



Briefly . . . Compiled by Richard Fitter

The items under this title continue the service formerly supplied by the newsletter *Kingfisher*.

INTERNATIONAL

Saving the Med . . .

At a meeting in Barcelona, Spain, in January/February, sixteen Mediterranean littoral nations agreed on co-operative action to help save that sea from further degradation. Control of dumping and pollution of all kinds will be sought through a series of conventions and an action plan.

. . . from Mercury

Very high mercury contamination has been found by a team of French scientists in fish caught in the Mediterranean. Seventeen out of 51 species of edible fish already have mercury burdens greater than the 0.5 parts per million permitted by the French Government. Mercury poisoning damages the central nervous system as was tragically proved during the terrible outbreak of Minamata disease in Japan, where 143 people died and almost 1000 fishermen and their families were permanently disabled.

Animals by Air

The International Air Transport Association has brought in new regulations to protect animals transported by air from the cruel conditions imposed on them by many animal traders. For instance, parrots have hitherto often been shipped 20–30 or even 40 to a box. By the new IATA rules each bird must be partitioned off from its neighbour. The 112 member airlines of IATA, and 90 others, have agreed that in future they will not accept live animals without a certificate stating that these rules have been complied with.

IUCN and European Wildlife

The European Economic Community has asked IUCN to report on the current situation of wildlife and its protection in the nine member states, with particular reference to the implementation of the International Convention on Trade in Endangered Species.

Journal's Good Mark

The new policy of the Editorial Committee of the *Journal of Mammalogy* is not to accept manuscripts dealing with endangered species or subspecies for publication unless specimens were obtained legally and with the approval of all appropriate regulatory agencies, and observations were made under circumstances that were not detrimental to the survival of any endangered natural population.

BRITISH ISLES

Statement on Snaring

The Hunting/Shooting Committee of the British Field Sports Society, which represents both interests, has issued an agreed statement on snaring. They recognise that snares may involve a good deal of cruelty, but consider that there may sometimes be no effective alternative. The Committee recommends a code of practice, including the secure tethering of snares, which should be visited daily and as early as possible, and not so used as to endanger farm or domestic animals. They also say that snares should only be set to catch specific predators, and not laid as 'minefields' over an indefinite period.

Norfolk Hedges Disappear

Of some 16,000 miles of farm hedgerow in Norfolk in 1946, nearly half had disappeared by 1970. In addition some 4000 miles of banks and ditches forming internal field boundaries were also destroyed in the furtherance of agriculture. The greatest loss has been in the Breck/Fenland region, where the pattern of small fields dated from the Tudor enclosures. Here three-quarters of the hedges have gone. It is believed that in about two-thirds of the county the irreducible minimum of hedges still needed in modern agricultural practice has now been reached, so that in these areas little more loss is to be expected.

Geese Poisoned in Perthshire

At least 300 greylag geese were killed in Perthshire in November 1974 by the acutely poisonous non-persistent organophosphorus pesticide trithion. Greylag geese are so unpopular among local farmers for the damage they do, that restrictions on shooting them have been lifted. It seems likely that grain treated with trithion against the wheat bulb-fly may have been left too near the surface of the ground, perhaps not entirely by accident.

Seals in Shetland

The number of common seals in Shetland has been counted at 1828, an increase of about 600 since the previous census in 1971. This is believed to represent a fairly static adult population of about 1750, but with a larger proportion of pups. The grey seal population is less well known, but pup production is estimated at between 600 and 1000, varying from year to year.

Red Deer in Scotland

The Red Deer Commission estimates that a succession of mild winters has helped the red deer population of Scotland to rise to more than 200,000.

Grants from the NCC

The Nature Conservancy Council has made grants totalling nearly £50,000 to voluntary bodies, including the National Trust and several naturalists' trusts, to encourage the practice of nature conservation. The six largest grants were for information or education centres in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Essex, Lancashire, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

BBONT/WWF Joint Appeal

The first joint appeal by the World Wildlife Fund and a county naturalists' trust was launched in Oxford in March, when Sir Peter Scott, as WWF (British National Appeal) Chairman, launched the Thames Counties Wildlife Appeal, jointly with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust. The Appeal Chairman is Sir Thomas Barlow Bt.

EUROPE

Eutrophication of the North Sea

Surveys by the Fisheries Laboratory at Lowestoft show that levels of phosphate and nitrate continue to increase in the southern North Sea, being two or three times higher in January 1974 than they were in 1962. If these trends continue, possibly as a result of increases in detergent and sewage content of the inflows, harmful side effects on both the natural biological balance of the region and the recreational amenities of the coastal resorts may become more evident.

