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**LAST CHANCE
EXPAND COLOMBIA'S**

EL SILENCIO RESERVE NOW



EXPANDING COLOMBIA'S EL SILENCIO RESERVE

**Protecting forests, wetlands,
and wildlife from destruction**



Silvery-brown Tamarin

Country

Colombia

Partner/Organisation

Fundación Biodiversa Colombia (FBC)

Biome

Tropical and Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests

Ecoregion

Magdalena-Urabá Moist Forests

Habitats

The Magdalena-Urabá Moist Forests of north Colombia is an undulating landscape of moist forests and flat wetlands. More than half of the project area is covered by dense, moist forests, interspersed with patches of scrubland and large pools of flooded wetland. Around a fifth of the area is covered by a blend of man-made pasture and natural grassland.

Project summary

Fundación Biodiversa Colombia's (FBC) El Silencio Reserve safeguards one of the most important remnants of tropical moist forest in Colombia's Middle Magdalena Valley. This project will expand the reserve by purchasing two neighbouring properties of 284 ha and 1,211 ha each. Their protection will not only secure forest but also buffer and safeguard Ciénaga de Barbacoas, a wetland that acts as a vital freshwater system for the wildlife and traditional fishing communities of the area.

The land supports a diverse mosaic of ecosystems: moist tropical forest, natural and man-made grasslands, shrub and wetland habitats, all falling within the highly threatened Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena biodiversity hotspot. WLT is supporting this project by securing the two properties and supporting two forest rangers for three years.

The project is part of a long-term vision by FBC to connect isolated reserves, restore degraded areas, and empower local communities to protect biodiversity for future generations. By acquiring these two properties, an important step will be taken towards linking the San Bartolo Civil Society Nature Reserve and the Ciénaga de Barbacoas wetland, creating the largest continuous protected forest corridor in the region which would span over 6,000 ha.

Main threats to the area

This landscape has suffered decades of conversion for cattle and buffalo ranching, with forests cleared to create new pasture and agriculture plots, and the encroachment continues. In addition, poaching and illegal logging have caused many bird and mammal numbers to plummet, with habitat loss preventing their recovery. An imminent threat to the area is the intrusion of a man-made canal between the Ciénaga de Barbacoas wetland to the Magdalena River which threatens the area's entire freshwater system. If the erosion caused by its continued use completes the link, this canal would contaminate the lake and allow greater access to poachers and loggers, putting both biodiversity and water quality at risk, as well as the livelihoods of the local fishing community.

Global prioritisation

The Barbacoas landscape, where this project is set, is considered a global conservation priority due to its biodiversity, hydrological importance, and scarcity of protected areas. The area is within the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena hotspot, a region listed among the world's most endangered and least protected biodiversity hotspots. The expansion of El Silencio will form part of a regional network of privately protected areas.

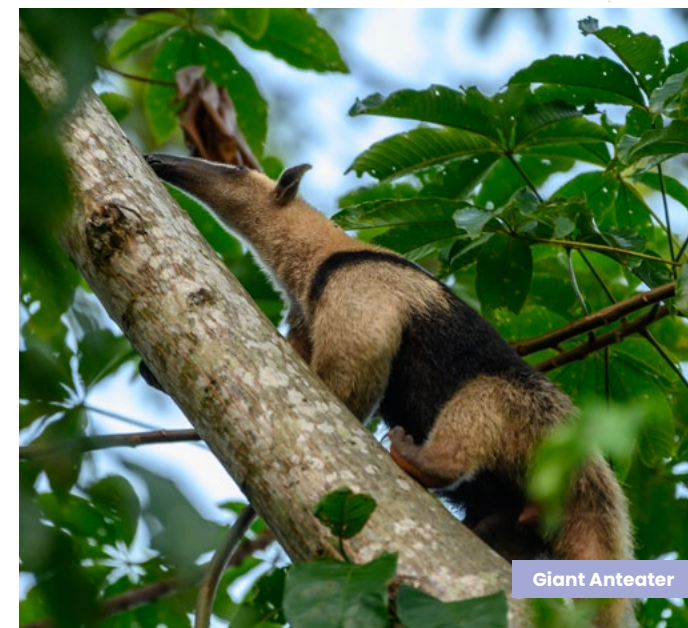
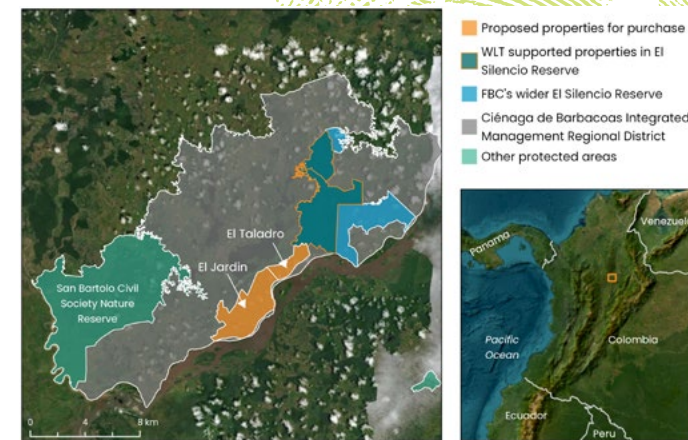
Biodiversity

