

Plan for the Galapagos

A master plan for the Galapagos Islands National Park, which covers 88 per cent of the islands, including all the smaller ones, makes two main proposals: that the present park boundaries, drawn in 1969, and enclosing 690,000 hectares, should be 'staunchly defended', and that a marine zone two miles wide should be included – a further 430,000 hectares. The plan has been accepted by the Ecuadorean Government as the basis for future policy. Tourism and scientific research are recognised in the plan to be predominant interests of the Galapagos, and management aims are defined as being to preserve the ecosystems by protecting endangered species, and controlling or eliminating the introduced goats, pigs, dogs, etc., which have done such a vast amount of damage, especially to the vegetation and the tortoises.

For management purposes the plan divides the park into five zones: primitive-scientific (untouched by the feral animals) which must be strictly protected; primitive (the largest zone) which must be protected to act as buffer zones; extensive-use zones, open to visitors whose numbers must be controlled, where interference should be kept to a minimum; intensive-use zones, capable of withstanding heavier use by visitors, but where deterioration must be guarded against; and special-use zones around the settlements, which should still be available to settlers (for firewood, water, etc.) by permit. With extra park guards, stationed on small boats and the use of trained guides for all tourist parties, the plan envisages the possibility of up to 12,000 visitors a year, at least 90 per cent of them living on ships.

Scientific research will continue to be managed by the Charles Darwin Research Station with the guidance of the National Parks Committee – the two bodies are already collaborating in an environmental education programme, both in the islands and on the mainland. The Government will also promote research aimed at harmonising the interests of the local people and wildlife conservation, for it is often forgotten that 4000 people live and work in the islands.

News from Ecuador

Fernando Ortiz-Crespo, FPS Consultant in Ecuador, tells us that a natural history society, the Sociedad 'Francisco Campos' de Amigos de la Naturaleza, founded in 1974, has 100 members and 'is the largest and most active amateur organisation of its kind in Ecuador', producing educational exhibits and running publicity campaigns. Two members have produced a check-list of Ecuador's birds, the first for 50 years. The address is Casilla 471, Quito. For Spanish speakers Juan Black, formerly of the National Park Service, has produced *Galapagos, Archipiélago del Ecuador*, aided by WWF, IUCN and the Darwin Foundation, an account of the islands' natural history and conservation, very well illustrated in both colour and black-and-white. Copies of this have gone to school libraries throughout Ecuador.

Walrus Hunting

Recommendations that the moratorium on the taking of Pacific walrus should be lifted and the management of the animal returned to the State of Alaska under a joint Federal/State management programme are the result of the hearing mentioned in the last *Oryx*, page 132. The recommendation would allow 3000 a year to be taken.



TWO GALAPAGOS ENDEMICS. The remarkably tame Galapagos hawk *Buteo galapagoensis* is safe on the uninhabited islands. Man is its worst enemy because it takes the occasional chicken. The giant tortoise is one of the eleven surviving races of *Testudo elephantopus* from which the islands take their name – *galapago* is Spanish for tortoise. *Tjitte De Vries*