

No end to the whaling

As the International Whaling Commission's moratorium on commercial whaling enters its first full year, the whaling nations continue their defiance. Norway continues hunting the protected stock of minke whales in the north-east Atlantic; its target last season was 400 but, according to the whalers' official returns, even this reduced quota was impossible to find; after two weeks' extension to 4 August, the Norwegian whalers said they had taken 379 whales. The Norwegian authorities still deny that there is sufficient evidence to justify protecting the stock. In fact, the inability of the IWC's Scientific Committee to agree on an assessment of the stock is because Norway has withheld, and continues to withhold, data in violation of IWC rules. The Norwegian Government was certified under US law on 9 June 1986 for failing to respect the protection of the north-east Atlantic minke whales. Seeking to avoid a US embargo of its fish, Norway announced in July that it would halt commercial whaling as from 1988, but said it would continue whaling after that under the guise of scientific research. It also announced its intention of appointing an 'independent' scientific group to review the status of the minke whale stock, thus circumventing the IWC Scientific Committee. The group will consist of Professor Lars Walloe (Chairman) and Professor Arne Sem Johanssen of the University of Oslo, Dr David Anderson of Colorado State University, USA, Dr Roy Anderson of Imperial College, London, and Dr Raymond Beverton of Cardiff University, UK. Following Norway's announcement, the US refrained from applying sanctions to Norway, but certification will not be lifted until Norway withdraws its objections to the moratorium and to the Protection Stock classification of the north-east Atlantic minke whales.

'Scientific whaling' is the issue of most concern to conservationists now. In what has been described as an enormous loophole, the IWC allows any country to issue an unlimited number of scientific permits for taking whales for research, and to utilize the products. At its 38th meeting in Malmo on 9–13 June 1986, the IWC revealed how little it could do about controlling this situation. All that came out was a non-binding resolution agreed by consensus designed to discourage international

trade in the meat from scientific whaling, i.e. that it should be used primarily for local consumption, and to encourage restraint in sampling a protected stock.

Iceland halted scientific whaling temporarily on 28 July following criticisms from the US that the number of whales taken could not be used primarily for local consumption, which the US estimated to be 5–10 per cent of the expected yield. Iceland responded by announcing that it would use some of the surplus meat by feeding it to animals on fur farms, and resumed whaling in August. The US removed its threat of sanctions, but criticized Iceland's campaign to urge its residents to eat more whale meat to help 'save' the research whaling programme.

Japan continues whaling, although the US came close to stopping it. On 30 June 1986 the US Supreme Court overturned the decision of three lower courts by deciding, by five votes to four, that it was not mandatory for the Reagan Administration to apply the Fisheries Act amendment that would penalize Japan for 'diminishing the effectiveness of the IWC'. As a result, the US will not apply sanctions against Japan for continuing whaling, and in return Japan notified the IWC that it was withdrawing its objection to the moratorium in three stages, ending its Southern Ocean minke whaling on 1 May 1987, its coastal whaling of Bryde's and minke whales on 1 October 1987, and its coastal sperm whaling on 1 April 1988. Had the Supreme Court upheld the previous rulings, the Reagan Administration would have been ordered to cut Japan's fishing rights in US waters by half, and this would almost certainly have brought Japan's whaling to an abrupt halt. As it is, Japan has announced that after 1988 it will replace its commercial whaling with both 'scientific' and 'subsistence' whaling, claiming that its hunt for minke whales in the north-west Pacific is 'small-scale and traditional' and should be treated as 'aboriginal subsistence' whaling, which is exempt from the moratorium.

The USSR has announced that it will continue whaling in the Southern Ocean for only one more season, but it has not yet withdrawn its objection to the moratorium. South Korea, also involved in so-called 'scientific' whaling, does seem to have been influenced by the threat of US fisheries

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sanctions, and has said that it will halt its programme.

However, with Iceland keeping its whaling fleet operational, with Japan and Norway on the brink of taking up 'scientific' whaling within the moratorium, with the Philippines signalling an interest in doing the same, and with the IWC seemingly unable to do anything useful to prevent it, prospects for the future of the moratorium, and indeed for the IWC itself, look bleak. Some big changes are necessary before the ban on commercial whaling is reassessed in 1990. It would be a start if the US used its legal powers in a way that reinforces the spirit of the IWC, and if it were more actively supported by other 'conservationist' members of the IWC.

