



Natura
International

Annual Report 2020



Natura International works to create new parks and reserves to safeguard our world's precious biodiversity and natural heritage. We do this by working locally, with in-country partners who work with government and communities to protect priority places and ecosystems. Our principal program is in Argentina, where we work closely with Natura Argentina on five large parks creation projects in northwestern Argentina that aim to protect over 2 million acres.

The year was especially difficult for both ourselves and our partner Natura Argentina due to Covid restrictions on meetings and travel that severely affected the ability in the field to perform needed community work or begin work in new areas. We were able to accomplish perhaps only about 30-50% in each project of what we otherwise might have in an ordinary year.

Nonetheless, our programs advanced in each of our areas, as described below. Overall, those that dealt mainly with government interactions advanced the most, such as in Mendoza and Córdoba. In other areas we were able to hire people living in the province to augment our capacity, which allowed us to carry out the fieldwork needed to forward our goals.

Mar Chiquita and the Rio Dulce Wetlands



There were two pieces of good news in our effort to create a major national park around the Mar Chiquita and the Rio Dulce wetlands. One was that the Córdoba province is working to determine the shoreline of the lake area, a difficult task given the fluctuating water levels of the lake; this allows the definition of the boundaries of the proposed National Park to proceed. Second, a contentious issue involving the purchase of another national park in the province, was resolved, that had been an obstacle to the creation of any new national park within the province.

During the year Natura Argentina continued its regular participation in the meetings of the public-private committee that is coordinating the efforts to create the park. However, because of Covid restrictions they were unable to conduct our planned active program of outreach to local municipalities and stakeholders in the tourism and agricultural sectors. Nonetheless, we were able to carry out studies needed for the park's declaration, including the environmental characterization of the Bañados del Río Dulce area in Santiago de Estero province, and a cadastral report and map of the potential area that might be included in this province. We also carried out the regular aerial censuses to monitor flamingo and shorebird populations. We hope for more accomplishments in 2021!

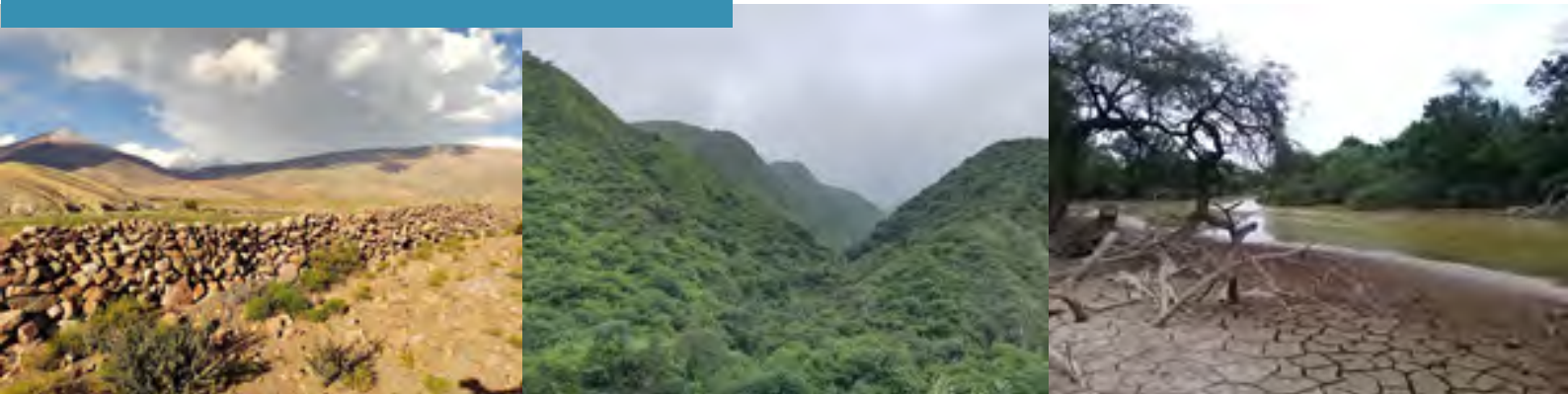
Uspallata, Mendoza



Our work over the past several years to create a protected area in the Uspallata Valley achieved a partial victory in 2020 with the declaration of a National Defense Reserve of 425,000 acres, providing significant protection to an area that had been a military training camp. In addition, a law is being drafted in the national legislature with provisions that would considerably strengthen the protection of these National Defense Reserves.

We continue to work towards the declaration of a National Park that would be the first in Mendoza, which includes much of the Estancia Uspallata and would, along with the adjoining provincial protected areas, create an extensive conservation corridor protecting Andean habitats and cultural resources such as the Qhapaq Ñan (Inca Trail).

