



Briefly

INTERNATIONAL

Japan to Join CITES

Japan, one of the world's major importers of wildlife products, has nearly completed formal proceedings for ratification of CITES. This follows a campaign by the Wild Bird Society of Japan and WWF Japan in which more than 20,000 signatures were collected in favour of the treaty.

Latest Ratifications

Israel, China and the Central African Republic have ratified CITES, bringing total membership to 61.

Prince Philip to Head WWF

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, will become President of WWF in 1981.

IUCN Director-General

Dr Lee M. Talbot, Director of Conservation World Wildlife Fund, and a Vice-President of FPS, succeeded Dr David A. Munro as Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature on August 1. Dr Munro resigned for personal reasons.

Pesticides Kill Us Too

The World Health Organisation estimates half a million people are poisoned every year from direct exposure to pesticides. About 5000 of these die.

Little Bustard Endangered

The little bustard *Tetrax tetrax* is the latest bustard to go on the danger list, with numbers heavily reduced throughout its range. It appears to be extinct in Eastern Europe and non-Soviet Asia, and on the verge of extinction in Soviet Asia, North Africa, Italy and Sardinia. In France it is considered likely to disappear by the end of the century. Only in Spain and Portugal does it still occur in any numbers.



Little bustard

Primate Imports

In 1977-8 the US imported about 60,000 primates, 90 per cent of them from Malaysia, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Kenya, Bolivia, Thailand and Somalia. Rhesus macaques were the commonest import in 1977, but after the Indian ban on rhesus exports, effective from April 1 1978, they were replaced by other macaques from South-east Asia. The other major imports, in declining order, were squirrel monkeys, tree shrews, marmosets, black-faced vervet monkeys, baboons and douroucoulis.

Primate Exports

According to figures given to the International Primate Protection League by an Indonesian animal dealer, from January 1 to September 17 1979 Indonesia exported 17,092 crab-eating and 815 pigtail macaques. Major importers were the US, 4320; Taiwan, 4300; Japan, 2566; Sweden, 1675; Netherlands, 1320; and Britain, 1062.

WFPA, ISPA to Merge

The World Federation for the Protection of Animals and the International Society for the Protection of Animals, which are already co-operating in several projects, have begun meeting the legal requirements for a full merger, probably early in 1981.

Tragopan Studbook

The IUDZG (International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens) has started a studbook for Cabot's tragopan *Tragopan caboti*, with Tim Lovel, Chairman of the World Pheasant Association, and Wolfgang Grummt, Director of East Berlin Zoo, as joint keepers.

New Lion Tamarin Studbook

The 1979 International Studbook for golden lion tamarin *Leontopithecus rosalia rosalia*, compiled by D.G. Kleiman, shows 162 animals in captivity on December 31 1979 - 71 males, 84 females, 7 young.

Arabian Oryx Studbook

The 1979 Arabian Oryx Studbook, keeper Dr James M. Dolan, San Diego Zoological Society, shows 159 males and 163 females at December 31; 48 births and 17 deaths were recorded during the year.

Threatened Plants Sub-Committee

A TPC Lichen Sub-Committee has been set up, chaired by Dr Mark Seaward at the University of Bradford, W. Yorkshire BD7 1DP.

Briefly

BRITISH ISLES

NCC Grants Rise, Disappear

During 1978/79 the Nature Conservancy Council paid out a record amount in grants for nature conservation projects, £180,000, or nearly three times the amount for the previous year. For the first time the NCC grant-aided the purchase of nature reserves – £50,000 for eight reserves. In 1979/80 the NCC budget was severely cut, with little or no money available for such grants.

Reserve Leases Expiring

Leases on 44 of the Nature Conservancy Council's 164 National Nature Reserves will expire in the 1980s, and the Council is concerned about whether enough funds will be available to renew them all (assuming that all the landowners want them renewed). Of the system's 320,000 acres only about 83,000 are actually owned by the NCC.

Wildlife of Glasgow

Children recording the fauna on a piece of waste ground in a loop of the Clyde in Glasgow's East End found, in two years, 117 bird species, 19 mammals and 6 fish. Planning permission has been given for building, but the children are campaigning to save the site ('the only piece of countryside we've got'), have made a film about it and have begun to record its flora. Save the Loop Action Group, Dolphin Arts Centre, 7 James Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow G40.

