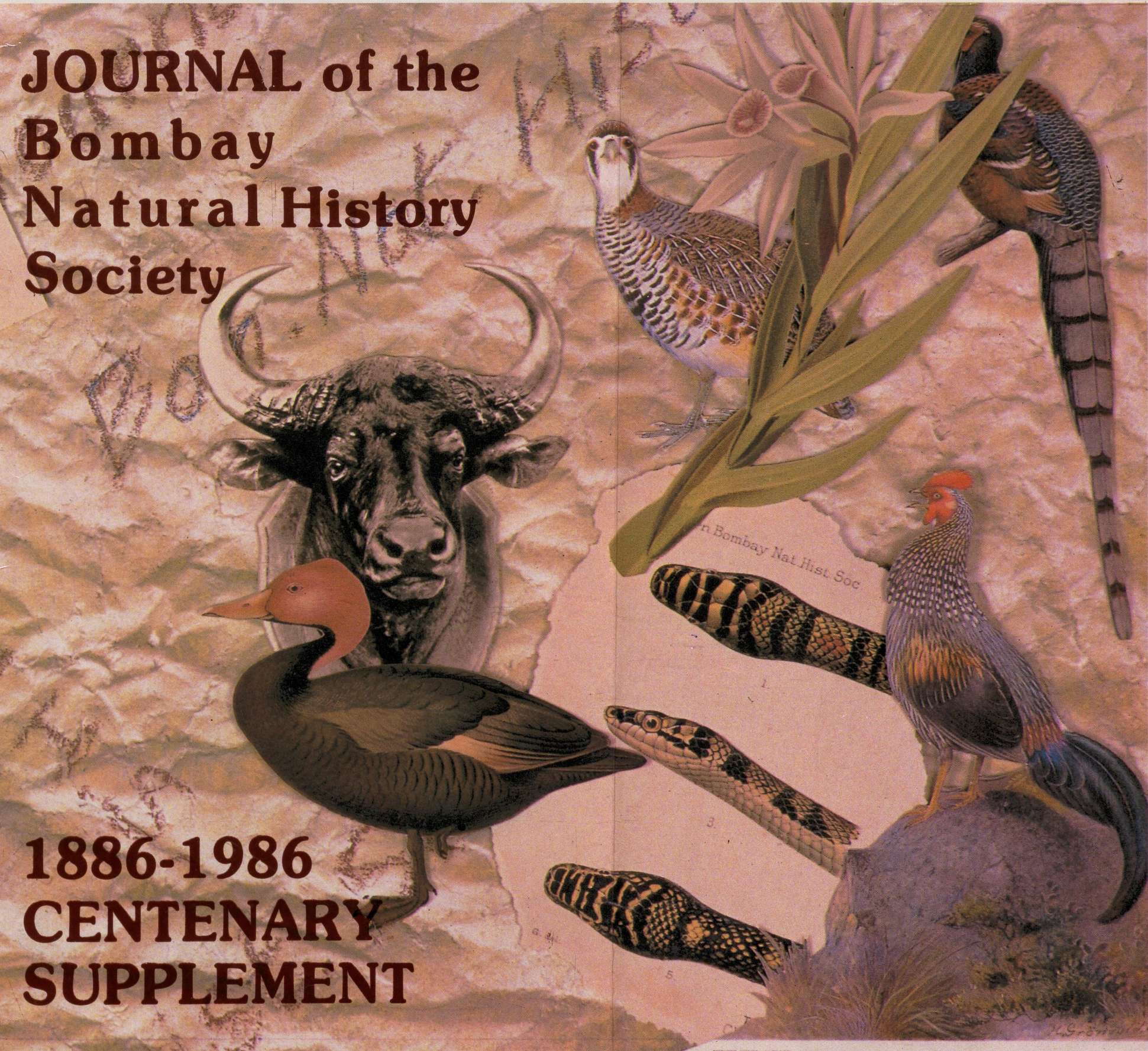




**JBNHS Centenary Supplement**

**JOURNAL of the  
Bombay  
Natural History  
Society**

**1886-1986  
CENTENARY  
SUPPLEMENT**





SCAT FISH  
(*Scatophagus argus*)  
juv.

CLOWN FISH  
(*Amphiprion percula*)

BLUE-RINGED ANGEL FISH  
(*Holacanthus annularis*)

COLLARED BUTTERFLY FISH  
(*Chaetodon collaris*)

Carl P'silva '67

from Aquarium Fish -

HORNBILL 86(4)



Tasmanian wolf

#### Tasmanian Wolf

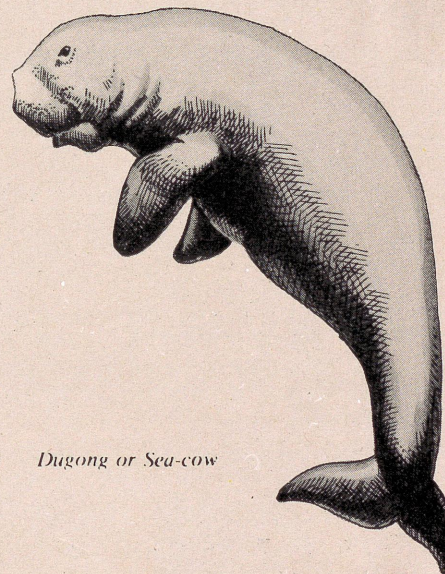
Sighting the Tasmanian wolf during the Ligabua Centre's recent survey confirms that the animal is still alive. The last captive animal died in Hobart Zoo in Tasmania in 1936. Sightings were reported to have increased since the 1940s. A close relative of the Tasmanian Devil, the Tasmanian wolf is as big as a medium sized dog, brown in colour with about 15 dark stripes along its back, teeth of a marsupial and a large tail. Analysis of the available information and ecological conditions in the animal's habitat confirm that the population of the Tasmanian wolf is increasing. —*World Wildlife Fund News*, No. 37, Sept.-Oct. 1985.

