

# Wildlife Reporter continued.

## News Desk

### THYLACINE EVIDENCE

The thylacine still seems to survive, in small numbers, in the Cradle Mountain National Park, Tasmania. Australian zoologist Dr Eric Guiler has for some years been gathering what evidence he can on this interesting animal, and although it has disappeared from parts of Tasmania largely due to conflict with man and his livestock, it continues to hang on in unsettled areas. A WWF executive accompanied Dr Guiler on a recent expedition, and reportedly they found tracks of thylacine.

### WALL CREEPER N DORSET

As we go to press, something like 200 bird-watchers will have seen a very rare vagrant indeed. It is the wall creeper (*Tichodroma muraria*), which is normally found in very rocky habitats in southern and south-eastern Europe. This is the first time one has been reliably reported in Britain for 50 years. In the *Field*

Guide its winter habitat is described as 'rocky valleys and foothills', and it breeds 'from about 6,000 feet to the snow-line'. Let us hope someone gets a good photograph, as we know of no photograph of this bird in the wild.

### PUERTO RICAN PARROT

Lloyd Swift, a director of the WWF United States National Appeal, visited Puerto Rico's Luquillo National Forest in January - an area which may be the last stronghold of the very rare Puerto Rican parrot. During their visit, his party was lucky enough to observe 10 of the birds at relatively close range within a period of three-quarters of an hour. This is not only lucky, but remarkable - as the total world population of this parrot may be not much more than 20 birds!

### JAVAN RHINOS

Scientific work continues on the Javan rhinos (WWF Project No. 475) in Ujung Kulon, the famous nature reserve on the



Rare - and recent - photo of a Javan rhino in the Ujung Kulon reserve, Java (Photo: Prof. Dr R. and L. Schenkel/WWF)

south-west tip of Java, in Indonesia. In their latest report, the WWF team of Prof. Dr R. Schenkel and L. Schenkel estimate that numbers may be up to 28, compared with the estimate of 24 or 25 in 1967 and 1968. This is very encouraging, and all the evidence suggests that if the present level of protection is maintained, 'the population of Javan rhinos in Ujung Kulon will increase'. But it seems that the area is 'not optimal as to food', since the animal's preferred foodplants are widely scattered and rather scarce. Therefore, well planned habitat management will be necessary in the future. Research has already started in this direction.

### SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

The Royal Society runs a very interesting and important scheme for sponsoring scientific research in schools. In the year ended 30 September 1969, some £4,500 was awarded to science teachers (mainly for the purpose of buying equipment), and currently 109 school projects are being assisted. One of the main objects of the scheme is that there should be active pupil participation in the projects.

Some examples of school projects are a study of the ecology of slugs, being carried out by the Brune Park School, Gosport, Hants; an investigation of the

invertebrate fauna of the Rivers Dee and Don, with particular reference to water pollution, by the Aberdeen High School for Girls; and a study of limiting factors in mice populations, being made by the Swadlincote County Junior High School, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.

### PENTANGLE CONCERT

A successful concert by The Pentangle, compered by John Peel, was held at the Albert Hall in London on 17 March. The concert was in aid of the WWF, and Peter Scott addressed the audience about the work of the Fund.

## On the Sea shore

By Bill Simms

I think I must have been about five years old when I first became aware of the wonder in a simple star-fish. It was lying there on the beach, completely dried out, and its stiff extended arms were just made for grasping by a chubby little hand.

That was many years ago, but my interest in star-fish remained strong, and whenever possible I have studied the various species. It is truly amazing just how many facts can be gathered even by an intermittent interest such as this, and I strongly recommend the idea of specialisation in one class of creature. The satisfaction of knowing a single subject very thoroughly is immense.

So perhaps you might become interested in star-fish - but there

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## THE WILDLIFE YOUTH SERVICE OF THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

Presidents Peter Scott, Harry Secombe, Johnny Morris, Armand Denis

Director Cyril Littlewood

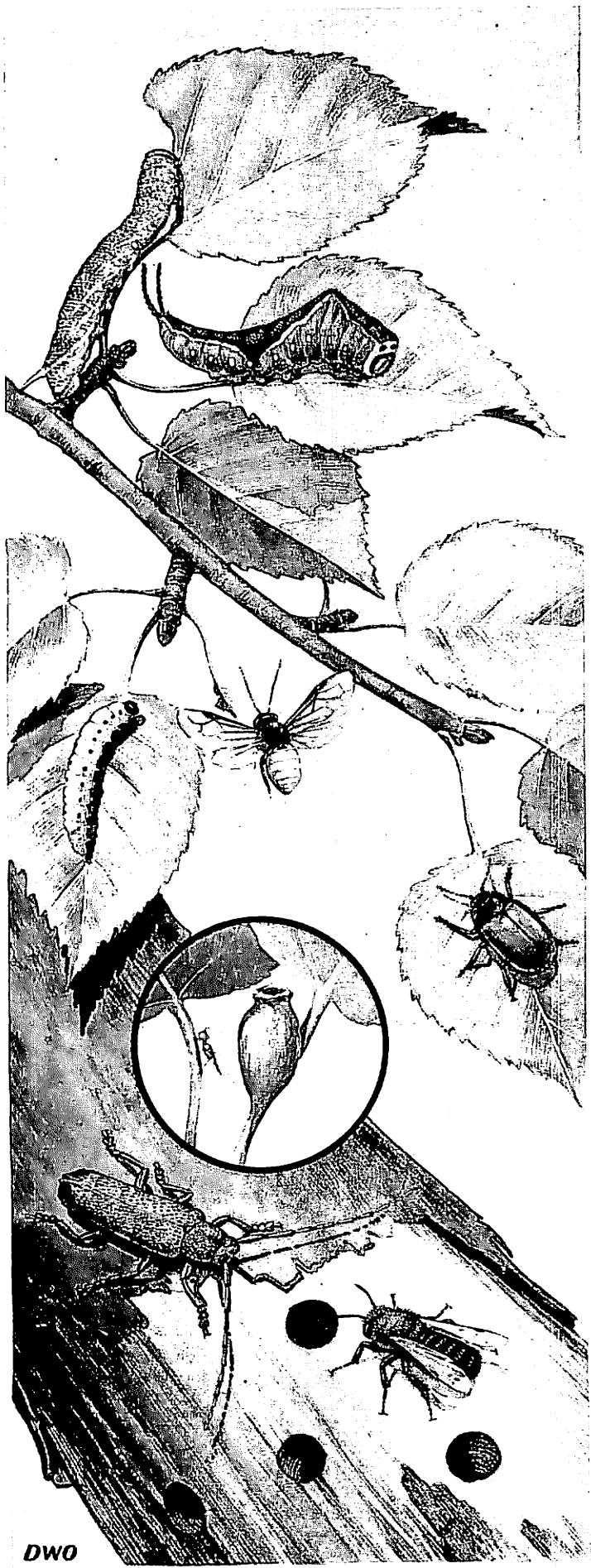
Field Rangers, who are full members of the Wildlife Youth Service, receive a free copy of *ANIMALS* six times a year, as well as the WYS Newsletter three times a year. They are entitled to free admission to special film shows held in different parts of the country, and may attend WYS Adventure Camps. They receive a Membership Card and an embossed metal Field Rangers badge. They pay an annual subscription of 21s.

