

R.A.O.U. Conservation Policy*

DEFINITION

1. (a) The R.A.O.U. conservation policy defines the meaning of nature conservation, emphasizes its significance in human life, stresses the need for ecological research, and enumerates the principal means by which effective conservation may be achieved.
 - (b) Nature conservation may be defined as a state of ecological harmony between man and nature—the so-called Balance of Nature. This harmony will be achieved by a full knowledge of man's place in nature, embracing an understanding of the interrelationships between all forms of life—from micro-organisms to specialized vertebrates—and the total environment.
 - (c) The maintenance of a stable Balance of Nature is an essential prerequisite for all forms of land use, which is the basis of human economy and survival. It is not confined to the interests of scientists and nature lovers.
 - (d) Since the Balance of Nature embraces all living things, there can be no separate conservation scheme for the benefit of any one particular form of life. The one comprehensive policy must be regarded as urgent and be put into effect in accordance with accepted ecological principles.
- The methods adopted must be kept under review and modified as necessary to meet changing conditions.

RESEARCH

2. There is an urgent need for ecological research into the life cycles of the species comprising each biotic community in order that their requirements may be understood and that the most effective measures may be devised to ensure their self-perpetuation.

RESERVES

3. (a) It is essential to reserve areas of each type of environment, large enough to ensure self-perpetuation of their biotic communities. The variety, distribution and area of reserves must be increased wherever possible.
- (b) The suitability of existing reserves as conservation areas should be examined periodically by a competent authority and, if found ineffective or incapable of restoration, such reserves must be replaced by others.
- (c) The status, tenure and control of all nature reserves must secure them from alienation and commercial exploitation.
- (d) Land use must make the maximum contribution to nature conservation, subject to the essential needs of man. Landholders should be encouraged to practise accepted conservation methods on their properties, but the declaration of privately owned lands as sanctuaries must not interfere with efforts to secure adequate Government-owned and controlled reserves. Private sanctuaries should not be established without the approval of the appropriate authority.
- (e) Closer co-operation between Government authorities in matters of legislation, administration and control of wildlife and its habitat is necessary to establish nature conservation on an effective national basis. The direct administration of reserves and conservation regulations must be vested in scientifically trained organizations that are free from sectional influence.

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LEGISLATION

4. (a) Protection, under conservation legislation, should be extended to all native species. Where these are permitted, control measures and open seasons should be effectively enforced so that the species is not endangered.
- (b) Trapping of native species of birds for commercial aviculture must be prohibited. Aviculturists must be licensed and subject to strict control.
- (c) The collecting of protected flora and fauna species, particularly rare species of birds and their eggs, must be prohibited except for the purpose of promoting scientific knowledge and better conservation methods. Such collecting should be restricted to competent research workers holding a current permit which limits the scope of each collection in relation to the species, number of specimens, area and period, and which defines the specific purpose of collecting.

INTRODUCED SPECIES

5. (a) Further introductions of any alien species for any purpose, and transference of any native species beyond its natural range within Australia, must be prohibited except where it can be shown that such action is necessary to ensure its survival, and will not jeopardize other native species or human economy.
- (b) All introduced species that have a detrimental effect on native species or on human economy should be declared noxious and should be eradicated as far as practicable.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR WILDLIFE

6. (a) Maximum publicity by all media should be directed at exposing offences against conservation laws; warning the public against taking protected species, game species out of season, and exceeding bag limits, and emphasizing the significance of nature conservation in human economy.
- (b) Publicity concerning the numbers and distribution of game species before and during open seasons, and also reports of the taking of unprotected species should be discouraged.
- (c) Close liaison is needed between the Union and authorities responsible for projects which may adversely affect the welfare of native flora and fauna. Similar relationships are necessary to assist the organizations taking an active interest in nature conservation.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

7. There is an urgent need for a truly national conservation organization fully representative of all diverse interests but which is dedicated to the task of maintaining the Balance of Nature.