

Government should set up a Nature Conservation Department with sufficient powers to enforce effective legislation. The report condemns the present nature conservation policy in South Australia as quite inadequate, and points to the urgent need for preserving "primeval areas", because "if they are not secured now there will be none left".

Breeding Chinchillas for the Wild

Soviet animal breeders think that chinchillas could be established in the wild in the U.S.S.R., in the mountain areas of central Asia, in the Crimea, and in the arid areas of the Caucasus. The first 100 pairs were brought from Colorado, in the U.S.A., for acclimatization in the Kirov region in 1960; the first litter was born in 1961, and a second in 1962 from females of the 1961 litter. But further studies are being made before the animals are released into the wild.

Conservation in the Constitution

The Swiss have recently introduced Nature Conservation into their Federal Constitution. The Federation may acquire nature reserves of national importance, either by agreement or by expropriation. In 1960 a commission with seven members was appointed to make a list of sites of national or international importance which should be conserved in their natural state. The report produced in 1963 listed 106 such sites, covering a total area of 3,000 square kilometres, or 8 per cent of the area of Switzerland.

Wildlife Artists Unite

A group of artists specializing in the painting and drawing of wildlife have formed a Society of Wildlife Artists, which will hold an inaugural exhibition in London at the Galleries of the Federation of British Artists, opening on 13th August. The Convenors of the Society are E. A. R. Ennion, Robert Gillmor, R. B. Talbot Kelly, Peter Scott, Keith Shackleton, and Maurice Wilson, with Maurice Bradshaw as secretary. Thirty other wildlife artists have accepted the invitation to become founder-members.

African Journey: Extracts from a Report

IN the spring of 1963 a game conservation mission, sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund and headed by Mr. Philip K. Crowe, a former U.S. ambassador to Ceylon and South Africa, visited several critical areas in Africa and the Near East to present the case for conservation to the various governments "at the highest possible levels", and to report on the status of rare species and wildlife in general.

EGYPT

The situation in Egypt, says Mr. Crowe, quoted in *African Wildlife News*, "could hardly be worse", with no game department, game laws unenforced, the desert fauna nearing extinction, and wildfowl unprotected and decreasing. Government officials showed some interest in the establishment of game reserves, but none at all in protecting wildfowl; because the migrating flocks pass over the country and do not breed "the feeling seems to be that it is not up to Egypt to protect another country's resources".

SUDAN

Poaching and inadequate game laws are responsible for an alarming decrease in many species in Sudan, despite a well organised game department. Neither lion nor buffalo are protected, and distinguished visitors are allowed to shoot in the game parks. The previous year "an Arab princeling turned the Nimule Game Reserve into a minor abattoir, shooting everything he saw from the safety of his car". There is a lot of game in parks and reserves, and a high standard among the men in charge. The cost of an elephant licence is so low that a Sudanese can make a good profit by selling the ivory and meat. In this huge country of over a million square miles and a budget for wildlife conservation of £28,000 (Sudanese), little effort can be made to protect the game, and in some cases the local police were actually profiting from illegal shooting.

SOMALIA

Three rare animals are in danger of extinction in Somalia : the Somali wild ass, the dibatag or Clarke's gazelle, and the beira antelope, all found in the desert areas of the Horn of Africa and rescue operations should be considered. The game laws date from the Italian regime and are hopelessly out of date. There is much administrative confusion, and "the game is being destroyed as fast as possible". The fine Somali leopard is now so rare that native hunters get as much as \$100 for a prime pelt. Ivory and skin auctions are conducted by the government with only cursory attention to the legality of the source. In the Bubasci Game Reserve on the Kenya border there are Hunter's antelope, and near the mouth of the Juba there are said to be dugong.

ETHIOPIA

Although the law states that there is no hunting in Ethiopia, it is possible to get a special permit to shoot almost anything, including such rare species as mountain nyala, ibex, and wild ass. The ibex still survives in the Simien mountains, where it is protected, but there is no protection for the other two. The game laws, published in 1944, provide for no enforcement, poaching is rampant and the sale of skins and ivory almost unchecked. The responsible Minister promised to refuse all requests received for permits to shoot mountain nyala, ibex, and wild ass. Surveys of these three species would be worthwhile, and also technical help for setting up a game department. In both Sudan and Ethiopia there is a need for technical books on conservation.

Scientific Survey in Ethiopia

A UNESCO scientific mission, headed by Sir Julian Huxley, made a survey of wildlife conservation problems in Ethiopia last autumn at the request of the Ethiopian government. The mission covered most of the country looking for sites for national parks or reserves, and was received by Emperor Haile Selassie, who has taken a personal interest in wildlife conservation.