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Notes and News

FPS and the Honours

Both a retiring and an incoming member of the FPS Council received knighthoods in this year's birthday honours: Dr Frank Fraser Darling who retired after the annual general meeting in June, honoured for his distinguished work in wildlife conservation, and W. A. R. Collins, the well-known publisher who specialises in books on wildlife and conservation, whose election was confirmed at that meeting. Guy Mountfort, also a member of Council, who has done invaluable work in alerting countries—notably Jordan and Pakistan—about their wildlife and persuading them to take action to save it—received an OBE. Finally our Chairman, Peter Scott, was awarded the Gold Albert Medal of the Royal Society of Arts for 1970 for his outstanding work in conserving wildlife. Sir Frank Fraser Darling has accepted the Council's invitation to become a Vice-President of the Society.

Seals Conservation Act

The passing of the Seals Conservation Act in June—one of the last acts of the last Parliament—means that seal populations in Britain, both grey and common, will now be managed as a resource, with the aim of achieving the highest numbers compatible without damage to fisheries. Both species are now protected in the breeding season, except under a licence from the Secretary of State, who is also empowered to give complete protection throughout the year. The FPS has been working for a bill to conserve seals for some years, and we are greatly indebted to our Council member Lord Cranbrook, who introduced it in the House of Lords, and to Mr John Temple, MP for Chester, who piloted it through the Commons.

Will the Sperm Whale Go Too?

Little progress on the Antarctic whaling front resulted from the meeting of the International Whaling Commission in June. The quota was frozen at the previous year's figure of 2700 blue whale units (1 blue equals 2 fin, or 2½ humpback, or 6 sei whales), although if the scientific advice had been taken—and why else should the Commission employ the best scientists?—there would have been a reduction of 200 units. The result will be a further delay in rebuilding whale stocks to a point where they could once more be a significant factor in the food supplies of an increasingly hungry world. The 1969/70 Antarctic expeditions caught 19 fewer fins but 80 more sei and 408 more sperm whales than in the previous season. In the North Pacific things were slightly better, and small reductions in the catch of fin, sei and

sperm whales were agreed. The renewal of the ban on taking blue and humpback whales in the North Pacific is also to be commended. It is worth noting that whaling in the North Pacific and other non-Antarctic seas is now as important as Antarctic whaling, thanks to the greed of the whaling nations in earlier years which depleted the Antarctic stocks. The number of sei and fin whales taken yearly is about the same as in the Antarctic, together with seven times as many sperm whales. The gradual increase in the sperm whale catch is disturbing, and it seems likely that before long this great whale will join its fellows in decline.

Four Cheers for the World Bank!

It has sometimes seemed that the larger the project—whether to build a dam, put a barrage across an estuary, lay an oil pipe across a country—the less attention is paid to ecological considerations—the effects on habitat, wildlife and the whole environment of the area. The World Bank's statement, in March this year, that in future all projects financed by the Bank Group would be checked to ensure that there would be no seriously adverse ecological consequences, and that if there were measures would be taken to avoid and mitigate them, was a real break-through for conservation. 'We are determined', said the statement, 'to identify and thoroughly to investigate all important environmental problems involved in the projects we finance'. Four cheers for the World Bank!

Porpoise Sacrifice for Tuna

An example showing how dangerously wasteful some wildlife harvesting methods can be is that of the US yellowfin tuna fishery in the Eastern Pacific, described by Dr William F. Perrin at last year's conference in California on Biological Sonar and Diving Mammals. The tuna associate in the sea with schools of porpoises—mainly two species, *Stenella graffmani* and *S. longirostris*, which, because they are air breathers, can be spotted more easily than the tuna. So when a school is sighted fishermen send out small speedboats to herd the porpoises into their seine nets and the fish with them. The problem then is to get the porpoises out while keeping the fish in, and many porpoises die in the nets. One fishing boat that Dr Perrin accompanied in 1966 took about 300 tons of tuna and killed about 2000 porpoises. (This of course does not include injured porpoises that get away and die later). In 1969 another boat, in 15 net-sets over a period of one month, took 312 tons of tuna and killed 1697 porpoises, which represented about 20 per cent of the porpoises that were caught in the net. The number of porpoises killed each time ranged from 1 per cent of the school to as high as 50 per cent; the average was 5.44 porpoises killed per ton of fish. If this were true for the whole industry the 45,000 tons of tuna taken this way each year could mean that over 244,000 porpoises are killed every year. Dr Perrin points out that quite apart from aesthetic and humanitarian considerations, the porpoises are a valuable source of protein (already used in Japan and other countries for human consumption) and there are real reasons for

