

INTERNATIONAL

World Heritage Convention

Japan has decided to accede to the 20-year-old World Heritage Convention, the 126th nation to do so.

Source: *Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas Newsletter*, June 1992, 3.

CITES Parties up to 115

Djibouti, Czechoslovakia and Equatorial Guinea have acceded to CITES. These accessions became effective on 7 February, 28 May and 8 June 1992, respectively.

Ramsar update

By the end of June 1992 there were 71 Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands with Peru, Indonesia, Argentina, Bangladesh and Brazil joining recently.

Source: *International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau News*, July 1992, 2.

International Whaling Commission

At the 44th annual meeting of the IWC Iceland announced that it was leaving the Commission and Norway said that it would resume commercial harvesting of minke whales, whether or not the IWC agreed a quota. A French proposal to declare the Antarctic a whale sanctuary was taken off the agenda because it did not have sufficient support.

Requests from Japan for a continued kill of minke whales in Antarctica for 'scientific research' were granted. The meeting agreed on the procedure to be used to calculate catch quotas if commercial whaling were resumed but said

that many other features needed to be in place before it could be used as part of a Revised Management System. Source: *New Scientist*, 4 July 1992, 7; 11 July 1992, 12-13.

World Bank pledge

In a change in funding priorities the World Bank has pledged never again to finance roads through virgin rain forest or dams in the Amazon.

Source: *The Guardian*, 6 June 1992.

Tuna fishery to kill fewer dolphins

Tuna purse seine operators in the eastern Pacific have agreed to limit each vessel to a set number of accidental dolphin kills a year. The agreement, reached at a 13-nation meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in June, is designed to cut such kills to fewer than 5000 a year by 1999. An IATTC observer will be placed on every vessel and a 2-year budget of more than \$5 million was agreed to achieve these objectives. A major share of this will be used to find ways of catching yellowfin tuna without entangling dolphins. When purse-seining for tunas associated with dolphins came into widespread use more than 200,000 dolphins were killed each year and work to solve the problem has already reduced mortality by more than 80 per cent. In 1991 dolphin mortality caused by the fishery was 28,000 animals, about 0.3 per cent of the population.

Source: *Fishing News International*, July 1992, 3.

Coral trade still continues

In July British Customs seized two large consignments of coral

(80 tonnes in total) from the Philippines because they were imported in contravention of CITES. The coral was claimed to be pre-1986 stock, which was being exported under a temporary relaxation in controls by the Philippine authorities, but remains of marine organisms attached to the coral showed that it had been taken recently.

Source: *The Marine Conservation Society*, 20 July 1992.

Timber seized

In May British Customs made the first ever seizure of CITES-listed timber in Europe. The 24-tonne consignment of alerce *Fitzroya cupressoides* – commonly passed off as mahogany, although it is a softwood, and known as the 'redwood of South America', was confiscated from Timbernet Ltd in Oxford. The tree is a Chilean 'Natural Monument' and was listed on Appendix I of CITES in 1972 because of threats from logging and pulping industries. Source: *BBC Wildlife*, August 1992, 70.

EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA**Only 200 Swedish lynx left**

There may be fewer than 200 lynx left in Sweden, according to the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, which succeeded in getting strict legal protection for the species in 1991.

Source: *Cat News*, March 1992, 14.

Mass razorbill deaths in Gulf of Finland

Hundreds of razorbills *Alca torda* were found drowned near breeding colonies in the Gulf of



Red kites have bred in England and Scotland for the first time in more than a century (*RSPB/C. H. Gomersall*).

Finland earlier this year. The reason for the drownings has not been determined and so far there is no evidence of disease. *Source: Suomen Luonto*, 51 (5), 5.

Red kites in English and Scottish skies

Red kites *Milvus milvus* have bred successfully in England and Scotland for the first time in more than a century. At least nine young flew from nests in July – eight in England and one in Scotland. The parents are from Spain, Sweden and Wales, all released over the last 3 years. The only native red kites in Britain are in central Wales where 70–80 pairs are breeding and where persecution is still a major threat.

Source: Joint Nature Conservation Committee/Royal Society for Protection of Birds, News Release, 9 July 1992.

Golf course threat to orchid

Guernsey, in the Channel Islands, has one of the finest concentrations of loose-

flowered orchid *Orchis laxiflora* in northern Europe. Traditional management by hay-cutting and autumn grazing is threatened by changing agricultural patterns, the planting of potatoes and, most recently, a new golf course. The Island's conservation body, La Société Guernesiaise, is actively acquiring meadows, the finest one already in its ownership, but now has to pay golf-course prices. One tiny field, the size of a tennis court, may show 3000 spikes of *laxiflora*, together with other typical wet meadow plants.

Source: La Société Guernesiaise, Candie Gardens, St Peter Port, Guernsey.

Polish bird society launched

The Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP) was launched in February. With significant populations of several globally threatened species and 126 Important Bird Areas, Poland is extremely important for birds. OTOP aims to collect

information, spread awareness and take action for threatened species and habitats.

Details: Jacek Szostakowski, PO Box 335, 80–958 Gdansk 50, Poland.

EC funds road that will displace bears

The European Community is funding a road in the Pyrenees despite local protest and the fact that the project goes against EC environmental directives. A little-used road between Pau in France and Zaragoza in Spain is being turned into a major three-lane highway. It passes through the Aspe Valley, much of which lies within the Pyrenees National Park and which is home to 12 of the 15 brown bears *Ursus arctos* surviving in the Pyrenees. Local opposition led by the Coordination pour la Sauvegarde Active de la Vallée



Orchis laxiflora – Europe's best population is threatened by a golf course (*Tim Peet*).

d'Aspe (CSAVA) has attracted support from other environmental groups across Europe but plans for a Summer Action Camp scheduled for 16–26 July were thrown into disarray by the imprisonment of CSAVA activist Eric Pétetin.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, July 1992, 66.