Restoring the UK fauna

Successful reintroductions of species that have become extinct in the wild are perhaps one of the most spectacular and rewarding of all conservation achievements. As readers of *Oryx* will know, FFPS played a leading role in the rescue of the last white, or Arabian, oryx in the wild, an initiative that made possible their eventual reintroduction into their homelands. Other British organizations have also promoted reintroduction schemes; several of the country's zoos are at this moment engaged in re-establishing Père David's deer in China and the scimitar-horned oryx in Tunisia.

Being strong advocates of such schemes in other countries, one wonders why British conservationists have not made more effort to restore their own impoverished fauna. In December 1984, the FFPS held, jointly with the Mammal Society, a symposium on reintroductions, and the Mammal Society has recently published three of the papers concerned with mammals, together with an introduction by Pat Morris (*Mammal Review*, 16 (2), 1986). Pat Morris discusses the reasons why so few British reintroductions have been attempted in the past and urges caution to avoid any negative effects arising from future attempts. He is of the opinion, however, that the British people are becoming more conscious of their wildlife heritage and of the need to conserve

it, so that the prospect of restoring lost species has become more attractive.

The paper by Don Jefferies and his colleagues presents a case study on reinforcing the native otter populations in East Anglia by inserting captive-bred otters in groups of three. The trial, described in meticulous detail, showed that the technique was viable, and the 11 otters released in 1983–1985 and their progeny now form a substantial proportion of the otter population of East Anglia. The technique thus developed could be used in other areas of Britain and Europe where conditions were favourable for the re-establishment of this declining species.

Re-establishment on a large scale was not the objective of the study described by Brian Bertram and David Moltu. They describe the release of 10 young red squirrels in Regent's Park in London, where they were last recorded in 1942, and the subsequent investigation of the reasons why the introduced grey squirrel has replaced the red over much of Britain. By providing a supplementary food source, which the red squirrels but not the neighbouring greys could obtain, they hope to show that limited reintroductions might be feasible.

Derek Yalden discusses the opportunities for reintroducing British mammals, setting out the criteria that should be met before a reintroduction is attempted. Examining the case for re-establishing existing mammals into areas in which they have become extinct, he believes it is feasible to consider seriously only the polecat, the pine marten, and perhaps the wild cat, all of which could be reintroduced to selected areas of Britain. Prospects for reintroducing others are severely hampered by the lack of suitable habitat, especially deciduous woodland. Considering Britain's recently extinct mammals, the disappearance of five of these—aurochs *Bos primigenius*, brown bear *Ursus arctos*, beaver *Castor fiber*, boar *Sus scrofa* and wolf *Canis lupus*—is attributable to man, and perhaps four others—tarpan *Equus ferus*, moose *Alces alces*, glutton *Gulo gulo* and lynx *Felis lynx*—too. Yalden considers that there are powerful ecological arguments to reintroduce the wolf on the island of Rhum, a National Nature Reserve with a red deer *Cervus elaphus* population that has to be severely

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culled each year to control it. He goes further and proposes that the Nature Conservancy Council should take a policy decision to recreate the northern Palaearctic mammal fauna on Rhum. The wild herbivore population could be diversified, and he suggests several candidate species. If their prey could be introduced, then consideration should also be given to introducing other predators. There would be difficulties to overcome, certainly, but such an imaginative and positive approach to conservation has much to recommend it, says Yalden, and should attract financial support from naturalists and from the tourist industry.

Pilot whaling in the Faeroe Islands by Kieran Mulvaney

For over 400 years, the inhabitants of the North Atlantic Faeroe islands have been killing long-finned pilot whales *Globicephala melaena*. Originally, this whaling provided an essential source of protein for the Faeroese, whose volcanic islands were ill-suited to crop growing or livestock farming. Today, however, according to a recently published report, the hunt is maintained more for its traditional appeal than its nutritional value (Whyte and Whyte, 1986). The report also says that there is cause for concern at the cruelty involved, as well as the possible effect on the whale's populations.

A pilot whale hunt, which the Faeroese call a *grind*, begins whenever a suitable pod of the whales is sighted. Small boats form a cordon around the whales and slowly drive them in to one of a number of specially designated bays. As the whales approach shore, the islanders wade into the water, bury hook-like gaffs into their head regions, and haul them on to the beach. There, they try to despatch them by slicing through the blubber with a special knife and severing the spinal cord. In the process, they cut through both the carotid artery and jugular vein, as a result of which many of the whales bleed to death.

