



Kingfisher

*News and Comment about
Wildlife and Conservation
at Home and Abroad*

Edited by Richard Fitter

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Gleam of Hope for Whales?

AT LAST there is a tiny gleam of light for the future of the world's whales. The United States, alarmed at the implications for international fishery treaties of the failure of the International Whaling Commission to secure enforcement of the reduction of catches and other scientific conservation measures recommended by its scientific advisers, has secured an emergency meeting of the I.W.C. in London at the beginning of May. If all goes well it should be possible to submit an agreed conservation plan for the blue, fin and sei whales to the regular meeting of the I.W.C. in June. It is now up to conservation bodies all over the world to make their voice heard in no uncertain terms. U.F.A.W., in its annual report, states that it is believed that last season the Japanese not only started whaling before the agreed date but also killed whales of less than the agreed minimum length. Thirty years ago nearly 30,000 blue whales were caught in a single season, but last year barely a hundred were caught. No won-

der it was necessary to place an absolute ban on the catching of blue whales. If scientific advice is not heeded, the fin and sei whales will follow the blue into near extinction—there may be fewer than 1,000 blue whales left in the world. This is the sad pattern of the North Atlantic whale fisheries, and now the Antarctic fisheries are going the same way. Already Great Britain and Holland have withdrawn from Antarctic whaling, and recent news is that New Zealand's land-based whaling industry is to close down, too. As eight members of the Survival Service Commission on the International Union for Conservation of Nature wrote to *The Times* on March 9, we need "an international authority capable of

achieving the enforcement of rules based on scientific measurement so that the whales can continue to exist for the inestimable ultimate benefit of mankind."

Threat to Upper Teesdale

Upper Teesdale, one of the half-dozen most important botanical areas in the British Isles, with more rare plants than any comparable area in Great Britain including spring gentian and shrubby cinquefoil, is once more threatened with the construction of a reservoir. This time the site lies just above Caldron Snout waterfall, midway between the two national nature reserves of Moor House and Upper Teesdale. The Nature Conservancy has agreed "without prejudice" to permit trial borings within the latter reserve. The Botanical Society of the British Isles and the Northumberland and Durham Naturalists' Trust are rallying to the defence of Teesdale and if a local public inquiry becomes necessary will raise an Upper Teesdale Defence Fund to enable the naturalists' case to be properly presented.

It is pointed out that the creation of the reservoir would destroy 20-25 acres of the richest plant communities with important geological features; permanently or temporarily damage an equivalent area during construction; alter the hydrology and micro-climate; and by altering the river flow affect the Tees for several miles downstream.

Objection at Ullswater

Fourteen voluntary societies, headed by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the National Trust, have lodged an official objection to the draft Manchester Water Order, which seeks to abstract water from Lakes Ullswater and Windermere.

Enterprise Neptune

The National Trust's campaign to save the still unspoiled coastline of England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be formally launched when boy scouts and other young people's organisations light 1,000 bonfires and beacons on St. George's Day, April 23. So far as possible these will be lit where the beacons warning against the Spanish Armada were lit, to warn of a fresh assault on Britain's coastline, from thoughtless developers. It is hoped to raise £2 million to purchase parts of the most attractive 1,000 miles of still unspoiled coastline. On May 11 the Duke of Edinburgh, Patron of the Appeal, will speak at a lunch at the Mansion House in London in its aid.

The National Trust also announces that it has received the £18,500 for the purchase and endowment of a four-mile stretch of the Long Mynd, the well-known hill in Shropshire, for which it appealed last August.

Arabian Oryx News

Three charming mother-and-son pictures feature in the Special Bulletin on the Arabian oryx

recently issued by the Arizona Zoological Society. The World Herd of Arabian Oryxes is located at the Society's zoo at Phoenix, Arizona, and now consists of twelve animals, five belonging to the Fauna Preservation Society, four belonging to the World Wildlife Fund and two to the Zoological Society of London. The three mothers and sons are the F.P.S.'s Edith and her son Ian, born in 1963; the London Zoo's Caroline and her son Michael, born in 1964; and the World Wildlife Fund's Lucy and her son Sherman, born in 1964. Plans are now being made for the dispersal of the herd and its ultimate return to the wild, as soon as numbers build up sufficiently. It may be possible to make a start in 1967.