Insect kill on the steppe

In June more than 300 sq km of Spanish steppe were sprayed with malathion, a non-selective insecticide. The affected area, La Serena in Extremadura province, supports 1700 great bustard *Otis tarda* as well as populations of little bustard *Tetrax tetrax* and lesser kestrel *Falco naumanni*, all threatened species. The timing coincided with the height of the breeding season and it is probable that chicks starved to death. The spraying contravened the EC Wild Birds Directive and emphasizes the urgent need for the Spanish steppe to be protected. La Serena is one of five areas bird conservation organizations would like designating as Environmentally Sensitive Areas to allow farmers to receive Community subsidies and maintain the steppes as a patchwork of grazing land and low-intensity cereal farming. Source: *World Birdwatch*, June 1992, 5; *New Scientist*, 18 July 1992, 7.

Ruddy duck spreads

Escapes from captive collections in the 1950s introduced the North American ruddy duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* into the UK where it now has a winter population of over 3500. It is spreading quickly, having been recorded from 13 European countries and breeding in Iceland, France, the Netherlands and Spain. It threatens the rare white-headed

duck *O. leucocephala* through hybridization and competition in Spain, where conservation measures have seen the white-headed duck population recover from 22 individuals in 1977 to 580 in 1991, and in Turkey. At least five hybrids have been shot in Spain since the summer of 1991.

Source: *International Waterfowl and Wetland Research Bureau News*, July 1982, 18.

Black Sea dolphins need help

A Romanian voluntary organization is trying to save the dolphins and porpoises in the Black Sea. All three species there – common porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*, common dolphin *Delphinus delphis* and bottle-nosed dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* – have declined because of pollution, mass slaughter by shooting (for food and for fun), decreasing numbers of fish prey, and drowning in fishing nets. The Society intends to survey the Black Sea, assess the threats and come up with solutions. Volunteers have restored a former dolphin-hunting boat to use for the survey and are now seeking navigation and survey equipment. Source: The GESS Society for Marine Research, Frumoasa, str. 31, code 78114, Bucharest, Romania.

Cormorants killed

Croatian fishermen crossed the border into Hungary and shot 2000 cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo* in a nature reserve on the Drava river near the Croatian town of Donji Mihojlač. The Croatian authorities acknowledged the border violation and prevented the hunters from returning 2 days later to kill the remaining 1000 birds. Source: *The Guardian*, 6 June 1992.

AFRICA

Okapi forest protected

In May Zaire's Environment and Conservation Minister signed an agreement to create the 13,726-sq-km Ituri Forest Reserve. An estimated 5000 okapi *Okapia johnstoni* live in Ituri. The forest is also home to Mbuti pygmies and the Ituri management plan has integrated their needs with the reserve's conservation goals. Zaire has also designated the Mangrove Reserve to protect manatees *Trichechus senegalensis* and 1000 sq km of mangrove forest.

Source: *WWF News*, June 1992, 16; *Commission on Parks and Protected Areas Newsletter*, June 1992, 4–5.

Leopard orchids in danger

Leopard orchids *Ansellia africana* are appearing for sale in the Westlands area of Nairobi following a ban on their sale at the Kenyan coast, which was introduced as a result of an East African Natural History Society initiative. They grow high in doum palms *Hyphaene thebaica*, in large open-forest trees at the coast and in *Acacia* spp. in the Kerio Valley. Trees are often felled simply to collect the orchids. The Orchid Society in Kenya is now compiling a list of other endangered species and the Law Reform Commission is looking into ways of protecting all endangered plants in Kenya. Source: *East African Natural History Society Bulletin*, June 1992, 22.

Rhinos dehorned

An epidemic of rhino poaching has forced the Zimbabwe



Hippos are among victims of the drought in Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou National Park; at least 120 had died by mid-1992 (*Norman Myers*).

Government to start a 2-month programme of dehorning 300 rhinos to make them worthless to poachers. Zambian poaching gangs are entering Zimbabwe almost daily and kill about one rhino a week. There are only about 3000 black rhinos left in Africa, about 1000 of them in Zimbabwe.
Source: New Scientist, 6 June 1992, 8.

Private reserve offers hope to drought-stricken animals

Fifteen ranch owners in south-east Zimbabwe are to pull down fences separating their land to create the Save Conservancy – a large block of land in the Save Valley, north-east of Gonarezhou National Park. By the end of 1992 the new reserve will be surrounded by 300 km of electric fence and the landowners have set up anti-poaching squads and wildlife management units. The move has been made because the drought has made cattle-raising non-viable. There are plans to transfer black rhinos and some elephant to the new reserve from drought-stricken Gonarezhou where 120 hippos and hundreds of buffalo have already died and where 2000 elephants must be culled to

save the remaining animals and habitat.
Source: New Scientist, 25 July 1992, 10.

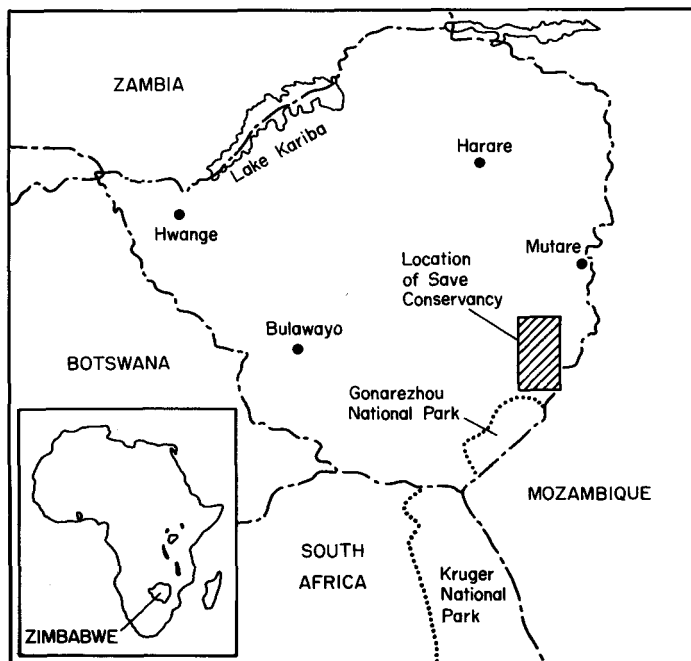
Tough new wildlife legislation in Malawi

Malawi's National Park and Wildlife Bill 1992 has been passed by parliament and awaits the President's signa-

ture. The new Act will replace existing wildlife legislation and introduces tough penalties for wildlife offenders.
Source: TRAFFIC Bulletin, May/June 1992, 8.

