

Why Wetlands Conservation in the Paraguayan Humid Chaco is Crucial

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ABSTRACT

This poster discusses the importance of wetland conservation and the impact of ecosystem services on human well-being in the Paraguayan Humid Chaco, a vulnerable zone with high biological diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Wetlands are defined as:

“... areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.” (Ramsar Convention, 1971, Article 1.1).

Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning services such as food, water, timber, and fiber; regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, wastes, and water quality; cultural services that provide recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

Wetlands are one of the most beneficial ecosystems, but they are also among the ecosystems most threatened by human activities.

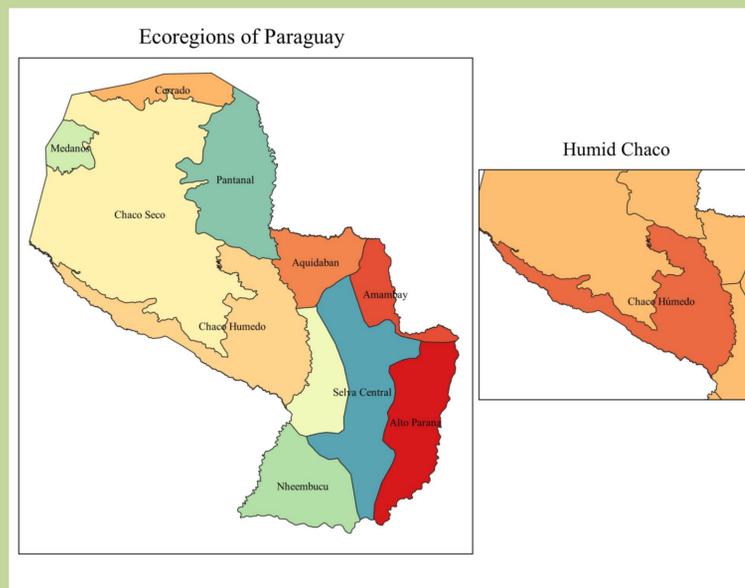
According to Elsam (2006), the Humid Chaco is known for its wealth and abundance in wildlife, it is characterized by its palm savannas of *Copernicia alba*, wetlands, grasslands and flooded forests. The main anthropic activity is extensive cattle ranching through the use of savannas and grasslands natural. Wetlands are one of the vegetation units most representative of the Humid Chaco.

The benefits of ecosystem services provided by wetlands contribute to human well-being, thus wetlands conservation is crucial.

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Wetlands are considered one of the most productive ecosystems, productivity is strongly related to the ecosystem services that are provided by them.

The benefits from ecosystem services are sometimes not appreciated in the short term, or on a local scale. Therefore it is difficult for local people to understand their importance, but the aforementioned benefits are vital to sustain life.



Source: Macedo Amarilla (2021)

CONCLUSION

Achieving conservation of natural resources in countries like Paraguay is a great challenge, due to unsustainable productive activities, such as cattle ranching in the Humid Chaco ecoregion. The wetlands present in the Humid Chaco are productive due to the mentioned ecosystem services, their importance for sustaining human life, and their influence in the hydrological and biogeochemical cycles.

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROVIDED BY WETLANDS



Source: <http://www.wildlife.com.py/gallery/ecosystems/>



Source: <https://paraguay.wcs.org/es-es/Vida-silvestre/Jurumi.aspx>

Source: Adapted from WWF (2021)

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