Uspallata, Mendoza



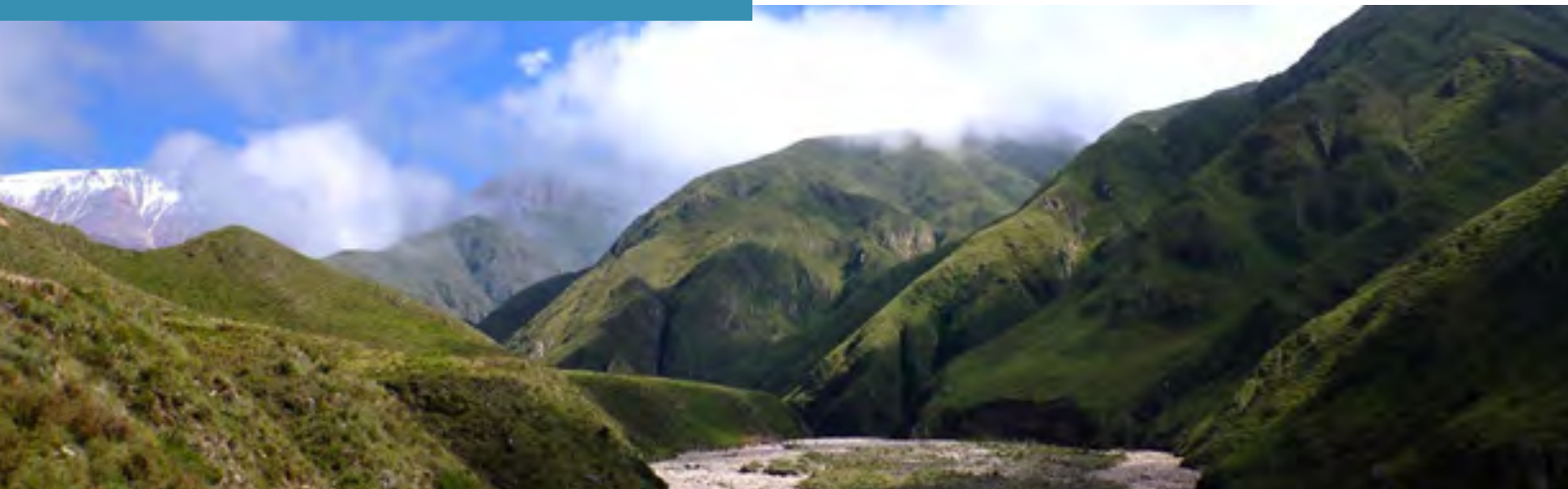
The landscapes vary between high plains, dense cloud forests and canyons and meanders in the Chaco Seco.

In spite of the pandemic and lockdown in 2020, we were able to maintain active communications with our provincial partners and authorities. Along with our main partners, we established a road-map for the participatory process needed to create one or more protected areas in this region.

We were also able to conduct a number of field investigations with local partners to characterize environmental values and biodiversity and talked with local actors about new proposals for the conservation of the region's natural and cultural heritage. The information obtained in the field will be fundamental to nourish the socio-environmental diagnoses that we generate during 2020.

We continue to work with the Provincial System of Protected Areas of Salta (SiPAP) to support the processes for the creation of protected areas, developing communication initiatives and promoting analyses and tools for the financial sustainability of the system.

Sierras de Famatina



TPanoramic view of Sierras de Famatina. Source: Natura International.

Natura Argentina continued its work of over five years to declare a national park in the Sierras of Famatina to protect its water sources for adjacent communities, its biodiversity and its cultural heritage, and to strengthen regional economies through nature tourism. During 2020, we were not able to carry out a full set of activities due to the pandemic, but we did meet virtually with the Minister of Tourism and Culture of La Rioja, the Secretariat of Tourism of Chilecito, de Felipe Varela and Lamadrid, the Directorate of Environment of Villa Unión and the leadership of Talampaya National Park, as well as updated a number of technical reports.

We also proposed and developed five training courses for the Secretariat of Tourism of La Rioja, the tourism secretariats of the five municipalities that make up the Sierras de Famatina, and private providers for the digital marketing of nature tourism ventures, funding applications and development of accessible tourism in natural areas.

We also signed a new collaboration agreement with the Ministry of Tourism of La Rioja to work on strengthening nature tourism as a motor for local development in the Sierras de Famatina.

