1042	82	12			
1908	107	6		23	11	7	724	94				
1909	295	105	3	43	14	12	735	96	1		1	
1910	206	103	4	43	14	16	3643	42	8	1	1	
1911	NA											
1912	905	64	2	24	13	18	886	61	10			
1913	549	95	1	28	7	17	1697	171	15	1		
1914	1458	71	5	23	20	6	503	68	12	1	1	
1915	1039	100	14	31	38	6	1565	153	5		2	
1916	42	52	12	14	44	16	1133	88	3			
1917	33	75	98	6	33	16	24	34	10			
1918	27	114	144	5	51	19	2702	117	1		1	
1919	17	77	119	6	37	26	885	40	1			
1920	2	130	19	3	19	3	173	35	2	1		
1921	NA											
1922	NA											
1923	NA											
1924	5	2	5				270	2				1
1925	NA											
1926			15		3		2	3			1	
1927		2	9	1			1				1	
Total	5026	5219	469	517	413	920	67368	2708	83	9	11	1

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, s(1876-1916)

Appendix IV (5) Statistics of the number of tigers killed in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	88	69	69	26	20	64	53	17	1	2	25
1878	81	82	61	27	42	21	11	7	7	1	35
1879	NA										
1880	61	35	41	24	21	30	9	9	6	2	35
1881	45	39	50	43	28	41	7	8	5		23
1882	40	51	60	22	36	39	27	5	3		33
1883	63	59	50	23	37	54	232	11	4	2	30
1884	65	45	41	24	49	58	41	8	3	6	24
1885	101	36	34	32	45	22	40	14	5	5	13
1886	172	40	32	21	40	53	47	6	2	6	17
1887	153	59	60	27	41	32	16	6		3	41
1888	77	26	34	23	35	47	27	11		5	37
1889	39	63	43	18	29	48	52	4	2	7	32
1890	54	56	31	20	31	51	32	20	6	10	73
1891	84	36	28	14	25	54	83	13	4	14	22
1892	97	28	33	19	25	42	27	15	9	15	33
1893	NA										
1894	100	33	41	16	29	45	17	13	5	14	43
1895	66	50	29	29	29	56	33	18	10	12	28
1896	NA										
1897	57	63	50	24	22	39	19	23	6	7	27
1898	49	64	35	11	16	34	25	17	4	22	16
1899	NA										
1900	106	57	35	44	35	35	36	12	10	7	37
1901	108	28	50	30	10	42	29	11	6	6	25
1902	42	66	33	27	30	41	55	17	11	7	15
1903	57	86	30	27	37	34	11	12	7	4	27
1904	69	71	52	24	12	41	20	17	6		12
1905	80	62	29	29	21	32	19	25	2	8	21
1906	46	126	24	37	30	35	23	13	14	6	25
1907	72	24	40	26	17	28	16	25	8	5	17
1908	125	36	29	23	17	39	11	30	8	6	17
1909	120	19	24	35	30	34	25	8	10	6	17
1910	106	70	28	36	17	33	12	14	13	6	10
1911	NA										
1912	50	39	15	24	21	28	36	5	8	2	6
1913	51	27	29	25	23	27	22	11	9	3	15
1914	42	71	21	21	20	30	16	26	8	11	3
1915	37	66	46	19	27	26	32	18	7	11	6
1916	71	33	40	34	20	33	46	8	16	19	11
1917	29	24	53	8	21	14	18	13	16	6	13
1918	35	49	24	10	13	19	9	33	16	12	13
1919	33	49	24	15	20	22	70	10	9	7	7
1920	28	145	18	20	13	33	97	10	11	19	28
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	2	23	13	28	7	10	9	7		3	16
1925	NA										
1926	1	14	25	10	9	19	11	5	6	3	15
1927	8	29	28	10	12	22	7	16	2	2	21
Total	2810	2148	1532	1005	1062	1507	1428	571	285	292	964

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix IV (6), Statistics of number of leopards killed in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	55	32	35	11	14	5	9		6	2	19
1878	26	42	46	13	8	16			6		32
1879	NA										
1880	22	37	28	13	6	9	3		2	2	38
1881	24	30	46	26	14	11	5	3	12		21
1882	31	23	32	12	12	5	4		7		31
1883	26	44	30	20	16	9	53	9	6	1	35
1884	52	35	46	5	24	15	14	1	8		21
1885	64	67	60	22	28	2	19	5	17	1	15
1886	83	41	62	20	40	4	12	5	5	5	31
1887	115	42	46	11	29	17	15	15	1	1	59
1888	78	51	61	12	17	12	15	10	8	3	28
1889	38	60	68	16	20	8	7	58	9	2	43
1890	74	71	98	18	12	7	19	20	14	3	79
1891	121	71	98	9	13	5	13	16	30	8	55
1892	195	83	45	16	17	12	7	21	19	18	51
1893	NA										
1894	148	105	78	21	26	17	9	9	35	25	91
1895	142	130	92	11	26	13	8	14	14	26	64
1896	NA										
1897	95	135	82	32	14	11	7	15	16	39	44
1898	82	127	33	23	15	11	8	18	17	25	31
1899	NA										
1900	185	110	80	27	25	15	10	30	36	14	65
1901	173	55	103	35	25	21	13	6	24	16	83
1902	68	187	93	37	15	14	67	19	35	17	66
1903	133	146	66	23	22	13	10	33	30	14	37
1904	188	130	63	14	15	17	8	16	40	10	38
1905	178	100	96	33	32	25	11	35	47	18	23
1906	79	164	79	26	39	24	7	34	29	9	45
1907	265	69	71	34	16	9	13	19	30	23	52
1908	208	61	73	25	34	21	11	7	18	17	60
1909	186	73	81	27	36	19	9	21	35	11	46
1910	121	99	63	25	26	21	16	23	30	21	36
1911	NA										
1912	99	80	78	48	27	29	18	31	49	18	39
1913	72	84	100	45	27	20	3	37	48	23	43
1914	70	111	97	54	31	31	4	25	43	12	41
1915	87	84	98	31	32	28	25	9	20	21	58
1916	69	71	82	43	58	19	28	32	34	16	73
1917	30	62	75	31	103	24	59	14	30	20	81
1918	56	69	58	31	37	20	42	38	29	21	50
1919	58	98	72	39	20	20	58	42	35	20	41
1920	21	120	74	29	22	26	49	39	26	31	61
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	3	27	10	21	4	7	3	10	1	8	49
1925	NA										
1926		18	20	12	1	13	3	32	2	1	40
1927	2	17	31	15	6	17	7	34	7	1	60
Total	3822	3261	2749	1016	1004	642	701	805	910	523	1975

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix IV (6), Statistics of Number of bears killed in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Goalpara	kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi & Jyantia Hills	Naga Hills	Garo Hills
1877	16	10	28							1	3
1878	22	11	20	6						1	5
1879	NA										
1880	8	6	25	8	5	5				1	9
1881	6	8	37	7	3	2					11
1882	9	7	41	11	3						2
1883		7	33	8		7	12			1	10
1884	19	9	32	8	4	7	8	1			12
1885	16	3	46	6	3	2				1	15
1886	13	14	34	8	4	6			1	1	15
1887	16	9	36	12	5	8		4	1	18	1
1888	14	2	38	13	5	10	1	12	3	1	15
1889	10	8	39	9	10	11		3	1	5	17
1890	14	7	46	11	8	10		14	2	5	12
1891	21	11	31	15	13	7		3		9	20
1892	16	4	24	13	5	13		28	2	7	22
1893	NA										
1894	11	11	26	20	10	12		8	1	1	40
1895	10	8	23	18	7	29	2	21	9		46
1896	NA										
1897	12	15	11	23	8	24	3	11	6		43
1898	18	12	26	17	7	25		13	7	2	36
1899	NA										
1900	9	24	18	14	12	18		34	21	1	59
1901	4	13	26	19	10	10		22	22		50
1902	4	21	13	14	7	21	1	35	29	8	59
1903	7	23	17	18	14	15		50	40	5	43
1904	16	32	25	17	13	18		36	47	6	54
1905	39	24	20	27	12	41		46	60	2	46
1906	16	24	21	24	9	25	1	34	73	3	75
1907	22	14	11	34	16	31		35	66	11	45
1908	19	9	29	22	17	29		35	48	10	70
1909	24	14	24	24	28	45		33	39	27	51
1910	12	13	12	28	26	30		21	47	8	42
1911	NA										
1912	8	15	26	39	15	25		24	31	8	25
1913	5	5	15	35	15	15		14	40	12	47
1914	2	12	13	30	10	9	33	15	29	20	42
1915	7	9	10	11	22	18		18	29	38	45
1916	3	7	9	18	25	22	1	35	39	58	22
1917	18	8	7	6	16	19		27	26	138	75
1918	16	11	11	9	4	8		35	53	54	30
1919	12	19	9	21	22	23		37	59	61	34
1920	9	14	2	21	6	21		30	21	74	46
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924		3	1	19	3	4		19		6	34
1925	NA										
1926	2	2	2	18		9		10			20
1927	2	2	8	8		3		20	3		59
Total	507	480	925	689	402	637	62	783	855	604	1407

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix V: Statistics of the amount of reward paid for the destruction of wild animals in various district of Assam during 1877-1927

