

Briefly...

International

CITES update

St Lucia, Thailand and the People's Republic of the Congo have ratified the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the ratifications became effective on 15 March, 21 April and 1 May 1983 respectively, bringing the total number of CITES Parties to 81. Thailand took reservations on three Appendix I species: Siamese crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis*, saltwater crocodile *C. porosus*, and Indian monitor *Varanus bengalensis*; and three Appendix II species: water monitor *V. salvator*, Burmese python *Python molurus bivittatus*, and reticulated python *P. reticulatus*. *Traffic* (USA) 5, 1

New member for IWC

Mauritius joined the International Whaling Commission on 17 June 1983, the 40th member state to do so, and is expected to support conservation measures.

Austria ratifies Ramsar

Austria ratified the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) on 16 December 1982, and designated five sites for inclusion in the list of wetlands of international importance: the Lake Neusiedl area with the 'Lacken im Seewinkel'; Donau-March-Auen; Lower Lobau; barrage lakes on the lower reaches of the Inn; and the Rhine delta of Lake Constance. *Council of Europe Newsletter*, 83-3

New Biosphere Reserves

In April 1983 12 reserves were added to the international biosphere reserve network under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme, bringing the total to 226 reserves in 62 countries. The new reserves are: Reserva de la Biosfera 'Araucaris' in Chile; Réserve Naturelle Intégrale d'Ipassa-Makokou in Gabon; Bia National Park in Ghana; Parc National de la Comoé in Ivory Coast; Darien National Park in Panama; Parc National des Volcans in Rwanda; Reserva de la Biosfera del Canal y los Tiles, Reserva de la Biosfera de la Marismas del Rio Odiel and Reserva de la Biosfera de las Sierras de Cazorla y

Segura in Spain; South Atlantic Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve, Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve and California Coast Ranges Biosphere Reserve in USA. In addition, Haleakala National Park and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park have been combined into the Hawaiian Islands Biosphere Reserve. *IUCN Bulletin*, 14, 4/5/6.

Year of the Plant

Year of the Plant, a new WWF/IUCN campaign, is to be launched in April 1984 at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and is expected to last 18 months.

Wildlife Film Festival

The Seventh Annual International Wildlife Film Festival will be held on 11-15 April 1984 at the University of Montana. Details: Wildlife Film Festival, Wildlife Biology Program, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana 58912, USA.

Netherlands a free port for parrots

The Netherlands imported 33,379 wild-captured psittacines (parrots, macaws etc.) through Schiphol Airport between 1 May 1980 and 31 August 1981. The Netherlands is not a Party to CITES and the Dutch Endangered Species Act (1977) protects only a limited number of psittacine species so that the country is acting as a free port for these birds, of which all except three are listed on Appendix I or II of CITES. *Traffic Bulletin*, 5, 1

Half US ivory imports illegal

In spite of US and international laws to control the ivory trade, US trade records show that more than half the elephant ivory imports for 1981 and 1982 were illegal, coming from African nations through Hong Kong, Kenya and Zaire, which accounted for nearly 60 per cent of US imports in 1982, banned commercial ivory exports in 1977 and 1978 respectively. *WWF-US*

Stranded whale workshop

The RSPCA has organised an international workshop in the UK this October where invited experts will discuss the problems of stranded

cetaceans (whales, porpoises and dolphins) and produce guidelines for use by governments and other authorities in emergencies such as the stranding of 36 pilot whales *Globicephala melaena* which occurred earlier this year on the Orkney island of Westray. Six were saved by towing them out to sea but the rest died and were buried on the beach. Co-sponsors of the workshop are UNEP, IFAW, Scottish SPCA, PTES and the Humane Society of the USA.

Europe and North Africa

Berne Convention

Greece ratified the Berne Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) on 14 March 1983. *IUCN Bulletin*, 14, 4/5/6.

