

WORLD WATCH

GOOD NEWS FOR UGANDA'S WILDLIFE

Political change in Uganda has resulted in some good news for environmentalists according to Dr. Robert Malpas, an IUCN/WWF biologist who should know. Malpas spent a total of ten years in Uganda including a stint during the days of Idi Amin.

Amin came to power in January, 1971. In the eight years of his rule, law enforcement in the national parks and reserves took a sharp nose-dive with the expected result - a significant increase in poaching and human encroachment. There were reasons for this. For one, Amin's soldiers hunted extensively in Uganda's parks in the mid 1960s often using high-powered equipment and helicopters. As a result, the rhino virtually disappeared from the country and the elephant population fell from 30,000 to 2,000.



The most abundant species of rhino in Africa is the black rhino but it has suffered alarming decreases in recent years. The black rhino may not even exist in Uganda today.
Credit: Donald Paterson

Malpas believes that despite the decline in living natural resources during Amin's time, it was not all the Ugandan leader's fault. "The wildlife scene deteriorated during Amin's stay in power," he said. "This was not so much the result of Amin's direct action but because of the deterioration of the country's economy and the whole political system."

Today things are looking better. Improvement, however, came gradually. Immediately after the change in Ugandan government, natural resource management wasn't a first priority. "Things are changing now that a sense of political stability has been achieved," Malpas said. "The current President, Mr. Milton Obote, is very interested in conservation," he added. (IUCN's Director General visited with President Obote and Robert Malpas in Uganda in May, 1981. One of the newly-elected IUCN Councilors is from Uganda.)

With conservation consciousness becoming a reality in Uganda, the development of a national conservation plan for the coun-

try is of particular interest. The move to start work on a national conservation plan came as a government initiative and is supported by IUCN and WWF. Malpas indicated that the effort is underway to try to gather the necessary information and to draw up the basic elements of the plan by the end of 1982.

The process won't be an easy one. Step one in getting the plan going is to carry out an area survey of game and forest reserves. "We really don't know what the conserva-

tion status of Ugandan forest reserves is at the moment nor what the human pressures on them are," he noted. He sees the national plan as being less ambitious at the start if compared to other countries where an infrastructure for implementing such strategies is already in place.

"We have to find out what is there and then see what the problems are in the area," Malpas said. The important thing is that the conservation effort in Uganda is finally off to a good start.

OBITUARIES

Kidepo Park Officials

IUCN was saddened to hear of the deaths of Chief Warden A.M.K. Bendebule, Park Warden S. Ndozireho and Mechanic Katebalwa in an aircrash in Kidepo National Park, Uganda.

The plane crashed on take-off in late October, 1981. Junior Warden M.N. Adupa was injured. Deepest sympathies are extended to their families and friends in sincere appreciation for outstanding efforts these dedicated men had made to further conservation in Uganda.

Dr. Mario Dary

It is with deepest regret that the IUCN Secretariat learned of the death of Dr. Mario Dary, Rector of the University of San Carlos, Costa Rica on December 15, 1981. Mario Dary was one of the most outstanding figures in the world of conservation in Central America. He played a leading role in building and creating the reserve in north-eastern Guatemala for the protection of the quetzals. He was formerly director of the Asociación Guatemalteca de Historia Natural. Dary was also second in command of FEMAC and was host to the First Regional Conference of NGO's in Guatemala in December, 1978 where FEMAC was born. He was assassinated by unknown assailants on the grounds of the University of San Carlos. His loss to the conservation world will be sorely felt for he was not only a dynamic force in his own country in conservation matters but also helped guide dozens of youngsters on the way to becoming scientists in the field of natural science.

Fred Packard

Fred Mallery Packard, 68, a retired international specialist on parks and conservation for the US National Parks Service died on 5 December, 1981 at his

home in Virginia, US, after a heart attack. He was also the first secretary of IUCN's National Parks Commission.

Fred earned his bachelor's degree in ornithology from Harvard University, later conducting research on big-horn sheep at Rocky Mountain National Park as a National Park Service ranger before earning a master's degree from the University of Colorado.

After serving in the Navy in World War II, he moved to the Washington area to become executive secretary of the National Parks Association. Fred became a specialist in wildlife management for the Bureau of Land Management in 1962, transferring to the National Park Service as an international specialist two years later.

