

kinds. In fact, herpetologists came here from all over the world because it was so famous for its snakes. But I drove around here one day last week, made a complete loop, and didn't see a single snake—where forty years ago, even twenty years ago, there would have been two hundred. The lack of kingsnakes is incredible. There aren't any! I haven't seen one here in ten years.

"Why? Well, for one thing, in the fifties and sixties the cattle growers used this as winter pasture and they kept draining the land. Also, the state pushed two four-lane highways through Paynes Prairie. Every snake in here tries to get across those highways at one time or another, and the chances of making it with all those cars and trucks going by are practically nil."

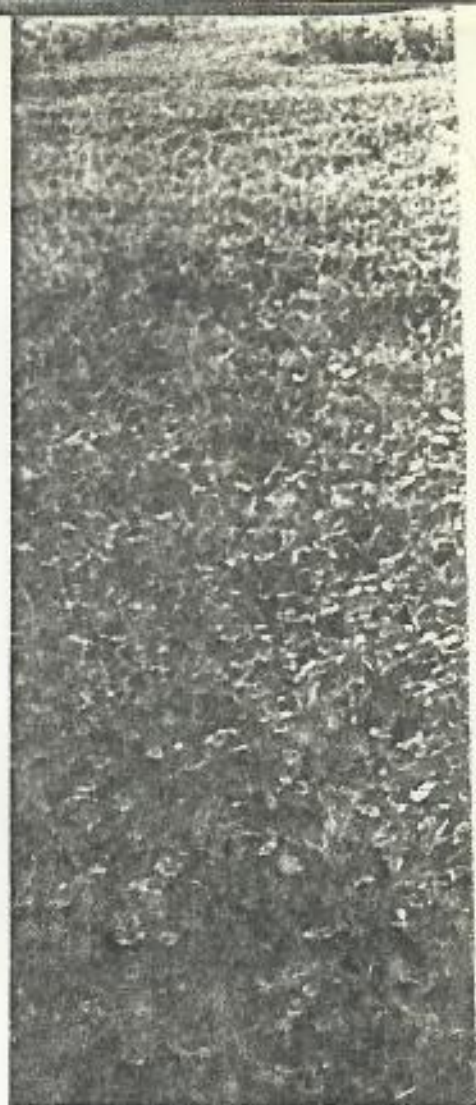
But Archie Carr, who has followed sea turtles around the world for many years, is apt to think of conservation problems in terms that are not confined to even so complex a local phenomenon as the abundance or disappearance of snakes in Paynes Prairie. As an ecologist, he knows most of the horror stories about what happens when exotic animals are introduced into a native ecosystem. He is ready to repeat to any interested visitor his theory of an introduced species that is laying waste to his—and William Bartram's—pristine Florida.

"The armadillo was brought here from the Southwest in the twenties and introduced around West Palm Beach," he said. "It's now one of the most destructive

elements in Florida's ecosystem. Why, here in Alachua County armadillos turn over almost every square foot of leaf-mold. They aerate the forest litter and destroy the habitat of all the tiny creatures that live in that stratum. They eat many of the small snakes and ruin the habitat for the rest of them. It seems odd that the only snakes I see anymore in Paynes Prairie are big, six-foot diamondback rattlers. Some people say that's because rattlers live in the holes made by the armadillos."

Archie's vendetta against armadillos had led to the creation of one of the first backyard eagle feeders in the South. Any armadillo that wanders within range of a Carr shootin' iron ends up neatly laid out on open ground in sight of the house. Bald eagles can be counted on to find the carcass without delay, providing Archie Carr with splendid views of their regal selves.

**A**RMADILLOS, TURTLE poachers, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are permanent occupants of the dingy underside of a world that has otherwise delighted Archie and Marjorie Carr for most of their lives. Florida is the center of their existence, though both have traveled widely, and Archie is still a globe-trotter to an unusual degree even in this highly mobile age. Although he made his reputation through his work on the biology and conservation of sea turtles, he



also has been extremely active in the attempt to preserve the Suwannee River. Marjorie, who began her career as a professional biologist, has probably been the most influential citizen conservationist in Florida for some years. Each is highly individualistic, yet they share an affinity for plain speaking. No one will fight very hard to protect wildlife or wilderness, the Carrs believe, if they are thought of solely as material resources to be hoarded or exploited. There has to be a conviction that we will keep these things around so that people will be able to see them in the centuries to come.

"And we ought to stop talking vaguely about 'space for man to breathe in,' too," Archie writes in his book *ULENDO*. "A man breathes his very best in an oxygen tent. If this difficult saving is done, it will only be for motives that make men keep paintings and dig ruins and write about their time for other times to come. It will be because man is the creature who preserves things that stir him."

If Marjorie Carr is not as well known outside Florida as her husband, it probably comes as news to her friends and foes

