

**Editor** : Bittu Sahgal

**Assistant Editors** : Shyla Boga, Gita Vasudevan,  
Sunjoy Monga

**Art Director** : Gulam Hussain

**Consultant** : T. Parameshwar

**Manuscripts and  
Research** : Royina Grewal

**Contributing photographers**: John Edwards,  
Ashish Chandola, Dr. Tej Kumar Shrestha,  
Joanna Van Gruisen, Devendra Basnet, Charles  
McDougal, Sunjoy Monga, D.L. Golobitsh,  
Isaac Kehimkar, Ajay Desai, Dr. Vijay  
Tuljapurkar, Dr. Michael J. B. Green, Oswald.

**Photo credits**: Cover—Joanna Van Gruisen,  
Commentary—Bittu Sahgal, L.I.C.—T.N.A.  
Perumal, I.D.I.—Aditya Arya, Rallis—Bala Iyer.

**Correspondents**: Kailash Sankhala, 21 Dhuleshwar  
Garden, Jaipur 302 001. Tel: 63933.

Kunal Verma, 1322 Arun Vihar (AWHO), Sector-37,  
Noida (U.P.) 201 301. ph: 392143.

Shabbir Malik, 1 Kinner Apartment, Vijay Park,  
Navrangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009. Tel: 445068/448699.

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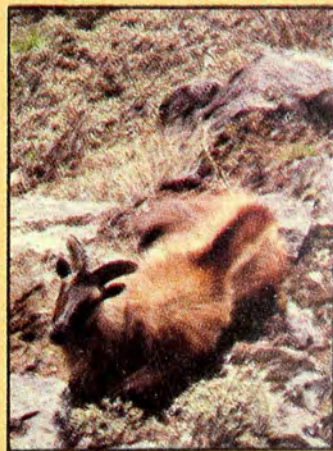
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# NEPAL

by Dr. Tej Kumar Shrestha





Ashish Chandola



Charles McDougal



Charles McDougal

The Himalayan newt (facing page), photographed in eastern Nepal, is a curious amphibian with a compact head and body, and a long, eel-like, compressed tail. Its body is dark brown with a dash of yellow and orange at the base of its tail and fingertips. Newts are amongst the most aquatic of amphibians and their physiques are closely adapted to their habitat in water. They have retained their external gills and can live out of water for as long as two months. 1. The hog deer has probably been called so because of its squat, pig-like appearance and movements. While running, it keeps its head bowed and moves without that bounding gait so characteristic of deer. This relative of the chital is a solitary animal that favours grass jungles and plains, wherever the grass is not too high. Persecution has made the wary animal almost entirely nocturnal in many parts of its range. 2. An adult gaur in the forests of Chitwan. Though gaurs move down to lower levels, in quest of pasture, they are essentially hill animals, keeping to deep forests. Fairly timid by nature, a wounded or provoked gaur can, however, be dangerous. In Nepal, gaurs inhabit the *sal* forests of the terai, mostly in the foothills of the Churia and Bhabhar hills of the central lowlands. 3. A rhinoceros enjoys a wallow in water fringed with tall grass. Among the various animals found in Nepal, the one-horned rhinoceros occupies a special place, as its population is limited only to Nepal and India. Once abundant in Nepal, they are confined to isolated pockets in the Nepalese terai. After Kaziranga, the Royal Chitwan Park has the largest number of these animals.



**T**he orient meets the Palaearctic. Terai flood-plains contrast sharply with dizzy mountain summits, and densely clothed tropical valleys gradually give in to treeless, flower-studded alpine meadows. Awesome mountain ridges with desolate expanses of rock and snow, slope down into deep gorges and narrow twisting rivers. That is Nepal. A combination of nature's delicate elegance and savage grandeur. Home to more than 300 species of mammals, 800 birds, 150 reptiles and amphibians and 125 fish, and refuge to a great many of Asia's endangered animals, such as the tiger, snow leopard, swamp deer, Gangetic dolphin and spiny babbler. Cradled in the heart of the vast Himalayas, with India to its south and west and the Tibetan region of China to its north, the kingdom of Nepal ex-

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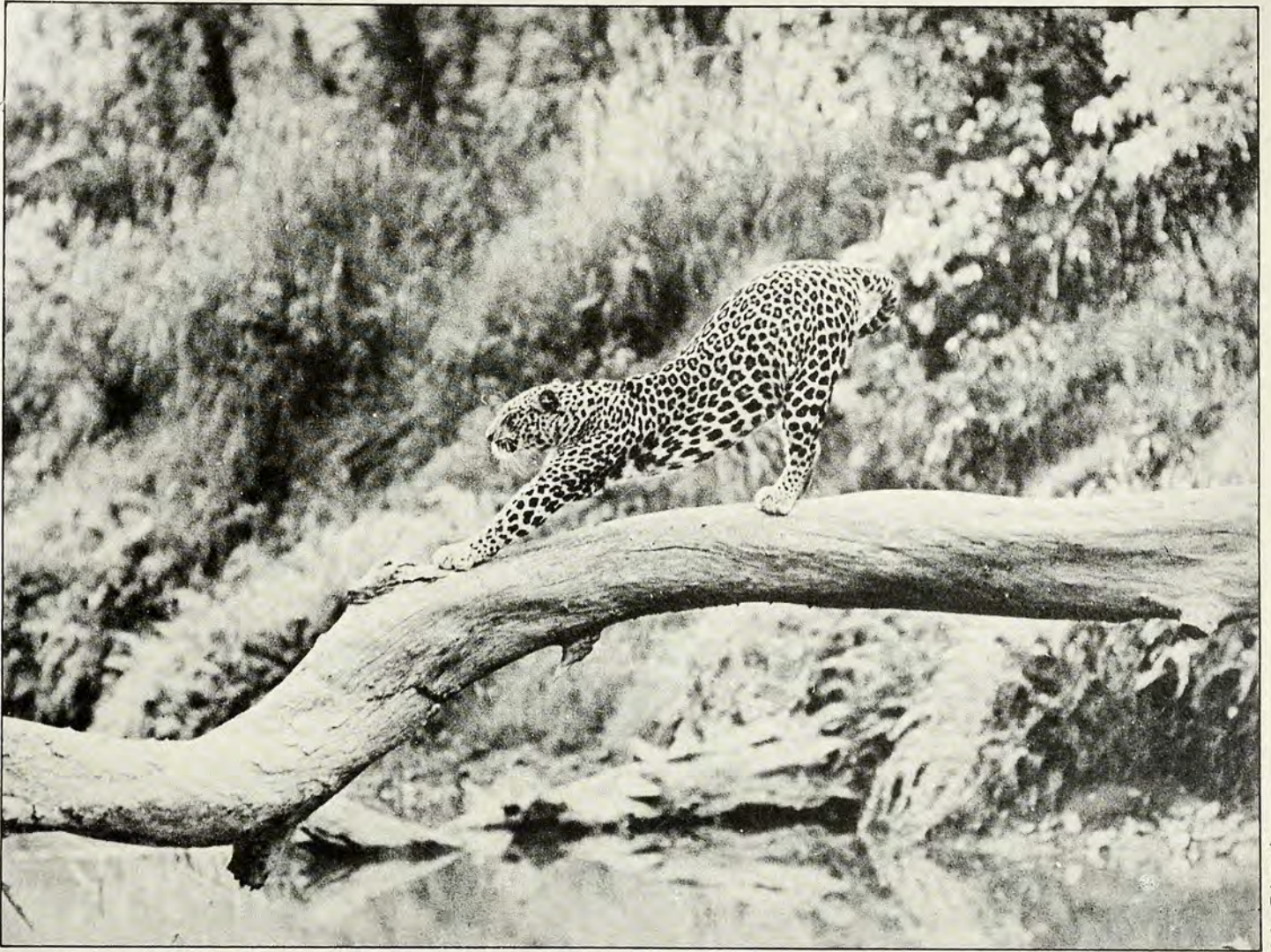
Also known as the muntjac, this little deer keeps to the wooded hills, where it is not very easily spotted. Its call is a distinctive sound, like the barking of a dog.

