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IUCN Red List codes used in this report

CR – Critically Endangered
EN – Endangered
VU – Vulnerable
NT – Near Threatened



Photo: Black-throated trogon
by Edgar Mendez Vargas

Front cover: Hatchling Dumeril's monitor
acrylic painting by Carel Brest van Kempen

Message from the Executive Director

Dear friends and supporters,

Every year we puzzle over how to present our past year's work in a coherent way that best demonstrates ICFC's breadth and depth. So far we have made it almost a point of honour to say something about every project, no matter how small, since even those can have a tremendous impact on the ground, either in improving the outlook for a single struggling species or by changing the outlook of a local community.

However as we grow, this is becoming harder to do without listing projects encyclopedically – which would not be much fun for you, poor reader!

So this year we have grouped some projects into logical themes to give you a taste for not just what we are funding by why. You'll notice as you read, we've grouped a few indigenous focused projects in Latin America; some Rift Valley projects in Kenya; some small reserves we helped create that we are now helping to protect; a couple of "tough-to-protect" bird projects in Patagonia, and some projects focused on elevational or altitudinal gradients. This latter topic feeds into a guest essay by ICFC advisor, Adrian Forsyth. Let us know what you think! As always, thanks for being part of the team and making this happen.

-- Molly Bartlett



Back row: Rob Stoner (President, ICF), Molly Bartlett, David Agro, Michael Bradstreet (Board member), Carlos R. Garcia, Thiago Schinaider (Associação Floresta Protegida, Brazil), Meade Cadot (ICF Board member), Alice Banks (wife of Andre Boraks)

Front row: Scott Hecker, Andre Boraks (with son), Jackie Leppard, Tamara Martin, Barb Zimmerman, Laurie Havinga, Tom Welch, Boraks boys, Anne Lambert

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ICFC conserves nature in the tropics where biodiversity abounds and is most under threat. With our small team and dedicated field partners we are achieving lasting conservation gains and large co-benefits for climate and local communities.

Asia & Oceania



Reef manta ray
by Florian Allgaeuer

New

Philippines: Protecting a manta ray “cleaning station”

Conservation need

Mobula rays are gentle giants that feed on plankton and ply the warm waters of the Philippines. *Mobula* species are threatened by overfishing, boat strikes, habitat loss, pollution, and the illegal gill plate trade for traditional Chinese medicine.

In 2018 an important block of coral was identified as a site of manta ray aggregation in the shallow waters of northern Palawan. There, wrasse fish wait to clean parasites and necrotic material off the mantas. These unique “day spas” provide crucial habitat for mantas, fostering their well-being and enabling their continued survival. It is noteworthy that, until now, only two such cleaning stations were known in the entire Philippines, and both are now protected areas.

What we are doing

This project is gathering information needed to eventually establish the Sibaltan reefs as a community-led, science-based marine protected area. Video rigs installed at the manta cleaning station capture images of the rays’ pale ventral surface, which have pigment spots unique to each individual, like our fingerprint. The crew at the Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute (LAMAVE) use this data to understand manta

populations, migration patterns and habitats critical for feeding and reproduction.

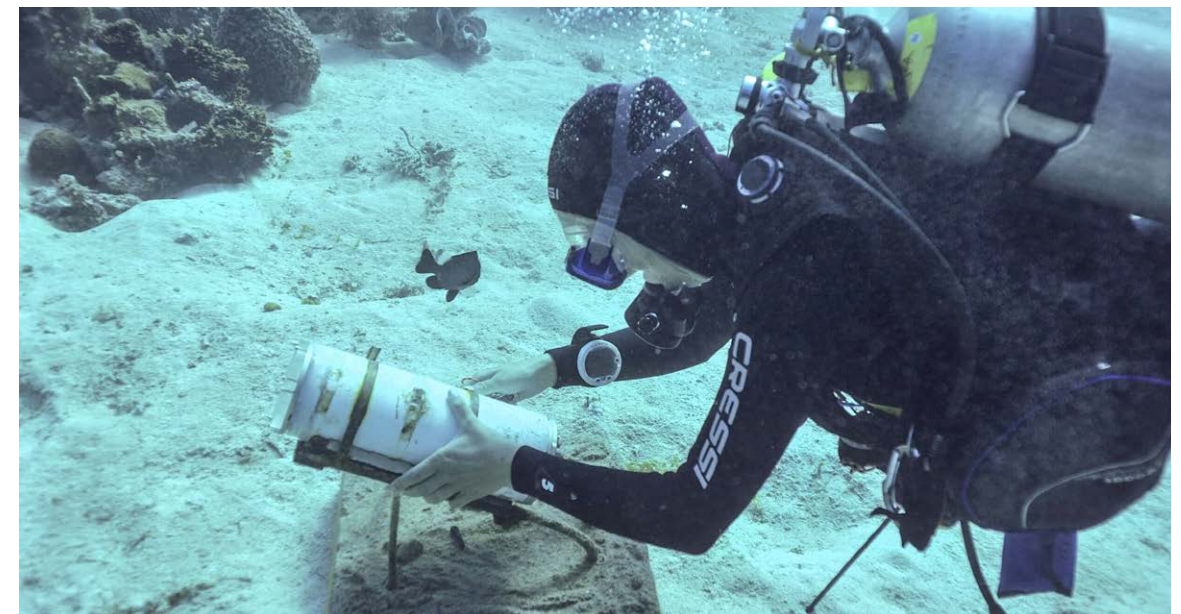
2022 Highlights

The underwater cameras have captured many hours of reef manta activity, along with footage of dugongs, whale sharks, and a shovelnose ray (CR). Since the start of the project, 23 individual mantas have used the cleaning station, 13 of which are new newly identified for the province of Palawan (bringing the total to 101 manta rays).

An observation of a female manta tangled in fishing gear prompted quick intervention from the field team who were able to disentangle her.

Stakeholder consultation is a major part of planning a marine protected area, and dive tourism operators were involved in establishing a voluntary code of conduct and guidelines regarding in-water interactions and future zoning developments for the cleaning station.

Size of area:	3,200 hectares
Field partner:	Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute (LAMAVE)
Spending in 2022:	\$15,173



Above: Underwater camera being set up at the reef cleaning station. Photo: LAMAVE

Opposite: Reef manta rays (VU) have a ‘wingspan’ of several meters and lack stingers (so pose no threat to humans).

New

Indonesia: A new conservation organization gets its start in Papua

Conservation need

The Indonesian portion of the island of New Guinea, known as Tanah Papua (Land of Papua), boasts one of the few remaining untouched natural frontiers on our planet, with an impressive 92% forest cover still intact. However, the region is currently facing significant threats stemming from logging, mining, and land conversion for agriculture. Unfortunately, the local communities lack economic opportunities and the capacity to effectively resist the exploitation of their resources.

In the highlands of Papua, traditional communities heavily rely on forests for essential needs such as firewood and construction materials. As the population grows, the demand for wood has surged, resulting in unsustainable rates of deforestation surrounding these villages. This contributes to soil instability, the occurrence of landslides, and the depletion of vital clean water sources. It is imperative, therefore, to implement sustainable resource management practices in this region.

What we are doing

ICFC is helping a new conservation organization, YAPPENDA (acronym for “Foundation for the love and service of Papua” in local languages) get its start. It is working in two areas: the Heluk valley of Yahukimo Regency, and the Cyclops Mountain range of Jayapura Regency. The project is restoring degraded habitat and establishing community forests for sustainable use. YAPPENDA is also creating a learning centre (combined with its office) for education and research, in collaboration with Indonesian and foreign universities. This

Fungi are an important component of the ecosystem services and carbon cycling (*below, Microporus xanthopus*). Photo: Andre Boraks



Located between Australia and SE Asia, the island of New Guinea is a complex mix of these two distinct biogeographic regions. Transected by a mountain range that reaches 4,800 meters, the island’s complex topography and large size support diverse ecosystems teeming with endemic species. Photo: Malcolm Wilson

is key for developing science and conservation capacity.

2022 Highlights

Through meaningful dialogue with local communities and relevant government bodies, a forest restoration initiative has been set into motion. As part of this effort, five tree nurseries have been established between Jayapura and Yahukimo, serving as vital hubs for the cultivation of a diverse range of indigenous tree species. These nurseries are now abundantly stocked, awaiting the planned tree planting campaign in 2023.

To further enhance the restoration endeavor, education and research programs have been actively initiated. YAPPENDA is providing logistical support to an Oxford University expedition team and collaborating with a local university in Jayapura.

Size of area:	2,700 hectares
Field partner:	YAPPENDA
Spending in 2022:	\$263,787



Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin. Photo: MCC

The following two projects have both benefitted from having donor Doug Bender as an on-site volunteer. Doug, a retired spacecraft engineer, also supports this work financially and contributes his technology expertise.

Cambodia: progress for marine life

The MCC team passed a milestone in having deployed 270 conservation and anti-trawling structures (CANTS) in Cambodian waters. These structures, made from concrete blocks, protect the Kep marine fisheries management area and areas important for marine mammals such as the Irrawaddy dolphin (EN). CANTS, which entangle trawl nets, continue to prove highly effective in deterring illegal fishing. This has inspired similar action in neighboring Kampot province where MCC worked with Wild Earth Allies and local fishing communities to deploy CANTS.

Ongoing MCC mapping of seagrass meadows in Kep and Kampot has found 1,202 hectares of seagrass regrowth. Seaweed, corals and bivalves are also recorded. The recovering marine ecosystem offers food and shelter to a diversity of marine life. The MCC Marine Mammal research team were thrilled to witness the return of two emblematic species in Kep and Kampot waters: the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (aka pink dolphin; VU) and the dugong. Cambodia’s marine life is coming back!

Size of area:	16,900 hectares
Field partner:	Marine Conservation Cambodia (MCC)
Since 2016:	\$941,226

New

Laos: Asian Elephants

Conservation need

The Asian Elephant (EN), which ranges across South and Southeast Asia, has declined in population by at least 50% in the last 60–75 years. One area where they occur is the 4,000 km² Nakai-Nam Theun National Park in the Annamite mountain range. It is one of the largest remaining contiguous forest blocks in the Indochina peninsula, and the Lao government has made its protection a high priority.

In 2008, the Nam Theun 2 hydropower project created a 450 km² reservoir that flooded the core habitat of the resident elephant population on the Nakai Plateau. Elephants and other large vertebrates are also impacted by overhunting.

