

THE MANAGEMENT OF INDIA'S WILD LIFE SANCTUARIES AND NATIONAL PARKS

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PART II

(With 4 plates)

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INTRODUCTION

Since writing the paper 'The Management of India's Wild Life Sanctuaries and National Parks' published in this Society's *Journal* Vol. 51, No. 1 (December 1952), considerable progress has been made in India for the preservation of wild life. The Inaugural Session of the Indian Board for Wild Life was held at Mysore from 25th November to 1st December 1952, and the Resolutions adopted there have been published. Many of these have since been accepted by the Government of India, and some of them are now actually being put into operation.

The Executive Committee of the above Board held its first meeting at Kanha Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh from 29th October to 2nd November 1953, and the recommendations made by it have been published in *Indian Wild Life Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (November 1953).

The writer, moreover, has been able to contact personally many more highly placed people in India and elsewhere directly concerned with preservation of wild life, and he has been able to visit some of the wild life sanctuaries in the States of Mysore, Assam, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

In addition, visits have been made to some of the national parks and other wild life centres of Britain, Switzerland, Kenya,

Tanganyika and Uganda; and discussions and exchanges of views have been held with officials concerned with these places.

It is in the light of the developments outlined above that this second paper has been written, as Part II of the previous paper.

STATE WILD LIFE BOARDS

As it was anticipated, the preservation of wild life in India will be mainly, if not entirely, in the hands of the Forest Department, advised by Wild Life Boards. The system of Wild Life Boards has been set up in India, with the Indian Board for Wild Life at the Centre and State Wild Life Boards in the States. By now a number of States have actually created their Wild Life Boards, and it is becoming apparent that the composition of these Boards will need careful consideration.

It is essential that the most suitable persons, both official and non-official, be appointed to sit on these Boards. While the appointment of officials would naturally be by virtue of their official position as heads of the Departments concerned, or their deputies, the selection of non-officials is more complicated.

The actual wording of the Mysore resolution on the subject, No. 3, (a), reads as follows: 'That each State Government should be requested to set up a State Wild Life Board consisting of representatives of various organisations and interests to deal with the day-to-day administration of local wild life problems'. The word 'representatives' should be carefully noted. It is most important that the non-official members of such Boards should not just be nominated by a Minister or Chief Conservator of Forests, but should actually represent natural history or wild life societies and interests, sporting organisations and interests, publicity interests, public opinion and so forth.

In order that persons may effectively represent their respective organisations and interests, they must obviously be chosen by those organisations and interests themselves. A Note on this subject was carefully compiled by the writer and published in the *Indian Forester*, Vol. 79, No. 10 (October 1953), and the relevant extract therefrom is reproduced herewith:

'4. *Non-official Members.*—(i) While the choice of official members should prove comparatively simple and straightforward on the lines indicated above, the appointment of non-official members will require careful consideration.

(ii) One or two influential and knowledgeable M.L.A.s who could "put it across" in the Assembly and on the platform, would be a great asset to any State Wild Life Board. But it is essential that the Board as a whole should steer clear of politics. All shades of public opinion should be represented on the Board. The overriding consideration should be to include knowledgeable persons who can bring an independent outlook to bear on all problems relating to wild life, irrespective of their political affiliations.

