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## International

### Somalia joins CITES

Somalia became the 91st Party to CITES when its accession became effective on 2 March 1986. *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, VII, 5.

### UAE not implementing CITES

The CITES Secretariat urged all CITES Parties to prohibit trade in CITES species with or through the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with effect from 28 November 1985. The UAE has been a Party to the Convention since 1975, but has made no effort to implement it. *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, VII, 5.

### Illegal ivory seized in Portugal

In November 1985 Customs Officers at Lisbon Airport seized 1.3 tonnes of ivory concealed in a shipment of malachite from Zaire to Lisbon via London. *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, VII, 5.

### Ramsar Parties reach 40

Egypt and Mali joined the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) in July 1985, bringing the total number of Parties to 40. *UNEP News*, January/February 1986.

### The whale count begins

At a special meeting in April, the International Whaling Commission decided to establish an inventory of all the information available on whales as a first step in its task of assessing the world's whale stocks. *New Scientist*, 17 April 1986.

### Minke whaling—1985/86

The Soviet whaling fleet arrived in Antarctic waters in mid-December, and by 11 January had taken 743 minke whales, vastly exceeding the Japanese take to that date of 414. In the 1984–85 season, the USSR harpooned 3027 minke whales—the International Whaling Commission quota was 1941. *Monitor*, 10 February 1986.

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## News from the World Heritage Convention

At the 9th Session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Paris on 2–6 December, the following natural sites were accepted for inclusion on the World Heritage List: Keoladeo National Park, Kaziranga National Park and Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, all in India; Huascarán National Park in Peru; and the Goreme Valley in Turkey, bringing the total number of natural properties on the List to 61. Philippines has become the 88th Party, and the People's Republic of China the 89th, to accede to the Convention. *CNPPA Members' Newsletter*, 33 and 34.

### Trouble for timber agreement

The embryonic International Tropical Timber Organization, which was launched on 1 April 1985, is in stalemate: member nations, in two two-week meetings in June and November 1985, could not reach a single decision and were not able to agree where the headquarters should be or who should be the Director-General. One final meeting will be held in 1986 in a last effort to save the agreement. In January Friends of the Earth International and the International Institute for Environment and Development launched a joint campaign to try and break the political deadlock.

### US/Japan drift net agreement no use

The US and Japan have agreed, subject to a formal decision, that Japanese fishermen will stop using drift nets in the Bering Sea by 1994. North American fishermen say that the agreement is not enough and that it gives minimal protection to Alaskan and West Coast spawned salmon in the open sea. *Monitor*, 10 March 1986.

### Norway announces whale quota

The Norwegian Government has announced that its whalers can take 400 minke whales from May this year, 350 from the coastal stock and 50 from the central Atlantic stock. The US Government has warned that Norway would be

certified under the Pelly Amendment and could face an embargo of fish products. According to Iceland's fishing minister, Iceland is negotiating with Norway, Denmark and Canada about leaving the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to form a North Atlantic Whaling Commission. If that were to happen, the IWC could collapse altogether. *Monitor*, 14 April 1986.

### Przewalski horse numbers

Prague Zoo, which publishes the stud-book of the Przewalski horse, reported that on 1 January 1985 there were 614 individuals in captivity in 100 places worldwide, the population having increased by 62 individuals since the previous year. *Gazella*, 3/4, 1985.

## Europe and North Africa

### Endangered European bird habitats get funds

The European Commission has allocated £752,000 for 11 conservation projects designed to maintain, or re-establish, natural habitats for endangered birds in the European Community. Community funding will provide 50 per cent of the cost of each project. *GNUS*, 13 February 1986.

### What future for eight wolves?

In the whole of Sweden and Norway there may be only eight wolves left. The only female to have produced young in the last three years was shot in August 1985, three young wolves 'disappeared' in October and November, and a fourth was found shot in December. The pack has mange and the old male is hampered by an injury. A barbaric anti-wolf lobby exploits loopholes in the protection laws to kill wolves. However, recent political changes in Norway promise a better future: in January 1986 a wolf enthusiast was put in charge of the Fish and Wildlife Directorate's carnivore studies, and this has already improved official co-operation in the two countries. *BBC Wildlife*, 4, 3.

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## New Estonian reserve

Estonia SSR is establishing its fifth nature reserve in the Endla-Oostriku wetland on the south-eastern slope of the Pandivere Upland in Central Estonia. The 8162 ha (20,168 acres) cover seven bogs, which are home to several rare species, and important springs.

*Eesti Loodus*, January 1986.

## Media's role in environmental awareness in Estonia

Research into the role of the press, radio and television in promoting ecological awareness in Estonia showed that although the coverage of environmental issues was extensive, the quality was poor: 29 per cent of press material did not indicate the causes of ecological problems, 35 per cent did not mention measures being implemented, and 44 per cent did not mention any further measures required to improve the situation. The researchers stressed the need for the media to show people what they could do to improve the state of the environment.

*Eesti Loodus*, November 1985.

## Heinz give a million

The British subsidiary of the H.J. Heinz Company has marked its centenary by pledging £1 million towards wildlife conservation in Britain. The grant is the largest single donation ever made to British conservation and it will be dispensed over the next three years. The FFPS Bat Project is one of the recipients.

## Timber treatments that kill bats

Researchers P. A. Racey and Susan M. Swift have shown that chemicals used to treat roof timbers against infestations of wood-boring insects and rot-causing fungi cause the death of pipistrelle bats, even if the bats roost in timber treated 14 months previously. The lethal chemicals involved are chlorinated hydrocarbons and pentachlorophenol, which are commonly used by timber treatment companies and are also widely available to the general public in the UK. Alternative effective chemicals are available that are not toxic to bats, and the researchers argue that they should replace the toxic chemicals

wherever bats are likely to roost.  
*Biological Conservation*, **35**, 205–214.

## Fine for killing bats

Magistrates fined a man, trading as Yorkshire Damp Cure, £500 plus £2000 costs in February for killing bats by treating their roost with Lindane. This was the first successful prosecution for killing bats under the UK's Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

*Nature Conservancy Council*, 5 February 1986.

## Fined for eagle rearing

In April a man, Philip Dugmere, was fined £500 by a Stafford Crown Court for rearing nine rare African eagles—three crowned eagles, four martial eagles and two Verreaux's eagles—in his aviary near Wolverhampton in the UK. The eagles had been smuggled into Britain as eggs, having been allegedly stolen by a wildlife inspector in Zimbabwe.

*The Times*, 29 April 1986.

## Fewer badgers to be killed

The team appointed in September 1984 to review the badger/bovine tuberculosis problem in the UK, which included FFPS Vice-Chairman, David Jones, has reaffirmed that there is unchallengeable evidence to indicate that badgers constitute a potential wildlife reservoir for bovine tuberculosis in cattle. However, as a result of the team's report, the Minister of Agriculture announced that, in future, action against badgers would be confined to that part of a farm where the tuberculosis outbreak can be attributed to badgers. This should reduce significantly the numbers of badgers killed.

*Badgers and Bovine Tuberculosis*, HMSO, 1986. Price £7.20.

