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Viewpoint

Priorities in conservation action

Organizations or individuals striving for conservation action are often faced with a difficult basic decision: where to concentrate their often meager resources and talent to obtain the maximum of benefits? Should short-term goals – which are often spectacular and produce much public interest – be favoured over long-term objectives that can more readily lead towards a dynamic balance between man and his environment? To what extent should local conservation measures be favoured over broad international issues? To what extent should coordination be sought for different but interrelated programmes such as strengthening and creation of parks and reserves, policy and legal aspects, strengthening of administrative structures, training, public education, sound land-use planning, etc.? One could ask many similar questions, depending on the terms of reference, scope, and other conditions faced by groups or individuals presently undertaking conservation action.

Is it possible to find some common platform for conservation action where, beginning on a world scale, it may be possible to so branch out that local small conservation organizations and even private individuals can identify with a niche – a place that is important to effective and concerted action as part of a global strategy?

While action is more urgently required than ever, there is a growing tendency among conservation organizations to disagree as to what the real priorities are and the best techniques to achieve proclaimed goals. Some organizations get increasingly impatient over shortcomings and feel that more extreme measures are required. A few spend their energies (as well as their talent and financial resources) in fighting other conservation groups which they consider either too passive or too radical. Part of this divisiveness, of course, is generated by the intense competition for credit and financial support.

Over the broadening conservation front, a "left" as well as a "right" wing have developed on either side of what may be called the "centre". Obviously, such splitting of efforts and allegiances can only be harmful unless a reassessment of basic objectives and a search by each group to find a place of maximum effectiveness is undertaken to bring about the type of concerted action that is required today.

There can be little argument against the basic definition of conservation, as defined at IUCN's 10th General Assembly, and its corollary, which, in its simplest expression, implies the maintenance of the different forms of life and the maintenance of open options as an

essential ingredient of quality of life, and ultimately the achievement of a global dynamic balance between man and his environment.

Let us take as an example the item of maintaining the different forms of life on earth. This indeed deserves our highest priority and it certainly is broad enough to provide a platform on which all conservation organizations can stand.

Two aspects immediately come to mind to illustrate one issue we believe all conservation groups should support: (1) the survival of wild species of plants and animals threatened with extinction, and (2) the maintenance of healthy populations of wild species not yet threatened with extinction. Although both are related, they require different approaches.

Survival demands immediate action and no effort should be spared to succeed until the causes threatening the species have been eliminated; international action may have to be taken if trade, pollution or other factors intervene. Clearly, survival of species is a world concern and the action programmes it involves offer scope in depth for citizens and scientists and as many groups as care to become involved... locally, nationally, and internationally.

The problem is usually quite different for the maintenance of healthy populations of wild plants and animals not threatened with extinction. The key word here is 'healthy' and the main interest is to keep representative groups of plants and animals in condition so that evolution, under the best possible natural conditions, can take its course. But in a world increasingly transformed by human interference – well-intended, thoughtless, or plainly stupid – this is proving to be extremely difficult.

But science and management have not yet solved the problem of how to maintain viable populations of all wild plants and animals on earth for the important combination of scientific, educational, recreational, aesthetic and economic objectives. Nor have they yet brought the most representative ecosystems of the world under protection for perpetuity to serve important scientific and educational purposes. This is an urgent necessity, but it has received scanty attention and even less funding from governments, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental conservation groups. Yet this is at the very root of the conservation philosophy since it will provide a unique tool to maintain diversity and provide a guarantee to preserve the choice of options for future management. It is the essential preliminary step to avoid a real catastrophe, for if the present trend continues, thousands of wild species will soon become endangered and extinct.

This type of major priority and the necessary logistics involved could become a rallying point of an intense and concerted effort by all conservation groups – embracing necessary inputs on policy, legislation, administrative strengthening, training and education in general. Most important will be the development of adequate land-use planning devices based, not on political, military or short-term convenience, but on sound ecological principles.

In the arena of action, where the conservation movement tends to disperse into factions, which are even antagonistic at times, it is urgent to identify common objectives where all conservation organizations can find their true "raison d'être". If this is agreed upon, the rest will certainly come much easier.

