

INTERNATIONAL

New Parties to CITES

The total number of Parties to CITES has risen to 130 with the accession of Dominica on 4 August, effective 2 November 1995 and Belarus on 10 August, effective 8 November 1995. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 101.

Sturgeon action

The Sturgeon Specialist Group of the IUCN/SSC has reported on international conservation activities to help threatened sturgeons and paddlefish that are being undertaken by its group members. They include: a status survey of *Pseudoscaphirhynchus kaufmanni* in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and an international breeding programme for the species; a US–Chinese breeding programme for the Chinese paddlefish *Psephurus gladius*; and efforts to create a collection of broodstocks of Russian sturgeon species in captivity and a bank of cryopreserved sturgeon sperm. Source: *Species*, No. 24, June 1994, 63.

EUROPE

Forest damage increases in Europe

Forest damage continues to be a serious problem in Europe, with over one-quarter of trees sampled showing signs of damage and most tree species showing a continuing decline in health since surveys started in 1988. Several factors have been identified as being important probable causes of damage, including weather

conditions, insects, fungi, game, human actions, air pollution and forest fires. Source: *arborvitæ*, No. 1, 4

Puffin hunt

Residents of the island of Trenyken in the Røst archipelago, west of the north Norwegian mainland, are continuing to hunt puffins *Fratercula arctica* despite a law introduced in 1989 banning the activity. The Norwegian ornithological society, Norsk Ornitologisk Forening, says that 3000–5000 puffins have been caught in Røst every year. A police raid in April 1995 found 15 dead puffins on Trenyken and nets slung between the three steep peaks that dominate the island. Five people were fined for puffin hunting but the residents are protesting, saying that bureaucrats and politicians are trampling on their cultural traditions. The puffin colony in the archipelago is suffering a decline – decades of breeding failure since the early 1970s were triggered by overfishing of herring, which led to a chronic shortage of food for chicks. There are only 600,000 pairs today compared with 1.3 million in 1980. In 1995 Røst puffins suffered their worst breeding season for many years, with no chicks surviving and most adults abandoning their nests to avoid starvation. Source: *BBC Wildlife*, November 1995, 59.

Road threat to Spitsbergen

The future of Spitsbergen, the largest island in Svalbard, which in turn is the largest area of unspoiled Arctic wilderness in western Europe, is threatened by plans for a road to service a proposed new coal mine. Svalbard is important for its

huge breeding colonies of seabirds, including Brunnich's guillemot *Uria lomvia* and little auk *Alle alle*. There are currently no permanent connecting roads or railways on the islands and a Norwegian coal-mining company has proposed a 64-km road and power-line from Longyearbyen, the main settlement on the west coast, to a new mine at Svea to the south-east. The road would pass through Reindalen, the largest ice-free valley on Spitsbergen, with some of the most important wetland and tundra vegetation on the islands. Source: *World Birdwatch*, 17 (3), 2.

New park for Sweden

Sweden established its 24th national park in 1995. The 6000-ha Haparanda Skärgöden National Park includes two main islands, Sandskär and Seskar Furö, and some islets and skerries in the northern part of the Gulf of Bothnia near the Finnish border. The two larger islands are covered with pine, aspen and birch forest, and heather; the skerries are important resting places for migratory birds. Source: *Nature and National Parks*, 1995, 33 (126), 34.

Reserve for warbler

Conservation efforts for one of Europe's most threatened birds, the aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* received a major boost in September 1995 with the opening of Karsiborska Kepa Nature Reserve in Poland. The new reserve covers 180 ha of a 300-ha island in the Swina estuary in north-west Poland. The 43 breeding bird species of the island include 120 pairs of aquatic warblers. The reserve's purchase was funded by

donations from individuals, business and environmental organizations.

Source: BirdLife International, 6 September 1995.

Birds of prey still persecuted in the UK

The illegal persecution of birds of prey is still rife in the UK according to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In 1994 some of the UK's rarest birds of prey, including the red kite *Milvus milvus*, northern goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* and peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus* suffered from nest robbing, nest destruction, shooting and poisoning. There is little sign of improvement in the situation over previous years.

Source: *Habitat*, 31 (8), August/September 1995, 3.

Results for Italy

Investigations over the past 3 years by the Italian Forest Corps have resulted in the seizure of some 2000 endangered parrots and other CITES-listed animals. A total of 19 people were investigated of which seven were tried and imprisoned.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 116.

Wild goat on the brink

A recent study has found that the Pyrenean wild goat *Capra pyrenaica pyrenaica* is on the brink of extinction, with a population of fewer than 15 animals restricted to 650 ha in the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park and its buffer zone in the central Spanish Pyrenees. Past conservation measures – habitat protection and improvement, winter supplementary feeding and reduction of sympatric

populations of chamois *Rupicapra pyrenaica pyrenaica* to prevent disease transmission – have failed to halt the decline. Now the Pyrenean Wild Goat Recovery Plan is trying to improve habitat further to increase its carrying capacity, breeding the animals in captivity and planning releases into similar habitat.

Source: *Caprinae News* (IUCN/SSC Caprinae Specialist Group), No. 8/9, September 1995, 9–13 and 18–20.

Crane wintering site ploughed up

Grassland in one of the world's most important wintering sites for common crane *Grus grus*, Gallocanta in Spain, has been ploughed up by farmers trying to receive payments fraudulently under the EU's set-aside scheme. Gallocanta, host to over 50,000 common cranes in winter, is designated a Special Protection Area, making destruction of its habitat illegal. Conservationists in Spain have started legal proceedings against the farmers.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 17 (3), 3.

New colonies of rare gull

Recent surveys by the Hellenic Ornithological Society in the south-east Aegean Sea have revealed seven new colonies of the globally threatened Audouin's gull *Larus audouinii*, doubling population estimates for Greece to 210 pairs.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 17 (3), 3.

NORTH EURASIA

Belarus survey finds rare bird stronghold

Surveys in Belarus have revealed a previously unknown

stronghold for the globally threatened aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. The most important site, 8000-ha Dikoe Bog in the north-east Brest area, is estimated to hold 1500–3000 males. Other sites are also believed to have important populations. Current world population estimates are 5740–18,110 pairs and Belarus was believed to hold a maximum of 50 individuals. Sources: *IBA News* (BirdLife International), September 1995, 6 (13), 2; *World Birdwatch*, 17 (3), 4.

NORTH AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

Rescued bears freed

On 19 August 1995 the first six bears *Ursus arctos* rescued from being forced to 'dance' and pose with tourists on the streets of Istanbul, Turkey, were released into a forest sanctuary at Karacebey near Bursa. The release is part of a long-term project by the World Society for the Protection of Animals and the Turkish Government to end the spectacle of captive bears on the streets and beaches of Turkey. Since 1993 c. 20 bears have been confiscated and taken to the Wildlife Rescue Centre at Uludag University in Bursa for rehabilitation. Only 2000–3000 bears are left in the wild in Turkey.

