



# ropinet

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Design by **Katherine Hartman**

## THE DRAGON AND THE RAINFOREST

**William F. Laurance**

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In July of last year, China hosted the ATBC annual conference, in the beautiful, subtropical city of Kunming. I had the honor of presiding over the conference, which included delegates from 43 countries around the world.

All involved in the conference were struck not only by its flawless organization and the great warmth of our Chinese hosts, but also by the extraordinary growth of environmental research in tropical Asia. Although many of our members live in the Americas or Europe, all three winners of our prestigious student and young-researcher awards were Asian or affiliated with Asian universities. This speaks volumes about the vibrancy and dynamism of Asian science today.

These impressive advances come at a critical time, for tropical Asia faces serious and growing environmental problems. Increasingly, a major driver of these changes is the stunning economic growth in China, which has created huge demands for imported timber, minerals, and other natural resources. As it emerges from its slumber, the Chinese dragon is having an increasing impact on the world's rainforests.

Tropical rainforests mostly occur in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Although limited in extent, they sustain over half of all known plant and animal species. Rainforests also perform essential ecosystem services. They greatly reduce flooding, protect fragile soils, store huge amounts of carbon that would otherwise increase global warming, contain a cornucopia of natural products that benefit humanity, and provide homes for many indigenous peoples.

China is making good progress in protecting its own surviving forests and in creating new tree plantations, but its industries have developed an enormous appetite for rainforest timber. The timber is mostly used for making furniture, plywood, and disposable chopsticks, much of which is exported for sale overseas.

China is actively buying and importing timber throughout the tropics, but especially from Asian and Pacific nations—particularly Indonesia, Myanmar, and Papua New Guinea. Although timber-cutters do not intentionally destroy the forests, they bulldoze networks of roads and tracks that greatly increase access for slash-and-burn farmers and hunters, who then raze the forests and kill their wildlife. In this way, industrial logging is a critical, if indirect, driver of forest destruction.

The problem is especially severe in Indonesia, which is losing 2-3 million hectares of forest every year—equivalent to roughly ten football fields a minute. There, as elsewhere in Asia, much of the logging is illegal, with timber-cutters paying bribes to steal and illegally export the

timber. Most of the timber entering China's commercial markets today is stolen and harvested in an environmentally destructive manner.

This is a dangerous situation for Chinese business. Europe and North America buy two-thirds of China's furniture and wood exports, and powerful environmental organizations there have their eye on China. For example, the influential Rainforest Action Network is promoting a major boycott of timber products from Indonesian old-growth forests, and is considering a similar boycott of Chinese products.

Such actions could have a big impact on Chinese exports. Boycotts initiated by environmental groups have a major effect on consumer preferences, and have forced some



of the largest furniture chains in North America and Europe to stop selling products from old-growth forests. Meanwhile, "green" timber products—those produced in an environmentally sustainable manner and sold at a premium price—accounted for \$7.4 billion in sales in the United States alone last year, and are expected to grow to \$38 billion there by 2010. In the modern business world where being green is rewarded and not being green is punished, developing a reputation as an environmental bad-guy can be fatal.

To avoid possible boycotts and damage to its international reputation, China will need to be far more careful about the tropical timber it buys and imports. Reputable organizations, such as the Forest Stewardship Council ([www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)) and Rainforest Alliance ([www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)), can recommend timber suppliers that harvest

native forests in a sustainable manner or use eco-certified plantations. These organizations are also working to make North American and European consumers more aware that the furniture and wood products they buy must be harvested sustainably.

With its enormous population and burgeoning economy, China could play a vital role in preserving rainforests, simply by choosing to import only sustainably harvested timber. Achieving this, however, will take a concerted effort on the part of Chinese citizens, legislators, and businesspeople alike. With wisdom and foresight, the Chinese dragon can continue to prosper while helping to ensure that the world's rainforests survive too.

*William Laurance is President of the ATBC, and a Senior Scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. A similar version of this essay was published, in Chinese, in the Newsletter of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.*



## Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

### Fellowships in Tropical Biology

The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), in the Republic of Panama, is a division of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC and maintains research facilities in different marine and terrestrial locations on the Isthmus of Panama. STRI offers fellowships for undergraduate, pre-doctoral, and post-doctoral research in the areas of research represented by its scientific staff. Disciplines include ecology, anthropology, paleontology, paleoecology, evolutionary biology, molecular phylogenetics, biogeography, animal behavior, neurobiology, soils sciences, and physiology of tropical plants and animals. Staff and research interests are listed at <http://www.stri.org>.

**STRI Earl S. Tupper 3-year Postdoctoral Fellowship (deadline: 15 January 2007):** Applications should include detailed research proposal with budget, curriculum vitae, 2 letters of recommendation, names and telephone numbers of 3 additional references. Applicants should consult with STRI scientists who will serve as advisors before submitting final application. For more information: [fellows@si.edu](mailto:fellows@si.edu).

**SI Postdoctoral, Senior Postdoctoral and Predoctoral Fellowships (deadline: 15 January 2007):** From 3 months up to two years depending on research. Available through the Office of Research Training and Services, Victor Building Suite 9300, MRC 902, PO Box 37012, Washington DC 20013-7012 or visit [www.si.edu/research+study](http://www.si.edu/research+study)

**SI Molecular Evolution Fellowships (deadline: 15 January 2007):** Available through the Office of Research Training and Services, Victor Building Suite 9300, MRC 902, PO Box 37012, Washington DC 20013-7012 or visit [www.si.edu/research+study](http://www.si.edu/research+study)

**STRI Short Term Fellowships (deadlines: Feb 15, May 15, Aug 15, and Nov 15)** through STRI. For information, visit [www.stri.org](http://www.stri.org). Proposals in Spanish are accepted.

**STRI Fellowship Program for students in Latin America (deadlines: Feb 14, May 15, Aug 15, and Nov 15).** Candidates must be from universities in Latin America, particularly Central America, to carry out short-term projects and/or internships. For more information, see instructions for short-term fellowships and internships, [www.stri.org](http://www.stri.org), or contact [fellows@si.edu](mailto:fellows@si.edu). Proposals in Spanish are accepted.

