

result in desert encroachment. It would be better to sponsor a thousand family allotments of 10 ha each than a single agricultural project of 10,000 ha!

Rehabilitation Possibilities

If I were asked to make any prophesy about the future of the world's deserts, it would undoubtedly be a gloomy one: and I should be most agreeably surprised if it were not fulfilled. It seems inevitable that desertification will continue to spread in the immediate future, and that most at least of the world's deserts will continue to expand. This is a very major part of much of the problem of the Third World. The population problem may, of course, be solved by thermonuclear warfare, from which only a few unfortunates would survive to envy the dead. It may equally well be solved by world starvation, accompanied by the misery, tyranny, and vice, that Thomas R. Malthus foretold in *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the future Improvement of Society* (1798, revised 1803). A third possible cause of a reduction in human population numbers might be the appearance of some uncontrolled new virus or stress syndrome.

Although I have predicted that desertification will increase, along with the human population of the globe, I am not so pessimistic as to believe that humanity will inevitably perish in a holocaust. Many things are possible for people who possess the technological capacity to send men to the Moon and bring them safely back to Earth. To make the desert blossom is technically possible.* At present, this may be economically unrewarding and have little of the political and emotional appeal of sophisticated rocketry. Arid regions are, however, well endowed with ultraviolet energy and some other aspects of fertility, and are by no means devoid of further resources—as we know full well.

There is some hope, therefore, that a change in the direction of economic pressures may result in a reversal of the world's present suicidal tendencies. Even if this viewpoint is unjustifiably optimistic, we still cannot discount the possibility that cultural values may change, as they have done so often in the past. Mankind is not so rational—or utterly irrational—as is often thought. Despite his greed, Man can also be gratifyingly compassionate. If this quality were universally extended towards other human beings, as well as to the endangered fauna and flora of the Earth, it would undoubtedly be possible to overcome the dangers inherent in the present paradox.

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* As the late Richard St Barbe Baker and others have long contended. — Ed.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Our Journal Changes

After prolonged planning and consultation, a predecessor journal, *Biological Conservation*, was launched in 1968. It soon engendered an active sister, *Environmental Pollution*; but as the need for an ecologically-based general environmental counterpart emerged, *Environmental Conservation* was founded in 1974 and *Biological Conservation* left in other hands. The careful planning that was put into the dual venture of *Biological Conservation* and then *Environmental Conservation*, has paid off to the extent that no major changes have been deemed necessary in the latter during its near-decade of existence. Now, however, we feel that the time has come to introduce a dignified categorization of substantial short communications and reports (as opposed to mere notes etc.) while at the same time effecting economies of layout and execution beginning with the present, Autumn issue of this year [1982].

Blank Spaces

In future, the principal papers in our Journal will continue to begin on a right-hand page but will not be backed by 'fillers'. The most obvious difference for our readers will be the blank spaces at the ends of the main articles, though every effort will

be made by the typesetters not to end any paper with a page carrying only a few lines. This practice, long favoured in the past by commercial publishers and those of more lavish journals, has now become common for reasons of both expediency and economy. It will no longer be necessary for us to concoct 'last-minute fillers', and indeed the whole production process will be streamlined.

To compensate our readers and ourselves in the matter of much-needed space, the Publishers have generously undertaken to add 8 pages per issue to the regular allotment of 80, while increasing to 12 (exceptionally) the maximum number of 'extra pages' which we may add per issue on payment of 150 Swiss francs per page (always in groups of 4). Thus the minimum number of pages per volume is increased to 352 and the maximum permissible to 400 (apart from covers and 'prelims').

Short Communications & Reports (SCRs)

A second evident change in our Journal will be a special section, entitled 'Short Communications & Reports' (SCRs), and starting on a right-hand page in the manner of main papers and other sections. The Short Communications will usually be

reasonably detailed scientific articles that do not constitute 'full papers'. These, as in the past, will commonly be refereed; they will be presented in a relatively compact style, without a summary and with the authorship and/or address normally indicated at the end of the paper. Not infrequently, contributions that are submitted as 'full papers' are adapted by their Authors at Referees' and/or the Editor's suggestion and the latter's request before publication in this Section. The Reports will likewise be items of some substance, and will include important edicts and resolutions or accounts of major bodies.

Each SCR may be up to a maximum of three printed pages of the Journal in length, and should be illustrated when appropriate. Such items will run on, one after another, within the Section, for which it is hoped to allow about ten pages in each issue.

Notes, News & Comments (NNCs)

In the manner of the preceding SCRs and the following Conferences & Meetings (C&Ms) and Reviews & Notices (R&Ns), this Section will also normally start on a right-hand page and be filled to its end. NNCs will, in general, be shorter items than SCRs, but will likewise be 'signed' by their Author or Authors wherever possible to indicate responsibility, with an address for further correspondence etc. The SCRs having been separated as indicated above, the NNCs are the other items that were used hitherto as 'fillers'; so with an allotment to them of commonly six or eight pages per issue, there should be no loss of information-capacity in our new-style Journal. NNCs and C&Ms (but not R&Ns) may be illustrated, and should not normally exceed a single page of the Journal. They, too, will run on, one after another, without blank spaces.

