

Briefly

Excessive delays in the production of the newsletter *Kingfisher*, with several issues completed but not printed, have made it impossible for the editor, Richard Fitter, to continue it as a separate publication. But so many readers have enquired about *Kingfisher*, urging that it should be continued, that we have decided to continue the news service, somewhat reduced, in *Oryx*, and short news items, compiled by Richard Fitter, will appear in each issue under the title 'Briefly'.

GREAT BRITAIN

Sharp Puffin Decline

The puffin population of St. Kilda, numbering up to 3 millions in the early 1960's, is now down to about 250,000, according to Dr. J.J.M. Flegg, Director of the British Trust for Ornithology. Similar severe declines are recorded for Norway, Cornwall, Brittany and the Irish Sea area. The cause is so far unknown.

Four out of six puffin corpses examined in three different parts of eastern Britain in three different years were found to have rubber threads in their gizzards. Two out of nine puffins shot off Norway were similarly contaminated. The effect on the puffins has yet to be determined.

Ospreys in Scotland

At least seven pairs of ospreys attempted to breed in the Scottish Highlands in 1971. Five of these succeeded in rearing 11 young, one of which was recovered dead in Mauretania in the early autumn. One of the successful pairs bred, for the first time, at the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Loch of Lowes reserve in Perthshire.

Farm Reserve Scheme

An ingenious method of promoting cooperation between farmers and conservationists is the new farm reserve scheme of the Carmarthen-shire Branch of the West Wales Naturalists' Trust. Farmers are invited to offer their land as farm

reserves, with no official agreement or legal obligations on either side, but periodic visits by members of the committee to offer advice and help on conservation aspects. The scheme has the blessing of the local branch of the National Farmers' Union.

Tortoise Import Restriction

To prevent tortoises being imported to Britain too late in the year to become acclimatised before the winter, importation between July 1 and March 31 is to be restricted.

Rabies Ban Lifted

The ban on rabies-susceptible mammals coming into the UK was lifted on January 10, when a new Order came into effect imposing a six-months quarantine on ten orders of mammals, including bears and otters. Vampire bats must be quarantined for life.

Chillingham Cattle Up

The herd of wild white cattle at Chillingham Castle, Northumberland, now numbers 48, including 30 cows. Fourteen calves were born during the year, bringing the total to the highest at any time since the First World War. A new king bull 'emerged' during 1971.

Help for the Corps

Last December the Prime Minister promised government assistance to the National Conservation Corps for two years. The Scottish Conservation Corps now has its own head-

quarters at Doune, Perthshire, thanks to grants from the Carnegie UK and Pilgrim Trusts and WWF.

Conservation for Students

The National Union of Students has appointed a full-time Conservation Officer, Nicholas Brown, to help with the establishment of local environmental conservation groups in universities and colleges.

B N A's Success

The British National Appeal of the World Wildlife Fund raised a grand total of £400,000 in 1971. £72,488 went to conservation projects in Britain.

Hawk Trust Robbed

The Hawk Trust has been robbed of four out of the five peregrines in its breeding stock, thus setting its breeding programme back for years. The Trust urgently needs a tiercel to enable it to restart its breeding programme.

M4 Bows to the Sea Stock

During the planning stage of the M4 extension, the Glamorgan Naturalists' Trust persuaded the planners to avoid a newly discovered site, near Llansamlet, of one of Britain's rarest plants, the great sea stock *Matthiola sinuata*.

Wash Reclamation

Large-scale reclamation of the Wash is recognised to be impossible in the desk study recently published by the Water Resources Board. However, even the proposed four large banded reservoirs along the south-west shore would destroy important estuarine habitat, including the feeding grounds of waders and wildfowl and the breeding grounds of a substantial proportion of the common seals.

Useful Directory

The Council for Nature's Directory of Lecturers in Natural History and Nature Conservation (c/o the

Zoo, Regent's Park, London, NW1) will be invaluable to all those whose task is to compile fixture lists for societies (25p).

EUROPE

Snowmobiles in Europe

France, Switzerland, Austria and other Alpine countries are all trying to strengthen their laws against the snowmobile invasion of their mountain fastnesses. Ski trails, as well as peace and quiet, have been destroyed by uncontrolled snowmobiles in the Alps.

