



Briefly . . . Compiled by Richard Fitter

The items under this title continue the service formerly supplied by the newsletter *Kingfisher*

INTERNATIONAL

Pahlavi Environmental Prize

Maurice Strong, former Secretary General of the United Nations Environment Programme, has been awarded the first Pahlavi Environmental Prize of \$50,000. The prize has been established by the Shah of Iran, to be awarded annually for the most outstanding contribution to the cause of protecting the environment.

UK & Wetlands Convention

In ratifying the Wetlands Convention as the ninth contracting party, the United Kingdom has brought the following states and territories within its provisions: Antigua, Belize, Bermuda, Brunei, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands and Dependencies, Gibraltar, Jersey, Montserrat, Pitcairn Island, St Helena and Dependencies, Solomon Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

New UNEP DG

Mostafa K. Tolba (Egypt) succeeded Maurice Strong (Canada) as Director General of the UN Environment Programme in January 1976.

Polar Bear Agreement in Force

In May 1976 the international polar bear agreement, signed in November 1973 by Canada, Denmark, Norway, the Soviet Union and the USA, came into force, having been ratified by the necessary three signatories (Canada, Norway, USSR).

Mediterranean Pollution

Representatives of 15 Mediterranean coastal states have met in Barcelona and agreed on measures to protect the Mediterranean Sea from pollution. Twelve of them have also signed the resultant Convention and Dumping Protocol. Of the countries qualified to attend, only Albania and Algeria did not do so.

WWF Tops \$20m

The total sum allocated to conservation grants by the World Wildlife Fund since its foundation in 1961 has now exceeded \$20,000,000.

Golden Lion Tamarin Studbook

The second edition of the Golden Lion Tamarin Studbook, prepared by D. G. Kleiman of the National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, shows 83 animals in captivity (excluding those maintained at the Biological Bank at Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) in 15 zoos and other collections in the USA, Japan and South Africa.

Siberian Tigers in Zoos

Altogether 1031 Siberian tigers have been registered in the official Studbook up to August 1975, but only 571 are still alive, in 140 collections. Of the 48 wild-caught animals in the studbook only 30 have bred and thus contributed to the gene pool.

Orang-utans in Captivity

According to Marvin Jones's private files, there are 401 wild-caught and 220 captive-bred orang-utans at present in captivity. Half the captive-bred and nearly a third of the wild-caught animals are in the USA. But of the captive-bred only seven are proven breeders, compared with 182 of the wild-caught.

Prince Bernhard Retires

Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands has retired as International President of the World Wildlife Fund. He will, however, continue as President of the Netherlands National Appeal.

Cats Symposium in Seattle

The Fourth International Symposium on the World's Cats will be held March 17-20, 1977, in Seattle, Washington—details from R. L. Eaton, Department of Zoology, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195, USA.

SAFE becomes WPTI

SAFE International has changed its name to Wildlife Preservation Trust International to clarify the organisation's purpose, according to its Hon. Director, Gerald Durrell. SAFE/WPTI concentrates mainly on saving endangered animals through captive breeding and the establishment of breeding colonies.

36 Przewalski's Horse Births

At the latest count there were 254 Przewalski's horses in European and American zoos, a net increase of 11 for 1975. Thirty-six foals (20 males, 16 females) were born during the year.

Getty Prize Survives

The annual \$50,000 Wildlife Conservation Prize established by the late J. Paul Getty in 1974 will be awarded again in April 1977 as the Getty Prize. The first two recipients were Peruvian conservationist Don Felipe Benavides and Dr Salim Ali, doyen of Asian ornithologists.

BRITISH ISLES

Green Ban Arrives in UK

The 'green ban', widely used by trade unionists in Australia to avert threats to the environment, has reached Britain in the paradoxical shape of a refusal to demolish a large slab of bricks and mortar, the General Post Office in Birmingham.

Kites in Wales

1975 was a good year for the red kite in Wales, the only part of the British Isles where it still breeds. Twenty-eight known breeding pairs produced 24 offspring, the largest number raised in any year this century. The use of strychnine and other poisons, however, is believed to be responsible for the virtual disappearance of the red kite from the north-eastern part of its present range, where only a few years ago four or five pairs nested.

Two Rhum Eagles Die

Two white-tailed eagles, both females, are the only survivors of the four which were re-introduced to Rhum in the Inner Hebrides last year. The single male of the group is said to have died of kidney failure, and the other female was shot on the mainland. Ten more eagles may be introduced in an attempt to re-establish the species as a breeding bird in Britain for the first time since 1916.

New British Mammals?

A wild boar killed on a forestry road at Nairn in the Scottish Highlands, and a raccoon dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides* snared in West Sussex suggests the possi-

bility of two new introduced mammals in Britain. The unheralded arrival of the raccoon dog, which has been spreading westwards across Europe for many years, is particularly alarming in view of the rabies implications.

