

# Briefly . . .

## International

### CITES meeting

The 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, to be held on 9–20 October 1989 in Lausanne, Switzerland, will be considering proposals to upgrade the African elephant to Appendix I, and to crack down on out-of-control trade in Appendix I species and their products, such as rhinoceros and certain plants. *Monitor*, 27 March 1989.

### CITES Parties make 101

St Vincent and the Grenadines became the 97th Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora on 28 February, 1989, St Vincent and the Grenadines have taken Appendix I species reservations on the humpback whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* and the hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*. Chad, Gabon, Ethiopia and Malta have also acceded to CITES, with these accessions becoming effective on 3 May, 15 May, 4 July, and 16 July, respectively, bringing the total number of Parties to 101.

*TRAFFIC (USA)*, January 1989, 12.

### Australia rejects treaty

On 23 May, Australia, which claims 42 per cent of Antarctica, said it would not sign the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resources Activities and instead would press for the continent and its surrounding oceans to be declared a world park.

*WWF News*, May/June 1989, 1.

### Forest facts

Only 1 per cent of the world's 800 million ha of productive tropical forest are being exploited without irreversible damage, according to a study prepared for the International Tropical Timber Organization. The world has already lost half of the 1.5 billion ha of humid forest present at the beginning of the century and 10–20 million ha of rain forest are being cleared or burnt each year. Sustainable forest management is being practised only in some areas of Malaysia and Australia.

*Our Planet (UNEP)*, March 1989, 12.

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## Record number of trees

A 50-ha plot in a lowland forest, Pasoh in Peninsular Malaysia, has been found to contain 835 species of trees. The research methods were identical to those used on a 50-ha plot in Barro Colorado Island in Panama, which holds the previous high record of 306 species. Future monitoring could reveal findings important to the conservation and wise exploitation of rain forest, for example which species are fast-growing. In 1988 a third 50-ha plot was established in the Western Ghats of southern India as part of a plan to establish a network of comparable plots around the world. Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Madagascar and Cameroon have all expressed interest in joining the scheme.

*BBC Wildlife*, April 1989, 216.

## Europe and North Africa

### Timber trade proposal

The European Parliament adopted a motion, the Muntingh proposal, on 26 May, calling on the European Commission to pass a resolution to regulate trade in tropical timber and tropical timber products, and to create a Tropical Forest Management Fund. The aim is to support sustainable management of tropical forests by giving financial support to set up forest management plans in countries exporting tropical timber to the EEC. The proposal also allows for EEC to compensate producing countries for keeping exports down to sustainable levels.

*WWF Press Release*, 26 May 1989.

### Europe bans sealskin imports for ever

The European Community imposed a permanent ban on the import of baby sealskins on 8 June. The ban replaces an existing six-year ban, which was due to expire on 1 October.

*The Guardian*, 9 June 1989.

### New association for sea turtles

The Mediterranean Association to Save Sea Turtles (MEDASSET) has been formed as an umbrella body to link all European and Mediterranean organi-

zations and individuals concerned with sea turtles. It will co-ordinate research, conservation, fund-raising, political liaison, publicity and education.

*MEDASSET*, 1(c) Licavitou Street, Athens 106–72, Greece.

## Britain's dolphins dying out

The bottlenosed dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* is declining around British coasts. Forty years ago 69 seaside towns claimed to have dolphins; now there may be only two resident populations, one in Cardigan Bay and the other in the Moray Firth. The only young dolphin born last year in Cardigan Bay was found dead and contained high concentrations of toxic chemicals. Harbour porpoises *Phocoena phocoena* are also declining; 17 dead individuals were washed ashore at Cardigan Bay last year and live ones are rarely seen. The causes of the decline are suspected to be overfishing, entanglement in fishing nets, and pollution.

*The Guardian*, 4 May 1989.

## Orchid collector sentenced

An orchid collector, Henry Azadehdel, who made £200,000 by trading illegally in orchids was given a 12-month prison sentence and fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £10,000 costs at the Old Bailey in London on 6 June. It is the first time that anyone has been convicted in Britain for dealing in endangered plants in contravention of the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

*The Guardian*, 6 and 7 June 1989.

But, see page 186 of this issue of *Oryx*.

## Red kite comeback

The UK Conservancy Council and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds are making an attempt to re-establish the red kite *Milvus milvus* in England and Scotland, where it disappeared by 1890 due to persecution. A few pairs remained in Wales and special protection has enabled them to increase to about 50 pairs today. The young birds for reintroduction will come from Sweden and Wales.

*NCC/RSPB News Release*, 5 June 1989.

## Essex emerald emergence

The Essex emerald *Thetidia smaragd-*

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*daría marítima*, a beautiful green-and-gold moth, was once widespread on the upper fringes of saltmarshes in Essex and Kent in England. Loss of habitat due to sea-wall construction led to a decline and in 1985 the only known remaining colony died out. In 1987 another colony was found and 11 caterpillars were taken into captivity. Now the captive population numbers just over 100 and it is hoped that some stock will be returned to the wild next year.  
*Nature Conservancy Council*, 27 June 1989.