STRI applications may be submitted either in English or in Spanish. Applications consist of one (1) printed copy, plus one electronic copy of all requested materials. The electronic copy should be submitted on a CD or by e-mail, as a single file in Word, WordPerfect or preferably PDF, including application form, proposal with budget and CV. Send hard copy of the application to STRI/Office of Academic Programs, Unit 0948, APO AA 34002-0948 from the US or Apartado 0843-03092, Balboa, Panama from Latin America. Electronic version should be sent to [fellows@si.edu](mailto:fellows@si.edu). Note: For those interested in applying to the SI Postdoctoral, Senior Postdoctoral, and Predoctoral Fellowships and the Molecular Evolution Fellowships, besides the copies requested in the guidelines provided by the Office of Research Training and Services, please submit one electronic copy of application form, proposal/budget and CV to [fellows@si.edu](mailto:fellows@si.edu). Awards are based upon merit, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or condition of handicap of the applicant.

## Pondok Ambung Research Station Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

The Pondok Ambung Research Station is situated inside Tanjung Puting National Park, Central Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo. Tanjung Puting lies three degrees below the equator and covers an area of 4,016 km<sup>2</sup>. The park provides one of the largest protected areas of tropical peat swamp and heath forest in Southeast Asia.

Pondok Ambung was recently completely refurbished and reopened by the Orangutan Foundation UK. This was made possible with support from The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation. The



research station is positioned in a beautiful location on the Sekonyer Kanan, a black-water river. Around the research station there is an established trail network covering approximately two kilometers of mixed riverine, peat swamp and dry-land habitat. Pondok Ambung is only four kilometers downstream from Camp Leakey, a research site, which offers an additional 50 km<sup>2</sup> of study area. Camp Leakey was established by Dr. Biruté Galdikas, President of the

Orangutan Foundation International, whose Orangutan Research and Conservation Programme began there in 1971.

The research station provides excellent facilities for visiting scientists. There is sleeping accommodation for 14 people in four separate rooms, a workroom, dining hall, kitchen, washrooms, toilets and outside relaxation area. Solar powered electricity provides power for lighting, laptops and battery charging. There is a VHF radio link to the town of Pangkalan Bun (the district capital approximately four hours away by boat). Field assistants and a cook are provided and there is a motorized long-boat. Transport around Tanjung Puting is included in the research station's fees. Camp Leakey has an Information Centre with a fully equipped lecture room, LCD projector and library available for use by student groups.

Pondok Ambung is ideally suited for all and we welcome university summer schools or field courses. Potential research subjects could include mammalian surveys, avian surveys, river quality and hydrology (including fish stocks), forest succession, meteorological studies (solar radiation, evaporation rates, micro-climate studies), invertebrate studies, socio-cultural and agricultural studies.

Since 2004 the park has hosted two studies on gibbons (*Hylobates agilis*) (University of Edinburgh & Copenhagen), as well

as work on orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus*) (Max Planck Institute), bats (University of East Anglia), frogs (University of Edinburgh) and the false gharial (*Tomistoma schlegelii*) (University of Bonn).

The Park has a diverse range of lowland habitat types, including dry ground forests, swamps, lakes and mangrove/nipah palm (*Nypa fruticans*) associations along the coast. Dipterocarps, particularly *Shorea* sp., are common on the edges of swamps and along the rivers. All swamps in Tanjung Puting are peat-based and acidic. There are also patches of secondary forest, growing on land historically cleared for farming. Throughout the park over 600 tree species and 200 orchid species have been recorded.

Pondok Ambung was originally established in the late 1980s, for the study of the endemic proboscis monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*). Tanjung Puting has eight primate species and over 28 species of large mammals, including the clouded leopard, civet and Malaysian sun bear. There are over 220 bird species and many reptile, amphibian and fish species. The highly endangered "dragon" fish, also known as the Arwana (bony-tongue), is found in the park's rivers. The large number and diverse range of species found in Tanjung Puting National Park make it one of the most important



*A view of the facilities at Pondok Ambung; photo by Dr. Mark Fellows, Reading University.*

and valuable areas in Southeast Asia for habitat protection and for wildlife conservation.

For further information please contact the Orangutan Foundation, 7 Kent Terrace London NW1 4RP, UK at [info@orangutan.org.uk](mailto:info@orangutan.org.uk) or by telephone at 00 44 0207 724 2912 [www.orangutan.org.uk](http://www.orangutan.org.uk)

## ATBC Asian Chapter to convene first annual meeting, 6–8 March, in India

To help further the aims of the ATBC in the Asia-Pacific region, an Asian Chapter was launched this past summer at the ATBC annual meeting in Kunming, China. The first annual meeting, "Averting biodiversity meltdown in the Asian tropics," is to be held at Mahabalipuram, near Chennai (formerly known as Madras) India on 6-8th March 2007. A brochure and registration form are available at [www.ifpindia.org/atbc](http://www.ifpindia.org/atbc). Early registration ends on January 15, 2007.

Mahabalipuram is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, featuring ancient temples and rock carvings almost 2000 years old. Dr Peter Ashton, who recently received an ATBC lifetime achievement award, will give the keynote address and Dr William F. Laurance, ATBC President, will give a valedictory speech. Post conference excursions to the Western Ghats and Andaman Islands are also being arranged. Please join us!

Rhett Harrison  
Secretary, ATBC-Asia Chapter



*The Sekonyer Kanan, a black-water river near the station.*



## The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

# All In a Day's Work

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The words 'journal' and 'journey' share the same Latin root, *diurnus*, which means *day*. Indeed, *Biotropica* has certainly filled my days over the past three years or so (and even a few nights). During most of this time, it felt like *Biotropica* was a large ship heading on a journey. Its destinations? Your home ports. The cargo? A rich supply of high quality and fascinating research products. I am pleased to report that the ship is in fine shape, and the journey is succeeding.

