

# Oryx

The International Journal of Conservation

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The website of the journal is (from 2008):

<http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>

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The Society was founded in 1903 as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, and subsequently named the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society. Fauna & Flora International is conserving the planet's threatened species and ecosystems – with the people and communities who depend on them.

Oryx - The International Journal of Conservation, is now published quarterly by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Fauna & Flora International. It is a leading scientific journal of biodiversity conservation, conservation policy and sustainable use, with a particular interest in material that has the potential to improve conservation management and practice.

The website, <http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>, plays a vital role in the journal's capacity-building work. Amongst the site's many attributes is a compendium of sources of free software for researchers and details of how to access Oryx at reduced rates or for free in developing countries. The website also includes extracts from Oryx issues 10, 25 and 50 years ago, and a gallery of research photographs that provide a fascinating insight into the places, species and people described in the journal.

The [Rhino Resource Center](#) posted this PDF in June 2009. We are grateful for the permission.

USA, will operate through three commissions, for North America, West Greenland and the North-east Atlantic respectively. Salmon fishing outside the areas of jurisdiction of coastal states and beyond 12 miles within those jurisdictions is now forbidden. Catch quotas for the West Greenland and Faeroes salmon fisheries, however, will be dealt with in separate fishery agreements, and this may be an Achilles heel. This new convention gives the North Atlantic nations an opportunity to conserve salmon stocks rationally, but will they take it? For a start the Scottish Office might put its own house in order and bring in some effective legislation to control the illegal fishing, or in plainer words poaching, that is the major threat to British salmon stocks. Ireland has very effective laws that enable inspectors to challenge anybody in possession of a salmon to prove that it was legally acquired. Why not Scotland?

Most of the discussion about the destruction of tropical forest has centred on the loss of habitat for wildlife or the removal of topsoil by rainfall. But in most, if not all, parts of the tropics, the forest is also an important source of food for

the local population, as Professor Abdul Manap Ahmad of the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia has recently shown in *Tiger Paper*. In Malaysia many forest trees produce fruits which can be and are widely eaten: *Durio zibenthinus*, a relative of the cashew nut, *Eugenia michelii* with slightly acid-tasting bright red fruits and various species of *Ficus* are only a few. Cashew nuts *Anacardium occidentale* themselves are very rich in protein and grow in tropical forests. Leaves and shoots of many species are eaten as salads or vegetables. The sap of some species, such as *Areca celiso* in the Philippines, is used as a drink. Roots are also eaten, as are many species of mushroom that grow in forests but will not do so after they have been felled. Animal food, too, is important in Malaysia (as in West Africa), and Professor Ahmad lists two dozen mammal species that are or were (for some like the gaur and the banteng are now endangered) eaten by local people. So those to whom the felling of forests is a sign of modern progress may like to reflect that whereas most tropical forest loses its soil and becomes agriculturally unproductive a year or two after felling, a real live forest continues to produce nutritious food for ever.

The sort of problem that park managers dread — an endangered species dying of a transmittable disease in its last stronghold — has arisen in Indonesia. Five of the world's 60 remaining Javan rhino were found dead between December and

**Javan  
Rhino  
Deaths**

February in Java's Ujung Kulon National Park. Some had suffered from diarrhoea and all had died suddenly and near water. The guards who discovered them fenced them against scavengers, and a team from the Indonesian Conservation Department and a veterinary officer confirmed early on that deaths were not caused by poachers — the valuable horns were intact and trackers could not find any human footprints around the corpses.

An emergency team, visiting the area in late February, decided that an infectious disease was the most probable cause of the deaths, but none has yet been identified. A link between the rhino deaths and those of domestic buffalo in the park surrounds has been suggested, but if this were so large numbers of banteng, the wild cattle, and other wild animals would be expected to have succumbed too; in fact, only two dead banteng were found. It may be that the unusually heavy rain of the period left the rhinos susceptible to infection and its spread might have been exacerbated by their enforced congregation in the drier parts of the park. All is speculation until more evidence is found, but the remaining rhinos are being watched and domestic animals will, as far as possible, be kept away.

What happened to the *Partula* snails of Moorea in the South Pacific is a classic case of the unpredictable consequences of introducing exotic species. The land snails *Partula* spp. became extinct in their wild home after a Frenchman, in 1967, introduced giant African snails *Achatina fulica* for food. These decimated the island's orange trees, so an American snail *Euglandina rosea* was introduced in 1974 to prey upon them, but instead they fed on the original *Partula* snails, almost wiping them out. At the last moment Professor Bryan Clarke, with a grant of £650 from the ffPS Oryx 100% Fund, rescued colonies of five of the island's nine species and has been breeding them at Nottingham University. Now the Wildlife Preservation Trust in Jersey is building a glass 'snailarium', with regulated temperature and humidity, to breed one species, *Partula taeniata nucleola*. The snails are especially valuable because they reveal unique patterns of evolutionary development. If *Euglandina* is ever eliminated from Moorea the *Partula* snails will be re-introduced.

The 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) comes before the US Congress for reauthorization this year and hearings have already begun. A strong anti-conservation lobby wants to see the Act scrapped altogether and conservationists are concerned that even if it survives it will be significantly altered. Amendments brought in during the past two reauthorizations have already reduced its effectiveness. Not one of the many species ready for listing has been accepted by the present administration, and hundreds more await action. A 1978 amendment, which requires that any species not adopted within two years be dropped, may mean that such species never receive protection. Already 1700 plants and 63 animals have been dropped from consideration. Industry now litigates every step of the way to slow the Department of the Interior from making final determinations within the required time. Another 1978 amendment created a Cabinet-level committee to decide the fate of species in unnegotiable conflicts with development projects – and the latter often win. An indication of the current level of commitment to wildlife conservation is the Interior Department's recent acceptance of comments on an environmental