



FUNDACIÓN
JOCOTOCO
ECUADOR

ANNUAL REPORT
2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On a global scale, 2019 has been a devastating year for the environment. The fires raging in Australia, the west coast of the US, and the Amazon burnt natural areas at an unprecedented scale. Those fires illustrated the tremendous challenge to preserve the natural resources that we humans and all other species depend on. Fundación Jocotoco addressed the global challenges by creating two new reserves in 2019, the Jocotoco Galapagos Reserve and the Las Balsas Reserve! Both reserves protect critically endangered species and highly threatened ecosystems. Through land acquisitions, our network of reserves grew by 2,210 acres to 56,175 acres. Also, we helped to protect an additional 24,710 acres of communal land in Las Balsas. This area encompasses some of the most intact dry forests in Western Ecuador. In line with our increasing responsibilities, our team grew by 10% to 60 employees, 75% of which are park guards and the reforestation team. This team planted 20,071 native trees in our Buenaventura and Tapichalaca Reserves while initiating a new *Polylepis* reforestation project in Yanacocha.

A clear indication of the success of our conservation model is that the populations of endangered species and large megafauna, such as Mountain Tapirs, Spectacled Bears, and Jaguars are all increasing within our reserves. Such increases testify to our approach for controlling hunting and in protecting large swaths of healthy ecosystems. Reintroducing the endangered Great Green Macaws in our Ayampe Reserve has been another key achievement: 'our' birds flew to Las Balsas, where they started to breed along with the last surviving macaw individuals in the dry forests of western Ecuador. Finally, we expanded our partnerships with the Ecuadorian government, zoos, as well as the academic and private sectors. In 2019 these collaborations led to the declaration of the 184,360 acre municipal reserve in southwestern Ecuador at Palanda that also includes within its boundaries Tapichalaca, our first reserve. Our collaboration with a consortium of fourteen universities is setting the stage for a dynamic multi-year study of the resilience and recovery of the Chocó ecosystem. Engaging with the private sector allows us to develop sustainable land use forms in the buffer area of our reserves, ranging from coffee production south of Tapichalaca to the chocolate producers of the Washu project adjacent to Canandé.

In sum, the expansion of the area we protect and our growing collaborations with distinct stakeholders allow us to effectively protect some of the most biodiverse, yet most threatened areas in the world. Thank you all for your support and interest in our work! Together, we are making a difference!

Martin Schaefer, PhD
Executive Director, Fundación Jocotoco





GALAPAGOS —NEW RESERVE!

Jocotoco started the year with a bang! In January we established our 13th reserve, the “Jocotoco Galápagos Reserve”. We bought 250 acres in the highlands of San Cristóbal to protect a nesting colony of the critically endangered Galápagos Petrel. In a partial survey, we found 104 nests; these nests are well hidden in recesses and burrows, and so likely there are more. It immediately became clear that invasive species such as rats and feral cats were posing a significant threat to this charismatic seabird, one that breeds only on five islands on the Galápagos. We thus have begun to collaborate with Galápagos National Park authorities, Island Conservation, Pacific Rim Conservation, and neighboring landowners to develop strategies to better protect the petrel’s breeding sites and enhance its reproductive output. Pairs are returning to nest on the property as we write – it is comforting to be able to say that thanks to our efforts, they are now safer than they were before.

As a further indication of our success on the Galápagos, one of our neighbors became so impressed by our work that he placed a conservation easement on 47 adjoining acres to protect additional petrel nesting sites!

**ALREADY FUNDACIÓN JOCOTOCO BIOLOGISTS
DISCOVERED 104 GALAPAGOS PETREL NESTS
AT THE NEWLY CREATED RESERVE ON SAN
CRISTOBAL ISLAND.**

LAS BALSAS- NEW RESERVE!

