



# FORESTS FOR LIFE

This is the first of WWF's Annual Forest Reports. It marks the organisation's 35th anniversary and its long involvement in forest conservation worldwide. We believe that the time has come to document these achievements in one volume. It also gives us an opportunity to thank the thousands of people, supporters, donors, partners and WWF staff for helping to make this work possible.

Dr Claude Martin, Director General, WWF International

# Contents

1	Foreword
2	Objectives
5	World Forest Map
7	Europe/Middle East
10	Africa/Madagascar
12	North America
14	Asia/Pacific
17	Latin America/Caribbean
19	Intergovernmental processes
20	Certification
22	Buyers' Groups
23	Where to next?



WWF research shows that the world's forests are in crisis. Nearly one per cent of the world's tropical forests disappear each year. We now know that similar losses in forest quality are taking place in temperate and boreal forests. WWF is committed to halting and reversing this degradation. During 1996, WWF spent over 35 million Swiss Francs on 350 forest projects in over 50 countries. On the following pages we look at a few of the successes achieved with our partners during this year.

Early in the year WWF helped launch the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) trademark. This logo is now available on a small, but growing, number of timber products which have been certified as coming from well-managed forests. WWF is now working with over a hundred businesses around the world to help them source timber products from well managed forests, certified through the FSC. In June, WWF hosted a *Forests for Life* conference in Brussels to promote forest certification in Europe. Nearly 400 delegates, including many businesses and Members of the European Parliament took part to celebrate the 'take off' of certification in Europe. A second certification conference was held by WWF-Japan in Tokyo in September 1996. This WWF conference proposed forest certification as a mechanism through which Japan can lighten its footprint on the world's forests.

During 1996 the strength of collaboration between WWF and the IUCN (World Conservation Union) grew. As well as managing a joint programme of work, WWF and IUCN have produced a first Forest

Policy Book. I commend anyone interested in forest conservation to obtain and read this book.

WWF, in collaboration with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), launched the first WWF World Forest Map in September in Geneva at a key meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. This unique map shows the current extent of the world's forests and that 94% are still unprotected. Simultaneously, around the world, the map was distributed through the WWF network and displayed on the WWF web site.

WWF has also increased its level of collaboration with indigenous peoples. Having signed an accord with the International Alliance of Indigenous Peoples from the Tropical Forests, WWF produced a position paper supporting their rights.

At the launch of the WWF Living Planet campaign on 1 October, the President of the Russian Republic of Sakha announced a 'gift to the earth', pledging to set aside for permanent protection an area of 70 million hectares of boreal forests,

representing over 2% of the world's entire forest area.

However, the earth's forests suffered considerable setbacks during the year. News broke in August that the annual rate of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon had increased by over 34% since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Also during 1996, the impact of transnational logging companies has become much more severe. Large forest tracts in countries which had previously been 'safe' from destruction are now being targeted by these international loggers. WWF, with the help of the European Commission, is now turning its attention to investigate and report on this issue.

I would like to thank each and every one who has helped to make progress in forest conservation possible. It inspires me to see that so many people care about the world's forests and the people that depend on them.

Dr Claude Martin  
Director General, WWF International

At a time when the world's forests face more acute pressure than during any other period in history, the world's two largest conservation organisations, WWF and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) have, for the first time, joined forces to develop a common policy position on forests.

They believe that the earth's forests currently face two critical problems: deforestation, and loss of forest quality. In order to resolve these issues, WWF and IUCN have defined a challenge for the world community: to halt and reverse the loss and degradation of forests and all kinds of woodlands by the year 2000.

The two organisations have concluded that this goal can only be attained if five priority objectives are fulfilled:

- 1 Establishment of a network of ecologically-representative protected areas



2

Environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management outside protected areas

- Implementation of ecologically and socially appropriate forest restoration programmes

3

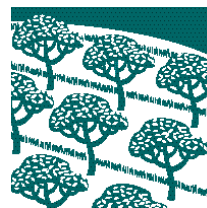


- 4 Reduction of forest damage from global change



5

Consumption of forest goods and services at levels that do not damage the environment





# OBJECTIVES

The challenge is daunting. Of the 233 most important centres of plant diversity worldwide, 79% are now under imminent threat. Currently only 6% of the world's 3,300 million hectares of forests are formally protected. However, WWF believes there is currently no intergovernmental process which is capable of catalysing the rapid changes needed to slow the rate of forest loss.

This is why WWF is setting its own goals and targets and filling the leadership gap through an integrated mix of field programmes, policy initiatives and campaign action. This, for example, includes our commitment to working with indigenous and local peoples for forest protection and sustainable management. At the September meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) in Geneva, representatives of indigenous peoples played a major part in negotiations for the first time. WWF is providing logistical and technical support to twenty or so indigenous groups' representatives to enable them to attend other IPF meetings and related inter-sessional activities. There is also the development of a new phase of WWF's project to conserve temperate forests in Chile and Argentina working in partnership with the Mapuche people. Together, a strategic plan for the conservation and sustainable management of the forests to the year 2000 has been drawn up which provides the long term framework for a range of WWF-supported

activities.

The overall task is an uphill struggle.

It can only be confronted with commitment, co-operation, optimism and resources.

The *Forests for Life* Campaign, which began at the end of 1995, aims to accomplish two formidable targets:

- 1 Establishment of an ecologically representative network of protected areas, covering at least 10% of the world's forest area by the year 2000.
- 2 Independent certification of 10 million hectares of well-managed forest by 1998.

The *Forests for Life* Campaign has developed a range of tools aimed at world leaders, influential business leaders, media, and the general public. These aim to inform, educate, publicise and, finally, encourage action which will help the world community to achieve the two targets. The first important tool developed has been the WWF World Forest Map which shows the fragility of the forests. It stresses how little remains and how little of this is protected.

