Left to right from top:

- IUCN Secretaries General:
  - Jean-Paul Narcis, 1968-1955
  - M.C. Blooms, 1959-1960
  - Gerald Huxley, 1961-1962
  - Hugh Elliott, 1963-1966
  - Joe Berwick, 1966-1970
  - Directors General:
    - Gerardo Budowski, 1970-1976
    - David Mann, 1977-1980
    - Lee Talbot, 1981-1982
    - Kinton Miller, 1983-1988
    - Martin Midgley, 1988-1994
    - David Nettell, 1994-1996

[Not shown: Tracy Philippou, 1956-1985]

Leaders in conservation

IUCN's 50 years

3-4/98
Faced with the growth in industrialized countries of the idea that the Earth is at the service of humanity—a view used to legitimate the pillaging of our planet—the scientific world began to mobilize during the 19th century. By the start of this century the idea of nature protection was spreading gradually among sensitive and educated people. National non-governmental organizations were being created, and, here and there, governmental agencies for the protection of nature. The need to coordinate those efforts at supranational level was increasingly recognized, thanks to our visionary predecessors, the great pioneer naturalists.

IUCN represented something like the third attempt to set up a global organization of its kind. So I think we owe somehow of a debt of gratitude to those hardy souls who persevered in 1946 during a somewhat bizarre trip around the national reserves and National Park of Switzerland. We must bow with respect to those who gathered at a hotel in Brussels just short of a year later to set in motion the steps that brought all those people together in Fontainebleau on 30 September 1948 to set up the earliest incarnation of IUCN.

In fact, we need to go back to 1910 to trace the deepest organizational roots of IUCN. Paul Sarasin— who with his cousin Fritz had founded the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature— first proposed a Committee “charged to establish an international or world Commission for the protection of nature throughout the world, from the North Pole to the South Pole, and covering both the continents and the seas.”

From that point obstacle after obstacle blocked the dream’s fulfilment. The work of a Consultative Commission was suspended with the First World War. Paul Sarasin died in 1929. Pieter Gerbrand van Tienhoven, a major Dutch conservationist, set up an organization in Brussels in 1928 which was to become International Office for the Protection of Nature in 1935. After it moved to Amsterdam in 1940, its activities were again severely restricted by World War II.

Finally, with the end of hostilities, a successor of Paul Sarasin at the head of the Swiss League, Dr Charles Bernard, and League Secretary Johann Büttikofer, organized the famous tour of Swiss nature reserves, bracketed by sessions in Basel and Brunnlen to discuss the future development of international collaboration for the protection of nature.

I could say the rest is history, but history never progresses in a straight line. The following pages record some of those meandering paths of IUCN’s early years, when so much depended on so few individuals.

Pierre Goedlind is a Swiss ecologist, agronomist and entomologist whose association with IUCN dates from 1975. He has served as a Councillor representing the Swiss Confederation and Canton of Vaud (1975-93), a member of the Bureau, and Acting Director General (1982). In 1988 he was named a Member of Honour of IUCN for his service to conservation.

Paul Sarasin’s dreams of a world commission for the protection of nature were finally realized with the creation of IUCNP. He is pictured (standing) in the Swiss National Park. Pro Natura

**A personalized tour**

This issue of World Conservation marks the Union’s 50th anniversary. The celebrations in Fontainebleau will be looking ahead, imagining what the world will be like in the future and discussing what we can do about it.

So we decided to take a look back, at the roots of IUCN in the “parks and species movements” of mid-century, and at the Union’s subsequent evolution and those who guided it. Instead of recounting facts, we sought impressions, thoughts and images. We seek to offer a feel for life in IUCN, by having people relate some of their most vivid memories, including moments of hardship and hilarity. Instead of imposing our own style and format, we wanted a presentation of, by, and for the members of the IUCN family, in their own words and, wherever possible, with their own photographs. It is hoped that this issue will serve as a complement to the monumental and much more comprehensive history of IUCN by Sir Martin Holdgate to be published in the coming months by Earthscan Publications Ltd.—a taste of which may be found in the summary at the centre of this edition.

Let us open up our net wider, asking people to tell us what difference IUCN has made in their lives, and what they remember best about the people and events of the Union’s first 50 years. The following, which cannot possibly be comprehensive, is simply what we discovered in our net at the end of the process.*

Please keep in mind that memories fade, and are often faulty. Yet impressions can be more “truthful” than facts, and are certainly less elusive.

The Editor

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* In the end we received so many responses that we had to do some serious editing—for which we apologize to those voluntary contributors who put so much effort into the exercise. Your full contributions will be presented in an anniversary album and exhibit at Fontainebleau. You may find a short history, list of major players, and a chronology of events in the “background” section of the Anniversary website at www.iucn.org/50

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Paul Sarasin, the great Swiss pioneer... was able to create in his own country a genuine movement in favour of the protection of natural resources and amenities and was the founder of the Swiss National Park. A far-sighted scientist, he soon realised the uselessness of scattered effort, and saw how urgent it was to concentrate this by achieving the intellectual unity to unify the various existing laws and coordinate the widespread national measures taken to preserve fauna and flora menaced by man’s so-called civilization.

—from a foreword to the Fontainebleau proceedings

Charles Bernard
My dilemmas with IUCN

By Max Nicholson

What difference has IUCN made in my life? As a human being now in his mid-90s, who at the age of 44 was already caught up in the creation of IUCN, I thought I should be able to give some kind of answer to such a simple question.

Born in the country beneath hills and near the sea in Ireland, but in a purely English family, I first came to England as a young stranger to its unfamiliar environment. I was constantly on the move, and my frustrated need to belong was eventually satisfied by an attachment to birds, which mercifully stayed with me wherever I went. While I duly learnt at school about human affairs and thoughts, my close bird companions, with their quick reactions and in some ways superior capacities, gave me a different perspective.

This detachment was reinforced at the age of 16, when my father's post with the British Army of the Rhine led me to live for a period amid a German culture whose art, opera and forays into the countryside threw new light on what could, and could not, be taken for granted. Going up late to Oxford, my habits as a loner gave place to busy teamwork devoted to exploration of the tropical rainforest and Arctic tundra, to bird censuses and founding of national institutions. World War II plunged me into global operations and shipping strategy, after which I rejoined the civil service as head of the Deputy Prime Minister's office.

Then, suddenly I found myself in July 1946 being led round Switzerland among a strange group of foreigners full of baffling talk about an International Union for the Protection of Nature. Having had only a few months of experience with the subject, in a country where I was kept busy on the vast tasks of post-war reconstruction, I had some difficulty in getting my bearings.

My contact with the leading ecologists Tansley and Elton taught me that the fast-unfolding knowledge of the biosphere and its living systems called for vigorous operational development of the field of nature conservation. As my new colleagues and I strove to design the first government agency for modern nature conservation, I found their approach too traditionally based on natural history, too full of missionary zeal, and too oblivious to the new ecological disciplines and to the political and managerial problems that had to be confronted in an integrated way.

My old friend Julian Huxley was about to become the first head of the office of UNESCO, which he not only founded in science but single-handedly committed to the adoption and launch of IUPN. Without him I am sure the Union would never have come into effective existence, nor discovered its only possible role. While he was soon replaced at UNESCO, I was busy launching the UK Nature Conservancy, and added support of IUCN (then IUPN) to my tasks there. Despite numerous invitations, however, I never undertook any official post, preferring to help wherever possible behind the scenes.

I soon realized that, while we needed to learn what to conserve and how to conserve it, our practical success depended on massive and generous public voluntary support in addition to that from government. I therefore joined in a movement to complement IUCN with a much more strongly supported and funded twin, which emerged under my chairmanship in 1961 as the World Wildlife Fund. Although at first it progressed as intended, its twinship proved a more difficult goal to realize, and the two bodies eventually diverged.

So I am brought back to the Editor's question, "What difference has IUCN made in your life?" Even if spelt out to convey my struggle to reconcile a deep concern for nature with my compulsion to bring to its aid my gifts and opportunities in the world of human affairs and management, the answer is still superficial.