My goals when I began as Editor in June 2003 have now been reached. It is time for a new Editor to continue both the journal and the journey. As many of you know, Jaboury Ghazoul has already taken over most of the duties of Editor and will be fully in charge by the end of 2006. The six-month transition has permitted a gradual shift of duties to achieve seamless continuity. Manuscript submission and review will continue to be handled as before through our Manuscript Central website: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bitr>, and the journal will continue to be co-published with Blackwell Publishing.

*Biotropica* is reaching more tropical biologists than ever before and at a much faster pace. During 2005, our institutional circulation grew from 415 to 3278 (790%), and membership increased from 689 to 879 (127.5%). During the first six months of 2006, 29,869 *Biotropica* articles were downloaded from Synergy, more than double the total number downloaded for all of 2005. We now publish six issues per year, journal content is online (dating back to 1997), and articles are available and fully searchable online at least one month prior to print publication. Our content has broadened; we publish special sections, controversial commentaries, and synthetic reviews that attract wide attention. But perhaps the most significant change is that the timing of decisions and publication has been greatly decreased due to electronic submission/review and the diligent work of subject editors and cooperative reviewers. In 2003, it took, on average 146 days to reach the first decision on manuscripts, and 328 days for final acceptance. From September 2005 to September 2006, the average number of days to first decision was reduced to 42 and average number of days to final acceptance was 91. The number of submissions has been increasing steadily each year, and has now reached 400/yr. As a result, we have had to become increasingly selective; the acceptance rate during the past year was lowered to 23 percent, on par with many of the world's leading international journals. *Biotropica*'s Impact Factor has been on the rise since 2002 and is now 1.094, which is excellent for a specialty journal. So, if you were thinking of sending your next tropical

biology or conservation paper to a widely-read, high-profile, fast journal, *Biotropica* is it!

We are proud of our global base of authors, reviewers, and subject editors. In 2005, we received manuscripts with corresponding authors from 39 countries. Even so, the Americas still account for over 60% of our corresponding authors. To broaden the geographic scope of our publication, the Editorial Board has approved a change in our publishing policy. Effective January 1, 2007, English will be the sole language for submitted manuscripts. To make English papers more accessible to non-English readers, we strongly encourage the publication of second-language abstracts in whatever language is most appropriate for the country where the research was conducted. These second abstracts will be published as on-line supplemental material, linked to each paper, and will serve to provide an accessible summary for scientists and non-scientists alike. We hope that these changes will encourage more submissions from authors studying in Africa, Asia, and Australia/Oceania. Information on this, and some other minor changes, are available on the Blackwell Science and ATBC web pages (see below).

In the coming year, I will remain involved with guiding *Biotropica* and supporting Jaboury's efforts to keep the journal on a productive course. Please let us know your ideas and concerns. As we work together with Blackwell to remain competitive, financially solvent, and on the forefront of publishing technology, our best resource is you, as both reader and author, and you again, as valued reviewers. Read our articles, and send us your very best manuscripts! Send us also comments, suggestions, photos, ideas for special sections, commentaries and reviews. Recommend *Biotropica* to your library, your colleagues, your students, and your professors. Spread the word about our high quality, fast publication. Visit our updated websites at <http://www.atbio.org/biotropica.html> and <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0006-3606&site=1> for more information about our editorial board, submitting manuscripts, subscriptions, author guidelines, and a free sample issue. And remember, students can sign up for free on-line journal subscriptions for up to three years!

I want to take this opportunity to thank Kevin Bardelski for his excellent assistance and support in the *Biotropica* Office and to thank Asdis Thorsteinsson, our production editor at Blackwell, who worked behind the scenes to make everything turn out just right. I also thank John Kress and Marjorie Spencer for their support and guidance. We have worked very well as a team and have paved the way for Jaboury and Christopher Kaiser, his assistant, to take *Biotropica* across new horizons.

It has been a pleasure serving you as Editor. I sincerely thank everyone I have worked with for your impassioned commitment to understanding and conserving the world's tropical biota. You have all taught me a great deal and I have loved the journal... and the journey, every day.

## ATBC CONSERVATION COMMITTEE RESOLUTION NO. 8

# PRONUNCIAMIENTO PARA QUE SE DETENGAN LAS INVASIONES DE MINEROS ILEGALES EN LA CUENCA DEL RÍO CAURA, VENEZUELA

WHEREAS the Rio Caura Basin in Venezuelan Guayana is one of the richest and most important forest areas on the planet because of its megadiverse biota, high cultural diversity, large freshwater discharge, striking natural vistas, and other environmental services it provides to society; and

WHEREAS the Rio Caura Basin is one of the last largely pristine basins in the tropical world, encompassing 5 million hectares in area, which makes it of exceptional value as a natural laboratory; and

WHEREAS the forests of the Rio Caura Basin store an estimated 1.4 billion metric tonnes of biomass, equivalent to more than 700 million tonnes of carbon, such that deforesting the area would emit enormous quantities of greenhouse gases that would accelerate global warming; and

WHEREAS the Rio Caura Basin contains more than 2,600 vascular plant species that account for 17% of the botanical diversity in Venezuela and 28% of the botanical diversity of the entire Guayana region; and it contains more than 88% of the endemic plants known for the Guayana region; and

WHEREAS the Caura Basin contains remarkably diverse terrestrial animal communities, including 168 mammal species, 475 bird species, 34 amphibian species, and 53 reptile species, which collectively account for a third of all animal species known in Venezuela and over half (53%) of all species from Venezuelan Guayana; and

WHEREAS aquatic communities are also extraordinarily diverse in the Caura Basin, with 441 species of fish identified to date. Of these, 13 are endemic to Venezuela and 251 are restricted to Venezuelan Guayana, with 35 considered to be in danger of extinction. In addition, 240 aquatic invertebrate species have been identified, of which 110 are aquatic insect genera new to science; and

