

The list of outright attacks on environmental concerns, unfortunately, could go on, but you get the picture. The United States is in the midst of the worst regression of environmental protection in our nation's history, and the assaults have only begun. A Congress that seems 'anti-everything that does not produce short-term economic gains' has been released upon the lands by a public that cannot have realized what it did. Polling of voters last November indicates that some 83 per cent considered themselves environmentalists, yet Congress inexplicably is acting in the opposite manner. I maintain that today, Congress is the opposite of progress.

Perhaps it is appropriate to end with another pair of opposites, a pair that could have critical bearing on the American state of the environment: independence and dependence. Americans are fiercely proud, and rightfully so, of their historical struggles for independence. We even celebrate an Independence Day on 4 July, the day when our Declaration of Independence from Great Britain was

signed in 1776. We are indeed an independent people. But perhaps it is time that we celebrated a Dependence Day, a time when we recognize and celebrate our complete and utter dependence on our environment for our lives and prosperity. Our strong patriotism should extend to humble recognition of the vital role played by the natural world in our existence. Our continued abilities to provide for our basic needs such as clean air and water, food, functional biogeochemical cycles, climate control, and aesthetic pleasures are all derived from an intact nature. And there is no better place to begin this new patriotism and recognition of dependence than in the halls of the United States Congress. It is high time for Congress and progress to become synonyms, rather than opposites.

Gary Meffe is an Associate Professor at the University of Georgia and the Savannah River Laboratory, and is senior author of Principles of Conservation Biology (Sinauer Associates, 1994).

NEWS AND VIEWS

The (dis)information age: a reply

Sidney J. Holt

The article by *Oryx* Deputy Editor Gary Meffe in the July 1995 issue, 'The (dis)information age' sounds a timely warning, but with insufficient urgency and scope. The so-called 'Wise Use' network is by no means confined to the United States or to non-governmental players. Links extend across both oceans of the northern hemisphere. A trans-Pacific node is, for example, the Global Guardian Trust in Japan, started by Kunio Yonezawa, one time senior officer in the Fisheries Agency of the Japanese Government, Japanese representative to the International Whaling Commission (IWC), and staffer of the FAO of the UN. In the other direction we find the High North Alliance, led by Norwegian journalist Georg Blitchfeld, located in northern Norway and purporting to 'represent' regional fishing interests. Many

other nodes could be named.

While the constituents of the group within the United States mainly, as Meffe explains, defend land-owners' 'rights' to do as they wish, unregulated, with the property they occupy, elsewhere the interests tend to have a different primary focus: for example ensuring that fisheries are not regulated conservatively, and that the current moratorium on commercial whaling is overturned before guarantees of monitoring and enforcement of regulations are in place. For these reasons the IWC is a universal lobbying target, to which may now be added the Fisheries Committee of the European Union, and the UN in its role of seeking effective controls over destructive fishing on the high seas.

Several such groups receive funds from 'official' sources, as well as from corporations and political formations. Thus it is known that funds – incompletely laundered – have surreptitiously been made available from time to

time by government agencies in Canada, Iceland and Norway. For example, the Government of Iceland contributed some of the funds needed by an Icelandic film-maker who produced in recent years two defamatory films about Greenpeace and some of the people connected with that organization.

Part of the technique has been, over the past 5 years, to harass delegations at IWC meetings in efforts to picture them in situations, which, with suitable editing, could be made to look embarrassing. But, overall, the name of the game, as Meffe's title indicates, is systematic 'disinformation' – a strategy perfected in the bad old days by the KGB, and exercised since by some other agencies under more benign names such as 'economy with the truth'. A 'textbook' example of how this is done is provided by scrutiny of the material put out by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to justify that country's recent resumption of outlaw whaling, and which is full of travesties of the facts, as is well known to people who closely follow that issue.

In order to operate in a slightly different context various 'wise use' groups have formed apparently legitimate international non-governmental environmental organizations (INGOs). Perhaps the best example of these is the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD), whose headquarters are in Brussels, which has become a member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and is very active there as well as among all the institutions of the European Union: Commission, Parliament and Council.

