



# Briefly . . .

## INTERNATIONAL

### USSR Loses Whale Vote

In a postal vote the IWC has defeated a Soviet proposal to kill 1508 male sperm whales in the Southern Hemisphere. The USSR, Japan and Peru voted in favour, and South Korea, Spain and Iceland abstained. Sixteen members voted against, and Brazil did not vote.

### CITES Ratifications

58 countries have now ratified CITES, the latest being Bolivia, Italy, Guatemala, Tanzania and Liechtenstein.

### Hungary Joins Ramsar Convention

Hungary has become the 23rd member of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Ramsar Convention.

### Dolphin Watch

International Dolphin Watch was launched in November 1978 by Horace Dobbs to collect data and sightings for use in a Dolphin Survey Project. Information: IDW, Parklands, N. Ferriby, Humberside HU14 3ET.

### Tamarin Studbook Updated

The 1978 update of the International Studbook of the Golden Lion Tamarin *Leontopithecus rosalia*, compiled by D.G. Kleinman, National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20008, includes also the *L.r. chrysopygus* and *L.r. chrysomelas* animals at the Tijuca Park, Rio de Janeiro. *L.r. rosalia* increased from 137 to 153 animals, with a strong female bias.

### Pests Fight Back

FAO reports that 364 species of insects and mites have developed resistance to the pesticides being used against them.

## BRITISH ISLES

### Land Purchase Fund

WWF(UK) has launched a £2m. Land Purchase Fund. About 100 sq miles of British countryside are lost to development every year, and only eight per cent is protected.

### MAFF Grant to Drain Levels

Against the advice of the NCC, the Ministry of Agriculture has approved a grant to drain West

Sedgemoor, some 2500 acres of the Somerset Levels, 90 per cent of which have already been converted from wetland to farmland.

### Lead in the Mersey

Lead poisoning from an unknown source in the Mersey has killed hundreds of waders. By early November 1695 corpses had been found (1020 of them dunlins). Recent dredging operations may have stirred up old lead deposits, which were then concentrated by mud-living invertebrates.

### Aftermath of *Esso Bernicia*

146 of the 200-400 great northern divers (loons) that winter in Shetland, between 36 and 73 per cent, were killed by oil pollution following the *Esso Bernicia* disaster of December 1978. The 633 black guillemots (tysties) killed in the same incident represent 16 per cent of the Shetland breeding stock.

### Fewer Hares

In a paper delivered at the World Lagomorph Conference in Ontario, the British Field Sports Society has warned that British hares have been declining steadily for a number of years, partially, if not mainly, because of farmers spraying autumn stubble.

### Corncrake Decline

A 1978 RSPB survey has found that the corncrake *Crex crex* 'has all but ceased to breed in England and Wales and . . . may soon disappear from the Scottish mainland', mainly because of intensive farming techniques which deprive the bird of its cover. Its main strongholds are now Orkney and the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

### Polecats Spreading

The polecat, once widespread in Britain but reduced by gamekeepers to a small area in central Wales, has begun to expand its range again, according to a Mammal Society survey. Since the early 1960s polecats have recolonised all of Wales except for some of the southern industrial areas and have been seen in the English border counties.

### Spider Rediscovered

Two specimens of *Eresus niger*, a spider not seen in Britain since 1906, have been collected in Dorset by Rowland Snazell of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.

### Essex Emerald Moth Protected

The Essex emerald moth, thought to be extinct until 20 larvae were discovered in the autumn of 1978, has been added to Schedule 1 of the Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act; anyone who kills, injures or takes one as a specimen can be fined £100.

### Tree Census

The Forestry Commission is making a national census of all trees and woodlands in Great Britain, including isolated trees, hedgerows and clumps, and giving estimates of numbers of trees by species, age, size, life expectancy and timber volume, with a breakdown of the figures separating those in towns from those in the countryside.

### Nightingale Survey

A British Trust for Ornithology census of singing nightingales *Luscinia megarhynchos* in England between May 8 and June 6 1976 recorded 3230 birds. This was a decline since 1966, mainly in western and northern counties, probably due to weather fluctuations, including droughts in the Sahel, where nightingales winter. Another census will be taken in 1980.

## EUROPE

### Trophies Banned

Following the example of Australia and the Scandinavian countries, West Germany will no longer exempt hunting trophies, usually taken on African safaris, from CITES import controls.

### Circus Owners Fined

In France, a party to CITES, the owners of a circus have been fined 10,000 francs for importing eight chimpanzees from the Ivory Coast. The French Management Authority intends to return the animals to Africa.

