



# Elephant & Seladang Hunting in the Federated Malay States

*Theodore Rathbone Hubback*

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## **Elephant & Seladang Hunting in the Federated Malay States** Theodore Rathbone Hubback

Theodore Rathbone Hubback (1872 – 1942) was an English engineer, conservationist and author in what is now Malaysia. THE Malay Peninsula is a portion of Asia little known to the general public, although it is the greatest tin-producing country in the world. Except to the resident Europeans in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States and a very few others, it is entirely unknown as a biggame hunter's country. As such I do not wish to describe it, since it is not a country which a stranger can enter and go on an organised hunting trip. In fact, it is extremely difficult for those not conversant with the Malay tongue to obtain any hunting at all; although for those who live in the country and can occasionally leave their regular duties for a few days' recreation, there is within reasonable reach big-game hunting which for genuine sport will hold its own with any in the world. The bags are never big, the game is never plentiful, but the haunts of the elephant and the seladang take the sportsman into country where the hunting is superb, and a good trophy a prize well within reach. Elephants are to be found in a wild state all over the Malay States, seladang not so generally; but since my own hunting has been done chiefly in the Selangor and Negri Sembilan States, my remarks concerning the habits and peculiarities of these animals are principally based on my experiences in those two southern states. The big game of the Malay Peninsula comprises elephant, seladang, rhinoceros, tiger, and tapir; but I intend to confine myself to the description of the hunting of the two former animals, since of tiger-hunting there is but little, while rhino are now scarce except in most inaccessible places, and tapir, although plentiful, afford no trophies for the big-game hunter. The seladang and the gaur belong undoubtedly to the same species, which is generally known as the Indian bison, although this is a misnomer, as the gaur or seladang, among other distinctive features, has only thirteen pairs of ribs, whereas the true bisons have fourteen. Sanderson, in his excellent book, *Thirteen Tears among the Wild Beasts of India*, states that these two species of game afford the finest sport for the rifle in the world; and if my account of hunting the elephant and the seladang in the Malay Peninsula will help the reader to while away an idle hour, my reward will be sufficient from the fact that his attention has been directed to a most interesting, although little known, corner of the East.

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