

# "In wildness is the preservation of the world"

Henry David Thoreau



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

REWILDING

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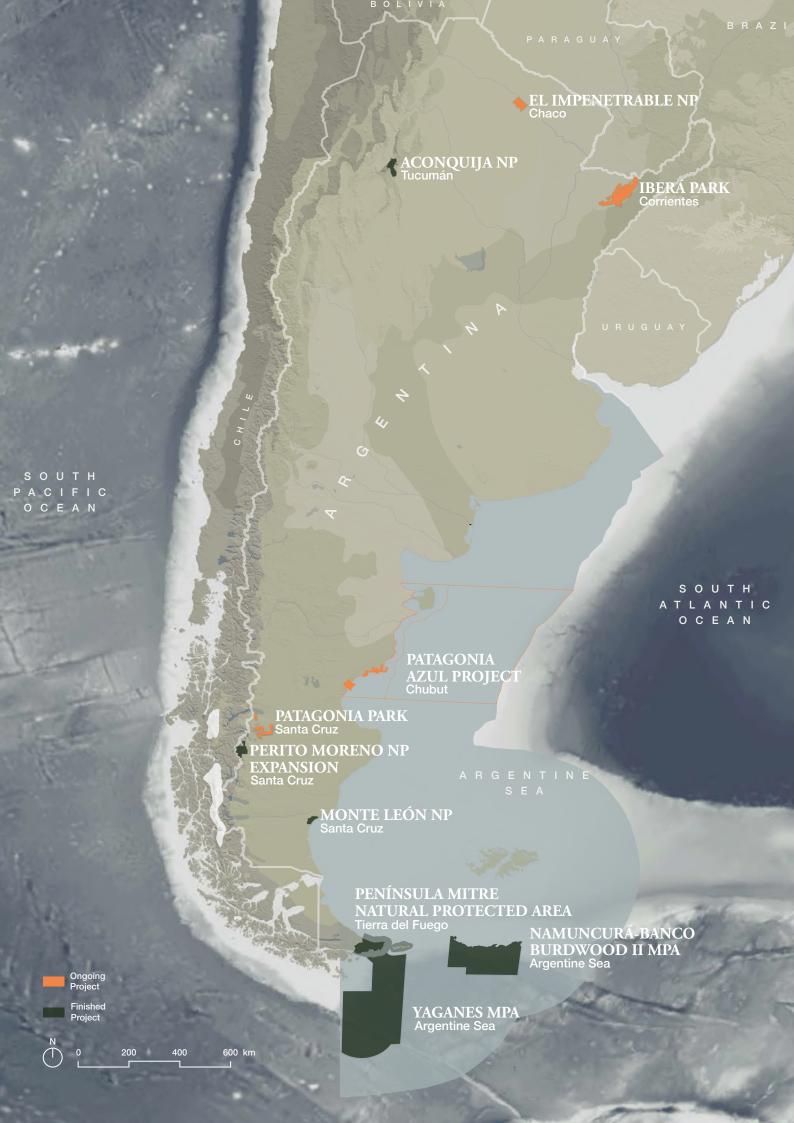
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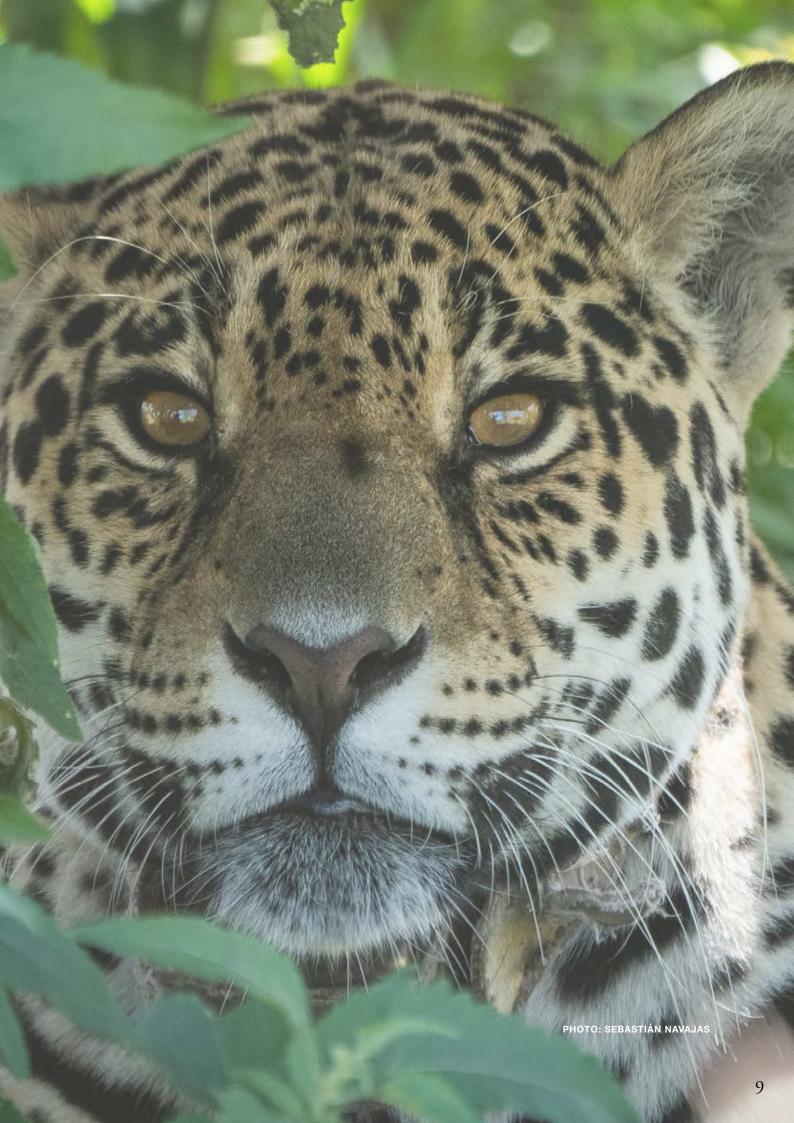
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### **Protected Areas**

We help to create protected areas, build public-access infrastructure, and promote the parks as engines for a new local economy.



# OUR Model

# Restorative Economy

We build a territorial brand associated with world-class nature tourism experiences and exportable regenerative artisanal production.



# Wildlife

We work to restore complete ecosystems, with abundant and observable wildlife that breathes new life into the local cultural identity.



## Communities

We work with local people to improve their well-being and pride in the land, for public empowerment, and for entrepreneurship.



# OUR IMPACT SO FAR

We donated over 407 thousand hectares (over 1 million acres) of land to create and expand 10 national and provincial parks that protect over 1,5 million hectares (3,7 million acres). This protected land sequesters 938 million metric tons of carbon.

At sea, we helped protect **96 thousand square kilometers** of the Argentine Sea with the creation of the first national marine parks in Argentina.



We are reintroducing 16 missing species to their natural habitats in Argentina, and working with research and active management of 14 threatened species to increase their population numbers.





**6** ecoregions are being positively-impacted by territorial conservation models: the Iberá wetlands, the Great Chaco, the Patagonian steppe, the Argentine Sea, the Cloud forest, and the Patagonian forest.

We are helping to create **4** nature-based tourism destinations: Iberá, El Impenetrable, Patagonia, and Patagonia Azul, where we are developing **14** park gateways with public-use infrastructure linked to local communities.



# Dear wild friends,

Every year, we work submerged in an adrenaline-fueled sense of urgency marked by the species extinction and climate crises. It seems like nothing is enough to reverse the impact that 8.1 billion human beings and billions of domestic animals have on the planet. The impact is so devastating for wildlife that, currently, only 4% of mammals are wild. Birds, amphibians, and reptiles suffer a similar fate. For this reason, we work tirelessly to restore the functionality and diversity of our natural ecosystems. We seek to reintroduce each keystone species that has disappeared, to guarantee completely protected ecosystems, and to boost new local restorative economies that are integrated with nature. As we carefully review progress indicators, we are glad for the advances achieved in 2023.

We celebrated the new year with the confirmation that twenty-one jaguars, 10% of the national population, live free in Iberá Park, placing Corrientes as the province with the third-largest jaguar population in the country. This milestone also reflects the arduous work carried out together with neighboring communities, who see in the return of this iconic feline an opportunity to position Iberá as a unique cultural and nature tourism destination. Additionally, it represents the pride of the people of Corrientes in once again living alongside the animal that best represents their brave and courageous identity.

And, when rewilding succeeds, there is no other option but to increase the scale of restoration. For this reason, we believe it will soon be necessary to replicate this model across northern Argentina to restore, through natural corridors such as rivers, the connectivity between ecoregions like the Cloud Forest, the Gran Chaco, and the Atlantic Forest.

In El Impenetrable National Park, in the Gran Chaco, we are working to recover top predators. To increase genetic variability and strengthen the jaguar population of Chaco, we exchanged two releasable females between the reintroduction centers in Iberá and El Impenetrable. Both females will become the first jaguars to be released in El Impenetrable National Park. On the other hand, in this park, we launched the giant otter reintroduction project thanks to the translocation of a female from Iberá Park.

In Patagonia Azul, together with national researchers, we studied threatened and iconic species such as humpback whales, imperial shags, Magellanic penguins, and southern giant petrels. Once published, these studies will help legitimize proposals to create new marine areas to achieve protection for 30% of the Argentine Sea. As part of this project, we also incorporated 18,000 hectares (45,000 acres) for conservation, and opened a new

public-access gateway: Bahía Bustamante. We expect that this new nature destination, based on marine wildlife watching, will progressively provide an economic alternative for local communities and replace extractive activities, such as bottom trawling.

In each of the projects that we are working on, we are interested in improving our work with neighboring communities. For this reason, this year we carried out several socioeconomic surveys that provided key information to measure the impact of our Economy of Nature model, and in this manner, to adjust our local development and community-outreach initiatives.

In El Impenetrable, the Entrepreneurs by Nature program has expanded its reach to 310 entrepreneurs of whom 180 receive periodic income, highlighting the tourism potential of the region and the positive impact that nature tourism can have on local ventures.

Something similar happened in Iberá Park, where this year almost 60,000 visitors were recorded, and in Patagonia Park, which received 19,000 tourists, allowing the neighboring communities to receive significant incomes for their products and services.

The permanent construction of public infrastructure, such as the Elsa Rosenvasser Feher Interpretation Center and Planetarium and the new trails and campgrounds inaugurated this year in Patagonia Park, help attract more visitors to discover these nature destinations. This is in addition to the locals, who thanks to outdoor environmental education programs, feel a greater interest in carrying out wildlife watching activities and become true guardians of the wildlife and flora protected by these new parks.

In these pages, you can read in greater detail about the arduous work carried out by the teams in the regional projects. This report is partly in recognition of these 163 people impassioned by the cause, who live in remote locations where there is still hope of winning the battle against extinction; and of you, who from further away believe that change is possible and chose us to make it a reality together. May 2024 be even more bountiful!

Sofía Heinonen

Executive Director at Rewilding Argentina

# 2023 IN PICTURES















# 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

## PARK CREATION

18,000 Hectares

Hectares
—45,000 Acres—
acquired to be
restored

New protected area created—Santa Ana
Provincial Park

163
Conservation
guardians working
on the ground

New gateway opened to the public

New campgrounds inaugurated and 2 expanded

29 Kilometers of trails built

33 Kilometers of trails restored

17 Kilometers of roads built

56,5 Kilometers of roads restored 20 Kilometers of fences restored

9,5
Kilometers of fences
built to control exotic
species

58 Kilometers of fire lines built

28
Kilometers of internal fences removed

## **ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION**

14

Active management and research projects to increase wildlife populations

16

Exotic species being eradicated

153

Animals translocated

187

Telemetry and satellite devices deployed to monitor wildlife 2

Newly-founded wildlife populations

16

Wildlife reintroduction projects to restore locally extinct species

#### REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

3

Environmental organisations created

65 New Entrepreneurs

by Nature

145

Training courses provided to entrepreneurs

6

Intercultural exchanges

82,420

Tourists to all four nature-based tourism destinations

## **COMMUNITIES**

3

Socioeconomic surveys carried

36

Environmental education talks provided to local communities

33

Local families benefited from cattle management projects



*IBERÁ* 

EL IMPENETRABLE

**PATAGONIA** 

PATAGONIA AZUL

ACONQUIJA

# IBERÁ PARK



## **PROJECT START**

1998

# CURRENT PROTECTED

**AREA** 

750,000

Hectares (1,85 million Acres)

TOTAL CARBON STORED

264

Million metric tonnes

#### **REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS**

Bare-faced Curassow, Collared Peccary, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, Jaguar, Maned Wolf, Ocelot, Pampas Deer, Puma, Red-and-green Macaw

# STRATEGIC PARTNER

Tompkins Conservation

# CONSERVATION MANAGERS

Alicia Delgado, Augusto Distel, Magalí Longo, Marianela Masat, Daniel Roldán, Juan Pablo Vallejos, Sofía Zalazar

# PARKS & COMMUNITIES COORDINATORS

Marisi López, Pascual Pérez

#### **DONORS**

Mimi and Peter Buckley, Oak Foundation, Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative, Fondation Segré, Slobodan Randjelovic & Jon Stryker, The Bromley Charitable Trust, The Liz Clairborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation, Tompkins Conservation, White Cedar Fund, National Geographic Society, The BAND Foundation



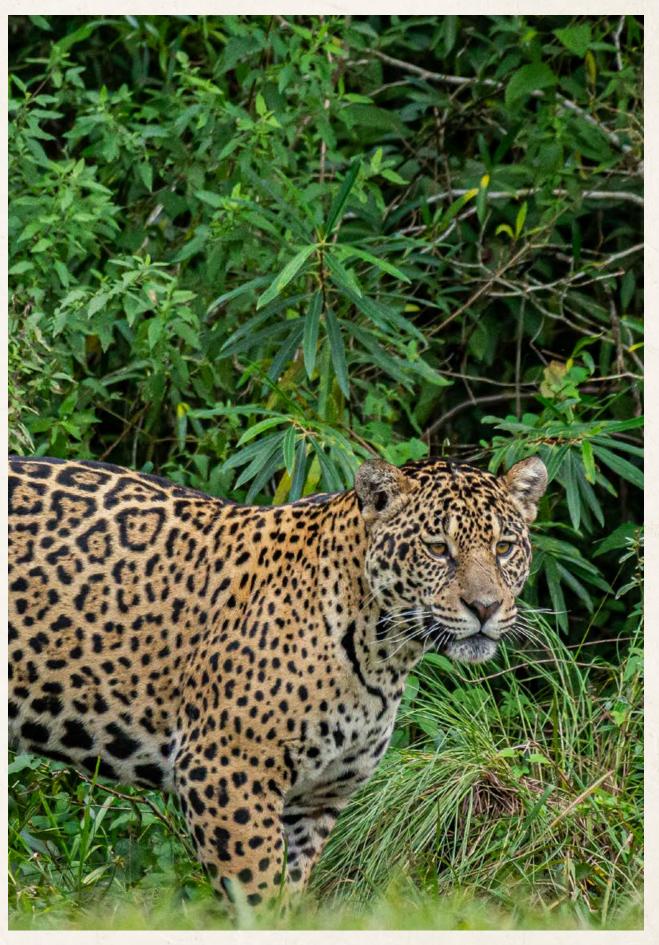
# INTRODUCTION

The Iberá wetlands are an unparalleled jewel of biological importance. Filled with freshwater lagoons and reservoirs, they connect diverse ecoregions such as the Upper Paraná and the Atlantic Forest to the north, the Espinal to the south, the Chaco forest to the west and the Pampas grasslands to the southwest. During the last century, the Corrientes Province underwent a severe defaunation process which resulted in a further degradation of nature, traditional knowledge, and ways of living of the local communities.

