Welcome

Once again it is a pleasure for me to welcome you to this report on the work of UNEP’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre. During the 15 years that UNEP and WCMC have been working together, UNEP has come to rely increasingly on the Centre for biodiversity assessments, analyses and information support. The time has now come to build on this scientific and technical work by engaging UNEP-WCMC more fully in UNEP’s programme for implementing biodiversity policy.

What does this mean in practice? One of the key constraints on environmentally sound development is lack of manpower, UNEP is looking at options for becoming more involved in capacity building to address this problem, and UNEP-WCMC has much to offer. By identifying biodiversity centres of excellence around the world and forging links through information exchange, training and technical support, the Centre can play a wider role at the regional level. Execution of some of UNEP’s global initiatives, for example in coral reefs, will also increasingly fall to UNEP-WCMC, where the critical mass of international expertise enables UNEP to play its full role in achieving the biodiversity targets set at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The excellent work of WCMC as a part of UNEP confirms the value of our policy of building links with centres of excellence around the world. Just as cultural and biological diversity strengthen and bring flexibility to society and ecosystems respectively, diversity within UNEP will enable us to reach our goals efficiently and effectively.

Klaus Toepfer
Executive Director, UNEP

Foreword

UNEP-WCMC Mission: To promote wiser decisions and a sustainable future through knowledge about conservation and sustainable management of the living world

2002 was an important and busy year for all those involved in environment and development, and UNEP-WCMC was no exception. The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development saw publication of the Centre’s World Atlas of Biodiversity, a major overview of our knowledge on the condition of the living world. The research for the 340 page book helped us to contribute extensively to the UN Secretary-General’s report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management, and positions the Centre well to contribute to measuring progress towards achieving the 2010 target for a significant reduction in biodiversity loss.

2002 was the International Year of Mountains, culminating in an international summit meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The Centre took the lead for UNEP and, in close co-operation with UNEP’s European Regional Office, where our Mountains Programme is located, we were honoured to provide technical support to the international summit. Mountain Watch, the first overview of the ecological condition of mountains and the human pressures upon them, was launched and received widespread support in raising mountain issues on the environmental agenda. We will continue our work on mountains and embark on new initiatives to support the 2003 International Year of Freshwater.

It was a great pleasure to launch our UNEP-WCMC Chevening Scholarships in Biodiversity this year. With the generous support of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and several private sector donors, we now have scholars from Armenia, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, the Maldives, Mongolia and Tanzania working for 12 months on topics from turtles to great apes, coral reefs to biodiversity conventions. The Centre expects to continue the scheme year on year and are always interested to hear from postgraduates who would like to work on the interface between biodiversity research and policy.

2003 brings new challenges and opportunities for the Centre and its staff. At the UNEP Governing Council we will launch a new exposition on biodiversity, highlighting our growing role as UNEP’s information and policy implementation centre on all aspects of living resources. We are also looking forward to playing a full part in the Durban World Parks Congress, where new assessments of the world’s protected area system will be a major input.

Special thanks go to those who have given their time to advise and guide the Centre in building its direction and strategies for the future. In particular, I would like to thank the Board of Trustees of WCMC 2000 and their Chairman, Sir Rudolph Agnew, and the Centre’s Scientific Advisory Council chaired by Dr Cristián Samper.

In closing I should like to express my sincere thanks to the many individuals and organisations that have supported our programmes and projects during the year. We look forward to continuing our co-operation with you into 2003 and beyond.

Mark Collins
Director, UNEP-WCMC
Assessment & Early Warning

Objective: To analyse the state of global biodiversity, assess trends and provide early warning of emerging threats in support of international cooperation and action

World Atlas of Biodiversity
Policy makers involved in strategic planning for the conservation and management of important habitats will be able to use this unique print and web resource to access comprehensive baseline data. It offers a view of global biodiversity, collated from UNEP-WCMC’s research and independent reports, that allows users to create their own maps via the UNEP-WCMC website. The Atlas thus updates the work initiated by the Earth Summit in 1992. (See Publications section for details.)

Mountains
Mountain Watch was launched for the culmination of the International Year of Mountains at the summit meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. It breaks new ground in providing a highly visual, map-based overview of the ecological and social values of mountain ecosystems, the pressures they face, and case studies from around the world of approaches to sustainable development in mountain areas. (See Publications section for details.)

