LEADER WITH ASSOCIATES COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

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

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

10/01/2000 - 04/30/2001

for

World Wildlife Fund

Date Submitted: June 15, 2001
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Global Conservation Program Activity Report for World Wildlife Fund

Summary of Activity Status and Progress

INTRODUCTION

To pave the way in achieving WWF's global goal of conserving biodiversity in the Global 200, the ECOSNature project seeks to conserve the full extent of biodiversity in the Southwest Amazon, Atlantic Forests, Forests of the Lower Mekong, Sulu Sulawesi Seas and Bering Sea ecoregions. These provide testing grounds to strengthen ecoregion conservation as an innovative approach for broad-scale conservation. This project relies on fundamental principles of learning and adaptive management which are promoted through core project management through various exchange and communication mechanisms.

The past six months of the ECOSNature Project resulted in steps forward for further developing actions to achieve ambitious, long-term biodiversity visions. The following provides brief highlights followed by more detailed information on results supported by USAID.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In the Sulu Sulawesi, a biological prioritization workshop with over 80 regional scientists drafted a Biodiversity Vision.
- Foundation PUMA was created with approval of guidance by the Bolivian government.
- In the Southwest Amazon, SERNAP/Amboro successfully opposed entrance of Andina S.A. (oil company) carrying out prospecting.
- The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) formally recognized the Peruvian Council for Voluntary Forest Certification as in important step towards sustainable forestry in the Southwest Amazon.
- In Atlantic Forests, the Biodiversity Vision is now being used by the secretariat of the environment and the Network of Environmental NGO's to prioritize conservation action in the Interior Atlantic Forests area.
- In Bali Barat Park, a priority area of the Sulu Sulawesi, local stakeholders developed a code of conduct for dive operators as an important step in collaborative management.

Project Management

Strategic Goals & Objectives

To conserve the full expression of biodiversity in all EcosNature ecoregions.

Collaborators/Partners

- USAID – Global Bureau
- GCP partners

For EAI:
- SERNAP
- Bolivia Ministry of Sustainable Development
- USAID Bolivia

Summary

Core project management plays an essential function for facilitating learning and coordinating communication across ECOSNature ecoregions, the WWF network and the broader conservation community. The past six months were particularly important for laying the groundwork for several initiatives designed to advance expertise in specific areas such as gender issues, role of indigenous peoples as stakeholders, developing tools for economic incentives, exchanging monitoring and evaluation methods and overall communicating lessons learned.

Highlights

Project Management:
- Island Press will publish research done on global trends in economic commodities.
- Bering Sea village community members successfully trained in toxics monitoring with the catalytic impact that has inspired an alliance to develop a regional monitoring program.
- Successful exchange between TNC and WWF on monitoring and evaluation methods on the Pribilof Islands, a priority site within the Bering Sea.

EAI:
- The Foundation PUMA created in May with the approval by the Bolivian Government of La Paz of the By-Laws, Guidelines and Act of Foundation.
- First Board of Directors for Foundation PUMA selected and finalized.
- Provisional Board and provisional staff of the EAI will manage the new Foundation temporarily until the Board of Directors have been sworn in and a new staff have been hired.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Mobilize Conservation Action on an Ecoregional Scale

Result 1.1 – Effective programmatic and financial administration to advance conservation impacting ECOSNature ecoregions

The EcosNature coordination team added a research assistant, Gautham Rao to build even greater technical strength for advancing ecoregion conservation. As a team we continue to work with WWF staff in Washington and the field to support exploring ways to advance conservation in the leader ecoregions as well as provide technical assistance in exploring associate agreements under the LWA to expand USAID support in Global200 ecoregions.

Result 1.2 – Facilitated activities and communication as opportunities for exchange and learning to advance ecoregion conservation implementation

Workshops

Following the "Learning Across Boundaries – Broad-Scale Conservation" workshop held last fall, we are in discussion with GCP partners on the focus of the coming workshop which TNC has agreed to host. This will likely include a workshop similar to the Adirondacks bringing together GCP partners and others at a field site to explore overall issues relevant to our work. Themes such as generating partnerships across multiple scales and sectors as well as broad-scale conservation in the freshwater realm are now being discussed.

Communication

We are in the early phase of implementing a combined Internet/Intranet strategy for Ecoregion Conservation information. A new Internet site is being developed based and building on information currently found on the existing Intranet site. The Internet site will offer a wealth of information on biodiversity conservation principles, large-scale and ecoregion conservation approaches, including living examples of these approaches in action. This site will target the general public, the conservation community, and large-scale conservation practitioners. The Intranet site will complement the external site with detailed information and resources on the approach, as well as offering a place for ECOSNature ecoregion teams to collaborate and connect.

Specific communication products developed in the last reporting period include:

- Sharing Across Boundaries:
  Issue I: Socioeconomic Assessments and Ecoregion Conservation: The Burning Questions
  Issue II: Gender and Ecoregion Conservation: The Burning Questions
- "A Resource Guide – Incentives for River Basin Management as a Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation: Lessons from Cases Worldwide"

Other selected communication products in production include:

- "Learning Across Boundaries – Broad-Scale Conservation" proceedings for Adirondacks workshop.
- "Ecoregion Conservation: A Portfolio of Stories" (this includes profiles of Atlantic Forests and Bering Sea)
- Disappearing Landscapes: The Population/Environment Connection
- "Ecoregional perspectives in conservation: recent lessons and future directions" as a chapter in a book on adaptive collaborative management. In Press.

Result 1.3 – Facilitate innovative grants

Economic Incentives/Financial Sustainability

Long-term financial sustainability is of high importance for EcosNature ecoregions and ecoregions throughout the WWF network. This was explored through several ways in the past reporting period.

- GREEN – (Green Economics for the Environment): Following the successful GREEN workshops held in the Atlantic Forests, Sulu Suluwesi and the South Pacific which focused on economic incentives in ecoregion conservation, another workshop will be held specifically designed to understand and build capacity for economic tools and approaches in forest and freshwater ecoregions. This includes help developing pilot projects testing these tools which will be particularly beneficial for ECOSNature staff and partners to explore what economic and policy mechanisms can help in mitigating threats at various scales. The results of these meetings will be synthesized in a report that will be distributed widely.
- The use of direct payments as an economic tool in ecoregion conservation may prove to be a critical mechanism for large-scale actions across landscapes. WWF explored these ideas with the technical expertise of Paul Ferraro in a discussion forum that included experts in conservation finance. A collaborative paper will be presented at a sustainable funding conference to be held in Madagascar. This conference will specifically focus on protected areas with applicability throughout ecoregion work. This will include a feasibility study for southern Madagascar that will be a much needed pilot to be shared widely to expand our understanding of this tool for sustaining long-term conservation within the mosaic of resource use and tenure across the international conservation landscape.
- Economic incentives through watershed management is a potentially important approach for conservation in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecoregions. Research done to explore this was conducted through a paper that will be distributed to the GCP and the broader conservation community.

Global Trends

Trend analyses of several commodities in industrial sectors was completed and is in final draft form. These analyses help us to better understand shifts in production (where and how) to meet and anticipate threats on the horizon. This work also emphasizes potential best practices to mitigate further 'frontier conversion' with goal of identifying key players and dynamics that drive industrial threats. This is specifically useful for commodities that are directly impacting ECOSNature ecoregions. For example, commodities such as palm oil for Sulu Sulawesi, coffee for the Forests of Lower Mekong, salmon for the Bering Sea, soy for Atlantic Forests, cattle for

Southwest Amazon. Island Press will be publishing the final results which provides an exciting opportunity for even greater distribution.

Monitoring and evaluation

At the "Learning Across Boundaries" workshop in the fall, participants planted the seed for potential collaboration to exchange methods for monitoring and evaluation. In May, this idea became a reality and staff from TNC joined WWF staff to apply TNC tools in the Bering Sea. Held in the Pribilof Islands, a priority site within the ecoregion, community members were an integral part of the team and learned together with TNC/WWF staff. A monitoring system is now initiated and the collaboration a successful example of extending greater exchange across GCP partners in the field. Further exchange is being explored for the next reporting period by inviting GCP staff to the Gulf of California – a marine ecoregion which is further along in their M&E thus providing a rich learning opportunity.

Building on lessons learned throughout several ecoregions, WWF is drafting a guidance document for M&E in ecoregion conservation. This document adapts the traditional pressure-state-response model to help provide a framework within an ecoregional context. Examples of how this framework is applied are included for a generic marine ecoregion as well as the actual work being done in the Gulf of California. A draft of this working paper is included in the appendix.

Engaging stakeholders

Gender issues

Following gender training workshops held in the Terai Arc, East Africa Marine and Madagascar Spiny Forest ecoregions, a synthesis was drafted to help understand how to better understand gender issues and questions in ecoregion conservation. A key question is exploring how gender fits into understanding the overall socioeconomic landscape for project planning and implementation. The results were communicated in newsletters and an analytical paper now drafted for further review. (See Appendix - Sharing Across Boundaries –"Gender and Ecoregion Conservation: The Burning Questions") Further training is planned as part of an overall socioeconomic assessment in two priority sites within the Peruvian part of the Southwest Amazon and a training of trainers activity will be conducted in the Sulu Suluwesi.

This was also the first year in the Women and Conservation recognition program, designed to honor and promote the work of women leaders in conservation and any woman, man or institution that has made a significant contribution to empowering women's involvement in conservation. In conjunction with the awards event, WWF is facilitating a roundtable of other conservation practitioners and gender specialists to discuss more specifically how we in the conservation community can do better at addressing gender in our programs. This will take place in June, 2001 as a precursor to an even larger forum planned for the fall in collaboration with TNC and other partners.

Indigenous Peoples

As indigenous peoples are often a key stakeholder throughout the ecoregion conservation process, activities were supported to better understand the role of traditional peoples in biodiversity conservation in general and specifically within the Bering Sea. A collaborative effort between WWF and Terralingua looked at the relationship between biodiversity and cultural diversity. This was presented at the Smithsonian as part of their summer lecture series and at a WWF forum with specific reference to the experience of the Forests of Lower Mekong and the Bering Sea.

In the Bering Sea, support of the pilot initiative in community-based toxic monitoring has had tremendous success in magnifying impact. In addition to training of representatives from several communities, the pilot generated enthusiastic interest by key organizations in the area. For example, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation which represents tribal nation interests across a large region of coastal area is working to build an alliance among Bering Sea communities and institutions to develop a regional environmental health monitoring program. The pilot specifically demonstrated how to forge a collaborative effort against the threat of toxics which is damaging for both biodiversity and people. The catalytic nature of this work is still unfolding and will likely result in much needed science to understand the nature of toxics in the Bering Sea while acting to empower traditional peoples as stewards.

Result 1.4 – WWF Bolivia assist in establishment and management of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Foundation (EAI) in Bolivia

As a means of establishing sustained financing for biodiversity conservation in Bolivia (which includes six Global 200 ecoregions: Southwest Amazon, Pantanal, Andean Yungas, Chiquitano dry forest, Cerrado woodlands, and Central Andean Dry Puna), WWF is working with P.U.M.A. (Fundacion de Proteccion y Uso Sostenible del Medio Ambiente) to establish the EAI. The primary goal is to achieve high standards of transparency, efficiency and accountability in the establishment and management of foundation funds for biodiversity conservation. Specific objectives include:

- Establish and implement financial management procedures including financial planning and fundraising
- Develop and implement the EAI Foundation program including long-term strategic planning, project approval, monitoring and evaluation procedures and prioritization methodologies to increase the conservation impact and strategic focus of the Foundation's funding
- Implement external communications, outreach and public relations development of Board Members and Executives in all aspects of Foundation planning and management. The image of the former Enterprise of the Americas Initiative has suffered due to problems in its previous form and the Foundation needs to regain the confidence of the people and inform potential beneficiaries of the new management, focus and procedures. The role of the Board for the Foundation PUMA will be different than that of the former Board and the new Board members will have to be reoriented to their new role.

In this reporting period, several key steps in the logical process of establishing the foundation were achieved. Foremost, is the that the Foundation PUMA (Fundacion de Proteccion y Uso Sostenible del Medio Ambiente) was created in May with the approval of the Government of La Paz of the By-Laws, Guidelines and Act of Foundation. An important component of establishing Foundation PUMA is ensuring a Board of Directors that has appropriate representation. This initial call did not succeed in producing candidates from several important sectors of civil society – indigenous/campesino and private sector. Therefore the Founders decided to hire a professional recruitment firm - P&A Partners, to implement a more expansive nationwide effort to publicise and call for additional candidates. 400 applications were received and P & A was also given the job of screening the candidates. The Provisional Board interviewed the final 23 candidates and have submitted their recommendation of the 15 final candidates to the Founders. In early May the founders selected the 5 Board Members from the 15.

To help facilitate the board selection process, a consultant, Alexandra Sanchez de Lozada, was hired by WWF Bolivia to work with USAID Bolivia and the Provisional Board in the logistical transition from EAI management to the temporary Foundation PUMA management. Terms of reference for the provisional Foundation staff were developed to serve during this three month transition period. In addition, a plan for transition of accounts and legal documents was developed and initiated.

Defining a detailed work plan for 2001 will happen as soon as the new Board is in place. This work plan will include plans for technical assistance in the functioning of the Foundation. Throughout this process WWF will continue to play a key role in facilitating this process specifically through the consultation of Alexandra Sanchez de Lozada who will continue until the work plan is completed.

Table of Progress

Benchmark Number	***Benchmark/Output***	***Status****
1.1	Effective programmatic and financial administration to advance conservation impact in ECOSNature ecoregions	On-track
1.2	Facilitate activities and communication as opportunities for exchange and learning to advance Ecoregion Conservation implementation	On-track
1.3	Facilitate innovative grants	On-track
1.4	Strategic technical advice provided in the establishment and development of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Foundation (EAI) in Bolivia to support Ecoregion Conservation in six Global 200 ecoregions.	Mixed Performance
1.4	Legal documents completed and now in the process of being legalized.	Completed
1.4	Operational manuals completed and approved by Technical Working Group. The manuals have defined the process of Board selection, which has been initiated.	Completed
1.4	Communications strategy developed	Planned for 2001
	Provisional Board formed and in the process of selecting the new Board	Completed
1.4	Board structure and responsibilities established.	On-Track

- Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

EAI Key management issues:

The formation of the Foundation PUMA is going as planned in terms of the steps involved with its formation and development. The process of Foundation formation follows a logical order and if steps are skipped or implemented prematurely the final functioning of the Foundation could be

compromised. When and how to involve key actors is very important and for this reason the process has been slower than planned.

- KEY ACTOR PARTICIPATION IN TRANSITION: The key actors (Provisional Board Members, EAI staff and Founders) are now incorporated into the process. Implementation has gone very smoothly during this period and participation has been very good.
- BOARD FORMATION: As mentioned above it was decided that the professional firm P & A Partners would facilitate the Board selection process and although it took longer – the final Board was finally selected in a satisfactory manner.
- FUND ADMINISTRATION: WWF assisted putting a transition plan into place that will assist the management transition from the EAI to the Foundation PUMA. Several steps in the process involve legal documentation and action, in addition to Government approval so it is expected that the transition in some aspects (i.e. transfer of accounts) may take awhile longer.
- WORK PLAN FOR 2001: The General Manager and new Board will be asked to prepare the Work Plan for what remains of 2001. This can not take place until the new Board and critical staff are in place which is now estimated to take place in June or July.

Next steps

The focus over the next six months will include supporting opportunities for exchange through a variety of fora. This includes events such as completion of the GCP overlay map and presentation at the SCB meeting, assistance in development of next GCP workshop(s), and conducting a roundtable on women and conservation. For broader communication, we will be focusing on the development and launching of an internet communication strategy.

Bering Sea Ecoregion

Strategic Goals & 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

Alaska Marine Conservation Council
Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association
Association of Marine Mammal Hunters
Audubon Society of Alaska
Beringia Ethnic-Nature Park
Children's Library of Anadyr
Kaira Club
Kamchatka Fisheries Management Agency
Kamchatka Region Parks Administration
Naukan Cooperative
Northern Pacific
North Slope Burrough
Pacific Environment and Resources Center
Pribilof Islands Stewardship Council
Russian Academy of Science
Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
Russia Program Office
The Nature Conservancy of Alaska
TRAFFIC - Europe
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Wild Salmon Center
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
Yupik Association

Summary

In the first quarter of this year in the Bering Sea, we have been faced with a need to address new political circumstances at both the federal and regional levels, in particular the Kamchatka, Koryakia and Chukotka Regions, following gubernatorial elections in December. We are finding that these shifts in regional leadership are going to have a major effect on our ability to make conservation a part of the political agendas. In one case, we believe conditions will be more favorable; in two other regions, new challenges are arising. (Please see "Lessons Learned").

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Protect key sites in the Bering Sea by establishing three new protected areas and enhancing management in two existing areas

Result 1.1 : Establishment of Marine Zone for Nalychevo Nature Park

Documents for the establishment of this area have been completed. Now WWF needs to route the proposal through the appropriate agencies. However, due to disarray in the federal protected areas management agency,determining the exact process has become a new challenge for the project. With the entry of a new regional administration in December, WWF's Kamchatka coordinator, Vitaly Menshikov has spent time meeting with the new Governor and his staff to update them on our plans in the region. Meanwhile, WWF has developed a partnership between Nalychevo Nature Park with *Kamchatrybvod,* the regional fisheries management agency, to share enforcement responsibilities in the region proposed for protection. Kamchatrybvod will receive training in natural history subjects to learn how to identify wildlife in the park and marine zone and will be able to use the ranger facilities on the coast of Nalychevo. In exchange, the Kamchatrybvod inspectors will offer increased protection and enforcement of the coastal and marine area.

Result 1.2: Establishment of a Marine Protected Area in Karaginsky Bay

In autumn of 2000, Vladimir Kiprianov, a consultant working with WWF Russian Program Office conducted field visits to the Karaginsky region. Based on encouragement from the local administrations and with support of the native Koryak governor, Kirprianov began to develop a plan for a network of coastal protected areas. With the new governor, Loginov, now in office, expressing opposition to creating new protected areas, WWF may need to re-visit our strategy in the Karaginsky region. We are evaluating now what to do, in preparation for the summer field season.

Result 1.3: Establishment of a marine/coastal protected area in Chukotka Region

In December, 2000, WWF Russia 's marine officer Vasiliy Spiridonov held a meeting in Moscow of scientists and experts from Anadyr as well as researchers from Moscow who are familiar with Chukotka through years of field studies there. The goal of the meeting was to guide WWF's next steps in Chukotka and select the next area for further conservation work. To prioritize among the priority areas, the group discussed the areas on the Chukotka Peninsula that are highlighted by WWF's biodiversity assessment as well as those areas identified in a Friends of the Earth "hot spots" report published in 1998. The experts selected the Lower Anadyr River Wetlands as one of the main priorities. Based on an ornithological expedition last July (2000) new information is available on the importance of the territory for birds. Another candidate area, Pribregny Zapovednik, is under consideration.

However, given new favorable political circumstances (apparent support from the new Governor), it may make the most sense to concentrate efforts on improving management and zoning of the regionally designated Beringia Ethnic Park and push for its designation as a National Park. WWF's Viktor Nikiforov has spoken with Vsevolod Stepanitsky, the head of Russia's protected areas department in the Ministry of Natural Resources. Stepanitsky is interested in the concept of turning Beringia into a National Park. We now need to do more research in the region to discover what political and legislative steps would be necessary.

Result 1.4: Beringia Ethnic Cultural Park

See notes above regarding this protected area. On another activity, Ludmila Lazutina, WWF's Living Planet Club coordinator in Anadyr, the capital of Chukotka, traveled to Provideniya, location of the Beringia Park headquarters. Ms. Lazutina met with local educators and selected a coordinator for the Living Planet Club in Provideniya which essentially will act as supporting program to the park. Summer activities will begin this year.

Objective II: Shape the development policies for improved stewardship in collaboration with local communities, the private sector and the Russian Government

Result 2.1: Support for the anti-poaching brigades in the Karaginsky Region

WWF Russia's Viktor Nikiforov is conducting negotiations with the Karaginsky region and the *KoryakRybvod,* the regional fisheries management agency in Koryakia, Kamchatka's northern province, to begin an awards recognition program for this year's fishing season.

Result 2.2: Enhancement of Fisheries Enforcement through Satellite Monitoring System

With support of the WWF/USAID funds, the special team established in Kamchatrybvod, the fisheries management agency for the waters around Kamchatka, has been busy fine-tuning the software needed to monitor daily catch reports from vessels fishing in the western Bering Sea. The team completed work on a new software program, which allows inspectors at sea to conduct instant checks on vessels' compliance with permits for particular volumes of fish, or to fish in particular locations. Such software is greatly increasing the efficiency of the inspectors' work. (Unfortunately, the agency lost some of its inspector vessels to another agency, the Border Guard Service, with which it shares enforcement responsibilities but with whom interagency cooperation is fairly weak).

According to the monthly reports from the inspectors, in January, 44 vessels were identified as fishing improperly in certain locations. Twenty-two vessels were admonished for incomplete or inaccurate daily catch reports. In February, 29 vessels were admonished for improper catch reports. Kamchatrybvod's inspector vessel Merlang was dispatched to an area where the fishing boat Marlin was fishing illegally for two days. The Merlang apprehended and fined the Merlin. Also this month, Kamchatrybvod worked with the Federal Border Service to arrest a fishing vessel fishing inside the protected marine zone of the Commander Islands Zapovednik. In March, 21 Kamchatrybvod identified 21 vessels violating the law, including submitting incomplete or inaccurate catch reports or fishing in particular areas without permission. Of these, 13 have amended their behavior and resumed fishing.

Result 2.3: Creation of the "Living Planet" Clubs

Preparations are being made for summer club activities, such as a coastal Bering Sea Russian calendar. Also, WWF's V. Nikiforov is organizing a training workshop in Moscow for Living Planet Club leaders from eastern Russia to share experience and gain new skills in leading such educational initiatives.

Result 2.5: WWF Eco-school in Anadyr, Russia

Preparations for this year's ecoschool are underway. WWF US is providing matching funding for construction of the eco-school base camp which will begin this summer.

Result 2.6: Laying the groundwork for certification/economic incentives for fisheries conservation

In April, 2001, WWF joined with the Pacific Environment Resources Center (California), the Wild Salmon Center (Oregon) and Northern Pacific (Petropavlosk, Kamchatka) to host an international conference on fisheries conservation and management in the Bering Sea. Attendees included representatives of Russian harvesting and processing firms, NGOs, scientists and a group of three fishermen from Alaska. The Alaskan fishing contingent gave strong messages about the need for conservation and sustainable management. WWF provided information in the Russian language on certification. Also, WWF Bering Sea ecoregion leader Margaret Williams made presentations on marine protected areas, demonstrating their usefullness as a tool that provides economic benefits for fisheries. Information on marine protected areas was provided this information in Russian-language handouts.

Table of Progress

Benchmark Number	Benchmark/Output	Status*
1.1	Establishment of Marine Zone for Nalychevo Nature Park	On track
1.2	Establishment of a Marine Protected Area in Karaginsky Bay	Mixed Performance
1.3	Establishment of a marine/coastal protected area in Chukotka Region	On track
1.4	Beringia Ethnic Cultural Park	On track
2.1	Support for the anti-poaching brigades in the Karaginsky Region	On track
2.2	Enhancement of Fisheries Enforcement through Satellite Monitoring System	On track
2.3	Creation of the "Living Planet" Clubs	On track
2.5	WWF Eco-school in Anadyr, Russia	On track
2.6	Laying the groundwork for certification/economic incentives for fisheries conservation	On track

Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Next steps

The next quarter includes the summer field season, the busiest time of the year. We will launch a new Eco-School; begin another year of Living Planet Clubs; send a film/photographer to the field to develop a film about the coast of Kamchatka; gauge the opportunities for new protected areas in Chukotka and proceed with an experts' workshop; closely monitor the effectiveness of the Kamchatka Satellite Monitoring Program. On the political and policy front, we will monitor a new upcoming federal Law on Fisheries and will try to find inroads into the new governors' administrations in the western Bering Sea to build support for our work.

Success Stories

The recent conference in Kamchatka in which WWF took part and which WWF co-hosted was the first public meeting in Russia highlighting fisheries conservation issues. There were many positive outcomes from this conference, including the identification of at least one individual from the Russian fishing community who could be an advocate for improving fishing practices in the western Bering Sea.

Another highlight: during her April visit to Kamchatka, WWF's Bering Sea leader Margaret Williams met with the special inspection team at Kamchatrybvod. They report that "word has gotten out" about their increased vigilance in monitoring the region, and that vessel owners and captains are making a greater effort to adhere to laws and regulations, for fear of being stopped or fined.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The greatest challenges in the region are the changing political circumstances, both at the federal and regional levels.

