

News Desk

White tiger swap

A straight swap — of one female white tiger for one male white tiger — has been finalised by Bristol and New Delhi Zoos. White tigers are among the world's rarest and most fascinating animals, and the only ones to be seen in Britain are at Bristol Zoo. Bristol has several zoo-bred females, but only one male, so in order to double the breeding chances the 4½-year-old male from New Delhi will be introduced to the group. A Bristol-bred female was flown to New Delhi in October.

PCBs in polar bears

The industrial pollutants known as PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) have been turning up in yet more animals. The Canadian Wildlife Service reports that PCBs have been found in polar bears, seals, and char from widespread locations in the Arctic and sub-Arctic. DDE, the DDT component most widely found in the environment, was also present in the animals studied — and alarmingly the PCB levels were greater than the DDE levels. Results of the Canadian Wildlife Service surveys suggest that there is widespread PCB and DDE contamination of this large and remote marine environment, and support earlier evidence that the pollutants are generally very widely distributed.

Rare pelts on parade

The pelts of tiger, leopard, cheetah, and other endangered species are still being shown by furriers in their collections, despite a voluntary ban on the use of certain carnivore skins by the International Fur Trade Federation. And pelts are still being imported into Europe, the United States, and Japan, often by devious means to overcome the strict export bans imposed by many countries of origin wishing to conserve their wildlife. The agreement made between the IFTF and the WWF/IUCN has certainly achieved some success, and has made the public aware of the problems — but until there is a complete end to the trading in certain skins, the animals concerned will remain seriously endangered. In addition to the ban on the skins of the tiger, snow leopard, clouded

leopard, giant otter, and La Plata otter; and the temporary ban on leopard and cheetah, the conservation organisations believe that the following species (together with ocelot and jaguar) should also be included in the list, as they too have been dangerously depleted: Chingungo otter, Huilín otter, Cameroun clawless otter, caracal lynx, serval, and the puma or cougar. The public should not only refrain from buying products of endangered species, but also make known to the fur traders their strong disapproval of the use of such products.

Rare crocodiles hatched

In a successful breeding project in Mexico, 15 of the rare Morelet's crocodiles (*Crocodylus moreletii*) have been hatched at the Tuxtla Gutierrez Zoo. The species has a restricted range in south-eastern Mexico, British Honduras, and north-eastern Guatemala, and was thought to be extinct until rediscovered during the 1920s. Intensive hunting for hides seriously threatened its survival, and steps were taken to save the species; in a series of expeditions a potential breeding population of 26 crocodiles was concentrated at Tuxtla Gutierrez Zoo and in a lagoon at Alejandria. The 15 young hatched were all from one breeding pair, but it is hoped that from now on more batches of eggs will successfully hatch every year.

one of the few areas in which the species still survives. It was once widespread throughout northern areas of India, but now numbers only about 700, the majority being in the Kaziranga Sanctuary, Assam; there is also a small number in the Chitawan National Park in Nepal.

Island memorial

The 200-acre island of Copinsay in the Orkneys has been bought as a permanent memorial to the late James Fisher, one of Britain's best known ornithologists. When he tragically died two years ago in a car crash, a memorial appeal was established to raise money 'to buy or safeguard an important seabird island off the coast of the British Isles'. Seabirds were the great passion of James Fisher, and he would have been delighted with the choice of Copinsay. Lying about 2 miles to the east of the Orkney mainland, the island's chief feature is its fine 200-foot perpendicular cliff which runs nearly a mile along the south-eastern side. Estimates of Copinsay's birds (made for Operation Seafarer under the chairmanship of James Fisher himself) show 10,000 pairs of kittiwake, 9,000 pairs of common guillemot, 300 pairs of razorbill, 100 pairs of shag, 18 to 20 pairs of cormorant, 60 pairs of black guillemot, 50 pairs of puffin, and 700 pairs of fulmar — not to mention gulls, Arctic terns, rock doves, and rock pipits. Peregrines have also been reported to breed on Copinsay in the past. The island will be managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

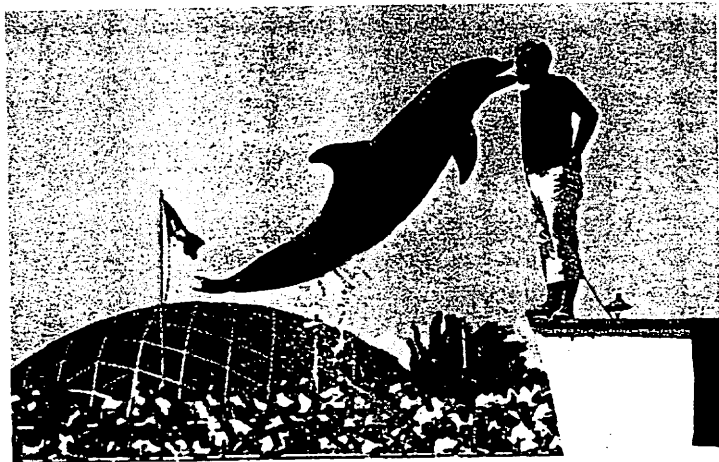
Rhinos slaughtered

In the past year, poachers have slaughtered 29 of the surviving 60 great Indian rhinoceroses in the Jaldapara Reserve in West Bengal. The World Wildlife Fund has appealed to the state government to enforce strict protection by increasing the number of guards, withdrawing firearms licences in the area, and imposing exemplary penalties on poachers. Jaldapara is

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Unintended victim

An unintended victim of the fight against the prairie dog in North America has been the black-footed ferret, which preys on the prairie dogs and is only



GREETINGS FROM LONDON



When photographers Jen and Des Bartlett visited London recently they came across this greetings card: the centrepiece photo is not of the London Dolphinarium, but of Jimmy Kline and dolphin at the (admittedly more photogenic) Miami Seaquarium