

WE STAND FOR WILDLIFE



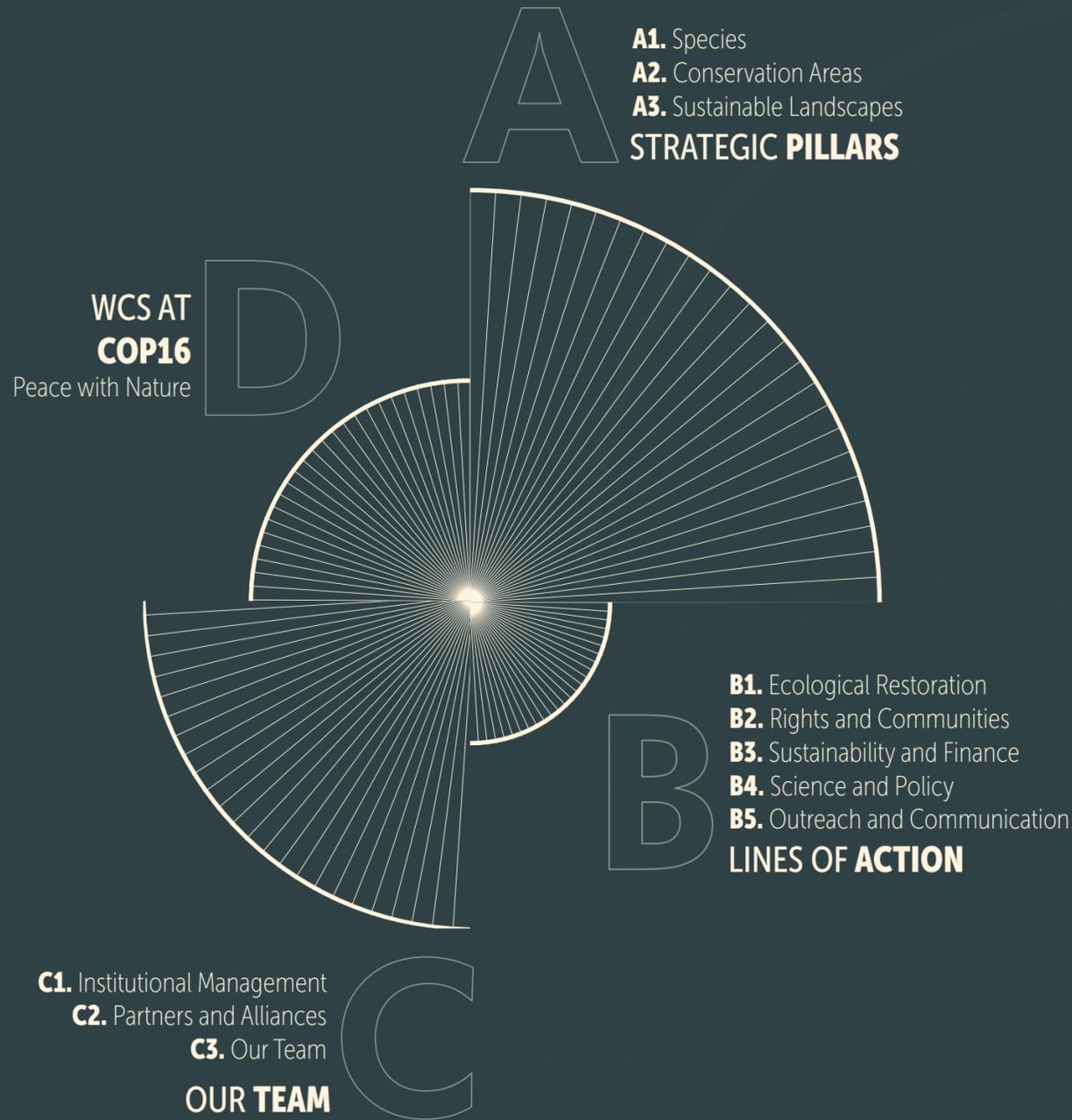
# 2024

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**COLOMBIA**



# INTRODUCTION



2024 will stand as a defining year for Colombia, shaped by the historic 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16), held in *Cali*. This gathering not only renewed the country’s commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development but also provided a unique opportunity to inspire and be inspired, deepen efforts already underway, and lend fresh urgency to conservation initiatives. While world leaders convened in conference halls, work on the ground pressed forward without pause, ensuring that the momentum sparked in *Cali* would translate into lasting action.

WCS Colombia is part of a larger global network comprised of 57 programs working across 14 regions. WCS Colombia works alongside its counterparts in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil as part of the Andes, Amazon, and *Orinoco* (AAO). For more than two decades, WCS Colombia has combined scientific research, on-the-ground conservation, and environmental education to conserve wildlife and landscapes while inspiring people to value nature.

natural wealth. They capture the rich biodiversity, stories, and the communities WCS has the privilege to work alongside. Here, figures, landscapes, and wildlife intertwine with stories of resilience, where sustainability is not an abstract ideal but a way of life.

We take pride in the milestones WCS has reached—helping species recover, reducing deforestation in key areas, and strengthening knowledge and wellbeing to empower local communities. Through inclusive, participatory strategies, cutting-edge tools, a commitment to human rights, and a collaboration-based approach, WCS has built partnerships that turn conservation into action.

As you read this report, we hope you recognize yourself in these achievements. None of this would have been possible without your trust, commitment, and action—or without the passion and dedication of the WCS Colombia team.

We stand for wildlife and people. Thank you for standing with us.

These pages offer a glimpse into Colombia’s territories and

Catalina Gutiérrez Chacón  
Director, WCS Colombia

**Find out more about WCS around the world**  
[Click here](#)

**Impact Report 2024:** global conservation actions and achievements.

**WCS Impact Portal:** stories and figures that reflect our commitment to nature around the world.

**Our work for wildlife:** progress in protecting iconic species and their habitats.

**WCS News:** information on zoos, aquariums and conservation programmes around the world.

# WCS COLOMBIA

## Intervention areas and overall implementation strategy

WCS Colombia's strategy is built on three pillars, six lines of action, and two cross-cutting approaches—all designed to protect and restore the ecological integrity of Colombia's marine and terrestrial ecosystems. The goal is to ensure that government institutions, businesses, academia, and civil society organizations do not just recognize the link between biodiversity conservation and human well-being, but actively manage it—through informed policies, coordinated action, and long-term commitment. Grounded in principles of inclusion and equity, this strategy envisions a future with sustainable and resilient landscapes where conservation areas are effectively managed, productive lands are thoughtfully planned, and nature-based solutions help communities navigate growing environmental and social challenges.

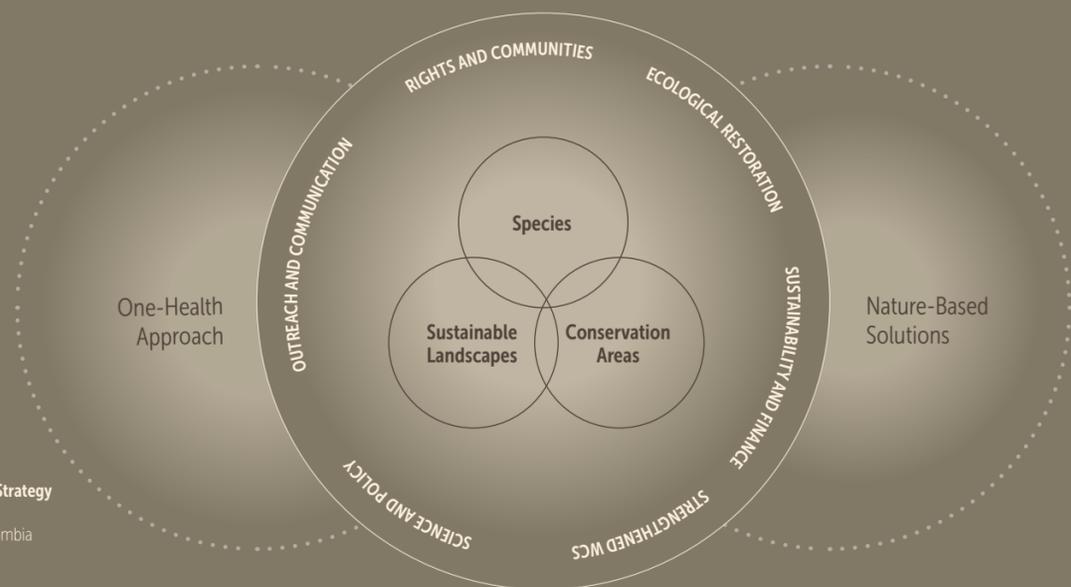
WCS focuses on five key terrestrial landscapes and one seascape—selected for their ecological significance and strategic opportunities. These landscapes serve as the foundation for implementing a

comprehensive conservation strategy designed to create lasting impact.

Ensuring the ecological integrity of these landscapes goes beyond conservation alone. It requires strengthening governance systems at the national level and working with a diverse range of partners to implement innovative initiatives that set new standards for conservation and sustainable natural resource use.

Additionally, WCS understands that conservation challenges do not stop at borders. To tackle transnational threats, we collaborate with WCS programs across the AAO region—spanning Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru, scaling our impact in the broader regional level.

In response to the urgent need to protect the critically endangered Dahl's toad-headed turtle (*Mesoclemmys dahli*) and the tropical dry forests, WCS Colombia worked to expand the *La Carranchina* Reserve (located in *San Benito Abad, Sucre*) from 120 to 222 hectares, a crucial strategy to protect and recover the turtle's wild populations.

