

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL



SECURING NATURE'S BOUNTY

**A Brighter Future for
People and Nature in the Americas**

Peru.

© Diego Pérez

PEOPLE NEED NATURE.



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Guyana.

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Leader in the Americas**

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A MESSAGE FROM CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL'S LEADER IN THE AMERICAS

Beni River, Bolivia.

© Conservation International/photo by Bailey Evans



RACHEL BIDERMAN, PH.D

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Biderman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

SVP and Chief Field Officer,
Americas

For nearly 40 years, Conservation International has worked with hundreds of partners across the Americas to create a brighter future for people and nature.

Our work has never been more vital than it is today in the Americas. In all our work, we match the enormity of our task with an ambition rooted in putting human well-being on equal footing with conservation.

We work every day to demonstrate that people and nature need each other to thrive. We know that protecting nature is the best way to secure the well-being of communities, stabilize our climate and create solutions for the benefit of all humanity. In partnering with local and Indigenous peoples, supporting their livelihoods, cultures and well-being, we ensure that our projects promote social and economic development. We promote climate policies and carbon market solutions for a more resilient economy.

Across the region, we have aligned our work into strategic areas of focus to maximize our impact. We are committed to natural climate solutions (environmental actions that increase carbon storage or avoid carbon emissions), as we work to protect and restore our forests and mangrove ecosystems, conserve our oceans and improve fisheries sustainability, and strengthen nature-positive economies in critical landscapes and seascapes. To support these overarching strategies, we are developing creative, innovative scientific and financial solutions.

The Americas region contains natural capital that is key to addressing the global environmental challenge we face. The Americas are rich in freshwater resources, with nearly one-third of the global total. This blue bounty is secured and maintained by diverse ecosystems such as forests, grasslands and paramos that connect to the coast. The region's rich variety of ecosystems on land and sea host the world's largest reservoirs of biological diversity. And the irreplaceable carbon-rich ecosystems of the Amazon and the coastlines of Central and South America form a bulwark against the worst effects of climate change.

At Conservation International, we are committed to securing these benefits that nature provides. We do this by engaging diverse partners, partnering with Indigenous, afro descendants, traditional and local peoples, governments, the private sector and the civil society to conserve critical landscapes and creating greater prosperity and solutions that are self-sustaining and empowering to local communities.

As you read the following pages, I hope you are inspired by the work from our nine country programs in the Americas. With your help, we can continue to ensure a brighter future for our planet — one where people and nature thrive together.



**UNPRECEDENTED,
URGENT, COORDINATED
GLOBAL-SCALE ACTION IS
NEEDED NOW.**

Amazon.

© Jorge Ilich-Gejo



The Americas region, known for its extensive forest cover, rich oceans and rivers, amazing biodiversity and cultural heritage, is facing unparalleled challenges due to climate change and unsustainable practices. Despite the region's limited contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, it is experiencing severe consequences that affect both biodiversity and human well-being. Conservation International, since its establishment in 1987, has worked to protect millions of hectares of essential ecosystems in the Americas, ensuring enduring benefits for both nature and people.

Our Mission: Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, Conservation International empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature, our global biodiversity, for the well-being of humanity.

Our Vision: We imagine a healthy, prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature, for the long-term benefit of people and all life on Earth.

A woman wearing a brown hat and a blue patterned vest is working in a field. She is holding a white string or thread, possibly for weaving or a craft project. The background is a blurred field with green plants and wooden stakes.

NATURE FOR CLIMATE

Colombia.

© 2020 Logan Watts



IN THE AMERICAS, WE'RE HELPING TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

by protecting millions of hectares of rainforests and coastal mangroves where carbon is safely locked away. High-carbon ecosystems, such as tropical and mangrove forests, can be powerful allies in the fight against climate change.

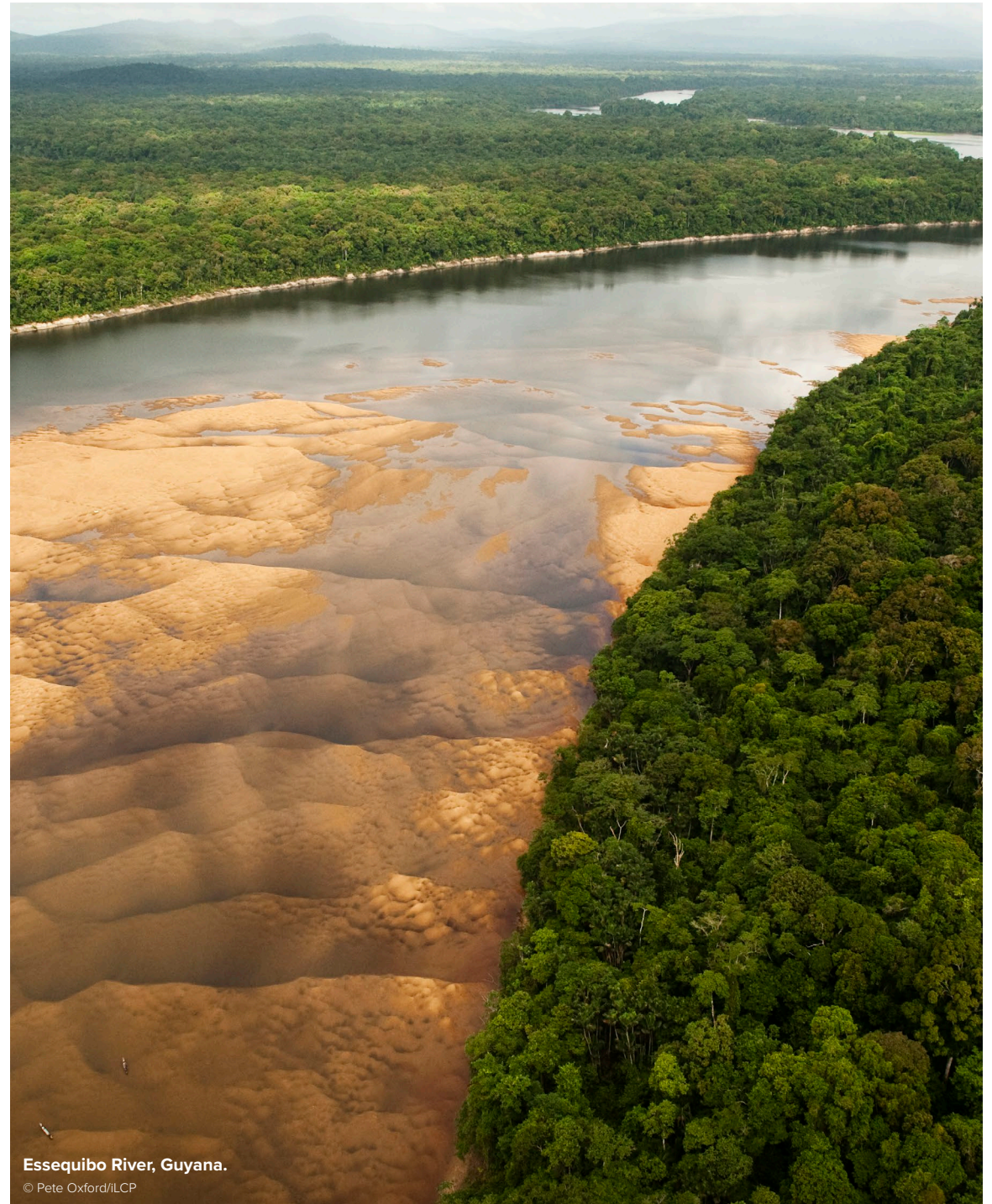
Our Goal: To protect 20 million hectares (49.4 million acres) via new conservation areas; strengthen the management of 50 million hectares (123.6 million acres) of existing protected areas and Indigenous lands; restore 600,000 hectares (1.5 million acres), avoid deforestation in an additional 200,000 hectares (494,211 acres); secure climate finance for 30Mt CO₂e; support 500,000 people to adapt to climate change.

