

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

World Heritage Committee

Thirteenth session

Unesco Headquarters, Paris, 11-15 December 1989

ITEM 8 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Monitoring of the state of conservation of natural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List

1. At its thirteenth session, the Bureau received reports, presented by the representative of IUCN, on the status of conservation of several natural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to undertake specific actions in respect of the following sites: Tai National Park (Côte d'Ivoire), Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal), Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Reserves (Zimbabwe), Sangay National Park (Ecuador), Mt. Nimba Nature Reserve (Côte d'Ivoire/Guinea) and Manas Game Sanctuary (India).
2. The Secretariat continued its efforts with the Permanent Delegation of Côte d'Ivoire to Unesco to draw up a preparatory assistance request for Tai National Park (Côte d'Ivoire). Elements of a draft proposal were discussed and the official submission of a request by the national agency responsible for the management of Tai National Park is awaited. In the meantime, WWF-International has launched a project for preparing a development plan for Tai National Park at a cost of US\$82,500 (SFr 133,775) for 1989-1990. Coordination with the WWF-International project is envisaged under the WWF-Unesco Cooperative Programme for the Conservation of Natural Heritage expected to begin in 1990.
3. The Bureau's concerns and recommendations on a proposed plan by the Government of Senegal to construct a road across the Niokolo-Koba National Park were transmitted to the President of the Republic of Senegal via the Permanent Delegate of Senegal to Unesco, by letter dated 1st August 1989, signed by the Director-General of Unesco. The Permanent Delegation of Senegal to Unesco acknowledged receipt of this letter on 10 August 1989 indicating that the communication had been transmitted to the President of the Republic of Senegal.
4. The Bureau's concern over the proposed excision of Sangay National Park and its recommendation for an elaboration and revision of the management plan available for the site were transmitted by the Secretariat, via letter of 9 August 1989 to the Ecuadorian authorities. In their response of 6 October 1989, the Ecuadorian authorities welcomed the Bureau's suggestion to request support for technical cooperation but did not provide any specific information on the proposed excision of the natural property. The Secretariat is continuing with its efforts to obtain further information on the status of conservation of this site and develop a proposal for technical cooperation for elaborating and revising the management plan.
5. In respect of the Bureau's recommendations on the conservation of Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Reserves, Mt. Nimba Nature Reserve and the Manas Game Sanctuary, no response has been received from the States Parties or the World Bank (Mt. Nimba Nature Reserve) and Mobil Oil (Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Reserve).
6. A report prepared by IUCN on monitoring of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties is attached for consideration.

Convention Concerning the Protection of the
World Cultural and National Heritage

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

13th Ordinary Session
Paris, France

11-15 December 1989

MONITORING THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES

Report prepared by IUCN
October 1989

A. NATURAL PROPERTIES

GENERAL

1. As part of the process of monitoring World Heritage sites in a systematic manner, IUCN has requested the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) Protected Areas Data Unit (PADU) to update its information sheets on natural World Heritage Sites to provide better baseline material for the monitoring process.
2. In order to carry out this work, PADU and IUCN have jointly written to each national authority, enclosing copies of information sheets of natural sites inscribed before 1986, and requesting critical review and update of the information. At the same time a request was made for supporting information on conservation and management issues within the sites, including management plans and information on recent research. All of this information will be available to support IUCN's monitoring activity.
3. A total of 63 World Heritage Sites in 28 countries was inscribed before 1986, and letters were sent to the appropriate management authorities in June of this year. By the end of September, responses had been received from seven countries covering 12 sites.
4. A draft directory of natural World Heritage sites, containing all of these information sheets, will be made available to the World Heritage Committee.
5. It should also be noted that the Ramsar Convention Bureau is now operational at IUCN Headquarters and a close working relationship exists regarding the nine sites that are on both Ramsar and World Heritage lists. The Ramsar monitoring procedure (attached) has used the World Heritage as a model and the sharing of results in this area is mutually reinforcing.
6. IUCN uses its network of some 400 members of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) to gather information on, among other things, real or potential threats to the integrity of World Heritage natural sites. IUCN is looking at ways of further enhancing and systematising this process of gathering information because of the key role it can play in identifying issues which may adversely affect protected areas in general and, specifically, natural sites inscribed on the World Heritage list.

7. The following reports are brief summaries of material on hand relating to monitoring of World Heritage natural sites. In some cases, these have already been reported to the Bureau and/or Committee. In other cases, information has come to hand since the Bureau meeting in June 1989. The information is submitted to enable the Committee to decide whether or not it needs to take any action on the relevant matters.