Are Weasels Falsely Accused?

That weasels and stoats may have little influence on the survival rate of partridge chicks is indicated by recent studies in England and Scotland sponsored by the Game Conservancy. It appeared that the areas with the highest chick survival also had the most weasels and stoats, and it was estimated that a weasel in an average year will consume from one-half to four gamebird chicks. Removal of weasels from the area tested would save only about 12 or 13 chicks a year. Stoats appeared marginally more important as predators, mainly because they are capable of taking sitting hens, but shooting weasels and stoats as pests is probably unjustified.

Dangerous Pets Regulated

People who keep certain potentially dangerous wild animals as pets can now be fined as much as £400, under the terms of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act. This requires owners of lions, poisonous snakes, certain monkeys, crocodiles or bears to hold licences from local authorities, who can refuse applications on grounds of safety, nuisance or inadequate accommodation. Zoos, pet shops and research laboratories are exempted.

Stiffer Penalties

The maximum fine for an offence involving a specially protected bird has been raised from £25 to £100 under a new amendment to the Protection of Birds Acts. For an offence against a less rare species, the fine has gone up from £5 to £20.

Chinese Mitten Crab Increasing

For the past few decades the Chinese mitten crab *Eriocheir sinensis* has been increasing its range along the coasts of France and may soon appear in the rivers of Britain. The species breeds in the sea but lives in fresh water; the last one found in a British river was taken in the Thames in 1935.



Egg Thieves Undeterred

At least 39 peregrine falcon eyries, about a quarter of the British total, were raided last summer by egg thieves and would-be falconers. As a result of this undeniable failure of current protection schemes, the RSPB has announced that this year it will change its tactics 'with wider and more intensive coverage of sites . . . and by the use of automatic devices.'

EUROPE

Environmental Impact Statements

Four European countries, France, the Netherlands, the UK and West Germany, are considering the adoption of environmental impact statements. A recent meeting in Louvain, sponsored by the European Council for Environmental Law and the European Environmental Bureau, discussed the American experience with these statements and its relevance to European problems. The four countries appear to intend to use EIS's only for a narrow range of subjects, the UK, for instance, only for land use development.

Conservation Landslide Vote

By a vote of 467-1, the French Assembly has adopted a Nature Protection Bill, which provides, among other things, for an animals' charter (a ban on trade in all endangered species), procedures for the creation of nature reserves, and compulsory environmental impact studies to accompany all large planning schemes.

Alpine Ecological Charter

The Council of Europe's ALPEXPO Symposium agreed on a Draft Ecological Charter for European Mountain Regions which establishes that the Alpine environment is an indispensable natural reserve, that farmers should be rewarded for protecting soil and mountain landscapes, and that a convention of Alpine regional authorities should be organised in Grenoble, France, by 1977 at the latest.

Golden Eagles in Finland

Although the golden eagle is legally protected in Finland, its nests are being systematically destroyed in north-eastern Lapland, where local opinion is very much against it, as a supposed predator on

young reindeer. The authorities are helpless because suspicions against the vandals cannot be confirmed.

Peregrines and Ospreys

Only 16 pairs of peregrines nested in Finland in 1975, all in open bogs, compared with an estimated 800-2000 pairs of 25 years ago. All cliff sites are unoccupied. Out of more than 900 traditional osprey eyries, 673 were inhabited in 1975, but only 394 pairs actually produced young, an average of just over two per nest.

Lynx in Yugoslavia

The lynx appears to have been successfully reintroduced into Slovenia, where it was exterminated at the end of the last century. Four pairs, caught in Slovakia, were released in Slovenia in April 1974, and have now reared at least one litter of young in the wild.

Deer for the Abruzzo

64 more red deer have been released in the Abruzzo National Park, Central Italy, to provide a stock of wild prey for the wolves. The latest batch came from the Bayerische Wald in South Germany. There are now believed to be 130 red deer in the park, but the roe deer operation has been less successful, their numbers being only 22.

Penalty for Killing a Bear

Fines and costs totalling 275,000 lire plus an indemnity for damages to the Abruzzo National Park have been imposed on a man who killed a brown bear in the park where only 80-100 are believed to remain —heartening evidence that the Italian judiciary is at last beginning to take wildlife conservation seriously.

Bounty Abolished

Czechs will no longer be paid bounties for wolves, and will no longer be allowed to catch or kill them for any reason between March 1 and September 15.

Ebro Delta Reprieved

Following representations by IUCN, WWF and other conservation bodies, the Spanish Interministerial Commission for the Environment has decreed that there is to be no development of the Ebro delta, adjacent to the world famous Coto Donaña reserve, until an expert committee has delineated the areas to be conserved.

Diplomas for Parks

The Council for Europe Nature Diploma has been awarded to the Pyrenees and Vanoise National Parks in France and to the Kuscenneti National Park south of Lake Manyas in Turkey.

