

INTERNATIONAL

CITES update

Burkina Faso, Poland and the United Arab Emirates have all acceded to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (effective 15 January, 12 March and 9 May, respectively) making a total of 106 Parties. The UAE originally acceded to the Convention in 1974, but withdrew in January 1988; the CITES Secretariat has now re-established contacts with the UAE and steps have been taken to allow effective application of the Convention. *Traffic Bulletin*, 9 March 1990, 19.

World Heritage

New natural sites listed at the 13th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris in December 1989 included the Tasmanian Wilderness, Australia (13,740 sq km), a 78 per cent increase on the 1982 listing of the Western Tasmanian National Parks. This large addition adds greatly to the wilderness and conservation value of the site. Also inscribed on the list were: Banc d'Arguin National Park in Mauritania, an existing Ramsar site; Victoria Falls/Mosi-oa Tunya (Zimbabwe/Zambia); and Bandiagara in Mali. New natural site nominations for 1990 include: Yellow Mount, China; Panda Reserves, China; south-west New Zealand; La Amistad/Baru, Panama; Bemaraha, Madagascar; Abiseo, Peru; El Vizcaino, Mexico; and Sjaunja, Sweden. The World Heritage Convention now has 111 State Parties, with Albania, Indonesia and Uruguay joining in 1989. *CNPPA Newsletter*, No. 49, 1.

Threatened protected areas

In 1989 the sites shown in the table below were added to the Register of the World's Threatened Protected Areas, which is maintained and updated annually by the IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre. *CNPPA Newsletter*, No. 49, 13.

Forestry plan attacked

The Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), drawn up by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank and the World Resources Institute in 1985, has come under fire. The plan is intended to co-ordinate efforts to save the world's tropical forests and improve the lot of

Threatened Protected Areas of the World: additions for 1989

Site	Country	Summary of threats
Manas Wildlife Sanctuary	India	Occupation by Bodo tribal people in ethnic unrest with consequent poaching and breakdown of management.
Tanjung Puting NP	Indonesia	Fish poaching threatens endangered dragon fish, which could also lead to disturbance of orang-utan habitat.
Wildlife reserves in Tanimbar Islands	Indonesia	Lack of management and consequent loss of wildlife values.
Flood Plains NP	Sri Lanka	Illegal activities including brick making, cultivation of tobacco and other crops and housing construction.
Wilpattu NP	Sri Lanka	New clearing and settlement. Park dissected by new military roads.
Yala NP	Sri Lanka	Large portions occupied by squatters, poachers, illicit cultivation, timber cutters.
Murchison Falls NP	Uganda	Reconsideration of a hydroelectric scheme, which would harm the flow of the Murchison Falls and affect riverine habitat.
Katmai NP	USA	Ongoing negative impact of Alaskan oil spill on coastal and marine environment and consequences on wildlife from bears to eagles; major loss of unresearched archaeological sites.
Everglades NP	USA	Adverse impacts of alteration of water quality and quantity from agricultural practices and urban encroachment.
Walden Pond	USA	Overuse (highest urine count of any freshwater body in Massachusetts) and major building developments nearby threaten integrity of Henry David Thoreau's meditative site.

the rural poor by exploiting forests sustainably. Over 73 Third World countries are now involved and an independent review of the TFAP is due to report in May. In March, however, the World Rainforest Movement, an international voluntary organization, published its own highly critical review. It says that the TFAP's national forestry action plans for nine countries are likely to lead to further deforestation, remain dominated by concerns of conventional forestry organizations, and ignore political factors that give rise to landlessness, which is the main cause of forest land being converted to agriculture. *New Scientist*, 31 March 1990, 25.

World Bank proposes environmental fund

The World Bank has proposed the establishment of an environmental fund for projects that have 'global significance' and where loans would 'tip the balance' in encouraging environmental investment. They could include the transfer of technology to developing countries to help phase out ozone-depleting CFCs and the encouragement of 'debt for nature' swaps.

The Guardian, 15 March 1990.

Missing ivory

The Hong Kong Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has admitted that 116 of the 474 tonnes of ivory in Hong Kong does not have the appropriate CITES documents. At the CITES meeting in October 1989 Hong Kong announced that there were 670 tonnes of ivory in the territory, of which 93 per cent was legally acquired. Since only 5.3 tonnes have left the territory legally since October it



This set of six stamps was issued in Vienna on 4 May 1990 to commemorate the work of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in the field of medicinal plants. UNIDO assists developing nations with the scientific and technical means necessary to develop traditional medicinal systems based on plants so that they benefit the whole of mankind. The stamps depict the rosy periwinkle *Catharanthus roseus*, American ginseng *Panax quinquefolium*, frangipani *Plumeria rubra*, *Chinchona officinalis*, *Bixa orellana* and bitter melon *Momordica charantia*. Information from United Nations Postal Administration, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10.

is possible that the missing ivory has been smuggled out to China, North and South Korea and Taiwan. The UK, on behalf of Hong Kong, announced in January that it would take out a 6-month reservation on the African elephant to allow Hong Kong to continue its ivory trade. Since then there has been an upsurge in poaching in

Kenya. Other nations that have taken out a reservation on the ivory ban are China, Malawi, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

WWF News, March–April 1980, 8.

