

great tracts of old-growth temperate rainforest left in the world and have been the centre of a fierce dispute between environmentalists and the government of British Columbia for over three years (see *Forest & Bird* February 1994).

The government announced in July that it had accepted all 127 recommendations of a scientific panel established to look at a sustainable logging regime for the sound.

Logging would continue but clearcuts more than four tree heights wide would end, over 87,000 hectares of new parks would be created, and unlogged watersheds would be protected at least until full species inventories and ecological assessments had been carried out. There was an assumption (never denied by the government) that no clearcut could be greater than four hectares. The government claimed that clearcut logging "as we know it" at Clayoquot would end.

In a province where 15 percent of jobs are forestry related, the compromise was seen as a considerable environmental gain and most conservation groups acceded to the agreement.

By September the regime started to unravel when the first batch of new cutting permits – allowing 14 hectare clearcuts – was announced.

Environmentalists argue they have been deceived and have denounced the new rules as only providing for the forests to be destroyed with greater sensitivity.

The battle to save the Clayoquot forests is obviously not over yet.

## From Auckland to Gunung Leuser

THREE YEARS of barefoot tracking in the jungle, taking photos of Indonesia's elusive wildlife, gave Aucklander Mike Griffiths the drive to fight to save the great rainforests of the Gunung Leuser National Park in northern Sumatra.

The Forest and Bird member and former oil company executive is now armed with a staggering US\$60 million of European Union and Indone-

sian government money to protect the park and areas around it.

Gunung Leuser is Indonesia's premier national park with a wide variety of habitats from its high mountainous core to coastal swamp, and contains the largest area of lowland forest left in Sumatra.

It is also the last place on earth where orangutans, rhinos, elephants, tigers and leopards still live together.

Yet like many conservation areas in developing countries, legal protection for national parks in Indonesia is weak. Parks are regularly logged, cleared for agriculture by land-hungry farmers and available for all sorts of commercial exploitation if enough money is offered.

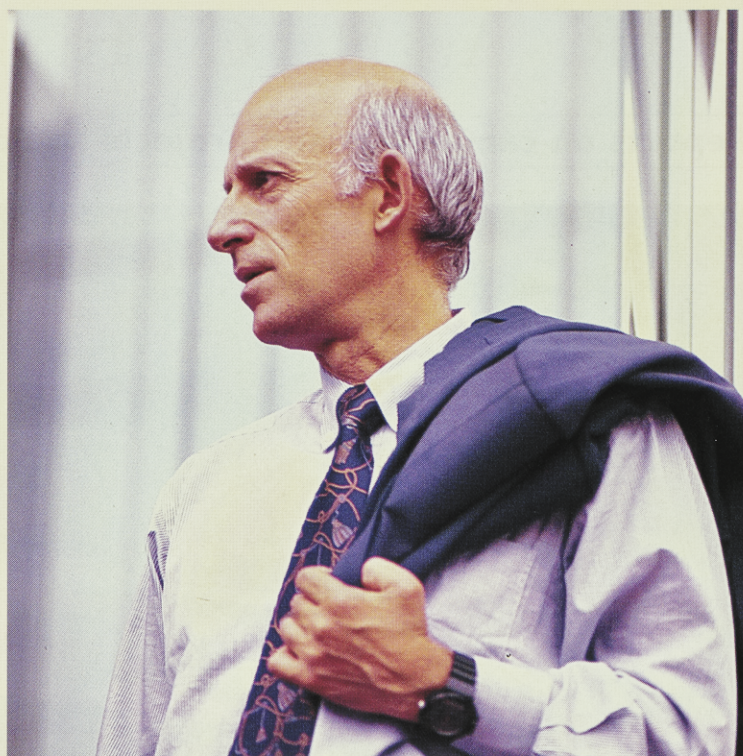
Mike Griffiths also found that the richest areas, biologically, were outside the park where many illegal timber operations were operating with impunity. "The amount of money that can be made exploiting rainforests gives those people so much power in Indonesia, that you must have access to the very top to conserve forests."

To halt the destruction, Griffiths and local allies proposed increasing the protected area by a million hectares to 1.8 million and effectively privatising the park by transferring its management to the Leuser International Foundation, the body he had set up in 1993 to lobby for the area's protection.

The government was under international pressure for its poor conservation record and was amenable to innovative proposals. Griffiths, who has worked for 20 years in Indonesia, pursued his goal and his international fundraising with the zeal and effectiveness of an experienced international negotiator.

Last April the Forestry Minister agreed to place the entire Leuser ecosystem under the management of the Leuser Foundation for seven years. The only drawback was that logging concession holders maintain their prior rights.

"In a stroke we doubled the land under protection and took



Mike Griffiths: "I come from industry and I know how the world works. To save Gunung Leuser, I knew it would take a lot of money and influence. You must have tremendously good political support, and the funds to win that support."

the first step toward creating the most important conservation area in Southeast Asia and one of the top parks on the planet."

The Leuser Development Programme has three ministers on it, the first time any Indonesian minister has been involved in this way in a conservation project.

Griffiths also has the committed support of some of the most powerful leaders in the province of Aceh where most of the forest is located.

"When we face really serious threats, the support of these leaders is essential in conveying the problem to President Suharto."

In only two years the foundation has already fought off two major incursions.

A local clique of retired army colonels and businessmen had cleared 12,000 hectares within the park and during 18 months of negotiations could not be persuaded to stop.

"After some wheeling and dealing in Jakarta, the head of the army in northern Sumatra heard about the problem and weighed in on our side, boots and all. Now we have a reforestation programme in place."

In another instance the bulldozers were warming up to begin construction of a road

that would have sliced right through the heart of the rainforest.

Griffiths used his government connections; President Suharto heard about the project and it was stopped.

"In certain cases unofficial high-level lobbying can be very effective in Indonesia," Griffiths says with a smile.

He has also introduced patrols which are constantly moving around the park to protect the rhinos and he believes that poaching is now negligible.

The same patrols also appear to be protecting the tigers. Griffiths says a wildlife trafficker in Jakarta delivered a backhanded compliment by saying that tiger poachers were operating everywhere in Indonesia except Gunung Leuser.

Griffiths is aware that many conservationists are suspicious of privatisation but says it was essential in this case to break the institutionalised shortcomings of the present management system.

Griffiths expects it will be much easier to attract funding for conservation projects within the park and sustainable development in the region to protect the park.

Adam Leavesley