

Reports and Journals

A series of papers on the lynx in Europe, its status in each country, and the history of and reasons for its decline, by Josef Kratochvíl and others, is published (in English) in two volumes, No. 4 and 5/6 of the *Acta Scientiarum Naturalium* by the Bohemian Academy of Science in Brno. In the Czechoslovakian Carpathians the lynx increased considerably after the second world war, and caused quite severe losses among game and domestic animals, especially sheep, but it is thought this may not last and that it may have to be protected in time. In Poland where numbers also increased after the war there are believed to be about 320 animals. In the Ukraine numbers are put at 100 and decreasing; in Finland lynxes come in from Russia and also from Sweden where numbers have increased but could easily go down again through persecution despite protection; in Norway, where bounties are paid and there is no protection, numbers are believed to be about 150.

The National Park Situation in Southern Asia, IUCN publications No. 19 (US \$3.00), volume III of the New Delhi Assembly Proceedings, consists of reports from India, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaysia, Philippines, Nepal, South Vietnam and Thailand (some with a tendency to gloss over unpalatable facts), a paper on the USSR's guiding principles for reserves, and the reports of the valuable pre-Assembly study tours of reserves in India – Guindy, Sariska, Kanha, Dachigam, Periyar and the northern Salt Lake zone near Calcutta.

The six papers in the first issue of *Ornis Scandinavica*, the new journal of the Scandinavian Ornithologists' Union (PO Box 307, Blindern, Oslo 3, Norway), to be published in English twice yearly at 50 kroner a year, include Nesting Behaviour of the Black-casqued Hornbill and the Great Hornbill, Breeding Behaviour of the Purple Sandpiper in West Spitsbergen, A New Race of the Spike-heeled Lark from Angola, and the Hunting Technique of Tengmalm's Owl.

Geographical Variation in the Polar Bear, by T. H. Manning (Canadian Wildlife Service No. 13, \$1.00) is a report based on the measurements of 628 skulls which showed that there are regional differences in size, suggesting that some populations are partially isolated. The largest bears were found to occur in southern Alaska. This is the population that suffers most from over-hunting, and the author suggests it may be too late to preserve its original characteristics in full.

The first fatal bird-aircraft collision was in 1910. In 1960 sixty people died in the USA after an aircraft collision with starlings, and two years later 17 died in a similar collision. *Studies of Bird Hazards to Aircraft*, a Canadian Wildlife Service Report (Series No. 14, \$1.25) comprises six papers on the subject, all concerned with migrating birds over Canada and methods of forecasting such movements, thus enabling aircraft to avoid them.

Causes and Implications of an Observed Sex Differential in the Survival of Wapiti, by Donald R. Flook, a Canadian Wildlife Report (Series No. 11, \$1.25) shows that higher mortality in bulls than cows helps to maintain a high rate of increase in the population by leaving more food and habitat for cows and calves.

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Jaguar Survival

Dr Maurice G. Hornocker, working on a WWF jaguar reconnaissance survey, reports that there are still areas in the vast continent of South America where jaguars probably occur in a pristine state – in the Amazon basin, the upper Rio Orinoco, in Venezuela, in west Paraguay and south-east Bolivia, northern Argentina and the tropical forests of north-east Paraguay and east Bolivia. But elsewhere the situation is one of unrelenting pressure to the point of extermination. Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico and Peru have passed stringent laws to protect jaguars and try to enforce them, but more important to the jaguar's survival is its ability to adapt to different habitats.

Italians See Migrating Birds

The Italian WWF reported a dramatic increase in the number of migrating birds to be seen in Italy this spring, the first in which the government's ban on shooting after March 31st came into force. Hoopoes, bee-eaters, turtle doves and many other species were seen in large flocks; ducks and waders appeared on lagoons and coastal marshes formerly birdless, and only 20 kilometres north-east of Rome some 600 night herons were seen flying up-river where before they seldom survived the shooting barrage on the coast.

Mink in Russia

The Russians have introduced American mink on the east slopes of the Ural Mountains, in an area of wooded river banks and ice-free pools, and all hunting, fishing and wood-cutting have been banned in the area until the mink have settled. Perhaps in the vastness of the USSR it will be possible to contain the mink; most other countries to which they have been introduced are engaged in battle with this determined destroyer of other wildlife. In Iceland mink decimated the wildfowl on Myvatn, the large lake in the north of the country.

Pesticides Kill Eagle Embryos

Only one of the four or five surviving pairs of breeding sea eagles in West Germany, all in Schleswig Holstein, succeeded in rearing young in 1970, and that was the pair that had been given supplementary feeding with pesticide-free food. Dead embryos in the eggs of the other nests were all found to contain a high concentration of pesticide. This has been happening for several years because the parents had absorbed chemical residues from the fish and sea-birds they had consumed.

Walrus for Weather Forecasts

Soviet airmen have found that walrus movements give them valuable information about weather changes and ice conditions. Herds of walrus will appear at unlikely places, such as near large packs of ice, but within a few days the sea becomes ice-free. Conversely their disappearance from an apparently favourable area will foretell a deterioration in conditions there.

The Easy Excuse

Twenty-six American states now protect all birds of prey – Montana is the latest to do so; two (Nevada and New Mexico) protect none; 22 protect some – which always enables the killer of a protected species to claim that he thought it was one of the others.