

Briefly . . .

International

92 for CITES

Spain's accession to CITES on 30 May 1986 became effective on 28 August 1986.

TRAFFIC Bulletin, VIII, 2.

Ramsar update

Belgium, Mexico, France and Egypt have ratified the Ramsar Convention, the next meeting of which is in Canada, 27 May–5 June 1987.

naturupa newsletter-nature, 86–8/9.

Campaign to halt tropical deforestation

In September, 64 participants from 22 organizations based throughout the world met in Penang, Malaysia, to discuss the environmental and social problems caused by tropical deforestation. They agreed a Declaration on the Forest Crisis in the Third World, which will be sent to all the member governments of the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, and the International Tropical Timber Organization, as well as a four-point plan of action to prevent causes of tropical deforestation and to protect tropical forests.

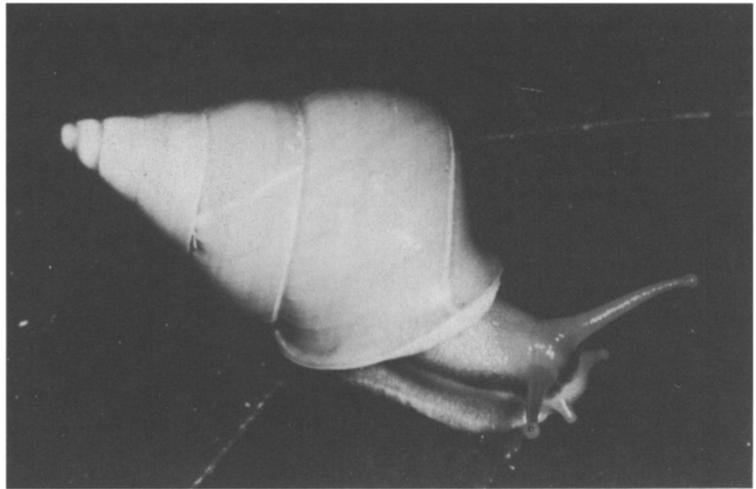
Friends of the Earth, Press Release, 15 September 1986.

ITTA dispute resolved

The 41 Parties to the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) have resolved a year-long dispute about where to locate the headquarters and who to appoint as Executive Director. The International Tropical Timber Organization, which administers the Agreement, will operate from Yokohama, Japan, with Dr H. Freddie Freezaillah of Malaysia as Director. Parties to the ITTA control over 95 per cent of all trade in tropical timber, and the ITTA is the only UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) commodity agreement that has the conservation of an important living resource as an objective.

WWF Features, 5 August 1986.

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This green tree snail, highly prized by collectors and used in modern jewellery, lives only in the rain forests of Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. Collecting is monitored carefully, but its greatest threat is from the logging industry. A new road across the island, improving access to the forest, has reduced the chances of this snail's survival. 'Mollusc as a threatened species' was one of the main themes of the Ninth International Malacological Congress sponsored by the National Museums of Scotland from 28 August to 6 September 1986.

Fishermen urged to curb debris

Fishermen are being urged to take the initiative in curbing the increasing pollution of the sea by debris of all kinds, particularly plastics and synthetic fibres. At the request of the US National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an audio-visual programme has been developed for use with US Pacific coast fishermen as well as groups in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea.

Fishing News International, August 1986.

Ivory seized in Belgium

On 15 January 1986 Belgian Customs officers searching for drugs discovered 1889 unmarked elephant tusks weighing nearly 10 tonnes in a shipment labelled 'Bee-wax' shipped from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to Antwerp and awaiting transferral to a ship bound for Dubai. Inspection by CITES Secretariat staff suggests that the tusks were taken from elephants killed in 1985, probably from an already depleted population in Tanzania. It is the biggest seizure of illegal ivory ever made outside Africa.

TRAFFIC Bulletin, VIII, 2.

World Bank—day of protest

An international day of protest was held on 30 September 1986 against the World Bank and its destructive lending policies towards the Third World tropical rain-forest countries. It coincided with the Bank's annual conference in Washington, and protests took place there and in Europe.

Frog trade carries on

Frog populations are not being endangered by the present level of trade in frog legs, but there is a need for conservation measures. These were the conclusions of the first World Conference on Trade in Frog Legs held in Calcutta, India, 10–11 April 1986, which was organized by the Marine Products Development Authority and the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute. It made 13 recommendations, including advocating that trapping and processing frogs should continue as an important source of rural employment, that frog culture be expanded, and that regional quotas and a specified number of legs per kg be established.

Fishing News International, 25, 9.

Oryx Vol 21 No 1, January 1987

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Red-crowned cranes in captivity

There are currently 131 red-crowned cranes *Grus japonensis* registered in captivity worldwide, due to the work of the US-based International Crane Foundation. The captive population is about 10 per cent of the world population.

The ICF Bugle, 12, 3.

Europe and North Africa

Bern Convention

Spain has ratified the Bern Convention, joining Austria, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK and Finland, together with the European Community.

naturupa newsletter-nature, 86–8/9.

Illegal wildlife trade in Europe

Two new TRAFFIC offices have been set up in Italy and Austria in a move by the WWF to help strengthen trade controls within the EEC. Austria is not a member of the EEC, but is a major conduit for illegal trade in endangered species entering Europe despite the fact that it ratified CITES in 1982. Italy ratified CITES in 1980, but has no framework to enforce the Convention. Once within the EEC, illegal wildlife products can move between the 12 member nations without further controls because of an amendment adopted by CITES three years ago, which allowed the EEC to accede to the Convention as a single unit. France is considered to be the weakest enforcement point in the EEC (in 1985 it imported several thousand spotted cat skins from Bolivia despite a CITES recommendation that Parties refuse imports from that country until further notice: the skins are now on the market in West Germany and other EEC countries), and WWF's next priority is to establish a TRAFFIC office in Paris.

WWF News, 42.

Conservation of *Cyclamen*

The *Cyclamen* Society has produced a leaflet that contains a code of conduct for all *Cyclamen* growers and draws

attention to the fact that all *Cyclamen* species are listed by CITES as plants that are threatened in the wild and may become endangered as a result of trade. Licences are required for import and export of these plants between countries that are Parties to CITES and, in addition, Turkey, which is not a Party to CITES, has prohibited the export of certain species.

Cyclamen Society Journal, 10, 1.

Radioactive reindeer

Over the next five years 180,000 reindeer in Scandinavian Lapland will have to be destroyed because of abnormally high levels of caesium resulting from the Chernobyl accident. The Lapp people depend on the reindeer for their livelihood.