International alarm over environment

In the first international poll taken on environmental attitudes, between 75 and 100 per cent of those questioned called for stronger actions by governments and international organizations and stronger laws to contain industrial pollution, which was seen as a high-priority issue. Other causes for concern were loss of agricultural land, deforestation, radioactivity, desertification and acid rain. There was less awareness of the greenhouse effect and the destruction of the ozone layer. Most people would be willing to pay higher taxes if they knew the money was going to be spent protecting the environment. The poll was conducted for the United Nations Environmental Programme in Argentina, China, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Federal Republic of Germany and Zimbabwe.

Tropicus, III (4), 7.

Japanese aid

Japan is now the world's largest national donor of aid and its unenlightened approach to the environment is worrying some conservationists. In 1989 its overall investment in development projects, mostly in the Third World, was £23 billion, as much as the World Bank, and it has agreed to double this. The projects it funds are often large-scale facilities that exploit and process raw materials for

export to Japan. Examples are a motorway-wide logging road in Sarawak, Malaysia and charcoal burning aluminium smelters and iron blast furnaces in the Carajas region of the Amazon.

The Guardian, 23 March 1990.

Plight of fish

At least 596 species of fish, most of them freshwater species, are threatened, with 24 believed extinct. There is a geographical bias in the list, which reveals, for example, that 22.4 per cent of North American fish may be threatened compared with 0.4 per cent of those in South America. Although these differences may be related to greater pressures on fish populations in North America, it is more likely that they reflect the lack of knowledge of the fish fauna of South America. The fish of Amazonia are being affected by intensive deforestation, mining and resultant pollution, and the introduction of exotic species. Catfish

Pseudoplatystoma spp. have disappeared from some mining areas and are heavily contaminated with mercury in gold mining areas. The accidentally introduced tilapia *Oreochromis nilotica* is now dominant in a headwater of the Rio Araguaia and the small native *Astyanax* spp. are becoming scarce there. *Fish*, 1, Winter 1989, 1 & 4.

EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA

Siberian tigers may be culled

The Amur or Siberian tiger *Panthera tigris altaica* population in the Soviet Far East has increased to about 430 individuals from a low of 30 in response to a hunting ban

introduced in the 1940s. Soviet biologists are concerned that this increase is having an impact on other species. The tiger's major prey—wild boar—is already declining because of forest fires and logging. Research has shown that for balanced tiger/prey populations there needs to be 300,000 prey animals for 430 tigers and only about one-fifth of that number exists. The tigers are likely to turn to hunting domestic animals as a result. Soviet biologists believe that it is practical to preserve only 200-250 tigers and that some female tigers and cubs will have to be removed, mainly from unprotected areas. USSR Embassy, Ottawa, Canada, 1990.

Sweden's new park plan

Europe's first national parks were set up in Sweden in 1909. To mark its 80th anniversary the National Conservation Service has devised a new national parks programme under which 20 new national parks are to be created, three existing parks are to be enlarged, three are to be absorbed by new ones, and four are to be reclassified as protected natural areas as they do not meet IUCN national park criteria. The area covered by the parks will be 5 per cent of Sweden's land area and Vindelfjäll National Park will cover 550,000 ha to form Europe's largest park. *Nature and National Parks*, 1990, No. 105, 27-28.

British fish suffering from acid rain

Trout and salmon in up to one-third of rivers and lakes in Scotland, and large areas of the Lake District, Wales and the Pennines, have been wiped out

or are badly affected by acid rain according to a recent report. The Royal Society and its equivalents in Norway and Sweden led the research by 30 scientific teams in a five-year study funded by the Central Electricity Generating Board and British Coal.

The Guardian, 20 March 1990.

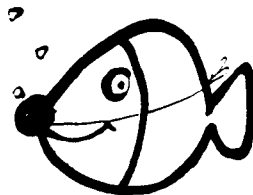
Fish campaign

On 21 March 1990 the Council of Europe launched a campaign to protect freshwater fish. Of 200 European freshwater fish species 103 are in danger. Ten member states (Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland) and

Czechoslovakia have agreed to participate, promising public awareness campaigns about fish and the need to protect them.

Council of Europe, 12 March 1990.

COMME UN POISSON



DANS L'EAU

Shell Oil fined

Shell Oil (UK) was strongly criticized and fined £1 million in the High Court after pleading guilty to spilling 156 tons of crude oil into the River Mersey from a fractured pipeline (*Oryx* 24, 36). The spill spread 16 km, killing 300 birds and affecting 2000 others.

The Guardian, 24 February 1990.

Red kites poisoned

Although all birds of prey are fully protected under the UK's Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, persecution continues, particularly through the illegal use of pesticides and poisons. In some cases this is seriously limiting numbers and preventing species from expanding their range. At least 11 red kites *Milvus milvus* were found poisoned last year; the species has a total population of only just over 50 pairs in Great Britain. In most cases no proceedings can be brought against the perpetrators because of lack of evi-

dence. If the poisoning is to stop, education, publicity, the withdrawal of certain chemicals and changes in the law are all necessary.

Topical Issues NCC, March 1990, 3.