AMAZONIA

People need nature to thrive, and nowhere is this more evident than in the Amazon. Approximately 15% of its forests have been deforested; scientists warn of a critical “tipping point” if deforestation reaches 20%. If we fail to protect it, we will not be able to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Protection of the Amazon is of vital importance for our planet, particularly for the more than 35 million people and 500 Indigenous groups who live and depend on it.

We work with governments, local communities, Indigenous peoples and the private sector to conserve 80% of the Amazon forest by establishing new protected areas, strengthening the management of existing ones and restoring degraded lands. To date, with our partners, we have helped conserve over 21 million hectares (52 million acres) of forest, supporting 27 Indigenous territories and COICA (the regional representative Indigenous body) in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname.

Our goal in the Amazon is to protect an additional 12 million hectares (29.7 million acres) via new protected areas and Indigenous Peoples and local communities’ territories; strengthen management of 100 million hectares (247 million acres) of existing protected areas and Indigenous territories; and restore 115,000 hectares (284,171 million acres) of degraded lands.



Essequibo River, Guyana.

© Pete Oxford/ILCP

Restoring our best hope for climate change in the Brazilian Amazon

About 20 percent of forest cover in the Brazilian Amazon has already been lost to threats such as cattle ranching and agriculture. In response, Conservation International has launched an innovative approach to restoration in Brazil with three parallel fronts:

1. At the policy level encompassing large territories, rules and regulations, stakeholders and decision-making process at subnational or national level;
2. At the market level including initiatives of organizations, companies and markets, directly related to the restoration value chain or with assets to finance and promote restoration; and
3. At the landscape level, including local, pilot-scale initiatives where different restoration techniques are tested and improved.

In 2023, Conservation International reached a milestone – 17 million seedlings produced and used in the restoration of 7,000 hectares (17,000 acres) in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado, resulting in the storage of an estimate 91,700 tons of CO₂ over 30 years and employment of 3,500 people. Conservation International aims to restore 100,000 hectares (250,000 acres) by 2025 and 500,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) by 2030 in Brazil.



Rio Araguari, Brazil.

© Conservation International/photo by Bailey Evans

Women rangers protecting the Brownsweg Nature Park, Suriname

Brownsweg, with its rich and unique biodiversity, is a maroon village of the Samaaka tribe that lies at the feet of the Brownsweg Nature Park (BNP). The BNP is among the most accessible and popular nature destinations in Suriname, with approximately 20,000 visitors a year for recreation, research and education. But the BNP is experiencing an alarming increase in poaching and illegal gold mining.

In alliance with the community, Conservation International, established a 'Uma Busi Skowtu' (local name for women rangers) program in early 2023 with 10 local women to protect their environment. The Brownsweg women rangers is the first organized group of local women to be government-recognized and have impact on wildlife and biodiversity in their community. These heroic women (18-35 years) are the first line of defense against the poaching and retaliatory killing of wildlife, illegal logging and mining activities.



Suriname.

© Amazon Conservation Team (ACT)

Protecting nature for the benefit of humanity in Bolivia

Bolivia shares eight percent of the Amazon rainforests, including 34 million hectares (84 million acres) of forest with irrecoverable carbon – carbon, that if released, could not be recovered in our lifetime. Since its inception nearly 40 years ago, Conservation International has worked in Bolivia to protect biodiversity and support Indigenous peoples and local communities secure their ancestral lands and preserve their culture. In 1988, Conservation International developed the world's first debt-for-nature swap for the expansion of the Beni Biosphere Reserve, a financial innovation that changed conservation forever.

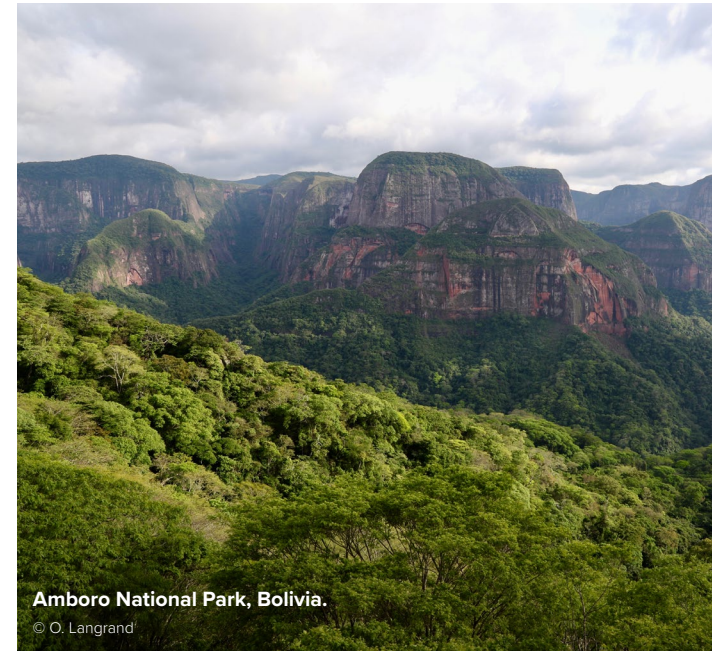
Since then, Conservation International has supported the creation of more than 4.7 million hectares (11.6 million acres) of protected areas in the Bolivian Amazon; protecting rainforests and cloud forests and savannas and conserving critically endangered species, allowing biodiversity to thrive and improving livelihoods for hundreds of families.

Today, Conservation International is working to support Indigenous peoples as they identify livelihood opportunities and plan for the sustainable management of their territories encompassing 2.0 million hectares (4.9 million acres).

Bioeconomy – a conservation tool in the Amazon

Demonstrating that nature conservation and economic development go hand-in-hand and that local and Indigenous peoples benefit from conservation efforts is critical to conserving the Amazon Bioeconomy is a solution. It promotes the rational and sustainable use of Amazonian biodiversity, offering viable economic alternatives that respect the rights and cosmovision of communities and contribute to the conservation of the tropical rainforest.

This past year, we focused on rallying partners, donors, governments, Indigenous and local people and the private sector around this understanding. Since early 2023, Conservation International and the World Resources Institute (WRI) have been co-leading an effort with support from the World Bank (ASL team), IADB (Amazon funds) and critical partners to create a PanAmazonian Network on Bioeconomy. The team collaborates on policy and finance solutions to enhance a community's capacity to promote sustainable production while conserving the protected territories it inhabits.

