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Conservation | Climate Change | Sustainability

COLOMBIA'S LIVING LANDSCAPE

Colombia. A land of striking contrasts – and outstanding natural beauty. The meeting point of Central and South America, with the magnificent Andes mountain ranges running right through it, this remarkable country is literally teeming with life.

Despite taking up less than 1% of the world's land area, Colombia is home to an incredible 10% of known global plant and animal species, making it one of the most biologically diverse places on Earth.

A WILDLIFE HAVEN

Colombia's diverse forests support countless species, including the spectacled bear, spider monkeys, jaguars and harpy eagles. And this incredible country has coasts on both the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. Every year humpback whales return here to breed, and five of the seven species of marine turtles nest on its beaches.

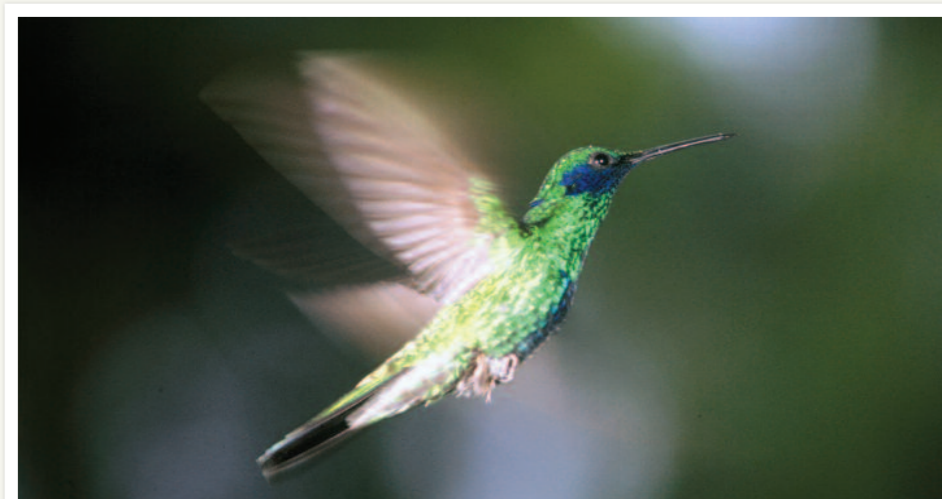
Nowhere else on Earth are there so many amphibian species. And Colombia also has the third highest number of reptiles, the largest variety of butterflies and the second highest number of freshwater fish species – 3,200 compared to the UK's 50.



© STAFFAN WIDSTRAND / WWF

AN AVIAN KALEIDOSCOPE

Over 1,800 bird species are found here – more than in any other country in the world. Fascinating feathered inhabitants include the spectacular scarlet macaw, the colourful toucan and a wide variety of hummingbirds.



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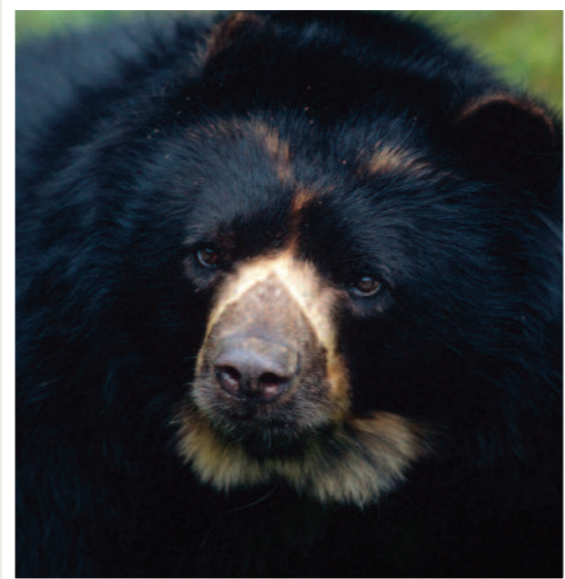
Malaga Bay is an important breeding ground for humpback whales and marine turtles. Read more overleaf.

Colombia's oceans and coastlines are visited by hundreds of migratory species, such as the humpback whale, critically endangered marine turtles, and the largest number of North American migratory birds on the continent.



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The Northern Andes is one of the most densely populated mountain ranges in the world, providing critical water supplies for the majority of Colombia's population. The headwaters of the most important river systems in northern South America, including the Amazon and the Orinoco, are found here.



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SPECTACLED BEAR

South America's only bear species is mainly found in the isolated cloud forests and mountaintop moorlands of the Andes. Its habitat is becoming increasingly patchy and fragmented due to land clearance for infrastructure, crop growing and cattle grazing.