What we are doing

Our project is surveying the elephant population using a non-invasive genetic sampling method (collecting elephant dung!). This will assess the impact of the hydropower project and help with the establishment of a protocol for the long-term monitoring and protection of this elephant population. Ultimately, the survey is intended to serve as a catalyst to draft a multi-stakeholder local Conservation Action Plan for the protection of the elephants in the Nakai Plateau and surrounding areas.

Size of area:	4,000 km ²
Field partner:	Association Anoulak
Spending in 2022:	\$16,863

Gains for threatened species in Asia-Pacific and Nepal

Generally, to protect globally threatened species, protecting their habitat is the best bet. But sometimes other actions must be taken to address more direct threats. This is illustrated by our spoon-billed sandpiper, maleo and island conservation projects below—as well as by our projects for other shorebirds, the vaquita, hooded grebe, Mali elephants, sea turtles, among others. In contrast, the red panda in western Nepal is benefiting from broader habitat protection.

Our **project for the spoon-billed sandpiper** (CR) continued in shorebird landscapes across **four countries in Asia**, with a total count of 43 spoon-billed sandpipers (along with 67,555 waterbirds of 65 species). These areas also supported 300 globally endangered Nordmann's greenshanks (EN), 7,159 great knots, and other threatened shorebirds. In addition to site protection, along stretches of coast we have removed hundreds of illegal mist nets (which are used to trap birds) and carried out effective conservation outreach work in communities throughout the spoon-billed sandpiper winter range.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper

Field partners: Project leader: Sayam Chowdhury and partner NGOs in Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Thailand

Since 2016: \$454,755

ICFC's **project in Sulawesi** dates to 2010, when we began working with the Alliance for the Conservation of Tompotika (AlTo) with a primary focus on saving the **maleo** (CR) from extinction. In 2022 the success of this effort led to a record-smashing high count of 199 adult birds at the main nesting colony in Libuun, up from 115 in 2021. The first range-wide survey of maleos across Sulawesi was led by AlTo's director Marcy Summers, and the results were published in *Biodiversity and Conservation* in December. The survey made clear that the primary threats to maleos are egg-taking by humans, followed by degradation of travel corridors. Now, Sulawesi's wildlife and natural ecosystems face a threat from expanded nickel mining to meet the sharply increased demand for this metal for electric vehicle batteries. The project has engaged a key individual who is working with the mining companies and with local villages, which will need to make important decisions about mining.

Sulawesi

Size of area: 250,000 hectares

Field partner: Alliance for Tompotika (AlTo)

Since 2010: \$2,000,914

In **French Polynesia and Fiji**, our project with BirdLife International and Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie in remote islands in the South Pacific aims to eradicate **invasive species** that can quickly drive endemic species of birds to extinction. The invasive species targeted include rats, feral goats, common mynas, and cane toads. In Rotuma, mynas have been contained and are down to a very few birds, while all of Rapa's islets are now goat-free and measures continue to control rats. Rats are a serious problem on most of the world's islands, having arrived by ships since man began exploring in canoes. They are the single largest threat to seabirds.

French Polynesia and Fiji

Size of area: 6,800 hectares

Field partner: BirdLife International Pacific; Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie (MANU)

Since 2019: \$113,993

In **Nepal**, data collection on the **red panda** and other mammals is expanding, and our Forest Guardians and local forest users continue to monitor community forests in close coordination with the Divisional Forest Office. Twenty-four hectares of degraded red panda habitat was restored using seedlings from four nurseries, aided by fencing and water source conservation. The project provided greenhouse materials that enable local forest users to produce fresh vegetables for daily consumption and stable income. Dog vaccination continued with the goal of reducing rabies infection both for local communities and the wild red panda population.

Nepal Red Panda

Size of area: 261,600 hectares

Field partner: Red Panda Network (in Nepal)

Since 2017: \$198,518



Photo: Baz Scampion



Maleos at digging their nesting burrows. Photo: Kevin Schafer



Above, left: Checking burrows for Rapa Shearwater

Above, right: Rapa shearwater with geolocator

Right: Nursery seedlings in the Himkalika, Kalikot district of Nepal for forest restoration to help the red panda (EN). Photo: Red Panda Network



Latin America



American oystercatchers
by Patricia González



Two of an estimated ten vaquitas remaining. Photo: Thomas A. Jefferson

New

Saving the vaquita from Extinction

Conservation need

The world's smallest Cetacean is teetering on the edge of extinction in the Upper Gulf of California in Mexico. The decline of this diminutive porpoise is entirely due to illegal gill netting. Perhaps fewer than 10 remain. The illegal fishing centers around the harvest of swim bladders from totoaba fish, which are exported to China where prices approach US\$5,000 per swim bladder.

What we're doing

In 2022 ICFC supported two complementary projects for the vaquita. With the Cetacean Action Treasury, we are funding the efforts of local Sea Scouts who patrol the boundaries of the Zero Tolerance Area (ZTA) to dissuade gill-netters from entering by warning that there are 200 submerged anti-net devices in the area. The Sea Scouts also assist with removing submerged nets that were snagged by the devices ("ghost nets"). With Pronatura Noroeste we have a project to encourage local fishers to switch to "vaquita friendly" fishing gear such as specially designed nets and hook-and-line methods. Seafood products harvested in this manner are branded as legally obtained products and fetch higher prices.

2022 Highlights

A local social media campaign warning about the submerged net blocks was viewed by 20,000 people in the fishing communities. The Sea Scouts patrolled the ZTA and assisted in removing nets, counting illegal entries, and informing proper authorities. Acoustic detections indicated that most vaquitas were still present and were using the NW sector of the ZTA.

Pronatura, working with the grassroots organization Pesca ABC, developed "vaquita friendly" smaller trawl nets, cast nets, and hook-and-line methods. They trained 33 fishers who sold 18 tons of seafood at up to twice the market price of illegally caught fish. Another local group, MAREM, comprises 20 women in two communities who monitor catches that come ashore and lead campaigns to "rescue the fisheries of the Upper Gulf and save the vaquita". The most exciting news was that vaquitas were detected in higher numbers where the anti-net blocks were deployed.

<i>Size of area:</i>	225 km ²
<i>Field partners:</i>	Pronatura Noroeste; & Cetacean Action Treasury
<i>Spending in 2022:</i>	\$70,965



New

Peru: Launch of the ICFC Field Training Fellowship

Conservation need

Conservation programs in the biodiverse tropics require field personnel with particular skill sets, experience, and fortitude—characteristics that are not readily acquired in a university setting. Large conservation organizations and academic institutions are increasingly staffed by professionals who are well grounded in theory but lack experience in rigorous field conditions.

What we are doing

Our new fellowship program, based mainly at the Manu Biological Station in Peru, empowers graduate-level conservation research in Latin America, providing an immediate and long-term benefit to conservation regionally. Field biology experts are training cohorts of students with a diverse set of skills and techniques inherent to tropical research.

2022 Highlights

The first two cohorts of Fellows (10 women, 6 men) were from Peru, Colombia, Mexico, the U.S., Italy and Spain.

Fellows were trained in wilderness first aid, lab work, data management, plant and animal taxonomy, ecophysiology and thermal tolerance, science communication skills, statistical analysis, and acoustic monitoring. Field training was physically and mentally demanding, with steep terrain, badly maintained trails and river crossings. Fellows learned how to safely ascend into the canopy and set traps.

As a group, the Fellows formed a network of conservationists that have foundational field-skills that are needed to foster future biodiversity conservation.

Field partner: Alejandro Lopera Toro and Adrian Forsyth

Spending in 2022: \$61,646

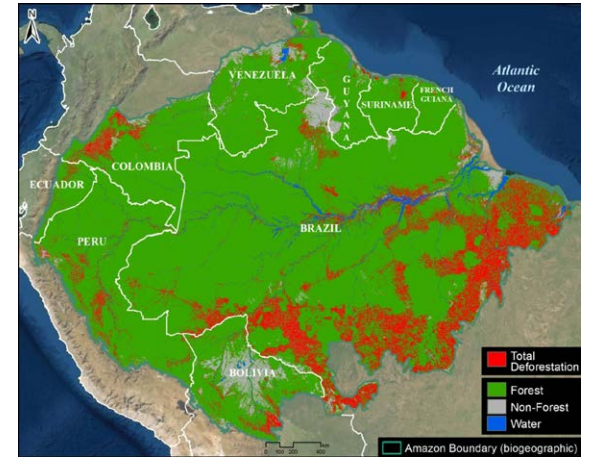


Peru: Ground-breaking MAAP reporting on deforestation in the Andes-Amazon region

The Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP) supported by ICFC develops and publishes timely, high-impact technical reports on the most urgent deforestation cases for government officials, civil society and the public.

In 2022:

- The deforestation rate in Brazil and Bolivia was the highest since 2017.
- MAAP documented 983 major fires across the Amazon in 2022, impacting nearly 1 million hectares. Once again, MAAP found that most fires occurred in recently deforested areas.
- MAAP published a comprehensive review of illegal gold mining deforestation hotspots in the southern Peruvian Amazon, including Indigenous peoples' territories.
- MAAP supplied information that was very helpful in two of our project areas.
- MAAP showed that in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, two-thirds of deforestation events were illegal. Collaboration to address deforestation is developing between MAAP, the Mato Grosso environmental agency and Instituto Centro de Vida.
- MAAP revealed large-scale deforestation (4,800 hectares) from new Mennonite colonies in Peru.



Analysis on the Amazon tipping point garnered much attention and led to a webinar co-hosted with the World Bank and a panel of experts and garnered high audience engagement.

Conservación Amazónica—ACCA is very engaged in using MAAP reports to provide technical and legal support and confidential alerts to help the government of Peru respond to deforestation threats.

MAAP is also working with Conservación Amazónica—ACEAA in Bolivia and EcoCiencia in Ecuador to advance understanding of the major drivers of deforestation in those two countries. In Colombia MAAP collaborated with the National Park services.

Field partners: Amazon Conservation and Conservación Amazónica - ACCA

Since 2013: \$1,332,826

Right: The MAAP team partnered with The Washington Post to create an interactive article showcasing illegal gold mining in the Yacapana National Park in Venezuela, a sacred territory for Indigenous peoples. Map: Washington Post

Left, top: Participants in the ICFC Field Training Fellowship set traps to intercept flying insects.

