

it is probably booked by evolution for non-survival and we must not interfere,” would be even more damaging to the image of the wildlife conservationist than for him to tackle an occasional problem which is not ecologically sound.

We are all agreed that the unnatural “management” of populations which so often goes on in Africa’s National Parks is undesirable. It would no doubt be much better if the ungulates, for example, were free to wander all over Africa, but of course they aren’t, and so we have to accept the managed and probably, in future, largely enclosed animal communities as second best. They are a good deal better than nothing. However, he makes a good point that until man knows a great deal more than he does now, he should not be so eager to play God, not so precipitate in his control measures, nor so certain that with his half-knowledge he can produce “all the answers”.

Postscript : One useful result of the flamingo rescue operations, reported in *Africana* for December, 1964, is the recovery of a flamingo, ringed at Magadi, at Sodere, on the Awash River in Ethiopia. During the rescue operations the opportunity had been taken to ring 8,000 young birds, but recoveries had been disappointing until this one was reported, showing that East African flamingos move up the Rift into Ethiopia.—*Editor.*

GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST NATURE

MUCH of mankind “has become involved in a kind of free-for-all guerilla warfare against nature, waged by burning and other forms of destruction familiar in such warfare”, said Max Nicholson, Director General of the Nature Conservancy, in his Horace Albright Conservation Lecture in California last year. In Latin America, for instance, the “scorched earth” methods which the Russians used against the Germans during the war are now being used by the inhabitants themselves against their own future interests in their own country. Forests of good timber are reduced to ashes, sources of water flow destroyed, and vast tonnages of soil shifted from the upland slopes to block navigable rivers, leaving spreading scars of erosion. “Even important international organisations for technical and economic aid are tacitly associated with these destructive practices.”

The blame for the continuance of this lamentable state of affairs he places largely on the ecologists. If they had put their house in order first they would now be able to demonstrate that ecology and conservation are as essential to the developers of natural resources as the agricultural sciences are to agriculture and the physical sciences to industry and defence. Another reason he suggests for the low status and relative ineffectiveness of the conservation movement is that conservationists have placed too much stress on a negative and defensive appeal, exploiting feelings of guilt at the extinction of species, the destruction of trees, the creation of dustbowls, erosion and so forth, instead of emphasising the positive and scientific aspects of conservation. They have also failed both to demonstrate the important educational potential and content of conservation, and to develop the professional standards necessary for a further advance on a wide front. The answers to many of these shortcomings he sees in the full development of the International Biological Programme, described on page 25.