



# NATURE IS CALLING

HOW YOUR SUPPORT OF NATURE AND CULTURE INTERNATIONAL SAVES THE PLANET



## DON JUSTO BANCAYAN DEFENDER OF THE SEA

Don Justo Bancayan, an experienced artisanal fisherman from La Isllilla, Peru, is leading efforts to protect the Pacific Ocean.

As a young fisherman, and out of necessity, Bancayan worked for several years trawling in northern Peru and Ecuador. After witnessing the devastating effects of trawling and other illegal fishing practices on marine life, Bancayan left the trawling industry and vowed to become a **Defender of the Sea**.

In 2000, Bancayan was appointed as Beach Sergeant, a local authority in charge of ensuring sustainable fishing, and is now a leading advocate for creating Peru's Tropical Pacific Seas Reserve. In 2016, with the support of Nature and Culture, Bancayan traveled to Lima, Peru, to present to the Congress of Peru the highly destructive effects of illegal fishing practices on Peru's coast. His voice was heard that day and was the catalyst for discussions about the need to create a marine protected area in Peru's northern waters.

## ON THE HORIZON NORTHERN PERU'S FIRST NATIONAL MARINE RESERVE

In the exceptionally biodiverse coastal region of northern Peru, artisanal fishermen are fighting to protect their livelihoods and Peru's main seafood source.

Peru's northern sea – home to species such as marine turtles, humpback whales, and the endangered Humboldt penguin – holds roughly 70% of the nation's marine biodiversity, including numerous endemic species. The coastal waters constitute the greatest upwelling system on the planet and support one of the world's largest fisheries – accounting for nearly 20% of global fish stocks and 60% of Peru's seafood consumption.



Humboldt penguins

Despite its high levels of biodiversity, endemism, and economic significance, this ecoregion lacks legal protection and faces enormous threats including unsustainable fishing practices, industrial pollution, and unmanaged tourism.

Recognizing the urgent need to protect this area, artisanal fishermen seek to conserve these critical coastal and marine habitats by creating northern Peru's first national marine reserve. Nature and Culture International has joined forces with the fishermen and local communities in an effort to establish the Tropical Pacific Seas Reserve, protecting a distinctly biodiverse marine habitat and threatened artisanal fishing activity for around 5,000 families.

The proposed national marine reserve will encompass **four coastal and marine ecosystems** in Peru's Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean totaling 1,159 km<sup>2</sup>. This unique project will protect one of the most vital ecosystems in Peru, as 60% of all Peruvian fishermen live in and depend on the reserve and surrounding area.

If you would like to contribute to this historic initiative, please contact our Development Director, Christine Andersen, at [candersen@natureandculture.org](mailto: candersen@natureandculture.org) or donate on our website.

# ECUADOR DECLARES RÍO NEGRO-SOPLADORA NATIONAL PARK

Cheers erupted as Ecuador declared Río Negro-Sopladora National Park, Ecuador's first national park in nearly a decade, on January 23, 2018. The new park, encompassing **75,654 acres of pristine páramo and cloud forest ecosystems**, eliminates an unprotected gap in the highly diverse and biologically significant Sangay-Podocarpus Corridor, and now serves as a critical link in a 100-mile chain of protected ecosystems in the Andes Mountains.

**"We only protect what we know; it's not easy to create a protected area and as such, this is a historic milestone,"** said Tarsicio Granizo, Ecuador's Minister of Environment.

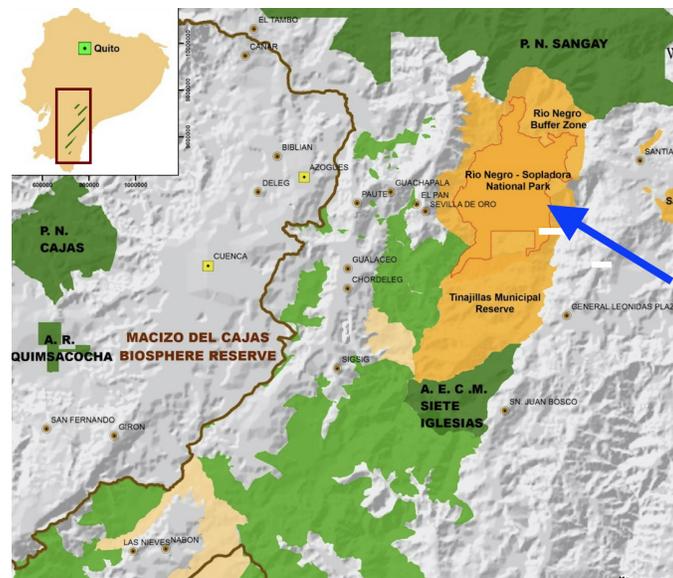
Home to a wealth of flora and fauna, Río Negro-Sopladora National Park establishes habitat connectivity that is essential for the long-term survival of such far-ranging and charismatic species as the spectacled bear (globally threatened), Andean tapir (critically endangered within Ecuador) and Andean condor (critically endangered within Ecuador). Additionally, dramatic altitude changes within the park encourage the evolution of diverse species and provide what some have called a critical "escape valve" for climate change – an upward migration path to cooler temperatures to help species survive as the Earth warms.