concern at losses such as these. (Porpoises are mammals not fish and probably bear only one young at a time and only one a year). The fishermen know that they depend on the porpoises and are receptive to conservation ideas—they have already tried some that did not work. For the sake of the porpoises it is to be hoped that some ingenious research worker will come up with the answer *soon*.

Turtles Flourish in Queensland

'A bright spot in a depressing picture' is how Dr Robert Bustard describes the results of his investigation (aided by WWF) into sea turtles in Queensland, including the Great Barrier Reef. He estimates breeding female populations of the three species—green, flatback and loggerhead—at not less than 75,000. The green turtle *Chelonia mydas*, which is a critically depleted species in other parts of the world, predominates, followed by the Australian endemic flatback *C. depressa*, with the loggerhead *Caretta caretta* in smaller numbers. In Queensland both turtles and eggs are fully protected at all times apart from small exceptions for aborigines—in marked contrast to most other parts of the world. The next step, says Dr Bustard, is to get the more important nesting grounds, which are mainly on small islands, declared national parks. In the Seychelles, in the Indian Ocean, the green turtle is also fully protected, but an ominous statement issued by the Government last December pointed out that its efforts to persuade other countries in the Indian Ocean to follow suit had so far brought no results, and if, after the end of 1970, no steps had been taken the Seychelles Government would have to consider whether its legislation should be changed. One can hardly blame the Seychellois for not wanting to hold off the turtles (a valuable resource) themselves merely in order that their neighbours should get them.

Park for Caribbean Turtles

Costa Rica has this year declared a national park at Tortuguero, site of the biggest nesting concentration of green turtles in the Caribbean, where Professor Archie Carr ('the world's master turtler' as Tom Harrisson has called him) has been battling for years to protect the turtles and runs a hatchery to build up their depleted numbers. The park takes in more than half of the 22-mile shore, where hawskbill and leathery turtles also nest; it extends out to sea for three miles and far enough inland to take in several endangered species including manatee, crocodile and three species of spotted cats. This year Professor Carr reports an encouraging increase in nesting turtles at Tortuguero instead of the usual continuous decline. One reason for this could be the Costa Rican government's decision to extend the legal limit for harpooning turtles from one *kilometre* to three *miles*; this has made it very difficult for the harpoon boats to intercept the turtles coming in to nest. Another boost for Caribbean turtles was the decision of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama to stop all hunting of green turtles for three years. Much less good, however, is the news about the Atlantic ridley turtle, whose only nesting ground in the world is a

beach in Mexico, north of Tampico. When discovered twenty-five years ago these ridleys were coming ashore to breed in numbers as great as 40,000 a day; ten years ago numbers were down to a few hundred all told, and the Mexican government took strong action to protect them. Now Dr Peter Pritchard reports the almost unbelievable news that the government has granted a lease for the commercial exploitation of this highly depleted and vulnerable colony as a source of skins for the novelty leather trade. The FPS is among the many conservation bodies that have protested to the Mexican government at this extraordinarily short-sighted action.

Lesson of the Pribilof Fur Seals

This year the Interior Department's building in Washington has been picketed by people demanding an end to the fur seal industry in the Pribilof Islands. Reporting this, *Audubon* comments that while there could be a case for this on humanitarian grounds (but does not say whether there is), there cannot possibly be one on biological or conservation grounds. As is well known the Alaska fur seal early this century looked like becoming extinct through overhunting. A convention signed by the USA, UK, Japan and Russia in 1911 brought control of the hunting, and stocks have built up until today there are an estimated one and a half million fur seals on the Pribilofs, despite the fact that three million sealskins have been harvested, mostly from surplus bachelor males, under the supervision of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This harvest has brought in over $28 million, much of which has been used to defray the cost of administering the islands. Moreover, control of the fur seals is believed to be necessary in the Pribilofs—the summer food supply is limited, and overcrowded rookeries lead to disease, parasites and fatal injuries. The Pribilof fur seals are in fact the perfect example of what conservationists mean by harvesting a wild animal population on a sustained yield basis. This is what conservation is about.

