

FPS Annual General Meeting

Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards, Chairman of the Scientific Authority for Animals, and Professor Dr A. G. Bannikov of the USSR, FPS Vice-President, were speakers at the FPS 1977 Annual General Meeting on July 5. The President, Lord Zuckerman, was in the chair. Professor Wynne-Edwards summarised the Scientific Authority's first year of work as adviser to the UK Government on international trade in endangered wild animals, and Professor Bannikov, whose talk is presented in full on page 123, discussed wildlife protection in the Soviet Union. John Roberts, Director of the Great Britain/USSR Association, very kindly acted as interpreter.

Elections

The meeting opened with the approval of the annual Report and Accounts and the election of four new Council members:

Lord Dulverton CBE TD
 Lt Col J.P. Grant of Rothiemurchus MBE
 Professor Peter Jewell
 Dr David Jones

Four members of Council retired and were warmly thanked by the Chairman for their services: Dr Michael Crawford, Dr John MacKinnon, Lord Medway and Roger Wheater.

A minute of silence was observed as a tribute to our late Vice-President, Sir Landsborough Thomson CB DSc.

The five Officers of the Society were re-elected, as were three Vice-Presidents, Sr Felipe Benavides, Sir Frank Fraser Darling, and Mervyn Cowie. The Chairman, Sir Peter Scott, proposed a vote of thanks to the Zoological Society of London for much help throughout the year and especially for the provision of office accommodation and services.

After a wine and cheese supper the meeting closed with a showing of *The Passing of the Leviathan*, kindly loaned by Aubrey Buxton and Anglia TV.

A New Aid to Captive Breeding

Breeders of endangered bird species have sometimes been unable to distinguish the sexes where they are similar. This has now been remedied by a technique invented at San Diego Zoo, and developed at London Zoo's Wellcome Laboratory of Comparative Physiology with the support of an FPS Oryx 100% Fund grant that enabled the research to be successfully concluded. Dr R. D. Martin, Senior Research Fellow of the Wellcome, believes that the laboratory will soon be able to offer a service to other laboratories and zoos for as little as £10 a verdict. Devised by Wellcome's Dr David Gilbert from earlier work by San Diego's N. M. Czekala and B. L. Lasley, the technique involves analysing the sex steroids in a bird's faeces, possibly because the urine with which the faeces are mixed has passed through the cloaca and picked up minute traces of hormones. The key to the process is known as radio-immunoassay, which can detect quantities of oestrogen or testosterone as small as a billionth of a gramme. The Wellcome is now testing monomorphic birds from Jersey Zoo, the Wildfowl Trust and London Zoo, and when the £10 service begins a client will need only to deep-freeze the faeces he wants analysed and send them to London.