

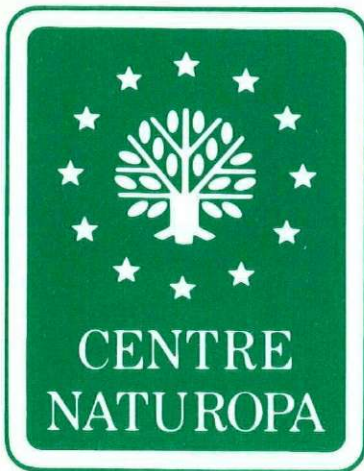
# Naturoopa

COUNCIL OF  
CONSEIL DE L'Europe





Fabrice Roubert



# Naturopa

# N° 77-1995

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## Towards a strengthening of legislation on biodiversity

**E**nvironmental blindness and ecological short-sightedness are two expressions which are making their way into the current lexicon. Can we afford to be fatalistic, to simply accept that the balance of our major natural ecosystems is to be destroyed and that a considerable number of species - each representing an extraordinary and unique form of life - are to disappear from the planet every day? Is it right, for example, that nearly half Europe's species of freshwater fish are threatened with extinction and that, more generally, the landscapes in which we live are becoming ever more uniform and damaged?

Agenda 21, adopted in 1992 by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development states that the current reduction of biodiversity is mainly the result of human activities and represents a serious danger to human development. In view of

the fact that this phenomenon is not just occurring elsewhere and far away - in the Amazonian rainforest, for example - it is vital that we take action. Indeed, as early as 1972, the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment indicated that humanity had a particular responsibility for the safeguard and wise management of the heritage represented by wild flora and fauna and their habitats.

In a regional international context, thirty European and African States, together with the European Community, have rallied behind the programme set out in the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats, in order to preserve their natural heritage. We must ensure that this programme is realised. ■

M.D-P



G. Lacoumette

## Editorial

**T**here is no doubt that Europe's natural environment, like those elsewhere in the world, is facing very serious problems. In quantity and quality our natural heritage is being depleted, and the worst aspect of it is that we are aware of it.

During more than thirty years of its forty-five-year existence, the Council of Europe has had nature and its conservation and management high on its list of priorities. On the suggestion of its Parliamentary Assembly, which has worked on environmental matters since 1961, the Council of Europe intergovernmental programme started in 1964. Its principal aim was to work against the trends that threatened Europe's natural environment.

In the course of history, humans have both enhanced and scarred the face of our continent through many civilisations and economic activities. Europe's environment has thus been heavily shaped by man. It still provides a habitat for a multitude of natural animal and plant life, but many species are faced with increasingly unfavourable conditions for survival.

### The fallacy

Our society today, rightly proud of its many achievements, and happy that recent political events have ended the confrontation between blocs in Europe thus bringing its peoples closer together, nevertheless, faces major problems in many fields. It is obvious that the various aspects of the physical, economic and social well-being of humans must be a major priority. Workable solutions must be found to give hope and reassurance to our youth, we must care for the old and infirm and we must look beyond our borders and reach out a helping hand. In our preoccupation with these tasks, it is understandable that, as we have become accustomed to doing, we take nature

at its face value, believing that it will "right" itself, overcome what we are doing to it.

This is a mistake and we should now know it.

### Bern Convention

Knowledge of, interest in and care for our natural environment have taken on a greater

importance in the field of the natural environment, the Bern Convention.

Launched in 1979, in the Swiss capital, as the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, this text has now been ratified by thirty countries together with the European Community, who are using it to protect and improve their natural environment and heritage.

At the beginning of my term of office, I am pleased to be able to express my pride in this convention and the importance I attach to it as the Council of Europe's major contribution to safeguarding Europe's wildlife and its habitats. Having drawn up this instrument - the first global nature conservation treaty in the world - the Council has a responsibility to monitor the convention's implementation. There is certainly also room for improving and strengthening the protection it provides. The natural environment needs our continuous attention and can only be safeguarded by international co-operation. The Council of Europe is ready to play its full part in responding to this major challenge. ■

Daniel Tarschys  
Secretary General  
Council of Europe



Council of Europe

importance in the period following the restructuring after the second world war. Our Organisation based its activities in this field on a series of scientific studies whose conclusions it distilled into resolutions and recommendations to its member states for appropriate action. This work has formed the core of the Council of Europe's environmental reputation and has included activities such as ministerial conferences, environmental awards and one of the major legal instru-

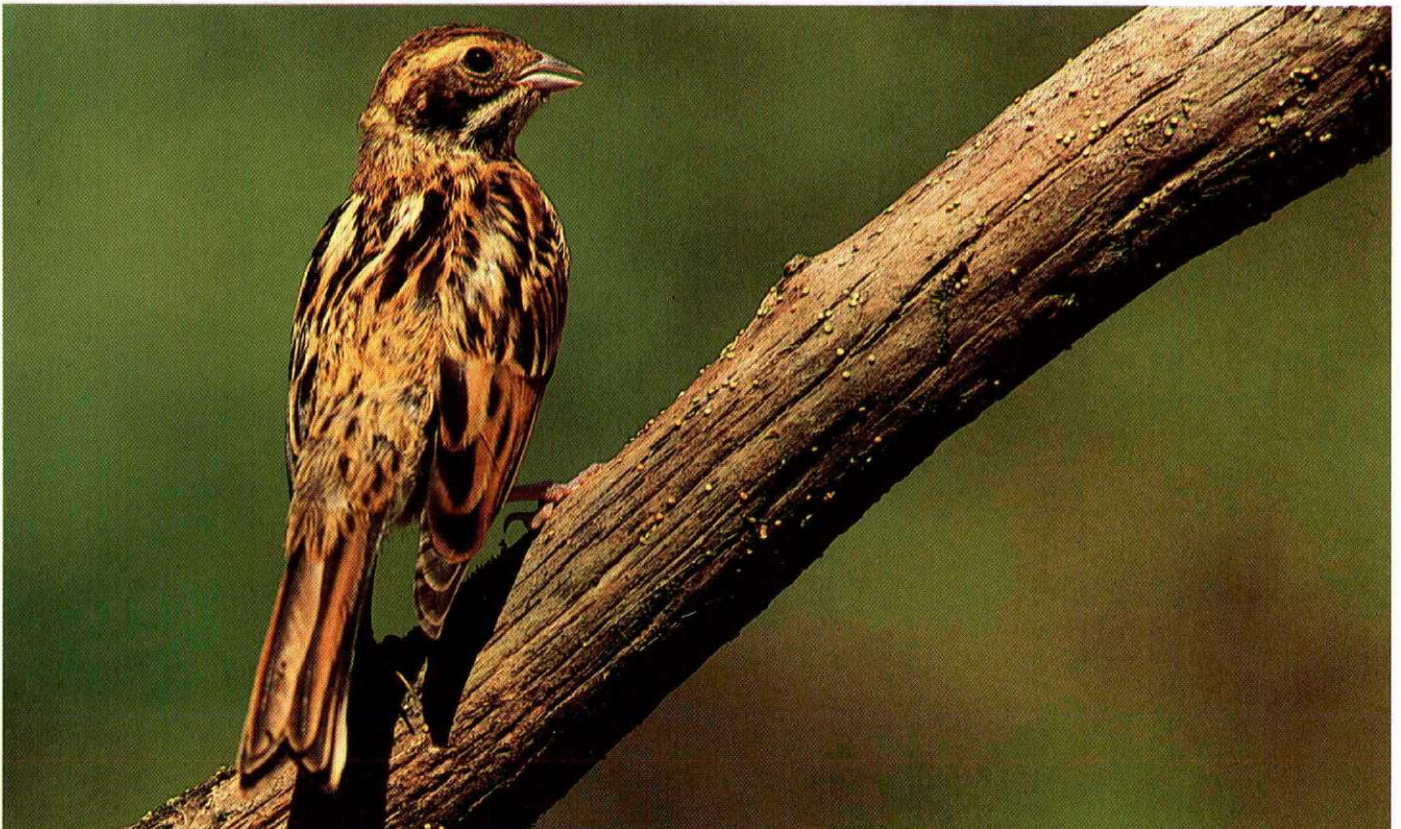


*Cormorants*



The aims of this Convention are to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, especially those species and habitats whose conservation requires the co-operation of several States, and to promote such co-operation.

*Reed Bunting, female*



# A personal view

*Eladio Fernández-Galiano*

**T**he Bern Convention has been around for little more than fifteen years since its signature in September 1979. At the time it was greeted with great enthusiasm by European conservationists. It was the first time that a significant number of states had agreed on a "global conservation" treaty, dealing with all aspects of nature conservation on a European-wide scale. The Bern Convention was a whole strategy - a complete conservation programme for Europe - where signatory states agreed to take a very thorough series of measures regarding their wildlife and natural habitats. It is now time to take a look to see what we have accomplished and what has gone wrong, so that the challenges of the future can be better confronted.

## Achievements

The secretariat has a privileged view of what the convention is and means. It is in the centre of events, working with governments, experts, non-governmental organisations and the public. Since it entered into force on 1 June 1982, I believe the Bern Convention has achieved, in particular, the following:

- the compilation of the first comprehensive list of protected species for the whole of the continent, and the setting up of certain "quality standards" in the way the governments concerned deal with nature conservation; all parties have extensively modified their legislation so as to bring it into line with these standards;
- the extension of its principles and standards to the whole of western Europe and, in recent years, to a number of eastern European states;
- the controls set up to check its implementation; as illustrated by both the willingness of parties to open files when there was a suspicion that the convention was not being respected and the very effective role of NGOs in presenting and negotiating such alleged violations. The standing committee of the convention has become what has been described as "an open laboratory" of international relations, where scientists, NGOs and governments come to agreements both on general matters of principle and, more specifically, in "hot" cases;
- the excellent work of scientific and technical groups, which has provided high-quality information thus enabling governments to take appropriate action;
- the development of co-operation activities with other conventions;
- the avoidance of heavy bureaucracy, favouring a direct, fast and creative way of

conflict solving based on openness, personal contacts and goodwill.

## Room for improvement

The convention has also had, and still has, its weak points, which include the following:

- its very imprecise way of ensuring legal protection of threatened natural habitats;
- its lack of success in modifying agricultural, forestry, fishing and development policies so as to make them more in line with the objectives of the convention;
- its very limited means, both in terms of human resources and budget, which have hindered the development of a more ambitious programme;
- its inability to solve, after years of negotiation, some very important cases, such as the degradation of important nesting sites for marine turtles in Zakynthos, Greece.

The convention is set to develop in a international legal context marked by two new

treaties: the EC Habitats Directive, which affects half of the present parties to the convention, and the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity. Unlike the Bern Convention, both these treaties are backed by powerful financial mechanisms, well-staffed secretariats and an enormous amount of political support, public attention and NGO interest. They are also technically more complete, as conservation thinking has evolved greatly in the last fifteen years. To avoid becoming irrelevant, the Bern Convention has to look for a new role, dealing with new subjects and trying, on the one hand, to extend to non-EU states the new approach to habitat conservation found in the Habitats Directive and, on the other, to act as a regional treaty capable of co-ordinating the implementation, in Europe, of many of the provisions contained in the Rio Convention. It will not be simple but, if the parties are willing, it promises to be rewarding. ■

*E. Fernández-Galiano*  
Secretariat of the Bern Convention  
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*Bialowieza National Park (Poland)*



G. Lacourmette

# The Bern Convention: its potential and objectives

*Antti Haapanen*

In Finland we have a proverb: "Sanasta miestä, sarvesta härkää". It is very difficult to translate. It means approximately that you can take as good hold from the words of a man as from the horns of an ox. In other words we should believe what a person is saying. In the same way, the international community has a right to believe that a government has understood its duties when becoming a party to the Bern Convention.

