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Photos: Piotr Naskrecki and Peter Hoke (CI)

Rapid Assessment Program

Conservation International's Rapid Assessment Program (RAP), within the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CABS), was founded in 1990 in response to the increasing loss of biodiversity



Photo: Edward Lohnes (CI)

in tropical ecosystems. RAP is an innovative biological inventory program designed to generate scientific information to catalyze conservation action in tropical areas that are under imminent threat of habitat conversion.

RAP assembles teams of host-country and international scientists to produce rapid, first-cut assessments of the biological value of poorly known areas that are not only potentially important biodiversity conservation sites, but

also threatened by habitat conversion. These can either be terrestrial, freshwater or marine ecosystems.

The combined knowledge of these experts allows them to assess in three- to-four week surveys the uniqueness and conservation value of an area and to make recommendations about its management.

RAP results are made quickly available to local decision-makers through the web, press releases, media coverage, and in their *RAP Bulletin of Biological Assessment* series.

So far, biological information from fifty-five RAP expeditions of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems throughout the world has resulted in the protection of thousands of hectares of tropical forest, including the creation of national parks in Bolivia and Peru, state and local parks in Brazil, biodiversity corridors in Madagascar, and the identification of biodiversity priorities in numerous countries.

Over 600 species new to science have been documented during RAP surveys and over 200 students and beginning scientists from host countries have been trained in RAP field methods and data analysis.

DISCOVER

Since its inception in 1990, RAP has been on the forefront of exploration of the last blank spots on the global map of life. Often RAP expeditions are the first and only biological investigations in areas that desperately require attention.

TRAIN

In many parts of the world where biodiversity is most at risk, training in biodiversity assessment methods is often unavailable. RAP activities aim to build capacity of local individuals and institutions to collect, analyze and disseminate high quality biodiversity data to feed into conservation decision making. RAP capacity-building tools are freely available online.

PROTECT

Before an area can be designated for protection, information about species and habitats is required. In some instances, currently protected sites lack sufficient data for effective management. RAP expeditions provide this essential data to justify protection of or to assist in management of important areas of high biodiversity.

RAP AT A GLANCE

RAP expeditions completed: Over 60
Species documented: Thousands
Species new to science discovered: Over 600
Local scientists trained: 300
Hectares protected: over 3.6 million

Protected areas created in Bolivia, Peru, and Brazil. One national and two state parks established in Brazil. Biodiversity corridors designed in Madagascar. Protected areas strategy developed for Guyana. Illegal oil drilling halted in a national park in Guatemala. Initial Biodiversity Action Plans developed for industry in Guinea, Ghana, Venezuela.

RAP EXPEDITIONS (terrestrial, freshwater, marine)

SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

Belize (1992)
Bolivia (1990-1992, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997)
Brazil (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004-2006)
Ecuador (1991) Ecuador/Peru (1993, 1999)
Guatemala (1999)
Guyana (1993, 2001, 2006)
Paraguay (1997)
Peru (1992, 1996, 1997, 1998)
Suriname (2004, 2005)
Venezuela (2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2008)

AFRICA & MADAGASCAR

Botswana (2000, 2003)
Côte d'Ivoire (1998, 2002)
Democratic Republic of Congo (2004)
Ghana (2003, 2006)
Guinea (2002, 2003, 2005)
Liberia (2005)
Madagascar (1997, 1998, 1999, 2002)

ASIA-PACIFIC

Cambodia (2002, 2007)
China (2005)
Indonesia (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2007)
Nepal (2005)
New Caledonia (2004)
Papua New Guinea (1994, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2008)
Philippines (1998)
Solomon Islands (1993)

RAP LINKS

Biodiversity Portal
<https://biosurvey.conservation.org/portal/server.pt>

RAP Database
<http://rap.conservation.org>

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