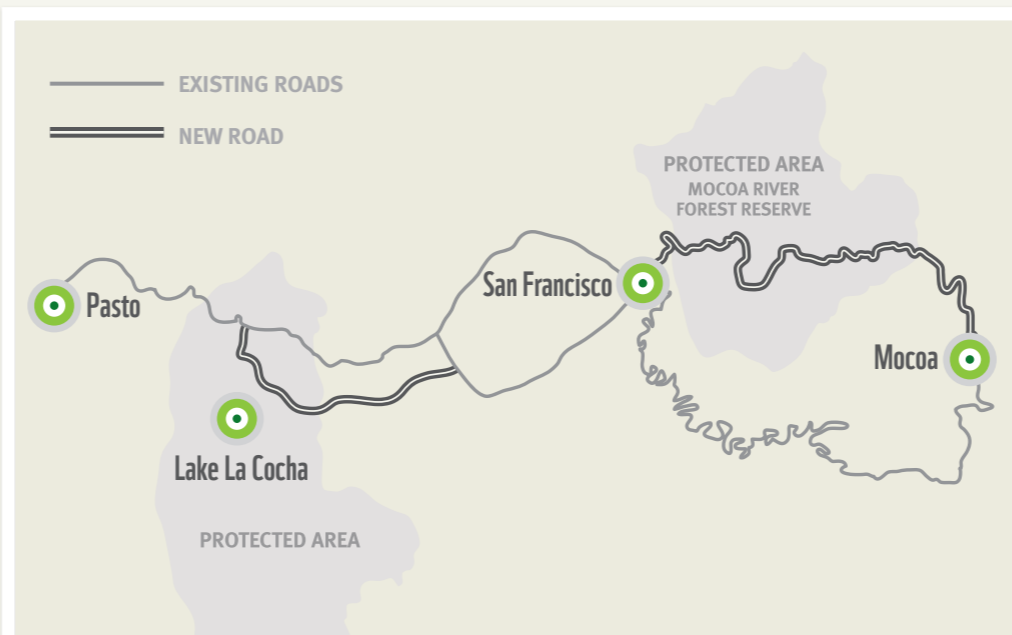
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Farmer conservationist and long-time community leader, Conchita Matabanchoy lives in the forest next to Lake La Cocha. Turn over to read her story.



© LARS K. (IMAGE IS TAKEN FROM WWF'S AMAZON ALIVE! REPORT. VISIT WWF.ORG/AMAZONALIVE)

The proposed Pasto-Mocoa road will provide a new, safer route between the two towns



1/3 A THIRD OF COLOMBIA'S PLANT SPECIES AND 12% OF ITS LAND MAMMALS DON'T EXIST ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD



© EMILIO CONSTANTINO / WWF-COLOMBIA

DECADES OF SUCCESS

Thanks to the Guardians' support we have a long and successful track record in Colombia. Here are just a few examples.

PROTECTING MALAGA BAY



This beautiful bay lies in the central part of Colombia's Pacific coast. It's globally recognised as one of the most important breeding and nursing sites for humpback whales. Every year, between 500 and 700 visit to mate and rear their young.



148

MALAGA BAY IS HOME TO 148 SPECIES OF SALTWATER AND FRESHWATER FISH

Disruption and destruction

Five years ago, plans were being made to build an industrial port in Malaga Bay, which would have been catastrophic for wildlife. Thanks to the Guardians' generosity, what was almost a disaster is now a real success story.

A major achievement

The Guardians' donations helped fund our crucial campaign to lobby the Colombian government and raise public awareness of the consequences of a new port. And after intense debate, the government finally declared Malaga Bay a protected area in 2010. We were fully involved in all stages of the technical design of plans for the new Malaga Bay Uraba National Park, which now protects over 47,000 hectares of ocean and coastline, an area twice the size of London.

The government's decision opens up a new page for the future of the Malaga Bay region and the whole country. It's been a long and arduous struggle, but the end result is worth it. And with your support we can achieve even more.

It's critical that we continue to strengthen the management of existing protected areas. These include mangroves in the southern Pacific coast area; and Gorgona and Sanquianga National Parks – vital habitats for sea birds, marine mammals, fish and marine turtles. We're also working to make sure that by 2013 two new coastal sites become integrated into Colombia's protected area network. One of these, Acandí, is an important nesting site for critically endangered leatherback and hawksbill turtles.

500-700

BETWEEN 500 AND 700 HUMPBACK WHALES A YEAR VISIT MALAGA BAY TO BREED, GIVE BIRTH AND NURSE THEIR YOUNG



MAKING NATURAL PARTNERSHIPS

We're helping local farmers in Pasto protect the forest and get more from their land.

