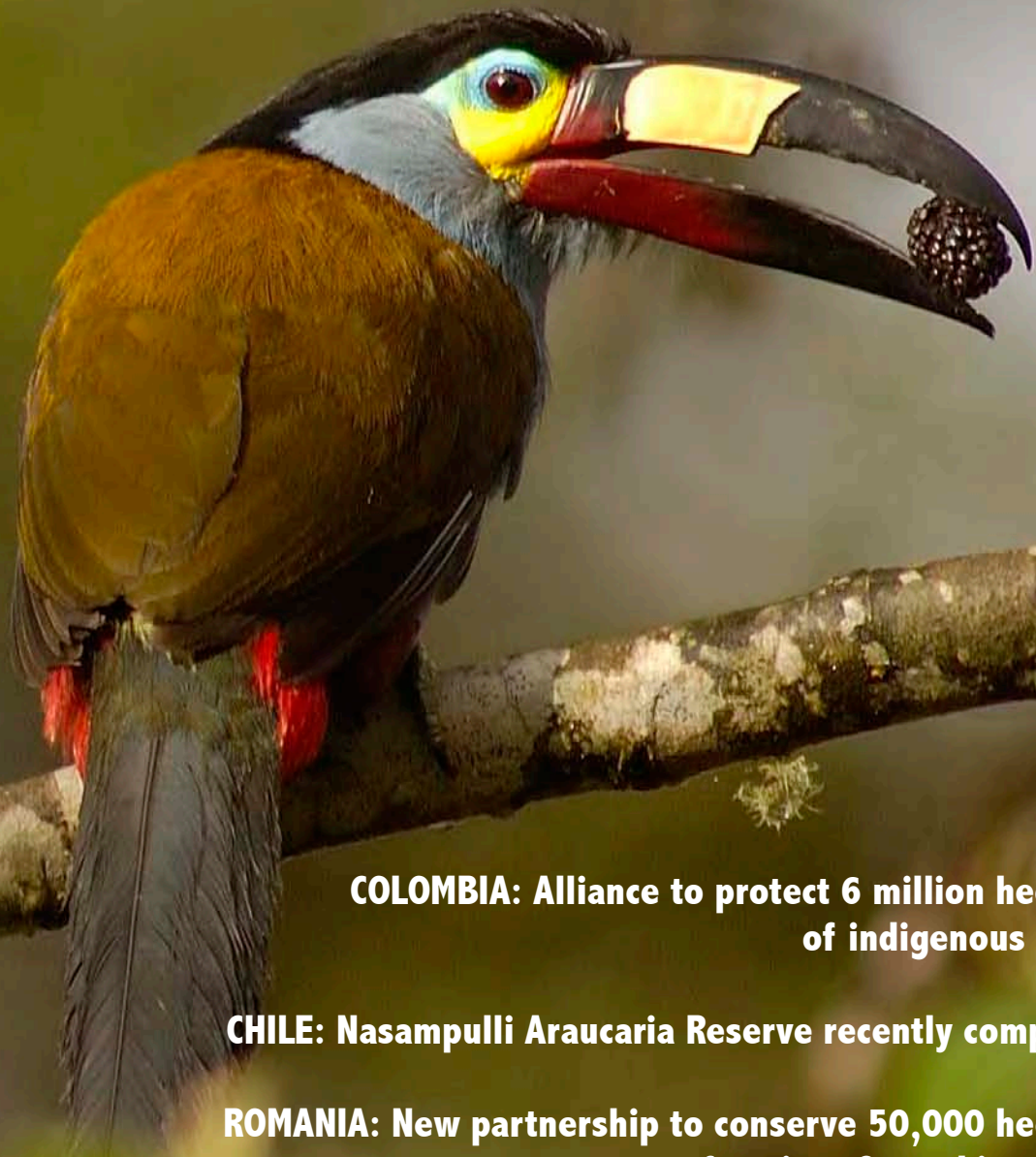


RAINFOREST REVIEW



COLOMBIA: Alliance to protect 6 million hectares of indigenous forest

CHILE: Nasampulli Araucaria Reserve recently completed

ROMANIA: New partnership to conserve 50,000 hectares of ancient Carpathian forest

ECUADOR: Southern phase of Choco-Andean Corridor approaching completion

SPRING 2009

The conservation projects:



Costa Rica

Coastal forest and turtle conservation



Colombia

Expanding the Pangan-Awa Corridor



Colombia

Conservation of indigenous land



Suriname

Mapping a new future for the Wayana



Panama

Turtle conservation



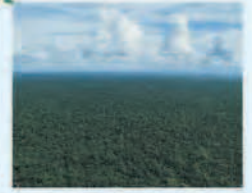
Brazil

Education project for Cristalino Foundation



Ecuador

Choco-Andean Corridor project



Brazil

Assistance for the Yawanawa



Ecuador

Lowland tropical forest on the Rio Napo



Peru

Threatened high-altitude forest of Peru



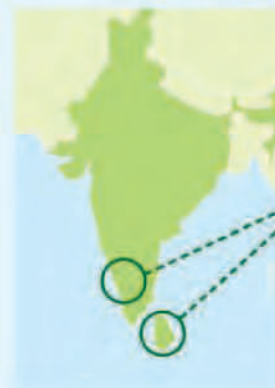
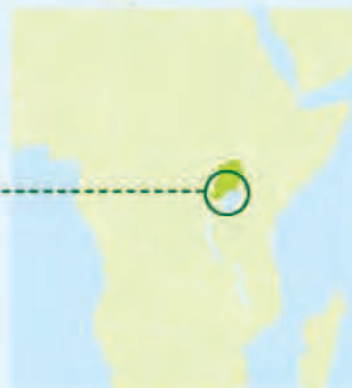
Chile

Araucaria forest of Southern Chile



Uganda

Assistance for the Batwa people



India & Sri Lanka

Working with local communities

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A LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER DIRECTOR, RAINFOREST CONCERN

Will REDD keep the world green?



Peter Bennett (right) with Martin von Hildebrand, Founder Gaia Amazonas, in Colombia last year, see page 10 and 11.

The idea of rewarding countries for protecting their forest through the carbon market, known as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries (REDD) has been high on the agenda in the run up to the Copenhagen climate summit in December. This is an ambitious initiative to help protect the world's forests, for their role in climate regulation and carbon sequestration.

According to the International Panel on Climate Change, deforestation in the tropics is responsible for about one fifth of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide - making

deforestation the second largest source of global emissions after fossil fuels. In recognition of this, the international community has been putting great effort into reaching consensus to include avoided deforestation in the post-2012 Kyoto climate agreement.

Deforestation will continue as long as cutting down trees is more economic than preserving them. Access to finance from carbon markets and other funding initiatives will be vitally important. But in reality we have no idea how long this will take to be established, or if it can be effectively implemented in some of the world's most remote areas. Rainforest Concern does not believe we can afford to wait for international agreements to take effect. Which is why we will continue to do what we do best - protecting rainforests on the ground using a combination of strategies that our international partners and we have found to be effective for over 15 years.

During 2008, we assisted Gaia Amazonas to register in excess of 6 million hectares of forest for indigenous tribes in the Colombian Amazon. We also completed the creation of the Nasampulli Reserve in southern Chile, with the aim of creating a corridor of forest to connect this reserve to Huequehue National Park. In Ecuador we are close to completing the southern phase of the Choco-Andean Forest Corridor and in Brazil we have assisted the Amazon Association to legally register the Xixuau Reserve, which straddles Amazonas and Roraima States.

Although we may be called Rainforest Concern, we have sometimes partnered projects to protect native forests and biodiversity in temperate zones. This is the case with a new project to protect up to 50,000 hectares of ancient Carpathian forest in Romania, home to such charismatic animals as the European bear, lynx, chamois and wolf and numerous rare or endemic plant species. As you might expect, the recession has begun to have an impact on our work.

The competition for funding is becoming more evident with every passing month. I would therefore end this letter by asking you to read this copy of Rainforest Review and, if you are inspired by the projects, please continue with your support for our work. For those who are not yet members please do join at whatever level of membership you feel able, as the income received from memberships is the only funding we can truly rely upon to continue this vitally important work.

Peter Bennett

RAINFOREST CONCERN

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NEWS

Climate change, Canopies and Wildlife

Scientific research at the Santa Lucia Cloudforest Reserve

by Dr Mika Peck, Rainforest Concern

In 2008 the Santa Lucia Cloudforest Reserve in Ecuador became the field station for the Earthwatch project 'Climate change, Canopies and Wildlife' supported by Rainforest Concern. A series of parallel projects, led by scientists from the UK and Ecuador, and manned by Earthwatch volunteers, aim to address key scientific questions to guide conservation management of wildlife and habitat in this bio diverse hotspot. Additionally, the income generated by the project will ensure financial viability of the reserve through the generation of sustainable livelihoods for this community-protected forest. Scientists and volunteers engage in basic and applied research to monitor wildlife, develop innovative habitat assessment tools and investigate climate change.



A camera trap takes a spectacled bear unawares

Most of the larger mammals and many of the bird species that form the focus of the research are considered at risk of extinction and there is an urgent need to determine whether protected areas are actually capable of sustaining populations in the long term. The project monitors elusive and nocturnal mammals, such as the spectacled bear, pumas and ocelots using a network of camera traps. Activated by movement, these traps provide essential information on species inventory, abundance and the impact of human path use on animal movements.

For birds (to date 394 species have been recorded in the reserve) a long-term monitoring programme was established using the visual and auditory identification skills of expert local

birders, to compare diversity and abundance in primary, secondary and reforested sites. The programme also carried out a preliminary reptile and amphibian survey for the reserve – in the Andes amphibian species have been particularly hard hit recently and the causes are still under investigation.

The feasibility of innovative forest assessment tools was investigated with the help of botanists from Ecuador's National Herbarium. Aerial imagery is now becoming readily available, through platforms such as Google Earth, and image quality is constantly improving. A number of ecological questions at the landscape scale can be addressed if the crowns of canopy species or species groups can be identified from such images. Using a model helicopter as a photographic platform high resolution aerial imagery of the tree tops was obtained above plots where trees were identified to species level - no mean feat in an area that can have up to 300 species per hectare. Mathematical models are currently being tested to determine whether crown structure and pattern allow species or species groups to be clearly identified. Techniques using 'aerial taxonomy' can provide information on canopy tree species composition and distribution at the landscape scale to guide conservation efforts. One example of how this information could be used would be to analyse the carrying capacity for the reintroduction of frugivorous primates.

Finally an altitudinal transect of data loggers, which automatically collect temperature and humidity data throughout the year, was field deployed to monitor climatic change in the region providing raw calibration data for climate models. Bryophytes (mosses and liverworts), thought to be extremely sensitive to climate change, were collected throughout this transect to investigate their potential role as biomonitors of change in the region.

This work addresses a range of ecological questions and will ensure that management plans are based on sound science giving these unique and wonderful species and habitats the greatest chance of survival. The project runs for two more years and you are welcome to join the teams in the cloud forest in the Summer of 2009.

For more information see www.earthwatch.org/exped/peck.html.

The London Marathon

Thank you to Jill May, Michael Barrett and Jamie Orr who chose to support Rainforest Concern as their fundraising charity for the London Marathon 2008. We still have places for the 2010 Marathon and we would welcome you joining our team. If you already have your place through the ballot system, have you considered using it to run for Rainforest Concern? Please contact Anna Karlsson on 020 7229 2093 or info@rainforestconcern.org for more information. You can sponsor our runners for 2009 online through www.justgiving.com, or contact us for further details on how you can support them on the big day.



Running for the rainforests

Music for the Rainforests

Philip Lambert, pianist and composer, played his original compositions on the 9th October 2008 in Grosvenor Chapel in London in aid of three charities, one of which was Rainforest Concern. The chapel was filled to capacity. We are very grateful to Philip Lambert for this event, which raised over £7,000 for Rainforest Concern's projects.

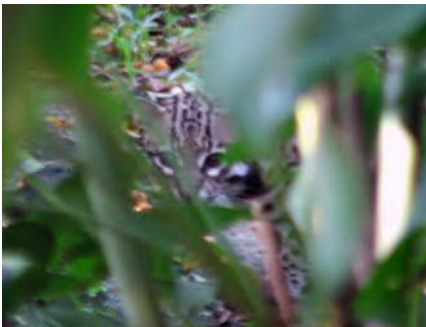
It pays to recycle

by Scott Lescak, Eazfone

It is estimated that there are as many as 90 million mobiles in the UK that are not being used. Each year thousands of new phones are bought in the UK. New mobile phones require materials such as gold and copper, and in some cases these materials come from mining facilities that can damage or destroy key environmental areas such as rainforests. You can recycle your phone and help raise funds to support Rainforest Concern, through www.rainforestconcern.envirocharities.com.

