

## INTERNATIONAL

## CITES

Estonia and Greece acceded to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on 22 July and 8 October 1992, effective 20 October 1992 and 6 January 1993, respectively, bringing the total number of Parties to 117.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, October/November 1992, 47.

## World Heritage

The World Heritage Committee, which met in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA in December 1992, agreed to the addition of four new natural sites. Fraser Island, off the south-eastern coast of Queensland, Australia, covers 1810 sq km and is the second largest sand island in the world, with rain forest growing on its high dunes. It will be part of the new Great Sandy Region Regional Park. The other three sites are all Chinese Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Wulingyuan, in Hunan Province, is dominated by quartzite sandstone pillars, many over 200 m high. It covers 264 sq km with a 127-sq-km buffer zone, providing habitat for the Chinese giant salamander, dhole, Asiatic black bear, clouded leopard and Chinese water deer. Jiuzhaigou Valley, in northern Sichuan Province, is renowned for its mountain scenery, diverse forest, lakes and waterfalls as well as being the fifth most important of China's Giant Panda Reserves. Huanglong, also in Sichuan, has pools, forest and alpine meadows and is home to the giant panda and Sichuan golden snub-nosed monkey.

Source: *CNPPA Newsletter*, December 1992, 6.

## Ivory trade plans

The four member states for the Southern Africa Centre for Ivory Marketing (SACIM) – Botswana, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe – have agreed on measures to exclude poached ivory from the market if trading is resumed. The most likely scheme to be put to CITES for approval, involves marketing legally obtained tusks that have been marked with a hologram, a bar code and a serial number. The four countries would feed data on tusks traded into a central database in Gaborone, Botswana. Under the plan profits from tusks and skins will be ploughed back into conservation programmes in the countries of origin. The SACIM countries claim to have a combined total of 144,000 elephants and say that culling is necessary to keep populations within the carrying capacity of available habitat.

Source: *New Scientist*, 12 December 1992, 7.

## Timber organization flounders

At the International Tropical Timber Organization meeting in November 1992 the governments of 50 countries failed to agree on how to regulate world trade in timber to help conserve forests. The current International Tropical Timber Agreement expires in 1993 and tropical countries want a new one to include the northern forests of Canada and Siberia. There is growing concern that Siberia's forests face destruction as Russia seeks to increase timber exports.

Source: *New Scientist*, 5 December 1992, 12.

## EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA

## New reserves in Russia

In 1992 a number of new protected areas were established in Russia, among them two nature reserves – Pasvick (270 sq km) and Dzerghunsky in Buriat Republic (2500 sq km). New national parks are Ruscky Sever (the 'Russian North') in Vologda Region (2000 sq km), Meshora in Ryazan Region (1200 sq km), Smolensk Pooserie in Smolensk Region (1500 sq km) and Panayarvy in Karelia (1500 sq km). In addition, the West Altai Nature Reserve (560 sq km) was established in Kazakhstan. Zavidovskoye Nature Game Reserve (700 sq km), 100 km from Moscow, was to be re-established as a Nature Reserve in compliance with a Protocol signed by the former USSR Minister of Defence and the USSR Minister of the Environment, but it has now been reorganized into the Residence of the Russian President.

Source: *CNPPA Newsletter*, December 1992, 12.

## Saiga kill unsustainable

A recent WWF campaign promoted the use of the horns of saiga *Saiga tatarica* as a substitute for rhino horn in traditional medicine in the Far East but this should be reviewed if reports on poaching and smuggling of saiga and markhor *Capra falconeri* in Kazakhstan and Siberia are confirmed. Since 1990 the killing of male saiga for their horns has increased dramatically: carcasses are left to rot and entire herds are being wiped out. Some reports say that the saiga population has declined by 90

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per cent. Hoofs and horns of saiga and horns of markhor, as well as intestines, are used in traditional medicine in Korea, China and Tibet.

Source: *Caprinae News*, No. 6, 6–7.

### Russia aims to boost goose

The US has loaned Russia 10 pairs of Aleutian Canada geese *Branta canadensis leucopareia* for a captive-breeding programme. The offspring will be released in an effort to increase the small flock of geese that migrates between Russia and Japan. The species was almost extirpated from Asia decades ago and Russian biologists hope to duplicate the US effort that raised the Aleutian Canada goose from endangered status in 1967 to more than 8000 birds.

Source: *Outdoor News Bulletin*, 11 December 1992.

### Saimaa seals unsafe

The 180 Saimaa seals *Phoca hispida saimensis* on Finland's Lake Saimaa continue to be threatened by the building of summer cottages on the lake shore. Conservationists have failed to achieve results in their campaign for laws to stop more houses being built and cottages are closing in on 10 of the last 12 areas that are still peaceful enough for seals to give birth. Most threatened are the 35–40 seals that live on Lake Pihlajavesi, a central part of greater Lake Saimaa, where the town of Savonlinna has plans for 4000 summer cottages. The development would effectively cut the population of the lake in two and the southern subpopulation probably would not survive.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, January 1993, 61.



The common dormouse is being reintroduced into parts of Britain (Andy Purcell/ICCE).

### Dormouse reintroduction

The common dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* is being reintroduced into parts of the UK: 11 were released in Hertfordshire in September 1992 and 20 in Kent in October.

Source: *Reintroduction News*, December 1992, 8.

### Oil spill in Shetland

Oil released from the tanker *Braer*, wrecked off Shetland on 5 January 1993, has damaged organisms on the sea bed. Divers found large numbers of dead sea urchins and razor shells at depths down to 20 m off Scousburgh, close to a bird reserve. By mid-January 1000 dead oiled birds had been found and 300 recovered, oiled but alive. Around the west side of Sumburgh Head virtually every bird inshore had died, including hundreds of great northern divers, shags and black guillemots. It is feared that oil resurfacing after storms could endanger more birds.

Source: *New Scientist*, 23 January 1993, 5.