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)
UNEP-WCMC plays a key role in the MA as the technical support unit to the Condition Working Group. In addition, the Centre recruited the MA data coordinator, and now oversees data use and management in the MA. UNEP-WCMC staff also contribute to the condition, scenarios and sub-global MA activities, and to the first formal product of the MA, People and Ecosystems: a Framework for Assessment and Action, to be published in 2003.

World Atlas of Seagrasses
This atlas will provide information on the distribution and status of an ecosystem whose importance for subsistence communities and productivity for fisheries has, until recently, been unappreciated. It will be launched in the first half of 2003 and marks a major international collaboration to shape a clear agenda for seagrass ecosystem conservation.

Coral Reefs
UNEP-WCMC hosts the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN), a joint programme with the International Coral Reef Initiative. In 2002, the Centre made several key contributions to ICRAN’s activities, including a map-based analysis of reefs, mangroves and seagrass sites identified by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. During the year, as a result of a new collaboration, the Centre developed a semi-automatic process for data extraction from the Admiralty marine charts. In 2003, UNEP’s Coral Reef Policy Unit will relocate to UNEP-WCMC in Cambridge, thus increasing the Centre’s role in policy implementation.

Global Marine Aquarium Database
This resource, compiled with the assistance of the Marine Aquarium Council and many commercial traders, provides access to 500,000 records of trade in live aquarium species. The aim is to develop a certification system for reputable aquarists worldwide to promote sustainable collection methods. More than a million tropical fish are traded annually to the UK alone, and overall the trade has major environmental impact on fragile habitats. UNEP-WCMC’s database is freely accessible on the website and offers information on the level and species involved in the marine trade.

Great Apes Survival Project (GrASP)
Our closest relatives, the great apes – and especially gorillas and pygmy chimpanzees – are under imminent threat of extinction in the wild. To address this, UNEP is leading a long-term partnership between international agencies and governments to reduce the impact of development on ape habitats and populations. The Centre published new analyses of the impact of infrastructure development on ape populations in The Great Apes – The Road Ahead, launched at the Johannesburg World Summit. A World Atlas of Great Apes is now planned for release in 2003/4.

Objective: To analyse the state of global biodiversity, assess trends and provide early warning of emerging threats in support of international cooperation and action
Conventions & Policy Support

Objective: To support the development and implementation of international agreements and programmes that promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable management

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
Support to the CBD has become an important cornerstone of our activities. The Centre provided data to the CBD’s expert groups on forest biological diversity and dry and sub-humid lands as well as helping to prepare materials for intergovernmental debates on protected areas and on information access and sharing (Clearing House Mechanism).

At a regional workshop, run by UNEP-WCMC to review CBD implementation, seven Central American governments confirmed the significance of the Centre’s Darwin Initiative-funded project in helping national agencies to improve reporting on their actions taken in response to CBD decisions. The CBD welcomed the methodology and other regions were encouraged to adopt it.

UNEP-WCMC continued implementing the GEF project on Biodiversity Indicators for National Use with partners in Ecuador, Kenya, the Philippines and Ukraine, developing indicators for national policy makers. In conjunction with the UK’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Centre prepared a review of international nature conservation information systems to identify how they can be used in biodiversity policy development and implementation.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

The Centre continues to manage the CITES Trade Database and to provide support services for the CITES Secretariat and Parties. The CITES conference adopted the Centre’s Checklist of CITES Species as its official list, a valued resource for implementing agencies everywhere. New online tools were developed to allow more sophisticated analyses of wildlife trade data during 2002 and, next year, the CITES Trade Database will be upgraded to facilitate data access and analysis by remote users.

Caribbean countries and agencies invited the Centre to develop a distributed exchange mechanism for data on marine turtles to support consultations on sustainable use policy. A similar approach is now being used for marine mammals as a contribution to the development of an Atlas of Marine Mammals.

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
The Centre has developed an innovative and cutting-edge Information Management System for the CMS, incorporating powerful new products to link with key databases around the world. The system integrates information reported to the Convention with that from expert networks to provide a one-stop-shop of information on CMS-listed species. The Centre has worked closely with the CMS Secretariat to develop syntheses of nationally reported actions to implement the CMS and the various related agreements on birds, bats, turtles and small cetaceans.

World Heritage Convention
The Centre has recently joined the IUCN World Heritage Evaluation Panel (whose annual recommendations go to UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee), thereby extending its role and support to IUCN WCFA and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in the evaluation of World Heritage written nominations for natural and mixed sites.

