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# Notes and News

**Ban on Spotted Cat Furs**

A voluntary ban on all trade in the skins of tiger, clouded and snow leopards, giant and La Plata otters, and a three-year ban for leopard and cheetah have been agreed by the International Fur Trading Federation for their members after discussions with the Survival Service Commission of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). Members of the Federation include Fur Trade Associations throughout the world, and the ban is a splendid and effective forward step in the fight to save these severely threatened species; the three-year ban will give IUCN the necessary breathing space to find out the status of leopard and cheetah and whether it is possible to permit a crop on a sustained yield basis. The FPS takes great pride in helping to achieve this agreement by IUCN and IFTF, particularly as two of the IUCN's negotiators were our Chairman, Peter Scott, and our Hon. Secretary, Richard Fitter. The agreement also makes provision for a joint survey of South American cat species, such as jaguar, ocelot and margay cat, whose skins are widely used in the fur trade, it is feared at rates that are rapidly depleting the stocks. One effect of the ban on other cat skins could be an intensification of the hunting pressure on these South American cats. The survey will be directed by Dr Paul Leyhausen, Chairman of the SSC Cat Group.

**Britain Bans Vicuña**

The Board of Trade's decision in October to prohibit all imports of vicuña hair and skins into Britain was splendid news and the culmination of several years of hard pressing on the part of FPS, and especially of our Council member, Sir Berkeley Gage. Formerly British ambassador in Peru, Sir Berkeley took up the cause of this highly endangered Peruvian animal, along with Señor Felipe Benavides of Peru, who has for years been badgering not only the British (and other) governments, but also the FPS to badger the British government! The point is, of course, that vicuña hair comes almost entirely from Peru, with a small amount from Bolivia and Argentina, and that all three countries have banned its export. Consequently any vicuña hair coming into Britain must be contraband and all who trade in it are trading in smuggled goods. In his letter informing FPS of the decision, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade pointed out that 'efforts to stop the international trade in vicuña hair

can be properly effective only through a concerted action of all the major importing countries', but that the British government nevertheless accepts 'the strong arguments for not delaying any further the introduction of a prohibition until such action has been agreed'. Thanks to the new US law passed last December vicuña imports are automatically banned because of the exporting countries' ban on exports. Now we have to turn our efforts on European governments, among whom by far the largest importer of vicuña products is West Germany. The total population of vicuñas is estimated today at a maximum of 15,000. Dr. H. Jungius who has been studying them says that between 1950 and 1970 some 400,000 have been killed. One vicuña produces annually 150–200 grams of hair; in one year Bolivia sold about five tons to the USA—representing the deaths of between 25,000 and 30,000 vicuñas. Properly farmed, of course, it would be possible to take a crop every year, but not until stocks have built up again. In the Pampas Galeras vicuña reserve in Peru, established in 1966 (see ORYX, August 1966) numbers have doubled (despite poaching) and a new and international reserve is being started near Ulla Ulla in Bolivia and extending into Peru.

**Prices Slashed for Spotted Cats**

In New York the World Wildlife Fund this summer made a highly effective agreement with the Furriers' Joint Council, which represents 99 per cent of the 11,000 fur workers in the USA. This was to the effect that its members would no longer 'cut, fashion or fabricate skins taken from species endangered by demands for their skins, including tiger, leopard, cheetah and jaguar. This combined with a New York state law passed earlier this year forbidding the sale of furs from 14 endangered species, brought slashed prices for spotted cat coats in the New York shops. In reporting this the *New Yorker* comments, 'For all the furore, the ban is not likely to cripple the industry. Less than 1 per cent of its $300 million in annual sales comes from spotted cats'. (In the USA 80 per cent of the fur trade is in pelts of animals raised on mink and other ranches). This of course is the point of the whole argument. Conservationists do not want to cripple the industry; they merely want the furriers to lay off these highly endangered species and persuade all ladies wealthy enough to buy leopard to buy mink instead.

