

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

PRESENT STATUS OF DEER IN BANGLADESH

Deer is an important mammalian fauna of Bangladesh. It plays an important role in maintaining the forest ecosystem. Blanford, in 1888, recorded five species of deer in this region. These were the Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak* Zimmermann), the Spotted Deer (*Axis axis* Erxleben), the Hog Deer (*Axis porcinus* Zimmermann), the Swamp Deer (*Cervus duvanceli* Cuvier) and the Sambar (*Cervus unicolor* Kerr). However, updating of this old record was necessary because during this period wanton deforestation and indiscriminate huntings had taken place resulting in ecological changes and disappearance of quite a few animal species. A reconnaissance survey of the wildlife of Bangladesh was, therefore, carried out between April and December, 1978; and special attention was given to ascertain the present position of deer.

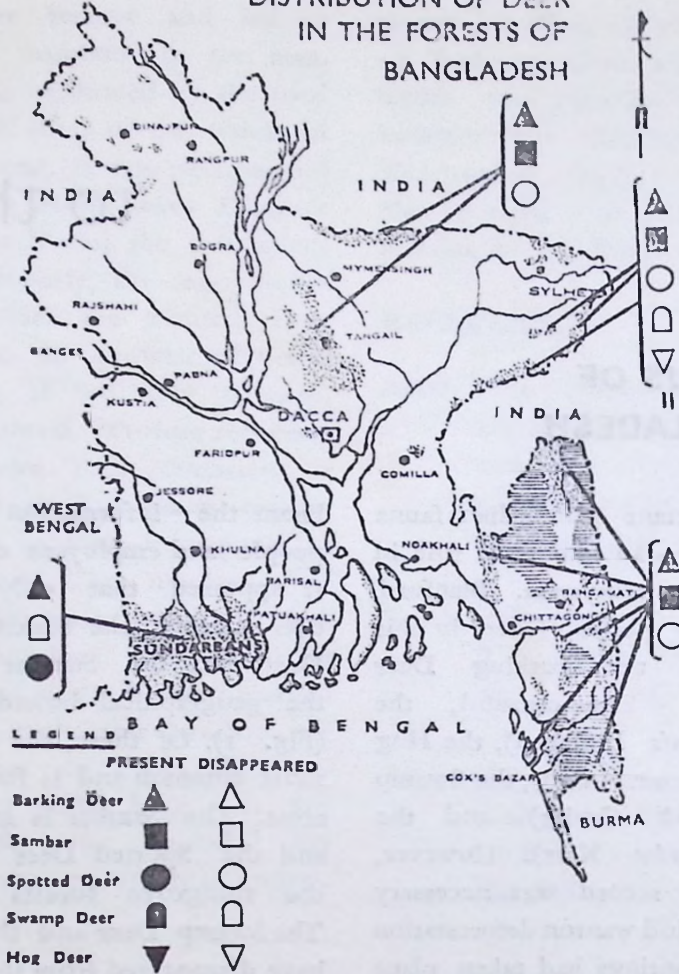
The major forest areas of Bangladesh which were visited during the survey were Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Tangail and the Sundarbans.

From the information collected from local people and employees of Forest Department it appeared that only three species of deer, namely, the Barking Deer, the Spotted Deer and the Sambar now exist within the geographical boundaries of Bangladesh (Fig. 1). Of these, the Barking Deer is the most common and is found in all the forest areas. The Sambar is more or less common and the Spotted Deer is confined only to the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans. The Swamp Deer and the Hog Deer seem to have disappeared from this territory.

Being relatively smaller in size and less beautiful, the Barking Deer was not subjected to much hunting pressure; and might also have adjusted themselves to the ecological changes, because of their diversified habitat. This is evident from their increasing number.

The Sambar were also found to be fairly distributed, probably, due to their diversified habitat and less attractive appearance; though they are bigger in size and are easy targets for the hunters.

DISTRIBUTION OF DEER IN THE FORESTS OF BANGLADESH



The Spotted Deer are the most beautiful ones and are adapted to the conditions of the mangrove forests. It could be for these reasons that they were subjected to severe hunting pressure and became worst victim of recent ecological changes.

From the current observations, it seems that, except for the Barking Deer, the other

two species are not doing well and might have to face similar consequences like that of Swamp Deer and Hog Deer if proper steps are not taken for their conservation. Therefore, a detailed study on various aspects of deer is necessary for recommending a proper management programme.

N. A. Siddiqi
Senior Research Officer
Forest Research Institute
Chittagong

**COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY INSTITUTE - UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
UNIT OF TROPICAL SILVICULTURE TRAINING COURSES**

In resolution XVIII of the eleventh Commonwealth Forestry Conference, held in Trinidad and Tobago in 1980, it was recommended that the Commonwealth Forestry Institute should make additional research and development training courses available. This resolution is being implemented and the following programme of courses has been drawn up for 1982 :-

Social and Community Forestry, a six-week course to be held in Oxford from 30 August to 8 October 1982. The course will concentrate on the role of forestry in the rural economy and the silvicultural and administrative methods for planning and implementing social and community forest projects. In view of the importance of this type of forestry it is anticipated that a second Social and Community Forestry course will be run in 1983.

Forest Protection, a ten-week course to be held in Oxford from 21 June to 27 August 1982 covering diseases, insects and other biotic and abiotic influences. The course aims to provide forestry graduates or diploma holders with basic knowledge of forest protection so that they can monitor pests and diseases and implement appropriate control measures.

Fifth Planning and Management Course for Forestry will be held from 2 July to 1 October 1982. All places have been allocated but it is planned to run the sixth course in July to September 1983 concurrently with the ninth Forest Research Course.

Tropical Moist Forest-Resources, Management and Conservation, a six-week course to be held in Oxford from 25 October to 3 December 1982. This will concentrate on the selection, creation and management of conservation areas in Tropical Moist Forest.

In 1983 in addition to the tenth Forest Research Course, the sixth Planning and Management Course for Forestry and the second Social and Community Forestry Course there will be a six-week course on Forest Resource Utilization.

A number of other courses are in preparation and details will be released in due course.