Mute Swans Oiled

Mute swans feeding on the drainage from a food processing plant in the Montrose Basin near Dundee were oiled when the drains disgorged leakage from a commercial heating system; 209 of the flock of 211 were affected, and 23 died.

Mine Seepage Kills Salmon

Acidic water seeping from a disused coal mine at Dailly in Ayrshire has killed hundreds of salmon in the Water of Girvan on Scotland's west coast. A court order requires the National Coal Board to control the seepage, estimated at 400,000 gallons a day, so far without result.

Bardsey Money Raised in Two Years

The Bardsey Island Appeal, for the acquisition of the well-known bird island off the coast of North Wales, has been closed after raising £219,350 in two years. The target was £200,000 in three years. The Endowment Fund of the new Bardsey Island Trust is still open.

Bardsey
Island

Lleyn Peninsula

Donations to Appeal Treasurer, Midland Bank, High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd.

Nine Years of Oiled Birds

At least 46,000 oiled birds have died around the British coast in the past nine years, often from slicks caused by ships illegally dumping oil, reports the RSPB. The IMCO (International Maritime Consultative Organisation) designation of 'areas to be avoided by certain classes of ships' has been generally ignored.

Sullom Voe Bans Ship

A Greek tanker, the *Mihalia*, was refused entry to the Sullom Voe oil terminal after having been seen by a surveillance aircraft to be trailing an oil slick 1.5km long and 50m wide. The ship waited outside the port for 10 days while its owners tried unsuccessfully to sue the local authority, the Shetland Islands Council, but finally left.

British Seal Count

The Natural Environment Research Council reports that in 1978 there were 70,000 grey seals *Halichoerus grypus* and 19,500 common seals *Phoca vitulina* in British waters.

Sperm Oil Imports

In 1979 Britain imported 864 tonnes of crude sperm oil, worth £298,000, from the Canary Islands, Peru, Norway and France.

New Elm Disease Technique

Trees with Dutch elm disease that are killed off with the herbicide cacodylic acid prove to be as attractive to the bark beetles that are the disease's vector as live elms; because the breeding galleries in the dead trees fail to develop, this may be a way to reduce the beetles. The British Forestry Commission is supervising trials of the technique in northern England.

Mosses and Liverworts Code

The British Bryological Society has produced a Code of Conduct for the conservation of Britain's 700 species of mosses and 300 of liverworts. Obtainable from Dr P.D. Coker, School of Biological Sciences, Thames Polytechnic, Welling Street, London SE18 6PF (send SAE).

EUROPE

Lufthansa Takes Hard Line

Lufthansa, the West German national airline, has announced that it will no longer carry any live animal listed on Appendix I of CITES. It is the first such ban imposed by a major international airline.

Polish Pollution

According to a Polish underground news journal, Polish coastal waters are much more polluted than has ever been officially admitted. The completion of a new oil refinery at Gdansk is said to have been followed by a sharp increase in reports of oil slicks, and Poland has no tugboats capable of dealing with a major accident. Sewage flowing into the Gulf of Danzig from Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot is untreated, and many beaches in the area are closed to water sports.

Swedes Want Pollution Action

The Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature has written to all EEC governments urging each one to follow up its signature in November 1979 of the Convention on Long-Range Trans-Frontier Air Pollution, by taking 'concrete measures to limit the emission of sulphur'. The Convention, signed by 31 countries and the EEC, assumes that each country will achieve this by the gradual introduction of new machinery and processes to lower pollution and deal with flue gases.

Swedish Merlins Safe, Just

A four-year study (1975-8) of 66 merlin *Falco columbarius* nests, most of them in Sweden's Stora Sjöfaklet National Park, found that the birds were producing an average of 2.6 fully-fledged young per nest (2.5 is the level needed to maintain the population), but pesticide residues in the birds were high.

Hungarian Sea Eagles

Since 1975 white-tailed sea eagles wintering in Hungary's Hortobágy National Park have been fed every year, mainly with offal and carp, to ensure they get uncontaminated food. Only 1-3 pairs now nest in Hungary even in a good year, and often these fail to rear young.

Shared Protection

The Threatened Plants Committee (TPC) has prepared a list of sites of threatened Aegean endemic plants. Many are on coastal cliffs and it is hoped that some may be protected by inclusion in marine reserves for the endangered Mediterranean monk seal.

