

## INTERNATIONAL

**New Parties to CITES**

Four new accessions to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) have brought the total number of Parties to 126. Mali's accession came into force on 16 October 1994, Romania's on 16 November, Eritrea's on 22 January 1995 and Sierra Leone's on 26 January. Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (1), 1.

**Philippines joins Ramsar**

The Philippines became a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention in November 1994 and nominated the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary, an important staging and wintering area for migratory waterbirds, as its first Ramsar site. Source: *Ramsar*, December 1994, 8.

**New World Heritage sites**

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Ruwenzori Mountains National Park were added to the UN World Heritage List in December 1994. They are the first Ugandan areas to be added to the list, which now totals over 440 sites. Source: *African Wildlife Update*, January–February 1995, 3.

**Biodiversity Convention**

The first meeting of the Parties to the Biodiversity Convention took place in the Bahamas from 28 November to 9 December 1994. The Convention, which has been signed by 167 governments and the European Community, entered into force on 29 December 1993. The meeting agreed that that date each year should be declared

the International Day for Biological Diversity. The meeting also agreed that UNEP should continue to provide an interim secretariat and that the Global Environment Facility continue as funding mechanism until the second meeting of the Parties. The meeting called for a study on establishing a clearing-house mechanism for technical and scientific co-operation. Source: UNEP, 9 December 1995.

**An unprecedented assessment**

More than 1000 scientists are working on the first-ever global appraisal of all aspects of Earth's biodiversity. Financed by the Global Environmental Facility and conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Global Diversity Assessment will provide an 'independent, critical, peer-reviewed, scientific analysis of the current thinking on all aspects of biodiversity: origins, dynamics, assessment, measurement, monitoring, economic valuation, conservation and sustainable use.' Source: *Our Planet*, 6 (5), 38.

**Rain forest project**

A new project on sustainable conservation and management of tropical rain forests in China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam is being promoted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization with funding assistance from the Australian Government. The aim of the first phase, which was due to start in February 1995, is to prepare a document on providing regional assistance and support for improved conservation, management and environmentally sustainable use of tropical rain forests in

the countries concerned. It will also consider employment opportunities for rural communities and provision of forest products for rain-forest-dwelling peoples. Source: *Forest News (Tiger Paper)*, XXI (3), 7–8.

**Japan objects to whale sanctuary**

On 12 August 1994 Japan took a reservation on the IWC's decision in May to establish a whale sanctuary in Antarctica. The current global moratorium still prevents Japan from whaling commercially in the Antarctic but if the moratorium is lifted and the Revised Management Scheme implemented, 2000 minke whales *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* could be killed annually in the Antarctic. Russia, which originally objected to the sanctuary, later withdrew its reservation. Source: *Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly*, 43 (3), 12.

**More than half earth's land area undisturbed**

McCloskey and Spalding (1989) calculated that, although nearly one-third of Earth remained undisturbed by human activity, most of it was desert or tundra. Their study did not include wilderness areas of less than 4000 sq km (see *Oryx*, 24 [1], 5). A new study by Lee Hannah used a minimum of 1000 sq km for identifying wilderness areas and found that 90 million sq km of land, about 52 per cent of the total land area, is still undisturbed. However, much of this is rock, ice and blowing sand; natural habitat has been displaced by human disturbance over nearly three-quarters of the habitable surface of the planet. The percentage of land dominated by humans exceeds

70 per cent in many areas of South East Asia that 50 years ago were still covered with rain forest. As well as improving mapping resolution, Hannah's study also differed from the earlier one by expanding the categorization system from two classes to three by including a partially disturbed category and employing an ecologically based definition of natural habitat. This permitted the study to examine all natural areas of potential importance for conservation on a global scale, although it did not set out to address diversity, endemism or rates of destruction.

Source: *Ambio*, 23 (4–5), 246–250.

### Logging shifts rather than stops

Some western states of the USA and British Columbia, Canada, have significantly cut back on timber harvests as a result of logging restrictions. A recent paper argues that, while such restrictions are intended to reduce regional environmental damage, they are triggering increases in timber harvests elsewhere in the world, where the effects of logging may be even more environmentally damaging than in western North America.

Source: Sedjo, R.A. The global environmental effects of local logging cutbacks. *Resources*, Fall 1994, 2–5.

### Aeroflot supports illegal wildlife trade

In 1992 the Russian airline, Aeroflot, stated that it would cease 'the trade in the world-wide carriage of live wild birds' but there have been three confirmed reports recently that Moscow-bound flights out of Africa have carried monkeys, ivory, African grey parrots and

a crocodile, all in contravention of CITES regulations.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, February 1995, 53.

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## EUROPE

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### European circuses hold illegally imported animals

A study by TRAFFIC has found that numerous European circuses use animals imported in violation of CITES. The study report, *CITES and the Regulation of Wildlife Traffic for European Circuses*, states that many Appendix I species had invalid or no documentation and that existing legislation within Europe needs to be strengthened or introduced in countries where none exists.

External EU border controls need to be strengthened and internal monitoring improved. Source: *BBC Wildlife*, December 1994, 60.

### Herbicide residues from boat paint accumulate

When antifouling paint containing tributyltin was banned from use on small boats in Europe in the late 1980s it was replaced by copper-based antifouling paints containing Igarol 1051, a triazine herbicide. Now Igarol 1051 is appearing in increasing quantities in the coastal waters of Europe. Little is known about its toxicity to other marine organisms but one risk is that it will inhibit the growth of algae along shorelines and affect biological communities. Some studies have shown that the compound accumulates in fish and degrades at a very slow rate. Source: *New Scientist*, 14 January 1995, 7.

### Oil terminal could harm migratory birds

Construction of a large oil terminal at Butinge, on the Baltic coast of Lithuania, in 1995 poses a threat to huge congregations of migrating and wintering waterfowl and seabirds. Ten species regularly occur in internationally important numbers, which led to the identification of four Important Bird Areas there. One of these is one of the most important wintering areas for the globally threatened Steller's eider *Polysticta stelleri*. Conservationists have written to decision-makers in Lithuania recommending ways to reduce the impact of the terminal. Source: *European IBA News*, December 1994, 2–3.

### Sweden bans lead shot

Sweden banned the use of lead shot within Ramsar sites from 1 August 1994. The 30 Ramsar sites in Sweden are only a fraction of the total number of wetlands and it is hoped that the hunters will give up using lead shot voluntarily elsewhere over the next few years. If this does not happen the authorities will probably use further legislative measures.

Source: *Ramsar*, December 1994, 2.