Mussels and Oil Pollution

Mussels collected from hydrocarbon-polluted areas of the Lagoon of Venice lost the bulk of their hydrocarbon content within 10–15 days of being transferred to relatively unpolluted waters. The elimination of the balance was, however, very slow, and 12 per cent of the pollution remained in the mussels after eight weeks.

Oil Spill in Ireland

On October 21, 1974, a huge oil spill of 650,000 gallons occurred in Bantry Bay, Co. Cork. Weather conditions and the absence of many seabirds from the Bay prevented the incident from becoming a major biological disaster, but the fifteen local fishing boats claimed an average loss of £1000 per day each. This is the twenty-second spillage in Bantry Bay since the oil terminal opened in 1968.

Denmark's Maplin

The important bird habitat on the island of Saltholm, south-east of Copenhagen and midway between Denmark and Sweden, is threatened with extinction by Danish Government plans to build an international airport on it. Saltholm is an important migration watchpoint and provides winter feeding for thousands of ducks and geese.

France Forbids Vertebrate Imports

France has prohibited the import of all live vertebrates except under permit from the Ministry of Agriculture. Elephants, monkeys and reptiles are now among the animals whose import is newly controlled.

A DRUGGED WOLF being fitted with a collar containing a miniature radio transmitter in Italy's Abruzzo National Park. Three wolves have been 'collared' in this way – the battery lasts about 26 months – and their movements are being studied as part of the research study necessary for management. This is part of WWF's Operation St Francis to save the wolf in Italy, now down to about 100 animals. Lack of prey species has forced the wolves to take domestic stock and every man's hand is against them. *P. L. Florio*



The order is aimed at newly created zoos, who have sometimes slaughtered their animals, many of them rare, when they started to lose money.

Diploma at Risk

If the threat of an express railway line being built across the northern part of the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve in West Germany materialises, the reserve will lose the Council of Europe Diploma awarded to it in 1971.

Scooters and Swedish Wildlife

Illegal hunting from snow scooters has already wiped out Sweden's wolf population, and is threatening the wolverine and other rare animals. So-called sportsmen mounted on snow scooters frequently chase she-bears with cubs, as well as elk. There are now some 33,000 snow scooters in Sweden.

Reindeer in Finland

Wild reindeer seem to be increasing in eastern Finland, in their only remaining Finnish locality. The total of 61 females with calves observed in 1974 was the highest so far.

Endangered in Finland

The WWF Finnish Appeal has compiled a Finnish Red List of endangered, vulnerable and rare species. The 21 mammals include as endangered reindeer, Arctic fox, wolf, beaver, and the Saimaa and grey seals; the 54 birds include as endangered lesser white-fronted goose, spotted and sea eagles, peregrine and gyrfalcons, and snowy owl; the one reptile is the

endangered smooth snake. There are also six freshwater fish; 85 insects, including the endangered apollo and large blue butterflies; one mollusc; and 62 plants, including the endangered fly, musk, fen and red helleborine orchids.

Novaya Zemlya Reindeer

The thriving reindeer population on Novaya Zemlya, classified as the race *Rangifer tarandus pearsoni*, has recovered its numbers at the beginning of the century, some 80,000, after a period of near extinction due to overhunting. This represents another success for Soviet conservationists, and has led to the animal's deletion from the Red Data Book.

Birds of Prey in Finland

Ospreys in Finland are now estimated at 800–900 pairs, and are slowly declining. Forestry operations seem to be the main cause. The kestrel population, following a census in which 400 amateur ornithologists took part, is somewhere between 500 and 1500, and has greatly declined in the past twenty years, probably due to pesticide residues, which have already nearly exterminated the Finnish stocks of peregrine falcon and sea eagle.

Peregrines in Sweden

Only nine pairs of peregrines nested in Sweden in 1974, and these reared only 14 young birds.

White Storks in Denmark

Only 40 pairs of white storks nested in Denmark in 1974, compared with 200 pairs as recently as 1960. This continues the

long-term decline in the status of the stork in western Europe, basically due to habitat destruction combined with climatic deterioration, but recently aggravated by pesticide residues in the storks' favourite winter food in Africa, locusts, as well as in their breeding environment.

No Badger Gassing

The Chief Justice of West Berlin has ruled against the gassing of foxes and badgers in their earths. Veterinary authorities had claimed that this was necessary to control rabies, but the Chief Justice decided that rabies was now too widespread to be controlled by killing just two out of many wild mammals.

Gin Trap Ban

Sweden has totally banned the steel gin trap.

