

Making a Difference for Wildlife

Hundreds of local conservation projects are undertaken annually by SCI Chapters. They are reinforced by many notable conservation initiatives funded by the SCI Foundation.



**Water Buffalo Research
and Abatement**
Rondônia, Brazil
Total Funds: \$50,000



IN 1953, the Rondônia, Brazil, state government introduced about 40 water buffaloes (*Bubalus bubalis*) into the Pau D'Oleo Reserve for raising and distribution to regional farmers. When the experimental farm was abandoned in the 1970s, the buffaloes escaped, and today occupy a 400-square-kilometer area, including the 600,000-hectare Guapore' Ecological Reserve. With no natural predators, the buffaloes are now estimated at as many as 15,000 animals. They have out-competed indigenous species and are producing visible changes in the Reserve's ecology.

According to Emanuel Casara, secretary executive substitute of IBAMA in Rondônia, "There are no concluded studies on the impacts caused by the buffaloes in the ecosystem of the biological



reserve. The most conspicuous one reported until the moment is that the animals adapted perfectly to the existent conditions in the area." Rondônia has been discussing extreme measures, even including herd extermination.

SCI Brazil had a better idea and developed a program, in cooperation with IBAMA, to create a hunting preserve. Sport hunters will cull buffaloes at a sustainable rate, simultaneously protecting the Reserve's indigenous species and providing ecological research funding to IBAMA.



Additionally, hunters will be required to quarter and salt the meat for distribution to the region's needy.

SCI Brazil also has entered into a contract with Pro-Fauna Assessoria e Comercio LTDA of Iguape, Sao Paulo, to conduct an ecological assessment of the buffalo population and its effects on plant succession and its effects on abundance and habitat alteration, as well as to determine sustainable harvest quotas in the Reserve.