NORTH AMERICA

Rearing Terns for Market

It costs the Massachusetts Audubon Society \$1 to protect every common tern chick that fledges in Massachusetts. The cost of studying them is an extra \$1–2 per chick. Since only 5–10 per cent of the chicks survive to enter the breeding population, each new breeding adult thus reflects an expenditure of at least \$25. As Ian Nisbet remarks in the Society's April 1976 *Newsletter*, 'it seems a mis-allocation of resources to spend \$25 to foster a tern which is then killed and sold for a dime in a Guyanan market'.

Conservation Victory Thwarted

Success in controlling the sea lamprey in the Great Lakes has been nullified by the fact that the resulting crop of food fish cannot be eaten due to PCB contamination, Assistant Interior Secretary Nathaniel P. Reed recently told a House of Representatives Committee.

Preserving the National Symbol

To 'ensure that this magnificent bird will be around for the tricentennial', the bald eagle has been proposed for listing as an endangered species in 43 of the United States. The 1940 Bald Eagle Protection Act applies only to the southern subspecies. Under the new rule the bird would be listed simply as *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* and would be protected in all but five northern States, Alaska and Hawaii.

Duck Hawk Back Again

Sixteen young peregrine falcons (duck hawks) bred at Cornell University were released at five sites in the eastern United States in 1975. Twelve of them survived their first winter and were supplemented with two dozen more released in 1976. A new facility in Colorado is now breeding the subspecies of the peregrine that inhabits the Rockies, and four of these were released in 1976.

Whooping Cranes Return

All 49 of the whooping cranes that migrated north from Texas to Canada in the spring of 1975 returned there in the fall, with eight young ones to make a total of 57 wintering at Aransas in the winter of 1975–76.

Osprey Revival

The US ban on DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons is thought to be the main reason for the recent successful breeding season of ospreys in southern New England and Long Island. From the 105 active nests between New York and Boston, 130 osprey chicks hatched. In the 1950s and 1960s ospreys were suffering severe reproductive failure because of pollution, and before the DDT ban their populations were declining by as much as 25 per cent a year.

Abolishing Lead Shot

Steel shot ammunition will be used for waterfowl hunting in selected areas in the Atlantic Flyway as from 1976. The use of steel and other non-toxic shot will be extended to the Mississippi Flyway in 1977 and the Central and Pacific Flyways in 1978.

Refuges for Endangered Species

There are 44 endangered species of wildlife in 139 of the 385 national wildlife refuges in 39 of the United States. Most are in the Nanalei and Hawaiian islands refuges, with eight between them, including the Laysan duck and three other birds that are found nowhere else in the world. Two Florida refuges, Merritt Island and National Key Deer Refuge, house six each, among them the Florida manatee and the southern bald eagle.

Mammals in Refuges

Approximately half the estimated 416 species of North American mammals are found on lands and waters within the 385 national wildlife refuges in the United States.

Polar Bears in Ontario

At least 80 polar bear cubs were born along the Hudson Bay coast of Ontario, according to aerial surveys in the spring of 1976. This maintains the polar bear population of the region, where native peoples are estimated to kill about 20



adult polar bears a year. In Canada the polar bear is no longer considered an endangered species, except along the Newfoundland–Labrador coast.

Margay Extinct in US?

No margay have been seen in Texas since 1971, and none in New Mexico in recent years. Those reported in southern Florida are suspected of being either ocelots or released pets. So the margay appears to be extinct within the United States, although fortunately still not endangered in Mexico.

More Endangered Species

The gray bat and three subspecies of the timber wolf, including the Mexican subspecies, have now been officially added to the list of endangered species in the US.

Return of the Wolf

The Office of Endangered Species is considering a plan to reintroduce the timber wolf in six areas of the United States: the Great Smoky Mountains, North Carolina/Tennessee; the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, upper New York, New Hampshire and two areas of Maine.

Burro Problem in the West

Wild horses and burros (feral donkeys) continue to displace native wildlife in many parts of the western United States. Their numbers grow at about 20 per cent each year and have doubled since 1971. There are now 50,000 wild horses and 5000 burros on public lands alone, 7000 of them in Oregon. Vegetation is being destroyed, and both elk and bighorn sheep are suffering from the competition. Restrictions imposed by a federal law of 1971 are obstructing the efforts of the Bureau of Land Management to alleviate this threat to America's wildlife.

Endangered Butterflies

Two Florida butterflies, the Schaus and Bahama swallowtails, are the first insects to be officially listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Canada and IUCN

Representatives of Canadian government agencies and voluntary bodies have set up a Canadian Committee for Nature Conservation to liaise with IUCN.