## Species diversity

Article 2 of this convention explicitly asks the parties to maintain the populations of wild flora and fauna at a level that corresponds to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, taking into account the needs of subspecies and varieties or forms at risk locally. It clearly means, in more modern wording, that the biodiversity of a species is to be preserved. Also equally clear is the text concerning the need to ensure the conservation of the habitats of wild flora and fauna species, especially those specified in Appendices I and II of the convention. Unfortunately, obligations to conserve endangered natural habitats have not been thoroughly specified. However, special attention must be paid to protecting important areas such as the breeding, staging, wintering, moulting and feeding areas of migratory species.

I understand that Article 14 gives the standing committee of the convention a relatively independent responsibility in the application of the convention. The standing committee can thus make recommendations to contracting parties concerning measures to be taken.

It is my opinion that there are many people who are not fully satisfied with the implementation of the convention and its results since it entered into force - I have to say I am one of them.

## The Monaco Symposium

The recent Monaco Symposium was an important step forward in improving the

implementation of the convention. Although formally it was just a working group meeting organised by the standing committee, most parties sent a delegation that was ready to discuss any delicate problem. It was generally accepted that the Bern Convention could play an important role in Europe in conserving European biodiversity in the same way as the Rio Biodiversity Convention. I agree that we need a regional convention that specifies the goals and tasks in a more detailed way than the Rio Convention.

If the parties are ready to follow the Monaco

## More emphasis on habitat conservation

As far as the implementation of the Bern Convention is concerned, I think we have paid perhaps too much attention to certain cases, involving, very often, only specific species and their habitats. Although they deserve our attention, more consideration must be given to habitat conservation. Species are seldom effective indicators of the state of nature conservation throughout the whole continent. We need in Europe undeveloped natural areas, not just



F. Zvartov/Ptutici

Declaration the standing committee must decide what this will mean in practice.

In the framework of Nordic co-operation we identify the biogeographical regions in the Nordic countries as well as the vegetation and geomorphological types (habitat types) found there. Threatened species are also identified since they constitute the main elements of biodiversity to be protected in the Nordic region. The most important parts of this information exist already.

on its edges but also in its very heart. It is a considerable challenge for the standing committee to point out to the parties their duties in this respect. The reporting system used so far has not been able to show any achievements in establishing national parks, nature reserves and other protected habitats. There were certainly many occasions when this would have been a wise choice.

Biological regions and their natural habitat types from across Europe must be identified

and the information used jointly as a key element in biodiversity conservation. I think this information could be collected fairly easily if we accept that the classification must not be too detailed at first. Later on, more detailed systems can be developed and applied. Nothing prevents this in countries where information already exists in a detailed form, this can also be used.

## Reporting system

The reporting system has been considerably developed. As is already the case when asking for a species to be excluded from the convention, information could likewise be provided on the current state of biodiversity conservation. This information should be stored in an information centre where it can be developed into such a form as to make it easily accessible. Such reports shall then be analysed by the standing committee. It could then make conclusions on how far national parks and other nature reserves reported by the parties go towards fulfilling the idea of a network of representative ecological areas - Eeconet, as it was named during a conference hosted by Dutch and Hungarian officials some years ago. If this does not seem to be the case the standing committee can make, according to Article 14, recommendations to a contracting party on the measures to be taken.

Regular surveys should be made to assess how well Eeconet serves migratory species as regards breeding, resting and wintering areas. In this the Bern Convention could act for the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) as a local agreement. Birds are not the only migratory species in nature, many bats, cetaceans and fish species migrate regularly in different seasons, too.

## European co-operation

As regards European co-operation in wetland conservation, we should go much further than is possible under the Ramsar Convention. For example, amphibian species and dragonflies could be used as good bio-indicators in this context. I think in large areas of Europe, wetlands should be reconstructed so as to enhance the ecological diversity of the areas concerned.

## Co-operation with an information centre

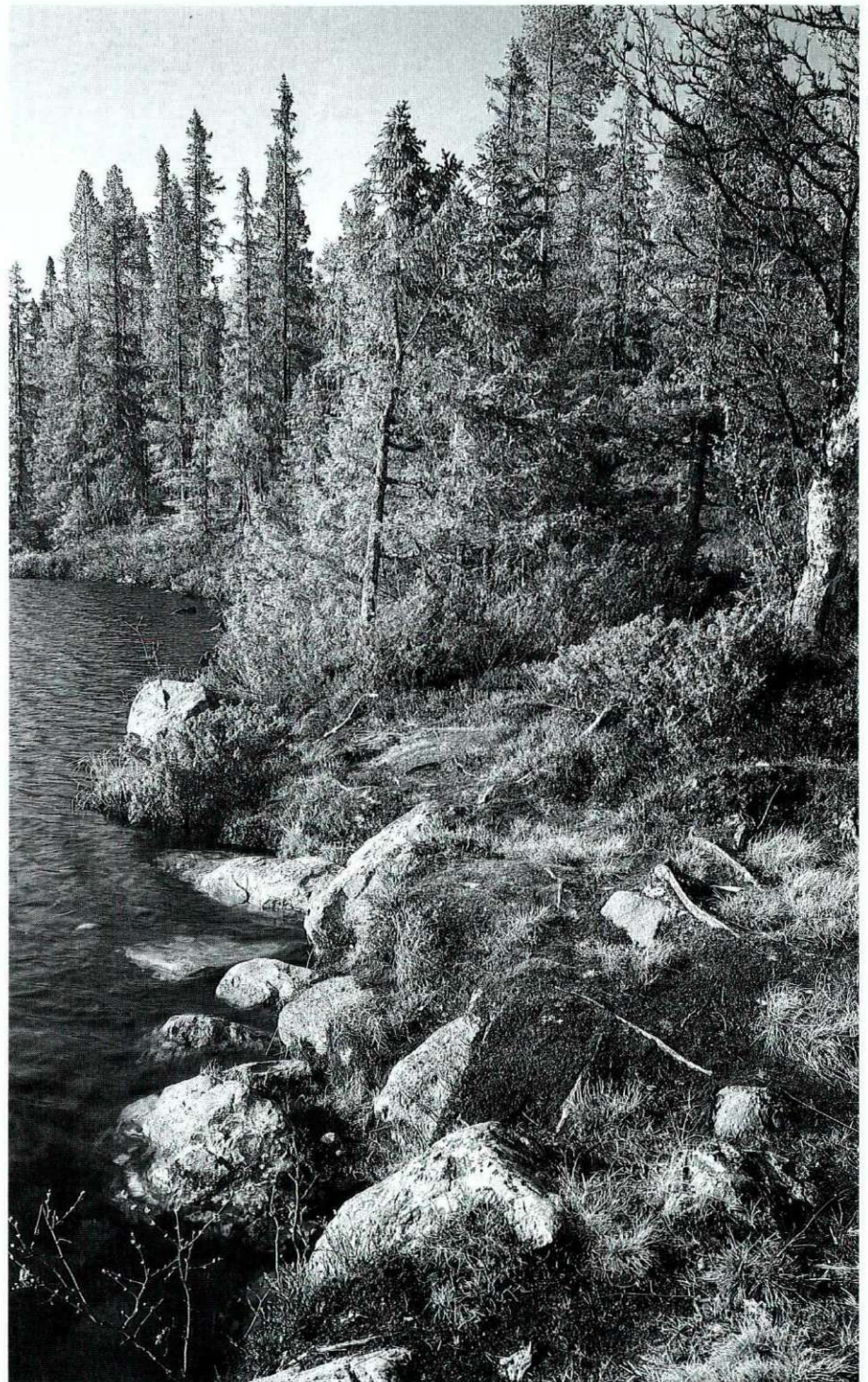
Parties to the Bern Convention should make a deal with a suitable information centre, for example the European Environment Agency or the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), which would then help in the application of the convention. Parties should be ready to pay since it will allow the secretariat to concentrate on other essential tasks. Such an information centre could help considerably in the implementation of the convention. Modern methods of sending information make it fairly easy for parties to

provide the centre with the necessary information. We must, however, remember that even in Europe there are different types of countries as far as technical development or conservation expertise are concerned. When new systems are developed these differences must be taken into account.

In conclusion, the Bern Convention provides the parties with a very good apparatus for maintaining and even enhancing Europe's biodiversity. The Monaco Declaration sug-

gested many effective ways of improving the convention's implementation. The standing committee has a duty to show the parties the measures that need to be taken. The parties need to show that they deserve the trust of the international community when implementing the convention. ■

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G. Lacourrette

# Community law

Ludwig Krämer

The European Community's approval of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats is enshrined in the Council's decision of 3 December 1981 (82/72 EEC). This means that Bern Convention's provisions are now an integral part of Community law. They are applicable throughout the territory of the Community irrespective of whether a particular member state is or is not a party to the convention. With each enlargement of the European Community - in 1986 with the accession of Spain and Portugal, in 1990 with the entry of the new German Länder and in 1995 with the accession of Sweden, Finland and Austria - the field of application of the decision of 3 December became considerably wider.

By far the majority of member states of the European Union have also signed and ratified the convention. This being so, a question that has arisen on several occasions is whether the convention's provisions are to be implemented by the European Community or by the member states which have signed the convention. The decision of 3 December leaves no doubt as to the answer:

"... the Community will take part in such implementation by exercising the powers resulting from existing common rules and those acquired by it by virtue of future acts adopted by the Council ..."

In other words, the Community's secondary legislation determines whether the convention is implemented by the member states of the Community or by the Community itself;

the main items of secondary legislation to date are the Convention on the Conservation of Wild Birds and the Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. In practice, the emphasis placed by the Community on the protection of habitats and wild fauna and flora has not generated any divergence of interpretation as between the Bern Convention and Community law: the two instruments function like communicating vessels. It is to be hoped that the combined effect of the Convention's provisions and those of Community legislation will be to make the conservation of Europe's natural habitats still more effective, for these are as vulnerable as ever and need the best possible protection through measures taken at national, Community and international level. ■

L. Krämer

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# Otter seminar

Addy de Jongh

In June 1994 a remarkable seminar on the Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra* L.) was organised by the Council of Europe, the IUCN, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Nature Management, and the Otterpark Aqualutra in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. The main aim of this seminar was to make practical recommendations after an exchange of knowledge, experiences and opinions about the conservation of the otter and its habitat throughout Europe. These were produced in six workshops: habitat protection; ecological networks; pollution; field research; captive research; and education.

## Habitat protection and eco-networks

The measures needed to protect habitats are aimed primarily at restoring habitats in the west and maintaining them in the east. Measures should be taken with regard to legislation, hunting, fishing, land and water use, protection of existing habitats and ecological networks, traffic, tourism and pollution. The recent economic development of central and eastern European countries should take account of these measures. Mistakes made in the west should not be copied in these countries, because it is more expensive to restore than to preserve. Besides, restored nature is only a poor substitute for what once was there. What is lost, is lost forever.

Participants agreed on the establishment of a pan-European programme for the conservation of otters and their habitats, the planning and carrying out of bilateral programmes involving states from the east and west, the assignment of appropriate management, protection and/or restoration measures to areas important to otters and the integration of these areas in other programmes (for example, Nature 2000, Ramsar sites, Biosphere Reserves, Eeconet areas, etc).

## Pollution and field research

Exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) is assumed to be one of the main causes for the decline of otter populations in most European habitats. Until now only correlations between PCB levels in otter tissues and the status of populations point in this direction. Therefore it is necessary to clarify the cause-effect link.

In addition, more effort should be put into extrapolation experiments with other animals; application and testing of non-invasive biomonitoring techniques; locating sources and pathways of contaminants; quality objectives in the food chain; standardisation of methods; and specimen banking and exchange.

In the workshop on field research it was stressed that international co-operation should be promoted and funds for this should be made available. Further studies should be carried out on habitat and food resource utilisation, especially radio-tracking and electrofishing studies in both low and high population densities. Other disciplines need to be involved in field research, like genetics (for example, DNA fingerprinting), computer modelling (for example, GIS technology), fish population dynamics etc. Each country in

Europe should ensure that regular surveys will be carried out with ideally time intervals of five years with a standardised methodology.

