

# Sir Julian Huxley FRS

Doyen of British conservationists, Sir Julian Huxley FRS, who died on February 15, had been a Vice President of the Fauna Preservation Society since 1962, and an ordinary member since 1931. He had a lifelong interest in conserving the wildlife of Africa, and travelled widely there. Perhaps his greatest contribution was to act as midwife to the infant International Union for the Protection of Nature (now IUCN), while he was Director-General of Unesco in the late 40s. He played a similar part for the pioneeringly successful Nature Conservancy in Britain, which was born out of the report of the Wild Life Conservation Special Committee, of which he was Chairman, in 1947.

It was, however, as a naturalist and observer of wildlife that Julian Huxley achieved his highest peaks. His pioneer field studies of the behaviour of the great crested grebe and the redshank before the First World War founded a whole new branch of science. Most of all, he just enjoyed watching wildlife, whether it was birds in his Hampstead garden or zebras on the Serengeti plains. His active mind threw itself into his watching with an enthusiasm that brought fresh insights and heightened enjoyment for his companions. A day in the field in his company was a liberal education in itself.

R.F.

## Endangered Species Trade in Britain

Further news of Britain's pioneer effort in controlling the trade in endangered species is now available in the shape of the ninth annual report of the Advisory Committee on the Animals (Restriction of Importation) Act 1964. During 1973 responsibility for the committee passed from the Department of Education and Science to that of the Environment. That the mechanism of control is working in the way intended is shown by the following comment:

The number of applications for the import of chimpanzees continued to rise in 1973. . . . the Committee has kept under constant review the need for importation of chimpanzees from the wild, bearing in mind reports from various sources that sufficient chimpanzees are now bred in captivity to meet the genuine needs for this species in this country. The Committee is still unable to conclude that all further importation from the wild should be suspended, but each application for importation is very closely scrutinised to determine whether it should be allowed, or whether the applicant should be advised to seek captive-born animals and if necessary wait until such are available. In any case, the Committee needs to be satisfied that every effort has been made to meet approved requirements from captive-born sources. The Committee is particularly concerned . . . at the number of applications for chimpanzees for research purposes. It will continue to scrutinise such applications very closely before recommending the issue of licences.

The Committee also regrets that the Medical Research Council continues to fail to grapple with the general problem of primates for research. The Council has so far come to no conclusions on the important study of the techniques of breeding animals for research, made on its behalf, but not yet even approved for publication.

Total numbers of animals imported into the UK in 1973 were: 3 marsupials, 11,647 primates (42 great apes), 4 rhinoceroses, 13 tapirs, 23 wild members of the cat family, 748 iguanid lizards and 114,223 tortoises and terrapins. Both Old World monkeys and land tortoises showed a welcome fall from the 1972 figures, respectively from 11,557 to 9,960 and from 207,675 to 67,605.