Threat to Geese in Iceland

Thjorsarver in Central Iceland, which is to be flooded for a hydro-electric scheme, holds some 10,700 breeding pairs, representing three-quarters of the Iceland/Greenland breeding stock of pink-footed geese which winters in Britain. If the area is flooded, as planned, 85 per cent of the nest sites will be lost, and the vegetated areas remaining could not provide enough food for more than a small proportion of the goslings now raised there.

Knechtsand Threatened

The vast sand flat in the Elbe estuary, known as the Knechtsand, the most important moulting ground of the European shelduck, is threatened by a plan to develop seaside resorts in the coastal region and to promote tourism even on the Knechtsand itself.

A Million for the Camargue

The World Wildlife Fund has given one million francs to the French Government towards the purchase of land needed to consolidate and safeguard the world famous nature reserve of the Camargue in the Rhône delta.

New HQ for World Wildlife

In December a special foundation was created in Switzerland to purchase the site and erect the building for the future joint

RARE EAGLE OWL

Vosseler's owl *Bubo vosseleri* is known only from five specimens, all in the Amani valley in the Usambara Mountains in north-east Tanzania. This tame one (no. 4) was brought to Mr Graham White as a chick. *Colin P. Groves*

A Good Slogan

"Leave only footprints . . . Take only photographs" (in Norway's national parks).

AFRICA

Kenya Merger

President Kenyatta has announced the amalgamation of the National Parks and Game Departments.

Black Rhino in S W Africa

The latest estimate of black rhinos in South West Africa is 90. It is believed that there were never a great many in this region.

Introduced Mammal Survey


A survey of feral and introduced mammals in Southern Africa (north to Rhodesia) is being carried out so that distribution maps can be prepared. Offers of help to the Department of Nature Conservation, Faculty of Forestry, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

NUTAE Transformed

The Nuffield Institute of Tropical Animal Ecology has been renamed the Uganda Institute of Ecology, and is being temporarily administered by the Uganda National Parks.

No Pesticides in Naivasha

A survey by Leslie Brown and Professor Tom Cade of Cornell shows that there is still a very low incidence of organochlorine pesticide pollution in Lake Naivasha, Kenya's famous bird lake. Properly managed, the lake should continue to be safe from this sort of pollution. The survey,



headquarters of WWF and IUCN and world conservation centre in Geneva. The foundation has been promised a donation of £1m, and has already bought 3 hectares of land next to the Geneva Botanic Garden. Half this area is likely to be sold to the municipality for an extension to the Botanic Garden.

Polluted Beaches

The National Science Research Council of Italy classifies 60 per cent of Italian beaches as polluted, 14 per cent as on the point of becoming so and only 26 per cent as still clean. Seventy per cent of the pollution is due to industry, petroleum wastes from ships and untreated sewage.

News from Norway

Wolves are to be protected throughout Norway and bears in Southern Norway. Finland, on the other hand, has decided to maintain its wolf bounties. All Norwegian ships are now forbidden to dump heavy-metal and other poisonous waste at sea. All development and prospecting in Spitsbergen is to be controlled.

Brent and barnacle geese and all birds of prey, including the previously exempt eagle owl, are now protected in Norway.

European Diploma Award

The Council of Europe has awarded its Diploma to the protected landscape of the Siebengebirge nature park in West Germany.

financed by East African Wildlife and New York Zoological Societies, is to be extended to Lakes Nakuru and Baringo.

Roan Capture Completed

A final instalment of roan (24) have been captured in the Ithanga Hills, Kenya, by the John Seago team, on behalf of the East African Wildlife Society. So far 58 roan have been caught in an area where only 21 were believed to survive, and 30 have already been released, 19 in the Shimba Hills reserve and 11 at Solio Ranch, Naro Moru.

AMERICAS

Whale Sanctuary Declared

The Mexican Government has created a whale sanctuary in the waters of the Laguna Ojo de Liebre south of Sebastian Vizcaino Bay on the Pacific coast of Baja California.

Endangered Turtles for Handbags

To replace the banned alligator skin, American manufacturers are now importing thousands of turtles from Mexico. Among the legally exportable Pacific ridley, loggerhead and green turtles are specimens of the endangered leatherback, hawksbill and Atlantic ridley. Only the front flippers are imported, the rest being used for meat or thrown away.

Whale Moratorium Passed

Both houses of the US Congress have passed resolutions urging a ten-year international moratorium on the taking of all species of whale, dolphin and porpoise.

