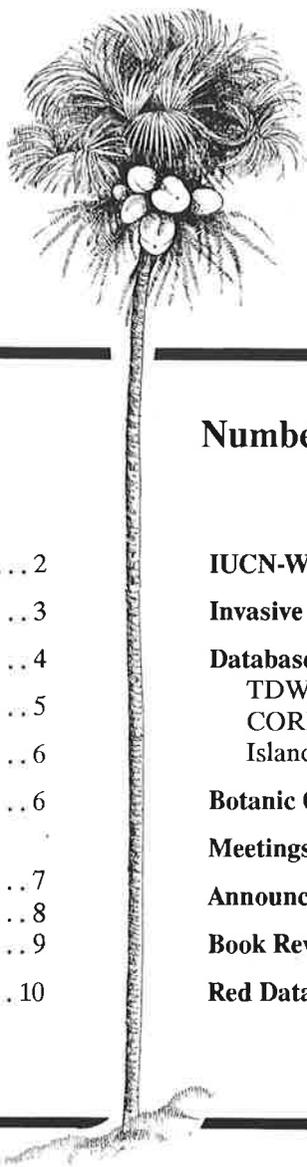


# Threatened Plants NEWSLETTER



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ecological stability of the island, particularly with regard to their role in the rainfall cycle and in soil formation. The island's rugged topography is extremely vulnerable to rapid and severe erosion, and once the forests are removed there can be disastrous loss of soil during the heavy winter rains. Above the laurel forest, in the central massif, is a community dominated by ericas. The conservation of this scrubby community is also important as it protects the laurel forest from erosion and helps regulate the water regime.

Aware of the increasing disturbance to this biologically rich and economically valuable natural heritage, the forest and associated *Erica* scrub was declared a protected area by decree of the Regional Government in 1982, becoming known as the Natural Park of Madeira. The Natural Park is now zoned to ensure controls on

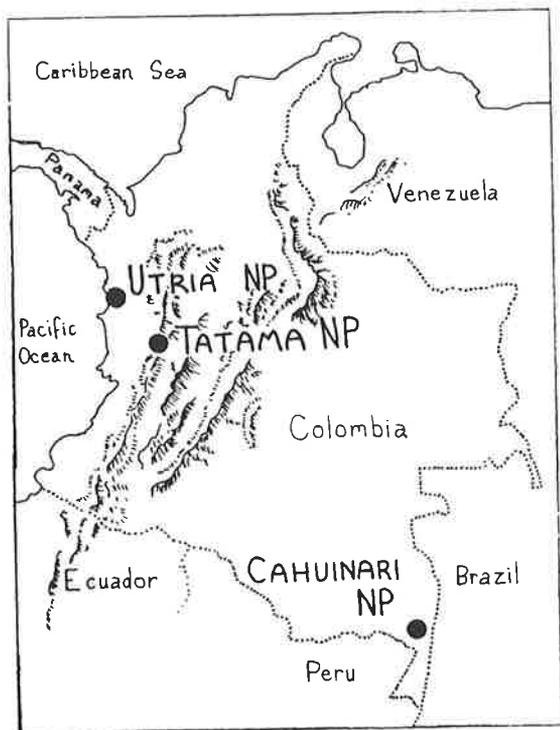
disturbance and visitor pressure. Today, the Park, covering some 100 km<sup>2</sup>, represents the largest and most valuable area of laurel forest left in the world. In total, the Natural Park covers about two-thirds of the island and is considered both a valuable part of Madeira's natural heritage as well as an important feature in its economy.

## New Colombian Parks

On 28 November 1987, the Colombian government announced the creation of three national parks. Utría Sound NP (54,000 ha) on the Pacific coast, and Tatamá NP (51,900 ha) high up in the Andes, are both in the Chocó region. Cahuinarí NP (575,000 ha), now the largest national park in the country, is in the Amazon region.

Conservation of the Chocó region, encompassing parts of Colombia, Panama and Ecuador, has been a goal for a considerable length of time (see TPN No. 17, 1986). Between 1968-1977, five national parks were established in the northern and southern Colombian Chocó, but none in the species-rich central portion. Yet this area includes many endemics and possibly represents a Pleistocene refuge.

Utría Sound (Utría means "beauty" in the local Emberá language) is one of the top priorities for conservation in Colombia. Located 150 km south of the border with Panama, this coastal area is a tropical fjord consisting of a narrow inlet, 10 km long and 1-2 km wide, with abruptly rising slopes. Nowhere else on Colombia's Pacific coast can a combination of its three most endangered ecosystems be found: coral reefs, mangroves and rain forest. From the sandy beaches, estuaries and cliffs, the forested slopes rise to over 1,900 m in the Baudó Mountain Range. The rich fauna (including over 200 species of birds) and flora are poorly known, with exciting discoveries certain to come.



## Ecuador - Second Debt Swap

WWF has secured a second debt-for-nature swap, following the signing of an historic agreement with the Ecuadorean Monetary Board and Fundación Natura. WWF has purchased US\$1 million face value of Ecuadorean debt with the assistance of Bankers Trust Company and Citicorp/Citibank. Under the agreement, every dollar of debt WWF buys, bonds worth more than US\$3, plus future interest income, will be issued to protect parks and reserves throughout Ecuador. The debt-for-nature swap is the first step in a programme approved by the Ecuadorean Government that could eventually exchange US\$10 million face value of debt for conservation projects. The first year's proceeds arising from the agreement are to be targeted on Sangay National Park, Cayambe-Coca Ecological Reserve, Yasuni National Park, Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, Podocarpus National Park and Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve. Together, these parks and reserves encompass ecosystems ranging from the Pacific Ocean to the peaks of the Andes and including parts of the Amazon basin forests.

The decision to protect Utría was urgently needed when a plan to build an hydroelectric dam and support road, and slash-and-burn agriculture threatened the area. It was time to act quickly. Co-ordinated funding efforts and technical assistance were provided by Fundación Natura, WWF-US and TNC, to INDERENA (the government agency responsible for managing Colombia's natural resources), in order to develop inventories and plans for the park area. In 1987, a co-operative agreement between INDERENA and Fundación Natura established a Technical Committee which is preparing an operational plan for the park. Indian community involvement is an important component of the plan. With the support of multilateral funding and increased local participation, the success of the conservation effort to protect Utría Sound National Park should be guaranteed.

Olga Herrera-MacBryde (TPU)

## New Foundation in Paraguay

Paraguay is one of the botanically least known countries in South America. The Paraguay River bisects the country from north to south. The eastern half, where over 96% of the population lives, contains tropical forests, gently rolling wooded hills and fertile grassy plains. The western half, composed of dense scrub forests and marshes, remains relatively unexplored and undisturbed. However, the recent upsurge in both the nation's economy and population now threatens the grasslands and lush forests.

garden conservation plant. If established, a database of techniques and learned experience could be created as a permanent asset for the conservation movement and for the botanic garden community. For more details see *BGCS News* Vol. 1 No. 2 (June 1988). Copies of the discussion paper are available from BGCS, 53 The Green, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AA, U.K.

## BG Congress

The 2nd International Botanic Gardens Conservation Congress will be held from 24-29 April 1989 in Saint-Denis on the island of Réunion. The theme of the conference is "Tropical Botanic Gardens - Conservation and Development". It is hoped the meeting will be attended by a wide range of representatives from botanic gardens worldwide and will provide an important opportunity for exchange of ideas and to review progress in the implementation of the Botanic Gardens Conservation Strategy. Further details from: P.S. Wyse Jackson, at the BGCS (address above), or from Deuxième Congrès Internationale des Jardin Botaniques pour la Conservation, Conseil Générale de la Réunion, Palais de la Source, 2 Rue de la Source, 97400 Saint Denis, Ile de Réunion, France.

## African Newsletter

A new regional botanic garden newsletter is being launched for gardens in Tropical Africa, Madagascar and the islands of the Indian Ocean. The aim is to link the gardens into a co-operative network of institutions and to develop garden conservation programmes for threatened floras of that region. Further details and contributions should be sent to P.S. Wyse Jackson at BGCS (address above), or to M. Bovey at the Limbe Botanic Garden, Limbe, Cameroon.

# Meetings

## 17TH IUCN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The biggest and most productive General Assembly in IUCN's 40-year history took place between 1-10 February 1988 in San José, Costa Rica. The theme of the 17th Assembly was "Conservation for Sustainable Development: A Shared Responsibility." More than 1000 delegates participated from 93 countries, including environmental scientists, administrators (including 13 environmental ministers), and representatives from aid agencies. The World Bank, the Inter-American, African and Asian Development Banks and a number of major U.S. philanthropic foundations participated, many for the first time. The World Bank announced it will be turning more to non-governmental organizations for advice on environmental aspects of its programmes.

The economics of conserving natural resources dominated discussions. Costa Rica's Nobel Prize laureate President Oscar Arias called for "development compatible with the conservation of life in all its forms in a true peace with nature." Later, the ministers of natural resources of Costa Rica and Nicaragua signed a letter of intent to begin creation of an "international peace park" along their eastern border, and Costa Rica announced abandonment of an oil pipeline project through its side of a "peace park" with Panama.

For the first time, the issue of rapid human population growth was high on the agenda. In particular, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and IUCN discussed areas for closer collaboration. IUCN will also appoint a full-time women's advisor to give the knowledge and skills of women a greater role in sustainable development.

Economics was a thread weaving through official hearings and daily contacts. For example, there was much discussion on ways of valuing the benefits of protecting natural areas, as opposed

to the practice of fixing value by the profits to be made from commercial exploitation. Environmental groups in Honduras, for example, showed that a watershed could supply reliable water to the capital city 23 times cheaper than the water now obtained from a polluted river. Rehabilitation of degraded lands to restore productivity, and the use of modern intensive methods in certain areas, were recognized as increasingly important ways to avoid the destruction of natural areas.

At the plants workshop, there was considerable interest in the work of the Botanic Gardens Conservation Secretariat, and the role that botanic gardens could play in conservation education, with some 50 million people visiting botanic gardens around the world each year.

This 17th General Assembly helps set the IUCN course for the next 3 years, and the ideas will be incorporated in a revised Programme for the next meeting of the IUCN Council. In particular, IUCN made a commitment to implement the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment in its report to the United Nations (the 1987 Brundtland report), and reviewed the draft World Conservation Strategy II. Overall, the Assembly reflected a growing symbiosis between ecology, economy and equity.

Olga Herrera-MacBryde (TPU)

## CITES - PLANTS COMMITTEE

The first meeting of the Plants Committee (PC) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and The Linnean Society, London, on 1-5 November 1988. There were about 40 participants, including representatives from 10 governments, the European Community, IUCN, several other conservation groups and individual experts. The PC members who represent the CITES geographical regions are: Africa (J.H. Seyani, The National Herbarium of Malawi, Zomba); Asia (T.B. Shrestha, Royal Nepal

Academy of Science, Kathmandu); Europe (G. Ll. Lucas, the PC vice chairman, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew); North America (B. MacBryde, the PC chairman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.); Oceania (D.J. Miller, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Canberra City); and South America, Central America and the Caribbean (Lic. Dora E. Mora de Retana, Universidad de Costa Rica, San José).

The PC intends to develop CITES as an effective treaty for the conservation of plants, recognizing that its national and international structures offer a unique opportunity to advance and use knowledge of threatened and potentially threatened plants. Additional objectives:

1. to improve the CITES mechanism and administration for plants so that the treaty is a more effective tool to conserve qualifying taxa in international trade, without encumbering such trade in specimens that usually are not of conservation concern (such as artificially propagated and scientific specimens);
2. to make CITES more effective for the many threatened and potentially threatened taxa now regulated by it;
3. to assist Parties to add taxa to or revise CITES lists (appendices I-III) to bring additional protection to plants in need of CITES provisions.

The PC intends to continue to function with a broad spectrum of participants having diverse knowledge and experience. The six PC regional committees will be developed into effective networks, and linked to related conservation efforts. Large and complex CITES regions will be divided into subregions. For example, Asia may be divided into four subregions, with Dr Shrestha also the Central South Asia subregional co-ordinator. The Caribbean, Central America, and South America are recognized as subregions, with Lic. Mora de Retana also the Central America subregional co-ordinator. The PC is seeking funds to operate some of these regional committees.

The meeting agreed that:

- a CITES *Guide to Plants in International Trade* be published as a book for the general public and regulatory officers;
- checklists be developed for higher taxa listed in CITES appendices (with synonymy, distribution and IUCN categories for recognized taxa);
- a study on significant international trade in wild orchids be conducted;
- traded non-CITES groups, such as bulbs and timber, need further study;
- the CITES Secretariat must hire a Plants Officer.

More education and publicity is still required to improve understanding of and co-operation with CITES, and assistance is still required for certain Parties to enforce the provisions of CITES more effectively. Also, the PC encourages Mexico and Turkey to become Parties to CITES.

Direct Financial assistance for this meeting came from the Conservation Treaty Support Fund, Fauna and Flora Preservation Society, Netherlands, U.K., U.S.A., World Wildlife Fund-U.S., and private individuals. The PC will meet next in Lausanne, Switzerland, during the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, 9-20 October 1989. The deadline for Parties to submit proposals to amend the appendices, or draft resolutions, is 12 May 1989. We need your participation, as there is much to do for so many plants; please especially contact your regional member as much as appropriate.

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## RAIN FORESTS

"The Future of the Tropical Rain Forest" was the subject of intense discussion at an international conference held in Oxford in June. The forum was organized by the Oxford Forestry Institute, supported by The Timber Trade Federation, Friends of the Earth and the Overseas Development Administration. Despite initial differences among the 250 conference participants, who represented a diverse array of professions and interest groups, the conference concluded by reaching a remarkable degree of consensus.

The conference urged that: "National governments and bilateral and multilateral agencies introduce guidelines and/or legislation that would ensure that all tropical hardwood timber entering the export trade be derived from forest resources that are operated under a sustained-yield harvesting/management system, the terms and conditions of which will be drawn up by government forest services in consultation with non-governmental organizations and conservation groups".

This resolution was supported by all parties, including The Timber Trade Federation, which stipulated that such a move be imposed at an international level and co-ordinated by the International Timber Trade Organization. The mechanism for implementing the World Bank-proposed regulation would involve the adoption of an international Code of Conduct for ecologically sound logging practice and a system of labelling all timber supplies with their country and concession of origin. Other causes of deforestation were discussed, including unwise development projects, spreading agriculture, and increasing population. The point was made that in all cases it is necessary to ensure that forest exploitation does not infringe upon the rights of indigenous people.

The conference called upon governments to:

- reassess their contribution to solving or worsening the critical problem of tropical deforestation;