Anthrax outbreak

At the end of July wildlife officials were trying to save the last herd of desert elephants in



Location of the new private reserve in the Save Valley, Zimbabwe.

Namibia from being wiped out by anthrax. One elephant had died and the remaining 50 could die quickly if they picked up the water-borne virus. Funds were being raised to fire darts loaded with vaccine at the elephants from a helicopter. Other species in the area – black rhinoceros, sable antelope, gemsbok, eland and impala – are also at risk. *Source: The Guardian*, 31 July 1992.

Wild animals to be killed in Namibia

President Nujoma of Namibia has declared a state of emergency as the worst drought for 30 years continues in most parts of the country. He has appealed to farmers with game herds on their land to donate animals killed to conserve grazing to the people. He said that all natural resources of the country, including those in Etosha National Park, must be utilized to provide food. *Source: Johannesburg Star*, early April 1992.

Aye-aye first

On 5 April a male aye-aye *Daubentonia madagascariensis* was born at Duke University Primate Centre in North Carolina, USA, the first to be born in captivity outside Madagascar for a century. *Source: New Scientist*, 25 April 1992.

ASIA (EXCLUDING INDO-MALAYA)

Orang-utan repatriation problems

In January the Council of Agriculture, Taiwan, decided to suspend indefinitely the repatriation of orang-utans *Pongo*

pygmaeus to Indonesia. The decision appears to have been prompted by unsubstantiated charges by the Indonesian news media that 'Taiwan people eat orang-utans and send back animals which are ill'. By 10 January 283 orang-utans had been registered with the authorities in Taiwan; the Orangutan Foundation Taiwan estimates that there are 400–800 orang-utans in the country. *Source: Asian Primates, IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group Newsletter*, 11 (4), 5.

Japan citizens fight for their forest – and lose it

The Ikego Hills Forest is the last significant area of natural habitat in Zushi City, south of Tokyo, Japan. Despite its urban surroundings it is still in good condition because it has been used for underground munitions storage by the Japanese and then US military authorities. The broad-leaved forest supports more than 107 species of birds, including some that are endangered. A plan to build housing for US Naval personnel in Ikego is now going ahead despite vigorous protest by the citizens of Zushi. *Source: Save Ikego Forest Group*, 3–7–19 Zushi, Zushi-Shi, Kanagawa-Ken 249, Japan.

INDO-MALAYA

Sri Lanka's emergency tree rules

Sri Lanka's President, Ranasinghe Premadasa, has introduced emergency regulations to curb the illegal felling of trees because existing laws were inadequate or ineffective. The Chairman of the Central Environmental Authority has been empowered to declare protected forest areas, whether

private or state-owned, with penalties for their destruction ranging from 2 to 10 years' imprisonment and fines of Rs100,000–500,000.

Source: TRAFFIC Bulletin, May/June 1992, 32.

Rehabilitation destroys lake

A 'rehabilitation' project for Beung Boraphet, an 18 × 6 km freshwater lake in Nakhon Sawan province, Thailand, has damaged the site for wildlife. Thousands of ducks wintered there and it was listed as a site of international value in the *Directory of Asian Wetlands*. It is also important for fishermen and is under the administration of the Fisheries Department, which drained the lake in order to eradicate 90 species of water plants. Construction work has altered one of the largest natural islands, which was a roosting site for many birds. The project, financed by a loan from the Japan Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, also includes the construction of an aquarium, a crocodile farm and a fish breeding centre. The lake is to be stocked with Siamese tiger fish *Datnoides microlepis*. Following an outcry from environmentalists, the Deputy Agriculture Minister asked for closer co-operation between the Fisheries Department and the Forestry Department, which has a responsibility to conserve the site.

Source: Bangkok Bird Club Bulletin, July 1992, 10.

Teak to be flooded

An irrigation and power scheme threatens to flood 38 sq km, more than 10 per cent, of Mae Yom National Park in Phrae province, Thailand. It contains the last great stand of teak *Tectona grandis* in the country. Teak is so endangered in

Thailand that a recent environmental impact assessment commissioned by the World Bank described the Mae Yom as a 'vital natural genetic resource of the highest priority'.

Source: *Bangkok Post*, 1 June 1992.

Thai turtle project

Local fishermen along 60 km of coastline in Thailand's Trang province have started a Sea Turtle Conservation Project.

The villagers protect turtle nests until hatchlings emerge and reach the sea safely, release sea turtles trapped in fishing gear and work to stop destructive and illegal fishing methods, such as the use of cyanide and dynamite. However, large trawlers still operate within 3 km of the shore and armed outsiders are coming in with cyanide, bombs and nets. The local people cannot stop them and government agencies ignore their pleas for help. Some villagers feel that they are conserving the sea so that others can squander its resources and they are talking about abandoning the project.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, July 1992, 2–5.

