

Kai Curry-Lindahl

an appreciation by John A. Burton

Towards the end of 1990 Professor Curry-Lindahl died at the age of 73. His long career started in the Swedish publishing house Natur och Kultur in 1937, and throughout his life he was a prolific writer, not only of technical reports and scientific papers, but also of numerous popular books. His interests were broad, but always had a conservation slant. In particular he worked for the preservation of endangered species. Although he will probably be best-known as an international conservation diplomat, he was every bit at home in the field. From 1945 to 1953 he was managing director of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, and in addition to his international work, he always retained a firm footing in the conservation of his native Sweden. From the 1950s onwards his work became increasingly international, culminating with his work for the United Nations Environment Programme. At an age when most people have long settled into retirement, he was regularly travelling not only to international conferences, but also to Berkeley, California, where he was Professor in the Department for Forestry and Resource Management.

Kai Curry-Lindahl was for many years very active within the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP), and he was a Vice-President of the FFPS from 1976 until his death. I first met Kai at the first IUCN General Assembly, which I attended as part of the FFPS delegation in 1975. I was also active in ICBP's UK Section and, typically, he took time to introduce me to many delegates and explain how international conservation worked. He fully lived up to the adage 'If you want something done, ask a busy man'; few people lived such a busy and full life, yet he had the time to help and encourage someone like myself beginning to try and understand the Machiavellian labyrinths of international conservation politics. He was a polyglot who slipped from one language to another, always producing a deep sense of shame in the majority of the English delegates at conferences, and he was renowned for his kind, consider-

ate manners. But he was not to be brow-beaten and was not only a tough negotiator, but could be an outspoken critic.

As an acknowledged expert on the fauna of Central Africa, and an international conservation diplomat, he was an obvious choice for the FFPS mission to Rwanda in 1978. This was after David Attenborough had alerted the Society to the plight of the mountain gorillas. The report of this mission, with Dr Sandy Harcourt and *Sunday Times* journalist Brian Jackman, resulted in the Mountain Gorilla Project (Harcourt and Curry-Lindahl, 1978). Two of Kai Curry-Lindahl's contributions to *Oryx* illustrate his wide-ranging interests and knowledge. In June 1982 he wrote on the mismanagement of marine resources—the lessons he was teaching have yet to be learned; and in 1984 he wrote an overview of conservation in Sweden, and in this pointed out the damaging effects that misapplied foreign aid can have. This was a topic he returned to several times after producing a massive report for the Swedish Government in the late 1970s, and summarized in his address to the FFPS AGM in 1979 (Curry-Lindahl, 1979).

Kai was undoubtedly one of the great conservationists of the modern era, who had the rare combination of the enthusiasm of the field naturalist and the ability to influence governments.

References

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Felipe Benavides, 1917–1991

Dr Felipe Benavides, a Vice-President of FFPS and an outspoken Peruvian conservationist who was most famous for his tireless cam-

painging on behalf of the vicuña, died in London on 21 February 1991. Born on 7 August 1917, he was educated in England and was at different periods of his life a diplomat and a businessman, although these activities were completely overshadowed by his passionate, almost single-minded devotion to wildlife conservation—a cause he considered to be more important than any other.

His first conservation battle was against Aristotle Onassis, whose ships were catching whales illegally in Peruvian waters. He won, and Onassis was fined \$3 million and sold his whaling fleet. He founded the excellent Lima Zoo, of which he was also honorary director. He campaigned long and hard for the establishment of parks and nature reserves in Peru, among them Manu in the Amazon region, Aguada Blanca in the Andes near Arequipa, and Paracas in the coastal desert south of Lima. One of his great regrets was that, despite his warnings, Paracas was later substantially wrecked by commercial exploitation of scallops and other illegal activities.

Felipe Benavides is best remembered for his 37-year battle to conserve the vicuña. He was ultimately successful, although he made a number of enemies along the way (among them, regrettably, WWF). Although he was sometimes accused of carrying out a non-scientific, sentimental campaign, it was he, and he alone, who finally proved that vicuñas could be sheared and their valuable wool harvested on a sustainable basis. His opponents, meanwhile, espoused the idea that sustainable development meant shooting the animals and using their meagre meat for 'vicuña-burgers'.