**Young Kenyans Watch Their Wildlife**

A really good job is being done in Kenya by the new Wildlife Clubs designed to get young people interested in and knowledgeable about their country's wildlife. The success and rapid growth of the clubs—the first was started in 1968 and there were expected to be 100 by the end of 1970—knocks on the head the idea that Africans (anyhow young Africans) are just not interested in wildlife—except as money-earners. Richard Leakey is chairman, and from a national headquarters at the National Museum in Nairobi, of which he is Administrative Director, the Clubs receive a quarterly newsletter and help in organising their activities, field trips, etc. In

April, 30 delegates from the Clubs (26 boys and 4 girls) attended a seminar which included a week in the Tsavo National Park, at the new Educational Centre in Tsavo East, where they watched the large animals, saw some of the work being done at the Research Centre, attended a demonstration by the Warden's anti-poaching squad, and also had their bus charged by an irate bull elephant. Discussion meetings included one led by Perez Olindo, Director of Kenya National Parks, who has also announced that members of the Club will be admitted free to all Kenya's national parks. 'I cannot say how much I enjoyed the game viewing and bird watching', wrote one young delegate, 'especially when we saw, a few yards away, a brownish hill supported by four poles—that was an elephant'!

**Knysna Elephant Survey**

The most southerly elephants in the world are a little group of ten animals in the forests near Knysna on the south coast of the Cape Province in South Africa. Although very large animals, they are not a subspecies as has sometimes been suggested. A calf was born in March this year, but total numbers do not increase. Last year a well known game warden, Nick Carter, who had been working in the Kruger Park, made a twelve-month study of these elephants for the Wild Life Protection and Conservation Society of South Africa. He concluded that the elephants are breeding normally, there is no lack of food, and that the low numbers are the result of illegal shooting by farmers and smallholders on the edge of the forests, and also hunters who come out to the forests to shoot at night. If one of the young cows were to be killed the odds against the group's survival would be great. He recommends that an area of 25–30 square miles, for which the sea would form the southern boundary, should be fenced in (nine miles of fence) and a full-time warden with staff be appointed.

**Averting Disaster in Liberia**

The wildlife picture in Liberia is one of careless and wanton slaughter that will inevitably mean the extermination of most of it. So great is the hunting pressure (of people killing for meat) that 'it seems a miracle that there still are some animals in Liberia', writes Dr Kai Curry-Lindahl in a report to the Liberian government published by IUCN. This in a country that is short of meat, that does not and could not supply its needs from domestic stock, and where in any case bushmeat seems to be preferred, is lunacy. Liberia, he points out, could develop her wildlife in the same way that she has developed her sea fisheries in recent years. But government control is essential. He recommends as a first step to be taken quickly that the present forest reserves should be turned into combined game and forest reserves, where animal stocks could build up to act as a reservoir for other areas and from which crops could be taken when this became scientifically acceptable. Buffer zones round the reserves could be used for timber production with farming and other land uses further out still. But the important change that must be achieved is to get rid of

the idea that wild animals are only of secondary importance compared with other resources. As a matter of sheer self-interest, Liberia needs the wildlife to feed the people and the present haphazard, uncontrolled, destructive hunting is the way to disaster—and that not so very far ahead. The chimpanzee is the only animal that is fully protected; nevertheless, chimpanzees are intensively hunted throughout the year, pregnant and suckling females killed and the young captured. Three national parks have been planned, but none declared, and there are no wildlife refuges at all. 'There is no area in the whole of Liberia where wildlife is protected.'

**A Zebra Going Downhill**

The cape mountain zebra *Equus zebra zebra*, found only in the Cape Province of South Africa, is down to 140 known animals. In the national park that was created in 1937 to protect them, the Cradock Mountain Zebra Park, numbers have risen to 98 (from six in 1937), but in open country outside the park numbers continue to decline rapidly; only 39 could be found in a province-wide survey by the Cape Department of Nature Conservation, described by J. C. G. Millar in *African Wildlife*, and these he thinks will be exterminated in another ten years if they cannot be protected. The zebra's competition with domestic stock for grazing is what incurs the wrath of farmers, who also find uses for both the meat and skins despite its being on the protected list. The Department proposes that a second reserve for the zebra should be created in the Gamka Mountains, where 15 of the 39 are known to occur; this has been accepted in principle by the administration, but 'the land has yet to be bought and the reserve proclaimed'. The department plans to capture some more using a helicopter and immobilising drugs, and put them in the new reserve, both to increase the numbers and strengthen the population genetically. There is clearly some urgency if these zebras are to be saved. The Cape mountain zebra is the smallest of the zebras, and rather donkey-like in build.

