

Bali Declaration hopes to save Indonesia's biodiversity from deforestation

August 4 2010

Indonesia has some of the richest biological diversity of any nation on Earth; however, it is threatened with losing it to forest destruction. In reaction, more than 900 scientists from around the world, including those from the Smithsonian Institution, recently came together as members of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation to release "The Bali Declaration," which calls for urgent efforts to slow rampant deforestation in Indonesia.

Geographically, Indonesia is distributed across an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands that span Asian and Australasian regions. A great many of its species are endemic to just one or two islands, and biologists are still discovering new species throughout the country—underscoring how fragile and little understood Indonesia's biodiversity is. However, logging, land conversion, forest fires, overharvesting and other environmental stresses are posing greater and greater threats. The pace of deforestation (averaging 2 - 2.5 million hectares annually from 1996 to 2005) has led to the degradation, fragmentation and loss of critical ecosystems.

Through the Bali Declaration the ATBC recommends, among other things, that reduction of deforestation be immediately concentrated in existing and emerging "hot spots" of forest conservation, such as Sumatra, East and West Kalimantan and West Papua. It also urges the Indonesian government to implement and maintain a planned two-year moratorium on new permits for timber, [oil palm](#) and other plantation concessions and to reinstate the 2007 ban on clearing peat forests that

was rescinded in 2009.

"The threats to the rich biodiversity of Indonesia are unparalleled," said John Kress, executive director of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation and director of the Smithsonian's Consortium for Understanding and Sustaining a Biodiverse Planet. "So it is most encouraging that the government of Indonesia has initiated an agreement with the government of Norway for funding to reduce dangerous carbon emissions through [forest-conservation](#) and monitoring activities, thereby complementing ongoing efforts to slow [deforestation](#) and strengthen protected areas in the country."

Forest loss and degradation have already imperiled many Indonesian animal and plant species, including more than 100 mammal species classified as threatened or endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, such as the Javan rhinoceros, Asian elephant and the Sumatran orangutan.

Provided by Smithsonian

Citation: Bali Declaration hopes to save Indonesia's biodiversity from deforestation (2010, August 4) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-bali-declaration-indonesia-biodiversity-deforestation.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.