



FR

2011

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Conservation

New Caledonia

WWF FRANCE'S 10 YEARS COMMITMENT IN NEW CALEDONIA

WWF

WWF is the world’s leading, independent conservation organisation. Active in over 100 countries and with close to five million supporters internationally, WWF works to halt the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and build a future where human beings live in harmony with nature while preserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

In 2011, WWF celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Since 1973, WWF France is working on the ground to transmit a living planet to future generations. With volunteers and the support of 170,000 donors, WWF France leads actions in the field to preserve the natural environment and species, to promote sustainable lifestyles, train decision-makers, assist companies in reducing their ecological footprint and educate the young. However these changes can only be achieved by respecting local populations. That’s why WWF policies are based on dialogue and action. Yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier is president of WWF France since 2009.

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14 years ago, WWF France became involved in New Caledonia, a hotspot of global biodiversity. 10 years ago a permanent local office was created to work more directly with people in this country, closer to reality.

Our ship has always kept to her course, despite the waves of success and failure, hope and concern. The aim is to foster a project for New Caledonia respectful of its people and its biodiversity. We must keep to this course upon which all our projects are based. This is all the

more important in the context of the institutional and social changes which the territory is undergoing.

With this report, we wish to provide a report of our commitment, our actions and our results, as well as to pay tribute to our partners, volunteers, donors and supporters who have helped to achieve them.

New Caledonia, a fragment of the ancient super-continent, Gondwana, is a living page in the planet's natural history book, a unique page that must be kept open. To achieve this goal, all our energies must be mobilized, and yours...

Have a good read and we look forward to another ten years with you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Isabelle Autissier'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Serge Ortu'.

WWF IN NEW CALEDONIA: TEN YEARS ALREADY!

New Caledonia, situated in the middle of the South Pacific, is an archipelago with a population of 250,000. More than 60% of the population live in and around Nouméa.

New Caledonia includes the main island of Grande Terre and adjacent islands with a land area of 16,595 square kilometres, the Loyalty Islands (Maré, Lifou, Ouvéa) with a land area of 1,981 square kilometres, a few remote archipelagos, isolated and uninhabited islands.

Given its geological history, the island has resources in nickel, chrome and cobalt. One third of the main island, Grande Terre, is made up of peridotite rocks which contain the ores. It is estimated that New Caledonia holds 20 to 25% of the world's nickel reserves.

In addition to its mining resources, New Caledonia has an exceptional rate of endemism which makes it one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. It contains 4 of the planet's 238 priority ecoregions: dry forests, moist forests, fresh water ecosystems, and coral reefs.

In 1997, WWF France, supported by WWF US, in association with other organisations, became involved with the preservation of dry forests in New Caledonia. This led, in 2001 to the implementation of PCFS (Programme de Conservation des Forêts Sèches = dry forest conservation program) of which WWF France is a partner.

In October 2001, WWF France set up an office in New Caledonia to be present in the field, and work with other Caledonian partners, to conserve the island's exceptional natural heritage:

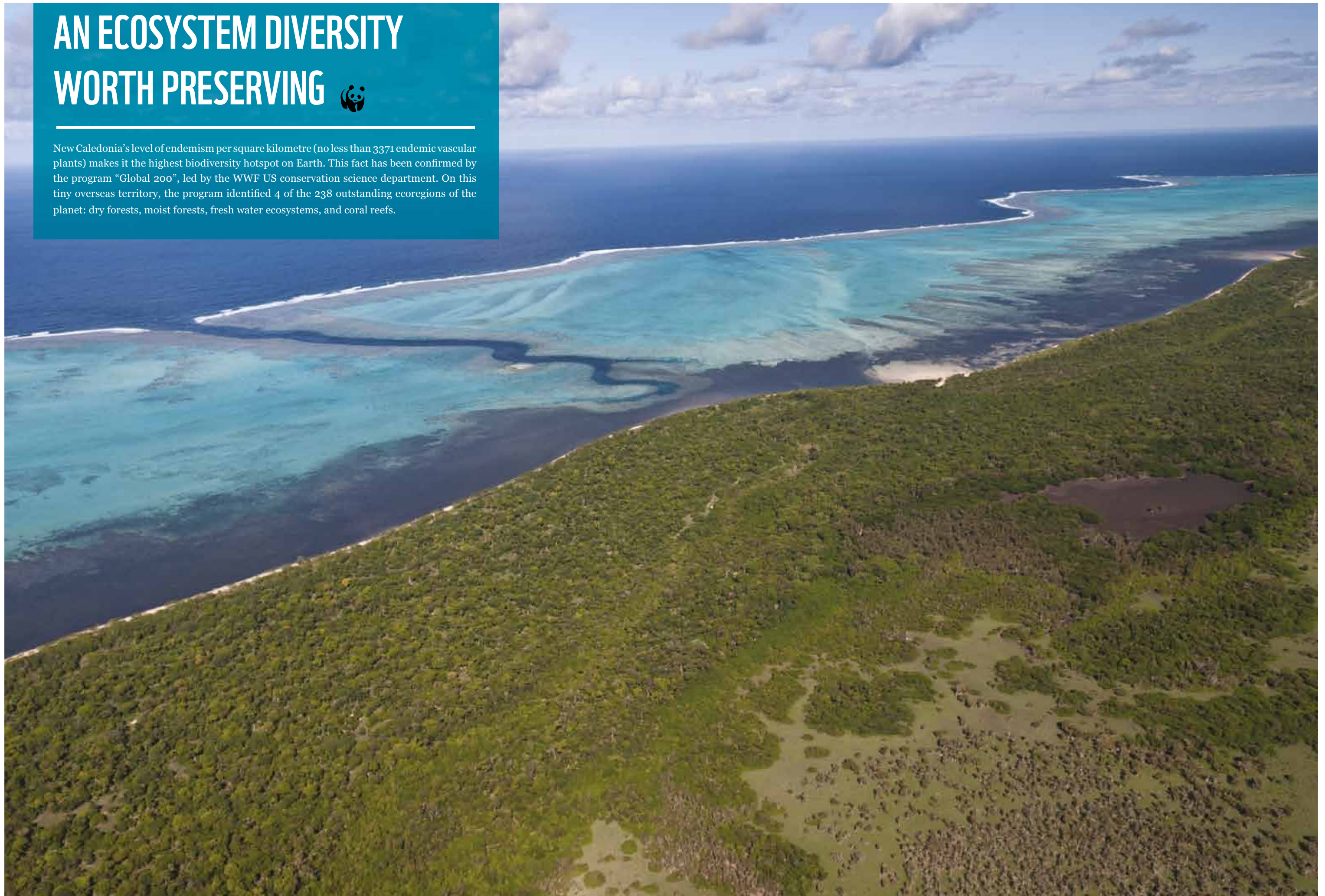
To promote conservation and sustainable management strategies for the 4 New Caledonian ecoregions.

To improve management of threats to the ecoregions: fire, invasive species, mining, waste and pollution, global warming.

To support people and organisations through the development of environmental education, the strengthening of stakeholders' competences, the implementation of management structures and tools.

AN ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY WORTH PRESERVING

New Caledonia's level of endemism per square kilometre (no less than 3371 endemic vascular plants) makes it the highest biodiversity hotspot on Earth. This fact has been confirmed by the program "Global 200", led by the WWF US conservation science department. On this tiny overseas territory, the program identified 4 of the 238 outstanding ecoregions of the planet: dry forests, moist forests, fresh water ecosystems, and coral reefs.



DRY FORESTS REPRIEVED

Review:

New Caledonian dry forests used to cover 4,500 square kilometres. Today, there are only 57 square kilometres in isolated patches on the west coast. So this ecosystem (which contains about sixty species unknown anywhere else) is one of the most threatened on Earth. Fire, clearing for agriculture, over grazing, urban sprawl, invasive species (rats, deer, pigs, achatina snail, fire ant, passiflora, leucaena, etc) have led to the disappearance of 99% of its surface area.

