



Thylacine in Australia

This is an old photograph of a thylacine, the Tasmanian tiger *Thylacinus cynocephalus*, believed extinct in Australia for several thousand years and feared so in Tasmania despite rumours of sightings in recent years. But in April this year the *New Scientist* published two photographs of the tail and rear half of an indubitable thylacine taken in February 1985 in Western Australia. The dark bars on the rump are unmistakable. Kevin Cameron, an expert bushman, was able to take a series of photographs as he approached the animal, which was engrossed in digging at the base of a tree, its head hidden by the stump.

White Rhino in Garamba

In the Garamba National Park in Zaire Charles Mackie, Leader of the IUCN/WWF Project, reports that poaching is now 'generally under control', and that the number of northern white rhino *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* is now thought to be up to 17, including three born recently. With financial aid from the Frankfurt Zoological Society and UNESCO, much equipment has been brought into the park, including four landrovers, a tractor and trailer, a Cessna 185 aircraft, a 7-ton truck, radios, fuel and guards' uniforms (from UK via Kenya and then truck through Uganda). Radio communication and aerial surveys now permit good surveillance and a patrol post permanently manned has been established near the rhino concentration area.

Getty Prize

The 1985 J. Paul Getty Wildlife Conservation Prize (announced in 1986) was awarded to Henry and Jean de Heaulme, the father and son team, for their outstanding work in protecting Madagascar's unique fauna, and particularly for their work to establish a new 40-sq km nature reserve at Analabe.

Training in Captive Breeding

The international training programme in conservation and the captive breeding of endangered species, which the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust has been running for seven years, is to become an optional university Diploma in Endangered Species Management with the University of Kent at Canterbury. Candidates who are accepted for the very popular training course will be able to continue to the

Diploma if they achieve the required standard. In its seven years under the Training Officer, Dr David Waugh, 168 people from 36 countries have taken the course.

NCS for Vietnam

IUCN's Conservation for Development Centre (CDC) is assisting Vietnam to draw up a National Conservation Strategy. Early in 1986 Vietnam's Prime Minister, Pham Van Dong, officially endorsed the establishment of a National Board for the Conservation of Nature. Elizabeth Kemf, Editor of *WWF News*, describes some of the country's enormous problems after 30 years of war — 72 million litres of herbicides and 13 million tons of bombs, deliberate destruction of forests, coastal mangroves, wildlife and agriculture; 20 to 25 million bomb craters are only one of the problems. And forest destruction has increased since the war while the population has doubled since 1946.

Kouprey Plans

Dr John Mackinnon, leader of an IUCN/WWF project concerned with the kouprey, has secured the signatures of the three governments on whose territory kouprey occur, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, to a document which, among other things, accepts the need to establish a captive breeding herd in order to save the species. All three have agreed to participate. They also accept IUCN/WWF's role in providing technical assistance and advice. The idea of a transfrontier reserve between the three countries has been agreed and the area is to be surveyed this year. It is hoped to hold an International Kouprey Workshop before the end of 1986.

Cuban Ivory-bills Confirmed

Two ivory-billed woodpeckers *Campephilus principalis bairdii*, a male and a female, were seen in Cuba in April by biologists of an international team from the Cuban Bureau of Flora and Fauna. A female had been seen by two members the previous month and between April 3 and 17 there were eight sightings. Leader of the team was Dr Lester L. Short, Chairman of the ICBP Woodpecker Group.

The birds feed on beetle larvae which they get by scaling the bark from recently dead pine trees, and it is the destruction of these forests that has brought them very close to extinction. The area where they were found was one of secondary pine growth with few large trees, and most of their feeding sites appeared to be in deep holes they had drilled into dead pine stumps. However, from the air the expedition saw some patches of large pines that could prove suitable for the woodpeckers if they can be preserved.

The Cuban Ministry of Agriculture on April 23 ordered the immediate stopping of all lumbering around the woodpeckers' area and the implementation of Dr Short's other proposals, including the installation of guards. Local people were also anxious to save the birds, and at every point 'friendly and cooperative Cubans' assisted the expedition. So, says Dr Short, 'if the population is sufficient and the habitats suitable for breeding, the situation is very favourable for saving the ivory-billed woodpecker in Cuba'.

The team consisted of biologists from the Cuban Bureau of Flora and Fauna the Natural History Museum, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Museums of Kenya.

Jerdon's Courser

In January this year, after much effort and searching, the Bombay Natural History Society was able to produce a Jerdon's (or double-banded) courser *Cursorius bitorquatus*, not recorded since 1900 and feared extinct. The bird was in fact known to local trappers in the region where Jerdon originally discovered it in 1848, and one of them brought a bird to the BNHS searcher, Bharat Bhushan, having trapped it at night; two more were seen a few nights later. The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department has promised to conserve the habitat to ensure the courser's survival.