As regional leadership changed with the election of new governors in all three regions lining the western Bering Sea, we are evaluating new opportunities for conservation as well as tactics that we are using to achieve our goals in the region. In one case, it appears that we may have more positive circumstances and new allies for our work, with a new governor of Chukotka ensconced in the region. We believe he will support a higher level of US-Russian collaboration and for conservation. However, the governor's personal ties with the largest oil company in Russia also represents unseen challenges as he begins to promote economic development in his region. Reportedly, one area slated for oil exploration is very close to the Lower Anadyr River Wetlands, an area identified in WWF's biodiversity assessment as a priority for conservation. At the same time however, we have heard from Governor Abramovich's staff that he is interested in strengthening Beringia Ethnic Heritage Park, and perhaps raising the status from a regional area to a federally designated area that would afford the territory more protection.

In Koryakia and Kamchatka, the new governors are indicating a range of attitudes toward conservation efforts, ranging from disinterest to outright hostility. For example, in late March Governor Loginov of Koryakia (the northern province on the Kamchatka Peninsula) annulled the four-year old Tskhanom Traditional Use Area, a protected area that allowed for reindeer herding and involved native Even, Evenk and Koryak herders in the management of the territory. The governor's move represents a blow to conservation and indigenous peoples alike. These events are important to note for they reflect a new negative attitude toward conservation and native peoples. These governors are important players in the western Bering Sea, and making progress to some degree will require their support for large-scale initiatives.

On the federal level, in February Russian President Putin appointed as the head of the federal Fisheries Committee Mr. V. Nazdratenko. Nazdratenko is the former governor of Primorsky Region (Maritime region, in the Russian Far East) and one of the most notoriously corrupt officials with connections to organized crime. How the fisheries ministry will fare under Nazdratenko's leadership is yet unclear, but his appointment is not encouraging for our work in cleaning up illegal activities and improving fisheries conservation in the Bering Sea.

Atlantic Forest Ecoregion

Strategic Goals & 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.

WWF's activities for the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Complex are directed toward four long-term goals: (1) mobilizing conservation action on an ecoregional scale; (2) protection of key sites and wildlife populations; (3) shaping regional development to support conservation; (4) and establishing the long-term conditions and capacities needed to sustain conservation. This report focuses on actions for Paraguay, but the report also includes progress on some relevant actions in Brazil and Argentina that are supported by matching funds.

Collaborators/Partners

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

Additional Partners in Paraguay:

* Fundación Moises Bertoni
* Carrera de Ingeniería Forestal de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción
* Secretaria de Medio Ambiente (SEAM)
* Alter Vida
* Guyra Paraguay
* Servicios Eco Forestales para Agricultores - SEPA
* Sobrevivencia
* Instituto de Derecho Ambiental - IDEA
* ITAIPU-Binacional Paraguay
* Peace Corps Environment Program –Paraguay
* Pro COSARA (Asociación Pro Cordillera San Rafael)
* APMA (Asociación de Protección al Medio Ambiente del Amambay)
* NATURAL, Land Trust
* ECO CULTURA
* ECOCLUBES
* Red de ONGs Ambientalistas del Paraguay
* MaB (Man and the Biosphere – Paraguay chapter)
* Texas A&M University

* Fiscalia de Medio Ambiente (Ministerio Publico)

Summary

Although the technical document describing the Biological Vision for the Interior Atlantic Forest (IAF) ecoregion is still under preparation, the Vision itself has already been widely disseminated and is mobilizing partners to initiate significant coordinated conservation actions needed to achieve the Vision.

Highlights

* The Secretariat of the Environment (SEAM) is using the Biological Vision as a framework to prioritize its conservation actions in the IAF Ecoregion. SEAM is inviting, on a regular basis, the WWF Paraguay ecoregion coordinator and other partners working in this ecoregion to discuss conservation actions that SEAM will implement in the IAF.

* The Network of Environmental NGOs of Paraguay has adopted the Vision as their most important framework for action, and is developing a plan to increase its members' capacity to contribute toward achieving the Vision.

* Together, the USAID Mission in Paraguay, the U. S. Embassy in Paraguay (Economic and Commercial Section), and the WWF Ecoregion Coordinator for the IAF- Paraguay, organized a presentation of the Biological Vision for the conservation of the Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. The presentation was a resounding success, with over 100 people in attendance, representing government institutions, NGOs, scientists and private business. The event generated several new partnerships among the participants, and the broad press coverage generated significant public interest in conservation of the Atlantic Forest. Several members of the press corps expressed interest in organizing training courses for Paraguayan journalists to improve their capacity in reporting on the environment

* The Environmental Prosecuting Attorney's Office (Fiscalia de Medio Ambiente) prioritized the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion as a key site for law enforcement. The Fiscalia has developed a partnership with the Paraguayan Environmental Law Institute (IDEA) to develop actions to reduce illegal logging in the IAF. With the more active presence of the Fiscalia personnel in the IAF, local communities are better equipped to counteract illegal logging and wildlife trade in the region.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Mobilize Conservation Action on an Ecoregional Scale

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

Progress Indicator 1: Atlantic Forest Ecoregion program officer for Paraguay hired (with sufficient time, infrastructure and team support available), participating in the

development and monitoring of the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion-Based Conservation Biological Vision and Plan and ensuring effective implementation of the plan in Paraguay.

Lucy Aquino, the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Coordinator for Paraguay, continues to collaborate with the Atlantic Forest Coordinators for Brazil and Argentina to develop the technical documentation for the Vision. She is also widely disseminating the Vision in Paraguay and developing new and strengthening old partnerships for its implementation. WWF developed an agreement with the Instituto de Derecho Ambiental (IDEA) to administer the funds for the operation of a small office in Asuncion, as well as to ensure compliance with all legal requirements for its operation. WWF is moving forward to establish an official presence in Paraguay to permit further empowering Lucy to develop programs and partnerships for implementation in Paraguay.

Thus progress status is *mixed performance*, with the establishment of the office *completed* and the dissemination of the Vision *on track*.

Result B: A network of institutions with a shared Vision and conservation strategy for the ecoregion developed

Progress Indicator 1: Tri-national Forest Corridor Initiative strengthened to coordinate and mobilize action of partners/stakeholders to implement the Conservation Strategy to achieve the Biological Vision for the Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest and Araucaria ecoregions: Paraguayan National Commission strengthened.

The Tri-national Commission developed, and presented to UNEP, a proposal for a project development grant for a GEF mid-sized grant to build the institutional capacity of the Commission to coordinate conservation actions across the three country borders. UNEP encouraged the Commission to formally submit the proposal. The Paraguay Focal Point for GEF has endorsed the proposal, and endorsement from the GEF focal points in Brazil and Argentina is pending.

The Paraguayan National Commission met in December and February, and the members identified additional organizations to be invited to join the Commission. To help the Commission advance more quickly, WWF has allocated matching funds to help pay a part-time salary for the Commission Coordinator (she is currently coordinating the commission in her spare time) and for an assistant to take care of logistics and disseminate information to promote the National Commission and the Tri-national Initiative.

Progress status is *on track* with the institutions of the Paraguayan National Commission sharing the Biological Vision and coordinating actions toward its implementation.

Progress Indicator 2: Key organizations active in the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Complex sharing the Biological Vision for the ecoregion and participating in the development and implementation of an Ecoregion Conservation Plan.

The Network of Environmental NGOs of Paraguay (Red de Organizaciones Ambientalistas) adopted the Biological Vision as its priority and began development of

an action plan to strengthen the capacity of its member NGOs to implement conservation actions in the Interior Atlantic Forest (IAF).

The U. S. Ambassador to Paraguay, Mr. David Greenlee, hosted an event in Asunción on March 5 and 6, to present the Biological Vision of the Parana-Paraíba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. The event generated a great deal of interest in the Vision among the public in Paraguay and government authorities of all three countries. The Economic and Commercial Attaché of the U. S. Embassy in Paraguay, the USAID Mission, and WWF organized the event, which included the participation of authorities of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay involved in the conservation of the IAF: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Brazilian and Argentine Embassies in Paraguay, NGOs from Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, the three National Commissions of the Tri-National Initiative for Conservation of the IAF, the WWF IAF Team, the Paraguay Secretary of the Environment and the Paraguay Environment Attorney (Fiscalia de Medio Ambiente). About 20 Paraguayan journalists attended the press conference held the first day. The presentation of the Biological Vision of the IAF was made to the authorities of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay on the second day. In addition to the presentation of the Vision, twenty partner organizations exhibited poster presentations on the conservation activities they are developing in the IAF in Paraguay. Approximately 100 people attended the event, and most of them demonstrated interest in contributing to the implementation of the Vision. The press coverage was excellent (Annex 1). Several reporters have offered space in their newspapers for a regular column on the Vision and expressed interest in developing a training course to help journalists improve the quality of their reporting on the environment. As a result of the publicity, the WWF office in Paraguay has received several calls from individuals interested in collaborating with efforts to conserve the Atlantic Forest in their communities. The U. S. Ambassador himself has subsequently held further discussions with the coordinators of the event to develop ways the Embassy could be of more help now and in the future to encourage actions to conserve the Atlantic Forest in Paraguay. He has mentioned in several press interviews the problem of the deforestation of the Atlantic Forest in Paraguay and the need to implement the Biological Vision. (Annex 2)

The WWF Ecoregion Team (Coordinators for Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay and International Coordinator) hosted the Board of Trustees of the Summit Foundation for a visit to the tri-national area of Foz do Iguaçu in March 2000. During the trip, the Board was apprised of threats and opportunities for conservation of the Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. The trustees gained a first hand understanding of the conservation actions already underway and their impact in the tri-national ecoregion, as well as an appreciation for the importance and complexity of actions needed to ensure conservation of the Interior Atlantic Forest at the ecoregion scale. As a result of this trip, the Summit Foundation trustees agreed to consider a proposal for additional funding, and Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina is preparing a proposal for submission in May 2001 for funds to leverage implementation of the Green Corridor Law of Misiones, Argentina.

Progress Indicator 3: Improved enforcement of relevant environmental laws and regulations to protect the Interior Atlantic Forest in Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil.

Activities this period are focusing on improving law enforcement in Paraguay (See III.C.4) before beginning efforts to coordinate enforcement efforts across the borders with Argentina and Brazil.

Progress Indicator 4: Develop a tri-national strategy to ensure transboundary control of timber, non-timber forest products, and wildlife trade.

Same as above.

Result C: Biological Vision for the Atlantic Forest refined and monitored

Progress Indicator 1: Criteria developed and disseminated for prioritizing research to fill information gaps to develop Vision: populations of umbrella species, special elements, flagship species, indicator species, ecosystem dynamics, restoration, etc.

Lucy Aquino has written letters of endorsement for proposals developed by several partner organizations in Paraguay to fund priority research initiatives. However, no funds have yet become available for implementation.

Progress Indicator 2: Priority sites for conservation action in Parana/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest (IAF) of Paraguay identified by WWF and partners, building on the biological assessment and Biological Vision developed for the IAF and collecting additional basic information needed to develop a detailed conservation plan for the Paraguayan portion of the ecoregion.

Guyra Paraguay has completed their part in the preliminary phase of a process to develop the Paraguayan component of the Biological Vision for the IAF. The two main objectives were:

1. To compile and collate existing information concerning the distribution of Atlantic Forest bird species of conservation concern in Paraguay, and to develop a database of the distribution of bird species.
2. To identify priority zones, based on available information, for Atlantic Forest species of conservation concern in Paraguay.

The results clearly show a gradient of increasing number of Atlantic Forest endemic and forest-dependent species of conservation concern from northwest to southeast in Paraguay. A notable peak occurs in the vicinity of San Rafael and Caaguazú National Parks. That this gradient is real, and not an artifact of field effort, is supported by the fact that field effort is greatest in the north and east of Canindeyú and Alto Paraná departments, considerably distant from the peak numbers of target species. Due to the lack of ornithological studies, no pattern is apparent between the San Rafael area and further to the southeast - the Paraná River (Itapúa department). Unfortunately, this area is now one of the most deforested in eastern Paraguay. A separate report (in Spanish) summarizing the project results is available.

Priority Sites (see map- Annex 3)

Site	Department	Area (ha)	Status
Arroyo Blanco	Amambay	5,000	PNR
Ypané Forest	San Pedro	15,000	-
Yaguarete Forest	San Pedro	30,000	-

Mbaracayú-Chino	Canindeyú	5,000	-
Estancia Golondrina	Canindeyú	20,000	PNR
Carapá	Canindeyú	2,000	Ref. Biol.
Limoy	Alto Paraná	12,000	Res. Biol.
Itabó	Alto Paraná	10,000	Res. Biol.
San Joaquín	Caaguazú	20,000	-
Moisés Bertoni	Alto Paraná	152	MC
Kuri'y	Alto Paraná	?	RN
Ñacunday	Alto Paraná	1,600	PN
Yvytyruzú	Guiará	16,000	PN
Cordillera de Yvytyruzú	Caazapá	5,000	-
Tapytá	Caazapá	7,000	PNR
San Rafael	Caazapá/Itapúa	59,000	PN

Key: PNR – Private Nature Reserve; Ref. Biol. – Biological Refuge; Res. Biol. – Biological Reserve; MC – Scientific Monument; RN – Nature Reserve; PN – National Park.

Progress Indicator3: Process developed for monitoring the Vision

In completing the technical document for the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion by the end of June 2001, WWF will identify indicators of impact on biodiversity that can be effectively monitored.

Progress Indicator 4: In the Paraguayan portion of the IAF, ground truthing diagnosis completed of the status of the Biological Vision in the area and communication with municipalities, local governments and NGOs to mobilize their participation in the implementation of the actions needed.

The WWF Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Coordinator for Paraguay has developed a plan to work with municipalities, local governments and local NGOs. WWF has purchased (with matching funds) a 4-wheel drive vehicle that will allow the Coordinator access to rural areas outside Asuncion to begin developing strategic actions for implementing the Vision. Field trips, especially in the Southern Conservation Block, are expected to begin in May 2001.

Progress Indicator 5: Communications strategy for the Biological Vision developed.

December 5 -6, the WWF Interior Atlantic Forest Team (coordinators for Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay) met for the second time in Asuncion to discuss the development of the technical document describing the Biological Vision of the Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. At their meeting in Brasilia in July 2000, the WWF Atlantic Forest Steering Committee mandated the development of the technical documentation of the process used to develop the Vision so as to allow peer review. The contents to be included in this document include: 1. Introduction; 2. Ecoregional planning: concepts and perspectives of ecoregion-based conservation, and the definition and concepts involved in a Biological Vision; 3. A Description of the Atlantic Forest ecoregional complex; 4. Methodology; 5. Socio-environmental diagnostic of the Paraná-Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion- bio-geophysical and socio–economic diversity; 6. Parana – Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion: Conservation Objectives; 7.

General conservation strategies for the Ecoregion; 8. Identification of priority areas; 9. Conclusions and final considerations; 10. Documents used and bibliography.

From January through March, Rosalia Fariña (a consultant hired to edit the Interior Atlantic Forest Biological Vision document) and Lucy Aquino continued refinement of the technical document. However, due to each country's different and complex realities, the integrated document has not yet been completed. The team had not anticipated the extent of these differences when developing the plan for the integrated document, and it has been unable to identify anyone with sufficient information or experience in all three countries to integrate the document. The team identified a forester with considerable experience in Paraguay and Argentina. His information made it possible to incorporate an historical analysis of the development of deforestation in Paraguay and Argentina into the document. The team has now developed a revised work plan for the team itself to complete the integrated document by July 2001.

Conservation International's (CI) State of the Hotspots Program is preparing a document to evaluate the current status of the Atlantic Forest. The document will be ready for wide circulation later this year. CI's Atlantic Forest Hot Spot will include the same boundaries as those WWF is using for the Atlantic Forest Global 200 ecoregion complex, but CI will not attempt to integrate information or analyses for the three countries. Instead, CI's document will have separate sections on each of the three countries (Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay), each with five chapters: (1) History of deforestation, (2) Status of biodiversity, (3) Socio-economic factors, (4) Conservation capacities, and (5) Synthesis. CI has invited WWF to prepare a short section on the Tri-national Biological Vision for the Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion.

Progress Indicator 6: For the Paraná/Paraiba Interior Forest ecoregion:

- ***a) Easy-to-use system developed to access the biological and socio-economic information and integrated maps produced for the Vision;***
- ***b) Support provided for finer scale landscape design of the priority areas in the tri-national area.***
- ***c) Support provided for the development of conservation strategies in the Green Corridor municipalities.***

The Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina has hired a GIS officer who is devoting full time to the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion. He has produced maps of the Biological Vision landscape design (Annex 4) for dissemination and for further analyses to be included in the technical document, and has begun preparing the database of information collected in the biological and socio-economic assessments, for dissemination among the partners.

Progress Indicator 7: Biological Vision for Atlantic Forest ecoregion complex (15 ecoregions) refined.

Due to delays in hiring an additional Atlantic Forest officer, WWF-Brazil has been delayed in completing the Vision for the two Pernambuco ecoregions and initiating the process to complete a Vision for the Serra do Mar ecoregion. They have completed descriptions and background information for all 15 ecoregions as well as filling information gaps for the Brazilian portion of the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion. This information will be integrated into the technical document describing the Biological Vision for the Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion.

All the above activities are *on track*, contributing to the refinement and monitoring of the Biological Vision. We expect to continue refinement of the Vision on a permanent basis. The project undertaken by Guyra Paraguay will be used to monitor and update the Biological Vision map to guide priority conservation actions in the ecoregion.

Objective II: Protect Key Sites and Wildlife Population

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

Progress Indicator 1: An analysis of land tenure for improved protection and management of existing protected areas.

We have not been able to raise funds for this activity; thus it is cancelled for this year.

Progress Indicator 2: For the IAF in Paraguay, diagnosis of protection status of the corridors, core conservation areas, and protected areas to strengthen involvement in the action plan of the local stakeholders and other partners working in the areas.

Lucy Aquino met with a Global Environmental Facility (GEF) consultant who is helping Fundación Moises Bertoni to write a proposal to support work with private reserves. The consultant is now aware of the Biological Vision for the Interior Atlantic Forest and the importance of private reserves for achieving the Vision. Hopefully he will link these two initiatives in the GEF proposal.

As a result of Lucy Aquino's meetings with personnel of the Controlaria General de la Republica to inform them of general concern about the rate of deforestation of the IAF in Paraguay, and the lack of law enforcement related to logging, the Environmental Attorney's office is focusing its efforts on the Interior Atlantic Forest. (Annex 4)

Lucy Aquino also met regularly with the new Minister of the Environment and NGOs to discuss the process of implementing the newly created Secretariat of the Environment and the most important conservation actions to be implemented by this Secretariat. As a result, the Minister declared that the Secretariat would give highest priority to implementing actions to achieve the Vision for the Interior Atlantic Forest.

Progress Indicator 3,4,5: Increased capacity of Paraguay NGOs' conservation and environmental education activities (Guyra Paraguay and Environmental Law Institute – IDEA).

Guyra Paraguay has acquired new remote sensing images of the Atlantic Forest to incorporate into their GIS system. The images permit analyses using more current information on the status of the forest – important because Paraguay has the highest deforestation rate in South America. New NASA policies that now permit sharing of the images purchased facilitate collaboration of more institutions using the database. Guyra also acquired multi-media presentation equipment that will increase their capacity for environmental education and communications activities. The images and equipment along with the staff training in organizational management which WWF supported last

reporting period have helped Guyra to significantly increase their capacity for implementing Atlantic Forest conservation work.

Progress Indicator 6: Increased technical capacity of the Paraguayan National Park and Wildlife Service working in IAF.

Martha Motte, a National Park Service biologist participated in a training course in "Wildlife Conservation and Management" organized in Brazil by IPE (Instituto de Pesquisas Ecologicas) and the Smithsonian Institution. The course gave Lic. Motte the capacity to develop a wildlife conservation and management program in the IAF. She is now involved in the Rapid Ecological Assessment for San Rafael National Park conducted by the Secretariat of the Environment with funds from a GEF grant.

Dr. Victor Valdovinos of the Secretariat of the Environment participated in the Conference called "Environment 2001, Water, Energy and the Environment", held in Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana from March 9 to 11, 2001. The conference was exceptionally productive, and Dr. Valdovinos had the opportunity to participate in several symposia on legal ethics, environmental judicial cases, and climatic changes. A debate on "Innovative Approaches to Improved Environmental Performance: Management and Policy" was particularly important to increase Dr. Valdovinos' capacity to address problems among land owners, the government, and NGOs in the San Rafael region. Dr. Valdovinos has strengthened the relationship with the International Legislative Drafting Institute, which has expressed its wiliness to cooperate in the definition and methodologies for courses and workshops with Judges and Attorneys in the Interior Atlantic Forest.

Progress Indicator 7: Increased protection status of priority areas in the IAF, in Paraguay.

Lucy Aquino and the other Atlantic Forest coordinators continued mobilizing joint efforts with Itaipu Binacional – Paraguay to promote their reserves (in the Eastern Conservation Block) to become "Biosphere Reserves". She also met regularly with members of MaB. On November 24 the Mbaracayu Reserve and its buffer zone was officially declared by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve. Mbaracayu is thus serving as a model Itaipú can follow to accomplish our goal.

Progress Indicator 8: A scorecard rating system and baseline ratings disseminated for all existing protected areas in the Atlantic Forest ecoregion complex.

FVSA has disseminated the baseline ratings for the level of implementation of all the protected areas in the Interior Atlantic Forest in Argentina. WWF-Brazil completed and disseminated ratings for all federal protected areas and is working to evaluate the status of the state protected areas.

Progress Indicator 9: Analysis of conservation and sustainable development projects in the Atlantic Forest complex completed and disseminated

WWF-Brazil, together with several other Brazilian organizations, is documenting case studies from the Atlantic Forest and organizing a seminar later this year for first-hand exchange of experience.

Some of the activities to achieve this result are completed, including the strengthening some government and non-governmental organizations through the acquisition of better equipment and training of key staff. Other activities are on track and will continue with the same status until more funds are available.

Result B: Expanded implementation of integrated conservation and development projects to protect and connect key sites to implement the landscape designs of the Biological Vision for the Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest, Serra do Mar and Bahia Costal Forest Ecoregion. (see map- Annex 5)

Result B4: Connect core conservation areas in Northern Block (previously called Corredor Norte) Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.

Progress Indicator 1: Implementation of a fire prevention program through community education workshops and courses

Completed last reporting period.

Progress Indicator 2: Forest certification promoted in the Yaguarete Forest core area and Sur de Rio Ypane area.

The Natural Land Trust director was trained in FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)) certification during the last reporting period. Natural has recently requested membership in FSC. WWF forest specialists will assist in analyzing the viability of certified sustainable forest management in the region before beginning wider promotion.

Yaguarete Forest is now for sale. Until we know who the new owner is, the promotion of certification in the area is cancelled.

New Progress Indicator (3): A model developed for ecotourism, environmental education, and alternative production on private land with local communities near Cerro Cora National Park.

Actions are underway between the Estancia Arroyo Blanco Private Reserve (located northwest of the Cerro Cora National Park) and a Travel Agency "SIBONEY" to develop a conservation and ecotourism effort. They are discussing the possibility of serving as a model for the other private land and reserves for the development of ecotourism, environmental education and alternative production, with the communities around this land and Cerro Cora National Park. Lucy Aquino has provided input and advised them on how to promote their work with other partners in the IAF.

New Progress Indicator (4): Identify priority areas for specific actions for the Northern Block.

Guyra Paraguay's project "Identification of Priority sites for Conservation Action in the Interior Atlantic Forest of Paraguay" (see I.C.2) identified three important areas in the Northern Block:

Arroyo Blanco. - This was one of the first three properties in Paraguay to receive specific legal recognition in 2000 as a private nature reserve, although the law recognizing such private conservation initiatives was passed in 1994. Approximately 5,000 ha of forest remain on the property, narrowly connected to the forest part of Cerro Cora National Park (ca. 6,000 ha of forest), and surrounded by about 18,000 ha of more heavily degraded forest. The forests of this area form the north-westernmost extent of the Atlantic Forest in Paraguay, although a few Atlantic Forested endemic species occur further west, primarily in riverine forest.

Ypané Forest.- Although heavily degraded, this forest block still covers a relatively large area (approximately 15,000 ha) directly to the south of the Rio Ypané. The core area appears relatively intact, and narrow connections remain to other forest blocks in the region (such as Yaguarete Forest). The mosaic of interconnected forest blocks in San Pedro and Amambay departments is now the most extensively forested region of eastern Paraguay, and Ypané forest may well warrant treatment as a core area for a forest conservation initiative in the area.

Yaguarete Forest.- The property known as Yaguarete Forest forms the southern part of a large (ca. 30,000 ha) block of forest in northern San Pedro department. Paraguay's National Action Plan developed as part of the Trinational Initiative in 1999, identified the Yaguarete Forest as the core area within the remaining forest areas in northeastern Paraguay. Yaguarete Forest retains a tenuous connection with the Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve (Central Block), primarily through gallery forest along the river Jejui Guazú. Of the 16,000-ha Yaguarete Forest property, approximately 6,000 ha are Cerrado and grassland habitats, while the remainder is forested. Approximately 6,000 ha comprise tall, semideciduous subtropical forest, while the remainder is low forest, in areas of transition with Cerrado habitats. Since 1995, the Yaguarete Forest has been exploited under a certified sustainable selective logging regime, the only such initiative in Paraguay. However, the property and business has been offered for sale since 1999, and the logging has stopped. (Guyra Paraguay interim report to WWF, 2001).

