



REGUA NEWSLETTER

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The REGUA protection men, lower line (1 to r) Rildo, Levi, Messias, Antonio and Arilson
Top line (1 to r) Daniel, Jairo, Gilberto, Antonio night watchman, Marcos and Moyses.

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1) Introduction: The importance of REGUA and its clear message is attracting large numbers of people coming to visit this conservation project. By employing members of the local community, by offering areas for research, by planting trees, by offering the site for kids to visit, by helping the municipality with its Agenda 21 study, by attending meetings and congresses, by continuously repeating that nature needs us to look after it, the project consolidates itself as a serious conservation unit.

The Current State of Conservation, the Birdlife International Congress, Buenos Aires September 2008

Raquel and I returned from the last Birdlife international Congress having shared a most exciting experience, meeting people from around the world working in bird conservation. The four day Congress prioritized the identification and management of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and Key Bird Areas (KBAs) all over the world.

Birdlife partners have been mapping areas and developing public pressure to conserve bird habitat around the world and have been very successful at rallying public and Gov't attention to this task.

There are many challenges ahead facing this such as climate change, finding financial resources especially in our post- credit crunch era, such as the carbon market, mitigation and compensation, networking within governmental spheres, forging links to existing conservation units, and the constant drive to develop new initiatives among the many topics discussed and attracting listeners to the debate.

One most dramatic speaker was Professor Bucher from Cordoba Federal University, Argentina who has witnessed an increasing rapid land use change of wilderness to farmland pursued by his country's drive for economic commodity exports. His cynicism was clear in describing Government jubilation in their yearly declining deforestation rates. Will there be anything left, he ponders. The world's economic marriage of consumption and production can only end in bitter environmental poverty and he warns to IBAs in creating core protection areas. Later in the debates, Birdlife partners show their wariness of the drive to sustainability and wonder how their IBAs can meet economic targets, a standard management tool and understood as the only business perspective. Partners describe their dedication and commitment in networking and seeking integration with existing conservation units to cohesively manage the twenty first century competition for land use.

One of the many subjects in the workshops raised was the significance of monitoring IBAs. Though its importance for planning and meeting targets is widely recognized, the main conclusion was that through constant monitoring, adjustments are permitted and making for sure progress.

Speaking of agendas, it was fascinating to learn of various initiatives with a common goal. There is the 2010 Convention on Global Biodiversity (CBD) whose aims are to reduce biodiversity loss in the world at local levels (See: <http://www.cbd.int/>). Another converging agenda is the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) ensuring environmental sustainability (See: <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>). The 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership is a global initiative to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010 (See: <http://www.twentyten.net>) By using existing measurements or indicators available and mapping sustainable use including threats to biodiversity, partners of Birdlife International are creating a framework of biodiversity status and trends. Though links are not always clear between habitat and biodiversity, some indicators have been developed beyond baseline level though the challenge is standardizing methodology.

Another challenge facing IBAs and their partners is their legal status, their integration within a national conservation agenda, their finance, their sustainable use including community involvement and the training of professionals. It was all so very exciting to listen to speakers from the African, Asian and European continents all confessing to identical problems and the ensuring debates were rewarding for all.

Congratulations to Birdlife for the hard work in the organization of this important event. It was a very valuable experience, a great team spirit and we felt ever more confident that we are on the right path for a better world

2) PROTECTION:

Perhaps the most important news of the year has been the land purchase of the Matumbo Gap. This most important area was crucial to guarantee a permanent forest cover between REGUA to the east and Lemgruber to the west as a forested corridor and arrest housing development from the High Matumbo village below. The project started with a casual conversation with World Land Trust-Kirsty and IUCN-Marc in Holland 2006. World Land Trust found more funds and we mapped the whole area, identifying the owners and set on trying to get the funds to REGUA and pay the owners. We are still missing the acquisition of José land. José is currently sorting a tenant farmer settlement.



