

## Wildlife protection and indigenous people

In the 'News and views' section of the January 1987 issue of *Oryx* (21, 4–5), Brian Morris reported on the 4th International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies, and discussed the complex and sometimes conflicting objectives of cultural and natural preservation.

The identification of World Wildlife Fund with a lack of sensitivity on this question does not recognize the major programme initiatives that have been under way within WWF for some time. For example, at World Wildlife Fund–US I direct the Programme in Wildlands and Human Needs, whose overall goal is to improve management of critical wildland areas to ensure that they can be used sustainably in order to meet the development needs of rural people.

Some of these activities have a strong anthropological orientation, such as the ethnobotany studies that we have sponsored in Suriname and work with the Kayapo in Brazil, and many have the dual goal of both cultural and natural resource preservation. In the Kuna Indian Forest Reserve in Panama, for example, it is the native people themselves who have established the protected area and are implementing management programmes with our assistance.

In other areas World Wildlife Fund is working to establish land rights for native peoples, including projects on the south-east coast of Costa Rica, in Irian Jaya in Indonesia, and jointly with Cultural Survival with the Awa Indians of Colombia and Ecuador.

Other project approaches aim at incorporating indigenous groups, not only in programme activities but also in the actual planning and implementation of projects; examples include the Paya and Miskitos in the Rio Platano of Honduras, the Choco, Wainan and Kuna of the Darien, the Sione Secoya in the Cuyabeno of Ecuador and the Cabecar in Costa Rica's Amistad Biosphere Reserve.

WWF–US has not specifically singled out tribal peoples for its conservation and development projects, but seeks to address the needs of rural populations, be they Indians or campesinos, in

and around protected areas. Thus we are working to establish extractive reserves for Brazil's rubber tappers, sustainable use in Peru's huge Pacaya Samiria Reserve, a cottage forestry programme in the tropical forests of Dominica, a lobster fishery project in Sian Kaan of Mexico, a wildlife utilization project in Zambia's Luangwa Valley, and fuelwood and fisheries extension work both on the Caribbean island of St Lucia and at the biologically diverse Lake Malawi in Africa.

A local village credit system is now under consideration in northern Thailand, as is a health system linked to a local reserve for the BaBinga pygmies in the CAR, a project with the Uros Indians of Lake Titicaca of Peru, and another with the Chemonies of Bolivia. We are seeking funding, and plan to host a workshop on 'Natural Resources Management and Native Peoples' drawing on indigenous groups from the US, Canada and Latin America.

I cannot speak from personal experience regarding the Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh, which prompted the *Oryx* article, but I hope the diversity and range of projects being undertaken by just one of the WWF organizations will demonstrate that the balancing of human and natural needs is not an insignificant or incidental part of World Wildlife Fund's activities.

We at WWF recognize that the interest of native peoples and nature conservation will not always be identical, but with good will our two communities will find that what unites us far outweighs what divides us. Dr Morris has made an important contribution in urging that such a dialogue is overdue, and I hope that this response will take the discussion one step further.

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## The rarest lemurs on earth

The 'rediscovery' by Patricia Wright of Duke University of the greater bamboo or broad-nosed gentle lemur *Haplolemur simus* has been widely reported (*Los Angeles Times*, 28 September 1986; *Nature*, 16 October 1986; *Oryx*, 21, 117). I