## Satellite seal tracking

In December 1985 a female grey seal was successfully tracked off the English coast using a radio-transmitter glued to the hair on its back (it will fall off when the seal moults) and a satellite. The Sea Mammal Research Unit in Cambridge will now be able to assess much more accurately the effects that grey seals have on fish stocks. Seals have been

tracked before, but the transmitters had a range of only 20 km and had to be followed using aeroplanes.

*BBC Wildlife*, **4**, 3.

## Virus introduction

This summer, scientists plan to release a genetically engineered virus for the first time in Britain. The virus attacks caterpillars of the moth *Panolis flammea*, which is damaging exotic lodgepole pines in the north of Scotland.

*GNUS*, 13 March 1986.

*The Guardian*, 9 and 11 March 1986.

## Bulb dealer fined

A bulb dealer was fined £1800 by Bath magistrates in January for smuggling orchids and cyclamens in and out of Britain over the past three-and-a-half years. Walter Stagg, of Wiltshire, who runs Avon Bulbs, did not have the Department of the Environment licences required under CITES.

*DOE*.

## Sharp decline in Somerset otters

A survey for the Vincent Wildlife Trust has revealed that only 12 wild otters are left in the Somerset wetlands in southern England, which is one of the species's last strongholds in Britain. The reasons for the decline are not known but, according to the researcher, the main threat could be the clearance of riverside vegetation. It may also be that the eels, the main food for the otters, are contaminated with pesticide residues, and the report recommends analysing the eels, which are also eaten by humans in the area.

*Otters on the Somerset Levels*, Vincent Wildlife Trust, Baltic Exchange Building, 21 Bury Street, London EC3A 5AU.

## New NNRs for the UK

The Wash National Nature Reserve was declared on 25 February, and Bardsey Island in North Wales was declared a national nature reserve on 20 March 1986, bringing the total number to 214 in Great Britain. Bardsey covers 444 acres (179 ha) and has a diverse fauna and flora. It is located on the Irish sea-board migration route and supports important nesting populations of

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chough and manx shearwaters. The Wash (Lutton Outmarsh) covers 240 acres (97 ha) of saltmarsh in Lincolnshire, which attracts many waterfowl and seed-eating birds in autumn. NCC.

## Norfolk Broads to get protected status

The 120 miles (190 km) of the Norfolk Broads in eastern England are to be brought under the control of a single body on 1 April 1988, and be given financial support and status equivalent to a national park. GNUS, 13 March 1986. *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 March 1986.

## Lead weight ban

The National Trust of England and Wales is banning the use of lead fishing-weights in its waters from 15 June 1986 as a result of the Nature Conservancy Council's report stating that more than 3000 swans die each year in the UK from lead poisoning. *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 1986.

## Superstore moves meadow

A UK supermarket chain, Tesco, which wants to build a superstore on ancient meadowland, is prepared to transfer three acres of turf to another suitable site in Warwickshire, in co-operation with the Warwickshire Nature Conservation Trust. *The Guardian*, 17 March 1986.

## News from Ireland

Ireland has created six new nature reserves covering 2773 ha (6852 acres) of woodlands, wetlands, hills and coasts, including Capel Island in County Cork. This brings the total number of Irish reserves to 27. In December 1985 the Irish Minister for Fisheries and Forestry adopted a regulation to implement the EEC Directive on the conservation of wild birds. It amends and strengthens some provisions of the Wildlife Act 1976. *naturupa-newsletter-nature*, 86–1.

## Dutch protect Irish bogs

In December 1984 the Dutch Foundation for the Protection of Irish Bogs launched a fund-raising campaign to

buy and protect peat bogs in Ireland. Shareholders have already acquired Scragh Bog in central Ireland, in co-operation with the Irish National Peatland Conservation Committee. Another reserve will be bought soon with the help of WWF–Netherlands. *naturupa-newsletter-nature*, 86–1.

## Hikers kill endangered insects

A study on eight hiking trails in Bieszczady National Park in Poland found 978 trampled insects over 25 days. Of the 79 species collected 16 are protected by law—nine species of *Carabus* and seven species of *Bombus*. In order to reduce this destruction the researchers recommend that the hikers be made aware of the role of insects, and that narrow trails be widened where insects are trampled in great quantities. *Parki Narodowe i Rezerваты Przyrody*, 1985, 6, 2.

## Italy and France move to reduce phosphates

Legislation to ban the production, import, storage and sale of detergents exceeding specified phosphate levels has come into force in Italy in an attempt to control water eutrophication. The French Ministry of the Environment has signed an agreement with detergent manufacturers under which phosphate content will be stated on detergent packets. *naturupa-newsletter-nature*, 86–2.

## Protection for Hermann's tortoise

A station for the protection of the reptiles of Massif des Maures in southern France has been set up and its first project is concerned with Hermann's tortoise *Testudo hermanni*. In 1985 several eggs of this species, which were moved from their original nests to sheltered nests nearby, hatched successfully. *naturupa-newsletter-nature*, 86–1.

## Flamingoes compensate for winter losses

Exceptionally cold weather at the beginning of 1985 killed 3000–6000 west Mediterranean flamingoes *Phoenicopterus ruber roseus* in their Mediter-

anean wintering grounds, but in the summer a record 13,500 pairs and 8700 pairs nested in France and Spain, respectively. Between them they raised 10,000 chicks. *ICBP European Continental Section News*, 7.

## Portugal protects coast

Hunting and shooting have been banned along the entire Portuguese coast and around offshore islands. Many animal species and habitats will benefit, especially the turtle dove *Streptopelia turtur*. The protected area extends from the cliffs to 1 km inland. *naturupa-newsletter-nature*, 86–2.

## Madeira forbids turtle hunt

Madeira has prohibited the capture, keeping, deliberate killing of and trade in marine turtles in Madeira waters. The following species are involved: loggerhead *Caretta caretta*; hawksbill *Eretmochelys imbricata*; Kemp's ridley *Lepidochelys kempii*; green *Chelonia mydas*; and leatherback *Dermochelys coriacea*. *naturupa-newsletter-nature*, 86–1.

## Maltese bird slaughter continues

During 1985 illegal bird killing and trapping in Malta continued on a massive scale. About 3 million finches are caught in nets each autumn, and birds of prey are shot even in their roosts in the 'protected' area of Buskett Garden. *ICBP European Continental Section News*, 7.

## New areas in Sinai protected

In October 1985 two new protection areas were designated in North Sinai. One covers the coastal sand dunes between El-Arish and the international border at Rafah, and the other includes wetlands in the Lake Bardawil area, which are important for breeding and migrating birds. In addition, the Egyptian Government plans to declare St Catherine, Gebel Elba, the petrified forest near Maadi and Abu Rawwash north-west of Cairo protected national heritage areas. *Sinai Newsletter*, 4, 1.

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## An Egyptian nature fund

A new Egyptian law (No. 101/1985) makes provision for a 10 per cent tax to be levied on all tickets for travel issued in Egypt and paid for in Egyptian currency. The money raised will be used to develop tourist areas, hotels and airports, to develop archaeological sites, and to finance pollution prevention and nature conservation projects. *Sinai Newsletter*, 4, 1.