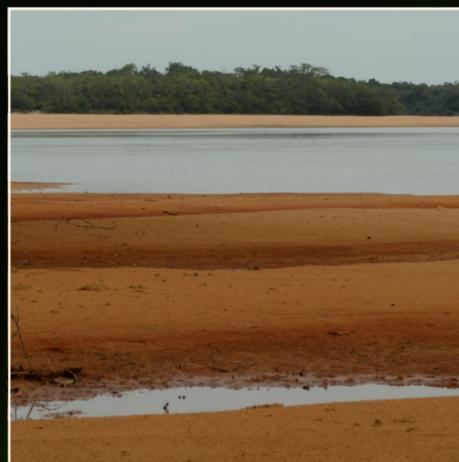
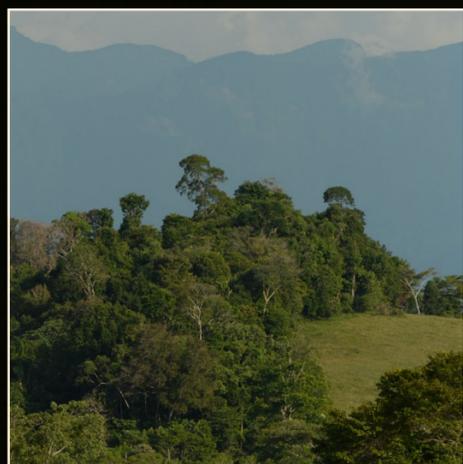


A

# STRATEGIC PILLARS



- **A1.** Species
- **A2.** Conservation Areas
- **A3.** Sustainable Landscapes



# A1 SPECIES

Through close collaboration with local communities, committed institutions, and dedicated funding partners, WCS Colombia is at the forefront of efforts to study, protect, and restore Colombia's most vulnerable species. In 2024, these initiatives led to the recovery of five wildlife populations while also curbing deforestation in areas protected under conservation agreements. At the heart of these efforts are more than 200 local monitors who actively collect data on these five priority species, ensuring informed decision-making for conservation.

- Cracking down on wildlife trafficking:** A strengthened partnership with Avianca is helping curb illegal wildlife trade.
- Balancing conservation and coexistence:** Efforts to manage human-wildlife conflict have focused on five key species: the Andean bear, puma, jaguar, *Orinoco* crocodile, and bat populations.
- Curbing deforestation:** Conservation agreements in the Andean-Amazon Piedmont in *Putumayo* and the Middle *Magdalena* Valley region have led to deforestation reductions ranging from 17 to 70%.

- Promoting species recovery:** Three populations—Dahl's toad-headed turtle in the Caribbean, the river turtle in the *Sinú* River, and the *Cauca* guan in the Andean landscape—are showing signs of stability or growth, signaling progress in long-term conservation efforts.
- Conservation agreements and civil society natural reserves.** WCS Colombia placed over 60,000 hectares of threatened habitats under protection through voluntary conservation agreements and Civil Society Natural Reserves (RNSC, for its acronym in Spanish).
- Promoting sustainable resource use and management:** WCS Colombia promoted responsible management of the *Magdalena* catfish (*Pseudoplatystoma magdaleniatum*) in the Middle *Magdalena* Valley, the giant South American river turtle (*Podocnemis expansa*) in the *Meta* river basin, and stingless bees and bird tourism in *Putumayo*.
- Community-based participatory monitoring:** More than 200 local monitors are now actively engaged in tracking key species, including the *Magdalena* and giant South American river turtles, Caribbean manatee, *Magdalena* catfish, mammals, and birds in cocoa agroecosystems.

**BARRANCABERMEJA**

Monitors	6
Manatee records	1309
Sampling hours	1

**BOCAS DEL CARARE**

Monitors	13
Sampling hours	190
Manatee records	4

**BOCAS DE BARBACOAS**

Monitors	10
Sampling hours	264
Manatee records	88

**CAMPO AMALIA**

Monitors	8
Sampling hours	627
Manatee records	97

**CAMPO CERRITO**

Monitors	10
Sampling hours	924
Manatee records	54

**CAMPO DURO**

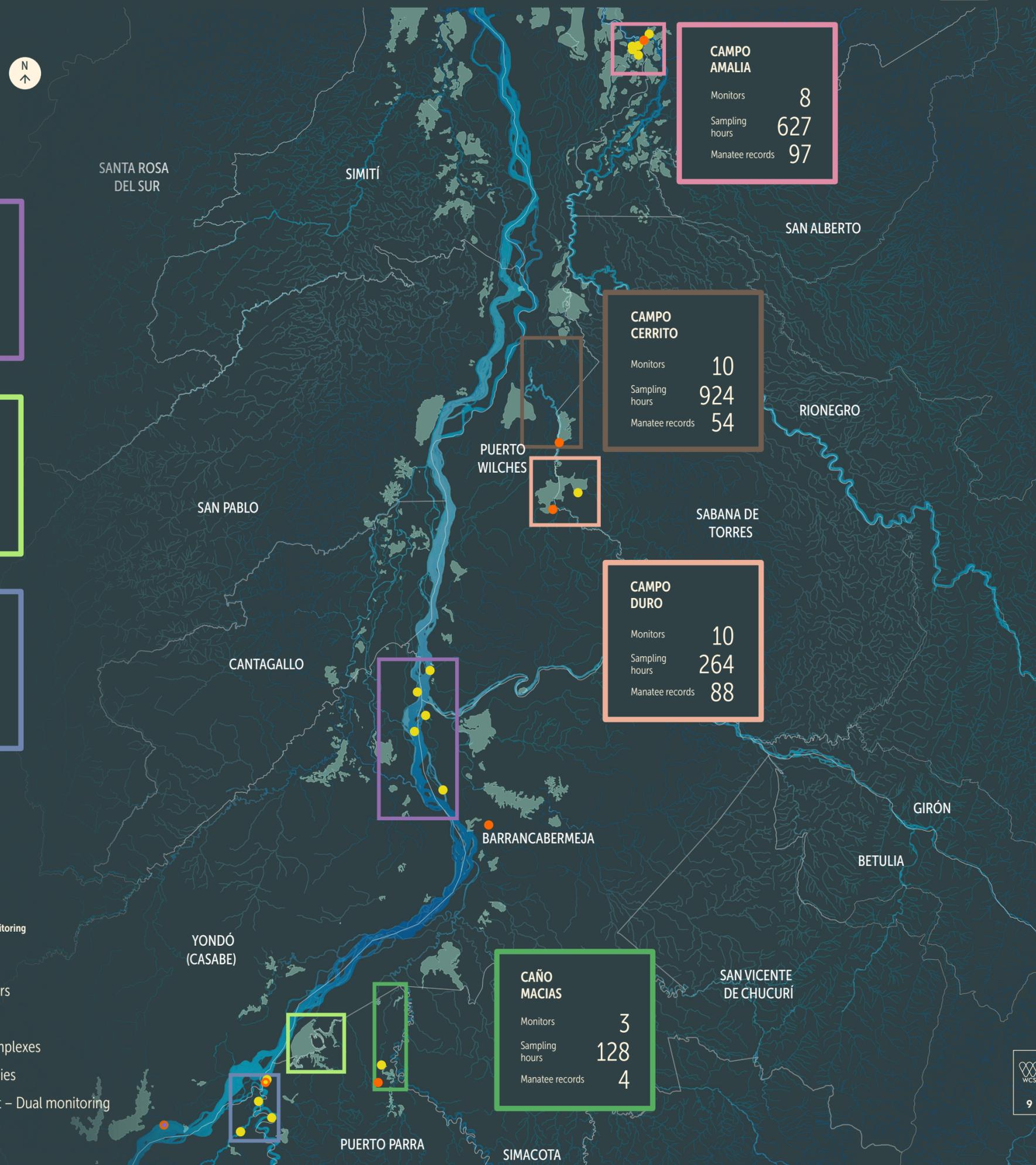
Monitors	10
Sampling hours	264
Manatee records	88

**CAÑO MACIAS**

Monitors	3
Sampling hours	128
Manatee records	4

**Community-Based Manatee Monitoring**  
Source: WCS Colombia

- Populated centers
- Monitoring sites
- Key wetland complexes
- Other water bodies
- Rivers of interest – Dual monitoring



**NOTAS**  
**SILVESTRES SERIES**

**Community-Based Monitoring:  
A Crucial Effort to Protect  
the Caribbean Manatee in the  
Middle Magdalena Valley**

“We need swift action. But while long-term solutions take shape and rescue efforts continue, and despite financial and logistical challenges, we’re not walking away. The manatees are part of our lives—they’ve always been here, and as long as we’re here, we’ll keep looking out for them as our survival is tied to theirs.”

**Reinaldo Zapata**  
President, Community Action Board of El Cerrito  
Municipality of Sabana de Torres, department of Santander

The Caribbean manatee is a warm-blooded, air-breathing aquatic mammal with fine hair that nurses its young and depends on healthy waterways for survival. As the only fully aquatic herbivore, it feeds on seagrasses and vegetation in wetlands, rivers, and lagoons, earning its nickname, “sea cow.” Some individuals can live more than 50 years, but few will reach that milestone. The species faces growing threats, including pollution, habitat loss, boat collisions, entanglement in fishing gear, and illegal hunting. Therefore, protecting the Caribbean manatee demands efficient measures and the collaboration of local communities.

In the wetland complex of the Middle Magdalena Valley, fishers from Santander and Antioquia have witnessed firsthand the decline of manatee populations and the degradation of their environment. Now, as part of WCS’s *Proyecto Vida Silvestre* (PVS), they are leading community-based monitoring efforts to promote sustainable fishing practices and document manatee sightings, gaining crucial insights to better understand habitat use and inform conservation efforts.

Local organizations—including Asodesba, Asopromanati, Asopesbocar, and Asopezchucurí—are at the forefront of manatee conservation. In 2024, they conducted 674 monitoring sessions with 57 participants, logging

4,195 hours across 190 sectors and 29 water bodies spanning 15 wetland complexes. Since July 2023, they have recorded 251 manatee sightings—a number that would be difficult to reach with conventional scientific surveys. Their work highlights the power of participatory conservation where fishers’ knowledge becomes crucial.

Beyond monitoring, many fishers are now first responders in a stranding response network. Between July 2023 and May 2024, they responded to nine stranding cases. Despite the ongoing threats to the species, these fishers remain some of its most dedicated defenders—promoting research and protection. Their collective effort brings hope for biodiversity conservation not only in the Middle Magdalena Valley but also in Colombia and the world.



