

NATURE IS CALLING

HOW YOUR SUPPORT OF NATURE AND CULTURE INTERNATIONAL SAVES THE PLANET



SAVING SPECIES FOUND NOWHERE ELSE ON THE PLANET

Endemic species, species found in only one location on the planet, are essential to an ecosystem. Unfortunately, they are vulnerable to extinction due to their limited geographic range and usually small population size. Because they often only exist in a single region or even a single site, a sudden catastrophic event can drive an entire species to extinction.

Peru's Marañon – home to the hairy long-nosed armadillo, vulnerable Peruvian night monkey and spot-throated hummingbird – boasts hundreds of endemic and threatened species. Its high level of endemism is attributed to its unique microclimate and landscape, as well as the fact that the region served as a refuge for many species during the last ice ages.

Together, **the two new conservation areas protect almost 200 endemic species** found nowhere else on the planet!

NATURE AND CULTURE PROTECTS AREAS IN THE GRAND CANYON OF SOUTH AMERICA

Nestled between breathtaking Andean peaks, Peru's Marañon dry forest is "one of the richest in the world," according to Nature and Culture biologist Iván Mejía. The deep and rugged canyon, known as the Grand Canyon of South America, is an incredibly biodiverse area within the Tropical Andes Hotspot.

Despite its biological significance, the Marañon forest faces serious threats, such as agricultural expansion, logging, hunting and forest fires.

"When we were younger, Andean bears and red deer would walk around here. There were also some parrots we called 'chichirichis' and we always followed them," recalls community member Leoncio Vásquez.* Human habitation and deforestation have taken a toll on the ecosystem. Now, the chichirichis, or yellow-faced parrotlets, are a threatened species (*see top photo*).



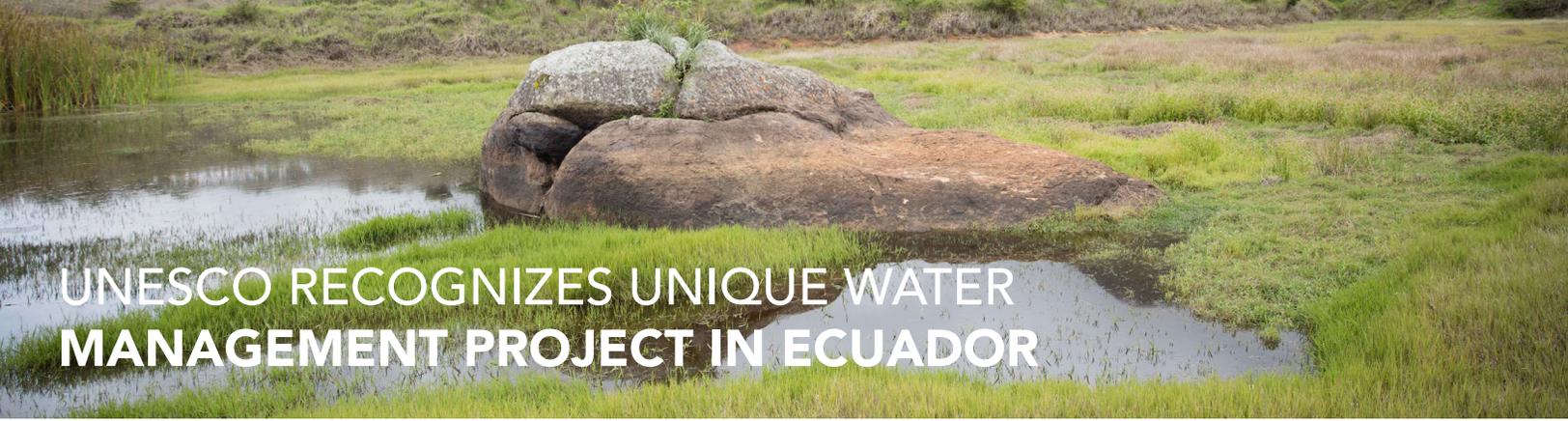
Seasonally Dry Tropical Forests of the Marañon Conservation Area

In 2012, residents of nearby towns joined forces with Nature and Culture to protect their home against the construction of hydroelectric dams and further deforestation. With the support of regional governments, the Peruvian Protected Area Service and the Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Culture created two protected areas in the ecoregion this year – the **Seasonally Dry Tropical Forests of the Marañon Conservation Area** in the Amazonas region and the **Cujillo Private Conservation Area** in Cajamarca.

