

Briefly . . .

International

Ramsar addition

Surinam became the 38th Party to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) on 18 March 1985. Surinam nominated Coppename Rivermouth Nature Reserve to the List of Wetlands of International Importance. There are now more than 300 sites covering 20 million ha.
IUCN Bulletin, 16, 4–6.

Computer access to legume facts

Anyone with access to a personal computer will soon be able to tune in to the world's expertise on the 17,000 species in the Leguminosae, thanks to the International Legume Database and Information Service. The project will combine the data collected by 16 research groups worldwide and will include information on conservation status and distribution. Potential users and contributors should contact Dr Frank Bisby, Biology Department, Southampton University, Southampton SO9 5NH, UK.
Nature, 10 October, 1985.

Europe and North Africa

Seal ban extended

The EEC ban on imports of baby harp and hooded seal skins, imposed in 1983 and due to expire on 1 October 1985, has been extended by four years.
Daily Telegraph, 28 September 1985.

Good and bad news for rare goose

The new independent Greenland Government has been persuaded, for the first time, to ban hunting of Greenland white-fronted geese *Anser albifrons flavirostris*. The Irish Government, however, is considering lifting the ban on shooting this goose, which is the rarest goose to winter in the British Isles. There are only 19,000 birds left, and 60 per cent winter in Ireland.
New Scientist, 4 July 1985.

Musk-oxen births

Another 11 calves have been born into the herd of musk-oxen *Ovibos moschatus* on Wrangel Island in the Soviet Arctic reintroduction programme.
GNUS, 90.

Halibut rearing—a first

Marine biologists in Norway have successfully reared two halibut in captivity from artificially fertilized eggs. Only once before has a captive halibut metamorphosed into a young fish, and that died after a few weeks. Halibut stocks have been seriously depleted by overfishing, and this breakthrough means it may now be possible to farm halibut.
New Scientist, 5 September 1985.

Swedish wolf killed

A farmer in southern Sweden shot the female wolf that had bred three years in succession close to the border with Norway. The killing was illegal, but the Government may not prosecute for fear of angering farmers. The pups born in 1985 were weaned before their mother was killed and may survive under the tutelage of another adult wolf that is with them.
New Scientist, 15 August 1985.

Fish to get protection

The sheatfish *Silurus glanis* is one of the most seriously threatened species of fish in Sweden, and the Fisheries Department has proposed that surviving specimens be protected. It does not breed every year because of fluctuating weather conditions, but the building of dams and water pollution are the main causes of the decline. In one of the three rivers where sheatfish still exist, specimens have been numbered and two have been equipped with ultrasonic transmitters. Breeding experiments are also in progress.
naturopa-newsletter-nature, 85–7.

A new Scottish trust

The Islay Natural History Trust has been formed in memory of Rodney Dawson. Before his death at the age of 34, he had become increasingly aware of the diversity of Islay's wildlife and how little of it

had been documented. Already, a field centre has been established with a reference room and library with exhibitions, which is open from 10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Accommodation is available at reasonable rates. For more information, write to Islay Natural History Trust, Blackbrae, Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay, Argyll PA48 7UE, UK.

Greenland white-front update

Despite attempts by conservation organizations and requests by the European Commission to call a halt to peat cutting at Duich Moss, Islay, road construction is finished and peripheral drainage to the first area destined for exploitation is almost complete.
ICBP European Continental Section News, 5.

Sea-eagle flight

The first white-tailed sea eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* to be raised in the wild in Britain for more than 70 years flew in the summer of 1985 on the Scottish island of Rhum.
RSPB.

Call for net ban

UK organizations interested in salmon conservation have decided to call for urgent government action to ban drift netting for salmon in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It has been illegal in Scotland since 1962. The organizations are concerned by the deaths of seabirds and marine mammals caused by monofilament nets.
Fishing News International, 25, 7.

Britain's red deer genes threatened

Sika deer *Cervus nippon*, introduced from Japan early this century, are spreading into the habitat of Britain's native red deer *C. elephas* in Scotland, and there are fears that hybridization threatens the genetic purity of the native species.
Forestry Commission, 29 August 1985.

Contaminated otters

Dieldrin, the use of which has been banned under a 15-year-old voluntary agreement, PCBs, lindane, DDT and

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heavy metals have been found in the tissues of 16 out of 23 European otters *Lutra lutra*. The otters, most of which had been killed on roads and came from all over Britain, were analysed by biologists C. Mason and S. MacDonald. It is believed that the chemicals accumulate from eating contaminated fish. Seven otters from the remote Orkney Islands were largely clear of pollutants. *New Scientist*, 15 August 1985.

Tourist boycott of Britain

Environmental groups from 10 European countries, representing more than two million people, announced an international boycott of Britain to protest against Britain's exports of sulphur pollution from power stations. Britain is the largest emitter of sulphur dioxide in Western Europe, contributing significantly to the acidification of forests and lakes in Scandinavia and other countries, but the Government refuses to take action to control the pollution. *Acid News*, 3.

Reaction against proposed ban on toxic paint

The Paintmaker's Association in the UK has launched a campaign against proposed regulations designed to prohibit the use of anti-fouling paints containing organo-tin compounds on small boats. Research by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has shown harmful effects on shellfish and other marine organisms where levels of a fraction of one part per billion (p.p.b.) tributyl tin occur. Levels of 14 p.p.b. have been recorded in some enclosed waters around the UK and are also high in some estuaries. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 16, 7.

