

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

I.—THE BALINESE TIGER.

PANTHERA TIGRIS BALICA (SCHWARZ).

A considerable amount of literature has appeared on this supposed form, but apparently, (from lack of material) none of the authors felt quite sure as to its real validity as a separate subspecies.

Schwarz, in his original paper,¹ described the form from a single flat skin and skull, chiefly on the ground of the smaller size and flatter bullae, as compared with the Javanese-Sumatran races. Afterwards² he published a photograph of the same skull.

Then we find³ a quotation on the animal, taken from a letter, written by Mr. B. Ledeboer (now dead, killed in Africa by an elephant) to Mr. Jacobson at Fort de Kock, Sumatra, translated and published by the latter. Rightly, the information given in this letter, is called 'puzzling' by Pocock.⁴ Amongst other data we read there that the Balinese tiger is *not* smaller than the Javanese, and above all that, 'if a Sumatran tiger is laid on its back, nothing is seen but a whitish skin, the underside of head, throat, breast and belly being totally without markings!' Here there must be considerable misunderstanding, though I cannot make out who the offender is—either Mr. Ledeboer has made a very thoughtless error, or Mr. Jacobson has mis-translated his letter in English? Mr. A. Ledeboer (brother of Mr. B. Ledeboer), whom I visited for this purpose, told me and, moreover, clearly demonstrated from his collection of skins, that there is indeed no question at all about the Sumatran tiger being striped on the belly—the stripes of the back *certainly* invade the underparts, and therefore such a supposition has never occurred to him or to his deceased brother! As concerns the smaller size of the Balinese Tiger, in this respect also the remarks in the letter of Mr. B. Ledeboer are quite unexplainable. Indeed, Mr. B. Ledeboer previously published another letter⁵ in which he (knowing nothing of Mr. Schwarz's new description) gave his observation on the smaller size of the Balinese tiger! which his brother Mr. A. Ledeboer at once confirmed. I hope that I have now removed any misconception that may have arisen from the really very puzzling information in the letter of Mr. B. Ledeboer.

Again, during my short visit to Mr. A. Ledeboer, I had the opportunity of looking over his large collection of skins and skulls

¹ *Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.*, 8-x, 1912, p. 325.

² 44 *Ber. Senckenb. Naturf. Ges.*, I, 1913, fig. 3.

³ *Journ. F.M.S. Mus.*, x, 1921, p. 237.

⁴ *Journ. Bom. N.H. Soc.*, xxxiii, 1928, p. 534.

⁵ In Koningsberger, *Java Zool. Biol.*, Buitenzorg, 1915, p. 422.

of the Sunda-tigers (Sumatra, Java, Bali). Mr. A. Ledeboer had just obtained his 100th tiger, while the material of Mr. B. Ledeboer was also available! Unfortunately, my very limited time (only one afternoon), and further, the fact that the whole collection (skins and skulls) was decorating the walls of the house by way of 'hunting-trophies', prevented me from making a thorough study of this splendid material. Nevertheless, aided by Mr. A. Ledeboer's knowledge—I here publish a few data on his material—even a cursory examination showed that the differences between the 3 Sunda-races of the tiger were so obvious, that, indeed, a single glance was sufficient to distinguish the races and to recognise the origin of the skins and skulls from their appearance!

Without claiming even approximate completeness, I enumerate the following differences:

	<i>sumatrae</i>	<i>sondaica</i>	<i>balica</i>
Size	'normal'	'normal'	smaller
Ground colour of the skin	lightest	darker	darkest
Colour of innerside of forelegs	whitish	a lighter shade of the general groundcolour	like in <i>sondaica</i>
Nasals	short and wide	long and narrow	long and narrow
Occipital plane	broad	narrow	narrow
Frontal line (fore-head)	most flat	more vaulted	still more vaulted
Bullae	'normal'	'normal'	somewhat flatter

Of course I very much regret not having had the opportunity to trace all the differences in detail, and especially not to be able to fix any point in exact numbers. But, in connection with the doubt expressed by Kloss¹ and Pocock (l.c.) about the validity of Schwarz's form *balica* (and even Mr. Schwarz himself wrote me that he should be glad to hear of a further confirmation of his race), I think that even these incomplete (but, as far as they go, quite sure) data are of sufficient importance. For myself they have removed the last doubt as to the validity of the 3 named races of tigers of the Sunda Islands.

H. J. V. SODY.

[We append below a note by Mr. R. I. Pocock.
'Knowing my interest in Tigers, the Editors kindly sent me the MS. of Mr. Sody's paper on the races of the Sunda Islands before setting it up in type.

¹ Journ. F.M.S. Mus., x, 1921, p. 237.

When writing on these Tigers in 1928, I had very few specimens whereon to form completely satisfactory conclusions regarding the distinctness of the Tigers of Sumatra and Bali from those of Java described many years ago as *sondaica*. Hence the additional evidence on these points now supplied by Mr. Sody is particularly valuable and interesting. It is to be hoped that he may get further opportunities of extending his observations. His disapproval of the 'puzzling' statement, attributed to the late Mr. B. Ledeboer, regarding the alleged absence of stripes on the lower side of the Sumatran Tiger (*sumatrae*) is also very gratifying'.—Eds.]

II.—REMARKABLE BEHAVIOUR OF A TIGRESS.

While on the survey of the Eastern Ghats I was told a very strange tale (not by Col. Longbow) of the behaviour of a tigress in the Nallamalli Hills. As a matter of fact the story has gone its 'umteenth' round among the Officers and Rangers of the Forest Department in the Cuddapah and Kurnool districts.

The scene was in the Nallamalli Hills, at Iskakundam Bungalow, which is about 30 miles from Diguvametta. The Conservator and his Deputy had occupied the two rooms in the forest bungalow, the rest of the staff were in the out-houses.

The Deputy was writing his report under a petrol lamp in his room when he felt something brush against his chair. He slightly turned his head and saw a tiger rubbing itself along the back of the chair! !

I wonder what a good many of us would have done? Shouted? Screamed? Jumped on the table? or fallen down in a dead faint?

The Deputy did none of these things. He was not a big game hunter. I doubt if he had ever killed a thing in his life. He calmly got up from his chair and as calmly walked out of the room—closing the door behind him.

As calmly he announced to the Conservator in the next room, that he had securely locked a tiger in his room.

None of us can blame the Conservator for jumping to a quite natural, though in this instance, unwarranted conclusion. The Deputy never drank a drop of spirits in his life.

They both went outside and peeping through the barred window saw the tigress placidly rubbing herself against the table. The first shot hit the animal but in leaping up she upset the lamp which fortunately was extinguished by the fall. The second shot was fired from the roof, through a hole in the thatch.

On examining the animal it was found that she suffered from a wound on the thigh which was alive with maggots.

Now here is something for our big-game hunters to solve. Though we cannot possibly afford a prize for the best explanation put forth, it will give us an insight into the philosophy with which



Sody, Henri Jacob Victor. 1932. "The Balinese Tiger, *Panthera Tigris Balica* (Schwarz)." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 36, 233-235.

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