

about biodiversity in another island nation on the opposite side of the world from the Caribbean -- Indonesia. There, as in some Caribbean communities, the traditional homes are built on stilts to protect them from high water. I ask you, as I asked them, to consider such a traditional home as an ecosystem and the pilings that support it as the species in that ecosystem. We can remove one piling and the house will still stand. Perhaps we can remove two pilings. Maybe three. Four. But which ones? It is often difficult to know which piling -- or which species in an ecosystem -- is important to stability. We don't always understand how all the pilings -- all the species -- work together to provide a stable environment.

They are collectively so much more than their sum individually. And if we remove the wrong piling, or if a hurricane or other stress comes, what will happen to the home?

Our ecosystems -- the ones we live in -- are our homes. They are supported and stabilized by biodiversity. The interconnections among species are often interdependencies. We are dependent on other species and they are dependent on us. If we remove the wrong "piling," or too many, under stress our "homes" could collapse. Let us work together to maintain strong "homes" for ourselves and our birds.

WORKSHOP FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WORKSHOP ON THE DRAFTING AND APPLICATION OF CARIBBEAN WILDLIFE POLICY AND LEGISLATION

SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING, NASSAU, BAHAMA ISLANDS, 3 AUGUST 1996

The overall objective of the workshop was to assess the significant wildlife policy and legislation issues in the Caribbean and to elicit comments and recommendations from the workshop participants on how to most effectively use or revise existing policy and law to protect biodiversity.

The workshop focused on the need for further review of the relative role of law and policy. What can effective wildlife policy do? How can it most effectively articulate governmental intention with regard to the conservation of resources and provide an integrated perspective on the management of resources? How can policy resolve inter-ministerial conflicts and establish political will for implementation of nature conservation?

FINDINGS

1. There is a need to publish and publicize existing policy and legislation to educate the public about the requirements of law and regulations.
2. Much creative use can be made of existing policy and legislation, including common-law principles, to achieve biodiversity protection.
3. Public and governmental support, generally referred to as "political will," is crucial to the success of biodiversity protection policy and legislative efforts.
4. The regulation of private land for biodiversity protection poses many challenges in the Caribbean because of differing concepts of the rights of landowners and the powers of government to control land uses.
5. There are significant variations in the hunting regulations and from country-to-country in the Caribbean.
6. There is a need for post-disaster (hurricanes, etc.) wildlife protection.
7. Land use planning and zoning are generally not well-developed but are essential for long-term biodiversity protection in the Caribbean.
8. Confusion exists regarding whether one law is superior to

another with regard to the management of resources (e.g., is mining allowed in national parks?).

9. Confusion also exists as to the proper role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) relative to the holding of land for biodiversity protection purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a strong need for (and the SCO supports) public access to the biodiversity policy and law-making process, including prior consultation and review of draft policy and legislation.
2. Further review and research is needed on how to develop the "political will" to promote governmental policy, law, and enforcement for biodiversity protection. The SCO should consider holding a workshop on this topic at its next meeting.
3. Further review should be conducted of the rights of government to control private land uses for biodiversity protection.
4. Caribbean countries should attempt to coordinate and make uniform their hunting and other biodiversity protection requirements to minimize the differences between countries.
5. Caribbean countries should explore a variety of funding mechanisms to support biodiversity protection, including dedicated revenue for habitat conservation, fees, licenses, taxes, and credits.
6. Caribbean countries should understand the benefits and obligations of relevant international conventions and revise their laws and policies accordingly.
7. The SCO members should continue to explore whether there is an ideal structure for governmental ministries for biodiversity protection.
8. The SCO should continue to review Caribbean wildlife policy and legislation to identify common issues and problems in the preparation and dissemination of wildlife policy and in the drafting and enforcement of wildlife legislation, including regulations.