

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.

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Sunderbans, India, to catch crabs and shrimps. When the poison is sprayed on to the water, crustaceans crawl out of the water where they can be captured, but it is reported that the poison is killing fish, crocodiles and other aquatic animals.

Source: IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter, October–December 1997, 16 (4), 5.

Forest owlet rediscovered

The forest owlet *Athene blewitti* was rediscovered in degraded remnant foothill forest in the Indian state of Maharashtra in November 1997 by a team from the USA. All that was known of this Indian endemic was from seven specimens collected between 1872 and 1884.

Source: *World Birdwatch*, March 1998, 20 (1), 3.

Indian rhinos continue to be lost

In 1997 Assam, which harbours 75 per cent of Indian rhinoceroses *Rhinoceros unicornis*, lost 24 rhinos to poachers: 12 in Kaziranga National Park, three in Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary and nine in Orang Wildlife Sanctuary. The state budget for Kaziranga National Park was cut drastically but non-governmental organizations were able to assist financially, and were it not for the dedicated staff, poachers may have claimed more rhinos. Three poachers were killed in Kaziranga in November 1997.

Source: Bibhab Kumar Talukdar, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati 781 028, Assam, India.

Gharials in Bangladesh

Gharials *Gavialis gangeticus* were seen in October 1997 in

the lower reaches of the River Padma in Bangladesh, 6 years after the last official record of the species in the country, when two young gharials were caught by fishermen in the Teesta River and given to Dhaka Zoo.

Source: IUCN/SSC Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter, October–December 1997, 16 (4), 5.

Pollution in Nepalese park

The Naryani, one of Nepal's major rivers, flows through the Royal Chitwan National Park and eventually into the Ganges in India. A recently constructed paper mill above the park is drawing water from the river at the rate of 250 cu m/minute; 5 per cent is consumed and the rest is released into the river as dark brown, foul-smelling effluent. The director of Chitwan is concerned about the potential threat to the park as well as the possible effects of small factories, and a major brewery and distillery also being built. A Nepalese/USA team is monitoring the pollution and the results will be presented to the Nepalese Government in the hope that conservation and anti-pollution measures will be implemented before irreparable damage is done.

Source: *Centre for Reproduction of Endangered Species Report*, Spring 1998, 1–2.

Giant catfish demise

Spawning adults of the Mekong giant catfish *Pangasius gigas* migrate up the Mekong River from southern Vietnam north through Kampuchea and to Thailand. It now occurs in appreciable numbers only in Chiang Khong, Thailand, where it is still fished despite declining numbers. In 1983 the Thai Government started an

artificial breeding programme to boost numbers, rearing hatchlings from sperm and eggs extracted from wild fish. The young fish are sold commercially or released into reservoirs and rivers throughout Thailand but there is no evidence that the artificially reared fish have ever bred. It is thought that the fish could become extinct in the wild within 20 years.

Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, April 1998, 12.

Smugglers occupy Thai park

Talay Bun National Park was created in 1980 in virgin forest in the Ta Nao Sri mountain range in southern Thailand on the border with Malaysia. Angry villagers, protesting about delays in granting documents regarding farming rights on the land they occupied when the park was declared, attacked the national park office on 19 February and set fire to tourist lodges, staff living quarters and a working area for the Queen of Thailand. The unrest is believed to be encouraged by gangs who want to maintain smuggling routes for drugs, to continue illegal logging and to lay claim to land for money laundering investments. Parts of the forest are dominated by armed Mujahideen terrorists, hampering officials in survey work to establish land rights.

Source: *Bangkok Post*, 22 March 1998, 1 & 3.

Tackling illegal logging in Thailand

The discovery of large-scale illegal logging in Mae Hong Son along the Salween River in Thailand prompted the formation of a special army task force to protect the forests.