Whatever I have performed as a thinker and leader, as a manager and persuader, is founded in my place as one of those human beings who became imprinted (as ethnologists say) at an early age with the magic and challenge of the natural biosphere.

However we each choose to face this challenge, we become better human beings as a result. Richly as we profit from human culture and human fellowship, our evolutionary seen arises from our fellow animals and plants.

IUCN is a way to broaden that fellowship.

Max Nicholson was one of the founding fathers of IUCN. In recent years he has pursued conservation as Chair of the IUCN (Natural History) Commission and as President of the IUCN (Natural History) Commission and as President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, having been awarded the President's Medal, IUCN's highest honor, in 1991.

In 1953 Max Nicholson received the first John C. Phillips Memorial Medal, IUCN's highest award, from President Jean Beine, IUCN.
overrule the platform and persuade the GA to take whale conservation seriously. My chief memory of the 1975 General Assembly at Zaire was again of the mid-conference tour, when we traveled in an exceedingly cold troop-carrying aircraft (my wife was famously warm and cocooned by the president’s personal mechanic Harrow) but still arrived before the more comfortable aircraft, which had had to land twice on mountaintop rubble.

On the way to Ashkhabad in 1978 I remember the chagrin of the American delegates, waiting in an hours-long delay at the airport, at seeing the British, who had booked through intourist, trooping off to a civilized meal, while they had to make do with the airport lounge cafe. At Moscow airport again, at the end of that meeting, I saw the North Korean delegates physically attack the sole South Korean delegate!

The 1961 Lucerne General Assembly was especially close to my heart, because it was there that the Red Data Books really went public, with the Mammal volume edited by Noel Simon.

Those are some of the events I remember best. It would take too long to talk about the people I have known in IUCN, since I know most of the leading figures. I will just mention two who stand out especially: Hal Coolidge I first remember at Nairobi in 1963, typically bustling along followed by a trail of acolytes.

And of course there was the oft-cited Col Jack Vincent, Executive Officer of the SSC from the late 1960s to the mid-70s, with his constant cry of “Yes, but what do we do?”

Richard Fitter is a prolific natural history writer, especially of field guides. His works include The P Contestant Butch’s (Collins, 1978), a history of the first 75 years of the Fauna Preservation Society (an IUCN member), and Wildlife for Man (Collins, 1986), part-edited and rewritten for the SSC. He was a member of SSC from 1963 onwards, and latterly served as Chair of its Steering Committee (until 1988).

P. R. VAN TIENHOVEN

Pieter van Tienhoven (1875-1953) was a man with a mission in life: establishing an international nature conservation organization. Formally trained as a biologist and lawyer, van Tienhoven had been actively involved in international protection of birds and numerous other international nature conservation issues at the turn of the century and maintained the pressure for such an organization throughout the 1920s and 1930s. At Fontainebleau, van Tienhoven was nominated honorary Member of IUCN. He can honestly be called one of the first pioneers for international cooperation in nature conservation. Van Tienhoven’s legacy lives on not only in the library he donated to IUCN, but also in IUCN’s objectives to safeguard our natural heritage through international collaboration.

Joanna Boddam-Hosing

I remember...

By Miriam Rothschild

On my way to the conference at Fontainebleau I crossed the channel in a violent rainstorm and landed at Calais. Although the war was well and truly over, the town was still flat. It looked like a moonscape except for a solitary inn, standing like a forbidding surrealistic dream amidst the rubble. Calais had first been bombed by the Germans and subsequently by the British Air Force. Reconstruction had not begun.

At Fontainebleau, in beaming autumn sunshine, I walked towards the Galerie des Colonnes, a building set aside for the conference. Alongside the path was a row of conventional flowerbeds planted with dahlias and Glauniaceae, abloom with bright colours. The contrast between the concrete chaos of Calais and sunny, smiling Fontainebleau filled one with strange, conflicting emotions of doubt and optimism. I received little encouragement since I had originally been excited at the thought of the rebirth of a plan for international conservation but had found no corresponding enthusiasm in England. Before our first conference at Brunnen, I had tried in vain to persuade various scientific organizations to send representatives to the meeting. They were clearly uninterested. Even the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (SPNR), whom I represented, appeared indifferent. Cyril Diver, the first Director General of the Nature Conservancy, was frank. “For me, he said, “conservation stops at the channel.” This was also rather pathetic feeling among the British contingent that, despite the many years that had elapsed since the Berne conference (at which Charles Rothschild represented the UK Government in 1933), they had not had time to “get their national nature conservation straightened out” and could not yet contemplate a government-sponsored, grandiose international organization. It is interesting, however, that at the Berne Conference Rothschild had urged the delegates to press for the protection of the Arctic fauna, but this apparently was not raised by IUCN until the technical conference arranged in Copenhagen 40 years later.

Henry Maurice, appointed a Vice President of the first Executive Board, was an English representative at both Brunnen and Fontainebleau who disregarded the bickering politicians arguing about the future location of our headquarters, and talked of the major threats to the world’s fauna and flora. I learned a lot from him, and we found a subject of mutual anguish in the innumerable waste of surface water in the UK. Maurice courageously ignored the fact he was mortally ill. “My doctors say I will recover,” he remarked, “I choose to believe them.”

Among the throng at the reception I recognized Roger Heim, subsequently President of the IUPN and IUCN, undoubtedly one of the most remarkable men of his day. He was director of the Natural History Museum in Paris at the time of the fall of France in World War II. Being a Jew, he was arrested by the Ger-

mans and sent to the Buchenwald death camp. He was one of the very few survi-
wors. After his release Heim went straight back to his desk at the museum. Some-
one asked him a question about Buchenwald; he replied “Death was our only friend.”

Despite the sheer horror of his experience, Roger Heim still retained his old intuitive skill as a field naturalist and his infectious enthusiasm for the natural world – especially for mushrooms and their chemical secrets. I wondered what he thought of the duties of the energetic, lively Miss (Eileen) Sam (assistant to Julian Huxley) who claimed it had taken her “a day of hard talking” to smooth over one of the squabbles between rival enthusiasts.

George Bresler and William Yomtov, impressive American delegates, not only thought internationally but were idealistic and optimistic. Talking to them one felt the future of the rhinoceros and the skylark depended on energetic visionaries, not reasonable men who discussed the basic question of our meagre resources. Like the poet we must listen to “the silver chain of sound.”

Surprisingly I left France in a sanguine mood. Julian Huxley, in his opening address, had put into words what the 150 delegates present felt in their bones – the love and fascination of life other than our own, which must be protected. Maybe the necessary flow of energy would come from the New World?

Despite the unmarked graves of Calais and the dark shadow of the Holocaust – yes, there had been something magical about the Conference at Fontainebleau.

Miriam Rothschild, daughter of the Hon. Charles Rothschild, is a Fellow of the Royal Society and recipient of the Victorian Medal of Honour. She has published over 300 scientific papers and twelve books specializing in the study of flies, their taxonomy, the mechanism of their jump and dependence for reproduction on their host’s sex hormones. During the last ten years, Miriam Rothschild has concentrated on conservation, in particular the cultivation of the native flora of the UK.

From top: reading room housing the original van Tienhoven library and archives in the International Office for the Protection of Nature in Brussels; the library at “Les Ulis” in Morges (1990); a meeting in the new library, inaugurated at HQ in 1992; Ambassador Crosland-Hosing and Sir Martin Hokagate with the portrait of van Tienhoven. IUCN

Honor. Miriam Rothschild and friends.
After their 1916 tour of the Swiss National Park, members of the expedition had lunch in the Hotel Storchen in Schönenwerd where they signed the postcard, marking the birth of the idea of IUPN.

