

# RAINFOREST TRUST®

VOL. V: SUMMER 2017



HOW SAVING  
HABITAT FOR SPECIES  
PROTECTS THE PLANET



# Rainforest Trust Receives Highest Charity Navigator Rating

Rainforest Trust has been recognized as one of the most efficient and effective nonprofit organizations in the U.S. by Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of charities. This is the 8th time that Rainforest Trust has received a 4-star rating (the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator), and this year the conservation organization was also awarded the maximum 100 percent overall rating. According to the Charity Navigator website, "Less than one percent of the thousands of charities rated by Charity Navigator have earned perfect scores." Of the more than 400 environmental groups assessed, Rainforest Trust was one of only seven receiving this level of recognition for its financial health, accountability and transparency.

"We are extremely proud to have received the top rating from Charity Navigator," said Rainforest Trust CEO Dr. Paul Salaman. "We have worked incredibly hard to meet and maintain the highest standards of accountability and transparency throughout our organization, and with this recognition, our supporters can be confident that Rainforest Trust is making the most effective and efficient use of the resources available to us to benefit our fragile planet."

As part of its growth, Rainforest Trust has launched its SAVES Challenge, where the organization has committed to raise \$50 million as a challenge match that will direct a total of \$100 million to establish new protected areas to save threatened species around the world.



**RAINFOREST  
TRUST®**

We purchase and protect threatened tropical habitats to save endangered wildlife through local partnerships and community engagement.

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**Online (Credit Card or PayPal)**  
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7078 Airlie Road, Warrenton, VA 20187

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# Message from the CEO

Dear Friends,

In 1988, a passion to save endangered species and their habitats gave birth to Rainforest Trust. Over time, you have followed our work: helping to safeguard more than 17 million acres of habitat to protect countless Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable species through the preservation of biodiversity hotspots.

We are proud of the work we have accomplished to date, including three recent protected areas created in Borneo, Colombia and Australia. Yet, we realize we haven't been sharing the complete story of the impact of our projects.

Take for example one of our flagship projects to help expand the Airo Pai Community Reserve in Peru through a partnership with Center for the Development of an Indigenous Amazon (CEDIA). This 1.3 million-acre expansion will provide the missing link to the creation of a nearly 8 million-acre corridor in the Amazon. The amount and diversity of plant and animal species found here is extraordinary, and includes the Endangered White-bellied Spider Monkey and the Endangered Giant Otter.

But the reach of the project extends beyond the treetop and river homes of the monkey and otter. In our effort to achieve this goal, we have done so much more for the community and the planet.

On page 16, you will read about our recent work in Peru, empowering indigenous people with the title to their lands. Title (officially recognized ownership) is something assumed in many parts of the world, but helping Amazonian indigenous communities be recognized as owners and custodians of the land is a critical step to ensuring the long-term sustainability of protected areas.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly from a global perspective, protecting this tract of rainforest – the simple act of stopping deforestation – will prevent the release of 1.4 million Mt of carbon into the atmosphere. What does that mean? Learn more about the positive impact of our work on the climate on page 10.

Rainforest Trust couldn't do any of this without your support, and for this we are eternally grateful. The urgency of our work grows with each passing day; with your help we will continue to lead in the global effort to save species, communities and our planet.

With great appreciation,



Dr. Paul Salaman, CEO



Protecting forests such as this one in Borneo safeguard carbon storage.



## Dr. Paul Salaman, CEO

At the age of eight, Paul met Sir David Attenborough and became enthralled by international wildlife conservation. As a teenager, he managed a nature reserve in London and traveled across the tropics visiting rainforests. A graduate of Oxford University, Paul has discovered four bird species new to science over the last 20 years and joined Rainforest Trust in 2008.



# Major Logging Concession Overturned to Provide Refuge to Critically Endangered Species in Borneo

**This vital habitat for Critically Endangered Bornean Orangutans and Sunda Pangolins is now incorporated into the Kuamut Forest Reserve, which safeguards the last vulnerable flank of the pristine forest of the world-renowned Danum Valley Conservation Area.**

Rainforest Trust, in collaboration with Bornean partners the South East Asia Rainforest Research Partnership (SEARRP), Sabah Foundation and Permian Global, worked with the Sabah Forestry Department and State Government to permanently protect the 34,414-acre former logging concession through its designation as a Class I Forest Reserve.

“It was predicted that without intervention, 40 percent of the Kuamut forests would have been converted to sterile oil palm plantations by 2020,” said Rainforest Trust CEO Dr. Paul Salaman. “Killing the logging concession lease and making the area a forest reserve - the same level of protection as a national park - expands Kuamut Forest Reserve to 206,039 acres, providing a crucial refuge for Borneo’s spectacular wildlife.”

The rainforests of Borneo, which date back more than 100 million years, are some of the earth’s oldest and most biodiverse, supporting thousands of endemic species. In total, 15,000 flowering plants species, 221 species of terrestrial mammals and 420 species of birds are found on this incredible island. Critically Endangered species found in Sabah include the Sunda Pangolin, whose numbers have drastically decreased due to poaching for its meat and scales, as well as the Bornean Orangutan, whose status has recently been increased to Critically Endangered due to the destruction and fragmentation of its habitat.

Unfortunately, industrial logging has decimated Borneo’s forests and the rapid spread of palm oil plantations has contributed to the drastic decline in wildlife populations. Because of the efforts of Rainforest Trust, local partners and the Sabah government, the recent conversion of the logging concession to expand the Kuamut Forest Reserve annuls all logging plans and significantly improves protection for some of the island’s most threatened species.