Acid rain strikes in Wales

Acid rain is decimating fish stocks of many Welsh rivers according to a report by Roscoe Howells, Director of the Scientific Services of the Welsh Water Authority. *New Scientist*, 98, 1357

Motorway threat to barn owls

Barn owl *Tyto alba* numbers have been falling dramatically everywhere in Britain in the past 20 years. The reasons: intensive farming, the destruction of old barns, pesticides and, now, according to a survey being carried out by the Hawk Trust, motorways. Barn owls, attracted to motorway verges by high populations of voles, are being killed by collision with vehicles. Colin Shawyer, who is carrying out the survey, found five dead owls on one mile of motorway in just one night.

Washlands: drainage threat

A public enquiry began in June over Agricultural Land Investment Holdings's demands to end the ban (imposed two years ago by Lincolnshire County Council) on draining 4000 ha of salt marshes around the Wash in Lincolnshire, UK. The city-owned firm is backed by the National Farmers' Union, the Crown Estate (from which it recently bought land in the area) and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The marshes are SSSIs and are extremely important wintering grounds

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Male European otter wearing a harness with a radio transmitter attached to enable it to be tracked after its release into the wild on a river in East Anglia on 5 July 1983. The rivets which hold the harness together will rust in a few weeks and the harness will fall off leaving the otter unencumbered.

for large numbers of species of European waders.
New Scientist, 98, 1361

Wildcat survey

A wildcat *Felis silvestris* survey is being conducted by the Nature Conservancy Council in Britain over the next two years. Wildcats once lived throughout Britain but now occur mainly north of the line Glasgow–Edinburgh. Information: Dr Nigel Easterbee, NCC, 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh, UK.

New farming and wildlife organisation

The Farming and Wildlife Trust Ltd has been formed to promote and support the work of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) in the UK. It hopes to raise funds to appoint Farm Conservation Advisers at county level. Further information: The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL.
Habitat, 19, 5

Otter releases in UK

Three young European otters *Lutra lutra*, bred at the Otter Trust's headquarters near Bungay in Suffolk, were set free in July on an East Anglian river from which otters disappeared in recent years. Jeanne and Philip Wayre have

been breeding otters since 1972—they now have a breeding nucleus of more than 30—for the express purpose of releasing young animals annually to build up the wild population. If this pilot release is successful six more young otters are ready to be set free.

Grey seal pup numbers halved in Ireland

The number of grey seal pups *Halichoerus grypus* on the main breeding grounds off north-west Ireland has fallen to 50 per cent of the 1980 figure. A further reduction is expected in future years as a result of continued unauthorised killing of seal pups.

Habitat, 19, 5

Respite for white-fronted goose

A three-year moratorium on hunting the Greenland race of the white-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* has been introduced in Ireland where most of the bird's world population winters. The ban reflects international concern for the status of this subspecies and will enable essential research to be done.
Le Courier de la Nature, 83

Woodpecker lost from Sweden

The middle spotted woodpecker *Den-drocopus medius* has disappeared from

Sweden where it was once widespread in the south; its decline is associated with the clearance of oak forest on which it depended. By 1980 only two pairs bred and since then severe winters have probably contributed to its disappearance.

Le Courier de la Nature, 83

Free passage for reindeer across frontier

Reindeer *Rangifer tarandus* are being allowed free access across the Finland/USSR border in a joint conservation effort between Soviet authorities and research workers and Finnish conservation groups. The Finnish population of wild reindeer is about 600 and on the Soviet side there are around 2500. A captive-breeding programme has resulted in the release of nine reindeer into the wild.

WWF News, No. 23

New parks for Finland

As a result of new legislation in 1982 Finland established 11 new national parks, enlarged six and proposed two more. Five new nature reserves were also declared, bringing the country's total to 20. The new legislation also created a new kind of protected area—bog reserves—and 59 of these are now being conserved. Lemmenjoki National Park in the Lapland fells has been enlarged to 2800 sq km, making it the largest in Europe. Bears, wolves, wolverines, otters and golden eagles occur in its forest and tundra habitats. This park is adjacent to Övre Anarjokka National Park in Norway; together they cover some 4000 sq km, the largest protected wilderness in Europe.

