



Las Herosas  
Natural National Park

Photo: Eduardo Sandoval

# En Terreno

Newsletter – September 2016



Cauca Poison Frog  
(*Andinobates bombetes*)  
Photo: Diego Gómez



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**MARIO SANTO DOMINGO.**  
Por el Desarrollo Social de Colombia





Las Herosas Natural National Park  
Photo: Eduardo Sandoval



## WCS JOINS THE PROTECTION OF THE SALDAÑA RIVER BASIN

Public-private alliance for the main tributary of the Magdalena River in Tolima.



Natural National Parks of Colombia, Cementos Argos, and WCS Colombia entered into the agreement that aims to reduce the threats affecting the supply of environmental services related to the water resource in the upper basin of the river (sub-basins Cambrín and Siquila).

With an investment of 5,000 million pesos, the “Saldaña River, a basin of life” project joins forces to work on prevention, protection, and restoration of the vital resource, based on the community involvement in implementing management actions and by linking the various conservation stakeholder groups.

The Saldaña river basin is the largest in the Tolima department –with more than 370,000 hectares– and it is born in Las Herosas and Nevado del Huila Natural National Parks (NNP). Major population centers and productive sectors, such as coffee and rice, are associated to this area. It is also considered an area with high potential for hydropower production. **However it is estimated that 40% of the natural vegetation cover** (about 150,000 ha) has been removed in an uncontrolled fashion, **and the loss of such vegetation is one of the major threats to water integrity.**

With the signing of this agreement, the phase to diagnose problems and determine intervention actions to be implemented begins.





Photo: Sebastián Valdivieso © WCS Ecuador

## THE XII CIMFAUNA WAS HELD

**It was a week with major conferences, workshops, mini-courses and symposia about wildlife management in Latin America.**

Researchers of the conservation community gathered at the **XII International Congress of Wildlife Management in the Amazonia Region and Latin America, held in Quito (Ecuador)**. It was carried out with the purpose of promoting the sharing of knowledge and experiences among professionals and students interested in the different themes discussed during the congress.

Among other topics, the agenda included: **monitoring of species at the landscape level, characterization and management of conflicts between humans and wildlife, and protected areas.**

Equally, **WCS Colombia participated with several presentations**, including:

♥ Occupancy models as a tool for monitoring wildlife: **“Evaluation of management effectiveness in El Tuparro NNP using occupancy models with ungulates”** and **“Occupancy as a tool for monitoring at the landscape level: Wildlife Project case.”**

♥ “State of knowledge of health of **Andean Condor** (*Vultur gryphus*) populations throughout their distribution.”

♥ “Evaluation of the first reintroduction of the **Orinoco crocodile** (*Crocodylus intermedius*) in Colombia”.

♥ “Evaluation of the presence of medium and **large mammals in the Serranía de San Lucas (Colombia)**”.

♥ Management and conservation of continental turtles in Latin America: **“Distribution of red-footed tortoise** (*Chelonoidis carbonaria*) **in dry forests of the Colombian Caribbean.”**

The **XII CIMFAUNA** was organized by the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Wildlife Conservation Society Ecuador, and the Wildlife Management Community in Latin America, with the support of The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and FundAmazonia.

See the reports of the event and every presentation here: <http://bit.ly/2bx4vi5>





Quebrada La Concha (Cantagallo, Bolívar)  
Photo: Luz Dary Acevedo - WCS Colombia

## EXPLORATORY TRIP TO SAN LUCAS SWAMPS

Tours aim to evaluate the existing biodiversity components to protect them in the future.

This activity was carried out as part of the technical support that has been provided to the Peasant Farmer Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (ACVC, by its acronym in Spanish). Such association leads the call to protect the existing wetlands and lowland forests (swamp forests) in the south of the reserve, municipalities of Yondó (Antioquia) and Cantagallo (Bolívar).

The trip included tours in areas that should be a priority for conservation, as warned by several people in the bordering community of the area of interest: **lowland forests known as "La Manigua" and "La Poza" and the forest called "El Dos"**.

This initiative is supported by the Conserva Colombia Program of the Fund for Environmental Action and Childhood, The Nature Conservancy, Natural National Parks of Colombia, Fundación Proyecto Primates, Fundación Panthera, and WCS Colombia.



Photo: Julie Larse Maher - WCS

## NEW MEETING ABOUT THE ANDEAN BEAR

Allied organizations of this species participated in the technical committee of the project Conservamos la Vida.

