

COLOMBIA'S Forests of Mist

Discover the
hidden life
of Guanacas

and why we're tripling your donations
during this Big Match Fortnight to save it

**BIG
MATCH FUND
FORTNIGHT**
11-25 OCTOBER 2023

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



The WLT network doubles

Stories of optimism at first
WLT Partners' Symposium in years



Ten years of 'Big Match' appeals

The decade of action made possible
by WLT supporters like you

Plus new Snow Leopard reserves, field visits to Asia, and Buy an Acre in South Africa

COLOMBIA TODAY, THE WORLD TOMORROW



Dr Catherine Barnard,
World Land Trust CEO

So much can change in three years. When the WLT partnership last met in Guatemala in 2020, the world was a different place. Since then, we've had a global pandemic, and the catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis are ever more visible across the world. But what hasn't changed is the passion of the WLT partnership to protect our shared natural home, together, so I'm delighted that while 23 WLT partner organisations attended our Guatemala Symposium, we welcomed 46 in Cambridge this July for our 2023 Symposium.

The event (see next page) was an incredible opportunity to make new friends and reconnect with old ones – to take a step back and reflect strategically on how we can make an even greater impact. There were over 1,000 years of combined conservation knowledge packed in our college conference room in Cambridge, a diversity of experiences that is our strength. The energy from the attendees really drove home the enormous growth of the WLT network over the last three years, and the potential, and eagerness, to do even more.

WLT and our partners are passionate and driven as we strive to become an even greater force for good. But it all comes back to our collective efforts and to you, the WLT supporters who have funded every square metre of land, every tree and every ranger our partners have delivered since our foundation. It is people like you who have made a decade of 'Big Match'

appeals possible (see pages 10-11), and it is you, once more, who could make this year's appeal a success, helping (see pages 4-9) fund the protection of Colombia's Guanacas forests. We know that all of us are finding life even more expensive this year so like in 2022, thanks to our generous matchpot supporters, we will triple what you donate, so that whatever you can give can go much further for the life that hides within these forests of mist.

Over the years we've all shown what we can achieve together, and this year, I hope that you will join us once more to make a difference for a landscape that needs our help to thrive.

**COLOMBIA'S
Forests of Mist**
Use the letter
we've sent you for
tripled donations to
our new appeal



Together with our new partners, WLT supporters are now helping to protect...

...THE SNOW LEOPARD...

More than 90,000 hectares (222,000+ acres) of Karakorum-West Tibetan steppe legally protected for Snow Leopards, and linked to a nearby national park. 50,000 trees to restore this habitat. Six rangers to guard it. That is what the Snow Leopard Foundation ambitions in Pakistan and donations from WLT supporters are helping to bring it about, in a project where conservation areas will be managed by local people.



...A 'CRITICALLY ENDANGERED' FLORA HAVEN...

A three-hour drive east of South Africa's Cape Town, Buy an Acre supporters are helping to save the last 5% of one of Earth's most endangered habitats. With support from donations to our programme, new partner Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust is protecting swathes of yellow- and magenta-flowered shrubland home to hundreds of threatened plant species, Black Harrier hawks (pictured left), and more.



...and other habitats in Brazil, Mexico, Uganda, and beyond!
Visit worldlandtrust.org to meet all the new WLT partners saving land on your behalf



CONSERVATION OPTIMISM AT FIRST WLT PARTNERS' SYMPOSIUM IN YEARS

By **Dr Richard Cuthbert**, WLT Director of Conservation

Held on 10-13 July 2023, this year's Partners' Symposium was WLT's first since before the pandemic, and our biggest yet.

The numbers at the University of Cambridge's Robinson College reflected just how exponentially the WLT network has grown in recent years. Of the 46 conservation partners who attended, 23 were organisations that hadn't been with us at the Guatemala Symposium of 2020. The new faces – many from Africa and Asia, continents where WLT has been adding new partners – gathered at the College gardens and meeting

halls alongside WLT's operational partners (IUCN Netherlands, Nature and Culture International, and the University of Leeds), and others who visited as the Symposium closed in celebration, from WLT Ambassador Sarah Class to WLT Patron David Gower OBE.

