

The Revolving Fund

Quick Help for Animals in Danger

FOR an outlay of rather less than £2,000 from its own funds, the FPS has in the last year managed to devote over £9,000 to urgent projects for saving endangered wildlife. This has been done through the Revolving Fund set up jointly with the World Wildlife Fund, which went into action in January, 1966.

The idea behind the Revolving Fund was to have a source of money which could be tapped quickly in urgent cases. The FPS started the ball rolling by allocating a sum of £5,000 from capital, of which in the event it has only been necessary to draw on £1,997. The World Wildlife Fund agreed to refund 50 per cent. of all money spent on approved WWF projects as a first call on its uncommitted project money, and to refund the rest as and when funds became available. The WWF has, in fact, paid back £5,654 into the Fund. In addition a princely donation of £2,500 came from an anonymous member of the FPS, smaller donations totalled £65, and other FPS members contributed £198 earmarked for the Persian Fallow Deer Project.

So far the Fund has contributed to four projects: the Javan and Sumatran Rhino Projects, the Persian Fallow Deer Project and the Zambian Aircraft Project.

The biggest single item was to save the Javan rhino, which is without doubt the rarest large animal in the world today, with a total population of probably no more than 40 animals all in the Udjong Kulon reserve in western Java. To ensure both the long-term conservation of the rhinos and the immediate guarding of the reserves from poachers money was urgently needed to pay for a scientific survey to enable management plans to be devised, and also for a boat to enable both scientists and game guards to get to the reserve and work there, because there are no roads and all communications are by water. £3,800 was advanced towards the cost of a fibreglass motor-boat, with the necessary jetty and buildings, and £2,000 to enable Dr Jacques Verschuren, the distinguished Belgian ecologist, to start the survey. A generous and timely donation by Mrs Iris Darnton towards this Javan Rhino Project is included in the money repaid by the World Wildlife Fund.

The other rhino project, the Sumatran, concerns another extremely rare and endangered animal, of which very little indeed is known. (See note on p. 332). A small grant of £230 was made to the Malayan Nature Society towards Mr David Strickland's survey in the Sungei Dusun Reserve in Malaya, and his report is now awaited.

The Persian fallow deer, another seriously endangered animal whose world numbers scarcely exceed those of the Javan rhino, inhabits a small area of woodland which is scheduled for clearing. The Iranian Game Department planned to capture a small breeding stock to keep in captivity in Iran as the basis of a captive breeding herd and asked

for the assistance of a veterinary expert qualified in drug-darting techniques. The Fund made a grant of £800 to Mr Michael Woodford to enable him to accompany the Iranian Game Department's expedition to capture a small breeding stock. Severe flooding eventually frustrated the expedition which, however, is to be repeated. A report appeared in ORYX April 1966, p. 211.

In Zambia commercial poaching on a grand scale is fast reducing both black and red lechwe herds to the point of being endangered species, and the only hope of adequate control is with aircraft. The Zambian Game Department appealed for funds to buy a light aircraft and the Revolving Fund advanced half the cost of a Piper Cherokee, £2,275. The other half was defrayed by the Dulverton Trust, through the World Wildlife Fund. A generous donation of £1,400 from the late Professor F. Merlin Haines of Fordingbridge, Hants, for this project was included in the money repaid by the World Wildlife Fund.

This brief account of the Revolving Fund's first year's work shows that useful and urgent conservation jobs are being done. We would urge FPS members to support the Fund with contributions, and also interest non-members who would be willing and ready to help. There are many more projects in the pipe-line. The FPS carries the cost of the Revolving Fund's administration, so that all money donated to the Fund goes directly and quickly to the saving of gravely threatened animals.

Please send donations to the Hon. Treasurer, Fauna Preservation Society.

THYLACINE REPORT

THE discovery of a thylacine, the Tasmanian wolf, using an old boiler as a lair is reported from Tasmania by Dr Eric Guiler, chairman of the Animals and Birds Protection Board. In ORYX August 1966, Dr Guiler described an expedition to look for thylacines which failed to find any of this rare and exceedingly elusive animal. The new report is from Mawbanna, in the north-west. The fire box had been removed from the old boiler, and the animal could get inside, but in doing so scraped its body against the sides leaving hairs which Dr Guiler identified as thylacine. *A trap set nearby failed to catch the thylacine, but fresh hairs at intervals showed that it was still using the lair, and the footprint of a young thylacine confirmed the impression that a female with a pup or pups was using it.*

Field Biology Certificate

Details of a new London University Certificate in Field Biology, open to all, can be obtained from the Assistant Director, Room 14, Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, 7 Ridgmount Street, London, WC1, for enrolment before March 15, 1967. The work involves a directed course of private reading, attendance at two two-week Practical Courses in consecutive summers, an approved plan of field-work and examinations.