tends roughly over 500 miles east to west and 90-150 miles north to south. Approximately 75 per cent of its terrain is mountainous, the only flat land being a lowland belt along the southern border, called the terai.

Lying as it does between two major zoogeographic regions, the Palaearctic in the north and the oriental in the south, the fauna of highland Nepal is typically Palaearctic, that of the midlands strictly Indo-Chinese while lowland Nepal is oriental.

Early explorers and hunters who ventured into the country spun fantastic stories on the diverse wildlife of this small kingdom. They spoke of a culture where conservation was a natural part of the people's lives, where controlled hunting was a sport reserved for the Royal family and the Ranas, and religious sentiment combined to keep the catchment areas of many of the sub-continent's rivers alive—just as nature intended them to be. Nepalese





John Edwards

epics, which describe several real and mythical animals, bear testimony to man's increasing fascination with the animal world. Engravings on the walls of ancient shrines, wood carvings, stone sculptures and bronzes depict the diversity of the region's natural splendour—a diversity which can still be found today.

**O**f the many interesting animals in Nepal, one which seems symbolic of the land is the elusive and breathtakingly beautiful *him-chituwa*, or the snow leopard. This animal's habits are relatively unknown, though studies are being conducted to throw some light on its behaviour. The snow leopard is usually found in rocky areas above the tree line. A nocturnal hunter, it survives on wild sheep and goats, though rodents and birds are also included in its diet. Snow leopards often establish their territories close to human settlements, relying on domestic stock when food

The common leopard is the most widespread of the three leopard species found in Nepal. An excellent tree climber, the animal often frequents the vicinity of villages and the forests adjoining the Kathmandu valley.

is scarce, though even at the best of times food is never plentiful in this imposing, yet barren, terrain.

Sharing the habitat of the snow leopard is another large mammal—the brown bear. Though it feeds on grass and roots, a brown bear is not averse to eating marmots and rodents, and is known to even kill domestic sheep and goats. Called the *dub* in Nepali, this animal has often been sighted by mountaineering expeditions. In fact, many believe that the myth of the yeti originated from brown bear sightings, more so from their large tracks—the effect of melting snow enlarging the size of the spoor!

Ashish Chandola



Long-nosed green tree snake



Paradise flycatcher male on its nest

Ashish Chandola

Joanna Van Gruisen



Black and yellow grosbeak

Joanna Van Gruisen

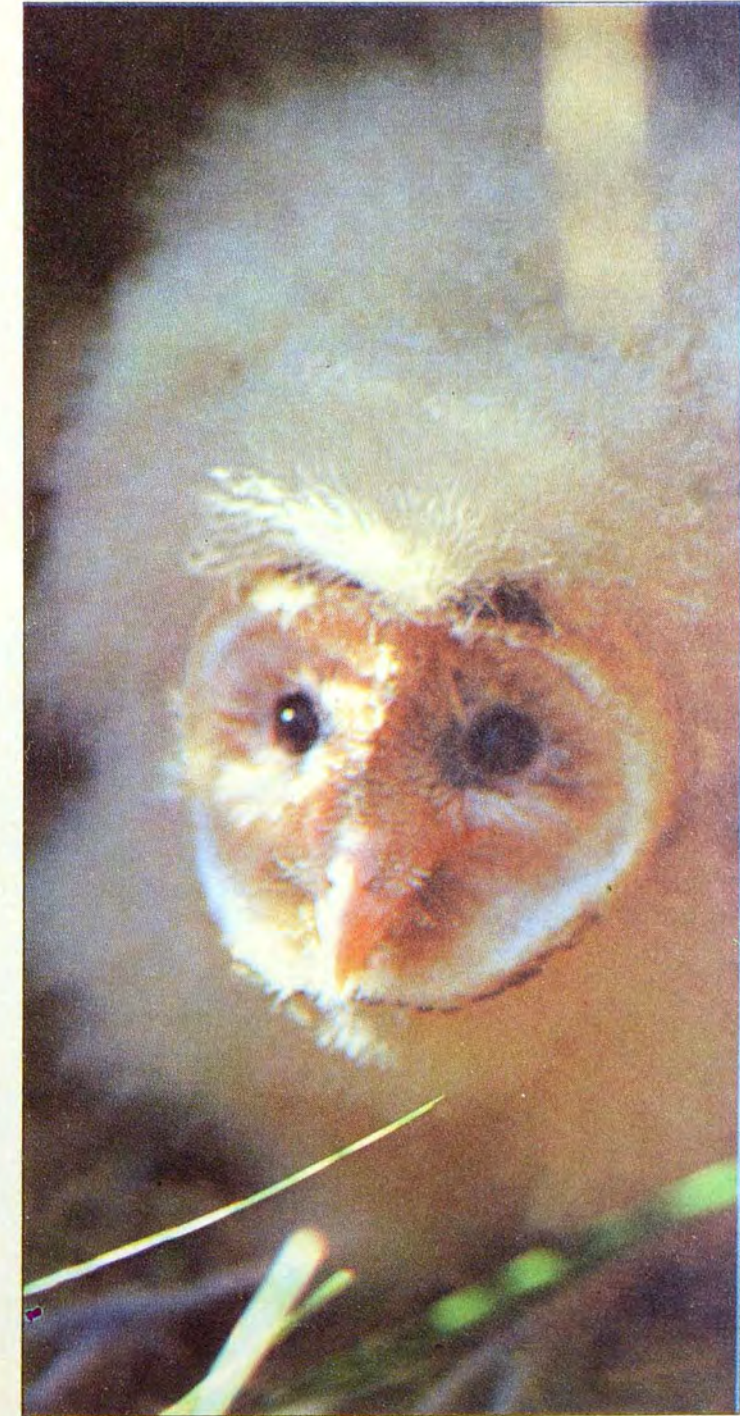


Monal digging for potatoes



Ashish Chandola

White-browed fantail flycatcher feeding its young



Ashish Chandola

Grass owl

While tales of brown bears and yetis keep many mountain children close to their mothers, the red panda has the opposite effect because of its 'teddy bear' looks. Its home is in the lower temperate forests, and though once a common animal in these regions, today it is one of the country's most endangered species. The red panda has the endearing habit of sleeping among the top-most branches of a tree with its tail wrapped around its head. It descends to the ground in the evenings to feed on roots, eggs and insects.

