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INDO-PACIFIC CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Indo-Pacific Conservation News

Deal Signed for "Radio Asmat"

IPCA has negotiated an agreement for the construction of a community-based radio network in Asmat, dubbed "Radio Asmat". In the past year IPCA has had ongoing discussions with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Danish Embassy in Jakarta for the funding and installation of a community AM radio station in Agats. An agreement and contract for the project was signed in September 2001. The Government of Denmark will provide financial support, and UNESCO will install, train, and provide technical support to *Lembaga Musyawarah Adat Asmat* (LMAA) for its operation.

Radio Asmat promises to be a major positive development for the Asmat region. About 70,000 ethnic Asmat people live in the remote region, which covers about 2 million hectares (5 million acres). Owing to this isolation, villages currently have no way to receive timely and accurate information. With Radio Asmat, they can access not only news from the outside world, but also information relevant to Asmat communities – LMAA's activities, health

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Conservation Success in Asmat

With IPCA's help, our partners at LMAA and the FAR Councils have rejected several highly destructive commercial logging and fishing operations that threatened to destroy a vast area of rainforest and degrade fisheries stocks. Yufen Biakai, Amandus Anakat, and the other LMAA leaders, working with the similarly vital FAR Councils and IPCA's Liaison Officer Neville Kemp, have played a critical role in reaching out to Asmat communities and garnering their support.

In 2001, LMAA and FAR-Simai shut down a destructive, clear-cut logging operation owned by Barito Pacific. Similarly, LMAA and FAR-Joerat also rejected a highly questionable commercial fishing operation in northwest Asmat run by the Djayanti Group. In a year when most other areas of Papua and Indonesia saw continued destruction, these are notable conservation successes.

These results were also

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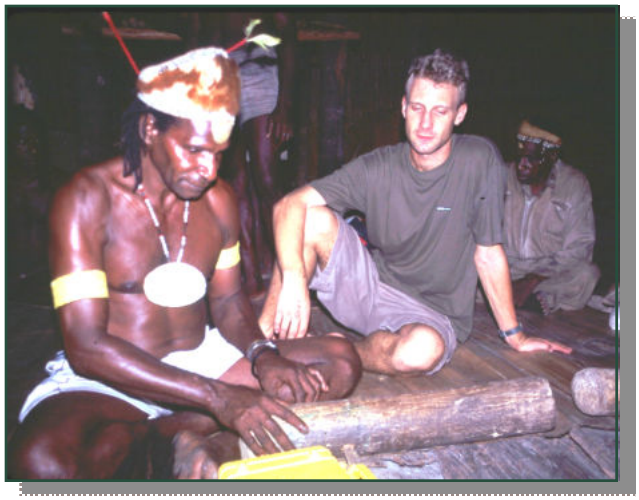

IPCA Liaison Officer Nev Kemp with *adat* leader in Syuru village, April 2001.
Photo © John Burke Burnett, 2001.

IPCA Set to Begin Biological Survey with British Petroleum in Papua

IPCA is set to carry out full scale rapid biological assessment of the new British Petroleum (BP) natural gas project area in Tangguh, Papua (Irian Jaya), Indonesia. The Tangguh project, with an estimated cost of at least $2 billion, will be one of BP's global flagship projects. Our survey, which is set to begin in early February 2002, will be a joint effort between IPCA, BP, and P.T. Hatfindo Prima, an affiliate of Hatfield Associates, a Canadian consulting firm.

When fully operational in 2006, the liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities of Tangguh will produce approximately 7 million tons of LNG per year. BP indicates that among its top priorities is to improve health and education services for nearby villages and 7,000 people directly affected by the project, as well as to have as small a "footprint" on local rainforest and mangrove habitat as possible.

This survey follows a site visit to Tangguh by Burke Burnett, IPCA Executive Director, in March 2001. His report to BP highlighted the urgent need for this survey, in order to better understand the biodiversity of Tangguh

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Conservation Results in Asmat

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due to the hard work of two IPCA trainers, Neville (Nev) Kemp and Sue O'Farrell. Both have been working in Agats since December 2000 to help LMAA gear up their organization and undertake their empowerment efforts. Nev (see separate article) has done an outstanding job in working with LMAA in Agats this year. He has worked with LMAA and the FARs to facilitate a comprehensive internal strategic planning exercise, monitor logging and fishing projects, and educate local councils in evaluating whether these extractive projects provided a positive benefit to their communities. Considerable credit for our excellent results must go to Nev for his tireless efforts in working with the FARs and LMAA.

