Iguazú National Park

2020 Conservation Outlook Assessment

SITE INFORMATION
Country: Argentina
Inscribed in: 1984
Criteria: (vii) (x)

The semicircular waterfall at the heart of this site is some 80 m high and 2,700 m in diameter and is situated on a basaltic line spanning the border between Argentina and Brazil. Made up of many cascades producing vast sprays of water, it is one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world. The surrounding subtropical rainforest has over 2,000 species of vascular plants and is home to the typical wildlife of the region: tapirs, giant anteaters, howler monkeys, ocelots, jaguars and caymans. © UNESCO

SUMMARY

2020 Conservation Outlook
Finalised on 02 Dec 2020

Significant Concern

The natural beauty of the Iguazú waterfalls is being negatively impacted from unnatural changes in river levels due to the operation of dams on the upper Iguazú River. Concerns also remain regarding possible negative environmental effects of unnatural shifts in water levels due to the newly constructed Baixo Iguaçu dam close to the boundaries of Iguazu National Park, and Iguaçu National Park in Brazil.

Protection and management of Iguazu National Park is mostly effective within its boundaries, especially considering the high rate of visitation and the increasing contribution of research and monitoring to management decisions. Studies conducted on the site’s biodiversity tend to indicate it is being maintained. However, the impacts of threats originating outside the area, including biological isolation due to agriculture and livestock grazing, roads, and upstream dams are considerable. The Iguazu National Park Management Plan is a useful tool to guide the protection and management of the park. Joint actions with the Iguaçu National Park in Brazil, including joint patrolling, planning and training will improve the management of both World Heritage sites.
FULL ASSESSMENT

Description of values

Values

World Heritage values

► One of the largest and most impressive waterfalls in the world

Criterion:(vii)

Iguazú National Park and its sister World Heritage property Iguaçu National Park in Brazil conserve one of the largest and most spectacular waterfalls in the world. Across a width of almost three kilometres, the Iguazú or Iguaçu River drops vertically some 80 meters in a series of cataracts. The river, aptly named after the indigenous term for “great water” forms a large bend in the shape of a horseshoe in the heart of the two parks. The permanent spray from the cataracts forms impressive clouds that soak the forested islands and river banks resulting in a visually stunning and constantly changing interface between land and water (World Heritage Committee, 2013).

► Exceptional biodiversity and rare charismatic species

Criterion:(x)

Iguazú National Park and the neighbouring Iguaçu National Park constitute a significant remnant of the Atlantic Forest, one of the most threatened global conservation priorities. The rich biodiversity includes 400 species of birds and possibly as many as 80 mammals, as well as countless invertebrate species. The park is home to the typical wildlife of the region such as tapirs and howler monkeys, but also to rare charismatic species including the broad-snouted caiman (Caiman latirostris), giant anteater (Myrmecophaga tridactyla), harpy eagle (Harpia harpyja), ocelot (Leopardus tigrinus) and the jaguar (Panthera onca) (World Heritage Committee, 2013).

► Exceptional plant diversity with high level of endemism

Criterion:(x)

Iguazú National Park, together with the contiguous World Heritage site of Iguaçu National Park in Brazil and adjacent protected areas, forms the largest single protected remnant of the Paranaense subtropical rainforest, which belongs to the Interior Atlantic Forest. This forest biome, historically covering large parts of the Brazilian coast and extending into Northern Argentina and Uruguay, as well as Eastern Paraguay, is known for its extreme habitat and species diversity, as well as its high degree of endemism. Around 2,000 plant species, including some 80 tree species have been suggested to occur in the site (World Heritage Committee, 2013).

Assessment information

Threats

Current Threats

Hunting, invasive species, climate change (increased rainfall, extreme temperatures and extraordinary floods and droughts), fishing, extraction of commercial and medicinal plants, road-kill of wildlife, increased visitation, and agriculture and livestock on the eastern boundary of the park are high threats. The potential impacts of the new Baixo Iguaçu dam operation (Brazil) in close proximity to the boundaries of Iguazu National Park and the contiguous Iguaçu National Park World Heritage site in Brazil is the most pressing current concern.
**Hunting and trapping**  
*(Hunting or trapping of terrestrial wild animals for subsistence, commercial and recreational purposes)*

Hunting for commercial and recreational purposes is an important threat. Hunting of predatory species (eagles, vipers and carnivores) is also lead by locals’ fears, traditions and to avoid threats to farm animals. Insects trapping (arthropods and butterflies) is carried out for sale. The Iguazu National Park Management Plan includes programs and projects to cut down hunting inside the Park and its surroundings (APN, 2018).

