

Briefly . . .

International

UK to join World Heritage Convention

Britain has, at last, decided to ratify the World Heritage Convention.

Belgium joins CITES

Belgium became the 82nd Party to CITES on 3 October 1983, the ratification becoming effective on 1 January 1984, when the EEC Regulation enforcing CITES among all EEC Parties also came into force. Belgium first signed the Convention 10 years ago.

New Biosphere Reserves

Three nominations for World Biosphere Reserves have been accepted by the Man and Biosphere Bureau, UNESCO: California Coast Ranges Biosphere Reserve, South Atlantic Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve and Central Gulf Coastal Plain Biosphere Reserve, all in the USA. The Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve was dedicated on 12 May 1983.

Two join Antarctic Treaty

Brazil and India have been admitted to the Antarctic Treaty, bringing the total number of Parties to 16. They qualify as members, having sent scientific expeditions to the continent and they intend to set up research stations there.

Two new TRAFFIC Offices

TRAFFIC (Australia) was opened in January 1984 with Frank Antram, formerly of the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit at Cambridge, UK, as its director. It will concentrate on Australian wildlife trade but will also include, for the time being, the rest of Australasia in its area of interest. The members of the Fund for Animals, Australia, have raised the money to support the work. (Address: PO Box 371, Manly 2095, NSW.) In the Netherlands, Minouk van der Plas-Haarsma is to be the secretary of the TRAFFIC (Netherlands) Committee under the chairmanship of Wim Bergmans. Financial support is at present insufficient to pay any full-time staff so the office will be run on a voluntary basis. (Address: Muur 10, 1422 PJ Uithoorn, The Netherlands.)

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Europe and North Africa

Harp and hooded seal import ban

The EEC Directive banning imports of raw and tanned furskins and other articles from harp seal *Pagophilus groenlandicus* and hooded seal *Cystophora cristata* pups into EEC countries came into effect on 1 October 1983 and will remain valid for two years. Most member states have already enforced the ban.

TRAFFIC Bulletin, 28 November 1983

Danger in EEC environment fund

Generally conservationists have welcomed the EEC's proposed environment fund to preserve wildlife habitats, but the Institute of European Environmental Policy criticises a plan to compensate landowners for not destroying wildlife habitats, saying that scarce conservation money should not be used in this way.

Two new UK reserves

The North Solent National Nature Reserve was declared in October 1983. The 760-ha reserve includes shingle beach, a range of coastal wetlands and species-rich wetland valleys, and incorporates much of the Beaulieu Estuary and 100 ha of the Cadland Estate. St Abb's Head, on the Berwickshire coast, a Grade I SSSI that has been managed jointly as a nature reserve by the National Trust for Scotland and the Scottish Wildlife Trust, is the first national nature reserve in Scotland. It is famous for its seabird colonies.

Russia builds dam to protect wildlife

Russia is building a dam below another dam for a hydroelectric project on the Yenisey River to ensure that adjacent wetlands important for wildlife will not suffer from abrupt water level oscillations associated with the operation of the electricity generating plant.

World Environment Report, 15 October 1983

Germany might ban turtle imports

The agricultural committee in the West German parliament has voted to ban all

imports of sea-turtle products and it is expected that the ban will be approved by the full Bundestag. If so, the proposal will go to the European parliament for consideration of a European-wide ban on trade in sea turtles. Germany, France, Italy and the UK are all heavy consumers of turtle products.

Monitor, 24 October 1983

Endemic fir gets protection

The last individuals of the Nebrodian fir *Abies nebrodensis* grow on eroded and exposed hillsides in the Madonie Mountains of northern Sicily where the species is endemic. The species is protected under the Bern Convention now that Italy is a member but the Sicilian Forestry Service has been protecting it for the last 10 years, fencing each tree against grazing, growing seedlings at a nearby forestry station and planting them out in the wild, close to the few adult trees that remain. The site is now proposed as a reserve, which would benefit not only the Nebrodian fir but the Madonie region as a whole, which suffers badly from tourist pressure.

Threatened Plants Newsletter, No 12

Hunters stone ornithologists

Hunters stoned members of the Malta Ornithological Society as they marched to protest against the illegal killing of migrating birds of prey in Buskett Reserve. Laws are totally ignored and to date there have been no prosecutions; 45 honey buzzards *Pernis ptilorhynchus* were shot in one evening alone. A counter-march by the hunters' and bird trappers' association two weeks later rallied 1000 supporters, five times the number the conservationists could muster—a reflection of the huge problems conservationists in Malta face.