Foreign flatworm threat

Flatworms *Artiosthia triangulata* from New Zealand are devastating native earthworms in Northern Ireland. The flatworm grows up to 15 cm long and is believed to have arrived in the 1960s with imported produce. The Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland is seeking ways to control the flatworm before the damage it does to agriculture is irreparable.

New Scientist, 10 February 1990, 27.

Netherlands plan for otter

A recovery plan for the otter *Lutra lutra* was launched in July 1989 in the Netherlands by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries. It made recommendations on habitat protection, restoration and management, control of pollutants and the promotion of the use of stop-guides in eel traps. In Friesland, one of the core areas for otters, the government has already financed a restoration project. Others are planned, as are reintroduction programmes when water quality has been improved.

IUCN Otter Specialist Group Bulletin No. 5, 41–44.

New wildlife research institute

The European Wildlife Research Institute (EWI) was founded in 1989 in Bonn, West Germany, by several organizations interested in wildlife research because of an increasing sense of responsibility of

hunters towards their quarry. It is attached to the Institute of Biogeography, Centre for Environmental Research, University of Saarbrücken. At a national level it will advise federal and state game associations on wildlife ecology and will undertake theoretical and applied research. For example, a project has started on plant-herbivore interactions to gain information to approach the problem of damage by ungulates to natural, semi-natural and plantation forests. Internationally the institute coordinates a research group of the International Wetland Research Bureau and heads the commission on migratory birds of the International Game Council. It also plans to develop within the Institute of Biogeography a curriculum for wildlife ecology, which is so far lacking in the FRG.

EWI, D-7823 Bonndorf-Glashütte, FRG.

Gorilla trader jailed

Walter Sensen, a West German animal dealer, was arrested and imprisoned in Nuremberg in February and charged with five violations of wildlife trade laws, three of them involving gorillas. The first involved three young gorillas on a flight in January 1987 from Cameroon to Taiwan. On a stopover in Zaire airport workers found two of the animals dead of suffocation. The third is now in Taipei Zoo. Sensen's business was subsequently expelled from Cameroon but it resurfaced in Equatorial Guinea from where the second charge arises: in 1989 two gorillas were sold to Guadalajara Zoo in Mexico. The third charge involves a circular posted from Equatorial Guinea to Sweden's Kolmarden Zoo offering gorillas. Other charges involve coat-



This colour leaflet has been produced by the UK-based Marine Conservation Society, 9 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5BU, UK, to make dealers and customers aware of the damage done to coral reefs by the trade in coral, shells and other marine souvenirs, and of the controls on imports currently in force under CITES.

is, three porcupines and herons. *BBC Wildlife*, April 1990, 267.

Peregrine falcon reintroduction progress

The German Falconers' Association, in co-operation with bird protection organizations, reintroduced 424 captive-bred peregrine falcons *Falco peregrinus* into the wild between 1977 and 1989 at 31 sites in Germany. Losses have been very small and the first successful breeding in the wild by released birds occurred in 1982. There are now many nesting populations established in West Germany and also in East Germany, where the species had totally disappeared. The final releases under the programme will take place in 1992 as by then all potential nest sites will have been occupied. All the pairs so far have nested on cliffs or buildings and the programme is now attempting to establish a population of tree-nesting falcons in northern and central areas by releasing birds from artificial eyries built in trees and by fostering under other raptors. *Newsletter of the World Working Group on Birds of Prey & Owls*, December 1989, 9–11.

Time has come for frontier park

The idea of a frontier national park (Intersylva) between the Federal Republic of Germany and Czechoslovakia was born 20 years ago and in 1970 the Bavarian Forest National Park was established by the FRG. Now, with the return of democracy to eastern Europe, there is a chance of realizing the original plan. The forests on the Czechoslovakia side of the border are relatively undisturbed and the vast forest area of this frontier region (700–800 sq km)

offers a last chance in central Europe for a large forest park. However, the political changes also pose threats, especially an array of ill considered and uncontrolled development schemes. There is urgent need to prepare an integrated frontier park plan before it is too late. *Nature and National Parks*, 1990, No. 105, 5–6.

Dam threat

The Pieniny Transfrontier National Park on the Poland–Czechoslovakia border is threatened by a plan for a dam. If it goes ahead it will spoil beautiful limestone landscape, and the 400-m-deep gorge of the river Dunajec; it will threaten 1000 vascular plant species, some of which are endemic, about 100 species of nesting birds and 1600 butterfly species. The main change will be in the aquatic ecosystem downstream of the dam. *Naturopa newsletter*, 89–10, 4.

Buying back nature

A campaign to 'buy back nature' has been launched by WWF–Austria with the aim of protecting high-quality natural areas from economic development. The first area to be bought will be 4.2 sq km of water meadows in the heart of the proposed Danube Water Meadows National Park. Within three months of launching the plan half the funds required had been raised; Flood Plains share-certificates are sold in Austrian post offices and banks. *Nature and National Parks*, 1990, No. 105, 36.

