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COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT*

**LAG-A-00-99-00048-00
SSO 1 (934-001-01)**

Semi-annual report
06/01/2000-11/30/2000

for

World Wildlife Fund

Date Submitted: Tuesday, January 16th 2001

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Global Conservation Program Activity Report
for World Wildlife Fund

Summary of Activity Status and Progress

INTRODUCTION

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Summary for period 06/01/00-11/30/00

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Bering Sea Ecoregion

Objectives

The objective of the Bering Sea program is to conserve the globally significant biodiversity of the Bering Sea by protecting key sites and wildlife populations, as well as shaping development policies for improved stewardship in collaboration with local communities, the private sector and US and Russian governments.

Collaborators/Partners

- ^{WWF} Russia Program Office
- Kamchatka Fisheries Management Agency
- Russian Academy of Science
- Kamchatka Region Parks Administration
- Northern Pacific
- Wild Salmon Center
- Pacific Environment and Resources Center
- Yupik Association
- Naukan Cooperative
- Association of Marine Mammal Hunters
- Kaira Club
- Children's Library of Anadyr
- Beringia Ethnic-Nature Park



Summary for period 06/01/00-11/30/00

In the second half of this year in the Bering Sea, we have made progress in utilizing our biological information to guide further action on the ground in Russia and Alaska as well. Our support for local initiatives in the region has been significant for raising the profile of the Bering Sea among local governments, agencies and NGOs alike. Among the highlights of the last six months are described below:

Highlights

- ⇒ Initiating a children's education program in Chukotka (northwestern Bering Sea);
- ⇒ Strengthening enforcement capacity in Nalychevo Nature Park;
- ⇒ Translating the WWF-TNC biodiversity assessment into accessible, understandable language for the layman and publishing this in the form of a color-photo "Call to Action in Marine Conservation;"

Strengthened enforcement capacity for of illegal fishing

- ⇒ Participating in international negotiations on implementation of a newly signed agreement on the Conservation of the Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population;
- ⇒ Initiating a partnership between WWF and the National Geographic Society to highlight ecoregions of the world. The Bering Sea will be the first featured ecoregion on a multi-media web site shared by the two organizations.

Activity Description

Result 1.1: Established Marine Zone for Nalychevo Nature Park

In May of this year, Russia's President Vladimir Putin signed an executive decree dissolving the State Committee on Environmental Protection and the Federal Forest Service, transferring their functions to the Ministry of Natural Resources. Until this moment, all decisions regarding the establishment of protected areas were processed through the regional branch of the State Committee on Environmental Protection. The dissolution of this body caused chaos and confusion within the conservation arena as well as the nature protection agencies, and temporarily derailed the process to establish a new type of protected area in Kamchatka, a marine zone.

Currently, WWF's leader on this project, Vitaly Menshikov is working with conservation planners to determine the appropriate mechanism for establishing the Nalychevo Marine Zone in the interim.

On a more positive side, plans for constructing a ranger station on the coast of Nalychevo proceeded, and the new building was completed this summer. The station now provides a safe shelter for a park ranger to conduct monitoring and enforcement more effectively in the park. This station was built with matching funds).

The concept of developing a demonstration area on indigenous fishing practices has been unsuccessful. Although we had included that in our workplan in response to a local association of indigenous peoples, feuding erupted among several factions within the association as to how the project should be implemented. Thus, we will postpone such plans at the present.

Result 1.2 - Completed Sociological survey around Karaginsky Bay, Mapping of Resource Use

Vladimir Kiprianov, a consultant to WWF, completed this project. Kiprianov spent several weeks meeting with coastal community residents in northern Kamchatka, in the region of Karaginsky Bay. As a result of his research he identified key areas of subsistence use of natural resources. He also identified key groups and individuals that represent potential supporters of the park in the future. In particular, these are the older women and young people in society. Based on public polls, he found that middle-aged men in the villages have much less interest in nature protection in the region. Through his work he also identified areas that are valued by local people as special hunting and fishing areas, as well as sites that have some cultural or spiritual value, information that will prove useful in a protected areas design. His results are presented in a report with accompanying maps. As a follow-up to this report, Kiprianov returned to the region in September,

2000, for additional investigations into the current regulations on natural resources management that may serve as useful mechanisms to establishing a marine protected area.

Result 1.3 - Completed Sea otter survey

In June, 2000, wildlife biologist Alexander Burdin, of the Kamchatka Fisheries Management Agencies (Kamchatrybvod), set off for the Commander Islands with a small team of marine mammal biologists. The researchers conducted a survey of the two primary islands where sea otters reside, Mednyi and Bering Islands, which are part of the Commander Islands Zapovednik, or nature reserve.

Conducting this survey was an important achievement for several reasons. First, because this otter population has been monitored since the 1970's, the consistent gathering of data over regular intervals – now punctuated by the 200 survey – makes this an especially valuable data source. Second, the survey involved four professional biologists, who currently receive inadequate support for their research and conservation in Kamchatka. By enabling these people to remain active in the field and utilize their expertise, the project is contributing the longevity of needed experts in conservation biology in the Bering Sea. Third, planning and sharing the information with the US Fish and Wildlife Service proved to be a positive process which strengthened working relationships among scientists, managers, and WWF conservationists across the Bering Sea ecoregion.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, the results of the survey can be compared with an Aleutians-wide sea otter survey that the US Fish and Wildlife Service conducted in April, 2000. That survey showed that in the Aleutians, the sea otter population has declined on an average of 70% throughout its range in the last thirty years, dwindling to an estimated 6,000. In comparison, the Commander Islands population appears to be more robust and stable, and may even be increasing. For example, on Mednyi Island, 1,932 individuals (1,549 adults and 383 pups) were counted, which significantly exceeds the numbers seen over the previous years (1,200 to 1,300). The total number of sea otters counted on Bering Island was 2,161 – a smaller number than that counted 1995, when the count was 3,316. However, weather conditions at the time of 2000 count were not favorable: due to prolonged storms, kelp beds were spread across a broad area of water. Thus, biologists believe that a portion of the sea otters was not counted.

The significance of these numbers – a total of 4,093 counted for both islands-- is yet to be determined. In fact, the otter counts on the Commanders raise a major questions: why do these animals appear to be immune from the factors that are causing drastic declines in otter populations just several hundred miles to the east? In any case, the results show the importance of the Commanders as a refuge for a keystone species in the dynamic Bering Sea ecoregion.

The results of the Aleutian-wide and Commander Islands sea otter survey were presented and discussed in November, 2000, in Monterey, California at a special US-Russia sea otter working group, part of the Area V region of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Alexander Burdin attended from Kamchatka.

Result 1.4 - Increased awareness about the importance of the Bering Sea

In an effort to raise awareness about the importance of the ecoregion internationally, as well as within the ecoregion itself, we have been supporting a variety of programs. These fall into the general categories of publications, children's education (Living Planet Clubs), and media. The results of our work include the following:



Publications

Support to the journal "Northern Pacific" yielded one issue in the latter half of 2000.

Additionally, the editors of the journal, responding to a need for a shorter publication targeting resource users in the region, initiated a newspaper called "Pacific Bulletin." The newspaper is produced twice monthly, and reaches 5000 readers – primarily fishermen and owners of fishing enterprises in the Russian Far East, including Sakhalin, Primorsky, Chukotka, and Kamchatka regions.

This summer WWF produced a simple single-page leaflet in the Russian language to be widely distributed among partners, decision-makers, and the general public. The leaflet describes WWF, our interest in the Bering Sea, and our general goals for conservation here.

Establishment of "Living Planet Clubs" in Chukotka

In 1999, WWF made its entry into Chukotka (northwestern Bering Sea) primarily by working with one local NGO partner, Kaira Club. In 2000, we supported Kaira Club again but other organizations that are helping to strengthen an ecoregional approach to education and broaden our geographical reach. For example, subgrantees included representatives of the Yupik Society, the Marine Mammal Hunters Union, and the Naukan Cooperative, who live throughout the region, not only in the capital city Anadyr.

These partners helped to organize a children's calendar contest as part of our "Living Planet" awareness campaign, soliciting some 300 drawings of children's images of nature and lifestyles of the northwest Bering Sea. Children from remote villages such as Lavrentia, Aalkatvaam and Ilinernay on the Bering Sea coast participated along with children of larger town of Provideniya and the region's capital Anadyr. A local jury convened in Anadyr, selected a range of illustrations, and forwarded the final selections to WWF-Russia, which designed and printed a calendar called "Chukotka Nature Through Young Eyes." Three thousand copies were printed and sent to the villages and towns of Chukotka for distribution.

Our partners also helped to organize summer camp programs in which children ages 8-14 learned from books and games and then real-life contact with nature in the tundra and on the coast.

In July, WWF's Bering Sea director Margaret Williams and her counterpart from WWF's Russia Program Office, Viktor Nikiforov, traveled to Anadyr, Chukotka, to meet for the first time with local officials from natural resource management agencies including the management department of Beringia Ethnic-Natural Park, the Pacific Science Center and the Forest Service. Our visit was invaluable to improving our understanding of the extremely difficult physical, political, and economic conditions in which our colleagues are working.

During our visit we made the acquaintance with several individuals with whom we will work closely in the future development of our Living Planet Clubs. These include the Director of the Anadyr Children's library, and the leader of a youth outdoor education corps. We organized a field trip – an outing on Anadyr Bay – for 40 of our young Living Planet Club participants during which we sighted more than 60 beluga whales and hundreds of seabirds nesting on a small island. For most of the participants, including the chaperones, it was the first visit ever to this local wildlife area.

Viktor and Margaret met with local journalists to explain WWF's interest in the region and the reason for their trip. Coincidentally, a team of reporters from Russia's largest national news outlet was visiting Chukotka and also filmed an interview.

In late summer WWF finalized discussions with the administration of the Beringia Ethnic-Nature Park on the establishment of a Living Planet Club center in Provideniya. We identified an office space which is being furnished with educational materials, a computer, telephone and other basic supplies so that it will function as a children's meeting place, where they will gather with their teachers or club leaders on a regular basis. Students will study biology, ecology, and natural history. They learn interactive games which incorporate lessons about wildlife as well as cultural ties to wildlife in the Arctic and marine environments of the Bering Sea.

In October, Viktor and Margaret shared the results of the Living Planet partnerships at a US National Park Service-hosted conference in Anchorage called "Beringia Days." Many of our Chukotka partners were also attending, which provided the opportunity to discuss follow-up and future development of the children's educational programs in the region.

Media

Mikhail Zilensky, coordinator of the Naukan Cooperative in Chukotka (northwestern Bering Sea), produced a series of radio reports for broadcast in Lavrentia and surrounding regions.

In August, Margaret Williams and Viktor Nikiforov took CNN reporter Gary Strieker on a site visit to a remote indigenous village in Kamchatka. While the village is on the western side of Kamchatka and therefore outside of the Bering Sea ecoregion, the visit was an opportunity to highlight WWF's work with indigenous people of Kamchatka and the importance of their involvement in protected areas management.

Other outreach efforts

In the US, WWF published a “Call to Action” which outlines key features of the bounty and richness of Bering Sea, threats, and needed conservation actions. The report includes a beautiful illustrated map that will be transformed into a web site on ecoregions of the world that is being jointly developed by WWF and National Geographic Society (NGS).

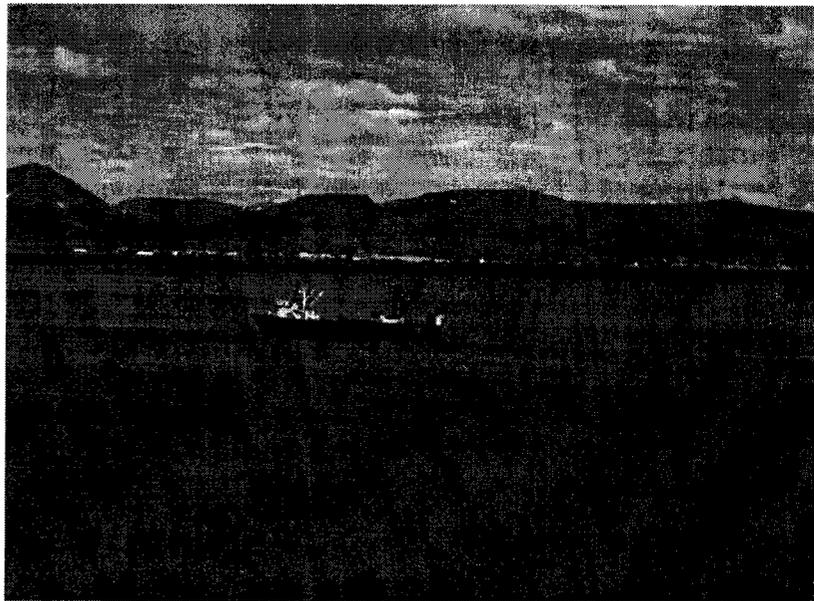
WWF and NGS are currently making final preparations to launch a map of ecoregions of the world, which will be distributed free of charge to every middle school across the United States. At the same time, the two organizations are developing a web site that will be launched simultaneously, and will “roll out” the site featuring the Bering Sea first. The site will contain multi-media effects such as ocean sounds, a walrus video, and sound bites with people who live in the Bering Sea ecoregion.

Result 1.5 - International attention about illegal fishing in the Bering Sea

The last half of this year saw some exciting developments in WWF’s efforts to address illegal fishing in the western Bering Sea. Specifically, our project with Kamchatrybvod, the fisheries management agencies responsible for monitoring resource use (determining allocations, issuing fishing permits for Russian vessels) was finally launched in August.

The Director of Kamchatrybvod, Sergey Denisenko and a team of four fisheries inspectors began a project to test a monitoring system that had been put in place for the agency in the previous year, but had never been fully utilized. The monitoring system is based on satellite vessel monitoring devices that emit a signal determining the location of a given fishing vessel. The captain of each vessel is required to call in a daily catch report to Kamchatrybvod’s inspectors.

The captains must include information on kilometers traveled, fuel expended, types of species caught, volume caught, and many other parameters of the boat’s operations.



The team of inspectors is now in place to carefully analyze and ground-truth the information coming to them via satellite. Whereas previously, no designated persons were focused on the details of these catch reports – and captains often avoided sending in reports without reprimand --, the Kamchatrybvod teams is closely tracking the movements and catch efforts of the vessels in the western Bering Sea. They know which vessels are at sea, and are ready to act if a catch report is

skipped. The results are significant: reporting has increased by 14 percent since 1999, most likely because word is spreading that Kamchatrybvod is becoming more vigilant. In the two months since the inspectors began their work, they identified 320 violations. In 140 of these cases, the inspectors' analyses demonstrated major discrepancies between the information provided by the fishing vessels, and the actual location of the boat shown by the satellite.

