

The African, however, has a strong sense of the traditional, and his claim to proprietary rights over the lechwe cannot be ignored. There is a sporting atmosphere about a chila, which seems to be conducted in the same spirit as a fox-hunt or a race-meeting. There is nothing in the chila, as a method of taking game, that could be objected to by any upholder of field sports, and it involves both skill and strenuous physical effort. The African is far more likely to support conservation measures aimed at preserving his sport than he would be to co-operate in preservation for its own sake—an academic consideration quite outside his apparent interest or present understanding. No solution to this problem has yet been found; but at present it is likely to lie in the direction of control rather than in any attempt at abolition.

Chinese sikas are quite unlike the small and stocky Japanese sikas which roam so many British parks. The majority of Chinese sikas stand $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high at the shoulder and are comparable to the average Scottish red deer. They differ from the Japanese sikas, where the antlers of the stag are greyish-black to black; in Chinese sikas they are red.

Sika deer are woodland animals and this has given rise to anxiety. Throughout this century there has been wholesale destruction of forests in China; until the Communist regime few new trees were planted.

Another reason for anxiety is that Chinese physicians have long regarded a preparation of deer's antlers as a cure for impotence. High prices are paid for the antlers, and besides the stalking of stags with rifles, the Chinese make free use of set-guns, snares and pitfalls; with these methods neither hinds nor calves are spared. Already some varieties are believed to be extinct. To-day the Chinese sika appears to have joined that group of animals—the European bison, Père David's deer, Mongolian wild horse and Hawaiian goose—the survival of which depends upon their careful management in parks and zoos outside their native habitat. In Great Britain there is a fine herd of Formosan sikas which are kept apart in a special paddock at Woburn, as well as smaller herds at Whipsnade and Chessington Zoos.

FISHERIES RESEARCH IN HONG KONG

DESPITE many difficulties and setbacks, organized fisheries research in Hong Kong forges ahead with outstanding vigour and success. Under Dr. G. A. C. Herklots, it got off to an excellent start just before the Second World War but was brought to an abrupt halt by the Japanese occupation. The early post-war period witnessed resolute attempts to revive the project, and these efforts met with some success: but it was not until the formation of a Fisheries Research Unit affiliated with the Department of Zoology, University of Hong Kong, that the project became again soundly established. In 1950 Dr. David Barker was appointed professor of zoology in the University and acting director of the new Unit. Since then, solid and rapid progress has been made. A specially designed research vessel, the *Alister Hardy*, built in a local shipyard, went into service in January 1954, to initiate an ambitious programme of researches in nearby waters (see *Nature*, 172, 1170; 1953).

Preliminary results of much interest and value are already available and have been published in a new journal, the *Hong Kong University Fisheries Journal**. This publication carries on, under its new name, the former *Journal of the Hong Kong Fisheries Research Station*, originally launched by Dr. Herklots in 1940 but which ran to only three issues because of the War. It is intended to publish the new *Journal* annually for the time being; but as the activities of the Unit expand and multiply, publication will no doubt become more frequent. This first number is well printed on good paper and has an attractive format that does credit to all concerned with its production. It contains four papers on various aspects of fisheries biology, one on the sea snakes (*Hydrophiidae*) occurring near Hong Kong, and one by Prof. Barker giving an interesting and informative history of the development of fisheries research in Hong Kong.

The Fisheries Research Unit now has its own director, Mr. J. A. Tubb, a graduate of the University of Melbourne, and formerly director of fisheries in North Borneo, and it is to be expected that this, the most easterly of a chain of Commonwealth research stations in the Indo-Pacific region, will quickly become a powerful and progressive influence both locally and internationally within the region. It certainly merits the fullest measure of encouragement and support that can be extended to it by all interested in fisheries and general marine biology in those Far-Eastern waters.

G. A. STEVEN

* *Hong Kong University Fisheries Journal*, No. 1 (December 1954). Edited by Prof. David Barker. Pp. iv+65+12 plates. (Hong Kong: University Press, 1954.) n.p.

ANAPHYLATOXIN, HISTAMINE DEPLETION AND SKIN REACTIONS IN THE RAT*

By DR. M. ROCHA E SILVA and A. M. ROTHSCHILD

Department of Biochemistry and Pharmacodynamics, Instituto Biológico, São Paulo, Brazil

AS shown before¹, incubation of rat's plasma with polysaccharides (starch, agar, inulin, etc.) generates a most potent histamine-releasing substance (anaphylatoxin), when assayed by perfusion through the guinea pig lung or by addition to a chamber containing a piece of guinea pig ileum (strong contraction followed by desensitization). Experiments performed in order to test the possibility of activating anaphylatoxin *in vivo*, by injecting starch or agar intravenously into rats, led to the result that, instead of being activated, the plasma of these rats became much less active when assayed *in vitro* with the proper amount of agar as activator. Significant drops of the content of anaphylatoxin to 5–30 per cent of the normal levels could be observed in most animals receiving the polysaccharides intravenously.

This 'depletion' of anaphylatoxin appeared to constitute a favourable condition in which to test the possible role taken by anaphylatoxin in the mechanism of production of several skin reactions involving increased capillary permeability, as revealed by the passage of a colloidal dye (Geygy blue or

* Results presented at the annual meeting of the Braz. Soc. for the Advanc. of Science, held in Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, Brazil, during November 8–13, 1954.