

From the President of LIPU

Danilo Mainardi

We should all be proud of the fact that the fortieth LIPU reserve has been established. It is worth pausing a while to consider the fact. A world without nature reserves can be very pleasant or extremely unpleasant. It is fine if there is no need for reserves, but unfortunately this is not the case in Italy. So it is fantastic that LIPU's thirty thousand members have been responsible for setting up these forty so varied protected areas. They can be temporary overnight stops for migrating birds or homes for species in permanent residence. They are also places where the balance of nature, which has been lost elsewhere, can be restored and allowed to prosper.

At present they are merely fragments, but we are already thinking of the forty-first. We are giving ourselves practical objectives. We are promoting an ideal, a beautiful world in which reserves will not be needed.

AN OBJECTIVE REACHED

Armando Gariboldi

With the creation of the latest LIPU reserve, Bosco Vignolo, in the Ticino Park, we have reached an important objective. It is our fortieth reserve and has a protected area of over 5000 hectares. It shows how one can start from individual ecological problems (such as habitat, flora, fauna, especially birds) and arrive at the proper practical management of a whole area. It confirms that these are vital elements on which it is possible to impose a strategy for nature protection and the improvement of the environment.

LIPU's experience is extremely valuable at the present time, when the "public" network of protected areas (national and regional parks) is running the risk of becoming just a kind of "container" which is adapted to anybody who uses it. We are listening to growing and worrying views expressed by politicians and administrators, in which parks and protected areas are presented as opportunities for economic development (more or less sustainable), sources of employment, increasing tourism and the production of hand crafts, and where the defence of nature is pushed to the end.

For us, however, the protection of ecosystems is fundamental to improving our quality of life and it is this that protected areas must have as their final objective. A different approach means distorting the very concept of park and

protected area. All this is in the full knowledge that we are not living in Amazonia but in one of the most populated countries of the western world. We are also convinced that real nature represents a resource that "technological" man can no longer do without, as LIPU has shown with its own reserves, starting with the one at Torrile which this year is now celebrating its tenth anniversary.



Forty reserves (and we shall certainly not be stopping there); 40 concrete examples which show that this method of managing protected areas is not a utopian ideal but is a practicable reality even for Italy.

TEN YEARS AT TORRILE

Ugo Faralli

At birthday parties you can give presents or you can go back over the life, the moments and the memories of the guest of honour. I am not being stingy but I prefer the second solution, speaking of the countless gambles and dreams which have been transformed into reality, starting with those few intrepid pairs of Black-winged Stilts, which in the early '80's found their way to the drainage pools at the Torrile sugar factory.

Perhaps more than anything else it is the sheer numbers involved which demonstrate the success of Torrile's first ten years. And it has been a success. Not just from our point of view at LIPU, where we thought about, proposed, built and have managed this "first concrete example of environmental reconstruction", but also of all those who have visited and have got to know the Torrile reserve. There have been ornithologists and researchers, administrators of public authorities, officials of private corporations, weekend visitors, school children; there have been articles in magazines and items on television; but above all millions and millions of birds and so many other species of animals have used the reserve. Now there is national recognition (it has been put on the National List of Protected Areas by the Ministry of the Environment) and international (IBA), continued research into techniques for managing the environment and the main bird species, and into the consolidation and extension of environmental reconstruction (initially 7 hectares, the reserve has increased in size to 32 hectares). Thanks to all

I was talking about numbers. Here are some. Around 110,000 visitors, of whom 38,000 have been school children coming from all over Italy. Over 270 newspaper articles and 18 television items on the main national networks. 1 book in preparation on "Birds of Torrile", 7 scientific papers, 3 graduate theses. Over 230 species of birds have been observed and counted, 3,450 days have been worked by the reserve staff (about 40,000 hours), and 70 Italian

and foreign volunteers have worked there. One visitor centre, 1,400 metres of nature walks and 6 observation hides have been constructed. These are numbers of which we can be proud, not just the reserve and LIPU staff but also all LIPU members, whose financial and moral support has turned the dream into reality.