Appendix: V (1), statistics of the reward paid for the destruction of wild animals including snakes in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Reward Paid for the destruction of wild animals including snake										
	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowga on	Sibsag ar	Lakhi mPur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garohills
1877	2481	1925	2006	660	542	1535	425	270	55	62	677
1878	2133	2293	1913	735	632	1104		150	180	27	1040
1879	NA										
1880	575	790	1175	572	540	810	10	202	120	62	1165
1881	1205	921	1522	917	734	1036	123	200	160		767
1882	1112	1096	1755	395	920	962	526	70	87		962
1883	1584	1299	1422	590	953	1387	2276	274	87	932	57
1884	1895	994	1425	555	1304	1513	620	147	100	125	742
1885	2727	1034	1397	742	1163	526	445	340	192	97	472
1886	3885	1123	1220	552	1215	1400	727	100	70	180	637
1887	4012	1242	1705	592	1195	1010	325	232	7	160	1322
1888	1727	714	1257	677	1095	1230	545	337	45	145	157
1889	917	1498	1497	465	795	1112	1162	140	80	210	897
1890	1405	1373	1475	503	784	1298	547	665	140	290	1835
1891	2663	1288	1655	395	790	1393	1260	865	275	540	1155
1892	3642	1310	1435	620	789	1247	868	1050	250	740	1397
1893	NA										
1894	3346	1596	1732	685	1163	1300	680	550	260	625	2260
1895	2557	2120	1565	830	945	1620	1592	815	265	577	1660
1896	NA										
1897	1847	2480	1787	936	723	1197	1523	965	305	575	1387
1898	1725	2386	1670	590	584	1135	1329	677	245	870	980
1899	NA										
1900	3755	2150	1475	1060	1130	1080	1399	835	665	310	1920
1901	3681	1079	2160	995	637	1305	1077	470	475	378	1682
1902	1321	2062	1625	908	859	1257	2519	785	770	463	1337
1903	2317	1798	1285	683	1196	1160	831	1037	845	218	1185
1904	3022	1711	1695	510	508	1322	914	779	820	186	972
1905	3339	1911	1650	808	850	1326	958	1121	1130	301	1095
1906	1575	3751	1610	772	1077	1275	742	866	1280	287	1592
1907	3635	1236	1520	821	768	1073	334	643	1088	430	1267
1908	2015	1316	1585	675	864	1402	161	906	775	387	1565
1909	3696	1198	1483	1141	1423	1297	225	588	797	399	1022
1910	2769	2415	1231	1240	797	1169	1078	834	807	405	737
1911	NA										
1912	2973	1633	1145	1281	867	1013	369	503	827	333	637
1913	518	1387	1742	1049	999	819	169	685	844	428	1060
1914	762	2432	1524	1163	885	1128	268	697	778	531	665
1915	1203	2232	2292	787	1071	1145	525	715	539	786	1030
1916	2233	1365	1601	1337	1317	1088	1034	719	954	1177	1275
1917	1060	1148	1778	573	1387	724	458	991	915	730	1402
1918	1356	1856	1194	541	699	713	1664	754	1001	823	875
1919	1337	2134	1279	850	902	847	1980	914	832	756	837
1920	793	3922	1126	884	545	1177	2123	707	655	1384	1240
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	32	584	110	465	228	294	278	480	60	592	604
1925	NA										
1926	30	432	530	237	248	609	273	515	160	540	686
1927	192	767	807	282	269	712	135	887	570	490	1281
Total	85052+14	68001+16	62060+12	31073+8	36392+13	46750+14	34497+15	25480+12	20510+8	1855+1+8	4553+14
Total	85066	68017	62072	31081	36405	46764	34512	25492	20518	18559	45549

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix V (2) Statistics of the reward paid for the destruction of snakes in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Reward paid for the Destruction of snakes										
	Goalpara	kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garo hills
1877											
1878											
1879											
1880											
1881		34									
1882		33									
1883		21									
1884		18			9						
1885		16	5		1						
1886		25			0						
1887		14			0						
1888		16			0						
1889		23									
1890		10			4						
1891		6			14						
1892		21			18		468				
1893							NA				
1894	1	21			15		263				
1895	2	30			15		1059				
1896											
1897	12	25			18		1119	0			
1898		21			28		764				
1899							NA				
1900		33			12		576				
1901	1	24			19		512				
1902	1	22			19		1224				
1903	2	33			23		606	7		5	
1904	2	1	0			7	643	2			
1905	4	6	0	2	3	3	663	4			
1906	0	6	0	15	5	3	392	1	1		
1907	0	9		29	3	1	94	8	3		
1908	0	1		11	1	4	10	6			
1909	1	25	2	12	3	3	7	8	1		0
1910	1	25	1	10	4	3	806	5	2	0	0
1911							NA				
1912	0	16	0	6	4	6	2	109	2		
1913	3	25	0	7	5	4	69	2	4	1	
1914	7	17	2	11	3	13	18	2	3	1	0
1915	6	25	7	7	3	20	136	2	2		
1916	10	13	6	3	7	31	120	3	1		0
1917	8	18	46	3	7	25	6	11	3		0
1918	6	28	69	3	7	29	672	9	1		
1919	5	21	51	1	7	13	222	11	0		1
1920	8	34	9	0	7	1	48	10	0	1	1
1921							NA				
1922							NA				
1923							NA				
1924	1	1	1				70	0			
1925							NA				
1926		2	6			2	0	0			1
1927			3	0			0				0
Total	81+9	719+17	208+6	120+7	264+14	168+5	10569+13	200+10	23+3	8+1	3+3
Total	90	736	214	127	278	173	10582	210	26	9	6

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix V (3) statistics of reward paid for the destruction of wild animals during
1877-1927

Year	Reward paid for the Destruction of wild animals										
	Goalpara	kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garo hills
1877	2481	1925	2006	660	542	1535	425	270	55	62	677
1878	2133	2293	1913	735	632	1104	0	150	180	27	1040
1879	NA										
1880	575	790	1175	572	540	810	10	202	120	62	1165
1881	1205	887	1522	917	734	1036	123	200	160	0	767
1882	1112	1063	1755	395	920	962	526	70	87	0	962
1883	1584	1278	1422	590	953	1387	2276	274	87	932	57
1884	1895	976	1425	555	1295	1513	620	147	100	125	742
1885	2727	1018	1392	742	1162	526	445	340	192	97	472
1886	3885	1098	1220	552	1215	1400	727	100	70	180	637
1887	4012	1228	1705	592	1195	1010	325	232	7	160	1322
1888	1727	698	1257	677	1095	1230	545	337	45	145	157
1889	917	1475	1497	465	795	1112	1162	140	80	210	897
1890	1405	1363	1475	503	780	1298	547	665	140	290	1835
1891	2663	1282	1655	395	776	1393	1260	865	275	540	1155
1892	3642	1289	1435	620	771	1247	400	1050	250	740	1397
1893	NA										
1894	3345	1575	1732	685	1148	1300	417	550	260	625	2260
1895	2555	2090	1565	830	930	1620	533	815	265	577	1660
1896	NA										
1897	1835	2455	1787	936	705	1197	404	965	305	575	1387
1898	1725	2365	1670	590	556	1135	565	677	245	870	980
1899	NA										
1900	3755	2117	1475	1060	1118	1080	823	835	665	310	1920
1901	3680	1055	2160	995	618	1305	565	470	475	378	1682
1902	1320	2040	1625	908	840	1257	1295	785	770	463	1337
1903	2315	1765	1285	683	1173	1160	225	1030	845	213	1185
1904	3020	1710	1695	510	508	1315	271	777	820	186	972
1905	3335	1905	1650	806	847	1323	295	1117	1130	301	1095
1906	1575	3745	1610	757	1072	1272	350	865	1279	287	1592
1907	3635	1227	1520	792	765	1072	240	635	1085	430	1267
1908	2015	1315	1585	664	863	1398	151	900	775	387	1565
1909	3695	1173	1481	1129	1420	1294	218	580	796	399	1022
1910	2768	2390	1230	1230	793	1166	272	829	805	405	737
1911	NA										
1912	2973	1617	1145	1275	863	1007	367	394	825	333	637
1913	515	1362	1742	1042	994	815	100	683	840	427	1060
1914	755	2415	1522	1152	882	1115	250	695	775	530	665
1915	1197	2207	2285	780	1068	1125	389	713	537	786	1030
1916	2223	1352	1595	1334	1310	1057	914	716	953	1177	1275
1917	1052	1130	1732	570	1380	699	452	980	912	730	1402
1918	1350	1828	1125	538	692	684	992	745	1000	823	875
1919	1332	2113	1228	849	895	834	1758	903	832	756	836
1920	785	3888	1117	884	538	1176	2075	697	655	1383	1239
1921	NA										
1922	NA										
1923	NA										
1924	31	583	109	465	228	294	208	480	60	592	604
1925	NA										
1926	30	430	524	237	248	607	273	515	160	540	685
1927	192	767	804	282	269	712	135	887	570	490	1281
Total	84971	67282	61852	30953	36128		23928	25280	20487	18543	45532

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1876-1916)

Appendix V (4), Statistics of rewards paid for the destruction of tiger in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

Year	Rewards paid for the destruction of tigers											
	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garo hills	Lushai Hills
1877	2126	1675	1700	600	462	1475	387	250	25	50	575	
1878	1962	1887	1475	662	1012	525		150	150	25	875	
1879	NA											
1880	1432	500	800	470	475	750	10	197	110	50	937	
1881	1050	710	940	760	637	974	60	177	100		612	
1882	925	930	1170	290	837	837	455	70	60		800	
1883	1462	1050	970	460	875	1225	1965	230	60	50	712	
1884	1575	785	805	460	1137	1375	430	137	60	125	587	
1885	2350	690	670	610	1000	509	375	315	110	87	325	
1886	3437	765	630	380	937	1253	690	75	40	150	412	
1887	3435	1002	1160	490	1010	737	260	145		150	950	
1888	1320	462	620	460	862	1112	450	237		125	850	
1889	700	1200	810	350	612	1025	910	90	40	175	650	
1890	1020	1010	580	370	650	1163	460	510	70	250	1462	
1891	1650	670	500	210	588	1283	1155	675	60	410	500	
1892	1810	550	640	380	600	1037	380	600	100	475	762	
1893	NA											
1894	1900	640	800	310	700	1025	410	265	10	380	1050	
1895	1230	900	550	570	600	1275	515	375	120	327	675	
1896												
1897	1020	1130	990	460	500	887	255	725	100	175	662	
1898	920	1150	640	210	345	800	410	407	70	605	400	
1899	NA											
1900	1990	1020	650	745	810	775	270	530	220	140	900	
1901	2035	500	970	510	250	1037	505	220	100	212	612	
1902	720	670	650	485	650	962	760	340	225	215	342	
1903	1010	590	560	398	863	800	140	290	140	75	550	1125
1904	1190	600	910	315	263	950	220	342	120		262	1471
1905	1430	760	630	382	472	737	220	417	160	50	500	1723
1906	720	2100	470	450	637	862	290	257	260	137	587	947
1907	1140	410	750	360	425	692	355	180	150	125	387	795
1908	810	690	540	387	387	903	100	420	150	137	400	1125
1909	3695	1172	1481	1128	1419	1293	217	580	796	399	1022	854
1910	1862	1442	650	812	400	787	175	247	277	150	237	977
1911	NA											
1912	1937	837	337	650	475	637	140	100	187	45	150	846
1913	212	612	762	500	637	587	90	240	170	65	350	972
1914	375	1450	462	500	487	712	245	370	187	157	75	1230
1915	762	1500	987	425	567	637	313	370	162	237	125	1167
1916	1587	737	875	737	475	700	627	187	387	452	250	1650
1917	662	500	1050	175	487	325	337	312	375	112	325	1641
1918	750	1137	562	177	312	450	675	200	362	287	287	1302
1919	712	1062	562	287	475	525	1312	300	187	175	250	1509
1920	522	2752	462	437	300	775	1660	205	275	475	487	1729
1921	NA											
1922	NA											
1923	NA											
1924	20	398	47	242	95	212	178	335		65	193	1519
1925	NA											
1926	20	307	382	100	138	450	252	112	150	60	325	2113
1927	162	650	550	80	228	505	100	337	50	45	512	2290
Total	55647+7	3960 2+7	3174 9+5	18784+ 5	2509 1+7	35580+ 8	1875 8+2	12521+ 7	6375+4	7424 +5	2292 4+9	9081
Total	55654	3960 9	3175 4	18789	2509 8	35588	1876 0	12528	6379	7429	2293 3	9081