ICBP Newsletter, 5, 3

Cyprus moves to protect wetland

A sewage treatment plant that threatened the Limassol Salt Lake (often referred to as Akrotiri Salt Lake) in Cyprus will now be built elsewhere. The lake is of great importance to migrating and wintering waterfowl. The Cypriot Government's decision came after protests from the country's Ministry for Agriculture and Natural Resources as well as from conservationists in Cyprus and the rest of Europe.

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Africa

Ivory ban in Sudan

Sudan government authorities banned all exports of unworked ivory from 1 January 1984. In 1982 187 tonnes of ivory were exported from Sudan, much of which originated from neighbouring countries where ivory export is forbidden.

Future of Sudan park bleak

Boma National Park in the Sudan, which was opened four years ago, lost vehicles and supplies worth \$500,000 in an attack by 12 rebels. The staff have been unable to return and the future of the park is uncertain.

International Wildlife, 13, 6

Where tourism is more of a threat than poaching

Tourism threatens the wildlife of the Air and Ténéré regions of Niger even more than poaching, according to John Newby, leader of a WWF/IUCN project to establish a vast conservation area there. Among the several thousand visitors a year are those in vehicles which are capable of going virtually anywhere. The resulting disturbance of the animals can be disastrous: in the hot season, when temperatures can reach the upper 40s, addax *Addax nasomaculatus* that are forced to gallop for only a few minutes can die of heat exhaustion. But, since tourism is also the surest way to bring in funds, a compromise will have to be found.

WWF Monthly Report, September 1983

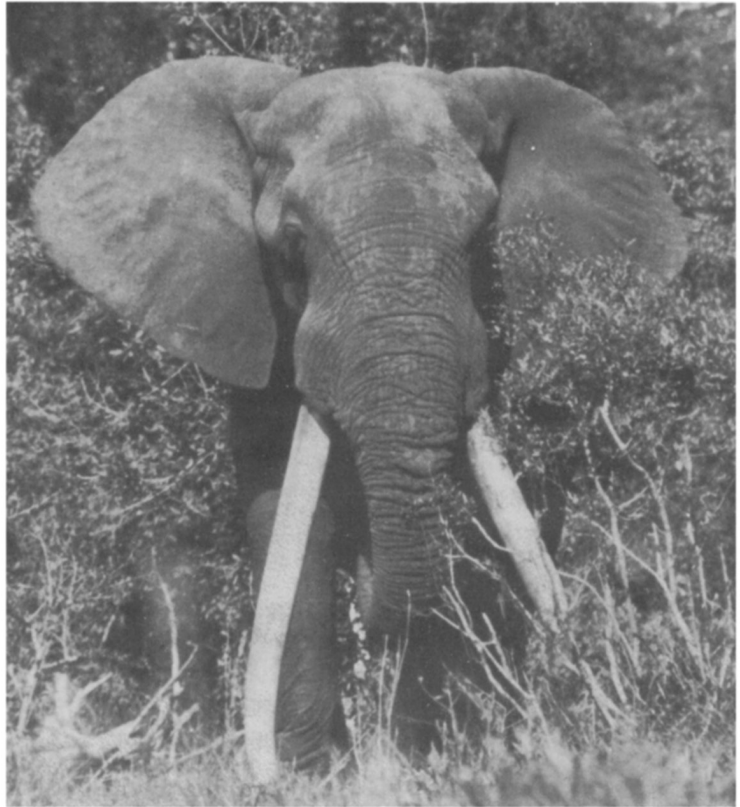
A new sunbird

A new species of sunbird, discovered in 1981 in Mwanihana Forest Reserve on the Uzungwa Mountains in eastern Tanzania, has now been described and named as *Nectarinia rufipennis*, rufous-winged sunbird.