Torrile Reserve has had a really special spring this year. Among a large number of sightings, the more interesting were Great White Heron, Glossy Ibis and Slender-billed Curlew. There is also good news of breeding. Storks have built a spectacular nest and Redshanks, waders which only breed rarely in Italy and only in a few sites, have nested at Torrile for the first time.

LOOK TO THE LAND

Agata Cleri

Quarrying and nature tourism: how to create many new reserves. Experience of collaboration between LIPU and the Province of Parma.

More than ten years ago it was proposed to the local authorities that the wetland at Torrile should be a site of environmental reconstruction to encourage Black-winged Stilts to live and breed there. As it turned out, the methods used in its construction were similar to quarrying and this led us to reflect on the opportunities for integration between extractive industries and reforming the natural landscape. Soon afterwards the value of our idea was confirmed by a new law on extractive activities in the Region of Emilia Romana to ensure that land is restored to a state of nature, for public and social use.

Projects are drawn up on a local basis and insufficient thought is given to long term objectives. They are usually drawn up by geologists and engineers, without input from naturalists. The result is that the landscape is reinstated, but nature is missing: lakes are surrounded by weeping willows, and when they are not used for fishing they are very pleasant places for romantic strolls, but they are of very little use for wildlife and plants.

We have proposed to the Province of Parma a procedure for formulating communal Plans for Extractive Industry. It is only by joint planning that the activities of extraction, reinstatement and final use can be properly integrated. Although actual conditions may vary between regions, the LIPU methodology used in the Parma experiment can be used elsewhere.

A NEW METHOD

The more important and innovative aspects of the LIPU study on sites of mineral extraction planned for natural restoration are:

- Investigations are made into the potential for environmental improvement and final use of sites throughout the province.

- The environmental analysis is based on the concept of "ecological networks" to understand the environmental implications of the pattern of extraction sites, often found near waterways which are the main corridors for bird migration.

- Environmental data are related to human activities, especially tourism: natural environments which are adapted for the use of the public can be used for educational purposes and recreation, acting as effective supporting elements for nature tourism.

- Reference is made to key species of plants and animals, a more complex approach than was used in typical environmental reconstruction in the past; as some environments are becoming very much rarer it seems more useful to prioritise habitats and species in order to provide the most favourable conditions for their revival.

- In few cases is the final use of the site indicated at the outset; therefore factors for consideration will be recommended, such as the type of management and maintenance of the area which can be guaranteed in the future.

LIPU PROJECTS

A JEWEL UNDER THREAT

Fabio Casale

The Ferruginous Duck (Aythya nyroca) is one of the four Italian species which are threatened with extinction at world level. LIPU is taking practical steps to protect it, using a precise plan of action.

Spring started well at the Brabbia Reserve and for bird-watchers there was a succession of interesting observations. Great Reed Warblers perched on the tops of the reeds, Purple Herons flying over the water, Coot carrying their chicks around, put to fright every so often by the sudden appearance of a Marsh Harrier. The more fortunate managed to catch sight of a dark duck, with its ducklings, emerging from thick vegetation. Smaller than a mallard, rusty in colour, it is the very rare Ferruginous Duck, the jewel of Brabbia.

The Ferruginous Duck is one of the 1,111 species defined by BirdLife International as being at the greatest risk in the world. Four of these species breed in Italy and for them, Audouin's Gull, Lesser Kestrel, Corncrake and Ferruginous Duck, LIPU has intervention programmes. Ferruginous Duck populations are in serious decline everywhere: there are only 800 breeding pairs in the European Union. The reasons for the falling numbers are to be found in the destruction and degradation of wetland environments where it breeds. Within this global picture its presence in Italy assumes great importance. Here, the Ferruginous Duck is a regular winter visitor, with some breeding in limited wetland areas in Lombardia, Emilia Romagna, Toscana and Sicily. There are about 50 (maximum 80) pairs.

