

WWF AROUND THE WORLD

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URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO SAVE CONGO'S WILDLIFE (WWF News Bulletin, 01/09/97)

Democratic Republic of Congo – Urgent international action is vital to help the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) save some of the world's most endangered species. National Parks like world-famous Garamba and Virunga, and the Okapi Reserve – all listed as World Heritage Sites – are threatened with collapse. Park staff at Garamba can now only carry out 15 per cent of the anti-poaching operations that were routine before the conflict, as much of their conservation equipment has been looted. Recent air and ground surveys undertaken in Garamba by WWF found evidence of poaching of the northern white rhino and also revealed many poachers' camps, 29 dead elephants, 24 buffaloes and 16 hippos all freshly killed. In Virunga 44 park guards have died on duty in the last two years, while twelve mountain gorillas have been killed.



Mountain gorilla: Being killed



Truong Son muntjac: Elusive deer found

ANOTHER NEW DEER AND SEVERAL NEW PLANTS DISCOVERED IN VIETNAM (WWF News Bulletin, 01/09/97)

Vietnam – Three years after finding a large deer-like species unknown to science in the dense Vietnamese jungles, a survey team has identified another new species based on skulls collected by hunters. Weighing about 15 kg, the new discovery – a deer-like animal with tiny antlers – is possibly the smallest of the deer species and has been named the Truong Son muntjac after the area where it was found. Living at altitudes ranging between 400 and 1 000 metres in forests with a dense undergrowth, the animal's small size allows it to move freely through the vegetation. Scientists also found several new plant species in western Vietnam. "It just goes to show that this transitional zone between the forests of the northern and southern regions of Vietnam is truly a biodiversity hotspot," said Dr Vu Van Dung, Chief Botanist at Vietnam's Forest Inventory and Planning Institute, who co-led the survey team.

GLOBAL WARMING BAD NEWS FOR BOREAL FORESTS (Global Warming and the Forests Forgotten by Time by Elizabeth Foley)

Russia – Two-thirds of the world's boreal forests could undergo 'significant changes' by 2050 due to global warming, according to a new WWF report. Russia's Pechora-Ilych, a huge expanse of virgin forests, and home to such spectacular species as the brown bear, lynx and grey wolf, could be among the 25 to 40 per cent of boreal forests that are expected to disappear entirely, mainly through fire and pest attack. As global warming begins to make its effects felt, all vegetation types in boreal forests are expected to begin a slow migration northwards to cooler climates – but not at the same rate. As a result most boreal forests are expected to undergo enormous reductions in area before re-establishing themselves further north. Scientists warn that global warming may also increase the reproduction rate of pests such as the spruce bark beetle, making the impact of climate change felt almost immediately.



Lynx: Inhabiting boreal forests



Galapagos marine iguana: Threatened

NEW ECUADOREAN LAW CRUCIAL FOR GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (WWF News Release, 17/07/97)

Ecuador – The human population of the biologically and historically important Galapagos islands increased from about 6 000 in 1982 to over 16 000 in 1996, largely because of migration to the islands. This massive influx is having an adverse impact on the unique scenery and wild species found in the Galapagos. A WWF report concludes that phenomena such as the production of tonnes of trash, illegal fishing and introduction of alien species must be brought under control by a special law designed to regulate the management of the islands. In the interim the Ecuadorean government has issued an emergency decree which bans all commercial and industrial fishing until new laws for the islands are approved.

MEDITERRANEAN FISHERIES FACE GRIM FUTURE (WWF News Release, 13/10/97)

Italy – Over 100 000 small and hundreds of large fishing vessels compete for declining resources in the Mediterranean Sea, with a possibly irreversible impact on target and non-target species. Despite the fact that some species, such as bluefin tuna, are on the verge of collapse, the development of some fleets continues unabated. Responding to the deteriorating situation, WWF and Greenpeace, supported by 39 non-governmental organisations, have called on states bordering the Mediterranean Sea to take effective action for the future of the region's fisheries and its fishing communities. "Time is running out for the fish stocks and fishers of this region," said Demetres Kravellas, WWF's Mediterranean Fisheries Co-ordinator.



Fish stocks: Declining



Danube floodplain: Restored

WWF AUSTRIA HELPS RESTORE DANUBE FLOODPLAIN (Donau: A Restoration, 02/07/97)

Austria – WWF Austria is spearheading a major effort to restore the Danube floodplain to its natural state. By cutting open and lowering sections of the river's embankment, the Danube's waters will again be allowed to flow into the floodplain forests east of Vienna, the last great intact riverine forest in Central Europe. Before the Danube-Auen National Park was opened in 1996, the floodplain was being choked by flood-borne silt. The project aims at re-connecting the Danube with some of its tributaries so that sediment can be flushed out of the floodplain and into the river, thereby revitalising the forest ecosystem.

