



for a living planet[®]

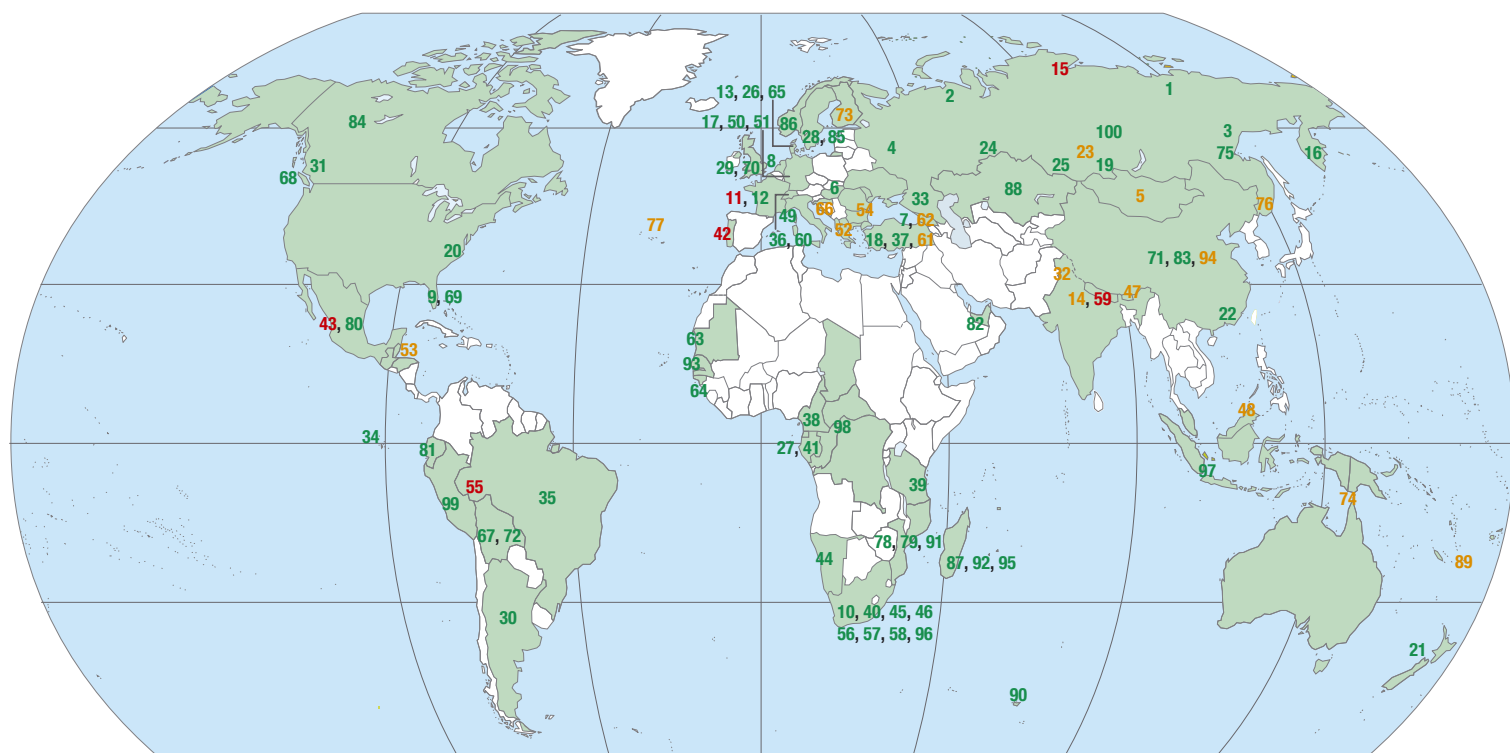


100

Gifts to the Earth

1996 - 2005

Gifts to the Earth



Countries having a Gift to the Earth registered, May 2005
Implementation status: **Green:** on target; **Orange:** significant progress; **Red:** slow progress

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
| 1 | RUSSIA – Sakha Republic | 38 | CAMEROON | 73 | FINLAND |
| 2 | RUSSIA – Komi Republic | 39 | TANZANIA – Zanzibar | 74 | AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA |
| 3 | RUSSIA – Khabarovsk Region | 40 | SOUTH AFRICA | 75 | RUSSIA – Amur Region |
| 4 | RUSSIA – Orel Region | 41 | GABON | 76 | RUSSIA – Primorsky Region |
| 5 | MONGOLIA | 42 | PORTUGAL | 77 | PORTUGAL – Azores |
| 6 | HUNGARY | 43 | MEXICO | 78 | MOZAMBIQUE |
| 7 | GEORGIA | 44 | NAMIBIA | 79 | MOZAMBIQUE |
| 8 | GLOBAL – Unilever | 45 | SOUTH AFRICA | 80 | MEXICO – local communities in Oaxaca |
| 9 | USA – Florida | 46 | SOUTH AFRICA – Mr Leslie Hill | 81 | ECUADOR |
| 10 | SOUTH AFRICA – ABSA | 47 | BHUTAN | 82 | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES |
| 11 | FRANCE – 3Suisses | 48 | MALAYSIA | 83 | CHINA – Shaanxi Province |
| 12 | FRANCE | 49 | FRANCE, ITALY, MONACO | 84 | CANADA |
| 13 | DENMARK – Best Western (DK) | 50 | GERMANY – Schleswig-Holstein | 85 | SWEDEN – Sveaskog |
| 14 | NEPAL | 51 | GERMANY – Hamburg | 86 | NORWAY |
| 15 | RUSSIA – Taymir Republic | 52 | ALBANIA, GREECE, FYR of MACEDONIA | 87 | MADAGASCAR – local communities |
| 16 | RUSSIA – Kamchatka | 53 | BELIZE, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, MEXICO | 88 | KAZAKHSTAN |
| 17 | GERMANY – AEG | 54 | BULGARIA, MOLDOVA, UKRAINE, ROMANIA | 89 | SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES – Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, Niue, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, French Polynesia, Samoa, Kingdom of Tonga, Vanuatu |
| 18 | TURKEY | 55 | BRAZIL – State of Acre | 90 | AUSTRALIA |
| 19 | RUSSIA – Khakassia Republic | 56 | SOUTH AFRICA – Sappi | 91 | MOZAMBIQUE |
| 20 | GLOBAL – World Bank | 57 | SOUTH AFRICA – Mondli | 92 | MADAGASCAR |
| 21 | NEW ZEALAND | 58 | SOUTH AFRICA – Dr Anton Rupert | 93 | SENEGAL |
| 22 | CHINA – Hong Kong | 59 | NEPAL | 94 | CHINA |
| 23 | RUSSIA – Tyva Republic | 60 | SWITZERLAND – Geneva | 95 | MADAGASCAR |
| 24 | RUSSIA – Bashkortostan Republic | 61 | TURKEY | 96 | SOUTH AFRICA |
| 25 | RUSSIA – Altai Republic | 62 | GEORGIA | 97 | INDONESIA |
| 26 | DENMARK | 63 | MAURITANIA | 98 | CENTRAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES – Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo. |
| 27 | GABON | 64 | GUINEA BISSAU | 99 | PERU |
| 28 | SWEDEN – AssiDomän | 65 | GLOBAL – Tropical Forest Trust | 100 | RUSSIA – Krasnoyarsk Region |
| 29 | UK – B&Q | 66 | CROATIA | | |
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| 34 | ECUADOR | 71 | CHINA | | |
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| 37 | TURKEY | | | | |

Director General's message

When WWF launched the Gifts to the Earth scheme in 1996, we little realized the great extent of goodwill and readiness within the international community to take up the challenge and make conservation commitments of global importance. Nor did we anticipate the magnitude of the conservation achievement this simple idea would help inspire.

The aim was to encourage governments, companies, organizations and individuals to make significant conservation commitments reflecting WWF's global priorities, and to celebrate these publicly, highlighting the achievement and the leadership. This was to help mobilize a move towards a world where the environment is treated with respect and responsibility, and ensure we leave our children a living planet.

Among the 100 Gifts celebrated to date are major conservation commitments by more than 110 governments, and partnerships with environmentally responsible corporations to promote sustainable management of forests and fisheries. Through Gifts, WWF has recognized the creation or upgrading of more than 160 million hectares of protected area. This includes formal protection for more than three percent of the world's remaining forests, the creation of marine parks, restoration and protection of wetlands, and the launch of energy conservation schemes to help combat climate change. Taken together, these undertakings represent new and unprecedented levels of conservation achievement which are, truly, Gifts to the Earth.



Dr Claude Martin

What is a Gift to the Earth?

A Gift to the Earth is a public celebration by WWF, the conservation organization, of a globally significant conservation action which is both a demonstration of environmental leadership and an inspiration to others to act similarly. WWF actively seeks major conservation commitments which will accelerate protection of forest, freshwater and marine ecosystems and flagship species – especially within the Global 200 ecoregions, the Earth’s most biologically significant natural areas – and will counter global threats to the environment such as toxic chemicals and climate change.

The action being recognized as a Gift to the Earth must be new, measurable, and represent a globally significant conservation commitment. The action should demonstrate environmental leadership and inspire others.

The Gift is symbolic, and enables WWF to publicly recognize good environmental stewardship, to thank and congratulate those involved, and to communicate this widely, so as to achieve further significant actions. The Gift to the Earth programme is managed by the Global Programme Support Unit at WWF International.

“GIFTS TO THE EARTH WERE CONCEIVED IN 1996

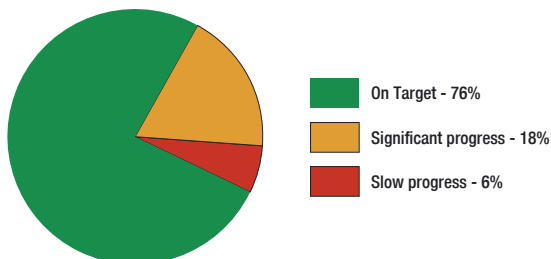
by WWF’s Living Planet Campaign as a mechanism to promote, encourage, and honour major conservation initiatives. Looking back on the 100 Gifts to the Earth celebrated in 70 countries since then, the overriding impression – beyond the scale and variety of conservation successes these represent – is one of hope.

That such a large number of commitments have been made and acted on by so many governments, companies and others in cooperation with WWF, in such a short time, demonstrates that we can achieve our overriding conservation aim – ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources now and in the longer term, for the benefit of all life on Earth.