## Captive research and education

In the workshop on captive research it was generally agreed that further captive research was necessary, but that it has to be well co-ordinated throughout Europe. The captive research should concentrate on two areas: general otter biology, like foraging behaviour and nutrition; and research that would complement field research and conservation. It was considered very important to collect and store samples of blood, tissues and also cranium from live or dead otters. The studbook of *Lutra lutra* should also include data concerning genetics, behaviour, clinical-chemical aspects and post-mortem data. Re-introductions from captive and wild populations were discussed. These programmes should strictly follow the guidelines given by the IUCN Otter Specialist Group. The general opinion was that re-introductions should not be undertaken when there are possibilities for a natural influx of individuals from other neighbouring populations. In those areas where this is not the case re-introduction can only be successful when all the causes of the extinction, having affected the former population, have been removed. In case of a (very expensive) re-introduction there should be a follow-up phase, including long-term surveys and studies of population genetics.

In the workshop led by the author of this article many different problems of environmental education were discussed. Several target groups were distinguished and policies for reaching these groups were discussed and recommended. Everybody agreed that too little work was done on otter-related education; many more education programmes needed to be developed. ■

Drs Ing. A.W.J.J. de Jongh

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Ilaren/Otterstation/Sake Elzinga

# A great responsibility

*Costas Laliotis*

**T**he Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works has been given the main responsibility for promoting what had been agreed by all governments in Rio, namely sustainability. A new spirit must govern all our decisions in production, education, collective attitudes and personal relations.

This spirit dictates a need to care for vulnerable ecosystems, endangered flora and fauna species, functional cities, and the emotional and physical well-being of citizens.

Also, future generations will have every right to demand a decent life on an ecologically balanced and life preserving planet.

Greece, my country - an ancient and geopolitical crossroads between east and west, north and south - is characterised by its rich and often virgin nature and its unique landscapes.

## Modern Greek reality

However, modern Greek reality, colourful as it may be, bears the stigma of negative anthropogenic influences. Over-populated cities, ubiquitous concrete, the supremacy of private car traffic, greenless urban areas and suburbs, a lack of comprehensive physical and urban planning and a lack of modern infrastructures make up the post-war picture of Athens (Attica) and other large cities. Only inspired programmes, like "Attica-SOS", can guarantee positive results.

Human potential, know-how and financial means, appropriately integrated in a precise plan of decisive interventions, like the programme already in effect since spring 1994 in Athens, can give realistic hope.

It is self-evident that we should pay special attention and give absolute priority to planning, works and interventions serving the up-

grading and conservation of areas around cities and other sites of a significant character or fragile ecological balance. Delays experienced in the past involving the decisive solution of problems, like issuing and rigorously implementing regulations, making integrated and viable management plans for many biotopes and creating natural parks, will certainly be overcome. The Greek Government and particularly the Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works recognises that rescuing and enhancing the natural environment is vital.

I am sure that the results of this collective endeavour, involving our ministry, citizens, and the social and scientific bodies will become apparent during 1995.

## Steps being taken

I would like to mention a few examples of steps being taken, such as the improvements in physical and urban planning; the creation, after a delay of decades, of a modern land register; the improvements in living conditions in big cities; the clamp-down on unauthorised house-building; the decentralisation and deconcentration of jurisdiction, funds and power; the growing participation of the public together with the continued efforts of non-governmental organisations; the improvements in environmental education programmes; and an increased ecological awareness.

Sustainable development, as I have already stated, is our main goal, but improvements in living standards do not necessarily run contrary to what have been called the "rights of nature".

Keeping this principle always in mind and eager to preserve the rights of nature, we are promoting as an absolute priority the designation of management schemes, for example for the Natural Park of Alonnisos and that of Zante, where, without doubt, many positive measures for the protection of the sea turtle have already been taken.

We are also promoting a procedure to establish boundaries for several Greek wetlands, and furthermore the introduction of a framework for their immediate protection. Special care has to be given to those included in the famous Ramsar Convention.

Greece considers it an obligation to respond positively to international initiatives and commitments as contained in decisions, regulations and agreements of multilateral organisations like the Council of Europe, the European Union, the United Nations and Unesco. I must underline that for Greece the Bern Convention provides the necessary guidelines when formulating relevant policies.

The Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works has elaborated integrated programmes made up of decisions, interventions and institutions that contribute to environmental protection, preserve vital equilibria in significant ecosystems and guarantee a sustainable development.

These programmes are our positive and optimistic answers to the challenges of our times.

I wish and hope that our deeds will contribute to the Pan-European endeavour and the universal concern for the protection of the environment and nature, as well to the development of sustainable development.

It is also my hope that in these everyday battles, governments will co-operate with NGOs concerned with ecological matters and that they will also respect the autonomous actions of their citizens. ■

C. Laliotis

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Landscape (Ireland)

# Europe: no future without nature conservation

Jean-Claude Lefeuvre

A region's vulnerability to environmental degradation depends on the duration and intensity of the batterings its natural systems receive and on how often they are repeated. After thousands of years of human activity, Europe has already lost some of its wild flora and fauna, and its natural habitats have been substantially altered. But the inhabitants of the "old" continent have not been content simply to maltreat their indigenous ecosystems. In their eagerness to discover and subdue new lands, they have inflicted their works on very nearly the whole surface of the earth, either by taking full or partial possession of the continents or - as in North America or in Australia where in 1988 celebrations were held to mark the two hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the first "English" settlers - by ousting the native populations.

These global despoilers became aware very early of the damage done to wildlife when natural habitats were drastically altered: this was particularly true of Europe's forests, which lay in shreds after being opened up for cultivation. It is not surprising that nature conservation came into existence in this part of the world: indeed, as early as 726 AD, the first documented nature reserve was put in place by the small state of Venice to preserve game animals. Between then and the end of the 19th century when the first national parks were created by Anglo-Saxon expatriates (Lefeuvre, 1990), nature conservation made slow and steady progress.

## Wildlife conservation: three stages

In the report entitled "Environment for Europe" (Strasbourg, 1993) prepared for the Pan-European Conference on that theme, the Council of Europe recalls how methods for conserving wildlife in Europe have been through three stages: initially, it was considered sufficient to prevent or limit the depletion of threatened species; little or no thought was given to the protection of their habitats. At a later stage, protected areas were introduced in order to preserve not only open spaces of exceptional value but also representative samples of the different types of ecosystem characteristic of Europe. The Council of Europe had a crucial role in ushering in the third stage, the one in which we are now involved. This consists in gearing efforts to the conservation of wildlife outside protected areas. To a large extent, this new approach which consists in paying due regard to the "commonplace" natural world has its roots in the confrontation of ideas engendered by the first European Nature Conservation Year (1970) and preceded by more than 10 years of intellectual activity much of which is distilled in the now celebrated works of Carson (1963), Dorst (1965), Julien (1965), Commoner (1969), Bonnefou (1970), Taylor (1980), etc, which warn of an "overwhelming toll of biological disasters".

This new conception of the relationship between mankind and nature, through which the term "environment" achieved the status of a concept which the 1972 International

Conference in Stockholm reaffirmed, had the effect of causing most European governments to set up departments with special responsibility for all environmental problems, nature conservation included. The number of European protected areas increased, although not without due heed being taken of the statements made in 1970, for it very soon became apparent that the conservation measures which caused certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural monuments to qualify the European Diploma - an award instituted by the Council of Europe in 1965 - were not sufficient in themselves. This point was perhaps made most clearly by the Frenchman M.A. de Bettencourt, who said: "The idea is not to establish nature reserves here and there or to preserve one or two picturesque sites, only to leave the whole continent a prey to uncontrolled industrialisation and urban development" (1970).

## Nature conservation and planning

Making nature conservation an integral part of planning is a principle enshrined in the Bern Convention, which the Council of Europe opened for signature in 1979. This instrument, officially entitled the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, has the merit of covering all the aspects of conservation that can in any way contribute to the complete protection of Europe's entire natural heritage. Ratified now by nearly every country of the wider Europe, the Bern Convention pursues three main objectives:

- to ensure better regard for ecological concerns in the planning and development policies of the contracting parties;

- to institute minimum protection for all wild plant and animal species and stricter protection for endangered species, whether sedentary or migratory;

- to strengthen co-operation among contracting parties in the field of nature conservation.

## Network of protected areas

The Bern Convention makes it plain that protected areas cannot be independent from one another but must form a network (the Council of Europe set the example in 1976 when it created the European Network of Biogenetic Reserves). Its essential message is that one should look outside protected area and think in terms of planning.

There can be no question of criticising the countries of Europe for establishing protected areas of various kinds, often with great difficulty. The point is that these havens must no longer be regarded as bastions under siege but as areas of propagation, as crossing points in an interconnected network that serves to sustain wildlife throughout Europe while making due allowance for the needs and activities of human beings. Seen from this angle, they are as much a part of the planning process as Europe's towns, or its major road and rail infrastructures. The authorities thus have a duty to treat the natural heritage not as a sanctuary where trespassers are prosecuted but as a valuable asset which it is their job to manage. Circumstances may require this capital stock to be refreshed or rehabilitated in order to retain a development potential consistent with the knowledge that the human environment is changing. This way of thinking of course implies that all of Europe's habitats must be better documented, a task entrusted to the European Environment Agency (EEA) responsible for the CORINE-Biotopes Programme, and compared with the inventory of European protected areas entrusted to the Council of Europe so that the completed protected area network will reflect biogeographical features rather than national considerations. This proposition is upheld by Eeonet (Benett, 1991) and advocated by the European Union in the shape of the "Natura 2000" network. The next step is to set out the main objectives of each of the many protected area types and translate these into management plans so that their original properties may be conserved: this is the idea behind the IUCN's Action plan for European protected areas, among others.

## System-to-system exchanges

One advantage of this new approach is that natural area management policy is readjusted according to the progress of research in the field of system-to-system exchanges on different levels. It makes no sense to protect a



Villé, Vosges (France)

bog, a lakeside or riverside wetland area or even a coastal zone without taking account of the drainage basins and what goes on in them and without a detailed knowledge of the organic materials, nutrients and pollutants brought down by the rivers and streams. Moreover it is now known from research into population biology and landscape ecology that no amount of protection afforded to isolated sites will prevent the local extinction of numerous species. At a time when the conservation of biological diversity has been brought into focus by the Rio Earth Summit as one of the major issues of the 1990s, all these considerations must make us turn our attention to the natural world outside protected areas, as the Bern Convention directs.

Eeonet's merit is to have suggested linking Europe's protected areas by establishing or recreating ecological corridors which would permit the necessary propagation of plant and animal species in all circumstances including the disaster scenarios connected with climate change in general and mean temperature increases in Europe in particular (Stigliani and others, 1989). An ecologically coherent network such as this will develop only if the nature conservation policy framework is determined by the ecological structure of Europe, not its political geography.

## Maintenance of biodiversity

But these networks are not sufficient. A further vital need, highlighted by the World Biodiversity Strategy (1994), is to safeguard the earth's natural systems on which life

depends, to purify water, recycle oxygen, carbon and other essential elements, maintain soil fertility, renew the resources which permit us to draw nourishment from the land, the fresh waters and the oceans, produce medicines and safeguard the genetic resources on which our unceasing endeavours to improve our plants and domestic animals depend.

Natural sites, whether of outstanding beauty or devoid of charm, provide a service to the community free of charge. They have one immense advantage over artificial and often monovalent structures: they carry out all their multifarious functions while providing wildlife - and therefore biological diversity - with the basic necessities for survival in our disturbed systems.

Considered as natural infrastructures, all these habitats have an indispensable role in sensitive planning, both at local and regional or international level. 1995 is Europe's second year devoted to nature conservation: may it convince our elected representatives and their staff and others with responsibility for managing our land, that there is more to nature conservation than safeguarding wildlife: its principal objective must be to guarantee a secure future for Europe, from Ireland to the Urals.

J.C. Lefeuvre

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# Co-operation in Africa

*Seydina Issa Sylla*

**D**oes the Bern Convention contain the answer to the many questions that arise over the ecology of migratory species, the availability and sufficiency of their food resources and the state of their habitats?