NATURAL PROPERTIES ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

8. Ngorongoro Conservation Area (Tanzania)

As IUCN reported to the 12th meeting of the Committee, conditions here have substantially improved over the past few years when the "warning light" first went on in 1983. Continued support and surveillance is required but the main threats are now under control. On 2 March, a letter from the Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Tourism agreed that the area can now be removed from the Danger List. The Bureau was glad to learn that, thanks in part to support provided under the World Heritage Fund, the situation of this site had greatly improved since it was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1983. In the light of the IUCN report and the letter from the Ministry, the Bureau recommended that the Committee comply with the request of the Ministry to remove this property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

9. Garamba National Park (Zaire)

The joint project to rehabilitate this Park run by the Frankfurt Zoological Society/WWF/World Heritage Fund with IUCN cooperation has met with considerable success since no more rhinoceros have been poached in the last five years, the rhinoceros population has increased by 50% and a better management regime has been established. The Park recently celebrated the 50th anniversary since its foundation. The Bureau noted this situation with satisfaction and recommended that the property be re-examined in 1990: if the situation continued to show improvement, steps should be taken to initiate the removal of the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

IUCN, WWF and the Frankfurt Zoological Society are now looking at the next phase of the rehabilitation project maintaining vigilance on the poaching situation, preparing a management plan and looking into work outside the park along the lines of the MAB model. There may well be a request for further support from the World Heritage Fund. The situation will need close attention as the park contains the last viable natural population of square-lipped or northern rhinoceros whose population in 1988 was estimated at 21, up from 15 in 1984.

OTHER NATURAL PROPERTIES

10. Tai National Park (Côte d'Ivoire)

At its Twelfth Session, the Committee requested IUCN to report back to the Committee on longstanding concern that this park has lost much of its integrity since its inscription in 1982. IUCN reported to the Bureau in June 1989 that the number of elephants, for example, is now down to less than 100 from 1800 in 1979 and human population pressures on the park and its surrounds continue.

11. IUCN notes that the Committee had requested the Ivoirian authorities to propose its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In June 1989, the Bureau noted that the Secretariat had contacted the Ivoirian authorities, but that only recently a response had been obtained in the form of a request for preparatory assistance in order to prepare a technical cooperation request for an integrated project addressing the need for increased protection of the natural values of this Park and also the socio-economic problems. The contribution of the World Heritage Fund would be used in a catalytic manner adding on to other funding sources. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to follow this matter and consult with IUCN in the preparation of the integrated project for technical cooperation.

12. In the meantime, a WWF International project has the objective of long-term conservation of the park with particular reference to resolving threats posed by poaching, logging, farming and gold-mining. Some results have been achieved to 30 September 1989 with boundary marking begun and enforcement resulting in five poachers and three illegal gold-miners being imprisoned and a start made on a programme of environmental awareness and education. WWF sees a need for the Ivoirian authorities to be persuaded to support rural development programmes around the park rather than concentrate on boundary demarcation and law enforcement.

13. Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)

Problems with illegal settlement, logging and poaching were brought to the attention of the Committee at its 12th Session. There was concern at the possible settlement of 4,000 Nicaraguan Mishkito Indians near the buffer zone and their subsistence agriculture and hunting could pose a threat. There have also been plans to construct roads through and near the reserve. This property was inscribed in 1982 and the monitoring report sought from the national authority will be reviewed carefully when it comes to hand.

14. Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal)

IUCN reported to the Thirteenth Session of the Bureau a proposal of the Government of Senegal to construct a new road to connect two villages on either side of the park using a route which would bisect the park. IUCN had conducted an environmental impact study of the proposal for the EEC and suggested an alternative route which would avoid damage to the World Heritage site.

15. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a letter to the highest authority in Senegal recalling this States Party's obligation to protect the natural values for which Niokolo-Koba was inscribed on the World Heritage List and expressing the Bureau's strong preference for the alternative route outside the Park.

IUCN has also made representations on its own behalf to the President of the Republic of Senegal. However, at the time of the writing there has been no indication of any change in the roading proposals.

16. Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Reserves (Zimbabwe)

IUCN reported to the 13th Session of the Bureau that Mobil Oil was about to begin an oil exploration programme in the Zambesi valley including the above reserve. On request of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, IUCN prepared environmental impact guidelines to be built

into the contract between Mobil and the Government. There are possibilities that seismic surveys could be conducted without construction of trace lines through the park but substantial impacts would still be experienced. Ideally, no exploration activity should be permitted within the boundaries of the World Heritage site. IUCN also suggested that Zimbabwe should be commended for its efforts to protect the remaining rhino and elephant populations that have been under intense pressure from poachers over the past four years.

