

U N E S C O

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
NOMINATION TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Name: IGUAZU NATIONAL PARK

Identification No: 303

Date received by WH Secretariat: 31.12.83

Contracting State Party having submitted the nomination of the property in accordance with the Convention: ARGENTINA

Summary prepared by IUCN (March 1984), based on the original nomination submitted by Argentina. This original and all documents presented in support of this nomination will be available for consultation at the meetings of the Bureau and the Committee.

1. LOCATION: Misiones Province, north-east Argentina on the border with Brazil

2. JURIDICIAL DATA:

The site consists of a national park of 492 sq km and a nature reserve of 63 sq km. Both park and reserve are included in the nomination. Both areas are vested in the national government and are managed by the Servicio Nacional de Parques Nacionales. The park was officially established in 1934, but creation was initiated as early as 1909. The area of the National Reserve (between Port Iguazu and the waterfall) was removed from the park in 1970, and further modifications were made in 1971 (the village of Puerto Iguazu was removed from the park) and 1972 (which added a further 12,600ha to the park). It has been suggested that the nature reserve be upgraded to national park status. Some adjacent land now owned by the military may also be added to the park.

3. IDENTIFICATION:

The park and reserve share with the Iguazu National Park in Brazil one of the world's largest and most impressive waterfalls, with a height of 80m extending over 2,700m. The falls are split into a number of drops and rapids and large clouds of spray soak the surrounding area. Islands in the river are consequently covered with luxuriant vegetation. The site is located at the southern extremity of the Brazilian Rainforest Biogeographic Province.

Much of the park is a gently undulating basalt plateau with red semi-lateritic soils. Humid subtropical climate with annual mean temperature of 20°C, summer mean of 33°C and winter mean of 9°C. Annual rainfall over 2,000mm distributed fairly evenly through the year. Relative humidity often near 90%.

The vegetation of the majority of the area is subtropical wet forest, rich in lianas and epiphytes, but the wide ranges of temperature found here mean that the forests are less diverse and luxuriant when compared with others in Brazil and parts of Paraguay. Nonetheless, over 2000 species of vascular plants have been identified.

The fauna typical of the region includes tapir, coati, tamandua, racoon, a rich avifauna (400 species) and a variety of lower vertebrates and invertebrates. Threatened mammals as the jaguar, ocelot and tiger-cat amongst

the carnivores, and the giant anteater and Brazilian otter (all listed by IUCN as 'vulnerable') are also found. Primates include the black-capped capuchin and black howler monkey.

There is also a small population of the endangered broad-nosed caiman, and of the threatened Brazilian merganser (saw-billed duck).

4. STATE OF PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION:

Apart from the ranger staff, the park has no permanent human population and is not exploited except in the heavily visited area around the falls. The Management plan now in preparation includes a system to inventory, protect and study plant and animal species, a programme to maintain, repair and rebuild the park's infrastructure, and the training of personnel (guides and rangers).

The waterfalls themselves, and the possibility of excursions into the virgin forest make Iguazu one of the principal tourist attractions in Argentina. The large number of visitors are concentrated around Puerto Iguazu and the falls. Facilities include an international airport, hotel, youth camp, camp and picnic grounds, kiosks, restaurants, an extensive network of trails, launches for boat trips and a small museum in the administrative centre located in the town of Puerto Iguazu. There are plans for more tourist facilities in the development zone of the nature reserve. The development of the national highway 101 has also had a serious impact on the interior of the park.

There is some illegal hunting and cutting of palmito Euterpe edulis for edible palm hearts. Forest exploitation on the opposite side of the Iguazu River in Brazil is known to occur but its effects and extent are not known.

5. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

The Iguazu National Park nomination, as presented by the Government of Argentina provides the following justification for designation as a World Heritage property:

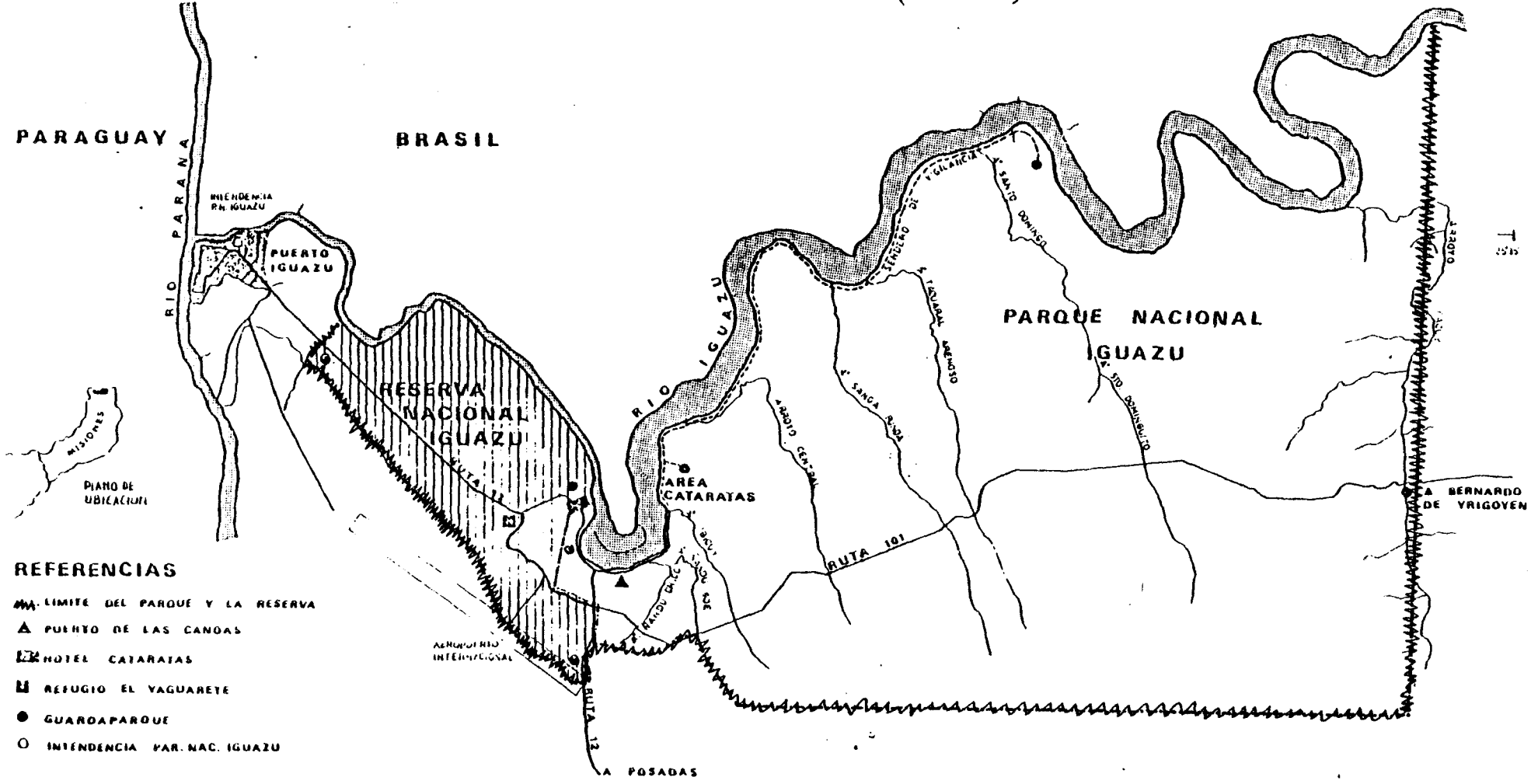
a) Cultural property -- not applicable

b) Natural property

(iii) Exceptional natural beauty. The park contains part of one of the world's largest and most impressive waterfalls, which extends over 2,700m with falls split into a number of drops and rapids. Large clouds of spray soak the surrounding area, and islands in the river are consequently covered with luxuriant vegetation.