**Wildlife Training at Dehra Dun**

A big step forward for the future of India's wildlife is the establishment of a wildlife management section in the Dehra Dun Forestry School. This is important because only Dehra Dun graduates are eligible for management posts in India's national parks and sanctuaries, and hitherto the training has been exclusively in forestry. The new step means that in due course all park and sanctuary managers (as well as all other forest officers) will have been trained in wildlife management. First to enrol were about a dozen former graduates of Dehra Dun who returned specially for the three month course; five of them came from Maharashtra State, an indication of that State's progressive outlook. After this successful start the course was extended to nine months. It is run by a young forest officer with considerable field experience, Mr Choudury, who, by his drive and enthusiasm, has given the course the impetus that it needs. The course is roughly half theory and half field work; for the latter the students

travel widely. The first course spent some time in the Gir Forest, home of India's sole surviving lions, which has many practical problems and lessons for the enquiring student of wildlife management.

**Problem Tigers in the Sunderbans**

The last tigers in Pakistan are to be found in the Sunderbans, an area of mangrove swamps and jungle in East Pakistan; this was one of the areas proposed for a national park by the Mountfort WWF expedition in 1968. Unfortunately the tigers there have taken to man-eating—no doubt because their own prey (axis deer) has decreased and a woodman or a honey-gatherer, even a fisherman in a boat, is an easy target—the tigers will swim out to a boat. To find the solution for this problem the Survival Service Commission decided to initiate a study of the tigers and recently Dr. Paul Leyhausen, Chairman of SSC's Cat Group, visited the Sunderbans, had valuable talks with the government, and paved the way for the research study to be carried out by Dr. Hendrichs. The East Pakistan government's plans are for two areas in the Sunderbans, both close to the Bay of Bengal and each about 50 square miles, to be set aside as strict nature reserves with no access except for management and research workers. Adjoining both areas will be two national parks of 120 and 70 square miles respectively. The remainder of the Sunderbans, about 3000 square miles, will be declared as a game reserve, with selective, strictly controlled timber working, fishery and hunting in areas to be changed each year according to the game wardens' recommendations.

**Stop the Rhino Horn Merchants**

The demand for its horn is the real cause of the depleted state of the Sumatran rhino population in Sabah, says John MacKinnon, who has just returned from a ten-month stay, most of which he spent in the jungle. He estimates numbers in Sabah at fewer than 100. The rhinos favour hilly areas in eastern Sabah, and prefer the secondary forest where the upper canopy is broken and the smaller shrubs, canes and vines on which they feed are more numerous. For this reason deforestation is not such a serious threat to the rhinos just because they prefer the secondary growth; in fact logging may even help them by encouraging this secondary growth. Unfortunately, the rhinos habitually return to favourite haunts, such as mud wallows, at regular intervals, and skilled hunters make good use of the fact. On the Sagama river where rhinos were formerly common and much hunted by the Dusun people they are now so rare that there is little hunting at all, but there are still the few expert trackers who can find the occasional animal—and John MacKinnon found these trackers' paths in the areas where he had found the most rhino tracks. When they do get a rhino they can expect to make M$2000 from the Chinese merchants in Tawan and Sandakan out of one rhino. (A man's daily pay from a job would be of the order of M$5). With such prices someone is always willing to risk the penalties of taking a protected animal and the only hope of stopping the trade (and the killing), says John Mackinnon,

is to attack the market. 'The conviction of a couple of merchants for buying the horns would be far more effective than convicting the poachers'. Logging, however, is very far from helping the orang utans; indeed it is a serious threat to them. Sabah is exporting £1 million-worth of timber a week to Japan and timber exploitation is on a vast scale. Most orangs are in the forest reserves but this, says John MacKinnon, does not mean security, for the reserves are scheduled to be logged at a controlled rate. The only safe population is the small one on Mount Kinabalu (a national park) and those in the excellent Sepilok scheme (described on page 389); so there is urgent need to declare a new reserve. Once again tourism, carefully planned, might provide the answer. Wild orang utans could be as big a draw as chimpanzees in Africa, and the prospect of tourist revenue might induce the government to support the plan for an orang utan sanctuary.