**Logging/ Wood Harvesting**  
*(Harvesting of trees and other woody vegetation for timber, fibre or fuel)*

Harvesting trees for timber is an important threat on the eastern boundary of the Park, the northern area close to the Iguazu river and in the south corner (APN, 2018).

**Tourism/ visitors/ recreation**  
*(Increasing visitation)*

Visitors numbers have increased up to 1,381,000 in 2015. On a regular day the Park receives between 2,500 and 3,500 visitors with peaks during January and February (summer season), Easter, long weekends and winter vacations. The Iguazu National Park Management Plan includes projects and activities to address visitors and infrastructure needs (APN, 2018).

**Invasive Non-Native/ Alien Species**  
*(Invasive species)*

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan reports 123 non-native plants species including 13 invasive plant species, 6 woody and 7 herbaceous, as well as 3 exotic fish species identified in the upper Iguazu river (Coptodon rendalli, Geophagus brasiliensis, Oreochromis niloticus) and one in the lower Iguazu (Clarias gariepinus). Since 2010 they are carrying out control and monitoring activities. The Iguazu National Park Management Plan includes exotic species control activities (APN, 2018).

**Livestock Farming / Grazing**  
*(Agriculture, and livestock on the eastern boundary of the Park)*

When seen at a regional scale, there is an area on the eastern boundary of the Park called the “Argentine Peninsula Bottleneck” that is a barrier to genetic flows between the Brazilian and Argentinean National Parks. In the last decades this area has been settled by colonists who have continued over the years to deforest the area for agricultural development and the rearing of livestock. Projects that seek to slow the rate of deforestation have only had marginal success (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

**Tourism/ visitors/ recreation**  
*(Tourism infrastructure and activities)*

Tourism infrastructure has led to an impairment of natural aesthetic values. For visitors, the most prominent and direct intrusions of infrastructure on the visual integrity of the waterfalls are: the Sheraton Iguazu Hotel, the old unused walkways to the Garganta del Diablo (Argentina) and the Porto Canoas Restaurant and Souvenir Shop located at the edge of the falls, and the Naipi Souvenir Shop and elevator, from the lip of the canyon to the elevated walkways to the Santa María falls and the Hotel das Cataratas (Brazil) (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008). Visitor facilities and trails have also had an impact on vegetation and wildlife in the waterfall area, which holds the greatest biodiversity and highest number of endemic species.
In Iguazú National Park, the conservation outlook assessment highlights several threats to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Here’s a summary:

**Household Sewage/Urban Waste Water**  
*(Sewage and waste water from tourism infrastructure)*

Pollution of water courses by direct discharge of domestic and industrial effluents, including sewage and grey water mostly with partial treatment or without treatment from tourism facilities (APN, 2018).

**Agricultural Effluents**  
*(Water-borne pollutants from agriculture and forestry)*

Water-borne pollutants from agriculture and silviculture in the surroundings of the site include nutrients, toxic chemicals and sediments (APN, 2018). However, no detailed information is available regarding specific pollutants and their potential impacts on the site’s values.

**Habitat Shifting/Alteration**  
*(Increased rainfall, extreme temperatures and extraordinary floods and droughts)*

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan reports an increase in rainfall and temperatures especially during spring and winter, as well as extraordinary floods and droughts. Sensitive species such as amphibians would be affected and changes in the forest composition and physiognomy are expected (APN, 2018).

**Dams/Water Management or Use**  
*(Dams on the upper Iguazú River)*

The Itaipu dam (Brazil and Paraguay) located in the Paraná river and the four Brazilian dams located on the Iguazú river have considerably altered the water flow that feeds the waterfalls, impacting its aesthetics. The unnatural fluctuation in water levels also affects riverine flora and fauna, though the specifics are unknown. The fact that the river downstream from the dams flows in large part through protected areas contributes significantly to the attenuation of any potentially negative impacts on water quality and flow (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

The Baixo Iguaçu hydroelectric power plant (Brazil) located on the Iguazú river, 70 km upstream from the falls and 500 m from the Iguazu National Park limit, is now installed and in full operation (State Party of Brazil, 2019). Given its location, a group of NGOs identified 53 potential environmental impacts, of which 45 would be negative and 29 irreversible (APN, 2018).

