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A CONVENTION COMES OF AGE

A preview of the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (New Delhi, February 25 — March 8).

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**Polar Bear Agreement: a model
for more cooperation
in the Arctic?**

**IUCN's role
in preserving man's heritage**

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Special report on conservation in the Caribbean**

CITES COMES OF AGE

The trade in wildlife products and wild animals is big business. Last year alone one of the major trading nations, West Germany, imported wildlife goods to the value of roughly US \$50 million. That sum represents a traffic in items like ivory, whale oil, furs, hides, pet birds, zoo specimens and so on. Worldwide, the demand for wildlife goods threatens the supply (and hence the survival) of the animal and plant species that provide them.

The threat posed by the wildlife trade to rare and endangered species has long been recognised. As far back as 1911, a Swiss conservationist, Paul Sarasin, called for global restrictions on the import and export of bird feathers - they were much in vogue for hats at the time.

It was not until the 1960s that a consensus about the need for an international instrument to control the trade became significant. The idea had its origins in the conservation movement in general, and in IUCN in particular.

At the 1960 General Assembly in Warsaw governments were urged to restrict the import of rare animals; at a meeting of African wildlife authorities held in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1961, Dr Lee Talbot, now IUCN's director general, was the leading inspiration behind a recommendation calling for the establishment of a convention. And in Nairobi in 1963 the General Assembly passed a resolution introduced by Wolfgang Burhenne now chairman of IUCN's Commission on Environmental Law, Policy and Administration, calling for "an international convention on regulations of export, transit and import of rare or threatened wildlife species or their skins and trophies."

Drafts of what was to become the Washington Convention were circulated to governments in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And in March 1973 the Convention was signed by 21 nations. It came into force two years later after ten countries had ratified it.

Meanwhile there were stirrings in the trading community. Like the conservationists, traders have no desire to see species become endangered, but unlike some elements in the conservation movement, they did not want a convention that stopped the trade.

Ten years ago the International Fur Trade Federation made a Declaration for voluntary restraint on the trade. The traders said this showed they were serious about their support for conservation. And in return they asked for their legitimate trading rights to be recognised. But conservationists say the 1971 Declaration turned out to be a damp squib with things going on much as before. So they looked to the 1973 Washington Convention as "their" Convention which they could use to thwart the traders.

But things haven't quite turned out that way. CITES from its inception was never intended to prevent trade but to regulate it. CITES has matured rapidly in the intervening years, so that today on the eve of the New Delhi meet-

ing its profile is that of an autonomous intergovernmental body in the pocket of neither the conservationists or the traders.

Membership

Not that this always seemed the case. By the time of the first meeting of the Parties in 1976 in Berne, Switzerland, only a minority of "conservationist" countries were among the 33 countries that had ratified the Convention. Most preferred to stay on the sidelines to see how the treaty would work out.

They must have been impressed. Today the roll-call of government members has more than doubled to 67, making it by far the largest of all the conservation conventions. And among those members are virtually all the major trading countries. Nowadays for any country with an interest in the trade it's de rigueur to be a member.

The expanding membership has had a profound impact on the conduct of the trade. Traders can no longer get away with voluntary declarations. Their compliance is now demanded by international law. The choice was stark: go underground and risk prosecution or seek to use their influence on governments when CITES came up for reviewing and amending. They have adapted fast and nowadays they are as skilful and as persistent as the conservation NGOs in

lobbying governments. That's why in Delhi the conservationists will be rubbing shoulders with a strong trading contingent from among four different fur trade associations, the Association of European Ivory Traders, the International Pet Trade Association, biomedical and pharmaceutical industries and other users of wildlife resources.

The Convention gives both groups equal rights as observers. But it is the governments who call the shots. Neither party can say what the law is going to be or dictate priorities. For example, the conservation NGOs in the run-up to New Delhi have pressed hard for harp and hooded seals to be added to the Appendices, but the Canadians and the Norwegians appear to have had little difficulty in blocking the proposals.

The growing independence of CITES has been greatly enhanced by the new funding arrangements agreed on at the second meeting of Parties in Costa Rica, 1979. At first financed exclusively by UNEP, this support is now being phased out as the Parties themselves begin to contribute - a good sign that as a professionally run Convention, governments consider it worth supporting.

The day-to-day running of CITES is the responsibility of a streamlined Secretariat (two scientists, a lawyer and secretarial support staff). The Secretariat is housed at IUCN/WWF Head-

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Stuffed baby caimans from Brazil on sale for tourists on a Caribbean island.

(CITES/Zuber)

quarters near Geneva in Switzerland. This gives CITES the opportunity to draw on the expertise provided by the members of IUCN's Species Survival Commission.

The location of the CITES Secretariat, however, seems to have had no effect on its autonomy: its first responsibility is to governments and it does not by any means automatically endorse the views of either IUCN or WWF. For instance, the Appendices are increasingly viewed from the standpoint of the practicalities of administration and enforcement rather than the ideal requirements of conservation. That may be one reason why the amendment proposals this time are manageable - just 92 in comparison with 249 before Costa Rica.

