CORRESPONDENCE

Skuas

SIR,—B. R. Johnston's "Skua Numbers and Conservation Problems at Cape Hallett, Antarctica" (*Nature*, **231**, 468; 1971) has been read with interest and understanding. However, the report requires further elaboration.

With reference to paragraph 3, it should be said that the resident penguins were moved from the area selected for establishing Hallett Station into other parts of the rookery. They were not killed or shipped from Cape Hallett as the verb "were removed" might suggest. This 1956 operation, supervised by Carl Eklund, USNC IGY, was carried out as humanely as possible, without losses, and in light of information then available on penguin behaviour.

With reference to paragraph 5, the remark that there was no significant loss of monel-metal bands is unclear. The

statement on mean annual loss of breeding skuas, and on the fifty breeding birds lost between 1956 and 1967, requires substantiating data to indicate how these figures were derived. Similarly, figures for chicks fledged/females breeding may be based on end-of-the-season count and may result in greater actual breeding success than really exists.

For the benefit of those unfamiliar with skuas, it should be stated that the species is highly adaptive and quickly takes to feeding on food and other wastes available at all Antarctic camps; and that its willingness to take anything that can be swallowed has contributed to its mortality.

With reference to the last sentence, next to the last paragraph, Cape Hallett is not a Specially Protected Area. A very small part of Seabee Hook inland toward the cliffs has been designated as a Specially Protected Area for terrestrial botanical reasons.

In 1970–71, USARP biologists at Hallett Station began the restitution of the natural area; the work is continuing and will result in returning a large part of the land occupied by Hallett Station to the original inhabitants. The 1971–72 scientific work at Hallett Station includes a skua-banding programme by Dr John R. Baker, Iowa State University, in co-operation with Mr C. J. R. Robertson, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, New Zealand, for data which may help to establish the true status of the skua population at Cape Hallett, Antarctica.

Yours faithfully,

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British Diary

Monday, November 1

Modern Food and Food Additives (6.30 p.m.) Dr D. W. Kent-Jones, Society of Chemical Industry, in association with the Industrial Division of the Chemical Society, in the Scientific Societies Lecture Theatre, 23 Savile Row, London W1.

Some Aspects of Drying Oils Technology (7 p.m.) Mr G. Hutchinson, Oil and Colour Chemists' Association, at the Queen's Hotel, George Street, Hull.

Tomorrow's World in Telecommunications (7 p.m.) Institution of Electrical Engineers, at the Royal Star Hotel, Maidstone, Kent.

Acrylic Resins (4 p.m.) Mr A. R. H. Tawn, Oil and Colour Chemists' Association, Thames Valley—Student Group, in the Main Lecture Theatre, Slough College, Slough.

Tuesday, November 2

Automatic Circuit Testing (7.30 p.m.) Mr D. Palmer, Institute of Measurement and Control, at the Peahen Hotel, St Albans.

Electrons in Solids (5.15 p.m.) Professor L. Pincherle, University of London, at Bedford College, Regent's Park, London NW1.

Migration and Interaction of Triplet Excitons (5.15 p.m.) Professor H. C. Wolf, Faraday Society, at the School of Chemistry, The University of Newcastle upon Tyne. (Bourke Lecture.)

The Excavations at Kalibangan (5.45 p.m.)

Mr B. K. Thapar, University of London, at the Institute of Archaeology, 31/34 Gordon Square, London WC1.

Wednesday, November 3

Food Additives and Contaminants (3 p.m.) Society for Analytical Chemistry, at the Polytechnic of the South Bank, Borough Road, London SE1.

Henry Armstrong and School Science, 1880–1930 (1 p.m.) Dr W. H. Brock, Royal Institution, History of Science Discussion Group, at 21 Albemarle Street, London W1.

Migration and Interaction of Triplet Excitons (4 p.m.) Professor H. C. Wolf, Faraday Society, in the Department of Chemistry, The University of Manchester.

The Effectiveness of Modern Visual Communication Systems (6 p.m.) Mr B. Stapley, Institution of Electronic and Radio Engineers, at 9 Bedford Square, London WC1.

The Ionosphere and Radio Engineering (7 p.m.) Mr G. Millington, Institution of Electrical Engineers, at the University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex.

Using Existing Resources Better—Planning for Future Growth (11 a.m. symposium) Institution of Chemical Engineers, jointly with the Society of Chemical Industry, at the University of Aston in Birmingham.

Thursday, November 4

Fermentation Pilot Plant Organization and Instrumentation (10.30 a.m., panel discussion) Society of Chemical Industry, Microbiology Group, at 14 Belgrave Square, London SW1.

Hazard Analysis — a Quantitative Approach to Safety (6.30 p.m.) Mr T. A. Kletz, Oil and Colour Chemists' Association, at the Royal Turks Head Hotel, Gret Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Migration and Interaction of Triplet Excitons (5 p.m.) Professor H. C. Wolf, Faraday Society, in the Department of Chemistry, The University of Sheffield.

Pressure Transmitter Design Parameters (7.30 p.m.) Mr C. H. Goode, Institute of Measurement and Control, at the Hotel Majestic, Park Place, Cheltenham.

Recent Developments in the Preservation of Foods (6.30 p.m.) Mr S. D. Holdsworth, Society of Chemical Industry, Food Group, at the School of Chemistry, University of Bristol.

Statistical Interpretations (7 p.m.) Mr M. Keegan, Society of Cosmetic Chemists of Great Britain, at the Royal Society of Arts, 6–8 John Adam Street, London WC2.

The Laws of Disorder. Part 1: Entropy; Part 2: The Second Law of Thermodynamics (1 p.m., ICI science films) Royal Institution, at 21 Albemarle Street, London W1.