

Together We Find a Way

2021 LATIN AMERICA
IMPACT REPORT



From towering Andean peaks and Patagonian grasslands, to the Amazon rainforest and Mesoamerican Reef, Latin America's unparalleled natural wealth is essential to the health of our planet.

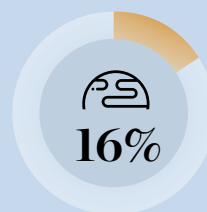
The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has worked in the region for five decades. Our efforts in Latin America span 17 countries and engage hundreds of partners across sectors: local communities, governments, companies, financial institutions, and academia. Together, we create innovative, practical and field-proven solutions to meet our world's most pressing challenges: protecting ocean, lands and water; tackling climate change; and providing food and water sustainably.



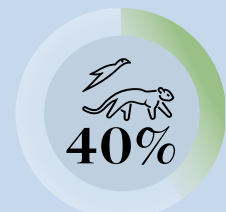
COVER

Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, Peru. The Amazon rainforest covers more than half of Peru's territory and is the second-largest swath of the Amazon, after the Brazilian. © Daniel Maraña/TNC Photo Contest 2019

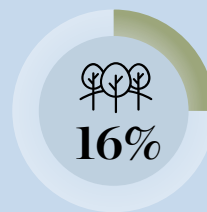
LATIN AMERICA: NATURE'S POWERHOUSE



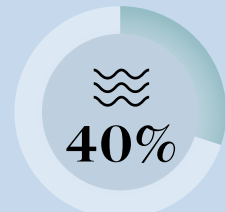
OF EARTH'S LAND SURFACE



OF ALL SPECIES



OF ALL FORESTS



FRESH WATER



LARGEST REEF



- 1 Gulf of California
- 2 Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef
- 3 Mesoamerican Forest Bridge
- 4 Magdalena-Cauca
- 5 Orinoquia/Llanos
- 6 Amazon
- 7 Cerrado
- 8 Atlantic Forest
- 9 Humboldt Current
- 10 Chaco
- 11 Chile Mediterranean
- 12 Patagonia

Protecting 12 Iconic Places, home to incredible natural, economic, and cultural resources and must-win ecosystems where our work is delivering triple benefits for biodiversity, people, and climate.



Content

- PROTECT LANDS, WATER, OCEANS 8
- PROVIDE FOOD AND WATER SUSTAINABLY 15
- TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE 25

Brazil's Sea Mountain range emerges above the clouds. © Ferreira Netto, TNC Photo Contest 2021

Together, We Find a Way



Paula Caballero
Regional Managing
Director for Latin
America

One of the things I love the most about my new role as TNC's Regional Managing Director for Latin America is the time I spend with supporters, trustees, partners and staff in the incredible places where we work. I get to meet the passionate people who make our organization so strong.

These experiences reaffirm my reasons for joining TNC: our science-based approach, combined with practical, field-proven solutions, rooted in decades of collaboration with diverse partners. Few organizations have the depth, muscle and convening power that TNC has to deliver results with the scale and urgency necessary.

These are urgent times. This decade is the critical moment for global action to tackle the climate change and biodiversity crises. To avoid tipping points that could have dire consequences for all life on Earth, TNC has developed an ambitious set of goals to achieve by 2030 and a meticulously-derived set of metrics to track our progress.

Latin America has a decisive role to play in achieving our organizational global goals. The region is home to nearly half the planet's biodiversity and a quarter of the world's forests, making it vital for addressing two urgent tasks: reversing the decline of nature and halting climate change. With your commitment and support, Latin America can deliver 50% of TNC's overall and global projected carbon sequestration and emission reduction targets by 2030.

Our team has mobilized to meet these challenges head-on by focusing on 12 Iconic Places, carefully selected for their readiness to deliver biodiversity, climate and social outcomes. Through collective action with local and Indigenous communities, governments, the private sector, local organizations and other stakeholders, we are activating major levers to scale impactful conservation and regenerative development through public policy, corporate practices, innovative finance and more.

While we pursue ambitious goals on a regional and global scale, at the community level, these may translate into family farms finding security and protecting nature through new ways of producing food; volunteer squads of divers repairing coral reefs that shield the shore; fishers designing guidelines to protect their stocks; or Indigenous communities stepping forward to lead ambitious national action.

The Impact Report that follows captures our ambitious goals and a sampling of our accomplishments in 2021.

We are grateful to all our donors who continue to generously support us at this critical time for our planet. Together, we can realize a future where both people and nature thrive.

With deep appreciation,
Paula Caballero



Forging Ahead into a Decisive Decade

We are facing the biggest, most complex challenges of our lives. And that calls for our biggest, most ambitious plans. That is why we have set urgent targets aimed at helping us secure a thriving planet—for people and nature.

Latin America has a decisive role to play, especially for climate—as the region will deliver 50% of TNC’s projected carbon sequestration and emission reduction targets for 2030.