He was widely honoured for his conservation work and served on numerous national and international committees, commissions, and boards. Among other honours, he was awarded the Order of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands; an honorary doctorate by the University Federico Villarreal; and was the first annual winner of the John Paul Getty Wildlife Conservation Prize, administered by WWF-US. He was appointed an honorary OBE in 1963, although this was not for conservation but for his work in representing British industry abroad. He

served as a Vice-President of FFPS from 1972 until his death; as an International Trustee of WWF until he resigned in 1979 due to fundamental disagreement over vicuña conservation policies; as President of Peru's National Vicuña Council; and as representative of Latin America and the Caribbean on CITES's 12-member Standing Committee.

A tough, energetic, incorruptible, autocratic fighter for what he believed in, Benavides inevitably attracted controversy. Some bureaucrats found him difficult to deal with. In particular, he railed against people that he described as 'conservation mercenaries', notably in Peru. Near the end of his life he became increasingly concerned that some of those involved at a senior level in Peruvian conservation organizations were men who had committed serious offences involving wildlife; and that some of them might have links with terrorist activities. For these reasons he was worried about the considerable amount of international funding channelled through such organizations, and what the money might actually be used for.

The Peruvian Congress will erect a monument in his memory in the Parque de las Leyendas (Lima Zoo) and the people living at Pampa Galeras have renamed their central square after him. Felipe Benavides will be greatly missed in conservation circles, indeed he is probably irreplaceable, but his achievements will remain a lasting inspiration.

Nigel Sitwell.

The Oryx 100% Fund

Grants awarded

At its meeting on 19 March 1991, the FFPS Council agreed to fund the following projects.

£3000 for Chris Mercer to carry out population surveys of Queen Alexandra's birdwing butterfly *Ornithoptera alexandrae* and to assess the availability of food-plant vines. The work will be carried out over a two-year period prior to establishing Wildlife Management Areas in the Popondetta area in Papua New Guinea. The species is on the verge of extinc-

tion because of habitat destruction. (Project no. 90/30/3).

£1000 to Lyn Clayton to continue a study of the ecology and conservation of the babirusa *Babyrusa babyrussa* in primary rain forest in Sulawesi. This endemic species is severely threatened by uncontrolled hunting for an illegal meat trade and the researcher's presence in the area, backed up by personal contact with the primary traders, has already provided a degree of protection for the animals in the study group. This species is a conservation priority; its status is uncertain and the information gained in the study will be valuable for the SSC Pigs and Peccaries Action Plan. (Project no. 91/2/1).

£500 to Simon Zisman for a rapid ecological survey of mangroves in Belize that are currently threatened by infrastructure developments. The study will focus particularly on the plant community composition and the crab and bird fauna. The data will be used by the Forest Department to identify zones for conservation. (Project no. 91/9/2).

Reports received

University of Bristol Tioman Archipelago Expedition 1988 (Project No. 88/43/22). Eight undergraduates based their research in the Tioman Archipelago off the south-east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The Earl of Cranbrook, patron of the expedition, had led the only major research visit to the islands in 1962 and the new expedition aimed to extend the earlier work by concentrating on different areas of the main island, Pulau Tioman, and studying different elements of the fauna and flora. Although the mountainous interior is largely undisturbed, the island's beauty attracts increasing numbers of tourists each year.

The main objectives of the expedition were: to extend the species check-list for reptiles and amphibians on Pulau Tioman and Pulau Pemanggil; to investigate the flora of Gunung Kajang, the highest mountain on Tioman; to investigate the biology of the rain forest canopy using a basic system of aerial walkways and platforms; to compare the effects of lithology and clearance of leaf litter and root

mats upon water infiltration rates in two different soil types; and to make a short natural history film. Notable findings were 24 additions to the species check-list of amphibians and reptiles, three of them new to science, and the rediscovery on Tioman of the slow loris *Nycticebus coucang insularis* after 34 years. Much of the proposed research went as planned and the results are presented in a 90-page illustrated report.

