



Overview of the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress by Penelope Figgis AO¹

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held its quadrennial World Conservation Congress at the International Convention Centre (ICC) on Jeju Island, South Korea, 6–15 September 2012. Leaders from government, the public sector, non-governmental organizations, business, United Nations agencies and social organizations gathered to discuss, debate and decide solutions for the world's most pressing environment and development issues. The Congress brought together 10 000 people, including 5 000 conservation experts from 153 countries, and provided 600 events.

The first five days of the Forum about sustainability ideas, thinking and practice was followed by the Members' Assembly, a global environmental parliament of governments and NGOs, where elections take place for all senior positions and motions are passed which form IUCN's policies.

It was my pleasure from 5–12 September to perform my dual roles of Director of Australia's national committee of IUCN members – 'the ACIUCN', and Vice Chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), Oceania. Australia and the wider region of Oceania were well represented with over 100 delegates. I can only offer a few snapshots from my own experience. I was principally involved with the Congress Forum, as national committees do not have a vote in the Assembly. I followed the World Heritage, connectivity conservation and BIOPAMA streams in addition to several marine and financial meetings.

I encourage readers to explore the richness of the IUCN Congress site including many videos of Congress events <www.iucn.org/>. There is also a summary of the Congress at <www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/forum___exhibition/summaries/>.

Overall it was a deeply inspiring event, as we met with colleagues from around the world who are using all their intellect and resources to try to defend the living fabric of the earth, and the rights of all peoples who are dependent on it, against a growth and resource consumption paradigm which often appears to accord nature scant value.

WCPA steering committee and members' meetings

The day before the Forum commenced, the six Commissions of IUCN representing some 12 000 global experts met in Jeju. On the opening day, WCPA also had a half day Steering Committee meeting attended by about 70 members. WCPA has some 1 400 members across 154 countries.

The WCPA Chair, Nik Lopoukhine, and the Head of IUCN's Global Protected Area Program, Trevor Sandwith, reported on the last four years, and the major influence that the WCPA had exerted on strategic directions in protected area policy globally. Nik highlighted the importance of WCPA in shaping the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which shapes much of the work and funding for protected areas worldwide, but is less visible in Australia. Nik also identified our key roles in areas such as:

- connectivity conservation – expanding the idea of varied and equitable governance across wide land and sea scapes
- natural solutions – our work on getting ecosystems and biodiversity conservation understood as critical responses to climate change
- management effectiveness, which has now become a global best practice norm across the WCPA.

Some of the WCPA's work areas have been especially high performing, such as marine conservation and conservation in the high seas. But specialist groups with strong leadership working on policy areas such as tourism, freshwater management, healthy parks/healthy people, landscape restoration, sacred and cultural sites, cities and protected areas, and World Heritage have also had achievements.

The most important factor shaping the WCPA over the next four years will be global work towards achieving Target 11 of the CBD's Aichi targets, which commits over 100 nations to having 17% of terrestrial and 10% of marine territory in protected areas. While this is a key direction for the future, at least 14 of the Aichi targets can also be partly achieved

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through protected areas of all kinds. Many of the initiatives discussed below such as the Protected Planet and the Green list will be central to WCPA's work.

The Congress meetings also discussed ideas for the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, in 2014. It was suggested the Congress could have three major themes:

- recognising the full spectrum of values, from spiritual and aesthetic to economic
- governance: all forms of governance including indigenous peoples' rights, governance of the high seas, and models for land and sea scape management
- mainstreaming: all forms of partnerships and alliances to achieve conservation through the tourism, health, water and insurance sectors.

The themes are not yet set in stone. They will be discussed in the next few months and WCPA members will be given a chance to provide input.

The Forum

World Heritage

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, a Forum workshop focused on engaging the IUCN constituency for conservation and communities. Over 100 delegates attended, representing many government and organisational members of IUCN, and IUCN Commission members. It was my privilege to chair this session and to attempt to draw out consensus points to be conveyed to key bodies associated with the Convention.

It was clear that there are deep concerns about the long term credibility of the World Heritage Convention. The problems are multifaceted, including:

- a lack of capacity or political will to manage sites well, which leads to more 'in danger' designations
- increasing pressures from the many threats that beset even well managed sites
- a lack of proactive assistance to State parties
- internal issues within the World Heritage Committee which have the potential to lower the rigour of assessment and harm the critical 'brand' 'World Heritage'.