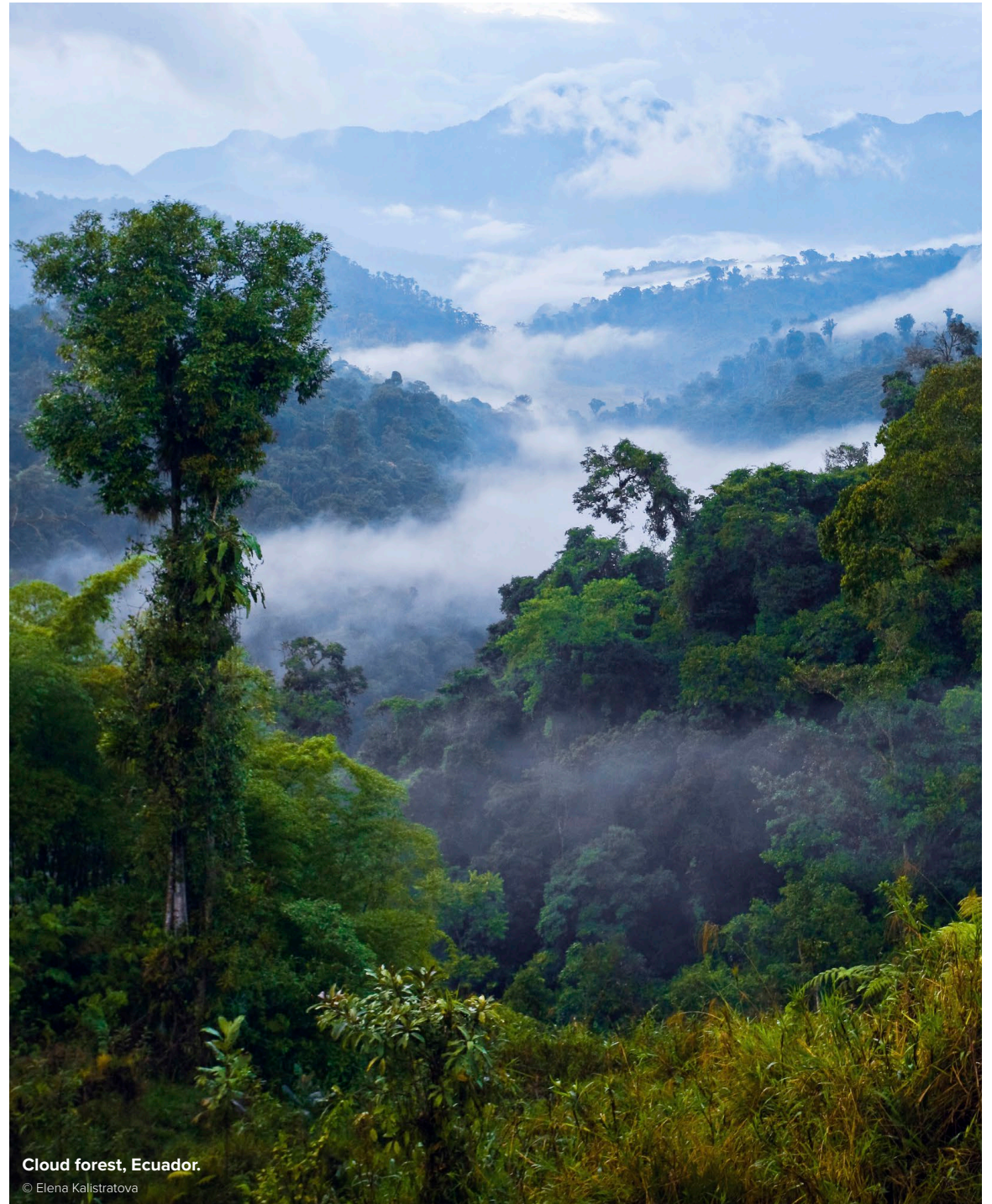


Protecting ancestral territories in Ecuador's Amazon

The Amazon rainforest covers over half of Ecuador's mainland, boasting rich biodiversity of flora and fauna, as well as diversity of cultures and languages of the 11 Indigenous nationalities who steward 62% of territories in the Amazon region. To protect these areas, Conservation International uses a Rights-Based approach in partnering with Indigenous organizations to strengthen governance, improve conservation and provide economic opportunities through bioeconomy initiatives.

Since 2008, the "Socio Bosque" program, developed by the Ecuadorian government with the technical support of Conservation International, provides financial support to landowners and Indigenous and rural communities who voluntarily commit to protect their forests. In the last two years, Conservation International promoted 23 conservation agreements (an incentive mechanism to conserve nature leading to benefits for people) to support the protection of more than 70,000 hectares (173,000 acres) of forests and improve the livelihoods of over 5,000 people who depend directly on these ecosystems.

In 2023, a new agreement was signed with the Mashientz Achuar Indigenous community to conserve 50,046 hectares (123,000 acres) of native forest in the Ecuadorian Amazon providing development and well-being opportunities to 380 people from 90 families. Mashientz is the first Achuar community ever led by a female president, Teresa Chiriapa.



Cloud forest, Ecuador.

© Elena Kalistratova

Indigenous women leading conservation, innovation and knowledge in the Amazon

Indigenous women play a key role in environmental stewardship and communal politics, yet persistent barriers remain including land and resource rights, access to formal education and full and effective participation in decision-making processes.

The Amazonia Indigenous Women's Fellowship is a program created in 2021 dedicated to enhancing Indigenous women's leadership in conservation, land management, innovations in the use of natural resources and applied traditional knowledge. The program supports fellows in seven countries in the Amazon – Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname. Fellows are awarded a one-year grant to implement their projects and network with other Indigenous women in the region.

Throughout the fellowship, committed mentors provide a meaningful and effective system of support so the fellows can grow in their influence and impact advancing conservation and community well-being.

Over the next five years, we aim to expand to 200 fellows to foster innovation through local actions and Indigenous knowledge to contribute to protecting 80% of the Amazon by 2030.

Some of the accomplishments to date:

- 95 Fellowships awarded
- 72 women influencing decisions at local and/or national level
- 3123 members of the community participating in projects
- 90 Indigenous organizations engaged
- 63 knowledge exchanges for networking and peer-to-peer learning
- 72 barriers minimized by the fellows due to participation
- \$1.3 million in direct funding for Indigenous women in conservation



Shampuyacu, Alto Mayo, Peru.

© CI Peru/ Marlon del Águila



Restoring forests and improving livelihoods of Indigenous communities in Peru

The Alto Mayo forests (in the northeastern Peruvian Amazon) have been under threat for many years due to the increasing number of immigrants coming to the region in search of fertile land. Many Awajun Indigenous communities in the area began renting their land to newcomers, without knowing the devastating effects to their livelihoods. Whilst some communities lost up to 90% of their forests, all of them lost part of their natural and cultural heritage.

Together with local partners, and the Regional Indigenous Federation, Conservation International has been working with 16 Indigenous communities with the Tajimat Pujut initiative, or “good living”, to enhance their ancestral practices, establish life plans (a strategic plan created collectively by an Indigenous or native community, by individuals or an organization) and strengthen territorial management for the restoration and conservation of their forests.

To date, together we have conserved 863,732 hectares (2.1 million acres) benefiting more than 4,300 people directly and over 283,000 indirectly and reduced deforestation rates in the landscape by 59%.

MANGROVES

Mangroves sequester carbon at some of the highest rates of any ecosystem. They also provide benefits essential for communities to adapt to climate change impacts, including coastal protection, flood control and food security, as well as providing economic and cultural benefits. Despite this growing recognition of the importance of mangroves for supporting livelihoods and mitigating climate change, an estimated third of global coverage has been reduced through deforestation and degradation of the coastal zone.

Our goal is to restore 35,000 hectares (86,487 acres) of mangrove ecosystems by 2030.



Cispata Bay, Colombia

© Daniel Uribe

Working with local communities through mangrove restoration in Costa Rica

The Gulf of Nicoya, hosting Costa Rica's second-largest mangrove ecosystem, has been a focal region of Conservation International's efforts for over 12 years. In a joint effort with national environmental institutions, private companies and local communities, the largest mangrove rehabilitation project in Central America was successfully implemented.

With the active participation of coastal communities, 20 miles of channels were opened, reconnecting tides to a total area of 352 hectares (870 acres). A little over a year into the restoration process, not only has the mangrove forest resurged where absent, but it has also spurred the return of various species, including birds, fish, crabs and more.

Additionally, Costa Rica recently identified 14,000 hectares (34,595 acres) of potential areas across the nation earmarked for mangrove ecosystem restoration. Currently collaborating with environmental authorities, Conservation International is actively developing strategic initiatives to propel forward this ambitious objective.



