

due in no way to diminution in stock is plainly evident from the numbers of tiger and wild dog especially which are to be found in the Burma Forests today.' The position appears to be at variance with what obtains in India where the discontinuance of payment of rewards in various provinces, as shown by the figures available, has had no appreciable effect on the number of tigers killed.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
April 15th, 1940.

S. H. PRATER,
Curator.

II.—THE 'SAMBUR' CALL OF THE TIGER AND ITS EXPLANATION.

I hope the following will be of interest.

Early in April 1940 I was shooting with the Maharaj Kumar of Vizianagram in the jungles of the Maharani of Khairigarh in Lakhimpur Kheri, Oudh, and in the Nepal Tarai.

On the 6th I took my seat in a comfortable machan at about 5 p.m. in a thick and secluded part of the jungles on the Nepal border. Behind me was a small though thick tree and ringal clump and on the other sides was a sea of *narkul* and *ratwa* grass ranging from 2 to 20 feet in height. My object was not to shoot but watch wildlife and use my Cine-Kodak to the best advantage. At about 5-20 p.m. a tiger and a tigress came out of the *ratwa* grass into a clearing in front of me and about 150 yards away. At first they sat down to survey the country and then they started to gambol like a couple of overgrown kittens.

I was directly in their path and they would certainly have come past me, and given me a magnificent picture, when I saw the tigress stiffen her limbs and look in my direction a little to one side and towards the tree jungle. I felt certain she had not winded me. On looking back I found that one of my two look-out men, who had been placed in an improvised machan, was trying to scale another tree. I was naturally annoyed but could do nothing. However these proceedings were of considerable interest as by this time the tiger too was all attention and I heard and saw him utter the much-discussed 'sambar' call. From the way the tigers stared I was convinced that they had not made out what they had seen and, as they were uncertain whether it was friend or foe, they uttered this cry. Their expressions and attitude were a picture of suspicion mixed with a certain amount of alarm, and it struck me that the cry was also a cry of warning, for the tiger on uttering it promptly looked back at his mate who was a little behind him. After staring intently for another minute the pair turned round and disappeared from view.

In connection with this call I should like to narrate another incident which I experienced when shooting in the East Fen Block of the Mandla district, C. P., a few years ago. In a secluded part of thick jungle was a small pool very much used by wild animals. On three sides was thick jungle and on the fourth was a ridge about 4 feet high with rank grass and shrubbery, and beyond this

was an open glade of grass. On the previous evening at about 5-30 p.m., while sitting on the ridge with two shikaris, we saw a tiger moving along in the thick jungle evidently on his evening prowl.

On the following evening we again repaired to the ridge and about 5-30 p.m. a large herd of pig entered the water and were snouting about in the weeds. After half an hour they jerked up their heads, listened intently looking towards the opposite bank, and then started to feed again though they appeared to be decidedly on the alert. Meantime we sat practically motionless smoking and chatting in whispers. One of the shikaris got up to hand me my binoculars when we heard the 'sambar' call from the direction in which the pig had been looking. The swine bolted and my friend and I did not in any way connect this with the call we had heard which I must confess we took to be that of a Sambar. However our shikaris were certain it was a tiger who, on suddenly noticing suspicious objects on the ridge, uttered the call in surprise and alarm and possibly as a warning. We saw no tiger but later verified from pug marks that one at least had passed along the jungle from where the sound had come. It seems to me that in both cases the 'Sambar' call was uttered as a note of sudden surprise or suspicion coupled with alarm and the instinct possibly to warn a mate close at hand.

If you think this worth publishing in our *Journal* I shall be interested to see comments.

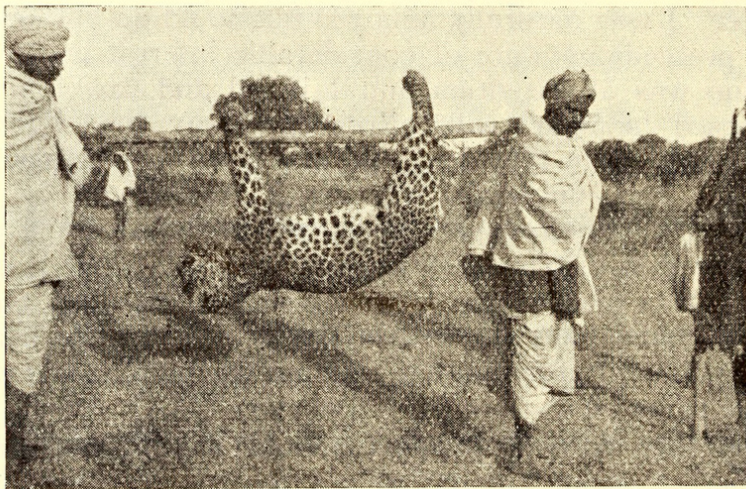
19, RAJPORE ROAD,
DELHI.

E. S. LEWIS.

April 24, 1940.

III.—A TAIL-LESS PANTHER.

