

INTERNATIONAL

Ramsar news

Liechtenstein and Zambia acceded to the Ramsar Convention on 6 and 28 August 1991, respectively. Liechtenstein designated the Ruggeler Riet for the Ramsar list and Zambia designated two sites: Kafue Flats (Lochinvar and Blue Lagoon National Park) and Bangweulu Swamps (Chikuni Special Conservation Area). The Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance now contains 556 sites in 64 countries.

Source: *Ramsar, The Newsletter of the Convention on Wetlands*, October 1991, 8.

CITES gains 112th Party

Uganda became the 112th Party to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora on 16 October 1991.

ITTO's future uncertain

The International Tropical Timber Organization, whose 47 member nations either produce or consume tropical timber, has made little progress in its

Target 2000 project. At its meeting last December 40 of the 47 nations failed to present reports outlining plans for achieving sustainability in forestry by the year 2000. The only firm proposal to emerge from the meeting was a commitment by Sarawak to reduce the amount of timber it fells by 1.5 million cu. m a year over the next 2 years. While Japan still argues that the ITTO has an important role in safeguarding the rain forest, many other delegates disagree and see little point in extending the Agreement, which expires in 1994.

Source: *New Scientist*, 14 December 1991, 12.

Whaling

Norway has announced its intention to allow a catch of 382 minke whales during the next 3 years for research purposes. Five whales were caught for research in 1990, but none in 1991. Norway has said that it intends staying in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) but will consider alternatives if the Commission does not show greater understanding of its position. Norway's proposal will have to be approved by the IWC at its meeting in June

1992. Iceland has decided to withdraw from the IWC from 30 June 1992, but has said that no decision has been made on resuming whaling.

Sources: *The Guardian*, 3 December 1991; *Fishing News International*, January 1992, 5.

Drift-nets on the way out

Japan has finally agreed to end drift-net fishing in international waters by the end of 1992 after intense pressure from the US and other countries. It is expected that South Korea will impose a similar ban on its own drift-net boats and Taiwan, although not a member of the UN, has already agreed to abide by the original US resolution, which called for an end to drift-nets by June 1992.

Source: *New Scientist*, 7 December 1991, 13.

The world's cranes

All 15 species of crane are featured in the painting by David Rankin, shown below, who created it as a tribute to cranes and for the opening of the Ron Sauy Library at the International Crane Foundation headquarters in Wisconsin, USA. Seven of the world's crane species are endangered.



Winter counts show that the trend is generally still downward for most species (see Table), but new surveys in remote places are resulting in discoveries of new populations: black-necked cranes are now known to number at least 4025, with 2800 new birds being found in Tibet in 1991.

Table. Winter counts of endangered cranes

	Year 89-90	Year 90-91
Whooping crane		
USA, Texas	146	146
Red-crowned crane		
China	681	546
Japan	446	453
South Korea	?	121
Siberian crane		
China	1953	1531
India	17	10
Iran	8-10	3-5
Eastern sarus crane		
Vietnam	800	814
Black-necked crane		
Bhutan	299	333
China	1255	3692
India	6	?
White-naped crane		
China	2716	1962
Japan	1439	2390
South Korea	?	94
Hooded crane		
China	440	756
Japan	7172	9506
South Korea	?	180

Source: ICF Bugle, *International Crane Foundation Newsletter*, November 1991, 8.

UK timber companies defy Philippines ban

Two of Britain's largest timber companies are importing wood from the Philippines in defiance of an export ban. They are not breaking British law because the Department of

Trade and Industry has not imposed an import ban. Since the start of the export ban in July 1989 the UK has imported 28,000 cu. m of raw Philippine timber. Gliksten, a subsidiary of Meyer International, is selling Philippine mahogany (lauan) in some of its 200 Jewson outlets. Timbnet in Oxford sells tropical hardwood, including lauan, to builders, carpenters and cabinet makers. The timber was bought from East Asiatic Timber, a broking agent, which has denied that the timber comes from the Philippines. Source: *The Observer*, 15 December 1991.

EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA

Critical loads too high for lichens?

Critical loads agreed for sulphur and nitrogen in regulations to mitigate the adverse effects of air pollution may be still too high for terrestrial blue-green algae, and lichens containing these rather than green species. All such lichens have disappeared from the Netherlands, for example, and 96 per cent of them have either vanished or are in danger of doing so in Denmark. That blue-green lichens should be especially affected may be due to the nitrogen-fixing ability of the algae; the nitrogen-fixation process has been shown to be very sensitive to acidity as well as to the deposition of nitrate and ammonia.

Source: *Acid News*, October 1991, 7.

Wild cats declining in Scotland

Wild cats *Felis silvestris* in Scotland are still being shot, poisoned and snared despite



protection under the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act. A survey between 1983 and 1987 carried out by the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland and just published revealed that numbers have declined all over Scotland, but mostly in the north and west where the cats are genetically purer than most populations in Europe. Gamekeepers often shoot cats, either in ignorance of the law or deliberately in contravention of it. They also might not know the difference between feral and wild cats. Interbreeding with feral cats is probably the biggest threat to the wild cat and a study by the

independent Wildcat Working Group found feline leukaemia virus in 5 per cent of wild cats, the first time it has been found in any species other than the domestic cat *Felis catus*.

Source: *New Scientist*, 23 November 1991, 15.

