

# Briefly . . . *Compiled by Richard Fitter*



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

## INTERNATIONAL

### **Ocean Research Threat**

Fearing a move by certain Latin American countries to set up an International Sea Bed Authority with power to grant or refuse permission to conduct research on the high seas, the International Council for Scientific Unions has urged that open research in the oceans should be encouraged and should not require consent when beyond the limits of territorial waters.

### **Whaling Ban Supported**

The Second International Parliamentary Conference on the Environment, which met at Vienna in June 1972, passed a resolution supporting the whaling moratorium urged by the Stockholm Conference.

### **The Golden Ark**

The first seven members of his new order of chivalry announced by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, the Order of the Golden Ark, to recognise special service rendered to the conservation of flora and fauna: Mr Harold Coolidge, retiring President of IUCN, Dr Ira Gabrielson, retired President of WWF/US, Dr C. R. Gutermuth, President of WWF/US, Sir Hugh Elliott, former Secretary General of IUCN, Max Nicholson, Convener, CT Section of the International Biological Programme, Dr Enrique Beltran, Director, Instituto Mexicano de Recursos Naturales Renovables, and Dr Tsuyoshi Tamura, President, National Parks Association of Japan. Seventeen others have been announced as we go to press.

## BRITISH ISLES

### **Britain Destroys Dutch Lichens**

Total emissions of sulphur dioxide in the United Kingdom, mainly from electricity power stations (whose emissions have trebled in 20 years) are

now at an all-time high at 6 million tonnes a year. This has increased atmospheric pollution to such an extent that lichens have been devastated right across the North European plain, and some countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, are now completely devoid of a natural lichen flora.

### **Peregrines Going Up Again**

A census by Dr. D. A. Ratcliffe of the peregrine population of Great Britain in 1971, covering 90 per cent of the 806 territories known to have been occupied at some time within the past 40 years, showed that 341 territories were occupied and 157 contained eyries with young. This represents 54 per cent of the normal pre-war population level, compared with only 44 per cent in 1963, when the peregrine stocks were at their lowest level. Recovery has been most marked at inland sites, probably due to the continuing high level of pesticide residues in the sea.

### **Birds of Prey Successes**

Six pairs of ospreys reared twelve young in Scotland in 1972. In Wales 26 pairs of kites attempted to breed, the 15 successful pairs bringing off 18 young. The Lake District golden eagles succeeded in rearing one young bird. However, these successes were only achieved as a result of active measures by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds against the increasing number of egg thieves. Four young snowy owls were hatched on Fetlar, Shetland, but may have been eaten by their mother.

### **Illegal Seal Captures**

Evidence that despite the Seal Conservation Act some zoos are still capturing common seals for exhibition, without a Home Office licence, is reported by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare. One zoo near the

Wash proved to have eight seal pups, five of them on show to the public and one bearing a tag affixed by the Natural Environment Research Council. This zoo is believed to have exported two seals to Monaco.

#### **Farne Islands Cull**

To maintain the present ecological balance in the islands, the National Trust authorised a cull of the grey seals, whose excessive numbers are damaging the vegetation and the bird habitats. This was carried out in autumn 1972, but only about half the intended 1000 cows, 1000 calves and 250 bulls could be culled.

#### **Badgers, For and Against**

The Frodsham Natural History Society, Cheshire, has instituted a wardening system to stop badger digging on land where the owners have not given permission. In one area alone 45 wardens are operating.

In July 1972 Dursley Rural District Council in Gloucestershire decided to shoot badgers living near a housing estate and bulldoze their sets, for fear they might damage gardens, cause a nuisance and be harried by dogs.

#### **Nature Reserve Burned**

The Essex Naturalists' Trust's Fingringhoe Wick reserve was severely damaged by a fire, started when a straw-burning fire on a nearby farm went out of control. This was one of many incidents last autumn which led to widespread demands from both conservationists and fire brigade authorities that straw and stubble burning by farmers should be brought under stricter control.

#### **The Large Copper Returns**

The introduced colony of the extinct (in Britain) large copper butterfly at Woodwalton Fen, Huntingdonshire, itself became extinct in 1969, when floods drowned all the caterpillars. An attempt to restart the colony from captive stock appears to have succeeded, and results have pleased the Nature Conservancy scientists who are controlling it.

#### **Keep Your Dead Wood**

The importance of dead and decaying timber as an entomological habitat, especially for beetles, and the need, in woodland nature reserve management plans, to allow for its preservation, or at least not to allow for its destruction, is the theme of "Wildlife Conservation and Dead Wood", a supplement to the *Quarterly Journal* of the Devon Trust for Nature Conservation: 20p from 2 Pennsylvania Rd, Exeter EX4 6BQ.