Fewer Hunters in Lombardy

The number of licensed hunters in the Italian Province of Lombardy, which includes Milan, fell from 230,000 in 1977 to 190,000 in 1978 with the introduction of strict written exams as a licence requirement. The failure rate in 1979 was said to be 60 per cent.

Frogs' Legs Imports Rise

Between 1975 and 1978 imports of frogs' legs to West Germany rose from 228 tons to 442 tons. Main exporters were India, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Malaysia. Throughout Europe the demand for wild frogs has far exceeded supply.

Soviet Poaching Penalties

A Soviet court has sentenced two shepherds who poached an elk to one year's 'improvement work', confiscation of their weapons, and fines equal to 20 per cent of their annual wages plus 810 roubles each.

Portuguese Precedent

Portugal becomes the first nation in the world to make constitutional provision for protection of the environment with Article 66 of its new constitution: 'All men are entitled to enjoy and obliged to defend a healthy and ecologically balanced human environment.' Section 2c obliges the Government to 'create and develop natural parks and recreation areas in addition to classifying and protecting landscapes and sites in order to guarantee the conservation of nature . . .'

NORTH AMERICA

Endangered Species Act Amended

Amendments to the US Endangered Species Act have made the formerly independent Endangered Species Scientific Authority (ESSA) answerable to the Secretary of Interior, and created a new independent Scientific Advisory Commission (SAC) with no power to enforce its decisions, as ESSA previously could. Reasons for rejecting its advice, however, must be published in the Federal Register.

EPA Gets Tough

The US Environmental Protection Agency, which estimates that 90 per cent of the 50 million tonnes of toxic wastes produced every year in the US are disposed of by 'environmentally unsound methods', has announced new waste-disposal regulations involving strict Government monitoring and a



compulsory EPA disposal permit. The cost to the chemical industry will be thousands of millions of dollars a year.

Paehlke's Law

Robert Paehlke, writing in *Nature Canada* on containment of hazardous chemicals, suggests that the first principle of environmental protection ought to be . . . Everything leaks.

Ten Most

The Department of Interior has published a list of the US's ten most endangered species: black-footed ferret, red wolf, dusky seaside sparrow, Kauai oo, snail darter, Houston toad, birdwing pearly mussel, lotis blue butterfly and clay-loving phacelia (a plant of which only four specimens survive in Utah). The Department admits that a 'ten most' list is mainly a publicity device to draw attention to the 221 endangered plants and animals in the US.

Dangerous Trade

Wyoming's Department of Game and Fish reports that conservation agents are more likely to be injured or killed by firearms than any other kind of law enforcement officer.

Bats Listed

Two subspecies of big-eared bat, the Virginia *Plecotus townsendi virginianus* and Ozark *P. t. ingens*, have been listed as endangered by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Five caves in West Virginia have been designated as Critical Habitat for the Virginia race, numbering about 4000 in West Virginia, Virginia and Kentucky, but the caves used by the Ozark bat, now down to 100-200 in Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, are not protected because the bats do not use any particular ones regularly.

Fox Squirrel Reintroduction

The endangered Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel *Sciurus niger cinereus*, now confined to four counties in Maryland and one in Virginia, will be reintroduced to parts of its historic range in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware. The Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to establish some 30 new colonies.

Colorado Reintroduces Bighorn

The Colorado Division of Wildlife, which has already successfully reintroduced moose and river otters to parts of their historical ranges, has released 11 desert bighorn sheep in the semi-arid canyon country west of Grand Junction, where petroglyphs show that they were once fairly abundant.

Outboards Out

A gradual phase-out of motorised craft on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park has been announced by the Park Service. If successful it will be oars only after 1985.

Plant Recovery Plan

The Fish and Wildlife Service has contracted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to prepare a recovery plan for the endangered northern wild monkshood *Aconitum noveboracense*, a member of the buttercup family found in south-eastern Wisconsin and north-eastern Iowa, with scattered populations in Ohio and New York. It is the first time that the Service has chosen a single plant as the subject of a recovery programme.

End of Coyote Bounties

Michigan, the last US state to offer coyote bounties, will no longer do so. The rate was \$15 for a male and \$20 for a female.

Disappearing Wetlands

A report released by the Council for Environmental Quality estimates that 40 per cent of the US's original wetlands have been destroyed and about 300,000 acres a year continue to be lost to agriculture, highways, building, dumps and dredging for marinas and ports. However, some hope lies in the fact that for the first time in its 200-year history the Federal Government is advocating preservation of wetlands, as opposed to subsidising their destruction.