Braconniers à l'Ouvrage

Poachers recently brought off a double in France, killing a lynx, which had been introduced from Central Europe to Switzerland, when it strayed over the French border, and a wisent or European bison from Poland that was grazing peacefully in a park in the department of the Yonne in eastern France.

Attack on Spanish Wolves

Following the deaths of two children, supposed to have been attacked by wolves, the authorities are to attempt to eliminate the wolf population of the Orenne district in north-west Spain by strychnine poisoning. The Spanish Appeal of WWF, ADENA, has protested against this decision, and has called for the preservation of a viable stock of wolves in Spain.

Predators in Estonia

There are at present some 100–150 wolves in Estonia (in 1955 there were 1000), the same number of lynxes, 150–200 brown bears, 4500–6000 foxes and more than 7000 of the introduced raccoon dog. Proposals have been made for the rational regulation of their numbers instead of haphazard attempts at extermination.

Good Example from Sweden

Swedish bird photographers have been setting a good example by refraining from

photographing the nests of birds that are rare or easily disturbed. Many Swedish papers no longer publish pictures of birds at nests.

Fish Kill at Lake Balaton

More than a ton of dead fish were found in Lake Balaton, Hungary, in February, the result, it is believed, of chemical pollution, perhaps from pesticide residues.

Soviet Red Books

The Soviet Wildlife Protection Society has decided to compile a Red Data Book for endangered species for each of the Soviet Union's fifteen constituent republics.

Flora Europaea Progress

Volume 4 of *Flora Europaea* (Plantaginaceae to Compositae) is in the press and will appear in 1976.

NORTH AMERICA

Grand Canyon Threat

The Grand Canyon in Arizona, one of America's most famous national parks, is beginning to be polluted by particles carried on the wind from Los Angeles and other California cities. Already its magnificent vistas are not as distinct as they once were. A much greater threat comes from the six coal-burning power plants in use or under construction within a hundred miles. Even a small percentage of the total pollutants from these plants, when they are burning 100,000 tons of coal a day, will spread a distressing mass of contaminants over the national park area.

Coyotes, Foxes and Snowmobiles

Chasing wildlife with snowmobiles is illegal in Saskatchewan except under licence. Despite this, when 43 snowmobile hunters were interviewed confidentially in one rural municipality, all admitted using snowmobiles to hunt foxes and coyotes and only nine had licences. Between them they killed 250 foxes and coyotes in the winter of 1973–74, as follows: killed by snowmobile alone, 25; chased with snowmobile, shot with rifle or shotgun, 159; caught with traps or snares set by snow-



mobile, 66. This represented a two-thirds increase over the previous winter, when only 14 hunters were involved. Needless to say, foxes and coyotes had by the end of the 1973–74 winter become so scarce that several hunters expected little or no hunting the following winter.

Restoring Endangered Species

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has announced the formation of 31 teams of from three to six wildlife experts who will be responsible for developing a recovery plan designed for the specific needs of one endangered species or of several such species occupying a common ecosystem. It is hoped that eventually there will be 50–60 such teams. Endangered species covered by the first 31 teams include the California condor, nene goose, black-footed ferret, Kirtland's warbler and American alligator.

More Endangered Species

Four mammals, three birds, two fish and a reptile have been proposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion in the List of Endangered and Threatened Species. They are: the Mexican wolf, Cedros Island mule deer, peninsular pronghorn antelope, gray bat; po'o uli, Hawaii creeper, Newell's Manx shearwater (all three from Hawaii); bayou darter, Scioto madtom; and American crocodile.

Grizzly Bear a Threatened Species

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to list the grizzly bear as a threatened species in the contiguous 48 states. Currently it is not listed at all under the Endangered Species Act, and receives no Federal protection except on Federal lands. In this area it is found only in three districts in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, notably the Yellowstone National Park.

Canada Stands by Polar Bear

The Canadian Government has ratified the international agreement for the conservation of the polar bear, which has also been signed by Denmark, Norway, the USA and the USSR.

Wolf Endangered in Minnesota?

The Minnesota Department of Natural

Resources has asked the Fish and Wildlife Service to remove the timber wolf from the list of endangered species. Minnesota's population of 500–1000 wolves is the last remaining viable group in the contiguous 48 states, but they are increasing. As it is delicately put, 'a major problem now seems to be containing the wolves within available habitat to prevent livestock depredations that provoke local public resentment'.

Whooping Crane Egg at Patuxent

An egg laid by one of the whooping cranes at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center at Laurel, Maryland, on April 18, was the first egg laid in the captive flock that has resulted from airlifting second eggs from clutches laid on the birds' breeding grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada. This is the first time that a bird hatched and reared in captivity has in turn laid an egg. Unfortunately the chick died some days after hatching. The number of whooping cranes at the Aransas refuge in Texas in the winter of 1974–75 was 49, including two young birds, exactly the same as in the previous winter.