Sue O'Farrell, who is based in Merauke but travels to Agats frequently, has also made a major contribution in training LMAA in bookkeeping, financial reporting, strategic management, and computer skills. These institutional capacity skills are essential for LMAA to become self-sufficient and maintain accountability to its donors and to the Asmat people themselves.

The strong results we achieved in 2001 came at a time when most other areas of Papua and Indonesia had scant good news for conservation. IPCA feels that the conservation successes of LMAA and the FAR demonstrate the importance and the need to focus efforts at the grassroots level in order to mobilize support for conservation. It is time-consuming, difficult work, but it is highly effective. We remain committed to not simply consolidating this success, but to extending it to community-based sustainable micro-enterprises in Asmat (see related article on Page 4). IPCA believes that such projects can provide a positive reinforcement to communities that have already demonstrated their commitment to conservation by rejecting destructive logging and fishing.

Serpentine rivers & pristine rainforest in Asmat
Photo © John Burke Burnett, 2000.

IPCA Biological Survey with BP

LIPI's Dr. Johannes Mogea collecting plants in Papua
Photo © Michael Moore, 1998.

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and how it will be affected by changing land uses both on-site and in adjacent areas that have been converted to oil palm plantations by companies unrelated to BP. The Bomberai Peninsula where Tangguh is located is, like much of Papua, poorly understood and under-documented scientifically. Our survey will address BP's need to document the flora and fauna of Tangguh, while also providing critical data that conservation science requires to plan and manage sustainable development and conservation initiatives in Papua. IPCA believes that this sort of project illustrates how "win-win" solutions can result when scientists and conservation organizations work in partnership with responsible corporations.

Our research teams are composed of expert international and Indonesian scientists. Participating biologists include Dr. Wayne Takeuchi (PNG Forest Research Institute), R. Maturbongs (University of Papua), Dr. Vojtech Novotny (Smithsonian), M. Amir (LIPI - Indonesian Institute of Sciences), Dr. Scott Miller (Smithsonian), Dr. Gerald Allen (W. Australian Museum), Mr. Samuel Renyaan (Cenderawasih University), Dr. Allen Allison (Bishop Museum), Dr. Helen Kurniati (LIPI), Dr. Bas van Balen (Wageningen University), Dr. James Menzies (University of Adelaide), and others. The combined local and international experience encourages two-way transfer of scientific and local knowledge between local and international scientists. The survey will also support the broader endeavor of documenting Papua's flora and fauna for purposes of conservation biology and natural resource management in the province.

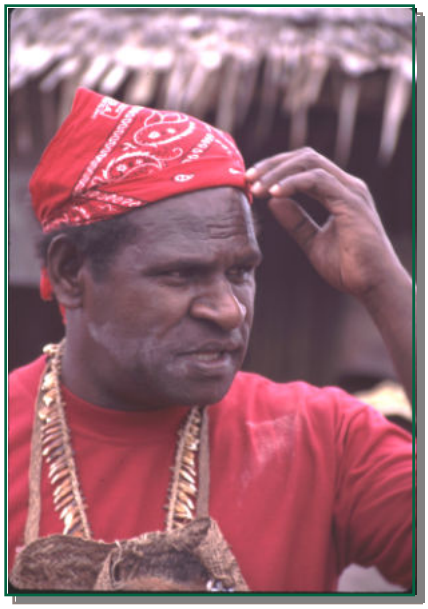
Contract for "Radio Asmat" Project Signed

Continued from Page 1

information, environmental education, stories and oral traditions, information on community development projects, etc. In short, Radio Asmat will be a tool with enormous significance and benefits for the Asmat people and the future of their rich biodiversity.

After an initial start-up period, LMAA and the associated FAR (*Forum Adat Rumpun*) sub-councils will be responsible for the station's ongoing expenses, which constitute relatively small sums. This buy-in is important for Asmat communities to feel they have ownership and a stake in the continued smooth operation of the network, and is in fact a prerequisite for Danish and UNESCO support. Radio Asmat will disseminate information to villages within a 50 or so mile radius of the radio transmitter operated by LMAA in Agats.

The idea for the project came from Danish Ambassador Michael Sternberg. Later it received robust support from Drs. Manuel Kaisiepo, Indonesian Minister for Accelerated Development in Eastern Indonesia, Drs. John Gluba Gebze, the Bupati (Head Regent) of Merauke, as well as various *Camat* and police officials in Asmat. The project is now awaiting final permission letters from the provincial government. Barring unforeseen glitches, Radio Asmat looks likely to become a reality in the first half of 2002. Stay tuned...