### Lake Hornborga restored

Lake Hornborga in Sweden, which almost disappeared because of drainage work between the 1800s and 1933, has been restored. The restoration work on an area of 34 sq km was completed in 1994. Raised water levels have already attracted birds: black tern *Chlidonias nigra*, dunlin *Calidris alpina* and great snipe *Gallinago media* have returned after decades of absence. Source: *Naturoopa*, No. 76, 4–5.

### Ukraine/Poland border protection

Ukraine and Poland have developed a joint nature conservation project involving protected areas along their common border. The project calls for strict protection of the areas of most value for wildlife, with a total ban on industrial development and only limited tourism. The organizers of the project also propose a trans-European protected belt that would stretch from France to the Ukraine.

Source: *Network 21*, November 1994, 14.

### Butterfly reintroduction

The blue butterfly *Philotes vicrama* has been reintroduced to former restored habitat at Ruokolahti in Finland. Ten females were translocated from Finland's, and the Nordic region's, only known population.

Source: *Suomen Luonto*, November 1994, 58.

### Importance of peat bogs

Scotland's peat bogs contain three-quarters of all the carbon locked up in organic matter in British soils and vegetation. The result, from a new government study, adds enormous weight to the case for preserving the UK's bogs. The peat-bog carbon is the equivalent of more than 100 years of carbon dioxide emissions from power stations and exhausts. The figure is more than twice that given in the government's first report to the Climate Change Convention, under which nations are requested to take steps to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases.

Source: *New Scientist*, 19 November 1994, 6.

### Wartbiter rediscovered in old site

The wartbiter *Decticus verrucivorus* has been rediscovered at its only known British location in the county of Wiltshire where it was last seen in 1989. It was found by conservation staff surveying the site before reintroducing captive-bred insects from London Zoo. The wartbiter survives in three other sites in the UK, in the counties of Dorset and Sussex.

Source: *English Nature*.

### Plight of Britain's fungi

A new provisional red data list of British fungi contains 600 species that are now less common than they used to be and 70 species that are already extinct in Britain. Some groups, such as the larger boleti, are very seriously affected: devil's boletus *Boletus satanus* is very rare and *B. rhodoxanthus* is known from only one site. Among the smaller species, the *Poronia* nail fungus, which grows on horse dung, has declined because fewer horses feed on wild plants and it is possibly the most endangered species in Europe.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, February 1995, 58–59.

### France to amend protected species legislation?

The French Environment Minister, Michel Barnier, has proposed amending a 1976 act that says that protected species can be captured or killed only under exceptional circumstances and for scientific purposes. The amendment would allow species to be killed if they are a threat to public health and safety, to protect other rare species and to prevent damage to crops, farm animals, forests, fisheries and waterways.

Environmentalists warn that the amendment contains numerous loopholes that would allow hunters to kill rare animals on spurious grounds. Among the target species could be flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber*, which damage crops.

Source: *New Scientist*, 3 December 1994, 9.

### Wind power threatens migrating birds

The USA-based Kenetech Corporation is going ahead with a project to build 90 wind turbines at Tarifa in southern Spain despite an agreement between the European Commission and Spanish authorities to delay new wind-energy projects pending the results of bird-impact studies. Researchers advising Kenetech warned that migrating storks and large raptors would be killed in collisions with the turbines.

Source: *European IBA News*, December 1994, 1.

### Greek Government ignores court ruling for wetlands

The High Court in Greece ruled in September 1994 that the proposed Acheloos River diversion scheme should be stopped because of the lack of an environmental impact assessment. Under the scheme, water would be tunnelled through the Pindos Mountains to produce hydroelectric power from two dams and irrigate 39,000 sq km of the Thessaly plain. Three Important Bird Areas would be affected by the withdrawal of water, including the Messolongi wetlands, a Ramsar site, important for slender-billed curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* and 100,000 wintering waterfowl. However the Greek Environment Minister has said the govern-

ment will ignore the court ruling. Conservationists, who are seeking a court injunction to stop the work, are considering criminal proceedings.  
*Source: World Birdwatch, 16 (4), 4.*

### Malta acts to stop illegal hunting

Malta is making a strong effort to curb illegal hunting following the enactment of new hunting laws in January 1994. Dozens of hunters and trappers have been arrested, shotguns and equipment have been confiscated and there are many court cases pending.  
*Source: BBC Wildlife, February 1995, 60.*

## AFRICA

### Shark finning in Red Sea

In a new development for the region, Yemeni fishermen caught and removed the fins from sharks in Sudanese and Egyptian waters in 1994. Sudanese authorities arrested some of the fishermen responsible but sharks already appear to have disappeared from at least one reef.  
*Source: Shark News, October 1994, No. 2, 4.*

### Elephant numbers up in Tsavo

There has been a major improvement in the status of elephants in Kenya's Tsavo National Park since 1988. Aerial surveys in 1994 found more than 6200 elephants and no fresh or recently killed elephant carcasses. Tsavo's elephant population fell from an estimated 42,000 in 1970 to 6000 by mid-1980s. The survey also counted 11,000 African buffaloes *Synceros caffer* – the

highest number since the 1970s.  
*Source: African Wildlife Update, November–December 1994, 5.*

### Hunters shoot Amboseli elephants

Towards the end of 1994 trophy hunters in Tanzania shot at least three bull elephants that crossed the border from Kenya's Amboseli National Park. Amboseli's elephants frequently cross the border but there was a gentlemen's agreement with the Tanzanian authorities that no elephants would be hunted in the area. Members of the Amboseli Research Project, which has been studying the elephants for 22 years, say the death of the giant bulls is a great loss to the project and a devastating blow to Kenya's tourist industry. Tanzanian wildlife authorities say they will not prevent hunting in the area but Kenyan conservationists say that ecotourism could bring in more tourist revenue than hunting.  
*Source: BBC Wildlife, February 1995, 54–55.*

### Hunting unwelcome

Since 1988 Tanzania's Wildlife Division and other conservation bodies have been successfully rehabilitating the degraded Mkomazi Game Reserve, whose northern border abuts Kenya's Tsavo National Park. Now, just as the animals are recovering, Tanzania's Environment Minister has allowed professional hunters to shoot animals inside the reserve. Conservationists have protested on the grounds that hunting is premature because numbers of animals in the reserve are unknown, but probably still rather low, and that hunting is in direct conflict with the aims of the Mkomazi

project, which are to exploit wildlife through ecotourism.  
*Source: BBC Wildlife, December 1994, 61.*

### Virunga National Park being damaged

At least 850,000 Rwandan refugees are living in camps within walking distance of Zaire's Virunga National Park, despite UN guidelines that say 'utmost care should be taken to avoid the establishment of refugee sites in or near national parks'. One aid agency is transporting fuelwood from plantations elsewhere but consideration is being given to relocating the camps. Virunga National Park was added to UNESCO's List of World Heritage Sites in Danger on 16 December and emergency funds allocated to help deal with the crisis.  
*Source: African Wildlife Update, January–February 1995, 1 & 8.*

