

that Jerina reports experimentally produced alopecia totalis in rats by feeding thallium acetate to the pregnant and nursing mothers.

'The bald condition of the Naked Mole-rat (*Heterocephalus glaber*) is of a different nature being, in all probability, due to phylogenetic retardation whereby the newborn condition persists until adult life, an explanation which also accounts for the relatively glabrous skin in man. This retardation (neoteny) is itself determined by a mutation affecting the behaviour of certain ductless glands whose activities control the growth processes.'

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 Winge, O. (1950): *Inheritance in dogs, with special reference to hunting breeds*, translated from the Danish by Catherine Roberts, Ithaca, Comstock.
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Writing on 19-2-1957, Mr. Menon adds:

'The mother of the cubs littered again on 1-11-1956 having paired with the same male. The two cubs (one male, one female) born now are quite normal. The hairless male cubs of the last litter have grown quite as well as the female cub. There is a tendency for the two male cubs to go together and also lie close to each other. They are also rather timid compared to the female. The teeth and claws of the two males, originally not quite so well developed as those of the female, are now more or less of the same size and strength. In addition to the pigmentation, warty growths are also noted on the skin of the hairless cubs.'—EDS.

3. 'SCENT TRAILS' AND 'POOKING' IN TIGER

In the *Journal* of December 1956, the reviewer of 'The Tigers of Trengganu' has touched upon some interesting matters that must have caught the particular attention of many other readers of that very interesting book. And here I should like to discuss the statement therein that the Malayan tiger ejects a strong smelling secretion from the root of the tail, and then to introduce certain other matters, not irrelevant to tigers in general, in order to invite the interest of other sportsmen who have carried an enquiring mind in their pursuit of the tiger.

Once while watching a zoo tigress pacing her cage, I observed that almost every time she turned away from one side of it, to resume her walk to the opposite side, she squirted a jet of urine at the bars, and simultaneously uttered what I shall here allude to as the 'pook'—but uttered more softly than it probably is in other circumstances. And, immediately preceding the 'pook', there was a sound like a short, suppressed hiccup, which in after years took my mind to the Burmese version of the sound as the 'tit', or titting of a tiger (though I myself had never heard it there); those who have had

any acquaintance with that language will know how our Burmese friends pronounce the 't' at the end of such a syllable; and if I have chosen to imply that the utterance of it resembles a hiccup, it is chiefly because I noted that when that zoo tigress uttered that double sound (*hic-conk*; though the second one was more of a high-pitched *kink*) there was a slight spasmodic contraction of the belly and, with the *hic* or *tit*, the head was dipped momentarily with the neck slightly arched, while the cheek muscles retracted the corners of the lips at the same time.

The tigress did not utter the 'pook' every time she ejected urine, nor vice versa, the 'pooks' being uttered usually during her walks to opposite sides of the cage. In the act of squirting urine the vulva briefly opened as those of mares do, and the tail was rigidly flirited upwards; and I seem to remember that this movement of the tail always accompanied the 'pook' too. From these signs I formed the opinion that the tigress was in season.

The urine—a short jet—was squirted slightly upwards, at an angle of perhaps 15 degrees above the horizontal; and being propelled at a velocity sufficient to carry it about 10 ft. or more, this jet of urine was barely visible to anyone standing a few yards away from that large cage, especially as the jet broke into a fine spray towards the end of its trajectory. It was when I moved to the rear of the tigress as she walked away that my clothes received some of that spray; and the pungent odour of it was similar to that which I have sometimes detected in the jungle and ascribed to the proximity, or recent presence, of a tiger. Indeed, I once detected this odour a few seconds before a wounded tigress began 'caterwauling' in a thicket about 50 yards away (a cry discussed in the Bombay Natural History Society's journal many years ago). I cannot, however, remember having noticed this odour at tiger- or panther-'scrapes' which I have examined in the jungle; nor have I detected it on a dead animal, tiger or panther. If, as the author of 'Tigers of Trengannu' seems to suggest, the odour is derived from scent-glands at the root of the tail, I must admit that I have not yet discovered such glands there on a dead animal, perhaps because I had not looked for them?

Some amongst the jungle tribes that I have hunted with have assured me that even male tigers can, and do, spray tree-trunks and high bushes with their urine.

On a few occasions in Indian jungles I have believed I had heard a tiger 'pooking'; but, as the sound was said to resemble the 'conk' of a sambar, I was never certain of having correctly identified it. On two later occasions, however, a couple of years ago and when camped in the lower Nilgiris, I did recognize the sound with certainty. For on both occasions it was uttered from quite a short distance off, and was preceded by the *hic* I have described, faint but quite distinct from the *conk* that followed. Besides, on the evening of the first occasion a tiger had killed a cow less than a furlong from where I was, and actually while the herdsman was calling the cattle to the pen; on the following evening a man had run in to say that the tiger was behind him and on its way to the kill. It was about 10 p.m. when I heard the 'pooking' for the second time (and I wonder why the sound has become so widely accepted as a *pook*

when it is more like the sambar's *conk*—even the Burmese *tit* is phonetically a more apt description!).

RATNA COTTAGE,
FERNHILL (NILGIRIS),
January 22, 1957.

K. BOSWELL,
(Capt.)

4. FOLLOWING UP WOUNDED TIGER AT NIGHT

Lt.-Col. A. Locke, the author of the recent book 'The Tigers of Trengganu', apparently believes in following up a tiger immediately after wounding it, even at night. I once read about a well-known professional hunter in French Indo-China, a man with a French name (was it de Fosse?) who preferred to follow up at night because, as he pointed out, the wounded animal was then the more readily spotted by its eyes reflecting the light of an electric torch, and he insisted that this was therefore the safer method. And, considering the matter objectively and quite impersonally, it would at first appear that he was right, that his was the saner method, as seeing the animal before it charges certainly reduces the odds, even in daylight; and it must be assumed that the torch used for the follow up at night must have a wide, diffused beam of light, and that not too many torches in the hands of others would be used, for their effects would be bewildering. But, and I would suggest that this is the crux of the matter, before the animal's eyes may be picked up with the torch its trail must be followed. Can this be done as well by artificial light as by daylight? I think not. My torch has shown the blazing eyes of panthers (unwounded) at very close ranges, a tiger's too, and once at about 200 yards when they shone like small twin stars; but I have also known raindrops and dew, as well as bits of quartz, to reflect gleams that resembled the eyes of animals. And to follow up a wounded tiger at night, when human morale is naturally low (and is not a measure of confidence always important?), must require stark courage, for a task which is invariably the most frightful in the experience of a big game hunter. And can one be always certain of the torch revealing both eyes, to thus indicate the position of the head as a target for the first shot before a charge is launched, or before the animal can turn away? On one occasion a tiger, suspicious of my 'hide' on the ground which had not been there before the kill had been made, was finally revealed about 75 yards away by the diamond-bright gleam from one eye it was exposing at the side of a tree-trunk behind which it was sitting. On another occasion, while returning through scrub jungle from a point where I had hoped to ambush a panther whose usual route I knew, something prompted me to stop and flash my rifle-torch to the rear, and there in the beam was a single brilliant eye beside some dark object, probably a small boulder. On yet another occasion, with a Gond as companion, we were taking a short cut through scanty jungle. The Gond stopped. Getting his bearings, I thought, till I noticed him make a slight recoiling movement and saw his hand reach back towards me; and then 'there, crossing



Boswell, K. 1957. "'scent Trails' and 'pooking' in Tiger." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 54, 452–454.

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