WYS School Groups are affiliated to the Panda Club (up to 11) or to the Wildlife Rangers (11 and over), and can take part in many WYS activities.

AID Corps members receive a special AID badge, and help to raise funds to support endangered wildlife all over the world. AID stands for Animals In Danger. AID Corps membership is open only to Field Rangers or members of WYS School Groups.

Full details of all categories of membership in the Wildlife Youth Service are available from:

Wildlife, Wallington, Surrey. Tel. 01-669 4895.



*Illustration by Denys Oven-*  
*den shows some of the insect*  
*inhabitants of a poplar tree.*  
*Top left: Poplar hawkmoth*  
*larva (pupa in the soil, moth*  
*flies away). Top right: Puss*  
*moth larva (pupa in hard*  
*cocoon in bark, moth flies*  
*away). Second from top: Pop-*  
*lar sawfly larva and imago*  
*(pupa spun on bark, imago*  
*flies away). Purple gall aphid*  
*(in circle), winters on sow*  
*thistle and lettuce, while pop-*  
*lar leaf beetle, to the right,*  
*lives its whole life cycle on the*  
*poplar leaves. Bottom left:*  
*Poplar longhorn beetle (larva*  
*and pupa in burrows in the*  
*wood, beetle found in vicinity*  
*of poplar trees). Bottom right:*  
*Leaf cutter bee may nest in*  
*abandoned burrows of the*  
*longhorn beetle; the bee flies*  
*about, finds a burrow, and*  
*lays eggs in cells stocked with*  
*honey and pollen; larva lives*  
*in cell and bee overwinters in*  
*it, emerging in the spring*

pollen and nectar, and on the structural parts of the flower. A further group of insects will probably be found feeding on the fruits and seeds. In addition to these primary feeders there will also be numerous parasites, predators, and scavengers which depend on the tree only indirectly.

Identification of all the animal species is a difficult problem, but the project will still be a useful ecological exercise if identification is taken only as far as orders and sub-orders.

**Hedgehog activity**

The warmer weather at this time of the year brings various creatures 'back to life' - and among these are two especially attractive animals, the dormouse and the hedgehog. If you want to make the acquaintance of the dormouse (not a mouse in fact, but related to the squirrel), look out for a neat, round, grassy nest in briars or honeysuckle or some similar place about 6 feet above the ground. The hedgehog, however, lives at ground level, perhaps beneath gorse bushes or in rabbit holes. If you are lucky enough to have hedgehogs in your garden, remember that they are fond of milk: leave it for them, not in an ordinary saucer, but in an earthenware flower-pot saucer, which because of its

weight and flat bottom won't be so easily turned over.

**Sponsored Walk For Wildlife**

Ten boys from an Essex approved school will be making a big contribution to European Conservation Year when they walk from John O'Groats to Lands End this month.

The boys (from Chafford School, near Harwich) had the idea themselves, and persuaded their headmaster that they could do it, and would help raise money in this way for AID, the British children's own fund-raising arm. Starting on about May 20, the 10 boys will walk in relays of about 5 miles at a time; they will thus each walk about 100 miles during the 10 days or so that they expect to take to reach Lands End. The school bus will follow them, providing sleeping quarters, food, first aid, and so on.

The 1000-mile walk will be routed from John O'Groats via Wick, Inverness, Pitlochry, Stirling, Carlisle, Preston, Warrington, Caernarvon, Dolgelly, Welshpool, Leominster, Gloucester, Bath, Taunton, Exeter, Okehampton, Bodmin, and thence to Lands End, where they hope to arrive on May 31.

This is a tremendously spirited and adventurous effort, and it is hoped that, as in a normal sponsored walk, members of the public will sponsor the boys, so that their walk will produce a large and important contribution to wildlife conservation. If you would like to participate, however small your contribution, please fill in the form below and send it to the Wildlife Youth Service headquarters. It will be very gratefully received.

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To: Walk for Wildlife,  
 Wildlife,  
 Wallington, Surrey.

I would like to sponsor the Chafford School team for . . . . . miles at . . . . . shillings (or pounds) per mile. I enclose my contribution, made payable to AID Corps (Wildlife Youth Service).