Source: WSPA, 21 August 1995.

Libya's large turtle population

Libya has the largest concentration of loggerhead turtles *Caretta caretta* in the Mediterranean. A survey (see *Oryx*, 29 [4], 231) along 1250 km of its eastern coast recorded over 12,000 loggerhead nests. Unlike most other loggerhead

sites in the region, Libya's coast has not been developed for tourism. Beaches are off-limits even to local people and patrols of soldiers enforce the rules.

Source: MEDASSET, 29 September 1995.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Problems for forest primates in Ghana

Wildlife surveys in the three forest national parks (Bia, Ankasa and Kakum) of south-western Ghana indicate that these forests have become increasingly isolated by expanding agriculture and degraded by excessive logging and hunting. Primate species that are dependent on tall, mature forest are particularly susceptible to hunting, and some of these are nearing extinction if not already extinct. Miss Waldron's red colobus *Procolobus badius waldroni*, Roloway monkey *Cercopithecus diana roloway* and white-naped mangabey *Cercocebus atys lunulatus* are particularly in crisis, being historically known from only a very restricted area in western Ghana and eastern Côte d'Ivoire.

Source: *African Primates*, July 1995, 1 (1), 5–6.

Logging boom in Cameroon

High demand for tropical hardwoods in Asia, linked with devaluation of the CFA franc, has created a surge in timber exports from Cameroon. Logging, primarily carried out by European companies, increased by 400 per cent between 1993 and 1994, threatening some of West Africa's richest rain-forest areas. A UK-based consultancy has a project to monitor and

suggest improvements to export controls, to reduce the quantities of illegally exported timber and pave the way for proper controls on trade.

Source: *arborvitæ*, No. 1, 3

Sun-tailed guenon range extended

The sun-tailed guenon *Cercopithecus solatus*, a monkey endemic to Gabon, was discovered only in 1984, when it was known to occur only in an area of about 5000 sq km in the Forêt des Abeilles. Since then the forest has been opened up to exploitation and the guenon is now threatened by hunting associated with logging. In response to this threat Gabon declared *C. solatus* a totally protected species (Decree No. 678, 28 July 1994). Since then *C. solatus* has been observed on four occasions in the Lopé Reserve, extending the known range of the species at least 30 km to the west. These were the first individuals known to occur in any protected area. Survey work is being carried out to estimate population numbers in Lopé Reserve and to discover whether the new sightings are part of a continuous population extending to the Forêt des Abeilles.

Source: *African Primates*, July 1995, 1 (1), 6–8.

Habitat restoration in Kenya

A scheme to plant over one million trees in Kenya's Amboseli National Park has been launched to restore habitat degraded by elephants. The scheme has been approved by the Kenya Wildlife Service and is a long-term commitment spear-headed by Wildlife Safaris and Serena Lodges and Hotels. Wildlife Safaris provides a per-passenger contribution towards the

purchase of the trees and payment of labour while Serena Lodges and Hotels provides the infrastructure and labour supervision. Every Wildlife Safari passenger visiting Amboseli is invited to plant an acacia tree in an area protected by an elephant-proof fence.

Source: *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, July–September 1995, 9.

Worse news of Hunter's hartebeest

Hunter's hartebeest or hirola *Damaliscus hunteri* was believed to have a total world population of 2000 (see *Oryx*, 29 [3], 160) but a survey in 1995 revealed a far worse situation. Only 301 animals remain. The main cause of the decline appears to be shrinking habitat and increased competition with domestic livestock.

Source: *Daily Nation* (Kenya), 28 September 1995.

Lake Naivasha a Ramsar site

On 10 April 1995 Kenya designated Lake Naivasha and the surrounding riparian land (in total 300 sq km) as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. This permanent freshwater lake in Kenya's Rift Valley is known for its diversity of wetland plants and animals, including the largest number of waterbird species of any wetland in the country and one of the world's tallest stands of papyrus. Lake Naivasha has no protected status and is surrounded by private farmland. Members of the Lake Naivasha Riparian Owners Association, which supported the Ramsar designation, have drawn up a proposed management plan to govern activities at the site.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, September–October 1995, 3.

New elephant sanctuary

The Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary, at the foot of Kenya's Shimba hills, is now open to visitors. Local residents are involved in management and maintenance of the sanctuary and in providing educational activities for the area's children. The conservation area encompasses 240 sq km of indigenous forest, valleys and a river that attracts a rich array of birds.

Source: *African Wildlife News*, 30 (5), 1.

Longhorn cattle removed from Ugandan park

The last of the long-horned cattle in Uganda's Lake Mburo National Park have left. Most cattle belonged to Tutsi refugees who fled Rwanda years ago and settled on the edge of the park but who have now returned to Rwanda.

Negotiations with local landowners led them to remove their animals, while Ugandan Bahimia pastoralists were resettled amicably on land outside the park.

Source: *African Wildlife News*, 30 (5), 7.

Elephants up in the Selous

For the first time since aerial surveying started in the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania in 1976, the elephant population is no longer declining. More than 52,000 elephants are now estimated to live in the reserve and surrounding areas, up from 31,000 in 1989 but still far below the 112,000 estimated in 1976. The upward trend appears to be increased anti-poaching efforts combined with increased donor assistance and the ivory trade ban.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, September/October 1995, 8.

Motor traffic restricted in Serengeti

Tanzanian park officials have taken steps to reduce non-tourist motor traffic in the Serengeti National Park as part of a major new management plan to enhance conservation of natural resources. Air, car and motor bike rallies, hang gliding, parachuting, and horse and camel riding will be banned. Limited ballooning will be allowed and walking safaris will be offered for the first time in designated wilderness zones. Non-essential personnel living in the park will be relocated.

Source: *African Wildlife News*, 30 (5), 7.

Elephant deterrent tested

Between July 1993 and May 1994 tests were conducted on free-ranging elephants in Zimbabwe to evaluate the effectiveness of a capsaicin-based aerosol as an elephant-repellent. Elephants inhaling the spray retreated and ceased their current activity. The results suggest that the chemical may act as a practical elephant deterrent when combined with aversive conditioning of problem elephants and a capsaicin-based technique could be a cost-effective supplement, or even an alternative, to electric fencing and the shooting of problem elephants.

Source: *Pachyderm*, No. 20, 1995, 55-64.

Disastrous decline in Botswana's wildlife

In the Kalahari region of Botswana buffaloes are in serious decline, predator numbers have dropped and wildebeest and hartebeest have experienced an 80-90 per cent die-off. A combination of fac-

tors is believed to be responsible for a reduction in animal numbers: drought; veterinary-cordon fences for foot-and-mouth disease control interrupting migratory routes; and the loss of key resource areas to livestock. Livestock expansion has penetrated deep into areas that were formerly occupied only by wildlife and hunter-gatherers. Increased access into remote areas has facilitated poaching and the abuse of the citizen hunting system. Livestock and illegal boreholes can now be found in almost every game reserve and national park in the country. While viable management plans exist and Botswana has the personnel and resources to carry them through, the political will to do so appears to be lacking.

