

## INTERNATIONAL

**Forest loss lower than expected**

On 8 March the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that forest loss in the 1980s was lower than predicted. Between 1981 and 1990 15.4 million ha of tropical forests were lost per annum compared with the 16.9 million ha expected. In 1980, however, the annual loss of tropical forest was 11.4 million ha. In developed countries forest cover increased in the same period: for example, in Europe at the end of 1990 149 million ha were forested compared with 137 million ha in 1980. The FAO report concludes that the rate of deforestation is still worrying. *Source: European Environmental Bureau, Environment in Brief, March 1993, 9.*

**New Parties to Ramsar**

Croatia, Guinea, Slovenia, and Trinidad and Tobago have all become Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention. For Croatia and Slovenia the Convention entered into force from the dates of their independence, 18 October 1991 and 25 June 1991, respectively. Slovenia designated Secovljske Soline on the Drava River for the List of Wetlands of International Importance. Guinea became the 18th African Party on 11 November 1992 and listed five sites: Ile Alcatraz, Iles Tristao, Rio Kapatchez, Rio Pongo and Konkoure. Trinidad and Tobago, became a Party on 21 April 1993 and designated Nariva Swamp for the Ramsar list of wetlands. *Source: International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau News, January 1993, 3.*

**CITES to take action over rhino horn trade**

On 6 March the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) announced that it will call for a wildlife trade ban with China, Taiwan, South Korea and Yemen in September unless those countries take immediate action to halt their involvement in the rhino horn trade. *Source: African Wildlife Update, March–April 1993, 7.*

**Earth Council established**

The Earth Council has been created to follow through decisions made at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and promote a world ethic of sustainable development. It will also provide information and objective analysis for resolving development/environment disputes or conflicts and will assist in strengthening the involvement of the public and non-governmental organizations. Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the Rio Conference, chairs its Organizing Committee. *Source: Earth Council Organizing Committee, BP 323–1001 San José, Costa Rica. Fax: 506 55 2197.*

**Timber labels scrapped**

Austria is about to scrap a law requiring labels on tropical timber, which was introduced in September 1992 as a result of pressure from groups urging a boycott of timber taken from rain forests. Malaysia and Indonesia said that the labels discriminated against them and threatened an economic boycott of Austria, which would have harmed Austrian road and dam projects in Asia. *Source: New Scientist, 13 March 1993, 12.*

**ICBP name change**

The International Council for Bird Preservation is now known as BirdLife International. Its new address is: Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA. Telephone and Fax numbers are unchanged.

**EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA****Tundra reserve**

Russia has declared the largest contiguous expanse of tundra in Eurasia as a reserve. From July 1993 only scientists will be allowed inside an uninhabited 40,000-sq-km area on the north coast of the Taimyr Peninsula. The reserve is Russia's contribution to a network of protected areas set up by an international Arctic treaty signed at Rovaniemi, Finland, in 1989. The peninsula provides breeding grounds for many species of waders and waterfowl and has a subspecies of walrus. *Source: New Scientist, 13 March 1993, 12.*

**Russian court rules against Siberian logging**

In December 1992 the Russian Supreme Court ruled against a South Korean/Russian logging venture that would have destroyed forest where 2000 Udegei people live and a major breeding site of the threatened scaly-sided merganser *Mergus squamatus* on the Bikin River in the Russian Far East. This is one of the first cases in Russia where a court has backed the land rights of indigenous people over the interests of developers. *Source: Survival Urgent Action Bulletin, February 1993; World Birdwatch, 15 (1), 5.*



Habitat for an internationally important population of European otters is threatened by road building in Scotland.

### Otter habitat at risk in Scotland

High-quality habitat for an internationally important population of European otters *Lutra lutra* in western Scotland is to be destroyed to build approach roads for a new bridge linking the Isle of Skye to the mainland. A public enquiry into the development was cancelled and a conservation group is trying to fight the project in court. The group claims that the route chosen by the Scottish Office breaks the 1979 Bern Convention and the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and that other less damaging routes are available. The Scottish Office says that the Secretary of State for Scotland and Crown land are exempt from the Act and that damage to the otter holts would not be an offence because it would be 'the incidental result of a lawful operation and could not reasonably have been avoided'. Source: *BBC Wildlife*, April 1993, 15.

### Ancient woodland to be destroyed for road

Protest groups trying to prevent a road through Oxleas

Wood in Eltham, south-east London, lost their case in the High Court on 19 February 1993. The judge ruled that the government was entitled to take the land – the last piece of ancient woodland in London and a Site of Special Scientific Interest – in exchange for an area newly planted with trees. Source: *The Guardian*, 20 February 1993.

### Effort for lampreys

The two species of lamprey that occur in Czechoslovakia are the focus of a long-term conservation programme. *Lampetra planeri* and the much rarer *Endontomyzon mariae*, which occurs only in one stream in the country, both live as larvae for many years buried in silt by small streams before emerging as adults to spawn and die. Lampreys are protected by Czech law and are regarded as indicators of high environmental quality. Surveys are being done to determine distribution and habitat requirements and in the long term it is hoped to carry out captive propagation and reintroduction projects. Source: The Czech Union for Nature Conservation, *Nika*, Special Issue 1993, 26–27.

### Help for sturgeon

Professional fishermen in France, concerned at the endangered status of the common sturgeon *Acipenser sturio*, have formed the Association for the Defence of the Wild Sturgeon, which aims to introduce controls to give the species the best chance of survival.

Source: Association pour le défense de l'esturgeon sauvage, Mortagne sur Gironde, 17120 Cozes, France.

### Mediterranean marine sanctuary

In March government ministers from France, Italy and Monaco signed a declaration creating a 73,000-sq-km Mediterranean sanctuary for marine mammals, from Hyères, France, to La Spezia, Italy, and Sardinia. Hunting of marine mammals and the use of drift-nets will be forbidden in the sanctuary, which includes a zone that is considered to have the greatest concentration of cetaceans in the western Mediterranean.