Italy's wildlife stamps

The Italian Post has issued a series of four stamps (shown opposite) dedicated to wildlife conservation. They depict Sardinian (Corsican) red deer *Cervus elaphus corsicanus*, Abruzzo brown bear *Ursus arctos marsicanus*, peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus* and Posidonia seagrass *Posidonia oceanica*. The deer and bear stamps bear the WWF logo, while the Posidonia stamp bears the logo of MAREVIVO, an Italian marine conservation organization. It is the first time that the Italian Post has used the logos of conservation non-governmental organizations.

Source: WWF-Italy.

Algal problem on Mediterranean seabed

Caulerpa taxifolia, a tropical algal species, is colonizing the Mediterranean sea-bed between Toulon and the Italian border and ousting native marine species. Alexandre Meinesz, who runs a marine laboratory, has been warning of the dangers since the seaweed was first detected in the area in 1984, having been kept in Riviera aquariums for decorative purposes.

Source: *The Guardian*, 18 December 1991.

New transfrontier park

The Austrian states of Salzburg and Bavaria have agreed to create a transfrontier Kalkhochalpen National Park

covering 390 sq km by 1995. Within the boundaries of the proposed park Bavaria owns several thousand hectares of mountain forests. Timber production is not economically feasible but ways must be found to end traditional hunting there. The Salzburg portion of the park will cover 180 sq km of mainly high mountains. The park will protect a varied alpine flora and a karst landscape with high-altitude caves as well as ibex, golden eagle, black and wood grouse and rare species of insects.

Source: *European Bulletin, Nature and National Parks*, 1991, 29, 111, 10.

Greek wetland threatened by EC funding

The Mesolongi and Actoliko lagoons in Greece are supposedly protected because of their threatened wetland bird fauna, but they have already suffered from extraction schemes and now the river that feeds the lagoons is being diverted with the help of EC Structural Funds, even though the project infringes the EC Wild Birds Directive and goes against the EC's own environmental guidelines.

Source: *Birds Magazine* (RSPB), Winter 1991, 15.

Greek park recommended

George Sfikas, who has been working on an EC programme to identify the most important biological areas in Greece as a first step towards protecting them, makes a plea for a national park to be created around Mt Chelmos with the Waters of the Styx as its central core. This area has many rare and endemic plants as well as rare birds and insects. The Ravine of Vouraikos nearby, which also contains rare

species, should be made a natural monument and linked to the park. Meanwhile there is an immediate need to protect these areas from pollution by cheese factories, from uncontrolled hunting and from overgrazing.

Source: *Nature, Bulletin of the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature*, No. 53, 25.

Fruit for the bears

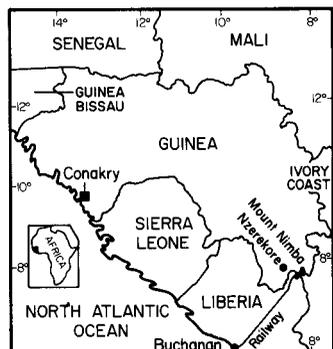
Greek villagers living near areas inhabited by bears are planting fruit trees to give bears easy access to food without having to enter villages. The scheme was launched by the Friends of the Greek Bear in 1991 in Macedonia.

Source: *Council of Europe, natura opa newsletter* No. 91-9, 2.

AFRICA

Mount Nimba in danger

The West African state of Guinea has proposed to remove protection from part of Mount Nimba, a World Heritage Site, in order to accommodate a controversial iron-ore scheme. The plan threatens an internationally important wildlife reserve. UNESCO's World Heritage Committee meeting in Tunisia



Map showing location of Mount Nimba, a World Heritage Site, threatened by an iron ore mine.

in December 1991, objected strongly, placing Mount Nimba on its List of World Heritage in Danger. The mine, scheduled to open in 1993, will affect an estimated 15 per cent of the site, an area of upland tropical rain forest, which houses 200 endemic faunal species and which has been identified as a centre of plant diversity by IUCN. *Source: New Scientist*, 4 January 1992, 8.

Ethiopian park under pressure

The Nechisar National Park, which includes the Arba Minch Forest in southern Ethiopia, is reported to be under pressure. More than 5000 wood cutters make their living from selling firewood from the 840 ha of forest land within the park, each cutting about three loads of wood a day and earning more than twice as much as can be earned on the neighbouring cotton plantations. People also cut down young trees to build houses and fences. Spraying chemicals on the cotton plantations, established 29 years ago by clearing 5000 ha of forest, is also causing problems, with bees, birds and fish being killed.

Source: Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society Newsletter, January 1992.

Burundi's ivory bought by South African businessmen

The London-based Environmental Investigation Agency uncovered plans for the illegal sale of 15,000 elephant tusks by two South African businessmen who bought the ivory from the Burundi Government. Burundi has no elephants and the stockpile of ivory came from elephants killed by poachers in surrounding African countries.

The Times of Swaziland **SUNDAY** Sunday, September 22, 1991

PLEASE DON'T POACH!!

It's just not worth it any more



Poaching has threatened Swaziland's wildlife to the point of extinction in some species. Nineteen of these have had to be reestablished and several species still face the threat of extinction.

Now we have a new law, the GAME AMENDMENT ACT, which makes it NOT worthwhile to poach anymore. Swaziland now leads the world with her anti poaching legislation.

For illegal possession of rhino or elephant products a minimum mandatory penalty of 5 years imprisonment will be imposed.

Poaching rhino or elephant will attract a 5 year jail term plus replacement of the animal or compensation for its full value. Failure to replace or compensate will result in an additional 2 years in jail.