LIPU has various strategies aimed at the conservation of the Ferruginous Duck; from direct management of key areas for breeding, rest and overwintering to political lobbying to improve the level of protection of wetlands; from being sensitive to threatened species and environments to formulating breeding and reintroduction projects.

WHAT LIPU IS DOING TO SAVE THE FERRUGINOUS DUCK.

We are managing four of the most important sites in Italy:

- Brabbia**, with the most significant breeding population in the north-west. (6 pairs in 1997)
- Montepulciano**, where every year 1 - 2 of the "tuscan" pairs breed.
- Massaciuccoli**, regular overwintering.
- Biviere di Gela**, the most important site in Italy for Ferruginous Ducks on migration (over 300 in 1998).

We are carrying out ad hoc projects:

Two LIPU projects, financed by the EU, for environmental management work to encourage the Ferruginous Duck. One is within the Brabbia reserve, the other at Montepulciano. We have studied their presence, biology, ecology and their breeding requirements and, in consequence, carried out work on reopening and enlarging areas of water where they breed.

We are communicating with people:

There are certainly not many people who know the Ferruginous Duck and its problems to survive. That is why within LIPU's plan of action are included environmental education activities and information on the species and on wetlands in general.

We are fighting for the environment:

LIPU has put all the key Ferruginous Duck sites on the IBA list. We want them to become Zones of Special Protection, and that be designated Ramsar areas, or Wetlands of International Importance.

We are creating special centres:

LIPU now has four centre where the Ferruginous Duck is being raised in captivity in order to be reintroduced into the wild. Torrile, Silea Stork Centre, Montepulciano and Racconigi Stork Centre.

How many remain within the EU area?

Greece	300 - 400 pairs
Austria	50 - 200 pairs
Germany	20 - 100 pairs
Italy	50 - 80 pairs
Spain	1 - 10 pairs
Netherlands	0 - 1 pair

Thus the total for the European Union is: 421 - 791

BIODIVERSITY

LIVING RAINBOWS

Carlo Meo

There is a growing role for conservation of biodiversity in LIPU reserves. Butterflies are at the centre of increasing interest, with their fantastic shapes and colours, and their uncertain future.

Among insects, the graceful shapes and attractive colours of butterflies are appreciated by everyone. In the first days of sun in springtime some are roused by the warmth and flit in the warm rays for a few hours. Many species, on the other hand, spend the winter in hibernation as egg, chrysalis or caterpillar. Over the flower filled meadows they go in search of nectar from the first flowers, and plants on which they can deposit their eggs. Butterflies depend on specific plants to allow them to perpetuate their species.

In Italy there are about 4000 species of lepidoptera, of which 80% are moths. These are not studied very much and not having the gaudy colours of daytime flying butterflies they are well camouflaged from the teeming predators. They prefer wild plants and have become much rarer as a result of changes in agricultural practices, pollution and fires. In addition, the return of a certain kind of unscrupulous collecting is damaging to sensitive species, feeding a shady trade no less serious than that in birds and reptiles.

The role of LIPU reserves

The duty of our reserves is always to protect natural environments and the delicate balances which sustain them. That is why, in a few hectares of protected nature we can observe an example of diversity which is compromised elsewhere. The conservation of wet meadows, woodland and hedgerows, and their careful management, allows the survival of a multitude of tiny creatures, including butterflies. LIPU reserves, thanks to their diverse geographical situations, harbour a surprising variety of butterflies and moths. In future, LIPU reserves will play a more important role in the conservation and management of these delicate insects.

A PARADISE FOR BUTTERFLIES

The Casacalenda reserve has been revealed as a real sanctuary for butterflies and moths. Almost 100 species of butterflies and an estimated 350 species of moths have been counted. During the second half of June there is a real invasion when hundreds of insects are attracted by the favourable conditions offered by the reserve. Counts are taken periodically and some are raised in special cages for release. Food plants are grown which favour the rarer species, whose status is monitored periodically by volunteers. Very soon Casacalenda will have its own butterfly house.