#### **New Forest Committee**

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Naturalists' Trust has set up a New Forest Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr Francis Rose, of King's College, London. The committee will be linked with and supported by the Trust, but will be in a position to give independent scientific advice on wildlife conservation in the New Forest. Its formation has been welcomed by the Forestry Commission.

#### **Whipsnade's Triumph**

The cheetah cub born at Whipsnade Zoo in November 1972 was the first known to have been born to a cheetah that had herself been born in captivity.

## **EUROPE**

#### **Belgian Bird Catching Ban**

A great victory in the long struggle of Belgian bird protectionists to stop bird catching in their country was chalked up in July, when the Belgian Government officially banned the practice. It had been estimated that during the six-week open season in Belgium every autumn some 15 million birds were caught by the 27,000 licensed bird-catchers. Half of them were eaten, the rest sold as pets.

#### **Auk Shooting in Europe**

Widespread shooting of auks has been revealed by an inquiry of the British Trust for Ornithology into the causes of death of ringed auk recoveries. One quarter of the British recoveries had



been shot, although auks are strictly protected. In the Bay of Biscay 37 per cent of razorbills and 32 per cent of guillemots recovered were shot. Auks are protected in French territorial waters, but not outside them. In Norway, where there is an open season for auk shooting, 89 per cent of razorbills and 84 per cent of guillemots recovered had been shot. *See also page 13.*

**Spring Shooting of Roding Woodcock**  
Many European countries persist in the remarkably unsportsmanlike practice of shooting roding woodcock in spring, and this prevents Denmark, Poland and West Germany, among others, from signing the International Convention for the Protection of Birds, 1950. In the Netherlands, where spring shooting has been forbidden since 1966, the numbers of breeding woodcock have increased from a few pairs to many hundreds.

#### **Sea Eagle Disasters**

The Finnish sea eagle population is on the way out, as a result of the pollution of the Baltic, so that its food is contaminated with pesticides. In 1972 only two pairs are known to have nested successfully, and seven other eyries were decorated with fresh twigs but no nesting took place. In 1971 a census revealed 22 adult specimens in the whole country.

The four pairs of white-tailed sea-eagles in Schleswig-Holstein, the only ones in western Europe outside Scandinavia, reared only one young in 1972. One two-day-old young bird was killed by a marauder who evaded the guard and climbed 60 ft to its nest. The one surviving young was also threatened by a marauder, who fortunately was detected by the guards.

#### **White Storks Decrease**

The white stork is decreasing all over western and central Europe, according to the XI *Bulletin* of the International Council for Bird Preservation. Sharp decreases were recorded in Denmark, the Netherlands, Alsace and Baden-Württemberg, where numbers are down to 65, 19, 23 and 43 respectively. Only Oberlausitz in Germany and

Styria in Austria were still recording small increases.

#### **Woodpecker Threatened**

The white-backed woodpecker *Dendrocopos leucotos*, once common in Finland, is now on the verge of extinction there because of the disappearance of the old and decaying trees it needs for food and nest-holes. Finland's deciduous forests have been steadily cleared and replaced with conifers, so almost all the old birches are gone. Special reserves must be created if the species is to survive in Finland.

#### **Seals in the Baltic**

The Baltic seal stocks are now probably at a lower level than at any time during the present century, according to Oliver Hook and Professor Johnels of the Swedish Museum of Natural History, who have studied them for ten years. They urge that the bounties still being paid in Finland and Sweden should be discontinued, as those formerly paid by Denmark, Germany and Latvia have already been.

#### **Elk in Estonia**

Official estimates of the number of elk in Estonia rose from 4000 in 1962 to 11,500 in 1972, although 11,000 were shot during the period. Allowing for young born this year and other factors, it was estimated that the number of elk in Estonia by autumn 1972 was actually between 15,000 and 20,000. The carrying capacity of the country is estimated at only 6000–7000 animals, so that a recommendation was made for 8000 elk to be shot in Estonia during autumn 1972.

#### **Polar Bear Hunting Ban**

Norway has imposed a five-year ban on the hunting or killing of polar bears in Spitsbergen, where as recently as 1970 five hundred bears were killed. Polar bears are already fully protected in the USSR, Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### **Pyrenean Desman's Mystery Decline**

The Pyrenean desman, a shrew-like relative of the mole, is one of the few

Red Data Book animals confined to Europe, occurring on both sides of the Pyrenees and in the northern half of the Iberian peninsula. P. B. Richard reports in *Courrier de la Nature* no. 22 that for the past two years the population he has been ringing at Ariège in the French Pyrenees has ceased to exist. The cause is unknown.