Ocelots at Pacuare Reserve!

Although for some years we have known we have pumas at the Reserve as their pug marks are frequently seen however, we had no idea we had ocelots as well! Early one morning when Project Co-ordinator Scott Handy was lying on the ground taking a photo of a snake he look up to see a young ocelot. He just had time to take this photograph before the cat took flight. This took place just a few yards from the Lodge!



Best known for having one of the most important nesting beaches in the world for the leatherback turtles, the Pacuare Reserve is teeming with all sorts of other wildlife. This includes three species of monkey, sloths, an amazing variety of beautiful birds, poison dart frogs and even crocodiles.

Are you tempted to experience this tropical paradise? Then why not have the Pacuare Lodge all to yourself with its stunning views of



both the lagoon and ocean! It has a large master bedroom with ensuite bathroom and two smaller double bedrooms. When you are not walking the trails, just lie in a hammock on the huge verandah and catch the Caribbean breeze! All this for just USD 80 for each adult per night which includes three hearty meals. For more information or to make a booking contact the Reserve Manager Carlos Fernandez directly at carlos57fer@yahoo.com.

Earth From the Air

Rainforest Concern has teamed up with Spirit Level Film to bring you an exclusive offer on Yann Arthus Bertrand's new film, Earth From The Air. You can buy a half price copy for £9.99, by using coupon code RAINFOREST. £1 will be donated to Rainforest Concern. Phone 020 7569 3039, or visit www.spiritlevelfilm.com/panoramica.



A new partnership with Africa and Asia Ventures

We are delighted that, from this year, we will be working with Africa and Asia Ventures (AV), one of the most established volunteering companies, who are broadening their activities into Central and South America.

Since AV was established in 1993, they have placed over 5000 volunteers throughout Africa and Asia. Their main focus has been on teaching placements in poor rural areas, but conservation and community projects have been an important element of what they have offered volunteers since 1999.

We look forward to receiving AV volunteers on some of our turtle protection projects in Costa Rica and Panama as well as on the Santa Lucia and Yachana reserves in Ecuador, see www.aventure.co.uk.



Sheffield University

We are delighted that Sheffield University raised £6,000 through their "Bummin to Belgrade" hitchhiking event.

We particularly wish to thank the following for their support

Good Gifts

Rainforest Concern features in the Good Gifts Catalogue (www.goodgifts.org), where you can sponsor an acre of rainforest as a gift. The price of the gift is passed on to Rainforest Concern in full, and it is an excellent way of solving your gift problems, and at the same time supporting our work. We are pleased to be included again in the catalogue for Christmas 2009, and would like to thank Good Gifts for their continuous support.



Boden

Our partnership with Boden, the mail order clothes retailer, continued last year, and we are happy to announce that they are assisting us in purchasing land for the Choco Andean Corridor Project in Ecuador, www.boden.co.uk/forestfun/.

Steppes Travel and Discovery Initiatives

We are very grateful for the support from Steppes Travel, www.steppestravel.co.uk, and Discovery Initiatives, www.discoveryinitiatives.co.uk, travel companies using tourism to fund conservation.





ROMANIA

Saving Romania's ancient Carpathian forests, a unique conservation opportunity

by Christoph Promberger, Director of the Carpathia Foundation

Thanks to a ferocious demand for timber and prolonged exploitation wild forests are becoming a scarce resource, no more so than in Europe, where very few forests have remained unscathed. A study carried out by Greenpeace has revealed that only two areas of some 50,000 ha of unspoiled forests remain in Europe, one of them being in the Western Carpathian Mountains of Romania. These forests still have some of the greatest levels of biodiversity anywhere in Europe. Charismatic mammals such as a European bear, wolves, lynx, wild boar and chamois are present in viable populations. The area has a bewildering number of birds and insects many of which used to be present in Western Europe but have now retreated to this region. Similarly the number of rare plants, many of which are endemic, is staggering.

Originally, much of the forests in Walachia (Southern part of the Romanian Carpathians) were privately owned. During communism the forests were nationalised and managed for some 50 years by the National Forest Administration in a sustainable way. With the end of communism, a restitution process has started. Those who can prove through documentation that his family once owned forests' are entitled to ownership.

After the third restitution in 2005 the vast majority of forests were returned to their former owners. Most of these former/new owners have no relationship with these forests; some live far away, and most are in urgent need of money. As a consequence, logging companies moved in and started to buy properties or, more often, bought only the standing timber on the properties and clear felled everything.



Deforestation causes habitat and biodiversity loss

photo: HORATIU HANGANU



photo: SPENCER COCA

Piatra Craiului National Park, Romania

Many hundreds of hectares have been illegally logged inside or around Piatra Craiului National Park. The Park Administration did not have the legal power to stop the logging and the Forest Inspection Authority did not intervene, either due to political pressure or corruption. Luckily by the time we started buying areas of forest this restitution process had impacted only a relatively small area. Still, some areas have been devastated.

There is an increasing international interest in the Carpathians as the last European Wilderness. With EU accession, Romania is receiving more international attention; while political stability offers secure investments in the country. We have identified approximately 50,000 ha of forest in the area around Piatra Craiului National Park. Given an average price of 2,500 Euro/ha, this would mean a total investment of ca. 130 million Euro. It would be one of the largest private conservation projects in the world, but this is a unique chance to create a large forest wilderness in densely populated Europe. With an expanding network of several organisations, companies and individuals we are confident that it is possible.

Within the next two years, all nationalised forests will be returned to former owners and within 3 to 4 years, there will be a completely new property structure. If no action is taken most of these forests will be logged. We have a very short window of time in which to act if we want to protect these forests, we have to act now as in a few years this opportunity will be lost forever.

A foundation is now being formed to administer this conservation initiative, the Carpathia Foundation, and two very generous donors have provided the initial funding to start the project. We now urgently seek more contributors to make this project a reality.

Carpathia has formed partnerships with Rainforest Concern, the European Nature Trust in the UK, the outdoor clothing company, Jack Wolfskin in Germany and the Ciconia Foundation in Switzerland. Peter Bennett of Rainforest Concern first met me in 2000 when he first visited Romania and expressed interest in doing something to protect the wonderful ancient temperate forests. Then post-Communism bureaucracy prevented any meaningful conservation efforts and we had to wait until now before we could act.



photo: BSC PROMBERGER

European lynx, still found in these forests

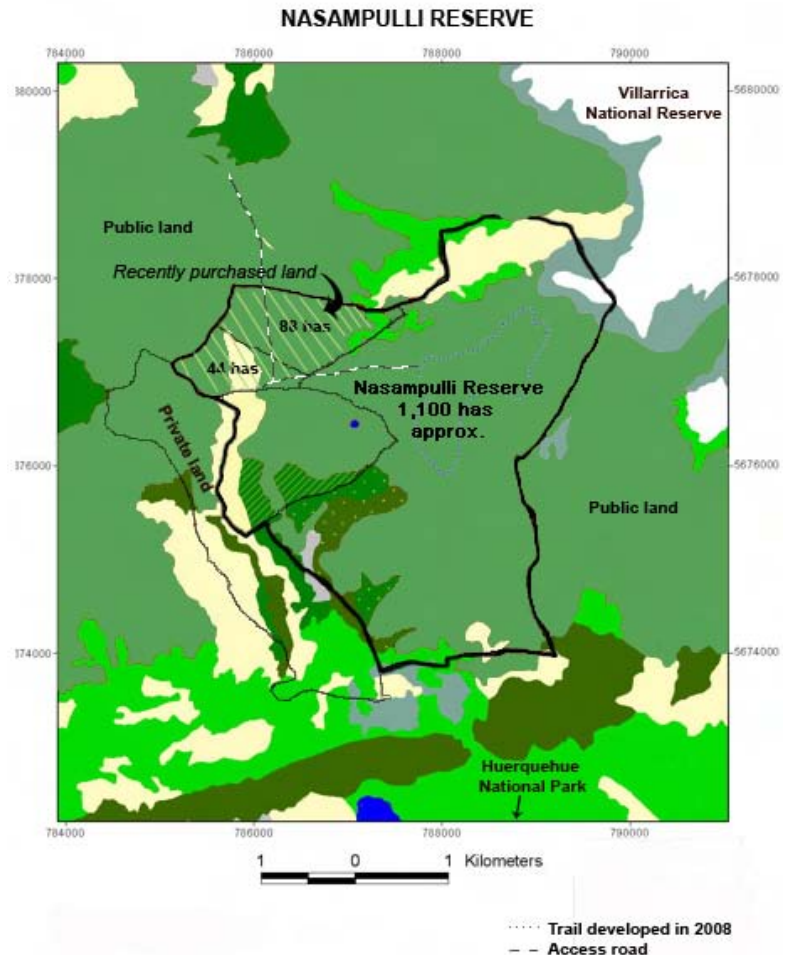
Through the new Carpathia Foundation, we intend to establish an official protected area, with three major goals: the protection of forests and alpine meadows, the promotion of research and restoration including re-introduction of once common species (eg black grouse, vultures, marmots), community involvement and the development of eco-tourism.

Nasampulli Reserve finally completed

by Prof Antonio Lara, Christian Little and Fernando Bustos

Last year we made important progress in the protection of the *Araucaria araucana* forests in the Nasampulli Reserve. This is the result of the collaboration between Rainforest Concern and Universidad Austral de Chile since 2003. In 2008 Rainforest Concern purchased 160 hectares of pristine monkey-puzzle forest bringing a total area of 1,100 hectares under protection within the reserve and, crucially, forming a connection to the Villarrica National Reserve.

We have now completed the long awaited original goal and plan, on the basis of collaboration, trust and hard work. Last year, we accomplished several other goals in addition to land purchase. With the collaboration of many people and colleagues we protected the area, improved road to access the reserve, opened and improved several trails, and repaired fences to prevent browsing of *Araucaria* seedlings by cattle. Our partnership with our neighbour Mr. Joel Balboa has been key for the development of our project, and involvement of local people in developing the reserve has strengthened our relationships with the community. Charlie Watson, a Rainforest Concern volunteer, spent several weeks with us last summer and was a



The magnificent Araucarias trees in the reserve

big help in the field as well as in the office. In the future we face important challenges that require hard work to assure the long-term success of the Nasampulli reserve. These in-

clude strengthening general protection of the Reserve, especially against human-set fires during the dry summer months (January through March), building and improvement of trails to provide access to the various areas and the building of a rustic shelter. Another challenge is the development of a biological corridor connecting the southern portion of the Reserve with Huerquehue National Park.

Through focused and hard work and a combination of land purchase and conservation partnership with landowners it would not only link Huerquehue National Park with Nasampulli, but also Villarrica National Park to the north, creating an important corridor vital for the connectivity of wildlife in the area. Home to native species such as the Puma (*Puma concolor*), the Pudu (*Pudu pudu*) and the Monito del Monte (*Dromiciops gliroides*), the corridor would create a vast habitat of continuous *Araucaria* forests. Deforestation of these old-growth

forests in the region has left many small isolated areas fragmented – this corridor would link three large areas of protected land together, preserving this stunning landscape and the rich biodiversity within it. As well as the corridor the opportunity to purchase a new 28-ha parcel that would enlarge Nasampulli towards the north including riparian areas along the beautiful Pichapinga river is also of high interest.

Summarising, achievements in 2008 and in the previous years have only been possible due to the trust, partnership and close relationships between Rainforest Concern and Universidad Austral de Chile forming the basis on which to inspire future collaboration required for the protection of the *Araucaria* forests. We should also mention the role of the Planet Foundation for their generous efforts in making the purchase of the remaining parcels in 2008 possible. We are very grateful for their on-going help.