The future of this area began to change with the arrival of Kris and Doug Tompkins in 1998, who started buying land to develop an ambitious conservation and restoration project. Twenty years later, as a result the Iberá Park (750,000 hectares/1,853,290 acres) was created in collaboration with the national and provincial governments. Iberá became the regional birthplace of rewilding, where the return of locally lost keystone species has helped to shift the extractive economy towards a restorative one based on nature tourism, impacting ten communities with a total population of 100,000 people.

Today, Iberá boasts a healthier and more complete ecosystem thanks to the return of species that were locally and nationally extinct. In just two and a half years, the number of jaguars in Iberá increased from zero to twenty-one, thus augmenting the national population of the species by 10% (it is estimated that there are between 200 and 250 wild jaguars in Argentina), making Corrientes the province in the Argentine Gran Chaco with the largest population of the species. On another front, the populations of species such as the collared peccary, giant anteater, Pampas deer, and red-and-green macaw continue to grow quickly. Individuals of these species have been recorded outside the borders of Iberá Park. In the case of the anteater, a specimen has even been recorded in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), from which the species had been absent for over 130 years.

The resurgence of these iconic species not only benefits the ecosystems of Iberá, but also creates pride within communities and revitalizes local economies through nature tourism based on wildlife watching.

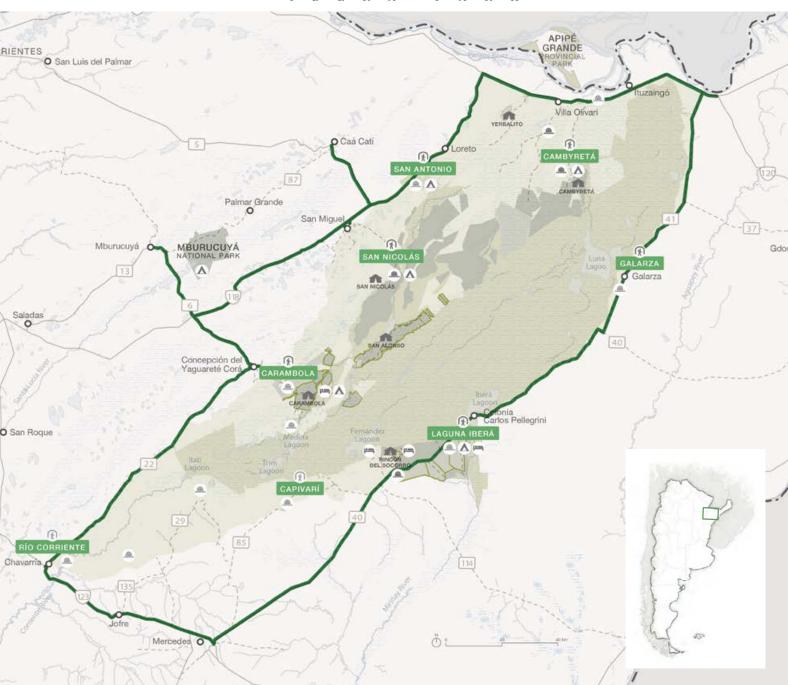


KARAI, ALONG HER SISTER PORA AND HER MOTHER MARIUA, WERE THE FIRST JAGUARS TO BE RELEASED IN IBERÁ PARK IN 2021. PHOTO: EDWIN HARVEY

# **PARK**



- Kilometers of perimeter fences repaired in the Carambola Gateway
  - 1 Campground and 1 shelter restored
- Kilometers of firebreaks redefined in the Carambola Gateway
- Native trees planted in the Yerbalito Reserve



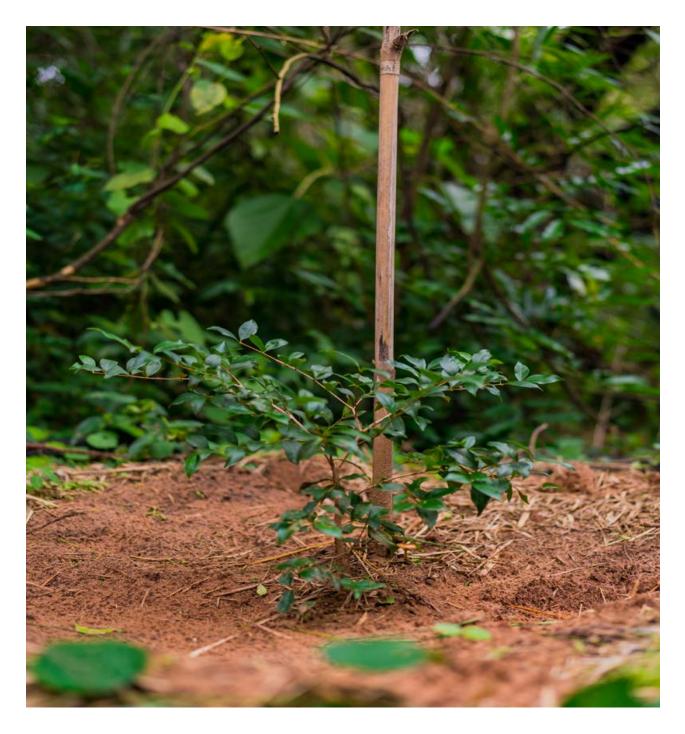
In early 2023, a series of wildfires were recorded, affecting mainly the San Nicolás and Carambola gateways. The latter had to close down temporarily because of the damage caused to public infrastructure. In light of this, we repaired fifteen kilometers of perimeter fences, restored the Carambolita Campground, and carried out maintenance work on the Lechuza Cúa shelter—one of the main tourist attractions of Carambola Gateway.

To prevent and mitigate the impact of future wildfires on the gateway, we:
(i) redefined more than fifty kilometers of firebreaks, (ii) provided workshops on wildfire prevention to local families who live in the wetlands, (iii) purchased firefighting equipment, and (iv) carried out fire management work together with national and provincial authorities.



Throughout Iberá Park, we also carried out perimeter fence repair work and herding to **prevent the entry of cattle**, which competes with and displaces native herbivores and profoundly alters natural environments, causing the disappearance of some kinds of vegetation.

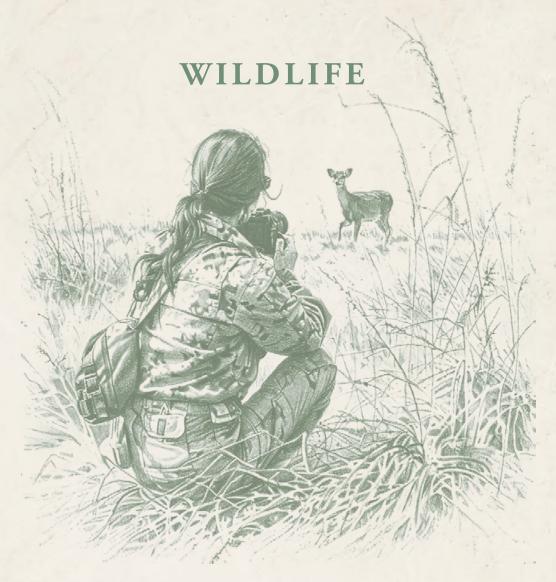
In the Yerbalito Reserve, to the north of Iberá Park, we continued the **reforestation** work that began in 2022 and planted sixty new native trees, totalling 203 specimens planted so far. Planted species include the curupay (Anadenanthera colubrina), pink trumpet tree, inga (Tabebuia impetiginosa), pacara earpod tree, and ibirapita (Peltophorum dubium), which serve as nesting and feeding sites for birds such as the redand-green macaw.



TWO HUNDRED AND THREE TREES WERE PLANTED IN YERBALITO TO RESTORE THE AREAS AFFECTED BY WILDFIRES.

PHOTO: ANDREA VILLARREAL

Finally, Rewilding Argentina acquired possessory rights over 100 hectares (247 acres) in the area of Ñupi—a community within the wetlands and connected to the Carambola Gateway—which will be instrumental in developing a new shelter and expanding the cultural and nature offering in this gateway.



- Jaguars roaming free in Iberá Park and 1 captiveraised male incorporated for breeding purposes
- Red-and-green macaws flying free in Iberá Park and 5 chicks born
- Bare-faced curassows living free in Iberá Park and 10 chicks born
  - 4 Giant otter pups born
  - 2 Pumas monitored

- Ocelots released in Iberá
  Park, 1 cub born and 1
  female incorporated into the
  reintroduction project
- 200+ Collared peccaries distributed across 5 self-sustaining population nuclei
  - 4 Self-sustaining population nuclei of giant anteaters
  - Pampas deer distributed across 2 self-sustaining population nuclei
    - 7 Maned wolves monitored

In September we released Coli, a male jaguar obtained from the *Establecimiento Faro Moro* (Paraguay) who became the ninth specimen to be released in Iberá Park. Additionally, we recorded six new cubs that were conceived and born in the wild. Two years and a half after the first release of jaguars in Iberá Park, the confirmed population of the species numbers twenty-one individuals, most of whom have remained within the borders

of San Alonso Island hunting native prey, reproducing, and coexisting with local families who live within their dispersal area. To further increase the genetic variability of the species, we incorporated a captive-bred male from *Associação Mata Ciliar* (AMC – Brazil) who will accomplish a key role as a breeder for the project.



UPON HIS RELEASE, COLI WAS OBSERVED MATING WITH KARAI AND OTHER FREE-ROAMING FEMALES IN IBERÁ PARK.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS



AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS OF NATIONAL EXTINCTION, 39 RED-AND-GREEN MACAWS LIVE FREE IN IBERÁ PARK.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS

Eight bare-faced curassows were imported from Criadouro Onça-pintada (Brazil), of which we released seven, reaching eleven free individuals in Iberá Park. Since this bird is prey to other species, it is essential to create a minimum viable population that can survive in the wild. To this end, we continue implementing the technique of clutch manipulation, which encourages matings between the breeding pairs and increases the rate of egg hatching, which in turn augments nestling survival rate. As a result of implementing this technique, ten chicks were born in 2023.

Fifteen red-and-green macaws were added to the reintroduction project, two rescued from illegal wildlife trafficking and thirteen coming from collaborating national institutions (Fundación Temaikèn and Ecoparque Buenos Aires). Additionally, we released fourteen individuals among the two population nuclei of Iberá Park, increasing the total free specimens to thirty-nine, and recorded the birth of five chicks, resulting from the reproduction of one of the three breeding pairs of red-and-green macaws.



THE INCIPIENT POPULATION OF BARE-FACED CURASSOWS IN IBERÁ IS PROGRESSIVELY GROWING THANKS TO CLUTCH MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES AND THE RELEASE OF NEW INDIVIDUALS.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS

In the **giant otter** reintroduction project there are currently six releasable specimens distributed among one family group—which includes a female, a male adult, and his two juvenile offspring—and one breeding pair. Although we observed multiple copulations between both pairs, only one of them produced a

litter of four pups, which unfortunately died within a few days. The mortality rate of pups tends to be high in this species, especially within the first weeks of life. Despite the result, this event confirms that the pair is fertile and capable of successfully gestating, which is crucial for their long-term reproduction.



THE FAMILY GROUP FORMED BY NIMA, COCO, AND HIS OFFSPRING WILL BE RELEASED IN IBERÁ PARK ONCE THE COUPLE SUCCESSFULLY REARS A NEW LITTER OF PUPS.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS

Two male **ocelots** and one female were released, marking the eighth species that has been reintroduced in Iberá Park. Meanwhile, in pre-release pens, one adult female and one male continue developing their hunting and climbing skills, which will eventually allow them to survive on their own in the wild. Additionally, several copulations were recorded, resulting in the birth of the first cub in the project, currently a female juvenile. In December, we added a new female to the ocelot reintroduction project, originating from the *Refugio Silvestre Urutaú* (Paraguay).



LANAYA, ONE OF THE FEMALE OCELOTS INCORPORATED INTO THE REINTRODUCTION PROJECT IN 2021.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS



Nine collared peccaries were added to the reintroduction project, which currently includes five self-sustaining population nuclei. In the latter, we released eight of the nine new peccaries, given that the remaining specimen died during quarantine due to an infection. Additionally, we recorded fifty-four young among the five nuclei, increasing the total population of the species to over 200 peccaries. This number is approximate, given that not all individuals are fitted with telemetry devices. Therefore, the populations must be monitored mainly through direct observation and camera traps.

Four of the five population nuclei of giant anteaters in Iberá Park are self-sustaining. These four nuclei function essentially as one large population, with individuals constantly moving between them. During 2023, we released eight anteaters: three in one of the self-sustaining populations to increase its genetic variability, and five in the population nucleus that is still growing. Additionally, we rescued and rehabilitated five specimens, which we expect to release in this same population.

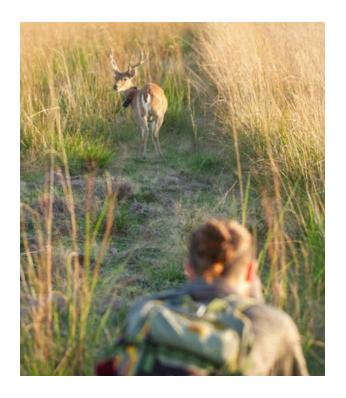
COLLARED PECCARY BIRTH RATES IN IBERÁ PARK ARE ON THE RISE, AND ALL FIVE POPULATION NUCLEI ARE NOW SELF-SUSTAINING.

PHOTO: JUAN VIGLIONE



ORPHANED AND INJURED ANTEATERS CONTINUE TO BE RESCUED AND REHABILITATED FOR THEIR FUTURE RELEASE IN IBERÁ PARK.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS



BESIDES BEING HIGHLY CHARISMATIC, THE PAMPAS DEER PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE IBERÁ ECOSYSTEM BY MAINTAINING THE HEALTH OF GRASSLANDS.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS

Seven maned wolves continued to be monitored—three breeding pairs and one female—all of which were fitted with satellite collars in 2022. This conservation project seeks to quantitatively study the spatial and population ecology of the species within and outside of Iberá Park.

Finally, we continued monitoring two **pumas** that had been fitted with satellite collars in 2021. In addition, the species was recorded in four gateways of Iberá Park, indicating that it is progressively returning on its own to this region.

Through an annual census, we estimated the Pampas deer population in Iberá Park to be at about 330 deer, distributed among two self-sustaining nuclei of approximately 300 and 30 individuals respectively. Currently, this is the largest population of the species within an Argentine protected area, and the only one that continues growing. Given that the species feeds primarily on various native grasses, we carried out controlled burns in 4,300 hectares (10,625 acres) of Iberá Park in order to promote the growth of grasslands.



STUDYING THE MANED WOLF WITHIN ITS NATURAL HABITAT PROVIDES VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO THE BIOLOGY OF THIS LARGELY UNKNOWN SPECIES.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS

## RESTORATIVE ECONOMY



- Local entrepreneurs at the Carambola Gateway
- New participants in the Carambolita
  Nature Club and 19 young people
  working on nature tourism
- 125 Iberá Artisans and 106 Iberá Cooks perceiving periodic incomes

60,000+ Visitors to Iberá Park

In the Carambola Gateway, nine entrepreneurs began to provide tourism services, bringing the number of local businesses based on traditional cuisine, hospitality, and cultural and nature tourism to seventeen. Due to prolonged droughts, several tourism providers had to diversify their offerings and venture into activities such as cycling, hiking, astrotourism, and horseback riding.

Additionally, we inaugurated *Puesto Medina*, a new shelter immersed in the wetlands that is managed by local families and which quickly became one of the main attractions of this gateway. Besides providing unique experiences, these activities create purposeful jobs and reinforce local community pride.

The second edition of the Carambolita Nature Club was launched, an environmental education program developed in 2022 with the support of the Iberá Committee and the Corrientes provincial government which trains local youths in cultural and nature tourism. Throughout 2023, forty-one young people participated in ten workshops that addressed topics related to entrepreneurship, hospitality, local cuisine, kayaking, astrotourism, and tour guiding. Since the launch of the club in 2022, we have carried out seventeen workshops for a total of seventy-five people, of which nineteen are already working in the cultural and nature tourism sector.



