

SOCP Habitat Protection

The original main activity of PanEco is liberating and caring for orangutans and reintroducing them to the wild. The reason they are endangered is the destruction of their habitat, however, so today we also strongly advocate protecting the rainforest and educating about the environment.

The Leuser National Park

The Leuser National Park – one of the most important reserves in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site – provides a haven for many rare species of animals and plants which are endangered on account of the increasing clearance of forests for palm oil plantations. Here there is the world’s highest density of orangutans and other flagship species, for example the white-handed gibbon, the Sumatran tiger and the giant soft-shelled turtle.

The peat swamp rainforest of Tripa, an important part of the Leuser National Park, is particularly endangered. The deforestation of Tripa threatens the unique biodiversity, contributes to global warming and destroys the basis of existence for the local human population. The peat swamp rainforests are an important basis of existence for the people who live there. They provide effective protection against natural disasters such as tsunamis, provide clean drinking water and, with their ample supply of fish and fruits, ensure there are food resources available



Each year an area of the rainforest three times as big as Switzerland is cleared on Sumatra alone to make room for palm oil plantations.

The Threat

If the peat swamp rainforests are burnt down and drained, huge amounts of carbon are released into the atmosphere in the form of CO₂ and contribute to global warming. A study by PanEco and the World Agroforestry Centre ICRAF comes to the conclusion that the destruction of Tripa will release an estimated 30 million tons of carbon in the next 30 years.



Extremely valuable peat swamp forest falls victim to slash-and-burn practises

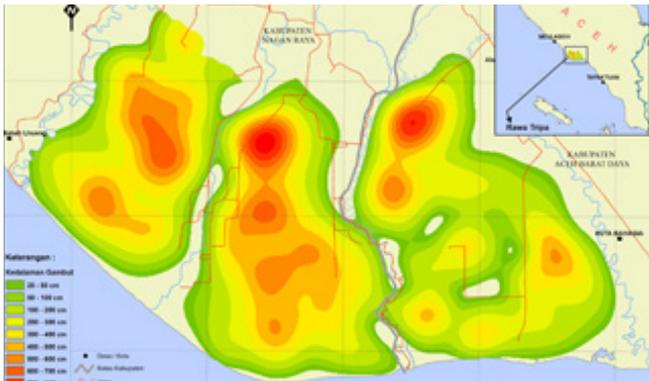


This is followed by the extraction of water through drainages. This process leads to the emission of large quantities of CO₂.

Against the background of the acute threat to Tripa, PanEco and its partner NGO YEL started a programme in 2005 to stop the destruction and to ensure the long-term restoration and conservation of the unique rainforests of Tripa. The programme pursues two complementary goals: improving local environmental policy and creating alternative sources of income.

The Leuser National Park with its unique biodiversity is also under great threat: in the province of Aceh the government has introduced a new spatial planning law

aiming to free up huge areas of this ecosystem for mining and also paper and palm oil plantations. The law is in conflict with national environmental protection laws, but the provincial government is insisting on its implementation. The Leuser National Park is not only essential for the survival of us humans. It comprises one of the most important rainforests in the world and provides a haven for many rare species of animals and plants which are endangered on account of the increasing clearance of forests.



SOCP analysis provided to the authorities prove that the peat in the Tripa rainforest extends much deeper as previously thought. As a result, the CO2 emissions following slash-and-burn are even higher as feared.



With the help of new technology, like drones, protected forests can be monitored, evidence related to the violation of conservation laws can be gathered and data for research purposes can be collected.

Measures

- PanEco provides scientific study and mapping of the area in order to be able to assess the situation and development on the basis of reliable data. Based on the results, a series of reports on the value of Tripa and sets of maps have already been published.
- PanEco is carrying out a local campaign to raise the public's awareness of the importance of the swamp forest ecosystem. In particular, the campaign relies on mobile units, i.e. well-equipped teams that visit schools and villages.
- PanEco supports the Leuser Ecosystem Management Authority in Aceh (BPKEL) to promote the capacity of the local institutions when implementing the guidelines and laws to protect the Leuser ecosystem. PanEco also helps the local government improve land-use planning according to the vision «Green Aceh».

- PanEco has launched an international media campaign to make people throughout the world aware of the situation in Tripa. This has led to various articles and documentary films such as «The Dark Side of a Green Fuel» and «The REDD Ape».

Successfully won court cases

At the end of 2013 there was a major success: the Indonesian court fined the palm oil company PT Kallista Alam 9 million US dollars for illegal slash-and-burn agriculture in the Leuser ecosystem. In 2014 the court finally rejected Kallista Alam's appeal and is therefore supporting the decision of the governor of Aceh to revoke the palm oil company's illegal palm oil concession. This historic verdict sets a precedent and paved the way for another successful court case in early 2016.



PanEco is a non-profit foundation with headquarters in Berg am Irchel. Since 1996 we have been actively involved in nature and species conservation and environmental education in Switzerland and Indonesia.

PanEco Foundation
Chileweg 5
CH-8415 Berg am Irchel
Phone +41 52 354 32 32

info@paneco.ch
www.paneco.ch/en