The year 2019 ended as well as it began, with another big bang! We established our 14th reserve, in the dry foothills of southwestern Ecuador. The Las Balsas communal reserve is a 99-year usufruct that protects the largest population of the endangered Lilacine Amazon, a recently recognized species of parrot endemic to western Ecuador, as well as the last remaining population of the critically endangered *guayaquilensis* subspecies of the Great Green Macaw. Amazingly, the reserve is located only an hour west of Guayaquil, Ecuador's second largest city. The Las Balsas community protects 25,000 acres of the best dry to semi-humid forest remaining in western Ecuador, through a government incentive program. We supplemented this by protecting the parrot's critical roosting sites, the most threatened habitat of all which was not yet protected. During dusk roosting surveys at the riverside gallery forests we recorded over 2,500 birds, which corresponds, at least seasonally, to more than 90% of the Lilacine's global population

Almost equally important here is the last population of the Great Green Macaw of the subspecies *guayaquilensis*, reduced to a mere seven individuals in 2017. Then a miracle happened and the captive-raised birds that we reintroduced 40 miles further north in our Ayampe Reserve found their way to Las Balsas and united with the last wild individuals. Now 13 macaws fly in Las Balsas, and we released a further six individuals at the end of December. Even more excitingly, one pair even began to

nest and as we write two youngsters are about to fledge.

Long-term, our work will enable us to address some of the most pressing environmental problems that the community faces, especially in a climate that varies from very dry to very wet (during El Niño years). Poverty is a significant problem, particularly when severe El Niño events destroy the subsistence crops. While Jocotoco cannot effectively address issues outside its area of expertise, we can help the community to develop sustainable income sources and to connect it to international markets and potential funding sources. This will demonstrate, once again, that conservation and prudent development can go hand in hand.



**UP TO 90% OF THE GLOBAL
LILACINE AMAZON POPULATION
ROOST IN THE LAS BALSAS
COMMUNAL RESERVE.**



AYAMPE

There are several successes to report at our flagship communal reserve Ayampe, where we protect the Endangered Esmeraldas Woodstar and its equally threatened food source the Pechiche tree. In 2019, the community voluntarily protected an additional 5,000 acres of land adjacent to our reserve, and reforestation of the endangered Pechiche tree with community members is ongoing. . Since 2014 we have collaborated with community members around Ayampe and in turn, these successes and lessons learned have served as the foundation for the creation of our second communal reserve, Las Balsas.

Six Great Green Macaws from our captive breeding program were transferred and successfully released at Las Balsas Reserve, which strengthens the connection and communication between both communal reserves. Our sea turtle program also successfully released hatchlings, thereby significantly reducing mortality from predators and feral dogs.

IN 2019 THE COMMUNITIES ADJACENT TO AYAMPE VOLUNTARILY ADDED 5,000 ACRES OF COMMUNITY LAND TO THE COMMUNITY RESERVE!





BUENAVENTURA

Further south and inland, in our Buenaventura Reserve, the endemic El Oro Parakeets were more productive than ever. A total of 85 fledglings took wing leaving our nest boxes. This takes the total number of El Oro Parakeets raised in our nest boxes in Buenaventura to 427 – pretty darn good for a long-lived species with a global population size of only 1000 adults.

Our nest box program here is especially crucial because the widespread deforestation in this part of Ecuador has meant that large trees with cavities suitable for nesting have become very scarce. We also expanded the reserve by 240 acres, allowing us to put out more nest boxes in protected habitat, thereby potentially increasing the population even further.

IN 2019 THE NEST BOX PROGRAM AT BUENAVENTURA SUCCESSFULLY FLEDGED 85 EL ORO PARAKEET CHICKS.





TAPICALACA

Given our success in increasing numbers of the El Oro Parakeet, we also are now providing nest boxes for the congeneric White-breasted Parakeet on the other side of the Andes at our Tapichalaca and Copalinga Reserves.

We were pleased when one of the nest boxes in Tapichalaca was immediately occupied by a group of this charismatic parakeet. We thus are hopeful that in coming years we'll be able to boost numbers of this near-endemic species, one that like the El Oro is severely threatened by habitat loss.

We continue to regularly record the threatened Spectacled Bear and Mountain Tapir in Tapichalaca. Indeed, Mountain Tapirs have become somewhat easier to see – a clear indication of our victory in eliminating hunting in and around the reserve, as this is an endangered species.