Managing wildlife and wild places to preserve the various forms of life is only one example of a major priority all of us should share. There are many others.

We cannot afford to wait much longer, teetering on the brink of catastrophe and bickering over details or methods of action when such overwhelming and urgent priorities need our immediate attention and concerted action. Our credibility and our success in influencing decision-makers and indeed all the citizens with whom we share this planet, is, tragically, at stake, and indeed so is our very survival.

Gerardo Budowski

Vast additions proposed for US parks, wildlife refuges

Legislative action that would more than double the areas protected in the U.S. National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System has been proposed to the U.S. Congress by the Secretary of the Interior.

The proposal would add 63.85 million acres of public land in Alaska to those systems. In addition, 18.80 million acres would be added to the National Forest System, and .82 million acres added to the National Wild and Scenic River System. In all, about 23 percent of Alaska's total area is involved in the new proposal.

The park and refuge systems currently contain about 30 million acres each. Secretary Morton's proposals would add some 32.26 million acres to the parklands and 31.59 million acres to wildlife refuges.

The recommendations followed two years of detailed studies required by a provision of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act which became law in December 1971. Under that provision, the Secretary of the Interior was required to recommend to Congress within two years the Alaska lands he had decided should go into each of the four systems.

The proposals include three entirely new national parks — Gates of the Arctic, in the rugged and scenic Brooks Range; Lake Clark in southern Alaska, west of Anchorage; and Wrangell-St. Elias, in the spectacular southeast.

Congressional action was also proposed to more than double the size of Mount McKinley National Park; enlarge and upgrade Katmai National Monument to full national park status; create new national monuments named for Kobuk Valley, Cape Krusenstern, Aniakchak Caldera, and the Harding Icefield-Kenai Fjords; and, through a National Rivers designation, to include in the National Park System the entire Charley River watershed and a portion of the Yukon River drainage in east central Alaska. The Chukchi-Imuruk National Reserve on the Seward Peninsula in the far northwest would be administered jointly by the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Nine additional proposals call for new or expanded refuges to protect fish and wildlife resources that are of worldwide significance. Protected against other development would be lands and waterways that help support dozens of species of wildlife.

USA ratifies Convention on trade in endangered species

On 14 January, the United States of America became the first nation to deposit with the Government of Switzerland its instrument of ratification of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

It will be remembered that the United States was host to the plenipotentiary Conference, held a year ago in Washington, at which the Convention was adopted. The Convention will enter into force when it has been ratified by 10 nations.

Since our last report, the Khmer Republic (Cambodia), Uruguay and Nigeria have signed the Convention, bringing the total of signatory countries to 43.

Egypt ratifies World Heritage Convention

The Arab Republic of Egypt has deposited with UNESCO its instrument of ratification of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Egypt was the second nation to ratify the Convention, the first being the United States of America.

Programme Activities

Ecological guidelines for development

Guidelines for economic development based on ecological principles and referring specifically to humid tropical forest areas of Latin America were formulated at a meeting organized by IUCN in Caracas, Venezuela, on 20–22 February.

Officials from the countries concerned met with experts from a wide range of disciplines to discuss papers summarizing current experiences and research findings, and to agree on development guidelines based on these sources. Representatives of FAO, UNDP, UNEP, ECLA and OAS, all sponsoring organizations, also took part. Working languages were English and Spanish.

The Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas (IVIC) provided facilities for the meeting at its hilly campus which is beautifully situated high above Caracas.

Field trips to outstanding National Park and virgin forest areas were arranged for participants following the meeting.

The Caracas meeting was one of a series being organized by IUCN with financial support from UNEP, the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), and the World Wildlife Fund to evolve ecological guidelines for economic development. These meetings continue the action initiated with the publication of the book *Ecological Principles for Economic Development*, by Raymond F. Dasmann, John P. Milton, and Peter H. Freeman, published for IUCN and the Conservation Foundation with financial support from SIDA (John Wiley & Sons Ltd., London, 1973).

Another meeting in this series will be held at Bandung, Indonesia, 28–31 May, to examine ecological guidelines relating specifically to the development of humid tropical forest areas in South East Asia.

New IUCN Publications

All prices are given in US dollars.

