



Natura
International

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

Natura International focuses on the creation of protected areas to conserve biodiversity, natural ecosystems, and cultural heritage in Latin America. Our major programs are in Argentina in collaboration with Natura Argentina, and in Peru and Ecuador in collaboration with a diverse group of local conservation partners. These efforts aim to conserve two of the planet's most biodiverse ecosystems, especially the rich Andean cloud forests and the lowland Amazon rainforests.

Our conservation strategy is to support and build the capacity of local conservation groups who work directly with the governments and communities to establish protected areas in high biodiversity ecosystems. By doing so, we aim to achieve conservation results in a way that is sustainable and through participatory processes. In tandem, local teams assist with research needed to generate solid technical and scientific information to support the decision-making that ensures the protection of natural and cultural heritage.

In Argentina, highlights of 2023 by Natura Argentina included the launch of a process to create a major sustainable funding mechanism for key ecoregion protections by organizing a multi-sectoral meeting at the Argentine embassy in Washington, DC. In-country, the team advanced towards the creation of protected areas in the Sierras de Ambato of Catamarca province, and in the Sierras de Famatina in La Rioja.

In Ecuador, our partner Paisajes Sostenibles continues to work towards the creation of a 277,000-acre Santa Elena Provincial System of Protected Areas by working with both with the province and the 32 local communities residing within the area. These areas will protect much of Santa Elena Province's native coastal forest, renowned for the many endemic species of the Tumbesian ecosystem.

In Peru, we supported projects with three partners that work with local and indigenous communities to conserve lands in northern and central Peru. Asociación Amazónicas por la Amazonía (AMPA) is providing technical support to the leaders of the Shawi Nation to promote a community-based conservation initiative to safeguard approximately 143,000 acres of their ecologically-rich ancestral territory in the Amazon. Spectacled Bear Conservation-Peru is working with the Salas community to establish a 24,000-acre community reserve to protect core Spectacled Bear habitat. Lastly, Upper Amazon Conservancy is working to title 150,000 acres of Amazon rainforest with the Alto Esperanza indigenous community that will connect with three other protected areas to form a great forest corridor.

Argentina Conservation Program

Natura Argentina is advancing seven conservation projects to establish large protected areas in eight ecoregions of northwestern Argentina, including Chaco forests, thorn forests, pre-puna, puna, high Andes, temperate montane forests, and Yungas cloud forests. These ecoregions host considerable biodiversity, including a number of threatened and endemic species. In 2023 the team found seven species not previously found in certain areas, including one endangered species. The project locations are depicted in their provinces below:



Conserving Mar Chiquita – Ansenusa National Park

We have supported Natura Argentina over the past several years to help the effort to conserve Mar Chiquita and its associated wetlands, in both Córdoba and Santiago del Estero provinces. This area is of global importance for its concentrations of migratory shorebirds and flamingos. Natura Argentina celebrated a major milestone with the June 2022 creation of Ansenusa National Park and Reserve, protecting 1.6 million acres of this critical saline lake and wetland habitat.



The team is now working to support management of this area, providing technical expertise to local municipalities, and educating and mobilizing local communities. During 2023, many long years of work began to bear fruit, reflected in the dedicated cooperation between all the institutions and organizations in the region. Education programs trained park staff and local guides who are working to promote conservation and ecotourism in Ansenusa. Natura Argentina continues to carry out wildlife surveys, including biannual censuses of flamingo and migratory shorebird numbers.

Bañados del Río Dulce – Santiago del Estero province



The Rio Dulce provides 80% of the water to the Mar Chiquita lake, and is key to the water supply of local communities throughout its course.

These wetlands improve the quality of life of local communities and protect natural and cultural diversity, as they are important water reserves in the face of

Argentina's water crisis; they also sequester carbon, mitigating global warming. In addition to its work to create the national park in Córdoba province, Natura Argentina expanded its conservation program in neighboring Santiago del Estero province, whose rich wetlands would be an excellent addition to the Ansenusa National Park. The team has been conducting biological and social surveys to build the case for extending protections around Mar Chiquita, and sharing findings with relevant decision-makers and local communities.

Uspallata Valley – Mendoza province



Natura Argentina continues to work with many sectors to advance the future creation of protected areas in the Uspallata Valley, and to strengthen the conservation of the adjoining Defense Natural Reserve already established. These actors include the National Parks Administration and Ministry of Defense, the government of Mendoza, and local communities.

The project continued to receive broad support from government, academia, and the local community. Expeditions included broad community participation, and the team presented the previous year's exciting confirmation of the endangered Andean Cat (*Leopardus jacobita*) in the region, at the Argentine Mammalogy Conference.

Sierras de Famatina – La Rioja province

Work advanced significantly in 2023 toward establishing a protected area in the Sierras de Famatina, with the goal of safeguarding water sources and biodiversity from mining threats, and promoting sustainable tourism as an engine for the development of regional economies.

Natura Argentina continued to strengthen alliances with municipal, provincial and national agencies, as well as local communities to provide technical information and facilitate learning exchanges; they also developed communication materials to publicize the project.