Vietnam and Laos stop timber exports

Widespread destruction of forests in central and southern Vietnam has led the Prime Minister, Vo Van Kiet, to ban the export of timber and sawn wood and to order the withdrawal of all export permits issued this year. The makers of brick, lime and pottery are being encouraged to use coal instead of charcoal and wood. Almost 700 sq km of virgin forest were lost when dams were built at Tri An and Dau Tieng and an equivalent area of Tuy Ninh province was cleared for

rubber plantations and other crops. Mangroves in the south are disappearing because of shrimp farms, logging and charcoal-making. Laos banned the export of timber from May 1992 in an attempt to enforce the 1991 nationwide logging ban.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, May/June 1992, 32.

Hold-up in protection for Hong Kong's wetlands

Seventeen species of ardeids (herons, bitterns and egrets) have been recorded in Hong Kong. The rarest is the threatened Chinese egret *Egretta eulophotes*, which bred there until the early 1980s but is now only a rare migrant. Most of the ardeids and other waterbirds in Hong Kong are concentrated around Deep Bay, in the north-west corner of the territory. In 1990 6800 ardeids wintered there, but breeding habitat is being destroyed for housing and industry and colonies that remain suffer from fishermen from mainland China stealing eggs and chicks. Its mosaic of wetland habitats make Deep Bay eligible for Ramsar status but the Hong Kong Government has taken no firm steps to have it designated and protected from further destruction.

Source: *Heron Conservation Newsletter*, May 1992, 2–3.

Marine park being spoiled

Malaysia's Pulau Redang National Park is threatened by a massive £57-million tourist development. The park includes nine islands, of which Pulau Redang is the largest, all with mangrove forests and the best coral reefs in Malaysia. The developer claims to be taking steps to safeguard the reefs but studies by conservation groups

found that hills had been levelled, traps that were designed to trap silt were inadequate, large areas of trees had been felled and guidelines on mangrove conservation had been ignored. The amount of sediment washing into the sea has increased fivefold and many corals and mangroves have already died.

Source: *New Scientist*, 15 August 1992, 10.

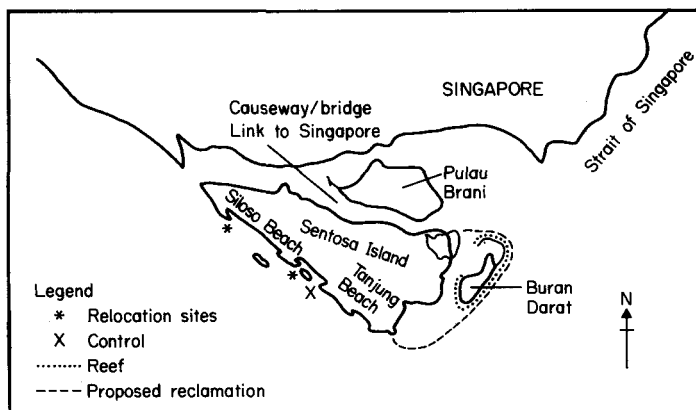
Kalimantan still burns

Forest fires are still destroying protected areas in Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo. Burning coal seams are reported to have sparked fires in at least eight places in Bukit Suharto Forest Park and the Kersik Luwai Orchid Conservation Area has also been damaged. Now Finland, Canada, Britain and Japan, embarrassed by Indonesia's diplomatic pressure, have offered assistance to put out the fires. According to the International Campaign for Ecological Justice in Indonesia, the main cause of the fires is debris left behind by logging companies and there is still no sign of changes in forest practice. Last year timber worth more than \$4.45 million was burnt in East Kalimantan alone, along with unaccounted for losses of other forest products and wildlife.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, August 1992, 55.

Philippine eagle captive breeding

On 15 January the Philippine Eagle Conservation Program Foundation (PECPF) hatched its first chick. Deforestation has made the eagle *Pithecophaga jefferyi* one of the world's most endangered birds: only 35 survive, of which 13, including the new arrival, are at PECPF's



Location of a project to rescue reefs threatened by a reclamation project in Singapore.

headquarters in Davao City. The chick was conceived by artificial insemination and hatched by a 22-year-old female. Even if further breeding successes occur PECPF has no plan to release any birds to the wild because their habitat has been so devastated that survival would be unlikely.

Source: *International Zoo News*, June 1992, 38–39.

Reef rescue in Singapore

A project has been launched to save some of the marine life threatened by a reclamation project in Singapore. Thousands of corals and marine organisms from the reef round the small island of Buran Darat are being moved to new sites off the south coast of Sentosa Island. The entire 2 km of the reef will be affected by reclamation work joining the island to Sentosa. The new sites are on submerged rock-retaining bunds below reclaimed beaches. The translocated reefs will be monitored and the success of the project will be determined by comparison with control areas where only natural colonization will occur.

Source: *Marine Conservation*, Summer 1992, 12.

NORTH AMERICA

Exxon Valdez oil spill still a problem

Three years after the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground, oil still contaminates Alaska's shoreline, and wildlife is still showing signs of damage. Of 20,000 sea otters *Enhydra lutris* in the Gulf of Alaska 3500–5000 were killed directly by the spill and the population has fallen by 2200 more since. Populations of

common seals *Phoca vitulina* in oiled areas have internal levels of petroleum five to six times higher than other seals. It is now believed that 435,000 birds were killed directly by the oil spill; in 1991 numbers of murres (guillemots) *Uria* spp. and harlequin ducks *Histrionicus histrionicus* were still declining, with complete breeding failure in some colonies.

Source: *National Parks*, July–August 1992, 13–14.

Canada bans cod fishing

Canada has announced an 18-month ban on fishing its northern cod stock because of its precarious state. It is planned to temper serious socio-economic effects in Newfoundland with financial aid and resettlement programmes for fishermen.

Source: *Fishing News International*, July 1992, 2.

New population of sea otters

A colony of about 100 sea otters *Enhydra lutris* has been discovered in Canada, near Hunter Island off British



A new colony of sea otters has been found off British Columbia (Alaska Department of Fish and Game).