Special Publications

Second World Conference on National Parks. Proceedings of the Conference held at Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, September 1972. Separate volumes in English, French and Spanish. Published by IUCN for the National Parks Centennial Commission of the United States. 504 pp. (in press) \$10.00

New Series

- 24 *Ungulates — their behaviour and management.* Proceedings of a Symposium on the behaviour of ungulates and its relation to management. University of Calgary, Alberta, Nov. 1971. In preparation.
- 26 *Planning for Man and Nature in National Parks.* Reconciling perpetuation and use. By Richard R. Forster. 84 pp. \$3.00
- 27 *1973 UN List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves.* Information based on that of second edition of the United Nations List (1971) and Addendum (1972), resp. No. 15 and 15A. 48 pp. \$4.50
- 29 *1974 UN List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves.* In preparation.

Supplementary Papers

- 37 *Environmental Education in an Urban Society.* Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the North-west Europe Committee, Commission on Education IUCN, Rotterdam, September 1971. 105 pp. \$2.50
- 38 *Environmental Conservation Education in the School Curriculum in East-European Countries.* Final Report of the International Seminar, held in the border National Park Pieniny, Poland–Czechoslovakia, June 1972. Text in German and Russian, with English summaries. 191 pp. \$4.00

- 39 *Seals*. Proceedings of a Working Meeting of Seal Specialists on threatened and depleted Seals of the World, held under the auspices of the SSC of IUCN. 18-19 August 1972 at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. 176 pp. \$5.00
- 40E *Proceedings of the 11th General Assembly of IUCN* at Banff, Canada, 11-16 September 1972. 331 pp. \$6.50
- 40F *Comptes Rendus de la Onzième Assemblée Générale de l'IUCN* à Banff, Canada, 11-16 September 1972. 374 pp. \$6.50
- 41 *Crocodiles*. Proceedings of the Second Working Meeting of Crocodile Specialists, sponsored and arranged by the Survival Service and Ecology Commissions of IUCN, held at Ndumu and Lake St. Lucia, Zululand, 20-27 March 1973. 115 pp. \$5.00

Occasional Papers

- 3 *Propositions pour la création du Parc national ivoirien de Taï* by Urs Rahm. 43 pp. \$3.00
- 4 *Classification and Use of Protected Natural and Cultural Areas* by Raymond F. Dasmann. 24 pp. \$2.50
- 5 *A Working System for Classification of World Vegetation* prepared by the IUCN Secretariat. 21 pp. \$2.50
- 6 *An Ecological Survey of the proposed Volcano Baru National Park, Republic of Panama*, by Anne LaBastille. 77 pp. \$4.00
- 7 *A system for defining and classifying natural regions for purposes of conservation*. A Progress Report by R. F. Dasmann. 47 pp. \$3.00
- 8 *List of Mammals which have become extinct or are possibly extinct since 1600*. Prepared for the SSC of IUCN. Compiled by Harry A. Goodwin and Jewel M. Goodwin. 23 pp. \$3.00

Conservation Notes

Sale of Agent Orange to Latin America deferred

The possible sale of several million gallons of surplus Agent Orange for use in South America has been deferred. IUCN has been advised by the US Environmental Protection Agency that the herbicide, held by the US Air Force, is not currently registered for domestic use in the United States, and that the Department of State will not authorize overseas sale of stocks which cannot be used at home.

IUCN has also been advised by the Air Force that "United States Government Agencies object to the use and export of herbicide orange and have no plans to release the item to Latin American or other countries".

Earlier, the EPA considered an application by the Air Force for registration of the herbicide. The compound was found unacceptable after a review of available data. However, a hearing is scheduled for April, this year, at which resolution of the public health and other issues will be sought.

Agent Orange is a 50-50 mixture of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D, two herbicides which have been widely used. The mixture contains a contaminant known as dioxin (tetrachlorodioxin) which is highly toxic and said to be dangerous to humans.

IUCN has opposed use of Agent Orange, particularly in such applications as forest clearing, and early this year requested the US Government to take action to prohibit the export of this material to Latin America.

Use of Agent Orange was also opposed by the Symposium on Amazonian Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, which was held in Manaus, Brazil, late last year. See IUCN Bulletin 5 (1) January 1974 for a report on the Manaus meeting.

