



the bp conservation programme



**Embargoed until 9am EST Thursday, June 23, 2005**

**BP Conservation Programme Marks 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Of Global Awards to Aspiring Conservationists**  
*Programme to Announce New Five-Year Initiative*

**Washington, DC, June 23, 2005:** The BP Conservation Programme marks 15 years of environmental achievement tonight as they award \$600,000 to 28 teams of aspiring conservationists at a ceremony held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

The Programme is celebrating 15 years of supporting teams of conservationists in their early careers. Over the past five years alone, BP Conservation Programme's award winners have described approximately 25 species new to science, rediscovered 3 bird species thought extinct, and have influenced the environmental awareness of countless local communities.

This year's 28 winning teams, selected from 400 applicants, will work on biodiversity issues in 23 different countries. Projects range widely in scope from the conservation of the Trinidad Piping-guan (an endangered native bird) to protecting Darevsky's viper in Armenia, to reducing the threats to nesting leatherback turtles in Gabon.

\$75,000 is being awarded to three projects: on Marsh Deer that find refuge on floating islands in Argentina; the critically endangered Philippine Crocodile; and a Kenyan community that depends on the sustainable harvesting of forest products.

"The BP Conservation Programme gave me the opportunity to inform the world about conservation issues threatening one of the important global biodiversity sites located in Kenya, the Kikuyu Escarpment Forests. With the Programme's backing, funding for the project has multiplied as other donors have now financed more conservation efforts in the area. The training I received from the Programme gave me better skills for project implementation and management and made me more appreciative of other people's contributions. Now I am able to play a leading role in the conservation of the unique resources and the overall development of my community by linking a sound environment with improved livelihoods," said David Kuria, leader of the Vision 2005 Project.

"With the experience of setting up and carrying out their own projects, the teams develop a broad range of critical skills as conservationists, which gives them a competitive edge in the job market," said Marianne Dunn, BP Conservation Programme manager.

"Through our support, these high-potential individuals progress in their careers with the ability to work with communities to collect good quality scientific data and to use

knowledge on the ground for better decision making and governance. This is something the world needs now to help slow the rapid loss of our precious natural resources.”

**ENDS**

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## **Notes to Editors**

*A list of all recipients and their projects is available upon request. High-quality images are also available. Winners will be present at the ceremony to answer questions about their projects.*

## **Information on the three 2005 \$75,000 Consolidation Award Recipients**

- The Marsh Deer Project, working in the lower Paraná River Delta in Argentina, developed a method last year that showed marsh islands in the delta float during floods. These islands are important in providing refuge to the local population of deer (*Blastocerus dichotomus*) during high waters. The team will work to implement a conservation plan and large-scale publicity campaign in Buenos Aires to ensure the deer receives recognition and its habitat is protected.
- The CROC Project (Community-based Research, Observance, and Conservation Project) will continue to work with the critically endangered Philippine crocodile, a freshwater species of which there are only approximately 50 individuals, in the Northern Luzon area of the Philippines. As the first group to implement any in-situ conservation activities for the species, once-rampant hunting of the crocodiles has now all but ceased. This year the team is committed to not only further protecting the crocodile but ensuring that community involvement and awareness are increased and the NGO they started is self-sustaining by the year 2007.
- The Vision 2005 Project has been working since 2000 to promote sustainable management and harvesting of the Kikuyu escarpment forests in Kenya. Since the forest is a key biodiversity site, the BP Conservation Programme consolidation award will allow the team members to scale up and diversify initiatives such as biodiversity monitoring, local community awareness, conservation education and the promotion of environmentally friendly, income-generating enterprises. The implementation of such conservation and management schemes are considered of critical importance to the people who depend on the forest for their livelihoods.

## **Background to the BP Conservation Programme & Awards**

The Programme is a partnership of BP, BirdLife International, Fauna & Flora International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and Conservation International. Winners are supported by the global network of scientific and business expertise embedded in this collaboration. For more information about the BP Conservation Programme, please visit <http://conservation.bp.com>.

Award winners will be recognized at a ceremony held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, in Washington, D.C., beginning at 6:30 p.m. The ceremony will feature renowned biologist and environmentalist Edward O. Wilson.

A large component of the BP Conservation Programme is its offer of supporting resources. Representatives from each team participate in a two-week training workshop conducted by the Smithsonian Institution's Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity Program, where they learn about topics such as biological monitoring and surveying techniques, conservation education and people-oriented research. Throughout the life of the project, advice, assistance with results dissemination and communications support services are available using the global network of conservation expertise embedded in the Programme partnership.

Applicants seeking a BP Conservation Programme award must demonstrate initiative by designing their own projects from the proposal to implementation stages. Award winners are required to invest in their project countries by including at least one national on their team and by engaging local stakeholders. They also carry out self-designed biodiversity projects, gather baseline data and contribute knowledge to conservation in some of the most ecologically important and environmentally threatened areas in the world.

The 2005 ceremony will reflect upon the Programme's history of promoting biodiversity conservation, sustaining innovative partnerships and nurturing the careers of conservationists all over the world. Approximately 85% of the BP Conservation Programme's alumni have gone on to careers in conservation, including 42% who work at local, national or international NGOs and 43% who work in academia.

Future plans for the Programme, which will be more closely integrated into BP's overall \$500 million, five-year community investment commitment, will also be announced by Mr. Conn at the ceremony. Conservation projects will be funded as part of a more intense focus on educating and enhancing the capacity of young conservation leaders. Projects will be further streamlined with national conservation priorities and will link conservation activities more closely to BP's business practices. Overall, this new initiative, to be called the Energy and Environment Programme, will place a greater emphasis on support for people and projects in sensitive areas where BP has operational sites. The new version of this program is expected to launch in 2006.

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