Nature and Culture International's biological studies in 2017 registered 546 species in the area, including threatened and uncommon species, and high levels of endemism. Among the species registered, there are **three entirely new species of amphibians** – a frog, a salamander, and a caecilian (a type of limbless serpentine amphibian). The study, conducted in 12 days and under poor weather conditions, reflects only a small portion of the National Park's ultimate biodiversity.

The Andean Corridor, encompassing the Sangay-Podocarpus Corridor and the new National Park, is a biodiversity hotspot in the Andes Mountains of southern Ecuador. Not only is the Corridor home to more than 450 bird species and 100 mammal species, including many threatened and endemic, but its **forested watersheds supply water to millions of people living downstream.**

Roberto Villarreal, mayor of Morona Canton, recognizes the National Park as a critical source of water. "We are aware of the importance of this natural area since it will benefit the neighboring communities and guarantee water for various hydroelectric projects, namely Paute Integral and San Bartolo," said Roberto Villarreal.

## Río Negro-Sopladora National Park



Conservation of the region will also contribute to the local and global efforts aimed at mitigating climate change.



Newly discovered *Hyloscirtus* sp.

Río Negro-Sopladora National Park is a result of extensive collaboration over several years between Nature and Culture, the Ministry of Environment, and local communities and authorities. Nature and Culture was critical in achieving this declaration, among other things producing the management alternatives plan and building community and political support, in addition to conducting biological studies.

With your help, Nature and Culture has conserved more than **551,202 acres** in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador and Peru, and our work continues in this critical ecosystem. In Ecuador we are working to create a **one-million-acre provincial reserve** in the Zamora Chinchipe Province, and further down in Peru we are working to establish an additional 205,000 acres of regional and community reserves. **Continued support of our work in the Andes Mountains is needed to achieve these goals.**

# COLOMBIA ESTABLISHES LARGEST REGIONAL PROTECTED AREA IN COUNTRY'S HISTORY



Until recently, it was considered too dangerous to go into remote areas of Colombia and work to establish conservation areas. This has now changed since the signing of the 2016 Peace Accord.

Historically known as the “region of freedom and refuge,” Río Baudó, located in Colombia’s Chocó, is home to some of Colombia’s poorest communities, including members of the **Embera, Eperara Siapidara, and Waunana indigenous groups, as well as Afro-Colombians who descended from escaped slaves in the 19th century.**



Sea turtles off the coast of Colombia now have a protected area to safely reproduce.

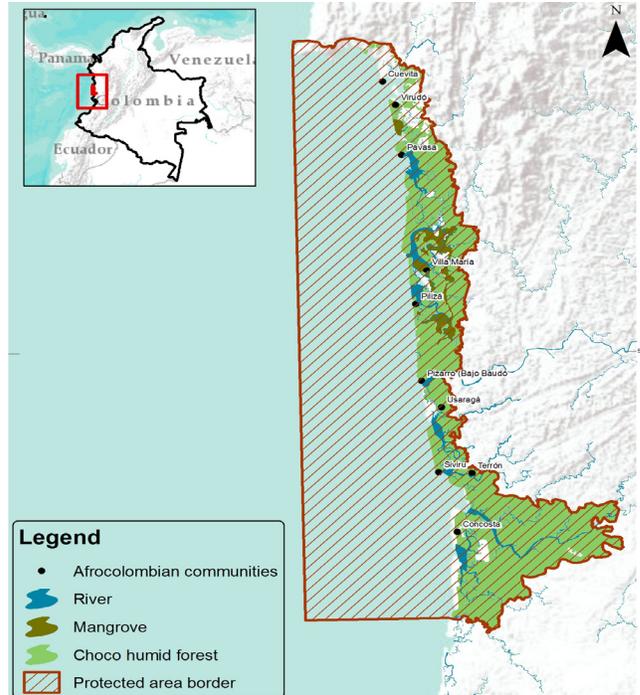
In recent years, industrial fishing such as bottom trawling and the search for gold and timber have brought upheaval to these communities, decimating their natural resources and contaminating their rivers with mercury and siltation. After seeing the success of nearby protected areas, ten local Afro-Colombian communities asked the Regional Environmental Authority (CODECHOCÓ) to help them protect their lands, the sea and humid forest in Bajo Baudó.