Property Name	Size(ha)
Jovelino	57.0
Demar	11.0
Messias	48.9
Waldenoor 1	79.0
Jose (Still Missing)	37.7
Oscar and Adeilton	36.1
Valter	15.4
Waldenoor 2	27.8
Octaviano 2	5.5
Octaviano 1	6.1
Sedenil	3.7
Tania	3.8
TOTAL	332.0

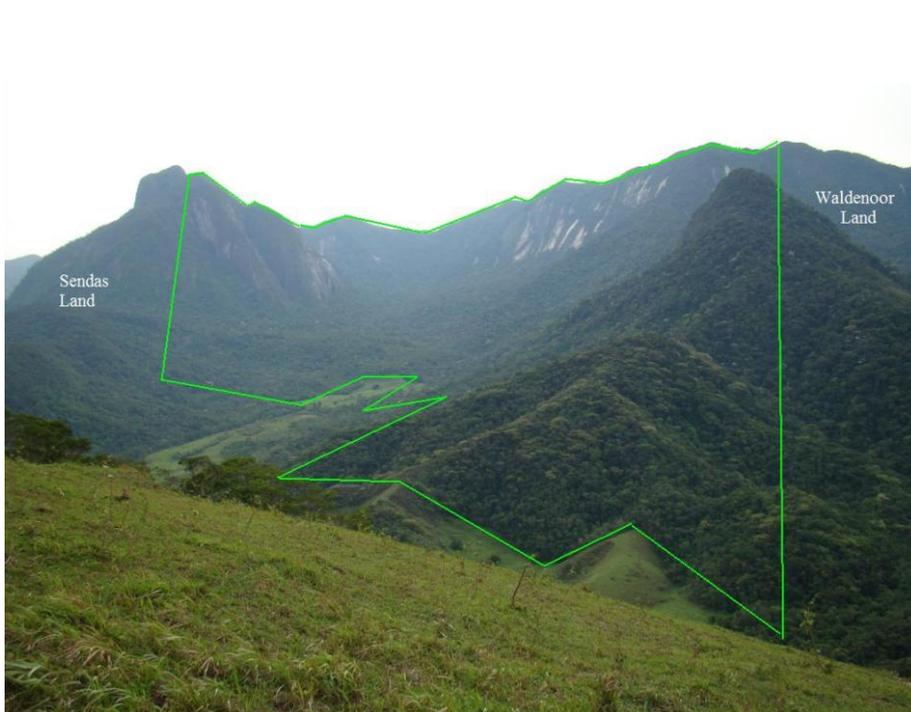
The biggest lessons learnt from this are found in explaining to both funders and the local population what steps are involved in the process not to augment expectation.



Ken and Ana Ford's visit to see the Waldenoor land and David Weidenfield from ABC-US

Subject	Issue	Consequence
Locality	Properties for sale can be included in established park areas. Isn't this Gov't responsibility?	Compensation to property owners rarely occurs in Brazil. The purchase of the Matumbo Gap was essential to prove REGUA's responsibility and commitment to conservation
Document status	Many properties have no document titles or "Possession" status. Furthermore, to create registry titles or deeds is an expensive process	To induce funders to understand the often delicate though respected property title / rights is also difficult considering the Matumbo Gap land is all "Possession" land.
Size	Many properties have a different surface area than those known by the owners.	This is not a problem for the owners but requires careful explanations to donors
Timing	Keeping payment schedules is hard.	Owners are reluctant to commit to sale for long periods and grant proposals take time
Infrastructure	Some small properties have infrastructures	This raises property prices
Maintenance		REGUA is able to attract funds for protection through the employment of locals as park wardens. The ownership of the land is essential for this to occur
	Financial Expectation can be disappointing	To negotiate with large families and address their financial expectation is difficult
:	Not understood conservation ethos	To induce locals to understand the concept of conservation is a difficult

The most recent activity is the land purchase has been the Lemgruber property. This 680ha property covered by excellent forest has been measured and mapped and is now ready for transfer.



Alan and Carlos walking the property

The 680ha Lemgruber property which lays to the east of the Matumbo Gap

Though not seen to be critically important REGUA aims to transform the bulk of its property into a Gov't recognized private conservation Unit- RPPN status (Reserva Particular do Patrimonio da Natureza)). It is not possible to transform areas laying within the Três Picos Park, only those laying adjacent to its limits. This would be valuable for the future and all land purchase funders value the internationally recognized permanent conservation status.

3) RESTORATION:

The weather has been very good for the plants and the reforestation programme is a subject of praise for all those visiting.

The 2009 planting (Jan –March 2009) has been anticipated due to the amount of rain received and already 7 000 of the planned 20 000 native trees have been planted.

This area is the hardest to restore, with *Imperata cylindrica* grass showing that the soil is very infertile and unproductive. Some plants have grown well and others have found it harder but all in all the results are good.