Rainforest Trust and local partners are currently working to finalize this project by declaring an additional 81,767 acres to strengthen Kuamut Forest Reserve.

“The generous support of Rainforest Trust has enabled SEARRP to provide the science that underpinned the protection of this crucially important area of forest,” said Dr. Glen Reynolds, Director of SEARRP. “Having now extended our relationship with Rainforest Trust, we look forward to expanding these efforts and, with our partners in Sabah, contributing to the conservation of much larger areas of Sabah’s priceless rainforests.”

*Rainforest Trust thanks all of its supporters that helped to make possible the expansion of Kuamut Forest Reserve, especially an anonymous donor, Brett Byers and Leslie Santos, Luanne Lemmer and Eric Veach, Charles Uiblein and many other Rainforest Trust supporters.*



Since 1950, the Bornean Orangutan population has dropped by over 50 percent.

**“It was predicted that without intervention, 40 percent of the Kuamut forests would have been converted to sterile oil palm plantations by 2020.”**



# Critical Land Purchase Connects 3 Million Acres of Rainforest in Australia

**This 173.5-acre property is a vital piece in connecting an extensive rainforest corridor from the uplands to the coast in Queensland, northeastern Australia.**

This May, Rainforest Trust supported South Endeavour Trust's purchase of a priority site that is crucial to the long-term conservation of upland biodiversity in tropical Australia. Protecting the 173.5-acre property links a wildlife corridor to help complete a nearly 3 million-acre rainforest mosaic in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The Misty Mountain Wildlife Corridor is essential for the natural movements of wildlife across this diverse landscape, as it re-establishes a continuous stretch of rainforest from the Australian coast to the uplands. For many threatened species, this ability to disperse enhances their capacity to adapt to climate change, which is projected to have severe impacts on species in tropical Australia's higher elevations.

"The fragmentation of the unique rainforests of Australia's Wet Tropics poses huge challenges for biodiversity," said Tim Hughes, South Endeavour Trust's Executive Director. "This is particularly so in the heavily cleared upland regions of the Wet Tropics. This acquisition closes a critical gap for connectivity in these upland rainforests and will benefit a wide range of threatened and near threatened species."

The uplands of Australia's wet tropics support more vertebrate species than any other landscape in the country, including species such as the Southern Cassowary, Spotted-tailed Quoll, Lumholtz's Tree Kangaroo and Lemuroid Ringtail Possum. Recent surveys in the area around the purchased property recorded the presence of 369 vascular plant species and 92 bird species. In addition, three Endangered frogs are known from the area: the Common Mist Frog, Lace-eyed Tree Frog and Torrent Tree Frog.

"While this region is a conservation priority, the high altitude rainforests on rich volcanic basalt have long been targeted for deforestation and cattle ranching," said Dr. Paul Salaman, Rainforest Trust's CEO. "This small land purchase is now connecting a vast contiguous mosaic of montane to lowland rainforest to the Great Barrier Reef, helping create one of the most important tropical land and seascapes on our planet."

In December, South Endeavour Trust and the Queensland Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection will sign an agreement to officially designate the purchased property as the Misty Mountain Nature Refuge. Plans are also underway to strengthen the wildlife corridor through reforestation of degraded lands immediately adjacent to the corridor.



**The Endangered Common Mist Frog** is found in the Misty Mountains Wildlife Corridor.



**Southern Cassowaries**, some of Australia's most iconic species, benefit from the protect area.

**"This small land purchase is now connecting a vast contiguous mosaic of montane to lowland rainforest to the Great Barrier Reef, helping create one of the most important tropical land and seascapes on our planet."**



# Land Purchase Protects Rare Magnolias in the Colombian Andes

**The expansion of Selva de Ventanas Natural Reserve safeguards vital habitat in the biodiverse Andes for Critically Endangered and Endangered plant species.**



**A flower of the Ventanas Magnolia tree**, of which only 25 individuals remain in the world.



**Community outreach and environmental education initiatives** will accompany the new reserve.

Rainforest Trust and local partner Salvamontes Corporation worked to expand Selva de Ventanas Natural Reserve by 120 acres this June, strategically linking a vital biological corridor in Colombia's Antioquia district. The purchase and protection of this area prevented the conversion of the site's forests to pasture land, which has been incredibly detrimental to the region's biodiversity.

The Alto de Ventanas ecoregion provides habitat for rare magnolias and at least 13 Critically Endangered or Endangered orchid species, at least two of which are considered to be new to science (*Lepanthes* spp.). The protected expansion contains 32 percent of the global population of the Ventanas Magnolia (*Magnolia polyhypsophylla*), the most endangered tree species in the region with only 25 adult individuals known in the world. This site is also home to seven endemic bird species, one endemic amphibian species and 26 narrow endemic plant species. The Critically Endangered Handley's Slender Mouse Opossum is likely to be found in the expansion as well, as it was recently collected less than a mile from the site. It is also suspected that a Critically Endangered frog species (*Niceforonia adenobrachia*) also occurs in this area.

"Timing was of the essence with this land purchase," said Dr. George E. Wallace, Chief Conservation Officer of Rainforest Trust. "The pace of deforestation and conversion of ranch land in this region is so rapid and the value of this area for threatened species, especially plants, is so high that it was critical to bring the land under protection."

