

Briefly . . . *Compiled by Richard Fitter*

The items under this title continue the service formerly supplied by the newsletter *Kingfisher*.

INTERNATIONAL

Airlines Support Conservation

Twenty-six airlines have supported a WWF call not to promote the hunting of species endangered with extinction or any other kind of travel that threatens wild nature.

New Migratory Bird Convention

The United States and Japan have signed a Convention to protect the birds which inhabit both countries, including the preservation of the environment. The US has also signed a treaty with Mexico extending the existing convention to 32 new families of birds.

World Fish Catch is Up

The increasing drain on the world's fish resources is indicated by FAO's estimate that in 1970 the world fish catch was a record of 69.3m metric tons. This upward trend has been uninterrupted since 1945, except in 1969. The leading fishing nations were Peru, with 12.6m tons (almost entirely anchoveta processed into fish meal for export), Japan (9.3m), USSR (7.3m), China, Norway, USA and India.

Tourism in the Antarctic

Sir Vivian Fuchs has declared that Antarctica should be preserved from all but very limited tourism. Scientists and others working in the Antarctic fear both disturbance to the environment and interference with their own work.

New Pollution Survey

The Pollution Research Bureau has been set up as an independent non-profit organisation to carry out a world-wide survey of pollution, covering air, land, fresh water, sea, noise, food and medicinal drugs. The advice, co-operation

and commitment of scientists in these fields is sought. Offers to Phillip Dawes, PRB, 10 Derby Rd, Caversham, Reading, Berks.

Swan Research Group

During its annual Executive Board meeting at Slimbridge, Glos, in December, the International Wildfowl Research Bureau set up a Swan Research Group to promote and coordinate swan research.

GREAT BRITAIN

James Fisher Memorial

It has been agreed to purchase the seabird island of Copinsay, in the Orkneys, as a memorial to James Fisher.

Frogs and Toads Down

Surveys of the status of the common frog and common toad in Britain have shown that only slight declines occurred during the 1940s and 1950s. In the 60s, however, the frog and probably also the toad, suffered a serious decline over most of England and Wales, and a lesser decline in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Habitat destruction, mainly the draining of marshes and ponds, is thought to be a more important cause than pollution of the environment by pesticides or other contaminants. The surveys were carried out by A.S. Cooke of the Nature Conservancy.

Endangered British Insects

The Joint Committee for the Conservation of British Insects has issued a list of 16 butterflies and 66 moths which are rare or endangered in the British Isles. The Committee says that two species on the list, the large blue and large copper butterflies, should not be collected at all, and

the remainder collected only with the greatest restraint. It suggests that collectors should content themselves with one pair of each.

PCBs from Glasgow

Sludge from sewage works in Glasgow has been shown to be an important source of the PCBs which are suspected as having been the main cause of the mass deaths of seabirds in the Irish Sea area in the autumn of 1969. Two-fifths of the PCBs come from a single sewer in the Glasgow area.

Less DDT in Seabirds

The DDT and dieldrin content of shags' eggs in north-east England and south-east Scotland has decreased along with the decreasing sales of organochlorine pesticides in Britain, according to scientists at Durham University. The DDT derivative in the eggs has dropped by almost half over seven years.

War on Hawks

The Hawk Trust reports serious nest robbing of Britain's birds of prey in 1972: four complete clutches of red kites' eggs stolen, eyasses snatched from a number of peregrine eyries in Scotland, and numerous buzzards' eggs collected. All these birds are, of course, protected, the first two with special penalties.

Two men from Hartlepool, Co. Durham, have been fined £50 each at Inverness for robbing the Loch Garten ospreys of three eggs.

Waders and Estuaries

The four most important estuaries in Britain for waders, all with more than 100,000 birds at counts during 1970/71, are Morecambe Bay (252,443), The Wash (161,009), the Dee and the Ribble. The most numerous waders at the peak counts were dunlin (312,272), knot (260,634), oystercatcher (152,812) and lapwing (92,411).

A New Code of Practice

A working party of the Schools Council has produced a draft code of practice for schools relating to the use of living organisms and material of living origin. Information from J. Wray, Centre for Science Education, Chelsea College, Bridges Place, SW6.

Wild Flowers for Sale

The need for the Wild Plant Protection Bill is underlined by the recent offer for sale, in a Margate, Kent, florists' shop, of 'wild orchids - 6p per bunch'. As the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation points out, all orchids in Kent are scarce and decreasing.