#### **Reindeer in Iceland**

Reindeer numbers in eastern Iceland increased by approximately 1000 in 1972, and now total 3598. Most are near the Snaefell mountain north of the Vatnajökull glacier. Numbers are to be reduced, but not, as hitherto, by sportsmen.

#### **Butterflies and Snails Protected**

The municipal council of Vigneaux in the Hautes Alpes department of south-eastern France has forbidden for three years the collecting of butterflies and snails, and the killing of squirrels.

#### **European Soil Charter**

To arrest the steady deterioration of land in Europe and promote soil conservation practices, the Council of Europe has adopted a European Soil Charter. Among other things the Charter urges the protection of soils against erosion and pollution and the making of detailed inventories of soil resources.

#### **Swiss DDT Ban**

Switzerland is the latest country to ban the use of DDT and other hard pesticides.

#### **New WWF Appeal**

World Wildlife Finland, the 18th national appeal of WWF, was officially launched in Helsinki in October.

#### **Malta's Robin Poachers**

Some 20,000 robins are believed to be caught in Malta every autumn, despite the fact that this is a protected bird in the island.

#### **Goshawks in Netherlands**

After a severe decline from about 125 to only 20 breeding pairs between 1958 and 1963 and still only 20 pairs

in 1971, goshawk numbers in the Netherlands have shown a slight increase. In 1972 there were 29 pairs, of which 22 bred successfully. The part played by the 40 German goshawks released in Holland in the winter of 1963/64 in this recovery is not clear.

## **AMERICAS**

#### **A Third Alaska Pipeline?**

The possibility of a third pipeline across Alaska, in addition to the well known proposal for an oil pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez, and a gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay into Canada, is raised by Jim Kowalowsky in the summer 1972 *Alaska Conservation Review*. He fears that hints dropped by oil industry spokesmen indicate that they are planning also an oil pipeline from Prudhoe Bay into Canada.

#### **Comprehensive DDT Ban**

The Environmental Protection Agency has banned the use of DDT in the United States for nearly all except limited public health purposes, as representing an unacceptable risk to the environment and in the long term to the wellbeing of mankind. The ban has been challenged in the courts by the Montrose Chemical Corporation, sole US manufacturer of DDT.

#### **Wildlife Protected in Uruguay**

All native Uruguayan animals are protected under a new law, which prohibits their commercialisation, with certain exceptions, such as the monk parakeet, eared dove and house sparrow. Hunting is forbidden in public places, and is allowed on private property only with the permission of the owner. Hunting of the red-winged tinamou *Rhynchotus rufescens* is totally prohibited.

#### **Threat to Yellowstone Bison**

Stockmen around Yellowstone National Park, in Montana and Wyoming, are urging the eradication of brucellosis from the Yellowstone bison herd, which they claim is a threat to their cattle. They have rejected a



plan for boundary control, and insist on a programme that would slaughter some 80 per cent of the Park's bison. The remaining bison would have to be penned for several years for further testing. The Yellowstone bison are the only ones in the United States that were not exterminated and have survived in natural free-ranging herds. Veterinarians agree that the transmission of brucellosis from them to cattle is a very remote possibility, and in fact the disease has not been reported from cattle herds anywhere near the park boundaries for more than ten years. It is to be hoped that saner counsels will prevail, and preserve a resource that is far more precious to the United States, and indeed the world, than the cattle in the surrounding area.

#### **Protection for the Eastern Cougar**

The Canadian Nature Federation has urged the provincial governments of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, where the eastern race of the cougar still occurs, both to protect it and promote research into its life history.

#### **Threat to the Manatee**

The Florida manatee may be extinct within twenty years, warns William M. Stephens in the *National Parks Magazine*. He fears it may not be possible to save it unless certain waterways within the Everglades National Park are placed off-limits to all boat traffic. A similar ban is needed in winter in places where the sea-cows congregate.

#### **Helping the Sea Otter**

Research and management are restoring the kelp beds off the coast of California, which are the favoured habitat of the once almost extinct sea otter. Divers have been killing the sea urchins, which increased as a result of pollution by sewage outfalls, and began to overgraze the kelp beds.

