

FFPS/SSC workshop on action plans

The FFPS organized a workshop on SSC Action Plans on 26 April 1991 at the Zoological Society of London. Its purpose was to improve communications with key members of SSC Specialist Groups in the UK and to discover the kinds of assistance that specialist groups might need in preparing, publishing and implementing action plans. Funding is a major problem and although the Peter Scott Memorial Fund is available for all aspects of action plan funding, matching funds need to be sought.

David Jones chaired the meeting; Simon Stuart, Co-ordinator of the Species Conservation Programme at the SSC Office in Gland, and Mena Boulanger, SSC Development Officer in the Office of the SSC Chairman at Chicago Zoo, both gave informative talks and Mark Collins explained FFPS's role in the SSC programme. Almost 50 people participated in the meeting, 18 of them giving presentations on their group's work or experiences or on topics of relevance to those preparing and implementing action plans. A report was compiled and the positive feedback we received has encouraged us to arrange a follow-up meeting in 1992.

New newsletters

Volume 1 No. 1 of *Asian Primates*, a newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group appeared in June and will be published quarterly. The first issue reports on the illegal trade in orang utans among other things (see *Oryx* 25, 63). The action Plan for Asian Primate Conservation 1987–91 is in its final year and a review and revision process will start soon.

The first issue of *Fungi and Conservation Newsletter*, published by the SSC Committee for Fungi appeared in January 1991. At least two large projects are under way at the Biosystematics Research Centre in Ottawa on the distribution of North American fungi. In Washington State, USA, a licence for the picking of wild mushrooms is required and in British Columbia, Canada, the Forest Service

has issued guidelines for the harvesting of wild mushrooms. The newsletter highlights the loss of forests and their associated mycorrhizal fungi in the Dominican Republic and in Belize. There are few African mycologists but in June 1990 the Committee for the Development of Mycology in Africa was established under the chairmanship of Professor A. Peerally, University of Mauritius.

News from other SSC newsletters

Sirenews (April 1991) reports that the oil spill of the Gulf War, although impacting other species, appeared not to have caused direct mortality of dugongs—yet. Elsewhere in the world, dugongs are holding their own off Cape York in Australia where a survey in 1990 found around 10,472 individuals compared with around 8110 in 1985. The outlook is grim for manatees, however. In October 1990 a visit to a market in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, found polished and carved manatee ribs for sale, as well as manatee oil for treating chest colds. With only 100–200 manatees remaining in the Caribbean such pressures are unsustainable. In addition poachers take manatees for meat and there are deaths from boat collisions and accidental entanglement in nets. A survey of manatees in Florida in early 1991 yielded a maximum of 1465 animals. Of 206 dead manatees in 1990, 47 were killed by boat; water-craft related manatee deaths in Florida during 1986–1990 showed a 68 per cent increase over the previous 5-year period.

Fish, newsletter of the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (Spring 1991) reports on the apparent extinction in the wild of the Lake Eacham rainbowfish *Melanotaenia eachamensis*. This fish was abundant around the edges of its only location, Lake Eacham, on the Atherton Tableland in northern Queensland, Australia, before 1984. A survey in 1987 found no rainbowfish. Circumstantial evidence suggests that introduced fish, which were recorded from the lake for the first time in the mid-1980s, are

responsible for the disappearance of the endemic species. Aquarium stocks of rain-bowfish are being maintained and reintroduction would be possible but only if the translocated species are first removed.

Cat News (July 1991) highlights the menace to tigers by the Chinese quest for their bones for medicinal use. Poaching of tigers in Nepal and northern India and seizure of sacks of bones en route to China are reported more and more often. Poachers are putting pesticides into carcasses of tiger kills to poison them: half the tigers in the western part of Chitwan National park disappeared during last year's monsoon. China's tigers number fewer than 100 and although officially protected since the mid-1970s, poaching continues. Because of the demand for bones, China has established a tiger breeding farm in the province of Heilongjiang, but this could never provide sufficient for the market, South Korea also imports tiger bones, importing 1700 kg between 1985 and 1990.

New SSC Publications

Antelopes: Global Survey and Regional Action Plans. Part 3: West and Central Africa. Compiled by Rod East with the SSC/IUCN Antelope Specialist Group. IUCN, 1990, 171 pp., £10.00, \$US25.00. This, the third of a four-part survey of African and Asian antelopes, covers 22 countries in West and Central Africa. As well as detailed reports on each country there is a summary of the status of antelopes within the region and an outline regional action plan for antelope conservation.

Rabbits, Hares and Pikas: Status, Survey and Conservation Overview, compiled by J. Chapman, J. Flux and the IUCN/SSC Lagomorph Specialist Group, IUCN, 1990, 169 pp., £12.50, \$US25.00. This action plan provides an overview of the state of knowledge about all 78 species of lagomorphs, provides a contemporary framework about their importance to humans and the world's ecosystems, reviews their status on a world-wide scale and makes recommendations for conservation

action to prevent the extinction of any lagomorph species and to allow their populations to recover to safe and productive levels.

African Insectivora and Elephant Shrews: An Action Plan for their Conservation, compiled by M. Nicoll, G. Rathbun with the IUCN/SSC Insectivores, Tree Shrews and Elephant Shrew Specialist Group, IUCN, 1990, 53 pp., £7.50, \$US15.00. This action plan covers the entire African continent and its inshore islands plus Madagascar. African insectivores and elephant shrews contain many little-known and critically imperiled species and populations, many of which occur in areas of high species richness and in seriously threatened habitats. The plan highlights the biological importance of this often neglected group, reviews current knowledge, identifies species at risk and the causes, identifies critical areas for conservation, and describes specific conservation projects.

Biodiversity in Sub-Saharan Africa and Surrounding Islands: Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use, IUCN/SSC Occasional Paper No. 6, edited by S. N. Stuart, R. J. Adams and M. D. Jenkins, IUCN, 1990, 242 pp., £12.50, \$US25.00. This publication, which appeared in December 1990, is the first of the SSC's planned programme of regional biodiversity assessments. Its purpose is to outline what needs to be done to halt the rapid depletion of Africa's living natural resources and to set these actions in the context of the economic and social development of the continent; to draw together the data and recommendations in relevant sources; to make summarized information available to managers of biological resources in Africa; to provide factual underpinning to the Global Biodiversity Conservation Strategy being prepared by IUCN, the World Resources Institute and the United Nations Environment Programme.

During 1991 the SSC will launch other regional biodiversity assessments.

All IUCN/SSC publications are available from IUCN Publication Services Unit, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK. Please make cheques or international money orders payable to IUCN adding 15% for packing and surface mail postage costs.