The 100 Gifts to the Earth show a range of progress. While some have gone beyond the original Gift commitment made, well over three-quarters have either fully achieved their purpose, or are on track to reach it – a tribute to the many people involved, both our partners and within WWF. There are lessons, too, from the less successful – especially in working with the private sector where WWF is still learning how best to engage with companies to achieve substantive moves towards sustainability.

But while WWF may celebrate a Gift to the Earth achieving its goal, we are aware that to be effective conservation commitments, whether protected area creation and management or sustainable resource procurement, need to be maintained. The Gifts are about stewardship, and long-term success requires persistence. So we think of achievements as being

Implementation status of Gifts to the Earth



**‘on target’ –
for a living planet.”**

*Rob Soutter
Special Campaigns, Global Programme Support Unit
WWF International*

1 – Russia, Sakha Republic (1996) Creation of a protected area network totalling 70 million hectares

On target

The world's first Gift to the Earth (GttE), it is also the largest. The Republic of Sakha has created more than 45 million hectares of new protected areas (PAs) and improved the protection of a further 25 million hectares of existing PAs. This network ensures the future of undisturbed expanses of tundra, taiga and boreal forest, 80 percent of the breeding grounds of the endangered Siberian crane, and the range of one of the world's largest reindeer populations, numbering over 100,000 individuals.

The Sakha Gift to the Earth, which provides protection for 30 percent of the Republic, is the single most important contribution to WWF's efforts to establish a viable, representative PA network in the Russian Arctic.

As HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus of WWF International said, when he visited the Republic in 1995, "I have no doubt that other countries will follow your example of caring about your natural resources."

2 – Russia, Republic of Komi (1997) A conservation programme for the Pechora-Ilych Biosphere Reserve

On target

Now well managed, the one million hectare Pechora-Ilych Biosphere Reserve protects one of Europe's most extensive pristine old-growth forests, home to such species as the beaver, sable and wolverine.

Following the Gift commitment, Russia's first High Conservation Value Forest inventory has mapped both the most biologically important areas to be set aside, and the places that can be sensitively and sustainably harvested. Supported by the Swiss Development Corporation, almost one million hectares have been allocated for the first model forest project, and political support for Forest Stewardship Council Certification (FSC) is growing. This, in turn, will encourage other Russian territories to adopt a combination of forest protection and sustainable management.

3 – Russia, Khabarovsk (1997) Protected area coverage to be increased to 10 percent of the region

On target

In eight years, 16 protected areas (PAs) have been created, providing shelter for key threatened species such as the Amur (Siberian) tiger, the oriental white stork, and Steller's sea eagle.

The new PAs include the 429,600 hectares Anjujsky Park, together with ecological corridors.

This is the first part of the Econet plan to create regional networks of PAs linked by corridors throughout Russia. The original commitment is 80 percent achieved, and has helped build consensus between the regional government and NGOs to achieve conservation and sustainable resource use.

4 – Russia, Orel Region (1997) Reintroduction of the European bison and development of protected areas

On target

Since reintroduction, the European bison herd, now of about 100 animals, has become free-ranging and self-sustaining. To support the herd, its habitat is being protected and restored, highlighted by the creation of the Orlovskoye Polesye National Park.

And the reintroduction of the bison together with the creation of protected areas has boosted tourism and helped with the creation of new jobs for the local community. As local resident Vera Ivanova confirmed, "The park is a source of happiness for us. Before, this region was losing people and jobs. Now we have visitors to the park, new roads, and new people. If only it had happened 20 years ago."

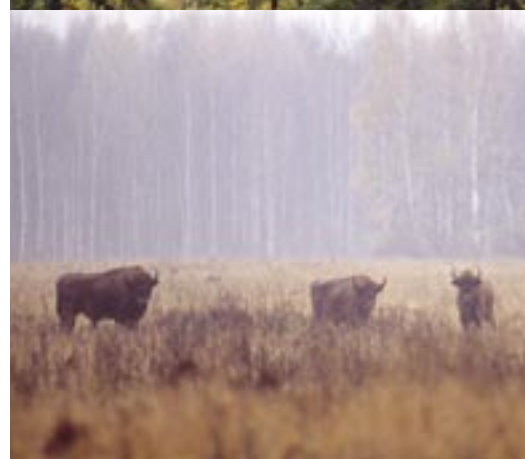
5 – Mongolia (1997) Increase protected area coverage to 30 percent of the country by 2030

Significant progress

Mongolia contains the world's most extensive steppes and the largest part of the Gobi Desert. Since making its Gift to the Earth commitment Mongolia's protected area coverage has increased to 20.9 million hectares, close to 50 percent of the original pledge. The new protected areas help conserve species such as the snow leopard, Argali sheep, and Mongolian gazelle. Containing many sacred sites, the protected areas are supported by the Buddhist community.

Progress is slowed by proposals for exploration and exploitation of the country's oil and other minerals, and by dam construction for hydropower.

Recommendations for a further 465,000 hectares of protected areas, linked to the development of WWF's priority Altai-Sayan ecoregion are currently under government consideration.





6 – Hungary (1997)
Seven new Ramsar sites, protecting Wetlands of International Importance

On target

Seven new Wetlands of International Importance were designated as Ramsar sites in 1997 when HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visited Hungary. All are now well managed, with a high degree of cooperation between government, private owners and non-governmental organizations. The privately owned 1,508 ha Retzilas area is a model for conservation, sustainable fish farming and education; in 2004 it was the venue for a symposium on otter conservation.

There is potential for a further 300,000 hectares of new forest protected areas, which may be recognized as a future Gift to the Earth.

7 – Georgia (1997)
Increase protected area coverage from 2 percent to 20 percent of the country

On target

Georgia's biological diversity includes over 6,000 species of vascular plants, 8,300 ferns and 1,200 species of lichen and moss together with animals such as the Caucasian leopard, two species of ibex, brown bear and chamois. As part of the Republic's Gift to the Earth, 620,000 hectares of new protected areas have been created, more than tripling coverage to almost 9 percent of the Republic. A further 1.1 million hectares of forests, nearly 16 percent of the country, are now protected under the Forest Code.

The Georgian Gift has been, and remains, an effective communications vehicle with government and development agencies. Today, WWF is working with the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and Germany's Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) to establish further PAs to conserve the country's natural heritage.

8 – Global (1997)
Creation of the Marine Stewardship Council to independently certify well-managed fisheries worldwide

On target

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was set up to establish standards to determine whether a fishery can be environmentally sustainable, and provide customers seeking to buy responsibly with an eco-label they can trust.

Based on the success of the Forest Stewardship Council, and its standards for sustainable forest management, the MSC is now an effective independent organization. It has already certified eleven fisheries, including the world's largest wild caught salmon fishery in Alaska, and part of the world's largest for white fish, the pollack fishery in the Bering Sea between Russia and Alaska.

The 11 fisheries certified to date are found within the bounds of seven of WWF's priority marine ecoregions in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. They now provide consumers in 22 countries with a choice of more than 200 fish and seafood products independently guaranteed to come from well-managed sources.

9 – United States of America, Florida (1997)
The Keys National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan to be approved, protecting 1 million hectares of coral reefs

On target

The sanctuary is larger than originally envisaged. This Gift to the Earth was a major driver in the development of the Water Quality Plan and particularly the Florida Keys Water Quality Improvement Act, which channels \$100 million into wastewater and storm water treatment – essential for rebuilding the health of the region's coastal waters and reefs.

Nonetheless, despite surpassing the original commitment, many of the major indicators of reef health remain poor or are worsening – largely the result of external factors including fisheries mis-management and the effects of climate change.

10 – South Africa (1997)
Amalgamated Bank of South Africa donates land to enlarge the Table Mountain National Park

On target

Table Mountain, seated majestically at the north end of the Cape Peninsula, is one of the world's most celebrated landmarks. Today, it is also a symbol of a rich, fragile and highly threatened floral kingdom – the fynbos, home of another national treasure, the protea.

The Amalgamated Bank's donation of 260 hectares of prime development land enabled an important area to be added to the Cape Peninsula National Park (renamed Table Mountain National Park in 2004). This action brings in Sandy Bay, one of the last undeveloped beaches on the peninsula into the park. The park stretches the full 60km length of the Cape Peninsula (see also GtE 40). The National Park is a central feature of WWF's priority fynbos ecoregion.

An innovative job-creation scheme in the park focuses on eradicating non-indigenous, alien and invasive vegetation which threatens many fragile fynbos species, and absorbs huge quantities of scarce water. This initiative teaches skills and provides regular employment to young people, simultaneously benefiting the environment and local communities.

11 – France, 3 Suisses (1997)
3 Suisses commits to reduce its CO₂ emissions by 25 percent

Slow progress

An ambitious target for a leading mail order retailer. But when the pledge was fully assessed, 3 Suisses realized that transportation is responsible for 85 percent of its emissions. As alternative fuels are not yet sufficiently developed, a switch away from fossil fuels was not economically feasible.

The pledge is not abandoned, but a solution is not yet available.

12 – France (1997)
The creation of 10 new protected areas

On target

In all, protected areas totalling 540,000 hectares have been created. The new Chérine National Park has helped build cooperation between the local fishing and hunting communities to develop sustainable management and awareness.

13 – Denmark, Best Western DK (1997)
The Best Western Hotels Group (Denmark) pledges a 25 percent reduction in its water and energy use

On target

The Best Western Hotels Group has gone yet further, reducing its consumption of energy and water by 32 percent. This achievement has helped WWF demonstrate the economic advantages in reducing consumption, and was highlighted at the Best Western Hotels annual meeting in Lisbon in 1999.

14 – Nepal (1997)
Protection of 200,000 hectares within the Kanchenjunga region

Significant progress

Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest peak, rises to 8,586 metres, dominating a mountain system that stretches beyond Nepal into China and India. The area includes important watersheds which guarantee both the quantity and quality of water available to millions of people in the plains below, and wildlife such as the Himalayan black bear, the red panda, and snow leopard.

Following up the pledge in July 1997, the Government of Nepal created the 1,650 km² Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (KCA) in recognition of the biological and cultural significance of the region. In 1998, it was enlarged to 2,035 km² with a focus placed on local, community-based management. It is planned that management of this huge protected area be handed over to the KCA Management Council but implementation remains a challenge due to resource needs and the internal security situation.

Nepal's Gift to the Earth has also helped develop the initiative across boundaries into India's Sikkim State.

15 – Russia, Taymir Republic (1997)
Protection of 20 percent of the Republic – a total of 7 million hectares

Slow progress

The Taymir Peninsula, the northernmost point of the Eurasian continent, contains the largest remaining unbroken stretch of tundra landscape. Dense carpets of mosses, lichens and grasses feed the 700,000 strong wild reindeer herd – the largest in the world. Hundreds of thousands of waterbirds nest around the peninsula.