Together, we all discussed what had brought us together: how we as a network can further our conservation impact at a time of planetary crises. Conservation funding models, engagement with local communities, tech-assisted biodiversity monitoring, forest restoration techniques, project

financial sustainability – all these crucial topics (and more) took centre stage not just in the formal sessions, but also over meals and late into the evening. With 26 countries represented by our partners alone, the debates were only the stronger for the diversity of perspectives.

Supporting each other as we work towards the mission we all share: saving land, saving species. That is what the WLT partnership is about, and as we left Cambridge, we were inspired about the impact we can all make in this pivotal decade for people and planet.



52 WLT PARTNERS IN 2023 (26 IN 2018)



"The symposium was absolutely brilliant and the most useful and inspiring conference I have ever been to. Never before have I felt so connected to so many amazing conservationists, all at the coalface, fighting similar battles and challenges."

Dr Odette Curtis-Scott,
Director,
Overberg Renosterveld
Conservation Trust,
South Africa



THE HIDDEN LIFE YOU CAN PROTECT THROUGH OUR NEW 'BIG MATCH' APPEAL

BIG MATCH FUND FORTNIGHT
11-25 OCTOBER 2023

COLOMBIA'S Forests of Mist

A bird that was thought extinct. The world's tallest palm tree. Roaming big cats. Elusive treefrogs of the Andes. Since time immemorial the mists of Colombia's Guanacas have been sheltering astounding life, and now chemical-heavy farming and cattle ranching are creeping nearer. But not if we act now. Tripled during Big Match Fortnight (11 to 25 October), your donations to our new appeal 'Colombia's Forests of Mist' will help to expand a critical reserve, plant trees to restore it, and fund local people to guard it.

So rare and threatened is the Antioquia Brushfinch (pictured left) that it was thought extinct until 2019 but here, in the cloud forests protected by Fundación Guanacas, it lives on. José Rodrigo Castaño, president of our partner, thinks constantly of the songbird, and the misty land that safeguards it. Every time he closes his eyes, he hears it: the water that gives this place life – the water that gave it its name.

For that's how local Indigenous People once called this place: Guanacas, or 'sacred water over stone'. And like everything else in these forests high on Colombia's Cordillera Central, it begins with the mist. Droplets condense off the near-permanent cloud cover, slide down the trunks of Quindio Wax Palms (Colombia's national tree), white-flowering *Magnolia yarumalensis* trees, and the stalks of spiky bromeliads where insects live and hummingbirds hover. The water forms springs that shelter threatened amphibians such as the Chocolate Frog. It crosses Puma, Oncilla, and Ocelot habitat to then cascade down to the lower valleys, where it gifts tens of thousands of people the water they need to drink, feed their crops, and power their dams.

Over the decades, José Rodrigo has led Fundación Guanacas in safeguarding these cloud forests and the delicate balance that rests on them. With help from WLT and other organisations, a reserve of over 850 hectares (2,100 acres) has been protected over the years – but the land around it remains vulnerable to the advance of farming and ranching. That is what your 'Big Match' appeal donations will guard against: expanding and reforesting the reserve, unlocking ranger and ecotourism jobs so that local people benefit too. Together, we can preserve these forests the way mists have kept them for millennia – read on to find out how!

THIS IS WHAT YOUR TRIPLED DONATIONS WILL DO FOR THE HIDDEN LIFE OF GUANACAS



ADDING 181 HA (447 ACRES) TO THE RESERVE

Of the total 302 ha (746 acres) our partner wants to protect with help from other sources



PLANTING 36,500 TREES

So that 100 ha (247 acres) can be restored between 2023 and 2027



FUNDING FOUR RANGERS

From the local community between 2023 and 2025



FINANCING ECOTOURISM CABINS

So that conservation action can boost local livelihoods too

FOR THE BENEFIT OF...



320+ SPECIES

Who call these cloud forests home



38,000+ PEOPLE

Who rely on Guanacas for water

“Everything starts here, in the Guanacas cloud forests, in its water that gives life. With your help, we must protect it, for those who love life are never wrong.”

JOSÉ RODRIGO CASTAÑO

Founder and President of Fundación Guanacas



CHECK OUR LETTER TO READ JOSÉ RODRIGO'S MESSAGE TO YOU IN FULL

THE FORESTS OF MIST YOU CAN SAVE

EXPANDING THE GUANACAS RESERVE

At Guanacas, conservation has already made huge strides. Since Fundación Guanacas president José Rodrigo Castaño (pictured) began safeguarding the land he inherited in 1989, the reserve has grown to protect 850-plus hectares of cloud forest. Now our partner's goal is to save another 302 hectares around the reserve – of which 181 hectares will be funded by your 'Big Match' appeal donations – before intensive farming and ranching can come any closer. "After decades of work, we must push on for Guanacas, and with your help, we can save this land," says José Rodrigo.