Solutions:

- stop the degradation of the remaining dry forests by urgent protection measures,
- increase ecological restoration so that dry forests take their proper place in the West Coast landscape,
- increase public awareness and involvement in protecting, preserving and producing incomes from these forests.

WWF action:

Following the alarm signal given by IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement = research institute for development) botanists, WWF took part in the mobilization of Caledonian organisations to save the dry forests in 1997. Five years later the PCFS (Programme de Conservation des Forêts Sèches = dry forest conservation program) started. With its partners, local communities, research organisations and associations, PCFS has worked to improve knowledge of the ecosystem, as well as to protect it, restore it and produce commercial income from it.

WWF gave financial backing (46 MCFP= 385 500€) to a number of projects initiated by its partners in the program: protection of several priority dry forests including Nekoro, the largest dry forest in the Northern Province, multiplication of indigenous plants in nurseries, ecology of invasive species, restoration sites, study of rare species (placostylus snail, etc...)



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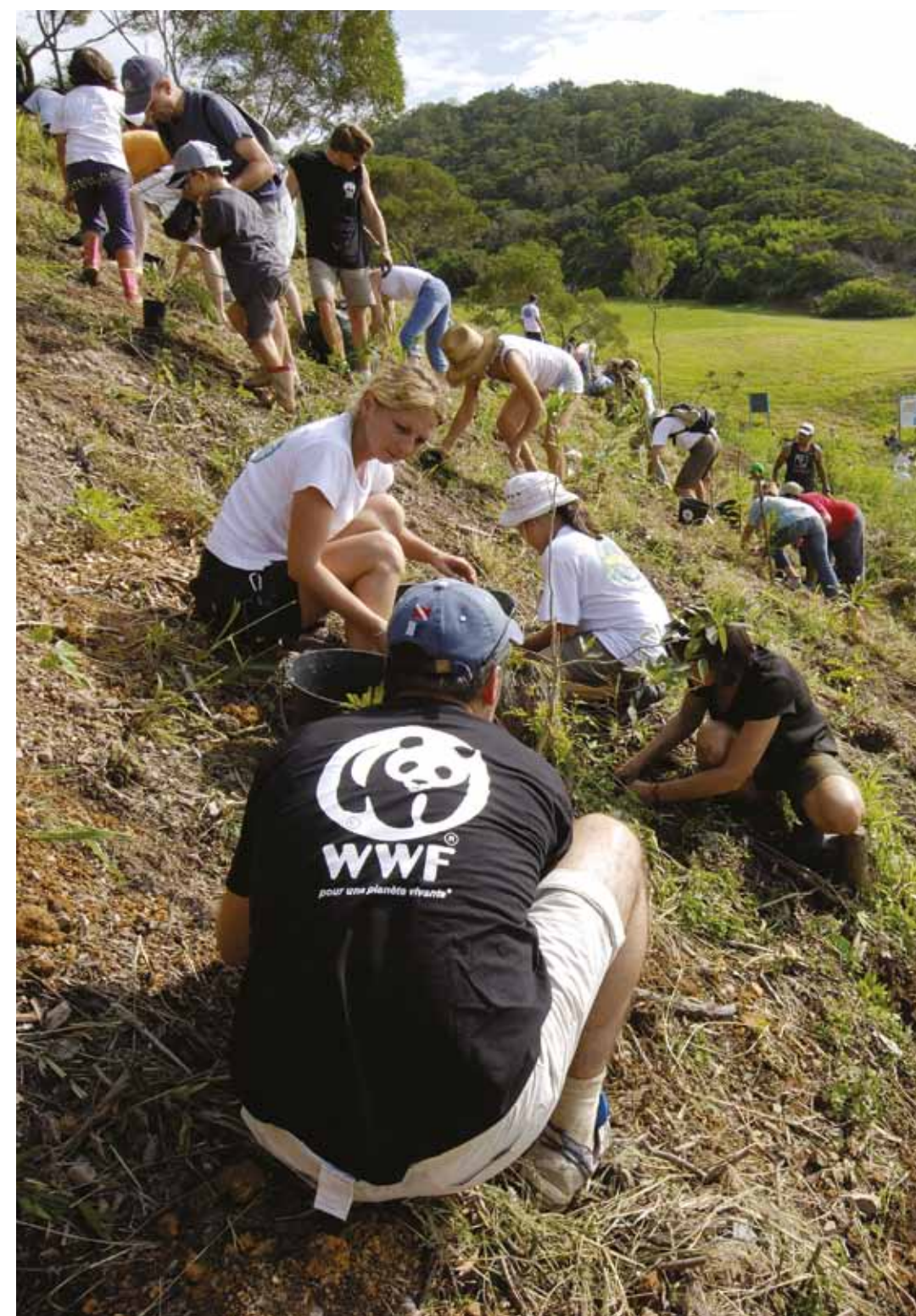
WWF is convinced that the future of the remaining dry forests can only be ensured by reconnecting them to other forest ecosystems on the West coast. Since 2003, WWF has worked to implement this approach within the framework of a program of landscape management (organisation of an international conference, workshop on definition of landscape units and action methodology, funding and participation in the Pindai-Nekoro area landscape analysis).

Following the same logic, it was essential to raise the awareness of forest users and associate them in active restoration. So, after trials on a few small sites, WWF succeeded in 2009 in planting 1,000 trees in one morning, reaching 2,000 trees/morning in the following years.

Over two years, with the participation of more than a thousand volunteers, close to 12,000 plants (about fifty different species of endemic or indigenous trees, shrubs and lianas) have been planted on two protected dry forest sites in Nouméa: Ouen Toro and the Forestry Park.

Among these plants, some are endangered. The plantations will guarantee their future by creating new populations or strengthening existing ones. This work is urgent and necessary to preserve these two forests, and it is an invaluable experiment to promote and adapt the restoration of other forests throughout New Caledonia.

Another unquestionable success of WWF's involvement in the multi partner-program for the conservation of the remaining dry forests has had a tangible result. In September 2000 a document was drawn up by the Northern Province, the Southern Province and WWF. This document proposed the implementation of a permanent dry forest management structure, with the possibility of including other environmental territory-wide initiatives. Ten years later, thanks to the evidence provided by the collective work of PCFS and by the involvement of local authorities, the CEN (Conservatoire des Espaces Naturels = Conservatory of Natural Lands) was implemented. It now hosts the Dry Forest and the UNESCO World Heritage programs, but in the future it could include other conservation projects.



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MOIST FORESTS: LIVING REMAINS OF GONDWANA

Review:

This ecoregion consists of moist forests and maquis on ultramafic rocks, which are living remains of the Gondwana super-continent from which New Caledonia separated 80 million years ago. In each of these areas, 2010 and 1144 species of plants have been listed, with endemism levels of 82 and 88 % respectively. With this unique flora (fern trees, endemic palm trees, amborella, etc) goes an exceptional fauna (the famous kagu, the New Caledonian imperial pigeon which is the world's largest arboreal pigeon, the largest gecko in the world, three species of endemic flying-foxes, etc...). Unfortunately, the moist forests have already lost two thirds of their original surface area and cover only 3,900 square kilometres. Today, the remaining forests are under threat from a new mining boom, forest fires, invasion by introduced animals and plants, as well as smuggling and poaching of some species (flying foxes).

Solutions:

- maintain and restore existing forests
- interconnect the moist forests areas and connect them to other types of forests (mangroves, dry forests and mesophilous forests) through restoration of ecological corridors,
- support collective development strategies to control and reduce threats to forests and maquis on ultramafic rocks,
- promote the development of sustainable activity for local populations living in and around these forest areas
- develop strategies to save emblematic and keystone species (kagu, flying-foxes, crow honeyeater, palm trees, etc...)