Flemming P. Jensen, 1983. *Ibis*, 125

Latest on the Kafue lechwe

In Zambia the population of lechwe *Kobus leche* on the Kafue Flats is estimated at around 41,000 according to results of three censuses in 1981–83 by Geoffrey Howard and Richard Geoffrey. The estimate is only half that of Richard Bell *et al.* in 1970–72 but about 108



Shingwedzi, famous bull elephant of the Kruger National Park (*Anthony Hall-Martin*).

the same as that in 1969 by John Hanks. *Gnusletter*. IUCN/SSC Antelope Specialist Group, September 1983

Plants steal the show

South Africa launched a national plants campaign in August 1983 with 'Flora '83', a huge wild flower show organised by the South African Nature Foundation, the South African Botanical Society and the National Botanic Gardens. The theme was 'Conservation through Education' and there were large displays of species gathered in the wild from conservation farms and nature reserves, such as the Ramskop Nature Reserve which propagates local endemics.

Threatened Plants Newsletter, No 12

Fire destroys geometric tortoise population

In South Africa one of the only two

areas inhabited by the geometric tortoise *Psammobates geometricus* has been burnt, killing 90 per cent of the entire population. The other 10-ha area, containing the only remaining individuals, is threatened by the owner who wishes to burn it and plough it unless someone buys it for 40,000 rands (US \$40,000): John Greig—Herpetologist with the Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation of the Cape of Good Hope and an IUCN/SSC Tortoise Specialist Group Member—is trying to raise the money.

A famous tusker

Shingwedzi, one of the magnificent large tuskers of the Kruger National Park, was a legend in his lifetime. He was named after the Shingwedzi River, where he spent much of his time until he died in 1981, aged 56 years. All the exceptional bull elephants in the north-

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east Kruger are now fitted with radio-collars so that if they move into areas along the Mozambique border, where poaching is a danger, they can be driven to safer areas.

Why breeding cheetahs in captivity is not easy

Blood and enzyme tests carried out at the National Institute of Health in Maryland, USA, have revealed that 55 captive cheetahs *Acinonyx jubatus* originating from two areas in South Africa are genetically very similar, reflecting the fact that at some time in the past 99 per cent of South Africa's cheetahs were extirpated. The inbreeding has damaged their reproductive capacity; sperm counts are very low and 70 per cent of sperm is defective. *International Wildlife*, 13, 6

Endangered fody: first captive-breeding

Two Rodrigues fodies *Foudia flavicans* were reared at the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust in 1983, the first time that this endangered species has been bred in captivity. *On the Edge*, No 46

Indo-Malaya

Pakistan may yet save the Siberian crane

When 921 crane-hunters (about half the total) in Pakistan were questioned it was found that they held 5071 cranes—57 per cent common cranes *Grus grus* and 43 per cent demoiselle cranes *Anthropoides virgo*—few of which had bred in captivity. The hunt's significance for crane populations was reflected by one hunter's statement, that in the past he could catch 45 cranes in one night and now he catches only two or three. The hunt may also have affected the very rare Siberian cranes *G. leucogeranus*, only 36 of which now migrate through Pakistan on their way to and from their wintering grounds in India. Pakistan is now trying to save the cranes by banning the shooting of any crane, the capture of Siberian cranes and by charging large fees for the capture of demoiselle and common cranes. *The ICF Bugle*, 9, 4

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Marbled teal rediscovery

The marbled teal *Anas angustirostris*, which survives precariously in a few wetlands in eastern Europe and the Middle East, has been rediscovered in Pakistan. Ashiq Ahmad, Wildlife Management specialist at the Pakistan Forest Institute in Peshawar, found 30 marbled teal on Lake Zangi Nawar in Baluchistan and 12 on Akri Lake in Sind, during wildfowl censuses of Pakistan wetlands in 1983. Baluchistan Forestry Department is trying to protect the teal that are breeding on Lake Zangi Nawar. The rarity of the species and its disappearance from former Pakistan breeding haunts led to a re-introduction attempt by WWF-Pakistan in 1972, using stock from the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge, UK, but the birds were all killed by mongooses. *WWF-Pakistan Newsletter*, 2, 2

Name change for Gunung Mulu

The Sarawak Government is to invest \$50 million in turning Gunung Mulu National Park (see *Oryx*, January 1983) into an international tourist attraction. It will be known as Baram International Park. *Borneo Bulletin*, 3 September 1983

More hope for milky stork

A team studying waders of the Malayan peninsula found at least three times the number of milky storks *Mycteria cinerea* than the previous estimate of 15 individuals in one breeding colony. Further aerial surveys could reveal more storks or give an accurate population estimate. The decline of the species, which once occurred along the entire western coast of Malaya, is attributed to loss of its mangrove habitat. The bird is rated as vulnerable and ICBP aim to conserve its habitat by various methods including a local education programme. *ICBP Newsletter*, 5, 3

