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Swamp Deer in Kanha National Park

The continuous decline of the southern race of the barasingha, or swamp deer, in the Kanha National Park, in central India, has at last been arrested and numbers there are increasing—from 70 in 1969 to 96 at the census last summer, and now, according to news from Commodore K. K. Sanjana, over 100. This is an isolated race, *Cervus duvauceli branderi*, so this is the world population of this subspecies; in 1938 there were over 3000. Claude Martin of Zürich University is engaged on a WWF project study to find out the cause of the barasingha's decline, and a small herd is now established for study in a tiger-proof 69-acre enclosure where they are breeding in natural conditions; several fawns have been born.

Tigers are a great feature of the Kanha park. Commodore Sanjana reports that there are now 36 and the visitors' chances of seeing them are 'almost 90 per cent'. The park is now under the able management of Mr H. S. Panwar, Chief Wildlife Warden of Madhya Pradesh. Animal numbers are increasing, and facilities have been greatly improved.

Extinct and Endangered in Sind

Once upon a time—in fact, until the early 1930s—the Indus River, in its meanderings through the province of Sind to the Indian Ocean, flooded vast areas every summer, so that there were large riverine forests, many swamps and lakes, few people and a lot of wildlife. Today, writes T. J. Roberts, in *The Pakistan Journal of Forestry*, the Indus has been tamed; floods are reduced, arid areas have been irrigated and forests felled to make room for agriculture; the population has greatly increased, and 'within living memory' tiger, swamp deer (barasingha), blackbuck, and open-billed and black-necked storks have become extinct. On the verge of extinction now, are the wild ass, marsh crocodile, black ibis, short-toed eagle, peacock, great Indian bustard, marbled teal and star tortoise, 'for which little can be done'. And the list will lengthen if present trends continue: hog deer, glossy ibis, black partridge, houbara bustard and grey pelican will go, and the ratel, fishing cat and smooth-coated otter will disappear as breeding populations. Urgently needed, says Tom Roberts, whose survey was made at the request of the Chief Conservator of Forests in Sind, are new sanctuaries for the swamp and wetland living species.