



Briefly . . . Compiled by Richard Fitter

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

INTERNATIONAL

Convention Ratified

On January 14 the United States became the first country to ratify the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. The total number of signatories is now 43, with the accession of Cambodia, Nigeria and Uruguay.

Pollution of the Sea

The International Marine Pollution Conference convened by IMCO in October 1973 and attended by representatives of 79 countries agreed on an International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. It applies to all ships and to all pollutants, not just oil, and will eventually supersede the International Oil Pollution Convention of 1954.

US Reacts on Whaling

The United States has reacted strongly to the denunciation by Japan and Russia of two of the key decisions made at the International Whaling Commission meeting in June 1973. Dr Kissinger has protested to the Japanese Government at the 'wholesale disregard for the views of all other member nations'. Why, he asks, should there be a Commission if its decisions can simply be ignored, and why should its scientific committee prepare recommendations?

Whaling Petition

A petition calling for the end of commercial whaling signed by 27 leading British industrialists, financiers and trade unionists was presented to the Japanese Embassy in London in December by Spike Milligan on behalf of the Friends of the Earth.

ACF Supports Whaling Ban

The Australian Conservation Foundation has come out in favour of

the cessation of whaling. The Foundation urges the Australian Government to end whaling operations from the Cheynes Beach Whaling Station, to ban the import of whale products, and to use its influence to encourage other countries to cease whaling, or at least accept the proposed 10-year moratorium.

Appeal to Fur Trade

IUCN and WWF recently appealed to the International Fur Trade Federation to accept the provisions of the International Convention signed in Washington in March 1973, and cease to deal in the furs of the endangered species banned under that Convention.

A New Institution

An Institution of Environmental Sciences has been formed in London, with headquarters at 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, SW 7. Its remit covers ecology, pollution, public health, urban problems, genetic effects, climatic conditions and the effects of technology and transport. Its aims include the promotion of education and research in environmental sciences, and it hopes to bring together scientific, professional and teaching disciplines, both governmental and non-governmental, in those sciences.

The Golden Ark

Fourteen more conservationists have been awarded the Order of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands: Sir Herbert Bonar (UK), Professor François Bourlière (France), Professor Dr Rudolf Geigy (Switzerland), Professor Dr Bernhard Grzimek (Germany), Charles de Haes (Belgium), Ernest Kleinwort (UK), Count Léon Lippens (Belgium), Professor Théodore Monod (France), Professor Carlos Munoz (Chile), Perez Olindo (Kenya), Dr Anton Rupert

(South Africa), David Shepherd (UK), Russell Train (USA) and Dr Jan Westermann (Netherlands).

The 1001

WWF announces that the 1001 Nature Trust now has its full complement of 1001 members, and there is a waiting list. This trust was founded by the WWF President, Prince Bernhard, to raise a capital fund to support IUCN/WWF. The members have all contributed at least \$10,000 each.

The Getty Prize

J. Paul Getty, the oil magnate, has given \$50,000 to WWF to be awarded as a prize for an outstanding achievement or outstanding service for the benefit of mankind in wildlife conservation up to the end of 1973. The prize will be awarded in October by a jury, whose announced members so far are Prince Bernhard, Professor Bernhard Grzimek, Sir Julian Huxley and Dr Dillon Ripley.

World Heritage Convention

The United States and Egypt are the first two countries to ratify the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted by the 1971 UNESCO General Conference.

Wetlands Convention Signed

Iran, Finland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are so far the only four signatories of the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance. The UK has designated thirteen wetlands to be brought under the provisions of the Convention.

New IUCN Members

Western Samoa and Iceland have joined IUCN as 34th and 35th state members.

Zoo Magazine Revived

John Aspinall has bought Gerard van Dam's interest in *International Zoo News*, which is now appearing under the editorship of Geoffrey Schomberg. Subscriptions may be sent to him c/o Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4RY (£7 p.a., US\$19.00 or DM60.00).

BRITISH ISLES

From DES to DOE

Responsibility for nature conservation was transferred from the Department of Education and Science to the Department of the Environment on November 1. This includes the servicing of the Advisory Committee on the Animals (Restriction of Importation) Act, which advises the Government on the importation of rare and endangered mammals and reptiles.