### Grassland conservation

A new Institute for Grassland Conservation and Research has been established in Germany by a conservation organization, Naturschutzbund Deutschland. Located in Bergenhusen, Schleswig-Holstein (the well known 'stork village') in the Elder-Treen-Sorge lowlands, one of the largest areas of wet grassland in Germany, the Institute will focus on the European white stork *Ciconia ciconia* and its habitats, but will also cover regional and international aspects of grassland and grassland bird conservation. Further information can be obtained from Dr Holger Schulz, Institute for Grassland Conservation and Research, Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V., Goosstroet 1, D-2381 Bergenhusen, Germany. Tel: 04885 570. Fax 04885 583.

Source: *IWWRB/ICBP/IUCN Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills Newsletter*, November 1992, 10.

### Eagles increasing slowly

The UK's reintroduction project for the white-tailed sea eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* is progressing well but the population is increasing slowly. Seven eagles fledged successfully in 1992, bringing the total number fledged to 29 since the project started in 1975. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Royal Society for Protection of Birds and Scottish Natural Heritage are together exploring ways to increase eagle numbers more rapidly. Source: JNCC/RSPB/SNH Press Release, 7 December 1992.

### German/Polish park

The Dolnej Odry Nature Park, in the Lower Odra Valley on the Germany/Poland border, covers one of Europe's few unspoiled estuaries. It has a rich flora and fauna and is important for migratory birds. The German and Polish governments are drawing up a trans-frontier protection programme. Source: *Council for Europe natura newsletter*, 92-10, 3.

### Hungary's great bustard population

Research carried out at the University of Sopron shows that there are almost 9000 great bustards *Otis tarda* in Hungary – a considerable increase over the previous year. Source: *Council for Europe natura newsletter*, 92-10, 3.

### Road halted for bears in France ...

French environmentalists won a battle on behalf of the few remaining brown bears *Ursus arctos* in the Pyrenees when a court in Pau blocked government plans to start construction of a 8-km tunnel at one end of



Great bustards are thriving in Hungary (see below) (D. Hinrichsen/ICCE).

the Aspe Valley (see *Oryx*, 26, 190). The court said the French Government had failed to carry out an environmental impact study required by a European Community directive. Source: *New Scientist*, 12 December 1992, 8.

### ... but dam threatens bears in Spain

Spanish environmental groups are campaigning to prevent the construction of Vidrieros Dam on the River Carrion in northern Castilla y León. The dam would flood the Pineda Valley in the heart of one of Europe's best wildlife areas. The valley is a vital corridor for 13–20 brown bears one of the last two populations in Spain. The area has been identified as an Important Bird Area and as a priority site under the EC Habitats Directive. A local environmental group, Asociación de Naturalistas Palentinos (Fabrica Nacional n.10, Palencia, Spain) has purchased two plots of land in the dam area in order to be able to take further legal action and to strengthen the resistance of local farmers to the land expropriation process. Source: European Environmental Bureau, November 1992.

### Oil spill off Spain

Up to 70,000 tonnes of oil spilled from the tanker *Aegean Sea* off La Coruña on the north-west coast of Spain on 4 December 1992, killing some 10,000 tonnes of shellfish, according to conservationists. The oil is reported to have contaminated 100 km of shoreline from Malpica in the south-west to Cabo Ortegal in the north. Local officials refused to allow the World Wide Fund for Nature to set up a rescue centre for oiled birds and the official rescue centre run by the Administration of La Coruña apparently treated only about 100 birds, including cormorants and a rare local subspecies of guillemot *Uria aalge ibericus*, whose total population was fewer than 100 before the spill. Source: *New Scientist*, 9 January 1993, 9.

### Loggerhead breeds again in Cefalonia

It was thought that the loggerhead turtle *Caretta caretta* no longer bred on the Greek island of Cefalonia but swimmers observed 70 hatchling turtles emerge from the sand in 1991. Source: *Nature*, *Bulletin of the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature*, January–March 1992, 30.

### Ibis reintroduction

Eight captive-bred waldrapp ibis *Geronticus eremita* are to be released in Friuli, Italy – a region inhabited by the species over 300 years ago. Source: *Reintroduction News*, December 1992, 8.

### CITES trade ban with Italy

Italy has not yet adopted sufficient legislation to implement CITES and in June 1992 the

Standing Committee of CITES recommended that Parties do not issue any CITES documents for specimens consigned to Italy and do not accept any CITES documents issued by Italy until that country demonstrates to the Standing Committee that it has taken the necessary steps to ensure adequate implementation of the Convention.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 13 (2), 1992, 49.

### Albania protection association

A new association has been formed to protect flora and landscapes in Albania, particularly those affected by tourism. Association for the Protection of Flora and Landscapes in Albania, Post Restante, Tirana, Albania. Fax 35 542 33309.

Source: *Council for Europe natura newsletter*, 92-11, 3.

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## AFRICA

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### Poaching in Ethiopia

Poaching in Ethiopia has caused declines in the mountain nyala *Tragelaphus buxtoni* and Swayne's hartebeest *Alcelaphus buselaphus swaynei*. It is probable that the 3000-strong population of the latter species at Senkelle has been reduced to fewer than 1000 and, while 300–500 mountain nyala used to be seen in the Gaysay area of Bale Mountains National Park, only 30 were seen during a recent visit. Anarchy, civil unrest, and inadequate budgets and manpower combine to prevent wildlife authorities from carrying out their duties and several wildlife areas have had to be abandoned.

Source: *Gnusletter*, 11 (3), 1992, 16.

### Hunter's antelope

Hunter's antelope *Damaliscus hunteri* has probably now been extirpated in Somalia, making it effectively endemic to an area of Kenya where there are security problems. There are only four in captivity (in Brownsville Zoo, Texas) and surveys are needed to assess numbers and threats within its historical range as well as to census the introduced population in Tsavo, which, if it survives, could be an extremely important insurance population for this threatened species.

Source: *Gnusletter*, 11 (3), 1992, 13.