#### **New Fur Seal Colony**

A previously unknown northern fur seal colony has been found at Castle Rock, off the coast of southern California. A total of eight bulls, more than 100 cows, and 43 pups were counted. This is now

the second Californian colony of an animal population once nearly exterminated by the hunters but brought back to health and vigour by the efforts of the United States. The first, San Miguel, was found in 1968, after a lapse of sixty years, and has since nearly doubled in population.

#### **PCB's in Polar Bears**

Canadian Wildlife Service researchers have found PCBs in polar bears and seals from widely distributed localities in the Canadian Arctic and Subarctic. PCBs are also present in Arctic char, but in lower concentrations. They were found in all samples of polar bear, seal and char that were analysed. DDE, a DDT derivative, was also found in all these samples.

#### **Condors Decline**

In recent years the Andean condor has steadily declined in numbers, according to Jerry McGahan in the XI *Bulletin* of the International Council for Bird Preservation. It disappeared from Venezuela seventy years ago. In Colombia only some 50–200 remain, and they are disappearing rapidly. Even in Peru they are decreasing in at least part of their range. On the guano islands of Santa Rosa and de la Vieja, two or three are shot annually—in 1947 thirty were shot in two days.

#### **Timber Wolf Sanctuary**

To protect the timber wolf *Canis lupus lycaon* in its only remaining habitat in the 48 contiguous states, an inviolate wolf sanctuary of 2,350 sq.m is to be set up in the Superior National Forest of northern Minnesota.

#### **Peregrine Project**

The Peregrine Project at Cornell University, NY, aims to perpetuate peregrines in captivity until they can be returned to a safer environment than the one which has exterminated all peregrines in the north-eastern United States. The project has five pairs of peregrines, three of them proven egg producers, and after preliminary experiments to determine the correct incubation temperature,

hopes to produce at least ten peregrines during the 1973 season.

#### **Whoopers Sad Decline**

Only 51 whooping cranes, including five young birds, wintered in the Aransas Refuge on the coast of Texas this year, a decline of 13 on the previous year. The wild population is now back to where it was four years ago, and the captive stock is also four down on 1969.

#### **Puerto Rico Parrot Census**

The 1972 census of the Puerto Rico parrot in its only known remaining habitat, the Luquillo Experimental Forest in Puerto Rico, estimated 15 individuals, inclusive of a pair captured for captive breeding. This compares with estimates of 12 for 1971, 16 for 1970 and 24 in 1968. Four individuals are known to be in captivity, three of them at the U.S. Interior Department's station at Patuxent, Maryland.

#### **California Condors**

Recent censuses of the California condor, confined to a restricted range in southern California, have never exceeded 34, but actual numbers are estimated to be between 50 and 60. Fortunately man-induced mortality is now apparently at a very low level.

#### **Threat to Auks Lifted**

In both 1970 and 1971, according to Canadian ornithologists accompanying the Danish salmon fleets off Greenland, at least half a million guillemots were drowned in fishing nets. Fortunately the agreed reduction of the catch from 800 to 300 tons until 1975, and total cessation after that, will arrest this threat to the auk population of north-eastern North America.

#### **Protecting Porpoises**

The US Commerce Department has announced measures to save porpoises from being drowned in the nets of the US tuna fleets. Federal agencies and the tuna industry are required to work towards reducing porpoise mortality as close as possible to zero within two years. Research is to be stepped

up, a new type of net with smaller webbing to be used, and fishermen taught how to handle the nets to enable the porpoises to escape.

#### **A Marine Fish Endangered**

The totoaba *Gynoscion macdonaldi*, a giant croaker fish found only in the Gulf of California, where it is or was the basis of an important commercial fishery, appears to be threatened with extinction due both to overfishing and to the diversion of the Colorado river having eliminated its brackish water breeding habitat. Attempts to capture a small stock for captive breeding in 1971 proved a failure, and commercial fishermen have also had poor hauls.

#### **Salmon Fishing Ban**

Canada has banned practically all commercial salmon fishing in its waters for at least six years.

#### **Rationing the Parks**

Overcrowding of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina is damaging the trails so much that it has become necessary to restrict the number of overnight hikers in some areas of the park.

## **AFRICA**

#### **Birds of Prey Protected**

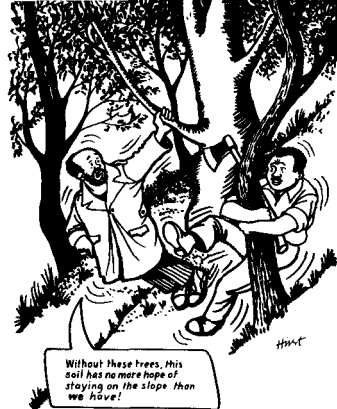
The peregrine falcon and other birds of prey are now strictly protected in the Sudan.