Nature Conservancy Council

The new Nature Conservancy Council has announced the following appointments as chairmen of its statutory committees: A. E. Smith, Committee for England; H. A. Maxwell, Committee for Scotland; Dr D. A. Bassett, Committee for Wales; Professor A. D. Bradshaw, Advisory Committee on Science.

New Rabies Legislation

The Rabies Act which recently received the Royal Assent provides powers for an infected area to be cleared of foxes and other wild mammals, enables animals illegally imported to be destroyed, and in various ways tightens up the laws controlling the spread of rabies.

Badgers and TB

Further investigations into the incidence of bovine tuberculosis in badgers has shown that in two areas where TB in cattle is abnormally high, West Cornwall and South Gloucestershire, positive material was collected from 3 out of 102 farms and 7 out of 52 samples respectively. In two other areas where infection of cattle by TB is at or near the national average, the Chilterns and East Sussex, no infected badger material was found. It is not known whether the infection of cattle by TB is at or near the national average, the Chilterns and East Sussex, no infected badger material was found. It is not known whether the two western areas the cattle have infected the badgers, or vice versa, or both are being infected by some third animal, such as rats.

Tunnel for Badgers

A badger underpass is to be constructed under the M5 near Wellington,



Somerset, following the example set when a culvert under the M53 in Cheshire was modified to allow the passage of badgers, foxes and other animals. These underpasses not only help to preserve badgers, which otherwise get killed while keeping to their traditional pathways across motorways, but also protect motorists from accidents due to hitting a badger at high speed.

Seal Hunting Ban

The hunting of common seals in the Shetlands was banned as from September 1973, by an official order under the Seals Conservation Act.

Farm Nature Reserves

Twenty-six areas are now covered by the West Wales Naturalists' Trust's farm nature reserve scheme in Carmarthenshire. Under this scheme naturalists bring to the landowners' attention any animal or plant on their land worthy of conservation, and advise on the management needed to preserve it. Badgers, buzzards, herons, marbled white butterflies and bee orchids are a few of the animals and plants protected so far in this way in Carmarthenshire.

Why Cut Road Verges?

Apart from the undoubted safety aspects of clearing kerbs, sight-lines at dangerous bends and junctions, and road signs, the general contribution of roadside grass-mowing to road safety is an article of faith rather than an established fact, concludes Dr J. M. Way, of Monks Wood, in a report on the management of road verges on rural roads (50p from Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon). The Hampshire County Surveyor and Chief Constable were satisfied that there was no increase in the accident rate in the county following a decision not to mow verges in 1968. Similarly, in Gloucestershire in 1971, no accidents were reported due to long grass obstructing visibility.

The 40th Trust

The Manx Nature Conservation Trust, founded in Douglas, Isle of

Man, in December, will perform the same functions in the Island as the county naturalists' trusts do in England and Wales. The Trust has already been offered two reserves. Inquiries to the Hon. Treasurer, 63 Athol St, Douglas, IOM.

New Conservation Group

The Langstone Harbour Conservation Group has been formed by eight national and local conservation bodies, to safeguard the wildlife and natural resources of one of the richest and most important estuarine areas on the south coast. It holds 6000 wintering brent geese, around 10 per cent of the world population.

Save the Village Pond

A campaign to save village ponds all over the country is being launched by the British Waterfowl Association. Advice on how to achieve this can now be had from the Campaign's Director, Bell House, 111 Lambeth Rd., London, SE1. It is hoped that many ponds may be designated either as nature reserves or as school study areas.

Oil at Loch Eriboll

Sutherland County Council has given outline planning permission for a multi-user oil complex at Loch Eriboll on its north coast. Loch Eriboll is the best and currently the least spoiled deep water loch in the north-west Highlands. It is to receive tank farms, deep water wharfage, a construction yard and possibly an oil refinery 'as soon as possible' if the Council has its way.

Radioactive Caesium in the Sea

Water from the north-eastern part of the Irish Sea can be identified by its radioactive caesium-137, which emanates from the Windscale nuclear fuel processing plant in Cumberland. A recent survey has shown how closely this water hugs the coastline as it travels across the Irish Sea and along the west and north coasts of Scotland, being still detectable off Aberdeen, and even off north-east England. Inshore waters receive almost all the effluents from industrial, sewage disposal and

other sources, and this survey suggests that the dilution capacity of the sea may be far less than is commonly supposed.