Source: *European Environmental Bureau, Environment in Brief*, March 1993, 8.

### Record number of red-breasted geese

A January 1993 survey of the globally threatened red-breasted goose *Branta ruficollis* found a record total of 65,000 individuals on the Black Sea wintering grounds of Bulgaria and Romania. The survey team identified the need for detailed studies and management measures to safeguard key sites: a proposal for follow-up action is being prepared.

Source: *International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau News*, January 1993, 18.

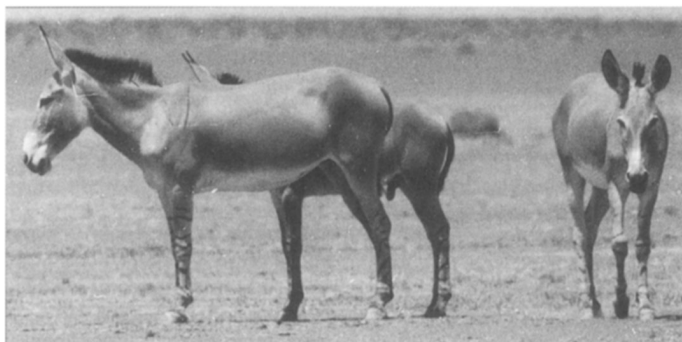
### Brown bear and dam conflict

A battle is being fought over a proposed dam in northern Spain. Drought-stricken farmers are pressing for the dam in the Vidrieros valley in Castile y León but conservationists say the dam would wreck a costly project to restore habitat for the brown bear *Ursus arctos* from Galicia in the west to north-central Cantabria. The 80 bears left in northern Spain live in two groups of 60 and 20. The Vidrieros valley is a corridor for the smaller group and disturbance caused by building the dam could split the population into non-viable groups. In March the government announced that the dam was off but anger from farmers caused a reversal and now 'environmentally kind' alternatives are to be investigated before a final decision is made. Source: *New Scientist*, 20 March 1993, 7.

## AFRICA

### Plan for wild ass

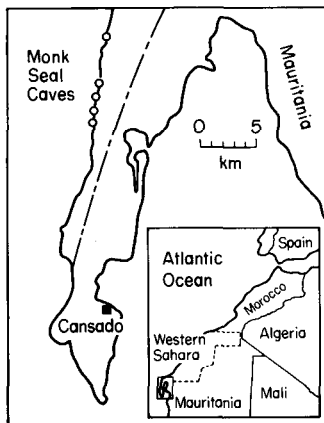
There are only a few hundred African wild asses *Equus africanus* left in the wild in Somalia, Ethiopia and the Sudan. Chronic drought has intensified competition with livestock for water and food and the ass is also hunted for its meat and for medicinal purposes in Ethiopia and Somalia where military unrest has made automatic weapons and ammunition readily available. Acknowledging that the 'tragic turmoil in the Horn of Africa makes conservation efforts appear difficult, even trivial', the IUCN/SSC Equid Specialist Group has set a goal of building the wild population to 2500



The wild ass is the subject of a conservation plan in Ethiopia and Somalia.

animals and is working with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization to develop a management plan for wild asses in Yangudi-Rassa National Park and has recommended creation of a proposed multiple-use reserve in Somalia as soon as politically feasible. As a step towards increasing the captive population from 70 to 500 the group suggests a captive-breeding project near Yangudi-Rassa. Source: *International Wildlife*, May-June 1993, 28.

The colony lives in five caves along a 10-km stretch of coast at the southernmost tip of Western Sahara and western Mauritania. Other caves further along the coast could also contain seals but access is restricted by conflict over the former Spanish colony, which is claimed by Morocco, Mauritania and the local Polisario Front. The expedition, was funded by Spain's National Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Spanish universities, and the Mauritanian Army helped by mapping a path through minefields to reach the caves. Source: *New Scientist*, 3 April 1993, 5.



### New discovery raises hope for monk seals

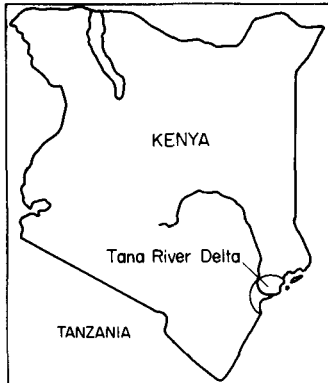
Spanish biologists studying the Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* have discovered a colony of 350, doubling the known world popu-

### Bongo plan

In an attempt to boost numbers of the bongo *Tragelaphus eurycerus* in Kenya embryos of this forest antelope from Cincinnati Zoo's germplasm bank are to be implanted in eland *T. oryx* mothers at Mount Kenya Game Ranch. The eland will then be released back into the wild so that the bongo calves will be born in their native habitat. There are probably fewer than 100 bongo in the wild in Kenya because of hunting pressure. The first stage of the Save the Bongo project will involve a census to establish precise numbers and location of

bongos as well as useful herds of eland.

Source: *The Observer (London)*, 28 February 1993.



### Tana River delta – reserve or prawn farm?

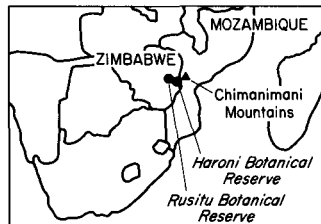
A reserve in Kenya's Tana River delta was proposed in 1982, a survey was carried out in 1988 and, in 1991, the District Development Committee approved the proposed Tana Wetlands National Park. But in May 1992 the Kenya Government allocated 20,235 ha (95 per cent of the proposed park) to a ranching company, who then sold half the land to Coastal Aquaculture, a foreign-owned prawn-farming business. Conservationists, led by the East African Wildlife Society, have protested in vain; they say the development will be an ecological disaster. Kenya Wildlife Service Director, Richard Leakey, says that wildlife outside the delta may also suffer and that the land deal violates the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The area supports waterbuck, topi, buffalo, hippopotamus and crocodiles and could generate tourist income but the development is moving fast.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, March–April 1993, 1 & 8.