Exotic Fish

Eighty-four exotic fish species are living feral in US waters, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Thirty-nine have breeding populations, eight of which are expanding rapidly.

Striped Bass Decline

The striped bass, a popular sport and food fish off the US Atlantic coast that spawns in rivers, has been declining steadily since 1970. Possible causes include pollution, overfishing, obstructive dams, changes in ocean currents and scarcity of food. Congress has appropriated \$1 million to study the problem.

Last Chantecler Dies

The last known Chantecler chicken, a six-year-old cockerel, has died in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Developed in the early 1900s by Cistercian monks, this was the only breed officially recognised as being of Canadian origin.

Just Asking

The International Safari Club of Tucson, Arizona, asked permission to import, annually, 1125 hunting trophies, including 5 gorillas, 5 orang utans, 5 red colobus monkeys, 10 cheetahs, 150 African leopards, 50 ocelots, 10 white rhinos, 25 tigers, 100 Hartmann's mountain zebra, 40 jaguars, and several kinds of endangered antelopes. Permission was refused.

The Sophisticated Predator

Canadian biologists have discovered an attractant that draws wolves, and only wolves, to traps: Chanel No. 5 perfume.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN**Effects of Tortoiseshell Ban**

Janet Barber of WWF reports that in Barbados, St Vincent and Grenada the US ban on tortoiseshell imports has caused the prices of tortoiseshell jewellery in curio shops to drop sharply, and shopkeepers are turning to coconut shell, acrylic and 'cow hoof'. Other wildlife products on sale were coral, shells, sharks' teeth and jaws, stuffed caimans from Guyana, puffer fish and, on St Vincent, scrimshaw from the island of Bequia, where whaling continues.

Tortoiseshell Exports

The main Caribbean tortoiseshell exporters are Cuba, Haiti, the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands, and the main importer is Japan.

Mexican Monarchs Protected

The President of Mexico has issued an edict protecting the monarch butterfly in his country, where there is a major wintering ground, following a representation from the Survival Service Commission.

Forestry Laws Ignored

A Mexican senator has accused the paper industry of ignoring federal, state and municipal laws protecting forests in the south of the country and predicts that, without new legislation and stricter enforcement, they will disappear in a few years.

Australian Turtles from Mexico

The CITES Management Authority in Switzerland discovered several consignments of Appendix I olive ridley turtle skins from

Mexico (via Italy) labelled *Chelonia depressa*, the Appendix II flatback turtle found only in northern Australia, as well as another olive ridley shipment labelled *Podocnemis expansa*, an Amazonian river turtle.

Conservation Incentives

Costa Rica, which loses some 60,000ha of forest a year to developers, farmers and loggers, has announced a new forestry programme designed to make up the loss. Tax deductions, low-interest loans, technical assistance and free seeds will be offered for reforestation projects, and surveillance of forest reserves increased.

Nicaraguan Environment Institute

The Nicaraguan Government has set up a Natural Resources and Environment Institute (INRA), the first official environmental body in the country's history.

Vicuña in Bolivia

Bolivia has established five new vicuña reserves: Huancaroma, San Andrés de Machaca, Laruta-Charaña, Jesús de Machaca and Altamachi Refuges, with over 900 animals between them. A census in the Ulla Ulla National Reserve last winter showed over 1100 vicuña.

AFRICA**Bangui Ivory Ban**

The Central African Republic, where poachers have been killing about 6000 elephants a year, has prohibited elephant hunting and banned all trade in ivory.

Single-handed Slaughter

A Namibian farmer has been fined R250 for killing 21 black rhinos and four elephants in Kaokaland and Damaraland, areas in which a previous survey had found only 50 rhinos. South Africa's Endangered Wildlife Trust believes that remaining rhino populations are now so small that recovery is unlikely.

Gangs in Luangwa

The Zambian Government and WWF have launched a \$3 million anti-poaching programme in the Luangwa Valley, home of 1200 black rhinos and 55,000 elephants. This follows a report by Peter Murphy, Head of IUCN/WWF Project Management, that some 10 large gangs of poachers armed with automatic rifles are operating there. The



Luangwa guard force will be doubled, and more airplanes and other vehicles will be added to the present equipment. The Wildlife Conservation Society of Zambia, the Honorary Rangers and members of the Zambian business community are helping, and a local mining company has offered the use of its computers.