Together the two conservation areas protect 43,000 acres of dry forest, home to hundreds of unique and threatened species such as the vulnerable Peruvian bush anole (a type of lizard) and endemic cacti. The areas secure essential natural resources for nearby communities, including clean water sources and local plants with medicinal value; and have great potential to boost local and regional economies through tourism.

With your help, Nature and Culture will continue to collaborate with the regional governments to develop and implement the areas' Management Plans to ensure effective and lasting conservation impact.

*Quote from *Peru: Marañon dry forests protected as a regional conservation area* at news.mongabay.com



UNESCO RECOGNIZES UNIQUE WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN ECUADOR

The dry forests of southwest Ecuador are home to many creatures that are well-adapted to the area's dry conditions. However, rural communities struggle with the region's eight to nine-month dry season. Without an effective water storage and management system, family farms lack clean water and experience severe water shortages that hinder agricultural production.

Earlier this year, UNESCO's International Hydrological Program named the Paltas Municipality as an international **Eco-Hydrology* Demonstration Site**. This is the first Eco-Hydrology site in Ecuador, in the Andes, and one of only 23 sites in the world!

The specific site within Paltas is Nature and Culture's Pisaca Forest Reserve. Inside the reserve, the municipality revived an ancient practice of pre-Columbian indigenous peoples, the Paltas, who once lived in the area. The indigenous people dug ponds throughout the region to capture water during the four-month rainy season, which recharged springs to provide water in the dry season.



The revived system has enabled the Carrión family to expand their agricultural production. For example, they now produce sugar cane.

Prior to excavation efforts, Nature and Culture restored the reserve's natural ecosystem, which allowed soil on the reserve to hold more water and reduced pollution in the natural ponds. We also implemented environmental education and gained community support for water management and conservation initiatives.

The Paltas Municipality successfully excavated several infiltration ponds to implement the ancestral practice. **Now, residents of nearby towns have a water supply for 12 hours each day instead of one hour, and have access to clean water year-round.**

*Eco-hydrology uses the understanding of relationships between hydrological and biological processes to improve water security, enhance biodiversity and further opportunities for sustainable development.

Learn more about our critical work with water resource management in **Visionaries**, a public television show hosted by Sam Waterson. The show featuring Nature and Culture will broadcast across the U.S. in early 2019. Check visionaries.org for broadcast times.

"Now we grow a lot of plants – yucca, plantains, fruits. Now we can water growing areas where it was not possible before," said Mercedes Omaida Carrión, a local farmer.

The ponds are coupled with a water fund created by Nature and Culture that is used to secure water and protect municipal reserves. The water fund, FORAGUA, is the first locally funded program for watershed management in the country.

With support from Nature and Culture's Water School, the Paltas Municipality plans to invest more resources into managing their natural areas, including: implementing conservation, education, scientific research and water resource management using an eco-hydrological approach.

BREAKING NEWS

Perched in a creek bed in the Ecuadorian Andes, a striking bird with a brilliant blue throat has revealed itself to science for the first time.



Photo by Roger Ahlman pbase.com/ahlman

Dubbed the blue-throated hillstar (*Oreotrochilus cyanolaemus*), the new species is already listed as **critically endangered**. However, Nature and Culture and partners are working in the region to establish a new conservation area protecting its entire habitat.

Learn more at natureandculture.org/blue-throated-hillstar.

A STORY OF HOPE IN PERU'S AMAZON

Growing up in the remote rainforest of Peru, Erika Catashungo never imagined she would manage a global business. "Not even in my dreams," she said. Today, Erika is manager of Cooperativa Esperanza del Bosque (My Forest Hope Cooperative in English), a communal enterprise producing sustainably-crafted artisan goods for an international market.

Together with Nature and Culture and Loreto's* Regional Park Service, Erika established My Forest Hope Cooperative (My Hope) with a group of local women in 2007. For decades hunting and timber extraction had been the primary sources of revenue in their home, the Amazon forests of Loreto, and oil and gas were seen as the next frontier. Large-scale logging operations increasingly threatened the local communities' forests and natural resources.



Erika Catashungo with My Hope baskets.

My Hope gave hope for a better future. The project involved women using their communities' ancestral knowledge and fiber from the chambira palm to sustainably weave baskets and other handcrafts, as well as reforesting their lands with chambira plants. Though local women had been using the fiber to make hammocks, baskets and other items, Nature and Culture assisted the My Hope women with improving the design and quality of the baskets and provided training and education on business and sustainability.