This has been distributed to all Heads of Government and other influential decision makers. The map, along with individual country maps, has also been put on the WWF web site (<http://www.panda.org>). This is the first time people, other than foresters, scientists and politicians, have had access to this worrying

data. Democratising information, we feel sure, will help us

to build a constituency which can push governments to work on our targets. With maps being updated regularly, people with access to the Internet (a growing number) will be able to check the progress of our Campaign.

Certification conferences are another tool used in our campaign strategy. These conferences, which took place in Brussels and Tokyo, are events which help to build political support among forestry sector personnel, business leaders, journalists and politicians, for the positive role independent, third party certification plays in sustainable forest management.

Development of national Buyers' Groups is being actively promoted in a number of key timber consuming countries. These groups, made up of consuming and retailing companies, should provide the necessary market incentive to persuade logging companies that certification is not only viable but is, ultimately, a positive marketing tool.

Our International President, the Duke of Edinburgh has also written to Heads of Government of major timber producing and consuming countries to make them aware of WWF's policies and to request their support for our campaign goals. We anticipate generating support not only to achieve the campaign

# 74 % of the world's forests are unprotected

Overleaf – the first digital global forest map showing actual forest extent and protected areas was launched this year. The WWF World Forest Map, produced in collaboration with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, utilised national and international forest data spanning the last 20 years. It is a particularly important point of reference because it clearly demonstrates the extent of the danger to one of the world's invaluable resources.

With the information that this map provides, it can immediately be seen that current levels of forest protection are far below the internationally accepted minimum of 10%. The map also shows that countries such as Cambodia, Russia and Gabon, where large areas of forest still remain, have yet to establish representative networks of protected areas to ensure adequate protection for all their different forest types.

In addition to the World Forest Map, 80 national maps have been produced which demonstrate in greater detail for each country, the extent of forest cover as well as forest protected areas. Certified forests endorsed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) are also highlighted.

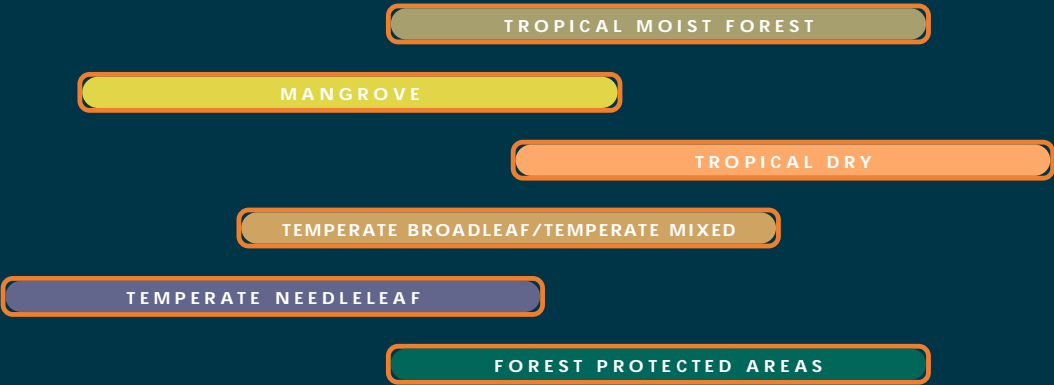


The WWF World Forest Map is available as a full colour poster and can also be accessed on the WWF web site: <http://www.panda.org>.

This map comprises a digital compilation of data from over 80 sources which vary in accuracy and date. We have used the most up-to-date and accurate sources of information for each country or region. Because of variations in information, there may be inconsistencies in some forest classifications. These will be rectified in future editions of the map.



We have adopted a very broad classification system, using five forest groupings – two temperate and three tropical. Detailed information is stored digitally at WCMC and is available for further analysis at country or regional level.





Land area of European/Middle East Programme region	4,047,514,000 ha
Area of forest and other woodland	1,179,283,000 ha
Annual change in forest cover	+ 242,100 ha
Number of WWF forest projects	38
1996 expenditure	Sfr 3,708,020
1997 budget	Sfr 7,100,448
Number of certified forests	9
Coverage	1,841,543 ha
Number of protected areas	1140
Coverage	64,578,811 ha

Sources: Food and Agriculture Organisation, Forest Stewardship Council, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, World Resources Institute, WWF International.

# Europe

# Middle East

Europe's natural environment has suffered the consequences of two historical processes – continuous human habitation of the area and the industrial revolution. The result is that today parts of west and central Europe have been stripped of their forest cover with only tiny remnants left of certain forest types. The rest has often been used intensively for many centuries. Accordingly, the conservation challenge in Europe is to halt fragmentation and the decline in quality. This can be achieved through the restoration of forests and woodlands, and the development of a more representative network of protected areas. In northern and eastern Europe the conditions are different, with large areas of old-growth forests still in existence. However, they too face an uncertain future with timber companies and 'cash hungry' governments rapidly harvesting these last untapped resources.

WWF is countering these threats by promoting sustainable forest management through independent, third-party certification – from Portugal to the Bering Strait, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. The impact of Europe's timber demand is felt throughout the world through large scale unsustainable logging. WWF is attempting to shift the demand to timber from well-managed forests. To this end, WWF is developing Buyers' Groups for sourcing independently certified timber in a number of European countries.



## AUSTRIA/HUNGARY

### Two important successes for the Green Danube Programme

WWF-Austria has, after a thirteen year struggle, won national park designation for an 11,500 hectares floodplain located east of Vienna. The park area was to have been destroyed under plans by a power plant company to dam the last intact riverine forest of the Danube river in Middle Europe. However, demonstrations by thousands of Austrian citizens and WWF campaigns stopped the destructive proposal and led to the opening of the national park in October 1996.

In April, WWF achieved additional success by convincing the Hungarian government to designate the Danube floodplain forests of Gemene-Beda Karapancsa as the Danube-Drava National Park. The forests are the largest in the Danube region (24,500 hectares) and are home to over forty pairs of black stork and other threatened floodplain-dependent species. The campaign was led by the WWF-Hungarian Programme Office and was so successful that the Environment Minister declared an additional 26,000 hectares (primarily forest) along the Drava river as belonging to the new national park.

## UK

### Community forest initiatives in Scotland

WWF has worked since the mid 1980s to enable community-based forestry initiatives in Scotland. For example, helping the Borders Community Forest Trust to buy a small area of woodland, and pressing for a change in the law to allow crofters to plant and manage woodland, something they could not previously do as any trees on crofting land automatically belonged to the landlord. In association with the crofters, WWF has also published guidelines on how to design, plant and manage small woodlands.

A major barrier to community forestry was lack of funding. To this end, WWF also worked to establish The Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust, whose aim is to double the amount of native woodland in Scotland from 2% to 4% of the land area as a legacy for the next millennium.

The Trust has already allocated £25 million to projects right across Scotland, from the urban central belt to the rural Highlands and Islands. Almost £12 million of that funding came from the UK National Lottery's Millennium Fund. A third application to the Fund will be submitted by the end of the year.



## BELGIUM

### Forests for Life '96 conference

In June, WWF hosted a major conference on forest certification in Brussels. Over 400 delegates participated in a lively debate on the achievements of the Forest Stewardship Council and WWF Buyers' Groups.





## FINLAND

### Important step towards protection of old-growth forests

In June 1996, after many years campaigning by WWF and other environmental NGOs, the Finnish government made a decision to protect 77,000 hectares of old-growth forests in northern Finland. The majority of this is state owned land and the balance, in Kuusamo Forest Common is close to the Russian border.

However, there is a down side to this story. Due to the pressure from the forest industry, the Ministry Taskforce released 100,000 hectares of old-growth forest for felling. There are limitations in place such as the requirement for unfelled ecological corridors to be left in place but, as yet, there is no scientific evidence as to the efficacy of this landscape ecology planning system. WWF-Finland is demanding a postponement of 20 years in order that there is adequate time to acquire more information on this technique.

On the other side of the Finnish-Russian border, there has been fierce opposition from consumers concerned about the destruction of old-growth forest. This has led to Finland's largest timber buyer, Enso, stating that they will not purchase timber from areas that have conservation value. A joint initiative by WWF-Finland, WWF-Germany, the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, the Republic of Karelia (Russia), the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and Enso was made in October to establish a working group. This group – every effort will be made to ensure that Russian environmental NGOs are included – will prepare a conservation plan for the old-growth forests in Russian Karelia. In addition to forest conservation activities, ecological forestry practices in commercially managed forests via independent certification will be promoted.

## SAKHA REPUBLIC YAKUTIA

### Arctic ecosystem to be protected

The Sakha Republic, situated on the southern bank of the Arctic Ocean, is a vast land with a harsh climate – winter temperatures drop to -72°C. It is a unique place with a vulnerable arctic ecosystem but, as in so many other parts of the world, mistakes made in previous years have left a heritage of severe environmental degradation. After discussions with WWF, the President of the Republic of Sakha announced on 1 October at the WWF 2000 – The Living Planet Campaign launch, that 70 million hectares of virgin Sakha territory will be completely protected by the end of this century.

## KOMI REPUBLIC PECHORA-ILYCH

### Swiss government helps to protect unique boreal forest

The Republic of Komi in Russia is in a state of political and economic transition – an unstable economy, changing legislation, shortage of funds for nature conservation, and inexperience of the market economy. So the future looked bleak for the Pechora-Ilych Reserve and Yougyd Va National Park – 2,500,000 hectares of pristine boreal forest and one of the very last untouched areas of Europe where natural dynamics still shape the forests. Fortunately, WWF was able to secure substantial funds from the Swiss government. This will be spent on developing better forest management to ensure that the existing protection system remains intact.



## SWEDEN

### Making a mark on the world's wood products trade

In Sweden, all major timber industry representatives, forest owners' associations, indigenous peoples' groups, NGOs and manufacturers such as IKEA, agreed in February 1996 to participate in a formal Forest Stewardship Council working group to develop a national set of standards for independent certification. The working group will publish their standards by 1 April 1997. Other major stakeholders in timber producing and exporting countries worldwide are showing increasing interest in the FSC process and are developing national sets of standards for timber certification.

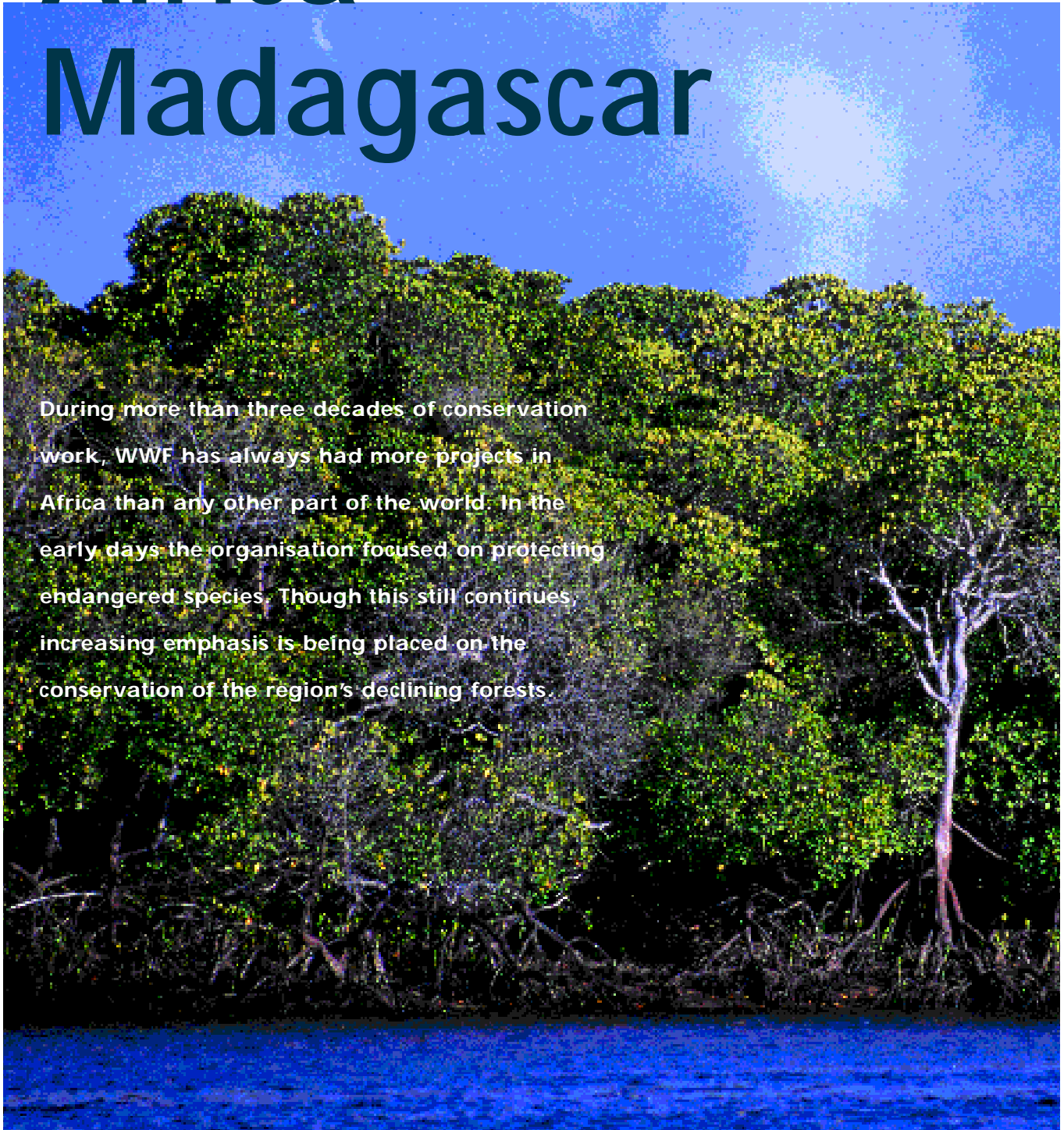


Land area of Africa/Madagascar Programme region	2,363,566,000 ha
Area of forest and other woodland	1,125,539,000 ha
Annual change in forest cover	- 2,755,100 ha
Number of WWF forest projects	72
1996 expenditure	Sfr 13,964,306
1997 budget	Sfr 26,324,184
Number of certified forests	2
Coverage	26,250 ha
Number of protected areas	196
Coverage	33,098,264 ha

Sources: Food and Agriculture Organisation, Forest Stewardship Council, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, World Resources Institute, WWF International.

# Africa Madagascar

During more than three decades of conservation work, WWF has always had more projects in Africa than any other part of the world. In the early days the organisation focused on protecting endangered species. Though this still continues, increasing emphasis is being placed on the conservation of the region's declining forests.



The tropical forests of west and central Africa are being degraded by logging and clearance for agriculture. WWF is working against this erosion by mobilising support from the Dutch government, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the WWF network to establish protected areas throughout the Congo Basin, the second largest contiguous forest in the world. This, in itself, is not sufficient and WWF is working with local communities, governments and the logging industry, to promote sustainable forest management as an alternative to over-exploitation.

## CAMEROON/GABON/ GHANA

### European Union (EU) support for central and west Africa

The European Commission has signed a contract with WWF-Belgium to implement a first phase programme to promote sustainable forest management and certification in the timber-producing countries of central and west Africa. The 14 month programme, which runs until the end of February 1997, involves two courses of action. One is to inform the professional timber sector and non-governmental organisations in Europe about certification and to promote the creation of new Buyers' Groups there. The other is to establish a co-ordinated response to the demand for certified timber in those African countries that still have significant forest resources. As ever, the role of governments as forest owners is crucial, particularly as Asian logging companies have moved into the Congo Basin buying large concessions for logging. The aid given by the EU to WWF represents an excellent opportunity to find a way towards a sustainable future for the forests of Cameroon, Gabon and Ghana.



## KENYA

### The sacred Kaya forests

The Kayas are relic patches of the once extensive lowland forest of eastern Africa. Sacred to the local people, they are a storehouse for almost 50% of the country's rare plants. They have recently come under pressure due to a growing demand for timber and land. This year WWF rescue efforts have included organising permission for extension work to be carried out, and obtaining protected national monument status for three Kayas with nine more in the process of being officially gazetted. However, in the long term, their survival depends on the success of WWF's awareness programme and the application of the laws that govern their conservation.

## NIGERIA

### Nigeria's last rainforest remains under threat

The Cross River National Park, one of the richest areas of tropical rainforest in all of western Africa, is under threat from the state government who plan to grant extensive logging concessions.

In particular, the concessions of the Ikirigon Forest Reserve, part of the Cross River National Park, were reviewed by a panel set up by Nigeria's Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA). They recommended that the Western Metal Products Company (WEMPCO) be granted approval to commence logging, if the shortcomings highlighted in their Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) were addressed. WEMPCO, whose total concessions amount to a massive 54,143 hectares has been previously reprimanded several times by the government of Ogun State, for its blatant flouting of good forestry laws.

The Nigerian Conservation Foundation (a WWF associate) has been one of the many groups insisting that logging should not start until a new EIA has been completed, approved and a stakeholders' monitoring team put in place to ensure forestry law compliance. The World Bank has offered FEPA financial and professional assistance to write another EIA.

Land area of North America region	1,835,150,000 ha
Area of forest and other woodland	749,289,000 ha
Annual change in forest cover	- 316,500 ha
Number of WWF forest projects	3
1996 expenditure	Sfr 2,521,818
1997 budget	Sfr 2,323,806
Number of certified forests	8
Coverage	615,621 ha
Number of protected areas	1222
Coverage	186,702,762 ha

Sources: Food and Agriculture Organisation, Forest Stewardship Council, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, World Resources Institute, WWF International.

# North America

The United States has some 7% of the world's forested area and 13% of the temperate forests. Combined with Canada, the two countries have half the world's coastal temperate forests – an area of outstanding biodiversity.

However, some 10% of the earth's forest plantations are to be found in the USA and that figure is increasing as natural woods are converted to 'fibre farms'.

WWF-US is working to change this pattern by pushing for increases in protected areas, especially in the Rockies and Alaska. A recent success was the purchase of temperate rainforests around Prince William Sound with funds from the Exxon Valdez settlement. At the same time, WWF is also working to influence consumer demand for timber from well-managed forests through the development of Buyers' Groups.

There are 417.6 million hectares of forest land in Canada. Of this, around 28% is currently managed for timber production. Old forests make up 71% of the total volume of the country's commercial forests. The ever quickening pace of logging (1 million hectares every year) and other demands on Canada's forests, is leading to a change in their character. More than 40 forest dwelling species are now officially threatened or endangered.



Through its Endangered Spaces Campaign, and support for a landscape ecology approach to forest certification standards, WWF Canada is attempting to moderate the rate of change in original forest in order to maintain adequate forest quality. The goal of the Endangered Spaces Campaign – to complete a protected areas network which represents all the distinct ecological forest zones of Canada – is now government policy.

## USA

### Salvage logging threatens some of the earth's oldest coniferous forests

The Salvage Logging Rider has been described as the most damaging piece of environmental legislation in the US in decades. The law effectively permits the timber industry to bulldoze roads and cut down any trees they wish on federal lands (except wilderness areas or national parks). Using liberal definitions of salvage developed by the US Congress, the Forest Service proposed 266 salvage sales in 18 states in areas that had been previously withdrawn for environmental or biodiversity conservation.

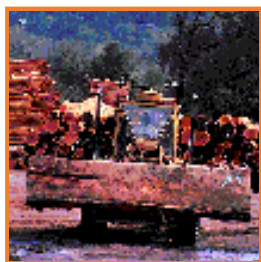
WWF-US has played a key role in the salvage logging debate by publishing three articles in scientific journals on forest health and biodiversity conservation, which were used by the environmental community to provide scientific backing for various campaign initiatives, and for submission to the administration to support measures aimed at repealing the salvage law. In addition, WWF-US has published numerous opinion editorials in national newspapers, held press interviews, testified in front of Congressional committees on forest health, and continues to work with the Clinton administration and Congress to seek permanent protection for remaining old growth forests.



## CANADA

### Nova Scotia New protected areas

WWF-Canada's lobbying efforts have helped advance more than one third of Nova Scotia's 77 natural regions to be adequately or moderately represented by protected areas, with protection being significantly advanced from about 2.5% to about 8% of the provincial land base. At least 40 significant forest sites are captured by the new protected areas, resulting in more than 250,000 hectares of Acadian forest now protected in the province.



### British Columbia Stein Valley secured

The Stein Valley (107,000 hectares) was protected as a Class A provincial park this year. The largest undeveloped watershed left in south-western British Columbia, it encompasses lakes, alpine meadows, tributaries, old growth forests, glaciers, steep canyons and wide floodplains, and holds great spiritual and cultural value to the Lytton First Nation, the area's aboriginal population.

Since 1991, the government of British Columbia has created more than 260 new parks. Over the last five years the amount of parkland in British Columbia has increased under its Protected Areas Strategy from 6.3% to 9.2%, or 8.7 million hectares.

The designation of the Stein Valley as a protected area has been a long standing goal for WWF-Canada as its protection helps safeguard an ecosystem that was under-represented in the province's protected areas system. The low elevation forests that will be shielded in the Stein Valley are an important addition to Canada's natural areas representation as outlined in WWF-Canada's Endangered Spaces Campaign.

# Asia

Land area of Asia Pacific region	2,673,126,000 ha
Area of forest and other woodland	806,400,000 ha
Annual change in forest cover	- 838,200 ha
Number of WWF forest projects	92
1996 expenditure	Sfr 6,261,338
1997 budget	Sfr 15,199,370
Number of certified forests	3
Coverage	12,701 ha
Number of protected areas	898
Coverage	90,982,708 ha

Sources: Food and Agriculture Organisation, Forest Stewardship Council, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, World Resources Institute, WWF International.

The WWF Asia/Pacific programme encompasses an area stretching from Pakistan in the west to the islands of the South Pacific in the east, and from Japan in the north to New Zealand in the south. The region contains a spectacular variety of habitats ranging from the world's highest mountain to the world's deepest ocean – and a stunning diversity of plants and animals.

A multiplicity of threats to the forest exist here. These include large scale, unsustainable logging of hardwood timber, the pressures of a population explosion coupled with widespread poverty, and the burgeoning demand of the 'Tiger Economies' of Singapore, Malaysia, Korea and Taiwan.

In an effort to combat these immense problems, WWF has developed a broad programme covering forest restoration, the strengthening of a protected areas network, the promotion of sustainable forest management, and community ownership of valuable forest resources. This programme is being implemented in partnership with local communities, indigenous NGOs, and other key players in the region.

## INDONESIA

### Butterflies help protect Arfak's mountainous forest terrain



Covering 68,000 hectares in northern Irian Jaya, the Arfak Mountains Reserve supports a rich biodiversity. In 1989, WWF began to initiate butterfly ranching in the area surrounding the reserve as an economic alternative to destructive agricultural practices. This year, approval was finally granted by the Indonesian government's conservation agency for the export of live butterfly pupae which are much sought after by foreign collectors. This should increase butterfly sales while conserving wild stock.

Six species are ranched by the local Hatam people and a small non-governmental organisation sells the butterflies, in line with existing CITES regulations and with the Indonesian government's approval, to foreign buyers and dealers. This means the local people have a guaranteed income no matter

the international market may be. Indeed, the area has improved significantly and is showing signs of recovery. Their demands on primary forests have declined and the forest is now self-sustaining.



## NEW ZEALAND

### Kahurangi National Park

On 19 May 1996, the 452,000 hectares Kahurangi National Park was officially declared open. WWF has long supported the creation of this national park, one of the largest areas of virtually unmodified landscape in New Zealand, which includes extensive native forest.

## JAPAN

### Putting certification on the map

WWF-Japan held their first ever Forest Certification Conference in Tokyo in September which was attended by over 300 delegates. This seminar has put certification on the map in Japan and has provoked debate on the need to restore Japan's timber industry to help reduce reliance on timber imports.



## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

### Assault on biodiversity

With complete disregard for existing conservation areas, biodiversity priorities and community needs, the new 1996 National Forest Plan sets aside more than half the country's forests for logging. Those areas are home to the majority of the planet's species of birds of paradise and arboreal marsupials, more orchids species than any other country on earth and an impressive diversity of birdlife. The plan is based on forest resource mapping supported by Australia and the World Bank. It identifies 20 million hectares of the country's 39 million hectare national forest estate as suitable for logging – 12 million hectares of this is to be handed out before the year 2000.

The plan greatly increases both the rate and impact of what is already a grossly unsustainable industry. An Australian government assessment in 1995 found that the country's logging allocations were then three times above economically sustainable levels. The new plan almost triples existing concession areas.



This expansion is also set in a context of generally poor forest management practices. Typical is the Lak concession in New Ireland, operated by Malaysian company Rimbunan Hijau, whose logging practices were described by forestry advisor Frantz Arentz, as "amongst the worst that I have observed anywhere in the tropics."

The treatment given to environmental protection in the plan is nothing short of cynical. The Forest Authority's remit to identify protection forests is fulfilled by listing these areas in the plan. However, they are then duly ignored in the final concession maps. Forestry areas are declared over existing conservation areas; proposed conservation areas are disregarded; and regions identified as having the highest priority for biodiversity conservation are slated for logging.

The plan reaches its most absurd in West New Britain Province where all but 98,000 hectares of the Province's 1.6 million hectares of closed forests have been given over to logging. The remaining portion is only excluded because it is largely needle karst and so inaccessible as to challenge the most adventurous forester. More concessions have been allocated across the ecologically important Whiteman Range and Lake Namo wetlands as well as the entire lowland forests of the region.

WWF is incorporating the logging concession maps into global forest maps so that the full impact of the Forest Authority's plans can be seen by all. A series of projects which aim to support community-based conservation in areas of high biodiversity significance are also in progress. However, the scene is set for an increasingly narrow focus on timber production and the slow erosion of one of the world's most important centres of biodiversity.



## MALAYSIA

### An holistic approach to highland forests

On 16 January 1996 a major seminar, organised jointly by WWF-Malaysia and the Institute of Environmental Studies, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia was held to discuss one of the most threatened, but least known, natural habitats in Malaysia – the highland forests. Found in areas 300m above sea level, they support endemic, threatened and rare species of flora and fauna. The seminar, held in Kuala Lumpur, was attended by senior government officials, academics, private consultants and developers and the opening speech was made by Tun Daim Zainuddin, the economic advisor to the Malaysian government. He proposed the setting up of a central agency to oversee the overall management of highland areas. WWF-Malaysia is continuing to press for this agency to be established.

The Highland Forest Campaign, which began in 1994, is the first part of a longer term initiative which focuses on the country's natural habitats. In order that the ecological benefits of highland forest can be enjoyed and sustained, it is essential to make people appreciate the richness of these areas and how they contribute to the quality of life and a clean environment. Accordingly public awareness is one element of this integrated campaign which also features conservation fieldwork, policy work, environmental education and fund-raising.

WWF-Malaysia is also involved with on-going projects on the botany and land use of highland areas, particularly on the main range of Peninsula Malaysia. These projects will run to the end of 1998 and the aims of this work are to provide better options for resource and land use planning, and the management and conservation of highland areas. In line with awareness raising, WWF-Malaysia is also assisting in the establishment of a nature education centre in one of the hill resorts.

Land area of Latin America and Caribbean region	2,016,413,000 ha
Area of forest and other woodland	1,259,717,000 ha
Annual change in forest cover	– 8,400,000 ha
Number of WWF forest projects	53
1996 expenditure	Sfr 7,730,348
1997 budget	Sfr 9,442,479
Number of certified forests	6
Coverage	251,046 ha
Number of protected areas	581
Coverage	106,779,200 ha

Sources: Food and Agriculture Organisation, Forest Stewardship Council, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, World Resources Institute, WWF International.

# Latin America and Caribbean

Stretching from Mexico in the north to Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America, the Latin America and Caribbean region encompasses 33 countries and extraordinary biological wealth – from deserts to forests, oceans to coral reefs, mountains to mangroves. The legendary Amazon rainforest alone nurtures some of the richest plant and animal communities on earth.

Since 1962, WWF has supported more than a thousand conservation initiatives in over 30 of this region's countries. At present, the major threats facing forests here are commercial logging, conversion to other land uses, and mineral exploitation – the forests of Central America are being cleared faster than anywhere else in the world, including the Amazon where deforestation has actually increased.

**WWF is countering these threats through a variety of programmes in key hotspot countries of the region – promoting better forest management practices through independent certification, advocating improved forest policies, strengthening protected area system management, partnering indigenous organisations in their fight to save their forest heritage, and developing innovative income-generating programmes which support forest conservation. These initiatives, undertaken with partner organisations, seek to assist local people to effectively manage and benefit from their own natural resources.**

## **CHILE**

### **WWF fights against illegal cutting**

Similar to the giant redwoods of North America, the majestic alerce is a conifer native to Chile which often lives for over 1000 years. Despite being listed on Appendix 1 of CITES in 1984, the illegal trade in alerce continues.

WWF is supporting the efforts of several Chilean organisations to halt this trade by identifying and reporting illegal cutting to the Chilean authorities. However as few successful legal prosecutions are obtained WWF hopes that, by raising public awareness of the importance of alerce, it will raise more support to protect this wonder of nature.



### **Conservation breakthrough in Rondonia**

After much opposition, one million hectares of extractive reserves for rubber tappers has recently been legalised, but the main challenge in the years ahead is to make these reserves viable, not least from an economic standpoint. The future of rubber is uncertain and a number of other products are being investigated including timber. The tappers were initially wary of getting into timber extraction, as to them this typically means the beginning of the end of the forest. With advice and support from WWF however, a low-impact pilot logging operation has been initiated.

### **WWF develops forest management systems for the Amazon**

WWF has developed a forest management system in Paragominas, the largest logging centre in Brazil which is already being replicated by other NGOs and private logging companies.

However, WWF is concerned about the recent influx of Asian transnational companies who have bought up an estimated 1.5 million hectares of forest in the Brazilian Amazon, importing unsustainable logging techniques from Asia.

## **BRAZIL**

### **Deforestation is increasing in the Amazon**

In July 1996 the Brazilian government announced that the annual rate of deforestation in the Amazon has increased by 34% since 1992, to 1,489,600 hectares each year. The government immediately launched counteractive emergency measures including: a two year moratorium on the granting of new licences for the exploration of mahogany and virola; and an increase, from 50% to 80%, in the land area prohibited for farming activities.

"The increase in the deforestation rate was expected, as the drop at the beginning of the decade was mainly associated with the fact that the Brazilian economy was going through a cooling off period. But the economy has been recovering steadily, which accounts for the increase," stated Garo Batmanian, WWF's Executive Director. He considered the government's new measures "positive" but insufficient to secure the reversal of deforestation trends in the long term.



# Intergovernmental processes – achievements

**WWF is taking a strategic and targeted approach to intergovernmental fora in order to shape the international agenda on forests.**

The WWF lobbying team is influencing negotiations in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and its subsidiary body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), as well as those of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The meetings of these bodies are part of a process leading up to Earth Summit II in June 1997 which will review progress and set future direction on a number of issues including forests.

At Earth Summit II, governments will have to show what actions they have taken between 1992 and 1997 to implement the commitments they made at the Rio Earth Summit. It will not be enough to merely identify issues requiring further consideration by the international community.

WWF's objective is to use the inter-governmental process leading up to Earth Summit II to secure support from governments for our forest targets and for the delivery

mechanisms needed to implement them. This is being achieved through co-ordinated lobbying at national and international levels which involves the WWF network and its many partners in the non-governmental and private sectors.

Progress has already been made. By using the IPF process, WWF has helped to generate a dramatic increase in support for independent voluntary certification. Six months ago, only a few governments recognised the merits of certification. At the third session of the IPF in September 1996, more than 20 countries expressed support, led by the EU, Brazil, Columbia, Papua New Guinea, Poland and Switzerland. Later the Group of 77 (which includes more than 120 countries) added its somewhat more qualified support. This issue will be further negotiated at the final session of the IPF in February 1997.

With significant progress already made on the certification target,

WWF's forest team will intensify its efforts between now and June to put protected areas firmly on the international forests agenda by using meetings of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the IPF, the CSD and Earth Summit II.

Several governments have already established or agreed to establish networks of protected areas covering at least 10% of their country's forest area, including Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Lithuania and the Republic of Sakha. The inter-governmental processes on forests provides an ideal opportunity for these countries to lead by example and challenge others to match their commitment. For those countries where protected area options are more limited due to the disappearance of natural forests,

# A landmark year for certification

1996 has been an excellent year for certification and the Forest Stewardship Council. The aim is to promote timber products from well-managed forests. One of the most encouraging developments has been the progress made by national working groups in defining the level of performance required for certification. In countries from Finland to Indonesia, substantial headway has been made by working groups which bring together stakeholders with a wide variety of perspectives.



One Swedish forest industry representative described his working group as follows: *"The Swedish Forest Stewardship Council working group was set up in February 1996 and comprises representatives of the leading environmental organisations, all major Swedish forest companies, forest owners' co-operative associations, buyers such as IKEA and Kinnarps, union organisations and native Laplanders. This represents a working group that is uniquely representative even by international standards."*

1996 also marked the end of the three year grant provided to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), by the government of Austria. This support, along with that of other donors, has been instrumental in helping establish the FSC as the international accreditation organisation for forest certification. This year, FSC members approved a Principle and Criteria for forest plantations. At the General Assembly held in Oaxaca, Mexico in June the members agreed to modify the statutes to give equal voting powers to the social, economic and environmental chambers. They also determined that further progress was needed in the following areas through the creation of working groups: social issues in FSC; certification of multiple sources, including small scale forest owners; and the examination of possibilities for certifying non-timber forest products.

This consensus building among different stakeholders is a precondition for successful certification. In the Nordic countries small scale forest owners initially felt left out of the dialogue on certification, but after much informal contact and a search for

better mutual understanding, the situation has improved. In Africa, funding for the creation of working groups has been difficult to find, but this year the European Commission provided resources through WWF-Belgium to support certification working groups in Cameroon, Gabon and Ghana.

Some progress has also been made on averting the potential conflict between the performance-based forest certification promoted by FSC and environmental management systems certification (ISO 14001) proposed by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). At an ISO meeting in Rio de Janeiro in June it was confirmed that the ISO has no plans to develop a forest certification standard. A working group was, however, created to "describe informative reference material" on existing performance standards, including those of the FSC, which forest products' companies wishing to be certified to ISO 14001 could use. Equally importantly, the ISO has begun to recognise that it has insufficient safe-guards in place to prevent unscrupulous companies from using certification to ISO 14001 as a

'quasi-ecolabel' which would lead to consumer confusion. This is already beginning to happen in the area of quality management with the ISO 9000 series of standards for quality management. The ISO now plans to review its procedures for the control of claims.

In October the Canadian Standards Association published its sustainable forest management standard.

Although some improvements were made to the standard in the final stages, it is still unsatisfactory from an environmental viewpoint as it does not include specific performance requirements. It is not yet clear whether the Canadian forest industry will press ahead with the implementation of this standard, at the risk of an NGO backlash, or whether a dialogue will now begin on regional performance standards in Canada.

Now that certification and the FSC are firmly established, WWF's focus for the future will be to ensure that the standards used for certification are of high technical quality and have been developed through a balanced, multi-stakeholder process. The quality of forest certification, even more than the quantity of forests certified, will be the real measure of success for WWF.

# An emerging network of Buyers' Groups

Many responses to the threats to the world's forests have been largely ineffectual. Governments continue to offer financial incentives which encourage unsustainable forestry practices. In many cases industry has simply spent the money on PR campaigns to convince their customers that all is well. Environmentalists have focused on drawing attention to the problem and, increasingly, on seeking solutions.

WWF has been at the forefront of an NGO movement which is taking a different approach. In 1991 WWF-UK formed the first so called 'Buyers' Group'. The WWF 1995+ Group is a partnership between WWF and 75 UK companies committed to purchasing forest products that originate solely from well-managed forests. These companies establish internal databases to monitor the sources of their forest products and are committed to using independent certification and the framework provided by the Forest Stewardship Council to prove that their sources are well-managed.

The formation of the WWF 1995+ Group was paralleled by the work of Friends of the Earth in Holland who formed their Hart voor Hout (Heart

for Wood) project which has a similar partnership idea, seeking to reduce the Dutch consumption of tropical timber to a level which will be supplied only from sustainable sources. WWF in Belgium has formed the Club 1997 and WWF in Austria, the Group '98. All of these projects share the common characteristics of partnership between environmental groups and industry, with industry committed to buying products from well-managed forests.

Similar projects are under development in Australia, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Japan, North America and Switzerland. The job of setting up a group can be very time consuming, requiring numerous visits to companies to convince them of the value of the work and then to negotiate the

terms of an agreement which suits local conditions. It is hoped that three more groups will be formed by early 1997.

Buyers' Groups are now beginning to have a huge impact on the debate on certification and forest management. They are operating in areas of high forest product demand and company members are sending out the message to thousands of suppliers in tens of different countries that they care about the source of their forest products.

# WWF IS GOING TO TIGAL:

1997 is going to be a important year for forest conservation. In the first six months, governments will meet three times to try to find a solution to the world's forest problems. WWF will be there in force, pushing for the complete protection of at least 10% of each of the world's forest types, and demanding that governments act swiftly, and together, to harness the resources to make this a reality.

## AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

WWF wishes to see action taken to maintain forest quality which is decreasing rapidly in many parts of the world. We will also continue to urge for adequate recognition of the role that indigenous and local peoples play in forest conservation. All too often forest dwellers are pushed aside to make way for unsustainable development which is causing so many social and ecological problems worldwide.

We will maintain and enhance our global forest conservation field programme thanks to the generosity of our donors, and continue to play a leadership role in the international forest policy debate using our experience on the ground to shape our policies. The *Forests for Life* campaign will be focusing its attention on the minimum 10% Protected Areas Target, as well as encouraging better forest management through independent certification.



#### FOREST PROTECTED AREAS DEFINITION PROJECT

WWF will launch a new definition, after extensive consultation, to add clarity to the debate on how much of the world's forests need to be set aside for permanent protection.



#### WWF INVESTMENT IN FORESTRY CONFERENCE

WWF will hold a conference which will bring together the investment and forest management communities to look for ways of ensuring sustainability.

#### WORLD FOREST MAP

An updated map will be published towards the end of 1997 which will incorporate the newly agreed Forest Protected Area Definition and show both globally and nationally, precise data on what forest remains and how much is protected.

#### TRANSNATIONAL LOGGING COMPANIES

The WWF network will work in partnership with the World Resources Institute, using a European Commission grant, to carry out case studies to determine the full impact of these logging companies in Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean.

#### EUROPEAN FOREST SCORECARDS

WWF will be repeating this pertinent exercise which highlights how European governments are, or are not, implementing commitments to forest protection, sustainable management and restoration. Other regions of the world are planning similar studies.

#### HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

WWF's International President, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, has written to many of the world's decision makers on our behalf, and he will be hosting a reception for over 100 ambassadors to push WWF's message home. We believe that governments have sat on the fence for too long and, in an effort to catalyse their action, WWF will publicise those which pledge to protect more than 10% of each of

#### GOOD HARVEST?

WWF will publish 'Good Harvest?', a book containing a compilation of good examples of forest management around the world, to prove that forests can be managed for the long term, taking social ecological and economic factors into

#### FOREST RESTORATION STUDY

WWF-India will complete their study of Forest Restoration within the Asia-Pacific region. An enormous effort will be required to recreate forests and woodlands in this region which can serve a range of social, ecological and economic

#### WORLD WIDE WEB SITE

The WWF world wide web site at <http://www.panda.org> will be continually updated throughout 1997 with details of WWF's forest work, policy statements, press releases and campaign news.

#### NORTH AMERICAN FOREST CERTIFICATION CONFERENCE

WWF-US and WWF-Canada are jointly hosting a top level conference in May to examine the potential for forest certification.