Trees are now coming as seedlings from the REGUA nursery. Seeds have been collected by the REGUA rangers and volunteers within an innovative programme by the RJ State Government Forestry Institute (IEF-RJ) in partnership with the REGUA reserve. This has enabled quality and quantity seed collection for both the IEF –RJ and the REGUA nurseries, permitting the REGUA reforestation officer, Mauricio to gain self confidence and status within the local community. REGUA is also recognized for its work in its reforestation field, contributing to the Gov't for stimulating their own nursery and attracting researchers to measure the biomass growth.



Above image shows us the area that is being planted. At the end of 2009, REGUA will have planted 58 000 trees

The success of this reforestation programme can also be measured by the happiness of the school children visiting REGUA. School children from urban areas 50km away come to visit REGUA as part of the school visit programme. Their home towns have no original forest cover and by walking the forested areas at REGUA, they see that trees can be planted and they can almost see trees growing. This is widely considered the first step in changing values and contributing to the environment.

4) Environmental education:

The year of 2008 saw the REGUA education project gain substantial progress. This activity has consolidated REGUA within the municipality as a reference centre and André, the REGUA teacher, has been instrumental in helping youths in acquiring knowledge of the conservation situation of REGUA and beyond. The program has also gained maturity. No need to remind you all that Brazil recognizes environmental education as a fundamental pillar for long term conservation.

This year, we received the visit of 323 children accompanied by 30 teachers from 9 different schools during the course of the year though this was concentrated within the last school semester (July to November).



André writes of the school visits: Once again the school visits are becoming a regular occurrence at REGUA. Within the visits we try to concentrate the kid's attention on a subject and this year we are paying particular attention to planting trees along the river side. This subject draws their attention to:

- Water and the water table
- Accumulation and litter in the river itself

REGUA received education material from the World Land Trust-UK and this has been of great value and it has been translated and distributed and the kids have taken exercises back home to develop and answer.

André writes of the young rangers programme :

Completing our fifth year, this most successful project now includes lessons based on the activities occurring at REGUA such as; Orchid and butterfly studies, ornithology, reintroductions of the Red billed Curassow and Black fronted piping Guan, identification of plant species as well as classroom work on such varied subjects as litter recycling, water use, social responsibility as well as theatre work. The students also walked trails, stayed in the research house, did some nursery work, cleaned litter from the river and visited to the Primatology Centre. REGUA organized an arts and crafts course and the creation of the young ranger " The Green Bulletin", a paper discussing the progress made by the rangers and prepared by the rangers themselves which include interviews, photos and its editing on the computer.

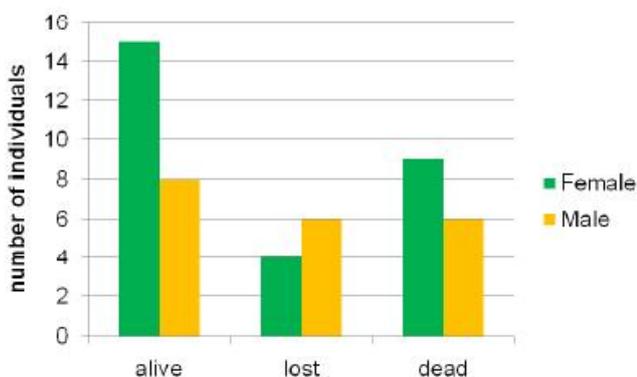


The Artwork was most successful and the work was inspired by the red billed curassow reintroduction project. The theatre play was a huge amount of fun and we have produced it for the benefit of the community.

Agenda 21- Cachoeiras de Macacu: REGUA has helped Cachoeiras de Macacu municipality to create a permanent Forum presided by its 4 sectors, Gov't, private, public and community. REGUA in conjunction with the local prefecture and financially supported by the Federal Gov't and BART, has helped forge the path for a more sustainable and integrated future in which this forum can make collective decisions in the best interest of the municipal population and its development. Several meetings have taken place and a case study which took 2 years to produce has been printed and formerly given to those interested and involved. The final stage of this Agenda 21 has seen much interest from the public and they are proud of their community spirit. A large network of Agendas is similarly taking place in the neighbouring municipalities and Brazilian law is encouraging its industries to develop their agendas and integrate within established local municipal frameworks such as towns and communities. As Rio de Janeiro State has received high investments due to the presence of Off-shore Petroleum, this is seen as a fair and responsible path for sustainability and a non centralized development.