Transfrontier park

There is an Austro-Hungarian plan to classify the Neusiedler See (known as Lake Fertő in

Hungary) as a transfrontier national park by 1995, in time for the Vienna–Budapest world fair. This alkaline lake is highly eutrophic and suffers from various forms of pollution and from the impact of tourism. About half of its 240 sq km is covered by reeds and it is one of the most important bird areas in central Europe, serving as a key resting place for geese migrating from Siberia to Tunisia. Hungary recently included 2870 ha of the lake in the list of wetlands protected under the Ramsar Convention. *Naturopa newsletter*, 89–10, 3; *CNPPA Newsletter*, No. 49, 2.

Otter extinct in Switzerland

The Otter Group Switzerland, which was established in 1984 with members from governmental and voluntary organizations, has announced that the otter *Lutra lutra* has to be considered extinct in Switzerland. In 1989 there was only one free-living individual left and a reintroduction in 1975 had failed. Good habitat still exists in several places and the only explanation for the otter's disappearance seems to be the levels of PCBs in fish; trout in the best otter habitats are contaminated well above the levels known to affect otters. The Otter Group has agreed to turn its efforts to a public awareness campaign to draw attention to pollution problems. *IUCN Otter Specialist Group Bulletin*, No. 5, 45–50.

Massif reserve

The Ventron massif in the Hautes Vosges is to become the 95th French nature reserve. It covers 1647 ha and contains ancient forests, peat bogs, sedge and cliffs. The species to benefit include the capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, the hazel grouse

Tetrastes bonasia, the pygmy owl *Glaucidium passerinum* and the club moss *Lycopodium inundatum*.

Naturopa newsletter, 89-10, 3.

Massive use of pesticides in Spain

During the summer of 1989 vast quantities of the insecticide Malathion were sprayed from the air in the Estremadura region of south-western Spain to kill the green oak tortrix moth *Tortrix viridana* and gypsy moth *Lymantria dispar* in oak woods, and grasshoppers, Orthoptera, in crops and pastureland. The resultant death of all insects virtually eliminated the food supply of many birds in the middle of their breeding season. Those species affected included the great bustard *Otis tarda*, little bustard *Tetrax tetrax*, roller *Coracias garrulus*, lesser kestrel *Falco naumanni*, Montagu's harrier *Circus pygargus* and black kite *Milvus migrans*. More spraying is planned for 1990.

Newsletter of the World Working Group on Birds of Prey & Owls, December 1989, 3-4.

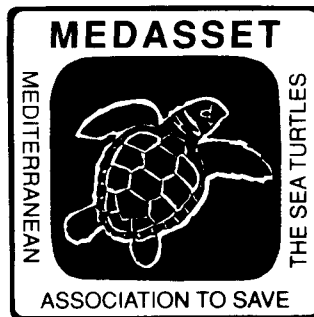
End of a tortoise prime site

The site of the largest known concentration of Hermann's tortoise *Testudo hermanni* in Europe has been destroyed. The 150-ha coastal heath at Alyki near Thessaloniki was home to 3000 tortoises as well as 22 other species of herpetofauna (*Oryx* 24, 64-5). Fifteen of these—including Hermann's tortoise—are protected by the Bern Convention of which Greece is a signatory. At the end of January local people drove tractors and bulldozers on to the site, which had been protected by presidential decree, and ploughed and flattened it with the full knowl-

edge of the local authorities. The local people want the land to build holiday villas and when planning permission was refused for this in 1980 on conservation grounds they responded by burning and ploughing part of the heath. *BBC Wildlife*, April 1990, 269.

Progress on sea turtles

MEDASSET, which was founded in October 1988 to co-ordinate the conservation requirements for sea turtles in the Mediterranean, has issued a progress report. This specialist group made a conservation assessment of the south-west Peloponnese coastline on the Ionian sea, and is investigating accidental captures of turtles by sword-fish fleets. Current projects include a full survey of potential nesting beaches in the North Aegean, in south-east Sardinia, a continuing investigation of accidental captures and catalysing government action at Ministry of Fishery level to resolve these problems. MEDASSET is also campaigning to improve the conservation situation for turtles at Laganos Bay, Zakynthos and to save Patara in Turkey—an important nesting beach—under threat from tourist development. *MEDASSET Progress Report*, February 1990.



Egypt to control hunting

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism is proposing to regu-

late hunting by visitors to Egypt by setting hunting seasons and bag limits and by penalizing foreign hunters and tour companies who break Egyptian wildlife protection laws. The Ministry has also asked the Ministry of the Interior to stop granting permits allowing Maltese hunters to bring guns into the country (although they could still be hired). More than 500 hunters are known to have visited Egypt last year, many of them from Malta where a company, Sphinx Tours of Valetta, specializes in tours to Egypt, offering opportunities to shoot 'every kind of bird you would wish for your collection'. *BBC Wildlife*, April 1990, 264.

Screwworm fly control plan

The threat to wildlife from accidental introduction of the parasitic screwworm fly *Cochliomyia hominivorax* into Libya (*Oryx* 24, 66) may be averted. The International Fund for Agricultural Development and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, backed by funds of \$77 million, have proposed an 2-year eradication programme starting in August using sterile flies. *The Independent on Sunday*, 8 April 1990.

AFRICA

Kenya burns rhino horn

President Moi of Kenya set ablaze 283 rhinoceros horns and 13,950 game skins in Nairobi National Park on 25 January. They were worth \$US324,000 and had been recovered from poachers since 1976. The ceremony was used to unveil a marble monument to commemorate the 18 July 1989 historic burning of 12

tonnes of ivory.
Traffic Bulletin, 9 March 1990,
19.