CHILE

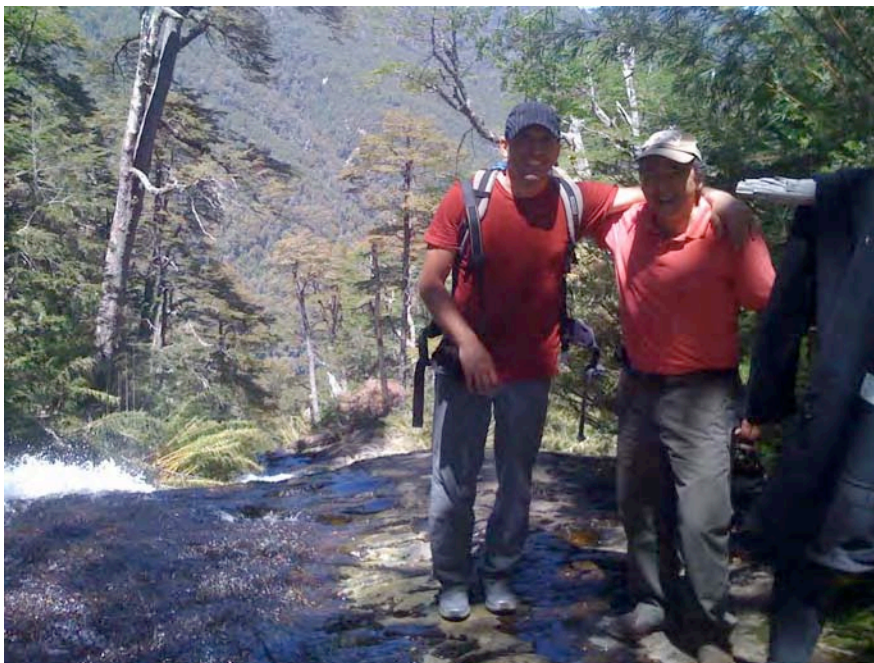
Creation of the Biosphere Reserve

by Karl Yunis, Director of Parques Para Chile

During 2008 Parques para Chile has focussed much of its attention on linking the value of biodiversity conservation with local economic development. We have done this within the framework of the UNESCO sponsored Araucarias Biosphere Reserve project. The Namoncahue Biological Corridor, managed by Parques para Chile and Chile's Park Service, and the Nasampulli Reserve project managed by Fitzroya Society and Austral University are located within the core and buffer zones of the Biosphere Reserve. Both provide clear examples of how public and private sector can coordinate efforts in order to establish important new protected areas that benefit the lives of local stakeholders.

The Araucarias Biosphere Reserve framework is an excellent way to promote sustainability and social equity whilst at the same time expand protection for species and ecosystems that lack adequate representation in protected areas.

Parques para Chile has developed a public-private management plan for the Reserve, which involves working at the local level to develop zoning and planning commissions, which reach accords for land management within the reserve.



Karl Yunis and Marcelo Ringeling of Parques Para Chile

These accords enable us to identify priorities for sustainable economic development, identify and adequately protect priority conservation areas and develop a portfolio of sustainable economic activities and products, which will then be certified as official products and services of the Araucarias Biosphere Reserve.

The management of the area for sustainable production of livestock, forest resources, tourism and ecological services is one of the most important aspects in the development of the management plan for the reserve. Parques para Chile has reached important accords with regional government leaders.

One of the main focuses for sustainable development will be the development of a territorial management plan for buffer zone areas of the reserve, which are important corridors for biodiversity. In these areas, Parques para Chile will continue to work alongside the Ministry of Agriculture in order to develop carrying capacity standards for grazing, forestry and other activities so that these do not have a negative impact on wildlife within the buffer zones that surround national parks and reserves.

Economic alternatives, carbon offsets and ecological services

Many rural indigenous communities within the Araucarias Biosphere Reserve live in remote areas where tourism, one of the Reserve's main industries, is not a viable economic option. These groups are among the poorest rural communities in Chile, and there is much social unrest, partly due to the dire economic situation that most communities find themselves in. For this reason community reforestation programmes, within indigenous lands and adjacent private protected areas, are a viable means in which newly planted native forests can effectively sequester carbon whilst at the same create needed income for indigenous groups.

Parques para Chile is currently working on a Carbon offset scheme that would involve the participation of two indigenous communities located adjacent to the Nasampulli Reserve and the Namoncahue Biological Corridor. Carbon offsetting should not only create direct environmental change but also produce economic benefits for local communities. Most local farmers and foresters are not aware of the impacts that deforestation and non-sustainable grazing has on natural ecosystems in Chile.



View towards Volcan Villarica



Involving local communities in reforestation and restoration can create new income sources in geographical and environmentally challenging areas where no other alternatives other than non-sustainable exploitation of local natural resources is possible.

A small project like this can have a long-lasting impact on the local environment because it directly involves indigenous communities and 'campesinos' in reforestation and restoration, developing environmental awareness through a hands-on approach to conservation and sustainable forestry. Carbon sequestration is something that benefits all of humanity, but if reforestation is developed in ways that exclude local stakeholders, little social and long-term environmental change will occur.

Identifying key biodiversity areas

Even though a large part of the Araucarias Biosphere Reserve is protected by National Parks and Reserves, the great majority of these areas do not contain over-winter habitat for fauna species such as the Pudú deer. Parques para Chile continues to stress the importance that low and mid-elevation habitat has in safeguarding the survival of native and endemic species.

Prioritisation for the establishment of new protected areas, within the Araucarias Biosphere Reserve, is needed because resources available for conservation efforts are scarce and therefore need to be invested in strategic ways

to ensure that the greatest contribution to preserving biodiversity is being made.

The Centre for Biodiversity of Parques para Chile is following two main conservation-planning variables developed by Dr. Chris Margules and Dr. Bob Pressey of the University of New South Wales, Australia. At the centre of this methodology are how vulnerable and irreplaceable a particular geographic unit is and the consequences of what might happen if that site were degraded or permanently lost. This approach evaluates how much a particular site found within the Biosphere Reserve contributes towards achieving conservation objectives. Previous conservation decisions are also factored into the decision making process to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources.

We have begun research on the distribution and home ranges of endangered species. This process involves the use of Geographic Information Systems, existing literature reviews, local knowledge, regional committees, and international experts and Chilean Red List species expert commissions.

At the end of 2009 we will be submitting a report on the state of Red List species within the Reserve accompanied by a conservation priority-setting agenda agreed upon by international, regional and local-level stakeholders and experts.

Red List species monitoring in Latin America

In December 2009, Parques para Chile will be hosting an intensive three-week seminar aimed at training up-and-coming conservation leaders in the monitoring of Red List species. Red List species are important for conservation because they are most at risk of extinction. The seminar will train NGO leaders from across South America in the techniques, standards and scientific methods necessary for the long-term monitoring of trends in distribution, population size, home ranges and ecological condition of the habitats they depend upon for survival. Several International organisations will be participating in this important event including Rainforest Concern, IUCN, Birdlife International, Audubon Society, WWF, ESRI, Pacific Biodiversity Institute, as well as several Chilean and International Universities and Research Institutes.

Conservation and public participation in the Namoncahue Biological Corridor

In December 2008, Parques para Chile began research on the spatial distribution of endangered species within the Namoncahue Biological Corridor. The over-wintering habitat for the Pudú deer and Magellanic woodpecker, as well as several species of sensitive bird species will be studied. Since several land parcels still need protection within the corridor, additional knowledge that accurately describes habitat use of species of conservation concern is a valuable indicator of the relative overall conservation value of each land parcel. Acquiring this information will allow us to justify protection of these areas.

Local school groups and Regional Universities are already signed up to participate in field visits to the Corridor during the summer months. We look forward to their visits and hope that through research and contact with species we can help influence students to pursue careers in conservation and conservation science.

We would like to thank Rainforest Concern and all of their supporters for appreciating the important role that local organisations play in the conservation of biodiversity and development of sustainable economic agendas for local peoples. With your support we can reach out to local people and continue to transform the economic and natural landscape of the Araucania, Chile.



Development of economic alternatives is a project priority



COLOMBIA

Socio-environmental management of the Caquetá-Japurá River basin

by Dr Martín von Hildebrand, Founder Director of Gaia Amazonas

The Caquetá-Japurá River basin, stretching across Colombia and into Brazil, could become a refuge for Amazon biodiversity and one of the last remnants of the Amazon biome as we know it. According to scientists, this northwest region of the Amazon Basin – with its proximity to the Andean mountains, which allow for a greater retention of humidity – will be least affected while global warming and deforestation convert 30-60% of the Amazon rainforest into savannah.

A new partnership between Rainforest Concern and Gaia Amazonas is making possible the conservation of 83% of natural forest in the Colombian side of the Caquetá-Japurá River basin, strategies to halt deforestation, the promotion of Andes-Amazon biological corridors, and the articulation of conservation initiatives between Colombia and Brazil.

The Caquetá-Japurá River basin is one of the main tributaries for the Amazon Basin, with a catchment, which covers 275,574 km² (211,557 km² in Colombia). The Caquetá River rises in the Andes of southwest Colombia. From the headwaters, the river moves in a southeast direction through the foothills (piedemonte) where the Andean mountain range meets the Amazon, an ecoregion with great biological diversity. The river continues its path through the lowlands, alluvial plains and rocky outcrops of the Guyana shield landscape, and flows

across the border into Brazil, where it is called the Japurá River and later joins the Amazon River.

In the higher region of the river basin, in the foothills, 80% of natural forest has already been lost due to the human impact of colonization, the expanding agricultural frontier, illegal crops, and timber extraction. The middle and lower regions are better protected with indigenous territories and protected areas aimed at biodiversity conservation. Nevertheless, even here the impact of extractive industries, such as gold mining, along with the insatiable demand for biofuels and coca, mean that deforestation is advancing.

Rainforest Concern has partnered with Fundación Gaia Amazonas, a Colombian organization, to promote the conservation and shared management of the Caquetá-Japurá River basin, bringing together indigenous territories, national protected areas and other local actors.

Gaia Amazonas, founded in the early 1990s by Martín von Hildebrand, is committed to forest conservation based on indigenous people's rights and empowering local communities - to ensure the future of different cultures, traditions and the Amazon forest on which they, and we, depend. For more than 15 years, Gaia Amazonas has been working with indigenous people in the Colombian Amazon, mostly along the Caquetá, Apaporis, Mirití, Guainía, Isana, Tiquié, Putumayo and Igará Paraná Rivers. This constitutes 40% of the Colombian Amazon with indigenous communities from more than 17 main ethnic groups. It also coordinates an alliance of non-government and indigenous organizations in the northwest Amazon to promote transboundary forest conservation.

The Caquetá-Japurá River basin presents a number of special characteristics that make this an exciting and vital initiative for the Amazon. Firstly, the Caquetá is the largest river basin in the Colombian Amazon. Within the basin there are 73 Indigenous resguardos and nine national protected areas, covering 117,755 km². The majority (95,164 km²) are located in the middle to lower regions. Another 50,000 km², also in the middle region, form part of the Amazon Forestry Reserve - a legal



photo: RAINFOREST CONCERN

Martín von Hildebrand

figure aimed at the protection of soils, waters and forest, although forestry activities and economies are permitted. The area of most concern is the higher region and the foothills, which are among the most deforested areas in the Colombian Amazon and heavily colonized.

On the Brazilian side, there are ongoing initiatives for protection through conservation units and indigenous lands, and these provide continuity to the forest areas that are already afforded some protection in the middle and lower Caquetá River on the Colombian side. While there is exchange and linking on both sides of the border, what is missing is an integrated management plan to connect the higher part of the river basin.



photo: RAINFOREST CONCERN

Matapi children

With support from Rainforest Concern, baseline information on the socio-environmental situation of the Caquetá-Japurá River was compiled. The baseline information takes into account the differing contexts - historical, political, social, cultural, economic and environmental - between the higher region and the middle-lower regions of the basin. It has allowed Gaia Amazonas to update data for its Geographic Information System (GIS), to produce digital maps, and for preliminary guidelines aimed at shared conservation and management of the river basin.



photo: RAINFOREST CONCERN

Inside a Matapi molla



photo: RAINFOREST CONCERN

The Apaporis river, a tributary of the Caquetá

An informal working group was set-up with non-government and government members, and has enabled an unprecedented exchange of information about the Caquetá-Japurá River basin. This includes analysis of the main local and regional dynamics, coordination of agendas at the local level in the lower Colombian side, and the development of strategic actions to prevent deforestation and the exploitation of natural resources.

The group has become a key player for a wider conservation initiative - Amazon Regional Articulation (ARA), facilitated by AVINA foundation, working for a shared vision and approach to climate change and the Amazon. Within the framework of ARA, the working group is looking for economic alternatives to support the standing forest of the Caquetá-Japurá River basin and its environmental goods and services.