New Environment Ministry

President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya has divided the former Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife into a Ministry of Tourism and a Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. The latter is headed by Andrew John Omanga, and Assistant Ministers are Philip Leakey and J.K. Munene. J.G. Shamalla is Permanent Secretary. The new Minister of Tourism is Gilbert M'Mgijiwe.

Conservationist Advice on Kagera

In response to pressure from IUCN and UNESCO, UNDP has agreed to add two ecologists to its 27-man mission to assess the Kagera Basin project, which aims to turn 80,000ha of East African savanna lowland, including part of Rwanda's Akagera National Park, into farmland.

Flooding Compensation

President Senghor of Senegal has promised to give additional land to Niokolo-Koba National Park in compensation for park land that will be flooded by a proposed dam project.

Apes for Fertility Research

Gabon's International Centre for Medical Research, which opened in Franceville in December 1979, is using chimpanzees and gorillas for research into human fertility, which the country's leaders reckon is too low (the International Demographic Center puts the Gabonese population at 637,000). The International Primate Protection League reports in its March *Newsletter* that the Centre holds 20-30 wild-caught chimps and two baby gorillas, survivors of an original eight.

Cancer in Giraffes

In many parts of South Africa giraffes have been found to be suffering from a form of skin cancer that causes horn deformities and discoloration of the neck and rump. The cause is uncertain, but the cancerous giraffes are more likely to come from areas they share with domestic cattle, and both animals appear to carry a similar virus.

Cheetah in Libya

In Libya a single cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* was seen 30km south of Beida in 1979. Genets

Genetta genetta were found dead in the road on four occasions, and local chicken farmers consider them a common menace. Porcupines *Hystrix cristata* still occur.

Cheetah in South Africa

Cheetah still occur on privately owned stock farms in the northern Cape and in northern and eastern Transvaal, but since they are accused of damaging stock and are unprotected, their numbers are falling. They occur in both the Kruger and the Kalahari Gemsbok National Parks. In the Umfolozi and Hluhluwe game reserves in Natal, where they were reintroduced in 1965, they have increased satisfactorily, and are seen regularly.

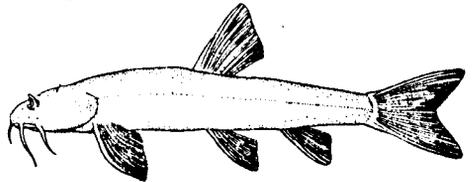
Demoiselle Cranes in Morocco

In spring 1980 a small population of possibly three pairs of demoiselle cranes was discovered near Fez, Morocco.

ASIA

New Chinese Cave Fish

A new species of blind white fish has been discovered in the waters of caves 400m underground in Yunnan, China, and named



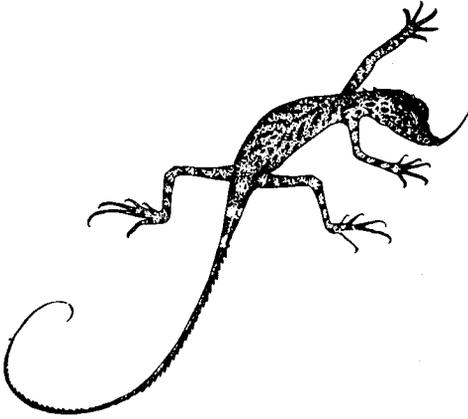
Noemacheilus gejuensis. Like the recently discovered *N. smithi* in Iranian caves, named after Anthony Smith who discovered it, the fish has no eyes at all, only vestigial orbits, but is otherwise shorter and lacks the deep adipose ridge between the caudal and dorsal fins. It is described in *Acta Zoologica Sinica* 25:3.

Indian Rhino Increase

Indian rhinos in Kaziranga National Park in Assam have increased to about 960, and any further increase would be beyond the park's carrying capacity. Translocation to other parks is being considered, with Dudhwa National Park in Uttar Pradesh as the first choice.

Siberian Tiger Increase

In the past decade Siberian tigers in the Soviet Far East have increased from 130 to 200, mainly because of strict protection laws.



New Lizard in Sarawak

A new species of lizard, *Harpesaurus thescelorphinos*, has been discovered in Sarawak and is described by F. Wayne King in the *Sarawak Museum Journal*. It is the first of its genus to be found on the island of Borneo.