### Camargue Headquarters Attacked

In March 1979 the headquarters of the Camargue nature reserve in southern France were burned down and the reserve's director severely wounded by gunfire. The attackers are believed to have been provoked by increased enforcement of anti-hunting laws.

### Chamois Census

A survey team composed of hunters, soldiers and police counted 2800 chamois in France's Pyrénées Occidentales National Park.

### New Demand for Leeches

A new serious threat to the medicinal leech *Hirudo medicinalis*, once common in Europe and the Middle East but reduced by 19th century medicine to a small area of central Europe, is the growing demand for its anticoagulant, hirudin, for research into human blood clotting. Since it takes thousands of leeches to produce a small amount of pure hirudin, some scientists believe that the leech should be declared an endangered species.

### Lease Running Out

The lease negotiated by WWF Austria to preserve Seewinkel-Lange Lacke, the third most important site for waterfowl in Europe after the Camargue and the Coto Doñana, will run out in a few years time, and there are fears that, without Government help, it may prove too expensive to renew.

### The Akrotiri Sewer

The Government of Cyprus is planning to turn Akrotiri Salt Lake, an internationally important site for wintering bird migrants, into a sewage depot.

### Pollution and Antlers

In the mid-1950s the antlers of roe deer in the Niepolomice Forest, in the Krakow region of southern Poland, became on average 32 per cent lighter and 29 per cent shorter, for no apparent reason. Now a paper in *Acta Theriologica* points out that the antler decrease coincided with the opening of the nearby Lenin Iron and Steel Works, which pours large amounts of sulphur dioxide and iron dust on to the forest. Comparisons of antler size and pollution in other forests seem to confirm a connection.

### Ladybirds as Pollution Meters

Russian scientists have discovered that air pollution can be measured by subtle changes in the colour of ladybirds' wings.

### Sterile Grass Carp

Hungarian biologists have crossed grass carp *Ctenopharyngodon idella* with bighead carp *Aristichthys nobilis* to produce a sterile hybrid with most of the characteristics, including a taste for certain waterweeds, of grass carp (see *Oryx*, November 1978, p290).

### No Prospecting in Coto Doñana

Permission to prospect for oil in the Coto Doñana National Park in south-west Spain has been refused.

### Elks Threaten Cars

In order to cut road accidents, about a third of which are caused by collisions with large game animals, the 1979 Swedish elk-hunting season was extended from 20 days to 40-60 days (depending on the province) so that hunters might bag at least 110,000, as opposed to the usual sustainable kill of about 90,000, and thus reduce the population of 300,000.

### Finnish Bears Up, Down

Hunting restrictions and immigration from the USSR caused the Finnish bear population to double between 1970 and 1978, from 150 to 300, but to decline again when large-scale hunting was resumed in the 1977-8 season and some 100 were killed.



Kirtland's warbler

### Vaccinating Foxes

Swiss authorities have been setting out bait for foxes containing rabies vaccine. Many scientists fear that this could spread rabies rather than halt it, and the practice is banned in Austria and France.

### Swiss Gull Revival

As a result of protection Switzerland's breeding population of black-headed gulls *Larus ridibundus* has risen from a few pairs in a single colony near Kaltbrunn to 3000 pairs in several colonies. The wintering population, which had been reduced to a few thousand, is now about 180,000.

### Siberian Tit Decline

In thirty years the Finnish population of Siberian tits *Parus cinctus* has declined by 90 per cent with the disappearance of the old coniferous forests in which they nest and has also shifted northwards, where breeding success is limited by the colder climate.

### Belted Kingfisher Shot

A taxidermist who shot the only belted kingfisher *Ceryle alcyon* (from North America) ever seen in Ireland was fined £20.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Missiles in the Wilderness

Some 22,000 sq miles of south-western wilderness, probably in the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada, could be affected by the MX missile system, already approved by President Carter and now in the planning stage, a \$33,000 million scheme involving up to 8000 miles of roads for hauling missiles around (to present a perpetually moving target) and a workforce of 25,000 to build the system and 10,000-15,000 to operate it. Environmental impact hearings will be held later this year.

### Leak Detector Fails

After two major leaks in the Trans-Alaska pipeline, one of which allowed 100,000 gallons of crude oil to spill on to the banks of the River Atigun, the Alaska Pipeline Office has admitted that its computerised leak detection system, designed to detect spills of more than 750 barrels a day, only works for spills of more than 3000 barrels. In another accident 40,000 gallons of jet fuel flowed into the Arctic Ocean after frost damaged the tanks' plastic bottoms.

### Kirtland's Warbler Census

A 1979 census found 210 Kirtland's warblers in Michigan and one in Wisconsin – 12 more than in 1978, when 196 were counted in Michigan,

two in Wisconsin and one in Ontario.