Fen saved

Mare Fen at Swavesey, Cambridgeshire, UK, which was under threat from a drainage scheme, has been purchased by the County Council for a nature reserve. Its 42 acres (17 ha) provide a winter refuge for wildfowl. *The Times*, 22 June 1985.

Fines for digging up worms

Three anglers were fined the maximum of £20 in August 1985 for illegally

digging up 685 lugworms in Lindisfarne Nature Reserve on the Northumberland coast of Britain. The lugworms are important food for birds using the internationally important bird sanctuary in Budle Bay. *Guardian*, 15 August 1985.

Butterfly transplant failure

Not a single silver-studded blue butterfly *Plebejus argus* has survived the shift of a colony in 1984 from a development site near Ipswich. It cost £6000 (see *Oryx* 19, 38). *West Lancashire Evening Gazette*, 1 August 1985.

Red squirrel reintroduction

Of the 10 red squirrels released in Regent's Park towards the end of 1984, seven survived the winter in good health. One was killed by a car, another by a cat, and a third, whose radio-collar failed, has not been seen since. *Mammal Society Newsletter*, 63.

New parks for the Netherlands

The Groote Peel National Park in the Netherlands covers 1320 ha (3260 acres) of marshland of exceptional ornithological interest. Sheep will be used to maintain the vegetation. Schiermonnikoog National Park in the Wadden Sea covers 5400 ha (13,340 acres) and consists mostly of dunes and freshwater and saltwater marshes. It, too, is important for many birds. *Council of Europe Newsletter—Nature*, 85–6.

Bringing wildlife to towns

The German Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz (BUND) has launched a campaign to encourage wildlife in towns and villages. It is designed to promote the return of many plant and animal species by demonstrating what can be done in this respect in gardens and municipal land. *naturupa-newsletter-nature*, 85–7.

Griffon vulture colony thriving

The reintroduction of the griffon vulture *Gyps fulvus* into the Cevennes in France by the Fonds d'Intervention pour les Rapaces is reaching the final stage. Releases over the last three years

resulted in a colony of 43 by March 1985, and five chicks were hatched in the wild in April. The colony has also been visited by foreign vultures. *World Birdwatch*, 7, 3.

France's biggest nature reserve

France has made the 16,000-ha (40,000-acre) high plateaux of the Vercors, where the northern and southern Alps meet, its biggest nature reserve. Its 80 bird species include the rock ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus*, orphean warbler *Sylvia hortensis* and Bonelli's eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus*. *Council of Europe Newsletter—Nature*, 85–6.

Belgian import scandal

Despite the fact that Belgium is a member of the CITES, the Convention regulations were violated in July 1985 when three young chimpanzees, two of which later died, elephant tusks, elephant-foot umbrella stands and leopard skins were imported into Belgium as gifts from President Mobutu of Zaire to King Baudouin of Belgium after the latter had attended Zaire's 25 years of independence celebrations. *International Primate Protection League*, 27 August 1985.

Birds still under pressure in France and Greece

Turtle doves were again shot in France in 1985, despite an EEC directive banning spring shooting of migrants, and protestors against the shoot were met by a bomb and counter-demonstrating hunters. In Greece, the Government ignored the EEC directive and also allowed the shooting of spring migrants. *Birds*, Autumn 1985.

Greek beach unfit for turtles

Tourism is disturbing the most important nesting beach for loggerhead turtles *Caretta caretta* in Europe. Each year up to 800 gather to nest on the shores of Laganas Bay on Zante Island in Greece, but they are frightened away by speedboats during the day and by lights from vehicles and by noisy beach parties at night. Some still nest in small coves on the east of the Bay, and the University of Salonika has proposed that the Government creates a marine park there and an ecological centre for scientific research and for tourists. The co-ordinator of the

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turtle study, which is being funded by the European Commission, for the Greek Ministry of the Environment, says the best way to help the turtles is by enabling local people to become shareholders in the venture.
The Times, 8 August 1985.

Maltese plants saved

The Maltese habitat of two rare plants has been saved by being excluded from a redevelopment scheme. The species are *Cistus monspaliensis* and *Convolvulus cantabrica*.
naturupa-newsletter-nature, 85–7.

Majorca reserve purchase

Eight hundred ha (2000 acres) of the national reserve of S'Albufera on Majorca have been purchased by the local government (Govern Balear) for the equivalent of over £1 million to secure the future of the site. ICONA (Instituto para la Conservación de la Naturaleza) is expected to purchase a further 400 ha (1000 acres).
ICBP European Continental Section News, 5.

Threatened area no longer threatened

Durmitor National Park, a World Heritage Site in Yugoslavia, which was identified as one of the world's 11 most threatened protected areas at the IUCN General Assembly in 1984, has been removed from the register of threatened areas. The proposed hydro-power plant in the Tara Canyon will not now be built due to public pressure from within and outside Yugoslavia.
CNPPA Members' Newsletter, 32.

Dam on the Danube

The Hungarian Government has announced that it is going ahead with the construction of a major hydro-electric power dam on the Danube River north of Budapest, despite protests from environmentalists.
Daily Telegraph, 17 August 1985.