A Good Example

Glamorgan County Council has made an outright grant of £1200 to the Glamorgan Naturalists' Trust, to mark the Trust's tenth anniversary.

Churchill Fellowships

'Leisure and the Natural Surroundings' is the nearest thing to a wildlife category in this year's Churchill Fellowship subjects. Applications for forms (to Churchill Memorial Trust, 10 Queen St, Mayfair, London W1X 7PD) by postcard. Closing date November 6.

A Change of Name

With the adoption by the Sussex Naturalists' Trust of the name Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation, 21 of the county trusts have either originally adopted or later changed to this title.

EUROPE

Forest Fires in Italy

Fires destroy some 125,000 acres of forests in Italy each year. This is twice as much as is being planted or reafforested. In 1971 as much as 200,000 acres were burned down. According to FAO sources, the other Mediterranean countries are equally badly affected.

The Park and the Bears

The Council of Europe's Diploma for Nature Conservation, awarded to the Abruzzi National Park, has been officially handed over to the Italian Minister for Agriculture and Forestry. Only 70–100 brown bears remain in the Park, reports the World Wildlife Fund and it must be extended if they are to survive.

Russia's Polluted Rivers

The Soviet Government has recently issued a decree ordering renewed and mandatory efforts to clear up the pollution of the Volga and Ural Rivers. The Volga Committee of the USSR Conservation Society has expressed special concern over the inefficiency of the waste water treatment of a petrochemical plant at Novokuibyshevsk.

Wacht am Rhein

The EEC Commission has launched a preliminary study on pollution in the Rhine basin, to determine the origins, the concentration and the effects of the main pollutants and a critical evaluation of national and international actions undertaken so far or planned.

Dormice on Formentera

Interest taken by the FPS and European conservationists in the fate of a rare form of dormouse *Eliomys quercinus* found on Formentera in the Balearic Islands has resulted in the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture halting an operation to exterminate 'rats' on the island.

Lab for the Coto

On May 27 Prince Juan Carlos of Spain inaugurated the Luis Bolin laboratory in the Doñana National Park in southern Spain. The new lab overlooks the Coto Doñana and will be supervised by Dr Valverde, Director of the Doñana Biological Station.

Muskoxen in Sweden

In September 1971 five muskoxen, disturbed by NATO military exercises on the Dovrefjell, Norway, migrated to Harjedalen, Sweden, where it is hoped they will set up a colony. This is the first time wild muskoxen have been seen in Sweden. The Dovrefjell colony originated from a small number introduced about 25 years ago, and now numbers about 30.

The Hedgehog Protected

As from April 1 the hedgehog has been fully protected in Sweden. In Britain it is unprotected, and may still be seen hanging on the 'gibbets' of the more old-fashioned type of gamekeeper.

Iceland Sea Eagles Recover

There are now some 65 white-tailed sea eagles in Iceland, compared with a low point of about 15 some years ago.

New Environment Ministry

Austria and Denmark are the latest countries to establish a Ministry to deal with the protection of the environment; Bulgaria has added it to the Ministry of Forestry.

New WWF Appeal

The 17th national appeal of the World Wildlife Fund was launched in Denmark in May.

DDT Banned

As from January 1, the use of DDT has been banned in Sweden by the State Poisons Board; the only exception is for use in forestry.

NORTH AMERICA**Poachers and Alligators**

At least 127,000 alligators were illegally killed during 1968–1970, according to the records of one Georgia dealer alone, according to the *New York Times* for April 9. Some 40 poachers have been brought to book from this one

source, but the total number operating on his behalf is believed to be more than 460. Since the sale of alligator or crocodile products is illegal in New York and Florida, most of the poached alligator skins were sold to Japan, for shoes, purses, luggage and items of jewelry.

Wolf Fur Order Cancelled

The US Defense Department has cancelled an order for 277,502 parka hoods with wolf fur ruffs. This follows a protest by the National Wildlife Federation that some 25,000 wolves or about half the total estimated North American wolf population would have to be killed to fulfil the proposed contract.

Spray through the Feet

According to C. David Fowle of the Canadian Wildlife Service, lethal or intoxicating doses of phosphamidon, an insecticide widely used for spruce budworm control, may either be absorbed by birds through the feet from sprayed vegetation or may be eaten.