Endangered Sturgeon

The shortnose sturgeon is now so endangered that its continued survival in either the United States or Canada can be regarded as by no means certain. It is on the US national endangered list, and also in the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. In Canada it is confined to part of the St John River system in New Brunswick, which is badly polluted by pulp and paper mills, vegetable processing plants and raw municipal sewage. Pressures of human population and industrialisation are also the main cause of its endangerment in the US.

Wildlife Imports Confiscated

The US Department of the Interior has confiscated more than \$2m worth of illegal wildlife imports since 1971, but believes that a great deal more slips by undetected, according to Secretary Rogers Morton in a recent speech.

Threatened Plants

The Smithsonian Institution has submitted to Congress a list of 750 endangered and 1200 threatened plants in the USA, accompanied by eight recommendations for action to save them.

Hawaii, California and Texas are the three states with the largest number of endangered plant species in the USA, with 637, 242 and 95 respectively, followed by Florida (84), Arizona (64), Utah (56), Nevada and Oregon (43 each). Six states also have more than a hundred threatened plant species: California (393), Hawaii (202), Oregon, Texas (135 each), Florida (128) and Utah (101).

Protecting Endangered Wild Flowers

The Fish and Wildlife Service is examining the possibility of including four species of wild flower on the Endangered Species

List: monkshood *Aconitum novaeboracense*, sullivantia *Sullivantia renifolia*, birdseye primrose *Primula mistassinica* and Forbes's saxifrage *Saxifraga forbesi*.

All four occur in very small numbers in isolated unglaciated areas, notably the cliffs and rock ledges of the Kickapoo River Gorge in Wisconsin.

The Most Contaminated Eggs

Aquatic birds' eggs from Lake Ontario have proved on analysis to be the most contaminated with DDT and PCB of any ever analysed anywhere in the world. The birds most affected were common terns, herring gulls and double-crested cormorants. There have been widespread breeding failures among these birds, and many deformed young have been hatched, for instance with crossed bills. Effluents from the 30m. people who live around the Great Lakes have polluted the water, and the fish-eating birds of the lakes have been especially hard hit. And what, one wonders, about the human populations around the lake shores?

DDT Kills Many Birds

Thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands, of song-birds are known to have been killed directly or indirectly by the US Forest Service's spraying of 400,000 acres of the north-western forests, in an attempt to control the tussock moth.

This programme, the first use of DDT since it was outlawed in the US in 1972, cost about \$3m.

Salt Pollution in Mass.

Levels of sodium salts and chlorides in both ground water and drinking water have been rising in Massachusetts for the past 15–20 years, and in most areas within 50–60 miles of the coast have now reached levels where they begin to be a potential hazard to human health. In 1972 88 communities in the state had all or part of their water supplies contaminated at more than 20 mg per litre. One town, Weston, has had to close its wells and buy all its water. The cause? Salt used to de-ice roads in winter.

Mirex Gets the Axe

Environmental groups chalked up a substantial victory recently when the US Department of Agriculture at last agreed to abandon the use of Mirex, a highly persistent and toxic pesticide, for the control of imported fire-ants. The Secretary for Agriculture claimed that the restrictions placed on the Mirex programme by the Environmental Protection Agency made it completely unworkable.

Delta Damage Restoration

The Canadian Government is to contribute half the cost of the \$2m second phase of a programme to restore the water-levels in Lake Athabasca and the Peace-Athabasca delta that were drastically lowered by the completion, by the ecologically ignorant British Columbia government, of the Bennett Dam on the Peace River.

Back to Mangroves

A US District Court judge has ordered a Florida housing developer to restore a mangrove wetland which he drained without obtaining a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Siberian Tigers Increase in Zoos

In 1970 66 Siberian tigers, equally divided between the sexes, were registered in the Siberian Tiger Studbook from American zoos. During the next four



years 191 cubs were born, of which 140 survived. In January 1975 the total number of Siberian tigers in American zoos was 209, including 115 females.

A New Society

The Pan-American Society for the Protection of Birds has recently been formed, with headquarters at Baltimore, Maryland, to secure more adequate protection for birds from avoidable and deliberate human causes.

SOUTH AMERICA

The Chilean Huemul

A small group of Chilean huemul *Hippocamelus busulcus* have been located in the pre-cordillera region of the Termas de Chillan at about 36° latitude in the province of Nuble. Hitherto they were thought to be confined now to the provinces of Aysen and Magallanes, much further south. This rare deer is included in the *Red Data Book*.

