

The Fauna Preservation Society

APRIL, 1957

EDITORIAL NOTES

Oryx.—In November, 1953, a British Mammals section was started in *Oryx* at the suggestion of Mr. R. S. R. Fitter, a member of our Council. By a coincidence, there was founded at the same time The Mammal Society of the British Isles. That new society has, we are glad to say, prospered and now publishes its own very interesting Bulletin. There seems no longer a need for our Society to devote a special section of its journal to British mammals and readers will see that it has been discontinued.

This does not of course imply that we lack interest in British animals or that articles about them will no longer find a place in *Oryx*. Our journal will continue to welcome articles on British animals, as it has always done.

The Society is most grateful to Mr. Fitter for all his work in connection with the Section.

International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.—The I.U.C.N. is now recognized as the main international link in all matters concerned with nature conservation. Its work is steadily increasing, and at a far greater rate than the financial resources available. The minimum membership fee for individual societies is \$50 yearly, but up till now our society has been admitted to membership at the reduced fee of £3, by virtue of belonging to the British Committee for International Nature Conservation, a committee of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves. Our Council has now decided that we should increase our annual subscription to £20 and thus become a full member of the Union. Our relationship with the British Committee will of course remain unaltered.

The Serengeti.—Professor W. H. Pearsall has finished his ecological survey of the Serengeti, made on behalf of the Society.

His report may be had from the Society, price 5s. It will also be reprinted in the August *Oryx*.

It is hoped to arrange for both Professor Pearsall and Dr. F. F. Darling to give evidence at the meeting in June of the Tanganyika Government Serengeti Committee.

India.—It is very pleasing to read in *India News* that the Uttar Pradesh Government have re-named the Ram Ganga national park in Garhwal the Corbett National Park. This is in memory of Colonel Jim Corbett, who spent his life in serving the hill folk of Kumaon and working for the preservation of wild life in that entrancing country.

We welcome also the publication by the Indian Board for Wild Life of a booklet *Why Preserve Wild Life?*, written and illustrated by Mr. E. P. Gee. It puts very well the arguments for protecting the wild animals of India and answers many of the questions which might be raised on the value of preservation.

South Africa.—The above booklet offers answers to the question, *Why protect wild animals?* In *African Wild Life*, Colonel Rowland Jones gives valuable advice on “*How?*” In a short article on nature conservation in national parks he describes some of the inevitable effects of tourism—roads, traffic, camps and other disturbances, which from the animals’ point of view are spoliation, not development. Then he advises on how the worst effects of these may be mitigated.

Throughout runs the theme that the primary function of conservation concerns the flora and fauna. In any nature reserve visitor’s wishes must be secondary.

The Thylacine.—Probably the world’s rarest animal is the thylacine, or Tasmanian tiger. As none have been seen for many years, the Animal and Bird Protection Board of Tasmania has arranged for a small group of people to visit the wilder parts of the country in April, to try to obtain evidence of the animal’s survival. Dr. W. Bryden, Director of the Tasmanian Museum, Hobart, has kindly promised to inform us as soon as any definite information has been obtained.

The Tsetse Fly.—Experiments are being undertaken which may possibly result in a victory over the tsetse fly, which as a carrier of trypanosomiasis, greatly limits man’s use of nearly a third of Africa. These experiments follow successful work against the screw-worm fly in Curaçao. The male screw-worm flies are rendered sterile by gamma rays and released. Females mate only once and those that mate with sterile males produce sterile offspring. It is thought that female tsetses also mate

once only and if so, that radiation of a sufficient number of males might eventually destroy the population.

How is nature conservation to regard this? The tsetse is a menace to man's herds and its elimination must surely be beneficial. Yet, does not the same tsetse still protect vast areas of Africa from reckless exploitation of vegetation and destruction of wild life? Has man's knowledge of the best use of land in such a hard country progressed so far that the restrictive influence of the tsetse is nowhere still necessary?

We believe that mankind's true interest requires that much of Africa now in the tsetse's domain shall keep its present vegetation cover and its wild life population. Only if men can follow their true interest could the elimination of the tsetse be an unqualified blessing.

Pelicans and Fish. Predator and Prey.—In its Bulletin for December, 1956, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature refers us back to an article in the *National Geographic Magazine* for November, 1954. The article, called "Saving Man's Wildlife Heritage", is by John D. Baker, president of the Audubon Society, and is in general a review of that society's immense work for wild life preservation. One point only we will mention. When the society employed men to protect the pelicans and other fish-eating birds at Tampa Bay, Florida, fishermen feared that an increase of these birds would decrease the fish stock, already low. "But when the birds were restored to their former abundance, so were the fish. The aquatic plant life, the pasturage of the sea, was restored to its normal profusion and verdure by the guano of water birds. The plant life in turn provided food, shelter and shade for fish and other marine animals."

A similar course of events was reported by Professor Kosswig at the Nature Protection Conference, Beirut, 1954. The killing of the pelicans on Lake Marmara, Turkey, resulted in overpopulation of small carp with delayed development and failure to reach full size.

Yet it is often still assumed that the destruction of the predator will automatically be followed by an increase in its prey—to man's advantage.

The Secretary—A Tour.—The Council have arranged for the Secretary to visit Africa from the middle of June to the end of October, 1957. The Secretary will visit Nyasaland, including the Nyika plateau, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika and, it is hoped, the Belgian Congo. His object will be to meet local wild life protection societies and

offer the increased co-operation of our society. He will also represent our society at the meeting of the International Committee for Bird Preservation in Bulawayo and at the Pan-African Ornithological Congress at Livingstone.

A Correction.—The Editor regrets that the List of Contributors, published with *Oryx* Vol. III No. 6, omitted the following:

DE ALCANTARA, DR. MARIO.

The National Park of Gorongoza, 298–302.



[Photo : A. W. F. Banfield, Canadian Wildlife Service

CARIBOU HERD ON SUMMER RANGE AT BATHURST INLET, NORTH WEST TERRITORIES