The Brussels-based International Office for the Protection of Nature (IOPN) was created by Pieter van Tienhoven in 1935. Address: 9, rue d’Egmont. IOPN

Left: IOPN documentation section, managed by Mme T. Grain and Mlle L. Johanknegt. IOPN
Below: IOPN reading room. IOPN

In Morges, some of the staff overflow was housed in the lovely villa “Floréal,” painted by Herbert Girardet, then Head of Personnel. IUCN/Niki Meith (courtesy of Anette Hertford)

Left: In 1961 IUCN headquarters transferred from Brussels to the villa “Les Uttins” in Morges, Switzerland. IUCN
Above: in 1980 IUCN and WWF moved to the World Conservation Centre in Gland. WWF-Canon

The new building faces a field of varying crops, but has its own protected area in the form of a ‘natural garden’. IUCN/Anja Thorsell

Key dates: HQ sites

1935: International Office for Protection of Nature is established in Brussels.
1960: The Operations Intelligence Centre is created at the IUCN Headquarters in Brussels.
1961: April. IUCN headquarters is transferred from Brussels to the villa “Les Uttins” in Morges, Switzerland.
1975: IUCN moves part of its staff from Les Uttins to the villa “Floréal”.
1980: The World Conservation Centre is formally opened in Gland, Switzerland, by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, newly elected President of WWF.
1992: IUCN staff move into the new Headquarters in Gland, formally opened on 3 November by the President of the Swiss Confederation, René Felber.
Partnership

By Michel Batisse

Cooperation between IUCN and UNESCO is alive and well. So that the question today is how it may develop in the uncertain future that all international organizations are facing. Everybody claims concern for biodiversity and supports sustainable development but we can see that in reality, irreversible pressures on land, waters and forests keep mounting and there is little change in previous wasteful practices of natural resources use.

Biodiversity is under threat everywhere. Its conservation has to rely upon a variety of local and global measures. It will somehow succeed if it is not accepted by all stakeholders concerned, accommodating in particular the legitimate claims of local peoples. This implies major efforts in environmental education and in ensuring a fair share of benefits. It will not succeed if it is not integrated within a coherent approach to ecosystem management. This requires political will and institutional changes for effective regional planning.

In this context, it is clear that all relevant organizations, including IUCN and UNESCO, must strengthen and pool their efforts. IUCN should see to it that its basic mission of mobilizing the community of conservation managers and scientists is maintained in the foreground. UNESCO should promote environmental education and research vigorously and develop further a fully functional Biosphere Reserve Network.

SIR JULIAN HUXLEY

The ties between IUCN and UNESCO are as old as the Union itself. Soon after World War II, when UNESCO was still very young, its first Director General Julian Huxley - who had already been active in wildlife conservation in the United Kingdom – was indeed well prepared to revive Paul Sarasin’s pioneer efforts toward the creation of an international commission for nature protection. His personal commitment, throughout a rather complicated, end-on-end negotiation, involving a number of strong-minded people from various countries, eventually led to the founding of the new body in Fontainebleau, under the joint auspices of UNESCO and the French Government.

Michel Batisse is Senior Environmental Adviser at UNESCO and President of the Mediterranean Blue Plan. He was Assistant Director-General (Science) at UNESCO until 1984. He is a recipient of IUCN’s Highest Award, the John C. Philip Memorial Medal (1996), and a member of WCPA.

Much has been achieved in the last fifty years and we seem to be on the right track. But neither UNESCO nor IUCN, nor indeed anyone else has an other 50 years ahead to succeed in conserving our biological resources and life-supporting systems. We have to move faster.

UNESCO

Key dates: UNESCO

1948: IUPN is founded in Fontainebleau, under the joint auspices of UNESCO and the French Government.

1950: Survival Service Committee is established by a grant from UNESCO.

1954: Joint IUCN/UNESCO mission goes to Galápagos.

1959: Charles Darwin Foundation is created in Brussels, under the joint auspices of IUCN and UNESCO.

1964: The Darwin Station is founded on one of the Galápagos Islands.

1972: Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage is adopted. IUCN helps draw up the World Heritage List.

1979: “Parks” magazine is initiated by CNP for UNESCO support.

1982: UNESCO’s First International Biosphere Reserves Congress is held in Byelorussia; IUCN contributes a critical analysis of the status of the world Biosphere Reserves.

1996: IUCN and UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre sign a Memorandum of Understanding to consolidate and expand their working relationship.

In the late fifties, UNESCO began to mobilize external funds for concrete field operations for which the Union was the appropriate scientific advisor. Two examples are the early missions to Galápagos and Ethiopia.

Sudden insight

By Irenäus Ebib-EBesfeldt

"...I had by January 1954 raised and observed a great variety of amphibians, reptiles and mammals, and of course was familiar with bird behaviour. But it was on Galápagos, dating the first IUCN-UNESCO mission to the Islands, that I suddenly realized the profound differences in the behaviour of reptiles on the one hand and of birds and mammals on the other. It was what we call an Anaeroby, a sudden insight; and it initiated a train of thoughts about the origins and prospects of individual bonding and prosocial behaviours, the result of which amongst others was the book Love and Hate which came out in 1970 and has continued to sell since then.

The following weeks deepened my fascination with the Galápagos Islands, above and under water – the large aggregations of marine iguanas on Fernandina, the flightless cormorants and the ever-present finches of the family Geospodidae, which convinced Charles Darwin that species can change in the course of evolution – for me, it was like a great seminar in evolutionary history.

What are the prospects today? The situation may sound grim, but the positive achievements of the last four decades certainly surpass the negative developments. To sustain any human population, the animal and plant life on Galápagos must be preserved. The other natural resources of the Galápagos Islands are limited. There is not much fertile land for agriculture and with the modern techniques of shuffling the marine resources could be rapidly depleted. It is the uniqueness of the animal and plant life which attracts the visitor. This could provide a lasting income from tourism, provided it is managed in responsible ways. The Government clearly agrees: in March 1998 the Ecuadorian Congress passed a Special Law to promote local development and conserve biodiversity in the Islands, including ways to reduce the risk from alien invasive species.”

Irenäus Ebib-EBesfeldt was in charge of the original IUCN/UNESCO mission to Galápagos. He was responsible for stimulating renewed interest in Galápagos conservation in the 1950s and the subsequent founding of the Charles Darwin Research Station. This text is an excerpt from "Galápagos – the past and the present", 1998 (unpublished).
Sir Julian Huxley and the Lion of Judah

By Alain Gille

In 1963 Emperor Haile Selassie, known as the Lion of Judah, cabled a request to UNESCO for assistance in developing its national parks and reserves. The Director General of UNESCO responded by asking me, attending the 1963 Nairobi General Assembly in my twin capacity at an UNESCO liaison officer to IUCN and Science Officer for Africa, to put together a mission immediately. Sir Julian Huxley, former Director General of UNESCO, agreed to lead the mission.

Five of us flew to Addis Ababa on 25 September 1963 and started to work. On the third day we were scheduled to be received by the Emperor in his office, after which we were invited to join him for a luncheon. But first — in a rare honour — we were to visit the Emperor’s pet lion and be permitted to caress the animal.

When the mission arrived to pay homage to this national symbol, which figures prominently on Ethiopia’s flag, I felt a certain apprehension. We were led to a square courtyard in the castle’s interior where a large figure stretched out in the shade: the Emperor’s lion, attached to a tree by an impressively thick metal chain linked to an enormous iron collar. Sir Julian was at the head of the line of visitors. I was at the rear. Sir Julian, at the head of the group, was invited to approach the cat, a splendid 200-kg mass of muscle whose head was encircled by a black fringe (ah, the spoils of office!) and to pet it.

Perhaps his courage came from his years prior to joining UNESCO, when Sir Julian had been director of the London Zoo. I can still see him as he walked towards the animal with what looked like a confident gait. His pace became more tentative when, at his approach, the lion raised itself on all fours.

Sir Julian paused, but quickly suppressed his hesitation. Was he not the leader of the mission? Bravely, he extended his right arm, and gently rubbed the lion’s back, from its spine towards its rear legs. But he had apparently forgotten that a lion is nothing more than an enormous cat.

In any case, transported by this attention, the animal decided to act like any feline and roll on its back so that we could rub its tummy. Unfortunately, Sir Julian was so close to the lion that he received the force of all 200 kg of leonine muscle against his legs. He staggered and threw up his arms. But with twist of his body, he managed to regain his balance, and honour was saved!

Benefiting from this lesson, we each approached in turn to caress the belly of the Emperor’s favourite pet, which made no secret of its enjoyment.