GNUS, 140.

Radioactive damage to reserves

Four reserves in the USSR were affected by the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in April 1986: Dneprovsko-Teterevskoe, Zlalesskoe, and the proposed National Parks at Dnepro-Desnyanskiy and Verchnedneproskiy. Part of the Dneprovsko-Teterevskoe Nature Hunting Reserve was in the total evacuation zone [25 km (15 miles) south], and IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas has listed it as a Threatened Protected Area.

CNPPA Members' Newsletter, 36.

1000 Finnish species extinct and endangered

More than 1000 species are extinct or threatened in Finland according to a Ministry of the Environment report. A committee spent three years on the study, which revealed that 83 species are extinct, 154 are extremely endangered, 190 are vulnerable, and 624 are rare; the actual number of threatened species is probably higher because data were available for only one-third of Finland's species. Forestry is the greatest single factor contributing to the threat of extinction; the loss of decaying trees alone threatens 180 species.

Suomen Luonto, 5, 1986.

Conditions in Baltic disastrous

Around 80 per cent of the seals in the Baltic Sea are suffering from patho-

logical conditions. Sweden and Finland have launched a joint scientific project to find solutions.

naturupa newsletter-nature, 86–7.

New park for Sweden

Sweden's twentieth national park, Stenshuvud, on the east coast of Skåne, opened on 28 May 1986. It has an immense variety of habitats, but is very much man-modified. Access has been designed to channel the anticipated large numbers of visitors away from the most sensitive parts.

Sveriges Natur, 3/86.

Glacial valley park

The Biebrza river and its glacial valley in north-east Poland is to become a national park. Its marshlands and forests are important for Montagu's harrier *Circus pygargus*, white-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, booted eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*, and lesser spotted eagle *Aquila pomarina*.

naturupa newsletter-nature, 86–7.

Hainburg Dam shelved

The Austrian High Court has ruled that the Austrian Power Corporation shall not build the controversial Hainburg Dam on the Danube unless it can show that it would not have adverse effects on ground water reservoirs. The decision came one year after the government-appointed ecological commission advised against giving permission to build the dam. The commission also recommended the entire riverine forest east of Vienna be declared a national park, and WWF-Austria is now campaigning for this.

WWF News, 43.

Ospreys in France

Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* bred for the first time in 70 years in France in 1985. At a secret site in the Massif Central, Fonds d'Intervention pour les Rapaces (FIR) guarded the nest, and two young fledged.

Birds, 11, 3.

Sea eagle success continues

White-tailed sea eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* have bred successfully in Scotland for the second consecutive year.

GNUS, 14.8.86.

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Six ESAs designated

The UK Government has designated six threatened farmed landscapes—the Broads, Pennine Dales, Somerset Levels, South Downs, West Penwith and Cambrian Mountains—as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). Farmers in an ESA will qualify for special payments from the Ministry of Agriculture if they farm in a way that safeguards the characteristic landscape, wildlife and archaeological features of the area.

Countryside Commission News Release, 14 August 1986.

Two new reserves in UK

The Nature Conservancy Council has announced two new National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in Dyfed, Wales. Coed Ty Canol has broad-leaved woodland and boulder heath, is of outstanding national importance because of its lichens, and has populations of dormice and polecats. Rhos Llawr Cwrt is unimproved sedge-rich grassland. Nature Conservancy Council, 19 September 1986.

Badger control should stop

As it has not been proved that bovine tuberculosis can be transferred between badgers and cattle, the UK Nature Conservancy Council has again urged the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to discontinue its badger control programme. The Council was responding to the Dunnett Report (see *Oryx* 20 (3), 186), which recommended modifications in the badger control programme that would reduce the numbers killed, but did not suggest that it should be abandoned altogether.

NCC Press Release, 29 September 1986.

Dolphinaria improvements essential

The UK has banned the imports of dolphins and killer whales for five years to allow Britain's six dolphinaria to carry out major improvements to their facilities, in particular to the size of their pools.

Department of the Environment, 1 July 1986.

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Urchin investigation

Thousands of sea urchins are being caught off British coasts and sold as ornaments, according to the Marine Conservation Society. Amateur divers are being asked to search urchin-rich parts of the seabed to see if populations are suffering from the trade. Little is known about their life cycle and they are not protected by law.

GNUS, 140.

Crested newt offence

In the first prosecution relating to great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the owner of Chandos Aquarium and Water Garden Centre in Leamington, UK, was fined £200 for possessing and offering for sale a number of these animals.

NCC Press Release, 11 September 1986.

Mires: protection urged

The International Mire Conservation Group met in the UK in September and called on the British and Irish Prime Ministers, The European Commission and other Ministers to save globally important ecosystems. The Group calls for a halt to the rapid and widespread afforestation by state and private interests that is destroying large areas of the Caithness and Sutherland moorlands, for all the remaining relatively intact raised bogs in Ireland to be protected, and for the British Government to rescind planning consent for the peat cutting at Duich Moss, Islay, which are the most important wintering grounds in Britain for the Greenland white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*.

International Mire Conservation Group, Press Notice, 26 September 1986.

Decrees for wolf and bustard

In Spain the Autonomous Communities of Andalucia and Extremadura have enacted decrees to protect two declining species, the wolf *Canis lupus* and the great bustard *Otis tarda*.

naturopa newsletter-nature, 86–7.

New threat to birds in Italy

Regional Bill No. 328 of the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia in Italy, which was passed on 23 July 1986, permits 880,000 small birds to be

caught in nets and traps annually between the second Sunday in August and 15 December. Previously the yearly quota was set by the President of the Regional Council, and the Bill, if approved by the Italian Government, would prevent anyone appealing against the quota. The 'seizable' species include bullfinch, brambling, chaffinch, blackbird, fieldfare, song-thrush and redwing, which are sought by 1500 bird-trappers in the Region. Italy's League for the Protection of Birds, which has recently collected nearly 900,000 signatures asking for a referendum on hunting, is appealing to the Italian Government against the Bill, saying that it contravenes national and international regulations.

Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli.

Fur trade in Greece

The fur trade is booming in Greece—there are 200 fur shops alone on the island of Rhodes—and an investigation by Christine Berry revealed an abundance of CITES Appendix I species for sale. Some of the shop managers had no idea what constituted an endangered species, and others are prepared to give false documents to tourists in order to circumvent import regulations in their home countries.

The Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly, 35, 1.

Turtles protected after boycott threat

The Greek Government has promised new measures to protect the nesting grounds of loggerhead turtles *Caretta caretta* on the island of Zakynthos after a warning by West German ecologists that they would organize a tourist boycott of Greece unless something was done.

GNUS, 137.

Scheme to protect pelican

A wardening and educational scheme has been set up jointly by the RSPB, European Commission and the Hellenic Ornithological Society to protect a colony of Dalmatian pelicans *Pelecanus crispus*, one of Europe's rarest birds. The birds nest in only two places in Greece, and in one of them, on the Amvrakikas Gulf, they are threatened by habitat destruction, disturbance and illegal shooting.

Birds, 11, 3.

Oryx Vol 21 No 1, January 1987

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Yugoslavian wetland threatened

An important wetland and forest area flanking the Sava River in Yugoslavia is threatened by a water resources and agriculture scheme funded by the World Bank. A dam has been built to open up land for intensive cultivation, and other areas are being drained. The important alluvial oak forests, which support black stork *Ciconia nigra*, white-tailed sea eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* and lesser spotted eagle *Aquila pomarina*, are threatened because of prolonged flooding. The impact of the dam and drainage on wildlife habitats was not studied prior to the work being done and is still unknown, although studies have now been started. *World Birdwatch*, 8, 2.

World Heritage Site in Yugoslavia?

According to ICBP, the Kopacki Rit, a wetlands reserve between the Drava and Dunav (Danube) in Yugoslavia, deserves recognition at the highest level—perhaps as a Ramsar or World Heritage Site. It supports 500–1000 spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* on autumn passage and many breeding pairs of white-tailed sea eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* and black stork *Ciconia nigra*. *World Birdwatch*, 8, 2.

Seal in a clean sea

The Caspian seal *Phoca caspica* is no longer in danger of extinction; its numbers have reached 500,000 since the introduction of a purification works for industrial wastes entering the Caspian Sea and the protection of their wintering areas. *GNUS*, 140.

Comeback for endangered plant

The highly endangered cineraria *Senecio hadrosomus*, endemic to Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, was selected as one of the 12 most endangered plant species at the 1984 IUCN General Assembly. Since then the site where the 10 remaining wild plants grow is in the process of being declared a nature reserve, and over 200 plants have been

propagated by tissue culture at the island's botanic garden. By the end of 1986 it was hoped to have 1000 plants growing. A dozen plants introduced into the species's original locality early in 1986 have grown well. *Species*, 7.

Africa

Senegal reintroductions

Eight addra gazelle *Gazella dama*, two males and six females, have been flown from the Rescue Centre for Saharan Wildlife in Almeria, Spain, to Senegal for a reintroduction experiment, funded by WWF and the Frankfurt Zoological Society. They are being held in the Special Faunal Reserve of Gueumbeul while they adapt to Senegal's environment, and two fawns have been born already. They will be released eventually on the sandy plains adjacent to the Ferlo River. Red-fronted and dorcas gazelles have already been translocated to the Parc National des Oiseaux du Djoud and there are plans to reintroduce ostrich and giraffe. *Species*, 7.

Award for college

Tanzania's College of Wildlife Management at Mweka was awarded the United Nations Environment Programme's Sasakawa Environment Prize on World Environment Day, 5 June 1986, in recognition of its outstanding achievement in conservation training. Since the College began in 1963 some 1200 graduates from 17 African countries have been trained to manage wildlife parks and reserves. The \$50,000 Sasakawa Prize was endowed by the Japanese Shipbuilding Industry Foundation in 1982, and UNEP awards it annually to honour individuals or institutions for conservation excellence. *WWF News*, 42; *Focus*, 8, 4.

Poaching with pumpkins

Poachers in Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania are killing elephants by baiting known elephant paths with poisoned pumpkins. According to one official, 80–100 elephants at a time could be killed by this method, which is also used in neighbouring Mozambique. *Sunday Nation*, 22 June 1986.

First for Niger

The Niger Government held its first national wildlife seminar in March 1986, inviting 80 participants from all walks of life (foresters, government administrators, village chiefs, professional hunters, poachers, and park rangers) in the country and from neighbouring Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali. The seminar was the culminating event of a month-long multi-media campaign aimed at bringing wildlife to the nation's attention. It made several recommendations, including: urging speedy approval of the National Reserve of Air and Ténére; reinforcement of men, equipment and funds to secure the integrity and management of W National Park; and asking the Ministry of Defence to take steps to halt illegal hunting. *WWF News*, 42; *WWF Monthly Report*, July 1986.

White rhinos

The remnant population of white rhino *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* in Garamba National Park in Zaire is believed to now number 17, with three born recently. Poaching is now generally under control, reports the leader of the IUCN/WWF Project in the Park. *Species*, 7.

Zambian ivory seized

In June 1986 Zambian authorities seized 564 elephant tusks, which were concealed in a truck in northern Zambia on the way to Burundi. *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, VIII, 2.

Zambesi oil—what prospects?

Concern is being expressed over the exploration for oil and minerals in the Zambesi Valley. Uranium has been discovered, but may not be exploited for some time as there is currently a world over-supply. Oil has been discovered east of the major wildlife areas, and exploration seems almost certain to spread westwards into wildlife areas such as the Mana Pools National Park. Conservationists are not trying to halt the exploration, but want to ensure that environmental planning is an integral part of the project, which is being funded by West Germany. *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, 44.

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Zimbabwe's rarest antelope

Lichtenstein's hartebeest *Alcelaphus lichtensteinii*, although relatively common in neighbouring countries, is in a precarious state in Zimbabwe, and the drought of the early 1980s affected it severely. About 30 animals survive on private land, and about 75 in the Gonarezhou National Park, which are vulnerable to poaching. Conservation measures are now under consideration; one of the most vital steps may be the establishment of other breeding groups in areas such as the Kyle Recreational Park, which offers suitable habitat and increased protection from poachers. *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, **44**.



Lichtenstein's hartebeest (Mark Boulton/ICCE).

Minefields in the parks

Minefields set during Zimbabwe's liberation war are still killing animals in the national parks. Only a small part of the 40-sq-km (15-sq-mile) minefields in the Victoria Falls and Zambezi National Park has been cleared since 1980 despite help from the UK, Canada and the US, and in the past five years the deaths of 15 buffalo, three elephants and one kudu have been reported. On the Mozambique border, a 30-km (16-mile) long minefield is said to be deterring poachers in the Gonarezhou National Park, but since independence at least 30 buffalo, one lion and three elephants have been killed by mines. Mine clearance is so complex that some of the minefields may never be cleared. *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, **44**.