Illegal export or import of rhino or elephant products will send you to jail for seven years. The court may not suspend any sentence under the Act. So it is goodbye for 7 years.

For Royal Game, which includes most birds, the penalty is E4000 or 4 years plus replacement of the animal poached. Failure to replace or to compensate will result in a two year jail term in addition to the principal penalty. In all cases the fine imposed shall not be less than the value of animal poached.

For common game or for the possession of snares and traps, the minimum penalty is 6 months or E600.00.

Any official (and this would include a prosecutor or a member of the judiciary) who improperly spoils a prosecution or who in any way attempts to defeat the ends of justice, will go to jail without the option of a fine, according to the new law.

Improper issuance of permits or the loss of court records is jailable without the option of a fine. The law requires mandatory confiscation of any weapon, vehicle, or other equipment used for poaching.

Anyone who solicits poaching is guilty of the same offence as the convicted person.

This Act has teeth, so please don't contravene it. Let us make this an example of preventative legislation rather than curative legislation. We don't want people in jail, we'd rather have our wildlife.

Swaziland is already widely acclaimed for these measures taken to protect her heritage because it shows the world we care about our wildlife.

We take this opportunity to thank and to congratulate our Parliament and the Hon. Minister for Natural Resources and most of all, our King for supporting this legislation.

HLANE NATIONAL PARK
BAKAMSHOLO (MACHOBANE)




Hlane National Park authorities advertised Swaziland's new Game Amendment Act very widely in an attempt to prevent poaching.

The businessmen were warned by CITES that selling the ivory would be illegal under a binding CITES resolution but they engaged in secret negotiations to fly the ivory from Burundi to Korea in planes with UN food aid markings.

Source: Observer, 8 December 1991.

TRAFFIC office in South Africa

A TRAFFIC (Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce) office is being set

up in Johannesburg by the Southern Africa Nature Foundation, the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Wildlife Society, South Africa's three leading non-government conservation organizations. It will work closely with the Endangered Species Protection Unit set up in 1989 by the South African Police after investigations revealed that South Africa was a key route in international illegal trade networks. The office will be at the Endangered Wildlife Trust, c/o Johannesburg Zoological

Gardens, Jan Smuts Avenue, Parkview 2193, Transvaal, South Africa.

Cultivating medicinal herbs

Gathering herbs from the wild for medicinal use has become a boom industry around Cape Town in South Africa and there are fears that some plants may become extinct as a result. Police have failed in their attempts to prevent plant collection and with people from rural areas flooding into towns there is a growing demand for herbal medicine. The Western Cape Traditional Plant Use Committee has been set up to address the problem and is discussing with traditional healers plans for cultivating medicinal herbs.

Source: *New Scientist*, 4 January 1992, 7.

Egyptian vultures flown to southern Africa

A project to breed Egyptian vultures *Neophron percnopterus* in captivity for reintroduction into the wild in southern Africa received a boost in the form of four captive-bred vultures from Israel, donated by Professor Heinrich Mendelsohn of Tel-Aviv University, and flown from Israel free of charge by El Al Airlines. This species was once widespread in southern Africa but the last breeding record was in 1923 from the Transkei. The project is run jointly by the Endangered Wildlife Trust, Vulture Study Group and World of Birds. Source: *Endangered Wildlife*, December 1991, 21.

Rare pochard captured

The Madagascar pochard *Aythya innotata*, which has been considered virtually endemic to Lake Alaotra in north-east

Madagascar, and which had not been seen since 1960 despite recent surveys, has been rediscovered. On 29 August 1991 a fisherman caught a male pochard in a net and the bird is now in captivity in the Botanical Garden in the capital, Antananarivo.

Source: *IWRB Threatened Waterfowl Research Group Newsletter*, No. 1, November 1991, 12-13.

ASIA (EXCLUDING INDO-MALAYA)

Big Wind puts out fires but causes problems for birds

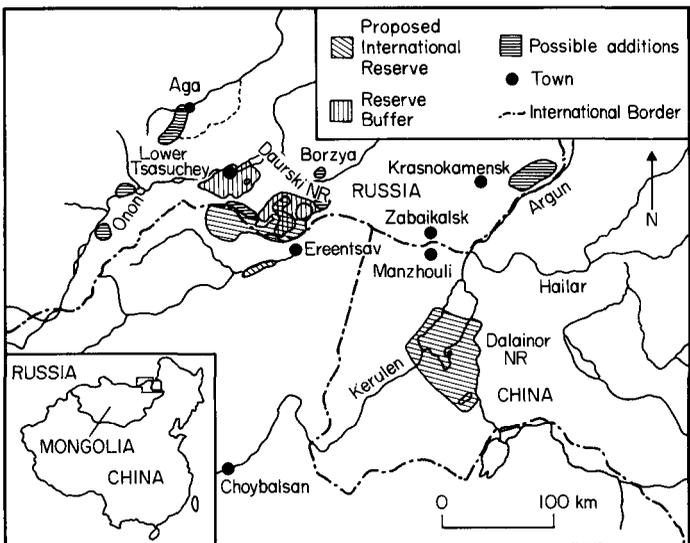
The welcome news that the last of Kuwait's burning oil wells had been extinguished in November was shadowed by the fact that oil lakes are spreading around some uncapped wells. The teams sent to cap the wells fell behind the fire fighting teams because a Hungarian machine, Big Wind, enabled the fires to be put out more rapidly than had been expected. The total spillage of

oil is now 5-20 times as great as that discharged directly into the sea in the Gulf war and winter rains could wash some of this oil into the sea. In November 1991 a team of ornithologists reported 35 dead birds - mainly ducks, grebes and herons - along a 200-m stretch around one of the country's 69 oil lakes. Extrapolation gives a total of at least 22,500 large waterfowl dead around the lakes and many other bird species must be dead in the oil itself or heavily contaminated. Saudi engineers are bringing in machinery to suck up oil but it will be difficult to find a safe dumping ground.

