

Oryx 100% Fund — a New Move

The FPS Council has decided to match all contributions to the Oryx 100% Fund, £1 for £1, up to £5000. Thus all gifts from members and friends up to that total will in fact be doubled. An anonymous £1000 gift was the first to be doubled in this way, which makes a splendid start, and all future gifts will qualify.

The Fund is concentrating on making small grants for urgent projects — the normal ceiling for a grant will be £500. (Larger projects are the province of the World Wildlife Fund). Thus contributors to the 100% Fund know not only that their gift will be doubled but that every penny will be spent on projects as the Society absorbs all clerical expenses. Please help!

The latest grants from the Fund include £500 to Costa Rica National Parks to buy the engine for a boat to be used for controlling poachers at the green turtle nesting beaches; £150 to Dr Carlos Lehmann for film stock to make a conservation educational film in Colombia; £50 towards a survey of the Zanzibar red colobus monkey; £50 for a survey of the cotton-top marmoset in Colombia, and a further £50 to Paul Joslin for his report on the Gir lion in India. All the animals concerned in these grants are in the highly endangered class; facts are urgently needed before plans for their conservation can be drawn up, and small grants such as these, paid out quickly, can be vitally important.

FPS Grants in India

The FPS has made two small grants of Rs1000 each out of its funds held in India: one to Mr E.R.C. Davidar to investigate the Nilgiri tahr in the Western Ghats; and one for a study of the leopard in the Borivali National Park on the outskirts of Bombay. India is one of the countries where, because of the difficulty of sending money out, FPS subscriptions can be paid into an account in the country of origin and later used for conservation projects such as these.

Animal Imports into Britain

Apart from tortoises, fewer animals were imported into Britain in 1970 than in 1969, according to figures just published by the Advisory Committee on the Animals (Restriction of Importation) Act 1964. While tortoise imports rose from 275,602 to 289,972, imports of all other animals fell from 13,352 to 12,999. Only 79 "List 1 animals", which includes the endangered species, were imported, and of these 27 were kangaroos or wallabies, trade in which is carefully controlled by the Australian Government, and 32 were southern white rhinos, which the Natal authorities are almost desperate to dispose of. In fact it is fair to say that in 1970, with the exception of a single orang-utan from Malaysia, no seriously endangered mammals or reptiles were imported into Britain, a tribute to the efficient working of "Boyle's law", the nickname given to the Act which the Society's then secretary did so much to bring about. But why, oh why, must we import well over a quarter of a million wretched tortoises every year? Is it not time the British public was weaned from such unsuitable pets, the vast majority of which die with the onset of each winter?