The now deep penetration of the IUCN is particularly alarming. There, a caucus of up to 50 member organizations (many from government agencies in Canada, representatives of hunters located in France and Belgium, official and non-governmental groups in Zimbabwe, and so on) can now be relied upon to work together to oppose conservation, but always in the name of 'conservation'!

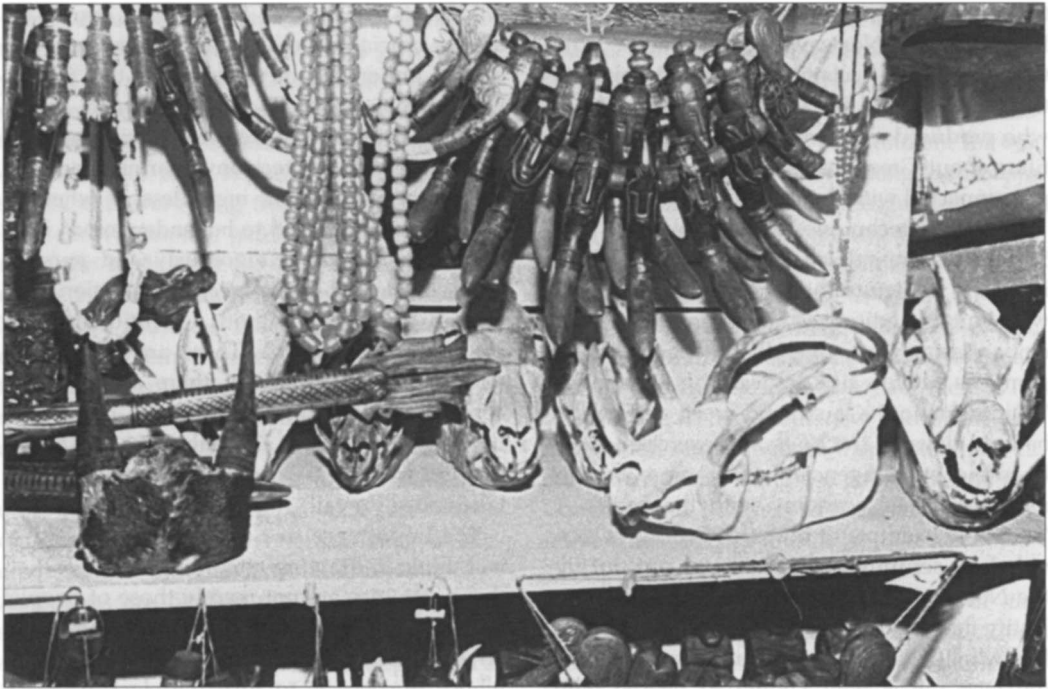
The critical question in these fora is: can a consensus that 'any use of wildlife resource should be sustainable' (as the new IUCN Statute requires) properly be interpreted as meaning that 'use' – lethal use, that is – of all

wildlife is *mandatory*? The marine mammals are the crucial test case in this controversy because, under the new Law of the Sea – UNCLOS – national and designated international authorities have the explicit power to decide fully to protect any marine mammal species or population, regardless of whether or not it is considered to be 'endangered'. The wise use movement vigorously and persistently challenges this specific provision (although usually without mentioning its provenance explicitly). There are other sub-strategies: for example if there are possibly conflicting opportunities both for non-lethal use (e.g. ecotourism) and lethal use (i.e. hunting and trade in products and parts) then the latter must prevail.

The importance of Gary Meffe's perspective is, I think, in drawing attention to the fact that these activities are not merely those of people with certain personal opinions, but constitute an extensive and growing political movement whose purpose is to turn the clock back 50 years and sweep away social and community action, laws and regulations, and organizations that have been dedicated to imposing restraints on the exploitation of nature, to the restoration of degraded ecosystems and animal populations, and to the protection of such biodiversity as remains in our world.