The baseline study highlighted the complexity of the higher part of the Caquetá-Japurá River basin and the need to identify key actors, community initiatives and public policies. Around 17% of the Caquetá-Japurá River basin is located in the Andes and foothills, where the historical processes of colonization, violence and drug-trafficking have created a context that leads to deforestation.

Strategies already identified by the working group as alternative sources of income for the population are: i) REDD pilot projects with inhabitants near to protected areas (Doña Juana,

Indi Wasi, Guácharos, Puracé and Orito), for which the Climate Change division of the Ministry for the Environment is seeking finance; ii) the creation of Andes-Amazon biological corridors, through mechanisms that favour reforestation and natural forest conservation (such as Forestry Incentive Certificates, Green Markets, Clean Development Mechanisms); iii) encouragement and advice for community initiatives aimed at eco-tourism, food security, the production and marketing of non-forest timber products, low-impact technology, among others.

Meanwhile strategic actions for conservation in the middle and lower Caquetá River, and to prevent the advance of deforestation from the foothills, are being achieved through working with the National Parks Administration, of the Ministry for Environment.

Firstly, in the lower Apaporis River, one of the main tributaries, the Yaigojé Apaporis indigenous resguardo is being threatened by gold mining, by the Canadian company Cosigo Resources. Of particular concern are the La Libertad rapids, considered an extremely sacred site by the ethnic groups - Tanimuka, Yucuna, Matapí, Letuama, Makuna, Yuhup, Barasano, Itana, Eduria and Tatuyo – of this region. According to their cosmivision La Libertad is the origin of thought and of life. The gold that is found there is the energy that gives life, and taking the gold is like “turning off the sun”. Gold mining within indigenous territory has occurred because the subsoil of indigenous

resguardos in Colombia belong to the nation. In response,

Gaia Amazonas has supported the local indigenous organization, the Association of Traditional Authorities of the Yaigojé Apporis (ACIYA), to approach the National Parks Administration and request that a protected area is superimposed over the resguardo. This would cover 12,197 km², as a conservation, a measure that would conserve the area and facilitate the survival of the indigenous people. An agreement has been made with ACIYA for the necessary process to establish the protected area, with technical support from Gaia Amazonas. The combined expansion of the resguardos and Chiribiquete will give effective protection to 174,755 km² (83%) of the Caquetá River basin in Colombia.

Another example is with the Forestry Reserve lands around Chiribiquete National Natural Park. The Forestry Reserve in the Colombian Amazon cannot guarantee conservation of the forest and its natural resources, and already 14% (61,073 km²) has been lost to colonization in the foothills – which highlights the need to protect the Caquetá River basin through more solid organisations. Local indigenous organisations have requested that the resguardos of Villazul and Miritía Paraná are extended by a further 4,200 km². Meanwhile Gaia Amazonas and the National Parks Administration are pushing for an extension to the Chiribiquete National Natural Park by an additional 12,800 km², to provide a total coverage of 52,800 km².



photo: RAINFOREST CONCERN

This initiative for the conservation and shared management of the Caquetá-Japurá River basin is a delicate process but needs to move ahead swiftly if it is to take an effective stance against the ever-increasing demand on natural resources and pressure on Colombia's standing forest.



COLOMBIA

Strengthening conservation in the Colombian Chocó Mountains

by David Caro, Director Proaves

Compressed between the Pacific coast and the snow-clad High Andes, the Colombian Chocó Mountains are home to one of the greatest concentrations of unique biodiversity on the planet. Its phenomenal importance to life on earth is thanks in part to its equatorial location. Sitting astride the mighty Andes the region is assured of rainfall throughout the year across its many elevated life zones. These conditions are accentuated in the foothills and premontane zone, where rainfall levels peak and montane and lowland fauna and flora types collide. This has resulted in an extraordinary diversity of flora and fauna in what is a relatively tiny tropical enclave; remarkably still much is to be learnt of the regions biodiversity as researchers discover more and more new species of birds, frogs, orchids, and butterflies that inhabit this fascinating region.

The Chocó is also of great cultural importance because the heart of the Chocó, in south-western Colombia, is inhabited by the Awá (pronounced ah-WAH) whose homeland has been greatly reduced thanks to outside colonization. In recent years this has been compounded by large infrastructure developments including a major highway, which runs from Tumaco on the Pacific coast, through the middle of the Chocó forests, to the city of Pasto, high in the Andes.



The cloudforest of the Pangan Reserve

The highway has pierced through the heart of the wettest tropical forests on the planet and allowed a torrent of non-native colonists to invade the area. The long-isolated Awa tribes were rapidly pushed back away from the highway as forests were invaded and systematically destroyed for unsustainable pastureland and uncontrolled timber exploitation. Today, the Awa community remains divided and segregated by a highway that has left in its wake a wide swathe of deforested wasteland, now legally held by colonists.

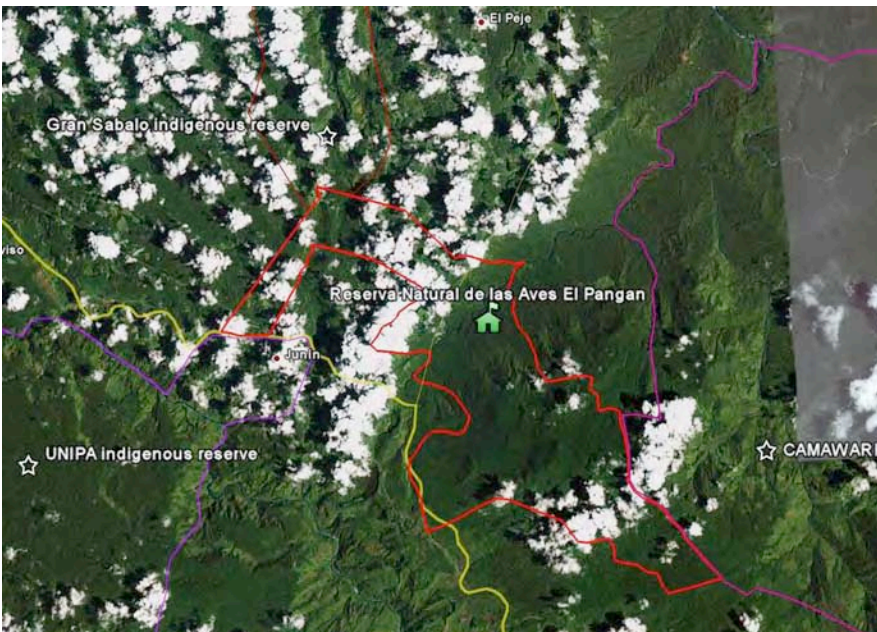
In a bold initiative, Rainforest Concern and the Colombian foundation Rainforest Colombia teamed up to buy back land from colonists along the highway between the indigenous reserves.

In 2007 and early 2008, with support from Rainforest Concern and the Planet Foundation, Rainforest Colombia acquired six properties of foothill and lowland tropical forest totalling 2,842 acres. These acquisitions, from non-indigenous colonists, established a corridor four miles long and almost one mile wide. Importantly this corridor connects together three separated indigenous reserves; the CAMAWARI reserve (296,500 acres), the UNIPA reserve (499,100 acres) and El Gran Sabalo reserve (5,000 acres) as well as the El Pangan Nature Reserve, which covers an area of 11,998 acres.

Thanks to the strategic purchasing of 2,842 acres we have been able to establish one of the most important biological and cultural corridors in the Neotropics – today over 800,000 acres (326,800 hectares) of one of the most important bio-diverse regions in the world is now unified and protected. Furthermore, the Colombian reserves extend to the Colombian-Ecuadorian border from where it also borders the Ecuadorian reserve of the indigenous Awa people and Rainforest Concern's Awacachi corridor.

So for the first time since colonists invaded the area over 100 years ago to divide and isolate the indigenous Awa people, we have created a biological and cultural corridor that protects the heart of this Chocó hotspot.

With your assistance it is hoped that the Pangan Reserve may be further extended in 2009.



Aerial photograph of the Pangan Reserve, Southwest Colombia

The Escola da Amazônia education project, Mato Grosso Brazil

by **Silvio Marchini, Cristalino Ecological Foundation**

For most Brazilians in the cities where policy is determined Amazonia is nothing but a distant place, one they have little or no connection with. For those who live on the Amazon agricultural frontier - for the most part migrant farmers with scant knowledge of the forest - prejudices about the forest and its uses and indifference have resulted in the world's highest rates of tropical deforestation. Escola da Amazônia, Cristalino Ecological Foundation's (FEC) education programme, was created in 2002 to inform Brazilians about Amazon issues and nurture among young people their interest and admiration, and consequently, their respect for the forest.

Despite living very close to the Amazonian forest, young residents who live in the city of Alta Floresta and the surrounding areas have little knowledge or contact with this unique environment and the wildlife it supports. "A Day in the Forest" is a workshop designed to put young people in direct contact with the Amazon jungle. The workshop runs for one day in a well-preserved 50-hectare fragment of the forest, situated in the urban region of Alta Floresta. During the day, students walk in the forest, observing the fauna and flora and carry out activities, which include artistic and team building exercises with the aim of making the forest environment more familiar and fun.



photo: EDSON GRANDISOLI

'A Day in the Forest' children's walk

In Alta Floresta, farming livestock is by far the most important economic activity and is responsible for approximately 60% of deforestation in the Amazon. "Alternative Practices" workshops are intended to stimulate interest in economic activities, such as beekeeping, fruit processing and handcrafts, all which do not involve extracting timber from the forest. Workshops, taught by professionals from different



photo: SILVIO MARCHINI

'Sassá, the Jaguar', theatre performance as part of the Humans and Jaguars Co-existence Project

economic disciplines, take place in rural schools throughout the region and are aimed at students, their families and their teachers.

A twinning schools project brings students and teachers from private high schools of major Brazilian urban centres to participate in one-week workshops. Participants work on joint activities with rural schools exposing them to conservation and development issues. Fostering pair-wise co-operation between visiting and local schools, Escola da Amazônia has academic benefits for both sides as well as economic benefits for the local school; the visiting school donates books and part of the income generated is allocated to local activities. Thanks to this innovative approach to financial sustainability Escola da Amazônia won a Whitley Award in 2007.

The People and Jaguars Coexistence Project research project revealed that jaguars are able to capture the attention of both young and old alike. People regard jaguars as the most fascinating creatures, but also as the most dangerous of pests. The perception of jaguars as a major threat to both livestock and human safety is widespread and explains why these elusive creatures are severely persecuted in this region. In order to draw people's attention to broader conservation issues, including the

establishment of protected areas, Escola da Amazonia is working with FEC's 'People & Jaguars Coexistence Project' to decrease jaguar persecution and explore the jaguar's timeless appeal.

Over the last year Rainforest Concern has been supporting the many initiatives carried out by the Cristalino Ecological Foundation and Escola da Amazônia. It is thanks to Rainforest Concern that education and communication materials could be developed, printed and distributed. One such example are the free T-shirts given to the 50 to 60 pupils, who attend the monthly, 'A Day in the Forest' workshops. Another example is the one thousand copies of the Guia Gente & Onças (Guide to Humans and Jaguar Coexistence) that have been distributed within the community.

Given the precarious situation of public education in Brazil, the alarming rates of habitat degradation on the Amazon frontier and the typically long-lasting effects of educational interventions, this support from Rainforest Concern will certainly have an impact that far outweighs the cost. We strongly believe that this approach will help bring about far-reaching social and environmental improvements. For further information please contact silvio@escoladaamazonia.org



COSTA RICA

Buffer land acquired for Pacuare Turtle Reserve

by John Denham, Trustee of Rainforest Concern



Leatherback turtle hatchlings make a dash for the sea

The Pacuare Reserve is known mainly for having the most important beach in Costa Rica for the critically endangered Leatherback Turtle but more and more we are realizing that the 800 hectares of forest behind the beach are just as special. Most reserves are much larger but few have the diversity of wildlife to be found in Pacuare. A night walk along the trails with a flashlight and sharp eyes is a revelation.



photo: CAROLINA BROWN

Keeping an eye out for poachers

By day, you cannot avoid the three species of primate - Howler, White-faced Capuchin and Spider monkeys. It is normal to see all three in an hour's walk, and the howlers wake everyone at 5.00 am. If you are lucky you might see an armadillo, a brocket deer or racoon, or possibly an anteater, recently a group of peccaries was seen. There were also two big-cat sightings during the season, both by Scott Hardy who was in joint charge of the turtle project.