#### **White Rhinos at Kabalega**

Two newly born white rhino calves have been seen in Kabalega (formerly Murchison Falls) National Park, Uganda, where the endangered northern race was reintroduced some years ago.

#### **Threat to Cape Flora**

If present trends continue, according to Roy Siegfried in *African Wildlife*, the great majority of the unique endemic Cape flora is likely to be replaced, within the next century, by alien plants, mainly wattles. *Hakea* and unwanted pines. Among other creatures threatened by this wholesale extinction of an irreplaceable



Two illustrations from Kenya's National Report to the United Nations on the Human Environment, a thorough survey now published by the Government in a small book with a foreword by the Minister of Natural Resources, the Hon. W. O. Omamo MP. Kenya's wildlife is given full consideration as a major natural resource and the considerations for accommodating it and exploiting it examined. Its importance as a major land use is fully appreciated, especially in view of the fact that arid low-yielding lands cover four-fifths of Kenya.

world resource is the already rare protea seedeater *Protea nerifolia*, whose ecology is bound up with relatively rare combinations of peculiar plants which are part of this ecosystem.

#### **Oil and the Jackass Penguin**

With the large number of ships now rounding the Cape of Good Hope every day, there will inevitably be further incidents involving the mass oiling of seabirds, concludes the South African National Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds. However, it is unlikely that oil pollution alone can exterminate the Cape jackass penguin, because of the large number of breeding islands and because of the technical capacity to contain the effects of oil spillage. But there is still great need for a seabird rescue service, such as SANCCOB provides, and it has been shown that oiled penguins can be successfully cleaned and rehabilitated.

#### **Addax Protected**

In October 1972 the Chad Government issued an ordinance granting full protection to the addax and the scimitar-horned oryx throughout the country.

## **ASIA**

### **The Vietnam Environment**

About 10 per cent of the agricultural land of South Vietnam has had to be abandoned because of destruction due to the war. Between 1965 and 1971 alone, some 26 million craters were produced, covering 423,000 acres and representing a total displacement of some 3.4 billion cubic yards of earth. Five Rome plows (20-ton caterpillar tractors fitted with 11 ft-wide plough blades) had destroyed 750,000 acres of forest up to August 1971. (Arthur H. Westing and E. W. Pfeiffer, in the Fall 1972 *Explorer*).

### **Return of the Banteng**

Game Coin has set up a conservation project to catch banteng, the wild cattle of Asia, from the feral herd of 2000 in northern Australia and return them to Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, where they have been killed out.

### **More Protected in Sri Lanka**

Amendments to the wildlife protection regulations in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), approved in July 1972, extend protection to 16 mammals and five turtles or



tortoises. In addition the Ceylon wood-pigeon is removed from the list of birds which may be shot without licence in the open season. The newly protected mammals include six shrews, three bats, six rodents and the Ceylon palm civet. The turtles include the green turtle, the hawksbill and two logger-heads.

#### **Protection Laws Flouted**

The Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka complains that the sale of leopard, crocodile and deer skins continues in spite of the stringent laws against it. Pavement hawkers offer the skins of leopards and other protected animals to tourists for dollars only at the jetty whenever a cruise ship is in harbour. These offences are committed openly within the precincts of the Customs. Similar offences are alleged at the airport, and even live snakes and birds are said to be smuggled out in suitcases.

#### **Malaysian Wildlife Protected**

Malaysia has passed a Protection of Wildlife Act, which covers mammals, birds, reptiles and insects in two categories, 'totally protected' and 'protected'. The two rhinos and the tapir are among 34 totally protected mammals, and all species of hornbill are among the 465 species of totally protected bird.

#### **Tigers in Bangladesh**

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, has expressed determination to conserve the tigers of the Sunderbans, which have been made the symbol of the new nation on its coins.

#### **An Otter in Danger**

The smooth-coated otter *Lutra perspicillata* has reached remnant status in Pakistan, according to Philip Wayre, and unless it is protected immediately will undoubtedly quite soon become extinct. The oxbow swamps in the riverain forests north of Hyderabad are one of its last remaining important habitats, and he urges that suitable sanctuaries be set aside for the otter, allowing at least five miles of river for each animal's territory.