Columbia's central coast. The province's entire population was believed to have been hunted out by 1929. It is not known whether the otters travelled from distant colonies – the nearest is a colony introduced from Alaska 200 km away on Vancouver Island – or whether they are the descendants of a few that escaped the fur traders. *Source: Vancouver Sun*, 27 February 1992.

Alarm to save whales

Scientists at Memorial University, Newfoundland, Canada, have developed an alarm system to drive whales away from fishing nets. The alarm is housed in floats attached to the nets and issues low-frequency clanging sounds. In tests, cod fishermen reported 75 per cent fewer collisions with whales.

Source: New Scientist, 25 July 1992, 18.

Peat bog saved for sundew

The Nova Scotia Government has blocked a fuel-peat mine development to protect the thread-leaved sundew *Drosera filiformis*, which was listed as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada in April 1991. The proposed development was on Swaines Road bog, the most important of the four known sites of the sundew in Canada. The government is creating ecological reserves under the Special Places Act and has offered to help the developer find other bogs suitable for peat extraction. *Source: Nature Canada*, Spring 1992, 12–13.

Eight more species for list

Seven plants and one animal were given protection under

the US Endangered Species Act in November/December 1991. The plants include three endangered annual species from California: Baker's stickyseed *Blennosperma bakeri*; Burke's goldfields *Lasthenia burkei*, and Sebastopol meadowfoam *Limnanthes vinculans*. Also protected are Cumberland rosemary *Conradina verticillata*, a riverbank perennial from Tennessee and Kentucky, the little Aguja pondweed *Potamogeton clystocarpus* from Texas and two endemic Puerto Rican orchids, *Lepanthes eltorensis* and *Cranichis ricartii*. The Point Arena mountain beaver *Aplodontia rufa nigra*, whose known distribution is limited to a small portion of coastal Mendocino County, California, was listed as endangered. *Source: Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, January/February 1992, 14.

Low lights help hatchlings

New high-pressure sodium street lights placed lower than normal and with an inverted bulb, have replaced conventional street lights in the St Petersburg area of Florida to make beaches safer for hatchling turtles. The new design lights the streets well but the light, being directed downward and over a much smaller area, does not confuse hatchlings and lure them away from the ocean. More surveys are under way in other parts of Florida and if the new lights prove effective they will replace conventional lights in communities that request them.

Source: Marine Turtle Newsletter, July 1992, 24–25.

Otter return

The North American river otter *Lutra canadensis* is back in the Great Smoky Mountains

National Park on the North Carolina–Tennessee border after an absence of 50 years. A total of 37 otters trapped in South Carolina and Louisiana were released between 1986 and 1992. Survival has been good and the otters have bred. Successful reintroductions of the species have also occurred in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park and Dinosaur National Monument and studies are under way to assess the feasibility of releases at Buffalo National River, Arkansas and Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky.

Source: National Parks, May–June 1992, 35–38.

Lynx reintroduction

The Canadian lynx *Lynx canadensis*, which was extirpated in the Adirondack region of New York State, USA, in the late 1980s, has been reintroduced in the north-east sector of Adirondack Park. A total of 83 animals from Yukon in Canada were released during the three winters of 1988–1990. All were fitted with radio-collars and held for 2–4 weeks prior to release. There have been 32 known deaths; 12 were due to vehicles. Radio-tracking has shown that the animals use large areas – 421 sq km for females and 1760 sq km for males. A male and female were in close telemetric association in several instances but there is no direct evidence of breeding. *Source: Re-introduction News*, May 1992, 7.

Hawaiian crow – survey finds 11

On 11 April 11 Hawaiian crows *Corvus hawaiiensis* were found by federal biologists in a narrow band of forest between 1200–1676 m on McCandless Ranch in Kona, the only place

where the species occurs in the wild. The survey was a direct result of a lawsuit brought by the Audubon Society against the ranch and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to compel the Service to carry out the recovery plan for the endangered bird (see *Oryx*, 26, 16).

Source: *'Elepaio*, May 1992, 29.

Has the brown tree snake reached Hawaii?

There are fears that the brown tree snake *Boiga irregularis*, which caused bird extinctions in Guam (see *Oryx*, 24, 47) has reached Hawaii, possibly in military aircraft. In 1981 two snakes were found and destroyed on Oahu and two more were found in 1986. Since then there have been several unconfirmed sightings, many on military bases. Last October two snakes were found on the same day – one on a taxiway at Honolulu Airport and the other under a military cargo plane at adjacent Hickam Air Force Base. The snakes were captured but they may not have been the only individuals. Their nocturnal habits make the chances of finding the alien snakes slim but the Department of Land and Natural Resources has seven Snake Watch and Alert Teams. So far they have found boa constrictors, pythons and garter snakes – all pets released into the wild – but no brown tree snakes.

Source: *Audubon*, May–June 1992, 25–26.

Honeycreeper nests found

In March researchers found three nests of the crested honeycreeper *Palmeria dolei* in the forests of Waikamoi Reserve on Maui in Hawaii. These are the first recorded nests of this endangered species since 1860. The discoveries will help

provide valuable information for recovery plans for the species, which is now found only on Maui.