Main photo: “El Pato” Salcedo. WCS Colombia.  
Top photo and Bottom photo: Katherine Arévalo-González.

# A2

## CONSERVATION AREAS

This pillar aims to protect environmentally and culturally significant areas by providing technical and financial support for the designation of area-based conservation strategies while strengthening the ability of key stakeholders to manage them effectively.

In 2024, WCS Colombia advanced in securing over 50 sites critical for biodiversity conservation. Five are in the process of being designated as public protected areas, while seven are undergoing registration as RNSCs. An additional 30 sites have been prioritized as Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECM). The remaining sites are protected through other management strategies, including conservation agreements, community-based biodiversity monitoring, and support for Indigenous and Afro-Colombian territories.



### Bringing conservation to the global stage:

WCS contributed to the annual *Parques Naturales Cómo Vamos* report, launched during COP16.



### Expansion of Colombia's protected areas:

WCS supported the expansion of the *Tatamá* PNN and the designation of two new protected areas: *Cerro del Duende* and the *San Juan* River Delta in *Chocó*.



### Marine ecosystem protection:

Through the *Skylight* tool, WCS is promoting surveillance over five marine protected areas managed by Colombia's National Natural Parks (PNN, for its acronym in Spanish) office.



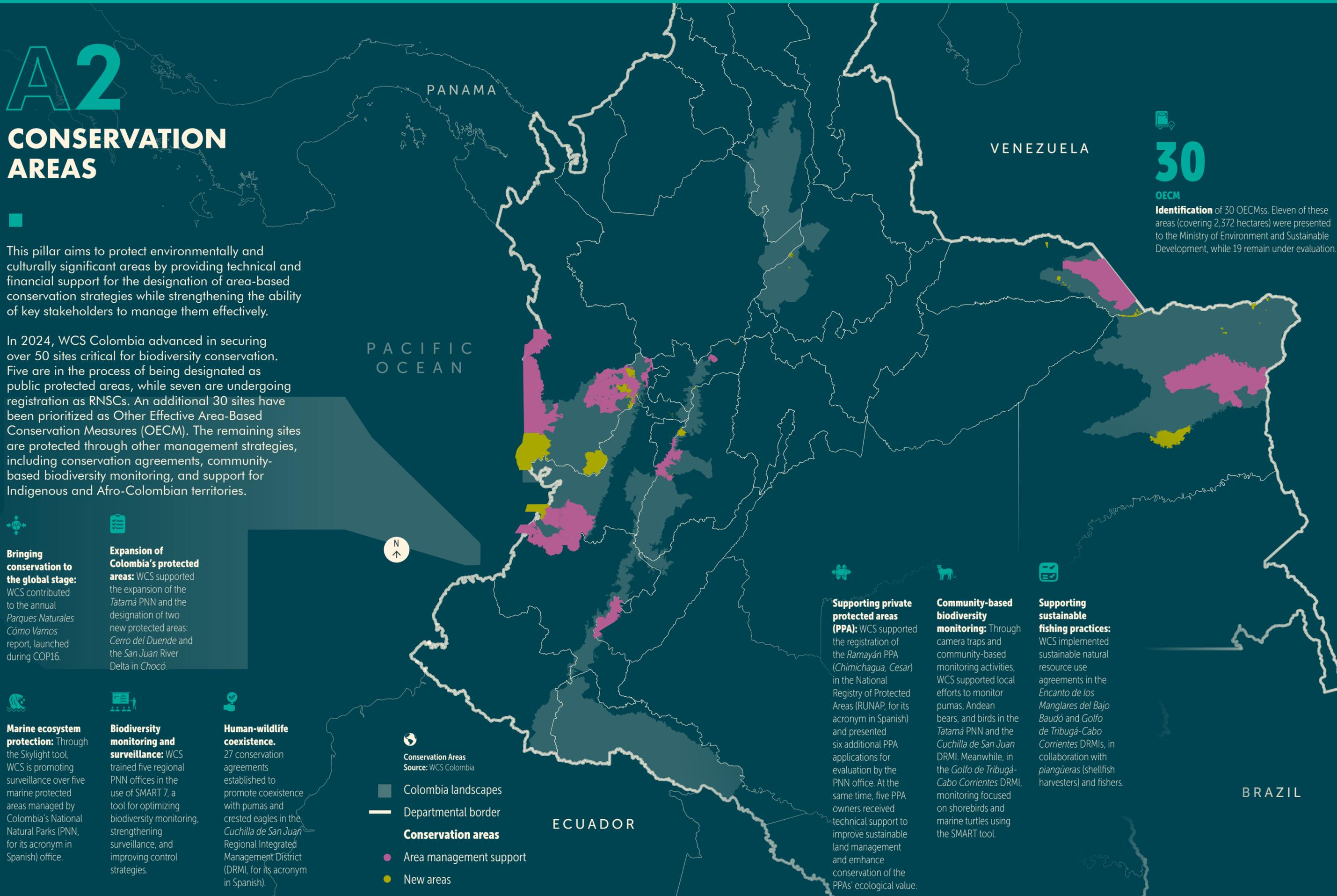
### Biodiversity monitoring and surveillance:

WCS trained five regional PNN offices in the use of *SMART 7*, a tool for optimizing biodiversity monitoring, strengthening surveillance, and improving control strategies.



### Human-wildlife coexistence:

27 conservation agreements established to promote coexistence with pumas and crested eagles in the *Cuchilla de San Juan* Regional Integrated Management District (DRMI, for its acronym in Spanish).



**30**

OECM

**Identification** of 30 OECMs. Eleven of these areas (covering 2,372 hectares) were presented to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, while 19 remain under evaluation.



### Supporting private protected areas (PPA):

WCS supported the registration of the *Ramayán* PPA (*Chimichagua, Cesar*) in the National Registry of Protected Areas (RUNAP, for its acronym in Spanish) and presented six additional PPA applications for evaluation by the PNN office. At the same time, five PPA owners received technical support to improve sustainable land management and enhance conservation of the PPAs' ecological value.



### Community-based biodiversity monitoring:

Through camera traps and community-based monitoring activities, WCS supported local efforts to monitor pumas, Andean bears, and birds in the *Tatamá* PNN and the *Cuchilla de San Juan* DRMI. Meanwhile, in the *Golfo de Tribugá-Cabo Corrientes* DRMI, monitoring focused on shorebirds and marine turtles using the *SMART* tool.



### Supporting sustainable fishing practices:

WCS implemented sustainable natural resource use agreements in the *Encanto de los Manglares del Bajo Baudó* and *Golfo de Tribugá-Cabo Corrientes* DRMIs, in collaboration with *piangueras* (shellfish harvesters) and fishers.



## NOTAS SILVESTRES SERIES

### Designation of the Riomanso Natural Reserve as OECM

“*Riomanso* is more than just a river carving its way—sometimes fierce, sometimes calm—through the mountains and valleys of *Norcasia* before merging with the *La Miel* River. It is more than its wetlands and streams, its forests and pastures, or the shifting sandbanks that come and go with the current. *Riomanso* is a legacy—one that began generations ago when men and women chose to protect a piece of these mountains. That choice has endured, passed down through the years, and now, in the seventh generation, it remains as strong as ever.”

**María Fernanda Jaramillo**  
Owner of the area proposed for OECM  
designation, *Riomanso* Natural Reserve

In 2021, WCS set out to support the designation of OECMs—an effort to highlight the importance of conservation strategies beyond Colombia’s formal protected areas.

One such place is the *Riomanso* Natural Reserve. In 2024, three years after its nomination, the reserve reached a major milestone with the publication of the *Riomanso* Bird Guide. Funded by WCS, the guide reflects the Jaramillo family’s dedication to raising awareness of the impact of conservation efforts in this area. The guide showcases 270

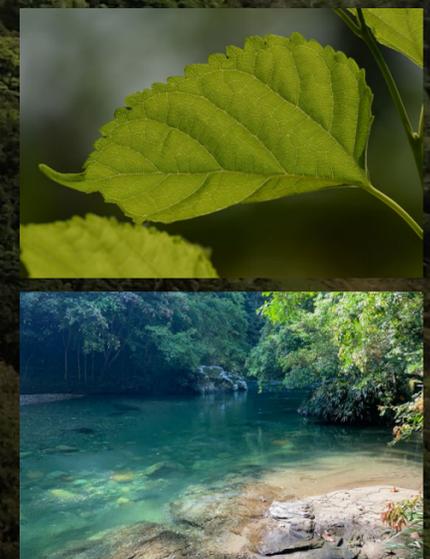
documented species, resulting from more than two decades of observation and research.

*Riomanso* sits along the river that shares its name, near its confluence with the *La Miel* River, in the municipality of *Norcasia*, eastern *Caldas*. Spanning 480 hectares, the landscape is a patchwork of dense forests, riparian woodlands, secondary vegetation, and agroecosystems.

Since 1993, *Riomanso* has been an active member of the PPA Network (*Resnatur*, for its acronym in Spanish) and the

Latin American and Caribbean Network for Bat Conservation (*Relcom*, for its acronym in Spanish). It is also the only reserve in *Caldas* recognized as a Bat Conservation Area (*AICOM*, for its acronym in Spanish). With this legacy, *Riomanso* has become a benchmark for private conservation efforts in the department.

*Riomanso* is not just an ecologically significant site—it is a testament to the vital role civil society continues to play in protecting Colombia’s natural heritage.



Main photo: Sergio Jaramillo - Propietario Reserva Riomanso.  
Top photo: “El Pato” Salcedo. WCS Colombia.  
Bottom photo: Abel Rojas.



Scan the QR code  
to download  
the **Riomanso  
Natural Reserve  
birdguide.**

# A3

## SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES



In 2024, WCS spearheaded efforts to merge sustainable production and conservation strategies in key regions of Colombia. In *Putumayo*, *Caquetá*, and *Guaviare*, WCS strengthened the Amazonian cocoa value chain by achieving a 27% deforestation reduction on cocoa farms, while also creating linkages with international markets. In *Tolima*, WCS promoted the implementation of sustainable systems by establishing conservation agreements in 75 cattle and coffee farms, ensuring the protection of 4,565 hectares of forest.

