

testes are hidden in the hind-portion of the abdomen. The fore portion of the animal from the head to behind the shoulders as well as the rump and hind quarters are black, whereas the middle of the body is white. The young, however, are spotted with white or fawn colour on a dark ground, the hair being much longer than when the animal has attained maturity. The hair is short and thick. The tapir has a measurement, at the shoulder when standing, of between 1 m. and 1.25 m., being 10 cm. higher at the rump,

The tapir lives in the recesses of dense forests and delights in lying in water and swampy ground. The male and female would seem to live together in marital harmony for they are always found together. They are nocturnal feeders, living on grass, young shoots of shrubs and trees, and other kinds of vegetation.

The tapir presents many peculiar features for study by zoologists and natural historians and he is also philologically a puzzle in Siam. The Siamese word for the tapir is Som-set (สมเส็จ) which is a shortened form of สมเส็จ meaning completely mixed or a complete mixture. The reason the Siamese give this peculiar name to this animal is because they believe the animal to be composed of the flesh of seven different animals although there is no suggestion of interbreeding among these seven animals. The seven animals are:—the pig, the elephant, the rhinoceros, the horse, the bear, the ox, and the sambar. The tapir has points of resemblance to the pig, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the horse, so that this curious belief of the Siamese would seem to have some justification. Hunters hold that if a tapir is shot and falls to the ground, the characteristics of the flesh of the seven animals mentioned, become manifest in that portion of the body which touches the ground, that of the rest of the body being like the normal flesh of an ordinary animal. Some hunters even go so far as to say that the flesh of the seven animals which congregate together in that portion of the body which is in contact with the ground is of different colours. The flesh of this animal is not much esteemed as food nor is the animal sought after for commercial purposes. The reason for this animal having survived may be found in these two main factors. The chief enemy of the tapir is the tiger.

F. H. GILES.

## No. II A Natural History Note.

It may be of interest to place on record that a dwarf hunch-backed elephant has been seen roaming in the forests north-west of the inland sea between Patalung and Nakon Sridhamaraj in Southern Siam. Apart from this animal being dwarf and hunch-backed all other parts of the body seem to be normal. The people of the district say that this animal is a descendant of some tame elephant



which took to the forest life and became wild two centuries ago. They also believe that all descendants of this herd die in captivity.

F. H. G.

### No. III Some Rare Birds of the Northern Provinces.

- \* 1. *Ixobrychus eurhythmus* (Swinh.). Von Schrenck's Bittern.  
An adult female of this rare bird was taken 2 May, 1936, at a small and almost dry "lick" (น้ำขี้) in mixed deciduous forest near Ban Mai Tong Hong, Chiengrai province (between Chieng Kham and Mu'ang To'ng).
- † 2. *Anas poecilorhyncha haringtoni* Oates. Burmese Grey Duck.  
In the *Ibis*, 1920, under *Anas poecilorhyncha* Forst., Count Nils Gyldenstolpe writes that "a small party of ducks, probably belonging to this species, were observed in the Meh Ping River, a few miles south of Keng Soi, by the present author in 1914." Since that date the species has not been recorded from the Kingdom.  
While investigating the birds of the great marsh at Me Chai, Chiengrai province, 9 and 10 May, 1936, I found at least fifty individuals of this large duck.
- \* 3. *Himantopus himantopus himantopus* (Linn.). Black-winged Stilt.  
I have long suspected the presence of the Stilt in North Siam, at least as a winter visitor, due to reports of a mysterious "snipe" which have reached me from time to time. On the marsh at Ban Me Chai a solitary bird was seen, 9 and 10 May, excessively wild and impossible to collect, but unmistakably a Stilt.
- \* 4. *Sterna aurantia* Gray. Indian River-Tern.  
The River-Tern is already known from Siam, but has not yet been recorded in the northern provinces. At least eight were present on the Me Kok river at Chiengrai, 6 and 7 May, 1936.
- \* 5. *Dicrurus annectans* (Hodgs.). Crow-billed Drongo.  
This species, not previously reported from the North, proves to be extremely common in the lowlands of Nan province, where it supplants *Dicrurus macrocerus*, the common species of other provinces.
- † 6. *Pteruthius melanotis* Hodgs. Black-eared Shrike-Babbler.  
The female of a mated pair was taken on Doi Phu Kha, Nan province, at about 4,500 feet, 5 April, 1936.

\* Not previously recorded from North Siam.

† Not previously recorded from Siam.