Getting Oil Out of Alaska

The ecological implications of oil development in Alaska, described by Peter Scott in the May ORYX, are occupying both the Canadian and US governments. Canada's concern is about the proposal to run a year-round service of ice-breaking super-tankers to carry the oil round her dangerous north coast to the eastern American ports, and the Government proposes to create a 100-mile pollution-control zone covering all northern waters. All ships operating within 100 miles of the Canadian shore would be subject to Canadian regulations to protect the environment. (The USA has protested.) The all-too-real possibility of a disaster in these dangerous ice-bound waters is described as 'a nightmare thought' by Boyce Richardson, of the *Montreal Star,* writing in the *Guardian;* any wreck on the scale of operations proposed would make the *Torrey Canyon* disaster look puny, accidents are anyhow more likely in such dangerous waters, and the coldness of the water would make the damage almost permanent.

(Canada has already had experience of the last point with a tanker accident off Cape Breton.) The alternative method of bringing the oil (although the oil companies want both) is by pipeline across Alaska, but Washington has still not given the go-ahead for this because of its ecological implications. *Audubon* reports that a delegation of more than 100 Alaskans, who went to Washington recently to demand that construction of both pipeline and access road be started, was told by the Geological Survey Director that he did not see how most of the pipe on the proposed line could be buried in the permafrost, that the oil companies had planned the route without consulting either State or Federal agencies, and that they had never submitted design plans or indications how the line could be operated safely. In fact, he said, at one point the engineers had admitted that there was an even chance that the pipe would break because of permafrost melt. Forty million dollars-worth of road-building equipment is already on the scene in Alaska; the pressure to get started is enormous, and the Alaska State government is behind it. But must nations be bulldozed into hurried and possibly disastrous decisions by giving in to purely money considerations? And is the oil really needed, at least in the immediate future?

Poisons Exported to Africa

Large and increasing quantities of organochlorine and organophosphorous insecticides—including DDT, endrin, aldrin, lindane and malathion—which have done so much damage to European and North American wildlife, are being imported into Africa. In 1969 one large chemical firm in Kenya sold 74,280 gallons and 1,170,000 lbs of insecticides and fungicides, of which 50,000 gallons and 72,000 lbs were organochlorines. A correspondent in Africa points out that the closed lake systems in East Africa are particularly vulnerable to these poisons. The bird populations on the Rift Valley lakes—Baringo, Hannington, Nakuru, Elmenteita and Naivasha—are among the richest in the world, but in lakes with no outflow the danger of chemicals building up is obviously great. Most of the water loss is by evaporation, so that the solids are left in increasing concentration. Lake Nakuru receives the sewage effluent from Nakuru town, including detergents and industrial and insecticide waste; cattle dips have been emptied into the streams feeding the lake. The green algae on the lake, the basic food of much of the life in the lake, could be affected by sprays used on the shore farms. As Europe and North America gradually reduce the use of these poisons the incentive to unload them on to 'inexperienced' countries is considerable. In the USA current production of DDT alone is 100 million lbs a year, 20 per cent of it for the home market. Now its use is to be phased out, and, quite apart from the money loss, the manufacturers are left with the problem of disposal: if it is buried there is the danger of seepage and contamination of water sources, if burned it contaminates the atmosphere; dumped in the sea there is again the problem of seepage. How much easier to sell it to an unsuspecting victim! 'Aldrin makes the earth a healthy place to live in',

read one advertisement. African governments would be wise to find out what is happening, why the developed nations are giving up the use of these chemicals themselves and why they are exporting them. The irony of the situation is that East Africa itself produces one of the most effective insecticides that is not harmful to other wildlife, pyrethrum.

