An aerial photograph of a vast, flat wetland landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow across the entire scene. A narrow, winding water channel cuts through the marshy terrain. In the lower center of the frame, a person is riding a dark horse through the water, followed by a small wooden boat carrying several people. The vegetation is a mix of green and brown, indicating a natural, undisturbed environment.

WE BELONG TO THIS WORLD

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

FUNDACIÓN
REWILDING
ARGENTINA

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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REWILDING
ARGENTINA



Rewilding means opening our hearts and minds to others.

Marc Bekoff



OUR LEADERSHIP

Sofía Heinonen, Executive Director; Laura Fernández, Finance Director; Sebastián Di Martino, Conservation Director; Emiliano Donadio, Scientific Director; Lucila Masera, Alliances and Strategy Director.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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South America

BRAZIL

BOLIVIA

CHILE

PARAGUAY

URUGUAY

ARGENTINA

*Pacific
Ocean*

*Atlantic
Ocean*

THE JOURNEY TO RETURN TO NATURE

Rewilding Argentina is a foundation created to confront and reverse the biodiversity crisis and the resulting environmental degradation, to restore the healthy functioning of ecosystems, and to promote the well-being of local communities.

Formed in 2010 by Argentinian conservationists and activists, Rewilding Argentina is an independent non-profit organization and a part of the Tompkins Conservation global network.

We are united in our strong commitment to the restoration of natural beauty, in our belief in the intrinsic value of all species, and in the possibility of creating a model of development for rural communities based on conservation and rewilding.

Our multi-disciplinary teams live in the areas where we have our projects. This allows us to deeply know and understand the environments where we work, to make accurate diagnosis of threats that they face, and to intervene rapidly and effectively in order to assure their restoration and conservation.

FUNDACIÓN
REWILDING
ARGENTINA



The diverse and wonderful wildlife in the Breal Lagoon in El Impenetrable National Park amazes Sofía and the rewilding team every time they set out in a kayak exploration from El Teuco field station. PHOTO: MARISÍ LÓPEZ.

Dear wild friends,

The year 2020 will be remembered by all as a year of internal “revolutions”, where we were forced to re-evaluate all our paradigms and value more than ever the natural places that we dream of saving, thereby also “saving ourselves”.

In Argentina, where Rewilding Argentina has five territorial projects with well established teams, we are privileged. We were all where we wanted to be when the long six-month quarantine was declared. Very capable project coordinators were in charge of containing the teams and collaborating with the emergency committees created in neighboring communities to assist the sick and to solve logistical problems in the face of an invisible enemy that had the potential to harm everyone. We are pleased about our policy to live and make decisions from the place where changes are intended to be achieved.

As the weeks went by, it became evident that the local economies were not self-sustaining and that they would need support from outside. The closure of the borders and limitations on tourism did not help the vision of putting new value on wildlife and culture that was being promoted. In many cases, nature tourism already is the principal source of income for local businesses and their economies were severely impacted.

With this new reality, we had to re-think the best way to protect the ecosystems in which we work from the extractive activities that the quarantine did not stop, such as mining, oil drilling, agri-business, deforestation, wildfires and illegal hunting. With no visitors with environmental consciousness to be present as allies in these territories, it became imperative for us to patrol the boundaries of the protected areas more often, to be spokespeople and ambassadors for nature in social media and the press so that it would not disappear from the public agenda and priorities, to help to overcome the doubts and fears of the people living close to the projects by inviting them to get to know the neighboring park regions as their own home, and, with the passage of time, to encourage the opening of lodging and dining services for the tourists that started traveling again. Above all, we were obliged to think of new alternative economies for local businesses and entrepreneurs, that are regenerative and linked to the existence of a park. We worked hard to establish a connection between the territorial brand, restoration of nature and the welfare of families neighboring the protected areas. We named this program “Entrepreneurs by Nature”.