### Duikers in Zanzibar

A survey of the Zanzibar red duiker *Cephalophus adersi* suggests that fewer than 100 individuals survive in Zanzibar. With 200–250 occurring at its only other site – Arabuko Sokone in Kenya – the species needs urgent attention. The animal is poorly known and difficult to observe, apparently being restricted to dense thicket forest in Zanzibar. Further surveys are needed and a captive population needs to be established. The other two small antelopes in Zanzibar – the suni *Neotragus moschatus* and blue duiker *Philantomba monticola* – still appear to be widely distributed. All three species are hunted for meat and the proposals to open up hunting safaris for antelopes in Zanzibar should not be permitted unless very strictly controlled and limited to areas where red duikers do not occur.

Source: *Gnusletter*, 11 (3), 1992, 3 & 12–13.

### Dung beetle introductions?

Over 500 Zimbabwean cattle ranchers have switched to game ranching in the last 10

years and dung beetles that can cope with the droppings of wild herbivores, which are drier and more fibrous than those of cattle, may have to be reintroduced to prevent a build-up of dung. Some of Africa's 2000 species of dung beetle are very specialized and in places where cattle replaced wild game some species may have become extinct. One species, associated with elephant and rhino and once widely distributed in southern Africa, now occurs only around the Addo Elephant Park in South Africa. Research on dung beetles is being carried out by a WWF Multispecies Project in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Source: *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, January–March 1993, 8.

### Rhino losses and dehorning

At a meeting of the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group in November 1992 it was reported that the population of black rhinoceros in Zimbabwe had fallen to 430 animals from 2138 in 1989. By mid-November 117 black rhinos and 108 white rhinos had been dehorned in Zimbabwe. The dehorning – at a cost of \$US1400 per animal – may have to be repeated every 2 years. Swaziland, which has lost over 50 per cent of its white rhinos in 18 months, has also decided to remove horns from all remaining rhinos, and Namibia, which conducted the first dehorning of black rhinos in 1989, is poised to resume at the first sign of poaching.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 13 (2), 1992, 47.

### Lead affecting elephants

On the shores of Lake Kariba in north-west Zimbabwe a number of elephants with paralysed

trunks, believed to be caused by lead poisoning, are slowly starving because they cannot feed adequately. Recent severe droughts have resulted in increased concentrations of lead in water, forage and soil. Flaccid trunk paralysis was first noted in an old bull elephant 3 years ago and in 1992 12 elephants appeared to be suffering from the syndrome. Lake Kariba is one of Zimbabwe's biggest tourist attractions and fishing weights, petrol, batteries, discarded oil filters and engine exhausts are all sources of lead pollution. The Zambesi Society is assessing the impact of tourism on the lake and will analyse water samples for their lead content.

Source: *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, January–February 1993, 7.

### New wildlife law for Botswana

Botswana's Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act 1992 came into effect on 11 December, replacing the former Fauna Conservation Act and National Parks Act, and introducing important new provisions. After years of delay nine Wildlife Management Areas are to be created especially for wildlife utilization, where stock-keeping and agriculture will be controlled. Makgadikgadi Pans Game Reserve is upgraded to a national park, securing its future against recent demands to degazette it, and Mabuasekube Game Reserve is included in Gemsbok National Park. The new law incorporates CITES provisions and there are greater punishments for all offences. For those relating to ivory and rhinoceros horn there are maxima of a Pula 50,000 fine and 10 months in prison and a Pula 100,000 fine and 15 years in prison, respectively.

This brings the penalties in line with neighbouring countries. A radical departure from Roman–Dutch common law is that people keeping wild animals within a game-proof fence or in another manner approved by the Director, are regarded as owners and do not lose ownership if the animals escape.

Source: C.A. Spinage.

### Flamingo sanctuary in Botswana

The official opening of Botswana's newest wildlife area, Nata Sanctuary, was scheduled for December 1992 or January 1993, according to the Kalahari Conservation Society. It will mark the culmination of years of work by local conservationists to protect parts of Sowa Pan, the wet season habitat for thousands of flamingos and other water birds. Soda-ash mining started in the southern part of Sowa Pan in 1989 and residents in the village of Nata declared the northern part of the pan a conservation area to protect wildlife habitat.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, 1 (3), 7.

### Plan to allow rhino hunt

In South Africa the Bophuthatswana National Parks Board (BNPB) is considering the possibility of allowing organized hunting of ageing male black rhinos. Increased surveillance in Pilanesberg Game Reserve has resulted in the population of black rhinos increasing by 7 per cent a year over the past 4 years. The annual costs of protecting the reserve's 33 black rhinos (\$US114,000) could be offset by fees paid to hunt the surplus males.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 13 (2), 1992, 48.

### Giant sable in Angola

Efforts to secure a future for Angola's giant sable antelope *Hippotragus niger variiani*, which is restricted to an isolated part of central Angola, continue to be hampered by violence in the country. In mid-August there was fighting between government troops and UNITA rebels in Malange Province, where almost all the remaining giant sable live. Two protected areas in the province – Kangandala National Park and Luando Natural Integral Reserve – once harboured more than 1000 giant sable but some believe that fewer than 20 survive in Kangandala and no recent estimates exist for Luando because few people have visited it in the last two decades. Some parts of the reserve have been controlled by government forces and others by UNITA. Hope for the antelope lies in the fact that it is Angola's state symbol: the penalties for killing one are severe and the people living near Kangandala and Luando apparently have a taboo against hunting it.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, 1 (3), 1 & 8.

### Farming weasels for medicine?

Traditional doctors in southern Africa say that the striped weasel *Poecilogale albinucha*, which has a reputation as a powerful traditional medicine, is becoming scarce. This is primarily due to changes in land use but near urban areas it may also be a result of overcollecting. A large proportion of South Africans consult traditional practitioners and animal and plant products are in huge demand. In addition to striped weasels, the pangolin *Manis temminckii*, vultures and the endemic giant girdled lizard

*Cordylus giganteus* are also particularly threatened. The problem has led to the suggestion that farmers in Kwa Zulu and other communal areas could be encouraged to farm striped weasels, using techniques developed for mink farming in Europe and North America and civet farming in Ethiopia. Source: *Endangered Wildlife*, 11, 1992, 10–15.

