Les noms d'autres personnalités, en particulier des savants équatoriens, seront proposés lors des prochaines séances de notre Conseil de manière à ce que toutes les disciplines soient représentées au sein de cette Commission.

Notre Fondation est très reconnaissante aux éminents scientifiques qui ont accepté de nous aider de leurs conseils et de mettre leur prestige au service de la cause que nous défendons.

Jean DORST

A REVISIT OF THE GALAPAGOS
by
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Just three weeks ago I enjoyed the hospitality of Dr Roger Perry, Director of the Charles Darwin Research Station at the Island of Santa Cruz, Galapagos. We sat on the veranda of his house chatting about the problems of nature conservation in this area, while feeding his tame lava lizard "Fitz Herbert" with flies.

The main purpose of my visit was to catch some Darwin finches, especially the woodpecker finch in order to breed them at home and to study the ontogenetic development of certain behavior patterns, especially the tool using behaviour. In addition I wanted to observe the behavior of female marine iguanas at the egg-laying sites and the behavior of Tropiduri, as a continuation of a previous investigation. On Hood Island the females fight for the egg-laying sites in a way not observed on other islands. The fighting starts with initial headnodding display, the mouth wide open. Occasionally the females engage in headpushing. But more often they simply rush at the rival, biting and shaking her viciously. The situation was found to be the same when I visited the place in March, 1966, but this time I saw that the females stayed close to the egg-laying place after egglaying.

Guarding the egg-laying site from a nearby rock. They defended the area as their own territory against other females thus preventing their eggs from being dug up. From time to time they inspected their closed egg cache sniffing at the surface, touching it with the tongue and scratching
new soil from the vicinity on the top layer. The same individuals were also observed the following day guarding their eggs, and, upon questioning, Miguel Castro, conservation officer remembered that they normally stay on guard for at least a couple of days. During egglaying season the females of the Hood-subspecies (Amblyrhynchus cristatus venustissimus) get nearly as brightly coloured as the males, their coloration functioning as a spacing-out mechanism. This is not the case in females of other islands. Nor did I observe the females of Narborough and Indefatigable defending their egglaying sites after egglaying. This behavioral trait seems to be a subspecific characteristic, as is their bright coloration.

I furthermore had the opportunity to study the ritualized tail-lashing tournaments of the Tropiduri, which I had already filmed before. An interesting new observation was purely accidental. The above mentioned pet lizard "Fitz Herbert" at Dr Perry's house had lost his tail just two days before my arrival. The lizard still occupied most of the veranda as his territory but another male tried to displace him. I witnessed one of the very first encounters. Fitz Herbert threatened the rival, with full lateral display he awaited him in the position which normally proceeds tail-lashing and finally he performed or lashing movement but lacking the tail, the effect of this intention remained just a slight jerk of his body. Fitz Herbert momentarily shrunk and retreated. Shortly afterwards I saw him running away in full flight pursued by the other male. The complete defeat of Fitz Herbert was only prevented by Dr Perry who from time to time interfered pouring a cup of water on the victorious male. One week later in the morning I watched another conflict, the tailless Fitz Herbert still fleeing from the other one. But at noon a surprising turn of events occurred. Fitz Herbert suddenly changed his mode of fighting. Instead of trying to tail-lash the opponent, he grasped its tail with his mouth and held tight, from time to time shaking his enemy viciously. This was certainly against the rules of the game. The other lizard tried to bite back, but did not get any hold on the tailless opponent. Finally he retreated, dragging Fitz Herbert behind, for a while, since he would not let go so fast. As a consequence the other male proved to be displaced. Fitz Herbert had got his superiority again.

This observation is of special interest and invites an experimental investigation of the behavior of tailless lizards. When does the lizard realize that it has lost its tail? Do all finally adjust to the new situation by falling back to the unritualized way of fighting, and when during regeneration does the tail-lashing recur.

Visiting the Islands now for the fourth time in a period over twelve years, I was able to observe certain changes resulting from colonisation. Between 1954 and 1960 the impact of human settlement on the endogenous fauna resulted in a continuous devastation. Tortoise colonies which we visited on Indefatigable Islands in 1957 proved to be slaughtered when we visited the same place in 1960.
Goats absent on Abingdon in 1957, are present now. The threat of extinction was hovering over many of the endemic Galapagoan animals. But now the tide seems changing. Not that the settling activity has stopped, on the contrary: The village of Academy Bay is flourishing. Many new buildings are erected, a new hospital is under construction and a new pipeline provides water. However I observed the first indication of a change when landing at the main pier of Santa Cruz Islands. Although many people were moving around young and halfgrown marine iguanas basked on the rocks without any sign of fear. This was different from what I saw six years ago. At that time children used to hunt the iguanas for pleasure and they became rare and shy as a result. For the moment they are not bothered any more. A change took place in the people's attitude toward the animals. They were made aware of the iguanas' peculiarity due to an educational campaign by Roger Perry, a most promising start.