**Rhinos and Orang Utans in Sumatra**

One of the main surviving populations of the Sumatran rhinoceros is in the Loeser Reserve in northern Sumatra. Following a three months' survey there last summer, Dr. Fred Kurt estimated, from the reports of local hunting guides, that there was a minimum of 28 in the reserve with a possible 30 more in areas where the guides were afraid to go. He never saw a rhino, but he did see rhino traps, and illegal hunting he reckons is intensive. The traps were laid especially in areas frequented by female rhinos. Of the 33 areas in North Sumatra and Adjeh where rhinos still survive, only seven are inside the reserve; seven are in areas of so far untouched primary forest, but eighteen are on the edge of the reserve or in areas belonging to timber concessions where none are likely to survive unless they can be moved. Orang utans also are more numerous outside the reserve than in: about one third are estimated to be inside, the remainder in areas of shifting cultivation or timber concessions; many miserable captives are also kept by villagers in very poor, often horrible conditions. A considerable rescue programme is needed for both rhinos and orang utans, both highly endangered species: more sanctuaries, careful planning of timber extraction so that there are no isolated pockets of either animal, and rehabilitation centres for each species.

**Search for Monk Seal Caves**

'The entire Mediterranean monk seal population probably does not exceed 500 animals', says the Red Data Book of IUCN and gives it a red sheet to indicate 'in danger of extinction'. Last summer the Italian Appeal of the World Wildlife Fund started a research programme to find out what measures would ensure its conservation in Sardinia. In grottoes round the Sardinian coast the seals still find refuges and breeding places, but many of these are becoming so disturbed, especially by tourists, that the seals are unlikely to stay. WWF has financed two surveys, one of all the grottoes in the Gulf of Orosei by the Speleological Group of Piedmont, including the famous and much visited Grotto of the Sea Ox (del Bue Marino), to find

out which are occupied by seals so that visitors could be directed to the unoccupied ones; the other a scientific study by Dr Walter Scott of UFAW (a recent FPS Council member) on the monk seal's biology. The Red Data Book, quoting Van Wijngaarden, states the reason for their decline to be 'unceasing pursuit by fishermen and disturbance of their last remaining refuges (caves with submarine entrances) by skin divers'.

**Tackling Hawaii's Problems**

'The list of native species threatened with extinction in Hawaii includes all the mammals, all freshwater fishes, half the land molluscs, a quarter of the insects and of the ferns, 300 species of flowering plants and 36 per cent of the birds; another 36 per cent have already been exterminated.' This appalling catalogue comes from the IUCN *Bulletin*, reporting a Smithsonian Institution Colloquium held in Washington last May to focus attention on the situation. The island's native animals and plants are among the world's unique, most diversified and scientifically significant. The major destructive factor is, of course (where is it not?), the destruction of habitat, especially the few remaining virgin forests, by land development, building and commercial forestry. Hawaii also has several of the other classic causes of wildlife decline: introduction of exotic species, pesticides and pollution. And the remedies are equally classic: reserves to protect the wildlife, research to provide the facts for sound management, planning to avoid irreversible damage, control over the import of exotics and, last but far from least, education. A major meeting in Hawaii was planned for December to bring together those involved in the task of saving Hawaii's wildlife and to hammer away at getting done some of the vital things that everybody has known for years ought to be done.