Hunter's antelope gives cause for concern

There is concern over the status of Hunter's antelope *Damaliscus hunteri* in Kenya, whose range lies on the poachers' route to Tsavo and Meru (between the Tana River and Somalia). A census is needed urgently.
Gnusletter, January 1990, 8.

Impenetrable a park

On 25 September 1989 Uganda declared the Impenetrable (Bwindi) Forest, the Mgahinga Forest and the Rwenzori Mountains national parks.
World Birdwatch, October–December 1989, 4.

South Africa gets new invader

The kudzu vine *Pueraria lobata* has established a foothold in the eastern Transvaal and if not checked quickly could spread to other warm parts of South Africa. It poses a real threat to indigenous forest—climbing into the canopies of trees, completely smothering and, eventually, killing them. It is native to China and Japan, but because of its multitude of uses it has been widely planted in many parts of the world. It is now an official pest in the USA. It was introduced into South Africa by an eastern Transvaal farmer.
Veld & Flora, December 1989, 116–117.

Drastic decline of Derby eland

A huge decline of the eastern giant or Derby eland *Tragelaphus derbianus gigas* has

been reported from Central African Republic due to massive poaching by Sudanese and Chadian nationals. A hunting safari company, which reported this, has permission to export 25 animals to the National Zoological Gardens, South Africa, for captive-breeding as a precaution against extinction. Capture was scheduled for January/February 1990. At present about 40 eland are hunted legally by licenced hunters each hunting season. The draft IUCN/SSC Antelope Specialist Group's Action Plan lists the eastern giant eland as 'threatened', having disappeared completely in recent years from Chad and Nigeria, with viable populations persisting in CAR, Sudan and Cameroon.
Gnusletter, January 1990, 4.

ASIA (EXCLUDING INDO-MALAYA)

Musk deer research in China

Musk deer *Moschus sifanicus* are protected by China's 1988 Wildlife Conservation Law, which prohibits musk deer harvest and trade in musk obtained from the wild except by special permission from provincial authorities. The government of Qinghai province has also published a special notice regarding the importance of conserving musk deer but the animals continue to decline. In late 1989 R. Harris, of the University of Montana, US, with Chinese colleagues from the Northwest Plateau Institute of Biology in Xining, Qinghai, started research in the Beizha Forest on the border with the Tibetan Autonomous Region, aimed at developing improved conservation strategies. They found that musk deer are still heavily exploited,

mostly by Moslem Salar people who are employed as loggers or in road-building crews. A few Salar, using wire snares and working at night, can almost extirpate musk deer locally. Neither local Tibetans nor Public Security officials are willing or able to take action to discourage them. Musk deer are still common in some areas; the team made a total of 161 musk deer observations in 3 months and will resume research in September 1990.
Richard Harris, University of Montana, US.

Japanese to capture coelacanth

It is reported that a Japanese expedition financed by a private group has set out to capture coelacanth *Latimeria chalumnae* in the Comoros Islands in order to keep them alive in an aquarium for study purposes. Certain institutes have expressed serious misgivings about this expedition, fearing that scientific research is being used as a cover for commercial aims.
Naturopa newsletter, 89-10, 4.

INDO-MALAYA

Malaysian plan to destroy mangroves

The Malaysian Government has announced a land reclamation project that will destroy 98,334 ha of mangroves (90 per cent of Peninsular Malaysia's total) on the west coast of the Peninsula. The aim is to extend the land to a width of up to 3.2 km into the Straits of Malacca for industries, airports and housing. Environmental and consumer groups are campaigning against the project, which has been put forward in response to the country's fast growing

population, which is increasing at the rate of 340,000 a year.

APPEN, *c/o Sahabat Alam Malaysia, 43 Salween Road, Penang, Malaysia.*

Bali bans turtle meat sales

The Bali provincial administration of Indonesia has prohibited all restaurants in the province from selling turtle meat, although slaughtering turtles for traditional and religious rituals is still allowed. The move follows international protests and threats of a tourist boycott of Bali.

Marine Turtle Newsletter, January 1990, 28.

Illegal logging in Bintuni Bay

An Indonesian logging concern financed by a Japanese corporation is illegally logging mangrove forests in Bintuni Bay, Irian Jaya. The Indonesian Government allows selective logging on a rotational basis and bans the cutting of mangroves within 200 m of the shore and within 50 m of rivers. An Indonesian Company, PT Bintuni Utama, acquired a 137,000-ha forest concession in the bay in 1988 and built a woodchip factory, partly financed by the Murubeni Corporation of Japan, which also buys the woodchips. Bintuni Utama has been logging without making the legally required environmental impact assessment and has been breaking logging regulations. The Marubeni Corporation denies any responsibility and, after much media coverage, the Ministry of Forests and Environment is monitoring the operations. Protestors say that logging should stop altogether until the mangroves regenerate.