The new progress indicators are *on track* providing important tools to refine the Biological Vision map to connect the core areas.

Result B5: Connect core conservation areas in the central conservation Block (previously called Corredor Central) Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.

Progress Indicator 1: Action Plan developed by local partners to reduce breakdown of ecological process and biodiversity loss in the Mbaracayu Reserve and Jejui Guasu Watershed, including: a. Building the capacity of local people and biology students to monitor biodiversity; b. Development of community-based institutions to facilitate sustainable resource use in the Mbaracayu Reserve and Jejui watershed; c. Development of multi-property forest conservancies in the Jejui watershed and the surrounding area (Forest Certification, Conservation Easements); d. Development of an ecotourism plan for Mbaracayu Reserve and Jejui Watershed.

Fundación Moises Bertoni and Texas A&M University are developing a workshop for the community of the Mbaracayu Reserve and the Jejui Guasu Watershed of the Central

Block. This workshop, "Capacity Building Network for Sustainable Development in Paraguay", will take place in the Mbaracayu Reserve in August 2001 with professionals experienced in community managed conservancies on private land in Zimbabwe. The coordination team pairs each of the Zimbabwe professionals with a Paraguayan professional.

Co-organizers are Dr. Urs Kreuter (Texas A&M University) and Dr. Alberto Yanosky (Fundacion Moises Bertoni).
Co-leaders:

1. Rowan Martin (Zimbabwe) and Miguel Morales (USAID – Paraguay) for legal framework and development of community based resource management.
2. Mike Murphree (Zimbabwe) and Lucy Aquino (WWF): for institutional structure of successful programs.
3. Clive Stockhil (Zimbabwe) and Victor Vera (Natural Land Trust): for institutional framework for successful private land conservancies.

Progress Indicator 2: The Aché Indians included in the management and administration of the Mbaracayu Reserve and its buffer zone.

This activity will begin in the next reporting period.

New Progress Indicator (3): Identify priority areas for specific actions for the Central Block.

Guyra Paraguay's project "Identification of Priority sites for Conservation Action in the Interior Atlantic Forest of Paraguay" (see I.C.2) identified three important areas in the Central Block.

- Mbaracayú-Chino.- The Mbaracayú-Chino property is a 5,000 ha block of forest adjacent to the south-east corner of the Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve, one of Paraguay's most important Atlantic Forest sites. The Fundacion Moises Bertoni (NGO managing the reserve) is currently trying to raise enough funds to purchase the property, to extend the reserve and help preserve the culture of indigenous Aché who have traditionally lived in this area. The Mbaracayú-Chino property provides the only forest connection between the reserve and other forest areas to the south and east.
- Estancia La Golondrina.- This 50,000-hectare property contains approximately 20,000 ha of forest, almost directly to the south of Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve, and virtually connected by a series of forest fragments between the estancia and the Mbaracayú-Chino property. Estancia Golondrina was the site of a brief ornithological study in 1992, which revealed it to hold populations of several threatened Atlantic Forest species. However, further studies are required to complete the site inventory and permit an evaluation of its potential conservation value.
- San Joaquin .-Although now isolated from other forested areas in Paraguay, largely as a result of the rugged nature of the terrain, San Joaquin retains approximately 20,000 ha of apparently relatively pristine forest,. The area has been proposed for inclusion within the national system of protected areas (as a national park), but as yet no further action has been taken (Guyra Paraguay interim report to WWF, 2001).

New progress indicators are *on track* providing important tools to refine the Biological Vision map to connect the core areas. The organization of the workshop with local communities in the Mbaracayu Reserve and Jejui Guasu Watershed is *on track*.

Result B6: Connect core conservation areas in the Eastern Conservation Block (previously called Corredor Este), Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.

Progress Indicator 1: Increased capacity in Itaipu environmental education and law enforcement for the Itaipu Reserves (Carapa, Itabo, Limoy, Tati Yupi).

Partners from Itaipu Binacional- Paraguay are developing a regular line of communication with Lucy Aquino, WWF IAF Coordinator for Paraguay, to develop conservation actions in the Eastern Block: Workshops in different aspects of conservation for journalists, with attorneys and judges, environmental educators etc., are being organized. Ms. Aquino and Itaipu partners are also coordinating the proposal of the Itaipu Reserves for a Biosphere Reserve.

New Progress Indicator (2): Guyra Paraguay's project "Identification of Priority sites for Conservation Action in the Interior Atlantic Forest of Paraguay" (see I.C.2) identified three important areas in the Eastern Conservation Block

Carapa Biological Refuge, Limoy and Itabó Biological Reserves: These three reserves protect some of the last forested areas remaining within the upper Paraná River watershed in eastern Paraguay. In total, they protect ca. 24,000 ha of forest. Although they have been the subjects of various studies by Itaipu Binacional's resident biologists, further systematic ornithological studies are required to evaluate their importance for conservation (Guyra Paraguay Interim report to WWF, 2001).

New progress indicator is *on track*, providing important tools to refine the Biological Vision map to connect the core areas.

Result B7: Connect core conservation areas in the Southern Conservation Block (previously called Corredor Sur), Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, Paraguay.

Progress Indicator 1: Conservation Easement program established with private landowners in the Parque Nacional San Rafael.

NATURAL Land Trust is fully established in Paraguay, with all legal work and documentation complete. They have also completed strategic planning to achieve several objectives: a) Develop a system of Conservation Easements in Paraguay; b) Become leaders in the promotion of Forest Certification in Paraguay; c) Create economic incentives for becoming part a Conservation Easement; d) Develop an administrative strategy to manage properties and acquisition of land; e) Strengthen the relationship between NATURAL and other partners with similar objectives; and f) Strengthen NATURAL in administration, finances, and especially working with the community.

AVINA has accepted a proposal presented by NATURAL's founder and director, Victor Vera, allocating a total of US $ 206.650. WWF's support was instrumental in the establishment of NATURAL, making possible AVINA's acceptance of Victor Vera's proposal. The IAF will benefit greatly from the establishment and growth of NATURAL because the new organization's lines of action coincide with those needed to implement the Biological Vision for the ecoregion.

Two Conservation Easements were established last year, and these landowners continue to encourage other ranchers to join this initiative. More landowners are expected to join this initiative. Conservation easement promotion is thus *on track*.

Progress Indicator 2: Law enforcement programs developed cooperatively with the government and private landowners in the Southern Block.

Pro Cosara, an NGO of landowners in the San Rafael National Park, is developing a project in the Parque Nacional San Rafael to achieve the following general objectives: a) Implementation of a Private Law Enforcement System; b) Follow up of governmental actions in the San Rafael Area; and c) Strengthened relationship between Pro Cosara and the central government.

Pro Cosara has conducted the following activities and observations:

- Radio communications equipment was installed at the Pro Cosara base in the Yataí locality, on a private property within the Park (Estancia San Isidro) and in the truck used by the Park Guard.
- Three illegal sawmills were discovered within the Park, and action was taken against their operation.
- Illegal timber trade is very common along the buffer zone of the Park.
- Another group of landless people invaded an area within the Park, and a new settlement (colony) called Taguatoí was established.
- Many new areas of deforestation were discovered during an overflight.
- Informational reports and declarations of infractions were submitted several times to the Forest Service, but they have received no response.
- Pro Cosara has succeeded in interesting other landowners in the Park in protecting their land, thus obtaining their commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of about 25,000 ha. Pro Cosara began with three landowner members, and now has eight.

Pro Cosara is working to counteract two of the most important problems in the Interior Atlantic Forest - deforestation and the invasion by landless people into San Rafael, one of the most important forest remnants in the IAF. Pro Cosara is working along three important lines of action (1) Enforcement, (2) gaining the interest of the government, and (3) awareness within the community in the San Rafael area. WWF seed money has helped Pro-Cosara obtain a large grant from the AVINA Foundation to continue operations.

Progress Indicator 3: Delimitation of the Parque Nacional Yvyturuzu boundaries and contributing to the development and implementation of a management plan

The NGO Alter Vida has started the delimitation work for Yvyturuzu National Park. When the delimitation is completed, Alter Vida will disseminate the boundaries and enlist support from the local communities.

This activity was delayed due to the lack of matching funds from other sources to complete the project, but the project is now *on track*. No more delays are expected.

New Progress Indicator(4) Guyra Paraguay's project "Identification of Priority sites for Conservation Action in the Interior Atlantic Forest of Paraguay" (see I.C.2) identified seven important areas in the Southern Conservation Block

a. Moisés Bertoni.- The 20-hectare Moisés Bertoni Scientific Monument protects 152 ha of forest, including extensive stands of palm heart palm *Euterpes edulis*, close to the mouth of the Monday River. Although very small and widely isolated, it is one of the few forest blocks remaining on the Paraguayan bank of the Paraná River and thus is of considerable importance for maintaining connectivity between the forests of Paraguay and Argentina.

b. Kuriý.- The Kuriý Scientific Reserve protects the last remaining native stand of Araucaria pine (Kuriý or Pino Paraná, *Araucaria angustifolia)* in Paraguay. Although the reserve supposedly encompasses 2,000 ha, recent satellite images suggest that there is virtually no forest cover left. However, given its uniqueness within a national context, any remaining forest could be of conservation importance, especially as the potential basis for a forest corridor between Caaguazú and San Rafael National Parks and the forest of Misiones province, Argentina.

c. Ñacunday.- This 2,000-hectare national park retains about 1,600 ha of forest at the mouth of the Ñacunday River. Although a relatively small forested area isolated within an agricultural zone, it is one of the few forest blocks that retains the potential to connect forested areas in Paraguay with adjacent areas in Argentina.

d. Yvyturuzu.- Originally designated as a managed resources reserve, and now proposed as a national park, Yvyturuzu covers a total area of 24,000 ha, of which about 16,000 ha are forested. In addition to being one of the more extensive tracts of forest remaining in eastern Paraguay, Yvyturuzu forms a core part of a chain of forest islands, which have the potential to connect Ybycuí National Park (in the west) with Caaguazú and San Rafael National Parks to the east (and potentially also with forests in Argentina).

e. Cordillera del Yvyturuzu.- The approximately 5,000 ha of forest in this area lie directly between Yvyturuzu and Caaguazu National Parks, and thus play a key role in maintaining connectivity between these two protected areas.

f. Estancia Tapytá.- This 12,000 ha property, owned by Forestal Yguazú, a forestry subsidiary of Shell Renewable Resources, protects (as a private nature reserve) approximately 7,000 ha of forest. This forest forms one of only two forest corridors remaining between San Rafael and Caaguazú National Parks.

g. San Rafael.- San Rafael is one of the largest unprotected blocks of forest remaining in Paraguay, and forms the core area remaining in the southern part of the eastern region. In 1992, a governmental decree designated San Rafael as "reserved for a National Park". However, San Rafael has yet to be consolidated as a protected area. To date, a maximum of 5 % of the area of the park has benefited from basic inventory work, and there is an urgent need to survey further areas to justify priority

areas for land purchase, private conservation initiatives and zoning (Guyra Paraguay interim report to WWF, 2001).

New progress indicators are *on track* providing important tools to refine the Biological Vision

Result C: Priorities established for creation of new protected areas.

Progress Indicator 1: Establishment of the category IAF Corridor in the Paraguayan Protected Area System, using the criteria of watershed

No funds were available to conduct the land tenure analysis; thus this activity is *cancelled* for this year.

Progress Indicator 2: Strategy developed to increase the protection of core conservation areas of IAF in Paraguay by acquisition of land to be incorporated to the system of protected areas and private conservation areas.

The Fundacion Moises Bertoni continued developing a strategy to acquire the land south of Mbaracayu Reserve. The Ambassador of Taiwan to Paraguay is assisting in this process.

Objective III: Shape regional development to support conservation.

Result A: Limit unsustainable use of the forest

Result A1: No unsustainable logging practices – commercial Atlantic Forest products operations certified.

Progress Indicator 1: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification of timber areas in the core areas and corridors established in the Paraná/Paraiba Interior Atlantic Forest Biological Vision.

NATURAL Land Trust is now fully established. One of its strategic lines of action is for NATURAL to become a leader in the process of Forest Certification in Paraguay. Performance is on track.

Result C: Establish a land use policy framework that supports conservation

Progress Indicator 1: Policy developed with IBR (Instituto de Bien Estar Rural) and INDI (Instituto del Indigena) to reduce the impact of the agrarian reform on the IAF

This activity will begin in the next reporting period.

Progress Indicator 2: A proposal for a new land reform compatible with conservation and sustainable development developed with IDEA (Instituto de Derecho Ambiental)

Funding was not available; thus this activity was not initiated.

Progress Indicator 3: A strategy, enforcement mechanisms, and alternatives for the landless developed to prevent invasion of forested areas by landless peoples.

This activity will begin in the next reporting period.

Progress Indicator 4:Environmental education program developed with the community in rural areas and buffer zones of protected areas.

Funding was not available; thus this activity was not initiated.

Progress Indicator 5: Capacity built for the Environmental Prosecuting Attorney (Fiscalia de Medio Ambiente) Office to implement law enforcement in the Interior Atlantic Forest of Paraguay

IDEA and the Environmental Attorney have developed a planning strategy to counteract unsustainable use of the IAF. Their plan is to focus law enforcement and community involvement in the four conservation blocks, especially in San Rafael. This action will also strengthen their capacity to enforce pertinent laws.

Result C3: Feasible economic incentives for protection of Atlantic Forest identified

Progress Indicator 1: Countries guided to focus the carbon sink mechanism of the Kyoto Climate Change Treaty Protocol on carbon capture through reforestation with native species and the recuperation of natural habitats.

Completed during last reporting period

Objective IV: Establish long-term conditions and capacities needed to sustain conservation

Result A: Public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest increased.

Result A1: Value of ecological services of protected forest disseminated to the general public and decision makers

Progress Indicator 1: Status of Forest cover disseminated

All partners are disseminating the status of forest cover together with the dissemination of the Biological Vision.

Progress Indicator 2: Atlantic Forest campaign in Spanish, Portuguese, Guarani, and English initiated to promote the beauty and "existence value of the Atlantic Forest.

The campaign will be planned after the completion of the Biological Vision documentation for the Interior Atlantic Forest.

Progress Indicator 3: Educational and informational materials on the Interior Atlantic Forest developed

Lucy Aquino has met with Peace Corps leaders to coordinate work in Paraguay and strengthen their capacity in public awareness in the IAF. Two Peace Corps volunteers are developing a manual for schools on the Biodiversity and conservation of the IAF. In the near future this manual will be presented in several workshops within the IAF districts.

Additional activities will be planned when the technical Vision document is complete.

Result B: Funding mechanisms developed to provide sustained funding for Atlantic Forest Conservation.

Progress Indicator 1: Proposals to the GEF developed

A project development grant proposal for institutional strengthening of the Tri-National Initiative was completed and submitted to UNEP (see I.B.1)

Progress Indicator 2: Proposals to the AECI (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional)

On December 4-5, 2000, Lucy Aquino visited three organizations based in Madrid, Spain, to make contacts and identify potential future funding for the IAF:

ARAUCARIA a consultant office to the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI). A representative of this organization visited Paraguay last year and discussed with Ms. Aquino the possibility of grants to develop social conservation projects in Paraguay. Due to the instability of the Paraguayan Government, the consultant of ARAUCARIA advised AECI not to allocate funding for Paraguay. However, they recommended development of some projects with NGOs in the IAF region. Ms. Aquino and the personnel of ARAUCARIA identified three different NGOs that AECI may support: Guyra Paraguay, Pro Cosara, and Eco Cultura (an NGO working in the northern block). Eco Cultura is now working with AECI in Asuncion to develop a proposal on sustainable development with local communities.

SEO (Sociedad Española de Ornitología, the organization that represents Bird Life in Spain) Lucy Aquino met with personnel of SEO and discussed potential support for NGOs that are working with conservation of birds and their habitat in Paraguay.

WWF- Spain (ADENA): Ms. Aquino visited WWF-Spain and promoted support for potential future funding for the Interior Atlantic Forest.

Performance is *on track.*

Table of Progress

Benchmark Number	Benchmark/Output	Status
I.A.	WWF Ecoregional Team capacity ensured to coordinate Atlantic Forest ecoregional conservation	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
I.B.	A network of institutions with a shared Vision and conservation strategy for the ecoregion developed	On-Track
I.C.	Biological Vision for the Atlantic Forest refined and monitored	On-Track
II.A.	Policy framework established for improved protection and management of existing protected areas	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
II.B4	Connect core conservation areas in Northern Block	Mixed performance (On-Track, Completed and cancelled)
II.B5	Connect core conservation areas in Central Block	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
II.B6	Connect core conservation areas in Eastern Block	On Track
II.B7	Connect core conservation areas in Southern Block	Mixed performance (On-Track Completed and Delayed)
III.A.	Limit unsustainable use of the forest	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
III. C.	Establish a land use policy framework that supports conservation	Mixed performance (On-Track Completed and Delayed)
IV.A.	Public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest increased	On-Track
IV. B.	Funding mechanisms developed to provide sustained funding for Atlantic Forest Conservation	On-Track

- Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Next steps

Several lines of actions are progressing on track in the Interior Atlantic Forest in Paraguay. Specific actions to move toward accomplishing the Biological Vision are being developed for each of the four Conservation Blocks. Several partners are focusing on the Southern Block, especially in the San Rafael Core Area, one of the most biologically diverse areas in Paraguay. Moreover, it is one of the most threatened remnants of Atlantic Forest, and constitutes a "national paper park". There is no park infrastructure in the park, there are no park guards, and the lands are still under private ownership. The future of San Rafael remains unclear, and is the subject of much controversy. Logging and clearing for agriculture continue to the present day,

and landless people still being settled within the park. Many landowners have cleared the forests remaining on their land to prevent illegal settlements.
A World Bank loan to the Paraguayan government has funded a project attempting to improve social and environmental conditions in the region; however this loan does not allow for direct land acquisition. Moreover the government has recently been awarded a Global Environmental Facility (GEF) grant to develop projects to protect globally important ecosystems in Paraguay. San Rafael is one of the areas that can benefit from this project, but once again there is no provision for land purchase through this grant and the Paraguayan government does not have funds available for land purchase. San Rafael is without a doubt the most important fragment of Interior Atlantic Forest in Paraguay, because of both its biological and cultural value. Its large size and relatively intact status will allow us to accomplish our medium- and long-term objectives for conservation of the IAF ecoregion. We must develop urgent actions to acquire land and develop a strategy for the consolidation and effective protection of this most important forest remnant.

Completion of the Biological Vision Technical Document is a priority. This document will help guide our long- and short-term actions. After its completion we will develop an education and communications strategy for mobilizing support of decision makers and the general public for actions to achieve the Vision. We will also identify the most important policy issues on which to concentrate at the ecoregion scale.

Success Stories

Our most important achievement is that our partners are already using the Biological Vision to mobilize and guide the implementation of actions in the Interior Atlantic Forest. Non-governmental organizations, government organizations, and local and international scientific groups are using our maps to identify priority areas to implement their conservation actions. Because WWF has based an Ecoregion Coordinator for the IAF in Paraguay, partners' actions are being coordinated in an organized manner. The Secretariat of the Environment has also accorded high priority to the Biological Vision, and significant actions are already well advanced, especially in the San Rafael Area.

The USAID Mission in Paraguay, the U. S. Embassy in Paraguay (Economic and Commercial Section) and the Ecoregion Coordinator of the IAF-Paraguay organized a presentation of the "Biological Vision for the Conservation of the Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion". The presentation was very successful with more than 100 people representing government institutions, NGOs, scientists and private business attending. The press coverage generated additional support and opportunities.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Deforestation and illegal timber trade are the biggest challenges in the IAF, worsened by very weak institutions such as the Environmental Attorney, the Secretariat of the Environment and a very corrupt Forest Service.

However, we have identified some very committed groups of people within the government with whom we can work, especially in the Secretariat of the Environment. The strengthening of NGOs has helped to counteract several aspects of weakness within the government.

Annexes:

1. News articles (2) resulting from the event at the American Embassy to launch the Biological Vision
2. News article on Ambassador Greenley's visit to Mbaracayu
3. Map of priority sites resulting from Guyra's field project
4. Map of Biological Vision of the Interior Atlantic Forest; map of remaining forest of the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion.
5. Conservation blocks, corridors, and protected areas of the Biological Vision in Paraguay
6. Maps of deforestation of the Atlantic Forest in Paraguay over time
7. Parque Nacional San Rafael
8. Atlantic Forest Global 200ecoregion Complex

Southwestern Amazon Moist Forest Ecoregion

Strategic Goals and Objectives

The objective of the Southwest Amazon Program is to conserve the full array of the biodiversity of the ecoregion by protecting key sites and wildlife populations and by shaping regional development to minimize threats to the ecoregion biodiversity. USAID support is focused 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

Bolivia

* SERNAP - National Service of Protected Areas
* DGB - General Directorate for Biodiversity
* FAN - Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza
* CISTEL - Center of Research and Services on Teledetection
* CETEFOR - Forestry Technical Center
* PROCESO Educational Services
* CI - Conservation International
* WCS - Wildlife Conservation Society
* Local stakeholders (Indigenous Territories –TCOs-, Municipalities and local community organization or *Organizaciones Territoriales de Base* -OTB-).

Peru

* INRENA - The Peruvian National Protected Areas Agency
* ACCA - "Proyecto Castañales" of the Asociación para la Conservación de la Cuenca Amazónica
* FENAMAD: Federacion Nativa del Rio Madre de Dios y Afluentes
* ADAR: Asociacion para el Desarrollo Amazonico Rural.

Summary

In Bolivia, progress has been made in the establishment of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor conservation plan. Results include: initial stages completed in the organization of the Working Group (by PROCESO), thematic maps (i.e. climate, geology, geomorphology) for the preparation of the ecological and vegetation maps of the corridor (by CISTEL), and biodiversity surveys of the Covendo-Cotacajes-Altamachi area (by CETEFOR).

In Peru, in spite of the unsettled political situation and the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the upcoming presidential elections, important progress has nevertheless been made during this six-month reporting period. Efforts have been consistent with programmed activities and the most significant achievements are related to the Voluntary Forest Certification initiative of Brazil nuts in the department of Madre de Dios and to the participatory zoning and mile posting process with local indigenous communities at the Amarakaeri Reserved Zone.

Highlights

* SERNAP and the local board of the Amboró National Park successfully opposed the entrance of Andina S.A. (oil company) to carry out seismic prospecting in the National Park.
* The administration of Carrasco National Park, completed construction of the main camp at Sacta Valley.
* During its last Board of Directors meeting in February 2001, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) officially recognized the Peruvian Council for Voluntary Forest Certification (PCVFC). The PCVFC represents an important intermediary between the FSC and national timber producers. It will also help ensure that appropriate standards and policy are developed in order to promote sustainable forest management and voluntary forest certification.
* The official categorization process of the Amarakaeri Reserved Zone is being led by INRENA with unprecedented local participation and buy-in from indigenous communities and grass-roots organizations. It is anticipated that by the time Amarakaeri is officially declared a Communal Reserve, the site will present none of the land tenure issues or conflicts that have traditionally been evident at most protected areas throughout the country. According to the head of INRENA, the official categorization of the Amarakaeri Reserved Zone is expected by July 2001.
* At least one million hectares of land will be added to the Purus Reserved Zone in its Southeastern limits, while a comporable surface area will be excluded in the northwest towards the Ucayali. This area is being extended to conserve some of the most pristine remaining wilderness in Peru and to benefit many as yet un-contacted indigenous communities that live in this region. According to the head of INRENA, the official enlargement of the Purus Reserved Zone is expected by July 2001.

Objective I: Consolidation of the Amboró-madidi Connectivity Complex

Activity 1.1. Establishment and strengthening of the Connectivity Complex Amboró-Madidi Working Group.

PROCESO, an NGO based in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, was contracted to create the organizational structure to ensure the participation of the civil society in the conservation plan of the corridor. PROCESO selected the municipalities as the building blocks for this structure. Each municipality is represented by 4-5 people (a representative of the municipal government, Indigenous people, campesino communities, and protected areas). The 64 municipalities were assigned to one of 5 subdivisions based on logistical considerations. The representatives of these 5 regional working groups will conform the Working Group. To date, PROCESO has visited and organized the representation in 2 of the 5 sub-divisions.

The Director General and Director of Planning and Monitoring of SERNAP, as well as the Coordinator for the Corridor (hired by WWF to work at SERNAP) all resigned at the beginning of the year. The new administration at SERNAP (the new coordinator has not been appointed) is not willing to support the commitments and accomplishments made by the previous director. Instead, they are proposing to put the structuring of the Working Group on hold, until a consensus is achieved on how to create a proper participatory structure for the civil society in the conservation plan of the corridor. This change in policy at SERNAP means a delay of at least a year in the implementation of the Conservation Plan for the Corridor.

Activity 1.2. Continuation of the Amboró-Madidi Connectivity Complex Design

Ecological Map. CISTEL, an NGO based in Cochabamba, was hired to prepare the ecological map of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor. This map is composed of Landscape or Ecological Units which are unique combinations of physical (climate, geology, geomorphology and physiography) and biological (vegetation) variables. In each Landscape Unit, biodiversity surveys will be carried out using "indicator species" and vegetation plots. Secondary information on species occurrence obtained by FAN is being incorporated into the map (scale of 1:250.000) and will help characterize the units. The map will then be printed at the scale of 1:500.000.