The scaly anteater or the pangolin, locally known as *salak*, is a slow, shy and sober animal that besides possessing hair, also sports scales—an unusual mammalian

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Tigers are found only in the terai in Nepal, where there are presumed to be about 200 animals.

feature. Found in the sub-tropical and deciduous forests of central Nepal, pangolins have small, pointed heads, narrow mouths and small eyes and ears. Their forefeet are longer than their hind ones, and when threatened, pangolins curl themselves up into round hard balls to protect their soft undersides. It is a common belief amongst certain tribes of Nepal, that pangolin scales prevent rheumatic fever and that its flesh possesses aphrodisiacal qualities!

Yet another animal plagued on account of mythical medicinal folklore, is the Indian one-horned rhinoceros. Once abundant, not only in Nepal, but also in the entire Gangetic delta, rhinos have now been confined to isolated pockets in Assam and the Nepalese terai. After Kaziranga in Assam, Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park has the largest population of these relics of a bygone age.





Sunjoy Monga

Not only is its horn deemed to have peculiar medicinal qualities, but almost every part of a rhino's anatomy is sought after, and hence they become targets for poachers.

The terai is home to a wide diversity of ungulates. Deer species are fairly well represented, with chital, hog deer, sambar muntjac and swamp deer. The last named is perhaps the most endangered of the lot, tenaciously surviving in Suklaphanta and Karnali. Not only are these animals an important prey species of the tiger and the leopard, but they are among the most graceful and attractive of all animals. The musk deer is the only representative of the deer family found in the higher regions of the country. Other large ungulates, such as the yak, migrate to the snow-free southern slopes. Ibex and tahr are often seen scaling the high ridges of the mountains. Bharal favour grassy slopes, while the nayan and the Tibetan sheep, which is the largest of all wild sheep, can be found fre-

The bharal or blue sheep lives high in the Himalayas, being particularly common in summer between the tree line and the snow line. An intermediate between sheep and goats, the bharal is usually difficult to locate in the rugged, open terrain.

quenting the edge of the snow line, in spring.

The temperate and alpine highland regions of Nepal are of particular ecological interest and importance, as they harbour a large number of interesting mammals, amongst them the active Himalayan pika, which lives amongst the rocks, making little caches of hay to use during the lean winter months. Another common species is the yellow-throated marten which prefers to spend its winters hibernating.

I once had the opportunity of spending two weeks along the Indo-Nepalese border, at the edge of the river Mahakali, and the one thing that struck me most was the silence of

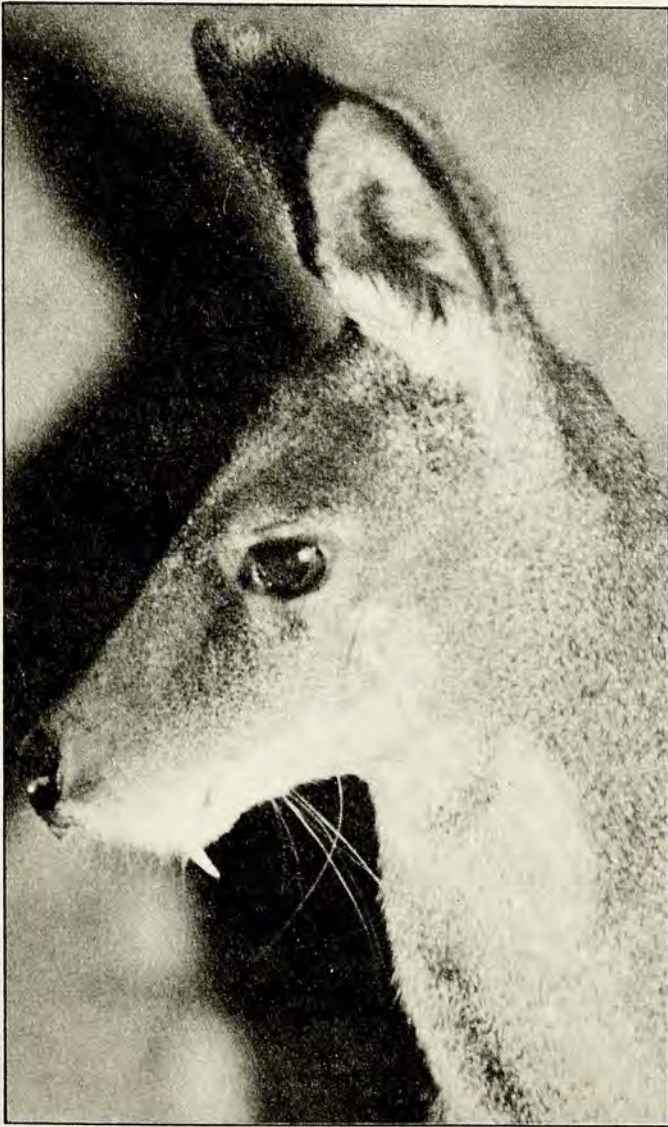
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# NEPAL

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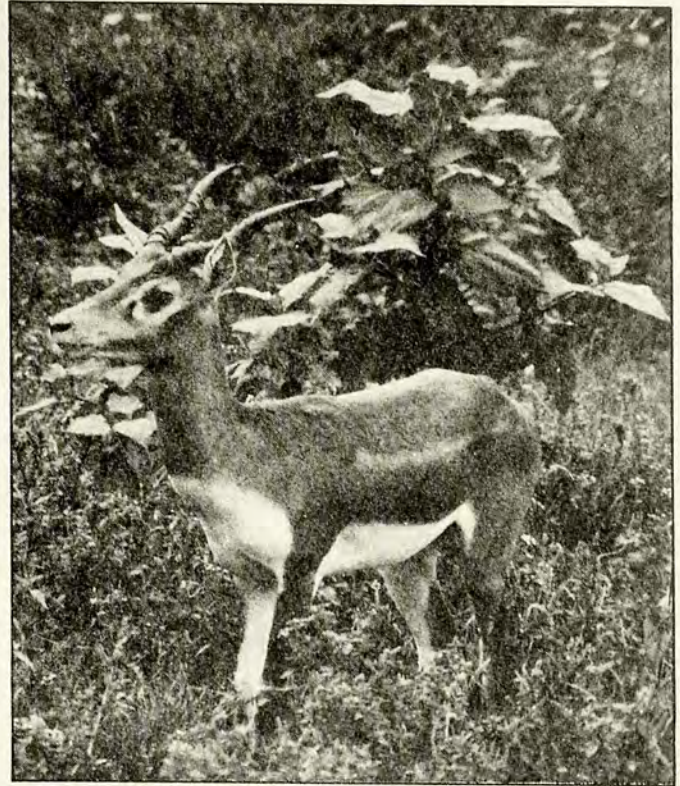
the jungle, broken only occasionally by the sounds of babblers, hornbills and monkeys. In the dense jungle of Suklaphanta, the fog does not lift until noon, and the mornings present a delightful sight of liana-draped trees, water dripping from the leaf canopy and the unforgettable screech of parakeets. The Rani Tal lake, in Suklaphanta, serves as a refuge to a great number of water fowl and wetland birds.