Certainly not, but it is and will continue to be an instrument of international co-operation between neighbouring and distant countries in their endeavours to conserve biological diversity.

Burkina Faso and Senegal have ratified the Bern Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Both countries are important wintering destinations for migratory birds, along with other African countries such as Mali, Cameroon and Mauritania, which co-operate with the Bern Convention in a number of practical ways. Their attendance at meetings of the Bern

Convention suggests that they may soon adhere to or co-operate fully with the latter.

The Bern Convention has the potential to become a basic instrument of local community involvement in habitat management. Basic training targeted on the partners who voluntarily opt for sustainable development will be necessary (a pilot project to promote village development and enhance the economic value of biological resources).

There is a clear will to co-operate with the Bern Convention but it is not backed by sufficient resources to ensure better habitat preservation (research programmes, on-site habitat management, facilities for inventory control and monitoring and database compilation). Africa's shortage of resources does not bring work to a halt; it is, however, an impediment whose adverse effects must be mitigated.

This being so, international co-operation is seen as the best hope of holding on to all that has been won in the effort to conserve biological diversity. This is a rejoinder to the "national priorities" argument normally used in defence of other sectors of socio-economic life.

May the Bern Convention bring to fruition the positive expectations of the international community committed to the cause of ensuring, in a spirit of fair and concerned partnership, that our village, the Planet Earth, is better protected despite its many ills. ■

S.Issa Sylla  
Director of National Parks for Senegal  
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Dakar  
Senegal

*Bird ringing, Djoudj National Park (Senegal)*





J. Sutherland/Medasset

# A step in the right direction

Lily Venizelos

**T**he rate at which species have become extinct in the 1990s has been more rapid and greater than anything the world has experienced during the last sixty or seventy million years.

It is a major ecological problem and will inevitably have the most serious impact upon our planet, unlike so many others it is completely irreversible.

## Zakynthos turtles

I still remember the year 1984, long before MEDASSET was founded in 1988, when for the first time, a simple grassroots conservationist "knocked on the door" of the Bern Convention to draw attention to the threat facing the loggerhead turtles nesting on the Greek Ionian island of Zakynthos. Laganas Bay is now recognised as the most important remaining nesting site for *Caretta caretta* in the Mediterranean.

Massive, uncontrolled tourist development was starting to overtake most nesting beaches, making life more and more difficult for nesting turtles and their hatchlings. As a result, either myself or, since 1988, MEDASSET have presented annual recommendations and reports to the convention's standing committee.

My appeal to the standing committee in 1985 resulted in a file being opened for the site in 1988. It has been reviewed ever since at every subsequent meeting. Moreover, since 1986, the standing committee has carried out two on-the-spot appraisals and has made detailed recommendations to Greece ever

since 1987. Both appraisals criticised the Greek Government for "failing to protect the turtles in accordance with its obligations under the convention", and urged the government to take action. Finally, the government did not adopt the second appraisal and recommendations. In the meantime the situation worsened in Laganas.

## Serious concern

At the 12th standing committee meeting in 1992, MEDASSET stated: "The Bern Convention is in itself an excellent 'tool' for governments who have the will to use it. We are here, like most NGOs, at our own expense because we believe in this 'tool'. Please do not disappoint us by ignoring this problem. Therefore we urge the committee not to close the file on Zakynthos turtles before the standing committee has been fully informed about the implementation of the convention. Zakynthos is the epitome of this convention. Failure will reflect on the reputation of conventions." The standing committee recognised that preservation of the *Caretta caretta* breeding grounds is one of the convention's most serious concerns and that the present situation in Zakynthos could discredit the Bern Convention and weaken its impact. The convention has not been as effective as it should have been in the case of Zakynthos. The standing committee is now concerned that the credibility of the convention is at stake. The options available to the committee are few, time has run out. The committee accordingly decided to address a declaration to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Since 1988, MEDASSET has continued to follow up and fight for the protection of the

Dalyan and Patara nesting beaches in Turkey at meetings of the standing committee.

The standing committee provides NGOs with an important platform to express their views; their success greatly depends on the effort they put in. Good examples of this kind of activity are provided by the World Wide Fund for Nature, the European Herpetological Society and MEDASSET.

The aim of the convention is that contracting parties agree to take the necessary steps to protect endangered species and habitats. If they fail to do so they should report to the standing committee and solutions must be found for cases under dispute.

But we should not forget that if application measures are too strict, countries might leave the convention and do whatever they want, which is not the desired aim. In the case of Zakynthos, let us warmly welcome the recent announcement, by the Greek authorities, of the creation of a national marine park and the destruction of illegal constructions.

In spite of the difficulties faced, the Bern Convention is still a positive step in the right direction for conserving wildlife and natural habitats in Europe. ■

L. Venizelos

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# Working actively through NGOs

Ricardo Aguilar

In order to achieve its aims, the Bern Convention requires (as do other legal tools and initiatives geared towards the protection of the environment) the active support of institutions, governments and, above all, citizens. Denouncing, and thus aiming to prevent, any environmentally damaging activity is a task to be taken on board by every one of us.

Collaborating with non-governmental organisations in the protection of the environment is of the utmost importance if real change to existing policy is to be made, and if we want to ensure that current legal instruments are fully implemented and thus effective.

## Public support

Citizens can help achieve these goals in many different ways. Joining an association is perhaps the simplest and most common of all, although situations vary from one European country to another. The active support of any association entails two main responsibilities: a contribution towards financing its activities and the offer of support in its public demands and messages.

In addition, joining an association allows for a more active role in the protection of the environment. Campaign success depends on the joint effort of thousands of citizens. Here are some suggestions:

- support campaigns (sign petitions, write letters of protest or support, etc.);

- collect information to help NGOs compile campaign reports;

- help with office tasks, for example, answering mail, translating reports, maintaining data records, writing reports, filing, etc.;

- identify environmentally-friendly alternatives;

- work on projects aimed at protecting and reintroducing nature, for example, on clean up campaigns in rivers, lakes and coastal areas and on the revitalisation of areas affected by erosion, etc.;

- learn about nature conservation by undertaking environmental, biological, chemical and geological studies, etc.;

- participate in public activities, such as protest walks, etc.;

- help to design public exhibits for environmental education;

- consume less, consume better; choose non-toxic and environmentally-friendly products; reduce consumption and avoid excess packaging; choose reusable products if they are available and recyclable ones if they are not, avoid disposable products if at all possible;

- classify your household waste (paper, glass, metal, etc.) for recycling and support similar initiatives;

- share your professional knowledge with NGOs (on science, law, economics, etc.);

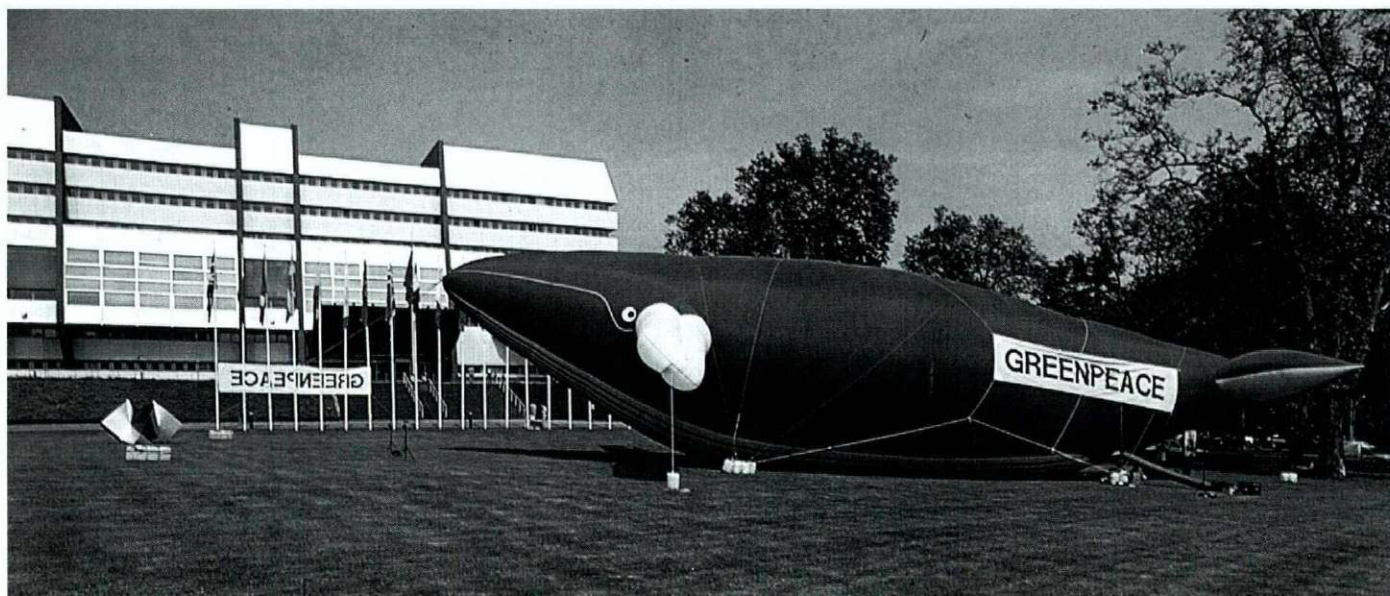
- increase public awareness by giving information to NGO campaigns aimed at environmental education.

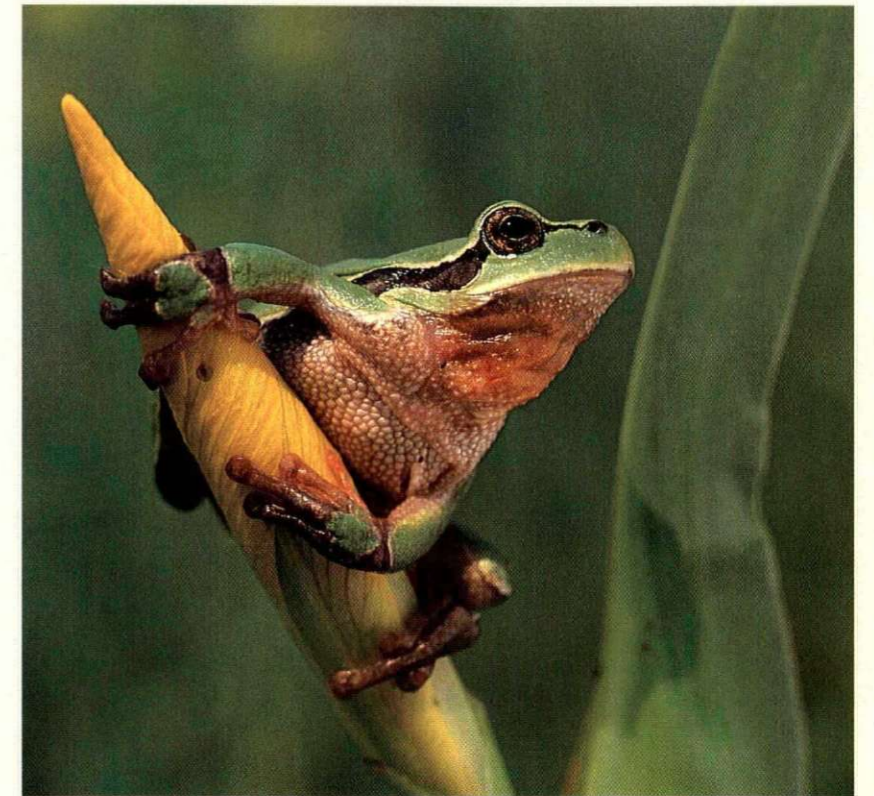
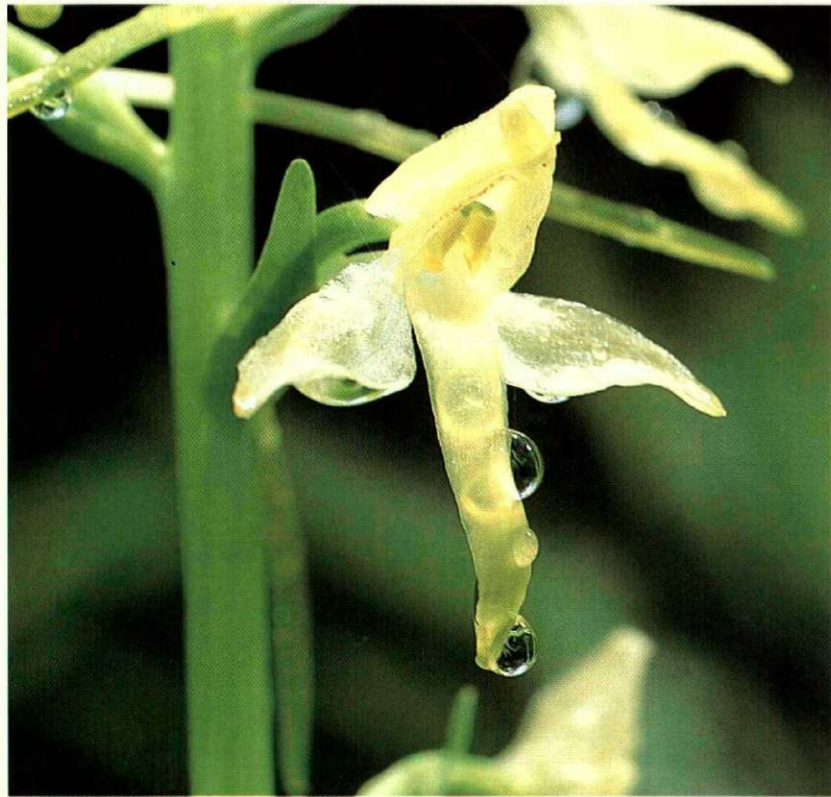
## Access to information