17. On the light of this, the Bureau decided to commend the Zimbabwean authorities for their efforts to protect the remaining rhinoceros and elephant populations. The Bureau expressed great concern however over the proposed oil exploration programme, particularly in the light of a very negative report submitted to the Secretariat by the Zimbabwe National Commission for Unesco. The Bureau therefore requested the Secretariat to convey its concern to the highest government authorities of Zimbabwe, as well as to the Director of Mobil Oil Company.

18. Ichkeul National Park (Tunisia)

Although the integrity of the wetlands of this park remains in doubt due to the increasing interruption of fresh water inflow, there have been several improvements to management in the past year. These include the opening of a visitor centre, the institution of some controls on cattle grazing and the hiring of additional staff. These are all commendable initiatives. However, the main exercise to build the Tindja sluice to control water flow has still not been completed. This is the single most important activity that is needed and will also require a major effort to train specialised staff in its operation (funds are available for this through IWRB). Work on two other drainage canals as recommended in the Ramsar Convention monitoring report has not commenced. The Committee may wish to give further encouragement to the Tunisian authorities to step up efforts to implement these plans.

19. Sangay National Park (Ecuador)

IUCN carried out a monitoring mission to this site in March and has submitted an advisory report to the Director of National Parks. With the assistance of an IUCN/WWF project there have been many improvements to management of the park since it was inscribed in 1983. Most of the boundary has been marked, there are more field staff and guard posts and local extension programmes are regularly conducted. There are, however, several worrying issues that need attention. First is the colonisation pressure on the western boundary of the park and a proposal to excise a large section of land for settlement. A second problem is the lack of essential operating equipment as well as the lack of a research and public use programme. The 1979 management plan is also urgently in need of updating to address these problems and to include consideration of cooperative activities in the buffer zone. The Fundación Natura, a leading Ecuadorian NGO, is working with the Ministry of Agriculture with funds through a "debt swap" arrangement and has itemised a list of priority needs.

20. On hearing of these problems, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to contact the Ecuadorian authorities to express its concern over the proposed excision and to encourage them to draw up a request for technical cooperation to support the elaboration of a revised management plan addressing many of the conflicting issues in the Park. The Bureau hoped that the request for technical cooperation could be submitted in time for examination by the Committee in December 1989.

21. Manu National Park (Peru)

As IUCN reported to the Bureau, the threat from plans by Shell Oil and Petroperu for oil and gas exploration along the northern boundary of the park has subsided. Undoubtedly this will be raised again in future, but, except for some settlers moving to the area in anticipation of future development, there are no current serious management issues that need to be followed up by the Committee.

22. Mount Nimba (Côte d'Ivoire/Guinea)

IUCN reported to the Bureau that there is still some uncertainty regarding the commencement of a World Bank-financed iron ore mine project in the Guinean section of the site. IUCN has had no replies to its letters of concern to the relevant authorities.

23. The Bureau noted that the preparatory assistance mission to this site in November 1988 had resulted in the elaboration of a two-year Unesco/UNDP project on evaluating the impact of iron-ore extraction on the natural values of the site and elaborating an integrated management plan which would improve protective measures and encourage socio-economic development of the transition zone. The Bureau nevertheless wished to express its concern about further damage to this site and suggested that this concern be communicated to the World Bank.

24. Manas Game Sanctuary (India)

The Bureau heard a verbal report from IUCN that this site had been invaded in February 1989 by several hundreds of local Bodo tribes people and this had caused great damage to the park and loss of life. The Indian authorities had sent in the police to halt further destruction, but the problem of illegal encroachment was still not resolved. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to contact the Indian authorities to express its concern over this situation and encourage taking appropriate measures to restore the site.

25. Subsequently, IUCN has received reports that at least six but almost certainly more Indian rhinoceros and at least four tigers were killed as a consequence of the disturbances as well as some elephants. A large number of trees have been felled and the habitat of species such as golden langur, hispid hare and pygmy hog put at risk.

26. IUCN has itself taken initiatives including a letter to the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister of Assam expressing concern and also conveying a resolution of IUCN's Species Survival Commission urging restoration of the integrity of the Sanctuary.

27. At the time of writing, IUCN understands that the Bodo tribe has agreed to end its agitation in favour of a negotiated settlement and there are reports of official action to reinstate management of the occupied areas.

28. Yellowstone National Park (USA)

Following up on the 1988 wildfires in this park and discussions at the 12th Committee meeting, the United States made available further information on the results of the fire management policy review and the fire recovery plan for the park. Other State Parties with interest in this subject should be aware of the existence of these materials which may be obtained from the Director of the US National Park Service.

The Bureau in June 1989 decided to thank the American authorities for their reports and for their offer to make them available for other States Parties.

