

Executive summary

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THE RAP PROGRAM

The Rapid Assessment of Program (RAP) was created in 1990 by Conservation International (CI) with the objective of rapidly collecting the biological information necessary to accelerate conservation actions and protection of biodiversity. In Venezuela, the RAP program has been modified and expanded to involve multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional teams to study terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. National investigators, along with invited international experts, apply their taxonomic expertise to study specially selected habitats over a 15 day period. To this information is added additional data previously collected from the area by other authors; together they make conservation recommendations based on the biological diversity of the area, level of endemism, the uniqueness of the ecosystems and their threats, both actual and potential, as well as the risk of extinction for some species at national to global scales.

The RAP scientists evaluate and analyze in the field the diversity of groups of organisms selected as indicators. By combining their field data with social, environmental and other data sources, they can make realistic and practical conservation recommendations to governments, institutions, funding agencies, and others responsible for taking decisions related to biodiversity conservation.

The results of RAP have served as scientific support for the establishment of national parks in Bolivia, Peru, Madagascar and Guyana, providing the biological baseline information for poorly explored tropical ecosystems. The RAP program also identified threats and proposed recommendations for the conservation of these areas. The results of RAP surveys are made immediately available to all parties interested in conservation planning.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE 2008 RAMAL DE CALDERAS RAP SURVEY

- Inventory species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and aquatic invertebrates associated with the different ecosystems of the Ramal de Calderas in the Venezuelan Andes.
- Describe the vegetation types present in the sampling areas in the Ramal de Calderas.
- Determine the most important physicochemical parameters of the different ecosystems in the area of study.
- Produce a list of endemic species and/or species with restricted distribution in the area of study.
- Determine the most important species for conservation plans (threatened, endangered, etc.) and/or sustainable use.