### Wildfowl Trust changes name

The Wildfowl Trust, founded by Sir Peter Scott in 1946 and based at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, UK, changed its name on 15 June to The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

### Otter disappearance

Although the otter *Lutra lutra* has been protected in The Netherlands since 1942 and numbered an estimated 300 individuals in 1965, numbers have since fallen rapidly. Now naturalists believe that only a few scattered individuals remain and that the species can be regarded as virtually extinct in the country.  
*Naturopa newsletter-nature*, 89-3, 2.

### Biosphere Reserve in France

The Northern Vosges Regional Nature

Park in France was awarded the status of biosphere reserve by UNESCO on 12 January 1989.  
*Naturopa newsletter-nature*, 89-3, 2.

### Abruzzi National Park enlarged

Rocchetta al Voltumo, a small town in the province of Molise, Italy, has voted to give 800 ha of its territory to the Abruzzi National Park, home of brown bear *Ursus arctos*, wolf *Canis lupus* and golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. This decision, which is unprecedented, is said to be evidence of a growing understanding of the need to reconcile nature conservation and socio-economic development.  
*Naturopa newsletter-nature*, 89-3, 2.

### New society in Greece

The Society for the Protection of Nature and Ecocodevelopment has been founded in Hrysoupolis, Greece. Its main aim is to operate regional nature conservation schemes.  
*Society for Protection of Nature and Ecocodevelopment*, PO Box 47, GR 642 00, Hrysoupolis, Greece.

### Portuguese protest against eucalyptus

Farmers and conservationists in northern Portugal have united in protest against the eucalyptus. Since 1986 thousands of acres of land, previously used for growing grapes, figs, cherries, olives and cork oak, in conjunction with

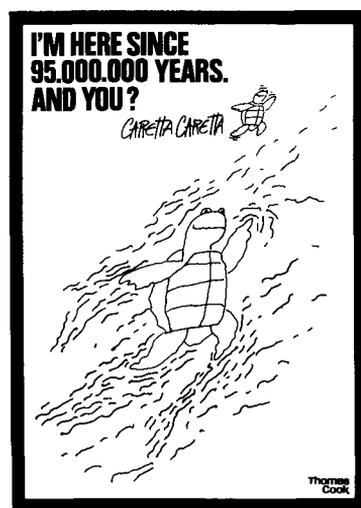
raising livestock, have been bought or leased by paper manufacturers to plant eucalyptus for industrial purposes. The protestors, who have been demonstrating, claim that eucalyptus depletes the soil of water and contributes towards erosion. With a glut of olive oil in the EC farmers who uproot olive trees and plant eucalyptus receive subsidies and the Ministry of Agriculture says there is no future in small mixed farming.  
*The Guardian*, 22 June 1989.

### One wild hermit ibis left in Turkey

The hermit ibis *Geronticus eremita* has become virtually extinct in Europe. Once common in central Europe as far north as the Alps, in recent decades the species occurred only at Birecik in eastern Turkey. Here drainage of wetlands and pesticides caused big declines. In 1989 only three individuals returned from migration and two of these died in a storm.  
*ICBP*.

### Harrier chick deaths averted

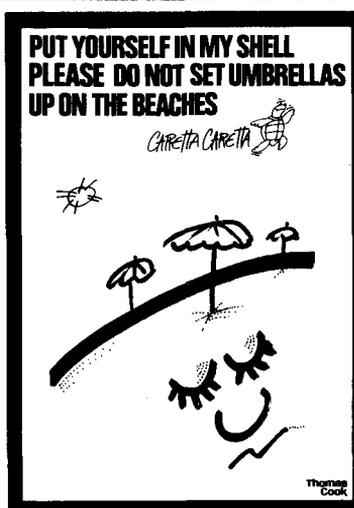
In the Valdepeñas area of Spain a campaign is under way to prevent the deaths of harrier chicks due to the action of combine harvesters. The majority of such deaths can be avoided by consulting farmers and removing chicks during harvesting of the crops. During the 1988 breeding season 31 Montagu's harrier chicks *Circus pygargus* and 1 hen harrier chick *C.*



