



# Briefly . . .

## INTERNATIONAL

### The World's Timber in 1994

FAO predicts that in 1994, if the present pattern and rate of world wood consumption continues, the demand for timber in the developed countries will have increased by 75 per cent, and by 40 per cent in the developing ones; demand for plywood, fibreboard, particleboard and paper will double. Most of the world's forests will be in North America and the Soviet Union, and the Third World will have a shortage of 650 million cubic metres.

### Paper Mountain

The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) reports that the UN offices in Geneva use 977 tons of paper each year, representing the annual growth of 2442.5 acres of virgin forest, and that, since Swiss authorities charge \$10,000 to collect 100 tons of waste paper, recycled paper costs only two per cent less than virgin paper.

### Clear-Felling Makes You Sick

When man destroys a tropical rain forest, he eliminates the larger forms of wildlife, but the smaller ones, from viruses to many insects, are more adaptable and do not necessarily decline. This means, according to researchers from the UK's Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, that the settler and his crops replace the original animals and plants as disease reservoirs, and people living on cleared land are more often ill than those who live in uncleared forest.

### Fish Farming

China leads the world in fish farming, producing 2.2 million tonnes a year. Second is India, with 490,000 tonnes, followed by the USSR, 210,000, and Japan, 147,000. Britain produces only 2500 tonnes.

### WWF Grants

Since its first grant in 1962, WWF has given more than \$30 million to 1847 projects in over 130 countries.

### New CITES Members

Monaco and France have become the 45th and 46th parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

### Seychelles Joins IUCN

The Seychelles Republic has joined IUCN, becoming the 49th member state.

### Otter Award

WWF has established a Gavin Maxwell Award to be presented annually to the individual or organisation considered to have done most to further otter conservation. The value is about £700.

### Snow Leopard Studbook

The snow leopard *Panthera uncia* studbook records 79 males and 88 females in captivity in 49 zoos.

## BRITISH ISLES

### Cold Summer Hits Bats

Britain's 15 species of bats were severely affected by the unusually cold June, resulting in a shortage of insect life. Mothers abandoned young to look for food, and many bats were going into hibernation. It is not known whether the country's rarest bat, the greater horseshoe, still has a viable population.

### Ribble Estuary Saved

The UK Government will provide funds for the NCC to buy 5500 acres of Lancashire's Ribble estuary, a Grade 1 Site of Special Scientific Interest and the second most important estuary in Britain—and fifth in Europe—for waterfowl, including pink-footed geese, pintail, terns, teal, wigeon and knot.

### Military Ban on Sperm Oil

The Ministry of Defence has stopped the use of sperm whale oil and its derivatives as a lubricant, and is taking steps to ensure that no leather items whose production involved sperm oil are used by any of the military services.

### Oil Gone, Dispersant Lingers On

The Institute of Cornish Studies reports that, seven years after the Torrey Canyon oil spill, toxic detergent could still be detected along the Cornish coast, although the oil itself had long since disappeared.

### Strip Mining in Forest of Dean

Northern Strip Mining Ltd has been given permission by the Forestry Commission to excavate 130 acres of Woorgreens Gale in the Forest of Dean. Under the terms of the lease the company must work only on weekdays and Saturday mornings, prevent excessive noise,

keep down the dust, not use explosives, control drainage and fill in and contour the land as they go along. When in two years the site is finally refilled, it will be planted with broad-leaved and coniferous trees and have a 15-acre wetland area.

### Bats Keep Mansion

An anonymous businessman who paid £25,000 for a derelict 25-bedroom mansion that was discovered to house a colony of the rare greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrum-equinum* has decided not to improve the property. Woodchester Park, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, will be in effect a private reserve for one of Britain's most highly endangered animals.

## EUROPE

### Europe's Waste

Every year the European Community disposes of 1700 million tonnes of waste: 950m. agricultural, 300m. from extractive industries, 200m. sewage sludge, 115m. industrial, and 90m. household. West Germany leads the EEC in per capita waste with 317kg a year; Italy, at 260kg, produces the least. The world's most prolific waste-producing country is the US, with 630kg per head per year.

### France Bans Sealskin Imports

France has banned the import of skins of baby Greenland seals *Pagophilus groenlandicus*, and the French Fur Association has declared a moratorium on the use of sealskin.

### PCBs and Seals

Common seals *Phoca vitulina* in the Dutch Waddensea have declined from 1500 in 1968 to 250 in 1977 because of pollution from the Rhine. High concentrations of PCBs, a known cause of reproductive failure in seals, have been found in the livers, brains and blubber of dead seals washed ashore.

### Raptor Killing Continues

The province of Lower Austria still allows the killing of birds of prey, even though full legal protection was given in 1976. In the hunting season of 1977-78, most Lower Austrian districts permitted the shooting of goshawks and buzzards, and one district virtually ordered that numbers of these birds be killed. Because hunters cannot always distinguish between species, all kinds of raptors are shot. Ten of Austria's original 24 breeding birds of prey are

now extinct, and only seven are still relatively numerous.

### Amoco Cadiz Victims

2700 seabirds of 34 species were brought to the Brest rehabilitation centre in the first fortnight after the wreck of the Amoco Cadiz. Worst hit were puffins, with 681 casualties, followed by razorbills (513), shags (417) and guillemots (379).