### Whales recovering off South Africa

Southern right whales *Eubalaena australis australis*, some of which breed in sheltered South African bays each June are increasing by 7 per cent a year, according to Peter Best of the University of Pretoria. When monitoring started in 1969 50 whales and 15–16 calves were seen; now the numbers are 200 cows with 70–80 calves. Even with these recent increases it is believed that only about 2000 southern right whales survive worldwide. Peter Best's team is now taking skin samples to investigate whether the small gene pool remaining in the 1940s after heavy exploitation has resulted in inbreeding. Source: *African Wildlife Update*, 1 (3), 2.

### Decision soon on Lake St Lucia wetland

The South African Government is awaiting the report of a review panel before it decides on whether to allow mining for titanium in sand dunes between Lake St Lucia in Zululand and the Indian Ocean. Richards Bay Minerals (RBM), which is owned by Rio Tinto Zinc, claims that the mining would not be incompatible with conservation and tourism in the long term. They say that over a 20-year period only 50

ha would be affected at any one time, that the process requires no chemicals and that mined areas will be rehabilitated. While accepting RBM's reputation for model rehabilitation work, opponents of the scheme are worried that some species might disappear while others will take decades to become re-established. There is also concern that reconstruction of the dunes cannot match the original layering and that the hydrology of the system, built up over 25,000 years, will be disturbed. St Lucia Lake is a Ramsar site and the area is home to a rich fauna and flora; 25 species are in the *South African Red Data Book*. Source: *New Scientist*, 23 January 1993, 9.

### Park must pay its way

Cape Point National Park, flanked on one side by the Atlantic and on the other by the Indian Ocean, is attracting keen interest from developers. Its fynbos vegetation is renowned for its diversity but conservationists fear that the Government will sell the park for development unless it is made economically viable. Dr Richard Cowling of the University of Cape Town, suggests raising funds from low-impact ecotourism, exporting fynbos flowers, developing the thatch industry based on fynbos reed (which already exports to California) and exploring other products such as herbal teas, aromatic oils and medicines. Source: *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, January–March 1993, 8.

### Crocodiles captured in Madagascar

Madagascar's wild crocodile populations are declining because of increased demand

for crocodile oil. Until recently the medicinal use of oil extracted from crocodile meat was restricted to rural communities, but now hospitals are using and selling the oil to treat burns, ulcers, melanomas and asthma. Although Madagascar has crocodile ranches, the oil comes from wild-caught animals and the number being caught is not known. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 13 (2), 1992, 50.

### Plant reintroductions in the Mascarenes

Efforts to restore the flora of the Mascarene islands (Mauritius and Rodrigues) in the Indian Ocean are meeting with success on offshore islets, where introduced herbivores have been removed and where weed-control measures are in place. The endangered palm *Dictyospermum album* var. *conjugatum* – down to only one standing and one fallen tree in the wild on Round Island – has been introduced to the Ile aux Aigrettes in the form of 50 plants grown from seed. Fifty-six trees of *Draceana concinna*, known only from Ile aux Aigrettes, have been planted on Round Island and *Dombeya rodriguesiana*, a dioecious tree endemic to Rodrigues, is being grown from cuttings derived from clones of two trees (both now dead) – one male, the other of unknown sex. Source: *Reintroduction News*, December 1992, 5.

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### ASIA (EXCLUDING INDO-MALAYA)

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### Radio transmitter would threaten birds

The Israeli Government has revived plans to build a large

radio transmitter in the Arava Valley, even though the Environmental Impact Assessment, ordered in 1990 by the Israeli court after environmentalists' opposition to the plan, is incomplete. The transmitter would cover a 8-sq-km site in the valley and would be on the main migration route of millions of birds. It is feared that large numbers of these would collide with the structure and that the radiation from such a huge transmitter would disorientate them.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 14 (4), 3.

### Arabian oryx in Oman

The reintroduced population of Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx* in the Jiddat al-Harasis region of Oman suffered from drought in 1990–91, with high mortality rates for old and very young animals in some herds. Rains fell in early 1992 and by September the population had recovered and numbered 117 individuals – 15 surviving immigrants and 102 wild-born animals in 19 herds of 2–16 individuals ranging over an area of 14,000 sq km. By December 1992 births of calves, conceived after the rains earlier in the year, brought the total of oryx in the wild in Oman to 134.

Source: *Reintroduction News*, December 1992, 6.

### Waldrapp ibis in Saudi Arabia

The eastern population of waldrapp ibis *Geronticus eremita* was believed to have become extinct in the wild in 1989 but scientists from Saudi Arabia's National Wildlife Research Centre (NWRC) recorded 25 individuals in about 8 sq km in the south-west of the country. Similar habitat extends over hundreds of square kilometres

along the eastern edge of the Asir Mountains and it is hoped that many more ibises will be found. The NWRC is launching a research programme on the conservation status of the species in Arabia.

Source: *IWWRB/ICBP/IUCN Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills Newsletter*, November 1992, 8.

### Wildlife legislation in Japan

Japan's new law on the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora comes into effect on 1 April 1993, replacing the Law for Control of Transfer Etc. of Endangered Wild Fauna and Flora. The new law will continue to control possession, sale or transfer within Japan of species of wild animals and plants designated as endangered and penalties for violations will increase to a maximum of ¥100,000 or 1 year in prison. Offenders may also be ordered to pay for the return of seized animals and plants to the country of export or origin, or to a designated facility. The legislation is inadequate in several ways; it neither controls trade within Japan of imported CITES Appendix II and III specimens, nor does it cover trade in parts and derivatives of Appendix I species.

Domestic trade in the Asiatic black bear and sea turtles, all listed in CITES Appendix I, is also not covered on the grounds that these species fall under the jurisdiction of other Japanese laws, which do not treat them as 'endangered'. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 13 (2), 1992, 56.

