

News and Notes

This section is intended to provide a forum for up-to-date information on threatened species, on-going conservation work and other issues related to bird conservation. It will include pieces abstracted from other publications. Please send any contributions to the editor, Dr Seb Buckton, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, Glos GL2 7BT, UK or email: Seb.Buckton@wwt.org.uk.

Heard Island ecology shows impacts from global climate change

Surveys on Heard Island, 4,000 km southwest of Perth, Australia, have revealed evidence of the ecological impact of global warming. Glaciers have retreated by 12% since 1947, and sea surface temperature has risen by up to 1 °C. Areas of the island previously poorly vegetated are now covered with lush vegetation, and populations of birds and insects have also expanded. For example, the King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus* population has expanded from just 3 pairs in 1947 to 25,000, and 1,200 pairs of the vulnerable Heard Island Cormorant were found, while previous surveys since the 1950s have revealed far fewer. The island will now be surveyed every 2 years to monitor impacts of climate change in the Antarctic.

Source: *Nature* 410: 616

BSE measures could spell disaster for Spanish birds of prey

Spanish government measures to control the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) could have serious impacts on bird of prey populations. Since January 2001, all dead cows, sheep and goats must be incinerated, whether they are infected or not, and the rule has now been extended to pigs, poultry and horses. This threatens the supply of food to scavenging birds of prey, including Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* and Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*, as well as Red

Kite *Milvus milvus* and Spanish Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti*. To alleviate the impacts on birds of prey, BSE-free meat needs to be provided, but no diagnostic test currently exists for identifying animals incubating the disease. There is also a need for a network of food-provision stations for scavenging birds that cannot be accessed by other scavenging animals such as foxes.

Jose Tella (2001) Action is needed now, or BSE crisis could wipe out endangered birds of prey. *Nature* 410: 408.

Online Information on all existing and proposed Protected Areas in Vietnam

The online version of the "Sourcebook of Existing and Proposed Protected Areas in Vietnam" has now been launched, and is the result of work undertaken by BirdLife International – Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute with financial support from the European Union. The online version of the Sourcebook can be accessed in either English or Vietnamese language through the BirdLife Vietnam Programme websites: www.birdlifevietnam.com (English) or www.birdlifevietnam.org (Vietnamese).

This Sourcebook has been designed to improve access to information about Vietnam's protected areas, and contains descriptions of 189 existing and proposed protected areas in Vietnam. Each site entry summarises the existing information available about the site, and directs the reader to more detailed sources of

information. The online version allows information on each of these sites to be downloaded in pdf format.

The Sourcebook has also been published in hardcopy, launched at the offices of the European Union in Vietnam, on the 6th March, 2001. There are two volumes, covering northern and southern Vietnam.

Each volume is available in Vietnamese and English.

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Source: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme web-site.*