The meeting called upon the World Heritage Committee to ensure that all processes comply with the Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Convention, consistently and rigorously, and that they are transparent to the wider community. It also called on the World Heritage Committee

to ensure that the advice of IUCN and ICOMOS is treated with due respect. The meeting also supported the 'World Heritage Watch' NGO initiative that emerged from the World Heritage NGO forum in St Petersburg in July 2012, which involves establishing an international network of NGOs to safeguard the integrity and implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme

The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA), launched by the European Commission in July 2011, has two main components: one on protected areas which will be implemented by IUCN and the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), and another on access and benefit sharing (ABS). The richness and diversity of the plants, animals and ecosystems in protected areas of many countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific provides services to local people and communities in and around these areas. The protection and sustainable use of these resources can help reduce poverty and provide benefits for urban areas and communities located far from the protected area itself. However, in most countries there are information gaps and a lack of adequate capacity to plan and effectively manage protected areas. BIOPAMA seeks to address this challenge.

Quite a number of our colleagues from Oceania were involved with discussions on the BIOPAMA. The meetings in Jeju endeavoured to sort through the complex issues of implementation and aligning BIOPAMA with other initiatives in the three target regions. We stand ready to assist in the Pacific by mobilising IUCN Commission members with appropriate skills to add capacity.

The Protected Planet brand

The WCPA re-launched its best practice series of technical publications within the Protected Planet brand, with a new cover and design and two new titles: *Ecological Restoration for Protected Areas* and *Guidelines for Applying the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories to Marine Protected Areas*. Several others are in the pipeline, including titles on governance of protected areas, systematic conservation planning, and a major revision of all titles is planned for the 2014 World Parks Congress <www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/gpap_capacity2/gpap_bpg/>.

The WCPA journal *PARKS* was also re-launched as an on-line, peer reviewed and open access journal <www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/gpap_capacity2/gpap_parks2/> and several other new IUCN publications with released at the Protected Planet Pavilion during the Congress.

Protected Planet Report

The first ever global report card on progress toward the achievement of UN targets on biodiversity and development that rely on national parks and protected areas as the chief strategy – the Protected Planet Report – was launched at the Congress. The report shows that overall that great strides have been made in the last ten years to create more protected areas globally, but that in order to achieve the targets agreed in Nagoya in 2010, a terrestrial protected area the size of Argentina and an MPA the size of Australia is needed. Simply declaring these areas will not be enough however, as all protected areas must be managed. Progress toward achieving management effectiveness targets in protected areas is well below the target for their declaration. Achieving good management will require a massive investment and political will. The report can be downloaded at <www.unep-wcmc.org/medialibrary/2012/09/14/eb3bb854/PPR2012_en.pdf>.

Marine protected areas

As concern grows about the state of marine resources and the degradation of the world's oceans, new IUCN guidance launched in Jeju may significantly improve ocean protection.

IUCN defines a protected area as:

A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

This definition will make it much harder for marine areas that permit resource exploitation to be MPAs. It should slow the trend of fisheries advisory bodies claiming that area mechanisms that exploit fish, are MPAs. Pipeline and wind farm areas will also not be considered MPAs unless they have clear long-term objectives for nature conservation and are consistent with MPA guidelines. If marine areas involve extraction and have no defined long-term goals for conservation and ocean recovery, they are not MPAs.

IUCN categories are applicable to all types of protected areas, but as there are fewer MPAs, there is less experience and understanding of MPAs, and the application of the MPA category may become inconsistent. Confusion tends to arise when sites have been incorrectly assigned on the basis of activities that occur, rather than using the stated management objectives. Also, where protected areas include both land and sea, the objectives for the marine component are rarely considered when assigning the site's category.

International Connectivity Conservation Network

Dr Graeme Worboys and Dr Olivier Chassot launched the International Connectivity Conservation Network (ICC) at the Congress. The objective of the Network is to assist global corridor managers to interact, to share experiences and knowledge, and ultimately to help facilitate the establishment and effective management of large scale corridors that connect protected areas. More information is at <www.connectivityconservation.net>. The launch of the ICC Network is another step in IUCN WCPA's progressive facilitation of connectivity conservation globally.

An Earthscan publication, *Connectivity Conservation Management: A Global Guide*, was launched in 2010 at the Melbourne Healthy Parks, Healthy People Conference and it has since helped facilitate connectivity conservation management in different parts of the world. It includes the science supporting connectivity conservation, and was a key reference to an Australian National Advisory Committee responsible for preparing Australia's first ever whole-of-continent draft 2012 National Wildlife Corridors Strategy. The book followed workshops in 2004 (Papallacta, Ecuador) and in 2008 (Dhulikhell, Nepal) which helped to develop the content for the book.