Thirty-five years after, while I still feel regret that the photos I took (unseptiously) were a failure, I am eternally grateful that the Emperor kept his lion well-fed.

Sir HUGH ELLIOTT

Hugh Elliott was Secretary-General of IUCN from 1963 to 1966. Hugh had been a British civil officer in East Africa working in agriculture and early in his retirement became engaged in the Special Africa Project. He was a keen ornithologist and my keenest memories of Hugh, bonkettors to the ready, adding to his personal list of bird sightings on every occasion in the field.

Hugh edited IUCN publications for many years and was a caring editor, forgiving of his authors’ foibles. He was a delightful companion with a quiet sense of humour and was always gentle with people. I never saw him angry yet he could set out his point of view firmly but without any harshness. Unfortunately his sight failed sometime before he died, cutting him off from some of his greatest pleasures.

FRANCOIS BOULIERE

The ties between UNESCO and IUCN are well symbolized by our late and regretted friend François Bourlière, a former President of IUCN (1963-1966) and also of the International Biological Programme (IBP). François was one of those persons you always remember once you have met him. He was really a Renaissance man, being at the same time a professor in medicine who made important contributions to gerontology, and a pioneer in the natural history of mammals and in Antarctic and tropical ecology. His curiosity and knowledge extend to all subjects and his culture and talent for communication were remarkable. He disliked frivolous and costly projects, and always opted for achieving lasting and meaningful results.

Bourlière was President of the 1968 "Biosphere Conference" — the first such conference to promote, at the intergovernmental level, what we would now call sustainable development, and which gave rise to the innovative concept of Biosphere Reserves. IUCN was well-represented at that UNESCO meeting, with no fewer than 35 scientists attending as members of the IUCN delegation (including Harold Coolidge, Gerardo Budowski, Luc Hoffman, Peter Scott, Russell Train, Jean Dorst, Wolfgang Burnhme, Théodore Monod, Jean-Paul Harvey, Kai Curry-Lindahl, Lee Talbot, etc.) You can imagine that this was not an easy conference, since many participants had their projects. But thanks to the authority and leadership of François Bourlière, the entire IUCN delegation strongly supported the recommendation for a research programme on “Man and the Biosphere”, which the Conference accepted unanimously. The programme was launched in 1970 with François again serving as the first Chair of its coordinating council.

HAROLD COOLIDGE

Hal Coolidge, IUCN’s President from 1966 to 1972, was a scion of the line of US President Coolidge and a hyperactive promoter of conservation.

I remember him on regular visits to my office in Bangkok during the 60s. He would arrive unannounced, sit down, and start on a seemingly never ending stream of information about conservation work throughout the world. From his bulging, battered briefcase he would pluck one paper after another, insist that I make a photocopy for later reference and continue his monologue in a gravelly voice. Then suddenly it would be over and he would pack up and depart.

Hal worked tirelessly looking for funds and he was able to persuade the Ford Foundation to make a major grant for IUCN to set up a professional secretariat in 1970. Without his efforts IUCN might well have fallen by the wayside.

E. J. H. BERWICK

Joe Berwick, Secretary General from 1966 to 1970, was a wonderful personality. Under the facade of a reserved British civil servant beat an admirably kind heart. His deep, unpretentious humanism was rooted in a bitter life experience during World War II, when as a young specialist in tropical agriculture in Borneo he was drawn into the whirlpool of warfare. Joe was always exceptionally warm and generous, especially towards us “Easterners.”

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The Commissions are one of the factors which make IUCN special. Other international organizations have members and a secretariat. But the existence of the Commissions – worldwide networks of experts – as part of its structure and governance gives IUCN a unique potential. In fact it was the Commissions which led IUCN’s networking and regionalization for many decades. While the Secretariat was still a small group nestled in the centre of Europe, providing scientific and technical advice on request, the Commissions took the message of conservation to the furthest corners of the Earth. In the realms of species survival, protected areas and environmental law especially, they have been, and remain, pre-eminent.

No park is an island
By Adrian Phillips

Protected areas have been central to the work of IUCN from the beginning. The founding of the Union was inspired, in part, by a tour of the Swiss National Park and other reserves. Jean-Paul Harroy, the Union’s first Secretary-General (1948-50), was a “parks person” and later chaired the International Commission on National Parks of IUCN (1966-72) (see key dates). Other leading people in the history of IUCN, including Hal Cooledge and Kenneth Miller, also came from protected areas “stalwarts”.

Today the Commission maintains a global network of 1300 protected area experts drawn from nearly every country. In 1948 there were barely 1000 protected areas around the world; now some 30,000 places measure up to the definition of a protected area, and nearly 13,000 are large enough to be recorded in the UN list. As the numbers have grown, many of the earlier notions have been stood on their heads. Thus, where once parks were planned against people, WCPA now advocates that they be planned with local people. Where once the emphasis was on setting these places aside, now we look for the many connections which link protected areas to the world around. Earlier language justified the creation of parks on aesthetic grounds; we now advance scientific, economic and cultural rationales as well. Park visitors, engaged in recreation and tourism, were once seen as protected areas’ principal customers; now the local community is often recognised as the key stakeholder.

JEAN-PAUL HARROY
To me the giant of IUCN, the Union’s first Secretary General and a founding father of what is now the World Commission on Protected Areas, was Jean-Paul Harroy, the eminent Belgian professor who recruited me into the Commission in 1971 – an event which changed my life and continues to be a major influence 27 years later. Pictures of Jean-Paul float though my mind. Our first meeting was when he visited Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1971. I arranged for him to meet and speak to a group of rangers from all the national parks in New Zealand by a lovely lake near Rotorua. Harroy was a very effective leader of conservation who arranged publication of what became the forerunner of the IUCN/WCMC United Nations List of National Parks and Protected Areas.

Where previously most parks were strictly protected sites, now they are complemented by other kinds of protected areas in which people live and use resources. Formally, each protected area was seen as a unique investment in conservation; now we seek to develop networks and systems of protected areas, planned and managed nationally and at a bioregional scale. Fifty years ago, protected areas were almost entirely a national responsibility; now they are seen as an international concern. Where once the emphasis was on terrestrial areas, marine parks are now the highest priority. CNPPA (now WCPA) has played a central role in bringing about these shifts in perception and practice.

Fifty years of experience has taught us that protected areas cannot survive and flourish in isolation: they must be planned and managed in a wider social, economic and physical context.

A geographer and planner, Adrian Phillips has been Chair of WCPA since 1994. Before that he was Director General of the Countrywide Commission (UK) for 11 years, and Programme Director at IUCN Headquarters (1978-81).

Key dates: WCPA
1958: The Athens General Assembly decides to establish a Commission on National Parks
1960: The International Commission on National Parks is constituted at the Warsaw General Assembly, under chair Harold Coolidge, to become the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA).
1962: The First World Conference on National Parks is held in Seattle, USA. A List of national parks and equivalent reserves is compiled by IUCN and published as the UN list.
1972: The Second World Conference on National Parks is held in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, USA.
1972: The World Heritage Convention is signed.
1972: A two-volume World Directory of National Parks and other Protected Areas is compiled by CNPPA to complement the UN list.
1982: World Congress on National Parks is held in Bali, Indonesia, and connects protected areas to the development agenda of developing countries.
1992: The Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas in Caracas, Venezuela widens the emphasis from national parks to embrace other protected area categories.
1994: Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe is launched across 20 countries.
1994: IUCN publishes Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories.
1996: CNPPA name is changed to World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).
1998: WCPA launches its best practice guideline series, with National System Planning for Protected Areas.
Science: the Union's cornerstone

By Tony Mence

From its inception, IUCN has been firmly grounded in science, and in the early days that science was ecology—as we understood the term then.

In 1949, the joint IUPN-UNESCO Conference on the Protection of Nature in Lake Success focused on the role of ecological research in the conservation of natural resources, and called on the Union to establish a "Survival Service" to provide governments with reliable scientific advice on threatened species.

