

The Oryx 100% Fund

Grants awarded

At its meeting on 15 December 1988 the FFPS Council approved funding for the following projects.

£500 for printing an advisory leaflet for hunters in Cross River state, Nigeria. Hunting is a major threat to wildlife populations in south-east Nigeria and conservation measures being taken by the Cross River State Government includes the declaration of two national parks—Oban and Boshi-Okwangwo. To ensure the effectiveness of the parks, rural hunters need to be advised of the laws affecting them and a leaflet to serve this purpose is to be distributed by the Cross River State Government in collaboration with the federal authorities. (Project number 88/55.)

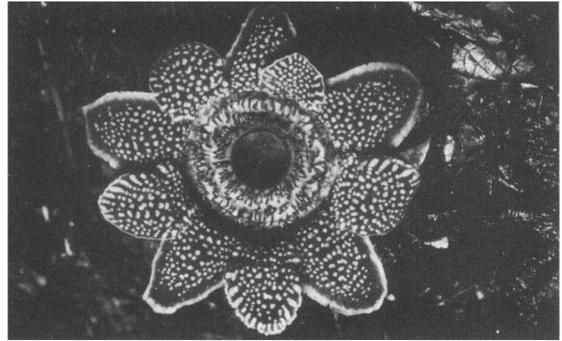
£460 towards a study of the threatened *Sapria himalayana* (Rafflesiaceae), a plant parasitic on lianes in tropical montane evergreen forest in Thailand. Little is known about it; it is not known how it is pollinated or how its seeds are dispersed, and no scientific description of the seeds has been published. The project will determine its status and distribution at known and potentially suitable sites, investigate its reproductive ecology, and evaluate the need for the feasibility of artificial propagation. Since it is so rare and attractive, it may be possible to persuade the Forestry Department to protect sites where it grows and by doing so increase the protection for many other species dependent on montane forest. (Project number 88/56.)

Reports received

The final reports of the following Oryx 100% Fund projects have been received.

Madagascar Rain Forest Expedition (Project number 87/49)

This expedition made the first systematic faunal and floral survey of the Manongarivo Special Reserve in north-west Madagascar in the Malagasy summer of 1987/88. The attractively illustrated 195-page report includes information on 65 plants used for medicinal purposes and a 116



The spectacular flowers of *Sapria himalayana* can be as much as 200 mm across. The species is parasitic on lianes in tropical montane forest, but little is known about its reproductive ecology (Steve Elliott).

socio-economic and agricultural study of the reserve, as well as the survey results for herpetofauna (34 reptiles and 14 amphibians, including four possibly new species), birds (69 species, of which 53 are Malagasy region endemics and 24 are rain forest species), mammals (18 species, including a new locality record for *Microgale brevicaudata*, a rare tenrec, which is little known), and insects. The concluding chapter emphasizes the importance of the reserve for the endemic flora and fauna of Madagascar. Although there is a considerable area of primary rain forest within the reserve, the official boundary has little relevance to the local people. A sizeable part has been cleared for cultivation and the disturbance extends about 6 km into the official boundary and up to about 450 m in altitude. The report ends with suggestions for reassessing the current reserve boundary and for a zonation system for land use for the whole area so that both local people and the wildlife will benefit.



Chamaeleo pardalis from the Manongarivo Special Reserve in Madagascar (Chris Raxworthy).

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One of the tenrecs—*Setifer setosus*—recorded on the Madagascar Rain Forest Expedition (Chris Raxworthy).

The Bat Problem in Israel (Project number 88/49)

Dr Sandie Sowler visited Israel in October 1988 to check on the progress of implementing non-toxic methods of controlling fruit bat numbers (where this is considered necessary) and to draw up a Bat Education Programme with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) (see *Oryx*, **23**, 53). Dr Sowler found that no fumigations had been carried out since her visit in March 1988 and that the Department of Plant Protection and Inspection (DPP&I) had received no reports of fruit damage by bats in 1988. She was assured that in future no control would be carried out without reported fruit damage and that the damage would be first verified by the DPP&I. The new control measures would involve live capture of the bats and humane destruction, unless the bats were to be used for research. Another breakthrough is that the DPP&I has prevented the continued registration of



A black lemur in Manongarivo Special Reserve (Chris Raxworthy).

FFPS news



Lepilemur dorsalis photographed on the Madagascar Rain Forest Expedition (Chris Raxworthy).

Gammexane canisters for agricultural use and since the gas is no longer produced in Israel and no longer imported from Britain, once all the canisters are used up all cave fumigations, including illegal ones, should cease.

Dr Sowler's proposed Bat Education Programme was received enthusiastically and there are provisional plans to launch it in 1993 and declare that year 'The Year of the Bat' in Israel. Meanwhile, a pilot scheme is being set up in the Carmel region, an area encompassing a large national nature reserve and having several SPNI field centres. It has also been severely affected by cave fumigations in the past.

The future looks brighter for bats in Israel, with more people interested in them, with the Nature Reserves Authority investigating the possibilities for bat research, and with informal discussions taking place on the possibility of giving legal protection to *Rousettus aegyptiacus*, now that it is no longer considered to be a serious pest.