### National park in Quirimbas archipelago

The Quirimbas archipelago in northern Mozambique comprises 27 islands and islets extending from Pemba to the Rovuma River close to the Tanzanian border. Twenty years ago marine scientists recommended that these coral islands be protected. In August 1992 Mozambique government conservation staff together with the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Southern Africa Nature Foundation carried out an aerial survey of the archipelago after a National Forestry and Wildlife meeting in Pemba in July passed a resolution appealing to the Governor of Cabo Delgado Province to establish the national park. The area is so far unspoilt but is attracting the attention of tourist companies and needs a management plan to ensure that tourism does not threaten the wildlife, which includes four species of marine turtles and dugongs.

Source: *Endangered Wildlife*, 12, 1992, 16–17.



### Botanic reserves need action

Large parts of the Haroni and Rusitu botanical reserves south of the Chimanimani Mountains in Zimbabwe close to the border with Mozambique have been destroyed. The reserves were exceptionally rich in species but now only two of Haroni's 20 ha and only 20 of Rusitu's 150 ha are left. Until

recently the area was a no-go zone for Zimbabwe citizens and now that access is allowed conservationists have discovered that over the past 10 years the government has used the land for refugees from Mozambique who have cleared forest to plant crops. Part of the Haroni reserve is also being cleared for a commercial banana plantation. A coalition of conservation organizations is liaising with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, local people and commercial farmers in an attempt to protect and restore the reserves, which are important because they have botanical affinities with those of central Africa and of the Mozambique coastal plain.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, April 1993, 12–13.

### Operation Radio Rhino

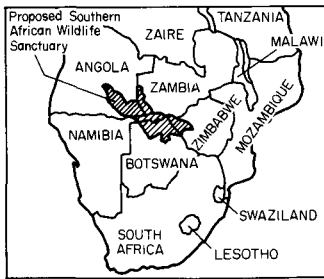
Zimbabwe, which now has only about 350 black rhinos, is to implant transponders under the skins of some rhinos to allow national park staff to monitor their movements. An alarm can be raised if rhinos wander into an area where there is a high risk of poaching. A £50,000 pilot system developed by a South African electronics company (UEC Projects) is being set up in Matusadona National Park on the Zambian border where the rhino population has fallen from 150 to 16 in 5 years. Zimbabwe's pilot scheme is being run in parallel with another in Umfolozi Game Reserve in Natal. Since 1984 armed anti-poaching units in Zimbabwe have been patrolling the Zambian border and the shoot-to-kill policy has cost the lives of over 200 poachers but in spite of this 1170 rhinos have been killed in the past 8 years.

Source: *New Scientist*, 20 February 1993, 19.

### Rhino relocation in Botswana

In order to protect the remaining population of white rhinos in Chobe National Park, Botswana, officers of the Natal Parks Board moved four individuals to the newly established Khama Rhino Sanctuary in Serowe. One animal died from bullet wounds sustained before capture. The sanctuary is a community-based project and is run by a Trust composed of officials elected from the community. White rhinos were introduced into Chobe, where they had been extinct since 1890, by the Natal Parks Board in the 1960s and 1970s, and by 1981 there were 100. An aerial survey in 1991 estimated that perhaps 20–30 remained and it is known that a total of 12 rhinos have been killed there since November 1992.

Sources: *Kalahari Conservation Society Newsletter*, December 1992–January 1993, 14; *African Wildlife Update*, March–April 1993, 2.

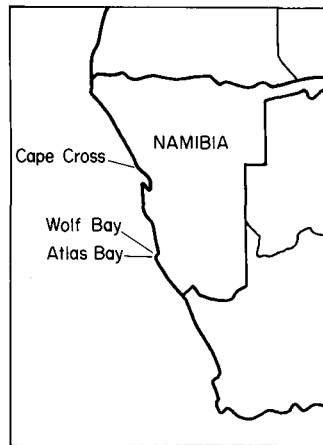


### Proposal for world's largest wildlife sanctuary

A proposal has been made to create the world's largest wildlife sanctuary in southern Africa, covering 246,000 sq km in Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) is considering the

proposal, whose main advocate is Botswana's Chobe Wildlife Trust. The plan would link existing parks and reserves, creating an area of 'unequalled biodiversity' and protecting the watersheds of the Okavango, Kwando and Zambezi. Each country would continue to administer its own land within the sanctuary boundaries but there would be multinational agreements for migratory species, law enforcement, river management, etc. The human population density in the area is low and it is intended that local people would benefit economically from the scheme.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, November–December 1992, 3.



### Fur seal cull

In September 1992 Namibia announced that it intended to kill 42,000 southern fur seals *Arctocephalus pusillus*, an increase of 68 per cent over the previous year's quota. The government says the culling is justified under a sustainable utilization policy and that seals need to be killed to allow over-exploited fish stocks to recover. There are 650,000 seals on Namibia's coast. The Wildlife Society of Namibia supports the government position as

long as culling is humane and sustainable but the Namibian Animal Action Committee says there is no reason to kill seals and that the methods (shooting adults and clubbing pups) are inhumane. The sites of the culling are Cape Cross, Wolf Bay and Atlas Bay.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, November–December 1992, 6.

### Madagascar teal

The number of Madagascar teal *Anas bernieri* breeding at Lake Bemamba, one of the last sites where the species is known to occur, has declined from 120 individuals in 1973 to just 10 pairs. A survey in 1992 found that almost all the shallow parts of the lake have been converted to rice fields; the teal survived in a marsh that was too saline for rice and it is hoped that this area will be protected by inclusion in a buffer zone for the Tsingy de Bemaraha World Heritage Site. The teal also once occurred on the west coast of the island, including on Lakes Masama and Ihotry, but there have been no recent records.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 15 (1), 5.