Nepal forms an avian highway for a large number of migratory birds. Over eight hundred bird species have been recorded,



Tej Kumar Shrestha

The only representative of the deer family in the higher mountains of Nepal, the rare musk deer is seen singly or in pairs. Projecting from the mouth are its greatly enlarged upper canines, indicating that it is a male.



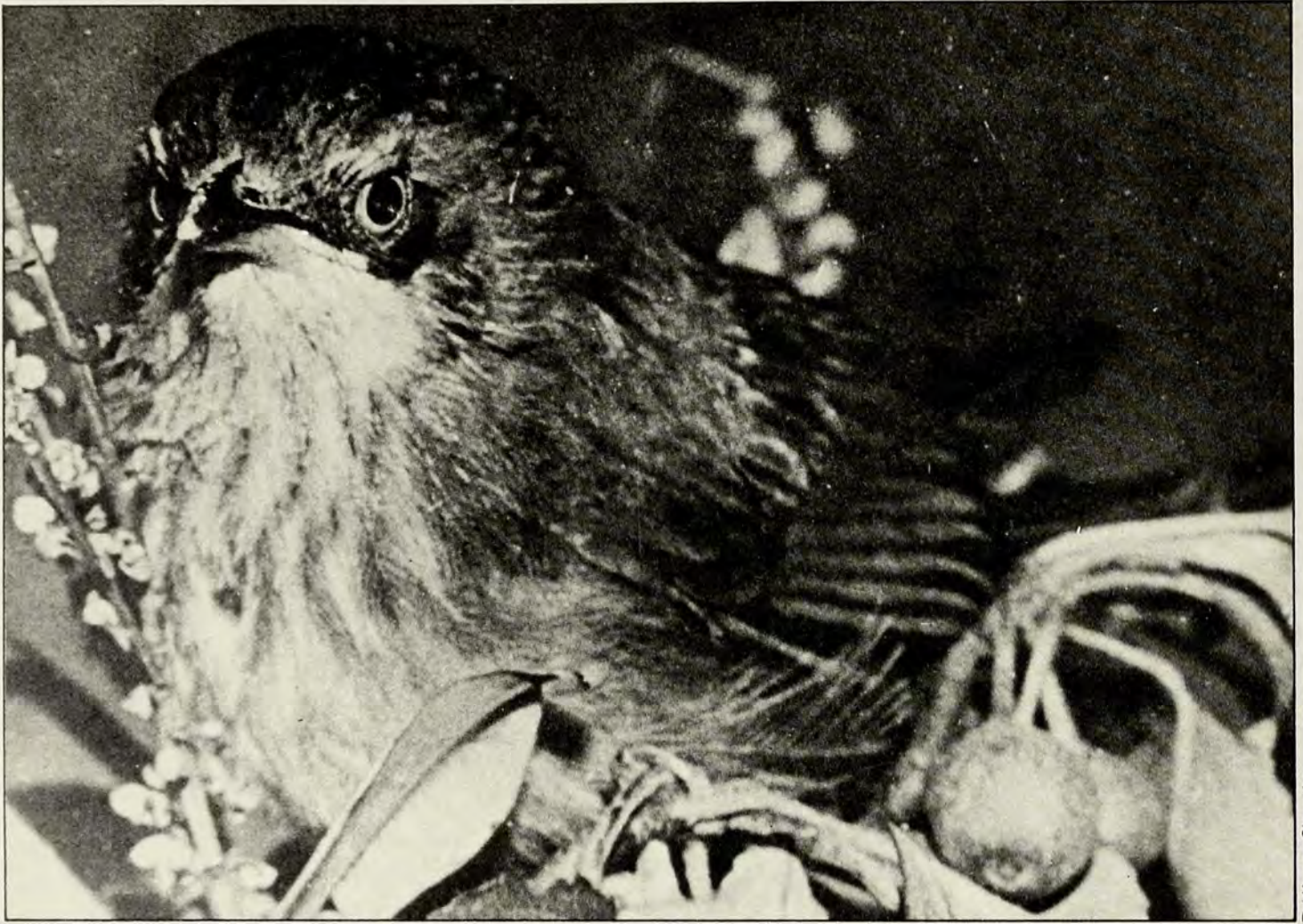
Tej Kumar Shrestha

The blackbuck is considered sacred because it is regarded as the vehicle of the moon. Commonly called *Krishna sar* in Nepal, these beautiful antelopes inhabit the plains and open forests of the Banke and Bardia districts of western Nepal. Excessive poaching has drastically reduced Nepal's blackbuck population.

ranging in size from the huge lammergeier to the thumb-sized flowerpecker. And, in colour, from brilliant Himalayan pheasants to dull-coloured babblers and warblers. The monal, the national bird of Nepal, is widely distributed over most of the national parks and reserves of Nepal, at altitudes ranging between 2,800-4,000 metres, moving somewhat lower during the winter. The birds live either singly or in parties of three-to-four, feeding on roots, shoots, berries and tubers. Its plumage forms the focus of a number of Nepali paintings, poems and folk songs. Needless to add, it is this colourful plumage that has contributed to a decline in monal populations, at the hands of man, though now it is a strictly protected species.

Some of the best areas for bird-watching are in the Kosi and Karnali watersheds, Mai valley, Kaligandaki valley, the areas beyond Pokhara, below the Annapurna range, Rara

# The spiny babbler



Tej Kumar Shrestha

The spiny babbler was first discovered in Nepal by Sir Brian Hodgson, a British diplomat, in the year 1836. This discovery provided impetus to the search for the bird on the Indian sub-continent. In 1843, Allen Hume endeavoured to collect one specimen of the spiny babbler, but failed. In the same year Captain Stackhouse captured one in the Kumaon and presented it to Dr. Hume. Since then, the spiny babbler remained unnoticed and unrecorded and ornithologists of those days supposed it to be extinct.

Digging into recent literature, I was surprised to read that little is really known about the habits and life-style of the spiny babbler. Dr. S.D. Ripley, who led an expedition in search of zoological rarities in Nepal, which included the spiny babbler, was able to collect one specimen of the bird in the Rekcha village in the Karnali zone of the country.

One fine morning, in July 1983, I decided to go to Chhapagaun which is about ten miles from Kathmandu to photograph the spiny babbler in the wild, and to bring back some

Ringmo finger, Arun valley and Dolpo valley. The marshlands near the Kosi barrage teem with a variety of fascinating birds; on a fine morning, I have observed as many as 77 species—flycatchers, sunbirds, bee-eaters, warblers, bulbuls and others. In the upland thickets, near Mai Pokhari, one may even spot

the rare wren babbler, purple cochoa and streaked spider hunter. Bird-watching at Kathmandu, Pokhara and the Chitwan valley can be equally fruitful in the spring and summer.