New Natural History Society

The Halifax Field Naturalists are the latest natural history body in Canada. Information from Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, NS.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Rare Caribbean Parrots

Only 125–175 St Lucia parrots *Amazona versicolor* remain, according to the latest estimate. The parrots of Dominica, *A. arausiaca* and *A. imperialis* are now believed to number 350 and 150 respectively. All three must clearly be regarded as gravely endangered in the wild. Human predation continues to be responsible for an important part of the population decline.

Bird Threatens Bird

The once abundant but now uncommon yellow-shouldered blackbird *Agelaius xanthomus*, endemic to Puerto Rico, is threatened not by man but by another bird, the brood-parasitic shiny cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*, which has recently invaded the West Indies.

Vicuña in Chile

A census of the vicuña in Lauca National Park has yielded 2227 animals so far, but there are believed to be 4000 there altogether. Huemul (deer) may number 400.

AFRICA

Desert Marching South

The Sahara Desert is advancing southwards at a rate of more than 5 km a year in Sudan. A recent reconnaissance has found clear evidence that the edge has shifted southwards by 90–100 km in the past seventeen years. Sand encroachment, moving ahead of the onward march of the desert is also serious, and is already forcing the progressive abandonment of agriculture.

Extinct in Morocco

The Spanish imperial eagle *Aquila heliaca adalberti* is now extinct in Morocco, where it used to breed in the marshes and forests between Rabat and Tangier and in

the Rif, according to a survey by S. P. Mills of Oxford, England, supported by WWF. The surviving population of this race of the imperial eagle is believed to number fewer than 60 pairs, all in Spain.

Tribulations of the Cape Hunting Dog

The only remaining pack of Cape hunting dogs in Kalahari Gemsbok Park, South Africa, appears doomed. Of an original eight, two were shot by stock breeders when the pack strayed from the park, and another, a female, died during efforts to tranquillise the dogs before taking them back. The last remaining female had a hind leg injured during the same operation. In the Kruger National Park, where there are about 260 dogs, some have been killed by lions, and the population as a whole may be suffering from competition with spotted hyenas.

Successful Transplant

Four years after the East African Wild Life Society translocated them to the Shimba Hills reserve in eastern Kenya, roan and sable antelope have not only survived but are breeding. There are eleven roan in two herds.

Fate of Crescent Island

Bureaucratic delays appear to have ended the possibility of the Kenya National Parks Trustees acquiring Crescent Island on Lake Naivasha as a bird sanctuary. The island has been bought by a private individual.

Unesco African Directory

A directory of ecologists working in the African region is obtainable from the Unesco Regional Office of Science and Technology for Africa, PO Box 30592, Nairobi, Kenya. It lists 226 research workers in 22 countries, 179 in English-speaking and 47 in francophone countries, 79 Africans and 147 expatriates.

New Conservation Areas in Ghana

Two areas, together known as the Ankasa River Forest Reserve and considered to be the most important tropical rain forest reserve in Ghana, have been upgraded to conservation areas, under the Wild Animals Preservation Act. Conservation areas now account for 117.5 square miles and have been divided into three administrative sections: Bia National

Park, Bia West Game Production Reserve and Bia South Game Production Reserve. Among the projects to be conducted on the game production reserves is a study of how to reconcile logging with fauna conservation.

ASIA

Orang-utan Habitat Losses

Dr and Mrs H. D. Rijksen estimate that there are now about 15,000 orang-utans in Sumatra, half of which will lose their habitat during the next 10–15 years due to logging and clearing for agriculture of the natural rain forests. The 6000 km² Gunung Leuser reserve is likely to become the last refuge for the orang-utan as well as such endangered animals as the Sumatran tiger and the Sumatran rhino.

Rehabilitating Orang-utans

During 1975 eleven orang-utans reached the Medan rehabilitation centre in North Sumatra, four of which were confiscated and seven donated. Most of the donations were from Indonesian officials, including army and police officers, who were persuaded to present them, often after keeping them as pets for several years. Only three more were known to be in captivity by the end of the year, compared with 53 in August 1973, of which 28 reached the rehabilitation centre.

Sumatran Tiger Soon Extinct?

Markus Borner believes the Sumatran tiger could become extinct in the wild fairly soon if steps are not taken to enforce protection of the 800 wild survivors, of which he estimates 100 are being poached and killed annually. About half the surviving tigers are found in Central Sumatra, but unfortunately very few of them are in nature reserves.

Javan Rhino Census

The 1975 annual rhino census in the Ujung Kulon reserve in western Java produced an estimate of 45–54, continuing the slow but steady increase recently recorded. Five rhinos were encountered during the census, the highest number on record, and helping to confirm the increase.

Tigers Increase

In India tigers are increasing in some of



the special reserves set aside under Operation Tiger. At Bandipur numbers have risen from 17 to 24, at Melghat from 27 to 32 and in Manas from 31 to 40. In the famous Corbett Park the tiger population is said to have reached saturation point.