Mammals of Tibet

Acta Zoologica Sinica (26:1, 1980) reports that Chinese zoologists conducting a mammal survey in south-eastern Tibet in 1973 returned with 498 specimens belonging to 7 orders, 16 families, 46 genera and 80 species; 46 per cent were native to the Oriental zone, 37 per cent were Palaearctic, and 16½ per cent were distributed in both zones. The animals included clouded leopard, Pallas's cat, Oriental small-clawed otter and steppe polecat.

Eagles Rediscovered

Philippine eagles (formerly called monkey-eating) have been rediscovered on three islands: Luzon, Samar and Leyte.

Flamingoes in Kazakhstan

Aerial counts of flamingoes on the lakes of Kazakhstan SSR estimate 35,000 in the Republic.

Crocodiles Protected

Indonesia has protected two crocodiles, the Siamese *Crocodylus siamensis* and New Guinea *C. novaeguineae*, and the false gharial *Tomistona schlegelii*, making it illegal to catch, kill or trade in them without permission from the Director of Conservation.

Burma Interested in Croc Farming

Burma, which is planning a crocodile conservation and management scheme, has

sent three trainees to Papua New Guinea to study crocodile farming.

PPA Takes Over Orang Station

The Bohorok Orangutan Station has been transferred to the Indonesian Directorate of Nature Conservation (PPA). Started in 1973 it has hitherto been supported by the Frankfurt Zoological Society and WWF. The station has received 102 orang utans, most of them confiscated.

Caged Bird Ban

Sri Lanka has banned all trade in caged birds.

ANTIPODES

Tasmanians Oppose Dam System

Opinion Polls show that a 2-1 majority of Tasmanians are opposed to the hydroelectric development proposed for the Lower Gordon river system. The scheme if implemented would flood the wilderness catchment area which harbours many rare and endemic species, including 18 indigenous animals, the ground and orange-bellied parrots, and several recently discovered plant species. IUCN has appealed to the Tasmanian Government to make the area a national park.

Tasmanian Discovery

The New Holland mouse *Pseudomys novaehollandiae*, previously known only from the Australian mainland, has been recorded for the first time in Tasmania, living in heath and woodland along the north-east coast. Since its preferred habitat is fire-dependent, the Tasmanian populations, like the Australian ones, are scattered, separated by areas that have not been allowed to burn.

Plant Rediscovered

Six specimens of the Mogumber bell *Darwinia carnea*, for many years thought to be extinct, have been found on a small stony ridge south of Narrogin, Western Australia.

DDT and Australian Peregrines

In Australia, where DDT is still legal, researchers have confirmed that peregrine eggshells in intensively farmed areas are some 15 per cent thinner than normal. The difference in falcon productivity between contaminated and uncontaminated study areas was about 35 per cent.



Rock Wallaby Decline

Early reports from a Western Australian survey of black-flanked rock wallabies *Petrogale penicillata lateralis* in nature reserves in the wheatbelt area south of Kellerberrin indicate a sharp decline, possibly due to predation by foxes and feral cats. Small groups of wallabies were found at only ten sites on the large granite outcrops that they inhabit, and many suitable sites were uninhabited. Only one juvenile was seen.

Dingoes, Snakes Lose Protection

The Western Australian Government has decreed that dingoes and poisonous snakes are not protected anywhere in the State and that an Agricultural Protection Board officer may enter a national park or nature reserve to kill them without special permission.

Dune Restoration

Australian Consolidated Industries, which until 10 years ago was mining a unique sand dune system near Adelaide, South Australia, is restoring the area with some success. After layers of soil were replaced and stabilising crops planted and irrigated, some 25 species of native plants returned, and some re-contoured dunes are reported to be as stable as natural ones.

Kokako Colony Found

When nearly 100 kokako *Callaeas cinerea wilsoni* were discovered in Puketi State Forest in northern North Island, New Zealand, in an area marked for logging, the Forest Service agreed to change its plans and log somewhere else. The kokako is one of three members of the wattlebird family, which also includes the saddleback, restricted to a few offshore islands, and the extinct huia. The other subspecies, the South Island kokako *C. c. cinerea*, has not been seen in 30 years. All the wattlebirds have been affected by habitat destruction and introduced cats, rats and stoats.