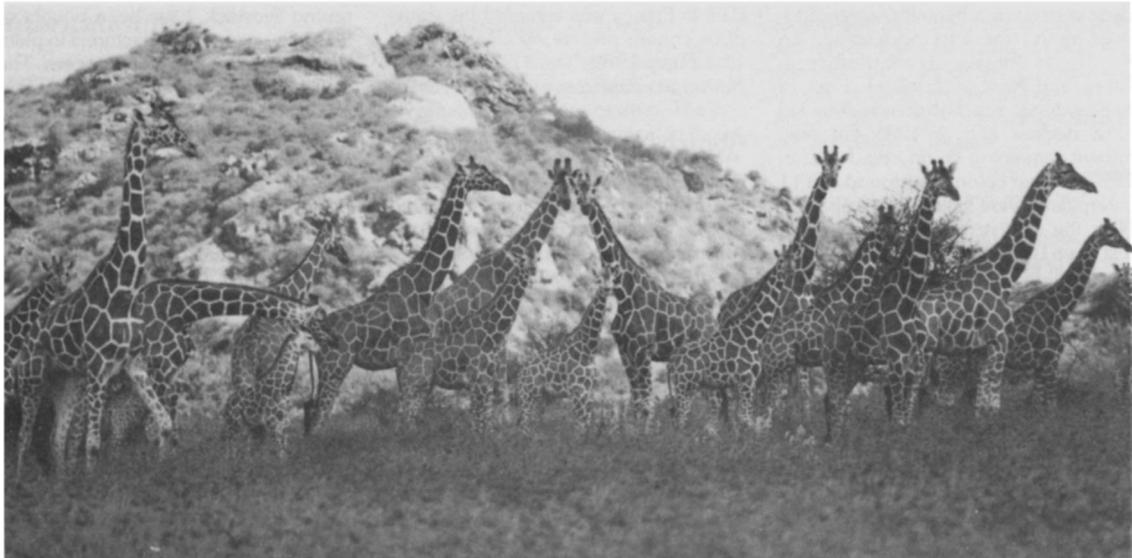
Briefly

Turtle campaign in Turkey. These postcards are part of an array of educational material produced by Dogal Hayati Koruma Demegi (DHKD), the Society for the Protection of Wildlife in Turkey) for a campaign to protect nesting loggerhead turtles *Caretta caretta* on Iztuzu beach at Dalyan. Information centres have been set up where visitors can watch a video on turtles and find out what they can do to help turtle conservation.

Conservationists saved Dalyan from large-scale tourist development and now DHKD wishes to help produce a management plan for the entire Turkish southern coast to prevent it being ruined by piecemeal development. DHKD, PK18, 80810 Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey.



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Giraffes—threatened by demand for buckets (Norman Myers).

*cyaneus* were observed and moved when necessary. Of these 23 reached flight age and only 2 were killed by harvesters. *Quercus*, 36, 34–35.

### Africa

#### Ecological heritage in Nigeria

Nigeria has set up a National Advisory Committee on the Conservation of Renewable Resources to protect the country's rich biological and ecological heritage. The 20-member committee is to formulate realistic proposals on how national development programmes could be harmonized with conservation of soil, water, forests and wildlife. *Earthtrust Press*, 11 March 1989.

#### Demand for buckets threatens giraffe

The giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis* is threatened with local extinction in northern Kenya because man is over-exploiting it. Although the species has traditionally been hunted for meat, for skin to make milk buckets, and for tail hair for stitching, the method and rate of killing has increased. Poachers with modern weapons are killing large numbers and exchanging skins for cattle. As well as prosecuting the poachers, an

education campaign has been suggested, aiming at discouraging the traditional use of giraffe skin buckets for milking or watering cattle. *Swara*, May/June 1989, 6–7.

#### Rhinos dehorned

Namibian conservation officials are cutting the horns off sedated black rhinos *Diceros bicornis* in Damaraland to protect them from poachers. It is the first time that such a measure has been tried and it has divided leading conservationists in the region. *The Times*, 10 May 1989; *New Scientist*, 27 May 1989, 33.

#### Bald ibis back in Cape Town

Plans are under way to reintroduce the bald ibis *Geronticus calvus* to Cape Province, South Africa, where the last wild one was shot in 1906. There are an estimated 10,000 bald ibis in the highveld grasslands in the Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal and Lesotho, where numbers appear relatively stable, but where they are threatened in the long term by conversion of their grassland habitat to agriculture and afforestation, and by open-cast mining. Captive-breeding efforts have not been very rewarding to date, but a new captive colony has been established in

Cape Town with 22 chicks taken from the wild in the Transvaal; 18 have survived and it is hoped that their descendants will once again fly free in the eastern Cape. *Quagga*, 25, 18–20.

#### Biggest-ever ivory haul in Botswana

Customs officers at Kasane in Botswana, on the border with Zambia, confiscated the largest-ever contraband shipment of ivory in October 1988. Concealed in a container lorry that had crossed the Zambezi River from Zambia were 382 elephant tusks, 94 rhino horns, 3 African python *Python sebae* skins, 3 leopard *Panthera pardus* skins, 2 crocodile skins, a large amount of ivory jewellery, carved tusks and ivory sculptures, malachite items and 3100 kg of cobalt from Zaire. The shipment, valued at US\$ 2,177,750 was consigned to a Chinese businessman in South Africa. *Traffic Bulletin*, 7 May 1989, 28.

#### Zambesi Valley news

Zambia's 'Operation Stronghold', a programme to protect black rhinos *Diceros bicornis* in the Zambezi Valley, has been remarkably successful; in 1988 rhino kills fell to the lowest levels

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in several years and an estimated 500–600 animals remain. More men and more money are needed to continue, especially since the WWF withdrew funding for a helicopter from May 1989. The latest threat to the Zambezi Valley is an oil exploration and production contract, which is likely to be signed this year.  
*Zimbabwe Wildlife*, March 1989.

## Locust control—a threat to aardwolves

In southern Africa livestock farms, with large areas of grassland and good populations of termites, provide prime habitat for the aardwolf *Proteles cristatus*, which is classified as rare in the region. However, these grasslands are also endemic areas for the brown locust and when outbreaks occur insecticide is sprayed in an attempt to control them. A long-term study of aardwolves in Benfontein found that seven out of 12 adults and all cubs died in the first half of 1986 when a locust control programme was under way, and it is possible that deaths were due to the aardwolves eating poisoned locusts. Aardwolves are slow breeders and if locust control becomes more frequent, and does in fact cause deaths of these animals, it could seriously threaten the aardwolf population over large areas of its prime habitat.  
*Hyaena Specialist Group Newsletter* No. 4, March 1989, 40–41.

