

Preface

It is estimated that 10 million people are displaced from their homes and communities each year through a combination of civil unrest, armed conflict, development projects (especially dam construction) and other interventions. Over the past few years, the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford has undertaken to study many of these aspects of forced migration. The disruption to human lives and livelihoods which has resulted from recent wildlife conservation and other environmental protection projects has not, however, been studied systematically. Each year hundreds of thousands of mobile people, located in difficult-to-reach, marginal areas are displaced and often forced into permanent settlements in order to set aside land for the conservation of wildlife

This book has emerged from these two separate concerns: recent local, national and international efforts to protect the biodiversity of our planet; and the sustainable livelihoods of marginal communities around the world. For most of the past decade, I had observed first hand in Oman and later in Syria, how these two important dimensions of universal interests often collide and create distress and upheaval in the lives of indigenous and local peoples as well as in the work of social and natural scientists. Recognizing the global dimensions of this collision, I set about organizing a conference which would bring together social and natural scientists – anthropologists, ecologists, and wildlife conservation specialists – to examine the impact conservation and other environmental protection projects have on the lives and livelihoods of the peoples who inhabit the same territory and ecological niches. A call for papers went out in 1998 under the auspices of the Refugee Studies Centre. Over 80 abstracts were received of which 36 were invited to proceed to full papers. In September 1999, the conference *Displacement, Forced Settlement and Conservation* was held at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford. All but two of the original papers delivered at that conference appear in the on-line version of this book with Berghahn Publishers (www.berghahnbooks.com).

Marcus Colchester, Director of the Forest Peoples Programme, kindly agreed to co-edit this volume with me. His extensive knowledge and experience of forest peoples in Latin America and Southeast Asia gives a balance to my own expertise in nomadic pastoral systems in the Middle East and North Africa. Together we have selected the twenty papers to make up this volume

in which the interface between conservation and indigenous peoples is analysed in Latin America, East Africa, Southern Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. In some cases, papers critically examine the contemporary efforts to bring indigenous peoples into the management and running of conservation efforts. In others, the plight of indigenous communities who are ignored or treated dismissively is revealed. All these papers highlight the need for a wide multi-disciplinary platform upon which indigenous peoples can voice their concerns alongside those of natural and social scientists in the effort to protect the biodiversity of the planet we all share.

Dawn Chatty