Greenland Salmon Ban

The Danish and US Governments have agreed on a ban on high seas salmon fishing off Greenland as from 1976. This will be presented to the next annual meeting of the International Commission on North-West Atlantic

Fisheries. Fishing by Danish fishermen will be gradually phased out, but Greenland-based boats will continue to take up to 1100 tons of salmon a year.

California Condor Count

The annual census of California condors, held last October, sighted only 34 condors, including at least four immatures, compared with 53 at the previous census in 1969. The figure may, however, not be significant, due to adverse conditions, and it is believed the actual numbers may be between 40 and 60.

59 Whoopers Return

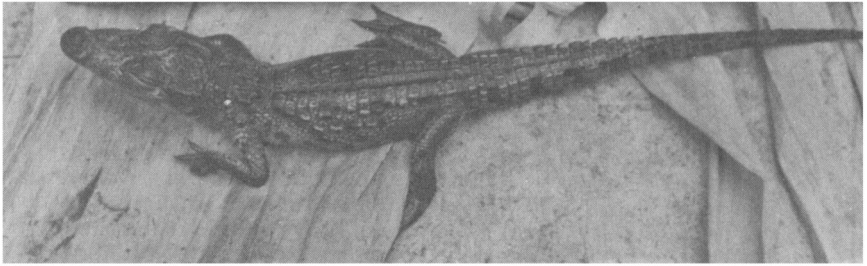
The number of whooping cranes arriving on their Texas wintering grounds last winter was a record 59, two up on 1970, but including only four young birds. By agreement with the US Air Force, Matagorda Island, near the Aransas range, will soon provide 50,000 more acres of protected and improved habitat for the cranes. There are now 21 whooping cranes in captivity, 17 are at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, three at Audubon Park Zoo in New Orleans, and one at San Antonio Zoo, Texas. Only three birds survived from the 1971 pick-up of 11 second eggs on the birds' northern breeding grounds.

Monkey Death Roll

Out of every 100,000 monkeys caught annually for importation into the United States, 55,000 die in the hands of the dealers, 8000 are used by hospitals and laboratories and 37,000 are sold as pets.

Kirtland's Warbler Alarm

The latest census of Kirtland's warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii*, North America's rarest breeding warbler, in June 1971, showed only 201 singing males, a decrease of 60 per cent over ten years. The bird is confined to the jack-



One of the eighteen young Morelet's crocodiles bred last year at the Atlanta Zoological Park, USA, — the first record of captive breeding of this very rare Mexican native.

pine country of northern Michigan, and winters in the Bahamas. Pressure on its limited habitat appears to be the main cause of decline.

Black-footed Ferrets in Peril

Almost the last US colony of black-footed ferrets, on a ranch in South Dakota, is in danger because the new owner is not only unwilling to sell to conservationists, but wants the prairie dog towns, where the ferret lives, poisoned.

Following reports of black-footed ferrets in the large prairie dog towns of Cimarron County, Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission is hoping to be allowed to forbid the poisoning or trapping of prairie dogs. Ranchers would still be allowed to kill them with guns.

Another De-extinction

The Kauai oo, believed extinct since 1964, has been rediscovered in the Alakai Swamp on Kauai, Hawaii, by a US Fish and Wildlife biologist. It and three close relatives were hunted almost to extinction for their yellow thigh feathers, prized for native robes.

Saving Porpoises

A new technique announced by the US National Maritime Fisheries Service is expected to reduce the number of porpoises and dolphins trapped and drowned in tuna nets (over 200,000 a year) by 75 per cent. The new system includes the

use of small-mesh netting at the back of the seines, so that the porpoises will not become entangled, combined with a manoeuvre by the fishing vessel to allow them to escape.

Cougars Attacked

Cougars in Florida, estimated to number between 60 and 300, are protected, but law enforcement is difficult. Two released from a local zoo into the Everglades national park were shot a few days later.

The only known breeding area of the now very rare eastern race of the cougar is under threat from a proposed highway that would cross its last remaining fragment of wild habitat in New Brunswick. The area has already been severely disturbed by loggers.

ASIA

Javan Rhinos Increase

The latest estimate of numbers of the Javan rhino in the Ujung Kulon reserve, Java, its last certain locality in the world, is at least 38, perhaps 42. Five years ago the estimate was 25.