### Beavers in Austria

Beavers *Castor fiber* have been reintroduced to the Salzach River in Upper Austria.

### Where White-tailed Eagles Are

Norway has the world's largest known population of white-tailed eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla*, with 450 pairs, followed by Greenland with 100; East Germany, 90; Sweden, 60; Poland, 50; Finland, 35; Estonia, 10; and West Germany, 4-6. Numbers in the USSR outside Estonia are unknown, and in Denmark the bird is extinct. Highly sensitive to pollution, the species is faring worst in the Baltic states. (The East German population centres mainly around lakes.)

### Woodpigeon Fair Game

Despite its classification as vulnerable in WWF/Finland's Red List and after 12 years of total protection, the woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* has been declared a game species in Finland.

### Wolf Open Season

A special authorisation to hunt wolves in Finland between September and March is no longer required. This decision follows a slight influx of wolves from the USSR and consequent alarm among farmers.

### Mink Threatens Mink

One of the victims of the American mink *Mustela vison*, now found in the wild throughout northern Europe, is the European mink *M. lutreola*, which is smaller and occupies a smaller range of habitats. In Finland the European mink was heavily hunted until 1945, when it became legally protected, but was never able to recover because of the introduction of American mink farms and their inevitable escapes, which could outcompete the remaining natives. One suggestion for saving the European species is to begin farming it, in which case the natives would become largely domestic, and the exotics wild.



### Soviet Impact Statements

A new Soviet law requires that all large construction projects must first be analysed for their possible effect on the environment.

### Clean Air in Athens

Sulphur dioxide, one of the main air pollutants of Athens, was reduced by 50 per cent between November 1977 and January 1978, after the Greek Government, on the advice of WHO, banned the use of high-sulphur heating oil in the city.

### Italian Reverse List

A new Italian hunting law lists not prohibited targets but the 69 species a hunter is allowed to shoot. Hunting is permitted only three days a week, and taxes and licence fees have been increased.

### Why the Mussels Died

When, in 1971, a dredger in the Bay of La Spezia, Italy, accidentally discharged a load of liquid mud on to the bay's mussel beds, local fishermen blamed the dredging company for having suffocated the mussels by burying them. The company responded by blaming the city's sewage, as stored in the mud. According to a report in *Marine Pollution Bulletin* both sides were right: mud would have suffocated the mussels but when mussels were suspended on ropes in the turbid water there was high mortality due to concentrations of copper, which drastically reduces dissolved oxygen. Most deaths were near a power station.

### Aerosol Ban

Following the example of the US, Sweden has announced a ban, effective from June 30 1979, on the import and manufacture of aerosol sprays containing propellants capable of breaking down ozone.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Eureka

The Watchmakers' Union of America has welcomed a substitute for sperm whale oil, OLOA 910, invented by the Chevron Chemical Company. One advantage, they say, is that 'it doesn't leave you with the terrible odour of whale oil'. The use of sperm oil, like all whale products, is banned in the US. The Batelle Memorial Institute, however, has abandoned research on the jojoba bean, whose oil also has possibilities as a sperm oil substitute, because of industry's lack of interest.

### Canada Creates Whale Committee

The Canadian Department of Fisheries has set up a six-member Committee on Whales and Whaling to advise on conservation of whales and dolphins. Chairman is Dr Ian McTaggart Cowan, who is also Chairman of the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council.

### New American Mammal

A new mammal, the silver rice rat, has been discovered in the Florida Keys by Numi Spitzer of Massachusetts University and Dr James Lazell of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. A semi-aquatic relative of the muskrat, it has pale, chinchilla-coloured fur and a long, narrow head and snout. Florida has already declared it rare and endangered. Its name and description will appear in the *Journal of Mammalogy*.

### Turtle Ban

Trade in and intentional killing of green, olive ridley and loggerhead turtles have been banned under the US Endangered Species Act. The only exception allows limited subsistence taking in the Trust Territory of the Western Pacific. Dealers in turtle products—i.e. leather goods, food, cosmetics, curios and jewelry—have one year to clear present stocks.

### US Bans Ivory Imports

Imports to the US of African elephant products must be accompanied by a certificate showing that the elephant was killed legally in a CITES member country, under a ruling by the Fish and Wildlife Service that lists *Loxodonta africana* as threatened.

### Bobcat Trade Ban Rescinded

Because of protests from various States, the Endangered Species Scientific Authority has rescinded its 1977 ban on the export of bobcat *Lynx rufa* pelts (see *Oryx*, December 1977, p. 115), substituting a quota system that would allow 76,000 to be exported in 1977-78. Louisiana is challenging in the courts the Authority's power to regulate exports.

### Bald Eagle Ruling

The Fish and Wildlife Service has classified the bald eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* as endangered in 43 of the 48 coterminous United States and threatened in the other five—Washington, Oregon, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

**FPS tour to Zambia and southern Tanzania, August 14-September 3. See page 448.**

### **Bald Eagle, Osprey Increase**

Between 1976 and 1977 nests of bald eagles in national forests of States bordering the Great Lakes increased from 178 to 197, and the number of young rose from 187 to 212. Osprey nests increased from 117 to 159, and young from 120 to 147. Both species have been recovering slowly but steadily since 1965.