As a result, Hal Goldblatt (then Secretary) set up the Survival Service in March 1950 with a grant from UNESCO. It flourished under the dynamic leadership of Peter Scott, who by 1958 had oversaw the first Red Data Book on endangered species, followed by RDBs on birds by Jack Vincent of ICBP and plants by Ronald Meldille of Kew Gardens.

In the following years, science remained at the heart of the Union's work, sustained by periodic IUCN-sponsored technical meetings to review the scientific aspects of conservation. Some of these coincided with General Assemblies and are now known as workshops. These meetings have stimulated both scientific interest and more widespread popular appreciation of the issues.

Science remained central even when, toward the end of the 1970s, IUCN began to change its programme emphasis from 'protectionism' toward an emphasis on sound management for rational and realistic objectives. But the emphasis shifted toward consideration of whole ecosystems, and new attention was paid to the marine environment and to plant conservation (up to then rather neglected). Plant specialists worldwide provided information on the natural sciences still account for much of the authority and respect it enjoys in conservation circles, echoed in the resounding success of SSC and, subsequently, its sister Commission. For this we can thank the many scientists who dedicated themselves to the Union in those first crucial decades.

Tony Mence joined IUCN in 1973 as Executive Officer of SSC, after which he became Senior Executive in the Director-General's office. He later moved to Cambridge to head the Species Conservation Monitoring Unit (through 1982), and served the Union again in the role of rapporteur for several General Assemblies and Conferences before retiring to his home in the UK. This text was based on an unpublished manuscript, "IUCN—how it began, how it is growing up" (1981).

SSC: leading the world in species conservation

If the idea for the Union was inspired by a National Park, it was interest in species conservation which stimulated much of its growth and expansion from 1960 on. This was when the Survival Service Commission helped establish a unit at IUCN Headquarters in Brussels and began collecting its first index of threatened species. When two centres of conservation in the UK became involved in SSC work—the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew—SSC helped the Union to accelerate its transformation from a small intimate group to a global network.

Red Data Books and the birth of conservation monitoring

By Jane Fenton

One of SSC's first major tasks, initiated by Sir Peter Scott, was the production of the Red Data Books for all threatened animals. Dr Ronald Meldille, first volunteer to start doing a Red Data Book for plants, he came two or three meetings and then at one of them in his gentle way said, "I think we need some help because I am not going to live long enough to complete this task". It was then that Grenville Lucas was brought on board; the subsequent work on plants he oversaw has become one of the biggest IUCN success stories. Although all the people with different specialist interests worked incredibly well together, and the production of the early Red Data Books was largely done in voluntary time. We located a deserted laboratory in a building in Cambridge which could accommodate all the workers on the Red Data Books under one roof—this became the Species Conservation Monitoring Unit. Things have changed a lot since then but there is still a splendid building there and a great deal of worldwide conservation work is being achieved under its roof.

Jane Fenton has worked since 1982 for ICBP/BirdLife International, most recently fundraising for the Rare Bird Club. In 1996 she was honored with the Order of the Golden Ark from HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.
SIR PETER SCOTT

SSC was already a major force within IUCN by the late 1960s, largely because Sir Peter Scott had the art of attracting conservation-minded scientists and naturalists – people who deeply cared about the fate of the animals and plants they were studying and who were prepared to devote much of their time and resources to their cause. In these early days our meetings were not large, and if we were in a tropical country Sir Peter would suggest that we sit outside under the trees, where we would work to the sound of fluttering paper as he dipped his paintbrush into a pot of water. He was fully capable of chairing a meeting whilst painting reproducible studies of birds or other animals, usually from the country in which the meeting was being held.

Countless people flocked to Slimbridge to meet Sir Peter and to discuss their concerns with wildlife in their countries. He always listened patiently and never hesitated to write a letter of support if he could. Some of these meetings were held in his swimming pool, and I well remember bobbing in the water with him and Richard Fitter.

Jane Fenton

I grew up with Peter Scott’s nature series on the BBC called ‘Look’. Along with David Attenborough’s programmes they opened up the strange and fascinating world of nature. My interest in conservation dates back to those films. The Scotts – father and son – were legend to me.

I met Peter Scott first at an SSC meeting in Tuvalu. This was my first ever trip to Africa. It seemed incredible that here I was in the middle of Kenya sitting down in the same meeting. Scott said very little. Most of the time he painted his watercolours or snatched up his binoculars to spot some bird or another.

After the meeting Ian and Oria Douglas Hamilton organized a trip to a giant bat cave on the coast. I remember entering the cave with Scott et al., peering up at thousands upon thousands of bats and scurrying cockroach-heaving dung underfoot. I can still recall that smell as though it was yesterday. But bats were obviously not Sir Peter’s cup of tea. It was not long before he was snake-shaking offshore with his underwater drawing pad, making exquisite sketches of the fish on the reef.

I only met the long-serving SSC Chair and founding member of WWF once more. I had been asked to write a profile of him in an edition of this very publication. In it I described him as the true Renaissance Man (writer, broadcaster, painter, naturalist, sportsman, etc.). The description stands. Without Sir Peter, his vision in helping to set up WWF, and his tremendous work for IUCN and wildlife, the world would be a far poorer place.

Robert Lamb

I was pretty junior in SSC when I first encountered Sir Peter Scott in a meeting at University of Cambridge and raised the question of attention to the insects and other invertebrates. He was gracious in his response. In later years we had some fine moments jousting over matters such as the feasibility of keeping blue whales going in a protected and managed piece of the ocean (he was on the affirmative side of this debate).

In addition to his own fine example of commitment to conservation, he charmingly engaged others. With Lady Scotts representation of this commitment after his death, the Species Survival Commission came to be the beneficiary of a $1 million grant in Peter’s memory from the Sultan of Oman. The money specifically supported development and publication of conservation action plans by the SSC specialist groups. It was an enormous boost to the activities of numerous specialist groups, and certainly made for a productive time by the SSC network during my tenure as chair.

George Robb

1970: The Operations Intelligence Centre is created at the IUCN Headquarters in Brussels, in which SSC was closely involved. SSC starts a card index of data for the 34 mammal species considered as threatened. 1973: A double volume, loose-leafed Red Data Book is issued by IUCN for internal circulation only. 1976: The Red Data Book (a looseleaf file of endangered species) is published. 1976: The Species Conservation Monitoring Unit, a data unit for SSC, is established. 1981: The Species Conservation Monitoring Unit becomes the IUCN Conservation Monitoring Centre, based in Cambridge with units in New Zealand. 1986: SSC action planning programme starts, now containing almost 50 titles. 1987: SSC prepares the first Analyses of CITES proposals (now in its fifth edition). 1994: The new Red List Categories and Criteria are formally adopted. 1995: The IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals is published, using new agreed categories and criteria. The first three Plant Action Plans are published. 1998: The IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants is published.

SPPC SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION

Key dates: SSC


Small is beautiful

The seventies and early eighties were the years of informativity and “smallness” in organizations like WWF and IUCN, when people had the time to get to know one another and when bureaucracies were behind-the-scenes instead of in your face. The most lasting legacy of those days was the network of friends which was created, many of those people going on to make significant contributions to the work of SSC. IUCN’s Plant Advisory Group was set up to advise the Director General on plant conservation issues and to develop projects under the initial leadership of Peter Raven, Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden.

An especially memorable meeting of the IUCN was held in Colombia in 1986. This included a field trip to La Panaza Reserve, which is one of the worlds major hot spots of plant diversity. Such trips were the glue which bonded people together, not just for that meeting, but for years afterwards. In the mad rush of life in the 1990s we may have lost something invaluable – the time to talk, the time to listen, and the time to really get to know one another.

David Given

Commission Chairs George Rabe (SSC), left, and Parthis Sarnath (CEC) discuss policy at a 1991 Council meeting, IUCN/Wee Math

GREN LUCAS

I met Gren Lucas on my first visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Gren told me about IUCN, and especially the Species Survival Commission. Gren was the Chair of SSC during the beginning of its transition from a relatively small, “chummy” group, with few staff and few specialist groups, to a global movement involving thousands of people and hundreds of groups.