Costa Rica.

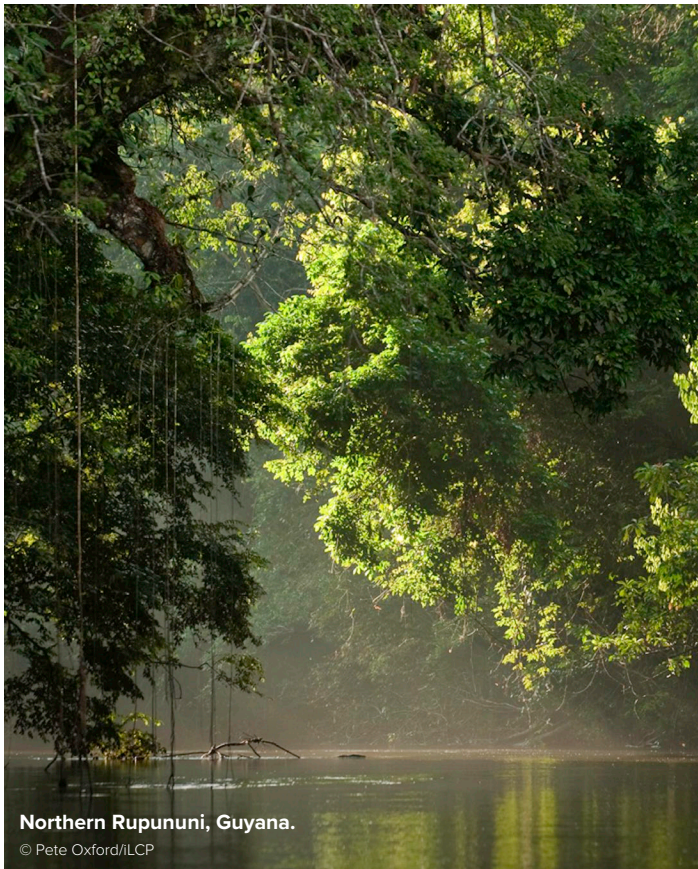
© Conservation International/photo by Monika Naranjo



Blue carbon in Colombia

In the Gulf of Morrosquillo, lies the world's first blue carbon project known as "Vida Manglar" (Spanish for "mangrove life"), under VCS (Verified Carbon Standards), CCB (Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards) certifications and approved by Verra, a global leader in creating standards for channeling carbon finance toward conservation.

The project is anticipated to remove about 1 million metric tons of emissions over 30 years and bring needed financing that will help the community and local authorities protect and restore the mangroves and biodiversity of the region. The methodology developed by VCS will quantify more accurately the carbon stored in the mangrove ecosystems. The initiative also focuses on promoting sustainable development, strengthening local governance and encouraging alternative productive activities.



A living wall of mangroves to protect Guyana's coast

In humanity's race towards climate adaptation, Conservation International, with partner resources and stakeholder alliances, is positioning Guyana as a global leader in nature-based solutions. With over 250 million tons of Amazonian sediment passing just off its Atlantic coast (this is considered the world's muddiest coast), Conservation International is supporting the country to develop cutting-edge "green" (mud and mangroves) and "gray" (sea walls and jetties) techniques to protect, and even grow, its coast. We have expanded our work to Guyana's last remaining natural stretch of coastal mangroves in the remote North-West District and are actively working to transfer skills to our partners in science, enterprise, communications and governance.



Isla Arena, Campeche, Mexico.

© Conservation International/photo by Asis Alcocer

Community restoration of mangroves at Isla Arena, Campeche, Mexico

Conservation International is working with the community of Isla Arena, Campeche, and the National Commission of Protected Areas, on a community restoration pilot project to conserve, protect and restore mangrove ecosystems, while providing development opportunities and improving the livelihoods of the local community.


Our goal is to restore 217 hectares (536 acres) of degraded and dead mangroves on this site, part of the Ria Celestun Biosphere Reserve. In addition, the project identifies and systematizes the good practices, including social and environmental standards, for the implementation of restoration, rehabilitation and conservation of marine-coastal ecosystems in Mexico. Along with the restoration activities, we are working with the community to train and empower women and young people, generating strategies for gender mainstreaming, as well as actions that promote equity, inclusion and diversity.

An aerial photograph of a coral reef system. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, contrasting with the dark, textured coral reefs. A small wooden boat with two people is visible in the lower center of the frame, navigating through a narrow channel between the reefs. The overall scene is a vast, natural landscape.

OCEAN CONSERVATION AT A SCALE

Abrolhos, Brazil.

© Luciano Candisani/ILCP.



OCEANS AND COASTAL AREAS ARE THE SOURCE OF LIFE

They host diverse marine and terrestrial species, providing sustenance, climate stability and thriving ecosystems. However, overfishing, pollution, habitat loss, mangrove degradation and climate change threaten their health. To face these threats our work supports sustainable fisheries and marine protection. Community and stakeholder engagement is a pivotal aspect, acknowledging their vital role in preserving the oceans' well-being.

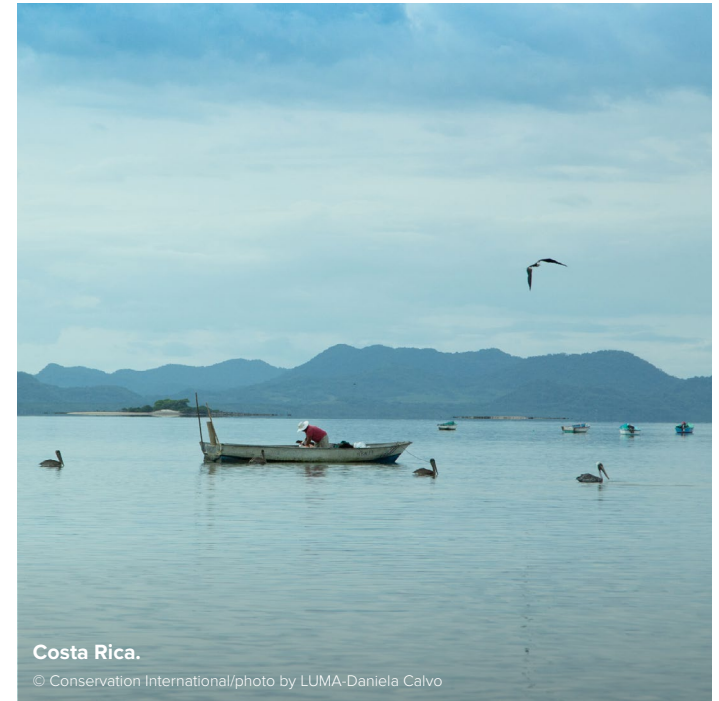
Our Goal: Expand ocean conservation by 1.2 M km²; strengthen management of 1.3 km²; improve sustainability in 25 fisheries.

Thriving innovative community-based fisheries sustainability in Costa Rica

Small-scale fisheries play a crucial role in the livelihoods of coastal communities in Costa Rica, both economically and for food security. Recognizing this, Conservation International, in collaboration with partner organizations, developed an innovative model known as the Community-based Fisheries Improvement Project (C-FIP). This model engages members of fishing communities directly in actions that enhance the management of marine resources and improve their livelihoods.

Implemented in five coastal communities within Costa Rica, C-FIP represents the first-ever recorded case globally that evaluates and implements a triple impact model (environmental, social and economic) for small-scale fisheries. During its implementation phase, C-FIP provided insights into the state of fisheries and the member communities, involving the collection of extensive biological data, refinement of fishing methods, updating of management measures and strengthening the capacities of local communities for sustainable businesses and livelihoods.