New Threat to a Threatened Bird

US conservationists fear that the \$7m mirex-spraying campaign of the Department of Agriculture may exterminate the red-cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species, long before it kills off the fire-ants it is aimed at. The feared effects are two: on the birds' reproduction, and on their food supply, for mirex kills off beneficial insects as well as fire-ants. Moreover ants form four-fifths of the woodpecker's diet.

After Santa Barbara

A survey of the Santa Barbara Channel by Dr Dale Straughan, of the University of Southern California, to determine the effects of the famous oil blowout of January 1969 has shown that damage to flora and fauna was much less than had been predicted, and that the area is recovering well.

Against Road Salt

The use of salt to de-ice roads not only does not increase the safety of winter driving, but seriously pollutes the environment, according to a report prepared for the town of Newton, Mass. Wells are being contaminated, roadside trees killed or at least poisoned, and vehicles and bridges damaged. In fact salt kills an average of 50–100 mature trees each year in a typical suburban town in Massachusetts. It also costs motorists an average of \$200 a year from corrosion.

Everglades: a new Victory

President Nixon has asked Congress for funds to buy over half a million acres of the Big Cypress Swamp, source of more than half the water supply for the Everglades National Park, as permanent insurance of the Park against drainage, pollution, drilling or development. This represents a major victory for the Everglades Coalition of conservation societies.

California Acts

California has legislated for a four-year moratorium on killing mountain lions (cougars) while biologists determine whether they are endangered in the state. Whales, sea turtles, kangaroos, vicuña and colobus monkey are among 13 additions to the list of endangered species which may not be imported into California. A Bill to increase the herd size of the tule elk to 2000 and to establish a number of new herds has also been passed unanimously in the California legislature.

The Osprey in North America

In February a conference on the status of the osprey in North America, held in Virginia, was told that on the whole the outlook was not unfavourable. More areas have stable populations than decreasing ones. The worst areas are along the Atlantic seaboard and around the Great Lakes, where several populations are nearing

extinction. A special committee has been appointed to prepare a thorough report on the subject.

Canadian Sealing Ban

In January the Canadian Government banned commercial sealing in Canadian waters in the Gulf of St Lawrence, and announced an agreement with Norway to reduce the permitted harp seal harvest in the international waters off the 'Front' from 245,000 last year to 150,000 in the 1972 season.

No Bears from the Air

In April the Alaska Board of Fish and Game prohibited the use of aircraft in any manner in the taking of polar bears.

Hunting Musk-oxen

By eight votes to four the Northwest Territories Council of Canada has approved limited hunting of musk-oxen. Some parts are overpopulated, and the animals are dying of starvation. It is feared that some permits awarded to Eskimos may be sold for a high price to southern sportsmen.

The Impact of Snowmobiles

Snowmobiles have an important impact on the physical environment, soil fauna and vegetation, according to Dr Wallace J. Wanek, a Minnesota biology professor. The impact is greater on forests than on open areas, partly because snow drifting fills in the tracks in open areas. A single traverse, over undisturbed snow, however, can have drastic effects, including damage to conifer saplings and other important plants. In one area 47 per cent of the pines and 55 per cent of the white spruce were damaged along tracks used by snowmobiles.

Cleaning up the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement signed by the US and Canadian Governments in Ottawa during President Nixon's recent visit represents the first major effort by the two nations jointly

to solve a serious environmental problem affecting a commonly shared natural resource. The five freedoms aimed at under the agreement are freedom from toxic substances; from excessive quantities of nutrients causing eutrophication; from oil, scum and floating debris; from material producing odour, colour or other nuisance conditions; and from objectionable sludge deposits.

Oregon Sea Otters Thrive

The first pup from the sea otters transplanted to Oregon from Alaska in 1970 and 1971 was recently seen near Cape Arago.

Cars Kill Rare Deer

Nearly 600 key deer, a Red Data Book subspecies, have been killed on the roads of Florida since 1948, including 52 in 1971 alone. In 1947 numbers were down to 50, but have since increased to several hundred.

Counting the Killers

The most recent annual Pacific coast-wide killer-whale count, from Alaska to California, totted up 550 whales, mostly off Vancouver Island.