Hungary's fourth park

Aggtelek, formerly a Landscape Protection Area, next to Northern Hungary's border with Czechoslovakia, has become the country's fourth national

park. Its limestone hills are riddled with sinkholes, caves and underground rivers, and bear beech and oak forest and juniper scrub. The park contains a sanctuary area designated in the 1930s for brown bear *Ursus arctos*, red deer *Cervus elaphus*, roe deer *Capreolus capreolus* and wild boar *Sus scrofa*.
Parks, 10, 2.

Turkish bay threatened by acid rain

Despite widespread protest, the Turkish Government is going ahead with a plan to build two, possibly three, thermal power plants in Gökova Bay at the south-western tip of the Turkish mainland. The Bay has a rich marine fauna and flora and rare forests of *Liquidambar* sp. The first two plants of 210 megawatts each will release 98.28 tons of sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere every year, will use sea water as a coolant, thus raising the temperature of the sea, and will cover the area with ash. Critics say that the coal reserves of the area will be exhausted in 24 years by the two stations, and in 16 if three are built.
The Society for the Protection of Wildlife, Turkey.

Egypt bans owl hunt

Egyptians have been banned from shooting owls, traditionally looked upon as evil omens, to allow the birds to kill off rats and insects.
Daily Telegraph, 3 August 1985.

Africa

Senegal bans hunting

All hunting of bustards and Afrotropical ducks was banned in Senegal from 1 December 1985—the beginning of the next hunting season—and the hunting season will close early. These measures should help species affected by the severe drought to recover.
World Birdwatch, 7, 3.

Elephant tusk for the Pope

Pope John Paul was given an elephant tusk carved with his name at an open-air mass celebrated in Yaoundé, capital of Cameroon. He urged Africans to ignore ideas from the developed world on limiting families through contraception and abortion.
Straits Times (Singapore), 18 August 1985.

CAR crackdown on poaching

A recent aerial survey in Central African Republic found nearly twice as many dead as live elephants. Drought has attracted nomads to the area and ivory poaching is increasing. After the President's helicopter was attacked by poachers, he ordered the Presidential Guards into the parks.
Earthscan, 13 September 1985.

African wildlife conference

An international symposium is being organized to mark the silver jubilee of the Uganda Institute of Ecology, which was established in 1961. The symposium will be held at Mweya in Queen Elizabeth National Park from 8 to 11 December 1986. Its theme is African Wildlife: Research and Management, and papers are invited. Further information from Dr Eric L. Edroma, Uganda Institute of Ecology, PO Box 22, Lake Katwe, Uganda.
Swara, 8, 3.

Flamingo numbers in Kenya

In August 1985 there were estimated to be at least 1.5 million lesser flamingos *Phoenicopterus minor* on Lake Bogoria, with large numbers also on lakes Nakuru and Elmenteita, in the Rift Valley, Kenya. There were, in addition, many greater flamingos *P. ruber* on Elmenteita, with smaller numbers on Bogoria.
Sir Christopher Lever.

Eucalyptus war continues

In Kenya, the Chairman of the Permanent Presidential Commission on Soil Conservation and Afforestation has appealed to people to uproot eucalyptus trees from river banks, swamps and water catchment areas. He warned that rivers could dry up if the trees, which consume a lot of water, were not removed.
Earthscan Bulletin, 8, 3.

Lake threatened again

After heavy rain, the waters of Lake Nakuru National Park in Kenya are polluted by surface drainage from the city of Nakuru. The lake, which is home to about two million flamingos, is a soda lake and has no outlet so any contaminants are retained. Tests have revealed

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the presence of lead, and there are almost certainly other chemicals present from the motor, fertilizer, chemical and other industries in the city. A water-purification plant for surface drainage water is urgently needed, according to the Park's chief warden. In the 1970s Lake Nakuru was polluted by leachings from a landfill dump outside the city, but that was cleared up thanks to the efforts of conservationists

The Fund for Animals Inc.

Illegal wildlife trophies confiscated

A raid was carried out on 22 February 1985 on several curio shops in Gisenyi, Rwanda, near the border with Zaire. It resulted in the confiscation of two serval cat skins, one leopard skin, several large rugs made from otter, jackal and hyrax, a rug made from the very rare Virunga golden monkey, and many carved ivory ornaments and jewellery. The raid was planned and organized by the Chief Warden of the Parc des Volcans (home of the mountain gorillas).

Wildlife News, 20, 1.

Rhino poachers jailed

A Zimbabwean court sentenced three Zambians to 11 years in prison for killing six rhinos near the Zambia–Zimbabwe border last January. It also fined the three men a total of \$17,700 for poaching the animals.

Los Angeles Times, 19 September 1985.

New reserve in Botswana

Mannyelanong Hill, near Gaborone in Botswana, was declared a Game Reserve on 26 June 1985. The regulations, aimed at protecting a colony of Cape vultures and an assemblage of wildlife that includes mountain reed-buck, klipspringer, dassie and kudu, came into force on 1 January 1986.

Kalahari Conservation Society Newsletter, 9.

Scarce copper reserve

South Africa's first butterfly reserve has been established on 12 ha (30 acres) of urban land in Roodepoort, home of one of the last colonies of the scarce copper *Aloeides dentatis*, an ant-associated

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butterfly. It used to occur in several places in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, but most colonies have been destroyed by township development or agriculture. The reserve is on land scheduled for development as a housing estate and has been established by the Town Council as a result of a three-year campaign by conservationists.

Quagga, 10.