LMAA Chairman Yufen Biakai
Photo © John Burke Burnett, 2001

Destructive Fishing Stopped in Asmat — Local Consensus Reached for Marine Fisheries Reserve

IPCA reported previously on the alarming rise in commercial fishing trawlers entering the rivers and seas of Asmat. In mid-2001, the Djayanti Group's P.T. Wanam company requested local permission to trawl for fish and shrimp in the Joerat area of northwest Asmat. This was rejected by LMAA and FAR-Joerat, and the company is now prohibited to enter any rivers or to use their trawl nets at sea. This is a significant conservation success that will help prevent large-scale exploitation of the Asmat fisheries resources that villagers depend on for subsistence.

The Joerat area is a part of the Asmat region located inside Lorentz National Park, also a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site.

While Wanam is not allowed to fish, LMAA and FAR-Joerat agreed that villagers could fish themselves and sell their catch to Wanam. Commercial fishing in Asmat is now at a far smaller and less destructive scale than would have been the case had Wanam been allowed to use trawl nets. Still, a looming problem is that since neither LMAA nor the FAR own speedboats, local Asmat monitoring and enforcement of regulations is difficult.

Traditional fishing in Asmat
Photo courtesy George Steinmetz © 1996

To begin addressing these issues, IPCA, LMAA, FAR-Joerat, and the head of the Merauke Fisheries office conducted a survey and community consultations with Joerat villagers in December 2001. Local Joerat communities have already noticed a decline in fish and shrimp stocks, and feel that they are not benefiting from the presence of P.T. Wanam. From these meetings, a consensus agreement was reached for the following **priority actions**:

- The need for written **contracts** with every commercial boat that enters Asmat waters, stipulating: prices, minimum lengths, method of weight and measurement, and method of payment.
- Establishment of a **monitoring** system so only vessels with permits can enter Asmat waters, and **enforcement** of catch limits. This requires investment in speedboats, training and payment of FAR staff who will enforce local regulations.
- The urgent need for an expert-led **survey of Asmat fisheries** to determine a sustainable catch limits. These results should determine the limits and extent of allowable commercial fishing in Asmat.
- A **Traditional Fisheries Protected Zone** (i.e. "no-go zone") should be established and enforced in designated rivers to serve as a reservoir for fisheries stocks.
- A "**closed season**", coinciding with breeding season, should be enforced for fishing operations.

This consensus for sustainable fisheries in Asmat is a strong basis for a intensive initiative to establish an formal indigenous extractive marine reserve in Asmat. This would serve as a model for other coastal areas in Papua and Indonesia.

IPCA Seeks Conservation Microenterprises for Asmat

In rejecting several destructive logging and fishing operations this year (see separate articles), LMAA and the Asmat people have shown a keen and impressive commitment to conservation and a sustainable future. Our next step must be to extend this success into positive benefits for their communities. In short, it's not enough to convince the Asmat or other local peoples what they shouldn't do – large-scale logging, destructive fishing, etc. — it's also critical to offer positive alternatives as well. To that end, IPCA is exploring options for community-based microenterprises in Asmat that will augment their demonstrated local commitment to conservation.

Sustainable development initiatives like community microenterprises display impressive results when they diversify local economies based on an *demonstrated commitment* to conservation – a commitment the Asmat have indeed displayed.

Some options under consideration are a **sustainable fisheries project** that would export *barramundi* (a highly-prized food fish) and mud crabs to Darwin, Australia, via nearby Timika. Other non-timber forest products such as *lawang* oil are also possible. Another excellent possibility is the **sale of certified cultural artifacts** (Asmat carvings and items that are certified as having been used in traditional ceremonies, rather than simply carved for sale). This would help support both the continuance of Asmat traditions and bring greater local returns.

For each of these proposals, a considerable amount of thought and planning must take place. Developing a strong business plan that outlines the optimal marketing strategy and how to distribute profits back to the Asmat through a community trust fund is essential. Furthermore, IPCA must also ensure that any extractive activities are certified as ecologically sustainable.

IPCA is currently seeking funding for both a community microenterprise consultant and ecological sustainability consultant to help devise a formal business plan.

Donate Online!

Through our partners at Helping.Org, you can now make online donations to IPCA. Please visit:

http://www.indopacific.org/donors.html.

Asmat man dancing, Pirien village
Photo © John Burke Burnett, 1991.

