

Bihar District Gazetteers

CHAMPARAN

By

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sissoo (*Sisham*); *Salmalia malabericum* (*semal*); *Adina cordifolia* (*karam*); *Albizzia procera* (*safed siris*); *Engenia jambolena* (*jamun*) are found.

Cane Forest.—Cane (*Calamus tenuis*) occurs in damp areas in patches along almost all the *nalas* of Madanpur range, such as Bohua, Baljora, Chamania, Pathlawa, etc., and in a small patch in Bisahia *nala* near Hathimalkhanta in Gonauli range. It also occurs in damp areas in Udaipur forest towards its southern portion. The tree species in the area are *jamun* (*Engenia jambolena*); *semal* (*Salmolia malabericum*); *khair* (*Acacia catechu*); *rohini* (*Mallotus philippinensis*); *satsal* (*Dalbergia latifolia*); *vilore* (*Trewia audiflora*).

Grassy Blanks.—Vast stretches of grassy blanks occur in the bed of the Great Gandak and in the old abandoned sites of cultivation and habitation near the villages, Gonauli and Kotraha.

The common grasses are *Saccharum munja* (*munj*); *Saccharum spontaneum* (*kans*); *Typha elephantina* (*pater* or *hugla*); *Davi pharagmitis karta* (*narkat*) which occur in *nalas* where water accumulates and also in Sareya-Mon.

Swamps.—A typical swampy area occurs along the Rahua *nala* in Madanpur range. It is a low level marsh almost devoid of drainage. The area is recorded to be 860 acres in extent and is in the process of natural reclamation. The species naturally occurring there are *Salix tetrosperma* (*bainsa*); *Bischofia javanica* (*arang*); *Eugenia jambolena* (*jamun*); *Barringtonia acutangula* (*izzar*); *Dalbergia sissoo* (*sisham*); *Acacia catechu* (*khair*); and *Salmalia malabarica* (*semal*).

Various water plants exist in the lake Sareya-Mon of botanical interest submerged in deep water.

Bamboo Forest.—*Bamboosa arundinacea* is found along upper reaches of Saktihari, Harra in Naurangia block of Ex-Ramnagar estate forest and near Nardebi Asthan of Ex-Bettiah estate forest at the site where, according to a legendary, the fort of Allha Ruddal, a chieftain, existed. The bamboo is of thorny variety and is not of much use.

Jhaw (Tamarix Forest).—*Jhaw* (*Tamarix*) occurs along the banks of Gandak and is found in pure patches to the south of Narshai island and Rajhawa, Jajhi and Mangalpur *Retas*.

FAUNA.

The wild animals available in the forests of the district are tiger, leopard, panther (*Panthera pardus*), black-bear (*Ursus torquatus*), wild dog, wild pig, barking deer (*Mutiacus muntjak*), *nilgai*, wild buffaloes (*Babalus bubalis*), black-buck, wild cows and oxen, monkeys (both red and black faced), wolf (*Cannis pallipes*), hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*), four-horned antelope, wild-goats, *sambhar* (*Rusa unicolor*), chittal (*Axis axis*), bison (*Bibos ganrus*), hog-deer, wild cat.

The rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) also makes stray appearances in the forests of Madanpur range from the neighbouring Nepal State. A solitary rhino is often met with in Rampur Madanpur Forest, Balgangwa forest and the Hathimalkhanta forest.

The specimens that are fast disappearing are hyaena, black-buck, four-horned deer, wild-goats and elephant (*Elephas maximus*). The last rhinoceros in Champaran district was heard of about a decade back.

The jungle abounds in various kinds of moths, caterpillars and butterflies.

AVI-FAUNA.

It would appear from the previous description that Champaran has forest as well as fields, hills as well as marshes and is situated on the border of the Indo-Gangetic and Himalayan regions. Its avi-fauna is varied and interesting but so little work has been done on this district that the bird population has to be inferred from the systematic list given in the Darbhanga Gazetteer. The birds mentioned in Champaran's own systematic list are those birds which have been definitely recorded from the district and from its size it is apparent that only a small part of the bird population has been recorded.

The most interesting birds of Champaran are the amazonian species of the three-toed quails and two of the migrant waders. Normally in the bird world, in India or elsewhere, the males are bigger and more gorgeously plumaged. The smaller and inconspicuous female accepts suit, sits on the clutch of eggs and hatches it. Since it has not to fight for territory or to win a mate, its smaller size and duller colouring is not a handicap while on the nest the inconspicuousness of the female has a protective function. It cannot be spotted and attacked by enemies easily and, therefore, the nest is not discovered nor destroyed.

With the amazonian species all this is reversed. The female is bigger, more gorgeously plumaged; it fights for its territory and for its mate, is polyandrous and does not sit on the nest. The males do that.

The bustard-quail (*Turnix suscitator*), the button quail (*Turnix tanki*), and the little button quail (*Turnix sylvatica*) are the three amazonian species resident in India. These are all three-toed quails and three-toed quails with similar habits are also found in Australia and Africa. Apart from them the only other amazonian species in the world are the red-necked and grey phalaropes, two waders which are winter visitors to Champaran and other districts of North Bihar and are called *tuhi* in Hindi. These two waders breed near the Arctic Circle and so the pugnacious females are not seen by us nor do we see them in their breeding plumage.