Companies Fined for Pollution

The Anaconda Wire and Cable Company has been fined \$200,000 in a Manhattan court after a guilty plea to a 100-count indictment that included discharging water containing waste copper into the Hudson River last year. The Consolidated Edison utility company has been fined £630,000 — \$10 per fish — for each dead fish found impaled on the screens of its new nuclear power plant at Indian Point on the Hudson River, New York. The state's conservation law forbids the taking of fish by drawing off water from rivers.

Industry, Go Away!

The state of Delaware has made it illegal for heavy industry to locate along the state's 100 miles of coastline in Delaware Bay and 25

miles along the Atlantic Ocean. Specifically prohibited are refineries, steel and paper mills, petrochemical complexes and offshore bulk transfer terminals.

A Change of Name

Man and Nature is a new title covering four old journals: *Connecticut Conservation*, *Massachusetts Audubon*, *Maine Field Naturalist* and *Narragansett Naturalist*, which were already identical within their differing covers. They are the journals of the Connecticut Conservation Association and the Audubon Societies of Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

LATIN AMERICA

Reserves for the Quetzal

Stimulated by Dr Anne LaBastille, landowners in Guatemala have formed a Quetzal Protection Association, and set up a private cloud forest reserve on Volcan Atitlan. They are encouraging adjoining owners to add more land to the area. Dr LaBastille also helped in the establishment of the Volcan Baru National Park in Panama, another quetzal habitat. The quetzal, related to the trogons, is the national bird of Guatemala.

Straight into the RDB

A new species, the Elfin Woods warbler *Dendroica angelae*, recently discovered in the mist forest of eastern Puerto Rico, is expected to go straight into the IUCN Red Data Book, as there are probably only 300 pairs, occupying some 450 hectares within the Luquillo Experimental Forest.

National Park Threatened

The Santa Rosa national park in Costa Rica, gazetted in March 1971, is threatened by a large jet airport on its northern flank, which will be largely deforested.

Goat Control Proceeds

The Ecuador National Park Service has succeeded in exterminating

the feral goats on Barrington (Santa Fe) Island in the Galapagos National Park, and certain endemic plants already appear to be recolonising lost territory. Similar extermination on Marchena has been almost achieved.

AFRICA

Even along the Limpopo?

"We have a steady stream of complaints about air pollution from factories. Families have moved from their homes because of the noisome vapours pouring over their plots, killing plants and fouling the fabric of the house. Water supplies have been contaminated to the extent that they are undrinkable. Public water supplies are poisoned by factory and human effluents . . ." From the *May Newsletter of the Wild Life Society of Rhodesia*.

Rare Madagascar Tortoise

A fresh survey of the Soalala-Baie de Baly region has established that a few dozen individuals only of the rare tortoise *Testudo yniphora* remain. These are the only ones remaining anywhere.

Pelican Marking Scheme

Great white pelicans marked with a bright pink tag on the left leg may have come from Lake Shala, Ethiopia. If you see one, in any part of Africa, tell Dr Emil Urban, Faculty of Science, Haile Selassie I University, Addis Ababa.

ASIA

Rothschild's Myna Trade

Two dozen Rothschild's mynas, a Red Data Book bird, were seen in one cage in Singapore bird gardens recently, and a later observer reported over 75 in the same place. Hundreds are said to be coming out of Bali to dealers in California, Germany and Holland.

Rhino Poaching Threat

Two years ago the number of

great Indian rhinos in Jaldapara sanctuary, West Bengal, had risen to 70, but since then it has been reduced by at least 15 per cent. 14 carcasses have been found and it is feared many more are not found. At this rate the population will be wiped out within 6–10 years.

Death of a Rhino

The only Sumatran rhino in captivity in the world, survivor of a disastrous capture expedition some years ago, died at Copenhagen Zoo in February.

Wildlife Protected in India

The number of mammals protected under Indian law is now 37, including the lion, tiger, cheetah and three species of leopard. Eight bird species are also protected.

Okinawa Woodpecker Threat

The last 40 or so Okinawa woodpeckers *Sapheopipo noguchii*, saved from the manoeuvres of the US marines, are now under civilian threat, unless the Japanese Government, to whom the Ryukyu Islands were transferred in May, can be persuaded to stop the destruction of its woodland habitat.

Siberian Tiger Threat

Fears are being expressed for the future of the Siberian tiger, some of whose best remaining habitat lies along the Sino-Russian border in the Far East. The build-up of troops here is unlikely to favour the survival of these populations.