### Bald Eagle Survey

A bald eagle survey between January 13 and 27 1979, organised by the National Wildlife Federation with the aid of some 2600 birdwatchers in the 'Lower 48' states, recorded 9836 sightings. Washington state reported the largest number, 1126, followed by California, 810; Florida, 675; Oklahoma, 581; Oregon, 494; Texas, 435; Idaho, 392; Arkansas, 379; and Wyoming, 365. None were seen in New Hampshire, Vermont or West Virginia.

### Rarest Bird Gets Rarer

Between 1978 and 1979, the population of the dusky seaside sparrow *Ammospiza nigrescens*, probably the rarest bird in the US, dropped from 24 to 13, all males. A supposed female reported in June in the Titusville marshes, Florida, the bird's last habitat (the rest having been drained), has now been discounted as a male exhibiting female behaviour.

### Prairie Chickens Thrive

Greater prairie chickens *Tympanuchus cupido* have been re-established in Minnesota's Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area after an absence of almost 40 years. Thirty-four 12-week-old birds were released in September 1977, and by the spring of 1979 the population was described as 'booming'.

### Eagle Kills Whooping Crane

In 1979 a hunting party near Rangeley, Colorado, saw a young whooping crane, on migration with greater sandhill cranes between Idaho and New Mexico, struck and killed in flight by a golden eagle. At the Gray's Lake refuge in Idaho, eight of 16 hatchlings were lost, presumably to predators.

### Woodpecker Needs Tree Disease

The decline of the red-cockaded woodpecker *Dendrocopos borealis*, now numbering between 3000 and 10,000 in the central southern states, has been partially caused by the decline of a wood-rotting fungus, *Fomes pini*, or red-heart disease, which infects older pine trees and softens them sufficiently for the woodpecker to excavate nest holes. But forestry practice is to fell the pines at about 70 years old, some ten

years before the disease normally sets in. As a result, the woodpecker is confined mainly to national forests along highway verges, where trees are allowed to age.

#### **Brolga Hatched**

A brolga *Grus rubicunda*, or Australian crane, hatched at the US laboratories of the International Crane Foundation, is believed to be the first successful hatching of a brolga in US and possibly the first outside Australia.

#### **Adaptable Terns**

Deprived by development of many of the sandy beaches they need for nesting, least or little terns *Sterna albifrons* in Florida have begun establishing colonies on the local flat tar-and-gravel rooftops. An amateur ornithologist discovered 200 pairs on the roof of his town's Sears and Roebuck store.

#### **Steel Shot as Good as Lead**

Hunters have complained that steel shot, which is being promoted to prevent lead-poisoning of bottom-feeding waterfowl, does not perform as well as lead, but field tests by the Fish and Wildlife Service at Tule Lake, California, during the 1977 and 1978 hunting seasons, when 2000 hunters using both lead and steel shot fired 32,000 shells and bagged 4209 geese, showed no difference in range or accuracy between the two.

#### **Time Bombs for Bees**

A new way of packaging the pesticide methyl parathion – in pollen-sized capsules that gradually release the poison on to crops and thus protect farm workers from inhaling it – has proved even deadlier to bees than the old-fashioned spraying. A bee takes the capsule along with pollen back to the nest, where it can poison young bees and larvae many months later; a few capsules can wipe out a colony of 50,000, and some 20,000 colonies have so far been affected. Since the widespread use of pesticides began 35 years ago bees in the US have declined by 27 per cent. Fifty US crops depend on bees for pollination and represent \$2000 million in annual farm income.

#### **Two Crocodiles Listed**

The Fish and Wildlife Service has listed as endangered the saltwater crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* (of South-east and southern Asia, Papua New Guinea and Australia) and the Central and South American populations of the American crocodile *C. acutus*, whose US population has been protected since 1975. This stops US trade in their products. Three-quarters of all crocodile species are now covered by the US Endangered Species Act.

#### **Alligator Trade Ban Lifted**

Alligators are now so plentiful in parts of Louisiana that the US Fish and Wildlife Service is allowing their skins to be exported for the first time since 1969, when all alligator trade was banned. Only hides legally taken by permit-holders will be given official tags, and only these may enter trade. The 1979 hunt was expected to yield 10,000-15,000 hides, in addition to some 2000 killed as pests in Florida and 1000 from alligator farms.

#### **Trade Rules Relaxed for Zoos**

Captive breeding programmes in US zoos, wildlife parks and aquariums will benefit by a new regulation allowing certain endangered but captive-born species to be transferred between states. Formerly, under a part of the Endangered Species Act that was intended only to control trade in wild-born animals, such transfers involved so much red tape that some captive-breeding projects were being phased out.