This 120-acre expansion has greatly contributed to the creation of a protected biological corridor, with the goal of safeguarding 2,471 acres by 2020. Salvamontes Corporation will reintroduce plant species such as the Critically Endangered Ventanas Magnolia and Endangered Yarumal Magnolia to the expanded site, and the creation of a commercial nursery of native and ornamental species will help financially support the management of the reserve. In addition, the conservation group will engage in community outreach and environmental education programs to promote the creation of nature reserves and consolidation of biological corridors in the Alto de Ventanas region.



**The Selva de Ventanas Natural Reserve** contains numerous species of orchids such as this *Lepanthes culex*.



# EARTH DAY 2017

This year, Rainforest Trust staff participated in Earth Day events in Washington, D.C. and Earth Day Texas in Dallas, teaching participants about the importance of conserving the rainforest.





# Partner Retreat 2017

Many of Rainforest Trust's partners participated in a week-long retreat at Rainforest Trust's headquarters in Virginia.



**Dr. Paul Salaman demonstrates** how to use a drone to some of the partner representatives to aid in surveying protected areas for poaching and deforestation.



**Julie Hanta Razafimanahaka of Madagasrika Voakajy in Madagascar and Gilda Hicks of GREEN-Mindanao in the Philippines** talk outside Rainforest Trust's office.

In May, Rainforest Trust welcomed 15 representatives from its local partner organizations to its headquarters in Virginia for a partner retreat week. The attendees hailed from 13 countries across Latin America, Africa and Asia. Together, they represented projects protecting a variety of landscapes, species and ecosystems.

Throughout the week, the partner representatives participated in training seminars and presentations from Rainforest Trust staff on topics such as management plan development, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, camera trap usage, communications and fundraising. The representatives also gave presentations on their own projects, their successes and the challenges they've faced. Conservationists around the world often face similar obstacles and these presentations and dialogues allowed the representatives to learn about new solutions from each other as well as from Rainforest Trust staff.

"Our partners brought an incredible range of individual and institutional experience to the retreat," said Dr. George E. Wallace, Chief Conservation Officer of Rainforest Trust. "But the common denominator was a shared desire to learn from each other and to develop ways of helping all the organizations deliver stronger, more enduring conservation."

Besides the informative sessions, the partner representatives took the time to record interviews with Rainforest Trust's staff, sharing stories and expertise. During off-hours, the week included soccer games, barbecues and hiking.

"We witnessed every partner having the same total commitment and passion to saving species, assisting communities and protecting our planet as the Rainforest Trust team," said Dr. Paul Salaman, CEO of Rainforest Trust. "And it felt like we were with Family! It was wonderful to spend time together with our partners, share our experience and knowledge and make all of our conservation action that much more successful."





The partner representatives point to their project countries.

**"We witnessed every partner having the same total commitment and passion to saving species, assisting communities and protecting our planet as the Rainforest Trust team."**



Some of the partner representatives pose in front of Rainforest Trust's office.



Dr. Paul Salaman speaks with Dani Rivera of the Center for the Development of an Indigenous Amazon during a podcast.



Dr. Harriet Davies-Mostert of the Endangered Wildlife Trust in South Africa presents their project.



Rainforest Trust staff and partner representatives watch a presentation.



# How Saving Habitat

Earth has **too much carbon** in the atmosphere, leading to changes in our climate.



higher temperatures



stronger storms



more severe droughts



rising sea levels

**Carbon** comes from several sources<sup>1</sup>



deforestation



industry



transportation



land use



energy

**Fast Fact**  
Forests store carbon in plant matter and soil.

Initial estimates calculate that in the proposed Mak-Betchou Wildlife Sanctuary in Cameroon that Rainforest Trust is helping to protect, **7,007,998 metric tons of carbon** are stored above ground.

If released to the atmosphere, that would be equivalent to the carbon emissions of

**1.4+ million cars**  
per year



When deforestation occurs, either by chopping or burning, it releases a large amount of stored carbon into the atmosphere, similar to burning fossil fuels.

In all the projects Rainforest Trust has begun working on since May of last year, initial estimates of above ground carbon storage come out to **669,371,577 metric tons of carbon**.

If released to the atmosphere, that would be equivalent to the carbon emissions of

**142.4+ million cars**  
per year



# Protects The Planet

According to recent estimates, tropical deforestation accounts for up to **fifteen percent** of net global carbon emissions.<sup>2</sup>

**15%**

Amounts to about the same as all **transportation carbon emissions** <sup>1</sup>



**50%**

Halting tropical deforestation and allowing regrowth could mitigate up to **fifty percent** of all global carbon emissions through 2050.<sup>2</sup>

That's why Rainforest Trust's commitment to **protect habitat for endangered species** also protects the planet.

By preventing deforestation, **we prevent carbon emissions** and safeguard the planet's resilience to climate change.

RAINFOREST  
TRUST®



**Fast Fact**

Rainforest Trust has already protected over 17 million acres of wildlife habitat worldwide.





# Million-Acre Conservancy Created for World's Rarest Antelope

With the support of Rainforest Trust, the Hirola Conservation Programme (HCP) recently succeeded in formally establishing the 1,061,236 acre Bura East Conservancy to protect the Critically Endangered Hirola in the savanna woodland ecosystem of northeastern Kenya. Other species that will benefit from this refuge include Giraffes, Grevy's Zebras, Elephants, African Wild Dogs, Lions, Cheetahs and several antelope species. Dr. Abdullahi Ali, founder of HCP and a lifelong conservationist, spearheaded much of this work. HCP is now preparing to compensate community members for the conservancy land by conducting land surveys and studying detailed settlement plans.

Obtaining the registration certificate for the new conservancy means community members are now empowered and officially have the legal backing to operate conservation efforts in Kenya. In partnership with HCP and the local county governments, the communities will hold the land in trust for the conservation of wildlife in the area. The communities will act as guarantors for Bura East Conservancy and a future adjacent conservancy, which will both be incorporated into local area development plans. Together, these conservancies will protect 1.2 million acres, the largest conservation area in northeastern Kenya. This new conservancy will not only safeguard the Hirolas that currently call this region home, but will also help the species recover by re-establishing a free-ranging population between protected areas.



A Hirola, the world's most endangered antelope.

Colored sandy brown with white spectacle-like markings around their eyes and impressive spiral horns, Hirolas are some of the most imperiled antelopes in Africa and are assessed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These medium-sized antelopes found in northeast Kenya and southwest Somalia are threatened primarily by habitat loss due to range degradation. They are also vulnerable to poaching, drought, disease and competition with livestock for resources, and there has been a drastic population decline of almost 90 percent since 1980. The Hirola is also the last species in the genus *Beatragus*, and, "The loss of the Hirola would be the first extinction of a mammalian genus on mainland Africa in modern human history," according to the IUCN. Hirola are considered a "refugee species" since they have limited access to optimal habitat, are restricted to less than five percent of their historical geographic range and there are estimated to be only a few hundred of these antelopes left. Dr. Abdullahi Ali, the founder of HCP, is determined to increase these numbers.

Dr. Ali has felt connected to wildlife since childhood. Born in Garissa

County, Kenya, to a family in a pastoral ethnic Somali community, his parents were nomads who herded goats and camels. He spent his childhood defending the prized animals from predators such as leopards. His uncle, who held a prestigious military position after helping prevent a government coup, leveraged his status to support the creation of one of the first schools in the neighboring region. He asked that each family allow at least one child to receive a formal education, and although Dr. Ali said that his father was originally opposed to the idea, his mother sent him to the school when he was about 7 years old. "This was literally the first time I was in a permanent structure and interacted with individuals other than my family members," Dr. Ali said.

In high school, he had the opportunity to visit Masai Mara Natural Reserve, a 373,120-acre wildlife reserve in Kenya that borders Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. He witnessed the grand annual migration of Wildebeest that takes place between the reserve and Serengeti National Park, and was impressed by the rangers who were the protectors of this massive range.

"I decided right then that I wanted to be a wildlife ranger," said Dr. Ali.

To learn how to safeguard the incredible species that shared his homeland, Dr. Ali enrolled in the University of Nairobi to study biology and conservation with a focus on endangered species and the impacts of landscape changes on wildlife. Following the completion

**"Strengthening a locally driven conservation program provides a new win-win for locals and the Hirola."**



of his undergraduate degree, he returned to Garissa County to help establish a sanctuary for migrant giraffes wounded during the Somali Civil War that began in the early 1990s. He eventually went on to earn a master's degree in conservation biology and a Ph.D. in ecology from the University of Wyoming.

In 2005, the Kenya Wildlife Service asked Dr. Ali to join the national Hirola management committee tasked with protecting Hirolas, since he was familiar with the territory and had experience with conservation projects. With a historical range almost entirely outside national parks and other protected areas – paired with decades of political turmoil along the Kenya-Somalia border – the conservation of Hirolas has been a longstanding regional challenge and a major priority for the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Dr. Ali decided to begin his own initiative to focus on saving the antelope species in his home county of Garissa and eventually received funding to establish the Hirola Conservation Programme (HCP). His current conservation and research sites are over 300 miles from Nairobi, Kenya's capital, in a remote area along the Kenya-Somalia border. He stays in a small tented campsite with field assistants, in a region where the primary diet of local residents consists of livestock meat, such as from goats.

"For those of us who are vegetarians, this is not a recommended holiday destination," noted Dr. Ali.

There are no paved roads in the area, and getting stuck in the mud is common. Rainfall can be erratic and sometimes leads to disruptions in the road networks; when it is not the rainy season, the region can face extensive droughts that dry up the water holes on which local wildlife depend. When the amount of accessible water is limited, human and wildlife conflicts can arise; in the village of Gedilun in Garissa County, there were two reports in October 2016 of buffaloes attacking people as they were going to a water hole.

While local communities rely predominantly on herded livestock for food, migrants from other regions sometimes come into the area to poach animals such as Hirola. Dr. Ali said local Somali clans do not hunt the Hirola for two main reasons: they are sympathetic to its shy nature, and because these antelopes are dependent on grasslands, their presence in an area indicates positive ecosystem health.

"When [local clans] see them, they think that livestock will do well and that there will be many births and abundant food," said Dr. Ali. "In this way, the Hirola is a good omen for the land."

Hirola are so valued by community members that when there was an effort to relocate the species from the locally-managed Arawale National Reserve near Garissa to Tsavo East National Park in southern Kenya (outside the Hirola's geographic range), local political leaders filed a lawsuit against their further removal. Since then, Arawale National Reserve has been dissolved, as it is no longer financially supported by the government. Instead of focusing on relocation efforts, HCP aims to safeguard Hirolas in their natural range by protecting and restoring their habitat.

While the creation of protected areas is backed by international organizations, HCP understands that it will not be sustainable without

local support. According to the nonprofit's website, "Conservation as a form of land use is new to Somali communities along the Kenya-Somalia border, who for centuries practiced pastoralism in isolation."

Although Somali herders spend the majority of their time in rangelands shared with wildlife, they are rarely involved in the management and decision processes regarding regional conservation, according to the HCP website.

To incorporate the knowledge of those most familiar with the areas to be protected, HCP created a network of herders, conservation groups and local scouts called "Herders for Hirola." Founded in 2012, the network originally had 20 herders who received training on conservation practices, ecology, security issues and how to communicate the value of wildlife through community outreach. Herders are trained to use global positioning systems (GPS) to collect data, which allows HCP to map sightings of Hirola and other species throughout the range as well as track incidents of human-wildlife conflicts. Patrols are sometimes conducted on camelback, as trucks often have difficulties navigating the unpaved terrain.

Already, 25 rangers from local communities have been recruited

and trained to protect the wildlife and habitats in Bura East Conservancy and the adjacent future conservancy. In addition, community members have been trained in conflict resolution methods. Important next steps for development of Bura East Conservancy include appointing site management committees, identifying critical areas for wildlife, building ranger stations and other infrastructure, and providing an exchange tour for local leaders to visit other established conservancies elsewhere in Kenya.

By leveraging conservation innovations, HCP can measure wildlife enforcement patrols and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-poaching efforts. Using technologies such as these allows the nonprofit organization to combine reports from local informants with analyzed data to share information with authorities and other conservation groups for long-term habitat management.

Like these tools that marry traditional knowledge with ever-advancing technologies, Ali is a bridge between grassroots conservation efforts and the international conservation community to effectively protect the region's at-risk wildlife.

"I have had the pleasure of knowing Abdullahi Ali since 2011, when he was conducting his doctoral research on the Hirola," said Dr. Sally Lahm, Rainforest Trust's Africa and Madagascar Conservation Officer. "His background as an ethnic Somali, and devotion to the protection of this species and many others in eastern Kenya, offer him the unique opportunity to conserve the region's natural resources for wildlife and local people."

"Rainforest Trust's support has lifted the profile of what I'm doing, and is helping make a difference and giving greater hope and expectation that we can save the species," explained Dr. Ali. "Additionally, strengthening a locally driven conservation program provides a new win-win for locals and the Hirola."

"I'm excited for a new protected area," said the passionate conservationist.

"It all makes my face brighten up."



**Above:** The new protected area will also protect wildlife such as giraffes. **Below:** Dr. Abdullahi Ali, founder of HCP.

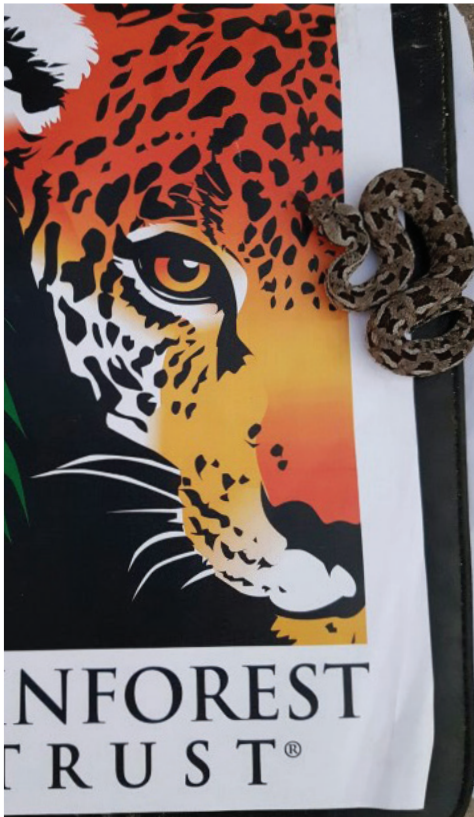


# Rediscovered Snake Sparks Major Conservation Initiative

**The rediscovery of the threatened Albany Adder – a tiny viper soon to be declared “extinct in the wild” since it had not been seen in almost a decade – is sparking a major conservation initiative to safeguard this rare reptile’s habitat in South Africa.**



**The Albany Adder** had not been recorded in almost a decade before a team from the Endangered Wildlife Trust, Rainforest Trust’s partner, rediscovered it.



**The tiny and threatened Albany Adder**, seen on the Rainforest Trust logo.

Human-induced habitat destruction, paired with poaching for the pet trade, has led the Albany Adder to be considered one of the rarest snakes in the world (it is listed as Critically Endangered in the most recent reptile conservation assessment for South Africa published in 2014). Because this snake is endemic – meaning it is found only in a specific, limited range – there is a much higher risk that habitat fragmentation and loss could lead to the species’ extinction if left unchecked.

Conservation organizations Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and Rainforest Trust understood that to secure a future for the Albany Adder, protecting its habitat needed to be a priority. Before committing to the creation of a protected area though, the presence of this rare snake first had to be confirmed, as it was last scientifically recorded almost 10 years ago. The most recent sightings had occurred at a site currently being mined, and the EWT team consulted with local herpetologists regarding the possibility that the species could be found there again. After determining the ideal time frame (active male adders pursuing mates are easier to spot than dormant ones), there was only one thing left to do: go into the field and search for them.

Armed with cameras, measurement tools and a healthy dose of anxiety (since only 12 Albany Adders had ever been officially recorded), conservationists set out to affirm the species’ existence in November 2016. As the EWT team traveled to the Eastern Cape Province, the prevalent concern wasn’t with the risk of coming in contact with the snake’s venom, but an even scarier prospect: that it may already be too late to save the species.

For almost an entire week, the team searched through bushes, under rocks and in limestone holes for the grayish tan snake that is perfectly adept at blending into its environment. Even well into the night, conservationists drove down numerous highways and dusty farm lanes, hoping to catch a glimpse of the snake in a different context.

By the last day – with findings of other reptile species but no sign of the Albany Adder – morale was low. The EWT team decided to return to the first area that had been surveyed as a last attempt to document the species. Their vehicle was low on fuel so the EWT Field Officer Michael Adams had to leave the team and travel to the nearest town roughly 20 miles away to refill. On his way back to the site, Adams came across a sight that had been almost given up on:





a single female Albany Adder slithering across the road.

"I was massively excited, but I had no one to celebrate with!" Adams said.

After calling the other conservationists to the discovery, documenting and then releasing the female adder back into its natural habitat, Adams and the EWT team continued searching into the evening. Incredibly, they came across a second Albany Adder, this time a young male. The EWT team conducted another search in March 2017, finding additional adders including a pregnant female. Between the two surveys, five Albany Adders were documented, bringing the total recordings of the species to 17 confirmed sightings.

Bolstered by the success of their searches, the EWT and Rainforest Trust are now working to protect the habitat of this highly threatened snake. The Coega Bontveld vegetation which the adder species inhabits has been drastically reduced by development activities and is under continuous threat from mining, road construction and the expansion of a nearby industrial complex.

Because Albany Adders have been confirmed at the mining site, there is a strong case for protecting the land through a Biodiversity Stewardship Program, which is a way for private landowners to work with conservation authorities to manage the ecosystems within their lands with a focus on protecting biodiversity. The EWT is currently discussing land rights with various landowners in the area, with the aim to create a protected area that is close to 1,000 acres in size. According to Adams, this proposed nature reserve will be the first protected area in Africa to be dedicated to the security of a Critically Endangered snake species, and other wildlife such as Blue Cranes, Secretary Birds and Ludwig's Bustards will benefit as well. "The Albany Adder will only survive if it is given formal protection and its last remaining habitat is protected into perpetuity," said Rainforest Trust's Director of Conservation Programs James Lewis.

"If we don't do this now, then the loss of this incredible species will rest on the shoulders of our generation. We can act, and we can save this species. We must."



**"The Albany Adder will only survive if it is given formal protection and its last remaining habitat is protected into perpetuity."**



# Land Titles for Indigenous Communities in Peru Create a Firewall of Protection



Indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon received legal recognition of their land ownership rights, which allows them to have access to state benefits and strengthens the buffer zone of the spectacular Sierra del Divisor National Park.

Representatives of Peruvian indigenous communities receive land titles.

Nineteen indigenous communities working with participatory conservation projects implemented by Rainforest Trust's local partner Center for the Development of an Indigenous Amazon (CEDIA) have recently received title ownership of their territories. The titles were presented by the CEO and Chairman of Rainforest Trust, as well as the Regional Governor, Director of the Agriculture Authority of Loreto Region and CEDIA staff on February 15 during a celebration in the Loreto Region of Peru, which highlighted the importance of community support in the protection of wildlife habitat and how vital it is to the success of long-term conservation strategies. Nine of the titles presented were directly supported by Rainforest Trust, and the nonprofit organization is working with CEDIA to secure land titles for additional communities.

These new land titles will strengthen the buffer zone of Sierra del Divisor National Park, a massive 3.3 million-acre protected area established with the support of CEDIA, local indigenous communities, Rainforest Trust and other supporters in 2015. The creation of this national park and its surrounding buffer zone have been part of a multi-year, multi-organizational effort to secure a conservation corridor that

**"We have great plans for the future and we are sure that we will continue to make history on the conservation of the Amazon with a global scope."**

spans 67 million acres from the banks of the Amazon in Brazil to the snowcapped Andes of Peru. The region has some of the highest levels of biodiversity ever recorded on the planet and is thought to contain many species still unknown to science, and local communities actively participate in safeguarding the national park.

"It was a tremendous honor to present legal documents to indigenous leaders that finally own legal rights to their land," said Rainforest Trust's CEO Dr. Paul Salaman. "Not only do these 19 communities now have access to state benefits such as healthcare and education, but their land greatly strengthens conservation efforts, as this blocks mining and logging concessions on their lands."

The celebration also coincided with CEDIA's 35th anniversary. Rainforest Trust and CEDIA have collectively protected almost 30 million acres of Amazon Rainforest by establishing land rights for hundreds of indigenous communities and by creating new protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries.

"Rainforest Trust has been a crucial partner for CEDIA for [25] years, together we have had extraordinary achievements for the conservation of the Amazon and the defense of its communities," said Dani Rivera, project manager for CEDIA. "Such a long and successful relationship is only possible when based in confidence, results and loyalty in difficult times. We have great plans for the future and we are sure that we will continue to make history on the conservation of the Amazon with a global scope."



El Cono is an iconic, dormant volcanic cone in Sierra del Divisor.





# Rainforest Trust Hosts Inaugural Meeting of IUCN United States National Committee

This June, Rainforest Trust hosted the inaugural meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) United States National Committee. The conference took place at the Airlie Conference Center across the street from Rainforest Trust's headquarters in Northern Virginia. Attendees included scientists, communicators, policymakers and experts from conservation and environmental organizations across the U.S. and elsewhere. The meeting featured panel discussions, presentations and conversations on the role of IUCN in the U.S. and the new IUCN United States National Committee.

IUCN is a global network of conservation organizations and governmental bodies. Founded in 1948 and based in Gland, Switzerland, IUCN oversees publications including the Red List, facilitates knowledge-sharing and convenes events such as the World Conservation Congress.

Dr. Paul Salaman, CEO of Rainforest Trust, welcomed participants to the meeting, recalling the decades-old relationship between Rainforest Trust and IUCN. "Our roots with IUCN extend back almost 30 years, but as we moved to collaborate with more U.S. organizations, we discovered no platform or avenue for dialogue between like-minded environmental groups in the U.S.," Dr. Salaman said. "With over 100 U.S. Members, it is apparent that the national committee will provide that path to facilitate dialogue."

Inger Andersen, the Director General of IUCN, opened the proceedings remotely from IUCN headquarters and noted that IUCN members in the U.S. have been consistent leaders in conservation, highlighted by Hawaii's hosting of last year's World Conservation Congress.

Andersen thanked Rainforest Trust for hosting the event and, in her closing remarks at the end of the event, recognized Dr. Salaman for his "tireless effort" to create the committee. In addition, John Robinson, IUCN Councillor for North America, recognized Dr. Salaman's work

to bring in members to IUCN U.S. and host the inaugural meeting with a copy of *The Paper Zoo*, a book of animal art covering the last 500 years.

Regarding the importance of the meeting, Dr. Salaman said, "We believe that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts -- that as a collective, the IUCN family in the U.S. can have a more effective voice for nature, both domestically and internationally."

**"With over 100 U.S. Members, it is apparent that the national committee will provide that path to facilitate dialogue."**



**Dr. Paul Salaman** welcomes participants to the first meeting of the IUCN US National Committee.





## Rainforest Trust's Corporate Sponsorship Program

**Rainforest Trust's Conservation Circle offers annual sponsorship opportunities that help protect the planet, save species and care for communities, while providing businesses a robust visibility package.**

A sponsorship package provides your business with the chance to leverage Rainforest Trust's significant brand awareness and engage with thousands of conservation enthusiasts. Sponsors are important partners in our quest to maintain a healthy planet. By joining our Conservation Circle and making an annual financial commitment, your company is taking action to save rainforests, one of the most important natural resources left on Earth that positively impacts our climate.

### CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

**\$100,000+**

### PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

**\$25,000 – \$99,999**

### DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE

**\$5,000 – \$24,999**

### PATRON'S CIRCLE

**\$1,200 – \$4,999**

Rainforest Trust's business partners provide crucial support for our most urgent conservation work. By joining, your company will benefit from affiliation with a prominent network of other corporations that share a commitment to protecting the most threatened tropical forests and saving endangered wildlife. Annual sponsorship perks include, but are not limited to, visibility on our website and social media, recognition at fundraising events and opportunities to boost your brand.

To learn more about Rainforest Trust's Conservation Circle, please contact Mary Ellen Walsh, Corporate Giving and Events Officer, at 800-456-4930 or email [maryellen@rainforesttrust.org](mailto:maryellen@rainforesttrust.org)

## Rainforest Trust Conservation Circle Member: Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden

The Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden is a conservation organization striving to help stop and reverse the rapid decline of species and habitat locally and globally by supporting field conservation projects.

To support their outreach, the Zoo raises money from visitors through their Round Up for Conservation program. The program is a huge success thanks to the persistence of the Zoo's sales staff and their guests' generosity, growing exponentially since 2011 and supporting two to three complementary conservation organizations, such as Rainforest Trust, each year.

"By contributing just a few cents from a purchase, each Zoo guest becomes part of a powerful collective," said Rebecca Snyder, PhD, Curator of Conservation and Science at the Zoo. "Together this can result in positive change for imperiled animals and plants. Small change adds up to big change," stated Snyder.

This is the second year the Zoo has partnered with Rainforest Trust but their first year as members of the Conservation Circle. According to Dr. Dwight Lawson, Executive Director of the Zoo,

"By supporting Rainforest Trust, we foster a tangible connection between endangered species at the Zoo and the threats faced by their wild counterparts. It's inspiring that people living in Oklahoma care enough to make that connection and can truly help protect complex ecosystems on the other side of the planet through this partnership."

"The Oklahoma City Zoo has a robust outreach and education program," said Rainforest Trust CEO Dr. Paul Salaman. "Fostering greater understanding about the importance of the rainforest, the biodiversity of animals and plants is critical in the success of our work. We very much appreciate their support."

As Conservation Circle members, the Zoo receives the benefits of association with Rainforest Trust, including visibility and access to scientific experts for their programs. Conservation Circle members can designate their gifts to benefit specific Rainforest Trust projects and, for 2017, the Zoo has chosen to support two initiatives: "Last Great Forests of Northern Borneo" and "Saving One of the World's Most Critical Hotspots for Amphibians" in Cameroon.







**DONATIONS DOUBLED**

**LATIN AMERICA**

# Sanctuary for the Scalloped Hammerheads of Golfo Dulce in Costa Rica

**SIZE:** 172,974 acres **PROJECT COST:** \$313,681 **PRICE PER ACRE:** \$1.81

**KEY SPECIES:** Hawksbill Turtle (CR), Scalloped Hammerhead (EN), Whale Shark (EN), Green Turtle (EN), Olive Ridley turtle (VU)

**CR** Critically Endangered  
**EN** Endangered  
**VU** Vulnerable

One of four tropical fjords in the world, the unique ecosystem of Golfo Dulce in Costa Rica provides critical nursery habitat for Scalloped Hammerheads. Endangered Scalloped Hammerheads are coastal and semi-oceanic sharks found in warm temperate and tropical seas. Neonates and juveniles live in nursery areas located in the coastal waters of estuaries, bays and mangroves, where nutrient-rich waters provide food and protection from predators. Adults migrate to open waters, returning to nursery areas to have pups. The coastal waters of Golfo Dulce support a wide diversity of fish, which in turn provide sustenance for newborn sharks.

Because sharks have low reproductive rates and mature slowly, they are particularly vulnerable to fishery exploitation and have experienced significant declines throughout their range. Scalloped Hammerheads are caught in oceanic and coastal waters, through targeted fishing as well as bycatch. Research shows that sharks and rays contributed to more than 50 percent of the total catch of fishing operations in Golfo Dulce, with Scalloped Hammerheads as the most negatively impacted.

Other sharks in Golfo Dulce include Tiger Sharks, Bull Sharks, Blacktip Sharks and Whitetip Reef Sharks. Apart from the seasonal aggregations of Whale Sharks, many of the sharks that inhabit the gulf are juveniles, which further demonstrates Golfo Dulce's importance as a shark nursery. In addition to sharks, Golfo Dulce is home to 276 species of fish, 296 species of mollusks, 71 species of macrocrustaceans, eight species of whales and dolphins and numerous rays. Sea turtles also feed here, including the Critically Endangered Hawksbill Turtle, Endangered Green Turtle and Vulnerable Olive Ridley.

To protect this impressive marine ecosystem, Rainforest Trust is supporting local partner Misión Tiburón in the creation of a 172,974-

acre multi-use Marine Management Area in Golfo Dulce, Costa Rica. This designation will establish fishing exclusion zones in the most critical nursery habitat for Scalloped Hammerheads. Additionally, Rainforest Trust and its partner are working to establish this area as Costa Rica's very first Shark Sanctuary, a new categorization which will prohibit sharks from being harvested within Golfo Dulce.

"Marine Protected Areas have been established around many of the seamounts where adult Scalloped Hammerheads aggregate," said Katie Pugh, Rainforest Trust's Invertebrate & Aquatic Species Conservation Officer. "But the nursery habitat of Golfo Dulce is a missing puzzle piece that must be protected in order to bolster the declining population. Our hope is that this will also set a precedent for the protection of other important nursery areas."

**For every \$1.81 raised toward the conservation of Golfo Dulce, an acre of habitat will be protected. And, thanks to the SAVES Challenge, every donation to this project will be doubled.**

**Golfo Dulce is home to 276 species of fish, 296 species of mollusks, 71 species of macrocrustaceans, eight species of whales and dolphins and numerous rays.**



# Urgent Protection

Support the conservation work of Rainforest Trust and its partners around the world.

## New Protection for Imperiled Primates in Cameroon

The Lebialem Highland forests are home to significant populations of the Critically Endangered Cross River Gorilla and the Endangered Nigeria-Cameroon Chimpanzee, as well as a host of threatened and endemic chameleons, birds, amphibians and plants. However, the rapidly increasing human population poses serious threats to these lush highland forests.

Rainforest Trust is working with a local partner to create the Mak-Betchou Wildlife Sanctuary which will safeguard 34,794 acres of montane forest and add to an immense network of protected areas spanning over 1.5 million acres throughout the region. Rainforest Trust is also supporting the creation of a management plan for Tofala Hill Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Price per Acre: \$23**

**All gifts matched 1:1 through the SAVES Challenge.**



## Saving Bizarre Biodiversity in Indonesia

The Nantu Wildlife Sanctuary contains one of the few remaining intact lowland rainforests on Indonesia's Sulawesi Island. Home to strange wildlife such as the Snoring Rail, the pig-like Sulawesi Babirusa and Anoa, animals reminiscent of buffalo, this sanctuary is threatened by slash-and-burn clearance, oil palm plantations and illegal gold mining.

To conserve Sulawesi's endemic species through a strategic expansion, Rainforest Trust is working with a local partner to add 15,267 acres to the existing 127,289-acre Nantu Wildlife Sanctuary via a long-term lease and a land purchase.

**Price per Acre: \$54**

**All gifts matched 1:1 through the SAVES Challenge.**



## Safeguarding the Lost Forest in Madagascar

The "Lost Forest" has been isolated from the eastern rainforests and western dry forests of Madagascar for hundreds of years. This secluded rainforest sits atop an extraordinary mega quartz massif unlike any other geological feature for hundreds of miles, which may contribute to its unique flora and fauna. The first expeditions in the previously unexplored area supported in part by Rainforest Trust have potentially discovered a wealth of species never before known to science.

To ensure long-term protection for the region's biodiversity, Rainforest Trust is working with a local partner to establish the 3,460-acre Lost Forest Reserve.

**Price per Acre: \$206**

**All gifts matched 1:1 through the SAVES Challenge.**



Please use the enclosed envelope or visit [RainforestTrust.org](http://RainforestTrust.org) to make a donation.