

OUR SPECIES:
CARIBBEAN MANATEE
(*Trichechus manatus manatus*)

Photo: Nataly Castelblanco - Martínez

It is the only purely herbivorous aquatic mammal. It eats significant amounts of vegetation because, on average, it can eat up to 10% of its weight in one day. Its feces help fertilize the waters of rivers, narrow rivers, and swamps where it lives, and they also are food for different kinds of fish that share its environment.

It does not have natural predators, except for human beings, who have damaged its habitat by not performing productive activities in a responsible manner. This has caused the manatee to be considered vulnerable. Currently, WCS Colombia coordinates the Wildlife Project* (Proyecto Vida Silvestre – PVS), an initiative that, in conjunction with Cabildo Verde Sabana de Torres, works in favor of this animal.

Some of the activities of the PVS have included supporting and training the Guardians of the Manatee, a group of volunteers that seeks to contribute to the conservation of this mammal and its habitat. Likewise, they bring the message to their neighbors and share what they have learned in the different meetings with the technical team of the Wildlife Project.

PVS:* The Wildlife Project works for the conservation of ten species of flora and fauna in the Middle Magdalena and the Eastern Plains. 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.

En Terreno

WCS Colombia Newsletter – December 2016 – No. 11



White-headed capuchin
(*Cebus capucinus*)

Foto: Diego Gómez - WCS Colombia



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



Lehmann's poison frog
(*Oophaga lehmanni*)
Photo: Gustavo González - WCS Colombia



Golden poison frog
(*Phyllobates terribilis*)
Photo: Gustavo González - WCS Colombia



Masked tree frog
(*Smilisca phaeota*)
Photo: Frogs & Friends

THE FIELDWORK BEGINS IN THE FARALLONES DE CALI NATURAL NATIONAL PARK TO BENEFIT THREATENED AMPHIBIANS

This activity is part of the conservation strategy that aims to protect that taxonomic group in the protected areas of the country.

The trip covered **four places** inside the park located in **two townships of Valle del Cauca: Cali and Dagua**. The researchers took **42 tours** in mountain streams to find out about potential threats that amphibians face in the conservation area. Samples were taken from individuals found to detect diseases affecting them worldwide.



Photo: Frogs & Friends

This activity was performed with officials from the Natural National Parks of Colombia, who were trained by WCS to identify the species, record information, and take the corresponding samples. **Altogether, 658 individuals from 36 species of amphibians, 35 of anurans, and one salamander were recorded.** These researches, along with the work of Universidad del Valle, are essential to determine the conservation **actions to preserve amphibian populations in the Farallones NNP.**



Alto Anchicayá Dam (Valle del Cauca)
Photo: Frogs & Friends

Secondly, some of the tours were taken together with the **staff of Zürich Zoo**, who prepared a documentary as part of the project **“Conservation Strategy of Threatened Amphibians in the Protected Areas of Colombia.”** This includes illegal trade, deforestation, and emerging diseases that amphibians might suffer from.

The records highlight the observation of the **Lehmann's poison frog** (*Oophaga lehmanni*), which is critically endangered. The team also visited a place in Buenaventura where a project is being carried out together with the Cali Zoo. In this area, **the golden poison frog** (*Phyllobates terribilis*) can be found, the most poisonous frog in the world and which is also highly threatened due to illegal trade.

The project **“Conservation Strategy of Threatened Amphibians in the Protected Areas of Colombia”** is part of an agreement signed by the Zürich Zoo, the Cali Zoo, and WCS Colombia, together with the Natural National Parks of Colombia and the participation of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.



Dermanura con leucismo
Photo: Tomás Villada - Universidad de Antioquia



Northern screamer
(*Chauna chavaria*)
Photo: William Bonell WCS Colombia



"La Manigua" hollow, Puerto Matilde village
Cantagallo (Bolívar)
Photo: William Bonell - WCS Colombia

BIOLOGICAL INVENTORY IN WETLANDS OF THE PEASANT FARMER RESERVE ZONE (ZRC, by its acronym in Spanish) OF THE CIMITARRA RIVER VALLEY

Joint work of researchers and local guides to study biodiversity in swamps in the south of Serranía de San Lucas.



Chrotopterus auritus
Photo: Tomás Villada - Universidad de Antioquia

The activity was led by the **Peasant Farmer Association of the Cimitarra River Valley – National Agroecological Network** (ACVC-RAN, by its initials in Spanish), as part of a project co-financed by **Fondo Acción**.

This evaluation included groups of **plants, aquatic ecosystems, fish, herpetofauna, birds, and mammals that live in the bodies of water and forests of the Cimitarra River Valley ZRC**, located between the townships of Yondó (Antioquia) and Cantagallo (Bolívar). A second study is expected to be performed with the same groups during the summer, as well as an analysis of mercury existence.

The main findings include **the presence of the second largest bat in Colombia and the American continent** (*Chrotopterus auritus*) and a specimen of the *Dermanura* genus, which suffers from leucism (a partial loss of pigmentation that gives color to the fur).

The results of this inventory will be used as a technical tool in the search and consolidation process of a local or regional environmental protection figure for some ecosystems related to the swamps, which are still preserved because of community agreements and that could be **part of the conservation variety around the Serranía de San Lucas**. This procedure is developed with the assistance of **Fundación Panthera, Fundación Proyecto Primates, and WCS Colombia**.

