

leaves to sell and roots and berries to eat, drank in the daytime from these troughs, while cattle often drained them dry.

All shooting had been banned during the drought but this had no effect on the local poachers. We were astounded at the scale on which they operated. Shotguns and muzzle loaders licensed to protect crops are used continuously for killing both deer and gaur, now fully protected in Bihar, at water holes in the summer and at salt licks during the rains; the meat is sold. At every water hole we found hides made of branches, and in certain places hides of a more permanent nature had been carefully built of stones and boulders, with loopholes to fire out of. We destroyed 23 hides and one machan, but they were invariably rebuilt. A Government official, caught shooting a sambhar by spotlight from a jeep, was prosecuted, and army vehicles whose numbers were taken by foresters at night were reported to the Area Commander.

The RSPCA have now donated £500 specifically for wild life in Palamau, and two model dams are being built in the hope that the Forest Department may build more in other areas; they will be protected by forest guards against poachers. The lack of transport is a difficulty, but we hope for further donations to buy a jeep. These dams will bring permanent relief to the wildlife in the parched summer months and ensure that this year's calamity will not occur again. The State is lucky in having a keen conservationist, Mr. S. P. Shahi, as its Chief Conservator and under his guidance there are already signs that the game laws are more strictly adhered to.

Since this article was written the monsoon rains have brought floods to northern Bihar. The Palamau jungles in the south are once again lush and green, but there is no room for complacency. In the fiercely hot and dry summer months the Palamau National Park and the surrounding jungles are always acutely short of water, and now that the water level has fallen it is more than ever urgent to build permanent watering places.

Donations to help in this work can be sent to the "Save the Wild Life Fund", at the National and Grindlays Bank, 13 St. James' Square, London S.W.1. or 6 Church Lane, Calcutta.

Manipur Deer and Indian Wild Ass

IT READS as though the hydroelectric scheme in India which it was feared might threaten the safety of the rare Manipur brow-antlered deer will in fact benefit the deer indirectly. Mr. E. P. Gee reports that the scheme, by reducing the level of the Logtak Lake would reduce the level in the deer's sanctuary; but it would also keep the water level constant, eliminating the flooding which at times forces the deer to move outside the 10-square-mile sanctuary to higher ground where they may be in danger from poachers. With no flooding they are likely to stay inside. Another rare animal in India, confined to one small area and recently thought to be threatened, is the Indian wild ass, now numbering some 850 animals on the Little Rann of Kutch. The threat here is cultivation of their desert range, but the Chief Conservator of Forests of Gujarat State has assured Mr. Gee that there will be no cultivation for at least 15 years, and that even then the major part of the Little Rann will not be touched.