ECOTOURISM

Armando Gariboldi

It is summer in the National Park of the Gran Paradiso, on the track which climbs from the Valmontey up to the refuge at Sella: there is a continuous line of "ecotourists" climbing to high altitude, where they are guaranteed to see ibex. Along many parts of the Italian coastline rubber dinghies and motor boats go up and down past colonies of gulls, cormorants, shearwaters and Eleonora's Falcons. They are attractions which are quickly exploited by fishermen and local boat hires for exclusive and guaranteed observations. These are just some examples of the new kind of tourism, the so-called ecotourism.

Tourism is now the most important industry in the world: in 1996 almost 600 million people moved around the world for leisure purposes. The growth area is the sector aimed at observations on nature. One official definition is that "ecotourism is tourism in areas which are little disturbed by man and which contributes to the protection of nature and to the benefit of local people". We admit to some uncertainty about the part "contributes to the protection of nature", observing what happens in practice, even in Italy.

The natural environment and wild animals are extremely delicate "resources" that obey the laws of life and not those of the marketplace. Nowadays there is much talk of sustainable tourism, or rather the need to keep intact those resources which attract the visitors. Even among ecotourists there are few who would give up the opportunity of taking a nice photograph or the thrill of a close encounter in order to avoid disturbing the animal. Indeed, paradoxically, it is among the guides and experts that at times one finds the more inappropriate behaviour: photographing animals at the nest or in their den, taking young away and other delicate activities are done in the conviction that "I know exactly what I am doing and therefore I am not doing any harm".

It is, therefore, important to have a code of conduct for those who work close to wild animals; something which LIPU has always been attentive to, since framing the "golden rules" for birdwatching. It is important to publicise, for example among non-specialist tourist operators, the need for caution and to take precautions, something which every LIPU member can do quite easily, first of all by example. This example transmits an attitude of love and respect, believing as we do that the success of a certain kind of tourism should not be counted only in economic terms.

SWALLOWS HAVE SO MANY FRIENDS

Spring arrived, and the swallows, and to greet them was LIPU, with its President Danilo Mainardi and with him LIPU branches all over Italy, volunteers and thousands of people who were ready to say, "No, swallows will not disappear from our skies!" This message, so simple and yet so powerful, has become a battle cry for LIPU, which has

been running its campaign for two years and is now celebrating the first results.

The Day of the Swallows was a great festival, when people, especially children, got to know about them and the problem of their dramatic decline and their importance to ecology. 21 March was also the occasion to meet our target of 100,000 signatures. In only a year we have reached our objective, thanks to the support of LIPU members. The petition will now be sent to the Presidency of the European Parliament. In discussions on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, topics will include protection of the agricultural environment, and of swallows, and of our own well-being.

The Farms for Swallows are starting to arrive. There are not yet the hundred which were proposed to set up in the first phase of the project but already there are tens which have decided to do something immediately and practically to encourage swallows, such as keeping old barns, creating hedgerows and small ponds, and installing artificial nests. We have decided to make 21 March a permanent date for the Day of the Swallows, a lovely way to celebrate together the arrival of spring.

SPREADING THE NEWS

For the Day of the Swallows there was a lot of help from television, radio, daily newspapers and magazines. We are very grateful to all who spoke about the LIPU initiative, the serious problems affecting swallows and our environment and especially inviting everyone to participate in the festival.

THANKS TO YOU

WORK IN PROGRESS

ANTI-HUNTING: FACTS, NOT WORDS

A group of volunteers, co-ordinated by LIPU's Inspector Piergiorgio Candela, is working in an environment which is still quite difficult, in every sense. In 1997 they succeeded in confiscating and destroying almost 11,000 of the notorious "archetti" traps, removing 135 nets and releasing over a thousand small birds. LIPU's gratitude goes out to all those who are taking action against barbarous poaching practices, for their invaluable work, often at great risk and far from the public eye.

PO DELTA: PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT WETLANDS

The LIPU Life Po Delta project is continuing to make an impression on the conservation of nature in the area. Veneto Region has now acquired an important wetland along the Po di Maistra. There are about 42 hectares of reedbeds, freshwater pools and shrubs which support thousands of birds all year round, including a colony of herons.