Confidence

As more countries have joined, so CITES confidence has grown in proportion. This can be seen very clearly in the West German proposal on whales (see accompanying article) which goes much further than the Schedule of the International Whaling Convention (IWC). In the early days it would have been unthinkable for CITES to contemplate going out of sync with a much older, more established Convention like the IWC.

If the West German proposal is accepted, it is bound to put pressure on the IWC to extend its Schedule. Nineteen members of the 26-nation IWC are also CITES Parties.

Now that the regulations exist, the CITES Secretariat has steadily become more involved in providing services to governments, such as briefing customs officials on CITES regulations, producing standardized documents and so on. To some conservationists, it seems that it has become rather too involved these days in bureaucratic paraphernalia, red-tape and legal niceties. But these are the kind of hum-drum services that governments want. Most developing country Parties - who make up two thirds of the membership - lack the necessary capability to enforce the regulations. So practical help is being provided: at the New Delhi meeting a special demonstration will be made on new methods of tanning ivory.

Even today, to some elements in the conservation movement, helping countries to trade in this way smacks of a sinister revisionism. Other wildlife groups make token noises about being in favour of the trade, but oppose any move aimed at allowing it to take place, assuming

WTMU joins SCMU

At the beginning of 1981 the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Unit (WTMU) started work alongside IUCN's Species Conservation Monitoring Unit (SCMU). WTMU has taken over from Traffic International which was based formerly in London. The Traffic staff are now working for the new unit and the former chairman, John Burton, has been retained as a consultant to WTMU. To avoid too much confusion, the Traffic International Bulletin will retain its present title. Subscriptions for the bi-monthly Bulletin should be sent to WTMU, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, U.K.

The future of the IUCN/SSC Traffic International Specialist Group will be considered at the SSC meeting in New Delhi. It is hoped that all Group members will become consultants to the Unit.

at the same time that CITES' commitment is similarly cosmetic.

Thus amendments which appear to favour trade always seem to arouse emotion-charged opposition. Witness the furore over proposals to trade in vicuna and US alligators at Costa Rica.

The message coming through to the CITES Secretariat from the developing countries is that wildlife must pay its way. This point was forcefully underlined at the recent First Africa Wildlife Conference in Nairobi. If it can be established beyond doubt that once-endangered animals have been well managed why not carry out a controlled harvest? After all that is what Appendix II is all about. But there are unresolved complications here - South Africa has managed her white rhino population to a point where a sustainable trade can be carried on (this is not disputed). Accordingly she has tabled a request to put the white rhino on Appendix II. Both the CITES Secretariat and the European and US NGOs have opposed this move on the grounds that it would encourage the market. But why should South Africa be penalised because other countries cannot defeat their poachers?

Wildlife farms are another sticking point. CITES has a strict set of rules on "captive-bred" specimens (the ranching issue is likely to be contentious at New Delhi - see accompanying article). But surely once a farm is deemed to be bone fide, say like the crocodile farms on Papua New Guinea, won't their output of hides encourage the market too?

Nerve Centre

What sets CITES apart from other conservation conventions is its efficient, independent Secretariat. It has become, in effect, the nerve centre for the global regulation of wildlife trade - assessing, sorting and checking information fed to it by governments. This has enabled the tiny Secretariat staff to make a steady stream of well-documented revelations about the illegal trade.

The newly instituted system of "cross-checking" export and import permits enabled it to uncover nine forgery cases last year. One case (see previous Bulletin) involved forgeries amounting to US \$12 million. It involved documents for the export of 200,000 caiman crocodile hides, 40,000 ocelot skins and 140,000 skins of otters and other endangered species. That is an awful lot of animals - and an important counter-argument to those critics of the convention who say that when weighed against habitat destruction, the wildlife trade is an insignificant cause of species decline. Nor was the Paraguay haul unprecedented by any means. In 1979, for instance, 150,000 snake skins were seized by Indian customs; German officials intercepted 3600 rare cactus plants; and US officials traced an illegal consignment of 17,500 fur pelts to a ranch in Texas.

CITES has calculated that some five million crocodile skins enter the market every year. And a recently published

report by Frederico Medem (see October Bulletin) revealed that the trade has all but wiped out the Orinoco population of adult caimans in Colombia. Parrots these days are becoming increasingly popular as pets, and it's reckoned that a minimum of a quarter of a million parrots enter the USA legally each year. A further 20-25,000 are smuggled across the Mexican border.

Doubts

A more serious criticism concerns the long-range prospects of CITES succeeding in its task. The argument runs like this: the poaching which feeds the illegal trade is a product of corruption and poverty. So too is the narcotics traffic, and although penalties are realistically stiff (this does not yet apply in most instances to the illegal wildlife trade) for those caught trafficking in drugs, smuggling increases every year. So what chance then has CITES of wiping out the illegal trade when items like rhino horn are literally worth their weight in gold?