Source: *'Elepaio*, May 1992, 33.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Forests cleared in Guatemalan park

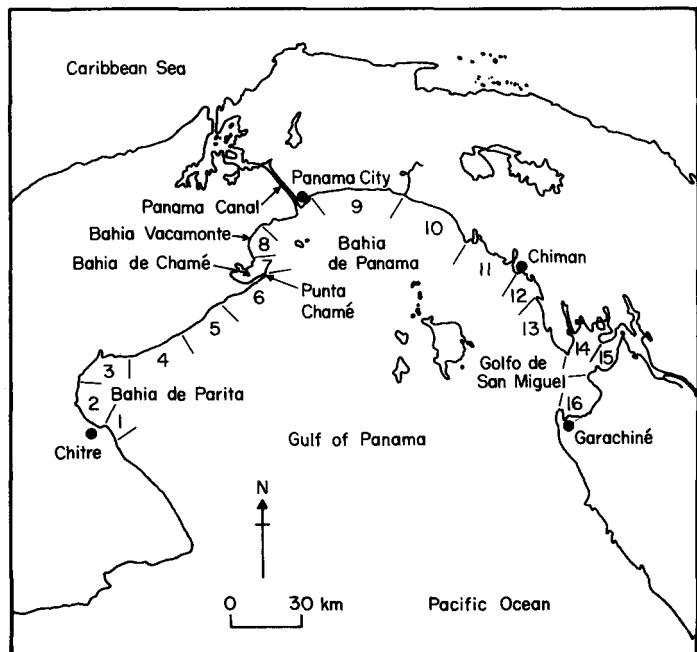
Comparing aerial photographs taken 10 years ago with satellite images in 1991 revealed that nearly half of the forest in Guatemala's 1000-sq-km Sierra de las Minas National Park has been destroyed in the intervening period. The Conservation Data Center of the University of San Carlos, which is mapping the park's ecosystems, attributes most of the clearance to agriculture and commercial logging. The newly formed Guatemalan conservation group *Fundacion Defensores de la Naturaleza* is marking the park boundaries and meeting

local people and politicians to instil a better sense of stewardship.

Source: *Nature Conservancy*, July/August 1992, 7.

Panama's coast important internationally for birds

More than 15,500 fish-eating, wading and raptorial birds were counted along the coast of the Gulf of Panama from Chitré to Garachiné in October 1991. The brown pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* and olivaceous cormorant *Phalacrocorax olivaceus* were the most frequently recorded species. The findings support a proposal to declare shorebird beaches between Panama City and Chiman as a Ramsar site. The designation would protect 46 per cent of the birds found in the survey as well as internationally significant concentrations of shorebirds. Bahia de Parita also held many birds and beaches near Chitré are already protected as



Panama's coast, showing areas surveyed for shorebirds.

ecologically important sites under local bylaws.

Source: *Canadian Wildlife Service Progress Notes*, No. 198, May 1992.

New park in Panama

Panama's new Isla Coiba National Park covers more than 2700 sq km and includes the islands of Coiba, Jicarón and Ranchería. Its primary objective is to conserve the island, marine and coastal ecosystems in the region.

Source: *Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas Newsletter*, June 1992, 6.

Flamingos flown in

An attempt is under way to reintroduce Bermuda captive-bred Caribbean flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber ruber* to the British Virgin Isles, where the subspecies has been absent since the early 1950s. In 1986 eight Bermuda-bred flamingos were exported to Guana Island Wildlife Sanctuary and these birds were monitored until 1991 when the last birds flew off to join other Caribbean colonies. It had been determined that the flamingos could adapt to the wild but that Guana Island could not support a large colony. In March, 20 flamingos were flown to Anegada Island, historically the site of the BVI's largest flamingo colony, in preparation for their release at two salt ponds, Flamingo Pond and Bones Bight Pond.

Source: *Forum News* (NGO Forum for UK Dependent Territories), June 1992, 2.

Protection for Caribbean bay

Salt River Bay, St Croix, US Virgin Islands, was declared a National Historical Park and

Ecological Reserve in February. The only place of its kind left in the Virgin Islands, the site was threatened by a massive resort development (see *Oryx*, 23, 47). The 370-ha park contains forested hills, mangrove swamps and a coral reef, while further out to sea is one of the world's few underwater limestone canyons. A total of 110 species of birds rely on the area and three species of sea turtles feed in the seagrass beds.

Source: *National Parks*, May–June 1992, 10–11.

SOUTH AMERICA

Slaughter of protected wildlife in French Guiana

Scarlet ibis *Eudocimus ruber* and marine turtles are being slaughtered on a massive scale in French Guiana despite being protected by law. The guards are helpless against the heavily armed poachers.

Source: WWF–France, June 1992.

Cocoa prices fall and threaten forest

One of Brazil's last remnants of Atlantic Forest is threatened by plummeting world cocoa prices. Because cocoa cultivation needs the protection of taller trees, native forest in the cocoa-growing region of Bahia state is still reasonably well preserved. Now cocoa growers are thinking of rearing cattle instead, which would result in forest clearance.

Source: *New Scientist*, 6 June 1992, 11.

New species of porcupine

A new species of prehensile-tailed porcupine *Coendou koopmani* has been described from the Amazon lowlands of Brazil. It is sympatric with *C. prehensilis* but is much smaller (about the size of a guinea pig) and darker, and unlike that species it lacks extensive white-tipping of the spines.

Source: *Mammalia*, 56 (2), 1992, 237–244.

Norwegian company damages Ecuadorean park

A Norwegian mining company, Ecuamor, is planning open-pit mining for gold in the eastern part of the Podocarpus National Park, Ecuador. The company has already damaged habitat through exploratory operations. The park covers 1463 sq km of forest, including the only remaining large tracts of temperate cloud forest in southern Ecuador, and is still poorly known biologically. At least 12 threatened birds occur in the park and the mining, in the Romerillos area, would affect half of the 540 bird species recorded there.

Sources: *World Birdwatch*, June 1992, 5; *BBC Wildlife*, August 1992, 54.

Argentina bans parrot exports

The Argentine Government has prohibited the export of nine parrot species until at least 1994. There is evidence to suggest that the species concerned, which include the blue-fronted Amazon *Amazona aestiva*, are being traded at non-sustainable levels. The ban will be lifted only when management programmes to ensure the survival of the species have been established.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, May/June 1992, 8.

