

Translation from Administracion de Parques Nacionales document (by Dave Fawcett 9 Dec 94)

Protected areas of the Republic of Argentina to be included in the "List of Wetlands of International Importance"

PARQUE NACIONAL RIO PILCOMAYO AR003

Location: [coords given] near the confluence of the ríos Pilcomayo and Paraguay, Pilcomayo departamento [town/municipal level division], Formosa province.

Area: approx. 55,000 ha.

Borders: ~not yet translated

Altitude: 60m

Biogeographic province: "Chaqueña", eastern district (Cabrera and Willink 1980). "Gran Chaco" (Udvardy 1975).

Wetland type: Rivers and slow flowing water courses, lakes and pools of fluvial origin, with permanent marshy zones, associated *esteros* [shallow, relatively rounded lakes, grouped in clusters, fed by rain and subterranean water. More permanent and defined than *bañados* of AR001], seasonally inundated pastures, savannas, palm groves.

Site description: Vast mosaic of different types of aquatic environments, which alternate with tall forest and riparian forest along the río Pilcomayo.

Vegetation: The dominant landscape is a more or less floodable savanna, with *Copernica australis* palm groves. There are also islets of forest ("monte fuerte") whose most characteristic species is the hardwood species Chacoan red quebracho (*Schinopsis balansae*). The water bodies shelter an abundant aquatic vegetation (rooted and floating), whilst the río Pilcomayo is bordered by a paranan gallery forest.

Land ownership: Under ownership and jurisdiction of the Nation, subject to the regulation of the law no. 22351 of National Parks, Natural Monuments and National Reserves.

Level of protection: Category II (IUCN 1978). The National Park was created in 1951, and its boundaries were modified in 1968 by Law 17915.

Land use: The human inhabitants who still remain in the park herd livestock. Tourism, so far scarce, is going to increase.

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION:

Waterbirds: Characteristic of the Chaco wetlands, in concentrations and number which vary notably according to water fluctuations. It is worth mentioning the three species of neotropical storks (*Jabiru mycteria*, *Ciconia maguari* and *Mycteria americana*). The latter is usually found in large concentrations during the dry season. *Chauna torquata*, *Harpiprion caerulescens* are also found, and the three species of *Dendrocygna* (*D. viduata*, *D. autumnalis* & *D. bicolor*), *Sarkidirnis melanotos*, *Cairina moschata* & *Heliornis fulica*.

Other fauna: The area also shelters a rich terrestrial avifauna, of which *Rhea americana* & *Cariama cristata* are outstanding. Amongst the reptiles, *Caiman brachyurus* & *C. latirostris* must be mentioned. The area is also rich in mammals such as *Chrysocyon brachyurus*, *Lontra longicaudis* [I think that genus is an error and should be *Lutra* - an otter which would be expected here], *Myocastor coypus* [the coypu], and *Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris* [the capybara].

Threats: The few human inhabitants possess large numbers of livestock, causing notable impact on the vegetation, which is aggravated by intentionally started fires. Wildlife are affected by poaching. The boundaries are deficient, having left out part of the Laguna Blanca, the largest lake in the park. [This

Laguna Blanca is a separate lake from the Argentine "Laguna Blanca" Ramsar site -- DATABASE NOTE]

Research and conservation: Ecological studies have been carried out on the flora and fauna. The area is under the care of two resident park wardens.

References: see original.