Plant threatens Okavango

Salvinia molesta, known as Kariba weed, found in the Moreni Wildlife Reserve in June 1986, threatened the Okavango Delta. The plant grows very rapidly, forming a thick mat on the water, depriving submerged aquatic plants, fish and other aquatic life of oxygen and light, and blocking water-courses. Thousands of *Cyrtobagous salvinae*, the weevil used for biological control of *Salvinia*, have been introduced, affected lagoons have been isolated and pumped dry, a fence has been built to prevent hippos reaching the affected areas, and boat access is being controlled.

Kalahari Conservation Society Newsletter, **13**.

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Palm decline in Botswana

Basket weavers in Botswana are having to walk further and further in search of their raw material, the leaves of the mokolwane palm *Hyphaene ventricosa*. The reasons for the decline of the palms may be improper harvesting practices (although 81 per cent of women interviewed in 1986 still practice selective cutting, which is sustainable), harvesting for palm wine, and grazing pressure from livestock. More research is needed to determine the exact causes, the extent of the decline, and possibilities of cultivating the palm before action can be taken to conserve it. *Kalahari Conservation Society Newsletter*, **13**.

Black rhinos reintroduced

Black rhinos have been reintroduced into the Grahamstown district of Cape Province, South Africa, 140 years after the last one was shot there. Two males and two females were donated by Natal Parks Board and released in the Andries Vosloo Kudu Reserve by the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation. It is the first time black rhino have been introduced in a Cape Provincial Nature Reserve. *Quagga*, **14**.

Alien crab in South Africa

The European shore-crab *Carcinus maenas*, which has been successfully emigrating from Europe to other parts of the world since the 1850s, was first recorded in South Africa in 1983, and zoologists believe it might become a threat to some local fauna. Unlike two other crabs that have been introduced to South African waters by ship (the hairy crab *Pilumnus hirsutus* and the kelp crab *Pilumnoides perlatius*), the European shore-crab is an aggressive predator. It became a threat to the soft-shell clam *Mya arenaria* industry in the 1950s on the New England coast of the US, and control measures were necessary. *African Wildlife*, **40**, 2.

Aardwolf information needed

The aardwolf *Proteles cristatus* is often persecuted in the mistaken belief that it preys on livestock. In fact it feeds almost exclusively on termites, and one of the objectives of a current project in South Africa is to document information about the usefulness of this and other species to farmers, who have an important role to play in conservation. *Quagga*, **14**.

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Cranes poisoned

About 180 of the 200 crowned cranes *Balearica regulorum* on the coast of Transkei have been killed by a man who poisoned them with maize soaked with insecticide because he suspected them of eating his maize crop. The birds, which are mainly insectivorous, are traditionally protected by tribespeople and play an important role in tribal folklore.

The Argus (Cape Town, South Africa), 13 August 1986.

Oil spills—threat to penguins

Two major oil spills, in July and December 1985, severely affected the jackass penguin *Spheniscus demersus* on St Croix island on the south-east coast of southern Africa. One of the spills resulted in 1180 heavily oiled penguins, of which 620 were cleaned, rehabilitated and released. The bird is endemic to southern Africa, and is listed as being of Special Concern in ICBP/IUCN's *Red Data Book*. *World Birdwatch*, 8, 2.

Crow threat to the Seychelles

The wildlife of the Seychelles is threatened by a new intruder, the Indian house crow *Corvus splendens*, which is undergoing a ship-borne expansion of its range and is now established throughout the Indian Ocean region. Mombasa Island in Kenya, for example, is now almost devoid of native species because the crows raid the nests of smaller species and mob raptors and other large birds. Five crows arrived in the Seychelles in 1977; two were shot but the three left have bred—now there are 25. They should be eradicated immediately, says Dr Colin Ryall of Mombasa Polytechnic, Kenya, to prevent damage to the delicate Seychelles ecosystem. *New Scientist*, 2 October 1986.

Asia (excluding Indo-Malaya)

New gazelle

A new species of gazelle was proposed by Colin Groves and Douglas Lay after examining five museum skins and skulls from North Yemen, which were collected in the 1950s by Dr Harry Hoog-

straal. The new species *Gazella bilkis* differs most conspicuously from the Arabian gazelle *G. gazella* in its horns, which are more upright, almost straight and have a markedly smaller span. Subsequently Chris Furley discovered 10 unusual-looking gazelles alive in a private collection in Qatar in the Arabian Gulf; they have since been identified as *G. bilkis* by Groves. *BBC Wildlife*, 4, 8.

Fumigation of bat caves

Annual fumigation of bat caves in Israel has been taking place since 1958 in an attempt to eradicate the Egyptian fruit bat *Rousettus aegyptiacus*. Research has shown that this bat is not a problem since it eats only fruit that is too ripe for commercial use. Fumigation with lindane still goes on, however, even in caves within national nature reserves, destroying insectivorous bats (which are protected under the Israel Wild Animal Protection Law), owls and cave invertebrates. Lindane decomposes only slowly in caves, and the toxic effects may last for decades, endangering wildlife and presenting a major health hazard for tourists. The Nature Reserves Authority has concluded an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture to discontinue unauthorized fumigation of caves in nature reserves, but conservationists want all cave fumigation stopped and compensation to be paid to farmers for verifiable fruit-bat damage. *Israel—Land and Nature*, 12, 1.

Bear hunting prohibited

Kochi Prefecture in Japan decided on 26 August to prohibit the hunting of bears for 10 years beginning in November 1986, and neighbouring Tokushima Prefecture, which shares part of the bears' habitat, has agreed to co-operate. This is the first time that such a conservation measure has been attempted in Japan, and the Japanese Environment Agency hopes that Honshu, where bear numbers are declining, will follow suit. *Monitor*, 27 August 1986.

Japanese Birdathon

In September 1986 Japan, following in the footsteps of other Big Bird Racers, held its second Birdathon. Organized by

the Wild Bird Society of Japan, 12 teams competed and raised 9,000,000 yen. In 1985 the first Japanese Birdathon, organized by Dr M. A. Brazil, raised 1,000,000 yen. The money goes towards a 100,000,000 yen fund for crane conservation and will be used to purchase land for the red-crowned crane *Grus japonensis* in Hokkaido, the northernmost island in Japan.