These are just some of the 27 mammals we have listed at Pacuare, one third of which are on the IUCN Red List for threatened or endangered species. Together with its mammals the Reserve has some 230 different bird species, among them the rare and beautiful Agami Heron, Pacuare is the Agami's only nesting site in Costa Rica and the second largest nesting colony in Latin America. Apart from the sea turtles, of which the Leatherback is the one we know best there are an impressive number of reptiles and amphibians yet to be studied.

The giant Leatherback nesting season stretches from March through to the end of July, with April and May being the peak months. In 2008 we counted 648 nests, which is about average for recent years. The beach was patrolled every night of the season to deter the poachers. In spite of the extensive protection, we still lose an estimated 6% of nests to poachers who sell the eggs for profit in the bars of Limon.

Our Research Assistants (RAs) came from several countries including, Spain, Britain, the US and for the first time, Costa Rica, and we would welcome more Costa Ricans in the RA team. This year, the RAs gave short presentations at the end of the season in our new 'aula', before an invited audience, subjects included: a census

of primates in the Reserve; frogs and toads and a resume of the turtle season.

About 700 visitors came and stayed at the Reserve, mainly in groups brought from Costa Rican and US schools by Ecology Project International (EPI). One group to visit the reserve came from the. We had one university group from South Carolina Coastal University and we would welcome more such groups. On the research side, two young US university graduates, Lizzy and Laura, soon known as 'the monkey ladies', conducted a three-month study of capuchins, and they hope to return next year to continue their research. Another US graduate spent four months researching nest temperature and sex determination in Leatherback turtles.

Thanks to generous funding from Rainforest Concern and Planet Foundation the reserve now has an additional 100 hectares of forestland. This area is on the other side of the canal, with several hundred meters of water frontage. Thanks to its position - the land is situated opposite the reserve where the canal is narrowest - this will make a valuable buffer zone against the relentless advance of the banana plantations. The area, which has suffered from illegal logging, will benefit from regular patrols as well as providing useful work for future volunteers as we begin our reforestation programme.



A highly enthusiastic volunteer!

All in all it has been a rewarding year with a lot happening and a lot still to do. If you would like to know more about Pacuare, or provide much needed support by visiting the reserve our website is www.turtleprotection.org Alternatively you can contact Carlos Fernandez who can help arrange your visit whether you are coming to work as a volunteer or stay at the lodge.



New record for leatherback turtle nesting

by John Denham, Trustee of Rainforest Concern

Unlike Pacuare in Costa Rica, which combines an important turtle project with an equally important forest initiative, the projects in Panama are purely beach based and designed to protect and monitor the Leatherback turtles during the nesting season from March to July. There are four beaches, three on the mainland in a continuous line of 20 km intersected by three broad rivers. The fourth, Playa Larga is on the nearby island of Bastimentos.



Turtle tracks returning to the ocean

Any account of the 2008 nesting season would be incomplete without a bit of past history. The three mainland beaches, stretching from the Costa Rican border, have always been important nesting sites for Leatherbacks but were never protected until recently. Unlike the Costa Ricans who poach Leatherback nests mercilessly for their eggs but do not like the meat (though Green Turtle meat is very popular) the Panamanians have always killed the Leatherbacks for their meat.

A few years ago, a walk along any one of the three beaches was a sad sight; rotting carcasses strewn across the beach, the work of unscrupulous poachers. Around 25-30 adult females were slaughtered on each of the three beaches every nesting season. For a colony of only a few hundred, that was the road to extinction.

Because Leatherbacks nest over a wide area that would include both Pacuare and Panamanian beaches in the same season we realised that our work would never be truly effective unless the situation in Panama was tackled. The evidence from tags was clear. A turtle nesting at Pacuare could lay seventy miles down the coast 10 days later on a Panamanian beach where a poacher might be waiting with a machete.

The first patrols were started in 2002 on Soropta, the worst of the killing beaches. The team consisted of a biologist, six young men from the nearest community, a cook and a few volunteers from overseas, all living in a renovated beach hut. The effect was immediate and since then, though nests have been lost to poachers, no turtles have been killed on the 7 km of beach that we patrol every night of the season.

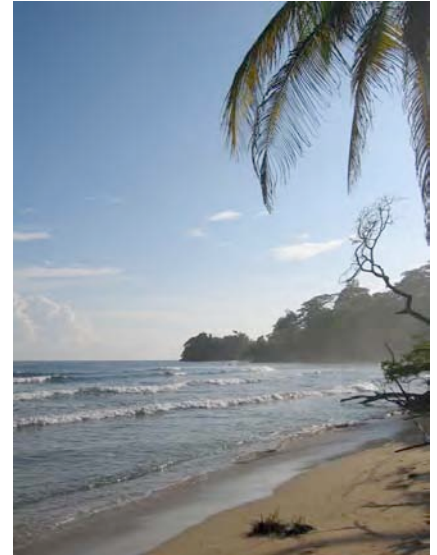
After Soropta came Sixaola beach. The project, which has been community based from the start, is led by a young local Panamanian trained in turtle monitoring and supported by local 'assistants' who live behind this deserted and inaccessible stretch of coastline. In order to deter poachers the beach, which borders Costa Rica, is patrolled on a nightly basis, nests are counted and those turtles not already tagged are tagged.

Two years after Sixaola, the community project on the third beach, San San, was started. All three projects involve local people and are supervised by our Mexican biologist Cristina, based in nearby Bocas del Toro.

Against this historical background, this year's nesting figures were most encouraging. Soropta had over 500 nests, the highest ever, Sixaola almost 400 and San San just over 300. Playa Larga, had 150 Leatherback nests (plus a good number of rare Hawksbills) making a total of 1350 nests.



Measuring a Leatherback turtle



View of Soropta beach

Though the killing appears to have been nearly halted, only one turtle was killed on San San, the poachers are relentless. Serious losses were suffered on Sixaola from Costa Rican invaders who come 50 miles down the coast in their 30 knot boats on a calm day, quickly locate up to 25 nests, excavate them and speed back to the north to sell the eggs in the bars of Limon'. To combat this, we have had meetings with the Panamanian Environment Ministry who have strongly requested that a police post be placed on the beach at Sixaola. On Soropta there were also poaching problems this year but the measures that we plan for next year should be effective.

We are very pleased that it is the communities who are providing the people who protect and monitor the turtles. They receive training from biologists and each year less supervision is needed. Altogether about 20 men and women earn some money from working on these beaches, in an area where there is no possibility of finding any regular work.

Running these projects costs money and Rainforest Concern funds all four projects, which are managed by EWT. So much has been achieved, in what is a relatively short time we have turned killing beaches into safe havens. If we are to truly bring back this colony of Leatherbacks back from the brink of extinction it is vital that this work continues.



PERU

Polylepis protection in Peru

by Matthew Cranford, Imperial College London

Since 2003, Rainforest Concern has teamed up with La Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN) to help support the reforestation of Polylepis in the southern Peruvian Andes. Rainforest Concern has also helped support some of ECOAN's community development initiatives for households whose livelihoods depend on these woodlands.

Polylepis forests are the highest growing in the world, and one of the most vulnerable neotropical ecosystems, providing habitat to numerous endemic and charismatic species. In large part due to centuries of human influence, the forests now only cover a small percentage of their potential range in Peru and their distribution is extremely patchy.



In the summer of 2008, with support from the Holly Hill Trust, the Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London carried out an investigation into the economic and social aspects of ECOAN's community conservation. The research highlights the success of the work already carried out and illuminates potential future directions.

Within the region that ECOAN works in to conserve Polylepis, over 60 percent of the households live in extreme or moderate poverty. These households have traditionally depended on wood from the forest, not only for construction, but as their only source of fuel for cooking and lighting. Although felling trees for wood is the greatest threat from and to local communities, current agricultural practices also place significant pressure on the woodlands.

Previous research carried out by the University of Plymouth (as described in Rainforest Concern's Autumn 2007 newsletter) found that although the area of forest has remained rela-



Forest degradation has been reduced through community initiatives

tively stable, the density and quality of Polylepis forest patches decreased over the second half of the 20th century. But this is not to say that local communities do not value the ecosystem. In fact, it is clear that the majority of locals understand it is important to conserve the natural resources they depend on. The main restriction to conservation by locals is a lack of alternatives for fuel.

Local households reported that, in recent years, they have reduced their forest-degrading activities by close to 70 percent. In fact, the vast majority of that reduction is attributable to ECOAN's community conservation initiatives. ECOAN has worked to provide sustainable agricultural and fuel alternatives while helping to reduce energy needs. Additionally, the value that locals place on Polylepis woodlands has increased with reforestation efforts.



The dependency on Polylepis wood for fuel is being reversed

Altogether, this means that community conservation efforts have helped locals to change their attitudes and behaviours away from forest degradation. The social environment is now

supportive of conservation of the natural environment. The remaining question is how to capitalise on this success so that we can continue to sustain and protect this unique ecosystem.

Payments for ecosystem services (PES) have arisen in recent years as a very popular market-based conservation strategy. Organisations that benefit from ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity and watershed protection, can pay landowners to conserve the natural ecosystem and provide those services. Not only do direct and conditional payments help ensure conservation, they can be used to transfer wealth from relatively richer buyers to impoverished ecosystem service providers in the developing world.



Polylepis - no other tree grows at such altitude

The main concern with PES is that the social environment is often not immediately conducive to them. However through community conservation, ECOAN and its partner organisations have not only begun to conserve Polylepis, but have also helped to create a local social environment with the potential to support PES. With carbon markets already in place globally and markets for biodiversity and water rapidly catching up, now may well be the time to consider implementing PES to increase and sustain conservation of the Polylepis forests in southern Peru.



Yachana Foundation recognised worldwide

by Douglas McMeekin, Executive Director, Yachana Foundation

The Yachana Foundation, formally FUNEDSIN, is being recognised worldwide for its innovation in sustainable development, tourism and conservation. Increasingly protected forests are becoming more important for the preservation of species. In last year's newsletter (September 2006) we reported the discovery of a new species of Glass Frog in the 3,000 acre Yachana Reserve. The purchase of this valuable contiguous tract of land, most of which is primary rainforest, was bought primarily through the support of Rainforest Concern.

Thanks to the collaborative research of Global Vision International and the Ecuadorian National Science Museum, another species of Glass Frog was found in the reserve in April 2008, so far this rare species has only been discovered in one other place in Ecuador - Santa Cecilia. Tragically, this site has been completely deforested destroying the habitat for this species. Today the Yachana Reserve is the only known place in Ecuador where this species still has a chance.

In December 2007, Yachana Lodge, which is part of the Foundation, was recognised by the international tourism organisation Skål as the best worldwide example of Education in Ecotourism. In February 2008, the Lodge received another award for being the best example of Responsible Tourism in the world by the Educational Travel Conference. And in April and May 2008, the New York Times ran two articles on the work of the Foundation in combating global warming, with its protected forest and the pivotal role of youth education in conserving the Amazon. Last but not least in June 2008, the National Geographic and Ashoka Changemakers awarded the Yachana Foundation with the prize for being one of the three best examples of Geotourism in the world.

This valuable and much needed attention is recognition of the important social and environmental work the foundation is doing. One of



A dance performance at the Yachana Reserve

the most significant social projects of the Foundation is the Yachana Technical High School. Using the forest as their "living classroom" to learn about the value of the rainforest and how to protect it the school's innovative approach is helping to meet the needs of children and teenagers from poor families throughout the Amazon region of Ecuador.

Working closely with the students from the high school, Quest Overseas has this year embarked on a number of highly successful collaborative conservation projects. These included: trail maintenance; building a thatch roof at a spectacular look out point; working with Rob Nivison,

a UK investigator in BioChar (putting carbon into the soil to raise its productivity); tree planting and participating with the students in some of their other agricultural and conservation projects. In addition to the activities, just being with and getting to know the students was a highly rewarding experience for the Quest participants.

Yachana believes that the future of the rainforest is inextricably linked to the well-being of its inhabitants and that only through education will meaningful long-term changes begin to be made to protect this invaluable resource.



Sustainable agriculture and conservation training

ECUADOR

Change for good in Ecuador?

by Fiona Pérez, Manager, Rainforest Concern Ecuador

A referendum on 28th September 2008 in Ecuador resulted in the approval of the new constitution - Ecuador's 20th. Essentially, it allows the President to run for two consecutive terms as well as to dissolve the congress and to have greater control over the central bank.