Unfortunate deaths

Five black rhinos died in quarantine in Etosha National Park in South Africa in July 1985. They were amongst 12 due to be sent to Augrabies National Park in exchange for 36 Cape buffalo. After the fifth death, the remaining seven were released and six more rhinos caught and taken to Augrabies without subjecting them to quarantine. The reason for the deaths is suspected to be a combination of unusually cold nights and stress from being penned. Unpenned, the rhinos would have dealt with the cold by increased activity. The six rhinos in Augrabies have settled in well.

Windhoek Advertiser, 23 July 1985.

Death of a desert elephant

An elephant calf died in Western Damaraland when its herd was being driven towards a US television crew by a helicopter. It was shot after it fell and broke its leg in rough terrain. Damaraland conservationist Garth Owen-Smith said that the permit issued to Mr Jan

Oelofse, a game-capture expert, for the exercise should have stipulated that a nature conservator be present. He also said it was particularly tragic that one of Damaraland's elephants should die in this way because the population had begun to increase for the first time in 15 years after a successful anti-poaching campaign.

Windhoek Advertiser, 12/13 August 1985.

Game ranger sacrifice

A South African game ranger, Dave Reynolds, faced with a charging black rhino, refused to use his gun and was wounded in the right thigh because he did not want to kill an endangered species.

Not Man Apart, October 1985.

Asia (excluding Indo-Malaya)

Jackal come-back

Following the extensive poisonings in Israel's rabies control programmes of the 1960s, the jackal *Canis aureus* population appears to be making a significant recovery.

Israel—Land and Nature, 10, 4.

Leopards increase in Israel

Leopards *Panthera pardus* are increasing in numbers in Israel and expanding their range, perhaps due to the effective



Lake Nakuru, Kenya, with pelicans and flamingos (A. Nilsson/WWF).

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conservation of ibex *Capra ibex* and other prey animals. In some places electric fencing is being erected to discourage them from becoming too familiar with human settlements. Israel—*Land and Nature*, 10, 4.

Computer helps protect wild flowers

A computer at the Israel Plant Information Center run by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and the Hebrew University has accumulated a wealth of data on Israel's 2371 flowering plants. It is used to discover if any endangered plants are threatened by development plans and to keep track of population trends of rare plants. Data are collected by 70–80 volunteers, who undertake regular surveys and have added several new plants to Israel's list. The Center also collects seeds from wild species to encourage their use in landscaping developments. Israel—*Land and Nature*, 10, 4.

Deer returns to wild

Père David's deer *Elaphurus davidianus*, which is extinct in its native habitat in China, will be reintroduced to a new wildlife reserve in China in mid-1986. The new reserve is in 15 sq km (5.8 sq miles) of forest on the edge of the Yellow Sea, some 250 km (155 miles) north-east of Shanghai, where the last specimen seen in the wild was shot in 1939. The 30 deer will come from London Zoo, Chester Zoo and Marwell Zoo. *Zoological Society of London*.

Indo-Malaya

Bangladesh bans frog hunt

Bangladesh introduced a four-month ban on hunting and exporting frogs from 14 April 1985, to give them a chance to breed in safety. *Fishing News International*, 25, 8.

Coral mining must stop

Almost 80 per cent of Sri Lanka's coral reefs are dead or dying, according to the country's Central Environmental Authority. Despite the Coast Conservation Act of 1981, the traditional coral mining industry continues in the south, and there are suggestions that



Père David's deer (Michael Lyster/Zoological Society of London).

people should be resettled or found other jobs. *Earthscan Bulletin*, 8, 3.

Tigers shocked by dummies

Tigers in the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve have been increasing in numbers since 1973 due to the protection afforded by Project Tiger, but every year they have also been killing about 45 humans, who enter the reserve to collect forest produce. In 1983 an experiment was set up, using electrified dummies of fishermen, wood and honey collectors as bait in places where there were known man-eaters. Tigers attacking them received electric shocks. In 1983 the number of people killed by tigers fell to 20, and in 1984 to 12. It is too early to tell whether this success will be sustained, but the experiment continues. *Tigerpaper*, XII, 2.

Sumatran rhinos

Sabah State Government, Malaysia, has banned the proposed export of four pairs of endangered Sumatran rhinos *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* for captive-breeding in US zoos. It was to be part of the IUCN co-ordinated effort to save the

species, of which there are only around 850 left in the wild. Captive breeding may still go ahead, but in sanctuaries in Sabah, which has 20–40 rhinos left. *New Scientist*, 12 September 1985.

Indonesia to export elephants

An Indonesian newspaper has reported that the Government has decided to reduce the country's wild elephant population by allowing animals to be exported. *Los Angeles Times*, 22 September 1985.

North America

Clam decline: fishermen claim damages

More than 400 fishermen in Cordova district in the Prince William Sound area in Alaska are claiming damages from the Trans Alaska Pipeline Service Company because pollution in Valdez Bay has caused a decline in the clam population. The fishermen earlier opposed the construction of the pipeline terminal in Valdez. *Fishing News International*, 25, 7.

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Eskimos sue over fall in salmon catch

A coalition of western Alaska Eskimos has filed suit in US District Court in Anchorage against the US Secretaries of Commerce, State and Transportation to try to stop the huge incidental catch of immature salmon by foreign trawlers. The salmon spawn in Alaskan waters and are an important resource for Eskimos, who claim that their catch has declined.