OCEANS

Ixtoc Capped

The *Ixtoc I* gusher in the Gulf of Mexico, source of the world's greatest oil spill, was finally capped on March 24 1980, after losing 140 million gallons in 295 days.

Arctic Oil Leases Blocked

The US Government's failure to comply with the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act has halted the sale of

oil leases worth \$1000 million covering 800 square miles of the Beaufort Sea off Alaska's North Slope. Deciding in favour of a consortium of environmental groups and local Eskimos, a district judge ruled that in granting the leases the Government had taken too little account of the danger of pack ice to oil platforms and of lack of information on breeding areas of gray and bowhead whales. And in Eastport, Maine, the Environmental Protection Agency has denied a water quality permit to a proposed oil refinery and terminal on the grounds that a spill would affect right and humpback whales.

New Fish in Palau

A scientific expedition to the Palau islands, which are still threatened by plans for an oil superport, has identified 13 new species of fish in the archipelago's coral reefs.

Starlings in Hawaii

For the first time European starlings have been seen in Hawaii. Two were reported on Hawaii Island. If the species became established it would be a serious threat to Hawaii's many endemic birds.

Mercury in Australian Fish

Large specimens of blue grenadier *Macruronus novaezelandiae* and gemfish *Rexus solandri* in south-eastern Australian waters have been found to contain as much as 1.6 ppm of mercury, 1.1 ppm above the maximum level permitted by most states. Gemfish, a deep-water species exploited on a large scale only since 1969, now comprises 30 per cent of the catch in the area and is worth \$2 million a year to local fishermen.

Mediterranean Debris

Oceanographers on an observation platform suspended in front of the prow of a ship steaming at 11 knots 40 miles south-west of Malta counted an average of five pieces of floating debris per minute in a 10-m-wide path, and from this have extrapolated an average of 2000 pieces per sq km in that part of the Mediterranean. About 65 per cent were plastic; the remainder included timber, rubber, nylon rope, feathers, large tarballs, glass bottles and paper.

Origins of Marine Mammals

Studies of the anatomy of cetaceans and seals, conducted by V.P. Zvorykin of the USSR Academy of Sciences, suggest that the former are descended from primitive ungulates and the latter from both ungulates (the Odobenidae) and carnivores (the Phocidae).

NEW NATIONAL PARKS AND RESERVES

Australia has proclaimed the first section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, covering 1,180,000ha at the reef's southern extremity, and has also set aside 16 sq km on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean as a national park.

Indonesia has declared over 4500 hectares in Bawean Island as reserves for the Bawean deer.

Sri Lanka has declared the Lahugula Wildlife Sanctuary a national park.

The US has declared the five Channel Islands off the coast of southern California a national park. Various parts of the islands have already been named Critical Habitats for six species of seals, sealions and seabirds, including the endangered brown pelican.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation has bought 1898 acres of coastal land between Corona del Mar and Laguna Beach for \$32.6 million, about \$17,000 an acre, the most expensive parkland purchase in the State's history. The seller, Irvine County, also gave the State a two-year option to buy an additional 393 acres for \$3.25 million.

California's Save-the-Redwoods League has donated 58ha of redwood land, worth nearly \$400,000, to the Nisine Marks State Park.

Three wetland areas in the lower Mississippi Delta – Matthews Brake in Mississippi, Lower Hatchie in Tennessee and Overflow Bottoms in south-west Arkansas – have been authorised as migratory waterfowl refuges by the US Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

France has declared a 214,500-ha national park, the Mercantour, in the Alps north-east of Nice.

The Benjamin Meaker Charities Trust has bought 1016 acres of heathland at Arne on the Purbeck Peninsula, Dorset, habitat of three of Britain's most endangered animals – smooth snake, sand lizard and Dartford warbler – for the RSPB, which already held a lease on 740 acres.

By agreement with the Beaulieu Estate the NCC has declared 1631 acres of the Beaulieu river estuary a National Nature Reserve. To prevent disturbance of the ducks and waders public access will be limited to one footpath.

PERSONALIA

The 1979 Gavin Maxwell Award has been given jointly to Trevor Beers, for his work with the Otter Haven Project in Devon, and Jane Twelves, who is studying otters on South Uist in the Outer Hebrides.