#### Dugong hunting in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

Among the rarest and most intriguing creatures of the Great Barrier Reef the largest coral system in the world is the dugong, *Dugong dugon*, the world's only strictly herbivorous marine mammal listed in the IUCN MAMMAL RED DATA BOOK as a species in danger of extinction.

In the Marine Park many of the problems involving conservation of the species and rational use by man have come to a head. Its goal is to provide for protection, wise use, appreciation and enjoyment of the Reef in perpetuity. It tackles this task by minimising regulation of human activity, maximising the involvement of the community in management of the Marine Park and by nurturing community understanding and acceptance of necessary restraints.

An estimate of Hope Vales annual dugong catch and of the likely sustainable yield of the dugong population was provided by Dr Helene Marsh, a leading dugong researcher. She based her estimate on her own work on dugong population biology. This is a classic example of a situation where a fine balance has to be struck between the need to employ its resources with due restraint, and the obligation to protect the endangered species. Success was attained through video programme which conveyed public concern for the survival of dugongs. —*IUCN Bulletin* Vol. 16, July-Sept. 1985.



Dugong or Sea-cow

## SPECTRUM

ON April 13, 1987, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi released in New Delhi the centenary supplement of the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. The 238-page issue made no concession to the landmark in the form of, as may have been expected, self-congratulatory or patronising messages from fraternity worthies and the powers of the day.

Instead, a crisp editorial by the society's president, Salim Ali, on the journal's role in Indian natural history is followed by scholarly presentations along the lines initiated by the first editors, R.A. Sterndale and E.H. Aitken.

The journal developed into a highly research-oriented publication thanks to the labours of 22 subsequent editorial teams that have guided its destiny since then. The current editors are: J.C. Daniel, the curator, A.N.D. Nanavati, honorary secretary and P.V. Bole. Incidentally, Salim Ali was the first Indian to be included in the editorial team — in 1936.

The histories of the journal and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) are closely intertwined because the former preserved and projected the findings of the latter for posterity.

The BNHS preceded the journal by three years. In 1883, eight residents of Bombay, all of them Englishmen, decided that it would be an excellent idea to form a society for the study of natural history. The founders met on September 15, 1883 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (now Bhau Dhaji Museum) in Victoria Garden (now Jeejamatha Udyan) and constituted themselves as the BNHS. They proposed to meet monthly to exchange notes, exhibit interesting specimens and generally encourage each other's study of natural history.

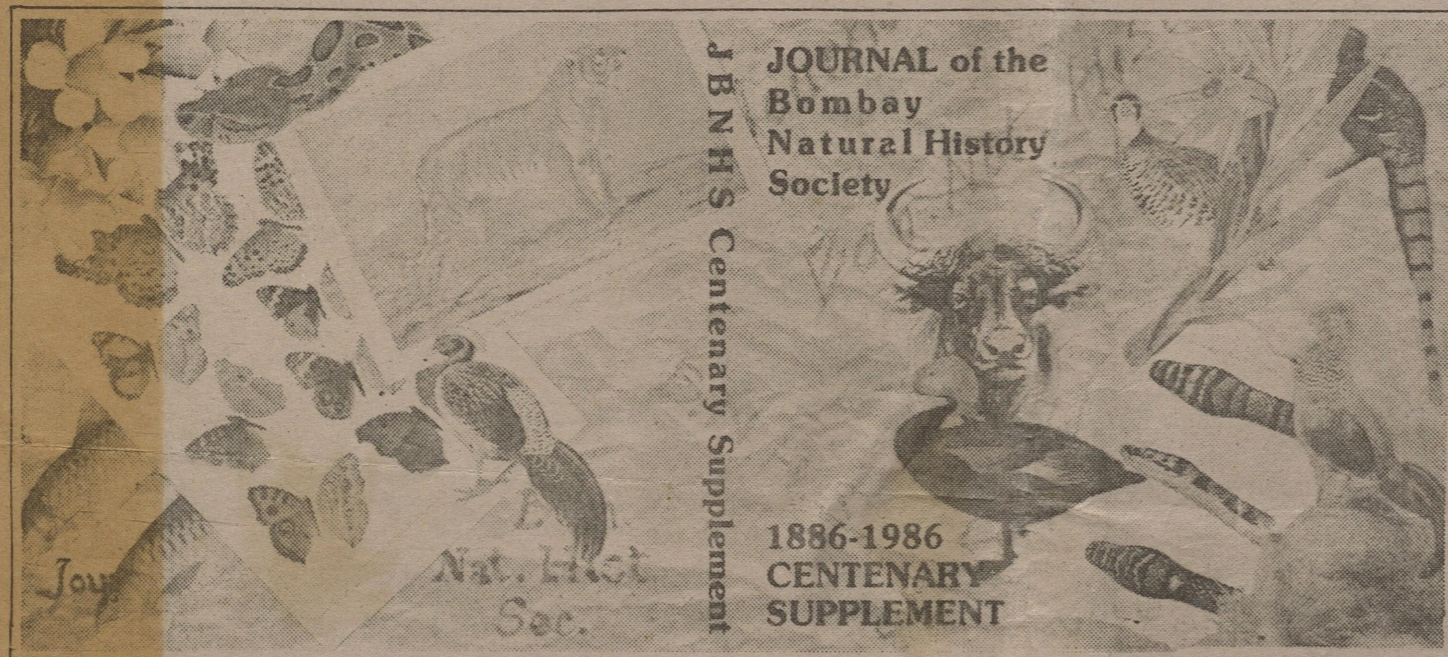
As *Gazetteer of Bombay City and Islands* notes, in "January 1884, Mr H. Phipson kindly offered the use of a room in his office at 18 Forbes Street, (now V.B. Gandhi Marg), Fort, Bombay.