**Conservation Plan for Dominica**

Unrestricted forest exploitation in the Caribbean island of Dominica threatens not only wildlife and the forests as a resource (for there is little replanting) but also destroys the watershed protection against erosion and floods. A Conservation Foundation report, *Dominica, A Chance for a Choice* analyses the island's resources and potential, and urges the establishment of a national park in the south centre of the island. This coincides with an area that has already been recommended for protection for forest and water resources and electrical power, includes large tracts of so far undisturbed rain forest, and also a 1400-acre private estate conditionally offered to the government by a landowner concerned at the forest destruction, whose conditions would be met by the project. It would not be a park to attract mass tourism, but primarily to protect the island's natural resources, especially water, and one which Dominicans themselves could enjoy, with educational facilities such as nature trails and exhibits. The Dominican government is most sympathetic to the plan, and the Foundation has great hopes of a successful outcome. Large animals are few in Dominica. There is a large West Indian wood frog *Leptodactylus fallox*, known

(perhaps ominously!) as the mountain chicken, which is thought to be commoner on Dominica than anywhere else in the Caribbean. The forests have a small opossum, agouti (a rabbit-sized rodent) and boa constrictors. But the wildlife wealth is in the birds, which include two endemic parrots, both in the IUCN Red Data Book: the sisseron, or imperial parrot *Amazona imperialis*, and the red-necked parrot *A. arausicaca*.

**Wild versus Domestic in Ethiopia**

A working plan for Ethiopia's first national park, the Awash, has been drawn up by a Scottish ecologist, Ian Robertson, who was seconded to Ethiopia's Wildlife Conservation Department for two years' work in the park by the British Ministry of Overseas Development. The plan aims, by management of selected habitats, to increase the populations of beisa oryx, Soemmering's gazelle, greater and lesser kudu and defassa waterbuck; to translocate breeding units of Swayne's hartebeest, giraffe, buffalo, black rhinoceros and possibly Grévy's zebra, to areas where they can be protected; and to improve facilities for visitors. Much has been achieved in the Awash park already, but until the Ethiopian authorities face up to the central problem—how much longer nomadic pastoralists are to be allowed to graze their vast herds of sheep, goats, cattle and camels in the park, competing for the grazing with the wildlife—the finest management plans can make little headway.

**Substitutes for Primates**

Between 160,000 and 200,000 primates (non-human) were involved in the world primate trade in 1968, is the estimate of Barbara Harrisson in a massive factual paper on primates prepared for the Third International Congress on Primatology and the SSC's Primate Group, meeting in Zürich last August. Rhesus from South Asia and vervets from Africa are the predominant Old World species, both used in large numbers for medical research, the former for live tissue for vaccine production, the latter for vaccine and other testing. The New World imports are probably roughly divided half to medicine and half to the pet trade. The species most threatened by the latter is the chimpanzee. Her analysis of the statistics here suggests that up to 6000 chimpanzees (allowing for losses) are being taken every year from the wild. 'The pharmaceutical industries of developed nations are the major consumer of lives of non-human primates', she writes. 'They have a commitment to produce safer drugs; but they should also be committed to promote the continued survival of natural resources'. Moreover ways of doing this are coming increasingly to hand. The use of human diploid cell strains for producing virus vaccines including polio is not new; according to the recently founded FRAME (Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments), whose work dovetails neatly with that of wildlife conservationists, such vaccines have been used without any problems on 10 million people in Russia, Poland, Yugoslavia and the American forces, and these vaccines are in fact safer:

in eight years of tests no contaminants have been found, whereas the monkey kidney tissues used for vaccine production have yielded 57. So far the British Government has not permitted the use of this method which alone could save large numbers of primates every year. Computers too can be used to simulate a number of processes and make predictions on drug action which hitherto have been discoverable only by the use of laboratory animals.

