



## March 2019 Newsletter

Dear supporters and friends,

Here is our spring update along with our hearty thanks.

### ICFC donors ascend Cerro Chucantí in Panamá

In January, ICFC donors were able to see first-hand a cloud forest reserve that ICFC has helped to protect in the Darién region of Panamá. The expedition team consisted of seven ICFC donors, two special guests (naturalist Brian Keating and wife Dee) and ICFC's Carlos R. Garcia. The team's local guide and expert on the ground was Guido C. Berguido, founder of Adopt a Panama Rainforest Association's (ADOPTA). The itinerary included visits to the Canopy Tower, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute's Barro Colorado Island Monument on the man-made Gatún Lake in the Panamá Canal, a guided tour along the legendary Pipeline Road in Soberanía National Park, and a 3-day visit to ADOPTA's Cerro Chucantí Nature Reserve. Cerro Chucantí is an isolated massif in southern Panamá that rises from sea level to 1,444 meters. It sustains a diverse montane and cloud forest tropical ecosystem, hosting many endemic and threatened species of reptiles and amphibians, plants, birds and mammals.

Sightings at Chucantí included such iconic and beautiful species as the Critically Endangered black-headed spider monkey, red-capped manakin, and a yet-to-be formally described frog species *Pristimantis* sp. aff. *Cruentus*, which is found only at the peak of Cerro Chucantí between ~1,200 m and 1,444 m in elevation — an example of how small a range can be for an amphibian species in the tropics (and how vulnerable they are as a result).

The trip was enjoyed by all and reinforced in trip participants the importance of ensuring that Cerro Chucantí and other imperiled places in the tropics are protected in perpetuity. Thank you, Guido and ADOPTA; keep up the good work!



All photos: Brian Keating

*"Here, on the peak of Chucantí, I have the immense privilege of holding a living specimen of a yet-to-be named *Pristimantis* species that Guido's team recently discovered. This frog lives nowhere else on Earth except for this mountain top. And at this point, you either get the enormity of it, or you don't - but if you do, I hope it inspires you to think of how you can do your own small part for wildlife conservation. The world needs all the help we can give it." -- trip participant Godwin Lai*



*"Entering the reserve by horseback was the perfect way to introduce us to this remarkable place that has been referred to as an 'Island in the Sky'. As we plodded upwards, the haunting sounds of howler monkeys permeated the air, giving us a hint as to what was to come. Over the next few days we hiked into some remarkable habitats, but the pinnacle of our experience was the ascent and traverse of the mountain ridge through some incredible cloud forest. Ringing with calls from some of the avian endemics, the trees were festooned with mosses and clouds drifted in and out, giving it all an ethereal feel. This project is extremely important and stands as an example of how a few people can make such a profound difference". -- Brian Keating*

### Future donor trips...

We are thinking of doing donor trips about once a year or less. Your input on what would be of most interest is welcome. Possibilities include:

- Laikipia Nature Conservancy, Kenya
- Barba Azul Nature Reserve, Bolivia
- Fundación Jocotoco reserves, Ecuador
- Los Amigos Biological Station, Peru
- Piro Biological Station, Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica





### Saving the Ecuadorian Chocó

Sometimes a big vision is needed to save a threatened ecosystem. ICFC's Ecuadorian partner Fundación Jocotoco came up with such a vision to secure enough lowland Chocó forest to ensure its long-term ecological sustainability. The plan includes taking advantage of a rare opportunity to buy (from a logging company) 56,833 acres of lowland Chocó rainforest that will connect three existing protected areas that together span over one million acres across an altitudinal gradient from 100-4900 metres. See details on [our website!](#)

*"I cannot imagine a more urgent conservation initiative. The Chocó plants and vertebrates are awe-inspiring in richness and heart-breaking in their endangerment."*  
-- E.O. Wilson

### ICFC joins Green Budget Coalition

ICFC has joined 21 other NGOs in [a coalition](#) that makes annual recommendations to the Canadian government on budgetary matters related to environmental sustainability and conservation. We look forward to working with our NGO colleagues and potentially adding an international dimension to this coalition.



### Volunteer opportunity: Bahamas Eco-Sailing Adventure!

Now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, paying volunteers can participate in a field project aboard a live-aboard schooner. Field work involves protecting key sites for beach-nesting birds and wintering birds (especially the Piping Plover) and removing invasive vegetation. Cost \$1,750/week + air fare.

2019 Expedition Schedule -- Choose 1 week or more:

- WEEK 1: May 5-12 Joulter Cays & S. Andros
- WEEK 2: May 12-19 Northern Exumas
- WEEK 3: May 19-26 All Exumas

Go to [www.coastalbird.org](http://www.coastalbird.org) for details.

### ICFC Gathering, Toronto, May 14

Join us for an after-work reception at 5:30, May 14, 20 Avoca Avenue (ground floor meeting room). Bennett Hennessey of Asociación Armonía will give us an update on Armonía's work in Bolivia. Bennett is a Canadian biologist who moved to Bolivia and was a key person in developing Armonía's work (supported by ICFC) to save the blue-throated macaw and other threatened species.



### 🎵 A novel way to support conservation

Last October we were contacted by Keenan Reimer-Watts, who had an idea for using music to raise money for conservation. As he put it, while musicians don't have a lot of money, they do have a lot of passion and they care about the planet as much as we do. A talented musician himself, Keenan has now formed [Communities for Conservation\\*](#) which enables people to text to donate \$5 or more to ICFC directly from their mobile phones. His original vision has expanded from music festivals and concerts to include local community businesses such as cafés. As he says, the aim is to bring communities together to value what nature we have left and protect as much as we can. *Thanks, Keenan!*



\* Anyone interested is welcome to contact Keenan through the website.

### Peru cracks down on illegal goldmining – with our help

Peru initiated a major crackdown on illegal goldmining in February, for which ICFC and our partner Amazon Conservation Association (ACA) can claim some of the credit. ICFC supports and played a role in creating ACA's Monitoring the Andean Amazon Project ([MAAP](#)), which collects and broadly disseminates "near-real-time" remote sensing data to show the precise locations and causes of deforestation in the highly biodiverse Andean Amazon.

As covered by [CNBC](#) and [CNN](#), a MAAP report issued in January detailed record levels of goldmining deforestation in 2017 and 2018 in the southern Peruvian Amazon. MAAP reports are closely followed by government officials and MAAP also brought the issue to the fore with a series of high-profile reports in Peru's leading paper *El Comercio*.

The crackdown is a sustained effort to address the scourge of illegal goldmining in Peru's Madre de Dios region that is causing widespread ecological destruction and severe health and environmental impacts.

### Other project news briefs

With our **Kayapo Project**, we are pleased to report that the new mobile guard post is now in operation and six stationary guard posts will be up and running by the end of June at key entry points on rivers that intersect with roads. These will bar entry to all persons unauthorized by the federal government, including loggers, goldminers and commercial fishermen. We began to set up guard posts in 2016 and they have proven highly effective.

As part of our **Mali Elephant Project**, 1,126 km of firebreaks were created in November, involving 1,072 eco-guards from 8 communities. Normally 10-20 fires would be expected in these communal lands which would consume the pasture that wildlife and livestock rely on during the long dry season. As a result of the firebreaks, there has been only one fire and that was soon put out by local eco-guards.

### Onward! ¡Adelante! En avant! Avante!

Your support, 100% of which is applied to programs, always enables us to more. **Thank you from all of us!**

p.s. Have a look at our [new home page!](#) More website changes are to follow in coming months.