

Viewpoint

25th Anniversary

"An immense and magnificent task..."

On the 5th of October 1948, representatives of 18 governments, 7 international organizations and 107 national conservation organizations signed the document which established the International Union for Protection of Nature. Thus was born at Fontainebleau the organization now known as IUCN, which this month marks a quarter of a century of service in international conservation.

A historical review of IUCN's growth and accomplishments is not intended in this short space, although such a review is planned for publication during the twenty-fifth anniversary year. We will, instead, attempt to assess the broad impact of the organization and to venture a few ideas on future directions.

IUCN was created out of the full realization by its founders that international cooperation is essential for the achievement of concrete results in nature protection. We quote from history written by the Union's first President, Dr. Charles J. Bernard, who, as President of the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature, had much to do with the Union's founding.

"The delegates assembled at Fontainebleau do not claim to have inaugurated International Nature Protection. The idea has been in being for a long time, and I think I shall not be blamed if I mention here only the name of Paul Sarasin, the great Swiss pioneer. He was able to create in his own country a genuine movement in favour of the protection of natural resources and amenities and was the founder of the Swiss National Park. A far-sighted scientist, he soon realized the uselessness of scattered effort, and saw how urgent it was to concentrate this by achieving an international agreement to unify the various existing laws and co-ordinate the widespread national measures taken to preserve fauna and flora menaced by man's so-called civilization.

"In 1913 Paul Sarasin managed to establish a diplomatic instrument signed in Bern by a certain number of States, and later gaining the adherence of more governments.

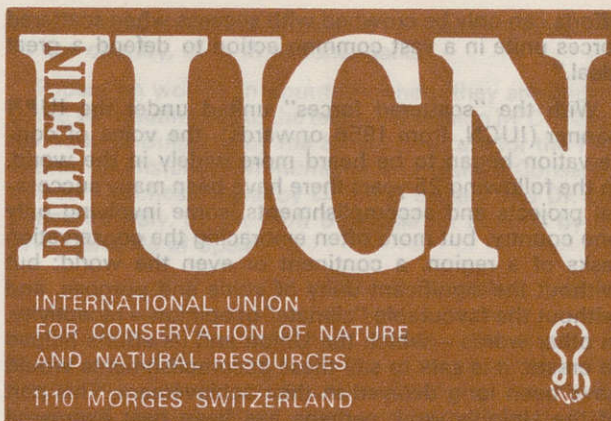
"The 1914 war seriously hampered the activities of the 'Advisory Commission' thus created, and the enterprise had no active sequence.

"Immediately after the war, in 1918, an effort was made to reconstitute the Commission, but other and more urgent matters claimed public attention. However, the seed was sown on favourable ground and might be expected to sprout in time.

"I have only mentioned the name of Paul Sarasin, but if I were to give those of all who afterwards worked for the 'idea' a volume would hardly suffice. Groups were formed in all countries of the world; they strove with all their might to defend their ideal, and worked with varying results to rescue nature's still untouched treasures from a meaningless exploitation. All of them felt that it would be impossible to achieve concrete results unless a world co-ordination of these scattered efforts were ensured.

"Already in 1928 a first attempt was made in this direction, resulting in the establishment of the International Office for the Protection of Nature which is still operative to-day at Brussels.

"A first Conference was held at Brunnen (Switzerland) in 1946, and, in accordance with the intentions of its organizers, recommended that the subject should be studied and discussed again very shortly.



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Anniversary Message

Sir Julian Huxley, Director General of UNESCO at the time of formation of IUCN in 1948, took a leading part in organizing the meeting in Fontainebleau which inaugurated the Union, and made the opening address.

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary, Sir Julian has written as follows:

"IUCN has been the major instrument in International Conservation, and I have seen with my own eyes the excellent work this organization has done in Latin America and other countries. I am sure it will not only continue, but expand its valuable work."

"I am indeed proud to have succeeded in initiating its formation while I was in UNESCO. I wish it continued success both in old and new fields of work."

"In 1947, again at Brunnen, a more important Conference was convened, the delegates being authorized this time, either officially or unofficially, to draft a text of agreement. The proceedings took place in a friendly spirit of collaboration and the Conference decided that an International Union for the Protection of Nature was urgently needed; it also suggested that this new organization, to be created in Paris in 1948, should be under the auspices of Unesco. A Provisional Union was immediately set up and the Swiss League was appointed to take charge of its administration.