Sources: *New Scientist*, 9 November 1991, 14; *Birdwatch*, January/February 1992, 8.

International crane reserve

An international reserve for cranes on the borders between Russia, China and Mongolia came a step nearer at a meeting between representatives of the three countries and the International Crane Foundation. The Daurian



Map showing location of new international crane reserve.

Steppes, as the Russians call the Mongolian border region, still hold a highly diverse wildlife and are the heart of the range for the endangered white-naped crane. The new reserve would incorporate Dalainor Nature Reserve (nearly 4050 sq km) in Inner Mongolia, China, and Dauriski Nature Reserve (2068 sq km) in Russia, with the Mongolians adding 1032 sq km adjacent to Dauriski.

Source: *The ICF Bugle*, November 1991, 1 & 4–6.

Japan bans some wildlife trade

Japan banned the import and export of Bengal monitor lizards, yellow monitor lizards *Varanus flavescens* and olive ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* from 31 January, complying at last with CITES regulations.

However, there are still six other endangered species freely traded in Japan.

Source: *New Scientist*, 25 January 1992, 22.

INDO-MALAYA

Elephants in trouble in Thailand

Elephants in Salak Phra forest, which was declared in 1865 as Thailand's first wildlife sanctuary, are threatened by poachers and illegal logging. Forestry officials can do little because the loggers enjoy the protection of certain influential people. Villagers also cut bamboo, a major food source for the elephants, which then wander out of the sanctuary to eat crops. There are probably no more than 35 wild elephants left in 859-sq-km Salak Phra and the estimated wild elephant population in the whole of Thailand is 750–1055 animals, in various wildlife sanctuaries covering a



Thailand's stamps reflect the importance of elephants to the country's economy but the wild populations are severely threatened.

total of 16,598 sq km. Most of these are similarly threatened. Source: *The Nation* (Bangkok), 25 November 1991.

Controversial dam funded in Thailand

Ignoring opposition from three of its executive directors and the protests of environmental groups around the world, the World Bank agreed in December to lend Thailand £32 million to finish building the Pak Mool Dam. Pressure groups say the decision casts doubt on its new policy of

applying strict environmental criteria to its projects. The dam, 570 km north-east of Bangkok, is designed to generate 136 megawatts of electricity; it will force thousands of people to move, disrupt rice production and threaten fish stocks.

Source: *New Scientist*, 21/28 December 1991, 5.

Shrimp farming banned in mangroves

Thailand's National Forestry Policy Committee has decided to ban shrimp farming in mangrove forests after 1994.

Source: *The Nation* (Bangkok), 22 November 1991.

Crackdown on illegal logging in Philippines

President Aquino of the Philippines promised a crackdown on illegal logging after officials said that deforestation was the main cause of the floods that killed up to 7000 people in November 1991 and made 120,000 people homeless on Leyte. It is reported that at least four mayors on Leyte were either protecting or involved in illegal logging. Source: *The Nation* (Bangkok), 12 November 1991.

Pakistan conference results in Action Programme

At a conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl in South and West Asia in Karachi, Pakistan in December 1991 an Action Programme was adopted to address the problems of wetland deterioration and destruction in the region. Greater co-operation was called for regarding the conservation of transborder wetlands, for example the Sundarbans between Bangladesh and India. Parties to the Bonn Convention

were urged to develop a multi-lateral Agreement for waterbird conservation, as well as a special Agreement for the highly endangered Siberian cranes. The Action Programme is available from the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, UK.
Source: IWRB News, January 1992, 1.

Rhino horns seized in Singapore

Ten rhinoceros horns were seized at Changi airport in Singapore on 6 December 1991, the first such confiscation since Singapore joined CITES. The horns were concealed in incense woodchips imported from Indonesia and were probably from Javan or Sumatran rhinoceroses.

Source: The Straits Times, 10 December 1991.

NORTH AMERICA

Canada's endangered species list grows

The number of endangered species in Canada rose to 211 in 1991, from 192 in 1990. New additions include polar and grizzly bears, seven reptiles and amphibians, two fish, four plants and the Peary caribou.

Sources: Vancouver Sun, 22 August 1991; Nature Canada, Fall 1991, 45-50.

Killer whales future threatened

The future of the 190 killer whales *Orcinus orca* that enter Johnstone Strait, off the northeast coast of Vancouver in Canada, to feed each summer is being jeopardized by a company, MacMillan Biodel, which is logging in the Tsitika River val-

ley. The clear-felling substantially increases the rate of soil erosion, and thus the amount of silt flowing into the sea, making it unsuitable for whales. Increased human activity near the shore may also result in the whales leaving. To study the impacts of human activities on the whales, the federal and British Columbian governments have formed a joint Johnstone Strait Killer Whale Committee.

Source: The Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly, Fall 1991, 13.

DON'T SHOOT



SEA LIONS

This sticker is being given to US fishermen to encourage them to comply with new regulations.

