



# Amazon Conservation in the Age of Development: The Limits of Providence

*Ronald A. Foresta*

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The tropical rain forest of the Brazilian Amazon has become one of the familiar modern metaphors for wanton destruction. This study addresses this crisis. It argues that in the last two decades those who forged and applied conservation programmes in Brazil misunderstood a basic component of development politics. In his view, top government officials supported conservation more to advance immediate foreign and domestic policy goals and less because of the benefits conservation promised. Modern conservation theorists assume that conservation programmes are most likely to succeed if they fit into broader national development programmes. Foresta advocates the opposite: leave the Earth's remaining natural areas outside the pale of modern development planning, he urges, for a greater chance of success in the long run. Though focused on conservation efforts for Amazonia, his analysis applies to developing nations throughout the world. Conservation practitioners and administrators can read this work as a guide to the pitfalls of conservation policy-making in the Third World, others as a call for a new approach to preserving the world's biological resource.



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