

Rapid Assessment Program

CI created the Rapid Assessment Program (RAP) in 1990 to provide biological information quickly in order to catalyze conservation action and improve biodiversity protection. Frequently, in a race against imminent forces of destruction such as logging and mining, small RAP teams of expert international and host country field biologists conduct 3–4 week first-cut assessments of the biological value of selected areas. RAP scientists record the diversity of selected indicator groups of organisms and analyze this information in tandem with social, environmental and other ecosystem information.

CI then follows up with practical conservation recommendations to international policymakers, conservationists and decisionmakers in local governmental and nongovernmental agencies, preventing further biodiversity loss. These recommendations are based on the sound evidence of the area's biological diversity, degree of endemism, uniqueness of its ecosystems and its risk of extinction.

RAP HAS THREE COMPONENTS:

Terrestrial RAP

Terrestrial RAP assesses the biological diversity of poorly known terrestrial ecosystems for which biological information is needed in order to take conservation action. RAP scientists gather and report information about vegetation structure, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects.

Aqua RAP

Aqua RAP provides a first-cut assessment of the biological value of freshwater aquatic ecosystems in order to identify priorities and opportunities for conservation. Aqua RAP's expert teams survey fish, plants, invertebrates, water quality and sometimes amphibians and reptiles.

Marine RAP

Marine RAP generates and disseminates information on coastal and near-shore shallow-water marine biodiversity for conservation purposes, focusing particularly on recommending priorities for conservation area establishment and management.

Litoria sp., one of 29 new species of frog discovered on a 1998 RAP expedition to Papua (formerly Irian Jaya), Indonesia.



RAP HOTSPOTS INDEX

- Number of major protected areas established due in large part to recommendations based on RAP findings: 6
- Number of acres of tropical rainforest conserved within these six protected areas: more than 8 million
- Number of new reptile and amphibian species among 70 collected during a four-day trip to Colombia's Chocó: 10
- Number of new coral species Marine RAP discovered in less than five weeks of surveying two areas in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea: 40
- Number of butterfly species RAP discovered in Vilcabamba, Peru: 20

RAP'S LASTING SUCCESS

CI's Rapid Assessment Program, the brain-child of Nobel Prize-winning physicist Murray Gell-Mann and the late CI ornithologist Theodore A. Parker III, is celebrating its 11th anniversary this year. Often operating one step ahead of destruction, RAP surveys continue to make conservation assessments that save thousands of acres of rain forests and other valuable ecosystems.

HOW TO LEARN MORE

For more information about CI's programs, please visit www.conservation.org.

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RAP survey results are available on the Internet and in preliminary reports. Final reports, with complete species lists, are published within a few years of each expedition.