

ANTLER STYLES

Antler style or shape and length is a subject which sambar hunters love to talk about so any book about sambar must discuss this subject if it is to be complete.

And when this subject is raised India is always mentioned. When referring to a stag taken in Australia, often the comment is made that "this stag has Indian style antlers or something similar."

From Feb. 21st to March 7th 2018 I visited three national parks in India. During those wonderful 14 days I photographed countless sambar stags in Sariska Tiger Reserve and Ranthambhore National Park in the north and Nagarhole National Park in the south.

In all parks I saw sambar with a variety of antler styles. Some were V shaped and others lyre shaped. I saw antlers which had inners shorter than the beam, some where the beam and the inners were same length (shanghai tops) and others where the inners were noticeably longer than the beam.

Right: There were squarish antlers which after initially curving nicely, then grew straight up before finishing with shanghai tops, similar to those which adorn the 38 to 40 incher at right, which I photographed at Sariska. He was the finest I saw during 14 days in the Indian Jungle. Superbly pearled, exceptionally long, thick, deeply veined beams, short tops and brows remind me of a 451/2 incher taken by Col. Glasfurd in India in 1921. See p. 151, SOTS Vol. 3, for a photo of this Monarch of the Satpura Mountain Range. When assessing antler length, consider that the length of the head measured from between the pedicles to the tip of nose is about 15 inches, and there is considerable length in the curve of the beam.

Monarch and hinds are browsing sal (*Cappris separia*), an abundant, evergreen shrub which was the only green forage in Sariska at the time. The long, needle-like thorns of this succulent, drought tolerant shrub prevent defoliation by Cervidae and Nilgai. Native tree violet, prickly coprosma and bursaria spinosa are native shrubs which are abundant throughout the sambar's southeastern Australian range. They also have thorns which prevent defoliation.

See the following pages for stags which exhibit the various antler styles and beam, brow and tine length of Indian Sambar.

