SEH-News

News from other Societies

British Herpetological Society. — Report of Main Activities in 1982

The 35th Annual General Meeting was held in London on 23rd March and chaired for the first time by the new President, the Earl of Cranbrook. Three new Honorary Members (total 10) were announced: Dr. J.F.D. Frazer (retiring President), Prof. A. d’A. Bellairs and Dr. E. Elkan. A presentation was made to Dr. Frazer after 26 years’ service as President (the June issue of British Journal of Herpetology was also dedicated to him). New Council Members were Dr. B. Groombridge (Editor, IUCN Red Data Book: Amphibia & Reptilia) and Dr. G.J. Walters, replacing Mr. J. Coborn, who resigned. The draft revision of the BHS Rules was accepted, subject to approval by U.K.’s Charity Commission. Reports on the Conservation and Captive Breeding Committees, and by the Editor of the Journal and Education Officer (Chairman, Junior Section), were published in the BHS Bulletin.

The A.G.M. was followed by a talk by Dr. H.R. Bustard (FAO Crocodile Breeding Project, India): Conservation of the Indian gharial (Gavialis gangeticus).

Membership: Members (total 701) included 79 from overseas, 158 institutions and libraries (141 in 1981) and 93 juniors.

Meetings: Nine evening meetings were held in London. A special meeting was also organised in honour of Dr. Edward Elkan on 14th September (his bibliography was published as a BHS circular in June) and a joint symposium on ‘Introduced Species’ held with the Mammal and Fauna & Flora Preservation Societies on Saturday, 27th November (reported on separately).

Meetings attended: The BHS was represented (2) at the Joint 25th Anniversary Meeting of the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles and 30th Annual Meeting of the Herpetologists’ League, 1–6th August, Raleigh, North Carolina, U.S.A. As BHS European Observer (Chairman, SEH Conservation Committee), Mr. K.F. Corbett held meetings in Hannover and Genoa. Dr. Lambert attended the 2nd IUCN/SSC Tortoise Group Meeting in Raleigh, N.C. (chair ed by Dr. P.C.H. Pritchard in the absence of the Chairman, Dr. I.R. Swingland, a BHS Council Member), and Dr. Groombridge the Inaugural Meeting of the IUCN/SSC Snake Group in Madras, India, 8–12th November. The BHS was to have been represented by Dr. Elkan (attended on his behalf by Mr. J.E. Cooper) at the first International Colloquium on Pathology of Reptiles and Amphibians, Angers. As a non-governmental member of IUCN since 1981, a BHS representative attended meetings of the U.K. Committee for IUCN.

Conservation: Following ten years of habitat management for Britain’s three rarest species, a site acquisition programme was initiated in 1982 for a network of small BHS reserves for the four endangered species of U.K. herpetofauna. After six years’ regrettable delay, U.K.’s Nature Conservancy Council re-appraised the National Policy on Endangered U.K. Herpetofauna in Autumn 1982 and promised Wildlife Link (an amalgam of voluntary U.K. wildlife conservation bodies, including the BHS) that a policy document, following a series of discussion meetings, will be presented to their ruling Council for ratification in March 1983.

Dr. M.R.K. Lambert (London)
Amphibian Ecology Group in Britain

The Amphibian Ecology Group consists of representatives from all the centres in Britain, where active research into amphibian ecology is taking place. The group first came together at Leicester in January 1982, and the second meeting took place at the UWIST (University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology) Field Centre, Newbridge-on-Wye in October 1982. The aim of the meetings is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on amphibian ecology, in order to define more clearly research objectives and to standardise methods and procedures. It is hoped that meetings will take place in the autumn each year, when accounts of the preceding summer's field work will be presented. The next meeting will be held at Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdonshire, England, in the autumn of 1983.

Anybody wishing for further details of the group should contact Dr. S. P. Gittins, Department of Applied Biology, UWIST, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff CF1 3NU, Wales, or through the British Herpetological Society, c/o Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY, England.


A Symposium on Introduced Species was held jointly by the British Herpetological Society (BHS), Fauna & Flora Preservation Society (ffPS) and Mammal Society on Saturday, 27th November 1982, in the Meeting Rooms of the Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1.

The Morning and Afternoon Sessions were chaired respectively by Dr. J. F. D. Frazer, formerly of the Nature Conservancy Council (lately President of the BHS, Treasurer of the Mammal Society) and Mr. I. J. Linn, Dept. Zoology, Univ. Exeter (Chairman of the independent Working Group on Introductions of the UK Committee for International Nature Conservation). The eight papers included four each on herpetofauna and mammals. After an introductory paper by Sir Christopher Lever, the herpetological papers included:

Dr. T. J. C. Beebee (Dept. Biology, Univ. Sussex): Green frogs and other illegal immigrants
Mr. R. E. Honegger (Curator of Herpetology, Zürich Zoo, Switzerland): Introduced amphibians and reptiles and their influence on native biota, with reference to Bufo marinus (read by M. R. K. Lambert)
Mr. Q. Bloxam (Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust): The potential of re-introducing Leiolopisma telfairii in the Mascarenes, Indian Ocean
Mr. K. F. Corbett (BHS Conservation Committee and Chairman, Societas Europaea Herpetologica Conservation Committee): Conservation of declining UK herpetofauna — successful re-introduction techniques.

The Symposium followed an earlier one, jointly held by the BHS and Mammal Society, in 1963. The papers presented are to be published in summarized form by Oryx, the journal of ffPS, in 1983.

Dr. M. R. K. Lambert
British Herpetological Society, London


A one-day Symposium 'Evolution in the Galapagos Islands' was held by the Linnean Society of London, in association with the Charles Darwin Foundation, on Tuesday 9th December 1982. The symposium took place in the Lecture Theatre of the Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1, England. The meeting was chaired in the morning by Prof. R. J. Berry (University Coll., London), 1982 President of the Linnean Society and Editor, the Biological Journal of the Linnean Society, and in the afternoon by Dr. P. Kramer (Essen, F. R. Germany), President of the Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) and Dr. O. Hamann (Copenhagen, Denmark), European Secretary of the CDF.

The talks ranged from a general consideration of 'islands and evolution' (Prof. A. J. Cain, Univ. Liverpool), through the geological formation (Dr. B. R. Rosen, Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)), genetical processes, specific vertebrate groups, effects of the introduction of an ant on other invertebrates (Dr. Y. Lubin from CD-Research Station) and colonization by flora (Prof. D. Porter, Univ. Virginia, U.S.A.), to the impact of man