THE CARAMBOLITA NATURE CLUB AIMS TO ENCOURAGE AND FORM FUTURE NATURE TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS, AND FOSTER A NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL BASED ON NATURE CONSERVATION.

PHOTO: ANDREA VILLARREAL

The Iberá Artisans and Cooks programs include a network of 250 and 130 people respectively, of which 125 artisans and 106 cooks and producers receive periodic income. Throughout 2023, the Iberá Cooks represented the regional culture and traditions in twenty-four events where they proudly presented recipes and traditional products.

In order to spread awareness about Iberá Park as a **nature destination** before a greater audience, we developed a series of social media publications showing the natural and cultural attractions and the tourism options of Iberá Park. Additionally, we organized trips with national and international influencers and journalists to promote the destination in the national and international press as well as on social media. These efforts bore fruit, given that Iberá Park received more than 60,000 visitors in 2023.



VALERIA MOLINA IS PART OF THE IBERÁ COOKS NETWORK, AND HAS ESTABLISHED HER OWN RESTAURANT -ÑANDEGUSTO- WHERE SHE PREPARES REGIONAL DISHES TO THE VISITORS IN IBERÁ PARK.

PHOTO: ANDREA VILLARREAL



THANKS TO ITS COUNTLESS ATTRACTIONS AND WIDE TOURIST OFFERING, IBERÁ PARK IS CONSOLIDATING AS AN INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED NATURE TOURISM DESTINATION.

PHOTO: ANDREA VILLARREAL

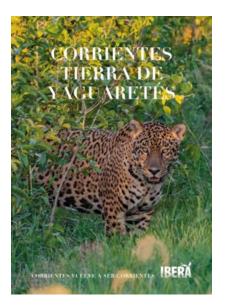
## COMMUNITIES



- Episodes of the Corrientes, Land of Jaguars series produced and broadcasted
- 100+ Neighboring properties provided with information on the jaguar reintroduction project
  - 30+ Environmental education talks
    - New communication campaign developed: I'm an Iberá Guardian
    - 2 Cattle vaccination campaigns coordinated
    - 1 Socioeconomic survey carried out

In order to highlight the cultural, ecological, and economic value of the return of the jaguar, we created **new** audiovisual materials for the Corrientes, Land of Jaguars campaign, launched in 2022. To this end, we produced a twelve-episode series in which the jaguar's neighbors share stories about the return of and coexistence with this iconic feline. The episodes aired weekly on local radio and television channels and on social media. Thanks to the positive feedback from viewers and the local press, the series received reruns on radio and TV.

To **share information** about the jaguar reintroduction program and the species' ecology and behavior, we visited more than fifty-six livestock and forestry properties neighboring Iberá Park. Through this initiative, which began in 2022 and has reached more than one hundred properties, we seek to guarantee



MAIN POSTER OF THE CORRIENTES, LAND OF JAGUARS COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN.

a peaceful coexistence between the neighbors of Iberá Park and jaguars. In addition, we provided more than thirty talks and workshops in local communities about the Economy of Nature model and the species reintroduction projects carried out by Rewilding Argentina in Iberá Park.



TEAM MEMBERS VISIT LIVESTOCK AND FORESTRY NEIGHBORING PROPERTIES TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE JAGUAR AND THE REINTRODUCTION PROJECT TAKING PLACE IN IBERÁ PARK.

PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI



EDUCATIONAL TALKS
AND WORKSHOPS
ON THE SPECIES'
REINTRODUCTION
PROJECTS WERE
CARRIED OUT AT
LOCAL SCHOOLS,
HIGHLIGHTING
THE IMPORTANCE
OF COMPLETE
AND FUNCTIONAL
ECOSYSTEMS.

PHOTO: ANDREA VILLARREAL

To involve local communities even more deeply in the monitoring and protection of reintroduced species, we developed the communication campaign I'm an Iberá Guardian, which involved designing and distributing decals, calendars, posters, and even *yerba mate* cans with key images and information about these iconic species and their reintroduction projects.

With the end goal of improving livestock health and preventing transmission of illnesses to wildlife, we carried out two vaccination campaigns together with the National Agrifood Health and Quality Service (SENASA). This livestock management program allows local families to increase their income, reduce the number of domestic animals, and lessen the impact of livestock on the wetlands.

Together with the Iberá Committee, provincial organizations, and the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste (UNNE), we carried out a socioeconomic survey in Concepción del Yaguareté Corá, the municipality and locality linked to the Carambola Gateway. The information obtained through the survey will allow us to design and implement, together with these other organizations, actions aimed at increasing well-being in accordance with the needs of this community, and to evaluate the long-term impact of our local development initiatives based on cultural and nature tourism.



## —Where were you born? What was your life like as a child?

My name is Nelson Zarza. I was born in Concepción del Yaguareté Corá, Corrientes Province. One of the towns that have access to the Iberá wetlands, specifically to the Carambola Gateway.

I come from a family with a strong cultural identity. Where daily traditions revolve around mate, traditional meals, and chamamé music every midday at home.

From an early age, I learned to cook by watching and admiring my parents cooking traditional food over wood fires, such as a good carrero stew and a tasty mbaipy.

## —How did you come to know Rewilding Argentina?

The Conservation Land Trust Foundation, today Rewilding Argentina, appeared as one of the projects for the community of Concepción de Yaguareté Corá. Out of curiosity, I attended a workshop called "Let's Save Iberá," which emphasized the importance of the flora and wildlife of Iberá. Sometime later, a Site Guide Course appeared for local people to train as hosts of Iberá and be able to receive tourists and show them the marvels of this place.

In 2014, the Conservation Land Trust Foundation provided support for the first site guides through kayak guide training, which helped develop a new tourism offer in the destination.

I participated in all these trainings and workshops with a lot of enthusiasm for showing others the place where I was born.

## —What did you imagine your life would be like, and what is it like now?

When I was in high school, my dream was to graduate and study Gastronomy. Today, thanks to the tourism we have been having, I have had the opportunity to fulfill a childhood dream: becoming a chef, studying, being a professional, and being able to stay in my town to provide a high-quality service.

This natural stage where I have the privilege of cooking has places such as the Lechuza Cúa Shelter, which is where products such as cassava starch, *andaí* (squash), vegetables from family gardens, cheese, and honey are the protagonists of local flavors. I am a strong defender of our cultural wealth and of our flavors; of those traditional foods, of lighting a fire, setting down a pot, and savoring a good mbaipy.

## —What message would you share with people reading this for the first time who have not been to Iberá?

I always say that I am very fortunate to be working in Iberá Park, surrounded by so much natural abundance that accompanies my cooking. Today, this wetland is the protagonist of a model of local development through nature tourism, where local people like me, from my town or from other towns neighboring the wetlands, play a part in protecting, caring for, and responsibly using these natural resources. Now, I can say that Iberá is more than nature: it's opportunity and constant growth while respecting the place.

## -How do you imagine the future of the park?

I hope we continue to work for the Iberá wetlands, which are shining again and have allowed Corrientes to be Corrientes again.



## OBJECTIVES 2024

- 1. Acquire new properties to improve the design of Iberá Park.
- Build a new shelter to widen the tourist offering at Carambola Gateway.
- 3. Keep working alongside the National Parks Administration to prevent the incidence of wildfires and entry of cattle, particularly in the San Alonso and Carambola areas.

- 4. Monitor the self-sufficient populations of collared peccary, giant anteater and Pampas deer.
- 5. Continue the reintroduction projects of locally or nationally extinct species –such as the bare-faced curassow, giant otter, jaguar, ocelot and red-and-green macaw— and initiate projects to rewild lowland pacas and red-legged seriemas.
- 6. Keep involving local communities in the monitoring and protection of the released jaguars and developing initiatives to promote a peaceful coexistence with the species.

"Once we got to Iberá we really came to understand that we weren't just in the land conservation business, we really wanted to be leaving behind fully functioning ecosystems, and if that's the goal rather than just creating national parks then by the nature of that description you have no choice but to commit yourself to bringing back those species that are really necessary to see the ecosystem functioning in its historic and appropriate way"

#### **Kris Tompkins**

Co-founder and President of Tompkins Conservation

## EL IMPENETRABLE



#### **PROJECT START**

2011

## ECOREGION BEING RESTORED

Dry Chaco

### CURRENT PROTECTED AREA

128,000

Hectares (316,295 Acres)

## TOTAL CARBON STORED

28,2

Million metric tonnes

#### REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS

Giant Otter,

Guanaco,

Jaguar,

Marsh Deer,

Red-footed Tortoise

#### **DONORS**

DOB Ecology, Slobodan Randjelovic & Jon Stryker, Turtle Conservancy

### **CONSERVATION COORDINATOR**

Débora Abregú

## PARKS & COMMUNITIES COORDINATOR

Lucía Kronhaus, Marisi López



#### INTRODUCTION

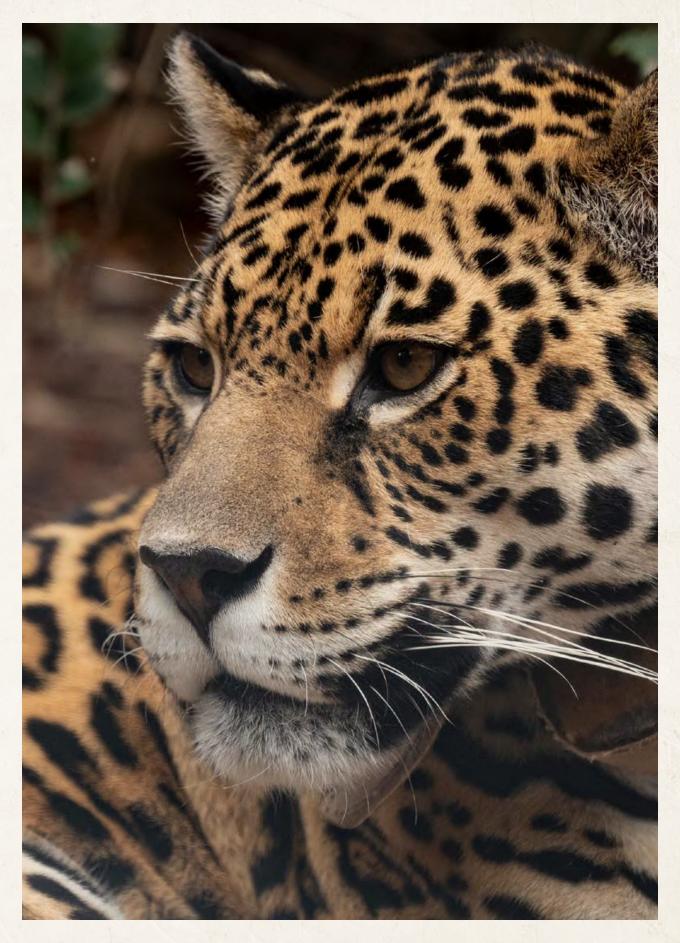
The Gran Chaco is one of the world's last remaining great wildernesses. Home to South America's second largest forest, this vastly biodiverse region is one of the most deforested and threatened areas on the planet due to expansion of the agricultural frontier. From 2011 to 2014, Rewilding Argentina participated in the process of the creation of the El Impenetrable National Park, and as of 2017 has teams on the ground inside the park in agreement with the National Parks Administration. These teams are working to reduce threats to the protected area, reintroduce locally extinct keystone species, and settle the foundations for a restorative local economy based on cultural and nature tourism and artisanal production.

The El Impenetrable National Park is progressively becoming a driving force for the local economy. Our vision and work model have sparked the attention of provincial authorities with whom we have

built a strategic relationship to position this emerging nature tourism destination. Indeed, the local economy is transitioning from an extractive one to a restorative one that contributes to the creation of meaningful work and the ecosystem's recovery.

Due to the discovery of two dispersing male jaguars (a species on the brink of regional extinction), and a giant otter (nationally extinct) we confirmed the importance of the Bermejo River as a biological corridor connecting the Yungas with the Atlantic forest. Through an innovative mating system, one of the forest-dwelling male jaguars fathered seven cubs with two females brought from Iberá Park. The presence of Teuco—the wild giant otter—called for his protection, prompting the launching of a one-ofa-kind reintroduction project and the first translocation of a giant otter to this area. Additionally, two species that were once locally extinct –the guanaco and the red-footed tortoise – have been recently reintroduced to this region after decades of absence; while efforts are underway to recover some of El Impenetrable's most threatened environments, such as its grasslands.

In order to fully protect this lifesustaining corridor against deforestation and poaching, it is essential to acquire strategic land adjacent to the Bermejo River in the Formosa Province, expanding the El Impenetrable National Park towards the north.



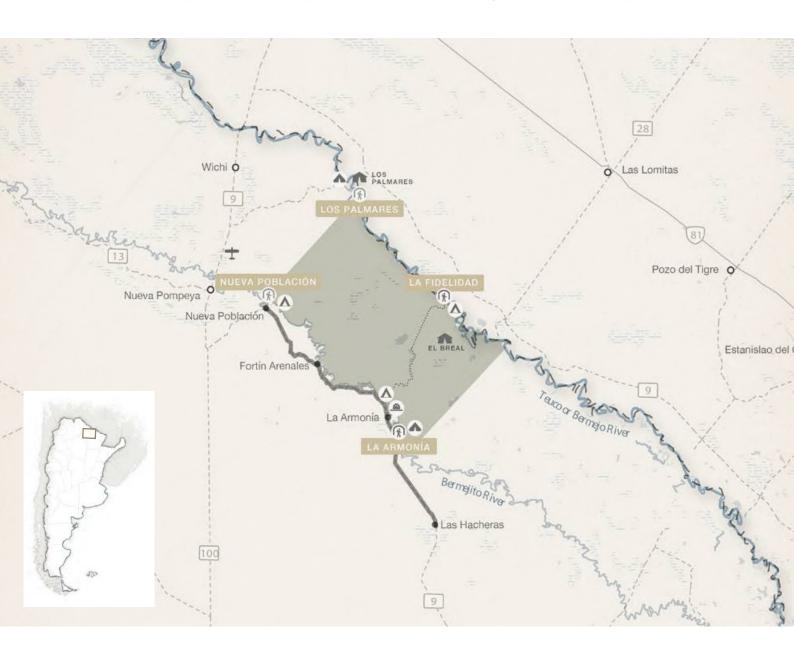
ISIS, ONE OF THE FEMALES THAT INHABITS THE JAGUAR REINTRODUCTION CENTER AT EL IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE.

### **PARK**



- Wildlife-watching excursions and 30 patrols along the Bermejo River
  - Threats monitoring campaigns carried out within and along the border of El Impenetrable National Park
  - 1st Segment of La Huella del Impenetrable built
    - Additional platforms built in La Fidelidad Campground



In and around El Impenetrable
National Park, we continue working to
bolster new regenerative economies based
on tourism and sustainable development,
which depend on nature as their main
driving force. Through these alternative
income generators, we seek to reduce the
threats that currently affect the national
park and/or its surrounding areas, such
as hunting, fishing, logging, and the
presence of livestock.

In this context, 104 wildlife-watching excursions took place along the strip of the Bermejo River between Los Palmares Glamping Site and La Fidelidad Campground. At the same time, we carried out thirty patrols along 100 kilometers of the Bermejo River and carried out three threats monitoring campaigns within and along the border of El Impenetrable National Park. The results of the patrols and campaigns were presented to the National Parks Administration for the implementation of threat-control measures.