Gren is one of the most hospitable people I ever met. Another memorable characteristic is his direct sense of humour. We invited him to our home in New Zealand one evening in 1980 when the General Assembly was held in Churchill. He walked into our living room, swept it with his eyes and proclaimed, “I know that I am in a botanists home – they can grow rubber plants”. For the next year that plant almost died of over-attention. If some peoples sensibilities are occasionally ruffled by Gren’s crudeness, I have always found him an inspiration, and have personally benefitted from his encouragement and his interest in my work.

David Given

Peter Scott’s drawings graced the pages of the IUCN Bulletin during the 1960s.
Law Programme: a jewel in the crown

Since its founding in 1960, IUCN's Law Programme has been instrumental in a number of major international environmental conventions and soft law instruments, working on stage in negotiations and conferences often after long periods behind-the-scenes. In the following pages, two key players recall some highlights.

Remembering the early days

An interview with François Burhenne-Guillain

Q: How long have you been with IUCN?
FBG: It's hard to believe, now, but I have been working with IUCN for all of my professional life. My first contact was in the early '60s, when I was a law student in Brussels. I had never heard of IUCN, and the term "environmental law" did not yet exist.

I needed a summer job, so I approached a Professor at another faculty who was looking for a student to work for the Council of Europe on legislation for "natural resources conservation" - as the field was called back then. That Professor was Jean-Paul Harroy, the first Secretary General of IUCN (1948-1956).

After my interview, Professor Harroy told me I would probably not get the job, since I hadn't finished my studies. Fortunately, no one else wanted it, because a few weeks later he called again and offered me the post. So it began.

Q: What happened next?
FBG: I turned up in Bonn and went to the building where today the Environmental Law Centre is still housed. I was shown to my office, a bare room except for stacks of thin envelopes - one for each country that had sent information on its natural resources legislation. I was to assemble all the material I could find and fill in the gaps. I would be working with Wolfgang Burhenne, who was chair of the IUCN Committee on Environmental Legislation.

Wolfgang was already a workaholic, as was Jean-Paul Harroy, splitting their time between their professional and volunteer work for IUCN and others. I sensed that Wolfgang did not believe that I could do the job properly. And so I set out to prove him wrong. This was the start of the IUCN Environmental Law Information System.

Q: What do you remember most about those first years?
FBG: There is one moment I wish I could forget. After I graduated from university, I was asked to become the Executive Officer of the Commission on Legislation. Soon after I started, IUCN, through Jean-Paul Harroy and Wolfgang, was asked to

Above: The first demonstration of the Environmental Law Information System was given at the June 1972 Stockholm Conference. IUCN/EIC
Right: IUCN President Hal Coolidge (left) visits Wolfgang and Françoise Burhenne at the Environmental Law Centre in 1970. IUCN/EIC

Quotable

Putting communication into conservation

Founded in 1948, the Commission on Education and Communication is one of the Union’s oldest commissions, and since then has played a forceful role in shaping a global acceptance for environmental education.

The challenge has been an enormous one - to encourage the Union to accept that scientific information alone does not bring about a change in peoples’ attitudes and practice toward the environment so they become more willing to take responsibility for its continued health and productivity. Communication and education are the best tools we have to bring this about, and not just in schools but throughout society – in companies, local communities, governments and social groups. The only alternative is to force laws and regulations on a reluctant populace, a solution that would be prohibitively costly and probably counterproductive.

Frits Hesselink

Heady challenge

Application of ecosystem-based management is only partly about science. It is much more about cultures and societies... We cannot wait for a perfect understanding of science of ecosystems - we will never have all the knowledge we would like as scientists. Instead scientists and professionals must assist decision-makers on the basis of best estimates, case histories and sound precautionary principles to introduce the new idea of ecosystem-based management into reality. This is the heady challenge to the new CEM.

Ed Malby

Bridging the globalization divide

The globalization process has seen the re-emergence of the old conflict between the North and the South. This involves conflicts over identities, rights, and perceptions. IUCN, as a union of northern and southern members, could help bridge this divide by emphasizing areas of common interest - for example, biodiversity, consumption, community building - and synthesizing the concerns and perspectives of different constituencies.

Tarig Banuri

Key dates

CEC

1948: Commission on Education is established (renamed Commission on Education and Communication in 1990).
1953: The Handbook of Conservation is published, the first by a Commission.
1966: IUCN chairs education section at Biosphere Conference.
1969-73: The first executive officer for the Commission is appointed, regional committees are strengthened in NW Europe, East Europe, and established in India, North America, Central Africa; the International Youth Federation is supported.
1970: IUCN produces first internationally agreed definition of environmental education and takes its place as a leading force in the field.
1992-1997: CEC focuses on capacity building for the integrated and strategic use of communication and education as tools for policy.

CEM

1996: A Montreal Congress workshop approves 10 draft principles for EM.
1997: The Steering Committee meets for first time to set policy and workplan. A special issue of World Conservation is devoted to ecosystem management.
1998: The Steering Committee approves the regionalization of CEM and sets target to establish regional CEM networks.

CEESP

1996: At the Montreal Congress CESP is refocused and renamed the Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy.
1997: The Commission undertakes strategic planning and networking, and sets up working groups.

CEC Chair Frits Hesselink addresses participants in a CEC-organized training programme for government and NGO members in Central Europe. IUCN/Wendy Goldstein
IUCN’s pre-eminent position in international environmental law is due to the single-minded efforts of two people – Wolfgang and Françoise Burhene – who have worked together for more than forty years. They have established the IUCN Environmental Law Centre at Bonn, Germany, now staffed with a team of lawyers and researchers able to assist in developing environmental law at both country and international levels.

Françoise and I worked as a team on the final drafting of many international conservation treaties – helping to resolve sticking points amongst the delegations, then harmonizing the texts in English and in French. This was an exhilarating job, involving long hours working against the clock, with accuracy as a prime essential. She was a splendid colleague, wise in legal matters, meticulous in phrasing, always calm, a sheer delight to work with.

Burhene hospitality is legendary; there was a wonderful manor house in a village above Bonn which preserves its ancient exterior but is up-to-date inside with all the latest technology mixed with beautiful old furni-

The contribution of this superb team has enriched the Unions professional and personal life for decades, and it is hard to imagine the field of environmental law without them.

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The contribution of this superb team has enriched the Unions professional and personal life for decades, and it is hard to imagine the field of environmental law without them.
One obvious risk was to hit upon the same embarrassed customs inspector twice in a row— as happened to me at my hometown airport in Munich: what that Bavarian customs officer asked me to do with that cactus (in the native Bavarian dialect) is unfit for print, and therefore could not be fully included in my report to the national CITES Management Authority.

I don’t remember what eventually became of Little Red Riding Hood. She probably ended up getting confiscated somewhere, or suffered an untimely heroic death owing to excessive fumigation. But the effects of her globe-trotting performances, together with other IUCN/WWF activities for compliance control, were quite remarkable. Some evidence of that impact was an irate letter addressed to the Director General of IUCN at the time (David Munro) from German IUCN Councillor von Hegel (head of the Federal Forest and Wildlife Department, a direct descendant of the 19th century philosopher, and an avid big game hunter). Von Hegel formally complained about the CITES Secretariat, whose activities amounted to harassment of hard-working national management authorities and unduly singled out German treaty infringements.

The letter received a gentle acknowledgment from Dave Munro and resulted in considerable extra work for the Secretariat— for we now, of course, had to prove our independence and incorruptibility by finding and publicising at least as many CITES infringements in Germany after that letter as during the previous year—which was not easy, since the Federal Government had indeed begun to step up its enforcement efforts, and infringements actually were on the decline.

Peter H. Sand was Secretary-General of CITES from 1978 to 1981 and Assistant Director General of IUCN until 1983. He moved on to become chief of UNEP’s Environmental Law Unit in Nairobi, principal legal officer of the 1992 Rio Conference, and environmental legal adviser of the World Bank in Washington DC. “Tired”, he now teaches international environmental law at the University of Munich.

WOLFGANG BURHENNE

Wolfgang Burhenne has an image and reputation that reflects the “larger than life” impression he makes on people. His size, his great knowledge and his air of authority can even alarm some people, but I discovered within an hour of meeting him that behind his assertive manner lies a wealth of reason, flexibility, and warmth.