#### **US Lists Zebras**

Grevy's and Hartmann's mountain zebras have been listed as threatened by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and unlicensed commercial import of them or their products banned.

#### **Migratory Bird Commission**

1979 was the 50th anniversary of the US Migratory Bird Commission, which has overseen the establishment of 10 million acres of waterfowl havens in 42 states.

#### **Minnesota Protects Wetlands**

Minnesota has abolished property tax on privately owned wetlands and will allow farmers a tax credit on every unreclaimed acre.

#### **Oklahoma Blocks Land Purchase**

Oklahoma has passed a law prohibiting the Federal Government from buying land in the State for national forests, wildlife refuges or parks without permission of the Legislature.

#### **Lake Empties into LA**

Los Angeles has drawn so much water from Lake Mono, 300 miles to the north, that the level has dropped 43 feet since 1941, leaving, in the words of Robert C. Boardman of *Audubon*, 'a 14,700-acre bathtub ring', with impassable muck near the shore and dried alkali dust farther out. Once the largest lake wholly within California, it is still a resting place for about a million eared grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* and a third of the world's Wilson's phalaropes *Phalaropus tricolor*, but no longer supports the largest known breeding colony of California gulls *Larus californicus*.



## LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

### Perennial Maize Discovered

A wild perennial maize *Zea diploperennis*, with the same number of chromosomes as domestic annual maize, has been discovered in a remote mountainous area of Mexico. It is hoped that by crossing the two a domestic perennial variety can be produced.

### Friendship Park

The presidents of Panama and Costa Rica have signed a declaration of intent to establish a 200,000-ha Parque de la Amistad (Friendship) on their mutual border, mainly to protect the watershed.



### Brazilian Primate Society

A primatological society, whose aims include providing a scientific basis for primate conservation, has been formed in Brazil: Dr Fernando Dias de Avila-Pires, Sociedade Brasileira de Primatologia, UNICAMP, Depto. Zoologia, CX Postal 1170, 13100 Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil.

### Environmental Education for Engineers

UNESCO and UNEP have organised environmental education programmes for engineering students at universities in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Brazil, Chile and Colombia.

### Dominican Parrot Programme

ICBP has begun work on the recovery of Dominica's two endangered parrots, imperial *Amazona imperialis* and red-necked *A. arausiaca*, after the hurricane that devastated the island in August 1979. In the worst-hit areas, including some important parrot habitat, 70 per cent of the trees were uprooted, broken or twisted, but the forests surrounding Morne Diablotin in the north, where there are also some parrots, are relatively intact.

### Army Spares Mangroves

A year-long campaign by the US Virgin Islands

Conservation Society has persuaded the Army to withdraw plans for a National Guard armoury on the islands' only surviving mangrove lagoon, near St Thomas.

## AFRICA

### Kenyan Elephant and Rhino Survey

Aerial surveys by the Kenya Rangeland Ecological Monitoring Unit (KREMU), a Canadian Aid programme, show 60,000 elephants and 1800 black rhinos in the country, compared with 167,000 and 11,500 respectively in 1973.

### Falling Vultures

Fledgling vultures, including the endangered Cape vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, in the Magaliesberg area of South Africa have been crashing, and dying, on their maiden flights because their wings have been weakened by a calcium deficiency resulting from lack of bones in their diet. All the predators in the area have been exterminated, and so there are no carcasses from which the vultures can get bones. The Vulture Study Group of Johannesburg is buying carcasses from farmers and putting them out for the vultures.

### Sociable Cheetahs

Cheetahs in parts of Namibia where other large predators have been eliminated have abandoned their usual solitary life-style and live and hunt in packs, going for larger prey and rearing larger litters.

### Wildebeest Shun Serengeti

'Large concentrations' of wildebeest were seen in Kenya's Masai Mara Game Reserve in November, when they should have completed their annual migration to the Serengeti. The herds returned north after finding the Serengeti too dry, and some were calving in the Mara, which had had some rain.

### Fire in Tsavo

Fires, believed to have been set by poachers, have burnt out the whole Ngulia valley in Kenya's Tsavo West National Park.

### New Way of Counting Elephants

Researchers at Malawi's Kasungu National Park conducted an elephant survey by counting droppings, which they say is more effective in small dense forests than the usual aerial counts.

### The Discriminating Oxpecker

Researchers in South Africa's Rhodes Matopos National Park have discovered that yellow-billed oxpeckers *Buphagus africanus* prefer to eat the ticks on certain animals but not others. Favourite is buffalo, followed by white rhino, eland, zebra, giraffe, sable, wildebeest, impala and warthog. Waterbuck, duiker, steenbok, reedbuck, tsessebe and klipspringer are never pecked.