FUNDACION JOCOTOCO'S 22 YEARS OF CONSERVATION WORK WITHIN AND AROUND TAPICALACA LED TO THE DECLARATION OF THE 184,360 ACRE MUNICIPAL RESERVE BY THE PALANDA COMMUNITY.





CHAKANA

The Mountain Tapir and Spectacled Bear have also found refuge in our Antisaniilla Reserve – which we now call Chakana Reserve to prevent confusion with the government’s adjacent Antisana Reserve. Here, we recently discovered that a healthy tapir population roams a secluded valley at 4000 meters above sea level; they are most likely part of the largest mountain tapir population certainly in Ecuador, and perhaps globally.

Eleven Spectacled Bears have been registered within Chakana, two of which are new additions in 2019! Additionally, annual Condor surveys have revealed that the reserve is utilized by 67% of Ecuador’s northern Condor population. Our resident Condor pair has once again successfully fledged a young bird. The fact that they are breeding annually at Chakana since 2013, while condors typically breed only every other year, testifies to the quality of our reserve.

CHAKANA RESERVE HARBORS ECUADOR'S LARGEST POPULATION OF THE ENDANGERED MOUNTAIN TAPIR.





COPALINGA

At Copalinga birdwatching continues to be spectacular: Gray Tinamous, a difficult and rare species, walk around the cabins like chickens roam Key West. The feeders at Copalinga attract a phenomenal variety of hummingbirds, tanagers, and other birds. White-fronted Capuchins (an endangered monkey) are now easy to observe!

YUNGUILLA

Further north, and home to Fundación Jocotoco's greatest conservation success story is Yunguilla, the last refuge for the Pale-Headed Brushfinch. In the early 2000's, its population numbered in the low double digits. Through active on-the-ground conservation management this species was rescued from the brink of extinction, and now maintains a population of approx. 250 individuals. This year's annual count of this endangered bird revealed a stable population at our Yunguilla Reserve. Encouragingly, a few have now colonized a separate valley where a few years ago we created a satellite reserve in order, we hoped, to establish a second population of the species. Now it's actually happening!

NARUPA

Narupa Reserve, on the east slope of the Andes, has seen rapid recent growth: since 2017 it has doubled in size to 3820 acres! The goal of the expansion has long been to link up Narupa with two large governmental reserves, Antisana Ecological Reserve and Sumaco National Park, and that's now starting to be a reality. Here at Narupa is the only breeding site of the rare Orange-breasted Falcon in Ecuador. In October, we were thrilled to see the pair's male defending its cliff against Black Vultures, documenting that "our" eyrie is still active. Narupa's expansion also increases protection of Military Macaws, which are now being seen inside the reserve daily (with groups of up to 20 individuals) as well as numerous other threatened birds. Additionally, it is one of the best overwintering sites for the boreal migrant Cerulean Warbler, which is fairly common in season!

YANACocha

Yanacocha, close to Quito, remains our most popular reserve, and we welcomed 4300 visitors here in 2019. An increasing number of local schools are now coming to explore our Interpretation Center and to experience a day in a natural cloud forest. Yanacocha is of course home to many Andean birds, many of them abundant and easy to see, especially at the feeders. The reserve's notable bird is the critically endangered Black-breasted Puffleg, a small hummingbird found almost nowhere else. While we had increasing sightings in the first half of 2019, worryingly, our one-day census in October yielded a mere single female. We will repeat our survey in early 2020 to continue to assess possible seasonal movements and recognize that there is a need for more focused research.

**SINCE 2017, NARUPA
RESERVE DOUBLED IN SIZE
AND NOW CURRENTLY PROTECTS
3,420 ACRES OF ANDEAN
FOOTHILL FOREST.**



CANANDÉ

Jocotoco has protected 17,000 acres of Chocó rainforest, with many more to come in the next few years. In October after our board meeting, we had planned a 24 hour BioBlitz Fundraiser to record as many species as possible of all taxa. More than 80 scientists, writers, social media influencers, and many board members had signed up for this event. Alas, the recent protests in Ecuador about withdrawing fuel subsidies forced us to cancel the event for this year. Thankfully, the situation has now calmed down (though the underlying problems remain); management of our reserves was not affected. So, we have vowed to do the BioBlitz next year!

