

# Threatened Plants NEWSLETTER



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also adversely affect the hill forests of Thaleban National Park across the border in Thailand. The announcement that Perlis is to clear Mata Ayer (reported in Oryx 22: 54, 1988) ignores the Conservation Strategy which WWF-Malaysia has prepared for the state.

## Nam Choan Dam Threat

The largest legislated protected area in Thailand containing the country's least disturbed expanse of riverine forest is threatened by revived proposals to construct the Nam Choan Dam.

Plans to construct the dam were first made in the early 1970s, but were withdrawn after protests from local people and the international conservation community. The present proposals would flood 223 sq. km of riverine forest in the heart of the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary, which is contiguous with the Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary. The flooded area would bisect Thung Yai and thus seriously affect animal migration routes, and would result in the loss of lowland rain forest which is already inadequately represented in Thailand's protected areas system.

Stephen Davis (TPU)

## Machalilla

The Master Plan for Machalilla National Park, Ecuador, has been released by the Departamento de Administracion de Areas Naturales y Recursos Silvestres of the Ecuadorian Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganaderia. Its production was funded by WWF.

The park was created in 1979 and has an area of 55,095 ha, but because of geographic and socio-economic factors it is not a single unit. The continental portion (38,935 ha) in southwestern Manabi province is divided into northern and southern areas separated by a populated belt that is not included in the

park. The marine area includes two nautical miles contiguous to the continental area and encompasses La Plata and Salango islands in the Pacific Ocean. This makes Machalilla the only park in Ecuador that has been established with a marine area from the outset. (A marine area for the Galápagos Islands National Park was only established in 1986.)

The park includes spectacular coastal scenery and the Chongon and Colonche mountain ranges which support the last remaining primary dry forest in Ecuador. Approximately 60% of the park consists of dry, secondary forest with Cordia lutea, Croton fraseri, Bursera graveolens, Geoffraea spinosa, Jacquinia pubescens and Lemaireocereus cartwrightianus. The upland areas of the park are a refuge for white-tailed deer, collared peccary, nine-banded armadillo, pale-throated sloth, coati and ocelot, as well as containing sites of archaeological interest.

Although the government owns 80% of the park land, park protection faces many problems due mainly to the structure of private ownership, and to colonists organized into communities which extend claims of land rights to other areas of the park. The dry secondary forest is threatened by timber activities and conversion to farmland and pastures. Also there are plans to install oil depots on La Plata Island, which would create critical problems for protection of some areas of the park.

In spite of these problems, Machalilla offers the challenge of reforestation that can parallel the most ambitious tropical restoration project, such as that planned for the dry tropical forest of Guanacaste in northwestern Costa Rica. Once protection of Machalilla has been secured, reforestation can begin by planting native species and by using dry forest fragments as seed sources to restore degraded land. Machalilla also offers the potential for developing environmental education and tourism, as well as showing how natural resources can be managed in the dry tropics and used to restore damaged ecosystems. To achieve these aims, the cooperation of government agencies and the wholehearted support of Ecuadorians is needed.

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