### Flying by Gaslight

Over northern Algeria migrating white storks *Ciconia ciconia* have changed from day to night flying, due to the oil-field gas flares that are spread across the Algerian Sahara at about five-km intervals. The birds swoop to within 20 feet of the flames and then spiral upwards effortlessly on the warm air current until they are high enough to swoop towards the next flare. 8000 storks have been seen doing this in a single night.

## ASIA

### Kouprey Alive, Well, and Protected

The Principal Private Secretary to the King of Thailand has confirmed the existence of koupreys in the Dongrak mountain range and has issued a royal decree setting aside 79,000 acres in Si Sa Ket Province as a sanctuary for them.

### Reserves Change Hands

Two wildlife reserves were included in the areas handed over by Israel to Egypt under the 1979 peace treaty.

### Deer in Yang Highlands

Hunting has reduced the rusa deer *Cervus timorensis* in Java's Yang Highlands to 500-1000, according to a FAO/WWF survey. Once so numerous that in 1844 a Dutch naturalist reported seeing 50,000 in one day, the deer had declined to 100 by 1908. Subsequent protection and management brought the population back to nearly 10,000 before World War II, but there have been no attempts at management since then.

### New Pheasant Discovered

A new subspecies of Cabot's tragopan has been discovered in the Guangxi Zhuang-zu Autonomous Region of southern China. Three males and two females were collected by an expedition led by Professor Cheng Tso-hain, of the Peking Zoological Research Institute, who

published the bird's description in *Acta Zoologica Sinica* (September 1979) and named it *Tragopan caboti guangxiensis*.

### New Fish in Caspian

A new species of goby, *Bentophilus svetovidovi*, distinguished from other species by dorsal plates said to resemble a hairbrush, has been discovered in the Caspian Sea.

### Crossed Horse

Chromosome analysis of Iran's Caspian miniature horse, an ancient domestic breed, indicates that it may be a cross between the domestic horse *Equus caballus* and Przewalski's horse *E. przewalskii*.

### Tiger Bone Wine 'Pure'

The Taiwan Provincial Assembly has been assured by the Chiayi brewery that its tiger bone wine is from genuine tiger bones and not those of dogs and cats. The brewery produced documentation to prove that it imported annually 2000kg of tiger bones, representing about 200 tigers, from Indonesia and Thailand. The wine is thought to have medicinal value and sells for US\$1.25 a bottle.

### Ill Wind

Of the 270 40-oz. canisters of cyanide salt swept off a dockside into the bay when Typhoon Hope struck Hong Kong, 24 have yet to be recovered: 12 of those found were damaged and leaking.

### Japan Jails Smuggler

In Tokyo a smuggler with 199 bird-of-paradise skins from Indonesia was sentenced to 18 months in prison plus four years' probation. The skins were bought illegally but openly from souvenir shops in Jakarta.

### Customs Men Catch Cobra Thief

The world's only captive albino cobra, stolen from Sri Lanka's Dehiwelo Zoo, was found by officials at Katyunake airport in the baggage of a Swiss tourist along with seven other snakes.

### Snakeskins Seized

Calcutta Customs officials have seized 150,000 snakeskins, worth about £335,000, due to be exported illegally. The Calcutta Collector of Customs claimed that Customs officials were involved in a smuggling racket.

### Man as Scavenger

One reason for the decline of axis deer *Axis axis* in Mysore's Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary,

where direct hunting is illegal, is the local villagers' practice of scavenging the kills of predators. A. J. T. Johnsingh, who for three years has been studying Bandipur's dholes (hunting dogs) *Cuon alpinus*, reports that in his study area 45 per cent of dhole kills and all leopard kills were taken away by people.

## ANTIPODES

### Rules of the Antarctic

US citizens who kill or take any Antarctic mammal or bird or introduce an exotic plant or animal to Antarctica can be fined as much as \$10,000 or sentenced to a year in prison, under rules drawn up by the National Science Foundation, the agency in charge of US scientific activity in Antarctica. The NSF's powers derive from the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978, passed to fulfil US obligations under the Antarctic Treaty of 1959.

### Thylacines Reported

In the year preceding June 1978, 10 sightings, some plausible, of the supposedly extinct thylacine, or Tasmanian wolf, were reported to the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

### Containing the Mute Swan

Western Australia has taken action to prevent the introduced mute swan *Cygnus olor* from spreading in the wild, which it appears to be doing, competing with the native black swan. The policy is to allow no other colonies than the original ones to become established in the wild; feral birds should be sent to an approved zoo or humanely despatched; surplus birds must be pinioned.