Grounded in science, fueled by our collaborative spirit and our relentless pursuit of solutions, we know that together we can overcome barriers to progress and achieve our most ambitious plans yet.

Seville, in the Valley of the Cauca in Colombia is known as “the balcony of the valley” for its spectacular panoramic views. © Fabián Rendón Morales/TNC Photo Contest 2021

Our 2030 ambition

TNC GLOBAL

● Climate

3 GT
CO₂E/YR

100 M
PEOPLE

● Oceans

4 B
HECTARES

● Fresh water

1M
KILOMETERS
River Systems

30 M
HECTARES
Lakes and wetlands

● Lands

650 M
HECTARES

● People

45 M
PEOPLE

TNC LATIN AMERICA

1.5 GT
CO₂E/YR



increased sequestration/
reduced emissions of
greenhouse gas

1.2 M
PEOPLE



at-risk of extreme weather
benefiting from adaptation

124 M
HECTARES



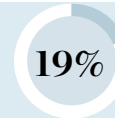
important for biodiversity
and carbon

246 K
KILOMETERS



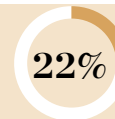
important for biodiversity
and carbon

5.7 M
HECTARES



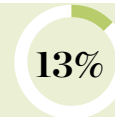
important for biodiversity
and carbon

141 M
HECTARES



important for biodiversity
and carbon

5.8 M
PEOPLE



benefitting from healthy
oceans, fresh water, and
lands

Our Guiding Principles

We **lead with our values**—honoring Indigenous and local peoples’ voices, choices, and actions.

We ground our strategies in the places identified by our science—maximizing our ability to effect change **for nature and the people who rely on it**.

We strive for **multiple benefits** by pursuing solutions that benefit biodiversity, sequester carbon and reduce risk to people most vulnerable to the harm caused by climate change.

We leverage **policy, partnerships,** and **finance mechanisms** to advance conservation far beyond any one place.



Protect Lands, Water, Oceans

Protecting lands and waters is where TNC's story began. Today, we are guided by our mission to conserve Latin America's iconic landscapes at an unprecedented scale—for the benefit of people, wildlife, and climate.

*Aerial view of the Cara Blanca Pools showing three of the 24 cenotes that support a rich diversity of fish, wildlife and archeological sites in Belize's recently protected Maya Forest.
© Tony Rath/tonyrath.com*



Saving an Ancient Place to Help Solve a Modern Problem

Imagine you are in the Maya Forest of Belize, surrounded by innumerable shades of green. You hear the roar of Howler monkeys and lively chatter of parrots and hundreds of other bird species. You are in a place that witnessed an ancient civilization rise, thrive and fade.

Today, it is the forest itself, and all the mystery it holds, that is at risk of disappearing. The region's tropical forests are being cleared at an alarming rate by logging to make way for agriculture, cattle ranching, and development. Between 1986 and 2018, the nation's forest stocks declined by more than 28%. When forests are removed, the carbon they store escapes into the atmosphere. Loss of tropical forests such as those in Belize is responsible for about 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions—a significant factor in the face of climate change.



THE MAYA FOREST AND MESOAMERICAN REEF hold the second largest tropical forest of the Americas; the longest underground river system on the planet, the second largest reef system in the world, and is a bedrock of cultural heritage from the great Mayan civilization.

Jaguars are among the most threatened large cats in the Americas, largely because of habitat loss. Because they are the top predators in the Maya Forest, the health of the jaguar population is an indicator of overall ecosystem health. These protected acres will continue to provide jaguars with room to roam © Alan Diddier Fuentes/Photo Contest 2019



That's why TNC facilitated a coalition of more than a dozen entities that recently conserved 236,000 acres of Belize's Maya Forest.

This tropical rainforest is home to at least 70 species of mammals, such as jaguars, pumas, and howler and spider monkeys, in addition to hundreds of species of resident and migratory birds. It also helps to safeguard three major watersheds that supply the country with a third of its drinking water and a quarter of its water for irrigation.

“This area has great historical and cultural significance, and it is impossible to overstate its ecological importance,” says Julie Robinson, TNC’s program director in Belize. “And just by ensuring it will endure, we are helping to solve the most urgent problem of our time—climate change.” TNC’s climate scientists estimate that using natural solutions to avoid greenhouse gas emissions, including conserving at-risk priority landscapes like the Maya Forest, can deliver about one third of the global emissions reductions needed by 2030.

● [READ MORE](#) →



“This project is an example of remarkable conservation action, with innovative financing, innovative partnerships, and unusual levels of collaboration. Most importantly, it ensures a future for a very special corner of the planet and the extraordinary biodiversity it shelters.”