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix V (5), Statistics of the reward paid for the destruction of leopard in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

year	Rewards paid for the destruction of leopards											
	Goal para	Kamrup	Darrang	Now gaon	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garohills	Lushai Hills
1877	275	142	172	47	70	25	37		30	10	95	
1878	115	177	210	57	40	90			30		152	
1879	NA											
1880	102	175	140	62	27	40			10	10	187	
1881	115	140	227	122	67	55	10	15	60		102	
1882	142	105	145	55	52	25	20		27		152	
1883	122	195	137	90	77	45	265	44	27	5	172	
1884	242	151	210	25	115	75	70	5	40		102	
1885	300	310	287	102	135	10	70	25	82	5	75	
1886	390	185	270	87	237	20	37	25	25	25	150	
1887	500	182	215	47	135	85	65	70	2	5	290	
1888	342	225	262	52	75	60	95	50	30	15	135	
1889	167	242	302	72	92	37	252	35	35	10	165	
1890	320	315	450	78	50	35	87	95	60	15	310	
1891	910	527	865	50	78	45	105	160	215	75	490	
1892	1760	685	450	120	140	110	20	205	130	165	435	
1893	NA											
1894	1380	835	680	195	312	165	70	65	235	240	825	
1895	1250	1115	820	100	210	120	60	115	95	250	580	
1896	NA											
1897	730	1175	690	270	125	90	125	130	145	400	390	
1898	690	1095	780	220	140	100	65	165	115	245	625	
1899	NA											
1900	1700	860	660	205	202	140	55	265	275	160	525	
1901	1620	455	930	305	217	195	60	50	195	160	630	
1902	565	1275	835	317	120	105	525	165	285	160	485	
1903	1270	970	555	161	180	100	85	290	225	125	250	32
1904	1685	890	500	79	145	160	50	125	285	100	235	50
1905	1555	855	825	236	270	230	75	315	410	165	170	60
1906	705	1410	730	146	345	195	315	50	245	70	380	55
1907	2285	565	660	187	145	80	60	180	235	215	455	35
1908	995	585	665	161	307	175	50	55	150	160	535	67
1909	1410	665	705	203	355	180		200	289	95	395	165
1910	850	870	555	235	240	190	97	205	245	185	305	160
1911	NA											
1912	1015	710	685	440	260	260	120	285	405	165	375	200
1913	295	725	920	380	260	155	10	340	385	205	425	180
1914	355	900	932	465	300	282	15	225	352	120	395	360
1915	420	665	1050	285	310	265	75	205	165	195	520	295
1916	555	560	680	355	575	170	270	300	310	145	660	190
1917	225	505	650	245	755	215	110	485	245	175	730	300
1918	460	600	505	285	340	167	315	305	260	170	450	250
1919	515	870	565	330	170	160	445	375	295	150	375	240
1920	185	1020	645	190	230	280	415	319	245	282	540	260
1921	NA											
1922	NA											
1923	NA											
1924	20	398	47	242	950	212	178	335		65	193	607
1925	NA											
1926		117	132	52	10	115	16	285	10	10	232	238
1927	110	225	65	41	145	480	35	255	55	10		179
Total	2864 7+3	24671+3	21808 +4	7396 +6	9008 +5	5743+1	4829+1	6818+1	6959+2	4762	1469 2+4	3923
	2865 1	24674	21812	7402	9013	5744	4830	6819	6961	4760	1469 6	3923

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix V (6) Statistics of reward paid for the destruction of bears in various districts of Assam during 1877-1927

year	Rewards paid for the destruction of bears											
	Goal para	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowga on	Sibsa gar	Lakhi mpur	Sylhet	Cachar	Khasi hills	Naga hills	Garohills	Lushai Hills
1877	38	25	68							2	7	
1878	51	25	50	15						2	12	
1879	NA											
1880	40	25	235	40	37	20				2	40	
1881	40	37	355	35	30	7					52	
1882	45	27	39	50	30						10	
1883	32	315	40	17	26					2	47	
1884	77	40	310	40	40	13	20	5			52	
1885	77	12	435	30	25	7				5	72	
1886	57	54	320	35	40	27			5	5	75	
1887	77	42	330	55	50	37		17	5	5	82	
1888	65	10	375	65	50	42		50	15	5	72	
1889	50	32	385	42	90	50		15	5	25	82	
1890	65	35	445	55	80	50		60	20	25	62	
1891	103	85	290	135	110	65		30		55	165	
1892	72	40	235	115	40	100		245	20	50	200	
1893	NA											
1894	65	95	250	180	85	110		75	5	5	385	
1895	75	75	195	160	70	225	10	183	50		405	
1896	NA											
1897	85	150	105	205	80	220	10	110	60		345	
1898	115	120	250	160	70	235		105	20	60	315	
1899	NA											
1900	65	220	165	110	105	165		300	170	10	495	
1901	25	100	260	180	95	72		150	180		440	
1902	35	95	125	106	70	190	10	280	260	70	510	
1903	35	205	170	124	130	140		450	380	10	385	920
1904	145	220	235	116	100	165		310	415	55	475	1072
1905	350	240	195	187	105	345		385	550	20	425	1257
1906	150	235	210	160	90	215	10	292	685	20	625	382
1907	210	140	110	248	145	280		305	575	90	425	175
1908	210	10	280	165	165	260		395	450	90	630	237
1909	123	87	193	143	290	226		148	187	140	252	103
1910	55	77	55	132	150	138		95	222	40	195	125
1911	NA											
1912	20	70	122	185	72	110		107	152	38	112	35
1913	7	25	60	162	72	65		62	186	57	212	230
1914	25	60	62	137	47	45		65	125	90	225	175
1915	15	42	47	55	105	87		72	145	173	205	102
1916	30	55	40	140	250	162	10	172	190	270	350	387
1917	165	75	32	50	135	159		112	127	165	347	616
1918	140	99	57	75	40	60		160	255	240	132	287
1919	105	180	50	190	200	148		167	290	271	157	105
1920	85	115	10	165	165	165		130	97	328	212	510
1921	NA											
1922	NA											
1923	NA											
1924		20	5	83	10	22		51			77	477
1925	NA											
1926	10	7	10	84		42		47			66	1010
1927	15	7	32	37		12		90	15		262	1208
Total	3249+5	3628+5	7237+4	4468+5	3494+3	4481+6	70	5240+4	5861+2	2425+5	9694+9	9413
Total	3254	3633	7241	4473	3497	4487	70	5244	5863	2429	9703	9413

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix VI (1) Statement of the cattle killed by wild animal in British India in each calendar year from 1877-1916

Year	Number of cattle killed by wild animals									
	Madras	Bombay	Bengal	North-western provinces & Oudh	Punjab	Central provinces	Mysore and Coorg	Assam	Hyderabad	Ajmer & marwara
1877	6892	3056	9360	10201	5177	2977	5163	2994		
1878	6210	3736	10907	7001	7593	2194	4208	2042	2295	143
1879	6342	4007	11292	8035	9069	2692	102	2491	1820	291
1880	8577	4531	14567	8140	7986	3711	219	3269	2660	216
1881	8668	2398	8423	7971	4083	2929	1018	2802	3013	264
1882	9374	2967	8332	8283	2793	3796	288	3972	3170	554
1883	8812	2702	11447	8926	2623	3952	131	3819	2161	231
1884	8731	1901	12094	8096	2015	4322	329	6631	2302	442
1885	10122	2770	11912	9277	1555	3661	358	14131	2085	461
1886	9335	2252	11382	8008	2860	3790	685	14063	1583	163
1887	13671	1993	17230	7667	2128	3709	542	16123	1723	326
1888	8923	2252	23616	8647	1030	4719	580	15293	206	264
1889	10518	2084	22884	7299	886	3390	637	14674	1695	281
1890	10153	1783	21607	5931	1063	4620	576	14907	1278	153
1891	9766	2522	21567	6979	928	5988	721	14604	1389	139
1892	9886	2160	27966	6573	786	7509	891	16401	1350	271
1893	12233	1920	35623	6362	1606	8343	911	17446	1492	102
1894	12254	2236	35518	5724	1198	10228	664	19593	1254	31
1895	11855	1515	38500	6079	1012	9697	528	19554	1199	76
1896	9548	1886	30595	6500	1022	8508	498	17640	1088	28
1897	9891	2023	28533	5366	774	8047	512	15938	904	99
1898	11601	1676	28408	6356	476	11759	676	16266	794	114
1899	13480	2025	29624	6580	1012	11214	1549	16806	1032	99
1900	12769	1894	27568	6671	878	8415	1233	15135	603	11
1901	10798	2206	24710	6663	1727	12722	1236	14035	547	
1902	11005	1769	24777	6634	751	14135	704	14694	638	
1903	10978	4673	22235	7049	1972	17412	972	13915		1
1904	12056	6009	23506	8742	1460	16851	863	12612		4
1905	13343	6206	18427	8525	1779	17703	1191	13457		21
1906	13878	7753	17014	6123	1775	13721	1229	13618		7
1907	13222	7051	16966	9421	2808	14431	1047	14499		6
1908	12427	7513	18272	10484	1609	12830	690	13554		8
1909	11380	8572	23624	11124	2255	12059	820	13220		61
1910	10966	8043	22348	13040	2043	12087	724	12954		65
1911	11242	9154	19392	12293	1758	11365	621	NA		151
1912	11701	9891	23158	12790	1789	11430	849	13934		242
1913	11722	9306	5016+16942	11524+5	1497	12467	833	15740		259
1914	11575	8728	4750+16105	10460+42	2206	12724	730	17739		278
Total	405904	155163	753384	289560	85982	332107	35528	470565	38281	5862