If the incentive is great enough - runs the argument - a way will be found to beat any number of new regulations and "forgery-proof" documents. A well-established French-based reptile leather dealer boasts: "Conservationists underestimate our professional pride and skill. I can beat this Convention any time - and legally too."

CITES might respond that it cannot hope to stop the illegal trade but it can regulate the legal traffic. Trade is not the cause of extinction - but it is an accelerating factor. All CITES can realistically aim to do then is to slow down the process, to postpone the point of no return.

Without regulation, for some species that point would be reached in a few years, for others it may be 20, perhaps 30 years. So CITES is helping to preserve wildlife resources for the next generation. As Peter Sand, CITES secretary general puts it: "It is more than a Convention of 67 nations, it's a pact between this generation and the next".

USSR to continue whaling in Southern Ocean

You may have read reports in the press that the Soviet Union intends to stop whaling. These are without foundation.

After contacting a reliable spokesman within the Soviet Union's Ministry of Agriculture, IUCN was informed that the Soviet Union will continue its whaling activities in the Southern Ocean. The spokesman told IUCN that "The annual catch taken by the Soviet Union's whalers will stay strictly within the quotas decided by the 24-nation International Whaling Commission".

The Soviet spokesman in the Agriculture Ministry - which is a member of IUCN - was able to confirm however that apart from taking a few individual whales to meet the needs of indigenous communities in the USSR's far north, all whaling will stop in the Soviet Union's far eastern waters.

Upon being told the news IUCN's director-general, Lee Talbot, said "Obviously IUCN and WWF are disappointed to discover that the Soviet Union does not intend to stop all whaling, but we welcome the announcement that they intend to establish a series of marine sanctuaries in their far eastern waters".

WHALES: ONE STEP BEYOND THE IWC?

In an unexpected move to preserve the whales most threatened by whaling, West Germany has proposed that all fin, sei and sperm whale populations be protected from trade by placing them on CITES Appendix I.

Though not a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the Federal Republic is well placed to make such a move since in 1978 (the most recent year for which accurate figures are available) she was one of the world's largest traders in whale products. She will be abandoning (on 1978 figures) imports of around 7000 tonnes of whale oil, of which 69% was probably sperm whale oil; 115 tonnes of spermaceti (a very valuable product per unit weight); and a spermaceti export trade of around 79 tonnes going to 28 countries.

While the trade figures for this year are liable to be considerably lower, due to declining IWC quotas and catches, the importance of the West German move is that it goes beyond the present IWC Schedule and also coincides with the recent European Economic Community decision to ban trade in all major whale products from January 1st 1982. Already Peru and Chile are

committed to stopping sperm whaling by 1982, and Spain has already stopped.

If the West German proposal is accepted the result will be that sperm whales taken by the USSR, Japan, Iceland and Portugal (not an IWC nation) would find their traditional European markets closed to them. And similarly Iceland and Spain would find that the European and Japanese markets would be closed to their sei and fin whale products.

However, since Japan is the chief importer of baleen whale meat from these countries (baleen whales include fin and sei, but not sperm whales), much would hang on whether or not she would agree to observe the CITES decision. She may very well enter a reservation, allowing herself to continue importation.

The only exploited populations of sei and fin whales are in the North Atlantic. All the other populations have been protected on scientific grounds. The available data on the North Atlantic populations appear to indicate that current IWC quotas are unjustified.

In the case of sperm whales, it could be argued that the population ex-

ploited by Japan is sufficiently large for it not to be placed on Appendix I. But all the evidence points to a continuing decline in numbers that is likely to go on for decades even if sperm whaling were to be stopped tomorrow. In a worse plight is the sperm whale population off Peru, for which the IWC's own Scientific Committee's recommendation has been zero for many years.

The West German proposal is in line with the Scientific Committee's recommendations which have not been adopted by the members of the Convention. And it is consistent too with the IUCN/WWF call for a moratorium on all commercial whaling. At its Florida meeting, IUCN's influential Species Survival Commission called upon all CITES Parties to support the proposed ban.

It should be noted that the USA has proposed that only certain populations be added to Appendix I to keep the CITES list in tandem with the IWC Schedule. Conservationists are opposed to this stand, one reason being that it would be impossible to tell apart the products of the endangered populations from the others for which trade will still be permissible.

PARROTS: A FAMILY IN PERIL

As the implementation of CITES has evolved, its control on international trade in endangered species has had to be strengthened by including complete animal or plant families on its Appendices; cats, whales, birds of prey, cacti and orchids are a few examples. There are several reasons why this has become necessary, including evidence of trade pressure shifting from the traditionally trapped species covered by CITES to the smaller lesser known ones unprotected in the same family by the Convention; the difficulty of distinguishing threatened animals or plants covered by CITES from more common members of the same family, thus allowing a rarer CITES species to enter trade illegally, mistaken for its less rare relative; and the uncertain common and scientific names of some species which provide the trader with the advantage that he can give it a name which doesn't appear in the Convention.

