influence haul out and aggregating behaviour which in turn have implications for disease transmission.

The dynamics of the affected populations are known to play a role in epizootics. Anderson and May's mass action models of epidemiology predict that (human) epidemics are most likely to occur when the population size is sufficiently large and the mortality caused by the disease greatly exceeds the population growth rate.

Lavigne and Schmitz provide evidence that seal plagues have historically occurred when population density was high. However, Harwood and Grenfell point out that the underlying assumption here is that encounters between infective and susceptible animals are random events. This is not so in seals, whose aggregating behaviour during haul out varies with season and conditions.

Clearly there is a risk of the recurrence of a PDV epizootic among North Sea seals, which will increase with time and as the relative number of susceptible animals rises. According to Harwood and Grenfell, the highly endangered Mediterranean monk seal *(Monachus monachus)* might be driven to extinction if the virus were to spread to its main stronghold.

Global warming may also influence the risk of future seal plagues. Blixenkrone-Moller et al have shown that PDV may pose a threat to terrestial animals such as the mink *(Mmustela vison)*. The signs are that PDV will continue to affect European mammals in the future.

Ref: Lavigne, D.M. and Schmitz, O.J.
Marine Pollution Bulletin 21 (6) 1990

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Krogsrud, J., Evensen, O, Holt, G., Hoie, S. and Markussen, N.H.
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Ed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1990

The 20th anniversary of the Yorkshire Mammal Group took place this year. Looking back, 1990 could be recorded as a successful year for the Group. We had a full programme of evening lectures and carried out a considerable amount of field work.

Apart from the summer break, the Group meet on the first Thursday of each month in York and had lectures covering mammals in foreign lands and in the UK. On foreign animals, Andrew Price covered the topic of Marine Science in the (now-too-topical) Gulf area. Even our AGM was spiced with tales of mammalian experiences in Israel related by Michael Thompson, and by an intimate talk on gorillas in central Africa by Gordon Woodroffe.

At home, the National Rivers Authority view of "The River Bank" was given by Tim Coles, and Steve Jones described the role of hedgerows (his pet subject) on dispersal of small mammals. Talks on Pipistrelle Bats (Michael Thompson), Mountain Hares (Valerie Clinging) & What the Cat brought in (Colin Howes), covered a wide range of British mammals. Henry Arnold of the NCC made biological recording into an exciting topic.

Field studies included several small mammal traps and some interesting river bank walks, looking for signs of otters in North Yorkshire. The Bat Section held a number of lectures and carried out field surveys for bat roosts in addition to responding to numerous NCC call-outs for bats in trouble.

Our publicity has been good this year and membership has stayed about the same as last year, with some members moving away and some new people joining. The programme was planned by an enthusiastic committee: Ann Hanson has been our Secretary and she has worked hard and effectively. I am grateful to her and the rest of the Committee.

Dick Wakelin