APPEN, *c/o Sahabat Alam*



The National Federation of British Zoos launched a campaign in April to raise £20,000 to help with the ICBP Project to reintroduce and protect the Bali starling, also known as Rothschild's mynah *Leucopsor rothschildi* in its natural habitat, the Bali Barat National Park. Twelve captive-bred Bali starlings have been released and are currently being monitored. (*Hans Reinhard, courtesy of Bruce Coleman Ltd*)

Malaysia, 43 Salween Road, 10050 Penang, Malaysia.

Palawan needs help

Palawan, the Philippines' fifth largest island, still possesses unspoiled habitats but they are being destroyed by logging, dynamite and cyanide fishing, tourist development and mineral exploration. The Haribon Foundation is pressing for Palawan to be declared an 'integrated protected area', pointing to a government study that says the island's economy does not need to rely on log-

ging but could derive sufficient income from sustainable fishing and wildlife tourism.

APPEN, *c/o Sahabat Alam Malaysia, 43 Salween Road, Penang, Malaysia.*

NORTH AMERICA

Bison's fate in balance

The 4000–5000 bison in Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada are under threat of slaughter. The herd is a hybrid mix of plains and wood bison and some animals are infected

with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis. Agriculture Canada proposes that the herd be killed to prevent the diseases spreading to domestic livestock and to avoid the danger of genetic contamination of the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary herd, which is expanding its range. Wood Buffalo National Park would be restocked with wood bison from the Mackenzie herd and from Elk Island National Park. Opponents of the proposal say genetic studies show that all stocks are hybrids, that the herd has been infected for 60 years and is adapted to the diseases, that the herd is the largest bison gene pool in existence, that there would be no guarantee that eradication would be complete and that the reintroduced bison would not become infected, that cattle could be excluded from a zone around the park and that research for an effective vaccine be accelerated. A review panel has until May to decide on a recommendation, but federal ministers have the final say. *Canadian Nature Federation Almanac*, Spring 1990.

TEDs make a difference

Total counts of dead turtles washed up on the beaches of South Carolina, USA, in 1989 were the lowest since monitoring begun in 1980. The use of Turtle Excluder Devices in shrimp nets between May and August was probably responsible; carcass counts returned to past levels in September and October. *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, January 1990, 28.

Trade exhibit at renovated zoo

The first major exhibit in the Wildlife Conservation Center of

New York's completely renovated Central Park Zoo is entitled 'The illegal skin trade'. Compiled with the help of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, it features a wide assortment of raw skins, hides and manufactured products that have been seized at the Port of New York. A free booklet explains how the consumer can avoid contributing to the damaging trade in reptile products. *Dept of Public Relations, Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021-7055, USA.*

Construction stopped for squirrel

On 26 March a court ordered construction work on an international observatory to be stopped for 120 days to enable a reassessment of the impact of the project on an endangered subspecies of red squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus grahamensis* that occurs nowhere else (*Oryx* 23, 112). In 1986 there were 328 squirrels, in 1989 only 162-185. Poor pine cone crops since 1988 have contributed to the decline. *New Scientist*, 7 April 1990, 26.

First Kemp's ridley nesting in Florida

About 95 per cent of nesting Kemp's ridley *Lepidochelys kempii*, the world's most endangered sea turtle, lay their eggs on a single 32-km-long beach at Rancho Nuevo in Tamaulipas, Mexico. There are only a few nesting records elsewhere in Mexico and in Texas, and one unconfirmed report from Colombia. On 30 May 1989 a Kemp's ridley laid 116 eggs on Florida's west coast at Madeira beach, witnessed by dozens of tourists. The nest was inundated by storm tides on 6 June and moved to higher ground. On 27

and 28 July 24 hatchlings emerged. A second turtle excavated a nest on Palm Beach on Florida's east coast, also in May, but failed to deposit eggs. *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, January 1990, 8-9.

Invader on Hawaii

Hawaii's native flora is being devastated by the combined efforts of the faya tree *Myrica faya*, a native of Madeira, the Azores and the Canary Islands, which was introduced in the 1920s as a garden shrub, and the Japanese white-eye *Zosterops japonicus*, which was introduced as a cage bird. The tree poisons and outcompetes native Hawaiian species and the bird spread its seeds. About 12,140 ha of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park are infested with the faya tree and efforts to eradicate it now rest in the hope of finding an insect that will attack the faya but nothing else. *New Scientist*, 17 March 1990, 30.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Honduras bans wildlife trade

With effect from 1 February 1990, the Government of Honduras banned 'the killing, capture, internal and external trade, of all species of mammal, bird and reptile' until scientific studies have been carried out on the status of wildlife populations and captive-breeding operations in the country. *Traffic Bulletin*, 9 March 1990, 19.

National parks for Jamaica

A project is under way to establish Jamaica's first national parks. Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust, a

Jamaica NGO, will work with government agencies to implement the Protected Areas Resource Conservation Project. In the next three years the project will set up two pilot parks—the Montego Bay Marine Park and the Blue Mountain/John Crow Mountain National Park—and will develop the framework and infrastructure for a national park system. The project is funded by USAID, the Jamaican Government and NGO contributions. *IUCN Bulletin*, 20, 10-12, 10.