For a society to function correctly, access to information is a basic requirement. Knowledge about our environment and who is destroying it is the major prerequisite for action by citizens. The Directive on Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment is a major step forward in social development, and for getting ready to face the ecological challenges of the future. A basic priority of citizens should be to demand that this directive is effectively implemented in all countries of the European Union, and that similar mechanisms are put into place in other countries.

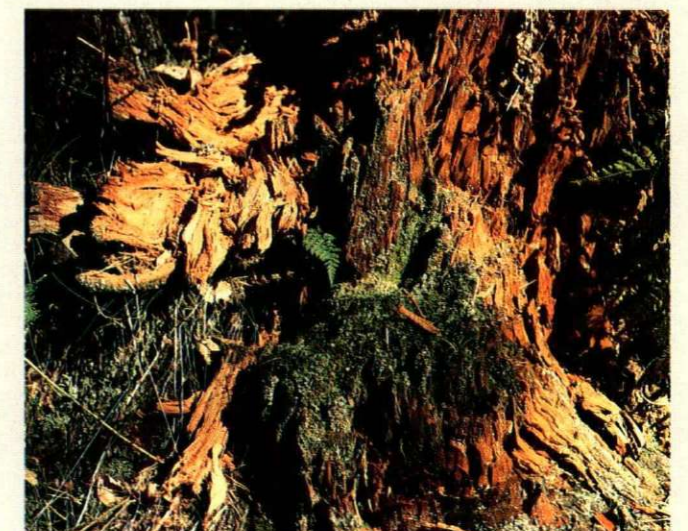
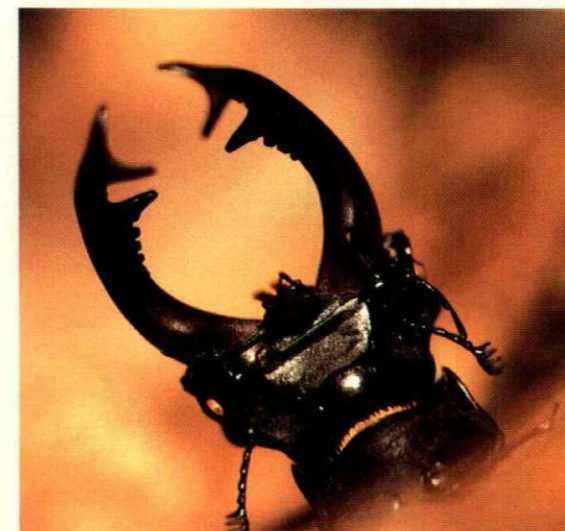
The main tasks of NGOs are to increase public awareness and foster positive change so as to ensure that society's everyday life contributes to environmental conservation. In short, citizens need to perceive nature as part of them, thus making us all responsible. ■

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...“wild flora and fauna constitute a natural heritage of aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational, economic and intrinsic value that needs to be preserved and handed on to future generations”...(Preamble to the Convention)







Pirin Mountains (Bulgaria)

## Looking eastwards

Geko Spiridonov

The Bern Convention is the most broadly-based and the most European of all the treaties on wildlife conservation. The contracting parties include Hungary, Bulgaria, Estonia and Romania, all of which acceded between 1990 and 1993. The other states of Central and Eastern Europe - members of the Council of Europe and others, which together make up the greater part of the continent - have so far refrained from acceding to the convention (with the exception of Moldova which did so in May 1994). And yet most of these countries have a long-standing tradition of nature conservation and many achievements to their credit.

Bulgaria's record in this respect is perhaps fairly typical, although the differences between one country and another, due to historical background, should not be underestimated.

There are natural and historical reasons which explain why Bulgaria's biological heritage is so rich and diverse and why so few species have disappeared; but its legislation on forests, hunting and fishing gave considerable extra protection right up until the last century. Today it is hoped to harmonise this substantial body of law with the legislation of the European Union.

### Network of protected areas

The precursor of the contemporary Bulgarian nature reserve - the *branichte* - dates back to the Renaissance or the Middle Ages. The first

law on nature conservation was enacted in 1936, but some strict reserves and one national park preceded it. Early in the 1980s, the network of protected areas was developed on a biogeographical basis, and priority was given to the biocoenoses.

With the creation of the Ministry of the Environment, large-scale development of the network of protected areas became possible, and since 1978 the total area has increased fourfold. The network at present covers 500 000 hectares, or 4.5% of the area of the country. The extensive units comprising a dense infrastructure of strict nature reserves demonstrate the principal feature of protected areas in Bulgaria: three national parks - Rila (108 000 hectares), Balkan Central (73 000 hectares) and Pirin (40 000 hectares) and the recently designated Strandja nature park (116 000 hectares). Within the boundaries of these parks, there are 21 strict reserves covering 51 000 hectares, established before the parks themselves.

Independently of the protection of habitats inside and outside protected areas, 330 flora species and 520 fauna species are listed as protected. Over 100 of these species listed in Appendix III of the Convention are totally protected in Bulgaria.

Other instruments which reinforce the Bern Convention and facilitate its application include the Red Book on endangered vascular plants and vertebrates (published in the early 1980s), the National wetlands of major importance, the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, the expanded CORINE Biotopes Programme, the newly

created National Office for Nature Conservation, and the 1991 Outline Law on the environment, under which a procedure for evaluating the environmental impact of every land-use project is made compulsory. Not forgetting the other conventions, such as the Ramsar Convention and CITES, whose aims include the conservation of biological diversity.

### Nature conservation combat

Today, this impressive structure put together by a few generations of nature lovers determined to defend the environment, is at serious risk. The institutions responsible for conservation are short of staff, money and, in some cases, morale and enthusiasm. The importance of applying the law, restoring moral values and searching for ways of saving our endangered ecosystems and natural areas is not fully appreciated by everybody. In these difficult times European co-operation and international support are surely decisive. And the struggle to safeguard Bulgaria's natural world has received help from many sources; now, it is for us to act.

While the Bern Convention is acknowledged to be an indispensable tool for nature conservation in Europe, unfortunately its financial resources mirror those of Eastern Europe in their inadequacy. ■

G. Spiridonov

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# Wetlands of Europe

John O'Sullivan

The importance of Europe's wetlands for both humans and wildlife can scarcely be overemphasised. Wetlands provide our drinking water, irrigation for our food crops, nourishment in the shape of edible fish and other animals, water for our factories, as well as building materials and fuel. They provide defences against flooding, transport routes and recreation opportunities; they even help control our climate. Wetlands also provide a wealth of habitats for a vast array of animals and plants, and this wildlife is itself greatly valued by people, including teachers, hunters, nature enthusiasts and tourists.

And yet, for all their obvious importance, scarcely a European wetland south of the tundra and taiga remains unaffected by humans. We continue to pollute our wetlands with every kind of agricultural, industrial and urban waste. We drain them for building development, or for intensive cultivation; we dam them for water supply and power generation; we overfish them, over-disturb them, and in a dozen other ways fail to ensure their survival for use and enjoyment by those who come after us.

All this is taking place today despite recent massive public concern, measured by, among other things, the enormous growth in support for the non-governmental nature conservation organisations and by the proliferation of global treaties on the subject of conservation. Among the latter, the Ramsar Convention is specifically devoted to protecting wetlands, and, in a European context, the Bern Convention has regularly dealt with wetland problems and policies in its thirteen-year history (entry into force: 1 June 1982). A look at how the Bern Convention works may help to illustrate the real nature of the problems, as well as the much-needed solutions.

## The workings of the Convention

The Convention obliges its contracting member states to protect the habitats of wild flora and fauna, especially the species listed in its Appendices I (plants) and II (animals). It also insists that all endangered natural habitats be protected. The responsibility for monitoring the operation of the convention lies with the standing committee, which consists of delegates from the contracting parties, a group of some thirty European and West African states. Observers are invited, and among these the non-governmental organisations BirdLife International, the Societas Europaea

Herpetologica and the World Wide Fund for Nature have played a particularly active role.

Each meeting of the standing committee (there have been thirteen to date, approximately annually) has drawn attention to particular threats to sites and species, and this has often led to the removal of the threat. Examples include, in the United Kingdom, the rapid protection, from proposed peat-extraction, of Duich Moss on the Scottish island of Islay, a wintering site of the Greenland white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*), and, in Germany, the prevention of proposed infilling of a quarry holding populations of the serotine bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*) and the green toad (*Bufo viridis*). In a number of cases the standing committee has made formal recommendations directed to particular countries, requesting them to take action on threats to sites or species. In some cases, quick action has been taken and the threat diverted. In others, progress has been slow. For instance, the subject of Laganas Bay, on the Greek island of Zakynthos, has been on the agenda of no less than eight meetings of the standing committee. This is the most important nesting site in the Mediterranean for the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), an endangered species listed on Appendix II of the convention. The site is threatened by tourist development and disturbance, and was the subject of a standing committee recommendation to Greece in 1987. Despite this, the threat was not countered, and the committee took the exceptional step, at its meeting in 1992, of adopting a declaration, informing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe that the convention "has not been as effective as it should be" where this site is concerned. The issue remains unresolved. There is a further outstanding recommendation to Greece, from the 1992 meeting, concerning the Missolonghi wetlands. These are threatened by a highly contentious project (which has been criticised on economic as well as environmental grounds) to divert the waters of the rivers Acheloos and Evinos. The wetlands fed by these rivers are of very great importance for dozens of Appendix II species such as the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), the pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) and the slender-billed curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*).

Dams have also been a major feature of the convention's work in Spain. The most recent example concerns a proposal for a dam at Iruña on the river Agueda in Salamanca, a largely pristine riverine and woodland area, with, among other animals, the otter *Lutra*

*lutra* and the black stork *Ciconia nigra*. In 1994, this site was the subject of an "on-the-spot appraisal", a useful practical procedure of the convention, which provides for the visiting of a contentious site by an expert who then reports back to the standing committee, in the case of Iruña at this year's meeting.

It is a sobering thought that even the successes achieved by the convention usually represent only a holding of the line; a site may well be threatened again in the future. On the other hand, the failures almost always mean permanent loss or damage - there is no second chance.