USSR signs Wetlands Convention, Agreement on Polar Bears

The USSR signed the Wetlands Convention (Ramsar) on 13 February, subject to ratification, according to word just received at Morges.

Earlier in the month, the Soviet Union also signed the Agreement on Polar Bears, which had been concluded on 15 November 1973 at Oslo following a meeting of representatives of Canada, Denmark, Norway, the USA and the USSR, the five nations which have polar bears on their territory. See IUCN Bulletin 4 (12) for details and the text of the Agreement published as a Special Supplement.

Prespa National Park Decreed by Greece

By Presidential Decree published in January, Greece has declared the Prespa Lakes region a National Park.

The action will be widely welcomed by all who know this splendid region of northern Greece, and follows many years of effort led by the Société Hellénique pour la Protection de la Nature. IUCN/WWF have cooperated closely, especially through their Working Group on Greek Conservation.

The new National Park contains the lake of Mikra Prespa and the Greek portion of the lake of Megali Prespa, which encompass some of the most important wetland habitats in Europe. Floral and faunal resources are superb. The park as a whole contains 19,470 ha, including 4,735 ha of Lake Mikra Prespa and 3,640 ha of Lake Megali Prespa.

The Decree notes that the conservation action is of primary importance both for scientific research as well as for the economic development of the region and because of the area's general aesthetic and cultural features.

Swiss to publish key-word index to wildlife research papers

The Swiss Wildlife Information Service, together with other European wildlife research units, will soon publish a key-word index (KWI) on papers dealing with wildlife research. This KWI will contain key-words of approximately 1000 publications from 1973 that might be of interest to wildlife researchers. On the average, every publication yields five key-words; the KWI thus will contain a total of 5000 key-words alone for 1973. This will permit researchers to gather a topical and international review on the latest publications efficiently.

Organizations interested in having their publications included in the coming KWI should send the papers published between 1973 and 1 March 1974 to the Swiss Wildlife Information Service, Birchstrasse 95, 8050 Zürich, Switzerland.

ECE to consider ecological aspects of development planning

As a result of meetings held in Geneva, 21-23 January 1974, the Economic Commission for Europe (UN) will approach the problem of ecological aspects of economic development planning. The Geneva meeting of the Senior Advisers on Environmental Problems for ECE agreed on the details of a seminar to be held in the Netherlands, 5-11 April 1975. This will bring together ecologists, planners and economists from ECE countries and will provide, among other objectives, ecological guidelines for use by planners and decision-makers in governments or other responsible authorities. This meeting, which parallels initiatives being taken by IUCN and UNEP, will focus on problems of urban-industrial nations but will regard also the implications of their development and environmental concerns for the less developed countries.

It is not man's nature to be orderly. Order is an intellectual process.

René DuBois

WWF protests Austrian tourist center plan

The World Wildlife Fund has appealed to the Austrian Government not to allow the proposed construction of a tourist center near the nature reserve of Seewinkel-Lange Lacke in eastern Austria.

In letters to Dr. Bruno Kreisky, the Federal Chancellor, Mrs. H. Firnberg, Minister of Science and Research, and Dr. Theodor Kery, Landeshauptmann of the Burgenland, the World Wildlife Fund said the project would seriously affect the unique landscape of the Seewinkel and its nature reserves, which are of European importance. They were created by the World Wildlife Fund 10 years ago.

The proposed development would include 515 bungalows and 252 apartments with the necessary infrastructure and equipment for some 5,000 tourists in the area of Pamhagener Hutweide, one of the last steppe areas of central Europe.

Seewinkel is near the Hungarian border. Deer and wildboar live in the reeds by the lake, and herons and many other birds nest there. The area is noted for its birds of prey, including white-tailed eagle, imperial eagle, and lesser spotted eagle, while tens of thousands of duck and geese are visitors.

New Zealand conserves its coastline

The Department of Lands in New Zealand is engaged in a major campaign to protect the nation's coastal regions. New national parks and reserves are being created to conserve areas of scientific and scenic interest and to ensure that the public has access to the shoreline.

The programme involves acquisition of lands being built on for holiday homes and other developments. The current budget allocation exceeds \$NZ 1 million for land acquisition.