"The removal to a central situation gave an astonishing impulse to the society. The meetings were better attended, the membership increased and collections began to be made, so that in a very short time the necessity for more ample accommodation was pressingly felt."

Phipson again came to the rescue of the society and both Phipson's office and the society moved to larger and more suitable premises at 6, Apollo Street. The society shifted to its present location in the compound of the Prince of Wales Museum in 1933, when it marked its golden jubilee.

## OPEN HOUSE

# A hundred years of natural history



The jacket cover of the centenary supplement which was released by the Prime Minister last month

The journals of the Bombay Natural History Society — one a century old and the other launched in 1976 — and the society itself all have a history almost as captivating as the record of the activities of the society.

JOHN B. MONTEIRO charts the course of the society and its journals in a centenary tribute

As Salim Ali notes in his editorial to the centenary supplement, by 1886, three years after the founding of the society, the well-attended monthly meetings of its fast-growing membership had become very popular but were tending to become more like social get-togethers than scientific meetings.

To give the society's serious activities meaningful significance it was decided to publish a quarterly journal for the maintenance of a permanent record of the business transacted at the meetings; of the papers read and discussed

and of the natural history specimens collected, exhibited and described by members and hunting sportsmen.

Such a publication, it was felt, would also help to stimulate an intelligent and well-informed interest in nature among the many who lacked a formal background in biology. It was also meant to keep the scattered outstation members in touch with the society and with each other and encourage their participation in its activities.

To gather representative material to build up reference collections and for the journal, five sec-

tions were formed, each of members specially qualified in the different branches of natural history: mammals, birds, reptiles and fishes, insects and other invertebrates, and botany. The secretaries of the respective sections were to invite members to communicate their observations and also impel them to collect biological specimens for the society's fast-developing museum.

In the early days of the journal, the emphasis was largely on game animals and *shikar*. But as Salim Ali notes, the recorded experiences and field observations of well-informed and discerning sportsmen have helped substantially to build up knowledge of the life histories of not only quarry species but also of others of lesser interest to sportsmen:

"A large proportion of the natural history of our game animals has been acquired in this way, specially since the journal commenced. Most of such knowledge is seminal and would have remained unavailable but for the published notes and articles of observant sportsmen. They consisted mainly of British district offi-

cials, army personnel and planters dispersed in remote backwoods, lacking social amenities and congenial company, who had therefore taken to natural history and *shikar* by way of relaxation and recreation."

From chiefly *shikar* in the early days, the journal has steadily shifted to conservation with the growing realisation that all was not well with Indian wildlife and that the once-teeming game was vanishing fast throughout the country. This was partly due to excessive hunting by unethical sportsmen and organised poaching for commercial gain by local *shikaris*, but mainly due to the destruction of wildlife habitats.

The society has been deeply concerned about wildlife and environmental conservation and its journal has campaigned against public and official apathy. The need to protect wildlife against unregulated hunting and large scale commercial poaching by village *shikaris* was increasingly felt by forest officials and discerning sportsmen ever since the early years of the twentieth century.

The society and its journal pro-

vided a forum for them. Its membership constituted the nucleus of the sporting fraternity in India at the time; the majority of them were British officials and professional men zealously interested in the preservation of game animals even though it may have been occasionally not quite from purely altruistic motives.

An account of the society and the journal calls for a mention of Herbert Musgrave Phipson (of Phipson & Co., wine merchants — now part of the United Breweries Group) who was a truly remarkable man. During the early years of the society, Phipson as honorary secretary and editor of the journal was its virtual *ma-bap*. It is largely to his keenness and contagious zeal as a naturalist that the society and its journal owe their growth and prosperity.

The foundation built by Phipson has enabled the society to weather the storms and stresses of subsequent years. The business house of Phipsons has provided other personalities as well to guide the destinies of the society and the journal. They include H.M. McCusky, P.M.D. Sanderson and R.A. Spence — who were all editors of the journal. The Phipson connection was so long and close that the natural history collection of the society came to be known as 'Phipson's Museum'.

St. Xavier's College provided the next largest number of editors of the journal — P.V. Bole, Fr. Jean Ferdinand Caius, and Fr. H. Santapau.

The journal enjoys a well-merited reputation as a repository of Indian biology. The society has made microfiche films of its volumes 1 to 64 which should be available for reference at the society's premises at Hornbill House, in the Prince of Wales Museum compound.