#### **Wild Asses in Iran**

There are about 1200 wild asses in Iran, 500 of them in a reserve. Those in the north are onagers, *Equus hemionus onager*, but the Iranian authorities believe that those in the south are the Indian wild ass *E. h. khur*, hitherto thought to be confined to the Indian subcontinent.

#### **Birds Protected in Cyprus**

All birds of prey and owls, all large water birds except ducks and geese, and all gulls (to safeguard Audouin's gull) are now protected in Cyprus.

#### **Japanese Crested Ibis**

In July 1972 there were 12 wild Japanese crested ibises in Japan and one in captivity. It is not known how many, if any, there may still be in China.

#### **Pandas in Japan**

Two giant pandas from China are now in Tokyo Zoo.

## **ANTIPODES**

#### **Kangaroo Poaching**

In the first half of 1972 poachers killed more than 6000 kangaroos in protected wildlife refuges in northern New South Wales and escaped across the border into Queensland, where there is no limit to the number of kangaroos a licensed hunter may kill. The poachers appear to be as willing to shoot at people who try to stop them as they are to kill kangaroos.

#### **Emu Farm**

The farming of emus has started at North Kalannie, Western Australia. It is hoped to produce more than 5000 skins a year. Top quality leather only comes from captive emus, wild birds usually suffering some damage on the back.

#### **Private Zoos in Australia**

The Western Australia Department of Fisheries and Fauna rarely gives favourable consideration to proposals to establish private zoos; a dozen such applications were received last year. The Department feels that a zoo can





only be run by those who have both a specialised knowledge and adequate financial resources. Authorities in other countries, please note.

#### Rare Birds Protected

The noisy scrub bird *Atrichornis clamorosus*, the Cape Barren goose, the freckled duck and seven other rare birds in danger of extinction have been given strict protection throughout Western Australia.

#### Takahes Hatched

Two takahes, the first of this rare flightless bird to be bred in captivity, were hatched at a bird reserve near Wellington, New Zealand, on Christmas Day.

#### Government Grant Up

The Australian Federal Government has trebled its \$50,000 a year grant to the Australian Conservation Foundation, to meet the cost of its secretariat.

#### Rare Plant Rediscovered

*Gunnera hamiltonii*, a rare plant last reported in 1925, has been rediscovered in abundance on Stewart Island or Rakiura, off New Zealand's South Island. A reserve is urgently needed to safeguard the continued existence of the plant in its sole known site.

## THE OCEANS

#### Plankton in Decline

Records in the North Atlantic over 22 years show a decline in the amount of plankton, a shortening of the season by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  weeks, and a delay in the spring 'bloom' of the phytoplankton. The cause(s) may include pollution, both of the ocean and of the atmosphere, by human activity, and a cyclical variation in the amount of solar radiation.

#### Protection in the Seychelles

The Seychelles Government is to prohibit the export of the caret shell which comes from the hawksbill turtle, in order to conserve the species and so that local craftsmen will be able to continue to produce tortoiseshell objects.

The use of spear guns offshore is also to be prohibited, to preserve the fish fauna offshore.

#### Fire Threat to Rarities

A two-day fire in the Vallée de Mai on Praslin Island in the Seychelles recently threatened the coco de mer palm and the black parrot, both endemics. The fire destroyed 600 acres of casuarina forest, but fortunately missed the palms. Some 400 islanders fought the blaze.

#### Long-Distance Turtle

A leatherback turtle tagged in Surinam, in the north-eastern corner of South America, has been recovered off the coast of Ghana, West Africa. Its journey of 3,700 miles is the longest proved migration of a turtle so far.

## NEW NATIONAL PARKS

Britain's eleventh national park has been designated in mid-Wales, the first since 1957. The Cambrian Mountains National Park covers 467 square miles of the Welsh Hills, including the sources of the Severn and the Wye.

Some 152,000 hectares in Corsica have been declared France's ninth regional natural park.

Three new parks containing 18,500 sq.m. increase Canada's total acreage of national parks by more than 50 per cent: They are Klauane (8,500) in the south-west corner of the Yukon Territory, and including Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak; Baffin Island (8,200), almost all within the Arctic Circle; and South Nahanni (1,840), which includes Virginia Falls, twice the height of Niagara.

Gros Morne is a new Canadian national park in the Long Range Mountains of Newfoundland. Its 155,000 hectares include rivers, lakes, waterfalls and extensive broad-leaved and coniferous forests.

Lal Suhanra in the Punjab is the latest national park to be promulgated in Pakistan. Preparations for fencing it are in an advanced stage.