In response to the pledge, only the 288,000 hectare Brekhovskie Islands Zakaznik (sanctuary) has been created, taking the total protected area coverage to 13 percent. A change in administration halted progress.

It may be possible to relaunch the initiative as the Republic is joining the larger Krasnoyarsky Krai, where the government has just made a commitment to double its existing protected area coverage to 6,2 million hectares.

16 – Russia, Kamchatka (1997)
Protection of 31 percent of the Kamchatka Peninsula

On target

The Kamchatka Peninsula is one of the world's truly special areas, hosting Europe's largest population of brown bears, the spawning grounds of several species of Pacific salmon, breeding sites for Steller's sea eagle and, offshore, the highly endangered Pacific blue whale.

In making his Gift to the Earth, the Governor appealed to the international community to help rehabilitate and preserve the region's natural heritage, damaged by decades of mining, oil development, logging and poaching.

Protected area coverage has now reached 30 percent with the creation of the 500,000 hectare Kluchevskoy Nature Park which encompasses Eurasia's highest active volcano.

There are plans to create a further 100,000 hectares of protected areas in 2006.

17 – Germany (1997)
Electrical appliance manufacturer, AEG, introduces a line of appliances which are 25 percent more energy efficient

On target

Not only has AEG introduced its new range, but has also pledged only to sell cooling appliances that are in the highest category for energy efficiency.



18 – Turkey (1997) Four new Ramsar sites to be designated

On target

The four Wetlands of International Importance were declared in 1998. One, Uluabat Lake, hosts important breeding populations of waterbirds including the pygmy cormorant and Dalmatian pelican. WWF worked with the Environment Ministry and local authorities to develop a management plan for this lake, an approach now being followed for the other three sites: the Kizilirmak Delta, Gediz Delta, and Akyatan Lake which, between them host other important breeding populations of purple heron, black stork, greater flamingo and lesser kestrel.

WWF demonstrated the value of Ramsar protection when it successfully opposed moves by the Turkish Culture Ministry to downgrade protection status of the Gediz Delta.

Following declaration of these four Ramsar sites, a National Wetlands Committee has been created with all stakeholders represented, including WWF. In total, 12 Ramsar sites totaling more than 170,000 hectares have been created since the Gift to the Earth announcement. The government is planning to declare a further 20 Ramsar sites in 2006.

19 – Russia, Khakassia Republic (1998) Protected area network to be increased and threatened species protected

On target

As part of a national snow leopard protection programme, the 142,000 hectare Zaimka Lykovyh Reserve was created adjoining the Khakas Reserve. Besides the leopards, other key species including Argali sheep, ibex, sable, Maral stags and reindeer will benefit from the Reserve at the junction of the Altai and Sayan mountains.

20 – Global (1997) The World Bank pledged to help create more than 50 million hectares of new protected forest areas by 2005, and certify 200 million hectares of sustainably managed forest

On target

The alliance of WWF and the World Bank has been instrumental in leveraging some of the highest level and longest term initiatives for protected area (PA) creation. These have included the Amazon Protected Area Programme and Congo Basin initiatives which together contributed more than 15 million hectares to the achievement of the 50 million hectare target, which has recently been achieved.

The area of FSC-certified forest, the standard of sustainability adopted by the World Bank, will reach at least 60 million hectares by end 2005, against the target of 200 million hectares. Much of this is in Europe and North America, and the modest increase in FSC-certification

elsewhere highlights the challenges facing independent forest certification in countries where land ownership may be an issue and where legal and governmental frameworks may need strengthening.

21 – New Zealand (1997) Expansion of the terrestrial protected area network

On target

A total of 200,000 hectares of rainforest was added within 56 new protected areas in South Island, while the Fiordland National Park was expanded to include 45,000 hectares of beech forest at Waitutu.

WWF New Zealand is now working with the government to greatly increase protection for the country's rich marine environment. Early in 2005, following a symposium of top marine scientists to develop mapping of conservation sites, the Fisheries Minister launched a booklet on the country's marine priorities. A major increase in New Zealand's marine protected area may merit Gift to the Earth recognition.

22 – China, Hong Kong (1997) Creation of Marine Park and education centre

On target

Hong Kong's Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department established the 260 hectare Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park. With the help of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, HSBC and other partners, WWF has built the Marine Life Centre, serving as a focus for further marine conservation. WWF-Hong Kong is urging the government to declare all Hong Kong waters as Fisheries Protection Areas, and all eastern waters including the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park, as fisheries no-take zones.

23 – Russia, Republic of Tyva (1998) Increase protected area network to 20 percent of the territory

Significant progress

Important species such as snow leopard, musk antelope, reindeer and brown bear are now secure in the new protected areas established in the Tyva Republic. The 373,000 hectare Ush-Beldir Nature Park was created in 2003, in one of the most beautiful and remote regions of western Tyva, on the Mongolian border.

Together with the regional government, and an insurance company, WWF is helping develop an innovative scheme to compensate local herders for loss of livestock to snow leopard.





24 – Russia, Republic of Bashkortostan (1997)
Increase protected area coverage by 1.9 million hectares

On target

Located in the southwestern Urals, the Republic of Bashkortostan was the first Russian region to adopt WWF’s concept for developing protected area networks. Bashkortostan is home to more than 280 bird species, including the rare black stork and osprey, 77 mammal species, 42 fish species and 20 different types of reptile and amphibian.

Protected area (PA) coverage has increased by 2.3 million hectares taking the total size of Bashkortostan’s network, which includes steppe, broadleaf forests, mixed, pine and larch forests, fir taiga and mountain tundra, to 3.24 million hectares, fully 23 percent of the Republic.

The Republic’s PA network in the Southern Urals, which is still expanding with the support from the SDC, has become a model for integrating conservation of biodiversity with sustainable use for the benefit of local people.

25 – Russia, Altai Republic (1997)
Enlarge the republic’s protected area network

On target

Strung like beads along the Katun River, the natural parks of Altai are wrapped in the myths and legends of the towering Altai peaks. The turquoise Katun stirs the imagination and has inspired tales of a fantastic country hidden at the river’s source – a kingdom of perfect enlightenment. Many sacred sites are included in the Republic’s protected areas, helping preserve traditional lifestyles and knowledge.

Following the Gift to the Earth commitment, five new parks have been created, including the 136,000 hectare Belukha National Park which contains Siberia’s highest peak – the 4,506m Belukha mountain.

26 – Denmark (1997)
To establish 750 MW of energy generation from offshore wind turbines

On target

To date, 400 MW generation capacity has been installed offshore, out of a total wind-based energy generating capacity of 3,000 MW, corresponding to 20 percent of Denmark’s energy needs. A further 400 MW are to be added offshore by 2008, exceeding Denmark’s pledge.

27 – Gabon (1997)
Protection of 600,000 hectares of the Minkebe rainforest

On target

This is a vital link in a conservation area of barely disturbed lowland forest linking

Gabon, Cameroon and Congo. These forests are rich in animal life, holding the largest surviving population of forest elephant, as well as large numbers of gorilla, chimpanzee, leopard, forest buffalo and giant pangolin – an ant-eater with brownish red overlapping scales giving it the look of a large pinecone.

The Gift to the Earth encouraged the authorities of Gabon to establish a national commission to follow up on the 1999 Yaounde Declaration – a set of principles for forest conservation and sustainable management announced by the heads of state or representatives of six Congo basin countries in Cameroon in 1999 (see also GttE 38, 41, and 98). A review of the country’s protected area priorities in turn led to the creation of 13 new national parks in 2002.

Minkebe is part of the 14 million hectare Tridom tri-national protected area complex, covering 7.5 percent of the Congo basin forest area, which was signed into existence at a meeting in Brazzaville of heads of state of Congo basin countries in February 2005.

28 – Sweden (1997)
AssiDomän commits to sustainable forest management and FSC-certification of all its forests

On target

AssiDomän provided an invaluable boost for sustainable forest management world-wide, by having its entire forest area FSC-certified as being sustainably managed. At the time, the company was Europe’s largest private forest owner – its 2.4 million forest hectares could cover the whole of Belgium. Furthermore, AssiDomän has launched an internal drive to guarantee that all its products are sourced from sustainably managed forests.

In launching a series of joint initiatives with WWF to promote FSC in Europe, AssiDomän’s then President and Chief Executive, Lennart Ahlgren, asserted, “We believe strongly in forging partnerships to ensure that we can serve our current and future customers without costing the Earth its resources”.

29 – UK (1997)
Home improvement chain, B&Q, commits to improved environmental standards in its operations including purchasing wood only from well-managed forests

On target

The UK’s leading home improvement chain, B&Q, pioneered the introduction of environmental standards in retailing, by introducing a policy to ensure all purchases of wood and timber products come from sustainably managed forests.



30 – Argentina, Alto Paraná (1997)
Alto Paraná establishes a 3,200 hectare private nature reserve

On target

Alto Paraná, the owner of 40,000 hectares within the highly-fragmented Atlantic coastal forest – amongst the world’s most threatened forest types – created a 3,200 ha private nature reserve to link two existing protected areas. The Atlantic coastal forest, shared by Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil has been reduced to less than five percent of its former extent. But it remains amazing biologically diverse, sheltering rare and threatened species including the jaguar, tapir and thousands of plant species.

WWF Associate Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA) continues the work of linking isolated Atlantic forest areas by the establishment of viable biological corridors.

31 – Canada, British Columbia (1997)
Protection of 4.3 million hectares of the northern Rockies

On target

Fifteen new protected areas have been created, totalling 1 million hectares, buffered by more than 3 million hectares of Special Management Zones and a further 920,000 hectares of Special Wildland Zones.

The overall Muskwa-Kechika Management Area is one of the last true wilderness areas of North America, and remains a priority for achieving both conservation and sustainable development. Through a careful process of stakeholder engagement, consensus was reached on land management in the buffer zones that allows resource development while ensuring the protection of important wildlife and other environmental values.

32 – India (1997)
Protection of eight freshwater areas in the Indian Himalayas

Significant progress

Five wetlands in the high altitude Ladakh region have been prioritized: Tsomoriri, Tsokar-Startsapuk Tso, Pangong Tso, Hanle marshes, and Chushul marshes. Designation as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention has been achieved for Tsomoriri and is in process for Pangong Tso.

Close to Tsomoriri and Tsokar, where the state government has appointed WWF-India to develop management plans, the local people have formed their own conservation trusts to regulate tourist activities. This has helped rehabilitate waterbird populations and improved local incomes.