## Asia

### Oryx reintroduction to Saudi Arabia

The white or Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx* is being reintroduced in Saudi Arabia, the first attempt by that nation to re-establish a species extinct in the wild. On 30 November 1988 five male and four female oryx were flown from San Diego Zoo in the USA to Saudi Arabia. In March eight additional oryx (four of each sex) were flown from the Shaumari Wildlife Reserve in Jordan. The animals are due to be released in the autumn in the 2650-sq-km Mahazet Assed Protected Area, 150 km east of Taif, which is protected by a 220-km chain-link fence. Meanwhile they

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are acclimatizing in a 2.5-sq-km pre-release enclosure.  
*Antelope Specialist Group Newsletter*, May 1989, 6.

### First captive breeding of a threatened vulture

Scientists at Tel Aviv University, Israel, have reported the first captive hatching of a Negev lappet-faced vulture *Torgos tracheliotus negevensis*. The event is particularly significant because only one pair of this subspecies is known to remain in the wild. The population in the Negev Desert dwindled due to hunters, disturbance and a reduction of their food supply.  
*Quagga*, 25, 15.

### Manchurian tigers extinct in China?

Manchurian tigers *Panthera tigris altaica* may have become extinct in the wild in China, according to Qian Yanwen, Secretary General of the Chinese Society for Animal Protection. An aerial survey in 1987 spotted no Manchurian tigers in north-east China, their only remaining stronghold. A survey in the 1970s had observed only seven. Qian blames the demise of the tiger on the destruction of forests by humans and excessive poaching. There are more than 20 Manchurian tigers in Chinese zoos.  
*New Scientist*, 15 April 1989, 24.

### Japan's tortoiseshell imports

Japan's reservation on the CITES Appendix I listing of hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* has allowed Japan to continue to import tortoiseshell despite protection in most countries of origin. According to Japanese Customs, in 1987 and 1988 Japan imported 54,851 kg of tortoiseshell, representing an estimated 51,720 turtles. Of the 19 countries of origin listed, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Dominican Republic and the US all apparently violated CITES, since all are Parties to the Convention and none has taken a reservation on the turtle.  
*TRAFFIC (USA)*, January 1989, 6.

### Shiraho safe?

The Japanese Government has cancel-

led plans to build an airport on Shiraho Reef on Ishigaki Island (see *Oryx* 21, 119 and 23, 166). The plan caused international outcry because it would have destroyed one of the largest reefs of blue coral in the northern hemisphere. However, the Japanese Environment Agency has outlined an alternative plan to build an airport 4 km north of Shiraho. The new plan reveals that the landing strip would be only 1.5 km from the reef lagoon habitat. Impact to the reef could be severe during construction work and pollution would harm it in the long-term.  
*New Scientist*, 20 May 1989, 23; *WWF News*, May/June 1989, 8.

## Indo-Malaya

### Cheer pheasant project

The World Pheasant Association's project to reintroduce cheer pheasants *Catreus wallichii* to Margalla Hills National Park has had considerable success. Captive-bred birds have survived for over 20 months in the wild and 200 poults were released in 1988 alone. The project has been extended to another area of the bird's former range north of Balakot in the Mansehra district.  
*Natura*, *WWF Pakistan Newsletter*, March 1989, 9.

### Falcon-trapping in Pakistan

Falcon-trapping in the upper Chitral area of Pakistan is causing problems for agriculture because small animals, the falcons' prey, are increasing and feeding on crops. The trappers' objective is the saker falcon *Falco cherrug*, and in order to catch them smaller falcons—laggar *F. jugger*, kestrel *F. tinnunculus* and red-headed falcon *F. chicquera*—are released into the saker falcons' territories with balls of feathers tied to their talons. As the saker falcon swoops to take the 'prey' from the smaller bird its claws become entangled in the feathers and the birds fall to the ground.  
*Natura*, *WWF Pakistan Newsletter*, March 1989, 9.

### White-headed duck protection

The number of white-headed ducks *Oxyura leucocephala* visiting Pakistan

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have steadily declined over the last three years, from 567 in January 1987 to 187 in January 1989. In recent years the ducks have been seen only in Kharar, Ucchali and Jhalar lakes in the Punjab. Kharar is a wildlife sanctuary and Ucchali is a game reserve, but Jhalar is unprotected and there are reports of hunting parties from Lahore visiting the area and shooting this duck. Punjab Wildlife Department has started the process of giving this wetland protected status.

*Natura WWF Pakistan Newsletter*, March 1989, 9.

## New national park for Nepal

Royal Bardia Wildlife Reserve in Nepal was upgraded to Royal Bardia National Park in December 1988. The park contains 32 mammal species including tiger, spotted deer, black buck, wild boar and a translocated population of greater Indian rhinoceros, as well as 235 species of birds.

*Wildlife Nepal*, April 1989.

## Bird-nest poachers

The demand from China for the edible nests of the cave-dwelling birds *Collocalia maxima* and *C. fuciphaga* has led to a decline in the populations of these birds in the cave systems of Sabah and Sarawak in eastern Malaysia. Although collectors are licensed, rising prices are encouraging poachers, and the Sarawak Government is considering imposing stiffer penalties including imprisonment for illegal collectors. On 31 March the State Executive Council ordered a three-year halt to the collection of birds' nests in the Niah Cave, the main centre for collection of nests, and since then 15 people have been arrested for breaking the rule.