The national park of Uda Walawe, just declared by the Minister of Shipping and Tourism of Sri Lanka, is Ceylon's first new national park for 18 years. It is 119 sqm. in extent, and provides sanctuary for wild elephants, a Red Data Book animal in Sri Lanka, wild buffaloes and wild boars.

Some 400 acres of regenerating native bush at Wainuiomata, in New Zealand's North Island, has been set aside as the first step in the establishment of a recreational park.

Five national parks are to be established in the Seychelles. One will include Morne Seychellois and the mountains of North Mahé. Another will be a marine national park, the island of St Anne with its nearby islets and reefs.

## NEW NATURE RESERVES

The Nature Conservancy's latest national nature reserve is the Derbyshire Dales, 123 acres on the south side of Lathkill Dale, leased from the Peak Park Planning Board, and 23 acres in Monks Dale, near Tideswell. The reserve lies on limestone, and includes mixed ash and elm woodland, scrub and grassland.

The purchase of Martin Mere, the Wildfowl Trust's latest wildfowl refuge, near Southport, Lancashire, was completed in July.

Sharnbrook Summit, an important 21-acre grassland site which runs alongside the main railway line from Bedford northwards, is to be leased by Beds and Hunts Naturalists' Trust from British Rail.

BBONT's latest reserve is on the Otmoor rifle range, near Oxford, by agreement with the Territorial Army. The site, of great botanical and entomological interest, has since been threatened with inundation by a new reservoir.

Patmore Heath, one of the best acid heaths in Hertfordshire, and an SSSI, is to become a nature reserve of the Herts and Middlesex Trust, by agreement with Albury Parish Council.

A 630-acre marshland site at Leigh on Sea, Essex, including Two Trees Island, is being offered by Southend Corporation to the Nature Conservancy as a national nature reserve, in connection with research into the wildlife of the Maplin area.

Llanymynech Rocks, on the Shropshire border, is the North Wales Naturalists' Trust's third Montgomeryshire reserve, by agreement with the owners. Its 4½ acres are rich in limestone flora and breeding birds.

The Netherlands Society for the Conservation of Natural Monuments is to buy 580 acres of the Zwanenwater, a region of sand dunes and lagoons famous for spoonbills and other breeding birds.

The Schleswig-Holstein government is to protect the North Frisian Waddensee, between Eiderstedt peninsula and the Hindenburg Dam, thus protecting all the shallows as far as the Danish border. The establishment of a national park is being considered.

Greece has established three nature reserves on the borders of Lake Mikra Prespa to protect the important colonies of pelicans, cormorants and herons, and has banned hunting on and within 300 metres of the lake. It is hoped that similar arrangements will be made for the bird colonies in the Evros delta, Luross and Kerkini.

Portugal has established the Selvagens Islands with their important seabird colonies as a nature reserve.

Two new nature reserves in Kazakhstan are Lake Alakol, to protect a relict colony of gulls, recently discovered, and on the Ust-Urt plateau, to protect the Asian mouflon.

The Djoudj, 30,000 acres of wetlands in the lower delta of the Senegal river and an important bird sanctuary, is Senegal's latest national park.

During 1971/72 three new nature reserves were established in New Zea-



land, bringing the total of official reserves to 51. These were at Eyrewell, Armstrong (Canterbury) and Lake Luxmore (Southland).

The first wildlife reserve in south-western Papua is to be an area of about 2000 square miles on the Bensback Plains. It has large herds of deer, also wallabies and waterfowl.

## PERSONALIA

Lord Craigton, Chairman of the All-Party Conservation Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Fauna Preservation Society, has succeeded Lord Molson as Chairman of CoEnCo, the Committee for Environmental Conservation.

Sir Charles Connell, Chairman of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, is this year's Chairman of the Council for Nature, a post which rotates annually among the Council's Vice Presidents.

Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards, Regius Professor of Natural History at Aberdeen University, who retired from the chairmanship of the Natural Environment Research Council in September 1971, was awarded a CBE in the New Year Honours.

Dr Keith Eltringham has been appointed first Director of the Uganda Institute of Ecology, successor to the Nuffield Institute of Tropical Ecology at Ruwenzori (formerly Queen Elizabeth) National Park.

James Ferguson-Lees, lately President of the British Trust for Ornithology, has succeeded David Lea as Deputy Director (Conservation) of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

John S. McCormack is the new Executive Vice-President and Director of WWF Canada.

Professor M. F. Mörzer Bruyns of the Netherlands is the new Chairman of the European Continental Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation.