### **Incidental Dolphin Killing Declines**

Better fishing gear and a co-operative response by tuna fishermen to a tougher interpretation of the Marine Mammals Act have resulted in a sharp decline in the number of dolphins killed incidentally in US tuna nets. In 1977 only some 30,000—out of a quota of 62,429—were killed, as compared with earlier annual averages of 200,000–300,000.

### **Bird Dealers Convicted**

Two bird dealers, owners of Basically Birds of Alpine California, have been found guilty of receiving parrots smuggled from Mexico. One was sentenced to 18 months in prison, five years' probation and \$5000 in fines, and the other to five years' probation and \$2500 in fines. A recent outbreak of Newcastle disease, carried by parrots and infectious to poultry, has inspired a crackdown on the flourishing illicit trade.

### **Aerial Hunting**

Five Alaskans and a Texan have been charged and five airplanes seized under the federal Airborne Hunting Act, which prohibits shooting at animals—in these instances Alaskan brown bear—from the air. The maximum penalty is a \$5000 fine, a year in prison and forfeiture of any animal taken and of the aircraft. An Alaskan law also includes forfeiture of hunting equipment.

### **Jail for Shooting at Whooping Cranes**

A man who shot at (and missed) two whooping cranes near New Mexico's Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge was jailed for 30 days, put on three years' probation and banned for three years from hunting. The whooping cranes at the refuge are being reared by greater sandhill cranes in an attempt by wildlife officials to establish a second flock.

### **Whooping Crane Roosts Protected**

Six wetland areas used as stopping places by migrating whooping cranes have been declared critical habitats by the Fish and Wildlife Service: Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge,

Oklahoma; Quivira National Wildlife Refuge and Cheyenne Bottoms State Waterfowl Management Area, in Kansas; 55 miles of Platte river bottom in Nebraska; and Alamosa and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges in Colorado, both used by the transplanted flock that migrates between Idaho and New Mexico.

### **Falcon Smuggler Fined**

A man caught trying to smuggle four young peregrine falcons out of Alaska was fined \$5000 and placed on five years probation. The birds were returned to the wild.

### **Reprieve**

On the day before logging was to begin on 240 acres of ponderosa pine, nesting site of bald eagles in Klamath County, Oregon, the US Fish and Wildlife Service condemned the land and took possession, after failing to agree on a price with the owner, the Thomas Lumber Company. Condemnation, a last resort, is allowed under the Land and Water Conservation Act and the 1973 Endangered Species Act. The tract is now known as the Bear Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

### **Acid Rain Kills Lakes**

A survey of 200 lakes in the Adirondacks found that 80 are devoid of fish life, due, it is thought, to rain polluted by acid from factory emissions.

### **Park Grassland Cut for Hay**

In 1977 some 26 sq km of prairie grassland in the south-west corner of Saskatchewan's Prince Albert National Park were cut in a commercial haying operation, by permission of the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, despite the following considerations: the International Biological Programme had asked for a reserve to be established in that part of the park; the meadows are important calving grounds for elk and are the park's best raptor habitat; there are two wolf rendezvous sites nearby; and the grass harbours jackrabbit, Sprague's pipit, red-sided garter snake and three kinds of ground squirrel and provides food for wildlife throughout the park. The decision to allow haying was apparently not based on any extraordinary agricultural hardship, as the 1977 crops in the district were later reported as the best in years.

### **Spraying Helps Budworms**

In New Brunswick, which still allows spruce budworm spraying, budworm eggs have increased by 36 per cent, while Nova Scotia, which recently banned the practice, has reported a decline of more than 60 per cent.



### Kirtland's Warbler in Quebec

An adult male Kirtland's warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii* has been found, and captured, in Quebec—the first confirmed record there. In 1977 a sighting was reported in Ontario. The warbler, which migrates between the Bahamas and Michigan, has a known population of under 500.

### Drainpipe Isopod Endangered

The recently rediscovered Socorro isopod, whose entire population of 2500 inhabits 90 feet of drainpipe under an abandoned bath house in New Mexico, has been listed as endangered by the Fish and Wildlife Service. One of only two known freshwater isopods, it is thought to be a



relic of the sea which once covered the western US and in 1949 was feared extinct after Sedillo Spring, its original habitat, was capped. But some made their way to the drain pipe, and the species has survived there since.

### Sea Otters Thriving

Sea otters have established themselves off Vancouver Island on the Canadian west coast, where they were reintroduced in 1969 and 1972. They had last been seen there in 1929. Scientists for the Pacific Biological Station at Nanaimo have sighted several thriving colonies, including females with young.

### Captive Motherhood

For the first time on record, a captive-born orang-utan has not rejected her infant. At St Louis Zoo an 11½-year-old mother has protected and nursed her male infant in the

same way as wild-born oranges, even though she did not have the important childhood experience of seeing other mothers' behaviour.

### 'Mexican Duck' Not a Mexican Duck

The Mexican duck has been removed from the US endangered species list after the discovery that all 5000 of the US population are hybrids between Mexico's 50,000 pure Mexican ducks and the common mallard.

### Pesticide Company Fined

A pesticide manufacturing company in Middleport, New York, has been fined \$500 for violations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. During the 1975 spring migration, thousands of sandpipers, mourning doves, killdeer, Canada geese and various ducks were killed by toxins in FMC Corporation's 10-acre waste-water pond. The penalty was minimal because FMC had subsequently drained the pond and installed a surface water treatment plant at a cost of \$4m.