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1876-1916)

Appendix VI (2) Statement of the cattle killed by snakes in British India in each calendar year from 1877-1916

Year	Number of cattle killed by wild animals									
	Madras	Bombay	Bengal	North-western provinces & Oudh	Punjab	Central provinces	Mysore and Coorg	Assam	Hyderabad	Ajmer & marwara
1877	363	116	969	312	102	85	345	9		
1878	140	221	537	213	95	15	72	11	389	
1879	113	103	754	266	132	13		2	387	
1880	227	89	1248	221	78	39		57	383	
1881	270	191	154	317	69	26		16	836	
1882	329	131	228	318	126	54		30	569	22
1883	278	69	263	314	47	54	1	20	284	1
1884	304	110	303	313	178	50	1	39	156	4
1885	298	79	311	40	45	294		56	192	5
1886	719	59	239	659	32	238		208	130	
1887	1070	48	509	216	77	44		190	134	
1888	1173	81	496	201	9	57		185	206	1
1889	2037	74	480	221	87	14		71	120	
1890	1852	100	538	247	32	54	2	257	132	3
1891	1317	305	499	210	38	47	3	50	142	
1892	1458	195	479	189	93	120		96	141	1
1893	2019	74	725	256	48	95	1	....	135	
1894	2071	71	463	236	79	235		60	121	1
1895	2312	40	887	184	10	244		205	108	
1896	1707	53	963	361	26	249		190	109	1
1897	1965	43	652	348	61	210		39	74	1
1898	2096	32	755	443	94	346	3	257	78	
1899	2112	41	915	365	7	475	1	199	129	1
1900	2428	91	832	362	9	498		126	61	
1901	1714	291	850	617	5	464		123	32	
1902	1964	75	775	349	14	569		238	66	1
1903	2328	129	635	545	14	663	3	105		
1904	2090	82	703	578	22	778	6	126		1
1905	2048	145	316	246	6	571	6	150		
1906	1705	198	256	467	8	570		149		
1907	1998	231	350	682	23	765	4	182		
1908	1794	319	849	615	34	603	1	187		
1909	1600	532	330	665	13	433	2	139		
1910	1745	692	422	747	32	426	2	229		
1911	1566	594	411	902	30	284	4	NA		
1912	1644	431	492	860	10	252	3	545		1
1913	1634	632	153+183	729	7	323	1	263		1
1914	1712	698	117+183	759	19	233		208		3
Total	54200	7465	20588	15573	1811	10490	461	5017	5114	48

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1876-1916)

**Appendix VII (1) Statement showing the destruction of wild animals killed in
British India during 1877-1927**

Year	Number of wild animals killed									
	Madras	Bombay	Bengal	North-western provinces & Oudh	Punjab	Central provinces	Mysore and Coorg	Assam	Hyderabad	Ajmer & marwara
1877	6997	1237	4138	3910	1489	1608	1684	772		
1878	7061	941	4650	4495	1320	1197	1200	815	173	23
1879	4008	1875	5543	3032	1503	1030	12	639	124	13
1880	1284	1717	4783	2924	1380	1408	26	541	167	8
1881	1429	1367	4213	3037	1411	1351	15	1176	216	5
1882	2055	1824	5867	2932	1549	1608	27	1093	253	5
1883	2708	1336	5653	3907	2276	1796	24	896	385	10
1884	4033	1489	6906	3679	2333	1657	531	835	201	17
1885	4208	2471	5932	3817	2043	1833	38	1061	328	14
1886	3319	1991	5293	4545	1799	1478	36	1418	252	12
1887	2438	935	5138	3416	3172	1395	35	1071	502	23
1888	1926	961	6503	4553	2774	1825	18	1000	355	12
1889	1975	880	6807	2755	2011	1223	36	851	351	12
1890	1134	836	5160	2939	1079	1000	34	1185	355	19
1891	1170	820	4882	3458	1663	1193	54	1671	387	50
1892	1090	600	5662	2723	1000	1340	188	1685	410	20
1893	1016	645	5536	2210	1334	1184	139	1608	382	13
1894	1038	528	4924	2173	1137	1237	182	1606	270	13
1895	973	1243	4902	2300	1279	1474	144	1674	292	29
1896	1078	992	5302	2489	1718	1566	173	1916	359	27
1897	1042	1409	6685	3189	1507	1197	162	1672	333	25
1898	914	1523	9275	2460	1008	873	237	1638	320	13
1899	974	1371	7608	2357	992	1123	237	2032	407	61
1900	1015	1167	5230	2769	1374	1342	171	2063	314	10
1901	837	1208	4915	2533	880	911	24	1234	311	6
1902	813	472	5051	2556	1302	968	34	2186	242	20
1903	796	399	5043	2711	564	1409	320	2176		18
1904	805	725	5213	1932	884	1682	249	2588		16
1905	809	866	1518	1956	842	2532	258	2373		8
1906	906	744	1521	2667	1080	1668	249	1916		10
1907	797	821	1604	3032	827	1871	368	2018		12
1908	761	828	1683	3561	1228	2762	204	2170		16
1909	1019	1573	1427	2308	1401	1912	191	2113		7
1910	2219	2257	1785	2616	1714	1591	209	1971		7
1911	2219	3283	2132	3172	2482	1889	331	NA		13
1912	2070	3027	3716	3143	3469	1881	159	1720		18
1913	2238	3471	2858	2749	2382	1902	166	1988		14
1914	1907	3997	2824	3554	1172	1832	207	2611		22
1915	1768	3818	2769	3523	551	1731	151	3060		37
1916	1634	4368	798	3109	758	1417	101	1562		14
1917	1898	3947	412	2684	496	1564	58	1490		8
1918	1491	3085	1115	2487	317	1409	42	1261		6
1919	2091	4562	1159	2745	267	1838	46	1322		20
1920	1994	6001	1868	2649	860	3103	51	1606		31
1921	1806	7572	1532	3726	321	2510	50	1667		36
1922	2022	6774	2191	2561	367	1748	90	1587		21
1923	1725	7722	2643	3353	322	1984	67	911		15
1924	548	6190	2762	2959	289	1728	71	788		10
1925	566	6905	2171	4325	507	1735	60	935		21
1926	446	9445	2076	5096	362	1654	57	1041		58
1927	464	10843	1769	5507	407	1732	67	1226		45
Total	91534	135061	201147	159283	65202	81901	9283	76438	7689	943

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes,(1876-1916)

**Appendix VII (2) Statement showing the destruction of snakes killed British
India during 1877-1927**

Year	Number of Snakes killed									
	Madras	Bombay	Bengal	North-western provinces & Oudh	Punjab	Central provinces	Mysore and Coorg	Assam	Hyderabad	Ajmer & marwara
1877		93154	15761	414	13566	61	1336	135		
1878		88796	24276	1697	1783	410	691	25		66
1879		102232	21102	952	2420	924		33	88	72
1880		177078	23201	1029	9126	866	58	202	158	61
1881		207113	19282	1142	22279	1493	16	300	332	21
1882		262348	32187	16380	6065	1853	114	313	333	118
1883		293230	38856	24490	48873	1914	78	200	290	142
1884		221556	54787	24689	74355	2378	111	428	299	248
1885	328	283579	53995	27347	47576	1997	41	582	774	106
1886	255	266921	31204	26636	85715	2070	46	777	496	849
1887	302	311476	35054	25864	177080	2065	48	269	697	575
1888	699	389472	39326	24264	108312	1791	27	516	848	265
1889	340	433795	41189	25663	68501	1395	14	395	76	224
1890		406092	41115	24083	29941	1554	26	478	113	192
1891		2803	43805	2963	24949	1402	1	828	84	237
1892		292	49309	1240	22499	1488	25	2329	85	117
1893		341	55695	21139	22780	1522	11	9443	108	124
1894			56165	14829	26315	1844	2	1808	130	87
1895		12421	50576	16387	26281	6845	73	4466	181	104
1896		42148	34705	14827	20012	1337	3	1624	113	30
1897		38393	28277	7957	19059	29	17	4406	139	40
1898		38479	36745	7833	17334	66	14	2432	217	64
1899		26612	37208	5811	12972	121	16	6272	222	37
1900		27184	28918	9995	13272	145	13	3164	173	6
1901		13855	28892	7234	9681	199	4	3132	176	4
1902		14345	25794	8228	7698	199	8	6961	242	20
1903		9954	24334	8397	8039	413	14	4325		18
1904		13022	24865	8265	7391	508	6	3591		16
1905		11787	22751	7914	5982	177	13	3805		8
1906		14099	19182	8585	5071	212	3	2507		10
1907		13698	20499	9668	3937	644	5	1452		16
1908		20788	18608	12128	4228	918		965		16
1909		33770	21908	10680	4089	1551	20	1305		7
1910		36319	21393	10558	3332	1673	12	4081		7
1911		28157	25212	7895	3693	1471	13	NA		13
1912		27038	27718	7647	2760	1028		1983		18
1913		27336	33918	5905	3080	1265	5	1981		16
1914		27751	27419	6322	8854	1350		2168		26
1915		92042	28479	9474	14648	1508	4	2952		59
1916		9982	6911	6788	27157	849		1409		25
1917		25035	10376	5395	15026	728	1	332		30
1918		21250	9453	6475	4749	572		3187		20
1919		23670	9137	9245	3865	394		1214		19
1920		20238	9224	12335	1177	242		388		57
1921		20372	8190	14353	6149	255		353		44
1922		23484	7869	8614	5699	308		141		22
1923		22738	9094	8248	2263	505		38		11
1924		23383	10217	8635	4083	463		308		3
1925		22078	10162	4272	3331	915		53		29
1926		25166	9170	5069	4300	2087		30		15
1927		32533	9365	10892	2401	1664		16		17
Total	1924	4379405	1372878	556852	1073748	57668	2889	90102	6374	4331

*Rs.135 was paid by the municipalities in rewards for the destruction of 796 snakes.