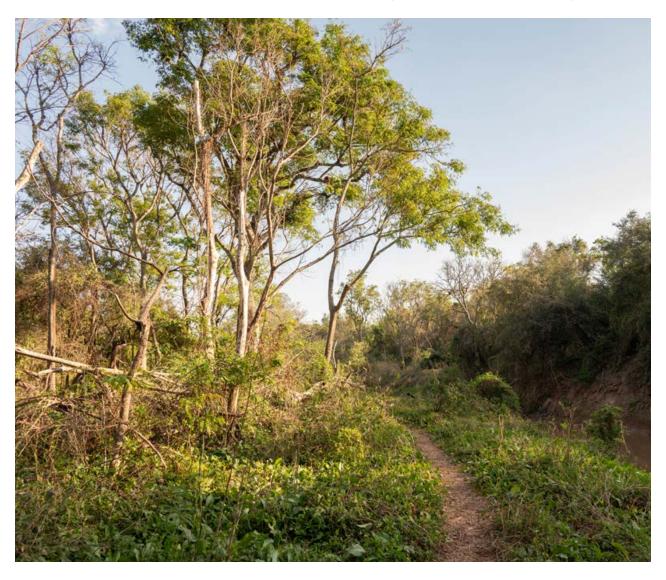
TEAM MEMBERS SIGHTED QARAMTA, ONE OF THE WILD MALE JAGUARS THAT ROAMS WITHIN AND IN THE VICINTY OF EL IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK.

PHOTOS: GERARDO CERÓN

The first section of La Huella del Impenetrable was built: a five-day trekking trail immersed in nature that will span sixty-eight kilometers in the southern region of the national park. This trail will connect the local communities of La Armonía, Nueva Población, Fortín Arenales, and Bajo Hondo, broadening nature tourism opportunities and allowing the patrol of the southern border of El Impenetrable National Park. The first section corresponds to

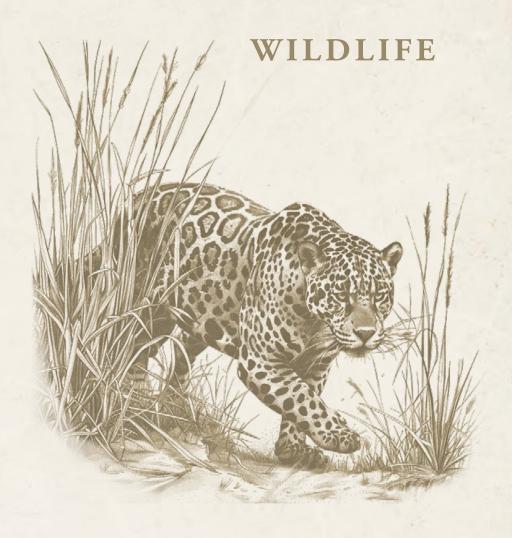
the first day of trekking and features a public campground with twenty tent sites, constructed by the National Parks Administration, sixteen kilometers of trails (three of them also built by the National Parks Administration), a shelter that can accommodate eight people, dry toilets, and seven kilometers of vehicular roads.

Additionally, we increased the capacity of La Fidelidad Campground from ten to eighteen camping sites, which enabled more than 1,100 people to camp here during 2023. This public-use campground is free, whereas the food and tourism services are offered and managed by the Neighbors Association of La Armonía, guaranteeing that all income directly benefits this community.



A NEW TREKKING TRAIL, LA HUELLA DEL IMPENETRABLE, WILL ENABLE TOURISTS TO EMBARK ON A FIVE-DAY JOURNEY THROUGH THE PARK, ENJOYING AUTHENTIC GASTRONOMY AND LODGING SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL FAMILIES

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE



- Female jaguars
  exchanged between
  the Iberá Park and El
  Impenetrable National
  Park
- 3 Jaguar cubs born
- Pre-release enclosure built in the Jaguar Reintroduction Center
- 1 st Giant otter translocated to El Impenetrable National Park

- Red-footed tortoises released in El
  Impenetrable National
  Park
- Guanacos released in the El Impenetrable region
- Hectares of grasslands of El Impenetrable
  National Park free from invasive bushes

With the goal of continuing to increase the genetic diversity of jaguar populations in northern Argentina, two adult females were exchanged between the Jaguar Reintroduction Centers of Iberá Park and El Impenetrable National Park. These females were bred with two releasable males and will eventually be set free into El Impenetrable National Park. To this end, a 1.5 hectare pre-release enclosure was built, thus reaching a total of three enclosures of the same size and three others measuring 1,600 square meters each.

The presence of females in the Jaguar Reintroduction Center continues to anchor two wild males, Qaramta and Tewuk, within and in the vicinity of the national park. Monitoring both individuals has allowed us to learn more about their habits and home range and to implement strategies for their reproduction.

Three cubs were born as a result of the second mating between Qaramta and a captive-bred female, with one cub dying soon after birth. The mother and the two surviving cubs were translocated to the Iberá Park. Unfortunately, another offspring died shortly after due to a hiatal hernia.



ONE OF TANIA AND QARAMTA'S CUBS. THE TWO OFFSPRING WERE TAKEN TO IBERÁ PARK.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE



TEAM MEMBERS MONITOR THE TWO WILD MALE JAGUARS - QARAMTA AND TEWUK.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE



YVERÁ, THE FEMALE OTTER BORN IN IBERÁ PARK, WAS TAKEN TO EL IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK TO LURE A WILD MALE AND ANCHOR HIM WITHIN THE SAFETY OF THE PROTECTED AREA.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE

All these actions, which include the increase in jaguar populations in Iberá and the Dry Chaco region, contribute to a long-term goal: creating a corridor in northern Argentina that connects jaguar populations from the Yungas and the Atlantic Forest, to increase the number of specimens living in the country (the population is currently estimated at 200-250 individuals).

A female giant otter born in Iberá Park was transported to a pre-release enclosure in El Impenetrable National Park in order to anchor Teuco, the wild male sighted along the Bermejo River in 2021 and 2022. The female has quickly adapted to her new environment, developing her fishing skills. Until now, no additional wild individuals were recorded in the area. If this situation were to persist, a male otter would be incorporated to the pre-release enclosure as a potential mate.

Nineteen **red-footed tortoises** were released in El Impenetrable National Park, increasing the population of

the species to thirty-nine specimens. Unfortunately, one of the released males was found dead and the cause of death could not be determined. The remaining thirty-eight specimens are in optimal condition and have adapted favorably to their new environment, feeding on fruits, mushrooms, and native plants, as well as snails and carrion. Additionally, thirtynine new specimens were imported from the Refugio Silvestre Urutaú (Paraguay) to the Corrientes Province Biological Station. Four turtles died during the quarantine period, presumably due to mycoplasmosis. For this reason, we extended this period considerably. Eight of the thirty-nine specimens were translocated to a pre-release pen in El Impenetrable National Park, where we plan to release them in early 2024.

Thirty **guanacos** were successfully translocated from Patagonia Park to a pre-release enclosure in El Impenetrable region. Before their release, we fitted five of them with satellite collars and ten with telemetry devices. Once released, the guanacos dispersed rapidly; thus, local communities became deeply involved in monitoring the species and showed great interest in the protection of the individuals. Thirteen of the released guanacos died, mostly due to fence entanglement, predation, and poor physical condition. The seventeen surviving guanacos showed a remarkable adaptation to their new environment, feeding on native plants. These individuals have dispersed toward areas surrounding the Bermejo and Bermejito Rivers and within El Impenetrable National Park.



WITH THE RELEASE OF NINETEEN RED-FOOTED TORTOISES, THE REINTRODUCED POPULATION OF THIS FOREST REGENERATOR SPECIES IN ELIMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK NOW HAS OVER THIRTY INDIVIDUALS.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE

The native grasslands of El Impenetrable National Park have been gravely affected by excessive grazing and poor fire management, causing the loss of most of their surface area and being replaced by bushes that, though native, behave like invasive species. To reverse this situation, we began a restoration project that seeks to eliminate the invasive bushes through selective shredding, respecting the other plant species. To date, we have removed invasive bushes in 325 hectares of the national park.

THE REMOVAL OF INVASIVE BUSHES, SUCH AS THE TUSCA, WILL ALLOW NATIVE GRASSLANDS TO PROGRESSIVELY RESURGE IN EL IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE

The species baseline continues expanding: in 2023, we recorded 41 new species of arthropods, 23 of plants, 12 of fungi, 4 of birds, 4 of mammals, 1 of reptiles, and 1 of fish. So far, we have found 678 new species of arthropods, 544 of plants, 353 of birds, 74 of fish, 60 of mammals, 54 of reptiles, 36 of amphibians, and 36 of fungi.



## RESTORATIVE ECONOMY



Entrepreneurs By Nature, of which 180 receive periodic incomes

1,309 Products sold at more than 6 point-of-sale locations

120 Training sessions provided to entrepreneurs

4 Cultural exchanges, and participation in 4 fairs and festivals

2,400+ Visits to El Impenetrable National Park

700+ Guests at El Bermejito and Los Palmares glamping sites





A KAYAK TRAINING SESSION WAS ORGANIZED AS PART OF THE ENTREPRENEURS BY NATURE PROGRAM. THESE SESSIONS AIM TO, HELP LOCALS LEARN HOW TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES TO VISITORS.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE

The Entrepreneurs by Nature program seeks to enhance the local economies of the communities of El Impenetrable by developing artisanal products and services tied to nature tourism that, in turn, foster ecosystem conservation.

Seventy-five new people joined the program, reaching a total of 310 entrepreneurs, of whom: 180 receive periodic income, 47.2% produce artisanal products, 15.6% offer gastronomic products and services, 7.2% provide tourism services, and 30% provide other services related to nature tourism and ecosystem restoration. Additionally, 1.309 artisanal crafts were sold at more than six point-of-sale locations—setting a new record for the program—and new commercial alliances were forged for specific products such as carob flour, which is used in the production of food products and is sold in several stores throughout the country.



TOURISTS CAN ENJOY A BOAT TRIP DOWN THE BERMEJO RIVER, WHERE THEY CAN OBSERVE WILDLIFE AND CAMP ON THE SHORE.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS

In addition, we worked to improve the quality of the products and services provided to visitors within and around the national park. To that end, the Entrepreneurs by Nature program provided 120 training sessions focused on nature tourism, entrepreneurship, gastronomy, and artisanal production; organized four cultural exchanges to different national destinations, during which entrepreneurs learned and shared experiences, knowledge, and techniques; and participated in four national and regional festivals and fairs at which they offered their products. Likewise, we provided tools and support to enable ten local families to begin to offer lodging services, and tourism and gastronomy experiences in their homes, allowing visitors to learn about the entrepreneurs' stories and experience authentic cultural tourism, while contributing to the local economies.

All of these actions have been key to increasing the nominal income obtained by the entrepreneurs by 34% from 2022. Since the program's launch, the income of communities has constantly increased, highlighting the tourism potential of the region and the positive impact that nature tourism can have on local ventures.

With the goal of promoting the nature destination, we developed a series of social media publications, showing everything that El Impenetrable has to offer tourists, including its attractions, lodging options, variety of activities, and the backstories of local entrepreneurs. Additionally, press trips were organized for national and international journalists and influencers in different niches to broadcast the destination to an even larger audience.





A LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR OFFERS GUIDED HORSEBACK RIDING EXCURSIONS, DURING WHICH TOURISTS CAN EXPLORE THE AREA OF LOS PALMARES AND IMMERSE INTO THE CHACOAN FOREST.

PHOTO: GONZALO GRANJA

MORE THAN 1,100 PEOPLE SPENT THE NIGHT AT LA FIDELIDAD CAMPGROUND, DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING TO THE ECONOMY AND WELLBEING OF THE NEIGHBORING COMMUNITY OF LA ARMONÍA.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE

As a result of these actions, over 2,400 people visited El Impenetrable National Park and 1,800 the La Fidelidad Campground; of which one 1,126 spent the night at the campground. Additionally, more than 700 people stayed at El Bermejito and Los Palmares glamping sites. Each of these visits benefits local economies and contributes to a development model where flourishing wildlife and forests create communal well-being and return value to the local culture.

### **COMMUNITIES**



- 200+ Neighbors visited El Teuco Biological Station since 2021
  - Environmental education talks, 5 puppet shows, and 3 murals in rural schools
  - 1st Socioeconomic survey within the buffer zone of El Impenetrable National Park
  - Local families reached by the survey and environmental education actions





THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION INITIATIVES, LOCALS
ARE LEARNING ABOUT THE THE
JAGUAR REINTRODUCTION PROJECT
AND THE SPECIES' KEY ROLE IN THE
ECOSYSTEM.

PHOTO: MIRANDA VOLPE

Rewilding Argentina continued working towards educating the neighboring communities of El Impenetrable National Park on the biodiversity crisis, while generating interest in protected areas and the native species that inhabit them, highlighting their value for a new local development model based on nature tourism and restorative production.

Fifty-three neighbors visited El Teuco Biological Station to learn about the species reintroduction projects carried out there, especially the jaguar program. Since 2021, when this initiative began, more than 200 neighbors have visited the biological station.

MURALS FEATURING
ICONIC SPECIES WERE
PAINTED ALONGSIDE
LOCAL COMMUNITIES,
FOSTERING A SENSE OF
PRIDE AND CARE FOR
NATIVE WILDLIFE.

PHOTO: GONZALO LEGUIZAMON



Additionally, at the rural schools of El Impenetrable, twelve environmental education talks took place; a puppet show for children, called The Species That Return, was performed in five schools; and three murals of native species were painted together with students, teachers, and parents.

In collaboration with the Chaco Tourism Institute, the Chaco School of Government, the Provincial Institute of Statistics and Data Science, and the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste (UNNE), we carried out the first socioeconomic survey within the buffer zone of El Impenetrable National Park. A team of twenty-five people visited 674 properties, of which: 532 families actively participated in the survey (78.9%), 79 were uninhabited (11.7%), and in 30 the families were absent from their homes (4.5%). Only thirty-two families opted not to participate in the survey (4.9%), indicating that the initiative was popular among the communities.

The 532 surveyed families also received environmental information and communication materials—such as posters, calendars, and cans for storing yerba mate—themed on the reintroduction projects that are being developed in the El Impenetrable area.

The results obtained by this survey will allow us to coordinate initiatives with government authorities and key stakeholders that are more aligned with the needs of the region, and analyze the long-term impact that nature tourism and a more regenerative economy have on local communities.



## —Where were you born? What was your life like as a child?

"My name is Roxana Soraire, I am nineteen years old, and I was born and raised in Santa Teresa, which is located approximately fifteen kilometers from El Impenetrable National Park. I have fond memories of my childhood, related to the countryside, caring for animals, and tending my family's small shop".

## —How did you come to know Rewilding Argentina?

"My first connection was through my dad, who in 2011 worked as a guide in what is currently El Impenetrable National Park. Today, my dad works as a firefighter for the National Parks Administration. My second connection was through my mom. Like all country women, she was taught to weave as a child. Later on, she abandoned the hobby she enjoyed so much because it did not provide her income, since she had no one to sell her weaving to. So she dedicated herself to the family shop. Then Rewilding Argentina showed up and, through the Entrepreneurs By Nature program, started incentivizing local women to produce and sell their crafts. My mom joined the

program, and thanks to that she started weaving again.

When I turned eighteen, I began my first job as an intern at El Bermejito Glamping Site. It was the first time that I was out of my house for so long, so I felt a lot of fear mixed with other emotions. I worked for a season and a half, and in October 2023 I was offered the opportunity to do a cultural exchange at Patagonia Park, where I am doing customer service at the cafeteria of the recently inaugurated Interpretation Center and Planetarium".

## —What did you imagine your life would be like, and what is it like now?

"I imagined myself finishing high school and studying for the only degree available in the closest town, and living and working close to home. I never thought about going further from my home. That is why I am proud of myself because I gave myself a challenge, and in spite of my fear, I decided to travel. Currently, with Rewilding Argentina I am having opportunities I never thought I would have at my age, and I hope to be able to work with them on future projects".



## **OBJECTIVES**

2024

- 1. Open the Nueva Población Gateway to the public.
- 2. Inaugurate the first section of *La Huella del Impenetrable* and build its second section.
- 3. Offer wildlife-watching excursions along the strip of the Bermejo River between La Fidelidad Campground and Los Palmares Glamping Site.
- 4. Assist in consolidating the skills and strengthening the businesses of the members of the Entrepreneurs by Nature program.

- 5. Carry out environmental education initiatives in at least eight rural schools of El Impenetrable.
- 6. Continue the reintroduction projects of locally extinct species—like the giant otter, guanaco, jaguar, marsh deer and redfooted tortoise— and obtain permits to launch the Pampas deer reintroduction project.
- 7. Keep restoring native grasslands by removing invasive bushes.