*Asia-Pacific People's Environmental Network*.

## More protection for leatherbacks

Concerned over the continuing decline in nesting leatherback turtles *Dermochelys coriacea*—only 100 came ashore in Terengganu State, Malaysia, in 1988 compared with 1500 in 1956—the State Government has amended the Turtles Enactment Act 1987. From 5 April anyone in possession of an egg of a leatherback could be fined US\$ 224

385 or imprisoned for 6 months, or both. *Asia-Pacific People's Environment Network*.

## New CITES law in Singapore

Singapore's Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1989 came into effect on 17 March 1989, enabling implementation of CITES, to which Singapore became a party in November 1986. On 22 March 1989 a man was arrested and fined for attempting to export Asian bonytongues *Scleropages formosus* (a fish listed on CITES Appendix I) from Singapore to the Philippines without a permit, the first conviction under the new law.

*Traffic Bulletin*, 7 May 1989, 29.

## North America

### US declares chimpanzees endangered

From the end of April 1989 the US will ban the import of any wild-caught or captive-bred chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* and *P. paniscus* from Africa. In reclassifying the chimpanzees from 'threatened' to 'endangered', the USA recognizes the drastic declines in chimpanzee populations due to habitat destruction, population fragmentation, excessive local hunting, and international trade. Captive chimpanzees outside Africa will remain available for medical research, but by including captive chimpanzees in Africa within the 'endangered' classification the USA Fish and Wildlife Service will forestall the possibility of wild-caught animals being laundered through 'captive' colonies and imported into the USA. *Traffic Bulletin*, 7 May 1989, 30.

### Growing demand for sharks' fins

A rapidly expanding market for shark meat and fins has prompted the USA Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to call for emergency restrictions on fishing. Sharks are extremely slow-growing, late-maturing animals and populations will be dangerously depleted if fishing for them is allowed to go unchecked. Most of the fins are shipped to Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo and the high prices they fetch encourage owners of small vessels to

discard the rest of the shark. The Council would like to see regulations requiring that only whole un mutilated sharks be landed.

*The New York Times*, 7 May 1989.

### Conservation land released for grazing

For the second year running, agriculture officials have released lands enrolled in the USA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for emergency hay-making and grazing due to drought. So far 78 counties in four states are involved and the farmers concerned must agree to a 50 per cent reduction in their annual payment and must leave 25 per cent of their CRP land undisturbed for wildlife.

*Outdoor News Bulletin*, 16 June 1989, 3.

### Species neglected by US programme

The US Endangered Species Programme has concentrated its money and efforts on species with a high public appeal and those already on their way to recovery, rather than giving priority to wildlife most likely to become extinct. That is the conclusion of a report by the USA General Accounting Office, which found that the USA Fish and Wildlife Service often violates its own guidelines and priority system for aiding endangered species.

*International Wildlife*, July–August 1989, 25.

### Oil plan for Alaska shelved

Legislation to allow oil exploration in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge has been shelved in the US Congress because of public and official outrage over the oil industry's incompetence in the Prince William Sound oil spill. Even supporters of the oil industry in Congress are demanding major reforms before more pristine areas are opened up to exploitation.

*Monitor*, 10 April 1989.

### Wolf-kill programme fails

British Columbia's wolf-kill programme in the northern part of the province has in certain regions resulted in an increase in wolf populations, according to Dr Gordon Haber, a wildlife

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biologist. He concluded that the wolf's prey species face a greater threat from unregulated hunting, easier access to big-game habitat and poor enforcement of hunting regulations than they face from wolves. British Columbia's Environment Minister has announced that the government will not proceed with the wolf control programme in 1989, and the Wildlife Branch is considering whether to stop the programme for four years. Since 1977 about 1000 wolves have been killed with poison or shot from helicopters, leaving about 8000 wolves in the province.

*The Vancouver Sun*, 27 January 1989.

## Company hands over bear habitat

A logging company, Fletcher Challenge Canada, has handed over a 67-ha parcel of land at the mouth of the Asseek River, on British Columbia's central coast, to the Pacific Estuary Conservation Programme. The forest is a small but critical piece of grizzly bear *Ursus arctos* habitat and the action is part of a larger effort to protect bears in the area.

*The Vancouver Sun*, 10 April 1989.

## Blue herons return

Great blue herons *Ardea herodias*, which abandoned colonies near pulp mills on Georgia Strait, British Columbia, in 1988 returned to their nesting sites this year and produced fertile eggs. Last year scientists suspected that dioxin contamination from the mills was to blame for the herons' aberrant behaviour, but now natural causes are believed to be responsible, especially since another population of herons far from any mill have deserted their nests. Dioxins have been found in heron tissues, however, and the pulp mills have made great strides in removing dioxins from effluent in the last two years.

*The Vancouver Sun*, 8 June 1989.

## Otter and bighorn swap

Over the next two years Colorado plans to import 30 river otters *Lutra canadensis* from Oregon, implant them with radio transmitters and release them into the canyon of the Dolores River in the south-western corner of the state. In re-

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turn Oregon will import 30 bighorn sheep *Ovis canadensis* from Colorado in an effort to establish two new herds. Disease recently wiped out 70 per cent of the state's major herd.

*International Wildlife*, May–June 1989, 28.