WHEREAS the Caura basin contains one of the largest Neotropical expanses of riparian forest, an ecosystem that is known to regulate the physical and chemical characteristics of the neighboring aquatic habitats and the regional hydrological cycle; and

WHEREAS the Rio Caura Basin is being imperiled by recent waves of invading illegal gold miners within its natural and protected areas, including Brazilians, Colombians, Guianans, and Venezuelans; and

WHEREAS numerous Venezuelan researchers, including those at the Center for Ecological and Anthropological Research, National University of Guayana (UNEG) - Bolívar campus, at the Antonio Jose de Sucre Polytechnic University (UNEXPO) - Guayana, at the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC), at the Western University (UDO), and the La Salle Foundation for the Natural Sciences - Guayana and Caracas, have raised repeated concerns that illegal gold mining could irreversibly damage natural areas in the Rio Caura Basin, especially because economically viable decontamination and habitat-restoration measures are not in place; and these researchers fully support the Ye'kwana, Sanema and Hoti peoples, whose cultural and environmental integrity is being gravely threatened by mining;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation:

- URGES the Government of Venezuela to take immediate steps to protect natural areas in the Rio Caura Basin in accordance with Venezuelan laws, and to promote respect for the security and basic human rights of all stakeholders in the Basin; and
- URGES the Government of Venezuela to take action to stop death threats and intimidation against indigenous peoples and environmentalists by violent elements within the mining community; and
- RECOMMENDS that the Government of Venezuela declare the complete protection of the Rio Caura Basin; and
- URGES the Government of Venezuela to officially recognize the rights of indigenous peoples of the Caura Basin to their land, thereby reinforcing their longstanding roles in conserving and enriching these environments; and
- RECOMMENDS that the Government of Venezuela facilitate sustainable-development projects to assist the indigenous peoples of the Caura Basin, with further support from nongovernmental groups, research institutes, and universities; and
- URGES the Government of Venezuela to ensure the long-term security and monitoring of the Basin to guarantee its conservation and protection from rampant illegal gold mining, for the benefit of local, regional, national, and global communities.

CONSIDERANDO que la Cuenca del río Caura constituye una de las áreas boscosas más ricas e importantes del planeta por su megadiversidad biológica, su diversidad cultural, su alta producción hídrica, hermosos paisajes naturales y otros servicios ambientales prestados a la humanidad.

CONSIDERANDO que la Cuenca del Caura es una de las últimas cuencas en gran parte prístinas del mundo tropical, con 5 millones de hectáreas, lo cual le confiere un altísimo valor como laboratorio natural.

CONSIDERANDO que la Cuenca del Caura por su cobertura boscosa y estado prístino presta servicios ambientales contra el calentamiento global al producir 1,4 billones de toneladas estimados de biomasa equivalentes a más de 700 millones de toneladas de carbono. Su deforestación emitiría enormes cantidades de carbono que acelerarían el proceso de cambio climático global, aspecto fundamental en el marco de las negociaciones del protocolo de Kyoto.

CONSIDERANDO que la Cuenca del Caura tiene bellezas escénicas incomparables.

CONSIDERANDO que la Cuenca del Caura posee más de 2.600 especies de plantas vasculares y sostiene el 17% de la diversidad vegetal de Venezuela y el 28% de la diversidad vegetal de Guayana y que, de las plantas endémicas registradas para la Guayana, el Caura posee 88,3%.

CONSIDERANDO que el Caura posee comunidades de animales terrestres muy diversas incluyendo 168 especies de mamíferos, 475 especies de aves, 34 especies de anfibios y 53 especies de reptiles que

colectivamente contienen una tercera de las especies animales registradas en Venezuela y más de mitad de las especies de la Guayana Venezolana.

CONSIDERANDO que las comunidades acuáticas de la cuenca del Río Caura son también extraordinariamente diversas con 441 especies de peces que han sido registrados hasta ahora. De éstos, 13 son especies endémicas de Venezuela y 251 están restringidas a la Guayana venezolana y 35 en peligro de extinción. Han sido registrado, además, 240 especies de invertebrados de las cuáles 110 son insectos acuáticos con un género nuevo para la ciencia

CONSIDERANDO que la Cuenca del Caura posee una de las mas grandes extensiones neotropicales de bosques ribereños, los cuales regulan las características físicas y químicas de los ecosistemas acuáticos adyacentes y del ciclo hidrológico regional.

CONSIDERANDO que las poblaciones indígenas tradicionales de la cuenca, Ye'kwana, Sanema y Hoti dependen directamente para su supervivencia de los recursos naturales (agua, plantas, fauna) que ella posee utilizando el 70% de la plantas de la región.

CONSIDERANDO que las poblaciones no indígenas (criollas) del bajo Caura y otras poblaciones indígenas recién migradas a la zona (Hiwi, Piapoco y Pemón) beben el agua del Caura y dependen de los recursos naturales (caza y pesca) para su alimentación y sustento.

CONSIDERANDO que la minería es una actividad altamente depredadora, que promueve la violencia contra el ambiente y entre las personas, que genera desarraigo, despago a la convivencia, ilegalidad e injusticias.

CONSIDERANDO que la minería dispersa en grandes áreas mercurio elemental el cual posteriormente se transforma en compuestos tóxicos como el metilmercurio; destruye los suelos; aumenta la carga sedimentaria (minería de oro aluvional) en los ríos con la consecuente alteración de su dinámica hidráulica y de los hábitat y biota ribereña existente; deforesta el bosque ribereño con la consecuente desaparición y extinción local de las especies; contamina los peces con mercurio y por ende a las poblaciones humanas que los consumen; disminuye el recurso pesquero que es la principal fuente de sustento de las poblaciones del área; sobreexplota los recursos naturales por el aumento súbito de la población en la región; promueve un aumento de la incidencia y prevalencia de enfermedades emergentes y endémicas además de las enfermedades producidas por la contaminación mercurial como hidrargirismo y el Mal de Minamata.

CONSIDERANDO que esta primera incursión masiva e ilegal de minería no tiene precedentes de explotación tradicional minera en la cuenca del Caura.