### Birds of Hakata Bay threatened

Hakata Bay, on the northernmost tip of Japan's island of

Kyushu at the closest point to Korea and the Asian mainland, is a vital staging post for migratory birds. Tens of thousands of birds use the bay each year including six internationally endangered species – black-faced spoonbill *Platalea minor*, Saunders' gull *Larus saundersi*, Asiatic dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*, Nordmann's greenshank *Tringa guttifer*-spoon-billed sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* and Swinhoe's egret *Egretta eulophotes*. The bay is currently designated as a Wildlife Protection Area but this has no practical meaning – in spring people searching the mudflats for shellfish disturb the birds. Now the city of Fukuoka is pressing ahead with plans to build a huge island with port facilities, which will almost fill the bay. Local opposition is strong and the Hakata port authorities have responded by proposing a bird park and an artificial tidal flat on the new island.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, November 1992, 8.

### Illegal trade in antelope wool

The Tibetan antelope *Pantholops hodgsonii* is still reasonably abundant on the Tibetan plateau but it is threatened by demand for its wool. Hunting is intense in and around the Chang Tang Reserve and about 1000 antelopes have been killed each winter in the last few years. In 1992, however, only 200 were killed because the government started to enforce the law. Wool traders from north-west Nepal smuggle the wool into Delhi, India, and from there it is sold to Kashmiris who weave it in Srinagar. Marketed under the name *shahtoosh* (king of wool), a scarf can fetch \$US3000–8500.

The scale of the killing is illustrated by the fact that a European manufacturer recently ordered 200–300 kg of wool: eight antelopes have to be killed to yield 1 kg. Tibet is concerned about the extent of this illegal trade and has taken steps to control it but Nepal and India need to act too. *Source: Gnusletter*, 11 (3), 1992, 23–24.

### Campaign to save estuary

The Wild Bird Society of the Republic of China (Taiwan) is campaigning against government plans for industrial development of the Tsen-Wen River estuary in south-western Taiwan. The estuary is a very important wintering area for many waders and waterfowl, including about 200 black-faced spoonbills *Platalea minor*, two-thirds of the known world population of this endangered species.

*Source: Yeh-Wang Chen, President, Wild Bird Society of ROC, 6 Alley 13, Lane 295, Fu-Shin S. Rd. Sec. 1, Taipei, Taiwan.*

### Taiwan acts on rhino horn

In November 1992 Taiwan, the world's principal consumer of rhino horn, announced a total ban on the sale or display of rhino products, backed by tough penalties for offenders. The move came after a call by conservation groups for sanctions and a trade boycott against Taiwan. Campaigners are now calling for Taiwan to destroy its rhino-horn stockpiles of 5–10 tonnes (from 2000–4000 rhinos). The Taiwan Government has also promised to prohibit the medicinal use of bear paws, musk and tiger bones and any other products from endangered species.

*Source: BBC Wildlife*, January 1993, 62.

### Crested ibis in China

While Japan has had to abandon attempts to restore the crested ibis *Nipponia nippon* (see *Oryx*, 27, 13), China has had more success. In 1981 Chinese ornithologists found seven birds in Yaojiagou Valley on Mount Qin, Yang County, Shanxi Province, 17 years after the last sighting in the country. The nesting area in the valley has been guarded ever since and other conservation measures carried out including building and stocking feeding pools and supporting agriculturalists in the area, where fertilizers and pesticides have been banned. Beijing Zoo hatched ibis eggs in 1990, 1991 and 1992 and in 1992, for the first time, three chicks survived. New nesting areas have been discovered in the valley and the known wild population numbers 22. There are still problems: the young raised in the wild have not returned to their breeding area after migration and most have been produced by three pairs, so inbreeding is a threat. Despite the ban on agricultural chemicals some farmers still use them, and those that do not suffer from poor crops. Efforts are under way to solve the problems: there are plans to expand ibis habitat and declare a reserve, to introduce severe punishments for poachers, to expand the ban on chemicals and to provide more aid for farmers.

*Source: IWWRB/ICBP/IUCN Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills Newsletter*, November 1992, 2–4.

### Black-necked cranes

Cao Hai National Nature Reserve in Guizhou Province, south-west China, an important wintering ground for more

than 300 black-necked cranes *Grus nigricollis*, is threatened. Its borders have not been clearly defined and the lake and surrounding wetlands in the 162-sq-km basin are being reclaimed for agriculture and building. Cao Hai has been under pressure since the 1950s when the lake basin was drained. It was reflooded in 1982 but the lake is shrinking due to deforestation, siltation and land reclamation and there is pollution from 700 primitive zinc furnaces. Cao Hai has been excluded from a new list of national nature reserves. *Source: BBC Wildlife*, January 1993, 60.

### China's turtles

Nine Dragons' Beach, near the town of Gangkou on the eastern arm of Daya Bay, is a provincial reserve where 100 green turtles *Chelonia mydas* nest every year. Turtle protection staff measure and tag turtles and collect the eggs, reburying them in boxes higher on the beach. Station staff have so far released 30,000 hatchlings, improving the hatching success rate from about 50 per cent on the beach to 95 per cent in boxes. The station runs on minimal funds, although it is the only turtle nesting beach left on mainland China. It is threatened by massive development in the region of Daya Bay, which is the site of China's first nuclear power generator. *Source: Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 24 (12), 1992, 576–577.

## INDO-MALAYA

### Prawns or crocodiles?

The Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary in Orissa, India, a 140-sq-km area of mangroves,



is under pressure from encroachment, development and conversion for a World-Bank-funded prawn-culture project. The habitat alteration will affect the largest population of saltwater crocodiles *Crocodylus palustris* in India as well as the nesting beaches of 500,000 olive ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea*. A meeting of the IUCN/SSC Indian Subcontinent Reptile and Amphibian Group recommended that the area be protected as a national park and that the adjacent 100 sq km of mangroves in the Mahanadi Delta, known as the Kujang Forest, also be included.

Source: *Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter*, October–December 1992, 6.

### Storm's stork captive-bred

Zoo Negara in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, announced the first captive breeding of the endangered Storm's stork *Ciconia stormi* when three chicks hatched in June 1992. One is being hand-reared and the other two are being raised by the parents.

Source: *IWWRB/ICBP/IUCN Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills*, November 1992, 9.

