IUCN Conservation Outlook Assessment 2014 **(archived)**
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Please note: this is an archived Conservation Outlook Assessment for Ischigualasto-Talampaya Natural Parks. To access the most up-to-date Conservation Outlook Assessment for this site, please visit https://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org.

Ischigualasto-Talampaya Natural Parks

SITE INFORMATION

Country:
Argentina
Inscribed in: 2000
Criteria:
(viii)

Site description:
These two contiguous parks, extending over 275,300 ha in the desert region on the western border of the Sierra Pampeanas of central Argentina, contain the most complete continental fossil record known from the Triassic Period (245-208 million years ago). Six geological formations in the parks contain fossils of a wide range of ancestors of mammals, dinosaurs and plants revealing the evolution of vertebrates and the nature of palaeo-environments in the Triassic Period. © UNESCO

SUMMARY

2014 Conservation Outlook

Good

The geological values which are the basis for the site's Outstanding Universal Value are relatively intact and well protected. There are no significant threats to the geological features of the site and protection and management with regard to these values are mostly effective, although finance resources and staff levels are considered somewhat inadequate for the effective management of the entire site. Overall, the Conservation Outlook for the site's Outstanding Universal Value is good. However, there are some concerns with regard to the site's biological values, particularly rare and endangered endemic species which are threatened by livestock grazing, and occasional poaching, though the situation is improving.

Current state and trend of VALUES

Good
Trend: Data Deficient

The geological features of the site are well protected and are being studied on a systematic basis.

Overall THREATS

Low Threat

There are no significant threats to the geological values of the site, though visitors occasionally take rocks with fossils; livestock grazing and occasional poaching threaten endangered and rare species.

Overall PROTECTION and MANAGEMENT

Mostly Effective

Protection and management with respect to the site's geological values is good, but biodiversity protection is hampered by livestock grazing, and occasional

poaching and firewood collection which are hard to prevent due to insufficient staffing. Overall, human and financial resources are considered somewhat inadequate for the effective implementation of the management plans. Environmental education and tourism would benefit from some improvement.

FULL ASSESSMENT

Description of values

Values

World Heritage values

► **A complete sequence of fossiliferous continental sediments representing the entire Triassic Period**
Criterion:(viii)

The site contains a complete sequence of fossiliferous continental sediments representing the entire Triassic Period (45 million years) of geological history. No other place in the world has a fossil record comparable to that of Ischigualasto-Talampaya which reveals the evolution of vertebrate life and the nature of palaeoenvironments in the Triassic Period (Draft SoOUV, 2011; Justification for inscription, 2000).

Other important biodiversity values

► **Endemic species requiring special protection**

The desert environment contains several rare and threatened endemic species of flora (6 species requiring special protection) and fauna (5 species of mammals, 3 species of birds, and 3 species of reptiles) (WDPA, 2011; IUCN, 2000).

Assessment information

Threats

Current Threats

Low Threat

There are no significant threats to the geological values of the site, though visitors occasionally take rocks with fossils; livestock grazing and occasional poaching threaten endangered and rare species.

▶ Livestock Farming / Grazing

High Threat
Inside site
Outside site

The site is not fenced, so cattle, horses, and donkeys from neighboring lands enter the site for grazing, thereby altering the composition of the native vegetation and competing with native fauna (WDPA, 2011).

▶ Tourism/ visitors/ recreation

Low Threat
Inside site

Given the number of visitors to the site it is sometimes not possible for all visitors to be accompanied by Park Rangers or Guides with the result that rocks with fossils are taken by some visitors (Cortez, 2005; APN, 2001)

▶ Subsistence hunting

Low Threat
Inside site
Outside site

Illegal subsistence and recreational hunting is an occasional threat (WDPA, 2011; Cortez, 2005; APN, 2001; IUCN, 2000).

Potential Threats

Protection and management

Assessing Protection and Management

▶ **Relationships with local people**
Highly Effective

The site brings tourists to the region which is welcomed by local communities as a source of income. (WDPA, 2011)

▶ **Legal framework and enforcement**
Some Concern

Both areas are on public lands and have strong legal protection. However, because of a lack of human and financial resources, enforcement is weak (WDPA, 2011; Cortez, 2005; APN, 2001; IUCN, 2000)

▶ **Integration into regional and national planning systems**
Highly Effective

The site is integrated into regional and national planning, mainly for tourism (WDPA, 2011).

▶ **Management system**
Some Concern

Management of the site is guided by management plans and public use plans; coordination of management between the federal and provincial parks is carried out by a Management Coordination Committee for the whole site. Human and financial resources are inadequate for implementation of management plans (WDPA, 2011; Cortez, 2005; APN, 2001).

▶ **Management effectiveness**
Some Concern

Management effectiveness with respect to the protection of geologic features is relatively good, but staff levels are insufficient to protect the site's biodiversity from occasional poaching, cattle grazing, cutting of firewood, and collection of fibers, and aromatic and medicinal plants. Visitor management by the concessionaire at Talampaya is reported as being deficient in terms of the quality of the guide services that are obligatory for visitors; visitor management at Ischigualasto is deficient when it comes to handling peak visitation. (APN, 2001) However, it is important to note that Ischigualasto is a Provincial Park, while Talampaya is a National Park, thus certain differences in managements structure, staffing and budget are inevitable.

► Implementation of Committee decisions and recommendations

Highly Effective

Not applicable

► Boundaries

Some Concern

Boundaries are unmarked in many areas and are not known by local communities. (APN, 2001)

► Sustainable finance

Some Concern

Finance for management of the site is insufficient, and no business plan is in place (WDPA, 2011).