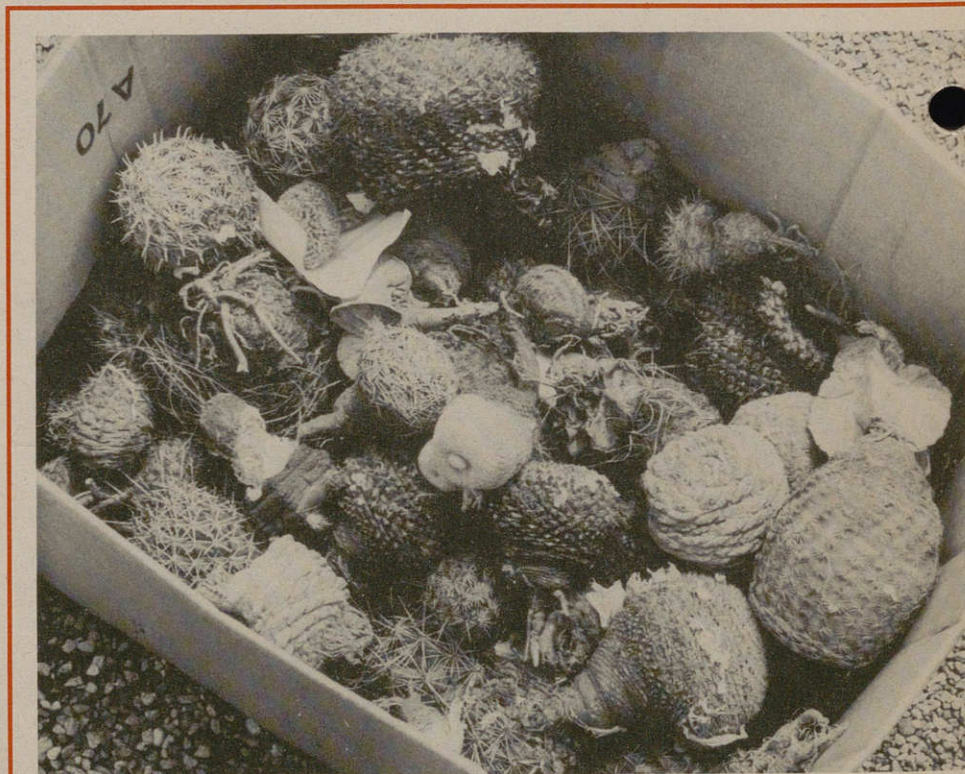
The latest complete group of animals to be proposed to be added to the Convention (for a combination of the above reasons) is the order *Psittaciformes* (parrots). There are approximately 380 parrot species in 81 genera. At present 25 taxa are on Appendix I and 15 on Appendix II of CITES.

International trade in live parrots is believed to be about one million birds annually, but losses during capture and in transit from stress and mutilation are huge; every 10,000 parrots entering the US in a year may represent a quarter of a million dead parrots. A single bird can have a value of US\$6000 and the high value of many of the traded species has stimulated smuggling on a grand and destructive scale.

It is believed that between 25-50,000 parrots are smuggled across the Mexican border into the US each year; this is in addition to legal trade, which is estimated at 250,000 to 350,000 annually for the US, and approximately the same number for Japan. Imports into West Germany and other European countries are equally high,

with Brazilian hyacinth macaws and Australian palm cockatoos selling at US\$8000 a pair, even though the species are fully protected in their countries of origin. But they are not listed on CITES; so the German customs authorities prefer to look the other way

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Rare Mexican cacti seized from a German tourist at Frankfurt airport (See cactus rustling story on page 7).

(WWF/Barthlott)

when another plane-load arrives from Rio or Bangkok.

Parrots are not just threatened by trade; they live mainly in lowland tropical rain forest, the most threatened and diverse habitat in the world.

These accelerating pressures, and analysis of them in reports like "Macaws: traded to extinction?" (produced by Traffic (USA) with funding from WWF-US) stimulated the Belize government, fully supported by the British government, to propose that all parrots should be given protection at least under Appendix II of CITES. One of the species newly proposed is the spectacular scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*), which is found in Belize; it is referred to by Dr Joseph Forshaw in "Parrots of the World" as "almost extinct in Central America".

confused with those species on Appendices I or II threatened by trade.

The budgerigar (*Melopsittacus undulatus*) uniquely breeds readily in captivity and will not be proposed for inclusion on CITES; the United States has also suggested excluding the cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*).

Some parrots may well be included on Appendix I during negotiations in New Delhi if severe threat due to trade is revealed as the reason for their rarity; all others it is suggested should be on Appendix II either because there is a significant threat to them if they are in trade or because they can be

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in the UK and the International Council for Bird Preservation (both IUCN members) have played major roles in preparing this proposal.



(WWF/Roath)

Bonaire parrot. The parrot family is being traded to extinction.