RESTORING THE CLOUD FOREST

Your donations will not just bring legal protection to tracts of cloud forest in Guanacas. They will also restore them by funding 36,500 trees, including the Critically Endangered Quindío Wax Palms, the Endangered *Magnolia yarumalensis* and shrubs favoured by the Antioquia Brushfinch. "When I see the before and after of restoration at Guanacas, I get goosebumps," says Guanacas Forest Engineer Alba Yurani Escobar Caicedo (pictured) of the push to revive forest corridors used by Puma and other big cats. "We all dream to continue planting, to see the forest as it once was."



WATER AND JOBS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

The conservation you support through our 'Big Match' appeal places local people at its heart. For the communities around Guanacas, the expanded reserve will not only act as a water source, carbon store, soil fertility ally, and barrier against climate-driven erosion and landslides. It will also unlock ranger jobs and revenues from ecotourism cabins funded by you. "We're already seeing a change with people in this area," says Guanacas ranger Henry Londoño (pictured). "Those who own land now tell us they no longer want to sell it to producers, that saving the forest is the right thing to do."

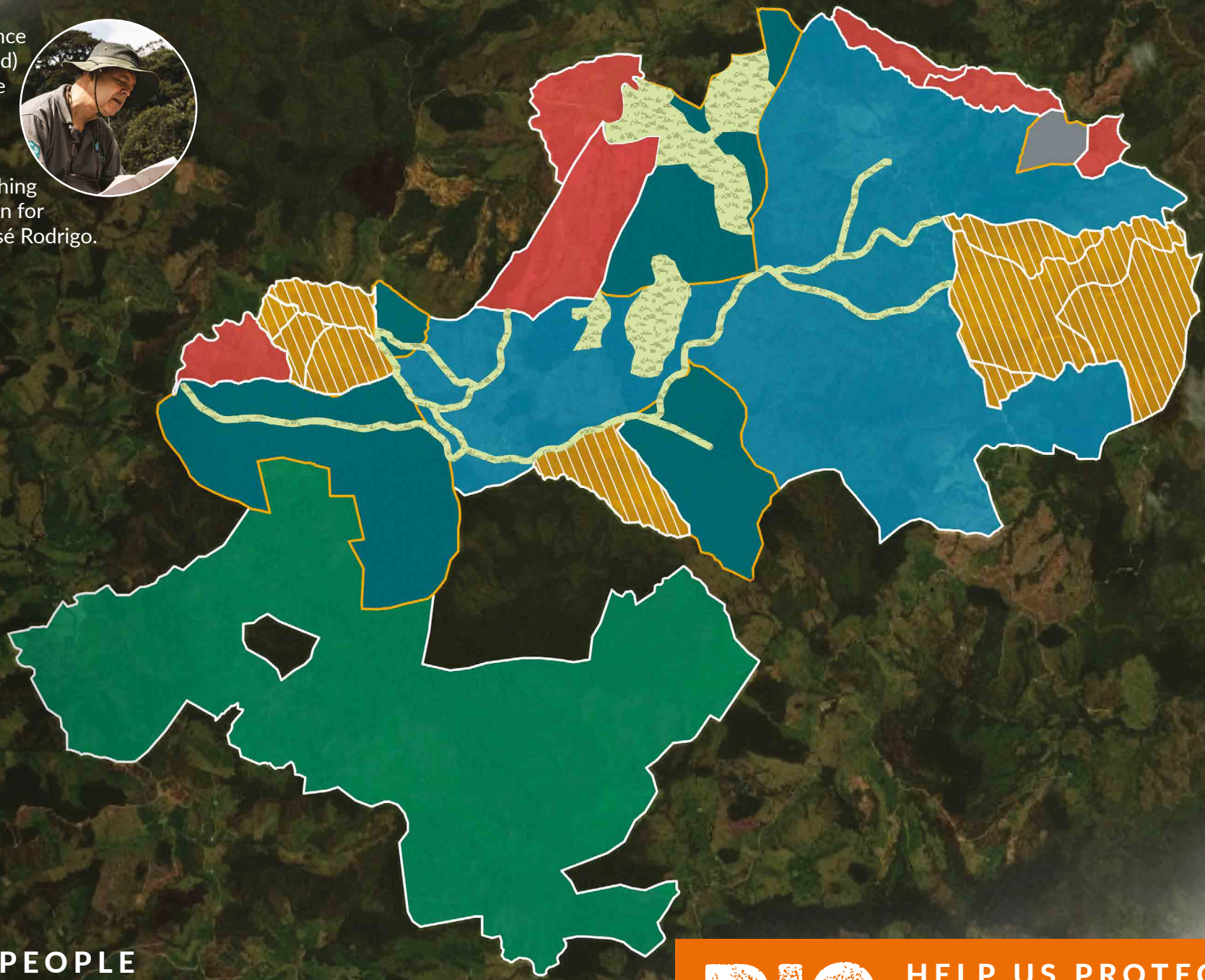


GUANACAS: CONSERVATION SO FAR

- Current boundaries of Guanacas Reserve
- Completed reserve extensions funded by WLT
- Reserve extensions in progress funded by WLT
- Santa Rosa de Osos Municipal Reserve

GUANACAS: FROM 2023 ONWARDS

- Your donations will fund these extensions of 181 ha in 2023
- Future extensions
- Restoration plans including trail margins



ONCILLA



INCA JAY



MAGNOLIA YARUMALENSIS



CHOCOLATE FROG



SPARKLING VIOLETEAR

**BIG
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11-25 OCTOBER 2023

HELP US PROTECT THE HIDDEN LIFE OF GUANACAS

In Colombia's Antioquia Department, Guanacas is the exception, one of the last remnants of lower montane wet forest left – and with your help, Fundación Guanacas can protect more of it while there's still time.

From 11 to 25 October, what you donate online (worldlandtrust.org) or using the form attached to the letter we've sent you will be tripled. A **£20 donation will become £60**, three times more funds for our partner as they purchase habitat, plant trees, and enlist new rangers.



A corridor for roamers