Critical situation for crocodile

The sad conclusion of a paper on the distribution and status of the endemic Philippine crocodile *Crocodylus mindanensis* is that it is in immediate danger of extinction. Primarily, this is due to agricultural and industrial development of its lowland habitat and there are no signs that the few remaining populations will receive protection; the crocodiles

are feared as predators of domestic animals and the preservation of their habitat conflicts with government priorities for the socioeconomic improvement of rural Filipinos. C.A. Ross and A.C. Alcala, 1983, Kalikasan, *Philipp. J. Biol.* 12(1-2)

Rare birds seized

On 13 September Singapore's Primary Production Department seized 124 rare and endangered birds in a house raid. The birds—100 palm cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus*, 21 Moluccan, or salmon-crested, cockatoos *Cacatua moluccensis*, two Brahminy kites *Haliastur indus* and one blue-crowned pigeon *Goura cristata*—were apparently smuggled from Indonesia by a Singapore businessman who now faces a fine of SG \$1000 for the import of each bird for contravening the Wild Animals and Birds Act. The seized birds were taken to Jurong Bird Park but all the cockatoos died from Newcastle disease. *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 28 November 1983

Elephant smuggling

Wild Asian elephants are being illegally exported from Burma to Thailand, and possibly to Assam, for domestication. The elephant is protected in Burma: hunting is forbidden as well as are the possession, sale or purchase of live or dead elephants or their products without a licence. The elephants are apparently being smuggled into Thailand, which is a Party to CITES, through remote areas controlled by insurgents. *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, 28 November 1983

Gangs grab logs—and trains

In northern Thailand armed gangs of illegal loggers commandeer freight trains to carry the logs. The Governor of the State Railway of Thailand says he is virtually powerless to deal with the problem and advocates that the only way to solve it is to make it so difficult for those who are buying the logs that the market will dry up. *World Environment Report*, 30 September 1983

New Thai sanctuary

Thailand's King Bhumibhol Adulyadej has launched a six-year project to establish the 158,000-ha Phu Khieo

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parkland as a wildlife sanctuary and develop it to promote tourism, protect the forests and provide local people with a source of income.

Travel Trade Gazette Asia, 9 September 1983

Asia (excluding Indo-Malaya)

A park for Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's 5260-sq-km Asir National Park, although not yet officially open, is now accepting visitors. It stretches from the Red Sea in the west to mountains more than 3000 m high in the east. There are plans to reintroduce the oryx, Arabian gazelle, ibex and ostrich, which once inhabited the park. The development, headed by Prince Khalid al-Faisal, is a joint Saudi Arabia-US venture.

The Christian Science Monitor, 3 October 1983

Giant seed-collecting project

In order to plant trees and grass on 2500 sq km of barren slopes in Gansu Province in north-west China, members of the Youth League are being asked to collect seeds from areas which have similar climate and soil.

International Wildlife, 13, 6

North America

Two more endangered fish

The Ash Meadows speckled dace *Rhinichthys osculus nevadensis* and the Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish *Cyprinodon nevadensis mionectes*, both endemic to the Ash Meadows basin of Nevada, have been listed as endangered.

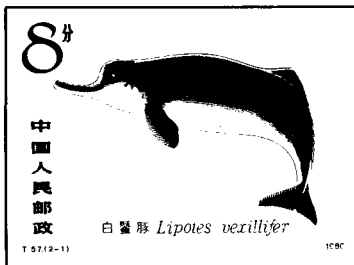
AAZPA Newsletter, XXIV, 10

Wyoming toads die in captivity

The two juvenile Wyoming toads *Bufo hemiophrys* discovered in 1982 (see *Oryx*, January 1984, page 51) have died in captivity, crushing hopes of establishing a captive-breeding programme. It is uncertain whether the toad, recently proposed for official Endangered listing, still exists—no calling males were heard in 1982—but it is just possible that the adults that produced the juveniles still survive.

BBC Wildlife, 1, 1

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Whitefin dolphin *Lipotes vexillifer* on a stamp issued by China in 1982. The species is restricted to the Yangtze and Quiantang rivers and Dongting and Poyang lakes in China, where it has been legally protected since 1975.

