

The Fauna Preservation Society

EDITORIAL NOTES

Oil Pollution of the Sea.—Members will be pleased that the British Government is calling an international conference to consider means of dealing with oil pollution. This does not mean that the task of the Co-ordinating Advisory Committee is done. Its work, which consists mostly in spreading information and in propaganda both at home and abroad, is still vitally important and must go on. It is for this reason that the Committee's pamphlet is included in this issue of *Oryx*.

International Union for the Protection of Nature.—The fourth general assembly of I.U.P.N. will be held at Copenhagen, Denmark, from 25th August to 3rd September, 1954.

The subjects to be dealt with are :—

- (a) The effect of modern insecticides on mammals, birds, and insects.
- (b) Publicity for nature protection.
- (c) Species of Arctic wild life threatened with extinction.

Attendance at the assembly meetings proper is restricted to delegates ; but technical discussions will be held simultaneously to which any person interested in nature protection is cordially invited. All attending the conference may also take part in the very interesting trips which will be held during its last few days.

Further information may be had from the Secretary, Fauna Preservation Society.

India.—In October last the Executive Committee of the India Board for Wild Life met in the Kanha Sanctuary, more widely known as the Banja Valley Reserve. The Committee suggested the establishment of eighteen national parks in fifteen states. It recommended a Rs. 40 lakh scheme, £300,000, so that the following particularly important places should be established as national parks before the end of the Five Year Plan :—

Assam	Manas Sanctuary
	Kaziranga Sanctuary
Madhya Pradesh	Kanha Sanctuary
	Tarora Sanctuary
Madras	Mudumalai Sanctuary
Mysore	Bandipur Sanctuary
Rajasthan	Siraska area in Alwar District
Saurashtra	Gir Forest
Travancore-Cochin	Periyar Sanctuary
Uttar Pradesh	Rajaji Sanctuary
Vindhya Pradesh	White Tiger area

South-West Africa.—*African Wild Life* reports that the Kaokoveld game reserve is likely to be opened up for settlement. This reserve—the most important game region in South-West Africa—has an area of 25,000 square miles, bordered in the north by the Cunene River and stretching from the coast to Etosha Pan. The Kaokoveld has hitherto been considered too remote for profitable development, being without a harbour. It is now suggested that “invasion ports” should be established on the lines of those made for the invasion of France by the Allies.

As the Wild Life Protection Society of South Africa truly says, no place is any longer so remote or has shores so inhospitable as to be safe from exploitation.

Canada.—We hear from Mr. F. G. Bard, Director of the Saskatchewan Provincial Museum, that on 5th November, 1953, he saw and photographed three whooping cranes at Herbert, Saskatchewan. At the same time twenty-one birds had arrived at their winter refuge in Texas. On that date, therefore, there must have been at least twenty-four whooping cranes still in existence.

Mr. Bard is trying to persuade sportsmen to refrain from shooting any white bird; this would include the lesser snow goose and Ross's goose, both in need of protection.

U.S.A.—Mr. Fred M. Packard, Executive Secretary of the National Parks Association, writes that the State of New Jersey has just established a magnificent state park at Island Beach. The plan for developing this park is almost exactly the same as the Dutch plan for De Kennemerduinen national park, noted in the last issue of *Oryx*. The northern mile of the park will be devoted to recreation and there will be no roads except to this area.

New South Wales.—We read in the December *Bulletin for Rangers*, published by the Fauna Protection Panel, that a koala reserve was opened at Kuring-gai Chase in September, 1953. Though the public may visit the koalas in the reserve, its main purpose is to study the animals' breeding, diet, and ailments. Most of the koalas now in the reserve were found suffering from disease or disability in Kuring-gai Chase or elsewhere. A number had an eye complaint common among wild koalas. One, with a broken leg, had been the victim of a motorist; others had been scorched or starved in bush fires. All have received care and treatment and every koala in the reserve is now healthy.

It is hoped that the koalas will breed freely and their numbers

increase. If so, it may be possible to re-stock areas where koalas no longer exist.

The latest report of the panel tells of the increase of the duck-billed platypus, under strict protection. A survey into the distribution of the platypus is being undertaken to decide whether further steps are necessary to protect it.

Regarding the reports in English newspapers of the shooting of great numbers of kangaroos, the Chief Guardian of Fauna has written to explain the kangaroo problem in the Western Division. When a lease of, say two million acres expires, the holding is divided into twenty blocks of a hundred thousand acres each. Whereas a considerable kangaroo population may not have troubled the grazier with the enormous farm, it could be a great problem to the twenty new people.

For many years there has not been a long open season for shooting kangaroos and their numbers have increased enormously. An open season was therefore declared in 1953 and it continued until early 1954.

Western Australia.—In 1951 the International Union for the Protection of Nature considered that the banded ant-eater *Myrmecobius fasciatus* was an animal in special danger of extermination. It is therefore very pleasing to hear that when the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee of Western Australia were on inspection in October, 1953, they saw four of these little marsupials wild in the Dryanda forest reserve. They have been seen in other places also.

Seals of the Falkland Islands.—We have received from Dr. J. E. Hamilton, for many years Naturalist to the Government of the Falkland Islands, the following comments on the article by Mr. R. M. Laws, published in *Oryx*, Vol. 2, No. 2.

- (1) The estimate of 14,000 fur seal, for the four Falkland Island rookeries seen, must be received with great reserve in the absence of supporting counts.
- (2) The "Refugee" idea to explain the increasing elephant seal herd in the Falkland Islands does not seem to be supported by the fact that very many of our elephants are young immatures. The earlier examples of the young which I saw have had plenty of time to become grandparents and thus found a Falkland Islands herd. The psychology of these seals is such that they submit to extermination under persecution, but are not driven away from their chosen homes.

Regarding any estimate which might be made of the seals at

Beauchene Island, Dr. Hamilton says that, as far as he can discover, no one has been on the island since before 1914. He concludes by pointing out, very truly, that control of sealing must be conducted with continuous vigilance. Optimism may be disastrous.

Flamingos.—On page 140 of the last issue of *Oryx*, it was stated incorrectly that the species of flamingo breeding at Enbagai Crater in the Serengeti National Park, Tanganyika, was the greater flamingo. The bird is the lesser flamingo *Phoeniconais minor* (Geoffroy). The distribution of this flamingo is mainly eastern Africa, but it ranges to Cape Province and Madagascar and occurs in south-western Africa.*

The Society for the Protection of the Flamingo in the Bahamas, well known to all readers of *Oryx*, has arranged with the National Audubon Society, for Nassau to be included in the latter's series of screen tours. Three lectures with films are being given this spring in the interest of wild life protection, wise use of natural resources and education.

* REFERENCE

BANNERMAN, DAVID A. *The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa*. Vol. 1, p. 191. Oliver and Boyd, London, 1953.