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

**Appendix VIII (1) Statement of people killed by snakes British India during
1877-1927**

Year	Number of person killed by snake-bite									
	Madras	Bombay	Bengal	North-western provinces & Oudh	Punjab	Central provinces	Mysore and Coorg	Assam	Hyderabad	Ajmer & marwara
1877	720	933	8879	3871	672	1168	55	188		
1878	609	819	9944	3158	759	934	72	255	100	12
1879	1128	875	9515	3778	611	841		221	102	27
1880	1182	972	10064	4723	681	991	3	211	125	49
1881	1064	1024	9268	5010	744	985		189	197	54
1882	920	1190	9191	5680	930	1058		167	190	39
1883	1267	1150	9153	5904	909	1076		210	187	83
1884	1191	1108	9614	5542	809	797	3	175	172	50
1885	1487	1145	10112	5039	686	1066		178	206	42
1886	1492	1206	10388	6538	928	869		254	214	63
1887	1263	1168	9131	5765	843	928	1	198	182	47
1888	1455	1165	8946	6223	961	1055		213	283	65
1889	1587	1080	10681	6445	915	1063	1	230	216	53
1890	1424	1075	10534	5798	834	1041		214	191	78
1891	1433	1187	10031	6013	799	1099	4	209	145	51
1892	1455	1038	9120	4566	871	999		208	189	35
1893	1498	1192	10797	4847	917	1024		206	192	41
1894	1612	1233	9856	5689	1037	1087		160	231	66
1895	1640	1286	9157	6297	1085	1279		182	277	51
1896	1869	1109	9250	5695	962	1133		154	172	37
1897	1872	992	10723	4549	936	1010	1	177	143	39
1898	1664	1215	11123	4908	1067	1006	2	153	179	85
1899	1695	1122	12220	5570	1049	1132	1	193	160	50
1900	2037	701	10557	6056	893	994	1	170	104	4
1901	1614	1051	11343	5369	796	1147		169	147	32
1902	1902	1160	11130	5127	967	1304		164	245	43
1903	2011	1008	10394	4998	797	1386		172		30
1904	1932	1129	10052	5171	974	1550	1	185		50
1905	1896	1111	8245	4928	923	1280	1	248		30
1906	1527	1143	8862	5225	1060	1100	1	172		14
1907	1677	1171	8276	5113	903	996		134		34
1908	1586	1248	7402	4846	925	989		146		14
1909	1684	1345	7202	4845	1149	1383		217		69
1910	1543	1247	7767	5474	964	1253		239		42
1911	1608	1395	9344	5791	905	1244		NA		25
1912	1530	1140	10287	5246	793	1063	1	150		20
1913	1695	1406	10131	5195	912	1155	1	167		24
1914	1520	1608	10324	5553	1207	1198		150		44
1915	1519	1789	11504	6659	1631	1439	3	256		53
1916	1505	1445	10084	6734	988	1212		170		26
1917	1452	1527	10278	6506	975	1524		151		22
1918	1275	1480	9364	6538	902	1523		206		56
1919	1263	1161	9058	5160	742	1167		173		35
1920	1119	1309	9500	4712	729	943		208		59
1921	969	1378	8586	4903	726	975		217		55
1922	936	1315	9332	4854	844	1224	3	183		44
1923	1150	1205	8787	5247	797	1133	2	172		25
1924	1099	1124	9145	4594	832	1525		207		37
1925	895	1325	9162	4321	807	1389	2	188		
1926	967	1488	9123	4585	719	1358	3	179		
1927	1310	1409	8537	4268	899	1274		163		
Total	72748	61102	491473	269626	45764	58369	162	9501	4549	2004

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

**Appendix VIII (2) Statement of people killed by wild animals British India
during 1877-1927**

Year	Number of person killed by wild animals									
	Madras	Bombay	Bengal	North-western provinces & Oudh	Punjab	Central provinces	Mysore and Coorg	Assam	Hyderabad	Ajmer & marwara
1877	135	86	1256	722	54	293	43	229	0	0
1878	243	92	1374	1061	43	299	12	233	54	0
1879	208	139	1264	626	39	258	0	200	28	0
1880	223	136	1295	561	42	289	0	234	15	4
1881	238	141	1367	470	27	248	0	211	18	3
1882	275	15	1267	393	35	285	0	214	25	9
1883	382	76	1302	304	55	305	2	259	21	9
1884	225	108	1547	314	-138	227	19	212	21	9
1885	136	108	1711	320	36	220	0	188	21	1
1886	196	128	1595	284	56	240	0	167	15	3
1887	228	72	1563	216	72	275	2	139	24	5
1888	187	65	1335	197	55	342	0	164	-283	4
1889	205	80	1560	263	31	332	2	179	29	3
1890	196	47	1321	222	31	368	0	201	26	6
1891	279	80	1584	236	65	310	3	200	29	4
1892	316	48	1664	233	56	317	1	209	31	3
1893	274	38	1600	232	37	256	2	155	27	5
1894	279	40	1711	279	40	221	1	145	37	2
1895	277	46	1603	530	54	291	1	168	23	1
1896	295	51	1644	642	62	361	1	113	16	8
1897	240	52	2210	701	75	700	0	164	29	3
1898	143	30	1762	575	33	409	1	151	42	6
1899	189	26	1632	512	50	282	0	145	19	0
1900	206	53	1728	651	34	453	1	119	51	3
1901	208	97	1075	416	10	720	1	147	36	4
1902	202	130	1134	317	21	435	1	149	43	13
1903	438	70	1120	409	3	470	0	121+17=138	0	0
1904	237	33	1087	199	11	351	1	118	0	0
1905	299	30	805	214	17	293	0	105	0	0
1906	317	58	756	282	8	265	0	110	0	1
1907	295	66	840	130	19	174	0	99	0	2
1908	236	32	1034	206	8	238	1	114	0	1
1909	369	36	1004	237	11	220	0	127	0	0
1910	396	22	1130	185	10	179	0	133	0	6
1911	286	26	905	-358	6	129	1	NA	0	3
1912	322	29	1233	160	8	123	1	112	0	1
1913	308	20	839	139	11	125	0	102	0	0
1914	306	18	879	123	0	163	1	126	0	3
1915	551	46	1107	191	1	161	1	147	0	0
1916	452	41	1214	131	34	158	1	170	0	2
1917	568	34	996	172	26	158	2	138	0	11
1918	560	48	775	212	8	210	0	162	0	0
1919	568	45	984	295	5	388	0	198	0	3
1920	783	54	1199	450	8	530	0	216	0	1
1921	840	71	907	525	4	766	0	152	0	2
1922	901	51	843	492	4	688	0	181	0	8
1923	851	44	819	909	4	661	2	209	0	0
1924	641	68	655	521	4	362	4	182	0	1
1925	452	56	558	352	4	302	1	177	0	0
1926	428	45	509	536	7	255	1	144	0	0
1927	579	63	633	533	5	274	4	145	0	0
Total	17968	3090	61935	18522	1201	16379	114	8062	397	153

*Including bihar and Orissa # from 1908 it also included Delhi +including united provinces

Source: NAI, Home, Public, Report on the extermination of wild animals and venomous snakes, (1876-1916)

Appendix IX: Draft All-India Convention for the Preservation of the Fauna of India

Article 1

Any provisional government may adhere to this convention in whole or in part by a notification in writing addressed to the government of India. It is expressly understood that the provisions of this convention shall not in any way prohibit or restrict forest operations in the territories to which the convention may become applicable.

Article 2

The expression 'Wild Life Sanctuary' shall denote an area constituted by the competent legislative authority in which the hunting, shooting or capturing of any wild bird or animal, or specified bird or animal, is prohibited except by or under the control of the highest authority in the department responsible for the management of the Sanctuary, and the boundaries, ownership, or character of which shall not be altered without the sanction of the competent legislative authority. In accordance with the above provisions facilities shall so far as possible be given to the general public for observing the fauna in wild life sanctuaries.

The expression 'animal' shall include all vertebrates and invertebrates in their wild state and any part thereof as well as egg-shells and nests.

The expression "trophy" in Article 8 of this convention shall denote any part of an animal, or substance or article produced from such animal when dead, or the eggs, egg shells, nests or plumage of any bird, which any Contracting Government may notify under Article 8; but shall not include any trophy or part of a trophy which, by a process of bonafide manufacture, as contemplated in paragraph 1 of Article 8, has lost its original identity.

Article 3

The contracting governments will forth with explore the possibilities of establishing in their territories wildlife-Sanctuaries as defined in the preceding article.

Article 4

The Contracting Governments will notify the Government of India of any such wild life sanctuaries established under Article 2.

Article 5

In all cases in which it is proposed to establish in any territory of a contracting Government a wild life sanctuary under Article 2 contiguous to a sanctuary situated in another territory being the territory of a Contracting Government or to the boundary of such territory, there shall be prior consultation between the competent authorities of the territories concerned. Similarly whenever any animal is in need of special protection whether within or without an established sanctuary, there shall, if necessary, be prior consultation and co-operation between the competent authorities of the neighbouring Contracting Governments for the preservation of such animal.

Article 6

In addition to any wild life sanctuaries established under Article 2 forest areas under the complete direct control of the Contracting Governments will be managed as wild life reserves in which all killing, capturing, hunting and shooting of animals or fishing

is prohibited. Hunting, shooting or fishing may be allowed to such limited extent as may be prescribed by rules for such areas.

Such rules may limit the number, sex and size of animals permitted to be killed and may prescribe suitable close seasons and other regulations where such are necessary.

Article 7

The protection of the species mentioned in the annex to the present convention is declared to be of special importance. Animals belonging to the species mentioned in Annex A shall, in each of the territories of the Contracting Governments, be protected as completely as possible, and the hunting, killing or capturing of them shall only take place by special permission of the highest authority in the territory, which shall be given only under special circumstances, solely in order to further important scientific purposes, or when essential for the administration of the territory. Animals belonging to the species mentioned in Annex B, whilst not requiring such protection as those mentioned in Annex A, shall not be hunted, killed, or captured in any part of the territory of the Contracting Governments except under rules made by the competent authorities.

No hunting or other rights already possessed by certain individuals or tribes or any other persons or bodies, by treaty, concession, or specific agreement, or by administrative permission in those areas in which such rights have already been definitely recognised by the authorities of the territory, are to be considered as being in any way prejudiced by the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

In each of the territories of the Contracting Governments the competent authorities shall consider whether it is necessary to apply the provisions of paragraph 1 of the present article to any species not mentioned in the annex, in order to preserve the indigenous fauna in each area, and, if they deem in necessary, shall apply those provisions to any such species to the extent which they consider desirable. They shall similarly consider whether it is necessary in the territory concerned to accord to any of the species mentioned in Class B of the annex the special protection accorded to the species mentioned in Class A.