Restoration Guidelines

This publication provides guidance on the restoration of terrestrial, marine, and freshwater protected areas, at both system and site levels on. As restoration sometimes has to extend beyond protected area borders, to address ecosystem fragmentation and maintain well-connected protected area systems, this guide uses the term 'restoration for protected areas' for activities within protected areas, and for activities in connecting or

surrounding lands and waters that influence protected area values. It provides information on principles and best practice, with examples, and advice on the process of restoration, but it is not a comprehensive restoration manual and does not give detailed methodologies and techniques. More information is at <<http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAG-018.pdf>>.

Green List

Three events at the Congress aimed to advance discussions around an IUCN initiative to develop a 'Green List of Well-Managed Protected Areas'. The List will celebrate protected area successes, acting as a benchmark for progress towards effective and equitable management, and rewarding innovation, excellence and enterprise. Protected areas wishing to be included on the List will have to satisfy agreed criteria concerning conservation and effective management, and equitable governance. Several pilot projects are underway in Colombia, Kenya and with the WWF Tiger Conservation Program.

The objectives and mechanisms for a Green List were presented at a well-attended event in the Protected Planet Pavilion and this was followed by a more technical workshop session that examined the process for selecting and assessing sites for the Green List in a 2-hour workshop that used 'educational clickers' to gather audience feedback on the proposal. Other potential pilot site countries indicated their keenness to participate during this program.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Korean National Parks and Wildlife Service (KNPS) and the IUCN was signed at a press conference. Under the MOU, KNPS will provide staff support and funding to assist in the development of the Green List as well as participating as a pilot site in the program. Motion 048 on Development of Objective Criteria for a Green List of Species, Ecosystems and Protected Areas was adopted by the Member's Assembly.

The Members' Assembly

More than 180 motions were proposed to the Members' Assembly, IUCN's unique global environmental parliament bringing together governments and non-governmental organizations to debate and vote. The Assembly approved resolutions on a wide range of issues including action to recover Atlantic bluefin tuna stocks and avert extinctions of rare dolphin species; shutting down illegal bear farms; scaling back offshore drilling in French Guiana, Suriname and Guyana; and providing better payment channels for ecosystem services in poor countries.

Action on stopping the escalating poaching of elephants and rhinos was approved, and the push for a globally binding treaty on protecting wildlife from mercury contamination was endorsed, as was greater enforcement of laws on wildlife crime and reducing the impact of recreational divers on marine environments.

IUCN's work programme for the coming four years was also approved, recognizing that global production and consumption patterns are destroying nature. At the same time, people, communities, governments and business are underutilizing the potential of nature and the solutions it provides. The adopted quadrennial programme builds upon IUCN's niche as the world's leading authority on biodiversity conservation.

Australian members will find interest in the motions that are accessible at <<http://portals.iucn.org/2012motions/>>. Here are a few of particular interest:

- M182: Australia's Proposed Marine Reserve Network
- M164: Need for non-regression in environmental law and policy
- M053: Strengthening the World Heritage Convention
- M045: The Sydney V1th IUCN World Parks Congress 2014
- M046: Healthy parks healthy people
- M054: Sacred Natural Sites: Support for custodian protocols and customary laws in the face of global threats and challenges
- M055: Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention
- M056: Valuing and conserving and of geoheritage within IUCN Programme 2013–16
- M065: Protecting the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area and other important heritage areas of Australia from the harmful impacts of the expansion of the mining and gas industries and other activities
- M085: Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

The elections

The Assembly is also the forum at which the members of IUCN chose their key office bearers for the next quadrennial. Members vote for the President and Councillors from each region and the Chairs of IUCN's Six Commissions of Experts.

