

# Briefly...

## International

### World Heritage Update

Holy See (Vatican City), Belize and Zimbabwe have joined The World Heritage Convention, bringing the total membership to 69 countries. The World Heritage Committee meeting in Paris in December 1982 approved the inclusion of the following natural areas in the World Heritage List: Tassili n'Ajjer (Algeria); Western Tasmania Wilderness National Parks and Lord Howe Island Group (Australia); Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras); Tai National Park (Ivory Coast); Aldabra Atoll (Republic of Seychelles); and Selous Game Reserve (Tanzania). *IUCN Bulletin*, 14, 1-2-3

### Three more for CITES

Thailand, the People's Republic of the Congo, and St Lucia have become Parties to CITES, bringing the total number of Party states to 81. Thailand entered reservations with respect to *Crocodylus siamensis*, *C. porosus*, and *Varanus bengalensis* listed on Appendix 1, and *V. salvator*, *Python molurus bivittatus*, and *P. reticularatus* listed on Appendix II. *Traffic Bulletin*, IV, 6

### Austria accedes to Ramsar

Austria has joined the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), bringing the total number of Parties to 34. *IUCN Bulletin*, 14, 1-2-3

### Finland joins IWC

Finland became the 39th member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on 23 February. Finland will begin active membership during the annual meeting in Brighton, UK, this July and is expected to support conservationist measures. *IWC Commissioners Briefing*, No 6

### Sanctions against whaling nations

The US Government is withholding 100,000 metric tonnes from Japan's fish quota in the US 200-mile zone for the July–September period, because of Japan's objection to the IWC decision to phase-out commercial whaling. If Japan does not withdraw its objection before

mid-August, it will lose the 100,000 tonnes, valued at more than \$35 million. An American seafood restaurant chain, *Long John Silver's Seafood Shoppes* has cancelled contracts worth \$5 million with the Frionor Company of Norway because of Norway's objection to the IWC decision.

*IWC Commissioners Briefing*, No 6

### Conservationists and family planners unite

In January 1983 the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) established official collaboration with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The agreement arose from a resolution of the 15th Session of the IUCN General Assembly in New Zealand in October 1981 which recognised 'that the conservation of the environment, wise use of natural resources and the stabilisation of human population are issues that are fundamentally inter-related and that acceptance of this is crucial to the achievement of these objectives.'

### New estimate of 30 million arthropods

As many as 30 million arthropod species (insects, spiders, crustaceans and their relatives) may exist in the world according to T.L. Erwin and his colleagues of Washington's Smithsonian Institute. Previous estimates have been put conservatively at 2–3 million of which 1.3 arthropod species have been described so far. The new estimates arise from findings made while collecting beetles in the forests of Panama, Brazil and Peru: non-persistent insecticidal smoke used to collect from the tree canopies yielded numbers of species far in excess of expectations.

*New Scientist*, 97, 1346

### Synthetic human musk may help musk deer

Dr Dodd, a professor of chemistry, has succeeded in synthetically manufacturing 'human' musk which is found in human glands, especially the ampits. Two major perfume companies will launch human musk products this year which it is hoped will consequently reduce the killing of musk deer and the illegal trade in musk for perfume.

*Traffic Bulletin*, IV, 6

### Biosphere Reserves Congress

The First International Congress on Biosphere Reserves will be held in Minsk, Byelorussia, USSR, 26 September–2 October 1983. Information: Dr Bernd von Droste, Division of Ecological Sciences, UNESCO, Rue Miollis 1, 75015 Paris, France.

### World Wilderness Congress

The 3rd World Wilderness Congress will take place on 8–15 October 1983 in Scotland. Details: The Park, Forres, Scotland IV36 0T2, UK.

### Europe and North Africa

#### Golden eagles possibly poisoned

One of England's only two pairs of golden eagles *Aquila chrysaetos* is missing, feared dead. Mr Anthony Warburton of the Eskmeals Nature Reserve, at Ravenglas in Cumbria, believes the birds died from eating poisoned sheep carcasses set as bait for foxes. *The Times*, 2 April 1983

#### Redshank and snipe numbers low in UK

Breeding populations of redshank and snipe in the UK are much smaller than had been believed, according to a 1982 British Trust for Ornithology/RSPB survey. Only 2096 pairs of snipe (33 per cent on the washlands of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk) and 2414 pairs of redshank (mainly in south coast counties and East Anglia) were recorded. The survey results will be used in negotiations with landowners to help safeguard the important remaining sites.