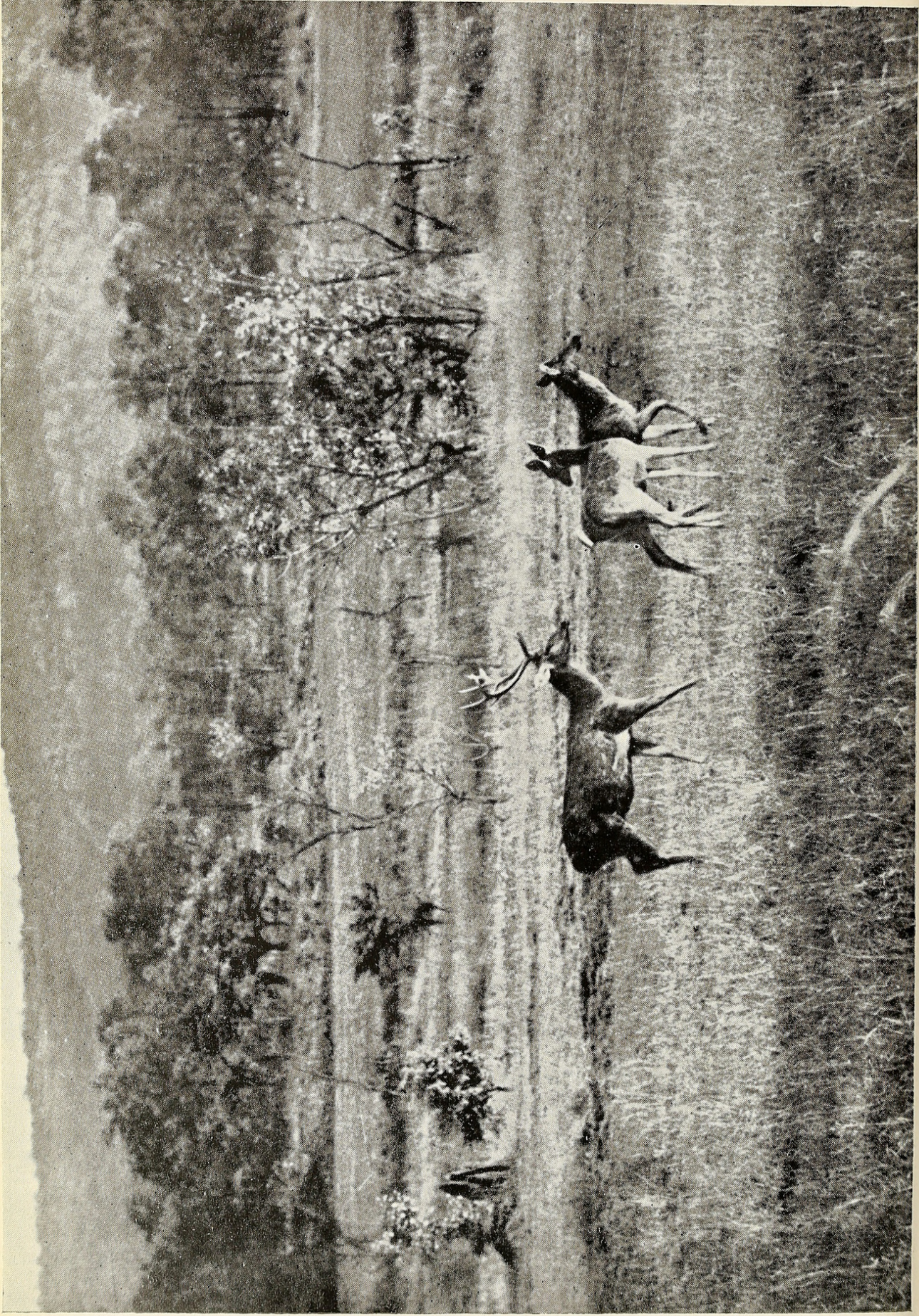
(iii) Most important of the non-officials to be appointed would be one or two persons of proved experience and knowledge of wild life problems and wild life conservation. Without such



Wild elephant (*makna*). Kaziranga Sanctuary



Wild buffalo bull. Kaziranga Sanctuary
(Photos : E. P. Gee)



persons a Board will be of little use. Field naturalists are preferable to museum or laboratory specialists; and if a qualified zoologist is chosen he should be a person of practical field experience rather than textbook knowledge. The claims of wild life conservationists of repute should never be overlooked in the composition of a State Wild Life Board; and the appointment of such persons could well be placed in the hands of the Head of the State or of the Executive Committee of the Indian Board for Wild Life.

(iv) Any important organization or interest connected with the study of natural history should be considered for membership. Most States have some kind of natural history society, or at least a nucleus of members of the all-India society known as the Bombay Natural History Society; and from these a representative should be nominated by the Society's committee of management.

(v) Similarly any important game association in a State should be invited to nominate its representative, as the interests of bona-fide sportsmen must always be safeguarded in any scheme for the preservation of wild life. It is well known that the presence of sportsmen in a forest is always a deterrent to poachers.

5. *Other Relevant Points.*—(i) In the event of a State possessing some outstanding Wild Life Sanctuary or National Park, preference should be given to persons residing in that locality when appointing either official or non-official members. Local knowledge and local influence are of paramount importance in such cases.

(ii) In any event members of the Board should, as far as possible, be drawn from different parts of the State concerned. A predominance of members from some particular part or parts of a State would be unfair.

(iii) Another possible asset as a member of a State Wild Life Board might be some influential leader, or someone of great eminence and authority, whose backing in wild life preservation would be of the greatest moral value. Similarly the proprietor or editor of a newspaper in general circulation throughout the State would be a valuable member of any State Wild Life Board.

(iv) If it is considered desirable to admit as large a number of non-official persons as possible to a State Wild Life Board, so as to obtain a wider cross-section of opinion and advice, the Board would become unwieldy. Two methods of overcoming this unwieldiness might be: (a) to have an 'Inner' or 'Executive Committee' in control of a larger Board, and (b) to have 'Associate' or 'Corresponding Members' in different parts of the State, who would have an opportunity of expressing their views on any important questions in writing, without actually being on the Board.

(v) It is possible that high-ranking ex-officials retired from service, with inside experience of the legal and administrative difficulties, would be suitable for membership—especially if they were also knowledgeable wild life conservationists or experienced sportsmen.

(vi) Some States may already have an appointment for a Game Warden (as in Travancore-Cochin) or Wild Life Officer. In such cases this official would naturally be on the Board.

(vii) The Government of India have recently appointed 'Honorary Regional Secretaries for the Indian Board for Wild Life' for each region of India. These persons are ready to advise States in the matter of the creation of State Wild Life Boards, and to do everything possible to help in the preservation of wild life. They are to 'maintain liaison between the Central Board and the State Boards'. It would perhaps be right, therefore, that the Honorary Regional Secretary should be an honorary or *ex-officio* member of the State Boards within his jurisdiction, and should attend meetings if and when possible. In any case the agenda and minutes of every meeting should always be sent to him.