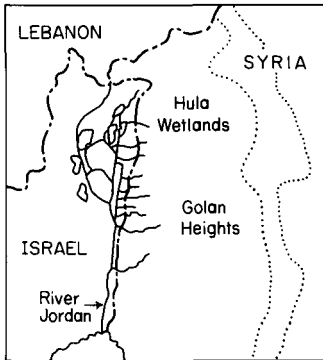
### Good season for pink pigeons

In 1992 the remaining wild pink pigeons *Nesoenas mayeri* on Mauritius had their best breeding season since records began in 1976. Even before the final count for the season four pairs had laid 20 eggs and 14 chicks had fledged. The success is due to a poisoning campaign eliminating introduced rats, which were major predators as well as competitors for food. Jersey Zoo has promised Mauritius six young hens to improve the sex ratio.

Source: *International Zoo News*, 40 (1), 42–43.



## ASIA (EXCLUDING INDO-MALAYA)



### Wetland re-creation in Israel

Israel is to try to re-create part of the Hula Valley wetlands just south of the sources of the River Jordan, which were drained in the 1950s to create arable land. The land proved unsuitable for farming and it is thought that local communities could benefit from the tourism that would be encouraged by reflooding the area. There is currently disagreement between neighbouring settlements, which want as much money as possible from tourism, and conservationists who want intrusion kept to minimum. Some species that lived only in the Hula wetlands may be extinct – the frog *Discoglossus nigriventer* and the fish *Acanthobrama hulensis*, for example – but others survive nearby and should be able to recolonize.

Source: *New Scientist*, 17 April 1993, 9.

### Arabian oryx in Oman

The latest news from Colonel Ralph Daly on the reintroduced wild herd of Arabian oryx in Oman is that after a serious lack of rain in 1990/91 numbers fell to 115, but after good rains in April 1992 and a tropical

storm in October the animals are again in good condition, with green grass everywhere in the Jiddat al Harasis and numbers up to 134.

### Spoonbills in Taiwan

The 200 black-faced spoonbills *Platalea minor* (of a world total of 300) threatened by industrial development at the mouth of the River Tsen-Wen in Taiwan, the last patch of wetland in the region, received a temporary reprieve when the government ordered an interim reserve to be declared while studies are made on the birds' use of the area and the potential for non-detrimental development. National government officials say they are sympathetic to conservation but that the wetland is the last piece of land in public ownership in the area and building an industrial estate elsewhere would be difficult for the local authorities, who make the final decision.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 15 (1), 4.



### Japanese wetland battle

An Environmental Impact Assessment conducted on behalf of the Fukuoka Port and Harbour Authority, which concluded that building a 401.3-ha island on the richest shallows of Hakata Bay would cause no significant environmental damage, has been heavily criticized by independent scientists at the

Asian Wetland Bureau. The development is strongly opposed by citizens of Fukuoka as well as conservation groups in Japan and elsewhere who say the island will destroy habitat for migratory birds. Hakata Bay is an internationally important site under the Ramsar Convention. The Prefectural Government and the National Environmental Agency have advised against further development of the bay.

Source: *The Bay Window, Hakata Bay Environmental Newsletter*, January 1993.

### New warbler on Hainan

A new warbler species has been found on Hainan Island, China. The Hainan leaf-warbler *Phylloscopus hainanus* was found in secondary growth at forest edges.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 15 (1), 6.



### An endangered orchid in China

*Changnienia amoena*, a terrestrial orchid, grows in subtropical evergreen broad-leaf forest in hills in eastern and central China. It is one of seven orchids

in the *China Plant Red Data Book* and it is threatened by logging and collection of its pseudobulbs, which are used in the treatment of sores and snake bites. It is believed to be in danger of extinction in its type locality, Xitianmu Mountain, Zhejiang. It is not in cultivation outside China but is of potential economic importance because of its attractive flowers and medicinal value.

Source: *The Kew Magazine*, 10 (1), 52–54.

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## INDO-MALAYA

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### Insurance for villagers affected by elephants

The Department of Wildlife Conservation in Sri Lanka is to pay for insurance cover for families at risk from elephant depredations. Compensation will be paid if elephants kill or permanently disable people or damage property. Initially the scheme will cover 700 families at risk in eight provinces.

Source: *Gajah, Newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group*, Spring 1993, 33.

### Sanctuary for milky storks

Kuala Gula, in the Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve in Peninsular Malaysia, is to become a bird sanctuary after a decade of effort by conservationists. Between 43,000 and 85,000 migratory wading birds use the reserve and adjacent coast and it is the last area in Peninsular Malaysia capable of supporting a viable breeding population of milky storks *Mycteria cinerea*. The reserve is also home to 50 per cent of the Malaysian population of lesser adjutant storks *Leptoptilos javanicus*. The entire 40,711-ha

reserve will be promoted as an eco-tourism project.

Source: *Asian Wetland News*, July 1992, 7.

### Proboscis monkeys at risk?

One of the largest populations of proboscis monkeys *Nasalis larvatus* in Sabah, Malaysia, is under threat from oil-palm growers. The monkeys live by the Kinabatangan River in an area proposed as a national park but a large area nearby has been planted with oil palms and some felling is taking place along the river itself. The local land authority granted the loggers a draft permit to develop plantations; the Ministry of Tourism and Environment challenged this and issued an order to stop the logging.

Source: *New Scientist*, 13 March 1993, 11.

### Tusks seized in Thailand

Customs officials at Bangkok Airport in Thailand seized 103 elephant tusks in January; they had come from Ethiopia and Burundi and had been left unclaimed at the airport's inbound cargo section for 2 months.

Source: *African Wildlife Update*, March–April 1993, 5.