Sealion regulations

The US National Marine Fisheries Service has issued new regulations as a result of the listing of Steller's sealion *Eumetopias jubatus* (see *Oryx*, 25, 193). Discharge of firearms at or within 100 yds (91 m) is prohibited, but fishermen may use other means, which do not injure or kill, to deter sealions from interfering with their gear. Approaching within 3 nautical miles of any Steller's sealion breeding area west of 150°W is banned and no more than 675 sealions may be killed incidentally each year west of 141°W. Each violation of the law is subject to penalties, including vessel forfeiture, fines of up to \$25,000 and imprisonment for

up to 1 year.

Source: Fishing News International, November 1991, 14-15.

US to extend use of TEDs

The US Department of Commerce has ordered Atlantic shrimp vessels to use turtle excluder devices (TEDs) throughout 1992 rather than from 1 May to 1 September as previously required. The National Wildlife Federation, which threatened court action over the issue, argued that the number of turtles that washed ashore last year after drowning in shrimp nets proved that year-round protection was necessary. The Federation is urging the Department to make the new rule permanent.

Source: International Wildlife, January-February 1992, 26.

Ferrets in the wild again

No black-footed ferrets *Mustela nigripes* have been seen in the wild since 1986 and with a captive population of over 300, 49 4-month-old individuals were acclimatized and released in Shirley Basin, Wyoming, USA in 1991. Most of the animals were radio-collared and tracked. In the wild 80 per cent of juveniles die before reaching maturity so losses were expected. Of the 49 released, five were killed by coyotes and one by a badger. A month after release 10 ferrets were certainly still alive and more captive-bred animals will be released in autumn 1992.

Source: BBC Wildlife, January 1992, 56.

Decoy deer to catch hunters

Game wardens in the US are using realistic animal decoys to catch 'spotlighters', who illegal-

ly hunt at night by using artificial light to spot and 'freeze' deer and other game animals. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, which pioneered this use of decoys in 1975, issued 131 charges to spotlighters who shot at three artificial deer in 1991. The department hopes for even greater success this year with seven remote-controlled deer models whose heads and necks can move in a lifelike manner. *Source: National Wildlife*, December–January 1992, 32.

Transplanted otters fail to take

After 4 years of trying the US Fish and Wildlife Service has failed to establish a separate colony of sea otters *Enhydra lutris* on San Nicolas Island off the southern California coast and may soon abandon the project. Of the 139 animals transferred since 1987 only 14 adults remain; some have died or disappeared and others have returned to the main colony. *Source: National Wildlife*, December–January 1992, 32.

Four more species listed

During June and July 1991 the US Fish and Wildlife Service listed two animals and a plant as endangered and one plant as threatened. The winged maple-leaf mussel *Quadrula fragosa* was once widespread in the Mississippi, Tennessee, Ohio and Cumberland River drainages but habitat damage has eliminated it from 99 per cent of its range. It is now known only from a 8-km reach of the St Croix River and appears not to have reproduced since 1983. The Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly *Boloria acronema* is known from only two locations in the San Juan and Sawatch Mountain,

Colorado, where overcollecting is the main threat. Knieskern's beaked-rush *Rhynchospora knieskernii* remains in only 27 populations, all but one in the Jersey Pinelands. Threatened status was necessary because the suppression of wildfires has resulted in the encroachment of woody vegetation in the clearings it requires. The Tennessee yellow-eyed grass *Xyris tennesseensis* was listed as endangered. This wetland plant has suffered from habitat destruction and only seven populations remain in Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee. *Source: Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, July–August 1991, 11.

Frozen mussels

As mitigation for the loss of a diverse mussel bed caused by the construction of a dam on the Ohio River, three power companies have given the Virginia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit \$25,000 for research into the feasibility of cryopreservation of freshwater mussel genetic material. Juvenile mussels from artificial propagation projects may be available for transplants within a few years; they could be used to re-establish mussels when habitats have been restored or to replace populations wiped out in environmental accidents. *Source: Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, July–August 1991, 12.

Panthers die in Florida

The last two female Florida panthers *Felis concolor coryi* in the south-east portion of the Florida Everglades died in 1991. The causes of death have not yet been determined, but mercury levels of 15 and 35 parts per million were found in the blood and liver, respective-

ly, of one of the animals. The blood level is in the toxicosis range for domestic house cats. Only two panthers, both male, remain in the south-east Everglades.

Source: Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, July–August 1991, 6.

Reefs in Florida unhealthy

Florida's coral reefs are dying rapidly according to researchers who have been monitoring their health since 1976. All six monitoring sites had lost some coral species and at five sites the total area covered by coral had shrunk. Most of the damage appeared to be the result of black band disease caused by algae, whose growth is enhanced by excess nutrients. The source of these could be sewage and the destruction of the Florida Keys is prompting calls to prevent further development along the coast.

Source: New Scientist, 11 January 1992, 12.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Drugs deal to help Costa Rica's forests

The Merck pharmaceutical company is paying a Costa Rican conservation organization \$1 million for the right to search for new medicines in forest plant and animal species. There are already many agreements that promise to share royalties for new drugs with the country of origin but this is the first agreement where money has been given just for the right to look. The National Institute of Biodiversity of Costa Rica will use money to train local people to collect specimens and to extract compounds for Merck to screen. If any discoveries produce mar-

ketable drugs Costa Rica will receive royalties.

Source: *National Wildlife*, December–January 1992, 29.