It is hard to interpret the result, it seems that there is a collective feeling that the country needs a real change. The 444 articles that the constitution is comprised of are open to interpretation at this stage and there is a lot of uncertainty as to how these will be endorsed. Many say it is now up to the people to pressure the Government to make the changes, otherwise things will continue as before. A lot will come down to the political will of the President.

The constitution has an article that grants nature rights and people will be allowed to defend those rights in court. This is not a completely new concept but the first time it has been included in a constitution. The main areas of concern for our conservation work are: the expropriation of land which is unproductive farmland or without a social function. Despite mentioning the importance of protected areas, the President can decide whether to exploit these areas should it be decided that it is of national interest.



Santa Lucia nursery children

As you will see from Carlos Zorrilla's article, many positive steps have been taken to keep the mining threat out of Intag since the last newsletter, thanks to a tremendous amount of support from many organisations and individuals. However, the new mining law planned for late October could have terrible consequences for Ecuador's biodiversity.



Cloud forests: the highest number of endemic and threatened species on earth

Other threats, include Government plans to provide Hydroelectric power, in areas with fragile ecosystems, as well as the pressure to produce bio-fuels. In addition to this we continue to look for ways to deal with destructive road building practices in the forested areas of Intag, without alienating local communities and compromising their needs for a transport system. However, overall there is still good news to report since the last newsletter and our work does continue to make a real difference in Ecuador and despite needing your help more than ever, we are pleased to announce some noteworthy achievements. These include the purchase of more forest areas for the Neblina Reserve in Intag, thanks to sponsor-an-acre supporters, Good Gifts and Rainforest Rescue. The reserve, 1000 hectares (2471 acres), provides a substantial area of forest in the middle of the corridor.

In 2008 Rainforest Concern applied for Protected Forest Status from the Ministry of Environment for the area, formed an additional group of forest wardens from the surrounding area to protect it, and carried out training for all forest wardens. We need to raise more funds to continue community outreach in the surrounding areas, as well as increase our capacity to train and support forest wardens, both crucial areas of work which will help ensure the wellbeing of these forests.

In Paso Alto, with ALLPA and AACRI (local coffee grower's association) a major step has been the acceptance by one community to enter into the management plan process for the Protected Forest project (5000 hectares/

12,355 acres). This outcome is due, in no small part, to the positive results of a pilot agroforestry project started there with the help of Rufford Maurice Laing and individual supporters.

You will also read about the positive impact of the recent Earthwatch groups and their research at Sta Lucia, highlighting the existence of endangered species that need protection; as well as their certification by Rainforest Alliance as an ecotourism destination.

Rainforest Concern has supported the first year of a six year reforestation CO2 project at the Jatun Sacha Bilsa Reserve, as well as buying a piece of land for the Napo Andean Forest Foundation in the buffer zone of the Gran Sumaco Reserve. There are many more challenges ahead, and we hope you can continue to support our efforts in a country, which has truly incredible biodiversity.

STOP PRESS

On the 12th November 2008 Ecuador's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum officially extinguished Copper Mesa Corporation's (previously named Ascendant Copper) Golden 1 mining concession in Intag, Ecuador. The Golden 1 concession formed a key part of the company's JUNIN mining project, and constituted the company's most valuable asset. The government measure means that the Golden 1 concession will revert back to the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, and that it is all over for Copper Mesa in Intag.

Progress of the Paso Alto Project, the Southern Choco-Andean Corridor

by Jefferson Mecham, Director of ALLPA

Situated in northwest Ecuador, Paso Alto, which covers over 5000 hectares (12,355 acres), is the largest extension of forest within the southern Choco-Andean Corridor Project. In 2006 the regional coffee growers association AACRI, ALLPA (a partner organisation) and Rainforest Concern signed an important agreement with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment. Over the past year the Management Plan for the Paso Alto Protected Forest Reserve has made major advances securing both local government and community support to complete a plan designed to establish long-term sustainability within the region. Initial opposition to the management plan came from those community members who believed that the forest's protected status would have a detrimental impact, depriving them of their land and livelihoods.



Chestnut mandibled toucan, frequently seen in these forests



The dense forests of Paso Alto

Thanks to previous studies carried out by the projects promoters those concerns were addressed with the initiation of a pilot scheme. Started in 2007, the agroforestry project, established native species/ tropical fruit/ organic coffee plantations in the communities of Paso Alto. The aim of the pilot scheme was to earn the trust of local communities by conserving the regions forests through the development of sustainable agroforestry alternatives.

During the project's pilot phase, March 2007 - May 2008, participating farmers successfully established 22 one-hectare agroforestry parcels on their land: 11 in the community of Barrio Nuevo and 11 in Bella Vista. The plantations included a variety of species - coffee, fruits, and native hardwoods - and over 15,000 plants divided into the 22 parcels. The success of these 22 parcels has attracted a group of 16 farmers in the neighbouring community of Playa Rica (also in the area of influence of Paso Alto) to participate in the project since the summer of 2008. Over the same period eight new parcels have been planted in Bellavista.

An integral part of the pilot scheme was to provide participants with regular training and technical assistance; this included agroforestry design and planting methods, and plantation management. In addition to this, local farmer-promoters - one from Bellavista and one from Barrio Nuevo - received additional training in agroforestry systems, with field trips to observe organic production methods and coffee cultivation. This initial pilot for the project has garnered the vital community support for conservation and participation in the management plan of the Paso Alto Protected Forest Reserve. In the summer of 2008 we were able to com-

plete the management plan workshops in the community of Bellavista. Attended by local government officials and professionals from the Environment Ministry, participants, who now had a clear understanding of how conservation can help improve their lands and livelihoods, were enthusiastic in their support. The pilot phase accomplished its purpose and now needs to become a fully implemented project to establish this process and leave it firmly on the path of sustainability. Rainforest Concern are currently fundraising for this.

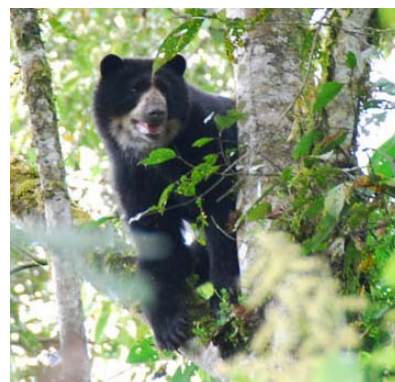


photo: LUIS DIE

Spectacled bears will benefit directly from this project



ECUADOR

Water, biodiversity conservation and resistance to mining: a way of life in Intag

by Carlos Zorilla, Executive Director, DECOIN

2008 marked eight years of collaboration between Rainforest Concern and DECOIN in conserving Intag's bio diverse forest, its wildlife and the area's water resources. Much of the sustainable development carried out by DECOIN has been through direct implementation of conservation and alternative development projects for which we have much to thank Rainforest Concern and their donors.



The stunning cloudforests of Intag

Community Watershed and Biodiversity Reserves.

The initial collaboration between DECOIN and Rainforest Concern started 11 years ago with DECOIN's Community Watershed and Biodiversity Reserve project. The main objective of the project was to conserve as much of the area's unique and threatened wildlife and biodiversity as possible. Today these reserves produce safe drinking water for thousands of Intag's residents, and help protect pockets of biological diversity. Because most people are aware of the link between safe water and health, the project has been a resounding success, with 36 communities owning, and actively taking care of their reserves. Even though the project protects a relatively small area (approximately 900 hectares), it is the motivation behind their protection that differentiates this project from most other conservation initiatives. An encouraging confirmation of this is that none of the

community-owned areas has experienced any illegal squatting or logging. Thanks to the projects success several other communities throughout the country have requested help to protect their micro watersheds and the Ministry of Environment has expressed interest in replicating the project in other parts of the country.

Reforestation with Native Trees.

Another very important aspect of our work involves the planting of thousands of native trees in areas needing reforestation. Communities produce native trees as close to their reserves as possible, with projects paying the community a fair price for the plants. To date, approximately 30,000 trees have been planted in the five community reserves, and in collaboration with Rainforest Concern and other conservation organisations there are plans to plant an additional 80,000 trees. The reforestation plan includes the use of several threatened species and has created the most comprehensive database on native tree reforestation in the region.

Alternative Development

With the help of Rainforest Concern we are working with six communities and five cottage-industry community groups to conserve Intag's unique diversity. One of the project's main objectives is to support the communities and groups most impacted by the mining companies whose disruptive presence has caused significant economic hardships on the people living in the area. The project also includes the promotion of agro forestry, an investigation into plant disease and the reduction of pesticide use, as well as improving marketing for the area's products.

Mining: A Reason to Celebrate

Intag has become a reference to the rest of the country and other nations in how to resist destructive extractive industry development. In April 2007, the government decreed a complete halt to new mining development, and reverted thousands of mining concessions. Thanks to Rainforest Concern and The Planet Foundation Project public attention was drawn to the real threats posed by large-scale mining development through a series of highly suc-

cessful national and international mining forums. In August of 2008, with the support of Rainforest Concern & The Planet Foundation Project, the 18,009 hectare Junin-Toisan Municipal protected area was created. This is one of the very few Municipal protected areas in the country that not only protects primary forests and dozens of pristine rivers and streams, but also sits right over the copper deposit.

DECOIN is currently working with the national environmental umbrella organisation, CENMA, on a new mining law, which will be presented to the legislators for approval. Thanks to The Planet Foundation we were able to hire a top-notch lawyer to help analyse the proposed legislation. Though work lies ahead to try to minimise mining's destructive impact on water, forests, biodiversity and communities, you can bet DECOIN will be one of the main actors involved in this crucial work.



Looking Ahead

DECOIN's Executive Director was recently given an award by the Denver Zoo for his conservation efforts making him the first international recipient of the Denver Zoological Foundation Conservation Award. The award highlights the effective conservation work carried out by DECOIN's on both a personal and organisational level. For the foreseeable future, we will continue implementing more of the conservation initiatives that got the attention of the Denver Zoo and brought us the award. We will continue our efforts to increase awareness of environmental issues amongst the residents of Intag by supporting sustainable economic activities and protecting water supplies with the aim of ending the one activity that guarantees to destroy it all - large-scale mining.



The Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary, Western Ghats, India

by Suprabha Seshan, Founder and Director

Since its inception in 1981, the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary has been promoting the preservation of rainforests in the Western Ghats, through a combination of on and off site strategies. Through 2007 and 2008 the sanctuary has continued its work in conservation and education. The successful propagation of hundreds of native plant species at the Sanctuary has now made it possible to envisage integrated restoration strategies for degraded parts of the Western Ghats. A large number of people continue to visit the garden and educational programmes, organised by the Trust, have become increasingly popular with schools.

One of the sanctuary's more recent projects, supported by Rainforest Concern, is the Rapid Floristic Survey covering the southern-forested districts of Maharashtra, Uttara Kannada, Coorg, Nilgiris and Wayanad. As well as monitoring the growth and spread of Orchidaceae, Balsaminaceae and Pterophytes the project continues to foster the ongoing cultivation and propagation of approx 1,600 native rainforest species. In addition to this Rainforest Concern has also provided funding for the purchase and replanting of an old coffee plantation.



Restoration of hillsides ensures clean and healthy streams

restore the wattle infested areas of the Mukurthi National Park.