SOUTH AMERICA

Brave addition to Brazil's government

Jose Lutzenberger, Brazil's most outspoken environmental activist, has been appointed head of a Special Secretariat for the Environment of the new government, which came into power on 15 March. He has been campaigning for 15 years against pesticide misuse and environmentally destructive policies. He says his first job will be to change current government policy that gives cattle ranchers financial incentives to convert forest to grazing land. Fernando Collor de Mello, Brazil's new president, has been congratulated by ecologists from around the world for his choice. *New Scientist*, 10 March 1990, 30.

To rescue the Atlantic forests

In 1987 less than 10 per cent of Brazilians in the Atlantic coastal region knew that remnants of the Atlantic forest were of conservation interest; by 1989 one in five Brazilians considered the destruction of these forests to be the most

important environmental problem facing the nation. The change in awareness is largely due to the efforts of SOS Mata Atlântica, formed by a group of scientists, politicians and businessmen in 1987. Most Brazilians in the region now recognize SOS's logo—Brazil's green flag partially stripped of its colour with the warning 'we're taking the green from our land'. The SOS has launched an ambitious programme for the Lagamar whose 32,375 sq km embrace about 20 per cent of Brazil's remaining Atlantic forest and which is protected on paper but is under intense pressure from human activity.

The Nature Conservancy Magazine, March/April 1990, 14-19.

Tamarin reserve burned

An unseasonal fire burned through most of February in the Poço das Antas Biological Reserve, 97 km north of Rio de Janeiro. This remnant of Atlantic forest is the home of the last wild population of golden lion tamarins *Leontopithecus rosalia rosalia*. Although 30 per cent of the reserve was burnt, mostly in regenerating areas, the 450 tamarins escaped unharmed. Other animals were affected, however, including the swallowtail butterfly *Parides ascanius* and the maned sloth *Bradypus torquatus*. At one point more than 300 people fought the blaze. *WWF News*, March/April 1990, 1 and 7.

AUSTRALIA AND ANTARCTICA

Cape York breakthrough

Cape York Peninsula in north-

ern Queensland, Australia, is relatively unspoiled and its forests relatively unknown scientifically. A recent rush to grab land in the region—for mining, timber, tourist development, land speculation and a potential space launchsite—has been checked thanks to a campaign by conservation groups.

Queensland's new government, elected in December 1989, and the Australian federal government have now announced a joint land-use plan for Cape York Peninsula. Despite this breakthrough conservationists are still concerned over current proposals for alluvial gold-mining in the McIlwraith and Iron Range rain forests and mining sand dunes at Shelbourne Bay for the Japanese glass-making industry. Oil exploration is also going on at the Aurukun wetlands, which support a great number of water birds.

WWF News, March/April 1990, 1.

Thylacine lives—according to computer analysis

A computer analysis suggests that the Tasmanian tiger or thylacine *Thylacinus cynocephalus* still exists, despite the fact that no living specimen has been photographed, captured or shot in more than 50 years. Henry Nix of the Australian National University developed a programme called Bioclin that predicts accurately where a particular species should occur based on a detailed description of the environmental factors it is known to prefer. Intrigued by the frequency of reported sightings of the thylacine, he collected two independent sets of data. From one set—based on scientific collections and official government records of where thylacines were shot and trapped by farmers and bounty hunters late last century and in the early 1900s—he instructed

the Bioclin programme to generate a map of potential habitat. The other set—based on 'reliable' and 'less reliable' sightings of the thylacine over the past 60 years matched the first set almost perfectly, with the greatest number of sightings occurring in areas of predicted optimum habitat. Statistically the chance of these independent data sets coinciding so closely approaches zero. *New Scientist*, 10 March 1990, 24.

Tuna close to extinction

The southern bluefin tuna *Thunnus maccoyii*, one of Australia's most important commercial fish, is close to commercial extinction, mainly because of overfishing by Australian and Japanese trawlers. The fish is a slow-growing, slow-breeding, long-lived species and its flesh is much prized. The total catch has been declining since 1961 and an Australian government report states that if it continues to decline there is little prospect of recovery. Australia has tried to negotiate a total fishing ban but Japan has resisted, blaming the decline on Australia's haul of immature fish off South Australia. The Australian Government says that the Japanese long-line fishery has contributed about twice as much to the decline as the Australian surface fishery. *Traffic Bulletin*, 9 March 1990, 32.

To control the cane toad

The Australian federal government has allocated \$A1.25 million to research on controlling the introduced cane toad, which is spreading throughout eastern and northern Australia at a rate of 35 km a year. It was introduced more than 50 years ago to eradicate a beetle pest of sugar cane and it is poisonous

to most animals that eat it. Biologists are divided over how to control it: some say that biological control—a virus or a bacteria—should be used before the toad overwhelms native wildlife populations; others say more needs to be known first. It is likely that an Australian biologist will be sent to study the cane toad in its natural habitat in Central and South America. *New Scientist*, 24 March 1990, 19.

Swamp turtle breeding well

Six of the 11 western swamp turtles *Pseudemydura umbrina* hatched in 1989, after eight years of efforts to breed them in captivity, have survived (*Oryx* 24, 46). With only 40 or so left in the wild this breakthrough is critical. A Western Swamp Turtle Nursery has been built with the help of local businesses in Perth and three females have laid another 15 eggs. The species takes 10–20 years to reach maturity. Perth Zoo, Western Australia.