### Singapore stops sale of rhino products

From 20 November 1992 the sale or display of rhino horn and related products was banned in Singapore under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Amendment Act. Singapore banned the import and export of rhino horn in October 1986 but domestic trade was allowed to continue to allow local retailers to run down their stocks.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 13 (2), 1992, 56.

### Sand dredging on a massive scale

The construction of Hong Kong's new airport on reclaimed land will require the dredging of some 400 million cu m of marine sand. Three-quarters of the world's dredgers are involved and dredging has started at a group of islands, the Ninepins, in the south-eastern waters of Hong Kong. Sea-bed life has been destroyed as well as the fringe of corals. New dredging areas are being gazetted by the Hong Kong Government and the marine impact is going to be very severe indeed.

Source: *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 24 (12), 1992, 576.

### Pollution at Mai Po

The Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, the largest remaining wetland in Hong Kong, is grossly polluted according to the findings of a 3-year study. In some locations water quality is so poor that it is toxic to crustaceans. Sediments have high pollutant loads, including metals. It is hoped that water quality can be improved by enforcement of the Water Pollution Control Ordinance together with remedial measures to control the sources of pollution.

Source: *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, January 1993, 6.

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## NORTH AMERICA

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### More bighorn sheep found

A recent survey along part of the Fraser River, British Columbia, Canada, found 1250 individuals of the California bighorn sheep where only 265 were thought to occur. This represents an 'increase' of 36 per cent of the Canadian popula-

tion of the subspecies, or 18 per cent of the entire North American population, which inhabits mountain ranges west of the Rocky Mountains.

Source: *Caprinae News*, No. 6, 6–7.

### Swift fox comeback

The swift fox *Vulpes velox* disappeared from the Canadian prairies in the first half of this century but a reintroduction programme has had results. In the winter of 1991/1992 there were at least 225 foxes in the wild, some of them having survived for 4 years and produced at least two litters. Analysis has shown that wild-caught animals (from the US) fared better than captive-bred foxes: 3 months after release 5 of 27 (19 per cent) captive-bred foxes survived, compared with 17 of 28 (61 per cent) wild-caught animals. The greatest cause of mortality was predation by coyotes within the first month of release. Foxes have spread to at least 278 areas in southern Alberta and southern Saskatchewan and have also moved into northern Montana, USA. The furthest recorded movement was 190 km; wild-caught foxes travelled greater distances and settled in prairie habitats while captive-raised foxes moved shorter distances and often settled close to buildings, cultivations and roads.

Source: *Reintroduction News*, December 1992, 4.

### US bird legislation

The US Wild Bird Conservation Act 1992 became law in October 1992 and places new restrictions on the import of wild-caught birds as pets to the US. The import of 10 species (all Psittacines) was banned immediately: two are on Appendix I of CITES and the

rest on Appendix II. All other CITES-listed bird species may continue to be imported for a further year, with appropriate permits, but after that they will also be banned unless listed as approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The new law also seeks to ensure humane treatment of birds in captivity, transport and maintenance, and establishes the Exotic Bird Conservation Fund, which will use revenue from fines, donations and other dues for projects to conserve wild birds in their native countries.  
 Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 13 (2), 1992, 56.

#### 74 species listed

Between 1 January and 31 October 1992 the US Fish and Wildlife Service classified eight animals and 66 plants as Endangered or Threatened.  
 Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XVII (3–8), 1992, 1 & 15 & XVII (9–11), 1992, 9.

#### More regulations to aid turtles

Since 1 December 1992, US commercial shrimp trawlers over 25 feet long have been required to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in their nets in all offshore waters. From January 1993 all inshore shrimpers were required to use TEDs too, unless they had a single net with a footrope less than 44 feet and a headrope less than 35 feet; but even these vessels will have to use TEDs by December 1994.  
 Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, January 1993, 24.

#### California condor update

One of the two California condors *Gymnogyps californianus* released into the wild in

January 1992 (see *Oryx*, 26, 136) was found dead on 8 October near the Pyramid Lake Dam in southern California. It had died of kidney failure after ingesting ethylene glycol, probably from a pool of antifreeze leaked from a vehicle. Antifreeze has a flavour that attracts animals and has been implicated in the accidental deaths of domestic pets. Twelve condor chicks hatched in captivity in 1992 and six were due to be released into the wild.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XVII (3–8), 1992, 2 and XVII (9–11), 1992, 2.

#### Hawaiian crow population increases by two

Only one Hawaiian crow *Corvus hawaiiensis* is known to have fledged in the wild in the only known location of the species, on a ranch in western Hawaii. Two other nests were abandoned after predation by introduced rats. One chick was hatched at the Olinda captive-breeding facility on Maui, where 10 adult crows are kept.  
 Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XVII (3–8), 1992, 2.

### CENTRAL AMERICA

#### Reserves in the Cayman Islands

The National Trust of the Cayman Islands, formed in 1987, has produced a new strategy for the establishment of terrestrial reserves to safeguard important natural sites, which might otherwise disappear because of accelerating environmental destruction associated with tourism and housing development. The first goal is to establish the 4-sq-km 'Mountain Reserve', which

would protect the largest area of primary dry forest on Grand Cayman and many endemic species. The government has already donated some land but other key areas in private ownership will have to be purchased. Other reserves are planned for Little Cayman and Cayman Brac.

Source: The National Trust for the Cayman Islands, PO Box 10, George Town, Grand Cayman, West Indies.

### SOUTH AMERICA

#### Mountain tapir

The mountain tapir *Tapirus pinchaque* is not safe in Sangay National Park in Ecuador. A researcher, Craig Downer, has seen 30 individuals killed, including two of his radio-colored study animals. There is steady human encroachment into the park and livestock grazing is intensifying. Some expeditions, led by licensed guards, hunt the tapir so that tourists can sample the meat. The most serious threat is a pledge by leaders of a 17-community-strong coalition on the western border region of Sangay. Using the slogan, 'Where man has once set foot he will never retreat,' they are intent on burning the forests and *paramo* to create grazing right up to the base of Sangay volcano. Only a few thousand mountain tapirs remain in their geographical range in the Andes, mainly in Colombia and Ecuador with some in Peru.  
 Source: *Tapir Conservation*, No. 3, August 1992, 2–3.