### Majete elephants have definitely gone

The elephants of Majete Wildlife Reserve (see *Oryx*, 28 [1], 3) – 10 per cent of Malawi's national herd – appear to be extinct. A recent survey (funded in part from FFPS's 100% Fund) found only bleached elephant bones. Reports suggest that the reserve was occupied by heavily armed poachers in the late 1980s. It is believed that Malawi's seven remaining elephant herds are threatened. Ivory is available in all the cities and hawkers say that the police are involved in selling it. The wildlife department has an annual budget of less than £300,000 for five parks and four reserves.  
*Source: BBC Wildlife, February 1995, 60.*

### Cheetah conservation centre

The USA-based WILD Foundation has purchased a 7300-ha farm in northern Namibia about 35 km east of Otjiwarongo to use as a base for cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* conservation. The farm, which had previously been run as a hunting farm, will be managed by the Namibia-based Cheetah Conservation Fund, which is developing research and education facilities. Namibia harbours about 20 per cent of the world's remaining 12,000 cheetahs and almost 90 per cent live on farms in the north-central region of the country. *Source: African Wildlife Update*, November–December 1994, 1.

### New-style management for Kruger

As South Africa's new Land Claims Commission prepares to hear claims from people displaced by government policies during the past 80 years, Kruger National Park officials are trying to resolve two claims filed by the Mdluli and Shongoni tribes before they go to court. To minimize future conflicts with its neighbours, Kruger has launched the Integrated Conservation and Community Development Programme, which is helping carvers and artists to market their products in the park, training local residents as tour guides, helping local traditional healers obtain plant and animal material from the park, and assisting local people in manufacturing items needed by the park. *Source: African Wildlife Update*, November–December 1994, 3.

### New colony of Livingstone's fruit bat

A new colony of Livingstone's fruit bat *Pteropus livingstonii* has been discovered on Anjouan in the Comoro Islands by members of a local environmental group, Ulanga. The colony, which roosts in fig trees at about 600 m in a steep valley called Matulabi, is distinct from the previously known population of 150, which was believed to be all that were left on the island. On 18 December 1994, Action Comores Regional Co-ordinator Mohamed Moutui visited the site and made a direct count of 250 bats. (see *Oryx*, 28 [2], 107–114) *Source: Stephanie Wray, Action Comores*, January 1995.

### Turtle ranch to close on Réunion

After years of international pressure France has decided to close down a turtle ranch on government land on the island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean. The ranch rears hatchling green turtles *Chelonia mydas* collected from other islands in the Indian Ocean and uses the turtles to make jewellery and souvenirs; the meat is also eaten locally. Because Réunion is officially part of France CITES regulations banning international trade do not apply and French visitors can take back turtle products to France. Once in France, under EU rules, the products are allowed to move freely between member states. In the past France tried to gain an exemption from CITES regulations for the ranch, which provides 30 jobs, but failed. While no hatchlings have been collected for the past 2 years, those currently being reared will keep the trade going for another 5 years giving employees a chance to

transfer to other employment. The ranch may be turned into a conservation centre.

*Source: New Scientist*, 14 January 1995, 10.

### Agreement on Mauritius conservation

On 5 December 1994 the FFPS, Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, Mauritius Wildlife Fund and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew signed a co-operative agreement with the Mauritius Government on the conservation of Mauritius and Rodrigues in the Indian Ocean. The partners are supporting habitat survey and management, captive propagation and species reintroduction, professional training and capacity building. Priority will be given to remaining forest on Rodrigues and Ile aux Aigrettes, and highly degraded but recovering Round Island.

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## ASIA (EXCLUDING INDO-MALAYA)

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### Oman bans rhino horn imports

Oman banned the import of rhinoceros horn on 18 October 1994 and plans to prohibit the sale of rhino horn in due course. The move is particularly welcome given the cultural importance attached to the country's tradition of making dagger handles from rhino horn. The ministerial decision is the first restrictive measure of its kind to be taken in Oman, which is not party to the the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and has no other legislation to control trade in CITES-listed species. However, Oman is examining

the possibility of joining CITES.  
*Source: TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 15 (1), 1.

### Poaching rife in republics of central Asia and Kazakhstan

Poaching of endangered animals is of growing concern in the republics of central Asia and Kazakhstan. Their parts and products are offered for sale through the black market, networks of acquaintances, middlemen and newspaper advertisements. The price of snow leopard *Panthera uncia* and lynx *Lynx lynx* skins and horns of argali *Ovis ammon karelini* have shot up and the scale of poaching is probably three to four times greater than before the break up of the USSR. Even grey marmots *Marmota baibacina kastsch* are being sold at increasing prices and their population density has fallen in much of the region. The main markets are in Russia and among foreign tourists.

*Source: Snow Line*, XII (2), 6–7.

### Aral Sea restoration

A huge 10-year restoration programme, funded by donor countries and international organizations, has been launched to restore the Aral Sea in central Asia. The sea is considered to be one of the world's worst ecological disasters. Thirty years ago it was the largest freshwater body on Earth but it has since been halved in size because of the diversion of rivers to irrigate cotton fields. Salinity has tripled and the dry sea bed has become a source of airborne salt and dust carrying herbicide and pesticide residues. The lowered water table around the sea's edge has led to desertification and the loss of hundreds of species of animals. The Aral

Sea fishery has ended, with only one of its original 14 species of fish surviving.  
*Source: Marine Pollution Bulletin*, October 1994, 579.

### First female megamouth

The first ever female megamouth shark to be seen was washed up in Hakata Bay, Kyushi, Japan in November 1994. It was named *Megachasma pelagios* in 1983 from a dead specimen found near Oahu in Hawaii and the first live one was found off Los Angeles, California, USA, in 1992.  
*Source: BBC Wildlife*, February 1995, 10.

### Orang-utans with nowhere to go

Hundreds of domesticated orang-utans *Pongo pygmaeus* discarded by wealthy Taiwanese may have to be destroyed because they are diseased and cannot be released into the wild. Under Taiwan's 1989 wildlife conservation legislation owners were required to register pet orang-utans and further imports were stopped. However, hundreds of orang-utans that were imported after a 1986 TV show promoted them as ideal pets are now reaching sexual maturity, when they can become unpredictable and aggressive. The five rehabilitation centres in Indonesia and Malaysia cannot cope with any more animals.  
*Source: New Scientist*, 3 December 1995, 10.

