



Briefly . . . Compiled by Richard Fitter

The items under this title continue the service formerly supplied by the newsletter *Kingfisher*.

INTERNATIONAL

More Acid Rainfall

Despite the increased control of air pollution, the rain now falling in the eastern United States and Europe is between 100 and 1000 times more acid than normal. This has happened in just twenty years, and may be both stunting the growth of forests and farm crops and accelerating the damage to man-made structures by corrosion. Much of the increase can be traced to the elimination of smoke (solid particles), so that stacks appear to be emitting nothing but are in fact allowing sulphuric and nitric acid to escape.

Trade Convention Ratifications

Forty-eight countries, including the USSR, Canada and Egypt have now signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Seven (USA, Switzerland, Sweden, Cyprus, Nigeria, Oman and Tunisia) have also ratified. When ten nations have ratified, the Convention will come into force.

US Ratifies Dumping Convention

The United States is the sixth nation to ratify the Ocean Dumping Convention. Forty-five countries have signed so far; fifteen must ratify to bring it into force.

IUCN Membership

Nepal has recently become the 38th State Member of IUCN. In addition IUCN now has 337 organisational members. The two groups of members are geographically split as follows: Asia and Oceania 28 countries; Europe 27; Africa 23; Americas 16.

End of IBP

The Special Committee for the International Biological Programme, which has been functioning since 1964, ceased to exist on June 30, when all IBP committees terminated. A new IBP Publications

Committee will carry on until the end of 1976, with an address c/o the Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W.1.

BRITISH ISLES

Cromarty Firth Threat

Cromarty Firth, an inlet on the east coast of northern Scotland, is of international importance to wildfowl, and has been scheduled as an SSSI by the Nature Conservancy Council. Two bays are to be established as national nature reserves. Yet the whole area is under grave threat as a result of becoming a centre of activity for North Sea oil. Repeated spillages are endangering the conservation value of the area – there were three serious spills between January and April 1974 – and strong measures to reduce and treat oil pollution are urgently necessary.

Seabirds Found Dead

During the twelve months ended in August 1974, some 6700 dead seabirds were found along the 7400 miles of Britain's coastline, not far short of one corpse per mile. More than half were oiled, and about a third were auks. This season, 600 volunteers, marshalled by the RSPB, will be conducting five organised counts along Britain's shoreline. More dead seabirds than usual were found during a routine beached bird survey in the northern Irish Sea and Firth of Clyde areas in late January 1974. A total of 1322 birds, the largest number on the coasts of Lancashire and Cumberland, included nearly 800 auks. Some were oiled; the cause of death of the rest is unknown.

Dutch Elm Disease

Some 4½m out of an original 23m elms have died of Dutch elm disease since the present epidemic began in the late sixties, according to the Forestry Commission's latest estimate. More than three-quarters

of a million elms were felled last year, mainly because of the disease.

ICBP Deplores

The International Council for Bird Preservation, meeting at Canberra in August, deplored the decision of the Secretary of State for Wales and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to allow the South Wales Fisheries Committee to cull half the local population of the oystercatcher in the Burry Inlet, Glamorgan, and urged the review of this decision with impartial advice.

More Endangered Insects

The Joint Committee for the Conservation of British Insects has issued a further list of endangered insect species in Britain, to add to those of the butterflies, moths, dragonflies, grasshoppers and crickets it has already announced. The eleven species include six microlepidoptera, three hemiptera, including the famous New Forest cicada, and two beetles.

Ashleworth Ham Reprieved

The Ministry of Agriculture has agreed to exclude Ashleworth Ham nature reserve, near Tewkesbury, Glos, from a proposed drainage scheme, on account of its importance for both breeding and wintering wildfowl and waders. Local farmers have been co-operating with the Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation to achieve this.

BLOWS Progress

After five years' operations, the British Library of Wildlife Sounds has amassed a collection of 170 sets of commercially published gramophone records, comprising more than 450 discs which contain some 10,000 recordings or cuts of about 2500 animal species. Unpublished recordings consist of duplicates of the natural history section of the BBC sound archive (4000 cuts of 1000 species) and more than 1500 cuts of nearly 700 species contributed by individual recordists.

The Tree Council

To ensure continuity of the 1973 'Plant a Tree' campaign, many of the bodies concerned, including the CPRE, the CLA, the NFU and the National Trust,

have joined to form the Tree Council, with Dame Sylvia Crowe, the Forestry Commission's landscape consultant, as Chairman, and John Workman of the National Trust as Vice-Chairman.

English Eagles Breed

The only breeding pair of golden eagles in England, which has nested in the Lake District annually since 1970, fledged an eaglet in 1974. This is the fourth eaglet the pair has successfully bred.

Local Conservation Corps

With the affiliation of four more local conservation corps to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the total of such corps affiliated to the Trust now stands at 50, representing nearly 4000 volunteers.

New Addresses

The Countryside Commission and the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves both have new addresses. The Commission has moved to John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 3RA. The SPNR is now at The Green, Nettleham, Lincoln.

EUROPE

Two Mudflats Reprieved

Two extensive wetlands on the shores of the North Sea have recently been reprieved: the Foulness area off the Essex coast, from the threat of the Third London Airport, and the Dollard region of the shallow offshore bight known as the Waddensee, from the inappropriate location of a new canal. The Netherlands Government is to build the canal behind the dyke, where it does not encroach on this extensive and unique brackish tidal area, vital for many wildfowl, waders and spoonbills, and a wetland of international significance. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has proposed that the mudflats of Foulness should now become a nature reserve and country park.

Seals Decrease in Waddensee

Since 1968 the number of common seals in the Waddensee, off the Netherlands



coast, has fallen from 1500 to 500. The decline is attributed to a combination of more pollution and greater disturbance.

Baltic Seal Protection Urged

British, Dutch, Finnish, German and Scandinavian scientists, meeting at a symposium on seals in the Baltic at Lidingo, Sweden, in June, urged the governments of the seven Baltic states to protect the three seal species of the area (common, grey, ringed) and the common porpoise. Measures proposed: establishment of sanctuaries, especially in the main breeding areas; intensified scientific research; and strict control of hunting.

Although both Sweden and the USSR now protect the Baltic seals, their efforts are to some extent nullified by the fact that the Finnish Government, pandering to the age-old prejudice of fishermen against seals, still offers bounties on seals. Very few grey seals can now be seen off parts of the Finnish coast where a few years ago a few hundred could be seen.

Seewinkel Threatened

The Seewinkel-Lange Lacke reserve, adjoining the Neusiedlersee in eastern Austria, is threatened by the proposed construction of facilities for 5000 tourists in a steppe area immediately alongside it.

Predator Protection in Italy

A law has recently been passed in Italy to provide compensation for damage caused by brown bear, wolf, wild boar and golden eagle in the region of the Abruzzi National Park.

Wildlife in Sweden

Three years ago five muskoxen immigrated from Norway into Sweden, where they have now settled down on pastures by Lake Rogen and increased their numbers to seven. Brown bears have recently returned to the Sonfjället forests, whence they were driven out in the 1950s and 60s by clear-felling. Their numbers also seem to be increasing. In central and southern Sweden lynx stocks are slowly increasing, but have aroused the wrath of local huntsmen, who appear to regard them as competitors. Elk numbers in Sweden have

substantially increased over the past forty years, due to the disappearance of wolves, bears and other carnivores, milder winters, and new forestry techniques and hunting regulations. In parts of Dalecarlia there are nine elk per hundred hectares.

Control of Snow Scooters

Snow scooters, which can cause great harm to vegetation and wildlife, are now to be registered and licensed in Sweden. The Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature has appealed for reports of damage by snow scooters.

Red Banner for Nature

The All-Russia Society for Nature Protection, which has more than 24m members in the Russian Federation alone, has been awarded the Red Banner of Labour on its 50th anniversary.

The Unintended Bag

Between 1965 and 1972 there were 270 shooting accidents in Finland, 16 of them fatal, and 86 per cent caused by shotguns. In Italy seven people were shot dead on the opening day of the 1974 shooting season.

Ecology for Europe

A European ecological movement was launched by the leaders of some sixty ecological groups in eight countries (the Nine, minus Britain, Ireland and Denmark, plus Austria and Switzerland) at a meeting at Strasbourg in July. A European environment charter was adopted, and an appeal is to be made to heads of state calling for a halt to the building of nuclear power stations.

Chimps Acclimatised in Russia

Five chimpanzees spent the summer of 1974 on a desolate island on a lake in north-western Russia, feeding themselves on locally available vegetation and insects. None of them caught cold, despite the night temperatures often dropping to 6° C. and the occurrence of cold rains. They made themselves armchair-like nests for the night, in which the temperature rose to 37° C.

Gran Paradiso Protected

Two areas have recently been closed to hunting on the borders of the Gran

Paradiso National Park in north-west Italy, to protect the wildlife within the Park. One consists of 2400 ha in the Valle d'Orco, and also borders on the Vanoise park in France, the other of 1200 ha at Valsavaranche.

Game Ban in France

France has banned for three years the sale or purchase in any form, particularly as patés or preserves, certain species of mountain game, whose hunting and shooting is already forbidden, viz. chamois, capercaillie, black grouse, rock partridge *Alectoris graeca*, hazel hen *Tetrastes bonasia* and ptarmigan.

Wolf Type Extinct

It is now believed that the wolves of the Danube delta were ecotypically distinct. Unfortunately this can now never be proved, because this population became extinct fifteen years ago.

Black Sea Dolphins

Since the ban on hunting dolphins in the Black Sea in 1965, numbers have increased fivefold to about 900,000 according to the latest census.

NORTH AMERICA

Aldrin/Dieldrin Banned

On October 1 1974, Russell Train, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, ordered immediate suspension of production and major uses of aldrin and dieldrin in the United States.

DDT on the Way Down

The decline in the amount of DDT in the American environment is signified by an analysis of 319 small birds which have killed themselves over the past ten years against the TV towers of Florida. The average concentration of DDT and its metabolites in their fat has fallen from 16–20 parts per million in 1964 to only 4 parts today.

The Determined Poisoners

Mirex may be as dangerous as DDT, and may stay around in the environment even longer. Yet the Environmental Protection Agency, despite having Russell Train as

its head, has authorised the use of Mirex on five million acres in seven southern states, from South Carolina and Florida to Texas.

Carry on Dumping

The Supreme Court has rejected a federal judge's order that would have stopped the dumping of 69,000 tons of taconite wastes from iron ore milling into Silver Bay, Lake Superior, Minnesota. The court held that the health hazard was not sufficiently great to warrant putting 3000 workers at the plant out of jobs. Environmentalists now fear it will be impossible in future to stop dangerous pollution without actual proof of harm.

Lead Shot Phase-out

The Interior Department has tabled regulations that will phase out lead shotgun ammunition for waterfowl hunting, as from 1976 in the Atlantic Flyway, 1977 in the Mississippi Flyway and 1978 in the Central and Pacific Flyways.

New Mexico Steps Backward

The New Mexico Game Commission recently took a step backwards by voting to allow the hunting of cougar kittens and of females accompanied by kittens.

Development and Geese

Planned reclamation of all the intertidal flats on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River between the St Charles River and the Orleans Island bridge has already destroyed 600 acres of tidal marsh, and will eventually remove another 1160 acres, from an area heavily used by waterfowl. Canada geese have already decreased by 50 per cent since 1969. Another disaster for wildfowl would result if a large artificial lake is made by damming both ends of the Orleans Channel. Some 5000–7000 acres of tidal mud would be lost, and with it probably some 40 per cent of the 150,000 snow geese which have resorted to this area during seventy years of successful protection.

Relieve for Beaufort Sea

The Canadian Minister for Indian and Northern Affairs is not allowing offshore



drilling in the Beaufort Sea, north of the Mackenzie delta, before the summer of 1976, to allow for the completion of some environmental studies. Oil and gas have already been discovered in this region.

Democracy and Deer

When the citizens of Morris County, New Jersey, saved the Great Swamp from being a jetport, it ended up as a national wildlife refuge. Now the same citizens are on the way to destroying the reserve by refusing to allow any deer to be hunted. The 600 deer in the refuge are overgrazing and overbrowsing the vegetation. Biologists have twice tried to secure a cull to reduce the pressure, but have twice been frustrated by the 'deer-loving' citizens. Now every red cedar tree has been browsed off to a height of five feet, and every blueberry and other succulent bush eaten back to the ground, and deer are dying of starvation.

Grizzly Bear Status

Following a petition to the Secretary of the Interior that the grizzly bear be officially declared an endangered species, the US Fish and Wildlife Service proposes that the grizzly should be regarded as endangered only in Mexico, threatened in the continental United States, and neither threatened nor endangered in Canada and Alaska. Within the United States, grizzlies should be killed only if human safety or livestock are at risk, and in three special areas, the Selway-Bitterroot area of Idaho, and Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, only for considerations of human safety.

Aversion for Coyotes

Professor Carl R. Gustavson of the University of Utah is experimenting with a chemical, lithium chloride, that does not kill predators but gives them a stomach upset and so leads them to avoid certain types of prey. After coyotes had eaten lamb laced with lithium chloride, they refused to attack sheep. This promising technique is still in the experimental stage.

Sea Otters Breed

At least one young northern sea otter has recently been reported from both British Columbia and Oregon, showing

that the transplants of sea otters from Alaska to a part of their range where they had become extinct are beginning to succeed.

Mountain Caribou in Danger

The mountain caribou appears to be an endangered species in the United States, although still quite common in Canada, where it is known as the woodland caribou. Fewer than a hundred are known to exist in the US, in the forests of northern Idaho, north-western Montana and north-eastern Washington, almost all on public land. A report on measures to protect the mountain caribou has recently been published by the Idaho Academy of Science.

Tule Elk's New High

A record number of tule elk were counted in Owens Valley, California, in 1974: 375 compared with 340 in 1973.

Bald Eagles – Good News and Bad

Good news: that there are still some 30–55,000 birds in Alaska. Bad news: that in the north-eastern and south-eastern United States, and along the Great Lakes shores bald eagles are either declining or extinct. So much for a national bird!

California Pelicans Recover

The brown pelican in California appears to be recovering from reproductive failure attributed to ocean pollution by DDT. In 1970 only one young was hatched, but in 1974 the number was 305. Pelicans nest on several islands off California and adjacent Mexico. One of these, West Canapa Island, was closed to the public during the nesting season to help the recovery along.

More Falcons for Colorado

In an effort to restore falcon stocks in Colorado, the state's wildlife division last spring placed 14 young prairie falcons in the nests of wild falcons, which successfully reared them. Two young peregrines were also successfully released.

Marbled Murrelet Nest?

The last unknown breeding location of a North American bird species may have been discovered when a tree-trimmer

working among redwoods in Big Basin State Park, northern California, found a nest containing a chick covered with white down, believed to be a marbled murrelet. The only known egg of this species was taken from a female shot in May 1897 in the Prince of Wales archipelago.

Alligator Smuggling

Special agents of the US Fish & Wildlife Service arrested six people and seized more than 500 alligator hides in New Jersey in September. The alligator is protected under the Endangered Species Act.

An Endangered Turtle

The bog turtle *Clemmys muhlenbergi* has always been one of the rarest North American turtles, and is now gravely threatened by habitat destruction and collection by the pet trade. It is not yet on the endangered list, but the US Fish and Wildlife Service has it currently under consideration.

Winning the Lamprey War

A record low catch of 1911 adult sea lampreys in Lake Superior this year suggests that the US Fish and Wildlife Service is winning the 18-year war against this introduced pest which once virtually wiped out the lake trout and other fish species in the Great Lakes. The trout have been reintroduced from hatcheries, and are beginning to breed again in the Lakes, especially Michigan and Superior.

LATIN AMERICA

Japan's Illicit Whaling

A field team of the International Society for the Protection of Animals has discovered that a Japanese whaling company operating in a remote area of Peru since 1967 has been taking undersize whales in violation of an international treaty signed by Peru, Chile and Ecuador.

Peru Protects Wildlife

By presidential decree Peru has completely protected all the wild fauna in the Region de la Selva, the forested Amazonian area east of the Andes, except for specific

animals (not cats or monkeys) traditionally used as food by the local inhabitants, and for exports for scientific purposes. Another decree protects four species of Andean trees that are in danger of extinction.

Export Ban in Ecuador

Ecuador is to prohibit the uncontrolled hunting and export without permit of birds, mammals, reptiles and other groups of animals. No permits at all will be allowed until a new law has been drawn up. Exports will only be allowed for scientific and research purposes. No further agriculture will be permitted in still uncultivated parts of the Galapagos Islands.

Sr Felipe Benavides has persuaded the Government of Ecuador to adhere to the La Paz agreement on vicuña protection, already signed by Argentine, Bolivia, Chile and Peru.

Aground in Magellan Straits

A 200,000-ton Shell tanker grounded on a reef in the Magellan Straits, Chile, in August, and spilt some 30,000 tons of crude oil into the sea, forming a slick 115 km long.

Venezuela Research Centre

A new wildlife research centre has been established in the Rancho Grande National Park about 120 km east of Caracas, under Dr Gonzalo Medina Padilla.

AFRICA

Chad Prohibits Shooting

The Government of Chad forbade the shooting of waterfowl in 1974. Areas suitable for wintering waterfowl have been severely restricted because the waters of Lake Chad have dropped so much, due to the Sahelian drought, that the lake is divided in two by a ridge that had not been seen since 1913.

End of Hunting Safaris?

Safari hunting is now forbidden in Chad, northern Ethiopia, northern Mozambique, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, and



all West African countries except Cameroun and Gabon. As a result professional hunters are gloomily contemplating their own extinction.

Roan in the Transvaal

The herd of roan antelope, rare and straggling in the Transvaal except in the Kruger National Park, has increased to 37 in the Percy Fyfe nature reserve as a result of a dozen births in 1973. The herd originated from 26 animals, captured in various parts of the province during 1968–71. During 1973 a large herd of blesbok was removed from the reserve to make room for the growing roan population.

Pollution in Mozambique

The inner bay of Lourenço Marques receives the untreated sewage of the city, the run-off from five rivers, and metal and oil pollution from port activities and iron ore handling. Large quantities of metal pollutants are probably accumulating in muds and are likely to contaminate shellfish, which are an important local food source. The untreated sewage discharges threaten eutrophication of the bay, and are also a public health risk.

A Reserve but no Pelicans

One of the only three known colonies of the rosy pelican in West Africa bred annually on Wase Rock in the north-eastern part of Benue-Plateau state in Nigeria until 1971. They were disturbed just before the rock was gazetted as a small (231-acre) game reserve, and have not nested since.

ASIA

Lion-tailed Macaque

Two major threats to the lion-tailed macaque monkey *Macaca silenus*, which is restricted to the evergreen forests of the Western Ghats in India, are habitat destruction in its highly localised range, and illegal capture of infants for sale in markets. James A. Karr, of Purdue University, Indiana, who writes about this rare monkey in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, saw no subadults in the group he was observing.

Poaching in Assam

A man hired by a poaching gang slashed the trunk of an anti-poaching-squad elephant in the Manas Sanctuary. He was caught but got off with a small fine. Assam is one of the few states that have not taken up the new protection laws.

Smugglers Frustrated

Bombay Customs officials intercepted a motorised fishing boat about to leave a creek near Bassein, north of the city, loaded with a large consignment of skins of tigers and other protected animals, as well as other contraband. The smugglers escaped, but left their cargo behind.

Shooting Bans in India

The states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa followed the good example set by Gujarat in declaring a total ban on shooting in 1974 in honour of Mahavira's 2500th birth anniversary.

Privilege Withdrawn

Abuse of diplomatic privilege by members of foreign embassy staffs in India has led the Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi, to withdraw the immunity of diplomats who infringe protective wildlife legislation.

Second Generation Breeding

Thirty young white-winged wood ducks, a Red Book species from S E Asia, raised at the Wildfowl Trust in 1974 included the brood of a pair hatched at the Trust. A captive breeding nucleus has been established at Gauhati Zoo, Assam.

Protecting the Indus Dolphin

In congratulating the Government of Sind, Pakistan, for giving legal protection to the threatened Indus dolphin, IUCN/WWF have urged the Province to establish the world's first dolphin sanctuary, to cover 75km of the river below the Guddu barrage.

Crocodiles in Burma

The gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* and the marsh crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* are now extinct in Burma, and the estuarine crocodile *C. porosus* is threatened with extinction. The official trade corporation, however, continues to encourage fishermen to catch crocodiles, supplying them with outboard motors and nylon ropes. An



BRIDLED NAIL-TAILED WALLABY
Onychogalea fraenata. Believed extinct since 1937, and not seen in Queensland for 45 years, this small wallaby was rediscovered in Central Queensland during the State's recent comprehensive fauna survey. The area was being cleared at the time, but will now be protected under Queensland's new Fauna Conservation Act 1974. This picture (reproduced in the last *Oryx* before we had heard of the rediscovery) is from the colour painting in a new publication of Gould's *Kangaroos* (Macmillan £12).

export target of 300–400 crocodiles was fixed in 1974.

Pollution in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's population of between four and five million is becoming increasingly industrialised, with some 19,000 factories concentrated in a few densely populated areas. Most of the sewage is discharged untreated into the sea, and high heavy metal concentrations have been recorded in the surrounding waters. Lead has 160 times and cadmium 180 times the concentration found in the open ocean.

Saving Lake Baikal

The Soviet Union has spent more than 23m roubles on a purification works, to prevent the waste products of the Selenga pulp and cardboard mills from polluting Lake Baikal.

Muskoxen for USSR

Ten muskoxen from Canada have been flown to Lake Taimyr, in the Soviet north, to start a herd on the eastern shores where muskoxen lived in prehistoric times. In 1975 more muskoxen will be flown from the US to Wrangel Island.

Rare Cranes in Korea

WWF is funding an expert from the International Crane Foundation to negotiate the establishment of a Han River crane sanctuary in South Korea, and to ascertain the distribution and numbers of rare cranes wintering in South Korea.

ANTIPODES

Kangaroos v Sheep

Fresh research in Queensland has confirmed the fact, which Australian sheep farmers are so reluctant to accept, that red and grey kangaroos compete minimally with sheep both quantitatively and qualitatively. The kangaroos eat mainly grass and the sheep eat mainly the other pasture species known to ecologists as forbs, even in times of severe drought.

Vandals on Lord Howe

The Australian Conservation Foundation has accused the Australian and NSW Governments of an act of official vandalism in building a one-km stretch of road through a proposed national park on Lord Howe Island without any mention of it in an environmental impact statement, and without consultation with conservationists. Considerable damage has been caused to the remaining native forest on the island.

Mutton Bird 'Explodes'

A population explosion of the mutton bird or short-tailed shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* is in progress, according to D. L. Serventy in a recent lecture to the Royal Society of Tasmania. Many new colonies have been established, not only on the coast of Tasmania itself (existing colonies were on the offshore islands), but also along the east coast of Australia, beyond the previously known nesting limits. The cause of the increase is not known. One suggestion is that the



destruction of the Antarctic baleen whale stocks by the international whalers has made an additional food supply, not now being taken up by the whales, available to the birds.

New Hebrides Project

The French Residency in the New Hebrides, an Anglo-French condominium, has set aside seven acres at Malapoa on the island of Efate for a botanical/ornithological park. When completed, the project will have facilities for recreation, education and scientific research, as well as providing a sanctuary for indigenous wildlife.

Tonga Protects Turtles

The Tonga Department of Agriculture has recently extended the close season for marine turtles by a month, until the end of January.

THE OCEANS

Overfishing v. Pollution

A report from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea makes it clear that at present far more catastrophic damage can be done to fish stocks by overfishing than by pollution at its current levels. The report clearly documents the collapse of many of the herring fisheries of the north-eastern Atlantic due largely to gross overexploitation. The North Sea sole fishery is likely to go the same way unless there is a reduction of at least 40 per cent in the fishing effort.

Denmark Overfishes Salmon

Denmark has not kept to its 1972 agreement to limit the yearly catch of immature salmon to 1190 tons. In 1973 Danish vessels overfished by 43 per cent.

Sea Otters in the Ecosystem

Northern sea otters have been shown to occupy a key position in the coastal ecosystem of the Aleutian Islands. By preying on sea-urchins and keeping their numbers under control, they prevent these from overgrazing the kelp and other marine vegetation and so upsetting what used to be called the balance of nature. Harbour (common) seals and bald eagles

are among the animals whose food is diminished by a reduction in sea otters and consequent overgrazing of kelp by sea-urchins. *See also Note page 7.*

The Nene Saved

Twenty years ago only 42 nenes or Hawaiian geese were known to exist in the world. Today there are over 1000, and the Wildfowl Trust, which has already returned 200 birds to the wild, has been told by the US authorities in Hawaii that no more need be sent across the world, as they are now producing enough birds in Hawaii. The Wildfowl Trust has reared more than 800 nenes, 180 of which have been distributed on loan to 40 zoos and wildfowl breeders in all parts of the world. *See also Note page 2.*

Extinct Ibis Find

The partially fossilised bones of a recently extinct (possibly as late as the early 19th century) flightless ibis have been found in a lava cave on the Hawaiian island of Maui. With them were also the bones of one or possibly two species of flightless rail, the first record of any rail on Maui. Rails have been known in historical times on Hawaii and Laysan. Earlier IBP scientists found a new species of native legume vine, which appeared in an enclosure built to study the effect of goats.

Alien Birds in Hawaii

Twenty-five species of introduced bird (other than game birds) now breed in the Hawaiian archipelago. They include the cattle egret, barn owl, edible-nest swiftlet, skylark, red-vented bulbul, mockingbird, common mynah and house sparrow. A number of others have bred but are not yet well established.

NEW NATIONAL PARKS

The Icelandic Parliament has passed a special Act giving the area around Lake Myvatn and the River Laxa a status equivalent to that of a national park. Between ten and twenty thousand pairs of duck, including the only European populations of the harlequin duck and Barrow's goldeneye, breed in this area.

A national park has been opened in the Ticino valley in Lombardy, Italy.

Two national parks are to be created in western Norway: 265 km² in the Dovre mountains, and 3400 km² on the Hardangervidda.

Denmark has created the world's largest national park, of 700,000 km², in north-east Greenland. It covers virtually the whole north-eastern third of the island, and includes a principal polar bear breeding ground, as well as populations of the Atlantic walrus, musk-ox, barnacle and pink-footed geese, snowy owls and gyrfalcons.

Kenya has gazetted a new marine park, the Kisitie-Mpunguti Marine National Park, off the southern part of the Kenya coast, near Shimoni. It covers some 40 sq.m. and encloses three small tropical islands and coral reefs.

Dudhwa Sanctuary on the borders of Uttar Pradesh and Nepal, popularly known as 'Tiger Haven', is to be accorded national park status.

The State Government of Sabah is to create its second national park, the Tunku Abdul Rahman National Park, covering 14 sq. m., of which more than half will be coral reefs and sea, and the remainder includes the greater part of the island of Gaya and the whole of the 60-acre island of Sapi. The park will protect the last remaining primary rain forest in the area, including a species of *Quassia* belonging to a sub-genus formerly only known from South America. The beach flora is undisturbed.

Tasmania has extended two of its national parks, adding 1214 ha of Mount Rufus to the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair park, and 1157 ha to Mount William park, which contains the only examples of coastal scrub and lagoons in the state's sanctuary system.

Hastings Country Park in East Sussex, opened last July, consists of four miles of unspoilt coastline, with 500-ft cliffs.

NEW NATURE RESERVES

The Nature Conservancy Council has declared three new national nature reserves: Leigh, Essex, 634 acres of saltmarsh and mudflats in the Thames estuary; Swanton Novers Woods, Norfolk, 147 acres of ancient deciduous woodland; and the Lizard, Cornwall, 103 acres of heathland on Goonhilly Downs, including good stands of the Cornish heath *Erica vagans*. Extensions to the Derbyshire Dales and Lindisfarne national nature reserves are also announced.

Perivale Wood, Middlesex, in the Brent valley about nine miles from Central London, has been declared an official Local Nature Reserve by the London Borough of Ealing. The wood was bought in 1922 by the Selborne Society as a memorial to Gilbert White. It is still rich in wildlife: records include 110 birds, 200 moths and 320 flowering plants.

The RSPB has bought more than 6000 acres of marsh and tidal mudflat along the north-east shore of Morecambe Bay, Lancashire, opposite Bolton-le-Sands and Carnforth, and not far from its existing Leighton Moss reserve. Many thousands of shore birds winter there.

Derbyshire Naturalists' Trust have acquired Millers' Dale Quarry in the Wye valley as a 60-acre nature reserve. It is leased from the Peak Park Planning Board, to whom the owners, ICI, gave it two years ago.

Steep Holm, a small island off Somerset, in the Bristol Channel, is to be established as a nature reserve in memory of Kenneth Allsop. It has a large gully and is famous as the only place in Britain where the wild poppy grows.

A 30-acre reedbed at Filsham Farm, owned by the Hastings District Council, is to be managed as a nature reserve by the Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation.

Tow Hill, formerly two fell farms on the western slopes of Snaizholme valley to the south-west of Hawes, is the first reserve declared by the Yorkshire



Naturalists' Trust in the north-west of the county.

The five latest reserves of the Scottish Wildlife Trust: Drummains on the Solway Firth, 13.7 acres of reedbed and salting, by gift. Rhunahaorine Point, 698 acres on the Kintyre coast opposite Gigha, by agreement; it has a wintering flock of 400 Greenland white-fronts, and many waders and water birds breed there. The Loch of Lintrathen, Angus, an important wintering ground for greylag geese. Fargaig, a 12-acre wood in Inverness-shire. The Laird's Bog at Gordon Moss, by purchase.

The purchase of additions to four national wildlife refuges has been approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, viz. 3855 acres to Barnegat refuge, New Jersey; 1238 acres to the Great White Heron refuge in the Florida Keys; 783 acres within the Lake Alice refuge in North Dakota; and 63 acres to Ravaii refuge in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana.

An 800-acre national wildlife refuge has been established at Seal Beach Naval Station, one of the few remaining natural saltmarshes in southern California. Three endangered birds frequent the new reserve: brown pelican, clapper rail and least tern.

A new National Audubon Society sanctuary along the Platte River in central Nebraska was dedicated in late March, at a time when great flocks of lesser sandhill cranes and other waterfowl were resting there on their migration.

The new Sevilletta national wildlife refuge, 220,000 acres of desert grassland in Socorro County, New Mexico, about 65 miles south of Albuquerque, is the largest tract of land ever given to the national wildlife refuge system. It came from the Campbell Family Foundation of Albuquerque, through the Nature Conservancy.

Oregon has acquired a federally financed estuarine sanctuary at the South Slough of Coos Bay, some 250 miles

south of the Columbia River. The sanctuary will provide a natural field laboratory for the study of the balance between exploitation and conservation of marine resources.

The Santee Club has presented the Nature Conservancy with 25,000 acres of oceanfront land in South Carolina, formerly used for duck hunting. The new reserve contains bald eagles, alligators and an important egret rookery. The Conservancy has also recently added 4000 acres to the Barnegat national wildlife refuge in New Jersey.

The Peruvian Ministry of Fisheries has agreed to establish a sanctuary or marine park at the important seabird and seal breeding site at Paracas, south of Lima. The Ministry will also remove its Japanese-type trap-nets from the area.

Two game reserves, Opara and Upper Ogun, have been gazetted in the Western State of Nigeria.

Tunisia is to establish a reserve at Lake Ichkeul, one of the major wetland sites of North Africa, which regularly holds up to 150,000 wintering wildfowl.

Three million acres to the west of Lake Taimyr on the Taimyr peninsula, the northernmost part of the Asian mainland, have been proclaimed a state tundra reserve. A biological station is being set up on the peninsula.

An area of 340 ha at the summit of Lindis Pass, 24 km from Omarama, South Island, with a fine view over natural tussock grassland, has been set aside as a scenic reserve by the New Zealand Minister of Lands.

Cape Pillar State Reserve is newly proclaimed in south-eastern Tasmania. It contains fine coastal scenery, heath-woodland and high lakes. There are no roads and only one ill-defined walking track.

Three island national wildlife refuges in the Pacific have been announced by the

US Fish and Wildlife Service: Howland, 400 acres, Baker, 340 acres, and Jarvis, 1100 acres, all coral islands between 1300 and 1600 miles south-west of Hawaii. Seabirds are returning to nest on Baker Island now that feral cats, introduced by troops during the war, have been removed.

PERSONALIA

Jose M. Mayorga (Spain), Lady Jackson (U.K.), Professor S. Dillon Ripley (USA) and Thomas J. Watson, Jr (USA) have been elected Trustees of the World Wildlife Fund (International). They replace Marchese Inciso della Rochetta (Italy), Dr Werner Schaurte (Germany) and Dr Marcus Wallenberg (Sweden), who have resigned.

Dr Anne LaBastille is the 1974 recipient of the World Wildlife Fund Gold Medal. WWF has also appointed Dr Ira N. Gabrielson (USA), Lord Hurcomb (UK) and Dr Yoshimaro Yamashina (Japan) as Members of Honour, and Dr Carlos Lehmann, General Charles Lindbergh, Robert Cushman Murphy, Desmond Vesey-Fitzgerald and Professor Renzo Videsott (who all died in 1974) to the International Conservation Roll of Honour.

Dr H. Calaby (Australia), Dr Finnur Gudmundsson (Iceland), Dr Paulo Nogueira-Neto (Brazil) and M. K. Ranjitsinh (India) and Dr George B. Schaller (USA) have been appointed Hon. Consultants of the World Wildlife Fund.

In the New Year's Honours List, OBE's went to Stanley Cramp, for his services to ornithology and bird protection, and to Peter Garihwaite, former wildlife adviser to the Forestry Commission.

Dr Michael Gane, Director of the Project Planning Centre for Developing Countries at the University of Bradford, has been appointed to the new post of Director for England of the Nature Conservancy Council.

Lynn A. Greenwalt has been nominated to be Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Simon Hicks is the new Director of the National Conservation Corps, succeeding Richard Jennings, who has become technical adviser to the Save the Village Pond Campaign.

Ambassador Åke A. Jonsson, who has just retired from the Swedish Diplomatic Service, has been appointed Director of International Relations at WWF headquarters in Switzerland.

Roy Nelson has retired after 19 years as President of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, and is succeeded by J. V. Jerram.

The van Tienhoven Prize for 1974 went to Per Olof Swanberg, the distinguished Swedish ornithologist, in recognition of his work on behalf of the bird life of Hornborgasjön and restoration of this lake.

OBITUARY

Mohammed A. Badshah, formerly Wild Life Officer for Madras State, and latterly Zoological Adviser to the Dubai Government and founder of the Saudi Arabian Natural History Society, died in Dubai in January 1974.

Eddie Balfour, the RSPB's representative in Orkney from 1936 until his retirement in March 1973, has died.

Orville Crowder, pioneer of wildlife tourism and founder of the World Nature Association, died on August 6, aged 70.

Dr F. Carlos Lehmann of Cali, one of Colombia's leading conservationists, died in September.

Margaret Morse Nice, the distinguished American ornithologist, died on June 26, aged 90.

Dr Günther Niethammer, the distinguished German ornithologist, died in January 1974, aged 65.