The World Heritage Committee recommended the State Party of Brazil to ensure that an overall comprehensive monitoring system is in place for aquatic fauna and water flow, which would allow oversight of the implementation of requirements and action plans developed for the hydropower project, and assess their effectiveness with regards to mitigation of possible negative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of Iguazu National Park and Iguazu National Park (Brazil) (UNESCO, 2018).

**Collection of Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs)**  
*(Extraction of Commercial, medicinal plants and other species used for crafts)*

Extraction of commercial species (orchids and ferns, among others), medicinal plants and other species used for crafts mostly by local people. Extractions were carried out outside Iguazu National Park, overexploitation led to an increasing extraction within the park, especially in the areas close to Puerto Iguazu (APN, 2018).

Extraction of palmitos (Euterpe edulis) for local consumption and also for sale (APN, 2018).
Fishing / Harvesting Aquatic Resources
(Fishing in the Iguazú river and its streams for local consumption and sale)

Fishing takes place mainly in the Iguazú River and its tributaries. The fishing methods vary according to the section of the river; in the Lower Iguazu spinels, nets, and fish traps are used and boats for transportation, while in the Upper Iguazu, close to the eastern Park limit, spinels are mainly used from the river bank. In the lower river, some of the most fished species are dorado, pacú, surubí and manguruyú, and in the upper river the Moncholo (Steindachneridion melanodermatum), an endemic species of high conservation value (APN, 2018).

Other Activities
(Wildlife-vehicle collisions on access routes to the national park)

On the unpaved section of the RN 101 road, birds of the Caprimulgidae family are the most affected, and there is also significant intentional run-overs of ungulates for local consumption (APN, 2018). On the paved sections of the RN 1010 and RN 12, speeding causes road-kill of a wide variety of animals, from yaguaretés to raptors, including both diurnal and nocturnal species, generally run over by passenger vehicles. Lack of capacity to enforce speed limits and fines exception to cars with foreign registration plates are the main causes (APN, 2018).

Potential Threats

Political and economic pressure to asphalt the section of RN 101 that runs within the site would generate negative impacts on conservation values. However, there is no plan in development or underway to asphalt this route. The Iguazu National Park management seeks to reach an agreement with the National Roads Department to develop a long-term management plan for RN 101. The possibility of expanding the operation of the airport to 24 hours per day is a new potential threat to wildlife.

Roads/ Railroads
(Increase in traffic on the national route (RN 101) that crosses the park by asphalt ing the unpaved section)

According to the State of Conservation Report there is no project (in development or underway) to asphalt this route or carry out radical modification of the Ruta Nacional 101 (RN 101). The Iguazu National Park reached an agreement with the National Roads Department regarding the recognition of the unpaved section of the RN 101 as a special area given its characteristics. Current legislation includes several environmental considerations for roads inside protected areas, that open the door for a friendly discussion to develop a long-term management plan for RN 101 (State Party of Argentina, 2017).

Flight Paths
(Future 24 hour operation of the airport)

Potential 24 hour operation of the airport is a threat for wildlife, and a new control tower has already been built for such purpose (APN, 2018).

Overall assessment of threats

Hunting, invasive species, climate change (increased rainfall, extreme temperatures and extraordinary floods and droughts), fishing, extraction of commercial and medicinal plants, road-kill of wildlife, increased visitation, and agriculture and livestock on the eastern boundary of the park are high threats. The potential impacts of the new Baixo Iguaçu dam operation (Brazil) in close proximity to the boundaries of Iguazu National Park and the contiguous Iguazu National Park World Heritage site in Brazil is the most pressing current concern. Logging, sewage and wastewater from tourism
infrastructure, water-borne pollutants from agriculture and forestry outside Iguazu National Park are minor threats. Political and economic pressure to asphalt the section of RN 101 that runs within the site would generate negative impacts on conservation values. However, there is no plan in development or underway to asphalt this route. The Iguazu National Park management seeks to reach an agreement with the National Roads Department to develop a long-term management plan for RN 101. The possibility of expanding the operation of the airport to 24 hours per day is a new potential threat to wildlife.

### Protection and management

#### Assessing Protection and Management

**Management system**

Iguazu National Park has a new Management Plan 2017 – 2023 under implementation. The plan identifies values, management objectives, desired management outcomes and key threats. The planning process took around three years, allowing institutional stakeholders, local communities, NGOs and technical staff and authorities of the Iguaçu National Park (Brazil), participation and inputs (APN, 2018; UNESCO, 2018).