(With a photo).



A Tail-less Panther.

On the 18th-19th night of December 1939, I shot a panther at Amadeh Village, 15 miles from Pipariya, C. P. On examining the

panther with two other British Officers we found it was completely 'tail-less'; there was not even a stump, and the panther showed no signs of a scar, or that the tail had been bitten or cut off. The panther, an old male, measured 4 ft. 10 in. from snout to the base of its spine.

FORT SANDEMAN,
February 16, 1940.

D. RAMSAY BROWN,
Lieut.,
2nd Goorkhas,
1st Battalion.

[In Vol. xxxvii, p. 719 of the Society's Journal we published a photograph of a tail-less tiger sent to us by Mr. R. C. Morris.—Eds.]

IV.—HYAENA CARRYING OFF A BEAR CUB.

'A bear provided an interesting experience. I had wandered down Sultan's Road (Talamalai) about eleven o'clock with Jeddia hoping to see a bear in the bright moonlight. Presently a bear came along and I fired at it. It ran off as hard as it could go, yelling and I thought I had missed; as it went, I let it have another or at least attempted to do so. As I fired I saw it had a baby riding like a jockey on its back in the usual bear way. It cleared right off. Presently I heard the calling of what sounded like a small bear from where the bears had disappeared. This was a second young one which had not been getting a ride when I fired at the mother. Presently there was a fiendish noise and I saw a hyaena tearing through the open, yelling or laughing or whatever you like to call it, and it picked up the little bear and carried it off before my eyes! In spite of the bright moonlight I could not get on to it quickly enough to fire and it ran into the jungle emitting a series of fiendish *giggles*—it could not laugh on account of the bear in its mouth! Next morning we found the dead mother bear and the jockey young one with it.'

[The above is an extract from a letter dated the 3rd April 1940 from Mr. H. E. Shortt, King Institute, Guindy, Madras, forwarded by Mr. R. C. Morris.—Eds.].

V.—ON JACKALS (*CANIS INDICUS*).

The following two incidents occurred when I was out with a party in the foot hills in the Ambala district.

(a) *Curious behaviour of a Jackal.*

We were having a jungle beaten for anything from panther downwards. I lay down with a friend on the bank of a *nallah*, and between the *nallah* and the jungle which was being beaten was a pool of water 20 ft × 20 ft. and about 6 in. deep. A game path led from the jungle to the water through which animals

passed to cross the *nallah* into thinner scrub jungle. It was about 2 p.m. and I was lying with my hands under my chin, and staring towards the game path in the hopes of seeing the panther which was known to be there. Nothing nobler than a glabrous jackal, however, came out and entered the water without seeing me. When he was half way through I purposely made a slight movement which was at once detected. The beat could be heard some 200 yards away and, after a hurried glance back, the jackal to my surprise proceeded to submerge his head. He took it out after a few seconds for a breather and ducked again. After he had repeated this a few times we could not control a subdued laugh. This was too much for our friend who bolted back into the jungle now preferring to face the beat. It is obvious that he first considered himself between the devil and the deep sea and was so taken by surprise that he resorted to a silly subterfuge.

(b) *Jackals hunting hare.*

At the same place on another occasion I was lying down facing the scrub jungle at about 2-30 p.m. The open jungle consisted of interspersed thorn bushes and small clumps of sarkanda. I saw a jackal walk quietly upto a *sarkanda* clump and lie down against it in the shaded part. Then some 60 yards behind and to one side I saw a hare moving about and almost at the same moment caught sight of another jackal who moved slowly and apparently unconcernedly in such a way that the hare drew closer to the bush where the other jackal lay in ambush without movement. Within a few minutes the hare was hopping past the snare when he was knocked over and secured. I suppose that jackals, like wolves and wild dogs, work on carefully preconceived plans but this is the first time that I had ocular proof of this.

19, RAJPORE ROAD,

DELHI,

March 24, 1940.

E. S. LEWIS.

[The jackal appears to have emulated the legendary behaviour of the ostrich in the sand. Unfortunately in crouching to escape observation—instinctive behaviour—he was compelled to have recourse to a less convenient element. As regards the tactics of Jackals in hunting the hare, there is a note in our *Journal*, by Mr. Salim A. Ali (Vol. xxxi, p. 812). There were two jackals, says Mr. Ali, but only one took part in the hunt—the other sneaking off when observed. There was no subterfuge in their hunting. The jackal went straight for the hare and kept at the chase in spite of being fired at twice and wounded with a charge of small shot. There is also an instance of two jackals attacking a spaniel (C. M. Inglis, Vol. xxxviii, p. 1122); one stood to engage the dog, the other coming up from behind tried to take it from the rear. Jackals, usually carrion-feeders, will hunt any small animal they can master and in their hunting they probably resort to methods sometimes adopted by the larger carnivores. The lion is known to drive its



Lewis, E S. 1940. "The "sambur" Call of the Tiger and Its Explanation." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 41, 889–892.

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