



*Press release*

## Nature conservation helps fight climate change

The new report by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change<sup>1</sup> states that climate change has been more rapid than previously estimated. In the next decades significant changes of temperature, seasonal variation in rainfall and increased frequency and intensity of weather-related catastrophic events are likely to occur. In addition to direct impacts of climate change on human society reactions of nature have already been observed. In this context, nature conservation is more important than ever, states the Board of Directors of the European Section of the Society for Conservation Biology<sup>2</sup> meeting in Uppsala, Sweden, this week.

Nature is already under pressure because of habitat loss and degradation and climate change adds a new important threat. Human society and nature must adapt to this changing environment. Recent research<sup>3</sup> shows that natural and managed systems with high diversity and healthy ecosystems are more likely to have the capacity to adapt.

Past efforts of conservation have contributed to alleviating some of the effects of climate change before it became a major global concern. We must increase these conservation efforts such as halting deforestation, conserving wetlands and restoring threatened species and habitats.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment<sup>4</sup> has highlighted how dependent human well-being is on functional ecosystems for goods and services we often take for granted, such as drinking water and pollination. By helping biodiversity we are helping ourselves. Nature conservation is not a luxury; in a world where climate change is inevitable it is now more vital than ever. Spending on nature conservation today is an investment in our children's future.

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change: <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

<sup>2</sup> The Society for Conservation Biology (<http://www.conbio.org/>) is an international professional organization dedicated to promoting the scientific study of factors affecting maintenance, loss, and restoration of biological diversity, and to implement sound, evidence based conservation. The society has more than 13 000 members from the five continents.

<sup>3</sup> For example, *Science* 315: pp. 640-642 (2007) and *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 102: pp. 2826-2831 (2005)

<sup>4</sup> Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: <http://www.maweb.org/>