"This was our situation up to July 1947, and the task, as you may easily imagine, was no easy one. The Provisional Union and the French Committee appointed to organize the 1948 Conference met with serious technical and fundamental obstacles, the latter often being the more difficult to overcome. At last the French Government, jointly with Unesco, decided to invite the governments of all countries to send representatives to a Conference which was to take place at Fontainebleau from September 30 to October 7, 1948, to establish the International Union for the Protection of Nature. The provisional Union was asked to send the same invitation to all private, national or international bodies concerned with Nature Protection.

"The Conference of Fontainebleau is fresh in our memories. On 5 October 1948, the IUPN was born. An immense and magnificent task lies before it. Those deserving or fortunate persons who assisted in the constitution of the Union will be the first to support it in its efforts. But others, many others, will join them, for all the signs from our 20th century tend towards the certainty that our

efforts can only be crowned with success when scattered forces unite in a vast common action to defend a great ideal."

With the "scattered forces" united under the IUPN banner (IUCN, from 1956 onwards), the voice of conservation began to be heard more widely in the world. In the following 25 years there have been many successful projects and accomplishments, some involving only one country, but more often embracing the conservation tasks of a region, a continent or even the world; but without the significant unity of voice and purpose, and without the favourable "climate" of opinion – receptivity, in other words – which the Union and its efforts helped to create, it is safe to say these accomplishments would have been long delayed in their achievement. This part of the Union's work perhaps has been best expressed by H.R.H. The Prince of the Netherlands speaking at the European Conference on the Conservation of Nature, at Strasbourg in 1970: "I believe that the new awareness of governments and the general public of the problems of conservation can largely be attributed to IUCN..."

The Union has long been concerned with the preservation of species and their habitats, with National Parks and equivalent reserves and the setting aside of representative ecosystems for continuing protection. Conservation education, environmental planning, and the complex issues of policy, law and administration have also been part of the programme for many years. Always on the basis of the best available ecological knowledge. These matters will, of necessity, continue to be concerns, and it is difficult to imagine a time when they will cease to require major attention.

But there are additional areas in which strengthened Union effort is foreseen as likely.

Population matters may be one, although it must be said immediately that at the present time the Union has no programme in this field and has no claims to expertise.

Environmental planning will be an ever-increasing area of IUCN involvement, since this relates so much to land use planning based on ecological principles and quality of life. There will be increasing emphasis on the ecological impacts of development – and on the positive aspect of making conservation universally accepted as one of the tools of development – and ways to get this message across to the decision makers.

Continuing work will be required in support of international conservation efforts such as the conventions on trade in endangered species, wetlands, and the World Heritage. In this connection, ever closer links will be established with various UN agencies and other inter-governmental organizations notably UNEP, FAO, Council of Europe, Organization of American States, etc. A most productive working relationship with Unesco's MAB Programme already exists and will certainly be expanded.

It requires no great insight to predict that the second quarter century will be far more challenging than the first. Inevitably there will be demands that the Union's programme both rise and stretch to meet these challenges.

But whatever direction the detailed programme takes in response to mandates from the General Assembly, IUCN must continue to promote and stimulate international efforts for conservation, to unite "scattered forces" and to use its independence and resources on scientific conservation problems. While IUCN can look back with pride at the present world awareness of conservation matters and see the successful ever growing involvement of the UN system, it will obviously always stay in the forefront of conservation by indicating new trends and mobilizing new groups into conservation action. To up-date Dr. Bernard's memorable phrase: an immense and magnificent task still lies before it.

MAB Panel 8 meets at Morges

IUCN hosted the meeting of the Expert Panel on Project 8: Conservation of Natural Areas and of the Genetic Material they Contain, of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.

The meeting was held at Morges from 25–27 September 1973.

The Panel was asked to propose guidelines for the establishment of a co-ordinated world-wide network of protected areas and to propose specific activities for the conservation of animals and plants. These tasks were to be considered within the context of the MAB Programme and taking into account the relevant programmes of other inter-governmental agencies and international scientific organizations.

The Panel agreed that adequate measures should be taken to conserve examples of all the biomes of the world and of subdivisions of them. This series of protected areas should not only include unmodified examples but also samples of the different kinds and modifications produced by human use. To this end it is proposed to assess those biomes of which examples are already adequately safeguarded somewhere in the world against an inventory of all which should be protected if a comprehensive network is to be available for posterity. This would extend and complete the work begun under the auspices of IBP/CT, the results of which have been made available for this purpose.

