

our environment

Nuisance Species Banned in West

A number of undesirable wildlife species have been banned from importation into several western states by recent action of the Colorado River Wildlife Council, an association of state wildlife agencies in California, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado.

More than 26 species of fish, amphibians, and reptiles determined to be undesirable to native wildlife are now illegal for importation into or transportation or possession in those seven western states. Outlawed fish include lamprey, freshwater stingray and shark, bowfin, gar, gizzard shad, European whitefish, banded tetra, piranha, candiru, white perch, drum, grass carp, pike top minnow, snakehead, walking catfish, and tiger fish. Amphibians and reptiles that have been banned include marine toad, African clawed frog, crocodile, alligator and caiman, snapping turtle, cobra, viper, non-native rattlesnakes and coral snake, and the boomslang.

Giant Cache of Contraband Ivory

A giant cache of contraband elephant tusks has recently been discovered in a Nairobi, Kenya, warehouse. Packing cases, ready for shipment to overseas markets, were found to contain 800 of the ivory tusks. Their market value was put at \$1.5 million.

Private trade in ivory has long been illegal, and the governments of Kenya and other East African nations are constantly seeking out violators. Nevertheless, large amounts of the commodity continue to be smuggled to Europe and Asia.

Freighters Pose Health Threat

Sewage discharged into the Great Lakes by vessels arriving from ports where communicable diseases are epidemic may be creating a potential health hazard.

This conclusion resulted from an inquiry made by the International Joint Commission, Great Lakes Regional Office following the 1973 cholera epidemic in Naples.

The commission concluded that although incidents of communicable diseases introduced by vessel waters have not occurred recently, "there is no question that raw sewage and other vessel wastes continue to be dumped into the Great Lakes by ships which have earlier left ports in infected areas."

The commission reported the absence of communicable disease outbreaks in and around the Great Lakes is due mostly to the "relatively high level of treatment of muni-

cipal water supplies." But, it states, "health agency officials cannot provide assurances that there is no need to be concerned with the potential hazard from vessel wastes."

According to the IJC, there is no single agency in either the Canadian or U.S. government with clear-cut authority and responsibility to deal with vessel wastes problems. It recommends the U.S. and Canadian governments adopt compatible vessel waste regulations and procedures to assure "adequacy of sewage handling, treatment and disposal procedures and adequate surveillance of these procedures, especially as they are applied to vessels from high risk areas."

Federal Incentive for Auto Bans

The federal government has offered cities a \$15 million "carrot" to persuade them to ban autos from their downtown areas.

According to Frank C. Herringer, administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, \$15 million in technical studies grant, which do not require local matching funds, will be made available to cities willing to experiment with banning autos in all or part of their downtown areas or by instituting "congestion pricing," in which motorists are charged fees to enter crowded areas. Additional federal funds will be made available to help purchase buses for inside the auto-free zones.

Herringer predicted "we could well see a federal requirement that cities at least consider auto-free zones" as a prerequisite to applying for federal transportation grants; he indicated that the government would favor cities which adopt such an approach.

Feds Raid Feather Shops

In a series of raids in eleven states, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents have recently seized thousands of eagle and migratory bird feathers, dozens of eagle and migratory bird carcasses, and hundreds of American Indian curios made with parts of federally protected birds. More than sixty persons were either arrested or issued summonses for trafficking in eagles and migratory birds. Most of those cited were selling prohibited items to tourists and collectors, in violation of federal laws forbidding all commercial activities involving eagles and migratory birds.

The searches and seizures took place in homes, curio shops, taxidermy businesses, pawn shops, and other business establishments in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Manufactured articles seized in-

cluded mounted birds, headdresses, pipes, necklaces, dolls, spears, bustles, and hundreds of other feather-decorated curios. Over two dozen species of protected birds, including the bald and golden eagles, were involved. Some of the feathers seized had been trimmed or otherwise altered to disguise their true identity and to make them look old.

As the popularity of American Indian articles has increased in recent years, a lucrative market has developed for the eagle and migratory bird parts and feathers used to decorate Indian curios. Eagle carcasses currently sell on the black market for \$175; hawk carcasses bring up to \$45. Wing and tail feathers of these birds are used to make warbonnets and to decorate wearing apparel and other articles. Most bonnets and headdresses sell in the \$400 to \$700 price range, but some have been offered for sale for as much as \$1,500. It takes the feathers of as many as ten eagles to make some types of bonnets. While federal law expressly prohibits commercial activities involving eagles and migratory birds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issues eagle parts or feathers free to Indians by special permit for bona fide religious ceremonies. The Department of the Interior maintains a repository where the remains of eagles that are killed by accident or die naturally are stored for such free distribution.

The Bald Eagle Protection Act carries a maximum criminal penalty of a \$5,000 fine and one year in jail for first offenses. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act provides for \$2,000 fine and two years in jail for persons convicted of selling protected birds.

No Ill Effects in Asbestos-Fed Rats

There is no evidence that asbestos fibers entering the body through the gastrointestinal tract cause cancer, according to long-term studies by three laboratories. Findings of this research were reported in the December, 1974, *Archives of Environmental Health*, published by the American Medical Association. The report comes in the midst of heated controversy over the dumping of asbestos-loaded taconite tailings into Lake Superior by the Reserve Mining Co. (See September, 1974, *Bulletin*.)

Laboratories which conducted the research are at the Medical University of South Carolina, at Charleston; St. James Hospital in Leeds, England; and the Institute of Occupational Medicine, Edinburgh, Scotland.

The *Archives* reports:

"Ingestion of asbestos fibers has undoubtedly been in progress in some coun-



1975. "Feds Raid Feather Shops." *Field Museum of Natural History bulletin* 46(2), 14-14.

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