## Moves to save wetlands

What more should the Bern Convention be doing for wetland conservation? A prime aim is to ensure that every European country, including all the countries of the former Soviet Union, joins the convention, and plays a full part in its work. The political will to act, including the provision of adequate financial resources, is also vital. Contracting parties must be more willing to accept the opening of files on cases in their own territories, and to act promptly on recommendations made by the standing committee. Funding from supra-national agencies (including the European Union) that contributes to the destruction of wetlands should be redirected. Before any start is made on changing a site of major importance as regards conservation, full use should be made of environmental impact assessments and other studies. Sites, the importance of which is already recognised, should be managed according to a plan to conserve their interest, and every effort should be made to identify all sites not so far recognised. Regular liaison with the Ramsar Convention Bureau is essential to optimise the work of both conventions; as one example of where the two secretariats actively collaborate, one might cite the internationally-shared river basins, which are often of supreme conservation importance, and where countries cannot act effectively on their own. The appendices of the convention must be regularly reviewed to take account of new scientific work.

An example of the latter is the review by BirdLife International *Birds in Europe: Their Conservation Status*, published in 1994. This book demonstrates that no less than one-quarter of the bird species occurring regularly on the continent have undergone substantial population reductions in the past twenty years; wetland drainage is specifically identi-



RSPB

*Marsh marigolds*



RSPB

*The Red-throated Diver has declined across much of Europe as a result of drainage and disturbance, and possibly also acid rain*

fied as one of the major threats. As Jean-Pierre Ribaut of the Council of Europe points out in his foreword to the book, if the birds have gone, what other fauna and flora will have disappeared?

The Bern Convention can play an effective role, largely because of its powerful combination of secretariat, contracting parties and NGOs. But each of these elements must make a yet greater commitment to the objectives of the Convention if we are to succeed in saving the wetlands, or indeed any of the besieged wildlife habitats of our continent. ■

J. O'Sullivan  
 International Treaties Officer  
 Royal Society for the Protection  
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RSPB

*Habitat loss has been responsible for the decline of the Smew*



RSPB

*The otter is vulnerable to pollution and disturbance of its habitat*

# The Monaco Declaration

Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons

"Oh for a brush  
that would paint the plum in bloom  
and the fragrance of its flowers!"

Satomura Shōha

The aim of the Bern Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats is to conserve the natural environment within a geographical area consisting of the whole of Europe enlarged to include the Mediterranean region and Africa. It places particular emphasis on migratory and other species that are endangered and vulnerable, and on endangered natural habitats. Its geographical coverage and its objectives make it an instrument of major importance for the conservation of biological diversity in a specific region of the world. Indeed, its objectives largely concur with those set out in Agenda 21 adopted in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and in the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity of 5 June 1992.

The Monaco Declaration on the role of the Bern Convention in the implementation of world-wide international instruments for the protection of biodiversity was adopted on 28 September 1994 at an intergovernmental symposium on "The UNCED, the Rio Convention and the Bern Convention: the next steps", attended by several international organisations, governmental and non-governmental. It outlines a long-term strategy for halting the process whereby biological diversity and the diversity of landscape are becoming increasingly impoverished.

After referring to the inestimable value of the earth's biological and landscape diversity and the need to preserve it and ensure the sustainability of its use for present and future generations, the declaration calls for prompt and efficient action in order to apply the principles pronounced on the occasion of the Earth Summit. Recommendations are made to the contracting parties to the Bern Convention and its standing committee, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Council of Europe and the financial institutions involved, as appropriate.

These are concerned with measures that need to be taken in a number of different fields:

## Scientific and technical aspects

- making sure that the principles and obligations established at the global level in the world-wide international instruments for the protection of biological diversity are applied at regional level;
- conducting the research required for the identification and understanding of the components of biological diversity;
- identifying processes and types of activity which have or are likely to have appreciable adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity, and monitoring these processes so as to ward off those adverse effects;
- evaluating the extent to which the obligations incurred by the convention are implemented by the contracting parties;
- taking due account of the research and experimental work being done nationally and internationally to calculate the economic value of the components of biological diversity and the natural heritage.

## Strategic aspects

- facilitating the mobilisation and exchange of information, from all publicly available sources, relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
- establishing a network of partners and experts in the conservation of biological diversity, including the legal aspects, to facilitate co-ordination;
- reviewing at regular intervals the policies of the contracting parties to the Bern Convention for implementing those parts of the Bern and Rio Conventions which are relevant to conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components;
- continuing to use the procedures for ensuring that the Bern Convention is properly implemented (general and special reports; case-file systems; follow-up of recommendations).

## International and financial aspects

- considering the need for a mechanism for regularly reviewing and assessing general trends and needs in the field of the conservation of biological diversity at the regional level, and drawing up and following the guiding principles of a long-term strategic action plan;
- establishing appropriate co-ordination mechanisms to promote the co-ordinated implementation and further development of the Bern and Rio Conventions;
- providing substantial and financial support for the activities mentioned in the declaration.

Public concern over conservation-related questions is increasing all the time. Like day-dreamers confronting the facets of economic life, human communities must now reconcile conservation and development in ways which ensure that due attention is given to their natural assets. In Europe, where an outstandingly high level of economic development has been achieved at the expense of intensive exploitation of its natural environment, institutional and normative mechanisms must be put in place to manage this heritage to the best advantage as capital for future generations, and the emerging and developing countries supported in their endeavours to preserve the environment. Like the other international conventions on environmental subjects, the Bern Convention is an instrument which needs to be applied and used to the full. If this is to be achieved, then active community involvement is indispensable. ■

M. Déjeant-Pons  
Secretariat of the Bern Convention  
Council of Europe



## The role of local authorities

*Horst Lässig*

It is important to promote an awareness of the need to preserve natural habitats - thus going beyond what is simply stipulated by legislation - be it by providing subsidies for such activities or by public relations efforts aimed at informing the general public. There are no limits to what can be done. The aim must be to inspire the local populace by setting a good example.

Here in particular, the ball is in the local authorities' court. Since they are closer to the scene, they can act faster and more effectively and set an example through their own activities. They, more than anyone else, are best acquainted with their local wildlife populations. They also bear primary responsibility for ensuring that the ecological balance in their area is not disturbed and that local flora and fauna are protected to the required ecological, scientific and cultural extent. Local authorities must be aware of this responsibility, otherwise many species of wildlife will soon become extinct.

### Practical measures

To illustrate what can be done at local authority level, I would like to outline a few examples from my own experience, which deals with the Rems-Murr District in Germany. The Rems-Murr District has undertaken special initiatives to protect bats. Bat habitats and flight zones were mapped out for the entire district on the basis of an expert zoological opinion and recorded using computer graphics. We also hung up nesting

boxes for bats throughout the district and provided subsidies for private initiatives with the same aim. Winter quarters were created in a disused cellar in the village of Spiegelberg, once used for storing ice. The bats' hunting grounds were declared natural monuments. In addition, we have endeavoured to increase public awareness and appreciation of bats by holding seminars. A series of press releases on the subject is envisaged for this year, timed to coincide with the bats' annual cycle, focusing on their way of life and usefulness and drawing attention to factors that endanger the species.

### Amphibians and reptiles

Another key area of activities in Rems-Murr District involves protecting endangered amphibians and reptiles. To protect yellow-bellied toads, tree frogs and crested newts, we have created new wetland areas and declared them natural monuments, ensuring their regular maintenance and monitoring. To facilitate annual migration, we laid amphibian tunnels under several district roads and erected fences to guide the amphibians. During spring migration periods, certain stretches of road are either subjected to speed limits or even closed. In addition, existing spawning grounds are mapped out throughout the district and recorded using computer graphics. To protect wall lizards, sand lizards and smooth snakes we have built drystone walls and other stone structures.

These few examples illustrate the extensive creative scope open to local and district authorities in the implementation of the Bern

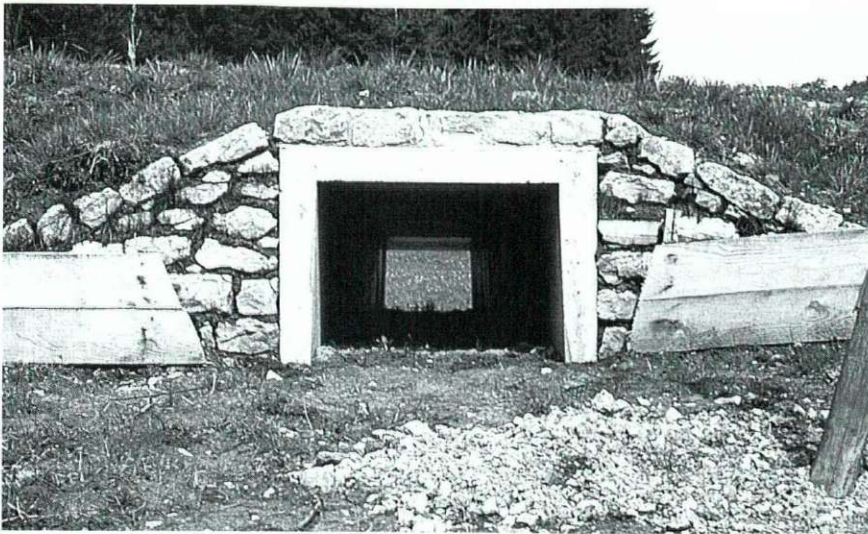
Convention. It should, however, be noted that such activities do cost money. Rems-Murr District, for example, maintains a team of five staff, permanently engaged in caring for natural monuments, wetland areas and waterways, thus helping to preserve the habitats and food sources of wild flora and fauna. The mapping out of all 2 000 existing biotopes in the district and the recording of almost 1 000 natural monuments on computer were also cost-intensive processes. However, these activities mean that we are now in a position to initiate programmes designed to network our biotopes.

### ENCY 95

The most important aspect is to generate new ideas and take initiatives, in full awareness of our responsibility. In this respect I would like to encourage other local authorities to do everything in their power to reach the goals set out in the Bern Convention. As 1995 is European Nature Conservation Year, it is the ideal time for every local authority to consider how endangered species of plants and animals living in built-up areas can be better protected and their habitats conserved or redesigned. ■

H. Lässig

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Member of the Congress of Local and Regional  
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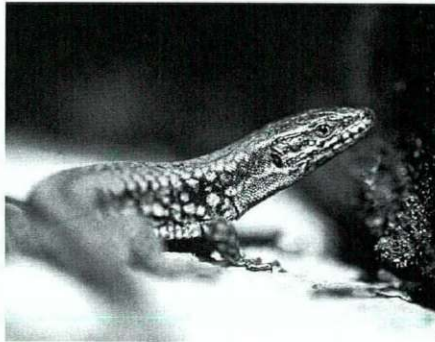
Umweltschutzamt Rems-Murr-Kreis



F. Roubert

**Amphibian migration routes**

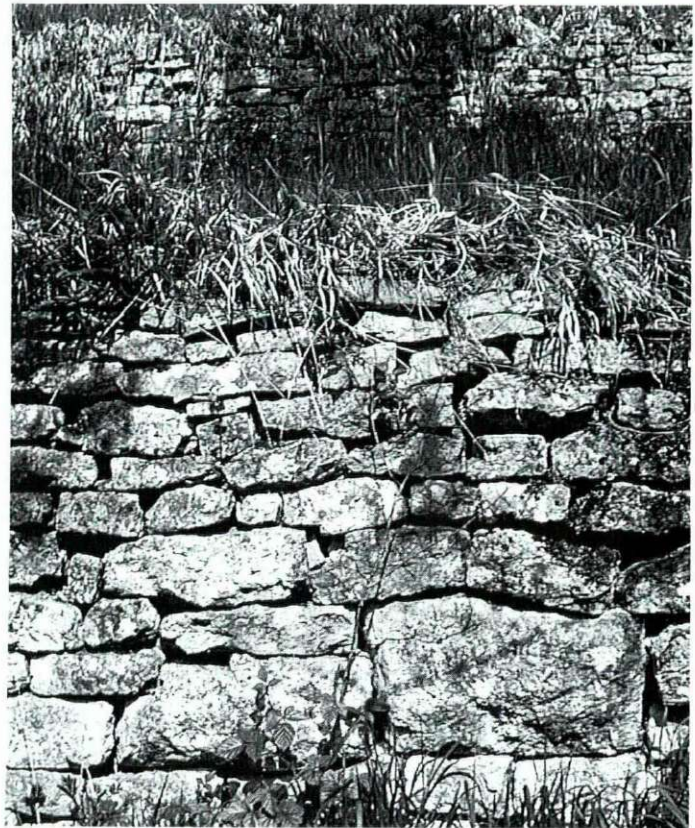
*To facilitate annual amphibian migration, amphibian tunnels are provided under roads that intersect the migration routes.*



G. Baumgart

**Habitats for reptiles**

*In the spaces between loosely piled stones, wall lizards, sand lizards and smooth snakes find an ideal hideaway. In order to preserve the habitats of these creatures, Rems-Murr District is endeavouring to conserve and maintain old stone walls such as are often found supporting terraces on vineyard slopes.*



Umweltschutzamt Rems-Murr-Kreis



G. Baumgart

**Winter quarters for bats**

*A cellar formerly used for storing ice and falling into disrepair was restored in 1993 and set aside as winter quarters for bats. To prevent the bats' hibernation being disturbed the entrance to the cellar was fenced off.*



Umweltschutzamt Rems-Murr-Kreis

# Europe's landscape and the Bern Convention

Michael Dower

The limestone terrain of the Peak District, in central England, has been occupied and worked by humans for what is believed to be 5 000 years. Men and women have cleared the wild scrub and woodland, grazed the land with cattle and sheep, enclosed the meadows with drystone walls, and built villages, farmhouses and barns. In the process, they created a landscape of high scenic quality and cultural interest. It is also rich in wildlife, notably the native flora of the limestone meadows.

