

New editors for *Oryx*

In August 1997 a group of trustees, staff and advisers started a strategic review of Fauna & Flora International. The aim was to produce a 5-year plan for our activities and as I write this the final draft is being presented to Council for approval. During the review process the group looked at FFI publications, prominent among which is *Oryx*. It was agreed that *Oryx* should not remain static but must develop to meet the needs of its readers and the conservation community in general. *Oryx* has changed little since 1994, when we removed the FFI pages from *Oryx* to a new newsletter *Fauna & Flora News*. That change allowed us more space for papers as well as giving us more opportunity to inform FFI members about our projects and programmes.

Now that *Oryx* is more in line with other academic journals, and its contents are covered by more abstracting and indexing services than before, we felt that it was time to move further forward in our ambition to make *Oryx* even more appealing, both to readers and authors.

We do not want to change *Oryx* so that it is unrecognizable: we will certainly be retaining Briefly, and News and Views, the two sections that met with most approval in the readers' questionnaire survey we conducted in 1993, but they will be reviewed and their form might be revised. The main change, we hope, will be to increase the range of papers we publish to give a greater coverage of the conservation issues of the day, while keeping our focus on threatened species and their habitats.

As editor of *Oryx* I already receive much valuable advice from the members of our Editorial Board. Their main role is to help with the review process for submitted papers, acting as referees themselves or recommending other appropriate people. Without them and the band of other referees the journal would not thrive. Their contribution is beyond measure and we are very grateful to them all.

With such a large board scattered in several countries it has been impractical to hold board meetings, although members contribute

advice and suggestions by other means. The Editorial Board has been renamed the International Board of Editors to reflect its role more closely.

The FFI review group felt that *Oryx* would benefit from having, in addition to the International Board of Editors, a small group of Senior Editors who could meet regularly and guide the journal's growth and development. We have selected a group of six people to serve in this capacity and are delighted to announce them here.

Bill Adams is a lecturer in geography at the University of Cambridge and has carried out conservation research in Africa and the UK. He works on sustainable development and indigenous resource management, particularly in relation to African drylands and wetlands.

Andrew Balmford is a lecturer in conservation biology at the University of Sheffield. He has field experience in Australia, Brazil, Patagonia, Rwanda and Uganda, and his research interests focus, in particular, on identifying priorities for conservation action.

E. J. Milner-Gulland is at the University of Warwick where her research interests include population dynamics of hunted species, particularly those hunted for commercial trade. E. J. is interested in the sustainable-use debate, and the interactions between human decision-making and wildlife population dynamics.

Jeffrey A. McNeely is Chief Scientist at the World Conservation Union (IUCN), where he advises governments on biodiversity policy, organizes international workshops and conferences, and develops new approaches to conservation. He spent 12 years in Asia advising on conservation issues in Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Paul Racey, Regius Professor of Natural History, University of Aberdeen, is a specialist in mammalian reproductive biology with an increasing interest in conservation biology. He is co-chairman of IUCN/SSC's Chiroptera Specialist Group and was founding chairman of The Bat Conservation Trust in the UK.

John G. Robinson, who is Vice-President for International Conservation with the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, is interested in how human uses of tropical forest resources

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affect the biodiversity and long-term survival of ecosystems. He has studied the impact of subsistence and commercial hunting on tropical forest ecosystems, and the social and economic changes associated with declines in the abundance of wildlife.

We welcome them all and look forward to working with them to guide *Oryx* into the next century.

The issues of whaling and the potential resumption of a limited trade in ivory from three African countries, which were covered in recent issues of *Oryx* resulted in several let-

ters to the editor. Some of these are published in this issue. *Oryx* welcomes letters but readers wishing to contribute their views for consideration for publication in News and Views are asked to keep letters as concise as possible. The editor reserves the right to edit long letters (more than 750 words).

Contributions are also welcomed for Briefly. Short items of news should be sent to Catharine Baden-Daintree at the FFI office in Cambridge.

Jacqui Morris, Editor

GUEST EDITORIAL

Changing conservation aims – who will represent wildlife?

Times certainly change. Even campaigning for wildlife conservation has become increasingly complex and confused. Some two decades ago, wildlife campaigns were readily accepted as beneficial to the 'environment' and, hence, ultimately in the best interests of our own species. We accepted the idea that the protection of keystone species – notably large, wide-ranging mammals such as elephants and whales – required the protection of their habitat and that this would contribute to the conservation of a much wider range of species. (This may also help explain the focus over the years of *Oryx* on mammals.) At the same time there was also early recognition that the local human dimension needed to be taken into account. However, we now also know about the existence of profound global-scale threats, particularly climate change but also the ubiquitous, persistent environmental contaminants that now taint all living things. To some extent this new knowledge may help to explain why modern environmental strategies have come to focus on 'the maintenance of biodiversity' and 'sustainable use'.

Change is not always for the better. Wildlife campaigners are increasingly painted as self-seeking, non-scientific misanthropists who are

incapable of seeing the 'bigger picture'. Such rhetoric has helped to splinter the conservation community, with the environmental lobby (focused on urgent global threats) and the animal welfare lobby (focused on the welfare of wildlife) at different ends of a spectrum. Yet the common ground between these interests remains enormous. Environmentalists are now increasingly shy of expressing a fondness for wildlife or concern for welfare matters. Such sentiments are not scientific in a world where what is interpreted as science now provides the *most important conservation doctrine*.

It is also notable that the term 'natural resource management' is increasingly replacing the word 'conservation'. Changes in terminology underline changes in aims and approaches. Why, for another example, has 'sustainable use' displaced 'stepping lightly on the Earth' or its more modern form, the 'precautionary approach'? The cynical might simply note that the first is supported by the more powerful lobby, ranging from multinationals to those local communities that are still inextricably linked to local natural resources. The common interest within this spectrum is a wish not to see their resource use inhibited 'unduly'.

However, is our knowledge of planetary systems really so good that 'sustainable use' should replace precaution as our guiding principle, especially as an actual direction to 'use' in response to human 'needs' seems to be