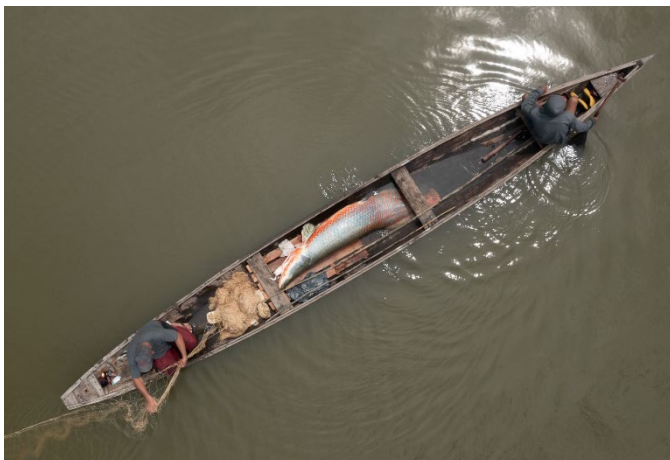


Dear supporters and friends,

Unusually, we have two trip reports this newsletter. Occasional visits to projects are a key part of ICFC's due diligence and are welcomed by our field partners.

New project: Jurua River, Brazilian Amazon

Our new project with Instituto Juruá, a Brazilian NGO, builds on a highly effective community-based fisheries management model—one that empowers local communities to guard their fishing grounds against large-scale commercial fisheries. At extensive beaches along the famously meandering Juruá river and nearby floodplain oxbow lakes, the work aims to recover and maintain populations of several threatened, historically overexploited species, the pirarucú (*Arapaima gigas*), as well as the giant South American river turtle, yellow-spotted Amazon river turtle, and six-tubercled Amazon river turtle. The broader landscape consists of seasonally flooded (várzea) forests and adjacent upland (terra firme) forests.



The air-breathing pirarucú is the world's largest scaled freshwater fish.

Belize/Guatemala trip (Jan-Feb. 2023)

Scott Hecker

I recently returned from Belize and Guatemala along with eight merry, intrepid ICFC supporters. The tour gave us all a chance to see project locales firsthand and to hear from many of these countries' local conservation leaders.

The 10-day itinerary took in wetlands, forests, and Mayan archeological sites in northern Belize and key wildlife corridor areas in central Belize. We then shifted to a coastal orientation with boat trips among the islands, mangroves, lakes and rivers of southern Belize and into Guatemala. ICFC has supported land purchases to augment wildlife corridors protected by the Maya Forest Conservation Trust, Wildlife Conservation Society (Belize) and Belize Zoo. In Guatemala, we have supported land acquisition for several FUNDAECO reserves and management of Laguna Grande reserve.

A unique aspect of the trip was hearing directly from the directors and staff of nine NGOs, who impressed all with their knowledge and accomplishments. Although birding was not the main focus of the trip, it added to our enjoyment every day and our Belizean guide, Roni Martinez, helped us see 214 species! (One couple were thrilled to see "100 lifers".) We are grateful to Steve Cox, Director of the



[Conservancy Travel](#) for handling the logistics of this successful trip.

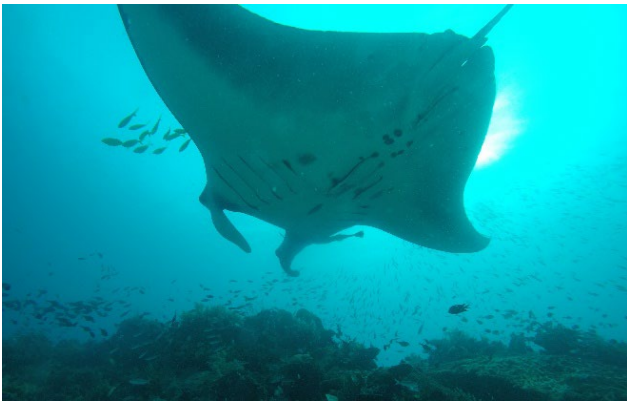
Participants were so delighted with the trip that some are interested in a possible ICFC trip proposed for Ecuador in 2024.

New staff: Welcome, Matt Aruch!

Matthew Aruch, PhD, joined ICFC in February as our Director of Indigenous Conservation Programs. After starting his career as a middle school science teacher, Matt first learned of ICFC's work in 2011, when he came across the Kayapó project while researching a graduate school paper on education and community ecotourism projects. In 2014, at the University of Maryland, he began collaborating with Barbara Zimmerman and ICFC to administer the university side of the Kayapó Field Course. He found the course and Kayapó Project to be remarkable case studies centered on Indigenous rights and knowledge, transnational and intercultural collaboration, and sustainability. The experience and lessons from the history of the field course and Pinkaiti Ecological Research Station became the focus of his doctoral research investigating multi-sectoral, transnational collaborations with Indigenous communities. Matt says he is "super grateful" to be able to continue supporting the Kayapó Project with ICFC and is equally looking forward to learning about and applying his experiences to the global portfolio of ICFC projects. Matt lives in Washington, DC with his wife, mother-in-law, two young sons, and Buster the cat. He can be reached at aruch@icfcanda.org.