*BTO News*, March 1982

#### Sea-bird strandings

A massive stranding of sea-birds occurred on the east coast of Britain in February this year: 19,214 bodies of razor-bills, puffins, guillemots, little auks and kittiwakes were reported. The cause of the disaster is believed to be a combination of food shortage and stormy weather.

*BTO News*, March 1983

#### New UK reserve

Rushbeds Wood, an SSSI and part of the ancient Bernwood Forest, has been

## Briefly...

bought by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust. Its 107 acres of deciduous woodland are a nationally important butterfly habitat—33 species live there.

### Call for planning controls on farming

The National Federation of Women's Institutes in the UK, which has 360,000 members, is calling for the imposition of planning controls on farming, a measure long demanded by conservationists.

*The Times*, 26 February 1983

### Fragmented field may halt motorway

Opponents of the £240 million M40 motorway extension in the UK are selling a 2.3-acre paddock on the proposed route—split into 2500 plots at £2 each—to frustrate compulsory purchase by the Government. This scheme is an attempt to divert the route from Otmoor where 41 of the 63 British butterfly species are to be found.

*Daily Telegraph*, 28 April 1983

### Grassland on the move

Twenty acres of limestone grassland on Thrislington Plantation in County Durham, UK, where several rare plants grow, are being transplanted by a quarrying company, Steetley Refractories Ltd, in conjunction with the NCC and the Durham Trust for Nature Conservation. The quarry needed to be extended because dolomite reserves were running out and 550 jobs were at risk. A public enquiry ruled that the most important part of the site, which is an SSSI, should be left intact and 20 acres transplanted to a new reserve half a mile away to allow quarrying.

*Natural World*, Spring 1983

### New reserve for France

The François le Bail Nature Reserve on the Morbihan Atlantic coast of France covers 42 hectares and is important for its flora and sea-bird colonies.

*Council of Europe Newsletter*, No 83-2

### Frog and snail imports to Switzerland

In 1981 Switzerland imported 172,720 kg of frogs (estimated as equivalent to 6,168,571 individuals) and 173,227 kg

*Briefly*

of snails for human consumption.  
*Tier*, April 1983

### Coffins and forests

The largest coffin manufacturer in Switzerland has announced a switch from a rare tropical hardwood, *abachi*, from West Africa, to local poplar as a contribution to WWF/IUCN's Tropical Forest Campaign. The Swiss Timber Association has also pledged to support the campaign's call to switch from endangered tropical hardwoods to local species.

*IUCN*, February 1983

### Wolves in Italy

The wolf, down to fewer than 200 individuals in Italy and threatened with extinction there, has been given all-the-year-round protection. Farmers now receive compensation for losses of grazing animals attributed to wolves.

*Tier*, February 1983

### Ten million birds netted in Cyprus

In the first ten months of 1982 ten million migratory birds were netted, shot or trapped by liming in Cyprus. The birds are pickled and sold as *ambellopoullia*, an expensive restaurant delicacy.

*The Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly*, 31, 4

### Turkish dolphin-hunt halted

The Turkish dolphin-hunt in the Black Sea was suspended by the Government for one year from 1 April 1983 until scientific investigations of the declining dolphin populations have been carried out. Over the past seven years, 6000 dolphins have been killed each year by Turkish fishermen (see *Oryx XIV*, page 163).

Turkish Association for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

### Africa

#### Two forms of white rhino for two million years

The white rhinoceros is believed to have diverged into two distinct forms, the northern and southern, two million years ago, according to the results of studies of genetic differences by the Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species in California. This discovery makes the conservation of the northern



These Arabian tahr (female and sub-adult male) are part of a small breeding group in the Breeding Centre for Endangered Species that His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has founded at Bait al Barakah (*J.H. Usher Smith*).

form, which is teetering on the brink of extinction, even more important.