The state government is now promoting the protection of Tsigul Tso, another high altitude wetland in Ladakh. Two further Himalayan wetlands – Hokersar and Mansar-Surinsar – have been included in the list of nationally important wetlands, and are also to be registered as Ramsar sites.

“The Gift to the Earth recognition has focused attention on these fragile and important high altitude wetlands, which are often of great sacred value to local communities.”

Parakshit Gautam, WWF-India

33 – Russia, Adygei Republic (1997)
Increase protected area coverage to 21 percent of the Republic

On target

Three new protected areas have been set up to protect the Adygei’s mountain forest landscapes and the upstream freshwater sources on the northern slope of the Caucasus Ridge. About 21 percent of the Republic is now protected.

34 – Ecuador (1997)
Galapagos Archipelago Marine Park to be expanded, and damaging fishing practices stopped

On target

The Galapagos Special Law expanded the area of protected waters around the archipelago by extending the limits of the marine park from a 15 mile radius to 40 miles. The law also banned industrial fishing boats from the park, at the same time as making provision for local people to benefit from the sustainable use of the archipelago’s resources and tourist activities.

Additionally, the law has encouraged the local community to participate in managing the park’s natural resource base, and to help design a provisional zoning scheme, operated by WWF.

Although the fishing industry has made numerous attempts to overturn or emasculate the law, it continues to be enforced. But keeping industrial fishing boats away from the park with limited resources remains a challenge, especially while also encouraging sustainable artisanal fishing.

35 – Brazil (1998)

To establish 25 million hectares of new protected areas by 2000

On target

Although the original schedule has not proved attainable, the target has been strengthened. The Amazon Protected Area Programme (ARPA) was launched in 2002 in partnership with WWF and the World Bank, with the aim of achieving conservation-based management of 37 million hectares: 28 million hectares as protected areas and 9 million hectares for sustainable use.

For the first phase, ending 2007, the target is 18 million hectares of new protected areas and 9 million hectares for sustainable forest management. To date, 24 areas have been designated: 9.9 million hectares of new protected areas, and 5.9 million hectares for sustainable use.

Key to the realization of this huge challenge, which will contribute enormously to the protection and sustainable use of the Amazon basin forests, is to complete its funding. An estimated capital fund of US\$220 million is required of which WWF is committed to raise US\$70 million.

“Gift to the Earth recognition played an important role in gaining the commitment of the Brazilian government to fulfil this very important and ambitious pledge.”

WWF-Brazil

36 – Switzerland (1998)

Held AG reduces energy use and promotes environmental sustainable energy sources

On target

A manufacturer of household cleaning products, Held has introduced a life-cycle analysis strategy to its operations, ranging from its selection of the raw materials and chemicals to the use and disposal of its products. Energy consumption has also been tackled; Held has eliminated its use of oil and reduced electricity demand by 34 percent.

37 – Turkey (1998)

The establishment of six coastal protected areas to conserve the endangered Mediterranean monk seal

On target

In an effort to save the critically endangered Mediterranean monk seal, of which fewer than 300 are estimated to survive, the Turkish Government has created six new coastal protected areas along a 200 km stretch of its southern Cilician coast. The seals' future is threatened by the overfishing of its food supply, by being caught in the nets, and by pollution. The protected areas will also help isolate important breeding and feeding areas from human disturbance.

38 – Cameroon (1998)

Protection of 220,000 hectares of Lobeke forests

On target

The Lobeke forest is the traditional home of the Baka pygmies and is sacred to them. Today, its 217,850 hectare core is a special protected area around which multiple use zones allow local community farming and hunting as well as sustainable logging and professional hunting. Revenues generated are used for village development including the sinking of new wells, founding primary schools, and building the conservation capacity of community leaders.

Lobeke is part of the 1.5 million hectare Sangha tri-national protected area complex spreading across Cameroon, the Central African Republic and the Congo. Agreed in February 2005 at a meeting of the Congo Basin countries' heads of state in Brazzaville (see GtE 27, 41 and 98), the Sangha tri-national aims to protect a virtually untouched reservoir of biological diversity, including forest elephant, buffalo, antelope, lowland gorilla and chimpanzee.

39 – Tanzania, Zanzibar (1998)

Creation of a 47,000 hectare marine protected area in Menai Bay

On target

The Menai Bay Conservation Area has been designated, and management structures established in conjunction with local communities. For example, many fishers have modified their boats to carry tourists, resulting in lowered pressure on the fishery.

Tourism funds conservation management and community development – the level of charges having been set following surveys to establish how much people are willing to pay to visit a well-managed protected area. Seventy percent of this income is used for conservation while 30 percent is reserved for community development.

“The Gift to the Earth has helped build political will in the East African region to implement conservation. In Zanzibar, the Gift to the Earth has been followed by the declaration of several new marine protected areas and, overall, the Mafia Island Marine Park has been scaled up tenfold to cover the Mafia-Kilwa-Rufiji seascape complex, totaling 900,000 hectares. This may merit a future Gift to the Earth recognition.” **Amani Ngusaru, WWF-Eastern African Marine Ecoregion**



40 – South Africa (1998) Creation of Cape Peninsula National Park

On target

On 5 June 1998, World Environment Day, Nelson Mandela announced the designation of the 24,500 hectare Cape Peninsula National Park as a Gift to the Earth. In 2004 the name changed to the Table Mountain National Park, in recognition of the world famous landmark. (see also GtE 10)

The new national park stretches 40km from Cape Town to the Cape of Good Hope. Home to some 2,285 plant species, of which 125 are threatened, the park protects important elements of the fynbos – a priority Global 200 ecoregion. Together with seven other sites in the fynbos, the national park has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A further 5,500 hectares are targeted for the terrestrial expansion of the national park, while in June 2004 a 1,000 hectare marine area was incorporated into the park.

The Table Mountain Fund, supported by the Global Environment Facility, has been established to help maintain the park with its unique flora and fauna.

41 – Gabon (1998) Establishment of Monts Doudou forest protected area

On target

The 230,000 hectare Monts Doudou National Park has been declared by the Government of Gabon.

As noted in GtE 27, in implementing the 1999 Yaounde Declaration the government set up a commission to review protected area priorities, and this led to the establishment in 2002 of 13 new national parks. (see also GtE 38 and 98).

42 – Portugal (1998) Creation of the Arrabida and Berlengas Archipelago marine protected areas

Slow progress

Although the two marine protected areas were proclaimed, management plans have not been fully developed or implemented, and there are threats to reduce the size and protection status of the Arrabida park. WWF is seeking clarification of the situation.

43 – Mexico (1998) Government committed to promote forest restoration in fire-damaged areas

Slow progress

Following the devastating forest fires in Mexico, the then President Zedillo issued a Presidential Decree in September 1998 which identified 85 areas, totaling 188,000 hectares in 21 of Mexico's 30 states, where forest restoration plans were

to be developed. This was linked to an assessment of policies and practices for fire prevention.

The legal status of these areas should prevent land-use changes, and thus remove incentives for setting new fires to clear forests for development in forested land. The Minister of Environment is tasked with the development of restoration plans, but little is known of their current status.

44 – Namibia (1998) Development of Nature Conservancy programme to promote community-based conservation

On target

This expanding Gift to the Earth opens the way for Namibia's communal area farmers to manage, protect and benefit from the wildlife and other natural resources on their land. The programme boosts rural economies, helps empower local communities and addresses poverty by providing land-use options that are both environmentally sustainable and financially viable.

To date, the conservancy areas have increased to 1.5 million hectares involving 200,000 people, with the number of registered conservancies rising from just four in 1998 to 39 by end 2004.

Highlighted as a Gift to the Earth, the programme has grown because of increasing incomes of poor rural communities largely as a result of sustainable tourism.

"Although the GtE commitment has been reached, there is significant potential to expand and to replicate this programme elsewhere." **Chris Weaver, WWF-Namibia Project Office**

45 – South Africa (1999) Establishment of the Cape Aghulas National Park

On target

The Cape Aghulas National Park, at the southern tip of Africa, was proclaimed in September 1999. Situated in an area of startling biodiversity with over 2,000 plant species of which 100 are endemic to the area, the park also incorporates several Important Bird Areas. And there are expansion plans to increase its current 17,280 hectares to at least 20,000 hectares.

The Global Environment Facility-funded Aghulas Biodiversity Initiative is cooperating with the park's neighbours to secure what is left of the coastal lowland vegetation. In an innovative move, the park authority is negotiating with one local landowner to take over management of 50,000 hectares under a contractual arrangement effectively tripling the size of the national park.





46 – South Africa (1999)
Donation of 47,000 hectares to create a major new national park for the succulent karoo

On target

Financially supported by the late Leslie Hill, an ardent private conservationist devoted to the highly threatened succulent karoo, WWF-South Africa began negotiating with the country conservation authorities in 1996 to create a new national park in this Global 200 ecoregion.

Mr Hill had donated 47,000 hectares out of the park's 49,000 hectares facilitating the creation of the Namaqualand National Park. This was the culmination of many similar initiatives by Leslie Hill to conserve the succulent karoo – a significant and highly threatened centre of plant biodiversity with some 4,000 species, of which 60 percent are found nowhere else.

Efforts are now underway to identify other local landowners prepared to help further enlarge the park.



47 – Bhutan (1999)
Creation of biological corridors to link nine national parks

Significant progress

In 1999, the Government of Bhutan identified a network of biological corridors to link nine national parks which cover 26 percent of the country. The corridors, which add a further 9 percent to Bhutan's protected area coverage, are the known heavily-forested routes by which tigers move between the parks.

Two of the corridors connecting Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Thrumshrigla National Park have been surveyed for biodiversity and for socio-economic information for management. Further surveys are currently underway in a further two corridors linking Thrumshrigla with the Royal Manas and Jingme Singye National Parks. Together these represent 40 percent of the projected corridor network.

“The people of Bhutan are proud that their small country can make a globally significant contribution to conservation, recognized as a Gift to the Earth. But further funding is needed to turn their deep commitment into a well-managed corridor network.” **Kinzang Namgay, WWF-Bhutan.**



48 – Malaysia, Sabah (1999)
To designate the 26,000 hectare Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary

Significant progress

During the WWF Annual Conference in Sabah in 1999, the Malaysian State Government of Sabah announced it would designate a 26,000 hectare wildlife sanctuary along the lower Kinabatangan river. The sanctuary is of major significance for species including the endemic orang-utan, Asian elephant, proboscis monkey and Storm's stork as well as being home to over 250 bird and ten

primate species. In the river are more than 90 fish species, including the endangered freshwater rays and saw fish.