The ecology, distribution and conservation of the Liberian mongoose (Project number 87/50)

The Liberian mongoose *Liberictis kuhni* was described scientifically in 1956 and is known only from 25 specimens, collected from six localities in north-east Liberia. Mining, logging, farming and hunting activities are all causing a rapid decline of forest in Liberia, but some is being protected. Sapo National Park covers about 1300 sq km and is the largest block of lowland rain forest remaining; it was hoped that the Liberian mongoose would be found there.

An expedition, from the Royal Ontario Museum and Metro Toronto Zoo, visited Sapo, but despite setting 500 live traps between 7 January and 15 February 1988 failed to catch a Liberian mongoose. This of course does not preclude its presence in the park. Dr Mark Taylor extended the search to southern Nimba, Grand Gedeh and Sinoe counties and succeeded in collecting an adult female mongoose from a village in the Gbi

National Forest approximately 20 km south-east of Tapeta. It was about to be eaten and had been shot by a villager who reported that it had been one of a group of about 15 animals foraging in long grass in a wet area nearby. People in Mali village, about 45 km north of Tapeta, also told Dr Taylor that the mongoose was present in the Gio Forest, but from questioning other villagers in southern Nimba, northern Grand Gedeh and Sinoe counties it appears that the species is no longer present in many areas where it once existed.

Its disappearance is presumed to be the result of a combination of habitat destruction and intensive hunting. However, the findings indicate that at least some populations of mongoose remain in eastern Liberia. Whether secondary bush provides a suitable habitat cannot be determined until more is known about their requirements. Dr. Taylor returned to Liberia with another three-month expedition in January 1989.

Il-fkieren tal-baħar , li huma rettlii bħall-gremxul, għandhom ġisimhom adattat għall-hajja fil-baħar. B'idejhom qishom moqdief u bil-forma ċatta ta' daharhom dawn l-animalli jghumu b'heffa li tghagģeb lill-fkieren ta' l-art.

Il-fekruna tal-baħar tbid fuq l-art, f'hofra li thaffer fir-ramel niexef ta' xatt imwarrab. Kull staġun tbid mal-150 bajda, imma minhabba perikli li jiltaqgħu magħhom il-frieh, wahdjet biss jirnexxielhom igħixu sa ma jbidu huma wkoll. L-akbar theddida hija l-bniedem. Hafna xtut ramlin qed jiġu żviluppatti għat-turisti. Il-fekruna tibża' mill-preżenza tal-bniedem. Fejn dari kienet tbejjet anke fir-Ramla l-Hamra f'Għawdex, illum dan il-post (bħal inhawi oħra) tgerxet minnu.

Fuq kollox hafna fkieren jinqabdu fix-xbiek u l-konzijiet tas-sajjieda, li jtellgħuom l-art, joqtluhom u jbigħuhom... għall-brodu jew għall-qoxra tad-dahar. Hemm bżonn li f'Malta l-fkieren tal-baħar jitharsu bil-liġi. Qed jonqsu b'rata kerha, u jekk ma nagħtuomx ċans...

ser nitilfuhom!

Z. CH. A. 1987

Sponsorata mill-FFPS, Londra
Dawn V. Falson

This poster to promote protection of loggerhead turtles was produced by the Maltese environmental group Zghazagh għall—Ambjent and sponsored by FFPS.

Save the Turtle Campaign, Malta (Project number 87/35)

A study in the early 1980s estimated that 1000–2000 loggerheads were caught each year in Maltese waters with nets or baited hooks. They are sold primarily for their meat, which is eaten commonly in homes, although not in restaurants, but also for their shells. An individual fetches £3–8 according to size. For the last three years Zghazagh ghall-Ambjent, with several other organizations, has campaigned for the protection of the turtles and the FFPS helped by sponsoring the production of a poster. Loggerheads have not nested on Malta's beaches since the early 1940s, but they are present in Maltese waters throughout the year. They are not yet protected legally, but the Minister for the Environment has responded to lobbying by indicating that steps will be taken to rectify this.

Serpent eagle rediscovered on FFPS-funded expedition

The Madagascar serpent eagle *Eutriorchis astur*, which had not been seen by ornithologists since



The Madagascar serpent eagle, listed as extinct in *The Doomsday Book of Animals* by David Day (Ebury Press London, 1981), has been rediscovered on an FFPS-funded expedition.

1930, was rediscovered in 1988 by the Cambridge Madagascar Rainforest Expedition (Project number 88/16), to which FFPS granted £500.

The primary objectives of the project were to compile mammal and bird inventories of the Marojejy Reserve in the north-east of the island, and to assess the condition of the reserve and the potential threats to it. Two of the expedition members saw the eagle while checking small mammal traps and they were able to watch it for three-quarters of an hour as it hunted below the canopy in dense forest along a river valley.

We await the full report of this expedition with interest.

Members' meetings

Details of London meetings, held at the Zoological Society of London's meeting rooms, are given in the insert in this issue of *Oryx*.

