**Norman Myers obituary (1934-2019)**

In the mid-1980s, the British environmentalist Norman Myers was the first scientist to calculate that tropical rainforest covering an area the size of England and Wales was being destroyed every year to produce beef for US burgers. Two decades later his calculations were confirmed through satellite images showing the clearance of tropical rainforest, especially in Brazil.

His interest in tropical rainforests had been stimulated by the rate at which they more than any other environment were being destroyed and species lost. In his book ‘*The Sinking Ark’* (1979) he proposed that species were being lost at the rate of one a day, rather than the accepted figure of one a year. Later, Myers admitted that his calculations were incorrect; he should have said 50 species a day.

In total he published almost 20 books which sold over a million copies and worked on approximately 300 professional or scientific research papers as a visiting professor at a number of Universities around the world, including Oxford.

His interest in wildlife had begun in the late-1950s when working for the British Colonial Service when he was posted to Kenya. There, in an independent Kenya he became a wildlife photographer and his close observation of a range of species lead him to complete a doctorate in conservation and development at the University of California, at Berkeley, in 1973. By the early 1980s he was living in Oxford and had become a well-respected environmental consultant.

Norman developed a range of new ideas about conservation and development, including the conservation opportunities of about 25 ’biodiversity hotspots’ containing about a third of all living things on Earth but accounted for only 1.4% of the planets land surface. One of these areas was the tropical rainforests of Madre de Dios, in south-east Peru.

Norman made many early predictions about what is now referred to as the ‘Anthropocene’ before the term was adopted, including the impacts of climate change on wildlife and human populations. He promoted a better understanding of the economic value of wildlife, natural products including their genetic value as sources of new pharmaceuticals, natural pesticides and foods.

In 1986 Norman accepted an invitation to become the patron of the newly formed (in Oxford) Tambopata Reserve Society and remained the sole patron of TReeS until his death. His words of support were important in the early years in securing support and funding from numerous institutions and individuals, and enabled TReeS to fund a wide range of conservation related initiatives.