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WWF action:

Since 2003, following an initiative of its chief Jacob Win-Nemou, the Gohapin tribe, (the largest tribe in the Northern Province situated at the foot of the Aoupinié forest), works with WWF, so as to build a sustainable development model in tribal areas, based on the restoration of the link between Man and Nature. This project, because of its commitment to conservation, restoration and economic development of the natural and cultural heritage, is a model that could be replicated in other tribes such as Goa and Pöö which are situated in the same crucial forest area.

Generally speaking, given its presence on site, and its relationship with other New Caledonian organisations (sharing successes and difficulties), WWF contributes to working out methods and tools on restoration issues, which can be used by other communities (tribes, local authorities, non profit organisations, etc.)

In 2005, at Sarramea, in collaboration with the CIE (Centre d'Initiation à l'Environnement = environmental education center), the IAC (Institut Agronomique Calédonien = New Caledonian institute of agronomy) and the Hunters Federation, WWF launched the first “Night of the Bat” in New Caledonia. Since then, this annual event is renewed in partnership with the Gohapin tribe. The first goal is to promote the value of flying-foxes in ecology and tourism, by showing that, as gardeners in the forest, they are more valuable in the sky than on the plate.

At the same time, WWF helped IAC organize a count of a large flying-foxes colony, as well as catching individual bats on which the institute experimented with satellite tracking.

At the end of 2008, WWF joined organisations involved in the preservation of the emblematic New Caledonian bird and a PASC (Plan d'Actions pour la Sauvegarde du Cagou = Kagu species action plan) was compiled. In order to monitor Kagu populations in mountain areas, WWF gave financial support to the SCO (Société Calédonienne d'Ornithologie = NC Bird Society), who initiated the plan. The funds were granted to develop a new method for assessing populations by acoustic recording. These song meters increased survey efficiency.



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NEW CALEDONIA'S FRESHWATER: A DOUBLE CHALLENGE

Review:

In its rivers, swamps, dolines and caves, New Caledonia hosts a fauna unique on Earth. However its increasing scarcity is an alarming sign of the water resource degradation. This fauna is a vestige of Gondwana. Fish (66 species known of which 11 are endemic), crustacean, mollusc, and insect populations are decreasing, even disappearing, because of repeated fires, mining activity (present and past), numerous invasive introduced species (tilapia, black bass, red-eared slider turtle, water hyacinth,) as well as over use of river water and discharging of untreated waste water.

Today, water supply problems, and problems about sharing the water resource, are becoming more frequent in New Caledonia. This demonstrates that urgent action is necessary by local authorities as well as water users.

Solutions:

- raise population awareness on the value of water and its associated biodiversity in order to promote respectful attitudes towards the water resource,
- organize an integrated management program at river basin level (legislation, water use coherence, etc.) so that human activities are compatible with biodiversity preservation (sometimes micro-endemic),
- set up a long term territory-wide strategy for the conservation of freshwater ecosystem biodiversity, by evaluating the role of each river basin in maintaining and restoring the quality of its populations,
- restore the hydrology of water streams by large scale investment to regenerate areas eroded by fires and mining, and reduce sources of erosion.



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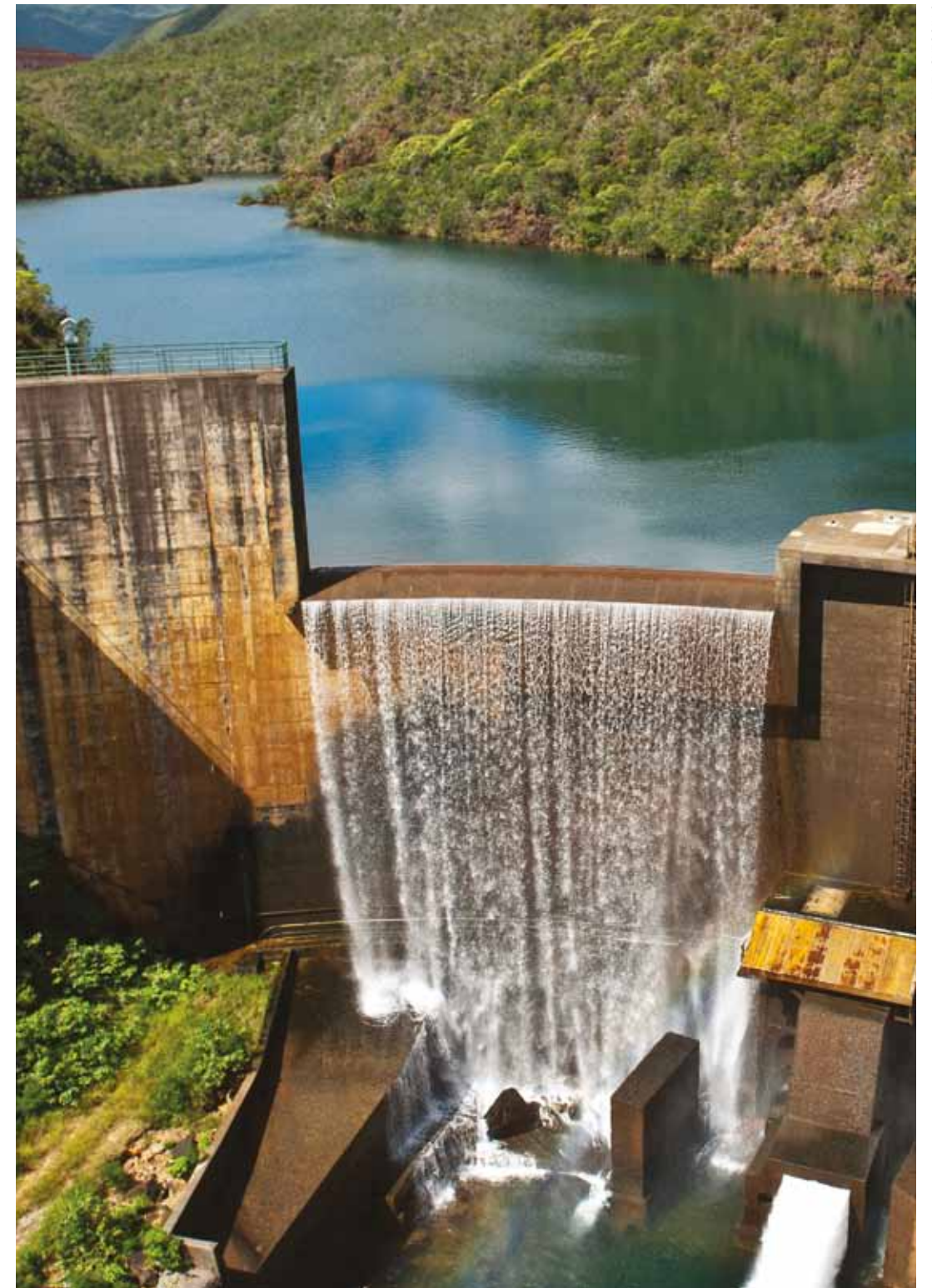
WWF action:

In 2002, WWF joined Dumbéa Rivière Vivante (For a Live Dumbéa River), an organisation of riverside residents for the conservation of the waterway. The river is considered the richest in New Caledonia for fish diversity, and is also the main water supply for Greater Nouméa. The partnership agreement included funding studies and surveys necessary to understand the river's importance (fish inventory, usage survey), promoting a proposed protected area in the upper reaches, fire prevention, mobilization of local authorities and media on the future of the Dumbéa River. It also covered cooperation on eco-citizen actions (waste collection, planting on riverside properties) within the framework of educational programs in local schools.

All this joint work contributed to the creation in 2010 of a steering committee for the Dumbéa River sustainable development project, under the leadership of the local council, bringing together local authorities and NGOs with a common aim: ensure the restoration, preservation and economic development of this unique water heritage.

