

Brazil / A Trip Report



Brent A. Mitchell
July-August 2018



I was invited to Brazil to give the closing keynote to the national congress of RPPN (Private Natural Heritage Reserves). The invitation was based largely on our role in producing the forthcoming *IUCN Best Practice Guidelines on Privately Protected Areas*. I then attended another national conference before traveling to the Pantanal and being hosted at Brazil's largest privately protected area.

Brazil has a system of privately protected areas called Private Natural History Reserves (RPPN from the Portuguese). Brazil has over 1,500 RPPN, all formally included in the national system of protected areas, protected in perpetuity, and allowing only scientific research, tourism, recreation and education. Over 250 RPPN owners and managers came together to share experience and strengthen their Confederation. We organized an article on the event in IUCN's newsletter <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/newsletter>



I was also hosted for another major event, the Brazilian Congress of Conservation Units, one of the largest, regularly scheduled national protected areas conferences in the world. With 1,300 participants it is similar to the George Wright Conferences we helped organize in the U.S. In fact, my first invitation to Brazil in 2015 came after the organizer of CBUC (from the Boticario Foundation) came to a presentation I made at our GW conference in Denver.



Guira cuckoo, Guira guira, at the site of a newly proposed privately protected area on the island of Florianópolis.

Snowy-capped tern, Sterna trudeauj, near the RPPN Congress site in Florianópolis.



Brazil's Largest Privately Protected Area

RPPN Sesc Pantanal

The Pantanal is a land of superlatives. The largest tropical wetland in the world. A biodiversity hotspot. Home to South America's "Big Five": Jaguar, Giant Anteater, Giant River Otter, Maned Wolf & Brazilian Tapir. Not to mention the Pantaneira culture, shaped by an unforgiving landscape. What the floodplain landscape lacks in elevation it holds in wonder.



Interpretation center at RPPN Sesc Pantanal. The reserve is supported by a 400-guest hotel which in turn supports the local community. All of the park rangers are from a nearby village, and all the hotel workers are from Poconé, the nearest town. The hotel includes a butterfly house, and Poconé families are paid to take care of eggs and provide pupae to the education center.



A Hyacinth macaw, *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, the largest of the parrot species. On IUCN's Red List as "vulnerable," there were only 18 individuals on the property when RPPN Sesc Pantanal was created 20 years ago. Today the population numbers 450 and trends indicate the population will continue to increase.



A flyover of RPPN Sesc Pantanal. At 108,000 hectares (> a quarter-million acres) it is the largest privately protected area in Brazil, a chunk of the largest tropical wetland in the world. Seen here with the pilot is Dr. Cristina Cuiabália, the reserve manager.

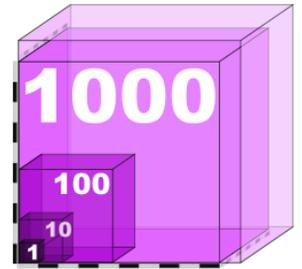


**PRIVATELY
PROTECTED AREAS**
PRIVATE MEANS • PUBLIC BENEFIT



We manage a Specialist Group on Privately Protected Areas and Nature Stewardship within the World Commission on Protected Areas, a global network of over 2,000 volunteer experts in 140 countries.

The privately protected areas community is growing. We now have well over 1,000 people receiving our occasional newsletter, *The Stivardr*. Over 350 are in the online discussion group. QLF manages all these groups, including a core group of nine individuals from five continents who convene at least monthly.



BIOFIN, a project of the UN Development Programme, hosted a webinar on PPAs as a finance mechanism for conservation in April of 2018. It was provided by Tracey Cumming, Sue Stolton, and Brent Mitchell, all members of the specialist group. A recording of the webinar is available on the YouTube channel of the Biodiversity Finance Initiative

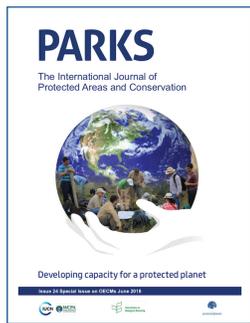


Update on PPA Guidelines

We continue to develop IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guidelines on Privately Protected Areas. The "we" is many people. Hundreds people from over 60 countries downloaded an early draft, and about 75 have commented or contributed significantly. The draft is now out for peer review, with internal IUCN review scheduled for September. We hope to launch the final Guidelines at the next Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Egypt in November. We thus far have commitments to translate the guidance to Spanish and Portuguese, and are pursuing other translations.

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Photos by Haroldo Palo, Jr., Jeferson Prado, Ciro Couto and Brent A. Mitchell



OECMs and Privately Protected Areas The International Journal of Protected Areas and Conservation

I was the lead author on an article in this special issue on distinguishing PPAs from *Other Effective Conservation Measures* on private land. First mentioned in the 2010 Aichi Targets, OECMs are the subject of forthcoming IUCN Guidance. For more information, see parksjournal.com.

Coming Up

I'll be traveling again for most of September. First, an IUCN 70th Anniversary event at Châteaux de Fontainebleau, south of Paris, France, on "Nature and Culture: A New Deal for Cultural Landscapes." I've also been invited to a select event (16 participants), part of the World Heritage Leadership Program, hosted by ICCROM in Rome. The focus is on aligning expert advice from UNESCO's two advisory bodies on World Heritage, IUCN and ICOMOS.

Later in September I'll be putting all this into practice, representing IUCN on a mission to evaluate a World Heritage nomination, Lake Ohrid in Albania. This is similar to the mission I conducted last year at Pimiachiowin Aki, the large boreal forest on the border of Manitoba and Ontario. (The Site was successfully inscribed on the World Heritage list last month.) In both missions I am paired with a counterpart from ICOMOS. Ohrid exhibits high endemism and provides refuge for relict freshwater species from the tertiary period.

I've already been invited back for the next national RPPN Congress. We have several projects in development with local partners in Brazil, including qualifying RPPN Sesc Pantanal as the first certified Green List certified protected area in Brazil, and a translation of our Best Practice Guidelines into Portuguese.



All the while our partnership with the US National Park Service Stewardship Institute continues. We convened a 20th anniversary workshop on "What Stewardship Means Today" shortly before I left for Brazil. We're organizing a workshop at the regional office in Philadelphia related to sorting out chronic workplace issues within the Service. It is scheduled for October, after I return from Albania.



The "last Pantaneiro." This gentleman was granted life residency in the Sesc Pantanal reserve. He can often be seen paddling his dugout canoe on the Cuiabá River.