

2008 can be considered a year of "highs" for WWF and forest conservation. Over 60 governments signed on to WWF's call for zero net deforestation by 2020 in May. This was followed by Paraguay and Indonesia fulfilling their support by announcing concrete actions in October. More forests received protection in the Amazon and Congo Basin, with the latter also achieving FSC certification for 1 million hectares of forests. The year also saw the first palm oil certified according to the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil criteria. Accolades were also given to Chile's indigenous people and WWF Bolivia for forest conservation. Read more about these and other highlights.

Forest protection



Ministers commit to zero net deforestation by 2020

WWF obtained pledges from more than 65 government ministers to achieve zero net deforestation by 2020. In May, at the 9th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP9), ministers from 67 countries as well as the

European Commissioner for the Environment, and others including the CBD Secretariat, Commission of Forestry in Central Africa (COMIFAC) and UNEP, signed on to WWF's call for zero net deforestation by 2020.

Deforestation, particularly in the tropics, is the third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, generating almost 20 per cent of all carbon emissions worldwide. These pledges – which included priority forest countries such as Indonesia and DRC, as well as developed countries including those of the EU and Japan – are now being followed up individually to develop implementation plans.

In this regard, the governments of **Paraguay and Indonesia** announced far-reaching actions to stop forest loss, at a special WWF event held during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain. Paraguay announced it will extend the zero deforestation law by another 5 years while the Indonesian government said it will no longer tolerate conversion of forests for establishing crop plantations such as oil palm. These plantations will instead have to use idle lands.



In November, Paraguay's Congress unanimously voted to extend the country's "Zero Deforestation Law" by another five years, beginning in 2009. With this, **Paraguay moves closer towards zero net deforestation** and has again honoured its commitment made at the CBD COP9 in May and the IUCN World Congress in October, to support WWF's call for zero net deforestation by 2020.

Protecting Sumatra's forests

Sumatra's 10 governors and four government ministries (Environment, Forests, Interior and Public Works) made a bold commitment to protect the remaining forests and critical ecosystems of Sumatra, an Indonesian island that holds some of the world's most diverse – and threatened – forests. The historic agreement represents the first-ever island-wide commitment to protect Sumatra's stunning biodiversity.



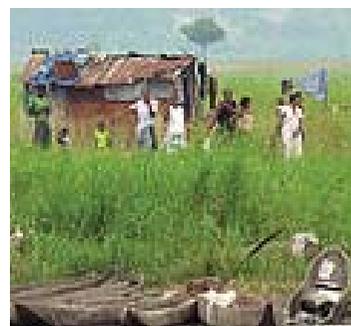
This will protect Sumatra's remaining forests, home to the Sumatran tiger, rhino, orang-utan and Asian elephant. More than 13 percent of Sumatra's remaining forests are peat forests, which sit atop the deepest peat soil in the world. Protecting these forests will also help in mitigating global climate change.

Indonesia doubles size of key national park and brings new hope for Sumatra's elephants and tigers

The government of Indonesia has declared its commitment to expanding the vital Tesso Nilo National Park on Sumatra island to 86,000 hectares. Tesso Nilo is one of the last havens of endangered Sumatran elephants and critically endangered Sumatran tigers. With more than 4,000 plant species recorded so far, the forest of Tesso Nilo has the highest lowland forest plant biodiversity known to science, with many species yet to be discovered.

Conserving the Green Heart of Africa...

This year, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) announced a process to create 15 million ha of new protected areas (PAs) in the highest



conservation priority forest areas, thereby doubling the country's PA cover. The new PAs will protect the largest block of forest in the Congo Basin as well as important populations of species including gorillas, bonobos and elephants.

In June, the Government of the Republic of Congo declared the 5.9 million ha Grand Affluents wetland at the confluence of four tributaries of the Congo River protected under the Ramsar Convention. In the past decade WWF has helped in protecting 92 million ha of wetland sites under Ramsar and other mechanisms – almost 10 percent of the world's freshwater habitat.

Congo, Rwanda and Uganda unite to strengthen conservation of protected areas, save mountain gorillas and improve community livelihoods



Borders will matter less to central Africa's mountain gorillas, following the launch of a strategic conservation plan and

an associated project which covers adjoining areas of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The new transboundary strategic plan aims to improve community livelihoods and contribute to the stability of the region. It will also assist in strengthening and making similar the three countries's policies and laws on the conservation and management of the protected areas.

...the Amazon...