Rule on stuffed birds alarms conservationists

A proposed US Fish and Wildlife Service rule to allow individuals to possess accidentally killed migratory birds and to have them mounted has been issued at the request of the National Taxidermists' Association. Conservationists are worried that the rule would encourage unlawful killing; it would be extremely difficult to determine if the animal had been killed accidentally or intentionally.

AAZPA Newsletter, XXIV, 10

New rule may make bird-poaching easier

Certain birds of prey can now be bred in captivity and sold for profit according to a rule change by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The US National Wildlife Federation, which opposed the change, says that it will create a free market system for endangered raptors that will be difficult to monitor, and make it easier for people to poach wild raptors.

International Wildlife, 13, 6

Whooping crane update

Whooping cranes *Grus americana* had a boom year in 1983: 24 pairs nested at Wood Buffalo (Canada); 19 chicks were reared from eggs from Wood Buffalo and Patuxent by sandhill cranes at Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho; and at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland 10 chicks were reared. The current world population in the wild may be as high as 106, plus 38 in captivity—a big improvement on the total of 109 in 1981.

The ICF Bugle, 9, 4

Grus Americana, 22, 4

Crane stops dam

An application to build a dam for irrigation purposes on a tributary of the South Platte River in Nebraska has been turned down because it would jeopardise the continued existence of the whooping crane *Grus americana* by degrading the habitat used in spring and autumn migration by about 700 of the species.

Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, VIII, 9

A ranch for the condors?

An 11,500-acre cattle ranch in the southern San Joaquin foothills, which is the major autumn foraging area for California condors *Gymnogyps californianus*, may be subdivided and thus become unsuitable for the condors. Congressional committees are considering its acquisition for the California Condor Recovery Programme—it would be an ideal place to reintroduce captive-bred condors to the wild.

Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, VIII, 9

Hope fades for dusky sparrows

In 1983 the US Fish and Wildlife Service approved a private plan, funded by several preservation groups and Walt Disney Corporation, to breed the only five dusky seaside sparrows *Ammodramus maritimus nigrescens* left, which are all males, with females of a closely related subspecies. The previous year the Service had refused to approve the plan on the grounds that the hybrid would not be a truly endangered species. One female produced three eggs but none hatched. The plan continues and, if successful, could produce, by back-crossing, a 90 per cent dusky sparrow in five generations. But hope for success is dwindling because the males are already eight years old and may be reaching the end of their productive life.

Audubon, 85, 5

Illegal imports of palm cockatoos

Two shipments of palm cockatoos *Probosciger aterrimus*, totalling about 100 birds and valued at US \$500,000–1,000,000, have been seized by US Fish and Wildlife Service officials. One shipment was seized at Miami on the grounds that the birds originated in

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Indonesia, where they are fully protected. The other shipment arrived at Los Angeles with a certificate declaring that the birds had been captive-bred in the Philippines but this was unlikely to be true since palm cockatoos are very difficult to breed in captivity.
TRAFFIC Bulletin, 28 November 1983

Revitalising the Everglades

A plan to restore the South Florida ecosystem, on which the health of the Everglades depends, has been announced by the Governor of Florida. More than \$50 million is to be spent purchasing 250,000 acres (1010 sq km) and revitalising another 60,000 acres (243 sq km). The Governor has asked the National Park Service to buy 70,000 acres (283 sq km) of Everglades National Park still privately owned to help the almost extinct Florida panther.
International Wildlife, 13, 6

A gate to keep bats safe

A gate has been built at the mouth of New Mammoth Cave in Tennessee to prevent human access. In 1962 4000 Indiana bats *Myotis sodalis* hibernated there, but by 1982 numbers were down to 710—a decline that was linked directly to an increase in human disturbance in the 1960s and 1970s.
Endangered Species Technical Bulletin, VIII, 9

More black-footed ferrets found

The 1983 black-footed ferret *Mustela nigripes* count found 88 animals near Meeteetse, Wyoming, the only place where the endangered species is known to exist. The 1982 count found 58 animals.
The New York Times, 11 October 1983

Permit to catch killer whales

The US Government has given the marine circus company, Sea World, permission to capture 10 orcas (killer whales) *Orcinus orca* and do research on 90 more over the next five years. Conservation opposition led to tight restrictions being placed on the permit, including a halt to all further captures or testing if any orca dies in the process, but there is no requirement that the orcas be released back to their home pods. Conservation groups plan further protests and probably court action.
Monitor, 7 November 1983