### Kangaroo Boom

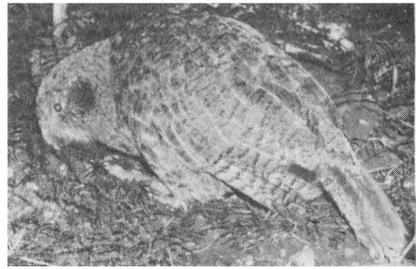
Because three years of heavy rain in the Queensland outback has caused the desert to bloom and kangaroos to reproduce at an unprecedented level, the State has raised the annual hunting quota from 800,000 to one million.

### States Block Bird Treaty

Western Australia and Queensland are blocking ratification of a migratory bird treaty between Australia and Japan. The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland suggests that 'state rivalries' are to blame.

### More Kakapos Found

Four male kakapos *Strigops habrotilus*, a ground-nesting lek species that may yet



P. Morrison

Kakapo

become extinct due to the introduction of deer to New Zealand, have been found in a remote part of Doubtful Sound, Fiordland, bringing the known world population to 15, all males.

### New Threat to Black Stilt

New Zealand's rarest mainland bird, the black stilt, has decreased by a quarter since 1973, to 20 breeding pairs and 10 young, all in an area of south Canterbury and north Otago, and they are now threatened by a hydroelectric project that would ruin their nesting grounds. Once widespread, the stilt was all but wiped out by feral cats and ferrets.

## OCEANS

### Outlaw Whalers Lose US Fishing Rights

Any nation caught flouting IWC regulations or supporting pirate whaling will automatically lose its fishing rights in US waters, under the terms of a new federal law, the Packwood-Magnuson Amendment.

### Sierra Sunk

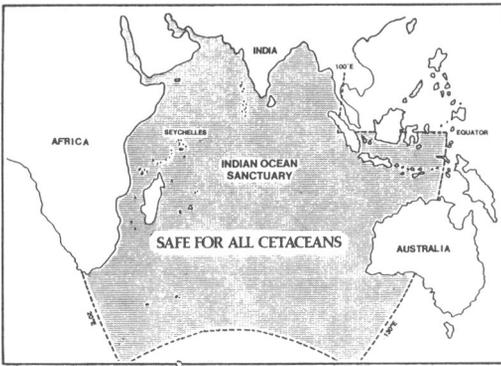
The 'pirate' whaling ship *Sierra*, which was rammed in July (see *Oryx*, November 1979, p127), was sunk in Lisbon harbour on February 6 by a bomb, thought to be a limpet mine.

### Whaling in the Faroes

Faroe Islanders killed 17 fin whales in 1978 and 1979, despite an IWC ban and a request from Denmark, which owns the islands, that the whaling cease. The meat, sold locally at about £1 per kg, contained up to five parts per million of mercury, with 200-300 ppm in the liver.

### Turtle Task Force

Philippines President Marcos has created a Green Turtle Task Force to carry out research, involve local people in turtle conservation, find alternative jobs for people who make a living exploiting the turtles, and work with international turtle conservation groups. A 1978 survey by the Forest Research Institute found that in the Philippines the green turtle had lost all its prime beach nesting sites, except on Turtle Island and possibly Lubang Island off Mindoro Occidental.



The whale sanctuary proposed by the Seychelles Government and accepted at the 1979 IWC meeting  
*Connecticut Cetacean Society*

### Small Spill, Large Toll

As many as 20,000 seabirds, about 90 per cent of them Brünnich's guillemots or thick-billed murrelets *Uria lomvia*, died in a spill of light fuel oil covering only a few thousand square metres of sea off the Norwegian coast. The source of the oil remains unknown.

### Drop in the Ocean

When several thousand gallons of oil spilled by a tanker were washed ashore on Staten Island, New York, authorities did not bother to clean it up. A spokesman said, 'These beaches are already designated as unsafe for bathing'.

### Year of the Coast

1980 has been declared 'Year of the Coast' in the US to draw attention to the need to conserve coastal resources.

### Fur Seals in the Prince Edwards

A survey of two species of fur seals on Marion Island, one of South Africa's Prince Edward Islands, shows 200-300 *Arctocephalus gazella* and 7000 *A. tropicalis*, which has increased by 10.5 per cent since 1952 but, because the population had earlier been severely depleted by sealing, has still not reached its optimum level.

