

Recoveries from the *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 1970–24

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I keep harping on the X General Assembly of IUCN, which took place in New Delhi on 29 November 1969. One memorable event was the award of the John C. Phillips Medal to Dr Salim Ali. The announcement was received with tremendous acclaim. It read as follows:

“To Shri Salim Ali, Senior Statesman of conservation and distinguished scientist, whose influence on conservation in his own continent has been great and whose work and accomplishments are known and respected throughout the world;

Most distinguished ornithologist and field naturalist in his own country; whose published works have long been the basic and authoritative references on the birds of his country and have established him in the foreground of world ornithologists.

Internationally recognized and respected leader in conservation whose efforts over the years have been a major factor in creating the climate of acceptance in conservation matters and preservation of wildlife which exists in his own country today.”

It has become a tradition in these Assemblies to formulate a Declaration on conservation relevant for the time and place. As Chairman of the Resolutions Committee I was asked to produce such a statement. I chose the subject of sunlight for its obvious importance to the Indian scene, and I tried to make it as practical and earthy as possible. I am sure you will agree that the Declaration has not lost its relevance over the passage of time.

I was pleased that Sir Peter Scott approved of it heartily, but pointed out the discrepancy in assuming that people inhabited the earth “since the beginning of its existence.” Nevertheless the Assembly adopted it without the correction:

Realising that the splendor of this earth derives from its sunlight, its beautiful green cover, its inter-dependent fauna and flora, and from the diversity of its landscapes, and

Realising that since the beginning of its existence, the people of the earth, even when poor in material possessions, have found life richly worth living because of these natural assets, and

Realising that man, himself a product of the

evolutionary system, is dependent on the stability and self-renewing properties of his environment,

Realising too, that the world population is growing at an alarming rate,

That economic development depends entirely on the utilization of natural resources, that this utilization is carried out often with little attention to the needs of renewal,

That because of this, much of the earth, once well watered and productive, is now impoverished and degraded,

That once abundant plant, animals and scenic resources, have been ravaged,

That therefore the attainment of a high quality of living for all mankind now depends upon the conservation, and restoration of these dwindling resources, and finally

That the natural resources of the world are a heritage, on which the survival of future generations must depend,

We the members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources assembled at New Delhi in November 1969

Now declare again our fundamental purpose as an international union of concerned States, Organizations, and individuals,

To urge on all governments and people the adoption, as a basic principle of development, the conservation and protection of long term values rather than exploitation for short term gains,

To foster sound environmental policies and to promote protection of ecosystems, human environments, and habitats of wild creatures from abuse and damage,

To encourage and assist in the making of coordinated legislation and international conventions to govern the utilization and treatment of soil, water, air, flora and fauna, to minimize pollution, and to protect the landscape in general, and ecosystems of special interest in particular, and

In summary, to urge upon all nations, action and support of those values which make life possible and worthwhile.