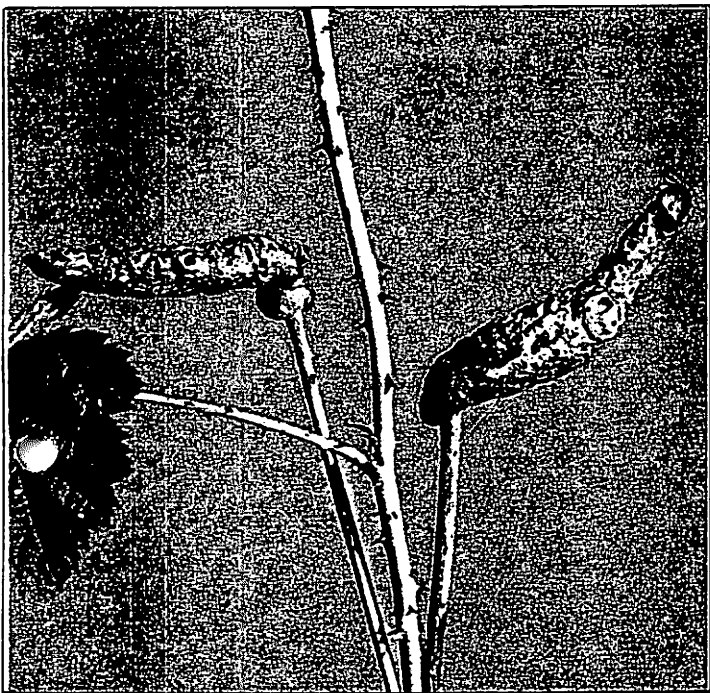


An oak marble gall from which a total of 31 insects emerged: each made its own exit hole, indicated by pins



Bramble galls made by the gall wasp *Diastrophus rubi*; these woody galls can be found at any time of the year, but those with exit holes have already given up their insects

must be taken to ensure that the right insects are being used. Galls frequently contain numerous parasites and 'lodgers', and a collection of galls might well yield more of these than of the original gall-causers. The identification of the various gall-

inhabiting insects is not easy but such a project could well be undertaken.

#### Birdsong

July is notable for the diminishing bird song, as compared with say the month of May. By the end of

the month, a marked silence has settled upon the countryside... but one remarkable singer, whose voice can be heard on most nights through the earlier part of the month, is the nightjar. Listen for its song - which could not possibly be mistaken for that of any other British bird. It is a strange, churring sound, more like the distant throbbing of a motor-cycle engine than a bird's voice. Although it has a peculiarly low, mellow pitch, it has remarkable carrying power, and on quiet nights can be heard fully half a mile away.

#### Young amphibians

An interesting sight to look out for during July is the emergence of young frogs and toads from the water in which they have spent the whole of their early lives. Sometimes they are so numerous in the damp grass beside streams that it is almost impossible to walk without treading on them. Their mortality rate at this time of year must be considerable.

## News Desk

#### Family tradition

The Yorkshire Naturalists' Trust has just welcomed Col. Geoffrey Scrope as a new member. This carries on a family tradition, for Col. Scrope's great grandfather was a well known naturalist - Charles Waterton. What is not so well known is that Waterton was also a staunch conservationist. A hundred and fifty years ago, when most farmers regarded owls and hawks as almost as great a menace as rats, Charles Waterton protected them keenly.

#### TV Appeal

On 19 April Virginia McKenna, star of *Born Free* and *Ring of Bright Water*, made a successful television appeal on BBC-1 on behalf of the WWF.

#### Noah competition

A storm blew up recently over a postal competition organised by a company calling itself The Noah Wild Life Company Ltd. Noah mailed competition entry forms to all WWF supporters - but this was done without the knowledge or approval of the WWF. The wording of the competition literature made it seem as if the two organisations

were somehow connected. Now, the company has agreed to abandon the competition, and hand back to entrants any money they have received: so if you happen to have any of these forms still in your possession, and are thinking of filling them in, you might as well throw them away as they are valueless.

#### Prince Philip Prize

Mark T. Joffe, aged 17, a student of University College School, Hampstead, has won the Prince Philip Prize of the Zoological Society of London. His winning essay was on 'A study of the leaf decomposition in a woodland stream'. The prize is for an account of practical work involving the observation of living animals, and is awarded annually to a pupil of zoology taking the GCE A-Level examination.

#### Sumatran rhinos

A seven-man RAF adventure-training expedition into the forests of northern Johore, in Malaya, has established that at least one pair of Sumatran rhinos are living in a 6-square-mile area on the slopes of Combak Pukin (3,500 feet). The Chief Game Warden for Johore, Cecil Rajah, later visited the area to inspect the rhinos' droppings and other evidence, and confirmed the team's findings. A report is being prepared for the Malayan Nature Society, and it will be recommended that the area should be declared a nature reserve. The team were from RAF Changi in Singapore.

#### ECY activities

There are many European Conservation Year activities taking place this month: for details, consult the programmes put out by the various bodies (see June issue for addresses). There is one event of great importance this month - though it is not open to the general public - which is an international conference in Cambridge from 14 to 23 July, on Youth and Nature Conservation.

The Countryside Commission has published a 20-page illustrated booklet on picnic sites. It is obtainable from HMSO, London, price 6s 6d. In the Netherlands, a 'nature conservation fleet' will tour the country, organising various events at each stop. A highlight of West Germany's extensive programme