IUCN is already compiling the World Directory of National Parks and Other Protected Areas, but no comprehensive inventory of world biomes has yet been prepared. Accordingly the Panel recommended that a classification system (based on that of Dasmann, IUCN Occasional Papers Nos. 4 and 5) be prepared as soon as possible to include all the biomes.

MAB National Committees will be asked to prepare for their countries an inventory of the biomes occurring in them and to indicate against each whether any example of it is already protected. This will enable an assessment to be made of the most significant gaps in the world network.

The Panel laid down some criteria for use as guides when choosing areas for conservation to fill gaps in the international coverage.

It also formulated a statement in justification of action to set aside and manage protected areas which includes four case histories of successes illustrating the kind of progress that has been made under different conditions in the Galapagos, Iran, Kenya and Canada.

During the meeting an analysis was made of action required to conserve genetic diversity. It was agreed that this would be undertaken through the conservation of sufficient natural ecosystems so that a significant proportion of Earth's plant and animal species can continue to exist surrounded by and in harmony with man's continually changing civilization. This is in accord with the action recommended at Stockholm in 1972 and incorporated in the action programme of UNEP.

MAB was asked actively to encourage, initiate and support studies concerning the dynamics of populations and communities occupying a natural environment over a long period of time.

Proposals were made for the drafting of guidelines embodying ecological and genetic principles for nature conservation which would give practical assistance in designing nature reserves intended to serve as long-term sanctuaries.

Wetlands Convention

The United Kingdom has signed the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and has designated 13 wetlands to be brought under the provisions of the Convention. Iran, Finland and Switzerland are the other signatories to date.

Conservation Notes

Conservation of the wolf in Europe

What is the possibility of conserving the wolf over large areas of Europe? Does the wolf constitute a serious hazard to man? Can the presence of wolves be tolerated in areas where the production of domestic livestock is an important economic activity? Questions of this nature have been widely discussed in Europe this year. Activities of the Wolf Specialist Group of the Survival Service Commission have provided the focal points for these discussions.

The Group convened its first major meeting on 5-6 September in conjunction with the 11th Congress of the International Union of Game Biologists which was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from September 2nd to 7th. The meeting of the Wolf Group was sponsored by the IUCN-WWF Joint Project Operation and by the WWF National Appeals of Canada, Finland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and USA. A high point of the meeting was the development by the Group of a Manifesto on the conservation of the wolf. The statement embodies a declaration of important principles and a series of recommendations on wolf conservation.

The technical session of the wolf meeting was entitled "The Conservation of the Wolf in Europe" and papers were presented or submitted by representatives of Canada, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Poland, Spain, USA, USSR and Yugoslavia. In addition, a single paper was presented on the wolf in Finland, Norway and Sweden. The technical session also included papers on research methods and on educational aspects of wolf management programmes.

The technical session was conducted as an open meeting and was attended by almost 100 people.

Both the technical session and the business meeting of the Wolf Specialist Group were dynamic "events". In addition to being well attended, it was evident that the participants were keenly interested in wolves and determined that they should not be exterminated in Europe. The sessions were widely reported in the press and received front-page coverage in several Swedish papers.

For three months prior to the meeting, Dr. Douglas Pimlott, Chairman of the Wolf Specialist Group, travelled widely in Europe visiting countries which still have wolves. He drew on this experience, and on material prepared for the technical meeting by members of the Wolf Group, in a review of the present status of the wolf in Europe, except for Albania and the USSR. Mr. D. I. Bibikov of the Central Laboratory on Nature Conservation in Moscow reviewed the current status of the wolf and government policies on wolf control in the USSR.

Dr. Pimlott suggested that in terms of the present status of the wolf, Europe could be divided into four categories: countries where wolves are extinct (11), virtually extinct (3), endangered (6), and those where viable populations still exist (3). The wolves in Finland, Norway and Sweden are in the virtually extinct category. Those in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain are endangered; Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia appear to still have viable low populations.