Wild Bird Society of Japan, Aoyama Flower Building, 1-1-4 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan.

Chinese tiger on brink

The Chinese tiger *Panthera tigris amoyensis*, down to 50–80 scattered individuals in the wild, could become extinct unless something is done soon, claimed a report at the International Symposium on Global Survival Strategies for Tigers in April 1986. Two reserves, in Hunan and Jiangxi, had been established for the tiger, but hunting, encouraged until 1977 when it became illegal, still goes on, especially in view of the demand for tiger parts in traditional medicine. The best hope is for a well-planned captive-breeding programme; there are 40 tigers in captivity in China, but they are closely related and new blood is needed. Dr Xian Peilun, Director of Chongqing Zoo, said that the Government had approved a proposal for a breeding centre at his zoo in 1984, and hoped that funds from international sources would be forthcoming to help. *WWF Monthly Report*, June 1986.

Père David's deer reintroduced

On 12 August 1986 39 Père David's deer *Elaphurus davidianus* were flown to China to be released into a specially created 1800-ha (4400-acre) wildlife reserve about 250 km (155 miles) north of Shanghai. The deer was extinct in China by the beginning of this century, and the reintroduced animals originate from individuals sent to the Zoological Society of London in 1869. *WWF News*, 43.

Indo-Malaya

Edible frog study

A study to assess the edible frog population of India and the rate at which it can be exploited is being carried out by the Maduraj Kamaraj University for the

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country's Marine Products Export Development Authority.
Fishing News International, 25, 8.

Primate massacre in Assam

The non-human primates in the forests of the North Cachar Hills in Assam, India, are being killed in huge numbers by parties of hunters from the neighbouring state of Nagaland, which include government ministers, senior police officers and civil officials. They have killed more than 1000 primates in the last three years, including hoolock gibbons *Hylobates hoolock* and capped langurs *Presbytis pileata*, the killing and capture of which is illegal under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. Anwaruddin Choudhury, a researcher from Gauhati University, who is carrying out fieldwork in the area, is calling for a high-level enquiry into the matter and recommends immediate protection for the areas that still hold the remnants of the primate populations.
The Sentinel (Guwahati), 6 April 1986.

Bakun Dam protest

The government decision to go ahead with the Bakun Dam in Sarawak, Malaysia, has met with nationwide protest. More than 5000 people in long-house communities will be displaced, and 700 sq km (270 sq miles) of land—65 per cent of it rain forest—will be flooded.
Suara Sam, 3, 2.

Sarawak's crocodiles need help

Sarawak's two species of crocodile have been so heavily exploited for hide that they could be on the brink of extinction, according to a recent survey. Present stocks of saltwater crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* appear to be less than one per cent of pristine populations, and the false gharial *Tomistoma schlegelii* was confirmed in only one river system. Jack Cox of WWF Malaysia, and Francis Gombek of the State's Forest Department, recommend: a five-year ban on harvesting and trade of saltwater crocodiles from the wild; investigation of reports of smuggling of live crocodiles to Singapore; establishing Sarawak mangroves as an International Biosphere Reserve; creating Wildlife Sanctuaries; and captive breeding to replenish wild stocks.
WWF Monthly Report, July 1986.

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Exotic food trade threat to wildlife

One of the threats to Malaysia's wildlife is the continued existence of restaurants and food-stalls trading in wildlife. Monkey's meat and brains, meat of iguana, squirrel, deer, anteater, python, cobra, tortoise and turtle are very much in demand. Many of the species involved are protected under the Wildlife Act (1972), but the secrecy surrounding the trade makes detection and enforcement of the legislation difficult. Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth) is urging the Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, the Veterinary Division under the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Department of Wildlife to take measures against the sale of meat from protected and endangered species.
Sahabat Alam Malaysia.

Transmigration Programme destroys forest

Indonesia's massive Transmigration Programme, funded by the World Bank, is causing acute concern among conservationists and environmentalists. The programme involves moving millions of landless people from the central Indonesian islands of Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok to the less densely populated outer islands. The programme will result in the loss of 3.3 million ha (8.1 million acres) of rain forest during the present five-year plan, and the indigenous people already living in the outer islands are being dispossessed of their traditional lands. In West Papua (Irian Jaya) tribal people who have resisted the takeover have been subjected to security operations by the Indonesian armed forces.
Sahabat Alam Malaysia.

North America

Ban to stop incidental dolphin kill

The US National Marine Fisheries Service announced bans on all tuna fishing 'on porpoise' from mid-late September, and on all imports of yellowfin tuna caught in the purse-seine net method, because the US tuna fishery has exceeded its yearly dolphin kill quota of 20,500.

Polar bears contaminated

A study found that tissue from polar bears taken by native hunters in the Canadian arctic contained traces of polychlorinated biphenyls, hexachlorobenzene, hexachlorocyclohexane and the pesticides DDT, chlordane, dieldrin and toxaphene. The Canadian Wildlife Service believes that the pollutants originate in North America and are airborne.

Marine Pollution Bulletin, 17, 8.

Rescue attempt for mammals trapped by glacier

Seals, porpoises and other sea mammals have been trapped by the Hubbard Glacier, which has blocked the top of Disenchantment Bay in Alaska. Meltwater from the glacier is making the new Russell Lake unsuitable for marine life. The California Marine Mammals Center and the Whale Museum in Washington organized 16 volunteers to help try to save the animals by trapping them and airlifting them out. September bad weather had caused the rescue of 40 porpoises to be abandoned, but eight harbour seals were helped to the sea across an eastern bridge. The water was rising by 30 cm a day, and geologists were predicting that the ice dam could be about to break.
New Scientist, 11 September, 18 September, 20 October 1986.

Owls sacrificed for Act

The US Endangered Species Act, currently being considered by Congress for its three-yearly renewal, may survive only with the sacrifice of spotted owls *Strix occidentalis*, according to Dan Simberloff of Florida University. The Act already has opponents—some senators are delaying its passage by wanting greater 'flexibility' in hunting grizzly bears *Ursus arctos* and in wanting to build the dam that threatens the Concho water snake *Nerodia harteri harteri*—and others are likely to join forces if the owl were to be listed as threatened. There are only 2000 spotted owls left in the northwestern US, and the powerful lumber companies want to log their old forest habitat.

New Scientist, 18 September 1986.