With Nature and Culture International and other non-governmental organizational support, the CODECHOCÓ regional environmental agency created Delta del Río Baudó Regional Protected Area in September 2017. This is the largest regional protected area in Colombia, encompassing **1,570 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean teeming with marine life and healthy coral reefs, and 350,000 acres of beaches, flooded Pacific forests, and the largest mangrove area in the Department of Chocó.**

Established in one of the wettest and most biologically rich areas on the planet, the reserve will now serve as a refuge for thousands of plants and animals, including sea turtles nesting along its extensive beaches, threatened species such as the hammerhead shark, and critically endangered species such as the black spider monkey.

The reserve also conserves 113,668 acres of mangrove forests on the shoreline, which protect against storm surges and coastal

## Bajo Baudó Regional Protected Area



erosion and provide nursery habitat for juvenile shrimp and fish that are important foods for local communities.

The protected area regulates threats such as mining, logging, and industrial fishing, and it promotes ecotourism activities for remote communities in the area. As a next step, we plan to help train local communities in environmentally-friendly income-generating projects with the goal of improving livelihoods.

## BEER FOR BEARS

SAVE THE DATE!  
MAY 12, 2018  
1 - 4 PM



Join us at Border X Brewing, San Diego, to raise awareness about the threatened **Andean bear** - South America's only bear species.



In January, the **tropical deciduous forest** in Ecuador (pictured above) makes a stunning transformation for only a few days when the Guayacan trees bloom. Nature and Culture Board member Charles Smith said “You’ll never see anything like it on the planet.”

## PUBLIC TELEVISION SHOW TO HIGHLIGHT NATURE AND CULTURE

Nature and Culture International’s work will be showcased by Visionaries, a public television show hosted by Sam Waterson. Nature and Culture was awarded the honor after Visionaries Senior Producer Jody Santos was inspired by Ivan Gayler’s vision of a bottom-up conservation model. The Visionaries team traveled with Nature and Culture staff for seven days through southern Ecuador and northern Peru capturing the beauty of the places where Nature and Culture works and interviewing people in communities we serve. The show will be broadcast across the U.S. in late 2018 or early 2019. Stay tuned!



Director of Peru, Alex More, sharing Nature and Culture’s story while being filmed by Visionaries’ Bruce Lundgren.



Nature and Culture awards **Sara Dozier Inaugural Lifetime Ambassador** for her 21 years of service!

## ECUADOR AND PERU SIGN GROUNDBREAKING AGREEMENT

In January 2018, Nature and Culture International facilitated the signing of a groundbreaking transnational agreement between the regional governments of Pastaza and Loreto. The agreement – signed during Pastaza’s Provincial Governor Antonio Kubes’ visit to Peru – lays the foundation for collaboration between the two regions in conserving the Amazon and recognizes vital international conservation corridors.



My Hope cooperative members show Governor Kubes of Pastaza (back row second from the left) extraction of natural dyes using herbs and roots.

The successful visit between the two sister Amazonian regions included several discussions on joint actions that will improve control, surveillance, and protection of these highly biodiverse regions.

During Governor Kubes’ visit he learned about bio-commerce in the Loreto region, including sustainable uses for Amazonian woods and the sustainable processing of Amazonian fruits for products such as cosmetics. Governor Kubes also visited local Nature and Culture offices, where he learned about the work of several artisans from the region’s conservation areas, including the work of a local artisanal fishing association.

Your generous support of Nature and Culture has impact beyond achieving protected areas and working with communities to conserve their cultures and way of life. Your support also allows governments to connect and learn from one another. In this pivotal time for our planet, government collaboration is essential to conserve rainforest and other biodiverse ecosystems that store vast amounts of carbon and whose deforestation accelerates the effects of climate change.