Source: *Zimbabwe Wildlife*, October-December 1995, 8.

Rhino gift to Swaziland

Six black rhinoceroses *Diceros bicornis*, two males and four females, have been given to King Mswati III of Swaziland by the President of Taiwan, Lee Teng-hui. The Kingdom of Swaziland has had considerable success in re-establishing rhinos after more than 70 per cent of the country's stocks were wiped out by poachers between 1988 and 1992. The rhinos were purchased from South Africa by Taiwan and released in the well-protected Mkhaya Game Reserve. The European Union provided funds for fencing the reserve while the UK Government, Engen Swaziland, the Prettejohn family of Ngwenya Glass and Steel, and Wire International also contributed generously to infrastructure and establishment costs. Since 1992 Swaziland has reported a marked decrease in the

poaching of endangered species through enforcement of new tough legislation – no rhinos have been lost to poachers since 1992.

Source: The Kingdom of Swaziland's Big Game Parks, 23 November 1995.

Namibia's seal hunt

In 1995 the Government of Namibia authorized the killing of 17,450 Cape fur seals *Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus*, again causing an outcry from conservationists and the scientific community. Despite a decrease in numbers by up to half-a-million seals in 1994, which was due to fish stocks moving beyond the range of the seals, a cull took place in 1994 (see *Oryx*, 29 [1], 10), killing 55,000 seals, including 12,000 bulls. Scientists warn that it will be another year at least until it is possible to start measuring the long-term damage to the seal population from the 1994 die-off. Only after the next pupping season will accurate estimates of seal numbers and population trends be obtainable.

Source: *The Pilot*, 12, 1.

Rhino conservation pays

Namibia's black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis bicornis* population, which inhabits communal land in Kunene Province (formerly Kaokoland and Damaraland), was heavily poached in the 1970s and early 1980s until locally based conservationists intervened and gained support from local people. Since then patrols and monitoring of the rhino population have been part of a joint venture between non-governmental organizations, Namibia's wildlife authorities and local community game guards. Specialist safari tours

include an outing with trackers for tourists to photograph a rhino. The fees charged go directly to the trackers, their families and the rhino protection programme. Rhino monitoring staff are paid a bonus for every rhino photographed and identified, which ensures that they take a personal interest in their work, and a reward is paid for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone who poaches a rhino or deals in rhino horn.

Source: *Pachyderm*, No. 20, 1995, 31–32.

White rhinos free in Namibia

Ten white rhinoceroses *Ceratotherium simum* have been released in Namibia's Etosha National Park, the first free-ranging white rhinos in the park this century. They were part of an exchange of wildlife between Etosha and Kruger National Park in South Africa, which received 30 giraffes *Giraffa camelopardalis* from Etosha. Prior to the Etosha release on 21 July, white rhinos had been re-established in Waterberg Plateau Park and in several Namibian game farms. Source: *African Wildlife Update*, September–October 1995, 3.

Namibians and cheetahs learn to live together

There is an intensive effort in the Okaputa district of northern Namibia to conserve the country's cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* population. Only 12,000 cheetahs remain in Africa, with 2500–3000, the largest single population, occurring in Namibia. The Cheetah Conservation Fund (see *Oryx*, 29 [2], 81) finds ways of managing livestock that reduce or prevent human–predator

conflicts. Landowners are encouraged not to kill cheetahs but to trap and turn them over to the Cheetah Conservation Fund where they are tagged and have radio-collars fitted before they are returned to the wild. It is then possible to identify which cheetahs are preying on livestock. The Fund is also encouraging the use of baboons, donkeys and dogs to scare away the cheetahs, which are easily intimidated. The Livestock Guarding Dog Programme that breeds and donates Anatolian shepherd pups to landowners now has a waiting list of interested ranchers.

Source: *African Wildlife News*, 30 (5), 5–6.

Large kill of African wild dogs in Namibia

Farmers in Namibia killed 32 endangered African wild dogs *Lycaon pictus*, one-tenth of the country's remaining population, after a pack killed a domestic calf. Conservationists have been given the chance to round up the pack's remaining 14 animals and transfer them to a safe reserve.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, October 1995, 61.

Vultures died at hands of farmer

In Namibia in May 1995 86 lappet-faced vultures *Torgos tracheliotus* and eight white-backed vultures *Gyps africanus* died after consuming two poisoned sheep carcasses left out by a farmer who claimed that vultures had killed scores of his newborn sheep. Wildlife officials had investigated the farmer's claims prior to the poisonings but found no direct evidence to support them. Since May at least 11 other lappet-faced vultures have

been poisoned and others shot. According to an ornithologist with Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism, it is probable that over 100 lappet-faced vultures were killed by farmers in 1995 – 10 per cent of the country's population. The Ministry plans to expand the use of 'vulture restaurants' where carcasses are provided by wildlife officials in certain areas.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, September/October 1995, 4.

Largest ever haul of cycads

The Endangered Species Protection Unit of the South African Police seized 153 cycads *Encephalartos altensteinii*, some more than 500 years old, the largest haul ever of cycads in South Africa. All were replanted in a protected area but only 20 per cent are expected to survive. The specimens had been taken illegally by a syndicate operating in the Eastern Cape. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 117.

Transferred magpie-robin breeds

The programme to save the Seychelles magpie-robin *Copsychus sechellarum* achieved an important milestone in June 1995 when one of two pairs transferred from Fregate Island to Cousin Island in November 1992 bred successfully. Reduced to fewer than 20 birds in the 1980s, all on Fregate Island, a recovery programme has resulted in numbers increasing to more than 50 individuals. Source: *World Birdwatch*, 17 (3), 3.

Tortoise poachers go free

The Seychelles police and the Attorney-General's office have decided not to prosecute three

workers of the Seychelle Islands Foundation who were caught smuggling 10 baby tortoises from Aldabra, which is a World Heritage Site. Eight of the tortoises were subsequently returned to the Foundation, which manages Aldabra.

Source: Ron Gerlach and Regar (Seychelles), 1 September 1995.

New centipede from Round Island and Serpent Island

A new species of large scolopendrid centipede discovered on 151-ha Round Island, Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean, has been named *Scolopendra abnormis* Lewis & Daszak 1995. The species occurs on bare rock faces where it hides in cracks in the volcanic tuff. It coexists with the endemic night gecko *Nactus serpensinsula* and other endemic lizards, which prey on it. The centipede also occurs on nearby Serpent Island where it displays behaviour unique among the large scolopendromorphs in that it feeds on carrion from the 1-million-strong seabird colony there. A new large theraphosid tarantula spider has also been collected from Serpent Island, which appears to belong to a new species, genus and possibly subfamily and may be confined to this 20-ha island. An expedition funded by Fauna & Flora International has collected specimens of *S. abnormis* for a captive-breeding programme at London Zoo. Source: Dr Peter Daszak, Kingston University, Surrey, UK and Carl Jones, Mauritius Wildlife Fund and Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust.