Activity 1.3. Continuation of the Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System Design

Biodiversity Surveys. FAN, an NGO based in Santa Cruz, was hired to select the taxa and the locations for biological surveys within the corridor. CETEFOR, an NGO based in Cochabamba, was hired to collect the biological and socio-economic data in the area of Covendo-Cotacajes-Altamachi. The data will contribute to the zoning process in this federal area, and should result in the delimitation and creation of a State Protected Area. This PA may become a National Park in the future.

Vegetation Maps. CISTEL is preparing the current vegetation map (as of 2000) of the Amboró-Madidi Corridor. This vegetation map will be used in combination with those of 1986, 1993, and 1997 (to be developed) to evaluate deforestation rates and changes in other key variables such as the network of roads. The 2000 vegetation map will be used as the baseline for the monitoring and evaluation system.

Objective II: Strengthening and Consolidation of the National Service of protected Areas of Bolivia (SERNAP)

Activity 2.1. Financial support to SERNAP to maintain activities in three areas of the National Protected Area System

Apolobamba., Through negotiations with the communities, land was obtained for the construction of two camps in the Area of Integrated Management (ANMI) Apolobamba. Funding from the Xunta of Galicia, Spain was obtained for the eco-aquaculture program. Funding from the AECI allowed for the restoration of the communications system of the area. Four new projects were developed, and funding is being sought for their

implementation. Eighteen exploration patrols and eight special patrols were undertaken. Twenty-one parkguards have been trained in monitoring wildlife. Two meetings were held with the Management Committee ("Comite de Gestion") as well as all of the organizations that work in the area. Ten signs were installed in the ANMI limits.

Carrasco. For Carrasco National Park, funds were obtained to re-define the Park limits (The Red Line). A total of 518 routine patrols were undertaken in the eight operational districts, and the construction of the main camp in the Sacta Valley was completed. In addition, 76.7 km of patrol trails were maintained in the areas of "Tigre", "Puma" and "Aguila". Six research initiatives were carried out: Characterization of spawning areas of *pimelodidos*; Preliminary list of birds of the Carrasco National Park; Bioandes Project; Comparative biodiversity study in landscape units; Effects of degradation and fragmentation in *polylepis* forests; and habitat use and interaction between the jaguar and communities in the northern region.

Noel Kempff Mercado. In this National Park, 30 signs were placed along the edge of the Iténez River. Two-hundred and twenty six routine patrols (by river and land), and one overflight patrol were undertaken, and as a result, 25 fishing nets and one canoe were confiscated. A meeting was held with the Management Committee and surrounding communities were provided with training and support in such areas as farming and forestry. Support was also given by providing them with equipment for their activities. Health teams were also supported in order for them to assist the communities in vaccination campaigns, and medicines and equipment was provided for their health post.

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

Activity 3.1. Creation of New Protected Areas

Manu: The first draft of the updated Manu National Park Management Plan, which incorporates the Manu Reserved Zone, has been developed. This result has so far been obtained exclusively by INRENA with financial support from the WWF Peru Program Office (PPO). Beginning in June, technical consultations and validation of the document will be open to non-governmental organizations, including WWF. The technical dossier for the final categorization of the Manu Reserved Zone has been completed, including relevant cartography and biological assessments. INRENA has been responsible for developing this technical dossier while the PPO has provided technical assistance for its revision and financial support to pay for INRENA staff hours. The salaries of one park chief and two park guards have been paid during the reporting period.

Amarakaeri: INRENA has completed the biodiversity and socio-economic assessments, which represent the basis of the technical dossier required for the final categorization. The PPO has been responsible for developing a preliminary biodiversity assessment based on secondary literature and for providing financial assistance to these activities. At least three participatory workshops have been held with surrounding native communities to raise awareness and discuss the benefits that will result from categorizing this reserved zone as a Communal Reserve. These workshops have been organized and coordinated by INRENA with WWF-PPO financial assistance. Participatory georeferenced boundary demarcation, and posting of signs have taken place with indigenous Harakmbut, Matsiguenga and Yine communities to establish limits of the Amarakaeri Reserved Zone. This will help avoid any

land tenure issues that may arise in future. The salaries of one local coordinator and two short-term assistants in GIS have been covered during the reporting period.

Alto Purus: 90% of the basic cartography for zoning has been completed jointly by INRENA, FENAMAD, ADAR and the WWF-PPO. The limits of the Reserved Zone have been redefined to exclude potential areas of conflict resulting from logging activities in the Sepahua and Atalaya watersheds or from titled Indigenous communities in the Yurua watershed. These limits have been redefined by INRENA with technical support from the FENAMAD and WWF-PPO during two consultative meetings. The Alto Purus Reserved Zone is being expanded towards the Las Piedras River watershed in the southeastern corner of the protected area. INRENA is responsible for this initiative but will involve other actors including the PPO over the coming months. The PPO is providing the necessary financial assistance through the hiring of the protected area coordinator, and the salaries of one local coordinator and two short-term assistants in GIS have been paid during this reporting period.

Objective IV: To certify 300,000 hectares for the gathering of Brazil nuts over a period of five years

Activity 4.1. Voluntary Forest Certification

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has approved the Peruvian Council for Voluntary ForestCertification (PCVFC) in Peru. The PPO and ACCA together developed the technical dossier that was submitted for approval to the FSC, and the PPO has funded coordination meetings with the Madre de Dios, Ucayali, Loreto, and Lima Working Groups.

The FSC recommended the approval of the Brazil nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*) standards for management and certification. The PPO organized and funded several workshops with representatives from each regional working group in order to develop a regional standard. Furthermore it provided technical assistance and 50% of the financial support required for field test in Pichanaki, Pucallpa and Iquitos.

The Madre de Dios Voluntary Forest Certification Working Group revised the FSC observations to the Brazil nut standards and made the necessary adjustments.

Tables of Progress

Benchmark Number	Benchmark/Output	Status*
1.1	* Ecological Corridor Working Group (ECWG) organized. Roles and Responsibilities identified among the group.	On-track
1.2	* Field-based biological and ecological assessments completed to inform conservation decisions. * Vegetation Map and its description document .Increase of conservation database. * Digital Elevation Model of CAM. *	On-track On-track On-track

1.3	* Ecological zoning and protection plan designed for the corridor, including maps of biological (species distributions, habitat and landscape characteristics, indicators) and socioeconomic (threats, focal activities) components. * Evaluation of current status of biodiversity conservation (gap analysis, habitat representation, prot. areas viability). * Multi-temporal change vegetation cover study. * Design Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System.	On-track On-track On-track On-track
2.1	* Onsite presence of protection staff during this period increased. * Park guards provided in support of the protection of Carrasco, Noel Kempff Mercado & Apolobamba Natl Parks.	Completed Completed
2.1	* Integration of sectoral legislation and norms in favor 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.	Completed Completed Completed Completed
3.1	* Creation of the Alto Purus, Amarakaeri and Manu Reserved Zones and the incorporation of these areas into the National System of Protected Areas (SINANPE)	On-track
4.1	* 30,000 hectares of Brazil nut certified in year one according to Forest Stewardship Council principles and guidelines.	On-track

Next Steps

Bolivia. In the next six months, we expect to finish all current field data collection for verification sampling of the current vegetation map. The monitoring system will be made compatible with the another local monitoring system that already partially exists in the CAM and a multi-temporal analysis of changes of forest cover will be ready.

Peru: Any accomplishments over the next few months will be subject to developments on a political level and to the outcome of the presidential elections scheduled for early June of this year. However, planned activities for the next reporting period include: Finish demarcating boundaries surrounding the Amarakaeri Reserved Zone after which the final categorization of protected area as a Communal Reserve may be declared. Through the Manu Park Director, participate in two INRENA-led meetings with technical staff and local representatives to review the Manu Reserved Zone proposal to incorporate it into the National Park. Extend the Purus Reserved Zone limits towards the Rio Las Piedras Watershed covering an additional one million hectares. Undertake an overflight of the Purus Reserved Zone to revise the proposed limits in the southwestern corner of the protected area and to define the buffer zone boundaries. Organize four workshops for the private forest sector in Peru to discuss potential markets in Europe and the U.S. for certified forest products.

Success Stories

Bolivia: During the past 10 months, the protected areas have faced two attempts by oil and mining companies to explore within PAs with categories I-III of the IUCN. In the case of Amboró

National Park, civil society has temporarily stopped work by "Andina" Oil Company. The company has requested an environmental license for 2D seismic prospecting. And in the case of the Noel Kempff National Park, the entrance of a mining company was prevented. The interesting point here is that the communities that are in the surroundings areas of the PAs were the main actors utilizing manifestations, official public statements, and blockades, thus supporting the respective Directors of the National Parks. These actions were strengthened by environmental NGOs such as WWF who carried out active campaigns. The question that needs to be answered is: was this support solely an opportunistic situation or are the attitudes of residents who live around PAs changing and are locals seeing the PAs in a more positive light? Possibly, local people have begun to realize that long-term benefits from living around PAs, although small, are important for the long term.

Peru: WWF-PPO, along with its local partner ACCA and Bolivian and Brazilian counterparts, successfully developed the first regional standard for certification of a non-timber product, the Brazil nut. Achieving this in Peru has involved establishing and strengthening the Madre de Dios Regional Working Group with its respective social, economic, and environmental chambers, carrying out a series of coordination meetings, undertaking field tests and finally harmonizing and fine-tuning the standard at a regional level. This experience has been highly participatory and led to many synergies among a diversity of actors and stakeholders including local NGOs, universities, private sector logging companies, indigenous grass-roots organizations, municipalities and the national government. The development of this regional standard will now allow for Brazil nut certification to occur beginning in FY02, helping to ensure conservation of large blocks of intact forest cover and connectivity between protected areas in the region, including the Manu and Bahuaja Sonene National Parks. In addition, Brazil nut certification promises even greater economic benefits to one third of the regional population whose livelihoods depend almost solely on this product. Finally, this experience has also been valuable to the FSC and will represent a successful case study to be replicated in other tropical areas of Latin America.

Challenges and lessons learned

Bolivia: The forming of the regional working groups will take longer than originally planned. Unfortunately, the new Director and Director for Planning and Monitoring at SERNAP do not support the agreements and achievements made by the previous administration regarding the structuring of the regional and main working groups. SERNAP has called for a revision of the way local communities will participate in the decision-making process in the Ambor-Madidi Corridor.

Peru: One of the most significant challenges for the PPO since the beginning of this initiative has involved working with the Peruvian Government during the fragile Paniagua administration's transition period, awaiting the outcome of the upcoming presidential elections. This uncertain political scenario has made planning and implementation of conservation initiatives unpredictable, and in this sense, challenging. Nevertheless, an efficient and harmonious working relationship has been established with INRENA through the hiring of consultants who act on behalf of the State but who also report to WWF. This novel public-private working relationship, though frustrating at times, has proven extremely effective for overcoming bureaucratic obstacles which are common place within the public sector. In addition, by placing consultants in key decision-making positions, it has allowed the PPO to steer conservation in a strategic direction in order to implement the biodiversity conservation vision in the SWA ecoregion.

Forests of the Lower Mekong

Strategic Goals & Objectives

The Forests of the Lower Mekong (FLM) is an ecoregional complex which contains the Greater Annamites and the Dry Forests of the Lower Mekong Basin Ecoregions: two of WWF's Global 200 most endangered spaces. The FLM comprises an incredibly high diversity of habitats including dry dipterocarp forests, moist evergreen forests, karst limestone forests, open grasslands and savannas, upland plateaus, wetlands, and pristine riparian environments. Habitats in the FLM support diverse, abundant, and rare wildlife and are highly interrelated ecologically. Covering much of the region referred to as Indochina, these ecoregions have been strongly connected both politically and socially.

The goal of the ecoregion program for the Forests of the Lower Mekong is: to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and maintain the integrity of biological processes across the Forests of the Lower Mekong.

The objectives for the program are to:

- Mobilize conservation on an ecoregional scale
- Promote integrated conservation and development in priority landscapes of the Forests of the Lower Mekong
- Promote a supportive policy environment for conservation and sustainable natural resource management
- Lay the foundation for lasting conservation
- Promote the conservation of the marine biodiversity of Con Dao National Park

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 Committees.
  - 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 NGOs:
  - TRAFFIC Indochina Program (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 NGOs
  - Wildlife Conservation Society; Flora and Fauna International; TRAFFIC Indochina Program (SE Asia);

Summary

Activities during this period concentrated on development of the two priority landscapes,* Central Annamites *landscape (representing the Greater Annamites Ecoregion) and the* Eastern Plains Dry Forests *(representing the Dry Forests of the Lower Mekong Basin) and promotion of a supportive policy environment for conservation and sustainable development.

Activities in the *Central Annamites* focused primarily on developing partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders and establishing the correct political and institutional frameworks to facilitate future implementation and intervention. A Central Annamites Advisory Group containing representatives of 15 government institutions, plus some senior individuals, was established with a representative core group responsible for facilitating the Initiative. This Advisory Group has now developed a detailed methodology for developing a conservation strategy and obtained permission and support from the Ministry to proceed with the Initiative.

The *Eastern Plains Dry Forests* Initiative has also been developing a conservation strategy. WWF laid the groundwork for this initiative by beginning to build partnerships with key constituents in the region and assessing the capacity of local staff. Field assessments were conducted during the dry season–the only time of year when access is guaranteed. The results from the biological and socio-economic assessments will be used to inform a strategy planning meeting in June. This meeting will also be an opportunity to consolidate initial partnerships and forge new ones with participating government scientists and other stakeholders.

Working toward a supportive policy environment in Vietnam, WWF field tested a set of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management-an important step in the forest certification process. We significantly influenced the development of key forest legislation in Cambodia to include environmental and social concerns., and in Laos, preparations were begun for a national

workshop to inform government officials of the purpose of CITES and encourage the Lao government to become a signatory.

Highlights

* In an important step towards national buy-in, the government of Vietnam committed to the Greater Annamites Ecoregion Program and the Central Annamites Initiative in January 2001.
* The Central Annamites Initiative was launched, the Central Annamites Advisory Group formally instituted, and the workplan finalized.
* Influencing national and international conservation agendas, the completed Biodiversity Vision was used in developing national Biodiversity Action Plans for Cambodia and Laos, and in a strategic environmental framework for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region countries.
* WWF completed field surveys providing critical baseline data to move forward in developing a conservation strategy for the Dry Forests.
* A biological assessment of the forests planned for production in the Kon Plong Forest Enterprise–the first step toward Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification–was completed in December 2000.
* WWF, in consultation with the NGO Forum, played a key role in increasing NGO input into a new and vital piece of forestry legislation in Cambodia,influencing its content to address environmental and social concerns.
* Two photographers completed a portfolio of 1000 photographs which contributed significantly to the design of the Biodiversity Vision, ecoregion brochures and posters, enhanced environmental education and awareness posters, and will be used to strengthen future launches and presentations.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Mobilize conservation on an ecoregional scale

Activities under this objective are focused on 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 the level and quality of stakeholder participation and build the foundations for future fundraising, and promote widespread awareness of ecoregional.

Result (Activity)1.1: Ecoregional Planning

The Biodiversity Vision was completed and reviewed by stakeholders in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Work commenced on assimilating comments into the final document. The graphics for the final Biodiversity Vision and technical annex have been designed and launches for the Biodiversity Vision are being planned in all three stakeholder countries and in the United States.

The Biodiversity Vision document, though yet to be published, has already been an important framework document for the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan for Cambodia currently in progress. The Biodiversity Vision has also been used extensively in developing a new Biodiversity Action Plan for Laos. In addition, the document was used a the basis for the biodiversity conservation components of a strategic environmental framework for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) countries (Myanmar, China, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia) developed by the Asian Development Bank and the Stockholm Environment Institute.

Result (Activity)1.2: Establish and strengthen ecoregional program management capacity

Communications

The FLM's communications goal is to facilitate the implementation of ecoregional conservation by creating support in the donor, government, and conservation communities, By communicating the purpose, activities and results of the program, WWF hopes to influence government policy, develop sustainable financing mechanisms, and build effective partnerships to achieve ecoregional conservation in this area of unique and vital biodiversity.

Toward this goal, WWF has drafted a highly visual and concise explanation of the conclusions from the biological assessment, aimed at providing an accessible resource for decision-makers and others interested in the biological conservation priorities in the FLM. This summary of the Biodiversity Vision includes a poster based on the map of priority areas in the FLM.

In addition, sets of communication materials for the Greater Annamites and Dry Forests of the Lower Mekong Basin focal ecoregions are moving toward final production. The layout, content and graphic design for each set is near completion. Publication is anticipated in August. Each set includes a brochure outlining the importance of the ecoregionand the background of the conservation programs, plus a poster and postcard aimed at donors, government officials, and conservation partners to generate understanding and support for these vital areas

Last period, WWFUS provided a small grant to hire two photographers to travel throughout the FLM and put together a portfolio of over 1000 photographs of the region. One photographer will visit the Dry Forests, in May (the best time of year for gathering images) and complete the portfolio. These photographs have been a great success, contributing not only to the design of the Biodiversity Vision, ecoregion brochures and posters, but enhancing environmental awareness and education posters. These images will also form the main part of a display for World Environment day,a presentation the first weekend of June being made to key decision-makers, and the launch of the Biodiversity Vision.

Strategic Planning

The WWF Indochina program began developing a five-year strategic plan in September. To further this process, the program integrated the results of ecoregion conservation assessments completed during this period into the planning process in order to refine conservation objectives and targets, and determine intervention locations. In addition, to ensure the efficient use of WWF network resources in achieving conservation results, the Ecoregion Conservation Management Unit convened a meeting of WWF Indochina senior managers and the WWFUS Asia Pacific Director. The meeting resulted in a conceptual map of WWF programs, both ecoregional and also thematic, focused on this geographic area and a set of next steps designed to ensure effective coordination and avoid duplication of efforts.

Last October, a high level meeting to discuss the future of the ecoregion program in the Greater Annamites was held in Hanoi. This group of 12 chief government representatives was enthusiastic about the concept of establishing a specific conservation program for the Greater Annamites. They have agreed to stand as a permanent Greater Annamites Steering Committee. The committee has since advised on the development of the program and plan to meet regularly.

The Ecoregional Conservation Management Team, using the Biodiversity Vision as a guide, considered the feasability of conducting a conservation program for the entire Lower Mekong Basin. Looking at ecoregional priorities in conjunction with existing planning units, such as the Greater Mekong, it was concluded the the most effective next step to enhance rather than duplicate conservation efforts in this ecoregion, is to focus on one sub-division of the Lower Mekong Basin – namely the Eastern Plains Dry Forests priority landscape. A steering committee for this priority landscape will be discussed in a conservation planning meeting to be held in June 2001.

In order to establish a Technical Support Group, the Ecoregion Conservation Management Unit is building partnerships with experts on issues such as indigenous peoples, sustainable development, and forest conservation. For example, the WWF International Indigenous Peoples and Conservation Unit has developed a proposal, in conjunction with WWF Indochina and the Ecoregion Conservation team, to improve the level of co-management of protected areas in the Greater Annamites Ecoregion. The Forests for Life Campaign is presently focused on supporting the activities under the Annamite Ecoregion Program.

Staffing

Robert Shore joined the Ecoregion Conservation Management Team on a full-time basis in February as a Research Officer. He will help finalize the publication of the Biodiversity Vision and support the development of the conservation programs generally.

Objective II: Promote integrated conservation and development in priority landscapes of the Forests of the Lower Mekong

Result (Activity) 2.1: Develop and initiate Central Annamite (Greater Annamite Ecoregion) Priority Landscape program

Stakeholder Consultation

The provisional working group formed at last November's stakeholder planning meeting has now been formally instituted as the Central Annamites Advisory Group. This group, working together with the Ecoregional Conservation Management Team has completed a workplan for the coming year.

Permission for the Greater Annamites Program and Central Annamites Initiative was first sought in Vietnam and the program was approved in January 2001. Initial discussions have started in Laos and final preparations to gain government permission are now underway.

Strategic Planning

The methodology and Terms of Reference for the biological and socioeconomic assessments agreed upon in last October's stakeholder meeting, were developed in February and March and

initial preparations are completed. A biological assessment team of both national and international scientists has been formed in Vietnam. Formation of a similar team in Laos is underway. These teams will identify the biological importance of the Central Annamites and design the biovision for this landscape by August 2001. A major output of the biological assessment will be a map of conservation zones based on a set of criteria developed by the biodiversity advisory team. The biological and socio-economic assessments will begin in April.

The socio-economic assessments are designed as a series of studies to be completed by specialists in collaboration with a provincial-based research team. The land use team has been established and begins fieldwork end of May. Benchmark socioeconomic data collection will also begin at this time. WWF will compile all the resulting data, reports and conclusions. The Central Annamites Advisory Group and a group of consultants responsible for compiling and facilitating the process, will work together to develop the conservation strategy.

The assessments include one specific study aimed at identifying possible actions, which will support and back up government policies. The Government of Vietnam has recently launched a major new national strategy for forest management that will be supported by a sector-wide support program comprised of donors, NGOs and Government representatives. In recognition of the need to support this program and integrate activities undertaken by the Central Annamite Initiative, WWF has prepared a ToR for a Forestry Program coordinator who will be responsible for implementing this crucial integration. A person has now been appointed and will join the team in August 2001 (see also Result/Activity 3.2)

Result (Activity) 2.2: Develop and initiate a program for the Eastern Plains Priority Landscape

Stakeholder Consultation

In an effort to build interest on the part of government officials in Mondulkiri Province, a critical step to developing a natural resources working group, WWF took two trips to the province. The first visit, undertaken in December 2000, was a brief, introductory one in which the organization was introduced to provincial authorities, discussions on the natural resource and threats in the province were held, and a preliminary training needs assessment was undertaken. At this time, provincial departments in Mondulkiri are eager to work with other organizations to both develop the province and also to conserve natural resources. However, local staff have limited access to information and resources with which to implement conservation activities.

Capacity Building

Based on our initial training-needs assessment it was clear that fundamental capacity building was essential before more comprehensive resource planning and management activities could occur. Currently, only a few Department of Forestry staff have experience working with concession areas in the province. A potential long-term strategy for WWF is to help provincial and district government officials collect, analyze and utilize information in conservation planning processes. This strategy will help to build institutional capacity while providing the resources required to address immediate threats to the province's rich biodiversity such as illegal wildlife and non-timber forest products trade.

In preparation for this long-term approach, WWF designed a general integrated training program (4-5 days) entitled "Participatory Conservation of Natural Resources in Mondulkiri" to introduce provincial staff to concepts of conservation. Participants included 20-30 people from the following provincial departments and organizations: environment, agriculture/forestry, rural

development, land titling, women's affairs, health, education, police, army, military police, governors office as well as relevant NGO representatives.

The training resulted in:

1) Understanding of the concepts and approaches to community participation in natural resources management and long-term conservation of habitats/biodiversity,
2) Knowledge, skills and motivation necessary to successfully implement participatory conservation,
3) Exchange of experience and field practice between provincial institutions and NGOs
4) A basis for more specific follow-up training and fieldwork on community resource use assessments, vegetation surveys, and protected areas assessments.

After this initial training, separate survey teams were selected for each set of followup activities, and each survey team participated in more detailed and focused fieldwork training prior to launching into the formal survey work (see below).

WWF and its partners undertook a series of field surveys in the target areas to the north, west and east of the provincial capital of Sen Monorom. The following surveys were undertaken:

Community resource use assessment: Resulted in an understanding of the relationships between local communities and natural resources in the dry forest landscape. (For more detail, please refer to section 3.4)

Vegetation ecology survey: Collected plant specimens from the dry forest landscape and established a permanent transect so that the seasonal variations in the vegetation could be studied and documented.

Protected areas assessment: Assisted the Ministry of Environment (MoE) in understanding the institutional and personnel issues associated with the three "paper parks" in the dry forest landscape. This assessment provided valuable information to the MoE for it to use when it seeks to establish a management presence in these protected areas.

Elephant survey: Assessed the presence and absence of the elephant in the dry forest in light of the seasonable availability of water and significant hunting pressures.

* The surveys were specifically aimed at identifying a) the status and distribution of the wildlife; b) the community's resource use; and c) the present capacity to manage protected areas in the Dry Forests in order to establish where critical interventions are required. Critical conservation zones will be identified based on the results of these surveys and those of other organizations at the upcoming "*Conservation Strategy Workshop: Dry Forest Landscapes of Northern and Northeastern Cambodia*" which will be held in Cambodia in June 2001. Maps based on the surveys will be refined during the workshop and presented to provincial officials after this event as a baseline of data. The status of wildlife poaching and appropriate interventions will also emerge from the discussions at the June workshop.

* These surveys were the natural extension of the above-mentioned training course and provided an opportunity not only to acquire valuable primary data, but also for the newly trained provincial and national staff members to test their field skills.