Left, bottom: The researchers were astounded to see in the first week of camera trap images an abundance of top-level predators (jaguars, pumas, ocelots), and lesser-known rare mammals including short-eared dog, bush dog, and this rarely photographed grison. Giant armadillos, tapirs, giant anteaters, and peccary were also recorded.



Conservation, Indigenous people and technology

Major progress in Wounaan territorial defense in Panama

The largest forests in Panama are on the eastern side of the Panama Canal and extend through the Darién Gap to the border with Colombia. This region is famous for its wildness and its iconic species—harpy eagles, jaguars, and monkeys. The region is highly important to both biodiversity and Indigenous inhabitants. ICFC works with Native Future and Wounaan communities to protect their traditional lands (25,000 hectares) from the Majé Mountains to Panama Bay. A successful strategy led by the Wounaan has been a game-changer: it combines live satellite monitoring, border monitors, drone operators, and legal representation. This has led to documented illegal incursions and ecological damage being brought before the Panamanian government and then into the courts. As of February 2023, 21 individuals have been “denounced”, three have been convicted and await sentencing, and two government officials have been removed from their positions for suspected malfeasance. These outcomes, the result of two years’ work, are unprecedented in the history of Wounaan territorial defense. The work is far from done but the tide has turned.

Size of area: 22,326 hectares
Field partner: Native Future
Since 2021: \$77,351



A stand-out year for the Los Amigos Conservation Concession in Peru

In the early years after its creation in 2000, LACC’s old growth rainforest was subject to increasing illegal incursions for logging of high-value timber. Illegal goldmining became another threat.

Promotores de Conservación, supported by ICFC since 2011, now carry out frequent ground patrols with state-of-the-art technology, with the result that as of 2022, illegal activities have been almost completely eliminated from within the reserve. We are thrilled with this result.

In 2022, *Promotores* conducted 196 patrols by river and over land, supported by drone overflights. High-resolution satellite images were analyzed by GIS specialists at ACCA.

Located in the department of Madre de Dios, LACC protects more than 146,000 hectares. Importantly, it also prevents access to the remote Madre de Dios Territorial Reserve, which is home to Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation (PIACI, its acronym in Spanish), safeguarding this vulnerable group from invaders.

Size of area: 146,000 hectares (1,460 km²)
Field partner: Conservación Amazónica – ACCA
Since 2011: \$825,189
 Trust fund capital at year-end: \$1,160,619



Top: Setting up for a drone flight to monitor the concession for incursions.

Left: A rather large beetle. Photos: ACCA

Brazil: Kayapo prevail through a difficult year

The more than nine million hectares of Kayapo territory held strong for a fourth year under a hostile government. The Kayapo protected their land from logging, mining, soy plantations, and ranching despite an ongoing government campaign to destabilize Indigenous organizations.

ICFC’s three Kayapo NGO partners, Instituto Kabu, Instituto Raoni, and the Protected Forest Association, are among the highest functioning Indigenous NGOs in Brazil and protect the country’s largest continuous tract of Indigenous territory. They were targeted by the Bolsonaro government, which directed its appointees at the Federal Indian Agency (FUNAI) to undermine them, including through the dissemination of false information to the Kayapo. FUNAI also set up administrative hurdles to prevent non-indigenous Kayapo NGO personnel from entering Kayapo territory to perform their jobs. This decreased the presence of the Kayapo NGOs, risking the intensification of efforts by illegal actors to entice the Kayapo down paths of predatory resource exploitation.

In 2022, most operations normalized, including trade in Brazil nut and cumaru nut, the A’Ukre international field course, sportfishing on the Xingu and Iriri rivers, territorial management planning (PGATI), and REDD carbon project planning. Guard posts continue to play the key role in territorial defense by the Kayapo. Three new guard posts were added to western border defense bringing the total to 15. Guard posts signal to the voracious frontier society that the Kayapo of that region are organized for territorial defense—a highly effective deterrence.

Ultimately, the competence and dedication of the three Kayapo NGOs withstood the government’s anti-indigenous, anti-environment campaign in Kayapo territory.

With the new Lula administration, we are optimistic. Challenges remain but a dark period is now over.

Size of area: 90,000 km² – bigger than 91 countries
Field partners: Associação Floresta Protegida, Instituto Kabu, and Instituto Raoni
Since 2007: \$14,344,902



Photo: John Meisner



New

Fostering the next generation of Ecuadorian conservationists

Conservation need

The Chocó Biogeographical Region spans 100,000 km² of humid forest in western Colombia and northwestern Ecuador and supports exceptional levels of biodiversity. In Ecuador, more than 90% of the original Chocó forests have been cleared and much of what remains is not well protected. The 120,000-ha Mache-Chindul Ecological Reserve (MCR) and surrounding areas are among the last bastions of remaining wilderness. However, landowners present at MCR's creation are still living in the reserve and continue to hunt and cut down forest for sustenance, in a region of poverty.

What we're doing

The Fundación para la Conservación de los Andes Tropicales (FCAT) began in 2002 as a group of concerned Ecuadorians wanting to address the rapid destruction of their environment. FCAT's grassroots efforts aim to provide conservation-related socioeconomic benefits to local communities. With its biological station in the MCR, the ~650-ha FCAT reserve serves as the perfect vehicle for community engagement, education, and research.

2022 Highlights

In 2021, ICFC helped FCAT purchase land to fill in a gap in the reserve. In 2022, FCAT launched the "Next Generation Club", with generous support

from ICFC donors Doug and Sheila Rogers. The goal is to build a young workforce that will forge a more sustainable future. In its first year, the club engaged 15 keen students who received theory and hands-on training in tropical ecology, camera traps, GIS, and more.

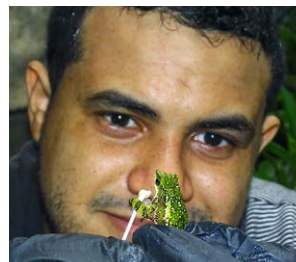
Size of area:	1,200 km ²
Field partner:	Fundación para la Conservación de los Andes Tropicales (FCAT)
Spending in 2022:	\$11,812

Colombia: Harlequin toads

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta—the highest coastal mountain in the world—is home to the world's most threatened group of amphibians: Harlequin toads (*Atelopus*). In 2022, Fundación Atelopus did eight surveys to evaluate their population dynamics and epidemiological status (*Bd fungus*). We are increasing connectivity between forest patches through reforestation, negotiating restrictive land use agreements with farm owners to reduce impacts of grazing and deforestation in critical areas adjacent to breeding streams, and promoting community awareness.

Right: José Barros examines a Harlequin toad. Photo: Fundación Atelopus

Top: FCAT the 'Next Generation Club' with ICFC's Carlos R. Garcia and ICFC supporter Doug Rogers (on left) Photo: FCAT



Community-level action is yielding results in Argentina and Nicaragua

ICFC's two community projects in the Atlantic Forest in Argentina continue to demonstrate the power of local action.

In our **Pino Paraná project**, communities now have a better understanding of the importance of trees for threatened cavity-nesting birds and for their other ecosystem benefits. An expanded team visited 15 primary schools, distributed 40 herbarium activities for teachers, guided two school visits to provincial parks, and distributed native tree seedlings to 35 rural families.

Restoration of the 1,500-hectare **Rincón de Santa María reserve** continued, transplanting more than a thousand native trees saplings from the nursery to the reserve and delivering hundreds more to local communities.

It was a good year for the **Salinas Grandes sea turtle project in Nicaragua**. Of the 11,918 turtle eggs placed in turtle hatcheries, 93% produced hatchlings that were successfully released. And 25 children benefited from an Environmental Leadership course.

Right top: Environmental education with youth from the town of Salinas Grandes Photo: Gabriela Paredes

Below: Theatre has proved effective in teaching about nature and its benefits. Photo: Kristina Cockle



Private reserves are worthy of ongoing support

Small and medium-sized private reserves have an important role in conserving sites of very high conservation value within an ecological matrix that can allow for their long-term sustainability.

ICFC has participated in several land acquisitions for private reserves. And we often also support their ongoing management and protection by our in-country field partners. This can be a modest and yet very important expenditure.



Barba Azul Reserve in Bolivia's Beni Savanna is vital for the Critically Endangered blue-throated macaw. Photo: Asociación Armonía

ICFC has long supported reserve management of **Barba Azul Reserve in Bolivia** (since 2010) and helped to purchase land to enlarge it. We are delighted that our dependable and ongoing support seems to help generate a new benchmark of success every year! And 2022 was no exception:

The highest number of blue-throated macaws (CR) ever counted—228 individuals—were seen at a single roosting site. Buff-breasted sandpipers, which nest in Canada's High Arctic, were also seen at a record number (3,871) during their fall migration. Other notable sightings included the first record of a bush dog (*Speothos venaticus*) and increased sightings of jaguar. Happily, tourism has rebounded post-pandemic, with 69 paying ecotourists in 2022.

In 2012, ICFC helped FUNDAECO purchase land to create **Laguna Grande reserve on Guatemala's** northern Caribbean coast (part of the larger **Rio Sarstún** protected area). Since then, the reserve more than doubled to 2,049 hectares, which includes Caribbean rainforest, karst cliffs, freshwater springs, brackish coastal lagoons, mangroves, and nearshore marine habitats.

In 2022, ICFC supported management of the reserve. Thanks to advocacy by Rio Sarstún's Coordinator and local communities with the Ministry of Finance, the neighbouring community of Blue Creek received ~\$84,000 in incentives for the protection of 230 forested hectares, benefiting 46 families. Other year highlights were the start of manatee monitoring in Laguna Grande and the implementation of an eco-tourism plan with UnCruise Adventures generating local income.