New WWF Appeal

Venezuela has launched the latest WWF national appeal, with Dr Francisco Kerdel Vegas as President and Dr Ali Dominguez as Secretary. Address: PO Box 60391, Caracas.

AFRICA

Cape Flora Disappearing

Alien weeds and shrubs are steadily wiping out the unique endemic flora of the Cape of Good Hope, and some authorities fear it will be extinct in the wild within 25 years. The authorities are at present spending R625,000 a year in a losing battle against the invaders. To clear the hakea infestation alone would cost an estimated R2½m, and this is only one of many such aliens.

Walias on the Increase

Effective anti-poaching controls in the Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia appears to have brought poaching of the highly endangered walia ibex under control, and led to a small increase in numbers, now estimated at 230–270.

However, ibex still frequently leave the safety of the park, especially in the Chenek area, where poaching continues.

Coypu on Lake Naivasha

Coypu or nutria *Myocastor coypus*, escaped from an abandoned fur farm, reached Lake Naivasha in Kenya's Rift Valley about fifteen years ago, and are now well established and doing great harm to both the vegetation and the wildfowl which depend on the vegetation for their habitat. A recent visitor to Crescent Island saw only a handful of birds where once there were a great many. The Louisiana red swamp crayfish was introduced into the lake at about the same time, and may also be doing harm.

ASIA

Progress at the Gir

The 193-km. rubble wall around the Gir Forest lion sanctuary, despite being only one metre high, has had a most beneficial effect on the vegetation. Despite a severe drought, grass has come up very well, and there has been much less lopping for branches. The latest census shows increases in the mammal populations to 155 panthers, 4517 spotted deer, 706 sambar, 1528 nilgai (blue bull), 979 four-horned antelope, 195 chinkara gazelle and 1922 wild boar. Ninety families were resettled outside the sanctuary last year, and 100 more were to be moved this year.

To Save the Wild Ass

A new sanctuary for the decreasing Indian wild ass in the Little Rann of Kutch is proposed. Numbers have fallen from 3000–5000 in 1946 to only 362 in 1969.

Wildlife in Iran

Eight hundred onagers, the Persian wild ass, were censused in the Touran Protected Region recently. Eleven have been transferred to the Khosh Yeilagh Protected Region. There is no recent news of the survival of the Caspian tiger in Iran. The marsh crocodile *Crocodylus porosus*, however, still survives, perhaps 50–100, in extreme south-east Iran. The Persian

fallow deer appears to be increasing slowly in the riverine forests of the Dez and Karkheh Rivers in Khuzestan.

Animals for Lal Suhanra

Nilgai (blue bull), chinkara gazelles, hog deer, peacocks and the now rare and decreasing marsh crocodile are to be introduced into the Lal Suhanra National Park, Pakistan.

Gangetic Dolphin Threat

In a recent survey of the status of the gharial *Gavialis gangeticus*, a crocodilian of North Indian waters, Romulus Whitaker, Director of the Madras Snake Park and Conservation Centre, found that the Gangetic dolphin *Platanista gangeticus* is also killed throughout its range for its meat and oil. The animals are usually seen after 4 p.m., and though they are said to be bottom feeders, they have been seen chasing fish on the surface.

Is the Bali Tiger Extinct?

Two Indonesian zoologists who searched central and western Bali in 1974 could find no trace of the local race of the tiger, although villagers claimed that one had been seen in the central area in 1973. The question of whether *Panthera tigris balica* is extinct therefore still remains open.

An Ill Wind

Kim Hon Kyu's survey of the cranes of South Korea has revealed that the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea has become a *de facto* crane sanctuary because of the lack of human activity. Kim has started a feeding programme for the many cranes that winter there, and is trying to persuade the South Korean Government to declare several crane sanctuaries. The United Nations and South Korea have collaborated to establish the feeding centre for the endangered Manchurian crane. Thirty-five of these cranes feed at Asia's first mainland crane feeding station – there are others in Japan. It is now hoped that North Korea will establish a similar station on its side of the border.

Japanese Ibis in Korea

Four Japanese crested ibis, one of the rarest birds in the world, have been sighted

in the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea, bringing the total known world population to 11. They were feared extinct on the mainland of Asia, none having been seen since 1966. The other seven are in Japan, where they are closely guarded by Japanese conservationists.

Mouflon Habitat Damaged

According to the Cyprus Ministry of Agriculture, about one-third of the natural habitat of the Cyprian mouflon, now regarded as conspecific with the mouflon of Corsica and Sardinia, *Ovis musimon*, has been destroyed by forest fires connected with the recent troubles. Cyprus has accepted ultimate responsibility for the survival of the Cyprus mouflon, at the request of IUCN.