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US to continue importing kangaroo products

The US will continue to import the skins and meat of certain species of kangaroo (red kangaroo *Macropus rufus*, eastern grey kangaroo *M. giganteus* and western grey kangaroo *M. fuliginosus*). Their import was prohibited in 1974–1981 because of their listing under the Endangered Species Act but the ban was lifted for 1981–83 when the Australian Government provided assurances of an effective management programme. The US Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed the effect of the two years' imports and decided to continue them because, amongst other things, the US removal of the ban had apparently had no adverse effect on kangaroo populations.
AAZPA Newsletter, XXIV, 10

A woodrat and a cotton mouse

The Key Largo woodrat *Neotoma floridana smalli* and the Key Largo cotton mouse *Peromyscus gossypinus allapaticola* have been given emergency endangered listing by the US Fish and Wildlife Service: loss of forest habitat to commercial and residential development is jeopardizing the future of these Florida species.
AAZPA Newsletter, XXIV, 11

Dogs—an alternative to poison

For many years sheep-farmers in the US have used Compound 1080 (sodium monofluoroacetate) to poison coyotes, but the method has taken a huge toll of other wildlife. In New Mexico farmers are increasingly turning to the ancient practice of using guarding dogs to protect their animals, a method that saves both sheep and wildlife. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish may finance a guarding-dog project in the southern part of the state, where pumas *Felis concolor* prey on sheep.
Sierra, 68, 5

Irrigation projects threaten 12 wildlife refuges

The US Congress has approved funding for several dam projects that were opposed by conservationists. The most destructive for wildlife is a \$22 million

irrigation project, the Garrison Division Unit, which will damage or destroy 12 national wildlife refuges in North Dakota and result in the loss of another 70,000 acres (28,330 ha) of prairie wetlands, 61,000 acres (24,680 ha) of grasslands and 4000 acres (9880 ha) of woodlands.
Grus Americana, 22, 4

Wildlife lands opened to mineral exploration

For the first time in 25 years the US national wildlife refuge system has been opened to mineral leasing. The Interior Department is now accepting applications for oil and gas leases on one million acres of land that has either been bought from private owners or set aside to protect only certain species. The National Wildlife Federation and three other environmental organisations are petitioning the Department to reconsider its decision.
National Wildlife, 21, 6

Strychnine ban despite ranchers' protests

The US Environmental Protection Agency has banned the use of strychnine to kill prairie dogs, rabbits, opossums, chipmunks and mountain beavers because of the large kill of 'non-target' animals, especially the endangered black-footed ferret which preys on prairie dogs. The cattle industry and the Agriculture Department opposed the ban on the grounds that strychnine is the cheapest and most effective way of controlling prairie dogs, which destroy rangeland and cause havoc in irrigation areas. Strychnine will still be permitted for killing ground squirrels, porcupines and some species of rats and birds.
The Washington Post, 20 October 1983

Missile sites are habitats of endangered species

An Air Force environmental survey has found that the placement of 100 MX missiles in Nebraska and Wyoming would harm the habitats of the black-footed ferret, the bald eagle and the greenback cut-throat trout, all threatened or endangered, and the habitat of the Colorado butterfly plant, which is being reviewed for federal listing as threatened or endangered.

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The final impact statement was due by the end of January 1984 after public hearings.

The Washington Post, 9 October 1983

A conservation acreage for US farmers

The US Agriculture Secretary has announced that farmers will receive price supports in 1984 if they set aside at least 10 per cent of their feed grain acreage for conservation. The conservation acreage must neither be cut for hay nor grazed during the six principal growing months, to control soil erosion and give wildlife the opportunity to rear young before the cover crop is reduced or removed.

Outdoor News Bulletin, 37, 21

Arctic wildlife refuge increased

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is to be increased by the addition of 1.3 million acres (5260 sq km) which are on the migrating route for the 100,000-strong Porcupine caribou herd. The land became available from Alaska State after a gas pipeline proposal was dropped. Its spruce-hardwood forests, bogs and tundra also support peregrine falcons, moose, Dall sheep, wolf and brown bear.