The President

IUCN Members elected their new President, Mr Zhang Xinsheng of China. He will lead the world's largest environmental organization for the next four years. He succeeds Ashok Khosla, who successfully represented IUCN 2008–12. The website has an interview with the newly-elected President where he speaks about his hopes and plans for the future <www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/news__press/?11094/The-next-four-years-according-to-Zhang-Xinsheng>

Oceania Councillors

Councillors who will represent Oceania on the IUCN Council are:

Andrew Bignell, New Zealand, Manager International, Department of Conservation, Wellington, New Zealand

Andrew's career has focussed on natural resources management, particularly National Park and other terrestrial and marine protected areas management. He has undertaken roles in research, planning and governance of protected areas, with a particular focus on New Zealand and the Pacific. He has been a senior member of the Department of Conservation for many years and has had active engagement in departmental governance and whole-of-government activity. Andrew is responsible for the Department's engagement in international activities with responsibility for strategic relationships. He is a member of the CBD COP Bureau. Within the Pacific he has participated in the work of inter-governmental organizations, the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (an NGO/Government alliance) and participated in the formation and work of the IUCN Oceania Regional Committee. He is a member of the WCPA and Chair of the New Zealand Committee of IUCN Members.

Brendan Mackey, Australia, Professor and Director, Griffith Climate Change Response Program, Griffith University, Australia

Brendan has internationally recognized expertise in the fields of conservation science, particularly in relation to ecosystems, connectivity conservation, forest management, and biodiversity-climate change interactions. He has been a member of expert groups which have written reports for the CBD Secretariat (Technical Reports 41 and 43). He has participated in various UN conferences and CoPs for climate change and sustainable development processes. He has considerable experience in the formulation of science and evidence-based conservation policy.

Brendan continues his term on the Council, where previously he has been Co-Chair of the Policy and Programme Committee, and a member of the Governance Committee, the Private Sector Task Force, the Rio+20 Task Force, and the Climate Change Core Group. He is also a member of the Commission on Environmental Law, the World Commission on Protected Areas, and the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy. He serves ex officio as a Regional Councillor on the Executive Committee of the Australian Committee for IUCN. He works on matters of conservation and environmental protection with governments at all levels, the private sector, and NGOs.

Anna Elizabeth Tiraa, Cook Island, Director of Climate Change, Cook Islands Government

Anna Tiraa is a committed conservationist with more than 20 years working for the benefit of the Pacific Islands environment. Anna has undertaken environmental related work for government, national and international NGOs, communities, the private sector, inter-governmental regional organizations and the UN. Her work experience includes project design, implementation, negotiation, monitoring, and review and evaluation. She has been a major contributor to bringing back a critically endangered endemic Rarotongan bird from the brink of extinction.

As Biodiversity Officer for the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), Anna has contributed to the biodiversity conservation efforts of more than 20 Pacific Island countries and territories. This experience has given her a sound knowledge of processes across a broad spectrum of groups contributing to conservation initiatives in the Oceania region, and allowed her to establish a valuable network of environmental policy makers and practitioners in the Oceania region.

Anna's educational qualifications include a BSc in Environmental Studies from the University of the South Pacific, Fiji (1994), and an MSc in Natural Resources Management from the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, (2011), for which she was awarded a UNEP scholarship. Her research project concerned biodiversity and climate change in the Cook Islands. Anna is presently a member of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) and Deputy Regional Vice Chair for Oceania, World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). She is an Executive Committee member of

the IUCN Transboundary Specialist Group (Oceania Representative). She is also an Executive founding member of Tapororoporō'anga Ipukarea Society (a Cook Islands Environmental NGO formed in 1996, also an IUCN Member) and was a Global Councillor for BirdLife International Council 2004–06.

Commission Chairs

Congratulations go to all the elected Chairs who guide their Commissions to achieve so much of the international output of IUCN:

- Commission on Environmental Law: Justice Antonio Herman Benjamin, Brazil

- Commission on Ecosystem Management: Piet Wit, The Netherlands
- Commission on Education and Communication: Juliane Zeidler, Germany
- Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy: Aroha Te Pareake Mead, New Zealand
- Species Survival Commission: Simon Stuart, United Kingdom
- World Commission on Protected Areas: Ernesto Enkerlin Hoeflich, Mexico

Read more about the new Chairs

www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/member_s_assembly/candidates_for_election/commission_chairs/

Information for contributors

How to contribute

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As a general guide, articles should be between 3 000 – 5 000 words in length and should conform to standard conventions of legal writing. For example the *Australian Guide to Legal Citation 3rd ed* (by Melbourne University Law Review Association) is an illustrative style guide available on-line.

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NELR 2012–13 deadline for contributions:

- 2013:1 – 22 March 2013
- 2013:2 – 7 June 2013
- 2013:3 – 13 September 2013

NELA Bulletin

(bi-monthly newsletter mailed to all members)

Contributions to the NELA Bulletin may be submitted to the NELA Secretariat at any time and need to be received in the last week of each even-numbered month (Feb/Apr/Jun/Aug/Oct/Dec).