

hierarchy for both color and form continues, since psychophysics has suggested differences in the processing of color as compared with processing of other types of visual information, such as brightness and form. At Canberra this hierarchy was extended into the area of stereopsis with a report that depth perception occurred only with differences in brightness and was impossible with color differences alone. Some neurophysiological data suggested a tendency for color and form specificity to be inversely related in cortical cells, which imply separate hierarchical channels for these two features; these channels could develop after much spatial selectivity had already occurred.

A breakthrough in vision research has been the development of techniques for studying single neurons in awake, trained monkeys. This approach is undoubtedly going to facilitate the ex-

ploration of higher brain centers, which must be very depressed in the anesthetized state. The initial successes with this method are taking place in visual motor systems, where eye movements can be directly related to neuronal activity.

The meeting made it clear that vision research will proceed to develop better techniques to link structure with function in all visual centers in order to uncover the general rules nature uses to construct visual brains—and ultimately man's visual world—by interconnecting nerve cells.

PETER GOURAS

*Laboratory of Vision Research,  
National Eye Institute,  
Bethesda, Maryland 20014*

PETER O. BISHOP

*John Curtin School of Medical  
Research, Canberra City,  
A.C.T., 2601 Australia*

## A Matter of High Priority:

### IV Jornada de Flora y Fauna Amazonica

The Fourth Meeting on Amazon Flora and Fauna was opened by the Bolivian Secretary of Agriculture on 15 October 1971 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The Secretary of Industry and Commerce, a competent economist, explained the importance of ecological surveys in a variety of areas, including political decision-making; integral studies of the renewable natural resources to assure the sustained yield management of commercially valuable species; well-defined and protected national parks and wildlife refuges to stimulate the tourist industry and market; lists of endangered species; and examples of ecological catastrophes caused by well-meaning, but incompetent, agricultural and forestry practices. The ministerial speeches and the subsequent lectures and discussions were taped and broadcast, so that the actual audience of the meeting was far larger than the almost 200 persons who physically attended. Some of us wondered skeptically what the media "rating" of such programs would be, but the organizing commission assured us that the use of transistor radios is widespread, and that people are interested in topics that concern their own region. Dr. Valdivieso (a Bolivian member of the American Academy of Orthomolecular Psychiatry and of the World Center of Group Psycho-

therapy) discussed the future of Bolivian Amazonia from data based on anthropological, clinical, and sociocultural studies. He stated that, "in terms of mental health, the failure of the natural defenses in the human organism leads to suicide. In ecological terms, the failure to comprehend rationally the importance of the conservation of flora and fauna means collective suicide." The people living in the Amazon Basin do not want to commit suicide. Some 30 papers were presented that covered topics ranging from problems caused by the introduction of the African bee to problems of regional planning of future settlements to avoid overcrowded cities. J. D. Candia, dean of the University for Tropical Agriculture, spoke about the ecological conditions of the chapare. Several other papers dealt with legislative programs, and the report of the delegate from Ecuador, who presented his country's new wildlife legislation and ordinance of implementation, was highly praised. It was especially pleasing to the group to know that many of the recommendations of the Third Meeting on Amazon Flora and Fauna held in Tena, Ecuador, in 1970 have already been implemented.

Traditionally part of the meetings consist of field trips. The participants

at the Fourth Meeting were given an opportunity to fly over one of Bolivia's projected national parks and also to visit a wildlife refuge near Trinidad (Department Beni). Perhaps the most impressive testimony to the fact that, in spite of all difficulties, something can be done to promote conservation in the Amazon Basin is the Botanical Garden of Santa Cruz. In 1965, Prof. Kempff transformed a piece of wilderness into the *Hortus Amazonicus Tropicalis Bolivienensis*. He left the existing vegetation, labeled it, added some more species from the Amazon Basin (but no plants from outside the region).

It is interesting to reflect on the history of these gatherings. The first meeting was held in Belem, Brazil, and was cosponsored by the Association for Tropical Biology (ATB). The second meeting (in Florencia and Leticia, Colombia) still had the moral support of the ATB, but all expenses were paid for by the host country. The third and fourth meetings were organized entirely without the financial or moral support of any international biological, ecological, or conservation agency. This, however, did not diminish the appeal of the conference, where representatives of governments could meet expert scientists and enthusiastic students to discuss the most urgent problems and the best ways to confront these problems. The meeting in Santa Cruz made 18 recommendations. Copies of these can be obtained from Noel Kempff Mercado, Presidente, Comisión Organizadora Casilla 123, Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

MARIA BUCHINGER

*Uriarte 2456,  
33, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

## Forthcoming Events

### August

5-6. **Perform Tests and/or Examinations on People Who Have Shown Sensitivity to Fluorides from Fluoridation**, Fact Finding Committee, Milwaukee, Wis. (R. J. H. Mick, 915 Stone Rd., Laurel Springs, N.J. 08021)

14-16. **Association for Computing Machinery**, Boston, Mass. (C. Giltner, Lincoln Lab., Massachusetts Inst. of Technology, P.O. Box 73, Lexington 02173)

14-17. **Biometric Soc.**, Western North American Region, Montreal, P.Q., Canada. (J. W. Kuzma, Dept. of Biostatistics, Loma Linda Univ., Loma Linda, Calif. 92354)

14-17. **American Statistical Assoc.**,