Enforcement of fisheries is far from perfect and it will take considerable time and investment to reform the situation in the western Bering Sea. However, the mere fact that the leader of the fisheries agency is willing to work with WWF and support such a program is hopeful, and the results of the last two months are encouraging.

As part of our future plans we are approaching the new Minister of the State Fisheries Committee of Russia – the federal agency of which Kamchatrybvod is a part – to fully appraise him of the program and to develop a base for political support. Additionally, we will be working on building a working relationship with the Kamchatka Border Guard, to which some enforcement functions were transferred two years ago. Additionally, we expect that the fisheries inspectors will be conducting spot checks, or raids on board vessels they have identified as possible violators. We have asked a local journalist to accompany the raid, to report on the event and collect footage on film

Result 1.6 – Other News

New field office

In October, WWF opened a Bering Sea ecoregion office in Anchorage, Alaska. David Cline, a wildlife biologist, and veteran conservationist who has been working in Alaska for more than 30 years will staff the office. Dave was a Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation and is an outstanding leader on Bering Sea conservation issues.

Polar Bear Treaty

After several years of discussions, in October the governments of the US and Russia signed an agreement on the conservation and management of the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear population. The agreement is essentially an agreement on hunting and management of this important polar bear population. Without it, there would be no restrictions on hunting and no agreement providing for the conservation of the species. In several places (Article VIII, sections 7(e) and 7(f)) specific language is used regarding conservation of polar bears and their habitat. Education and research are also mentioned as necessary measures. Dave Cline, our new field coordinator in Alaska, had been involved in the discussions that led to the treaty. He participated in the signing ceremony and follow-up discussions on implementation. WWF issued a press release which was picked up by the Associated Press and the story on the new polar agreement was carried in many media outlets, including the New York Times Science section, in a German nature magazine (Natur Kosmos), National Geographic's children's magazine, and web sites such as MSNBC, USA Today, and other news sites.

MPAs in Alaska

WWF is working to raise awareness in Alaska about marine protected areas as a tool for conservation of fisheries and wildlife habitat. In November, WWF's Endangered Seas campaign published a report on marine reserves and the success of reserves around the world in safeguarding marine resources. Demonstrative slides, a script, and overheads accompany the report so that others may make public presentations on the theme.

In November, WWF co-sponsored the first public meeting on marine protected areas in Alaska. The meeting was held during the American Fisheries Society gathering in Fairbanks. Several scientists, conservationist Elliot Norse of the Marine Conservation Biology Institute, and WWF's Bering Sea director Margaret Williams made presentations on marine protection issues. Following these talks was a panel discussion of a hypothetical plan for a marine protected area in the Bering Sea. The panel members were representatives of the Aleut Corporation, two scientists, a commercial crab fisherman, a commercial Pollock fisherman, and a representative of the at-sea processing industry.

WWF has made progress in establishing working relationships with stakeholders in one particular area of interest, the Aleutian Islands. We have made presentations to the board of the Aleut Pribilof Island Association, a non-profit organization representing Aleut people on issues in health, education, and environment and are developing a memorandum of understanding for cooperation on Bering Sea environmental issues. We made another presentation to the Aleutians Borough East (a sort of county government) and have had numerous meetings with other members of the Aleut community, including the Aleut Corporation. These relationships will be critical as we move forward in laying the groundwork to establish marine protected areas in Alaska – an important component of the Bering Sea ecoregion program.

Table of progress in meeting key activity benchmarks

Benchmark Number	Benchmark/Output	Status*
1.	Formal establishment of marine zone, initiation of environmental enforcement and educational activities.	On-track
2.	Documentation of marine resources most valued by local indigenous peoples; basic documentation of location of resource use activities by local people; by non-local, commercial-scale users; potential concepts of marine protected area in Karaginsky Bay.	Completed
3.	Population estimate of sea otters, a potential indicator species, in one of WWF's priority areas within the Bering Sea Ecoregion.	Completed
4.	Increased awareness of target audiences on the biological and economic importance of the Bering Sea.	On-track
5.	Increased international attention to loss of economic resources and biological wealth in the western Bering Sea due to illegal fishing. Increased pressure on governmental bodies to work together to resolve problem of over fishing and mismanagement of fisheries in the Bering Sea.	On-track
6.	Other activities	On-track

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The Russian Government agencies responsible for formalizing decrees of protected areas were dissolved. In the interim, WWF is working with conservation planners to determine the appropriate mechanism to keep these efforts moving forward.

The current lawsuit in Alaska over the Steller sea lion, the Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service, and its implications for a new management regime have coincided with the final stage of preparing our MPA proposal for the western Aleutians. Almost daily, the political situation changes and we must re-think our strategy based on new information on the sea lion/fisheries issue. This case has polarized the fishing and environmental communities and has galvanized the large processor/trawlers with the small boat fishermen in an unprecedented alliance. We face a huge challenge in presenting the concept of MPAs at this pivotal and tense time. The concept of closing new areas in the Bering Sea as an MPA could be greeted with not only skepticism but also outright hostility. Now we must work hard to provide information about MPAs as a tool that can benefit fisheries, and we must find allies in the fishing community who will promote this concept themselves.

We have made a huge step forward in initiating our toxics program. Key partnerships have been struck with several native communities and organizations. The current challenge is to identify seed money for chemical analyses. Without completing these analyses, we will be unable to move forward and show progress, on which outside funding from NSF or other sources will depend.

Southwestern Amazon Ecoregion

Objectives

The objective of the Southwest Amazon Program is to conserve the full extent of the biodiversity of the ecoregion by protecting key sites and wildlife populations and by shaping regional development to minimize threats to the ecoregion. USAID support is focussed on the development and consolidation of an Ecological Corridor (Amboró-Madidi) and strengthening the National Park Service (SERNAP) in Bolivia and upgrading the status and protection of several Reserved Zones and promoting FSC Certification of Brazil Nuts in Peru.



Collaborators/Partners

- National Service of Protected Areas (SERNAP)
- Biodiversity General Direction of Bolivia (DGB)
- Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN)
- Conservation International (CI)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- Local stakeholders (TCOs, Municipalities and local community organization or *Organizaciones Territoriales de Base -OTB-*)
- INRENA (National Institute for Natural Resources, Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales)
- GTZ (German Technical Assistance Agency)
- International Resources Group (through BIOFOR project) with USAID funding.
- FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)
- *Asociacion para la Conservacion de la Cuenca Amazonica (ACCA)*
- Pro-Naturaleza (Peruvian NGO)

Summary for period 06/01/00-11/30/00

During the last six months, several important actions were taken to ensure lasting conservation in the Southwestern Amazonian ecoregion. This includes completion of a comprehensive Biodiversity Vision to guide conservation efforts in the ecoregion, progress in establishing the Amboró-Madidi

Corridor in Bolivia, strengthened protected area management (SERNAP) in Bolivia and initiation of establishing three protected areas in Peru.

With USAID funds devoted largely to activities for this corridor, two major goals were achieved that include 1) the establishment of a data base (as a baseline of the information) for analysis and identification of information gaps and establishment of biological and socio-economic sampling points (to be used in a representative and gaps analysis for conservation) and 2) first steps to establish an “Ecological Corridor Working Group (ECWG)” composed of local stakeholders of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor. The biological and socio-economic information gathered for the establishment of the baseline allowed the identification of information gaps for several variables, including the distribution of plant and animal species, as well as human activities (i.e. population encroachments, opening and paving roads). The baseline information also provided an overview of the current conservation status of the corridor, and identified major threats and opportunities. The first steps for the establishment of the ECWG included the compilation and analysis of the local stakeholders. This turned out to be a daunting task since the number of stakeholders in the Amboró-Madidi Corridor is around 1,600!

Highlights

- ⇒ The Biodiversity Vision for the Southwest Amazon Ecoregion finalized and now being published for wide distribution to partners and stakeholders.
- ⇒ To ensure greater long-term financial sustainability and collaboration for conservation efforts, WWF and CI organized a series of meetings in November and December to discuss institutional cooperation on the Vilcabamba-Amboro Corridor, which will be one of the first beneficiaries of funding from the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund. This hotspot within the Tropical Andes overlaps to a significant degree with the Southwest Amazon ecoregion and the Amboró-Madidi Corridor. WWF and CI are currently in the process of developing a joint proposal to submit to the CEPF. The ECWG established in Bolivia will provide a model for the eventual binational coordinating mechanism that will be needed for the Vilcabamba-Amboro Corridor.
- ⇒ The baseline information and the preliminary Monitoring and Evaluation system of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor was completed by Fundación Amigo de la Naturaleza, a local NGO based in Santa Cruz. All this information was presented to WWF in the form of a comprehensive report, both printed and in electronic form (Araujo, N. & P.L. Ibisch eds. 2000. *Hacia un Plan de Conservación para el Bio-Corridor Amboró-Madidi*. FAN & WWF. Santa Cruz, Bolivia).
- ⇒ The National Service of Protected Areas and WWF carried out a “stakeholder analysis” of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor. This included the compilation and analysis of the stakeholders with interests and rights in the corridor area.
- ⇒ The creation of an *ad hoc* advisory committee to the ECWG composed of national (The National Service of Protected Areas and the Biodiversity General Direction) and international organizations (Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society, CARE and WWF).
- ⇒ Although it is not possible to separate the activities accomplished by SERNAP with the specific funds provided by this grant, SERNAP achieved several objectives that are worth mentioning.

There is no doubt that these achievements are partly due to the timely support provided by USAID and WWF.

- The system of entry fees for Protected Areas was approved and implemented for “Eduardo Avaroa National Park” and will be extended to Madidi, Cotapata, Toro and Sajama.
 - The “Reserva Nacional Amazonica Manuripi-Heath” was reclassified and renamed as “Reserva de Vida Silvestre Amazónica Manuripi”. This change in name implied changes in size and in the restrictions for the use and management of resources.
 - Noel Kempff Mercado National Park was decalred by UNESCO as a Natural Heritage Site.
- ⇒ The Peruvian Council for Voluntary Forest Certification was formally and legally established and a work plan developed.

Activity Description

Objective I: Consolidation of Amboró-Madidi Connectivity Complex

There are three main products for this 5-year project: a) Conservation Plan for the Amboró-Madidi Corridor, b) a Monitoring and Evaluation System, c) establishment of an Ecological Corridor Working Group (ECWG).

With the development of an ECWG of local stakeholders and with the help of a Monitoring and Evaluation System for the Amboró-Madidi Corridor, the goals for this reporting period include the completion of database (the main source of input for the Monitoring and Evaluation System of the Corridor) and the assembly of the “Ecological Corridor Working Group (ECWG)”.

More specifically, with grants made to SERNAP and FAN, the following activities were carried out: 1) an analysis of the stakeholders in the corridor area, 2) a strategy for establishing the “Governing Structure” of the groups interested in participating in the conservation and management of the corridor, 3) continued work developing a database with biological and socio-economic information of the corridor, 4) an analysis of the information needs for different taxa (both plants and animals), 5) development of a preliminary Monitoring and Evaluation System, and 6) an analysis of the socio-economic scenario for the future implementation of the Conservation Plan.

Result 1.1 - SERNAP advisor and SWA coordinator (WWF), coordinated and facilitated the initiation of a collaborative structure for defining and managing the corridor

A survey and analysis of the local stakeholders (i.e. that have access and rights over the natural resources) identified 1620 organization in the Amboró-Madidi Corridor Area. These groups belong to 58 Municipalities in 4 Departments (La Paz, Cochabamba, Beni y Santa Cruz).

- Protected Areas (SERNAP)	8
- Indigenous Territories (TCOs)	12
- Forestry concessions	18
- Local community organizations (OTBs)	1600

The local labor syndicates (*Sindicatos Cantonales*) were selected to represent the Local Community Organizations in the ECWG. Additionally, 84 NGOs addressing a wide range of issues (i.e. the environment, education, and health) were also identified to be working within the corridor.

An *ad hoc* Technical Advisory Committee to the ECWG composed of national (SERNAP and the DGB) and international organizations (Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society, CARE and WWF) was formed to help guide the process.

The Coordinator of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor (based at SERNAP) is a biologist with significant experience in the area working with many of the major stakeholders. Due to the complexity and the number of local stakeholders and NGO involved in relevant issues within the corridor area, an NGO will be hired as a consultant to support the Coordinator of the Corridor. This NGO will be in charge of helping him with the general strategies, carrying out opinion polls, and facilitating meetings and workshops.

Result 1.2 - Gathered information to establish a complete and updated biological and sociological database for the corridor

- Gathering of primary (original) information on socio-economic aspects of the municipalities of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor. Only a fraction of primary biological information was added to the database.
- New maps were developed including – base map, extent of biological information (flora and fauna -mammals, birds, insects, reptiles and amphibians), state of conservation, protected areas, indigenous territories, concessions (hydrocarbon, mining and forestry), and provincial and administrative divisions.
- Compilation of secondary information to prepare the data base of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor. Source of information included national and international scientific and social journals, museums collections and “gray literature” (B.S, M.Sc. thesis and reports of Environmental Impact Assessments).

Key information is still missing. The vegetation map (a key component for the Monitoring and Evaluation System) needs to be added to the database in combination with landscape units and topographic maps. With the release of relatively inexpensive images from Landsat VII, this piece of work should be a top priority of the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system. Other data layers (including roads) were being obtained from IGM (Instituto Geográfico Militar) or NIMA (a project funded by USAID).

Result 1.3 - Conduct ^{ed} analysis of biological and socioeconomic data, and design Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System

The information on the distribution of fauna and flora was gathered and compiled in a Geographic Information System (GIS). In most cases, the available information for individual taxa is very limited. Most biodiversity assessments were carried out along roads, rivers or in the vicinity of research field stations and the headquarters of national parks. Some areas have almost no available

information like the Altmachi-Covendo-Cotacajes zone. Biodiversity surveys are urgently needed for this and other sites.

Most of the socio-economic information is already gathered and compiled in the GIS. A preliminary analysis of the threats and conflicts among local stakeholders was completed. The first version of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is ready for evaluation by the ECWG and the *ad hoc* Technical Group. This system is equipped with a series of policy, social and biological indicators, as well as means and minimum requirements for obtaining the data in the field.

The preparation of the database as the main input for the M&E system was greatly delayed because resources were not available for purchasing the landsat Images to prepare the vegetation map, and for obtaining the required biological information in the field. Other issue that delayed the preparation of the database, was the process of generating the topographic map (contour lines) from a "raster" file. These barriers should be solved for the next calendar year. Additionally, information on effective management will be obtained from the eight protected areas within the corridor.



Result 1.4 - Initiated development of Ecological Corridor Conservation Plan and implementation of Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System

The preliminary M&E system will be presented to SERNAP, the ECWG and the *ad hoc* Technical Group. Feedback and suggestions for pilot studies are expected from these presentations.

