



**WORLD
LAND
TRUST**

Saving land
Saving species

Registered Charity 1001291

CONNECTING

**BRAZIL'S
ATLANTIC
FOREST**



Connecting Brazil's Atlantic Forest

Protecting the wildlife of the
Guapiaçu watershed

THE OPPORTUNITY

World Land Trust (WLT) and its long-standing conservation partner Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu (REGUA) need your support to extend the REGUA reserve by 180 hectares and protect Brazil's threatened Atlantic Forest habitat from deforestation.

Centuries of deforestation to this unique biome has left just 12% of its original forest standing. With your support, REGUA can purchase the 180-hectare Hermes plot and bring this vulnerable habitat under the protection of the REGUA reserve.

This is part of a long-term vision to connect and restore crucial Atlantic Forest fragments and safeguard at-risk biodiversity from the imminent threats of deforestation in the Guapiaçu valley and watershed.

The Hermes plot

Straddling the Guapiaçu valley, the Hermes plot is a low-level forest which offers unique habitat to an incredible array of species. These include several that are highly threatened and many others which cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

The property sits within the life-giving Guapiaçu watershed, with a stream that runs through it originating from a REGUA-protected property further up the valley. Safeguarding the Hermes site is central to the preservation of this vital watershed. This will indirectly benefit the roughly 2 million people living in parts of Rio de Janeiro who rely on it for their water supply.

WLT Director of Brand and Communications, Dan Bradbury had the chance to visit the Hermes plot in July 2025 - a visit which brought the stakes of REGUA's work sharply into view:

"A small stream begins higher up on land already owned by REGUA and runs through the Hermes plot into the basin of the Guapiaçu watershed. REGUA's biodiversity is dazzling. Birds call from every direction; in a single week I recorded more than 160 bird species. The immediate feeling is that this is a special place. The second feeling is that it is vulnerable. To stand there and hear that water is to understand the heart of this project. Protect the valley and you protect the flow. Safeguard the forest and you safeguard the source.

If you have donated to WLT in the past, you have already helped make REGUA what it is today. This is what long-term collaboration does. It builds. It heals. It lasts.

With your gift to our Spring Appeal, we can help REGUA purchase and protect this 180-hectare plot, secure the waters that run through it, keep the corridor intact for rangers and wildlife, and stop development at the point where it would cause the most damage."

"In time, the stream will keep running, the forest will keep growing, and the birds will keep calling. And you will have helped make that possible."

Image credit
Left: Shutterstock, Southern Muriqui (*Brachyteles arachnoides*)

Through ongoing scientific research, REGUA has found that the reserve and the wider Guapiaçu valley is home to:

490 bird species representing over 4% of the world's total bird species

73 amphibian species

61 mammal species

204 dragonfly species more than anywhere else in the Atlantic Forest

430 butterfly species

47 bat species





White-necked Hawk

WILDLIFE AT STAKE

The 180-hectare site is located in the Atlantic Forest Biodiversity Hotspot which is one of the most important biogeographical regions in the Neotropics as it:

- Harbours a similar number of species to the Amazon.
- Contains one in 14 of Earth's total plant species - including 5% of all of the world's orchids.
- Provides habitat for over 260 mammals, one in 20 of the world's total vertebrate species and close to 1,000 species of birds.

Donations to expand the reserve will ensure REGUA can continue to protect vital habitat for species listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable including:

Southern Muriqui

(Brachyteles arachnoides)

Critically Endangered. Following widespread habitat destruction and hunting, this species now survives only in small, isolated populations but is well protected in the reserve.

White-necked Hawk

(Buteogallus lacernulatus)

Vulnerable.

Fork-tailed Tody-tyrant

(Hemitriccus furcatus)

Vulnerable. Endemic.

Brazilian Snake-necked Turtle

(Hydromedusa maximiliani)

Vulnerable.

Russet-winged Spadebill

(Platyrrinchus leucoryphus)

Vulnerable. Endemic.

Central Humming Frog

(Chiasmocleis lacrimae)

Least Concern. Endemic.

Lowland Tapir

(Tapirus terrestris)

Vulnerable. Successfully reintroduced by REGUA in 2018

after being extinct in Rio State for many years.

The 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 Brazil.



Southern Muriqui



Russet-winged Spadebill



Lowland Tapir

THE IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION

Your support for this appeal will enable:

- The protection of 180 hectares of vulnerable lower-level forest from imminent threats of deforestation for agriculture and urban development.
- The employment of a forest ranger for a year who will be essential in the patrolling and safeguarding of the newly expanded area of reserve.
- The expansion of the reserve and increased protection of the habitat for species, such as the Critically Endangered Southern Muriqui (*Brachyteles arachnoides*) and Vulnerable Lowland Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*).

Broader project impact:

The purchase of the Hermes plot will mean it can be reconnected to the rich forest habitat surrounding the site which is already under REGUA's protection. This connectivity will:

- Support the overall protection of over 15,000 ha of land.
- Improve practical access for REGUA's forest rangers and scientists for patrolling and for monitoring wildlife

Public funding target for 2026 Spring Appeal: £197,260

Matched funding: this project is being generously supported by a private donor, who has provided matched funding for the £197,260 that will be raised from the public appeal.

Image credits
Left: Gabriel Mello, White-necked Hawk (*Buteogallus lacernulatus*) Top right: Shutterstock, Southern Muriqui (*Brachyteles arachnoides*) Middle right: Gabriel Mello, Russet-winged Spadebill (*Platyrrinchus leucoryphus*) Bottom right: REGUA, Lowland Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*)

WHY ACT NOW?

Despite ongoing conservation efforts to protect it, the Atlantic Forest continues to be threatened by deforestation, urbanisation, and illegal activities like poaching. In the Guapiaçu region all land is privately owned and the landscape is therefore vulnerable to deforestation for agriculture or development projects for new businesses or holiday homes. Limited resources mean there is lack of management and enforcement of regulations within other surrounding areas that are theoretically under protection, but in practice are left without any meaningful safeguarding.

Wildlife is thus at constant threat from human activities such as hunting, removal of plants, forest fires, illegal occupations, and the construction of off-road motorcycle routes.

With your donation, REGUA will be able to quickly secure this land and alleviate the multiple and imminent pressures from human activity in the valley.

Caring for local community

This project will be funding the essential employment of a forest ranger for an entire year. This builds on the employment that REGUA offers to local people as staff and forest rangers. This is part of a mission to build strong relationships with people and nurture long-term connections with communities in and around the reserve.



Thank you

With your donation, we can help connect more of Brazil's Atlantic Forest and further protect the Guapiaçu watershed, ensuring a safe passage for wildlife that needs connected forest to survive.

Image credits

Cover: Shutterstock, Young Lowland Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*)

Back: Lee Dingain, REGUA

World Land Trust, Blyth House, Bridge Street, Halesworth, Suffolk,
IP19 8AB, UK | Tel: 01986 874422 | Email: info@worldlandtrust.org
Registered Charity 1001291

worldlandtrust.org