A new entrant into the IUCN family was generally treated as a “junior senator” who was expected to learn a lot about IUCN before speaking up on the issues in the Council. Not knowing this practice, in the very first hour I took issue with what was being said, expressing my opinion on an important legal matter introduced by Wolfgang. Well, when Wolfgang spoke, he virtually commanded—such was the quality of respect that he enjoyed. As so a novice I caused quite a stir by showing the audacity to disagree with him. But I was soon vindicated when Wolfgang revised his opinion and agreed with me! This caused quite a commotion in the Council, and during the break it was explained to me that Councillors had learnt not to disagree with Wolfgang. In reality, that moment alone accelerated my acceptance in the IUCN family, and Wolfgang developed into one of my best lifelong friends.

Parvez Hassan

Key dates:

Law programme

1970: The IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC) is established in Bonn, Germany. ELC now maintains one of the world’s largest and most comprehensive databases on environmental law and policy.
1971: The Convention on the Protection of Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat is adopted in Ramsar, Iran. Its Secretariat is entrusted to IUCN.
1985: The ASEAN Agreement for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, prepared by CEL for ASEAN, is adopted in Kuala Lumpur.
1990: The IUCN Environmental Law Service is established within the ELC.
EVOLUTION

In 1981 IUCN and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IED) established a new unit at IUCN Headquarters to support implementation of the World Conservation Strategy. The Conservation for Development Centre (CDC) was an advisory service aimed at giving countries technical assistance in the formulation of national conservation strategies. When IUCN began setting up regional and country offices in the developing world under the auspices of CDC, it was the first step in the process of regionalization and decentralization of the Secretariat and Commissions.

CDC: a dream unfulfilled

By Mike Cockerell

The growth of IUCNs regional and country offices over the past decade or so helped the Secretariat to broaden its impact and relevance to today’s conservation issues. But it also created a problem: how could the Secretariat maintain coherence between its global policies and priorities and what it wanted to accomplish on-the-ground? Visits by Heads of Office and Country Directors helped, by introducing them to the Union’s members and partners, from senior government officials to individual farmers in our project areas, in turn giving them a glimpse of the real conservation and economic issues facing local communities and developing country offices.

Quotable

Support, friendship, action!

What distinguishes IUCN is its immensely broad spectrum of conservation action, from international advocacy and leadership at forums such as the Earth Summit, to practical, hands-on conservation action, working with villagers and farmers in often remote places to develop ways of utilizing natural resources wisely and to conserve biodiversity.

Rob Malpas

LEE TALBOT

When Lee Talbot came to IUCN as Director General, he inherited a Union in a difficult financial state. Council immediately instructed him to balance the budget, and he moved rapidly to do so—a thankless job since it meant greatly reducing costs and shedding around a dozen staff from the small Secretariat. So when I arrived in 1981 to head the new Conservation for Development Centre (CDC), it was a time of considerable gloom at Headquarters. In coming to IUCN, Lee simply moved downstairs for he had for several years been the director of Conservation at WWF International. Apart from his work and his young family, Lee’s passion was motor racing, not as an observer but as a very successful driver and his slow gentle speech belied a very quick and agile mind. He was a very strong advocate for bringing the word development into alignment with conservation at a time when many other conservationists were resisting. As such, his support for CDC was extremely important and it was an enormous pleasure working with him through his relatively brief tenure.

Mike Cockerell

Key dates: regionalization

1961: The Africa Special Project culminates in the Anasha Conference, marking a change in IUCNs focus toward natural resource management.
1981: The Conservation for Development Centre, an environmental advisory service initiated by IUCN and IED, is established at IUCN HQ to support implementation of the World Conservation Strategy.
1984: IUCNs first Regional Office, for Eastern Africa, is established in Nairobi under the auspices of the CDC. IUCN establishes its Environmental Impact Assessment Services to assist developing countries in the implementation of a proposed development procedure.
1986: The Conference on Conservation and Development: Implementing the Global Conservation Strategy is held in Ottawa. EARO represents IUCN alone.
1988: IUCN establishes a Regional Office for Meso-America in San José. Over the next decade Regional Offices are established in South America; Eastern, West, Southern and Central Africa; and Europe. An Asian Regional Directorate is set up, as well as 20 Country Offices and a dozen project offices.
1994: The Buenos Aires GA endorses IUCNs new Strategic Plan and Mission statement, and directs the Director General to pursue regionalization.
1995: HE President Daniel arap Moi augments the new IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Office at the Waisa Conservation Centre outside Nairobi.
1996: The first World Conservation Congress in Montréal adopts Revised Statutes which officially recognize IUCNs members committees at national and regional level.

Lee Talbot was instrumental in setting up the Union’s early regional programmes. Before joining IUCN he was WWF Director of Conservation, having discovered the situation in Kenya with Matthew Ogutu, Kenyan Minister for Tourism and Wildlife. Peter Jackson

Astronauts and music-makers

As one of the longest, possibly even the longest, technical programme person working for the Union (I started in 1974), I have seen people come and go and policies and programmes be invented and re-invented. Most of these activities happen at the stratospheric level where our astronauts live and operate at HQ. Those of us on-the-ground just keep ticking away, limited in our endeavours by well-defined contracts with donors and IUCN. The decentralization and regionalization policy is the one change that has made us sit up and pay attention to HQ happenings. Suddenly we became part of the larger IUCN organism, and needed to be more responsive to the tune of its music-makers.

Rod Salm
The Green Web

Fifty Years Of International Conservation
A Summary by Martin Holdgate

"The Green Web" is a book within a book. It describes how IUCN has evolved as an institution over the past 50 years, and the people who made it happen. But it also looks outwards. Since 1948, environmental concerns and bodies demanding environmental action have multiplied dramatically. Governments have established Environment Departments. Environmental law has become a growth area. Conferences have become almost inescapable. The evolution of IUCN has to be viewed within this context of surging greenness.

Beginnings

Although conservation has deep roots in many societies, IUCN is very much a product of European and North American culture. Concern for nature gathered momentum there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, stimulated by romantic writers, scientific explorers, and revulsion at the cruel destruction of some wild species, especially birds. Writers and thinkers like Jean Jacques Rousseau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau had a profound influence, the latter arguing that in wilderness is the preservation of the world. In 1866 the German scientist Ernst Haeckel first used the term 'ecology' to describe the web that linked organisms and their surrounding environment. National societies to protect various kinds of animal began to appear in Europe in around 1820, and the world's first National Park — Yellowstone — was established by the United States Congress in 1872. In the same year the Swiss Federal Council took the first steps that led to the creation of the International Committee for Bird Preservation, or ICBP, now BirdLife International in 1922. In 1909 President Theodore Roosevelt planned an international conference in Washington DC, to address the conservation and wise use of world resources.

With his departure from office, the baton passed back to Europe. It was picked up by Paul Sarasin, who with his cousin Fritz founded the Ligue Suisse pour la Protection de la Nature (the 'Swiss League') in 1909. His initiative led 17 nations to establish a Consultative Commission for the International Protection of Nature, constituted in 1914 but rendered inactive by war. A similar fate overtook the International Office for the Protection of Nature established by a Dutchman, Pieter van Tienhoven, in 1935. As World War II drew to its end a new American initiative glimmered briefly: President F. D. Roosevelt proposed a meeting of "the united and associated nations" for the first step towards conservation and use of natural resources commenting that "I am more and more convinced that conservation is a basis of permanent peace". But he died before it could happen.

After the war there were two world priorities: national reconstruction and the creation of the United Nations as a new international order to maintain peace and security. From Switzerland, the Chairman of the Swiss League, Charles Bernard, and its Secretary, Johann Büttikofer, looked outwards at the turmoil of activity, and felt that the threats to nature had redoubled. In June 1946 they argued the case for a new international action with a group of British, Belgian, Dutch, Czech, French and Norwegian conservationists invited to tour Switzerland and look at the National Park and nature reserves. In 1947 they convened a larger International Conference for the Protection of Nature at Brunnen.