## Scimitar-horned oryx to Tunisia

The scimitar-horned oryx *Oryx dammah*, which was last seen in the wild in war-torn Chad, was reintroduced into a part of its former range in Tunisia in December. The reintroduction was carried out by a consortium of British zoos—Marwell, Edinburgh and Whippsnade—and the home of the five pairs of captive-born animals is the 16,400-ha (40,500-acre) Bou Hedma National Park, where 2400 ha (5900 acres) have been uninhabited, unfarmed and ungrazed for eight years and where a staggering recovery of vegetation has occurred. It is a dearth of vegetation that probably contributed to the oryx's disappearance from Tunisia in 1935.

## Moroccan park plan proceeds

The Moroccan Government is now resolving the legal difficulties in establishing the proposed national park in the Massa region, between Agadir and Tiznit. The park will protect important coastal wetlands that are key areas for migrating birds and will contain the three largest breeding colonies of the hermit ibis *Geronticus eremeticus*. *WWF Monthly Report*, March 1986.

## Fears for Morocco's houbara bustards

Moroccan officials fear that Arab falconers from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain could bring the houbara bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* to extinction in Morocco within a few years. Local people are not allowed to hunt with falcons and the bustard is a protected bird in Morocco, but the visiting Arabs fly in directly to their hunting camps, mainly in the eastern and south-western provinces, and it is estimated that more than half the country's

bustard population has been killed by their falcons in the past four years. *WWF Monthly Report*, March 1986.

## Africa

### New reserve in Mauritania

Mauritania is to establish the Diawling Reserve in the lower Senegal delta. It will be contiguous with the Djoudj National Park on the Senegal side of the river—a World Heritage Site—and will provide an important complement with its 15,000 ha (37,000 acres) and a range of brackish habitats, which are largely absent from Djoudj. It is hoped that the Diawling will be the first of a number of multiple-use wetland reserves within the delta. *CNPPA Members' Newsletter*, 33.

### Niger River fish decline

The flood plain fishery around the River Niger in central Mali has declined drastically over the last 20 years, from 150,000 metric tons to 60,000–80,000 tons a year. Because of the drought in sub-Saharan Africa, the river no longer floods and the fish are deprived of the vast shallow areas for feeding and spawning. As stocks fall the fishermen become more desperate and use illegal small-meshed nets, which exacerbate the problem. Some species have already disappeared, and the small stocks of immature fish left may not be able to spawn prolifically even if the river were to flood in an exceptional year. Long-term prospects are poor: the desert is advancing south towards the river at 100 km a year and an effective system of management is needed to restore the fishery.

*Fishing News International*, 25, 1.

### Stork trapping in Nigeria

In November 1985 two conservationists visiting Nigeria on an ICBP expedition found a well-organized illegal stork trapping enterprise. Stork decoys were set in a shallow lake surrounded by hundreds of snares to lure flocks of migrating white storks *Ciconia ciconia*, a European breeding species whose populations are crashing. The Nigerian Conservation Foundation confiscated the decoys.

*World Birdwatch*, 8, 1.



The mangabey *Cercocebus galentus*. This individual, in Arusha, is the only captive representative of a newly discovered population in Tanzania (*Roland Wirth*).

### Last rain forests need protection in Nigeria

The rain forests of south-west Nigeria are disappearing rapidly and none is protected effectively. Okomu Forest Reserve, the largest forest reserve in Bendel, is the least disturbed and contains what is probably the largest surviving population of endangered white-throated monkeys *Cercopithecus erythrogaster*. There is no real conservation policy for the reserve, part of which is being converted to an oil-palm plantation: felling continues unabated and hunting pressure is heavy. Researchers have recommended the establishment of a strict sanctuary in the heart of Okomu, with the rest of the reserve being carefully managed, with selective felling and ranching of duiker and grasscutter antelope.

*Nigerian Conservation Foundation Newsletter*, 1.

### Tusks and skins seized

Police seized 445 elephant tusks and nearly 1400 lizard and python skins in north-eastern Nigeria in April. They are believed to have been smuggled from the Central African Republic. *The Guardian*, 8 April 1986.

### Lake Chad shrinking

So much water is being taken out of Lake Chad for irrigation purposes that most of the lake is less than 6 feet (2 m) deep, leaving few pools deep enough for hippo. Co-operation among the four countries that share the lake is needed

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These fake, but realistic, rhino horns are confusing traders in Zambia, and are probably made there, although this is not certain. They are made of wood, fibre glass and resins and none is identical; some are covered with blood and urine, others have rhino hair glued to them (*Esmond Bradley Martin*).

desperately: they show no intention of restricting their removal of Lake Chad water to 2 per cent of the total as was once agreed.

*Nigerian Conservation Foundation Newsletter*. 1.

## New national park for Tanzania

The Mahale Mountains in Tanzania on the east shore of Lake Tanganvika were officially gazetted as a national park on 14 June 1985, open only to people on foot. The highest peak (Nkungwe) reaches 2460 m (8070 ft) and there are extensive montane forests, grasslands and some gallery forests. The fauna includes chimpanzees, brush-tailed porcupines, red colobus monkeys and Angolan black-and-white colobus monkeys. The chimpanzees have been studied by Japanese scientists for 20 years.

*International Primate Protection League Newsletter*. 12, 3.

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## Nigeria passes endangered species trade law

In Nigeria, the Endangered Species (Control of International Trade and Traffic) Decree became law on 24 April 1985. It prohibits the hunting or capture of, or trade in, the threatened animal species listed in its schedule, which include gorilla, lion, leopard, cheetah, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, eagles and falcons.

*Nigerian Conservation Foundation Newsletter*. 2.

## Repercussions of dynamite fishing

Although fishing with dynamite is illegal in Tanzania, the laws are not enforced and many reefs have been destroyed. Beaches are now suffering erosion, houses and hotels are falling into the sea and the tourist industry, which has declined to 25 per cent of its capacity, is suffering because the beaches are now disfigured with groynes, and now that

the reefs have been breached, sharks can come ashore.

*Fishing News International*. 25, 1.

## African seals killed for aphrodisiacs

In December 1985 concessions were granted for the killing of 3000–5000 bull seals in South West Africa/Namibia in order to export their reproductive organs to the Far East, where they are regarded as aphrodisiacs. The Chief Oceanographic Researcher at the Department of Sea Fisheries in Windhoek said that the concessions were given because the sealers had lost income due to the collapse of the overseas market in seal skins.

*Pretoria News*. 3 December 1985.

## Egyptian vulture extinct in South Africa

An extensive air and ground survey of the high interior of the Transkei, where it was hoped a relict population of Egyptian vultures might still survive, in September 1985 failed to find any of the birds. It is presumed that the bird, which was sparsely but widely distributed throughout South Africa 150 years ago, is now extinct there.

*Quagga*. 12.

## Hope for ailing cañe marron

Conservationists are hoping that the world's last cañe marron tree *Ramosmania heterophylla* on the Indian Ocean island of Rodrigues will be healthy enough for cuttings to be taken and grown at Kew gardens in the UK this year. It was discovered in 1980, 40 years after the last sighting of the species, and it suffered from animal browsing until it was fenced, and then from an attack of mealy bugs.

*IUCN*.

## Asia (excluding Indo-Malaya)

### Onagers back in wild

A herd of 13 onagers, or wild asses, *Equus hemionus hemihippus* has been reintroduced into former range in the Makhtesh Ramon region in Israel. A female has since given birth to a healthy

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foal—the first known successful birth of an onager after reintroduction into the wild.