During the last forty years, modern methods of farming, particularly the use of nitrogen and other fertilisers, have greatly reduced this wildlife value. To address this problem, the National Park authority started fifteen years ago to pay farmers to revive the wild flora by making changes in their grassland regime. More recently, government agencies have brought in schemes to pay farmers to protect traditional habitats, to repair drystone walls and rejuvenate woodlands. As a result, the landscape and wildlife quality of the park is now being steadily enhanced, and the livelihood of farmers is also being sustained.

## People and wildlife

I have given the above as an example of the many thousands of characteristic local land-

scapes, created by the interaction of nature and humans, across the face of Europe. It is also an example of how public bodies can promote protection and enrichment of wildlife through actions that also protect traditional landscapes and sustain rural communities. This link between different public aims is the main theme of this article.

Because it has been so long and so densely settled by people, Europe contains little true wilderness. Of course, we have nature reserves, which are largely set aside from human use. Much government activity in nature conservation is focused on these places, within the context of the Bern Convention.

But nature conservation activity cannot be confined to such special areas. The species protected by the Bern Convention are found more widely. Moreover, the wildlife quality of special areas may be enhanced by the sound management of landscapes that surround them, and by widespread measures to reduce air and water pollution. The Bern Convention, and also the Convention on Biological Diversity agreed in Rio in 1992, refer broadly to the high value of wildlife wherever it is found, and require that value to be reflected in broad national policies of planning and development.

Policies for nature conservation are therefore needed not only for the protected areas; but

also across the broad face of Europe, in areas where human activity has modified the original wild habitats and has created a new, and often very complex, mixture of natural features and human artifacts. We call this mixture the landscape.

## Landscape: its variety and importance

When people first strove to gain food, clothing and shelter from the land, they had to accept the resources and constraints that the land offered. Their buildings were made of local materials. Their crops and livestock were those which could flourish in that place. Their culture and customs grew out of the link with the land: and the land, in turn, was shaped by their particular pattern of settlement and fields and woods. So, a landscape arose, unique to that place.

In some rare places, landscapes of such early types survive. But over much of the continent, the flux of human activity over many centuries has caused changes in the landscape. The result of this great human saga is an immense variety of landscapes, ranging from the olive groves of the Mediterranean to high Alpine meadows, from vineyard terraces to the bocage of France and the green fields of Ireland.

Landscapes are important because they enrich the diversity of nature and the quality of human life. Just as we value the rich variety of ecosystems and species in the natural worlds, so we gain from the rich variety of human culture as expressed in landscape. Also, they provide, for those who live within them, a sense of continuity, of human "roots" in a place and in a tradition, and of local distinctiveness. They embrace ways of life, and links with the land, which have proved viable in the past and may be viable in the future. Finally, they are a rich source of knowledge about past and present human interactions with the land.

Moreover, some landscapes have such outstanding qualities that they have value at the European scale. Examples include the Puszta of the Hungarian plains, the hills of Umbria and Tuscany, the valleys of the Tarn and Dordogne of south-west France, the waterway vistas of the Netherlands and the mountain scenery of the Lake District in northern England. Such areas have inspired writers and artists, and achieved fame far beyond the immediate locality. They merit European concern as much as do Venice or Prague or the greatest nature reserves.

## The challenge of protection

The continued existence of the diversity currently found in European rural landscapes and, in particular, in special areas such as those outlined above, is now under threat from those wildlife endangering forces that were identified by the authors of the Bern Convention. These include the

Alentejo landscape (Portugal)



Eriss-Irmann

intensification of agriculture, urban expansion, mass tourism, air pollution and other processes.

This vital heritage of landscapes poses a three-fold challenge to scientists, policy-makers and practitioners. Firstly, we need to identify, record and understand the landscapes that we inherit. This is a task for scientists, supported by the worlds of learning, publishing and government.

Secondly, we need to protect landscapes from inappropriate or damaging change. In many parts of Europe, governments have adopted planning policies that protect landscapes from damaging development; and have given special protection to areas of high landscape quality, such as regional parks. But, even in these areas, unnecessary damage to landscapes is still occurring; and elsewhere, such as parts of the Mediterranean coastline, catastrophic damage is still being caused.

Thirdly, we need to promote the survival of those cultures that have created our landscapes. Vineyards quickly fall derelict if they are no longer tended. Terraces collapse if they are not maintained. The vitality of landscapes is in the way of life that created them; and they embrace the homes and the livelihoods of those who live there. The challenge is to enable a way of life to continue, not with pain or hardship but at a viable standard of living.

### **A charter for landscapes**

The need to encourage such action by European governments has prompted the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, to set up a working group to consider bringing forward a charter for European landscapes, alongside the Bern and Granada Conventions.

Such a charter will take some years to develop and to introduce. Meanwhile, I say to those whose great mission is the protection of wildlife that their purpose will be more fully realised if they can make common cause with those whose concern is with the well-being of landscapes and of those ways of life that have created them. ■

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*Peak District National Park (England)*



Peak National Park



# Imagine the scene

*Cyrille de Klemm*

It is the early twenty-first century, 2010 AD or thereabouts. All the countries of Europe have ratified the Bern Convention. They have been joined by the majority of countries along the southern shore of the Mediterranean and by those of north-western Africa. Apart from a few minor gaps, the convention is applicable throughout the western and the Palearctic region, including the Urals, the Caucasus and the Sahara; the major part of the Atlantic migration route for waterfowl is also covered.

In all these countries, the danger of extinction has been removed from nearly all vertebrates and higher order plants. There are restoration plans to take care of most of the formerly endangered species. They are monitored regularly, and observers now report that their numbers are on the increase nearly everywhere. The natural populations of most species are deemed to be viable and there is no longer any need to reinforce them with animals reared in captivity or with artificially propagated plants. The restoration plans take account of all the processes that affect the conservation status of the species concerned and of their habitats. In the case of invertebrates, lower order plants and micro-organisms, and most of the marine organisms which were practically disregarded for a long time, it has been possible to identify a fairly large number of endangered species and the habitats particularly favourable to them, and protective measures are starting to be taken.

All the endangered natural and semi-natural habitat types have been identified as well as the processes responsible for their destruction or deterioration. The areas most amenable to the conservation of those habitats have for the most part been designated as nature reserves. The others are in no danger now that general measures for the protection of natural habitats are an integral part of every land-use plan. Potentially destructive processes have been brought under control and their impact has been considerably reduced.

## Situation under control

The NATURA 2000 network of the European Union has been in existence since 2004 and is continuing to develop. By the common consent of all concerned, the network has been extended to those parties to the Bern Convention that are not members of the Union.

For several years there have been no reports of exotic species being introduced and placing indigenous species and natural habitats at risk. Concerted measures have been taken by the parties to eradicate the most harmful species introduced in earlier times. Measures

to control the import of exotic species have also been adopted.

All parties to the Bern Convention now have adequate legislation for complying with their obligations. Not only may they now regulate on the taking and selling of all wild species and establish protected areas; they are also - and this is more important - empowered to prevent the destruction of natural habitats, establish corridors from one protected area to another, conserve natural landscape features and minimise the effects of destructive processes.

To a very large extent these changes have been brought about by amending planning legislation so as to make proper provision for the protection of natural habitats. Another factor is the considerable development of schemes whereby contracts are awarded or incentives offered for the conservation and especially the management of natural areas and in some cases their restoration and re-creation as well. The landowners receive sufficient remuneration for these activities to provide them with an acceptable income, or income supplement. Thus these measures are popular. To have a valuable natural habitat on one's land is now regarded as a bonus and not a liability. More and more specialised training establishments offer courses for future advisers on environmental management. The new graduates are very much in demand, not least by local authorities concerned to apply ecological planning policies to their territory.

Most parties have devised national nature conservation strategies; and some are also in possession of plans for national, regional and local action, and of the administrative and financial resources necessary for putting them into effect; and are all entitled to essential supplementary funding from international aid schemes put in place by the European Union and other organisations.

## The Standing Committee defines objectives

These achievements are largely due to the action of the standing committee of the Bern Convention. This is the committee which officially identified most of the threatened species. Since 1995 it has concerned itself with endangered habitat types; also singling out those areas that need priority protection by reason of their biological richness. It was responsible for issuing the recommendations which have led to their having protected status. It is, in addition, also the committee which identified the processes potentially damaging to biological diversity and natural habitats, and formulated guidelines for their regulation and management.

The committee began by preparing a strategy and an action plan identifying the shortcom-

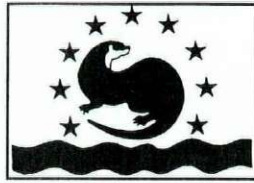
ings in the convention's application, setting precise objectives and establishing an order of priority among the studies to be undertaken and the conservation measures to be carried through. To formulate and monitor strategic action over the long term, it appointed a small group of independent experts to make a periodic examination and evaluation of general trends and conservation needs. The technical questions are examined, and proposals made, by small committees of specialists. In organising their meetings and preparing the essential basic studies, they were greatly helped by the parties' decision substantially to increase their voluntary contributions to the convention's budget and provide the secretariat with more staff.

## Power of democracy

The procedures for monitoring the parties' success in implementing the convention are operating well. Periodically, the committee examines the detailed national reports submitted by the parties, assesses their conservation performance and decides what measures they should adopt in order to fulfil their undertakings. It points to any shortcomings and suggests ways in which the parties responsible can remedy them. The number of cases under examination began to increase considerably in 1995 when it dawned upon the NGOs that the standing committee, whose meetings they were attending in ever larger numbers, was an effective ally in their campaign to ensure compliance with the convention. For some years the committee's workload continued to grow, but shortly after 2000 AD the situation levelled off and the number of cases under examination has since fallen sharply, which goes to show that the convention is now being applied nearly everywhere.