Given the incomplete data available on New Caledonian freshwater ecosystem biodiversity, WWF conducted several research programs, with additional funding from Conservation International. This was a necessary starting point to enable the setting up of a water resource conservation strategy for this ecosystem. The programs covered a review of current knowledge on freshwater biodiversity, identification of important data gaps to be filled, drafting a typology of New Caledonian fresh water habitats and an inventory of uses and public works impacting this environment. The report was handed to the Provinces and the Government. This allowed them to direct their efforts towards lesser known areas of study.

WWF encourages the preservation and restoration of forest cover, around catchment areas, amongst fire services, local authorities and tribes. This is vital in ensuring a sufficient water resource for New Caledonia, both in quantity and in accessibility. Pilot projects have been launched with funding from the Government, Northern and Southern Provinces and the Caisse d'Epargne Group (a banking establishment).



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A MARINE ECOREGION ON THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Review:

New Caledonia harbours the largest lagoon in the world: 23,000 square kilometres enclosed by a 16,000 km long continuous barrier reef. With a relatively low level of endemism (about 5%), compared to its terrestrial environment, it is an outstanding example of a high diversity coral reef ecosystem (15,000 species documented up to now), including rare, vulnerable or endangered species (humpback whale, turtle, napoleon wrasse, fairy tern, etc.). Apart from the lagoon, New Caledonia includes several archipelagos (Loyalty Islands, Chesterfield, Entrecasteaux, Bellona), remote islands (Matthew, Hunter, Walpole, etc.) and the rich underwater mounts of the Norfolk ridge.

Even though the majority of the reefs are in good health, several factors threaten this ecoregion : urban and industrial development; urban, mining and agricultural pollution; excessive recreational use of islets and reef passes; local abuse of resources. On a different scale, there are disturbance due to global warming.

Solutions:

- update scientific knowledge of New Caledonian marine biodiversity,
- develop a conservation strategy for this biodiversity with a coherent network of protected marine areas and appropriate means for efficient management,
- draft and implement an action plan, for the emblematic species of the marine ecoregion (turtles, dugongs, seabirds, whales, etc.),
- ensure better management of human activity which impacts the environment.



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WWF action:

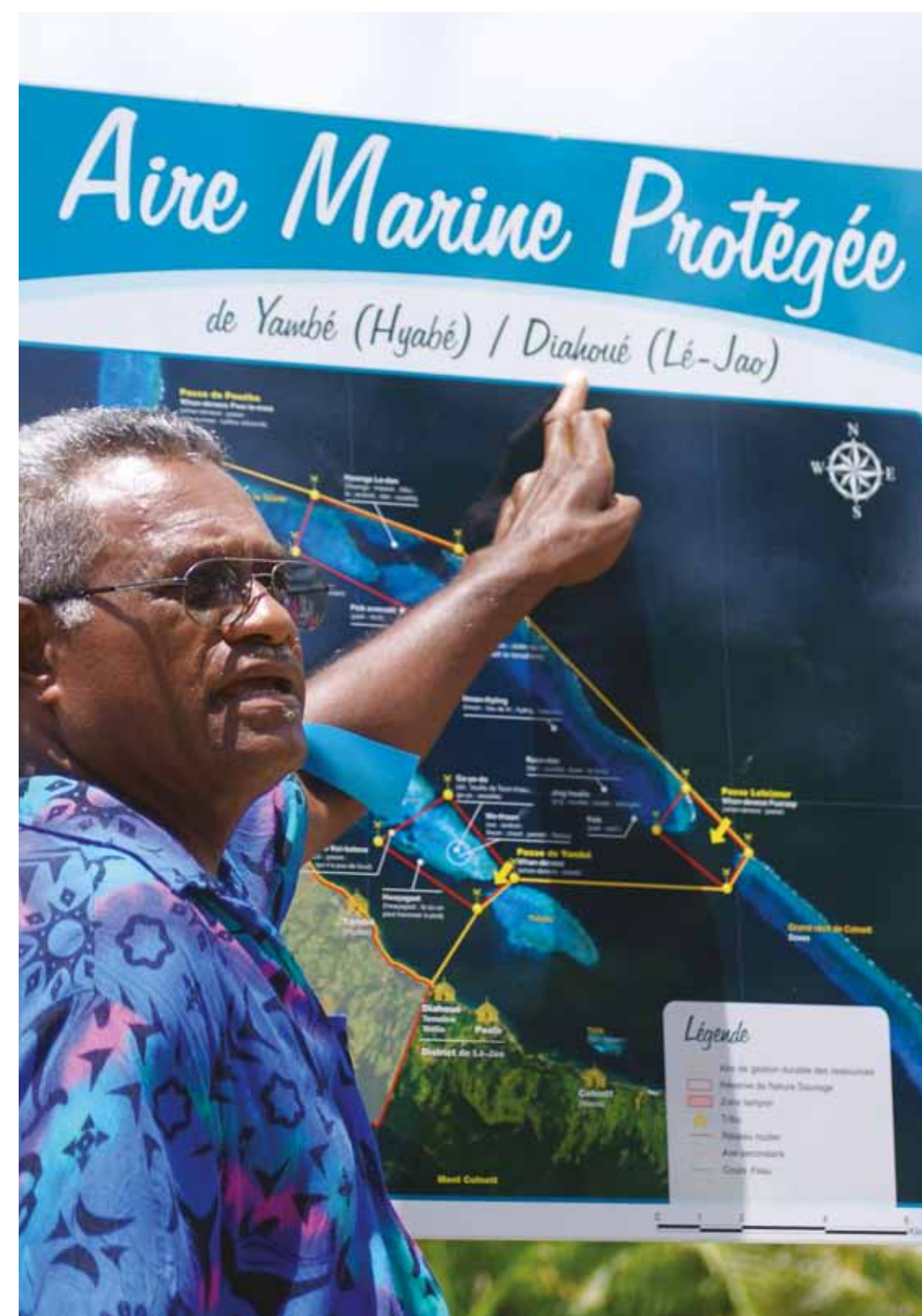
WWF is involved in the ecoregion on two fronts: improving marine areas management and developing conservation actions for emblematic species.

In 2003, WWF joined the local IFRECOR Committee, an organisation whose aim is to promote protection and sustainable management of coral reefs.

Within the framework of CRISP (Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific), started in 2005 by the AFD (Agence Française de Développement = French Agency for development) and its partners, WWF became involved in drafting the New Caledonia Marine ERA (Analyse Eco-Régionale = Ecoregional analysis). Its aim was the identification of a system of 19 areas of outstanding interest for the conservation of biodiversity and marine resources. The Initiative united active members (scientists, politicians, local communities, organisations) around a common vision and a common conservation strategy for these areas. In order to fill in missing data on one of these areas, the marine area of Diahot-Balabio, a rapid evaluation of biodiversity and its socio economic context (RAP) was carried out. Management measures were proposed, taking into account the requirements and expectations of the local population.

The ERA report, which contributed to the identification and description of areas to be listed, served as a basis for drafting the submission to UNESCO.

At the same time, WWF helped the Northern and Southern Provinces to strengthen their lagoon management tools. In cooperation with the Northern Province and the coastal tribes of Pouébo and Hienghène, the first three joint management Marine Protected Areas were created in 2009, covering an area of 12,785 hectares: the sustainable management area of Yambé-Diahoué, the Yeega Provincial Park and the Dohimen Wild Nature Reserve. They are jointly managed by a committee with representatives of the local council, the Northern Province, local tribes, fishermen, and tour operators. The management plans for these areas are being drawn up and several actions, which are already finalised or in progress, will be integrated into the plan : creation of tracks (under water, mangrove, botanical), publication of a newsletter on the three areas, restocking of hippopus clams, biological monitoring of reefs and of coral spawning, etc.