Special progress can be reported on the tortoise conservation project. These animals, most peculiar to the islands are at the same time those most threatened. Not only men but also wild running domestic animals and introduced rats endanger their existence. Goats compete for the tortoises food; pigs, dogs and rats feed on eggs and young. Thorough surveys by Miguel Castro revealed that most of the island subspecies have survived, although on some islands in very small numbers. On Hood Island e.g. only four adult tortoises have been found so far. More of a similar saddlebacked type were registered from Duncan Island but on neither of the two islands were young found, and this for different reasons. On Hood Island goats compete for the food in such efficient ways that young tortoises have a hard time finding food! Lack of cover may be another factor leading to extinction since the tortoises are exposed to predation by birds of prey. On Duncan-Island it is the rats that feed on the newly hatched young. Since the peculiarity of the Galapagoan fauna rests to a great extent on the fact of island speciation, the tortoises being a classical example, the preservation of all such island species and not just of one, is of the utmost importance. A most promising project was started by Miguel Castro. He brought eggs of the Duncan tortoise to an enclosure near the Station. Of these, 32 have hatched. Once they are strong enough to withstand the rats they will be released on their native island. Great precautions are taken to prevent the escape of any, thus preventing an inter-island transfer. A pair of Hood tortoise is kept in another enclosure near the Station with the intention to breed the animals, again with the task in mind to restock their native island.

More and more the Station attracts visiting scientists from all over the world, demonstrating the increasing interest in the Galapagos. This very positive fact, however, creates some problems we should be aware of. It is hardly to be avoided that seeds attached to the clothing of scientists visiting different islands are transferred to other places. Small insects might go with them. But more serious inter-island transfer could be prevented. Only recently a distinguished herpetologist on a scientific mission kept marine
iguanas from Hood, land-iguanas from the South Plazas Island and Tropiduri from various islands on Santa Cruz (Indefatigable). Animals of all three species escaped through negligence. Other recent examples of inter-island transfer were recently brought to our attention by a memorandum from Dr Eberhard Curio. We certainly want to avoid the situation that scientists become a greater threat to the fauna than the native population. Certain precautions are therefore a necessity if the peculiarity of the Galapagos is to be preserved. Only with the special permission of the director of the Station should animals be allowed to be transferred from one island to another, and precautions to prevent their escape must be taken. The wingfeathers of birds should be clipped; the entrance to cages should have two doors the first to be closed behind the caretaker before the second - is opened - to mention some precautions. The measures will be worked out in detail in near future.

RAPPORTE D'ACTIVITE SUR UNE MISSION AUX ILES GALAPAGOS
par J. J. VAN MOL

Cette mission qui s'étendit du 18 septembre au 25 novembre 1965, avait pour principal objectif de recueillir des informations plus détaillées sur l'habitat et la biologie de Caecogilbia galapagoensis. Ce poisson aveugle et dépigmenté appartient à la famille des Brotulidae et peuple les crevasses d'eau saumâtre à Santa Cruz.

Caecogilbia a été découvert tout récemment par N. LELEUP au cours d'une mission à Santa Cruz. Notre tâche consistait également à rechercher l'ancêtre probable de Caecogilbia parmi les Brotulidae marins habitant les parages des fles.

Cette mission fut réalisée avec un succès inespéré grâce à la collaboration dévouée et extrêmement éclairée d'un compatriote résidant à Santa Cruz : Mr André DE ROY. Ces recherches ont été poursuivies à la fois sur le terrain et au laboratoire de la Station.

Deux expéditions dans la région de Tortuga Bay où est situé un important réseau de fissures et de crevasses nous ont fourni des renseignements précis sur l'habitat de Caecogilbia et quelques spécimens complémentaires pour son étude morphologique.

La première excursion, d'une journée, fut une prospection préliminaire de ce milieu très spécial. Le fond de ces crevasses est occupé par une nappe d'eau saumâtre en communication directe avec la mer dont elles sont relativement éloignées (1 à 2 km.) L'accès de l'eau n'étant possible qu'en certains points