

Briefly . . .

INTERNATIONAL

US, USSR and Washington Convention

Following the November 1976 Berne meeting of parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the US took final steps towards implementation of the treaty, which came into full effect in February 1977. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union has ratified, becoming the 33rd party.

New WWF Trustees

New members of the WWF Board of International Trustees, to serve until the end of 1979, are Dr Thor Heyerdahl of Norway, Mrs Robert A. Magowan of the USA and Professor Jacques Piccard of Switzerland.

WWF Members of Honour

The following have been elected Members of Honour by the Board of Trustees of the WWF: HRH Prince Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah of Nepal, Ernest G. Kleinwort of the UK, Laurance S. Rockefeller of the USA and Perez M. Olindo of Kenya.

UNEP's New Director

Dr Mostafa Kamal Tolba has been re-appointed to a four-year term as UNEP's Executive Director, a post he has held for the past two years while completing the unexpired term of Maurice Strong. Dr Tolba will also serve as Secretary-General of the Desertification Conference at Nairobi in September.

WWF Medal to Arjan Singh

The recipient of the 1976 WWF Gold Medal is Arjan Singh of India, who was cited particularly for his work towards the establishment of the Dudhwa Wildlife Sanctuary and its proclamation as a national park, and generally for 'his private initiative and pioneering work for the preservation of the rich wildlife heritage of India'.

Mediterranean Pollution Meeting

Mediterranean nations meeting at Split, Yugoslavia, have developed a 'Blue Plan',

which co-ordinates social and economic development with the need to protect the sea from land-based pollution. Half of the \$1.5 million costs of the programme will be covered by matching grants from France and UNEP and the other half by the remaining countries. Monaco will host another meeting near the end of 1977, when it is hoped that a draft protocol will be drawn up.

BRITISH ISLES

Endangered Species Act in Effect

The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, which received Royal Assent in November 1976, went into effect in February 1977. The Act represents the UK's implementation of the Washington Convention.

Lead Poisoning in the Wash

Every year 400-700 water birds in the Ouse Washes die of lead poisoning from swallowing shotgun pellets. Most commonly affected species are mallard, pintail, scaup and pochard, and to some extent shoveler, teal and gadwall. It is estimated that the use of lead-iron alloy shot would cut the death rate by 87-95 per cent. Hunters object to steel shot because it doesn't go as far and tends to wear out their gun barrels, but the alloy has neither of these disadvantages.

North Sea Oil Pollution

The first North Sea oil pollution was recorded on September 24/25 last year, when solid lumps of oil up to 20 cm. in diameter were found on the beach between Loth and Brora in Sutherland.

Arne Peninsula Setback

The Department of the Environment has reversed a decision of Dorset County Council by allowing the winning of ball clay from the Arne peninsula, which contains extensive unspoiled heathland and supports many rare plants and animals, including the Dartford warbler.

Death of an Observatory

Under the new lease of the Pembrokeshire island of Skokholm, granted to the West Wales Naturalists' Trust by the owner, H. Lloyd-Phillips, bird ringing and the associated observatory work has ceased on

the island. This brings to an end the forty-year run of one of the two oldest bird observatories in Britain – the other is the Isle of May in the Firth of Forth. The island continues to be open to naturalist holidaymakers, however, and weekly courses are being offered this year.

Rare Fish Evacuated

Because a new hydroelectric power station in North Wales will warm the normally icy waters of Llyn Peris, the rare *torgoch*, or Arctic char, will no longer be able to survive there. So fisheries officers from the Central Electricity Generating Board are moving the fish to other cold lakes.

What Hedgehogs Eat

A recent analysis of the stomach contents of 177 British hedgehogs indicated that caterpillars, earthworms and beetles formed 55 per cent of their diet, with vertebrates accounting for 15 per cent. Only three contained identifiable galliform feathers, 15 contained eggshells (not necessarily from domestic birds' eggs) and one had what may or may not have been the remains of a gamebird chick.

