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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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ENDANGERED SPECIES (IMPORT AND EXPORT) ACT 1976

At the BCG specialist session at the Museums Association Conference in Bradford, 1977, John Burton, Assistant Secretary to the Fauna Preservation Society spoke on the above Act, and referred to the implications which it held for Museums. Three recommendations came from the session - affiliation of the Museums Association with I.U.C.N., the production of indexes to scheduled species held in Museums in Britain, and the need to develop displays in museums which are conservation-oriented. Stephen Horne has commented on the latter in this Newsletter.

I have received from John Burton the 'Notice to Importers and Exporters' circulated by the Wildlife Conservation Licensing Section of D.o.E., dated 17th January 1977. No amendments have been made to the scheduled species or to the implementation of control measures since that date, although minor modifications may be made later this year. It is also probable that Britain may make certain unilateral decisions regarding the scheduling of certain species and their derivatives. It is impossible to reproduce in full the annexes in the Newsletter, as they occupy 20 sides of very small print, but the notice itself is reproduced below, with some examples from Annex 1 and Annex 2 which may serve to clarify points raised in the notice itself. The complete document is available from Wildlife Conservation Licensing Section, D.o.E., 17/19 Rochester Row, London, SW1P 1LN.

The problems of scheduling species (and ending up with 20 page documents!) are discussed in the December 1977 volume of Oryx. At Washington in 1973 when the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species was originally set up and signed, few administrators realised that more than a handful of endangered species were involved. As pressure on the environment continue to increase and more species become endangered, the only real solution must be reverse listing, i.e. prohibiting everything except a small, free list of common species. This was suggested originally by Britain, and other countries are introducing similar systems. Unless complete agreement by the members of the Convention on reverse listing can be reached, it may be that the Convention could collapse as unenforceable. If reverse listing is agreed, then the specialist session suggestion of the preparation of specimen lists of endangered species could become a non-starter, unless some criteria could be found which would qualify 'endangered'.

P. Davis
Sunderland Museum

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IMPENDING MEETINGS

Osteology Seminar

Seminar, jointly with MAG and AMSSEE, will be held on May 22nd at Brighton. Details in Museums Bulletin or from Charles Steel, Booth Museum, Brighton. Reduced rate for BCG members.

Joint International Conference on the History of Museums and their Collections.

A BCG/GCG and Society for the Bibliography of Natural History joint conference on the above theme is planned for 1979. Provisional dates at present are 4-6 April or 9-11 April 1979, and the meeting will be held at the British Museum (Natural History).