#### Success for turtle project

Project Tamar started 11 years ago in order to conserve five species of turtles along 1600 km

of Brazil's Atlantic coastline. It has stopped much of the turtle killing and now villagers collect eggs, not for consumption but for taking to one of 18 hatching stations run by former poachers. Education programmes have been very effective and now some 30 per cent of eggs previously transferred to hatcheries are left on the nesting beaches. One of these, Praia do Forte, has more than 140 turtle nests a year. Brazilian tagged turtles have turned up in the Azores, more than 6000 km away. The next phase of the project is to teach fishermen how to revive turtles accidentally caught in nets.

Source: *Our Planet*, 4 (5), 1992, 17.

### Penguins reprieved

More than 200,000 penguins in a sanctuary at Cape Virgin in southern Argentina were given a reprieve after a court ordered temporary suspension of plans to build an oil pipeline through their habitat. The court action was brought by a Buenos Aires resident, who read of the pipeline in the press and who was supported by WWF and a professor in environmental law. The court ruling means that the Argentine and Chilean companies building the pipeline and the Argentine Government, which approved the project, must prove that there is no danger to the penguins or propose alternative routes.

Source: *The Guardian*, 14 January 1993.

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## AUSTRALASIA/ ANTARCTICA

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### \$53 million for conservation in Australia

On 21 December 1992, the Prime Minister of Australia

announced a number of initiatives aimed at protecting the natural environment. Around \$A53 million are to be allocated to conservation: \$13.9 million to maintain and expand protected areas and to identify and encourage preservation of pristine rivers; \$2.9 million to survey and protect old-growth forests and wilderness; \$4.8 million to boost marine conservation; \$2.25 million to develop and implement consistent World Heritage management systems; \$3.5 million for research into the effects of nutrients and fishing on the Great Barrier Reef; \$2.9 million to boost the government's Endangered Species Programme; \$8 million for control of introduced species; \$3.5 million to the North Queensland rain forest plantations programme; \$5 million to control *Mimosa pigra*, an invasive plant, which is threatening Kakadu National Park; and \$3.9 million to ease tourist pressure on conservation sites.

Source: *CNNPA Newsletter*, December 1992, 13.

### Setback for honeyeaters

Twenty-one out of 23 helmeted honeyeaters *Meliphaga melanops cassidix* in captivity died after accidentally being given an overdose of vitamins at the Healesville Sanctuary near Melbourne, Australia. The deaths are a major setback in attempts to save the bird from extinction. Only 70 remain in the wild, at Yellingbo State Nature Reserve east of Melbourne where they are vulnerable to bush fires. There are now plans to take eggs from the Yellingbo birds and incubate them at Healesville under the closely related Gippsland yellow-tufted honeyeaters, leaving the Yellingbo birds to lay a second clutch. Some of the

eggs will be returned to nests in the wild before they hatch and others will be used to start another captive population.

Source: *New Scientist*, 7 November 1992, 6.

### Fur seals continue to die

Fur seals continue to die in the nets of foreign trawlers operating in New Zealand waters, but skippers are not reporting all deaths as required, contrary to the claims of the Fishing Industry Association. In the West Coast hoki fishery, for example, vessels carrying scientific observers were 10 times more likely to report fur seal deaths than those without an observer. The conservation organization Forest and Bird estimates that in the hoki season, July to September 1992, over 200 fur seals were killed in the West Coast and Puysegur hoki fisheries, while another 60–120 seals were killed by trawlers earlier in the year in the squid fishery on the Snares shelf in spite of the much-heralded industry code of practice.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, November 1992, 2.

### Fishing regulations to help albatrosses

On 24 August 1992 New Zealand passed an amendment to commercial fishing regulations prohibiting the use of 'net-sonde monitor cables' by New Zealand fishing vessels, including foreign-chartered vessels. The regulations came into force on 1 October 1992. Net-sonde monitor cables, which run via a winch from the aft or stern of a vessel to an electronic recorder or monitor on a trawl net, have been causing huge mortalities in albatrosses. This is not the end of the problem because some foreign vessels, mainly Russian,

use net monitoring cables outside New Zealand waters. Conservationists want a similar ban throughout the Southern Ocean.

*Source:*s New Zealand: The Fisheries (Commercial Fishing Regulations 1986, Amendment No. 13); *Conservation News* (Forest & Bird, November 1992).

### Kiwi survey

A 1991–92 kiwi survey has shown large declines in numbers and distribution of two of New Zealand's three species of kiwis. Only the little spotted kiwi *Apteryx owenii*, extinct on the mainland and now restricted to island sanctuaries, was found to have good breeding populations. Dogs are the main threat to kiwis, while introduced possums compete for food, take over burrows and eat the eggs. While the Department of Conservation advocates the shooting of dogs that kill kiwis, the conservation organization Forest and Bird feels that this approach is too late and too limited and argues that all kiwi habitat should be declared dog-free. The survey is the final stage in a 5-year kiwi-recovery programme jointly run by Department of Conservation and Forest and Bird with funding from the Bank of New Zealand.

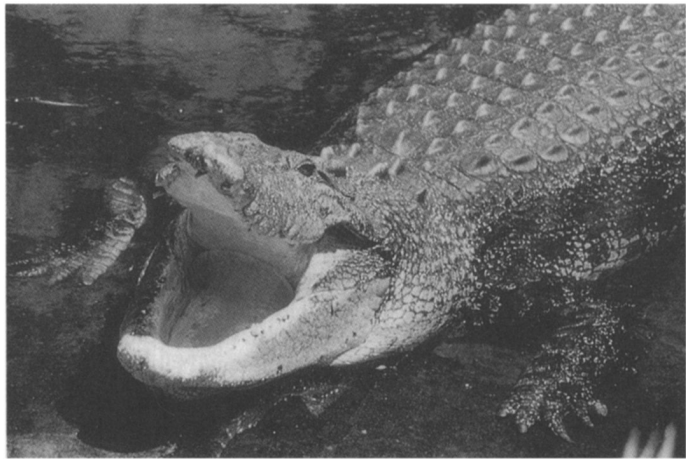
*Source:* Forest & Bird, November 1992, 3.