Wendy Paulson, chair, Bobolink Foundation

*Geoffroy's spider monkey in the forest canopy of Belize's Maya Forest.
© Lucas Bustamante*

Aerial view of central Belize showing agricultural fields, transition forests, human settlements, and former timber roads in the buffer zone of the protected area. © Lucas Bustamante

Forever Blue in Belize

The cerulean waters of Belize's Caribbean coast are home to some of the nation's most valuable treasures. These waters support lush mangrove forests, vibrant reefs and extensive beds of sea grass, all of which provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, including West Indian manatees and hawksbill turtles.

With nearly half of all Belizeans living in coastal communities, the health of Belize's marine ecosystems is of national importance. Tourism generates more than 40% of Belize's national income, and the Belize Barrier Reef— part of the second-longest coral reef system in the world—is one of the country's top tourist destinations.



The Belize Barrier Reef System features three of four coral atolls in the Atlantic, lush mangrove forests, numerous offshore islands, and hosts 77 species listed as threatened by the IUCN. Top: © Maria Dabrowski/TNC Photo Contest 2018.

Bottom: © Carla Santana Torres/TNC Photo Contest 2019

To protect these natural wonders, the government of Belize signed an agreement with TNC in November 2021 that will generate an estimated USD 180 million to support the country's ambitious commitment to protect 30% of its ocean waters. Representing the world's largest debt restructuring for marine conservation to date, the deal restructured approximately USD 550 million of Belize's external commercial debt with more favorable terms, and in turn has secured long-term sustainable financing for ocean conservation—as much as USD 180 million of new funding over the next 20 years. The Belize Blue Bond project more than triples Belize's budget for ocean conservation over the next two decades, including a new endowment that could reach USD 92 million in value to sustain long-term conservation funding.

● [READ MORE](#) →

2nd

Longest coral reef system in the world

40%

Tourism represents almost half of Belize's national income

"This deal is huge for Belize, especially during a tremendously difficult time for our economy, but its impact extends far beyond us as well. Blue Bonds will help us support the vibrant marine life that resides here, and maintain the rich biodiversity that is crucial for the health of our ecosystem and the planet. We are proud to be pioneers in this work, and to lead the way for other countries to join us as we conserve our oceans for Belize and beyond."

Hon. John Briceño, Belize Prime Minister

The loggerhead turtle is one of 3 varieties of sea turtles (green, hawksbill, and loggerhead) that nest in Belize. © Claire Ryser /TNC Photo Contest 2019



Amplifying Indigenous Voices

With deep ties to their land and reliance on its resources, Indigenous Peoples are vital allies in conservation and climate action. In Brazil, TNC has partnered with Indigenous institutions for the past 20 years. From supporting territorial and environmental management plans on Indigenous lands to promoting dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and companies that operate on or near their lands, TNC has amplified Indigenous voices to conserve their territories with new tools, including communications training. A direct result of this training was the creation of the pioneering **Guerreiros Digit@is**—Digital Warriors—network on Instagram that brings together Indigenous communicators from the Brazilian states of Pará, Mato Grosso, and Amapá.



“The use of technology and communication is very important to us. It guarantees there is room for our point of view and the chance to present our thoughts, our culture, and our struggle.”

Simone Karipuna, APOIANP Coordinator

Territories of Indigenous Peoples cover 24% of the globe’s land surface, yet they contain 80% of the world’s biodiversity. From the Maya Forest in Mexico to the Amazon basin, TNC’s partnership with Indigenous Peoples has the potential to influence the future of more than 10% of Latin America’s most biodiverse landscapes.

● [READ MORE](#) →

Bepnhibety Xikrin marks the location of Brazil nut trees on his GPS to identify and preserve areas of the forest that are especially important to his community. TNC collaborates with Indigenous peoples to integrate traditional knowledge with modern approaches to landscape planning in order to enable greater leadership in deciding how their traditional territories are managed. © Kevin Arnold

Cristian Wariu, youtuber who produces content focused on fighting prejudice and build awareness about the diversity of Indigenous Peoples.
© Cristian Wariu



Smart Energy Siting to Support Climate and Biodiversity Goals

To tackle climate change, we must transition to renewable energy as quickly as possible. Fortunately, we don't need to prioritize action on climate over conservation goals. By including nature in the energy planning and siting processes, we can meet the twin goals of addressing the climate crisis and conserving at least 30% of our lands, waters, and oceans by 2030.

TNC is collaborating with the government of Peru—one of the world's most biodiverse countries—to promote our “Hydro by Design” approach, which allows governments and developers to make better and more transparent decisions about their investments and projects, ensuring that hydropower does not come at the expense of biodiversity and free-flowing rivers. Our work with the Peruvian government and its Ministry of Energy and Mines includes assessing renewable energy projects by developing best-practices guides, identifying the most fitting places to site energy (solar and wind), and designing and carrying out training programs to minimize the environmental risks of energy infrastructure.