Parks, 7, 4

Finland's reptiles and amphibians protected

Protection for Finland's reptiles and amphibians, except the adder, came into effect in May 1983. Two of the country's 10 species, crested newt *Triturus cristatus* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* are extremely rare.
Suomen Luonto, 4/83, 42

Appeal to save German heath

The Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve in Germany is threatened by the ex-

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traction of water to supply Hamburg. Unless something is done soon wetlands will dry out and the wildlife will be lost. An appeal has been launched to safeguard this protected zone.

Council of Europe Newsletter, 83–5

French parks in danger

Of the six national parks in France three are threatened by dam-building projects. They are: the Vanoise in Haute Tarentaise (France's first national park which was set up in 1963); les Ecrins in Haute Romanche; the Pyrénées Occidentales in the high valley of La Neste. A fourth park, the Cévennes, is part of a plan to extend a ski resort—a project that would destroy a protected forest in an area that has, so far, remained untouched.

Fédération Française des Sociétés de Protection de la Nature

New nature reserve in France

Bruges Marshes, a 262-ha wetland near Bordeaux in the Gironde, one of the region's last wetlands, has been made a nature reserve. It is an important staging post for a number of protected migratory bird species, including birds of prey.

Council of Europe Newsletter, 83–5

Perfumed river

A French perfume manufacturer was sentenced to eight months in prison and ordered to pay more than 250,000 francs after being found guilty of polluting the Loup River over the past 20 years. Trout have been declining in numbers and those that are left are heavily scented. Damages awarded are to be used to restock the river and the company is building a purification plant at its factory.

Fishing News International, 22, 6

National parks in Romania

Two national parks have been proposed in Romania: the geologically complex Apușeni Mountains in the west have a rich flora, which includes many endemics and glacial relic species, and caves with an interesting fauna; the 'Portile de Fier-Valea Cernei', a chalk massif in the south-west, also has many rare plants endemic to Romania.

Ocotirea naturii, 25, 2 and 26, 1–2

Briefly

Storks down in Romania

White stork *Ciconia ciconia* numbers in Romania have decreased by between 20 and 68 per cent since 1958 according to a 1980 census in part of the country. Both a complete stork census and a public awareness campaign for stork conservation are needed.

Ocotirea Naturii, 26, 1–2

Introductions into the Black Sea

In a new ranching experiment Russians have been releasing Atlantic salmon fry into the Black Sea near the Crimean coast. The fry are reported to be acclimatising well. Other introductions by Ukrainian fishery biologists include striped perch, Pacific mullet and Caribbean eel. Oysters from the Soviet Far East have also been introduced in an attempt to restore stocks which died out 10 years ago following a sharp increase in salinity.

Fishing News International, 22, 6

Fish for leather

Italians are using the skins of wolf fishes and catfishes (*Anarhichas* spp.), mainly caught by Norwegians, for belts, shoes and bags. The fish leather is of good quality and strong and is replacing snake and crocodile skins which are no longer freely available.

Fishing News International, 22, 6

Adoption plan for Italian coast

WWF-Italy, concerned that two-thirds of Italy's coast have been spoiled by industrial, residential and tourist developments, have launched a campaign to protect what is left. Donations that symbolise the purchase of one or more sq metres of land at Lire 10,000 (£4.50) per sq metre will fund the purchase and conservation of stretches of sea-shore, river banks or lakeside.

Bird protection group for Algeria

A new ornithology group, Algeria's first, aims to set up a ringing centre, establish protected areas for birds and draw up an ornithological map of the country. Details GOAEP, Laboratoire d'Ornithologie, Parc Zoologique et des Loisirs d'Alger, Département de Zoologie, Route de Kaddous, Alger, Algeria.



Bald ibis (*Udo Hirsch/WWF*).

Park for bald ibis

Surveys of bald ibis *Geronticus eremita* in 1983 revealed that fewer than 400 exist—with 364 living in Morocco. The Moroccan Water and Forests Department have proposed a new national park to protect more than half the world's ibises and their feeding and breeding grounds: the Massa National Park is a strip of land between Agadir and Tiznit, 65 km long and 10–15 km wide, and is a resting and wintering area for a large number of migrating birds.