*Israel—Land and Nature*. 11, 3.

## Hopes for dugongs in Gulf

An estimated 500-strong herd of dugongs has been seen in the Persian Gulf near the Bahraini Island of Hawar. There had been fears that the Nowruz oil spill in 1983 had destroyed the Gulf population, which was then believed to be only 50 strong. The Nairobi-based UN Environment Programme is planning a survey of wildlife in the Gulf. *New Scientist*. 20 March 1986.

## Whales victims of mistaken identity

A whale, mistaken for a 'naval target' and killed by an Iraqi rocket in the Persian Gulf in March, is just one of many killed during the course of the Iraq/Iran war, according to marine life officials.

*Los Angeles Times*. 27 March 1986.

## New wildlife law for China?

China is preparing a law to combat the increase in hunting and capture of rare animals. Indiscriminate capture, killing and smuggling of wildlife are particularly high in the north-west, south-west and southern areas of the country, and involve eagles, owls, leopards, monkeys and tigers.

*New Scientist*. 13 February 1985.

## Captive Chinese alligators

An article in *China Daily* (31 July 1985) stated that 600 eggs of Chinese alligators were being incubated, and the current survival rate of captive-hatched young is 70 per cent. The total population of captive-bred Chinese alligators has increased to 1000.

*Crocodyle Specialist Group Newsletter*. 4, 1.

## New nature reserve in China

Fujian province in China has set up a nature reserve to protect ancient forest on Meihua Mountain in the western part of the province. The 17,000 ha (42,000 acres) are inhabited by tigers, short-tailed monkeys and blue sheep.

*XINHUA*. 26 March 1986.

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## Grass find for panda

Chinese researchers at Sichuan Provincial Panda Farm have discovered that giant pandas will eat rye grass. This could be a breakthrough in rescuing pandas, whose staple food, arrow bamboo, began to wither in Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces in the summer of 1983. At least 59 of China's approximately 1000 giant pandas have since died.

*The Washington Times*. 10 February 1986.

## Black-necked cranes

China has 900 black-necked cranes *Grus nigricollis*, the world's largest population of this rare species, according to the Northwest Plateau Biology Institute, which has carried out a three-year investigation of the species's distribution and life patterns.

*XINHUA*. 2 March 1986.

## Crested ibis loan

China's Beijing Zoo has loaned Japan's ibis protection centre on the island of Sado a young male Japanese crested ibis *Nipponia nippon*, which it is hoped will mate with the centre's only female, although it is rather old and has never yet reared young. The centre's one remaining male is believed to be too old to mate. The co-operative breeding programme hopes to save the ibis from extinction. Only three remain in the wild in Japan and perhaps 20 in China. The Chinese wild birds include three chicks, but the area they inhabit is polluted with mercury and manganese.

*Nature*. 317, 31 October 1985.

## Buddhists save tigers

Buddhist leaders in Taiwan have announced a fund-raising campaign to buy 12 tigers imported from India and Bangladesh as 'pets', but destined to be eaten during the celebration of the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Tiger. The tigers saved are to be donated to zoos.

*The Washington Times*. 3 February 1986.

## Wild Bird Society seeks to stop netting

Volunteers from the Wild Bird Society

of Japan, whose membership has increased seven or eight times since the end of the 1970s to its present 16,000, took to the hills last November in an attempt to prevent the mass destruction of small migratory birds. Every autumn poachers capture thousands of birds for the lucrative restaurant trade. In 1984 more than four million birds were captured in mist nets. The setting of mist nets has been illegal since 1947, but there is no restriction on their sale, and the Society would like to see their manufacture banned altogether. Since the nets are also exported to Italy and Spain, such a ban would also please environmental groups that are fighting to stop mist netting in those countries.

*Nature*. 7 November 1985.

## Japanese rear rare geese

Japanese biologists successfully raised several Aleutian Canada geese *Branta canadensis leucopareia* in 1985 and released six into the wild at Lake Izunuma in Japan in October. A breeding loan of 18 geese was made to two Japanese zoos in 1983 when the wild population that formerly wintered there dwindled to a single individual.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*. XI, 1.

## Reintroduction of endangered tree

In the Bonin Islands, 1000 km (600 miles) south of Tokyo, 150 of the 400 indigenous plant species are endemic and 80 are known to be endangered. One of the endangered trees, *Melastoma tetramerum*, of which only two individuals survive in the wild, has been propagated by the University of Tokyo and is being reintroduced into suitable places in its native habitat on Chichijima Island.

*Ambio*. XV, 1, 19–21.

## Indo-Malaya

### Appeal for bustard

The Governing Body of WWF–Pakistan has appealed for a total ban on the hunting of the houbara bustard for five years. The birds are indiscriminately killed by visiting Arab dignitaries.

*WWF–Pakistan Newsletter*. 4, 4.

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## Dam no longer a threat

The Governments of India and Bhutan are no longer considering building a dam in the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve in India, and the site has been removed from the List of Threatened Protected Areas of the World.

*CNPPA Members' Newsletter*, 33.

## Gharial success

India's gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* rehabilitation programme started 10 years ago when it was estimated that only 60–70 gharials were left; now there are more than 1500 wild gharial, including those released by State Forest Departments, and about 1000 in captivity in various rearing centres.

*Tigerpaper*, XIII, 1.

## Towards a second population of rhinos in Nepal

In Nepal four Indian rhinos have been translocated from Royal Chitwan National Park to Royal Bardia Wildlife Reserve under the auspices of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, in co-operation with the World Wildlife Fund. Over the next two years, 13 rhinos will be moved from Chitwan, where the only population in Nepal lives, to establish a breeding population in Bardia.

## Rare cranes sighted in Vietnam

A Vietnamese ornithologist, Dr Vo Quy, has found 20 eastern sarus cranes *Grus antigone sharpii* in Dong Thap near the Kampuchean border—the first authenticated sighting of this rare subspecies in South-East Asia in recent years.

*The ICF Bugle*, 12, 1.

## Tourism plans upset conservationists

Malaysian conservationists are concerned about the Government's plan to build a road into the heart of Taman Negara (Peninsular Malaysia's National Park) and to build an airstrip near Kuala Tahan, where the park headquarters is situated, in time for the Pacific Area Travel Association conference, of which Malaysia is host. Conservationists say that the plans will ruin the park's main

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attraction—its vast area of virgin forest untouched by development—and they are proposing less costly alternatives to attract more tourists without impairing its wilderness value.

*Sahabat Alam Malaysia*.

## Rattan stocks ravaged

Increased world demand for rattan cane is damaging the Morowali Reserve in central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The Reserve was designated in 1980, but protection exists only on paper and islanders are extracting 36 tonnes of rattan cane a year. The forest is being damaged and numbers of endemic species—dwarf buffalo, babirousa and egg-burying maleo fowl—are reduced. Some rattan species are disappearing—a third of Sulawesi's rattans are undescribed. The protection of Morowali Reserve—the only remaining example of primary lowland alluvial rain forest in Sulawesi—is vital and the control of rattan harvesting is essential to protect stocks.

*BBC Wildlife*, 4, 3.