Additionally, TNC is supporting authorities in planning a sustainable energy future for Loreto, a region located in the Peruvian Amazon. We are providing policy recommendations for a clean energy transition while mitigating adverse impacts on nature. Diversifying energy supply while minimizing social and environmental impacts is one of the most critical challenges in the Peruvian Amazon. Currently, Loreto—which accounts for half of the Peruvian Amazon—is electrically isolated from the rest of the country, constraining the economic development of this culturally and biologically diverse region.

Peru is one of the top five megadiverse countries in the world. It ranks second only to Colombia in terms of birds and is in the top five globally for amphibians, mammals, and plants. This beautiful sloth was photographed near Iquitos. © Sebastian Mezarina/ TNC Photo Contest 2019



Provide Food and Water Sustainably

Use the power of nature to restore the health of our soils and oceans, increasing production while building resiliency to our changing climate.

David Canul Tete picks corn by hand in his father's corn field in the ejido of San Agustin: TNC works with landowners, communities, and governments in Mexico to promote low-carbon rural development through the design and implementation of improved policy and practice in agriculture, ranching, and forestry. © Erich Schlegel

The Gran Chaco: Healing Nature through Healthy Food Systems



The Gran Chaco stretches across Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Brazil, spanning an area about twice the size of Spain. It is one of the last remaining biodiversity strongholds in the world and holds the largest dry forest in South America. Recent research found that there is 19 times more carbon stored here than previously estimated, making it one of the largest carbon sinks on the planet. Yet, the rare dry forest of the Gran Chaco is one of the most threatened ecoregions worldwide.

Eighty percent of Argentina’s deforestation today occurs in the Gran Chaco, largely due to large-scale soy and beef production. Growing the same crop year after year has led to overworked and malnourished soils



Largest dry forest ecosystem in South America

1M
SQUARE
KILOMETERS

Spans more than 1 million square kilometers in Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil

+50
ECOSYSTEMS

3,400
SPECIES OF
PLANTS

500
SPECIES OF
BIRDS

150
SPECIES OF
MAMMALS

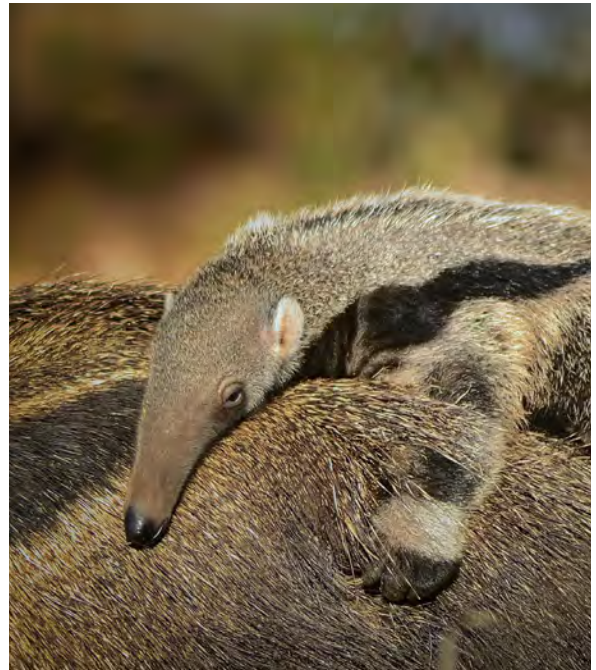
297
SPECIES OF
REPTILES

9 M
PEOPLE



that depend on synthetic fertilizers for productivity, perpetuating a cycle of depletion. Forests that once served as corridors for species like jaguars and giant anteaters are disappearing. These changes not only threaten biodiversity, but dramatically impact the region's ability to adapt to climate change and cope with natural disasters. Fewer trees mean higher temperatures, elevated carbon emissions, and dry, depleted soils that are more likely to erode during floods or droughts, threatening not only local water quality and quantity but also the region's food security.

But a new trend is emerging. In 2015, TNC began working with local farmers and larger conventional agricultural operations to introduce the concept of regenerative agriculture. The strategy is based on the principle of giving back to nature the resources needed to produce food— healthy soil, water, biodiversity— so the land can continuously produce while also sequestering carbon and enhancing climate resilience.



“Latin America is poised to become the world’s breadbasket. But the convert-and-deplete approach to food production has exacted a heavy toll on the region’s wildlife and the world’s climate. Current agricultural practices consume 70% of the region’s fresh water used for human consumption and cause 70% of habitat conversion, contributing to deforestation at three times the global rate. Science, economics, and on-the-ground experience show us that there is another path forward. How we produce and consume food can help protect and restore nature.”

