

# FORUM NEWS

CONSERVATION NEWS 2

NGO FORUM FOR THE UK DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

AUGUST 1989

## FORUM MEETS WITH GOVERNMENT

At the end of January representatives of the Forum met with Foreign Office officials and their colleagues from ODA and DoE to discuss conservation in the Dependent Territories. At the meeting the long-awaited Government response to the report 'Fragments of Paradise' was given. The response mainly consisted of a compilation of factual comments received on the report from the Dependent Territories. This provided a valuable update on conservation information and news.

The Government was unable to respond positively to any of the specific recommendations of the report but welcomed its publication and the formation of the Forum. We now have to build on this cooperative start and generate some positive conservation initiatives. The Foreign Office is clearly our focus for any environmental concerns within the Dependencies and we will maintain our dialogue primarily through the Maritime, Aviation and Environment Department.

## NEW MEMBER FOR THE FORUM

The Forum is delighted to welcome the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society (FFPS) as a supporting member. FFPS has been concerned with the protection of species in British overseas territories since its formation in 1903 as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (SPWFE). FFPS works on all aspects of international species conservation and pioneers conservation action for threatened plants and animals regardless of their popularity or attractiveness.

To support conservation work around the world FFPS has established the 100% Fund. Each donation made to this is used directly to save rare animals and plants, with no deductions for administration. Through the 100% Fund, FFPS has recently supported plant conservation work in St Helena and conservation activities in the Turks and Caicos.

The Protected Areas Data Unit (PADU) of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), based in Cambridge (UK), has offered to act as a liaison point between the Forum and WCMC. This will be invaluable to the Forum in keeping up to date on conservation data relating to

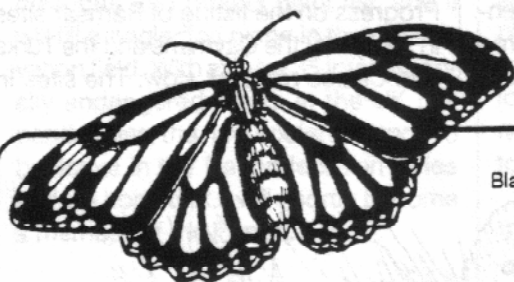
the Dependencies and particularly on protected area projects supported by international conservation agencies.

## ICBP BRITISH SECTION

ICBP British Section, one of the supporting members of the Forum, is developing a UK Dependencies Conservation Programme. Through this, bird conservation projects will be initiated and part-funded in areas identified by ICBP's UK national office as priorities for action. Attention will be focused on Anguilla, Montserrat, British Indian Ocean Territory, St Helena and Ascension. This short-list has been based on the presence of endemic birds, the need for ornithological survey and also to tie in with the activities of other voluntary organisations.

## CONSERVATION PLANS FOR ANGUILLA

The Government of Anguilla has prepared a draft proposal to implement a comprehensive marine parks programme for the island. Funds are being sought to get the project off the ground and WWF-UK is considering ways to contribute financial support. The Forum Co-ordinator will assist with liaison over funding and coordination of input from other voluntary groups in the UK.



Black-veined tiger

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The marine parks programme is clearly essential to the long-term sustainable development of Anguilla's marine resources. Tourism is of growing importance and the pace of development has created the urgent need for a marine conservation strategy. The programme proposes a series of marine resource management zones including six marine parks, areas for tourism management and for the management of fishery resources.

As yet Anguilla has no protected areas set aside for conservation although key sites have been identified and marine parks legislation was passed in 1982. The marine parks programme will involve preparation of an inventory of marine resources, provide technical guidelines for management, establish the marine parks, improve public awareness of the value of coastal resources and tackle current problems of habitat degradation. To establish the basis for long-term conservation a Marine Parks Authority will be created and training needs for parks management personnel will be considered a priority.