## More of Mai Po saved

WWF—Hong Kong has been able to increase its protected area at Mai Po marshes—Hong Kong's only extensive remaining wetland—by 25 per cent as a result of fund-raising activities in the Wetlands Conservation Campaign. A donation from the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club had already enabled them to buy three shrimp ponds in the 330-ha (815-acre) wetland, and funds from WWF—Hong Kong's 1985 Big Bird Race plus an additional donation from the Jockey Club enabled them to buy a fourth in December. A travelling exhibition on wetlands will reach all the communities in Hong Kong.

*WWF News No. 39*.

## North America

### Alaskan natives can hunt at any time

A US federal court has ruled that Alaskan natives may continue subsistence hunting for waterfowl and their eggs without regard to seasons established under the Migratory Bird Treaty

Act of 1918. The Alaska Fish and Wildlife Federation and Outdoor Council, and the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Conservation Fund, concerned about population declines in four species of geese (cackling Canada, white-fronted, Pacific black brent and emperor), filed suit to have spring hunting stopped. The judge ruled that the Alaska Game Act of 1925 permitted Alaskans to hunt the geese at any time and that this Act supercedes the 1918 Act.

*Outdoor News Bulletin*, 40, 5.

## Yukon resumes wolf hunt

The Yukon Government is resuming the controversial wolf killing programme it suspended in May 1985. About 40 wolves will be shot from helicopters to protect the Finlayson caribou herd, which lives about 300 km (190 miles) north-east of Whitehorse, near the settlement of Ross River. Since the first killings in 1983, 253 wolves have been removed from the area, leaving a current population of about 80.

*The Sun (Canada)* 19 February 1986.

## South Moresby national park recommended

The British Columbian Government's wilderness committee, appointed in October 1985 amid controversy over logging wild areas, made its recommendations in March. They include creating a new national park in the South Moresby area in the Queen Charlotte Islands and designating the Stein River Valley, often described as the last unlogged watershed in British Columbia, as a recreation area. The report was on the whole preservationist, but it turned down a proposal to make the 39,000-ha (96,000-acre) Khutzeymateen Valley, which has a large grizzly bear population, an ecological reserve. An environmental group, Friends of Ecological Reserves, has since requested an emergency meeting with the British Columbian Environment Minister to try to stop logging in the Valley.

*The Vancouver Sun*, 7 and 11 March 1986.

## Abdominal transmitters harmless

Researchers have found that radio

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transmitters implanted in the abdominal cavities of adult female river otters *Lutra canadensis* do not appear to affect adversely any stage of the breeding cycle.

*Journal of Wildlife Management*, **50**, 1, 92–94.

## New vaccine to help endangered geese

Results of tests of a newly developed vaccine against avian cholera in captive and wild giant Canada geese *Branta canadensis maxima* in the US suggest that it would be useful for immunizing Aleutian Canada geese *B. c. leucopareia* and other endangered species at risk from the disease. Vaccination could be co-ordinated with ringing programmes for free-flying birds and could be used with captive-breeding birds on refuges, game farms and zoos that are exposed to avian cholera in wild birds attracted to these sites.

*Wildlife Society Bulletin*, **13**, 4.

## Contraceptives for seals

A marine biologist at the University of Guelph in Canada has suggested that the burgeoning populations of grey and harbour seals could be controlled by injecting females with a contraceptive. He injected four grey seals with Depo Provera and found that three of the seals did not ovulate as a result. The biologist, Keith Ronald, says that a larger study is needed, but a birth-control programme would solve the seal problem: fisheries officials and fishermen blame seals for spreading codworm.

*The Globe and Mail (Canada)*, **23** December 1985.

## Swift fox reintroduction bad idea?

The Canadian Wildlife Service's programme to reintroduce swift foxes *Vulpes velox* into the species's former range in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba using stock from Colorado has been criticized. Mark R. Stromberg and Mark S. Boyce argue that the Colorado animals, which are from the southern part of the species's range, may not be genetically adapted to the rigours of the northern climate and also that there is a risk of interbreeding and

genetic alteration with the existing but rare swift foxes that still occur in the northern states of Montana and North Dakota.

*Biological Conservation*, **35**, 97–110.

## Two more taxa receive protection of US Act

In February 1986 a subspecies of falcon and a freshwater wetland plant were given protection under the US Endangered Species Act. The northern aplomado falcon *Falco femoralis septentrionalis* has been extirpated as a breeding species from its former range in the US (Arizona, New Mexico and Texas) and in Guatemala and now nests only in parts of eastern Mexico, where its survival is jeopardized by continuing habitat modification and by pesticides. Canby's dropwort *Oxypolis canbyi*, a perennial member of the Apiaceae, grows in wetlands on the lowland plain of the mid-Atlantic coast of the US. Many of these wetlands have been drained and now only 10 populations of the plant remain in Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, **XI**, 3.

## Cancer in clams

Cancerous tumours in clams have occurred in more than 20 places along the Maine coast in the Bay of Fundy according to a scientist at the Maine Department of Marine Resources, who says they may threaten the State's US\$ million clam industry. Cancerous tumours were first found by scientists in Chesapeake Bay on the coast of Maryland in 1983, and they may be to blame for halving the clam population since.

*Fishing News International*, **25**, 2.

## New colonies of endangered bats

Three new hibernating colonies of the endangered Indiana bat *Myotis sodalis* were found during 1985/86 winter surveys in the US—two in West Virginia and one in New York State, the latter being the northernmost hibernating site for the species. A colony of approximately 3000 Virginia big-eared bats *Plecotus townsendii virginianus*—also endangered—was found at a historical colony site in West Virginia—the largest

known big-eared bat colony in the east. *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, **XI**, 3.

## Orchid smugglers prosecuted

On 18 November 1985, in the first plant conviction under the US Lacey Act, a Michigan court sentenced a couple for illegally sending 2800 lady's slipper orchids *Cypripedium* spp., to nurseries outside the State. Most of the orchids came from state land. Ralph Millard received a three-month suspended prison sentence, three years' probation and a US-\$1000 fine. His wife Dorothy was sentenced to a suspended prison sentence and two-years' probation.

*TRAFFIC(USA)*, **6**, 4.

## Tentative plans for wolf centre

The city of Ely in Minnesota, USA, has been tentatively selected for an international wolf centre. Its objectives would be to increase public knowledge and appreciation of the controversial wolf *Canis lupus* and its complex ecosystem, as well as of a variety of other North American carnivores and the many difficulties associated with their management.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, **XI**, 1.

## Relocating wolves

A study of 107 wolves, which were captured at Minnesota farms where depredation of livestock had occurred and released in forest lands occupied by wolves, showed that survival rates were comparable with those of wild wolves. Some wolves travelled long distances after release and some found new mates and territories.

*Wildlife Society Bulletin*, **13**, 4.

## Farm Act good for wildlife

President Reagan has signed the 1985 Farm Act, which will govern US agricultural programmes for the next five years and which includes some outstanding conservation reforms. Federal subsidies will be withheld from landowners who drain wetlands to grow crops, the Agriculture Secretary will be able to acquire interests in farmland for conservation purposes, and 40–45 million acres of erodible cropland will be

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retired for 10 years and planted with perennial grasses, wildlife habitat, wind-breaks or trees.

*Outdoor News Bulletin*, 40, 1.

