Letters

South Georgia pintails

It is good to know that South Georgia pintails are now breeding in captivity at Slimbridge (*Oryx* **17**, 211, 1983) but I was sorry to see the sensational way this item was reported. The ducks were not airlifted off South Georgia to ensure the species was not 'wiped out' during the Falklands conflict. Their dispatch to Slimbridge was planned long before the first scrap-merchant set foot on the island. Furthermore, even had the hostilities in South Georgia been much more widespread, it is inconceivable that this attractive little duck, which although its population is small, is widely distributed along the whole of South Georgia's extensive coastline, would have been significantly affected by the war.

By all means let us have a breeding group of the ducks at the Wildfowl Trust, but I think I can guarantee that those who are able to make the trip to their beautiful native island will be able to admire them in the wild for many years to come.

Yours sincerely
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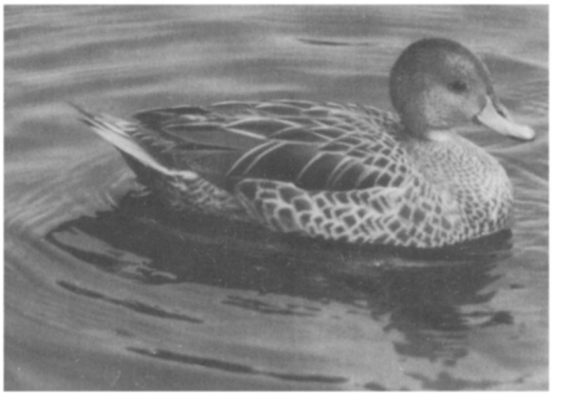

South Georgia pintail *(Nigel Bonner).*

Wildlife and Countryside Act

October 1983 *Oryx* (page 169) reports the conservation of 'perhaps the most diverse woodland in southern England' by means of a Management Agreement under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. This is surely something to be welcomed since it shows that the Act is fulfilling its intentions. It is therefore a pity that the report is phrased to give the impression it is a disaster.

The headline 'One Costly Result of the Wildlife and Countryside Act' implies that either too much was paid, or that we cannot afford to save such places. Management Agreements usually involve 'management'—i.e. the owner undertakes to spend time and money on the care of the area purely for conservation purposes, and the fact that he says he will be engaging extra estate workers suggests that this is the case, but the report implies that he is getting a lot of money for nothing.

You also report that he is 'adamant that there will be no public access' as if this was a selfish decision on his part, whereas it would almost certainly be a condition of the agreement designed to protect the wildlife. You might equally have made a fuss about the threat to wildlife if he had said he was going to allow unlimited public access!

This owner has freely entered into an agreement with the NCC to comply with their wishes for the management of his private land, as the Act hoped people would, yet your last comment suggests he is doing something antisocial. Sadly, you have to report enough disasters in your pages as it is, so why not highlight the good points of this item or at least give us the full facts so that we can judge for ourselves. More News, less Views.

Yours sincerely,
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Proposed mink farm on Trondra

At last I am able to say thank you on behalf of the Shetland Bird Club for your contribution to our success in the campaign against the establishment of a mink farm on Trondra. The enclosed local newspaper cutting tells it all and leaves me only to