WWF is seeking increased protection and gazettement of the sanctuary. It is the core of a plan to link isolated patches of riverine forest by reforesting lands along the riverbank, which has been cleared for oil palm plantation, from the upper catchment area to its mouth to establish a wildlife corridor.

49 – Italy, France and Monaco (1999)
Creation of the Ligurian Sea Cetacean Sanctuary

On target

The Treaty establishing the 85,000km² sanctuary, the first in the northern hemisphere, in an area of the Mediterranean Sea where 13 cetaceans species are regularly sighted, has been signed and ratified by all three countries.

More recently, Italy, France and Monaco have agreed a management plan for the sanctuary, which has also been recognized as a Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI), under the Barcelona Convention.

Challenges ahead include curbing the French driftnet fleet fishing illegally in the sanctuary, the frequency of oil spills in the area, and the growing, and as yet unregulated, whale watching industry.

50 and 51 – Germany (2000)
Promotion of sustainable forest management with Hamburg as the first city-state, and Schleswig-Holstein as the first state, to gain FSC-certification for their forests

On target

The certifications are still valid, and correspond to the latest developments in the FSC-certification process. Both states also continue to play a role in the German FSC-certification network.

Hamburg made a commitment on the procurement of only FSC-certified timber for public service requirements – a commitment that needs to be readdressed periodically to avoid the slipping of standards.





52 – Greece, Albania and FYR of Macedonia (2000)

Creation of Prespa Park as the first transboundary protected area in the Balkans

Significant progress

An area of international importance, including Prespa's two lakes and their surrounding catchments, has been declared a transboundary park by the prime ministers of all three countries. But its effective implementation remains a challenge.

A trilateral Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC) has been set up, together with a Secretariat, run by the collaborating NGOs. The PPCC has developed a strategic action plan, following trilateral consultations, and implementation has started, with funding mobilized from international agencies.

However, in order to be fully operational the declaration needs to be followed up by a trilateral agreement designating specific roles and tasks for the various stakeholders, including governments, NGOs and local authorities.

53 – Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico (2000)

Development and implementation of a regional management plan for the Mesoamerican reef

Significant progress

The Mesoamerican reef is unique in the western hemisphere for its size, array of reef types with nearly 60 coral species, and the largest population of manatees in the western Caribbean. It extends almost 1,000km from the northern tip of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula to the Bay islands off the coast of Honduras.

The 1997 Tulum Declaration, signed by the heads of states of the four countries established high-level political support for the conservation and management of the Mesoamerican reef as a single ecosystem. Conservation results already include the establishment of 12 marine protected areas key to the survival of threatened grouper fish species. However new threats are emerging, including pollution from agrochemicals.

Funding has been mobilized, and planning is underway, for a heads of state summit in 2005 to review progress and future priorities. Specific conservation targets include a strengthening of the regional system of protected areas, regional fisheries management and the conservation of additional key species and habitats.

54 – Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine (2000)

Establishment of the 600,000 hectare Danube Green Corridor

Significant progress

The declaration creating the lower Danube Green Corridor was signed on 5 June 2000,

World Environment Day, in Bucharest by the governments of Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. The target has been met, bringing together 777,195 hectares of existing protected areas, and there has been an enlargement of some areas totaling a further 31,000 hectares. But progress in creating new protected areas and in restoring wetlands has been much slower.

The imminent creation of 40,000 hectares of new protected areas in Bulgaria and Rumania will mean that a quarter of the target has been reached. Restoration activities have been developed in the Danube delta and Romania, and the experience gained will be used elsewhere.

Overall, the declaration has provided a valuable high-level platform for the implementation of the European Union's Freshwater Directive and directives on biodiversity conservation, and to achieve transboundary cooperation on freshwater management.

55 – Brazil, Acre State (2000)

Achieving FSC-certification of 2.5 million hectares of forests by 2010

Slow progress

Only 14,144 hectares of community-managed forests are FSC-certified to date, but state and private forests are expected to achieve FSC-certification at an accelerating pace – 270,000 hectares in 2006, 230,000 hectares in 2007, and 600,000 hectares in 2009.

56 – South Africa (2000)

Launch of the SAPPI Forest and Wetland Conservation Initiative

On target

SAPPI, the South African-based pulp and paper multinational, has achieved FSC-certification of all its plantations in South Africa – 340,000 hectares – and has removed plantation trees from 15,500 hectares of wetland and riverine areas. In a new development, SAPPI is promoting eco-tourism as a conservation incentive.

57 – South Africa (2000)

Mondi commits to achieving FSC-certification of its production woodlands

On target

Another pulp and paper multinational, Mondi's land holdings in South Africa exceed 600,000 hectares. Of these, 75 percent have been FSC-certified, representing one-third of the total area under commercial afforestation in South Africa. Mondi publicly supports the FSC-certification model, and has also developed a sustainable wetlands policy.

58 – South Africa (2000) Creation of trans-frontier Peace Parks

On target

This Gift to the Earth honours Dr. Anton Rupert, the founder of WWF-South Africa, who conceived and implemented creation of a network of trans-frontier conservation areas (TCFA) in southern Africa.

With the support of Nelson Mandela and the late Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, Dr. Rupert's initiative identified 14 potential TFCAs that could attract more than one million tourists annually, and create up to 8 million jobs.

Progress on the development has been good, with international agreements having been signed for six TFCAs, and two are in final development. To date, the Kagligadi TFCA, shared by Botswana and South Africa, and the Greater Limpopo TFCA shared between Mozambique, South Africa and, it is hoped, Zimbabwe, are functioning.

59 – Nepal (2000) Extension of Royal Bardia National Park

Slow progress

This extension adds 89,300 hectares to the National Park. Biological and social surveys have been completed and submitted to government. But civil unrest since 2000 has prevented any progress in signing this enlargement into law.

60 – Switzerland (2000) First major FSC-certification

On target

Geneva is Switzerland's first canton to achieve FSC-certification for the sustainable management of its forests – 50 percent of the forest cover of the canton. Following Geneva's initiative, 2,000 hectares of the Soignes forest, in Bruxelles municipality, and the forests of Lausanne municipality have also been FSC-certified.

The Gift to the Earth has provided a positive profile for Geneva's environmental policy. It has also helped encourage other Swiss forest owners to seek FSC-certification.

61 – Turkey (2001) Creation of the 114,000 hectare Kure Mountains National Park

Significant progress

To date Kure Mountains National Park only covers 37,000 hectares, but there has been rapid progress elsewhere with the creation of three national parks and two nature parks, totalling 169,000 hectares.

A lack of adequate resources has slowed the process, making it difficult to justify creating further new protected areas – a further 100,000 hectares are planned – when existing ones are not effectively managed.

"The Turkish public and local stakeholders are keen to participate in an international conservation initiative, and are proud of the international recognition received through the Gift to the Earth event." **Sedat Kalem, WWF-Turkey**

62 – Georgia (2001) Forest protected areas to be increased to 15 percent of the Republic by 2010

Significant progress

Georgia's forest protected area coverage has increased by 35,457 hectares to a total of 239,437 hectares – or 8.7 percent of its total forest area. WWF is currently working with the government to establish the Mtirala and Saguramo National Parks, adding a further 35,000 hectares to the total.

"The Gift to the Earth has set an ambitious and strategic forest protection target. Georgia's earlier Gift to the Earth (No.7), created a very positive profile which provides a powerful communications tool with government and other organizations". **Nuzgar Zazanashvili, WWF-Caucasus Ecoregion.**



IN MARCH 2001, IN A SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL EVENTS in Mauritania, Guinea Bissau and Senegal, WWF recognized as Gifts to the Earth the creation or enlargement of two key West African coastal wetlands, in Mauritania and Guinea Bissau, and gained a commitment from Senegal to create a network of marine protected areas.

The Gift to the Earth events helped initiate a partnership between WWF, IUCN – the World Conservation Union, a local non-governmental organization, Fondation International du Banc d'Arguin (FIBA), and later, Wetlands International, to develop a joint conservation programme for the wider ecoregion. This has also helped mobilize funding for the management of the protected areas.

The announcement by the Senegal Minister of Fisheries that a network of marine protected areas would be created was realized two years later at the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, where WWF recognized this achievement as a Gift to the Earth (see GttEs 63, 64, 93).

63 – Mauritania (2001)

Full protection of the Banc d'Arguin National Park – creating Africa's largest marine protected area

On target

The Banc d'Arguin is one of the world's most important coastal wetlands, and is a core area within WWF's priority West Africa Marine Ecoregion (WAMER). The park provides shelter for an estimated two million waterbirds migrating annually between southern Africa and northern Europe, as well as the endangered monk seal and rare Guinean dolphin. The area is also part of a major marine upwelling which supports one of the richest Atlantic Ocean fisheries and is home to an isolated indigenous population – the Imraguen – who practice sustainable artisanal fishing.

The government passed a law in 2001 which fully protects the Banc d'Arguin, increasing its size to 12,000 km², of which half is marine, and bans industrial fishing within the park. Only the Imraguen, who have become unofficial protectors of the park, are allowed to continue their traditional sustainable fishing practices in the park.

64 – Guinea Bissau (2001)

Creation of the João Vieira/ Poilão Marine National Park

On target

The Government of Guinea Bissau was honoured for the creation of the 500 km² João Vieira/ Poilão Marine National Park in the Bijagos Archipelago. Within the park, the sacred Poilão Island is home to the largest green turtle nesting site on the African Atlantic coast, with at least 7,600 nests recorded in one recent season. The park also offers shelter for an estimated 700,000 migratory waterbirds including Caspian, black and royal terns, and the highly endangered Mediterranean monk seal and rare Guinean dolphin.

IUCN-The World Conservation Union, played a key role with government in the creation of this important coastal wetland and marine protected area.

65 – Global (2001)

Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) to increase the area of sustainably managed and FSC-certified tropical forest

On target

The original target of this Gift to the Earth – to ensure that the Danish garden furniture company ScanCom would, by 2005, have all its wooden furniture sourced from FSC-certified forests – has been met.

Because of the very limited supply of other wood from FSC-certified natural forests in Asia, TFT helped ScanCom – one of its members – to start using eucalyptus that was readily available from FSC-certified plantations. This required different design and manufacturing techniques, and bringing this new product to the market. The change over has been successful, and several of ScanCom's competitors have followed suit, reducing pressure on natural forests.

TFT, which helps build capacity and leadership skills in forest ministries and companies in the tropics, is also working with other member companies to expand FSC-certification of natural forests in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Vietnam.