The Management Plan for the Amboró-Madidi Corridor will be developed and implemented once all the necessary information has been added to the data. This is likely to be completed during the second year (FY01 USAID) for implementation during the third year (FY02 USAID).

Result 1.5 - Initiated development of Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System with the ECWG

ECWG members will be asked to improve and endorse the monitoring and evaluation preliminary system. Key indicators and processes will be agreed on and methodologies and information will be taken into consideration in finalizing the M&E system for the corridor. New information will be added as soon as it becomes available (i.e. vegetation map).

Objective II – Strengthening and consolidation of the National Service of Protected Areas of Bolivia (SERNAP)

This Objective seeks to strengthen the capacity of the National Service of Protected Areas of Bolivia (SERNAP), an entity within the Ministry of Sustainable Development. Existing and nominated protected areas in the Southwest Amazon and Pantanal ecoregions have been identified as key components for the conservation of biodiversity in the next five decades. Besides protected areas, Indigenous Reserves (resource extraction reserves) and sustainable forestry concessions/reserves (independently certified) are also important for conservation purposes. Because existing protected areas are key for conservation of biodiversity and are usually threatened by various factors (i.e. illegal logging and hunting), it is of the outmost importance to provide adequate protection in the short term while preparing long term strategies. The conservation value of existing protected areas is even greater when considering how difficult and time consuming it may be to promote the creation of new protected areas.



Financial support was provided to SERNAP at a critical time to support 1) key administrative personnel at the La Paz Office, and 2) the directors and park rangers in charge of the administration and patrol of three Protected Areas. This financial assistance will ease the transition to more stable funding provided by a large GEF grant (in process). An important fraction of the GEF II project will become part of FUNDESAP, a trust fund for the Protected Areas of Bolivia.

Result 2.1 - Maintain^d the administration and protection of Carrasco, Noel Kempff Mercado and Apolobamba National Parks

In Apolobamba:

- The head of Park Rangers was hired at Apolobamba
- The 2001 Action Plan was drafted
- Six conservation proposals were drafted for fundraising.
- Two guard posts were build.
- The director and a park guard are receiving technical training
- A total of 48 patrol trips, 4 meetings and 1 training workshop were carried out.

In Carrasco National Park:

- The 2001 Action Plan was drafted
- Two conservation proposals were drafted for fundraising.
- A total of 48 patrol trips, and 11.4 km of trails opened for patrols
- A meeting with the local communities was carried out to review the "Red Line" (boundaries) of the park.
- A guard post is being constructed at Sacta.

At Noel Kempff Mercado National Park:

- The 2001 Action Plan was drafted
- Twelve conservation proposals were drafted for fundraising.
- A total of 237 patrol trips were carried out.

- Two meetings and one course were organized with the “Comité de Gestión” (implementation committee).
- The local community around the Park received information on agriculture and forestry practices.
- Health care was provided for the local communities around the Park.

This project will provide much needed short term financial support for key office and field personnel as well as for equipment. Approximately 80 % of the resources will be used to pay salaries and the remaining, to maintain field operations. Long term stability for both personnel and operations will depend on the Trust Fund being established at FUNDESNAPE. Initial resources will come from projects at GEF (II) and GTZ.

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Result 2.2 - Maintain the capacity of SERNAP's Central Unit to manage current issues, including co-ordination among the different levels of government compatibility of sectorial legislation, capacity building of communities within buffer zones and improvement of planning, monitoring and evaluation

- SERNAP maintained operations in the Protected Areas at a 90 % level.
- Tourism standards (and zoning) are being developed for Avaroa, Madidi and Cotapata.
- A series of statutes and regulations were written for activities within the Protected Area System: Concessions, management of resources including wildlife.
- The limits and status of Manuripi Heath were changed by means of a “Decreto Supremo”.
- Several legal cases pending solution have been processed.
- Funding from several grants (GEF II, PL-480 y KFW) will provide the much needed resources to the Trust Fund at FUNDESNAPE.

The regulations for management of protected areas prepared by SERNAP will be approved after consultations with the local communities. Certain protected areas still require proper delimitation and the ratification of decrees. It is necessary to strengthen the capacity of the legal department at SERNAP in order to help pending process in various Protected Areas.

Objective III – Promote the creation of three protected areas and the incorporation of these areas into the National System of Protected Areas of Peru (SINANPE)

Three large areas in the Peruvian Amazon are currently in the “Reserved Zone” status (Manu, Alto Purus and Amarakaeri). This status does not guarantee the long-term conservation of these forest areas. These “Reserved Zones” must be declared National Parks, Sanctuaries or Reserves (*sensu stricto*) to be legally protected. Otherwise, these areas may be turned into forestry concessions or other used otherwise.



Result 3.1 – Creation of New Protected Areas

- Purus: Biodiversity Assessment (by INRENA) in progress (Phase I) for the final categorization; Financial support to pay for Coordinator (interim Manager of Reserved Zone of Purus).
- Amarakaeri: Over-flight completed (final limits and encroachment analysis), workshop with adjacent (neighboring) indigenous communities for final zoning. INRENA is in the process of developing the final documentation for the formal categorization of the area.
- Manu: Pending completion of the Assessments for Purus and Amarakaeri.

Objective IV – Certification of 300,000 hectares for the gathering of Brazil nuts over a period of five years

Voluntary Forest Certification plays a key role in supporting connectivity between protected areas within the region and in contributing to achieving the forest management target. WWF is providing technical and financial assistance to strengthen the Madre de Dios Regional Working Group of the Peruvian Council for Voluntary Forest Certification (PCVFC).

Result 4.1 – Voluntary Forest Certification

- The Peruvian Council for Voluntary Forest Certification (PCVFC) was formally and legally established (November 2000) and a work plan was developed that included the completion of the forest management standards for wood production.
- During the Second Annual Conference of FSC in Oaxaca (November, 2000), the Peruvian delegation presented:
 - ⇒ Technical dossier for endorsement of the PCVFC as a national Working Group.
 - ⇒ Technical dossier for endorsement of the Brazil nut national standards.
 - ⇒ Presentation of the standard harmonization process between Peru, Brazil and Bolivia for Brazil nuts.

Table of progress in meeting key activity benchmarks

Benchmark Number	Benchmark/Output	Status*
1.1	Ecological Corridor Working Group (ECWG) organized. Roles and Responsibilities identified among the group.	On-track
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field-based biological and ecological assessments completed to inform conservation decisions • Integration of data from established monitoring systems • Formation of conservation database 	On-track On-track On-track
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological zoning and protection plan designed 	On-track

	<p>for the corridor, including maps of biological (species distributions, habitat and landscape characteristics, indicators) and socioeconomic (threats, focal activities) components.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of current status of biodiversity conservation (gap analysis, habitat representation, viability of protected areas). • Analysis of existing management plans and control of protected areas. • Design Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System 	<p>Delayed</p> <p>On-track</p> <p>On-track</p>
1.4	Analysis performed to develop Conservation Plan and implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation System	Delayed
1.5	Steps made toward developing plan for community-based monitoring of threats and indicators (communities informed, indicators identified, education process begun)	Delayed
2.1	Onsite presence of protection staff during this period increased.	On-track
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park guards provided in support of the protection of Carrasco, Noel Kemp Mercado and Apolobamba National Parks. • Integration of sectoral legislation and norms in favour of protection advanced. • Co-ordination among central, departmental and local governments in support of protection improved. • System planning including monitoring and evaluation is maintained • Permanent personnel and consultants hired. 	<p>On-track</p> <p>On-track</p> <p>On-track</p> <p>On-track</p> <p>On-track</p>
3.1	<p><i>Superheads should monitor</i></p> <p>Creation of the Alto Purus, Amaraeri and Manu Reserved Zones and the incorporation of these areas into the National System of Protected Areas (SINANPE).</p>	On track
4.1	30,000 hectares of Brazil nut certified in year one according to Forest Stewardship council principles and guidelines.	On track

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Currently the greatest challenge to declare new protected areas in the “Reserved Zone” in Peru is the unstable political situation. In spite of this instability, WWF has been able to continue working with INRENA to lay the groundwork. Because this is a new project (2 months old), a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of challenges and lessons learned will be provided in the next report.

Atlantic Forest Ecoregion

Objectives

The purpose of this five year project is to make significant advances toward the long-term goal of conserving the full extent of the globally significant biodiversity of the Atlantic Forest Terrestrial Ecoregion Complex and the Upper Paraná River freshwater Ecoregion of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay.



Collaborators/Partners

- WWF-Brazil
- Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA)
- USAID-Paraguay

Selected Partners Paraguay:

- Fundación Moises Bertoni
- Carrera de Ingeniería Forestal de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción
- Dirección de Ordenamiento Ambiental y Centro de Datos para la Conservación, Dirección de Parques Nacionales y Vida Silvestre - Subsecretaria de Estado de Recursos Naturales y Medio Ambiente, both of the Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería. This was changed recently to Secretaria del Ambiente.
- Alter vida
- Guyra Paraguay
- Servicios Ecoforestales para Agricultores - SEPA
- Sobrevivencia
- Instituto de Derecho Ambiental - IDEA
- ITAIPU- Paraguay
- Peace Corps Environment-Paraguay

Selected Partners added in Paraguay during this reporting period:

- Asociación Pro Cordillera San Rafael - Pro COSARA
- Asociación de Protección al Medio Ambiente del Amambay - APMA
- NATURAL, Land Trust
- ECO CULTURA

- ECOCLUBES
- Red de ONGs Ambientalistas del Paraguay
- Man and the Biosphere, Paraguay chapter - MaB
- Texas A&M University
- Fiscalia de Medio Ambiente

Summary for period 06/01/00-11/30/00

WWF's activities for the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Complex are directed toward four long-term goals: mobilizing conservation action on an ecoregional scale; protection of key sites and wildlife populations; shaping regional development to support conservation; and establishing the long-term conditions and capacities needed to sustain conservation. This report focuses on actions for Paraguay, which are those directly supported with USAID funds. The report also includes progress on some relevant actions in Brazil and Argentina, which are supported by matching funds.

Highlights

- ⇒ The Interior Atlantic Forest (IAF) Ecoregion Program in Paraguay established its office. The address is Cañada del Carmen 2780 entre Capitan Jara y Capitan Escario, Asunción – Paraguay.
- ⇒ IAF partners of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay refined the Biodiversity Vision (specific long-term 50 year biodiversity goals) for the ecoregion. They detailed the landscape design map for each forest block by specifically designing buffer zones and corridors to link the core priority areas. They also identified threats and opportunities for conservation of forest blocks, core areas, protected areas and corridors. This latter activity guided the development of WWF's (and other partners') implementation plan for fiscal year 2001. The WWF IAF team is editing a document for further distribution.
- ⇒ The Biodiversity Vision is already helping to “coordinate” actions in the IAF. The integrated information and the landscape design map are guiding not only Paraguayan national and tri-national actions, but also influencing the priorities of several U.S. and international organizations working in the IAF: Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Man and the Biosphere (MaB), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- ⇒ NATURAL Land Trust was created to establish Ecological Easements in Paraguay. Two private owners have already committed their land to the conservation of natural resources. The lands are located in the Southern Block in one of one of the Core Areas (San Rafael National Park) identified in the Biodiversity Vision.
- ⇒ Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve (priority area of the Paraguay Central Corridor of the IAF Biodiversity Vision) and its buffer zone were declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, giving United Nations recognition of the sustainable development activities in the region. Guyra

Paraguay/Birdlife International has designated Mbaracayú as an “Important Bird Area” (IBA) - a key area for the conservation of threatened bird species.

- ⇒ With the development of the Biodiversity Vision, the Paraguayan Environmental Prosecuting Attorney's Office (Fiscalia de Medio Ambiente) has prioritized the IAF Ecoregion as a key site for the enforcement of the timber trade law. However, the strengthening of its capacity will be necessary for the Office to be able to accomplish this objective.
- ⇒ Pro COSARA has established a private guard system for protecting San Rafael National Park, one of the priority areas of the Southern Corridor Forest Block identified in the Biodiversity Vision.

Activity Description

Objective 1 – Mobilize conservation action on an ecoregional scale

Result 1.1: WWF Ecoregional Team capacity ensured to coordinate Atlantic Forest ecoregional conservation.

- a. A small office was established in Paraguay to coordinate conservation actions with partners of the IAF Ecoregion initiative. This office has the infrastructure necessary for coordination, communication and meetings with partner organizations and other stakeholders.
- b. Lucy Aquino began a series of meetings with stakeholders to coordinate action strategies and programs in the IAF and to lead and manage ecoregion conservation efforts. Guillermo Placci (Argentina Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Coordinator) helped Lucy to conduct a workshop to finalize the Biodiversity Vision maps for Paraguay and to develop threats and opportunities analysis. The results of this analysis served to structure the WWF action plan for Fiscal Year 2001.
- c. The WWF Steering Committee for the Atlantic Ecoregion held a meeting in Brasilia in July to discuss the Biodiversity Visions for the 15 ecoregions of the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Complex. Two final steps were identified to complete the IAF Biodiversity Vision: refine the landscape design map and complete a technical document describing the process and methodology used to develop the vision. This document will be presented to the Steering Committee and for peer review in January 2001.
- d. WWF sponsored an interactive training workshop *Economic Approach to Biodiversity Conservation* held in Foz de Iguacu - Brazil August 7-11. Several Paraguayan partners participated: NATURAL Land Trust, Servicios Ecoforestales para Agricultores (SEPA), Sobrevivencia, ITAIPU-Paraguay, and Guyra Paraguay. Miguel Morales from the USAID Mission also participated. The main objectives of the workshop were: 1. Identify economic causes of biodiversity loss; 2. Describe economic tools for assessing these causes and 3. Develop ways of implementing the tools. The Paraguayan participants had an opportunity to work together with Brazilian and Argentine Atlantic Forest ecoregion counterparts as well as from other ecoregions around the world to discuss potential economic tools for conserving the biodiversity of their ecoregions.

- e. The WWF IAF team met with Barry Spergel, a WWF conservation finance expert, to discuss methodologies for financing the implementation of the Biodiversity Vision.
- f. WWF and the Red de ONGs Ambientalistas del Paraguay organized a workshop on *Carbon Sequestration and the Kyoto Protocol* to discuss among the stakeholders the different organizations' positions. Strong positions were debated with the guidance of international climate change experts (Mark Kember and Ricardo Carrere among others). This workshop took place in November, shortly before the COP 6 held in the Hague, Netherlands. The main objectives of the workshop were to protect Paraguay's remnant forests from perverse incentives that could result from COP 6 and for the Paraguayan delegation to COP 6 to take a democratically developed base argument as its official position.
- g. WWF experts in trade and sustainable commerce visited Paraguay as well as the other member countries of the Mercosur to advance a coalition process and organise activities with NGOs that are currently active or might be interested in becoming more engaged with the Mercosur process. The idea is to consolidate work plans and to discuss goals, objectives and concerns to work in the Mercosur framework and to establish targets and strategies for the resources available in the Mercosur area.
- h. The WWF Atlantic Forest Ecoregion team participated in the *Ecoregions in Action Workshop* in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. This workshop helped the Atlantic Forest team to gain new ideas and develop plans for the IAF ecoregion. The workshop provided examples on the latest thinking on ecoregional conservation from the social and biological sciences. This workshop also created opportunities to exchange experiences with other ecoregion co-ordinators examining examples of where ecoregional approaches have succeeded or failed.

