



INDIA'S WILD LIFE

THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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not slothful. It has an uncertain, rough temper and may attack on little or no provocation, inflicting terrible wounds on head and face with its long talons. A female bear with cubs is specially dangerous, and cases of severe mauling are not uncommon.

The sloth bear has a poor sense of smell or sight. It is, therefore, not difficult to approach it within a short distance when one can enjoy its strange antics and gambols. It is, however, a beast of great vitality. It can climb any tree, though not as fast as a panther.

Fruits of various kinds and fleshy flowers of trees, such as the *mohwa*, are the chief food of the sloth bear. It is also very fond of ants, beetles and other insects, besides honey. Without caring for the stings of either ants and bees, it would lick up the insects with its long tongue.

A big male will weigh about 260 pounds and a female about 130 to 160 pounds. This bear is by no means so plentiful as in former years.

VIII. Rhinoceroses

28. *The Great Indian Rhinoceros*

Until 1850, the rhino was common in the Punjab and the Rajmahal hills in Bengal. It was found in the Sundarbans at the turn of the century, but is no longer found anywhere else in Bengal or Assam, except the swampy localities in the sub-montane tracts there. Its natural habitat is the dense grass-jungles, where it lives and moves about like a rabbit in a corn-field.

It is a huge, clumsily-built animal. It has a long, boat-shaped, large head, short and thick legs and skin of great

thickness which is divided into great shields by heavy folds. It has ears like rabbits, though bigger in size. The eyes are small and pig-like. The Indian rhinoceros has a single horn about 9 inches long.

This animal is very fond of a mud bath, for which it has plenty of scope in its favourite haunts in the neighbourhood of swamps. Like the elephant, it is also long-lived, as many as 100 years.

If driven into the open, the rhino stands for a few seconds, shakes its ears while making up its mind which side to run. It can be dangerous and when badly roused attacks even an elephant, making a sweeping cut in its leg by its lower tusks in much the same way as a boar rips up a horse.

IX. Elephants

29. *The Indian Elephant*

Wild elephants are found in the forests of the Western Ghats from Belgaum to the south end of Kerala, Mysore and Coorg; parts of the districts of Coimbatore; the Nilgiri, Madura and Palni hills (South India); in the eastern part of Visakhapatnam district (Vizagapatam); and in considerable number in Orissa, east of the Mahanadi river. They also occur in the Terai of Uttar Pradesh and in the forests of Assam and Bengal.

Generally, the male elephant is about 9 feet high and the female smaller. Once a particularly large tusker killed in Garhwal carried tusks measuring 8 feet 9 inches and weighing about 160 pounds.

The elephant dislikes the sun. Thus, it keeps much to the denser parts of



The Himalayan black bear

The great Indian rhinoceros



sentially the same. It is to provide maximum protection for wild life. But there is one fundamental difference. A sanctuary is created by order of a competent authority. It may be the Chief Conservator of Forests, the Minister or the Government of the State. A national park, on the other hand, can be created, abolished, mutated or changed only by an Act of a State legislature.

Sanctuaries

Sanctuaries have already been provided for under the Indian Forest Act. Conservators can close shooting blocks for shorter or longer periods by declaring them as sanctuaries in States where the shooting block system exists. In other States like Assam and West Bengal, sanctuaries of a completely sacrosanct type have been in existence for over 25 years. In some of the former princely States, such as Travancore (Periyar), Mysore (Bandipur) and Junagadh (Gir) and in Patiala and Rajasthan, similar sanctuaries have been in existence for some time. At present, there are 72 sanctuaries covering an approximate area of 3,000 square miles in 19 States.

Some of the sanctuaries are as picturesque as they are varied in their wild life. The dry scrub Gir forest is the only home of the Indian lion. Groups of chital in the sylvan glades of the Kanha sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh afford a pleasing sight. The thick grass swamps of Kaziranga in Assam are the haunts of the great Indian rhinoceros.

Again, the magnificent Indian wild buffalo can be seen in the wide stream beds in the riverain forests of the

Manas sanctuary in Assam. The low mixed teak forests of Bandipur in Mysore are well known for bison and wild elephant. The high-level Periyar lake in Kerala has the most attractive setting for a game sanctuary. Here one sees animals from a boat when they come to the lake for a drink or bath or just for gambolling in the water. The Kashmir stag comes down in the winter into the confined valley of the Dachigam sanctuary near Srinagar.