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## INDO-MALAYA

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### Elephant deaths caused by land mines

Elephants are dying after treading on land mines used in

the war between Tamil separatists and government forces. The fighting started 10 years ago and looks as if it will continue after peace talks were abandoned in October 1994. It is reported that up to 20 elephants are killed each year by land mines, although the figure is impossible to confirm because of the dangers of entering the mined zone. The government's Department of Wildlife Conservation has recruited experienced veterinary surgeons to rescue and treat some of the injured animals but the difficulty of access limits their effectiveness.  
*Source: New Scientist*, 19 November 1994, 12.

### Marine die-off in a Hong Kong bay

A mass die-off event occurred in Mirs Bay, Hong Kong, in August 1994, possibly caused by an uncommon natural phenomenon acting on a scale that has never before been witnessed in the territory. A low-oxygenated current from the Luzon Straits swept into Mirs Bay and remained there for 2 weeks, suffocating and killing marine life until a typhoon broke up the stratification. An estimated 200 sq km were affected and much coral was killed, including some representing 100 years' growth. With Hong Kong's waters severely polluted, the coral communities may not recover.  
*Source: Porcupine!* No. 11, 1.

### New olive ridley nesting beach found

A new olive ridley turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea* nesting beach has been discovered at the mouth of the Rushikulya River, 300 km south of the Gahirmatha mass nesting beach in Orissa, India, which

supports the largest known concentration of olive ridleys in the world. The newly found nesting site extends 6 km and is 1 km east of the Madras–Calcutta highway and 30 km from the nearest large city, Berhampur. It is estimated that 200,000 olive ridleys nested there in the first week of March 1994. While local people eat some eggs, they are not exploited commercially and human predation is much less than that by feral dogs and jackals. The site is not legally protected and a new jetty nearby is expected to increase trawling in the area. The mass nesting at Rushikulya occurred exactly 1 month after that at Gahirmatha and it is not yet clear whether the populations are distinct.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, October 1994, 15–16.

### Mai Po marshes in limbo

Threats to fish ponds around Hong Kong's Mai Po wetland are intensifying after an Appeal Court overturned a decision to reject a golf-course development. Seven more rejected applications are now expected to go to the Appeal Court. Mai Po marshes and associated tidal flats, mangroves and traditional shrimp and fish ponds around Deep Bay are the largest and most important wetland in Hong Kong, with over 55,000 wintering waterbirds and 20,000–30,000 birds stopping over on migration. The marshes are a reserve but the 1200 ha of fish ponds – important as bird-feeding areas – are unprotected. Up to 10 per cent of the area could go if development schemes get permission. While Mai Po marshes and Inner Deep Bay have been proposed as a Ramsar Site, the Hong Kong Government has delayed a

decision until mid-1995.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 16 (4), 2.

### Move forward for rare monkey

The first field study of the rare Tonkin snub-nosed monkey in Vietnam *Pygathrix avunculus* (see *Oryx*, 27 [4], 252) has confirmed that just over 100 individuals survive in one of the best sites remaining in their range but their gregarious habits and inquisitiveness make them easy prey for hunters. District Community Committees have now banned all hunting of the species and the Provincial Governor has made a formal request to the national government in Hanoi to create a national park to help protect the habitat.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, November–December 1994, 17.

### Another new ungulate

Another new genus and species of ungulate has been described from horns found in a market in Ho Chi Minh city in Vietnam. The local name of *Pseudonovibos spiralis* is *linh duong* (mountain goat) and it is believed to live in the Ban Me Thuot, Dac Lac and Kon Tum districts of Vietnam. It also appears to survive in Cambodia's north-western districts, where its name means jungle sheep. Wolfgang Peter, who found the horns, is planning an expedition to try and find a living specimen.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, January 1995, 10.

### Turtles safe

Turtle egg collection at Pulau Sipadan, a diving haven of international renown, off Seporna in Sabah, Malaysia, has ceased following the signing of an agreement between

tour operators and two families who hold customary rights to collect turtle eggs on the island. Under the agreement the tour operators will pay the families an annual fee in return for not collecting eggs.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, October 1994, 29.

### Sarawak increases logging

Large tracts of tribal lands are to be taken over by the Sarawak Government, increasing the amount of forest available for logging by 40,000 sq km (50 per cent). Native land rights allow tribal people to use forest areas but not to claim ownership and it is legal to allow logging in the forests. Since Sarawak started to give timber companies concessions to log the hilly interior of the state in 1976, conflicts over land rights have intensified. Hundreds of forest dwellers have been arrested and imprisoned in the past 5 years after blockading logging roads into their forests.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, December 1994, 63.

### Singapore bans tiger medicine sales

Since 4 November 1994 it has been illegal in Singapore to sell or display medicines containing tiger parts and derivatives.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, October 1994, 2.

### Singapore bird site in jeopardy

One of the most important sites for birds in Singapore, Senoko, is under threat from urban development, including a major housing estate. Senoko is a 168-ha wetland comprising mangroves, mudflats and ponds, which was listed as one of the top 10 areas for conser-

vation by the Nature Society of Singapore (NSS). While the government accepted the NSS's document in principle in 1991, the Ministry of Environment's Green Plan omitted Senoko from its list of 18 sites deemed important for conservation. Despite appeals by NSS the government has refused to remedy the omission and appears bent on developing the area.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 16 (4), 4.

### Dragon fish export licenses

A Singapore fish farm, Rainbow Aquarium, has been given a CITES licence to breed and export the endangered dragon fish or arowana *Scelopages formosus* after developing a subcutaneous tag that documents the parentage of the fish. Previously the only sources were wild stocks.

Source: *Fish Farming International*, December 1994, 30.

### Crane discovery in Thailand

Reports of crane chicks being captured in Cambodia and sold in Thailand, as well as accounts from local people suggesting that cranes nest in scattered areas across the northern third of Cambodia, led to the discovery of three eastern Sarus crane *Grus antigone sharpii* nests in marshes in north-eastern Cambodia along the Sre Kong and Sre Pok rivers. The same aerial survey found giant ibis *Thaumatibia gigantea*, a species rediscovered 110 km to the north in Laos in 1992 after an apparent absence of 30 years. The scattered isolated nature of these wetlands have made them a safe haven for several species, allowing them to survive years of war. When the civil war ends, programmes for the protection of the wetlands

will need to address conflicts that will result when people move back.

Source: *International Crane Foundation Bugle*, November 1994, 3–4.

### Thailand confiscates bears

In September 1994 Thailand's Royal Forest Department seized 20 Asiatic black bears *Selenarctos thibetanus* and one sun bear *Helarctos malayanus* – all cubs – on their way from the wild in Burma to Korea where they were to be fattened for restaurants. The Bangkok animal dealer caught with them admitted that he had already handled 70 other cubs that year.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, December 1994, 61.

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## NORTH AMERICA

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### USA passes legislation for rhinos and tigers

Last October the US Congress passed the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, 1994, which is intended to support rhino and tiger conservation programmes world-wide.