Seabird Incidents

Seabirds have again been dying from an unknown cause in the Irish Sea. More than 1000 corpses, mainly of shags and guillemots, were found in February in the Firth of Clyde, Cumberland, North Wales and Northern Ireland. Their livers contained a variety of toxic chemicals, including up to 116 ppm PCB's and 17 ppm DDE.

The 13th recent oiling incident in the Cromarty Firth in North-east Scotland, also in February, has involved 200 mute swans and smaller numbers of whooper swans, goldeneye, tufted duck and scaup.

New Zoo Association

The Association of British Wild Animal Keepers has been formed to promote good relations between professional zoo keepers and zoos, to improve the standards of both public and private wild animal collections, and to promote knowledge of wild animal husbandry. The Membership Secretary is L. Rowe, 2 North Side, Leatherhead Road, Chessington, Surrey.

Harvest Mouse Survey

The Mammal Society appeals for records of harvest mice in Britain for its survey of the status and distribution of the species, organised by Stephen Harris and Roger Trout from the Zoology Department, Royal Holloway College, Englefield Green, Surrey.

Snake and Newt Surveys

Information on grass snake distribution and numbers is sought by Dr Ian F. Spellerberg, Biology Dept, The University, Southampton SO9 3TU; and on great crested newt distribution and numbers, by Trevor Beebee, Dept of Biochemistry, University College, Gower St, London, WC1.

EUROPE

The Coasts of Europe

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has urged the Council's 17 member states to undertake various measures to preserve the coastline of Europe, including rational land-use planning, the creation of nature reserves, the stabilisation of sand dunes, and precautions against future oil pollution disasters.

Baltic Cooperation

Seven countries bordering the Baltic Sea—Denmark, Finland, both Germanies, Poland, Russia and Sweden—have signed a convention restricting fishing in the Baltic in order to conserve stocks. The same countries met in Helsinki in March to sign a convention to reduce the pollution of the Baltic, some parts of which are already devoid of oxygen.

Baltic Grey Seals

Numbers of grey seals in the Baltic have fallen from 20–30,000 at the turn of the century to only a few thousand today. Environmental poisons, hunting with bounties, and disturbance by pleasure boats have all contributed to the decline. The Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature has called for the total protection of the species (the hunting season has already been shortened) and a complete census of the Baltic grey seal stocks, and the latest news is that Sweden is totally protecting seals from the beginning of 1974.

Brown Bears in Finland

The number of brown bears in Finland is estimated at 150–200. No fewer than 536 bears were shot in the dozen years up to 1971.

Protecting Europe's Birds

In a recommendation to its 17 member countries, the Council of Europe calls for stronger measures to protect birds in Europe. These measures include more and safer reserves, safeguarding of wintering and resting areas for migrants, tighter control of pesticides and elimination of the more persistent ones, and a reduction in oil pollution.



Sea Eagle Plight

Due to environmental poisons and disturbance of nesting sites, the position of the white-tailed sea eagle in the Baltic becomes increasingly grave. From 30 checked nesting sites on the east coast of Sweden only four young birds definitely became fully airborne in the summer of 1973. In the interior of Norrland, however, the four nests that could be checked in 1973 all succeeded, with at least seven young airborne.

WWF Finland is raising funds to protect the white-tailed sea eagle, as one of Finland's most endangered species. In 1973 34 eyries were checked in the three areas to which the eagle is now restricted. 26 eyries proved to be active, but only two successfully produced any young, a total of five eaglets. Disturbance from road construction, forestry and other human activity was an important factor in this lack of success. Pesticides were another.

Snowmobiles and Wolverines

There seems to be a clear link between the growing number of snowmobiles or snow scooters and the diminishing number of wolverines, protected in Sweden since 1968, according to the Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature. In 1972 snowmobiles were legalised for a trial period of three years, and the Society appealed to its members to report instances of the consequent harm to wildlife. Much illegal hunting was reported, bears were cruelly chased, and many forest plantations damaged.



Frohe Ostern

1974

Frankfurt Zoo's Easter card

Wolf Protected in Italy

The Italian Government has decided to extend the present protection of the wolf in Italy for three years. A recent survey by WWF Italy showed that no more than 100-120 wolves survive in Italy, notably in the Abruzzo National Park and the Maiello Mountains, where they will be studied during 1974 by an international team of zoologists. In the Abruzzo Region full compensation is paid under a recent law for damage to livestock by wolves and bears.