World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)

Major preparations began to update the UN List of Protected Areas and produce the State of the World Protected Areas Report for the 2003 World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa and the CBD Conference of Parties in 2004. The Centre made new agreements with IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas and a consortium of international organisations for maintaining the WDPA — and acts as custodian of the database, which now covers almost 100,000 protected areas.

Harmonising reporting on biodiversity
UNEP-WCMC continues to work with convention secretariats, international organisations and individual countries to harmonise national reporting and streamline information management. The Centre’s harmonisation work is opening the way for more effective and efficient implementation of international agreements on biodiversity.

The Centre is co-ordinating pilot projects in Ghana, Indonesia, Panama and the Seychelles to test different approaches to reporting and information management, that aim to help countries to integrate responses to the five biodiversity-related conventions. The emerging results, together with experiences from previous work, are being used by UNEP-WCMC to develop an action plan for harmonising reporting and information management of these international agreements at all levels.

The Centre also contributes to the work of a task force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting, established in 2002 by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. This task force is chaired jointly by the UN Forum on Forests and FAO and will hold its next meeting at UNEP-WCMC in early 2003.
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The appointment of a specialist Oracle database administrator and developer within the ICT team during 2002 was a strategic step for the Centre. The Oracle database system will be a primary tool in developing the digital biodiversity knowledge management system. A production server will be commissioned early in 2003 and live applications, particularly using geographic information systems, will be delivered through 2003.

Communications and Education

The year started with the launch of a series of 16 educational posters, From the Summits to the Seas to publicise the International Year of Mountains. Unveiled by Klaus Toepfer and Richard Howitt MEP at the European Parliament building, Brussels, in February, they were displayed around the world, including the Johannesburg World Summit, subsequently forming a permanent display in the Geneva Environment Centre. Together with the University of East Anglia and UK DEFRA, the Centre sponsored a conference in July on the subject of Science for Sustainable Development, attracting more than 100 participants. The World Atlas of Biodiversity was released immediately before the World Summit at a media briefing at Chelsea Physic Garden, London in August. The international press coverage was comprehensive, including a front-page story in the International Herald Tribune. In October, the Mountain Watch report was presented at a press conference held at the Austrian Cultural Forum in London.

In an exciting educational initiative UNEP-WCMC Chevening Scholarships in Biodiversity were announced by Bill Rammell, MP, to an audience of international dignitaries at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lancaster House, London in November. The global media audience for the World Atlas of Coral Reefs launched in 2001, continued to grow throughout 2002. A documentary, The Fragile Reef, based on the Centre’s work and the Atlas, was screened throughout Europe on the Discovery Channel and will be distributed to a global audience in excess of 450 million viewers during 2003.

UNEP-WCMC hosted two events that gained high local media attention. During an official visit, DEFRA Minister Elliot Morley unveiled a marine aquarium in the Centre’s reception area, donated and stocked from sustainable sources by the Tropical Marine Centre. Also in the reception area, Cambridge Mayor, Philippa Slatter, unveiled a portrait of Charles Darwin by local graffiti artist, Josh Peacock.
Networks & International Relations

UNEP-WCMC collaborates with many partners worldwide – a selection is given below:

International and Regional Organisations

- ACOPS (Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea)
- AEW A (African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement)
- Africa Resources Trust
- ARCOs (Albertine Rift Conservation Society)
- ARBC (ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation)
- BGCI (Botanic Gardens Conservation International)
- BirdLife International
- CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna)
- CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity)
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
- CCAD (Central American Commission for Environment and Development)
- CIFOR (Center for International Forestry Research)
- CMS (Convention on Migratory Species)
- Conservation International
- Earthwatch Institute, Europe
- ECN C (European Centre for Nature Conservation)
- EEA (European Environment Agency)
- European Topic Centre on Nature Protection and Biodiversity
- European Commission
- European Commission Joint Research Centre
- FFI (Fauna and Flora International)
- IIE D (International Institute for Environment and Development)
- ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development)
- ICLARM – World Fish Center
- ITP P (International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited)
- IUCN – The World Conservation Union
- MAC (Marine Aquarium Council)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management & Fisheries, The Netherlands
- Ramsar Convention Bureau
- SPREP (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme)
- The Nature Conservancy
- TRAFFIC International
- UNESCO
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre
- UNEP GRID Offices
- UNEP Regional Offices
- UNU (United Nations University)
- World Resources Institute
- Wetlands International
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- WWF International
- World Wildlife Fund