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

Result (Activity) 3.1: Socioeconomic Assessment for the Forests of the Lower Mekong

To complement the Biodiversity Vision process undertaken for the FLM, it was planned to undertake an ecoregional scale socio-economic assessment. A plan and draft ToR for a number of studies was prepared. In the process, discussions with key partners regarding their interest in participating and the feasability of these large-scale studies led the ecoregion team to redesign the studies. It was decided that other activities under this objective were already addressing some of the key threats (unsustainable forest management, illegal wildlife trade) and that other issues would be more effectively understood and addressed at the priority area scale. However, one additional ER-scale study is likely to be defined in conjunction with partners and pursued in the second half of the reporting year. The main criteria will be applicability as action research.

Result (Activity) 3.2 Promote sustainable forest management across the Forests of the Lower Mekong

Vietnam

The first set of Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), drafted by the Vietnam National Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification, were field tested in two sites. The environmental and procedural set of C&I were tested in Nghe An Province and the social C&I were field tested later in Gia Lai Province. The first field test included a consultant from Indonesia who advised the Working Group on the application of FSC standards using C&I appropriate to Vietnam. The consultant also identified improvements neededin the C&I in orderto meet the FSC standards. The review process is now complete and the C&I are presently being revised.

In December 2000, a field survey team undertook a biological assessmentof the forests planned for production in the Kon Plong Forest Enterprise. The aim of the assessment was to describe the biological status of the forests and to identify suitable areas within the forest for certified sustainable management. The survey recognized that portions of the forest would have to be set aside from production to ensure that the biodiversity value of the forests is not reduced in the future. The team has prepared a full report which is presently being translated, in full, into Vietnamese and will be published in May 2001. Since the survey, the remaining funding needed for this project has been secured from the Royal Netherlands Embassy to prepare the forest management for certification.

Cambodia

Forestry legislation in Cambodia has been in various stages of development for much of the past 4 years. Throughout this period of time, external consultants have drafted laws, which have then been revised by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) with limited if any meaningful consultation with concerned stakeholders. The current version of the law has a number of flaws. Specifically, it tightens central level control over the forest resources, it consolidates such control within MAFF, it ignores the roles and responsibilities of other government agencies let alone local communities, and it conflicts with key provisions of the "land law". Despite these flaws, the Prime Minister, under pressure from donors, ordered the

MAFF to present his law to the Council of Ministers (CoM) and the National Assembly for consideration.

Advocacy

WWF, in consultation with the NGO Forum and other organizations played a key role in a) drawing attention to the flaws in the law and developing the interest of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in reviewing the approval process and the content of the law itself; b) stalling the approval process within the CoM; c) encouraging the World Bank to retain a consultant to assist MAFF in improving the law; and, d) offering insights and comments on the law in the revision process. The law is still in the drafting stage. Although time for NGO input has been less than ideal, they, for the first time are actually having some impact on the development of this important piece of resource use legislation. WWF has played a lead role changing the way in which this vital piece of legislation was developed while influencing its content to address environmental and social concerns.

Forest Certification

Another element of WWF's planned work in the Cambodian forestry sector was the establishment of a national working group on sustainable forest management. Based on a feasability assessment it has become clear that the time is not yet right for this arrangement. There are two primary reasons why this is true:

* Cambodia is currently awash with standards, protocols, guidelines describing how forests should be managed. These have been developed over the course of the 4-year old forest policy reform process, spearheaded by the World Bank. The documents are generally not too far off from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) principles and criteria. Unfortunately, few if any of these protocols have been put into place. Cambodia requires field implementation to provide a practical grounding for the theoretical concepts more urgently that further formal guidance.

* Forest management in Cambodia is undertaken largely by concessionaires. The lack of well-formed forestry law, confusion over royalty payments, and uncertainty over the government's new requirements for management planning are taking priority in the minds of the concessionaires. Until concessionaires see it in their interest to join in a process to develop standards, such efforts would not be an efficient use of time and resources.

The Cambodia Office staff will continue to develop activities related to forest certification without a National Working Group (see next steps, below). In September, when the management plans are finalized and a government decision is made to accept them or not, the future position of certification in Cambodia will be more certain. The possibility of approaching certification through a National Working group will then be reexamined

Stakeholder Consultation

Over the reporting period WWF has held a number of meetings with government officials and industry on the future of certification in Cambodia. The following have been identified as the key challenges facing certification.

- **Concessionaires are wary of seeking certification at this time due to current management planning responsibilities and an uncertain climate for concessions.** Concessionaires are focusing on developing new management plans for September 2001. It is possible that these plans will not be approved, or that the boundaries of

concessions will change. In this uncertain atmosphere, concessionaires are not willing to begin making investments in improving management for future certification. However, as the Sub-Decree on Forest Concession Management incorporates several similar principles to the FSC P&C, progress toward legal compliance may represent progress toward the improvements required for certification as well. There was general consensus that concessionaires need to focus on basic improvements before certification can be considered more seriously. It is worth noting that SL International is seeking to become ISO certified before considering FSC certification.

- **Concessionaires are not convinced of the marketing possibilities for certified wood.** Most wood products from Cambodia currently go to China or Japan, and most of this is plywood (about 60 percent although precise estimates were not available). Neither China nor Japan is demanding certified wood at present. Concessionaires acknowledge that certification could open European and North American markets that cannot be accessed with their current uncertified products, but they want more information on these markets regarding their specific location, their value and their long-term reliability.

- **Department of Forestry and Wildlife is very supportive of the concept of certification and would like to see movement toward certification by concessionaires.** However, certification is a voluntary process; concessionaires must be committed to certification for it to be possible. DFW suggests a continuation of efforts to raise awareness about certification and perhaps the establishment of a pilot site to make the certification process and benefits more clear and tangible.

In light of these findings, the next steps in the process are as follows:

- Meet with concessionaires after management plans have been approved (i.e., after September 2001) and they have more certainty about their concessions.
- Collect information on: (a) markets for certified wood, and (b) case studies of certified forests around the world to improve understanding of decision-making, costs, and benefits. Provide this information to interested concessionaires as it becomes available. Make the subject of certified wood product markets and certification costs and benefits a centerpiece of any future meeting on certification.
- Continue awareness raising efforts regarding certification. Consider options for developing a pilot site for certified forest management. If concessionaires are not interested, evaluate opportunities for piloting certification of a community forest.

WWF still hopes that a progressive concessionaire will step forward and express an interest in bringing part of its forest management unit under certification. As with the development of the National Working Group, it may be best to wait until September 2001, the date at which draft management plans are required, before approaching the concessionaires again.

Result (Activity) 3.3 Promote the control of illegal wildlife trade in Laos

The scale and intensity of the trade in wildlife in Laos has been identified as one of the major threats to the biodiversity of the Forests of the Lower Mekong, At present, Laos is not a signatory to the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and has little present capacity to control the flow of wildlife across its national borders. Laos is the only country that has not ascended to CITES within the Forests of the Lower Mekong. In response,

this project was developed to facilitate the ascension to CITES and to support improved enforcement of wildlife trade laws at strategic border sites.

This project was initially delayed due to the administrative difficulties associated with establishing projects in Laos. However, in December 2000, WWF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Laos Government and the project has since proceededed as planned, starting with development of a detailed implementation plan.

The first activity undertaken was the development of materials to inform the Laos Government representatives about ascension to CITES. The materials are being compiled in the form of a coursebook that includes:

* A paper describing the aims, objectives and activities of CITES
* All the CITES documentation translated into the Lao language
* An annotated list of the Lao laws related to wildlife and wildlife trade
* Guidance notes on ascension to CITES
* Presentations prepared for the National Workshop (see below)

Preparations for a national workshop, to be held in July 2001, began as soon as the implementation plan was completed. The purpose of the workshop is to inform the senior government officials of the purpose of CITES and to inform these officials of the implications and obligations of signing CITES. The underlying objective of the meeting is to encourage the Laos government to accede to CITES. It is hoped that it may be possible to come to some declaration of intent by the end of the workshop although this is not specified in the agenda. The agenda and participant list has been drafted. Briefing materials and presentations have been prepared according to the agenda and objectives of the workshop. The workshop will include representatives of CITES management in China and Vietnam. These representatives will provide a useful perspective on the obligations and opportunities of membership of CITES.

During project approval discussions, the Government of Laos decided that inter-ministerial meetings planned to discuss conflicting policies and strategies for improved cooperation, specifically at international border crossings were unnecessary. The planned content of the meeting has therefore been transferred to the National Workshop.

A training team has been assembled comprising staff from TRAFFIC South-east Asia and experts from Laos. These materials are being developed and will include: the coursebook being prepared for the National Workshop; identification manuals for commonly traded endangered species in Laos (under preparation); and a guide for trainers containing an enforcement laws manual, case studies, and specific training materials on cross border trade demand, collaboration (national and international) and trading tricks.

Preparations are being made to conduct training at priority border sites to improve the law enforcement capacities of border customs officials. These activities are scheduled for the next reporting period.

Result (Activity) 3.4 Promote appropriate land tenure policies, especially related to indigenous people in Northeastern Cambodia

WWF completed the following activities according to the revised project concept and workplan for the Community Resource Use Assessments and Mapping Project in Mondulkiri Province:

* WWF collected relevant background information (including maps, census information, and reports on communities and biodiversity in Mondulkiri) from NGOs, government agencies, and other organizations.

* Using the collected background information as baseline date, WWF staff undertook more detailed planning, especially related to training on community mapping techniques, PRA training and field surveys including draft criteria for village survey selection.

* Visited Sen Monomrom Dec. 5-9 to meet with local government officials (Governor, Provincial Environment Department, Provincial Department of Agriculture, etc) as well as other people and organizations (such as Medicines Du Monde, Refugees International, World Food Program, Tiger Conservation Program, etc) to present the proposed activities of WWF and to briefly assess the local situation (including assessment of staff capacity, logistical information, local travel, security issues, etc). This introductory visit laid the groundwork for the follow-up work in the community resource use assessment and mapping component and other components of the larger ERC planning process that is being undertaken in Mondulkiri to promote appropriate land tenure policies.

* Conducted training on PRA and community resource mapping. (Please see section 2.2 Capacity Building above.)

* Carried out field surveys in two target areas in the dry forest Koh Nhek and Pich Chenda Districts. The surveys were completed in February 2001 and the results are currently being analyzed. It is expected that full reports will be available during the next reporting period. The reports were completed in a draft form in March. The results/reports are presently being presented to stakeholders in provincial meetings for comment. The feedback from the Provinces will be fed into the reports and the final report will be produced in Khmer in June. It will then be translated in to English and used for the Dry Forests conservation strategy meeting.

The reports will include summaries the issues local communities face in terms of natural resource management and the impact of this resource use on the environment. The studies found that although the communities are from the same ethnic group they have different resource use practices. The communities in Pich Chenda were mainly involved with shifting agriculture while those communities studied in Koh Nhek practiced lowland rice cultivation, collected NTFPs, hunted and fished.

Stakeholder Consultation

The results of the recent community resource use assessment surveys were presented to provincial government authorities in late-April 2001. In addition, key government officials have been invited to participate in the *"Conservation Strategy Workshop: Dry Forest Landscapes of Northern and Northeastern Cambodia"* to be held in June 2001. It is thought that these first two initial presentation/discussion sessions will provide the government officials with a basic understanding of the issues and the needs of the provinces upland and lowland peoples. This is the critical first step in ensuring that the resource use patterns and rights of these people are respected in future decision-making.

Objective IV: Lay the foundation for lasting conservation

Result (Activity) 4.1 Develop an effective information system for the Forests of the Lower Mekong

In February 2001, the ecoregion management team led a meeting for all WWF Indochina staff to discuss the methodologies, staffing and supervision and role of an information system for the Forests of the Lower Mekong. Following this meeting, an implementation plan for the system was designed and Terms of Reference for the Information System Officer and Design consultant were written. In addition to this, the necessary hardware to support the information system was purchased and set up in preparation for the arrival of the Information System Officer. The selection procedure for the information officer and the design consultant has begun and both should be in position in May.

In addition, A considerable amount of reference material was collected throughout the initial stages of the FLM program. In order to maximize the value of this resource, two volunteer assistants (Nguyen Thu Huyen and Tran Bao Ngoc) have been categorizing and cataloguing this material. A Library Database system has been established linked to the main office library system and will eventually become a part of the Forests of the Lower Mekong Information System (see Activity 4.1).

Objective V: Marine Conservation Initiative for Con Dao National Park

Result (Activity) 5.1:

Activity for this objective began with field survey work. Field survey activities are focused on two topics: baseline surveys of the reef to describe the status after the damage caused by Hurricane Linda and to establish a set of benchmark data from which future monitoring can be based and surveys to establish conservation activities specific to the Dugong.

For the Dugong work, a local consultant was contracted to survey, together with the Con Dao National Park, all seagrass beds. A report has been completed on the status and distribution of the seagrass bed including initial estimates of the Dugong populations and preliminary assessments of the key threats to this population. These surveys will be continued in order to refine the results produced during the preliminary surveys.

Seven members of the Con Dao park staff have been sent to the Nha Trang diving facilities to be trained to Advanced Diving standards. The training will also include reef survey methodologies and the identification of marine biodiversity. This will allow them to undertake more sophisticated biological surveys.

Table of Progress

Benchmark Number	***Benchmark/Output***	***Status****
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 Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion complex established.	On track
2.1	♦ 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 Central Annamites. ♦ Program actions in Central Annamites related to government policies/programs (particularly Five Million Hectares) identified and initiated.	On track
2.2	♦ Assessments of PAs, vegetation, and resource use in Eastern Plains completed. ♦ Eastern Plains 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	SFM in Vietnam: * 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	SFM in Cambodia: * 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	Lao Wildlife Trade: * 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 Mondulkiri Province.	Completed
4.1	Ecoregional information system established.	On track

5.1	Con Dao, Vietnam: * 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

Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Next steps

The next six months will be focused on achieving four major outputs as specified in the implementation plan - launching the next phase of activities under the ecoregion program:

- Biological and socio-economic assessments completed within the Central Annamites and a draft strategy completed in readiness for a Strategy Planning workshop
- A conservation strategy planning meeting held bringing together conservation biologists, natural resource managers and Cambodian government representatives. Further steps to obtain GEF funding for one protected area initiative (as identified in the conservation strategy planning meeting) will be made.
- Biodiversity Vision published and launched at four venues (Phnom Penh, Hanoi Cambodia, and Washington, DC). The communication materials will be published and released at the same time.
- Implementation plan and funding strategy for the FY02 will be designed

In addition to these major outputs, activities in the next six months will include some direct action at the field level:

- A project based on developing better Community-based Natural Resource Management throughout Cambodia including pilot sites in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests
- Baseline support for protected area management in Song Thanh Nature Reserve, Vietnam. This has been identified as an immediate priority action as the reserve presently has next to no capacity to manage the reserve
- "Reef Check" surveys to provide baseline monitoring data of the Con Dao National Park

In addition to these major outputs, supporting management activities will be conducted such as the consolidation of the information system and increased efforts to draw in further, wider partnerships for the two focal ecoregions.

Success Stories

Steady progress has been made with all the activities undertaken as part of the conservation program for the FLM. One achievement, however, stands as a landmark for conservation in the Greater Annamites and for Vietnam –

The Government of Vietnam's commitment to the Greater Annamites Ecoregion program and the Central Annamites Initiative.

In October, leading government representatives including the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (the Ministry responsible for the protection of forest wildlife) supported the development of an ecoregion program for the Greater Annamites. Twelve representatives of the main ministries, Government special committees, Universities and

research institutes with a stake in the development of better natural resource management and biodiversity conservation agreed to form a steering committee. This committee developed the Central Annamites Initiative as the flagship activity under the conservation program for the Greater Annamites.

In November, an advisory group formed the first multi-sector partnership to develop a programmatic approach to conservation for an area stretching through eight provinces. It is the largest most ambitious conservation initiative undertaken in Vietnam. The Initiative is a serious declaration by the Government of Vietnam to undertake a major commitment to the conservation of biodiversity in the Central Annamites and the Greater Annamite Ecoregion as a whole.

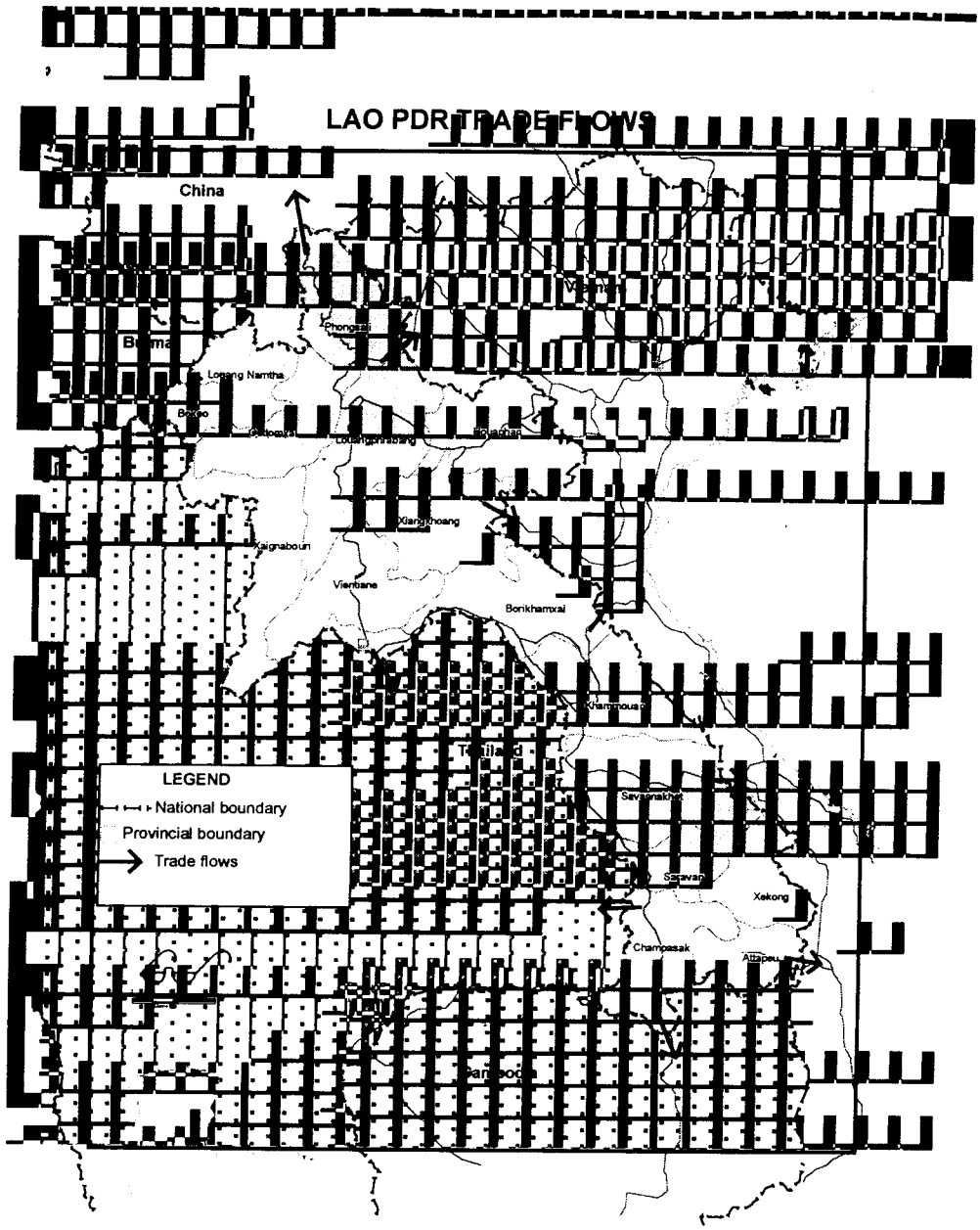
Challenges and Lessons Learnt

It is expected that trying to achieve conservation for a region encompassing three countries may have certain challenges. One of the challenges that has been particularly apparent during the last six months has been the difficulty of implementing actions efficiently over borders, whether they are at the national or district level. Ensuring that the important stakeholders are fully involved equally has been a basic principle of the work. When priorities have been set and actions identified, often certain areas/individuals/organizations are excluded. This tends to alienate these groups. Working over such a large area and with such a large and wide group of stakeholders, the challenge has been to sustain interest in those uninvolved or unaffected by current implementation but who have an important role to play in the long-term. Diplomacy and care are required at the implementation stage just as much as it is in the initial planning and preparation stages.

Certain elements of ecoregion conservation are based on a generally standardized approach. Biological assessment methodologies have been largely standardized throughout the world, for example. However, one of the main lessons learnt from the development of the two parallel priority area initiatives has been the need for flexibility inimplementation. For instance, in the Central Annamites it has proved to be more important to build the partnerships and support before embarking on the assessments necessary to develop the conservation strategy, while in the Eastern Plains dry forests it has been better to go ahead and undertake the assessments while the field conditions are suitable and build the institutional frameworks as part of the development of the strategy.

Successful ecoregion conservation needs to be built on a strong foundation of cooperative partnerships and activities across sectors and across scales. Within this broad framework, each conservation initiative must be designed and managed with a degree of flexibility to account for the specific circumstances and priorities of each situation. The FLM has built this strong foundation by ensuring that activities are based on the best information available or obtainable, and that partnerships engage the support of appropriate and effective stakeholders in an honest and open process of participation. The FLM has been flexible where needed, whether in response to weather conditions or government policies, designing and managing its initiatives accordingly.

Map : Wildlife trade flows in Laos



Sulu Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion

Project Title: Marine Conservation in the Eastern Indonesia and Sulu Sulawesi Seas

Description of site

The Eastern Indonesian and Sulu Sulawesi Seas harbor the most biologically diverse assemblage of marine life known anywhere on Earth. The ecoregion hosts over 80 coral genera and more than 450 species of coral, whereas the entire Caribbean Sea harbors only 50 species. This rich resource base also provides a livelihood for over 50 million people and is a major economic engine of the regional economy. Tragically, this flourishing of life is under siege from human population growth, destructive fishing practices, poorly planned development, over-consumption, pollution, and insufficient conservation resources and capacity. The recent economic and social strife in Indonesia has exacerbated regional marine resource degradation as economic urgencies force people into unsustainable exploitation. However, with a major portion of its economy based on marine products, long-term sustainability of these resources is a key to the economic recovery of Indonesia. In the face of urgent conservation and economic sustainability priorities, existing management efforts are not sufficient to protect priority marine resources across this vast area. As a result, WWF is multiplying its collaborative conservation action in the region with a focus on key sites and strengthening economic incentives for conservation. The long-term conservation imperative is to create both models and mechanisms to enhance the spread of conservation management across key priority areas such that the ecological and economic integrity of these globally outstanding marine ecoregions is maintained in perpetuity.

Strategic Goals & Objectives

The ultimate goal of WWF's marine conservation program in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas and Eastern Indonesian Seas is to enhance the long-term ecological and economic sustainability of the natural resources and biological diversity of these high priority marine ecoregions.This will be accomplished by working with local stakeholders to conserve a representative set of important biotas, habitats, ecosystem processes, and natural resources that characterize the outstanding biological nature of these marine ecoregions. This requires significant scaling up from the historical level of conservation activity. Using the Ecoregion Conservation approach, WWF strives to create the framework for conservation of large ecosystems. It does so by working with experts to prioritize which areas and natural resources are most critical to the overall biological character of an ecoregion and then developing strategic action plans to pursue the conservation of these high priority places and resources. The development and implementation of such a plan requires the formation of strategic networks of partnerships, and greatly increased action by global bodies, regional bodies, governments, industry, the private sector, NGOs, local communities, and individuals. As a result, partnership building is a key feature of Ecoregion Conservation

In a recent biological prioritization (Biodiversity Vision) workshop facilitated by WWF, a group of over 80 regional scientists and conservation managers articulated a biodiversity vision statement for the SSME: According to the scientists, in the long-term they hope that the SSME will be:

"A marine ecoregion that remains a globally unique center of biodiversity, with vibrant ecological integrity, including all species, assemblages, communities, habitats, and ecological processes. A highly productive ecoregion that sustainably and equitably provides for the socio-economic and cultural needs of the human communities dependent on it. An ecoregion where biodiversity and productivity are sustained through the generations by participatory and collaboration management across all political and cultural boundaries"

WWF fully supports this vision and is devoted to doing all it can to work with partners to achieve it. A similar vision will be developed for the Eastern Indonesian Seas.

To help achieve this vision, WWF is developing a network of conservation efforts in priority areas across the Sulu-Sulawesi and Eastern Indonesian Seas. Both Bunaken and Bali Barat Parks are key anchors within this network of conservation areas. WWF is using conservation programs at sites such as Bali Barat and Bunaken as a launching pad for the expansion of conservation effort both across a network of sites in the marine ecoregions and in areas adjacent to these high priority sites. By establishing a strong model for multi-stakeholder conservation at Bunaken and Bali Barat National Park, WWF will help to demonstrate which approaches can be successful thus setting the foundation for expansion to adjacent areas and other priority areas of the SSME and Eastern Indonesian Seas. WWF itself is spearheading this expansion and is also working with numerous partners to help support their efforts to expand conservation. Other priority areas where WWF is working are found throughout the Philippines and Malaysia, such as Balayan Bay, Eastern Sabah, Northern Palawan, the Cagayan Ridge, and others. In addition, WWF is working with TNC and others toward expansion of conservation efforts into the Sangihe Talau Islands in Northern Sulawesi and is setting up programs in Bali to generate funding to help support conservation both throughout Bali and Eastern Indonesia.