Hornbill House itself calls for a reference to 'William', the hornbill the Society has adopted for its logo and after which its building is named. 'William', a Great Indian Hornbill, arrived at the society's premises as a nestling in 1894 and lived in the society's rooms till 1920.

William was apparently quite a character and was so intimately associated with the society and its museum that he is fittingly honoured in the Bird Gallery of the Prince of Wales Museum which shows the curious nesting habits of the Great Indian Hornbill. He is here given the role of *pater familias* — a privilege he did not enjoy in life — and is seen feeding his imprisoned spouse through the narrow slit in the wall which was built by the birds to close the entrance to the nest-hole.

According to the society's second journal, appropriately named

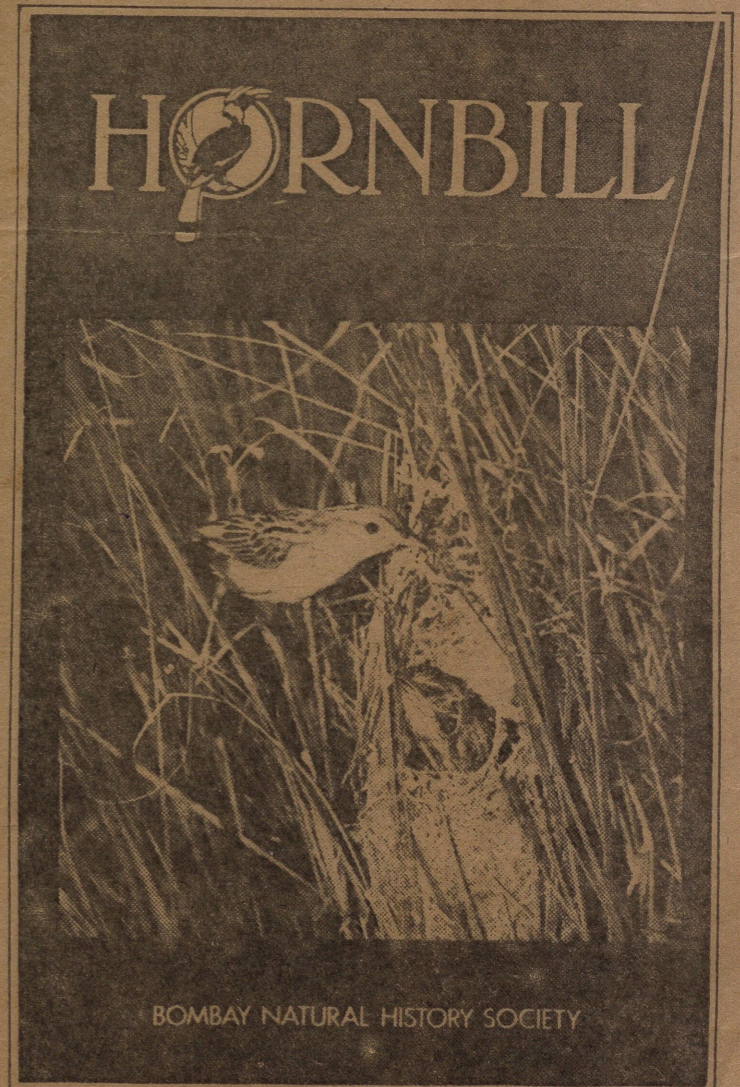
*Hornbill*, (about which more later) William apparently was very happy during the years he lived in the society's rooms. He made a great fuss of his personal appearance, and painted his great casque and beak with bright yellow from his 'vanity box' (the oil gland at the root of the tail) and finished his daily ritual with a dash of colour carefully placed on each wing. He was then ready to play a game.

He would easily catch a tennis ball thrown from a distance of seven or eight yards. His long curved beak prevented him from ever drinking, but he got all he wanted from the juice of ripe berries and fruit, and this in no way affected his cheery disposition. Cockroaches were to his liking, and a mouse, a snake or even a large rat he dearly loved; but it was not easy for him to get these

as he was hardly ever on the ground.

William, affectionately known as the office canary, lived in a cage behind the honorary secretary's chair during the 26 years he lived at the society. In 1938 he was incorporated into the society's logo and has since then found a place on the society's publications and stationery.

For several years, the society had been considering the publication of a popular, illustrated magazine for lay members who find the journal too technical. This was launched *Hornbill*, a quarterly in 1976. It not only presents natural history and conservation in easily readable language but also serves as a newsletter and as an inducement to friends of members to join the society. The society's membership now stands at about 3,000.



The second journal was named after William, the resident Great Indian Hornbill who made the society's premises his home