Washington Times, 26 September 1985.

Whale deaths could be due to pollutants

In the last three years 40 white whales *Delphinapterus leucas* have been found

dead on the banks of the St Lawrence River in Canada. Autopsies have revealed extraordinarily high levels of PCBs, DDT and the insecticide Mirex in the blubber, and the breast milk of one whale contained 1725 p.p.m. of PCBs. Recent research suggests that high levels of PCBs and other contaminants are making the whales vulnerable to a wide range of diseases. One whale had bladder cancer, two had stomach ulcers, one had pneumonia and one had heart problems.

The Gazette, Montreal, 31 August 1985.

Bringing wild species into gardens

Eighteen botanic gardens in the USA are co-operating with the one-year-old Center for Plant Conservation at

Harvard's Arnold Arboretum to bring the nation's 3000 endangered plants into cultivation. Only 10 per cent are at present in botanic gardens. In 1985 the Center helped bring in 60 species. *The Orange County Register*, 17 August 1985.

Poison to be used again

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the use of Compound 1080 to control coyote predation on domestic sheep and goats. The poison has been banned for the past 13 years, and its use will be confined to collars worn on domestic animals in fenced areas. The EPA requires that users of collars be trained and certified, that records be maintained of collars purchased, used and lost, and that any deaths of non-target animals be reported.

Outdoor News Bulletin, 39, 16.

New effort to stop illegal trade

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is to increase by 50 per cent the numbers of inspectors at designated ports of entry, to help intercept illegal shipments of wild animals and plants and their parts and products. In 1982 alone there were more than 55,000 shipments of wildlife imported to and exported from the US, many of which were probably accompanied by falsified documents. *WWF-US*, 28 August 1985.

Duck hunt restricted

Regulations for the US 1985-86 waterfowl hunting season are more restrictive than usual and aim to reduce the duck harvest by 25 per cent in order to help restore duck breeding populations, which are seriously depleted. Mallards and pintails that nest in the mid-continental areas of Canada and the north-central US are among the most depleted; they have been affected by the drought of the past few years.

Department of the Interior, 30 August 1985.

Ranchers sabotage elk reintroduction

An elk *Alces alces* reintroduction plan in and around the Humboldt National Forest has been blocked by ranchers in adjacent areas of Nevada and Idaho. Although the elk, which were eliminated



Sumatran rhino (C. Stemmler/WWF).

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there 100 years ago, were to have been released and maintained on public land, ranchers were afraid that they would damage hay on private land and would eat forage on public land, which their livestock now use, and for which they pay the federal government only \$1.35 per head per month. Livestock at present get 91 per cent of the public land forage in Idaho and 94 per cent in Nevada.

Outdoor News Bulletin, 39, 10.

Prairie at nuclear plant

Botanists are reconstructing a native American prairie in the midst of the particle accelerator at Fermilab, on the plains of Illinois.

New Scientist, 1 August 1985.

River poisoned to save trout

Biologists have poisoned about 8 miles (13 km) of a creek near Yellowstone Lake in an effort to remove all traces of Eastern brook trout, an alien species found during a wildlife census around the Lake in summer 1985. The invader could have meant extinction for the Park's native cutthroat trout.

GNUS 99/Ecology USA, 23 September 1985.

Shorebird reserve

New Jersey is buying 10 miles (17 km) of critical shorebird habitat in Delaware Bay, which is used by more than one million northward migrating birds each May. The decision came as a result of the WWF's Shorebird Conservation Project, the objective of which is to create a series of sister reserves along the flyways of migrating shorebirds. There have been dramatic declines in shorebird abundance on the US's east coast over the past 11 years.

Focus, 7, 4.

Plastic bullets for bears?

Biologists in Yellowstone National Park will be trying to teach grizzlies *Ursus arctos* fear of humans by shouting at them and shooting at them with plastic bullets, to try to reduce human casualties.

BBC Wildlife, September 1985.

Oil industry helps conservation

Several oil companies in Texas are

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helping the Nature Conservancy protect wildlife habitat by selling it land cheaply. The most recent purchase is 8500-acre (3440-ha) Peach Point Marsh, prime waterfowl habitat, wintering about 60,000 white-fronted and Canada geese. The land, valued at \$5 million, was sold for \$1.5 million.

Outdoor News Bulletin, 39, 14.

Condor's last hope

Of the seven Californian condors *Gymnogyps californianus* left in the wild, four are to be taken to join the 20 already in captivity, and three, one breeding pair and one five-year-old male, will remain in the wild. Three young females raised at San Diego Wild Animal Park will be released into the wild in 1986.

New Scientist, 12 September 1985.

Seaside sparrows on brink

One of the three remaining dusky seaside sparrows *Ammospiza maritima nigrescens*, all ageing males, died in September 1985 at Disneyworld, Florida. The mating programme with Scott's seaside sparrows *A. m. peninsulae* has so far produced four hybrid sparrows, two of which are claimed to be 87.5 per cent 'dusky' and are believed to be female. In 1986 they will be mated with the two dusky males in the hope of producing 93.75 per cent dusky birds.

Daily Telegraph, 1 October 1985.