### Walrus Return to Kamchatka

After more than 50 years, Pacific walrus *Odobenus rosmarus divergens* have reappeared near the Kamchatka peninsula, following a Soviet ban on walrus hunting in both the open sea and the rookeries farther north. Some 1000 have been reported on Ostrov Verkhoturova, a small island 20km off the Kamchatka coast.

### Kagu Decline

The kagu *Rhynochetos jubatus*, a bird endemic to New Caledonia and the only representative of the family Rhinochetidae, has disappeared from several forests that it formerly inhabited and is declining generally, chiefly because of incidental killing by hunters pursuing other

animals, according to a report by David Jeggo of the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust.

### Judge Rules Against Goats

Goats on Hawaii's Mauna Kea volcano are destroying the last habitat of the endangered palila *Loxioides bailleui*, and a federal district judge has ordered their removal. The Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society had sued the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources for maintaining the goats as game for hunters.

### Speargun Ban

Sri Lanka has banned the import of spearguns and announced controls on live tropical fish exports.

### NEW NATIONAL PARKS AND RESERVES

The USSR has declared a 2000-mile stretch of its north coast from the Barents Sea to the mouth of the Lena river – encompassing the vast Taymyr peninsula – a State Reserve, for wildlife preservation, research under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme, and studies of the possible environmental impact of reversing the flow of some northern rivers, including the Lena.

Some 14,000ha of mountain forests on the volcanoes Gunung Gede and Gunung Pangrango in western Java have been declared a nature reserve, and earmarked as the core of a new national park, which will also include Cibodas Nature Reserve (1040ha), Cimungkat Nature Reserve (56ha) and part of the Situ Gunung Forest Recreation Area (120ha).

Sabah has declared two new national parks: Pulau Tigma, a 16,000-ha island, and the Klias peninsula, 35,000ha of rain forest and mangroves and an important habitat of the proboscis monkey. Sabah now has five national parks.

Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park has been enlarged from 544 to 932 sq km, aided by a DM124,210 grant from Frankfurt Zoo.

The South African Department of Forestry has set aside 24,570ha in the Cape Mountains as the Hottentot-Holland Nature Reserve, an area with 37 threatened plants and eight Red Data Book vertebrates.

St Croix Island, home of 30,000 of the endangered jackass penguin, and a 50-km stretch of the Namaqualand coast have been declared marine reserves by South Africa.



Sweden has declared the 1600-sq-km catchment area of Gullmarsfjorden, a fjord on the country's west coast, a marine reserve, to be protected from pollution.

The Italian Minister of Merchant Marine has declared a protection area for Mediterranean monk seals in the waters around Montecristo Island, itself a 1039-ha nature reserve established in 1971.

The Bermuda Audubon Society has bought 2.5 acres on St George's Island at Stokes Point for a nature reserve, including reclaimed marshland that can be restored as a waterfowl habitat.

The Francis Beidler Forest, a National Audubon Society wildlife sanctuary in South Carolina's Four Holes Swamp, has been declared a National Natural Landmark because it contains the world's largest remaining virgin stand of bald cypress trees, some of which are 700 years old.

New South Wales has declared 502,000ha in the Colo-Hunter region as the Wolemi National Park.

Kenya has gazetted a one-mile-wide, 3400-ha strip along the crest of the Nandi Hills as a nature reserve.

The Nature Conservancy Council and Hampshire County Council have bought 600 acres of Hampshire's Martin Down, an area of chalk downland, heath and scrub.

The Society for the Promotion of Nature Conservation (SPNC) has bought 105 acres of limestone pavement on Southerscale Scar in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Lily-of-the-valley, bloody cranesbill, angular Solomon's seal and dark red helleborine are among its uncommon plants.

WWF has awarded grants to several British organisations to buy nature reserves: £2250 to the RSPB for a part of Scotland's Loch of Strathbeg, wintering grounds for mallard, wigeon, pink-footed geese and whooper swans, and £7000 for a wetland area at Langstone Harbour, Hampshire; £5250 to the Gloucestershire Trust for two gravel pits in the Cotswold Water Park; £7500 to the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust for Upton Broad, one of only four Norfolk broads whose underwater plant community has not succumbed to the area's pollution; £3000 to the Cumbria Naturalists' Trust for part of Hutton Roof Crag, a limestone pavement; £1375 and £675 to the Berkshire,

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust for Stepping Hill Field, chalk grassland at Chinnor and an old sand and stone quarry near Cothill; and £2500 to the Woodland Trust for Aversley Wood, whose vegetation includes wild service and wayfaring trees.

A grant from the Hambland Foundation has enabled the Otter Trust to buy 47 acres of Swangey Fen, near Attleborough, Norfolk. The River Thet, where otters are known to occur, forms the fen's southern boundary.