Mauricio Castro Schmitz, Director of Regenerative Agriculture, TNC Latin America

Giant anteater cub. © Luiz Ricardo Parodi /Photo contest

Adopting a regenerative approach to farming and livestock production increases the resilience of the land and the ecosystem’s ability to adapt to climate change. © Elisa Carrion-Narvaez

Farmer Martin Olivera is one of the champions of regenerative agriculture in the Santa Fe province. He allows his cows to graze on natural meadows or pastureland instead of clearing land for conversion to pasture. As a result, his cattle eat healthier and have shade protecting them from the scorching heat of the Gran Chaco. In return, the cattle fertilize the ecosystem and contribute to the spread of seeds, all of which keeps the forest healthy by creating a virtuous circle in what TNC calls the Gran Chaco foodscape. Martin also replenishes his soil's nutrients by planting small, surface-dwelling plants between rows of crops. Known as cover crops, these plants aren't harvested for income, but they help incorporate minerals into the soil to help boost overall productivity and prevent erosion.

Similar projects in Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Brazil—led by TNC in partnership with thousands of producers like Martin—are demonstrating that food production increases when managed with respect for the delicate ecological balance upon which it depends, creating a positive change for communities, economies, and wildlife.

"We must create new solutions and find smarter ways to produce more with less input while keeping in mind that there are no healthy foods without a healthy environment."

Dr. Qu Dongyu, UN Food and Agriculture Organization Director-General

**REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE:
A WIN-WIN CYCLE**

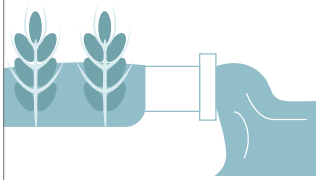
Secures the global food supply

GLOBAL FOOD DEMAND IS SET TO **INCREASE BY 50% BY 2050.**



Protects our water

AGRICULTURE ACCOUNTS FOR **70% OF FRESH WATER WITHDRAWALS.**



Increases biodiversity

AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION IS THE PRIMARY DRIVER OF **80% OF NATIVE HABITAT LOSS GLOBALLY.**



Builds a better economy

ONE-THIRD OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION OBTAINS ITS LIVELIHOOD FROM AGRICULTURE, AND FOOD PRODUCTION ACCOUNTS FOR **NEARLY 10% OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.**



Tackles climate change

AGRICULTURE AND OTHER LAND USE ACCOUNT FOR **25% OF THE GLOBE'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.**





Innovative Finance for Deforestation-free Production

Eight financial institutions and agribusinesses committed USD 3 billion to accelerate deforestation-free cattle and soy production in South America. The entities have become the first signatories of the Innovative Finance for the Amazon, Cerrado, and Chaco (IFACC), a new initiative from the United Nations Environment Programme, TNC, and the Tropical Forest Alliance. The IFACC strives to scale innovative financial mechanisms to help farmers implement principles and practices that can provide soy and cattle to global markets without further converting or clearing forests in the Amazon, Cerrado, and Chaco ecosystems. The initiative aims to reach USD 10 billion of commitments and USD 1 billion in disbursements by 2025 through mechanisms such as farm loan products, farmland investment funds, corporate debt instruments, and capital markets offerings.

Farm Uniao in São Félix do Xingu in Pará, Brazil. TNC and partners are helping landowners reduce deforestation by using practices that make land use more productive, like rotational grazing and planting native species that have income value. © Kevin Arnold

Agroforestry Conservation in the Amazon

Two TNC programs in Latin America are demonstrating that agroforestry, the practice of growing food crops and native trees in the same land area, is ideal for reducing deforestation, restoring and connecting forests, improving biodiversity conservation, and mitigating climate change. In Colombia, TNC recently completed a seven-year initiative in the Amazonian region of Caquetá, working with local producers to employ agroforestry practices that protect their livelihoods and nature. The initiative put almost 20,000 acres under conservation agreements and sustainable management and preserved 19,300 acres of native forests. The project also trained 171 smallholder families in good land-management practices and developed planning and sustainable management tools that are now being implemented by government organizations, including municipalities, Colombia's Humboldt Institute, and the Ministry of Environment and Social Development. Finally, the work meant 3.59 megatons of CO₂ eq GHG reduced emissions in the program area.

In Brazil, TNC launched the Agroforestry and Restoration Accelerator Project in Pará through the **Right Now Climate Fund**. The Accelerator will create a sustainable source of income for thousands of local farmers through sales of cocoa and other crops grown on degraded and discarded cattle pastures that will be transformed into healthy agricultural lands using agroforestry systems. The

first 26 smallholder farmers have joined the project and are already implementing ecological restoration practices on 3,456 acres. TNC has conducted mapping and environmental studies of the three regions engaged in the project. The nature-based solutions that are at the heart of the project will help tackle climate change by naturally trapping and storing carbon, preventing the worst effects of climate imbalance.