Programme for Belize

The Programme for Belize, which was set up in 1988 by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, has to date acquired more than 200,000 acres (80,000 ha) of tropical forest in the Rio Bravo area of northern Belize. Hunting and clear-felling are banned but non-consumptive uses of the forest, such as controlled tourism, are being developed. Private individuals have purchased 1-acre plots but the latest addition to PFB lands is 50,000 acres (20,250 ha) donated by Coca Cola Foods earlier this year. Details are available from Programme for Belize, PO Box 99, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 2LB.



New law for turtles

The turtles that nest at Tortuguero, Costa Rica, should suffer less from disturbance in future as a result of a new law,

which requires that tourists are escorted by trained guides when they visit nesting beaches at night between 1 July and 15 October. Tour groups will be restricted to a maximum of 15 individuals, only the guides will be allowed to use flashlights, and tourists will have to leave the beach once they have observed the nesting process.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, October 1991, 23.

Costa Rica enlarges parks

Costa Rica's President is expected to sign two decrees this year that will increase the size of Tortuguero National Park, which currently covers 197 sq km of lowland rain forest and has one of the world's most important green turtle *Chelonia mydas* nesting beaches. The first phase of expansion will include nearly 10 sq km of forested land linking the park to Barra del Colorado Wildlife Refuge to the north, additional turtle nesting beach, Tortuguero Mountain and a strip of land along the San Juan River on the border with Nicaragua. The second phase will encompass land north and south of the park, including upgrading about half the Barra del Colorado Wildlife Refuge to national park status.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, January 1992, 17–18.

SOUTH AMERICA

Scarlet ibis still not safe

Scarlet ibis *Eudocimus ruber* are still being hunted in French Guiana despite being legally protected. The bird is on restaurant menus and its feathers are still used to make artificial flowers. Some action is being taken: police confiscated a number of ibis in 1990 and

there was less disturbance in the two breeding colonies in 1991. About 1200 pairs nested at Karouabo and 500 pairs at Pointe Béhague.

Source: *Specialist Group on Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills Newsletter*, October 1991, 5.

Amazon forest grant

In December 1991, after a year of negotiations, The World Bank, the European Commission and the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations agreed to grant Brazil \$250 million for conservation in the Amazon Basin (see *Oryx*, 26, 17). The money will be used to improve salaries, to endow professorial chairs, to buy equipment for two science institutes, to fund the establishment of national parks, tribal reserves and new zones set aside exclusively for non-destructive activities such as rubber tapping and Brazil nut collecting. The donors will pay their money into a Rain Forest Trust run by the World Bank, which will vet all projects.

Source: *New Scientist*, 21/28 December 1991, 7.

Woolly spider monkey born in captivity for first time

In November the first woolly spider monkey *Brachyteles arachnoides* bred in captivity was born at the Primatology Centre near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The species, endemic to the Atlantic forest of Brazil is endangered: around 150 animals occur in two nature reserves at Barreiro Rico in São Paulo and Caratinga in Minas Gerais plus a few hundred scattered in the tiny remnant of Atlantic forest in the south-east of the country. The Primatology Centre acquired two female woolly monkeys in 1988 and two young males in 1990, all

rescued from illegal captivity.
Source: New Scientist, 4 January 1992, 5.

Yanomani territory protected

In November 1991 Brazil's President announced the demarcation of 94,000 sq km of northern Brazil as the territory of Yanomani indians. Although mining rights remain in government hands the demarcation should allow the indians to preserve their territory against encroachment, provided they receive support from government agencies to keep out gold miners and loggers.

Source: BBC Wildlife, January 1992, 57.

Black lion tamarin programme progress

In 1991 The Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust has become the first zoological park outside Brazil to breed all three species of lion tamarin successfully. In 1990 the Trust was selected as the first place outside Brazil to receive the critically endangered black or golden-rumped lion tamarin *Leontopithecus chrysopygus* and two of the three pairs of this species at Jersey have now had offspring. There are about 450 individuals in the wild and the captive population of some 70 individuals (from 22 founders) is distributed between São Paulo Zoo, Rio de Janeiro Primate Centre and the JWPT.

Source: Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, Les Augrès Manor, Jersey, Channel Islands.

Bird rediscovery from Brazil

Kaempfer's tody-tyrant *Idioptilon kaempferi*, which was described from a single specimen in 1929, has been rediscovered



Two of three pairs of black lion tamarins held by the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust bred in 1991. Jersey is the first place outside Brazil to receive this critically endangered species as part of a co-operative breeding programme.

ered in humid lowland forest in Santa Catarina, southern Brazil, less than 1 km from where the original specimen was taken. The forest is owned by the regional electrical company and thus has a reasonable degree of protection, but the area is a potential target for logging.
Source: World Birdwatch, December 1991, 3.

News from the Galápagos Islands

The Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) has reported the successful culmination of two important conservation projects in the Galápagos Islands in 1991. Giant tortoises *Geochelone elephantopus* reared at the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) and reintroduced to Española have bred in the wild. The released tortoises are descendants of those rescued from the island in the 1960s; the Española race of

giant tortoises was reduced at one time to only 15 individuals. Another milestone is the return of 35 land iguanas *Conolophus subcristatus* to the island of Baltra, more than 40 years after they disappeared there. In October 1991 the Ecuadorian Government extended for a further 25 years the Agreement under which the CDF acts as major adviser on Galápagos conservation and operates the CDRS.