### Elephant problems in Laos

There are an estimated 4000 elephants in the wild in Laos and about 850 in captivity, but poaching is becoming increasingly frequent. Guns are readily available as a result of the Indo-Chinese war and between 1990 and 1992 poachers killed about 50 elephants for their tusks, skins and meat, mostly in the Nam Theun area of Khammouane province. Some poachers caught red-handed had come across the border from Vietnam. Nakai Plateau/Nam Theun is the largest pro-

posed protected area in Laos. Ivory carvers in Vientiane and Luang Prabang sell small souvenirs to tourists, mostly from Thailand. The ivory problem will be exacerbated if the proposed bridge across the Mekong is built, linking Laos and Thailand. Laos needs international assistance to improve protection of proposed conservation areas and in controlling the wildlife trade; Laos is not a Party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Source: *Gajah, Newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group*, Spring 1993, 10.

### Frogs' legs from Indonesia

Indonesia is now the largest supplier of frogs' legs to Europe, mainly France and Belgium, and runs the risk of driving some frogs to extinction and encouraging outbreaks of insect pests. India was France's main supplier until 1987 when exports were banned after frogs had disappeared from large areas and tonnes of DDT had to be used to protect rice crops. In 1992 Germany proposed that a number of frog species, including some from Indonesia, should be listed on CITES appendices but this was rejected because of inadequate data to support the proposal.

Source: *New Scientist*, 10 April 1993, 7.

### Flowerpecker rediscovery

The cebu flowerpecker *Dicaeum quadricolor* has been rediscovered on the island of Cebu, Indonesia. This endemic bird had not been seen for 80 years and it was thought to be extinct because of severe deforestation.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 15 (1), 5.

### Philippine spotted deer update

The World Herd of Philippine spotted deer *Cervus alfredi*, which was created in 1990 with 13 animals at three institutions, has increased to 25. Seven animals (illegally held wild-caught orphans) have been acquired from private owners, although three of these died. Nine animals have been born in captivity, of which eight survived. Most progress has been with the Negros animals, which are held at Silliman University, on Negros in the Philippines, and at Mulhouse Zoo in France. Only four of the 25 animals in captivity are of Panay origin and plans are under way to relocate these from Bitu Farm on Panay to the West Visayas State University College of Agriculture and Forestry at Lambunao. Another breeding centre for Negros deer is being established in Bacolod City. (See *Oryx*, 25, 199–203).  
 Source: Parc Zoologique et Botanique de Mulhouse, France, 31 December 1992.

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## NORTH AMERICA

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### New Canadian wildlife legislation

The Canadian Government passed the Wild Animal and Plant Protection Act on 11 December 1992.  
 Source: *Nature Alert*, Canadian Nature Federation, January 1993.

### Aerial wolf kill suspended

In January Alaska's Board of Game delayed action on a plan to reduce the number of grey wolves *Canis lupus* in the state. The board announced in

November that it would use state-sponsored aerial and land-and-shoot hunts to kill wolves to allow caribou *Rangifer tarandus* and moose *Alces alces* numbers to increase. Environmental groups had called for a tourist boycott.  
 Source: *National Parks*, March/April 1993, 11.

### Exxon aftermath

Four years of monitoring the effects of the Exxon oil spill (38,000 tonnes) in Prince William Sound, Alaska, have yielded some unexpected results. Autopsies of seals revealed brain damage similar to that seen in people who die from solvent abuse. In 1992 there were 35 per cent fewer seals at the oiled sites than before the spill. It is suggested that brain-cell damage could also be the cause of the disappearance of a group of killer whales *Orcinus orca* that had lived in the Sound. Large numbers of otters that were cleaned later died from the effects of inhaling and ingesting toxic components of oil. Almost 1000 bald eagles *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* died and none of the survivors produced young but vacant nesting sites were taken over by immigrants in 1990 and were productive. Guillemots *Uria* spp. suffered great losses and some colonies have failed to produce any young since the spill. About 40 per cent of eggs laid in 1991 and 1992 by salmon that had survived the spill died, perhaps because of sub-lethal effects of oil.  
 Source: *New Scientist*, 13 February 1993, 5.

### Yukon plans wolf kill ...

The Yukon Government, Canada, announced in early January that it would start a 'caribou herd recovery pro-

gramme' in February, which would involve killing 150 of the 200 wolves in 20,000 sq km of the Aishihik Lake area, south-west Yukon. In 1994 another 50 wolves will be killed and in subsequent years the population will be kept at 50 if a significant number of caribou calves survive. There is no evidence to support that view that wolves have caused the caribou decline; disturbance and hunting by humans is more likely to be responsible. The Canadian Wolf Alliance is calling for an international boycott of tourism to the Yukon, a 5-year ban on the hunting of Dalls sheep *Ovis dalli*, moose, elk *Cervus elaphus* and caribou to allow the populations to recover, and a comprehensive wildlife management strategy for the region.  
 Source: *BBC Wildlife*, March 1993, 72.

### ... and British Columbia too

Friends of Animals, a group based in Connecticut, US, is threatening a tourism boycott of Vancouver and Victoria unless the British Columbian government stops killing wolves.  
 Source: *Vancouver Sun*, 29 & 30 January 1993.

### Pacific salmon threatened by relative

Atlantic salmon are showing up in spawning streams on the Pacific Canadian coast, raising concern that the species might take hold in the Pacific. In 1992 400 Atlantic salmon, escapees from fish farms, were reported by commercial and sports fishermen in British Columbia waters alone. Atlantic salmon are a potentially serious threat to wild Pacific salmon, of which some stocks are endangered.  
 Source: *Vancouver Sun*, 14 January 1993.



### Shell donates reserve

Shell Canada has donated 88 sq km in the Kootenay Range, south-east British Columbia, to the Nature Conservancy of Canada for a nature reserve that stretches from valley bottom to mountain top. The Mount Broadwood Heritage Conservation Area is home to some 800 elk *Cervus elaphus*, 250 California bighorn sheep *Ovis canadensis* and 250 mule deer *Odocoileus hemionus*.  
 Source: *Vancouver Sun*, 3 December 1992.