Gerard A. Bertrand, Chief of International Affairs for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, has been elected President and Chief Executive of the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

Thomas Cairns, former Research and Information Officer for the Bath Preservation Trust, has been appointed Secretary of the new Wildlife Link Committee of the Council for Environmental Conservation (CoEnCo).

Dr William G. Conway, Director of New York Zoological Society and an IUCN Council member, has received San Diego Zoo's Conservation Gold Medal.

FPS Vice-President Dr Harold J. Coolidge has been awarded the 1979 J. Paul Getty Wildlife Conservation Prize of \$50,000.

Lt Col Fatesinghzaop P. Gaekwad of Baroda has succeeded General P.P. Kumaramangalam as President of WWF India.

Bill Jordan, former Chief Wildlife Officer of the RSPCA, has been appointed Director of the People's Trust for Endangered Species, succeeding Nick Carter, who has become Deputy Director of the South African Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Lt Col Sir Ronald Kennedy Bt has been appointed Administrator of the World Pheasant Association, succeeding Mrs Didy Grahame.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has appointed Ronald E. Lambertson Associate Director for Federal Assistance, with responsibility for administration of both the Endangered Species Act and US obligations under the CITES treaty.

Mrs Marietta Lohay, one of the few women graduates from Mweka College of Wildlife Management, will organise the new Wildlife Clubs of Tanzania Education Programme.

Gren Lucas, Deputy Keeper of the Herbarium at Kew, who runs the Threatened Plants Committee, has received the OBE.



Dr George B. Schaller has been awarded the 1980 WWF Gold Medal.

R.C. Steele, former Head of Scientific Services at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, has been appointed Director General of the Nature Conservancy Council, succeeding R.E. Boote.

Sir Ralph Verney Bt, a member of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, has succeeded Professor Fred Holliday as Chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council.

OBITUARIES

Mrs Perrine Moncrieff CBE, Dutch-born New Zealand conservationist, died on December 17 1979. She was a long-time member and active correspondent of FPS.

E.R. (John) Parrinder CBE, who held several offices in the RSPB, including that of Hon. Treasurer, died on June 20.

For Want of an EIS . . .

Yet another dam is proposed for the Zambesi River – the Mupata Dam, to be built between Kariba and Cabora Bassa. At a meeting in Zimbabwe in January, Dr John Hanks called for an environmental impact statement (EIS) to be prepared for this dam before any decisions are made, and he cited the lessons of Egypt's Aswan Dam if anyone doubted the need for this.

'The Aswan Dam was completed in 1964, and it has produced 7 billion kwhr of electricity annually, has brought 900,000 acres of land under cultivation, and has increased national income by more than \$500 million each year. By any standards, that is an impressive record. But, as often happens with such a project, the potential side-effects were given far too little attention; they were only discovered when it was too late. Four of the major negative attributes are:

1. The dam deprived the eastern Mediterranean of one of its major sources of nutrients that previously came via the Nile. As a result, the sardine fisheries in the area declined by a dramatic 95 per cent, a fall from an annual catch of 18,000 tons to a mere 500 tons, and this represented an annual loss of some \$7 million.
2. Before the dam was built, the Nile carried and deposited an estimated 134 million tons of silt each year, enriching the soils in the floodplain area. The dam cut this off, and Egypt has been forced to buy additional fertilisers at great cost to make up this deficit.
3. With the dam holding back nearly all the sediments, the annual floods no longer deposit sediments on the shores of the Nile Delta. Erosion has increased to such an extent in the absence of natural deposition that Egypt is now paying \$250 million for reclamation work.
4. With the completion of the dam came a spectacular increase in schistosomiasis or bilharzia, the dam being an ideal medium for the growth and breeding of snails associated with the disease. Schistosomiasis is a debilitating and fatal disease, and an estimated 15 million Egyptians are at present suffering from it.

Many of the disadvantages could have been reduced significantly or avoided completely if extensive ecological studies had been carried out before a final site was selected and construction started. The aim of an EIS is not to frustrate progress, but to guide it in such a way that it does not end up in its own destruction, or the unnecessary destruction of key features of the environment.'

The Mupata Dam proposal threatens floodplains which in the dry season are the main grazing areas for the Zambesi Valley's wildlife. One result of both the Kariba and the Cabora Bassa dams was a drier vegetation type which does not recover naturally from the grazing by the game. What is threatened, said Dr Hanks, is the loss of most of the natural ecosystems from the Victoria Falls down to the Indian Ocean.