Yellow-eyed penguin die-off

At least one-third of the 400 yellow-eyed penguins *Megadyptes antipodes* that live on the Otago Peninsula in New Zealand's South Island, have died since December. The loss represents around 15 per cent of the world's total population and threatens the extinction of the mainland population. The cause of the deaths is not yet known and volunteers have been hand-feeding 120 orphaned chicks in an effort to save the colony. *New Scientist*, 17 March 1990, 24.

Kakapo lays egg

The kakapo *Strigops habroptilus*, New Zealand's giant nocturnal parrot, has been a cause of con-

cern. Only 43 birds are left, 14 of them female, and until this year there had been no successful breeding for nine years. In the early 1980s 22 birds from the last surviving population on Stewart Island, which was threatened by cats, were moved to Little Barrier Island. The recovery team has been trying to reduce the number of Polynesian rats on the island and has been providing the birds with extra food in an attempt to bring them into breeding condition. The efforts may be paying off—a nine-year-old laid an egg in March. *New Scientist*, 10 March 1990, 27.

More areas protected in Antarctica

The XV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Paris, 9–20 October 1989, designated three additional sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Antarctic Peninsula, which raises the total number to 31. They are: Ablation Point–Ganymede Heights, Alexander Island, which is, at 180 sq km, one of the largest ice-free areas in the Antarctic Peninsula; Avian Island, north-west Marguerite Bay, 1.2 sq km of island and shore, with an exceptionally abundant and diverse seabird population, including the southernmost known breeding colony of giant petrel *Macronectes giganteus*; and Mount Flora, Hope Bay, whose upper slopes contain a rich fossil flora of exceptional importance and which needs protection from the impact of souvenir collectors. *CNPPA Newsletter*, No. 49, 3.

OCEANIA

Tongan bird threatened

Niufo'ou, Tonga's northern-

most island, is under consideration by Iran as the site of a crude oil storage depot. The tiny island is the only home of the threatened megapode *Megapodius pritchardii*, which incubates its eggs in the volcanic soil.

World Birdwatch,
October–December 1989, 3.

Solomons' crocodiles in danger

The saltwater crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* population of the Solomon Islands may soon become extinct unless urgent measures are taken to protect it. Professors Harry Messel and Wayne King found only 177 individuals in a census in 1989 and recommend a ban on export and on taking from the wild crocodiles whose belly width is larger than 45 cm.

Traffic Bulletin, 9 March 1990, 33.

PEOPLE

Lester R. Brown, the founder president of the Worldwatch Institute based in Washington DC, has been awarded the WWF Gold Medal.

Russell A. Mittermeier is the new President of Conservation International. A primatologist, herpetologist and wildlife conservationist, Dr Mittermeier was formerly Vice-President for Science of the World Wildlife Fund-US and he is also Vice-Chairman of the IUCN's Species Survival Commission. Conservation International was founded in 1987 and is carrying out programmes in the world's tropical forests.

HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands recently presented 15 outstanding conservationists

with the Golden Ark Award for their contributions to conservation of fauna and flora. They included Dr David J. Bellamy, FFPS Vice-President and Christopher E. Parsons, FFPS Council member.

PUBLICATIONS

Flora of Ethiopia

Flora of Ethiopia: Volume 3 Pittosporaceae—Apiaceae is the first of eight to be published. It covers 14 families, including the economically important Fabaceae and Burseraceae and will run to about 650 pages, of which 190 will have illustrations. Further details from The Director, The National Herbarium, Science Faculty, Addis Ababa University, Box 3434, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

MEETINGS AND COURSES

Heritage interpretation congress

The Third Global Congress of Heritage Interpretation International will be held in Honolulu, Hawaii, 4–8 November 1991. Information: Ray Tabata, UH Sea Grant, 1000 Pope Road, MSB 226, Honolulu, HI 96822, USA.

IUCN General Assembly

The IUCN 18th General Assembly will be held in Perth 28 November–5 December 1990. The theme will be 'Conservation in a Changing World'.

World Congress on Protected Areas

The IV World Congress on Protected Areas will be held in Caracas, Venezuela early in

1992, probably in February.

Wildlife Economics and Management

The future prosperity of many countries depends on their wildlife but economic development can have a negative impact. The British Council is running a course—Wildlife Economics and Management: Policy and Practice—in April 1991 to examine the most effective methods by which wildlife can be managed as a renewable resource to yield a sustainable return. This three-week residential course, designed for experienced policy makers and senior administrators concerned with the commercial and scientific management of wildlife, will cost £1760 for fees, accommodation and meals. It will be held at the University of Kent and Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust. Further details from your nearest British Council Office or from Courses Department, British Council, 65 Davies Street, London W1Y 2AA.

CORRECTIONS

Corals and CITES

In *Oryx* (24, 3) it was wrongly stated that certain corals had been transferred to Appendix I of CITES. Originally 17 genera of corals were on Appendix II and the October 1989 meeting of CITES agreed to list all reef corals on Appendix II to avoid identification difficulties.

Zambezi Valley

In *Oryx* (23, 222) it was stated that Operation Stronghold is carried out by Zambia. In fact this programme in the Zambezi Valley is carried out by Zimbabwe.