### New national park for Kenya

The Kakamega forest in western Kenya, part of which is a nature reserve and the rest exploited for timber and used for cattle grazing, is to be gazetted as a national park.

*Swara*, 5, 6

### Lake Malawi—a national park

The Malawi Government has declared the southern part of Lake Malawi a national park. The lake's 500–600 endemic fish species (more than in any other lake in the world) are threatened by pollution, overfishing, habitat destruction and introduction of exotic fish species.

*WWF News*, No. 22

### Conservation in Swaziland

A comprehensive environmental education project run by the Swaziland National Trust Commission will train nature reserve personnel, customs officials, agricultural extensive officers, forestry officers and teachers, at Milwane Nature Reserve. Mobile units will also promote self-help conservation projects such as soil-erosion control and eradication of alien plants.

*WWF News*, No. 22

### New parks for South Africa

In South Africa new national parks have been approved: West Coast at Langebaan Lagoon, Cape Province and Vaalbos, near Berkeley West in the Kalahari Sand Belt.

*IUCN*

# Briefly...

## Aye-aye breeding in the wild

A baby aye-aye *Daubentonia madagascariensis*, the first to be seen in the wild for more than a decade, has been sighted in the nature reserve on the island of Nosy Mangabé off the north-east coast of Madagascar. The aye-aye was rediscovered on the mainland in 1956, having been believed to be extinct since 1933 and, because they were threatened by forest felling and hunting, nine of these very rare lemurs were transferred to the island reserve in 1965. *WWF News*, No. 22

## Conservation progress in Madagascar

Important agreements regarding wildlife conservation in Madagascar were signed at a meeting organised by Dr Lee Durrell of the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust in February. Conservationists from Austria, England, France, Madagascar, Switzerland and the USA (including fIPS representative, Robert Burton) agreed on a document describing how scientific research should be designed to promote wildlife conservation in Madagascar. Gerald Durrell, Director of Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, also signed an agreement with the Malagasy Government which allows the Trust to undertake joint breeding programmes with the zoo in Antananarivo for endangered Malagasy animals. Scholarships are to be awarded to two Malagasy students for a training programme at the Trust. *Jersey Evening Post*, 9 February 1983

## Correction

In *Oryx*, January 1983, we reported that 150–200 giant sable *Hippotragus niger* were believed to survive in Angola. In fact Dr Richard Estes saw 45 giant sable, which may represent half of the total population of the 630 sq km Kangandala National Park, during a five-day visit in July 1982.

## Asia (excluding Indo-Malaya)

### Plant conservation in China

Since the 1980 compilation of a list of rare, threatened and endangered plant species, China has formulated regulations for the conservation of Natural Plant Resources. The regulations afford three ranks of protection. The first will include endangered species of inter-

national interest, e.g. *Cathaya argyrophylla*, false redwood *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* and *Camellia chrysanthera*: the second, endangered species of scientific and economic importance, e.g. *Cycas panzhihuaensis*, *Coptis omeiensis* and ginseng *Panax ginseng*; and the third, vulnerable or rare species of scientific and economic value. The Department of Environmental Protection will have overall responsibility for conservation of plant species and their habitats. *Threatened Plants Committee Newsletter*, November 1982

## Nets modified to save porpoises

Japan's salmon fishermen claim to be able to halve the incidental catch of Dall porpoises by entwining air-filled tubes in their gill nets. The method, which will hopefully be used by the whole salmon fleet, is based on the porpoises' ability to detect air by means of sonar. *Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly*, 31, 4

## Indo-Malaya

### Cane turtle in Kerala

A cane turtle *Heosemys silvatica* collected in Kerala in October 1982 has laid two eggs, the first in captivity for this recently rediscovered species (see page 130 in this *Oryx*).

*Hamadryad: Newsletter of the Madras Snake Park Trust*, 8, 1

### Captive-bred pythons released

Four, two-and-a-half-year-old captive-bred Indian pythons *Python molurus* were released into the wild last November in Mudumalai Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, SW India. This is the first time in India, and possibly in the world, that an endangered species of snake has been captive-bred and released.

