



Masoala is the last place in Madagascar where the rainforest meets the sea © James MacKinnon 2001

- Botswana
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Congo Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Gabon
- Ivory Coast
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Namibia
- Rwanda
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe
- Regional Africa

## Masoala National Park, MADAGASCAR

### WCS at Masoala

Masoala National Park is the largest protected area in Madagascar, a country that ranks as one of the world’s top five “hotspots” for biodiversity. Masoala NP consists of seven different units, including three marine parks. The National Park is rich in rare species including a fantastic variety of palms, a recently discovered variety of ancient flowering plant, as well as eight lemur species. WCS first got involved in Masoala by supporting research on butterflies. Since then, WCS has worked with the Malagasy government to create and manage the National Park.

### The Human Aspect

In one of the most cyclone-prone areas in the world, the forests of Masoala provide critical watershed protection to the 45,000 people living downstream. The park helps to assure sustainable management of ecosystems that will provide long-term protection from the soil erosion and flooding that scar many other areas of the country. On a national level, Masoala’s marine and terrestrial ecosystems represent a rich and largely untapped resource for ecotourism.

### Threats

The main threat to Masoala is the forest fragmentation caused by slash-and-burn agriculturalists moving up the river valleys and hillsides from the coasts. The movement inland is driven by the demand for land to grow rice, as well as the overuse of marine resources along the coast. Secondary pressures include the illegal cutting of tropical hardwoods, in particular rosewood and ebony, and the hunting of lemurs.

### Masoala Highlights

#### Total Area

- 2,300 Km<sup>2</sup>

#### Biome

- Lowland rainforest
- Montane rainforest
- Coral reef ecosystems

#### Species Present

- Serpent eagle
- Madagascar red owl
- Eight species of lemur, including the Aye-aye and red ruffed lemur
- Endemic palms
- Pitcher plant
- Sharks
- Humpback whale
- Marine turtles

#### WCS Strategies

- Site-based conservation
- Research
- Training and capacity-building
- New model Development
- Informing policy





The panther chameleon, one of Masoala's many reptiles © James MacKinnon, 2001

### WCS Activities

WCS is currently providing technical and financial support to the National Parks Service (ANGAP) in all aspects of management. Particular support is provided in the fields of improving park infrastructure and management systems, ecological monitoring, community outreach and education, and protecting ecological links between Masoala and the remaining forests of eastern Madagascar. WCS's complementary work on integrated coastal zone management in neighboring Antongil Bay also provides important support to improved natural resource management efforts on the mainland.

Masoala national park is part of a larger landscape/seascape in and around Antongil Bay. To develop a better understanding of the interrelationships of wild areas in the greater landscape, and identify and secure ecological links between Masoala and the remaining forests of eastern Madagascar, the WCS project will undertake the following:

### Important Next Steps

- Target technical support on specific issues such as sustainable financing, staff and researcher training, ecological monitoring and promoting community-based forest management in the forests surrounding Masoala.
- Protect the fragile forest corridors that link Masoala to the remaining forests of eastern Madagascar. If that corridor lifeline is lost, Masoala will become an ecological island.
- Develop an Antongil Bay integrated coastal zone management program, which includes an effort to reduce some of the pressures that drive people inland from the coast to carry out slash-and-burn agriculture on the Masoala peninsula.
- Gazette and create a new protected area on the Makira plateau to the west of the Masoala National Park.

The overall objective for WCS activities at Masoala over the next three years is to develop Masoala NP as a model for protected area management in Madagascar .

### Contacts

James MacKinnon  
Technical Advisor  
pnmasoala@wanadoo.mg  
(261 20) 22 52879

For more information:  
[www.masoala.org](http://www.masoala.org)

Wildlife Conservation Society  
International Conservation  
2300 Southern Blvd.  
Bronx, N.Y. 10460 USA  
[www.wcs.org](http://www.wcs.org)

### Vision

WCS -International believes in the intrinsic value of the diversity and integrity of life on Earth and in the importance of wildlife and wilderness to the quality of human life.

### Mission

The Wildlife Conservation Society's International Conservation program saves wildlife and wildlands by understanding and resolving critical problems that threaten key species and large, wild ecosystems around the world.

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