## How many mushrooms should we pick?

Wild fungi have been gathered traditionally for years in the north-west US, but now commercial dealers are moving in and exporting wild chanterelles to Europe. The number of mushrooms taken is worrying mycologists, who say that commercial harvesting on public land should be stopped until research has been done on the effects of cropping. The Washington Department of Nature Resources has responded to the warnings from mycologists by appointing a task-force to study the issue.

*Sierra*, 71, 1.

## Sea otter count low

The southern sea otter *Enhydra lutris nereis* count in California in October–November 1985 found 1221 otters, including 155 pups. This is the lowest count recorded since the current survey methods were employed in spring 1982.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XI, 1.

## Snake raid

A raid on a San Francisco house in March uncovered 48 reptiles, as well as firearms and records detailing many years of illegal snake dealing, including the names of more than 100 people involved. A 34-year-old man has been charged with the illegal possession of the reptiles, most of which were venomous snakes.

*New Scientist*, 13 March 1986.

## Bald eagle numbers rise, but still an endangered species

Bald eagle numbers for 1985 were the highest ever in the seven-year history of the bald eagle survey in three states—Nebraska, Utah and Washington—and higher than in 1984 in 20 states. Despite increased numbers, the bald eagle is considered endangered or threatened in all of the lower 48 states of the US.

*International Wildlife*, 16, 2.

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## Three more species protected

In December 1985 three more species were given protection under the US Endangered Species Act. Piping plovers *Charadrius melodus* nest around the Great Lakes and along the Atlantic coast, wintering along the coast from North Carolina to Florida and in the Bahamas and West Indies. Public pressure on beaches destroys nests and young, and the bird's historical riverine habitat has been destroyed or modified by damming and channelization. The desert dace *Eremichthys acros* inhabits thermal springs in the Soldier Meadows area in Nevada and has a remarkable feeding adaptation in the form of horny sheaths on its jaws to scrape organisms from rocks. Landowners have modified spring outflows, making them unsuitable for the fish. The Guadalupe fur seal *Arctocephalus townsendii*, whose breeding population of 1600 is restricted to the eastern shore of Guadalupe Island, Mexico, is threatened by offshore oil and gas developments as well as sonic booms from the US Air Force's Space Shuttle Programme.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XI, 1.

## Condors to remain free

The proposed capture of the last five Californian condors in the wild has been forbidden by a federal judge in a Washington court. The lawsuit was brought by the National Audubon Society after the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued permits to state authorities in December to capture the last wild condors for captive breeding. The Society argued that capturing the last condors would hamper future releases of captive-bred birds and stall efforts to study and protect wild condors and their habitat. The Government maintains that drastic action is necessary in light of the recent disappearance of half the wild population and the discovery of lead poisoning in the only wild female to breed in 1985. She has since died. No captive-bred wild condors will be released in 1986. Two eggs have been laid this year by the last wild female: one was found shattered and on analysis it was found to have very high levels of DDE, a breakdown product of DDT known to cause shell thinning; the

second was taken to San Diego Wild Animal Park days after it was laid on 13 April.

*International Wildlife*, 16, 2.

*GNUS*, 13 March 1986.

*Los Angeles Times*, 16 April 1986.

## Caves for bats

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has acquired five caves in eastern Oklahoma for the protection of the endangered Ozark big-eared bat *Plecotus townsendii ingens*. The caves will be part of the Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge. Probably fewer than 400 of this subspecies are left in the wild in Oklahoma and Arkansas; they have disappeared from their historic range in Missouri and the decline is believed to be due to disturbance of the maternal and hibernating colonies in caves.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, X, 12.

## Successful year for fish hatchery

Dexter National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico, USA, had a successful year in 1985, releasing 3,000,000 razorback suckers *Xyrauchen texanus*, 117,000 Colorado squawfish *Ptychocheilus lucius*, 12,600 bonytail chubs *Gila elegans* and 10,000 Gila topminnows *Poeciliopsis occidentalis*. The hatchery currently holds and produces 14 species of threatened and endangered south-western fish species.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XI, 1.

## Fine for cactus exporter

On 29 August 1985 Joseph Anthony of Texas pleaded guilty to exporting 25 Appendix I and II listed cactus plants from the US to the UK in 1983. In the first US conviction under the Endangered Species Act for violation of CITES plant trade restrictions, he received a \$4000 fine and two-and-a-half years' probation.

*TRAFFIC (USA)*, 6, 4.

## Whooping crane count highest for years

The 1985–86 whooping crane wintering population count was the highest since 1938: 96 birds (including 16 young) from the Wood Buffalo National

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Whooping crane at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Maryland, USA.

Park breeding population wintered in Texas: the Rocky Mountain flock now numbers 28 and there are 38 in captivity at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Centre.  
*Grus Americana*. 25, Suppl. 1.

## Bat decline may trigger agave collapse

Surveys of nectar-feeding bats *Leptonycteris sanborni* and *L. nivalis* in the past three years have revealed declines in numbers. The bats fly north in the spring from Mexico to maternity roosts in Texas and Arizona as the agaves bloom. Big Bend National Park in Texas contains the only known roost of *L. nivalis*, and there are now about 1000 individuals; in years past 5000 have been counted in this well-protected roost. In Arizona, where hundreds of *L. sanborni* used to occupy several roosts, there is only one roost left. Winter roosts in Mexico also have fewer bats, and some caves are no longer inhabited. The bats pollinate agave flowers of many species and a decline in their numbers may start a spiral of decline in the agaves and in the many other species that depend upon them.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*. XI, 1.

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## One dusky sparrow

One of the two remaining dusky seaside sparrows *Ammodramus maritimus nigrescens* died in April. The survivor, being 10–15 years old, is not expected to live much longer.  
*Ecology USA*. 7 April 1986.

## Drilling wells to help manatees

The Florida Power and Light Company is drilling three artesian wells at its Fort Myers power plant to provide a source of warm water for manatees *Trichechus manatus*. In the winter of 1984–85, changes in the operating schedule at its Fort Myers plant meant that less warm water was to be discharged, threatening the 338 manatees that winter there, so the Company ran the plant during the very cold periods just for the benefit of the manatees. However, it is hoped that the new wells will provide a satisfactory and more economical way of keeping the manatees warm.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*. X, 12.

## Rehabilitated manatee joins wild relatives

A manatee that was rehabilitated at various oceanaria in Florida over a period of five years was released in spring 1985 and has since been successfully tracked by satellite telemetry in freshwater and saltwater habitats. It joined wild manatees and travelled from its release point in the Homosassa River to preferred habitat at the mouth of the Suwanee River.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*. X, 12.

## Protection for cactus and tree

The Cochise pincushion cactus *Coryphantha robbinsorum* was added to the US List of Endangered and Threatened Plants in January. It has a restricted distribution, in Cochise County, Arizona, and it is attractive to collectors. At the same time, the Lana'i sandalwood *Santalum freycinetianum* var. *lanaiense* was added to the List. Only 39 individuals of this small gnarled tree, which bears clusters of bright red flowers, are known from its range on the island of Lana'i in the Hawaiian Islands, and it is threatened by further habitat

degradation and introduced rats, which eat its fruits.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*. XI, 2.

## Mainly for birds

The US Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy of Hawaii and the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, has bought 8300 acres (3400 ha) of native forest on Hawaii as the first step in establishing the 33,500-acre (13,600-ha) Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge for endangered Hawaiian forest birds. It will also maintain habitat for the endangered Hawaiian hoary bat *Lasiurus cinereus* and many rare plants.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*. XI, 1.