### Wolf Reclassified

The 1200 gray wolves *Canis lupus* in northern Minnesota, the only ones in the 'Lower 48' United States, have been reclassified from endangered to threatened. This means in practice that near livestock they may be shot by a State of Federal agent. However, they will still be fully protected in about half of their 10,000-sq-mile range.

### Wolf Trapping Backfires

In the hope of slowing the decline in the bison herd on the Slave River—from 1900 to 750 in three years—the Northwest Territories Superintendent of Fish and Wildlife reluctantly agreed to a wolf-trapping programme. In three months trappers delivered 25 wolf carcasses, but a bison census revealed another seven per cent drop. It was then discovered that the trappers themselves had been shooting bison.

### 'Sky Motorcycles' vs Eagles

Motorised hang-gliders are now so popular on the US West Coast that 10 companies are producing them as fast as they can to meet the demand. Steven Hollister, President of the Pacific Northwest Hang-gliding Association, a devotee of the old-fashioned (c. 1970) silent hang-gliding and also a bird watcher who has flown 'wingtip-to-wingtip' with bald eagles and hawks, claims that these 'sky motorcycles' are causing serious disturbance among soaring bird populations.

### Plants Seized

A report from New York in September disclosed that in recent weeks 85 shipments totalling nearly 8000 wild plants had been seized at US ports of entry, mainly Miami, New York, New Orleans and San Francisco airports, as being prohibited species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

### US Losing Soil

The Wildlife Management Institute estimates that an average of nine tons of soil per acre per year is being washed away from American cropland. Conservationists consider about five tons to be 'acceptable'. When data was last collected in 1975, the nation lost a total of 2800m. tons in that year.

### US Lists 13 Plants

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has listed 11 more plants as endangered and two as threatened under the 1973 Endangered Species Act. Five of the eleven are in California, as were all four on the first formal listing in August 1977.

### Trade in Flytraps

The carnivorous Venus's flytrap, endemic to the coastal plains of North and South Carolina, is threatened by collectors working for mail-order houses which specialise in bizarre plants. Whole communities of flytraps are uprooted with pitchforks and carried away in pick-up trucks. Since the plants can only survive under precise conditions of sunlight and humidity, most of them die soon after delivery.

## LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

### Go-Ahead for Darien Gap Highway

The US Court of Appeals has allowed the building of the missing 250-mile link in the Pan-American Highway, through the Darien Gap in Colombia and Panama, on condition that Colombia takes action to control hoof-and-mouth disease. There is now no legal bar to construction starting immediately.

### Galapagos Iguana Hatches

Scientists at the Charles Darwin Research Station on Santa Cruz in the Galapagos have announced the first captive hatching of a Galapagos land iguana *Conolophus subcristatus*, from an egg laid by one of the 26 survivors of a population that had largely been destroyed by feral dogs.

### Giant Lizard Endangered

The giant anole *Anolis roosevelti*, a rare lizard that inhabits only forest canopy on the slopes of Mt Resaca on the island of Culebra, 20 miles east of Puerto Rico and part of the Puerto Rican Commonwealth, has been listed as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, due to logging of the fan-leafed palm, the tallest tree in the forest.

### 2000 per cent More for Wildlife

El Salvador has raised the budget for its National Park and Wildlife Service by 2000 per cent, from \$100,000 in 1977 to \$2,080,000 in 1978. Some of this is being used for a survey of mangroves, turtles, seabirds and estuaries.

### Costa Rica Enlarges Park Service

Costa Rica, which in 1978 increased the National Park Service budget from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million, has created two new departments, one for planning and one for research, and 114 jobs.

### Plan for Dominica

The Caribbean Conservation Association and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund have started a project in Dominica to establish national parks, a conservation training programme, and village forest industries.

## AFRICA

### So Far So Good

Dr D. Western, Director of the Wildlife Planning Unit of Kenya's Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism, has reported a large reduction in poaching of Grevy's zebra since the bans on hunting and on the curio trade, and Christopher Bell writes that a tour of curio shops in Nairobi, Nyeri, Samburu and Naivasha revealed apparent compliance with the trade ban. Though some shops still had signs advertising game trophies, the only skin goods he saw were of cowhide.

### Ethiopian Park 'Natural Heritage'

IUCN has classified Ethiopia's Simien National Park as a 'World Natural Heritage' area.

### Sudanese Crocodile Crash

The rapid population increase in Darfur, Sudan's westernmost province, has led to a sharp decline in crocodiles *Crocodylus niloticus*. Killed for skins, meat and livestock protection and their eggs taken, they are now termed



One of the white (square-lipped) rhinos in Kenya's Meru National Park, photographed by Dr Ruth Gipps in 1975. The rhinos were so unafraid of humans that she was able to film a family of three at a distance of 15 yards. As recorded in *Briefly in the June Oryx*, three of these rhinos—the only two bulls and a pregnant female—have been killed by poachers.

'rare', according to a report by R. T. Wilson in the *East African Wildlife Journal*.

### **Breakwater Threatens Seabirds**

A breakwater connecting the mainland to Marcus Island in South Africa's Saldanha Bay has ended the isolation of the island's seabird colony, which includes rare black oyster-catchers, swift terns, four cormorant species and 10,000 of the endangered jackass penguins. Predatory mammals known to have got across include mongoose, genet, fox, porcupine, meerkat and domestic cats and dogs. The Southern African Ornithological Society wanted a predator-proof wall, but the breakwater's builders, the Fisheries Development Corporation, have so far done nothing about it.