EUROPE

Fish Stocks Critical

Catches of herring and sole in the North Sea are declining, and cod, haddock and plaice stocks 'have fallen to crisis level', according to a report produced by EEC scientists as a background to recent proposals on fishing quotas. Conservation efforts have been termed a miserable failure.

Amphibians and Reptiles in Danger

European amphibians and reptiles are proportionately in greater danger of extinction than the continent's birds and mammals, according to an ad hoc group of the Council of Europe. While 10 per cent of birds and 12 per cent of mammals are endangered, the figures for amphibians and reptiles are 30 per cent and 45 per cent, representing 13 and 47 species respectively. Commerce is blamed for most of this depletion, followed by habitat destruction and pollution.

Getting to the Other Side

Roads which cut across migration routes of toads and frogs can in the early spring be littered with their crushed corpses. In Germany up to 10,000 a week may try to cross the main autobahn between Munich and the Alps, and in 1976 this highway had to be closed for a while to allow them to pass. This year the Environment Ministry and the Munich city council had buckets sunk in the ground beside the road, frogs and toads fell into the buckets, and ministry workers and volunteers carried the buckets to the other side and emptied them. Now tunnels are to be built. Luxembourg has announced similar plans, also citing the high rate of traffic deaths among hedgehogs.

Italy Protects Wolves

Thanks mainly to the efforts of the WWF's Italian National Appeal, the Government has banned wolf-hunting and all use of poisoned bait. There are 100–150 remaining Italian wolves *Canis lupus italicus*.

Finnish Peatlands Decline

Of Finland's original 10.4 million ha of peatlands, some 5.5 million have been ditched, and every year another 150,000 are drained. Protected peatland comprises only about 207,000 ha, and ditching of private land is subsidised by public funds. Forestry, the peat industry and water reservoirs provide the main threats. There is no large organisation in the country opposing this exploitation.

Norwegian Raptors

Surveys of golden eagle and white-tailed eagle in Norway show a population for each of 450 pairs, and gyrfalcons are down to 10–12 pairs.

Conservation in Portugal

Recent conservation Acts adopted by the Portuguese Government include creating a nature reserve of the Tejo estuary and a nature park of Serra da Estrela, establishing regulations for the already gazetted Serra da Arrabida, and giving legal definition to the concepts of nature reserve, nature park and national park.

German Environment Act

The West German Government has



Reprinted from *Marine Pollution Bulletin*

adopted the Federal Act on Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection, an outline measure which recognises the need for nature conservation, long-term landscape planning and the 'polluter-pays' principle.

Cancerous Fish

Some 25 per cent of sea pike *Maris lucius* caught along the south coast of Finland are infected with sarconatosis, a cancerous disease believed to be spread by a virus.

NORTH AMERICA

Carter Raises Conservation Funds

Among the revisions made by President Carter to the budget he inherited from Gerald Ford was an addition of \$150 million to conservation. He also added \$10 million to solar energy research, while cutting long-term research into the liquid metal fast breeder reactor by \$198 million. Carter had strong support from conservationists during his campaign.

Bills and Treaties

Among the final legislation of the 94th Congress were a bill providing some protection for the rare California tule elk and the ratification by the Senate of three treaties: the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals, the 1976 Protocol

Amending the Interim Convention on Conservation of the North Pacific Fur Seals, and the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears.

Marshland Proposed as 'Critical'

About 1000 square miles of southeast Florida marshland, the range of the 100 remaining Everglade kites, has been proposed as a critical habitat by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The only known food of the kite is the apple snail, which itself feeds on plants which depend on an adequate water level in the marshes. Development, flood control, grazing and drought have all contributed recently to a reduction of this level. Also proposed as critical is a 50-square-mile savanna near Florida's east central coast, the home of the dusky seaside sparrow.

Cactus Rustling

Arizona environmentalists are concerned about a growing trade in the saguaro cactus, currently estimated at a million dollars a year, which, despite plant protection laws and fines as high as \$1000, is denuding the desert. *Carnegiea gigantea* takes 150 years to grow to its maximum height of 11 metres – and 25 years to reach one metre and produce fruit. Since it functions as a tree for many desert animals, the loss of even a few plants can seriously damage the local ecology.