At the National Park Service, he negotiated an agreement on park use management between the US and Japan and advised the governments of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda on parks and public information exhibits. He helped arrange the First and Second World Conferences on National Parks, in 1962 and 1972, respectively, and collaborated in the preparation of the First UN List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves.

Fred retired in 1978, but maintained his active involvement in CNPPA, stimulating a number of new initiatives-outstanding among them being the International Parks Valor Award and providing advice on fund-raising, the World National Parks Congress, and many other matters.

Fred Packard was a Member of Honour of IUCN and a pioneer in the field of international cooperation on national parks matters and will be missed by all of us. His memory will be honoured by IUCN/CNPPA by renaming the Valour Award the "Fred M. Packard International Parks Award." A memorial fund has been started and all contributions will be gratefully accepted. Please contact the Executive Officer of CNPPA (IUCN, 1196 Gland, Switzerland) for details.

NIGERIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION TAKES OFF

By Jimoh Omo-Fadaka

The Lagos based Nigerian Conservation Foundation became operative on October 1, 1981. It promises to bring about a quiet revolution in conservation in Nigeria that may make conservation an important political influence in the management of the country's resources. The Foundation could also provide a positive and construc-

tive input into planning and environmental protection in Nigeria.

Though the Foundation's official launch will be in February, 1982, many esteemed figures from the Nigerian business and diplomatic communities are already closely associated with it. Mr. Olayinka Fisher, Director, served in the Nigerian Foreign Service. Business-men Chief S.L. Edu, Mr. A. Guobadia and Mr. A. Leventis join Miss Aduke Moore, one of Nigeria's most influential women, on the Foundation's Board.

Although much attention is expected to be focussed on development related issues, conservation will play a critical role in Foundation policy.

"Conservation and development are complementary processes," according to Chief Edu, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. "Conservation should attempt to ensure sustainable utilisation of nature and natural resources including wildlife. As development raises the standard of living, conservation attempts to guarantee the long term benefits of development," he said.

There are some immediate and basic needs in Nigeria that the Foundation can address. Chief Edu gave some examples. "There is the need for continuous utilisation of firewood as fuel. Our fishery industry is being crippled by pollutants and destruction of breeding areas. Our national parks need to be properly structured and effectively run in order to provide recreation and the preservation of some of our natural heritage. The Foundation will attempt to complement government endeavours in these directions."

The Nigerian Conservation Foundation, a non-profit organization, will encourage Nigerians to be aware of the importance of conservation and the wise use of all the country's natural resources including wildlife. It will work to raise public awareness of the issues through film production and the development of educational material for schools and mass media. The Foundation will encourage and fund research projects to offset the limitation of funds for numerous beneficial conservation projects being initiated by Nigerian and foreign scientists in Nigerian institutions of higher learning. The Foundation will also raise funds to carry out these activities.

The Nigerian Conservation Foundation through its efforts will provide the guidelines for the development of conservation policies and will complement government efforts in this direction. The work of the Foundation should produce a pragmatic framework for a new expanded concept of conservation and for the maintenance of the quality of the country's environment benefitting present and future generations. □



The Nigerian Conservation Foundations efforts may help Population of African wildlife that has been in decline like the African elephant.

Credit: I. Douglas-Hamilton

Jimoh Omo-Fadaka is with the Ecologist.

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by plantations of the same size. 80,000 hectares of fir forest are currently affected in Baden-Wurttemberg and Bavaria. The cause of the decline - acid rain. (Council of Europe Newsletter).

CHINESE WILDLIFE EDUCATION COMMITTEE FORMED

Three northeastern provinces in the People's Republic of China - Heilongjiang,

Jilin and Lianing - are planning to take concerted action to protect wildlife according to the *Guangming Daily*.

A joint committee has been set up to coordinate the efforts by schools, scientific research institutes and production units in these provinces. Experts attending the meeting inaugurating the Committee in Qiqihar proposed actions which include educating the people in the significance of wildlife protection and scientific research in this field.

In these three provinces alone there are 530 species of wild birds and animals.

According to the Committee concerted action is necessary because wildlife and wildlife habitat have steadily dwindled.

NEW PRESERVE IN GUANGDONG

A new natural preserve was recently established in South China. Guangdong Province has designated a 7,333 hectare area as a natural preserve under special protection. The area is well known for medicinal plants, Indochinese tigers, pangolins and spotted deer.