NEW NATIONAL PARKS

A Ne-ne Park at Last

A Ne-ne Park, first suggested by Peter Scott ten years ago, has been established with three pairs of birds in the headquarters area of Haleakala National Park on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

The Ajlun-Dibbeen Forest, part of the watershed of the River Jordan, is Jordan's latest national park.

Kouchibouquac, New Brunswick's second national park and the first of any size, covers 72 square miles of coast and mountains. The name means "river of the long tideway".

NEW NATURE RESERVES

Derbyshire Naturalists' Trust's latest reserve is at Overdale in the Peak District, 48 acres of heathland intersected by streams, presented by Associated Portland Cement.

Skipper's Island, 162 acres of rough grass, scrub and saltmarsh in Walton backwaters between Dovercourt and the Naze is Essex Naturalists' Trust's latest reserve. The Trust has also been given a 47-acre farm at Little Baddow.

Darlands Lake, Totteridge, and Hopkyns Wood, Tewin, an oak-hornbeam wood with a badger set, are the two latest reserves of the Herts and Middlesex Trust for Nature Conservation.

Edge Wood is a new 25-acre reserve of the Shropshire Trust on Wenlock Edge.

Three new reserves of the Scottish Wildlife Trust: Loch of Craighush, near Loch of Lowes, Perthshire, 70 acres of water and 18 of land, by agreement; an extension to the Keltneyburn reserve in North Perthshire, 64 acres by agreement; and Bawsinch, 15 acres of former market garden next to Duddingston Loch, Midlothian, only the second reserve to be actually purchased by this Trust, all of whose other reserves are by lease or agreement.

The National Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy are jointly acquiring the 3415-acre Four Holes Swamp in South Carolina. It contains about 40 miles of canoeable waterway.

Sultanpur, the new waterfowl and wildfowl bird sanctuary near Delhi, was officially inaugurated by the Indian Minister of State for Tourism in February.

In Pakistan the North West Frontier Province Government has declared Chitral Gol a sanctuary for five years.

PERSONALIA

WWF Gold Medals for 1972 were awarded to Professor A.G. Bannikov (USSR), Major Ian Grimwood (UK) and Dr Roger Tory Peterson (USA).

The 1972 European Prize for Nature Conservation and Landscape Planning has been awarded to Max Nicholson and Dr Werner Bauch.

The new Chairman of the Countryside Commission for Scotland is Mrs Jean Balfour, until lately Vice Chairman of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Dr W.J. Eggeling, lately Director of the Nature Conservancy for Scotland, also joins the Commission.

Changes at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds: George Waterston, Regional Officer for Scotland since 1955, has retired and has been awarded the Society's Gold Medal. He is succeeded by his deputy, Frank Hamilton, who was the Society's first Northern Ireland representative. David Lea, Deputy Director (Conservation) is retiring to return to field work as the Society's Orkney representative, in the room of Eddie Balfour, who retires, having worked for bird protection in Orkney since 1936.

Mrs M.J. Davis is the new General Secretary of the Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation.

Lord Dulverton has replaced Miss Robina Lund as a Trustee of the British National Appeal of the World Wildlife Fund.

Charles Morrison has succeeded John Coleman-Cooke as Chairman of Council of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

Dr Douglas H. Pimlott has become President of the Canadian Nature Federation, in succession to Dr Ted Mosquin, who is now Executive Director of the Federation and Editor of *Nature Canada*, successor to *Canadian Audubon*.

William E. Scheele, Director of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, has been elected Executive Director of the US National Appeal of the World Wildlife Fund, in succession to Herbert H. Mills.

After being vacant for 18 months, since the transfer of John Gottschalk, the directorship of the US Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife was filled in April with the swearing in of Spencer H. Smith, the Acting Director.

Dr J.H. Westermann, Hon. Secretary of the Netherlands Foundation for International Nature Protection, has succeeded Dr M.F.I.J. Bijleveld as Hon. Secretary of WWF Netherlands.

OBITUARY

Dr John D. Carthy, Scientific Director of the Field Studies Council, died on March 13 after a long illness.

Henry Gray, Chairman of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, has died in Dublin.

Dr Maria Koepcke, the German ornithologist who was the leading authority on the birds of Peru, was killed in an air crash in the Peruvian Amazon jungle on December 24.

Col. C.D. Trimmer, Director of Uganda National Parks from 1961 to 1964, died in February. He was first Warden of Murchison Falls National Park.