Lead Shot Ban Expanding

The ban on the use of lead shotgun pellets, introduced last year for the Atlantic Flyway in order to reduce lead poisoning in bottom-feeding water birds, will be extended this autumn to the Mississippi Flyway and will include areas of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee and Wisconsin. Almost all the Eastern states are now covered by the requirement that waterfowl hunters use only steel shot. Temporary exceptions for shotguns smaller than 12 gauge are still being made.

Alligator Revival

The 600,000 alligators that inhabit Florida and the coastal portions of Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas have been taken off the Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered list and are now only classed as threatened. These represent some 75 per cent of American alligators. The remainder, in Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina and the interior of Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas, are still endangered.

Peregrine Success

In 1976 Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology released 42 captive-bred peregrine falcons, bringing the number reintroduced since 1974 to 62. The Laboratory expects to produce more than 100 young this year, and 200 by 1978. In western states the young are put in nests of wild peregrines whose eggs have failed to hatch; in the East, where DDT wiped out the entire wild population, they are hand-raised in broods. The peregrine was probably worse-hit than any other bird by the insecticide.

Wood Duck Comeback

The wood duck *Aix sponsa*, which in the early twentieth century had been hunted to the verge of extinction, is now abundant enough to sustain an annual kill of nearly 750,000. Completely protected in the USA since 1916 (and in Canada since 1918), the first bag limits were allowed in 1941. In recent years it has been the second most frequently taken duck in the Mississippi and Atlantic flyways, but

habitat loss will prevent it increasing to its former numbers.

Kirtland's Warbler Increases

Following a programme to remove cowbirds from the northern Michigan nesting ground of Kirtland's warbler, singing males increased from 179 to 199 between 1975 and 1976, with the breeding population standing at 400. This is the second consecutive increase after a steady decline from the 1000 breeding pairs recorded in 1966.

Sea Otter Listed

California's southern sea otter, which is already protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, has now also been listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act's critical habitat provisions, thus restraining Federal agencies from doing anything that impinges on the otter's needs.

B.C. Animal Counts

Recent surveys of British Columbian animals show four mammal and 12 bird populations either definitely or possibly decreasing: caribou, mule deer, stone sheep, grizzly bear, redbear, canvasback, lesser scaup, common and Barrow's goldeneye, bufflehead, ruddy duck, surf scoter, white-winged scoter, sandhill crane, band-tailed pigeon and pheasant. Increasing populations include elk, white-tailed deer, wolf, cougar, wood duck, Canada goose, blue grouse, and ruffed and spruce grouse.

Canal That Won't Lie Down

The Cross-Florida Barge Canal, that perennial threat to the ecosystems of southern Florida, and the Everglades National Park in particular, never seems to die. Yet another study of it has resulted in an environmental impact statement that has been severely criticised by the National Parks and Conservation Association, which points out that the project puts at risk 25 national or state endangered or threatened species.

Pesticide Banned

Mirex, a DDT-like chemical used mainly against exotic fire ants in the South, has been banned by the Environmental Protection Agency after the discovery of



residues in human tissue and evidence that it is carcinogenic in laboratory animals. It is not true, incidentally, that the fire ant has no predator in the US; in fact the nine-banded armadillo is one.

Protection for Pests

As the result of a lawsuit filed by the Society for Animal Rights, the Fish and Wildlife Service must now enforce 'management' of the exotic pest, the European starling. This obliges them to prevent anyone from reducing the starling population by more than 10 per cent. Almost all native species are threatened by this foreign competitor, especially blackbirds, bluebirds and woodpeckers.

High Risk Animals

The Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a new list of exotic species which would threaten native wildlife if accidentally or purposely introduced to the US and is seeking legislation to provide controls on their importation. Introduced animals already established in North America include – among many others – the walking catfish, African clawed frog, mongoose, Japanese oyster drill, European starling, red-whiskered bulbul, monk parakeet and grass carp.