New shearwater

A new species of shearwater has been described from the

western Indian Ocean. The Mascarene shearwater *Puffinus atrodorsalis* has been recorded at several locations, from Madagascar and the east coast of Africa as far north as Israel, and the bird is believed to be locally common.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 17 (3), 5.

SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

India's failure to convict key wildlife smuggler

Sanar Chand is alleged to be the linchpin in the largest-known smuggling network in north-east India. He has at least 14 major wildlife cases filed against him although he was sent to jail for only a brief period in 1994. Chand is being held in Delhi while the Uttar Pradesh Forest authorities try to take him to Uttar Pradesh to face charges. However, the Uttar Pradesh Government has transferred all key officers who had been handling the Chand investigation other positions, giving no reason for this action. This has sent a clear signal to wildlife enforcement authorities throughout the country that pursuing wildlife criminals is not advisable and gives wildlife criminals the message that they can operate with impunity. The case has prompted calls for an urgent review of India's judicial system regarding wildlife crimes. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 102.

Illegal turtle trade in Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Despite tough legislation, there is a thriving and open market for tortoiseshell (from *Eretmochelys imbricata*) products in Sri Lanka. The illegal

collection of turtle eggs has also been taking place on the beaches of Sri Lanka's west coast. The law is virtually never enforced and tortoiseshell is on sale even in the government-ran tourist shop in the capital Colombo, according to a report by the Environmental Investigation Agency. Turtles have been virtually wiped out in Sri Lanka and most shell is being smuggled out of the Maldives – one dealer there said he could immediately supply 500 kg of shell, equivalent to c. 657 turtles. Because the majority of the demand for tortoiseshell comes from tourists, it is essential to educate tourists about the implications of buying tortoiseshell products.
 Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, 1995, No. 71, 10–11

Dam in Thailand would harm sanctuary

A proposal to build a dam in Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, part of Thailand's only natural World Heritage Site, has alarmed conservationists. The Kha Khaeng River runs through the core of the sanctuary, off-limits to all but educational and research activities. The area contains species that exist in viable populations in Thailand only in the sanctuary – wild buffalo, green peafowl, banteng, tiger, rufous-necked hornbill and Malayan tapir.
 Source: *BBC Wildlife*, November 1995, 64.

Gecko-farming

A project to farm tokay geckos *Gecko gecko* in Vietnam has been proposed to prevent further depletion of wild stocks and to benefit local people. The market for tokay geckos is enormous – they are used

extensively in traditional medicine throughout Asia and Vietnamese villagers collect and sell them as a significant source of income – 10 geckos can fetch a Vietnamese worker the equivalent of a month's wages.

Source: *New Scientist*, 9 September 1995, 8.

Does the Vietnamese warty pig live?

In January 1995, George Schaller and Kham Khoun, on a wildlife survey in eastern Laos, obtained from hunters the skull and meat of a pig that appears to differ from the Eurasian pig *Sus scrofa* and the local domestic pig *S. domesticus* – the only two pigs known from the area. Subsequent examination has determined that the skull is not that of a Javan warty pig and it is speculated that it may be that of a Vietnamese warty pig *Sus bucculentus*, which first came to the attention of western researchers in 1892 when a drawing was published of its skull. No live specimens have ever been found.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, September/October 1995, 18.

Rail refound

The invisible rail *Habroptila wallacii*, which is endemic to the island of Halmahera in Indonesia and had not been seen by ornithologists for over 40 years, has been observed by staff on a joint project by BirdLife International and the Indonesian PHPA.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 17 (3), 3.

EAST ASIA

Domestic ivory sale control in Japan

On 28 June 1995, Japan amended its legislation in an attempt to control the domestic trade in ivory and other products of CITES Appendix I listed species that are clearly recognizable as such. Whole tusks of raw or carved elephant ivory must be registered with the Environment Agency (EA) and cut ivory over 1 kg must be registered with the EA and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (this only applies to the dealer and not the wholesaler or retailer). Cut ivory under 1 kg is not subject to controls.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 104.

Strict fines for Hong Kong wildlife traders

A Hong Kong shop selling two bottles of medicines claiming to contain tiger and rhino ingredients has been fined \$HK40,000 (\$US5000) the highest fine handed down since wildlife penalties under the Animals and Plants Ordinance were increased in January 1995 to a maximum of \$HK5 million and 2 years' imprisonment. In a separate case a shop owner was fined \$HK20,000 for offering to sell three bottles of medicines claiming to contain tiger bone.
 Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 101.

Mongolian legislation

On 5 June 1995 Mongolia enacted legislation to prohibit the hunting, trapping and/or sale of skins, fur and by-products of endangered species. The legislation covers snow leopard *Uncia uncia*, saiga

antelope *Saiga tatarica*, musk deer *Moschus moschiferus*, red deer *Cervus elaphus*, reindeer *Rangifer tarandus*, Przewalski's horse *Equus przewalskii*, Asiatic wild dog *Cuon alpinus*, Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra*, beaver *Castor fiber*, houbara bustard *Chlamydotis undulata*, Siberian crane *Grus leucogeranus*, hooded crane *G. monacha*, white-naped crane *G. vipio*, and sturgeon *Acipenser* spp.
 Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 104

NORTH AMERICA

Spectacled eider's unlikely winter home

The spectacled eider *Somateria fischeri* was listed as threatened in 1993 after populations in western Alaska declined more than 90 per cent in 30 years through unknown causes. In Alaska the species spends the summer and breeds in the coastal tundra but its wintering sites were unknown. In spring 1994, in an attempt to discover where the eiders went in winter, 22 individuals were fitted with radio-transmitters and tracked until December, when the batteries became too weak to send strong signals. At that time the eiders were dispersed in the Bering Sea south of St Lawrence Island, where the ocean had not yet frozen solid. Unexpectedly, in February 1995 a signal was received from a transmitter that had been inactive since August 1994. US Fish and Wildlife biologists chartered a plane and flew in search of the source – 300 km within the Arctic icepack. They discovered tens of thousands of ducks jammed into tiny holes in the Bering Sea pack-ice, which the birds kept unfrozen by their own body

warmth and movements. It is estimated that there were 14,000 spectacled eiders – at least half the world population.
 Source: *Endangered Species Bulletin*, XX (5), 18.