### **Domestic Duikers**

A Nigerian experiment in domesticating Maxwell's duikers *Cephalophus maxwelli* has found them almost as easy to keep as goats, and as many as four exist comfortably in a 10-sq. m pen. Since duiker meat is better than goat and is already popular in West Africa, duikers would seem to be ideal for the small farmyard.

### **Swaziland Trust**

Swaziland has created a National Heritage Trust, authorised to control any development projects which might harm the environment.

### **Dipping vs Oxpecking**

Cattle in the Okavango area of South Africa are not dipped and yet suffer less from ticks than the Grootfontein area's cattle, which are. The difference is that Okavango has yellow-billed oxpeckers, which are absent in Grootfontein, where enough ticks survive on the dipped cattle to cause problems but not enough to support a

population of oxpeckers, one of which eats half its weight in ticks every day.

### **Anthrax in Namibia**

In recent years 54 per cent of the mortality of ten species in South West Africa's Etosha National Park was caused by anthrax. Affected animals are zebra, blue wildebeest, springbok, elephant, gemsbok, kudu, giraffe, eland and cheetah. It is the first time the disease has ever been recorded in gemsbok and eland.

### **Tanzania Allows Hunting**

Claiming overpopulation of wildlife in its reserves, Tanzania is to allow hunting safaris, reversing a ban imposed in 1973.

## **ASIA**

### **Giant Civet Re-discovered**

While conducting a WWF survey in Gunung Ambang Reserve in North Sulawesi, Dr John MacKinnon and Ir. Tarmuji sighted a giant civet *Macrogalidia musschenbroeki*, not seen since before World War II.

### **Oryx for Israel**

Four pairs of Arabian oryx, bought from Greater Los Angeles Zoo for \$170,000, have been introduced to Israel's Hai Bar Reserve for biblical animals. These animals are not part of the World Herd. Already one calf has been born. Purchase and transport were paid for by the Hai Bar Society of Israel and the Holy Land Conservation Fund of the US.

### **Thai Teak Ban**

After satellite photographs revealed a 35 per cent decline in Thailand's forests since the late

1950s, the Government banned the export of teak and imposed the death penalty for illegal logging. Burma, the only other country with teak of comparable quality, exports little but has recently signed an agreement with the Japan International Cooperation Agency for a \$4.5 million logging project in Chaungtha Forest Reserve, Arakan Yoma.

#### **UAE Hunting Ban**

The United Arab Emirates has banned the hunting of all 'rabbits, hares, woodpigeons and partridges'; in Abu Dhabi, the largest Emirate, virtually all hunting has been prohibited.

#### **Oman Protects Green Turtles**

Oman has banned the killing of green turtles on Masirah Island, as well as trawling near the beach where they nest. Both green and logger-head turtles nest on the island, but only the former seem to be declining. Loggerheads, which are not eaten by the local populace, now number more than 30,000, and moderate egg collecting does not appear to affect their numbers.

#### **Gulf Anti-Pollution Treaties**

Two treaties aimed at preventing marine oil pollution and an action plan for environmentally sound development have been signed by the eight Persian Gulf states—Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

#### **Middle East Ornithological Society**

The Ornithological Society of the Middle East was formed in April 1978 to collect, collate and publish ornithological data and encourage an interest in and conservation of the birds of the whole Middle East. It supersedes the Ornithological Society of Turkey and will publish a journal, *The Sandgrouse*. Information from the Secretary, Mr D. Parr, OSME, 40 Leatherhead Road, Ashtead, Surrey.

#### **Rhesus Researchers Look to Bangladesh**

Since the Indian ban on export of rhesus monkeys, US researchers have been approaching Bangladesh, possibly the only country in South-east Asia where the species is in danger, due to widespread forest destruction.

#### **Game Wardens Battle Soldiers**

A report in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* claims that there have been scores of deaths in pitched battles between Siberian game wardens and Soviet soldiers using helicopters, automatic weapons and hand grenades to poach deer, wild

boar, tigers, bears and wild sheep. Animal protection agencies suspect that the poachers are organised by senior Party officials interested in the profits.

#### **New Sika Deer in China**

*Acta Zoologica Sinica* describes a new subspecies of sika deer, christened *Cervus nippon sichuanicus*, found in the Ruogergai district of Sichuan at altitudes between 2800 and 3100 metres.

#### **Spreading Cheer Pheasant**

The cheer pheasant *Catreus wallichi*, once found across the southern slopes of the western and central Himalayas but now confined as a result of forest destruction to parts of Nepal and a small area of Azad Kashmir, is being reared in captivity in Pakistan for eventual re-introduction to the Margala Hills reserve. Eggs laid in Britain at the Game Conservancy are flown to a WWF-Pakistan/World Pheasant Association breeding centre in the Bansra Gali Murree Hills for hatching, and poult taken to the reserve.

#### **Smuggling by Post**

After tightening controls at Colombo's harbour and airport, Sri Lanka Customs officials discovered that tourists had begun to smuggle proscribed wildlife products through the parcel post.