The plan provides natural values, threats, protected area use and community issues information to the Iguazu National Park management and also to other stakeholders. Iguazu National Park has a Monitoring Committee to assess the implementation of the plan and measure success indicators (APN, 2018).

**Effectiveness of management system**

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan is under implementation and its objectives are being achieved. Iguazu National Park has a Monitoring Committee, with external stakeholder participation, in charge of monitoring, review and adjustment of the Management Plan at year 2 and 5 of its implementation (APN, 2018). The plan integrates three main programmes of work: i) Operational, ii) Public use and iii) Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Natural and Cultural Heritage. Those programmes integrate 44 projects that respond to the main goals for Iguazu National Park conservation and management, out of which 15 are already part of existing cooperation agreements with Iguaçu National Park in Brazil. The plan includes activities to assess effectiveness of the Iguazu National Park management system (APN, 2018; UNESCO, 2018). In 2006 a study of management effectiveness was conducted and management effectiveness had previously been positively assessed (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

**Boundaries**

The boundaries of the site are adequate, however the eastern boundary is problematic. While projects have been undertaken to reduce deforestation and agriculture in the “Argentine Peninsula Bottleneck” area that is critical for genetic flows between the Brazilian and Argentinean Parks, success has been limited (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan defines a new buffer zone that aims to combine local stakeholders engagement with management and conservation measures (APN, 2018).

**Integration into regional and national planning systems**

A letter of intent between the Administración de Parques Nacionales de Argentina, Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio), the Iguazu National Park in Argentina and the Iguaçu National Park in Brazil was signed in 2016 to formalize transboundary cooperation (UNESCO, 2018). Effective cooperation has been established between the two protected areas at the operational level.
Joint patrol activities by land and water are taking place since 2015 (State Party of Argentina, 2015).

The creation in 1995 of the Tri National Corridor that connects the main protected areas in the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil, and its strengthening in 2014 with the development of the Ecoregional Action Plan, a regional planning tool that promotes landscape connectivity among the three countries, are key efforts to promote Iguazu National Park integration into regional planning systems (APN, 2018).

**Relationships with local people**

In general relationships with local people are positive, though there are minor occasional disagreements with the tourism industry and agricultural communities along the eastern boundary of the park (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008).

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan includes the joint development of a long term strategy with the Guaraní indigenous peoples that live in the park surroundings (APN, 2018). The park management has provided space for the selling of crafts inside the park, aiming to support Guaraní families to have an income source (APN, 2018).

**Legal framework**

Relatively complete and effective.

**Law enforcement**

Hunting, logging, collection of terrestrial plants and fishing are the greatest enforcement problem. In terms of control and surveillance, Iguazu National Park organizes patrols every week, covering a significant area of the property. Joint patrols with the Iguazu National Park rangers, by land and water, are also being undertaken (State Party of Argentina, 2015).

**Implementation of Committee decisions and recommendations**

Most Committee decisions have been or are in the process of being addressed (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012; UNESCO, 2018).

**Sustainable use**

Conservation, research, and education appear to be sustainable uses of Iguazu National Park. However, studies that would document this preliminary conclusion are still on-going. There is some concern about the impacts of tourism infrastructure and illegal extraction of wild species (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan includes a Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural and Cultural Heritage Programme that addresses: i) research and monitoring, ii) protection and restoration, and iii) sustainable use and human settlements (APN, 2018).

**Sustainable finance**

The park receives more than one million visitors per year, and revenues from tourism finance management and conservation activities at Iguazu National Park and other less-visited protected areas. Since 2008 the Iguazu National Park budget had a significant increase, obtaining budget allocations from its own resources and from the National Treasury, with a good level of budgetary execution (APN, 2018).

**Staff capacity, training, and development**

Argentina’s regular 8 month Ranger training courses and additional specialized training events ensure that Ranger staff are formally trained. Management level staff consist of Rangers who have had wide field experience and advanced specialized courses. Sharing of experiences between Brazilian and
Argentinean Park Staff has also benefited staff development (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan includes a staff training project (APN, 2018).

Education and interpretation programs  Mostly Effective

The park relaunched its campaign of communication not only within the protected area but also in the city of Puerto Iguazú, spreading an environmental education message through a variety of promotional materials (posters, flyers, banners, audiovisuals, radio and other audio) for knowledge and awareness raising (State Party of Argentina, 2015). As part of the Iguazu National Park infrastructure, a small museum and a Visitors Center were opened in the refurbished Old Cataratas Hotel (as well as offices and meeting rooms for the park staff) (APN, 2018). The Iguazu National Park Management Plan’s Sustainable Use Programme includes an Interpretation, Environmental Education and Dissemination component with specific projects and activities already being implemented (APN, 2018).