Endangered Species Act, Canada

A proposal for an endangered species protection act in Canada was released on 17 August 1995 but it applies only to species that occur in national parks and on specified 'federal' lands, which cover about 4 per cent of the total land in Canada. There is no mandatory habitat protection in the proposal, although habitat loss is 80 per cent responsible for the loss of species in Canada. There is also no provision for advance review of projects that might affect an endangered species or its habitat.

Source: *Nature alert*, 5 (4), 1.

Protection for Gulf Islands

The creation of a new national park in the Gulf Islands of British Columbia, Canada came closer when the federal and BC governments unveiled the Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy Programme, which is designed to expand a network of coastal and marine parks on Canada's Pacific coast. As a first step the governments announced that the 150-ha Bodega Ridge on Galiano Island had been purchased at \$1.3 million. Both governments will spend \$6 million over the next 5 years acquiring land in the Gulf Islands of the Strait of Georgia for the new national park and other protected areas.

Source: *Nature Alert*, 5 (4), 7.

Mineral development threat to proposed park

Since 1975 there have been proposals for the creation of the Torngat Mountains National Park in northern Labrador. This area includes the highest and most rugged mountains in eastern North America, as well as the small Torngat Mountains caribou *Rangifer tarandus* herd and the George River herd (the world's largest), along with polar bears *Thalarctos maritimus* and the tundra-dwelling black bear *Ursus americanus*.

However, its creation may be under threat from mineral staking, which took place just before the results of a feasibility study and proposed park boundary were released.

Conservationists have called for the area to be immediately withdrawn from future mineral staking until a final decision has been made on the park.

Source: *Nature alert*, 5 (4), 3.

Lead shot ban for Canada

A ban on the use of lead shot in hunting migratory birds will be in place in Canada by 1997. Four provincial governments, British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, are already committed to a ban on the use of lead shot for hunting waterfowl by 1997. Lead-free zones have already been established where waterfowl are at greatest risk.

In Ontario, Presqu'île Provincial Park was designated a non-toxic-shot zone for the 1995 hunting season. One-quarter of the 860-ha park is marsh, site of a reintroduction programme for trumpeter swans *Cygnus buccinator* and where two swans died of lead poisoning in 1994; the shoreline is an important stopover site for migrating shorebirds.

Source: *Nature alert*, 5 (4), 8.

Bison will still roam in Wood Buffalo home

The Canadian Government has abandoned its plan to slaughter the world's largest free-roaming herd of bison in Wood Buffalo National Park, which is infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis. The plan was to eradicate all free-ranging bison in and around the park and replace them with disease-free animals. Instead the government will fund research to learn more about the effects of predators, disease, and habitat change on the population. A buffer zone will be maintained to prevent contact between bison in the park and the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary to the north. The change in decision was taken because the government could no longer afford the \$30 million needed to eliminate the herd and restock the park.

Source: *Nature Alert*, 5 (4), 6.

Canada to cull seals

Canada is set to announce its biggest ever seal cull, expected to be nearly 300,000 animals. The cull is being sanctioned on the grounds that the seals are the major cause of the collapse of the country's fish stocks, which are currently at their lowest ever recorded level. The International Fund for Animal Welfare disputes the claim that seals are affecting the recovery of fish stocks, and has said that killing seals could make things worse because they also eat the predators of commercial fish species such as cod.

Source: *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 30 (10), 631.

Grey wolf numbers rising

Grey wolf *Canis lupus* populations have increased in Wisconsin and Michigan, USA.

During the late winter of 1994–95 there were 85 wolves in Wisconsin and 80 in Michigan, compared with 1993–94 estimates of 54 and 57, respectively.

Source: *Endangered Species Bulletin*, XX (5), 24.

Black-footed ferret return – partial success

In autumn 1994 40 captive-raised black-footed ferrets *Mustela nigripes* were released in Charles Russell National Wildlife Refuge in north-central Montana. In March 1995 surveys confirmed that at least eight ferrets – six females and two males – were alive. Twenty had been killed by predators and another 11 met with unknown fates – they may have shed their radio-collars, been eaten by predators or had their radios destroyed. By the late 1970s destruction of native prairies and extermination of prairie dogs *Cynomys* spp. – the ferrets' main prey – had driven the ferret to the brink of extinction. As a result of a captive-breeding programme started in 1981, 316 ferrets have been released in Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota. The Montana and South Dakota animals appear to be doing well but there was a population crash in 1994 at Wyoming's Shirley Basin, possibly due to disease and heavy spring rains.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, September–October 1995, 11.

Wolf reintroduction progress

Eight pups born to a grey wolf *Canis lupus* reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park in January 1995, are believed to be the first born in the region in over 70 years. The female was one of a group of three – the

male was illegally killed and the other female struck out on its own shortly after being released. Two other packs released into Yellowstone at the same time are doing well; one pup was sighted in June and there may be others. Of 15 grey wolves released in central Idaho, one was killed illegally and another has disappeared, but the rest are thriving. The progress of the reintroduction programme in its first year exceeded all expectations: breeding started ahead of schedule, mortality was less than projected and wolves remained closer to their release areas than anticipated. By early July no conflicts with livestock had been reported.

Source: *Endangered Species Bulletin*, XX (5), 4–5.

Wild birds benefit from sales of wild bird foods

In the USA the Minnesota departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture have joined with wild-bird food packagers to create the Minnesota Wild Bird Food Conservation Program. Packagers agreeing to participate will contribute \$2 per ton of wild-bird food sold in Minnesota. At least \$100,000 is expected to be raised for wild bird conservation in the first year and in the long-term it is hoped to collect \$500,000 annually.

Source: *Outdoor News Bulletin*, 29 September 1995, 2.

Falcon nests again in Texas

A pair of northern aplomado falcons *Falco femoralis septentrionalis* nested and raised a chick near Brownsville, Texas, in 1995 – the first nesting in the USA since 1952. The adult falcons had been bred by The Peregrine Fund from 10 chicks

collected from a remnant population in southern Mexico in 1982. Since 1985 62 aplomado falcons have been released in Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. Biologists had not expected any of the released birds to nest for at least several more years.

Source: *Endangered Species Bulletin*, XX (4), 9.

Whooping crane update

The whooping crane *Grus americana* world population stood at 330 in August 1995. Conditions at the species's breeding grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada, were the worst of 5 low-water years, but 47 pairs nested, a great improvement over 1994 when only 28 of a possible 40–46 pairs initiated nesting. The low 1994 numbers may have been the result of poor food conditions in the species's wintering area in Texas.

Source: *Endangered Species Bulletin*, XX (5), 24.

Zebra Mussel Task Force

The zebra mussel *Dreissena polymorpha* was accidentally introduced into the Great Lakes of North America in about 1986 and has now spread through the major rivers of the eastern interior. In places zebra mussels form a thick carpet, smothering and extirpating native bivalves. Native mussels have already been eliminated from Lake St Clair, much of Lake Erie and the Detroit River. Biologists at Virginia Polytechnic Institute are trying to conserve stocks of native freshwater mussels by moving them into holding ponds protected from zebra mussels. Currently they are maintaining about 1500 individuals of 15 species. The Western Zebra Task Force has

been set up by US government agencies to try to prevent the spread of zebra mussels into the waters of the western USA. Source: *Tentacle* (IUCN/SSC Mollusc Specialist Group), No. 5, May 1995, 5–7.