Aberdeen University Expedition to Madagascar 1989 (Project No. 89/20/7). This team surveyed the bat fauna of the Reserve Naturelle Integrale de Marojejy, a montane rain forest reserve in the north-east of Madagascar. Bats were captured with mist nets and Tuttle traps and were also located during daytime searches for roost sites. In total, 218 bats were caught, representing 12 of Madagascar's 29 species. The records included two individuals of the Malagasy sucker-footed bat *Myzopoda aurita*, which is the only species in the family Myzopodidae and which is endemic to Madagascar. It has been recorded only rarely and is listed by IUCN as 'insufficiently known' in the *Red Data Book*. The team demonstrated that attaching radio transmitters to *Myzopoda* is a practical proposition and recommended that further effort should be invested in radio-tracking this species to establish where it roosts and possibly also to discover what feeding strategies are employed. As well as details of the bat survey, the 57-page report lists amphibians and reptiles sighted during the bat study and makes suggestions for future work.

Survey of the small spotted cat (Project No. 89/28/11). The small spotted cat *Felis nigripes* is elusive and virtually nothing is known about it in its natural environment. Chris and Tilde Stuart conducted a survey of the distribution and habitat utilization of this small felid.

The species is a southern African endemic, occurring only in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa, and two subspecies are recognized: *F. nigripes nigripes*, which occurs in the northern and central parts of its range, and *F. n. thomasi*, which occurs in the south. They are



The small spotted cat, subject of a survey supported by the Oryx 100% Fund.

separated on the basis of differences in pelage colour, but both have two or three distinct dark bands on the throat. With the adults weighing between 1 kg and 2 kg it is one of the smallest living felids.

The cats are secretive and nocturnal, which may account partly for the few sightings on record. However, the Stuart's believe that the scarcity of sightings are a true reflection of the species's rarity. It is rarely killed in the large-scale non-selective predator control operations carried out by farmers in South Africa and southern Namibia, and seldom appears in the hauls of hunters in Botswana who kill small predators for the pelts.

The field surveys within the known range of the species found that, although it was widespread, with the bulk of records located in South Africa, it can be considered uncommon to rare but with no obvious indication of decline.

All the habitat associations of known locations are of an open nature—grassland, scrub

and open woodland; the spread of semi-arid karroid scrub associations eastward and certain pastoral practices may be benefiting the species.

The Stuarts have pinpointed a number of areas where a detailed ecological study may be feasible. It is now time, they say, to establish the behaviour of this small cat in order to determine its survival requirements and ultimately to make recommendations to the various conservation authorities to ensure that the small spotted cat gets a portion of the funds usually reserved for the larger cats.

ICBP/FFPS Conservation Expedition Competition

The 1991 competition benefited from the first instalment of BP's three-year injection of £125,000. These welcome funds enabled us to employ a half-time expeditions officer and the resultant increased publicity attracted more

than 200 entries, a far greater response than has been achieved before in the history of the competition. The catchment area expanded beyond the UK to the rest of Europe and entries came from 14 countries. Project quality is improving all the time and the additional guidance we are now able to give must be at least partly responsible for that. The ICBP and the FFPS have long recognized the importance of involving local people in conservation initiatives and one of the criteria we use in judging is the degree of consideration that has been given to this aspect.

Andrew Sachs presented the four winners and eight runners-up with their prizes of £3000 and £1000 each, respectively, at a ceremony in London on 24 April. Senior diplomats from several of the countries to be visited by expeditions were also present at the ceremony.

Winners

Wetlands. Svyatoy Peninsula Expedition, Soviet Union, from the University of Agriculture, Prague, Czechoslovakia. The team will join students from the Soviet University of Ulan Ude to study the ecology and management of the newly created Zabaykal National Park on the eastern shore of Lake Baikal. The area is poorly known, but is believed to contain many rare and threatened species, including hooded crane *Grus monacha* and Asian yellow rail *Coturnicops noveboracensis exquisitus*.

Tropical Forests. Gola Forest Expedition, Sierra Leone, from the University of East Anglia, UK. The Gola forest is part of one of the largest remaining fragments of West African rain forest and is critical for the survival of a large number of endemics, such as zebra duiker *Cephalophus zebra* and white-breasted guineafowl *Agelastes meleagrides*. The British students will work with the University of Sierra Leone on large mammals and birds.

Oceanic Islands and Marine. Galápagos Marine Survey, Ecuador, from the University of Cambridge, UK. A joint British/Ecuadorean

team will carry out the first detailed offshore survey of the marine habitats of the Galápagos. The diving team will work with the Charles Darwin Research Station to provide baseline data on the distribution and abundance of marine life at critical sites that are subject to tourist damage.