Photo: Caroline Sparks



Visiting projects in Papua, Indonesia and Philippines

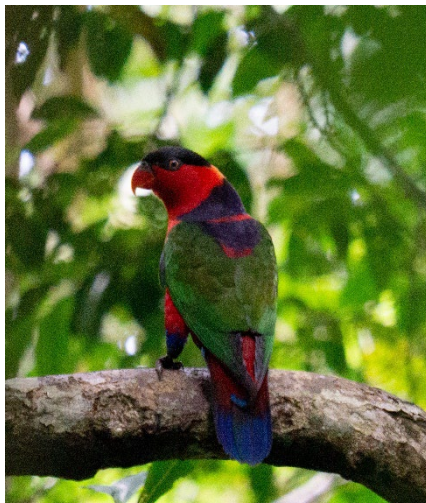
Andre Boraks

There is nothing like being on the ground at our project sites and meeting project personnel and others in person. So, last December ICFC sent me to our two projects on the island of Palawan, Philippines and in Papua, Indonesia, each of which started a year ago and involve new field partners for ICFC.

The Palawan site is a marine area where the reef manta ray (*Molula alfredi*) gather at five “cleaning stations” to have parasites removed from their bodies by symbiotic cleaner fish. The species is Red-listed as Vulnerable, and vulnerable it truly is. Mantas reach sexual maturity at 10 years, the gestation period lasts 12 months, and females give birth to a single pup. So, this is not a species that can recover quickly from setbacks.

Mantas are a draw for tourists, who are now returning after a pandemic hiatus, and the citizens of Palawan need to make informed decisions on how to best manage the impact of ecotourism (1.8 million tourists visited in 2018). Laying the foundations for future management, our field partner LAMAVE’s team of young biologists are protecting this stunning marine environment.

Three-thousand kilometers to the southeast, I met up with Iain and Malcom Wilson, founders of the new conservation organization YAPPENDA. Also visiting were personnel from Re:wild and Oxford University. The sons of Canadian missionaries, Malcolm and Iain grew up in Papua, immersed in the culture of the Yali Indigenous people. Within Indonesia, Papua holds the distinction of having vast stretches of intact rainforest (roughly 70% of the rainforest remains) and it was thrilling to see some of this and to meet with champions of biodiversity preservation in Papua.

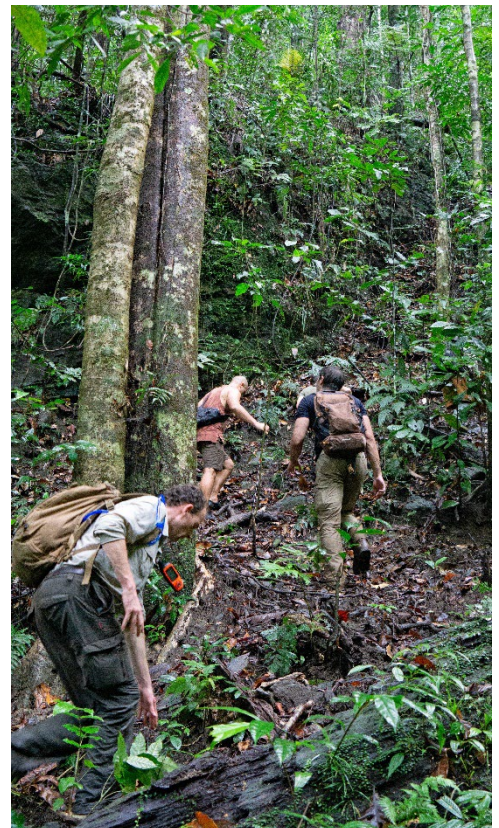


Top left: Manta ray (photo: LAMAVE)

Top right: Papua highlands (photo: Barney Long)

Above: Black-capped Lory (photo: Andrew Tilker)

Right: Heading up (photo: Andrew Tilker)



At the foot of Cyclops Mountain, I toured the denuded hillsides of Telaga Ria (currently being reforested). And in the highlands of New Guinea, we met with the communities of Holuwan and Ninia who seek to restore bygone forest, with the help of five newly constructed tree nurseries. YAPPENDA has also taken initial steps to start a research station that will bring scientists to this little-known region and develop science capacity. There has been quick interest from local and foreign scientists looking to collaborate, so research programs have started, even prior to the establishment of the research station.

The projects in Palawan and Papua are off to a great start. We look forward to supporting each field partner with the necessary tools to continue preserving and restoring these incredible ecosystems.

Opinion piece: COP15 raised the bar on badly needed finance for nature

See Anne’s [opinion piece](#) published January 3rd in the Halifax Chronicle Herald and online on Saltwire. Feedback has been positive.

Thanks and best wishes from all of us at ICFC!

Your ongoing support makes a difference!

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