River Pollution Fine

Accused of 'appalling neglect' in allowing the pesticide Kepone to pollute Virginia's James River, Allied Chemical Corporation has been fined \$13 million – the largest fine of its kind ever imposed in the US. Most of the Kepone produced by the company is exported to Europe for use in eradication of such pests as the Colorado beetle.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Plight of the Iguana

Iguanas *Iguana iguana* and ctenosaurs *Ctenosaura acanthura*, staple sources of protein in Nicaragua, are declining sharply there because they are being eaten before they can reproduce. Even though the reptiles are valuable natural resources, no efforts have been made to control hunters, who catch and sell them alive in local markets, a trade that frequently involves considerable cruelty.

Puerto Rican Blackbird Listed

Puerto Rico's yellow-shouldered blackbird *Agelaius xanthomus* has been listed as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It is suffering a 21 per cent gap between adult mortality and annual production of adults, caused primarily by an invasion of exotic predators and diseases – rats, cowbirds and fowl pox – into the coastal mangroves that it inhabits.

Whales and Tourists

The Mexican Government is building an observation tower at Scammon's Lagoon, a breeding and calving area for the gray whale. It is hoped that tourists will use this instead of going out in small boats and disturbing the whales to the point that they will be forced to extend what is already an extremely long migration – from the Arctic to Mexico.

Ovoviviparous Frog

The Western Hemisphere's first known ovoviviparous frog has been found in south-west Puerto Rico. The discovery, named *Eleutherodactylus jasperi*, which has so far been found only in a single 10-mile radius south of Cayey, would have been given its own genus had it not appeared so closely related to other, egg-laying, frogs in the vicinity. In anurans, terrestrial birth is a major evolutionary step.

AFRICA

African Conservation Convention

The African Convention for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, which pledges its members to 'ensure conservation, utilisation and development of soil, water, flora and faunal resources', has now been signed by 40 members of the Organisation of African Unity and ratified by 15 of them: Central African Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, the Malagasy Republic, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Upper Volta and Zambia.

Poaching and Poisoned Arrows

In a letter to *Wildlife* magazine, a researcher working in Tsavo National Park, Kenya, tells of finding an elephant that 'was quite literally rotting on its feet. Tatters of skin were hanging from his underside; his body was disfigured and swollen with enormous abscesses; his left

foreleg was puffed and oozing; and in his chest was a gaping wound.' The animal, it seems, had been shot with arrows carrying poison that was stale, and thus, instead of dying quickly, it had been condemned to weeks of gradual disintegration. It was dispatched with a bullet. According to the writer, more than 100 elephants a month are killed by poachers in the Tsavo.

West African Coastal Pollution

West African states have been advised by UNEP to combat coastal pollution by drawing up a convention similar to the Barcelona Convention for the Mediterranean. A UNEP mission visited Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and the islands of Principe and Sao Tome – whose coastlines are suffering from pollution caused by new oil installations, bilgewater, untreated sewage and industrial wastes. There are no sewage treatment plants in West Africa, and it is common practice for factories to dump their wastes in the nearest lagoon.

La Vie Sportive en Chad

In the Abou Telfane game reserve, in the Guera Mountains in southern Chad, the last greater kudus were seen by French Army sources being destroyed by helicopter crews, who were shooting them down with rockets. The same methods were used to kill elephants. Government and national parks officials seemed unable or unwilling to control this slaughter.

Conservationists in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone, which is in the process of establishing its first game reserves, now has its first conservation society, the Wild Life Conservation Association. Even before it had been officially launched it had already made several educational radio broadcasts, printed leaflets explaining the benefits of conservation and met with hunters in an attempt to persuade them to be more discriminating in what they shoot. Except for a Government donation of certain facilities, all expenses have so far been met by the two founders, Balogun O'Neill and Daphne Tuboku-Metzger.