#### **Disappearing Forests**

Since 1952 India's forests have declined from 33.3 per cent of the country's surface to 22.7 per cent, and Sri Lanka's from 40 per cent to 20 per cent.

#### **Green Wall of China**

China is planting 230,000ha of forest around the Maowsu Desert to prevent it from spreading.

#### **Musk Deer in South Korea**

A Musk Deer Preservation Council has been formed under the auspices of the Korean Wildlife Preservation Association, at a meeting in Kure City, Cholla Namdo, attended by about 700 people. The deer had been believed extinct in Chiri Mountain but three sightings have been reported in recent years.

#### **Environment Ministry for Indonesia**

Indonesia has created a Ministry of Environment headed by Dr Emil Salim, former Minister of Communications. Its responsibilities include control of pollution and protection of wildlife.



### Wildlife on the Plantation

The increase in rubber and oil palm plantations in peninsular Malaysia has destroyed many forms of wildlife, but benefited others mainly because of an increase in rats. Rat-eating snakes, including cobras *Naja naja*, are numerous and sometimes even imported by plantation owners; barn owls *Tyto alba*, first recorded in 1969, are now common, and pangolin *Manis javanica*, mousedeer *Tragulid* spp. and jungle fowl *Gallus gallus* have also adapted to life in the monoculture. The danger to these animals comes when the rats get beyond the predators' control and owners begin to use poisons.

## ANTIPODES

### Hunting Experiment Fails

Red deer and chamois in New Zealand's Tararua Forest Park are again being hunted by Forest Service officials in helicopters after a year-long test of the ability of private hunters to keep these exotics under control. The sportsmen failed to achieve the 8-10 daily kill considered necessary to arrest a decline in native vegetation.

### Protection Removed

In the first revision since 1972 of Western Australia's protected animals list, the following species have been removed because they are more plentiful than previously thought: little red antichinus *Antechinus rosamondae*, white-tailed dunnart *Sminthopsis granulipes*, Troughton's dunnart *S. murina ooldea*, western mouse *Pseudomys occidentalis* and scaly-tailed possum *Wyluda squamicaudata*. Also removed are narrow-nosed planigale *Planigale tenuirostris*, because it does not inhabit Western Australia, and Kimberley planigale *P. subtilissima*, because of reclassification as Ingram's planigale *P. ingrami*, under which name it remains on the list. There were 24 additions, mainly birds and reptiles.

### Mercury in Pigs

Recent research in Victoria and Western Australia has found that a pig whose diet contains as little as one per cent whale meal can build up a higher mercury level than is allowed in fish sold for human consumption. Since many pigs are fed on much more than one per cent whale meal, Australian pork can contain five to ten times the limit for fish.

### Threats to Heathlands

Jamie Kirkpatrick, writing in *Australian Habitat*, lists the main causes of the steady disappearance of Australia's native heathlands as conversion to farmland; aerial spraying of fertiliser, which, carried to heathlands by the wind, enriches the soil and allows non-heath species to invade; fire control in fire-dependent areas; mining; and an invasion of cinnamon fungus.

### Spearfishing Ban

Australia has banned commercial spearfishing off most of the east coast of Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef.

## OCEANS

### Salmon Agreement

Japan has agreed not to fish for salmon east of 175°E in the North Pacific, under an amendment to the International Convention for the High Seas Fisheries of the North Pacific Ocean, to which Japan, Canada and the US are parties. This moves the limit of Japanese salmon fishing some 600 nautical miles west and will help conserve stocks which spawn in the rivers of the North American west coast.

### Pearl Harbor Lives Again

Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, one of 50 US bodies of water which were so severely polluted as to be considered biologically dead and are now restored though anti-pollution measures, has been opened to the public for fishing and swimming for the first time since World War II.

### Samoa's Crown of Thorns

Crown of thorns starfish have consumed about 70 per cent of the coral in the deeper water off Pago Pago, American Samoa, and fishing experts predict that eventually all the living coral around Samoa will be eaten. Thought to thrive in polluted waters, the starfish is a major pest in many parts of the South Pacific. It first appeared in Samoa in 1976.

### Hunting Ban Helps Rare Deer

The Bawean deer *Axis kuhli*, endemic to 200-sq-km Bawean Island in the Java Sea, now numbers between 200 and 400, thanks to enforcement of a hunting ban, although habitat encroachment by teak plantations continues. Of the 50 sq km of Bawean's original forest cover, only 20 sq km remain.

### Albatross Needs Protectors

Dr Lancelot Tickell, writing in *Animal Kingdom*, says there is an urgent need for a team of biologists to reside on and guard Toroshima Island, a barren volcanic rock in the Japanese Ryukyu chain and nesting site of the 150–200 remaining Steller's albatross *Diomedea albatrus*. Numbering in the hundreds of thousands a century ago, some five million of these and the black-footed albatross *D. nigripes* were destroyed between 1872 and 1889 to provide feather bedding in China and Japan. Though the bird is now officially protected, no one lives on Toroshima and nothing is being done about the feral cats and rats there. Nor is there any attempt to discourage fishermen from egg forays.

### New Petrel Colony

A colony of dark-rumped petrel *Pterodroma phaeopygia*, found only in Hawaii and the Galapagos, and in the former thought to be confined to Maui, has been discovered on the neighboring island of Lanai at an elevation of 2800 feet, out of reach of the feral pigs and cats that have wiped it out at lower altitudes.