BLACK CORAL NEEDS CITES PROTECTION

In spite of the fact that about 99% of the animal kingdom is composed of invertebrates and that large numbers are used and often over-exploited by man, very few feature on either of the CITES Appendices. At New Delhi, the UK, on behalf of the British Virgin Islands, will be proposing that black coral should be added to Appendix II. All species of the order *Antipatharia* will be included, since different species are extremely difficult to identify.

There has recently been a lot of concern over the scale of international trade in corals of all types: stony, semi-precious (or black) and precious (red). An analysis of foreign trade statistics has shown that there has been a marked increase in coral on the international market. US annual imports of unworked coral have increased from about 200 tonnes in the 1960s to over 700 tonnes in 1978. Exports from the

Philippines have increased steadily through the 1970s; nearly 2000 tonnes were exported in 1976.

Unfortunately, trade statistics do not give a breakdown of trade in different types of coral, which makes interpretation of the data difficult. Black coral has become popular in the western world only relatively recently, although in South Asia it has long been associated with magical properties. It is now collected in a number of regions including the Caribbean, Indonesia, the Philippines and Hawaii to be made into jewellery, and small colonies are sold as curios. There have been a number of reports of depletion in the Caribbean and several islands have introduced legislation to control the trade. In the US Virgin Islands collectors are obliged to obtain a permit, but the present policy is that no coral should be

taken until further scientific data are obtained on which sound management policies can be based. The British Virgin Islands declared black coral endangered in March 1979 and parallel legislation has been enacted in the US Islands. Laws also exist in Antigua, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Hawaii and Florida, to control black coral collecting.

Most of the coral in trade is stony coral, destined for the many souvenir and curio shops in tourist and seaside resorts throughout the world. The Philippines has been the major exporter for some time, but in 1977 a presidential decree was issued which banned exports. This was very poorly enforced and trade continued unabated, but attempts are now being made to plug some of the loopholes in the legislation.

The Mediterranean used to be the centre of the precious coral industry but most diveable sites have now been over-exploited, although a small quantity is still collected off the coasts of Tunisia, Sardinia and Spain. Italy remains an important centre for coral carving but about 95% of the raw material now comes from the Pacific.

At the beginning of this century Japan was the main exporter. However, its trade declined as the known beds were exhausted. But the industry has now revived and the Japanese and Taiwanese currently exploit Philippine, Australian and other South Pacific waters. Taiwan leads the field at the moment and its 1980 harvest of 180,000 kg is thought to have broken all previous records.

A number of studies are underway to provide the data needed for drawing up management plans for coral harvesting. A study of coral growth rates and reproductive potential in Hawaii has resulted in sustainable yields being determined for a number of commercially valuable species. However, similar research has not been initiated in many parts of the world and until such time as it is, far greater control of the trade is required. The listing of black coral on Appendix II could be a very useful start. Furthermore, it will provide much needed data on the size of the trade and the countries involved.



WWF

(WWF/Barthlott)

A healthy coral reef teeming with life. Coral collection is one of the many threats facing reefs.

THE RANCHING CONUNDRUM

It is commonly believed that the farming of endangered species, such as crocodiles, turtles and various antelopes, for skins and food, will aid their survival by reducing the trade pressure on wild populations. So CITES allows captive-bred Appendix I species (normally banned from commercial trade) to be treated as Appendix II (monitored by a licensing system). But the terms of the allowance were not defined until March 1979, at the Costa Rica meeting of CITES, by which time several "farms", notably the Cayman Island Turtle Farm, were merrily despatching their reptilian wares across the globe.

In Costa Rica, CITES adopted a Resolution which defined "bred in captivity" as conceived in captivity, and which recommended that trade in captive-bred animals from a farm be allowed only if the breeding stock is not replenished from the wild, and if the farm can reliably produce second generation offspring under intensively manipulated conditions.

This may look harmless, but has actually caused more arguments than squeezing toothpaste tubes in the middle. The "squeeze" in this case is the definition of "second generation". Second generation animals are easily defined as those conceived in captivity from parents who were also conceived in captivity.

This means that the West German owned Cayman Turtle Farm has not demonstrably bred even one second generation animal (simply because its first-generation animals are not yet sexually mature) even though it probably will do so after 1982/3. Most

conservation groups, and the US government, therefore understand that Cayman Turtle does not accord with the CITES Resolution and should not be exporting at all. The UK and West German governments (the latter is the main importer of the farm's products), for reasons that are abundantly clear only to themselves, take the opposite view. No other turtle farm seems to have been recognised for the purposes of CITES. There is, however, the question of ranching.

Most conservationists think of ranching as leaving your beasts to get on with it, in their country of origin, under natural conditions (except that the area may be fenced-in), and killing off a sustainable yield at the appropriate time. The most important point is that a minimum of management is required. But the CITES Ad Hoc Ranching Committee will recommend in New Delhi that ranching operations (whose Appendix I species should be treated as Appendix II) be defined as those in which animals are conceived in the wild, but brought into an "intensively manipulated" environment for the purposes of "production". This seems out of line with the concept of ranching.