This constitutes, *inter alia*, a frontal attack on the interests of future human generations, and there are powerful short-term economic interests behind it. It is not sufficient to recognize this phenomenon in our midst – although that is a necessary beginning – but to go further and organize to counter it. It may be, Gary, that '...the pendulum will swing back toward reasoned thought and intelligent analyses of our predicaments...' but it is being pushed out very hard, and gravity and time alone might not achieve what you and I and many others – especially, I presume, the members of FFI – want.

Sidney Holt is a marine biologist and environmental consultant living and working in Italy. He has more than 200 publications in his field and awards include the WWF Gold Medal and the Golden Ark (Royal Court of the Netherlands).



Mountain anoa *Bubalus quarlesi* trophies and babirusa *Babyrousa babyrussa* skulls on sale in a souvenir shop, Rantepao, Sulawesi, Indonesia (Roland Melisch).

Anoa threatened by souvenir trade in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

Two anoa species are endemic to Sulawesi and occur sympatrically on the island: the lowland anoa *Bubalus depressicornis* and mountain anoa *B. quarlesi* (Groves, 1969). Anoa are exceptional among the wild cattle of South East Asia because, to date, they are the only ones known in the region to depend mainly on undisturbed forest. Both anoa species are protected by Indonesian law (Anon., 1991), listed by the IUCN as Endangered (Groombridge, 1993) and included in Appendix I of CITES.

In October 1993, while on a private stay in Sulawesi, the author found that in two out of 22 tourist shops in Rantepao, northern South Sulawesi, single trophies (horns) of mountain anoa were on sale. The horns were smooth rather than rugged and rounded in cross-section. Dealers mentioned the Latimojong

Mountains south-east of Rantepao as the place of origin for the mountain anoa trophies. Because Rantepao is a well-established tourist resort in Sulawesi's famous Toraja region and the author did not want to show too much interest in purchasing a trophy, no prices were asked for the skulls. Furthermore, on six occasions single anoa trophies were found attached to the entrance beams of traditional Torajan houses. Anoa trophies were always grouped with dozens of horns of Asian water buffalo *Bubalus bubalis* which plays an important role in traditional Torajan culture. A stew containing minced anoa meat was offered to the author during a tour to Bada Valley in Lore Lindu National Park, Central Sulawesi.

These incidents show that anoas, although fully protected by law in Indonesia, are still subject to ongoing hunting pressure. Anoa poaching for local consumption has been reported earlier: in 1979, MacKinnon reported heavy poaching pressure on lowland anoa near towns and villages. Whitten *et al.* (1987) found mountain forests in Lore Lindu

National Park to be heavily disturbed, presumably due to the starting of fires by anoa hunters. According to Whitten *et al.*, forest was burned in order to create patches of pasture to attract anoa, which were then easy targets.

Until the mid 1970s, national and international trade was virtually unknown (Thornback, 1983). The presence of anoa trophies in tourist shops opens a previously unknown chapter of threats to Sulawesi's unique fauna. The Toraja region in northern South Sulawesi is one of Indonesia's main tourist attractions and the gateway to many tourist tours. According to forecasts, Sulawesi's tourist business is still growing. Domestic and international tourist demand for souvenirs may severely undermine the efforts of the national conservation authority (PHPA) to curb poaching of protected animals. The pig *Babyrousa babyrussa*, endemic to Sulawesi, was found to be threatened similarly by the souvenir trade (Melisch, 1995). Public awareness campaigns directed at tourists and tour guides as well as improved law enforcement of the souvenir trade is strongly recommended to stop any possible expansion of illegal trade practices in Sulawesi's tourist resorts.

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Roland Melisch
c/o Schwind, M.-Grünwaldstr. 19
D-67346 Speyer, Germany

Palm harvest threatens Brazil's best protected area of Atlantic Forest

The palm *Euterpe edulis* was the main source of palm hearts until the 1970s in Brazil. The heart is the new growth (apical meristem) at the top of each plant and it is necessary to kill the plant in order to harvest it. A palm tree of about 20 m produces less than 500 g of heart. Because of intense overharvesting of *E. edulis* in the Atlantic Forest, many factories moved to the Amazon region to exploit related species (*E. oleraceae* and *E. precatoria*). There is no large-scale management and, while the extraction of palm heart is legal under license and a management plan, most of the hearts consumed come from illegal harvesting or extraction without management.