► Staff training and development

Some Concern

The few Rangers at Talampaya and Ischigualasto are well trained, but local guides less so. (Cortez, 2005; APN, 2011)

► Sustainable use

Highly Effective

The only uses of the property are for tourism and scientific study, and both

are carried out on a sustainable basis (WDPA, 2011).

▶ Education and interpretation programs

Some Concern

Both areas encourage visits by student groups, but neither area has a specific environmental education plan or program (Cortez, 2005; APN, 2001).

▶ Tourism and interpretation

Some Concern

Rudimentary visitor centers and brochures at both Parks provide some background on the areas and their significance. Guide services are reported to require improvement and are unable to cope with high visitation days.

▶ Monitoring

Data Deficient

Data deficient

▶ Research

Highly Effective

Numerous biological and paleontological studies have been carried out on the site, two field stations have been established at Talampaya, and there are agreements for research with local universities.

Overall assessment of protection and management

Mostly Effective

Protection and management with respect to the site’s geological values is good, but biodiversity protection is hampered by livestock grazing, and occasional poaching and firewood collection which are hard to prevent due to insufficient staffing. Overall, human and financial resources are considered somewhat inadequate for the effective implementation of the management plans. Environmental education and tourism would benefit from some improvement.

▶ **Assessment of the effectiveness of protection and management in addressing threats outside the site**
Data Deficient

Data Deficient

State and trend of values

Assessing the current state and trend of values

World Heritage values

▶ **A complete sequence of fossiliferous continental sediments representing the entire Triassic Period**
Good
Trend:Stable

The geological features of the site are well protected and are being studied on a systematic basis (WDPA, 2011; Cortez, 2005; APN, 2001, IUCN, 2000).

Other important biodiversity values

▶ **Endemic species requiring special protection**

The desert environment contains several rare and threatened endemic species of flora (6 species requiring special protection) and fauna (5 species of mammals, 3 species of birds, and 3 species of reptiles) (WDPA, 2011; IUCN, 2000).

Summary of the Values

▶ **Assessment of the current state and trend of World Heritage values**
Good
Trend: Data Deficient

The geological features of the site are well protected and are being studied

on a systematic basis.

▶ **Assessment of the current state and trend of other important biodiversity values**

High Concern

Trend: Improving

Rare and endangered endemic species are threatened by livestock grazing and occasional poaching. These include 6 species of higher vegetation, 5 species of mammals, 3 species of birds, and 3 species of reptiles(WDPA, 2011; IUCN, 2000).

Additional information

Key conservation issues

▶ **Collection of fossils by visitors**

Local

Given the number of visitors to the site it is sometimes not possible for all visitors to be accompanied by Park Rangers or Guides with the result that rocks with fossils are taken by some visitors (Cortez, 2005; APN, 2001)

▶ **Livestock grazing**

Local

The site is not fenced, so cattle, horses, and donkeys from neighboring lands enter the property for grazing, thereby altering the composition of the native vegetation and competing with native fauna

▶ **Poaching**

Local

Staff levels are insufficient to protect against occasional poaching of rare and threatened endemic species

▶ Firewood collection

Local

Over the years, firewood collection has altered the composition of native vegetation.

Benefits

Understanding Benefits

▶ Importance for research

The site is one of the great scientific treasures of the world, of great importance to palaeontology and evolutionary biology. The sites have the only complete, undisturbed and abundant sequence of Triassic fossil flora and fauna known, with remains of plants, and of ancestral mammals and the ancestral dinosaurs which displaced them.

▶ Outdoor recreation and tourism

Tourism to the site by both national and international visitors is small but growing, and is an important economic benefit for the region.

Summary of benefits

The property is one of the great scientific treasures of the world, and its conservation and study are of great importance to palaeontology and evolutionary biology, because the sites have the only complete, undisturbed and abundant sequence of Triassic fossil flora and fauna known, with remains of plants, and of ancestral mammals and the ancestral dinosaurs which displaced them.

Projects

Compilation of active conservation projects

№	Organization/ individuals	Project duration	Brief description of Active Projects
1	Protected Areas Administration and Inter-American Development Bank		This investment Project seeks to regularize the registration of Talampaya National Park as a federal property, strengthen management effectiveness, develop a study of natural and cultural diversity as the basis for a monitoring plan, and updating of the management plan.

Compilation of potential site needs

№	Site need title	Brief description of potential site needs	Support needed for following years
1	Protected Areas Administration and interested NGO	Development of a trust fund to generate sustainable finance for the property.	

REFERENCES

№	References
1	Administración de Parques Nacionales, 2001. Plan de Manejo, Fase II, Parque Nacional Talampaya. http://www.scribd.com/doc/3596150/Plan-de-Manejo-Fase-II-Pa…
2	Administración de Parques Nacionales, 2003. Plan de Uso Público, Parque Nacional Talampaya. http://www.scribd.com/doc/3664755/Plan-de-uso-publico-del-P…
3	Cortez, Eduardo, et. al., 2005. Fase II Plan de Manejo Parque Provincial Ischigualasto, Período 2005-2010.
4	IUCN, 2000. Evaluation of World Heritage Nomination – IUCN Technical Evaluation.
5	Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, Ischigualasto – Talampaya Natural Parks.
6	SOUV, 2011
7	WDPA, 2011. Talampaya-Ischigualasto Data Sheet. WCMC.