Turtles in Mauritius

The Mauritius Fishing Development Company has accepted the following recommendations from George Hughes, WWF turtle investigator: (1) close season for all turtles from November to February; (2) complete ban on egg collecting; (3) annual harvest

limit of 150 turtles, for a 5-year period; and (4) a monthly export limit of 30 lb of calipee from March to October, and none in the close season.

Pheasants Released

Two dozen cheer pheasants, an endangered species confined to the Western Himalayas, bred by the Pheasant Trust in England, were flown out to India in November as a gift from the Trust to the Himachal Pradesh Government. They will be released in a forest reserve near Simla.

New WWF Appeal

WWF Malaysia, the newest national appeal of the World Wildlife Fund, was officially launched by the Duke of Edinburgh at Kuala Lumpur on February 23.

ANTIPODES

Rain Forest Threat

The survival of much of the remaining rain forest of northern Queensland, together with its flora and fauna, is threatened by felling for timber and clearance for grazing. Two tree kangaroos, the pygmy possum, the brush-tipped ringtail and the spotted phalanger are among the marsupials in danger. The national parks so far designated in the area are unlikely to be adequate to ensure their survival, so the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland is urging the state government to set up more.

Wedge-tailed Eagle

New South Wales has become the first mainland state to accord full protection to the much persecuted wedge-tailed eagle. Hitherto it had only been protected in Tasmania, the Canberra region and part of South Australia. Subsequently South Australia followed suit for the whole of its territory. Western Australia has recently ended

bounty payments, and Victoria has dropped the eagle from the vermin list. It is believed that recently Australia has been destroying wedge-tailed eagles at the rate of 30,000 a year.

Birds Protected in Queensland

All native birds except a handful of 'pest species' are now fully protected in Queensland. In particular, the trapping of native birds for aviaries is now forbidden.

Takahes Decrease

A 30-40 per cent decrease in the takahe population is feared as a result of surveys in the Takahe and Point Burn Valleys of the Murchison Mountains in the South Island of New Zealand. The takahe is the giant moorhen-like bird rediscovered about 25 years ago after being believed extinct.

NEW NATIONAL PARKS

The Countryside Commission in Britain is to designate 671 square miles of downland in Berkshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire as the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

An area of some 1400 km² on the German/Danish border is to be designated as West Germany's second national park, the North Frisian Wadden Sea National Park. Ten existing nature reserves are included.

Hohe Tauern, Austria's first national park, safeguards more than 1800 sq km of the highest and most beautiful part of the eastern Alps.

Norway has created three new national parks, one in Hedmark and Sør Sør Trøndelag county (345 km²) and two in Troms county (750 and 170 km²).

The national park of Basse-Cassamance has recently been created in Senegal. Leopard, hippopotamus, serval and otters are among the fauna of this 4000-hectare stretch of secondary

forest, savanna and mangroves. Another new refuge, for birds, is at Djoudj, in the middle of the Senegal River delta.

Four marine parks in the Mascarene Islands, in the South Indian Ocean, have been officially gazetted by the French Government: Europa Is., Juan de Nova, the Isles Glorieuses, and Tromelin Is. This will greatly help to safeguard the marine turtles of the region.

Myall Lakes, 38,000 acres on the north coast of New South Wales, is a new national park, and four other national parks and four state parks are proposed.

Brazil has under consideration a number of areas for national parks, and one has recently been created: the Bocaina National Park, covering 134,000 hectares including the Bocaina Mountain, in the State of Rio de Janeiro. Also recently established is the Biological Reserve of Caracara, in the Mato Grosso State (80,000 hectares).

The new 464,000-acre Pukaskura National Park, on the north-east shore of Lake Superior, covers about 50 miles of shore-line.

NEW NATURE RESERVES

In Britain the Nature Conservancy announces a new national nature reserve, 1211 acres of heathland, woods and marshes at Walberswick, Suffolk, mostly by agreement, but including the purchase of 95 acres of tidal mudflats known as Angel Marshes. Extensions to four other nnr's are also announced: Old Winchester Hill, Hants; Cavenham Heath, Suffolk; Dyfi, Cardigan-shire; and Nant Irfon, Breconshire.

The Estonian Government has decided to create a reserve for migrant birds on the Hiiuma islands and on the archipelago in Kjaina Bay.