(viii) The above-mentioned methods of obtaining the best possible representation from the public for the non-official membership of State Wild Life Boards should also be a guide to the appointing of Advisory or Managing Boards or Committees, or Trustees, for any National Parks which might be created in a State.

6. *Conclusion.* The members, both official and non-official, of a State Wild Life Board or National Park Committee have a heavy responsibility to shoulder. For in all cases they will be examining problems and making recommendations for legislation, not to solve the difficulties of the present moment but to ensure that wild life will be preserved for all time.

The wild life of a State and the areas in which it is found will be entrusted to their stewardship, to provide for the public enjoyment of them in such a way that they will remain unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.'

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, ZOOLOGICAL PARKS, MUNICIPAL PARKS, WILD LIFE SANCTUARIES AND NATIONAL PARKS

There still exists in certain quarters in India some doubt as to the exact character and functions of the various types of park found in the world. It would not be out of place, therefore, to deal briefly with this subject.

1. *Zoological Gardens* are usually places where as large a number of the world's mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, etc. as possible are on show to the public in as small an area as possible, say 30 to 150 acres. These animals are usually kept in cages or restricted to small enclosures. The functions of zoological gardens are to show animals to the public as conveniently as possible for their recreation and education, and to provide material for scientific study. Zoological gardens are museums of living animals. They are usually found only in the largest cities, as their maintenance depends largely on gate money, or municipal or State grant. They are usually managed by a Board of Management or Trustees for a municipality or for a country, or by a Zoological Society consisting of subscription-paying members.

2. *Zoological Parks* are usually places where a selection of the world's mammals, birds, etc. are maintained in an environment as far as possible similar to their natural habitat, in a larger area, say 300 to 600 acres or more. The animals and birds are kept in

open fields or small wooded glades or lakes; and it is the human visitors who are restricted to fenced roadways and paths. They are usually outside, but not far distant from large cities, as they also largely depend on gate money for their maintenance.

In both zoological gardens and zoological parks it is more important to have a high standard of maintenance than to have a large collection of animals, i.e. the number of animals exhibited should not exceed the financial resources of an institution.

3. Municipal (or People's) Parks are usually man-made parks in towns and cities of any size, without any animals or birds necessarily being kept in them. Facilities are often provided in these for recreation, especially for children. Trees and plants of any species from any place can be planted in zoological gardens, zoological parks and municipal parks.

4. Wild Life Sanctuaries are usually places where some rare wild indigenous animals and birds, or wild life in good numbers and representative of a region, are considered to be in need of full protection together with their natural environment. Sanctuaries in India are created by the Forest Departments of States, by Gazette Notifications. They can therefore be altered or abolished in a similar manner. As most of the wild life sanctuaries of India are situated in the Reserved Forests where the felling of timber takes place according to a working plan, some sanctuaries have been hitherto wholly or partly exploited for their forest produce, while the wild life is left undisturbed as far as possible.

It is recommended by the Indian Board for Wild Life, and it is obviously desirable, that there should be as little disturbance to wild life as possible. For this reason it is recommended that there should be inner sanctuaries within a sanctuary 'where such operations may not be carried out, to ensure the nursing up of wild life undisturbed by human activities. Such sacrosanct areas may be declared as *Abhayaranya*, i.e. a forest where animals could roam about without fear of man. Such a sanctuary within a sanctuary would also ensure the preservation of plant life unspoiled and undisturbed.'—Mysore Resolution No. 6 (b), Note 2.

5. National Parks are usually places which are the same as really good wild life sanctuaries, with this difference: they are created by an Act of the Legislature and therefore they have a permanent status which can only be altered or undone by a subsequent act of the same Legislature. The definition of a national park for India as carefully phrased at the Mysore Conference is: 'An area dedicated by statute for all time, to conserve the scenery and natural and historical objects of national significance, to conserve wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations, with such modifications as local conditions may demand',—Mysore Resolution No. 6 (a), Note.

The up-grading of the best existing wild life sanctuaries of India into national parks by State Legislatures as soon as possible would

bring the following advantages: (a) These sanctuaries would become permanent instead of temporary strongholds of wild life, (b) They would be more effectively administered, (c) They would become more respected by the public, and poaching would decrease, (d) They would have an enhanced status, and would become institutions of national importance, (e) They would possess a national and all-India significance instead of merely a local one, (f) They would receive publicity and attract visitors and tourists from abroad and (g) They may become eligible for receiving some financial assistance from the Centre, whenever such assistance is possible.

