

Ian Grimwood, 1912–1990

Ian Robert Grimwood, a Vice-President of FFPS and an international conservationist who was at one time Chief Game Warden of Kenya and leader of Operation Oryx, died in his sleep on Christmas night, 1990. Born on 22 July 1912, he was educated at Ardrossan Academy and the Royal Grammar School, Guildford, and graduated in biology from Imperial College, London, in 1934. During 1935–48, he served in the Indian Army in the 2nd Sikhs, the Frontier Force Regiment, where his heart lay throughout his life. He finished as brevet Lt-Colonel, after seeing war service in Waziristan and Malaya, and suffering the misfortune of being a prisoner-of-war in Thailand in 1942–45.

On leaving the Army, he served first as biologist and Assistant Director in the Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) Game Department from 1948–60. Then until 1964 he was Chief Game Warden of Kenya, helping to establish Buffalo Springs, Mara, Meru and Samburu game reserves. In 1962 the FPS (as it then was) invited him to lead Operation Oryx, its expedition to the Aden Protectorate (now Yemen) to capture a breeding stock of the highly endangered Arabian oryx, which 10 years later became extinct in the wild. The three animals then captured, together with four more whose acquisition he later negotiated from the Riyadh Zoo, became the basis of the very successful World Herd of Arabian oryx at Phoenix and San Diego Zoos, USA. This led eventually to the oryx's successful reintroduction, first into an extensive enclosure at Shaumari near Azraq in Jordan and later into the wild in the Jiddat al Harassis in Oman, where they are now well established and breeding. This was the first time an animal extinct in the wild had been successfully reintroduced in the wild.

After leaving the Game Department, Grimwood continued to live in Kenya, but served as a wildlife consultant to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and other bodies, in many parts of Africa, Asia and South America, from Ethiopia and the Philippines to Peru. As a result, for instance, he was able to

draw attention in *Oryx* for April 1976 to the danger of extinction of another ungulate, the Calamian deer of the Philippines, and subsequently captured a group of them for captive breeding in England.

Ian Grimwood received many honours, becoming OBE in 1982, an Officer of the Netherlands Order of the Golden Ark in 1979, and recipient of the WWF Gold Medal in 1972, the Paul Getty Prize in 1976 and also of the San Diego Zoological Conservation Medal. He was elected a Vice-President of FFPS in 1976, and in 1987, when the Society celebrated the 25th anniversary of Operation Oryx, his name was inscribed on the FFPS Roll of Honour.

A modest man, who would probably have hated even the degree of publicity for his achievements involved in an *Oryx* obituary, there was an important sense in which his Army service in Pakistan was the real core of his life. He was able to combine an embodiment of the best British military leadership traditions with a sound scientific judgement. His selfless service of the international conservation movement was an important strand in building that movement up to its present strong position, and his name will long be remembered as the leader of Operation Oryx.

Richard Fitter.

Robert Lowes, 1914–1990

Dr Robert Lowes, physician and conservationist, died last year at his home in Surrey, England. He retired after 26 years in Sierra Leone, where he worked as a doctor and served as an FFPS consultant. He was a founder member of the Sierra Leone Nature Conservation Association and his negotiations with local people led to the establishment of the Mamunta-Mayosa Nature Reserve in 1980, the first protected area in the country.

Daphne Tuboku-Metzger.

Felipe Benavides

As we went to press we received the sad news that Dr Felipe Benavides OBE, one of the Society's Vice-Presidents, died on 21 February 1991.

Oryx 100% Fund

At its meeting on 13 December 1990 the FFPS Council agreed funding for the following projects:

£2250 to Dr Fiona Maisels for a pilot study to investigate the keystone resources for the vertebrate frugivores in the Salonga National Park, Zaire. Monkeys will be used as the main models and the information collected on the most important tree species for this group could be used for the design of conservation management plans (Project no. 90/22/10).

£1000 to J. A. Castillo in Argentina for a propagation project for South American bulbous plants, many of whose populations are reduced to fragments because of modern agricultural practice. Seeds from the project will be distributed free to institutions and individuals interested in propagation for conservation purposes (Project no. 90/16/7).

£1000 for an investigation into the ecology and distribution of 15 Red Data Book birds in south-west Ecuador. A conservation plan will be prepared identifying the most important remaining areas critical to their survival (Project no. 90/28/12).

£500 to the ICBP Tai Forest Avifaunal Survey, Phase 3. Five ornithologists will continue a survey of the Tai Forest in the Ivory Coast, looking particularly at Red Data Book species and Upper Guinea endemics to determine whether current levels of forests disturbance and destruction are threats to all species (Project no. 90/25/11).

£350 for an investigation into the effects of selective logging on endemic birds in Madagascar. The objectives are to identify key species affected by logging; to discover the nature and causes of changes in distribution after logging; and to train local students in survey techniques (Project no. 90/19/8).