Through this 'Big Match' appeal, we can gift big cats like Puma a protected, restored corridor of cloud forest, supporting a conservation project where our partner's rangers work with farmers to minimise human-wildlife conflict



Protection for unique flora

Mist, water, silence. At Guanacas, elevation and remoteness have combined to shape a haven of singular flora, so much so that an expert recently identified 120 species of epiphytes – or plants that grow on other plants – in just five days.



Jobs for local people

The trees funded by your donations will not just make the forest stronger. They will also see local people hired for six tree-planting positions and a nursery coordinator, employed alongside community rangers and jobs in ecotourism.



A future for the Antioquia Brushfinch

Known in Spanish as *montañerito paisa* ('little mountaineer from Antioquia'), the Antioquia Brushfinch is so threatened only 50 individuals have been sighted since its rediscovery in 2019, but at Guanacas we can save one of its few homes left

PROTECT THE HIDDEN LIFE OF GUANACAS - USE OUR LETTER TO DONATE

Image credits clockwise from top right: Andrea Ferreira, Gabbro/Alamy Stock Photo, Andrea Ferreira, Shutterstock - Evgeniyqw

10 YEARS OF 'BIG MATCH' APPEALS

Dan Bradbury, WLT Director of Brand and Communications



For WLT the 'Big Match' idea goes back to 2013, when we secured pledges from generous supporters that would match every public donation during a fortnight. Thanks to their incredible generosity, our Orangutan Appeal raised £750,000 during those first fourteen days, going on to reach the £1,000,000 target after

the fortnight – and our partner HUTAN was able to save a corridor of some of Earth's most biodiverse land, in Borneo.

Such commitment for nature, that year and all years since, even at this time of huge pressures on what people can donate. It fills WLT with gratitude, and inspires us about what we can achieve

this year, once more, in what will be our eleventh 'Big Match' appeal, in Colombia. Protecting the hidden life of misty Guanacas, together. Saving standing forest, about the most important thing we can do for people and planet right now. Proving, as with every other 'Big Match' appeal, what we can do when we come together for habitats that need our help.

To our incredible supporters: Thank you. With your help, WLT has raised more than £8,275,000 for nature through 'Big Match' appeals since 2013 - and counting.