Result 1.2 A network of institutions with a shared vision and conservation strategy for the ecoregion development ~~and~~

- a. The Paraguayan National Commission of the Tri-National Initiative for the Conservation of the IAF met in June to work on the Biodiversity Vision. The Paraguay coordinator for the National Commission, Lic. Macedo is working with the other members of the Tri-National Commission (the Argentina and Brazil co-ordinators, IUCN representative, other WWF expertise and the Communications Secretary) to complete a proposal to GEF/UNEP for project development funds for a mid-size grant to strengthen the Tri-National Commission co-ordination of conservation actions across the three national borders. WWF/FVSA and the Ministry of Ecology of the Argentina Province of Misiones currently support a Communications Secretary for the Tri-national Initiative. WWF also allocated funds to help pay a portion of the salary of the Paraguay National Commission Co-ordinator and has helped to promote the National Commission among Paraguayan decision makers.
- b. WWF has developed regular lines of communications with other international organisations involved in conservation of the IAF in Paraguay: The Nature Conservancy, Texas A&M University, IUCN, MaB (Man and the Biosphere). The result obtained is the avoidance of duplication and co-ordination of efforts. These key organisations now share the Biodiversity Vision for the ecoregion and are participating in the development and implementation of an Ecoregional Conservation Plan.

- c. Lucy Aquino met with several Paraguayan authorities - General Attorney's Office, the Paraguayan Chancellor Vice-Minister, and the Director of Environment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - to promote improved enforcement of relevant environmental laws and regulations to protect the IAF in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Lucy is also working with WWF expertise on sustainable commerce and the coalition of NGOs to promote actions for effective coordinated law enforcement across national borders.

Result 1.3: Biodiversity vision for the Atlantic Forest refined and monitored.

- a. In coordination with scientists, scientific research efforts were mobilised in Paraguay to fill an information gap identified in the process to develop a Biodiversity Vision: population of special elements. This included the elaboration of research proposals and wrote letters of support to obtain funds for these projects. Partners presented proposals to donor organizations for funding to develop the following projects: a. Population study of rodents in Mbaracayu Reserve; b. Population study of *Speotus venaticus* (bush dog); c) Impacts of hunting efforts in Mbaracayu Reserve.
- b. With WWF-support, Guyra Paraguay is currently conducting rapid ornithological assessments at ten selected sites using two criteria: a. birds as indicators of overall biodiversity and b. the value of each site as a cost-effective locality for the prevention of extinctions. Guyra will shortly be presenting their report of the project.
- c. In November, WWF acquired a second-hand, 4x4 vehicle for the IAF Paraguay ecoregion coordinator to complete a ground truth assessment of the status of the Biodiversity Vision in Paraguay. The vehicle will allow greater east of communication with municipalities, local governments and NGOs to mobilize their participation in the implementation of the actions needed in the region. Maintenance work, proper insurance and title transfer for the truck are currently underway to begin the assessment in January.

Objective II – Protect key sites and wildlife populations



Result 2.1: Policy framework established for improved protection and management of existing protected areas

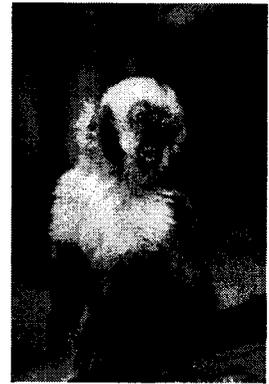
- a. IAF Program in Paraguay now has a 4x4 truck to begin the assessment of the protection status of corridors, core areas for protection, and existing protected areas. The vehicle will also allow better communication and coordination with stakeholders on conservation actions.
- b. WWF allocated funds to increase the capacity of Guyra Paraguay in two different aspects: 1. With the acquisition of materials and equipment, increasing its capacity to develop conservation and environmental education activities; and 2. Supporting the participation of two Guyra members in the *Curso de capacitación en Gerenciamiento para Organizaciones Ambientalistas y de Desarrollo* (Training Course in Management for Environmental and Development Organizations).
- c. WWF increased the capacity of the National Park Service by supporting a staff member to participate in a training course in Conservation and Management of Wildlife, held in Brazil.
- d. In coordination with MaB (Man and the Biosphere Paraguayan Chapter), areas are being identified in the IAF to nominate for "Biosphere Reserve" status. On November 24, UNESCO announced that Mbaracayu Forest Nature Reserve was approved for the status of "Mbaracayu Forest Biosphere Reserve". This was the result of a long process in which MaB members and the Moises Bertoni Foundation worked together with the WWF IAF coordinator to propose and promote this status for Mbaracayu Reserve. The IAF Biodiversity Vision identifies the Mbaracayu Reserve and its buffer zone as one of the core priority forest blocks (Central Corridor). Owned by the Mbaracayu Foundation and administrated by the Moises Bertoni Foundation, the Mbaracayu Forest Nature Reserve is the most effectively implemented protected area in the IAF of Paraguay. No logging is permitted; the only human activity is a program of sustainable hunting, including monitoring, developed by the Ache Indigenous Group. Biosphere Reserve status gives United Nations recognition to this sustainable use program.

Result 2.2 Expanded implementation of integrated conservation and development projects to protect and connect key sites to implement the landscape designs of the Biodiversity vision for the Interior Atlantic Forest

Result 2.2a: Connect core conservation areas in Northern Block (previously called North Corridor) Paraná/Paraíba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.

- a. With WWF support the National Park Service and APMA (Asociación de Protección al Medio Ambiente del Amambay) organized a fire prevention program through a community education workshop. Park guards, volunteers, and the community living in the buffer zone of the Cerro Cora National Park were trained in fire prevention. The Cerro Cora Park group is now trained and could organize fire prevention workshops for other areas in the IAF.
- b. With WWF support the Director of NATURAL Land Trust (Victor Vera) received Forest Certification training in a course held in South Africa sponsored by SIDA. Using what he learned in the course, Victor Vera will organize a workshop to promote Forest Certification among the landowners of the Northern Block.

Result 2.2b: Connect core conservation areas in the Central Block (previously called Central Corridor) Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.



- a. WWF is working with the Moises Bertoni Foundation and The Texas A&M University to organize a workshop for the community of the Central Block, in the Mbaracayu buffer zone and the Jejui Guasu Watershed. This workshop will help to: a. to build local community and NGO capacity in community-based natural resource management and private land conservancy establishment; b. to develop new regulatory mechanisms that provide individual landowners with incentives to participate in establishment of conservancies; and c. to examine complex multi-stakeholder interests while building stakeholder capacity. The Zimbabwe model of the CAMPFIRE (Communal Area Management Program for Indigenous Resources) will be used in the workshop.
- b. With WWF support the Deputy Director of Moises Bertoni Foundation, Dr. Alberto Yanosky, visited The Republic of China raise funds to acquire land and increase the southern portion of the Mbaracayu Reserve. A parcel of land in this area consisting of virtually pristine forest of great importance in maintaining ecological processes of this portion of the ecoregion, has been put up for sale by the owner who lives in the Republic of China.

Result 2.2c: Connect core conservation areas in the Eastern Block (previously called East Corridor), Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.

- a. WWF is coordinating with the MaB Paraguayan Chapter, and ITAIPU – Paraguay for the presentation of a proposal to UNESCO to classify the entire Eastern Block as a Biosphere Reserve.

Result 2.2d: Connect core conservation areas in the Southern Block (previously called South Corridor), Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.

- a. NATURAL Land Trust was established in Paraguay to develop a conservation easement program with private landowners. Two private owners have committed their lands in San Rafael National Park forming the first conservation easement to be implemented in Paraguay. This first easement will be widely disseminated as a demonstration of the use of the easement mechanism in Paraguay for effectively protecting forestland.
- b. Pro COSARA has implemented a private law enforcement program developed in cooperation with the government and private landowners in the San Rafael National Park. Pro COSARA will soon present a report of the results of the implementation of their action plan.

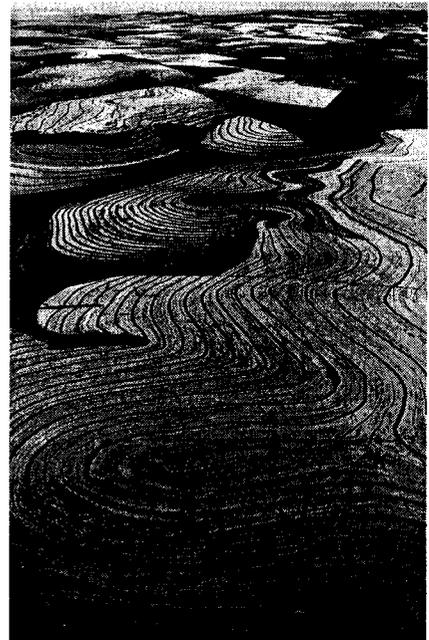
Objective III – Shape regional development to support conservation

Result 3.1: Limit unsustainable use of the forest

- a. Forest Certification is one of the target actions Paraguay is considering to limit unsustainable use of forest. Victor Vera from NATURAL Land Trust was trained with the support of WWF to establish programs among the landowners regarding Forest Certification. Forest Management Plans using the principles of FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), cover issues important for forest protection: 1) observance of laws; 2) land tenure and use rights and responsibilities; 3) indigenous communities rights; 4) community relations and employee rights; 5) forest benefits; 6) environmental impacts; 7) management plans; 8) evaluation and monitoring; 9) natural forest maintenance; 10) plantations. There is a lot of interest among landowners to implement a program with FSC criteria.
- b. Conservation Easements are another target alternative to limit unsustainable use of forest (this has been described under “II. Protect key sites and wildlife populations”).
- c. Private land reserves have been promoted by some of our partners to limit unsustainable forest use in the IAF in Paraguay. Several private reserves have been identified as priority areas in our Conservation Blocks: 1. in the Central Conservation Block, *Reserva Natural Privada Golondriana* (also known as *Mborombi*); 2. In the Eastern Conservation Block, *Reserva Privada Itabo*; 3. In the Southern Conservation Block, *Reserva Natural Privada Ipeti* and 4. In the Southern Conservation Block, *Reserva Natural Privada Tapyta*. These reserves all have good management plans.

Result 3.3: Establish a land use policy framework that supports conservation.

- a. Aided by the good relationship of communication and coordination WWF has developed with the Paraguay Office of the Environmental Prosecuting Attorney, the Biodiversity Vision map is being used to develop a strategic law enforcement system within the IAF. A workshop for prosecutors and judges in the IAF region is being organized for next semester to increase the capacity of organizations in charge of law enforcement.
- b. To address climate change issues, WWF and the Red de ONG Ambientalistas del Paraguay organized a workshop in November to guide NGOs and government officials to focus on the carbon sink mechanism of the Kyoto Climate Change treaty Protocol and its relation to native forest conservation. It was hoped they would consider carbon capture through reforestation with native species and the recuperation of natural habitats in the official Paraguayan position. This workshop gathered authorities, NGOs and the general public to discuss in a democratic manner the different positions that organizations have on this issue. Some climate change experts, including Mark Kember of WWF, were invited to share with Paraguayan NGOs and the governmental authorities their experiences on this very important protocol.



Objective IV – Establish long-term conditions and capacities needed to sustain conservation**RESULT 4.1: Public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest increased**

- a. WWF is working with the Peace Corps (PC) to use the Biodiversity Vision map to determine areas where Peace Corps Environmental Education and Forestry Program volunteers will be located. The Peace Corps is one of the only organizations currently active in providing environmental education and technical assistance in sustainable forestry practices to rural communities in Paraguay. Several Peace Corps Volunteers have already been placed in the IAF ecoregion, producing positive impacts on conservation and sustainable production activities in the communities where they are working. The PC is involving the WWF IAF coordinator in the training of their new volunteers.
- b. WWF is meeting with some representatives of the Paraguayan Congress to present the Biodiversity Vision map and the action plan and to ask for their support to promote conservation actions in the Ecoregion. Two congressmen, Deputado Francisco Rivas and Deputado Nery Pereira have asked the IAF coordinator for advice on specific actions to take place in the Eastern and Southern Conservation Blocks respectively. Diputado Rivas is promoting conservation actions with private land and Diputado Pereira is promoting the acquisition of land in San Rafael National Park and the creation of an ecocenter for environmental education in the Southern Conservation Block.

RESULT 4.2: Funding mechanisms developed to provide sustained funding for Atlantic Forest Conservation.

- a. WWF communicated with Texas A&M staff to develop a mechanism to raise funds for the program of community-based sustainable use in the Mbaracayu and Jejui Guasu watershed (in the Central Conservation Block). Proposals are being developed with WWF input of the Biodiversity Vision data and coordination with other IAF stakeholders.
- b. A proposal for a project development grant for a mid-sized grant been presented to the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)/UNEP by the Tri-national Commission of the Tri-national Initiative for the Conservation of the IAF. The proposal is for the strengthening the capacity of the Tri-national Commission to coordinate cross-border actions for the conservation of the IAF ecoregion.
- c. Carlos Ramos Program, a consultant working for the Araucaria Initiative of the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI), visited WWF Paraguay to gather information on the Biodiversity Vision and actions being implemented in the IAF. Carlos Ramos was very interested in coordinating actions with the IAF program, as he determined the feasibility of AECI implementing a long-term program in Paraguay. On December 5, the WWF IAF coordinator visited the Araucaria office in Madrid to seek information on the progress of negotiations for the program to work in Paraguay. The Araucaria staff informed her that Carlos Ramos' report to AECI did not recommend working in Paraguay on a big grant project due to the instability of the Paraguayan Government. However, they were interested in supporting small grants presented by NGOs working in the IAF with communities and natural resources.

The Araucaria staff advised WWF to contact the Spanish Embassy in Asunción to determine proper channels for some NGO partners to present a proposal to AECI.