ASIA

Conserving Sturgeon

In an effort to reverse the decline of the sturgeon, the source of caviare, the Soviet Union is spending 700 million roubles on pollution control and breeding stations. Some 670 waste treatment plants and decontamination installations have already been built, and 21 breeding stations on rivers which flow into the Caspian Sea are releasing 100 million fingerlings every year. Ninety per cent of the world's sturgeon live in the Soviet Caspian and its rivers; the rest are in the Iranian portion of the sea, and advice and research results are being forwarded to Teheran.

Villagers Leave Sanctuary

Two villages in India's 400 sq km Sariska wildlife sanctuary have been evacuated, and the 11 remaining condemned. Wildlife in the reserve includes 20 tigers, 42 panthers, 2000 sambar, 1500 spotted deer, 200 chinkara, 1800 wild boars, 80 four-horned antelope, 50 hyaenas, 800 blue bulls and 11 caracal.

Ladakh Expedition

Six black-necked cranes were sighted by the first ornithological expedition in Ladakh (near the Tibetan border) in 50 years. Led by Dr Salim Ali, the team produced the first known photograph of a *Grus nigricollis* chick, least-known of the world's 15 species of crane. Other animals sighted included Tibetan wild ass, marmot, mouse hare, wolf and Tibetan hare.

Remotest Tibet

A recent Chinese expedition to the 300,000 sq km northern Tibetan plateau found Tibetan antelopes, argali sheep, Indian antelopes, wild asses, grey-tailed hares, Tibetan foxes, snow leopards, brown bears, yaks, bar-headed geese, black-collared cranes, mergansers, and – in streams 5200 metres above sea-level – the world's highest altitude fish, Tibetan loaches. The Chinese hope to develop industry, agriculture and animal husbandry in the area.

Japanese Turtle Shell Imports

Between 1971 and 1975 some 220,867 kg of hawksbill turtle shell were imported by Japan, according to the Japanese Tortoise



Shell Association Newsletter. Principal exporters were Panama, Cuba, Indonesia and Singapore, followed by the Philippines, Kenya, Tanzania, Nicaragua and the Cayman Islands. The hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* is listed in Appendix I of the international trade convention, to which Japan does not subscribe. Some of the exporting countries, however, had signed (but not ratified) by 1975, including the two largest exporters, Panama and the Philippines.

Bangladesh Leopard Ban

Bangladesh has banned killing, hunting and trapping of leopard and clouded leopard and the export of their skins.

Increased Prey for Gir Lions

The numbers of wild herbivores in the Gir Forest Sanctuary, home of the last surviving lions in India, are increasing well since a rubble wall, one metre high, was built around the lion sanctuary, reports the Deputy Conservator of Forests, J. D. Tolia. The wall, 200 km long, has effectively kept out domestic stock, the habitat has improved, and the lions have been able to feed on the deer. There are about 180 lions.

Rare Oak Protected

An area has been set aside in Turkey's Kasnak Forest, near the Kovada National Park, for the protection of a rare oak species *Quercus vulbanica*.

Ibex 'Abundant'

The ibex *Capra hircus* are 'abundant' in Pakistan's Kirthar National Park, which was created in 1974 largely to protect them. Numbers are put at between 1500 and 2000 by the Sind Deputy Conservator for Wildlife.

ANTIPODES

Glaziers Back Environmentalists

Glaziers working on a multi-million-dollar building in central Melbourne refused to install windows until a sister company of the owners agreed to stop their controversial sand-mining on Fraser Island. When the owners tried to sidestep the issue by selling the building, the glaziers then banned another of their properties, a computer complex, leaving

unglazed five small windows needed to balance the air-conditioning which protects the delicate equipment. At last the company agreed to restrict the sand-mining to existing leases, and the union, the Federated Furnishing Trades Society, pledged to lobby for Fraser Island to be made a national park. As it happened, a few months later the island became Australia's first National Estate, and mineral exports (other than from specified parts of the beach) were banned.