Some local group meetings are listed below; others are also being arranged, but full details were not available when going to press. For information about additional meetings please write to the address given for each group, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Bristol and the West of England Group

Ian Redmond, c/o BBC Wildlife Magazine, Broadcasting House, Whiteladies Road, Bristol BS8 2LR.

Cambridge Group

5 May 1989. 'One for All and All for One' or 'Meerkats United' with Dr David MacDonald of Oxford University.

Meetings are held at the Department of Zoology, New Museums Site, Downing Street, Cambridge, and start at 6.00 p.m. with a buffet supper with wine (cost £3.00 only by pre-booked ticket, available from Dr Sandy Harcourt, LARG, Department of Zoology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EJ). Talks start at 7.30 p.m., at which attendance is free.

Oxford Group

David MacDonald, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PS.

North-West Group

Nick Ellerton, Chester Zoo, Caughall Road, Upton, Chester CH2 1LH.

Edinburgh Group

22 September 1989 at 7.30 p.m. Joint meeting with the Scottish Herpetological Society at the Education Centre, Edinburgh Zoo. A talk by Mike Linley from Anglia Television. Cost £1.50, including coffee and biscuits.

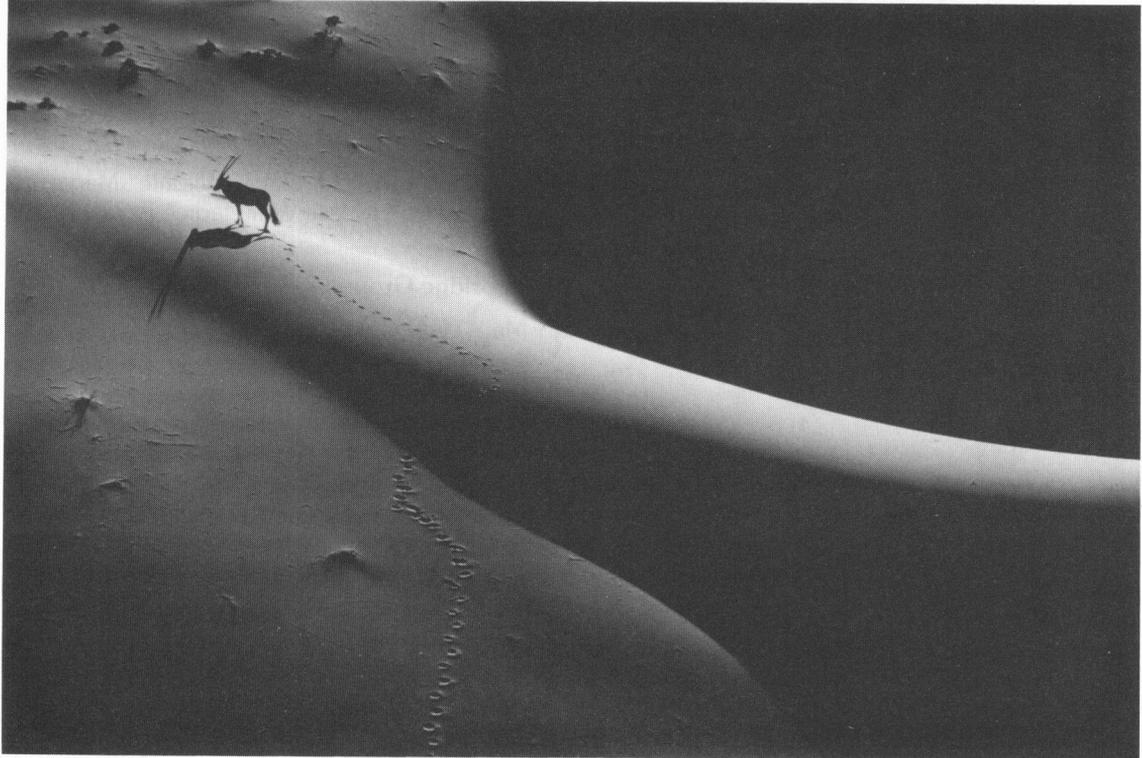
16 November at 7.30 p.m. An illustrated talk, joint with Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh—'Destruction, Conservation and Utilization of the Amazon Rain Forest'. Professor G. T. Prance, Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew—Lecture Theatre, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

Mrs Ingrid Stewart, Edinburgh Zoo, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 6TS. Telephone 031 334 9171.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition 1988

The photograph below, of a gemsbok *Oryx gazella* in the Namib Desert, was judged the best overall in the 1988 Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition. Sir Peter Scott presented the winning photographer, Jim Brandenburg, with the Kodak Award (a bronze sculpture of an ibis) at a ceremony in the British Museum (Natural History) on 24 November. Jim Brandenburg also won a two week holiday for two in Queensland, courtesy of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and Thai International.

Organized by BBC WILDLIFE Magazine, the FFPS and the British Museum (Natural History), the competition was in its fifth year and was sponsored by Kodak Ltd in conjunction with the World Wide Fund for Nature. More than 7000 entries in 14 categories were submitted from 30 countries and the judges included Bruce Coleman, an FFPS Council Member.



Jim Brandenburg's winning photograph of a gemsbok in Namibia.