### Sea otters thriving

A survey in 1992 of the sea otter *Enhydra lutris kenyoni* population from Point Grenville to Cape Flattery on the west coast of the Olympic Peninsula, Washington, USA, revealed there to be 283 independent animals and 30 pups, the highest number recorded since surveys started in 1977. The population originated from 59 translocated animals from Alaska in 1969–70. The population is important because it is the only one that has become successfully established as well as being intensively monitored.  
 Source: *IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group Bulletin*, No. 8, 1993, 2–4.

### Wolves walk back to Yellowstone

Grey wolves *Canis lupus* appear to have re-established in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem in Wyoming, USA. On 30 September a hunter shot and killed a wolf in the Teton Wilderness, apparently mistaking it for a coyote. It was one of a what appeared to be a family pack of 6–7. Yellowstone rangers confirmed the sighting when they retrieved the carcass. Another wolf has been

seen in Hayden Valley and another in the Heart Lake area. It is expected that the government will now abandon plans to release wolves from Canada into Yellowstone.

Source: *Canid News*, No. 1, January 1993, 11.

### New site for burying beetles

Six endangered American burying beetles *Nicrophorus americanus*, the largest carrion beetle in the USA, were discovered on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge in Nebraska in 1992. The refuge is completely outside the previously known Nebraska range of the beetle: only three collections, totalling 11 beetles, have been made in the state since the 1880s.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XVII (12), 18.

### Eagle and falcon recovery in Nebraska

Two bald eagles *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* and three peregrine falcons *Falco peregrinus* fledged in Nebraska, USA, in 1992, the first known successful fledging of these two endangered species in the state in the past century.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XVII (12), 18.

### Seven California condors in the wild

Six California condors *Gymnogyps californianus*, two males and four females, hatched at Los Angeles Zoo in 1992, were released into the wild in Los Padres National Forest, southern California, on 1 December. The female condor already in the wild was seen to spend time with the six birds while they were being held at the release site between October and December. The

remaining 56 birds in captivity are at San Diego Animal Park and Los Angeles Zoo, which are expected to reach capacity in 1993, but a new captive-breeding facility is being built by the Peregrine Fund in Idaho.  
 Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XVII (12), 2 & 13.

### Isopod protected

The Lee County cave isopod *Lirceus usdagalun*, a small aquatic crustacean endemic to a single cave system in south-west Virginia, USA, was listed as Endangered on 20 November 1992. This eyeless, unpigmented animal is vulnerable to extinction because of its very restricted range and potential threat to water quality. It has already been eliminated from one other cave system due to pollution from a sawmill.

Source: *Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, XVII (12), 10.

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## CENTRAL AMERICA

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### Leatherback migration tracked

Leatherback turtles *Dermochelys coriacea* that nest on the beaches of Costa Rica have been found to migrate along deep-sea pathways, following underwater mountain ranges and continental slopes. Ten female turtles were fitted with radiotransmitters whose signals are picked up by satellite when the turtle surfaces. The turtles moved either north to Cuba or east to the Caribbean, each following an identical route along the steep contours of the continental slope. Leatherbacks that left Costa Rica's west coast followed the slope of the volcanic Cocos Ridge to the Galápagos Islands where the signals died

out. Turtle migration corridors identified by tracking studies should be protected to prevent turtles being caught on fishing lines or in drift-nets.

Source: *New Scientist*, 10 April 1993, 8.

## SOUTH AMERICA

### Condor release in Venezuela

Five Andean condors *Vultur gryphus* bred in San Diego and Los Angeles zoos have been released in the Sierra de la Culata, Venezuela, following on from a release scheme for the species in Colombia (see *Oryx*, 27 (1), 83–90).

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 15 (1), 3.

### Orinoco under threat

A plan to canalize Venezuela's Apure River and three other major tributaries of the Orinoco would turn a 30,000-sq-km area of wildlife-rich, seasonally flooded plains to intensive agricultural use and open up the region to water transport. The project threatens two national parks and two wildlife refuges as well as important populations of freshwater dolphin and scarlet ibis. The World Bank has declined to fund the project on economic and environmental grounds but the Japanese International Co-operation Agency is carrying out extensive studies with a view to securing loans for the project from Japanese banks.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, April 1993, 14.

### Bird discoveries in Colombia

A new species of antpitta, the Cundinamarca antpitta

*Grallaria kaestneri* has been described from wet cloud forest south-east of Bogotá, Colombia. The Chocó poorwill *Nyctiphrynus rosenbergi*, originally described in 1895 but subsequently reclassified as a subspecies of ocellated poorwill, should be considered a full species, according to the results of recent fieldwork. The bird is endemic to wet forest in the Chocó in the lowlands of western Colombia and north-west Ecuador.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, 15 (1), 6.

### New tyrannulet

The restinga tyrannulet *Phylloscartes kronei* has been described recently. It appears to be confined to south-east Brazil, from south-east São Paulo south to Joinville in Santa Catarina, in woodland edges and secondary growth.

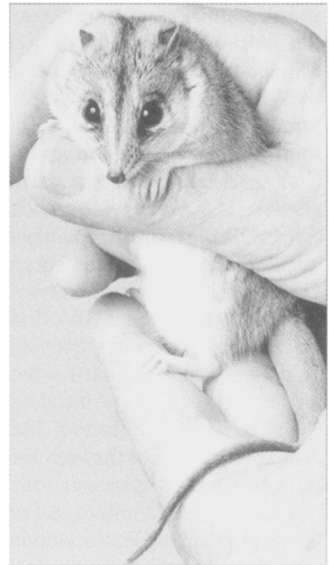
Source: *World Birdwatch*, 15 (1), 6.

### Logging on lands of indigenous people halted

In January a Brazilian federal judge ordered three logging companies to remove men and machinery from three Indian reserves in south Para state. The companies may also be made to compensate the Indians for the destruction of their forests and pay for their recovery. The case was brought by the Nucleus for Indigenous Rights on behalf of a coalition of some 70 Brazilian citizens' groups waging a campaign to halt the logging of mahogany *Swietenia macrophylla* in Amazonia.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, March 1993, 75.