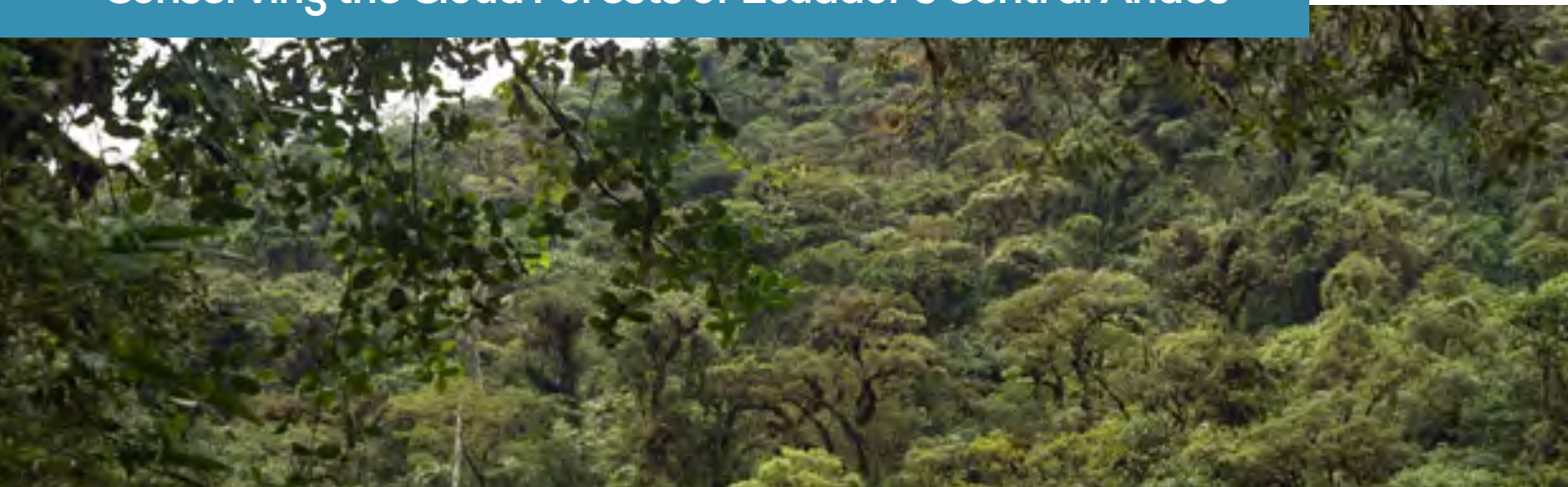
Catamarca province



Panoramic view of Las Higuierillas valley. Source: Natura International.

Natura International is assisting the Government of Catamarca create several protected natural areas, and potentially the first national park in the Province, mainly in the ecoregions of Chaco and Yungas. These would protect multiple ecosystems and endangered species such as the Black-and-chestnut eagle and Taruca deer. After a year of stakeholder meetings, mapping to identify critical areas, and reconnaissance trips, Natura International is preparing to launch an action plan with the province. One of the areas considered in the analysis is "Las Higuierillas", a transitional area of Chaco Serrano in which there are areas of forests representative of the southern Yungas, whose existence and maintenance are essential to sustain the ecological balance of the region.

AMAZON Conserving the Cloud Forests of Ecuador's Central Andes



In our first project in Ecuador, Natura International is supporting Fundacion Naturaleza y Cultura to create a municipal reserve of 34,000 acres in one of the world's most biologically rich corridors, the cloud forests of Ecuador's Andes mountains. This is home to an astonishing variety of orchids, tanagers, hummingbirds, many amphibians new to science, and endangered species such as the spectacled bear. There are undoubtedly undiscovered new species of orchids

and amphibians within this area, as it is unexplored, rich forest and close to the equator. This reserve would have the full force of law, and an added benefit is that

it helps to protect the watershed for the Paute hydro project, Ecuador's largest, and so the municipality will receive a certain amount of funding to manage this reserve. A contribution by a generous donor is allowing us to participate in this project, which is also supported by World Land Trust.

FINANCES

Natura International works to be as efficient as possible with its funds, and we are able to support program costs as well as more than a dozen full and part time staff in Argentina, and three part-time staff in the US, with our budget of \$160,000. We are also proud that 90% of all funds are spent in Latin America where they are needed most to accomplish our program goals.

Our income in 2020 was \$162,944, slightly above our 2019 income, and originating in roughly equal parts from generous individual donors, foundations and organizations including World Land Trust. Our expenses were \$133,550, which was less than budgeted due to the significantly lower travel costs resulting from Covid restrictions. We ended the year with roughly \$40,000 in unrestricted reserves, and \$37,000 in restricted funding accounts. Given the challenges imposed by the pandemic, we would like to thank our supporters for allowing our field programs to continue to be strong and effective.

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