## Black-footed ferrets reintroduction planned

Two additional captive breeding populations of the black-footed ferret *Mustela nigripes* are being established after two years of success at the captive colony at Sybille, Wyoming, during which numbers increased from 18 to 58. The National Zoological Park's Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia, and the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska, have been selected to receive 10 captive pairs each. It is hoped that by 1991 there will be 250 breeding pairs and that the first release into the wild will be possible. Meanwhile, colonies of prairie dogs, the ferrets' prey, are being mapped to identify possible reintroduction sites.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIII, 11–12, 8.

## Additions to US list

In October and November 1989 three species were added to the US List of Endangered and Threatened Species. The decurrent false aster *Boltonia decurrens* is a wet prairie perennial, which now occurs only in 17 populations in Illinois, where it is threatened by wetland drainage and agriculture. The little-wing pearly mussel *Pegias fabula* now inhabits only six stretches of river in Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee and most of the remaining population is believed to be too small to be viable. The California freshwater shrimp *Syncaris pacifica*, the only surviving member of its genus, was once common, but is now restricted to 12 streams where introduced predatory fish and habitat deterioration threaten it.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIII, 11–12, 9.

## Red wolf recovery

The effort to recover the endangered red wolf *Canis rufus*, which became extinct in the wild in 1980, is expanding.

On 1 February 1989 there were 84 red wolves; 69 in captivity, 11 in acclimation pens and 4 in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is moving ahead to increase the number of wolves in the wild and the number of facilities and island sites used to breed them.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIV, 1–2, 3.

## A mussel and a meadowrue

During February two species were added to the US List of Endangered and Threatened Species. Cooley's meadowrue *Thalictrum cooleyi* is endemic to the south-eastern coastal plain, where it depends on periodic disturbance, such as fire, to maintain the open sites on which it grows. It is known from 11 sites in North Carolina and one in Florida, all on private land, and 11 of these are threatened by habitat alteration. The speckled pocket-book mussel *Lampsilis streckeri* now occurs only in the Middle Fork of the Little Red River in Arkansas, where it is vulnerable to water quality degradation.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIV, 3, 7.

## Fight to save endangered tree

The Florida *torreya* *Torreya taxifolia* was once abundant in steep ravines of the Apalachicola River Basin of Florida and Georgia, but since the 1950s fungal diseases have affected all the stands. The only remaining plants in the wild are regrowth from the roots of dead adults and none live long enough to reproduce. The tree was classified as endangered in 1984 and the recovery plan involves attempting to control the fungal diseases as well as cultivating cuttings in selected gardens; it has been found that infected plants survive and reproduce in cultivation.

*The Center for Plant Conservation*, Winter 1989, 1 and 8.

## Florida terminates 'headstart' programme

In 1959 Florida's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) began efforts to increase Florida's green turtle *Chelonia mydas* population by initiating a 'headstart' programme, in which green turtles were reared in captivity for

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6–12 months prior to their release to offset high initial mortality. Over 18,000 hatchlings have been tagged and released. Now Florida has decided to end this first phase of the project and will await the return of headstarted turtles to nest. No headstarted turtle has yet been recorded as returning to nest, but this could be due to several factors: incomplete surveillance of beaches, loss of tags, or the long time it takes for green turtles to become reproductively active. If significant numbers of headstarted turtles begin to appear on nesting beaches the DNR will consider continuing the programme.  
*Marine Turtle Newsletter*, July 1989, 1.

## Armadillo eats turtle eggs

The nine-banded armadillo *Dasypus novemcinctus* has been recorded raiding nests of loggerhead turtles *Caretta caretta* in two wildlife refuges in Florida, USA. The armadillo first appeared in the USA in Louisiana in 1925 and since then it has spread through the Gulf coast states and is now abundant in Florida.  
*Marine Turtle Newsletter*, April 1989, 7–8.

## A new home for a cactus

Knowlton pincushion cactus *Pediocactus knowltonii* is known from only two populations, one of which has only two plants. It has suffered from collecting since 1958, when the one viable population was discovered. Now a new population has been established from cuttings in a more inaccessible site and protection has enabled the original population to increase. Botanists are also investigating new and faster ways of propagating the cactus for market sale.  
*The Center for Plant Conservation*, Winter 1989, 3.

## Central America

### Guatemala bans trade

Guatemala temporarily and immediately suspended all activities relating to hunting, capture, domestic trade, export and re-export of wild fauna on 26 September 1989.  
*TRAFFIC (USA)*, January 1989, 13.  
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### New law could protect 30 per cent of Guatemala

The President of Guatemala signed a new law in February, declaring 44 new 'special protection areas', establishing boundaries for six existing reserves, and creating the National Council of Protected Areas.  
*The Nature Conservancy Magazine*, May/June 1989, 36.

### 34 Puerto Rican parrots in wild

A count in the Caribbean National Forest, Puerto Rico, in January revealed that 34 Puerto Rican parrots *Amazona vittata* remain in the wild. In the Luquillo Forest captive rearing facility, two pairs of parrots laid eggs, three of which were fertile and hatched in January.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIV, 3, 4.