When the whaling began, only a few hundred whales were taken each year. As the human population of the islands increased, so did the size of the kill: between 1800 and 1889, for example, it averaged 900 a year, increasing to 1018 from

1889 to 1979. However, in the last few years, the number of whales killed has risen out of all proportion to the size of the human population, and since 1980 an average of 2400 whales have perished annually, with a peak of 2973 in 1981. Given that the islanders now enjoy material wealth and a standard of living as high as anywhere else in Europe, it is most unlikely that this increase is directly linked to nutritional requirements; indeed, reports suggest that much of the whalemeat is wasted. Instead, it seems that the kill may have increased for no better reason than that new-found affluence has brought motorboats to the islands, and these make it easier to herd the whales.

The Faeroese have insisted that their studies show that such figures cannot possibly influence the size of the local pilot whale stock. However, it is extremely difficult to conduct an accurate population census of cetaceans, and not one independent study on the size of the stock has yet been completed although a scientific team is currently analysing population figures under the direction of the United Nations Environment Programme. Faeroese pilot whaling does, however, have a precedent of sorts, and this may give some indication of what the future holds for the *grind*. In Newfoundland in 1947, a Norwegian sea captain started an industrial hunt in Trinity Bay, and here a full 10,000 whales were being taken each year by 1956. Thereafter, the whaling went into a dramatic decline and in 1972 collapsed completely when no more whales could be found.

The body responsible for the regulation of whaling, the International Whaling Commission (IWC), has its hands effectively tied on this issue. The pilot whale is not listed in the annex to the 1946 Convention, on which the IWC is based, and Denmark, under whose jurisdiction the islands fall, has made it plain that it will strongly oppose any attempt by the IWC to censure the Faeroese whaling. However, the Commission is entitled to express an opinion and to make recommendations, and at its 1986 meeting Bill Jordan, Director of the People's Trust for Endangered Species, presented a veterinary study in which he reported his opinion that the killing was completely inhumane (Jordan, 1986). Following this, the Commission asked the

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Faeroese to curb certain, excessively cruel, aspects of the hunt.

The Faeroese Government, bowed by international pressure, has attempted to introduce some reforms, designed to limit the hunt's cruelty. These have all been rejected by local politicians, whose constituents are staunchly pro-whaling. Now, frustrated conservationists are determined that, unless progress is made towards phasing out the kill, they will try to organize a boycott of Faeroese fish products in the UK and USA. As fish exports to these two countries constitute 99 per cent of the Faeroese economy, the consequences of such action could be disastrous for the islanders, and would almost certainly cause them to re-assess the desirability of maintaining the hunt in the face of international opinion.

References

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Copies of the Whytes' report are available from Kieran Mulvaney, People's Trust for Endangered Species, Hamble House, Meadow, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3JX, UK.

Wildlife protection and indigenous people

by Brian Morris

The 4th International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies, held in London from 8–13 September 1986, passed the following resolution.

'The conference . . . expresses concern about the threat to the well-being and survival of many indigenous peoples by the establishment of wildlife reserves in the traditional habitats of these people, and their subsequent eviction from such reserves. Although appreciating and applauding the efforts made by the World Wildlife Fund and similar organizations to protect endangered species, the Conference nevertheless felt that the rights of the indigenous peoples had in many instances, in India and elsewhere, been overlooked or disregarded. An intrinsic part of the

ecosystem themselves, and often with cosmological beliefs that are conducive to sustaining wildlife populations, the indigenous peoples have long coexisted with the animals in these reserves. We would therefore ask the World Wildlife Fund, in establishing wildlife sanctuaries, to co-operate with representatives of indigenous peoples and such agencies as Survival International to ensure that the rights and interests of indigenous people are respected and upheld.'

The exploitation and oppression of tribal groups by economically advanced neighbours, by ranchers and mining concessions, by timber enterprises, and by repressive governments is a widespread phenomenon, and there are numerous examples of alienation of tribal lands, and of acts of genocide against tribal people. Often treated as obstacles to progress, as exotic showpieces for tourists, or simply as objects for study, tribal peoples number some 200 million people—just under four per cent of the world's population. Although often designated as 'primitive societies', anthropological studies have indicated that they are complex and viable, and have rich cosmological systems that imply an ecological perspective. As long ago as 1938 the anthropologist Frank Speck spoke of the Amerindian peoples as being the world's first ecologists and nature conservationists.