Grasshopper sparrows endangered

Florida grasshopper sparrows *Ammodramus savannarum floridanus*, once reportedly widespread and abundant in Florida's dry prairies, now appear to be low in numbers and restricted in range. Surveys in 1980–82 revealed only 93 sparrows at seven sites, only one of these being a known former location. The birds appear able to tolerate some habitat change, but not intensive pasture management, which removes all shrubs. It was classified as endangered by Florida State in 1978, but its meagre abundance, restricted distribution and loss of habitat may make it a candidate for federal listing.

The Journal of Wildlife Management, 49, 3.

Warbler winter secret revealed

Biologists seeking the winter habitat of Kirtland's warblers *Dendroica kirtlandii* saw 11 last winter, in the Dominican Republic, and on the Turks and Caicos, Great Inagua, Eleuthera and two other islands in the Bahamas. Previous winter sightings have been very few. The bird on Eleuthera was ringed and released, the first time this has been done in winter habitat. Research is now concentrated on the winter habitat because, although the warbler's nesting areas in Michigan are protected and cowbird predation controlled, the population is still not increasing. The 400 birds produce 600–800 young each summer, but the number of nesting pairs remains the same.

Audubon, 87, 4.

Two fish, a mollusc and a plant added to list

The following have been added to the US List of Endangered Species. The Modoc sucker *Catostomus microps*, from the small tributaries of the upper Pit River in California, is a victim of habitat degradation, due to erosion and siltation, and of non-native fish: the Sacramento sucker *C. occidentalis* has invaded the habitat due to destruction of natural barriers, such as waterfalls, and hybridizes with it, and the brown trout, introduced for sport fishing, preys on it. The Niangua darter *Etheostoma nianguae*, down to eight populations in tributaries of the Osage River in Missouri, has suffered from channelization of streams; only 100–500 individuals of the Tar River spiny mussel *Elliptio (Canthyria) steinstansana* remain in a 12-mile (19-km) stretch of river in North Carolina. The Mancos milk-vetch *Astragalus humillimus*, which has fragrant lavender-and-white flowers, is known only from four populations in New Mexico, where oil exploration and power-line construction are destroying its habitat.

Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, X, 7.

Central America

Snail conservation project

Unregulated catches of molluscs have led to a sharp fall in their numbers in the Mexican Caribbean Sea. To help

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reverse the decline, a mollusc conservation programme at the Quintana Roo Research and Experimental Centre includes developing snail farming, and marking and recapturing snails to obtain accurate information about populations. The main objective is to rear the Queen conch *Strombus gigas*, a major food resource.

Fishing News International, 25, 8.

Monkeys get help from villagers

Villagers of Bermudian Landing in Belize have endorsed a programme to establish a sanctuary for the black howler monkey *Alouatta pigra*, a threatened species restricted to Belize, southern Mexico and northern Guatemala. A botanist and two US Peace Corps volunteers are surveying the vegetation in 3 sq miles (8 sq km) around Bermudian Landing, and when this is complete the landowners will be asked to sign a pledge to manage their farms to help the monkeys survive, by maintaining forests along waterways, by leaving forest corridors between fields and by leaving their food trees uncut.

WWF Monthly Report, July 1985.

Costa Rica now protects one-quarter of its land

Costa Rica established two new protected areas on 12 June 1985. Golfo National Wildlife Refuge (1309 ha, 3235 acres) is a remnant of once extensive coastal lowland tropical moist forests on the southern Pacific coast. Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge (92,000 ha, 227,000 acres) consists of swamp forests and flooded palm thickets in the north-east of the country. It includes some of the wettest lowland rain forest in Central America, and its wildlife includes jaguar, caiman, tapir, manatee and macaws. Costa Rica now has 25 per cent of its land area protected.

CNPPA Members' Newsletter, 32.

Panama reserves

In October 1984 the President of Panama signed into law decrees creating the following protected areas: Sarigua National Park (2000 ha, 4940 acres), Herrera Province, which includes mangroves and remnants of deciduous forest almost completely eliminated along Central America's

Briefly

Pacific coast; Chagres National Park (75,000 ha, 185,300 acres), which protects national forest in the watershed of the Panama Canal; Cerro Hoyo National Park (32,557 ha, 80,450 acres) on the tip of the Azuero Peninsula on the Pacific coast, which is a remnant of cloud forest; Canclon Forest Reserve (31,650 ha, 78,200 acres) in the Darien region of east Panama, designated for multiple-use forest management; Taboga/Uraba Islands Wildlife Refuge (237 ha, 586 acres), which protects important seabird colonies.

CNPPA Members' Newsletter, 31.

Carnivorous bee

The first bee species to get its protein solely from carrion instead of pollen has been discovered in Panama, reports David W. Roubik of the US Smithsonian Research Institute.

National Wildlife, 23, 5.

South America

Lobster ban

Ecuador has totally banned the capture, possession, transport and sale of lobster during the months of December, January, June and July of every year, in an attempt to protect stocks and rationalize exploitation.

Fishing News International, 25, 8.

Dolphins killed for eyes

Amazon River dolphins *Inia geoffrensis* are being slaughtered by fishermen for their eyes and oil in the Formosa River in Araguaia, north of Goias. The dolphins are being stranded when the river is dammed in the dry season to irrigate a huge agricultural project, poisoned by agricultural pesticides, attacked with guns and drowned or beaten to death. The eyes are sold as good luck charms for \$1.50–3.00 in markets and tourist shops in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. A Brazilian group of ecologists is airlifting a few to Minas Gerais State, but few survive the trauma.