Source: *Wildlife News* (African Wildlife Foundation), Winter 1995, 8.

### Warning to help whales

An alarm system, Aqualert, has been developed by scientists in Newfoundland to warn humpback whales *Megaptera novaeangliae* of fishing nets. Humpbacks caught in nets cause damage and some die. In tests of Aqualert fewer whales became trapped and net damage was reduced.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, November/December 1994, 14.

### Proposed sea lion cull

A plan to cull a group of sealions *Eumetopias jubatus* feeding on an endangered population of steel-head trout (*Salmo* sp.) in Seattle is causing friction between environmentalists and government officials in Washington State. In 1993 only 70 fish reached their spawning grounds in Lake Washington compared with almost 3000 in 1986 because sea lions intercept the trout as they negotiate a fish ladder at Bullard Lock. The sea lions started intercepting the steel-heads in 1980 with about five or six individuals becoming particularly skilled. Attempts to control this activity have failed: even when individuals were moved 160 km down the coast they returned. Both trout and sea lions are protected by federal law and the State of Washington has to seek permission to carry out the cull.

Source: *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 28 (10), 581.

### Gating caves has positive results

Known numbers of the Virginia big-eared bat *Plecotus townsendii virginianus* have increased steadily from 1300 to more than 13,000 in West Virginia and North Carolina since the listing of the sub-species in 1979 as endangered. Gating caves to reduce disturbance to roosting and hibernating bats appears to be responsible for much of the population increase.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 14.

### Burying beetle reintroduction completed

The third year of a pilot effort to reintroduce the endangered American burying beetle

*Nicrophorus americanus* in historical range on Penikese Island, Massachusetts, was completed in 1994. Additional laboratory-reared beetles were released and trapping confirmed that some of the stock released in 1993 had reproduced. The US Fish and Wildlife Service secured protection for habitat on Block Island off Rhode Island, which will be managed as part of the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge and will provide protection for the only known natural population of the American burying beetle in the eastern USA.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 13–14.

### Bug or fish?

The Ash Meadows naucorid *Ambrysus amargosus*, a flightless aquatic bug, occupies only a fraction of its historical limited range at Point of Rocks Spring and population levels are extremely low. Improving its status may require a temporary shut-down of new habitat created for another Endangered species, the Devil's Hole pupfish *Cyprinodon diabolis*, because the water is piped from one of the springs that still support Ash Meadows naucorids.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 18.

### Conservation agreement for new frog

The Ramsey Canyon leopard frog *Rana subaquavocalis* was described in 1993 and is currently known to breed in only two sites in the Huachuca Mountains of south-eastern Arizona. The total adult population is estimated at no more than 120 and representatives from state and federal conservation authorities, a

private landowner and the herpetologist who described the species are developing a conservation strategy to ensure the maintenance of existing habitat and the development of new habitat for establishing additional populations.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 18.

### Plants returned to the wild

Nearly 3000 seedlings of Heller's blazing star *Liatris helleri* have been returned to wild populations in North Carolina, USA. The seedlings were by-products of a genetic research project and employees of the National Park Service, US Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service along with volunteers, planted them out on days off work. The seedlings will significantly augment seven Heller's blazing star populations, almost all of which have been showing serious declines due, in part, to heavy recreational use of the rocky cliffs where they grow.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 13.

### Warbler festival

In 1994 one of the rarest birds in the world, the Kirtland's warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii*, was honoured during the 1st Annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival. The 10-day event in Oscoda County, Michigan, was sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 19.

### Desert refuge damaged

A fire, started by a cigarette or fireworks, swept through the Moapa National Wildlife Refuge in southern Nevada, USA, in June 1994. The refuge was established to preserve the

Moapa dace *Moapa coriacea*, an endangered desert fish endemic to Nevada's Moapa River system. Streams on and immediately below the refuge provided the only remaining spawning habitat for this fish. Prior to the fire, the refuge supported more than 500 dace but on 5 July only one could be found. Rehabilitation work has started in an effort to save the fish and other aquatic species.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 2 & 18.

### Wolf introduction gets go-ahead

On 22 November 1994 the US Fish and Wildlife Service approved a plan to establish experimental populations of grey wolf *Canis lupus* in Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho. The designation 'experimental' will allow wolves to be killed under certain conditions, for example if they are preying on livestock. The wolves will come from Alberta and British Columbia in Canada.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (6), 1 & 19.

### New potential California condor reintroductions

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has identified two potential areas in the historical range of California condor *Gymnogyps californianus* for additional reintroductions: the Grand Canyon/Vermilion Cliffs region in northern Arizona, which is mostly in federal or native American ownership; and the eastern foothills of the Gila National Forest, New Mexico.

Environmental assessments are being prepared for the proposed release sites.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 12–13.

### Abalone disease mystery

The withering syndrome that has drastically reduced southern California's black abalone *Haliotis* sp. population is now affecting red abalone. The cause of the syndrome, in which the abalone's large muscular foot withers to a fraction of its original size, has not been identified. If the withering syndrome continues to decimate abalone populations, the California Department of Fish and Game will call for a total ban on abalone fishing. *Source: Wildlife Conservation, November/December 1994, 15.*

### Butterfly reappears

The endangered Palos Verdes blue butterfly *Glaucopsyche lygdamus palosverdesensis*, which had not been seen since 1983, was rediscovered in 1994 in the grounds of a US Department of Defence facility in San Pedro, California. Since then other sightings have been made outside the Defense facility and the population is estimated to number 200 butterflies. *Source: Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, XIX (6), 3.*

### Fish and aquatic plant listed

In July the US Fish and Wildlife Service added a small aquatic plant, *Howellia aquatilis*, and the Rio Grande silvery minnow *Hybognathus amarus*, to the US list of endangered species. The water howellia has disappeared from most of its former habitat because of changes resulting from timber harvest, livestock grazing and urbanization, and remains only in scattered sites in Washington and Idaho. The minnow was once widespread and abundant in the Rio Grande but water removal, channelization, regulation of

river flow, pollution and competition or predation from introduced fish species have reduced its range by 95 per cent. It survives now only in a 275-km stretch of the middle Rio Grande in New Mexico. *Source: Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, XIX (5), 5.*

### Key deer may lose more ground

The endangered key deer *Odocoileus virginianus clavium* may lose more habitat because of plans to build a school on Big Pine Key in Florida to alleviate overcrowding in the existing school on nearby Sugarloaf Key. Key deer habitat once stretched from Key West in the middle keys but now remains on only a few islands. Only 250–300 key deer survive, most of them on Big Pine Key. The local human population is divided over the issue – some people say the deer should be moved elsewhere. *Source: Wildlife Conservation, November/December 1994, 12.*