In *Putumayo*, WCS strengthened stingless beekeeping by installing 287 new bee hives, training 143 producers, and supporting 18 women from the *Perla Amazónica Farmer's Reserve Zone (ZRPCA)*, for its acronym in Spanish). WCS also developed diagnostic assessments and strategies for the sustainable production of *camu-camu*, *açaí*, and other non-timber forest products from the Amazon.

Key highlights include the following:



14 conservation agreements signed to promote sustainable stingless beekeeping.



10 cocoa associations adopted a traceability application, improving sustainability across the cocoa value chain.



20 cocoa producers in *Orito* strengthened their skills in high-quality cocoa post-harvest processing, including physical and sensory analysis.



18 women from the MEMPA group in the ZRPCA participated in a stingless beekeeping training program with a gender approach.



93 additional hectares placed under sustainable management, bringing the total to 3,475 hectares designated for the protection of water resources in the *Río Saldaña* program.



14 demonstration farms supported through participatory planning, helping farmers adopt sustainable cocoa growing practices.



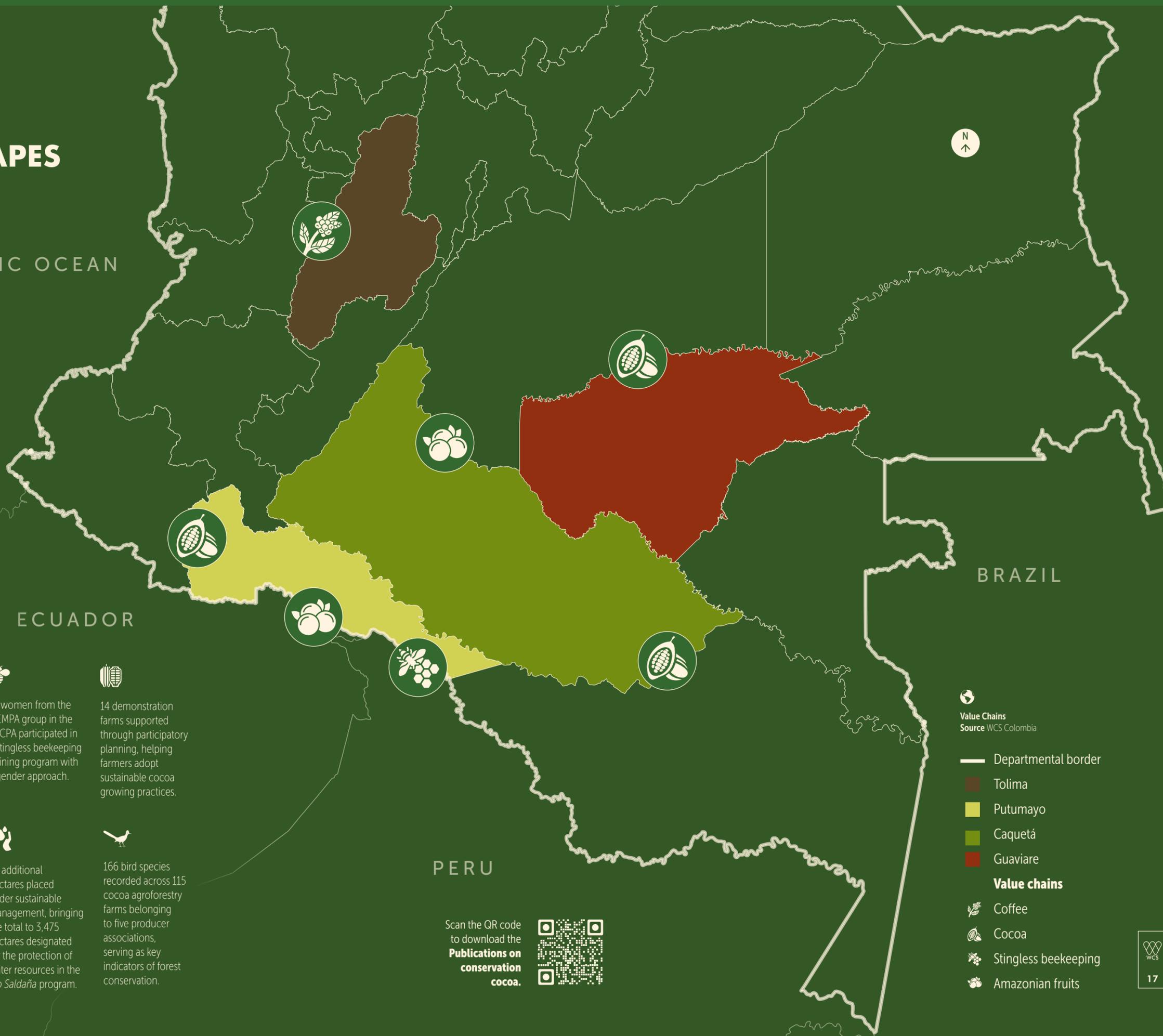
166 bird species recorded across 115 cocoa agroforestry farms belonging to five producer associations, serving as key indicators of forest conservation.

PACIFIC OCEAN

ECUADOR

PERU

BRAZIL



Value Chains  
Source WCS Colombia

- Departmental border
- Tolima
- Putumayo
- Caquetá
- Guaviare
- Value chains**
- ☉ Coffee
- ☉ Cocoa
- ☉ Stingless beekeeping
- ☉ Amazonian fruits

Scan the QR code to download the **Publications on conservation cocoa.**



# Coffee Processing and Environmental Conservation

Claudia Hernández  
Bella Vista Farm,  
Amoyá River Sub-basin

**NOTAS**  
**SILVESTRES SERIES**



**“Wastewater treatment systems are a game changer for coffee growers, and over time, they make us more aware of the need to protect the environment. These systems cut water use during the washing process, and then the water passes through four filtration tanks, where waste and bacteria are removed until it’s clean. It’s not drinkable, but it can be safely used for irrigation or returned to the stream without causing harm.”**

In the mountains of *San José de las Herosas*, coffee-growing tradition is weaving itself into a new era of sustainability. With the adoption of modular mucilage treatment systems, farmers are reshaping coffee processing, cutting its environmental footprint while deepening their commitment to water conservation and ecosystem protection.

Through the *Río Saldaña*, *Una Cuenca de Vida* program, coffee growers have adopted mucilage treatment systems that have cut coffee processing pollution by 80%. These systems prevent contaminated water from flowing into streams and rivers, filtering out fats, leachates, and other harmful residues that could threaten aquatic ecosystems.

Beyond its environmental impact,

these systems are creating new opportunities for coffee growers to qualify for certifications like Rainforest Alliance and access specialized markets with more competitive prices. These improvements not only reduce ecological harm but also create economic and social benefits for coffee growers.

As more farms adopt these technologies, coffee production

is shifting toward a more environmentally conscious and responsible model. This transition strengthens the commitment to preserving the unique ecosystems where coffee thrives, proving that innovation and sustainability can go hand in hand in agriculture. By embracing these changes, coffee growers are not just safeguarding natural resources; they are ensuring the survival of a long-standing tradition.



Photo: “El Pato” Salcedo. WCS Colombia

# B



# LINES OF ACTION



- B1.** Ecological Restoration
- B2.** Rights and Communities
- B3.** Sustainability and Finance
- B4.** Science and Policy
- B5.** Outreach and Communication



# B1

## ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

As part of ongoing efforts to restore degraded landscapes, WCS expanded its focus in 2024, increasing the area under restoration, maintaining previously planted vegetation, and closely monitoring plant growth and survival rates. This year, WCS established 23 new conservation agreements and propagated 58,374 individuals, including threatened species such as *Cedrela odorata*, *Persea sp.*, *Otoba lehmannii*, *Juglans neotropica*, *Cedrela montana*, and *Quercus humboldtii*. Additionally, WCS planted 59,968 trees, including 12,300 in the Cali River basin and 15,585 in the Middle Magdalena Valley. Survival rates averaged 71%, with some key species—like *Ceiba pentandra*—reaching over 90% survival. Under the Football for Forest (F4F) initiative, WCS began efforts to restore an additional 20 hectares—equivalent to 36 soccer fields.

Key highlights include the following:



200,000 trees, planted between 2022 and 2024, received maintenance to ensure healthy growth and maximize their contribution to restoration efforts.



Agreement reached with the *Cañamomo y Lomapieta* Indigenous Reservation to plant 20,000 trees, strengthening WCS's commitment to support ecosystem restoration and local communities.



Plant survival rates remain high, with 90-98% in the *Bita* River basin, 90-92% in *Putumayo*, and 75-84% in the *Cali* River basin, underscoring the effectiveness of protection and management strategies implemented by WCS.



273 permanent plots to assess the effectiveness of restoration strategies across diverse landscapes: 76 in the Middle *Magdalena* Valley, 36 in the *Andean-Amazon* piedmont, 55 in the *Orinoco* region, 36 in *Cali*, 36 in *Dagua*, and 34 in *La Carranchina* Reserve.