Gorillas v. Cattle

A report from Dian Fossey, who has been studying mountain gorillas in the volcanoes on the Congo-Rwanda border since 1967, makes depressing reading. Visiting her original camp on the Congo side, in the Albert National Park, which she had to leave for political reasons in 1967 (she has since been on the Rwanda side), she found the gorillas reduced in numbers and frightened where before they had accepted her; other wildlife, apart from elephants and buffalo which had increased, was almost absent where before there had been 'vast numbers'. The trouble is cattle grazing, as described by R. I. M. Campbell in the May ORYX, page 256. She reckoned at least 1000 head of cattle must have been grazing the area of her camp. Of the gorillas, which she had got to know two years before, Group 1 had decreased from 18 animals to seven and fled at her approach like 'truly frightened gorilla'; Group 2 had shrunk from eleven to six and an important part of their previous range showed signs of heavy cattle usage; and Group 3 was down from 20 to six. Fifty known gorillas in 1967 reduced to 20 in 1969 tells its own tale. The urgent need, she says, is for park patrols to turn the cattle out. The cattle graziers, she is convinced, still feel guilty at being there, but if left undisturbed they will soon come to believe that they have a right. Another correspondent in Africa suggests that the cattle owners are in the position of having nowhere else to graze their animals and that the problem should be tackled from this end. There would be no harm in tackling it from both.

Legal and Illegal Leopard Skins

It would be comforting to think that the drop in the price of leopard skins at the Kenya Game Department's auction of legal trophies at the end of last year (£41 a pelt compared with £100 in June) was because spotted cat coats were at last becoming unfashionable and that the campaign against them was having effect. But *Africana*, reporting the sale, suggests that it was probably due to uncertainty as a result of the Kenya government's ban on the import of all wild animal skins for commercial purposes. The East African Wildlife Society discovered that more than 95 per cent of the spotted cat skins for sale in Nairobi before the ban were imported; less than 4 per cent came from Game Department control shooting. Poachers from the north crossed into Kenya to snare or shoot leopards, took the skins back across the border and then sent them back again to Kenya. The new legislation should at least have knocked this on the head. The ban came into effect in January this year, since when only skins of animals shot under

control measures within Kenya can be used in the manufacture of goods —coats, handbags, belts, and the numerous trinkets and curios that ingenious dealers have thought up. Inevitably the fact that some skins and trophies are legal complicates the issue, but the legal sales are a valuable source of income for the Kenya Game Department, and wildlife protection is expensive. £40,000 was netted in that one auction of skins, rhino horns, ivory and hippo teeth—the ivory hit a record price. The sort of money that traders in illegal skins are making can be gauged from *Africana's* report of a Somali dealer in Asmara recently found with 150 leopard and 400 otter skins he had bought in Addis Ababa, all with permits from the Ethiopian government. In the last three years, he said, he had bought over 800 leopard skins, all with official permits, and the current market price per skin is US $200. But the vast majority of leopard skins on the Ethiopian market, says *Africana*, are being smuggled out to Djibouti to avoid export duty. The same dealer in October 1967 found 1000 skins on the Addis market; within a month all had gone out illegally to Djibouti.

Have Aeroplane — Must Fill

The numbers of leopard, ocelot, cheetah and jaguar skins imported into the USA all showed a decrease in 1969 compared with 1968, according to figures issued by the US Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. The figures are for undressed skins. Leopards declined from 9556 to 7669; ocelot from 128,966 to 107,200; cheetah from 1283 to 1152, and jaguar from 13,516 to 7332. Nobody seems to have any explanation to offer; are the recent export bans in India and Kenya a factor? The figures for live wildlife imports include 73,694,996 fish, 1,393,970 reptiles, ranging from boa constrictors, pythons and cobras to small caymans and chameleons; 1,938,533 molluscs and crustaceans; 571,663 wild birds (excluding canaries and parrots); 339,489 amphibians, many of them frogs, and 116,341 mammals of which 99,668 were primates. And this is for one country only. Admittedly the USA is probably the largest importer of live animals in the world, but do we really have to subject the world's wildlife—shrinking everywhere—to being shunted about on this scale? One wonders if it is not the case that we have invented the transport and must use it somehow.