The Vale do Ribeira, south São Paulo state, has one of the last intact populations of *E. edulis* in the entire Atlantic forest. This area also contains one of the best protected areas in Brazil, the Fazenda Intervaes, which contains one of the last natural populations of *E. edulis*. The Fazenda holds the world's largest populations of jacutinga guans *Pipile jacutinga* (the total world population is estimated as 1000 birds) and woolly spider monkeys *Brachyteles arachnoides* (total world population, 700).

The new government of São Paulo extended the reserve from 380 to 500 sq km in 1994, but sacked half the staff, including some guards and researchers working on environmental education and palm management, because of the difficult economic situation. Just after the dismissal of the forest guards, illegal palm-heart harvesting (and probably hunting) started in many parts of the reserve and many palms were sacrificed. The oil-rich fruits of the *Euterpe* palm are the main staple food for toucans, guans and bellbirds, as well as other fruit-eating birds and mammals during winter. The government does not have enough money to reinstate the guards that were sacked (the average wage is less than \$200/month) and those that remain are too poorly equipped to cover such a huge area.

To make matters worse, the Fazenda



Illegal palm hearts confiscated by forest guards in south-east Brazil (W. Portilho).

Intervales is located on limestone and the cement industry (Votorantim) is seeking to exploit this to bring progress to the region. (It is one of the poorest zones in the state and is known as the 'Hungry Belt'.) The same company also wants to build a series of four dams on the state's last free-flowing river, Rio Ribeira de Iguape, in the heart of the last pristine Atlantic forest in São Paulo. Just one dam (Tijuco Alto) will flood 110 sq km of forest and fertile soils and will displace more than 1200 families. One of the owners of the company, Antonio Ermirio de Moraes, is one of the most powerful and wealthy men in Brazil and is using all his influence to exploit the region. Most of the energy produced by these dams will supply his aluminium industry.

The Fazenda Intervales is a model for reserves in Brazil. Fundação Florestal, an extremely competent organization, manages it for ecotourism, environmental education, research and wildlife protection. Fundação Florestal is promoting much important research at Intervales, including a study of *B. arachnoides*, a long-term study of palm management, plant phenology, and the ecology of many endangered birds. This area is a base for field studies and postgraduate research for the three most important universities in Brazil (Universidade São Paulo, Universidade Estadual de Campinas and Universidade Estadual Paulista), mainly because of its

excellent facilities and high degree of protection.

Today, the future of Intervales is uncertain. Every month palm-heart poachers invade Intervales and the few guards cannot control the situation. National and international pressure and support will be necessary to re-establish the protection of Intervales. If you want to help please write to Fundação Florestal, Av. Miguel Stefano, 3900, 04301-903, São Paulo, SP, Brazil. Please also write to the governor of São Paulo asking him to review the dismissal of guards in the park: Governador Mário Covas, Palácio dos Bandeirantes, Av. Morumbi 4500; 05698-900 São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

*Mauro Galetti and David J. Chivers.
Wildlife Research Group, Department of Anatomy
University of Cambridge,
Cambridge CB2 3DY, UK*

Condor programme rises to new challenges

The California condor *Gymnogyps californianus* reintroduction programme is having to devise solutions to yet more problems. While captive California condors are now breeding well – resulting in an existing world population of 104

compared with a low of 27 in the late 1980s – re-establishing a wild population is proving difficult.

The Briefly columns of this journal have reported on some of the setbacks encountered in the past 4 years – one bird died after drinking anti-freeze from a puddle and four died after colliding with power lines. Despite recapturing the birds and re-releasing them in remote Lion Canyon, some of the young condors left the canyon and spent too much time near housing developments and camp sites. Eventually they were all recaptured and taken back to Los Angeles Zoo for their own safety. By February 1995 all the condors previously released into the wild were either dead or back in captivity.