First convictions for plant smuggling in USA

On 10 April 1995 in California, Eric Von Geldern, William Baumgart and Curtis Tom were convicted of smuggling over 200 pitcher plants into the country from Indonesia and Malaysia in September 1994. The men pleaded guilty, agreed to pay a \$US10,000 fine and were each sentenced to 3 years' probation and 200 hours' community service. On 24 April 1995, also in California, Harto Kolopaking of Indonesia was sentenced to 5 months' imprisonment for smuggling over 1500 Asian lady's slipper orchids *Paphiopedilum* spp. from Indonesia in 1992 and 1993. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 119.

Recovery of least Bell's vireo

Once common in stream-side thickets from Red Bluff, California, south into Mexico, least Bell's vireo *Vireo bellii pusillus* was down to 300 breeding pairs in the USA when it was listed as endangered in 1986. Recovery efforts, involving both preserving and creating new habitat and managing the parasitic brown-headed cowbird *Molothus ater* population (which has been in California for only 75 years), have met with success. In 1994 more than 1000 males were heard singing along rivers and streams in southern California. Source: *Endangered Species Bulletin*, XX (5), 11.

Nightshade invader

The newest threat to rangelands, pastures and natural areas in the US is tropical soda apple *Solanum viarum*, a perennial nightshade that forms monocultural stands and crowds out forage and native species. It is native to Brazil and Argentina but has become common in other parts of South America, India, the West Indies, Honduras and Mexico. It was first recorded in the USA in Florida in 1988 and is now estimated to infest over 300,000 ha in that state. It is spread by animals that eat the fruit, and transport of hay and turf, and has now reached 20 sites in Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, probably all through movement of cattle, composted manure and bahiagrass *Paspalum notatum* seeds from Florida. The plant has started to appear along trails in some state parks in Florida, apparently brought there by horses, and state officials are considering closing trails to horse-riders.

Source: *Aliens*, No. 2, September 1995, 15.

Shrimpers continue to kill turtles

Turtles continue to die in shrimp nets in the Gulf of Mexico despite regulations that have required shrimping vessels to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in their nets since 1988. Powerful elements in the shrimp industry are bent on doing away with TED regulations. In 1994 shrimp populations were high and in the shrimp rush that ensued more and more TEDs became 'disabled', 'developed holes' or were kept shut. Turtle strandings soared and were also at high levels in 1995. Some stranded turtles found in

Texas had been deliberately mutilated. The reason for the shrimpers' anger is unclear – in 1990 and 1991, the first full 2 years that TEDs were required, the Gulf shrimp catch was higher than any of the previous 3 years and gear loss and damage declined – but it is clear that many resent the regulations and believe that conserving turtles will put them out of business.

Source: *Audubon*, September–October 1995, 26–33.

Microchips for cacti

The critically small populations of the cacti *Ariocarpus agavoides* and *Turbincarpus ysabelae*, near Tula in Mexico, may be the first candidates for a pilot project that is using electronic chips to stop illegal collection of rare cacti. Sterile electronic chips the size of a grain of rice and bearing a unique code will be inserted into cacti with a hypodermic syringe to mark them. The CANTE-Desert Botanical Garden has received funding for the project from CITES subject to approval from the Mexican authorities.

Electronic chips have been used to mark a number of cycad species in South Africa for conservation purposes.

Source: *Cacti and Succulent Group Newsletter* (IUCN/SSC), No. 6, 5.

Rats eradicated from seabird island

Efforts started in late 1994 to eradicate the rat *Rattus norvegicus* and house mouse *Mus musculus* from the 0.62-sq-km Rasa Island off north-west Mexico appear to have been successful. The island is one of the most important seabird colonies in North America, with over 90 per cent of the world's population of elegant

terns *Sterna elegans* and Heerman's gulls *Larus heermanni*. In total an estimated 360,000 gulls and terns nest there. The rats and mice were apparently introduced by guano miners at the turn of the century and had little impact on the gulls and terns but are probably responsible for the absence of nocturnal hole- and crevice-nesting birds.

Source: *Aliens*, No. 2, September 1995, 21.

Snail surveys in Hawaii

The University of Hawaii is continuing its efforts to conserve Hawaii's endangered *Achatinella* snails: surveys to locate remnant populations on the island of Oahu; captive propagation – of five species to date; and reintroduction. Only one *Achatinella* species has been released to date and it is too early to report success but a similar reintroduction of the closely related *Partulina redfieldi* on Molokai in 1989 has had encouraging results. Of 10 1-year-old individuals released, three survived and started breeding in 1992. By November 1994 the small ohia tree *Metrosideros polymorpha* that was their release site contained 17 individuals.

Source: *Tentacle* (IUCN/SSC Mollusc Specialist Group), No. 5, 15.

CENTRAL AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

Dumped rice destroys reefs in Curaçao

In June 1995 400 tonnes of rice smothered coral in the Underwater Park of Curaçao in the Netherlands Antilles when a cargo ship ran aground on the

reef. As the rice migrated with the current it threatened to smother additional areas of the reef. The government expressed its willingness to cover the expense of the clean-up but 1 month after the spill the rice was still rotting on the reef. A minimum of 8500 sq m of reef area was destroyed and, had action been taken promptly, most of the damage could have been averted.

Source: *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 30 (10), 631.

SOUTH AMERICA

Dicksonia trunks in demand

Dicksonia sellowiana, a common lowland species of tree fern in Brazil, Colombia, and other tropical South American areas is being increasingly cut and sold as an orchid-growing substrate. Recent studies have shown that many small shops in Colombia are selling segments of trunk for orchid growing. At the moment there seems to be little cause for alarm but if the trade builds beyond local collection then it will cease to be sustainable unless tree ferns are grown as a commercial crop.

Source: *Plant Conservation News*, 2 August 1995, 7

Brazil gets tough on environmental offenders

Brazil's environmental agency IBAMA has started a campaign to clear a huge backlog of cases against environmental offenders and to collect unpaid fines, which probably amount to the equivalent of £285 million. IBAMA offices around Brazil have unearthed 115,000 outstanding cases and there could be 150,000 in total. Of

these 42,172 offenders have been ordered to pay fines totalling £57 million, only a tenth of which has been collected. The biggest single fine was £1.78 million, given to J. Ferreira timber company in Pará, northern Brazil. The most common crimes are illegal forestry, use of charcoal as a fuel by industries, dumping of toxic substances and illegal mining. The money raised by the campaign will pay for more inspectors and better equipment for IBAMA and the country's national parks.
Source: New Scientist, 9 September 1995, 12.

