

FAUNA OF NORTH THAILAND

by

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EXTINCT WILD MAMMALS IN NORTH THAILAND

Wild buffalo
Rhinoceros
Hog-nosed deer
Eld's deer
Mouse deer

EXTINCT BIRDS IN NORTH THAILAND

Sarus crane
Vultures
Imperial pigeon
Green pigeon
Wreathed hornbill
Rufous hornbill

RARE WILD MAMMALS NEARING EXTINCTION IN NORTH THAILAND

Gaur
Banting
Tiger
Leopard
Goral (wild goat)
Cloudy leopard
Seraw (goat antelope)
Golden cat
Gibbon
Rhesus monkey
Porcupine
Great black squirrel
Great flying squirrel

RARE BIRDS NEARING EXTINC- TION IN NORTH THAILAND

Peacock
Silver pheasant
Barred pheasant
Great golden hornbill
Grey hornbill
Bamboo partridge
Traneolin partridge

* A boy scout age 13. The paper is published without correction to show how a boy of thirteen can write an article of some value, and to encourage our younger generation to develop a keen observation on the vanishing natural resources.
Editor.

The fate of the animals on the preceding lists is the sad result of a chain of events. Not only is it tragic when a species of animal disappears from the earth, but the animals who had once depended on this species must either adjust or die, causing a chain reaction which may be detrimental to the people who brought it on. For instance, a farmer decides that the reason he does not have more chickens is because the hawks have been eating them. He then comes to the conclusion that if he killed the hawks he could get more chickens. So, he proceeds to kill every hawk he sees. By doing this he also destroys the natural predators of the rats who were also eating his chickens. When the rice harvest comes in, he is surprised to find half of it eaten by the field mice who had also been controlled by the hawks. To sum it all up, the farmer lost a lot of property by merely killing a few natural predators. Therefore, I believe if we are going to study the conservation of wildlife, we should include the reasons why many of these animals are dying out.

To begin with, the primary reason that these animals are disappearing is because man is killing them for food. Then, the horns of many of these animals and all of the body parts of the rhinoceros are believed to have healing powers, so some animals are killed purely to procure the medicines they possess. A third reason why many animals are disappearing in North Thailand is because man is accidentally poisoning them. For instance, often the people will poison the streams to get the fish living in the streams; (this in itself is very short-sighted for in the next year there will be no fish to even poison.). However, not only do they kill the fish but they also unknowingly kill the frogs, crawfish, snails, crabs, and many of the other animals that drink in the stream. Also, at one time there were vultures that fed on the dead dogs of the cities, but when the cities began the program of poisoning the stray dogs, the vultures became poisoned as well, until there are no more vultures in North Thailand.

Another reason for the disappearance of many species of wildlife is that man is cutting down large areas of virgin forests in North Thailand. These forests have been the ancestral home of many animals for centuries upon centuries. When man cuts these forests, he destroys the soil by planting his crops and by allowing erosion to run rampant. Also,

he destroys one of nature's greatest and most magnificent masterpieces, the climax tropical rainforest. But above and beyond all that, he forces the animals to move away or die. Either way, he loses, so perhaps this is a good place to clamp down.

The fifth and last reason for disappearance is perhaps the most horrible. It is pure indiscriminate slaughter of wild animals for pleasure or trophies. It accomplishes nothing except to bolster the hunter's ego. It invariably causes problems and does absolutely no good to anybody except the furrier. If this form of slaughter is allowed, I fear that future generations may never see these animals except in a book.

To make this a more thorough report, I am going to discuss the ways that the people kill these animals. The first is by poisoning the sulfur springs. If an animal drinks from these sulfur springs enough times, he becomes addicted to the sulfur water, meaning that if the animal doesn't come back and drink the water, he becomes emaciated and sick. The people know this, so they go to these sulfur springs and cover all but one of the puddles with branches; this they poison with sodium cyanide. The next morning they visit the springs and follow the tracks of each animal that drank at the spring during the night, and within fifty yards of the spring they find the animal dead. Although it has been poisoned, they can still eat it if they throw away the insides.

Another way that the people kill wildlife is aimed at birds. For two weeks they may set a feeding station and keep it stocked with unhulled rice. After two weeks, when the birds have gotten used to this feeding, these people set out a meal of unhulled rice soaked in insecticide. When the birds feed on this they die. The people who killed these birds can then go and collect the birds for their meals or to sell.

All these animals are being killed to the point where Thailand may lose one of its most valuable resources and tourist attractions. However, there are many problems that stand in the way of the conservation of this resource. In the first place, the common people are ignorant of the importance of conservation. This is hard enough to combat, but even

worse, all but a few people in high government positions do not care about this resource. There are a few people who are trying to combat the ignorance and indifference. Two of these are Dr. Boonsong Lekhakul, a Thai naturalist, and Harold Young, the curator of the Chiengmai Zoo. Their efforts through talks, lectures, and books have brought about the establishment of a few reserves, but a much stronger and more enthusiastic effort will be needed to save the wildlife in North Thailand.