Javan Tigers Down to Five

Only five Javan Tigers remain in the Meru Betiri reserve in Java, almost the last remaining refuge of this now very rare subspecies. Panthers and wild dogs are much more numerous. A few banteng survive just outside the reserve.

Smuggling Sri Lanka Leopard Skins

Europeans are believed to be responsible for killing 100–150 leopards every year in Ceylon, and for smuggling an average of three or four skins out of the country each week. In this way a foreigner on contract to a development project can earn an extra untaxed \$36,000 dollars in three years.

How Many Elephants in Sri Lanka?

T. W. Hoffmann, President of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Ceylon, claims that there are many more elephants in Sri Lanka than the last published estimate (1600–2200; G. M. McKay, 1971) suggests. He believes that elephants have actually increased in the past 20 years and may now number 4000–5000. He suggests that a population of 2000–2500 elephants could be maintained within the national parks.

Otters in Thailand

Four species of otter occur in Thailand: the common *Lutra lutra*, the smooth-coated *L. perspicillata*, the hairy-nosed *L. sumatrana* and the small-clawed *Aonyx cinerea*. All are decreasing, due to habitat destruction, poisoning and hunting for the skin and pet trade. A four-part conservation programme is being mounted by local conservationists, with the Royal Forest Department, and funded by the International Fund for Animal Welfare. It covers education, research, a moratorium in trade, the maintenance of habitat and the setting up of captive breeding groups.

Dugong Steaks for Sale

There is still a dugong market in South

India, at Kilakkarai in Tamil Nadu.

A decade ago some fishermen fished for dugongs alone, but now few fish exclusively for this endangered species. Dugong meat sells at 4–5 rupees a kilogram.

Monks Help Storks

When there is a storm, many young open-billed storks at the famous colony at Wat Phailom outside Bangkok, Thailand, fall to the ground and eventually perish. The Association for the Conservation of Wildlife is paying the monks \$20 a month to build a pen in which to keep these fallen youngsters, and to collect the food (snails) which also falls from the nests and feed it to them.

Turtles at Trengganu

From its start in 1961 until 1974 the Leathery Turtle Conservation Programme planted 478,938 eggs in the Trengganu hatchery in Malaysia, resulting in the release of 244,392 turtles. It is believed that some 2443 turtles may thereby have been added to the wild population. In 1974 the FPS made a grant to the scheme, and 85,243 eggs were planted in 1975.

Turtles in Thailand

The Thai Navy is helping to conserve the five species of marine turtles that frequent the seas around Thailand, all of which have decreased, by some 80 per cent, in recent years. The Navy controls access to the breeding islands, and hatches some eggs.

Threat to Ceylon's Coral

A million cubic feet of coral are already believed to have been quarried from the east coast of Sri Lanka. The heaps of coral lining the road from Ambalangoda to Gintota, and the lime kilns along the coast from Kalkudah northwards to Vakarai bear grim witness to the damage done to the reefs which at present still protect Sri Lanka's coast from erosion.

Endangered in Japan

Several species of mammal are in danger of extinction in Japan, and one, the Hondo race of the wolf *Canis lupus hodophilax*, is recently extinct, due to rabies and distemper at the beginning of the century, coupled with overhunting and habitat destruction. Another race of the wolf *C. l. hattai* is extinct on Hokkaido,

but survives in Sakhalin and perhaps in the Kuriles. The Japanese sealion *Zalophus californianus japonicus* is extinct in Japan, but may survive in Korea. The otter *Lutra lutra*, perhaps as a separate subspecies *whiteleyi*, has become very rare and is also extinct on Hokkaido. Both the Iriomote cat *Mayailurus iriomotensis* and the Ryuku rabbit *Pentalagus furnessi* are very localised and so inevitably insecure.

Thailand Bans Primate Exports

Thailand has banned the hunting, trading and export of all non-human primates. This should relieve the pressure especially on the threatened stump-tail macaque *Macaca speciosa*, for which there was an annual export quota of 6000.

Tree Planting in China

Since the Revolution in 1949 more than 80m trees have been planted in Peking, and a further million are planted each year. The forested area in and near Nanking has been increased from 1900 ha to 6103 ha in the same period.

Gir Forest Wins Award

The Indian Board of Wildlife has adjudged the Gir Forest National Park in Gujarat State the best preserved wildlife sanctuary in India in 1975. The Gujarat Forest Department has received the Chairman's Challenge Trophy for 1975.

Last Wilderness

Koh Surin, in the Andaman Sea 80 km off Thailand, and the last remaining uninhabited forested island in Thai waters, is to be surveyed by a 20-man multi-disciplinary research team, supported by the Wildlife Division of the Royal Forest Department.

Oman Protects Wildlife

A decree of the Omani Ministry of Diwan Affairs totally protects the Arabian tahr, the Arabian oryx, the ibex, all gazelles, the Omani hare and the houbara bustard. Shooting of all birds on the tidal coastline of the mainland and islands is now forbidden throughout the year, and there is a close season for sandgrouse from April 15 to June 30.