### Leeches get attention

Conservation attention is being turned to New Zealand's two terrestrial leeches, both large and both occurring on small islands. *Ornithobdella edentula* is confined to the Snares Islands and Little Solander Island, where it occurs in penguin and mollymawk colonies.

*Hirudobdella antipodum*, has a more restricted distribution,

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Estuarine crocodiles should be saved on Vanuatu if possible – but only one was seen in a recent survey there. This photograph is of a captive individual in Perth Zoo, Australia (Philip Steele/ICCE).

being known only from under one boulder on Taumaka, the largest of the Open Bay Islands, 5 km off Okuru, Haast. The leeches were first recorded in 1903 from around entrances of muttonbird burrows but the weka rail, a bird introduced to the islands soon after, was assumed to have exterminated them. In 1987 they were rediscovered under a glacial boulder near waterlogged penguin nests. It may be more common but next to nothing is known of its ecology and habitat preferences and so no survey technique has been developed.

*Source:* Forest & Bird, November 1992, 2.

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## OCEANIA

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### Crocodiles on Vanuatu

Vanuatu is the easternmost limit of the range of the estuarine crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* and a report published in 1989 suggested that the crocodile population there was not viable and natural extinction should be allowed (see

*Oryx*, 25, 136). The IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group challenged this view and in August 1992 conducted a survey of the northern Banks Islands group, which was thought to be the last area where crocodiles occurred. Only one crocodile was seen in a survey of 5.45 km of creeks – most of the habitat available. After discussions with local landowners a plan was developed to assist local people to replenish and conserve natural resources – coconut crabs, lobsters, various molluscs and crocodiles – and to manage the area on a sustainable basis.

*Source:* Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter, 11 (3), 24–25.

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## MEETINGS

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**Plant Diversity in Neotropical Montane Forests.** 21–25 June 1993, New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York, USA. *Contact:* Dr James L. Luteyn, Neotropical Montane Forest Symposium 1993, Institute of Systematic Botany,

New York Botanical Gardens, Bronx, New York 10458-5126, USA. Tel: 212 220 8645. Fax: 212 220 6504.

**Inventorizing and Monitoring Techniques to Respond to Catastrophic Events.** 21-25 June 1993, Pennsylvania, USA. *Contact:* Dr Stephen Fairweather, School of Forest Resources, 101 Ferguson Building, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802. Tel: 814 865 1602.

**Botanical Resources of Southern Africa.** 7-8 September 1993, Cape Town. *Contact:* The Chief Director, National Botanical Institute, Private Bag X7, Claremont 7735, South Africa. Tel: 021 762 1166. Fax: 021 761 4687.

**First Conference on National Parks and Protected Areas of East Asia.** 12-18 September 1993, Beijing, China. *Contact:* Professor Li Bo-sheng/ Assoc. Prof Wang Si-yu, Institute of Botany, Academia Sinica, Beijing, China 100044. Fax: 86 1 831 9534.

**Mountain National Parks and Biosphere Reserves: Monitoring and Management.** 20-23 September 1993, Krkonose National Park, Czechoslovakia. *Contact:* Jiri Flousek/Jan Stursa, Krkonose National Park, 543 11 Vrchlabí, the Czech Republic. Tel: 42 438 21011. Fax: 42 438 23095.

**5th World Wilderness Congress.** 24 September-1 October 1993, Norway. *Contact:* Vance G. Martin, President, WILD Foundation, 211 West Magnolia, Fort Collins, CO 80521. USA. Tel: 303 498 0303. Fax: 303 498 0403.

**Workshop on Conservation of Mahoganies.** 30 September 1993. *Contact:* FFPS, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, UK. Tel: 071 833 8899. Fax: 071 823 9690.

**Second World Congress of Herpetology.** 29 December 1993-6 January 1994, Adelaide, Australia. *Contact:* Dr Marinus S. Hoogmoed, Secretary General, World Congress of Herpetology, National Natuurhistorisch Museum, Postbus 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, the Netherlands.

**IUCN General Assembly.** 18-26 January, 1994. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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## OPPORTUNITIES

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### Volunteers needed for East Africa

The Society for Environmental Exploration organizes scientific expeditions to parts of East Africa through its offshoot, Frontier, and needs volunteers. Research assistants contribute towards expedition costs. Three of the current projects are centred on the coastal forests and coral reefs of Tanzania and on areas of tropical rain forest in Uganda. *Contact:* Frontier, Society for Environmental Exploration, Studio 210, 566 Cable Street, London E1 9HB.

### Call for volunteers

The Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece is seeking volunteers for its projects during the 1993 nesting season (25 May-10 October). The projects, on the islands of Zakynthos and Crete, include turtle monitoring and public awareness. Candidates must be prepared to work as part of a team and

share all aspects of very demanding work. Accepted volunteers will receive on-site training and will stay in free but simple camp-sites. Minimum working period is 3 weeks. Details and application form from: The Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece, Volunteer Section, Solomou 35, GR-106 82 Athens, Greece. Tel/Fax: 30 1 3644146.

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## PUBLICATIONS

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### The Earth Summit: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

This book contains the full text of the two international environmental conventions that were opened for signature at the Earth Summit in June 1992 - the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity - together with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Authoritative Statement on Forest Principles. The book also contains the full text of Agenda 21 and some important ancillary documents. Published by Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, PO Box 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands. Freephone for UK Customers: 0800 899832. ISBN 185333 784 6. HB £78/\$145 (surface mail), £86/\$160 (air-mail).

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### An apology

The illustration from the cover of TRAFFIC's *The Control of Wildlife Trade in Greece*, which appeared on page 21 of the January 1993 issue of *Oryx* was printed upside-down. The printer apologizes for the error.

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