Together with the Coorg Foundation and the Karnataka Forest Department, advisory visits have been made to the Talakavery Tapovana Project. The aim of the project has been to restore the degraded hillsides around the temple site with natural vegetation, an area critical to the wellbeing of the headwaters of the Kaveri River. In addition to this we are continuing to support several ornithological studies, one of which include the monitoring and breeding patterns of resident birds.

the Botanical Survey of India and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, in Coimbatore, India. We are very grateful to Rainforest Concern for critical support in our ongoing work. Our other supporters have been the Whitley Fund for Nature, Mrs. Rohini Nilekani, and the "Friends of the Sanctuary"



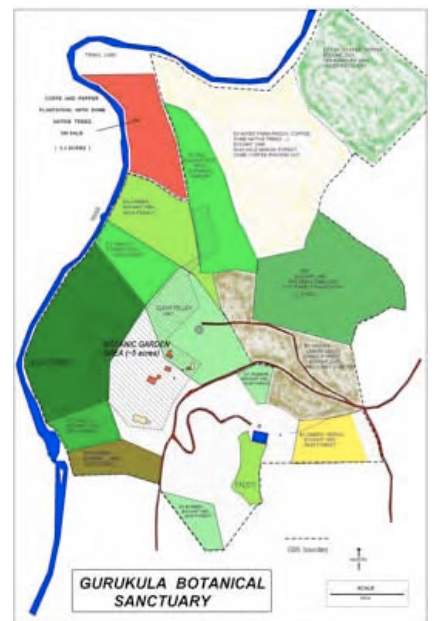
Planting epiphytes on trees

Various areas of the Sanctuary have been landscaped to create microhabitats for those plant species that are particularly vulnerable and difficult to cultivate. This included the construction of two greenhouses, one for seed and seedling storage, the other for ground orchids and impatiens. And together with the Tamil Nadu Forest Department we are continuing to

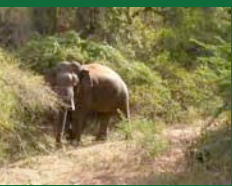
The School in the Forest

Between 2000 and 3000 people, 80% of which have come from northern rural Kerala, have benefited from guided tours and instruction on plant biodiversity and conservation. Slide shows were given in local schools together with the screening of wildlife documentaries for local villages. We are also pleased to announce that we have completed the third year of our Landscapes and Lifeskills Course, a six-month residential internship. Ten local women were trained in horticulture and conservation.

The Sanctuary was represented at the Planet Diversity Congress in Bonn where Suprabha gave a keynote speech on the wild basis of all life. We have also participated in National Assessment of Critically Endangered Plants with



Rainforest Concern funded the purchase of red area



INDIA

The use of the Lantana weed to benefit India's wildlife sanctuaries

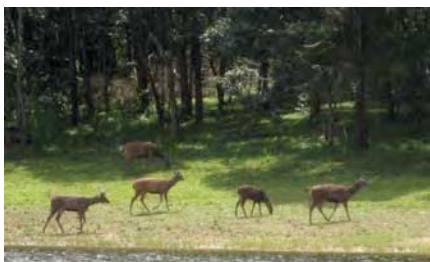
by R. Uma Shaanker, Ramesh Kannan, Gladwin Joseph, N.A. Aravind and K.N. Ganeshiah of the Ashoka Trust, Bangalore

Over two centuries ago, the famous American poet and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1892) quipped, "What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not been discovered."

One of the country's three biodiversity hotspots the Western Ghats, a mountainous chain that hugs the western coastline of India, is home to more than 25% of the country's plant species. Despite its wealth of flora and fauna, and the protection afforded by the establishment of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Reserves – the tiger reserves of the Western Ghats are now widely recognized as being one of the last bastions of these majestic animals – the area is under threat from several fronts.

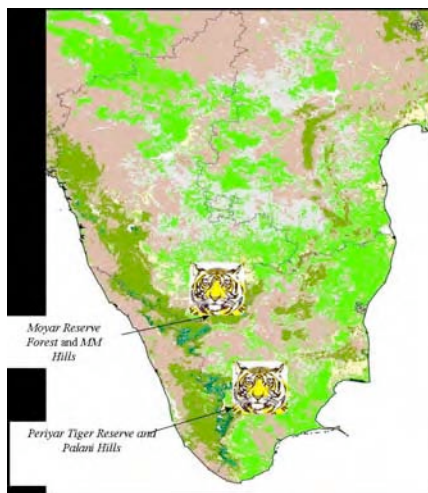
One of these threats comes from the introduction of invasive plant species that have successfully encroached into the native ecosystems. The most vociferous and widespread of these plants is the genus known as *Lantana camara** which has displaced scores of plants and threatens indigenous wildlife. (*hereafter referred to as lantana).

Originally introduced into the country from South America in 1807 for its ornamental flowers, the plant has spread like wildfire across the length and breadth of the country. Numerous studies have documented lantana's negative effects on the native flora and fauna and rural livelihoods of those who depend on this unique ecosystem. Several efforts to control the plant including chemical, physical and manual measures have met with little success. The continued spread of lantana and the inability to either eradicate or manage it has led to a sense of despair.



Sambar deer in Periyar Tiger Reserve

It is against this general ground swell of dependency, that ATREE (www.atree.net), an NGO dealing with conservation issues in India, decided to deploy an ingenious approach to managing lantana. Instead of trying to eradicate it ATREE actively encourage the use of lantana as a substitute for the area's scarce bamboo and rattan resources. By effectively managing this invasive species, this innovative approach has helped to improve the livelihood of a large number of communities living within and on the fringes of the forests of the Western Ghats. The areas from which lantana has been cleared for human use has, both actively and passively, helped to restore the area's native biological diversity.



The tiger reserves of Western Ghats

For the last four years Lantana has been used to replace bamboo and rattan to make a variety of products ranging from baskets to high-end furniture. Over 60 different products have been designed and produced by the local communities and over 400 families have been trained and employed in the making of substitute rattan and bamboo products. This has resulted in the establishment of a successful network of rural and urban markets. In association with local forest departments, efforts are currently underway to actively restore native plant diversity in those areas once affected by lantana. Monitoring the restoration of those sites to ensure native biological diversity is now under way.

In 2008, with support from Rainforest Concern, a number of lantana craft centres have been established. Situated in the forest regions they have been instrumental in training local artisans in the use of lantana. Thanks to the support we have received, employment in the area has increased from an average of five to nine months per year; resulting in a three to fivefold increase in annual cash income. While it is too early to fully assess the benefits of this approach and the impact it will have on restoring native biological diversity, the use of lantana has led to a significant reduction of this invasive plant and presumably its ability to spread with such ferocity in the future.

Two of southern India's premier wildlife sanctuaries; the Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala and the Moyal Reserve Forest abutting the Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Karnataka, are home to elephants, sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), spotted deer and gaurs (*Bos gaurus*). In both these reserves impenetrable thickets of lantana have displaced native vegetation, preventing the free movement of animals and severely hindering the ability of park managers to effectively record the movement of wildlife.

Thanks to recent support from Rainforest Concern, efforts have been made to encourage the use of lantana by those communities living on the forests fringes. The results have been positive, both environmentally and economically. Biological diversity is being restored and the sizable number of people dotted around the forest fringes, are now benefiting from the creation of new jobs. It appears that the virtues of lantana, promoted by ATREE, might indeed turn this weed into a plant.



Furniture manufacture using Lantana



Schools raise £14,000

by Anna Karlsson, Rainforest Concern

Students from schools and universities make a major difference to the work carried out by Rainforest Concern and we are very grateful for all the support we have received in terms of money raised and your continued support as ambassadors for the charity. Thanks to your contributions alone 280 acres of rainforest have been protected in 2008!

Thank you to all students who have raised money through events such as sponsored silences, flea markets, and the making of a DVD about rainforests, which was then sold to parents. And a very special thank you to our top fundraisers; Crofton Junior School who raised £939.17, bringing last year's schools donations to £14,000, close to our schools record of over £15,000 in 2007.

We always appreciate hearing about your creative fundraising events and seeing pictures and drawings from students and individuals, and we are amazed at your creativity and understanding of issues such as climate change, recycling and deforestation. A few examples of fundraising events are: Master Oliver Verity who raised £100 instead of presents for his birthday, as did Luke Caldwell who raised £215. Wensleydale Middle School raised £549.50 with a sponsored swim, and Dominic, Rasmus, Joscha, Carl, Jasper, Samuel, Moritz, Marius, and John at European School Culham raised £316.47.

Stephanie and Maia Lipscomb, and Bhavleen Puri at Scotts Park Primary School raised £190.95 with "Crazy Feet" biscuit sale (feet-shaped biscuits!), and Glenfall Community Primary School who raised £60 on World Environment Day (see our Education and Resources web page for information on World Environment Day 2009).

If you are a teacher why not have a look at the Education and Resources page on our website, www.rainforestconcern.org, for information about rainforests, and we have a rainforest educational pack that we can send to you and your school. If you know of any activities related to fundraising or education that you have tried and found to be effective, please don't hesitate to let us know.

The Rainforest

In the rainforest, there are tall, green trees, millions of living things live amongst these.

Long murky rivers rise over ten feet! when the rain showers down, over several times a week.

Native communities with heart felt love, pass down responsibilities, to the young and above.



All this is at risk, by the way we treat our Earth, by pulverising forests for commercial thirst.

We all need to play our part to alleviate our fears, by recycling and preserving, so that our Earth can remain for years.

by Konnie Walker - age 13 years St Clere's School

Rainforest Concern with Fones4Schools have developed an online and interactive project with the intention of recycling phones, www.fones4schools.co.uk, see right.



We are very grateful to Phil Williams and Dave and Sue Shaw for their continued awareness efforts and support.

Why not bring the rainforest to your school with an animated talk from Dave and Sue Shaw for their and their rainforest roadshow (see www.rainforestroadshow.co.uk) of giant stick insects, tarantulas and tropical artifacts. Email them on dave@rainforestroadshow.co.uk or phone on 01982 560 244 for further information.

Phil Williams' PLAN-IT ECO aims to encourage people to "take better care of this wonderful world" by organising lectures, workshops and interactive programmes throughout the UK. Contact PLAN-IT ECO by phoning 07798 802087 or e-mailing p_eco@msn.co.uk. Also see article by Phil page 24.



by Annabelle, Rushen Primary School

Environmental education in UK schools

by Phil Williams, PLANET-IT ECO



The promotion of Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education is now an important aspect of education throughout the UK and is being driven forward by the EU and UK Governments as well as local authorities.

SUSTAINABILITY is such a 'buzz' word at the moment, and the meaning is often blurred. For me it is quite simple: We (the human species) take from the planet (both locally and globally) what we really need without hurting it so that it will be there for future generations... our children and our children's children. Many people in the UK have no or little idea of what is happening to the natural environment, whether locally or globally, and how what is happening in far off places like South America affects us here in the UK. Similarly we seem not to really understand how our actions in the UK can have an impact on distant locations and the people who inhabit them. Many of us take so much for granted. The use of energy is a good example.

The tropical rainforests of the world, said to be the lungs of the planet, also provide us here in the western world with so much more; medicines and food being just two examples. When you next eat a Smartie or an M&M please know you are eating 2 bits of the rainforest, first the chocolate and then the shiny coating on the outside made from carnuba wax, which comes from the Brazilian wax palm tree found only in the Amazon.

The rainforest has also been the ancestral and spiritual home to millions of indigenous people who have lived peacefully and in harmony with the forest. They realize that to survive as a species (and that is all we humans are...one species out of millions) we need the help and support of all the other species. However, we are cutting down parts of the tropical rainforest faster than ever. Species are becoming extinct at an alarming rate and the native peoples are not only losing their land but being killed by those taking the forest.

The numbers of indigenous people in the Amazon has reduced greatly in the last 10 years. Why? In my opinion far too often short-term financial gains take priority over the long term positive actions needed to protect the forest for all. If it were not for the fine work being carried out by respectable charities such as Rainforest Concern and the hard work being carried out by a number of local people the destruction and damage would be far worse.

It does not have to be this way... and it is not too late... Each and everyone one of us need to take a long hard look at ourselves first; whether

young or old, at work or at home; we need to understand that as individuals we can make a difference, a step in the right direction.

Since I returned to the UK from abroad I have organised an annual "TEACHERS TO THE AMAZON" trip. In Ecuador we visited the cloud forest and the Amazon rainforest. The trip involved staying at a number of locations that have benefited greatly from their link with Rainforest Concern. With the assistance of my colleagues I am now assisting schools and colleges to take students out on similar trips. Schools and colleges need to seriously look at the operation of their facilities. Questions have to be answered such as:

- Does the school have a green/sustainability policy?
- Does the school have an energy saving programme?
- Does the school have a paper reduction programme?
- Does the school have an environmental club?
- Does the school monitor all wood supplies and wood furniture to make sure that the wood is coming from a sustainable source?

For whatever reasons we all need to look at ways to make a positive impact on this wonderful place we call home... our planet Earth.



by Tom, Welford on Avon Primary School

About Phil Williams

Phil Williams worked most of his career in television and film production. During this time he spent 18 years living abroad.

Phil returned to Wales 10 years ago and started his one man company PLAN-IT ECO with the aim of encouraging people to "take better care of this wonderful world" by organising lectures, workshops and interactive programmes throughout the UK. He represents Rainforest Concern by visiting school and community groups to promote the conservation of rainforest

To contact PLAN-IT ECO please phone 07798 802087 or e-mail p_eco@msn.co.uk.



