

## SHORT NOTES

## GIANT FALLOW DEER

In an article on the deer of Epping Forest, published in *Oryx*, March, 1954, I referred to a large fossilized horn of a fallow buck found at Clacton and dating from the time when this country was a promontory and not an island. This fossilized horn is in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington. Since writing the article I have visited Germany and Denmark. In Germany I saw a number of horns of fallow bucks, which appeared to be of the same type and size as the fossil horn from Clacton and was told that all these large fallow came from Schleswig Holstein, but that it was feared that they had been exterminated by occupation troops after the late war. In Denmark, however, I was told that these large fallow still exist in parts of Jutland. I saw an excellent photograph (see illustration) of a live buck in a Danish book, *Hjorte Bogen*, by F. W. Braestrup, published in 1952. This buck appears to be of the same type and size as the large fallow from Schleswig Holstein.

Fallow deer from other parts of Germany seem to resemble our modern fallow and I was told that some special quality in the soil of Jutland and Schleswig Holstein was believed to account for the remarkable growth of horn and body of the fallow from those districts. I was glad to learn that given the proper conditions parts of Europe can still produce giant fallow resembling the fossil from Clacton.—ANTHONY BUXTON.

## RED DEER IN SCOTLAND

Anthony Buxton is probably right to query the accepted ratio in Scottish red deer of one big stag to twenty-five other deer. This ratio has, I believe, been established only for certain forests in the West Highlands and Islands. It need not necessarily be that in other forests. During the past ten years, for example, a random series of counts in the forests of the western Cairngorms and northern Grampians have given a ratio of only 1 : 10. Thus, any estimate of the total number of deer in Scotland, which is wholly or partly calculated on the 1 : 25 ratio, may be misleading. In this respect the Deer Committee's present estimate is, I believe, 85,000 deer in the regular forests, plus an unknown number outside these.

Major Buxton makes the point that no young stags would be allowed near the hinds in a harem. My experience has been that one must not, perhaps, be too dogmatic on such points.