**Will the Government play?**

The third and last Countryside in 1970 Conference, under its royal patronage, has come and gone. Within fairly strict limits it has been successful. It has lifted co-operation between many disparate bodies—farmers, public utilities, conservationists, local authorities—to a plane that was hardly dreamed about when the first conference met in 1963. But, while it may have helped to bring about a big and hopefully lasting change in public opinion, the captain of the *Torrey Canyon* did almost as much. Indeed, the force of events might alone have been enough to achieve this dramatically changed climate of opinion without any aid from the Countryside in 1970, worthy as that was. For worthiness is not now enough; political action is essential and urgent. If the Government is aware of this, the Prime Minister, in his Guildhall address to the Conference on October 28th, gave no inkling of it. He beamed his goodwill, he spoke of the high priority his Government attaches to enhancing the quality of the environment, he said he had provided the necessary machinery. But he did not say what his Government would do, or indeed whether it would do anything at all. Politicians have so bad a reputation for backing down on promises, that we can hardly be expected to cheer at the prospect that, when they have taken deep thought, they will return with plans for action. When a British politician loses his seat on a conservation issue—as has already happened in America and Germany—then we may see results.

## Sea Otters taken to Oregon

Twenty-nine sea otters have been taken from Amchitka Island in the Aleutians (between North America and Russia) and released in the kelp beds off the Oregon coast, where the species was once abundant, in the hope of re-establishing it there. The operation was a joint one by the Oregon Game Commission, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the US Atomic Energy Commission—the last making some amends to conservation-minded Americans for blasting off a nuclear device on Amchitka Island.

## Turtles in Mozambique

As a result of his turtle survey on the Mozambique coast—part of the IUCN/SSC comprehensive survey in the south-western Indian Ocean—George Hughes reports that the green turtle is very common in Mozambique waters but needs better protection on the nesting beaches; that the hawksbill is common in the north, but the tortoiseshell export should be stopped or at least controlled; that the loggerhead, though common in the

south, is in grave danger due to the severe hunting of nesting females; that the ridley is not uncommon north of the Zambesi, and that the leatherback, though not uncommon in the south, is endangered by the intense hunting of nesting females. He has asked the Mozambique Government to have certain areas fully protected and recommends that they have the status of marine national parks.

## SOS for Addax in Chad

From Chad come reports that both scimitar-horned oryx and addax, both Red Book species (the addax on a red sheet that indicates danger of extinction) and both of which have their main populations in Chad, are drastically reduced in numbers, about 5000 for the oryx and only 1500 for the addax (compared with the 1964 estimate in the Red Data Book of 4000). In a letter to WWF, the Director of National Parks, Monsieur M. Anna, points out that Chad has created a large new reserve Onadi Rime—Onadi Achim, for the protection of these and other species, but does not have the personnel (or the funds) to guard it: twenty guards (on foot) are inadequate where what is needed is 150 with vehicles. Entry to the reserve is by permit only—except for the military.

## Peace Corps and Conservation

An agreement by which the Smithsonian Institution is to recruit graduate volunteers for the Peace Corps to do conservation work in developing countries means that the Peace Corps now includes conservation work in its programme as a recognised form of aid. When the Peace Corps receives a request for such assistance the Smithsonian will recruit suitable graduates who will then be supported by the Peace Corps. Among the first requests is one from the Colombian Government for a conservation and national parks project, asking for volunteers skilled in ecology, limnology, ornithology, mammalogy, herpetology, as well as park planning, wildlife management, soil conservation and watershed control techniques.

## Russia Protects Seals and Dolphins

Regulations protecting all marine animals in Russian waters became effective on January 1, 1970: they regulate all hunting of seals, eared seals and dolphins, with special rules governing the hunting of whales. In the Far North the people, who depend on fishing, are permitted to hunt these animals, except fur seals, up to limits which are set by scientists and regional committees. For others even to visit the breeding places is forbidden and no construction work is allowed within twelve miles of a breeding ground. The Baikal and Caspian seals are also fully protected.

## Development that is Destruction

Dr Theodore Barducci, of Peru, reported to a conference on the Ecological Aspects of International Development held in Virginia in June 1969, that insect pests on cotton in the Canete Valley, over a period of eight years, developed an immunity to insecticides; most of the useful insects, however, were destroyed, and the levels of pest infestation then increased despite spraying; when spraying was stopped and selected biological controls used instead, pest levels dropped rapidly and remained low. At the same meeting, Dr Raymond Fosberg described how mining on Banaba Island in the Pacific destroyed the soil vegetation and freshwater resources, so that the islanders had to use their share of the mining profits to buy another island and move to it.