Some operations, no matter how you define them, are fundamentally approved by the conservation movement, especially where carried out by local communities. These include turtle ranching in Suriname, and crocodile ranching in Papua New Guinea where very young wild animals are collected for rearing to commercial size in captivity, leaving the wild breeding stock undisturbed. These crocodiles are on Appendix II, but if they are moved to Appendix I, the PNG

trade may prove to be impossible. The Ranching Committee's idea of ranching is in reality merely the first step in setting up a farming operation. True, ranching still remains to be considered; however (as so often seems the case in legislation), too little attention is paid to the use of exact language which leaves no room for leeway when it comes to be interpretation.

The allowance for trade in captive bred animals is based on the belief that anyone who breeds Appendix I species can't be all bad. But some undesirable aspects may well be involved. It is widely known, for example, that many operations called "crocodile farms", especially in S.E. Asia, trade in large numbers of wild-caught animals which are merely reared in captivity, even though they may also be breeding crocs. No list exists of the genuine farms and ranches, so CITES members don't know who they can legally deal with. Compared with habitat loss, hunting and incidental killing, farming usually has a comparatively insignificant effect, either in boosting or draining populations.

Conservationists are concerned that procedures for marketing farmed products stimulate a market for wild-caught animals, and are often a direct drain on wild populations. This latter fear is to some extent off-set by the Costa Rica Resolution. But the former can only be quelled by the advent of adequate enforcement, aided by easy recognition of farmed items. Failing this, the only satisfactory solution for endangered species is no allowance for farmed or ranched products.

Downgrading proposals opposed

Gyrfalcon - The US has proposed to transfer the North American population of the gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) from Appendix I to II. The justification for this proposal is evidence that the population in North America is now stable. The US coalition of conservation NGOs, the members of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the CITES Secretariat are all opposed to this move. The NGOs note that the gyrfalcon remains endangered in Scandinavia and the USSR and vulnerable in Greenland. A lifting of the ban they fear would present the opportunity for trade in the European and Greenland "look-alikes". The US NGOs are also not satisfied that a "well documented population survey" (the Berne criterion for delisting) has been carried out in Canada and in parts of Alaska. The CITES Secretariat says, "The inconvenience of keeping this population on Appendix I is disproportionately smaller than the risk which its transfer would create for the other more endangered populations".

White rhinoceros - The US NGOs, EEB members and CITES Secretariat are at one in opposing the proposal by South Africa to downgrade its white rhinoceros population to Appendix II. They all praise South Africa for its sound management of white rhinos to a point where a limited resumption of trade is now possible, but

note that such a move would further reduce the already slim survival prospects in other parts of Africa. Dr Kes Hillman, chairman of the IUCN African Rhino Group is also strongly opposed to the South African proposal: "One cannot justify even controlled exploitation since it will only maintain the market". The CITES Secretariat adopts a similar position and also points out that "the illegal trade in rhino horn (of various species and origins) leaving South Africa has been considerable in recent years".



Gyrfalcon. Conservationists oppose the proposal to downgrade the falcon to Appendix II.

Seals: no consensus

In the run-up to Delhi, the US and European conservation groups pressed hard to get their governments to put harp and hooded seals on the Appendix I list, but without success. The EEB newsletter says that in the face of concerted Canadian and Norwegian pressure (both countries still trade in products from these species), no government was prepared to take up the issue.

France, however, has proposed that two other species - the common and the grey - should be placed on Appendix II. The EEB members ask the Parties to support the French proposals urging the countries with the larger populations "to take an international view and to be prepared to monitor legal trade through the issue of Appendix II licences".

The CITES Secretariat supports this stand with regard to the grey seal, half of whose population is found in Europe where it is considered endangered by the Council of Europe. But the Secretariat does not support the common seal proposal, with the justification that numbers appear to be on the increase and trade is far less important than with other seal species. So it would seem that a good hard look at all seals in trade is needed to resolve these outstanding issues.

POLAR BEAR AGREEMENT IS A SUCCESS

Seemingly immune to the ups and downs of international diplomacy during the 1970s, the IUCN-inspired "Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears" has been an outstanding success. This was the verdict of the five Contracting Parties - Norway, Canada, Denmark, USA and the USSR - at a conference held recently in Oslo.

In a joint statement at the end of the Oslo meeting, the five nations, who share the Arctic's polar bear population, noted that "the establishment of the Agreement had been of decisive importance for the protection of the polar bear".

