

# Synergies

## between scientific & indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge may advance scientific understandings, providing new information and perspectives that supersede those currently held by scientists. This is particularly evident in remote areas that have not been at the heart of mainstream scientific research.

The recognition that local and indigenous peoples have their own ecological understandings, conservation practices and resource management goals has important implications. It transforms the relationship between biodiversity managers and local communities. While previously they were perceived simply as resource users, indigenous peoples are now recognised as essential partners in environmental management.

However, differences between scientific and indigenous worldviews continue to create barriers to meaningful collaboration, as does the widespread assumption that science is superior to other knowledge systems.



Slash and burn agriculture is widespread in the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve, Nicaragua. While previously this land management practice was widely condemned, it is now acknowledged that many systems of shifting agriculture are environmentally sustainable, and are compatible with the maintenance of high biological diversity.



Beluga whale hunting is a traditional pursuit of central importance for the subsistence and cultural identity of the Inuit of Arctic Quebec, Canada. The Inuit participate actively in joint State-indigenous management boards for numerous wildlife species, including beluga, where indigenous and scientific knowledge are confronted and exchanged.

The use of fire to create and manage landscapes is an age-old tradition mastered by Aboriginal peoples in Australia. Scientific recognition has been slow in coming, but today traditional fire stick management has been officially adopted as a tool for managing protected areas, such as the Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Kakadu World Heritage Sites.

