

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL PARK

PETER KRAMER, 1970-73

When Peter Kramer, Perry's successor as Director, arrived with his wife, he already had the advantage of knowing the archipelago as he had been a junior member of the German Galapagos Expedition of 1962/63. He found that human predation on the wildlife had somewhat decreased since his first visit and that, thanks to the efforts of Snow and Perry to improve public relations, there was a better local understanding of the need for conservation. He pressed forward with Perry's educational programme, which he broadened, institutionalised and extended to mainland Ecuador. Aided by better communications due to somewhat more frequent flights to the Baltra airfield (though he himself was held up for a month in Guayaquil waiting for a passage) he was able to bring continental institutions into a working relationship with the Darwin Research Station. Until then, scientific investigation in the Galapagos had been the virtual monopoly of foreigners. Kramer involved Ecuador in Galapagos science by offering scholarships to enable national university students to work at the CDRS. Students were often attached to senior visiting scientists to gain experience in field research and live for a few months in a scientific atmosphere. This may not have been an ideal system but it was all that funds would permit at that time and it was the beginning of what was to become one of the main activities of the CDRS. Over the years, the educational programme grew and provided an increasingly important link between the Darwin Foundation and public opinion in mainland Ecuador. Galapagos science became increasingly Ecuadorean science and, in turn, gave a stimulus to the teaching of biology and geology in the nation's schools and universities. The CDRS became more and more an Ecuadorean institution.

A complementary development was the establishment, with the support of the Frankfurt Zoological Society, of a CDRS information centre in Quito. Snow and Perry had maintained excellent relations with the authorities on the mainland but distance and poor communications made meetings

rare and irregular. The new centre served to arouse official, academic and public awareness through contacts with the ministries, the media and the educational world, providing information about Galapagos conservation and science that was not available through any other channel. In the past there had been books in many languages about Galapagos science but not a single one in Spanish. Juan Black, formerly of the GNPS and now in charge of the Darwin Foundation's information centre in Quito, published the first Spanish natural history of the islands, entitled "*Galápagos: Archipiélago del Ecuador*". Copies of this and illustrated brochures were distributed to schools and colleges as well as being sold to a wider public.

This period was critical in the development of the Galapagos National Park Service. The embryonic staff was gradually expanded and in 1972 the first Superintendent, Jaime Torres, was appointed. Work was begun to provide the service with its own buildings, which were situated close to the Darwin Station. Co-operation remained as cordial as when both organisations were under one roof and led to a considerable expansion of conservation activity.

Although the legal delimitation of the boundaries had been completed, squatting inside the National Park still continued, particularly on Santa Cruz. But now, with the authority of the state behind the GNPS, it became possible not only to prevent further incursions but also to expel illegal squatters and funds were found to settle them elsewhere. The threat of farming activities spreading out from the settled areas, which had caused so much anxiety in the 1960's, ceased to be a major concern, though cattle strayed across the boundaries, carrying seeds of introduced plants. Attention was no longer focussed on the protection of the "strict tortoise reserve", it was the whole National Park that was to be preserved.

The patrolling of the park and the protection of its wildlife became the prime duty of the GNPS and, as direct human predation decreased, control of the spread of introduced animals and plants assumed greater and greater importance. With the

co-operation of the CDRS, the park wardens freed the arid island of Santa Fe from the goats that were destroying the scanty vegetation and endangering the existence of the island's endemic species of land iguana. Goats were also eliminated from Rábida, where they had recently been introduced by visiting fishermen as a source of food. Encouraged by these successes, campaigns were begun against the goats on Española and Pinta, where the problem had previously been considered, if not insoluble, at any rate beyond the available resources of funds and manpower.

Once the GNPS was firmly established, it became possible to draw up a comprehensive scheme for the management of the National Park. To prepare this, a small committee was appointed in 1973, representing the recently formed Department of National Parks and Wildlife, the National Planning Board, FAO and UNESCO (the last represented by Peter Kramer). Their report, "The Master Plan for the Protection and Use of the Galapagos National Park", followed the general lines of the Grimwood-Snow recommendations but went into much greater administrative detail and was a milestone in the history of the archipelago. It called for the absolute integrity of the 1969 boundaries and the extension of the park to include a two mile-wide marine zone. No buildings were to be allowed in the park apart from discreetly hidden cabins for GNPS wardens at sensitive points on three of the islands. (In fact these have never been built). The report re-affirmed that tourists should be accommodated aboard ships and, when landing, should be accompanied by qualified guides, trained by the GNPS and CDRS. Groups of visitors permitted to land at any one time should not exceed 60. With these precautions it was considered that up to 12,000 tourists a year could be accepted without harm, though "tourist impact" should be constantly monitored. Visitors should be charged a fee to enter the National Park and a reception centre should be built on the airfield on Baltra, an island which should remain a military reserve. Transport facilities for both tourists and residents should be increased.

To simplify management, the Master Plan called for the zoning of the park for five specific purposes:

Primitive-scientific Zones: areas that had remained essentially free from introduced species were to be given the strictest protection to ensure their ecological integrity.

Primitive Zones: the largest areas of the park which, though somewhat altered ecologically, needed special protection as the maintenance of their primitive character was necessary to guarantee the preservation of the Galapagos ecosystems.

Extensive Use Zones: areas which, although of interest to visitors, could not support a high load of tourist traffic.

Intensive Use Zones: a considerable number of carefully selected areas, small in extent but of prime interest to visitors and capable of withstanding substantial tourist traffic.

Special Use Zones: lands bordering the settled areas which had suffered considerable alteration but which nevertheless would require careful management.

Some of the Master Plan's proposals required further legislation but meanwhile they were accepted by the administration as a broad basis for future policy. The plan was published in an illustrated edition and, with modifications, has determined the lines on which the park has subsequently developed.

During this period there was a steady growth of tourist traffic and the GNPS and CDRS organized courses to train "naturalist guides" to accompany all parties of visitors. The Research Station itself became a tourist attraction. It had never been so intended, but visitors naturally wanted to see the tortoise rearing centre, particularly as tortoises were still difficult to see elsewhere. They were made welcome and, thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Anne Byron Waud, an exhibition and lecture building, the Van Straelen Hall, was inaugurated in 1973. The Station's library, herbarium and collections of zoological specimens were expanded and improved and a new house was built for the Director. The

new research vessel, Beagle III, arrived from England and was registered under the Ecuadorean flag. Work went ahead on building the headquarters of the GNPS.

Long-term botanical monitoring had begun when Tjitte de Vries established the first permanent study quadrats (measured plots) in 1966. This initiative was expanded and improved by Ole Hamann in 1971-72 and has been developed by him and a succession of Danish botanists ever since.



Bull Sea Lion

Photograph by I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt



Blue-footed Boobies

Photograph by Tjitte de Vries