

Oil and the Jackass Penguin



When Lord Willingdon, FPS President, paid a helicopter visit to Dassen Island, one of the main jackass penguin breeding grounds, together with Professor Westphal, Hon. Secretary of SANCCOB (South African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds) in February, the penguin numbers were estimated at 40-60,000. Three weeks later a tanker (unidentified) released bilge oil that contaminated 5000 of the birds. Of these 2000 were rescued by SANCCOB – at a cost of £100 a day for three weeks. The incident shows the constant threat to these penguins (see *Oryx*, September 1971, page 92). Lord Willingdon's visit was specially arranged by the Department of Industries as a 'thank you' to him and the FPS for supporting SANCCOB's work. The penguins are particularly vulnerable to oil as they spend so much time on the sea surface; the oil has become a major threat because the Cape route has now replaced the Suez Canal for Middle East oil tankers coming to Europe.

Wolves in North America

Timber wolves now occur only in two areas in the USA – the Isle Royale National Park and in the Superior National Forest in north-east Minnesota, according to Dr Douglas H. Pimlott, Chairman of the IUCN Wolf Group, in an article in *The Living Wilderness*. But in Canada wolves occur in all major regions except the three maritime provinces and Newfoundland. In the last ten years many Canadian provinces have reduced their predator control programmes, and wolves are probably as numerous in most of these areas as they were in primitive times. Dr Pimlott suggests that, with the marked increase of public interest in wolves, it is unlikely that 'intensive unreasoning control programs' will pose a threat to wolves in any Canadian province again during this century.

The Mexican wolf *Canis lupus baileyi* is no longer found in the USA, except for occasional individuals which cross the frontier into Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. But it is still found on the western Sierra Madre and other mountainous areas in northern Mexico, although it has decreased and continues to do so on the plains, where cattle and other livestock rearing have driven it out.