SOME POTENTIAL NATIONAL PARKS

The following wild life sanctuaries, all actual or potential national parks of India, were visited by the writer since the previous paper was written, and observations were made as under:

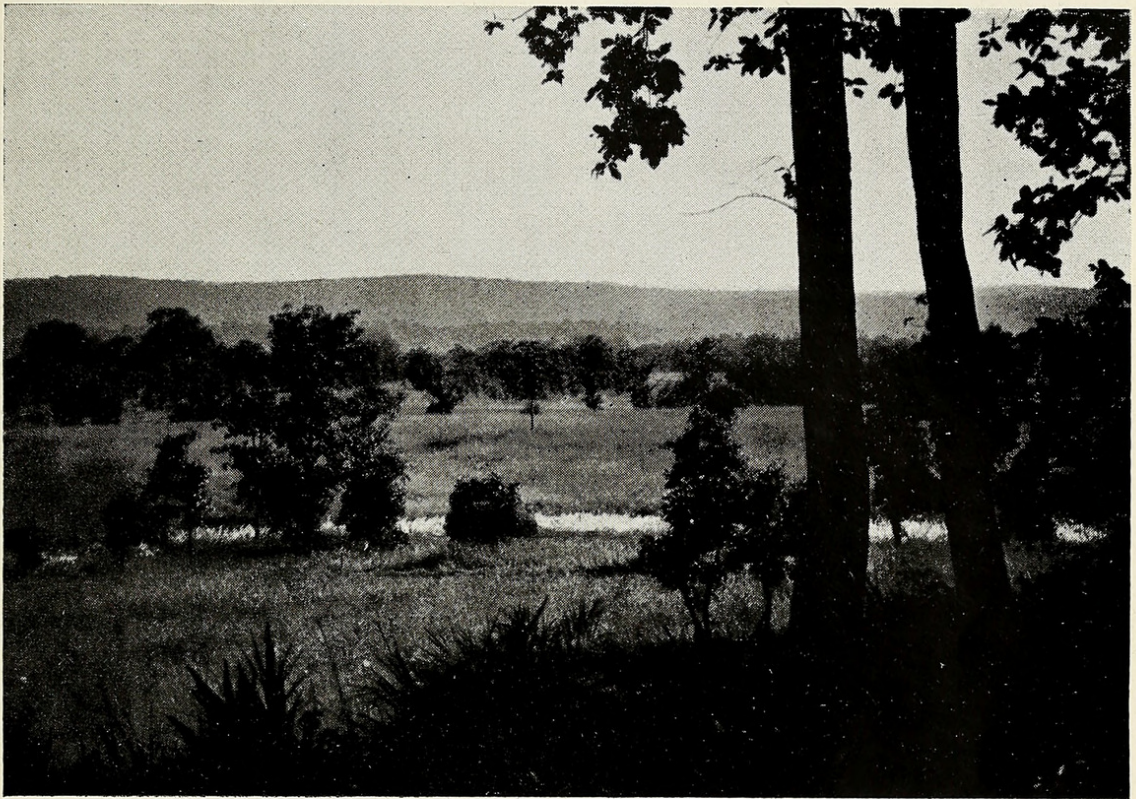
1. *A s s a m*. Some harmful shooting by 'sportsmen' and poachers had been going on round the fringes of Kaziranga Sanctuary, and sometimes actually inside the boundaries. The relevant resolution at the Mysore Conference, No. 19, reads: 'That buffer belts of sufficient width be declared around all sanctuaries within which no shooting, other than that required for legitimate crop protection, will be permitted'. The State Government by a Gazette Notification has duly created such a buffer zone round the four sides of Kaziranga, and the decrease in poaching has been significant and encouraging.

With regard to the North Kamrup (Manas) Sanctuary, a proposal has been put forward for a similar sanctuary to be made by the Bhutan Government on their side of the border. It is understood that this proposal is receiving favourable consideration in Bhutan. Should such a sanctuary materialise, and should a co-ordinated inter-State sanctuary or national park be created by India and Bhutan, it will be one of the finest in the world for scenery and fauna combined.

An 'Assam National Parks Bill' is in the process of being drafted for the purpose of up-grading both Kaziranga and North Kamrup Sanctuaries into national parks.

2. *B e n g a l*. The writer was able to pay a brief visit to the Jaldapara Sanctuary in North Bengal in April 1953, and again in April 1954. Although a few rhino and deer were observed, the forest, undergrowth and reeds were found to be extremely thick and the animals difficult to find—even on elephant-back after the annual burning. It might therefore be advantageous to the Bengal Government not to create this place as a national park but simply to maintain it as a carefully protected sanctuary, and to seek some other locality for development as a national park and show-place for the public and for tourists from abroad.

Jaldapara could be much improved as a sanctuary if the burning off of all grassy areas could be done more regularly and more thoroughly. The addition of the rhino area of Cooch Behar in the south would be advantageous; and the creation of a buffer belt, in which