The forests and wetlands of the Middle Magdalena Valley support extraordinary levels of endemism. The region is known as a Pleistocene refugium, an area that sheltered species from the ice ages of the past millennia and through to today holds some of the highest species richness in Colombia. From the amphibians and insects of the ground to the six species of primate that occupy the trees to the bats and more than 300 birds that roost and migrate throughout the valley, the region is overflowing with wildlife. The 1,211 ha property, known as El Jardín, is the only site in the region confirmed to host the White-lipped Peccary.

Key species¹

Brown Spider Monkey (*Ateles hybridus*, CR); Blue-billed Curassow (*Crax alberti*, CR); Magdalena River Turtle (*Podocnemis lewyana*, CR); Colombian Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris colombianus*, CR in Colombia, VU globally); Silvery-brown Tamarin (*Saguinus leucopus*, VU); White-lipped Peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, VU); Antillean Manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*, EN); Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*, VU)

¹The Red List of Threatened Species, maintained by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), includes categories of Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT) and Least Concern (LC). 'Endemic species' are those which are only found within Honduras.



Giant Anteater



Antillean Manatee



Blue-billed Curassow

Local Communities

FBC has built strong relationships with local residents and workers, who will play a key role in the transition of degraded pasture to restored forest. Their knowledge of the land, particularly the larger of the two areas, will play a central role in future restoration efforts. FBC will employ local people in seed collection, nursery work, and reforestation, helping to regenerate degraded pastures and rebuild forest connectivity.

The properties border a traditional fishing community at Bocas de Barbacoas, with whom FBC has a long-standing relationship as this community depends on the wetland and surrounding forests for its ecological and cultural value. FBC has already communicated its plans for expansion, which have been welcomed by residents. Through this project, community members will benefit from new employment opportunities, improved ecosystem services such as clean water, and the long-term stewardship of the land they rely on. By embedding conservation into local livelihoods, the El Silencio expansion will deliver lasting impacts for both people and nature.

Partner/Organisation

FBC is a Colombian non-profit conservation organisation dedicated to protecting biodiversity and promoting sustainable development through the creation and management of nature reserves. Since 2010, FBC has focused on conserving tropical ecosystems in the Middle Magdalena Valley and northern Andes, working closely with local communities, landowners, and scientific institutions.

A trusted World Land Trust partner since 2018, FBC has demonstrated a deep commitment to long-term landscape conservation, ecological restoration, and community-based stewardship. Their work has resulted in the establishment of multiple protected areas, including the El Silencio Reserve, and they continue to lead efforts to expand and connect key habitats in one of Colombia's most threatened ecoregions.

UN Sustainable Development Goals directly advanced by this project²:



²Our projects advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals both through conservation outcomes and indirectly through contributing to wide-reaching environmental and social benefits.



El Silencio Reserve



El Silencio staff



Colombian Tapir

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