

## News in Brief

### **French Award to British Conservationist**

Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith, M.B.E., has been awarded the Isidore Geoffroy-St.-Hilaire Medal by the Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature et d'Acclimatation de France for her distinguished work for nature conservation. Miss Barclay-Smith is secretary of the International Council for Bird Preservation and of its British Section. She is also a member of the Home Office Advisory Committee on bird protection, and the honorary secretary of the Co-ordinating Advisory Committee on Oil Pollution of the Sea.

### **Oil Pollution of the Sea**

Panama, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines have all recently accepted the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil, bringing the number of states which have adhered to it to twenty-four. Nine countries have now accepted the amendments to the Convention recently negotiated at a conference in London: Canada, France, Kuwait, Liberia, Norway, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Republic.

### **An Island National Park**

Two national parks, the first in France under the law of 1962, were declared last year: La Vanoise, in the Savoy Alps, covering about 55,000 acres and adjoining the Italian national park of the Gran Paradiso, and the island of Port-Cros, in the Mediterranean off Hyères. The island has some of the last remnants of relatively undisturbed mediterranean habitats in France.

### **Threat to the Fin Whale**

At the beginning of the autumn whaling season last December, the Director-General of FAO, Mr. B. R. Sen, in a letter to the International Whaling Commission, appealed to whaling countries to limit voluntarily their catches of fin-whales to 5,000, in order to prevent "further and perhaps irreparable damage to the whale stocks". According to FAO, the season's quota of 10,000 blue whale units would in practice mean that something like 16,000 fin-whales would be taken, whereas the figure ought to be reduced to below 5,000 if the present sustainable yield of fin-whales was to be no more than maintained.

### **Swedish Nature Conservancy**

Last year Sweden established a Nature Conservancy Board, Statens Naturvårdsnämnd, to direct the work in selecting nature reserves, national parks, and to supervise landscape planning and conservation as well as the protection of beaches and shores.

### **Call for Conservation in South Australia**

A group set up by the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia to inquire into the need for nature reserves and make recommendations, has produced a report urging in the strongest terms that the South Australian

Government should set up a Nature Conservation Department with sufficient powers to enforce effective legislation. The report condemns the present nature conservation policy in South Australia as quite inadequate, and points to the urgent need for preserving "primeval areas", because "if they are not secured now there will be none left".

### **Breeding Chinchillas for the Wild**

Soviet animal breeders think that chinchillas could be established in the wild in the U.S.S.R., in the mountain areas of central Asia, in the Crimea, and in the arid areas of the Caucasus. The first 100 pairs were brought from Colorado, in the U.S.A., for acclimatization in the Kirov region in 1960; the first litter was born in 1961, and a second in 1962 from females of the 1961 litter. But further studies are being made before the animals are released into the wild.

### **Conservation in the Constitution**

The Swiss have recently introduced Nature Conservation into their Federal Constitution. The Federation may acquire nature reserves of national importance, either by agreement or by expropriation. In 1960 a commission with seven members was appointed to make a list of sites of national or international importance which should be conserved in their natural state. The report produced in 1963 listed 106 such sites, covering a total area of 3,000 square kilometres, or 8 per cent of the area of Switzerland.

### **Wildlife Artists Unite**

A group of artists specializing in the painting and drawing of wildlife have formed a Society of Wildlife Artists, which will hold an inaugural exhibition in London at the Galleries of the Federation of British Artists, opening on 13th August. The Convenors of the Society are E. A. R. Ennion, Robert Gillmor, R. B. Talbot Kelly, Peter Scott, Keith Shackleton, and Maurice Wilson, with Maurice Bradshaw as secretary. Thirty other wildlife artists have accepted the invitation to become founder-members.

## **African Journey: Extracts from a Report**

**I**N the spring of 1963 a game conservation mission, sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund and headed by Mr. Philip K. Crowe, a former U.S. ambassador to Ceylon and South Africa, visited several critical areas in Africa and the Near East to present the case for conservation to the various governments "at the highest possible levels", and to report on the status of rare species and wildlife in general.

### **EGYPT**

The situation in Egypt, says Mr. Crowe, quoted in *African Wildlife News*, "could hardly be worse", with no game department, game laws unenforced, the desert fauna nearing extinction, and wildfowl unprotected and decreasing. Government officials showed some interest in the establishment of game reserves, but none at all in protecting wildfowl; because the migrating flocks pass over the country and do not breed "the feeling seems to be that it is not up to Egypt to protect another country's resources".