Dolphin Protection Successful

Since the 1965 ban on killing dolphins in the Black Sea, their numbers have trebled, to 800,000, according to the latest Russian census.

Flying Squirrel Still Flies

So little is known about the present-day situation of the flying squirrel *Sciuropterus russicus* in eastern Europe that a survey showing its current distribution in Finland is most valuable. This dormouse-like squirrel is able to glide from tree to tree, using a membrane between its fore and hind legs. The destruction of old deciduous forests, with aspens and woodpecker holes, by modern forestry methods, has greatly reduced its range. However, it will use bird nestboxes.

Reindeer in Finland

In October the tracks of about 30 wild reindeer were seen in the Elimyssalo reserve in eastern Finland, the last remaining locality for this species in the wild in Finland.

Germany Lists Wetlands

West Germany has established a list of 40 internationally important wetlands, chief among them its North Sea coast and islands.

Expensive Tree Felling

The Burgermeister of Vienna has introduced a law to fine up to half a million schillings (more than £10,000) anybody who fells a tree in the city.

Council for Europe Award

The German-Luxemburg Natural Park has become the thirteenth recipient of

the Council for Europe's Nature Diploma. It is the first international park in Western Europe.

Big Cats in Afghanistan

Dr Gunther Nogge of the Kabul Zoo reports in *International Zoo News* that he is convinced as a result of expeditions to the River Amu Darya that no Caspian tigers survive in Afghanistan. Neither leopards nor snow leopards, however, are rare in the high mountains of that country. The Bactrian wapiti, seriously endangered by cultivation and grazing of domestic stock, still inhabits the reed-beds of the Amu Darya. The goitred gazelle is almost extinct in the deserts of Afghanistan due to uncontrolled hunting.

Long-lived Birds

The longest-lived European birds, according to ringing records, are black-headed gull and guillemot (both 32 years), curlew and herring gull (both 31 years) and white stork (29 years). The longest-lived song-birds are a 20-year-old starling, a rook (19) and a redwing (18).

NORTH AMERICA

Desert Vandals

Bullet-ridden carcasses of the decreasing desert tortoise *Gopherus agassizi* rot along many roads of the American south-west. One individual boasted of using young tortoises as skeet targets. Another lined up 47 tortoises and killed them all with a shotgun. Some car drivers too run over tortoises because they like to hear the pop as the wretched animals' shells are crushed under their wheels. In one incident fourteen tortoises were placed under a wooden plank, so that a car could be driven over it to kill them. Yet this tortoise is protected by law almost throughout its range.

Petrified Forest Robbers

Pilfering of the fragments of petrified wood lying about on the ground in the Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona goes on apace. An estimated

12.5 tons, and probably more, is stolen each year, mainly by 'respectable' middle-class visitors. One visitor was recently arrested trying to carry off 67 lb. Penalties begin at \$25, and rise by about \$1 per lb. One problem is that visitors have increased to 1.2 millions a year.

The Coyote in Maine

When the coyote recently spread to Maine, the local shooting lobby, convinced that the state's deer population was at risk, and ignoring the now well established fact that bounties are a futile method of control, demanded a \$50 bounty on coyotes in Maine. Fortunately the Maine legislature did not allow itself to be stampeded by their prejudices (and perhaps remembered that the bobcat population of the state remained unaffected by half a million dollars spent on bounties) and rejected the bounty bill. Coyotes anyway eat mainly rabbits and rodents.

Peregrine Still Going Down

Only 65 known active nesting sites remain for the peregrine falcon in the whole of southern Canada, the contiguous 48 states of the USA and western Mexico. A few hundred more breed in Alaska and north-western Canada. A survey in the southern Rocky Mountains in 1973 found that only three young were fledged from 14 active nests. Four eggs which did not hatch were analysed and found to contain high levels of pesticides. There seems little doubt that DDT is the culprit.

Whooping Cranes Down

The mid-December count of whooping cranes at the Aransas refuge in Texas was down to 48, back to the level of 1967. Fourteen nests were located in Wood Buffalo Park in the 1973 breeding season, but only one young bird is believed to have survived.

Woodcock Edible Again

During 1971 and 1972 the shooting of woodcock was forbidden in parts of New Brunswick, because their high



DDT content made them unsafe to eat. Residues having fallen below accepted levels, the hunting season was resumed in 1973.