The competent authorities shall also give consideration to the question of protecting species of animals which by general admission are useful to man or are of special scientific interest.

Nothing in the present article shall (i) prejudice any right which may exist under the local law of any territory to kill animals without a licence in defence of life or property, or (ii) affect the right of the authorities of the territory to permit the hunting, killing, or capturing of any species (a) in time of famine, (b) for the protection of human life public health, or domestic stock, (c) for any requirement relating to public order.

Each Contracting Government shall furnish to the Government of India information on the subject of the measures adopted in each of its territories in regard to the grant of licence, and in regard to the animals, the destruction or capture of which is, in accordance with paragraph 3 of this article, not permitted except under licence. The Government of India will communicate any such information to all the Governments who have adhered to this convention.

Article 8

Each Contracting Government shall take any measures necessary to control and regulate in each of its territories the internal, the import and export and the manufacture of articles from animals or any part thereof or trophies as defined in

paragraph 6 of the present article, with a view to preventing the import or export of, or any dealing in, animals or trophies other than such as have been originally killed, capture or collected in accordance with the laws and regulations of the territory concerned.

The export of animals or trophies outside India shall be prohibited unless the exporter has been granted a certificate permitting export by a competent authority. Such certificate shall only be issued where the animals or trophies have been lawfully obtained. In the event of an attempted export without any certificate having been granted, the authorities of the territory where this attempt takes place shall apply such penalties as they may think necessary.

- a) Every trophy consisting of ivory and rhinoceros horn exported in accordance with the provisions of the present article shall be identified by marks which, together with the weight of the trophy, shall be recorded in the certificate of lawful export.
- b) Every other trophy shall, if possible, be similarly marked and recorded, but shall in any event be described in the certificate so as to identify it with as much certainty as possible.
- c) The Contracting Government shall take such measures as may be possible by the preparation and circulation of appropriate illustration or otherwise to instruct their customs officers in the methods of identifying the species mentioned in the annex to the present convention and the trophies derived there from.

The measures contemplated in paragraph 1 of the present article shall include provisions that found ivory, rhinoceros horn or other specified trophies of animals found dead, or accidentally killed, or killed in defence of any person, shall, in principle, be the property of the Government of the territory concerned, and shall be disposed of according to regulations introduced by that Government, due regard being had to rights and customs reserved in the succeeding paragraph.

No rights of the kind specified in paragraph 2 of article 7 are to be considered as being prejudiced by the provisions of the preceding paragraphs.

Each Contracting Government shall furnish to the Government of India information as to the measures taken in order to carry out the obligations of the present article or any part of them. The Government of India will communicate any information so received to all the Government who have adhered to this convention.

Article 9

The improper use of motor vehicles or other wheeled vehicles or aircraft (including aircraft lighter than air) shall be prohibited in such parts of the territories of the Contracting Governments in which special rules for the preservation of wild life have been enacted under Art. 7 (1), or alternatively in areas specified in Art. 6 of this Convention, both (i) for the purpose of hunting, killing, or capturing animals, and (ii) in such manner as to drive, stampede, or disturb them for any purpose whatsoever, including that of filming and photographing.

The Contracting Governments shall prohibit in such areas the surrounding of animals by fires for hunting purposes. Wherever possible, the under mentioned methods of capturing or destroying animals shall also be generally prohibited:

- (a) the use of poison, or explosives and the diversion of water for killing or capturing fish;
- (b) the use of dazzling lights, flares, poison, or poisoned weapons, for hunting animals;

- (c) the use of nets, pits or enclosures, gins, traps or snares, or of set guns and missiles containing explosives and poisons for hunting animals;
- (d) the driving of animals in snow;
- (e) the watching in the neighbourhood of water or salt licks to shoot animals other than carnivore.

Article 10

It is understood that upon signature, ratification, or accession any Contracting Government may make such express reservations in regard to the articles of the present Convention as may be considered essential.

Article 11

Each Contracting Government shall furnish to the Government of India information as to the measures taken for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the preceding articles. The Government of India will communicate all the information so furnished to the Governments who have adhered to this Convention.

The Contracting Governments shall, wherever necessary, co-operate between themselves for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the preceding articles and to prevent the extinction of any fauna.

Article 12

Any Contracting Government, at the time of signature, ratification, or accession, or thereafter, may make a declaration assuming in respect of its territories, either all the obligations of the present Convention, or the obligations with such reservations as may be made under Art. 10, provided that a Contracting Government must undertake to assume the obligations contained in article 8, paragraph 6. If such declaration is made subsequent to ratification or accession it shall be effected by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Government of India.

Article 13

It is understood that no Government will sign, ratify, or accede to the present Convention unless it makes or has made a declaration under article 12 assuming in respect of its territories the obligations of the Convention either in full or in part.

Article 14

The present Convention shall be subject to ratification. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Government of India which will notify their receipt and the date thereof, and their terms and the terms of any accompanying declarations or reservations to all the Governments who have adhered to this convention.

Article 15

At any time after the 31st March, 1935 the present Convention shall be open to accession by any Government of any Province in India. Accession shall be notified to the Government of India which will inform all the Governments who have adhered to the Convention of all notifications received their terms and the terms of any accompanying declarations or reservations, and the date of their receipt.

After the deposit or notification of not less than four notifications or accessions on the part of Contracting Governments, the present Convention shall come into force three months after the deposit or notification of the last of such ratifications accessions, as between the Government concerned.

Any ratifications or accessions received after the date of the entry into force of the convention shall take effect three months after the date of their receipt by the Government of India.

Article 16

Any Contracting Government may at any time denounce the present Convention by a notification in writing addressed to the Government of India. Such denunciation shall take effect, as regards the Government making it, and in respect of all the territories of that Government to which the Convention shall then apply, either in full or in part, one year after the date of the receipt of the notification by the Government of India provided, however, that no denunciation shall take effect until the expiry of five years from the date of the entry into force of the Convention.

If, as the result of simultaneous or successive denunciations, the number of Contracting Governments bound, in respect of their territories, by all the obligations of the present convention is reduced to less than four, the Convention shall cease to be in force as from the date on which the last of such denunciations shall take effect in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

The Government of India will notify all the other Governments who have adhered to the convention of any denunciation so received and the date on which they take effect. The government of India will also, if occasion arises, similarly notified the date on which the convention ceases to be in force under the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

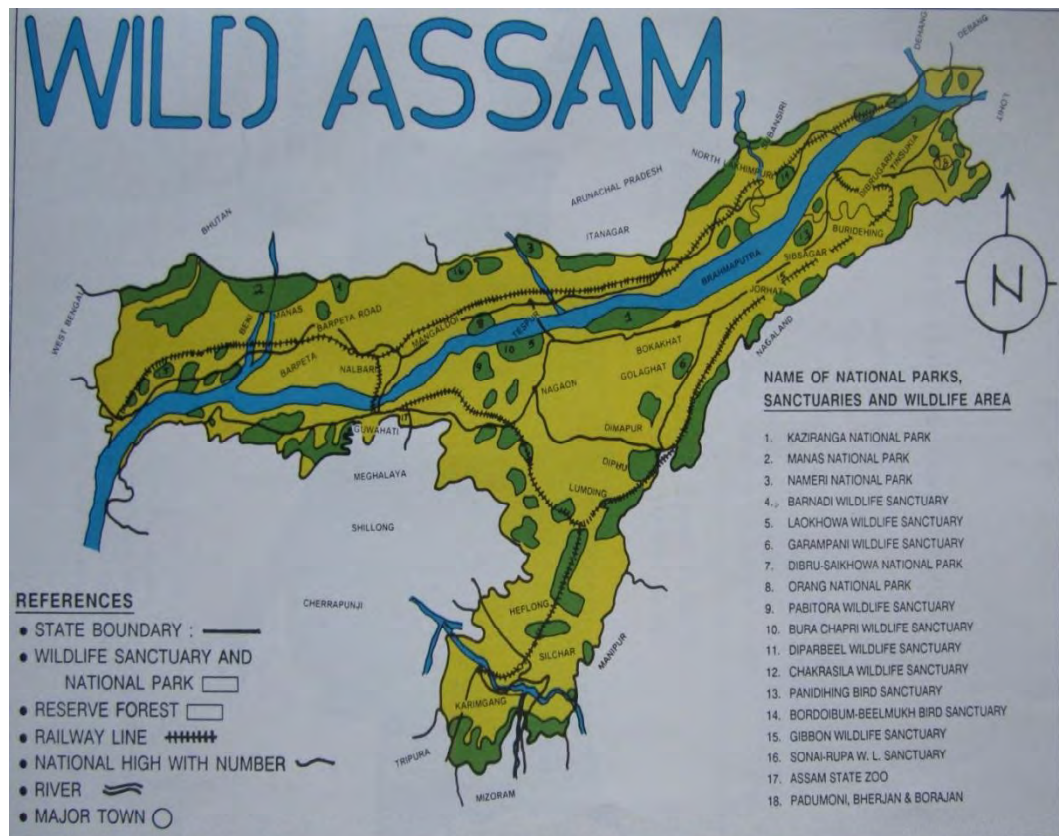
Annex A.

All kind of rhinoceros; Wild Ass of the Rann of Kutch; Sind Ibex; Kathiawar Lion; Musk Deer; Cheetah or hunting leopard; Monitor lizards (except in the Punjab and C.P.); Pangolin (except in C. P.); Caracal (except in the Punjab and Kutch); Brown-antlered deer; Pink headed duck; White winged wood duck; Pigmy-hog.

Annex B. (suggested).