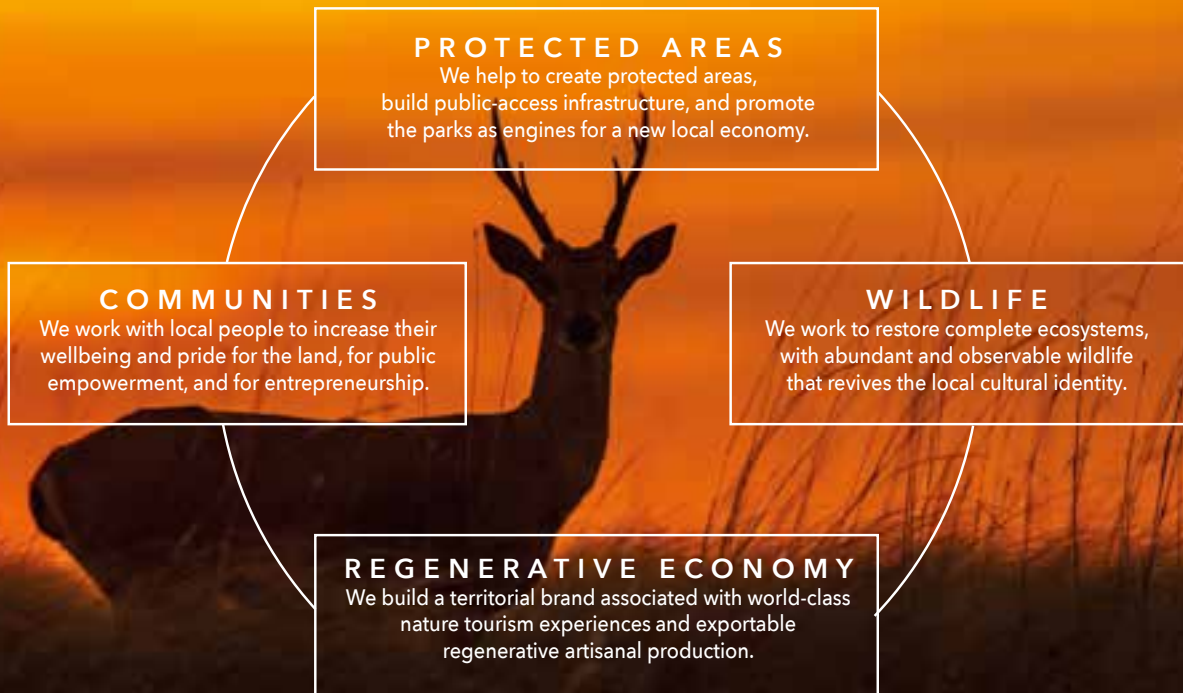
The other side of the coin of the confinement of 2020 was the number of people who had more time to think about and work remotely for nature. The most surprising was the arrival of Elsa Rosenvasser Feher, and her proposal to create an Interactive Planetary Museum in Patagonia. Her personal dedication and that of the Spirit architecture team to this titanic task—both architecturally and interpretively—gave us renewed hope that the citizens of the world are thoughtful, proactive and that they are looking to create synergies so that we can wake up before it is too late to reverse the extinction and climate change crisis, and that we can continue to share the planet in a more equitable way.

The greatest joy of the year, without doubt, was the number of jaguar cubs, macaw chicks, pampas deer fawns, and giant anteater and peccary babies who were born, as well as the tranquility with which all of wildlife enjoys every sunrise and sunset without even noticing our anguish and all the changes and efforts made to overcome the new challenges and vulnerability imposed upon us by the pandemic.

Two thousand twenty shook us, but we came out stronger, with more conviction than ever that we need more rewilding projects, more dedicated teams working in the field, more local, regenerative economies. And we look at 2021 with hope, thanks to all of our partners, friends and people who love nature from their very soul, and joyfully share with us every little adventure and achievement.

Sofia Heinonen
Executive Director
Fundación Rewilding Argentina

OUR MODEL



HOW DO WE WORK?

- 1 We form multi-disciplinary teams**, largely made up of locals, who live in the regions where we have long-term projects.
- 2 We implement restoration projects**, including the reintroduction and strengthening of populations of native species, with the goal of recovering natural ecosystems.
- 3 We promote the creation of new nature destinations** through experiences offered by local guides and other entrepreneurs and businesses who value wildlife and regional culture.
- 4 We develop a joint vision** of a local regenerative economy, in alliance with local and provincial governments.
- 5** Finally, once the State officially creates the park and adopts a public-private co-management strategy that assures a regenerative economy in the long term, **we donate the land** to the National Park Administration or to the directorates of provincial protected areas.

