

Editorial

Tropical Conservation Science, Mongabay.com e-journal

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Tropical ecosystems (terrestrial and marine) as a group account for a significant proportion of the Earth's biodiversity. Despite their biological importance, these fragile and geographically restricted ecosystems have been increasingly degraded by human activities and population growth over the past 60-70 years, resulting in the local disappearance of plant and animal populations, and, in some cases, of species. Paralleling this process has been a disappearance of sources of subsistence and ecological services for local inhabitants. Still, what has been lost or is at risk of being lost is largely unknown. In many cases, biological inventories are still incipient and even less information is available about the biogeography, ecology, behavior, and state of conservation of the plant and animal components in these ecosystems.

More recently, the last two decades have seen a surge in studies covering a wide spectrum of topics and approaches in the tropics. Among these topics have been: biological inventories; the documentation of ecological processes and of plant and animal community structuring; the study of traditional use of tropical ecosystems by indigenous and rural people, and assessments of drivers of change in the distribution and presence of tropical ecosystems. A major focus of these important efforts has been the world's tropical forests.

But despite the enormous contribution that tropical ecosystems make to the world's biodiversity, it is notable that only a few major scientific journals are dedicated solely to the tropics, among them *Biotropica* and *Journal of Tropical Ecology*, only one of which publishes conservation-oriented research in one of its issue sections. Other conservation studies are published in journals that not necessarily specialize in the tropics (e.g., *Conservation Biology*, *Ecology*, *Biological Conservation*, *Ecological Applications*, *Landscape Ecology*, etc.).

A cursory view of the scientific literature also shows that authors from developed countries predominate in the population of published works. Considering that English is the universal language of science, linguistic barriers may be playing a major role limiting scientists and students from tropical countries in releasing their work to the world's scientific community.

Tropical Conservation Science (TCS), an initiative of Mongabay.com, aims at providing a complementary venue for releasing the results of conservation-oriented research conducted by scientists and conservationists working in the tropics. TCS will publish papers in five languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Chinese. We hope that this will provide a channel for non-local and local scientists to publish the results of their investigations. A strong editorial board coupled to a peer-review process will ensure the high quality of published papers in TCS.

Tropical Conservation Science is a registered publication in the National Serials Data Program (Library of Congress, Washington, DC). TCS will publish four issues per year. After its 1st year, TCS will request registration in the ISI Web of Knowledge and other database indexing systems.

The Mongabay.com e-journal intends to stimulate publications directed to conservation problems as they relate to the impact of social, economic, sociopolitical, industrial and other drivers on the distribution and conservation of tropical forests and of other tropical ecosystems. The quarterly e-journal aims to become a forum for setting forth perspectives and analysis of contrasting concepts and data regarding approaches to tropical ecosystem conservation, as well as providing a channel of communication between scientists and the public at large on topics relating to tropical conservation.

Tropical Conservation Science has a multi-country editorial board composed of scientists with a long history of work in various regions in the tropics. Their contribution to the birth of the journal and to its ensuing development attests to their interest in creating a channel of dissemination of information on conservation oriented research in the tropics. A strong editorial board coupled to a peer-review process will ensure the high quality of papers published in TCS.

Manuscripts submitted to TCS can report any aspect of taxonomy, ecology, evolution, behavior, parasitology, epidemiology, and population genetics, among other topics, for both plant and animal communities, as they relate to tropical forest/ecosystem conservation. Manuscripts can also report on social and economic issues related to tropical conservation such as indigenous people, poverty, population growth, ecological footprint, conservation policy, and on relevant scientific, technological, cultural and religious issues, among others. The e-journal also welcomes interdisciplinary papers using the whole range of methods available, modeling, molecular biology, epidemiology, ecology and/or evolutionary theory, among others, to assess/discuss vital conservation issues in the tropics.

The current and first issue of TCS contains five papers. One deals with the conservation problems of tropical rain forests that have been subjected to long-term study in central Amazonia. Another provides, for the first time in the literature, a panoramic view of conservation issues in Belize. A third paper overviews the biogeography of the little known tropical forest in southern Yunnan, China. The fourth paper examines the usefulness of population viability analysis for conservation of primate populations in a highly fragmented landscape in southern Mexico. The fifth paper reports on the effects of human disturbance on populations of a very rare and little known mammal species (the Tree Hyrax) restricted to East Africa. These five papers encompass a broad spectrum of conservation issues in four major geographic regions (South America, Mesoamerica, Southern Asia and Africa) in the tropics.

Tropical Conservation Science invites the global community of scientists, advanced graduate students and conservationists working in the tropics to submit manuscripts for possible publication in future issues of the e-journal. Further information is available at www.tropicalconservationscience.org

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Mission statement

The main objective of **Tropical Conservation Science** a Mongabay.com e-journal is to bring to light, via publication of short papers results of research relating to conservation of tropical forests and of other tropical ecosystems.

Tropical Conservation Science will publish three types of: Research Articles, Conservation Letters and Short Communications. Articles will be regular technical papers and/or synopsis/reviews of particular topics. Letters would be non-traditional papers and could have as a central theme something like "critical thinking," whether it is a taxonomic, conservation policy, ecological, physiological or historical article. Letters would aim to be a bit edgy and promote thinking by moving into the next paradigm even when traditional journals refuse to move there. Such approach could promote discussions, disagreements and advances in thinking.

Tropical Conservation Science is a peer-reviewed open access journal that publishes original research papers and state of the art reviews of broad interest to the field of conservation of tropical forests and of other tropical ecosystems. Short turn-around time from submission to publication is an important feature of the journal.

The e-journal intends to stimulate publications directed to conservation problems as they relate to the impact of social, economic, sociopolitical, industrial and other drivers of tropical forest loss on the distribution and conservation of other tropical ecosystems. Equally important to the e-journal is to stimulate publication of research aimed at mapping, tracking and assessing drivers of tropical /ecosystem conservation.

Tropical Conservation Science aims at becoming a forum for setting forth perspectives and analysis of contrasting concepts and data regarding approaches to tropical ecosystem conservation. The e-journal attempts to provide a channel of communication between scientists and practitioners and between these and the public at large on tropical conservation.

Tropical Conservation Science stimulates publication of papers by graduate students based on their thesis and dissertation research and/or special projects.

Submitted manuscripts can report any aspect of taxonomy, ecology, evolution, behavior, parasitology, epidemiology, and population genetics, among other topics, for both plant and animal communities, as they relate to tropical forest/ecosystem conservation. Manuscripts can also report on social and economic issues related to tropical conservation such as indigenous people, poverty, population growth, ecological footprint, conservation policy, and on relevant scientific, technological, cultural and religious issues. The e-journal also welcomes interdisciplinary papers using the whole range of methods available, modeling, molecular biology, epidemiology, ecology and/or evolutionary theory, among others, to assess/discuss vital conservation issues in the tropics.

Tropical Conservation Science aims at being an international entity where papers will be published in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Chinese.

Tropical Conservation Science

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