It is one of the last remaining areas of its kind in the Po delta, at a strategic point within a Site of International Importance. It is an important result which has allowed the use of EU funds which were about to be lost. The management of the area is now in the hands of the Regional Forestry Commission, who have asked LIPU for further technical support.

ANTI-POACHING: INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

“Inform, educate, involve”. With this motto LIPU, in collaboration with the Province of Naples, has promoted a campaign against poaching, which is still causing serious damage to our natural ecosystem. Talking to people and getting them to know about nature is one of the more important activities to increase a love and respect for the environment. It is often just small personal gestures, carried out every day, which contribute to saving biodiversity. The cause is being promoted by leaflets and displays throughout the Naples area. People are being asked to help nature by identifying cases of poaching and the illegal traffic in wild animals to the LIPU branch in Naples.

THE “ZOOMAFIA” AND THE EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS

After unlicensed quarrying, the destruction of the landscape and the exploitation of the refuse trade, the Mafia organisations are now misusing animals, the most obvious example being their direct involvement in dog-fighting. Recently the Finance Guards have confiscated a number of pit-bull terriers and charged several people. Many illegal quarries, now disused, but still controlled by the Mafia, are being used for these clandestine dogfights. The Mafia is also involved in illegal trafficking in wild animals. It goes on in broad daylight in some parts of Naples and we should also not forget that in the province some of the biggest “markets” in exotic species are operating. The animals are kept in bad conditions, in clear violation of the law. But the illegality does not end there. On 200 small lakes, formed as a result of unlicensed extraction of materials for illegal building of all kinds, Mafia clans are organising illegal hunting at all times of the year, but especially during migration. For 10-20 million Italian lire (£3000 to £6000 sterling) a year poachers can rent from the clan a brick built shooting hide, constructed next to one of the basins, and shoot at anything which flies over. It is our duty to oppose this widespread breaking of the law, which is having serious effects on animal life.

RESERVES AND CENTRES

RESERVES IN SICILY

Rosa Puleo and Giovanni Battista Puleo

Two new Nature Reserves in Sicily and entrusted to LIPU’s management. Two victories for nature protection and an important recognition of the Association.

February was a very important month for LIPU reserves in Sicily. For the first time the Regional Government of Sicily has decided to entrust LIPU, in recognition of its quality as an environmental association, with the management of not one, but two Nature Reserves. The first, the “Biviere” at Gela has finally become a Nature Reserve after 13 long years. It is a source of satisfaction and pride for LIPU which has battled hard during that time, making the public aware and applying continuous political pressure, so that the dream might become reality.

The great lake

The Biviere reserve is situated between the town of Gela and the mouth of the River Dirillo. Its geographical position, climatic conditions and other factors make Biviere, which is the largest coastal lake in Sicily, one of the most important migration and resting areas for aquatic species of birds. For the regularity and numbers of rare birds, among which are Glossy Ibis and Spoonbill, Biviere is a wetland of international importance recognised by the Ramsar convention. The merits of this area are not based solely on birds but are also on a rich biodiversity, with rare plants, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and many interesting insects.

An island of nature

The second reserve which has been entrusted to us is the Isola delle Femmine. It was established, not just because it has a large colony of Herring Gulls but above all for its incredible biodiversity. Within its 13 hectares, and 2 hectares of sea, there are 144 plant species which support hundreds of typical Mediterranean insects, and in the depths of the sea fantastic marine life including interesting coral formations.

We recognise that we are not limited to the protection of birds but that we can be attentive to the ecosystem in all its complexity. It is a victory which opens new perspectives for the departments of Education and Research, Conservation and Publicity.

218 IN NEED OF PROTECTION

LIPU is recommending “Endemic Bird Areas of the World” a new book on the more important places to be protected in order to maintain the world’s biodiversity. If we want to protect biodiversity we have to know exactly where to concentrate effort and resources. This book, the most recent from BirdLife International, devotes its 860 pages to identifying the 218 areas which are the most important in the world for birds and biodiversity. Within 5% of the world’s surface live



25% of bird species: 2561 species concentrated into a rather limited area.