New tyrannulet

A new species of tyrannulet has been found in southern Bahia state, Brazil, in a range of hills known as Serra do Ouricana to the south of the town of Boa Nova. The Bahia tyrannulet *Phylloscartes beckeri* was discovered in tiny remnant patches of montane forest, all unprotected. Seven other globally threatened species of bird are found in the Serra do Ouricana.
Source: World Birdwatch, 17 (3), 5.

Road in Sangay National Park

Renewed construction of the Guamate–Macas road in Ecuador's Chimborazo state will deal a devastating blow to the Purshi region of Sangay National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition to endangered mountain tapirs *Tapirus pinchaque*, the area is home to eight species of endangered parrots, endangered guans, spectacled bears, Andean condors, pumas and other rare cats. The road, which was started in 1991, is intended to promote commerce between

communities in lowland Amazonia and the highlands but it will provide access to hunters and colonizers and their livestock. The blasting, excavation and dumping of debris has already triggered landslides and destroyed wildlife habitat.

Source: Wildlife Conservation, September/October 1995, 10.

Cyanide spill in Guyana

A massive spill of cyanide into Guyana's main river, the Essequibo, by the Canadian mining consortium Omai Gold Mines, has been declared one of the worst mine disasters in the country's history. More than 3 million cu m of highly toxic residue poured through a breach in the mine's waster pond, poisoning the river and posing serious health risks to wildlife and human communities downstream.
Source: BBC Wildlife, October 1995, 63.

PACIFIC

Year of the Sea Turtle

March 1995 saw the launch of the Year of the Sea Turtle campaign by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme to conserve sea turtles and their cultural, economic and nutritional values for coastal people in the South Pacific. The campaign slogan, Let our Turtle Family Live, has inspired a range of educational and publicity materials including a colouring book, a video, turtle rap music, TV advertisements, fact sheets and stickers. Ongoing research and monitoring activities have been incorporated into the campaign and a nation-wide competition where people

guess where radio-tracked turtles will go.

Source: The MTSG Bulletin (IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group), No. 5, 1–2.

Partula reintroduction

During the summer of 1994 a major step forward in the conservation of *Partula* snails was achieved on the island of Moorea in French Polynesia. Four universities, two zoos and local government combined efforts to return three species of *Partula* to their native habitats, albeit protected by barriers from the alien predatory snail *Euglandina rosea*. The species involved were *Partula taeniata* (from Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust), *P. suturalis* (from London Zoo) and *P. tohiveana* (Nottingham University, UK). A grant from Fauna & Flora International is enabling the populations to be monitored and further searches to be made for *Partula* populations in the Marquesas archipelago.

Source: Tentacle (IUCN/SSC Mollusc Specialist Group), No. 5, 13–14; and FFI files.

Sponge culture in Micronesia

Private sponge farms have begun harvesting and selling their crops in Micronesia. Funding from the Centre for Tropical and Subtropical Aquaculture and the National Marine Fisheries Service has been used to establish a demonstration farm on Pohnpei to train local residents in sponge-farming techniques. However, wild sponge populations in the region may not be large enough to sustain prolonged harvest for establishment of island-wide farms. Research will be necessary to ensure that sponge

farming becomes an economically viable industry, which can both sustain repetitive harvesting techniques, and alleviate pressure on wild sources. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (3), 103.

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND/ANTARCTICA

Rabbit control experiment goes wrong

An experiment involving the release of a lethal rabbit virus on Wardang Island, South Australia, went wrong when the virus 'escaped' to the nearby mainland. It is hoped that the virus, which was first seen in China in 1984 and has since spread in Europe and Mexico, could be used to control the European rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* in Australia and so a trial was set up on Wardang Island. At first the virus appeared to spread very slowly, although laboratory experiments had indicated that rabbits should readily contract the disease from one another. In September, large numbers of rabbits became ill, coincident with the arrival on the island of the Australian bushfly, blown in on high-altitude winds from Queensland, which appears to have acted as vector for the virus and has since spread it to Point Pearce on the mainland. To prevent further spread of the disease, rabbits in the Point Pearce area are being poisoned and their warrens destroyed. Vaccine from Europe will be used if the virus spreads to domestic and farmed rabbits. Source: *New Scientist*, 21 October 1995, 4.

Robin reintroduction

North Island robins *Petroica australis longipes* are being reintroduced to parts of their former range in New Zealand. Apart from a population on Kapiti Island, the robin has been extinct in the lower half of North Island for many decades. Twenty-seven birds were transferred from Kapiti to predator-free Mana Island off the Porirua coast in June. Source: *Forest & Bird*, August 1995, 8.

Southern right whale breeding area found

A large breeding ground for the endangered southern right whale *Balaena glacialis* has been discovered near the Auckland Islands, about 500 km south of New Zealand. A team of biologists counted 96 whales, which could be the largest single breeding aggregation of this species anywhere in the world.

Source: *New Scientist*, 2 September 1995, 11.

New emperor penguin colony

A new breeding colony of emperor penguins *Aptenodytes forsteri* has been discovered on the Budd Coast, Wilkes Land, East Antarctica. Preliminary counts estimated 2000 chicks and at least 1000 adults, with many foraging individuals in the surrounding area. This is the only known colony in a 1800-km stretch of coast and it is probable that more colonies are waiting to be discovered along the largely unexplored Wilkes Land coast. Source: *Polar Record*, 31 (179), 426-427

PEOPLE

Calestous Juma has been appointed Executive Secretary for the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is based at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi. Until the appointment Calestous Juma had been serving as the Executive Director of the Nairobi-based African Centre for Technology Studies, an international non-profit organization he founded in 1988 to promote policy research, undertake training and disseminate information on the application of science and technology to sustainable development.

NEW GROUPS

New plant specialist groups

In addition to the new SSC Specialist Group for temperate broadleaved trees (see *Broadleaves* p. 22), the European Plants Specialist Group is being re-formed under Chairman Dr Klaus Amman, University of Berne, Altenbergrain 321, CH-3013 Bern Switzerland (Fax: +41 31 332 20 59). An Arab Plant Specialist Group is in the process of formation; the Chairman is Dr Abdulaziz H. Abuzinada and the Deputy Chairman is Dr Tony Miller (Fax: +44 131 552 0382). A new Indian Ocean Plant Specialist Group has been established under the chairmanship of M. E. Dulloo in Mauritius (Fax: +230 464 8749).