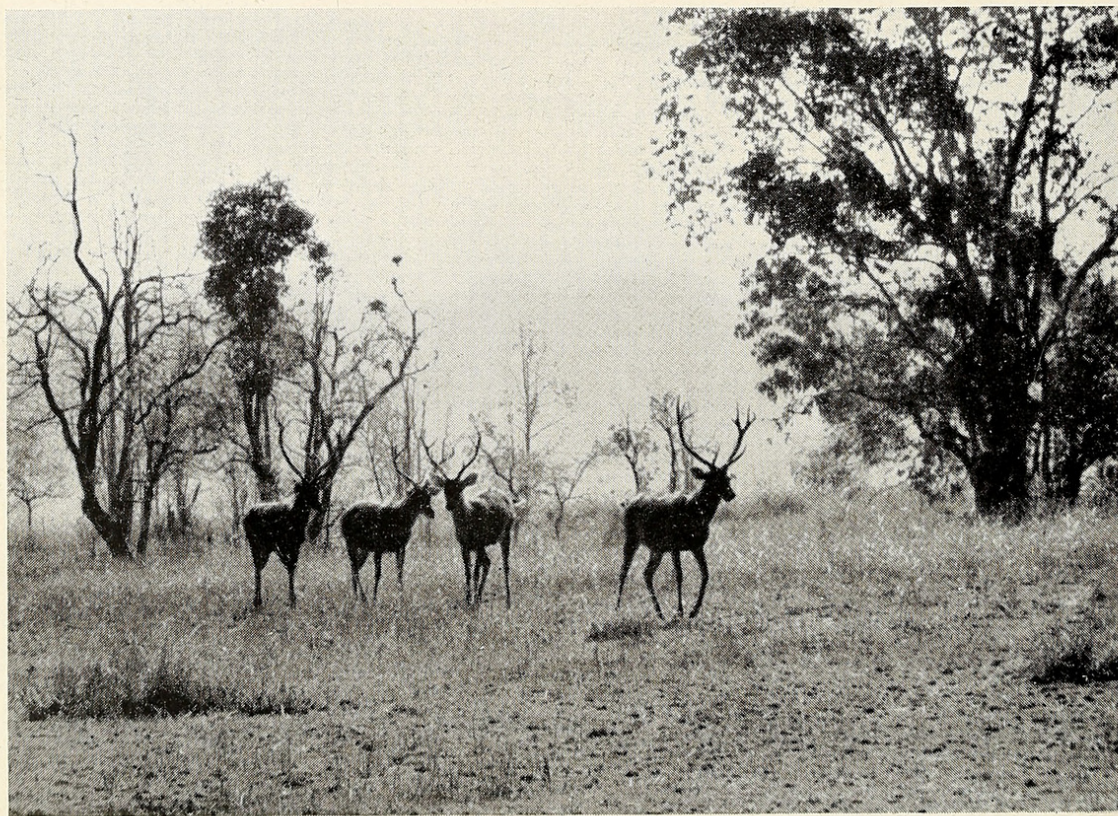
One of the *maidans* in Kanha Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh



Chital stag (*Axis axis*) in *sal* forest, Kanha Sanctuary
(Photos : E. P. Gee)



Barasinga or Swamp Deer. Master stag and hinds.
Kanha Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh



Barasinga Stags. Kanha Sanctuary
(Photos : E. P. Gee)

all shooting other than for genuine crop protection was prohibited, would help to preserve the valuable rhino and other wild life.

3. *M a d h y a P r a d e s h*. Two visits were paid by the writer to Kanha Sanctuary, probably better known as the Banjar Valley Reserve. In the first visit from 29th October to 2nd November 1953 this fine sanctuary was seen in its green freshness before the *maidans* had become dried up and burned off. Reminiscent of English parkland it appeared to the writer as one of the most pleasant spots of India. The *sal* and other trees growing in small woods and as isolated trees throughout the *maidans* possess a distinctive natural beauty of their own which no kind of regular planting by man can equal.

The second visit from 17th to 25th April 1954 showed Kanha after the *maidans* had been burned off and the new grass was just beginning to show. The wild life was much more visible during this visit, and the fine Indian Swamp Deer for which this sanctuary is renowned were much in evidence. One can motor all over these *maidans*; as in Africa, though their extent probably does not exceed two square miles. Though the freshness of November had gone with the advent of the hot weather, it seems that February to June must be the best time to visit this beautiful place—the later the better.

This is one of the best potential national parks of India, provided that good access roads can be made, the forest village at Kanha removed or kept under stricter control and a few of the difficulties caused by its remoteness overcome.

4. *M y s o r e*. Bandipur Sanctuary, the 'sanctum sanctorum' of the Venugopal Wild Life Park, was visited twice by the writer during the Mysore Conference. It is probably unique in India as being the only sanctuary with numerous motorable roads—there are over 90 miles of them in an area of only 22 square miles. The 'bison' or gaur were to be seen in good numbers, and the writer was close to a herd of 34 of these fine beasts for a whole hour on elephant-back. The Kuruba trackers who locate the wild animals for visitors, thus saving considerable time, are a great asset to this sanctuary, which also contains wild elephant and sambar as well as chital. Tigers appear to have become very rare, and should be allowed to re-establish themselves.

This should become one of the premier national parks of India, especially if one or two small areas of forest could be cleared as 'view points', to enable visitors to obtain unobstructed views of the Nilgiri Hills—thus adding beautiful scenery to the attractions of the place.

5. *U t t a r P r a d e s h*. The Hailey National Park was visited from 6th to 15th April 1954. The natural beauty and vivid colour of this region in the foothills of the Himalayas actually exceeded expectations, even after reading the descriptions written by E. A. Smythies and F. W. Champion. The view northwards from the Dhikala Forest Rest House was very fine, especially to one coming from the plains. This is perhaps the best part of the Park, and it

occurred to the writer that the hills seen in this view, which are mostly in the Mandal Shooting Block, should obviously be included in the Park instead of being left outside it. If Dhikala is to be the show-place and 'centre' for visitors, it is reasonable to expect it to be well inside the Park and not just on the extreme northern boundary. The valley of the river Ramganga, moreover, with its fishing, *shisham*-covered islands and pleasant *maidans* could very advantageously be included in the Park. All shooting in this 'no-man's-land' should be strictly prohibited so that the wild life of the Dhikala area may become less shy and increase in numbers.