Barito Clear-cut Logging Operation Ousted by Asmat

In late 2000, Barito Pacific, one of the most notorious Indonesian logging companies, began clear-cutting a large area of primary forest in the Simai area of Asmat northeast of Agats. LMAA, working with FAR-Simai, moved to shut down the operation operated by P.T. Mangole, a Barito subsidiary. Fortunately, only approximately 100 to 200 hectares (250 to 500 acres) were destroyed before the operations were forced to pull out. The area destroyed is still significant, but far less than the estimated 100,000 hectares that would have been destroyed had LMAA and the FAR not moved quickly to shut down the operation. Even the limited damage was not without significant negative impacts on local Asmat, however. Sago gardens and hunting areas were lost, and the cleared land filled with stagnant water, creating a large breeding area for malarial mosquitoes.

The vast scale of Mangole's plans to strip Asmat forests only recently became clear. Nev Kemp, Yufen Biakai and other LMAA staff, and FAR-Joerat conducted a survey of the area in January 2002, and were alarmed at the level of infrastructure put in place by the company before it was forced to pull out: over 15 kilometers of rail tracks, with several side branches, that were to be used to extract logs using skidders.

It's a tribute to LMAA and the FARs' commitment to conservation that they were able to react quickly to this logging threat, and to hit Barito with a claim for compensatory damages. Though it's unclear whether such compensation will ever be paid, these actions send a clear signal to irresponsible logging companies thinking of entering Asmat in the future.

Logging in Papua (Irian Jaya)

IPCA MOU with UNCEN, Plans Same with LIPI, Bishop, and Smithsonian

In March 2001, IPCA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Cenderawasih University (UNCEN) in Jayapura. This MOU reflects our commitment to work together to study and protect Papua's biodiversity and support the good stewardship of local peoples over their natural resources, and forms one of the operational foundations for IPCA's work in Papua. UNCEN will sponsor IPCA trainers and officers working in Papua, and facilitate our work in other important ways. In turn, IPCA is committed to working with UNCEN counterparts to transfer skills and understanding. Mr. Sam Renyaan, Head of UNCEN's Biology Department, is joining the IPCA-Hatfindo biological survey of the Tangguh project area. UNCEN is also interested in ethnobotanical research in Asmat to document uses of medicinal plants, which will strongly augment IPCA and LMAA's work there.

IPCA is also discussing an MOU with University of Papua (UNIPA), and a similar agreement with Indonesia's foremost scientific institution, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) based in Java. We have also reached agreements in principle for MOUs with the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution, and the Bernice P. Bishop Museum. In fact, our working relationships with these institutions are already strong — the lack thus far has been largely due to too many time commitments on all sides. We expect to finalize these in early 2002.

Introducing Nev Kemp

Neville (Nev) Kemp has been working as IPCA's Liaison Officer for Asmat program since February 2001. Nev has an M.A. in Forestry from his home country of Great Britain, and was formerly a VSO Officer tasked to the Biosphere Reserve on Siberut Island in West Sumatra. He has been working with our partners at LMAA and the various FAR councils based in Agats. Nev has been doing great work in a place that is logistically and climatically challenging – he's battled malaria, dengue fever, heat, humidity, pounding thunderstorms, treacherous seas, bugs, sunburn, and officious bureaucrats, in order to do the work of reaching out to remote Asmat villages and document the condition of the forests and seas.

Nev Kemp, Sam Renyaan (UNCEN), and Theo Desnem (LMAA)

"Despite all the bothers, Asmat is a really amazing place to work", Nev reports. "Asmat culture is incredibly rich and fascinating, the birdlife is brilliant, and the ongoing threats to Asmat biodiversity – and thus their entire way of life – are really critical. IPCA has a unique program with LMAA here in Asmat, and it's been really fascinating and challenging to try to make things go. And it's been gratifying to see some positive results come out of our work here. You look around Indonesia or other parts of Papua, and this sort of success is really rare."

> **"IPCA has a unique program here in Asmat, and it's been really fascinating and challenging to try to make things go."**

Nev has made significant personal sacrifices to carry out this critical work: he was married in July 2001, and so he's been spending several months at a time away from his new wife, Ninil, who lives in Surabaya, Java. He's also been working at near Peace Corps-level wages. Everyone who's been fortunate to meet Nev has come away impressed by his dedication, intelligence, understanding of ecological issues, and his impressive rapport with the Asmat people. LMAA is extremely fortunate to be working with Nev, who has been absolutely critical to our work in Asmat. **Note that one of our main priorities for 2002 is to find sources of funding to keep Nev's great work going, and only with your continued support can we continue his work there.** We need your continued support to make that happen.