The Vicuña in Danger

Though there are still some 400,000 vicuñas living wild in the Andes, wrote *The Times* Lima correspondent on February 10, the species is in danger because some 20,000 to 40,000 Peruvian vicuñas are killed every year so that their valuable fleeces can be smuggled to the United States via Bolivia. The vicuña, a small relative of the camel and the llama, produces the finest and softest wool in the world, but catching them to shear is so difficult that they are usually shot. (Ladies who like to wear vicuña wool, please note.) An experiment in domesticating the vicuña seems not to be economic so long as the smuggling trade thrives, and the best hope of sav-

ing the animal appears to lie in setting aside properly guarded reserves for it in the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes, coupled with new experimental breeding centres. These were the recommendations of a conference of experts held recently at Arequipa, Peru, and no doubt this will be one of the first subjects to which Major Grimwood, lately Chief Game Warden of Kenya, will give his attention on taking up his new appointment as wildlife adviser to the Peruvian Government in May.

Saving Przewalski's Horse

Przewalski's horse is one of those wild animals which exist only in captivity, for none have been seen in its last Central Asian stronghold since before 1950. The world population of more than 80 is all in zoos, and a stud book is maintained by the Prague Zoo. At the Second International Symposium on the Przewalski horse, held recently in Berlin, the Government of the U.S.S.R. was asked to establish a special nature reserve for the animal, and the Mongolian and Chinese Governments were asked to do everything possible to preserve it in the wild should any still be found to occur.

More Money for the Ne-ne

Representative Matsunaga of Hawaii has introduced into the House of Representatives a bill which would increase from

\$15,000 to \$20,000 the annual amount appropriated for a co-operative Federal-State effort to conserve and restore Hawaii's state bird, the ne-ne or Hawaiian goose. This very rare bird has been successfully reared in captivity, especially at the Wildfowl Trust's collection at Slimbridge, Glos., whence 35 have already been sent back to restore the wild population on the Hawaiian island of Maui, where the ne-ne has been extinct for many years. The surviving original wild population on the main island of Hawaii numbers only 30-40, but these have been augmented by another 87 reared in captivity in Hawaii and recently released.

Economics of Wild Geese

At Horicon Marsh in Wisconsin many thousands of Canada geese rest in a national wildlife refuge and a state wildlife area during their annual migrations. The Wildlife Management Institute has calculated that nearly 120,000 people drove over four million round-trip miles merely to watch the geese in 1960 and 1961. Another 85,000 people hunted the geese, and nearly \$125,000 was paid to hire blinds (hides) in surrounding private property. Moreover, shopkeepers nearby took at least half a million dollars from visitors coming to watch or shoot the geese in each year.

The Begging Bowl

WANTED: a second-hand oil-

operated refrigerator for Bardsey Bird Observatory (A. T. Clay, Ardenshaw, Gentlemans Lane, Ullenhall, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire).

Pesticide News at Home

The Ministry of Agriculture has reminded farmers, contractors and other users that restrictions on use of certain organochlorine pesticides are now in force. Home gardeners should not use aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, endosulfan or Rhothane at all. Farmers should only use these and other substances for authorised purposes, such as aldrin to control wireworm on potatoes and dieldrin to control onion fly on onion seed.

The Association of British Manufacturers of Agricultural Chemicals has called for the compulsory registration of toxic farm chemicals, making legal what is at present only a voluntary arrangement.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds announces that preliminary results suggest that the peregrine falcon population remained at its low 1963 level during 1964, and that the sparrowhawk, despite its recent protection, has become scarcer than ever and is extinct in many areas. Jointly with the British Trust for Ornithology the R.S.P.B. now urges that the present voluntary ban on the uses of certain organochlorine pesticides should be made compulsory, and calls for the compulsory surrender of all stocks of sheep dips containing organo-

chlorine pesticides, which should not be used on land or dumped in rivers, ponds or the sea.

Pesticide News Overseas

DDT residues have now been found by American scientists in both adelic penguins and crab-eater seals, two species which never leave the Antarctic seas, where so far as is known there is no large-scale use of DDT.

The United States Public Health Service has launched a five-year DDT spraying programme to eradicate the town-dwelling mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, a carrier of yellow fever, in nine coastal states, including Florida and Texas, and in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. \$5 million has been appropriated for this year alone.

