

Polylepis reforestation projects gain official protected area status



ECOAN has strengthened its community-run Polylepis reforestation programme in the Peruvian Vilcanota Highlands by obtaining government recognition for several of its projects as Private Conservation Areas (ACPs): Qosqocchuarina Reserve in the community of Rumira Sondormayo, Choquechaca (Ollanta) Reserve and Abra Malaga Reserve. More community-run reserves are being added to

this programme. These areas are recognised by the Government as part of the Protected Areas System of Peru (SERNANP) and are managed by local communities to protect the local biodiversity, provide opportunities for scientific research, education and local eco-tourism compatible with the objectives of conservation.

The Abra Malaga Reserve has a large number

of endemic birds, which attracts foreign tourists. These tourists now pay for a guide from the local community when they visit the reserve, so this community is benefiting economically from the improved conservation of its woodlands. This official status also helps communities in their discussions with other government agencies and provides a clearer framework for management, as, until now, things have been done on an informal basis.