



WORLD SCAN

COPPER RUSH THREATENS JORDAN'S WILDLIFE

One of Jordan's most vital biodiversity hotspots could soon lose a third of its 300 sq. km. area to a copper mine. The Dana Conservation Reserve is the country's largest Protected Area, and is the only one that crosses four bio-geographical zones; Mediterranean, Irano-Turanian, Saharo-Arabian, and Sudanian penetration. Consequently, its landscape ranges from high plateaus and wind-cut sandstone cliffs to low-lying deserts that harbour a stunning range of biodiversity. Flora includes Mediterranean cypresses, and three endemic plants found only in Dana. This supports several wildlife species such as Nubian ibex, Syrian Serin, caracal, and Lesser Kestrel. All this, now stands to be lost if the region is opened up to copper prospecting and mining by oil and gas companies. Local communities fear this will forever alter the landscape and affect their agriculture. The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) (who run the reserve) is currently working to reverse the approval.

COURT HEARING IN SINANGOE

On November 15, 2021, the Indigenous Cofan territory of Sinangoe in the northern Amazon rainforest witnessed its first ever Constitutional Court hearing held on its land. Five judges of Ecuador's Constitutional Court travelled to Sinangoe by canoe to review the country's free, prior and informed consultation process, known as FPIC. This hearing was a natural follow up of the Sinangoe's 2018 lawsuit win, when the community had sued the government after mining concessions in their territory were sold without consulting them. As court hearings typically occur in the



PUBLIC DOMAIN/PHILLIP DENNERT

The Dana Biosphere Reserve in Jordan hosts 703 plant, 215 bird and 38 mammal species – all of which are under threat from a proposed copper mine.



PUBLIC DOMAIN/INTERNATIONAL RHINO FOUNDATION

Sumatran rhinos are one of five extant species of rhinoceros in the world. Once found across the Eastern Himalaya of Bhutan and India, all the way to China, they now exist in small pockets in the Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Borneo.

main city, this move of having the hearing in community territory allowed all members of the community to be vocal. Over 300 leaders of other indigenous communities also travelled to Sinangoe in solidarity and support and to learn to defend their lands, which also face similar conflict issues with mining and oil concessions.

HOPE FOR THE SUMATRAN RHINO?

Indonesia has begun the construction of a third Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) in northern Sumatra, with plans for captive breeding of the Critically Endangered species. This 130 ha. sanctuary is being built in the Leuser Ecosystem, which is believed to be home to the most sizeable Sumatran rhino population in the world. The ecosystem is believed to be conducive for larger rhino populations to survive once captive bred animals are released. In 2017, scientists deemed captive breeding as the last resort effort to save the species from extinction. Indonesia's other two captive breeding centres have eight rhinos in total, and this latest sanctuary is being planned to host five more.

NEW WHALE SPECIES DISCOVERED!

In a unique amalgamation of indigenous knowledge and modern science, a new whale species was discovered in New Zealand's oceans. The Ramari's beaked whale *Mesoplodon eueu*, so named after the female Mātauranga Māori whale expert Ramari Stewart who was instrumental in its discovery, was first spotted in 2011 when a female washed up on a New Zealand's South Island beach. Discovered by Māoris from the local *Makaawhio* tribe, it was mistaken to be a True's beaked whale. Stewart arranged for the specimen to be preserved in a museum. Later, as she studied True's beaked whales of the northern and southern hemisphere, she discovered that the latter are in fact a new species! Ramari means "rare event" in Māori, and befits this whale species finding perfectly. Ramari's beaked whales are usually found at depths of 1,800 m. below sea level and surface only rarely above 900 m. as they prefer to stay away from their chief predator, orcas. Growing up to five metres in length, they have a distinct sloped head and a large tusk pointing from the lower jaw up past the upper jaw.