Quest Overseas 2008 project updates

by Jonathan Cassidy, Quest Overseas Director of Operations



2008 saw Quest Overseas' tenth anniversary working with Rainforest Concern on different projects in South America. With around 300 volunteers having visited project sites in Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile, we are extremely proud with what we have achieved together. Our teams of gap year volunteers went to work in the Ecuadorian and Bolivian Amazon, and as well as the work which was completed and funds which were raised, it looks as if we have helped to create yet another team of young eco warriors!

Yachana, Ecuador – the technical college continues to expand

It never ceases to amaze us how much is achieved at the project in Yachana year after year. Quest's first team in 2001 went to open some of the first trails in their protected forest area, to help patrol the land. Since then, they have managed to acquire almost four times as much forest in the surrounding area, have expanded their eco lodge to accommodate 50% more guests, and most importantly, have built from scratch a technical college for up to 100 local young people at a time – not bad in the middle of the jungle!



Expanding the technical college facilities

Our team of 19 volunteers were focussing their work on the expansion of the technical college facilities this year. With a new plot of land recently bought, trees were being planted and plantations needed to be cleared. After four weeks of mud, sweat and some very competitive volleyball competitions we managed to plant 500 native species and create a model plantation where carbon was used to maintain



Volunteers and technical college students in Ecuador

the nutrients in cleared forest. This plantation is to be opened up to all the farmers in the area, to help show a way where one plot of land will give them years and years of productive agricultural yields, rather than having to slash and burn a new area every year.

One further development in the Yachana project was that our volunteers were now to work on a daily basis with the students from the technical college. This unique cultural exchange made the experience for all involved so much more positive and we are looking forward to finding ways of developing this further. Thanks to all in Yachana and we look forward to seeing you again in May 2009.

Ambue Ari – Bolivia's only animal refuge bursting at the seams.

Yet another project which is inspirational in the amount it has achieved with the constant obstacles which government bureaucracy, local envy and commercial pressure has put on them, the Ambue Ari animal sanctuary in the Beni district of Bolivia is still thriving. Priding themselves on never turning away a single animal in need of refuge, they have started to become victims of their own success and are struggling to accommodate the animals they receive.

Whereas our teams normally concentrate their four weeks at the project building one enclosure for a new animal, this years two teams had to work double time and complete the construction of two enclosures each, for four pumas rescued from different circuses – well done guys! One fantastic piece of news which has only recently come to light however, is that they have managed to secure the purchase of a new 500 hectare area of forest. Not only does this give them more scope to accommodate new animals arriving to the refuge, this new area backs onto the Madidi National Park, giving them enormous scope for their reintroduction program, something which was so far only limited to the smaller species due to the potential territory areas available to them.

Looking ahead, business as usual

During a period where the working world is reeling from economic instability and uncertainty, the student population appear less affected and are still putting on their backpacks keen to explore the world. We are delighted to have the opportunity to offer them the chance to be involved in these Rainforest Concern supported projects, and hope that our next ten years working together prove as successful as the last year. For further information about Quest see www.questoverseas.com/



VOLUNTARY WORK

The choice of my Gap Year: the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary, India

by Julia Sandstrom, Volunteer

In February 2008 one of my young life's biggest adventures started. Even before graduating from the Swedish Sixth form I knew I wanted to see the world and help the environment at the same time. Finally a couple of months after graduating I got my plane tickets. I was going to India. On February the 24 2008 my adventure started. After cramming all my things into my backpack, my family and I set off to Heathrow. I was really nervous as well as extremely excited. Giving my mum, dad and sister a last big hug, I wept my tears away and went forward into the unknown a.k.a an airplane with movies on demand.

After 24 hours, four of which included a taxi ride into the middle of nowhere, I finally arrived at my planned destination - Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary. Stepping out of the taxi all I could see was dense rainforest and all I could hear were dogs barking. It was also extremely hot and humid outside, something I wasn't used to coming from a cold and wintry London. Underneath all the excitement and sweat, I was extremely tired. Sitting at Bombay airport without water for six hours is a bit tiring but the long trip was well worth it at last here I was in this amazing place.

Situated in the northern part of the South Western state of Kerala the region is home to some 39 million people and has one language called Malayalam. The sanctuary itself was formed when a man called Wolfgang came from Germany to study with a guru. He discovered this place and saw these trees that were being cut down and thought that maybe he could change this so he formed a sanctuary.



Amazing plant diversity at the Sanctuary

The Western Ghats is a big mountain range that runs from the beginning of the State of Gujarat and finishes up at the end of the State of Tamil Nadu. Once covered by dense rainforest the spread of big tea and coffee plantations in the early 1900 destroyed large areas of virgin rainforest. Now only 10% of the original rainforests remains. Fortunately these hills were recently declared a Unesco World Heritage Site - the Ghats has some amazing wildlife with 1 800 plants that are endemic to the region.



Experiencing the rainforest first hand

Wolfgang's vision of re-growing the rainforest came true and now there stands an amazing rainforest that is absolutely beautiful. Wolfgang and his dedicated team of people manage the day-to-day running of the Sanctuary. Twenty young girls from the area support the six-man strong management team, working at the sanctuary until they get married. Suprabha (or Supi as she is known) has lived and worked at the here since the eighties and has been key to delivering great results. She has put everything into this amazing place, often working for free. Now she travels to different seminars delivering speeches about the environment and the importance of maintaining the rainforest. Recently she won a price from a fund headed by Princess Ann of England for all the work that she has done.

While conservation is their main objective, education is very important. Every year some 3000 people, most of whom are children visit this unique place. The time they spend here is very important because it enables them to experience first hand how crucial it is to preserve the rainforest. Programmes run by the sanctuary include a six-month course called "Lifestyles and Life skills" which looks at everything from insects to how we humans came to live on planet earth. Everyone I've met that has taken part in this course said it was life changing.

The five weeks I spent at Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary was happy, crazy, sad, sunny, rainy and fantastic. I got to know so many great people and we became like a big family in the end. I also went travelling with these great people from the course for a further seven weeks up to a mountain course in the Himalayas. On route we visited some spectacular places around India and learnt so much about the different habitats and the environmental problems that face the country. I can't sum up everything I saw and experienced in India on one page. Who could? I however know, that all the people in India who are putting their lives and souls into conservation projects are amazing people and are doing a lot of good work. Usually they work without any money, living on nothing until some good willed person or institution give a donation. Although the projects may be small, they do show and teach people what can be done. Lastly I would like to say thank you to Michael Naylor, Peter Bennett and my father for making my trip a reality. And of course a big thanks to Wolfgang, Supi, Sandy, Shuti, Lorenzo and all the other great people at the sanctuary for making me feel so welcome.



The Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary



MEMBERSHIP

Our special thanks to the following schools that have joined us in the past year or have been actively involved with Rainforest Concern for many years:

Abbeyfield School; Abbs Cross School; All Souls C of E Primary School; Aylesbury High School; Benenden School; Berkhamsted Collegiate School; Bridgewater School; Broomfield School; CEDD'S School; Castle Primary School; Crofton Junior School; Cults Primary School; Diocesan and Payne Smith Primary School; Ecole Dickinsfield Edit Weston Primary School; Dorrington Primary School; European School; Culham Glenfall Community Primary School; Greenleys Junior School; Haberdashers Monmouth School for Girls; Harlington Lower School; Heasandford Primary School; Jessie Younghusband School; Kensington Prep School; Kinellar Primary School; Kirkliston Primary School; Lochnell Primary School; Malvern Primary School; Mary Erskine School; Pitteuchar East Primary School; Pontarddulais Comprehensive School; Queen Elizabeth Grammar School; Redlands Primary School; Ridgeway Middle School; Rosneath Primary School; Royal Grammar School; Rushen Primary School; Scotts Park Primary School; Sevenoaks Primary School; Shalfleet Church of England Primary School; Sheffield University; Shottery Primary School; Sibertswold Church of England Primary School; South park Primary School; Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School; St St Albans School; Cedd's C of E Primary School; St Clere's School; St Ignatius RC Primary School; St John's Primary School; St Vincent's Catholic Primary School; The John Hampden School; Welford on Avon Primary School; Wendover Tredworth Primary; Tuckwood First School; Wensleydale Middle School; William

We are particularly grateful to those of you who became Benefactors or Guardians in the past year:

Benjamin Allhusen; Josceline Anson; Jill Banwell; Joan Brown; Sheila Blamire; Nicholas Bulloch; Martin Chapman; Phil Chapman; Emma Clark; Amy Combes; Freya Cowan; Stephen Craig; Clare Dyas; Hayley Flood; Harriet Anna Furze; Carl Gant; Peter Gatehouse; Rosalind Goates; Tim Harris; Emma Healey; Evan Heasley; Naomi Hughes; Damian King; Abbie King; Jorin Klaehn; Mr and Mrs Langley Becky; Lee Stephanie; Lyth Elaine McChesney; C. McConnell; Maximilian McKechnie; Hannah Mond; Sarah Murtagh; Mrs Outi Ned Ponsonby; Paul M Randall; Sian Rees Melanie Richardson; Sally Rigg; Emma Runge; Edward Salt; Portia Sampson; W.J. Smyllie; Robert Stack; Daniel Stapleford; Robert Struckett; P.A. Turner; David Walker; Jennifer Mary Williams; Steven Wilson; Reverend A Attenburrow; Stuart Mills; Stephanie Russell; The St. Pier family; Wilding; McArdle Wilson.

If you are not a Member of Rainforest Concern, then please join us by completing the form below. If you are already a member, then perhaps you can encourage a friend to follow your example!

You might like to consider leaving a lasting legacy to the projects of Rainforest Concern in your Will. We will be happy to provide full details upon request and you may of course choose a particular area

Please tick one box only	
Member: Sponsoring 1 acre each year	<input type="checkbox"/> £5 per month <input type="checkbox"/> £60 annually
Friend: Sponsoring 2 acres each year	<input type="checkbox"/> £10 per month <input type="checkbox"/> £120 annually
Guardian: Sponsoring 6 acres each year *	<input type="checkbox"/> £25 per month <input type="checkbox"/> £300 annually
Benefactor: Sponsoring 12 acres each year *	<input type="checkbox"/> £50 per month <input type="checkbox"/> £600 annually
Name <input type="text"/>	Title <input type="text"/>
Address <input type="text"/>	
Postcode <input type="text"/>	
I would prefer to make a simple donation of £ <input type="text"/>	
Cheques should be made payable to 'Rainforest Concern'. Should you wish to pay by credit card, please telephone 0207 229 2093	
	You can make your donation worth even more! For every pound you give to us, we get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue. All you need to do is tick the box.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like all donations I have made since 6 April 2000 and all donations in the future to be Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise.
To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we will claim in the tax year.	
If you wish to sponsor an acre as a gift for someone please telephone us on 0207 229 2093 or visit www.rainforestconcern.org and click on "sponsor an acre online"	

STANDING ORDER FORM	
I wish to pay monthly / yearly by Standing Order (please delete as appropriate):	
Name and full address of your Bank	
To: <input type="text"/>	Bank / Building Society <input type="text"/>
Address <input type="text"/>	
Postcode <input type="text"/>	
Name(s) of Account Holder(s) <input type="text"/>	
Account no <input type="text"/>	Sort Code <input type="text"/>
Instruction to your Bank - Please pay to Barclays Bank, 20-29-90, 50793086, Ref: RCSO.	
On <input type="text"/> day <input type="text"/> month <input type="text"/> year	the sum of £ <input type="text"/>
and the same amount on the same day of each month / year (please delete) until further notice	
Signature <input type="text"/>	Date <input type="text"/>
<small>All our supporters receive an attractive certificate recording the level of their Membership, our magazine Rainforest Review and regular updates. * Guardians and Benefactors will receive a Rainforest Concern T-shirt (XL / L / M, Lady-fit S, M, L, Child size 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-11) - please circle appropriate size - please tick here if not required. After one year's Membership Rainforest Concern Benefactors are entitled to two days free accommodation, meals and guided tours at one of our lodges in Ecuador. Guardians are entitled to this after two years' Membership.</small>	

Please fill in the form and send to Rainforest Concern, 8 Clanricarde Gardens, London, W2 4NA, UK

Tel: 020 7229 2093 Fax: 020 7221 4094 website: www.rainforestconcern.org email: info@rainforestconcern.org Registered Charity no. 1028947



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