Table of progress in meeting key activity benchmarks

<i>Benchmark Number</i>	<i>Benchmark/Output</i>	<i>Status</i>
1.1	WWF Ecoregional Team capacity ensured to coordinate Atlantic Forest conservation at an ecoregional scale	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
1.2	A network of institutions with a shared vision and conservation strategy for the ecoregion developed	On-Track
1.3	Biodiversity vision for the Atlantic Forest refined and monitored	On-Track
2.1	Policy framework established for improved protection and management of existing protected areas	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
2.2	Connect core conservation areas in Northern Block	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
	Connect core conservation areas in Central Block	On-Track
	Connect core conservation areas in Eastern Block	Delayed
	Connect core conservation areas in Southern Block	On-Track
3.1	Limit unsustainable use of the forest	On-Track
3.3	Establish a land use policy framework that supports conservation	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
4.1	Public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest increased	Mixed performance (On-Track and delayed)
4.2	Funding mechanisms developed to provide sustained funding for Atlantic Forest Conservation	On-Track

Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion

Objectives

To ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and maintain the integrity of biological processes across the Forests of the Lower Mekong.



Collaborators/Partners

Greater Annamites Ecoregion

- Government of Vietnam:
 - *Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development* (Forest Protection Department; International Cooperation Department; Department for Forestry Development; Forest Inventory and Planning Institute); (central and provisional levels)
 - *National Centre for Natural Sciences and Technology*: Institute for Ecological and Biological Resources
 - *Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment* (National Environment Agency)
 - Representatives of Provincial level People's Committee's.
 - Central Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA)
 - National University of Vietnam; Xuan Mai Forestry College
- Government of Lao PDR:
 - Department of Forestry and other relevant government Ministries and Departments
- International NGO's:
 - TRAFFIC Indochina Programme (SE Asia); IUCN; Birdlife International; CARE International; SNV; Wildlife Conservation Society
- United Nation Development Program (UNDP)

Dry Forests of Central Indochina Ecoregion

- Royal Government of Cambodia:
 - *Ministry of Environment and Provincial Environment Departments*; Department of Conservation and Nature Development
 - *Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries*; Department of Forestry and Wildlife
- International NGO's

- Wildlife Conservation Society; Flora and Fauna International; TRAFFIC Indochina Programme (SE Asia);

Summary for period 06/01/00-11/30/00

Activities undertaken during this reporting period focused mainly on laying the scientific, institutional and strategic foundation for an effective ecoregional conservation program for the Forests of the Lower Mekong. Following upon last year's biological assessment/prioritization of the ecoregion complex and a scoping report on key socio-economic issues, activities during this reporting period were devoted to refining a comprehensive framework for interventions both at the ecoregional scale and at the scale of priority areas. Development and initial implementation of these activities are described in this report.

A core program management team has been established in order to facilitate coordination and integration of the program and closer links with key partners. This team has been developing the program through its four overarching objectives:

- *To mobilize conservation at the ecoregional scale* by providing a strong scientific basis for conservation priorities in the region, working with multiple stakeholders to develop consensus goals and undertake integrated programs of action, and communicating the purpose, activities and results of the program.
- *To protect key sites and wildlife populations* by piloting innovative, large-scale approaches to integrated conservation and development in priority areas defined in the ecoregional Biodiversity Vision, improving management of protected areas, and developing interventions for the conservation of important wildlife species.
- *To shape regional development to support conservation* by increased understanding of the root causes of biodiversity loss, as well as targeted policy engagement and field projects in Sustainable Forest Management, community based management of natural resources and control of illegal wildlife trade.
- *To lay the foundation for lasting conservation* by developing the capacity of local institutions to manage biodiversity conservation, promoting the value of biodiversity through education and awareness, and pursuing sustainable financing of conservation goals.

Activities have been initiated to meet each objective. During most of this reporting period, only one of these activities (Activity 3.3: promoting the control of illegal trade in wildlife in Laos) was funded by USAID, through support from EAP-EI. However, as of October, broad support is being provided from USAID's Global Bureau across these objectives, as defined in the FY01 Implementation Plan. Much of the activity during this (June – November) reporting period focused on preparing for the most effective use of these funds and initial implementation of activities has begun. Therefore, this report includes a detailed description of activities related to the FY01 Implementation Plan.

Highlights

- ⇒ A permanent ecoregion conservation office established for the Forests of the Lower Mekong in the WWF Indochina office in Hanoi, Vietnam. In addition to Mike Baltzer, the Ecoregional Coordinator, Nguyen Thi Dao was employed in August as the Ecoregion Conservation Officer.

- ⇒ The results of the Lower Mekong biological assessment (undertaken as the first step of ecoregion program planning) were presented at a meeting to develop the Cambodia National Biodiversity Action Plan. The meeting proposed that the results of the assessment stand as the basis for the Action Plan.
- ⇒ The ecoregion program has developed an innovative strategy for undertaking large-scale conservation in two priority areas – the Central Annamites (mainly in Vietnam) and the Eastern Plains Dry Forests (mostly in Cambodia). Planning and consultations have led to the adoption and support for these programs by the governments of Vietnam and Cambodia.
- ⇒ Critical interventions in key policy areas such as sustainable forestry in Cambodia and Vietnam and community-based resource management adjacent to protected areas have begun.
- ⇒ Government approval to undertake the Wildlife Trade project in Lao has been obtained after an extended period of delay.

Activity Description

Objective 1 – Mobilize conservation on an ecoregional scale

Result 1.1 - Ecoregional Planning

Following the biological assessment -- which concluded in a Biodiversity Vision workshop held in Phnom Penh in March 2000 -- work under this activity has concentrated on publishing the results of the workshop as a Biodiversity Vision for the Forests of the Lower Mekong. Broad conservation targets are outlined together with the first regional definition and prioritization of areas critical for biodiversity conservation in these ecoregions (please refer to attached map). The Vision document provides profiles on each of the priority areas identified in the biological assessment. Summaries of the extensive desk studies compiled as part of the biological assessment are also presented. This document – as well as a summary for broader public dissemination -- are now at the final draft stage and will be published within the next reporting period together with a high profile launch.

Meetings have also been held in both Cambodia and Vietnam to present the results of the Biodiversity Vision. In Cambodia, the conservation priorities identified in the workshop were presented at a meeting to develop the Cambodia National Biodiversity Action Plan. The meeting proposed that the results of the assessment stand as the basis for the Action Plan. In Vietnam, a meeting was held with representatives of the major Vietnamese government offices responsible for natural resource management to present a concept for the Greater Annamites ecoregional program. This concept was enthusiastically endorsed by the participants and planning for the program is underway priorities (see Objective 2.2)

Activity 1.2 - Established and strengthened ecoregional program management capacity

A new office for the Ecoregion Program was established within the WWF Indochina office in Hanoi, Vietnam. Two staff members were appointed to support the core program management in

the region. This team has devoted considerable effort to preparing the workplans and budgets for the FY01 year, including extensive consultation with government agencies, international organizations and local groups. In addition to this extensive planning and formulation, the team began producing communications documents to promote and support the main program objectives. These include:

- A summary of the Biodiversity Vision for wide public distribution inside and outside the region.
- a poster/brochure and postcard on each of the priority ecoregions (Greater Annamites and the Dry Forests of Central Indochina)

As part of our communications outreach (to government partners in the region, public audiences in the region and in the United States, the donor community, etc.), several photographers have been contracted to provide photographs of landscapes, habitats, species and threats. The photographs will be used as the basis for an exhibition to accompany the launch of the Biodiversity Vision planned for February 2001.

Objective II - Promote integrated conservation and development in priority areas of the Forests of the Lower Mekong

A key objective of the program is to pilot innovative, large-scale approaches to integrated conservation and development in two of the priority areas defined in the Biodiversity Vision. Within the entire Forests of the Lower Mekong ecoregional complex, two of the three ecoregions were selected based on criteria such as regional importance, present gaps in conservation efforts, readiness and applicability of ecoregion conservation at this time, urgency for an ecoregion approach and expressed opinions of the relevant government partners. The two ecoregions selected were the *Greater Annamites* and the *Dry forests of Central Indochina*. One priority area within each of these ecoregions was then selected, based on similar criteria, to pilot the large-scale integrated conservation and development approach. The priority areas selected were the Central Annamites and the Eastern Plains.

Result 2.1 - Developed and initiated Central Annamites (Greater Annamites Ecoregion) priority landscape program

The Central Annamites priority landscape is located primarily in central Vietnam, with a small area in Lao PDR. It covers the central block of the Greater Annamites Global 200 ecoregion. This landscape was identified as a priority because of the high levels of endemism of its flora and fauna. The landscape is dominated by forest habitat that is highly fragmented at present, but -- unlike many other fragmented landscapes -- is not intermixed with intensive agricultural land and human settlements. The conservation strategy for this landscape is likely to involve considerable habitat restoration, as well as integrated land-use planning and community-based resource conservation. The Government of Vietnam's new Five Million-Hectare forest restoration program will be an important context for WWF's work in this landscape.

The core ecoregion management unit in Hanoi has begun developing this program through consultation within WWF and with potential partners and stakeholders.

Stakeholder Consultations and Workplan Development

In October, representatives of the major Vietnamese government offices directly responsible for natural resource management -- particularly biodiversity conservation -- as well as representatives from other institutions in Vietnam (such as the University of Hanoi) attended a planning meeting at WWF. The concept for an ecoregional program for the Greater Annamites was presented and enthusiastically endorsed by the participants. Participants also endorsed an initial field program focus on the Central Annamites priority area and outlined plans for follow-up action. A formal partnership with the Forest Protection Department was formed to facilitate and coordinate the program.

Following the recommendations of that meeting, a larger meeting focused on the Central Annamites was organized by WWF in November. Over 50 representatives from Central government ministries and institutions, provincial representatives of those offices and representatives of the Provincial People's Committees were invited to a planning meeting in Hue (within the Central Annamite priority area). Once again the concept for a priority area initiative was presented and discussed. Working groups developed particular aspects of the program such as biological assessments, socio-economic assessments and analysis of long-term conservation needs. The meeting concluded with a basic framework for action and a unanimous support for the program. The Forest Protection Department will work as the main partner with WWF to coordinate the program. A detailed workplan is now being prepared for collection of data and information to develop a conservation strategy for the area over a period of eight months. In the meantime, interventions recognized as urgent will be initiated.

Staffing

The workplan is being prepared by the core ecoregional management staff together with a provisional working group made up of Vietnamese governmental staff and representatives of other Vietnamese institutions working in natural resource management. The working group will be formally instituted in the next quarter.

Result 2.2 - Developed and initiated a program for the Eastern Plains (Dry Forests of Central Indochina ecoregion) priority landscape

The Eastern Plains priority area is located in eastern Cambodia and southern Vietnam, within the Dry Forests of Central Indochina ecoregion. The landscape is dominated by dry, open forest habitat that remains largely intact. The fauna of the landscape is characterized by large mammals and birds that once flourished in large numbers but have been decimated over the last fifty years. The conservation strategy for this landscape will involve the development of effective wildlife management systems and protection of wildlife populations.



Building the involvement and trust of local communities will be an essential element of the conservation strategy.

Over the past few months, WWF staff has begun to develop a conservation program for this area, focused on Mondulkiri province in Cambodia. Specific steps undertaken included:

Stakeholder consultations

WWF staff met with representatives from the Ministry of Environment in Phnom Penh and the Provincial Environment Department in Mondulkiri to discuss plans for a program in the Eastern Plains. WWF has also discussed the concept with the Department of Forestry and Wildlife and representatives of the Wildlife Conservation Society, Fauna and Flora International, and other conservation organizations with an interest in the province. During a scoping trip in early December further discussions will be held with the World Food Program, Refugees International and other community development groups working in the target area. In early January a detailed project concept and a workplan will be formally presented to a full range of stakeholders.

Workplan development

The conservation situation in the Eastern Plains priority landscape is largely unknown. Three protected areas exist on paper but lack any clear management structure or operations. Furthermore, biological survey work has been confined to a number of preliminary assessments of habitat for large mammals. WWF has worked with NGO partners and government counterparts to refine the workplan to include the following elements:

1. **Protected area assessment:** A team of experienced MoE/Provincial Environment Department and WWF staff with competency in protected area management and community resource use will assess the status of the three protected areas within the priority landscape. The team will collect data on conservation status, threats, administrative plans of the provincial government, etc. This is a critical first step in determining how to “operationalize” the existing protected area system. That in turn is the first step in undertaking a “gap analysis” to determine how to complement the protected area system.
2. **Ecological vegetation survey:** The priority landscape covers a mosaic of dry dipterocarp forests. Currently, the conservation community has a very limited understanding of the dry forests, their seasonal variations and their management needs. A transect will be established in the dry forests, along the perimeter of Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary and a series of collections of vegetation material will be undertaken over the period January – June 2001. This data (along with the earlier mammal surveys) will then feed into the conservation strategy workshop scheduled for June 2001.
3. **Data compilation:** WWF has initiated systematic compilation of secondary data on forest cover, topography, watershed classification, political and administrative boundaries, population settlements etc., to form a series of base-maps in the priority landscape area.
4. **Conservation Strategy workshop:** In June 2001 a workshop designed to synthesize the information from these and related surveys will be held in Phnom Penh. The workshop will include approximately 40 biologists with knowledge of the dry forests and an interest in promoting conservation in the landscape. At this workshop primary point data on the

wildlife status, poaching threats, land conversion, etc will be overlaid on the base maps. The result will be a defined conservation strategy for the Eastern Plains including identification of priority sites for conservation and the types of interventions required.

A pilot assessment of community resources will also be incorporated into the planning process. For details on this, please refer to activity 3.4.

Staffing

In addition to WWF staff Jack Hurd, Andrew Maxwell and Seng Teak in Phnom Penh, WWF has requested and been granted by AusAID Cambodia an "Australian Youth Ambassador for Development." WWF now has a skilled GIS technician on-board who will play a leadership role in determining data needs, synthesizing and interpreting secondary data, and plotting data layers. She will also help WWF to recruit and hire a GIS technician to lead GIS efforts in the future.

Additional Financing

WWF has consulted with UNDP staff responsible for the Global Environmental Facility, who were encouraging of the ideas behind the ecoregional program and suggested that WWF begin to develop a proposal for a Medium – Sized Project. WWF has produced a "concept paper," the initial step in this process. The project is tentatively called the "Dry Forest Landscape Conservation Initiative." A Project Development Funds Block A proposal will be drafted to support costs of bringing in a project planning consultant to outline the project and conduct a stakeholder workshop in September 2001.

Objective III - Promote a supportive policy environment for conservation and sustainable natural resource management

Result 3.1 - Socioeconomic assessments of the FLM

Following the scoping report on the main proximate and underlying causes of biodiversity loss in the ecoregion (enclosed), more in-depth research on social and economic will be undertaken during 2000/2001.