**AUSTRALASIA/
ANTARCTICA**

Australia's aliens

Researchers undertaking the first comprehensive study of plant invasions in Australia have concluded that the country's landscape will be transformed completely within 20 years unless urgent steps are taken. All undisturbed range-

land and wetland ecosystems are at risk and native animals are becoming threatened as their habitat is altered. The best known alien plant in Australia is the giant sensitive plant *Mimosa pigra*, which was introduced in the late nineteenth century and today forms impenetrable thickets over vast areas. Despite chemical and biological control programmes, the plant has infested 30,000 ha of wetland in Northern Territory and is now threatening Kakadu National Park. Another 18 species of alien plants are capable of transforming natural ecosystems; they include the rubber vine, which is spreading rapidly through north-east Queensland, threatening gallery forests and dry rain forest communities in particular.

Source: *New Scientist*, 21/28 December 1991, 12.

New South Wales destroys endangered species legislation

The New South Wales Government has exempted government agencies from the two sections of the National Parks and Wildlife Act that make it an offence to take or kill endangered and protected species. The move came after a court case brought against the NSW Forestry Commission and three logging companies by the North East Forest Alliance, which claimed that proposed logging would disturb or injure 16 endangered species in Chaelundi State Forest. The judge found that the Forestry Commission's management prescriptions as set out in the environmental impact statement would not prevent disturbance and injury to many individual animals and their species.

Source: *Conservation News*

(*Newsletter of the Australian Conservation Foundation*), October 1991, 3.

Net ban to help penguins

The threatened yellow-eyed penguin will be assisted in its struggle for survival by a ban on set nets around the southern half of the Moeraki Peninsula in Otago, New Zealand. At least eight yellow-eyed penguins *Megadyptes antipodes* are known to have drowned near the peninsula in recent years. With a mainland population of only 130 pairs the impact of set nets is devastating; over the total mainland range of the penguin at least 50 are known to have died in set nets. Many individuals of other species also die in these nets and there is a compelling case for a total ban on all set nets in New Zealand.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, August 1991, 2.

Recovery project for New Zealand's symbol

A 5-year recovery plan for kiwis was launched in 1991 by the Threatened Species Trust of New Zealand (a partnership between the Department of

Conservation and the Royal Forest and Bird protection Society) backed by the Bank of New Zealand. The three species of kiwi still present in New Zealand have been declining in number and range: the little spotted kiwi *Apteryx owenii* is believed to occur only on offshore islands, the great spotted kiwi *A. haastii* is found only in large forest areas in South Island, and populations of brown kiwis *A. australis* are becoming increasingly isolated. Source: *Forest & Bird*, August 1991, 3.

Orchid rediscovery

An endemic spider orchid *Corybas carsei*, believed extinct, has been rediscovered in the Whangamarino wetland in the Waikato, New Zealand. Management work is now being undertaken to restore water levels.

Source: *Conservation News*, *Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society*, November 1991.

Streamers to help albatrosses

Fishing boats in the South Atlantic will soon have to use streamers in their nets to scare



Australia has just issued a set of six stamps featuring some of the country's threatened species. They include parma wallaby, ghost bat, long-tailed dunnart, little pygmy-possum, dusky hopping-mouse and squirrel glider.

off birds following a decision by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) in November 1991. Birds, in particular albatrosses, are attracted to the baited hooks of long-line fisheries and get trapped and drown in nets. The meeting also agreed to allow new fisheries to start in the region only after review by the Commission's scientific committee and, for the first time, set a 1.5-million-tonne limit for the krill *Euphasia superba* catch in the South Atlantic sector, which includes the heavily fished Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia areas.
 Source: *New Scientist*, 9 November 1991, 16; *Polar Record*, January 1992, 79.

OCEANIA

Vanuatu still has its starling

The Santo Mountain starling *Aplonis santovestris* is one of Vanuatu's most elusive endemic birds. First recorded in the 1930s on Espiritu Santo, it had not been seen since 1961, despite expeditions to the area, one of them funded by FFPS. In August 1991 an expedition by the Vanuatu Natural Science Society found the bird in cloud forest above 1400 m on Mount Santo. Nine separate observations were made but they may have all been of one pair. Despite its limited range (it may still also occur on nearby mountains), there appear to be no immediate threats, but of the six *Aplonis* species that occurred elsewhere in the south-west Pacific, one is extinct, one is possibly extinct, one is endangered, one is common but endemic to Samoa, and only two remain common and widespread. A potential

threat is the introduced rat *Rattus exulans* if it were able to establish in the cloud forest.
 Source: *Naika*, November 1991, 2-9.

MEETINGS

10-14 May 1992. 4th World Conference on Birds of Prey and Owls, Berlin. *Contact*: World Working Group on Birds of Prey, 15b Bolton Gardens, London SW5 0AL, UK or Wangenheimstr. 32, 10000 Berlin 33, Germany.

13-14 July 1992. Otter Conservation in the UK, sponsored by Intervet Ltd, Cambridge, UK. *Contact*: Patti Tudor, Kartupelis Associates, St John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 4WS. Tel: 0223 421145. Fax: 0223 421148.

20-23 July 1992. The Strategy of Indonesian Flora Conservation, Bogor Botanic Garden. This international conference will be focused on formulating a strategy for Indonesian floral conservation, drawing upon the experience of the world's botanic garden professionals. *Contact*: Dr Ir. Suhirman, Kebun Raya Bogor, Bogor 16122, Indonesia. Tel and Fax: (0251) 322187.