Very little is actually known about bird migra-

wild specimens, if possible. I was uncertain about its range and habitat in the Kathmandu valley. In the thickets of Chhapagaun, I observed many babblers and flycatchers but was unable to catch even a glimpse of the bird I was looking for. Then, at noon, I suddenly heard a babbling call in the distant thickets, and as I approached the noise and focused my binoculars, I saw the bird. I was overjoyed!

A member of the Order Passeriformes, with its nearest of kin being babblers, flycatchers, warblers and thrushes, the habitat of this quaint little bird is scrub and semi-cultivated slopes and the edges of fields. Dark olive and brown coloured, it merges well with its surroundings, undoubtedly the reason for its elusiveness. The spiny babbler is a small bird—the size of a bulbul, with a short neck and small head that sports a shaft of plumage on its forehead and neck ending in sharp spines, that explain its name. As to how these spines have evolved remains a mystery. The spiny babbler is a poor flier moving rather gingerly. It is a solitary bird, preferring to live singly or in small, scattered parties. Insects, berries and fruit form its diet, and its nest comprises of clumps of grass nestled into the forks of trees and into which the female lays her small, light-green eggs.

Man undoubtedly is the spiny babbler's chief enemy. Trigger-happy boys kill this little bird for sport, and every year land-clearing operations swallow up more and more of its natural habitat. Nests are swept away by the rain, while a number of natural predators like mice, squirrels, snakes and birds of prey feed on the eggs and young of this unique and endangered bird. Since it is found in Nepal only, every effort should be taken to preserve its habitat, and therefore enhance its numbers.

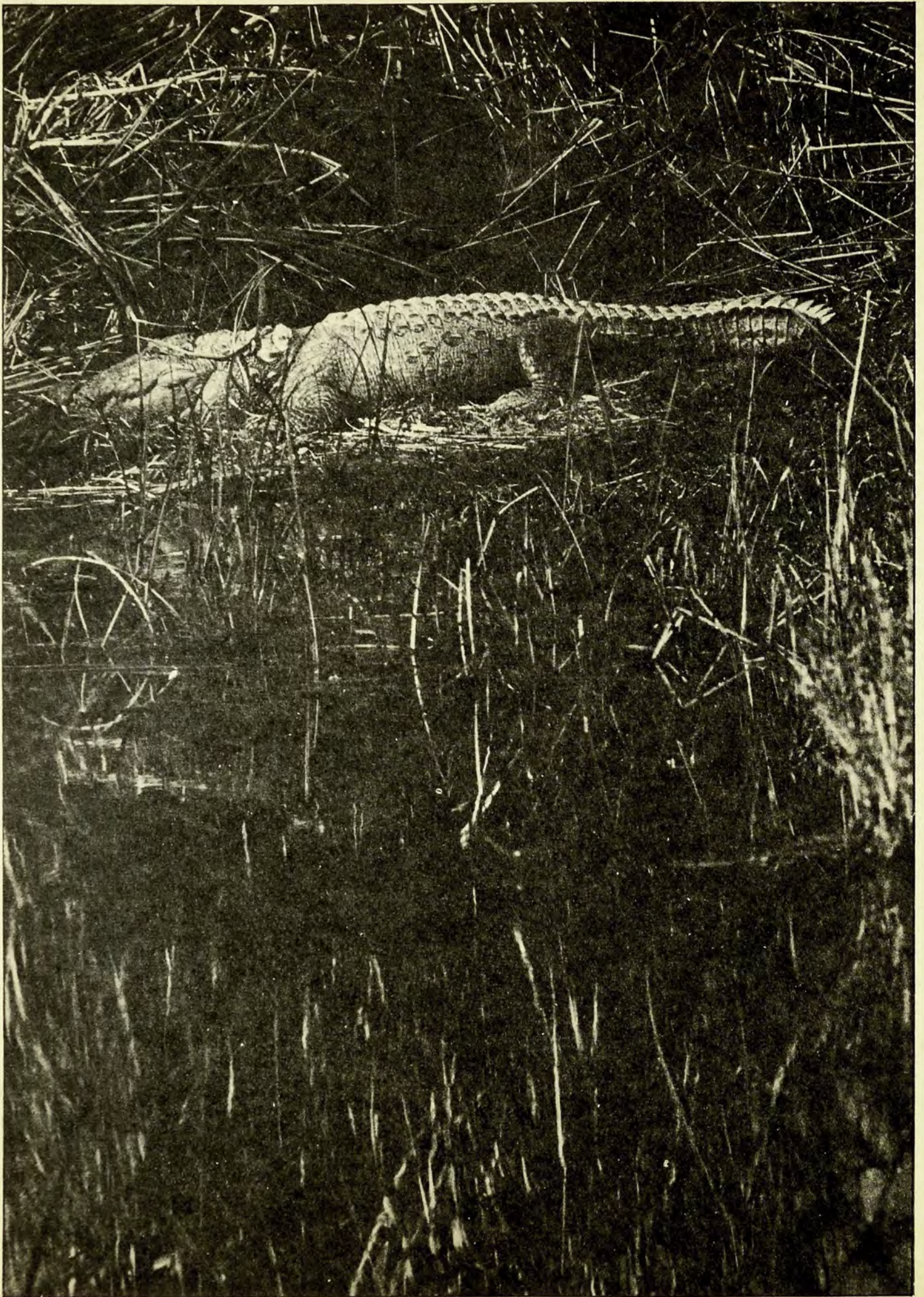
tion in Nepal. Most of the present knowledge is general and made up of fragmented records, often subjective and conjectural in nature. We can say, however, that in Nepal, altitudinal migration patterns are clearly seen. Several ducks and geese have been observed winging their way towards Siberia, using the Gandaki,

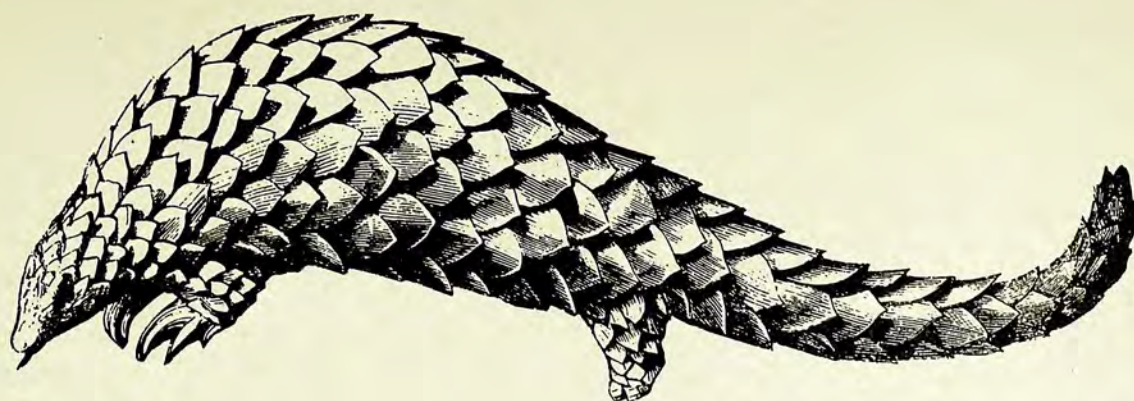
Karnali and Kosi river systems as guides, during winter and early spring.