In the Southern Province, WWF's first action was to support work in the Merlet Marine Reserve, where a biodiversity inventory was carried out: fish, benthic life forms and coral habitat. Other actions included two management issues for the Southern Province Environment Department : supervision of whale watching activity (with the help of "Opération Cétacés", whale watching guidelines were drawn up and distributed); improving lagoon monitoring through a cyber tracker, a tool which allows the keying-in of observation data by the lagoon surveillance teams in real time.

Considering the importance of turtle conservation in New Caledonia, WWF supported from 2002 to 2004 the ASNNC (Association pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature Néo-Calédonnienne = New Caledonian Conservation Organisation) in its monitoring of turtle populations in the Entrecasteaux archipelago, and in drafting an inventory of nesting sites (73 sites listed so far).

Thanks to a partnership with Grande Brasserie de Nouvelle-Calédonie (a local brewing company) in collecting and recycling aluminium cans, WWF helped fund aerial counting of the dugong population (the third largest in the world) implemented by "Opération Cétacés", within the framework of the Zonéco program. In 2010, with a view to preserving the species, a partnership (Provinces, New Caledonian Government, French Government, Marine Protected Areas Agency, Opération Cétacés, WWF) drafted a 2010-2012 dugong action plan. The aim of the plan was to acquire knowledge necessary for the preservation of this marine mammal, to raise awareness, and to maximise Provincial measures for its protection.



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ECOLOGICAL BALANCE IN DANGER

New Caledonia's outstanding natural diversity is unfortunately threatened by hazards; the main ones being fires (several thousand or tens of thousands of hectares are devastated every year), mining (the impact of over three hundred abandoned mines plus the impact of a new mining boom), biological invasion (hundreds of pests and weeds), as well as our own ecological footprint (including carbon footprint), which is driven by consumption and development choices.



HIGH EXPECTATIONS ON THE BUSH FIRE PROBLEM

Review:

Fires in New Caledonia are a major threat to biodiversity and water resources. Year after year, the process of desertification caused by fires carries on, because of lack of citizen commitment and political will. It leads to: water shortages during the dry season, soil erosion, invasive plants dissemination, disappearance of endemic species, etc. This does not take into account carbon dioxide release which has not been evaluated so far... and we know that one forest hectare stores several hundred tonnes.

Solutions:

- build a fire fighting organisation as good as the French one (pooling equipment and manpower, providing adequate aerial resources etc.)
- promote citizen involvement in fire management.
- support research projects to provide an understanding of fire propagation, vulnerability of the various New Caledonian ecosystems, and support studies of the use of fires and the public's perception (or otherwise) of the damage caused to New Caledonian wildlife heritage.

WWF action:

In 2005, WWF organised a historical widespread public appeal to fight the Montagne des Sources forest fire, alongside New Caledonian firemen. The fire devastated 4,300 hectares of moist forest and maquis, impacting three protected areas and two protected watersheds, including the High Dumbéa catchment area. The fire threatened (p29) the Blue River Provincial Park, an invaluable preservation area for New Caledonian moist forests.



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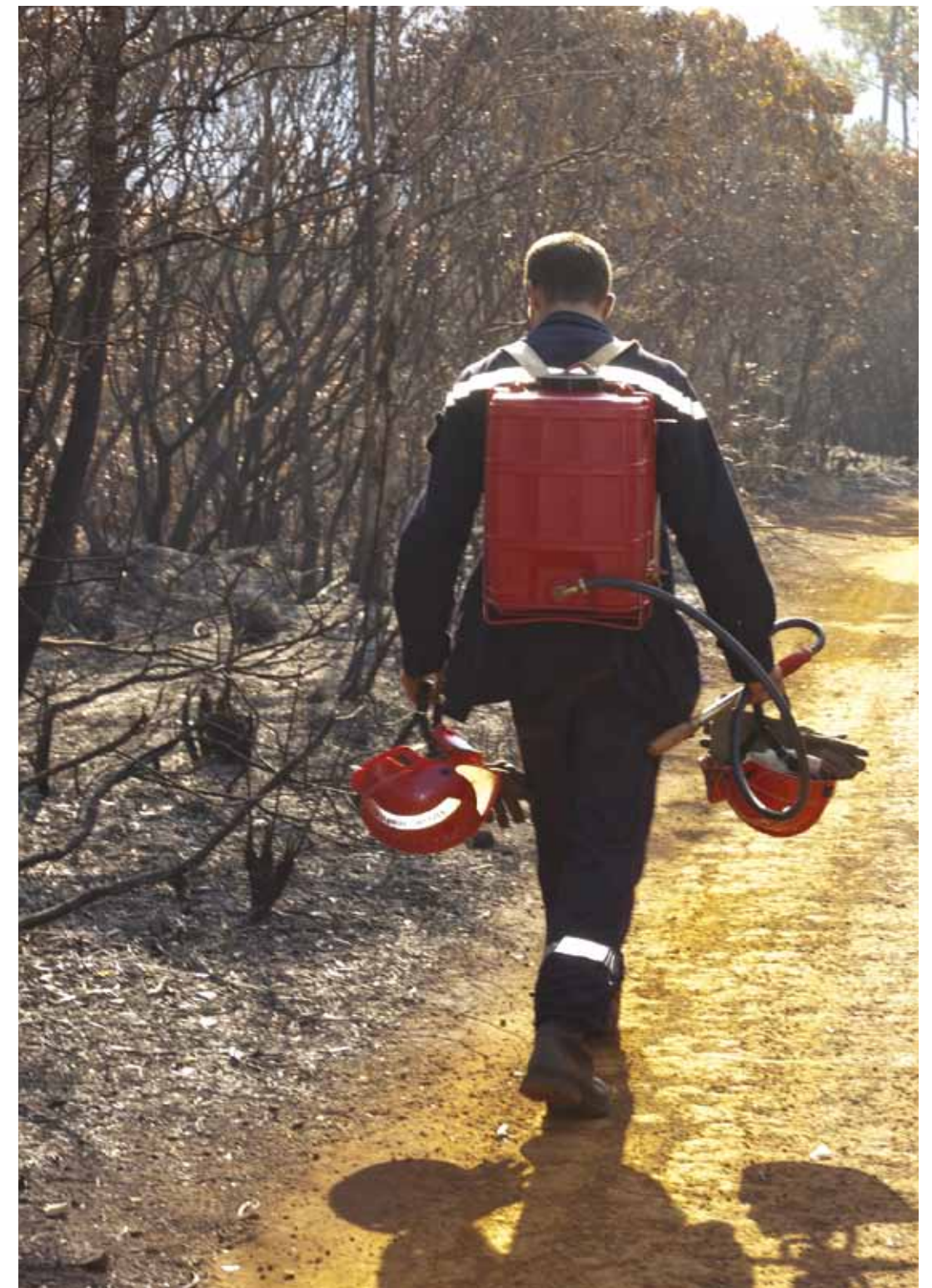
More than 400 volunteers fought the fire for 5 days, limiting damage while waiting for aerial and human reinforcements. This action contributed to speeding up an overhaul of fire control organisations in New Caledonia.

Following this action, WWF, in cooperation with the Southern Province, brought about the organisation of the first Fire Conference in New Caledonia. This was a crucial opportunity to promote the drafting of a New Caledonian Fire Action Plan, bringing together the whole population on six issues : coordination of available resources, improving awareness and prevention, monitoring and surveillance, fire fighting, statutory measures, restoration and management of rural environment.

It was also necessary to encourage local debate on the major problem of fire fighting in New Caledonia. To this aim, a photo exhibition and a film on citizens' involvement in fighting the Montagne des Sources fire was shown throughout New Caledonia, in each village.

This well-known fire was also an opportunity for WWF to mobilise research workers on a subject seldom addressed on the Territory. As a consequence, in 2007, a program on fire and ecosystems in New Caledonia was implemented. The program was run by CNRS-Cerege, and united more than 40 scientists. For four years, researchers shed light on four major scientific fields. They accumulated, analysed and published new information and data for a better understanding of fires, and as a consequence, for better fire management. This program was the starting point for drafting a risk assessment model on New Caledonian ecosystems.

