

Hope for the  
rainforest

**Courier 3/09**

# Rainforest protection is climate protection

**Forests are being plundered, drained, cleared and burnt down to make way for palm oil plantations. Deforestation makes Indonesia the third largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter in the world and contributes to global warming.**

## **Palm oil suppliers heat our climate**

The situation is particularly dramatic in Aceh province in northern Sumatra. Here palm oil companies, including Astra Agro Lestari AAL, are logging the last of Sumatra's virgin peat swamp forests to create vast plantations for palm oil production.

Their actions have devastating consequences for people and animals, but also for the world's climate. Peat stores a significant amount of carbon. In decimating the forests carbon is released into the atmosphere in the form of CO<sub>2</sub> and global warming accelerates.

The destruction of tropical forests is driven by global demand for products such as palm oil and paper. Traces of palm oil can be found in consumer goods including hygienic products, cosmetics, chocolate, baked goods and processed foods such as frozen meals. The disingenuous boom in biofuel has further stoked demand.

## **David against Goliath**

The multinational giant Jardine Matheson is the face behind this devastation. PanEco accuses the conglomerate of financing the destruction of vital rainforest in Indonesia through the majority share it holds in AAL. PanEco has nominated Jardine for the «Public Eye Award 2010», making a clear statement against its unacceptable behaviour.

We continue our all-out fight to preserve the Tripa peat swamps forests and prevent any more pristine nature and valuable ecosystems giving way to palm oil plantations. PanEco and its partner organisation YEL are taking a stand against AAL, generating publicity in Indonesia and at an international level on the heedless destruction of the rainforest. By increasing the pressure on AAL we hope it will abandon its irresponsible activity in Tripa and instead participate in efforts to protect the area.

This approach has led us to a possible partial success: Indonesian media report that AAL is bowing to the pressure from YEL and PanEco. The company may be realising the tremendous damage its behaviour is having on nature and the environment. Rabo-Bank also appears to be moving in the same direction, with reports that the bank has denied further credit to AAL for investment in plantations. These reports give us the hope and renewed strength to continue on our well-trodden path to fight for the peat swamp forests of Tripa.

## **Public Eye Award**

The Public Eye Award is an annual «name and shame» award started in 2000. It is bestowed on the opening day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos to companies that «act in a particularly irresponsible manner towards people and the environment». The award is an initiative of the Bern Declaration and Greenpeace and aims to provide a «critical counterpoint to the WEF».



**Reckless: Species-rich swamp rainforest is destroyed for palm oil plantations.**

Photos: Susilo Sudarman, Peter Jaeggi, Migros

# No life without the rainforest

**Deforestation of coastal swamp forests destroys the livelihood of local people. These forests are also refuge to the last Sumatran orangutans and harbour a unique diversity of species.**

## **Destruction of natural resources**

The rainforest in Tripa loses the equivalent of 20 football fields in size to deforestation every day. Indigenous people are under pressure: the enormous consumption of the plantations draws essential water away from the farmers' rice paddies. The clear cutting has a direct impact on the local climate and throws it out of balance. Droughts and devastating floods are the results. Along with the peat swamp forests, rich fishing and breeding grounds for sea fish and crustaceans and the protein supply of the people are lost.

Clearing coastal forests also removes a natural barrier against natural disasters, such as tsunamis, leaving people exposed and defenceless against the full force of the waves. It is vital to counter the effects of coastal swamp forest deforestation and prevent thousands of lives being lost in future tsunamis, as were in December 2004.

## **Hope for the homeless orangutans**

Ever more orangutans at the SOCP (Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme) quarantine station come from the forests of Aceh, a stark consequence of irresponsible clear cutting for palm oil plantations. The government of Aceh has enacted new legislation requiring all of «its» orangutans to be resettled in Aceh. PanEco and SOCP have turned their attention to finding suitable forests in the province that can provide a new habitat for these hapless great apes.

Resettlement alone will not save the orangutans from extinction. Far more important is protection of their habitat. This is why PanEco campaigns against the relentless destruction of the Sumatran rainforest.

You can find more information on PanEco projects at [www.paneco.ch](http://www.paneco.ch).



**Local people are losing their means of existence and suffer from illnesses.**

Photo: Robert Nickelsberg/Getty Images



**Storms result in flash flooding with devastating consequences.**

Photo: YEL/PanEco



**Orangutans are increasingly being driven out of their habitat.**

Photo: Molly Brooks

**Your donation supports our work to protect the rainforests of Tripa. Thank you!**

# Raising Awareness and Informing

The PanEco Foundation focuses on the areas of conservation and environmental education. Alongside Indonesia, it also works in Switzerland towards maintaining biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources and a better understanding of global environmental problems.

## Experience nature to understand nature

PanEco runs the Environmental Education Centre UBZ Neuland-Weinland in Berg am Irchel. The centre works closely with regional primary schools to provide children with a real live link to nature through memorable experiences and tangible examples. The UBZ also offers exciting excursions for adults on the themes of forest, water and agriculture. The new programme for 2010 can be accessed at [www.neulandweinland.ch](http://www.neulandweinland.ch).

## Environmental awareness promotes conservation

Our values have changed in the materialistic society of today. Many people have lost any direct contact with nature and the significance of environmental problems is only slowly dawning. PanEco is committed to bringing the importance of conservation to the widest range of the population. This is why we participate in public events where we draw attention to environmental degradation, identify solutions and present PanEco projects that protect at-risk nature. You can find more information on PanEco projects and current events at [www.paneco.ch](http://www.paneco.ch).

## A dialogue for nature

Raising awareness and informing consumers are important elements in a comprehensive approach to conservation. But what use is information when products with ingredients such as palm oil are still available on the shelves of major retailers? PanEco also works through the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) to encourage producers, processors and retailers to comply with RSPO guidelines for sustainable palm oil.



**Environmental education at all levels creates understanding for the need to protect and conserve the environment.**

Photos: PanEco

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