IUCN Bulletin, 14, 4/5/6

Africa

Egg exports harming ostrich population

Several tens of thousands of ostrich eggs are exported each year to Djibouti from Ethiopia and many are sold within the country also. Some of the trade is legal, conducted through tourist shops, but it is sufficiently lucrative to encourage poaching and the drain on the wild population is considerable. Ethiopia has no captive-breeding stocks of ostriches so all the eggs come from the rapidly diminishing wild population. *Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society Newsletter*, 179

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Railway construction destroying wildlife

Wildlife is suffering during the construction of a 669-km railway across Gabon, from Libreville to Franceville. Construction workers in camps along the railway are eating gorillas, warthogs, caimans and pythons and it is reported that elephants are being run down by trains.

Figaro, 14.1.83

New parks in Kenya

South Island in Lake Turkana and Mount Longonot on the floor of the Rift Valley near Lake Naivasha were declared national parks and the Kerio Valley was made a national reserve on 4 February 1983.

Swara, 6, 2

Rinderpest outbreak

In April 1983 it was confirmed that rinderpest, which had broken out towards the end of 1982 in the Serengeti in Tanzania and in northern Nigeria, had spread to 26 African countries. Almost the entire population of buffalo in Yankari Game Reserve in Nigeria has been lost and there are real fears that an epidemic could wipe out large numbers of Africa's wild bovines. Many African countries are seeking assistance: there is a shortage of vaccines, lack of information and experience regarding methods of inoculating wild animals, and a need to limit cattle movements, especially across game reserve boundaries.

Asia (excluding Indo-Malaya)

Trial reserve for Israel

The Israeli Nature Reserves Authority has been granted a five-year trial lease over 3000 ha (8300 acres) in the northern Arava Valley between Ein Yahav and Hatzeva for the purpose of 'growing, breeding and treating endangered species of plants and animals'. The land will revert permanently to the Authority if it is successful both in conserving endangered species and creating employment for local people on a scale similar to that which might be expected if the land were devoted to agriculture. The area already supports a population of an endangered subspecies of Dorcas gazelle *Gazella* 208

dorcas saudiya and the Authority plans to introduce indigenous animals from the Hai-Bar Wildlife Reserve, about 100 km south, thereby creating separated breeding nuclei. These species include the ostrich *Struthio camelus camelus*, Nubian ibex *Capra ibex nubiana* and the white or Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx* . . . the symbol of fFPS. A field study centre is planned for the use of people studying desert botany, zoology and geology.

Bill Clark

New population of Siberian cranes

In 1983 230 Siberian cranes *Grus leucogeranus* were discovered on wetlands north-west of Pyang-hu, an enormous lake whose waters mingle with the Yangtze River in Jiangzi Province in China.

The ICF Bugle, 9, 2

Three crested ibis chicks

Three crested ibis *Nipponia nippon* chicks have been recorded in Shaanxi Province in northern China, bringing the known world population to 18.

Panda killed and eaten

A radio-collared female giant panda was trapped, killed and eaten by a Chinese peasant who has been jailed for two years for the offence.

Indo-Malaya

Turtle poachers caught in India

Olive ridley turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* nesting on the east coast of India, in the Gahirmatha area, Orissa, were protected from poachers in the 1983 breeding season by patrols organised by the Orissa Forest Department in co-operation with the Indian Navy. They arrested 66 poachers, seized three trawlers and 10 small boats, confiscated nets and rescued 186 ridleys. Thirty turtles died but 156 were released back into the sea. In addition to poaching, thousands of ridleys are drowned in the nets of the 100–150 trawlers that fish near the coast each day. In past years up to 50,000 turtles were taken each year by poachers.