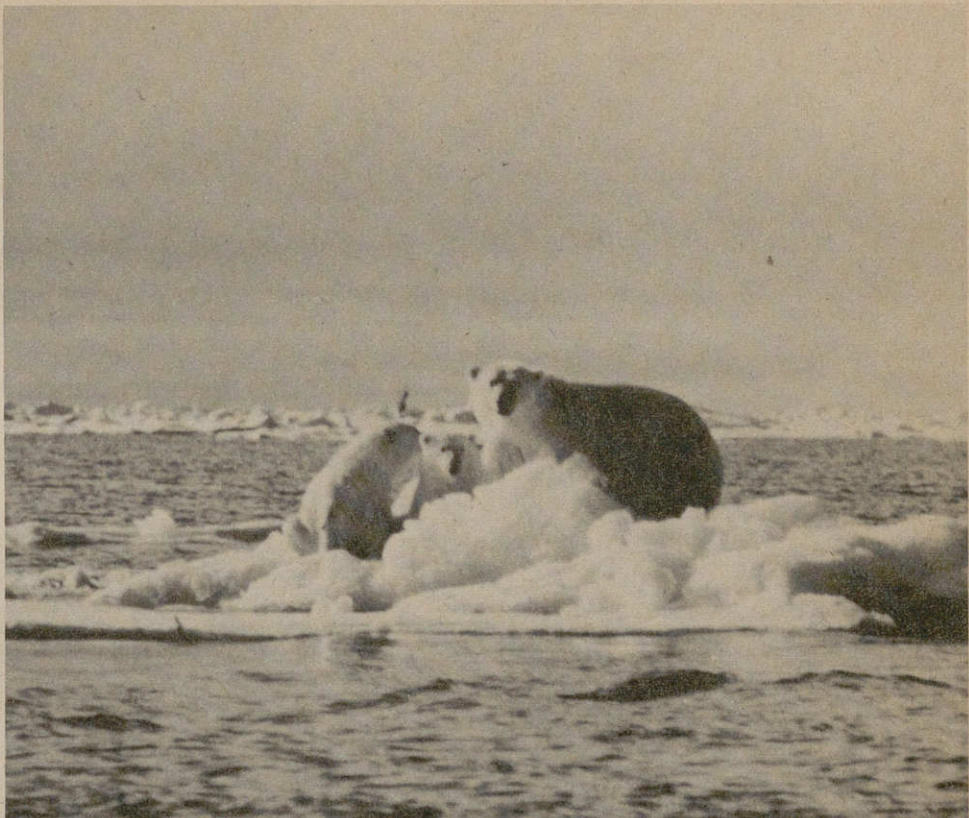
IUCN's role not only in setting up the Agreement but also in ensuring that it has worked was fully recognised by the five nations at Oslo.

In his opening address to the conference, Norway's environment minister, Mr Rolf Hansen, paid tribute to IUCN "for its close and constructive cooperation".

Since the Agreement was made, the SSC's Polar Bear Specialist Group has been the Parties' principal source of scientific advice on the status of polar bears in the Arctic.

The final decisions of the meeting reflect closely the recommendations of the Group, which held a meeting immediately prior to the conference. The Parties decided that a "high priority" should be given to ways of assessing the populations. This will help them decide whether polar bear populations can continue to sustain existing patterns of utilization. An estimated 900 bears are expected to be harvested in 1981 by indigenous peoples using traditional means.

Throughout the 1970s the Arctic nations have become increasingly involved in the region, and are likely to become more so as the techniques improve for extracting minerals and harvesting the living resources in the region's hostile environment. (The SSC Group had with concern the Canadian scheme mentioned in the previous Bulletin - for transporting hydrocarbons in new super-icebreakers). This means that the contact between polar bears and people is



WWF/Larsen

Polar bears on an icefloe: five nations are working to make sure their future is secure.

likely to increase; in anticipation, the Parties agreed "that investigations for the development of appropriate measures which would minimise polar bear/human interactions in the future should be intensified".

Lee Talbot, in his statement to the five nations expressed the hope that the Polar Bear Agreement would help provide the basis for the management of the other shared resources of the Arctic. The director-general urged the countries at Oslo to follow the WCS recommendation which refers to "the possibility of developing agreements among the Arctic nations on the conservation of the region's vital biological resources based on the principles and experience of the Agreement on Conservation of Polar Bears".

The Norwegian minister echoed this point quoting the Agreement as "an example to be followed in seeking solutions for other and perhaps more comprehensive problems".

When the subject of extending cooperation on other conservation issues was discussed, the other nations were much more cautious having been briefed by their governments to make no commitments. "We are not dismayed by this", said Bob Scott, IUCN's representative at the meeting. "The Parties are pleased with the Polar Bear Agreement, and maybe by discussing the idea of wider cooperation, we have planted a seed that will eventually grow into something very significant".

CITES LISTING TO COME CLEAN?

A proposal is before the meeting to stand the CITES listing system on its head. The Australian government has come up with the idea that it would make more sense to list only those species that may legally be traded rather than to continue to use the present system of listing those that may not.

Such a "clean" or "reverse" list system, say the Australians, would be easier to enforce focusing attention on species which may be traded without threat to their survival. It would also regulate trade in species whose status is unknown.

It could, however, turn out to be one of those ideas that work out better on paper than in practice. The clean listing concept has been added to the agenda with the aim of setting up an

expert committee to consider the suggestion in detail. After weighing up the pros and cons it is proposed that the committee would then report to the fourth meeting of Parties.

Cactus rustling: US Congress to get tough?