Ecotourism at Laguna Grande and other reserves brings revenue that helps with conservation efforts. Photo: FUNDAECO

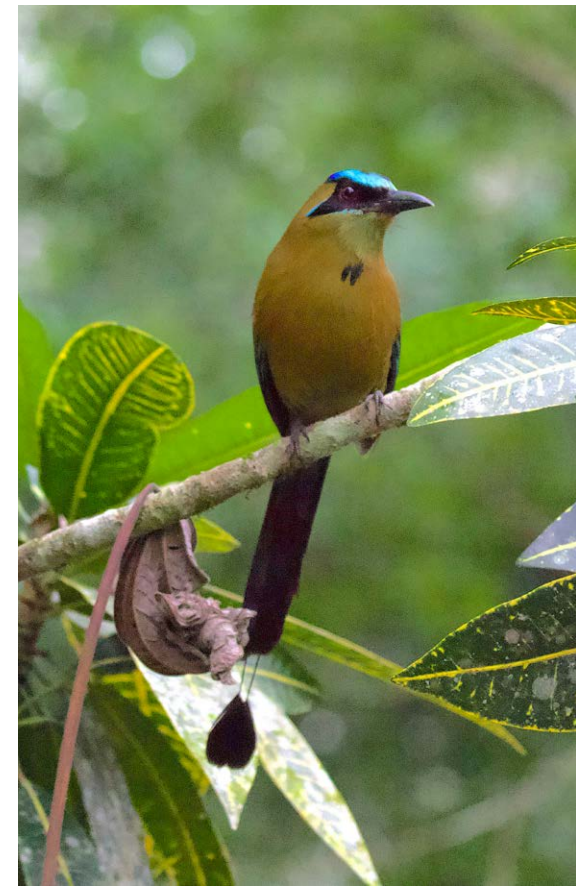


A group from ICFC including Scott Hecker and ICFC supporters visited Laguna Grande reserve in March 2023 to have a first-hand look at work that showcased breeding areas for manatees, jungle trails, visitor centers, and impressive community engagement with forest guardians, outreach programs and health clinics for small Mayan communities.

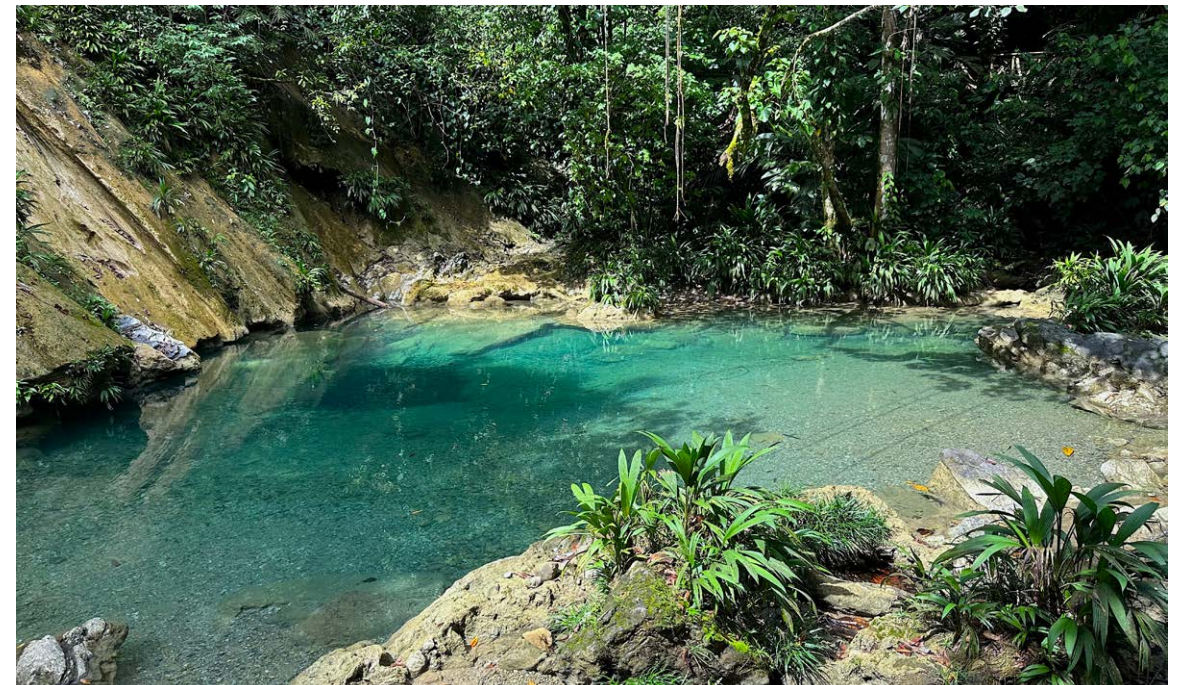
ICFC supported reserve guards at **Cerro Chucantí reserve in Panama** in 2022, again, after helping with land acquisition for this cloud forest reserve in earlier years. Chucantí's many range-restricted species are under threat from slash-and-burn activities, logging, and cattle ranching. To date, 60 new species of flora and fauna have been discovered at Cerro Chucantí.



Above: *Pristimantis aff. cruentus* (inedit) at Cerro Chucantí. Photo: Miguel Siu



Above: Lesson's motmot frequents Laguna Grande. Below: Freshwater spring at Las Escobas, Guatemala. Photos: Scott Hecker



Conservation across elevational gradients

Conserving natural ecosystems across elevational gradients is important in an era of climate change, as Adrian Forsyth explains in his essay (p. 22). And it is a prominent feature of some of our work.

Costa Rica's Area de Conservación Guanacaste (ACG) grew from a small national park containing dry lowland forest to 163,000 hectares stretching from a marine sector through dry forest and rainforest to cloud forest. The Guanacaste Dry Forest Conservation Fund, ICFC's partner since 2008, has played a key role in bringing about this expansion and in fostering local management and science at ACG. ICFC supports parataxonomists, all hired from the local community, who are responsible for the ongoing bio-inventory of Lepidoptera, Coleoptera, their parasites, and marine species. The science has shown more seasonal movement than expected of organisms across elevational gradients and also considerable impact from ongoing climate change.

Another ACG innovation dating from 1986 is the *Programa de Educación Biológica*, a pioneering field-based biology program for thousands of children living in rural communities surrounding ACG. In 2022, students were welcomed back from virtual learning (during the pandemic).



Installation of a bioacoustic monitor in the rain forest side of ACG. Photo: Isabel Vargas

The **Spectacled Bear Project in Peru** is improving our understanding of high-elevation ecosystems and climate effects, and the role the bear can play in helping other species adapt. The bears move seasonally from cloud forest to higher elevation grasslands, dispersing seeds as they go. To better understand their seasonal movements, in 2022, 96 camera traps were installed—from lowland rainforest to the Andean Puna grassland (550-3950



Andean bear caught on camera trap. Photo: Conservación Amazónica

metres above sea level). Of the 12,650 wildlife images, 17 were of new individual spectacled bears, including three mothers with cubs. To date, 37 bears have been identified in the project area.

Local communities are assisting the re-wilding efforts of the bears by planting native species at the upper limits of the cloud forests. The project propagated 24 native tree species, yielding 125,644 seedlings, although some plantings were deferred to the first half of 2023 due to the late onset of the rainy season.

The new Andean Bear Interpretation Center was inaugurated early in 2022 near the Wayqecha Biological Station. The center was visited by 350 people who learned about key species and cloud forest ecosystems through illustrations, sculptures, photographs, and videos.

Size of area: 9,119 hectares
Field partner: Conservación Amazónica (ACCA)
Since 2021: \$27,720

ICFC has supported the expansion of **Canandé reserve in the Ecuadorian Chocó** across a wide elevational gradient. Over five years, Fundación Jocotoco has more than quadrupled the reserve's size, to 11,671 ha. The discovery in the reserve of eight species new to science (including two species each of mammals and trees) in 2022 testifies to the importance of protecting this region. During the year, Jocotoco achieved the significant milestone of acquiring properties adjacent to the Cotacachi-Cayapas National Park, thereby securing its buffer zone.

Osa Conservation's Ridge to Reef program mobilizes citizen scientists, community members, ecotourism operators, park administrators and NGOs to conserve and restore the biological corridor connecting the highland forests of the Talamanca Mountains to the lowland rainforests on the Osa Peninsula.

In collaboration with a network of partners and local stakeholders, in 2022, OC planted 40,000 mangrove trees to restore degraded mangrove forest in the Térraba Sierpe wetlands—the largest protected wetland in Central America. To establish connectivity over the peninsula's landscapes, it also planted 81,062 rare, native, and threatened trees species. And 30 volunteer rangers were trained and patrolled 69,731 km, generating 27,265 biodiversity observations. This data was integrated in real time into the first Earth Ranger project in Latin America.

Elsewhere, the project protected and released 28,272 sea turtle hatchlings—for an all-time tally of 208,700 hatchlings—and collected 1,135 lbs. of garbage from sea turtle nesting beaches with the help of 215 volunteers.

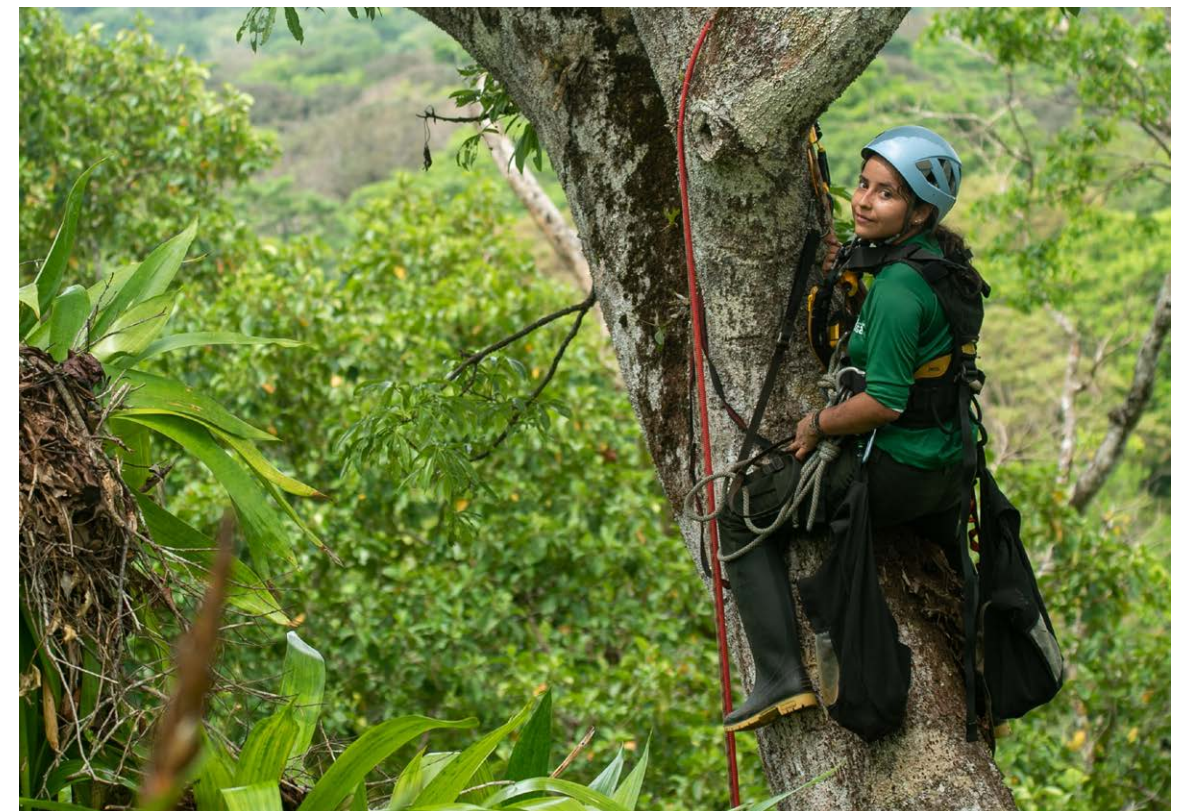
To build capacity at the local level and to foster civic responsibility, OC employed 114 local community members in restoration, research, and conservation initiatives, and hosted over 400 community members at its biannual Rainforest Heroes Celebration.