Mrs Gandhi Intervenes

After visiting the Madras Snake Park, which is located at the Guindy Deer Sanctuary, the last square-mile remnant of

the original scrub vegetation of Madras, Mrs Gandhi gave orders that a hospital, which was to have been built within the sanctuary, must be built elsewhere.

Destruction in the Himalaya

In Nepal more than 77,000 ha of forested land was officially designated for settlement in the Terai, but more than three times that area is thought to have been illegally cleared. Soil erosion has not surprisingly greatly accelerated, and in the eastern hills about 38 per cent of the land consists of abandoned farmland, ruined by erosion and inefficient farming.

New Department in Mongolia

A new Nature Protection Department has recently been set up in Mongolia, whose full name and address is: Department of the Protection of Nature of the State Committee for Science and Technology of the Council of Ministers of the Mongolian People's Republic, Government House, Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

ANTIPODES

The Kakapo Crisis

The curious New Zealand parrot, the kakapo *Strigops habroptilus*, is a good challenger to the Mauritius kestrel for the dubious distinction of being the rarest bird in the world. Only ten individuals are known still to exist, and none are certainly known to be females, although it is hoped that at least two are. It has recently been discovered to be a lek species, which complicates the plans of the NZ Wildlife Service to capture some for captive breeding.

World's Second Rarest Bird?

Yet another strong competitor for the title of "rarest bird in the world" is the black robin of Chatham Island, off New Zealand, *Petroica traversi*. In 1968 there were 25 pairs; now there are only nine individuals, all on Little Mangere, a 40-acre rocky islet in the Chatham group. It is hoped to save the species by re-vegetating the islet.

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef

An Act of the Australian Federal Parliament now in force establishes a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, a GBR Marine



Park Authority and a GBR Consultative Committee. The Park will not include any island or part of an island that forms part of Queensland, but the GBR extends for some distance out to sea beyond the coast of Queensland.

New Marsupial Discovered

A member of the marsupial family Dasyuridae new to science has been discovered in Billiatt Conservation Park, an area of 37,000 ha some 200 km east of Adelaide, South Australia. It most closely resembles the genus *Antechinus*, but appears to merit generic status itself; it has not yet been given a name. Dasyurids comprise most of Australia's small insectivorous and carnivorous marsupials, including the marsupial analogues of the shrews.

Park for a Wallaby?

Reports of the presence of the yellow-footed rock wallaby *Petrogale xanthopus* in western New South Wales have been confirmed by an extensive search, and in the area searched, near Broken Hill, the wallaby appeared to occupy most of the available habitats, in the shape of steep cliffs with luxuriant vegetation. It is hoped that a national park will soon be declared in the area.

Smuggling Birds from Australia

In the eight years 1967–1974, 73 people were convicted of attempting to export 3344 protected birds from Australia. The number of birds actually smuggled is probably much greater, since Australia has 12,000 miles of coastline. Golden-shouldered parrots *Psephotus chrysopterygius*, protected because of their rarity, fetch \$A6000–8000 a pair.

Unprotected in W Australia

A list of the unprotected fauna in Western Australia has been published officially. Its 16 mammals include such pests as the black and brown rats, rabbit, feral cat and feral goat. The 19 unprotected birds include the budgerigar, the introduced European goldfinch and, unfortunately, four birds of prey. There are also 29 poisonous snakes on the list.

New Zealand Bans Whale Products

New Zealand has banned importation of whale products, making it the second

nation to announce a total embargo. The other is the United States. Partial bans operate in Australia, France and the UK.

OCEANS

Pollution in the Pacific

Pollution by lumps of tar, petroleum residues, is concentrated in the north-western quadrant of the Pacific Ocean, particularly in the Kuroshio current system. The source appears to be tank washings from tankers on the very busy route from the Middle East to Japan. This is discharged by tankers south of Japan, and becomes entrained by the Kuroshio current, which washes it across the Pacific for 7000 km.

Tourists in the Galapagos

The number of tourists visiting the Galapagos Islands, almost all attracted by the islands' wildlife, rose from a handful in 1967 to 8100 in 1974, and only fell to 6800 in 1975 because the largest tourist boat sank in that year. The Galapagos Master Plan envisages a ceiling of 12,000 visitors a year.

Nene Restoration Project

There were 26 pairs of nenes at the Pohakuloa breeding station of the Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources in 1975. A total of 1446 nenes have so far been reared and 1061 have been released into four sanctuaries on the island of Hawaii, in addition to 187 on Maui. A grand total of 391 birds have been released on Maui, including also 197 from the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge, England, and 7 from Connecticut.