24-28 August 1992. Tropical Trees: Potential for Domestication, The Edinburgh Centre for Tropical Forest, UK. *Contact*: Dr R. R. B. Leakey, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Bush Estate, Penicuik, Midlothian EH26 0QB, Scotland UK.

8-21 February 1993. International Grasslands Congress, New Zealand and Queensland, Australia. *Contact*: Secretariat, XVII International

Grasslands Congress, Agronomy Department, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Fax: 64 6 350 5614

REQUESTS

ARACHNODATA, a private research and information centre for the study of venomous animals in general and arachnids in particular, is compiling a Catalogue of Scorpions and a World Atlas of Scorpions. Data from major US and European museums has already been collated but the compilers wish to receive information about scorpion material deposited in local museums, institutes and private collections in other countries. Project Co-ordinator: Matt E. Braunwalder, c/o ARACHNODATA, Frauentalweg 97, CH-8045, Zurich, Switzerland.

PUBLICATIONS

Forestry in the Tropics

Tropical Forestry: Third World Priorities Versus Western Concerns is the proceedings of the 1990 International Student Forestry Symposium, which was held at the University of Wales, Bangor. The 113 pages contain 11 contributions focusing on various aspects of deforestation in the tropics, the part that western countries play in the destruction and the future role for foresters in tropical countries. It is available from J. Williams, Lecturer in Forestry, School of Agricultural and Forest Sciences, University College of North Wales, Deiniol Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2UW, UK for £4.00 plus postage: £0.50 (UK); £1.00 (Europe); £1.90 (Africa); £2.20 (all other places). A limited number of copies have been set

aside for Third World organizations and individuals; these will be available at cost of post and packing only.

Threatened mammals in south-east Brazil

Threatened Endemic Mammals of the Atlantic Forest Region of South-East Brazil is a 126-page report by William L. R. Oliver and Ilmar B. Santos describes the current status and distribution of the threatened, endemic, arboreal mammals of Brazil's remaining Atlantic Forest. Field surveys were conducted as well as interviews with approximately 900 hunters, foresters, farmers and reserve staff. All federal state and private reserves were visited and the extent and location of any remaining unprotected forest were recorded. All the taxa investigated, with the exception of the prehensile-tailed porcupine *Sphiggurus i. insidiosus*, were found to be threatened to varying degrees. The reasons for this are discussed and recommendations for their enhanced protection are made. There is a need to reassess priorities for conservation action and to upgrade many existing reserves as well as to establish new ones, especially in the coastal forest of east Bahia. The publication is Special Scientific Report No. 4, Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, ISBN 0 9515581 3 7, and is available from: JWPT, Jersey JE3 5BF, Channel Islands, UK or Federal University of Minas Gerais, 31.270 Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brasil.

Hungarian Natural History Publications

The Hungarian Natural History Museum has launched a new series of books with the title *Studia Naturalia* and the first

two volumes comprise a collection of essays, *Bátorliget Nature Reserves – After Forty Years*, by more than 50 Hungarian and foreign experts. The contributions deal with the fauna and flora of three small nature conservation areas in north-east Hungary, comparing the situation today with similar research conducted 40 years ago. The book costs \$US80 from the Hungarian Natural History Museum, H-1088, Budapest, Baross u.13, Hungary.

Arabian gazelles

Arabian Gazelles by Khushal Habibi is published by Saudi Arabia's National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development. Its 131 pages provide information on and illustrate many aspects of the Arabian Peninsula's two extant species. It is intended to serve as a guide to the scientific management and conservation of gazelles in the Arabian Peninsula, where they were once so abundant. The book is available free of charge from Dr Abdulaziz H. Abuzinada, Secretary General, NCWD, PO Box 61681, Riyadh 11575, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

French fish atlas

Atlas Préliminaire des Poissons d'eau douce de France contains distribution maps and information about 80 freshwater fish species found in French inland waters. Details from: Secrétariat de la Faune et de la Flore, Muséum National d'histoire naturelle, 57 rue Cuvier, 75231 Paris Cedex 05, France.

Storks, ibises and spoonbills

A Bibliography of Storks, Ibises and Spoonbills has been compiled by M. C. Coulter, A. L.

Bryan Jr, D. P. Young Jr, K. Brouwer, M. P. Khal, C. E. King, J. A. Kushlan, C. S. Luthin and V. van Wieringen and published by Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, Aiken, South Carolina 29802, USA in 1991. Its 191 pages cover over 3000 references spanning more than 30 years. It covers all species in the group: five out of 20 storks are endangered or vulnerable, while four of 25 ibis species and one of six spoonbill species are endangered. It is a major contribution to conservation and research efforts for these birds.

Legislation for Botswana's fauna

History and Evolution of the Fauna Conservation Laws of Botswana by Clive Spinage, published by the Botswana Society in 1991, covers the development of legislation from the earliest Chief's Decrees dealing with ivory in around 1815, to the comprehensive game laws that exist today. It is available from The Botswana Society, PO Box 71, Gabarone, Botswana.

Publications from IUCN

Swallowtail Butterflies is the most recent Action Plan from the SSC. Compiled by T. R. New and N. M. Collins of the IUCN/SSC Lepidoptera Specialist Group, it describes priority projects in 34 areas of the world and is available from IUCN Publications Services Unit, 181a Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DJ, UK or IUCN Communications Division, Avenue du Mont-Blanc, CH-1196, Gland, Switzerland. A complete catalogue of IUCN publications can also be obtained from the above addresses.