Conchita Matabanchoy has lived in Pasto, south-west Colombia, all of her life. Although poor, she was so convinced of the need to safeguard the natural environment that she designated her own land as a nature reserve. And she's spent her life helping other local people live sustainably and protect the forest.

When Conchita was a child, timber and charcoal production were the main sources of income for small-scale local farmers, and the whole family were involved in the process.

"Children didn't have time to be children," recalls Conchita. "They worked with their families when they turned four, and women's roles in the household were not recognised."

Life was tough, and the relentless deforestation took its toll on the beautiful natural environment.



A woman of vision

Believing she could change things, Conchita organised her neighbours into a local community group that revived a traditional practice of co-operative working, known as the 'minga'.

Conchita's minga set up a loan scheme for small-scale agricultural projects such as raspberry plantations. It meant that families could support themselves without destroying trees to make charcoal. The forests began to regenerate and many species that had previously disappeared returned to the area.

3,000

WE NOW HELP OVER 3,000 PEOPLE FROM 550 RURAL FAMILIES MANAGE THEIR LANDS SUSTAINABLY



Private nature reserves

The projects were so successful that local communities began turning their properties into private conservation areas and created a network of private nature reserves. And Conchita became a founding member of the Association for Small Farmer Development (ADC), which is supported by WWF.

Working together, we now help over 3,000 people from 550 rural families manage their lands sustainably using traditional knowledge and practices. We've also overcome threats, like a large-scale dam development planned for Lake La Cocha. If this had gone ahead it would have destroyed some of the most unique mountain grasslands in the world, and with it countless critical wildlife habitats.

Working with the ADC and other conservation partners, we managed to get the area around the lake designated as a wetland of international importance, and plans for the dam were cancelled.

The ADC's hard work, perseverance and dedication has been recognised internationally with the winning of several prestigious environmental awards. Your donation will help us to carry on working in partnership with them and our other conservation partners. We can also go on supporting local communities, and help create more private nature reserves.

SUPPORTING SEAS OF CHANGE

We're protecting marine turtles while improving the lives of coastal communities.

A remarkable man, Dr. Diego Amoroch, has dedicated thirty years of his life to researching and protecting marine turtles. He founded and now heads the Research Centre for Environmental Management and Development (CIMAD). This WWF-supported organisation promotes community-based conservation across Colombia's Pacific coast.

A difficult dilemma

Five out of the seven marine turtle species visit Colombia's waters, including critically endangered hawksbill and leatherback turtles. But marine turtles are often innocent victims of unsustainable fishing practices. Thousands every year are snared on long-line fishing hooks, or caught in trawl nets, and drown. Turtles and their

eggs are also poached for food and money. In past decades these threats have caused a dramatic decline in turtle numbers. Expanding coastal development is only adding to the pressure, as it disturbs turtle nesting sites.

An inspired solution

Many people living along Colombia's Pacific coast rely on fishing for their livelihoods. CIMAD's work links the turtle's protection with the wellbeing of coastal communities. Local fishermen are shown turtle-friendly fishing methods, such as circle hooks, that reduce the risk of turtles being accidentally caught. They're also taught turtle first-aid, enabling them to treat and release caught turtles.



Turtles needing specialist care are taken to CIMAD's Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Centre, which also offers community education, from basic literacy to mentoring the next generation of conservation scientists. When they are released from the centre the turtles are fitted with a satellite tag and monitored, allowing local schoolchildren to follow their migration online.

Generating new local businesses is also important. In an initiative led by wives of local fishermen, plastic litter cleared from beaches is being turned into hand-woven bags and hats, preserving turtle nesting sites and boosting incomes.

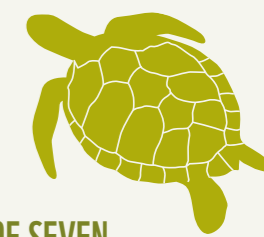
Diego is now working towards the implementation of a Pacific regional action plan to secure a long-term future for turtles. In 2010 he won the prestigious Whitley Award, a top nature conservation prize awarded to individuals leading sustained, effective efforts to conserve the natural environment.

Your support today means we can go on giving technical, logistical and financial assistance to Diego and CIMAD's projects now and in the future. It also means we can increase our work with commercial fisheries to promote sustainable fishing practices, like circular hooks.



5

FIVE OUT OF SEVEN MARINE TURTLE SPECIES VISIT COLOMBIA'S WATERS, INCLUDING ENDANGERED HAWKSBILL AND LEATHERBACK TURTLES



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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