Scan this QR code to explore the **photo gallery from the COP16 delegates' visit to the restoration areas in the Cali River basin.**

## NOTAS SILVESTRES SERIES

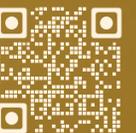
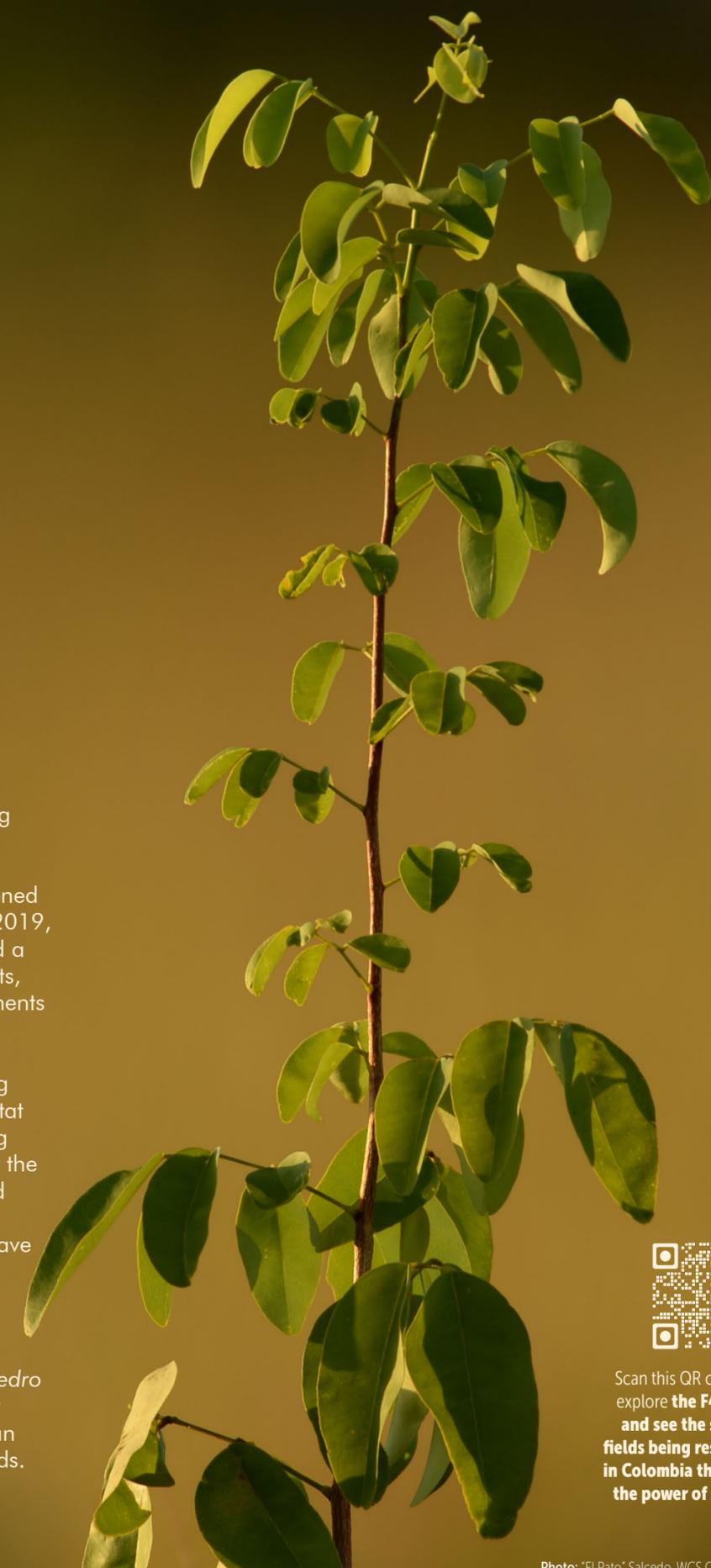
### Soccer: A Powerful Forest Restoration Tool The Story Behind a Local Leader Protecting the Andean Bear Corridor

In *Dagua, Valle del Cauca*, @FootballforForests (F4F) is helping bring forests back to life, supporting the restoration of the Andean bear corridor in an initiative led by WCS and local conservationist Victoria Larraniaga, alongside her community. The project is set to plant 31,900 trees across 50 hectares—an area roughly the size of 70 soccer fields. Involving children and youth, the initiative is using soccer as a gateway to conservation, teaching the next generation why protecting forests is not just important for wildlife, but for their own future as well.

For years, this corridor has been battered by extensive cattle ranching, exotic species planted in fragile soils, industrial pineapple farming, clay extraction, and selective logging. Now, alongside her community, Victoria Larraniaga is working to restore biodiversity and rebuild soil health. This corridor is crucial for maintaining ecological connectivity between environmentally significant areas such as the *Farallones de Cali* PNN, the *Río Anchicayá* National Protective

Forest Reserve, and the *Chilcal* DRMI, preserving its ecological, hydric, and social significance.

This corridor is key for conserving the Andean bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) and shelters one of the highest concentrations of threatened amphibians in the world. Since 2019, the Larraniaga family has played a central role in conservation efforts, beginning with voluntary agreements under the *Conservamos la Vida* project. Over the years, Victoria Larraniaga has become a driving force in the region, leading habitat restoration efforts and expanding conservation initiatives to protect the Andean bear, a species classified as vulnerable in Colombia. With support from F4F, these efforts have gained momentum, with six new conservation agreements signed with local landowners, 25,000 native plants propagated in the *Cavendishia* nursery, including *cedro rosado* and *guásimo*, and nearly 7,000 trees planted—restoring an area equivalent to 10 soccer fields. This work merges conservation, restoration, and community education, helping to transform the *Chilcal* DRMI landscape.



Scan this QR code to explore the **F4F app** and see the soccer fields being restored in Colombia through the power of sports

Photo: "El Pato" Salcedo. WCS Colombia

# B2

## RIGHTS AND COMMUNITIES

At WCS, we recognize that well-being, knowledge, and local empowerment are essential for protecting biodiversity and ensuring long-term conservation success. Without people, there is no territory; without territory, there is no biodiversity. The Rights and Communities component is rooted in four interdependent yet complementary principles: a socio-ecological perspective, a do-no-harm approach, participatory action research, and human rights. This integrated approach promotes equity, justice, and inclusive decision-making, ensuring that communities have a voice in conservation efforts and environmental governance while recognizing that human rights are intertwined with nature conservation.

Key highlights include the following:



**Middle Magdalena Valley:** 490 women organized into eight gender collectives are leading efforts in sovereignty and governance, serving as a socio-ecological model for the region.



**Andean-Amazon Piedmont:** WCS promoted discussions on women's role in biodiversity conservation, bringing together local stakeholders, institutions, and environmental organizations.



**Andes-Chocó:** WCS strengthened the capacities of a community-based monitoring group that will collect key ecological data across five Afro-Colombian community councils in the Pacific region.



**Conservation guidelines and frameworks:** WCS developed three documents guiding conservation efforts with a human rights-based approach, covering conceptual foundations, territorial engagement, and land-use planning.



**Central Andes:** WCS strengthened the skills of local communities in the *Anchicayá* River basin, *Valle del Cauca*, to carry out community-based monitoring, agroecology, and herpetology activities, enhancing the conservation of the *Oophaga lehmanni* frog.



**Orinoco region:** WCS supported game species monitoring with women from the *Cinaruco* National Integrated Management District (DNMI, for its acronym in Spanish), introduced iNaturalist for use in the *Laureles* local district (*Cravo Norte, Arauca*) for local species documentation, and worked alongside the Sikuani people of the *Aliwa Kupepe* territory and the *Awia Tuparro* Indigenous Reservation to integrate their Law of Origin into conservation efforts and finalize their Life Plan.

## NOTAS SILVESTRES SERIES

### Weaving the *Catumare*<sup>1</sup> for Good Living: The Experience of the Sikuani People in *Awia Tuparro*

**"In the heart of Colombia's high plains, where savannas and rivers intertwine like the fibers of a *catumare*, the Sikuani people of *Awia Tuparro* embarked on a journey to reclaim their identity and autonomy. Guided by their Law of Origin and ancestral knowledge, this journey took shape in their Life Plan—a declaration for the community's good living."**

Clara Isabel Arroyave and Mara Ibeth Contreras-Avila

<sup>1</sup>Traditional Indigenous handcrafted basket.

The *Awia Tuparro* Indigenous Territory (spanning 146.877 hectares) became an officially recognized Reservation in 2018, after 22 years of advocacy and the landmark T-379 ruling of 2014. With this recognition, in 2021, the territory's leaders turned to WCS for support in developing their Life Plan, a roadmap to strengthen self-governance, reinforce internal regulations, and define how they wish to live in balance with their land.

More than just a planning tool, the Life Plan is a means of dialogue with the State, offering an Indigenous perspective on what development should look like. Led by three territorial coordinators, the process wove together the wisdom of elders—guardians of ancestral memory—and the voices of youth, who brought fresh perspectives. Beyond setting goals, the process rekindled a sense of collective vision, reaffirming the principle of Good Living—a way of life built on harmony between people, nature, and ancestral values.

This process brought together leaders and community voices,

forming a diverse team prepared to navigate the challenges of managing their ancestral land. It established four foundational cultural principles: *Unuma* (collective work), *Yaiyatae* (respect), *Uratae* (honor), and *Itaxuto tsoniatae* (solidarity). These values provide guidance for the community's social and political life, ensuring that decisions remain deeply connected to the territory.

Women and youth—historically sidelined from decision-making—played crucial roles, securing an entire chapter dedicated to their challenges. Their leadership marked a shift in political organization, fostering a more inclusive governance structure.

The Life Plan lays out five core pillars for the future: protecting the territory, ensuring food abundance, strengthening traditional health practices, promoting education for Good Living, and strengthening community governance. The next challenge is bringing these priorities to life. Success will depend on collaboration between Indigenous leadership, local authorities, and national institutions.



Photo: "El Pato" Salcedo. WCS Colombia

# B3

## SUSTAINABILITY AND FINANCE

This component focuses on connecting conservation funding from public and private sources with on-the-ground efforts in conservation, restoration, and sustainable land use developed and supported by WCS and its partners. In 2024, WCS launched two pilot programs and feasibility studies to explore new pathways for climate finance and the emerging voluntary biodiversity markets. In parallel, WCS continued providing technical support to shape and refine regulations for environmental law enforcement.

Key highlights include the following:



WCS launched a pilot project in *Putumayo* to develop a community-led habitat bank, incorporating biodiversity credits as an innovative financing tool for conservation.



WCS conducted three pre-feasibility studies on greenhouse gas mitigation projects with Indigenous and farmer communities in *Caquetá* and *Putumayo*. While not immediately viable, these studies provided critical insights into social and environmental safeguards.



In partnership with the National Business Association of Colombia (ANDI, for its acronym in Spanish), WCS worked alongside the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the National Environmental Licensing Agency (ANLA, for its acronym in Spanish) to refine 1% compensation and investment regulations.

## NOTAS SILVESTRES SERIES

### Community-Led Habitat Banks: A Path to Long-Term Conservation

In 2024, as part of a strategy backed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), WCS partnered with communities in *Orito* and *Puerto Asís* to develop a community-led habitat bank. This model was designed to support landowners who have already demonstrated a deep commitment to conservation by establishing RNSCs. By providing a financially sustainable mechanism, the initiative offers long-term stability for voluntary conservation efforts.

A habitat bank is a conservation-based business model designed to systematically implement preservation, restoration, and sustainable land management activities. With a robust ecosystem and biodiversity monitoring system, it quantifies environmental gains, which can then be used to meet legal conservation obligations or generate biodiversity credits. This approach provides a sustainable financing mechanism, supporting conservation efforts for up to 20 years and creating alternative income streams for landowners committed to conservation.

The process faced major hurdles, from designing governance models that balanced individual

landowner decisions within a collective framework to establishing social and environmental safeguards, an entirely new concept in the country. Another challenge lay in developing long-term financial structures to ensure that small landowners could sustain conservation efforts.

Now, the focus is on consolidating the model through a participatory approach and securing official registration of the habitat bank with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. This step will be key to attracting investment, expanding conservation and monitoring efforts, and ensuring that the initiative delivers lasting impact.



Photo: "El Pato" Salcedo, WCS Colombia

# B4

## SCIENCE AND POLICY

WCS works at the intersection of science and innovation to inform biodiversity decision-making. Since 2020, WCS has contributed to more than 50 scientific publications and technical reports, shedding light on the conservation and management of Colombia's ecosystems and species. WCS's work also includes piloting technologies, such as drones, SMART, Kobo, and Earth Ranger, to enhance the monitoring and research of more than 10 species and taxonomic groups. In 2024, WCS launched an open-access tool designed to estimate deforestation reduction within protected areas and conservation projects.

Key highlights include the following:



Conducted Colombia's first drone-based census for the *Orinoco* crocodile



Added 9,797 new biological records, bringing the total to 40,338.



Published over 50 scientific articles and technical reports since 2020, with 14 new publications in 2024.



Designed a participatory bioacoustics monitoring system to assess how cocoa farming impacts biodiversity.



Launched a research initiative to explore the connection between land cover transformation and zoonotic disease emergence.



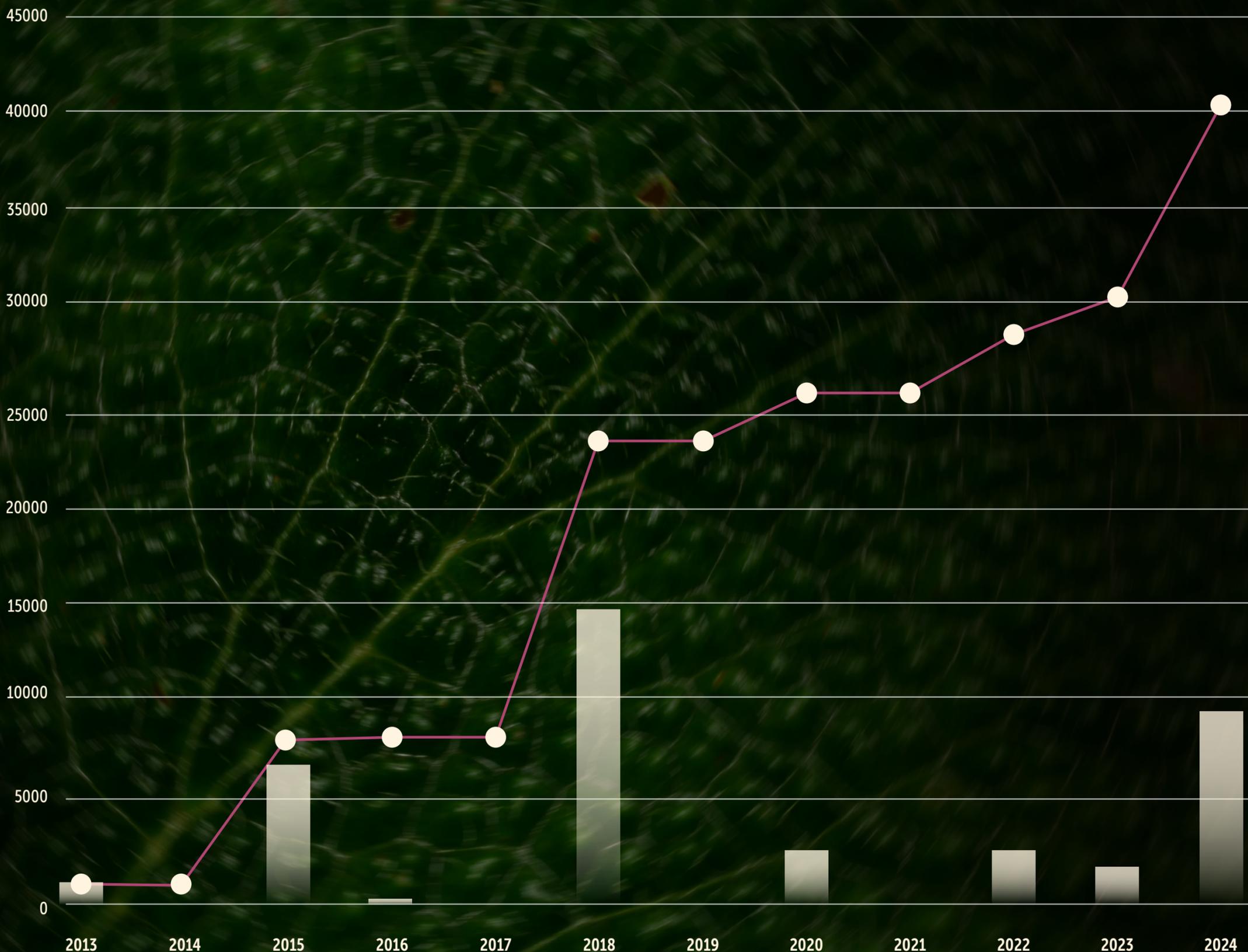
Developed an open-access tool to assess deforestation reduction in protected areas and area-based conservation projects.



Expanded the use of SMART, Earth Ranger, Skylight, and Global Forest Watch for biodiversity studies and threat monitoring across 10 protected areas.



Our contribution to the knowledge of the country's biodiversity, through open data available in the SiB Colombia.  
Source: WCS Colombia



### WCS IN THE MEDIA

Including international media outlets and websites



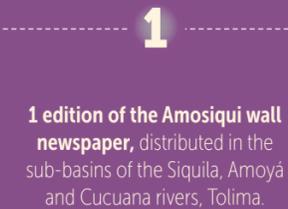
● Publications  
● Direct audience  
● Increase

### NEWSLETTERS

Including information about ongoing projects, activities, and milestones across WCS's geographies



### PRINT AND DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS

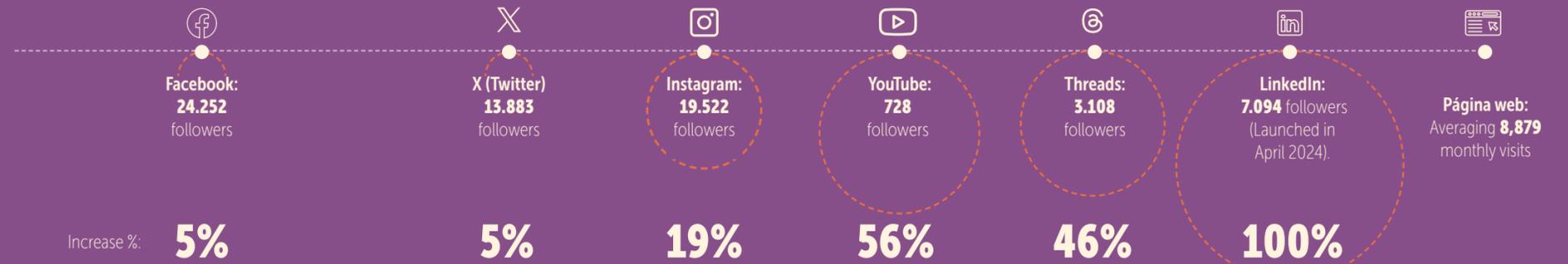


# B5

## OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

### EXPANDING DIGITAL REACH

WCS continues to expand its digital presence, strengthening public engagement with conservation efforts across multiple platforms:



### NON-DIGITAL EXHIBITIONS



This component focuses on inspiring people to recognize the value of nature and take action to protect it. Through outreach and strategic communication and products, this line of action supports WCS's mission to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable resource use, while strengthening the organization's visibility as a key player in wildlife conservation and community resilience.

# C



# OUR TEAM

- C1. Institutional Management
- C2. Partners and Alliances
- C3. Our Team

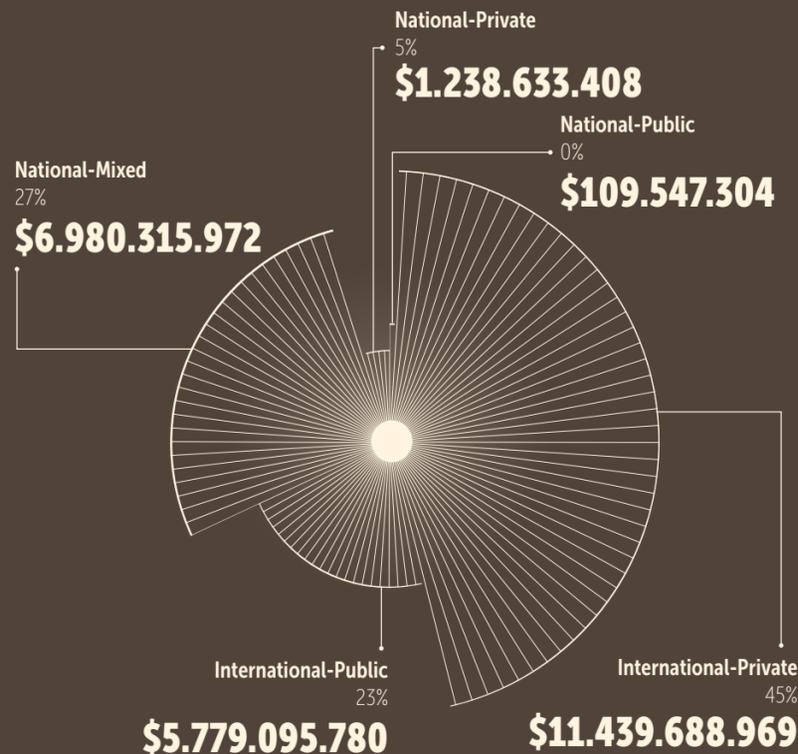


# C1

## INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT

### Investment

In 2024, WCS invested **COP \$25.547.281.433 (USD \$6.386.820)** to implement its strategy in Colombia. These funds, sourced from public, private, and mixed entities at both national and international levels, supported the implementation of 43 projects, programs, and initiatives.



### Forging and Strengthening Partnerships

National-Private 17%  
**\$1.715.056.441**

International-Public 49%  
**\$4.745.234.530**

**32 partnerships** established or renewed, including specific agreements, framework collaboration agreements, grants, and contracts.

17 new agreements signed, securing COP \$9,740,977,147 (USD \$233,088) in conservation investment set to take effect in 2024.

5 subgrants awarded, channeling COP \$627,116,245 (USD \$155,342) to local partners.

10 new framework agreements with universities, companies, government agencies, and local organizations.

International-Private 24%  
**\$2.322.886.800**

National-Public 10%  
**\$957.799.376**

### Transnational Initiatives:

WCS leads, supports, and implements transnational initiatives that foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing across countries. These efforts are key to tackling shared environmental challenges, such as wildlife trafficking, while developing effective solutions.

Key highlights include the following:



**Amazon Water Alliance:** upholding the integrity and connectivity of aquatic ecosystems across the Amazon Basin while protecting the critical environmental services they provide at regional and global levels.



**GEF Putumayo-Ica:** supporting Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru in enhancing capacities and enabling conditions to manage shared freshwater ecosystems of the Putumayo- Ica basin in the Amazon Basin.



**Conservando Juntos:** strengthening civil society capacities to prevent environmental crimes across the Amazon region, including Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

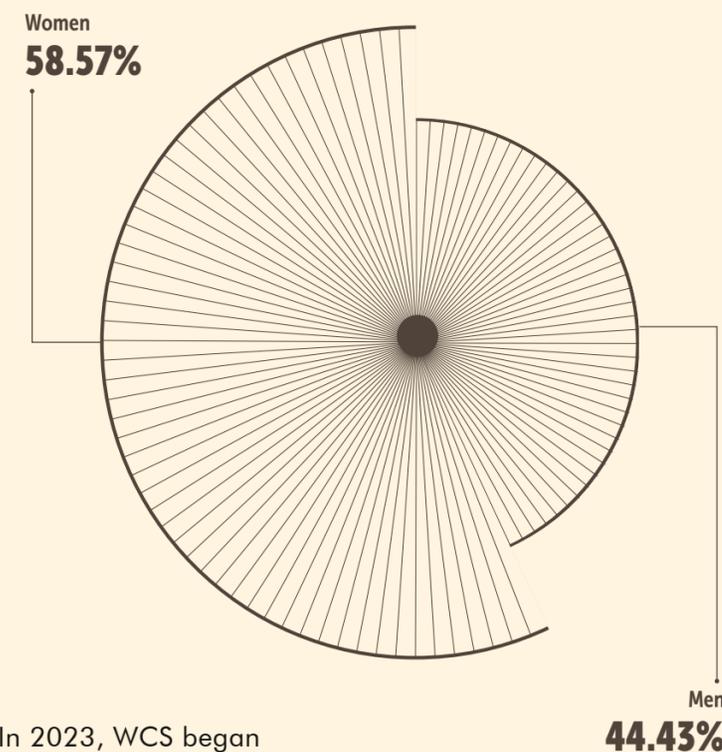


**PESCAVIDA:** promoting sustainable small-scale fisheries to ensure food security, sustainable livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation in Kenya, Indonesia, and Colombia.

**SIMPEL:** conducting legal and scientific assessments of public health risks in the Amazon, analyzing socio-ecological impacts and emerging wildlife-borne pathogens in Colombia and Bolivia.

### Our team

Our progress in 2024 was made possible by the dedication and expertise of 78 Colombia's team members, 25 of the regional and global teams based in Colombia, and 251 consultants. WCS's diverse team includes local experts, technicians, and professionals, with 57% holding graduate degrees, bringing specialized knowledge to the field.



In 2023, WCS began modernizing its administrative systems, a process successfully completed in 2024.

These improvements have streamlined inventory tracking, simplified accounting and payroll management, and enhanced employee self-management tools. As a result, WCS's Human Resources team can now focus on more strategic priorities.

Additionally, WCS strengthened its administrative capacity by 27%, bringing in highly qualified professionals to reinforce key areas such as accounting, logistics, and human resources.

# C2a

## PARTNERS

United States Agency for International Development

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

Agrosavia

Allen Institute

Andes Amazon Fund

Arcadia

Asociación Agrícola Orgánica de Cacaoteros del Municipio de San José del Fragua (ASOACASAN)

Asociación de Autoridades y Cabildos de los Pueblos Indígenas del municipio de Leguizamo y Alto Resguardo Predio Putumayo (ACILAPP)

Asociación de Productores Agroforestales Alternativos de Belén de los Andaquíes (ASPROABELEN)

Asociación de Productores de Cacao de Orito (ASOPROCAO)

Asociación de Productores de Cacao de Villagarzón (ASOPROCAVIP)

Asociación de Productores de Cacao La Florida (ASOPROCAF)

Asociación Nacional de Industriales (ANDI)

Avianca

Bezos Earth Fund

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)

Cabildo Indígena de Puracé - Pueblo Kokonuco

Camposol S.A

Canacol Energy LTD

CNE Oil & Gas S.A.S

Comité de Cacaoteros de los Municipios de El Paujil y El Doncello (COMCAP)

Comité de Cultivadores de Cacao en Sistemas Agroforestales del Municipio de San Vicente del Caguán (COMICACAO)

Comité de Productores de Cacao una Nueva Alternativa para el Valle del Guamuez (COPROGAMUEZ)

Concretos Argos SAS

Consejo Comunitario de La Comunidad Negra del Río Naya

Consejo Comunitario de la Costa Pacífica (CONCOSTA)

Consejo Comunitario General Los Riscasles Consejo Comunitario General del San Juan (ACADESAN)

Consejo Comunitario Mayor de Novita Conservación Internacional (CI)

Cooperativa Integral de Producción Agropecuaria (COOPERAGRO)

Corporación Autónoma Regional de Caldas (CORPOCALDAS)

Corporación Autónoma Regional de Risaralda (CARDER)

Corporación Autónoma Regional del Tolima (CORTOLIMA)

Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca (CVC)

Corporación Autónoma Regional para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Chocó (CODECHOCÓ)

Corporación para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Sur de la Amazonia (CORPOAMAZONIA)

Corporación GANSO

Corporación Universitaria Lasallista

Dejusticia

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Ecopetrol

Federación Comunitaria para el Ordenamiento y Manejo de las áreas Protegidas de Risaralda (FECOMAR)

Fondo Acción

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Fundación Águilas de los Andes (FADA)

Fundación Alisos

Fundación del Alto Magdalena

Fundación Carlota

Fundación Corona

Fundación Farallones

Fundación Franklinia

Fundación Grupo Argos

Fundación Humedales

Fundación Marviva

Fundación Herencia Natural (FHN)

Fundación Natura

Fundación Nutresa

Fundación Santo Domingo

Fundación Smurfit Kappa Colombia

Fundación Zoológica de Cali

Grupo BIZ Colombia S.A.S (AGROBIZ)

Hocol

Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones Científicas (SINCHI)

Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt

Internews

Laboratorio de Ornitología de Cornell

Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible de Colombia

Naturaleza y Cultura Internacional (NCI)

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

OceanKind

Organización Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana (OPIAC)

Parques Nacionales Naturales de Colombia

Patrimonio Natural

Point Blue Conservation Science

Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

Productores Comercializadores y

Transformadores de Cacao del Guaviare y Sur del Meta (ASOPROCACAO)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Rainforest Alliance

Rainforest Trust

Re:Wild

Reid Park Zoo

Resguardo Indígena Cañamomo y Lomapieta

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation (TSA)

UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK PACT)

Universidad Autónoma de Occidente

Universidad de la Salle

Universidad de los Andes

Universidad de Santa Rosa de Cabal (UNISARC)

Universidad de Sucre

Universidad del Quindío

Universidad del Rosario

Universidad del Valle

Universidad EAN

Universidad Nacional - Bogotá

US Fish & Wildlife Service

WCS Marine Protected Area Fund

Winrock International

World Bank

Zoo Zürich

Zona de Reserva Campesina La Perla Amazónica

# C2b

## AND ALLIANCES



CONSERVAMOS LA VIDA



# C3

## OUR TEAM

### COLOMBIA

Alexander Jaramillo García  
**Operations Coordinator**

Alexandra Areiza Tapias  
**Conservation Areas Lead**

Ana María Santofimio Mahecha  
**Rights and Communities Coordinator**

Andrea Catalina Lasso Muñoz  
**Technical Liaison - GEF**

Andrés Balcázar Salazar  
**Wildlife Trafficking Coordinator**

Andrey Yoan Valencia Cedeño  
**Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist**

Aura Perlaza Caicedo  
**Accounting Assistant**

Camila Durán Prieto  
**Wildlife Specialist**

Carlos Alberto Castillo Micolta  
**Logistics Assistant**

Carlos Andrés Ríos Franco  
**GIS Coordinator**

Carlos Arturo Saavedra Rodríguez  
**Species Coordinator**

Catalina Gutiérrez Chacón  
**Country Director, Colombia**

Christian Michael Díaz Sánchez  
**Technology Specialist**

Diego Fernando Córdoba Rojas  
**Marine Ecosystems Lead**

Donys Merceth Manchego Rojas  
**Reserve Ranger**

Edith Johanna Gutiérrez Cifuentes  
**Project Management Specialist**

Ernesto Ome Álvarez  
**Production Alternatives Specialist**

Fanny Lorena González Zapata  
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Felber Jair Arroyave Bermúdez  
**Data Analyst**

Germán Andrés Forero Medina  
**Science and Conservation Director**

Germán Sepúlveda Nogales  
**Project Management Specialist**

Guisella Alexandra Chaves Rosero  
**Conservation Areas Specialist**

Gustavo Alonso González Durán  
**Amphibian Specialist**

Héctor Alejandro Celemin Castro  
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Héctor Fabio Ortiz Cortázar  
**Accountant**

Igor Felipe Valencia Larrarte  
**Turtle Specialist**

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**Project Management Specialist**

Itma Selene Torres Rodríguez  
**Restoration Lead**

Iván Mauricio Vela Vargas  
**Large Mammal Lead**

Jahel del Cristo García de la Hoz  
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Jennifer Chávez Zapata  
**Social Processes Specialist**

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**Accounting Assistant**

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**Project Management Specialist**

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**Andean-Amazonian Landscape Specialist**

Jorge Enrique Parra Bastos  
**Deputy Director of Biodiversity**

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Juan Sebastián Mora Novoa  
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Laura Lizbeth Jaimés Rodríguez  
**Mammals Specialist**

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Leonor Adriana Valenzuela Ospina  
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Lina María Caro Ramírez  
**Sustainable Landscapes Coordinator**

Lucas Buitrago Garzón  
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**Logistics Lead**

Luis Felipe Salazar Arcila  
**Technical Specialist**

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**Large Mammal Specialist**

Luz Dary Acevedo Cendales  
**Health Coordinator**

Luz Karidme Díaz Granobles  
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**Operations Specialist**

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Yeiner Vega Martínez  
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Yelsin de Jesús Salgado Gómez  
**Local Conservation Strategies Specialist**

Yesid Alberto Llanos Bravo  
**Social and Governance Specialist**

Zaira Yohanna Ríos Flórez  
**Production and Outreach Specialist**

Zaira Yohanna Ríos Flórez  
**Production and Outreach Specialist**

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Camacho Hurtado Felipe  
**Data Analyst, Natural Climate Solutions**

Carlos Eduardo Guevara Fletcher  
**Aquatic Ecosystems Specialist, GEF Putumayo-Iça**

Carlos Esteban Payán Garrido  
**Senior Lead, Latin America Big Cats Program**

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**Senior Lead, Latin America Big Cats Program**

César Augusto Marín Corba  
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David Alejandro Jurado  
**Communications Specialist, AAO**

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Eduardo Villegas Flórez  
**Environmental and Social Standards Coordinator, GEF Putumayo-Iça**

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**Regional GIS Analyst**

Héctor González Rubio  
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Juan Fernando Jaramillo González  
**Grants Manager, GEF Putumayo-Iça**

Juan Fernando Jaramillo González  
**Grants Manager, GEF Putumayo-Iça**

Juan Pablo Varela Galindo  
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Lorena Hernández Agudelo  
**Deputy Legal Counsel, Latin America**

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**Wildlife Trafficking Technical Specialist**

Natalia Díaz Reyes  
**Gender Specialist**

Rocío Alexandra Ramírez Delgado  
**Regional Finance Manager, AAO**

Silvia López Casas  
**Freshwater Ecosystems Specialist**

Yesid Alberto Llanos Bravo  
**Social and Governance Specialist**

D



# WCS AT COP16

**Peace with Nature**



# WCS

## WCS AT COP16 - Peace with Nature

# COP16 EVENTS

of events by topic



As Colombia prepared for COP16, WCS played a key role in supporting the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in updating the country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) across three main components.

At COP16, WCS Colombia engaged in more than 80 events, positioning ecological integrity as a central pillar linking biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and public health. The discussions emphasized the indispensable role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, advocating for a rights-based approach to conservation.

**A** WCS facilitated the First Regional Biodiversity Summit in Cali (April 2024), where government officials, leaders, and civil society representatives came together to design a roadmap for integrating biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management into the NBSAP.

**B** WCS partnered with civil society organizations, including TNC, WWF, Gaia Amazonas, CI, and Natura to create a support group for the COP16's Scientific-Academic Subcommittee, providing expert insights and contributing to key agenda discussions. As part of this effort, WCS also provided the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development with a detailed analysis of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, mapping out Colombia's current progress, priority actions, and policy recommendations to guide national implementation.

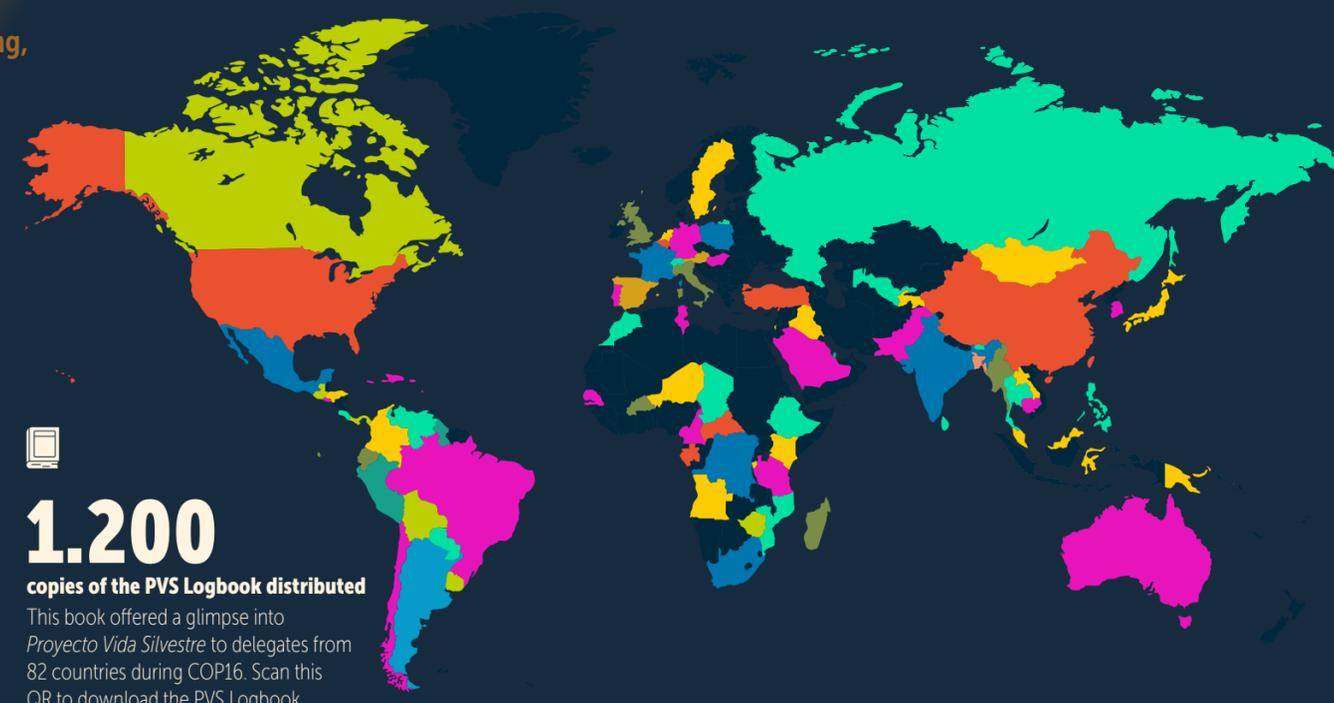
**C** In partnership with the Instituto Alexander von Humboldt and TNC, WCS Colombia helped shape and implement a national reporting framework for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The results of this collaboration are reflected in Chapter 6 of Colombia's updated NBSAP.

### COP16 milestones

- Global Biodiversity and Health Action Plan adopted.
- Colombia's NBSAP now incorporates ecological integrity as a core principle.
- Implementation of a benefit-sharing mechanism for genetic sequence data and the launch of the Cali Fund.
- New subsidiary body established for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, with a dedicated work plan through 2030.
- Afro-Colombian communities recognized as key actors in conservation.

### Outreach Materials and Public Engagement

- 30 wildlife video segments aired on *Noticias Caracol*.
- 30 audiovisual pieces from WCS Colombia featured at the WCS Global booth in the Blue Zone at COP16.
- 10 biodiversity messages about *Valle del Cauca* broadcasted at Cali's airport in collaboration with CVC.
- 7 in-depth news reports highlighting key local partners in WCS Colombia projects, broadcasted on *Caracol TV's* national newscasts.



**1.200** copies of the PVS Logbook distributed

This book offered a glimpse into *Proyecto Vida Silvestre* to delegates from 82 countries during COP16. Scan this QR to download the PVS Logbook.



**Countries with color in the map** received the PVS Logbook at COP16: Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, UK, Canada, Ecuador, Bolivia, USA, China, Peru, Chile, Guatemala, Tunisia, Bangladesh, France, Hungary, Burkina Faso, Philippines, Madagascar, Poland, Argentina, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Mozambique, Russia, Venezuela, Cuba, Indonesia, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Germany, Australia, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Congo, El Salvador, Spain, Gabon, Honduras, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Zimbabwe, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Saudi Arabia, Austria, Bahrain, Burundi, Chad, South Korea, Guyana, India, Laos, Myanmar, Mongolia, Niger, Netherlands, Palestine, Pakistan, Portugal, Central African Republic, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Turkey, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Belgium, Ethiopia.

**Countries without color on the map:** did not receive the book at COP16.



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