**F**ew areas in Asia provide better opportunity to admire and study reptiles and amphibians than Nepal does, their altitudinal and latitudinal distribution providing fresh ground for research. Luxuriant tropical forests, with their dense tangle of vines, trunks and roots, and numerous swamps, bogs and springs, provide a formidable, yet ideal cover, for many of these animals. The unique skipping frog lives in the rivers and wetlands, and Himalayan frogs have been observed at altitudes of 6,000 metres. The green Himalayan toad and the common toad are two of several others that have adapted to this great height.



The largest deer on the sub-continent sambars live in small herds, spending most of their time near water. Sambar stags have thick, stout antlers that obtain their familiar and typical branched appearance through a series of periodic renewals. Adult sambar stags normally sport three branches (tines).





Pangolin

**T**he hydrosphere of Nepal, constituting the snow-bound Himalayas, with its glaciers, snow-fed rivers, lakes and torrential hill streams, teems with well over 125 species of fish. The Nepal *chuche asla*, so like trout in many ways, the stone carp, the stone roller and the torrent catfish are all cold-water fish that have developed special (sucker) adhesive pads on their bodies to hold onto stones in fast-flowing water, to counter the effect of strong underwater currents.

Midland and lowland streams are dominated by fish such as the copper mahseer and the golden mahseer. A wide variety of carp, called river *rohu*, inhabit the warm waters of these lowland streams. Besides these there are warm-water fish such as the *jalkapoor*, catla, eel and catfish.

The Gangetic dolphin, or *saunsh*, a protected species in Nepal, is found in the Rapti and Narayani rivers remaining in fresh water all through its life. It is virtually blind and is thereby mercilessly killed by locals for the value of its flesh, blubber and oil.

**A**t Manaughat, the river Girwa rolled quietly past; clear and emerald green. Moving at more than ten miles an hour, it gave an impression of immense strength. Small flocks of merganser floated past, and a

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Also known as the marsh crocodile, the muggar (**facing page**) is the closest surviving relative of the extinct reptiles. Shy and elusive, freshwater muggers are found in many of the rivers of the terai, in Nepal.

family of otters entertained me, mid-stream, with a series of fascinating antics. After rowing for about half an hour, I arrived at a spectacular place near the Lalamati block of the Karnali Wildlife Reserve. Wedges of geese honked overhead, pelicans and egrets strutted along the mud flats, while great vultures glided down to stand with wings outstretched, as if drying them in the sun. At Dandajhari, the Karnali river forked into the Girwa and Kauriala, and I guided the boat towards the Karnali mainstream, where the river was wide and deep. Lush khair fringed the banks, throwing their shadows over the water. I moved on to Chisapani, observing the catfish that resembled miniature dolphins, from the prow of my boat. From my anchorage at Chisapani Pitmari, I paddled on hoping to catch sight of the dolphin I had come to see. Dolphins were once plentiful in the Karnali river, but though I examined the water there was absolutely no sign of them. I anchored the boat at nightfall by a sandbar, shivering in the biting cold. Later, I rowed up-river to the Chisapani-Bakakachali area, where soaring mountain peaks, sweeping surf and fresh green vegetation displayed nature in all her diversity. Muggers and gharials lay sprawled out on the banks, while some hunted for fish and water birds.

It was here, at the Chisapani gorge which is deep, narrow and V-shaped, that I at last caught sight of a dolphin. But it disappeared quietly out of sight before I could even take a picture of it!

# National parks and wildlife reserves in Nepal

## Royal Chitwan National Park

Located in the subtropical lowlands, the 932-sq.km. Royal Chitwan National Park was Nepal's first national park, officially established in 1973 for the preservation of the one-horned rhinoceros. Covered with dense, tropical deciduous monsoon forests and bound by several rivers which often change their course, resulting in the formation of several lakes, swamps and grasslands, Chitwan is home to the tiger, rhinoceros, leopard, sloth bear, gaur, gharial, mugger, Gangetic dolphin and about 300 species of birds. Encompassing part of the Churia hills, Chitwan was one of the famous hunting areas of Asia. This beautiful national park is easily accessible from Kathmandu, by air and road.

## Sagarmatha National Park

This magnificent high altitude Himalayan national park, spread over 1,243 sq.km. in north-eastern Nepal, includes the famed Mount Everest within it. Most of the park area lies above 3,500 m. and the vegetation comprises mostly of birch-rhododendron forests bordered by blue pine, fir and juniper. This national park is of specific interest for observing pheasants. The other wildlife includes the Himalayan tahr, musk deer, wolf, weasel, pika, serow and red panda.

There is something wonderfully elemental and marvellously primeval about the Karnali wetlands. The water, sandbars and grasslands teem with every form of life, from the lowest to the highest in the scale of evolution. Every brook, patch of forest or grassland, every mountain and moor of the Karnali watershed is inhabited.

Recognising the importance of such natural wilderness and natural resources for the educational, scientific and economic

## Langtang National Park

The largest national park in Nepal, Langtang with an area of 1,710 sq.km. lies north of Kathmandu. The Langtang valley exhibits a gradual change in vegetation from meadow to juniper, birch-rhododendron, fir, hemlock, blue pine and chir pine, as the altitude decreases from 4,500 m. to 1,500 m. These alpine pastures and forests harbour a variety of wildlife, including muntjac, wild boar, Himalayan black bear, tahr, musk deer and snow leopard. Pheasants are also found here in abundance.

## Lake Rara National Park

The interesting feature of this 106-sq.km. national park is lake Rara, situated at an altitude of 2,990 m. and covering an area of 10 sq.km. The coniferous forests, which cover most of this park, harbour the black bear, yellow throated marten, musk deer, goral and serow. Though not extremely popular with water fowl, a few winter migrants like the mallard duck and the common teal are seen here. There are regular flights from Kathmandu to Jumla from where it takes two-and-a-half days to reach lake Rara.

## Khaptad National Park

Located in the sub-Himalayan region, to the west of Nepal, this national park houses the leopard, marten, barking deer and black bear.