As a partner in the project, WWF supported the scientists' studies: facilitating their work on the ground, helping with data collecting on pilot sites, and also contributing to the sociological study of fires, in order to understand its uses and the perception of its impact on environment and resources.



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TOWARDS MINING DEVELOPMENT TAKING ACCOUNT OF PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Review:

Ultramafic substrates which contains New Caledonia's mining resources cover one third of the main island. On these substrates, forests and maquis have developed with the highest endemism ratio in New Caledonia (80 to 90 %). Mining has a direct impact on those areas: it disrupts and dries up water creeks in mining areas, and affects the lagoon estuaries by over-sedimentation.

Since the 1870s, the fluctuating nickel price dictates New Caledonia's economy. Due to an increase in demand from emerging countries, the territory is undergoing a new mining boom. Supplying this market, new large scale projects, in the North and in the South, are adding to the impact of older mines, 300 of which are abandoned.

Solutions:

- set up a mining plan which is not only a mining resources extraction strategy, but is also a preservation strategy for the outstanding biodiversity of ultramafic soils,
- ensure conservation of the last 10% of dense moist forest on these soils,
- initiate, on a massive and structural scale, hydraulic and forest restoration of the 20,000 hectares degraded by mining history,
- improve and enforce both the New Caledonian Government's mining legislation and Provincial environmental regulation,
- compel the mining sector to seek eco-certification of its processes,
- ensure that a non-negligible part of mining profits are directed towards financing, on the one hand, a biodiversity fund, and on the other hand, a diversification of economic sectors (forestry, agriculture, renewable energies, bio-prospecting, eco-tourism).



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WWF action :

Since 2002, WWF has been involved in monitoring the Vale Inco mining project. It meant participation in various public inquiries, making submissions to the owners about the project's environmental weaknesses and promoting a global biodiversity conservation development strategy within the mine's zone of influence.

In 2007, having observed a divergence between current mining development and sustainable development of the Territory, WWF drafted and circulated a document stating its vision of mining which takes into account people and the environment.

In 2008; WWF worked within the framework of the Environment Consultative Committee to improve the mining legislation project as well as revamping the Mining Code, which dates from 1954.

Since 2009, WWF has been involved in the OEIL (Observatoire de l'Environnement du Grand Sud = Southern area environment observatory) in order to contribute to an improvement of environmental monitoring of the Vale Inco mining project impacted area.



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INVASIVE SPECIES: AN ATTACK ON NEW CALEDONIAN BIODIVERSITY

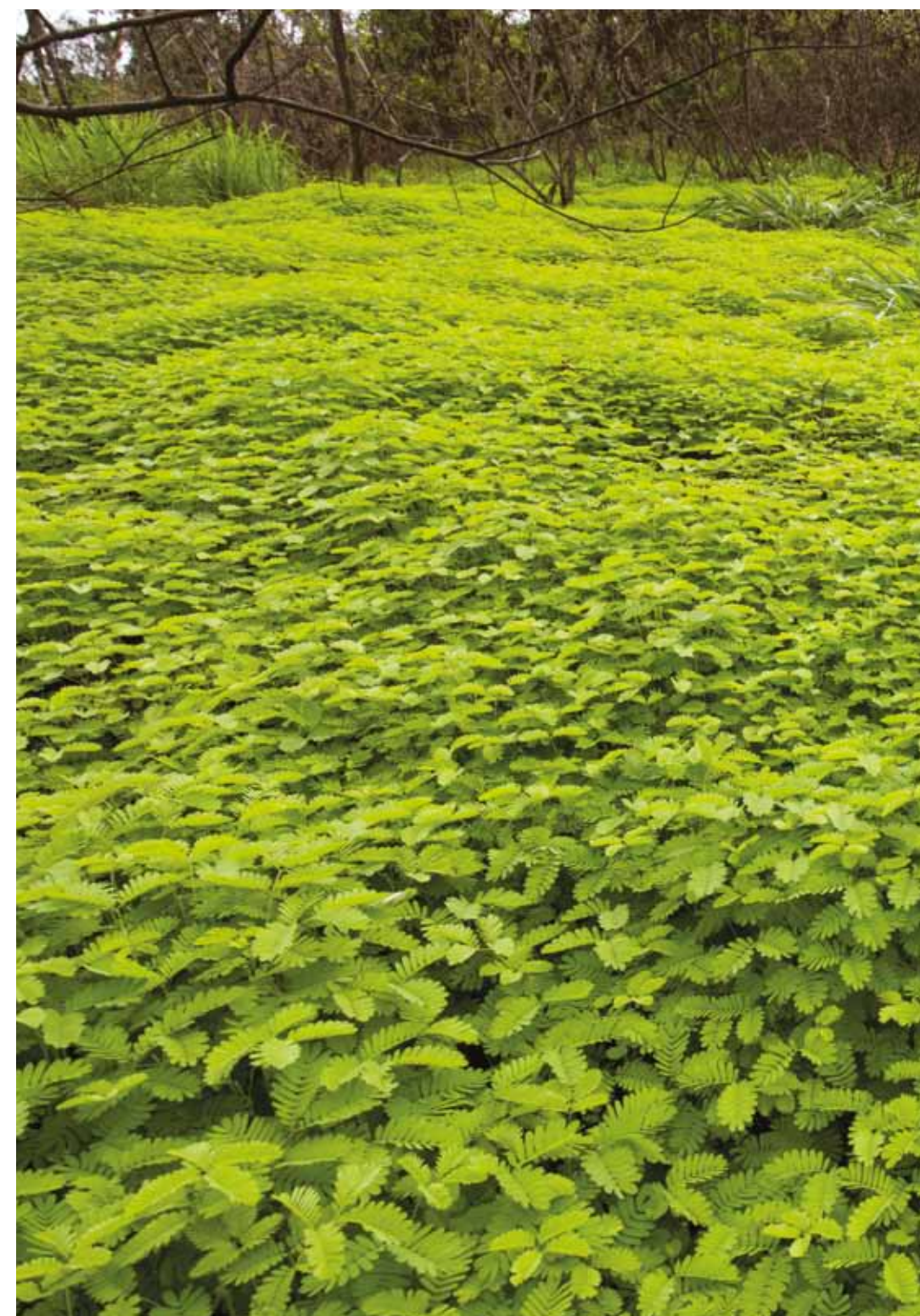
Review:

On a world scale, the introduction of invasive species is the second cause of the disappearance of biodiversity. New Caledonia is not immune from this threat which impacts indigenous fauna and flora, through competition or predation. It also has an impact on economic and sanitary issues (invasion of grazing lands, leptospirosis, destruction of cultures, etc.) Over 2,000 introduced plant species, of which 237 are considered invasive, have been listed (*Lantana camara*, *Miconia calvenscens*, water hyacinth, etc.). As far as animals are concerned, 38 vertebrate species have been introduced, among which rusa deer, three rat species, rabbits, red-vented bulbuls, or red-eared slider turtles. On top of this, over 500 species of invertebrates have been introduced. These include the fire ant, which is a steamroller for insect and reptile populations, and the achatina African snail, which competes with the endemic placostylus snail.

Solutions:

Implement recommendations of the collective report “Invasive Species in the New Caledonian Archipelago” (IRD 2006) which involves:

- setting up a legal corpus to cover all potential threats and provide adequate resources,
- reinforcing efficient checks at all access points in New Caledonia, and preventing all species introductions to islands and islets,
- making importers and businesses accountable
- raising the New Caledonian population’s awareness about risks associated with invasive species and of citizens’ role in the detection, control and non-propagation of introduced species.