National Conservation and Research Organisations

- Aburi Botanical Gardens, Ghana
- Autoridad nacional del ambiente, Panama
- Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographical Information Systems, Ghana
- Centre national de téledetection et de surveillance du couvert forestier, Benin
- CONABIO (Comisión nacional para el conocimiento y uso de la biodiversidad), Mexico
- CONAF, Ministry of Agriculture, Chile
- English Nature
- JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee), UK
- Ministry of Environment, Republic of Seychelles
- Ministry of Environment, Science & Technology, Ghana
- NASA, US
- NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration), US
- RIVM (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu), The Netherlands
- Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, UK
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK
- Southern African Wildlife College
- State Ministry of Environment, Indonesia
- The Natural History Museum, UK
- University of Cambridge, UK
- University of East Anglia, UK
- University of Ghana
- University of Hull, UK
- University of Makerere, Uganda
- University of South Florida, US

Publications


Mountain Watch: environmental change & sustainable development in mountains, also achieved considerable media coverage and is available in pdf format at: http://www.unept-wcmc.org/mountains/mountain_watch/pdf/.

The Centre contributes to many publications that are published by other organisations as an integral part of their publication programmes, a selection of these follows:

- The Centre prepares many reports and scientific papers for Convention Secretariats, international conferences and scientific journals. The Centre’s data, diagrams and maps frequently appear in publications produced by a wide variety of organisations and in the media.

Forthcoming publication:


A full list of our publications and ordering information is available at: http://www.unept-wcmc.org/reception/publications.htm.

Human Resources

One of the Centre’s main successes in 2002 has been the full implementation of the UNEP-WCMC Chevening Scholarships in Biodiversity. The Centre welcomed seven international scholars each carrying out research projects within particular programme areas. The scheme has proved extremely popular and the Centre is currently preparing to host a further six scholars for 2003.

In October, the Centre successfully met the Investors in People reassessment standards demonstrating its continuing commitment to the development of staff. This year most staff have been involved in one or more areas of formal training ranging from languages to web design and project management.

UNEP-WCMC continues to focus on broadening the international representation of its staff, which now includes 20 nationalities.
During Financial Year 2002 UNEP-WCMC met its budgetary targets by controlling costs carefully, delivering projects on budget, and increasing project turnover by over 20%, from £2.8M ($4.5M) to £3.4M (US$5.4M). A budgeted transfer to reserves of £125,000 ($200,000) with the aim, by 2005, of building reserves sufficient for three months’ expenses, was achieved with a small surplus. Reserves grew from £162K ($259K) to £292K ($467K) during the year.

Increases in both fixed and current assets, together with a decrease in current liabilities, attest to the Centre’s firmer financial footing. Debt repayments of £310K ($496K) were made, but cash reserves fell by just £71K ($113.6K). Work already done in readiness for invoicing to clients increased by £368K ($589K), while the bank of work contracted and paid in advance also increased by £241K ($386.6) to a healthy £1.2M ($1.9M).

Income from UNEP-linked projects increased by 3% to 42% in 2002, (see Figure opposite), with the Centre taking responsibility for major aspects of UNEP-managed projects like the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN). Transfer of other UNEP programmes to the Centre in 2003 may result in further growth. Other intergovernmental organisations remained strong supporters at 15%, while governments (14%) and international NGOs (5%) also contributed very significantly to the Centre’s programme of work. In addition to project restricted funds, over £87K ($139K) of sponsorship for the Chevening Scholars was raised during the year, plus a further £52K ($83K) received in donations to the Centre from the corporate sector.

Overall the financial results for 2002 demonstrate a strong upward trend and the organisation is well-placed to extend its operations and provide a wider range of biodiversity-related services in the years ahead.
Sponsors

List of Sponsors

AEWA (African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement)
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BP
CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna)
Cambridgeshire County Council
CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity)
CEP (Caribbean Environment Programme)
ChevronTexaco
CISCO Systems
CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
CMS (Convention on Migratory Species)
Darwin Initiative
DEFRA (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs), UK
DFID (Department for International Development), UK
Diageo
Earthwatch Institute, Europe
EFI (European Forest Institute)
ESRI GIS and Mapping Software
European Commission
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FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, UK
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