

No. X.—OCCURRENCE OF THE DWARF GOOSE
(*ANSER ERYTHROPUS*) IN ASSAM.

On the 28th October I had a specimen of this rare goose sent to me for identification. It was shot by Mr. R. Johnston at Soohering, Lakhimpur.

The bird is a young male, in very fine plumage, but the black on the breast ill-defined and in patches mixed with grey. Feet bright chrome yellow. Bill livid green, the nail still paler.

E. C. STUART BAKER.

DIBRUGARH, 9th November 1903.

No. XI.—CANNIBALISM IN SNAKES.

In the Bombay Natural History Society's Journal, Vol. XIV, page 395, is a very interesting little note on cannibalism in snakes by Mr. W. S. Millard, in which examples of this depraved instinct are cited, the offenders mentioned being the hamadryad (*Naia bungarus*), the cobra (*Naia tripudians*), the common krait of India (*Bungarus candidus*), and the python (*Python molurus*).

I think it is generally accepted that snakes form the staple, if not exclusive, diet of the hamadryad, and there is good reason to suppose that they form the usual food in the kraits.

Günther in his "Reptiles of British India," page 342, says the *Bungarus* feeds on "small mammals, lizards, small snakes, and toads," but I believe snakes will be found to be more generally ingested. In support of this view I will quote the following:—

Günther in the same work alluded to above, page 344, says he has found "uropeltides" in the stomach of the Ceylon krait (*Bungarus ceylonicus*), and Mr. Blyth in "Ceylon" by an old officer, Vol. II, page 196, refers to Dr. Günther finding a uropeltis inside a Ceylon krait. Major G. H. Evans, in a note in the B. N. H. S. Journal, Vol. XIV, page 599, mentions a banded krait (*Bungarus fasciatus*) eating a common paddy-field snake (*Tropidonotus piscator*).

In the B. N. H. S. Journal, Vol. X, page 7, Mr. Ferguson says of the krait (*Bungarus cæruleus*) or, as it is now known, (*Bungarus candidus*), that it feeds readily on snakes, and mentions one occasion when it devoured another snake made captive with it, and records another killed with the tail of a rat-snake protruding from its jaws.

Mr. F. B. Simson in "Letters on Sport in Eastern Bengal," page 246, narrates finding a banded krait (*Bungarus fasciatus*) with a snake nearly as large as itself inside it.

Cannibalism is, I believe, a distinctly unusual trait in the character of other snakes, but I have collected a few examples which I subjoin.

In Trichinopoly in 1896 I had a cobra (*Naia tripudians*) brought to me dead, killed in the well of the 23rd Madras Infantry Mess, which had nearly completed swallowing a common brown tree-snake (*Dipsadomorphus trigonata*). Mr. S. S. Flower in the Proc. Zool. Soc., Lond., December 1st, 1896, page 894,

mentions a cobra (*Naia tripudians*) swallowing another snake (*Macropisthodon rhodomelas*). The same observer in the Proc. Zool. Soc., Lond., May 16th, 1899, page 680, records a tree-snake (*Dipsadomorphus dendrophilus*) having swallowed another tree-snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*) rather longer than itself.

The same observer in the same Journal, page 684, says he has known the dhaman (*Zamenis mucosus*) eat a snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*).

In the B. N. H. S. Journal, Vol. XIII, page 352, Captain G. H. Evans and I record an earth-snake (*Xenopeltis unicolor*) devouring a snake (*Tropidonotus stolatus*).

In the same volume, page 534, I record a tree-snake (*Dipsadomorphus multi-maculata*) falling a prey to a companion species with which it was placed in captivity.

In the B. N. H. S. Journal, Vol. X, page 10, Mr. Ferguson mentions a rat-snake, presumably *Zamenis mucosus*, eating another when in captivity, both creatures having struggled with the same victim (a frog).

Mr. Buckland in "Curiosities of Natural History," page 182, relates having seen in the Zoological Gardens in London an English snake (*Tropidonotus natrix*?) in the act of swallowing a French species, and remarks that the snake swallowed was about the same size of the swallower.

F. WALL, CAPTAIN, I.M.S.

CANNANORE, 10th November 1903.

NO. XII.—THE OCEANIC, OR ANDAMAN TEAL (*NETTIUM ALLIGULARE*).

I received some time ago from the Indian Museum a male skin of this species with a patch of white on the hindneck; otherwise the bird is in normal plumage, having a white patch on the lores and round the eye. I can find no record of either Mr. Finn or anyone else having found white feathers in the same place.

CHAS. M. INGLIS.

BAGHOWNIE FACTORY, 20th November 1903.

NO. XII (b).—THE OCEANIC, OR ANDAMAN TEAL (*NETTIUM ALBIGULARE*).

In the Fauna of British India, Birds, Vol. IV, p. 445, Dr. Blanford states, as regards the distribution of this bird, that it occurs only on the South Andaman Island and that it has not been observed on the North Andaman, the Cocos, or the Nicobar Islands. I myself shot several specimens on the Great Cocos Island as recently as June last, some of which were young birds, and the native manager of the plantation on that island states that the bird is common there all the year round. I have also shot this bird on Landfall Island, which is, strictly speaking, the most northerly island of the Andaman group. I have



Wall, Frank. 1904. "Cannibalism in Snakes." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 15, 524–525.

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