10 years, 10 wins for nature



1

2013 ORANGUTAN APPEAL, BORNEO

Raised: £1,000,000 target hit
Achieved: Our first ever 'Big Match' appeal allowed partner HUTAN to protect a corridor of some of the world's most biodiverse rainforests



2

2014 BIG CAT BIG MATCH, ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL

Raised: £500,000 target hit
Achieved: WLT partners in Argentina (FBA) and Brazil (REGUA) were able to create and expand reserves crucial to Puma, Ocelot, and many others



3

2015 FORESTS IN THE SKY, ECUADOR

Raised: £500,000 target hit
Achieved: Fundación EcoMinga linked two national parks of Andean cloud forests, for the benefit of Black-and-chestnut Eagle and many more



4

2016 ELEPHANT CORRIDOR APPEAL, INDIA

Raised: £750,000 target hit
Achieved: WTI was able to protect the most important Asian Elephant corridor left between India's Western and Eastern Ghats ranges



5

2017 TREASURE CHEST APPEAL, GUATEMALA

Raised: £625,000 target hit
Achieved: With WLT supporters' help, FUNDAECO saved 1,000 ha for Baird's Tapir and hundreds of other species in Sierra Santa Cruz



6

2018 JUNGLE FOR JAGUARS, BELIZE

Raised: £600,000 target hit
Achieved: Partner CSFI protected a corridor of nearly 10,000 ha, linking 35,000-plus ha of habitat in deforestation-hit northern Belize



7

2019 SCORCHED EARTH TO FOREST HAVEN, VIETNAM

Raised: £575,000 target hit
Achieved: Viet Nature received funds to bring 120,000 trees to war-torn hillsides, restoring the home of Critically Endangered langurs



8

2020 SAVING ECUADOR'S CHOCÓ FORESTS, ECUADOR

Raised: £925,000 raised (target was £500,000)
Achieved: A surge of donations allowed Fundación Jocotoco to protect some of the last 2% of a global biodiversity hotspot

FOR HABITATS...

Thanks to Fundación Jocotoco, some of the last 2% of Ecuador's Chocó forests is being protected – and WLT supporters played their part. More than 900 ha of the 6,688 ha secured so far by the project has been funded with donations from our 2020 'Big Match' appeal, with other appeal-funded purchases planned over the rest of 2023. What's more, our partner reports that the recovery of the habitats already protected has been "astonishing", so much so that a new lab has been set up for 15 local and international universities to study the rapid comeback of Canandé's wildlife.

FOR BIODIVERSITY...

Ecuador's Chocó is so special around 15% of its species are found nowhere else on Earth, and some of them faced an extinction cliff if logging was allowed to continue at current rates. But 'Big Match' appeal donations helped to unlock new protections, and now, biodiversity wins are following one another. Giant Anteaters and Bush Dogs have returned to Canandé, new species of bee, frog, bat, rodent, and tree have been discovered, and most of the 500 Brown-headed Spider Monkeys thought to be left in the wild have been spotted in the reserve and surrounding areas.

FOR LOCAL PEOPLE...

To save the Chocó as Fundación Jocotoco is doing is to protect the forest-based culture of Indigenous Chachi people like José Añapa, who has been working to monitor primates in Canandé since 2020. "If I consider my local community, where there are no forests remaining, Canandé, in contrast, is filled with a diverse array of plant and animal species," he says. Meanwhile, researcher Silvia Vélez, also from the area, adds: "I have witnessed deforestation before but now I can see how forests are coming back in Canandé, and I watch nature thrive, the way it did before."



9

2021 GUARDIANS OF NIMLA HA', GUATEMALA

Raised: £1,370,000+ raised (target was £1,200,000) **Achieved:** In the year of COP26, FUNDAECO saved Laguna Grande's life-packed forests, wetlands and mangroves for posterity

FOR HABITATS...

At Laguna Grande, the conservation delivered by donations to 2021's 'Big Match' appeal has been swift in coming. The Reserve's tripling around this lagoon of Caribbean Guatemala was completed in 2022, and now FUNDAECO is working hard to keep it safe. At an average of two patrols per week, the crew of seven rangers is combing the trails alongside various community groups. The result? No serious poaching or logging incident reported anywhere, so far in 2023, within the 2,000-plus ha of forests, mangroves and wetlands under legal protection.

FOR BIODIVERSITY...