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AFRICA

ENVIRONMENT & WILDLIFE

Barbary

Macaques

Monkeys in winter

Toothfish

Goldrush

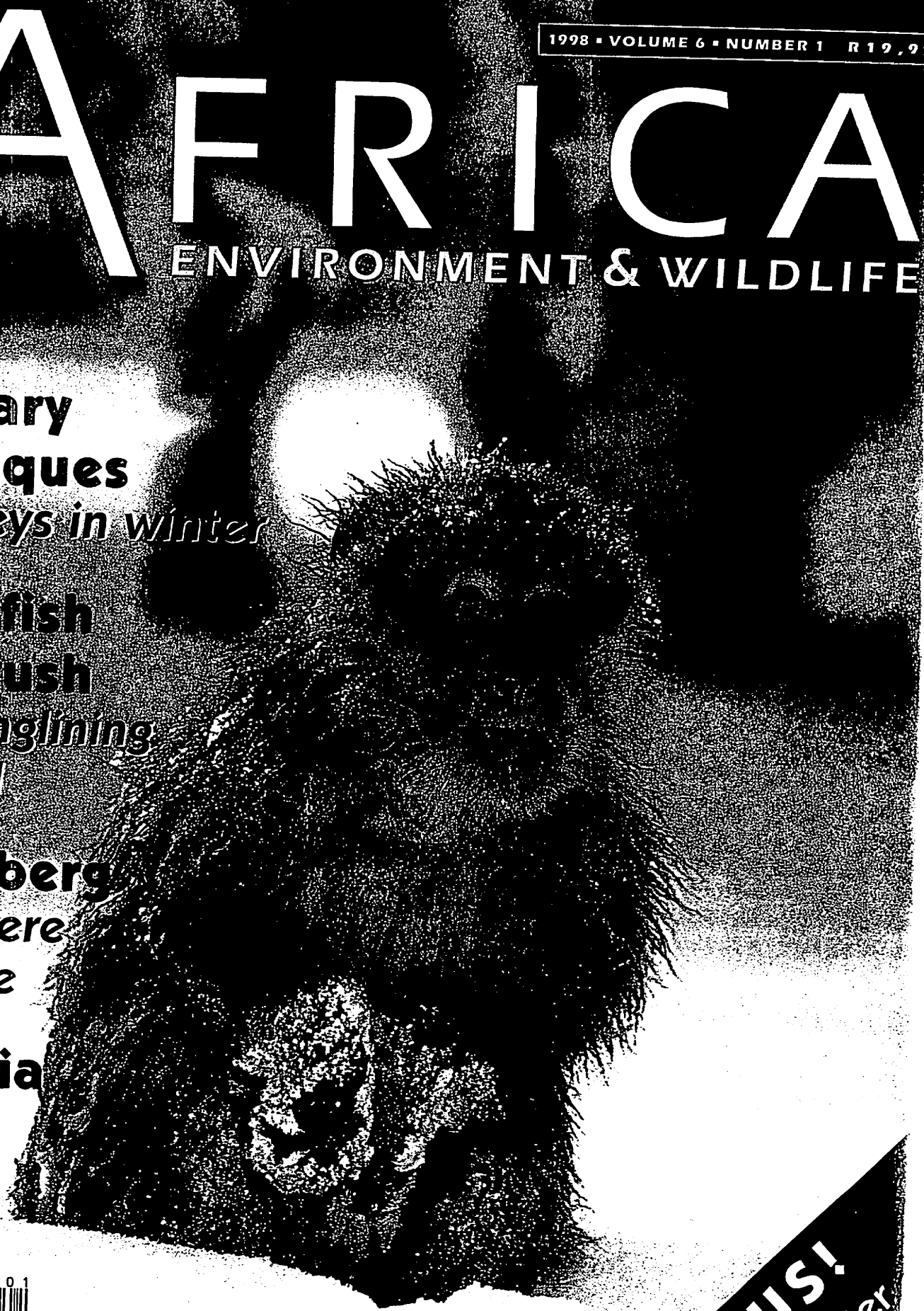
The longlining hazard

Kogelberg

Biosphere

Reserve

Somalia



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