"We cannot live without [chemical] pesticides in this intensely developed man-made society of ours. We could not maintain our agriculture, our health, or our present high levels of comfort and living. But we are finding it increasingly difficult to live with pesticides." (Dr. Nyle C. Brady, Director of Science and Education, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.)

Soviet biologists claim to have developed a new herbicide of toxic substances released by micro-organisms in the soil, which is especially effective against such dicotyledonous weeds as charlock and spurrey, but is not toxic to warm-blooded animals.

Biological Control in Canada

More than a dozen former insect

pests in Canada are now of less or no economic importance because they are permanently controlled by imported or translocated pests or parasites. This important statement on the success of biological control methods was made to the recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Montreal by Dr. Bryan P. Beirne, Director of the Belleville Research Institute in Ontario. The former pests include the larch casebearer and wheat-stem sawfly in Ontario, the woolly apple aphid, the oystershell scale and the mealy-bug in British Columbia. But biological control has so far been tried out on only one per cent. of Canada's insect pests, Dr. Beirne pointed out, and no Canadian university has a biological control department of adequate size. Moreover, every biological control research centre has a staff shortage. (Bulletin of the Conservation Council of Ontario, January 1965.)

Eagle Diet

In the last issue of the *Scottish Naturalist*, Ernest Blezard, Curator of the Carlisle Museum, records finding the remains of a buzzard on a ledge in Galloway from which two golden eagles flew off on his approach. The ledge had for some years contained a buzzard's eyrie. An eagle pellet, picked up below the ledge, proved to contain a mass of buzzard feathers. In the same issue J. D. Lockie studies the food of eagles in Wester Ross and

concludes that in winter the food of the golden eagles consists of some 40 per cent. deer and sheep carrion, and 30 per cent. each large birds and rabbits or hares. In summer, on the other hand, 60 per cent. is large birds, 30 per cent. lambs (of which only one-third are actually killed) and the remainder deer calves, rabbits or hares. At one eyrie which he studied the actual number of lambs killed by the eagles over a period of five years was seven. Since the number of ewes in their hunting range was 1,000, he concluded that this did not represent a serious economic loss to the farmers. The fact that the eagles were driven to eat so many lambs suggests a serious shortage of natural prey for them.

What Foxes Eat

A study of the diet of foxes in Wester Ross by J. D. Lockie in the final issue of the *Scottish Naturalist* shows that in winter they eat more than 60 per cent. deer carrion and 25 per cent. voles, the balance being made up with rabbits, birds and shrews. Unfortunately this almost blameless winter diet is replaced in summer by one of 32 per cent. deer calves, 15 per cent. lambs and 31 per cent. voles. It is not, however, known what proportion of the lambs are killed and how many are already dead or moribund when taken by the foxes. Since present trends of land management in the Highlands will reduce the amount of carrion of

both sheep and deer, it seems likely that the fox population will fall anyway.

Another study, for Co. Down, by J. S. Fairley, shows rabbits and birds to be the predominant food of foxes in that part of Northern Ireland, with smaller quantities of sheep or lamb remains, rats, field mice and insects, and a good deal of grass, some of which may have been only coincidentally consumed. It is worth noting that there are no voles at all in Ireland, but rabbits are commoner there than in many parts of Great Britain. (*Irish Naturalists' Journal*, January.)

The rather specialised diet of the foxes of the sand dunes near Ravenglass, Cumberland, which has the largest black-headed gullery in Europe, has led to the necessity to control them. For in one recent year they killed about 800 of the 8,000 sitting birds and some thousands of young birds, as well as carrying away and caching several hundred eggs.

A Good Word for Badgers

"Why do we wish to keep badger?" asks R. J. King of the Forestry Commission, in a recent issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Forestry*. "He does much good. In his favour goes his liking for mice, voles and young rabbits. He also has a habit of devouring many wasps' nests, to the delight of the weeding gang. Chafer and other large larvae also form part of his diet. Against this we must balance his habit of tearing up

fences, though we must realise that this can be avoided [by installing badger gates]. While looking for chafer grubs, etc., he is inclined to dig away at the roots of young trees. The occasional tree chosen for a scratching post can be overlooked. Havoc can be caused near a large set in older plantations by tree roots being disturbed with resulting windblow. This can be avoided by not planting the area of a larger set and allowing the natural scrub to form a canopy. We must also realise that an old badger, usually an old boar, turned out of the set by young pairing cubs, may become a rogue and may make many enemies among neighbouring poultry and sheep farmers. This can be stopped simply by selective control—as easy as that. Badgers living in family rarely, if ever, attack small farm stock.”