## Royal Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve

This 155-sq.km. reserve lies in the western

development of Nepal, the government, in 1973, formulated a comprehensive conservation scheme and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife was created to implement the scheme, on a country-wide basis. Based on the findings of the ecological survey, attempts have been made to establish more parks and reserves for the conservation of endangered species. A list of protected species has also been published, which mentions more than fifteen game mammals and birds that may be hunted, with permission. All export or sale of

terai of Nepal. It is predominantly made up of *shorea* (sal) forest and open grasslands (*phan-ta* in Nepali), the largest of which is known as the suklaphanta. The other grasslands are separated by small patches of forest. The eastern boundary of the reserve is marked by the Chaudhar river, and the Mahakali river partly forms its south-west frontier with India. Rani Tal, a small lake that lies on the eastern side of the reserve, is a paradise for bird-watchers as it is abundant in resident water fowl and migratory birds. A number of waterlogged areas are home to about 1,500 swamp deer. These areas (*dhap* in Nepali) are covered with reeds and tall grasses. The environment of this reserve is ideal for spotted deer, hog deer, wild boar, blue bull, wild elephant and tiger.

### **Royal Karnali Wildlife Reserve**

This reserve is situated in the Bardia district in mid-western Nepal, bordered by the Karnali river on the west and the Babai river on the east. Though a major part of the reserve is flat land consisting of sal riverine forests and grasslands, one third of it consists of the Churia hills, covered mostly with stunted sal forests. Due to a combination of habitats, a wide selection of fauna including antelope, wild boar, tiger, serow, rhesus monkey, langur, dolphin, a large population of ungulates and the endangered gharial is also found here.

### **Kosi Tappu Wildlife Reserve**

This 65-sq.km. reserve lies in the flood plain

skins has been completely banned.

Based on their ecological habitats, the national parks and reserves of Nepal have been placed into two categories: the Himalayan and the terai parks and reserves. These reserves are further divided into hunting and non-hunting reserves.

Realising the need for more ecological data for the formulation of a sound management scheme of wildlife resources, research ac-

of the river Kosi in the eastern terai. The numerous water-holes and swamps, created by monsoon floods, and the extensive savannah-type grasslands create an ideal habitat for the roughly sixty Asiatic wild buffaloes which still survive here. The lake formed by the Kosi river dam attracts thousands of migratory birds and maintains a variety of local fish-eating birds.

### **Shey Wildlife Reserve**

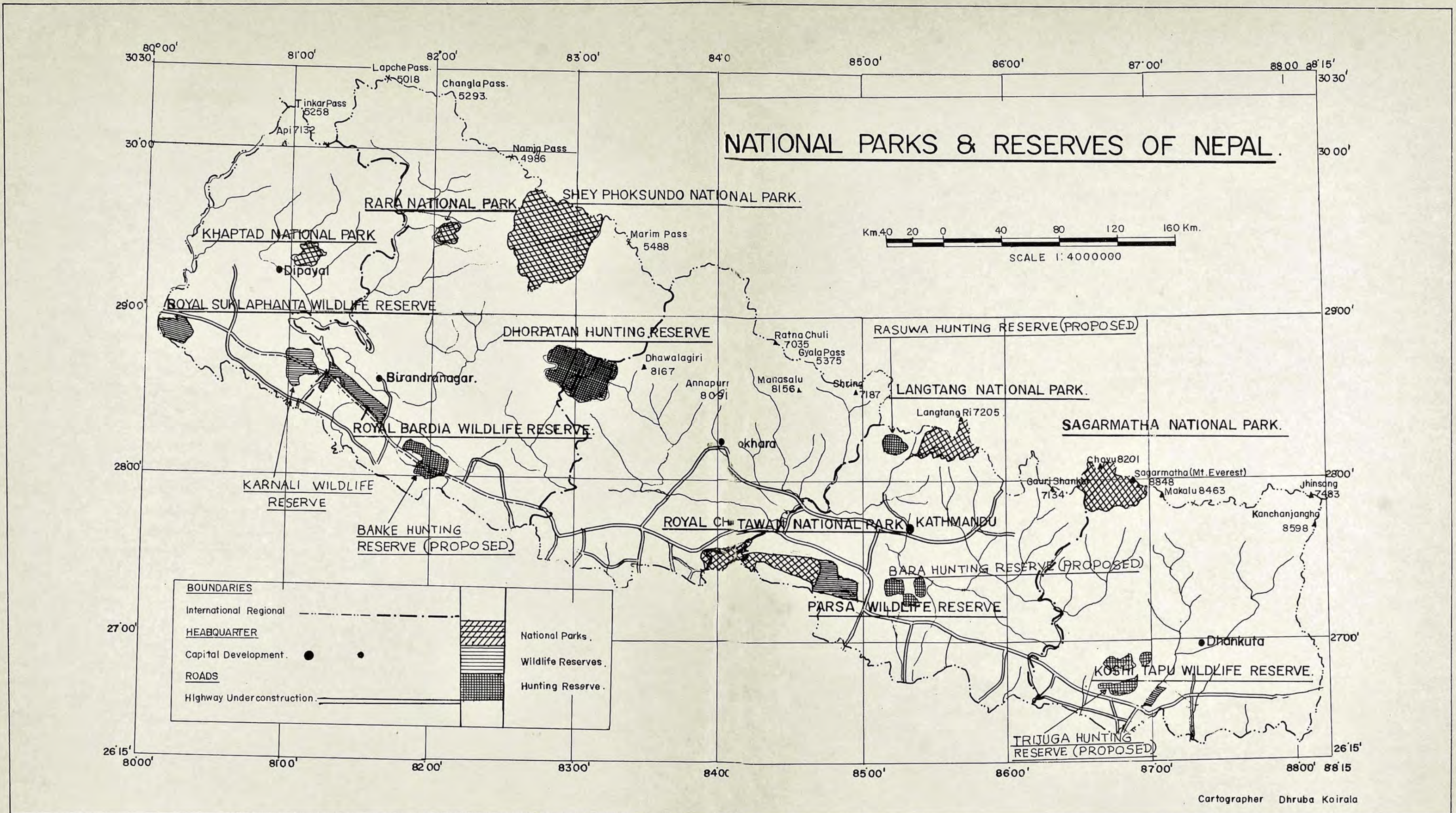
The Shey Wildlife Reserve has an area of more than 160 sq. miles, and is situated in the Dolpo district of north-western Nepal. A relatively secluded and undisturbed reserve, the dominant flora is pine, juniper and small bushes. Seen here are blue sheep, yak, goral, musk deer, tahr, red panda, snow leopard, wild dog, brown bear and muntjac. The snow partridge, snow cock, yellow-billed chough, blood pheasant, etc., are some of the birds that live within this reserve.

### **Bardia Wildlife Reserve**

This reserve lies in the lowland terai in the Bardia district on the eastern edge of the Karnali river. It covers an area of 880 sq.km. and supports a variety of wildlife that includes the Gangetic dolphin, tiger, leopard, wild elephant, spotted deer, barking deer, blue bull, swamp deer, blackbuck, sambar and hog deer.