## AUSTRALASIA/ ANTARCTICA



Research on the Julia Creek dunnart continues: records of specimens have been found in owl pellets in yet another locality and P. A. Woolley has now bred the dunnarts in captivity (P. A. Woolley).

### New records of Julia Creek dunnart

The Julia Creek dunnart *Sminthopsis douglasi*, which was previously known from only four specimens, the last of which was collected in 1972, has been found alive in north-west Queensland as a result of a study by P. A. Woolley from La Trobe University. Starting in 1990, Woolley visited all localities where dunnarts had been found in the past, collected information from residents and dunnarts found accidentally killed or brought in by domestic cats. Trapping in 1991 and 1992 obtained live specimens in two localities and a live dunnart was recovered from a cat in a third. The known geographical range of the species has been doubled, to over 200

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km in a north–south direction, and the number of locations increased from three to 11. The few past records appear to reflect a lack of collecting activity rather than rarity.

Source: *Wildlife Research*, 1992, 19, 779–783.

### Freezing helps Australia's endangered plants

Cryonics, the technique of freezing living tissue so that it can be brought back to life, could play an important role in conserving Australia's endangered plants. Botanists at Kings Park and Botanic Garden in Perth have succeeded in producing hundreds of plantlets of the rare *Grevillea scapigera* by tissue culture of thawed shoot tips. They will be planted in the wild in 1994. The technique has been used for agricultural crop plants but this appears to be the first application to endangered species.

Source: *New Scientist*, 27 February 1993, 16.

### Floods lead to seagrass die-off and dugong deaths

At least 44 dugongs have washed ashore dead along Australia's eastern coast between Nowra in New South Wales and Hervey Bay in Queensland. The cause may be a massive die-off of seagrass, on which dugongs feed, due to muddy water from two major floods in the heavily farmed Mary Basin in February and March 1992. The seagrass beds in Hervey Bay (home to an estimated 1800 dugongs) have virtually disappeared. After the floods the number of dugongs fell to about 200; 500–700 animals moved to other parts of Queensland and the rest are unaccounted for.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, April 1993, 11.

### No end to felling in New Zealand rain forests

The clear-felling of rain forest in South Westland, New Zealand, by the state-owned West Coast Timberlands, should have ended at the end of 1992 as required by the 1986 West Coast Accord and the government's election manifesto. Instead the clear-felling is to continue for 2 years with the loss of 50,000 mature rimu trees *Dacrydium cupressinum*.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1993, 2.

### New marine reserves in New Zealand

The New Zealand Government has approved three new marine reserves: at Cathedral Cove near Hahei, Coromandel Peninsula; Mayor Island in the Bay of Plenty; and Long Island in Marlborough Sound.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1993, 2.

### Kiwi news

The little spotted kiwi *Apteryx owenii* was believed to be extinct on the New Zealand mainland (see *Oryx*, 27 [2], 81), but one has been found at Franz Josef on the west coast of South Island. Because it was considered to be at risk from dogs, cats and stoats, the Department of Conservation moved it to Mana Island on October 1992. It is planned to keep the bird, a female, separate from other genetically different little spotted kiwis on nearby Kapiti Island and it is hoped that a mate will be found from the Franz Josef area. The 60–100 'brown' kiwis that live in Okarito forest in Westland National Park have long been considered to be a distinct population and genetic analysis has now confirmed that they are

sufficiently different to be classified as a new species; they are greyer than brown kiwis and have white on head and neck. Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1993, 3.

### Hope for hoiho

The 1992 census of the world's rarest penguin, the yellow-eyed penguin or hoiho *Megadyptes antipodes* found 380 pairs on the New Zealand mainland, a rise in numbers for the second consecutive year. However, numbers are still fewer than 5 years ago and intensive conservation efforts – fencing and revegetating breeding areas, establishing reserves and controlling predators – will need to continue for another 5–10 years.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1993, 4.

### First captive breeding for shore plovers

For the first time ever shore plovers *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* bred in captivity in 1992. Five of six chicks survived and another two eggs were still being incubated. The parents were taken into captivity as eggs at New Zealand's National Wildlife Centre at Mt Bruce in 1991 from the bird's last stronghold on Rangatira (South East) Island in the Chathams. Only about 100 birds survive in the wild and they are at risk if alien predators reach the island. It is hoped to breed enough birds to establish a second population on another predator-free island. Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1993, 5.

### Reef moved

When the harbour entrance at Tauranga in the Bay of Plenty had to be enlarged the Port of Tauranga Ltd agreed to move a

boulder reef rather than dynamite it. Rocky habitat is uncommon in the bay and almost 100,000 cu. m of boulders are being moved to occupy over 1 ha of the harbour floor. Plant life and schools of small fish have moved in and signs have been erected asking people not to interfere with the new marine ecosystem.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, February 1993, 5.

### Long-line fisheries threaten seabirds in Southern Ocean

After the Soviet Union started long-line fishing for Patagonian toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* in the Southern Ocean in 1988, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) became concerned that long-line fisheries could cause significant incidental mortality to seabirds and passed regulations in 1991 to minimize this. The requirements included the use of a streamer behind the vessels to scare the birds, a measure that has proved successful in the Japanese tuna long-line fishery. In March 1991 Greenpeace monitored the by-catch and compliance with the regulations of two Soviet long-liners operating around South Georgia over a 3-day period. During that time they saw six dead birds on the long-line hooks, including one black-browed albatross *Diomedea melanophris*. One ship was setting lines in daylight contrary to regulations. While the sample size was small, there were 581 vessels operating in the 1990/91 season in the South Atlantic sector of the Southern Ocean so if these results were typical the impact of the fishery on seabirds could be severe.

Source: *Polar Record*, April 1993, 143–144.