After its successful inaugural year, **OC's Ridge to Reef Nature Club** continued to provide rural youth with an immersive nature-based learning experience, fostering the next generation of conservation stewards. The Club grew to nine chapters and engaged 2,521 youth across the Osa region. It held 80 field workshops variously focused on: monitoring tools, climate change, marine wildlife, sea turtle nursery visits and hatchling releases. *A big thank you* to the Paul W. O'Leary Foundation for making this possible.

Overall, OC accomplished a lot in 2022!

Size of area: 1,093 km²
Field partner: Osa Conservation (OC)
Since 2017: \$923,273

Biologist Arianna Basto at the Osa Peninsula. Photo: Osa Conservation



We need to be strategic to reduce impacts of climate change on nature

by Adrian Forsyth, PhD

Climate change will be ongoing for the foreseeable future and, indeed, shows signs of acceleration. Our carbon dioxide emissions will increase by 1.5 billion tonnes in 2023, reaching a new record high of 33.1 billion tonnes annually. This climate pressure will most rapidly impact the concentrations of biodiversity that occur in the wet tropics. Tropical ectothermic (cold-blooded) animals and plants are particularly vulnerable to climate change because they have evolved narrow temperature tolerances. Changes in their ambient temperatures cause reduced fertility, decreased activity, and changes in behavior. Some species may be forced to move to higher elevations or latitudes in search of suitable habitat, while others may become more vulnerable to disease, predation, and competition from invasive species. Similarly, changes in temperature and precipitation patterns also affect the growth and reproduction of tropical plants, with cascading effects on ecosystems.

Many species are shifting their geographic distributions towards cooler areas or higher elevations, where temperatures are more suitable for their survival. Numerous studies have documented range shifts in a wide range of species, including birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and plants. What this means for conservation is that ecological connectivity becomes ever more important because it may allow plants and animals to move toward their natural climate optima. Protected areas are necessary, of course, but not sufficient. Protected areas normally have fixed boundaries and the species within them may need to go beyond borders, often into landscapes dominated by human land use. Conservationists will need to manage conservation landscapes and connectivity not only in areas with formal protection but also in the more challenging degraded agricultural landscapes in which they are usually embedded.

The biodiversity that occurs in large landscapes with complex terrain and elevational change is

likely to be most resilient to climate change. One priority is to not only identify and protect these resilient landscapes, but also to assess how fast the re-distribution of the flora and fauna must occur and what sorts of interventions, such as assisted migration or reforestation, may be needed.

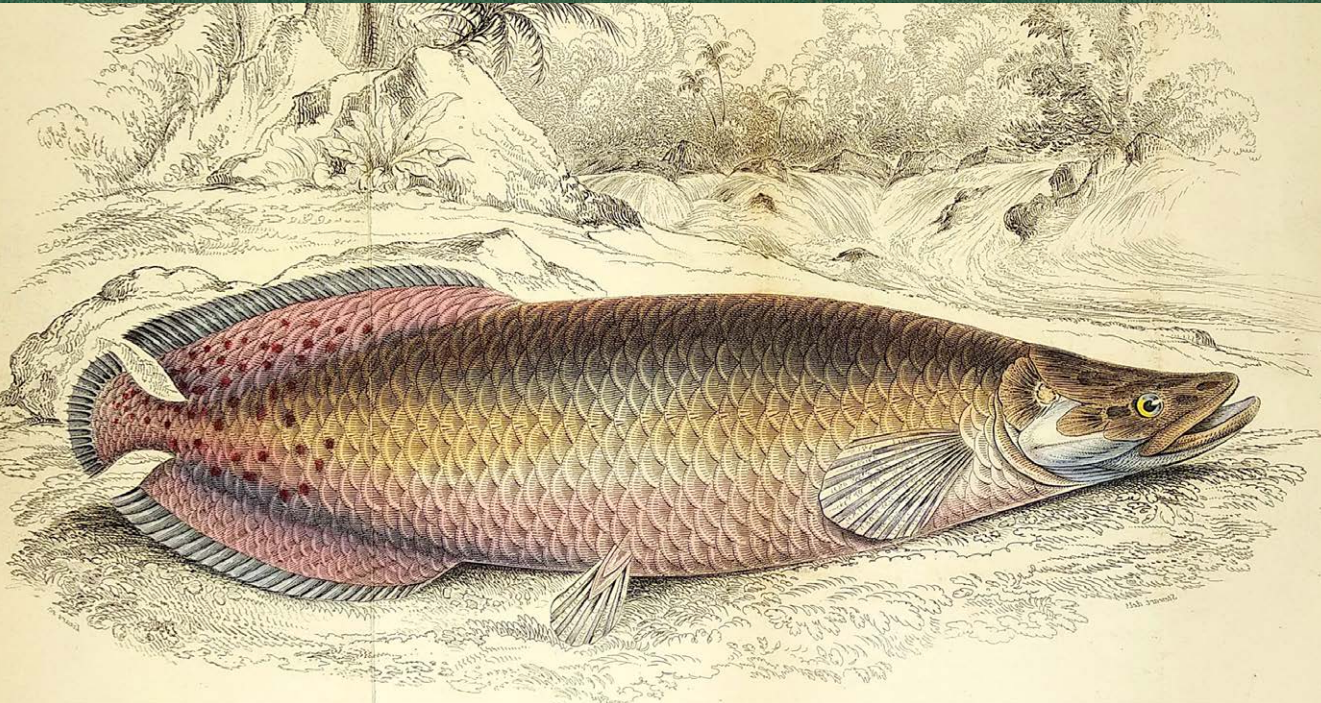
Near Manu National Park on the eastern slope of the Andes in Peru, where I and others have been tracking upslope migration of insects and trees over the past two decades, vertical movements have ranged from 10 to 40 m annually. For endemic cloud forest species that are at the limit of the tree line this means extending forest upward by that amount every year, a formidable task where cows, anthropogenic fire and agricultural pressure form a barrier to forest establishment.

If there is any low-hanging fruit to be harvested in this challenging situation it is to be found in tropical mountainscapes where much habitat remains intact and connected over climate gradients. A large amount of conservation funding is still expended on trying to maintain single species or tiny habitat patches. This is always laudable. But it may not be the best use of limited conservation resources. If we look ahead over the next centuries during which the full impact of climate change will be realized, it becomes clear that we now need to maintain these strongholds of biodiversity resilience. Without them we will have little hope of restoring terrestrial biodiversity.

The first step toward making mountainscapes resilient is to understand the map of connectivity over a climate gradient. If there are gaps where connecting habitat is missing, there should be a plan and program for restoration. It may take only a riparian corridor for enhanced animal movement, but it may also require work with communities that occupy an agricultural degraded landscape. Priority should be placed on land use practices that not only increase connectivity but also mitigate climate change by enhancing carbon-sequestering vegetation.



Adrian Forsyth is an Advisor to ICFC and has brought ICFC some of our best projects (see pages 12, 13, 14, 20 and 21). Adrian (a Canadian based in the U.S.) is a tropical ecologist, author, and life-long conservationist. He founded the Andes Amazon Fund and co-founded the Andes-Amazon Initiative at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Amazon Conservation Association, and Osa Conservation.



Sneak peek at some new 2023 work: Conserving the pirarucú (*Arapaima gigas*) of the Rio Juruá in the Amazon

ICFC has begun a project with Instituto Juruá in the Brazilian state of Amazonas that builds on past work with local associations to implement community-based management of pirarucu, trains youth for conservation roles, and protects fluvial beaches and lakes important for the reproduction of threatened or overexploited species, including various species of river turtle and waterbirds.

Above: Oxbows along the Rio Juruá

Left: The pirarucú is the largest freshwater scaled fish in the world. Engraving by Robert H. Schomburgk from *The Fishes of Guiana* (1841)

Africa



New

Kenya: Unique cave mining elephants of Mount Elgon

Conservation need

The elephants of Mount Elgon in Kenya possess an extraordinary behavior that sets them apart from all other elephants worldwide—they venture deep into caves in their quest for salt. However, these remarkable creatures face significant challenges that jeopardize their survival. Habitat loss and the persistent threat of poaching pose grave risks to their population. A government agriculture program (PELIS) allows for agriculture development within national forest reserves, to address local food insecurity. This can present a barrier to wildlife migratory routes, and lead to human-elephant conflict as elephants stop to raid crops when passing through the national forest.

What we are doing

We are working to ensure the long-term survival of the Mount Elgon elephants, mainly by reducing human-elephant conflict. Scouts patrol the forest reserve and gather information on elephants that is shared with rangers at the Kenya Wildlife Service. The geo-spatial data is used to inform future farmland establishment to avoid elephant migratory routes. ICFC provided funding for the first half of 2022 (and is now committed for 2023).

2022 Highlights

For the year as a whole, scouts carried out 1,642 patrols, covering a distance of 23,523 km. They recorded 40 elephant sightings. There were 29 incidents of crop destruction, most within the PELIS areas, indicating that human activities have encroached on the elephants' habitat. Buffalo caused one incident and elephants the remainder.