OUR IMPACT SO FAR

We helped to create and expand **8** NATIONAL PARKS

We donated **1** MILLION ACRES—407,000 hectares—FOR PARKLANDS CREATION

and helped to protect **2,47** MILLION ACRES—1 million hectares—ON LAND

as well as **38,610** SQUARE MILES—100,000 km²—OF THE ARGENTINE SEA

This protected land sequesters **505** MILLION METRIC TONS OF CARBON

11 SPECIES are being reintroduced to their natural habitats

5 SPECIES are being actively managed to recover their ecological roles

6 ECOREGIONS were or are being impacted by territorial conservation models
—Iberá wetlands, Great Chaco, Patagonian Steppe, Argentine Sea, Yungas and Patagonian Forest—

We are helping to create **4** NATURE-BASED TOURISM DESTINATIONS
—Iberá, El Impenetrable, Patagonia, Patagonia Azul—

We developed **6** PARK'S ENTRANCES WITH PUBLIC-USE INFRASTRUCTURE

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

PARK CREATION

1,235

ACRES
DONATED TO
THE GOVERNMENT

14,800

ACRES
INCORPORATED
TO BE RESTORED

1

GATEWAY
INAUGURATED
—Cañadón Pinturas—



1

PROTECTED AREA
CREATED
—Cueva de las Manos
Provincial Park—

84

CONSERVATION
GUARDIANS
ON THE GROUND

2

NEW OPERATION
CENTERS
DEVELOPED

27

KILOMETERS OF TRAILS
BUILT

61

KILOMETERS
OF ROADS
RESTORED



55

KILOMETERS OF
FIRE LINES
BUILT

40

KILOMETERS
OF FENCES
REMOVED

14

KILOMETERS OF
FENCES FOR EXOTIC
SPECIES CONTROL
INSTALLED

3

ACTIVE
MANAGEMENT PROJECTS
TO INCREASE WILDLIFE
POPULATIONS

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

13

WILDLIFE
REINTRODUCTION
PROJECTS
TO RESTORE SPECIES
THAT ARE LOCALLY
EXTINCT

7

EXOTIC SPECIES
BEING ERRADICATED



3

NEW
SELF-SUSTAINABLE
WILDLIFE
POPULATIONS

21

RELEASED
ANIMALS

83

COLLARS
DEPLOYED
TO MONITOR
WILDLIFE

2

NEWLY FOUNDED
WILDLIFE
POPULATIONS

2

ENVIRONMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS
CREATED

REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

65

TRAINING COURSES
PROVIDED TO
ENTREPRENEURS

19

NEW
ENTREPRENEURS
BY NATURE



5

NEW
REGENERATIVE
PRODUCT LINES

COMMUNITIES

44

TALKS
GIVEN TO LOCAL
COMMUNITIES



31

PEOPLE
BENEFITED FROM
FOOD SECURITY
PROJECTS



BOLIVIA

BRAZIL

PARAGUAY

EL IMPENETRABLE
NATIONAL PARK

ACONQUIJA
NATIONAL PARK

GREAT
IBERÁ
PARK

URUGUAY

ARGENTINA

Pacific
Ocean

Atlantic
Ocean

PATAGONIA
AZUL
PROJECT

PATAGONIA
NATIONAL PARK
PERITO MORENO
NATIONAL PARK
[EXPANSION]

MONTE LEÓN
NATIONAL PARK

PENÍNSULA
MITRE
PROJECT

NAMUNCURA-BURDWOOD
BANK II
NATIONAL PARK

YAGANES
NATIONAL PARK

KEY

- Finalized project
- Active project

0 200 400 600 km

THE PROJECTS

IBERÁ

EL IMPENETRABLE

PATAGONIA

PATAGONIA AZUL

PENÍNSULA MITRE



Tourism based on wildlife-viewing adds new value on many local traditional activities, such as traveling in "timbo" canoes, pulled by horse or poled through the wetlands of the Iberá Park Carambola sector, which installs a strong sense of pride in local communities. PHOTO: FLORIAN VON DER FECHT.