CONSIDERANDO que sobre la cuenca del Caura recaen cinco figuras de protección del ambiente, consideradas áreas bajo régimen de administración especial (ABRAE).

CONSIDERANDO que las poblaciones criollas del bajo Caura desarrollaron en el pasado actividades económicas sustentables exitosas basadas en el aprovechamiento de recursos no maderables (extracción de sarrapia).

CONSIDERANDO que la Organización Indígena de la Cuenca del Caura "Kuyujani" en convenio con la Universidad Nacional Experimental de Guayana ha venido realizando durante ya casi una década proyectos conjuntos para la demarcación de hábitat, planes de manejo y capacitación en materia socio-ambiental.

CONSIDERANDO que la Cuenca del Río Caura ha enfrentado recientemente una invasión en el área protegida de mineros ilegales, entre Brasileños, Colombianos, Guyaneses y Venezolanos, y

CONSIDERANDO que los investigadores de los Centros de Investigaciones Ecológicas y Antropológicas de la Universidad Nacional Experimental de Guayana (UNEG) de la Universidad de Oriente - Núcleo Bolívar, de la Universidad Experimental Politécnica Antonio José de Sucre (UNEXPO)-Guayana y de la Fundación La Salle de Ciencias Naturales-Guayana y Caracas han planteado repetidamente su preocupación por todas aquellas actividades que deterioren de manera irreversible las áreas naturales de la cuenca; y porque no existen medidas de descontaminación y reconstrucción de hábitat ecológicamente viables; y apoyo tanto a los pueblos Ye'kwana, Sanema y Hoti, cuya integridad cultural y socioambiental se ve gravemente amenazada por la actividad minera, para que continúen siendo garantes de la responsabilidad ambiental y el desarrollo sustentable en la Cuenca del alto Caura, así como a todos aquellos ciudadanos venezolanos, habitantes de toda la Cuenca y que promueven en ella el desarrollo ecológicamente responsable, socialmente pertinente y económicamente eficiente.

POR CONSIGUIENTE, la Asociación de Biología y Conservación Tropical ATBC DECLARA

SOLICITAR al Gobierno de Venezuela a desplegar rápidamente por la Cuenca del Río Caura personal de seguridad equipado, la infraestructura, y supervisión necesarias para sostener el estado legal de estas Áreas Naturales vitales y el respeto de los derechos humanos de todos los actores de la cuenca incluyendo investigaciones sobre los supuestos atropellos cometidos contra los mineros; y

RECOMENDAR al Gobierno de Venezuela que declare la protección absoluta de la cuenca del Caura y el respeto de las leyes y ordenanzas que han permitido que hasta ahora se mantenga en condiciones prístinas.

SOLICITAR al Gobierno de Venezuela que cesen las amenazas de muerte e intimidación contra indígenas y ambientalistas por parte de un sector violento de los mineros; y

RECOMENDAR al Gobierno de Venezuela el desarrollo de proyectos, de dimensiones razonables y económicamente sostenibles, de aprovechamiento de los recursos de la cuenca por parte de las comunidades indígenas con el apoyo de los entes estatales, ONG's, institutos de investigación y universidades; y que el desarrollo de proyectos de valoración económica de los servicios ambientales generados en las cuencas del Caura y del Caroní;

SOLICITAR al Gobierno de Venezuela el reconocimiento oficial de conformidad con la Constitución de los derechos indígenas sobre sus hábitat a fin de reforzar su rol en la conservación y enriquecimiento del ambiente que han cultivado desde tiempos ancestrales; y

SOLICITAR al Gobierno de Venezuela el resguardo y vigilancia, tanto aéreo como fluvial y terrestre, de la cuenca a fin de garantizar su conservación por parte de las autoridades competentes (Fuerzas Armadas Nacionales y Ministerio del Ambiente) a beneficio de las comunidades locales, nacionales, regionales, y globales.



## THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR TROPICAL BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION JULY 15-19, 2007 MORELIA, MEXICO

The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) is proud to announce its Annual Meeting for 2007. The meeting will be held in Morelia, Mexico, hosted by the Centro de Investigaciones en Ecosistemas (CIEco, Center for Research in Ecosystems) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). The venue will be the Convention and Exposition Center of Morelia city and the hotel. The theme of the meeting will be "Linking Tropical Biology with Human Dimensions."

Understanding the origin, evolution, and maintenance of tropical biodiversity, and the ecosystems they constitute, continues to be a central challenge for tropical biology. Furthermore, anthropogenic effects on tropical ecosystems, and the human dimensions (social, cultural, and economical) that act as drivers of such effects, add an enormous complexity to the urgent task of conserving, restoring, and coexisting with tropical ecosystems, their services and resources. Based on the mission, objectives and principles of ATBC, the meeting in Morelia will pursue key research topics previously recognized by Bawa et al (2004, *Biotropica* 36: 437-446) in "Beyond Paradise" and will attempt to help link tropical biology with human dimensions. The meeting will cover a wide array of basic and applied research topics on tropical biology and conservation, including: structure, dynamics and functioning of tropical ecosystems (TEs), anthropogenic effects on TEs, and socio-cultural-economical drivers of such effects. The meeting will review and promote the current vision of ATBC.

### MORELIA

Morelia, a city recognized as Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, is one of the most beautiful colonial Spanish historical cities in America. The capital of the state of Michoacan, Morelia is a city of about 1 million residents ([www.visitmorelia.com](http://www.visitmorelia.com)). Morelia is at an altitude of about 2000 m, and its climate is mild year around. Founded 465 years ago, the city is located in the valley of Guayangare (1,950 m.a.s.l), where in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Purepecha people established the oldest Guayangareo town. After the Spanish colonization, in 1535, Guayangareo became known as Valladolid, honoring the city of the same name in Spain. After Mexico became an independent nation, the name of the city was changed to Morelia as a tribute to José

María Morelos, one of the major leaders of the Mexican war of independence. At present, Morelia is a medium-size city, full of cultural and educational activities. It is the center of the Purepecha culture, which is displayed in an enormous diversity of arts and crafts made by people living in several beautiful villages surrounding Morelia and the lakes of Cuitzeo, Pátzcuaro, and Zirahuén. Several vegetation types are found around Morelia, including fir, pine, oak, and tropical dry forests. Toward the Pacific coast, and just three hours from Morelia by car, highly diverse, tropical semideciduous and dry forest formations can be found.