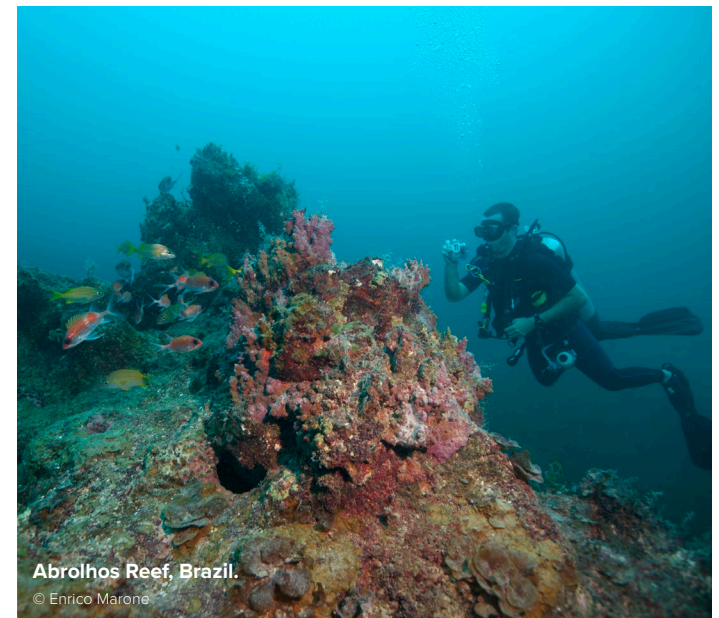
Today, Conservation International is focused on replicating and scaling this successful model to enhance other local seafood value chains throughout the country.



Securing Brazil's most spectacular marine systems

The Abrolhos Land and Seascape — a critical hotspot of 89 million hectares (220 million acres) for biodiversity conservation — is home to the largest and richest coral reefs in the South Atlantic. Despite its social, economic and environmental importance, its long-term protection still faces huge threats, such as illegal and unsustainable fishing, shrimp farming, exploitation of oil and natural gas near protected areas and sedimentation from coastal deforestation.

By supporting, with local partners, the implementation of key marine protected areas, (380,000 hectares (939,000 acres) in the Abrolhos Region and 46 million hectares (114 million acres) surrounding Abrolhos) promoting best practices in tourism, partnering with the local communities and using new approaches to improve restoration of critical forest areas, Conservation International aims to elevate healthy ecosystems as a central piece in the social and economic development of the region. And protect the main source of income for about 100,000 people who depend on the preservation of nature to succeed.



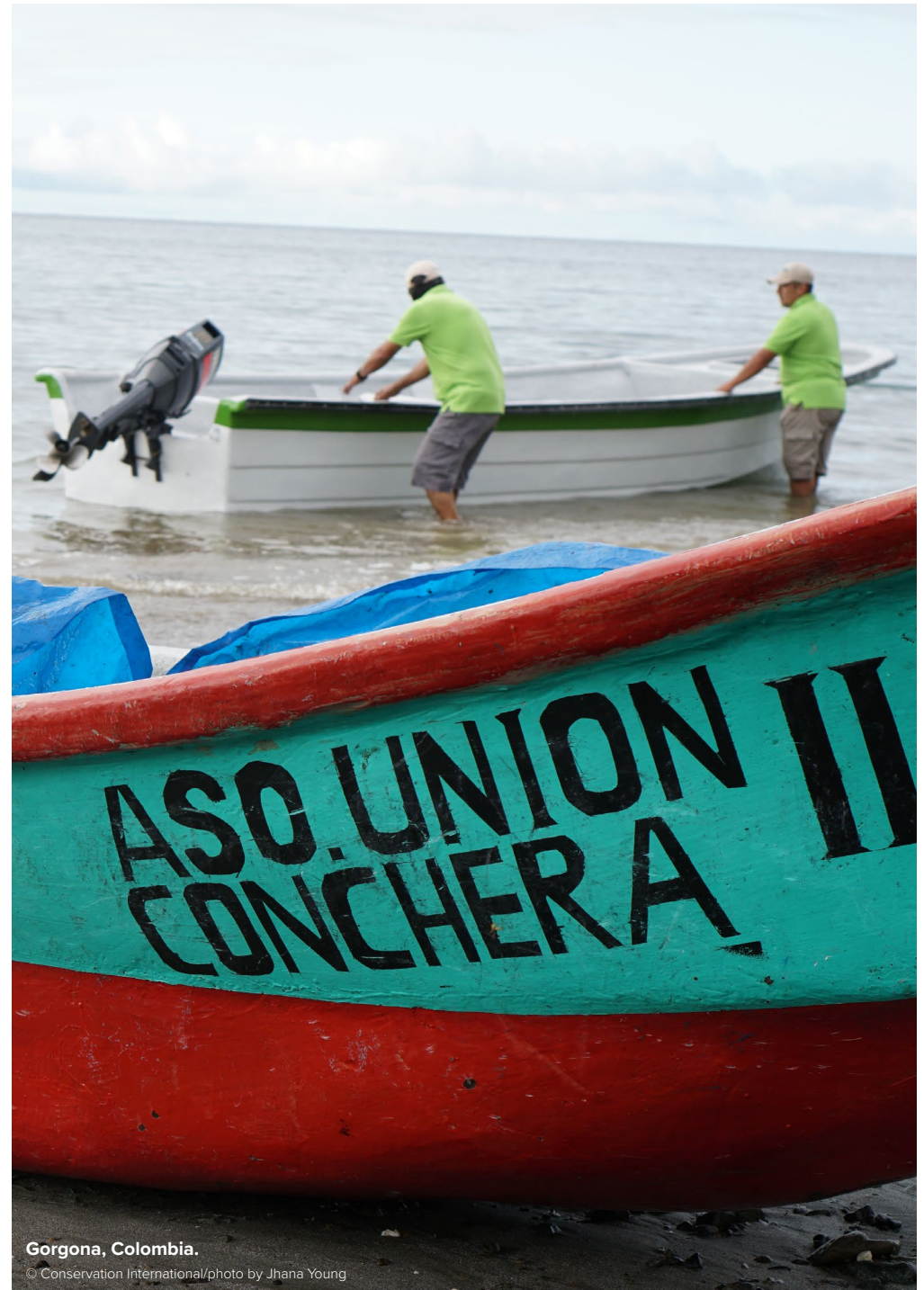
Responsible fishing – EcoGourmet initiatives in Colombia and Costa Rica

In 2012, Conservation International and the Fund for Environmental Action and Children (Fondo Acción) joined forces to identify fair business models within artisanal fisheries. This effort became EcoGourmet, a program started in the Caribbean and Pacific regions of Colombia. EcoGourmet fosters a mutually beneficial relationship among local fishers, restaurants and conscientious consumers committed to sustainable fishing practices.

Conservation International, working jointly with partners, strengthened technical capabilities of the fishing association by improving its fishing practices, its ability to process high-quality fishery products and opened access to high-value markets. This work allowed the community to secure higher prices for its fish products and enabled the restaurants to show themselves as socially and environmentally responsible. The success of EcoGourmet in Colombia has prompted other countries in the region to launch their own programs to bolster their sustainable management of marine ecosystems and ocean conservation.

Collaborating closely with fishing organizations, EcoGourmet in Costa Rica encourages adherence to selective fishing methods, compliance with catch sizes and the provision of quality seafood products. Partnering with restaurants committed to paying a premium price for responsibly caught fish and raising awareness among their customers about responsible fishing and marine conservation.