Musk oxen to Russia

Forty musk oxen, captured on Nunivak Island, off Alaska, have been airlifted to Siberia by Soviet air transports, to refound the extinct Siberian musk ox population.

Wolf in Arabia

A specimen of the rare Arabian subspecies of the wolf, *Canis lupus arabs* was found dead beside the Taif-Abha road in Saudi Arabia recently.

New Societies in Turkey

A new conservation society, the Society for the Protection of Wildlife, was founded in Turkey in March 1975. Its first project is the preservation of the endangered last breeding colony of the bald ibis *Geronticus eremita* in Turkey. Six weeks later Wildlife Foundation Turkey, WWF's 26th National Appeal, and the fifth in Asia, was officially launched at Istanbul.

ANTIPODES

Protection by Landowners

A new law in Papua–New Guinea enables landowners to make strict hunting laws for their land and to apply for them to be given the force of law by the Government. A region can be declared a wildlife management area, and regulations as to which animals may be hunted and what fees are payable laid down. The first such



area is the Tonda wildlife area, where only ducks, deer and fish may be hunted. Prospective shooters pay a \$1 fee to enter the area, \$2 each for licences for each type of game, and royalties, payable to the landowner, of \$15 per head for deer, \$1 per head for duck and 30c per kilo for fish.

Butterfly Farming in PNG

The Government of Papua–New Guinea is setting up butterfly farms in the villages as part of its plan both to increase the butterfly population and to provide a steady income for villagers by the sale of bred specimens for overseas as well as for the local tourist market.

Dugongs Drowned off Queensland

Although Australia is the only part of the dugong's wide range where stocks seem to be stable or increasing, many dugongs have been accidentally drowned in the course of the shark-netting campaign sponsored by the Queensland Government. Near Townsville alone 82 were drowned in the first year of the programme, and from 6 to 16 perished in each of the subsequent six years. Although the Government has been persuaded not to extend the netting programme into new areas, it has not yet agreed to replace it with alternative methods, such as baited hooks or shark enclosures. Shark-netting is believed also to take a significant toll of the dugong stocks off Somalia and Kenya.

Fraser Island as National Park

The Australian Conservation Foundation has called for a moratorium on further development of Fraser Island, the biggest sand island in the world, and has urged that it should be scheduled not only as a national park for Queensland, but should be classified under the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which the Australian Government has promised to ratify.

Kangaroos Threatened, not Endangered

Three species of kangaroo, the red, eastern grey and western grey, are to be listed as 'threatened species' by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, instead of as 'endangered' as originally proposed. This is because the Australian Government is going to add them to an appendix of the

Washington Trade Convention that will ensure strict export controls. Field investigations have established that these species are not in danger of extinction in the foreseeable future.

New Marsupial Discovered

A new species of marsupial mouse has been caught in a trap in the Billiatt Conservation Park, a hundred miles east of Adelaide, South Australia. It has been allocated to the Family Dasyuridae, but not yet given a scientific name.

Noisy Scrub-bird Numbers

The number of singing male noisy scrub-birds *Trichornis clamosus* in their sole known habitat in the hilly country around Two People's Bay in Western Australia has remained fairly static around 45 during the past five years.

Restoration of Mangere Island

The efforts of the NZ Wildlife Service to restore the wildlife of overgrazed Mangere Island in the Chatham group are continuing. The island was declared a reserve in 1967, and three years later 23 Chatham Island snipe and 15 shore plover were released there. The snipe have re-established themselves, but the plover returned to their original home, 11 km. away. A planting programme has begun, with the aim of making Mangere once more suitable for the black robin and the Chatham Island yellow-crowned parakeet.

Crested Grebe in Danger

The crested grebe, which is the same species, *Podiceps cristatus*, as the European great crested grebe, has become a rare bird in New Zealand in recent years, and if numbers fall any more, will become endangered. Increased use of its breeding lakes for recreation (fishing, speedboating) and manipulation of their water levels for electricity generation are two of the chief causes of the decline.

Fiji Protects Fauna

Export of the following animals without a permit has been prohibited in Fiji: the goshawk *Accipiter rufitorques*, three bats *Pteropus tonabus*, *Notopteris macdonaldi* and *Emballonura semicaudata*, two frogs *Platymantis vitiensis* and *P. vitianus*, the

venomous land snake *Ogmodon vitianus*, all Pacific boas *Enygrus* spp., and the banded iguana *Brachylophus fasciatus*. The Minister for Agriculture has also added to the list of the island's protected fauna the long-snouted echidna *Zaglossus bruijnii* and the python *Python boeleni*.