(iv) Habitats of rare and endangered species. The park contains at least seven species which are listed as threatened on a world scale by IUCN. These include the endangered broad-nosed caiman of which small populations can still be found in Iguazu.

PARQUE Y RESERVA NACIONAL IGUAZU (MISIONES)



REFERENCIAS

- ▬ LIMITE DEL PARQUE Y LA RESERVA
- ▲ PUERTO DE LAS CANOAS
- 🏨 HOTEL CATARATAS
- 🏠 REFUGIO EL YAGUARETE
- GUARDAPARQUE
- INTENDENCIA PAR. NAC. IGUAZU

303 IGUAZU NATIONAL PARK (ARGENTINA)

1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) Nomination form and map, air photography
- ii) IUCN Data Sheets
- iii) Consultations: Dr. M. Buchinger, Dr. R. Luti
- iv) Literature Consulted: IUCN Project files; IUCN Directory of Neotropical Protected Areas, 1982

2. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

Within the Brazilian Rainforest Biogeographical Province there are 11 other protected areas including the adjacent Iguazu National Park in Brazil. Together the two Iguazu parks comprise almost two-thirds of the protected acreage found in this Province as all other areas are smaller and most have a lesser degree of protection. No other location has the spectacular feature of the waterfalls which is one of the world's most outstanding scenic locations. Along with the Falls, the vegetation and wildlife resources of the park make it one of the most unique in all the Neotropical Realm.

In the words of the Swiss botanist Robert Chodat: "The waters of the deluge falling abruptly into the heart of the world, by divine command, in a landscape of memorable beauty, amidst an exuberant, almost tropical vegetation, the fronds of great ferns, the shafts of bamboos, the graceful trunks of palm trees, and a thousand species of trees, their crowns bending over the gulf adorned with mosses, pink begonias, golden orchids, brilliant bromeliads and lianas with trumpet flowers -- all of this added to the dizzying and deafening roar of waters that can be heard even at a great distance, makes an indelible impression, moving beyond words".

3. INTEGRITY

The site has a long history of protection dating back to 1909. A management plan is now being prepared. Some poaching of wildlife and vegetation still occurs but information on the extent and effects are not available.

The main impacts on the site are in the form of intensive tourist developments in the area of the Falls and a major national highway through the interior of the park. It is expected that the management plan will deal with these two issues in order that the impacts will be mitigated and controlled in future.

Additions to the size of the area are now being discussed and include both the Reserve and adjacent land now administered by the military. These additions would add considerably to the ecological viability of the site as many of the species found in the area require extensive natural habitats for long term survival (e.g., it is estimated that each jaguar needs a home range of 5000 ha).

Similar controls on the Brazil side of the Iguazu River in the adjacent park of the same name are also critical to the integrity of the nominated site. Coordinated regional management between the Brazilian and Argentina authorities is seen as an important factor in proper administration of the total complex.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

None.

5. EVALUATION

Iguazu National Park has several qualities that allow it to qualify for World Heritage status. The park contains one of the world's largest and most impressive waterfalls which extend over 2700 m with falls split into a number of drops and cataracts. Clouds of spray soak the surrounding area and support a luxuriant vegetation. As an extraordinary natural feature, the site meets criteria iii of the Convention.

The site also qualifies under criteria iv as it contains habitat that supports at least 7 species listed as threatened on a world scale by IUCN. These include the endangered broad-nosed caiman of which small populations are found in Iguazu.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Iguazu National Park should be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Further clarification of formal ownership and the site boundaries, however, is required. Brazil's Iguazu National Park is clearly an integral part of the area and has been included on the tentative list submitted by Brazil. The Committee should request the Brazilian authorities to nominate their contiguous portion of the area and thereby establish an international World Heritage property.

The Committee may also wish to note the importance of the proposals to extend the park boundaries and to complete the comprehensive management plan for the area.