Two 'Extincts' Refound

Two of the 273 plants listed as being possibly already extinct in Hawaii have been re-found: *Tetramolopium filiforme*, a composite, and *Lobelia niihauensis* var. *meridia*. On the same trip to Ohikilolo Ridge in the Waianae Mountains a new species of *Railliardia*, another composite, was found.

NEW NATIONAL PARKS

The Gujarat State Government has declared 140 km² within the Gir Forest,

last home of the Asiatic lion, as a national park.

The Indian Union Territory of Goa is setting up its first national park, Mellem, one of the very few unexploited areas of moist evergreen forest in the country.

The Tamil Nadu Government has declared the Guindy Deer Park, an area of natural forest which includes the Madras Snake Park, as its first national park.

Three new national parks have been recently established in Senegal, the Parcs Nationaux de la Langue de Barbarie, des Iles de la Madeleine and du Delta du Saloum.

NEW NATURE RESERVES

Five new national nature reserves are: Workman's Wood, Sheepscombe, Glos., a 118-ha Cotswold beechwood; the Swale, Sheppey, North Kent, 113 ha of coastal marsh and saltmarsh, part of a wetland of international importance; Barnack Hills and Holes, 23 ha of old limestone workings, formerly in the Soke of Peterborough, now in the new Cambridgeshire; Asby Scar, Orton, 166 ha of limestone pavement and grassland in Cumbria; and Clawthorpe Fell, Milnethorpe, 14 ha of limestone pavement, also in Cumbria.

Minsmere, the RSPB's famous bird reserve on the Suffolk coast, which has been leased by the Society from a local estate for 25 years, will be permanently safeguarded when the Society buys it for £240,000.

Cheshire Conservation Trust has leased Mount Farm Ponds, Gawsworth from Cheshire County Council and is jointly with the Lancashire Naturalists' Trust about to lease Hale Duck Decoy, which was transferred from Lancashire to Cheshire in the recent county review.

Warley Place, near Brentwood, has been leased by Essex Naturalists' Trust for 21 years at a peppercorn rent from its member Norman Carter as its 37th reserve. The reserve of 16 acres includes the site of the demolished house, the once famous but now overgrown gardens, and some woodland.

Wayland Wood near Watton, an 80-acre wood on boulder clay that has been owned by the same family since the 14th century, is Norfolk Naturalists Trust's 37th reserve. It has historical associations with the legend of the babes in the wood.

A reserve at Polstead, made by agreement between the Suffolk Naturalists' Trust and a local farmer consists entirely of an ancient hedgerow, probably 500 years old, and is believed to be the first such reserve. Another new reserve is Newbourn Valley, four miles south of Woodbridge.

Hooe Common, near Bexhill, a 5-acre boggy field containing many interesting plants of damp grassland, is the latest reserve of the Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation.

Pant Da, a sessile oakwood in the Rheidol Valley, Dyfed, is the newest reserve of the West Wales Naturalists' Trust. It was given to the Trust as an educational reserve.

Coigach in Wester Ross, opposite the Summer Isles, is the SPNC's latest reserve, comprising 13,500 acres of mountains, moorland, birchwood and freshwater lochs. Golden eagles, peregrines, pine martens, wild cats, greenshanks and black-throated divers all occur.

In the largest single project ever undertaken by a voluntary conservation body in Germany, the Deutsche Bund für Vogelschutz has bought 210 ha on the bird island of Fehmarn in the Baltic as a sanctuary for breeding and migrating waterfowl.

The Greek Government has agreed with IUCN/WWF to set up eight nature reserves, four wetlands, three virgin forest areas and the Rendina Gorge between Lake Wolwi and Starvos.

Some 80 per cent of the world population of the red-breasted goose nests in a new 12,000 sq-km-reserve in the Taymyr Peninsula, Siberia, which also holds herds totalling a million reindeer.

The Prime Minister of South Africa has announced his intention of forming a



72,000-sq-km-nature reserve in the northern part of South West Africa, the future Namibia. It will include the existing Etosha game reserve as well as the Skeleton Coast park, and will be more than three times the size of the Kruger National Park.

Aldabra was declared a strict nature reserve in February 1976, by the BIOT administration.

Churchill Island, in the tidal waters of Westernport Bay, has been bought by the Government of Victoria as a wildlife sanctuary, especially for koalas.

PERSONALIA

Dr Gerardo Budowski, retiring Director General of IUCN, has been appointed Head of the Department of Forestry at the Tropical Center for Research and Learning (CATIE) at Turrialba, Costa Rica.

Professor Archie Carr has received the 1975 Edward W. Browning Award for environmental conservation, for his work on sea turtles.

Dr Peter Crowcroft, formerly Director of the Brookfield Zoo, Chicago, USA, has been appointed Director of the Taronga Zoo, Sydney, Australia.

The Wildlife Society has awarded the Aldo Leopold Medal to Dr John S. Gottschalk, Executive Vice-President of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners.