Marine Turtle Newsletter, 25

Cranes hunted in Pakistan

An ancient sport in some villages in northern Pakistan is threatening the endangered Siberian crane *Grus leucogeranus*. Migrating cranes, caught by throwing weighted cords into the air, are killed for food or sold for pets. Common cranes *G. grus* and demoiselle cranes *Anthropoides virgo* are also caught as they migrate between their breeding grounds in USSR and Afghanistan and their wintering grounds in India. Dr Landfmed, an American crane expert who has visited the villages involved, hopes to encourage the Pakistan Government to devise and enforce conservation regulations to protect the Siberian crane.

Attempt to save Philippines crocodile

The Philippines crocodile *Crocodylus mindorensis* is in immediate danger of extinction in the wild due to the Government's agricultural and industrial programmes in the lowland habitat of the very few that are left in the wild. The Silliman University Environmental Centre has started a crocodile breeding programme in Dumaguete City; eventually, if secure sanctuary areas become available, captive-bred crocodiles could be released back into the wild.

IUCN Bulletin, 14, 4/5/6

North America

Education at the airport

Exhibits at San Francisco and Los Angeles airports in California have been designed by TRAFFIC (USA) to educate travellers about wildlife trade laws. Items on display include ivory curios, reptile-leather goods and sea-turtle jewellery, and are from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's stock of seized goods. The San Francisco exhibit, 'Cargo to Extinction', is to tour other airports in the USA.

TRAFFIC (USA), 5,1

Hatchery for seized turtle eggs

The first sea turtle hatchery for seized eggs has been set up in Burlingame, California by port inspector Ken

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McCloud who, with Rose Blundell, successfully hatched and raised eight olive ridleys *Lepidochelys olivacea* last year. The turtles were later tagged and released in their native habitat off the Costa Rican coast. An estimated 1500 sea turtle eggs are seized annually by US port inspectors and Ken McCloud has requested that all seized eggs be sent to him.

TRAFFIC (USA), 5, 1

Hunting ban in Everglades repealed

Deer hunting is to be allowed this autumn in the Everglades marsh in the northern part of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Florida after a 32-year ban. Environmental groups are considering whether to take legal action against the US Interior Department which allegedly ignored environmental impact, federal laws and its own deer population surveys. They are also concerned about the hunt causing damage to endangered species of wading birds and one plant, the curly leaf fern, that is found nowhere else.

Manatee sanctuary purchased after public appeal

Fourteen islands in Kings Bay in Crystal River, which is the wintering area for about 120 of Florida's 1000 manatees *Trichechus manatus*, have been bought by the US Nature Conservancy with \$425,000 raised by public appeal. The manatees are generally declining—in 1982 123 manatees died and only 60–80 were born—and the Kings Bay population appears to be the only one that is increasing.

WWF News, No. 23

Fund to help convict poachers

The National Audubon Society's fund to reward anyone who gives information leading to the conviction of poachers of grizzly bears *Ursus arctos* was tapped for the first time in May 1983 when an informant's tip led to the arrest and conviction of a poacher. Informants are rewarded with \$2500 and three more cases are now under investigation. Fewer than 1000 grizzly bears remain in the USA's lower 48 states and poaching is the main cause of mortality.

Not Man Apart, 13, 5

Briefly

Court rules in favour of California lake

Mono Lake in California, a breeding place for one-quarter of the world's California gulls *Larus californicus*, has been drying up as the city of Los Angeles diverts water from its tributaries. But litigation initiated by the National Audubon Society and other conservation groups led to a ruling by the California Supreme Court that water rights to Mono Lake must be reconsidered. The decision sets a precedent in an area where water rights have historically been considered irrevocable once granted and could have far-reaching effects for other water allocations that affect wildlife.

Audubon, 85, 3

Problems continue for bald eagles

In June 1983 50 people were arrested for killing eagles or trading in eagle feathers after a two-year undercover operation by federal officials who say that in the last three years 200–300 bald and golden eagles were illegally shot for commercial gain, mostly in South Dakota and Nebraska. Although the main cause of eagle deaths is illegal shooting, lead shot could be posing another hazard. Analysis of 650 dead bald eagles between 1967 and 1982 revealed that seven per cent had lead poisoning. The cause is probably pellets carried by dead and crippled waterfowl on which the eagles feed.