### Snake rediscovered on St Vincent

The colubrid snake *Chironius vincenti*, which is endemic to St Vincent, had not been reported since 1894, until in November 1987 the Department of Forestry of St Vincent donated a specimen to the Milwaukee Public Museum, Wisconsin, USA. It had been collected earlier that year in a rather inaccessible forest. Interviews with local people since then have revealed that they are familiar with the species, although it may not be common.  
*Amphibia-Reptilia*, 9, 415–422.

## South America

### Giant river turtle bred in captivity

The Emporor Valley Zoo in Trinidad has bred the South American giant river turtle *Podocnemis expansa* for the first time in captivity. The breeding turtles are survivors of a group captured 63 years ago but they had never bred. Success was achieved after the zoo manipulated water levels in the pool and provided deep clean sand near the water's edge.  
*IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group Newsletter*, December 1988.



These stamps depicting the wildlife of Belize were issued on 24 February 1989.

Further information from  
CAPHCO Ltd,  
Old Inn House,  
2 Carshalton Road, Sutton, Surrey  
SM1 4RN, UK.

*Oryx* Vol 23 No 4, October 1989

# Briefly . . .

## New collared frog

A new species of collared frog *Colostethus yustizi* has been described from Andean mountain streams and pools in cloud forests in the Yacambú National Park, Estado Lara, Venezuela. *Amphibia-Reptilia* 10, 175–183.

## The value of the forest

Rain forest destruction for cattle ranching or timber not only threatens the world's climate but is also less profitable than harvesting forest products, according to studies by scientists led by Dr Charles Peters of the Institute of Economic Botany in New York. They calculated that 1 ha of Peruvian rain forest has a net economic value of \$6820 in its yield of fruit and rubber, compared with \$2960 if it was farmed for cattle and \$2055 if it was managed as a timber plantation.

*The Guardian*, 3 July 1989.

## Aid programme for Brazil's forests

Britain signed its first environmental aid agreement with Brazil in July. The plans include aid for studies on the sustainable harvest of forest products, regeneration of rain forest and the links between forest and climate. It is hoped that the first project will be the establishment of a biological reserve near Belem.

*The Guardian*, 5 and 12 July 1989.

## Mercury threat to Amazon

The enormous gold-rush in Brazilian Amazonia has resulted in an estimated 1800 tons of mercury being dumped into the ecosystem. The mercury is used to speed-up the gold extraction process and, although Brazil has banned its use, it still goes on. The presence of mercury was detected in fish, plants and water in 1986 and pollution has been found hundreds of kilometres downstream from the gold prospecting sites. Now mercury far above safe levels has been detected in the hair, blood and urine of the resident population of Kayapo Indians and in the gold prospectors themselves.

*The Guardian*, 2 June 1989.

Briefly

## Amazon forest to be sprayed with DDT

The World Bank has given Brazil a £57-million loan to spray hundreds of places in the Amazon region with DDT to fight malaria. Many deaths from malaria have been reported, particularly in gold miners' camps and in new farming settlements.

*The Guardian*, 1 June 1989.

## Paraguay trade ban

A complete wildlife trade ban is again in force in Paraguay. The ban, prohibiting all export of wildlife for commercial purposes was instituted by decree in November 1975. For an interim period, until 17 February 1988, Paraguay had allowed exports of shoes made of boa constrictor *Boa constrictor* and yellow anaconda *Eunectes notaeus* skins.

*TRAFFIC (USA)*, January 1989, 13–14.

## Australia/Antarctica

### Rare finch on a gold mine

One of Australia's rarest birds, the Gouldian finch *Chloebia gouldiae*, is at the centre of a gold mining controversy in the Northern Territory (NT). Its most important breeding ground, an area of less than 10 sq km in the Yinberrie Hills, is in the middle of an exploration lease held by the Shell exploration company Billiton and 10 per cent of the area has already been damaged. The NT Conservation Minister has dismissed the threat as 'nonsense', while the NT Environment Centre has called for the area to be included in the Katherine Gorge National Park. The Yinberrie Hills are worth conserving for other reasons—a newly identified species of grass and one of the highest diversities of *Eucalyptus* spp in northern Australia. *Conservation News*, March 1989, 5–6.

### Dibblers rediscovered

A colony of dibblers *Parantechinus apicalis* has been found in the Fitzgerald River National Park in southern Western Australia. This small carnivore (sometimes called the speckled marsupial mouse) has not been seen since 1976.

*Wildlife Australia*, Spring/Summer 1988, 38.

## Numbat reintroductions

The range of the numbat *Myrmecobius fasciatus* had shrunk to the south-west of Western Australia by the 1960s and the species continued to be threatened by clearance for agriculture. By 1978 dramatic declines had occurred and by 1985 the first successful breeding in captivity was achieved, helped by the development of an artificial food to replace the natural diet of termites. Introduced foxes were found to be a cause of further declines in these and other endangered mammals in Western Australia. Now a reintroduction programme is under way in Boyagin Nature Reserve, linked with fox control. *Wildlife Australia*, Spring/Summer 1988, 18–20.

## Property for parrot

The South Australian Government has purchased a 140-ha property to protect the orange-bellied parrot *Neophema chrysogaster*, which with fewer than 200 left is Australia's most endangered bird.

*Wildlife Australia*, Spring/Summer 1988, 38.

## New bandicoot colony

Until recently the most endangered mammal in Victoria, Australia, the eastern-barred bandicoot *Perameles gunnii*, survived in a colony of a few hundred at a rubbish dump near Hamilton. Under a Bicentennial Grant, a new colony has been established at Gellibrand Hill Park near Melbourne Airport. *Wildlife Australia*, Spring/Summer 1988, 38.