Tourism and visitation management  Some Concern

Tourist services were awarded to a couple of concessionaires that run all facilities and programmes in the waterfalls area. Additionally the Park has given 78 tourist services licenses to other business including 3 transport service companies. The park offers tourist guide services provided by independent professionals registered by the park (APN, 2018).

The park has a sophisticated interpretation program that includes a visitor center, interpretive signs, brochures, and experienced guides (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

In 2013 the refurbished Old Cataratas Hotel became an alternative visitor centre, allowing for the move of the Public Use and Chief Ranger offices from the city of Puerto Iguazu to the park. In July 2015 new walkways were opened, comprised of about 600 m, improving the flow of visitors and allowing a different view of the falls (State Party of Argentina, 2015).

Monitoring  Highly Effective

The Monitoring and Evaluation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage Programme has a research and monitoring component that addresses specific needs of the park, and some research results are used to feed decision making (APN, 2018). There is a Monitoring Committee, with external stakeholder participation, in charge of monitoring, review and adjustment of the Iguazu National Park Management Plan at year 2 and 5 of its implementation (APN, 2018).

Research  Highly Effective

Research in Iguazu National Park has for many years been encouraged and research facilities are provided for both national and foreign guest researchers. This has resulted in an ever expanding body of research literature relevant to the park and its resources (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012). Between 1987 and 2016, 354 research authorizations were given. Ecology, diversity and biology are the three main research topics. The Monitoring and Evaluation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage Programme has a research and monitoring component that addresses specific needs including restoration of the natural patrimony, exotic species control, eradication and monitoring, and impact of roads on wildlife, among others (APN, 2018).

Overall assessment of protection and management  Mostly Effective

In general, protection and management of the park is mostly effective within its boundaries, especially considering the high rate of visitation and the increasing contribution of research and monitoring to management decisions. However, the impacts of threats originating outside the site, including biological isolation due to agriculture, livestock grazing, roads and the upstream dams are
considerable. The Iguazu National Park Management Plan is a useful tool to guide the protection and management of the park. Joint actions with the Iguacu National Park in Brazil, including joint patrolling, planning and training will improve the management of both World Heritage sites.

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

The combined impacts of the dams on the upper Iguazu River are the greatest threat outside the site beyond the control of the Iguazu National Park management. Habitat conversion along the eastern boundary could be considered the second largest threat outside the park, as projects designed to slow the rate of conversion have had only marginal success so far (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012).

**Best practice examples**

Iguazu National Park is the first park in Argentina adapted for people with disabilities. The park was qualified by the Architecture without Barriers program, as an example for Latin America since almost all the facilities, walks and services are enabled for people with reduced mobility. The buildings and walkways have access by ramps, the train has spaces for people traveling in wheelchairs and there are specifically adapted bathrooms. The runways to visit the waterfalls have railings with double wooden handrails, for the safety of minors, and a special protection at the bottom. In addition, their width allows the entry of baby carriages and wheelchairs. The route to Garganta del Diablo and all the Upper Circuit, are 100% accessible in all its extension. The Lower Circuit has an accessibility of 90% since it has some stairs (APN, 2018).

**State and trend of values**

**Assessing the current state and trend of values**

**World Heritage values**

**One of the largest and most impressive waterfalls in the world**  
High Concern  
Trend: Stable

The major threats to the exceptional natural beauty of Iguazu Falls include: 1) Low water volumes during certain periods due to the operation of dams on the upper Iguazu River; 2) the potential environmental impacts of the new Baixo Iguacu dam, which is located in close proximity to the boundaries of Iguazu National Park and Iguacu National Park in Brazil; 3) tourism infrastructure that directly impacts the natural setting, and adventure sport watercraft on the lower Iguazu River (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012; APN, 2018).

**Exceptional biodiversity and rare charismatic species**  
Low Concern  
Trend: Stable

Recent and ongoing research indicates that the biological diversity of the site is being maintained. The Iguazu Falls’ Canyon is the most biodiverse and environmentally sensitive area of the park. It is also the area that receives more than 1 million visitors each year. While there is little research to provide specific details, it appears that infrastructure developed to guide visitors to the best viewpoints and surrounding Atlantic Forest environments has been relatively effective in minimizing damage.