Professor Bertel Haglund of Sweden reviewed the situation in Finland, Norway and Sweden where wolves are virtually extinct. He summed up by stating: "The total number of wolves in the two countries can hardly exceed half a dozen". The situation he outlined for Finland is not much better with no more than about 15 animals still existing in the country. The remaining wolves are protected in Norway and Sweden but they are still com-

pletely unprotected in Finland and can be shot anywhere in the country, even in national parks.

Papers on wolves in countries where they are endangered were submitted to the technical session by Dr. Nicolas Boev of Bulgaria, by the Slovak Institute for the Protection of Historical Monuments and Nature Conservation for Czechoslovakia, by Dr. Luigi Boitani and Dr. Eric Zimen for Italy, by Dr. Piotr Suminski for Poland, by Dr. J. A. Valverde of Spain.

It is evident that international co-operation will be needed if wolves are to be preserved because in most cases many of the remaining wolves exist largely in border areas. This is true of Bulgaria, on its borders with Yugoslavia, Greece and possibly Rumania; Czechoslovakia and Poland which share borders with each other and each separately with the USSR and with Portugal and Spain. Only Italy is in a position to deal with wolves as a national conservation problem.

Premiums, called bounties in North America, are still paid for the killing of wolves in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Poland. They are classified as game animals in Spain, protected by law in Italy, until the end of 1973, and can be killed at any time by any method in Portugal.

In his paper on the wolf in the USSR, Mr. D. I. Bibikov reported a rapid increase in wolves during the war, at the end of which the population was estimated at 150,000-200,000 animals. In 1946 62,700 were killed in the USSR and 40,000 to 50,000 animals were killed each year for the next 15 years. A marked reduction of wolves became apparent in the late 1950's. During the past decade, the kill has been approximately 15,000 a year.

Mr. Bibikov concluded his paper with a number of important points. (1) The wolf has been treated as a pest animal and this is understandable considering the real damage it has caused. (2) It is reasonable to eliminate them entirely from livestock breeding territories and from highly populated agricultural and industrial areas. Wolf control, not wolf conservation, is still most needed in the USSR. (3) The wolf populations in the Baltic, Byelorussia, Ukraine and the central region of Russia are considered to be optimum. (4) There is no threat from extinction of any subspecies of the wolf in the USSR in the near future. He indicated that the European tundra subspecies (*Canis lupus albus*) is closest to being in the endangered category. (5) He stated the belief that the republics would not agree to the elimination of their wolf populations.

The First International Meeting on the Conservation of the Wolf reflected fundamental changes occurring in attitudes toward the wolf and its future. These changes are perhaps best epitomized by two specific items: (1) The presentation by Mr. Mats Segnestam of Sweden on The Nordic Wolf Project which seeks to develop co-operation between Sweden, Norway and Finland to maintain northern wolves in captivity and to eventually convince people and governments that they should be reintroduced into wild areas; (2) The development of the Manifesto on wolf conservation. This Declaration of Principles on Wolf Conservation which it contains has been analyzed and the recommendation section is being given a final review by members of the Wolf Group. The statement is a positive one and it will help to bring into perspective the balance that should exist between wolf protection and wolf control as dual parts of wolf management programmes.

The first principle in the Manifesto states a case for the wolf that has rarely been expressed in the past:

"Wolves, like all other wildlife, have a right to exist in a wild state. This right is in no way related to their known value to mankind. Instead it derives from the right of all living creatures to co-exist in a manner unhampered by man as part of natural ecosystems."

The East Rudolf National Park – Kenya

A new National Park has been established in Kenya. Known as the East Rudolf National Park, it covers an initial area of some 160,000 ha of exclusively terrestrial habitats.

It is hoped to include within the park area a further 50,000 ha of pre-historic sites and to extend it a minimum of 1.5 km into the lake to protect the fish spawning grounds and to provide a haven for crocodiles.

It is also hoped to include Central Island into the park and to bring a much larger area around the National Park under National Reserve status as a buffer zone in which other land uses will be allowed.

Conservation in Thailand

Enforcement of new regulations has virtually cut off all trade from Thailand in endangered species of animals.

Vigorous protective measures against poaching in game sanctuaries recently caught up a group of army officers now awaiting trial for hunting in the Tung Yai Naresawan Game Sanctuary. The case attracted wide publicity when a helicopter overloaded with illegally-taken game crashed, killing its occupants.

