

NOTES ON TWO IMPORTANT CONFERENCES

By Vernon C. Gilbert

Two related focuses on biological diversity will be provided by conferences scheduled 10 months apart in Washington, D. C., beginning November 16-18 this year with the U. S. Strategy Conference on Biological Diversity under co-sponsorship of the U. S. Department of State and AID, and continuing with a 5-day meeting in August-September of 1982—an International Symposium and Workshop on the Application of Genetics to the Management of Wild Plant and Animal Populations.

The Strategy Conference this year has been called to provide guidance for the U. S. government on steps this country might pursue domestically and through international channels to promote the maintenance of biological diversity. The conference will:

review the scope, magnitude and sources of worldwide loss of plant and animal species;

assess the economic, social, ecological, political and strategic implications to the United States and other countries of a continuing decline in species diversity, particularly as it may relate to world food supply, energy demand, and industrial output;

identify and evaluate technologies, institutions and scientific knowledge available for conserving biological diversity;

review the nature and effectiveness of U. S. government domestic and international policies and programs; and,

recommend initiatives the U. S. should undertake to stimulate and assist an expanded worldwide effort in this area.

The genetic resources of plants and animals on which humans depend are dwindling rapidly with the destruction of natural areas throughout the world.

This is a situation which may reach ruinous proportions in the short space of a few human generations. An important means of correcting this situation would be to increase the numbers of national parks, reserves and protected areas, and to improve the management of the biological resources in these areas. This will be the subject of the second conference, in 1982.

The Symposium and Workshop on application of genetics to wild plant and animal population management is aimed at providing guidance to improving the management of genetic resources—specifically the management of wild plant and animal populations in protected areas.

The Symposium will identify gaps in our knowledge, and will develop recommendations for management practices to mitigate adverse conditions and trends known to be occurring or anticipated in protected areas. The U. S. National Park Service has a leading role in developing plans for this symposium.

The George Wright Society fully endorses efforts such as these which are intended to develop both domestic and international approaches to solving the problems of biological resources management.

Editor's Note: A July 25, 1981 AP news item provides a timely, pragmatic footnote to current pleas for preservation of areas whose genetic diversity has not yet been fully explored or evaluated, much less understood for all time to come. Dated Princeton, New Jersey, the story re-

...CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

counts the Squibb Institute's worldwide search for a substance that will battle penicillin-resistant infections and the news that scientists may have found what they were looking for in their own backyard: a bacterium that lives in the Jersey Pine Barrens--moist forest land that covers 1.1 million acres of southern New Jersey just a few scant miles from the Squibb laboratories at Princeton. In 1979, the area was designated the Pinelands National Reserve by Act of Congress, providing a federal funding umbrella over what remains essentially a state-run operation. Strenuous efforts currently are underway to block implementation of the Reserve legislation, most of the controversy centering between those who would preserve it and those who would develop it in conjunction with the gambling activities at nearby Atlantic City.



NOTES

D.C. CHAPTER MEETS. The first meeting of the Washington, D. C. Chapter of The George Wright Society took place at the Cosmos Club, 11 August 1981. A short business meeting followed a period of libation and a buffet supper, and a slide talk on marine mammals in the Western Arctic Icepack, by A. R. Weisbrod, followed.

Ro Wauer chaired the business meeting, and discussed Chapter objectives and needs. He asked Rob Milne to chair a nomination committee to present a slate of candidates for local offices at the next meeting; Heather Huyck, Destry Jarvis, Hugh Miller and Dick Weisbrod were asked to assist.

Time, place and program for the September meeting has not yet been determined.

TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE--1982. At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society on 6 May 1981, it was agreed that the first Triennial Membership Meeting and the **Triennial Conference on Cultural and Scientific Research in Parks and Reserves** would occur during the week of 14-20 November 1982, in the Washington D. C. area. The Triennial Conference was first proposed to carry on the "tradition" of the first and second conferences on Scientific Research in the National Parks, sponsored jointly by the US National Park Service and the American Institute of Biological Sciences; these

were held in New Orleans in 1976 and in San Francisco in 1979. Some 700 or more persons attended each of these, attesting to their importance to scientists working in parks and similar reserves.

The new series of Triennial Conferences beginning in 1982 are meant to cover the entire range of research--anthropology through zoology--taking place in parks and reserves, with special emphasis placed on the use of research data to the preservation and management of cultural, historical and natural resources. While national parks have been emphasized in the first two conferences, all sorts of national, state/provincial, and local parks and reserves were represented. The intent is to broaden the concept even more in future conferences, to include all important work currently being undertaken in parks, protected sites and reserves worldwide.

The autumn issue of the **FORUM** (November target) will spell out in greater detail the plans for the 1982 Conference...conference chairmen, session leaders, specific dates and place, call for papers, formats, publication plans, etc.

...CONTINUED NEXT PAGE