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Plan for owls

About 1250 pairs of northern spotted owls *Strix occidentalis* would be maintained in national forests in Oregon and Washington States if a draft plan issued by the US Forest Service is finalized. Approximately 550 areas of old-growth forest, covering about 2200 acres (890 ha) each, would be kept and this would also ensure the survival of many other species that depend on this habitat. *Outdoor News Bulletin*, 40, 16.

Not the last ferrets

In November 1985 conservationists captured what were believed to be the world's last six black-footed ferrets *Mustela nigripes*. They have not yet bred—the two males are juveniles. Meanwhile, 12 more ferrets have been found near Meeteetse, Wyoming, and three females and a mature male have been taken into captivity for breeding. *The New York Times*, 24 August 1986.

Rabies alarm

Rabid racoons released into the wild by hunters seeking to improve the fur harvest have been blamed for the worst outbreak of rabies recorded in the US. States that have been affected include Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the outbreak is now spreading to the suburbs of Baltimore and Philadelphia. *GNUS*, 137.

Skullcap protected

The large-flowered skullcap *Scutellaria montana*, a herbaceous member of the mint family, was listed as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in June 1986. Only 10 populations are known, in Georgia and Tennessee. *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XI, 7.

Hope for an 88 per cent dusky sparrow

The only remaining dusky seaside sparrow *Ammodramus maritimus nigrescens*, a male now 12 years old, mated with a 75 per cent dusky/25 per cent Scott's seaside sparrow, which laid three eggs. If the eggs hatch the young will be 88 per cent pure dusky. *Bird Watcher's Digest*, 8, 6.

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Four plants and one bird

In May 1986 four plants and one bird were added to the US List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife: Florida golden aster *Chrysopsis floridana*, the two largest remaining populations of which are vulnerable to residential construction; dwarf naupaka *Scaevola coriacea*, a prostrate shrub confined to four places in Maui County, Hawaii, the largest of which is scheduled for residential development; Peter's Mountain mallow *Iliamna corei*, five plants of which remain on Peter's Mountain, Virginia; Jones' cycladenia *Cycladenia humilis* var. *jonesii*, a small rosy-flowered member of the dogbane family (Apocynaceae), which grows only on three areas of the Canyonlands region of south-eastern Utah, where gas and oil leases have been issued for all its known sites; and least Bell's vireo *Vireo belli pusillus*, a small grey migratory passerine, which has declined drastically in its range in California and Mexico, being completely extirpated from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, which were at the centre of its breeding range. Now it survives only in south-western California in isolated remnants of willow-dominated riparian habitat. Large areas of this habitat type have been destroyed by flood control and water development projects, crop production, livestock grazing and urbanization, and despite growing concern about the decline of riparian vegetation, substantial amounts continue to be lost. Approximately 65 per cent of least Bell's vireo population is threatened by construction projects. *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XI, 6.

Acidity impairs sense of smell?

Atlantic salmon placed in water with acidity levels commonly found in New England streams affected by acid rain avoided or became indifferent to odours that previously attracted them. These findings, by zoologists Winsor Watson and Carl Royce-Malmgren, suggest that the acidity interferes with the salmon's sense of smell, impairing its ability to return to its home streams to spawn, and may help explain the decline of salmon in acidified lakes and streams. *National Wildlife*, 24, 5.

Duck population low again

Duck hunting regulations for the 1986–87 season in the US will continue restrictions set last season when breeding duck populations dropped to a 30-year low. The 1986 autumn duck numbers were expected to be approximately 73 million, up from 62 million in 1985, but still the second lowest forecast on record. Prime wetland areas in parts of Canada have still not recovered from the drought of the last few years. *Department of the Interior*, 18 August 1986.

Land swap saves park

A geothermal drilling project on private land bordering Hawaii Volcanoes National Park was approved by the Hawaii Board of Land and Natural Resources in 1984, even though much of the land was zoned a State natural area worthy of protection. After the volcano, Kilauea, erupted recently, the State reversed its decision and agreed to a plan that would give 5650 acres (2290 ha) to the park in exchange for another site for geothermal resources that does not lie in Kilauea's rift zone. The plan awaits approval by the US Congress. *National Parks*, 60, 7–8.

Monk seal habitat—some protection at last

The US National Marine Fisheries Service has designated Critical Habitat (effective on 30 May 1986) for the endangered Hawaiian monk seal *Monachus schauinslandi* under legal pressure from Greenpeace Hawaii and the Hawaii Chapter of the Sierra Club (see *Oryx* 20, 3, 194). The area designated includes all beaches, lagoons and ocean waters out to a depth of 10 fathoms around the north-western islands. As the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Team recommended a critical habitat drawn at a minimum of 20 fathoms, environmental groups are continuing to pursue an enlarged critical habitat through legal channels. *Elepaio*, 46, 13.

Cacti success

An introduced population of Knowlton's cactus *Pediocactus knowltonii* planted in 1985 in New Mexico is flourishing, all 105 individuals having

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survived. Forty-five additional cacti were planted out in 1986, and the New Mexico Natural Resources Department will continue to monitor this new population as well as the only known wild one.

Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, XI, 6.

Central America

Legendary cat shot

A female onza, a legendary Mexican cat, said to resemble the puma *Felis concolor*, was shot in January 1986 by a Mexican rancher. The specimen was preserved and dissected in Mexico by a team of biologists. Preliminary findings suggest that the specimen is a new species, but comparison of the limb bones with those of female pumas and electrophoresis of onza and puma tissue are being carried out to confirm this. It is the first specimen to be obtained since the shooting of an onza in 1938 in the La Silla Mountains—only a few miles from where the 1986 specimen was shot. The 1938 specimen was lost after claims that it was an onza were ridiculed. *The ISC Newsletter*, 5, 1.

Saving the monarch

The Mexican Government is investigating the feasibility of protecting a fir forest in the mountains of central Mexico, which is the wintering place for monarch butterflies that spend summer on the eastern side of the Rockies in North America. The forest is owned under a communal form of irrevocable land tenure by farmers who are now logging parts of the forest to plant crops. Monarca, a private Mexican conservation organization, and the WWF are trying to develop alternative income sources for the farmers—resin production, tree nurseries and providing food, souvenirs and guide services to tourists.

Sierra, July/August 1986.

Guatemala halts wildlife exports

Guatemala has suspended all activities with regard to hunting, capture, local trade, export and re-export of wild fauna while it conducts a study on the populations and conservation of its faunal resources.

TRAFFIC Bulletin, VIII, 2.