The main factor responsible for this resounding success, which fifteen years ago seemed hardly conceivable, is, of course, public opinion. After the crisis, the public took up the cause of biological diversity and natural habitats with increasing determination. More and more people joined the voluntary conservation organisations, improving their financial situation and enabling them to play a decisive part in developing this new awareness. Democracy did the rest. ■

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# Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

BERN, 19.IX.1979

## Preamble

The member States of the Council of Europe and the other signatories hereto,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members;

Considering the wish of the Council of Europe to co-operate with other States in the field of nature conservation;

Recognising that wild flora and fauna constitute a natural heritage of aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational, economic and intrinsic value that needs to be preserved and handed on to future generations;

Recognising the essential role played by wild flora and fauna in maintaining biological balances;

Noting that numerous species of wild flora and fauna are being seriously depleted and that some of them are threatened with extinction;

Aware that the conservation of natural habitats is a vital component of the protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna;

Recognising that the conservation of wild flora and fauna should be taken into consideration by the governments in their national goals and programmes, and that international co-operation should be established to protect migratory species in particular;

Bearing in mind the widespread requests for common action made by governments or by international bodies, in particular the requests expressed by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment 1972 and the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe;

Desiring particularly to follow, in the field of wildlife conservation, the recommendations of Resolution No. 2 of the Second European Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Have agreed as follows:

## Chapter I General provisions

### Article 1

1. The aims of this Convention are to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, especially those species and habitats whose conservation requires the co-operation of several States, and to promote such co-operation.

2. Particular emphasis is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species.

### Article 2

The Contracting Parties shall take requisite measures to maintain the population of wild flora and fauna at, or adapt it to, a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements and the needs of sub-species, varieties or forms at risk locally.

### Article 3

1. Each Contracting Party shall take steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild flora, wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats, in accordance with the provisions of this Convention.

2. Each Contracting Party undertakes, in its planning and development policies and in its measures against pollution, to have regard to the conservation of wild flora and fauna.

3. Each Contracting Party shall promote education and disseminate general information on the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats.

## Chapter II Protection of habitats

### Article 4

1. Each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild flora and fauna species, especially those specified in the Appendices I and II, and the conservation of endangered natural habitats.

2. The Contracting Parties in their planning and development policies shall have regard to the conservation requirements of the areas protected under the preceding paragraph, so as to avoid or minimise as far as possible any deterioration of such areas.

3. The Contracting Parties undertake to give special attention to the protection of areas that are of importance for the migratory species specified in Appendices II and III and which are appropriately situated in relation to migration routes, as wintering, staging, feeding, breeding or moulting areas.

4. The Contracting Parties undertake to co-ordinate as appropriate their efforts for the protection of the natural habitats referred to

in this article when these are situated in frontier areas.

## Chapter III Protection of species

### Article 5

Each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the special protection of the wild flora species specified in Appendix I. Deliberate picking, collecting, cutting or uprooting of such plants shall be prohibited. Each Contracting Party shall, as appropriate, prohibit the possession or sale of these species.

### Article 6

Each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the special protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix II. The following will in particular be prohibited for these species:

a. all forms of deliberate capture and keeping and deliberate killing;

b. the deliberate damage to or destruction of breeding or resting sites;

c. the deliberate disturbance of wild fauna, particularly during the period of breeding, rearing and hibernation, insofar as disturbance would be significant in relation to the objectives of this Convention;

d. the deliberate destruction or taking of eggs from the wild or keeping these eggs even if empty;

e. the possession of and internal trade in these animals, alive or dead, including stuffed animals and any readily recognisable part or derivative thereof, where this would contribute to the effectiveness of the provisions of this article.

### Article 7

1. Each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix III.

2. Any exploitation of wild fauna specified in Appendix III shall be regulated in order to keep the populations out of danger, taking into account the requirements of Article 2.

3. Measures to be taken shall include:

a. closed seasons and/or other procedures regulating the exploitation;

b. the temporary or local prohibition of exploitation, as appropriate, in order to restore satisfactory population levels;

c. the regulation as appropriate of sale, keeping for sale, transport for sale or offering for sale of live and dead wild animals.

## Article 8

In respect of the capture or killing of wild fauna species specified in Appendix III and in cases where, in accordance with Article 9, exceptions are applied to species specified in Appendix II, Contracting Parties shall prohibit the use of all indiscriminate means of capture and killing and the use of all means capable of causing local disappearance of, or serious disturbance to, populations of a species, and in particular, the means specified in Appendix IV.

## Article 9

1. Each Contracting Party may make exceptions from the provisions of Articles 4, 5, 6, 7 and from the prohibition of the use of the means mentioned in Article 8 provided that there is no other satisfactory solution and that the exception will not be detrimental to the survival of the population concerned:

- for the protection of flora and fauna;
- to prevent serious damage to crops, live-stock, forests, fisheries, water and other forms of property;
- in the interests of public health and safety, air safety or other overriding public interests;
- for the purposes of research and education, of repopulation, of reintroduction and for the necessary breeding;
- to permit, under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking, keeping or other judicious exploitation of certain wild animals and plants in small numbers.

2. The Contracting Parties shall report every two years to the Standing Committee on the exceptions made under the preceding paragraph. These reports must specify:

- the populations which are or have been subject to the exceptions and, when practical, the number of specimens involved;
- the means authorised for the killing or capture;
- the conditions of risk and the circumstances of time and place under which such exceptions were granted;
- the authority empowered to declare that these conditions have been fulfilled, and to take decisions in respect of the means that may be used, their limits and the persons instructed to carry them out;
- the controls involved.

## Chapter IV Special provisions for migratory species

### Article 10

1. The Contracting Parties undertake, in addition to the measures specified in Articles 4, 6, 7 and 8, to co-ordinate their efforts for the protection of the migratory species specified

in Appendices II and III whose range extends into their territories.

2. The Contracting Parties shall take measures to seek to ensure that the closed seasons and/or other procedures regulating the exploitation established under paragraph 3.a of Article 7 are adequate and appropriately disposed to meet the requirements of the migratory species specified in Appendix III.

## Chapter V Supplementary provisions

### Article 11

1. In carrying out the provisions of this Convention, the Contracting Parties undertake:

- a. to co-operate whenever appropriate and in particular where this would enhance the effectiveness of measures taken under other articles of this Convention;
- b. to encourage and co-ordinate research related to the purposes of this Convention.

2. Each Contracting Party undertakes:

- a. to encourage the reintroduction of native species of wild flora and fauna when this would contribute to the conservation of an endangered species, provided that a study is first made in the light of the experiences of other Contracting Parties to establish that such reintroduction would be effective and acceptable;

- b. to strictly control the introduction of non-native species.

3. Each Contracting Party shall inform the Standing Committee of the species receiving complete protection on its territory and not included in Appendices I and II.

### Article 12

The Contracting Parties may adopt stricter measures for the conservation of wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats than those provided under this Convention.

## Chapter VI Standing Committee

*Articles 13 and 14 cover the composition, powers and functioning of the Standing Committee of the Convention and the possibility for any body or agency technically qualified in the protection, conservation or management of wild fauna and flora and their habitats to take part in its meetings.*

## Chapter VII Amendments

*Articles 16 and 17 cover the procedure for amending articles of the Convention and the provisions in its appendices.*

## Chapter VIII Settlement of disputes

*Article 18 provides for settlement in the event of disputes: either through friendly settlement or arbitration.*

## Chapter IX Final Provisions

*Articles 19 to 24 cover signature, ratification, acceptance, approval and denunciation of the Convention and the formulation of reservations.*

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Convention.

Done at Bern, this 19th day of September 1979, in English and French, both texts being equally authentic, in a single copy which shall be deposited in the archives of the Council of Europe. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit certified copies to each member State of the Council of Europe, to any signatory State, to the European Economic Community if a signatory and to any State invited to sign this Convention or to accede thereto.

### Appendix I Strictly protected flora species (...)

### Appendix II Strictly protected fauna species (...)

### Appendix III Protected fauna species (...)

### Appendix IV Prohibited means and methods of killing, capture and other forms of exploitation (...)



*Northern Vosges Regional Nature Park (France)*

*The common hamster lives mainly in the steppes of eastern Europe*



# At the Council of Europe

## European Nature Conservation Year 1995: NGOs take action



The Nature NGO Task Force has continued its work and maintained its contacts over the last few months. In addition to its informing and co-ordinating role, the Task Force has continued to represent the voluntary associations at the various ENCY decision-making levels.

The Task Force has at present forty-seven members.

A bulletin is published by Rurality-Environment-Development with the support of Directorate-General XI of the European Commission (Environment, Consumer Protection and Nuclear Safety), this bulletin can be obtained on request to the Task Force secretariat (contact at the bottom of this page).

We shall set out below some examples of activities which the INGOs will be conducting in the next few months as part of ENCY.

### NGO Nature Week

NGO Nature Week will be held from 16 to 20 October 1995 in the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. It will comprise three colloquies organised by different NGOs with the help of the Council of Europe. The final programme is as follows:

- colloquy on "The major transport infrastructures and nature conservation", organised by the International Federation for Housing and Planning (16 and 17 October 1995). This event is aimed at incorporating the "nature conservation" aspect into the construction and operation of transport infrastructures and disseminating recent discoveries and methods in this field;

- colloquy "Habitat 2000" organised by the European Environmental Bureau (17 and 18 October

1995). This meeting is aimed at analysing the manner in which the Habitats Directive is currently being implemented in order to identify new proposals to protect biodiversity in Europe;

- colloquy on "Rural law and nature conservation", organised by the European Council for Rural Law in partnership with the international association Rurality-Environment-Development (19 and 20 October 1995). This colloquy will draw attention to the fact that rural law is not always consistent with the new nature conservation concerns.

### For your diary

#### Urban development and nature conservation

The International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISCRP) are organising an international encounter on the theme of "Urban development and nature conservation" in Paris on 6 and 7 November 1995.

The first day will be spent attempting to solve the problem of the conservation of natural areas and resources, particularly on the outskirts of towns, in the face of urban growth and the growing needs in terms of infrastructures, amenities and housing. On the second day participants will tackle with the problems and conflicts of nature conservation in the urban, agricultural and forest environments.

#### Student action

The General Assembly of European Students is organising a wide range of activities in various European countries open to students from all European university faculties. Some examples are:

- a conference entitled "Economic development without pollution?" in Timisoara from 17 to 21 May 1995;

- courses such as "The environmental implications of the use of water by society" (Utrecht, from 23 August to 1 September 1995), "Nuclear pollution and its consequences in the Chernobyl region" (Kiev, from 6 to 30 August 1995) and "Environment and Greek culture" (Athens, from 2 to 17 August 1995).

#### European Garden Days

The International Office of Allotments and Leisure Gardens Societies will be organising, in Luxembourg from 28 June to 2 July 1995, the European Garden Days and an international seminar broadly entitled "Allotments and leisure gardens, a must for our towns and cities". The aim is to show how much gardens contribute to the quality of life and nature and environmental conservation.

#### The Alps - Landscape of the Year 1995

The International Friends of Nature have chosen the Alps as "Landscape of the Year 1995". This will be an opportunity for highlighting the role played by the Alps as a living environment for human beings. As 1995 also marks the centenary of the Friends of Nature, another activity will symbolise their commitment to the conservation of natural areas: 100 000 trees will be planted in some

twenty European countries with the co-operation of the national, regional and local federations of the Friends of Nature.

#### Other projects

Many other projects will obviously be implemented by the NGOs in the Task Force, including:

- the formulation and dissemination by the international association Euroter of a message on "Human rights and duties *vis-à-vis* nature", in the form of a guidebook;

- the 1995 Eurosite prize for management techniques, one of the criteria for which is special attention to efficient management techniques applicable to unprotected natural areas;

- a European Day of visits concerning geoconservation, organised by ProGEO, the European Association on the Conservation of the Geological Heritage. This "open day" will comprise excursions to geological nature reservations, museums and institutes.

The International Federation for the Defence of the Mediterranean (IFDM) is proposing a range of diversified activities to promote nature conservation around the Mediterranean Basin for 1995.

However, the INGOs operate in a wide variety of ways. Many of them have decided that rather than organising specific international events themselves they should actively participate in ENCY by encouraging their national members to contribute to this European campaign by implementing projects in their respective countries. Several INGOs have informed us of this choice, e.g. the International Automobile Federation, Soroptimist International, the International Touring Alliance, etc. ■

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Look to the  
future

Look after  
nature



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