## Hawaiian monk seal court case

Greenpeace and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund filed suit in a US District Court in Hawaii in February to compel the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to designate critical habitat in the waters around the north-western Hawaiian Islands for the highly endangered Hawaiian monk seal. The NMFS has stalled for 10 years since the Marine Mammal Commission recommended the action, which is required under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.  
*Monitor*. 24 February 1986.

## Central America

### Mexican cycads being decimated

Illegal trade, mostly to the US, continues to threaten Mexican cycads, although some plants seized by US authorities are returned to botanic gardens in Mexico to serve as a source for future reintroductions. Habitat destruction is an even greater threat: the site of one newly discovered population of *Ceratozamia miqueliana* in southern Veracruz was completely destroyed by the Mexican Petroleum Company, the site of the second lies close to a road and a third is being converted to farmland. A cycad species just discovered, but not yet described, is threatened by the

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development of a coffee plantation in Chiapas.  
*TRAFFIC (USA)*, 6, 4.

## Turtle decline unabated

In the period 1978–1985, there has been a 30 per cent decline in the nesting population of Kemp's ridley turtles *Lepidochelys kempii* at Rancho Nuevo, Mexico, and only 500 nested there in 1985. The Mexican Fisheries Department is controlling poaching and predation effectively, but immediate action is necessary to reduce the incidental catch of the turtles by trawlers in US and Mexican waters, which is by far the greatest cause of death.  
*Marine Turtle Newsletter*, 35.

## Conservationist's ordeal

Mexican biologist Roberto Aviña Carlin, who works to conserve sea turtles on Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, was conducting studies on the Biosphere Reserve Sian Ka'an in Quintana Roo in October 1985 when he was kidnapped and tortured by people believed to be turtle poachers. It may have been an act of revenge because Carlin often reports poaching incidents to officials.  
*TRAFFIC (USA)*, 6, 4.

## A step for Puerto Rico

On 28 September 1985 a new regulation went into effect in Puerto Rico that will provide full Commonwealth protection for all threatened and endangered species in Puerto Rico. Passage of the regulation has enabled the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources to enter into a co-operative agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on recovery efforts for the Puerto Rican parrot *Amazona vittata*, Puerto Rican plain pigeon *Columba inornata wetmorei*, yellow-shouldered blackbird *Agelaius xanthomus*, Culebra Island giant anole *Anolis roosevelti*, Monito gecko *Sphaerodactylus microplithecus* and the hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, X, 12.

## New Cayman turtle law

The Cayman Islands recently amended the Marine Conservation Law of 1978  
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to regulate the legal take of sea turtles from November to April by requiring turtle fishermen to have licences. The licences are issued only to residents who take turtles by traditional methods for island consumption. Each holder is allowed to take six turtles of a certain minimum size, each of which must be tagged and taken to an inspector for recording purposes. Penalties for offences under the new law include a fine of up to \$5000 and a prison sentence of up to one year.  
*Marine Turtle Newsletter*, 35.

## Squirrel monkey numbers low in Costa Rica

The Central American squirrel monkey *Saimiri oerstedii* once ranged through the lowlands of the Pacific coastal provinces of Puntarenas, Costa Rica, and Chiriqui, Panama. Little is known about the monkeys in Panama, and recent surveys in Costa Rica show that the animals have apparently been eradicated from all but a tiny fraction of their former range in that country. Until 12–15 years ago they were exported in large numbers, and their habitat has been converted to pasture and farmland. Perhaps only 3000 remain in small and widely dispersed groups.  
*Primate Conservation*, 6.

## South America

### Venezuela bans caiman hunt

The Ministry of the Environment in Venezuela published a resolution on 23 October 1985 banning the hunting of spectacled caiman *Caiman crocodilus* for one year. During that time, population research will be completed on the caimans so that sustainable hunting quotas can be set.  
*Traffic Bulletin*, VII, 5.

### New campaign to legalize wildlife exports

The Governor of Amazonas State in Brazil, Gilberto Mestrinho, has initiated a new campaign to legalize wildlife exports with an international symposium held in Manaus on 4–5 April 1986. The theme of the symposium, which is backed by the Paris-based International Foundation for Protection

of Game, was the utilization of wildlife of the neotropical humid forests, in particular the jaguar. There were also to be discussions of wildlife/human conflicts, culling quota systems, and the development of the uses of mammals, macaws, butterflies, turtles and crocodiles.

## Local people want mურიკი forest protected

The Brazilian Institute for Forestry Development (IBDF) is trying to find the best way to protect a 14.5-sq-km (5.6-sq-mile) area of forest, Mata do Sossego, at the border of municipalities Simonésia and Manhuaçu in Minas Gerais state. About 30 mურიკი (woolly spider monkeys) live there—a population discovered only two years ago. A group from the Manhuaçu Cine Club have filmed the animals and are campaigning to protect the forest and educate the people in nearby villages. On 22 November 1985 the group requested IBDF to give the area legal protection. Mურიკი are Brazil's rarest primates—a few dozen only are left in patches of forest in São Paulo and Minas Gerais.  
*Jornal do Brasil*, 8 December 1985.

## Plea for Brazilian marine park

Fernando de Noronha is the main island of an archipelago off north-east Brazil and is managed by the Air Force Ministry of Brazil. It has a small human population and is visited occasionally by tourists. It is also home to two endemic passerine birds *Elaenia ridleyana* and *Vireo gracilirostris* and a subspecies of eared dove *Zenaida auriculata*, which is endangered in Brazil. Ten species of seabirds nest there, as does the green turtle *Chelonia mydas*. A group of conservationists want the island declared a national marine park before tourist development begins in earnest.  
*Committee for the National Marine Park of Fernando de Noronha*, Rua 24 de outubro, 1000/2301 Porto Alegre, RS 90460, Brazil.

## Bolivian monkey export controversy

The Bolivian Government is seeking the return of 361 squirrel and night monkeys *Saimiri sciureus* and *Aotus*

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Vicuña (Karl Koford).

*trivirgatus* that were exported from Bolivia in January 1986 despite Bolivia's ban on wildlife exports. The minister responsible for authorizing the exemption has been replaced and Bolivia has issued a warrant for the arrest of Matthew Block, the Florida animal dealer who imported the monkeys into the US for the US Agency for International Development for use in malaria research.

*Monitor* 24 February and 10 March 1986. *Nature* 20 February 1986.

## Appeal to save fox

The Argentine Wild Life Fund has launched an appeal for the Patagonian red fox (*Pseudalopex culpaeus*), which is being hunted for its skins and poisoned with strychnine, especially in the Province of Chubut, where the State Governor is pressing sheep farmers to exterminate it.

*Fundacion Vida Silvestre Argentina*. *L. N. Alem* 968. 1001 Buenos Aires, Argentina.

## Vicuña survey reveals high numbers

The 1985 annual November survey of vicuña and other species in a 480,000-ha (1850-sq-mile) area of the Lauca National Park in Chile revealed 18,114 vicuña compared with 4087 in 1977, when the standard census method was established. Three other species of concern to conservationists—Darwin's rhea *Pterocnemia pennata*, the taruca or Andean deer *Hippocamelus bisulcus* and the guanaco *Lama guanicoe*—are also showing a similar recovery. There are now plans to protect small populations of vicuña in the region of

Antofagasta, 500 km (300 miles) south of Lauca, and in the Atacama region. *WWF Monthly Report*, March 1986.

