

PRIORITIES FOR BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION IN COLOMBIA

Martha Fandiño-Lozano & Willem van Wyngaarden

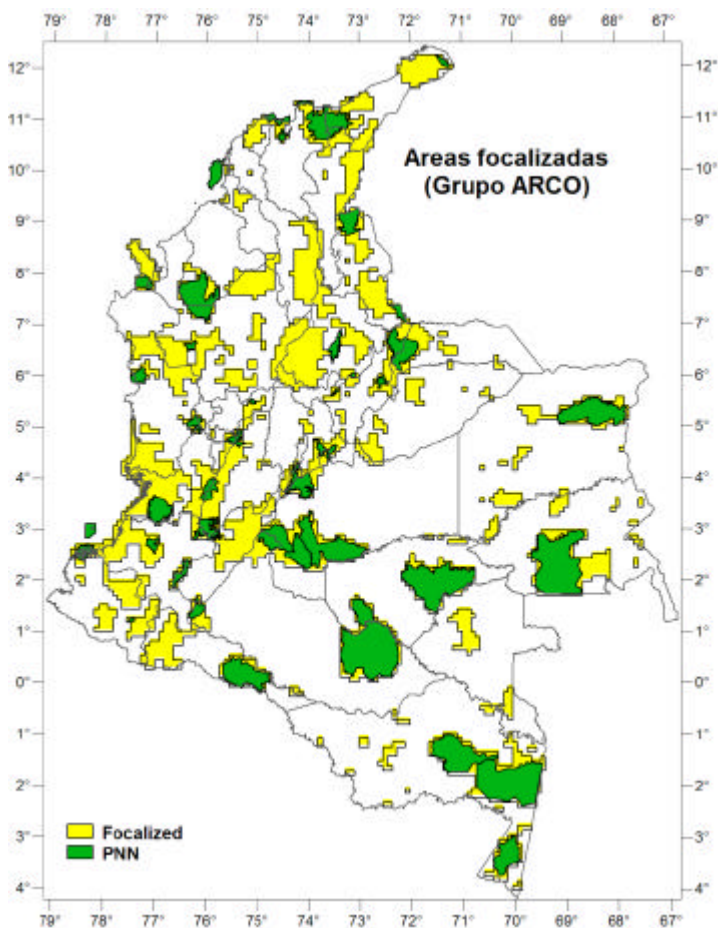
Grupo ARCO, Bogotá, Colombia

info.@grupoarco.info

The gaps in the actual system of national parks are enormous as can be read in the Inform 1 of the Grupo ARCO. Half of the ecosystems of Colombia remain excluded and so subject to the destruction that advances at a rate of 350.000 ha/year. Therefore it is urgent to complete the system of national parks in Colombia.

The Grupo ARCO has worked during the last 15 years in the development of methods, tools and data bases with this purpose. We developed the software FOCALIZE, that for the moment executes the automatic selection of the first type of conservation area: conservation of the natural arrangement. Also, we produced detailed maps of the ecosystems of Colombia as they are now and how they were before the transformation into agro-ecosystems and human artifacts. On the base of these products we generated this scenario of the priority areas for biological conservation in Colombia.

In yellow, the areas that have to be incorporated in the system of conservation areas. In green, the actual national parks that already have been declared. In total the selected sites cover 25.8% of the national territory, not taking into account the marine part. What is achieved with this scenario?



AS PROPOSED BY THE GRUPO ARCO	Other approaches generate at the most...
All ecosystems (337) grouped in 63 spatial arrangements (chorologic types) that are the home for the fauna and flora of Colombia.	All ecosystems.
Minimum targets with a biological meaning that are calculated for umbrella species (jaguar and puma). Because when they survive, the protected areas will be large enough for the smaller species.	Arbitrary minimum targets without a biological base, such as 10% of the remaining ecosystems.
Achieving compactness around the center of each chorologic type according the patterns of the ecosystems in reality.	Mechanical compactness of the planning units without taking into consideration their natural organization.
The selection takes place on the natural areas, and continues in the fragmented or even original-potential cover in case the targets cannot be met. In this way it indicates where protection, regeneration and restoration have to take place.	The selection takes only into account the sites that are in natural condition.

FOCALIZE (see the demo) permits to generate alternative scenarios in a very short time; that means different locations of the proposed areas. Now it is important that the country understands and hopefully adopts the approach as soon as possible, and advances in the refinement of the final scenery in a transparent public debate. The persistence or disappearance of the biodiversity of Colombia is something that concerns everybody.

Fuente: Fandiño-Lozano, M. & W. van Wyngaarden, 2005. Prioridades de Conservación Biológica para Colombia. Grupo ARCO, Bogotá. 186 pp.