Simon Hicks, lately Director of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, has been appointed Zoological Coordinator at the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust.

Dr Martin Holdgate, formerly Director of the NERC's Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, has succeeded D. J. Lyons as Director-General of Research in the Department of the Environment.

On leaving Queensland Judith Wright McKinney has been made Patron of the Wildlife Society, of which she was president for 14 years.

Group Captain G. R. Montgomery, Secretary of the Norfolk Naturalists Trust for the past 12 years, retired at the end of 1975.

Harvey K. Nelson, Deputy Associate Director for Wildlife in the US Fish and Wildlife Service, has been appointed Associate Director for Fish and Wildlife Management.

Frank G. Nicholls has retired as Deputy Director General of the IUCN.

Sir Peter Scott has received the US National Wildlife Federation's Conservationist of the Year Award for his help in preventing the extinction of the nene, Hawaii's state bird.

Sir David Serpell has been reappointed Chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council until the end of 1978.

J. T. R. Sharrock, who has now finished editing the BTO Ornithological Atlas, has been appointed Editor of *British Birds* in succession to Pat Bonham.

Group Captain F. W. Sledmere is the new General Secretary of the Suffolk Trust for Nature Conservation.

Gerald Thompson, the well-known Oxford scientific film maker, has received the Zoological Society of London's Silver Medal.

OBITUARY

Professor Jacques Berlioz, the distinguished French ornithologist, sometime President of the International Ornithological Congress, died on December 21, 1975, aged 84.

Professor G. J. Broekhuysen, a leading South African conservationist, has died.

W. H. Fordham, the well-known North Hertfordshire naturalist, and a vice-president of the Herts and Middlesex Trust for Nature Conservation, has died at the age of 92.

René Maheu, Director General of Unesco in 1962-74, died in Paris on December 19, 1975.

No more an Idyllic Harmony

The creation of protected areas and the protection of fauna and flora, with special provision for endangered species, were the main points of a Convention on Conservation in the South Pacific that resulted from a meeting of South Pacific governments convened by Western Samoa in June 1976. In his opening address the Prime Minister of Western Samoa, the Hon. Tupuola Efi, described the drastic changes from the old ways:

'Until quite recently, Pacific man lived in an almost idyllic harmony with his environment. Indeed it could be said that his culture, if not his existence, was founded on a carefully cultivated relationship with nature. . .

'Today it is a different story. Fish inside the reef, which were once the mainstay of our protein diet, are becoming increasingly scarce. Ava niu kini and dynamite are largely responsible. I have experienced the trauma of witnessing the deathly white and softened coral and sea plants a day after the laying of the ava niu kini. There is an eeriness which bespeaks mutilation, profanity and even death. . .

'In 1976, Western Samoa will import slightly over US\$1 million of canned fish. This represents approximately five million one-pound cans of fish, or approximately 32 one-pound cans for every man, woman and child living in Western Samoa.

'This importation of canned fish includes the entirely wasted cost of approximately US\$150,000 for cans and the untold environmental pollution that five million empty cans cause.

'The traditional containers – that is, baskets woven from palm trees, banana and breadfruit leaves – are easily disposable. Empty cans are not. But whereas this type of pollution is readily visible to us it is not the worst pollution problem. What is not easily disposable is not as bad as what is not dissoluble.

'Pollution is no respecter of national boundaries and it has become as much your problem as it is mine. And it might serve to underline the point that we inhabit one earth: for in order to cope effectively, the solution cannot be a national solution; it must be an international solution.

'Your task as I see it is to seek to resolve the disharmony either by finding a new harmony or by reducing the disharmonies to levels that would ensure a stable existence for human and animal life. It is no small task.'

Tigers in a Demilitarised Zone

One of the fascinating stories of the year is Dr George Archibald's account of the unplanned nature reserve that has grown up in Korea's Demilitarised Zone, where land once totally denuded by war now harbours tigers, lynx, rabbits, deer, and pheasants, and is the only known habitat on mainland Asia for the Manchurian crane and the Japanese ibis. All this has happened since 1954, when by UN decree no man was allowed to enter the 4 × 120-km belt without a special pass and no firearms were allowed at all. The story appears in *World Wildlife Yearbook 1974-75* (WWF, 1110 Morges, Switzerland, £3.50 + 50p postage), along with many others in the WWF's latest chronicle of world conservation efforts. As usual the compilation is comprehensive and the editing impeccable, and where entries report on some ongoing project references to previous yearbooks are given. It serves its purpose well and is engaging reading throughout, although it continues, inexplicably, to omit and index; reports are classified geographically, as they should be, but some kind of cross-reference to species would be very helpful.

Two FPS overseas tours are planned for 1977—one to Canada, to include whale watching in the St Lawrence, and one to Hawaii. For details see the Members' page at the end of this issue, page 512. An account of the two successful tours to Madagascar and Mauritius will appear in the next *Oryx*.