## NEW PARKS AND RESERVES

The Banc d'Arguin National Park on the Atlantic coast of Mauritania was inaugurated by the President on June 9. A most important area for birds, it is also of major significance for the rare Mediterranean monk seal.

Over 2.6m. ha of Lacadona forest, southern Mexico's last remaining rain forest, have been declared a forest reserve, of which the Montes Azules (330,000ha) are set aside as a biosphere reserve.

The Portuguese Government has gazetted the coastal marshes at Rio Formosa and Ludo in the Algarve as a nature reserve, partly as a result of the interest expressed by the IUCN Survival Service Commission when it met there in February 1978.

Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, in Kerala, and Sariska in Rajasthan are to be added to India's nine existing tiger reserves under Project Tiger.

A nature reserve has been declared in 160,000ha of the catchment basin of Sulawesi's Dumoga Dam and irrigation scheme, habitat of anoa, babirusa and other endemic mammals.

North Korea has declared 250 sq km of high-altitude mixed pine and deciduous forest in North Hamgyong province as Mount Chilbosan Nature Reserve. The 40 mammal species there include tiger, wild boar and leopard.

The Moonzund Archipelago, in the Baltic off Estonia, a resting place for Brent geese migrating between Britain and northern USSR, has been declared a nature reserve.

Alberta has designated 7000ha of mixed prairie, including extensive ungrazed grassland around the Milk River Canyon, as an ecological reserve.

The Canadian Wildlife Service has bought Prince Edward Point on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, an important resting place for migratory birds, as a national wildlife area, thus ending a long-standing threat of possible tourist development.

Union Camp Corporation, a forestry company, has given 16,600 acres of Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp to the Nature Conservancy, a private conservation body, which transferred the land immediately to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It will be known as the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

Funds from the  $\frac{1}{8}$  of one per cent of State sales tax earmarked for conservation have enabled the Missouri Department of Conservation to annex a 957-acre marsh to the 287-acre Bradyville Wildlife Area in Stoddard County.

Ireland has established five new nature reserves: Lough Gill and Rossberg and Caragh Creeks, Coon Lough, Ventry Lough, Kilglass/Grange Lough and Mutton Island.

The NCC has brought 789 acres of Surrey heathland—parts of Thursley, Ockley and Rodborough Commons—and combined them as Thursley National Nature Reserve. This includes the most important bog in south-east England.

The 13,500-acre Benmore Estate in the Coigach area of Wester Ross, bought with funds from the Cadbury Trust, WWF and other sources on behalf of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Conservation, will be managed jointly by the SPNC and the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Wyre Forest, 239ha of native broad-leaved woodland on the county boundaries of Here-

Pending approval of the Inuit natives of the areas concerned, Canada will establish six new national parks, five of them above the Arctic Circle. Though definite boundaries will not be set until after the negotiations, it is likely that only one, the Pingos of Tuktoyaktuk, will comprise less than 1000 sq miles.

ford, Worcester and Salop, has been declared a National Nature Reserve.

Mid-Glamorgan County Council has declared Kenfig Dunes, a coastal sand dune system listed in the NCC's *Nature Conservation Review*, a Local Nature Reserve.

## PERSONALIA

Miss Phyllis Barclay-Smith CBE has retired as Secretary General of the International Council for Bird Preservation after 36 years' service, starting as Assistant Secretary.

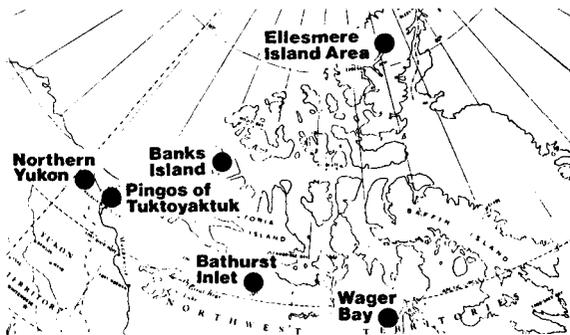
Professor S.W.L. Beaumont, head of Cambridge's Department of Applied Biology, has been appointed Chairman of the UK Natural Environment Research Council, succeeding Sir Peter Kent, who remains a Council member. Professor J.A. Allen and Dr J.C. Coulson join the Council, as Professor R.B. Clark and Professor G.M. Dunnet retire.

The Zoological Society of London has awarded the Stamford Raffles Award to Stanley Cramp, Chief Editor of *British Birds*, for services to ornithology.

E.D. Le Cren, Director of the Freshwater Biological Association, and I.D. Mercer, Dartmoor National Park Officer, have been appointed to the NCC's Advisory Committee for England. New appointments to the Advisory Committee for Scotland include W.J. Cairns, a landscape architect; Professor G.M. Dunnet, Regius Professor of Natural History and Head of the University of Aberdeen's Department of Zoology; and K.V. Runcie, Director of Extension Services of the East of Scotland College of Agriculture.

FPS Hon Secretary, Richard Fitter, has been appointed a Counsellor by the Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galapagos Islands.

Richard J. Herring has been appointed Director of Administration for IUCN. Formerly Assistant Secretary General of Planning and Administration, National Museums of Canada, he succeeds Alan Pike,



who has returned to the British Ministry of the Environment.

