

ROE DEER AND FALLOW

By P. H. CARNE

It is of great interest to have confirmation from so experienced an observer as Dr. Peter Delap of apparent antipathy between roe and fallow deer in Lakeland, more especially as he suggests that the dominant species there is the roe. In every instance which I have investigated in the south where the two species have come into territorial collision, the successful contestant for "living-space" has been, in the long run, the fallow.

Dr. Delap points out that the Lake District is essentially roe country, and suggests that fallow from local parks may have failed to establish themselves in the region because of a lack of suitable cover to which the roe had not staked a prior claim. That fallow can, however, not only gain a foothold in roe territory, but increase and expand their range at the roe's expense, is clearly shown in several areas in the south. Dr. Delap will recall the example cited in my article (*Oryx*, December, 1954) of park-escaped fallow having, to all intents and purposes, supplanted roe in parts of the Weald.

Roe deer, on the other hand, seem unable to make real headway in strongholds of fallow. Further evidence of this has lately come my way from Devon, where I learn from various landowners that roe have greatly increased since the war in woodlands east of the River Sid. Pre-resident fallow were few in the areas named by my informants. In the Sidbury Hills, however, and elsewhere west of the Sid where fallow occur in considerable numbers, roe remain scarce.

Whilst the general trend appears to have been for fallow to displace roe as the woodland deer of Southern Europe, thus affording an historic parallel for what can now be discerned in Britain, it is interesting to note that the wheel has locally turned full circle. Roe are still to be found in fair numbers in certain parts of southern Italy, notably the forests around Monte Pollino and alongside the shore south-west of Taranto. They are present, too, in Tuscany and elsewhere further north, whereas fallow, as wild animals, have almost, if not entirely, disappeared from the Italian peninsula.