Four community sensitization meetings were held along with an outreach program at a secondary school that included the Kenya Wildlife Service warden.

To mitigate human-elephant conflict, our field partner is implementing beehive fences in one of the areas most affected, with support from the Elephant Crisis Fund and other donors.

Size of area:	73700 hectares
Field partner:	The East African Wild Life Society
Spending in 2022:	\$15,453

Opposite: The walls of Mount Elgon's caves are made of volcanic ash, a soft rock that elephants excavate using their tusks to get dietary salt. The cave walls have distinctive furrows etched by generations of elephants.

Below: Community sensitization meeting in Kaptuindo. Photos: The East African Wild Life Society



Democratic Republic of Congo: A stand-out year for community forest concessions!

Forestry Concessions for Local Communities (CFCLs) empower communities to control and sustainably manage their forests. ICFC has been joined by others—Rainforest Trust, Erol Foundation and Good Energies Foundation—in helping Strong Roots to establish CFCLs across a 3,000 km² ecological corridor connecting Itombwe Natural Reserve to Kahuzi-Biega National Park—an area important for endangered Grauer’s gorillas and other wildlife.

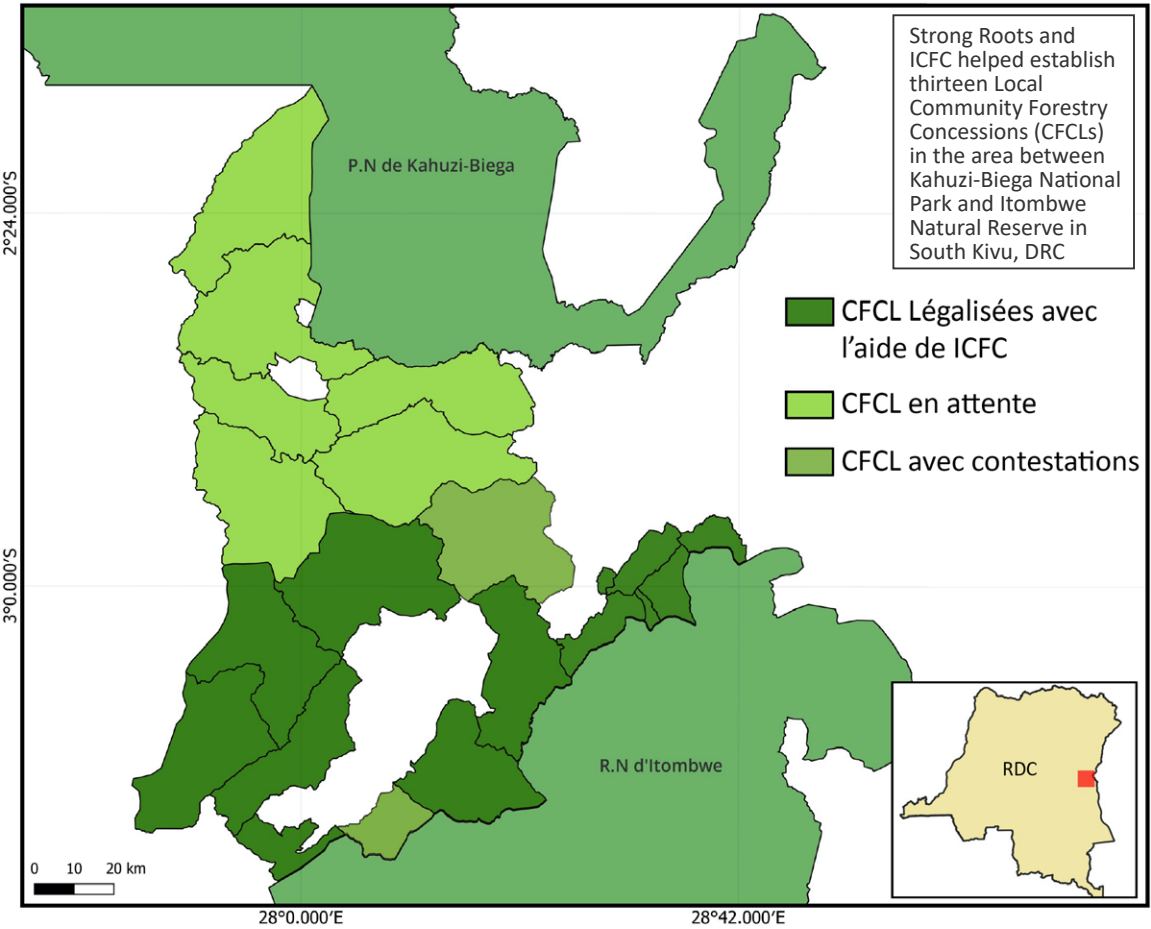
In September 2022, the titles for 13 CFCLs were officially handed over to local communities and Indigenous peoples in Mwenga by the government of South Kivu. These are the first titled community forests in South Kivu province—a triumph for the communities and Strong Roots. Extending across 258,078 hectares, they are the first CFCLs to become part of the Itombwe-Kahuzi-Biega corridor.



Grauer’s Gorilla. Photo: Strong Roots

Biological and health surveys were completed, as was a booklet that documents customary plants and animals that are protected under Lega customary law. The booklet was distributed at the CFCL signing ceremony and will help keep this important knowledge alive.

Size of area: 112,300 hectares (ICFC portion)
Field partner: Strong Roots
Since 2020: \$768,592



Youth gaining new skills. Photo: Mukutan Conservancy

Kenya: Challenges and progress at Mukutan Conservancy

With rising tensions in the leadup to the general elections that took place in August, Mukutan Conservancy (formerly Laikipia Conservancy) put its full effort into engaging with local communities to support them through this difficult period.

Happily, the repeated requests for additional National Police Reservists were finally answered in June after a visit from the head of the Kenyan Army. Forty new police reservists were trained, increasing the security team to 55 and providing much more robust security and anti-poaching efforts.

Four years of failed rains in the north of Kenya has challenged pastoralist communities and put pressure on areas where grass and water are well managed and available. To pre-empt an uncontrolled inflow of livestock, the Conservancy formed a grazing committee for each of the six neighboring areas. Each area appointed a small group of elders and youth representatives. These groups selected 1,000 cattle that were tagged and allowed to enter the Conservancy for day grazing for a minimal fee. Herders were assigned to look after the cattle, rules were put in place, and the system worked well.

In early 2023, the rains returned and the landscape has started to turn green again.

Damaged fence around the Conservancy’s boundaries led to greater human-wildlife conflict. We are now seeking funding for the arduous process of rebuilding fences. In the meantime, we have provided the most affected communities with high powered LED flashlights to help scare away the invading animals in the night. A strong network of informers and line guards receive airtime and phones to report incidents of human-wildlife conflict to the security office.

Youth program

The Mukutan Wilderness Education Centre worked with students from neighbouring Pokot community to teach leadership, first aid, peacebuilding workshops, environmental science, and guiding skills, traversing the landscapes of Mukutan and Mount Kenya, facilitated by those who know it best. Scholarships were distributed to high-performing students (74 students from 16 different schools) from low-resource families in nearby villages, specifically those students who have been heavily affected by drought, insecurity, or poverty. *Thank you to the Paul W. O’Leary Foundation for supporting this youth program!*

Size of area: 36,500 hectares
Field partner: Gallmann Memorial Foundation
Since 2017: \$1,338,899



Lake Malawi is home to more fish species than any other freshwater lake in the world. Photo: Ripple Africa

Malawi: Communities excel at managing fisheries

Community-run Beach Village Committees (BVCs) are turning unsustainable fisheries into productive ones. ICFC partner Ripple Africa is now working with 327 BVCs in the districts of Nkhata Bay, Nkhatakota, Salima, and Dedza. BVCs keep busy controlling illegal fishing gear, implementing seasonal fishery closures, protecting fish breeding sanctuaries, developing fisheries bylaws, and holding awareness raising meetings on topics like the problem with using monofilament nets.

Progress continued in 2022. There was a big drop the amount of illegal fishing gear being used after the signing of the Salima fisheries bylaws in May. Progress was made on fisheries bylaws in Dedza District, while Nkhatakota and Nkhata Bay drafted Fisheries Management Plans, which are required for use with their bylaws. Transportation needs for bylaw sensitization and enforcement were met with the purchase of 15 motorbikes, one vehicle and a boat for District Fisheries.

"I catch catfish using longlines with fishing hooks but I nearly stopped fishing because other fishermen were using illegal dragnets made from hundreds of mosquito nets. When they pulled the nets in, they would take my longlines with them making it impossible to fish. With the project, these illegal fishing nets are not allowed to be used so I am able to fish without any interruption." -- Misi (right, seated) is a fisherman in Salima

"Before the project came the Beach Village Committee was for fishers only so it was like assigning a pack of thieves to guard what other thieves want to steal."

-- Funny Nyirenda, secretary of Uthuli BVC



Size of area: 22,000 hectares
Field partner: Ripple Africa
Since 2019: \$663,217



Rüppell's vulture. Photo: Simon Thomsett

Updates on three projects in Kenya's Rift Valley region

The Great Rift Valley runs through Kenya north to south and features escarpments, volcanoes, and lakes, along with the region's distinctive wildlife.

ICFC is working with the Kenya Bird of Prey Trust to establish the Maasai-led **Kwenia Culture Sanctuary** (3,671 ha) for Rüppell's Vulture (CR) and other raptors. We now have 15 Raptor Guardians, who do patrols, monitor martial eagles, leopards and cheetahs, control invasive plants, promote conservation awareness in the community and help prevent killing of wildlife in response to livestock losses. A two-day "Christmas with the Vultures" event in December combined a football tournament with presentations about raptors and their ecological and social-economic benefits and was a great success.

At **Kijabe Forest in Kenya**, the number of rangers increased from 12 to 23 (four of whom are now women) to meet the increased need. Rangers patrolled a total of 15,893 km during the year. They received biodiversity identification training, which included a bird identification session organized by another ICFC field partner, the Kenya Bird of Prey Trust, mentioned above.

Harrison's long-eared giant mastiff bats inhabit a few lava tube caves on the slopes of an old volcano at Mt. Suswa. There we partner with Angaza Vijiji, a community-based group, to better protect the maternity colonies of this very rare bat. The project entails constructing fences to limit disturbances and employing bat guardians to work with local herdsman and community members to manage visitors to the caves and protect the roosts. In 2022, we completed a simple visitor shelter pavilion, trained guardians, conducted community workshops, and printed materials about these threatened bats.



