

## Oryx Tours to India and Zambia

Interest in the wildlife of India has greatly increased since Balakrishna Seshadri's *The Twilight of India's Wildlife* (obtainable from the FPS office, 52s) drew attention once more to both its richness and its rapidly vanishing status, and in India, too, there is a growing awareness of its value. The Society is therefore organising its third tour to India in February 1971. The co-leader will again be Mr J. C. Daniel, Curator of the Bombay Natural History Society.

The tour's first stop en route for India will be in the Arabian Gulf, at Qatar, to see the largest captive herd of Arabian oryx in the world, about thirty, belonging to Sheikh Qasim, at his country house seventy miles' drive across the desert. Last November when the FPS Chairman, Hon Secretary and Editor had an audience with Sheikh Quasim in Qatar he extended a warm invitation to the FPS to make this call.

In India the tour will start at the furthest point, in the famous Kaziranga National Park in Assam, where the snow-capped Himalayas form the northern skyline. Here great Indian rhino, Asiatic buffalo and swamp deer (all Red Book species) are among the mammals to be watched comfortably, often at close quarters, as you ride your elephant (a great improvement on a mini-bus!) which moves steadily and imperceptibly through the head-high grass (elephant head), across streams, and past jheels (shallow lakes) teeming with water birds; you may even come up with wild elephants. The next call will be the Manas sanctuaries which bstride the Indian-Bhutan frontier, in magnificent Himalayan scenery, or Jaldapara in West Bengal, both refuges for the Indian rhino and swamp deer. Then to Delhi and on to the Taj Mahal, one international tourist spot that never fails to astonish by its beauty, the Keoladeo Ghana bird sanctuary with its teeming colonies of storks and spoonbills and herds of deer, the Sariska sanctuary and the Corbett National Park—the last two with a good chance of seeing tiger. The river valley below the Corbett Park lodge is due to be flooded shortly when a dam is completed, and this may be the last chance to see this lovely stretch of the Himalayan foothills in its natural state. Finally, in early March, just before the snows melt and the deer return to the high grazing grounds, the party will visit the Dachigam sanctuary in Kashmir, last refuge of the hangul or Kashmir stag.

In July/August 1971 the Society's first visit to Zambia is planned, visiting the Kafue flats, the Luangwa valley and the Victoria Falls, and afterwards either Botswana (Chobe) or Malawi. In early 1972 we hope to visit both Pakistan and Ceylon.

Will members interested in any of these tours please write to Miss Giles at the FPS office. It is helpful to have some idea of how many are interested.

### Linnean Society's Appeal

In the first year of its appeal for funds to preserve and develop its collections the Linnean Society raised £61,836. The Swedish Government has given £8000 to provide premises for the collections of Linnaeus. Further gifts will be welcomed for later stages of the planned improvements.