Expo '74 and the environment

Most world fairs and expositions are little more than exhibits and attractions designed to entertain or amuse, but Expo '74, Washington, scheduled for May through October 1974, at Spokane, Washington, will offer something more. Environment is its theme, and a number of activities are being planned under what is called 'Environment '74 Programmes'. These include opportunities for discussion, several international symposiums, local problem assessment meetings, ad hoc meetings, a 'learning resource' centre and an information centre. More information can be obtained from Environment '74, Post Office Box 1974, Spokane, Washington 99210, USA.

IYF News

The Lüneburger Heide Course sponsored by the International Youth Federation, which was held annually from 1955 to 1969, will be set up again this year. The dates of the course are 18-31 July for 30 participants.

The programme is designed as a training course for youth leaders in national groups concerned with the environment. Apart from a presentation of IYF and its projects, special attention will be given to international cooperation in the field of conservation.

IYF theme for 1974 is 'Endangered Animals and Plants'. The Federation and its member organizations will consider such topics as international trade in endangered species, bird catching, investigations on national legislation for the protection of fauna and flora, Project Tiger, and national investigations on threatened species. The IYF also is cooperating with the International Project JONAH on the protection of the great whales.

A special action guide has been published and a second issue will contain questions and action proposals giving special attention to the development of conservation programmes in Third World countries.

Oscar Marley

Book Reviews

Hoogerwerf, A. (1970). *Udjung Kulon, the land of the last Javan rhinoceros.*

Leiden: E. J. Brill. 512 p., 155 illustrations, 3 folding maps. 90 Guilders.

The name "Udjung Kulon" brings to mind one of South East Asia's most famous wildlife reserves, the last stronghold of the large mammals of Java. From now on, however, Udjung Kulon will be well known, no doubt, as the name of the massive 512-page book that A. Hoogerwerf has written about that reserve and the wildlife it contains. The author, former Chief of Nature Protection and Wildlife Management in Indonesia, has capably produced a monograph that will be invaluable to anyone interested in this popular reserve as well as those interested in Javan wildlife and attempts at their conservation. As a monograph the book is especially useful as a model that should be imitated for dozens of other important reserves around the world.

The author subtitles his book "The land of the last Javan rhinoceros" but it is much more than a report on *Rhinoceros sondaicus*. He devotes more than 100 pages to discussing the history and status of this rare species whose total numbers have been variously estimated to be between 20 and 40 individuals. It was because of the precarious existence of this once far-ranging species that Udjung Kulon was first made a nature reserve in 1921 by the Dutch authorities in Indonesia. But it soon became clear as Java continued to become overpopulated that Udjung Kulon would also be one of the very few places left where various other big mammals could be preserved as well, among which are some species that are in danger of extinction also. Hoogerwerf therefore discusses the banteng, Javan tiger and Javan deer with equal thoroughness and devotes lesser parts of the book to the muntjac (barking deer), wild boar, mouse deer, wild dog, panther, and smaller mammals. But it is perhaps the first 41 pages of this lengthy work that will arouse the most interest, for it is in these first few chapters that the author writes *par excellence* about the history and significance of Udjung Kulon as a reserve.

Hoogerwerf's 40 years of familiarity with this unique area are revealed throughout the text. His compilation of data is almost overwhelming as is his bibliography, which comprises more than 600 references. While the book is illustrated with 155 black and white photographs and three folding maps, it is regrettable that none are in colour nor of the quality to adequately complement the text. It would have been an excellent reference book if an index had been included.

Bruce E. Weber

Ricciuti, Edward R. (1973): *Killers of the Seas.*

New York: Walker and Company. 308 p., \$10.00

Everyone who has gone to sea, or dreamed of doing so, has experienced the gnawing dread of those efficient marine killers, the sharks, killer whales, poisonous snakes, sea wasps, stonefish and myriad other lethal or dangerous creatures encountered in the sea. Here is a book that discusses them all in sufficient fascinating detail to constitute an extremely useful summary of the subject. Science writer Ed Ricciuti was well equipped to produce this fast-moving book. He is former curator of publications and public relations of The New York Zoological Society, a master scuba diver, and participant in oceanographic expeditions.

R. I. Standish

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