Five new strict nature reserves were created last year covering large tracts of the remaining undisturbed forest areas of Thailand:

1. Huay Kha Khaeng Game Sanctuary, 170,000 ha in Uthai Thani and Tak provinces, forest area with wild water buffalo and banteng.
2. Lum Nam Pai Game Sanctuary, 120,000 ha in Mae Hong Son province, forest area with elephants and gaur.
3. Phu Khieo Game Sanctuary, 130,000 ha in Chaiyaphum province, forest area with Sumatran rhinoceros.
4. Khao Soi Dao Game Sanctuary, 100,000 ha in Chantaburi province, undisturbed rain forest on the highest peak in the southeast.
5. Khlong Nakha Game Sanctuary, 70,000 ha in Ramong province, forest area with tapir, gibbons and probably Sumatran rhinoceros.

Last Bears in the Alps on the verge of extinction

Although under complete legal protection since 1939, the number of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*) living in the Brenta mountains of the western part of the Italian province of Trento has been declining alarmingly for over two decades. These represent the last stronghold of the species in the Alps and, in fact, in western-central Europe. Fortunately the fears expressed that the bears had been completely wiped out in the late 1960's proved to be too pessimistic.

A minimum of 14 sightings were reported by local residents in the years 1969 and 1970 together with 85 instances of tracks and/or scats being found. In addition, over 90 scats were collected and one sighting was made by the author in 1969 showing that at least some bears still survived. An analysis of all observations, including track measurements, gives a minimum estimate of 8 to 10 animals in 1969, of which two were sows with yearlings or two year olds (one and two young respectively) and one was a sow with at least one cub of the year. This is precarious enough for a species in which it can take 4½ to 9½ years for sexual maturity to be reached and in which the mortality rate of subadults can be high. But these results do not support the view expressed by others that habitat deficiencies in the rugged Trentino mountains and resulting undernourishment are at the root of supposed reproductive failure and thus the main factor causing the population decline.

A quantitative evaluation of information collected by means of systematic interviews with 196 local hunters, foresters, game wardens and others revealed an un-

expected transitory increase of bear numbers in the years of the Second World War, i.e. in the years when a large part of the men were serving in the army and hunting possibilities were very limited due to restrictive laws. This phenomenon could be explained if one admits that illegal killing – mostly done "accidentally" on a hunt for chamois or roe deer – is one principal cause for the decrease of bear numbers, a view expressed in 53% of the answers obtained from those who were interviewed. Another finding point in the same direction: using two independent investigations (one already published by B. Marti and our own) and a Petersen-Lincoln index procedure, we arrived at an estimate of over 2 bears killed illegally per year on an average over the last three decades. This could easily explain the continuous decline, since all observations available indicate a relatively low, though still normal, gross reproduction rate of about 10% per annum.

The constant encroachment of new developments such as new roads and chair lifts on the habitat as well as increasing general disturbance by tourists is probably another important negative factor. The relative remoteness and inaccessibility of the steep and rough country is certainly one of the reasons why the bears managed to survive just in this (and only in this) place in the Alps, but it makes effective surveillance by the small group of game wardens virtually impossible. A local group of WWF members in Trento takes great interest in the conservation of the last indigenous alpine brown bears, it employs a part-time warden for the protection of the animals. This is hardly enough for a 1600 square kilometer mountain area. Unless the provincial or central government takes more interest in the species and its conservation by implementing the long planned Provincial Park Brenta-Adamello there seems hardly a chance that these bears will survive for very long.

H. U. Roth

US names Marine Mammal Committee

The Marine Mammal Commission of the United States has appointed a 9-member Committee of Scientific Advisors in accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. Named to the Committee were:

George A. Bartholomew, University of California at Los Angeles; John J. Burns, Alaska Department of Fish and Game; Douglas G. Chapman, University of Washington; Jack W. Lentfer, U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife; Kenneth S. Norris, University of California at Santa Cruz; G. Carleton Ray, Johns Hopkins University; William E. Schevill, Harvard University; Donald B. Siniff, University of Minnesota; and Jesse R. White, Miami, Florida.

The Marine Mammal Commission, established by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and appointed by the President in June, is charged with the conservation of all marine mammals as they are affected by the citizens and policies of the United States. The Act, through the Commission, provides protection for all marine mammals, a system to regulate the legitimate taking of marine mammals and establishes a research programme to acquire the ecological information necessary for the sound management of marine mammals.

The Committee will provide scientific advice on all aspects of marine mammal conservation.

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