## Australia/Antarctica

### Penguins starved to death

Carcasses of some of the thousands of adult penguins that were washed ashore dead and under-nourished in the Falklands in early 1986 were flown to Britain for post-mortem examination, to see if their deaths are the first sign of an ecological disaster caused by factory fleets over-fishing seas around the islands. They were found to have died from malnutrition.

*The Guardian*, 3 and 24 April 1986.

### Rockhopper decline

The rockhopper penguin *Endiptes chrysocome* population on Campbell Island—the major stronghold of the species in the Australasian region—has declined precipitously during the last 40 years. The current population is only a fraction of the estimated one million breeding birds in the mid-1940s. Reasons for the decline are unknown, and research, which began in the 1985–86 breeding season with an investigation into the bird's breeding success, will continue for some years.

*Polar Record*, **23**, 142, 69–72.

### Giant clams to be farmed?

A group at James Cook University in Northern Queensland has developed a method for producing larval giant clams by the million. The giant clams of the family Tridacnidae are endangered.

*Fish Farming International*, **13**, 1.

## Woodchipping decision angers conservationists

The Australian conservation movement is angry over the Federal Government's decision in December 1985 to renew Tasmanian woodchip export licenses and increase the export quotas. No major forest area of wilderness is to be reserved from logging, and there are no enforceable and effective forest practices to safeguard the environment. The decision was made against the advice of the Environment Minister, Barry Cohen, and despite 80 per cent of the public being opposed to export woodchipping.

*ACF Newsletter*, **18**, 1.

## Dam traps eels that eat endangered frogs

A new species of gastric-breeding frog *Rheobatrachus vitellinus* discovered in 1984 in creeks in tiny isolated pockets of rain forest in the Clarke Ranges in Queensland (see *Oryx*, July 1985, page 175) is in danger. The Queensland Water Resources Commission has begun dam construction in the area and some scientists are warning that the dams could trap migratory eels, which would prey on the frogs. Meanwhile, a Queensland national park wildlife ranger has reported that the frog has already disappeared, perhaps because of overcollection by scientists and others.

*Australian Conservation Foundation Newsletter*, **17**, 11. *The Washington Post*, 16 February 1986.

## Kangaroo family planning

Australian scientists have developed a contraceptive bullet designed to reduce the libido of both male and female kangaroos and so reduce their populations by birth control rather than by culling. The bullets have been tested on eastern red and grey kangaroos and on some wallabies using an airgun, but for large-scale use a bullet would have to be developed for a 0.22 rifle. The bullets would sting the animals without causing bleeding.

*New Scientist*, 6 March 1986.

## Conflict over Botany Bay

There is serious concern for the future of

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Botany Bay in Australia, which is recognized internationally for its migratory wading birds, mangroves and salt marshes. There have been 22 oil spills since 1977, some of which have devastated the mangrove beds. The problems could be helped considerably by the construction of a new tanker-loading berth in a more sheltered part of the bay, and the Australian Maritime Services Board is prepared to pay for this. The oil company, Caltex, however, is unwilling to build a new pipeline and blames sewage for the problems in the bay. The Australian Government is considering special legislation to enable the pipeline to be built at the company's expense.

*Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 17, 1.

## Camel Cigarettes declare battle against nature

Camel Cigarettes, whose headquarters is in the USA, took its notorious Camel Trophy event to North Australia in 1986. In the 'battle of man and machine against nature', starting on 12 March, men in landrovers were to cover a 3165-km route through rain forest in York Peninsula and Northern Territory. Since 1980 the Camel Trophy off-road event has ripped through rain forests in Borneo, Brazil, Sumatra and Papua New Guinea. The Government pulled out of a rally in the Okavango swamps in Botswana when it realized how much damage would be done—the organizers in their promotional literature described this part of Botswana as '1500 km of untamed hell'. The address of Camel HQ is Camel Cigarettes, PO Box 2959, Winston-Salem, NC 27102, USA.

*Sahabat Alam Malaysia*, 13 March 1986.

## Island development plan withdrawn

Lindeman Island, Australia, was saved from a \$340 million development when the East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Ltd withdrew its plan in March. The development would have required the revocation of the national park status of the island and had aroused widespread protests from conservation societies and prompted massive rifts within the National Party Government.

*The Age (Melbourne)*, 13 March 1986.

*Briefly*

## Kangaroo kill 1986

The Australian 1986 kangaroo kill quota is 2,673,600, an increase of 687,600 over the 1985 quota. The Government claims that the current population of the three largest species of kangaroo is 16 million.

*Wildlife Alert*, March/April 1986.



Brush-tailed possum.

## Possums a problem for mistletoes

New Zealand's mistletoes, some with brightly coloured flowers, are becoming scarce in many regions and extinct in some. Their disappearance may have adverse effects on indigenous wildlife: some birds are known to feed on their nectar and others on their fruit. Introduced possums may be part of the cause, for they browse persistently on the plants, but are not the entire answer because mistletoes have also disappeared in one or two areas where no possums occur. Individual plants can be protected by possum-proof barriers, and mistletoes could be established on trees in urban areas or where possums are controlled or are absent.

*Forest and Bird*, 16, 3.

## Forest Service gets away with snail burning

Despite repeated challenges and angry scenes in Parliament, New Zealand's Minister of Forests has refused to give assurances that no more damage will be done to the habitat of an endangered subspecies of Powelliphanta snail. The snail is confined to a small area of native pine forest in the Mokihinui State Forest near Westport and, although it is 'absolutely protected' under the Wildlife Act, the Forest Service is clearing and

burning the native forest to plant exotic trees. The burning kills the snails, which need high humidity and natural plant cover. If the Forest Service were a private citizen, it could be subject to criminal prosecution and fined up to \$1500 for the first snail destroyed and \$100 for each additional snail.

*Bush Telegraph*, 21.

## Obituary

William H. Thorpe FRS, Professor Emeritus Animal Ethology, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, UK, died on April 7 1986, aged 84. He was an eminent ornithologist, being Chairman of the British Section of ICBP since 1965, and he was a staunch supporter of the FFPS.

## Requests

### Arabian birds information

The 'Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia' project started in 1985, and ornithological records from amateur and professional observers are requested. Old records are particularly valuable. A periodic newsletter *The Phoenix* is sent free to all contributors. Further details: Michael C. Jennings, Co-ordinator, Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia, 1 Eastcourt, Burbage, Wiltshire SN8 3AG, UK.

### North Sea Forum

The North Sea Forum, chaired by Lord Cranbrook, has been formed to brief ministers in preparation for the UK Conference on the North Sea in November 1987. Briefing must be complete by November 1986. Working groups on Species, Habitats, and Human Impacts have been set up and invite contributions. Details: Edwina Milesi, CoEnCo, London Ecology Centre, 80 York Way, London N1 9AG, UK.

## Correction

In the January issue of *Oryx* (page 51), under the heading 'Ranchers sabotage elk reintroduction', the species referred to should be *Cervus elaphus*, which is known in North America as elk, not *Alces alces*.