**SUMMARY**

Private protected areas (PPAs) are a board category that includes reserves established and managed by non-government entities, including civil society organizations, businesses and private individuals. It was recently suggested that the creation of a system of PPAs in Brazil may act as a useful model for extending protected area systems internationally. While it is clear that RPPNs have an important role to play in the future development of Brazil’s protected area system, there are several significant challenges that need to be overcome if they are fulfil their potential: (1) ensuring that RPPNs contribute to coverage and representation; (2) ensuring adequate governance; and (3) increasing the attractiveness of the RPPN model. While it is still too early to determine whether RPPNs constitute a robust PPA model that could (or should) be exported to other countries, they are creating new opportunities for innovation and novel management strategies that might eventually lead to a vibrant and distinctly Brazilian protected area movement.