The meeting was part of the planning of the **second phase of coordination and implementation** of the initiative that works to the benefit of the also known as **spectacled bear** (*Tremarctos ornatus*). This aims to maintain the habitat and conditions for the conservation of this mammal in the area covered by the project and thus reduce the bear-people conflict.

During the meeting, **three areas** were prioritized to develop pilot work processes: **Ramal-Limoncito (Cauca), Cali-Buenaventura, and El Águila-San José del Palmar (Valle del Cauca)**.

The event was attended by representatives of **Natural National Parks of Colombia** (Central Level and Tatamá, Farallones, and Munchique parks), **Grupo Argos, Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca (CVC), WCS Colombia, Fundación Mario Santo Domingo, and Smurfit Kappa**.

Learn more about the project in: [www.conservacionosoandino.org](http://www.conservacionosoandino.org)





Photo: María Paula Barrera - WCS

## MAP OF THE BIOLOGICAL CORRIDOR FOR TAPIRS

Men, women, and children participated in its creation.

It was created by inhabitants of the **village La Esmeralda (municipality of Puerto Carreño, Vichada)** and had the support of researchers from the Orinoco Biodiversa Foundation and the Wildlife Project (Proyecto Vida Silvestre – PVS).



Photo: Mayra Villanueva - FOB

From their perspective and experience, **participants located their farms on the map and identified areas of threat for tapirs (hunting, logging, burning, etc.)**. They also located areas with productive sectors (forestation and animal husbandry companies) and, of course, territories inhabited by this mammal that are strategic for its survival (as in the case of moriche swamps and gallery forests).

**Is worth recalling that Tapir (Tapirus terrestris) is a species whose threat level is vulnerable.** It is dependent on forests and water, and it is an important seed disperser. Therefore, it is essential to implement a large biological corridor that will provide food and favorable conditions so it stays in the region. **The map created was installed in Mrs. Mercedes and Mr. Miguel's store, a meeting point for many people who live in that part of the extensive Vichada department.**

**\*The Wildlife Project** works for the conservation of ten species of flora and fauna in the Middle Magdalena and the Eastern Plains of Colombia. It is funded by Ecopetrol and coordinated by WCS Colombia. Ten implementing organizations are part of this initiative, which is supported by Fundación Mario Santo Domingo.



## THE LANDSCAPE

### Carare – Middle Magdalena River

It is located in the east of the Santander department and is part of the **middle basin of the Magdalena River**. Its waters, which are still diverse in wildlife, are the subject of important fishing activities that nourish local communities.

**The Carare River** is one of the key landscapes for the work conducted by the Wildlife Project (PVS). There, the barred sorubim of Magdalena, **the brown spider monkey, the Carreto Colorado (*Aspidosperma polyneuron*), the Caribbean manatee, and other threatened species**, benefit from the conservation actions led by Fundación Humedales, Proyecto Primates, Centre for Research on Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems (CIPAV) Foundation, and Cabildo Verde of Sabana de Torres, all under the framework of such project.

Find more information about PVS in : [www.wcscolumbia.org](http://www.wcscolumbia.org)

Photo: El "Pato" Salcedo



## OUR SPECIES:

# ORINOCO CROCODILE

*(Crocodylus intermedius)*

In Colombia, it is also known as **Caimán Llanero**. It is the only species of crocodile whose distribution is in just **one river basin: the Orinoco basin**. In that region, it lives in lowlands shared between **Colombia and Venezuela**. Its habitat consists of large rivers, narrow rivers, and lagoons, as long as they have water throughout the year.

**Emblematic of the Eastern Plains**, it plays an important ecological role and is **one of the largest reptiles in the world** (some have been found that are up to six meters in length). It is one of the 12 species of crocodiles at the highest risk of extinction worldwide (**its threat level is critical**), mainly due to indiscriminate hunting and marketing of its skin, fangs, and eggs.

Currently, **WCS coordinates the Wildlife Project (PVS)**, an initiative carried out in cooperation with **Fundación Palmarito Casanare**, in which both institutions develop conservation actions in favor of this reptile. One example of these actions are the **two releases** carried out in an area adjacent to the **Tomo River in El Tuparro NNP (Vichada)** in which more than 40 specimens were reintroduced into the wild. Similarly, the PVS works in environmental collectivization, increased awareness, and education about the Orinoco crocodile to ensure the recovery of its populations in Vichada.