*Hamadryad: Newsletter of the Madras Snake Park Trust*, 8, 1

### Lizard skins in Bangladesh

More than two million pieces of lizard skin, valued at approximately US\$3.27 million, have been declared since the Bangladesh Government's decree last September ordering that all lizard skins were to become government property and should be declared to the Chief Conservator of Forests. Any person contravening the Order is liable to im-

prisonment of up to two years, a fine, or both. In 1978–79, before becoming a Party to CITES, Bangladesh exported 1,890,559 skins.

*Traffic Bulletin*, IV, 6

## New parks for Indonesia

New national parks, totalling 2,250,377 hectares, have been established in Indonesia: Kerinci Seblat in West Sumatra (1,484,650 ha); Barisan Selatan in Bengkulu and Lampung (365,000 ha); Bromo Tengger-Semeru in East Java (58,000 ha); Meru Betiri in East Java (50,000 ha); Bali Barat on the island of Bali (77,727 ha); Tanjung Puting in Central Kalimantan (355,000 ha); Kutai in East Kalimantan (200,000 ha); Lore Lindu in Central Sulawesi (231,000 ha); Dumoga Bone in North Sulawesi (300,000 ha); and Manuella Wai/Nua/Wai Mual in Maluku (189,000 ha).

## North America

### Dolphins killed by tuna fleet

Nearly 23,000 dolphins were killed by the American tuna fleet in 1982. This incidental catch is the highest since 1977 and exceeds the annual quota of 20,500 laid down by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Government is powerless to prosecute offending skippers because data collected by federal observers are not allowed as evidence. In addition a US Court of Appeals has ruled that observers have no right to be aboard tuna ships.

*The Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly*, 31, 4

### New park for Canada

The Valhalla Mountain Range, on the western edge of the Kootenays in British Columbia, Canada, is to be a 60,000-ha shoreline-to-mountain-peak wilderness provincial park.

*Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas Members Newsletter* No. 22

### Woodland caribou endangered

The only population of woodland caribou *Rangifer tarandus caribou* that still regularly occurs in the USA has been declared endangered. This population, known as the Selkirk Mountain herd, which ranges in north-eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and southern Brit-

*Oryx* Vol 17 No 3

# Briefly...

ish Columbia (Canada), now numbers only 13–20. Primary threats to this isolated population are illegal hunting, habitat loss, collisions with motor vehicles and inbreeding.  
*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, January 1983

## Tortoise gets help

The Bolson tortoise *Gopherus flavo-marginatus*, the largest tortoise in North America, is now confined to the Bolson de Mapimi in the Chihuahuan Desert in north-east Mexico. Hunted for its meat and eggs it is also having difficulty surviving in the badly overgrazed ecosystem—a few dry years would be disastrous for hatchlings. Ralston Purina, a pet food manufacturer is creating a special food to help hatchlings survive, and a WWF–US project is attempting to re-introduce the tortoise to its former range on suitably protected land.  
*Focus WWF–US*, 5, 1

## Eagle electrocutions down

The number of eagles electrocuted annually by power lines has decreased by about 90 per cent during the last decade in the USA. The eagle protection programme launched in 1972 by conservationists, the US Bureau of Land Management and the Edison Electric Institute has spent \$500,000 modifying power poles.  
*Outdoor News Bulletin*, 36, 23

## Wildlife Refuge System under attack

Matagorda Island, part of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, which is the only wintering ground for whooping cranes, has been signed over to the state of Texas by the US Interior Secretary. The agreement violates the law which allows only the Department of the Interior to own and manage National Wildlife Refuge System lands. The Sierra Club, concerned about the implications for other national wildlife refuges, is taking the case to court.  
*Grus Americana*, 22, 2

## Alligator-hunt in Florida

Commercial hunting may seriously jeopardise the survival of Florida's alligators, according to Dr Archie Carr of the University of Florida. Since 1978, 1800 alligators have been killed yearly under the Nuisance Alligator Control

*Briefly*

Program directed by Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission. Then the Commission arranged hunts in 1981 and 1982, when 350 and 379 alligators were killed for commercial gain. Dr Carr believes the hunt will increase the demand for alligator products and thus cause an increase in illegal poaching.  
*The Florida Naturalist*, 56, 1