Oil threat to Beauchêne

On 14 March the trawler *Lord Shackleton II* sank in 70 m of water off Beauchêne Island in

the Falklands. The island is a seal reserve and bird sanctuary. It has globally significant seabird colonies with almost half-a-million pairs of black-browed albatrosses and rock-hopper penguins. While an oil slick resulting from the sinking does not appear to have damaged wildlife, the 600 tonnes of fuel remaining on the ship are a long-term hazard. It is also possible that rats could have reached Beauchêne on wreck-age washed ashore.

Source: *Forum News* (NGO Forum for UK Dependent Territories, June 1992, 4).

AUSTRALASIA/ ANTARCTICA

Leafy seadragon collection banned

Western Australia has banned the take of leafy seadragons (related to seahorses *Hippocampus* spp.) without a permit from the State's Executive Director of Fisheries. The species is found only in the southern coastal areas of Australia and it has disappeared from some places and is declining in others. Their seagrass habitat is suffering from pollution and the more accessible areas appear to have been denuded of seadragons by collectors.

Source: *TRAFFIC Bulletin*, May/June 1992, 8.

Clams moved

The Australian navy moved thousands of clams from Orpheus Island off Queensland, Australia, to other parts of the Great Barrier Reef. The operation was necessary because a clam-breeding project by James Cook University ended up with too many clams. The 7-year project, which

involves eight Pacific nations, has been successful. Two species of clam have been reintroduced to Fiji and Tonga where they had become extinct; important discoveries have been made about clam biology; and a new species, *Tridacna tevora*, was found in deep water off Fiji and Tonga. The project also paved the way for clam-farming in islands throughout the Pacific and hatcheries have already been established on the Cook Islands, Fiji and Tonga.

Source: *New Scientist*, 13 June 1992, 10.

Entanglement an increasing problem

Observations on Australian fur seals *Arctocephalus pusillus doriferus* in Tasmanian waters between 1989 and 1991 revealed that nearly 2 per cent of seals were entangled with various kinds of man-made debris discarded by fishing fleets. Ninety-six per cent of the entangled seals had physical injuries that could cause eventual death. A large proportion of entangled seals are immature so it will be some time before the effects of mortalities are reflected in changes in breeding numbers. Rates of entanglement will increase with time because before 1988 the trawl fisheries operated over soft bottoms and lost few nets but now they operate over rocky beds off Tasmania's southern coast and more nets are snagged and lost. In addition, the fishery deploys about 6000 net-tows a year now compared with fewer than 1000 in 1989.

Source: *Wildlife Research*, 1992, 19, 151–159.

Hooker's sealion – the killing goes on

The New Zealand Government's promises to protect Hooker's

sealion *Phocarctos hookeri* have been broken. In February the Ministers of Conservation and of Fisheries said they would create a marine mammal sanctuary around the Auckland Islands and close the southern squid fishery once a maximum of 16 female sealions had been drowned in trawl nets. However, the sanctuary only covers the existing 20-km no-fishing area around the Auckland Islands and the 16-female limit was reached in March but the fishing continued. By 24 April, around 80 sealions, including 50 females, had been killed.

Source: *Forest & Bird Conservation News*, May 1992.

Fur seal expands range

A breeding colony of fur seals *Arctocephalus forsteri* with 13 pups was discovered at Cape Palliser on the southern tip of North Island, New Zealand – the first time that the species has bred on North Island this century. In March nine of the pups were found clubbed to death. Ravaged by commercial sealing last century and protected by law since 1875 the recovery of seal populations has been slow; there are now about 60,000 animals compared with around 500,000 before sealing started.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, May 1992, 4.

New bill would ban woodchip exports

A Forests Amendment Bill currently before the New Zealand parliament would ban the export of native logs and woodchips except for those from Maori land in Southland and from 132,000 ha of native forest managed by West Coast Timberlands. It would also restrict milling of native timber to logs from approved sustainably managed

forests, restrict podocarp and kauri logging to the removal of single trees or small groups, and restrict the felling of beech to areas no larger than 0.5 ha.

Source: *Forest & Bird Conservation News*, July 1992.

Endangered tussock planted

Nursery-grown plants from seed collected from the one remaining plant of spiral snow tussock *Chionochloa spiralis* on Mt Luxmore near Te Anau, New Zealand, have been replanted near the parent plant and covered with mesh to prevent hares grazing them. The endangered grass occurs in only two other places: the Takahē Valley in the Murchison Mountains and Lake Monk near Preservation Inlet in the far south of Fiordland.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, May 1992, 5.

Saddlebacks back

South Island saddlebacks *Creadion carunculatus* have been reintroduced to Fiordland after an absence of nearly 100 years. New Zealand Department of Conservation staff caught 60 saddlebacks off southern Stewart Island and transferred them by helicopter to Breaksea Island at the entrance to Fiordland's Breaksea Sound. The saddlebacks in South Island came close to extinction in 1964 when their last sanctuary, Big South Cape Island off Stewart Island, was invaded by ship rats. They were saved by transferring them to nearby islands and the recovery plan aims to build the population to 4000 birds on offshore islands.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, May 1992, 3.

Possum fence planned

The New Zealand Department of Conservation wants to create

an area free from possums *Trichosurus vulpecula* in the Coromandel Peninsula and is negotiating with local landowners to erect an electric fence from coast to coast. The project is significantly different from other possum-control efforts, which simply aim to keep populations down to the lowest practical density. The northern end of the peninsula contains forest that is relatively unmodified by possums and is home to a number of endangered plants and animals.

Source: *Forest & Bird*, May 1992, 4.

OCEANIA

Polynesian rat a threat after all

While ship (black) and Norway (brown) rats have long been recognized as problems for ground-nesting birds on islands where they have been introduced, evidence from Henderson Island in the Pitcairn group suggests that the smaller Polynesian rat, generally regarded as benign, can also be a problem. The island supports 3000 pairs of Murphy's petrels *Pterodroma ultima* and biologists on the Sir Peter Scott Commemorative Expedition found that of 62 hatching chicks observed, none survived more than 4 days; the culprit was the Polynesian rat. This is the first evidence of this rat causing wholesale destruction among nesting petrels and it is now thought that the petrel population on Henderson is maintained by immigrants from two other islands in the group – Oeno and Ducie. Polynesian rats also occur there but their impact is not serious. Oeno has 10,000 pairs of Murphy's petrels and Ducie 250,000 pairs, making the latter probably the world's most

important nesting site for the species.