Lead Poisoning of Wildfowl

A new study by the US Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife shows that lead shot is poisoning three times as many American waterfowl as previously estimated. In the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways dangerous lead levels are exceeded by 17 and 13 per cent respectively of birds analysed. The remedy is conversion to iron shot.

Propagating the Red Wolf

A three-way agreement between the US Department of the Interior, the Tacoma Zoological Society and the Point Defiance Zoo in Texas aims to save the highly endangered red wolf by setting up a captive breeding unit at the zoo.

Grey Whales Increase

Some 7000 grey whales were counted by a joint Russian-American team on their summering grounds in the Bering and Tchoukotka Seas. This represents an increase of one-third in recent years, thanks to a carefully enforced protection policy.

Endangered in Ontario

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has designated the first four endangered species under an Act of 1971: peregrine falcon, bald eagle, timber rattlesnake and blue racer snake.

LATIN AMERICA

Atitlan Grebes Increase

The giant grebes of Lake Atitlan, Guatemala, found nowhere else in the world, are on the upgrade again, their numbers at the latest census having risen to over 200, after having been down to 80 ten years ago. The introduced large-mouth bass have declined, so that both the grebes and also the crabs, and native fish, on which Indian fishermen depend for their living, are now increasing again.

Rescue Operation in Mexico

The new Council for the Protection of Wildlife in the Mexican State of Chiapas is organising a rescue operation when the flooding of La Angostura Dam begins later in 1974. Animals will be caught and relocated in adequately protected wilderness areas. Some rare plants will also be translocated.

Threat to Mona

Mona, a 22-sq-mile island off Puerto Rico, with 58 endemic animal and plant species, 29 of them endangered (including a giant iguana), is threatened with a major deepwater port and petrochemical complex. The Governor of Puerto Rico appears to have decided on this devastation after a whirlwind 4½-minute helicopter visit to the island.

WWF Peru

A new WWF National Appeal has been established in Peru, under the name of PRODENA, Pro Fondo Mundial de la Defensa de la Naturaleza, with Sr Felipe Benavides, WWF Trustee and FPS Vice-President, as President.

AFRICA

Game Parks in S Africa

Douglas Hey, Director of Nature Conservation in the Cape of Good Hope, has expressed grave reservations as to whether private game parks, a fairly recent innovation in South Africa, serve the cause of nature conservation. They represent, he adds, a drain on natural stocks because the collections are constantly being replenished and enlarged. Moreover, by transferring animals on an exchange basis, owners of game parks have been able to evade the strict controls on the export of endangered species such as cheetah.

Seronera Hotel Open

The new hotel at Seronera Camp in the Serengeti National Park is now open, after the construction of a water-pipe. Seronera also now has a resident magistrate, so that poachers can be dealt with on the spot.



Flamingoes in Lake Nakuru *Richard Fitter*

To Help Lake Nakuru

The Federal German Government has made a grant of DM 8m to Kenya to cover the cost of a new sewage plant for the municipality of Nakuru. This will treat the sewage effluent that enters Lake Nakuru, and so save the habitat of two million flamingoes.

Progress at the Crater

New administrative arrangements in the Ngorongoro Conservation Unit in Tanzania have placed responsibility for the wildlife as well as the human population firmly for the first time in the hands of one man, the new Director, M. J. U. Mgina. Farming in the Crater itself as well as in the whole Crater Highlands is prohibited, and illegal settlers are being moved. It is also agreed that no building will ever be built in the Crater, and the Masai herdsmen are being moved from the Crater floor to the Highlands.

Athi River Fish Kill

At the end of February more than half a million fish were found dead in the Athi River in Kenya. It is not yet known whether the cause was natural or due to man-made pollution.

ASIA

Threat to Sanctuary

The Salang Pra game sanctuary, in Manchanaburi Province in Thailand, is threatened with the resettlement within its boundaries of people displaced by the building of the Chao Neen dam on the river that separates the sanctuary from the Eravan National Park.

Good News from Thailand

The enforcement of new regulations has virtually put an end to all trade in

endangered animals from Thailand. Vigorous enforcement of measures against poaching in game reserves recently caught a group of army officers now awaiting trial for hunting in the Tung Yai Naresawan Game Sanctuary. They were found out when a helicopter overloaded with illegally taken game crashed.