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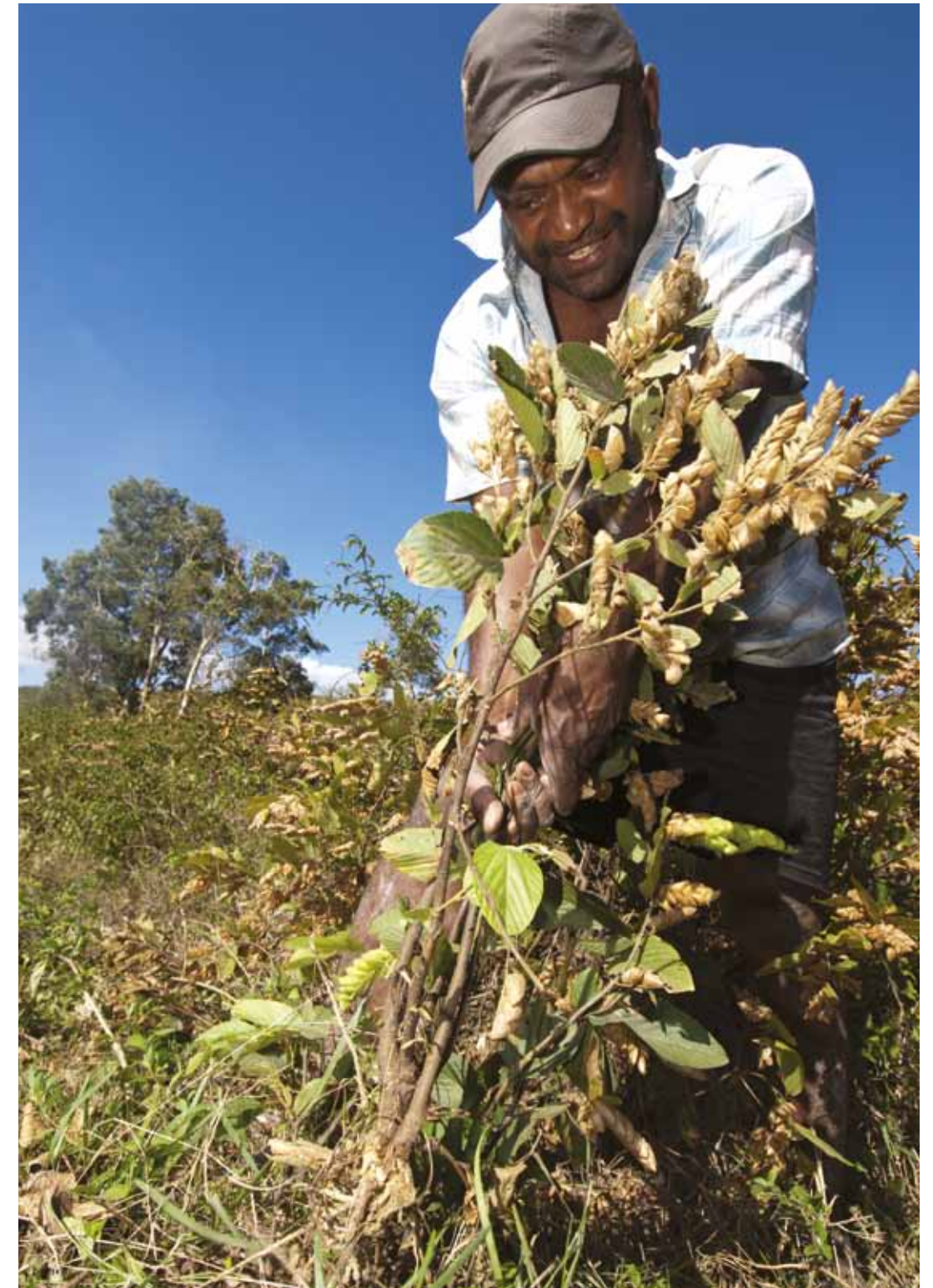
WWF action:

Within the framework of GEE (Groupe Espèces Envahissantes = invasive species group), a group bringing together authority and expertise from organisations, research institutes, and NGOs, WWF worked to improve management of this environmental threat.

Since 2005, in order to improve control methods and contribute to citizen mobilisation, in cooperation with the dry forest program (PCFS), WWF has organised eco-citizen projects to fight invasive species: fire ants (a program run by IRD), India rubber vine, white leadtree (*Leucaena leucocephala*), Green aloe (*Furcraea foetida*), etc.

With funding from the Ministry of Ecology and from the Northern and Southern Provinces, a control test operation on *Flemingia strobilifera*, (a shrub with high invasive potential), is being carried out on Gohapin tribal land, with the help of the local population. It includes producing documents relating to the operation. These documents will be distributed to local authorities, and to the GEE, so as to increase public awareness and to provoke the implementation of species control operations.

In a joint venture with the New Caledonian Government and the Provinces, WWF supported a study on six successful animal and vegetal invasions in freshwater eco-systems, including five species on the IUCN black list of the 100 most invasive species on Earth.



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REDUCING THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Review:

New Caledonia has a long way to go on the sustainable development issue: 97% of energy consumed is from fossil fuels (imported and under-taxed), water is wasted, most waste is not recycled, public transport is under-developed, a lot of chemicals, dangerous for the environment and for man, are still legal, the mining sector is dominant in all development choices, and citizen involvement is very low. Despite this situation, a number of projects, from citizens, businesses and organisations, are emerging and must be encouraged to make headway.

Solutions:

- develop ambitious legislation with respect to the environment, public transport, food and energy, including adequate enforcement measures,
- finalize and implement a development and planning program for New Caledonia which will promote a wide range of balanced economic sectors,
- draft a general plan for prospecting and promoting renewable energy, and for the rationalisation of energy use.

WWF action:

In 2003, WWF cooperated with GBNC (Grande Brasserie de Nouvelle-Calédonie = a local brewery) to promote the collection and recycling of aluminium cans, through media communication campaigns, and the implementation of a collection network called Recy'klos. This pioneer program showed the way for a number of other projects which recently came into being.



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WWF works on several fronts to reduce New Caledonia's carbon footprint. With organisations such as Soleil Pour Tous (sun for everyone), Ensemble Pour La Planète (=together for the Earth), WWF lobbied the Government to allow the connection of solar power to the mains electricity grid.

Since 2009, New Caledonia joined Earth Hour, a worldwide event, which was initiated in 2008 by WWF Australia. It has become the key demonstration against Global Warming. It urges citizens, authorities, local councils and businesses to turn off all lights during an hour so as to make a powerful statement: we can all reduce energy consumption without discomfort. With a power drop of 4,450KW in Greater Nouméa, the equivalent of the consumption of 14,240 households, the New Caledonian 2011 edition of Earth Hour was a success from which we can deduce an increasing concern about climate change. This electrical message sent by the population to the Government shows increasing expectations for a really ambitious climate and energy plan for New Caledonia. The plan should include a large share of renewable energy (solar and wind) as well as consumption restraint and energy efficiency.

In 2010, WWF participated in an inventory of greenhouse gas emission (GES) led by the New Caledonian Government and worked for the inclusion of forest fires in the global GES count, because it represents a significant increase to the 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide produced per person per year.

Moreover, WWF works every day to promote the reduction of our ecological footprint: distribution of "Planète Attitude" (an ecological guide), use of organic products on all plantation sites, raising awareness via the media, WWF stalls and talks.



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RAISE YOUR HANDS AND OPEN YOUR HEARTS! 🐼

WWF's work philosophy is based on the mobilisation of committed men and women in their own countries, on strengthening their power to build and manage projects and on investing in new generations more respectful of the environment.

In short, this philosophy is based on trust in people and their future.



WWF'S COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

Many people have answered WWF's call over the last ten years: on forest restoration sites, during the 2005 Montagne des Sources fire, for the 2006 marine turtle census project and during Earth Hour.

Apart from these important mobilisations, we had more discrete, occasional or regular, support for secretarial work, report writing, running a WWF stall, supervising, or on site monitoring.

This help was, and still is, essential for WWF involvement in New Caledonia: our success would not have been the same without the efforts of these men and women of all origins.

Citizen mobilisation is a real strength, a lever that proves nothing is impossible when volunteers work together.

In this way, things which appeared unattainable were achieved:

- from the first 2003 planting project of a few hundred trees by a handful of volunteers, we have achieved 2000 trees planted in a single morning by more than 200 eco-citizens,
- from 50 dry forest trees given in 2008 by a volunteer, there are today 2000 trees growing in nurseries thanks to the care of a dynamic volunteer team,
- from a timid start in 2009, Earth Hour mobilised ten times more people two years later,
- and in 2010, volunteers gave over 2000 hours to WWF!

Shaping a sustainable future for the country also means investing in future generations. Thus, a number of projects during the last ten years have been aimed at children : an educational dry forest path and its associated tools, a "Let's sing the Earth" competition (p47), educational projects on watersheds, and DVDs ("New Caledonian marine turtles : their wonderful life story" and "New Caledonia, beautiful planet"), etc.

However WWF also works to strengthen local expertise, chiefly in two essential fields: eco-tourism and environmental education.

Every year, discussions are organised with tourism project developers, in partnership with the Northern Province Tourist Office and with teachers from the DDEC (Catholic schools).

And, through its pilot programs in forest and marine areas, WWF invests in local communities to help them acquire necessary skills for project self-management.

In 2006, faced with repeated conservation funding problems, in partnership with IUCN (World Conservation Union) and the Ministry for Ecology and Sustainable Development, WWF drafted a report on permanent biodiversity funding procedures for French overseas territories, with a case study on New Caledonia. This document was handed to concerned parties.

Finally, WWF participated in the organisation and the launching of citizens initiatives including the project Ensemble pour la Planète (Together for the Earth). It also took part in a number of workshops with IFRECOR (an organisation whose aim is to promote protection and sustainable management of coral reefs), Dry Forest Program, Environment Consultative Committee, Invasive Species Group, OEIL, Natural Spaces Conservatory, INC research program, "A tree, a day, a life", etc.

WWF is contributing expertise to various strategic projects: the NC 2025 Development and Management Plan, the Southern Province Conservation Code, New Caledonia Eco-system profile, National Biodiversity Strategy.

TOMORROW?

Living with nature is not a fight. On the contrary, mankind has to invent a peaceful and necessary union with the environment. It is a contemporary outlook. It means going beyond purely worldly values that blind us and which confine us to artificial and short-lived gratification.

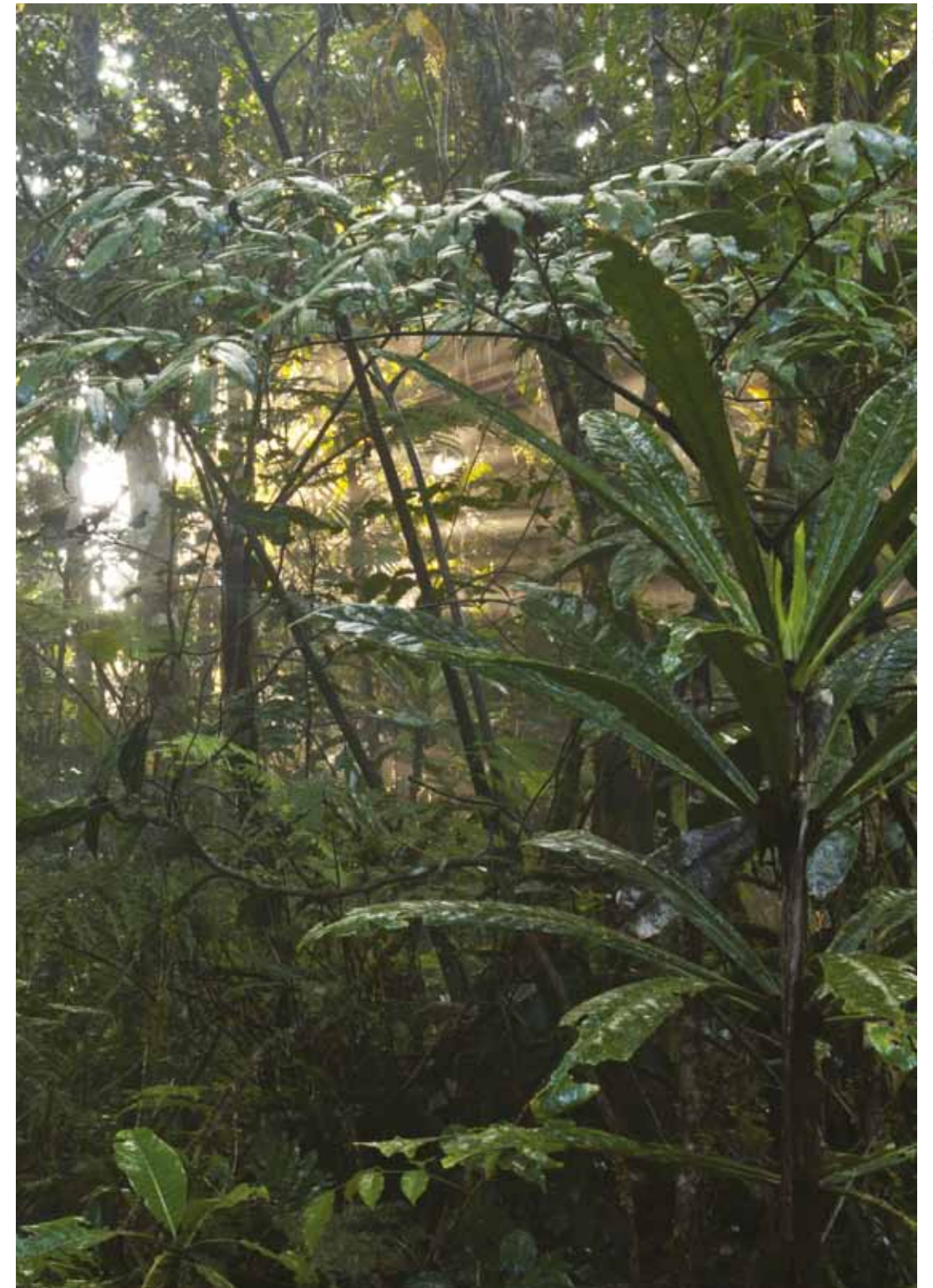
With its outstanding biodiversity, its unique human diversity and its history, New Caledonia must find original and special solutions to preserve its natural and human wealth. Every day for the last ten years, WWF has contributed to this aim, in cooperation with active partners in the Territory. A number of lessons have been learnt over these years.

We now have to use what we have learnt on pilot projects, in collective workshops, and where necessary in confrontation. This is the way to restore a win-win relationship between Man and Nature on this archipelago, which is undergoing major changes.

We will also have to seek skills from outside our organisation and our country, wherever men and women work to invent a less hostile relationship with their environment.

We will have to mobilise even more people, so that tomorrow 250,000 people don't drop their anchors on coral, 250,000 people do plant native species in their gardens and on eco-citizen sites, and 250,000 people do recycle their waste.

Despite bulldozing of dry forests in Nouméa, and of araucaria forests in Northern mining sites, despite fires and invasive species which weaken our forests and rivers, we must remain optimistic. But our optimism must be tempered with realism. We must have confidence in ourselves and work for Nature and for Mankind.



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10 YEARS COMMITMENT IN NEW CALEDONIA



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10 YEARS

WWF France in New Caledonia celebrates the 10 years of day to day action in the Territory.

OVER 700

volunteers, donors
and supporters



4 OUT OF THE EARTH'S 238

priority ecoregions

OVER 32,000

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dry and moist forest
restoration sites

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To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and
to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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