The Jaguar, Yaguareté or American Tiger is a predator of the Atlantic Forest. Conservation of this species is a priority since it is considered an indicator of the forest conservation status, and because of its cultural value. The latest reports from researchers, who have been working in the area for more than 10 years, indicated that within the park boundaries the registered individuals increased from 7 individuals
in 2006, to 13 in 2014. According to these estimates, the population of Yaguaretés in the Green Corridor of Argentina and Brazil would be 71 adult individuals. Until 2008, researchers estimated that the population was between 33 and 54 individuals (APN, 2018).

Despite the maintenance of the site’s biological diversity, there is serious concern that: i) riverine biota of the upper Iguazú River may be suffering negative impacts due to the alteration of river levels caused by the dams on the Iguazú River; 2) deforestation and agricultural development along the eastern boundary of the park may reduce genetic flows; 3) climate change is causing increased rainfall, droughts and extreme temperatures that could potentially cause habitat shifts within the park; and 4) hunting, harvesting of terrestrial plants, non-native species and fishing in the park and its surroundings are significantly threatening the biodiversity, as reported in the Iguazu National Park Management Plan (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010; World Heritage Committee, 2012; UNESCO, 2012; APN, 2018).

Exceptional plant diversity with high level of endemism

While there is no comprehensive data about the current state of the exceptional plant diversity, certain threats affecting these values have been identified, including extraction of commercial species (orchids and ferns, among others), medicinal plants, as well as palmitos (Euterpe edulis) (APN, 2018).

Summary of the Values

Assessment of the current state and trend of World Heritage values

The natural beauty of the Iguazú waterfalls is being negatively impacted from unnatural changes in river levels due to the operation of dams on the upper Iguazú River. Concerns also remain regarding possible negative environmental effects of unnatural shifts in water levels due to the newly constructed Baixo Iguaçu dam close to the boundaries of Iguazu National Park and Iguacu National Park in Brazil. Studies conducted on the site’s biodiversity tend to indicate that it is being maintained. However, habitat degradation along the eastern park boundary and potential habitat shifts caused by climate change continue to be main threats to the park.

Additional information

Benefits

Understanding Benefits

Direct employment, Tourism-related income, Provision of jobs

The waterfalls of Iguazu National Park are one of the major tourist attractions in Argentina and in South America, attracting more than a million national and international visitors each year, which results in a major tourist industry. Tourism facilities within the park provide employment to local people with a multiplier effect on the local economy.

Outdoor recreation and tourism, Natural beauty and scenery

The aesthetic beauty of the waterfalls and the biodiversity of the Atlantic Forest attract visitors to Iguazu National Park.
► History and tradition,
  Sacred natural sites or landscapes

The Iguazú waterfalls are sacred for the Guaraní Indigenous Peoples who live in the park surroundings, no human settlements are allowed within the park.

► Carbon sequestration,
  Flood prevention,
  Water provision (importance for water quantity and quality),
  Pollination

Iguazu National Park protects an important portion of the Atlantic Forest, which due to its high diversity provides a wide variety of ecosystem services.

Factors negatively affecting provision of this benefit:
- Climate change: Impact level - High
- Invasive species: Impact level - High

The Iguazu National Park Management Plan reports an increase in rainfalls and temperatures especially during spring and winter, as well as extraordinary floods and droughts as a result of climate change. Sensitive species such as amphibians would be affected and changes in the forest composition and physiognomy are expected (APN, 2018)

13 invasive plant species, 6 woody and 7 herbaceous were reported in the PNI Management Plan. Since 2010 the park has been carrying out control and monitoring activities (ANP, 2018).

Summary of benefits

Iguazu National Park is one of the major tourist attractions in South America, attracting more than a million visitors each year to see the natural and exceptional beauty of the waterfalls. Tourism facilities within the park provide employment to local people with a multiplier effect on the local economy. The waterfalls and the Atlantic Forest provide a series of environmental services, like carbon sequestration, flood prevention, water provision and pollination, besides cultural and spiritual values of great importance for the Guaraní Indigenous Peoples who live in the park surroundings.

Projects

Compilation of active conservation projects

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<th>Organization</th>
<th>Brief description of Active Projects</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>WWF Brazil, WWF Paraguay and Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (WWF associate in Argentina)</td>
<td>The Ecoregional Action Plan (2014 - 2018) established a vision that states that by 2020, the Upper Parana and Serra do Mar ecoregions will maintain landscapes that guarantee the conservation of biodiversity, functioning corridors, and environmental services, providing equitable economic and social development for local people (WWF – FVSA, 2014).</td>
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## REFERENCES

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