EcoGourmet facilitates direct connections between fishing organizations and commercial partners, reducing intermediaries and enhancing profits for fishers committed to responsible practices. Over the past two years, with support from five restaurants, almost 7 tons of responsibly caught fish from Costa Rica's Pacific regions have been successfully marketed. Fishers have received relevant price increases, with an average increase of 40%-90%. Conservation International is currently collaborating with other small-scale fishing organizations to improve their fishing practices and integrate them into this successful program.



Gorgona, Colombia.

© Conservation International/photo by Jhana Young

Awareness and mitigation of ghost fishing gear and other solid waste in coastal communities in Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador

Conservation International works with local partners in Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador to implement a ghost fishing gear and solid waste awareness and mitigation project. The program trains non-professional divers (certified by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors-PADI) to develop skills for the safe removal of abandoned fishing equipment and other debris from the seabed to reduce the negative effects on biodiversity and marine ecosystems. Project activities include capacity building, certification in advanced diving and removal of abandoned fishing gear, implementation of abandoned fishing gear removal activities in open waters, education and communication.

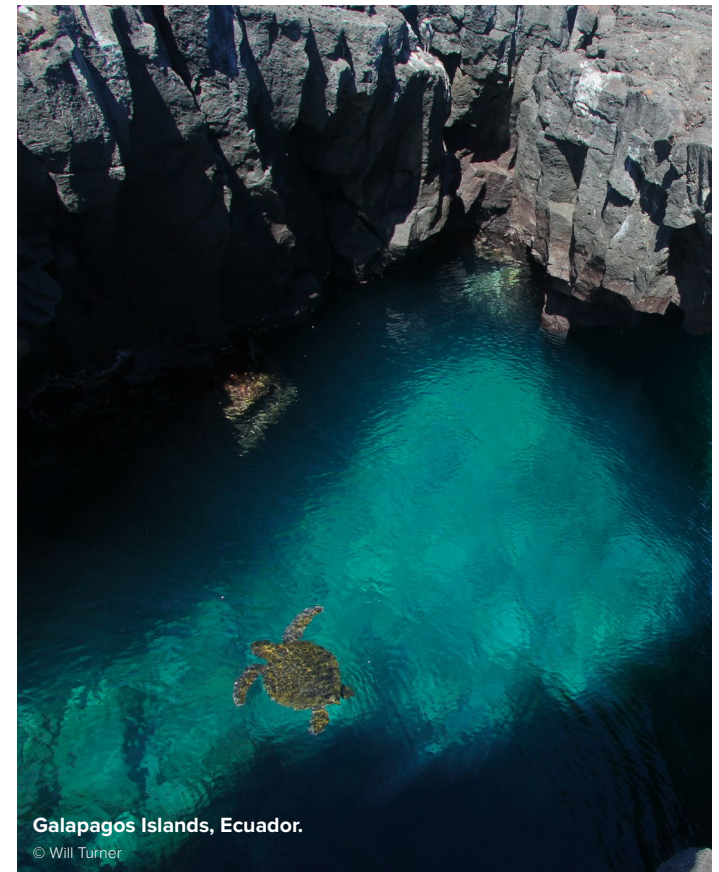


Keeping Galapagos' coasts clean of plastic debris through mobilizing local stewards

In Galapagos, the problem of plastic debris on coasts has been growing over the past decade. The ocean currents that give these islands their unique biodiversity also transport far-reaching marine debris to the islands. Surprisingly, less than 1% of marine plastics collected on Galapagos' coasts originate in the Galapagos. Regardless of their origin, these plastics seriously affect the health and survival of many unique marine and coastal species.

Since 2016, Conservation International together with local government and organizations have organized coastal cleanups in remote, rarely visited sites of the Galapagos Islands with the active participation of fishermen, guides, park rangers and members of the community. To date, the program has involved 3,000 volunteers making over 300 boat trips, required walking and navigating hundreds of kilometers of distant shorelines and collected more than 90 tons of marine debris on otherwise pristine islands.

Additionally, a series of activities focused on environmental education and communication have been developed on inhabited islands to increase public awareness of the consequences of plastic pollution and their impacts on nature and tourism, the islands' primary economic driver.



Enhancing marine governance through strategic partnerships in Costa Rica

In pursuit of promoting sustainable use of marine resources, Conservation International collaborates with the government and small-scale fishing communities to strengthen mechanisms for the control and surveillance of sea activities. Achieved through the installation of satellite monitoring devices on small fishing vessels, this not only ensures traceability of products captured under high sustainability standards but also aids in updating the National Maritime Control and Surveillance Strategy.

Supporting these endeavors, Conservation International has developed a Governance Strategy and Action Plan for Responsible Fishing Marine Area 201 (RFMA 201) in the Gulf of Nicoya. This strategy aims to improve the management of fishing resources through civil society participation, strengthen the capacities of fishers' organizations and deter illegal fishing. Through such initiatives, Conservation International will continue to empower civil society in the sustainable management of coastal-marine resources.



One million corals for Colombia

It is estimated that more than 19% of the world's coral reefs have been destroyed and 15% are under imminent risk of collapse in the next 10-20 years from human pressures. In Colombia, coral reefs have been affected considerably, mainly due to human-causes, global warming, hurricanes and tsunamis. As a result of these pressures, 29% of the country's coral areas are in urgent need of restoration.

The Colombian government, Conservation International and partners, launched the initiative "One Million Corals for Colombia" in 2021, to take decisive action with the involvement of local communities and local authorities to restore 1,000,000 corals in 13 areas (11 Caribbean and 2 Pacific). To date, 850,000 coral fragments have been cultivated, of which more than 200,000 have been transplanted into previously coral rich areas with support from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, five National Natural Parks, four Regional Environmental Corporations, 18 community partners and 16 private sector partners.





Santa Marta, Colombia.

© Conservation International/photo by Ricardo Ahumada

A necessary expansion of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape

Conservation International has been involved in the Eastern Tropical Pacific region since 1987, after establishing our first marine program in Mexico's Gulf of California. Conservation International's marine work then expanded into Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and Ecuador with the launch of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape (ETPS) in 2004, and later to Peru in 2019. The ETPS has exceptional concentrations of sharks, sea turtles, whales, as well as fishery resources. The ETPS is also home to five UNESCO World Natural Heritage Sites hosting a critical network of migratory routes.

Seascapes are a large-scale management approach that replenishes fisheries, provides for the economic and food security of people and safeguards biodiversity. Financial and technical support is essential to each seascape's implementation and long-term management.

Our goal is to build a community of practice that enables seascape stakeholders from around the world to exchange lessons and best practices and drive innovation in seascape-related policy and financing.



Galapagos Islands, Ecuador.

© Conservation International/photo by Sterling Zumbunn



Peru.

© Alvaro Estremadoyro/500px

Shifting to a blue economy in Peru

Peru has one of the most productive oceans in the world and is among the top 10 surfing destinations. Together with Peruvian Society of Environmental Law (SPDA) and Save the Waves Coalition, Conservation International is creating new legal tools to support the conservation of coastal marine resources.

This initiative recognizes that surf breaks and surf ecosystems, when properly managed, are a valuable marine resource that creates an important source of income for local populations. Also, Conservation International is working with the regional government of Huanchaco to rescue the ancestral practice of the caballito de totora, or reed boats, skillfully constructed by local fisherman for thousands of years and considered the origin of the first surfers. Restoring the practice will improve tourism practices, positively affect local well-being and restore totora ecosystems.

NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMIES

A close-up photograph of a person's shoulder and back, carrying a large, woven basket filled with cacao pods. The pods are in various stages of ripeness, showing colors from green to yellow to deep red. The background is a soft-focus green forest. The text 'NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMIES' is overlaid in large, white, bold letters on the left side of the image.

Reserva Comunal Yanasha, Peru.