PUBLICATIONS

Birdlife Conservation Series

Key Areas for Threatened Birds in the Neotropics by D. C. Wege and A. J. Long (1995, BirdLife International, ISBN 0 946888 31 0, 311 pp., £24.25) is the most recent in the BirdLife Conservation Series. It contains a site-based guide to the major threatened bird conservation hotspots in the Neotropics and concise information on the region's priority areas for globally threatened birds. It can be obtained from The Natural History Book Service Ltd, 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1803 865913; Fax: +44 (0)1803 865280; e-mail: nhbs@nhbs.co.uk

Marine turtles

A Global Strategy for the Conservation of Marine Turtles prepared by the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group has been published by IUCN (1995, ISBN 2-8317-0265-8, 24 pp.) It presents nine parallel strategies, including those on integrated management of populations, public awareness and regional and international co-operation.

arborvitae

The first edition of *arborvitae*, the IUCN/WWF Forest Conservation Newsletter, was published in September 1995. Contact: Odette Jonkers, SSF International, Ave du Mont-Blanc, 1196 Gland, Switzerland. Tel: +41-22-364-95-24; Fax: +41-22-364-82-19; e-mail: odette.jonkers-hueber@miswp.wwf.infonet.com or Ursula Senn at IUCN, 28 Rue de Mauverney, 1196 Gland,

Switzerland. Tel: +41-22-999-0263; Fax: +41-22-000-0025; e-mail: ujs@HQ.IUCN.CH

African Primates

The first issue of *African Primates* was published in July 1995 with the main purpose of promoting and supporting primate conservation in Africa. It is produced by the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group in collaboration with Zoo Atlanta, Conservation International and National Museums of Kenya. The editor is Thomas M Butynski, Zoo Atlanta, Africa Biodiversity Conservation Programme, PO Box 24434 Nairobi, Kenya.

Broadleaves

The first issue of *Broadleaves*, the newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Temperate Broadleaved Trees Specialist Group, was published in June 1995. Contact: Chairman (Vicomte Philippe de Spoelberch, Herkenrode, Vijverbos 6, B-3150, Haacht [Wespelaar], Belgium) or Secretary (Dr David Hunt, 83 Church Street, Milborne Park, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5DJ, UK).

Western Ghats newsletter

The Western Ghats Information Network is being launched to link individuals and groups with an interest in the natural history and conservation of the Western Ghats, India. A newsletter, *Western Ghats Alive*, will be produced. Contact: Kumaran Sathasivam, 29 Jadamuni Koil Street, Madurai 625 001, Tamil Nadu, India, or Andrew Robertson, 2 St George's Terrace, Blockley, Moreton-in-Marsh GL56 9BN, UK. Fax: +44 (0)1386 700128.

Chiroptera Neotropical

The first issue of *Chiroptera Neotropical*, a newsletter for the Neotropical members of the IUCN/SSC Chiroptera Specialist Group, was published in June 1995. The editors are Ludmilla M. de S. Aguiar, Conservation International, Av. Antônio Abrahão Caram 820/302, 31275-000 Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Tel/Fax: +55 31 441 1795; e-mail: cibrasil@ax.apc.org or Valdir A. Taddei, UNESP, Campus São José do Rio Preto, Rua Cristovão Colombo, 2265- J. Nazareth, CP 136 São José do Rio Preto, SP, Brazil. Tel: +55 01712 24 4966; Fax: +55 0173 248692.

Call for manuscripts

The Pacific Centre for International Studies, a US-based think tank that focuses on international environmental law and policy issues, seeks manuscripts for possible publication in the Centre's International Environmental Law Occasional Paper Series. Publications in this series are widely distributed to international and national policy-makers, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Center is particularly interested in papers (6000-10,000 words) in the following categories: international wildlife law, biodiversity preservation, climate change and desertification. Finished manuscripts or topic ideas may be submitted to: William Burns, Director, Pacific Center for International Studies, 33 University Square, Ste. 184, Madison, WI 53715, USA. Tel/Fax: +608 256 6312; e-mail: pcis@ix.netcom.com.

MEETINGS

International Symposium on Galliformes. 21–28 January 1996, Peninsular Malaysia. *Contact:* Mrs Jane Clacey, World Pheasant association, c/o Ashmere, Felix Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8NN, UK. Tel: +44 1932 254855; Fax: +44 1932 253793; e-mail: 100326.641@compuserve.com

Salim Ali Centenary Seminar on Conservation of Avifauna of Wetlands and Grasslands. 12–15 February 1996. Bombay, India. *Contact:* Director, Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, Dr Salim Ali Chowk, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Marg, Bombay 400 023, India. Tel: +91 22 2843421; Fax: +91 22 2837615.

Domestication and Commercialization of non-timber Forest Products in Agro-forest Systems. 19–23 February 1996. Nairobi, Kenya. *Contact:* Roger Leakey, ICRAF, PO Box 30677, Nairobi, Kenya. Fax: +254 2 521001.

Second International Sustainable Development Research Conference. 18–19 March 1996. Manchester, UK. *Contact:* ERP Environment, PO Box 75, Shipley, West Yorkshire

BD17 6EU, UK. Tel: +44 1274 530408; Fax: +44 1274 530409; e-mail: r.j.welford@hud.ac.uk

Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention). 19–27 March 1996, Brisbane, Australia. *Contact:* Ramsar Convention Bureau, Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Switzerland. Fax: +41 22 99901 69; e-mail: ramsar@hq.iucn.ch

Second International Conference on the Black Stork. 21–24 March 1996, Trujilo, Spain. *Contact:* ADENEX, c/Cuba, 10, E-06800 Merida, Spain. Tel: +34 24 371202; Fax: +34 24 373118.

International Wildlife Law: Preserving Biodiversity in the 21st Century. 26 March 1996, Washington, DC, USA. *Contact:* Wil Burns, Director, Pacific Center for International Studies, 33 University Square, Suite 184, Madison, WI 53715, USA. Tel/Fax: +608 256 6312; e-mail: pcis@igc.apc.org

Plants for Food and Medicine. 1–6 July 1996, London, UK. *Contact:* The Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0LQ, UK. Tel: +44

(0)171 434 4479; Fax: +44 (0) 171 287 9364; e-mail: marquita@linnean.demon.co.uk

International Conference on Systems Approach to Conservation of Tropical Biodiversity. 1–4 September 1996, Kerala, India. *Contact:* Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute, Thiruvananthapuram 695 562, Kerala, India.

5th International Congress of Ethnobiology. 2–6 September 1996, Nairobi, Kenya. *Contact:* Christine Kabuye, National Museums of Kenya, PO Box 45166 Nairobi, Kenya. Fax: +254 2 741424.

The 2nd International Symposium on Coexistence of Large Carnivores with Man. 15–19 October 1996, Omiya, Japan. *Contact:* Ecosystem Conservation Society–Japan, 305 Ando Bldg. 2–11–9 Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171, Japan. Tel: +81 3 59510244; Fax: +81 3 59512974.

Tenth CITES Meeting. 9–20 June 1997, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. *Contact:* CITES Secretariat, 15 Chemin des Anémones, Case Postale 456, CH-1219, Châtelineau - Genève, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 979 9139/40; Fax: +41 22 797 3471.