5) RESEARCH

The Red billed Curassow reintroduction is developing very well. Of the 53 birds released so far at REGUA from Crax-Brazil, there are 15 females and 8 males still being closely monitored though there are 10 birds that have lost their transmitters and some of these, occasionally heard. We believe we have identified a death zone in low Matumbo. The answer to this issue lies in a continuous education programme, explaining to the local public the importance of this bird. Two pairs are thought to be approaching age to reproduce. Let's keep monitoring them and look forward to chicks in 2009.



Forty Black fronted piping Guans have been released at REGUA. Though they have no transmitters, they are being seen regularly and as of 2009 these birds will have tags fitted to monitor their behavior and provide data for ecology. This year 20 Black fronted Piping guans have being introduced and we have just now received 20 Solitary Tinamous to be introduced.

All sorts of studies are being conducted on the curassows ecology.

One important study is the analysis of these birds' diets.

By collecting faeces, Christine has shown that their varied diet is based on insects, plant leaves and seeds. The importance of the bird as a seed disperser is well known, and provides further evidence of their top position within the food chain.



Brian Creswell from Biotrack-UK visited REGUA to bring some transmitters and has been most impressed with Christine's work to date. His suggestions lay in doing as many as possible plant plots near to where the Red billed curassows are located to analyze the habitat. All this information adds valuable criteria for further introduction projects and provides data that is not yet known about these shy birds. Our REGUA volunteers are happy to contribute.

REGUA is also studying the potential for holding work shops and courses on reintroduction biology at REGUA together with the RJ Federal University.

REGUA has also contracted two students from the local community to help her locate the birds faster and maintaining a closer watch over the birds. This will facilitate monitoring their every movement, helping them to readapt to the wild once again and avoid human contact.

Other projects at REGUA: Rio de Janeiro State University professor Tim Moulton has brought 3 students to study wetland ecology completing BSc's. REGUA has the following projects occurring at the moment:

1	2005	Red billed curassow reintroduction	PhD	Christine Steiner	USP
2	2007	Amphibians ecology within forest fragments in the Atlantic rainforest	MSc	Mauricio Gomes	UERJ
3	2007	Altitudinal amphibian variation on the Serra do Mar gradient	MSc	Carla Siqueira	UERJ
4	2008	Sloths and population survey at REGUA	MSc	Marcia Pessoa	UERJ
5	2007	Animal communities at REGUA		Hermano Albuquerque	UFRJ
6	2009	Caiman ecology in natural environment	MSc	Ricardo Freitas	UERJ
7	2008	Lepidóptera at Cachoeiras de Macacu, Guapimirim and Nova Friburgo	Science paper	Alexandre Soares	Museu Nacional
8	2009	Hummingbird survey on the Serra do Mar gradient	BSc	Maria Alice	UERJ

There is very positive news for Leipzig and Cologne universities though we will write about that in the next newsletter.

There are many options for Botanical students and to increase REGUA its attractiveness REGUA plans on constructing a simple laboratory. This has the benefit of not needing to remove material from the reserve.

We had a three week visit of Chris Knowles, an ex-Cambridge zoo keeper with a passion for nature last November. His camera traps and zeal was valuable to find species within the REGUA forests.

A person like Chris based at REGUA of his capacity would be valuable to draw attention to the natural world found here and help us infect similar enthusiasm with the local community and youths here.

We have also done some moth trapping and a night's work in the field can be most revealing. Dr John Feltwell came out for a short holiday to identify many insects and moths for us.



6) Tourism at REGUA:

The year 2008 has seen a huge increase in tourism brought about by the participation of REGUA on the World Land Trust stand in the Rutland Birdfair and the growing reputation passed on from person to person.

The increased movement has left the REGUA staff most contented.



The web page, thanks to Lee and Rachel has been launched with great success. Many visitors passed by in 2008 and we are pleased that they had a fine time with us.



Rachel and Martin helping us at the UK Birdfair



Our driver Alcenir

To attend the demand, REGUA plans to train another local guide, a young lad by name of Wallace from the High Matumbo Gap and a lad coming from the Young ranger programme to eventually guide groups. He is 18 years old, very calm and knowledgeable of the birds found in the forests here. This is once again welcomed by the local community who sense their involvement with REGUA.

The tourism is expanding due to the conservation work and guests are happy seeing the proceeds of their holiday contribute to the protection of the habitat. We are also seeing a small but increasing number of Brazilians looking for a holiday here at REGUA which is very important for us. Even a small video was produced and shown on National TV and we had an increased interest on the part of tourists.

We wish everyone a great year 2009 ahead and that you can all come and see us again.

Nicholas and Raquel