Wildlife imports into US still high

Despite the strengthened Lacey Act, which was amended in 1981 to allow for fines of up to \$20,000 and for prison sentences of up to five years for violators, the volume of illegal wildlife imports into the US includes more than 25 million animals, plants and products valued at \$100 million per year, according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Raw Philippine coral, ivory items from poached elephants, live parrots from Brazil's rain forests, and pangolin skins from Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand all form part of this trade. The method of bringing in illegal wildlife involves not smuggling but 'laundering': wildlife is smuggled from a country where it is protected to another where permits can be obtained for its export. It is difficult for US officials to prove that the information on such permits is fraudulent.

Focus, WWF-US, 5, 5

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New wildfowl refuge

The US has established the 5175-acre Currituck National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina, bringing the total number of refuges to 417 covering 90 million acres. The new refuge comprises Swan Island and Monkey Island in Currituck Sound which supports 150,000 wintering waterfowl, including most of the Atlantic Coast population of black duck *Anas rubripes* which is the subject of a federal-state conservation programme. The area is used by 246 bird species.

Central America

Pipeline threat to turtles

The remaining populations of the hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* in the Caribbean are facing extraordinary pressure as the region assumes a greater role in supplying the world market for tortoise-shell. Now oil threatens them too. An oil pipeline, recently built across the isthmus of Panama, has one terminal situated deep within Chiriqui Lagoon, which is part of a large system of bays covering 2000 sq km, whose coral reefs, sea-grass beds and beaches are one of the last remaining strongholds of the hawksbill in the Caribbean. Efforts are being made to ensure that protection of the area is given utmost priority by the owners and operators of the pipeline.

WWF Monthly Report, October 1983

Beach for leatherbacks

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is to purchase Sandy Point, a 500-acre peninsula on the island of St Croix in the US Virgin Islands. The beaches are critical habitat for leatherback turtles *Derموchelys coriacea*.

Monitor, 1 November 1983

National park for Haiti

The high mountain and cloud forests on Morne la Visite in southern Haiti were formally established as a national park by a resolution passed on 4 April 1983 by the Government of the Republic. The area's unique assemblage of species includes the black-capped petrel *Pterodroma hasitata*, a rare oceanic bird whose breeding site on the steep rock cliffs is one of the only two known, the chat-tanager *Calyptophilus frugivorus*

tertius, which inhabits the thick cloud forests, and the endangered Hispaniolan hutia *Plagiodontia aedium* which lives in moist forests.

South America

El Niño's disastrous effect on the iguanas

The El Niño of 1982–83 had a disastrous effect on the marine iguanas *Amblyrhynchus cristatus* of the Galapagos. The high sea temperatures led to the iguanas' seaweed food species being replaced with species that they could not digest, and the high sea-levels and heavy swell restricted their access to their feeding grounds. Almost all iguanas were underweight and half of some populations died, according to Andrew Laurie (see *Oryx*, January 1983)

New Scientist, 13 October 1983

Colombian marsh polluted

Colombia's San Silvestre Marsh, formerly described as a natural paradise, a 750-sq-km area of wetland in eastern Santander department, has become extensively polluted with hydrocarbon wastes from Colombia's major oil refinery.

World Environment Report, 30 October 1983

Brazil prohibits proposed exports of wild animals

The proposal to export wild animals or their skins and timber as logs (see *Oryx*, October 1983) has been prohibited. The only skins that may be exported are those of animals from breeding farms registered with the Brazilian Forestry Development Institute.

A Critica, 6 September 1983

Golden lion tamarins face dam threat

Poco d'Anta Biological Reserve, habitat of the few critically endangered golden lion tamarins *Leontopithecus rosalia* left in the wild is under threat: a government-constructed dam will flood part of the reserve's 5200 ha. The reserve's size is insufficient anyway to guarantee the survival of the tamarin, according to data recently collected by the US National Zoological Park's Golden Lion Tamarin Reintroduction

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Project. Project personnel are urging that 3000 ha of adjacent government land, scheduled for conversion into cattle pasture and cropland, be added to the reserve.

Hunters brought to justice

Operation Pantanal was launched at the end of August 1983 to attempt to catch the hunters who were decimating crocodiles and other animals in the 220,000-sq-km Pantanal region of Brazil. The hunters and smugglers of wild animals are intimately connected with highly organised gangs of drugs and arms smugglers. In the first few days three gang chiefs and more than 20 leather merchants were imprisoned and a huge number of crocodile skins, 12 aeroplanes, high-calibre arms, and boats were confiscated. More arrests would have probably been made had it not been for the hunters being alerted about the start of the operation by a network of amateur radio stations.

