

INTRODUCTION

In the course of his studies of the Reptiles and Amphibians of the Indo-Chinese subregion it was obvious that there would come beneath the notice of Dr. Malcolm A. Smith much material and literature dealing with the adjacent Malay Peninsula, a Malaysian province with which he was already very familiar.

Since the volume by Dr. G. A. Boulenger on the Reptilia and Batrachia of the Malay Peninsula was published in 1912* collecting work has brought to light a good many new species and new records for that area and researches in nomenclature have caused the change of a great many names.

I therefore asked Dr. Smith if he would undertake to prepare a hand-list of Malayan reptiles and amphibians in terms of the most recently accepted nomenclature and include in it the forms inhabiting the Peninsula, south of the Isthmus of Kra, which were unknown, or unrecognised, at the time Dr. Boulenger produced his work. Dr. Smith agreed to do this.

It should be understood that the present publication is supplementary only to Dr. Boulenger's volume and not an independent work. It gives recent changes in nomenclature, discusses certain doubtful species and others which required revision; and includes all forms, new and otherwise, obtained in the Malay Peninsula subsequent to the earlier account which should be studied with it.

In his Preface Dr. Smith has commented on the curious discontinuous distribution of certain species. I, and probably others, have already elsewhere drawn attention to similar conditions in the ranges of a number of mammals and birds. These species, occurring in the Indo-Chinese subregion which includes the northern quarter of the Malay Peninsula (lat. 10° to $13^{\circ} 30'$ N.), and again in one or more of the great islands of Sumatra, Java and Borneo, have not been met with in that other well-explored part of the Malaysian subregion—the southern half of the Peninsula—though that is continuous with Indo-China. As far as birds are concerned we can rule out migration between the areas north and south of the equator: climatic changes are insufficient to cause it and species which are common, for instance, to Siam and Java are generally represented by different subspecies in these two countries. If the species in

*A Vertebrate Fauna of the Malay Peninsula from the Isthmus of Kra to Singapore including the adjacent islands: Reptilia and Batrachia; by George A. Boulenger, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.R.S. London: Taylor and Francis, 1912.

question were high-level ones we could explain their absence in the Malay States by noting that the mountains there are not high enough to offer a congenial habitat (as is the case with plants) but the animals concerned are not mountain species. It has been suggested that the species are not now present because they have died out: but this solution does not seem a very satisfactory one. An interesting problem offers itself to zoologists.

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