Wall Street Journal Cites IPCA on Invasive Species Story

Reprinted courtesy of The Wall Street Journal

Environmentalists Fear Monkeys Will Destroy New Guinea Forest

The Wall Street Journal, Sept. 12, 2001
By Timothy Mapes, Staff Reporter
JAYAPURA, Indonesia

Yopi Muskita has spent the past seven years studying monkeys and their ways. Now he is ready to go to war. "If we don't kill them now, they can become very dangerous to our native species," says Mr. Yopi, a 42-year-old researcher for the World Wide Fund for Nature, as he walks along the edge of a tangled rainforest in search of a particularly aggressive monkey troop.

New Guinea, the largest tropical island on Earth, is one of the least-explored and least-understood wilderness regions in the world. Divided between the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya and the independent nation of Papua New Guinea, it is home to an astonishingly diverse collection of flora and fauna: kangaroos that live in trees, mammals that lay eggs, the world's tallest trees, its largest butterflies, its longest lizards the list goes on and on. But the monkeys, daring and ravenous, are new arrivals. Environmentalists worry that local wildlife that evolved for millions of years without having to worry about them could be quickly wiped out by a monkey onslaught.

New Guinea's latest arrivals are commonly known as crab-eating macaques, or *Macaca fascicularis* in Latin. But in fact they will eat most anything they can get their hands on. Ferocious competitors, they spend up to 90% of their waking hours foraging for fruit, insects, grasses and marine life -- thus stealing food from a host of New Guinea's native species. The crab-eaters also find the eggs of New Guinea's rare birds and reptiles especially tasty. Some biologists fear they pose a major threat to the endangered Birds of Paradise -- small- to mid-size forest birds whose brilliantly colored plumes and tail feathers have dazzled European fashion designers for centuries.

"These critters are the bubonic plague of invasive primates," says David Quammen, who has written a book showing how the same monkeys helped wipe out the flightless Dodo bird from the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius after being introduced by Dutch sailors in the 17th century. Mr. Quammen argues that the crab-eaters are one of a number of so-called weedy animals -- including rats, cockroaches, pigeons and, of course, humans -- that are highly mobile and can thrive in a wide range of environments. As they spread, overwhelming local species that aren't able to keep pace, the Earth will be transformed into "the Planet of Weeds," he predicts.

No one really knows how the monkeys got here. Some say Allied troops brought them in when they drove out the Japanese at

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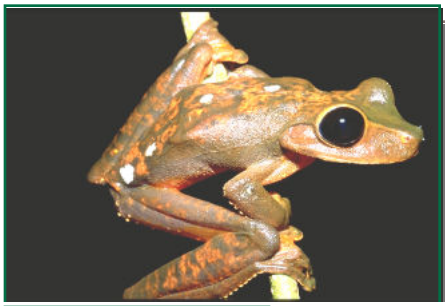

Scientists believe New Guinea's species are under major threat from introduced macaques and other alien species.
Top: *Cophixalis* frog species, Papua. Photo © Michael Moore, 1998
Bottom: Raggiana Bird of Paradise (*Paradisaea raggiana*); Photo © Bruce Beehler

Macaques!

Continued from Page 5

the end of World War II, using them to taste local fruits and plants before they were served to the men. A more plausible scenario is they were ferried here as pets by the thousands of Indonesians who moved to this region after Jakarta seized it from the Dutch in the early 1960s, and they then escaped to build their own communities in the jungles.

It also isn't clear exactly how many of the monkeys, distinguished by the pads on their bottoms that make it easier to sit in trees for long periods, are roaming the forests of New Guinea, a landmass nearly the size of Malaysia and Thailand combined. The WWF says at least six troops of between 20 and 30 each have been identified on the fringes of the forests near human settlements on the Indonesian side of the border. Scientists haven't ventured further into the jungle to see if the monkeys are spreading out of view, however.

Macaca fascicularis
Tony Whittaker, © Corbis

Mr. Yopi, a native of Indonesia's famed Spice Islands, spent years living in the forests of Sulawesi gathering monkey blood for studies on how the primates transmit diseases -- including the Herpes-B virus, which is non-lethal to monkeys but frequently fatal to humans. The stocky, curly haired researcher soon developed relationships with his studies, who recognized him so long as he didn't alter his appearance from day to day. He has little enthusiasm for plans to shoot the macaques or hunt them down with dogs, but fears there is no alternative.

Some local residents have developed a soft spot for the primates and hope their lives can be spared. That is the government's wish too. Mackbon, the local government's point man on the topic, suggests it could raise badly needed cash by trapping the monkeys and selling them to medical laboratories; crab-eaters are among the most widely used monkeys in research experiments. "I've heard that the price of these monkeys is quite good, especially in overseas markets," he says.