## Wetlands programme

The Nature Conservancy and the Richard King Mellon Foundation have launched a \$50 million programme to conserve wetlands. The initial emphasis will be on acquiring 17,000 acres of wetlands along the Escambia River in Florida.  
*Outdoor News Bulletin*, 11 February 1983

## Central America

### Caribbean mangroves to be protected

A consortium of conservationists, led by the US Sierra Club and Venezuela's Foundation for the Defence of Nature, has mounted a campaign to protect mangrove wetlands on the coast of Venezuela and Trinidad. Oil spills in the Caribbean (100 million barrels per year), dredging, port development, sedimentation and siltation from land sources are all contributing to the destruction of coral reefs and mangrove ecosystems. The United Nations Environment Programme, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Venezuelan Ministry of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources are funding the production of guidelines for protection and management of mangroves and the setting aside of protected zones.  
*International Report*, Sierra Club, 11, 4–5

## South America

### Eleven endangered turtles

A review of South American freshwater turtles and terrapins by Anders Rhodin and Russell Mittermeier indicates that there are at least 28 species of which 11 are endangered or extremely rare. Some species are known from only a few specimens and others, like the extremely rare Dahl's toad-headed turtle *Phrynops dahl* from the Sincelejo region of Colombia, may be on the

verge of extinction due to severe habitat destruction.

*Hamadryad: Newsletter of the Madras Snake Park Trust*, 8, 1

## Vicuña in Peru

Poaching of the vicuña populations of the Pampa Galeras in Peru has increased considerably according to a report by Dr Hartmut Jungius of IUCN. Many of the Ministry of Agriculture game wardens familiar with the area have been disarmed and are no longer allowed to patrol. The police who have replaced them do not carry out long patrols and most of the land is thus unsupervised. As a result of the report, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh (the President of WWF (International) and Vice-President of IUCN) has written to President Belaunde of Peru.  
*Traffic Bulletin*, IV, 6

## Peruvian reserve enlarged

The National Reserve of Pacaya Samiria in Peruvian Amazonia has been nearly doubled in size, from 1,387,500 ha to 2,080,000 ha, in order to include important parts of the Pacaya and Samiria watersheds.  
*IUCN Bulletin*, 14, 1–2–3

## Brazilian disaster

President Figueiredo of Brazil has given the go-ahead for a road through Araguaia National Park in Brazil, countering regulations prohibiting construction of any kind inside national parks or reserves. Pleas by Maria Tereza Padua, head of the Department of National Parks and a Paul Getty prize-winner, for an alternative road north of the park were turned down on the grounds that it would increase transport costs. The road will disrupt the natural flooding cycle of the park and open it up to hunters and settlers. The decision has caused Maria Tereza Padua to resign; her Department has been fighting continuously against inroads into the park system. Other projected threats to parks include: a road through Pakas–Novas National Park; forest clearance at Rio Trombetas Reserve; and a dam in the Aparados da Serra National Park.  
*Istoe*, 22 December 1982  
*Veja*, 22 December 1982

## Fish deaths in Brazil

At the beginning of 1983 150 tons of

# Briefly...

fishes were poisoned in the Coxim River in the Ecological Reserve of the Pantanal area, Mato Grosso do Sul state, Brazil. The cause—forty 20-litre tanks of Alafen, a pesticide of which the residues remain active for 40 years, had been emptied into the river. The farmer responsible was fined the equivalent of approximately US \$8000.  
*Istoe*, 12 January 1983

## Oceania

### Norfolk Island parakeet

Recommendations to captive-breed the endangered Norfolk island parakeet *Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae cookii* have been approved by the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly. Numbers in the wild are critically low, perhaps no more than 20.

*Threatened Species—Conservation Alert*, March 1983

### Forest birds of Guam in critical danger

Vast areas of forest on Guam are now devoid of all bird life. Ten of the island's 12 native forest birds are threatened or endangered and the remaining two are potentially so. The causes for the recent decline, at present being investigated by the Guam Aquatic and Wildlife Reserves Division, are unknown but possibilities include: diseases spread by introduced birds or mosquitoes; predation by introduced rats, feral cats, pigs, dogs, monitor lizards and brown tree snakes *Boiga irregularis*. Some good habitat has been lost but plenty is left that is completely devoid of bird life.