Fencing Rhinos In

A fence to protect the great Indian rhinos in the Chitawan National Park in Nepal has been completed with the aid of the Frankfurt Zoological Society. The fence will keep the rhinos in, preventing them from damaging crops, and keep out both poachers and grazing cattle.

Kulans in USSR

The Novosti Information Service claims a recently censused population of 800 kulans, or Mongolian wild asses, in Badkhyz, which lies between the Murgab and Tedzhen Rivers in southern Turkmenistan. According to the revised *Red Data Book*, this subspecies of *Equus hemionus* now occurs only in Mongolia, and it seems possible that the NIS has confused the kulan with the onager, or Persian wild ass, which is known to inhabit Turkmenistan.

Protecting Arabia's Trees

By direct order of King Faisal, it is now illegal to destroy a living tree in Saudi Arabia. The penalty for the first offence is a week in prison, for the second, two weeks.

Cats in Korea

The Amur leopard and the local races of the lynx and the tiger are reported to be increasing in North Korea.



THE OCEANS

Atlantic Pollution

During a yacht voyage from Britain to Antigua, West Indies, in 1972, visible pollution, mainly in the form of oil clots, was observed on seven of the thirteen days' sailing from Lisbon to Madeira, and on 21 of the 26 days across the Atlantic. The route was for the most part clear of the main shipping lanes.

More Dolphins Drowned

Although most of the tuna boats are now equipped with the Medina net which helps to prevent the drowning of dolphins and porpoises that are caught along with the tuna, some 300,000 of these small cetaceans still died as a result of American tuna fishing operations in 1972. This was 100,000 more than the previous year, because there was more fishing for yellowfin tuna. It is these tuna with which the dolphins swim, and for which the huge purse seines are used.

Sealing in NW Atlantic

During the 1972 hunting season, according to statistics just published, 151,636 seals were harvested in the North-West Atlantic area, of which 135,474 were harp seals and 14,382 were hood seals.

The Harpooner Harpooned

When a wave pushed a dead sperm whale against the 600-ton Durban whaler 'Edwin Cook', the vessel was holed by one of its own harpoons protruding from the whale's body, and nearly sank.

ANTIPODES

Endangered Animals Protected

Western Australia has protected 34 mammals and three reptiles, considered to be rare and likely to become extinct, with a \$1000 penalty. Six of the mammals may well be already extinct there, including two potoroos and the rusty numbat. Three others, on the other hand, the dugong and the two crocodiles, are still relatively common, but currently subject to heavy hunting pressure.

Official Wildlife Service

The Australian Government has decided to set up a National Park and Wildlife Commission and Service. The three-man commission will manage and operate the service, and be responsible not only for existing and proposed parks in the territories, but, in conjunction with the states, to undertake a broad ecological survey of the whole of Australia.

Kangaroo Management

A meeting of Australian Federal and State Government Ministers recently agreed (1) that it was opposed to the uncontrolled harvesting of kangaroos and wallabies, (2) that selected culling of certain species is a legitimate management practice, and (3) that a scientifically acceptable range of data-gathering and control measures should be drawn up.

Takahes Decline

The takahe, a kind of giant moorhen, lives only in an area of about 250 sq miles in the Fiordland National Park in New Zealand's South Island. Its numbers have been declining—in one area they have fallen from 50 to 17—and the NZ Wildlife Service is trying to find out why. One suspect is the introduced European stoat.

NEW NATIONAL PARKS

Two new national parks have been declared in Greece. One includes Vicos Canyon and the Aōos Gorge, in the Ioannina—Epirus region, with a rich fauna and flora. The other is the Mikra and Megali Prespa Lakes region in the Florina District, with important colonies of pelicans, cormorants and herons.

Norway has established three new national parks in Spitsbergen: South Svalbard, Forlandet and Northwest Svalbard.

Discussions are in progress to create the first two national parks in El Salvador, one in the 'bosque nebuloso' (cloud forest) area of the north-west, and another in the mangrove forests of the coast.

The US Department of the Interior proposes to create three new national parks in Alaska. The Department also proposes to double the size of the Mount McKinley National Park and upgrade Katmai National Monument to park status. The full proposals will add 32.26m acres to the park system.

Indonesia has established two new nature parks and two recreation forests in the past eighteen months.