National Wildlife, 21, 3

Peregrines back in New York City

Two pairs of peregrine falcons *Falco peregrinus* nested on bridges in New York City this year, the first of the species to do so for 20 years. Three of the four birds are ringed, having been reared in captivity and released into the wild by the Peregrine Fund Inc. Previous nesting successes from such releases have occurred in New Jersey, Virginia and New Hampshire.

Outdoor News Bulletin, 37, 11

No signs may not mean no ferrets

Regulations that protect the black-footed ferret *Mustela nigripes* under the US Endangered Species Act stipulate

that anyone who wishes to poison prairie dogs, which are the ferret's main prey, on their property must first search for black-footed ferrets and only use poison if none are found. The search must be conducted in the summer or autumn and guidelines show a 'classic' ferret digging or trench, made by the ferrets in search of their prey, as an example of what to look for. But recent research has shown that 'classic' diggings occur only seven per cent of the time and that summer and autumn are the times of least digging activity; this may account for the few reports of black-footed ferrets so far received.

On the Edge, 22

Oil company protects black-footed ferrets

Protection for black-footed ferrets *Mustela nigripes*, whose habitat includes the Rose Creek Oil Field near Meeteetse in Wyoming, USA, is to be incorporated in a long-term development plan being worked out by four oil companies. One of the companies, Husky Oil Company, has voluntarily closed wells for one year in areas occupied by the ferrets.

Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, VIII, 5

Unexpected rise in caribou numbers

In 1980 Canadian Wildlife biologists were sufficiently concerned about the apparently diminishing Kaminuriak caribou *Rangifer tarandus* herd of 40,000, that they proposed limits to native hunting. But in spring 1982 130,000 animals were counted—the herd ranges over the central Northwest Territories, northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The apparent increase has both pleased and puzzled biologists; there had been a consistent seven per cent annual decline since 1968 when 63,000 animals were counted. Although part of this enormous increase might be attributed to better calf survival and fewer animals hunted, it is believed that the numbers were augmented by migratory animals, perhaps from a little-known herd in the Chesterfield Inlet, NWT, area called the Wager Bay complex. Other caribou herds reportedly increased in 1982; the Beverly caribou in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were up from 105,000 to 125,000.

Nature Canada, 12, 2

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International commission to protect caribou

The 12,000-strong Porcupine caribou herd *Rangifer tarandus* which moves annually between Alaska and Canada may be threatened by industrial developments. An international commission of four US and four Canadian members is developing a management plan and will seek ratification from villages in the region, for a formal agreement on use and protection of the herd.

Polar Record, **21**, 134

Games threaten bighorn sheep

Canadian wildlife biologists are protesting over the proposed site for the 1988 Winter Olympic Games which they say will devastate a 250-strong herd of bighorn sheep *Ovis canadensis*. They are asking the Olympic Games Organising Committee to move the proposed site for the skiing competition from Mt Allan near Calgary, Alberta to a site 20 miles west.

International Wildlife, **13**, 3

Transplanting nuisance bears a failure

Transplanting brown bears *Ursus arctos* that have become a nuisance to humans does not appear to be a reliable management procedure according to research in Alaska. Of 20 adult brown bears transplanted distances up to 286 km and tracked after release, at least 12 (60 per cent) successfully returned to their home range.

Journal of Wildlife Management, **46**(4), 869–876

Northern elephant-seals recovering

Northern elephant-seals *Mirounga angustirostris*, once so heavily exploited for oil that they were down to only 100 individuals in the late 1800s, are now reproducing well. Charles F. Cooper and Brent S. Stewart of San Diego State University and Hubbs/Sea World Research Institute, report that the animals have doubled in number every five years for the last 20 on islands on the west coast of North America. They are currently increasing by 14 per cent a year and numbers were estimated at 90,000–125,000 throughout their range in Mexico and the US last year.

