

IUCN VIEWPOINT ON THE CONSERVATION AND USE OF WILD ANIMALS

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources is concerned with the conservation of wild animal life, and has been involved since its establishment in promoting action for this purpose. A guiding principle has been the belief that sensible protection and conservation of wild animals and their habitats is consistent with the scientific, educational, social and economic goals all countries seek.

IUCN believes it is important to man's long-term well-being to maintain the full array of natural diversity in animal species throughout the world. Even the smallest or least-known species may play vital roles in the function of the life systems of the planet. Conservation of species necessarily requires conservation of their habitats—and of the ecosystems of which they form a part. Towards the goal IUCN, in cooperation with other organisations and with governments, has consistently promoted the establishment of a world-wide system of national parks and reserves.

IUCN has taken an active role in the preparation of several international conventions and has regularly provided the scientific background for national measures for wildlife protection. It strives to prevent wild animals from being seriously reduced in numbers, or the gene stocks lost by habitat destruction or over-exploitation. It believes that conservation of separate populations and subspecies is required in order to maintain the full variety of wild animals for future generations. IUCN supports scientific studies of wild animals and their habitats so that conservation programmes for individual species may be based on a knowledge of their biology and ecological requirements.

Many wild species, however, occur in reasonable abundance in widespread habitats. Subject to appropriate ethical standards, these may be hunted, fished or trapped for food, commerce or recreation. Such exploitation need always be kept in balance with the reproductive capacity of the species involved, and must not exceed the maximum yield sustainable by the populations concerned, or disrupt the ecosystems to which they belong. Because such exploitation creates a selective pressure on these species, the harvest must be controlled to prevent populations from being dangerously reduced, and needs to be accompanied by management to increase carrying capacity of habitats and the productivity of the species.

Management of wildlife usually involves both habitat protection and control of numbers. Wild animals sometimes come into conflict with other valuable uses of land, and may therefore be classified locally as "pest" or "harmful" animals. Reasonable reductions of the numbers of these species in the areas of conflict may be justifiable. Such reductions, however, must always be carried out with proper safeguards to protect other species and to allow the target species to survive in its full genetic variety and reproduce in its natural habitat. The survival of a species is considered by IUCN to be of the utmost importance.

In accordance with the foregoing statements, and in keeping with humane standards, IUCN recognizes that wild animals are commonly used for food, recreation and commercial purposes, and that with some species, reductions of over-abundant populations may be essential to habitat protection. It recognises that such use or reduction may enhance the long-term survival of the species in areas where economic returns are considered more important than aesthetic or recreational values or where wild animal life is considered of secondary importance to other uses of land or natural resources.

Where species or subspecies are seriously reduced in numbers IUCN urges the strictest protection against **all** exploitation. Where there is doubt, IUCN encourages the declaration of moratoria on harvest and use. It will undertake or cooperate in studies designed to provide a scientific basis for management and improvement of their habitats and increase in their numbers. IUCN is prepared to offer its full support to such protection and management.

WATER SAMPLING ON TORTOISE RESERVES

When the Short-necked Tortoise was the subject of the series "Our Diminishing Heritage" (S.W.A.N.S. Vol. 2 No. 4 pp 88-89), the need for constant monitoring of populations and habitat was stressed.

As part of the Management Programme the Department has arranged for water samples from the swamps at Ellen Brook and Twin Swamps to be analysed by the Government Chemical Laboratories. The need for this analysis was emphasised by the recent examination of the proposed siting of the Pacminex Alumina Refinery.

There are four sampling sites at Twin Swamps and one at Ellen Brook. Collected samples will be filtered and analysed to determine the presence and quantities of dissolved solids, sulphate, nitrogen, nitrate, phosphorus, fluoride, chloride and iron.