### FIELD TRIP VENUES

Several field trips have been planned to visit wonderful natural and human managed tropical and temperate ecosystems, including: pine-oak forest in the Michoacán highlands (where indigenous Purepecha people sustainably manage pine forest), tropical semi-deciduous and deciduous forest in the Pacific coast of Jalisco (where the Chamela Tropical Field Station of UNAM and the MAB-UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Chamela-Cuixmala are located), tropical cloud forest (in the MAB-UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Manantlán, Jalisco), organic shade-coffee ecosystems (in the tropical area of Cuetzalan, Puebla), tropical cactus forest (in the Biosphere Reserve of Tehuacán-Cuicatlán, Puebla), and tropical rain forest and mountain cloud forest at the Biosphere Reserve El Triunfo, Chiapas. Furthermore, for those people interested in the Purepecha culture and the beautiful Morelia surroundings, we are preparing short trips around Patzcuaro and Cointzio lakes. Work sessions will be followed by cultural performances in the historic downtown of Morelia. All these activities are discussed in more detail at the meeting website, at <http://www.oikos.unam.mx/atbc/>



The Academic Committee for the meeting is chaired by Miguel Martínez-Ramos, and the Organizing Committee is chaired by Mauricio Quesada Avendaño, both on the faculty of UNAM, Morelia. The Secretariat for ATBC 2007 is directed by Claudia Nepote and Gumersindo Sánchez.


#### PROGRAM

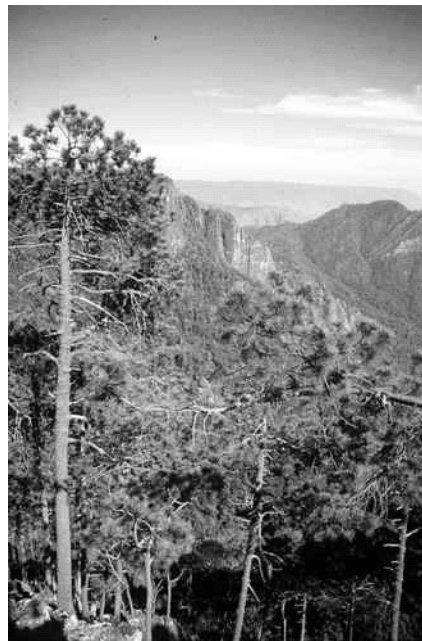
The meeting will open on Sunday, July 15, with the arrival of participants, registration and an opening ceremony that evening. Plenary and group sessions will take place from Monday through Thursday, July 16-19, with the ATBC evening banquet scheduled for Wednesday evening. Following the closing ceremony on Thursday, post-conference excursions will take place on Friday and the weekend after the meeting. The official language of the meeting will be English.

Delegates are invited to organize symposia and to contribute papers for oral and poster sessions. Workshops and round tables are also welcome. Symposium proposals are due on January 15, 2007. The deadline for submission of abstracts and for registration for the Morelia meeting is April 15, 2007. Registration can be done online, at the web site at <http://www.oikos.unam.mx/atbc/>. Participants should also plan to arrange hotel bookings and make excursion reservations by April 15, 2007. Hotel bookings may be made by contacting Mr. Carlos A. A. Boto, at the Agencia de Viajes Maruata, S.A. de C.V., Av. Camelinas 3233, Int. 309, Fracc. Las Américas, 58270 Morelia Mich., México Tel.: (443) 324-21-20; Fax: (443) 324-18-96. The agency may be reached by email at [maruata@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:maruata@prodigy.net.mx) and their web page is at [www.maruataviajes.com.mx](http://www.maruataviajes.com.mx)

Meeting participants are invited to submit their abstracts online, at the meeting website ([www.oikos.unam.mx/atbc](http://www.oikos.unam.mx/atbc)). Full instructions on paper length, presentation requirements, and other details may be found at that location. Some funding is available to support attendance by a limited number of participants from developing countries. For more information about potential funding assistance, please contact the Secretariat for further information, at the addresses given below. A valid passport is required for all travelers. The visa entry requirements for Mexico vary according to your country of origin. Please contact the Embassy or consulate of Mexico in your respective country for further details. If you require an Official Letter of Invitation, please contact the Secretariat of the meeting. This letter does not, of course, represent a commitment of the organizers to provide financial support.

#### We hope to welcome you all to Morelia this coming July!

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*Left: Temperate pine forest in the highlands of the Sierra Manantlán, Jalisco*

*Opposite page: Cactus forest in the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve, Puebla*

*Below left: The Cathedral in Morelia*

## EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN HUMAN-ALTERED ENVIRONMENTS AN INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT.

8-10 February, 2007, Institute of the Environment, University of California, Los Angeles. Organized by Tomas Smith & Louis Bernatchez.

Human activities are affecting the evolutionary processes that generate and maintain biodiversity. Climate change and deforestation are facilitating the evolutionary jump of animal diseases to humans. Fish farming has resulted in the spread of poorly adaptive genes to the wild. Introductions of exotic species are impacting native species and limiting their ability to adapt. In response to this developing crisis, we are convening an international summit of evolutionary biologists, conservation practitioners, and policy makers to synthesize current knowledge and to begin to develop plans to mitigate the effects. The summit will feature talks from more than 40 leading evolutionary biologists, poster presentations, and working groups. A central goal of the summit is to bring the discussion beyond academic boundaries to frame real-world solutions to these problems. For more information or to register go to: <http://www.ioe.ucla.edu/ctr/iosymposium.html> Travel grants for students and postdocs to attend are now available.