Quoting Newsweek, the latest Traffic (International) Bulletin reports that in the USA's Southwest, cactus rustling is becoming very serious. According to one reliable estimate rustlers stole around US\$600,000 worth of rare plants from Arizona alone.

Apparently the rustlers drive into the desert at night, uproot the plants and sell them to unscrupulous nursery

owners or individual collectors at prices ranging from US\$25 to US\$1000.

For many rustlers, cactus stealing is a sideline to smuggling drugs or illegal aliens across the border. Amateur diggers have also gone into the business. Holiday-makers sometimes turn a desert picnic into a cactus-rustling expedition to subsidize their trip.

One bill before the US Congress would make it a Federal offence to transport across state lines a plant seized illegally under any state law - even if it is not on the endangered species list. Recently the Federal government placed 17 varieties of cactus on the list, including three kinds of tiny pedio cactus.

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DAVID A. MUNRO

When Dave Munro joined IUCN as director general in the middle of 1977, the Union had been without a fulltime director general for some 18 months, the secretariat was operating below potential, and morale was poor. As always with IUCN the financial situation was uncertain, but the uncertainty was compounded by a rudimentary accounting system that made it impossible to tell whether the budget was being adhered to until after the financial year had ended. Apart from the triennial "programme" (required for each General Assembly) - which was unrelated to the budget - programming was nonexistent.

When he left in the middle of 1980, the secretariat was working effectively and morale was high. The role of the Commissions as the premier intellectual resource of the Union had been restored to them and, better still, had been integrated into the work of IUCN as a body. The Commissions and secretariat had gone through the initially painful but ultimately highly rewarding process

of learning how to programme - and have the impressive programme document "A Conservation Programme for Sustainable Development" to prove it. There were still money problems but at least we knew where we stood! Most important, because it is an achievement on which IUCN can build for the future, IUCN had prepared and launched to widespread acclaim the World Conservation Strategy.

Sensitive to the conditions and needs of developing countries, Dave Munro was in a good position to consolidate the rapprochement between development and conservation initiated by Gerardo Budowski. Munro's strong awareness of the need for sustainable development, coupled with his familiarity with the UN system and his experience as a senior officer of UNEP, enabled him to establish IUCN's credibility with its UN partners. At the same time, by strengthening IUCN's programming and project management, he improved IUCN's capacity to provide a professional service to World Wildlife Fund, which in

turn has greatly enhanced relations between the two organizations.

Reorganization takes time, particularly when at the same time there is a heavy programme of work to be carried out and contractual obligations to be fulfilled. By the time Dave left - for family reasons - the task had not been completed, and financial clouds were looming again. It was typical of him that he put the needs of his family before his own evident desire to finish what he had started. For being director general of IUCN was a job that challenged and excited him: it was the best job in his life, he once said.

Dave Munro will probably be best remembered as a man of great humanity who treated his staff with sympathy and care. In the words of his successor, Lee Talbot, "We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Dave, we miss him, and he and Raye have all our best wishes."

PROTECTING MAN'S HERITAGE

IUCN wears just about as many hats as there are to be worn in the world of conservation. One of these "hats" is the responsibility for advising Unesco on the nomination of natural areas for inclusion on the World Heritage List. The List is an exclusive one with only sites "of outstanding universal value" deemed worthy of inclusion by the Inter-governmental World Heritage Committee.

Recently IUCN prepared an indicative list of such areas in Africa, all qualifying - according to the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas - as areas of "universal significance". It's now up to countries to decide if they will nominate the sites, and up to the World Heritage Committee to pronounce on whether or not these sites are worthy of inclusion. The areas in question have to fulfill a tough set of criteria. Once a nominated site is accepted on the List, the state concerned may benefit from a newly-created World Heritage Fund which currently disburses about US\$1.5 million a year.

In an age of specialisation, the World Heritage Convention is a welcome exercise in eclecticism. It was set up by the Unesco General Assembly in 1972 (coming into force three years later) with the aim of protecting those parts of the cultural and natural heritage which are the common inheritance of all mankind. Among the community of international conventions, it is unique in linking together the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage and in providing a permanent framework - legal, administrative and financial - for international cooperation.

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Embodying the idea that the works of man and nature are part of a universal whole, the Convention - in a sense - represents a piece of the Renaissance projected into the 20th century. So by the lights of the Convention the Everglades, Ngorongoro and the Galapagos Islands are just as much part of man's heritage as Persepolis, Independence Hall or the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. But the World Heritage Committee is concerned that the Convention as it stands is unbalanced - a mere 18 of the 85 World Heritage sites are natural

properties, and of these just five occur in the Afro-tropical realm. And to date there are only ten Afro-tropical members. Unesco, supported by IUCN, aims to encourage more nations to join and for the addition of more natural areas to redress the balance.

One way of doing this is to draw up lists of potential natural sites. The first such list was made for Africa by the CNPPA meeting in Garoua in November. In all, it names 42 potential sites.



Aberdare National Park in Kenya: a candidate for the World Heritage List?