Ethical qualms aside, most environmentalists believe it would be nearly impossible to completely eliminate the highly intelligent and agile monkeys using traps alone. "With trapping, if you miss a few, they escape deeper into the forest, and you've got an even more intractable problem than before," says John Burke Burnett, Executive Director of the **Indo-Pacific Conservation Alliance**, who calls the monkeys an "ecosystem cancer" that will just reappear elsewhere unless it is eliminated now.

Agustinus Yumame, a lean, 32-year-old bean farmer, knows just how difficult trapping these monkeys will be. Every day, armed with a 60-centimeter machete, he patrols his bean fields, which sit on the edge of a dense monkey forest of tall trees and creepers. Raids of 20 or more monkeys are becoming more and more common, and increasingly sophisticated, he says. "Sometimes when they attack they leave a guard up in the tree. He keeps watch and then calls out when a human comes along and they all run away," he says.

The monkeys know when his cassava plants are ready to harvest, he says, and come to dig out the roots. "We can't go anywhere; we need to constantly guard our plants," he grumbles, standing barefoot in his fields as he warily eyes about a dozen brown-haired, long-tailed monkeys swinging through the trees, some 50 meters from his beanstalks. "The government should come and kill them all as soon as possible."

To be sure, scientists don't yet have much evidence that the monkeys have harmed native wildlife. While several studies have illustrated a drop in numbers of Birds of Paradise and other species, no serious examination has been done on the role the monkeys have played in the decline.

Yet there is ample evidence from around the world that monkeys and other so-called invasive species can be just as dangerous as better-known threats to New Guinea's environment, such as logging and mining or the population growth.

While damage from mining, for example, can be cleaned up over time, invasive species tend to stay forever and can alter the ecological balance in irreversible ways. That is what happened in Guam, where the arrival of the brown tree snake after World War II led to the extinction of nearly all of the Pacific island's native birds in just a few years. Hawaii offers another classic example: The state now accounts for about one-quarter of all of the endangered species in the U.S., as pigs, goats, coconut palms and strawberry guava plants introduced by humans push aside the unique plant and animal life that developed there over thousands of years.

In fact, monkeys aren't New Guinea's only invaders. The Climbing Perch, a freshwater fish, can survive several days out of water using a special chamber above the gills to breath air, and can wriggle long distances along the ground using its fins and gills. When larger local fish try to eat it, the resourceful perch extends sharp spines, often killing its would-be predator.

But for New Guinea's monkeys, time may be running out. The WWF plans to hold a meeting of government officials, scientists and environmental groups here next month to devise a joint strategy for eliminating them from the forests, one way or another.

"One feels sorry for the monkeys -- it wasn't their fault. But they're just in the wrong place," says Mr. Burnett. "It's either the monkeys or the New Guinea fauna. *Macaca fascicularis* is doing just fine in many other places, but New Guinea species? They've got no place else to go."

Indo-Pacific Biodiversity At A Glance

% of Total Global Species	Indonesia	Papua New Guinea	USA
Mammals *	11%	5%	9%
Birds *	17%	8%	8%
Reptiles *	8%	5%	4%
Amphibians *	6%	5%	5%
Freshwater Fishes *	7%	2%	4%
Insects †	5%	4%	3%
Plants †	15%	8%	7%
Marine Fishes †	22%	22%	5%‡
Marine Invertebrates †	25%	25%	5%‡

***Based on documented species only. Total actual percentages for many Indo-Pacific taxa are likely higher.**
†Estimated. ‡Hawaii only.

About our Partners and Work in Asmat

The Asmat, a group of some 70,000 indigenous people in the southern lowlands of Irian Jaya (Papua), Indonesia, are perhaps the most famous woodcarvers in the Pacific. In 1999, IPCA was invited by Asmat leaders to work with them through their new organization, *Lembaga Musyawarah Adat Asmat* (LMAA), whose mission is to empower Asmat communities through education, sustainable development, and the conservation of natural resources. LMAA is led by Chairman Yufen Biakai, Vice-Chair Amandus Anakat, Secretary Wiro Birif, and Treasurer Ernes Dicim.

Asmat's cultural and natural heritage is threatened by destructive logging and fishing. Our program with LMAA is helping the Asmat take responsible steps for a sustainable future. We are providing equipment and training to LMAA, and reaching out to villages to increase local awareness of the importance of sustainable management of natural resources. Our goal is to empower LMAA and mobilize the Asmat people to manage natural resources sustainably, for their own long-term benefit.