Australian Red Data Book

The Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service is publishing a series of loose-leaf papers, *Australian Endangered Species*, modelled on the IUCN *Red Data Book*. Each contains a picture of the endangered animal, a description and note on its ecology, a distribution map, habitat photograph, bibliographical references and its *Red Data Book* classification. Obtainable from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 636, Canberra City, A.C.T.



TIGER CAT

Plague of Toads

The virtual disappearance of the tiger cat *Dasyurops maculatus* and the eastern native cat *Dasyurus viverrinus* in Queensland is probably the fault of the toxic cane toad, a South American native introduced to Australia in 1935 to control sugar-cane beetles and now the most common vertebrate in eastern Queensland. A study by the curators of mammals and reptiles at the Queensland museum has revealed that the tiger cat can only be found in places where there are no cane toads, and the curator of mammals reported that his own pet tiger cat died half an hour after taking one bite of one of the amphibians.

Drowning Dugongs

Commercial net fishing has long been recognised a threat to dugongs, which get

entangled and drown, and now scientists in Queensland report that dugongs there have been falling victim to another kind of net – the ones set in shallow coastal waters to protect bathers from sharks. Though there is no proof that the security provided by these nets is more than psychological, with increasing tourist development demand for them is expected to increase.

Barrier Reef Park

Australia has set up a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to advise on the establishment of an underwater park and to control tourist development, mining and research along the 1250-mile reef.

But No Potoroos

A recent expedition from Western Australia's Wanneroo Wildlife Research Centre to the Recherche Archipelago failed to find any specimens or traces of two species of potoroo, or rat kangaroo, *Potorous gilberti* and *P. platyops*, both of which are generally considered to be extinct in the wild. What they did find, though, were specimens or traces of rock wallaby, dibbler and quokka – all very rare – as well as many birds, amphibians and reptiles never before recorded in the islands. And the quokkas were discovered to be carrying an extremely rare type of *Salmonella* (without ill effects).

Australian Park Survey

The Australian Wilderness and National Parks Committee has announced plans to inventory, on a state-to-state basis, all areas which fall under its jurisdiction. This will be reviewed quarterly to ensure that parks are not being destroyed or badly managed.

Flightless Teal Refound

The Campbell Island Flightless Teal *Anas aucklandica nesiotis*, which had not been positively recorded since 1944, was seen again in 1976 by the New Zealand Wildlife Service on Campbell Island, 600 km south of New Zealand. There had been an unconfirmed sighting in 1958.

OCEANS

Hawaiian Monk Seal Listed

Since August 1976 feral dogs have been eliminated on Kure Atoll, one of the

breeding grounds of the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. Other rookeries, however, have yet to be cleared of dogs, which along with people and sharks have all but exterminated the seal. The dogs tend to take the pups, the sharks the weaned pups and people the adults – though, since all Hawaiian monk seals exist within national park boundaries, the latter activity has officially ended.

Short-lived Ban

The ban on turtle killing introduced in the Seychelles last year was lifted before the beginning of this year.

A Triffid at Last?

In 1951 nearly 50,000 barrels of radioactive waste were dumped near the Farallon Islands, in the Pacific Ocean 30 miles west of San Francisco. Now an oceanographer has found growing at the dump site a new genus of giant sponge, four feet high and vase-shaped. There was 25 times more plutonium in the seabottom at the site than had been predicted by scientists.

Fledgling Mauritius Kestrels

Two of the four remaining wild pairs of Mauritius kestrels have fledged four young – three at a nest on Belomere Cliff and one at Tamarin. ICBP/WWF monitors have been guarding the nests against monkey predation.

End to South African Whaling

South Africa's Union Whaling Company, the largest land-based whaling operation in the world, has closed. Citing 'a drastic reduction in whaling quotas worldwide', the managing director said the industry had become uneconomic. The company killed mainly sperm whales, for which this year's quota has been reduced by 4000, to 500.

Whaling Nations

For the record, countries which still indulge in whaling are Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Denmark, Iceland, Japan, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Somalia, South Korea, Spain and the USSR.