Economic Incentives for long-term conservation are a critical element of the Ecoregion Conservation approach and are being pursued both at individual sites and across entire sectors. For example, WWF's consistent support for Marine Aquarium Council certification is a key to setting up long-term economic incentives for sustainable management. The approach promoted by the MAC has great potential to transform an entire resource sector to sustainability. This approach can expand into areas that are not formally protected and have a significant benefit to natural resources management. Other similar approaches to economic incentives that support sustainability in resource sectors in the matrix between protected areas are a critical component of the Ecoregion Conservation approach (e.g. such as support for community-based food fish sustainability and aquaculture.)

Under this USAID funded project, WWF's Ecoregion Conservation Approach is supported by the two mutually reinforcing objectives:

Project Objectives:

I. Enhancing conservation action at critical marine sites in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas and Eastern Indonesian Seas
II. Using market forces to support coral reef conservation throughout the Eastern Indonesian and Sulu-Sulawesi Seas

Collaborators/Partners

* Bunaken National Park Authority – North Sulawesi

* Management Board of Bunaken National Park
* NRM II – USAID Project
* North Sulawesi Watersports Association (NSWA)
* Team Raja Laut- Bunaken
* Government of North Sulawesi
* Bali Barat National Park Authority – Bali
* Dive operators / sports association in Bali (Gahawisri)
* Tourism association in Bali
* Bali Government (Environmental Bureau and Maritime & Fisheries Agency)
* Bali Barat-based Resorts Hotels
* Police and Navy Forces in Bali
* Department of Maritime and Fisheries
* Marine Aquarium Council

Summary

Objective I:

Enhancing conservation action at critical marine sites: In response to the persistent threats to the long-term ecological integrity of the most productive marine environment of the Eastern Indonesia and Sulawesi Seas, WWF initiated Partners for Park Initiatives (later called Friends of the Reef) for the priority areas within the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion Program. This program is striving to work with local constituencies to help them manage and conserve the outstanding resources of two pilot sites, Bunaken National Park- North Sulawesi and Bali Barat National Park in Bali. The funds provided by USAID play a critical role in enabling WWF to partner with several stakeholders in the project sites and to secure co-financing from other donors including the Packard Foundation, WWF/Netherlands and others. Some of the most notable accomplishments of the program within the reporting period include:

* Signed MOU between WWF and the Bunaken Park Management Board (Dewan Pengelolaan Bunaken) for the enhancement of patrol activities within the park and adjacent areas in March 2001. The supported patrols have caught eight (8) destructive fishers (bomber) in the area recently and prosecution of these individuals is in progress.
* Due to previous works of the USAID- funded NRM II project, North Sulawesi Watersports Association (NSWA), Bunaken Park, and the North Sulawesi Government, the entrance fee system for the Bunaken Park has been set up. This is in line with the sustainable financing mechanism that needs to be developed under the Friends of the Reef Program.
* Friends of the Reef Program in Bali Barat National Park has achieved buy-in by multi stakeholders (dive operators, resorts, police, park authority, local fishermen and government) through the enactment of and agreement to a 10 point of code of conduct to support environmentally friendly - marine dive tourism in the Park.

* Under the Friends of the Reef Program the intensive and effective patrol system for Bali Barat is being agreed upon and will be conducted by the Park Authority and Navy & Police, and supported by local-based dive resorts.
* Friends of the Reefs workshop in Bali invited representatives from Bunaken's program (NSWA, NRMII, Dewan and Bunaken Park Authority) in which knowledge and experiences on the collaborative coral reef management between Bali and Bunaken was extensively shared among partners. This includes the plan of establishing sustainable financing mechanism and patrol systems within both parks and also beyond. The multi-stakeholder workshop has created and agreed upon a common vision for the management of Bali Barat National Park.
* An Effective Learning Network that allows knowledge exchanges for the enhancement of common vision on co-managed marine resources between two pilot sites (Bali and Bunaken program) is in progress.

Objective II:

Using market forces to support coral reef conservation: The marine aquarium industry provides an excellent opportunity to use market forces to enhance coral reef conservation. Transforming the marine ornamentals trade into market-driven and industry-supported sustainability has important challenges in Indonesia - but also has great potential to contribute to the country's strategic needs for a stable and sustainable economy and environment. Indonesia has limited capacity to develop sustainable, environmentally sound income opportunities, especially in rural areas, or to manage and conserve critically important coral reef resources. In addition, the new Ministry for Marine Resources and the Maritime Council represent unprecedented opportunities to take advantage of a new interest in the environmentally sound and sustainable use of marine resources in Indonesia. As a result, Indonesia, including both the Sulu-Sulawesi and Eastern Indonesian Seas, is a priority country for the Marine Aquarium Council Program. Some of the most notable accomplishments of the MAC within the reporting period include:

* The Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) finalized Core Standards and Best Practice guidance and other supporting documents, with participation from stakeholders in Indonesia.
* MAC is continuing to undertake consultations and expand its network of support among government, industry, and conservation organizations in Indonesia.
* MAC is moving forward towards certification testing in Indonesia with active involvement of an increasing number of responsible industry operators.
* MAC is exploring partnership project opportunities with local marine conservation NGOs for training of collectors to ensure supply of certifiable marine ornamental in Indonesia.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Enhancing conservation action at critical marine sites:

Bunaken and Bali Barat Parks

Currently, most if not all marine conservation / protected areas in Indonesia are insufficiently managed to ensure the long-term persistence of their critical marine resources and their ecological integrity. There are too few trained individuals able to apply marine science and management skills, too little awareness of the importance of the Parks and other reef areas both

economically and biologically, too little support for conservation action over exploitative uses, and too few financial and human resources to handle management needs. Even in cases where there is outside technical and financial support there is generally no clear plan to ensure sustainability of conservation action at critical sites. Even though the management plan is available as in the case of Bunaken National Park and Bali Barat National Park, the capacity to implement them is still very much insufficient. As a result of these insufficiencies the critical marine resources of numerous important marine sites continue to decline.

Results for Activity 1.1: The Partners for Parks Initiative (Friends of the Reef), Indonesia

Please note, WWF has elected to change the name of the Partners for Parks initiative to the Friends of the Reef initiative as we feel it more adequately describes our coral reef conservation efforts both in and outside of parks. For the remainder of this report we will refer to the program as the Friends of the Reef Program.

In order to restore healthy marine systems and ensure long-term protection, WWF is focusing on partnerships, empowerment, shared responsibility and magnification. Strengthening stakeholder partnerships is a key aspect of democratization in Indonesia's rapidly changing climate of political decentralization. The initial WWF sites for this initiative are Bali Barat and Bunaken National Parks. The Friends of the Reef program is mainly aimed towards establishing a model of strong locally managed marine conservation areas that can then be magnified to other priority sites. In Bunaken, WWF is collaborating with the ongoing USAID NRM II project, which has developed and is implementing a management plan and has started private sector partnerships to support the park. The NRM II Project is pleased to have WWF involvement, particularly since WWF is committed to spending several years strengthening management and partnerships in the park. WWF will work closely with Park Management in all aspects of the Friends of the Reef Program. During the reporting period, the Friends of the Reef Program has made considerable progress in establishing critical strategic partnerships, eliciting stakeholder interest in conservation management, enforcing regulations against destructive activities, building capacity for effective marine management, and setting the foundation for sustainable-term conservation financing through dive fees.

Results of Activity 1.1.1: Monitoring & Enforcement

As stated in the project implementation plan; in Bunaken, WWF is drawing on its skills to facilitate community involvement and strengthen existing patrolling efforts by members of the North Sulawesi Water Sports Association (NSWA) and the new developed Bunaken Management Board. WWF is working on monitoring and enforcement in partnership with Park Authorities; the Bunaken Board; NRM II; Coelacanth researcher, NRM consultant, and advisor to WWF, Dr. Mark Erdmann; dive operators; local NGOs; and communities.

Accomplishment during the reporting period are:

* One full-time WWF staff has been based in Manado – North Sulawesi to manage the current program and also to enhance the strong partnership with multi stakeholders for the achievement of the project goal.
* WWF has given a sub-grant to support the patrol and law enforcement activities to the Bunaken Management Board that were documented by signing an MOU between WWF and the Dewan (the Vice Governor of North Sulawesi). The grant has been effectively

used to increase the capacity of regular patrols for the park so that they have been able to recently apprehend eight (8) fish bombers within and adjacent to Bunaken Park.

* The establishment of the Bunaken management board and the increased involvement of the local community in patrols has resulted in the effective partnership in the management of the park in Bunaken.
* The current success of patrols has resulted in a decrease in destructive fishing practices in Bunaken Park, as many bomb / cyanide fishers are increasingly afraid to be caught.
* The involvement of key persons of the Bunaken program and NRM II (Dr. Mark Erdmann, Reed Merrill, Tukiman and Dominggus Sinanu) in the Friends of the Reef workshop in Bali has resulted in an excellent exchange of knowledge and experiences on collaborative management of the park, so that the Bali-based stakeholders have increased their knowledge in park management.
* A common vision for Bali Barat National Park has been developed through the multi-stakeholder Friends of the Reef workshop – held in January of 2001. .
* A Code of Conduct containing ten commands of best practices in environmentally friendly dive tourism has been established through a multi-stakeholder process for Bali Barat National Park.

Results of Activity 1.1.2: Encourage environmentally sound science-based management

Currently, park heads and regional planners tend to base management decisions on resource-use patterns and development opportunities without adequate consideration of the ecological or environmental impacts. As a result, management decisions may not operate in the long term best interest of the biodiversity and ecosystems of the park. WWF is committed to helping park managers gather and use key ecological and environmental information to improve the management and long term conservation outcomes at the park.

Accomplishments during the reporting period are:

* Officials of the Bali Barat Park and Bali-based dive operators that are members of Friends of the Reef were given training on Reef Check methods so that they are able to conduct simple assessment of the coral reefs and associated reef fish within the park. This program will improve the monitoring and reef science capacity of the staff and other stakeholders so they can be more proactive in management decision making for the park.
* As a result of consultations, meetings, and trainings held by WWF, the park officials and stakeholders better understand marine resources and the park's function. As a result, most of the staff now recognize that the current park zonation should be reviewed and adjusted if it is to support long-term conservation goals of the park.
* Local knowledge interviews with fishers and dive operators in Bunaken have been carried out to identify locations and information on fish spawning aggregation sites. Further study is planned for October 2001. Weather and historical data on spawning suggest spawning aggregations are most active around October of each year.
* In Bali Barat, a detailed study on suitability of the area for coral reef rehabilitation and a coral farming project has been completed. Assisted by a scientist, the workplan for coral farming will begin in June.
* Under the related WWF fisheries program, WWF provided intensive training to officials, local NGOs, and students on fisheries monitoring, management aspects, and socio-

economic aspects for Bali Barat National Park. This involved training on fish spawning aggregation sites so that park staff knowledge of the most effective park zonation system was improved.

Activity 3: Partnerships and flagships

WWF works to facilitate the conservation action of other stakeholders. As a result, strategic and effective partnerships are a hallmark of WWF's conservation philosophy. Over the years, WWF has found that identifying and highlighting flagship species that are of interest due to their charismatic nature or economic importance has helped to increase interest and support for conservation activities and therefore enhance partnerships with key stakeholders. As part of the long term strategy to enhance conservation at key reef areas, WWF is devoting considerable effort to forming strategic partnerships and enhancing support by promoting conservation of specific flagship species and the broader ecosystem that sustains them.

Accomplishments during the reporting period are:

* A code of conduct for environmentally friendly marine dive tourism has been developed and adopted for Bali Barat National Park through a multi stakeholder workshop under the Friends of the Reef program (co-funded by WWF-Netherlands).
* Sustainable financing mechanisms (dive fees) that involve partnerships with the private sector have been started in Bunaken through the work of the North Sulawesi Water Sports Association, NRM II USAID project, Bunaken Park Authority and the local government. A similar financing mechanism has also been studied for Bali Barat, but the Bali stakeholders (dive operators, park authority and government) have proposed to develop a financing mechanism that covers not only the Bali Barat Park, but all of Bali WWF is now working with the Bali Government to investigate the feasibility of setting up a Bali wide dive fee. This should be a considerable source of conservation financing given that Bali has over 27,000 divers per year. Willingness to pay surveys have been distributed to dive operators and will be analyzed in approximately August or September of this year.. It was discussed that a certain percentage of revenue gained from the single park could also be allocated for national trust fund to substitute cost of management for marine parks that do not have the capacity to raise funds locally. As a result, conservation finance mechanisms in Bali have potential to support conservation throughout other areas of the Eastern Indonesian Seas Ecoregion.
* Outreach activities by WWF and other organizations have enhanced private sector interests (Dive and tourism operators) in park management. Their avid stakeholder participation in the volunteer Reef Check program indicates greater interest and enthusiasm in partnerships to support marine resource conservation within these parks.
* WWF's cooperation with Team Raja Laut (TRL) in Bunaken (which was formed to promote coelacanth conservation) was strengthened and the capacity of this group of youngsters was improved through training and more conservation related activities. The team is now responsible for the local knowledge inventory on fish spawning aggregation sites and is preparing to extend their activities into Sangihe Talaud area north of Bunaken. TRL is replicating this highly successful village initiative to other areas by forming other branches of the TRL in adjacent islands.
* Marine mammal surveys for the area around Bunaken and North Sulawesi have been identified as a critical step for promoting the conservation of flagship species. An effort to raise funds for these surveys has been launched.

* Flagship fisheries species are being surveyed by the WWF fisheries program (cofinancing to the EAP-EI grant) and will become a critical part of communications efforts on flagship species (in this case of economic and conservation value)

Activity 4: Communication, Magnification and Capacity Building Strategy

WWF is providing a platform to build capacity and communicate about successful tools to improve marine resource management, especially in the arena of multi-stakeholder marine protected area management. WWF is sharing our successes in multi-stakeholder marine management to elicit interest by other groups. The hope is that these groups will want to replicate and magnify this approach in other areas. WWF is encouraging this replication particularly in the priority areas of the SSME that were identified by recent Biodiversity Conservation Vision Workshop and in areas of the Eastern Indonesian Seas that have been identified by recent assessments. By targeting key actors ranging from national government and industries with a regional impact, to local park managers, communities and operators, the eventual target is widespread magnification of multi-stakeholder management approaches to other priority marine areas of these ecoregions..

A significant WWF effort is focusing on capacity building within the new Ministry of Maritime Affairs and relevant provincial planning boards. This is to ensure that an effective network of marine protected areas is seen as a priority, and to expose planners and decision-makers to new approaches for managing marine and coastal resources such as ecoregion conservation in grappling with larger scale issues. WWF has recently presented the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas Biodiversity Conservation Vision (developed by over 80 regional marine scientists and managers) to the Indonesian Government. The Government in turn asked WWF to lead the process of developing conservation action strategies for North Sulawesi and East Kalimantan WWF is pursuing this enthusiastically and has arranged for stakeholder meetings to initiate discussions for the development of these strategies.

Accomplishments during the reporting period are:

* Leaflets and brochures on Friends of the Reefs program were printed and circulated during the International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS) in Bali, October 2000. The program was covered by local, national and international media.
* Media coverage was done for Bali- Reef Check. This includes the printing and circulation of Reef Check protocols and reports that are made available to public.
* The report on Friends of the Reef Workshop in Bali was printed and circulated to stakeholders, including Department of Maritime and Fisheries Jakarta, Ministry of Environment Jakarta, and Department of Forestry Jakarta, and key partners in Manado. The products are electronically accessible.
* As a member of the advisory board of the Provincial Coordinating Committee for Bali-Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), WWF has been advocating for the model of strategic partnership in park management (including the sustainable financing scheme) to be adopted for other priority areas. As a result of decentralization in Indonesia and our consistent lobbying, decision-makers are increasingly open to multi-stakeholder partnerships in management. WWF plans to take advantage of this increasing openness in expanding the ecoregion conservation approach to other areas of Bali and the Eastern Indonesian Sea.

Objective II: Using market forces to support coral reef conservation

MAC has a rapidly growing stakeholder network in Indonesia, e.g. with government agencies, industry, and conservation NGOs. MAC is expanding our program of consultations in the stakeholder network, and we are beginning the process of developing and testing certification. The most critical need now is to build on these initial efforts and move certification development through to a significant level of implementation. This requires in-country capacity building, focusing on coordination, training, informational exchange, and efforts to increase understanding of certification among collectors and industry. USAID support has played an important role during the reporting period in helping MAC to hire an Indonesian consultant to strengthen the country program and to review standards and guidelines for certification. Details are below.

Results for Activity 2.1.1: Establish MAC Coordinator and Office for Indonesia

Accomplishments during the reporting period are:

In the process of establishing a full-time in-country presence through a MAC Coordinator and Office, MAC has been trying to balance the urgent need for full-time coordinator and the need to have a well-qualified candidate. MAC has not yet found a full time Coordinator, but in March of 2001, recruited Gayatri Lilley as consultant to develop MAC Coordination in Indonesia. Ms. Lilley is a well-qualified marine conservation professional, who is well known to the Indonesian NGOs, government, and industry communities. As the Marine Policy Advisor for WWF Indonesia from 1996 to 1999, she assisted and facilitated the development of a manual to promote sustainable use of corals in trade working closely with the Association of Shells and Corals of Indonesia (AKKII), Nature Protection and Conservation (PHPA), Center for Oceanology Research and Development (P3O), Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI), Department of Trade, TNC and WWF. As the MAC Indonesia Coordination Consultant, Ms. Lilley is assisting MAC in data collection and network development activities, including compiling policy and legal/regulatory documents relevant to marine ornamental trade, identifying data sources for the trade, developing a profile of the industry, expanding existing MAC network of individual companies, government agencies and NGOs, and communicating MAC Standards and certification processes.

Results for Activity 2.1.2: Test standards and certification system for marine ornamentals collection and export

Accomplishments during the reporting period are:

* The first review of MAC Core Standards has been completed by the Standards Advisory Group (SAG) and a public review. After going through the second SAG review, the MAC Core Standards will be finalized by mid 2001. Indonesia represents 17% of total SAG membership, which covers a range of stakeholders from around the world. There are 13 SAG members from Indonesia including representatives of industry, conservation, government agencies, and the academic community.

* The informal consultative group on marine ornamental certification development established by MAC was an initial step towards the development of MAC Indonesia Working Group that will focus on the technical aspect of certification development in Indonesia. From the industry, the chairperson of AKKII as well as the chairperson of the

BFEA have recently expressed the associations' commitment to move forward with certification test case activities. Similar expression of interests have also been voiced by a number marine conservation organizations, namely Yayasan Telapak Indonesia and WWF Indonesia.

Results of Activity 2.1.3: Build capacity of collectors and industry operators to participate in certification

Because certification is new to this industry, documents that clearly explain the standards, documentation system, etc. must be developed and distributed, e.g. manuals to guide industry participants through self-evaluation procedures, guidelines to explain how to upgrade systems and practices to "certifiable" standards, and training materials for collectors.

Accomplishments during the reporting period are:

In response to the need for coordinated ongoing consultation and capacity building in Indonesia, MAC has proposed establishing an informal consultative group on marine ornamental certification development. The main functions of the group are to provide stakeholder input to certification development in Indonesia, to work with MAC to coordinate certification development, to coordinate activities and input of stakeholders relevant to certification development, and to provide a forum to better understand the capacity needs of stakeholders including collectors and operators. The informal group includes of representatives from:

- Indonesian Government:
  - Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (Departemen Kelautan dan Perikanan, DKP)
  - Department of Trade and Industry (Departemen Industri dan Perdagangan, Deperindag)
- Marine Ornamental Industry:
  - Indonesia Coral, Shell and Ornamental Fish Association (Asosiasi Koral, Kerang, dan Ikan Hias Indonesia, AKKI)
  - Bali Fish Exporter Association (BFEA)
- Non-Governmental Organizations:
  - Indonesia Ecolabeling Institute (Lembaga Ekolabel Indonesia, LEI)
  - WWF Indonesia
  - Yayasan Telapak Indonesia
  - International Marinelife Alliance (IMA) Indonesia

MAC has been maintaining regular communication with the informal group members from the MAC office in Honolulu. Since March 2001, the MAC Indonesia Coordination Consultant has taken the lead on the consultation process. Most recently, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) held an international coral trade workshop in Indonesia from April 9-12 2001 and MAC took this opportunity to bring in certification issues to the presentations and discussions with its Indonesian stakeholders participating in the workshop.

Table of Progress

Benchmark Number	*Benchmark/Output*	*Status**
Monitoring and Enforcement	Total elimination of destructive fishing practices in the park	On-track
Environmentally sound, science based park management	Applied conservation sciences in marine park management	Mixed Performance
Partnership and Flagships	Established strong partnership for sustainable management of the park	On-track
Communication Strategy	The conservation program is adopted by stakeholders	On-track
• Establish MAC Coordinator and Office for Indonesia	Establishing a full-time in-country presence through a MAC Coordinator and Office. Accelerating certification development. Undertaking expanded efforts in stakeholder consultations and network development.	On-Track
Test certification standards	Creating and coordinating a MAC Indonesia working group. Coordinating the review and adaptation of MAC international standards. Coordinating the testing of standards by industry members, especially field collectors, to establish certification experience and capacity.	On-Track
Build capacity of collectors and industry operators	Developing partnerships to provide training to ensure that field collectors have the skills to participate in certification. Undertaking an outreach program to ensure that all industry participants are informed of the certification system and provided with guidelines for achieving compliance.	On-Track

* Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Next steps

With reference to the project implementation plan, the steps in the next six months would be as follows:

OBJECTIVE I:

* Completing the willingness to pay survey for Bali-Friends of the Reef .
* Officially launching the Friends of the Reefs Program.
* Building capacity for Reef Check in north Sulawesi (Bunaken).

* Securing the endorsement of the Bali and national government for the sustainable financing scheme for Bali and/or Barat National Park.
* The recently developed Code of Conduct for eco-friendly dive tourism in Bali Barat and Bunaken is put into full implementation.
* Achieving government adoption and effective management of an entrance fee system in Bunaken.
* Conducting regular patrols for Bali Barat and Bunaken so that the destructive fishing practices in the parks are significantly reduced.
* Ensuring that the conservation sciences (i.e. knowledge of fish spawning aggregation) is adopted by the government for improved park management (improved zonation in both parks).

OBJECTIVE II:

- *Testing Certification*

As the next step, the MAC Indonesia Coordination Consultant is enlisting individuals representing industry operators, academic institutions, conservation organizations, and government agencies to become members of the Indonesia Working Group. In the next few months the working group is expected to identify collections areas, collectors, and exporters that have the potential to participate in activities in preparation for the certification test case. In addition, MAC has also established contact with local certification companies with potential interests in involvement in MAC certification development activities.

As a part of the Core Standards review and in-country adaptation process, the MAC Indonesia Coordination Consultant will work together with MAC Accreditation Officer to develop a series of Interpretive Manuals for each Core Standards components (Ecosystem Management, Collection and Fishing, and Handling and Transportation) and the corresponding Self-Assessment Questionnaires.

- *Capacity Building*

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 use a series of Interpretive Manuals and Assessment Questionnaires to 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. The informal consultative group on marine ornamental certification development will be a key vehicle by which to identify target audiences and needs in terms of skills building.

To create the optimum level of critical mass of certifiable collection areas and collectors, MAC is exploring partnership opportunities with marine conservation NGOs that are interested in developing training programs for ecosystem management and collection and fishing practices that meet Core Standards Training Course Acceptance Criterion. These NGOs will work with local communities and collecting companies to help them build capacity for long-term sustainability of both marine ornamentals stock and the surrounding environment.

Success Stories

OBJECTIVE I:

Enforcement Success:

With WWF's support, the patrol system for the Bunaken park has succeeded in apprehending fish bombers and reducing destructive activities inside the park. There is a critical need to continue this important patrol effort and ensure that enforcement and patrolling becomes a regular part of stakeholder activities. The increased patrol activity and its recent success has increased motivation and interest in enforcement in Bunaken. This early success in the patrol activity is an important indicator that enforcement can succeed.

Partnerships and Multi-stakeholder Efforts:

In Bali Barat Park, local stakeholders have effectively come together on several issues including the development of a code of conduct for dive operations and divers. This marks an important milestone in the establishment of multi-stakeholder efforts to work together to protect the park. All conservation efforts in these ecoregions will depend on effective partnerships. As a result, this successful mutli-stakeholder collaboration is a good start for effective management in the Eastern Indonesian Seas.

Creating a Common Conservation Vision:

A common vision for Bali Barat National Park has been developed through the multi-stakeholder Friends of The Reef workshop. This also marks an important multi-stakeholder effort.

Sustainable Finance:

Additionally, the original plan to create a sustainable financing mechanism for Bali Barat was met with great interest. So much so that the Bali dive operators are considering creating a conservation fee for all diving in Bali. Additionally, the Bali Government is considering creating a conservation fee on all tourist arrivals for natural and cultural heritage preservation. Such a fee would ensure the long-term financing for significant conservation activity in Bali and could be applied for other areas of the Eastern Indonesia Seas. This is an outstanding example of working proactively to address one of the major obstacles to effective long-term conservation (i.e. financing).