A framework for action has been drafted which outlines the objectives of the assessments, key topics and a process for conducting the assessment. Key topics include infrastructure development, economic development trends, population growth and migration, and limited land-use and conservation management capacity. The framework identifies the need for the studies to be facilitated by a major international agency with "convening power" in the region. Acting on this, discussions with UNDP both in New York and in Hanoi have been initiated. Funding possibilities have been identified and are presently being followed up on. A single coordinator for the studies was identified as the best mechanism to drive the activity. Terms of reference for the coordinator are presently being developed and suitable candidates sought.

WWF will act initially as the facilitator of the activity and will provide technical assistance to the studies. It is planned to have a coordinator in place in the next quarter. The studies will be

conducted throughout 2001 and will culminate in a workshop to discuss the findings and endorse or revise the recommendations.

Result 3.2 - Sustainable forest management

In order to maximize the multiple use of forest resources and to ensure biodiversity conservation in forested areas outside protected areas, the ecoregion program is supporting efforts in Vietnam and Cambodia to promote sustainable forestry practices.

Vietnam

The Vietnam National Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification (NWG) was established in 1998. Since then the NWG has been working to develop a set of national standards for SFM in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC) principles and criteria. With technical support from WWF, the NWG has completed a draft set of criteria and indicators for SFM and submitted them to the FSC for endorsement.

To complement this policy work, WWF is working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Tropical Forest Trust (a consortium of European furniture buyers) on a field pilot of sustainable forestry practices in Vietnam. This activity is aimed at establishing certification for forestry activities in the Kon Plong forest complex area. The first step of this activity, a biological assessment of the forestry to inform the development of a Forest Management Plan, is being undertaken by international and Vietnamese scientists in December 2000 and January 2001. As this area represents a large block of forest in a biogeographical area never visited by biologists, the survey serves a dual purpose. The results will provide a further extension of biological knowledge and will fill a major gap in understanding of the biodiversity of Vietnam. The survey will also be the first time in Vietnam that a forest will be specifically surveyed for biodiversity in order to provide the information for better, more sustainable production forestry practices.

Cambodia

During the month of November WWF participated in a number of meetings to build organizational understanding of the forestry sector and define the role of forest certification in forest sector reform. Key points are as follows:

Advocacy

WWF is working with the NGO Forum (a group of local and international NGOs in Cambodia) and other stakeholders to monitor developments in forest law, particularly advances being made on the re-structuring of the timber concessions system. WWF and its partners are seeking to develop a strategy that will ensure that NGOs will be meaningfully engaged in the forest reform process. Key points are as follows:

- A review of Cambodia's forest concessions is continuing under the joint working group of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife, and WWF is continuing to engage in this dialogue. At a meeting in late November, the timetable for concessionaires to produce management plans was discussed. A key concern of the NGOs present was the ability of

concessionaires to produce credible environmental and social impact assessments within the timetable as proposed.

- The Donor Sub-Committee on Natural Resources met in late November to discuss the draft statement that will be presented at the January donor Consultative Group meeting. WWF contributed to the NGO comments on the draft and will continue to remain engaged in the re-drafting process.
- A new draft of the new Forestry Law will be publicly reviewed in late December-early January.

SFM (Sustainable Forest Management) Project Scoping:

In an effort to determine the role for forest certification in Cambodia, WWF has undertaken the following preliminary steps:

- Consultation with Department of Forestry and Wildlife: WWF met with the director general and presented a verbal briefing on the areas which the two organizations might cooperate – development of a National Working Group on Principles and Criteria for Certification; solicitation of interest on the part of a concessionaire in undertaking a pre-assessment; and encouraging the Cambodia Timber Industry Association (CTIA) in considering the development of a “producers group” on the marketing of certified products. Other areas in which cooperation may be pursued are wildlife trade control and biological survey work.
- Consultation with the Cambodia Timber Industry Association (CTIA): WWF met on two occasions with the head of the CTIA to introduce the WWF program in Cambodia and WWF’s work on SFM globally. The discussion included the concept of certification and its applicability in Cambodia. The general feeling on the part of CTIA is cautious at this point as the constituent members are closely watching the movements of the DFW on implementing the forest policy reform process.
- Consultations with Tropical Forest Trust (TFT): WWF met with the head of the Tropical Forest Trust office in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to discuss TFT’s interest in supporting certification activities in Cambodia (in addition to their work in Vietnam). This was a very positive discussion and a follow-up meeting to discuss specifics will be held in January.

Result 3.3 - Controlled Illegal Wildlife Trade in Lao



As reported in the previous semi-annual progress report (October 1999 – May 2000), the implementation of this project was significantly delayed by difficulties in obtaining final project approval from the Lao government. All conservation projects and organizations in Laos over the past year encountered similar difficulties. While the Lao government clearly expressed interest in the project, the government has also been interested to ensure that international projects meet its agenda for integrating conservation more closely with development. Therefore, WWF’s primary activities during this reporting period were to ensure strong and effective leadership of the WWF Lao program and to work

with the Government of Lao to promote the project goals and refine the workplan.

In the last report, we noted that a new WWF conservation Manager (Roland Eve) was appointed in Lao. Roland took up his post in Vientiane during this reporting period and continued actively pursuing permission to undertake this project. Government approval for the project was finally obtained in December and the official signing for the project took place on December 15, 2000. The one-year project activities are now being implemented over the course of this year and were resubmitted with the FY01 Implementation Plan.

Result 3.4 - Promoted appropriate land tenure policies, especially related to indigenous people in Northeast Cambodia

WWF has made a strategic decision to change the geographic focus of this year's work away from Ratanakiri province and towards Monduliri. The reason behind the change is two-fold:

- The World Bank-supported Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Project is being initiated in and around Virachey National Park, WWF's primary field site in Ratanakiri. Given its extensive resources, the Bank-funded project is in a better position to address the long-term conservation planning and management needs of the target communities.
- WWF is focusing its ecoregional program activities in Cambodia in the Dry Forests in the Eastern Plains priority area – centered on Monduliri province. The community resource assessment and mapping activities – to be focused on Phnom Prich and Lomphat Wildlife Sanctuaries over the 2000-2001 dry season -- will now be integrated into the planning process for this program. The combined results of this assessment/mapping, the PA Assessment and the Vegetation Survey (see Activity 2.2) will be used as the basis for a long-term landscape level conservation project in the Eastern Plains.

To accommodate this shift, WWF has worked to revise the project concept and prepare an overall workplan. From November 2000 to June 2001, the Community Resource Use Assessments and Mapping Project in Monduliri Province will include the following main activities:

- a) Collection of background information and initial planning (Nov to Dec)
- b) Visit to Sen Monorom (Dec. 5-9)
- c) Conduct detailed planning for field surveys & develop training modules (late Dec)
- d) Training on PRA and community resource mapping (Jan)
- e) Field survey assessments in 2-3 communities (mid Jan.- mid Feb)
- f) Data processing, analysis and report writing (mid Feb – March)
- g) Return field visit to Monduliri
- h) Presentation of findings at Conservation Planning Workshop (June)

Objective IV - Lay the foundation for lasting conservation

Result 4.1 - Developed an effective information system for FLM

The aim of this objective is to ensure that mechanisms and support are established that will facilitate conservation into the long-term future. Under this objective, the ecoregion program is establishing conservation education and awareness projects, sustainable financing and support to specific capacity needs. Initial activities under this objective are focused on ensuring that a system for storing and disseminating information on the region is established. This activity is planned to be initiated in the second quarter (Jan-Mar 2000)

The core team of the ecoregional program is also developing a project concept for capacity building in community-based environmental education in Vietnam, and field implementation of EE in critical conservation sites in the Central Annamites. During stakeholder consultations and joint planning over this reporting period, environmental education – as a tool for enhanced community participation -- has been identified as a key component of overall conservation success in the ecoregion. This concept will be submitted to EAP-EI for consideration in FY01.

Objective 5 - Con Dao National ParkResult 5.1 - Marine conservation initiative for Con Dao National Park

This is a new activity for the program, currently being initiated with funds from EAP-EI. A program officer with expertise in marine conservation and GIS, Tran Minh Hien has been appointed to lead this project. In October, she participated in a WWF sub-regional meeting in the Philippines to develop a Southeast Asia strategy for conservation of priority marine species including sea turtles and dugongs. The assessment and management activities in Con Dao will be linked to this broader Southeast Asia marine species strategy. A concept has also been developed for UNDP/GEF for a future medium-sized project to implement the management activities identified through this activity.

Table of progress in meeting key activity benchmarks

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status</u>
1.1	Biological assessment and biodiversity vision published. Conclusions of biodiversity vision better linked to national conservation strategies.	On track
1.2	Communication documents promoting the Ecoregion Conservation Program published and strategic planning within WWF – Indochina completed. Steering committees for the two Global 200 ecoregions (Greater Annamites and Lower Mekong Basin) established. Technical Support Group for the <i>Forests of the Lower Mekong</i> Ecoregion complex established.	On track

2.1	<p>Central Annamites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key sites for forest conservation and restoration identified, as a basis for developing a network of conservation areas in the Central Annamites. GIS maps produced as a decision making tool for land-use planning. • Improved coordination and collective action on the part of conservation and natural resource organizations and agencies working in the landscape. • Program actions related to government policies/programs (particularly Five Million Hectares) identified and initiated. 	On track
2.2	<p>Eastern Plains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments of PAs, vegetation, and resource use completed. • Conservation Strategy workshop held. 	On track
3.1	Major interventions to address biodiversity loss across larger scales identified and a wide range of stakeholders mobilized to undertake these interventions.	On track
3.2.1	<p>SFM in Vietnam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National SFM standards finalized, following review and endorsement by Forest Stewardship Council. • Areas of high biodiversity in Kon Plong production forests identified, suitable areas for introduction of certified sustainable management (FSC protocol) identified. 	On track
3.2.2	<p>SFM in Cambodia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and commentary provided on environmental and social considerations of forestry sector legislation in Cambodia. • Composition and protocols for the establishment of a National Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management established. • A target concessionaire selected and provisional agreements to initiate a pilot certification process in one concession area. 	On track
3.3	<p>Lao Wildlife Trade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness material and CITES documentation produced in the Lao language to support Lao Government ascension to CITES. • Training teams assembled, curriculum produced and trainings conducted National level training capacity improved and law enforcement capacities at border crossings improved. 	On track
3.4	Community resource use surveyed and mapped in priority areas of Mondulhiri Province.	On track
4.1	Ecoregional information system established.	On track
5.1	<p>Con Dao, Vietnam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report and set of baseline data explaining the present status of the coral reef ecosystem completed. • A team of park staff and their families trained as trainers in sustainable management of marine natural resources. 	On track

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The Forests of the Lower Mekong Program is an ambitious undertaking in a region with limited data and technical capacity. In addition to these limitations the region remains one of the poorest in the world. Natural resource exploitation is still the main source of revenue for the three countries. As a result, biodiversity conservation tends to receive less attention from governments and other stakeholders, and is often considered to be a barrier to development. For these reasons, an important element of the ecoregional program has been to emphasize the integration of conservation with development needs and the importance of conservation for long-term sustainability. This integration has been pursued in the development of program interventions as well as through program communications. In Vietnam and Cambodia, resource management departments have recognized the important role of biodiversity conservation in the overall development plans for their countries and have been highly supportive of the ecoregional programs. In signing the approval for the Lao Wildlife Trade project, the Lao government has also shown its support for conservation efforts despite some reluctance when faced with other priorities or economic incentives.

A second challenge and lesson learned concerns the immense amount of basic stakeholder consultation, strategic analysis and program development work involved in launching a comprehensive and ambitious program at this scale. Fortunately, with the investments in science-based assessments over the last reporting period, and the investments in program staff, partnership development and strategic planning in this period, the program is now in a position to pursue implementation of a diverse program at multiple scales.

Map ?

Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion

Objectives

The Goal of the SSME Program is to conserve the biological diversity and ecosystem process of the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion such that the natural biological character and ecology integrity of this system is maintained in the long-term.

The sub-objectives for funding from USAID during FY 2000 include:



1. Enhance conservation action at critical sites within the SSME.
2. Improve awareness and understanding of the importance of marine conservation in critical sites in the SSME (focus on Palawan).
3. Increase understanding of conservation priorities and needs across north Sulawesi and East Kalimantan as part of the Ecoregion Conservation planning process.
4. Use market forces to transform the marine ornamentals industry in the Philippines and Indonesia into one based on quality and sustainable use of coral reefs by developing third party certification system

Collaborators/Partners

- USAID
- The Marine Aquarium Council (MAC)
- The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI)
- The Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board
- The Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Marine Conservation Society
- National NGOs in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia

Summary for period 06/01/00-11/30/00

During the last six months, with the support of USAID, WWF has made significant progress in the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME) conservation program. The funds provided by USAID have helped enabled WWF to partner with several stakeholders in the SSME and to secure co-financing from other donors including the Packard Foundation, the GEF, the Henry Foundation, and others. This report detail's the progress we have made in Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion conservation program with emphasis on activities supported by USAID. The majority of the report focuses on progress and

accomplishments; however, there is a section on challenges and lessons learned at the end of the report.

Highlights

- ⇒ An almost complete elimination of illegal and destructive fishing at two pilot sites (Tubbataha and Anilao) under the Sulu-Sulawesi Environmental Protection Crusade
- ⇒ Significant increase in community participation in protection of Bunaken National Park in Indonesia. This community participation has been directly supporting the associated patrols (funded through other organization projects) in that the community has been reporting violators to the patrol officers. Destructive activities are declining as a result of this community participation.
- ⇒ Biological monitoring at Tubbataha continues to show increased fish biomass with a statistically significant increase in the last year (see Figure 1).
- ⇒ Expansion of the Sulu-Sulawesi Environmental Protection Crusade to new sites including Apo Reef and Cuyo Island. During 2000 and 2001, the crusade will expand to several new sites including Turtle Islands, Negros Occidental, Puerto Gallera and Quiniluban Islands.
- ⇒ Development of thorough marine education kits and a training of trainers program to greatly increase awareness of marine conservation issues.
- ⇒ Execution of several educational workshops and training's as well as distribution of awareness materials in Palawan and Semporna Island.
- ⇒ Significant increase in knowledge of conservation priorities in Northeast Sulawesi and initiation of dialogue for expanding protection from Bunkan to the northern Sangihe Islands
- ⇒ The Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) developing a strong network of support among government, industry, and conservation organizations
- ⇒ The MAC making significant progress in developing certification standards and understanding and designing a certification system
- ⇒ Established a marine turtle-monitoring program in East Kalimantan in an area where sea turtle egg harvesting is the single largest source of revenue for the local government. As a result, receiving permission and support from the local government for setting up this program is a significant first step toward marine turtle conservation in the area.
- ⇒ A priority activity over the last six months has been to initiate Ecoregion Conservation planning and assessment throughout the SSME with WWF-Philippines, Indonesia and



Malaysia each completing assessments in their territories of the SSME. The goal of this process is to identify priority areas for conservation and develop a collaborative plan to protect these areas. Funding from USAID has helped to support assessments and planning in the Malaysian territory of the SSME (Sabah) and in the Indonesian territory of the SSME (North Sulawesi and East Kalimantan). Ecoregion Conservation efforts in the SSME are coordinated by the SSME Coordination Committee with representatives from WWF-Indonesia, WWF-Philippines, WWF-Malaysia, and WWF-US

WWF continues to build on these important accomplishments and with the assistance of the USAID is working to expand our marine conservation efforts in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas.