*The Common Shrew (Suncus murinus)*

**Natural history of the Asian Musk Shrew**



*A Musk Shrew family caravanning*

*The Water Shrew (Neomys fodiens) has a mild toxin in its saliva*



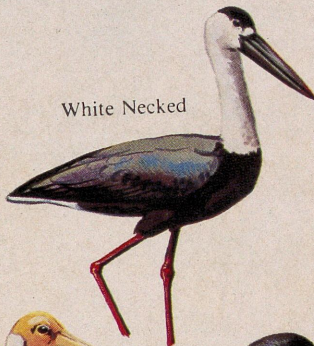
STORKS

White



1 Eurasian  
2 European

White Necked



Painted



Black



Lesser  
Adjutant



Adjutant

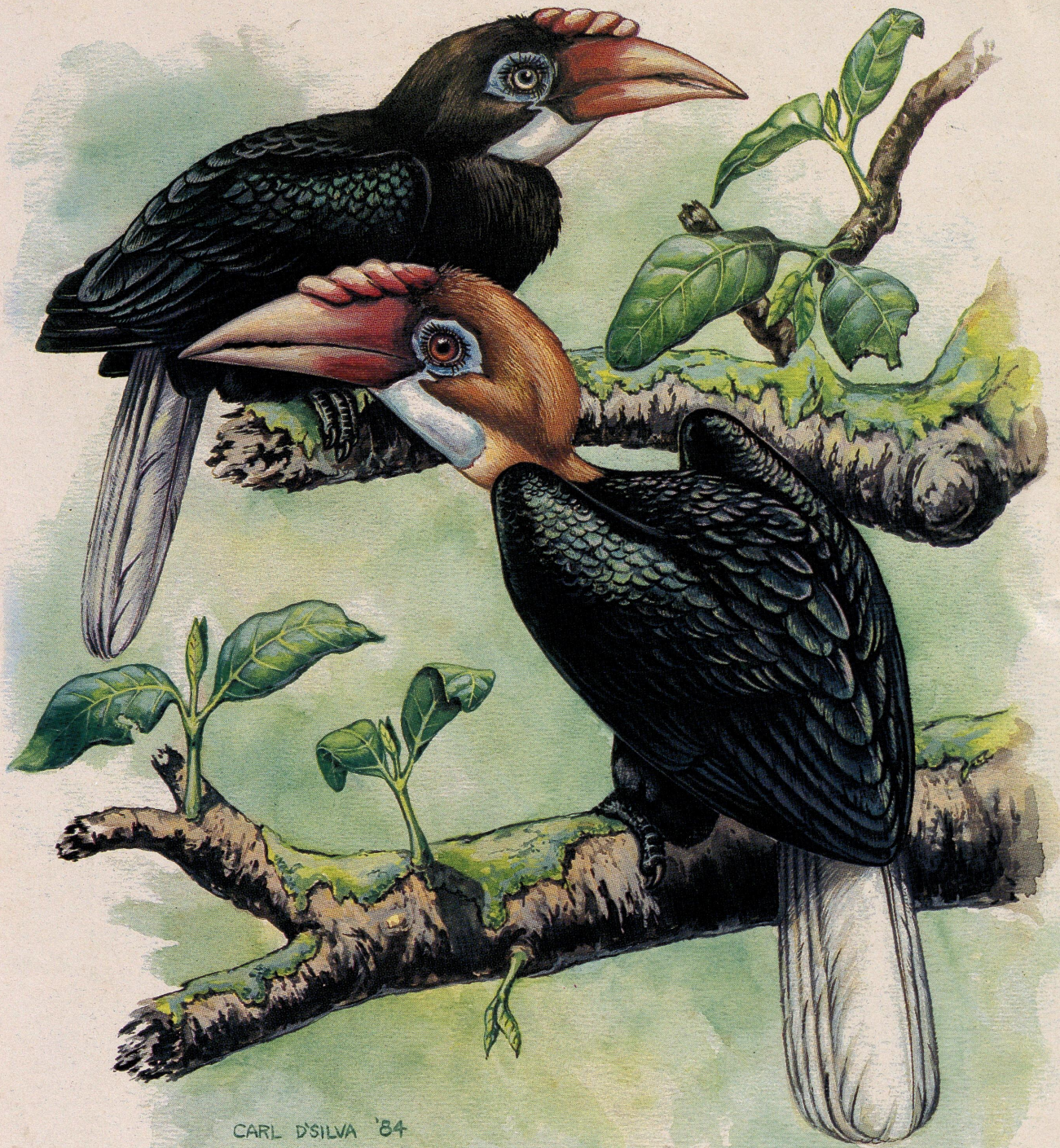


Openbill



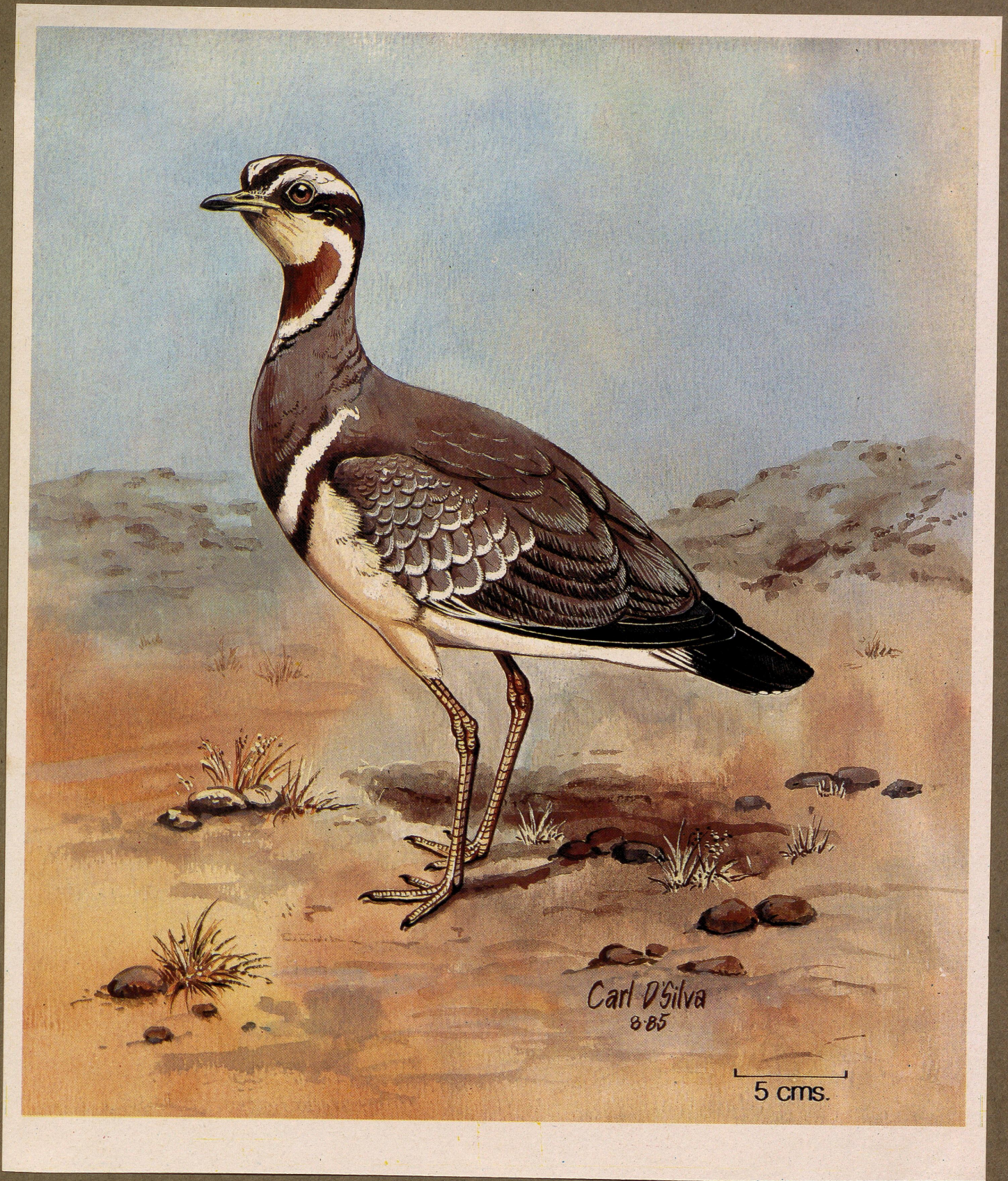
B i e l

© Carl D'Silva

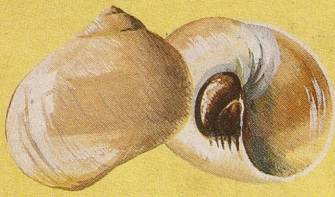


CARL D'SILVA '84

Narcondam Hornbills: Female above; Male below.