Several hunting reserves have been proposed—they include Dhorpatan, Rasuwa, Bara, Trijuga and Banke.

tivities have been encouraged in various national parks and wildlife reserves. The Tiger Ecology Project, sponsored by the WWF/IUCN, the Ecological Study of the Langtang National Park by Durham University, a Chital and Hog Deer Study under the Smithsonian Institution and gharial propagation financed by the Frankfurt Zoological Society, are some of the projects that have been undertaken in the past. A study on pheasants in western Nepal has been initiated by the World Pheasant Association and also a



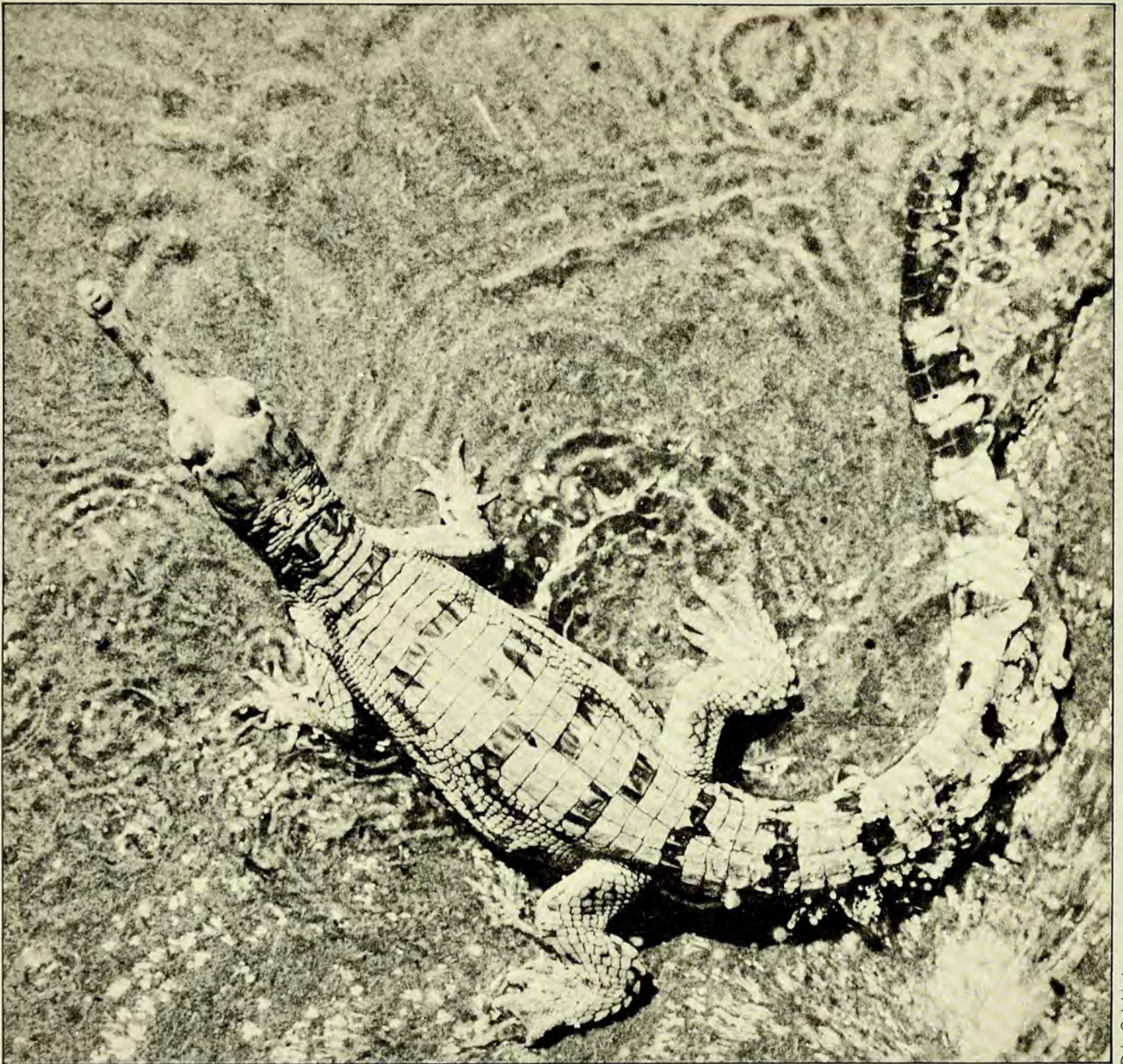
Dolphin Ecological Study undertaken by the National Council for Science and Technology. Nepal, a country which has always considered unique monuments and the many natural features of the world as a common heritage of all mankind, offered that the Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) National Park be included on

the World Heritage list. This has already been carried out by the World Heritage Committee. Nepal has also been actively participating in a number of international conservation programmes and has joined the WWF, IUCN, CITES and UNESCO. A comprehensive conservation education programme, including

slide-shows and displays has been introduced by the National Park and Wildlife Department and the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. Besides this, visitor centres and information centres have been established in the various national parks and reserves themselves, to provide information to

visiting tourists and naturalists. Schools and colleges have even incorporated courses on ecology and conservation into their curricula, as part of their formal education.

**T**he birth of Lord Buddha in Lumbini, Nepal, and his teachings which stressed



D. L. Golobitsh

A ball-like growth, locally called a *ghara*, on the tip of its snout, accounts for the gharial's name. Mystical powers are attributed to this *ghara* and hence many gharials are ruthlessly killed. Today, these fish-eating reptiles are a strictly protected species, in Nepal, where they are found only in a few major rivers, unlike the mugger which is much more common.

*ahimsa* and compassion, have all contributed to the peaceful attitude and nature of the people of Nepal. But development must take its toll particularly in this most fragile ecosystem. A gradual conversion of forests for habitation and cultivation by an increasing

population, the setting up of waterways, the construction of a network of roads and the reclamation of land. Dams are often constructed without careful study, forests cleared without a thought to water retention. Deforestation not only upsets the ecological balance, but drastically reduces soil fertility. Cattle grazing adds to this damage by destroying new vegetation and thwarting regeneration programmes. And, when man alters his environment, he destroys the wildlife of that region too. It is imperative therefore, that proper management policies be adopted to



Hornbill

maintain the splendour of this eco-system, without greatly hampering economic growth.

The first stage in the preservation of the many unique life forms of Nepal has largely been completed. The most endangered species have been identified and a programme set in motion for their conservation. What is now required is that the major habitat of the trans-Himalaya section of the country be identified, and a representative cross-section of each set aside as early as possible, so that plants and animals and the eco-system as a whole can be preserved indefinitely. When this goal has been achieved we may be sure that future generations will have the opportunity to ad-

mire and study the vast and diverse country of Nepal, in whose people the spirit of conservation has long been ingrained. Perhaps nothing bears witness to this more than an edict of the late Majesty Surendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, inscribed over a hundred years ago when a rupee was worth its weight in gold, on a Nagarjun stone slab. It reads: "*Fine rupees two hundred if anybody kills musk deer in this forest; fine fifty rupees if anybody kills deer and ghorals; fine hundred and fifty rupees if anybody kills chital and bharal. Fine ten rupees if anybody kills danphey, monal, pukras. Fine seven rupees to those who steal eggs of these birds; fine two rupees for those who fell trees of waist high and above; fine four rupees for those who cut trunk of plantain!*"