This first expedition counted on the participation of members of Cabildo Verde de Sabana de Torres, Natural National Parks of Colombia, Oficina de Nuevas Áreas - Subdirectorato of Administration and Management, the Caribbean Territorial Directorate, the Universities of: Antioquia, Los Andes, Tolima, Unipaz, CeTAmb-Lab (Italy), and Praxis Collective of Universidad Nacional, Bogotá.



Fotos: Mara Contreras - WCS Colombia

WORKSHOPS TO APPROACH COMMUNITIES OF CRAVO NORTE (ARAUCA)

One more step to support Natural National Parks of Colombia in the protection of new areas of the country.

The process has included activities to generate (biological, spatial, and social) information that supports the importance of preserving the **area known as Cinaruco**, located in the western part of the department of Arauca, near the border with **Venezuela**.

The workshops were held with landowners of the **villages of Juriepe and Lejanías del Juriepe**, but who live in the capital city of Arauca. Through a social cartography procedure, about **161 species of fauna were identified and spatialized, highlighting the richness of felines, reptiles, and aquatic mammals**.

The main threats identified were intentional fires and indiscriminate logging of saladillo and congrio (timber resources of great importance in the area).

An identical activity was performed with the residents of **La Esperanza and La Virgen villages** (also located in Juriepe and Lejanías del Juriepe) in the township of **Cravo Norte**. Together with them, the priority areas for conservation were determined.

This was part of the agreement signed by Natural National Parks of Colombia, Fundación para el Beneficio (Grupo Argos), Fundación Mario Santo Domingo, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), **to support the declaration of new protected areas in strategic threatened ecosystems of the country**.



Photo: Zaira Ríos - WCS Colombia

WCS PARTICIPATED IN THE INTERINSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE TERRITORIAL PLANNING COMMISSION (COT) AND THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS

A researcher of the WCS program in Democratic Republic of the Congo shared his experiences in territorial planning and management of parks in conflict scenarios.

The WCS representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Deo Kujirakwinja, participated in the special committee of the Territorial Planning Commission (COT, by its initials in Spanish), organized by Natural National Parks of Colombia (NNP). The purpose of this space was to strengthen skills and share experiences about the work of institutions in territorial planning, and it is a contribution to the general policy of territorial planning in Colombia.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of the **National Planning Department, the United Nations (UN), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Regional Autonomous Corporations, Research Institutes, and NNP**, among others. **The international cases presented included those from El Salvador, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.** As for the latter, Deo Kujirakwinja presented the role of protected areas in territorial planning in the east part of his country, in particular, the role that parks administrations play in the involvement of communities and townships in the management of protected areas.

Also, during the forum **“Challenges and opportunities for the conservation of protected areas in conflict and post-conflict scenarios”**, the different presentations analyzed, evaluated, and **shared national and international experiences on protected area management for conservation during and after armed conflicts.** This space arose in view of the political, social, and technical situation Colombia is facing, in the context of the recent definitive peace agreement.



Photo: Zaira Ríos - WCS Colombia

Regarding the work performed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the work of WCS with the initiative “Conflict-Sensitive Conservation” was highlighted, which aims to improve the management of protected areas and minimize conflict over natural resources. This approach takes into account the connection with local communities, their involvement in park management, and the strengthening of control and surveillance activities. Such initiative has been adopted in the **DRC** as one of the cornerstones for natural resources conservation in that country.



Foro Internacional:
RETOS Y OPORTUNIDADES
de la conservación de áreas protegidas en un escenario de conflicto y pos-acuerdo.



The International Forum on Management of Protected Areas was organized by Natural National Parks of Colombia in cooperation with the Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation (APC-Colombia), WWF Colombia, WCS Colombia (with the support of Fundación Mario Santo Domingo), the Delegation of the European Union to Colombia, and the European Union Program “Desarrollo local sostenible: Acuerdos para la conservación, el buen vivir y la paz” (“Sustainable Local Development: Agreements for Conservation, Good Living, and Peace”).



Photo: Camila Romero - NNP Colombia



Under the premise **“Forests, people, and peace, an opportunity for Latin American integration,”** the congress was consolidated as an academic, social, and institutional discussion about the future of Colombian forests in the post-conflict scenario.

The event revolved around four themes: territorial peace; who governs forests in post-conflict; agrarian, forestry, and environmental law and justice; and the economic opportunity of forests in the post-conflict.

WCS Colombia took part with two presentations: **“Emerging environmental markets in Colombia, resources for the sustainable conservation of forests”** and **“Multiple planning instruments for rural development”**, the latter in conjunction with WWF and Corporación Ecoversa.

The event was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Latin American Network of Forestry and Environmental Law (RELADEFA, by its initials in Spanish), and was supported by Revista Catorce 6, Bioparque Corporation, Corporación Ecoversa, WWF Colombia, Natura Foundation, ONF Andina, WCS Colombia – Fundación Mario Santo Domingo, and other important organizations.

Find more information about the congress in the following link:

congresoderechoforestal2016.com

Photo: Johanna Gutiérrez - WCS Colombia

X LATIN AMERICAN CONGRESS ON FORESTRY & ENVIRONMENTAL LAW 2016

Public, private, and community actors participated in the analysis of opportunities offered by a sustainable forest management.



Photo: Johanna Gutiérrez - WCS Colombia