the rare JERDON'S COURSER



Neverita didyma



Natica lineata



Natica picta



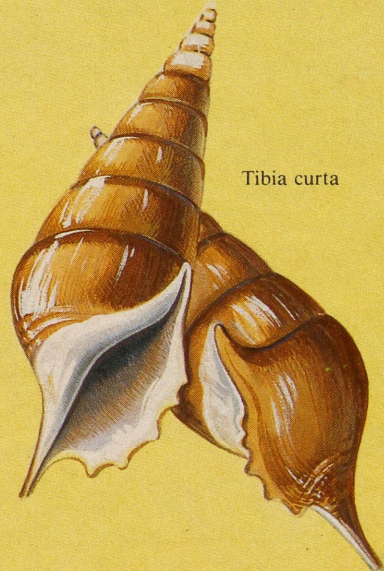
Janthina roseola



Natica maculosa



Lambis lambis



Tibia curta

© Carl D'Silva '86

© Carl D Silva  
'86



Littorina ventricosa



Planaxis sulcatus



Potamides cingulatus



Littorina intermedia



Tectarius malaccanus



Architectonica laevigata



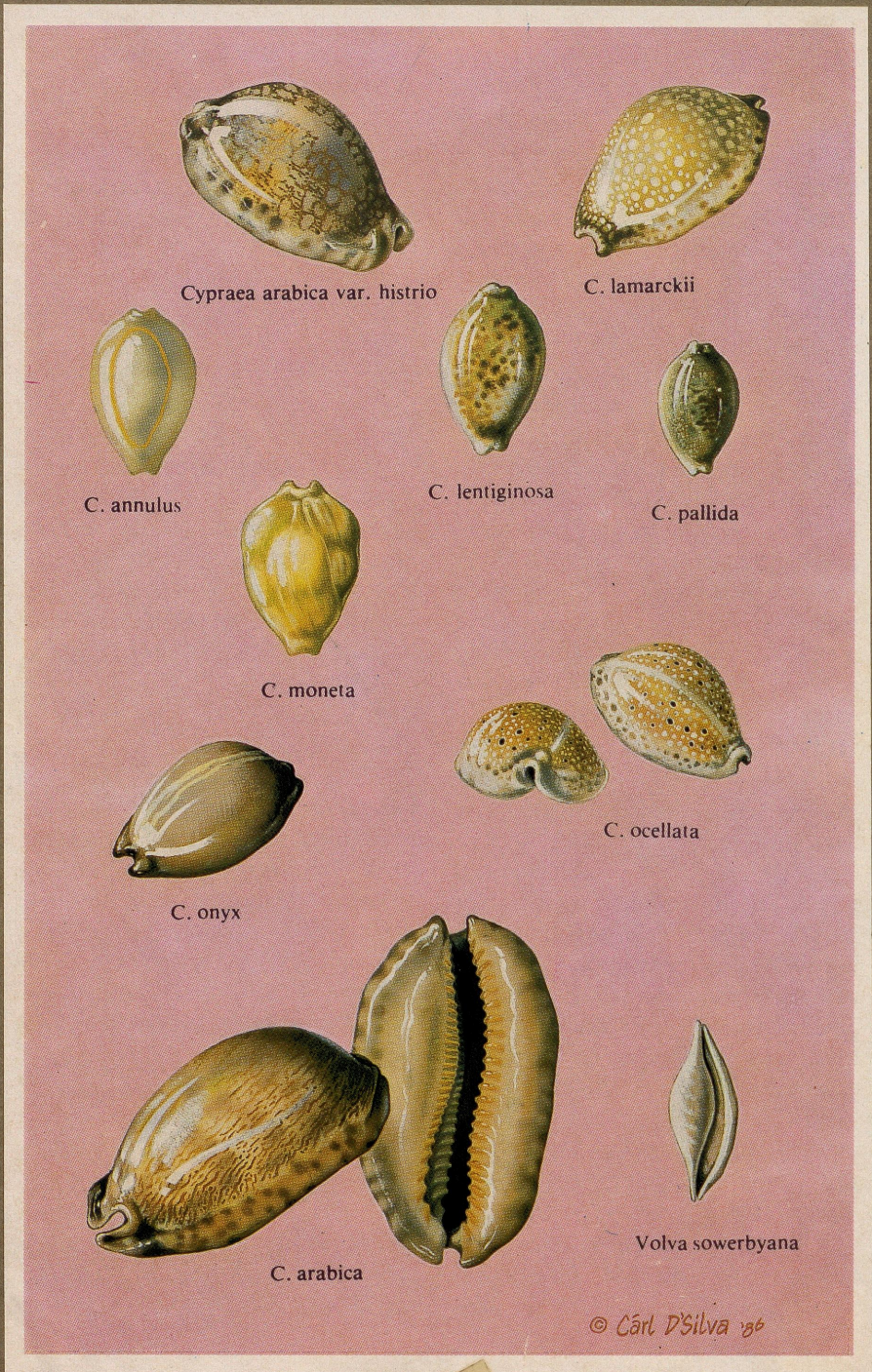
Turritella duplicata



Telescopium telescopium



Cerithium morus



Cypraea arabica var. histrio

C. lamarckii

C. annulus

C. lentiginosa

C. pallida

C. moneta

C. ocellata

C. onyx

C. arabica

Volva sowerbyana

© Carl D'Silva '86





*Thais tissoti*



*Thais rudolphi*



*Drupa subnodulosa*



*Thais carinifera*



*Drupa tuberculata*



*Thais sacellum*



*Drupa konkanensis*



*Thais bufo*



*Thais echinulata*

Carl

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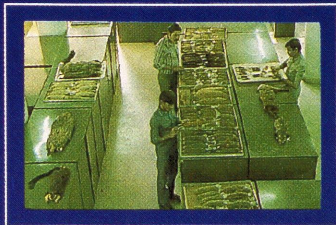
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(Opp. Lions Gate), Shahid Bhagat Singh Road, Bombay-400 023

☎ 243869, 244085, 243421 Gram: 'HORNBILL'

## About the BNHS

The Bombay Natural History Society derives its name from its city of origin, but its work covers every corner of India, from the Rann of Kutch to Arunachal Pradesh and from Ladakh to Point Calimere. Its scientific opinion receives international respect.

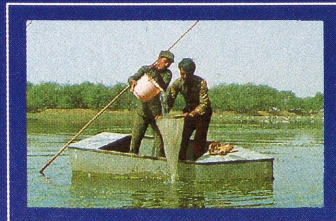
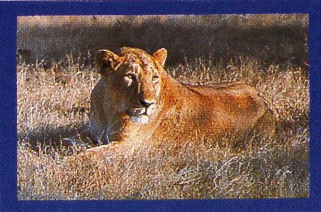


### Collections & Journal

In its early years, the BNHS played a vital role in documenting India's flora and fauna. Its collection of specimens and its Journal embody knowledge garnered over a century and indispensable for researchers from all parts of the world.

### Wildlife Conservation

The BNHS has helped create more sanctuaries and saved more endangered species than any other conservation organisation in the country. Quiet lobbying based on scientific data has helped save the Siberian and the Blacknecked Crane, the Asiatic Lion & many other species.



### Scientific Research

Effective conservation action should be based on scientific studies. Field projects by BNHS cover items of national significance. A few examples of recent projects:

Wetlands are an important part of the life support system of man and other species. The BNHS is studying the hydrobiology of one of the world's finest waterbird refuges — the Keoladeo Ghana National Park at Bharatpur.

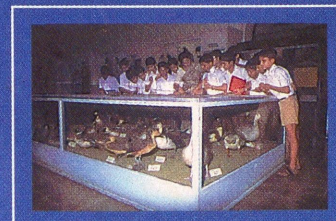
Studies of endangered species like the Elephant, try to establish ways in which men and wildlife can co-exist.



Bird strikes to aircraft cost human lives and valuable aircrafts. BNHS studies at 22 airports — International, Civil and Defence, have recommended ways to minimise such occurrences.

### A Landmark Discovery

The Jerdon's Courser, believed to be extinct, was re-discovered by a BNHS study team in 1986.