As at Kanha, one of the beauties of this place is the trees, growing naturally throughout the *maidans*. These consist of *sal*, *Bauhinia*, *kusum*, *dhak*, and so on. This natural beauty is one which cannot be equalled by any regular planting of trees in avenues or lines by the hand of man.

One of the greatest assets of the Park is the Ramganga, which is not only a very beautiful river but also provides good fishing for sportsmen from February to May.

The chital I found to be very shy, especially in the region of Dhikala—the show-place of the area. At Boksar they were slightly less shy, and still less so at Paterpani. But even at this latter place they were far more timid than at Kanha Sanctuary. The forest was full of wild life—tiger, sambar, barking deer, elephant, peafowl, junglefowl and others; and of these the tiger is the greatest asset.

It would considerably improve the Park as a sanctuary for wild life if all felling of trees and such operations by contractors, as well as all grazing by domestic cattle, were to be prohibited in the immediate vicinity of the places to which visitors will go, such as Dhikala, Boksar, Paterpani, Sarapduli, Bijrani, etc. If Dhikala is to be the main centre of the Park, then all forest exploitation and undesirable human activity within a radius of at least two miles should be prohibited, thus providing the 'inner sanctuary' recommended at the Mysore Conference.

It is a great drawback to this Park that it falls under the control of two different Divisional Forest Officers, those of Kalagarh in the west and Ramnagar in the east. Visitors, moreover, are at present obliged to apply unnecessarily to two different officers for admission. Obviously the Park would be much more effectively controlled and regulated if it could be made into one administrative unit.

Although this wild and remote but very beautiful national park was created as far back as 1935, no steps appear to have been taken to publicise it or open it up for visitors. The Park is accessible only in the dry months from November to 15th June, for during the monsoon months it has to be totally evacuated—not even a forest guard remains there. The construction of so many roads and bridges for access to the Park and for driving within it during the monsoon would be a formidable task and one involving great expense.

But it should not be difficult to open up this beautiful spot, at least for the serious type of visitor, during the dry season. Accommodation and the other amenities should be provided for the public

and for tourists from abroad to attract them, so that they can enjoy the fine scenery, colourful trees, river fishing and above all India's most spectacular wild creature—the tiger.

THE PLANTING OF TREES, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF WILD LIFE FROM OUTSIDE

1. The Planting of Trees

As a national park (or a good wild life sanctuary) is 'An area dedicated . . . to conserve the scenery and natural . . . objects', the planting of trees and shrubs in national parks should be avoided as far as possible. The beauty in the trees on the *maidans* of the Hailey Park and Kanha Sanctuary lies in their wildness and naturalness. Any kind of regular planting of trees in lines or plots immediately reveals the hand of man; it is the beauties of nature, not the works of man, that are looked for in a sanctuary or national park. Forest plantations of trees could be planted along the edges of a sanctuary, as a demarcation of a boundary and as a protection against poachers: this has been tried out with success at Laokhowa in Assam. But in the interior of a sanctuary or national park visitors expect to see and enjoy the natural beauties and wild life in its natural environment, with as little interference by man as possible.

It might, however, in certain cases be advantageous and beneficial to plant a few trees near Forest Rest Houses, hotels, along roadsides or in certain treeless *maidans* in order to improve the scenery and provide shade and shelter for wild life and for man. But in such cases the trees should be planted at random and haphazardly, so as to look as though they were growing naturally. Any kind of straight lines or squares or regular intervals would be quite out of place, and would have the disadvantage of making the place look more like zoological park or municipal park than a wild life sanctuary or national park.

Furthermore, if and when any trees or plants are to be planted in a sanctuary or national park they should be of the indigenous and local species, and never of other species brought in from outside. For the main function of sanctuaries and national parks is to conserve the country's indigenous flora and fauna in their unspoiled state. There is nothing which could spoil a wild life sanctuary or national park in India so much as the planting of, say, mango or blue gum trees in a place where no such trees exist in their wild state.

In the event of new roads being constructed in a sanctuary or national park, advantage should always be taken of the ground so that good views of wild life on both sides can be obtained. Furthermore, such roads should never be straight: winding roads have the advantage of not only being more natural but also they act as a check on possible fast driving by inconsiderate motorists.

2. The Introduction of Wild Life from Outside into a sanctuary or national park is also a thing to be rigidly guarded against, unless in the most exceptional circumstances and under expert advice. In any case the introduction of foreign or exotic species

is a most dangerous and unnecessary thing, in all cases to be avoided. For in a sanctuary or national park the emphasis is always on the indigenous fauna. A national park in India would not be truly national in character if it held, say, zebra or giraffe imported from Africa.

But the re-introduction into a sanctuary or national park of a mammal or bird, etc. which has previously existed in that region but which has become extinct, would not only be a beneficial action but also a laudable one—provided it is done on the advice of expert naturalists. It is hoped, for example, that the rare Indian lion of Saurashtra can be re-introduced into some sanctuary or national park of some other State in India, within its former range and under suitable conditions of environment.