A fully self-contained, secure, solar powered field office is now established and functioning as the base of operations for the Kwenia Culture Sanctuary. Photo: Kenya Bird of Prey Trust



Desert Elephants. Photo: Idrissa Ganame

Two projects in Africa work to reduce poaching and more

International sanctions against Mali affected the **Mali Elephant Project** in the first half of the year, yet much progress was made. Twelve new conventions (local laws) at the commune level were signed to reinforce legislation for the strictly protected core areas of the Gourma Biosphere Reserve. Assemblies were held among communities in and around the core areas to discuss natural resource degradation and develop resource plans. Natural resource management initiatives in 21 communities worked to prevent over-exploitation and encourage vegetation and wildlife recovery, thereby improving local livelihoods. As well: 432 people were trained in human-elephant conflict avoidance and wildfire management and 3,917 km of firebreaks were created, benefitting close to 42,000 people. 154 elephant sightings were reported by community informants (elephants have changed their historical routes due to poaching, and monitoring helps avoid conflict). Twenty Malian anti-poaching trainers have been trained by Chengeta Wildlife. This means that Mali now has the capacity to carry forward Chengeta's excellent antipoaching work.

Despite COVID-related disruptions in 2022, ICFC's partner **Stop Rhino Poaching** was able to carry out its specialized training courses for ranger corps and managers at South African rhino reserves. The emphasis on training is about disseminating the best conservation knowledge, skills, and practices—with force multiplying technologies—to help safeguard remaining rhino populations at selected high-risk protected areas. The approach also promotes more effective working relationships to curtail rhino poaching among staff at private game reserves and with local law enforcement authorities. We thank the Elliott Family Foundation for supporting this work.

Mali Elephants

Size of area: 33,534 km²

Field partner: Project Director Susan Canney and Field Manager Nomba Ganame

Since 2010: \$3,923,359

South Africa Rhino

Size of area: 400,000 hectares

Field partner: Stop Rhino Poaching

Since 2019: \$442,324



White rhinos. Photo: SRP

Madagascar: Working in a challenging but important place

Rabondro Reserve and other forests in northeast Madagascar continue to experience pressure from increasing population, poverty, and slash-and-burn agricultural practices. Without Fandroakando's patrol and surveillance activities, there would be illegal agricultural settlements inside the reserve with large portions of the forest cleared to grow rice and other crops. Once per month, the VOI (Local Village Associations) patrol the reserve with Fandroakando's rangers to locate areas where degradation has occurred and to find out who is responsible. Once identified, the VOI then proceeds to speak with the offenders and apply the *dina* (traditional community regulations) if required.

2022 Highlights and Lowlights:

Through its Aye-Aye Environment Club, which has 48 youth members, Fandroakando launched a plastics collection initiative in Maroantsetra—the government does not provide any garbage service—and included this topic in its weekly radio broadcast.

The organization's activities are also having a positive impact for the indigenous communities in region, as demonstrated by the increase in VOI membership in 2022.

However, Fandroakando experienced a difficult year in 2022 due to financial fraud. The culprits were fired, the organization has established highly rigorous financial controls, and hired a new Executive Director to provide proper oversight of their operations.

Size of area: 3,000 hectares

Field partner: Fandroakando NGO

Since 2021: \$276,101

Comment from ICFC's Executive Director:

ICFC did not take this issue lightly. We considered whether to terminate our involvement with this fledgling Malagasy NGO completely, or whether to assist them to rebuild an organization with more robust checks and balances. In the end, we decided to pause funding until their new systems and Executive Director were in place, and then agree to partial year funding in 2023 until we see how things are going. Pulling out altogether would have meant abandoning the gains that were made with our past funding. We are hopeful that Fandroakando has turned a corner and will protect this beautiful reserve into the future.



Madagascar is best known for lemurs. White-fronted Brown Lemur (*above*). Photo: Chien C. Lee
(*Below*) Photo: FANDROAKANDO



Shorebird Initiative



Magellanic plovers by Scott Hecker

Patagonia and its threatened species

The hooded grebe (CR) and the Magellanic plover (NT) share similar habitats—barren, remote areas in the Patagonian Steppe associated with freshwater lagoons. Both species are being aided by our field partners Aves Argentinas and Ambiente Sur.

New

Magellanic Plovers in Chile and Argentina

Conservation need

At “the end of the earth” in the southern cone of South America on the windswept, treeless, dry, cold Patagonian Steppe lives a shy ash-colored shorebird that looks like a dove. Named after the explorer, the Magellanic plover was thought to number in the thousands (7,000) due to the vastness of its range, but after the first comprehensive survey of its breeding and wintering area was completed in 2022, biologists were shocked to find only a few hundred (300) at 181 known breeding sites in Chile and Argentina.

Below: Magellanic plover at nest with anti-trampling device. Photo: Ambiente Sur

Right: Breeding (pink) and wintering (blue) range of Magellanic plover. © Lynx Edicions/ BirdLife International

What we are doing

As with many plovers this is a species with single nests distributed over large areas. The project will experiment with protection activities at breeding and wintering areas as the project gathers more information on threats from humans, cattle, and predators.

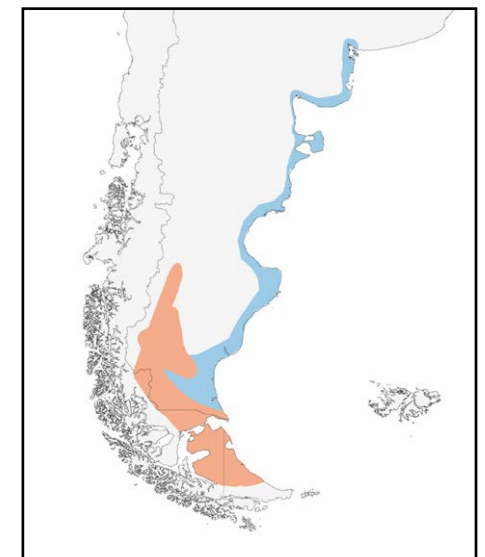
2022 Results

Surveys at four breeding sites yielded 132 individuals. Threats to nests and young included trampling or crushing by cattle, sheep, recreationists, ATVs, motorcycles, cars, and motorhomes. Other threats are from pets, horseback riding, fishing, and kite-surfing.

Six experimental nest protector devices were installed and monitored with trail cameras. (In the Netherlands these nest protectors resulted in a 75% hatch rate.) Predation was a key threat, which the exclosures did not deter. (A black-faced ibis ate the eggs of one clutch.) Of the monitored nests, only one fledged a chick. Monitoring on the winter grounds has begun in 2023, and the number of juveniles will offer a better picture of overall breeding success.

This project will continue only if we are satisfied there are good prospects for better results.

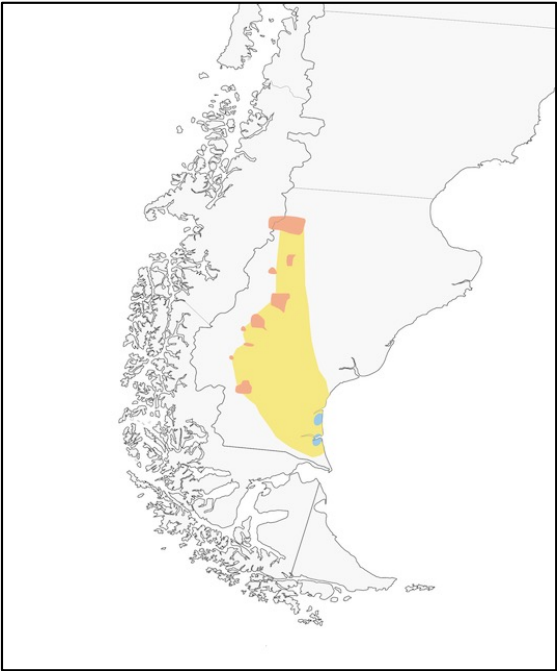
<i>Size of area:</i>	5,000 hectares
<i>Field partner:</i>	Ambiente Sur
<i>Spending in 2022:</i>	\$2,042



Artificial nest platforms a success for the hooded grebe!

Once again, the field team with Aves Argentinas removed mink from all grebe breeding sites and deployed nesting platforms at key sites. In 2022, a historic first occurred when a hooded grebe pair nested on an artificial platform, finished the full nesting cycle, and produced a hatched chick! There is good reason to be optimistic that more grebes will follow suit in the years ahead, which should boost grebe numbers as the platforms keep nests safer from strong winds. Mink removal is conducted at every site with breeding grebes, starting before the grebes arrive on site and then 24/7 throughout the breeding season. With the removal of 45 mink there was zero predation on any grebes. A nearby colony of predatory kelp gulls was kept in check by adding 482 eggs (just one gull egg hatched). A few invasive trout (which also prey on grebe chicks and compete for food) were found in a lake and these too were removed. However, as in most years, high winds (110 km/hour) occurred in January 2023 which ultimately resulted in lower than hoped for breeding success at the largest colony (100 nests) on Strobel Lake.

For the first time, hooded grebes hatched a chick on a nesting platform. Photo: Aves Argentinas



Above: Breeding (pink) and wintering (blue) areas of the hooded grebe. © Lynx Edicions/ BirdLife International

Coastal conservation in the Bahamas

New Salinas Nature Reserve, Long Island

ICFC is working with the Michael Young Family Foundation and the recently formed Long Island Conservancy to establish a new 7,000-acre nature reserve on the former Diamond Crystal Saltworks site. In the 1960s, the lagoons were heavily modified when they were turned into saltworks, which remained in operation until 1979. The site remains degraded but was recognized as having the potential to be restored as high-quality coastal ecosystem. Hurricane Joaquim in 2015 caused breaches to the dyke system which allowed new flows of seawater into the saltworks leading to noticeable increases in fish and wildlife.

The project began in October with an ecological assessment and hydrological study of the site. Preliminary results show the lagoons receive less than one percent of the potential tidal flow. Despite this, the site supports good numbers of fish, a small population of flamingos and migrant and resident shorebirds. Once restored, the new reserve will provide important new intertidal habitat for many species and it has the potential to link to a proposed 215,000-acre marine

protected area on Long Island being developed by the government of the Bahamas, the Bahamas National Trust and others.