Dr Raymond J. O'Connor, formerly lecturer on ecology, behaviour and data analysis at the University of North Wales and Queen's University, Belfast, has been appointed Director of the British Trust for Ornithology.

Perez Olindo, former Director of Kenya's National Parks, has been appointed Executive Director of Conservation by the East African Wildlife Society, and Michael Sawyer Executive Director of Trading.

Adrian Phillips, former Head of Programme Co-ordination for UNEP, has been appointed Director of IUCN's Programme Division.

Russell Train, first Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality and subsequently Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, has been elected President of WWF/US. He succeeds Francis Kellogg, who had served since 1973.

Dr Christopher Tydeman has joined the British National Appeal of WWF as Staff Biologist, replacing Dr David Black.

## OBITUARIES

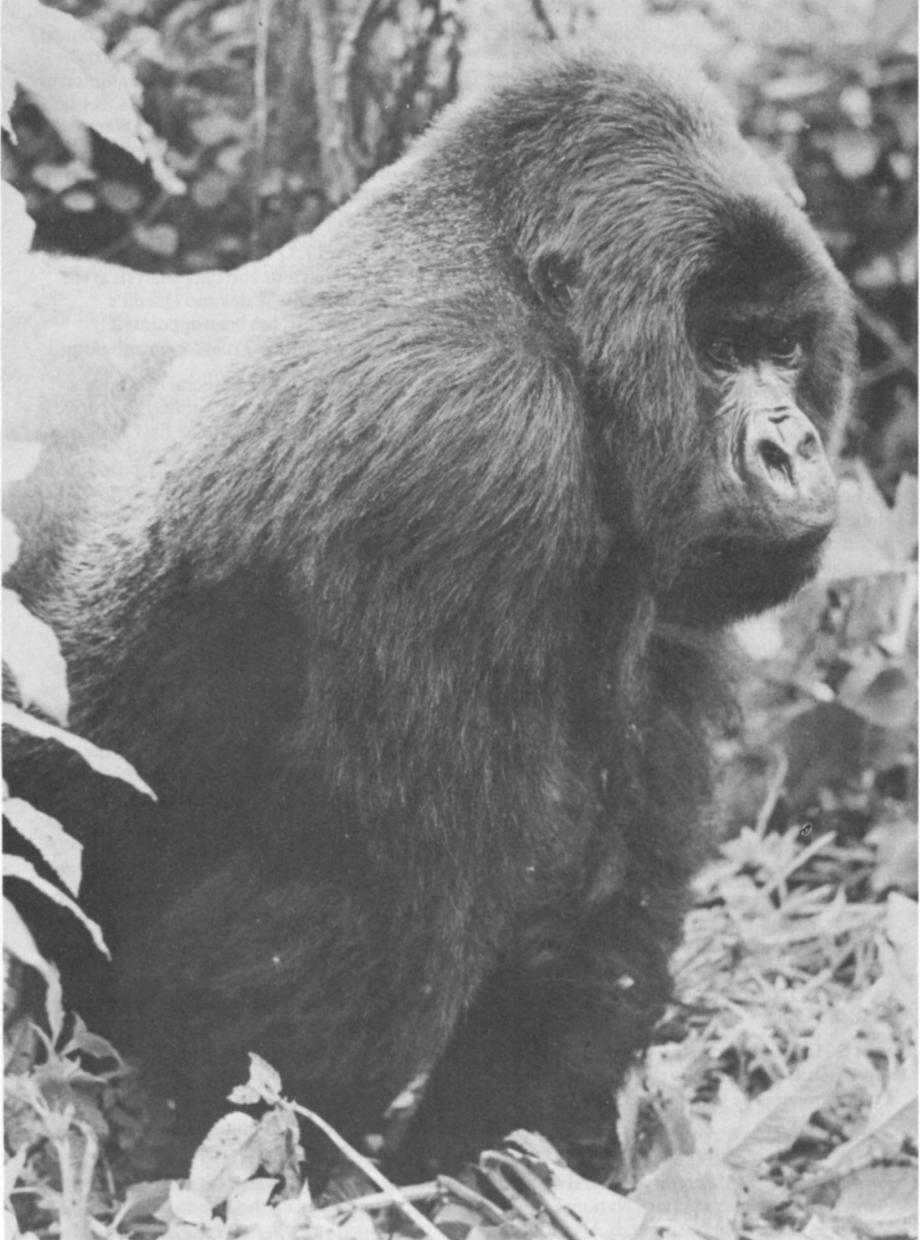
R.C.Homes, former President of the British Trust for Ornithology, died on June 2. He had a particular interest in wildfowl and their conservation.

Professor Douglas H. Pimlott, Chairman of the Survival Service Commission's Wolf Specialist Group, died on July 31.

Robert K. Poole, Director in Nairobi of African Operations of the US-based African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, has been killed in a road accident.

Captain H.R.H. Vaughan OBE RN ret'd, leading protector of the kite in Wales, died in June.

**Uncle Bert**



## **FPS Mountain Gorilla Fund**

The Society is appealing for

£50,000

to help save the mountain gorillas of Rwanda. Three gorillas have been killed by poachers this year, including 'Uncle Bert' pictured here.

The report overleaf describes what is happening to these magnificent animals and what needs to be done to protect them. The Fund has now received £8000, and money has been sent to both the Rwanda Government and Dr Dian Fossey. More is needed—

**PLEASE HELP**