A radical change was needed in the rearing programme. Young condors were given aversion therapy in the form of mild electric shocks to train them to avoid power lines. They were also trained to associate people with unpleasantness – several people rush at a young bird, catch it and hold it on its back: condors dislike this treatment. In February six new power-line-avoiding, human-fearing condors were released in the Lion Canyon region, near Santa Barbara.

The strategy seemed to be working: all the birds avoided power lines and humans. Things seemed to be going so well that another eight condors reared under the same regime were being prepared for release when the latest problem emerged. In August the programme's biologists heard that visitors at a camp site near Lion Canyon had been seen feeding two condors, trying to lure them into camera range. Two days later the condors returned to the camp site. Michael Wallace, a curator at Los Angeles Zoo and leader of the recovery programme, visited the camp site the following day and pretended to throw food at the condors. One bird ignored him and was allowed to remain free; the other showed interest and was recaptured. It will undergo more aversion therapy before being re-released.

Another strategy has been adopted this year to equip condors for a safer life in the wild. Four young birds hatched at the Los Angeles

Zoo and the San Diego Wild Animal Park are being reared in cages made to resemble caves, the type of nesting site that their wild ancestors would have used. The artificial caves have been built in a remote location and have a view of mountains, streams and sky, in stark contrast to the plywood and steel cages used in the zoo amidst the noise of human activity. These four birds were also the first captives to be reared by their mothers. Until now eggs were removed from females to encourage them to lay more eggs and in case the mothers were unable to care for their young adequately; the chicks were reared by keepers disguised by adult condors. The trend now is to replicate the natural situation as much as possible.

Editor

Source: *New Scientist*, 15 July 1995, 9; 26 August 1995, 9.

Endemic island wildlife threatened by golf course

An innovative attempt to save the threatened endemic wildlife of the island of Amami in the Ryukyu Islands, which lie south of the southern island of Kyushu, Japan, is under way in the city of Kagoshima. It is from here that the ruling council has already granted permission for a proposed golf course development on the island despite the threats this will pose to a number of already endangered species.

In an attempt to reverse the decision islanders have formed a campaign group – the Kankyo network – which has taken the issue to court. Although Kankyo speaks for the rights of all the island's wildlife, they have specifically chosen four of the most famous to act as plaintiffs in the case. These are the Amami rabbit *Pentalagus furnessi*, the Amami thrush *Zoothera major*, purple jay *Garrulus lidthi* and the Amami woodcock *Scolopax mira*. All are endemic to the Ryukyu Islands. To these could be added 17 endemic reptiles and amphibians, two endemic rats, at least 20 endemic plant species and a great number of

invertebrates, amongst which the beetles and butterflies are best known.

These species evolved in the broad-leaved, closed-canopy forest that once covered the island, but their habitat has been steadily reduced by loggers and sugar-cane planters; by 1980 mature forest covered only 5 per cent of its original extent. In addition to the loss of habitat, introduced mongooses, cats and dogs prey on the Amami rabbit.

During the court hearing lawyers opposing Kankyo argued successfully that, under Japanese law, any plaintiff in a case must have a fixed name and address. This obviously was not the case for Kankyo's chosen plaintiffs.

However, Kankyo plans to appeal providing it can raise the necessary funds. If it

should win the appeal, it would not only save the wildlife of Amami but would set a precedent for similar action elsewhere in Japan, where at present the rights of animals are not recognized in law. If Kankyo loses, it will mean the end for many of the island endemics, despite the fact that the Japanese Government has designated some of them as special national monuments.

For further information contact Kankyo, c/o Mr Hiroaki Sono, 25-5 Nagahama, Naze-Shi, Kagoshima 894, Japan.

*Owen Burnham
85 Ryelands Close, Yiewsley
West Drayton UB7 8AX, UK*