*Endangered Species Technical Bulletin*, January 1983

### Goats air-lifted out of park

Feral goats are being air-lifted out of Haleakala National Park in Hawaii to be sold for meat as part of an experimental programme to rid the park of exotic animals. Feral goats and pigs are damaging rare Hawaiian plants, destroying habitat of endangered birds and causing soil erosion.

*National Parks*, January/February 1983

## Australasia/Antarctica

### Whale rescue team in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government's budgetary provisions for whale rescues has en-

abled volunteers and park officers to be trained in whale rescue procedure; equipment is available to be rushed to any whale strandings. Tasmania received international praise with the mass rescue of pilot whales beached near the port of Strahan.

*IUCN Bulletin*, 14, 1–2–3

### Arboretum wins award

The Burrendong Arboretum in New South Wales, Australia, was awarded the International Dendrology Society's 1982 Arboretum Award for Merit. The arboretum grows 2000 Australian species, some rare and endangered; one of the aims is to restock some parts of Australia with native plants.

*Australian Conservation Foundation Newsletter*, 15, 1

### Swamp turtle—slow progress

The Western Australian swamp turtle *Pseudemydura umbrina*, with a total population of below 100, has failed to make significant population gains despite close monitoring and protection. Captive-breeding is slow due to low fecundity and delayed maturation and one of the two wild populations is continuing to decline.

*Hamadryad: Newsletter of the Madras Snake Park Trust*, 8, 1

### New Australian reserves

The Australian Government has declared two national nature reserves in the Coral Sea Island Territory north-east of the Australian mainland: Coringa-Herald (8980 sq km) and Lihou Reef (8420 sq km) consist of vegetated islets, sandy coves and a horseshoe-shaped reef system.

*Australian Conservation Foundation*, 14, 11

### No conservation money for Falklands

Lord Shackleton's report to the UK Government on the Falklands pleaded for development to be compatible with conservation (*Oryx* XVII, page 59). Despite this recommendation the UK Government's £31 million development aid programme includes no money earmarked for conservation.

*Natural World*, Spring 1983

### Plan to flatten islands for airstrip

The French Government plans to level

five islands (Cuvier, Lion, Pollux, Zeus and Buffon) in Adelia Land, Antarctica, to construct a landing strip. The islands are a breeding area for 1600 pairs of Adelie penguins, six pairs of skuas, 90 pairs of Cape pigeons, 50 pairs of snow petrels and 85 pairs of Wilson's storm petrels. Ironically the project has been justified by suggesting that ski-equipped aircraft could be used for biological studies along the coast, including ecological studies on penguins and seals.

*Eco*, XXII, 1

### Requests for information

Anyone working on endangered species who would like to request information in the new section of Briefly is invited to write to The Editor.

### Philippines—bird records wanted

Will any birdwatchers who have visited the Philippines in the last five years please send their records to T.H. Fisher, c/o Jadine Nell Corporation, 325 Buendia Avenue, Makati, Manila, Philippines, who is collating information to highlight the Philippines' threatened bird species.

## People

Mr Fred Elliott of Wiveliscombe, Somerset, UK, is the fourth winner of *Country Life's* Annual Farming and Wildlife Award. On his 200-ha farm Mr Elliott has preserved existing trees and shrubs and planted more, managed hedgerows for the benefit of wildlife and set aside buildings for owls and bats.

Pierre Portas, IUCN/WWF Project Manager for Africa and Madagascar, has been elected to the rank of Chevalier, of Mauritania's National Order of Merit, in recognition of IUCN/WWF's role in promoting conservation in Mauritania, particularly with regard to the establishment of the Banc d'Arguin National Park.

*IUCN Bulletin*, 14, 1–2–3

Mr William Wilkinson is the new Chairman of UK's NCC. He replaces Sir Ralph Verney, whose term ended in April. Conservationists regret that Sir Ralph's term of office was not renewed after his determined stand on the notification of Sedgemoor as an SSSI, but welcome the fact that Mr Wilkinson is an active conservationist with considerable financial expertise.

*Oryx* Vol 17 No 3