## CONSERVATION EDUCATION PACKAGE PROPOSED FOR TURKS AND CAICOS

The Marine Conservation Society has developed a proposal to carry out an educational project on coral reefs and their conservation in the Turks and Caicos. As in Anguilla, coral reefs are one of the most important natural asset of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and are subject to increasing usage and tourism pressures. The MCS project

will involve production of a series of leaflets, an illustrated booklet describing the marine life of the reefs, colour posters, display boards and an information package designed specifically for local schoolchildren. The Forum will ensure that experience gained from the project and any relevant outputs will be shared with other Dependent Territories.

## CITES MEETS IN SWITZERLAND

The Seventh Meeting of CITES will take place in Lausanne from 9-20 October this year. Among the items for discussion will be over 120 proposals for amendments of the Appendices. Some of the proposals are for species which occur in the Dependencies. These include addition to Appendix II of rat snake *Ptyas mucosus* and king cobra *Ophiophagus hannah*, both of which occur in Hong Kong, and transfer to Appendix I of lady's slipper orchids *Paphiopedilum* spp. again with species occurring in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has also been a major centre for trade in wild specimens of endangered *Paphiopedilum* spp. imported from China and southeast Asian countries.

Another proposal of importance to the island Dependencies is the addition to Appendix II of the stony corals *Scleractinia*, *Athecata*, *Coenothecalia* and *Stolonifera*. 17 genera of stony corals are already listed in Appendix II of CITES. Addition of these remaining orders will enable monitoring of all stony corals in international trade. It will simplify enforcement considerably and reinforce existing legislation in Dependencies such

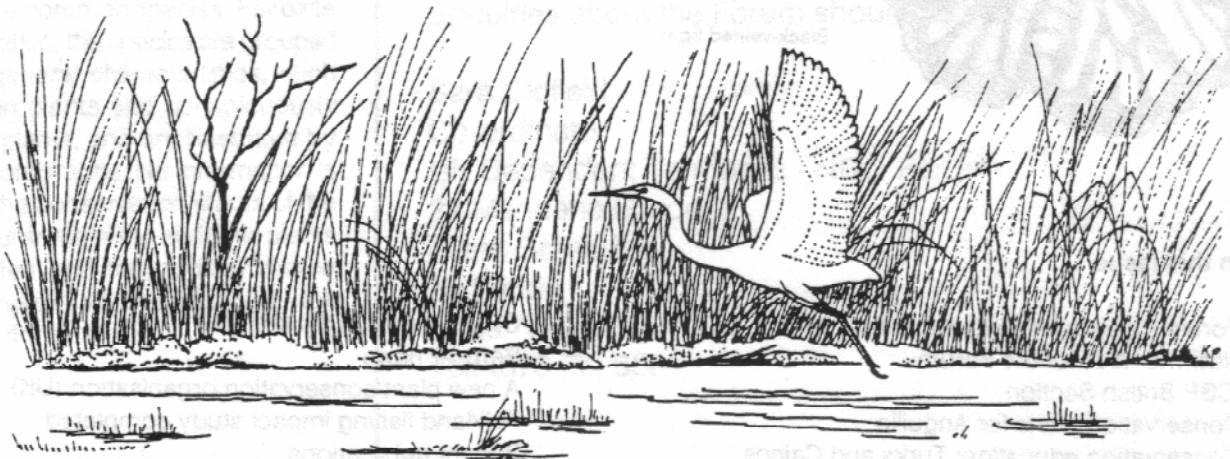


as Bermuda and the Caymans.

The coral proposal may prove to be controversial but the proposal which is already generating international media attention and attracting widespread public support is the proposal to transfer the African elephant *Loxodonta africana* to Appendix I. The tragic decline of elephants through poaching for ivory has necessitated this proposal which is supported by the UK Government. It may at last spell the end for Hong Kong's ivory trade. WWF is calling for an immediate ban on all ivory imports to Hong Kong and an assurance that the Hong Kong Government will support Appendix I listing for the African elephant. Meanwhile steps are being taken within the Colony to extend the registration of raw ivory stocks and WWF is calling for a computerised data base of all Hong Kong's raw ivory.