1. Elephant; Bison; Buffalo; All kinds of deer; All kinds of antelope and Gazelles; All kinds of wild sheep; All kinds of goats including Serow, Thar, Markhor and Ibex; Red bear; Tiger; Partridges; Quails (except the common, the black-breasted and the blue-breasted quails in the Punjab); Sandgrouse; Pheasants; Bustards; Ducks; Geese; Snipe and wood cock; Pea fowl; Jungle fowl; Spur fowl; Pigeon;

Appendix X: Map of Assam Showing National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries in Assam



Source: Reproduce from 'Baseline Data on Protected Areas of Assam' ed. by Nagen Sharma, Nagen Sharma Memorial Society, Guwahati, 2001

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Colonizing the Wild: Early British Policies Towards Wildlife in Assam

Geetashree Singh *

The conservation of wildlife is an important issue in the present world for the maintenance of the bio-diversity, the diversity of biological life upon our planet. The earth is a living ecosystem, a fragile system of interdependence and balance. Our own survival as a species depends upon the preservation of the biodiversity and is tied to the survival and vitality of everything on this planet. Thus, the study of the wildlife in the past will help to understand the importance of the preservation of wildlife. The study of the past will reveal the destruction of wild animals during the past, man-animal conflict, its consequences and ultimately the causes which led to the starting of the process of the preservation of wildlife in the past. This will help to understand the causes that led the destruction of wildlife in Assam during the British period, men-animal conflict and their consequences. Though the term “wildlife” indicates both fauna and flora in their wild state but in this work the term “wildlife” denotes only the wild animals in their wild state. The extension of human population to the natural wild animal habitats led to the displacement of the natural wildlife territory. The population density of wildlife and humans over laps increasing their interaction thus, resulted in increased physical conflict. By products of human existence offer unnatural opportunity for wildlife in the form of food and shelter, resulting in increased interference and potentially destructive threat for both men and animals that resulted into animals deaths, crop damage, damage to property, destruction of habitat, injuries to people, injuries to wildlife, livestock depredation and loss of human lives etc.

The men-animals conflict is not new, it could be observed since long back. In Ancient India, though hunting was practiced but wild animals were given importance as it has been evident that the deities of the ancient India were mostly in animal form. The pictures of Deities were found in various forms like that of hump less bull, elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, tiger, hare etc.¹ This indicates the importance of wild animals in ancient India. Mauryan king Ashoka, gave up royal hunt and started protecting birds and animals after embracing Buddhism.² Though hunting continued during the medieval period but Akbar forbade hunting on certain days.³ Even Kashmiri Sultan, Zain-Ul-Abidin gave up meat eating and tried to dissuade his nobles from hunting.⁴ The Ahom rulers also practiced hunting as their favorite past time. But it the common Assamese practiced both hunting and revered them. Assamese folktales tell how the villagers often stayed away from dense forest for fear of wild animals. But the coming of the British led to the mass destruction of wildlife. Reward giving, appointing paid *shikaries*, and hunting for sports and trophies led to the record breaking destruction of wildlife during the British rule. Ramachandra Guha and Madhav Gadgil viewed that as consequences of the record breaking *shikar* the population of wild animals decreased and even some of the animals like elephant and rhinoceros disappeared from areas in which they were formally quite numerous⁵. But the process of the destruction of wild animals did not start abruptly. Starting with the killing of wildlife for mere sports and trophies gradually it spun in wildlife trade. But there was not much trade in wildlife in Assam before 1874 except the trade of elephant teeth. Later the destruction of wildlife also helped in the expansion of cultivation after the jungles were clear off, which in turn helped the British government to earn more revenue. In the initial state the British government has no concrete policy towards wildlife. Through this paper an attempt has been made to study the pre-1874 British

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policies towards wildlife, since when the forest department of Assam started functioning. This will help to understand the early British policies towards wildlife in Assam in particular and in India in general. The paper has been divided into two parts. Section I discusses the damage done by wild animals and section II discusses the British policy towards wildlife.

Section I

Huge atrocities to life and property by wild animals can also be noticed in Assam even before the British establishment in the province. The folk tales of Assam also full of the stories of wild animals and occasional conflicts between men and wild animals⁶. Destruction of crops and cattle by wild animals made the human settlement so difficult that many villages were abandoned. Some references of the destruction and atrocities by wild animals can be observed in many literatures. John M'Cosh mention in his work "Topography of Assam" that "wild elephants are plentiful, and, move in large herds and are very destructive both to the crops and to human life; entering villages in day light and plundering granaries, and stores of salt, of which latter they are very fond"⁷. S.R Ward mentioned in his work, A Glimpse of Assam, "The worst night disturbers in Assam are the numerous jackals."⁸ He also mentioned "There are night visitors of a stronger and more dangerous kind; your cattle and horses are not safe when a leopard or tiger is prowling about your dwelling which is not an unusual occurrence, as everyone knows who has been many months in Assam."⁹ This indicates that the wild animals led to the damages and destruction of life and property. Every year large number of people was killed by wild beast. 277 and 239 people were killed by wild animals between 1869-70 and 1870-71 respectively¹⁰. 135 people in Kamroop, 16 in Durrung, 49 in Nowgoan, 3 in Seesagar, 9 in Luckimpore, 9 in Khasi & Jynteah hills, 18 in Naga Hills were killed in 1870-71¹¹. But the number of casualties by wild beast could have been more as reported by the deputy commissioner of Naga Hills that the number of casualties by wild beasts reported during the year falls far short of the actual number killed by them¹². Among deaths reported by snake bite 62 people were killed in 1869-70 and 72 in 1870-71.

Ravages committed by wild animals : The miles and miles of grass and real jungle made the existence of life and property an utter impossibility. Jungles were so heavy that it was almost impossible to track any wild animal. Lieutenant J. Lamb, collector of Zillah, Durrung, on his way to drive away a tiger that had killed some cows viewed that the jungle was so heavy that it was out of question to kill them¹³ and if the jungles were not cleared and burnt, the shelter for wild animals increased and it made the existence of life and property more dangerous. Wild elephants were also very destructive. Wild elephants moving in large herds were very destructive both to the crops and to the human life, entering villages in day light and plundering granaries and stores of salt of which later they were very fond. In the winter of 1866-67, one village was abandoned in the Kamroop district as a consequence of the destruction caused by the wild elephants.¹⁴ In Naga Hills also a village was deserted by its inhabitants on account of the depredation by the ferocious tigers¹⁵. How peerless was the lives and property of the people of Assam can be understood from the fact that many villages were abandoned because of the depredation by the ferocious wild animals. During 1868, 129 persons reportedly lost their lives because of snake bites or from attacks by wild animals. Human habitation in the form of human lives and agricultural crops were greatly subjected to depredations of the wild animals. Tigers were very numerous in the Jynteah hills and 14 people were reported to have been killed in the month of August, 1866.¹⁶ In the neighborhood of Cheera Poonjee and in Cheera Poonjee itself tigers also committed considerable damages to human lives besides a good number of cattle.¹⁷ Only in Gawalpara district 9, 34, 39 people were reported to have been killed in 1867, 1868 and in 1869 respectively¹⁸. The loss of human life can be easily understand from the fact that 52 people were reported to be killed only in the district of Durrung in two year, 1833 and 1834¹⁹. From 1858-63 a total of 1120 people were reported to have been killed in various districts of Assam²⁰. In 1866 a total of 1413, in 1867 a total of 1363 and 1869 a total of 1577 people were reported to have been killed by wild animals.²¹ By snake bite

64,100 and 160 people were reported to have been killed in 1866, 1867 and 1869 respectively.²² The reports were not available of the cattle killed by wild animals for all the districts of Assam except Sylhet where 918, 947 and 940 cattle were reported to have been killed.²³ The Superintendent of Cachar district has reported immense loss of life and property in Cachar in the year 1869 because of the vast increase of jungles. Around Fourteen & fifteen deaths were reported in a week. Even there is possibility that more than 14-15 people were killed in a week as many such cases were not reported by the villagers of the remote areas of this district.²⁴ *Havildar* of the *Ranees* house was also severely wounded by a tiger and several have been found prowling about the vicinity of the bazaar.²⁵

However, these statements are necessarily very incomplete and the figures are unreliable. There is also little doubt that many deaths from wild animals and snakes took place which were not reported to police and the return of wild animals killed does not include the large animals that are unquestionably annually destroyed by sportsman and those persons who did not claim authorized rewards on the other hand sudden deaths from natural causes and probably even cases of homicide and suicide were frequently reported as deaths from snake bite²⁶. A large number of losses of life from venomous snakes were also observed and offering of rewards for the destruction of snakes didn't answer the real object in view while it entails an enormous expenditure on government. A few years ago the plan of granting such rewards was tried in the districts of the Burdwan division and though the reward was only 2 annas for each poisonous snake the expenditure in a short time an account of rewards amount to 30,000. The fact that the people were ready enough to kill snakes and that they even brought them from distant jungles for the sake of the reward, satisfied the government that the inhabitants of villages and town would for their own sakes destroy a snake when they met it, and as nothing was to be gained by killing those that infested jungles the reward were discontinued and have not since been resumed.²⁷ No records were kept of the destruction of crops and cattle by the wild animals²⁸ except in Sylhet district.

Section II

British Polices towards wildlife during pre-1874 : Though, wild animals were even killed before the British rule by local inhabitants but it was accidental and not intentional. The elite class also used to Hunt wild animals as it was supposed to up-holds once social status- a higher social status required a more ferocious animal to be hunted. But it was occasionally and not a regular process. It was only during the British regime in Assam that various methods were adopted for the destruction of wildlife like awarding of rewards, appointment of regular shikaries etc. W.W.Hunter mentioned in his work "A Statistical account of Assam, vol.I & II" about the rewards given for the destruction of wild animals in various district of the province²⁹. Captain Roger introduced a gun especially for killing wild animals. Good sums was given as rewards for the destruction of wild animals varying in amount depending on the species of animals to be destroyed and its prevalence or destructiveness in any particular part of the province. A considerable sums were paid monthly by the district commissioners for the destruction of wild beasts and professional huntsmen were engaged in the pursuit are exerting themselves in an unwanted degree and it is hoped with good effects like in Kamroop³⁰. In Nowgaon, the district commissioner believed that the grant of an increased rate of rewards in his district had the effects of inducing the people to enter more systematically and generally into the work of the extermination of wild animals³¹. Special rewards were also occasionally sanctioned by government for the destruction of some particular man eating tiger or a notorious dangerous elephant.³² Great mischives were committed by wild boars in Gowhatty (Guwahati)town and to get away of this problem a reward of Rs. 10 was sanctioned by the government for the destruction of wild boar in Gouhatty (Guwahati) town.³³ In Cossyah and Jynateah hills the reward for killing tiger was increased from rupees 5 to rupees 20 and for tiger cubs, leopards from rupees 2-8 to rupees 10 each tiger as a special measure.³⁴ In some cases the grant of rewards for the destruction of wild animals were stopped like in Naga Hills in 1870 but in

the same year itself the deputy commissioner of the district felt the need of reintroduced the practice of granting the rewards for the destruction of wild animals³⁵. The extent of killing wild animals for rewards was high³⁶. However, in spite of the provision for reward the absent of regular shikaries can also be noticed, as in Sylhet 15 people were reported to have been killed during 1847 and during the same period there were only nine tigers brought in for the Govt. reward. For six they being full grown the reward for each was Rs.5/-, two not full grown Rs. 4/- each, and for one small one Rs.3/-. Again the scale of rewards varies from time to time and district wise depends on the atrocities by the wild animals. In 1848 scale of rewards for elephants was Rs. 10/-, for rhinoceros, tigers and leopard was 5 annas, for Bear and Buffalos 2.8 annas³⁷. In Nowgaon Rs. 5/- was rewarded for the destruction of Rhinoceros³⁸. The general amount of Rs. 5/- for a tiger, Rs.2.8 annas for leopard and bear and Rs. 2/- for Hyenas were awarded for the destruction of these animals in 1850 in all the divisions of Bengal including Assam³⁹. The special rewards sanctioned in 1850 for the destruction of Elephants, Rhinoceros, Buffalo was 10/- annas, Rs.5/- and Rs.2/- and 8/- annas respectively in Assam division and in Cachar Rs. 7/- was sanctioned for a tiger.⁴⁰ The highest amount paid as reward for the destruction of tiger under the Bengal presidency was Rs. 100/- per head⁴¹.