## ANTS IN THE SOIL ECOSYSTEM

A Symposium at the European Geosciences Union General Assembly 2007, 15-20 April 2007, Vienna, Austria. This session will review the status of soil/ant relationships and present case-studies on the impact of both mineral and organic mound-building ants on soil processes. We invite contributions (oral and posters) on any of these soil-ant topics. If enough interest is shown we would like to have selected papers published as a special issue in a soil, ecology, or entomological journal. If you would like to participate in this session, please submit an abstract at the website. The ant session is # SSS22. Deadline for abstract submission is January 15, 2007. For financial support please go to: [http://meetings.copernicus.org/egu2007/financial\\_support.html](http://meetings.copernicus.org/egu2007/financial_support.html). More information at EGU home: <http://meetings.copernicus.org/egu2007> Questions, please email Anita C. Risch at [anita.risch@wsl.ch](mailto:anita.risch@wsl.ch) or the co-conveners (Artemio Cerda: [artemio.cerda@uv.es](mailto:artemio.cerda@uv.es), Martin Jurgensen: [mjurgen@mtu.edu](mailto:mjurgen@mtu.edu), Leena Finer: [leena.finer@metla.fi](mailto:leena.finer@metla.fi)).

## MEETINGS CALENDAR

## 2007

**THIRD INTERNATIONAL ORCHID CONSERVATION CONGRESS**, San Jose, Costa Rica, 19-23 March, 2007. For information, Jorge Warner, [jwarner@carriari.ucr.ac.cr](mailto:jwarner@carriari.ucr.ac.cr) 2007 meeting **BIODIVERSITY CRISIS ON TROPICAL "ISLANDS" with particular reference to Borneo and the Southeast Asian region**. 11-13 June, 2007, Department of Biology, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. For more information, see <http://www.antbase.net/biodiversity-crisis-tropical-islands.html>

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL SOUTH-EAST ASIAN BAT CONFERENCE**, 7-10 May, 2007, Club Andaman Resort Beach Hotte, Patong, Phuket, Thailand. <http://www.sc.psu.ac.th/bats/2007>

**2007 AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (AIBS) ANNUAL MEETING**, 14-15 MAY 2007, Washington DC, on the theme of "Evolutionary Biology and Human Health," at the Capital Hilton Hotel. The program chair is 2007 AIBS President Douglas Futuyma, SUNY at Stony Brook. Program and registration online at [http://www.aibs.org/annual-meeting/annual\\_meeting\\_2007.html](http://www.aibs.org/annual-meeting/annual_meeting_2007.html)

The AIBS meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the **NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS ALLIANCE** (requires separate registration, see the NSC Alliance meeting website at [www.nscalliance.org](http://www.nscalliance.org)). The AIBS and NSC Alliance meetings take place immediately after the **INTERNATIONAL UNION OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (IUBS) CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY** (requires separate registration, see the IUBS meeting website at [www7.nationalacademies.org/IUBS/](http://www7.nationalacademies.org/IUBS/)), 9 -12 May at the Capital Hilton.

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY CONGRESS: WORKING TOGETHER FOR LIVELIHOOD SECURITY, FOOD SECURITY, AND ECOLOGICAL SECURITY FOR LIFE ON EARTH**. Bangkok, Thailand, 22-25 May, 2007. [ibc2007@yahoo.com](mailto:ibc2007@yahoo.com)

**SOCIETY FOR ECONOMIC BOTANY ANNUAL MEETING**, 4-7 June, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois. The theme of the meetings will be "The Search for New Plant-based Therapies." For primary consideration, submit abstracts as soon as possible. The deadline for submission is March 1, 2007. All abstracts should be submitted via the online call for papers. Visit <http://www.seb2007.com/>

**7<sup>th</sup> FLORA MALESIANA SYMPOSIUM**, Leiden, Netherlands, hosted by the Nationaal Herbarium Nederland, 17-22 June, 2007. See <http://www.nationaalherbarium.nl/FMVII/>

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EVOLUTION (SSE), THE SOCIETY OF SYSTEMATIC BIOLOGISTS (SSB), AND THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS (ASN)**, 16-20 June, 2007, Christchurch Convention Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand. Information on meeting registration, schedule, accommodations, and submission of titles for talks and abstracts at: <http://www.evolution2007.com>. The Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE) is providing Travel Awards of \$750 US dollars for 60 student SSE members to attend the 2007 Annual Meeting in New Zealand. Students will be able to use the award to defray travel or other meeting costs. Apply at <http://www.evolutionsociety.org>.

**9<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL POLLINATION SYMPOSIUM ON PLANT-POLLINATOR RELATIONSHIPS: DIVERSITY IN ACTION**, 24-28 June 2007, at the Scheman Center, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, USA <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/plantbee/home.html>

**SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY**, 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting: One World, One Conservation, One Partnership, 1-5 July, 2007, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. <http://www.nmmu.ac.za/scb/>

**PLANT BIOLOGY BOTANY 2007**, 7-11 July 2007. Joint meeting of the Botanical Society of America (BSA), American Bryological and Lichenological Society (ABLS), American Fern Society (AFS), American Society of Plant Taxonomists (ASPT), & Phytochemical Society of North America (PSNA) - Hilton Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA <http://www.aspb.org/meetings/pb-2007/>

**2007 ASSOCIATION FOR TROPICAL BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION ANNUAL MEETING**, 15-19 July, 2007, Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. Theme: "Linking Tropical Biology with Human Dimensions." Information at: [www.oikos.unam.mx/atbc](http://www.oikos.unam.mx/atbc). Early registration and abstracts by April 15.

**ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA, WITH THE SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION**, "Ecological Restoration in a Changing World", 5-10 August, 2007, in San Jose CA. <http://www.esa.org/sanjose/>

## 2008

**ATBC ANNUAL MEETING 2008**, 9-14 June, 2008, Paramaribo, Surinam. PLAN TO BE THERE!

## JOBS AND FELLOWSHIPS

ORGANIZATION FOR TROPICAL STUDIES  
EDUCATION DIRECTOR, COSTA RICA

The Education Director is responsible for the overall leadership and direction of all OTS education programs including undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses in Costa Rica. This position is a supervisory position and the incumbent is responsible for a deputy director, support staff, and course instructors. This position reports to the Vice President for Costa Rican Academic Programs and is located in the San José office in Costa Rica. The incumbent is responsible for the planning and implementation of all existing and new education programs in Costa Rica. The incumbent will be knowledgeable of science and education including the appropriate pedagogy in each field and be called upon to recruit expert course instructors and lecturers as appropriate. Positions are based in San José, Costa Rica. In-country and international travel is required. Applicants should hold a Ph.D. and have at least five years of relevant education and experience. Strong Spanish skills and the ability to work comfortably in multiple cultural settings are required. Salary is commensurate with experience. Additional information on OTS is available [www.ots.ac.cr](http://www.ots.ac.cr). To apply, send: (1) letter of application with details of programmatic and administrative experience, (2) curriculum vitae, and (3) names and contact information of three references to: [search\\_committee@ots.ac.cr](mailto:search_committee@ots.ac.cr). Or mail to: Search Committee, OTS, Box 90630, Durham NC 27708-0630. Position opened until filled. Contact: Jorge A. Jiménez, [jjimenez@ots.ac.cr](mailto:jjimenez@ots.ac.cr)

## GUANA ISLAND RESEARCH GRANT

Guana Island in British Virgin Islands has been the subject of extensive study since 1980 (Lazell, 2005. *Island: fact and theory in nature*. University of California Press; also see [www.guanascience.com](http://www.guanascience.com)). The Falconwood Foundation and The Conservation Agency are offering a grant for a graduate student to conduct research on terrestrial ecosystems on Guana in fall 2007. The winner will join 30 scientists conducting research on Guana. The grant covers room and board expenses for one for up to one month. Transportation to the British Virgin Islands and equipment needs are not included. A written report is expected as are copies of published work. Successful projects are likely to receive future funding. Before applying consult the sources above and the web site, [www.guana.com](http://www.guana.com). To apply, send a proposal (1000 words) detailing the goal of the study, the rationale for it, and how your work would benefit from this opportunity. Any biological topic can be addressed and all nationalities are eligible, subject to obtaining the necessary visa. In addition send a CV and have a single letter of reference sent to: Dr. Gad Perry, Department of Natural Resource Management, Texas Tech University, Box 42125, Lubbock, Texas 79409-2125, USA. Submission by e-mail (to [Gad.Perry@TTU.edu](mailto:Gad.Perry@TTU.edu)) is greatly preferred. The deadline is 1 March 2007.

THE CHRISTENSTEN FUND GRADUATE  
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IN PLANT  
CONSERVATION

The Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center at the University of Missouri-St. Louis is offering a fully funded fellowship leading to a M.S. or Ph.D. degree to students from tropical America, Africa, Madagascar, Asia, Malesia and the Pacific Islands with strong leadership and research potential in applied plant conservation. This special Graduate program in Plant Conservation, developed in collaboration with The Christensen Fund and the Missouri Botanical Garden, is available to individuals with applied plant conservation experience and strong academic credentials for studies and is designed to educate plant conservation scientists from the world's tropical regions. To learn more visit: <http://hwec.umsl.edu/scholarships/plantconservation.html> or write to: Executive Director, Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1 University Boulevard, St. Louis,

Tropinet is published quarterly by the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) and the Organization for Tropical Studies (OTS) and is available at <http://www.atbio.org> to all interested readers. ATBC is an international society that promotes tropical biology and conservation in its broadest sense. ATBC publishes the quarterly journal BIOTROPICA and sponsors annual meetings and symposia. Information: W. John Kress, ATBC Executive Director, Department of Botany, MRC-166, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, DC 20560. OTS is a non-profit consortium of 63 academic and research institutions in the United States, Australia, Latin America, and Asia. Its mission is to provide leadership in education, research and the responsible use of natural resources in the tropics. Graduate, undergraduate, and professional training and research facilities are provided at three field stations in Costa Rica. Information: <http://www.ots.duke.edu>, or at OTS, Box 90630, Durham, NC 27708-0630.



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MO 63121-4499, USA (email: [osbornepl@umsl.edu](mailto:osbornepl@umsl.edu)). Application review, for admission in the following August, will begin on December 1, 2006 but complete applications received before January 15, 2007 will be considered. Application forms can be obtained from the Harris Center web page at <http://hwec.umsl.edu/application.html>, by email from [iss@umsl.edu](mailto:iss@umsl.edu), or by writing to: Executive Director, Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1 University Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63121-4499, USA. Completed applications should be returned to Office of International Student Services, 261 Millennium Student Center, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1 University Boulevard, St. Louis MO 63121 with a copy of all materials sent to the Executive Director, Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center.

NORTH STAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
TRANSMITTER GRANT PROGRAM

North Star Science and Technology, LLC and American Bird Conservancy announce the 5<sup>th</sup> annual North Star Science and Technology Transmitter Grant Program. In the spirit of giving back to the research community that they serve, North Star will award a total of eight (8) satellite transmitters (Argos Platform Transmitter Terminals (PTTs)), to one or two recipients (8 PTTs to one project or 4 PTTs to each of two projects). PTTs are powerful, cutting-edge tools for the study of bird migration that greatly extend the range over which individual birds can be tracked. The program is open to projects throughout the world. Research that contributes to our knowledge of avian biology and that provides data useful for bird conservation, particularly of threatened species, will receive preference in the selection process. American Bird Conservancy (<http://www.abcbirds.org>) will handle the proposal submission process, review proposals, and select the winning projects. Please see <http://www.northstarst.com> for more information and proposal guidelines. Deadline for proposals is February 2, 2007. Any further questions about the program can be directed to George E. Wallace, American Bird Conservancy ([gwallace@abcbirds.org](mailto:gwallace@abcbirds.org); PH: 540-253-5780; FX: 540-253-5782).