## RAMSAR NEWS

Progress on the listing of Ramsar sites in Bermuda, the Caymans and the Turks and Caicos remains slow. The sites in





Bermuda are however closest to designation, following confirmation of their current protection status. Progress on Ramsar matters relating to the Dependencies is monitored by a DoE/NCC/NGO working Group on Ramsar and EC Special Protection Areas. One of the members of this Group, David Pritchard, is consulting with the Forum over preliminary ideas for a study of Ramsar implementation in Anguilla.

At present Anguilla is not included in the UK's ratification of the Ramsar Convention. It does, however, have saline ponds and small mangrove swamps which are of considerable importance for resident and migratory waterfowl. The aim of David Pritchard's proposed study, which would be undertaken as sabbatical leave from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, would be to consider the wise use of Anguilla's wetlands in the context of the Ramsar Convention. David is interested in relating the situation in Anguilla to the experience, problems and progress with Ramsar elsewhere in the Caribbean, particularly in UK Dependencies.

## A NEW PLANT CONSERVATION ORGANISATION FOR THE UK

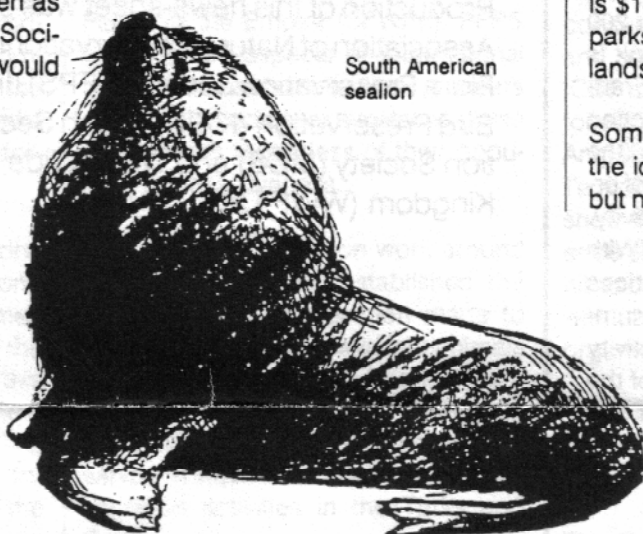
A new voluntary organisation called 'Plantlife' will soon be launched in the UK. This is the first time a membership society has been set up in Britain to celebrate and protect plant life, and it will fill a neglected niche in the conservation field. With at least 35 internationally endangered plants in the UK Dependencies, the new society intends to be active in the Dependent Territories and we hope that it will shortly become a member of the Forum.

## FALKLAND FISHING IMPACT STUDY COMPLETED

A two-year study to assess the potential for impacts of commercial fishing operations around the Falklands on the internationally important seabird colonies of the islands has recently been

completed. The work was undertaken by the Falkland Islands Foundation with strong support from the World-Wide Fund for Nature and the Falkland Islands Development Corporation. The survey report is available from Roger Wilson, Falkland Islands Foundation, c/o FFPS, 79-83 North Street, Brighton BN1 1ZA, price £5 (including postage).

In other parts of the world, fisheries impacts on seabirds have been serious. In the Falkland Islands, however, there appears to be only slight overlap during the breeding season between the penguin diets and the commercial catch of fish and squid. The situation with the black-browed albatross *Diomedea*



South American sealion

Bruce Pearson

*melanophris* is rather more uncertain, as the birds do take prey similar to that being caught by the fishing vessels, but they also scavenge around the fleet and thus have a new food source to exploit. That there have been no gross impacts does not preclude more subtle, long-term effects and sufficient doubt remains to indicate that continued monitoring is required.