OBJECTIVE II:

Rapid growth of MAC Indonesia multi-stakeholder network:

The vast majority of relevant government agencies, Indonesia conservation organizations with marine interests, academic institutions and aquarium industry operators are aware of MAC activities in Indonesia and have expressed their interest and support. MAC is currently exploring opportunities to conduct a partnership project with Indonesian marine conservation NGOs to conduct activities testing preparation activities.

Government support for responsible marine ornamental industry operations:

The Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia made a statement in his keynote speech at the NOAA-sponsored international coral trade workshop stressing the importance of a responsible and sustainable marine ornamental industry. Acknowledging the trade as a source of income for many fisher folks in poor coastal communities, the minister urged the industry to take a more active role in implementing environmental management measures to ensure the ecological and financial sustainability of coral reef resources.

Increased industry involvement in MAC and certification development:

Most industry operators have now had detailed discussions with MAC about the Core Standards (the public review version). As a result of these consultations industry participants are increasingly enthusiastic about MAC certification. Many companies have expressed interest in moving forward with pilot efforts including collectors' training. Increased industry involvement in MAC was also reflected in Indonesian exporters openness to contribute their trade data (based on individual company's sales invoices) to Global Marine Aquarium Trade Database (GMAD) organized by the World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC) on behalf of MAC.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

OBJECTIVE I:

- The multi-stakeholders management approach in park management is demanding but seems to be appropriate for most of the marine parks in Indonesia where the recently decentralized governance system is coming into effect. This approach is challenging and time consuming. It requires careful attention, a great deal of time, and strong facilitation. Intensive stakeholder liaison is needed as many ideas from the grassroots and top layers should be taken into account. Securing sufficient resources including staff time is a major constraint, that impacts the ultimate sustainability of operations. This challenge can be overcome by working intensely with stakeholders in initial years, to encourage sharing of conservation activities across multiple –stakeholders. Through this multi-stakeholder approach to conservation, efforts can create successful partnerships that carry forward on their own after external donor inputs end.
- A major challenge to any conservation effort is generating sufficient long-term financing. Conservation efforts are still woefully underfunded given the magnitude of the issues and threats. As a result, efforts to generate sustainable financing both for individual areas and for entire ecoregions are critical. The sustainable financing scheme for Bunaken and Bali Barat based upon the entrance fees is infusing a great sense of enthusiasm that the successes we are achieving can be sustained. A similar challenge is ensuring that places that do not have tourism can also develop sources of sustainable finance. Many important reef systems are not able to generate sustainable financing. As a result, it is important that well visited areas help to support conservation of remote areas that are not able to raise funds locally. To overcome this challenge, WWF is proposing that a certain percentage of funds locally raised from each park should be allocated to a national trust fund for marine parks to be shared with remote parks that can not raise funds easily.
- A major lesson in this effort is the importance of the work that NRM and USAID has carried out in North Sulawesi. Largely through these efforts, the local government and communities have become aware and supportive of conservation. As a result, WWF has been able to

partner with these ongoing projects to help enhance conservation outcomes that are based on the foundation they have built.

- The term Partners for Park was replaced by Friends of the Reef in order to accommodate also wider conservation efforts outside the marine parks. The "Friends of the Reef" term is specifically used by the WWF coral campaign in Indonesia in order to engage the public closely with the coral reef ecosystem conservation efforts.
- While WWF is pleased with the successes at Bunaken and Bali Barat, we have to recognize that the magnitude of threats across these ecoregions vastly outweighs our current capacity to address them. Model projects at key areas can instill motivation in adjacent communities and other priority areas of the ecoregion. Yet, the conservation community will need much enhanced capacity to support these motivated communities and harness this motivation into effective conservation outcome. Some threats are so entrenched in the region, that it will only be possible in the near term to reduce or eliminate them from select priority areas. As these areas are secured, we will need to collectively address root causes including resource poverty, lack of alternatives, limited capacity, limited political will, and many others. To fully address these issues resources including financing, collaborative efforts, and technical capacity will need to be increased by several orders of magnitude.

OBJECTIVE II:

- Developing environmental standards and certification for the marine ornamental trade is more complex and time consuming than envisaged due to the special characteristics of this industry in relation to certification and due to a number of unanticipated externalities. This industry is based on the collection and trade in live animals, engendering a range of health and husbandry issues not required of other environmental certification systems (e.g. forest products, food fish). The MAC certification thus requires standards to maintain health and quality control for the entire "chain of custody" through to retail, and not merely tracking of products that have been certified based on their origin.
- Defining the spatial aspect of the resource base is fundamental to certification, and this is complicated in fluid marine environments where boundaries are difficult to delineate. Likewise, defining those who have access to the area and its resources is also fundamental to certification, which is difficult where marine areas are "open access" or "community access."
- The lack of basic information on the local abundance, life histories, and harvest levels of the species involved make it difficult to develop early consensus on what sustainable use levels are. Many marine ornamental fish and corals are not a part of specific "stocks" with a defined geographic range, but are widely distributed, making the marine ornamentals trade a single global fishery that requires a single global set of standards and certification.
- To be applicable to the entire global fishery and its market, the standards and certification must take into consideration vast socio-economic, political and cultural differences.
- MAC certification will cover the trade in corals and giant clams, requiring understanding and integration of CITES issues and requirements.
- Indonesia, as one of the main export countries, is characterized by difficult and rapidly changing political conditions.
- The governments of several key import and export countries have given serious consideration to trade bans (notably the US), requiring MAC input to these developments and diverting MAC efforts from certification development.

- A critical factor to success is working through a multi-stakeholder consultation process. Although time consuming, face-to-face individual and group meetings are critical for trust building and obtaining buy-in from stakeholders in Indonesia. Environmental certification is a new and complex area for many to understand, regular follow-up communications are essential for concerns and misconceptions to be addressed.
- To be more effective in getting MAC message across to stakeholders in Indonesia, it is essential to have MAC materials translated into Bahasa Indonesia. At this point, the only document available in Bahasa Indonesia is the MAC Brochure. Once the Core Standards and other supporting materials are finalized, MAC will have to obtain funds to have key documents translated.

■ ECORREGION QUE COMPARTEN BRASIL, ARGENTINA Y PARAGUAY

Ambicioso proyecto en procura de salvar el bosque atlántico

Lou Ann Dietz, del Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza, detalla en un planisferio las ecorregiones en peligro, resaltando la fragilidad extrema del Bosque Atlántico Interior.

El Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza (WWF) presentó ayer, en el salón auditorio de la Embajada norteamericana, la visión biológica para la conservación del Bosque Atlántico Interior, ecorregión que comparten Brasil, Argentina y Paraguay. El ecosistema común se encuentra en peligro crítico, lo que dio inicio a un ambicioso proyecto en procura de preservar los fragmentos boscosos que siguen en pie.

El **Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza (WWF)** presentó ayer, en el salón auditorio de la Embajada de EE.UU., la visión biológica para la conservación del Bosque Atlántico Interior. El acto contó con la participación del embajador norteamericano, David Greenlee, y el secretario ejecutivo de la Secretaría del Ambiente, doctor Juan Francisco Facetti.

El fondo mundial, con apoyo de la Agencia Internacional para el Desarrollo (AID), se encuentran coordinando con varias organizaciones del Gobierno y otras no gubernamentales el estudio biológico del Bosque Atlántico Interior.

El Bosque Atlántico Interior se encuentra formado por un mosaico de fragmentos de bosques subtropicales del este del Paraguay, noreste de Argentina y suroeste de Brasil, del cual queda solo cerca del 7,2 por ciento de los 615 km2 que constituían originalmente la cobertura boscosa. **Esta región constituye uno de los ecosistemas forestales más ricos y amenazados del mundo.**

La presentación del proyecto de trabajo estuvo a cargo de Lou Ann Dietz, gerente del Programa del Bosque Atlántico Interior y del Amazonas, del fondo mundial. La señora Dietz explicó que, debido al aislamiento biogeográfico de otros tipos de bosques húmedos, más del 52 por ciento de las especies de árboles y 92 por ciento de los anfibios del Bosque Atlántico Interior no existen en ningún otro lugar del mundo.

"El último refugio del yaguareté -siguió diciendo- en el bosque atlántico, se encuentra en el área limítrofe que comparten Brasil, Argentina y Paraguay. El reducido y fragmentado estado del bosque sugiere que casi todas las especies pueden ser consideradas en peligro, algunos de ellas inclusive al borde de la extinción".

Por su parte, la licenciada Lucy Aquino, coordinadora del programa en Paraguay, señaló que la mayor amenaza para el bosque atlántico es su fragmentación en pequeñas islas, rodeadas por agricultura y desarrollo urbano. Debido a este fenómeno, las especies naturales se ven reducidas en número. **"Las probabilidades de supervivencia, a largo plazo, de estas pequeñas y aisladas poblaciones naturales son muy bajas"**, sostuvo la especialista.

Agregó que "estos fragmentos forestales que aún restan son vitales para la protección de las cuencas hidrológicas, prevención de la erosión del suelo y mantenimiento de las condiciones ambientales necesarias para la existencia de grandes ciudades".

La protección de estos fragmentos forestales es el principal objetivo del Fondo Mundial para el Bosque Atlántico. Esta organización ayudó a movilizar una red trinacional, que colabora de forma transfronteriza, para conservar y reconectar estos remanentes boscosos.

Ana María Macedo, de la Fundación Moisés Bertoni, mencionó la importancia de fortalecer las reservas forestales existentes, con la participación del Gobierno y el sector privado. En tal sentido, destacó la importancia que tiene la reserva del Mbaracayú, tanto por su extensión como por la protección que brinda a la cuenca del río Jejuí, recordando la necesidad de ampliar las áreas protegidas.

La coordinación del programa de preservación está a cargo del Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza, con auspicios de la Agencia Internacional para el Desarrollo (USAID) y la Fundación Summit. La participación paraguaya se tiene a través de Dirección de Parques Nacionales, Alter Vida, Itaipú, Sobrevivencia, Servicios Ecoforestales para Agricultores, Guyra Paraguay y la carrera de Ingeniería Forestal.

La reserva natural de Mbaracayú, de 65 mil hectáreas, ubicada en el departamento de Canindeyú, no constituye una vidriera de plantas y animales, que se mantiene intangible para estudios de la comunidad científica. Es un área protegida donde indígenas y campesinos pueden desarrollar pautas culturales propias. Las diferencias en el uso de la reserva surgen de que ambos grupos manejan conceptos diferentes de producción.

INDIGENAS DESARROLLAN UNA CULTURA PROPIA (Ultima nota)

Mbaracayú no es una simple vidriera ecológica

Roque González Vera

La reserva natural de Mbaracayú, de 65 mil hectáreas, ubicada en el departamento de Canindeyú, no constituye únicamente un muestrario viviente de plantas y animales, que se mantiene intangible como objeto de estudio de la comunidad científica internacional.

Mbaracayú es un área protegida donde indígenas y campesinos pueden desarrollar pautas culturales. Si bien existen diferencias en los niveles de aprovechamiento de la reserva, esta situación tiene su raíz en que ambos grupos humanos manejan conceptos diferentes de producción.

El ingreso a Mbaracayú se mantiene cerrado para los campesinos; lógicamente no área protegida no puede convertirse en un sitio de rozados o plantíos. Aquellos que viven en la zona de amortiguamiento ecológico cuentan con respaldo de la Fundación Moisés Bertoni, tanto técnico como social. Se apuesta a la organización comunitaria como medio para mejorar las condiciones de subsistencia.

Con los indígenas, el trato es comunicado con la reserva es diferente pueden ingresar a cazar, pescar y recolectar miel, siempre y cuando empleen medios tradicionales. Aquí viene otra diferencia. En los alrededores de Mbaracayú se encuentran dos pueblos indígenas: los ava guaraní y los aché. Los primeros son agricultores, mientras que los aché son cazadores y recolectores. Ambos tienen estadios culturales muy diferentes.

Un ejemplo concreto. Los ava guaraní utilizan armas de fuego para cazar, los aché, en cambio, trepan a su presa hasta atraparla, empleando armas tradicionales. Los aché son capaces de permanecer varios días en el monte, armados exclusivamente con arcos y flechas.

El concepto que manejan de cacería también es distinto. Los aché traerán las piezas necesarias para dar de comer a su familia, mientras que los ava guaraní con el empleo de arma de fuego capturan mayor cantidad de animales, a un punto que puede poner en peligro la existencia de algunas especies.

Los indígenas aché de la comunidad Chepapon ingresan a la reserva natural de Mbaracayú para cazar y pescar, siguiendo pautas culturales propias.

Indígenas ava guaraní mencionaron al embajador estadounidense los esfuerzos que realizan para superar las dificultades de subsistencia.

Los ava guaraní, por su condición de horticultores, se ven obligados a tumbar árboles para rozado. Esta práctica rine contra todo concepto de protección ambiental en un área protegida.

¿Son mejores los ava guaraní o los aché? Teniendo como punto de vista la protección de la reserva natural, la cultura aché se adapta al concepto de área protegida, pero, en definitiva, no se trata de que uno sea mejor que el otro, simplemente son culturas y procesos evolutivos diferentes. En definitiva son personas, con las mismas esperanzas y penurias que padecemos nosotros, pensando en cómo sobrevivir en un país que se encuentra a la deriva.

Hace algunos años, mediante un interesante diálogo entre el líder Angel Pires y el embajador norteamericano David Greenlee. El indígena solicitó explicaciones sobre la presencia de la delegación en su comunidad. "Estamos muy contentos por la visita, pero queremos conocer el motivo", inquirió Pires.

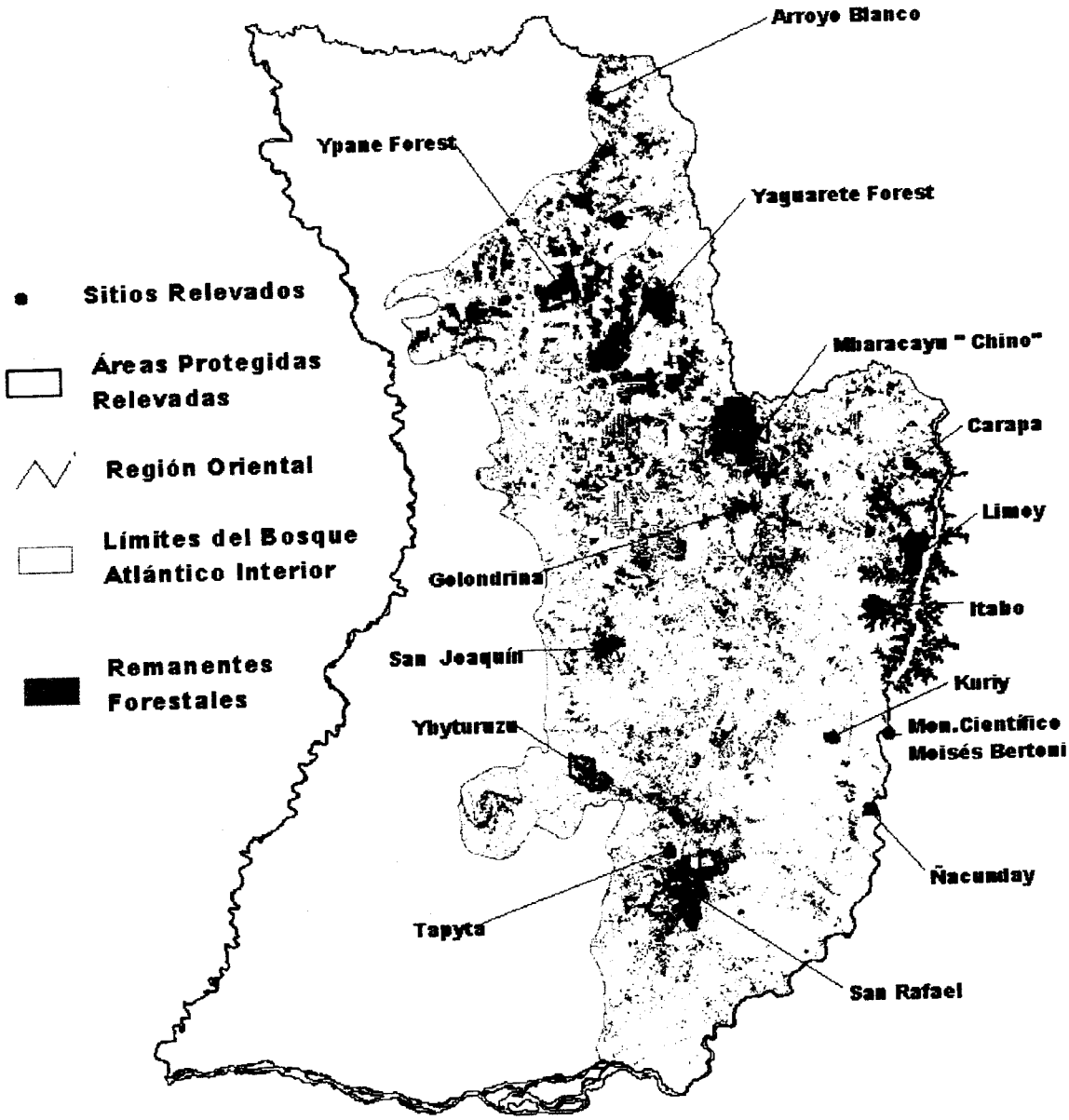
El diplomático le respondió en guaraní que la intención es conocer la reserva y los pueblos indígenas de la región. Allí nomás se inició el discurso de Pires, reclamando el desacierto del Gobierno paraguayo por la suerte de los pueblos indígenas. Sobre todo, resaltó que en nombre de los indígenas se solicita ayuda internacional, pero que los beneficios nunca llegan a las comunidades.

Pires explicó que su país presta su cooperación para el manejo del monte en la reserva de Mbaracayú, como ejemplo que es una forma de brindar apoyo a los campesinos e indígenas que viven en las zonas circundantes.

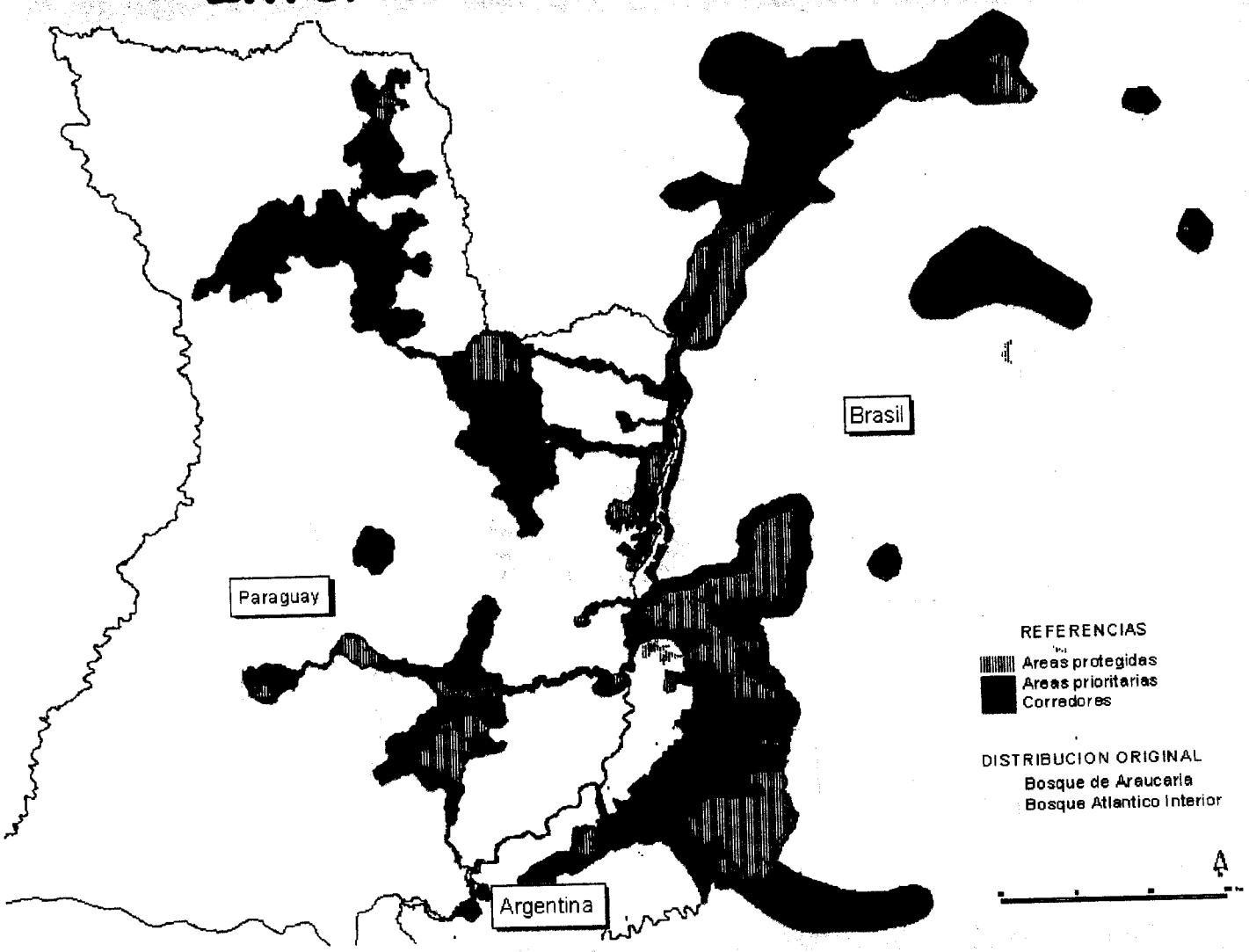
La población [illegible] en la reserva [illegible] situaciones que no [illegible] dígenas nativos de Canindeyú, cuyas tierras fueron invadidas por supuestos campesinos sin tierra, que ya destruyeron el monte y ahora se niegan a abandonar el sitio. El Gobierno, en lugar de dar cumplimiento a la orden de desalojo, dilata la solución, lo que agrava aún más el conflicto.

¿Qué hubiera pasado de los aché, si la reserva no estuviera? Es probable que estarían en proceso de extinción. Al acabar el monte, se acaba la vida para ellos.