Roxanne Kremer, 3302 N. Burton Avenue, Rosemead, CA 91770, USA.

Atlantic forests get protection

In June 1985, after a 10-year campaign, a 450-mile (724-km)-long ribbon of Atlantic forests covering 3.3 million

acres (1.3 million ha) of Sao Paulo State's Serrado Mar was declared a protected national landmark. The forests are home to hundreds of endangered species. Negotiations are underway to extend the classification to the entire 1200-mile (1930-km) Serrado Mar mountain range, where most of the 3 per cent of the surviving Atlantic forests are situated. The categorization will mean that use of the area will be under tight Government control; agriculture and urban development will be banned and native forest rejuvenation will be encouraged.

The New York Times, 23 July 1985.

Crocodile skins seized

A shipment of about nine tons of crocodile skins worth \$4.5 million bound for Spain was seized in Rio de Janeiro in July 1985 by customs officials. Eugene Lapointe, Secretary General of CITES, said it was the largest seizure ever of crocodile skins, and that they were probably illegally poached and smuggled from Bolivia.

The New York Times, 17 July 1985.

Skin traffic through Manaus

The illegal traffic in animal skins from Brazilian Amazonia continues, using false documents obtained in Bolivia. An agreement permits Bolivia, which has no port, to import and export goods via Manaus, and many illegal shipments pass through undetected. Recent confiscations, however, included 44,000 caiman skins on a Greek ship *Calypso* and a large shipment of collared and white-lipped peccary skins for Germany. Although the peccary skins were said to come from Bolivia, the collared peccary is very rare there, but abundant still in Brazil.

Jornal do Comércio, 11 July and 7 and 9 August 1985.

Saki precarious

The status of the southern bearded saki *Chiropotes satanas satanas* is now extremely precarious. The closing of the Turcuruí Dam on the Tocantins River in Brazil flooded 2400 sq km (926 sq miles) of land, around 70 per cent of it occupied by the saki. Some saki were rescued and released into forests where resident groups had already received animals forced back by the rising waters.

Briefly . . .

Agricultural schemes on the periphery of the new lake will continue to exacerbate the loss of habitat.

Primate Conservation, 5.

New park in Brazil

Chapada Diamantina National Park, an important upstream catchment area for Brasilia, was signed into law during the launch of the IUCN/WWF Wetlands Campaign in Brazil in September 1985. *CNPPA Members' Newsletter*, 32.

Reprieve for large coot?

In Chile, four private groups, including the *Comite Nacional pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora (CODEFF)*, supported by the Forest Service, filed legal objections to the Ministry of Public Work's application for permission to pump 8 million cubic metres of water a year from Lake Chugara in Lauca National Park in the Andean Highlands for irrigation purposes. A Court of Appeals granted protection to the Lake and declared the extraction of water illegal, although the decision has been appealed against by the Irrigation Department. The Lake is home to most of the world's population of giant coot *Fulica gigantea* and to 29 other species of waterfowl. Lowering the Lake's water level would have damaged the habitat for the birds as well as the grazing lands for the Aymará Indians domestic camelids.

World Birdwatch, 7, 3.

CNPPA Members' Newsletter, 32.

Australia/Antarctica

No increase in kangaroo quota

A request from the Queensland Government for an increased kangaroo quota—from 1.03 million to 1.5 million—in 1985 was refused by the Federal Government on unanimous advice from the Kangaroo Advisory Committee. The Federal Environment Minister, Mr Cohen, said that Australia could not put at risk its good standing in the world in the care of its wildlife by acceding to requests for quota increases that could not be justified. Queensland says it has many more kangaroos than estimated by the Federal Government's aerial survey.

Queensland Country Life, 5 September 1985.

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Koala (W. Dolder/WWF).

Sydney's koalas to disappear?

The last wild population of koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus* in Sydney is threatened by the construction of a large retirement village. Two-thirds of the koalas' area had already been destroyed when pressure from conservationists resulted in the New South Wales Government placing an Interim Conservation Order (ICO) on the remaining third for three years. Conservationists urge that the area under the ICO be expanded to connect it with other koala habitats to the north and south and that it should become permanent.

Threatened Species—Conservation Alert, 13.

Meet a possum at Hotham

Skiers at Mt Hotham ski resort in Victoria, Australia, are being asked to report all sightings of the mountain pygmy possum *Burrhamys parvus*. It is the country's rarest alpine marsupial and was believed extinct until 1966, but is now known to number about 500 in New South Wales and 1500 in Victoria. Windcheaters, posters and car stickers bearing the theme 'Meet a possum at Hotham' have been produced as part of a campaign to make skiers aware of the animal and avoid damage to its alpine habitat.

ACF Newsletter, 17, 6.

Penguins starve to death

Many little penguins *Eudyptula minor* died of starvation in Bass Strait, Australia, in 1985. At Phillip Island's Penguin Parade Reserve, chick mortality was 80 per cent, and a feeding programme was carried out to try to save some of the chicks using their natural foods, pilchards and anchovies, donated by a local supplier. The cause of the food shortage in Bass Strait, which is causing the death of other seabirds too, is not known. Some blame overfishing, but the fishing industry denies this.

ACF Newsletter, 17, 6.