At a staggering 700+ species, the life of Laguna Grande deserves the protection it is now getting and FUNDAECO has made great strides in documenting it, with 25-plus monitoring activities carried out, so far, in 2023 alone. Monthly surveys and drone footage are casting a light on the lagoon's West Indian Manatees, while camera traps have been set up to keep track of Jaguar populations, and mangrove health is being screened with help from Smithsonian Institute researchers. Bird life has been another highlight, with the count of confirmed species growing from 122 to 135 year on year.

FOR COMMUNITIES...

This appeal saw WLT supporters join forces with Laguna Grande's real guardians: the Indigenous Maya Q'eqchi, who have long called this area home. Two years on, these communities remain central. FUNDAECO has signed three local agreements for illegal logging prevention, mangrove conservation, and the creation of a new fish replenishment zone. Ecotourism plans with tour operators are already helping to bring new conservation-friendly income to this area, while new women's health clinics have continued to operate, staffed by locals like FUNDAECO community worker Marta Tiul Cabnal.



10

2022 LIFE ON THE EDGE, ECUADOR

Raised: £1,430,000 target hit
Achieved: Thanks to WLT supporters, Fundación EcoMinga secured funds to expand two "evolutionary island" reserves of cloud forest

11



2023 COLOMBIA'S FORESTS OF MIST

Your chance to build on a decade of impact

Target: Our 'Big Match' appeal needs to raise £1,150,000 to protect the hidden life of Guanacas
Impact: Tripled during the Fortnight (11-25 October), your donations will save 181 ha, reforest another 100 ha, and fund rangers and ecotourism cabins. Turn to our letter for more info.

WLT Conservation Programmes Officer
Gwynne Braidwood on visiting
community-driven partner projects
in India and Nepal



INDIA'S SECRET GROVES

Having worked closely with WLT's Asian partners for several years, it was exciting to visit them for the first time, starting with India's Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF). Earlier this year, I travelled to see first-hand how our partner is empowering local people, with WLT's help, to protect the sacred groves of the Western Ghats. Revered by neighbouring villages, these islands of intact forest are truly amazing places, home to some of the region's oldest and tallest trees, as well as a critical habitat for Great Indian Hornbill and threatened frog species. By strengthening the historical bond between communities and their groves, AERF is helping to keep deforestation at bay, and fuelling hopes that the wider landscape will be restored.

NEPAL'S FOREST GUARDIANS

To safeguard a corridor from old-growth lowland forests to Himalaya peaks over 8,000 metres high – that is what Koshi Tappu Kanchenjunga Biodiversity Education Livelihood Terra-Studio (KTK-BELT) is helping Indigenous Peoples to achieve in Nepal, and during my trip, I had a chance to discover how the new WLT-backed project is coming along. Together with the Forest Guardians that KTK-BELT is training to protect the habitats they know best, I explored a wilderness that transported me to the dense, magical forests of the books I used to read as a young girl, and stumbled across pangolin burrows. I was humbled to be welcomed into community homes, where I heard what forests mean to the people of this corner of eastern Nepal.

As we navigate the sixth mass extinction, the vital work that WLT supports cannot happen without people: Indigenous communities, women, youth, and all others. To them and the WLT supporters who make this conservation impact possible, thank you. Your commitment to the planet is an inspiration to us all.

“The
dense,
magical
forests
of the books
I used to read
as a girl”

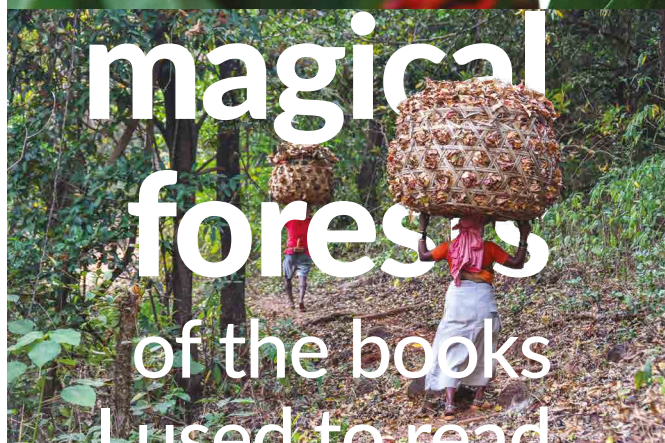


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Erratum | We apologise for missing our long-time partner Programme for Belize from our partner list in our Annual Report.

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