Dr Francis Peel (USA) has been appointed Deputy Director General of the World Wildlife Fund at Morges. Drs. M. F. I. J. Bijleveld, Hon. Secretary of WWF Netherlands from 1963–1971, has been appointed Youth Officer and Executive Officer of the WWF Education Committee at Morges.

Dr Hermann Abs (Germany), the Maharaja of Baroda (India), Eugene R. Black (USA) and General Charles Lindbergh (USA) have resigned as Trustees of the World Wildlife Fund. New Trustees are Dr Albert Löhr, Executive Vice-President of WWF Germany, and Maurice F. Strong, Secretary General of the Stockholm Conference and head of the new UN environmental unit in Nairobi.

Allan D. Cruickshank, usually regarded as America's foremost bird photographer, has been awarded the sixth Arthur A. Allen Medal of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Nicholas Crocker, Editor of the BBC Natural History Unit at Bristol, retired at the end of December. He is succeeded by Mick Rhodes, a producer with the BBC 2 Horizon series.

## OBITUARY

Professor Edward Hindle, FRS, Founder Director of the International Wildfowl Research Bureau, and sometime Scientific Director of the Zoological Society of London, died suddenly in London in January.

David Lack, FRS, one of the outstanding British ornithologists of the 20th century, died on March 12.

Louis Leakey, who died in London in October, aged 69, was best known as an anthropologist, palaeontologist and student of primate behaviour. But in his multifarious career he often found time to promote wildlife conservation generally, as for instance

when he played a leading part in saving the Mzima Springs, in what is now the Tsavo Park in Kenya, in the early 1950's, and later, in the 60's, the Serengeti too.

J. V. Bateman, a leading Northern Ireland Bird protectionist and Chairman of the N.I. Committee of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, died on July 4.

The Hon. Alexander Geddes, a member of the Management Committee of the British National Appeal of WWF, and an active supporter for many years, died on September 23.

Professor Walery Goetel, leading Polish conservationist, died on November 6.

Charles Astley Maberley, well known artist and writer on African wildlife, was robbed and murdered on his farm near Duiwelskloof not far from the Kruger National Park in the Transvaal, in February 1972.

John Markham, one of the leading British wildlife photographers, died of cancer on September 28.

Eugen Schuhmacher, the well known Munich film maker who made 'The Last of the Wild', has died.

Frank Minot, Director of Operations for the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, has died in Nairobi.

Herbert H. Mills, lately Executive Vice President of WWF United States and Member of the Executive Board of WWF International, died suddenly on October 21. He had also been Chairman of the National Audubon Society.

Gerald Samson, Director of Public Relations at the British National Appeal of WWF during 1970-71, died in August 1972.

Olegas Truchanas, Lithuanian-born Australian citizen, who became a leading Tasmanian conservationist and a Councillor of the Australian Conservation Foundation, has died in a canoeing accident.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

The reprint of James Walter White's 1912 *Flora of Bristol* by Chatford House Press, Bristol (£6.25) will be welcomed by all floristic botanists. It has long been out of print, as have the more recent flora of Gloucestershire (1948) and the older Somerset flora (1896). The area covered includes Gloucestershire north to Berkeley and Dursley, and Somerset south to Burnham and Shepton Mallet.

*Six Came Flying*, by Marquis MacSwiney of MASHANAGLASS (Michael Joseph, £2.50) is a remarkable account of the relationship between the author and his swans. They became so tame that he was able to make observations of the greatest scientific value and general interest on their behaviour.

Another splendid instance of the same genre, and the second of the Newbury Environmental Group Surveys, deals with *Bucklebury Common* and *The Changing Status of Wild Mammals in the Newbury District* (Borough Museum, Newbury, Berks, 40p). There are still half a dozen singing nightjars on the Common. Of the 32 mammals listed, eight, including mink and Chinese water deer, are introduced aliens. Dormouse and harvest mouse still survive.

A most attractive little series of illustrated booklets on various aspects of Exmoor including three on wildlife: *The Vegetation of Exmoor*, by Geoffrey Sinclair, *The Wild Red Deer of Exmoor* by E. R. Lloyd, and *The Fish of Exmoor*, by H. B. Maund. All would make excellent companions for the holidaying naturalist, but it is a pity a botanist was not asked to check the appendix of rare plants in the first-named.

*The Birds of the Department of Lima, Peru*, by Maria Koepcke (Livingston, Wynnewood, Pa 19096, \$4.95) now appears in a second and English edition, which will be invaluable to English-speaking bird-watchers visiting or living in an area where good bird identification aids in English have hitherto been almost non-existent.