THE OCEANS

Atlantic Pollution

Surveys by the Soviet Hydro-Meteorological Service indicate the most seriously polluted areas of the North Atlantic. Greatest pollution by petroleum and its products occurs in the Gulf of Maine area, also on the south coast of Newfoundland and off Florida. Pollution by detergents was worst in the Straits of Gibraltar, and bad off Portugal. Maximum concentrations of mercury were in the Straits of Gibraltar, off Lisbon, in the English Channel and off the west coast of Ireland.

Mauritius Kestrels Breed

To offset the disaster to the captive brood of Mauritius kestrels, one of the two remaining wild pairs of this rarest bird in the world nested successfully in the winter of 1974/75. Shortly afterwards there was a cyclone, and the fears that the total world population might have been swept out to sea have now been dispelled by the sighting of several specimens in a number of areas. It is not, however, yet possible to say just how many have survived.

Efforts are being made to take a pair of another highly endangered Mauritius bird, the pink pigeon *Nesoenas mayeri*, into captivity, since reproductive success in the wild is so low, mainly due to predation by the introduced monkeys.

Endangered in Hawaii

The palila *Psittirostra bailleui*, one of Hawaii's endemic honeycreepers, is endangered in its only remaining habitat, the native mamane-naio forest on the high slopes of Mauna Kea on the Big Island. Its enemies are feral sheep, which destroy its habitat, feral cats, which prey on its eggs and young, and local hunters, who for some inscrutable reason are opposing the hunting of feral sheep in the mamane-naio forest.

NEW NATIONAL PARKS

The USSR is to set up a national park in the Crimea, which will include a high-level nature reserve, the Kara Dag range, with the only (now extinct) Jurassic volcano in Europe, Cape Maryan with its exotic vegetation, and the Khapkal gorge with its beautiful waterfall.

The Sudanese Government has agreed to gazette as national parks Namukunyi and Otome, both contiguous with the Kidepo Valley National Park in Uganda.

Katavi, in the Mpanda district, not far from Lake Tanganyika, is Tanzania's newest national park. It lies within the western branch of the Great Rift Valley.

The Rajasthan Government has declared a desert national park in the Jaisalmer district, for the desert fauna and flora, which includes the rare and decreasing great Indian bustard, as well as desert fox, desert hare and chinkara gazelle.

The Government of Guam is to establish a large national park on the Pacific island's southwestern shore. This would protect dissected volcanic uplands, coastal lowlands, grassland, savanna, coconut stands, ravine forests and 4600 acres of reefs.

NEW NATURE RESERVES

Red Rocks Marsh, Hoylake, the only remaining habitat in Cheshire for the rare natterjack toad, is the Cheshire Trust's latest reserve. The eight acres of sand dunes and marsh lie between the golf links and the sea at the mouth of the Dee.

Keymel Crease, about five acres of cliff land reaching down to the sea at Land's End, is the latest reserve of the Cornwall Naturalists' Trust.

Priestcliffe Lees, 98 acres of limestone grassland and scrub and ashwood, on the south side of the River Wye in Miller's



Dale, is the newest reserve of the Derbyshire Naturalists' Trust. It is to be named the Selby Reserve in honour of Miss Alice Selby, whose bequest made it possible.

The Cawkell Trust has presented Turner's Spring, a 6½-acre wood at Stansted Mountfitchet to the Essex Naturalists' Trust. It is an oxlip wood on boulder clay.

Romers Wood and Motlins Hole, near Tenbury Wells, have been given by Col. W. R. Prescott to the Hereford and Radnor Trust as nature reserves. They are fine examples of mixed oak and ash woodland.

Two new BBONT reserves, both in Oxfordshire: the 58-acre Foxholes Wood, in the Evenlode valley near Bruern, a fine oakwood with bluebells; and a 12-acre patch of chalk grassland and scrub at Hartslock, between Goring and Whitchurch.

A large nature reserve will be established along the margins of the 3100-acre Empingham Reservoir in Rutland, after it begins to fill in 1977, by agreement between the Anglian Water Authority and the Leicestershire and Rutland Trust.

Two new Shropshire Trust reserves: Quarry Wood, Hinstock, eight acres of mixed woodland, by gift from Miss Rachel Lees; and Weir Coppice, Hook-a-gate, leased jointly with Shrewsbury School as an educational reserve.

Groton Wood, the Suffolk Trust's latest reserve, is the subject of a £50,000 appeal. It belonged to John Winthrop before he sailed for New England in 1630 to become the first Governor of Massachusetts.