Over 12 miles of Yorkshire coast, including Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs, have been designated as Heritage Coast by the Countryside Commission, making them eligible for grant aid for conservation work.

## PERSONALIA

Dr Albert Baez, an associate of the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley, is the new chairman of IUCN's Education Commission.

Jack H. Berryman, former Chief of the Office of Extension Education of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, has been appointed Executive Vice-President of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, a voluntary organisation in the US, Canada and Mexico.

R.E. Boote, Director General of the NCC and an FPS Council member, has been awarded the 1980 van Tienhoven prize for service to nature conservation. The prize, awarded annually by Stiftung FVS, a Hamburg foundation dedicated to nature and monument conservation and European unity, commemorates Dr P.G. van Tienhoven, the eminent Dutch conservationist and FPS Vice-President who died in 1953.

Nick Carter, former Research and Information Officer of the London Field Office of ISPA, has been appointed Director of the People's Trust for Endangered Species.

WWF has given Honorary Membership to Dr Harold Coolidge, the American zoologist who is an FPS Vice-President and a well-known pioneer of scientific conservation; Dutch geologist Dr Jan Westermann, founder of the Netherlands WWF and an expert on

Indonesian conservation; and artist David Shepherd, who has raised large sums for conservation through his wildlife paintings.

Lord Craigton, Vice-Chairman of FPS, and Ian Malcolmson, Hon. Treasurer, have retired as Trustees of WWF UK. Both have been elected Vice-Presidents.

Vivien Gledhill, former FPS Assistant Secretary, has been appointed Wildlife Conservation Assistant to the Chairman of WWF, Sir Peter Scott, replacing Jane Fenton, now General Administrator of the new Species Conservation Monitoring Unit (SCMU) in Cambridge.

Diane Griffin, natural areas coordinator of the Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources, has been elected president of the Canadian Nature Federation.

Dr Sidney Holt, British marine biologist and a leading whale scientist, has been awarded WWF's Gold Medal. He organised the 1976 Bergen conference on marine mammals and is chairman of the SSC marine mammal specialist group.

Dr Cristoph Imboden, the Swiss ornithologist and Assistant Director of Research for the New Zealand Wildlife Service, has been appointed Executive Director of ICBP.

Thomas L. Kimball, Executive Vice-President of the National Wildlife Federation, has been awarded the 1979 Audubon Medal by the National Audubon Society.

Pong Leng-Ee has been appointed Director of the National Parks Division of the Thailand Royal Forestry Division. He is succeeded as Director of the Wildlife Conservation Division by Pirote Suvankorn.

Chandler S. Robbins, former Director of the Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and a co-author of *Birds of North America*, has been given Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology's 1979 Arthur A. Allen Award.

Gustave Speth has been appointed Chairman of the US Council on Environmental Quality, succeeding Charles Warren.

Dr Lee M. Talbot, FPS Vice-President and WWF Director of Conservation, has received

the Distinguished Service Award of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

The first Gavin Maxwell Otter Award was given to an Aberdeen University student, Hugh Watson, who has published a report on otters on the Shetland island of Fetlar. The award, worth £727, enabled him to spend a further season on the island.

## OBITUARIES

Roger Heim, a former President and Member of Honour of IUCN, died in September 1979. He was a former director of the French Laboratory of Mycology and Phytopathology, curator of Grenoble's Alpine Garden, and director of the Museum of Natural History.

Carl Leavitt Hubbs, 85, oceanographer and marine conservationist, died on June 30 1979. He was instrumental in securing protection of the Guadalupe fur seal, northern sea elephant, Devil's Hole pupfish and gray whale at Scammon's Lagoon in Baja California.

Dr Lev Shaposhnikov, a former chairman of the IUCN Commission on Education, died in August 1979.

Academician Viktor Borisovich Sochava, the eminent botanist who produced the first vegetation map of European Russia and the first geo-botanical map of the USSR, has died. He was founder and first director of the Institute of Geography of Siberia and the Far East.

Mrs Hilda Stevenson-Hamilton, South African conservationist and wildlife artist, has died. She was the widow of Col J. Stevenson-Hamilton, for 44 years warden of Kruger National Park and a founding member of FPS, twice Hon. Secretary, and a Vice-President until his death in 1958.

Dr Tsuyoshi Tamura, the moving force behind the establishment of the National Parks Association of Japan in 1927 and for many years director of the Japanese park system, has died, aged 89.

Mikel Nils Persson Utsi died on June 30 1979, aged 71. In 1952 he brought reindeer to Scotland and owned and managed the Aviemore herd, which now numbers 80-1000, all Scottish-born.