Hope for numbats

On 20–21 January 1985, two female numbats *Myrmecobius fasciatus* in WWF-Australia's captive colony at Wanneroo, Western Australia, gave birth to six young, the first for the colony. Only two colonies of these tiny marsupials are left in the wild, in the southern part of Western Australia.

Wildlife Australia, 22, 2.

National Park mining kept dark

The Australian Conservation Foundation has condemned Western Australia's State Minister for Minerals and Energy for secretly approving a proposal by Armway Mining Pty Ltd to

Oryx Vol 20 No 1, January 1986

Briefly . . .

open up two alluvial gold mines and a refining plant within Hammersley Range National Park, subject to approval from the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority. The Minister was also criticized for keeping secret, for 18 months, a report by the Environmental Protection Authority, which recommends strongly against the mines, and warns of serious environmental impacts.

Australian Conservation Foundation, 23 August 1985.

Rare duck breeding attempt

Two freckled ducks *Stictonetta naevosa* from Australia have been flown to the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge, UK, in an attempt to breed them in captivity. There are only 13,000 left in the wild, where they are hunted illegally and where their habitat is being destroyed. *The Guardian* 24 September 1985. *World Birdwatch*, 7, 3.

Notable exclusions from list

Australian conservationists are deeply disturbed by the Australian Government's failure to include the rain forests of North Queensland and extensions to the western Tasmanian Wilderness Area on its proposed World Heritage Site List for 1985, despite strong recommendations from the Australian Heritage Commission. The State Governments of Queensland and Tasmania have effectively vetoed these listings. *Wildlife Australia*, 22, 2.

Peat mining prospect on Chatham Islands

Licences to prospect for peat have been granted for 17,019 ha (42,054 acres) on Chatham Island, 800 km (500 miles) east of New Zealand. Companies are evaluating the suitability of the peat deposits found on 44 per cent of the main island for conversion to liquid fuel. If peat mining were to go ahead, dramatic environmental changes would lead to the widespread destruction of plants such as *Dracophyllum arboreum*, the purple-flowered aster *Olearia semidentata* and the giant rush *Sporodanthus traversii*, which grow on the peat. *Sporodanthus* is rare and vulnerable on the mainland—its best prospect for survival is on the main Chatham Island. *Parkscape*, 3.

Briefly

Spectacular success for robin

The Chatham Island black robin *Petroica traversi* conservation programme has had such spectacular success that the species may require only one more season of intervention in its breeding cycle. The population has increased from five in 1980 to 38 in 1985.

World Birdwatch, 7, 3.

World's rarest penguin

The yellow-eyed penguin *Megadyptes antipodes*, down to 1200–1800 pairs throughout its range, needs greater protection, both on mainland New Zealand and on offshore islands. Their habitat has been destroyed by farming and recreation, and chicks fall victim to ferrets and feral cats. Some landowners have already taken the initiative to protect the small colonies of penguins on their lands, but most colonies are unprotected and are at risk.

Forest and Bird, 16, 2.

Land for the lizards

New Zealand's Wildlife Service has purchased 8 ha (20 acres) of steep coastal shrubland and scree slopes at Pukerua Bay as the country's first lizard reserve. Five lizard species live there, including the very rare Whitaker's skink *Cyclodina whitakeri*, a nocturnal species known to live only at Pukerua Bay and on two islands near the Coromandel Peninsula. Native coastal vegetation around Wellington has been devastated by road building, quarrying, housing development, fire and heavy grazing.

Forest and Bird, 16, 2.

Whales saved

Almost the entire human population of the northern end of Great Barrier Island near Auckland, New Zealand, took the day off work to drive a large school of pilot whales out to sea. About one-quarter of the school of nearly 300 died, stranded on the beach, but the rest were saved. The islanders attended rescue lectures after 140 whales were stranded in 1984.

The Times, 8 August 1985.

China in Antarctica

China has established a base in Ant-

arctica called the Great Wall, on Fildes Peninsula at the south-west end of King George Island off the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula. It is likely that China will seek full consultative status under the Antarctic Treaty of 1958, which becomes open for revision in 1991.

The New York Times, 25 June 1985.

Oceania

US marine sanctuary

Fagatele Bay, a 163-acre (68-ha) bay, formed when a volcanic crater collapsed, in American Samoa has become the seventh US National Marine Sanctuary. It is located on Tutuila Island, and there is a spectacular coral terrace system. Its fauna includes green and hawksbill turtles. Traditional subsistence fishing and recreation will continue, but dredging and discharge of pollutants will be prohibited.

CNPPA Members' Newsletter, 31.

People

Mark Boulton, Director of the UK-based International Centre for Conservation Education, was awarded the Order of the Golden Ark by HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands on 5 October 1985. He received the honour in recognition of his work in promoting conservation education worldwide, in particular in developing countries.

Ian MacPhail, European Co-ordinator for the International Federation for Animal Welfare and a former FFPS Council Member and Public Relations Adviser, was made a Commander of the Order del Sol, Peru's highest award, on 26 July 1985, for his work to conserve the country's wildlife during two decades.

Obituary

Mr Oleg Polunin, distinguished plant collector and writer, has died, aged 70. He was a member of several plant collecting expeditions to the Himalayas and Turkey. During a 1952 expedition to Nepal for the British Museum, about 5300 plants were brought back from a previously unknown area. He wrote many books, including *Flowers of the Mediterranean* and *Flowers of Europe*. *GC and HTJ*, London, 19 July 1985.