Size of area:	2,520 km ²
Field partner:	Fundación Atelopus
Spending in 2022:	\$298,059

Protecting and restoring piping plover wintering habitat

There is nowhere with more wintering Atlantic Coast piping plovers than the Bahamas. Again in 2022, our partner Conservian posted signs at key piping plover wintering areas and carried out eradication of invasive Australian pine (*Casuarina*) encroaching upon open beach areas where wintering plovers roost and breeding Wilson's plovers nest. Since 2016, 200 miles of coastal habitat has been assessed for plovers, 350 acres have been treated to remove Australian pine, and dozens of Bahamians have been trained to continue this work in the future.

Site of the planned Salinas Nature Reserve. Photo: David Agro



Conservation of shorebird wintering grounds in Argentina, Mexico, and Chile

Since 2015, ICFC has sought opportunities to protect the wintering areas of shorebirds that breed in North America and are declining in number. During the non-breeding season shorebirds gather by the thousands at key sites with abundant food resources, where they may face threats of development, drainage, pollution, and high levels of disturbance. Shorebird species with longer non-stop flights are the most vulnerable because any impact that diminishes their “fuel” supply risks their ability to reach their destination.

ICFC supports the protection of two of these long-distance migrants in coastal Patagonia in Argentina, Mexico and Chile—the red knot and the Hudsonian godwit. In **Argentina on the Bahía de San Antonio**, Patricia González (ICFC Shorebird Project Coordinator) and Fundación Inalafquen have developed one of the most comprehensive shorebird research, conservation and education programs in Latin America. At a heavily visited tourist beach in Argentina, the team of shorebird biologists/coastal wardens collect annual shorebird data, rope off sensitive areas for shorebirds, enforce strict regulations to limit disturbance, and host a highly successful annual shorebird festival now in its 13th year.

At the **Golfo de Santa Clara in Mexico** ICFC works with Pronatura Noroeste on a grassroots effort to protect a beach where millions of **grunion fish** spawn and **red knots** fill up on grunion eggs prior

to making their long flights north to their Arctic breeding grounds. This site hosts up to 9,300 red knots at one time, which is 44% of the Pacific coast population. A team of local women from Santa Clara have developed a remarkably successful outreach program with a large museum-like display area under tents on the beach. They patrol the four kilometers of beach (demarcated with orange highway cones and yellow tape) and talk with thousands of beach-goers during the critical period. (See our “Featured Field Partner” on page 39.)

ICFC’s project in **Chile** benefits one of the world’s “long haul” migrants—the **Hudsonian godwit**, which is capable of single flights of 10,000 km. The project with Fundación Conservación Marina began in 2015 with the establishment of five small, protected wetlands (918 ha) at the mouth of the **Maullín River**. It has since expanded down the coast to Chiloé and upriver to its mountain origins for a total area of 10,000 ha. The project is now a year-round program that works with a growing number of local communities, including the local Mapuche Indigenous people, and all levels of government. Key to the success here has been the strong focus on birding tourism, which has resulted in mapped birding trails, public bird-watching blinds, books and posters, and a daily presence of staff and volunteers to ensure the birds and habitats are protected. The Maullín wetlands attract thousands of Hudsonian godwits and whimbrels and other migratory

Red knots at San Antonio Bay. Photo: Fabian Pinasco



Featured Field Partners: Grunion Queens, Sori González Bernal, and Adriana Hernández Alvarez

When they saw vehicles passing along the beach on top of thousands of spawning grunions Sori González Bernal and her friends decided they had to do something to stop it.

The spawning of grunion (*pejerrey* in Spanish; *Leuresthes sardina*), is a unique phenomenon each spring at Golfo de Santa Clara, Sonora, Mexico, an annual occurrence not unlike the more familiar spawning of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay. The spawning fish, in turn, attract thousands of Pacific red knots (*Calidris canutus roselaari*), a threatened shorebird that feeds on the eggs to fuel its flight to its breeding grounds in the Arctic. But this one-month event coincides with the Easter holy week and attracts people in hundreds of vehicles that crush fish and hit shorebirds. Adriana Hernández Alvarez knew this very well: for ten years this young researcher studied the ecological relationship between the grunions and red knots.

Those who know Sori admire her energetic embrace of advocacy for the environment and the conservation of nature. Adriana joined forces with Sori’s team “Cuidando al playero rojizo y al pejerrey” (Taking care of red knots and grunions) in 2019. Together they have had remarkable success: actively working with the community, they set up temporary rope lines to stop vehicles and people from entering this critical area.

Sori, Adriana, and their enthusiastic team (mostly women), are making history with the support of Pronatura Noroeste and ICFC by changing social behaviours and solving a serious conservation problem, giving hope to these two amazing species and their connected environment.



Sori González loves nature and says that “we never finish learning.”

“In thirty years, I have seen and studied many human-caused threats to red knots on the Continent, but none of them impacted me as much as people driving on top of spawning grunions and killing migratory shorebirds. In this Anthropocene era, Sori and Adriana’s determination inspire me in making a difference in the world.”

-- Patricia M González, ICFC Shorebird Project Coordinator

The red knot and grunion protection team in Santa Clara. Photos: Pronatura Noroeste



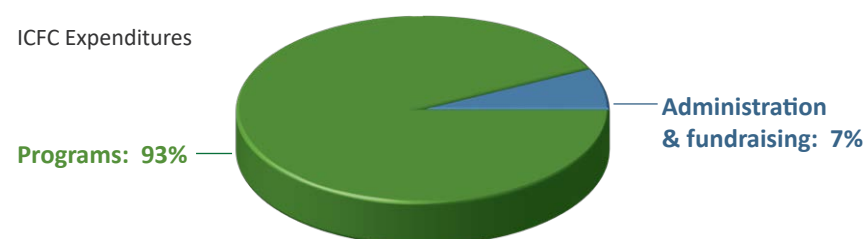
Adriana Hernández says she likes to think that “life put her on this beach to help shorebirds and habitat conservation.”



Statement of Financial Position of December 31, 2022

	2022	2021
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash	302,685	634,028
Investments (securities)	2,212,778	1,776,245
Project advances	1,994,097	861,842
Accounts receivable	1,647	13,971
HST Recoverable	16,130	14,953
	4,527,337	3,301,039
Capital Assets		
Interest in land ⁱ	93,152	93,152
Office equipment, net	3,585	3,370
	96,737	96,522
Restricted Assets		
Los Amigos Cons. Conc. Trust Fund	1,577,455	1,848,981
Parataxonomist Trust Fund	2,385,594	2,859,402
Administration Trust Fund	868,928	801,297
Poon Trust Fund	726,354	598,388
Jocotoco Sustainability Fund	880,103	1,031,519
	6,438,434	7,139,587
TOTAL ASSETS	11,062,508	10,537,148
LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	66,340	79,419
Deferred Income	138,826	0
	205,166	79,419
Fund balances		
Unrestricted	3,593,011	2,435,952
Internally restricted	825,897	1,913,709
Restricted	6,438,434	6,108,068
	10,857,342	10,457,729
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES	11,062,508	10,537,148

Complete audited financial statements are available on our website.



Statement of Operations

	2022	2021
REVENUE		
Donations	10,269,979	9,909,326
Gain/(Loss) on investment and foreign currency	(1,058,093)	110,497
NET REVENUE	9,211,886	10,019,823
EXPENSES		
Argentina: Hooded grebe	79,515	69,857
Argentina: San Antonio red knot	2,042	3,884
Bahamas: Piping plover	80,012	10,898
Bahamas: Salinas Long Island restoration	270,604	27,454
Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Taiwan: Spoon-billed sandpiper	90,534	96,940
Belize: Land Acquisition for the Maya Forest Corridor	0	632,694
Bolivia: Blue-throated macaw	30,174	20,702
Brazil: Kayapó project	3,431,806	1,761,451
Cambodia: Marine conservation	224,222	178,431
Chile: Maullin coastal wetlands	132,234	88,230
Costa Rica: ACG marine education & Parataxonomists	141,094	99,060
Costa Rica: Osa, sea turtles and community education	0	2,033
Costa Rica: Osa Peninsula & Youth Nature Program	325,734	242,973
Democratic Republic of Congo: Grauer's gorilla	241,159	220,189
Ecuador: Rio Canandé/Chocó reserve land purchase	0	347,597
Ecuador: FCAT Reserve land purchase	29,671	279,921
French Polynesia: Imperilled birds	2,042	46,061
Indonesia: Papua project	263,787	0
Indonesia: Sulawesi threatened wildlife	246,326	202,053
Kenya: Kijabe Forest	95,263	82,183
Kenya: Mukutan Conservancy, aka Laikipia Conservancy	639,227	217,942
Madagascar: Rabondro Reserve	159,912	118,162
Malawi: Lake Malawi fish conservation	367,958	201,232
Mali Elephant Project	244,772	348,333
Mexico: Vaquita porpoise	70,965	0
Mozambique: Sky Islands	65,623	64,251
Nepal: Koshi Tappu wetland & land acquisition	63,416	72,651
Nepal: Kanchenjunga, snow leopard	24,106	59,401
Nepal: Red panda	19,681	30,102
Nicaragua: Sea turtles projects	91,546	60,528
Panama: Majé Mountains Indigenous-led conservation	46,859	30,492
Peru: Andean Amazon, MAAP	189,300	196,881
Peru: ICFC Field Training Fellowship	61,646	0
Peru: Los Amigos Conservation Concession	92,662	78,077
Philippines: Manta Ray cleaning station	15,173	0
Shorebird program coordinator	2,042	1,942
Small projects (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ghana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama)	338,643	118,064
South Africa: Rhino conservation	54,413	39,650
Various Rainforest Trust-led common projects	2,524	83,774
TOTAL Program Expenses	8,236,687	6,134,093
Fundraising ⁱⁱ	115,048	115,343
Administration ⁱⁱ	460,539	316,477
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,812,274	6,565,913
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	399,612	3,453,910

ⁱⁱ 100% of Administration/Fundraising expenses were covered by ICFC's core group of long-term donors.

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17 million hectares
covered by ICFC projects
in
36 countries

244,000 people
benefit from project related
jobs, improved livelihoods and
education

\$54 million
invested since 2007

5.5 billion tonnes
CO₂ equivalent stored

> 500
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Harpy Eagle by Andres Novales
Back cover: Zebras by Shawn Carey



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