The conservation of these still natural areas is of crucial importance to the survival of unique species of birds, plants, butterflies and reptiles. This publication is of fundamental importance and is the only source of information on the priorities for the conservation of biodiversity. It is essential for those working in conservation, for territorial administrators, members of the scientific community, ornithologists and lovers of nature.

BIRDS AND WINDOWS

Marco Dinetti

As it is both transparent and reflective, glass is very dangerous for all species of birds. Suggestions from LIPU on how to avoid the killing.

Not everybody realises that windows constitute real dangers for flying creatures, dangers which are increasing all the time with the expansion of towns, more building in rural areas and the fact that it is often a major component in buildings. All kinds of birds are at risk, especially if the window reflects trees and sky.

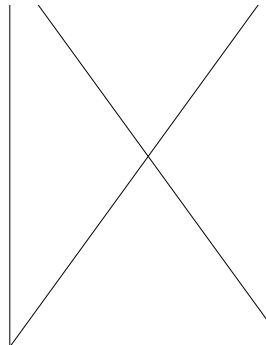
From the research of an American ornithologist it appears that there is no real difference in the risks to young or adult, or between male and female. Seed eating birds are more at risk in winter when they are attracted to bird tables, close to windows. Migrating birds strike in spring and autumn. The only significant reduction is in summer. Collisions happen especially in the morning when the birds are more active.

If we can assume that each building gives rise to the death of 1 bird a year, in Italy it is estimated that 25 million birds die in this way every year. Even if this is somewhat of an over estimate the numbers of birds would still be enormous. With the possible exception of hunting, windows kill more birds than any other single factor in man's activities. It is possible to reduce the risk of birds striking windows. Hang something white behind the window. If it possible to incline the window, turn it to reflect the ground and not the surroundings and sky. Stick silhouettes of birds of prey in flight onto the windows.

MAN'S ACTIVITIES AND WILDLIFE MORTALITY

The main factors involved in the death of wildlife, caused by man:-

- Impact.....vehicles, windows, overhead cables, high buildings, towers, lighthouses.
- Pollution....pesticides, oil and other substances.
- Hunting
- Poaching and vandalism.
- Getting trapped.....chimneys, fishing nets, traps, birdlime.
- Predation by domestic animals



NEWS FROM BIRDLIFE

No longer at sea

Last February the European Commission for the Environment decided that redundant offshore drilling platforms are no longer to be disposed of at sea. In the next 20-30 years in European waters (including the Adriatic) about 450 offshore platforms will go out of service. Up to now they have been sunk at sea, resulting in serious pollution and affects on fish.

Climate change

There will be serious consequences for nature as our climate changes. This is the alarming conclusion of a report from BirdLife International and WWF. Its analysis of the consequences of global warming caused much interest at the Kyoto Conference on Climate last December. A single example is a change in the migration pattern of Sooty Shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus*). 1.5 million used to overwinter along the western coast of the USA, but between 1987 and 1995 this figure fell by 90% due to changes in temperature of the ocean surface and currents.

Argentina: goodbye to the pampas

Pampas grassland in north-east Argentina is under threat from rapid expansion of the planting of pines and eucalyptus for paper and fabrics. There has been serious damage to seven species of birds which are already at risk of world extinction. AOP, the BirdLife partner, is trying to deal with this threat.

LASER AT ROME CENTRE

Experiments at the Wildlife Recuperation Centre in Rome with a new low frequency therapy laser. It could be used in the treatment of all sorts of trauma and illnesses in animals and is being evaluated by our veterinary surgeon.