Threatened Species. Taliabu Expedition, Indonesia, from the University of East Anglia, UK. This expedition will link with Indonesian counterparts from the governmental environmental agencies to study the ecology of seven threatened animals on Taliabu in the Sula Islands in eastern Indonesia.

Runners-Up

Cook Islands Expedition from the University of Oxford. This project will link with government counterparts for a widespread survey of the endemic-rich vegetation of these Pacific islands.

Insect Biodiversity in Vietnam from the Institute of Entomology, Czechoslovakia. Working with the National Centre for Biological Research, Hanoi, this team will look at the insect communities of the war-damaged forests of Vietnam to provide baseline information on the effects of forest damage on biodiversity.

Amaluza '91, Ecuador, from the University of Cardiff, UK. The forest fragments remaining in south-west Ecuador are among the top 10 priority areas for bird conservation in the world. In close association with local ecologists this team will look for various threatened birds, including the bearded guan *Penelope barbata*.

Coral Reef Conservation, Sabah, Malaysia, from the University of Oxford, UK. With students from the University of Kebangsaan, Sabah, this project will re-survey permanent sea-bed study plots to determine the effects of leisure use on coral growth.

Kizilirmali Delta Project, Turkey, from the Dutch Wader Research Foundation, the Netherlands. A team of young Dutch and Turkish ornithologists will visit lagoons on the Black Sea coast of Turkey, in which the white-

headed duck *Oxyura leucocephala* and other rare or threatened species occur. The project will look closely at man's use of the area.

Colombia '91 from Anglia Higher Education College, UK. In response to a specific request from the Foundation for Higher Education, Colombia, this team will work on the currently little-known ecology of threatened birds, such as the long-wattled umbrellabird *Cephalopterus penduliger*, in the forests of La Planada, south-west Colombia.

Rio Paute Headwaters, Ecuador and Cloud Forest Expedition, Ecuador from the Universities of Bristol and East Anglia, UK. These two expeditions will form a unique co-operative venture to provide continuous data from a study site in the Ecuadorian cloud forest for a 9-month period. Working with young conservationists from Universidad del Azuay, this group will examine the completely unstudied effect of tree removal on fog interception.

Arabian oryx project in Oman: an update

Since the Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx* was first reintroduced to the wild in the central desert of Oman in 1982 (see *Oryx*, 16, 305) the population has increased to 107 animals (2 December 1990), which roam unrestricted over more than 10,000 sq km. Further releases occurred in 1984, 1988 and 1989 and today reintroduced individuals comprise 20 per cent of the population.

Natural recruitment was slow at first, partly due to drought and partly due to the presence of a sterile but dominant bull, which was later castrated. In 1986 rains broke a long drought and good rainfall in subsequent years improved conditions; productivity of the herd increased markedly. This rapid growth in recent years has resulted in a very young population with a mean age of 3.5 years, the oldest animal being an immigrant of 13.3 years. A slowing of population growth was detected in 1990 and the herd may now be entering a new phase as natural mortality factors increasingly come into operation. Of 27 calves born in 1990, 12 died, most due to fighting or infanticide.

This was the first time that deaths from fighting had been recorded and there had been only one case of infanticide in previous years.

The Oman wild herd is genetically diverse: a number of animals have been recruited from founder lines that were not represented in the US captive herds, including animals from Jordan, of Qatari descent, and offspring of a bull of the Bahrain line.

When the population approached 100 individuals in early 1990, it was apparent that a new monitoring programme was needed. The original programme had been developed for a small population where the close monitoring of individual breeding performance was essential. With a larger population it is no longer possible to maintain the degree of accuracy that this involves and threats to survival are mainly demographic and require a different level of monitoring.

The new programme, which started on 1 April 1990, allows for a proportion of the population to be monitored accurately for the next 5 years to cover six aspects: productivity; population dynamics; social structure; range development; post-release monitoring; and genetics. A total of 39 animals were selected initially and those not easily recognized by the Harasis rangers were ear-tagged. A small number of young animals will be recruited to the monitoring programme at the beginning of each year.

Members' meetings

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Zoological Society of London's Meeting Rooms on Tuesday 1 October 1991 at 18.30 h. See insert in this issue for full details and booking form.

For information about local group meetings, please contact the FFPS Secretariat.

FFPS Christmas card

The FFPS Christmas card is taken from the photograph on the cover of this issue. Please see insert for further details and order form.