Three waterfowl reserves have

been established on Lake Mikra Prespa in north-western Greece. Two species each of pelican and cormorant, and many spoonbills, ibises, herons, ducks, geese and birds of prey nest in the 6 km² of the reserves.

Lake Zhuvintas, the largest lake in Lithuania, has been declared as a national reserve for mute swans. The adjoining swamps are rich in wildlife.

The US Department of Agriculture has set aside about 1000 acres of the Gila National Forest, New Mexico, as the lower Gila Delta Bird Habitat Unit. At least five rare species are among the 265 birds of the area.

The Ice Age National Scientific Reserve, 13,000 hectares, has been established in Wisconsin to preserve the best glacial features in the state.

British Columbia has set aside 27 ecological reserves. Outside the provincial parks the largest is the eastern half of East Redonda Island, 15,350 acres.

The Tufalar state nature reserve, the first in the Irkutsk region of Siberia, covers 332,500 acres. More than half is forest, containing sable, squirrel, lynx, bear, and musk and red deer, as well as the two largest lakes in the Sayany mountains, both good for breeding waterfowl.

Azerbaijan has set up four reserves for gazelles, mountain goats and pheasants.

Visimsky (23,250 acres) in the Middle Urals, and a 418,000 area south of Lake Baikal in virgin cedar and larch forest are two of the USSR's latest nature reserves. A waterfowl reserve on Lake Khanka is also planned.

The Government of Sabah has bought three islands, Pulau Selingan, Pulau Bakungaan Kechil and Pulau Gulisaan, as sanctuaries for green and hawksbill turtles.

Six new nature reserves have recently been declared in New South Wales: Warrabah (820 ha), along the Namoi River; North-West Solitary Island (4 ha) for nesting terns; New Torry Plains (11,000 ha), a game reserve on the flood plains south of the Murrumbidgee River; Stotts Island, in the Tweed River, 140 ha of rain forest; Wallabadah (1 120 ha), sclerophyll forest and savanna, for kangaroos and wallabies; and Lana Glen, including Blue Bonnet Creek (636 ha).

Personalia

B.R. Fuller, lately Director of Forestry and Game in Malawi, has been appointed to the new post of Environmental Officer with the Royal Society of Arts, made possible by the Dulverton Trust.

Dr Raoul van der Westhuizen has become Director of the South African Wildlife Foundation (the SA National Appeal of WWF) in succession to James Verwey, who has been appointed to a senior post with the University of South Africa in Pretoria.

Herbert H. Mills has given up his post as Executive Vice-President of the US National Appeal of WWF.

Dr Paul Géroudet, Scientific Adviser and Education Officer at WWF headquarters, has resigned to undertake ornithological and ecological research for the Swiss Foundation for Scientific Research.

Professor F.H. Stewart has succeeded Professor V.C. Wynne-Edwards as Chairman of the Natural Environmental Research Council.

The Australian Conservation Foundation has appointed four Vice-Presidents: Sir Garfield

Barwick, R.G. Downes, Professor F.J. Fenner and E.B. Gosse.

New members of the Nature Conservancy are Professors A.D. Bradshaw, C.D. Pigott and S.D. Valentine, together with H.A. Maxwell and Hew Watt. A.E. Smith, Hon. Secretary of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, is the new Chairman of the Conservancy's England Committee, which has been joined by Professor K.M. Clayton and Stanley Cramp.

S.D. Saparamadu has been appointed Director of the Department of Wildlife Conservation in Ceylon, formerly called the Wild Life Department, and headed by a Warden.

OBITUARIES

Prof Dr Rudolf Drost, the distinguished German authority on bird migration died on December 13. He was formerly Director of the Vogelwarte Heligoland and from 1959 to 1969 Chairman of the German National Section of the ICBP.

John Goddard, the Canadian zoologist who was FAO Wildlife Research Biologist in the Luangwa Valley Conservation Scheme in Zambia, died last year, aged 35. He was a leading authority on the black rhinoceros.

Air Marshal Sir Robert Saundby, President of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust since its inception in 1959, died last September. He was an amateur entomologist of distinction, whose collection has been presented to the British Museum (Natural History).

Selwyn Samaraweera, editor of *Loris*, journal of the Wildlife Protection Society of Ceylon, has died. He is succeeded by Noel de Costa.