### Turtle strandings

More than 1600 turtles of five species were stranded in the first 8 months of 1994 in Texas, Louisiana and other southern states of the USA. In addition there was an unknown number of offshore deaths because turtles do not always wash ashore. Most alarming is the large number of Kemp's ridley turtles *Lepidochelys kempii* – at least 440 – whose only nesting beach is in Mexico (see 'Kemp's ridley nest numbers' below). Most of the turtles are being killed in shrimp trawls. Regulations allow shrimpers to continue trawling as long as annual sea turtle mortality from shrimping does not exceed 10 Kemp's ridleys. This limit was exceeded in April but

the National Marine Fisheries Service did not stop the fishery. *Source: Marine Turtle Newsletter, October 1994, 2–5.*

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## CENTRAL AMERICA

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### Coffee habitat valuable

In some countries of Central America, where most native forest has been destroyed, traditional coffee-growing offers positive benefits to wildlife. When coffee is grown in shade conditions, the pseudo-forests are havens for resident and migratory wildlife and are almost the only canopy habitat left in El Salvador, parts of Mexico and some Caribbean islands. Traditional coffee plantations have been found to host about 150 bird species in Guatemala compared with 20–50 in coffee plantations grown in full sun. The modern way of growing coffee in closely spaced rows in full sun increases bean production fivefold but requires high inputs of pesticides and fertilizers. With shade-grown coffee reported to have a better flavour there is hope that the trend towards sun-grown coffee can be reversed and the habitat preserved. While large international coffee companies appear uninterested in the issue, some small companies are marketing organic shade coffee and encouraging farmers to stay with or return to growing it for a premium price. *Source: Audubon, November–December 1994, 58–64.*

### Mexican wolf release plan

The survival of 15 of the 21 Mexican wolves *Canis lupus baileyi* born in 1994 brought the total known population of this subspecies to 90. All are in

captivity (five in Mexico and the rest in the USA) but there are plans for reintroduction to two sites: the White Sands Missile Range in south-central New Mexico and the Blue Range Area in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest of south-eastern Arizona. Surveys are being carried out in Mexico and along the US/Mexico border to determine if any wolves remain in the wild.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (6), 15.

### Kemp's ridley nest numbers

Probably more than 1560 Kemp's ridley turtle *Lepidochelys kempii* nests were made at Rancho Nuevo beach in Tamaulipas, Mexico, in 1994. A co-operative Mexico-US project was started 17 years ago to save the only nesting population of this critically endangered turtle. For several years the annual number of nests continued to decline but there have been steady increases since 1985 and the total number of nests is now double that of a decade ago. However, serious obstacles to population recovery remain, including incidental catch in the Gulf of Mexico (see 'Turtle strandings' above).

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, January 1995, 30.

### Good news from Cayman Islands

The Cayman Islands has declared its first Ramsar site, a 81-ha swamp on Little Cayman, which is home to probably the largest breeding colony of red-footed boobies *Sula sula* in the western hemisphere, with an estimated 5000 pairs. There is also good news from Grand Cayman where numbers of the globally threatened West Indian

whistling duck *Dendrocygna arborea* have increased from 10 pairs 5 years ago to 100 pairs. Numbers on Little Cayman have increased to 30 pairs and in 1994 the species bred on Cayman Brac for the first time in many years.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 16 (4), 5.

### Cuban crocodiles recovering

Numbers of Cuban crocodiles *Crocodylus rhombifer* appear to be recovering. A recent survey estimated that there are 3500 individuals in the Zapata Swamp, Matanzas Province, Cuba, the only place where the species occurs. The greatest threat to the crocodile is hybridization, both in the wild and in captivity, with the now sympatric *C. acutus*. Hybrids appear to be fertile and already some crocodiles in Zapata Swamp appear to be hybrids. A commercial crocodile farm in Cuba holds about 800 adult *C. rhombifer* and has vigorously attempted to segregate both species since 1976. The North American captive population is thought to be relatively pure but genetic analysis is being carried out to identify hybrids.

Source: *International Zoo News*, 41 (8), 42-43.

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## SOUTH AMERICA

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### Suriname to increase logging

Suriname's National Assembly is about to consider following the example of neighbouring Guyana in opening up a huge area of rain forest – about 3 million ha – to Asian timber companies. Environmentalists, human rights groups and indigenous peoples have called on the government to halt the

deals until forest people's land rights are secured and the forestry department has been given sufficient resources to control the loggers. One Indonesian logging company already has a 150,000-ha concession and is ignoring logging regulations – it has even logged experimental reserves where studies of forest regeneration started in the 1970s.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, February 1995, 56.

### Rediscovery of antpitta

The brown-banded antpitta *Graealaría milleri* has been rediscovered in Ucumari Regional Park in the central Andes of Colombia, north of where the species was last recorded in 1942.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 16 (4), 3.

### Breeding chance for macaw

The last wild Spix's macaw *Cyanopsitta spixii*, a male resident in the Tabebuia riverine forest in north-east Brazil has been introduced to a female taken from the captive population of 31. Before release in August 1994, the female was kept in a flight cage where it could feed on wild food and interact with the wild male.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, December 1994, 61.

### Fire damages park

In 1944 nearly 99 per cent of the 1300-sq-km Emas National Park in Brazil was seriously affected by fire and there was substantial loss of wildlife. Possible causes of the fire include arson, 'controlled' burning of adjacent farmland and lightning. Periodic fires are natural in the *cerrado* habitat of the park but the vegetation may have been unusually dry

after a rare winter frost and unpredictable winds apparently moved the blaze in many directions at once, trapping wildlife in its path. There is limited scope for recolonization because the park is surrounded by agricultural lands.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, November/December 1994, 7.

### Chile protects turtles

A new regulation under Chile's hunting legislation has protected marine turtles for the first time. Chile did not formerly provide protection for these animals because they are 'erratic specimens and have not been and are not exploitable resources'. However, Chilean waters are the southern limits of the range of the leatherback turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* and East Pacific green turtle *Chelonia mydas agassizi*.

Conservationists pressing for a change in the law said that leatherbacks in particular are adversely affected by pelagic fishing using gill nets for swordfish.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, January 1995, 21.

### New parasitic fish

An undescribed parasitic fish related to the parasitic candiru has been discovered in Brazil. The transparent fish, only 1 cm long, is half the size of the three known species of candiru. At night it enters the orifices of larger animals, usually other fish but also mammals, and feeds on their blood.

Source: *New Scientist*, 3 December 1994, 7.

### New reserves in Falklands

Falklands Conservation has purchased two groups of islands off the south-east of East Falkland in the South

Atlantic: Motley Island with Mot and Sal islets; and Middle Island, Pyramid Island, Centre Island and a number of islets. The islands contain good tussac habitat and an exceptional diversity of wildlife. All appear to be free of rats.