Pedro Rodrigueus De Oliveira working on his São Félix do Xingu ranch, Brazil. Cocoa is a sustainable forest crop native to the Amazon and the primary ingredient of chocolate. Planting cocoa helps reconnect habitat and brings back wildlife, including pollinators and seed dispensers to the restored areas.
© Kevin Arnold



Sustainable and Prosperous Communities

TNC is leading a consortium of partners, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to reverse deforestation through the Sustainable Prosperous Communities (SPC) program in Mexico. Together, we are helping smallholders in Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan shift to nature-positive production systems and access markets and financing that recognize their efforts as good stewards of the land. The five-year, USD 30 million effort will include a range of public-private partnerships to transform the current economic model that encourages monoculture agriculture and low-productivity ranching. Those are the main drivers of forest conversion related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and threats to biodiversity.

“This initiative definitely teaches us an important lesson, and that is that only by working together, working hand in hand, can we address difficult challenges.”

Mauricio Vila Dosal, Yucatán Governor



Women tend to their seaweed farm on the flats of the Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve. © Seleem Chan

Seaweed Farms Restore Livelihoods and Habitat

As Covid-19 restrictions wiped out Belize's once-booming tourism industry, sustainable seaweed mariculture became a lifeline in a sea of uncertainty for tourism-dependent coastal communities in Belize. TNC has been working with local partners for the past five years to develop a sustainable seaweed industry that can provide social, economic and ecological benefits to both coastal communities and marine ecosystems. With the potential of being a “superfood”, farmers can obtain up to USD 15 per pound for dried seaweed, which is used in smoothies, soups, cosmetics and skin therapy. In addition to providing training sessions for this sustainable coastal livelihood, our collaborative program has focused on testing and developing a seaweed farming system that protects and provides habitat for other commercially and ecologically important species, such as spiny lobster, parrotfish, snapper and a host of other species. Sustainable aquaculture also offers the opportunity to empower women and reshape gender roles.

Authentic Partnerships for a Healthy Ocean

Building authentic partnerships with local communities is key to conservation everywhere. In Chile, one of the world's top fishing nations, TNC is working to achieve the greatest conservation impact by focusing on artisanal fisheries—many of them facing collapse due to overfishing and poor management—which are dotted along the coast and employ more than 90,000 fishers. We are working with communities and the government's fishing agencies to sustainably manage 13 fish species in 160 coastal fisheries. We also completed the first stage of a pioneering kelp forest restoration project in southern Chile that seeks to reduce the ecological and socioeconomic impacts of climate change. Chile is one of the world's top exporters of seaweed and its dense kelp forests are essential for healthy biodiversity.



Locals harvest kelp off the shore of Chile's Valdivia Province. The Humboldt Current, which flows from the southern tip of Chile to northern Peru, is the most productive marine ecosystem in the world, supporting wildlife and providing livelihoods for thousands of people. © Erika Nortemann



Dive-fishers in Ancón, Peru are working with TNC's Oceans Program in Peru to more sustainably manage their fishery. © Jason Houston

Fishing for a Future

A new national regulation in Peru will improve sustainable management of 76 species of coastal invertebrates, including scallops, clams, octopuses, shrimp, sea urchins and sea cucumbers, supporting for the first-time how communities manage their traditional fishing grounds, which cover more than 3.5 million acres that overlap with Marine Protected Areas in the Humboldt Current. TNC Peru matched the leadership and vision of fishers and agencies with scientific and technical resources to inform the regulation, and received more than USD 4 million from the **Blue Action Fund** to support the implementation of the new law and boost the management of marine protected areas over the next four years.

● [READ MORE](#) →

"Let's not only think about eating today, let's also think about eating tomorrow and about our children, because they will also live from fishing."

Julio Cesar Paiva, artisanal fisher, Ancon, Peru

Working Together for Water Security

Protecting and restoring nature's ability to provide clean water can help alleviate water shortages worldwide. First implemented in Latin America and now replicated around the world, Water Funds convene public, private, and community leaders to protect water at its source by reforesting watersheds that capture and filter water while introducing sustainable agriculture and ranching practices and other innovative projects that prevent contamination of the waterways. Our 26 Water Funds operate in nine countries in Latin America, mobilizing more than 350 public and private partners to invest more than USD 240 million to support conservation actions on more than two million acres in priority areas and benefiting nearly 104,000 families. Five additional Water Funds are in development in the region. The model is being replicated in North America, Africa, and Asia.

A Presidential Award In Guatemala

The Guatemala Water Fund was awarded the 2021 Presidential Medal for the Environment in recognition of its work to improve water security in Guatemala. Spearheaded by TNC and local partners in 2017, the fund has been working to strategically protect and restore forests in 18 watersheds that hold water sources for 16 million inhabitants of Guatemala City.



