

The late Navjot Sodhi conceived the idea of this book as a way of bringing the views of biologists living and working in the tropics to the forefront of our conservation planning for these biologically rich habitats facing increasing pressures from expanding human populations. In its 30 chapters, 55 authors present their views on the conservation problems they face and the solutions they have adopted in response. Human populations in tropical countries are projected to grow by more than 2.5 billion people over the next few decades, with expectations of increased consumption levels growing even more rapidly than the numbers of people. Clearly there will be a need for more trained conservationists and biologists to learn from the voices in this volume and further improve conservation efforts in the tropics. Significant levels of local involvement are essential to conservation success, with the rights of local people fully recognized, protected and fostered by governmental and international assistance. Overarching conservation plans are necessary, but cannot in themselves lead to success. Instead, effective long term conservation in the tropics requires the full participation of local people, organizations and governments. We hope that the individual experiences presented in the pages of this book will provide useful models that may serve to build better and more sustainable lives for the people who live in the tropics and lead to the continued survival of as many species and functioning ecosystems as possible.

Navjot Sodhi (1962–2011): Based at the National University of Singapore, Navjot was one of the great minds of conservation biology. A native of Punjab, India, he earned his PhD from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada and then moved to an incredibly fruitful 15 years documenting rain forest loss and degradation in Southeast Asia and its effects on populations of animals, plants, and people. He was the epitome of a conservationist, someone who cared passionately about the rich lands and often poor people who live in the tropics, and striving, with a large group of colleagues and students, to devise ways to improve sustainability in the region while pressures on the forest mounted rapidly. Having spent large parts of his life in developing and developed countries, Navjot was keenly aware of the differences between attitudes and actions in conservation that predominate in rich and poor countries and suggested the idea of this book to Peter Raven to highlight and reconcile these differences in knowledge. He intended to share with the world the lessons that conservation practitioners were learning in the countries where they live. Shortly before Navjot died, he asked his student Luke Gibson to step up and share the editorial responsibility with Peter Raven, and this book is the result. We believe that he would have liked this book with its varied contents very much – he always placed application in front of theory, deeply wanting to preserve the world's biological richness with the involvement of local communities and the support of urban populations from near and far. We miss him greatly, and are pleased to present here his last efforts in a wonderfully productive life.

Luke Gibson: Pursuing his PhD at the National University of Singapore, Luke Gibson is studying tropical forest loss and fragmentation and its impact on biodiversity, particularly in Southeast Asia. In Chiew Larn Reservoir, Thailand, he is recording extinctions of small mammal species from small forest fragments and the persistence – or decline – of other mammalian ungulates and carnivores in the lowland dipterocarp forest surrounding the reservoir. His previous research focused on primates in other locations in Southeast Asia. He received his Bachelor's degree from Princeton University and his Master's degree from the University of California, San Diego.

Peter Raven: Over the past 50 years, Peter Raven has become an influential voice in systematics, ecology and evolution worldwide. He served as President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and other organizations, Home Secretary of the US National Academy of Sciences and a member of a number of other academies worldwide. During his 39-year tenure as President of the Missouri Botanical Garden to a position of global leadership in conservation, with centers of activity in Africa and Asia. He is co-author of the leading textbook in botany, *The Biology of Plants*, and has written texts in biology and the environment. With Paul Ehrlich, he originated the



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