Due to our intensive efforts to record the elusive Banded Ground Cuckoo, we have had many records of this endangered species in distinct parts of the reserve and in the neighboring Tesoro Escondido Reserve where the resident harpy eagles still care for the young Eaglet that fledged last year. Another bit of noteworthy ornithological news involves repeated sightings of Great Curassow close to our lodge. Canandé is the only area in Ecuador where this species still survives, having been hunted out everywhere else.

The Chocó is the fourth most important hotspot for biodiversity in the world. Scientists have estimated that the Chocó is rapidly approaching an extinction cliff: if another 400 square miles of rainforest is logged, forecasts indicate that approximately one-third of the region's species would be lost forever. At current deforestation rates, that cliff is just a few years away. The

pending divestment or the largest timber company in Ecuador, presents a once-in-a-life time opportunity to remove industrial logging from the southern part of the Chocó. Here, countless species occur that are threatened, many of which are not known from anywhere else. At least ten species of amphibians have been discovered.

Those two projects and others besides will surely keep us busy next year and beyond as we strive to protect the most threatened species and ecosystems in the stupendous, mega-diverse country that is Ecuador.



**THE CHOCÓ IS THE LAST
HABITAT OF THE JAGUAR IN
THE COASTAL RAINFOREST
OF ECUADOR.**





Financial Model

Since our start, when founding board member Bob Ridgely discovered a startling new bird species –the iconic Jocotoco Antpitta—in the remote cloud forests of southern Ecuador, we have pursued innovative and diversified income streams. At the same time, we are grateful to have a group of faithful, long-term donors that anchors our organization. Their donations continue to be very important but increasingly more so for expanding our reserves, instead for covering our operational costs.

In our first years, we opened Casa Simpson to start ecotourism in southern Ecuador, a region seldom visited by international visitors in the early 2000s. Since then, our tourism operations were profitable, even throughout the inevitable economic downturns that followed. We have built five lodges, which are operated through our subsidiary company Jocotours and generate enough revenue to cover twenty percent of our operational expenses.

In 2018, to support our conservation activities, we added a "voluntourism" program in some of our reserves. Our program was immediately profitable! In 2019, we expanded the program to include our communal Ayampe Reserve. Here, volunteers help with reforestation, reintroducing the threatened Great Green Macaws, and they also provide income to the local families who lodge them.

In most regions, our reserves protect some of the best remaining forest and our long-term restoration projects sequester thousands of tons of carbon every year. Looking ahead to the near future, carbon financing will become an

important tool to contribute to our long-term financial sustainability.

Finally, as we improve the reach and visibility of our conservation activities, we have entered into partnerships with national and international companies. These partnerships allow us to grow, while also enabling these companies to save acres and protect biodiversity, thus achieving tangible results. Some of these companies have also motivated their employees to become volunteers in our projects.

OUR SUPPORTERS 2019

Rainforest Trust (US)	\$957,464
World Land Trust (UK)	\$372,580
US Fish & Wildlife Service	\$132,947
International Conservation Fund of Canada	\$131,412
Loro Parque Foundation (Spain)	\$101,799
American Bird Conservancy (US)	\$72,577
Other Donors	\$504,846
TOTAL	\$2,273,624

INCOME 2019

Donations for land purchase	\$407,912
Grants for conservation projects	\$1,865,711
Self-generated income (tourism)	\$190,729
TOTAL	\$2,464,352

EXPENSES 2019

Conservation Projects and Maintenance	\$1,005,579
Salaries (Field & Conservation Personnel)	\$253,402
Salaries (Administration & Fundraising)	\$77,132
Other Expenses	\$69,225
TOTAL	\$1,405,338

GROWTH in land assets 2019	\$1,059,014
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