Sierras de Ambato - Catamarca province



Natura Argentina continued to work with the local municipalities, provincial government and the National Parks Administration in the southern sector of the Sierras de Ambato, identified as one of the most feasible sites to become a protected natural area due to its rich cloud forest. Multiple ecoregions converge here, supporting high biodiversity.

During 2023, the project advanced in the legislative arena, with the presentation of the provincial bill. In addition, the team carried out activities related to the socio-environmental space with the communities, with environmental education and conservation workshops.

Sierras de Chañi – Salta province

Natura Argentina is working to strengthen the conservation of the Sierras de Chani, together with the government of Salta province, and local communities including the native Tastil people. The ecologically rich region includes the high Andean and puna ecosystem, and the glaciers and rivers that originate in the area are a source of water for the region.

Efforts in 2023 focused on exploring sustainable tourism and production options with the community, and conducting environmental education activities in local schools. Surveys

continued of the taruca deer, a key endangered species in the area, as well as other mammals.



Ecuador Conservation Program

Santa Elena Provincial Reserve

We supported Paisajes Sostenibles in successfully creating a Provincial System of Conservation and Sustainable Use Areas, and designating 114,333 acres as the Santa Helena provincial reserve in August 2022. The goal is to designate a total of 277,870 acres to protect endangered Tumbesian dry forest, an endangered ecosystem that is restricted to Southwest Ecuador and Northwest Peru with many endemic and endangered species. Once complete, this reserve will almost double the size of the adjacent Machalilla National Park.



This reserve is home to one of the best remaining areas of unprotected coastal Tumbesian forests in Ecuador. It also protects most of the province's water sources, and stores 17 million tons of carbon, contributing to the mitigation of global climate change. The provincial reserve area covers 80% of Santa Elena province's native forest and includes the protective forest of the Cordillera Chongón Colonche and the remnants of eight biodiverse terrestrial ecosystems.

Peru Conservation Program

Achieving Title for Indigenous Alto Esperanza Community

We are supporting the work of the Upper Amazon Conservancy (UAC) to advance the land titling application for the Alto Esperanza Indigenous community in the department of Pucallpa. This effort will make Alto Esperanza the first community in initial contact with modern society to receive land title in Peru's history, and by doing so protect one of the most intact yet threatened parts of the Peruvian



Amazon. This area forms part of a massive 10-million-hectare mosaic of conservation areas and indigenous lands that contains some of the most remote and least disturbed forests in the entire Amazon basin, and one of the highest concentrations of isolated people on Earth.

Salas Community – Spectacled Bear Conservation



The Spectacled Bear Conservation-Peru team are working to protect the habitat of the spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*), also known as the Andean bear, within a conservation mosaic in the Lambayeque region. We are supporting the plan to help the Salas community establish a 24,000-acre community reserve. This effort includes promoting sustainable productive activities and strengthening capacities of the community board in the process of establishing the protected area.

Shawi Nation Protected Area

Our partner, Amazonicos por la Amazonía (AMPA) is providing technical support to the leaders of the Shawi Nation to promote a community-based conservation initiative to safeguard approximately 58,000 hectares (143,000 acres) of their ecologically-rich ancestral territory, under threat from a 34-mile road project. AMPA is working to ensure the legal protection of their territorial security while developing a collaborative relationship based on trust.



Note: Cover photo and all Argentina photos courtesy of Natura Argentina

Ecuador – Santa Elena Provincial Reserve: Paisajes Sostenibles / Peru – Shawi Nation PA: Amazonicos por la Amazonía (AMPA)

2023 Financial Report

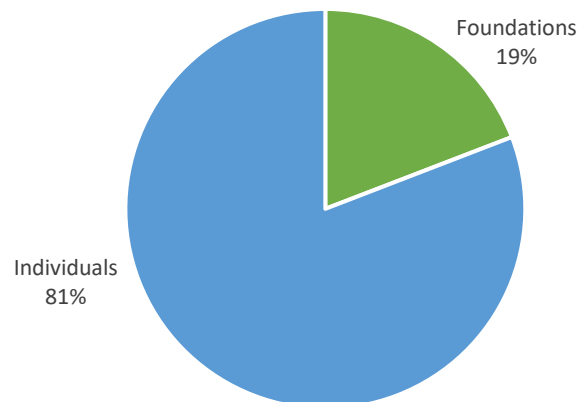
Natura International works to be as efficient as possible with its funds, and we are proud that 94% of our 2023 expenses directly supported our Latin American conservation programs.

Our approach is to provide funding for key conservation projects of three kinds:

1. **Our own strategic projects** – Catalytic projects to create or sustain protected areas, or support institutional capacity building.
2. **Seed Funding** – to help initiate major large conservation projects.
3. **Gap Funding** – Support to allow project continuity while partners await added funds.

Our income increased in 2023 from \$148,000 to \$287,000 with generous support from individual donors and foundations, including ongoing support from the Conservation, Food & Health Foundation, Starfall Education Foundation and Viridi Futuro Foundation. We thank our donors, whose support allowed us to increase our scope of grants in 2023 and maintain strong and effective field programs.

2023 Income Sources



2023 Expenses