66 – Croatia (2001)

Expansion of the protected area network including creation of Sjeverni Velebit National Park

Significant progress

A total of 224,000 hectares of new protected areas, including the Sjeverni Velebit National Park, have been created to date. Now, alongside the local non-governmental organization Green Action, WWF is working with the government on a management plan for all the protected areas in the Velebit region; to harmonize all national legislation relevant to natural resource management and to identify further high priority sites for protection.

In the Lastovo Islands, along the Dalmatian coast, WWF and the Croatian Government are planning to create a combined 19,000 hectare forest and marine protected area.

“Croatia's Gift to the Earth generated great interest and stakeholder involvement from the national to local levels, and has helped develop government interest in WWF's goals. But a change of government will require fresh efforts if this is to be maintained.” **Paolo Lombardi, WWF-Mediterranean Programme Office.**





67 – Bolivia (2001)
Designation of Wetlands of International Importance

On target

The Bolivian section of the Pantanal together with the Palmar de las Islas-Salinas de San José, and Bañados del Izogog-Rio Parapeti wetland systems have been designated as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. These newly protected sites, which provide significant freshwater reserves for their surrounding communities, are home to healthy populations of flora and fauna, including the jaguar, giant river otter and hyacinth macaw, which are threatened in other parts of Bolivia.

”Municipal authorities, indigenous communities, farmers and private land-owners have all shown interest and hope as well as commitment to participate in the conservation of these ecosystems, while continuing to access natural resources in a sustainable way.” **Roger Landivar, WWF-Bolivia.**

68 – Canada, British Columbia (2001)
FSC-certification of 87,000 hectares of temperate rainforest in Canada

On target

The original target has been achieved. And the commitment of the part-community owned lisaak Forest Resource company to the longterm protection and sustainable management of Clayquot Sound’s globally significant coastal temperate rainforest is continuing.

lisaak is now working with partners including WWF, local stakeholders and other local resource-based companies to increase the FSC-certification by a further 61,000 hectares to cover 60 percent of Clayquot Sound.

Within the forests it manages, lisaak is also keen to secure the conservation of 10,000 pristine hectares identified by First Nations as *eehmiss*. Though not formally protected they are culturally and biologically important.

69 – United States of America, Florida (2001)
Establishment of the Tortuga Marine Reserve

On target

The 67,200 hectare reserve has been established in the waters of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Although delayed, implementation of the 1,600 hectares within the dry Tortugas National Park is close to resolution.

The collaborative and consensus-based model developed here to help local stakeholders make design and management decisions has been adapted and used elsewhere – in the Bering Sea, Gulf of California, and the Pribilof Islands. It aims to help small communities better conserve habitats and species through marine

protected areas and improved fisheries management.

70 – United Kingdom (2001)
FSC-certification of the entire state forest and promotion of sustainable forest management

On target

FSC-certification of the entire 800,000 hectare state forest has helped increase certification in the UK to 1.2 million hectares out of a total woodland estate of 2.8 million hectares. Naturally Wood – the sustainability strategy for the UK forest industry, published in 2004 – includes the aim of further increasing FSC-certification to 60 percent of all UK woodlands.

The Forestry Commission has also achieved multi-stakeholder acceptance of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) as the national certification standard recognized by the FSC. Now it is exploring ways to remove obstacles preventing owners of small woodlands – 100 hectares and less – from gaining certification.

Progress in achieving environmentally responsible timber and paper procurement by the government sector has been less successful.

71 – China (2002)
Safeguarding all China’s natural wetlands

On target

The China National Wetlands Plan was released in 2001 with ambitious conservation objectives including an overall commitment to create 160 wetland reserves protecting 4 million hectares and sustainably managing a further 20 million hectares by 2010.

The Plan’s 2005 revision increases the conservation targets, but puts back the date for their achievement. Aims for completion by 2030 include: to have doubled the number of nature reserves to 643, covering 90 percent of China’s total natural wetland area; to have restored 1.5 million hectares of wetland; and to designate a further 80 million hectares as wetlands of international importance. A total of 23 such Ramsar sites have already been designated, bringing protection to more than 3 million hectares.

72 – Bolivia (2002)
The Bolivian Forestry Chamber commits to FSC-certification of 3 million hectares

On target

To date 1.9 million hectares of tropical forest has been FSC-certified, maintaining Bolivia as a world leader in the independent certification and sustainable management of tropical forests.



73 – Finland (2002)
Protection programme to address major threats to the northern Baltic

Significant progress

The Finnish Government is making use of a WWF-Finland public survey to assess overall progress. In several areas, such as maritime safety and oil-spill response and recovery, progress is good – Finland was active in the move to have the Baltic declared a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA), as a form of protection against marine accidents. But in others, including combating diffuse pollution from agriculture, progress is less encouraging.

Additionally WWF and the government are also cooperating in the identification of prioritizing natural sites for protection. A new protected area is planned for the Ekenas Archipelago.

“Recognition of the Gift to the Earth has helped draw attention to the threats facing the Baltic Sea, challenging the government and stakeholders to cooperate in addressing them strategically.” **Anita Mäkinen, WWF-Finland**

74 – Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea (2002)
Tri-National Wetlands Initiative to collaboratively manage 3 million hectares of wetlands

Significant progress

WWF is continuing to promote this initiative – set back by the Bali bombing. Recently interest by the three governments has been reawakened, a new activity plan has been developed and a meeting of the core parties scheduled. Meanwhile the Indonesian Government in Papua has pledged to complete Ramsar designation of the Wasur National Park.

WWF is seeking to secure the AU\$250,000 pledged for the initiative by the Australian Government on the announcement of this Gift to the Earth.

75 – Russia, Amur Region (2002)
Increase protection to ten percent of the territory

On target

“I believe that despite the urgent daily pressures we are facing worldwide, we should never forget the long-term future of our planet”, said Governor Leonid Korotkov.

The recent addition of 1.4 million hectares increases the Amur’s protected area network to 3.6 million hectares or ten percent of the territory. The areas include forests of outstanding biological significance conserving key species such as the oriental white stork and Japanese crane. And now the government plans to bring an additional 853,000 hectares under protection.

One of the world’s longest rivers, the Amur forms a natural frontier between Russia and China. Still largely undamaged, it is threatened by development proposals, including damming. WWF is particularly active in this Amur-Heilong priority ecoregion, promoting transboundary protected areas and cooperative management.

“The recognition of the Gift to the Earth has helped build bridges with key authorities, particularly the Government of Amur Region, leading to increased conservation commitment and funding.” **Igor Chestin, WWF-Russia**

76 – Russia, Primorsky Region (2002)
Create 1.8 million hectares of new protected areas by 2005 to achieve a total protected area coverage of 18 percent

Significant progress

The forests of Primorsky are home to significant populations of highly threatened species such as the Far Eastern leopard and Siberian tiger.

The Primorsky government had fulfilled more than half the pledge, adding 955,765 hectares to the national protected area estate, taking it to 12.5 percent of the region. Since a change of administration however, there has been little further progress.

77 – Portugal, Azores (2002)
Establish marine protected areas to safeguard two hydrothermal vents and the important associated life forms

Significant progress

The Lucky Strike and Menez Gwen seamounts are protected as a result of the process developed around the recognition of this Gift to the Earth, including a workshop of leading marine scientists. While this protection is not yet signed into law, decentralization of government functions in Portugal under the new government may help speed this process.

The Gift to the Earth helped build awareness of the importance of hydrothermal vents and the need to act urgently to protect them. The Gift also helped encourage other European Union countries to create marine protected areas in their waters.

The process for determining action is being used elsewhere – for example the Rainbow Vent outside the Azores EEZ. Collaboration has also been forged between WWF and the Government of the Azores, recently leading to cooperation to prevent the waters of the Azores being opened to the European Union fishing fleet. This in turn is leading to discussions on the conservation of deep-water ecosystems.

“The positive spin-offs of this Gift to the Earth are almost overwhelming, and far outweigh the slowness of achieving full legal protection for the vents”. **Stephan Lutter, WWF-North East Atlantic Marine Ecoregion**

FOLLOWING ON FROM THE GIFT TO THE EARTH INITIATIVE IN WAMER IN 2001 (see GttE 63 and 64) a similar process was initiated in Mozambique in 2002, helping to achieve a number of marine conservation successes.

78 – Mozambique (2002)
Increasing protection of the Bazaruto Archipelago National Park to 140,000 hectares

On target

The Bazaruto Archipelago National Park has been increased to 1,400 km², and the management plan approved. However, private sector development is taking place in the national park contrary to the management plan, and WWF is in contact with the government to address this issue.

“At the ceremony to mark this Gift to the Earth, President Chissano invited WWF to cooperate on further marine protected area creation and implementation. This has led to the creation of more marine protected areas.” **Helena Motta, WWF-Mozambique Project Office**

79 – Mozambique (2002)
Creation of the 750,000 hectare Quirimbas National Park

On target

The creation of the 750,000 hectare national park – of which 150,000 hectares are a marine area – has been announced, and its management plan approved, with implementation funding committed by the French development agencies AFD and FFEM. The largest MPA in the western Indian ocean, the park protects important mangroves and coastal forests, and a fascinating array of species including dugong, whales, elephants, buffalo, hunting dog and leopard.

There is strong community support for the park, particularly to deal with human/elephant conflict, to protect the sustainability of local fisheries, and to build employment opportunities by attracting tourism.

The recognition of these two Gifts to the Earth have also helped progress on other conservation goals including the compulsory use of turtle excluder devices in shrimp nets, wetlands protection, and efforts to develop a sustainable fisheries agreement between Mozambique and European Union. There is also strong interest both from local and national governments to establish the new Primeiras and Secundas National Park in central Mozambique – a marine park which could be the largest on Africa’s east coast.

80 – Mexico (2002)
Recognition of community protected areas and sustainable management of 42,000 hectares of forest

Significant progress

Eight communities from Mexico’s Pacific coast and Sierra Norte in Oaxaca were honoured for their innovative community-

based approach to protection and sustainable management in Community Protected Areas. Several mechanisms to provide technical support and funding for the ecosystem’s goods and services are being developed in cooperation with the communities and the government.

The initiative is already being replicated. Just in the area where WWF is working a further 50,000 hectares of community-managed forest has joined the scheme, and several proposals have been received from elsewhere.

This initiative was presented at the 2003 World Parks Congress in Durban, resulting in the Durban Agreement recognizing the importance of promoting the participation of local communities and indigenous peoples in the establishment of protected areas, both for the conservation of biodiversity and the reduction of poverty.

