

Acknowledgments

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Wildlife Protection in China

Two factors have greatly helped China's wildlife in the last decade, says Norman Myers, in the July *International Wildlife*: the Government's decision in the 1960s to slow down the development of new agricultural land, concentrating rather on improved yields from land already cultivated, and the considerable success achieved in slowing down the population growth rate. The Chinese, he says, now show great concern for their wildlife, and the giant panda, whose range had shrunk enormously, is a symbol of national pride; no Chinese would think of killing one, and its only enemy is the leopard. Its stronghold is the Wang-Lang Reserve in western Szechwan, almost 80 square miles of ravines and forest in the Min Shan Mountains; even outside the reserve it can maintain itself, for it poses no threat to livestock or people, prefers the most inaccessible terrain, and is almost never seen.

All nine species of deer in China have been greatly reduced and are threatened to some extent, but all are now protected with specific sanctuaries for each. Moreover, Norman Myers believes that the Government has succeeded in debunking the myth of the aphrodisiac properties of powdered deer antlers and rhino horn, certainly among young people. Until 1960 musk deer were relentlessly hunted for the musk, but a method of removing this from the animals without killing them has been devised, and musk deer have now increased to the point where limited hunting is allowed.

To protect the Przewalski horse the Government has encouraged nomadic herdsmen to use artificial waterholes for their domestic stock, leaving the natural ones undisturbed for the horses, which cross into China from Mongolia in the winter. This policy also helps the kiang, the Asiatic wild ass, now confined to Tibet but believed to be increasing in numbers.

The policy of eliminating tigers, which persisted until the mid-1960s has been 'partially reversed', and a refuge system is being planned; the tiger is partially protected; the Siberian tiger is fully protected, and tree-planting in the north-east is creating habitat for prey species. Leopards are fairly common, but pelts are going out in some numbers to Hong Kong dealers—a figure of 3000 skins seems likely. Clouded and snow leopard are protected except where individual animals take livestock.

The Chinese endangered species list, which lists 32 species and subspecies is being revised and more species added.