International Wildlife, **13**, 3

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Central America

Convention to protect Caribbean

Seventeen countries and the European Economic Community have signed The Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and a Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills. It provides legal backing for the 1981 UNEP-initiated Caribbean Action Plan. The signatories at the Cartagena, Colombia meeting in March 1983 were: Colombia, France Grenada, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Lucia, UK, USA and Venezuela. The treaty and protocol must be ratified by nine states before it comes into force, a process that is expected to take two to three years.

International Report, *Sierra Club*, **12**, 7

Toad re-introduction into Puerto Rico

Puerto Rican crested toads *Bufo lemur*, believed extinct in the wild since 1980, were to be re-introduced this year from captive-bred toads bred in Buffalo, USA from first-generation captive stock at the Jardín Zoológico de Puerto Rico.

AAZPA Newsletter, **XXIV**, 6

South America

Acid rain falls on Venezuela

The acidity of rain samples from 90 to 100 rain storms falling in one year on forests in southern Venezuela has been discovered to be ten times greater than 'normal' and equivalent to that of rain in industrial countries. The researcher, Bruce Haines of the University of Georgia, has not identified the source of the acidity—it may be from long-distance transport of industrial pollutants from North America and Europe or from the natural release of sulphur compounds from rain forest plants, litter and soil—but he is returning to Venezuela to try to do so.

National Wildlife, **21**, 3

Argentine court ruling sets precedent

Argentine conservationists challenged a permit given to a Japanese company to capture and export 14 Commerson's

dolphins *Cephalorhynchus commersoni* and won a court case that could set a precedent for wildlife conservation in the country. The court ruled that since 'human life is associated with all other forms of life... the public has the right to sue in defense of species and ecosystems'. The permit was blocked because the Government could not demonstrate that the dolphin population would be unharmed by the take.

Monitor, 31 May 1983

First marine park for Brazil

The Abrolhos Marine National Park, in a coral reef region near the Bahia State coast of Brazil and covering 266 square nautical miles, is the country's first marine park.

IUCN Bulletin, **14**, 4/5/6

National parks for Chile

Chile has established two new national parks: Alerce Andino in the Province of Llanquihue is 39,255 ha; Chiloé in Chiloé Island in the Province of Chiloé is 43,157 ha.

IUCN Bulletin, **14**, 4/5/6

Oceania

Effects of El Niño

The El Niño intrusion of warmer waters, which displace the cooler Humboldt current on the Pacific coast of America, markedly affected marine life in 1983. It dramatically shortened the mating season of hundreds of thousands of seabirds which nest on the Farallon Islands, 30 miles west of San Francisco, by disrupting the food chain and throwing the biological clock that triggers the mating season into disarray. It was also expected to destroy kelp beds off California on which sea urchins depend. Other effects in the affected area were heavy rainfall in the usually dry Galapagos Islands, and an expected mass mortality of various marine organisms which cannot tolerate the rise in temperature of more than 3°C above the mean. The last El Niño was in 1972–73.

Fishing News International, **22**, 6

New species of warbler from the Solomons

The description of a new species of thicket warbler *Cichlomis laneae* Hadden 1983 from Bougainville Island

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has just been published. The thicket warblers were discovered as recently as 1926 when the first species in the genera, *C. whitneyi*, was recorded on Vanuatu. In 1958 a second species, *C. grosvenori*, was discovered in New Britain. The Bougainville thicket warbler is known only from the locality where it was discovered, 1500 m up in the Crown Prince Range of Bougainville Island, North Solomons, Papua New Guinea. Its *Red Data Book* status is not yet known but it is certainly likely to be rare, if not vulnerable or endangered.