A brief description of some of the main sanctuaries will be found interesting :

Rajaji Sanctuary

The southern slopes of the Siwalik hills, near Dehra Dun, had been a shooting preserve of the Moghul emperors and later of the British Governors-General of India. Mr. Rajagopalachari, the last Governor-General, agreed to a proposal to turn his shooting blocks into a sanctuary. This 100-square mile sanctuary is today an excellent game preserve. Seven years of protection have resulted in a remarkable increase in the animal population, not only of the sanctuary but of the entire section of the Siwalik range.

Rhino Sanctuaries

Special interest is attached to the Jaldapara sanctuary in West Bengal and the Kaziranga sanctuary in Assam. But for them, the Indian rhinoceros would be extinct.

Of these, the Jaldapara sanctuary, which is near the beautiful Toorsa river, is in the Dooars district of West

Bengal. It has an area of about 39 square miles containing rhinoceros, sambhur, swamp deer, barking deer, pig and other animals.

The nearest railway station is Hasmara, from where one has to motor out a mile or two and thereafter on an elephant into the sanctuary.

The Kaziranga sanctuary, on the other hand, is in Assam. It covers about 165-square mile on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. In 1906, there were only 12 rhinoceroses in the sanctuary. They have now multiplied to some 250. In addition, there are hog deer, pig, wild elephant, wild buffalo, swamp deer and sambhur. Various kinds of water birds, florican, partridge and many others can also be seen.

Kaziranga is easily approachable. It is about 60 miles from the Jorhat airport, which is a few hours' flight from Calcutta. One can also travel by rail to either of the two stations, which are only 30 and 50 miles away from the sanctuary.

Taroba Sanctuary

Another fine wild life sanctuary is at Taroba to the south of Nagpur. It is mainly a teak forest and is a good place for tiger.

Madumalai and Bandipur Sanctuaries

The 23-square mile Madumalai sanctuary in Madras and the contiguous 22-square mile Bandipur sanctuary in Mysore have fauna typical of the south. These sanctuaries are located along the Mysore-Ootacamund road, about 50 miles from Mysore. The elephant, bison, sambhur, chital, langur, bonnet monkey and peafowl are the better known of the many species found here.

Periyar Sanctuary

One of the most beautiful sanctuaries in the country is in Kerala. It is the 260-square mile Periyar reserve. This sanctuary is of a different kind from any other. It comprises a river valley which was dammed many years ago to form a picturesque lake at an altitude of about 3,000 feet. All around are well-forested green hills. Round the lake are narrow creeks and inlets where roam about wild elephant, bison, sambhur and other animals. This sanctuary is, however, most famous for wild elephants.

North Kamrup Sanctuary

This sanctuary is on the Monas in Assam. One can see here rhino, wild elephant, wild buffalo, hog deer, pelicans and many other water birds.

Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary

This 21-square mile sanctuary near Bharatpur is famous for birds. Around a lake countless water birds breed from July to October, while vast numbers of migratory ducks and other birds visit this place in the cold weather months.

Vedanthangal Sanctuary

This is another famous bird sanctuary. It is about 54 miles from Madras. In the sanctuary, the birds breed from September to March.

Seringapatam Sanctuary

Yet another beautiful bird sanctuary is located at Seringapatam, a little distance from the city of Mysore. Here nesting and feeding birds are found.

Gir Forest

The Gir forest in the erstwhile State of Saurashtra is the home for

ELEPHANTS

152	The Indian Elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>	Hathi (male) Hathni (female)	Assam, Bengal, U.P. and Mysore
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HORSES AND RHINOCEROSES

153	The Great One-horned Rhinoceros	<i>Rhinoceros sondaicus</i>	<i>Gainda</i> Rhinoceros	Restricted to Assam plains, but moves up to foothills
154	The Indian Wild Ass	<i>Equus onager indicus</i>	<i>Ghor-khn</i>	The desert of the Rani of Kutch and parts of the desert zone of North-west India
155	The Smaller One-horned Rhinoceros	<i>Rhinoceros sondaicus</i>	<i>Gainda</i> , or Javan Rhinoceros	Occurred in Bengal Believed extinct