LMAA has set up local FAR Councils (*Forum Adat Rumpun*) for each Asmat sub-ethnic group (ex. *Joerat*, *Safan*, *Simai*, *Bismam*, et. al.), to provide consultative forums to discuss emerging environmental and social issues in Asmat and the steps needed to address those threats. The FAR Councils have played a critical role in mobilizing support for conservation actions.

In summary, IPCA:

- **Provides training & equipment** to LMAA to build their institutional capacity to undertake activities effectively;
- Carries out study tours for Asmat to degraded habitat, as part of **an environmental education program** to illustrate the negative social and economic consequences of logging and commercial fishing, and enhance Asmat villagers' understanding of the importance of sustainable development;
- **Monitors, documents and maps biologically & socially critical habitat** in order to document especially important or sensitive areas that should be off-limits to outside exploitation. We also plan carry out the **first-ever biological survey** of Asmat's forests, rivers, and seas.

We have achieved excellent results in 2001, while most other areas of Papua and Indonesia saw continued destruction. Please consider a donation to IPCA to keep our work going strong.

The threats are immediate and ongoing. We have achieved excellent results in 2001, while most other areas of Papua and Indonesia saw continued destruction. IPCA feels that the conservation successes of LMAA and the FAR demonstrate the importance and the need for conservation organizations to focus efforts on the grassroots in order to mobilize their support for sustainable development and rejection of destructive projects. It is difficult and time-consuming work, but we've shown that it brings positive results.

Top: LMAA leaders, including Yufen Biakai (center) and Donatus Pombai (right). Middle: Asmat kids, Pirien village. Bottom: New LMAA office, made possible by IPCA funding.
Photos by John Burke Burnett

CI Marine Survey in Papua Uncovers Amazing Richness

An international team of biologists organized by Conservation International's (CI) Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CABS) and in conjunction with Cenderawasih University, has discovered what is perhaps the world's richest repository of marine biodiversity. [Editor's note: IPCA is not affiliated with CI or CABS.] During a survey of the Raja Ampat Islands off the west coast of Papua, Indonesia, researchers identified *456 species of hard corals* (over half the world's total known scleractinian species) and *828 species of reef fish*, including four species new to science. This makes the Rajas one of the highest diversity marine sites ever sampled anywhere in the world. In addition to its amazing richness under the sea, several islands in the Rajas have bird-of-paradise species found nowhere else.

Coral reefs worldwide are under extreme threat from global warming, logging-related siltation, agricultural run-off, dynamite bombing, and cyanide fishing. Indeed, CI researchers found that about 15% of the sites surveyed in the Rajas have been impacted by illegal fishing techniques and siltation. IPCA congratulates CI and CABS for this highly important contribution to conservation science, and hopes that this survey will pave the way for new integrated marine and terrestrial conservation initiatives to protect the unparalleled biodiversity of the Raja Ampat Islands.

Indo-Pacific reef , Photo © Wolcott Henry

Thanks to:

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Anemonefish (*Amphiprion perideraion*) resting in anemone
Photo © Wolcott Henry

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About IPCA

The Indo-Pacific Conservation Alliance (IPCA) is a non-profit scientific and educational organization dedicated to the study and conservation of the native ecosystems of the tropical Indo-Pacific region and support for traditional peoples in their stewardship of these globally significant natural resources.

IPCA is organized in collaborative association with scientists at The Bernice P. Bishop Museum (Honolulu), the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, and other scientific and conservation organizations. Until IPCA was formed, no organization was specifically geared to providing requisite conservation science information to decision-makers and resource managers in the Indo-Pacific region.

Our geographic scope is the "Four '-nesias" of the Indo-Pacific — Indonesia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Currently, our work is focused on the Indonesian province of Papua (Irian Jaya), and we hope to expand our portfolio of projects to other parts of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Micronesia in the very near future.

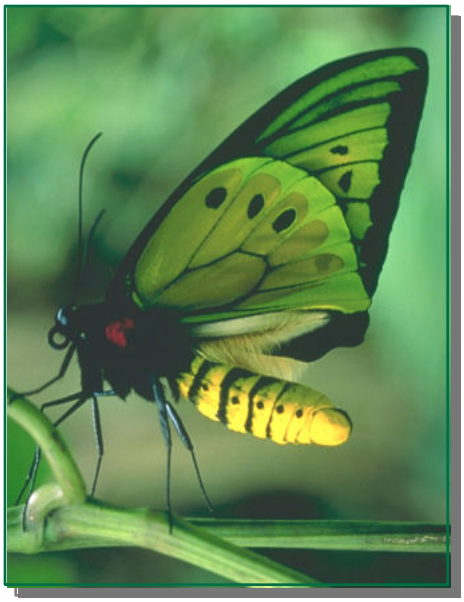
IPCA is filling a crucial gap by providing training and information on conservation science to national and local governments, local communities, and the private sector. This will help facilitate more practical and sound approaches to watershed-based terrestrial and marine resource management.