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Panama's iguana population rising

The Iguana Management Project at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, which began in 1983, is able to produce green iguana hatchlings that are so large that 95 per cent survive release into the wild. In December 1985 1200 hatchlings were released into Panamanian forests, where soy and fish meal were provided to achieve high growth rates. Nearly half the animals remained in the area to establish natural populations. The project is now working on experimental reforestation in which planted timber and fruit trees would support commercially useful iguana populations.

The Washington Post, 8 September 1986.

Parrot forest logging plan

The Puerto Rican parrot *Amazona vittata*, down to only 28 in the wild, is being further threatened by a US Forest Service proposal to allow logging in the Caribbean National Forest in Puerto Rico. The forest is used extensively for wildlife research and recreation, and is an important source of drinking water. The Natural History Society of Puerto Rico has joined a number of other conservation groups in appealing against the proposal.

National Wildlife, 24, 5.

South America

Reef Society

The Crusoe Reef Society was established in early 1986 to monitor, conserve and protect the marine coastal environment and resources in Tobago. Its immediate goal is to halt damage to Buccoo Reef, which over the past 20 years has suffered hurricane damage, destruction by boat anchors, trampling and souvenir collecting by visitors, frequent and illegal removal of commercial species, and sediment from on-shore developments. About 95 per cent of the shallow reef area has been destroyed, but most of the coral below a depth of 2 m is flourishing. The Society has made a number of proposals for better management of the reef, which was proclaimed a Restricted Area in 1973 and treated as a nature reserve. *Crusoe Reef Society, 10B Saddle Road, Maraval, Trinidad and Tobago, WI.*

Bird smugglers in Trinidad and Tobago

Cage-bird traders in Trinidad and Tobago are illegally importing large numbers of wild birds from South America. Local populations of blue-and-yellow macaw *Ara ararauna*, ruddy-breasted and grey seedeaters *Sporophila minuta* and *S. intermedia*, and the lesser seed finch *Oryzoborus angdensis* have been so reduced by trapping that the traders have turned to smuggling them in. The Wildlife Section of the Trinidad and Tobago Forestry Service has stepped up its campaign against the illegal operations of both trappers and traders.

Birds, 11, 3.

Galápagos waters reserve

The Government of Ecuador has declared the waters surrounding the Galápagos Islands a Marine Reserve. The Islands themselves have been a National Park since 1959.

WWF News, 42.

Dolphin rescue

A rescue operation began last August in Goiás State, central Brazil, to save some of the hundreds of Amazon river dolphins *Inia geoffrensis* that become trapped behind dams in the irrigation channels of the 100,000-acre (40,500-ha) River Formosa Rice and Soybean Plantation when the water level recedes. The dolphins are being killed for their eyes and genital organs, which are sold as lucky charms and aphrodisiacs (see *Oryx* 20, 1, 53). The rescue operation is a joint effort by members of the Biology Department at the Catholic University in Minas Gerais and an international team of vets, naturalists and biologists.

The Guardian, 5 August 1986.

Wildlife hospital in Brazil

The environmental week held in June 1986 at São Paulo, Brazil, was noteworthy for a conservation victory. On 7 June a centre for wildlife health was opened at the Tietê Ecological Park. One of the major problems of Brazilian wildlife and federal officers has been dealing with about 600 animals that come into their hands in the course of their work, most of them injured or ill.

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The new hospital includes a clinical analysis laboratory, space for surgery, and artificially climatized rooms. The centre will permit recovery of animals, which will be returned to the wild or used for research.
Veja, 18 June 1986.

Mejía Lagoons—a National Sanctuary

The Mejía Lagoons, on the coast of Arequipa in southern Peru, have been declared a National Sanctuary by the Peruvian Government, saving them from the threat of agricultural development. They are the only wetlands along more than 600 miles of coastline in Chile and Peru and are vital for 140 resident and migratory birds, including the osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, the little blue heron *Egretta caerulea*, Wilson's phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* and the Inca tern *Larosterna inca*.
Birds, 11, 3.

Oilbird sanctuary

The area in Chapare, Bolivia, where the Bolivian Wildlife Society has been carrying out its Oilbird Project has, after two years of lobbying by the Society, been declared a wildlife sanctuary by the Minister of Rural Affairs and Agriculture. The 1500 ha (3700 acres) protects not only the birds, but also the palm trees whose seeds are their staple diet. The oilbirds *Steatornis caripensis* are thriving and increasing in numbers.
Bolivian Wildlife Society, News Sheet 5.

Bolivia extends export ban

On 27 July 1986 Bolivia's President signed a decree extending the ban on the capture and export of wildlife for a further three years, despite lobbying by animal dealers. At the end of this time trade probably will be allowed at a sustainable level and so, meanwhile, status studies should be made of primates and many species of birds, particularly of parrots, of which the wildlife traders wanted to export 300,000 along with 12,000 primates had the ban not been extended. Status studies on caiman and cats are already under way, thanks to CITES. The President, His Excellency Dr Victor Paz Estenssoro, has become the president of the Bolivian Wildlife Society.

Bolivian Wildlife Society, News Sheet 5.

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Amboró National Park

Ever since Amboró National Park was proclaimed by Supreme Decree in 1984, the Bolivian Wildlife Society has been doing its best to get it properly protected. Its efforts bore fruit in 1986, when an agreement on technical and economic assistance between the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Agriculture, the Centre of Forestry Development, the Bolivian Association for the Defense of Nature (PB) and the Bolivian Wildlife Society (BWS(PB)) for the implementation and conservation of the Park was signed. Under the Agreement, PB and the BWS(PB) will develop a research centre, a captive breeding unit for endangered species, a paramedical post for the benefit of the population in the region, accommodation for visiting scientists, and an experimental agricultural station for the benefit of farmers legitimately settled in the Park.

Bolivian Wildlife Society, News Sheet 5.

Chile desert park

The 43,754-ha (108,116-acre) Pan de Azucar National Park was established in May 1986 in Chile's Atacama Desert, which receives an average of less than one millimetre of rain per year. An outstanding array of plants, many of them endemic, grow on coastal ridges exposed to fog, and the cacti among them are particularly threatened by collectors. The Park also contains Humboldt penguin *Spheniscus humboldti* colonies and other seabird breeding grounds.

CNPPA Members' Newsletter, 36.

Skins confiscated in Uruguay

Authorities in Uruguay seized a large number of skins from fur shops in Montevideo in March 1986 when it was found that the identification stamps were false. The total was 2388 raw skins, 4093 tanned skins, 47 garments, pieces and accessories, and 58 kg of mixed skins. The species involved included coypu *Myocastor coypus*, Geoffroy's cat *Felis geoffroyii*, ocelot *F. pardalis*, fox *Dusicyon* and *Cerdocyon* spp., racoon *Procyon lotor* and river otter *Lutra longicaudis*.