29. Wood Buffalo National Park (Canada)

IUCN reported to the Bureau in June that over 50% of the hybrid bison herd in the park have been found to be infected with either tuberculosis and/or brucellosis. These diseased animals pose a threat to humans, domestic livestock, and disease-free wood bison herds. An environmental assessment panel is currently exploring at least four options of how to control this problem including the elimination of all diseased animals. As the bison herd is one of the major values of this site, it is recommended that the Committee request to be kept informed of the results of the Panel review.

30. More recently, reports have come to hand of potential pollution of the national park that may be caused by proposed pulp and paper mill development in the country of Athabasca. The Canadian Parks Service of Environment Canada reports that a proposal for a bleached kraft mill is simply a large component of a major industrial development phase commencing in the north of the Province of Alberta fuelled by strong international markets for pulp and paper. The Parks Service says that due to the scale of these individual proposals and the potential for cumulative impacts, Federal interests would be affected including Wood Buffalo National Park.

31. As a result, the Federal Minister of the Environment has negotiated with the Alberta Government to ensure a federal presence in the environmental assessment process and a joint Federal/Provincial Environmental Assessment Review Board has been set up to review, among other things, potential impacts on Wood Buffalo National Park, and to recommend whether the proposed new mill could be constructed and operated in an environmentally satisfactory manner and, if so, what safeguards are needed and what conditions should be attached to any approval. The Canadian Parks Service stand is that "no impacts on... lands within the Park boundary are acceptable."

32. The Federal input into the issue is being coordinated by Dr. Len Good, Deputy Minister, Department of Environment, Canada and the Committee may consider it appropriate to draw to the attention of the Federal and Provincial authorities its concern that the integrity of Wood Buffalo National Park as a World Heritage site is maintained.

33. Fiordland National Park (New Zealand)

Some concern had been expressed to IUCN that the integrity of this site may be threatened by interest expressed by Comalco New Zealand Ltd in purchasing an interest in the hydro-electric scheme in the national park from which power is drawn for an aluminium smelter which Comalco operates distant from the park.

34. When Fiordland was inscribed as a World Heritage site, the existence of the power scheme was accepted because of its design and modest scale in relation to the 1.2 million ha site and because there were strict rules governing operating levels of Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri monitored by an independent Guardians group.

35. Since State electricity generation in New Zealand has passed from a government department to a State corporation, Comalco has expressed interest in gaining an ownership interest in the Manapouri generation and transmission assets.

36. IUCN's enquiries have shown that the New Zealand Government accepts a commitment by Comalco that, in the event of it gaining an interest in these assets, it recognises the need to continue the present operational rules. In addition, the government has introduced legislation to give the Guardians of Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau statutory authority which should ensure that there is no threat to the integrity of the World Heritage site from the proposals.

37. The Committee may wish to commend the States Party on its initiative to give a statutory role to the Guardians and in its efforts to ensure that any changes in ownership of electricity generation and transmission in the World Heritage site will not threaten its integrity.

38. Everglades National Park (USA)

There is increasing evidence that the major wetlands system of the Everglades in Florida is under considerable threat with the adverse impacts of changes in water quality and quantity arising from a range of developments agricultural, industrial and urban - which are altering the natural systems. It is indicative of concern about the site that the US Government has commenced litigation against alleged offenders, including the State of Florida. The Committee may wish to commend the States Party for its concern to maintain the integrity of the site.

RAMSAR

MONITORING PROCEDURE

1. It comes to the attention of the Bureau that the ecological character of a listed wetland is changing or is likely to change as a result of technological development, pollution or other human interference.
2. Where appropriate, the Bureau shall ask the Contracting Party or Parties concerned to provide further information concerning the situation.
3. Where, as a result of this procedure and other information available to the Bureau, the Bureau is of the opinion that there is evidence of a significant change or likely change in the ecological character of a listed wetland, the Bureau shall collaborate with the Contracting Party or Parties concerned to arrive at an acceptable solution and the Bureau may offer advice and assistance to that Party or those Parties, if required. The Bureau shall inform the Standing Committee of any action it has taken in this connection.
4. If it does not appear that an acceptable solution can be readily achieved, the Bureau shall immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee, acting through the Chairman and Secretary, provided by the Bureau, may pursue the matter, in direct contact with the Contracting Party or Parties concerned and, where appropriate, with other responsible agencies or bodies, with a view to helping to find a solution.
5. In the event of alterations to the List or changes in ecological character in wetlands included therein, the Standing Committee shall arrange for the information to be circulated for discussion at the next Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties in accordance with Article 8 paragraph 2 (d) of the Convention.
6. The Bureau shall periodically review and report progress on the conservation status of sites to which its attention has been drawn under this procedure. To facilitate follow-up, the Bureau shall maintain a register of activities undertaken in this connection.