Too Many Fish in the Thames?

A census of the larger fish in the River Thames at Reading, by W. P. Williams of Reading University Zoology Department, showed that per square metre of river surface there were 2.5 bleak, 1 roach and 0.1 each of dace and perch. An estimate allowing for the smaller fish of these species suggested that there might be as many as 10 fish per square metre in the river. There appear therefore to be too many small fish in the Thames and it is suggested that a drastic thinning of the stock would result in much improved

growth rates, such as occurred in the well-known experiments in Lake Windermere. (*Journal of Animal Ecology*, February 1965.)

Death on the Roads

An analysis of animals found dead on six miles of roads on Salisbury Plain during regular bicycle journeys over a period of five years showed that brown rats (180) and hedgehogs (125) were much the most numerous mammal victims, 38 hares, 28 common shrews and 19 rabbits being the only others to attain double figures. There were also 1,319 birds of all species, 123 toads and 40 frogs. The peak of rat casualties came in autumn and early winter, of hedgehogs in July, of toads in February and March and of frogs in October. Curiously enough most of the dead frogs were found more than a mile from the nearest known water. (A. A. Dunthorn and F. P. Errington in *Wilts Arch. & Nat. Hist. Mag.*, 1964.)

A count of birds found dead along the main Ely-Littleport road in the Isle of Ely gave a total of 654 house sparrows alone, with 154 blackbirds, 95 song thrushes, 37 moorhens, 27 linnets and smaller numbers of a dozen other species. May, June and July, when many young birds are learning to fly, is the worst period.

In the February *Newsletter* of the Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation, R. S. Burrows gives some hints on how considerate motorists can avoid running over certain wild animals.

He points out that the fox, badger and hare often show a similar behaviour pattern in crossing a road. They are traversing a well-known route, with a hole in the hedge or fence which they know is there. The approach of the car, however, disturbs them, and they set off running ahead of it down the road, from time to time rushing into the hedge to try to find a way through. If they fail to find one, they come back into the road, thus progressing in a zigzag. Often they are killed by running into the side of the car rather than the car running over them. A considerate motorist will therefore slow down till he is sure the animal has made a safe escape, and not just assume that because it has darted into the hedge it will not return.

Footpath Survey Progress

The latest report of progress in the national survey of footpaths, published by the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Society, shows that Durham leads the field with a second revised definitive map, closely followed by Cambridgeshire with a second revised provisional map, and Hampshire, Worcestershire and the Soke of Peterborough with second revised draft maps. Honourable mention also to the four counties with revised definitive maps: East Sussex, Middlesex, Shropshire and the Holland Division of Lincolnshire. At the other end of the scale, five counties which have got no further than a revised draft

map for their whole area are Cambridgeshire, Denbighshire, the Isle of Ely, Monmouthshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Butterflies and Railways

An Irish naturalist, Henry Heal, has made the remarkable discovery that the disused railway lines of Cos. Armagh and Down now harbour flourishing colonies of the scarce and local wood white butterfly, not hitherto known to exist in north-eastern Ireland. The Irish form of the wood white is a separate subspecies, so the abandonment of these railway lines has apparently led to an increase in the total population of one of the world's less numerous and more local insects. In other parts of Ireland the wood white still inhabits woods only. It seems fairly certain that these railway lines have been colonised within the past 20 or 30 years. (*Irish Naturalists' Journal*, January.)

To Control Straw Burning

There was widespread protest last summer and autumn at the many uncontrolled fires, resulting from the burning of the straw left behind by combine harvesters, which destroyed many miles of hedges and fences, numerous trees and saplings and even some growing crops. In consequence the habitat of much wildlife was destroyed and may never recover. The National Farmers' Union has recently held a meeting of inter-

ested government and other bodies with the aim of drafting a code of practice for straw burning, which can be published before next harvest for the guidance of farmers. At the same time a sub-committee representing the Nature Conservancy, the Country Landowners' Association, the Forestry Commission and the N.F.U. was set up to investigate methods of safeguarding wildlife and its habitat, before any straw burning takes place at all.