81 – Ecuador (2002)
Establishment of ecological corridors as community protected areas to link two National Parks

On target

The local governments and rural communities of Baños, Mera and Palora in central Ecuador agreed to protect and sustainably manage a 42,000 hectare ecological corridor linking the Llanganates and Sangay National Parks. The corridor will aid the dispersal of plants and animals including the Andean bear and tapir, as well as the jaguar. Within it, 245 bird species have already been recorded.

The corridor also contains 15 tributaries of the Pastaza river, important for maintaining water quality and availability for many downstream users.

82 – United Arab Emirates (2003)
Creation of the Qarnein Island Protected Area

On target

At the personal initiative of HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayel Al Nahyan, the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Qarnein Island became the first internationally-recognized marine protected area in the Arabian Gulf. This initiative protects the breeding habitats of the endangered hawksbill and green turtles, 20,000 breeding pairs of lesser crested terns, and bridge terns, white-cheeked terns and Saunders little terns.

The creation of the Qarnein Island marine protected area is expected to lead to the designation of further marine protected areas in the UAE and elsewhere in the Arabian Gulf.



83 – China (2003)

Establish the Qinling mountain range as a protected area network for the giant panda, with 12 new reserves and 5 ecological corridors

On target

The increased protected area, now totaling 313,300 hectares, and the 65,369 hectares of corridors linking isolated panda populations, is a huge boost both for panda conservation and forest protection. This initiative greatly helps ensure the viability of the giant panda population in the Qinling Mountains.

Seven new reserves and five ecological corridors linking them have been established, and the Shaanxi Forest Department has made a formal commitment to create the remaining five reserves within the next two years.

84 – Canada (2003)

The establishment of a viable, representative protected areas network in the North West Territories' Mackenzie Valley

On target

The Deh Cho First Nations and the Government of Canada have agreed to withdraw over 10 million hectares in the North West Territories' Mackenzie Valley from development for at least five years to enable the establishment of this network.

The initial five-year protection period is still intact, and longer-term measures are in place through the North West Territories protected area process, and the completion of the Deh Cho land-use plan. At this stage the majority of the more than 10 million hectares under permanent or interim protection is proposed to be declared as conservation or protected areas.

The 'Conservation First' approach – freezing development in priority natural areas until a full stakeholder process identifies important cultural, sacred and biological sites and integrates these into a land-use plan – is now being followed in the Sahtu region to the north.

85 – Sweden (2003)

Sveaskog commits to set aside 20 percent of its 3.5 million hectares of forest for conservation

On target

Sveaskog (formerly AssiDomän) continues to lead the world in implementing the highest standards of sustainable forest management, using FSC principles. The company is already halfway through a new assessment, using WWF's High Conservation Value Forest methodology to identify which areas of forest are important for conservation and which can be sustainably logged. This will result in 20 percent of the production forest being set aside for conservation-based management, a total of 700,000 hectares. Of this, 175,000 hectares – priority conservation landscapes

throughout Sweden – will be turned into 34 eco-parks that will combine forest protection and restoration. WWF estimates that 20 percent is the minimum amount necessary to be set aside in a boreal forest if it is to maintain biodiversity values.

Sveaskog's commitment is setting an example to other Swedish forest owners, and further afield in the Baltic republics and south east Europe.

86 – Norway (2003)

Protection of cold water coral reefs including the Røst Reef – the largest known on Earth

On target

Although full protection for the Røst Reef is still pending, it is now protected from its most dangerous threat, bottom trawling. Overall, reef protection in Norway is moving in a very positive direction, and Norway is taking a lead internationally on this urgent issue. The country's national reef policy is likely to be published in 2005, with several reefs, including Røst, due to be formally protected in 2007.

Support for protection of coral reefs has come from Norway's fishing industry, together with WWF and other environmental groups. The industry support, together with the fragility of cold-water reefs, has prompted the government to consider making the reef and its surroundings a 'petroleum-free zone' – preventing oil and gas exploitation – which would set an important precedent. This will be considered as part of the management plan for the Barents Sea.

"The recognition of this Gift to the Earth has had a massive influence on the protection of cold-water coral reefs and other deep-water communities both in, and far beyond, Norway. It has highlighted the need for urgent action in a number of intergovernmental decision-making fora, and started a cascade of follow-up steps. And the Minister of Fisheries used recognition of Gift to the Earth to announce protection for two additional reefs in southern Norway." **Andreas Tveteras, WWF-Norway**





87 – Madagascar (2003)

Local communities and authorities cooperate with the Malagasy Government to conserve two sacred forests in the spiny forest ecoregion

On target

The Gift to the Earth ceremony recognized the sacred status of the Sakoantovo and Vohimasio forests for the Mahafaly and Tandroy communities, and reinforced the value of sacred forests to other neighbouring communities.

The event was also used to recognize the first transfer of land on the Mahafaly plateau for community management of a sacred forest, and to help progress community agreement to expand the 43,000 hectare Tsimanempetsotsa National Park to over 200,000 hectares.

Following this Gift to the Earth there is increased recognition of the value of sacred forests in Madagascar. Requests have been made for more land transfers for local management, and for assistance in planning the community management of sacred forests. There is also increased engagement with, and support from, local leaders and officials for the national park expansion. But sacred forests are also a sensitive subject, and the event highlighted several lessons in how to handle local issues.

88 – Kazakhstan (2003)

Increasing the protected area network by 832,000 hectares, including creation of the 637,000 hectare Katon-Karagai National Park

On target

Since the recognition of this Gift, 737,000 hectares have been added to the estate. The 637,000 hectare Katon-Karagai National Park has been established protecting part of the sacred Belukha Mountain – a UNESCO World Heritage site (see GtE 23). However, protected area coverage in Kazakhstan is still low, at under two percent of the country.

The Kazak Gift to the Earth has prompted additional conservation initiatives in other Central Asian Republics.

89 – South Pacific (2003)

Eleven South Pacific nations establish whale sanctuaries in their waters

Significant progress

At least 12 whale species, including the blue, sperm, fin and sei whales, will benefit from the protection offered by the 11 South Pacific nations which declared their waters to be whale sanctuaries at a 2003 Pacific Forum meeting in New Zealand.

The Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Niue, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Australia and New Zealand have either already declared their Exclusive Economic Zones as whale sanctuaries or are taking action to do so through national legislation.

Together, the sanctuaries add up to 28,500 km² of ocean and create a blueprint both for whale conservation and shared management of marine resources throughout the world.

At the celebrations marking the Gift to the Earth, a whale task force was launched to mobilize funding to help with the design, implementation and management of whale sanctuaries; to encourage other Pacific nations to join the initiative; and to promote high standards for whale watching, enabling coastal communities to benefit from ecotourism. Funding has not yet been secured, but a strong partnership has since developed between the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, International Fund for Animal Welfare, WWF, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the South Pacific Whale Research Consortium.

90 – Australia (2003)

Creation of the 6.5 million hectare Heard Island and McDonald Islands fully protected marine reserve in the Southern Ocean

On target

A key purpose in establishing the Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) marine reserve – at the time it was the world's largest marine protected area (MPA) – was to help prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which was doing severe damage to the fishery around the islands. Follow-up to the MPA establishment requires a scientific programme to inform the management plan. Both were delayed due to weather conditions, but are back on track.

New developments include Australia's membership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's High Seas Task Force; collaboration with France on scientific programmes and measures to stamp out IUU fishing between HIMI and the French Kerguelen plateau; and resources for the pursuit of IUU vessels.

“Certainly this has been a very positive Gift to the Earth. The recognition by WWF has helped convince the Australian Government and fishing industry that positive outcomes can be negotiated and that WWF is a good partner in these discussions. It has helped bring industry to the table for high-seas regulation and IUU fishing issues, and has leveraged additional government attention.”
Marg Moore, WWF-Australia



91 – Mozambique (2003)

Join the Ramsar Convention and designate the Marromeu Complex in the Zambezi River delta as a Wetland of International Importance

On target

In 2004 Mozambique ratified the Ramsar Convention and designated the 700,000 hectare Marromeu Complex within the Zambezi River delta a Wetland of International Importance. The Mozambique Government has also created a national wetlands committee, which is developing a management plan for the area. But further funding will be needed for its finalization and implementation.

The Zambezi delta is an area of outstanding natural beauty. It contains Mozambique's largest concentrations of waterbirds, including three to four percent of the world's wattled crane population, plus crowned crane, several stork species and the largest white pelican breeding colony in southern Africa. The wetland contains one-third of the country's mangroves – essential for the sustainable productivity of one of Mozambique's largest sources of foreign exchange, its wild-caught shrimp industry.

92 – Madagascar (2003)

Tripling the island's protected area coverage

On target

To great applause, the President of Madagascar Marc Ravalomanana announced at the 2003 World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, a commitment to triple his country's network of protected areas by 2008 – from 1.7 million hectares to 6 million hectares in just five years. This commitment is a tremendous boost to efforts to protect and sustainably manage the unique biodiversity of this fabled island.

Led by the 'Durban Vision' group, a preliminary scientific identification of future protected areas has been completed, and by-laws passed to suspend mining and logging in priority areas.

93 – Senegal (2003)

Creation of four new marine protected areas (MPAs) and the expansion of the MPA network

On target

The creation process actively involved local communities, and has been instrumental in strengthening collaboration between the environment and fisheries ministries, national and international non-governmental organizations, research institutes and the media. The four new MPAs cover an area of 96,000 hectares. (see also GtE 63 and 64)

"The Gift to the Earth has helped set in motion useful new dynamics in Senegal, channeling all the marine and coastal stakeholders into a common objective. It has also proven highly inspiring for neighbouring countries like Cap Verde

and Guinea which are currently initiating a similar stakeholder-based MPA creation. It is hoped to be able to recognize as a Gift to the Earth new MPAs in Cap Verde and Guinea." **Papa Samba Diouf, WWF-West African Marine Ecoregion**

In a national celebration of this Gift to the Earth in Senegal in July 2005, several further MPA commitments were announced by President Wade and fisheries ministers from other WAMER countries.

94 – China (2004)

Development, approval and implementation of the National Environmental Educational Guidelines

Significant progress

The Ministry of Education gave final approval for the Guidelines, and the go ahead for the launch of the third phase of the Environmental Education Initiative. To date the initiative has reached more than 490,000 primary and secondary schools and over 200 million school children.

Due to a shortage of funds it has been necessary to delay the start of the third phase, including introducing the Guidelines to teachers nationwide.

95 – Madagascar (2004)

Development of a National Wetlands Strategy and designation of more than one million hectares of Ramsar sites

On target

Stakeholders have validated the National Wetlands Strategy, and this is awaiting government approval and adoption as a government decree. In all, 785,593 hectares have been designated as Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, with further sites in development.

