

The Fauna Preservation Society

EDITORIAL NOTES

Dr. Carmichael Low.—We record with great sorrow the death, in his eightieth year, of Dr. George Carmichael Low, whose long and distinguished services to tropical medicine, to ornithology and to protection of birds gave him a world-wide reputation and contributed much to the cause of conservation. He was a member of the Council of our Society from 1942 until his recent resignation on account of ill health.

Oryx, Volume I.—This number completes Volume I of *Oryx*. For those who wish to have their Journal bound the necessary extra pages are given at the back of this number. A leaflet from our printers is included.

International Union for the Protection of Nature.—The Third General Assembly of the I.U.P.N. was held at Caracas, Venezuela, from the 3rd–9th September. A most interesting report has just reached us from the Secretary-General, M. J-P. Harroy. As it is impossible to do justice to this report in the present number, it is held over until the spring.

The Agrimi or Wild Goat of Crete.—In May this year Mr. Hugh Farmar visited Crete on behalf of our Society and other interested societies and individuals to initiate measures for the preservation of the Agrimi. A record of his visit is published on pp. 327–337. We are in correspondence with the International Union for the Protection of Nature on this subject, in order to follow up with action the recommendations made by Mr. Farmar.

Deer in Scotland.—Readers will be glad to hear that a Deer (Close Season) Committee has been set up by the Government. This Committee, whose inquiries are restricted to Scotland, but not to red deer only, is to consider the desirability of introducing a close season or close seasons for deer, what safeguards for agricultural interests are necessary and how any close season recommended could be made effective. The presentation to the Committee of the views of our Society is being arranged.

East Africa.—At a General Meeting on the 15th July Captain Keith Caldwell spoke upon the wild life situation in East Africa. Below are a few points from a very interesting talk.

The new game laws of Kenya are good except for one great

fault. In legal proceedings against men arrested in the possession of game meat, the burden of proof that the animals had been legally killed formerly lay with the defence. Now it lies with the prosecution. This renders futile much of the work of the Game Department in the apprehension of offenders; for it is usually impossible to prove that a trophy has been illegally obtained.

There is reason to think that this law may be altered, for considerable loss is being suffered by the Kenya Government in the remission of fines when convictions are upset on appeal.

Great efforts are being made, and with success, to arouse the interest of the native African in the preservation of the fauna. He is being given a share—at least once a visible share in the shape of shilling pieces piled on a table—in the fees paid for shooting in controlled areas. He may in future perhaps be given also a percentage of the entrance fees to Nairobi National Park. Thus, a new attitude towards wild life is slowly being born; from apathy or even antipathy there is coming tolerance. As one Chief put it: “We have always had the game with us, why should it not so continue?”

As in Kenya the new game laws in Tanganyika Territory are a great improvement on the old. Likewise they have one fundamental fault. In Tanganyika the selling is allowed of the trophies of game legally taken. Such licence is a very great weakness, for it opens the door to shooting for profit and thence to extermination. It is hoped that an opportunity will soon occur to amend the offending clause.

In the discussion that followed Mr. Sherbrooke Walker asked that the elephants and other large animals in the areas around the Aberdare and Mount Kenya National Parks should not be forgotten. These animals could not live in the mountains, of which except for one very small extension to “Treetops” the national parks consisted. As forestry operations were increasing in the areas around the parks they might soon have nowhere to go. Mr. Sherbrooke Walker suggested that one or other of these two parks ought to be extended to include an area of low-lying forest country.

In reply Captain Caldwell pointed out that the elephants could move down towards the northern frontier and emphasized the difficulties in keeping large numbers of elephants close to cultivated and settled areas.

Uganda.—The establishment of two national parks in Uganda, upon which further information will be found in this number of *Oryx*, is an event of outstanding importance.

In *The Times* of 1st October, 1952, Professor W. Kennedy,

the leader of an expedition which had just returned from what is now the Queen Elizabeth National Park, is reported to have said that the scenery was "the most wonderful I have ever seen and the whole area teeming with game".

South Africa.—We are glad to report that a Department of Nature Conservation has been formed by the Cape Province. This follows the Fauna and Flora Branch of the Transvaal Administration established in 1947.

The Eastern Province Branch of the Wild Life Protection Society have opened an Oribi Fund. To ensure their survival, oribi are being introduced into the Mountain Zebra National Park.

Further steps have been taken towards enclosing the Addo elephant herd. A special fence is in course of construction, made of tram rails and lift cable. This appears to be successful and it is believed that the difficulties experienced with this herd have at last been overcome.

West Indies.—The formation of the Society for the Protection of the Flamingo in the Bahamas was reported in the last issue of *Oryx*. We are glad to hear that the results of protection have already been very encouraging. The Commander of the Air Force Base has been most co-operative and flying by U.S. planes over the nesting flamingoes has stopped. The two wardens, who were appointed special constables, did excellent work, remaining encamped near the colonies until the young birds were fit to take their migratory flight.

Mr. Robert Allen who, it will be remembered, was appointed by the National Audubon Society of New York to make a survey of the status of the American flamingo, reported in July that this year the birds formed three separate colonies at Inagua, a late-season count showing that no less than 1,200 birds had nested; it was hoped that between 4,000 and 5,000 young would be produced. There was also, compared with last year, a decided improvement at Abaco.

Exhibition at Oxford.—A collection of studies and fantasies of animals will be on view at Black Hall, St. Giles', Oxford, from 30th November to 13th December inclusive, by courtesy of the British Council. Times: Sunday, 12 noon to 5.30 p.m., weekdays, 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Some of the Society's films will be shown at 5.15 p.m. on Thursday, 11th December.

The exhibits are by Miss Robin Tomkinson, whose work is well known to all readers of *Oryx*. Members will remember also that at a general meeting in May, 1951, seven sketches by Miss Tomkinson were sold for the benefit of the Society.