A Noticia, 6 September 1983
A Critica, 2 September 1983

New turtle in Brazil

A new turtle species has been discovered in south-east Brazil. *Phrynops williamsi* is a side-necked turtle in the family *Chelidae*.

Focus, WWF-US, 5, 6

A tree loses some protection

The 1983 decision to downgrade the Chilean coastal population of *Fitz-Roya cupressoides* from Appendix I to Appendix II of CITES, in response to a proposal from the Chilean Government, has saddened conservationists in Chile. They fear that international trade will start again and that it will be difficult to distinguish between wood of dead standing trees in the coastal areas in which trade is allowed and the wood illegally taken from protected trees.

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Australasia/Antarctica

Dugongs dying in gillnets

Gillnets may be catching more than 3000 dugongs each year in Queensland and Northern Territory water, postulates Dr Helene Marsh of James Cook University in North Queensland, who based her estimate on information from people who had interviewed fishermen

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along the west coast of Cape York in 1980.

Threatened Species—Conservation Alert, No. 4

Cetaceans caught in Taiwan's gillnets

An estimated 4700 small cetaceans were caught in the gillnets of Taiwanese fishing vessels in northern Australian waters between June 1981 and March 1983. Four species are known to be accidentally captured: bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*, spinner dolphin *Stenella longirostris*, spotted dolphin *Stenella attenuata* and false killer whale *Pseudorca crassidens*. The Department of Primary Industry which collected the data and published them jointly with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, has asked the fishery to take all possible steps to reduce the incidental catch.

Technical Bulletin, Fund for Animals Ltd Australia, No. 8

Logging affecting platypus frog

The platypus frog *Rheobatrachus silus* is threatened by logging in its habitat, the Conondale Ranges, Queensland, Australia. The frog, listed in the *IUCN Red Data Book* as vulnerable, swallows its eggs and ejects them from its stomach when they are froglets, a type of breeding unique among vertebrate species.

Threatened Species—Conservation Alert, No. 4

Reserve for Chatham Island taiko

A little-known endangered petrel, the Chatham Island taiko *Pterodroma magentae*, which was rediscovered in 1978, is now known to number at least 17 individuals. It is the subject of a long-term study in which teams have attached transmitters to the tails of three birds in an attempt to discover the breeding grounds. Where the teams have located petrel burrows they have fitted them with microphones to monitor activity. Two young birds have been captured, and released, indicating that breeding is occurring. The owners of the study area have given 1000 ha to the New Zealand Government for a reserve, which also contains a large part of the population of the endangered Chatham Island pigeon *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae chathamensis*.

ICBP Newsletter, 5, 3

Reefs closed for recovery

Replenishment Areas, which will be closed to most kinds of fishing, were declared around North Reef and Boulton Reef in the Capricornia section of Australia's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in July 1983, for three and two years respectively, as an experiment to allow fish stocks to recover. Surveys before, during and after the closure should help to establish necessary recovery periods and levels of use that the living resources of the reefs can sustain.

Parks, 8, 2

New albatross

A new species of albatross has been discovered on tiny subtropical Amsterdam Island in the southern Indian Ocean by French scientists, Pierre Jouventin and Jean-Paul Roux. The Amsterdam albatross *Diomedea amsterdamensis* numbers about 30–50 individuals and it has been proposed that the species's 400-ha breeding site, on exposed plateaux 500–600 m above sea-level, should be made into a conservation area.

Nature, 305, No. 5931

Oceania

Henderson Island is safe

The British Government has announced that it will not allow Mr Ratliffe, an American, to settle on Henderson Island (see *Oryx*, July 1983). The news was welcomed by UK conservation bodies—including fPS, ICBP, WWF-UK and other members of Wildlife Link—whose report on Henderson submitted to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office recommends that the British Government nominate the Pitcairn Group of Islands—Pitcairn, Ducie, Oeno and Henderson—as a World Heritage Site.

People

Harold Eidsvik, Senior Policy Advisor for Parks Canada, has been appointed Chairman of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, replacing Dr Kenton Miller who is now Director-General of IUCN. Dr Marc Dourojeanni of Peru has been appointed Deputy Chairman.

Parks, 8, 2