NEW NATURE RESERVES

Bray's Pit, a wetland area in West Norfolk, has been bought by the Heacham Parish Council, which will work with the



Heacham and West Norfolk Natural History Society to improve the site.

To celebrate European Wetlands Year, the Vicarage Pit, a flooded gravel pit near Stanton Harcourt, was leased in 1976 to Oxfordshire County Council, who have made it an official local nature reserve and sublet it to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust to manage as a wildlife refuge.

The West Midlands Bird Club has leased the Belvide Reservoir, a canal feeder reservoir between Birmingham and Shrewsbury, from the British Waterways Board. An SSSI since 1951, it is an important centre for wildfowl.

Scotland's Red Moss, a raised bog near the Pentland Hills, has been presented to the Scottish Wildlife Trust by its eight major owners and more than 100 minor ones. The reserve covers 58 acres.

New Reserves in Western Australia include Boodalan Island (1.5 ha) in the Mandurah Estuary, and Low Rocks (4.03 ha), Great Sandy Island (25.8 ha) and Serrurier Island (351 ha), all in the Admiralty Gulf. Also gazetted is an area 2 km north of Burakin.

Star Swamp, a five-acre freshwater swamp in Stirling City, Western Australia, has been set aside as a metropolitan nature reserve, to be used for environmental education. Comprised mainly of stands of paperbark trees, the swamp attracts such waterfowl as grey teal, black duck, coot, western swamp hen and white-faced heron.

In New Zealand thirteen areas have been given to the Crown as nature reserves: They include a tract north of Dargaville, 29.4 ha; Aponga Scenic Reserve, Otai-karangi, 16.7 ha; the Waipipi Scenic Reserve north of Waiuku, 4.2 ha; the Oscar Reeve Scenic Reserve, Ohiwa Harbour, 6.3 ha; the Henri Loisel Scenic Reserve at Smiths Gorge, near Tolaga Bay, 41 ha; and the Glenburnie Bush Scenic Reserve at Pomahaka, south of Tapanui, 24 ha.

PERSONALIA

Following his resignation as Chairman of the WWF's British National Appeal, Sir Peter Scott has been appointed Vice-President and Founder Chairman of

WWF BNA; he remains International Vice-President. Succeeding him as BNA Chairman is Sir Arthur Norman. Michael Fitter, Grenville Lucas and Lord Melchett have accepted invitations to join the Board of Trustees.

Five new members have been appointed to the Natural Environment Research Council: H. Fish, Dr M. W. Holdgate, Professor E. Naylor, Professor J. Sutton and G. Williams. They replace D. J. Lyons, Sir Norman Rowntree, Sir David Serpell, Professor A. W. Skempton, Professor R. G. West and Professor A. Williams.

Eric Hosking, the well-known bird photographer, was awarded an OBE, and Arnold Thorne, former Director of the British National Appeal, an MBE in the 1977 New Year's Honours List.

J. N. R. Jeffers has been promoted from Deputy Director to Director of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, succeeding Dr M. W. Holdgate, now the Department of the Environment's Director-General of Research.

Professor Dr Ernst Lang, Director of the Basel Zoo, has been awarded the San Diego Zoological Society's 24th gold conservation medal. The Basel Zoo is well-known for the breeding of Indian rhinoceros, lowland gorilla, pygmy hippo, spectacled bear and flamingo.

Canadian ecologist George Matheson has been appointed Director of the Environment Liaison Centre in Nairobi.

OBITUARY

Ambassador Philip K. Crowe, USA, a member of the WWF Board of Trustees, died on October 18, 1976.

Drs Jan-Piet Doets, Chairman of the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, died on July 11, 1976, his 57th birthday. Drs Doets was also International Adviser to the Netherlands Minister for Culture, Recreation and Social Welfare and had once been head of the Nature Conservation Division of that department.

Dr V. G. L. van Someren, well-known ornithologist, Editor of the *Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society* and Curator of the Society's museum died on July 14, 1976. He was 89.