Oil Pollution Progress

Madagascar is the latest country to adhere to the 1954 convention on oil pollution of the sea. This means that 29 countries with three-quarters of the world's tonnage have now signed it. Unfortunately only 12 countries have yet signed the important amendments agreed in 1962, and until another eight do so, these amendments, which put teeth into the convention, cannot be brought into operation. Paradoxically every new country that signs the original convention without the amendments means that it takes longer to bring the amendments, which must be agreed by two-thirds of the signatories, into operation. The eight must come from the following 15 countries: Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Jordan, Madagascar, Mexico, Panama, Philippines, Spain, the United States and Venezuela. So far Poland, France, Sweden, Canada, Kuwait, Nor-

way, Liberia, the United Arab Republic and the United Kingdom, in that order, have agreed to the amendments, while Ireland and Western Germany are in process of doing so.

Bird Protection in Asia

The removal of all species of hornbills from lists of game birds and their total protection throughout Asia was one of the resolutions passed at the second biennial meeting of the Asian Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation at Hong Kong last autumn. The Section also urged all governments to make an effort to suppress the illegal import and export of birds of paradise and other rare birds and their skins, by requiring that every bird or skin imported or exported be accompanied by a certificate showing that it was legally taken in the country of origin. Another resolution appealed to all directors of zoos to consider all aspects of conservation before creating a market in endangered birds. (*Malayan Nature Journal*, December 1964.)

The Twice-Shot Eagle

Last May a fine specimen of the bald eagle, America's national bird, was found helpless and starving at Kenton, Michigan, its wing broken by a gunshot wound. The bird was taken into care by G. W. Irvine of the U.S. Forest Service, and its wing mended. As soon as it was well enough to be released, the eagle was given its freedom

again, at the end of June. In November it was found shot again, but this time it was dead. It was identified by the ring that had been placed on its leg. The bald eagle is rigorously protected throughout the United States, and is officially listed as an endangered species. The National Audubon Society, which reports this incident, says that irresponsible shooting continues to be a grave danger to both the bald and golden eagles in America.

Justice for the Birds

The March issue of *Bird Notes* records two fines for infractions of the bird protection laws. In November a boy was fined £4 at St. Albans, Herts, for killing a blackbird with an airgun, and in December a man was fined £3 at Whitchurch, Glamorgan, for attempting to take a kestrel with a butterfly net; he was seen climbing a quarry face towards the nest armed with a butterfly net. These cases were brought respectively through the initiative of A. R. Gazeley, a member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Peter Faber and John Lane, two members of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society.

Christmas Bird Census

The National Audubon Society announces that 11,200 people took part in more than 700 individual local counts during its 65th annual Christmas Bird Count last year. In these annual surveys of wintering bird life in the United States

each local group tries to find and count as many birds as possible in a dawn-to-dark operation on one day during the Christmas season. Each census area is confined within a radius of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The "winners" for 1964 were the Indian River Audubon Society team at Cocoa, Florida, who set up a new record of 204 different kinds of bird, beating their own previous 1960 record by four birds.

New Russian Fur-bearers

The introduction and translocation of fur-bearing animals is being carried out on a large scale in Russia. Already Siberian sables have acclimatised themselves on the shores of the Sea of Okhotsk, hares from the steppes of South Russia on the Chinese border, beavers in the forests around Moscow, and muskrats in the lake country of Uzbekistan. The chinchilla, a native of South America, has been imported from the state of Colorado in the United States, and has established itself in Central Asia. Elks translocated within the Soviet Union do not always stay in the place intended for them, but invade neighbouring forests and even wander into towns, where they have been known to break windows.

Monkeys near Moscow

Russian scientists claim to have successfully acclimatised monkeys from the tropics to the cold climate of the Moscow region,

where the temperature may drop to 20° C. below zero. For a year a group of monkeys has been living in a Russian birch forest without any cages or shelters. It is hoped that this will help Russian research institutions which rely on monkeys and have hitherto been much hampered because monkeys imported from East Africa or southern Asia did not thrive in Moscow even in well-heated cages.

Recognising Rhinos

John Goddard, the Canadian zoologist who is studying the wildlife of the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania, can now identify many of the 42 different rhinos which have been seen and photographed in the Crater in the past year by the shape of their horns and ears and the pattern on the wrinkles on their nose.