GRAZING OF DOMESTIC CATTLE

With regard to this problem, the Indian Board for Wild Life has made the following recommendation: 'Whereas cattle-borne diseases are spread in such sanctuaries by domestic cattle from the surrounding areas, the Central Board for Wild Life recommends that buffer belts of sufficient width be declared around all sanctuaries within which no shooting, other than that required for legitimate crop protection, will be permitted, and within which no professional graziers will be allowed to establish their cattle-pens. Whereas many preventable cattle-borne diseases among herbivorous wild animals result from contact with infected domestic cattle in the neighbourhood of "forests", the Central Board for Wild Life recommends that State Governments be requested to inoculate systematically and periodically domestic cattle in the neighbourhood of national parks, sanctuaries and reserves where and when necessary.'—Mysore Resolutions Nos. 19 and 20.

It cannot be over-emphasised that the grazing of domestic cattle in and near sanctuaries and national parks is not only detrimental to the grazing potential of the area, but is also a positive danger on account of diseases. There are innumerable cases of valuable wild animals dying wholesale from epidemics spread by domestic cattle and buffaloes. In Kaziranga Sanctuary of Assam, for example, many rhino died in 1944 and in 1947, presumably from anthrax; and some wild buffalo died in 1952 from rinderpest, and in 1953 from haemorrhagic septicemia. As many as 150 wild elephants are believed to have died in the Reserved Forests of the North Cachar Hills in Assam in 1949 from anthrax. The 'Indian bison' or gaur have become scarce in many places in north-east India and south India due to cattle-borne diseases.

In the Hailey National Park, moreover, I was informed that there were severe outbreaks of rinderpest in 1942 and 1947, in which countless chital are reported to have perished, and probably hog deer, barking deer and sambar as well.

The difficulties of the problem of how to prevent graziers from entering an area where they have done so for many years are fully realized; but all wild life conservationists without any exception



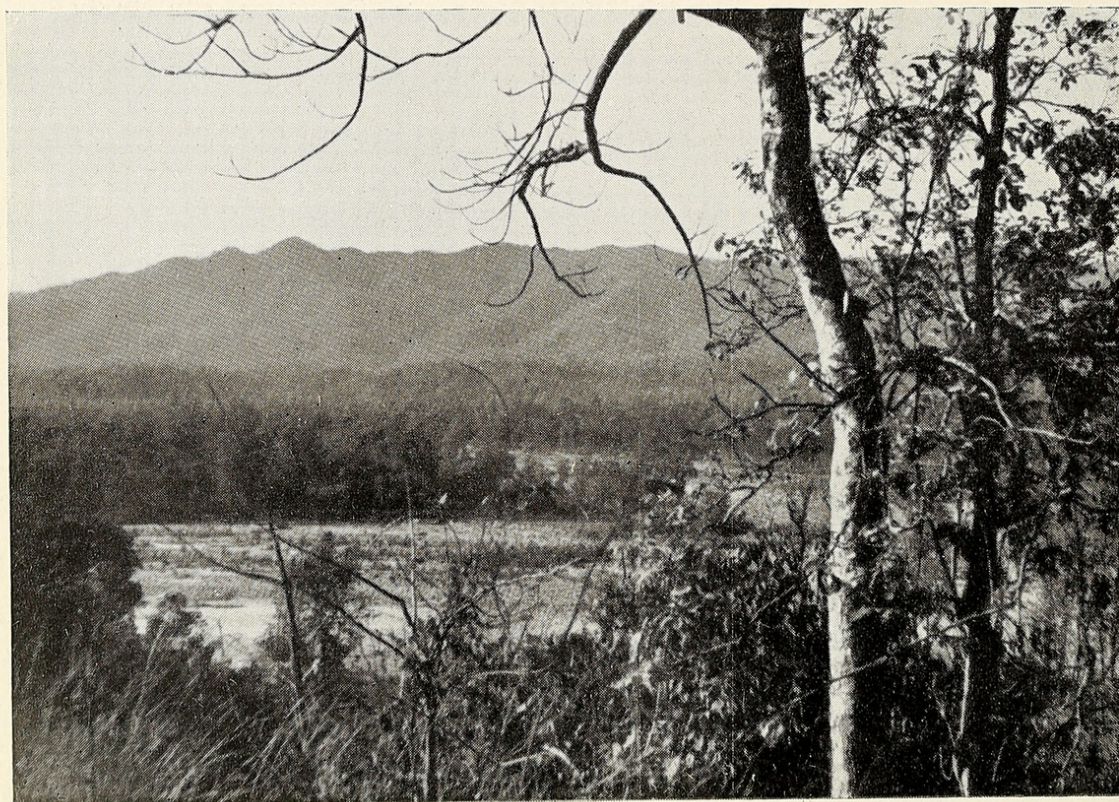
A herd of Gaur (*Bibos gaurus*). Bandipur Wild Life Sanctuary,
Mysore



Young bull Gaur, Bandipur Sanctuary, Mysore
(Photos : E. P. Gee)



Forest Rest House, Dhikala. Hailey National Park, Uttar Pradesh



View across Ramganga River from above rest house.
Himalayan foothills in distance

(Photos : E. P. Gee)

throughout the world are agreed that the grazing of domestic animals inside a sanctuary or national park should be prevented at all costs, and grazing in the surrounding areas reduced to a minimum. In any case all cattle in or near a sanctuary or national park should be regularly inoculated, after which no further cattle should be admitted into the area.

