

Central America

HONDURAS

Engaging Communities in Conservation in the Heart of Central America



conservation profile

action areas Mosquitia, Lake Yojoa Region

targets coastal wetlands, submontane evergreen forest, pine forest, cloud forest, riparian forest, freshwater systems, broadleaf forest, miskito pine savanna, rivers, archeological sites

stresses habitat destruction, conversion and fragmentation due to agricultural advancement, illegal extraction of wood, population migration, introduction of exotic and invasive species, inadequate agricultural and grazing practices, overfishing

strategies enforce existing laws and natural resource use regulations for the reserve, design community and municipal management and protection plans, develop and implement upper watershed management plans, implement community investigation and monitoring systems, pursue private lands conservation tools, build institutional capacity

results completed conservation area and management plan for Lake Yojoa Watershed, trained government and NGO personnel in conservation are planning and conservation strategies

partners AMUPROLAGO, AFE-COHDEFOR, Municipalities of Santa Bárbara, Las Vegas and Concepción Sur, MOPAWI, PROYECTO BIOSFERA, AFE-COHDEFOR, SERNA



© Lynda Richardson

Honduras, slightly larger than Tennessee, shares borders with Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, with coasts on both the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. It became an independent nation in 1821 after separation from Spain, and ended several decades of military rule until achieving a freely elected government in 1982.

Long saddled with the label “banana republic” because of its history with companies like United Fruit, Central America’s second-largest country is a veritable cornucopia of biological wealth. Honduras is about much more than bananas.

Stretching 5 million acres across in Honduras and Nicaragua, the Mosquitia makes up the largest protected area in Central America. The Miskito pine savanna in the Honduran Mosquitia is the only legally protected one of its kind in the world. Off the coast, divers and snorkelers flock to the Bay Islands, which are part of the Meso-American Reef — the world’s second largest barrier reef.

Like most Central American countries, Honduras is poor. More than 50 percent of its people live in poverty and more than 25 percent are unemployed. The country’s economy is also still re-



© Lynda Richardson

covering from Hurricane Mitch, which hit in 1998.

A growing urban population and unchecked development — together with overfishing, logging, mining and clearing of land for crops — are causing soil erosion and pollution. Such activities are jeopardizing the nation's forests, Caribbean coastline and its largest freshwater source, Lake Yojoa, causing a struggle for the country's symbol — the endangered scarlet macaw — and hundreds of other plants animals.

While land purchase is a practical conservation strategy in the United States, the Conservancy rarely buys land overseas. That's why it's vital for the Conservancy to network with private and public Honduras-based partners to achieve conservation goals. By working on jointly-agreed-upon goals in tandem with partners, the Conservancy can have a long-lasting and far-reaching impact across Honduras.

The Conservancy is focusing on two key areas in Honduras—the Lake Yojoa Region in the central part of the country and Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve in the northeastern Mosquitia. The Conservancy is counting on commu-

nity involvement to design and carry out long-term, science-based conservation work in both these extraordinary and threatened landscapes.

contact information

The Nature Conservancy
Central America Division
4245 North Fairfax Drive
Suite100
Arlington, Virginia 22203
tel +1 [703] 841.5300
fax +1 [703] 524.0296
nature.org