The cooperative has changed the lives of more than one hundred artisans from rural communities in Loreto's Amazon. Weaving has partially replaced traditional harmful economic activities in the area, such as charcoal making, hunting and timber extraction, all of which put pressure on natural sources. Additionally, **average income in participating communities has increased about three-fold**, and over 70% of revenues are reinvested in the family which goes towards children's education, health and well-being and home repairs.

Currently, My Hope is the first and only cooperative in the Peruvian Amazon of Loreto that sells at a national level and exports their products (now including baskets, eco-jewelry, placemats and other goods). With help from our donors, Nature and Culture connected My Hope artisans to multinational e-commerce companies and markets in the United States.

*Loreto is a large region in the Amazon rainforest in northeast Peru.



WEAVING A NEW WAY OF LIFE

For Mery Del Aguila Mancahuachi (*right*) of the Esperanza community, My Hope represents hope for a better future for her children.

Mery joined the cooperative in 2014 to earn additional income for her and her family. Mery's artisan earnings from My Hope enabled her to educate her four children through high school, as well as support her daughter in realizing her dream to become a professional.

Though higher education was traditionally uncommon for women in the Esperanza community, Mery's oldest daughter Malú aspired to continue her education after high school. **Mery wove "day and night" to make her daughter's dream a reality.** On February 25, 2018, Malú graduated as a Nurse Technician, becoming the first woman in her family to complete college education.

Mery continues to work at My Hope, empowering herself and her children. She plans to continue weaving the chambira, as long as she has "loved ones to fight for."

We are working with the cooperative for it to become self-sustaining by establishing relationships with new partners and buyers. We are also developing a reinvestment plan for artisans to consolidate and grow their business.

Now, Erika has a dream for the future. She hopes the cooperative will continue forever, and **"the new generations will continue to see the example we carry, care for the environment and reforest."**



PROTECTING NATURE AND CULTURE IN BRAZIL

Three years ago, the Macuxi, Wapixama and Taurepamg nations of Roraima, Brazil, approached Nature and Culture hoping to protect their home – the lush forests of **Raposa Serra do Sol**. This unique area encompasses 1.7 million acres of Amazon forest and native savanna grasslands in northwest Brazil. It was legally declared as indigenous land in 2005; however, its biodiversity remained unprotected without a sustainable management plan.



The name “Raposa Serra do Sol” comes from the fusion of two indigenous territories - Raposa in the south and do Sol in the north.

Together these indigenous nations and Nature and Culture prioritized the development and implementation of nine Community Conservation Agreements within the area (one for each ethno-region). The agreements will protect the area’s incredible biodiversity and assist indigenous people in sustainably managing their lands.

To date, with the Roraima Indigenous Council and Brazilian Institute for Education, we’ve established **five agreements that include a sustainable plan for ranching cattle** – a significant part of Roraima’s economy. Cattle represent economic power to the local community, and indigenous groups in the area own around 45,000 individuals.

The strategy in this unique ecosystem – part forest and part savanna – is to allow ranching on once degraded grasslands so as to prevent further deforestation. This will be followed by strict management guidelines to enable ecosystem recovery.



Thanks to the generous support of the Stiefel Behner Charitable Fund, Nature and Culture continues its vital work with Roraima’s indigenous nations to establish the remaining four community conservation agreements.

The journey to Temerén Forest in Raposa Serra do Sol. Temerén Forest was the focus of one of our first Community Conservation Agreements.

AAA CORRIDOR A BOLD RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Roraima is part of the Andes-Amazon-Atlantic Corridor (AAA Corridor), a collaborative vision to conserve the **largest tropical forest corridor in the world**, one that spans all of South America. The AAA Corridor is a concrete response by government, civil society and indigenous nationalities to combat climate change and safeguard one of the most culturally and biologically diverse regions on our planet.

Nature and Culture has already protected 11 million acres within the AAA Corridor, and has the potential to secure more than 9.6 million more with additional resources and funding.



Spectacled bear; Photo courtesy of SBC Peru

“There is no they. Only you and I who can save the forest — and together we can.”

IVAN GAYLER, FOUNDER

Thank you for conserving nature and culture. We invite you to join us in **protecting 20 million acres by 2020**. Give to our year-end campaign in November, where your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar, doubling your conservation impact. Together we can save the forest.

To learn ways that you can help, contact Christine Andersen at candersen@natureandculture.org.

