

NOMINATION TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

Name: IGUACU NATIONAL PARK

Identification No: 355

Date received by WH Secretariat: 27.12.84

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

Summary prepared by IUCN (May 1985) based on the original nomination submitted by Brazil. 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: In Parana State along the Argentine border and close to that of Paraguay. Brazilian Rainforest Biogeographical Province.

2. JURIDICAL DATA:

Established as a national park in 1939 by Federal Decree, amended in 1944 and 1981 to expand the area to 170,086 ha. The park is administered by the Department of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves of the Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento Florestal (IBDF). Some private land within the park including 113.6 ha of islands in the Iguacu River.

3. IDENTIFICATION:

Located just above the confluence of the Iguacu and Parana Rivers, in a generally flat area with red semi-lateritic soils which are nutrient poor. Basalt-volcanic rocks predominate, the area consisting of mesozoic sediments and volcanic basalt. The Iguacu River lies along the whole of the southern border. The main feature is the Iguacu falls in the far south-west of the park, where the Rio Iguacu falls off the steep edge of the southern Brazilian plateau. The river, which is 1200m wide at this point and contains a number of islands, drops 80m cutting a giant staircase down a triassic basalt flow. The Iguacu Falls form a semicircular front of 2700m of which 800m are on the Brazil side and 1900m on the Argentine side. Humid subtropical climate, with over 2000mm rainfall per annum, and a relative humidity of 80-90%.

The lower park is subtropical rainforest rich in tree ferns, lianas and epiphytes. The upper part is humid subtropical deciduous forest with stands of the Brazilian pine (here at its western limit) with two palms, the Assai palm and wild coconut palm, and the imbuaya.

Fauna recorded within the park include giant otter, La Plata otter, ocelot, jaguar, puma, margay, brocket deer, American tapir, collared peccary, white-lipped peccary, great dusky swift, solitary tinamou, ornate hawk-eagle, red-breasted toucan and harpy eagle. Giant anteater has also been recorded as well as pampas deer, black-fronted piping guan, glaucus macaw, and the vinaceous-breasted and red-spectacled parrots. IUCN (1977) also record black howler monkey, capybara, puma, black hawk-eagle, chimango caracara, crested caracar, white-tailed trogon, rufous ovenbird, broad-snouted cayman, dwarf cayman and the urutu viper. The presence of the black howler monkey is not, however, noted in the management plan, which confirms the presence of all other mammal species. No comprehensive bird list is given in the plan, but it does confirm the presence of the two endangered species, the glaucus macaw and the black-fronted piping guan.

4. STATE OF PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION:

Except for a park staff of 43 the park has no permanent human population and is not exploited except in the heavily visited area around the Falls. The management plan classifies over 80% of the park as a strict undeveloped natural zone.

The waterfalls themselves make Iguacu one of the principal tourist attractions of Brazil. One million visitors a year are concentrated around the falls where there is a hotel, heliport, museum, staff housing, recreational facilities and scientific laboratory. The development of highway BR373 has had a significant impact on the interior of the park. Enforcement of boundaries from surrounding settlement is a major management problem and an unknown extent of illegal forest exploitation within the park occurs.

Nearby hydroelectric development and the deforestation of the upstream catchment area has resulted in a chain of events which have impacted on the park including heavy siltation, rapid runoff and higher diurnal temperature variations.

5. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

The Iguacu National Park, as presented by the Government of Brazil, 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 shares with Iguazu National Park in Argentina one of the world's largest and most impressive waterfalls which extend over 2700m with falls split into a number of drops and rapids. Clouds of spray soak the surrounding area and islands in the river are consequently covered by luxuriant vegetation.

(iv) Habitat of rare and endangered species. The Iguacu park contains nine species which are listed as threatened on a world scale by IUCN. These include two species of otter, giant anteater and harpy eagle.

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION -- IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION355 IGUACU NATIONAL PARK (BRAZIL)1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) Nomination form and map
- ii) 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 49,200 ha Iguazu National Park in Argentina. The Argentinian park was added to the World Heritage List in 1984, with the comment by the Committee that it "was ... glad to be informed by the representative of Brazil that the contiguous Iguacu National Park on the Brazilian side of the river would be nominated by the end of 1984 so that both parks could constitute next year a transfrontier World Heritage Site." The Brazil park covers 170,086 ha, over three times the size of the Argentinian park. Together the two Iguazu parks comprise almost two-thirds of the protected territory 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.

3. INTEGRITY

The site has a long history of protection dating back to 1916. The national park was declared in 1939, with additional areas included in 1944 and 1981 to bring it to its current size. A management plan was prepared in 1981 and is being implemented.

The main impacts on the site are in the form of intensive tourist developments in the area of the Falls (including helicopter viewing), agricultural development in surrounding areas, and a federal highway that cuts through the park. The staff of the park is rather small -- 26 management and 17 general staff -- for such a large area in the midst of agricultural land.

Major concerns on the integrity of the Iguacu property are the effects of deforestation of the upper watershed and major upstream hydroelectric development which have affected hydrological conditions. Another dam proposal would flood 1700 ha in the southeast corner of the park.

Coordinated regional management between the Brazilian and the Argentinian authorities is seen as an important factor in proper administration of the total complex. From a natural point of view the two parks are a single unit and are considered as one site.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Inclusion of Iguacu National Park on the World Heritage List would provide another example of a transfrontier World Heritage Site, thus contributing to international understanding and cooperation in conserving the world's areas of outstanding universal value.

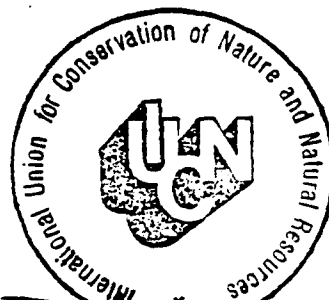
5. EVALUATION

Iguaçu 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. 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 9 species listed as threatened on a world scale by IUCN. These include the endangered broad-nosed caiman of which small populations are found in Iguaçu and two species of otter.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Iguaçu National Park should be inscribed on the World Heritage List, and should be incorporated as one property with the existing Iguazu National Park of Argentina. The name of the property would become "Iguazu, Iguaçu National Park of Argentina and Brazil". The Committee should encourage the Brazilian and Argentine authorities to ensure cooperation and coordination in management of the two adjacent parks.



J. Thorpe