TRAFFIC Bulletin, VIII, 2.

Anniversary conservation area

Uruguay has declared a conservation area in celebration of WWF's 25th Anniversary. The Quebrada de los Cuervos (Canyon of the Raven Nature Reserve) is a forested area containing peregrine falcons, Uruguayan tree frogs, long-tailed otters and the yerbamate tree.

WWF News, 43.

Australia/Antarctica

Hope for dugongs in Strait

At a meeting in Torres Strait, north of Australia, in March 1986, Dr Helene Marsh, Chairman of the SSC Sirenia Group, discussed her research findings on dugongs with the communities of the islands in the Strait. Dugong numbers are declining, and the meeting agreed that there was a problem with over-hunting. It was decided that a protected area should be established and more research carried out.

Species, 7.

Koalas and their diseases

The several maladies that afflict Australia's koalas, and which are now occurring in epidemic proportions, are all now known to be caused by the same bacterium, *Chlamydia psittaci*. What is not known is why the bacterium has become so virulent in koalas. Steve Brown, Australian wildlife veterinarian and koala conservation campaigner, and others suspect that human pressure has forced koalas into less favourable habitats and overcrowded them so that their resistance is lowered. As far as treatment goes, antibiotics are of no help because they kill the gut flora, which the koalas depend upon to digest eucalyptus leaves. The Australian Koala Association Inc. is attempting to raise £1 million for medical and environmental research.

BBC Wildlife, 4, 8.

Crocodiles a part of life

A crocodile conservation campaign, including television commercials, brochures, posters and school visits, has been started in Northern Territory, Australia.

Wildlife Australia, 23, 2.

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National Park endangered

Lind National Park in Victoria will lose its national park status if a proposal by the Land Conservation Council, which recommends that two-thirds of the area be logged and the rest downgraded to a scenic reserve, is accepted. Lind has been a national park since 1926; its rain-forest vegetation is rare in Victoria and supports 220 bird species. *ACF Newsletter*, 18, 6.

Rediscovery of a *Veronica*

Veronica pamkalliana, a blue-and-white-flowered plant, has been rediscovered in Flinders Ranges, South Australia, 200 km from its two previously known sites near Port Lincoln. It was collected there in 1909 and 1911, had not been seen since, and was believed extinct because of clearance for agriculture. The new sites are in two Conservation Parks, Alligator Gorge and Telowie Gorge. *The South Australian Naturalist*, 60, 4.

Plants of the wheat belt

Although largely cleared of natural vegetation, the wheat belt of Western Australia contains one of the highest concentrations of rare and threatened plants in Australia. A recent survey of the mallee belt, between Ravensthorpe and Cape Arid National Park, found 1220 taxa. Of these, 18 per cent are undescribed, 188 species are rare or local, 21 are endangered, and 37 are vulnerable. Other surveys in the wheat belt have rediscovered 39 plants that had been seen only once or twice since their original discoveries over 50 years ago. In addition, a project funded by the Australian Heritage Commission identified 52 species that have not been seen for 50 years and may be extinct. Only three per cent of the wheat belt is set aside as wildlife reserves, but some landowners are also setting aside protected areas on their farms. *Landscape*, 2, 1.

Horse threat in Australia

There are alarming numbers of feral horses in the Alice Springs Region of Northern Territory, Australia, according to a 1986 report. Aerial surveys in 1984 resulted in estimates of more than 82,000 horses in the region, and local

scientists believe that there could now be 100,000. The horses compete with wildlife for food and water, their hooves damage the thin soil surface of the arid zone, causing soil erosion, and they are also a threat to the pastoral industry. *ACF Newsletter*, 18, 5.

Short-lived ban lifted

The Australian Government ended the short-lived ban on the export of kangaroo products in July 1986, three weeks after it was announced, following pressure from the Queensland Government and the kangaroo industry. *Monitor*, 14 July 1986.

Breeding the brush-tailed bettong

A programme to breed and reintroduce the brush-tailed bettong *Bettongia penicillata* has led to the successful establishment of wild breeding populations on four islands in South Australia. All animals used were from three animals from Perth Zoo, but although inbred, the stock appears healthy and there have been no signs of any reduction in breeding potential. The species once ranged over much of southern Australia, but is now extinct except in the south-west of Western Australia and in northern Queensland. There are plans to try to reintroduce the bettong to parts of the mainland where fox predation is minimized or eliminated. *Australian Wildlife Research*, 13, 3.

Setback for Chatham Island robin

The Chatham Island black robin *Petroica traversi* programme suffered a setback in 1986 when a massive storm wiped out 14 of the 37 robins painstakingly built up over the past five years. The storm also affected the availability of insect food, and breeding was late and poor. However, 11 chicks were raised and New Zealand Wildlife Service staff say the population is still about 30. *World Birdwatch*, 8, 2.

Oceania

Four islands protected

Four uninhabited islands in the Northern Marianas have been set aside for conservation. Professor L. G. Elredge of the University of Guam, who has long championed the move, which was ratified by the voters of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands in November 1985, says that the islands are valuable for seabirds, coconut crabs and many endemic plants and insects. *CNPPA Members' Newsletter*, 36.

Campaign for conservation in the Pacific

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand has launched a campaign to help conservation in the Pacific, especially that of the rain forests, which are being logged wastefully. It hopes to appoint at least one conservation officer in the Pacific to provide legal assistance for Pacific conservation, to support surveys and education projects, and to obtain support and funding for national parks and reserves. *Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc., 7th Floor, Central House, 26 Brandon Street, Wellington 1, New Zealand.*

People

Dr Robert Scott retired from his post as the IUCN's Species Survival Commission's Executive Officer in July 1986 after seven years of service. Dr Stephen R. Edwards has been appointed as the new Executive Officer and took up his post on 1 November. For the past nine years he has been the Executive Director of the Association of Systematics Collections in Kansas, USA.

Obituary

Raol Sbree Dharmakumarsinhji died on 28 January 1986, aged 70. Author of *Birds of Saurashtra* and co-author of *Sixty Indian Birds*, he was one of India's pioneer conservationists and played a significant role in shaping India's wildlife legislation. He was Vice-Chairman of the Indian Board for Wildlife for 25 years until his death.

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