Gull Gulled

On the Isle of May, Scotland, in June 1964, a herring gull was found contentedly brooding two normal eggs and a dull red rubber ball. Oddly enough red dummy eggs were the ones most consistently rejected by the herring gulls in Niko Tinbergen's experiments, and it is thought that in this case the complete roundness of the ball was the deciding factor. (*Scottish Birds*, Spring 1965.)

The Secret Godwits

A pair of black-tailed godwits nested last year in a marshy area in the South of Scotland, a part

of Britain where these handsome waders have not been known to breed in the present century. It is a sad commentary on the behaviour of some bird watchers that not only the exact locality but even the name of the discoverer has had to be suppressed so that the birds may have a chance of breeding again safely this year. (*Scottish Birds*, Spring 1965.)

Information Wanted

Records of rock doves or feral pigeons on the east coast of Scotland between Aberdeen and Berwick, and on the south-west coast between Bute and Dumfries, are wanted by R. Hewson, 170 Mid Street, Keith, Banffshire.

Bullfinch in the Dock

On December 31 J. P. Doody, a member of the North Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society, found a dead bullfinch, hanging upside down in a tall dock plant by the River Windrush at Bourton on the Water. One of its wings and its tail were entangled in the plant. (*N.G.N.S. Journal*, January 1965.)

Vale Scot. Nat.

We record with regret that for the second time since the war the old-established *Scottish Naturalist* has been obliged to suspend publication.

New Field Centre Record

Last year saw the Field Studies Council create a new record with 11,617 student weeks at its seven

field centres, of whom just over half were for biological subjects and the great majority of the remainder for geographical and geological subjects. Nearly two-thirds of the students came from sixth forms, and most of the rest from either universities or training colleges and teacher courses. It is a little sad to see only 827 amateur naturalists in the total. The Council acknowledges a munificent gift of £25,000 from the Worshipful Company of Drapers to mark the Sexcentenary of their first Charter. The grant will be used to create a new field study centre in North Wales. Rhyd-y-Creua, a house in the Conway valley a mile from Betws-y-Coed, has already been purchased, and after substantial alterations will be opened for students in 1966.

Recording Mammal Distribution

The Mammal Society of the British Isles has launched a scheme for recording the occurrences of British mammals, both past and present, on the basis of 10-kilometre grid squares, as was done in the *Atlas of the British Flora*. Full particulars from the M.S.B.I., c/o Institute of Biology, 41 Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7. The Society is calling for volunteers to extract records from local journals.

A survey of whales, dolphins, porpoises and other Cetacea in British sea areas has been started by Arthur Bourne, 3 Juniper Way, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, from whom record cards can be

obtained.

Save that Pelvis!

Two zoologists at Royal Holloway College, London University, are appealing for help from naturalists for a research project on the sexual dimorphism of the mammal pelvis and the identification of post-cranial bones of British mammals. They ask for any mammal skeletons which can be retrieved from gamekeepers or are found by chance in the countryside to be sent to them, especially those of water shrew, hedgehog, water vole, bats and carnivores. (Drs. J. C. Brown and G. I. Twigg, Zoology Dept., Royal Holloway College, Englefield Green, Surrey.)

Wryneck Survey

LAST year there were probably no more than 100 to 200 pairs of wrynecks breeding in Britain, almost all of them in S.E. England or East Anglia. This makes it one of our rarer breeding birds, and the British Trust for Ornithology is continuing in 1965 the survey on the status of the wryneck which it launched in 1964. The Organizer, Mr. Ronald Peal (24 Creighton Avenue, London, N.10), would be grateful for the following information for any wryneck seen or heard in Britain this year: date and exact place; whether seen, heard or both; whether breeding is proved; and whether the report is considered reliable. Late April and May, when the clear ringing call of the wryneck is most often

heard, especially early in the morning, is the best period for observation.

Great Crested Grebe Enquiry

The British Trust for Ornithology is to conduct an enquiry into the status of the great crested grebe in 1965. The main aim of the enquiry, which is being undertaken at the request of the Nature Conservancy, is to ascertain if this bird is being adversely affected by the presence of residues of persistent organochlorine pesticides. Bird watchers all over the country will be asked to count the numbers of breeding pairs of great crested grebes for comparison with the last national census in 1955, and to estimate their breeding success. The organisers are Ian Prestt for England and Wales and Derek Mills for Scotland with the aid of B.T.O. regional representatives and national network of observers. The enquiry will be carried out in close collaboration with the Wildfowl Trust, which is undertaking a nation-wide enquiry into the breeding distribution of waterfowl year.