There is a further reason why such grazing by domestic cattle should be avoided: the very presence of domestic animals at the centre or show-place of a sanctuary, where a visitor expects to see wild life, is a veritable eyesore. It is sufficient to spoil the natural beauty of any place, thus rendering anybody's visit a waste of time and money.

Such visitors often travel great distances at great expense in order to see a country's wild life in its natural habitat; and to imagine their surprise, disappointment and revulsion at seeing domestic cattle in such places should not be difficult.

From every point of view, therefore, domestic animals should never, under any circumstances, be allowed at the 'centres' or show-places of a sanctuary or national park, should be prevented from entering the fringes, and reduced as far as possible in the buffer belts and surrounding areas.

ADMINISTRATION IN GENERAL

There is a tendency in some parts of India to 'lay on' really good preparations when a very important person is due to visit a wild life sanctuary or national park; while at other times, when nobody 'of importance' is due to come, the administration of the place is on vastly different level. The writer has visited several wild life centres in several States of India in the company of v.i.p.s, and then at other times by himself as an ordinary member of the public, and the standard of administration has been found to be startlingly different.

Even the Conservators and Deputy Conservators of the Forest Department usually arrange their tours well in advance, so that the forest staff in charge have ample time to 'prepare' the place. At other times, as it has been found by the writer, there are many occurrences,—commissions and omissions which go undetected—unless reported by non-officials to higher authority.

While it is admitted that v.i.p.s are usually extremely busy men, and that there should be no hitch or delay in the preparations for their visit to a place, it is surely wrong that they should see a place entirely different from what it really is. The actual standard of maintenance of a sanctuary or national park, i.e. the prevention of grazing, trespassing, poaching and the condition of roads, bridges, bungalows, etc. should be of a fixed uniform standard throughout the year, instead of the standard being extremely high during the visit of the v.i.p. or Conservator, and sometimes extremely low at other times. If a place were to be maintained at a uniform level throughout the year, as far as is consistent with the provision of staff and funds, then all visitors, both v.i.p. and ordinary members

of the public, would see and enjoy it equally, as it really is and under conditions which one would expect to find in a true democracy.

OCCASIONAL SHOOTING BY PRIVILEGED PERSONS

It has sometimes in the past been the practice in certain sanctuaries in India for v.i.p.s or senior officers of the Forest Department to shoot, say, a deer 'for the pot'. By all the principles and laws of wild life conservation this is a mistake of the greatest magnitude. In the Mysore Resolution No. 6 (b) Note 1, it is clearly stated that: 'The expression "wild life sanctuary" shall denote an area constituted by the competent authority in which killing, hunting, shooting or capturing of any species of bird or animal is prohibited except by or under the control of the highest authority in the department responsible for the management of the sanctuary'.

The real reason for this strict rule is not far to seek. It is not because there will be any upset in the balance of nature by the shooting of one chital or such animal, but because by shooting a mammal or bird in a sanctuary the very principle of sanctity is violated and the rules of a sanctuary broken by a highly placed person, while the lower grade forest staff are supposed to obey the rules and enforce them against poachers.

Provision is made in the above quoted Resolution for 'the highest authority in the department responsible for the management of the sanctuary' to exercise control over 'elements adverse to the maintenance of wild life including destruction of vermin and predators'—Mysore Resolution No. 6 (b), Note 3. Under this clause the 'highest authority' could authorise reduction in the numbers of hoofed animals or carnivora if considered advisable, to be done departmentally under strict supervision, and not by any individual at random.

Obviously if, say, a Conservator shot a chital in a sanctuary for his dinner, then in his absence the D.F.O. would feel entitled to do the same; and similarly the R.O., the B.O. and finally the newest-enrolled Forest Guard or Game Watcher would find it hard to resist the temptation. And how would the poachers react to all this?

It is realized that forest officers, in Uttar Pradesh for example, spend long periods on tour in camps in the forest, far away from their homes and the amenities of bazaars and shops. But in such cases, the shooting of a deer or a bird 'for the pot' should invariably be done in an adjacent shooting block, and under no circumstances whatever inside the boundaries of a sanctuary or national park.

It is not the intention of the writer to attempt to advocate the ultra-strict and highly idealistic rules and academic principles of such institutions as the Swiss National Park or the Parc National Albert in the Belgian Congo, for as Keith Caldwell has rightly pointed out, 'one of the dangers to wild life is the out-and-out protectionist'. Rather the writer advocates for India a sound broadminded policy in regard to her sanctuaries and national parks.

It should be emphasised that, in order to enforce the rules of a sanctuary and to prevent all illegal shooting, and in order to ensure



Gee, E P . 1955. "The Management of India's Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks II." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 52, 717–734.

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