Arguments for Crocodiles

Over five hundred crocodiles have been reared at the hatchery in the Ndumu Game Reserve in Natal, started in December 1966; they were released in the wild, mostly in the reserve and in the St Lucia Lake, the two main breeding areas in Natal both of which have seen a serious decrease in crocodiles—see the note in ORYX, December 1969, page 144. And A. C. Pooley, of the Natal Parks Department, tells us that a farmer in Zululand, Barry Kramer, this year bought 20 three-foot crocodiles from the hatchery to re-stock a large dam on his farm. As crocodiles have for many years been widely regarded as vermin and largely shot out on Zululand farms, this is encouraging. Crocodiles have been completely protected in Natal since April 1969, but the loss

of habitat continues: swamps and reed beds are drained, marshes reclaimed, and rivers dammed; commercial fishing, water pollution, and increased disturbance added to poaching all make the crocodile outlook bleak. Describing the hatchery in *African Wildlife*, Mr Pooley points out that only in the last ten years has any serious research been done on crocodiles, and it is now realised what valuable predators they are. The young crocodile, feeding on small insects, snails and fish, is important in maintaining the balance of pond life; the adult eats fish, including in Natal the predatory tiger fish and especially barbel, which prey on the fry of other fish and may weigh up to 45 lbs, too big for any bird predators. Barbel can survive in stagnant pools and mud holes where other fish die out, and would become abundant; only the crocodiles keep their numbers down. The crocodile is also a scavenger like the vultures and hyaenas, and when, in drought conditions, sick and elderly animals become bogged in mud at the water holes after struggling to find them, the crocodile makes a quick kill and ensures that the water is not polluted for other animals by a decomposing carcase. Mr Pooley describes an interesting incident he once saw in a drought. Two crocodiles holed up under the roots of a large fig tree on the bank of a dried-up river, and hollowed out a basin behind the roots which held water for about two months until rain fell. This little pool proved vital to many small animals and birds, amphibians, insects and fish—and also, of course, kept the crocodiles supplied with prey.

Blackbuck for Pakistan

In April this year a breeding group of blackbuck—the splendid antelope which is seriously endangered in India and almost extinct in Pakistan—was flown from Texas (of all unlikely places) to Karachi to be re-introduced in the new wildlife reserve of Lal Suhanra, in West Pakistan. For some years Texas millionaire ranch-owners have been importing and breeding blackbuck (of which a photograph appeared in the last ORYX)—in fact it has been suggested that there were more blackbuck in Texas than on the whole Indian sub-continent—and seven females and three males were presented to Pakistan and flown to Karachi at the expense of WWF (US). Another re-introduction to the same reserve is the marbled teal, which came from the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge, and chinkara gazelles are also to be taken there. There is a growing interest in Pakistan in conserving their wildlife, thanks largely to Guy Mountfort's WWF expeditions in 1966 and 1967. Earlier this year Ian Grimwood returned to Pakistan to become FAO Wildlife Adviser to the government and help establish the reserves that have been planned, and it is for his use initially that the FPS/WWF Revolving Fund has bought and sent out the Landrover shown on plate 1 (page 292). In March the Pakistan Wildlife Appeal of WWF was launched in the capital, Islamabad, on the occasion of the visit of the WWF President Prince Bernhard, and under the patronage of the President of Pakistan, General Yahya Khan. FPS membership in Pakistan is increasing steadily, and the Society has made the same arrangement there that we have with India: all subscriptions are paid

into a Pakistan account and the money is used for work in Pakistan. Work is going ahead to create the Sunderbans national park in East Pakistan, a vast area of waterways, islands and swamps that is the last home of the tiger in Pakistan, and it is hoped that there will be facilities for visitors (including an FPS tour) by the autumn of 1971.