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## OCEANIA

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### Rediscovery of a fruit bat

Bulmer's fruit bat *Aproteles bulmerae* was rediscovered in May 1992 in Papua New Guinea in a cave in the Hindenberg Ranges, its only known site. It had previously been known from fossil and modern cranial remains and a photograph of the ventral side of a skin collected in 1975 and later lost. Hunting was thought to have destroyed the population in 1977 and return visits found no bats. In 1991 the discovery in the Australian Museum of a previously unrecognized skin and skull of the species, which had been collected in 1984, prompted the search that led to the discovery of 137 bats. It is thought that the bats had survived undetected in very low numbers.

Source: *Mammalia*, 57 (1), 19–25.

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## MEETINGS

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*Meetings are normally announced only once unless changes to details have been made.*

**Important Discussion on Tropical Rain Forests.** 31 August 1993, Keele University, UK. Contact: The Local Secretary, British Association Annual Meeting, Keele University, Staffs ST5 5BG, UK.

**Asia-Pacific Symposium on Mangrove Ecosystems.** 1–3 September, Hong Kong. Contact: Ms Linda Yam, Research Centre, The HK University of Science and Technology, Clear Water Bay, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

**Bears in Russia and Surrounding Countries.** 6–11 September 1993, Central Forest

State Nature Reserve, Russia. Contact: Dr Igor Chestin, Department of Vertebrate Zoology and General Ecology, Biological Facility, Moscow State University, Vorobyevy Gory, Moscow 119899, Russia.

**Ecology and Conservation of Butterflies.** 10–12 September 1993, Keele University, UK. Contact: Dr A. S. Pullin, Department of Biological Sciences, Keele University, Staffs ST5 5BG, UK.

**Restoration of Temperate Wetlands.** 14–17 September 1993, Sheffield, UK. Contact: Bryan D. Wheeler, Department of Animal and Plant Sciences, PO Box 601, Alfred Denny Building, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2UQ, UK. Tel: 0742 768555 ext. 4316, Fax: 0742 760159.

**The 7th International Wildlife Film-makers Symposium.** 15–19 September 1993, Harper Adams Agricultural College, Shropshire, UK. Contact: British Kinematograph Sound and Television Society, M6-14 Victoria House, Vernon Place, London WC1B 4DF, UK. Tel: 071 242 8400. Fax: 071 405 3560.

**Grassland Management and Nature Conservation.** 27–29 September 1993, University of Leeds, UK. Contact: Dr J. J. Hopkins, JNCC, Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1JY, UK. Tel: 0733 62626. Fax: 0733 555948.

**Workshop on Conservation of Mahoganies.** 14 October 1993, London. Contact: FFPS, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, UK. Tel: 071 823 8899. Fax: 071 823 9690.

**Fauna and Flora of the Atlantic Islands.** 4–6 October 1993, Madeira. Contact:

Secretariat, First Symposium Fauna and Flora of the Atlantic Islands, Museu Municipal do Funchal, Rua da Mouraria, 31 P-9000 Funchal, Madeira, Portugal.

**Conference on the Study and Conservation of Birds of the Baltic Basin.** 4-9 October 1993, Vilnius, Lithuania. *Contact:* Dr Pranas Mierauskas, Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Juozapaviciaus St 9, 2600 Vilnius, Lithuania.

**Nature Conservation: the Role of Networks.** 15-20 May 1994, Australia. *Contact:* Dr D. Saunders, CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology, LMB No. 4, PO Midland, Western Australia 6056.

**VI International Congress of Ecology.** 20-26 August 1994, Manchester, UK. *Contact:* The Secretary, VI International Congress of Ecology, The Manchester Conference Centre, UMIST, PO Box 88, Manchester M60 1QD, UK.

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**OPPORTUNITIES**

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**Ford European Conservation Awards**

The Ford European Conservation Awards have been substantially revised for their 10th year. There will be cash awards for individuals, community groups and conservation organizations in Europe who are engaged in conservation initiatives in the following categories: Natural Environment, National Heritage, and Conservation Engineering. The Conservation Foundation will select the best project from each of 20 countries for a qualifying award of \$2000. Judges will visit the best

six and select the final three who will be invited to give presentations to an extended jury. The winner will receive \$50,000 and, for the first time, there will be second and third prizes of \$25,000 and \$10,000.

*Further information and entry forms in national languages from:* The Conservation Foundation, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, UK. Tel: 071 823 8842. Fax: 071 823 8791.



**Research in Papua New Guinea**

The Christensen Research Institute, a privately funded research facility on the north coast of Papua New Guinea, provides opportunities for research in a near pristine environment. Bench fees are subsidized by the Christensen Fund, California, and in addition a number of Christensen Fellowships are offered annually, with preference being given to post-doctoral researchers and those whose subject matter documents PNG's marine and terrestrial biodiversity. *Details from:* Dr Larry Orsak, Director, CRI, PO Box 305, Madang, Papua New Guinea. Tel: (675) 82 3011. Fax: (675) 82 3306.

**Bird sanctuary needs volunteers**

The Marquenterre bird sanctuary on the Bay of the Somme in

France wants staff or trainees for its nature study service from end March to November. Board, lodging and training provided.

*Details:* Mr Philippe Carruette, Parc du Marquenterre, 80120 Rue, France. Fax: 33 2225 0879.

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**REQUESTS**

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**Books requested**

The Wildlife Hospital Trust founded in 1979 offers training courses in the care and rehabilitation of sick and injured wild animals. Donations of books or periodicals for the library, particularly on veterinary medicine, ecology and wildlife legislation, would be welcome. *Contact:* Andrew Small, The Wildlife Hospital Trust, St Tiggywinkles, Aston Road, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP17 8AF. Tel: 0844 292292. Fax: 0844 292640.

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**PUBLICATIONS**

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**Crocodile Conservation Action**

This is a special publication of the Crocodile Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN-The World Conservation Union. This 128-page publication is a compilation of reports on activities implemented as a result of recommendations of the Crocodile Specialist Group's *Action Plan for the Conservation of Crocodiles*, which was published in March 1992. It is available from the CSG Executive Officer, Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA.