



WORLD
LAND
TRUST

news

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editorial

Saving biodiversity more than a Soap Opera *by John Burton*

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This year has been the International Year of Biodiversity, but according to a BBC survey www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11546289 most members of the British public thought that 'biodiversity' was a kind of washing powder. Admittedly biodiversity is a relatively new concept, it is a rather ugly word that is difficult to say and, it seems, more difficult to understand. It is depressing that there hasn't been an effective way to make people feel more connected.

Biological Diversity, to give it its full title, is a way of representing the diversity of plants, animals, and biomass in a given habitat. It is not the same as species diversity. Species diversity is almost always greatest in tropical forests, and lowest in deserts, tundra and similar habitats. But even in those habitats with relatively few species there are areas of important biodiversity.

The Gran Chaco is one such area, and the Patagonian Coastal Steppes another. Both habitats that the WLT has helped to protect. And often these relatively simple ecosystems are much less stable than complex ecosystems such as forests. Remove one or two species from a tropical forest, and it does not have a major impact. But remove one or two species from a simple ecosystem, and it can have a devastating, irreversible impact. That is why conserving the Gran Chaco is so vital. Cerrado, savannah, pampas, and grasslands: all these habitats are seriously threatened. They don't have the glamour of a tropical rainforest, but they are every bit as important.

Twenty-one years ago the World Land Trust was founded to buy and save critically threatened land, and this it has done - funding the purchase of some 500,000 acres to date. But the last few years have seen land prices escalate. We are now looking at alternative ways of conserving land, through leases, concessions and similar mechanisms as well as purchase. But the more we can raise in the immediate future the more land we can buy.

Two years ago, at a meeting with the CEOs of our overseas partner organisations, one of the major discussions was about

whether an Endowment Fund should be set up to put money aside for the sustainability of the organisations. Each and every one of our partners said 'No', the threats to the habitats and the species in their country were so serious that any available money should be used NOW, as quickly as possible, to buy and save land.

I pass that message on in a slightly different way to our supporters: Please don't wait and think simply in terms of a legacy. Legacies are important to us and we will use each and every one wisely and where it is urgently needed, but if you can make a donation now please do. I also encourage anyone thinking of making a larger donation to get involved with us, and our project partners. We can arrange for you to meet their representatives and we encourage visiting the sites you are helping save.

The WLT now has over 20 partners worldwide all putting their energies into saving threatened land. This is a success story, but it also reflects the failure of the human race to take account of its greater need. I look back over the past 21 years, and know three things: First, we have achieved relatively little, secondly, by way of contradiction, the Trust and its supporters have saved habitats and wildlife that would otherwise have been lost, and thirdly, this model really works, we just need to reach more people. WLT has grown largely by word of mouth, and the fact that we are now attracting major corporate support means that our individual donors are even more important. One of the first questions a company asks us is 'how many supporters do you have?' Just like fragile ecosystems, everyone is important and the success of the WLT depends on all components being a part of it.

John A Burton
Chief Executive



www.worldlandtrust.org

Registered charity: 1001291

The price of paradise is rising

Not surprising really: there is less and less of it left

John Burton reports

As supporters know, WLT does not simply use 'Buy an Acre' as a gimmicky way of raising funds. These are Real Acres in Real Places. We tell you where they are if you want to know, or, if you are happy for the Trust to make the decision on where your donation is most needed, then that's what we do. Where land is much more expensive we let you know that as well. For instance in Borneo, India and Kenya land costs nearly as much or more than in the UK.

When we decide where to get involved in land purchase, which overseas partners to work with, and which land purchase is most crucial, it is all considered using the following criteria: 'Is the land critically threatened and what would happen to it if we didn't buy it?', 'Is it a large enough parcel of land to support viable populations of wildlife?', 'Is it high in species diversity?', 'Do we have trust in the overseas partner to protect the land?' etc. But the exponential rise in the cost of land throughout the world means that we need to be as creative as possible in saving as much as we can while we can, and looking for new approaches for the future.

While it is attractive to buy as much land as possible, and land at less than £100 an acre is always attractive, it does not mean that an area one tenth of the size is not as important, where land costs £1,000 or even £10,000 an acre. The very fact that it is so much more expensive often means that there is more threat and consequently it is more important.

We are often asked why land prices

Habitats getting scarcer 'Buy an Acre' cost to rise to £100 from 1 January 2010

From 1 January WLT will be raising funds for the 'Buy an Acre' projects in units of £25 per quarter acre. Certificates can be produced in quarter acre units. We will have new funding opportunities across our projects, and will also be raising funds for Special Appeals.

have escalated, but there is no simple answer. It is a combination of several factors. First the economic recession plays a role. With interest rates very low, it makes sense to invest in land. As Will Rogers (not Mark Twain as is often thought) said: "*Buy land. They ain't making any more of the stuff.*" It's as simple as that: demand exceeds supply. Another factor has been the demand for biofuels, which also need large areas of land. In S E Asia, huge areas of forest have been destroyed for oil palm, and the same is happening in South America. Another reason is the demand for beef. Forests are chopped down to create pastures, and land is cleared for soya and other fodder crops.

As the economies of China, and other parts of Asia grow, we can expect even greater demand for beef, and China is now allegedly buying up huge tracts of land all over the world for this purpose. But let us not fall into the trap of always blaming others. Britain also demands cheaper and cheaper food.

An Elephant is an Elephant?

The elephants below are separated by thousands of miles and are different subspecies

Right: Orang-utans are not the only animals threatened by deforestation in Borneo. These Bornean (or Pygmy) Elephants also live in the tropical forests where WLT is working with project partners, Leap Spiral and Hutan, to save their habitat from being turned into an oil palm monoculture.

Below: Working with Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), WLT is protecting Elephant Corridors between forest reserves to help avoid human-



elephant conflict. WTI recently reported a major breakthrough when the Forest Department in the southern state of Karnataka announced a plan to purchase a large section of privately-owned land to secure wildlife corridors for elephants. This unprecedented decision was almost certainly made in response to international concern particularly as demonstrated through the success of WTI's existing corridor projects.

New project for WLT in 2011

'Keepers of the Wild'

Protecting wildlife in reserves

One of the ways that WLT can 'punch above its weight' is to assist, empower and add leverage to the work being done by our overseas project partners. Now that WLT has funded the purchase of half-a-million acres the responsibility of protecting the reserves rests with them.

A new WLT appeal is raising funds to support the 'Keepers of the Wild' initiative. It costs about £5,000 to fund a ranger for one year and the aim is to provide at least ten new rangers across the projects where they are most urgently needed.



Right: One of the rangers at REGUA, in the Atlantic Rainforest of Brazil, is Adilei Carvalho da Cunha. An ex-hunter-turned-conservationist Adilei's impressive mimicry skills make him a favourite with bird-watching groups. You can watch him at work in this short video where he mimics six bird species.

<http://vimeo.com/15327146>

Land in Borneo and India can cost about the same as in the UK, but WLT believes it is important to work with local partners to save as much natural habitat as possible. The leverage effect should not be underestimated either.

The Dry Chaco

John Burton discovers the alarming rate of deforestation during his recent visit to Gran Chaco in northern Paraguay *Report by Bethan John*



There are few habitats in the world like the Gran Chaco. It has an extreme environment that supports impenetrable forests, grasslands, arid deserts, and wetlands. Yet the importance of this ecosystem is still misunderstood and overlooked, and it is being destroyed before our eyes, right now.

The Gran Chaco, which translates in the Quechua language as 'productive hunting grounds', still maintains viable populations of threatened species; many plants and animals found here don't exist anywhere else in the world.

On a recent visit to the Dry Chaco the WLT's CEO, John Burton, took the *Guardian's* environment editor, John Vidal, on a tour of the region, meeting the Environmental Police to investigate illegal deforestation.

John Burton said: "While flying over the area you could see the onslaught of deforestation, I even spotted an illegal landing strip. But we need to be realistic as we're never going to stop the destruction altogether. The previous government issued licenses that allow for 75 per cent deforestation, so much of it is perfectly legal."

Some destruction within the Dry Chaco is unavoidable, yet it is critical that the large-scale illegal deforestation in the region is controlled, prevented, and eventually abolished.

"Currently the local NGOs don't have the resources to patrol this vast and largely impenetrable region", said John. "At present only five rangers are covering the size of East Anglia, over a million hectares."

Last year over 650,000 acres of Chaco habitat was lost through deforestation, principally for cattle grazing. There is growing concern over the demands for land being made by Brazilian ranchers and Mennonite farmers (a fundamentalist Christian sect that moved into the Chaco in the 1930s). These two groups now control nearly a third of the Paraguayan Chaco, which is also home to indigenous Indians, some of whom have indicated they do not want contact with the outside world.



Left: A Yaguarundi, photographed by a member of Guyra Paraguay staff. This medium-sized wild cat has an elongated body and head relatively small to its size.



Below Left: A young Lowland Tapir photographed on Dry Chaco land purchased with funds raised by World Land Trust and now protected by Guyra Paraguay.



Wildlife of the Chaco

The Chaco is home to more large mammals than the Amazon; they include the Jaguar, Giant Anteater and Giant Armadillo. This means that the ecosystem operates on a large scale with mammals needing expansive territories. Other species include the Endangered Chaco Peccary, Giant Otter and Crowned Solitary Eagle.

The Yaguarundi, which occurs in the Dry Chaco, is perhaps the least cat-like of all wild cats. It has short legs, an elongated body and a long tail, giving it an appearance rather like an otter, and is sometimes referred to as an "otter cat." Unlike other wild cats it is mainly diurnal and rarely climbs trees, hunting on the ground for rodents, reptiles and birds. Yaguarundis make an unusually wide range of vocalisations, including purrs, whistles, yaps and chattering sounds.

The young Lowland Tapir (*above*) was caught on camera at Campo Iris, the property now owned by Guyra Paraguay purchased with funds raised by WLT supporters. Campo Iris encompasses over 8,500 acres (3,440 ha) of Dry Chaco and was essential to protect as it contains the only semi-permanent lagoon in the area, making it a vital drinking place for wildlife of the region.

The Lowland Tapir is the largest mammal in South America and the only odd-toed ungulate in Paraguay. The long "proboscis" (nose) acts like a hand (much the same as an elephant's trunk) which it uses to pick vegetation and transfer to its mouth. Baby Lowland Tapirs are born with stripes to help camouflage them when they are young; they lose them at about one year old. They keep contact with their parents through high-pitched whistles.

**1500 football pitches are being lost EVERY DAY in the Dry Chaco.
That's an average of 1,463 acres (665 ha) being lost daily.**

This information has been provided by Guyra Paraguay who have used satellite imagery to measure deforestation. The results revealed that the rate of destruction continues to rise from the 563,500 acres (228,000 ha) lost in 2008.

Can it be saved?

Despite bulldozers, chains and trucks, WLT believes that enough can be saved to make all the efforts worthwhile... *But we need your help*

After witnessing the destruction taking place in the Dry Chaco, John Vidal published a controversial article in the *Guardian*, entitled **"With God on their side: fundamentalist sect threatens Paraguayan wilderness"**. The article raises concerns over the aggressive rate of agricultural expansion and the devastating style of farming that destroys the fragile soils of the Chaco, leading to desertification and erosion. There is also evidence, despite it being a compulsory requirement of legal deforestation that landowners are failing to create windbreaks to prevent soil erosion.

While farmers and large landowners defend the deforestation, arguing that it provides jobs, improves infrastructure, and creates wealth through agriculture, John Burton responds: *"It's important to remember that Paraguay wants to and needs to develop. But what must be evaluated is the value of the country's environment compared to the short-term gain in cattle ranching. Deforestation and road building disrupts the drainage and flooding patterns, to the detriment of migratory birds and breeding fish. If action isn't taken now then this rich habitat will be destroyed, and all the wildlife will be lost."* As John Burton also mentions on page 3, we cannot ignore the fact that demand for beef is increasing throughout the world, so it is vital that we protect what we can while we can.



Above right: A bulldozer arriving on a ferry crossing the river from Brazil (on the far bank). With increased protection of the forests in Brazil, this puts pressure on neighbouring countries where logging companies see a new opportunity.

Top: Jose Luis Cassaccia, former Minister of the Environment, stands in front of a bulldozer which was being used illegally and had been confiscated. It was being used to 'chain' the forest, after the larger trees had been removed.

Left: A tractor-train of wood being taken out of the Chaco for manufacturing charcoal. The dense, hard wood from trees that may have taken several hundred years to grow makes excellent charcoal, but it is a totally unsustainable industry.

How to protect a million acres in Paraguay

In 2008 the WLT embarked on an innovative agreement to conserve vast areas in northern Paraguay in partnership with Guyra Paraguay and the Ministry of the Environment, SEAM.

This shared-management agreement gives responsibility for three of Paraguay's key Protected Areas in the Chaco: Defensores del Chaco National Park, Rio Negro National Park and Cerro Chovoreca National Monument. Together these reserves cover over 2.5 million acres and conserve a significant portion of wildlife habitat in northern Paraguay. While the reserves remain under the ownership of the Paraguayan Government, Guyra Paraguay has pledged to assist in its protection. But funds are urgently needed to put more rangers in the field.

Over the past two years WLT has been able to fund a few additional rangers but, as part of the 'Keepers of the Wild' initiative, we will be aiming to raise



Above: Rangers outside Defensores del Chaco National Park. They are expected to protect nearly 1-million acres.

funds to provide more rangers next year. At around £5,000 a ranger per year it is very cost-effective and a few more rangers in the field would make a huge difference – showing a presence is the most important thing and with the presence protection can be assured.

The Wildlife

The Defensores del Chaco National Park, protects the heart of the Gran Chaco and, together with the Rio Negro National Park and Cerro Chovoreca National Monument, species that depend on these reserves include:

Mammals: Puma, Jaguar, Lowland Tapir, Giant Anteater, White-lipped Peccary, Collared Peccary, Night Monkey, Giant Armadillo, Marsh Deer, Giant Otter and Capybara.

Birds: Wood Stork, Greater Rhea, Capped Heron, Whistling Heron, Brown Tinamou and Quebracho Crested Tinamou.

Help us protect the Dry Chaco

Limited funds really do go a very long way in this project. See donation form enclosed or make a donation to the appeal on the WLT website.

www.worldlandtrust.org

Project Roundup: Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil

WLT pledges to help local partners save more spectacular habitats in Mexico



protecting 1,800 acres (720 ha) of threatened habitat.

More than 130 species of mammal are known to occur here including many threatened species.

It is also home to all six species of cat found in Mexico: Jaguar, Puma, Bobcat, Margay, Ocelot, and Yaguarundi. Adding more land to their reserves will safeguard the long term protection of these species. WLT will be working with GESG in 2011 in an urgent bid to save more of the diverse habitats in and around Sierra Gorda, which are threatened by deforestation for ranching. The land being targeted is still relatively inexpensive and we hope to have land purchase options as part of our **Buy an Acre** projects in 2011.

The area of rugged mountains in Sierra Gorda, central Mexico, is one of the most eco-diverse regions within the country. WLT has been working with local NGO, Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda (GESG), since 2007 and so far has assisted them in securing and

FIRST PRIZE WINNER:

Congratulations to Roberto Pedraza Ruiz, Technical Assistant GESG, who won first place with his photograph of a Margay kitten entitled "Innocence" in the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) International Year of Biodiversity Photo and Video Competition.



Above: Roberto rescued this Margay as a tiny kitten after she was trapped by dogs. The photograph was taken shortly before her release back into the wild, into a GESG cloud forest reserve in the Hoya del Hielo area, where Margays have been seen.

Guatemala: The Laguna Grande Reserve protecting vital habitats for a great diversity of wildlife and creating corridors to Belize & the Caribbean



A land purchase project funded by WLT, along the Belizean-Guatemalan border, gives strategic protection to the single most threatened habitat in the Guatemalan Caribbean region.

Working with Guatemalan project partners Para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservacion (FUNDAECO), this new land purchase of 1,577 acres (657 ha) encompasses a system of lagoons, mangroves and tropical forests that stretch from sea level up over 350m high mountains. It was funded through WLT's Action Fund.

As well as the wildlife that depends on these ecosystems, this particular land purchase was vital to secure as it creates a corridor between the Sarstún-Temash National Park in southern Belize, the southern tip of the Belizean Barrier Reef to the north and east, and the Chocón-Machacas/Río Dulce National Park to the south. Not only do these habitats contain a high diversity of species but they are also important wintering habitats for more than 100 species of neo-tropical migratory birds. Due to extensive cattle ranching and logging less than 20 per cent of the original tropical forests in the Caribbean Region of Guatemala survive.

Above right: The Río Sarstún watershed is protected by the Laguna Grande Reserve. Its mangroves and tropical forests are a haven for wildlife.



Above: The West Indian Manatee is found in the Laguna Grande. These large grey aquatic mammals are herbivorous and can live for 60 years.

THE BIAZA RESERVE IS A REALITY



For the past three years 26 members of the British & Irish Zoos & Aquariums have been raising funds to create the BIAZA Reserve in Brazil.

The funds have been raised and the BIAZA Reserve is now a reality, having saved an important parcel of Atlantic Rainforest which is now protected by WLT's Brazilian project partners, Reserva Ecológica de Guapi Assu (REGUA).

The Atlantic Rainforest once stretched in a huge swathe from eastern Brazil, through Uruguay and Argentina to eastern Paraguay. It is now estimated that less than 7% of it survives. WLT thanks BIAZA for so actively engaging with this initiative and congratulates them on their successful fundraising. We look forward to further collaboration through the Trust's new 'Keepers of the Wild' programme.

Photo credits: Cover: Sophia White; Page 3: (ranger) REGUA, (Indian Elephants) Marie Chambers, (Bornean Pygmy Elephant with calf) HUTAN, Page 4: (Yaguarundi) Silvia Centron, (Tapir) Emily Y Horton, Page 5 (all) Guyra Paraguay; Page 6: (Margay) Roberto Pedraza, (Lagoon) FUNDAECO, (Manatee) Germanico Barrios; Page 7: The Body Shop, Puro Coffee, Kevin Price/Vicky Fieldhouse, Rainforest Friends; Back page: (Victoria Crowned Pigeon & WLT Chelsea Exhibit at Chester Zoo) Andrew Owen/Chester Zoological Gardens.

Support WLT by buying these excellent products. It costs you nothing extra and raises significant funds for our work



The Body Shop's new Rainforest hair care range is stamped with its pioneering 'eco conscious' symbol to highlight the ecological standards the products meet. This range was created to mark The Body Shop's support for WLT in saving some of the last remaining Atlantic Rainforest. Show your support by choosing a gift from this excellent range of new products.

Puro Coffee enjoyed by all



WLT benefits from the sale of Puro Fairtrade coffee which is widely available in cafes, pubs and venues.

Puro has been supporting WLT for the past four years and during that time we have seen the percentage of sales due to WLT rise from £5,000 a year to £80,000+ for 2010. These funds have been used to buy land to create the Rio Candelaria reserve in Ecuador, working with Fundación EcoMinga, and are now supporting land purchase in Brazil, through WLT project partners REGUA.

We are delighted that Puro coffee is now drunk all over the world. The WLT has a Bean-to-Cup machine and ensures that every coffee-drinking visitor to the office tries it for themselves.

Puro for your Business:
www.puro.co.uk

Puro for your Home:
www.organicfairtradecoffee.co.uk

Wildlife-friendly gifts for children



Win a copy of this book see back page

New book supports WLT's Ranger Programme Available for Christmas

This delightful new book, with text by Kevin Price and illustrations by Vicky Fieldhouse, is a heart-warming story that will, without doubt, be a stocking favourite with young children this Christmas. What's more a minimum of 25p from the sale of each book is donated to WLT for the 'Keepers of the Wild' ranger programme (see pages 3 & 5).

Special Offer

WLT is able to offer this book for £4.50 a copy (plus £1.25 P&P) (Normal retail selling price: £5.99)

To order please send your cheque (payable to WLT) to:

World Land Trust
Blyth House, Bridge Street
Halesworth
Suffolk IP19 8AB

For overseas orders or to pay by credit card please call: 01986 874 422

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Real Acres in Real Places

www.worldlandtrust.org

WLT's Gold Medal winning exhibit at 2010 RHS Chelsea Flower Show now installed in Chester Zoo's Tropical Realm



Give regularly:
become a WLT Partner
Saving Wilderness
Saving Wildlife
Adding Leverage



The rebuild of the Trust's Chelsea Flower Show Exhibit in the Tropical Realm at Chester Zoo didn't quite go according to plan when a **Victoria Crowned Pigeon** decided to make her nest in the very spot chosen for the exhibit.

The largest pigeon species in the world the Victoria Crowned Pigeon is found only in New Guinea where its numbers in the wild are declining due to hunting. The birds at Chester Zoo are part of a captive breeding programme and this is



Above: WLT's 'Chelsea' exhibit now in situ at Chester Zoo.

the first breeding success for this bird at the zoo for many years. The Tropical Realm is home to 43 free-flying and breeding bird species. Once the chick had successfully fledged, building work commenced and the exhibit is now completed. We hope you can visit.

Make your commitment to the world's endangered habitats and their wildlife by becoming a WLT Partner today. All you have to do is pledge a minimum of £5 a month. It isn't hard for most people to find £5 - but over a 12 month period, this adds up to £60 - which is more difficult to find as a lump sum. Your regular donations help the WLT plan vital land purchases, knowing that you have pledged your donations in advance. Please also Gift Aid your donation if you are a UK tax payer.

WLT Partners help us save more land and all its wildlife.

You can complete a Direct Debit form online: www.worldlandtrust.org/supporting/partners.htm

Or call the WLT: 01986 874 422

Until 31 December

We will buy a whole acre of irreplaceable habitat

for only £50

WLT pledges to buy One Acre on your behalf for £50 (or a Half Acre, or 2,000 sq m, for £25) and you will receive a certificate to record your support and regular updates if you wish.

Donate on the enclosed form, or online: www.worldlandtrust.org

WLT Competition

First prize: A copy of *The Beauty Contest at the Zoo*
Answer this question:

BIAZA (British & Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) are raising funds to purchase and create the 'BIAZA Reserve' through which WLT Project Partner?

Prize donated by the author, Kevin Price.



Send your answer to:
WLT Competition,
Blyth House, Bridge Street,
Halesworth, Suffolk
IP19 8AB, UK.

Entries to be received by 20 February 2011 (open to UK addresses only). Please do not use the Freepost envelope.

The winner of the Spring competition was Jennifer Woodward of London E1, who won the Enterprise Plants Rainforest Planter.

Cover picture



Sophia White has donated the use of this beautiful butterfly design which is a section of a larger collage. The complete design is available as a scarf (20in x 65in) printed on pure Habotai silk in a Limited Edition of 250, and also as greeting cards. Sophia studied art in London and specialises in collage on paper. Sophia White's designs can be seen on Oenone Hammersley's website: www.oenonehammersley.com. Or phone Sophia for more information: 01730 829 071.

Saving Life on Earth with World Land Trust

A legacy to the World Land Trust is a legacy for future generations, ensuring some of the last remaining strongholds of our earthly paradise will survive for our descendants. You may also like to consider a 'living legacy' by making a donation that will create an entire reserve, which you can go and visit in your lifetime.

If you would like to speak, in confidence, to John Burton (our Chief Executive) please telephone: 01986 874 422.



LAST WORD

Dear Editor,

REF: WLT NEWS

I enjoy enormously reading the excellent "World Land Trust News" but always feel a little reluctant to put it in the recycling as I feel it should be read by as many people as possible.

To this end, whenever I visit the doctors, barbers or anywhere else with a waiting room, I leave a copy on top of the inevitable magazine pile. As "World Land Trust News" generally stands out from the usual fare of such places I expect that it would be read by quite a few people. Some of these readers may not have previously been aware of the WLT's existence.

I wonder whether it might be worth encouraging other readers to do similar in order to spread awareness of the wonderful work of the WLT.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Quinn