£150 for an evaluation of the status of poorly known cloud forest in Chiapas, Mexico. Remaining areas of forest will be surveyed to determine the size, degree of disturbance and threats to them, using bird species richness and numbers of endemic and endangered species as measures of site importance (Project no. 90/20/9).

The conflict in Rwanda and its impact on the mountain gorillas

In early 1990 the future of the endangered mountain gorilla in Rwanda appeared secure after 12 years of concentrated conservation effort by the Rwandan authorities and international conservation organizations, including the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society. They were well protected, they had become the mainstay of the national tourism industry (one of the top three foreign currency earners for the country) and their numbers were slowly rising.

Then, on 1 October 1990, rebels of the People's Liberation Front invaded the country from Uganda. Operations were first directed towards the north-west of the country and severely affected the savanna Akagera National Park. As the situation stabilized there, the invasion was resumed in north-east Rwanda on 22 January 1991. The rebels pushed through the Volcanoes National Park, attacking the local centre of Ruhengeri. During the fighting one of two film crews working in the area was captured temporarily. Apart from the impacts upon the local people, and deaths have been reported, there is grave concern for the gorilla population. The Volcanoes National Park is the Rwandan sector of the Virunga mountains, home of an estimated 310 mountain gorillas and half of the world population.

The rebel forces have now been driven back but are still active in and around the park, especially in the east where it adjoins the Ugandan frontier. Sporadic attacks in the surrounding countryside continue and there are military operations and patrols throughout the Virunga range.

As soon as the rebel forces withdrew from the Park headquarters, situated just outside the Volcanoes National Park boundary at Kinigi, the gorilla guards and trackers resumed their work of monitoring the gorilla groups in the forest. They have been able to confirm that, as of 14 February, all the gorilla groups that are regularly checked (totalling 120 animals and comprising the greater part of the gorillas resident in Rwanda) were

unharméd. The gorillas are still seriously threatened, however. The Rwandan authorities have stated that the rebels are shooting gorillas in order to disrupt tourism and thus the national economy. There are also independent accounts that gorillas have been fired upon. Rebel spokesmen deny this, declaring a policy to protect the environment and respect the rights of the gorillas. Nonetheless, the effects of the conflict and the general disturbance within the gorillas' habitat can only be guessed at for the present. Fortunately the main gorilla population is in the central Virungas rather than in the Ugandan frontier region.

The fact that the park trackers and guides are able to verify the condition of the gorilla groups while fighting continues in and around the park bears witness to the courage, determination and dedication of these men. They have in fact been carrying out their routine tasks as far as possible throughout the entire period of rebel activity.

So far, then, the gorillas appear to have escaped relatively unscathed but this could change at any time and the long-term prospects are also bleak. Gorilla-visiting, already hard hit by the conflict, has ceased entirely and is liable to remain closed for the immediate future. It is improbable that it will recover quickly when peace is restored. This not only damages Rwanda's economy but seriously weakens the country's ability to maintain its conservation effort, largely supported by tourist income. Furthermore the park infrastructure, notably its headquarters, have been damaged and looted. The Rwandan conservation authority, ORTPN, has affirmed that it will endeavour to maintain its budget for conservation and national park management at pre-conflict levels, but with reduced revenues it appears likely that it will need the full support of the international conservation community to rebuild its effectiveness.

It must be kept firmly in mind that the Virunga mountains, covering 380 sq km and divided between three countries, are of global significance because of their importance for the survival of the mountain gorilla. The site is also crucial, because of the biological and eco-

nomie benefits it provides, for the well-being of all the people living in its vicinity, the most densely populated area of central Africa. The value of the Virunga is a universal one, recognized by the governments of Zaire, Uganda, Rwanda and the People's Liberation Front. It transcends political differences and, however the present situation resolves itself, the basic need will remain for international co-operation to ensure that the Virunga and its gorillas are safeguarded for the good of all.

In February 1990 the FFPS, in partnership with the African Wildlife Foundation and the WWF, launched the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) to help support conservation work being done throughout the range of the eastern lowland and mountain gorilla in Zaire, Uganda, and Rwanda. The development of the IGCP has been delayed by the Rwandan conflict, but, as soon as conditions allow, the work must be resumed. The present situation underlines the need for this broad international approach and the IGCP organizations are already preparing themselves for the work ahead.

Roger Wilson.

The situation in Rwanda emphasizes the continued need for sustained conservation effort in the central African region. The Society is appealing to its members for their support for the International Gorilla Conservation Programme in Rwanda, Zaire and Uganda. Your help is urgently needed. Donations should be sent to

FFPS, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR.

Members' meetings

See insert in this issue for full details of meetings in London.

Information about local group meetings is obtainable from addresses given on the insert. Please write, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope.