

## INTERNATIONAL

**New Parties to CITES**

The total number of Parties to CITES has risen to 128 with the accession of Cote d'Ivoire on 21 November 1994 (effective 19 February 1995) and Comoros on 23 November 1994 (effective 21 February 1995).

Source: *TRAFFIC USA*, 14 (1), 23.

**New World Heritage Sites**

At its annual meeting in December 1994, the World Heritage Committee added 60,000 sq km of new land to the list of protected natural sites.

As well as two new African sites (*Oryx*, 29 [2], 77), the new sites are: Australian Fossil Mammal Sites at Riversleigh and Naracoorte; Los Katios National Park, Colombia; the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary, Oman; Doñana National Park, Spain; Canaima National Park, Venezuela; Ha-Long Bay, Vietnam; Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves, extending the existing Australian East Coast Temperate and Subtropical Rainforest Park by 35 per cent; and the addition of the Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Wilderness Park to Canada's Glacier Bay/Wrangell/St Elias/Kluane World Heritage Site.

Source: *IUCN Bulletin*, No. 1 1995, 4.

**Globally threatened ducks**

According to the conclusions of Anatidae 2000, the first international conference on the ecology, conservation and management of the world's ducks, geese and swans, which took place on 5–9 December 1994, nine of the world's 159 species of Anatidae are predicted to become extinct in the

next 10 years unless action is taken. A further 22 species are globally threatened. Numerical population estimates exist for only 58 per cent of the group. There are 410 biogeographic populations recognized by the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau and for the 287 of these for which trend data exist, 34 per cent are declining. Action plans for four species – *Branta ruficollis*, *Anser erythropus*, *Marmaronetta angustirostris* and *Oxyura leucocephala* were finalized during the conference and a *Global Action Plan for Anatidae* will be published this year.

Source: *IWRB News*, January 1995, 1 & 4–5.

**Bear bile trade should be stopped**

An international symposium on the trade in bear parts for medicinal purposes held in September 1994 in Seattle, Washington, USA, concluded that the trade in bear gall bladders is impacting wild bears in Asia and, to a lesser degree, in North America. The best way to help Asia's bears appears to be to limit the use of bear bile products, perhaps through government promotion of alternatives. The use of farmed bile and bile from legally killed bears is unlikely to ease the pressure on wild bears and in fact may increase it. As long as the use of bile is sanctioned there will be a market for it and this will promote unregulated killing.

Source: *International Bear News*, February 1995, 3–4.

**New tiger sanctuary**

A new International–Russian Siberian Tiger Sanctuary was endorsed by the Russian Prime Minister on 13 January. The sanctuary was proposed in June

1994 by the Amur Tiger programme, which was developed by tiger experts, environmental educators, wildlife law officials and biologists in an effort to save the last remaining Siberian (Amur) tigers, whose current population is estimated at fewer than 160 individuals.

Source: *Wildlife Matters*, Spring 1995, No. 6, 9.

**Loggerheads' long journey**

Research has confirmed that loggerhead turtles *Caretta caretta* hatched in Japan migrate to feed off Baja California, a peninsula on Mexico's west coast. The journey probably takes about 2 years and it is believed that the young turtles stay in these feeding grounds for about 5 years before returning to Japan as adults. The turtle's journey takes them through the North Pacific fishery where, although drift-nets have been banned since 1992, they are threatened by long-line fisheries. It is estimated that more than 1000 young turtles die on the way to Japan each year and there are now fewer than 3000 nesting females there. Australian loggerheads are suspected of making a similar journey to Chile and large numbers are probably dying in the South Pacific fishery, which may explain why the number of loggerheads nesting in Australia has fallen by 50 per cent in the last decade – only 1000 females remain.

Source: *New Scientist*, 6 May 1995, 5.

## EUROPE

**Steller's sea eagle trade**

Ten Steller's sea eagles *Haliaeetus pelagicus* have been



Above: barberry carpet, Essex emerald and reddish buff; Right: Moth Project logo (Drawings: Ian Hughes).

taken from Magadan State Reserve in Kamchatka, Russia, and exported by a private company that supplies animals to zoos with approval from the Russian environment ministry. It is believed that one pair was imported into the UK and another to a US zoo. Kamchatka has the only breeding population – about 2200 pairs – of this species, some of which winter in Japan. The news has prompted calls for the species to be listed on Appendix I of CITES.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, May 1995, 59.

### Russia's nature reserves in trouble

At the end of 1994 the directors of Russia's federal nature reserves (Zapovedniki) were called to the financial department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources to be told that they would have much reduced funds in 1995, only about 10 per cent of that allocated in 1990. At a subsequent meeting organized by reserve directors they wrote a letter of protest to the President and agreed to create an Association for the Support of Zapovedniki and National Parks, a professional and advocacy group providing an independent forum to protect the rights of employees and uphold the laws in these

protected areas.

Source: *Russian Conservation News*, January 1995, 3.

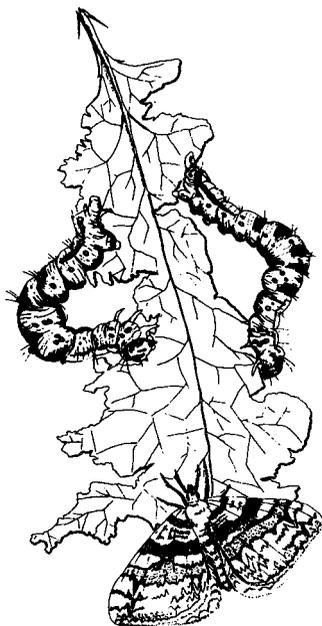
### Bears under poaching pressure

The Koni Peninsula on the Sea of Okhotsk near Magadan in Russia has a very high density of brown bears *Ursus arctos*. Despite occurring in a protected area, the bears are being killed by poachers for their skins and gall bladders. The State Hunting Office has no money for rangers, equipment or patrol flights. The Institute of Biological Problems of the North, Magadan and the Regional Hunting Office have established a Coastal Bear Project and are seeking funds for bear protection along the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk.

Source: *International Bear News*, February 1995, 14–15.

### New persistent pollutant found in Baltic animals

A new persistent pollutant has been detected in Baltic wildlife. Bis (4-chlorophenyl) sulfone (BCPS), which is used in the production of high-temperature polymers and in reactive dyes. It is a by-product of pesticide production and has been identified as a contaminant of perch *Perca fluviatilis* muscle at three locations in the coastal area of Latvia. It was also found in grey seal *Halichoerus*



*grypus* blubber and in an egg from a white-tailed sea eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* from the Swedish Bothnian Sea and Baltic coast. The environmental fate and ecotoxicological impact of BCPS need to be investigated in more detail.

Source: *Ambio*, 24 (2), 119–123.

### Moths being captive bred

Captive breeding of three species of endangered moths in UK zoos has had some success, despite difficulties. In 1992 the barberry carpet *Pareulype berberata* was reduced to a single hedgerow in Suffolk, the reddish-buff *Acosmetia caliginosa* was confined to a patch of heathland in the Isle of Wight, and the Essex emerald, a British subspecies of *Thetidia smaragdaria*, was assumed to be extinct in the wild, the last 11 caterpillars having been collected for their own safety in 1987. Maintaining the captive colonies has been difficult due to extremes of weather and to predators entering, and moths

and larvae leaving, the netted enclosures. The founding stock of barberry carpets was approximately 300 pupae and by the end of the 1994 season the estimated zoo population was 2700 pupae. Trial releases in the grounds of Dudley Zoo started in 1994 and at the end of the season one larva was found – a second generation from those released. The reddish-buff captive colony started with 70 pupae, increased to 590 at the end of 1993 but declined to 60 by the end of 1994. One of the problems with this species is that if more than six moths are kept together they become sufficiently stressed to cause little or no breeding success. *Source: Re-Introduction News*, No. 9, 1994, 12.

### Sand-eel fishery to reopen

The sand-eel fishery in Shetland, UK, is to reopen after a 5-year closure following a crash in the sand-eel population. Conservationists fear that the measures proposed to safeguard the sand-eel population are inadequate and reopening the fishery will threaten seabirds, including Arctic terns *Sterna paradisaea*, kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* and puffins *Fratercula arctica*, that depend on sand eels for food. *Source: New Scientist*, 15 April 1995, 11.

### Wolf proposal favoured

A proposal to reintroduce the grey wolf *Canis lupus* to the Scottish Highlands in the UK, was put to public vote through BBC TV. Of the viewers who voted, 75 per cent were in favour. The proposal has been made by the Carnivore Wildlife Trust, which is seeking funds for a feasibility study. *Source: Carnivore Wildlife*

Trust, 35 Church St, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 2BA, UK. Tel/Fax: 01865 373241.

### Dartford warblers benefit from warmer winters

There has been a dramatic increase in the population of Dartford warblers *Sylvia undata dartfordiensis* in the UK. Numbers fell to 11 pairs in 1963 due to loss of lowland heathland habitat in southern England and the very severe winter of 1962/63. Now, due to recent mild winters, there are around 1600 pairs and the species has recolonized many southern counties. *Source: New Scientist*, 1 April 1995, 11.

### Red kites expand range

Red kites *Milvus milvus* reintroduced into the UK in recent years had their best breeding season to date in 1994: 28 pairs reared 50 young and the birds are dispersing to areas where they disappeared many years ago. *Source: Avicultural Magazine*, 100 (4), 225.

### Burdur Lake a little safer

Plans for an industrial estate on the shores of Burdur Lake in Turkey, the single most important wintering site for the globally threatened white-headed duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, have been shelved after opposition from conservation groups. However, opposition to a planned airport on the lake shore suffered a setback when a court case brought by DHKD, a Turkish conservation organization, was dismissed due to procedural shortcomings. *Source: World Birdwatch*, 17 (1), 3.

### Turtles in Cyprus

As few as 300–400 green turtles *Chelonia mydas* and 2000 loggerheads *Caretta caretta* nest in the Mediterranean and for both species, but particularly the former, Northern Cyprus is extremely important. The Government of Northern Cyprus passed legislation to close the two main nesting beaches at Alagadi from 20.00 to 08.00 h and the new law is being enforced successfully. In 1994 on 80 beaches biologists recorded 461 green turtle nests and 519 loggerhead nests, representing 154 and 173 females, respectively. Of the nests documented 402 hatched and 344 were depredated, pre- or post-hatching (the fate of the rest could not be determined). The possibility of using cages and fences to protect the nests is being investigated and a hatchery is planned. *Source: Marine Turtle Newsletter*, No. 69, 18–19.

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## AFRICA

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### Hunter's hartebeest numbers fall

The population of Hunter's hartebeest or hirola *Damaliscus hunteri*, which occurs in the wild only in a 23,000-sq-km area in north-eastern Kenya and south-west Somalia, has fallen from 14,000 in 1973 to 2000, according to a hirola task force composed of government and non-governmental organizations. The cause of the decline is unknown. *Source: African Wildlife News* March–April 1995, 3.

### Goliath frog listed

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has classified Central Africa's goliath frog *Conraua*

*goliath* as threatened, with effect from 9 January 1995. It occurs only along major rivers in parts of Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and south-west Cameroon and is threatened because of human exploitation and environmental disruption. Collectors pay a high price for the species and although Cameroon banned their export in 1992, some have arrived in the USA since.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, March–April 1995, 7.

### Kenya burns more ivory

The Kenya Government burned 10 tonnes of ivory and other wildlife trophies on 9 February, reaffirming the country's 'commitment to save the elephant'. To help reduce conflict between people and elephants, the Kenya Wildlife Service established a Problem Animal Management Unit in 1995 and adopted an early strike policy on marauding elephants. As a result human deaths from elephants fell to 15 in 1994, from highs of 40 in 1992 and 35 in 1993.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, March–April 1995, 8.

### Mountain gorillas killed

In March poachers killed four mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. The motive for the attack was suspected to have been the capture of one or more infants – one of the dead gorillas was a lactating female. Uganda National Parks is conducting an intensive investigation into the deaths and has stepped up patrols in the park. Source: FFI/IGCP, 28 March 1995.

### Cattle invade game reserve

Tutsi refugees returning to north-eastern Rwanda from

Uganda and Tanzania are causing problems in the 375-sq-km Mutara Game Reserve. Refugees have brought 500,000 long-horned cattle into the reserve to graze in grasslands that were once used primarily by buffalo, waterbuck, eland, topi and other native herbivores of the Akagera ecosystem. The influx of cattle has led to overgrazing and soil erosion. Wildlife areas have been reduced by one-third, increasing the risk of water and food shortages.

Source: *African Wildlife News*, May–June 1995, 3.

### Elephants not for sale

In March, Zimbabwe's National Parks and Wild Life Department offered for sale 8600 elephants, most of them in drought-stricken Hwange National Park in the north-west of the country. However, on 10 May the Government announced that it was suspending the translocation of wildlife from its national parks and game reserves and banning all exports of live wild animals until a nation-wide survey of the country's major wildlife species could be conducted. The decision was made to ensure that such sales and translocations are in the best interests of the elephants – there have been reports of unscrupulous deals and corruption surrounding sales of wild animals. There are around 30,000 elephants in the park and, unless some are moved elsewhere or culled, it is predicted that hundreds will die as a result of food and water shortages.

Sources: *New Scientist*, 15 April 1995, 6; *African Wildlife Update*, May–June 1995, 1 & 8.

### Zimbabwe's rhinos starting to recover

For the first time in 10 years, numbers of rhinos in Zimbabwe are increasing. In early 1995 there were an estimated 260 black rhinos *Diceros bicornis* and 130 white rhinos *Ceratotherium simum*. With few exceptions, the country's remaining rhinos are found in eight areas: four Intensive Protection Zones (IPZs) and four private land conservancies. No rhinos have been lost to poachers in the IPZs in more than 14 months and no dehorned rhinos have been killed on private lands in 2 years. Source: *African Wildlife Update*, March–April 1995, 6–7.

### Migration corridors need protection

A new report from Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks identifies two migration corridors that are currently unprotected but that are critical to the long-term survival of the country's wildlife. One connects parks and reserves in the south-west and the other links a complex of protected areas in the north-east. Access to both is threatened by fencing and livestock grazing. In the south-west three of the major migratory species – wildebeest, hartebeest and eland – have declined dramatically, and wildlife in the region is now effectively cut off from sources of surface water to the north. In the north-east most wildlife populations are increasingly restricted to protected areas, which are too small to maintain them.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, May–June 1994, 4.

### Search for rare fern

Botanists from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, UK, are

searching the mountain ridges of Mauritius for endangered plant species, including more specimens of a fern *Adiantum asarifolium*. Only two individuals of this fern are known in the wild and there is one individual in the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. A propagation programme is to be set up on the island and spores from the Edinburgh specimen are to be taken to Mauritius to improve the genetic health of the species. *Source: The Times*, 25 April 1995.

### Plan to save the coelacanth

The World Bank is considering a plan to save the coelacanth. Once believed extinct, the fish was rediscovered in 1938 off the Comoros Islands, where it is now threatened by fishermen who inadvertently catch and kill coelacanths on their lines. A team of scientists, which has been studying the species from a submarine since 1987, report that in one area in December 1994 they found only one-third of the number of the fish occurring in 1989. Many fish recognized individually have disappeared and no young fish have been seen. The coelacanth bears live young, which makes the species especially vulnerable if pregnant females are caught. The proposed conservation project involves improving fisheries near the shore but outside the range of the coelacanth and installing underwater cameras near the caves where coelacanths live, making the fish a tourist attraction.

*Source: New Scientist*, 29 April 1995, 6.

## ASIA (EXCLUDING INDO-MALAYA)

### Oryx reintroduction complete

The world's most successful programme for reintroducing captive-bred animals to the wild will be completed this year when seven Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx* bred in the USA are released into the wild in Oman. They will be the last captive-born animals needed by the project and will join an estimated 288 oryx already in the wild. Most of these are descended from the nine animals that were brought together as the world herd after the FFI-led capture of three wild oryx on the Oman/Aden border in 1962 (see *Oryx*, 16 [4], 305).

*Source: BBC Wildlife*, May 1995, 58.

### Ostrich breeding project in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development has started a programme to breed and reintroduce red-necked ostriches *Struthio camelus* into the former range of the extinct Arabian subspecies *S. c. syriacus*. Seven birds of Sudanese origin (*S. c. camelus*) were released into the Mahazat As Sayd Protected Area in western Saudi Arabia in June 1994 and are being monitored to determine if they will survive and breed without supplementary food and water.

*Source: Re-Introduction News*, No. 9, 1994, 5.

### Capture plan for baiji

There is a plan this year to capture baiji or Yangtze River dolphins *Lipotes vexillifer* and release them into a lake that

was once a bend on the Yangtze River. This species exists only in the lower reaches of the river, which is so overfished, polluted, disturbed and channelized that it is no longer suitable habitat. A survey of the species's known range in 1994 yielded only two sightings. An existing baiji reserve along the river is ineffective because fishing continues and boat traffic is unchecked.

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

### Chance for Japanese ibis

A female Japanese crested ibis *Nipponia nippon* borrowed from China has laid three eggs after mating with the last known male of the species in Japan. It is the first time that a Japanese crested ibis has been known to lay an egg in Japan since 1982. *Source: The Guardian* 19 April 1995.

### Flying fox extinct in wild

The Formosan flying fox *Pteropus dasymallus formosus* has become extinct in the wild due to habitat alteration and intensive hunting for food and the pet trade. Several hundred individuals of this subspecies were seen 10 years ago in Green Island, the only habitat in Taiwan for this endemic taxon. There may be only 8–10 individuals in captivity, which may not be sufficient to establish a viable captive population.

*Source: Bat News*, July 1995, 5.

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## INDO-MALAYA

**Whale-shark fishery banned in Maldives**

Fishing for whale sharks *Rhincodon typus* has been banned in the Maldivian archipelago because of declining stocks, the low monetary value of the seasonal fishery and the possible benefits of the species to the tuna fishery and the tourism industry.

Source: *Shark News*, March 1995, 3.

**Dam could harm wild ass ...**

As well as displacing 1 million people and destroying 3500 sq km of forest and 2000 sq km of farmland, it now appears that India's Narmada Valley Development Project could drastically affect the wild asses *Equus hemionus* of Gujarat's Little Rann of Kutch. The population of around 2000 asses will be adversely affected by a proposed network of canals linked to the Sardar Sarovar Project – one of the largest dams in the Narmada complex. The canals will disrupt the saltflats, much of which are a wild ass sanctuary, by destroying vegetation around the bays (small raised islands), the asses' primary grazing and breeding areas. Changes in irrigation, land-use patterns and soil moisture regimes will also affect other species.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, March 1995, 66.

**...and other species too**

Large dams on the Narmada River in Madhya Pradesh, India, will destroy prime wildlife habitats and drive some species to extinction locally. The Narmada Sagar dam alone will submerge 400 sq km of

prime wildlife habitat, affecting many endangered large mammals, including the tiger. As the floodwaters rise, the habitats of otters, fishing cats, freshwater turtles and crocodiles will disappear. The fishing cat *Felis viverrina* is known to live only on the Kitti Islands in this area and it could become extinct there. To offset some losses, biologists have suggested establishing three new protected areas as refuges for displaced animals and captive-breeding programmes for turtles and otters so that populations can be re-established in other rivers.

Source: *New Scientist*, 4 February 1995, 8.

**Dolphin under increasing pressure**

The Ganges River dolphin *Platanista gangetica* is coming under increasing pressure because of intensification of fishing operations in the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. Dolphins are drowning in gill-nets, which are being used increasingly. Dolphin sanctuaries should be declared, and regulations introduced to control the fishery. However, implementation would be difficult because fishermen regard dolphins as competitors.

Source: *Tiger Paper*, 22 (1), 11–13.

**Hope for Orissa's turtles**

In their pending court case against the Orissa Government regarding industrial development near Bhitarkanika Turtle Sanctuary at Gahirmatha, conservationists have been cheered by the fact that an Expert Committee called by the court reported in favour of conservation (see *Oryx*, 28 [3], 156–157). The report calls for restricted use of Talchua jetty, control over shrimp farming

and suspension of road building in the sanctuary. The Orissa Government has elected not to introduce a bill to remove part of the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary from protected area status. The Chief Minister of Orissa is concerned about the turtles, and at his request, the US Government has agreed to provide technical assistance to enable the use of turtle excluder devices in nets in offshore waters.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, No. 69, 25.

**India's fish in trouble**

Biologists working for the Zoological Survey of India say that 59 species of fish are threatened as a result of human activities in and along India's rivers. Of 440 species of freshwater fish, 25 are endangered, 20 vulnerable and 14 rare. One species may already be extinct: *Barilius radiolatus* was last seen in 1868 in the Narmada River, the site of a major dam project. However, in Karnataka the team rediscovered the gold-and-black striped *Etroplus canarensis*, which was last recorded in 1878.

Source: *New Scientist*, 4 February 1995, 8.

**Mugger plan**

The IUCN is setting up a crocodile ranching programme in Nepal to benefit the mugger, or marsh crocodile, *Crocodylus palustris* and local people. When the wild populations in the south of the country have been stabilized by releasing captive-bred muggers, local people will be allowed to collect eggs or hatchlings and sell them to the breeding facility. When these crocodiles grow large enough to survive in the wild they will be

released. Other crocodiles bred and reared at the facility will be sold to private ranchers in the area. The scheme should discourage poaching because private ranches will be granted permits to sell skins only for the number of animals they are known to have received.

Source: *Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter*, 14 (1), 7–8.

### Wildlife fur trade being controlled in Nepal

The flourishing illegal trade in fur coats made from skins of endangered species in the tourist shops in Kathmandu, Nepal, was the focus of an article in *Oryx* (27 [4], 231–238). As a result of a meeting in July 1994 convened by the Nepal Forum for Environmental Journalists, which was attended by government officials, non-governmental organization representatives and researchers (including J. Heinen and B. Leisure, authors of the *Oryx* article), measures were agreed to address the problem. Already measures appear to be having an effect. In late July and August, Heinen and Leisure visited many of the shops surveyed over 2 years previously and saw no furs on display.

Source: *Conservation Biology*, 9 (2), 246–248.

### Hong Kong's dolphins threatened

Hong Kong's population of Chinese white dolphins (a subspecies or close relative of the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin *Sousa chinensis*), which is believed to number between 40 and 100, is threatened by blasting, land-filling, dredging and dumping of toxic mud associated with the construction of Hong Kong's new airport. Other problems

include boat traffic, pollution and overfishing. A sanctuary has been proposed but no suitable site has been identified.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, January / February 1995, 13.

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## NORTH AMERICA

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### US Endangered Species Act under threat

The US Endangered Species Act is under threat from conservatives in Congress who think it protects endangered species at the cost of economic development and the rights of landowners. Since the elections in November 1994 gave the Republicans a majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, the number of the attacks on the Act has increased and several bills before Congress have been designed to weaken the government's power to enforce the law. Conservationists have launched a campaign to save the act, which they fear may be eliminated or stripped of its power when it comes up for reauthorization later this year.

Source: *New Scientist*, 22 April 1995, 9.

### Alaska abandons wolf kill

After an investigation of Alaska's wolf control programme, which had been suspended in December by the state's Board of Game, the new Alaska Governor decided in February to cancel the programme altogether. The investigation found that wolf traps were also ensnaring and killing caribou, moose, foxes and golden eagles.

Source: *National Parks*, March / April 1995, 11.

### Whooping crane numbers fall slightly

At the end of 1994 there were 261 whooping cranes in the world compared with 268 at the end of 1993. Of the total, 133 (125 adults and 8 young) comprised the flock that migrates between Aransas, Texas, USA and Wood Buffalo, Canada. This flock numbered only 12 birds when the whooping crane recovery effort started in the early 1920s.

Source: *Grus Americana*, 34 (2), 3.

### Owl protection and jobs

When restrictions on logging were introduced in 1991 in Oregon, USA, to protect the northern spotted owl *Strix occidentalis caurina*, most politicians predicted enormous job losses in the timber industry. However, unemployment in the state has fallen to 5 per cent, its lowest level in a generation. While Oregon lost 15,000 jobs in forest industries in the last 5 years – compared with 100,000 predicted – it gained nearly 20,000 in high technology with timber workers being retrained for many of them. Oregon is still the nation's biggest timber producer but instead of using 300-year-old trees from public land, mills are relying on wood from plantations, most of them on private land, and are using the timber more efficiently.

Source: *Northwest Conservation Greater Ecosystems Alliance*, Fall 1994, 19.

### Wolves reintroduced

Early this year 15 grey wolves *Canis lupus* were reintroduced into central Idaho, USA, and 14 were released into Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. One of the Idaho wolves was subsequently shot while

allegedly feeding on a calf it had killed, but forensic evidence suggests that the calf was dead before the wolf found it. The radio-collar of another wolf has been discovered but the carcass has not been found. *Sources: Endangered Species Bulletin*, March / April 1995, 16–17; *New Scientist*, 1 April 1995, 11; 13 May 1995, 11.

### Bear reintroduction

Twelve black bears from Great Smoky Mountains National Park are to be released in Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in Tennessee as a pilot project for a reintroduction effort. *Source: International Bear News*, February 1995, 25.

### Bald eagle project success

Between 50 and 100 nesting pairs of American bald eagles *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* once inhabited New York State but by 1974 only a single non-productive pair remained. New York's Department of Environmental Conservation started on the re-establishment of the species as one of its first projects in 1975 and between 1976 and 1988, 198 nestling bald eagles were reared and released at four sites. By 1994 there were 23 breeding pairs in the state and if the population continues to grow at the current rate the recovery goal of 40–50 nesting pairs will be reached by the end of the century.

*Source: Re-Introduction News*, No. 9, 1994, 3.

### 16 more species listed

During October and November 1994 the US Fish and Wildlife Service listed 16 species as Endangered. They include 12 plant species endemic to the

Hawaiian Islands, two Puerto Rican trees and the Appalachian elktoe *Alasmodonta raveneliana*, a freshwater mussel endemic to the upper Tennessee River system in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. *Source: Endangered Species Bulletin*, January / February 1995, 22.

### Burying beetle update

About 50 American burying beetles *Nicrophorus americanus* released on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts in July 1994, bred, producing more than 400 young (see *Oryx*, 29 [2], 84–85) *Source: Endangered Species Bulletin*, March / April 1995, 18.

### Toad in peril

The Biodiversity Legal Foundation has petitioned the US Fish and Wildlife Service for emergency listing of the Amargosa toad *Bufo nelsoni* as Endangered. Less than 40 years ago thousands of these toads inhabited Oasis Valley in southern Nevada; today the endemic population probably consists of fewer than 100 individuals. The factors adversely affecting the species and its habitat include grazing, off-road vehicle use, grading for flood control and use of heavy machinery for development of commercial enterprises. The introduction of non-native predators (catfish and crayfish), pollution and diversion of springwater have also directly affected the toads. *Source: Froglog*, December 1994, 3–4.

### Sea otters on San Nicolas

A survey in December 1994 of the introduced population of southern sea otters *Enhydra lutris nereis* at San Nicolas

Island, California, USA (see *Oryx*, 28 [2], 95) found 16 independent individuals and one dependent pup, the highest count since March 1994. The otters continue to produce pups but recruitment of juveniles into the adult population is uncertain. *Source: Endangered Species Bulletin*, March / April 1995, 18.

### Sentence for spider dealer

A California reptile and spider dealer was sentenced in November 1994 to 8 years and 9 months in prison for smuggling more than 600 Mexican red-kneed tarantulas *Brachypelma smithi* from Mexico into the USA to sell them as pets, violating the US Lacey Act. The spider is also protected by Mexican law and has been on CITES Appendix II since 1985.

*Source: Endangered Species Bulletin*, March / April 1995, 14.

### Florida acts to protect turtles

Florida has restricted gill-netting to protect sea turtles from entanglement and death by drowning but the new regulations do not go far enough. Conservationists recommended 24-hour closure of gill-net fishing between January and May; the new rule prohibits gill-netting at night in state waters between Ponce Inlet and Jupiter Inlet from January to June. Florida's previous attempts to protect turtles – placing limits on the number and length of nets that could be placed and stopping the practice of leaving nets untended for long periods of time – have achieved little. *Source: Marine Turtle Newsletter*, No. 69, 28.

### Butterfly poachers plead guilty

Three men in the USA have pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to poach and trade in endangered and other protected butterflies from national parks, forests and wildlife refuges and to trade in butterflies taken illegally in Mexico. The men agreed to forfeit their collections of protected butterflies seized under federal search warrants in 1992 – a total of 2012 protected butterflies were taken and traded in the 9 years the conspiracy operated. The men face the prospect of up to 5 years in prison and \$250,000 in fines.

Source: *Endangered Species Bulletin*, March / April 1995, 4–6.

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## CENTRAL AMERICA

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### New Mexican reserves

In November 1994 the Mexican Government designated two new wildlife reserves totalling 4850 sq km adjacent to Big Bend National Park in Texas, USA. Efforts had been under way for 60 years to protect the areas in the border states of Coahuila and Chihuahua. The reserves are located in the Chihuahuan Desert, a diverse ecosystem that includes the 3240-sq-km Big Bend. Two other Texas-managed protected areas also adjoin Big Bend and the Mexican reserves.

Source: *National Parks*, March / April 1995, 12.

### Boas settle in

The release in 1993 of 28 captive-born Virgin Island boas *Epicrates monensis granti* on Cayo Ratones, an island off

Puerto Rico, appears to have been successful. Minimum survival estimates for the first year exceed 54 per cent and the four snakes monitored by radiotelemetry show foraging behaviour identical to that of wild snakes. Most of the neonate and subadult animals doubled or tripled their body weights in the first year and five offspring were produced. Further releases are scheduled on Cayo Ratones and reintroduction of the boa to a site in the US Virgin Islands is planned for 1996.

Source: *Re-Introduction News*, No. 9, 1994, 13.

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## SOUTH AMERICA

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### Spectacled bear status

Information collected for the Bear Conservation Action Plan, which is nearly complete, revealed that spectacled bears *Tremarctos ornatus* are doing a lot better in the wild than generally reported. There is an estimated minimum of 10,000 wild spectacled bears and the true number could be several times that. Unbroken tracts of the Andes stretching more than 100 km and extending over 3000 m of elevation still exist for this species in the southern third of its range (Peru and Bolivia) and 14 of the 42 conservation units containing spectacled bears in Venezuela and Ecuador are over 2500 sq km in size. Hunting, however, has become as important as habitat destruction in bear population declines, which was not the case 15 years ago. The number of parks infiltrated by drug traffickers, who are also often involved in illegal trade in animals, has tripled in the past 15 years and is a particular problem in Colombia, which,

among the species's range countries, has the most drug related problems and the least knowledge about its bears.

Source: *International Bear News*, February 1995, 4–6.

### New bird in Bolivia

A new species of bird, the diademed tapaculo *Scytalopus schutzenbergi* was described in December 1994. It was first discovered in 1993 in dense, temperate cloud forest in the Bolivian Andes only 1.5 h drive from the capital, La Paz.

Subsequent field-work and museum research revealed that it is common at elevations of 3100–3300 m in at least four places between central Cochabamba, Bolivia and southern Puno, Peru. Although much of the bird's habitat is remote and appears little disturbed in recent satellite photographs, the type locality is easily accessible by road and has been heavily damaged by the activities of a gold-mining co-operative in the past 5 years.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 17 (1), 2.

### Released caimans breed

A group of black caiman *Melanosuchus niger* was released, amidst much publicity, in 1990 in Normandia Lagoon in the Beni region of Bolivia. It was believed that many of the 25 caimans had emigrated from the lagoon but a recent visit indicated that there are probably 8–10 individuals of the original group still resident and that they are breeding.

Source: *Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter*, 14 (1), 9.

### Problems with introduced lizards

Lizards introduced into the Brazilian island of Fernando de Noronha to kill rats have

turned out to be a bigger threat to native wildlife than the rats. The teju *Tupinambis tequixín* was introduced in the 1970s but instead of eating rats, the lizard preyed on the eggs of seabirds and hawksbill turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata*. After increasing for a few years, the teju population seems to have stabilized and has, a yet unidentified, predator. The governmental environment agency, IBAMA, has to decide whether to leave the island in this new state of balance or allow the teju to be hunted. The teju used to be found throughout north-east Brazil but hunting for its skin and meat has threatened it with extinction on the mainland.  
 Source: *New Scientist*, 18 March 1995, 5.

### Little progress for tamarin

The black-faced lion tamarin *Leontopithecus caissara*, which was discovered in 1990 on the island of Superagüi in Brazil, is in a critical situation. An Action Plan for the species was started in July 1990 and research under its auspices has revealed that the distribution of this tamarin is very restricted, covering 300 sq km on the island of Superagüi and adjacent parts of the mainland in the states of Paraná and São Paulo. Its estimated population size is fewer than 300 individuals divided into three subpopulations. Only one-third of its range is within protected areas and the integrity of one of these – Superagüi National Park – is threatened by tourist development and agricultural invasion. Local people have also attempted to sell the tamarins.  
 Source: *Neotropical Primates*, 2 (suppl.), December 1994, 50–57.

## AUSTRALASIA/ ANTARCTICA

### Reef shock

Scientists at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in Townsville, Queensland, Australia, compared contemporary photographs of the reef with photographs taken as long ago as 1890 and were shocked by what this revealed. Parts of the reef are disappearing fast, particularly the reef flats. The cause – sediment washed from the land – has been suspected for years but has been hard to prove. Reef flats have disappeared in at least nine of the localities identified from old photographs. Branching corals seem to be disappearing faster than rounded forms, perhaps because the arms of the former trap sediment more readily. The destruction could be halted: some farmers have adopted soil conservation measures and road-builders and sewage plant operators have started to regulate the amount of sediment and nutrients they allow to drain into the rivers.  
 Source: *New Scientist*, 4 March 1995, 7.

### Successful breeding of threatened rodents

The Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens in Australia have established captive colonies of heath rat *Pseudomys shortridgei* and smoky mouse *P. fumeus* (classified by IUCN as Vulnerable and Rare, respectively), as part of a recovery programme involving the Victoria Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Both rodents occur in heathland maintained by fires and disruption of fire regimes and habitat loss

threaten their survival. Melbourne Zoo's only female smoky mouse gave birth to a litter of four on 12 February 1995 and two female heath rats caught in the wild in 1993 gave birth to three litters in the first 3 months of 1995. It is anticipated that heath rats bred at the zoo will be released into secure tracts of viable habitat in south-west Victoria in late 1995.  
 Source: Native Mammal Department, Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens, PO Box 74, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia.

### Carp invasion

The European carp *Cyprinus carpio*, an introduced species in Australian waterways, has unexpectedly spread to Tasmania. Experience on the mainland suggests that, unless something is done, the carp will displace trout and other species of fish. The trout-fishing industry brings around £15 million a year to Tasmania so drastic measures are being considered to eradicate the carp, including partially draining the two lakes where they have been found. It is possible that the carp were introduced as live bait.  
 Source: *New Scientist*, 13 May 1995, 6.

### Yellow-eyed penguin reserve burnt

A bush fire has destroyed most of the 68-ha Te Rere Reserve, one of the four remaining sites for the yellow-eyed penguin *Megadyptes antipodes* on mainland New Zealand. Fewer than 40 of the 100 penguins survived the fire, which is believed to have been lit on adjacent farmland. The birds were in moult and could not escape into the water.  
 Source: *BBC Wildlife*, May 1995, 56.

### Skink reintroduction

The New Zealand Department of Conservation released 30 robust skinks *Cyclodina alani* and Whitaker's skinks *C. whitakeri* on Red Mercury Island off the Coromandel Peninsula at the end of 1994. The reintroduction followed a 2-year rat eradication programme. It is believed that the skinks disappeared from the island some centuries ago, probably as a result of predation by the Polynesian rat *Rattus exulans*.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1995, 8.

### Success with rare teal

In November 1994 two Campbell Island teal ducklings hatched in the New Zealand's Department of Conservation's National Wildlife Centre in Wairarapa, the first hatchings in captivity. In January the same pair produced another two ducklings. Since 1984 conservationists have been trying to breed these flightless teal whose only known wild population of 50–100 birds, is confined to Dent Island off the west coast of Campbell Island. While physically and ecologically distinct, the Campbell Island teal and the larger Auckland Island teal have traditionally been considered to be subspecies of the mainland (flighted) brown teal *Anas aucklandica*. Recently analysis of blood proteins indicated that the Campbell Island teal is probably the most ancient teal in New Zealand and is genetically quite separate from other teal.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1995, 5–7.

## OCEANIA

### New wildlife area in PNG

The south face of Mount Stolle, which rises to over 3000 m in one of the most rugged parts of Papua New Guinea, has been officially declared the Mekil Wildlife Management Area. It covers more than 4040 ha of primary rain forest and its fauna includes five species of cuscus, three ring-tails and two tree kangaroos. The achievement is the result of co-operation between PNG's Department of Environment and Conservation, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Ok Tedi Mining Ltd, Highlands Gold and the people of Sokamin village who donated their land.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, February 1995, 10.

### Fiji bans turtle meat sales

Concerned that sea turtles could be hunted to extinction, the Fiji Government has banned sales of turtle meat for 1 year from March 1995 and will consider a permanent ban. Islanders will still be allowed to kill turtles for ceremonial, customary or subsistence purposes. Fiji was one of the region's major consumers of turtle meat: the most recent available figures show that about 20 tonnes of turtle meat, representing about 800 adult turtles, were sold in Fijian markets in 1984. In 1991 Fiji banned the export of unworked turtle shell, prohibited the sale of turtle eggs and enacted a 4-month closed season.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, No. 69, 26.

### Attracting an albatross

An attempt to re-establish a nesting colony of Laysan

albatross *Diomedea immutabilis* on Kaohikaipu Island in Hawaii is going well. About 40 volunteers from the Hawaii Audubon Society are involved in the project, which is using decoys and recordings of calls to attract as many prospecting juvenile birds as possible, in the hope that they will return to breed in future years. In 76 days of observation since December 1994 the albatrosses were seen in the area on 30 days and landed on 19 days.

Source: *'Elepaio*, April 1995, 18.

### New facility for Hawaiian birds

A captive propagation facility for Hawaiian forest birds is being built to work in association with the state's Olinda Endangered Species Facility on Maui. The US-based Peregrine Fund will construct and operate the facility on land made available by Kamahameha Schools Bishop Estate near Hawaii Volcanoes National Park in Ka'u. The US Fish and Wildlife Service will provide funding for most of the construction and half the operational costs. Hawaii once had 140 species of native birds. At least 70 of those are extinct and 30 others are endangered, with 12 of them close to extinction.

Source: *'Elepaio*, April 1995, 20.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Commonwealth Science Council Publications

*Techniques and Methods of Ethnobotany*, David R. Given and Warwick Harris, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1994, 148 pp., CSC(94)RNR-22, ISBN 0 85092 405 7, £9.50 (or 13USD in UNESCO coupons).

*Preparing to Plant Tropical Trees*, K. A. Longman, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995, 238 pp., ISBN 0 85092 418 9, £30 (or 45USD UNESCO coupons) or £24 (35USD Unesco coupons) for students/purchasers from developing countries. Prices include postage and packing. Details of these and other titles, which are all published at cost price, are available from Commonwealth Secretariat Publications, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, UK.

### Aliens

*Aliens*, the first issue of the newsletter of the newly formed IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG), was published in March. The next issue is planned for September 1995. *Contact*: Sarah Lowe, Editor, Centre for Conservation Biology, School of Environmental and Marine Sciences, University of Auckland, Tamaki Campus, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New Zealand. Fax: +64 9 3737 042; e-mail: sjlowe@tmknovl.auckland.ac.nz

### Asian Rhinos

Issue No. 1 of *Asian Rhinos*, the Newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group was published in January 1995. The editors are Thomas J. Foose and Nico J. van Strien.