© CI Peru/Marlon del Águila



NATURE-POSITIVE ECONOMIES ARE GOOD FOR PEOPLE, CLIMATE AND NATURE

They help conserve and restore the many benefits that ecosystems provide, while enabling sustainable development for local communities. Efforts to support nature-positive economies can range from helping communities maintain their traditional livelihoods by promoting sustainable agriculture practices, to investing in the development of local, nature-based enterprises and improving market access for their products. Nature-positive economies also require ambitious sustainability commitments from companies that source raw materials from these landscapes.

Our Goal: Support economic alternatives to reduce forest loss around areas of conservation; transform traditional production systems into nature-positive systems to stop production expansion.

Advancing sustainable management in the Gulf of Nicoya, Costa Rica, through marine spatial planning

Conservation International is spearheading the country's first official Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process. With a focus on the Gulf of Nicoya, this collaborative effort involves local and governmental stakeholders in designing the sustainable use, conservation and restoration of marine and coastal resources. Grounded in scientific, social and economic data, this planning process minimizes conflicts, improves local livelihoods and coordinates actions to ensure the sustainable use of marine ecosystems in alignment with national guidelines and policies.



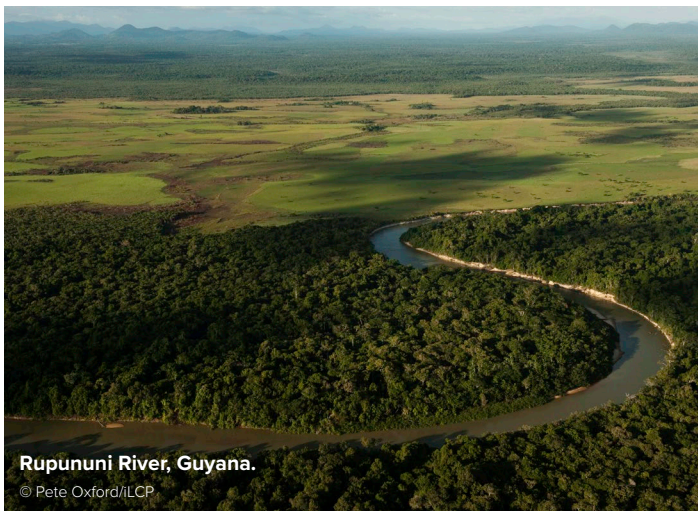
Naturamazonas, a model for reducing deforestation in Colombia's Andes-Amazon region

The Piedemonte Andean-Amazon region is one of the most diverse in Colombia. With the Naturamazonas project, Conservation International and other local institutions are reducing deforestation while generating agroforestry alternatives that contribute to improving the livelihoods of families linked to forest conservation.

To date, restoration activities have been carried out that support forest connectivity, have strengthened production chains and improved sustainable economic enterprises, including:

- 1,701 hectares (4,203 acres) under restoration
- 1,383,404 trees planted
- 3,164 families benefited
- 2,739 hectares (6,768 acres) of forest in zero deforestation agreements
- 1,664 hectares (4,112 acres) of agroforestry systems





Rupununi River, Guyana.

© Pete Oxford/LCP

Guyana's Rupununi – and the bridging of worlds

The Rupununi is a unique ecological region with some of the largest remaining natural tracts of tropical grasslands, mixed forests and wetlands in South America. It is facing big environmental and social changes with the approaching upgrade of an international highway connecting Guyana's coast to Brazil. To reduce the risk of damage to the area's interconnected wetlands, wildlife and people, Conservation International is sharing sustainable production approaches, many already tested and proven in the Rupununi.

Conservation International has now established a long-term financing mechanism, providing a new tool to meet the region's ever-changing technical and resource needs. The mechanism allows for the consistent delivery of support (both technical and financial) across the country's multiple landscapes. Through partnership with the government, we are adapting designs to take a "Build with Nature" approach to Guyana's infrastructure boom.



Musesi Project, Colombia.

© Conservation International/photo by Elise Harrigan

Musesi establishes family nurseries in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta

The Colombia Peace Fund, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and Conservation International, has agreed to undertake ecological restoration initiatives in ecologically and culturally significant regions of the Cabildo Arhuaco del Magdalena and Guajira Sierra Nevada.

This comprehensive project focuses on the restoration of 1,053 hectares (2,602 acres), involving the production and planting of 737,160 plants. The initiative also emphasizes community engagement, benefiting 429 individuals and the establishment of 427 family nurseries. The project's outcomes significantly contribute to both national and global climate change objectives, reinforcing the commitment to conservation and ecological restoration within Indigenous and local communities.



Advocating for nature and its benefits for people

Conservation International's Policy and Government Affairs team plays a strategic role in the Americas, bridging the gap between global environmental challenges and effective policy frameworks. We align our technical assistance and focused advocacy for policy advancements that drive sustainability. Our expertise lies in building capacity through targeted training, consultancies, events and capacity development programs amongst nine countries in the region.

We equip governments and stakeholders with the necessary skills to develop and implement ambitious frameworks, such as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and navigate the complexities of REDD+ (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation). By supporting ambitious NBSAPs and the development of high-integrity jurisdictional REDD+ markets, we unlock pathways for both.



Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador.
© Ralph Lee Hopkins

Highland restoration through agro-ecological systems in the Galapagos Islands

Agricultural production in the Galapagos Islands has come at the cost of clearing highly unique and biodiverse habitats formerly dominated by dense stands of endemic trees and shrubs. Farming using conventional approaches has also resulted in the introduction and expansion of invasive non-native species as well as the use of harmful pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizers. However, conservation paradigms are evolving recognizing the potential contributions of sustainable agriculture to biodiversity conservation and environmental services.

Conservation International is leveraging positive outcomes working in collaboration with farmers by promoting restoration of endemic habitat, protection of nesting areas critical to vulnerable endemic species and regenerative, sustainable and inclusive agriculture. This approach helps farmers adapt to environmental changes, protect endemic species, achieve food sovereignty, diversify livelihoods and combat invasive species in Galapagos.



The Chinampa Refugio Project, Xochimilco, Mexico.
© Conservation International/photo by Victor Martinez

Restoring chinampas, a pre-Hispanic agroecosystem in Mexico City

Conservation International is working to conserve and restore the wetlands of Lake Xochimilco, a Ramsar, FAO and World Heritage site in Mexico City. This place is the last natural remnant of the lagoon system of the Valley of Mexico, threaded by 105-miles of pre-Hispanic canals with floating farms known as chinampas. The chinampas are built in nutrient-rich soil from the canal beds, making them one of the most productive types of agriculture in the world.

Using a restoration model designed by the National Autonomous University of Mexico, we are improving the canal water through the use of a traditional agricultural technique using biofilters. The project has resulted in 72 biofilters in 33 refuges within 40 chinampas, which has led to significantly better water quality, the control of invasive species, the conservation of native species, including the charismatic Mexican axolotl and a betterment of food products produced in the agroecosystem.

Using coffee and cacao to conserve nature in Mexico

Cacao and coffee are produced primarily within Oaxaca and Chiapas. These regions are vital to the country's food security and the growing demand for agricultural products is increasing the rate of deforestation. Conservation International is working with smallholder producers, governments and businesses to reduce the drivers of deforestation and promote social and environmentally responsible agriculture, which is resulting in the production of high-quality and award-winning crops.

Conservation International partnered with Starbucks over 20 years ago to train farmers in Chiapas on best practices for sustainable coffee. Our work led to the creation of a new standard: The Coffee and Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) Practices. Building on this model, Conservation International has successfully supported the recovery of native cacao in Mexico, developing links between farmers and chocolatiers and creating demand for sustainable products.

