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AMAZING SNAFU SPOILS PAKISTAN EFFORT

As reported in the September issue, Pakistan had not come forward with any written indication that the government would welcome a visit by Park System Planner William J. Hart by the time he left Northern Rhodesia. The poor response was not caused by lack of interest or failure to appreciate the value of a visit by someone affiliated with IUCN. The mail had taken over thirty days to be delivered, cables from Nairobi were misplaced and messages to Salisbury were misdirected.

Instead of two days of leisurely inquiry into the possibilities for arousing park interest in Karachi, Mr. Hart found that there was an eight day itinerary worked out which would have taken him to Murree in the foothills of the Himalayas, out on the Punjab plain, and to the Chittagong Hill Tracts in East Pakistan. The only possible course was to spend one day in Karachi and one day in Rawalpindi and the mountains. By putting in one seventeen hour day and one twenty hour day contacts were made in the Karachi Development Authority, the Capital Development Authority, National Planning Commission, Department of Forests, and a tour of the Murree district.

The forestry departments of the Provincial Governments have submitted requests for substantial capital allocations to develop and protect two national parks in each wing (four national parks). The general attitude in the Planning Commission was that the funds would not be made available. The Government of Pakistan has requested a wildlife specialist through U.S.A.I.D. (which was rejected). This displays the usual pattern: interest in natural parks by the field people, interest in parks and open space to augment the amenities of new housing developments by planners, but very little money available in the budget process to undertake any work. When one has seen the huge amounts of capital being spent for formal gardens on the hills above the new capital city it is difficult to be sympathetic with economic planners when they plead "no money."

ON TO THAILAND

The visit of Park System Planner Hart to Thailand was originally billed as a courtesy call on Mr. Dusit Banajbatana, Deputy Director General of Forests, Member of the International Commission on National Parks, and member of the Park Systems Planning Advisory Committee. It so happened that Mr. Dusit was called away by his King as part of an official trip to the mountains by Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. Thus Mr. Hart's trip turned into a full scale park exercise with some of the young members of the staff of the Royal Forestry Department.

A top level tourist conference was going forward in Bangkok. As usual no one had thought to invite participation from the national park agency nor was there anyone there with a national park orientation to argue for the importance of the natural scene to the tourist industry. Khao-Yai National Park is undergoing "development" for tourism. The phrase is a neat device to permit the construction of an expensive summer residence for the Premier, an eighteen hole golf course, a landing strip, helicopter pad, and artificial landscaping for guest cottages.

Once again it is difficult to determine why there is money for this sort of capital intensive construction but no money for less intensive investments in a variety of natural parks.

SOUTHERN RHODESIA PROCEEDS WITH COMBINED DEPARTMENT

Recent letters from Sir Athol Evans, Chairman of the Southern Rhodesia Parks Board, and Mr. L. H. Stewart report that a Southern Rhodesian Ministry of Natural Resources is fully operative with a department of parks and wildlife management. The move was opposed by Mr. Stewart and by Mr. Hart (a copy of his statement to Sir Athol was distributed to members of the Park Systems Planning Advisory Committee).

Mr. Stewart has announced his retirement from service. Mr. Needham Gibson is the new Director of Parks and Wildlife Management.