### Bear News

The February 1995 issue of *International Bear News* was the first of a new publication combining the newsletters of the International Association for Bear Research and Management and the IUCN/SSC Bear Specialist Group. Details from Stephen Herrero, Faculty of

Environmental Design, University of Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4, Canada. Tel: 403 220 6605; Fax: 403 284 4399; e-mail: herrero@evds.ucalgary.ca

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## NEW GROUPS

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### Medicinal Plant Specialist Group

The IUCN/SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group has been formed in response to rising concern from many experts about plant conservation issues relating to medicinal plants. Tony Cunningham and Uwe Schippmann have been appointed as Co-Chairmen. The first meeting will be in late 1995 or early 1996 and a newsletter is in preparation. Any material or news on the conservation of medicinal plants would be gratefully received. *Contact*: Dr Uwe Schippmann, Co-Chair, Medicinal Plant Specialist Group, Bundesamt für Naturschutz, Konstantinstrasse 110, D-53179 Bonn, Germany.

### Galapagos Conservation Trust

A new charitable body to champion the cause of conservation in the Galapagos Islands has been established in the UK. Affiliated to the Charles Darwin Foundation, it aims to support the vital work of the Charles Darwin Research Station and to encourage the Government of Ecuador in its efforts to preserve the islands. *Contact*: The Galapagos Conservation Trust, PO Box 50, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8SB, UK.

### National Avian Research Center

The National Avian Research Center was established in

United Arab Emirates by royal decree in September 1989 by the Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi, H.H. Sheikh Khalif bin Zayed al Nahyan, and went public in October 1994. The Center promotes the sustainable use of houbara bustards and falcons and has established breeding and research projects for these birds with the aim of releasing houbaras to protected areas in the wild and breeding falcons for the sport of falconry to reduce pressure on wild falcons.

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## PEOPLE

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**Mohd Khan bin Momin Khan**, Chairman of the IUCN/SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group, and **Henk Reichart**, Senior Technical Advisor to the Suriname Forest Service and member of the IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group, received Golden Ark Awards from Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in October 1994. The award is given to people who have contributed significantly to wildlife conservation.

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## MEETINGS

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**The Peatlands Convention 1995**. 24–27 July 1995, Edinburgh, UK. *Contact*: Lucy Parkyn, Conference Organizer, The Scottish Raised Bog Conservation Project, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House, Kirk Cramond, Cramond Glebe Road, Edinburgh EH4 6NS. Tel: 0131 312 7765; Fax: 0131 312 8705.

**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, Campús, Central XI, Paraguay.

**2nd International Arctic Ungulate Conference.** 13–17 August 1995, University of Alaska, USA. *Contact:* Dr David R. Klein, Alaska Co-operative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775–7020, USA. Fax: 907 474 6967.

**BioNET–INTERNATIONAL Global Workshop (BIGW 1995).** Global Network for Biosystematics of Invertebrates and Microorganisms. 23–26 August 1995, Cardiff, Wales. *Contact:* BioNET–INTERNATIONAL, Technical Secretariat, Bakeham Lane, Egham, Surrey TW20 9TY, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1784 470111; Fax: +44 (0)1784 470909; e-mail: cabi-bionet@cabi.org

**10th International Waterfowl Ecology Symposium and Wader Study Group Conference.** 15–21 September 1995, Aveiro, Portugal. *Contact:* Rui Rufino, CEMPA/ICN, Rue Filipe Folque 46.50, 1000 Lisboa, Portugal.

**World Pheasant Association International Convention.** 22–24 September 1995, Leeds, UK. *Contact:* J. Readman, WPA International, PO Box 5, Lower Basildon, Reading RG8 9PF, UK.

**4th International Botanic Gardens Conservation Congress.** 25–29 September 1995, Perth, Australia. *Contact:* Congress West, PO Box 1248, West Perth, WA 6872, Australia. Tel: 619 322 6906; Fax: 619 322 1732.

**Bustards and Steppe Habitats.** 29 September–5 October 1995, Abu Dhabi, UAE. *Contact:* NARC, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

**International Conference on Forestry and Forest Products Research–95.** Theme: Sustainable Tropical Forest Management and Commercialization of Research and Development. 3–4 October 1995, Kepong, Malaysia. *Contact:* The Secretariat, CFFPR-95, Forest Research Institute, Kepong, 52109 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Attention: Dr Andrew Wong/Dr Roslan Ismail. Tel: 603 634 2633; Fax: 603 636 7753; e-mail: roslan@frim.gov.my andrew@frim.gov.my

**International Conference on Wetlands and Development.** 8–14 October 1995, Selangor, Malaysia. *Contact:* Muralee Menon, Asian Wetland Bureau, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Malaya, Lembah Pantai, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 603 756 6624; Fax: 603 757 1225.

**4th Symposium on African Herpetology.** 22–27 October 1995, St Lucia, Natal, South Africa. *Contact:* Dr Ortwin Bourquin, Natal Parks Board, PO Box 662 Pietermaritzburg, 3200, South Africa or e-mail: raw@zoology.unp.ac.za

**Marine Conservation Society Conference.** 27–28 October 1995, Manchester, UK. *Contact:* Marine Conservation Society, 9 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5BU. Tel: 01989 566017.

**International Symposium and Workshop on Conservation Biology.** 19–23 November 1995, Kuching, Sarawak. *Contact:* Professor John Beaman,

Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 93400 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. Tel: 60 82 671000; Fax: 60 82 672275; e-mail: jbeaman@ibec.unimas.my

**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.

**Waterbirds, Wetlands and Recreation: Putting Sustainability into Practice.** 19–21 April 1996, Bristol, UK. *Contact:* Graeme Greene, British Ornithologists' Union, c/o British Museum (Natural History), Sub-department of Ornithology, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 6AP, UK.

**Third International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens.** 7–11 September 1996, New York, USA. *Contact:* Third International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens, Attention: Lucy Jones, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225–1099, USA.

**IUCN General Assembly (World Conservation Congress).** 14–23 October 1996, Montreal, Canada. *Contact:* IUCN, Rue Mauverney 28, CH–1196 Gland, Switzerland. Tel: 4122 999 0001; Fax: 4122 999 0002.

**9th Pan African Ornithological Congress.** 1–8 December 1996, Accra, Ghana. *Contact:* Dr Yaa Ntiamoah-Baidu, Ghana Wildlife Society, PO Box 13252, Accra, Ghana.