Hunters Protect the Nilgiri Tahr

At least a thousand animals is George Schaller's estimate of the goat-like Nilgiri tahr in southern India, after his survey in the main areas—the Nilgiri Hills and the High Range, about 60 miles to the south. His report makes it clear that this tahr is an endangered species. In the Nilgiris their territory has been reduced to a narrow strip along the escarpment by forest plantations (mainly eucalyptus); in the High Range, with its deeply dissected valleys, massive peaks and towering crags, where tea plantations cover the valleys, the cliffs and grassy plateaus above provide good tahr habitat if it can be preserved. The largest population here is in an area owned by one of the tea companies, the Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company, and here the High Range Game Preservation Association (whose members are mainly on the company's staff) have successfully protected the tahr from poaching in the interests of hunting. The number of animals shot is negligible but the protection is real. If the shooting were stopped the protection would cease, and poaching and habitat destruction, says George Schaller, 'might well tip the balance for the species from tenuous security to extinction'. Another threat to the tahr here is the Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1963 which empowers the State to take over unused land for cultivation. The Kanan Devan Hills Company have applied for exemption for this land in order to preserve the tahr, citing the interest and support of both national and international organisations, including FPS, and there is a move to make the area a sanctuary.

Two Crocodiles in Trouble

Two crocodiles, the muggar *Crocodylus palustris* and the ghariyal *Gavialis gangeticus* face extinction in India: seriously reduced in the north, worse in the south, desperate in Orissa is R. N. Misra's summary of the situation, published in *Cheetal*, following a study of the two species. Only on the Indian-Nepal border are they still to be found in large numbers, thanks to better enforcement of the law. The reasons are the familiar ones: loss of habitat, lack of law-enforcement and the profits to be made from the trade in skins. He asks for a complete ban on the export of any part of a crocodile; a ten-year ban on hunting and shooting; enforcement of the game laws; a survey of the populations; and preservation of the breeding stock and experiments with crocodile farming. He describes some of the methods used by the hunters, some of whom at least have the merit of bravery. In addition to hooking (with metal lines and fish hooks), poisoning (with quicklime stuffed into a goat corpse), professional catchers will also dive into a known crocodile pool with a rope, one end of which is tied to a peg driven into the bank; they tie a noose round the crocodile's

belly and then drag the animal ashore. Why the crocodile does not attack the man is a mystery. In Pakistan, too, poachers for the skin trade are making serious inroads on the ghariyal populations, our FPS correspondent, Major Amanullah Khan, reports; he fears that it will become extinct very soon in West Pakistan.

Finance for IUCN

The expectation that IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) would this year receive a substantial grant to enable it to finance the ambitious programme put forward at the General Assembly in New Delhi last November (see the last ORYX, May, page 234) was realised in April with the announcement that the Ford Foundation had given $650,000 to cover a period of 33 months—April 1970 to December 1972. The new Director General, Dr Gerardo Budowski, took over in April, and also the new Deputy Director General, Mr F. G. Nicholls. Another encouraging appointment—encouraging for the future of IUCN—is the appointment of the well known American ecologist, Dr Raymond Dasmann, as Senior Staff Ecologist.

Death of Francis Katete

The death of Francis Katete, Director of Uganda National Parks since 1964, in a car crash in June is a most serious blow to the conservation cause in his country. Only 37, he was a man of real courage, with remarkable knowledge and understanding of conservation issues, as well as a charming and sympathetic person. The last two years have shown something of his quality in his able, brave and tenacious stand for the integrity of the Murchison Falls National Park in the face of the proposal to build a power station there.

Australia Looks to its Wildlife

The Federal Government in Australia and the Opposition have agreed on the appointment of a select committee of the House of Representatives, consisting of four government and three opposition members, to enquire into the preservation of Australian wildlife. It will investigate the adequacy of national parks, the effects of pollution and pesticides on wildlife and the effect of trade in meat and hides on kangaroo numbers. It will also consider the need for international and interstate agreements for effective wildlife conservation, the threat to wildlife from feral domestic animals and the need for a Wildlife Conservation Authority.

News from Victoria is that conservation played a major part in this year's State elections. On television the Premier, Sir Robert Bolte, said that the two priorities for his government were pollution legislation and conservation.

Chillingham Cattle Losses

A net loss of two animals is reported in the Chillingham wild cattle herd, from 36 to 34. A stampede in the herd in April last year (which could have been caused by low-flying jet planes) caused the death of three pregnant cows, all carrying heifer calves.

Bird-netting Ban to Return

As a result very largely of the massive campaign mounted by the Italian WWF, the Italian Minister of Agriculture will re-impose the ban on bird-netting that was lifted in January this year.