

## 5. A NOTE ON ANTLER CASTING OF BARKING DEER (*MUNTIACUS MUNTJAK*) IN CAPTIVITY

The Barking Deer or Muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) are distributed over the greater part of the Indo-Malayan countries, China, Formosa and Japan (Prater 1971). This note on some aspects of antler casting of barking deer is based on the observations made at the Nandankanan Biological Park, Orissa during the period October, 1970 to March, 1983. The park is within the geographical range of the species. Specimens collected from different parts of Orissa and those born and brought up in the park are included in the study. The number of stags under observation varied from one to seven.

The thirty four antler castings recorded during the observation period were distributed as follows: March, 2; April, 20; and May, 12. Majority of castings (94.12%) were recorded in April and May only. The antlers are cast annually and never retained to the next year.

The fifty one observations on the period of Velvet rubbing were recorded as follows: August, 14; September, 26; October, 9; and November, 2. Majority of observations (78.43%) were recorded in August and September only.

The antlers of both sides were cast either in one day or within four days. Casting of both antlers was observed within one day in twenty instances (58.8%), on eleven instances within two consecutive days (32.3%), on one instance within three days (3%) and on two instances within four days (5.9%).

The period required from the time of casting of antlers to the time when the stags start

rubbing off the velvet is taken as the span of antler growth. This period recorded on 12 occasions varied from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  months ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  months on three occasions; 5 months on one occasion;  $5\frac{1}{2}$  months on seven occasions and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  months on one occasion).

The weight and measurements of ten cast antlers are given as follows:

Length in cm	Weight in gm
5.00	7,400
6.50	8,600
7.00	11,500
7.75	12,500
10.00	17,000
10.00	17,700
10.00	20,500
10.50	12,300
11.00	16,900
11.00	25,200

The small antlers were either unbranched or with a short brow-tine as reported by Prater (loc. cit.). The antlers are shed in May and renewed in August but it is doubtful whether this occurs annually (Asdell 1964). Antlers are shed annually in May in southern Asia and they rarely exceed 125 to 152 mm in length (Walker *et al.* 1964). The antlers are cast in May and June and the average Indian antlers measure 5 to 8 cm, and maximum recorded length is 17.8 cm (Prater, loc. cit.). According to Acharjyo (1971) nine antler castings were recorded in April and May and both the antlers were cast either in one or two consecutive days.

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## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

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January 4, 1984.

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### 6. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF GREAT CRESTED GREBE *PODICEPS CRISTATUS CRISTATUS* (LINN.) IN COASTAL ANDHRA PRADESH

While on a nature trek to Thatipudi forest area and the reservoir situated in the foothills of Anantagiri ghats of Vizag District, on 27th February 1983, we observed a pair of Great Crested Grebes in the reservoir.

The reservoir is devoid of any marshy vegetation and very deep with abundant supply of fish. The pair of birds were 30 feet apart from each other at a distance of 50 feet from

the impoundment bund with prominent crests visible to the naked eye. We also timed its submergence and recorded the longest dive as 130 seconds, between 0400-0430 p.m.

This constitutes the first record of this species for Andhra Pradesh and extends its known range by about 450 km southwards from the last coastal record at Puri on the East Coast (HANDBOOK 1: 3).

ANDHRA PRADESH NATURAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY,  
DASAPALLA HILLS,  
VISAKHAPATNAM-3,  
March 7, 1983.

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### 7. A NOTE ON THE CATCHING OF MIGRATORY BIRDS WHICH VISIT ALIPORE ZOO, CALCUTTA IN WINTER

(With a photograph)

Several thousands of migratory birds (wild ducks) visit the Alipore Zoological Garden, Calcutta each Winter and take shelter in its lake. These birds include the following —

1. Lesser Whistling Teal — [*Dendrocygna javanica* (Horsfield)]
2. Garganey Teal — [*Anas querquedula* (Linnaeus)]





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