Steps have been taken to prohibit land alienation and to protect the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil, India and elsewhere, but in the recent decade a new threat to their interests and well-being has arisen from an unforeseen quarter. The establishment of nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries has had unexpected and unfortunate repercussions for the welfare of many tribal communities, in some cases leading to their wholesale eviction from their traditional homelands. This process has been particularly evident in India, and at the 4th International Conference mentioned above, the distinguished anthropologist Professor Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf discussed one striking case of a potential conflict between the interests of tribal people and those of wildlife conservation—that concerning the Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh.

The Chenchus are one of the few surviving foraging communities in South India. They live in

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semi-deciduous woodlands that clothe the Nallamalai Hills. Their 18,000 individuals show diverse settlement patterns and economic strategies, but several thousands live in and are dependent on the forest, continuing their semi-nomadic existence as hunters, food gatherers and as collectors of minor forest produce such as honey, gum, soapnuts, and various medicinal plants. Largely following the advice of Fürer-Haimendorf, in the 1940s Hyderabad State Government set aside 40,500 ha as a Chenchu reserve, where the rights of the Chenchus to collect forest produce were guaranteed by law. For more than three decades the Chenchus have lived relatively undisturbed in the forests and their rights to land and welfare provision were respected and guaranteed. Schools were opened for tribal children, mobile clinics established, and various programmes of economic development generated.

Until 1979 forest conservancy and the pursuance of the Chenchus' traditional life-style were not in conflict, but suddenly the picture changed. The Indian Government, influenced by international wildlife agencies, declared the entire Chenchu reserve a tiger sanctuary, naming it the Krishna Sanctuary after the river valley in which it was situated. Some Rs 46 lakhs were sanctioned for the Tiger Project, and a 'task force' set up to implement the scheme, under the auspices of the Forest Department (Sastry, 1983). Plans were made to restrict the movements of the Chenchus and eventually to evict them from the forest. To protect the tiger, entry to the core area of the sanctuary is forbidden, except to rich tourists. The fact that the Chenchus have lived in the reserve forest and happily co-existed with the tiger for many centuries was totally disregarded, as were their tribal rights under the Indian constitution. The fact that restrictions on their movements and harassment by forest guards is now causing them acute distress and hardship is seemingly brushed aside by wildlife officials, and it is left to the Tribal Welfare Department to protest against, and to cope with, the adverse effects of the Tiger Project.

The plight of the Chenchus threatened by eviction from their homeland is, as Fürer-Haimendorf indicated, by no means unique. In Karnataka the creation of the wildlife sanctuary of Nagarhole near Bandipur has resulted in the

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forcible removal of Jen Kurumbas and Betta Kurumbas. In the former state of Bastar, now part of Madhya Pradesh, hundreds of Maria Gonds of the Kutru region were evicted from the hill tracts that they had inhabited since time immemorial. The reason for the eviction, which local officials implemented most reluctantly, was the decision of the Indian Government to establish a reserve for wild buffalo. The fact that the Gonds and wild buffalo have coexisted for centuries, and the Gonds slash-and-burn cultivation on the hillsides did not interfere with the grazing of the buffalo in the swampy valleys was completely ignored. Similar forced evictions of tribal peoples from areas notified as wildlife sanctuaries have occurred in Orissa and Bihar (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1986).

The protection of wildlife, and particularly of endangered species like the tiger, is both important and essential, for as Thompson Seton long ago suggested, the protection of wild animal species is as crucial to the human spirit as the preservation of great works of art. However, there is no reason at all why such protection cannot be carried out without encroaching upon, or flagrantly disregarding, the rights of the tribal peoples. For, like the animals themselves, many tribal communities find their own sanctuary in the more remote forest areas, and in most of these areas the wild animals and the semi-nomadic food gatherers or shifting cultivators have for long lived side by side, in mutual toleration. With goodwill, as Fürer-Haimendorf suggests, it should be possible to employ the tribal people, who are conversant with the movements and habits of wild animals, as game guards, to engage them creatively in ecological and conservation measures. There is no need to sacrifice the rights of indigenous peoples: a conservation policy that does justice to the interests of the tribal peoples, and to those of the wild animals that share their habitats, is both imperative and a challenge to conservationists.

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