Source: *BBC Wildlife*, July 1992, 15.

OBITUARY

John Stuart Johnstone died on 5 April 1992. He was Director of Mole Hall Wildlife Park in the UK and a valued member of the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society Council from 1975 to 1984.

PUBLICATIONS

Herpetology: Contemporary Research on the Biology of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR Publications, 225 pp., HB Pre-publication price before November 1992 to SSAR members and delegates is \$20 and to all other individuals and institutions \$28. For postage add \$2 (USA) or \$4 (elsewhere). Orders to Dr Robert D. Aldridge, SSAR Publications Secretary, Department of Biology, St Louis University, St Louis, Missouri 63103, USA. Tel: 314 658 3916. Fax: 314 658 3117)

This book contains the revised and updated lectures given at the First World Congress of Herpetology held in the UK in 1989. It also contains a detailed, illustrated summary of the meeting with a complete list of delegates and their current addresses.

The Marine Curio Trade: Conservation Guidelines and Legislation. This booklet was prepared to help marine curio importers and retailers in the UK to make informed demands about the species they trade in and encourage them to support efforts to make the trade sustainable. Available for a dona-

tion of £2 from the Marine Conservation Society, 9 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5BU.

MEETINGS

Chemistry of Rain-Forest Plants and their Utilization for Development. 27–29 October 1992, Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatera, Indonesia. Jointly organized by Institute Technology Bandung, Andalas University, Bung Hatta University and UNESCO. *Contact:* Professor Dr Sjamsul Arifin Achmad, Department of Chemistry, Institute Technology Bandung, Jalan Ganesha 10, Bandung 40132, Indonesia. Tel: 022 82103; Fax 6 22 243 8338.

A Conference on British Mammals. 31 October 1992, Ipswich, Suffolk, UK. *Contact:* The Suffolk Naturalists' Society, c/o The Museum, High Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 3QH.

Sixth International Festival of Documentary Films on Parks. 9–14 November 1992, Sondrio, Italy. *Contact:* Assessorato alla cultura comune di Sondrio, Villa Quadrio, Via IV Novembre, 23100 Sondrio, Italy. Tel: 0342 213 305. Fax: 0342 513 001.

Sustainable Protection of Eastern European Landscapes. 10–11 November 1992, Utrecht, Netherlands. *Contact:* Department of Environmental Science, University of Utrecht, Postbus 80115, NL-3508 TC, Utrecht. Fax: 305 40604.

III International Congress on Ethnobiology – Culture and Nature. 10–14 November 1992, Mexico City, Mexico. *Contact:* III International Congress on Ethnobiology, Apartado postal

21–585, Coyoacan 04000, D. F. Mexico. Tel: 525 550 5057. Fax: 525 548 8207.

International Wetlands Symposium with special reference to Keoladeo National Park, 12–14 November 1992, Keoladeo, India. *Contact:* Harsh Vardhan, Tourism and Wildlife Society of India, C-158A, Dayanand Marg, Tuak Nagar, Jaipur 302004, India.

Waterfowl and Wetland Conservation in the 1990s. A Global Perspective. 12–19 November 1992, Florida, USA. *Contact:* XXXV IWRB Executive Board Meeting, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BX, UK.

Third International Conference: The Effects of Oil on Wildlife. 27–29 January 1993, New Orleans, USA. *Contact:* Eileen Muller or Joyce Ponsell, Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research Inc., 110 Possum Hollow Road, Newark, DE 19711, USA.

13th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation. 23–27 February 1993, Jekyll Island, Georgia, USA. *Contact:* Sally Murphy, 1993 Sea Turtle Symposium Coordinator, SC Wildlife and Marine Resources Department, PO Box 12559, Charleston, South Carolina 29412, USA. Tel: 803 795 6350. Fax: 803 762 5007.

The Future of Zoos. Arks or Distractions? 27–28 March 1993, Oxford, UK. *Contact:* Biology Course Secretary, Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA.

Symposium/Workshop on the Hydrological and Biological Functions and Importance of Mountain Cloud Forests. 4–8

April 1993. *Contact:* Dr Lawrence S. Hamilton, EAPI, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96848, USA.

Tropical Rain Forest Research Current Issues. 9–17 April 1993, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. *Contact:* Rainforest Conference Organizer, Registrar's Office, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Bandar Seri Begawan 3186, Brunei Darussalam. Tel: 673 2 427001. Fax: 673 2 427 003.

Conference on Reintroduction Biology of Australasian Fauna. 19–21 April 1993, Victoria, Australia. *Contact:* Dr Melody Serena, Healesville Sanctuary, PO Box 248, Healesville, Victoria 3777, Australia. Tel: 059 62 4022. Fax: 059 62 2139.

Whales and Dolphins: Ecology and Behaviour. 7–9 May 1993, Oxford, UK. *Contact:* Biology Course Secretary, Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA.

5th International Conference on the Conservation and Management of Lakes. 17–21 May 1993, Stresa, Italy. *Contact:* R. M. Società di Congressi s.r.l., Via Ciro Menotti II, 20129 Milano, Italy.

IUGB XXI Congress: Forests and Wildlife ... Towards the 21st Century. 15–20 August 1993, Nova Scotia, Canada. *Contact:* I. Thompson, Forestry Canada, Box 6028, St Johns, Newfoundland, Canada, A1C 5X8.

The Editor welcomes contributions to Briefly. Please send announcements 8 weeks before the first day of the month of publication.