"In a remote lowland forest in northern Argentina, giant anteaters snuffle around termite mounds, and jaguars stalk prey along the muddy banks of the Bermejo River. Parque Nacional El Impenetrable, which opened in 2017, is one of the South American country's newest and most diverse wildlife sanctuaries —and a growing site for ecotourism"

#### Mark Johanson

Writer for the National Geographic Magazine

# PATAGONIA PARK



#### **PROJECT START**

2012

### ECOREGION BEING RESTORED

Patagonian Steppe

# CURRENT DONATED AND/OR PROTECTED AREA

178,500 Hectares (441,083 Acres)

#### **DONORS**

Elsa and George Feher (of blessed memory), Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, Freyja Foundation, National Geographic Society, Wyss Campaign for Nature

#### **TOTAL CARBON STORED**

1,313

Million metric tonnes

# CONSERVATION COORDINATOR

**Emanuel Galetto** 

# PARKS & COMMUNITIES COORDINATOR

Rocío Navarro

#### **REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS**

Austral Rail, Coypu, Culpeo Fox, Guanaco, Darwin's Rhea, Huemul Deer, Puma, South American Gray Fox, Wolffsohn's Viscacha



#### INTRODUCTION

The Patagonian steppe encompasses 28% of Argentina's territory, yet less than 1% is protected. Since 2012, Rewilding Argentina has been working in the region with the objective of increasing the legal protection of the land, restoring wildlife populations, developing high-quality tourist infrastructure and public access to protected areas, and promoting one-of-a-kind nature tourism experiences.

To this end, we have donated and/or helped to legally protect 109,000 hectares (269,344 acres) in the areas of the Buenos Aires Lake Plateau and the Pinturas Canyon, acquired four properties (69,500 hectares/171,738 acres) that are currently being managed as private reserves, and worked towards the creation of three public gateways to the park.

Here, keystone species like the huemul deer have disappeared at the regional level, while the Wolffsohn's viscacha, the coypu, and the austral rail suffered local extinctions. Other species such as the puma, guanaco, Darwin's rhea, and Andean condor, which are key representatives of Patagonia's terrestrial wildlife, have also experienced significant declines in their populations. To this end, we are reintroducing species that were once locally absent, and enhancing the populations of those that had been reduced, and ensuring a peaceful coexistence between wildlife and productive human activities.

At La Ascensión and Pinturas Canyon Gateways, we are working with the communities of Los Antiguos, Perito Moreno, and Lago Posadas on the development of gainful ventures associated with tourism and public use of the park. Specifically, in the Pinturas Canyon Gateway, experiences are offered around wildlife watching, hiking, and environmental education that have resulted in neighboring communities actively participating in these natural and public areas.



#### PATAGONIA PARK

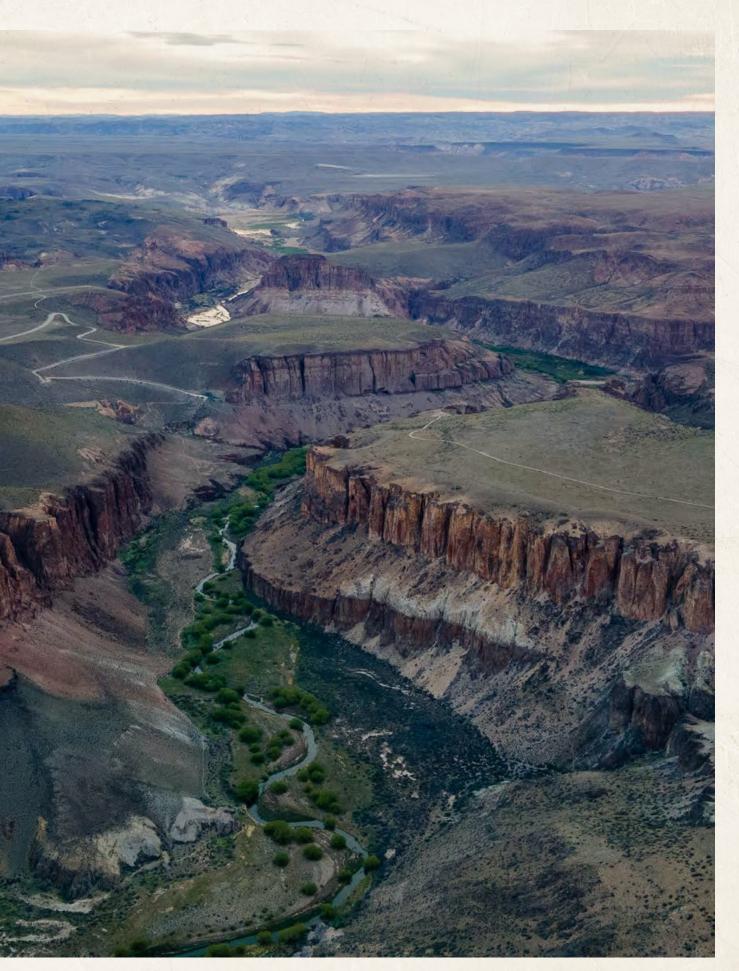
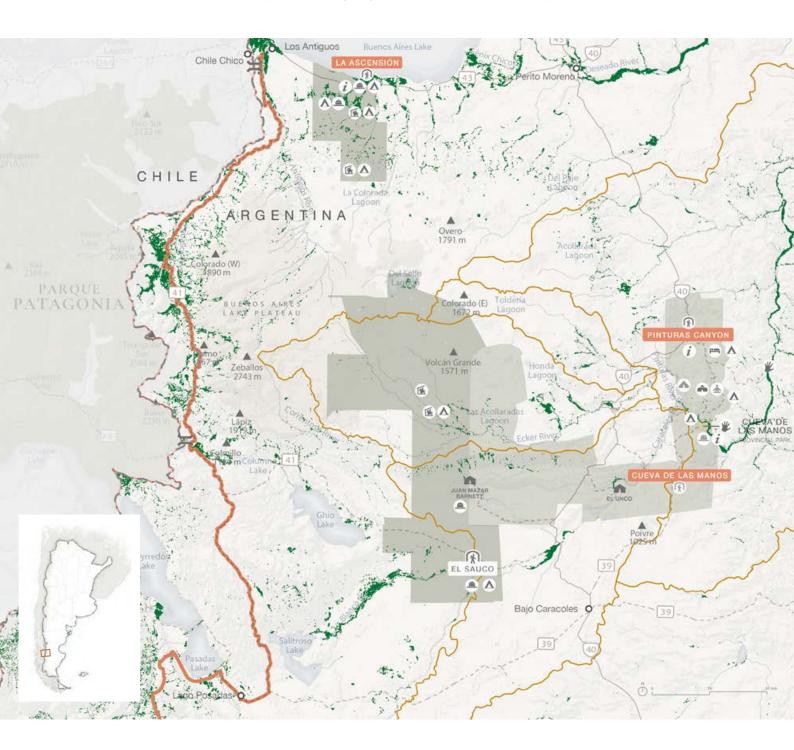


PHOTO: GUSTAVO CALFÍN

### **PARK**



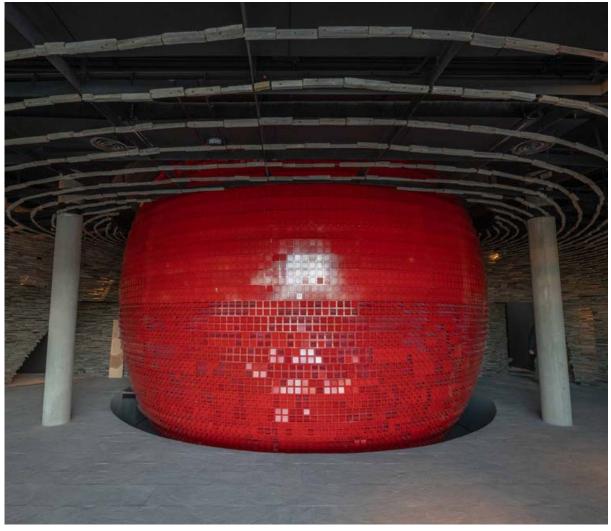
- 1 New interpretation centre opened to the public
- New campsites and one fire pit at La Señalada Campground
- 5 New kilometers of trails
- 1 New wild campground
- 2 New housing units for teams



The Elsa Rosenvasser Feher Interpretation Center and Planetarium, an immersive educational experience consisting of five themed rooms, was inaugurated in the Pinturas Canyon Gateway. Here, visitors can explore the historical coexistence of human beings

with nature since their arrival to the Americas, and the evolution of this connection until the present day. The visit ends at a planetarium. Since its opening in November, more than six hundred visitors have immersed themselves in the skies and ecosystems of Patagonia.









THE ELSA ROSENVASSER FEHER INTERPRETATION CENTER AND PLANETARIUM, AN INTERACTIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT WAS RECENTLY INAUGURATED IN THE PINTURAS CANYON GATEWAY.

PHOTOS: GUSTAVO CALFÍN



In partnership with the Freyja
Foundation, the public use
infrastructure of the Pinturas Canyon
Gateway continues being improved. At
La Señalada Campground, six picnic
tables, two dry-toilet bathrooms, and
six campsites were added. Additionally,
a new wild campground along the

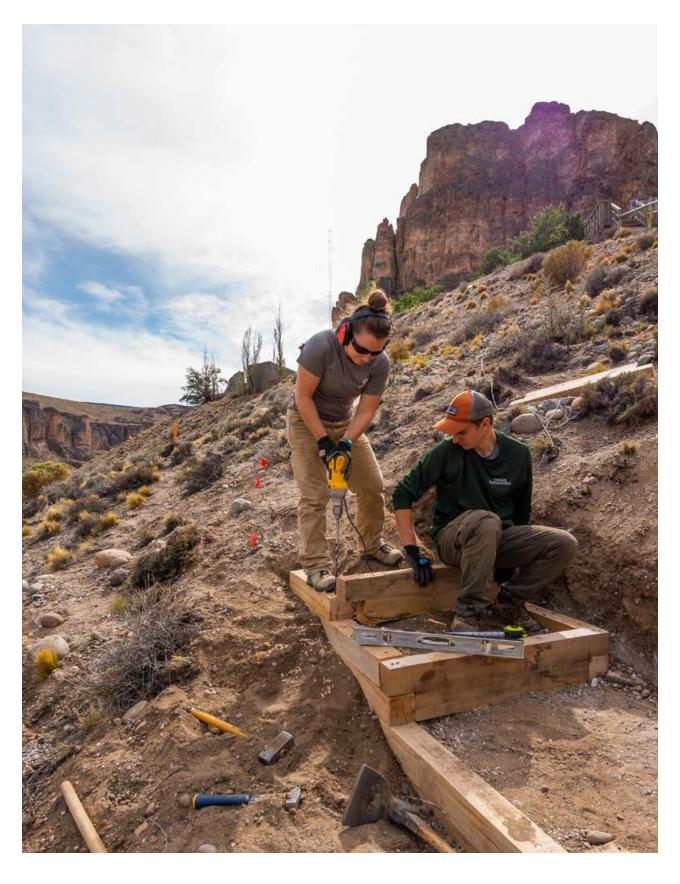
Pinturas River was opened to the public, including six campsites, six picnic tables, and two dry-toilet bathrooms. Two new trails were built: *Cueva de las Manos* and *La Vertiente*. The first one includes 130 steps distributed along 1.6 kilometers, whereas the second traverses three kilometers. In addition, we created a



new layout for the *Tierra de Colores* trail, which is 3.4 kilometers long. Currently, the Pinturas Canyon Gateway contains a total of ten high, medium, and low difficulty trails, out of which *Tierra de Colores* stands out as one of the most popular in the region, having been walked by almost 11,000 people.

THE NEWLY BUILT CUEVA DE LAS MANOS TRAIL FEATURES 130 STEPS.

PHOTO: HORACIO BARBIERI



THANKS TO THE CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, PATAGONIA PARK IS EMERGING AS A MAIN HIKING AND WILDLIFE-WATCHING DESTINATION.

PHOTOS: HORACIO BARBIERI





The Condor Lookout close to Cueva de las Manos rock art, was opened to the public and includes two group tables and two dry-toilets where visitors can take a break during excursions. Along the Pinturas River, we built a bridge and installed two rest areas including six picnic tables and two dry-toilet bathrooms. Additionally, five kilometers of vehicular roads were built, totalling twenty-seven kilometers.

Improvements were made to La Posta de los Toldos lodge, aiming to elevate the quality of service and its comfort. This resulted in two hundred thirty five reservations throughout 2023.



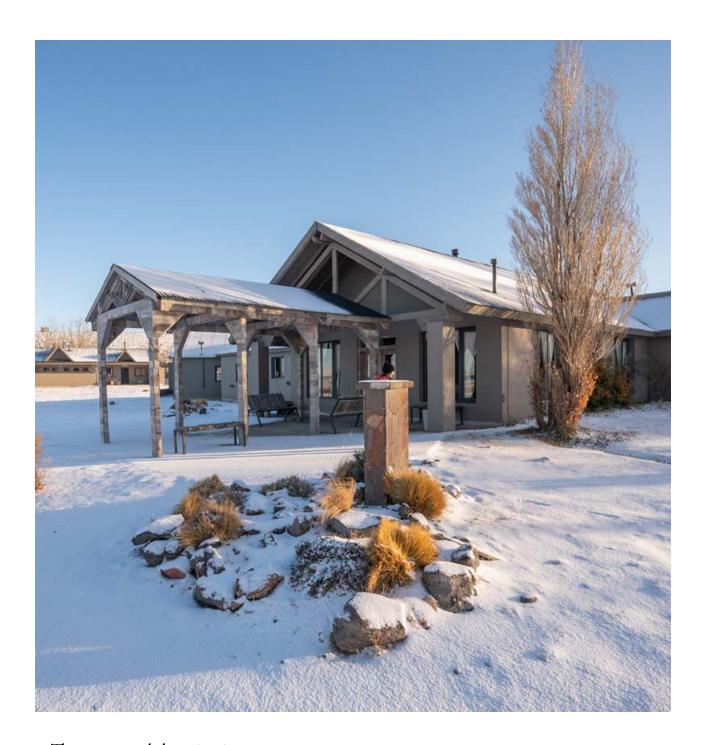
#### P A T A G O N I A P A R K





ABOVE AND BELOW: THE CONDOR LOOKOUT IS LOCATED NEAR THE CUEVA DE LAS MANOS. IT IS AN IDEAL STOP TO APPRECIATE THE CANYONS OR SPOT CONDORS AND BLACK-CHESTED BUZZARD EAGLES.

PHOTOS: HORACIO BARBIERI



The personnel dormitories within the Information Center were remodeled and two new housing units were built for the Freyja Foundation and Rewilding Argentina teams. Finally, we built eight kilometers of fencing and repaired another three, preventing entry for exotic species such as cows and feral horses.

IN ANTICIPATION OF THE TOURIST SEASON, LA POSTA DE LOS TOLDOS LODGE UNDERWENT IMPROVEMENTS IN ITS INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES. THE LODGE HAS NINE ROOMS WITH PRIVATE BATHROOMS, COMMON SPACES, A REGIONAL CUISINE RESTAURANT, A WOODBURNING KITCHEN IN AN OUTPOST, AND AREAS FOR BONFIRES. GUESTS CAN ALSO HIRE LOCAL GUIDES AND STARGAZE THE PATAGONIAN SKIES FROM THE STAR OBSERVATORY.

PHOTOS: HORACIO BARBIERI





It is important to highlight that the Pinturas Canyon Gateway currently employs a temporary team of ten park rangers who offer visitor services during the summer tourist season. Additionally, a permanent team of eight people carries out administration and maintenance of public infrastructure year-round. This means that the Economy of Nature model1 provides employment for a total of eighteen people responsible for public infrastructure. By contrast, the traditional livestock husbandry model only employed two people in the Pinturas Canyon Gateway area, signifying a 900% increase in regional employment opportunities.

#### WILDLIFE



- Pumas fitted with satellite collars, leading to a total of 13 monitored individuals
- Huemul deer monitored
- Wolffsohn's viscachas fitted with telemetry collars, and 8 translocated to cliffs in the Caracoles Canyon
  - 4 Guanacos fitted with satellite collars, leading to a total of 19 monitored individuals

- Coypu released, and 8 marked with rings
  - Austral rails fitted with rings, leading to a total of 48 monitored individuals
  - 2 South American gray foxes captured and fitted with satellite collars
  - Darwin's rheas fitted with satellite collars, leading to a total of 15 monitored individuals





TEAM MEMBERS CAPTURE A PUMA
AND FIT IT WITH A SATELLITE
COLLAR. THE MONITORING OF
THIS ICONIC SPECIES ALLOWS
US TO STUDY ITS ECOLOGY AND
BEHAVIORS AND TO DEVELOP OF
STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ITS
COEXISTENCE WITH CATTLE.

PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI

Currently, we are monitoring thirteen **pumas** in Patagonia Park Argentina. With the goal of studying the spatial ecology of this iconic predator and its interactions with other species, we captured eight adults, of which we fitted six with satellite collars, while two were marked with tags. Additionally, we recorded the birth of **eleven cubs**, of which three were fitted with telemetry collars. This will provide valuable information about their first life

stages, including their survival, age of independence, dispersal, and behaviour. Monitoring this species facilitates the development of strategies to promote its coexistence with livestock, which are shared with local ranchers. To prepare for International Puma Day, we launched a social network campaign that detailed the work of Rewilding Argentina with this species, informing the public about its role and significance to the ecosystem.

Rewilding Argentina continues to monitor twelve huemul deer in the Río Toro and Los Huemules reserve, as well as in Los Glaciares National Park, in order to study their biology and spatial ecology. This will allow us to design conservation strategies that contribute to the recovery of this endangered species' populations.

THE HUEMUL IS THE MOST ENDANGERED DEER IN THE AMERICAS. ITS ABUNDANCE HAS BEEN REDUCED BY 99% AND ITS RANGE BY 90%. TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE SPECIES? ECOLOGY AND BEHAVIORS, WE ARE MONITORING TWELVE INDIVIDUALS OF ONE POPULATION LOCATED IN THE SOUTHERN WEST OF SANTA CRUZ PROVINCE.

PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI





IN 2019 WE BEGAN STUDYING GUANACO POPULATIONS IN PATAGONIA PARK, ONE OF THE FEW PLACES WHERE THESE ANIMALS CONTINUE THEIR ANCESTRAL BEHAVIOR OF MIGRATION, WHICH IS PASSED DOWN BETWEEN GENERATIONS.

PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI

Four **guanacos** were fitted with satellite collars, reaching a total of forty-five individuals with collars, of which we are monitoring nineteen. Learning and spreading information about the guanaco's behaviour and spatial ecology aids in identifying ways to improve their migration routes and using their populations as source for reintroduction projects, while shifting the local perception of the species.



The team translocated eight new Wolffsohn's viscachas from the Pinturas Canyon to cliffs of the Caracoles Canyon, where the species was reintroduced in 2019. Furthermore, we fitted twenty-two individuals with collars, allowing us to monitor the species and study its spatial ecology. We recorded four births in the Caracoles Canyon, totaling twenty-two pups born since 2019, and indicating that the reintroduced individuals have adapted quickly to their new surroundings. Additionally, we observed at least ten viscachas dispersing to other cliffs in the region.

THE POPULATION OF
WOLFFSOHN'S VISCACHAS
ESTABLISHED AT CARACOLES
CANYON IS THRIVING, AS
INDIVIDUALS ARE REPRODUCING
AND SOME HAVE BEGUN
DISPERSING TO NEW CLIFFS.

PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI



TEAM MEMBERS CONTINUE RELEASING
AND MONITORING COYPUS WITHIN THE
TWO POPULATION NUCLEI ESTABLISHED IN
PATAGONIA PARK.

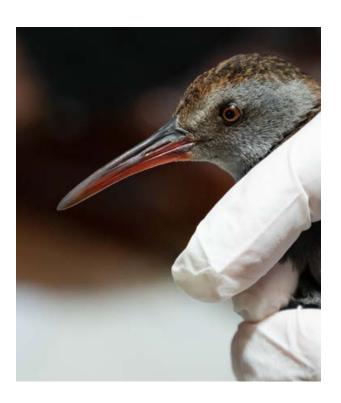
PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI

Nineteen **coypus** were released to reinforce the populations in the Caracoles Canyon and Pinturas River, which we continue monitoring through camera traps. In the first population, we recorded at least five new births. Additionally, we marked eight individuals with coloured rings, which allow us to study their survival and estimate the growth of the reintroduced population.

Six austral rails were fitted with rings, reaching a total of forty-eight monitored individuals in Caracoles Canyon's reed beds. Placing rings on individuals enables the study of their biology, behaviour, distribution, and population numbers, generating biological reference data to better understand this species and evaluate the impact of wetland restoration on the recovery of native wildlife.

IN THE REED BEDS OF THE CARACOLES CANYON, AN AUSTRAL RAIL POPULATION IS INCREASING IN NUMBERS THANKS TO WETLAND RESTORATION EFFORTS. PHOTO:

FRANCO BUCCI





THE MONITORING OF SOUTH AMERICAN GREY AND CULPEO FOXES ALLOWS US TO STUDY THEIR ECOLOGY AND INTERACTIONS WITH PREY AND PREDATOR SPECIES.

PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI

Two South American grey foxes were captured and fitted with satellite collars. Currently, we are monitoring three South American grey foxes and one culpeo fox in order to study their biology and interactions with other species.



STUDYING THE SPATIAL
DISTRIBUTION OF THE DARWIN'S
RHEA IN PATAGONIA PARK
CAN AID TO CONSERVE AND
RECOVER POPULATIONS IN
AREAS WHERE THE SPECIES
IS THREATENED OR HAS
DISAPPEARED.

PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI



Six Darwin's rheas were fitted with satellite collars, reaching a total of fifteen monitored individuals. Since the species is abundant in Patagonia Park Argentina, a project was developed with Rewilding Chile to reintroduce the species in Parque Patagonia Chile, where the species is threatened. However, a bird flu outbreak in Argentina delayed the importation paperwork, causing the temporary suspension of the project.

# RESTORATIVE ECONOMY



- Communication
  campaigns launched
  to position the nature
  tourism destination
- 1st Hiking Meet attended by 105 people
  - Public-private chamber of tourism created
  - 8 Entrepreneurs and ventures providing services in Patagonia Park

- Press tours organized for international and national journalists resulting in 336 press articles
- Radio interviews provided to position the nature tourism destination

Rewilding Argentina continues to develop strategies at the local, regional, and national levels to **position** the Pinturas Canyon Gateway and the Patagonia Park Argentina scenic route as unique nature tourism destinations.

With the end goal of reaching European and North American audiences, together with Freyja Foundation and the Milk&Honey agency we organised a **press tour** attended by six journalists from foreign publications. A total of fifteen articles were published in the international press, contributing to the expansion of the tourism destination beyond national borders.



PATAGONIA PARK IS POSITIONING AS A PROMINENT WILDLIFE-WATCHING AND HIKING DESTINATION.

PHOTO: HORACIO BARBIERI



Additionally, three press tours were organised by Rewilding Argentina, and more than 270 articles were published in the regional media as well as fifty-one in the national media. The destination was also promoted in two tourism fairs, one radio spot, and more than twelve interviews on regional radios.

In order to showcase the incredible trails of the Pinturas Canyon Gateway, we organised the **First Hiking Meet**, a three-day event that gathered 105 people. Thanks to its success, the meet will occur again in February of 2024.

Together with twenty public and private stakeholders from the tourism sector, we created the **Perito Moreno Chamber of Tourism**, which represents the interests of the industry in the region.

Furthermore, we organised a familiarization tour along the trails of the Pinturas Canyon Gateway, providing local officials and providers with the opportunity to explore regional tourism experiences.

To continue **promoting** the nature destination, we updated our tourist brochures and the Patagonia Park Argentina website, as well as renewing signage in two regional airports. Additionally, we launched six communication campaigns, one of them being specifically focused on digital marketing. This last campaign was particularly significant, as it helped to establish the Pinturas Canyon Gateway as a main hiking and wildlife-watching destination through the backstories of local entrepreneurs, while also increasing visibility for the Patagonia Park Argentina website in Meta and Google.



LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR
MAURO PRATI GUIDES
THE PROJECT'S
COMMUNICATION TEAM
WHILE SHOOTING ONE
OF THE SIX EPISODES
OF THE TIERRA DE
CAÑADONES TOURISM
CAMPAIGN.

PHOTO: GUSTAVO CALFIN

With tourism growing in the region, the demand for tourism operators is increasing, which directly benefits local hospitality businesses and nature tourism entrepreneurs. Though there are already eight local tourism entrepreneurs providing services in the park, we are continuing to train and incentivize community members to develop their own projects. During peak season, we held a workshop to certify ten tour guides in four neighboring communities, and we provided courses on nature tourism and rewilding for local providers and tourism offices, schools, and training centres. Also during peak season, two gastronomy ventures were added to the Pinturas Canyon Gateway, offering even more job opportunities in the region.

On the other hand, we developed an exchange experience with seven youths from communities near the El Impenetrable project, providing them with training in hospitality, gastronomy, and visitor services. In this manner, not only do they assist us during peak season, but they also gain knowledge and experience to provide better service at El Impenetrable.

As a result of all these activities, approximately **19,000 visitors** enjoyed the incredible beauty of Patagonia Park.



PARQUEPATAGONIAARGENTINA.ORG

### **COMMUNITIES**



Children participated in the Patagonia Park Explorers program

New community outreach initiative created

Through the Patagonia Park Explorers program, 235 children ventured into the Pinturas Canyon Gateway to do outdoor activities and learn about Patagonian ecosystems. This environmental education initiative, financed by Freyja Foundation and implemented by Rewilding Argentina since 2022, invites children between ten and fourteen years old to explore the gateway, connect with nature, and get involved in protecting the environment.

Thanks to the popularity of the program, together with the municipality of Perito Moreno, we created another initiative, "Return to the River," This initiative consisted in four free excursions along the Pinturas River for youths and adults from the neighboring community.



# Where were you born? What was your life like as a child?

I was born in Comodoro Rivadavia, Chubut Province. I come from an adventurous family who spent many months out of the year camping around the different regions of Patagonia. This inspired me to study to become a tour guide and later on to get my undergraduate degree.

# How did you become a tour guide in the region?

I became a tour guide at Cueva de las Manos in 2007 and fell in love with the region, developing new personal projects. Today, my work incorporates my other passion, gastronomy, and I offer outdoor experiences with local and regional cuisine, contemplating and interpreting the landscape.

# How did you come to know Rewilding Argentina?

I knew about Rewilding Argentina since it began its first project inception in the region, following its conservation work up through the creation of protected areas.

# What did you imagine your life would be like, and what is it like now?

I imagined life just the way it is now! Always working to reach new goals and continuing to take action to strengthen tourism and nature activities in our region.

# How do you imagine the future of the park and the region?

I imagine the future of the park involves many advances in research on species, new public trails, and the expansion of protected areas.

The region will grow into a destination chosen by many people in search of wholehearted contact with nature and the vastness of this region of Patagonia.

# Knowing that anyone in the world could read this, what would you tell them?

To come by Patagonia Park Argentina, to experience it, enjoy it.

# What would you tell someone who's never been to the park?

It is a unique natural area where you can make use of all the spaces and trails, connecting with nature in all its forms: geological formations, flora, fauna, and diverse landscapes that complement us and help us become better people.



# OBJECTIVES 2024

- 1. Open Cueva de Las Manos Gateway to the public, and build a campground and fourteen kilometers of trails at this new gateway.
- Construct the Río Pinturas Glamping Site at the Pinturas Canyon Gateway.
- 3. Expand the Patagonia Park Explorers program to include at least thirty additional children.
- 4. Offer training sessions on gastronomy and hospitality in all four neighboring communities to the park in collaboration with the Perito Moreno Chamber of Tourism.

- 5. Continue the reintroduction projects of locally extinct species –like the austral rail, coypu and Wolffsohn's viscacha—and incorporate first specimens to breed regionally extinct species, like the huemul deer.
- 6. Keep increasing the positive perception of controversial species –such as the guanaco and puma– and working to develop strategies to promote their coexistence with livestock.
- 7. Continue restoring wetlands (springs and rivers) in the canyon sector and eradicating exotic plant and animal species.

"Self criticism is important to recognize that destroying nature is the wrong thing to do. And responsibility is important to take action and make sure that if we broke it, we fix it; if we destroy it, we rebuild it. And if all that happened because we got disconnected from nature, then we help people to reconnect."

#### **Emiliano Donadio**

Scientific Director of Rewilding Argentina

# PATAGONIA AZUL



#### **PROJECT START**

2019

### ECOREGION BEING RESTORED

Patagonian Steppe, Argentine Sea

**DONORS** 

#### (108,0

Arcadia,
Blue Marine Foundation,
Elsa and George Feher (of
blessed memory), Dona
Bertarelli Philanthropy,
The Martha & Hunter
Grubb Foundation,
Oak Foundation,
Paul M. Angell Family
Foundation,
The Plum Foundation,
Wyss Campaign for Nature

### CURRENT PROTECTED AREA

44,000 Hectares (108,000 Acres)

#### **TOTAL CARBON STORED**

2.05

Million metric tonnes

### PARKS & COMMUNITIES COORDINATOR

Diana Friedrich

### CONSERVATION COORDINATOR

Lucas Beltramino

#### **REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS**

Broadnose Sevengill Shark, Darwin's Rhea, Gracilaria algae, Guanaco, Humpback Whale, Imperial Shag, Magellanic Penguin, Puma, School Shark, Sei Whale, South American Fur Seal, Southern Giant Petrel

### INTRODUCTION

The Patagonia Azul project is located within the Chubut Province. It encompasses over 60 islands and bays, and is home, feeding, and reproductive ground of a wide array of marine species, making it the most biodiverse area in the whole Argentine coast.

Rewilding Argentina has been working in the project area for five years. Thus far, we have acquired three properties that protect over 44,000 hectares (108,000 acres) of coastal land, and opened two gateways – Isla Leones and Bahía Bustamante— with public-use infrastructure linked to the local community of Camarones, with whom we envision a more local and restorative economy based on nature tourism and regenerative artisanal products.

At sea, we are studying the spatial ecology of iconic and threatened marine species, restoring depleted algae prairies, and eradicating exotic species from islands that are home to seabird colonies. Finally, we are developing strategic political relations to gain support and traction to legally protect Patagonia Azul through the creation of parks, both on land and sea.





PHOTO: SERAFÍN ROBERT

#### PARK

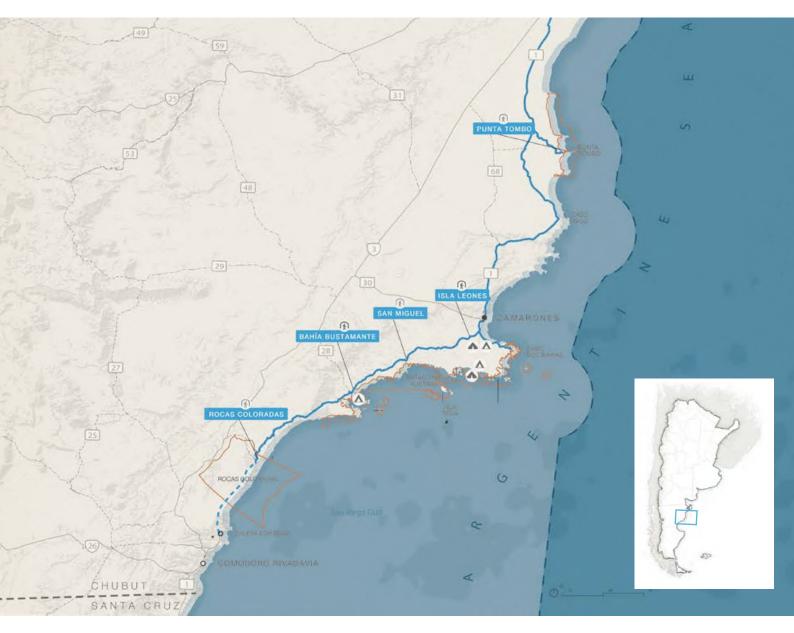


- 1st National conference on the creation of marine protected areas
  - 1 Property acquired
- 1 New gateway opened to the public
- Interpretation Center built
- Public wild campgrounds built
- New glamping site built

In order to achieve the goal of protecting 30% of the Argentine Sea, Rewilding Argentina worked with Juan Pablo Luque, the major of Comodoro Rivadavia, to create the first edition of Misión Atlántico: a national conference that gathered more than 300 people from diverse sectors, including scientists, politicians, young environmentalists, community members, and even representatives from the fishing sector. It stood out as an inclusive and engaging conference, where an honest and constructive dialogue was fostered among speakers and participants, helping to create a network of experts willing to work towards the protection of the ocean.

Rewilding Argentina incorporated 18,000 hectares (approximately 45,000 acres) for conservation through the purchase of the San Miguel Ranch, which spans thirty-five kilometers of the Chubut coast and is located between Isla Leones Gateway and the new Bahía Bustamante Gateway. The acquisition of this property was essential to further ramp-up our conservation vision in the area.

#### P A T A G O N I A A Z U L





SAN MIGUEL HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING VARIOUS NATURE TOURISM ACTIVITIES, AS SEVERAL CETACEAN SPECIES CAN BE SIGHTED FROM ITS COASTS.

PHOTO: LAURARO MARCH



THE MISIÓN ATLÁNTICO CONGRESS WAS A SUCCESS, AS IT HELPED TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE MARINE CONSERVATION CONFERENCES NATIONWIDE.

PHOTO: LAUTARO MARCH



La Ibérica Ranch was opened to the public by the name of Bahía Bustamante Gateway, and it includes a public wild campground for fifteen people, along with a section for RVs. This gateway also saw the construction of an Interpretation Centre, which will be inaugurated in early 2024. It will include two interpretation rooms with themed murals, a projection room, and a cafeteria, and it will cover topics tied to the Argentine Sea, its conservation value and existing marine protected areas, and the Patagonia Azul project.



TOURISTS CAN NOW CAMP AT THREE PUBLIC CAMPGROUNDS IN PATAGONIA AZUL: CAÑADON DEL SAUCE AND BAHÍA ARREDONDO, BOTH IN ISLA LEONES GATEWAY, AND ARROYO MAREA IN BAHIA BUSTAMANTE GATEWAY.

PHOTOS: LAUTARO MARCH









In the Isla Leones Gateway, a public wild campground for thirty people was opened to the public. It includes a shelter with a kitchen and common room, and it is connected to a network of trails that explore the vast landscapes of the Patagonian coast. Additionally, the Isla Leones Glamping Site was constructed, including six cabins by the ocean and a dining area with a common room, where visitors can enjoy locally sourced cuisine and hire tourist excursions offered by local service providers. The glamping site will be managed by Rewilding Experience tourism agency, and its incomes will help finance our conservation and restoration projects.

To house the teams who work on-site, a new house was built in Isla Leones Gateway.

AT THE RECENTLY BUILT ISLA LEONES GLAMPING SITE VISITORS WILL BE ABLE TO HIRE A WIDE RANGE OF NATURE TOURISM EXPERIENCES.

PHOTO: LAUTARO MARCH

#### WILDLIFE



- Marine birds fitted with GPS devices
- 4th Annual census of guanacos
- Insular ecosystems being restored
- Monitoring campaign to study 2 shark species
- 11 Sei whales identified
- Cameras placed in nesting sites for marine birds
- 71 Humpback whales recorded since 2020
- 2 Communication campaigns developed



GUANACO HERDS CAN NOW BE EASILY OBSERVED AT ISLA LEONES AND BAHIA BUSTAMANTE GATEWAYS.

PHOTO: SEBASTIÁN NAVAJAS

Rewilding Argentina implemented the fourth annual guanaco census in Patagonia Azul. Estimated densities show that guanaco populations peaked in 2022 but have settled around seven and three individuals per square kilometre at Isla Leones and Bahía Bustamante gateways, respectively. The factors driving the increase in density observed in both gateways in 2022 remain unknown. However, steady increases are expected in the future as range conditions improve.

For the restoration of insular ecosystems, efforts towards the eradication of exotic species continue on four islands in Patagonia Azul. Currently, no rabbits have been recorded on Gaviota and Valdés islands, and no cats on Tova Island, and we are carrying out intensive work to translocate the remaining dwarf armadillos to the mainland.

For the third consecutive year, humpback and sei whales have been sighted on the coast of Patagonia Azul. Seven sei whales and thirteen humpbacks were identified, and to date, seventy-one humpback whales have been registered. One of them was also sighted in Ushuaia (Tierra del Fuego) and two in São Paulo (Brazil), providing valuable information regarding their migratory paths. To understand more about the spatial ecology and behavior of this species, we are working with researchers from the University of California to launch a monitoring campaign that will include taking biopsies, marking with satellite devices, and using a hydrophone.

Two threatened shark species were recorded: broadnose sevengill and school sharks. Thus, a monitoring campaign was initiated to study these species use of the coasts of Patagonia Azul.







TEAM MEMBERS UPLOAD PICTURES OF HUMPBACK WHALE'S CAUDAL FINS TO AN ONLINE DATABASE TO REGISTER THEIR MIGRATION ROUTES, CONFIRMING PATAGONIA AZUL'S IMPORTANCE AS A FEEDING GROUND FOR THIS SPECIES.

PHOTOS: LUCAS BELTRAMINO

Together with researchers from CENPAT-CONICET (Patagonian National Center-Scientific and Technological Center of the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research), we monitored marine birds such as the Magellanic penguin, imperial shag, and southern giant petrel in three of the islands in the project area. For this purpose, a total of fifty-one birds were fitted with satellite telemetry devices. Additionally, six cameras were placed in nesting areas for these species. The cameras show a live feed that allows the researchers, and the general public, to observe these birds' behaviour in the wild. The results of the spatial ecology studies that the Patagonia Azul team is carrying out on these marine mammals, sharks, and marine birds will be crucial to understanding more about their distribution and behaviour, and eventually to advocating for zoning and the creation of a completely protected marine area.

At the same time, the team is developing **two communication campaigns** to provide education about the value of conservation in Patagonia Azul and involve a larger audience in the protection of marine ecosystems.



CAMERAS WERE INSTALLED ON THREE ISLANDS IN PATAGONIA AZUL TO REMOTELY MONITOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BREEDING SEASON OF THE MAGELLANIC PENGUIN, IMPERIAL SHAG AND SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL.

PHOTO: MARTÍN BROGGER



# RESTORATIVE ECONOMY



+ 1,000

Tourists in Patagonia Azul

- 3 New tourism experiences
- New entrepreneurship programs

Rewilding Argentina continues to expand the options for nature tourism in the region and promoting everything it has to offer. To this end, in addition to the popular nautical excursions, we developed cycling and rock climbing experiences led by local providers. At the same time, we continued collaborating with local establishments to provide better experiences in hospitality and gastronomy.

Furthermore, we developed and printed new tourism pamphlets, providing up-to-date information about Patagonia Azul, its access gateways, and main attractions; participated in two tourism fairs; and developed a series of social media publications, highlighting Patagonia Azul's nature tourism attractions, conservation values, and culture. Additionally, press trips were organised for national and international journalists and influencers to broadcast the destination to a broader audience.

As a result of all these actions, over a thousand tourists visited the Isla Leones and Bahia Bustamante gateway in 2023.









TO PROMOTE PATAGONIA AZUL AS AN EMERGING NATURE TOURISM DESTINATION WE DEVELOPED NEW PAMPHLETS, PARTICIPATED IN TOURISM FAIRS, ORGANIZED PRESS TRIPS, AND LAUNCHED SEVERAL SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS.

PHOTOS: LAUTARO MARCH



The Patagonia Azul team launched two programs to train locals in nature tourism and entrepreneurship. On one hand, the team organised the first edition of Youth for Nature, in which ninety-four locals participated in five sessions focused on tour guiding, marine wildlife watching, nature photography, boating, and history of the Patagonian Sea. On the other hand, the team launched the Entrepreneurs by Nature program, which involves a series of training sessions that seek to incentivize forty local people to develop their own ventures.

THE YOUTH FOR NATURE
PROGRAM WAS CREATED TO
SHOWCASE THE TOURISM
POTENTIAL OF PATAGONIA
AZUL AND ENCOURAGE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG THE
LOCAL YOUTH.

PHOTO: MARIANA CASSINI



CAROLA PUCCIARIO, A LOCAL ENTRERPRENEUR, USES EXOTIC SEAWEED AS A MAIN INGREDIENT FOR HER DISHES AND GASTRONOMIC PRODUCTS.

PHOTO: SOFÍA FRANCHELLA



PICKLED SEAWEED
- ONE OF CAROLA
PUCCIARO'S
BEST SELLING
PRODUCTS.

PHOTO: MARINA VILLANUEVA

#### **COMMUNITIES**



- 3rd Edition of the Sea Festival
  - 1 Socioeconomic survey conducted in Camarones
- 12 Community-outreach activities
- Participants at the Sea Club
  - Attendees at the Women's Club

The third edition of the Sea Festival took place, bringing together 500 people from around the country to participate in sporting tournaments, nautical excursions, regional cuisine, and live music. Additionally, several nationally recognized activists gave speeches and environmental education workshops, promoting awareness about threats to the ocean and the importance of protecting it.



LOCALS PARTICIPATED
IN SEVERAL AQUATIC
ACTIVITIES ALONG THE
COASTS OF PATAGONIA
AZUL, INCLUDING A
WORKSHOP ON DIVING
AND BREATHING
TECHNIQUES.

PHOTO: HORACIO BARBIERI



THEY ALSO BIKED THROUGH PATAGONIA AZUL'S EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPES.

PHOTO: HORACIO BARBIERI



PHOTO: MARIANA CASSINI





Rewilding Argentina continued to establish ties and create opportunities for exchange of ideas with the residents of Camarones. In this community we carried out a **survey** that allowed us to more deeply understand the main socioeconomic conditions of the residents, as well as cultural aspects, community participation, and their link to the sea. The survey's results will act as a socioeconomic baseline which in the long-run will allow us to determine the impact and effectiveness of our local development, community outreach, and wellbeing initiatives.



With the goal of reconnecting the community with the ocean, the team organised twelve activities –including kayaking, yoga, art, and photography workshops– in the Isla Leones and Bahia Bustamante gateways for a total of one hundred and fifteen people.

THE SEA CLUB NOT ONLY SEEKS TO CONNECT THE LOCAL YOUTH WITH THE OCEAN, BUT ALSO WITH THE ICONIC SPECIES THAT INHABIT IT.

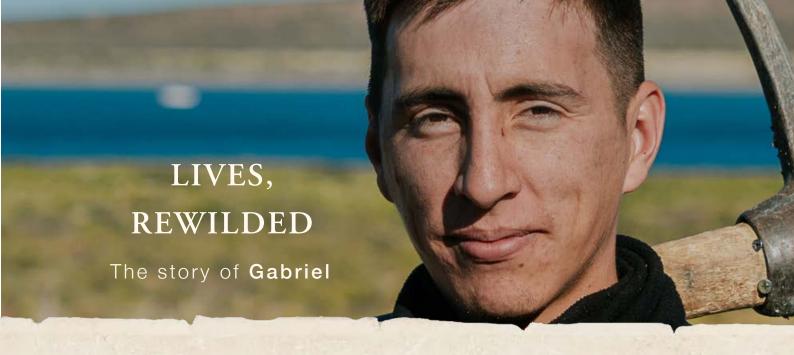
PHOTOS: SOFÍA FRANCHELLA





THE SEA CLUB ALLOWS LOCAL CHILDREN TO BUILD A BOND WITH NATURE THROUGH RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES. PHOTO: SOFÍA FRANCHELLA

During the summer, twenty young people participated in twelve meetings at the Sea Club, where they enjoyed beach games and snorkelling and diving workshops. During the winter, the Club took their activities into classrooms for a total of two hundred and fifty students at the Camarones school. Additionally, sixty-six women also sailed and dived in Patagonia Azul's waters with the Women's Sea Club, an all-female group of Camarones who seek to get closer to the sea and learn how to protect it.



## — Where were you born? What was your life like as a child?

"I was born in Trelew, Chubut Province, but I grew up in Camarones. As a kid, my life was fantastic; I spent most of my childhood in the town where I grew up. Today, I chose to raise my son here."

## — How did you come to know Rewilding Argentina?

"I first joined Rewilding Argentina as the host of the Cañadon del Sauce Campground, thanks to my partner who previously worked there. At the end of that season, I joined the trail-building team, where I still work."

## —What did you imagine your life would be like, and what is it like now?

"I never stopped to think about what my life would be like in the future, but thanks to the Patagonia Azul project, I can say that I have a job I like and I'm proud to be doing something positive which allows many people to get to know this place and learn a lot about it. It really is a paradise."

## — How do you imagine the future of the park?

"I imagine it filled with places for people to explore the sea and the steppe, also offering plenty of job opportunities for the community, and above all, that can contribute to a more sustainable world."

#### — Knowing that anyone in the world could read this, what would you tell them?

"That it is a beautiful place with many things and places to explore; the immensity of the sea and the steppe is amazing and unique; additionally, the comforts of the campgrounds, the native wildlife, and all the activities available at Patagonia Azul."



## **OBJECTIVES**

### 2024

- 1. Build an eight-kilometer trail network, open the Isla Leones Glamping site and offer new boat excursions at the Isla Leones Gateway.
- 2. Inaugurate the Interpretation Center and build a glamping site at the Bahía Bustamante Gateway.
- 3. Construct a dock to provide access to Tova Island from the San Miguel property.
- 4. Organize at least fifteen meetings at the Sea Club and forty-five community-outreach activities.

- 5. Establish a first core group of Entrepreneurs by Nature.
- 6. Continue studying the spatial ecology of marine mammals, sharks, and marine birds.
- 7. Complete the eradication of rabbits from the islands of Patagonia Azul, and continue efforts towards the eradication of european rats, and hairy and dwarf armadillos.
- 8. Continue restoring Gracilaria gracilis algae prairies and initiate an experimental project for the restoration of Macrocystis algae.

"This initiative is a testament to what can be achieved when passionate individuals and organizations unite for the greater good of our nature... Imagine a place where the frigid yet life-affirming currents from Antarctica converge with a coastline teeming with biodiversity. This is Patagonia Azul- a haven for countless species and a beacon of hope for conservation and sustainable livelihoods worldwide."

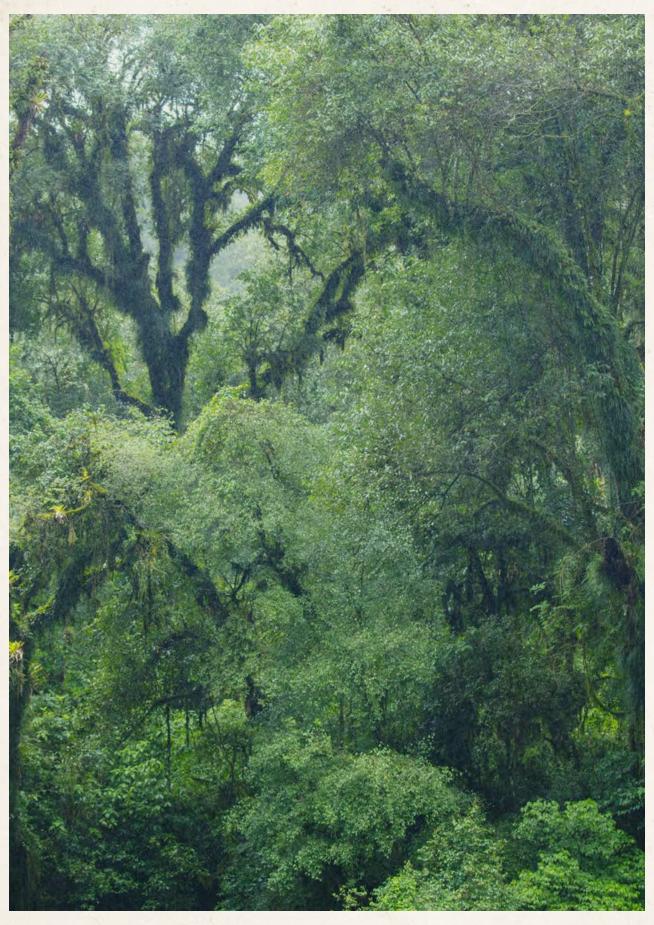
Dona Bertarelli

Dona Bertarelli Philantropy

## ACONQUIJA NATIONAL PARK



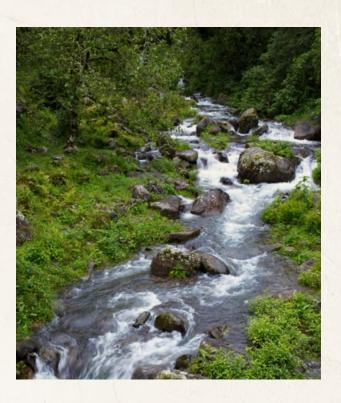




THE ACONQUIJA MOUNTAIN RANGE IS RENOWNED FOR ITS REMARKABLY VARIED ENVIRONMENTS.

A key conservation area in north central Argentina, the Aconquija Mountain Range has extremely diverse environments. The abundance of landscapes ranges from subtropical montane forests in the lowest mountains, to grasslands, rocky outcrops, and permanent snows found near steep peaks. Post colonization, certain large species of mammals became locally extinct, such as the jaguar and the tapir, while other species remain, such as the ocelot, puma, collared peccary and the globally threatened taruca (Hippocamelus antisensis). Rains and mountain springs feed rivers and streams, and many towns and most of the region's agricultural and livestock production depend on the water flowing from those mountains. Several Incan ruins are also found around the project area, such as Ciudacita and the Qhapaq Nan, the Great Inca Road, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. This highly biodiverse landscape of archaeological and cultural significance offers a key potential for nature tourism.

The Aconquija National Park was created by law in April 2018. This milestone resulted from an unprecedented partnership in the history of Argentina's parks. The law merged a pre-existing national park with newly-acquired private land that was donated by Rewilding Argentina to the National government (approximately 48,000 hectares/ 118,610 acres), creating the Aconquija National Park (78,409 hectares/193,752 acres).



RAINFALL AND MOUNTAIN SPRINGS NOURISH RIVERS AND STREAMS, VITAL FOR THE REGION'S TOWNS AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES.

PHOTO: FLORIAN VON DER FECHT

In 2019, Rewilding Argentina acquired and donated the private properties that currently are encompassed by the Aconquija National Park, and in 2022 the park was legally expanded in approximately 19,000 hectares (47,000 acres). Thus, we are working on the acquisition and donation of the properties that will be incorporated into the park.

In July 2023, the Santa Ana Provincial Park (14,500 hectares/35,830 acres) was created as a result of a joint effort between the Government of Tucumán, legislators, and Rewilding Argentina. Bordering the Aconquija National Park and located in the former Santa Ana Natural Reserve (created in 1972) this new provincial park strengthened the protection of critical and highly threatened areas of Yungas and foothill forests.

## OUR FINANCIALS

The attached statements show the audited financial information for the last three fiscal periods ending in March 31st of 2021, 2022 and 2023. They were prepared according to generally accepted local accounting standards and were converted into dollars at the exchange rate of each year end.

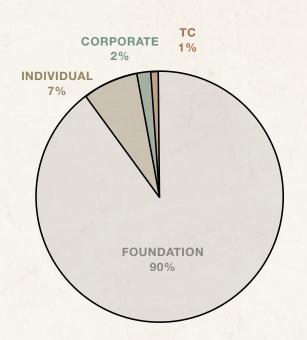
These statements show a sustained increase in the assets of Rewilding Argentina, which is explained by the investments made on public use infrastructure across all projects. Examples of this are the construction of the Elsa Rosenvasser Feher Interpretation Center and Planetarium in Patagonia Park, of camping and glamping sites, and trails; and the acquisition of properties for restoration and conservation purposes. In this regard, it is worth noting the acquisition of 23,000 hectares (56,834 acres) in the Patagonia Azul project and of 1,500 hectares (3,706 acres) in Iberá Park, which were donated to the Corrientes Province for conservation purposes.

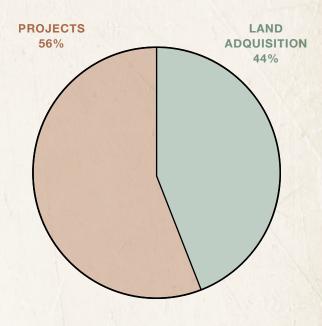
Additionally, the two graphics show the donations received by Rewilding Argentina during the 2023 calendar year which amounted to a total of USD 15.6 MM. These donations originate mainly from foundations but also 7% are from individuals, 2% from corporations and 1% from Tompkins Conservation (all listed in the Thank You page of this report).

As in previous years, most of the donations received are related to specific projects, while a small percentage of them are for general support. The second chart shows that 44% of the funds received were applied to the acquisition of land to expand our projects, while the rest of the donations were used for the operation costs of Rewilding Argentina's ongoing projects.

#### **FUNDING SOURCES**

#### **USE OF FUNDS**





#### **BALANCE SHEET**

CURRENT ASSETS	03.31.23 usp	03.31.22 USD	03.31.21 USD
Cash and Banks	5,049,577	3,791,285	2,400,529
Short Term Investments	300,631	961,751	189,989
Other Receivables	80,203	262,507	5,187,674
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	5,430,412	5,015,542	7,778,192
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	03.31.23 USD	03.31.22 USD	03.31.21 USD
Fixed Assets	31,400,400	26,321,669	13,499,818
Other Assets	2,363,312	2,061,28	1,202,965
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	33,763,712	28,382,958	14,702,784
TOTAL ASSETS	39,194,123	33,398,500	22,480,975

#### **BALANCE SHEET**

LIABILITIES & EQUITY	03.31.23 USD	03.31.22 USD	03.31.21 USD
Total Current Liabilities	462,734	448,620	236,720
Total Non-Current Liabilities	151,790	151,773	-
Total Liabilities	614,525	600,394	236,720
Founder's Contributions	4,732	4,360	3,393
Other Assets Revaluation Reserves	134,898	109,890	34,317
Retained Earnings	38,439,969	32,683,856	22,206,545
Equity	38,579,599	32,798,107	22,244,255
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	39,194,123	33,398,500	22,480,975

#### STATEMENT OF INCOME

RESOURCES	03.31.23 USD	03.31.22 USD	03.31.21 USD
For General Purposes	29,891	92,394	86,494
For Specific Purposes	13,005,275	9,276,826	12,068,662
Miscellaneous	y -	63,546	189,065
TOTAL RESOURCES	13,035,165	9,432,765	12,344,220
EXPENSES	03.31.23 USD	03.31.22 USD	03.31.21 USD
Administrative Expenses	(807,457)		(431,651)
Operating Expenses	(11,878,766)		(4,484,548)
Fixed Assets Depreciation	(812,638)		(362,782)
TOTAL EXPENSES	(13,498,861)		(5,278,981)
Other income	(1,199,570)		59,809
Financial and Holding Results	4,635,121		1,026,622
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	2,971,856		8,151,670

#### STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

CHANGES IN CASH FLOW	03.31.23 USD	03.31.22 USD	03.31.21 USD
Cash at Beginning of the Year	5,157,935	3,328,746	2,833,636
Cash at End of the Year	5,350,208	4,753,035	2,590,518
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	192,273	1,424,289	(243,118)
REASONS FOR CHANGES IN CASH	03.31.23 USD	03.31.22 USD	03.31.21 USD
Operating Activities			2. JAK
Collections of Resources for General Purposes	29,891	102,340	99,720
Collections of Resources for Specific Purposes	12,827,873	8,439,834	5,796,665
Contributions	(978,995)	(481,179)	(487,723)
Donations	(4,301,396)	(103,271)	
Payments of Suppliers	(4,496,013)	(3,308,260)	(3,649,129)
Payments of Salaries and Social Contributions	(3,777,362)	(2,754,591)	(1,252,198)
Payments of Tax Liabilities	(122,415)	(65,725)	(60.963)
Loans Received	77,952	217,791	
Financial Results Collect	6,919,740	3,827,500	2,579,649
Inflation Adjustments	(2,337,912)	(1,690,936)	(1,011,645)
NET CASH FLOW PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	3,841,363	4,183,505	2,014,377
Investment Activities			
Fixed Assets Purchases	(3,649,089)	(2,846,689)	(2,558,334)
Collection from Sales of Fixed Assets	- M	87,473	300,839
NET CASH FLOW (USED IN INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES)	(3,649,089)	(2,759,216)	(2,257,495)
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	192,273	1,424,289	(243,118)



#### FISCAL SPONSOR

Re:wild

#### **DONORS**

Arcadia

The BAND Foundation

Blue Marine Foundation

Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy

EarthToday

Elsa and George Feher (of blessed memory)

Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund

Freyja Foundation

Fondation Segre

The Martha & Hunter Grubb

Foundation

Martha Davis

Miejski Ogród Zoologiczny w

Łodzi Sp. z o.o.

Mimi & Peter Buckley

Nancy Gibson & Ron Sternal

National Geographic Society

Oak Foundation

Parrot Wildlife Foundation

Paul Angell M. Family Foundation

Quincey & Dan Imhoff

Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative

Royal Zoo ARTIS Amsterdam

Fondation Segré

Slobodan Randjelovic &

Jon Stryker

Stichting DOB Ecology

The Bromley Charitable Trust

The Embassy of Australia in

Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay

The Freer Family

The Ocean Foundation

The Plum Foundation

Tompkins Conservation

Turtle Conservancy

Union of Nature Foundation

White Cedar Fund

Wyss Campaign For Nature

#### **INKIND DONORS**

Orbis Mertig S.A.I.C.

Tenaris

Ternium

Viviendas Roca

### NATIONAL DONORS OF WILDLIFE SPECIMENS

Bioparque Batán, Bioparque de Olavarría, Bioparque La Plata, Centro de Atención de la Fauna Autóctona de Jujuy, Ecoparque Buenos Aires, Ecoparque de Mendoza, La Peregrina (Roque Pérez, Buenos Aires), Parque de la Biodiversidad (Córdoba), Parque Ecológico Urbano Río Cuarto, Parque Las Sierras, Reserva Experimental Horco Molle, Reserva Guaycolec, Temaikèn Bioparque, Directorados de Fauna de Chaco, Tucumán, Salta, y Entre Ríos.

## INTERNATIONAL DONORS OF WILDLIFE SPECIMENS

Asociación Mata Ciliar, Associação Onçafari (Brazil), Bioparc Doué La Fontaine (France), Breeding Station of Native Wildlife Cerro Pan de Azúcar (Uruguay), Budapest Zoo & Botanical Garden (Hungary), Criadouro Onça Pintada (Brazil), Gilvskud Zoo (Denmark), International Studbook for Giant Otters, Jundiaí (Brazil), NEX No Extinction (Brazil), Refugio Bella Vista, Itaipu (Brazil), Parken Zoo (Eskilstuna, Sweden), Refugio Faunístico Atinguy (Paraguay), Refugio Urutaú (Paraguay), World Parrot Trust (United Kingdom).

#### **GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS**

Administración de Parques Nacionales, Consejo Agrario Provincial (Santa Cruz), Delegación Técnica de APN Patagonia Sur (Calafate, Santa Cruz), Dirección de Biodiversidad de la Provincia de Misiones, Dirección de Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas de la Provincia de Jujuy, Dirección de Comercio Exterior (SENASA), Dirección de Dirección de

Flora, Dirección de Dirección de Recursos Naturales Renovables de la Provincia de Mendoza, Dirección de Fauna de la Provincia de Chaco, Dirección de Fauna Silvestre y Áreas Protegidas, Dirección de Fauna y Áreas Naturales Protegidas de la Provincia de Chaco, Dirección de Flora y Fauna de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Dirección de General de Bosques y Fauna de la Provincia de Santiago del Estero, Dirección de Parques y Reservas de Corrientes, Dirección de Recursos Naturales y Gestión de la Provincia de Formosa, Entidad Binacional Yacyretá, Fauna Silvestre y Suelos de la Provincia de Tucumán, Gobierno de Corrientes, Iefatura de Gabinete de Ministros de Santa Cruz, Ministerio de Ambiente (Uruguay), Instituto Chico Mendes para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad ICMBio (Brazil), Laboratorio de Biología de la Conservación, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible - MADES (Paraguay), Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable del Chaco, Ministerio de Ecología y Recursos Naturales Renovables de la Provincia de Misiones, Ministerio de Turismo de Corrientes, Ministerio de Turismo, Secretaría de Ambiente de la Provincia de Córdoba, Secretaría de Ambiente y Producción Sustentable de la Provincia de Salta, Secretaría de Biodiversidad y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Provincia de Jujuy, Secretaría de Estado de Ambiente de Santa Cruz, Secretaría de Estado de Cultura de Santa Cruz, Secretaría de Estado de Responsabilidad Social de Santa Cruz, Secretaría de Estado de Turismo de Santa Cruz, SENASA Delegación Corrientes.

## SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS, AND NGOS

Centro de Ecología Aplicada del Litoral (CECOAL), Centro de Investigación y Transferencia (CIT Formosa – CONICET y Universidad Nacional de Formosa), Centro Nacional Patagónico - Centro Científico Tecnológico del Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET-CENPAT), Centro de Reasilvestramiento Aguará (Estación Biológica de Corrientes), Clínica Veterinaria Dei Gratia, Clínica Veterinaria del Sol, Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), Criadouro Científico De Fauna Silvestre Para Fins de Pesquisa (Brazil), Dirección de Epidemiología y Análisis de Riesgos (SENASA), Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, EAZA Giant otter EEP, Ecografía y Radiografía (Corrientes), Estación Experimental (INTA Mercedes), European Association of Zoos and Aquarium (EAZA), Hospital de Clínicas (Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias, Universidad Nacional del Nordeste), Instituti Reprocon, Instituto de Biología Subtropical (IBS, Conicet), Instituto de Biotecnología, Instituto de Virología Dr. José María Vanella (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba Laboratorio de Biología de la Conservación), IUCN Otter Specialist Group, Laboratorio de Biología de la Conservación, Laboratorio de Diagnóstico de Enfermedades Infecciosas (Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias, Universidad de Buenos

Aires), Laboratorio de Hemoparásitos (INTA Castelar), Parque Provincial San Cayetano (Corrientes), Servicio de Análisis Clínicos de la Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias (Universidad Nacional del Nordeste), Cátedra de Patología Animal (UNNE), Servicio de Cirugía y Anestesiología (Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias Universidad Nacional del Nordeste), Servicio de Electrocardiografía, Turtle Conservancy, Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (Brazil), Zoológico de Huachipa (Perú).

# TEAMS WORKING IN THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Parques nacional y provincial Iberá, Parque Nacional El Impenetrable, Parque Nacional Aconquija, Parque Nacional Patagonia, Parque Interjurisdiccional Marino Costero Patagonia Austral, Reserva Don Luis.

#### **VOLUNTEERS**

Our work would not be possible without the support of our hardworking volunteers. This year, we counted the support of many volunteers that helped out with our on-the-ground wildlife reintroduction projects.

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