156	The Sumartum Two-horned Rhinoceros	<i>Rhinoceros sumatrensis</i>	Do.,	Occurred in Assam. Believed extinct.
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OTHERS

157	Nilgai or Blue Bull	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	<i>Nilgai</i>	Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Patiala and from the base of the Himalayas to Mysore. It does not occur in Eastern Bengal, Assam or Malabar coast.
158	The Indian Pangolin	<i>Manis crassicandata</i>	Bajra Kit or Scaly Ant-eater	Plains and slopes of hills of India and south of the Himalayas
159	The Chinese Pangolin	<i>Marnis aurita</i>	..	Assam

APPENDIX III

List of National Parks and Sanctuaries in India

State	Name of Park or Sanc- tuary	Location	Area
I	2	3	4
1. Jammu and Kashmir	Game Sanctuaries (three) Game Sanctuaries (three)	Kashmir Province Jammu Province	..
2. Punjab	(i) Game Sanctuaries (eleven) (ii) Game Sanctuaries	District Kandaghat; also other reserved forests	..
3. Uttar Pradesh	(i) Hailey National Park (ii) Rajaji Sanctuary (iii) Kansrau Sanctuary (iv) Nanda Devi Sanctu- tuary	Districts Garhwal and Naini Tal Siwaliks (Saharanpur Division) Dehra Dun Forest Division Kumaon Circle	200 sq. miles approx. 125 sq. miles
4. West Bengal	Jaldapara Sanctuary	Divisions of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Boxa	..
5. Assam	(i) Monas or North Kam- rup Wild Life Sanc- tuary (1905) (ii) Sonai Rupai Sanc- tuary (1934) (iii) Pabha (Milroy) Sanctuary (1941) (iv) Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary (1908) (v) Orang Wild Life Reserve (1915) (vi) Umtee Sanctuary (vii) Sanctuary for Rhino (viii) Reserve for Rhino (ix) Tirap Frontier Tract	Bhutan foothills in Kamrup District Foot of the Aka hills, Balipara, within the Charaduar forest re- serve North Lakhimpur Along Assam South Trunk Road Mangaldoi to Tezpur Khasi and Jaintia hills Maktaeogaon and Maula blocks of the Ripu Reserve in Goalpara West Division Laokhowa Reserve N.E. border of Assam	105 sq. miles 85 sq. miles 18 sq. miles 165 sq. miles 24 sq. miles 26 sq. miles ..
6. Madhya Pradesh	(i) Tairoba Game and National Park Reserve (ii) Bori Game Reserve (iii) Kanha National Park	North Chanda Division Hoshangabad Division Mandla Division

APPENDIX IV

Table showing the best months of the year for visiting sanctuaries.

Month	North - East		North Him. West		Cen- tral		Southern			
	Kazi- ranga	North Jalda- Kam- rup	Hailey- para	Kash- mir	Gir Forest	Keola- deo	Kantha Ghana	Ban- dipur	Mudu- malai	Peri- Lake
January	.	.	4	5	4	3	0	4	3	3
February	.	.	5	5	5	4	0	4	3	4
March	.	.	5	5	5	5	1	4	4	4
April	.	.	4	3	5	5	4	5	5	5
May	.	.	2	2	2	4	5	5	5	5
June	.	.	1	0	0	0	5	3	4	4
July	.	.	1	0	0	0	5	1	5	3
August	.	.	1	0	0	0	5	3	4	2
September	.	.	1	0	0	0	5	0	3	3
October	.	.	2	0	0	0	4	2	3	2
November	.	.	3	3	2	0	2	3	3	3
December	.	.	4	5	3	2	0	4	3	4

Key:

- 5 Best time of all
- 4 Nearly as good
- 3 All right, but less good
- 2 Possible, but not fully recommended
- 1 Just possible at times, not recommended
- 0 Impossible, or not allowed, or closed.

NOTE: The above table is based on information supplied by persons acquainted with local conditions. The main factors taken into account are the weather, condition of the roads and the amount of vegetation. When certain access roads are improved, some changes may be made in the figures, which in any case are only approximate.