Hilda Pelepé is transitioning her family farm from chemical intensive strawberries to a sustainable forest system that integrates crops and safeguards water sources. Guatemala City Water Fund project. © Jason Houston



A New App To Help Recover Magdalena's Fisheries

About 80% of Colombia's fresh water fish population has declined in the last half-century while demand for fish has continued to grow, impacting the country's most important rivers. Nearly 175,000 low-income fishers struggle to maintain their livelihoods in the Magdalena River basin.

Covering nearly a quarter of Colombia's territory, the basin harbors nearly 200 species of freshwater fish, 55% of which are endemic (not found anywhere else on Earth). The river is the economic engine of Colombia, responsible for 80% of its GDP. With support from Google, TNC developed the MiPez (MyFish) user-friendly mobile application to help fishers collect data and report their activities. MiPez serves as a local monitoring tool and promoting community engagement in the stewardship of natural resources. The app allows fishing communities, public and environmental authorities, and academic institutions to gauge the impacts of fishing on the basin's freshwater biodiversity and identify areas for improvement.

Colombia's Magdalena River covers 24% of the national territory and is an economic life-force for more than 30 million Colombians that live throughout the basin © Paul Smith



Tackle Climate Change

Unleash nature's full potential to stabilize our climate by conserving forests and wetlands, adding regenerative practices to agriculture, and planting trees.

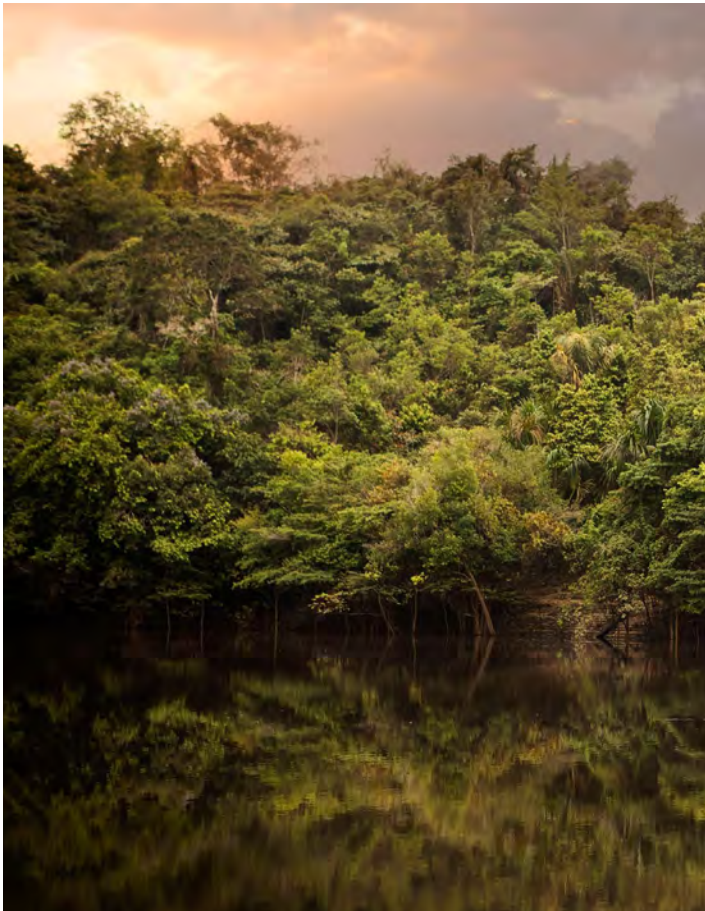
Tekakro Xikrin fishes on the Rio Bacaja near Pot-Kro Village in the Brazilian Amazon. Indigenous territories harbor more than 17% of the world's forest carbon. Indigenous peoples are key partners in the global struggle to contain climate change. © Kevin Arnold

The Amazon Rainforest: The Lynchpin of Our Planet's Health



A host of superlatives come to mind when talking about the Amazon. After all, the planet's largest tropical rainforest is home to 1/3 of the world's species, 1/4 of its **fresh water**, and its trees store 48 billion tons of carbon dioxide. The Amazon is Earth's greatest life reserve and plays a crucial role in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises facing our planet.

While the Amazon rainforest is one of the most important places on Earth, it is also one of the most threatened. Nearly the size of the continental United States, the Amazon spans nine countries, with 60% of it in Brazil. Twenty-one million people live in the Brazilian Amazon, including 200 **Indigenous and traditional communities**.





Brazil has already lost 20% of its rainforest to deforestation, making it one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gases and global climate change. Yet people are looking for solutions, and the Brazilian state of Pará is taking a leading role in climate action. Home to 9% of the Amazon rainforest, Pará is also the state with the highest deforestation rate in the region.

“We need a range of options to show farmers that they can switch from a broad-based production approach and deforesting the land to an intensive, more profitable model. At the same time, we need to ensure that the remaining forest becomes an integral part of the economy so that rural producers see it as an asset.”