The following table shows the scale of rewards sanctioned for the destruction of wild animals since 1866.⁴²

Division & districts	Tiger	Leopard	Bear	Hyena	Elephants	Rhinoceros	Buffalo	Wolf
	Rs. As. P	Rs.As. P	Rs. As. P	Rs. As. P	Rs. As. P	Rs. As. P	Rs. As. P	Rs.As. P
Assam division	5 0 0	2 8 0	2 8 0	2 0 0	10 0 0	5 0 0	2 8 0	0 0 0
Cachar	7 0 0	2 8 0	2 8 0	2 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0
Nowgong & Kamroop districts	15 0 0	2 8 0	2 8 0	2 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0

The forest of Durrung (Darrang) district also was full of elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, buffaloes, bison, deer of many kinds, bears, pigs etc⁴³. Those wild animals used to inhabit the large wastes of reed and grass jungle, and occasionally caused considerable damage to life and property. An amount of Rs 416, 7 annas and 8 paise was pay out by the government from 1858-63 as reward for the destruction of wild animals⁴⁴. A considerable amount of 15.6 pounds in 1866-67, 18.4 pounds in 1867-68 and 9.5 pounds in 1868-69 was expend in the district of Nowgaon by the government to keep down the tigers and leopard, the main destructive wild animals in the district⁴⁵. The reward for killing a tiger which was only Rs. 5 or 10 shillings to Rs. 25 or 2.10 pounds.⁴⁶ Similar rewards were paid for the destruction of wild animals in the Sibsagar district which amounted to 18.4 pounds in 1859 and 4 pounds in 1869.⁴⁷ A small amount of 10 shillings was paid as reward for snake killing in the Lakhimpur district. This was something not at all done in the other districts of Assam⁴⁸ as no rewards were paid to kill snakes in any of the province under Bengal till 1874.⁴⁹ Thus, paying of rewards for decreasing wild animals was mostly accepted method for the destruction of wildlife in Assam as it has also been found that almost in all the districts of Assam, rewards were given for killing of wild animals.

The plan of employing paid *shikaries* was occasionally been tried but without any real success. In some cases marksmen were selected by police, and being furnished with arms and ammunition were encouraged to shoot wild animals and were allowed half the reward in each case, but that too didn't get success⁵⁰. Captain Roger's plan of killing wild beasts by means of fixed gun, with strings attached is generally attached to it. But it is doubtful whether it is not as dangerous to cattle and human beings as to the noxious animals it is intended to destroy⁵¹. Sometime large hunting parties were also organized to destroy particular wild animals to those places where the loss of life and property from wild animals is great.⁵² These hunting parties were organized under the guidance of local officers at a small expense to government. This besides helping to kill off wild beasts also gave the people courage and incites them to organize similar hunts on their own

account and teach them to make a stand against a danger that is now destroying their substance and themselves⁵³.

Every year a good number of wild animals were killed for rewards and a good sum of amount were expended by the government for its destruction. Between 1858-63, 8682 wild animals were killed for which a sum of Rs. 28443-4-3 was paid by the government⁵⁴ and from 1866-69, 9854 wild animals were killed which a sum of 47,925 was paid as rewards.⁵⁵ It does not include those animals which were killed for sports and those for which no reward was claimed. That means the number of the wild animals killed during these years could be much more than what has been seen. Thus, even if the reports for the initial years of British rule is not available there is no doubt that a large number of wild animals were destroyed and a good sum of amount was spend on giving rewards for killing wild animals.

Revenue from wild animals before 1874 : Wild animals were not a source of generating revenue for the British government before 1874 except elephants and that too was in limited sense. The wild nature of Assam as a whole was not made to contribute towards the revenue, or rather to the wealth of the province excepts the trade of ivory in a limited sense in the Lakhimpur district where elephant catching also contributed a nominal amount⁵⁶. In fact elephants were always been a source of revenue for the government of Assam even in the medieval period. Dr. Wade in his history of Assam mention about Ivory boxes, fans of ivory, ivory articles were made and used in Assam. He also mentioned that king Rudra Singh presented mats, fans, and chessmen of ivory to the king of Delhi⁵⁷. Elephant catching expedition under kheddah were conducted since the early years of the company's rule⁵⁸. In fact, government played his monopoly over elephant catching. There were mainly two kinds of licenses that were formally granted. One was an annual lease of a particular tract of the country. It also gave the permit holder the exclusive right to catch elephants in any manner, he might choose⁵⁹. The amount paid by such license holder as fee varied at times and in 1869 the revenue derived from the issue of such licenses was 601 pounds and 10 shillings (approximately rupees 6,0101)⁶⁰. The other type of license which was granted to capture elephants in all unreserved forest upon payment of an annual royalty of 2 pounds or Rs. 20/-⁶¹. M' Cosh vied in his account that every year a large number of elephants were transported to various countries. He estimated that every year around 700- 1,000 elephants were exported from Assam every year and a duty of Rs. 10 was levied at Goalpara on every elephant exported⁶². Jenkins also reported that every year merchants from Bengal made attempts to visit the province with koonkees to catch wild animals and were generally very successful. He found that out of the 600-700 elephants caught in Assam in 1850, around 500 were exported, where as in 1851 about 900 were caught. Newly caught elephants could often be purchased, if under 5 feet in height, for Rs.100/- but the merchants seldom dispose the finer ones in the province as they realized Rs.800 to Rs. 1,00 each for them in Bengal or Hindustan, if they succeeded in keeping them alive for 2 or 3 years⁶³. A.J.M.Mills also observed that both ivory and rhinoceros horn were exported from Assam. Trade in Sylhet district in elephant tusk and buffalo horns and hides were observed by Hunter⁶⁴. However, the revenue derived from elephant catching was not considered significant⁶⁵. Though all skins of animals and their claws for which a reward was paid become the property of government and no person should have the option of purchasing the same but no trade in wild beast's skins was carried on in Assam before 1874⁶⁶. The British government fixed certain amount to be paid for the sale of the Skin of wild animals. It was for tiger, Chita. Panther and leopard was Rs. 10/- each, for bear Rs.2/- and for wolf or hyena Rs. 1/- each.⁶⁷ In spite of that absent of trade in wildlife skin could be observed. On the other hand government had to spend considerable amount to keep down wild animals as it can be seen that government has spent more than 67.18 pounds in 1865; 401.16 pounds in 1867; 110.18 pounds in 1870; 228.10 pounds in 1871; 227.10 pounds in 1872; 182.15 pounds in 1873 and 362.10 pounds in 1874.⁶⁸ A reward of Rs. 28443, 4 *annas*, 3 *paisa* was made from 1858-63⁶⁹. In 1866-67, 1867-68, 1868-69 an amount of Rs. 16713/-, Rs.14148/- and 2 *annas*,

Rs.17064/- respectively was rewarded⁷⁰. John M'cosh viewed that the number of wild animals killed was so great that, the amount of rewards absorbs a great portion of the revenue. This was he said only for those animals killed by *shikaries* and that too only by bows and arrows⁷¹. Thus, the government had to spend large sum of money on the destruction of wildlife. But it would be wrong to say that it was a burden on government, as only in the year 1869, a sum of Rs.60,101/-⁷² was derived by the government from annual lease of the tracts of the country for elephant catching but not more than an amount of Rs.20,000/- was spent on reward giving for the destruction of wild animals each year before 1874. Elephant's teeth were also exported to other countries like Thibet (Tibet)⁷³.

Conclusion : The man-animal interactions was not new to the British regime in Assam, but never before wild animals were destroyed in such large numbers. Archival reports regarding the destruction of wild animals in Assam are available from 1858-63 and from 1866-68 in pre-1874 Assam. If depend on these records it reveals that the number of wild animals killed in these years were much more than the number of human being killed by the wild animals. From 1858-63, 217 person were killed while 8682 wild animals were killed during the same period. Again, from 1866-68, 4353 human beings were killed by wild animals on the other hand 9845 wild animals were destroyed during the same period. Now, the question arises was the killing of wild animals in such large number needed? Safety of life was not the concern of the British as it is found that the villagers of Durrang (Darrang) were not allowed to clear off the jungles and they had to pay revenue out of their own pocket to clear off the jungles and if the jungles were not cleared off the shelter of wild animals were increased⁷⁴. The villagers also could not burn the jungles as it might burn their houses. And moreover the number of people annually destroyed was much lesser then the wild animals killed. Sport was one reason why wild animals were killed and secondly, it was for the sake of trade in wild animals as it is found that the British government has fixed certain amount for the sale of the wild animal's skin as mentioned earlier. There are also evidences of trade of Ivory, horn and hides of wild animals. Though, no trade was carried on in wild beast's skin but it would also be wrong to conclude that there was no trade in wildlife before 1874. It can be said that the in initial stage the British were not successful in their attempt to trade in wildlife in Assam.

Thus, it can be concluded that there was no concrete policy of the British government regarding wildlife in Assam till 1874 and not much revenue was generated from wildlife on the other hand the government has to spend large sum of amount on the destruction of wild animals. Though, there was not much trade in wildlife but the revenue from elephant catching was enough to meet the expenditure of the destruction of wild animals and the clearance of jungle later helped the British government to expand the cultivable land and to earn more and more revenue.

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