ISLAND OF SAN PIETRO

GIFT OF LAND

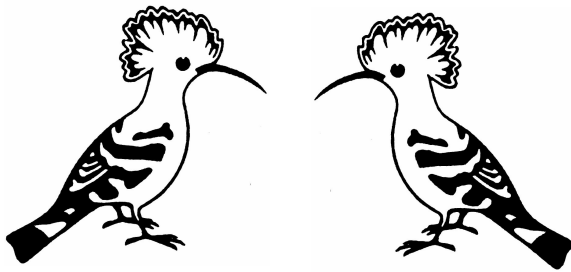
At Carloforte the Cagliari branch of LIPU is having an uphill struggle to renew its contract for the reserve, inside which it wants to develop the Eleonora's Falcon surveillance camp. But there has been an important development. A private supporter has given 3 year's free use of 48 hectares of land adjacent to the Camp. It is a practical way of confirming our presence on the island, at a time when the local authority, against the wishes of most local people, and with lame excuses, has decided not to renew it's contract with LIPU.

CESANO MADERNO IS ENLARGED

The very recently established Cesano Maderno Reserve at present consists of about 50 hectares of heath and woodland, but the local commune is continuing to add extra bits. Other local communes have decided to acquire an old quarry, the source of an area of wetland which forms part of the reserve. Local people have asked the Mayor for a cycle track to connect the town with reserve.

COTTAGE AT BOSCO NEGRI

The ground floor of the old cottage has been renovated. It will be used as a schoolroom during bad weather, for eating packed lunches and for evening sessions on animals and plants.



Some News from Britain

BRITISH BIRDWATCHING FAIR 1998

LIPU(UK) was once again at the British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water late in August. Many people visited our stand and asked questions regarding the work of LIPU. Nine new members were enrolled and we wish them a warm welcome to our family of friends in Great Britain. Special thanks are due to those who helped man the stand for the three days of the show; and those who did all the donkey work of putting the stand together before the public arrived, and then took it all away again after the rain on Sunday.

How nice it was to meet friends old and new who were all there united in a love of birds and all committed to the cause of bird conservation.

A DATE FOR THE DIARY

After the Birdwatching fair there was some frantic activity for Umberto Gallo Orsi whose contributions you will have read in previous editions of the Ali Notizie. He is the Species conservation Officer with responsibility for the Griffon Vulture and is overseeing the reintroduction of that bird into Sicily.

Umberto was over here to see the fair and then to drive to Cardiff and meet Iolo Williams, one of the RSPB team in Wales. Iolo has been filmed over the past few months going about his daily life and has suffered the "fly on the wall" treatment with patience and good humour. His responsibility for the Red Kite was seen by the BBC as a parallel to Umberto's interest in the Griffon hence the meeting in Wales which was all filmed.

Umberto was then to return to Italy and be followed by Iolo who will be there for a week, followed by the very patient film crew. The programme should be very interesting and should touch on conservation issues in both Italy and Wales. At the time of writing it was planned to screen a series of 6 half-hour programmes on BBC-2 television in January and February 1999. It should be worth tuning in to.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PUBLICATIONS

As you know we have two publications the Ali Notizie - this conservation newsletter which is translated from the Italian by Brian Horkley of Cambridge; and The Hoopoe which is published annually at the beginning of the year. I'd like to see The Hoopoe regain the former glory that it enjoyed before Roger's illness forced it to a simpler format, but that is not likely for the issue of next year. For the future, though, please let me know of events or projects which would be of interest to other members and I'll be pleased to expand the editorial team (currently me!) to include all who write to me.

We will still provide the news from Italy although there will always be some time lag in its production but I would like to see British news making an appearance.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

As your renewals fall due I'll be offering all members the opportunity to continue their subscriptions by Standing Order if they wish; a full explanation will come with the renewal letter. I'd like to make the point that this entirely voluntary, it doesn't matter a bit whether you choose this or not.

FINALLY...

Finally, a plea from the heart... I may have inherited the title of the UK Representative of LIPU but that is as nought without you. The members and friends of LIPU are its strength and without you there is no support for LIPU in this country. I do not have a monopoly of good ideas - I sometimes wonder if I have any! - so please drop me a line or call if you have anything you'd like to discuss which would move LIPU(UK) forward and make our work more successful.

Best wishes,

David