Helder Barbalho, governor of the Brazilian State of Pará

Through its Amazon Now Program, Pará state seeks to create a low-carbon economy and ensure a sustainable future for people and nature in the Amazon. The plan aims to improve the health of the forest, increase the efficiency of production chains, and boost the well-being of people and conditions in rural areas.

TNC is helping to lay crucial groundwork to advance this vision. To make real headway in conserving the Amazon’s remaining rainforest, we must ensure that standing forests are worth more than forests cleared for pasture while significantly improving local people’s livelihoods. One promising approach is to strengthen markets for products sourced from native or sustainably restored forests and build up a bioeconomy that can guarantee the conservation of large areas in the Amazon through place-based economic opportunities for Indigenous Peoples, traditional communities, and smallholders.

In 2021, TNC, the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), and the company Natura published a study to gauge the potential of multiple products to generate a forest bioeconomy in Pará. The study confirms that forest-based products such as açai berries, cocoa, and Brazil nuts can help create a bioeconomy supporting regenerative practices that avoid biodiversity degradation. Such a model would also embrace pricing that rewards producers for biodiversity protection and carbon mitigation.

The study, which projects that the bioeconomy could double Pará’s GDP in 20 years, is being used by the state government to inform its state-level Bioeconomy Strategy.



A farmer holds Brazilian nuts on his property in São Félix do Xingu, Brazilian Amazon. © João Ramid

View from the Rio Negro in the Brazilian Amazon.. © Ben Duarte/ TNC Photo Contest 2021

Pioneering Reef Insurance is Put to the Test

Healthy reefs protect vulnerable coastal communities from catastrophic hurricanes, support the thriving tourism economy and serve as habitat for fisheries and coral ecosystems. In partnership with governments and businesses, TNC has continued to activate its pioneering response protocol to the hurricanes that have hit Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula over the past two years. This protocol includes reef-restoring brigades and a reef insurance policy to cover repairs to the damage unleashed by extreme weather events. Reef brigades have successfully stabilized and reattached more than 40,000 fragments and colonies. The experience serves as proof of concept for other parts of the world where coral reefs, mangroves, dunes, and other coastal ecosystems play a vital role in protecting people and nature against the impacts of climate change.



Healthy reefs protect coastal communities from catastrophic hurricanes. © Jennifer Adler



Selso Martin Chavez and Julia Martin harvest ripe coffee beans in La Igualdad, Guatemala © Melissa Ballarin & Daniel López Pérez

Resilient Central America

October 2021 marked the successful completion of the five-year Resilient Central America (ResCA) initiative aimed at helping small farmers and artisanal fishers improve their livelihoods whilst strengthening climate resilience and food security through nature-based solutions. Led by TNC and funded by the U.S. Department of State, the ResCA program collaborated with governments to adopt climate-smart policies and strategies for the agricultural sectors in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and for fisheries in Belize. It also boosted sustainable production practices in key value chains, including corn, beans, sugarcane, dairy, coffee, lobster, and seaweed. Achievements include training 15,230 people in climate change adaptation and sustainability; working with almost 200 government institutions to promote sustainable practices; supporting the creation of 300 relevant policies and regulations, and facilitating the implementation of climate-smart practices on nearly 300,000 acres in the five participating countries. The initiative also saw a 15% increase in productivity in several of the production chains involved and a 6% increase in incomes for participating dairy farmers in two countries.

● [READ MORE](#) →

A Restoration Plan Grows In Brazil

Protecting and restoring forests can increase water security, bolster rural economies, and mitigate climate change. A powerful example of how this can be done is taking place in the Mantiqueira Mountains, one of the most ecologically diverse and vulnerable areas of Brazil's imperilled Atlantic Forest. The Conservador da Mantiqueira initiative is bringing together stakeholders from 425 municipalities located in Brazil's biggest markets—the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Minas Gerais that together make up 54% of Brazil's GDP—to build a forest restoration network that seeks to reforest nearly 4 million acres by 2030—an area 10 times the size of the city of São Paulo. The initiative is based on recent successes in **Extrema Municipality**, where TNC and partners planted two million trees and pioneered the use of Payment for Ecosystem Services in Brazil to incentivize restoration.



Workers with the Conservador das Águas project plant a variety of native species in a reforestation area in Extrema, Minas Gerais, Brazil. © Felipe Fittipaldi



This decade is pivotal for scaling science-based solutions that put us on the path to a sustainable future.

TNC's work in Latin America delivers a triple dividend that protects biodiversity and improves local livelihoods while enhancing carbon capture and climate resilience.

I am proud to partner with TNC, and invite you to do the same.



Sergio Rial
Chairman of Santander Brazil
Member of TNC Global Board
Co-Chair of **Latin America Conservation Council (LACC)**

Humpback whale mother and calf.
© João Vianna/TNC Photo Contest
2021

Together We Find a Way

2021 LATIN AMERICA
IMPACT REPORT



*Conserving the lands and waters
on which all life depends.*