Memorials to Ornithologists

The Yorkshire Naturalists' Union has launched a fund to finance a series of Ralph Chislett Memorial Lectures, to be delivered by eminent naturalists throughout Yorkshire, in memory of the distinguished ornithologist who was a former president of the Union. Subscriptions to M. M. Sayer,

10 The Gardens, Heath Road, Halifax, Yorks.

Cornwall Bird Watching and Preservation Society has commemorated its founder, the late Colonel B. H. Ryves, by offering a biennial prize of up to 20 gns.-worth of books for original and unpublished work on some aspect of the biology of British birds. Further details from A. G. Parsons, The Bungalow, Trewirgie, Redruth, Cornwall. Professional zoologists and non-residents in the British Isles are not eligible.

Operation Hush Hush

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is hoping to organise a special watching operation at the nesting site of a rare bird in 1965. The Director (The Lodge, Sandy, Beds) would be glad to hear from people who would be interested in camping out over the Easter and Whitsun holidays to guard the nests from the public. Volunteers will be expected to provide all their own equipment.

Feeding Garden Birds

Co-operation between the Young Ornithologists' Club and the Wildlife Youth Service has led to the successful launching of the Garden Bird Feeding and Observation Project, on a B.B.C. TV programme in February. Nearly 30,000 inquiries poured into the W.Y.S. afterwards. The survey, in which children identify and observe the habits of the birds they feed in their gardens, continues until April.

To Help Young Bird Watchers

So far 120 members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have responded to the Society's appeal for volunteers to take young bird watchers in their own districts out on rambles. But volunteers are still needed in seven English counties, as well as more in Scotland and Wales; apply to the Education Officer, R.S.P.B., The Lodge, Sandy, Beds.

A New Reserve to Visit

This year for the first time permits are being issued for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds's new reserve at Leighton Moss, Silverdale, North Lancashire. Permits, obtainable from the R.S.P.B. (The Lodge, Sandy, Beds), will be available from April 1 to August 31. Unescorted visitors will be allowed to use the two large hides and to walk along marked paths; escorted visitors will be shown round by the warden. There is also a public hide on the causeway across the centre of the reserve. Among the interesting birds seen at this reserve during the winter were bitterns, water rails, sparrowhawks, buzzards, a merlin and a great grey shrike.

Naturalists' Holidays in Iceland

The Iceland Tourist Information Bureau announces two 13-day guided tours for naturalists in Iceland at a cost of £69, leaving London on June 4 and 18. Many sea-bird colonies will be visited, as well as the famous waterfowl

lake of Myvatn, the waterfalls of Gullfoss, Godafoss and Dettifoss and the Great Geysir.

Coming Events

The Fourth Congress of European Mycologists will be held in Warsaw, Poland, from August 31 to September 6, 1965. Further information from Prof. Dr. A. Skoggiello, Aleje Ujazdowskie 4, Warsaw.

The International Youth Federation for the Study and Conservation of Nature is organising at least three International Camps in Europe in 1965, in the Netherlands, on the Lüneburger Heide in West Germany, and at Federsee in Bavaria: details from Ake Bruce, Ljunggatan 13, Göteborg SV., Sweden. Three international camps will also be held in Britain in conjunction with the Council for Nature: in Orkney (details from D. S. Davis, Peakes Biological Laboratories, The Waterside, Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex); near Swanage, Dorset, and at a place to be decided either in Wales or the North of England (details from the Field Observers' Club, 7a Glazbury Road, London, W.14).

An open-air rally on Ilkley Moor will be one of the events celebrating the centenary of the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society during the week beginning June 12.

A field course on Migration and Ringing will be held by the British Trust for Ornithology at Portland Bird Observatory from May 1 to

8, at a charge of 8 gns. Particulars from B.T.O., Beech Grove, Tring, Herts.

Book Reviews in Brief

CENTIPEDES OF THE BRITISH ISLES, by E. H. Eason (Warne, 3 gns.), the first book on its subject, has straightaway become the standard work and is likely to remain so.

