

The Law of the Wild

An Ecologist's Life



Ian R. Swingland



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Nyapun and his blowpipe 1978 and meeting in 2005

rangements for the Summit, arranged the travel logistics for me when I invited my friends to the Royal Mulu Hotel owned by Robert Geneid. I invited Tony Jack (SFM Australasia), Clare Rewcastle Brown (journalist and co-organiser of IMES), Niu Zhiming (ADB China Environment) and Illka. We had a wonderful time not least because I was able to meet Nyapun again, a Penan that help us a lot on the Mulu Expedition years before; a wonderful break from 3rd to 5th December 2005.

While at the Summit, Reuters interviewed me about conserving forests and benefiting local communities, which was published December 22, 2005: *'Science and Economics Work Together Toward Environmental Improvement'*:

British biologist Ian Swingland took up the idea of trading commodities to fund afforestation programs after he witnessed the devastation caused by logging in the Malaysian rainforests of Borneo in 1998, two decades after his first visit there. Now his company has bought about 10,000 hectares (25,000 acres) of Kangaroo Island, Australia's third-largest island, to demonstrate that afforestation can offer a major investment opportunity through trading in carbon credits.

"Conventional conservation is a disaster story," Swingland, the founder of Britain's Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent, said in an interview. "What isn't a disaster is where you make a business of it, and everybody's lives are improved by it, and we give them ownership of their own future." I'll let the full story speak for itself--but I like the last line: "If you don't even have incentives, how can you get people



Tony Jack (SFM Australasia), Clare Rewcastle Brown (Journalist and co-organiser of IMES), Niu Zhiming (ADB China Environment) and Illka Gobius (PINPOINT PR, a PR consultancy and Verve MPR, a marketing consultancy). Four exceptional people in their very different talents

to look after the environment?"

Swingland lived alone for two years in the 1970s on the coral Atoll of Aldabra in the Indian Ocean. There he studied the giant tortoises, numbering around 154,000, the island's only other inhabitants.

Now his company has bought about 10,000 hectares (25,000 acres) of Kangaroo Island, Australia's third-largest island, to demonstrate that afforestation can offer a major investment opportunity through trading in carbon credits. "Conventional conservation is a disaster story," Swingland, the founder of Britain's Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent, said in an interview. "What isn't a disaster is where you make a business of it, and everybody's lives are improved by it, and we give them ownership of their own future."

Kangaroo Island, off the state of South Australia, is home to two nature reserves with koala populations, but about 34,000 hectares (85,000 acres) of native bush land exists on privately held land.

Carbon trading is a key part of the European Union's strategy to cut emissions of heat-trapping gases under the Kyoto Protocol. The EU Emissions Trading Scheme, launched this year, covers 11,500 European manufacturing plants and power stations and lets companies that emit below their limits sell credits into the market where they trade as a commodity. Under