Source: *Warrrah*, No. 6, 1.

## AUSTRALASIA/ ANTARCTICA

### Rat kangaroo rediscovered

A small rat kangaroo, last seen in 1869, has been rediscovered in a nature reserve on the southern coast of Western Australia. Two students from the University of Western Australia found five adult Gilbert's potoroos, including two females with young. An extensive baiting programme to reduce the number of foxes in the reserve may have helped the last few potoroos to survive. One of the males has been fitted with a radio-transmitter in the hope that it will lead to the discovery of more individuals. Until now Gilbert's potoroo has been viewed as a subspecies of the long-nosed potoroo *Potorous tridactylus* and the discovery will allow genetic comparisons to be made to see if it is a distinct species.

Source: *New Scientist*, 17 December 1994, 12.

### Tourist development on reef halted

Work on building the largest tourist resort in Australia was halted in November 1994 when the Environment Minister ordered an investigation into its potentially damaging effects on the Great Barrier Reef.

Scientists who oppose the development, at Port Hinchin-

brook at Oyster Point between Cairns and Townsville in northern Queensland, say sediment washed from the exposed mud could smother seagrass meadows where dugongs and turtles feed and additional boat traffic could drive away dugongs, as has happened elsewhere. Stopping the work has resulted in uproar in Cardwell, the nearest town; environmentalists have received death threats and other residents argue that the resort will bring jobs.

Source: *New Scientist*, 26 November 1994, 7.

### Propagation of a newly discovered tree

Scientists in Australia have started to propagate the Wollemi pine from seed. The tree species was discovered recently in Wollemi National Park, 200 km west of Sydney and is a new genus of the Auracariaceae.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, February 1995, 12.

### Grey petrel decline blamed on fishery

The grey petrel *Procellaria cinerea* population of New Zealand is probably in sharp decline. Most breed on Antipodes Island, once the world's second-largest colony, and in 1978 there were an estimated 10,000–50,000 breeding pairs. Since then 15,000 breeding females have been killed on Japanese long-lines operating in New Zealand waters.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, November 1994, 25.

### Restoring St Paul

Rats and rabbits that have overrun the 8-sq-km French island of St Paul in the southern

Indian Ocean may soon be eradicated as part of a project to restore the island's original fauna and flora. The plan is designed partly to safeguard a subspecies of broad-billed prion *Pachyptila vittata*, which is endemic to St Paul and nearby Amsterdam Island. Between 100 and 150 pairs of the birds nest on the rat-free islet of Roche Quille off St Paul but there is a danger that rats may reach the islet by swimming across the 100-m channel that separates it from the main island. Rats and rabbits arrived at the island with settlers in the 18th century.

Source: *New Scientist*, 17 December 1994, 5.

### Protest against subantarctic development

French government plans to promote tourism, hunting and sheep-farming on some of its subantarctic islands – in the Crozet, Amsterdam and Kerguelen groups – have outraged scientists working there. Twenty-nine of them have petitioned the government to declare the islands as nature reserves.

Source: *New Scientist*, 21 January 1995, 12.

### Albatrosses and long-lines

A new study on South Georgia has illustrated the catastrophic impacts of long-line fisheries on grey-headed albatrosses *Diomedea chrysostoma*. Numbers of the birds have fallen by 22 per cent since 1976–77 but this masks an 80 per cent decline in the numbers of birds surviving to breeding age. The juveniles are dying on long-lines and even if mortality could be instantly reduced to natural levels it would be at least 12 years before the population stopped declining. Juveniles of

this species remain far out at sea along the mid-ocean convergences and in winter become the most common species as other albatrosses move inshore. It is probably here that most grey-heads are caught on long-lines.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, November 1994, 24.

### Oil spill in Antarctica

An 80,000-litre spill of fuel oil at Argentina's Antarctic Institute base at Marambio in July 1994 contaminated snow and frozen ground and there were fears that the oil could pollute marine ecosystems when the snow thawed in the summer. As much of the polluted snow was cleared as possible but the incident highlights the need for implementation of the Antarctic Treaty's environmental protocol, which was agreed 3 years ago but has been ratified to date by only 10 nations so cannot yet come into force. In November 1994 negotiations continued on drawing up an addition to the protocol that would impose strict legal liability for any environmental damage by scientists, government, tour operators and environmental groups active in Antarctica. There are fears, however, that the growing number of tour operators visiting the area may be able to opt out of the protocol by registering with a nation that is not a Party to the Antarctic Treaty or has not agreed to uphold its principles.

Source: *New Scientist*, 19 November 1994, 5.

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## OCEANIA

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### Three Hawaiian plants given protection

In June and July 1994 US Endangered Species Act protection was extended to three species of plants native to the island of O'ahu in Hawaii. *Gouania vitifolia*, a climbing member of the Rhamnaceae, *Diellia unisora*, a member of the fern family Polypodiaceae, and *Cyanea grimesiana* ssp. *obatae*, a shrub of the Campanulaceae, have all declined in range and numbers due to urbanization, habitat degradation, possible predation by non-native feral animals and competition from introduced plant species.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (5), 5.

### Co-operative management for forest

Native forest near the Kilauea Volcano in Hawaii is to be co-operatively managed under a new agreement between US federal, state and private agencies. One of the first goals is to eliminate feral pigs from 1700 ha of forest to protect native plants and wildlife habitat.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XIX (6), 7.

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## PUBLICATIONS

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### New herpetological serials

*Herpetological Natural History* is a peer-reviewed journal devoted to all aspects of natural history of free-ranging reptiles and amphibians, including conservation biology. Contact: Herpetological Natural History, c/o Allen Anderson, PO Box

176, Norwalk, IA 50211, USA. *Amphibian and Reptile Conservation* is a monthly newsletter covering conservation world-wide. *Contact:* Craig Hassapakis, Editor, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, 2255 North University Parkway, Suite 15, Provo, UT 84604-7506, USA.

## PEOPLE

**M. S. Swaminathan**, and **Paul and Anne Ehrlich** have been awarded the 1994 UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize for their lifelong work dedicated to the protection and management of the environment. For the past 40 years Dr Swaminathan, Director of the Centre for Research on Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development, based in Madras, India, has played a pivotal role in the conservation of biological diversity. Because of his emphasis on both conservation and utilization of natural resources, he is widely known as the father of economic ecology. The Ehrlichs, based at Stanford University in California, USA, are leading authorities on the issue of population and the environment, and for more than 25 years they have systematically traced environmental deterioration to its root causes, projected the probable consequences of continued deterioration and proposed and analysed the relative merits of alternative solutions.

**Philip Wayre**, Chairman of The Otter Trust in Suffolk, UK, was awarded an MBE for his services to conservation in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. He is a long-time member of the FFPS and former FFPS Council member.