Introduced predatory snail could cause problem in Vanuatu

The same predatory snail *Euglandina rosea*, which was introduced into the Polynesian island of Moorea to control the giant African snail *Achatina fulica* and instead preyed on the native species, causing some to become extinct, was also introduced to Vanuatu in the South Pacific. The effect on the native species has not yet been investigated however.
Naika, March 1983

Australia/Antarctica

Wilson Island deserves protection

The Australian Conservation Foundation is urging people to boycott P&O Australia Ltd operations because of their proposals to develop Wilson Island for tourism. The island, in the Capricorn Group of the Great Barrier Reef, is a small vegetated sand and shingle cay less than 5 ha in area. Twenty-three species of flowering plants grow there and its *Pandanus* palms, which are the largest stand in the Capricorn-Bunker group, support the largest reef heron *Egretta sacra* rookery in the islands. It is a nesting ground for loggerhead and green turtles and at least 11 bird species, including the threatened roseate tern *Sterna dougallii*—a bird that is very sensitive to human presence and which disappeared from Heron Island when it became inhabited. Professor Kikkawa of the University of Queensland has reported to P&O that Wilson Island deserves total protection, as one of the few unspoiled coral cays that remain, uninvaded as yet by introduced plants and animals.

Briefly

New reserve for Australia

A new Flora Reserve has been set aside by Victoria's Minister for Forests on the Errinundra Plateau in East Gippsland, Australia. Its 1600 ha include the largest area of cool temperate rain forest dominated by sassafras in Victoria. There are also centuries-old stands of plum pine. However, conservationists are concerned that unless the entire plateau is given protection the new reserve could be just an island refuge surrounded by even-age forests of eucalyptus which would follow the clear-felling currently being practised.

Australian Conservation Foundation Newsletter, 15, 4

Last-ditch attempt to save parrot

One of Australia's rarest parrots, the orange-bellied parrot *Neophema chrysogaster* is believed to have declined to about 60 pairs due to destruction of its saltmarsh habitat. A new group, the Survival Network for Orange-Bellied Parrots, has proposed that The Spit at Point Wilson, which is the most important winter feeding ground, be declared a wildlife reserve and that feeding grounds near Swan Island, Queenscliff and on Mud Island in Port Phillip Bay, Victoria, be replanted. The Queensland Government has declared a 161-ha reserve at Point Wilson.

Trees and Victoria's Resources, 25, 1
Threatened Species—Conservation Alert, 3

Mining threatens Australian bats

Mining for limestone at Mt Etna bat caves near Rockhampton in Queensland, Australia, threatens the ghost bat *Macrodermia gigas* (listed as vulnerable in the IUCN *Mammal Red Data Book*) and the little bent-winged bat *Miniopterus australis*. Mt Etna is the major ancestral maternity site for 80 per cent of the Australian population of the little bent-winged bat. Central Queensland Cement, which is responsible for the mining, is unwilling to move elsewhere and, despite listing the area on the Register of the National Estate, the Australian Heritage Commission seems to be doing nothing about it.

Threatened Species—Conservation Alert, 3

South Georgian pintails: first captive-breeding

A pair of South Georgian pintails *Anas georgica georgica*, which were airlifted off South Georgia during the Falklands conflict to ensure that the species was not wiped out, have produced three young at Sir Peter Scott's Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire, UK. They are the only South Georgian pintails in captivity.

Antarctic mineral regime opposed

In July 1983 the Antarctic Treaty Powers met in Bonn, West Germany to continue negotiating a minerals regime for Antarctica. Environmental groups opposed to mineral development in Antarctica, particularly the search for oil in the Southern Ocean, say the draft regime does not take the protection of this fragile environment sufficiently into account and they are urging that Antarctica be given World Park status.

Threatened Species—Conservation Alert, 3

People

Dr Norman Myers, ecologist and writer and regular contributor to *Oryx*, has been awarded WWF's highest honour, the Gold Medal, in recognition of his significant research on threatened species, genetic resources and tropical moist forests, and his outstanding achievements in developing conservation thinking. Léopold Senghor, first President of Senegal; Lyn de Alwis, Sri Lanka's Director of Nature Conservation; and Dr Hédia Baccar, Tunisia's Deputy Director of the Environment, have been elected WWF Members of Honour.

Obituary

Mr Anthony Hamilton Beamish OBE died on 2 May 1983. A nature conservationist with a particular interest in the Seychelles and the Far East, he played a key role in the establishment of the reserves on the islands of Cousin, Aride and La Digue. His book *Aldabra Alone* (1970) played a great part in saving that island from the proposal for an Indian Ocean air base.