Activity Description

Objective 1 – Enhancing conservation action at critical sites

Under this objective, during the last six months, WWF enhanced conservation action at Tubbataha Reefs Marine National Park and Anilao Municipal Protected Area in the Philippines, Semporna Island National Park in Malaysia, and Bunaken National Park in Indonesia.

WWF is extremely happy to report that, patrols and enforcement activity supported by this project have virtually eliminated destructive fishing in two pilot sites, Tubbataha and Anilao. Likewise, ongoing biological monitoring indicates that in the past year at Tubbataha, fish biomass has increased significantly and live coral cover is on the increase after the 1998 bleaching event.

Result 1.1 - Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park (TRNMP)

TRNMP is the Philippines only marine World Heritage Site and is a critical marine protected area with over 11,000 hectares of reef within its 32,000-hectare border. Results in Tubbataha supported by this project include:

- a) Increased patrolling and surveillance activity to everyday starting in June 2000. This includes Philippine Department of Defense staff based at Tubbataha and research and patrolling vessels operated by WWF-Philippines.
- b) Continued quarterly biological monitoring trips to track changes in reef condition. This monitoring has indicated improvements in overall coral reef ecosystem condition and statistically significant increases in fish biomass in Tubbataha in the past year (Figure 1).

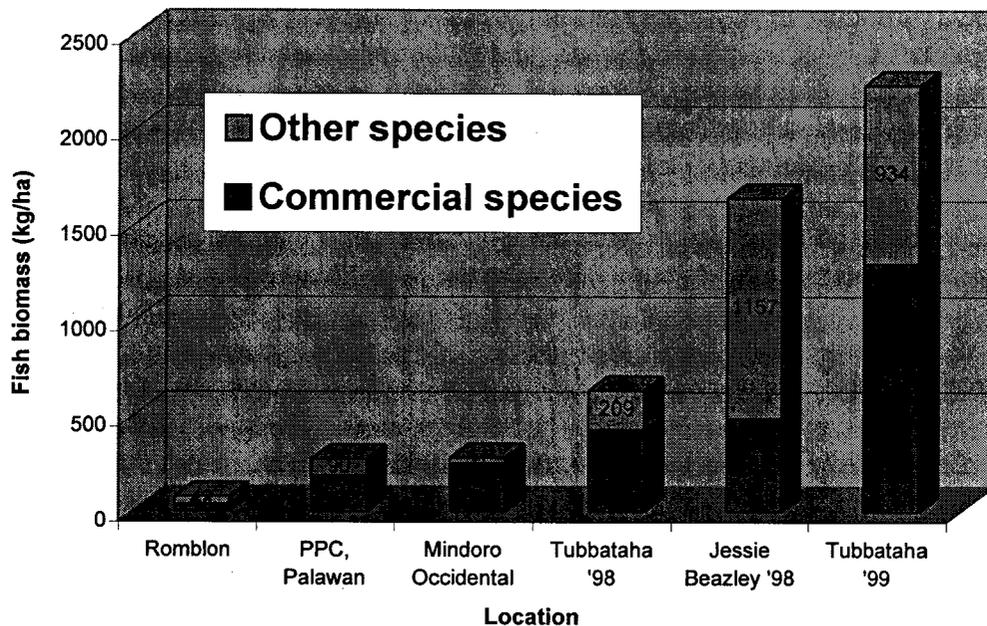


Figure 1: Showing increased fish biomass in both commercial and other species at Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park during the last year. While this increase cannot be proven to have resulted from increased enforcement activity the trend of increased fish biomass and improved ecosystem condition is a positive incentive to continue protection activities.

- c) Apprehended and confiscated a Taiwanese long-liner fishing illegally in Tubbataha waters in November 2000. The fishermen were deported and the confiscated boat may be kept by the Philippine authorities to use in enforcement activities.
- d) Completed the first year of collecting dive tourism fees at Tubbataha generating nearly 40,000 USD to be used in the management of Tubbataha and to help develop an endowment for long-term conservation management at Tubbataha.
- e) Strengthened the Tubbataha Management Board through ongoing training in natural resource management.

Overall the results in Tubbataha have been outstanding. With WWF's assistance, the TRNMP Board is successfully protecting this high priority marine area and is raising sustainable finance to help. We believe Tubbataha is a model for effective protection of remote reefs and are replicating the successful multi-stakeholder techniques used in this area to other sites around the SSME.

Result 1.2 - Anilao Municipal Marine Protected Area, Balayan Bay, the Philippines

Anilao, the most popular dive site in the Philippines, is situated within Balayan Bay in Southern Luzon. Anilao is only a four-hour drive from metro Manila and is therefore an excellent venue to demonstrate marine protection to decision-makers. Through increased patrols, awareness, and other enforcement activities, stakeholders in the area supported by WWF have greatly decreased illegal and destructive activities. Local people are monitoring has not yet confirmed such increases in fish biomass, observations on regular dives indicate improving ecosystem condition. Analysis of monitoring data is underway to help demonstrate the direct impact of the enforcement program. Adjacent communities have requested WWF assistance in setting up similar protection programs in their municipalities. WWF is very encouraged by this, as a major objective of the protection campaign is to create a model that can be replicated to protect ever-increasing areas of the SSME. The focus of activities at Anilao is currently with the municipalities of Mabini and Tingloy.

Activities and results over the past six months include:

- a. Undertook review of existing policies of Mabini and Tingloy pertaining to fisheries, tourism, permitting, environment and other aspects relevant to MPA management.
- b. Continued GIS analysis to delineate the municipal boundaries of Balayan Bay and its protected areas.
- c. Regularized monthly meetings of composite (Mabini and Tingloy combined) bantay dagat to tackle issues related to organizational policies, patrolling activities, conduct of Information, Education, and Communications activities, rotation schedules and formulation of annual plans, August - October 2000.
- d. Supported the active participation of bantay dagat in the formation of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Councils (FARMCs) in Mabini and Tingloy.
- e. Supported regular patrol activities of bantay dagat which totaled 4,608 man-hours for Mabini and 2,304 man-hours for Tingloy, June-October, 2000.
- f. Conducted a total of 32 board and search operations, warnings and reprimands to violators of fishery laws (destructive fishing practices down to virtually nil) from June to October 2000. Complimentary to the warnings and reprimands were lectures and issuance of prepared primers.
- g. Apprehended two Japanese recreational scuba divers caught spearfishing in one of the dive sites in Mabini in violation of existing municipal ordinance which prohibits spearfishing with the use of scuba within the coastal waters of this town. The case was filed at the PNP station in Mabini but the violators were immediately released, September 2000.
- h. Actively supported the Mabini-Tingloy Coastal Area Development Council (MATINGCADC) in its participation in community activities such as the International Coastal Clean up, Sept 16, 2000.
- i. Organized a meeting-workshop of the bantay dagat of Mabini and Tingloy to flesh-out organizational issues and concerns and assisted them in putting up an organizational

structure with working committees to help them strengthen their organizational capacity and enable them to stand alone, May 2000.

- j. Strengthened organizational ability by closely supervising their patrolling planning activities, implementation of policies, maintenance of boats, surveillance and communication equipment, June-Oct, 2000.
- k. Provided training course on marine mammal rescue for the bantay bagat of Mabini and Tingloy to help intensify the protection and rescue of stranded marine mammals in Balayan Bay, Sept 5-8, 2000.
- l. Held consultative meetings with officials and fishers of barangay Marikaban. This barangay was previously impenetrable and notorious in the use of illegal and destructive form of fishing. KKP is the first NGO to set in this barangay under the spirit of cooperation. Submitted a draft MOA to forge acceptance of KKP programs and ensure long term working relationship with KKP. Draft MOA is being reviewed by the barangay council, which shall lead in the consultation its contents with the fisherfolks. There is no certainty at this point if they will fully cooperate until the MOA is signed, October-November, 2000.

Result 1.3 - Improved Coastal Resources Management at Bunaken National Park, Indonesia

Bunaken National Park has long been well known for its outstanding coral reefs, characterized by coral caves and drop-offs. Additionally, Bunaken is now famous for being one of only two sites in the world with an extant population of coelacanth. USAID support through this project has assisted WWF and Dr. Erdman, who was the first scientist to discover coelacanth in Northern Sulawesi, to organize local people to protect the park by observing and reporting violations and raise awareness about conservation importance. Also, alternative livelihoods supported by the project have been highly successful in helping to improve local income and with appropriate outreach and education can be harnessed to decrease fishing and shell and coral collection pressure.

In the last six months, the following was achieved:

- a. All Coelacanth species passed for protection under CITES I category, jointly promoted by Germany and Indonesia.
- b. Community Reef Watchers team (Tim Raja Laut) continued to monitor daily fish landings including sharks and turtle catches at Bunaken and Mando Tua. Important findings include the discovery of previously unknown turtle nesting beaches and records of possible spawning aggregation activity during certain times of the year.
- c. Tim Raja Laut continued to observe and report illegal activities within the park.
- d. Tim Raja Laut has formed its own NGO, focusing on marine conservation issues and conservation in Bunaken National Park.

- e. Planning meetings were held to expand community reef monitoring model to other islands in the Park.
- f. Planning meetings to plan the training of rangers, community-reef team and local NGOs in underwater monitoring of fish communities. Plans to conduct spawning aggregation studies in Bunaken National Park.
- g. Handicraft micro-enterprise highly successful and lucrative. Operations expanded to include carved coconut shell souvenirs.
- h. Coelacanth researcher Mark Erdmann chaired a session on Coelacanth Conservation Biology at the International Coral Reef Symposium in Bali in November and presented the results of his work in Bunaken National Park.
- i. Several Film crews visited the site to film the ‘Coelacanth story.’”



The Coelacanth is proving to be a powerful Flagship species, helping mobilize support for conservation from a wide range of community stakeholders in and around Bunaken National Park.

Result 1.4 - Environmental Education and Management at Semporna Islands Project, Malaysia

The Semporna Islands Project is a three-year collaborative venture between the Marine Conservation Society, Sabah Parks, WWF Malaysia and Nature Link. Semporna is recognized as important and unique. A wide range of marine and terrestrial ecosystems are represented, including forest, mangrove, sand and rocky shorelines and coral reefs. Several of the islands are inhabited, and the waters and reefs are an important resource for the local community. Biodiversity is very high both on land and in the sea and, looking ahead, there is great potential for Eco-tourism development. The park was gazetted as a Marine Park in April 2000.

During the past six months, WWF primarily continued activities that were started in the first half of the project year. These included:

- a. Continuing the environmental education program, aimed at schools, villages and towns both in and around the proposed park, local government officers and the tourist industry, in order to promote the concepts of sustainable resource use, maintenance of biodiversity and benefits of management of the park. During this project period we WWF held several workshops for teachers, local government, the tourism industry, and park residents and users.
- b. Continued the delivered educational materials - marine information kits – the aim of which was to ensure that messages about the project would reach the stakeholders primarily in the local community.

- c. Completed biological assessments reports summarizing the important biological features of the Malaysian territory of the SSME as part of the Ecoregion Conservation process in the SSME
- d. Continued to informally trained parks staff as they work with project staff on village visits, biological surveys, and other activities.

Objective II - To increase understanding of conservation priorities and needs across North Sulawesi and East Kalimantan as part of the ecoregion conservation planning process

Of all areas of the SSME, East Kalimantan and North Sulawesi are the least understood and least studied in terms of their important marine resources, biodiversity attributes, and management issues. With USAID support, WWF-Indonesia has undertaken assessments of the biological priorities and socioeconomic conditions in these two areas in the first six months of the project period. These assessments are primarily the result of secondary literature reviews, although some primary field assessments were conducted as well.

Result 2.1 - Completed assessments in North Sulawesi and East Kalimantan

In the last six months, the following activities were conducted with the assistance of USAID funding:

- a. Together with Partners from Kehati (Indonesia Biodiversity Foundation) and the German Turtle Foundation, WWF-Indonesia has established a turtle monitoring and tagging program on Sangalaki Island, the island that has the largest green turtle nesting population in East Kalimantan. Volunteers have been recruited from Indonesian University and nightly patrols have been carried out for over two months. Data that has been collected includes number and size of nesting females, numbers of nests laid and hatching success of nests that were not collected by the egg-collectors;
- b. A report on status of Indonesia's turtle population has been prepared for the regional turtle meeting in the Philippines. The egg-collectors in Sangalaki are complaining that the monitoring activity is disrupting nesting activity as many of the female turtle that come up on the beach do not lay. This report will help show that based on monitoring in Aru and in Meru Betiri, beaching but not egg-laying is normal behavior throughout Indonesia;
- c. Scoping of Sanghie Islands in North Sulawesi. This region represents a significant knowledge gap within the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea ecoregion. Whereas good data is available for the Bunaken National Marine Park and the coastal habitats around the Northern Sulawesi Peninsula, little data is available on the marine and coastal fisheries and habitat status of the offshore Sanghie chain. Whereas piracy is potentially an issue north of the big island of Sanghie, the lower island chain is considered safe and was visited during a four-day scope

cruise in November, 2000. Meeting with local government officials and fishermen revealed that both the local government and the resource users were very aware of the potential advantages of sustainable management approaches and would be keen to be involved in a conservation initiative. Assessment dives revealed a range of habitat types, with extremely health coral and fish populations in many instances. This area is now considered a high priority for the SSME, both because of favorable institutional climate for resource management and because it appears to be priority based on biodiversity criteria. Planned follow-up includes a more complete rapid ecological assessment with TNC and follow-up proposals to fund additional fisheries management work, spawning aggregation work and establishment of additional protected areas in the region.

- d. During November 2000, initial stakeholder consultations were carried out in East Kalimantan and North Sulawesi, primarily to introduce us to the key stakeholders and to socialize the idea of a regional approach to planning conservation priorities in Sulu-Sulawesi Sea.
- e. SSME coordination and planning meetings were held in June and November to prepare for the Biovisioning workshop in March 2001.
- f. WWF used the International Coral Reef Symposium (Bali, October 2000) as an opportunity to raise awareness, solicit partnerships and disseminate lessons learned from it's experiences in ecoregion conservation planing and in conservation projects in the region. A series of papers were presented on marine ecoregions, the general approach of Ecoregion Conservation, lessons learned from Ecoregion conservation in the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea and in the Mesoamerican reef, lessons learned from projects in the Western Pacific, as well as several papers on the work of individual projects. The WWF booth occupied a prominent position and had a broad selection of posters, educational material and brochures on activities in the region. The conference provided a forum to both formally and informally exchange lessons learned on conservation approaches and provided a chance to meet new potential partners working in the region.

