

EDITORIAL

At a recent meeting of the Club it was decided that its name be changed to the *Trinidad and Tobago* Field Naturalists' Club. The welcome addition of the smaller sister island to the Club's name eliminates an anomaly which should have been put right years ago, but there have in fact been Tobagonians in the Club's membership for many years, although few meetings apart from the occasional excursion can have been held in Tobago.

Perhaps now the time is ripe for an upsurge of interest in Tobago's natural history, as distinct from that of Trinidad. Certainly it has been sorely neglected up to date by most members of the Club. Out of 99 articles on the natural history of the two islands published in the last eight issues of this journal (back to 1956) only three have dealt with Tobago alone (all concerning bird-life), and a few others have briefly included Tobago along with Trinidad. The current issue includes a further report on Tobago's birds.

Tobago's natural history should certainly be of great interest to students of zoogeography. Lying as it does on the edge of the continental shelf of South America, it is the last outpost of the Andean chain (according to some views), separated by very deep water and many miles from the Lesser Antilles. It is a commonplace to observe that its flora and fauna are essentially continental rather than Antillean. And yet they differ markedly from those of Trinidad, providing a beautiful subject for study.

Further, the sea and reefs around Tobago offer wonderful opportunities not available in Trinidad. It is a shame that no detailed long-term study of Buccoo Reef has ever been published (in spite of the great interest in that area), so that we have no firm ecological basis for any of the development plans. Conservational and agricultural decisions have had to be made, often without adequate prior studies. Now that the Government is hoping for the development of tourism in Tobago, we ought to be able to point to the existence of wildlife studies, if we want to safeguard our interests.