Varirata, the first national park in Papua New Guinea, was officially opened in October 1973.

Blue Lagoon National Park, Zambia, is 450 sq.km in extent, not 45,000 acres, as stated in the October 1973 *Oryx*.

NEW NATURE RESERVES

Extensions to the following national nature reserves are announced by the Nature Conservancy Council: 49 acres to Upper Teesdale, 56 acres to the Derbyshire Dales (Monk's Dale), and 64 acres to Chippenham Fen. This brings the total acreage of the 136 NNR's to 279,040.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds announces two new reserves: the Loch of Strathbeg in North Aberdeenshire and St Bees Head, Cumberland, the only English breeding place of the black guillemot.

Two new reserves of the Gloucestershire Trust are Snows Farm, 65 acres of Cotswold grassland at the head of the Slad valley, and Wilderness Old Cement Works Quarry near Mitcheldean, an important geological site.

The Lake District Trust has two new reserves: an 18-acre wood on the shore of the Kent estuary near Arnside, by lease; and 40 acres of fell and woodland at Barkworth near Windermere, with an interesting limestone flora.

The Surrey Trust has two new reserves: Cucknells Wood, 23 acres on the Lower Greensand near Guildford, by lease; and Graeme Hendrey Wood near Blethingley.

The Warwickshire Trust has bought the 73 acres of Big and Little Clowes Wood at Earlswood. The wood is mainly oak coppice, and has good plants and insects.

New trust reserves in Yorkshire include Tow Hill, 100 acres of woodland and moorland in the north-west of the county, and a small area near Beverley known as Keldmarsh. The Trust has also purchased two reserves previously leased, Kiplingcotes and Denaby Ings, and has extended the acreages leased at Ashberry Pastures and Potterick Carr.

Bretton Lakes nature reserve, consisting of two artificial lakes in woodland in the valley of the River Dearne, has been established by agreement between the Yorkshire Trust and the West Riding Education Authority.

The Nature Conservancy Council has declared the Whitlaw Mosses national nature reserve, 38 acres of fen on the Borders of Roxburgh and Selkirk. The Council has also added 1250 acres to Beinn Eithe NNR, Wester Ross and 1047 acres to Ben Lui NNR, Argyll.

Two new reserves of the Scottish Wildlife Trust: Loch Libo, 44 acres, one of only two nutrient-rich lochs in Renfrewshire, with good plants as well as wintering wildfowl, has been bought; and a headland with a small offshore island at Carradale, Kintyre, overlooking Kilbrannan Sound, with a herd of feral white goats, by agreement with the Trustees of the late Lord Mitchison.

Swan Island, the site of an important Ternery in Larne Lough in Northern Ireland, will be managed on behalf of the NI Ministry of Development as the RSPB's smallest reserve. Last year it held 67 roseate and 209 common or arctic terns.



The Wexford Wildfowl Reserve at the North Slob, Wexford, was officially opened in February. The 160-acre reserve is Ireland's first major official wildfowl refuge.

The palm woods at Vai in Crete, the only remaining natural palm grove in Greece, have been officially declared an 'aesthetic forest'.

Norway has established two new nature reserves and 15 bird sanctuaries in Spitsbergen. The reserves are Northeast Svalbard and Southeast Svalbard.

Two new Audubon sanctuaries: 450 acres of wetlands along the Platte River, near Gibbon, Nebraska, to preserve a whooping crane staging post from destruction by a reclamation project; and an unspoiled 4000-acre ranch in Southern California, on the edge of the Santa Ana Mountains.

The US Department of the Interior proposes to add 31.59m acres to the national wildlife refuge system in Alaska.

The new Council for the Protection of the Wildlife of the State of Chiapas in Mexico is setting up three reserves: 2000 ha of fresh, brackish and salt coastal marshes; 10,000 ha of evergreen forest, and 10,000 ha of cloud forest.

Since the Yellowstone Conference in September 1972 Indonesia has established eleven new nature reserves, including the Tanah Laut P. Pombe marine park in Maluku province.

Five new strict nature reserves have been created in Thailand, covering large tracts of the country's remaining undisturbed forest areas: Huay Kha Kaeng (170,000 ha) with wild buffalo and banteng; Lum Nam Pai (120,000 ha) with elephant and gaur; Phu Khieo (130,000 ha) with Sumatran rhino; Khao Soi Dao (100,000 ha); and Khio.g Nakha (70,000 ha) with tapir, gibbons and probably Sumatran rhino.