"Awareness of the importance of freshwater conservation is increasing among local people, conservationists and government, and the Gift to the Earth event contributed to this." **Jean-Paul Paddock, WWF-Madagascar**

96 – South Africa (2004)

Protection of 20 percent of the country's coastline, including creation of nine new marine protected areas (MPAs)

On target

The declaration of four new MPAs takes South Africa's network up from 11 percent to 18 percent of its coastline. A fifth large MPA, designed to help protect the important hake fishery on the west coast, is undergoing further stakeholder consultation to obtain the widest possible support.

A further four MPAs are planned, which will bring protection to substantial areas of the continental shelf and extend into the country's Exclusive Economic Zone, and also to the Southern Ocean around South Africa's Prince Edward Islands. The declaration of these MPAs will represent a significant achievement and is part of the government's commitment to protect its marine resources and biodiversity.

The declaration and plans for additional MPAs were stimulated by a WWF-South Africa study of the effectiveness of the existing MPA network. An outcome was a recognition of the need for training MPA managers, which WWF is now addressing with the marine management authorities.

"The Gift to the Earth provided an opportunity to bring the various stakeholders together, especially representatives of the fishing industry. The Environment Minister used the platform to announce the government's intention to create one of the world's biggest MPAs around the Prince Edward Islands, where illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing has caused huge damage to the toothfish fishery – an example of win-win for conservation and sustainable management with government, the fishing industry and WWF all cooperating for the common good." **Deon Nel, WWF-South Africa**

97 – Indonesia (2004)

Establishment of 1.3 million hectares of new protected areas and commitment to further improve management effectiveness

On target

This achievement was announced at the World Conservation Union (IUCN) conference in Thailand in November 2004, together with a commitment by government to establish a further 1 million hectares of new protected areas in 2005.

Nine new protected areas were created in 2004, totaling 1.3 million hectares – an area one-third the size of Switzerland. These include the 568,700 hectare Sebangau National Park (NP), vital for protecting lowland tropical forest and a large population of orangutans; the 362,605 hectare Togean Islands NP; and the 38,576 hectare Tesso Nilo NP, in Sumatra's Riau province, creating the core of a wider area to protect the largest surviving block of exceptionally biodiverse lowland forest on the once densely-forested island. Tesso Nilo also shelters a population of Asian elephant.

"The announcement not only of the creation in 2004 of 1.3 million hectares of new protected areas, but also the commitment for a further 1 million hectares, is a huge boost to efforts to save the rapidly shrinking rainforests of Indonesia. Spread across the archipelago, the new national parks protect a huge variety of biodiversity, especially the endangered Sumatran tiger, rhino and elephant, and the orangutan." **Chandra Kirana, WWF-Indonesia**

98 – Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of Congo (2005)

Ensure the survival of the world's second largest surviving area of tropical forest through protection and sustainable management

On target

Begun at the Yaoundé Summit in Cameroon in 1999 (see also GtE 27, 38, and 41), this precedent-setting initiative for forest conservation on a huge scale took on a powerful new shape at the 2005 Brazzaville Summit. Here, it was announced that 4.5 million hectares of new and upgraded forest protected areas (FPAs) had been created since 1999. Then a treaty and strategic plan were signed by the seven countries committing them to progressive forest conservation policies with ambitious targets for the next five years.

This COMIFAC treaty is Africa's first regional accord for forest conservation. In addition, two major tri-national FPA agreements were signed which bring almost 10 percent of the Congo basin forests under joint conservation management.

The Gift to the Earth platform provided a number of additional opportunities for conservation announcements. Three other countries – Burundi, Rwanda and São Tomé et Príncipe – also joined the regional COMIFAC conservation treaty, and the Democratic Republic of Congo announced a commitment to double its protected area network to 15 percent of forest cover. The Government of Italy announced a debt-forgiveness package for central African countries of about Euro 700 million, which will be converted into Debt-for-Nature agreements.



99 – Peru (2005)

Creation of the 2.5 million hectare Alto Purus National Park and the 202,000 hectare Purus Communal Reserve for indigenous peoples, together with measures to counter illegal logging and modernize the forest sector

On target

The creation of these new protected areas is a huge boost both for the protection of the Amazon forest, and for the rights and dignity of those indigenous people who choose to live in voluntary isolation.

Located in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, the Purus watershed harbours outstanding biodiversity and unique ecological and evolutionary processes. High rainfall, soaring humidity, complex topography and meandering river systems have resulted in a mosaic of habitats which support highly diverse and abundant communities of mammals, butterflies, fish and birds.

This protected area complex has been negotiated with indigenous peoples' organizations, government, WWF and other non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders, and is a tribute to a very careful and sensitive process. A special commission will propose a legal framework for the creation and administration of territorial reserves for indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in the Peruvian Amazon.

Further, the forest sector is being modernized through independent certification of sustainable forest management and chain of custody. A special presidential commission has been established to shut down illegal logging which both destroys the forest and possibilities of sustainable use, and causes huge financial losses to the government.



100 – Russia, Krasnoyarsk Region (2005)

Establishment of more than 3 million hectares of new protected areas by 2007

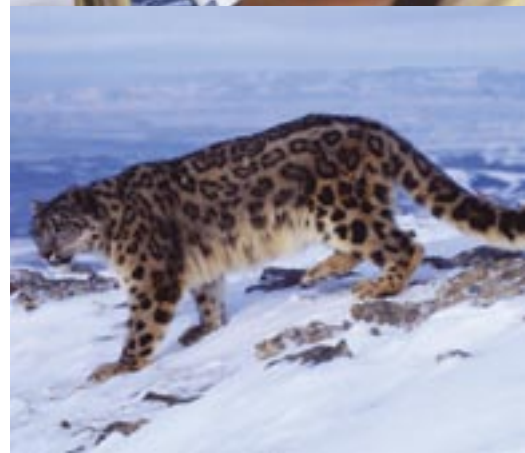
On target

The 100th Gift to the Earth was marked by the visit to Krasnoyarsk Region of HRH Prince Henrik of Denmark, founder and patron of WWF-Denmark. On 17 May 2005, a Gift to the Earth celebration was held in Krasnoyarsk to announce the commitment to establish more than 3 million hectares of new protected area, doubling the coverage to 6.2 million hectares.

Prince Henrik presented Governor Khloponin with the Gift to the Earth certificate, and congratulated him on having already placed 700,000 hectares under protection. This was followed by a field trip to visit the snow-capped peaks of the newly-created Ergaki Nature Park. The extensive taiga forests of the Krasnoyarsk region – at the geographic heart of Russia – is home to many charismatic species including the lynx, wolf, brown bear, wolverine, reindeer, elk, and important raptors such as the golden and white-tailed eagles.

Newly joined with the Taymir and Evenk regions, Krasnoyarsk is Russia's largest region, stretching from close to the border with China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan to the Arctic Sea. A large proportion of Krasnoyarsk's protected area commitment is within WWF's priority Altai-Sayan ecoregion, reinforcing the importance of this initiative.

Krasnoyarsk's commitment is the 14th Gift to the Earth to be recognized in Russia. As the first Gift to the Earth was celebrated in Russia's Sakha Republic, followed by a series of powerful commitments throughout the Russian Federation, it was particularly apt to return to Russia to celebrate the 100th Gift.





From one to one hundred...

The conservation successes recognized as Gifts to the Earth in Russia's regions over the past nine years exemplify how joint efforts of governments and civil society can lead to conservation achievements such as the establishment of protected areas. More than 50 million hectares of new protected areas have been created in less than 10 years. All of us from WWF are delighted to have assisted.

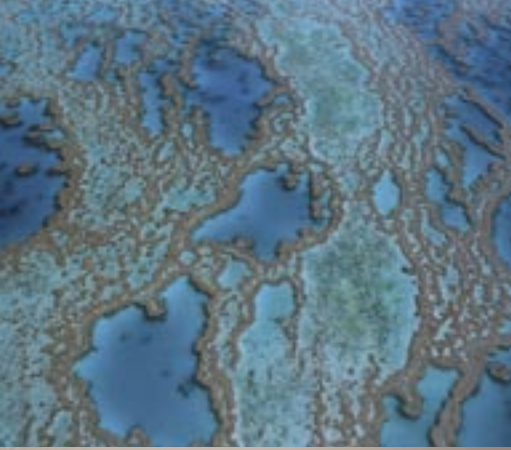
Building partnerships and cooperation are WWF's core working principles. We apply them in all our work, in the conservation of endangered species, sustainable forestry and fisheries, or in our attempts to mitigate climate change, and in formulating environmental policies.

WWF-Russia is committed to working with our national government in implementing its plan for the establishment of nine new strict protected areas and 12 national parks by 2011. Meanwhile, WWF sees the 100th Gift to the Earth as a very important landmark, which should inspire other governments and business leaders to contribute to the conservation of nature around the world – for a living planet!

Igor Chestin
CEO WWF-Russia

Sacred Gifts

Gifts to the Earth sparked the idea of working with the world's faiths – a huge range of organizations and people sharing many similar beliefs in the imperative for a healthy environment – to recognize positive conservation actions. In Kathmandu in 2000, 26 Sacred Gifts for a Living Planet were announced with the Alliance for Religions and Conservation (ARC). Several of these have developed into larger and lasting commitments.



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China	Southern Africa (Zimbabwe)
Colombia	South Pacific (Fiji)
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A hope for the future

Globally, the increase in protected area coverage highlighted in this brochure represents a hugely important contribution towards the targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its recently agreed Programme of Work on protected areas – particularly for WWF’s priority ecoregions.

The overarching target is to establish viable, representative networks of effectively managed protected areas – by 2010 for terrestrial, and by 2012 for marine biomes.

Similarly, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals challenge us all to move to a more equitable and sustainable world. The goal that specifically targets the environment, Goal 7, calls for the ‘integration of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; and the reversal of loss of environmental resources’ and for ‘the reduction by half of the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water’. While these targets are implicit in the first 100 Gifts to the Earth, they can also act as a signpost or a focus for future.

And combating climate change remains the greatest environmental challenge for us all.

The clarion call of the Millennium Development Goals provides a vision, and attainable targets, while the CBD Programme of Work provides WWF and its partners with a clear map for how to advance, particularly for protected area coverage. With CBD Conferences of the Parties being held every two years, and United Nations Special Sessions every five, these represent opportunities for announcements of initiatives which can be recognized as Gifts to the Earth.


Chief Emeka Anyaoku
President, WWF International



100

Gifts to the Earth

1996 - 2005

WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- Conserving the world's biological diversity;
- Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and
- Reducing pollution and wasteful consumption.

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