

Reports & Journals

Report of the Advisory Committee on the Animals (Restriction of Importation) Act 1964 for the year ending 31st December, 1965. HMSO 2s. 6d.

The Animals (Restriction of Importation) Act, passed in 1964, came into operation on January 16, 1965. The Advisory Committee set up to check on the Act's administration has examined the effects of the Act from January to December 1965. Its 20-page report of that first year was published on February 15, 1967. (What on earth happened to 1966?)

Basically the report says the Act is doing well, nothing needs to be done—yet—to change it, and constant vigilance is necessary. During 1965 a total of 163 animals “in immediate need of protection” were given import licences, and 86 import applications for such animals were turned down. All of the refused 86 were for anthropoid apes, but a further 84 ape applications were successfully among the year's 163 approved imports for the so-called List 1 animals. List 2 animals, which are not thought to be “in immediate need of protection,” can at present have automatic licences issued by the Board of Trade. During the year a total of 373,133 such animals were given import permission, 90 per cent. of which were tortoises coming in at almost a thousand a day. Other big imports were 23,000 Old World monkeys, 6,000 New World monkeys, and 4,000 iguanas.

The Advisory Committee, chaired by the Earl of Cranbrook, has been at pains to see everyone's point of view. A lack of pungency, alleged to be the fault of many a committee, is frequently apparent—“we found that many of the larger dealers in this country are on the whole well qualified . . .” Count the mitigations. What about the larger, or smaller, dealers who, in part or whole, are miserably qualified? The Committee expresses concern over the illicit trading in protected animals which undoubtedly takes place, the fur trade's current enthusiasm for animals like the leopard or panther, the lack of protective measures for certain South American monkeys, wasteful methods of capture (necessitating parental destruction), heavy mortality at holding depots, and so on. Consequently it frequently recommends increased attention.

Its four concluding recommendations are that the breeding of rare animals in captivity should be encouraged, that stud books should be kept at least for the large apes bred in captivity, that scientists should think twice before requesting rare animals for research unconnected with success in breeding (one American unit has 27 orang-utans, 15 gorillas and 66 chimpanzees!), and that zoos and menageries could usefully be classified according to their standards of housing and management.

ANTHONY SMITH

Nature Reserves in Romania, by Emil Pop and N. Salageanu. Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, Lei 55.

A well-produced book with over 100 black and white photographs, a map and bibliography and 170 pages of text describing all reserves in the country, with lists of protected species and an account of the status of some of the rarer and more striking ones.

Whooping Crane Population Dynamics on the Nesting Grounds, by N. S. Novakowski. Canadian Wildlife Service Report Series, No. 1, 50 cents.

A much larger format (11" x 8½") is used for the first of this new series of reports, with colour photographs on the cover and numerous black and white ones inside. Although whooping crane numbers have built up from 21 in 1954, when their breeding grounds were discovered, to the 43 birds that returned to their winter quarters last autumn, the outlook for survival is not good, due, the author suggests, to the juvenile birds being more prone to mortality than the adults, thus keeping the population fairly static. High mortality seems to occur following a successful breeding season.

Populations of Large Whale Species in the Western North Atlantic with special reference to the Fin Whale, by D. E. Sergeant. Fisheries Research Board of Canada, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, P.Q. Circular No. 9.

The widespread publicity rightly given to the decimation and impending extinction of the Antarctic whale stocks is apt to give the impression that if and when this happens, blue, fin, sei and humpback whales will be extinct everywhere. This report is a timely reminder that on the contrary there are small stocks of all these whales, and some others, in the North Atlantic and other oceans which are also worthy of conservation. Fin whales are the most numerous, and both blue and humpback are described as not uncommon, but these terms are relative, and there are not now anywhere near as many large whales in the North Atlantic as there still are in the Antarctic. Similar studies are badly needed for other oceans.

Game and Wild Life Preserves in the USSR, translated by Joan Keenan, edited by Julia and Henry Field.

Scientific Use of Natural Areas Symposium. Field Research Projects, Coconut Grove, Miami 33, Florida, \$3.00 each.

Sixty-six Russian reserves are listed in the first of these booklets, giving date of creation, location, size, and special purposes, with brief descriptions of the main features. The second booklet comprises the papers of the Symposium on the Scientific Use of Natural Areas in Washington during the International Congress of Zoology in August, 1963, and covers strict nature reserves (Verschuren), deserts (Monod), wetlands (Hoffman), islands (Bowman), and shallow-water marine sanctuaries (Ray), with a summary by Lee Talbot.

A Systems Approach to Park Planning, by William J. Hart. IUCN Morges, Switzerland, \$1.50.

Arising out of discussions at the first World Conference on National Parks at Seattle in 1962, this handbook looks at parks and nature reserves as an interrelated system of areas integrated with national and regional plans.

The New Forest

A new edition of *The New Forest* (Phoenix, 42s.), first published in 1961, brings up to date the chapters by various authors on all aspects of the forest. A useful map shows the distribution of deer by species.