Objective III – Improve understanding of the importance of marine conservation in critical sites in the SSME (focus on Palawan)

The major objective of this component is to improve understanding on the importance of marine conservation in critical sites of the SSME. Specifically, this component worked to improve the understanding and participation of stakeholders from Palawan on marine conservation issues. The specific areas from Palawan chosen as sites for the project were Puerto Princesa, Taytay, Roxas, El Nido, Cuyo, and Cagayancillo.

Result 3.1 – Education and Awareness Activities in Palawan

To date, WWF has organized several environmental awareness workshops in Puerto Princesa with various interest groups such as the local resources management authorities, the Palawan Network of NGOs Inc., the Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board, and others.

WWF has developed educational materials that particularly stress the economic importance of marine resources. Many communities throughout the Philippines are very concerned with improving their economic condition. As a result, WWF is working with these communities to demonstrate the linkage between resource conservation and economic stability.

Additionally, Fuji Xerox Corporation provided WWF with a mobile education vehicle, which has toured Palawan delivering environmental education programs in several towns and villages. Radio plugs have accompanied these programs and WWF also holds periodic radio shows on environmental issues in Palawan. WWF feels that it is critical to establish a solid foundation of understanding of environmental issues in Palawan.

WWF has worked with the Palawan Network of NGOs Inc. on training of trainers programs so members of this NGO network can provide environmental education programs in the field in villages and towns throughout Palawan. WWF feels that it is critical to establish a solid foundation of understanding of environmental issues and particularly their linkage to economic concerns in order to build support for conservation in the long-term.

WWF has also conducted a stakeholders meeting/forum in Palawan to expand support for the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion Program. This meeting involved numerous stakeholders from Government, communities, NGOs, and others to discuss the SSME Program and invite their involvement. The program was well received and many organizations have committed to participation. Similar stakeholder workshops will be held in other provinces.

Specific outputs under this component included:

1. Development and delivery of Marine Conservation Awareness Kits
2. Community Workshops and Information Seminars
3. Slide Shows
4. Video Presentations
5. Radio Plugs
6. Formation of Community-based Conservation Groups

The major target audience includes local government units and representatives from coastal communities in the five municipalities.

Production of Marine Awareness Kits

The kit is called TROPANG I.S.D.A. (Isang Super at Dakilang Alagad ng Dagat which in English means One Super and Great Guardian of the Sea) and was written in Filipino in order to provide better understanding among the target audiences in Palawan.

There were two types of kits produced: one for trainers and another for trainees.

A Trainers Kit contains the following:

1. Primer on "Ikaw Ba'y ISDA ng Dagat?" This Primer includes practical information about marine ecosystems and the need to conserve marine resources.
2. Flyer/sticker on Tropang ISDA
3. Poster showing the major marine ecosystems: mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs
4. T-shirt
5. Dodo animation video: This includes five (5) episodes of Dodo animation focusing on various environmental issues. Since Dodo is originally European made, the audio was translated in to Filipino (Tagalog). Please note that this video is for educational purposes only (not for broadcast).
6. Cassette # 1: Si Tima at ang Pawikan (Tima and the Sea Turtle)
7. Cassette # 2: Mga Kuwentong Karagatan (Stories About the Sea: There are two tapes consisting of four stories based on local folktales and legends. The tape also ends with the radio ads or public service announcements by local actors Eddie Garcia and Cesar Montano.
8. Trainer's Guide

A total of 120 copies of the trainer's kit was produced and distributed to trainers from Palawan.

The Trainee's Kit includes: the primer, sticker, poster, and bag only. A total of 5,000 copies of this kit were distributed during community presentations in Palawan from September to October of this year.

A series of community consultations or seminars were conducted in each municipality to introduce the kit (how to use it). Since August this year, several Information, Education, and Communications activities using the Tropang ISDA kits were conducted in various barangays in Palawan.

An orientation workshop with a total of 16 participants was conducted by WWF-Philippines last August 25, 2000. The workshop was aimed at orienting the trainers from Palawan on the use of the marine conservation awareness kit.

About 20 kits were distributed during the workshop. An additional 30 kits were given to participants for distribution to other potential trainers in their respective areas.

A training workshop was conducted September 27 to 29, 2000. This included participation by representatives from local government units, NGOs, and coastal communities. A total of 29 participants attended this training. During the workshop, participants were able to understand the usefulness of the Tropang ISDA kit. Exercises on certain applications using the kit were made.

At the end of the training, participants received copies of Tropang ISDA Trainers kits and a set of Tropang ISDA trainees kits. A total of 5,000 pieces was produced for distribution in coastal communities of Cagayancillo, Roxas-Taytay, El Nido, Cuyo & Quiniluban.

In addition, the WWF-Philippines' Project Office in Palawan, in collaboration with Sagipin and Gubat at Dagat (SAGUDA), a local NGO, was able to reach out to five critical areas in the province of Palawan which include: the coastal communities of Sitio Bulagay Brook's Point

Palawan, Bgy. Banca-Bancao and students from Narra Pilot Elementary School, Mateo Jagmis Elementary School.

It was agreed during the workshop that The Tropang ISDA kits will be distributed to communities in Palawan by the trained trainers, as part of their educational activities..

Objective IV – Using market forces to transform the marine ornamentals industry in the Philippines and Indonesia into one based on quality and sustainable use of coral reefs by developing a third party certification

WWF is administering USAID funds on behalf of the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) to support its efforts to transform the marine ornamentals industry to environmental responsibility. With a majority of the trade in marine ornamental species into the U.S., there is a significant opportunity for the U.S. based industry, Government, and conservation organizations to work with partners in collecting countries to transform the marine ornamentals trade to an environmentally responsible industry. This transformation would have significant benefits to coral reef conservation in collecting countries, as collectors become stewards of reef habitat.

Result 4.1 - Established capacity and network for marine aquarium species certification development and implementation in the Philippines and Indonesia

In the past six months, MAC has pursued a number of these activities and set a strong foundation from which to pursue others. Progress includes:

Network Development

Efforts in past six months focused on building on earlier efforts to establish familiarity with MAC and certification among key stakeholder groups in strategic locations.

Progress in Network Development includes:

- a. Industry stakeholders: Network very well developed in SE Asia, Pacific Islands, US and much of Europe and parts of S Asia/Indian Ocean;
- b. Hobby stakeholders: Network very well developed in US and in Europe;
- c. Government stakeholders: Network well developed very rapidly in US government agencies and with many key EU, Philippines' and Indonesian agencies;
- d. Public aquarium stakeholders: Network very well developed in US and Europe;
- e. Environment NGO stakeholders: Network very well developed in US and in Europe;
- f. Scientific community stakeholders: Very well developed network;

After an extensive search, MAC has hired a Coordinator for the Philippines in mid-2000 that has been agreed upon by all major stakeholders. The MAC office has been established in Manila, leading to rapidly increasing progress on network and certification development in the Philippines.

MAC has developed Terms of Reference for the MAC Coordinator in Indonesia and is pursuing discussions with major stakeholders for identifying and recruiting a suitable candidate. Additional support for the MAC Philippines and Indonesia Coordinators' positions is available in the USAID FY 2001 assistance to MAC.

To compliment the USAID assistance for Indonesia and the Philippines, MAC has leveraged support from Canadian International Development Assistance for 3 year support for a MAC Pacific Islands Coordinator, based in Fiji under the terms of a MOU between the Forum Secretariat and MAC,

Following discussions with stakeholders in Indonesia, the plans to convene a Multi-stakeholder Workshop in Indonesia to raise awareness of MAC and develop an action strategy for Marine Ornamental certification in Indonesia have been postponed until the MAC Coordinator for Indonesia is in place.

Certification System Development

MAC Coordinators for Certification Development and Accreditation were recruited in mid-2000 to move the certification system development forward. The revised certification development timeline calls for the standards of best practice to be finalized and tested in marine ornamentals collection and trade in the first half of 2001. An international multi-stakeholder working group is currently reviewing and revising the MAC Standards.

Following testing of the certification system, MAC will undertake information dissemination and certification training in parallel with awareness raising among hobbyists and public aquariums. The dissemination and training will include development of manuals that guide industry participants through self-evaluation procedures and explain how to upgrade systems and practices to achieve "certifiable" standards and training materials for collectors and industry personnel.

MAC hosted a standards and certification workshop in September, 2000 with the MAC country Coordinators and the Certification/Accreditation Coordinators and stakeholder representatives in Florida. The workshop:

- Developed a "blueprint" for the certification system development process up through the launch of certification.
- Identified the key "enabling conditions" for achieving the certification system development and launch.
- Established a detailed timeline and process for reviewing and revising the initial MAC Standards through an international multi-stakeholder "Standards Advisory Group".

MAC has succeeded in leveraging funds for the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring and Development Centre (WCMC) to develop an international data recording and reporting system that

will allow certification and labeling to be developed based on consistent, comprehensive, quality information on the marine ornamental trade.

During calendar year 2001, the certification system will be finalized and launched. MAC will work through its coordinators to undertake testing and training with willing industry participants for certification implementation in the Philippines and Indonesia. This will test the system and the industry's capacity to operate according to the standards, as well as the linking aspects of the system, e.g. product tracking and documentation.

Table of progress in meeting key activity benchmarks

Benchmark Number	Benchmark/Output	Status*
1.1	Enhancement of the Marine Enforcement Campaign at Tubbataha, Anilao (Halting of destructive activities).	On-Track
1.2	Enhanced Conservation Action at Bunaken and Semporna Island.	On-Track
2.1	Improved understanding of critical marine resources and threats to North Sulawesi and East Kalimantan upon which to base Ecoregion Conservation strategy development.	On-Track
3.1	Improved Understanding of and participation in Marine Conservation by stakeholder groups in 5 Municipalities of Palawan.	On-Track
4.1	MAC capacity expanded to enable consultations with stakeholders and network development. MAC capacity created for organizing training and testing of certification.	On Track
4.2	Greater range/number of stakeholders understanding certification and involved in MAC network. Expanded stakeholder participation in workshops and training on certification. Expanded participation in certification testing and implementation.	On-Track
4.3	Improved understanding of marine aquarium industry and certification among stakeholders, increased among stakeholders, expanded and strengthened network on certification, identification of key issues, opportunities and priorities for certification, and indicative work-plan for developing certification in Indonesia.	On-Track
4.4	Standards and certification system adapted by country Working Groups. Standards and certification system tested in test strands of collection (or culture)-to-export. Results of testing documented and provided to international standards Working Group.	On-Track
4.5	Manuals and training materials adapted to region by country Working Groups and consultant. Manuals and training materials disseminated. Evaluation of ability to comply with standards by industry participants (including collectors). Training provided to industry participants to assist them to upgrade systems and practices to meet standards.	On-Track

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Lessons learned in the first six months of this project year are still being applied in execution of this project and include (see last project report for the period October 1, 1999 through May 31, 2000 for full description of each lesson):

- a) Adequate Stakeholder Consultation is essential:
- b) Stakeholder Consultation for Ecoregion Conservation Planning is essential and should be pursued early on:
- c) Tri-national Cooperation for Ecoregion Conservation Takes Time:
- d) Don't Forget Immediate Protection:
- e) It's a Major Challenge to Start a New Paradigm:

New Lessons that WWF learned during the last six months include:

1. The Use Of Filipino (Tagalog) in all the Materials of the Tropang ISDA Kit Was Very Effective. It is important that future information and education materials, whether funded by international sources, should use the dialect of the target audience. This enables the trainers to also think of innovative ways of presenting the issues and messages on marine conservation more efficiently. The Tropang ISDA Trainer's training-workshop was a creative learning experience for the trainers from Palawan. Because the Tropang ISDA kit includes tri-media materials (for TV, radio, and print), the kit can be used so many ways and in various scenarios. Other areas besides Palawan should benefit from this marine conservation awareness project. If funding allows, additional kits may be produced for other coastal provinces in the Philippines.
2. There is a Need to also Train Teachers to Use Educational Materials with Schoolchildren. Unfortunately, many public schools have limited resources and teaching materials. Making this Tropang ISDA kit available to them will increasingly help in educating younger Filipinos on marine conservation issues. Besides the training and information or education activities, this project should expand to include sustaining Information, Education, and Communications efforts in local communities. A monitoring scheme should be formed in order to measure the level of awareness of the participants and the audiences as well as communities that were involved in the activity
3. Legal Mechanisms Supportive to Environmental Prosecution Must Be in Place: In order for enforcement efforts to be effective in the long run, cases filed must be won. WWF Rangers in Tubbataha have made eight apprehensions against illegal fishermen in the central and northern Sulu Sea this year. Of these 8 arrests, one was dismissed and the other cases are languishing in a very slow justice system. The confiscated boats should be made available for patrol use instead of rotting in the harbor. Tougher laws and more stringent penalties must be supported by the legal system in order to truly create disincentives against illegal fishing. When cases are mysteriously dismissed or when seized boats slip away, it is very discouraging for the enforcers who see no legal victories for their arrests. Work has now begun to make local judges take tougher stands on such cases through an initial "Prosecuting for the Environment" workshop.

4. Working with Youth Groups within Villages Quickly Builds Support and Local Capacity for Resource Management: Team Raja Laut, has done a great job in recording and reporting fisheries catch and violations in Bunaken National Park. Building on these successes they are now forming their own NGO. This is an excellent step to building increased local capacity to carry out resource management. Also by forming local voluntary organizations many natural resource management activities can be carried forward after donor aid ends.

5. USAID's Focus on Northern Sulawesi has set an Important Foundation for Successful Conservation Work: While it might be perceived that channeling additional funds to this area through USAID could potentially be duplicative, WWF's experience has been quite the opposite. Instead of duplicating activities, these funds have magnified conservation benefits and are a key to the continued expansion of conservation and sustainable development in the area. Other USAID projects have built a strong foundation of awareness and activity with the local community and government. USAID funded activities are building on the foundation USAID has established and are filling niches that current AID programs have not filled. This has been very positive in that the USAID funding is not adequate to cover the high costs of starting up activities in new areas and are instead used to magnify successes and conservation results in a short period of time. For example, while Team Raja Laut was started by other projects, USAID funds have been critical to the expansion of its activities and the resulting increases in reports and apprehensions of violators. Likewise, the local government and communities are increasingly supportive of conservation as a result of the work of USAID. This has enabled USAID funds to quickly achieve results in the area.