Castle Hill, 116 acres of grazed chalk grassland on the south-facing slopes of the downs three miles south-west of Lewes, East Sussex, is the 142nd national nature reserve of the Nature Conservancy Council.

Upton Warren, a 60-acre site within 15 miles of the centre of Birmingham, was recently bought by Christopher Cadbury

for the SPNR and is now managed by the Worcestershire Trust under a long lease. It has one large pool of 20 acres and a number of smaller ones, some of them saline.

A new 8000 km.² game reserve has been created at Melville Bay on the west coast of Greenland. It contains the only polar bear denning area south of Thule on the west coast, and is also an important area for ringed seals.

The latest national monument of the United States is the 14,400-acre John Day Fossil Beds, in north central Oregon.

More than a thousand acres in South Dakota and Nebraska, purchased jointly by the National Wildlife Federation and a business corporation have been handed over to the Fish and Wildlife Service to become a national wildlife refuge, especially for the bald eagle.

The Secretary for the Interior is to request that the whooping crane refuge on the Texas Gulf Coast be expanded to include Federal land on nearby Matagorda Island, now that the Air Force is closing down its aerial and gunnery range there.

The Big Thicket National Preserve in Texas is the first area to be designated as a national preserve by the U.S. National Park Service. It is located in a transition zone between the moist eastern woodlands, the arid southwest, the tropical coastal marsh and the central prairie.

A 950-acre of tropical rain forest in Dominica, ten miles from the island's capital, Roseau, has been given to the Nature Conservancy (U.S.A.).

Jordan is to establish a nature reserve at Shaumari in the Azraq oasis area, especially to breed animals endangered or extinct in the wild.

The Government of Kerala, South India, has declared the Eravikulam-Rajamallay-Anaimudi area a sanctuary for the protection especially of the Nilgiri tahr. This is a move for which the FPS has been pressing for some time.

PERSONALIA

The British National Appeal of WWF has appointed five vice-presidents, Aubrey Buxton and Sir Landsborough Thomson (on their resignation as Trustees), together with Sir Frank Fraser Darling, Lord Hurcomb and Guy Mountfort. Four new Trustees have also been appointed: Sir Herbert Bonar, Stuart Johnstone, Herbert Lloyd and Richard Lomer.

Christopher Cadbury, President of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, has been awarded the CBE.

Stanley Cramp, the well known ornithologist and sometime Chairman of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, has been awarded the O.B.E.

Congressman John D. Dingell (Michigan) has relinquished his chairmanship of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment.

Mrs Nicole Duplaix-Hall, has been appointed Scientific Assistant to the General Director of the New York Zoological Society. She has been succeeded as Editor of the International Zoo Yearbook by Peter Olney, Curator of Birds at the Zoological Society of London.

Gary E. Everhardt, lately Superintendent of the Grand Teton National Park, has succeeded Ronald Walker as Director of the U.S. National Park Service.

On resigning after 22 years' service with the Natal Parks Board, Ian Player has been appointed Executive Director of the New York-based International Wilderness Leadership Foundation, which was launched in March 1974. The Foundation aims to develop over a wider area the work begun by Player when he founded the Wilderness Leadership School in Natal in 1957.

Dr S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, has been elected Chairman of the Board of WWF USA.

Sir Peter Scott, Chairman of FPS and high officer of many other conservation bodies, has been awarded the Gold Medal of the New York Zoological Society in recognition of his outstanding services to world conservation. This is only the ninth gold medal awarded by NYZS in 75 years.

Dr Lee Talbot received the Schweitzer Award for 1974 at a ceremony held in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., in January.

OBITUARY

Allan D. Cruickshank, one of America's leading wildlife photographers and for 37 years on the staff of the National Audubon Society, died on October 11, 1974, at the age of 67.

Peter Paul Kellogg, a co-founder of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, died at Houston, Texas, on January 31. He was largely responsible for the Laboratory's leadership in the field of birdsong recording.

TAILPIECE

Even in 1848

"Nor is there much satisfaction in contemplating the world with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature; with every rood of land brought into cultivation which is capable of growing food for human beings; every flowery waste or natural pasture ploughed up, all quadrupeds or birds which are not domesticated for man's use exterminated as his rivals for food, every hedgerow or superfluous tree rooted out, and scarcely a place left where a wild shrub or flower could grow without being eradicated as a weed in the name of improved agriculture. If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger, but not a better or a happier population, I sincerely hope, for the sake of posterity, that they will be content to be stationary, long before necessity compels them to it." - John Stuart Mill.