Australia's first crocodile reserve, as recommended by Dr Robert Bustard, has been set up on the Ord River north-east of Wyndham, Western Australia.

2360 hectares on Pitt Island, one of the Chatham Islands, has been bought by the New Zealand Government. Known as Glory Block, it includes the only surviving large area of forest in the Chathams, where very little has been reserved so far, despite their large number of endemics. This forest area will be fenced against cattle.

New Zealand has also declared Solander and Secretary Islands 'special areas' within the Fiordland National Park. The islands are important because their lack of introduced animals means that their vegetation and fauna are unmodified, and a written permit will now be needed to land on them.

We are informed that it is not the case that the world's largest nature reserve is to be created in southern Africa, incorporating the Kruger and Gorongosa national parks and the Gona-re-Zhou reserve, as reported in the Council for Europe News Bulletin; ('Briefly', October, 1973, p. 178).

PERSONALIA

Phyllis Barclay-Smith has retired after 34 years as Editor of the *Avicultural Magazine*. She is succeeded by John Yealland, the former Curator of Birds at the London Zoo.

Nigel Bonner, Head of the Seals Research Division of the Institute for Marine Environmental Research at Lowestoft, Suffolk, has been appointed Head of the Life Sciences Division, British Antarctic Survey, at Monks Wood Experimental Station near Huntingdon.

R. E. Boote, Deputy Director (Conservation) of the old Nature Conservancy has been appointed

Director of the Nature Conservancy Council. The Deputy Director is Ian Prestt and the Chief Scientist Dr Derek Ratcliffe.

Dr Kai Curry-Lindahl is still in Nairobi, but has transferred from UNESCO to UNEP (UN Environment Programme), where he is a Senior Adviser on ecology and conservation. UNEP's PO Box no. is 30552.

Dr S. K. Eltringham, Chief Research Officer of the Uganda Institute of Ecology (formerly the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology) has returned to Cambridge, to the Department of Applied Biology. His successor is E. L. Edrome, a botanist Research Officer with both NUTAE and UIE.

John S. Gottschalk, lately Director of the US Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, is now Executive Vice-President of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners.

Christopher Hall, Secretary of the Ramblers' Association since 1969, has been appointed to the new post of Director of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

Professor Dr Heini Hediger has retired after 20 years as Director of the Zürich Zoo. He is succeeded by Dr Peter Weilenmann, Veterinarian at the Zoo since 1959.

Dr Martin Holdgate, Director of the Central Unit of Environmental Pollution has been appointed the first Director of NERC's Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, which embodies the research component of the defunct Nature Conservancy.

Dr Hugh Lamprey, the former Director of the Serengeti Research Institute, Tanzania, has been appointed consultant to IUCN in East Africa. He will be based in Nairobi, and among other duties will maintain liaison between IUCN and UNEP.

Dr Paulo Nogueira-Neto, the distinguished Brazilian conservationist,

has been appointed Secretary for the Environment in the Ministry of Agriculture of the Federal Government of Brazil.

Sir Peter Scott has succeeded Lord Avon as Chancellor of Birmingham University.

Dr Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr, has retired after twelve years as Director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, N.Y. He is succeeded by Dr Douglas A. Lancaster, Assistant Director since 1964.

Dr Victor B. Scheffer, the marine biologist who recently retired from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, has been named Chairman of the Marine Mammal Commission, which will direct and oversee US activities relating to marine mammals. Professor Starker Leopold of Berkeley, California, is one of the members.

P. Ssemwesi, Director of Uganda National Parks, has been appointed Managing Director of the Uganda Tourist Corporation. He is succeeded by Ali Omar, formerly Research Secretary of the Ecological Committee of the National Research Council.

OBITUARY

John L. Harrison, Professor of Zoology in the University of Singapore and a leading Malaysian naturalist, has died.

Professor Humphrey Hewer, the distinguished mammalogist, President of the Mammal Society and of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Naturalists' Trust, and a Vice-President of the Council for Nature, died suddenly at the end of February.

Oliver Hook, well known for his many years of work for wildlife conservation, notably in the New Forest and on seals, has died.

F. L. Reynolds, Conservation Officer to the Surrey Trust, and a pioneering figure in the county trust movement, has died.