## Feral goat problem gets worse

In 1983 many farmers in New Zealand went into goat farming, which was predicted as a new growth area. But a collapse in goat prices has caused farmers to allow their goats to escape into nearby bush. Goat browsing has contributed to widespread erosion in some areas and many rare plants have become locally extinct or endangered. *Forest & Bird*, May 1989, 2.

## Chafer beetles threatened by tip

One of New Zealand's best known insect reserves, the Cromwell Chafer

# Briefly . . .

Beetle Nature Reserve, is under threat from a proposal to site a new rubbish dump close by. The beetles are found only in this small fenced reserve and they would be very vulnerable to predation by increased numbers of rats and gulls associated with the tip.

*Forest & Bird, Conservation News, February 1989.*

## Campaign to ban wood chips

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, a New Zealand conservation organization, is mounting a major campaign to persuade the Government to ban the export of native wood chips. The trade with Japan is destroying New Zealand's beech forests on South Island and every woodchip ship that leaves Nelson takes with it 350 ha of beech forest, habitat for 2500 native birds.

*Forest & Bird, Conservation News, May 1989. 1.*

## Exotics almost outnumber natives

There will soon be more introduced plants in New Zealand than indigenous ones. At present there are 1470 exotics and their numbers are increasing at the rate of four a year. Many do not compete with native plants but some, such as *Clematis vitalba*, are major problems. A recent seminar in Christchurch heard that the almost total conversion of lowland New Zealand from indigenous to predominantly introduced plants in the last one-and-a-half centuries was an event probably unparalleled in world botany.

*Forest & Bird, February 1989, 2.*

## Oceania

### Fiji bans exports of clams and bêche-de-mer

On 1 January 1989 the Fiji Government banned the export of meat from giant clams *Tridacna derasa*, *T. squamosa* and *T. maxima* and imposed new restrictions on bêche-de-mer *Holothuria scabra* (a sea-cucumber) exports, limiting these to individuals of 76 cm long or more. Bêche-de-mer harvesting is estimated to be far in excess of the maximum sustainable level, having risen from 62.5 tonnes in 1985 to 652.5 tonnes in 1988. A spokesman

from the Fisheries Division said that 'giant clams are likely to become extinct very shortly if we continue exporting at the present rate'.

*Traffic Bulletin, 7 May 1989, 39.*

### Drift net ban in South Pacific?

Australia's proposal for a regional ban on drift nets in the South Pacific has been endorsed by the South Pacific Forum. Drift netting is indiscriminate and kills dolphins, whales, turtles and seals as well as the target fish—salmon and tuna. A fleet of 160 boats—30 from Japan and 130 from Taiwan operates in the South Pacific and last year took 20,000–40,000 tonnes of tuna, more than twice the maximum recommended catch. Japan has banned use of the nets within 160 km of its own coast. The Australian Prime Minister said that he hoped the proposed regional ban would lead to a world-wide ban.

*The Guardian, 11 July 1989.*

## Publications

### Proceedings of the Fifth International Snow Leopard Symposium

The Fifth International Snow Leopard Symposium was held in Srinagar, India in October 1986. The proceedings have now been published and include chapters on distribution and status in the wild, management of captive populations and recommendations for conservation strategies. Copies are available from International Snow Leopard Trust, 4649 Sunnyside Avenue No., Seattle, WA 98103, USA, at US\$19.00 plus US\$2.50 for postage in the USA or US\$5.00 for postage overseas.

### The Reintroduction of the White-Tailed Sea Eagle to Scotland: 1975–1987

The Nature Conservancy Council has produced a booklet describing the first 13 years of the white-tailed sea eagle reintroduction project on the island of Rhum. Written by A. J. Love, it is illustrated with photographs and line draw-

ings. The 48-page A4 booklet costs £4.00 post free from the Publicity Services Branch, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA, UK.

## Meetings

### Symposium on humans and on endangered African wildlife

The Ugandan Institute of Ecology is hosting its third international symposium with the theme 'human influences on endangered wildlife species in Africa'. It will be held at the Kampala International Conference Centre on 3–6 December 1990. For further information contact Dr Eric Edroma, PO Box 3530, Kampala, Uganda.

## People

Dr Richard E. Leakey was appointed as Kenya's new Director of Wildlife in April. He has been outspoken in his criticism of corruption within the government and believes that fencing Kenya's national parks is the only way to save wildlife from the encroachment of human development as well as from poachers.

*New York Times, 23 April 1989.*

Celio Murilo de Carvalho Valle, Professor of Vertebrate Zoology at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, and renowned for his conservation work for the muriqui *Brachyteles arachnoides*, was appointed Director of Ecosystems for the recently created Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBMARNR). He will be responsible for faunal protection and the Federal Park System. He plans to promote research in Brazilian parks and to establish a Conservation Data Bank, which will help in the preparation of the first Brazilian Red Data Book.

## Obituary

Dr Konrad Lorenz, founder of the science of ethology, Nobel Prize winner and author of several best-selling books on animal behaviour, died on 28 February 1989 in his home near Vienna, aged 85. He was a key figure in the battle to save the riverine forest east of Vienna from dam construction in 1984.

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