GARDENING WITHOUT POISONS, by Beatrice Trum Hunter (Hamish Hamilton, 25s.), is a valuable aid to those gardeners with sufficient social conscience to want to try to avoid poisoning the soils and wildlife of their garden. Despite its American background, it can be highly recommended. Supplement it with L. D. Hills's useful little PEST CONTROL WITHOUT POISONS (20 Convent Lane, Bocking, Essex, 3s.).

A DISCOGRAPHY OF PALEARCTIC BIRD SOUND RECORDINGS is a special supplement of *British Birds* by Jeffery Boswall of the B.B.C. Natural History Unit (Witherby, 6s. 6d.), which lists all known recordings of European and Asian bird voices and shows which species can be found on these discs; indispensable to the enthusiast.

CANNOCK CHASE is a map in colour of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Staffordshire, by the Staffordshire County Planning Department (County Buildings, Stafford, 2s. 6d.); a praiseworthy precedent which should be followed by other counties.

Personalia

Harry Secombe has become President, and Johnny Morris Vice-President of the Panda Club, the Junior Section of the Wildlife Youth Service of the World Wildlife Fund.

Brigadier C. E. H. Sparrow of the Wildfowl Trust has become Hon. Treasurer of the Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation.

Roger Cartwright, Organiser of the Gloucestershire Conservation Corps since July 1963, has resigned owing to pressure of work.

Capt. Frank Poppleton, former Senior Park Warden of the Uganda National Parks at Queen Elizabeth Park, has joined the staff of the College of Wildlife Management at Mweka, Tanzania, as Administrator and Instructor on National Parks and Physical Education.

Obituary

I. H. Burkill, former Director of the Singapore Botanic Gardens and some time Botanical Secretary of the Linnean Society of London, died at Leatherhead, Surrey, on March 7, at the age of 94.

Robert Hanlon, who taught biology at the Government High School in the Bahamas and had just completed a textbook on the natural history of the Bahamas for the Government, died on December 26, 1964, aged 39. He had been Director of the Audubon Camp of Wisconsin since 1961.

Who's Who in Conservation—2

The COUNTY NATURALISTS' TRUSTS are the biggest success story in the post-war natural history movement in Britain. The first such trust was founded in Norfolk as long ago as 1926, but it was not till 1946 that Yorkshire followed suit, with Lincolnshire in 1948 making a trio that stood alone till 1956, when expansion began with Cambridge and the Isle of Ely, Leicestershire and the West Midlands joining in. The pace soon quickened, and by 1964 every county in England and Wales, except for Rutland, had its trust, and Scotland was covered by the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

County naturalists' trusts—many of them now call themselves trusts for nature conservation—exist to promote the conservation and preservation of the fauna and flora of their counties in every way possible. The most practical way is by owning or leasing nature reserves or making agreements with landowners for the management of certain areas in such a way as to conserve their wildlife. At the last count, the trusts between them had 143 separate nature reserves, headed by Norfolk with 21, Kent with 20, Lincolnshire with 17, and Berks, Bucks and Oxon with 14.

The trusts are all entirely independent bodies, but come together in the County Naturalists' Trusts Committee of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, an old-established body (founded

1912) with a royal charter, that provides them with secretarial services and other umbrella facilities.

The trusts have been conspicuously successful in attracting people who do not think of themselves as naturalists and would not join natural history societies, but are nevertheless deeply concerned with the preservation of the countryside and its wildlife.

The Secretariat of the C.N.T. Committee is at Pyewipes, Willoughby, Alford, Lincs, from whom a list of county trusts and their secretaries can be had.

Tailpiece

When Dr. R. Dalton Muir, a Canadian Parks Naturalist, was recently in one of the national parks in Canada he met some visitors on a bridge and passed the time of day with them, he writes in the January *National Parks Magazine*. The family had been in the park for a week and had climbed two mountains, seen the animals along the road, walked a lot of trails and had a swim in the hot springs. But in reply to Dr. Muir's query they added, "We are not interested in natural history. We have some friends who are interested in natural history, but they are rather odd. No, we don't bother much with natural history. Besides, there isn't much of it here." Yet even as Dr. Muir was listening to these remarks, he saw a raven and a jay fly by, and the forest nearby was full of orchids. Odd?