



Young Conservationist Christian Teran Receives International Award

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Christian Teran.

Photo: Programa GESOREN-GTZ

Christian Teran, a twenty eight year old Ecuadorian national, has been awarded the Young Conservationist Award issued for the very first time by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the International Ranger Federation (IRF).

The award was officially presented at the IRF's 5th World Congress in June and recognizes Christian's outstanding role in promoting effective protected area management.

"We are pleased to acknowledge Christian's strong personal commitment to protecting Ecuador's natural resources," said **David Sheppard**, Head of IUCN's Programme on Protected Areas. "We had an excellent field of

applicants for the award, but Christian fully met all the criteria thanks to his untiring efforts and courage in promoting conservation in Ecuador's protected areas," he added.

"The award aims to raise awareness on the outstanding contributions made, and leadership shown, by young conservationists in the management of protected areas," noted **David Zeller**, President of the IRF. "We were seeking young professionals showing extreme dedication to protected areas, having the capacity to deal with adversity, and who have worked over and above the normal call of duty", he added.

Christian has worked on conservation and sustainable development in Northern Ecuador for seven years, since he was twenty-two years old. He is particularly commended for his crucial role in creating and effectively managing the Gran Reserva Chachi, a community conserved area in northern Ecuador's Choco forest. Thanks to his outstanding ability to relate to people and especially to local communities, Christian was chosen in 2004 by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GtZ) to coordinate the creation of this indigenous protected area.

Since then, Christian's dedication, innovation and capacity to deal with adversity have contributed to the success of the Gran Reserva Chachi, making it a model of effective community conservation both locally and internationally.

In a region characterized by significant violence and numerous challenges, Christian has succeeded in increasing local support for the reserve, helping communities design management strategies, and encouraging negotiations with timber companies to promote conservation. Despite being one of the world's most valuable biodiversity hotspots, Ecuador's Choco Forest had been poorly conserved until a new mechanism, a conservation incentive agreement, was piloted. Christian's constant innovation and local knowledge helped him take the incentive concept from theory to practice, and made the project a success both from the conservation and social standpoint.

The Young Conservationist Award is a joint initiative launched by IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas

(WCPA) and the IRF. In 2004, WCPA and IRF signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote collaboration on protected areas and the rangers responsible for their protection. IRF and IUCN acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of Parks Victoria in supporting the 2006 Young Conservationist Award.

For more information:

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