

# RURAL LANDSCAPE AS A HABITAT FOR FLORA AND FAUNA IN DENSELY POPULATED COUNTRIES

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## WORKING PAPER

by

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### I. *Introduction.*

- a. All over the world but especially in densely populated countries nature (including natural living communities in semi-natural or cultivated areas) is superseded by the influence of man (all reports).
- b. This influence has to be accepted as inevitable (Nicholson I, Gorter).
- c. For different reasons, however, we should endeavour to maintain nature's balance, qualitatively and quantitatively, as far as possible. Protection of nature is a factor deserving to be taken into account beside or even against other interests of human society (all reports implicitly).
- d. National and international action on behalf of nature protection is extremely urgent, considering the rapidly progressing impoverishment of nature (all reports).

### II. *Management of the landscape.*

- a. Reserves are indispensable, on one hand as an independent means towards nature protection (breeding haunts, flora habitats), on the other hand as an element in the landscape (Gorter, Vanden Berghen, Nicholson V).
- b. Reserves have a limited value only (Nicholson II, Gorter, Benthem).
- c. In extensive areas having a sound rural landscape, comprehensive management in accordance with the laws of nature should be aimed at (Nicholson II, Gorter, Benthem).
- d. In these areas natural elements should be preserved as much as possible (Gorter sub a, Benthem, Vanden Berghen).
- e. The problem of water supply, pollution of water and the conservation of natural water courses play an important part (Nicholson III).
- f. In many cases human influence intervenes to such a degree that conservation is inadequate. In these cases that same influence should be directed towards the creation of new landscapes which should be biologically and economically sound and efficient (Gorter sub b, Benthem, Nicholson IV).

- g. In areas previously deprived of their natural elements steps should be taken and stimulated for the reconstruction of the landscape (Benthem).
- h. In all rural or semi-urban areas a broad and direct policy should aim at the maintenance, the reconstruction or the creation of efficient and sound landscapes where indigenous flora and fauna will be able to subsist (Nicholson I, IV, VI a, Gorter, Benthem).
- i. If this policy is realistic and positive satisfactory results can be hoped for (Nicholson VI b).

### III. *Research.*

- a. Protection of nature must be based on research (Nicholson VI c).
- b. All measures on behalf of the landscape should be based on soil mapping and vegetation mapping. This mapping should be undertaken systematically (Vanden Berghen less positive, Benthem implicitly). Proper use of this data needs knowledge – still to be broadened – of the living conditions and dynamics of different forms of vegetation (Nicholson III).
- c. To achieve fauna conservation our still inadequate knowledge of the living conditions of animal species and their adaptability to new conditions urgently needs completion (Nicholson III).
- d. Research should be stimulated. Volunteers (students, private societies) should be employed (Nicholson III, V).
- e. Research should be coordinated. Research programmes should be worked out (Nicholson III).
- f. International exchange of information on research and research programmes is essential (Nicholson III, VI c).

### IV. *Influence of protection agencies.*

- a. Nature protection should be considered and action taken accordingly whenever developments affecting the landscape are attempted (Nicholson V, Gorter, Benthem implicitly).
- b. As different social interests are concerned in these matters, public agencies, in exerting their powers to guide these developments, should carefully weigh all the various factors, one of which is nature protection (Gorter implicitly).
- c. Even if this is not fully carried out, it is of the utmost importance that protection agencies should be consulted so as to be able to use all available means to prevent unjustifiable or even unnecessary damage (Nicholson IV, V).
- d. This can be attained either by special legislation or by arrangements between public or private protection agencies on one side and other public agencies or private concerns on the other side (Nicholson V).
- e. In the case of extensive works this consultation can lead up to the drafting by experts of landscape plans as a part of these works (Benthem).

- f. Nature protection should be promoted by specialised, authorized and sufficiently independent agencies (Nicholson V implicitly).
- g. International exchange of information on legislative and administrative devices in the field of nature protection would be useful (Nicholson V).

### V. *Education.*

- a. The aims of nature protection can be attained only if all aspects of their essential importance have been brought home to the people (Nicholson IV, V, Gorter, Benthem, Vanden Berghen).
- b. In this meeting special attention might be given to the need of teaching the principles of nature protection to future technicians (engineers, agronomists, etc.) who will take an important part in the planning and carrying out of large scale modifications of the landscape (Nicholson IV).
- c. The education of teachers and protection experts needs special care (Nicholson IV).

### VI. *International exchange of information.*

Means should be devised to stimulate international exchange of information on nature protection, preferably by establishing direct contact between persons and agencies concerned with the same problems in different countries (Nicholson VI f).