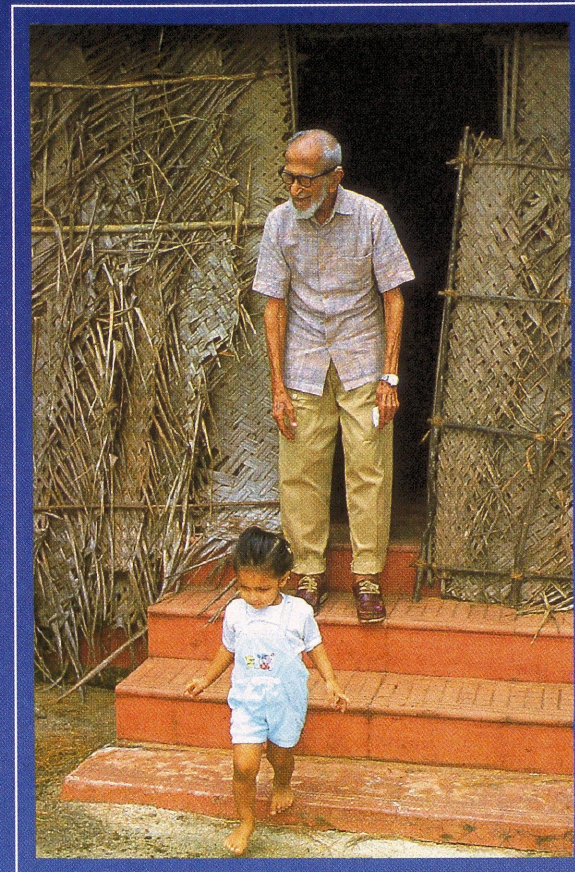


### Education

The BNHS has an active educational programme in several languages for school children and members.

1883  1987

## Bombay Natural History Society 1987-1988 Catalogue

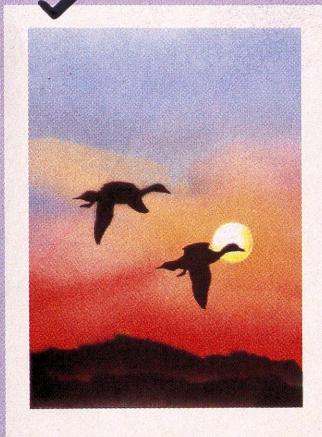


*“Nature conservation and nature education programmes of the BNHS ensure a richer legacy for future generations.”*

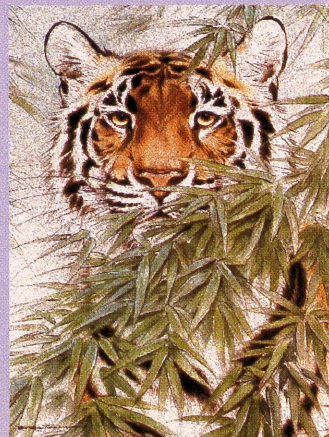
*Salim Ali*

**PRESIDENT, Bombay Natural History Society.**

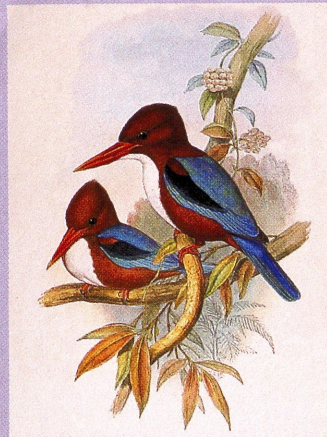
✓✓ Spread the joy of nature through your greetings...



87L5 — Pintail Ducks at Sunset



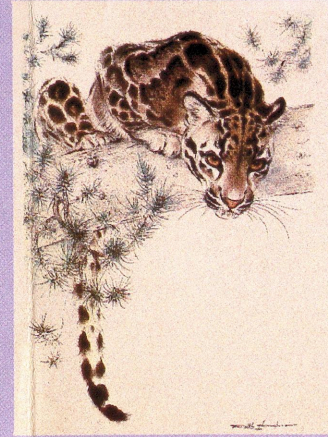
87L1 — Bengal Tiger



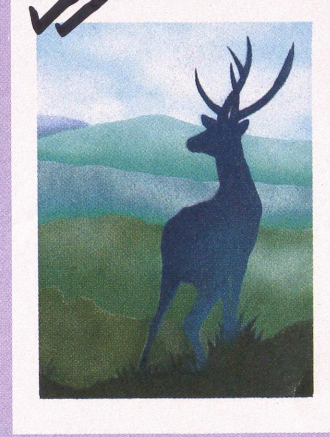
87L3 — Whitebreasted Kingfisher



87L4 — Bluewinged Siva



87L2 — Clouded Leopard



87L6 — Sambar



87L7 — Red Pierrot



87L8 — Danaid Eggfly



87N9 — Oak Blue



87N10 — Crimson Tip



A. Yellowbilled Blue Magpie



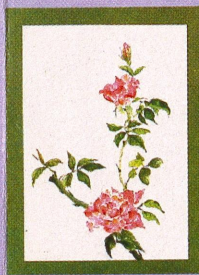
F. Assorted Pack



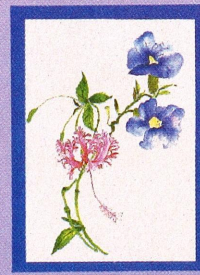
B. Plain Tiger



C. Phlox



D. Rose



E. Coral Hibiscus

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