Conservation International is helping create a new model for business in Mexico that helps to protect biodiversity and forests.



Chiapas, Mexico.

© Joshua Trujillo, Starbucks



Colombia.

© Trond Larsen

Caring for Colombia's paramos, nature's stewards of freshwater

For thousands of years, the high montane ecosystems and paramos (high-altitude Andean wetlands) have supplied Bogota, with a population of over 10 million people, with precious life-giving water, filtered through creeks and streams, rivers and lakes. However, the survival of the paramos and of Bogota's water supply have been threatened by unsustainable agricultural practices, mining and climate change.

Conservation International has been working for over 10 years in the Paramos Conservation Corridor, which supplies 85% of the water for the immense city of Bogota. Within this Corridor, the regional government of Cundinamarca has established the Monquentiva Regional Park covering over 4,000 hectares (10,000 acres) of crucial high montane and paramos.

Conservation International, with partners, has advanced promising models of ecological restoration in urban and rural areas while empowering local communities. Sustainable economic alternatives are key to assuring water supply. Conservation International works with the government and local communities to improve farming practices, making them more sustainable and profitable.



INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE AND FINANCE THAT ACCELERATE CONSERVATION

Chiapas, Mexico.

© Jason Phillibotte



FINANCING IS CRITICAL TO OUR WORK

As is Conservation International's cutting-edge research which generates insights that transform conservation policy and practice. We specialize in developing sustainable financing methods that support on-the-ground conservation efforts. We employ various sustainable finance tools for the long-term protection of critical ecosystems. Our expertise extends to creating financing solutions like conservation trust funds, environmental service payments, carbon project funding, debt-for-nature swaps and sustainable enterprise investments. We collaborate with local stakeholders, including Indigenous communities, to design customized financial mechanisms suitable for local contexts.

Our Goal: Develop effective solutions to some of the most urgent challenges. Support development and increases access to existing climate finance and develops new revenue streams to benefit lasting conservation and livelihoods.

Revolutionizing conservation with recognition of marine ecosystem services in Costa Rica

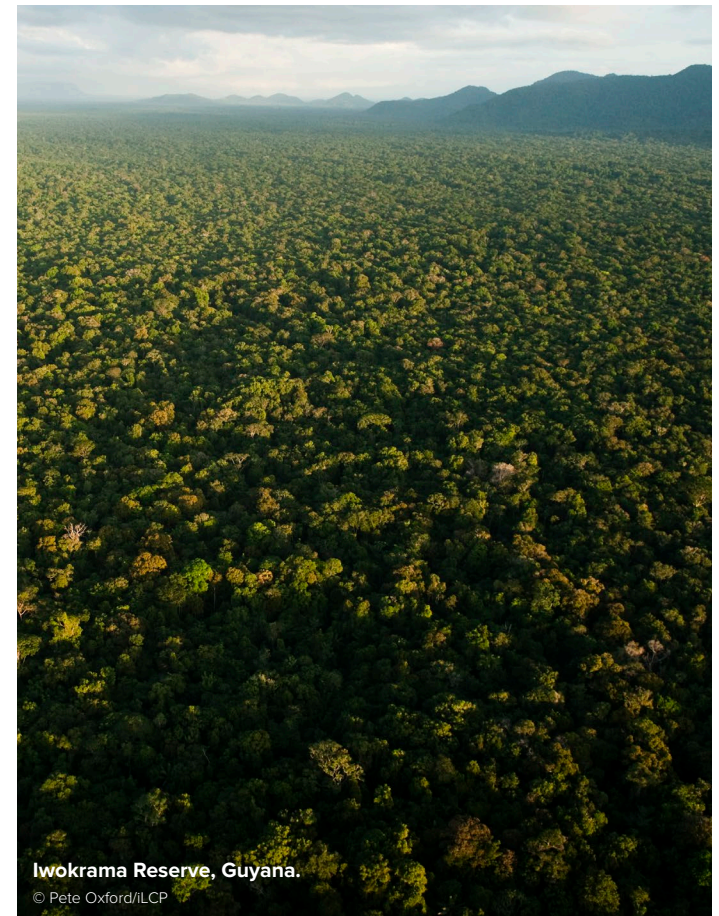
Costa Rica has a history of adopting pioneering policies for the recovery of critical ecosystems, exemplified by the Payment for Environmental Services Program for forest recovery in the 1990s. Today, the country aims to expand and improve the impact of this model to encompass the services provided by coastal marine ecosystems. Leveraging scientific information derived from mangrove ecosystems and blue carbon, Conservation International, supporting the government in this ambitious program, employs its Conservation Agreement model as a basis for the authorities to establish a National Program for the Management and Recognition of Marine Ecosystem Services.



Forest financing in Guyana

Guyana's pioneering Monitoring Reporting and Verification System (MRVS) enhances Indigenous and local communities' participation in new international carbon markets. Guyana now requires all communities to have Village Sustainability Plans to access carbon revenue, with Conservation International and the National Toshao's Council (all elected leaders from over 200 villages) supporting the rollout of these plans across the country. Conservation International is supporting the flow of recent carbon payments into Indigenous-led initiatives and scaling up its planning methodology at the village level with over 200 villages benefiting.

Built in partnership with the Guyana Forestry Commission, with support from Norway, the 10-year-old MRVS is a model for ground-breaking local participation and sustainability through capacity building.



Making fish waste profitable in the Galapagos

In Galapagos, Santa Cruz Island alone produces over 2.2 tons of fish waste that is discarded weekly, polluting local landfills and coastal waters around communities, impacting citizens' health. These practices are a crucial source of environmental contamination, including methane and other greenhouse gases, harmful to local terrestrial and marine wildlife and counterproductive to developing a robust nature tourism destination.

The project aims to transform fish waste (fish skin, bones, heads, and viscera,) utilizing innovative simple low-cost technologies into a valuable animal feed supplement and ecological agricultural fertilizer known as fish silage. Field trials proved that locally made fish silage can replace imported supplements and reduce the use of chemical fertilizers in agriculture, generating additional income for fishermen by selling fish discards. As a result, both terrestrial and marine contamination from fish waste is reduced, economic aspirations of fishers are met without increasing fishing pressure, reliance by farmers on chemical fertilizers is reduced and the carbon emissions associated with fertilizer and poultry food imports are avoided.

This project provides a novel approach to integrating two local productive sectors in a way that generates more money for both while reducing harmful environmental impacts that both currently generate. Given the simple and low-cost technologies associated with fish silage production, as well as the strong similarities between the various islands in Galapagos, this initiative could easily be replicated in the rest of the archipelago. Likewise, if successful implementation is achieved in Galapagos, Conservation International is well positioned to expand this initiative across its 25 coastal fisheries program sites in 11 different countries.



Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos, Ecuador.

© Afuera Producciones

The Peruvian Amazon: an investment opportunity

The Amazon Business Alliance promotes innovative financial instruments to accelerate business models that contribute to the sustainable development of local communities, while mitigating the impacts of climate change. As part of its strategy to mobilize resources from the private sector to sustainable activities it joined forces with the Municipal Savings and Loan Associations (Federacion de Cajas Municipales) to design and pilot the Biocredit. Biocredit, is the first financial product for sustainable agriculture in the Peruvian Amazon. It helps close the financial access gap for small and medium producers and agricultural organizations in the Amazon with sound environmental and social practices.





Ampiyacu Apayacu, Loreto, Peru.

© Gustavo Carrasco

NOW IS THE TIME.

We are at a threshold moment for nature, biodiversity, climate and people. Join us so together we can protect and restore our forests and mangrove ecosystems, conserve our oceans and improve fisheries sustainability and strengthen nature-positive economies in critical landscapes and seascapes in the Americas.

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