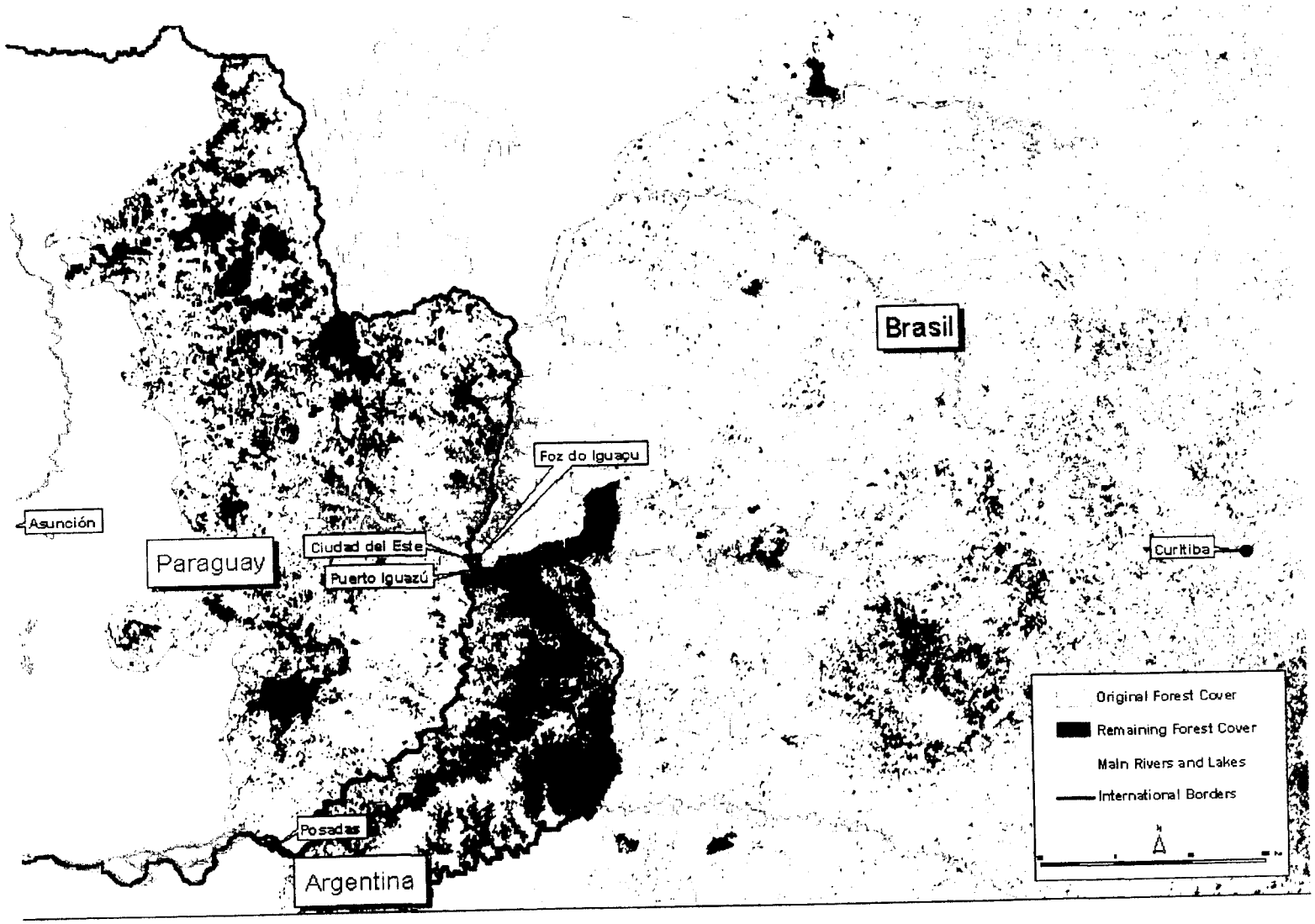
PRIORITY SITES FOR CONSERVATION
USING BIRDS AS INDICATORS
GUYRA-Paraguay



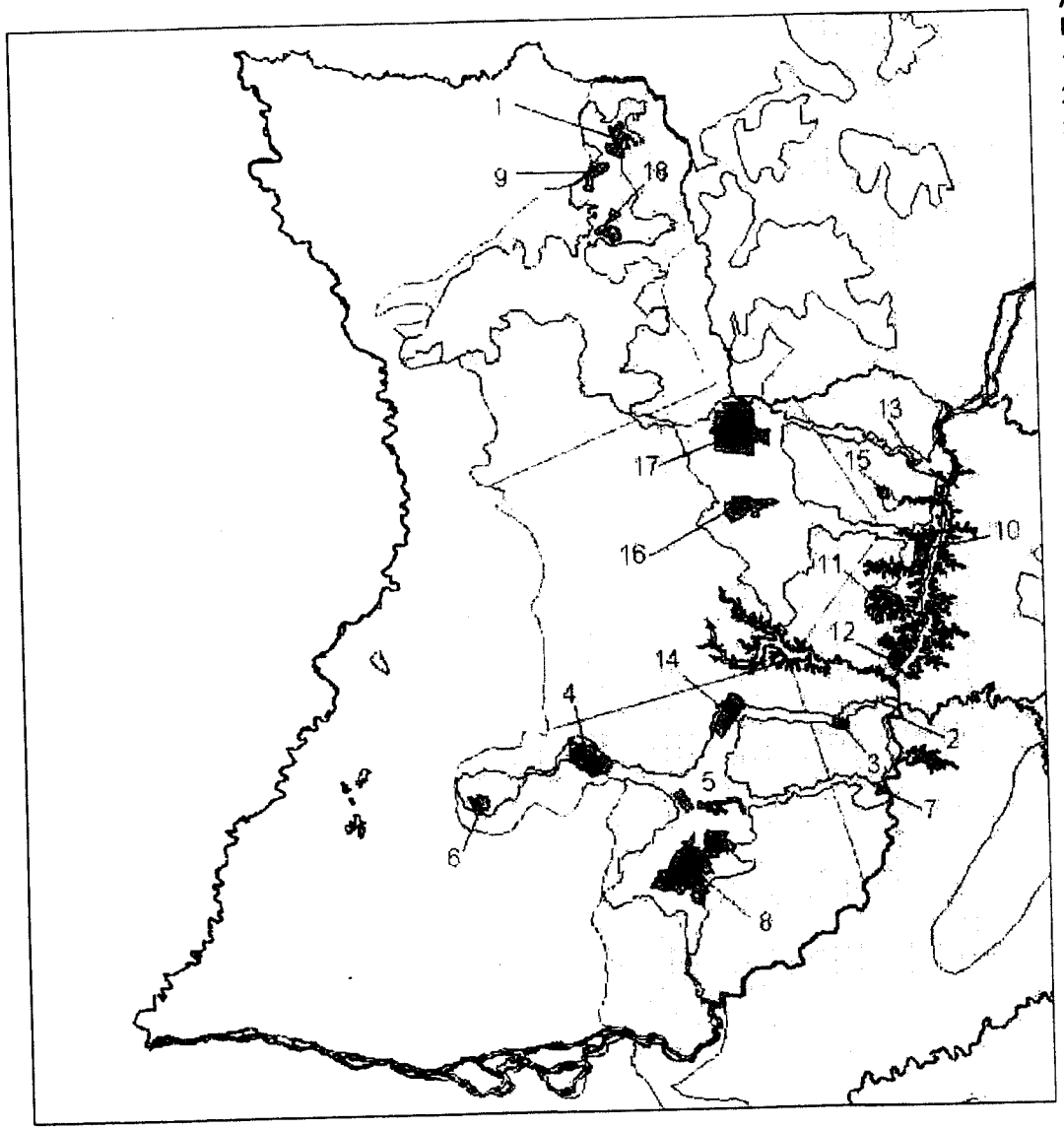
Biological Vision
Interior Atlantic Forest



Forest Remnants
Interior Atlantic Forest



Protected Areas of the Interior Atlantic Forest Ecoregion - Paraguay



AREAS ADMINISTERED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECRETARIAT

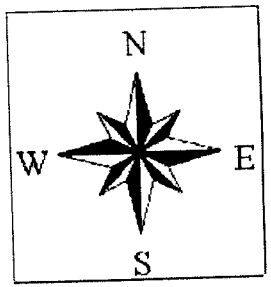
1 Cerro Corá National Park
2 Moisés Bertoni Scientific Monument
3 Kuriy National Reserve
4 Ybytyruzu National Park
5 Caaguazu National Park
6 Ybycui National Park
7 Ñacunday National Park
8 San Rafael National Park
9 Cerro Sarambi National Park

AREAS ADMINISTERED BY ITAIPU BI-NATIONAL

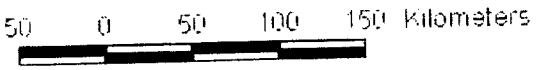
10 Limoy Biological Reserve
11 Itabo Biological Reserve
12 Tati Yupi Biological Refuge
13 Carapa Biological Refuge

AREAS ADMINISTERED PRIVATELY

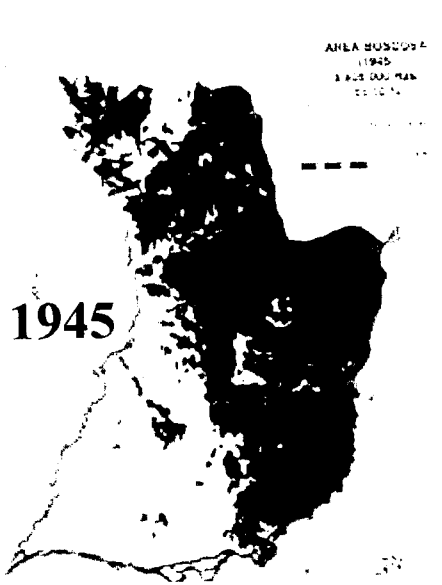
14 Ypeti Private Reserve
15 Itabo Private Reserve
16 Morombi Private Reserve
17 Mbaracayu Forest Private Reserve
18 Cerro Guasu Indigenous Reserve

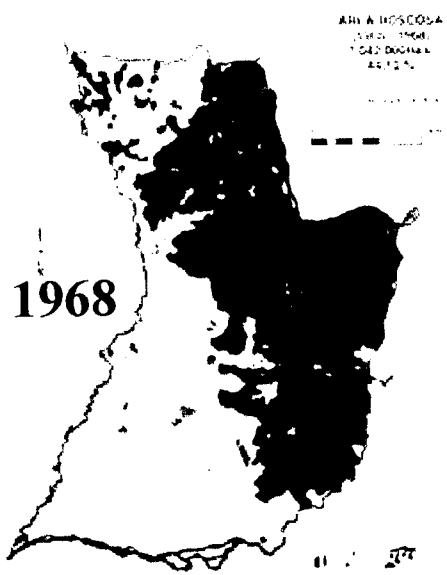


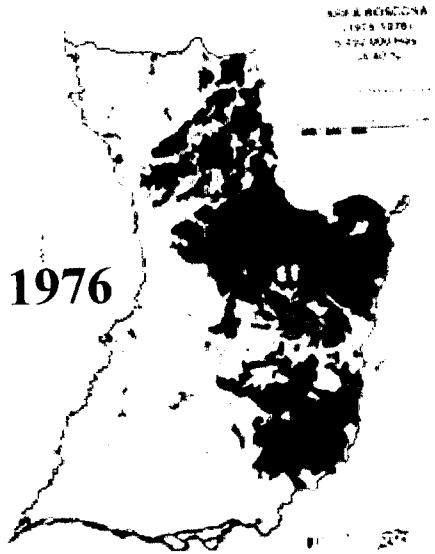
Country Borders
Corridors
Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion

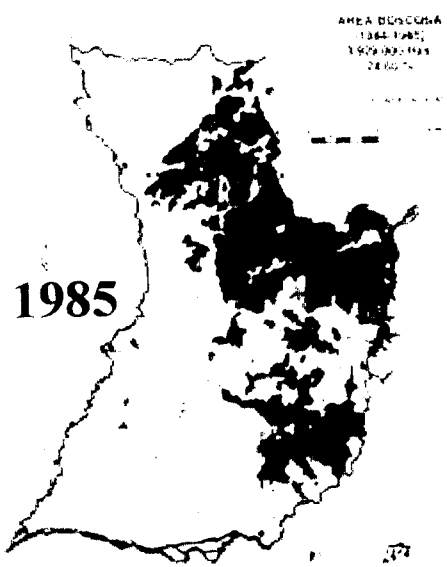


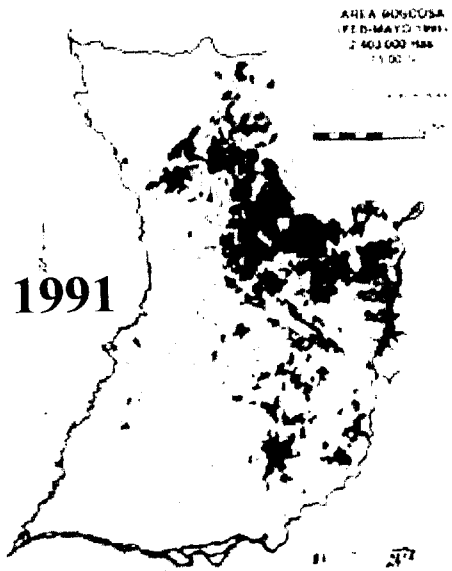
Advance of Deforestation in Paraguay

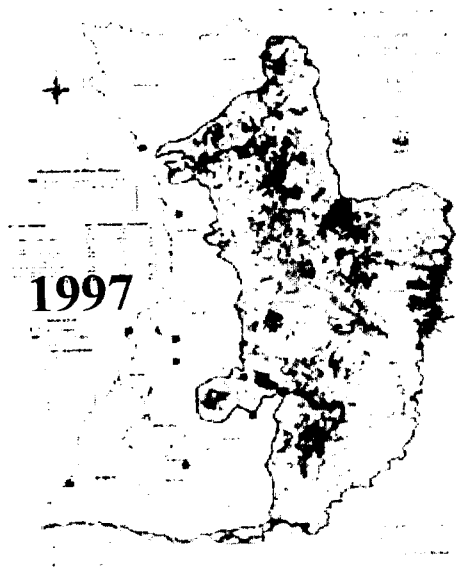












GUYRA PARAGUAY

Parque Nacional San Rafael

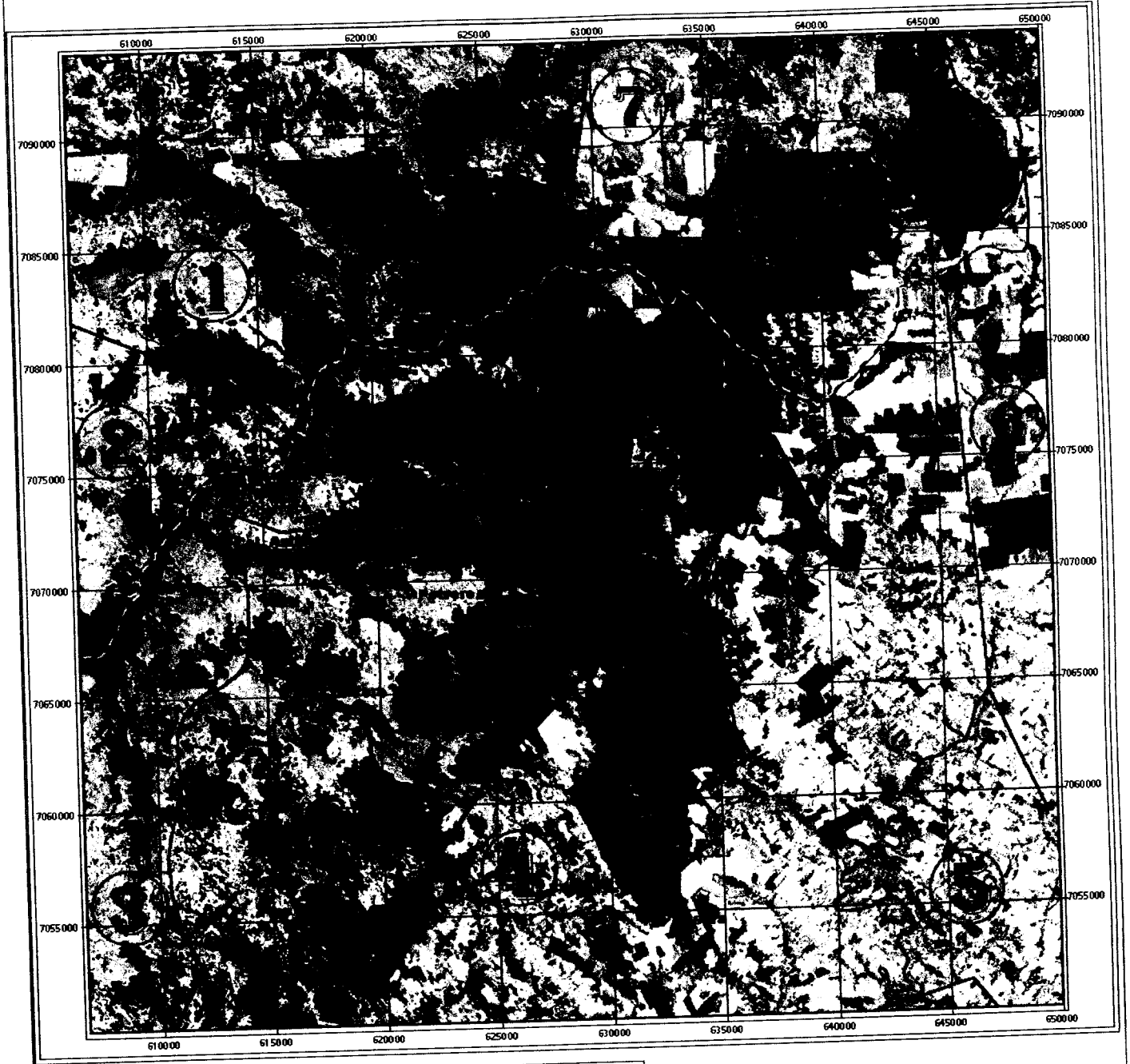


Imagen Satelital Landsat
False Color Compuesto
4.5.3.
Fecha: Abril 2000

ESCALA
1 :175000

Proyección: UTM
Datum: WGS84

1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Kilometers

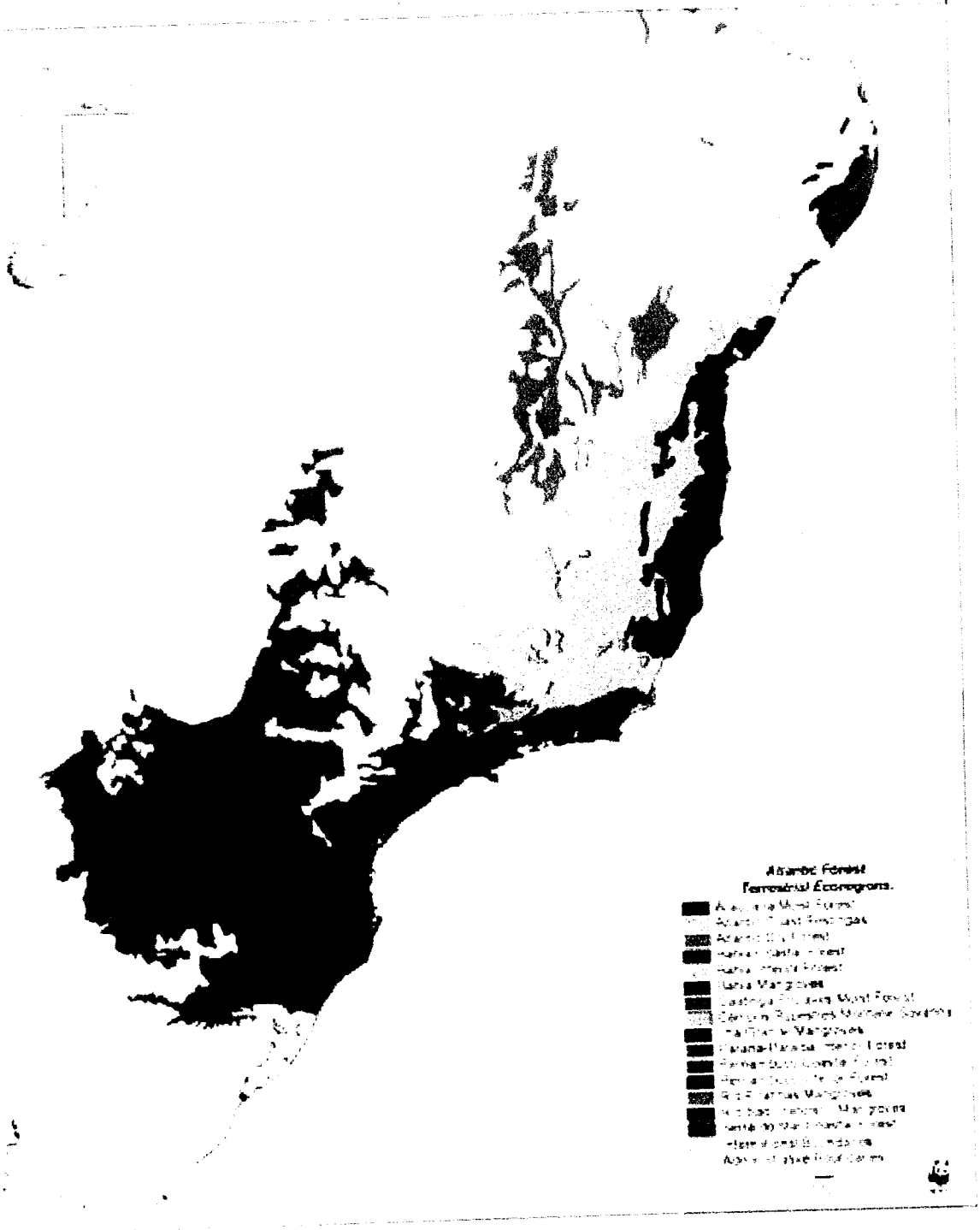
Distritos

1 San Juan Nepomuceno
2 Yuty
3 San Pedro del Paraná
4 Alto Vera
5 Capitán Meza
6 Edelira
7 Tavaí

Referencias

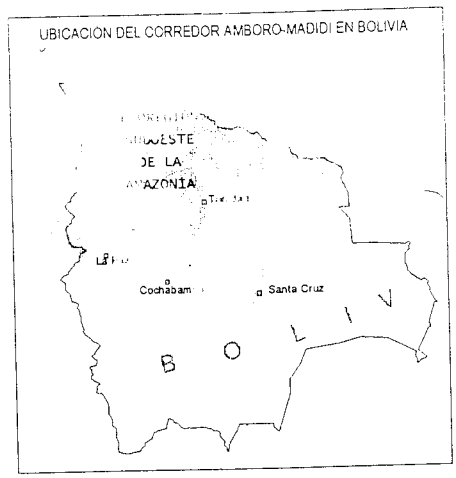
Límite del Parque
Límite Distrital
Límite Departamental
Vegetación
Suelos
Agua

Atlantic Forest Global 200 Ecoregion Complex



Corredor Amboró-Madidi

Áreas Protegidas



I.5
III.2
II.2
Borja
Trinidad
II.1
III.1
I.3
I.4
La Paz
I.2
III.3
I.1
Cochabamba
Santa Cruz

Fuente:
CD-ROM "Mapa de Áreas protegidas y Reservas Forestales - República de Bolivia. Min. Des. Sostenible y Planif., Vice-Min. de Medio Ambiente, R.N. y Des. Forestal. Abril 2000.

LEYENDA

Área protegida

Parque Nacional
- I.1 Amboró
- I.2 Carrasco
- I.3 Isiboro - Sécure
- I.4 Cotapata
- I.5 Madidi

Reserva de la Biósfera
- II.1 Pilón - Lajas
- II.2 Estación Biológica del Beni

Área Natural de Manejo Integrado
- III.1 Apolobamba
- III.2 Madidi
- III.3 Amboró

(Sub-) Ecoregión
- Bosques preandinos
- Faja subandina
- Yungas

Ciudad

Límite departamental

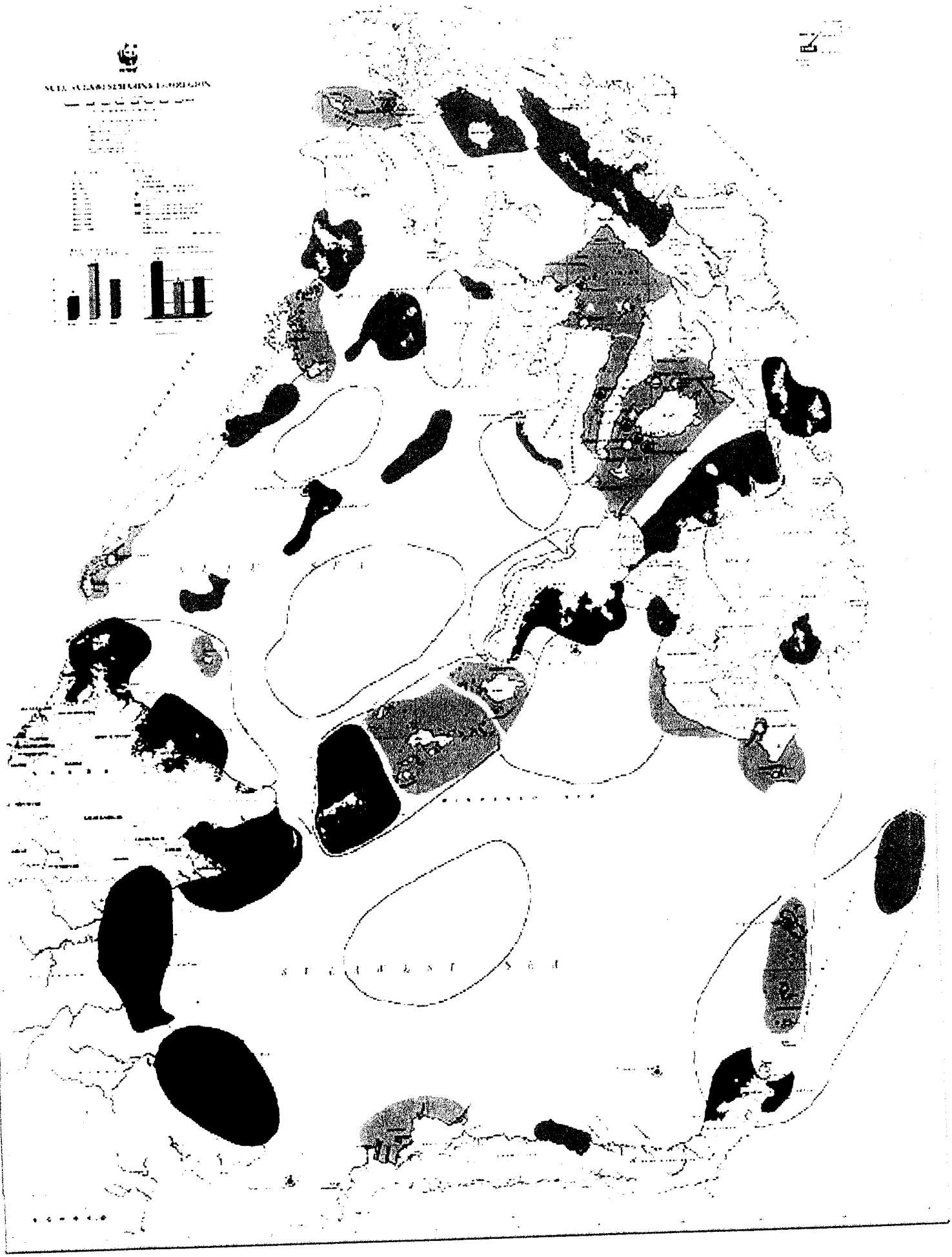
ESCALA 1 : 4,000,000

50 0 50 100 150 Kilómetros

Proyección Cónica Conforme de Lambert

Elaborado por:

Dpto. de Ciencias 2000

para:

WWF