IPCA's approach is to:

- ***Empower*** local community organizations to sustainably manage their natural resources, by providing tools, training and environmental education;
- ***Generate and mobilize*** scientific data on an area's biotic resources in order to provide baseline knowledge critical to carrying out sound conservation strategies;
- ***Carry out*** economic studies on ecosystem resources (including valuation studies) in order to provide sound economic arguments for biodiversity protection;
- ***Activate*** this information to facilitate improved land management and to enhance the policy context in which development and conservation decisions are made.

We're on the Web!

www.indopacific.org



Birdwing butterfly (*Ornithoptera* sp. Arfak Mnts., Papua, Indonesia
Photo courtesy George Steinmetz, © 1996

New Board Member, Tony Whitten & New Advisors, Dea Sudarman & Cynthia Mackie

IPCA is pleased and honored to welcome Dr. Tony Whitten to our board in June 2001. Dr. Whitten is Senior Biodiversity Specialist at the World Bank, and oversees the Bank's environmental and biodiversity policies in East Asia. He first visited Indonesia in 1976 to conduct dissertation fieldwork on Siberut Island, and has since spent many years studying Indonesia's biodiversity, and actively assessing and facilitating conservation projects in Indonesia and other areas of Southeast Asia. His books include several volumes in the *Ecology of Indonesia* series (which he founded), *Wild Indonesia*, *The Gibbons of Siberut,* and many others.

We're also honored to have two new Advisors. In June 2001, IPCA welcomed Ms. Dea Sudarman, Executive Director of the Sejati Foundation in Jakarta, to our Advisory Board. Ms. Sudarman is both a documentary filmmaker and a key player in several important land-rights projects in eastern Indonesia. A long-time friend of the Asmat and other Papuan peoples, Dea has provided important support and advice to IPCA's work.

In November 2001, Dr. Cynthia Mackie joined the Advisory Board. Dr. Mackie is former Vice President for Asia-Pacific Programs at Conservation International, and now an independent consultant on biodiversity conservation programs in Southeast Asia. Dr. Mackie conducted her fieldwork on the human ecology of the Apo Kayan region of Kalimantan, and has just returned to Washington DC after several years in Jakarta. We're glad to see her back in the States, and look forward to her insight and input.

Update Your Atlas: Irian Jaya is Now Papua

In December 2001, the Indonesian government officially changed the name of its easternmost province from Irian Jaya to Papua. Local Papuans have long sought this change to reflect their aspiration to a new era of provincial autonomy and cultural dignity within the Indonesian state.

New Asmat Art Collection in Kansas

The Lowell D. Holmes Museum of Anthropology at Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas recently received a 950-piece collection of Asmat artifacts. The pieces, including over 100 drums, 60 shields, 16 *bisj* poles, and a 30-foot long *wuramon* (soul ship), were collected by Mr. Jerry Martin, Curator of the Holmes Museum and IPCA Board Member Patti Seery in mid-2001. With this collection, made possible by IPCA supporters Barry and Paula Downing, WSU becomes one of the few institutions in the U.S. to have a significant Asmat collection. Furthermore, most museum collections that do exist were made thirty to forty years ago, so the recent acquisitions are an invaluable resource for researchers.

Indo-Pacific Conservation Alliance
at the Bishop Museum
1525 Bernice Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

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Please be a Friend of IPCA

Please consider a contribution to IPCA to help continue our conservation work in the Indo-Pacific. Your gift will cover the costs of our work in Asmat and other important activities in support of conservation and sustainable development in the region. IPCA was formed in 1998 in association with scientists from the Smithsonian Institution and The Bishop Museum in Honolulu. One of our guiding strategies is to meet our objectives with minimal overhead and to focus our resources into the field. Doing more with less will continue to be how we go about our work. IPCA is a recognized 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, and contributions are eligible for tax-deduction as permitted by law.

Please fill out the following form and send your check to: Indo-Pacific Conservation Alliance, at the Bishop Museum, 1525 Bernice Street, Honolulu, HI 96817. For more information please phone Burke Burnett at 808-848-4124 or email at: info@indopacific.org.

Many thanks!

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IPCA
Indo-Pacific Conservation Alliance

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