There were cross-currents of argument, not least with van Tienhoven who wanted to preserve the independence of his Office, but thanks especially to the influence of the first Director General of UNESCO, Dr Julian Huxley, the various strands were woven together in
ultimate harmony. The Brunnin Conference agreed on the text of a Provisional Constitution for an International Union for the Protection of Nature, gave the Swiss League a mandate to negotiate, and asked the League to send the Provisional Constitution to UNESCO for transmission to Governments and requested UNESCO to convene a congress that would adopt a definitive constitution for the Union. UNESCO and France cooperated: representatives of 23 governments, 126 national bodies and 8 international institutions met at Fontainebleau on 30 September 1948, and IUPN was born.

Some of its features persist today. The General Assembly of Members was the supreme body determining policy; and like that of the United Nations it was originally supposed to meet every year. The Executive Board was to run the things between assemblies, and although dominated by Europeans and North Americans, it did include founder members from Argentina and Peru.

After some argumentation (because Huxley and the British wanted an American) Charles Bernard was elected as the first President, and a Belgian, Jean-Paul Harroy became the first Secretary General. Brussels was chosen as the seat of the Secretariat. A European and an African Technical Symposium debated (among other things) action by Governments to protect nature, the scientific management of wildlife, the definition of National Parks and Nature Reserves, fauna conventions and international legislation. And — years ahead of its time — it called for a World Convention "as a basis for future cooperation for nature protection and to help in developing national legislation." Environmental law has deep roots in IUCN.

IUPN was unique as the world's first "GONGO" — Governmental and Non-Governmental Organization. It was conceived as an "international alliance of the friends of nature protection" (as Pieter van Tienhoven put it). It was a network of conservationists "who in one another personally, who corresponded with one another, who exchanged documents and who helped one another", to quote Jean-Paul Harroy. It drew on the values and concepts of people like John Muir, prophet of the wilderness, Gifford Pinchot, architect of sustainable resource use, Aldo Leopold, pioneer of species management, and Julian Huxley who asstated that he did not wish "to build a wilderness for UNESCO by arguing that the enjoyment of nature was part of culture, and that conservation was a scientific duty.

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Stage 1 Establishment

The Union that emerged from Fontainebleau was a compromise. While it was constituted as a Governmental and Non-Governmental Organization, a number of Governments had, quite descriptively, made sure that the intergovernmental element would not predominate, and that they were not committed to investing money into it. The Secretary General was only partially elected, and almost impossible because there were no set scales of dues. In early years, UNESCO's subventions were IUPN's life-line. It also succeeded through the diplomatic efforts of Jean-Paul Harroy — a "real bulldozer" — and his tiny, dedicated team headed by Marguerite 'Gogo' Caram.

The first stage of development lasted from Fontainebleau to the fifth session of the General Assembly held in Edinburgh in 1956. In that period the first blush of enthusiasm peaked, the first programmes were set in motion, the first Commissions became active, the first financial crisis shook the Union when UNESCO's support was interrupted for a while, and the capacity for limited action at the body of IUPN's peculiar character became very evident.

The board set Jean-Paul Harroy three main objectives. First, to make the Union known and accepted. Second, to weld the tiny embryonic nucleus of European and American naturalists already converted to conservation into a powerful, expanding, worldwide network. Third, to start promoting information, education, local action and coordinated ecological research. From the outset, the Union was a network, a facilitator, a catalyst and a synthesizer.

The first achievement was the IUPN-UNESCO Conference on the Protection of Nature, held in 1949 at Lake Success (the temporary base of the United Nations, in New York), in parallel with UNESCO's — the UN Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Natural Resources. There was a deliberate emphasis on building nature protection on modern ecological principles, drawing on the strong representation of scientific research centres and natural history societies in IUPN. The Conference also proved that an independent and professional non-UN body, working in partnership with a UN agency such as UNESCO, could deliver results of real value. The subsequent programme had six themes: safeguarding threatened habitats and species; development of the art and science of nature protection; environmental education; promoting international agreements on the protection of nature; encouraging new research; and promoting conservation by disseminating information. It is striking that so many of IUCN's concerns today can be traced right back to the Union's beginnings.

In all aspects of its style of working, partnership with other bodies was important at the outset. And as early as 1950, an American Vice President, Hal Coolidge, devised the Post-Survival Service as a voluntary network — the first of the Commissions, and for-foreman of the Species Survival Commission. In 1954 the Service was reporting on the status of several endangered species, and supporting expert symposia. Drawing on the assembled information, IUPN pressed Governments for action — and most returned favourable answers. The Union also began to issue publications, including a major volume on The Position of Nature Protection Throughout the World. It advanced education by working closely with UNESCO, and through establishing an Education Commission. The latter produced a Handbook of Conservation — the first publication attributable to a Commission — in 1955. There were technical discussions of the impact of agricultural chemicals on wildlife (years before Silent Spring), on the management of nature reserves and on rural landscape as a habitat for flora and fauna in densely populated countries. The dissemination of this kind of information was helped by the publication, starting in January 1952, of the IUPN Bulletin. The 1950s also saw a first step to the south — with the holding of the third General Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela, and the first international conservation conference to be held in the Latin America.

Stage 2 Science to the Fore

Charles Bernard was succeeded as President in 1954 by the distinguished French scientist, Roger Hubin, who led a phase of increasing scientific activity. The year brought another landmark — the first IUPN field mission, by Dr Lee Calbott, to collect information on the status of various threatened mammals in the Middle East and Southern Asia. But the most dramatic event of the period was the alteration of the Union's name to IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources — at the General Assembly held in Edinburgh in 1956.

Ecology, species conservation, protected areas, and education became central themes. The ecological programme took off under the leadership of a new Commission. The management of ecosystems used by people, and especially 'rangeland' — pasture for wild and domestic animals, or mixtures of them — gained new emphasis, and this practical approach brought Russian scientists into the Union, especially at the Warnow General Assembly in 1960. Another major change was the creation in 1958 of a Scientific Committee on National Parks under Hal Coolidge's chairmanship (it became a full Commission in 1960). Coolidge left UNESCO successfully at UN Headquarters for a mandate under which IUCN was requested, in 1959, to prepare and publish a UN List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves: the first list appeared in 1960. A Committee on Legislation was formed (with Wolfgang Burhorne at its head). Another landmark was the creation in 1959 — the centenary year of Origin of Species — of the Charles Darwin Foundation in the Galapagos Islands following a joint UNESCO-IUCN initiative.

But the early 1960s were the Era of Africa. The Africa Special Project was set up in 1960 to convince the leaders and citizens of newly-independent African states of the importance of "conservation practices based on ecological knowledge." It hit a high point at Arusha in 1961 when Dr Julius Nyerere gave the keynote speech later known as the Arusha Declaration and set the tone for nature conservation for years to come. The ASP and the Conference were in turn the stimulus for an African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (drafted by the new IUCN Commission on the Protection of the Organization of African Unity), and the establishment of the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka in Tanzania, where generations of African park directors and wardens have been trained.

As these events rolled on, the Secretariat changed. Jean-Paul Harroy was succeeded in 1955 by Tracy Philippus of the UK, and M. C. Bloomer of the Netherlands followed in 1959 — only to resign in 1960 when the General Assembly (prompted by the new Swiss President Jean Baer) decided to transfer the seat of the Union to Switzerland. Gerald Watterson came on secondment from FAO to take office in March 1961, to be followed by Sir Hugh Elliott in 1962. New office premises were secured in a former small hotel called 'Les Utins' in Morges, and the Union was registered as a legal entity in Switzerland.

IUCN arrived in its new home with important action in hand, especially in Africa. New opportunities awaited it, not least in Asia. But the chronic financial problems that had plagued most of the Union's fifteen years of existence seemed certain to cripple its response. Then, in April 1961 the Executive Board heard dramatic news. Dr James Scott (a Vice President) reported plans for a 'world fund' financing organization which would work in collaboration with existing bodies to bring massive financial support to the conservation movement. They called it the World Wildlife Fund. Its prospectus, the Morges Manifesto,