

RAP+ rapid assessment program

Leading the charge to discover and describe nature

Our challenge

The earth's ecosystems comprise millions of species and underpin the well-being of all human societies. Knowledge is our strongest tool to ensure the future of life on our planet, yet much of the natural world remains poorly known and unexplored. CI's Rapid Assessment Program (RAP) works to fill this void, sending teams of experts into critically important field sites around the world.

Our history

Over the last two decades, RAP surveys have led to the **discovery of more than 1,300 species** new to science and the **conservation of more than 20 million hectares of terrestrial and marine protected areas**. RAP expert scientists act as an ecological SWAT team to accurately assess the biodiversity and health of an ecosystem in a fraction of the time it would normally take. By working with students and local communities, RAP has also **trained hundreds of conservationists in tropical countries** around the world, laying the groundwork for the future. Read more about our successes in our recently published anniversary book, *Still Counting... Biodiversity Exploration for Conservation: The First 20 Years of the Rapid Assessment Program*.

RAP+

The new RAP+ builds on the core legacy of RAP, expanding its scope to integrate our understanding of vital linkages between biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, and human societies. RAP+ provides the mobile, flexible, and cost-effective tool required to protect natural capital, addressing today's most pressing conservation needs.



Brown capuchin monkey, Peru



Green sea turtle, Galapagos



Coneheaded katydid, Suriname



Crinoid, Raja Ampat, Indonesia



Gorndan children, Papua New Guinea



Cock of the rock, Peru



Coral reef, Raja Ampat, Indonesia

What we measure

We work in rivers, rain forests, coral reefs, and many other habitats around the world, often in remote, unexplored regions. RAP+ combines field surveys (usually lasting 1-3 weeks) that utilize **cost-effective, standardized methods, innovative technologies** and state-of-the-art analysis and planning. Recognizing that conserving biodiversity is fundamental to maintaining healthy ecosystems and the services that nature provides to people, RAP+ measures:

Biodiversity

- Species richness and abundance
- Species new to science
- Threatened and endemic species
- Indicator, keystone and flagship species
- Species important for human livelihoods

Ecosystem health and services

- Habitat diversity, quality, and structure
- Wild food and other provisioning services (see biodiversity above)
- Water quality and flow, watershed connectivity
- Carbon stocks, biomass

Socio-economic and sustainable management data

- Demography, livelihoods, and needs of local communities
- Threats to natural resources
- Sustainable management options

Our conservation goals

RAP+ provides field data needed for conservation planning at the local to regional scale at which many threats occur. Results are rapidly published in our standardized publication series (learning.conservation.org/biosurvey/RAP/Pages/Results.aspx) and in our online database, and are provided freely to a broad array of scientists, conservationists, policymakers, and stakeholders.

The goals of each individual assessment vary, but may include:

- Designing and creating effective protected areas
- Assessing, monitoring, minimizing and/or offsetting negative environmental and social impacts of major infrastructure and extractive projects
- Assessing ecosystem vulnerability to climate change and monitoring biodiversity co-benefits of REDD+ projects
- Supporting sustainable management of wild food sources (e.g., fish, bushmeat)
- Monitoring environmental health and the status of threatened species
- Engaging and informing stakeholders, policymakers, and the public
- Developing community-based conservation initiatives



Cloud forest, Peru

OUR VISION

We imagine a healthy, prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature, our global biodiversity, for the long-term benefit of people and all life on Earth.

OUR MISSION

Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, CI empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature, our global biodiversity, for the well-being of humanity.



Science + Knowledge Division

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