The Falkland Islanders are acutely aware of the need to conserve their wildlife, both as part of their natural heritage and as an asset for tourism, another developing industry. The Falkland Islands Development Corporation has therefore offered 70% funding for the monitoring work over the next two years, subject to the Falkland Islands Foundation securing the remainder. A similar offer has been made to look at the status of sealion *Otaria byronia* populations which have suffered a cata-

strophic decline over the past 50 years for no known reason. It is hoped that both studies can begin during the coming austral spring.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### *Economics and Biological Diversity*

Sub-titled, 'Developing and using economic incentives to conserve biological diversity', this IUCN publication sets out the economic case for conserving natural resources. In one example of the economic value of natural habitats and wildlife the author points out that the annual cash income from tourism is \$14 million for British Virgin Islands parks and \$50 million for Cayman Islands protected areas.

Some conservationists are sceptical of the ideas of so-called 'market greens' but no doubt economic arguments will be persuasive in convincing entrepreneurs, bankers and government accountants of the need for nature conservation. The guidelines and case studies in 'Economics and Biological Diversity' will be invaluable to land use planners and wildlife agencies competing for limited finances from over-stretched government budgets.

The book is written by J. A. McNeely and published by IUCN in 1988. It is available from IUCN Publications Unit, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL.

### *The birds of the Strait of Gibraltar*

This catalogue of the birds of Gibraltar was published as special issue of *Alectoris*, the journal of the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society (GONHS) in 1987. It is the first comprehensive account of Gibraltar's birdlife to be published this century. In addition to the systematic bird list, the publication provides information on Gibraltar's physical characteristics, habitats and important bird sites. It is of great value for conservation planning at time of rapid change of land use on the Rock and provides justification for Gibraltar's international importance as a conservation site.

*Alectoris* no.6, Special issue is written by J. C. Finlayson and J. E. Cortes. It can be obtained from GONHS, The Gibraltar Museum, 18-20 Bomb House Lane, Gibraltar.

GONHS has offered a free exchange of publications with the Forum and we look forward to working closely with the Society.

**Guide to Birds of the Falkland Islands**

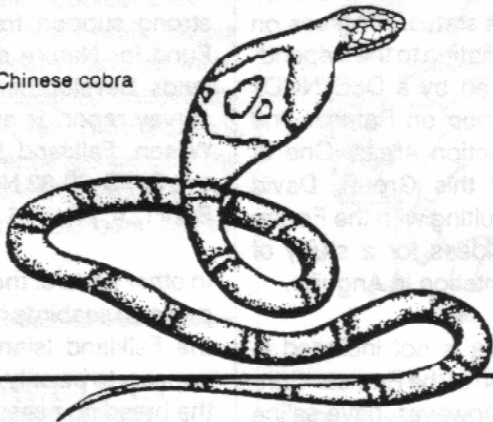
Robin W. Woods' 1975 book, 'The Birds of the Falkland Islands' has been expanded and revised. Published by Anthony Nelson Ltd., in 1988, the 'Guide to Birds of the Falkland Islands' covers the identification of all 185 species recorded in the Falklands or within 200 miles around the islands. The book is illustrated with 21 colour plates by Franklin Coombs. An introductory section describes the environment of the Falklands and records the history of ornithological and conservation activity. Robin Woods points out that, 'With radical changes in farming practices and tourism and fishing rapidly assuming importance, increased productivity must not be won at the expense of the most attractive natural inhabitants, the birds of the Falkland Islands'.

**Wild Flowers of the Falklands**

An attractive booklet on the Falkland Islands' wild flowers has been prepared by T. H. Davies and J. H. McAdam for the Falkland Islands Trust. The booklet is published by Bluntisham Books and is available from the Falkland Islands Foundation (address on previous page), price £3.50 including postage.

The booklet provides a simple guide to the flowers of the Falklands with a key to the more common species. For ease of identification, the species are grouped by their general characteristics, such as cushion plants and conspicuously flowering plants, and are illustrated by colour photographs. No information is given on the conservation status of the species but some of the endemic plants are included and the booklet should help increase appreciation of the Falklands flora.

Chinese cobra



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Enquiries about the Forum should be made to:

Sara Oldfield  
Co-ordinator  
UK Dependent Territories - NGO Forum  
22 Mandene Gardens  
Great Granisden  
Nr Sandy  
Beds SG19 3AP. UK.  
Tel: (076 77) 558