## OBITUARIES

**Gerald Durrell OBE**, conservationist and FFPS Vice-President died on 30 January 1995. An obituary appears on pp. 70–71.

**Robin Kingston**, a primatologist, died on 9 September 1994. He was a pioneer in setting up and running primate breeding facilities in Europe, Peru and Brazil. He received the American Society of Primatologist's Senior Biology and Conservation Award in 1993 for his lifelong dedication in the conservation and breeding of primates, particularly callitrichids.

**Warren G. Kinzey**, renowned for his pioneering research in New World monkeys died on 1 October 1994. He carried out research in several Latin American countries and taught in anthropology and primatology across the USA. In February 1994 he was honoured at a special meeting on New World monkeys at the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park in Washington, DC, USA.

**Ian Prestt** died on 24 January. Starting his career with the British Nature Conservancy in 1956 he became its Deputy Director when it was reconstituted as the Nature Conservancy Council. He was appointed Director General of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in 1975 and spent the rest of his working life with that organization, becoming President in 1991. He was best known for his bird work but had a lifelong interest in the conservation of reptiles, particularly the adder, and was involved with FFPS in the late

1970s when it was developing its amphibian and reptile conservation initiative.

## MEETINGS

**Natural and Human-Induced Change in Madagascar.** 2–4 June 1995, Chicago, USA. *Contact:* B. D. Patterson, Center for Evolutionary and Environmental Biology, The Field Museum, Chicago, IL 60605-2496, USA. Tel: 312 922 9410 ext 468; Fax: 312 663 5397; eMail: symposia@fmnh.org

**Land Use Changes and Nature Conservation in Central and Eastern Europe.** 5–8 June 1995, Palanga, Lithuania. *Contact:* Dr P. Mierauskas, Lithuania Fund for Nature, Juozapaviciaus St 9, LT-2600 Vilnius, Lithuania.

**International Congress of Chelonian Conservation.** 6–10 July 1995, Gonfaron, France. *Contact:* Congress Secretariat, BP 24, 83590 Gonfaron, France. Tel: 33 94 782641; Fax: 33 94 782427

**International Association for Bear Research and Management, 10th Triannual Conference.** 16–20 July 1995, Fairbanks, Alaska, and 11–14 September 1995, Mora, Sweden. *Contact:* Harry Reynolds, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AL 99701-1599, USA. Tel: 907 456 5156; Fax: 907 452 6410; or Anders Bjärvall, Statens Naturvårdsverk, S-171 85 Solna, Sweden. Tel: 468 799 1000; Fax: 468 799 1402.

**Neotropical Ornithological Congress.** 5–11 August 1995, Asunción, Paraguay. *Contact:* Nancy Lopez de Kochalka, c/o Comité Organizador Local del

V Con, Museo Nacional de Historia Natural del Paraguay, Surcursal 19, Campus, Central XI, Paraguay.

**Habitat Fragmentation and Infrastructure.** 17–21

September 1995, Maastricht, the Netherlands. *Contact:* Congress Office ASD, PO Box 40, 2600 AA Delft, the Netherlands.

**International Conference on Wetlands and Development.**

8–14 October 1995, Malacca, Malaysia. *Contact:* Simon Nash, International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, UK.

**MEDCOAST 95, Second International Conference on the Mediterranean Coastal Environment.** 24–27 October

1995, Tarragona, Spain. *Contact:* MEDCOAST 95, Local Organizing Committee. Laboratori d'Enginyeria Marítima (UM/UPC), Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Gran Capita s/n, modul D-1, E-08034 Barcelona, Spain. Tel: 343 401 6468; Fax: 343 401 7357.

**Eighth International Snow Leopard Symposium: Facilitating International Cooperation for Biodiversity Conservation in Central Asia.**

November 1995, Islamabad, Pakistan. *Contact:* Kurt Johnson, Symposium Co-ordinator, International Snow Leopard Trust, 4649 Sunnyside Avenue, N., Seattle, WA 98103, USA. Tel: 206 632 2421; Fax: 206 632 3967.

**VII Latin American Congress of Vertebrate Biodiversity and Zoology.** 28 November–2

December 1995, Piura, Peru. *Contact:* VII Congreso Iberoamericano de Biodiversidad y Zoología de vertebrados, Departamento de Biología,

Apartado Postal 295, Piura, Peru.

**Third International Penguin Conference.** 2–6 September 1996, Cape Town, South Africa. *Contact:* Organizing Committee, Third International Penguin Conference, African Seabird Group, PO Box 34113, Rhodes Gift 7707, South Africa.

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**OPPORTUNITIES**

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**2nd International Course on Wetland Management**

22 May–30 June 1995, Lelystad, the Netherlands. *Contact:* CIND, PO Box 600, 8200 AP Lelystad, the Netherlands. Fax: 31 3200 97155. (Applicants should have a BSc or equivalent and competence in the English language.)

**Wildlife in Russia**

BIOS expeditions offer opportunities to participate in scientific studies of wildlife in many parts of Russia. *Contact:* Dr A. M. Boldyrev, Director of BIOS, Tallinskaya St, 5/2. 46, Moscow 123458, Russia. Tel: 95 499 3376; Fax: 95 292 6511 for BIOSM.

**Wanted — wild dog sightings**

In 1985–88 John Fanshawe and Lory Frame conducted a postal survey concerning the status and distribution of the African wild dog *Lycaon pictus*. The results were of assistance in establishing the status of the species. It is now known that the species is threatened over much of its range and concerted conservation efforts are required. While advances have been made in identifying and

protecting wild dog populations in eastern and southern Africa, knowledge of the status and distribution of the species in western Africa is still lacking. The IUCN Canid Specialist Group, sponsored by the Licaone Fund, is now undertaking a more detailed survey of countries in western Africa, where wild dogs may still be present. If you have ever seen wild dogs in West or Central Africa, or know people who have, please contact: Dr Claudio Sillero-Zubiri, Canid Specialist Group, Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PS. Tel: 01865 271128; Fax: 01865 310447; eMail: sillero@vax.ox.ac.uk

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**CORRECTION**

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**Distemper spreads**

The Briefly item titled *Distemper spreads (Oryx 29 [1], 9)* was misleading. The statement 'canine distemper virus has affected 20–30 per cent of the population of 3000 lions...' should have been attributed solely to *Cat News* and not to *African Wildlife Update*. *African Wildlife Update* reported that 85 lions out of a study population of 250 had been killed by the disease and that it was unclear how many lions outside the study population had been affected. In addition it stated that 3000 lions live in Serengeti National Park when it should have stated the Serengeti region (*Cat News*) or Serengeti ecosystem (*African Wildlife Update*). The editor apologizes for the confusion.