Significant progress has been made with Brazil's Amazon Region Protected Area (ARPA) programme, a major partnership that includes WWF, launched in 2003 to quadruple Brazil's Amazon protected area cover to 50 million ha. Achievements to date include 32 million ha of new PAs, improved management and a conservation fund. The Brazilian government also reported on the value of ARPA's Protected Area network in reducing carbon emissions from forest loss and degradation.



Additionally, Brazil's Environment Minister Carlos Minc at the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP9) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), announced a commitment to create 4 new protected areas, 3 of them in the Brazilian Amazon.

In December, Minister Minc announced **new measures** designed to stem an accelerating assault on the Amazon's rainforests – on the same day as the nation's space agency released figures showing that 756km² of Amazon forest were cleared in August, triple the 230km² cleared in August 2007.

Heading the list of measures announced was the naming of the top 100 clearing culprits and an agreement made among government law and prosecution authorities to tackle a situation where only 10 out of 100 clearing prosecutions proceed to trial, and only one to any punishment.

...and Greater Black Sea basin

The governments of Hungary and Croatia have agreed to establish a 250,000 ha Transboundary Riverine Protected Area along the stretches of the Drava, Mura and Danube rivers, which they share. Amongst the next steps discussed is an extension of the transboundary area into Austria, Slovenia and Serbia, creating a 400,000 ha riverine Protected Area shared by five countries and the biggest in Europe.

Responsible forestry and agriculture practices

According to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the total area of FSC-certified forests has now passed 102 million hectares. Europe leads with FSC-certified forests, followed by North America, and South America and the Caribbean. **See www.fsc.org.**

Sustainable shipment opens new palm oil options



The arrival of the first certified sustainable palm oil shipment in Europe in November opened up possibilities for palm oil users to move away from subsidising forest destruction and social disruption from expanding palm oil plantations. The shipment, from south-east Asia, is of palm oil certified as compliant

with the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Principles and Criteria, a set of standards that ensure that palm oil is produced in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

Congo Basin passes 1 million ha Mark in certified forests



More than one million hectares of Congo Basin forests have achieved certification under the world's leading sustainable forestry scheme in July.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

certification has now been achieved for forestry operations on 1.2 million hectares, a significant step towards WWF's Green Heart of Africa programme's goal of having certification achieved for 50% of production forest in the Congo Basin. The certification involves logging companies SEFAC, Transformation Reef Cameroon (TRC) and WIJMA in Cameroon and CIB in the Republic of Congo.

WWF launch GFTN-Iberia in Portugal and Spain

In October, WWF launched the Global Forest & Trade Network - Iberia (GFTN-Iberia) office.

GFTN-Iberia is an alliance of about 20 Spanish and Portuguese companies, including Leroy Merlin, Lafarge Cement and Amorim, aiming to eliminate illegal logging practices through the promotion of FSC certification and the conservation of the world's most threatened forests.

Wal-Mart joins WWF in fight against illegal logging

In July Wal-Mart, the world's largest discount department store became a member of the Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN). In doing so, Wal-Mart commits to using more wood from sustainable, certified sources and phasing out wood from illegal or non-sustainable sources.

Others

Forest boost as poaching boss gets jail

A five-year jail sentence for a notorious elephant poacher could provide a lifeline for wildlife in and around an



African rainforest that survived the Ice Age. The court judgement was passed in October in Mundemba, the nearest town to Africa's oldest and most diverse rainforest, the Korup National Park in south-west Cameroon.

This area remained rainforest throughout the drying-out periods during the Ice Age when icecap advance caused severe global cooling which led much tropical rainforest to be replaced by semi-xerophytic scrub or savannah.

WWF Bolivia recognised for contributing to the forest sector

WWF Bolivia was awarded a special recognition on behalf of the Bolivian Forestry Chamber for its contribution to the forest sector. The award was received during the fourth Wood Industry Business Roundtable, of which WWF and its GFTN (Global Forest and Trade Network) also took part, with the participation of over 30 international GFTN member businessmen.



Indigenous peoples win conservation successes in Chile



A near 20 year struggle for land rights and conservation of their rare Araucaria forests for an indigenous Pehuenche community of the Andes range has been rewarded with a grant of title to 22,000 acres of land in southern Chile.

Forest protection gives Far Eastern Leopard chance for survival

The survival of the 35 remaining Amur leopards of the Russian Far East was given a huge boost following a government decision to establish a unified, centrally governed protected area.

The proposal will see jurisdiction of Russia's oldest nature reserve, Kedrovaya Pad, as well as two adjacent wildlife refuges transferred to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology from the three separate agencies that currently regulate them.