While it is hoped to represent each of these and the following two Sections in every issue of the Journal, for various reasons one or two may sometimes be omitted from an issue but then every effort will be made to ensure substantial representation in the next.

Conferences & Meetings (C&Ms) and Reviews & Notices (R&Ns), etc.

The remaining regular Sections or annual features of our Journal will remain much as in the past, with standardized styles of headings, but addresses of Reviewers will be added as well as those of Reporters of C&M items. The optimum length of constituent items in both these Sections remains about 500 words of text, and any which are not primarily environmental must have substantial environmental implications that should be stressed.

An opening section containing one or more Editorials, Guest Editorials, and/or Open Letters or a complement of Editorial Notes, may also be expected in each issue, and, at the end of each year's volume, its complete Contents and Index of Named Contributors, with a list of Other Books Etc. Received at the end of the following Spring Issue.

Typesetting and Proofing in Switzerland

In future, our Journal may be typeset elsewhere in Switzerland than the editorial and publishing bases, but there will be careful in-house checking of the proofs against the original copy, which will be done by trained proof-readers having a scientific background. Authors of Guest Editorials and Main Articles will receive two proofs, and will be expected to return a corrected copy to the Publishers without delay. Authors of SCRs will receive only one proof, which they may correct and return if they wish. All responses to editorial queries, and also the proof corrections, will be checked by the Publishers.

Provided that the Instructions for Authors or recent issues of the Journal are followed for style, that extra care is taken in the initial preparation and meticulous checking of all 'copy' before submission, and that Authors' corrections are received in good

time, this process should result in considerable savings 'all around'.

Printing in and Distribution from The Netherlands

The Journal will now be printed in The Netherlands—as a trial measure which we have been assured will involve no loss of quality but will result in further economies. Unfortunately, to this extent the Journal will no longer be wholly Swiss; but the governmental supervisors of the tax-free and non-profit Foundation for Environmental Conservation, owners of the Journal and copyright, assure us that there will be no objection to this arrangement, while everything up to the final printing and distribution will continue to be done in Switzerland.

Reprints and Free Copies

Another saving, which brings us more into line with other journals, will be the reduction from 50 to 30 in the number of free reprints which are sent to Authors of Guest Editorials and all major papers. This is still more generous than appears to be common nowadays, and any further number of reprints, with or without special covers, may be ordered at reasonable prices on a form which will be sent out with the proofs and should be returned with the corrected copy. Authors of SCRs and NNCs, and of C&M and R&N items, will each receive two 'voucher' copies in the form of tear-sheets of the published version of their contributions, and will now be free to photocopy their contributions without special permission from the Foundation. The publishers of books reviewed will also receive two tear-sheets of their pertinent items.

Every effort will be made to send out reprints and tear-sheets within two weeks of publication. All Advisory Editors will continue to be sent, on publication, a free copy of each issue of the Journal, and should communicate to the Publishers any change of address or loss. All other losses should be reported to the Publishers in Lausanne—not to the Editor or the Printers.

Permissions and Royalties

To reduce the burden of correspondence and embarrassment concerning these matters, 'blanket' permission is hereby granted to their Authors by the owning and copyright-holding Foundation for Environmental Conservation, for free photocopying of 'signed' Editorials etc., SCRs, NNCs, C&Ms, and R&Ns. However, this does not extend to reprinting of items, or to reproduction 'in any form or by any means' of full papers. Special permission from the Foundation, with due acknowledgements also to the Journal and its Publishers, will still be required for such reprinting or institutional copying, and in certain circumstances also payment of a royalty to the Foundation.

General Policy Items

Our agreed complement of 50 Advisory Editors has now been filled (except for two topics that are currently in abeyance) by the addition of a much-needed plant physiologist. As any vacancies to such 'chairs' are usually filled by supporting colleagues, written or verbal applications to join the Panel are apt to be superfluous.

It has been our policy in recent years to 'stress' or 'feature' particular topics in the early pages of issues of our Journal, as is done in this case for Desertification and will be continued to a lesser degree for Parks and Reserves in our Winter issue. Owing to the pressure of other work and especially of refereed papers which are awaiting publication, we have decided to discontinue this as a regular practice, but will resume it in special cases (such as a hoped-for featuring of IUCN in an early issue next year) and hereby invite our Advisory Editors to come forward with plans for such treatments from time to time.

Finally we wish to take this opportunity to express our warm appreciation and eternal gratitude to all those Referees and Advisers who work so hard and perforce anonymously to help us to maintain the standards of our Journal. N.P.