IBERÁ

PROJECT



ECOREGION BEING RESTORED

Iberá Wetlands

PROJECT START

1998

CURRENT PROTECTED AREA

1,7 MILLION ACRES
(700,000 HECTARES)

TOTAL CARBON STORED

264 MILLION
METRIC TONNES

REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS

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

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Marisi López

WILDLIFE PROJECTS COORDINATOR

Talía Zamboni

DONORS

Tompkins Conservation, Arcadia Fund, DOB Ecology,
The Bromley Charitable Trust, Fondation Segré, Artis Zoo,
The Habrok Group, Global Wildlife Conservation,
National Geographic Society, Parrot Wildlife Foundation

WETLANDS FOR ALL, FOREVER

In 2018, the 4,334,000-acre (1,754,000-hectare) Iberá Park was created in the core of the Iberá wetlands by Rewilding Argentina, Tompkins Conservation and our partners, including provincial and federal agencies. This extraordinary wetland, the largest in Argentina, is home to 30% of the biodiversity in the country including endangered species such as the pampas and marsh deer, the maned wolf and grassland birds like the strange-tailed tyrant.

In 2005, what was to become one of the largest rewilding programs in the Americas was started, with the goal of restoring keystone species that had been extirpated from Iberá through hunting and habitat loss and were extinct in the region, the Province or, in some cases, the country. The restoration of these key species will subsequently restore the balance and function of the ecosystem. Many of these species—top predators, large herbivores and important seed dispersers—once again roam the Iberá wetlands.

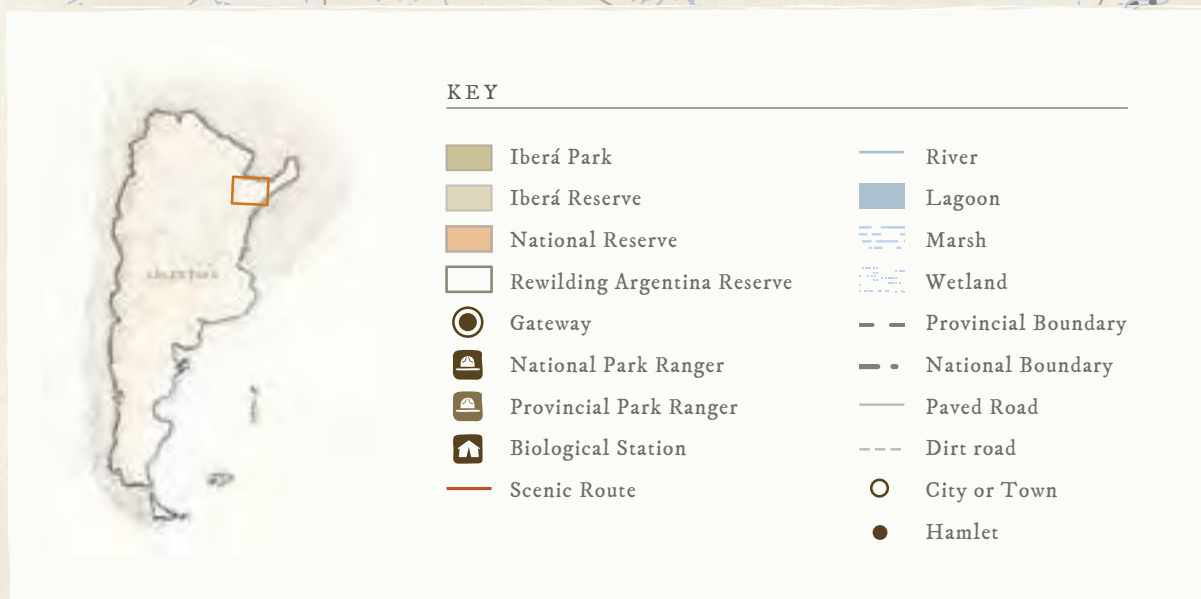
As the rewilding program developed, the unique culture of Iberá, which had evolved with the environment and the wildlife, began to recover as the ecosystems and natural processes recovered, impacting ten communities with a total population of 100,000 people which surround the park. The economy has begun a transition from an extractive to a restorative model, which is based on nature and cultural tourism, and creating a market for artisanal products under a strong territorial brand.

This was an exciting year for the Jaguar Reintroduction Project with the birth of four cubs who will be freed with their mothers in 2021, 70 years after the species went extinct in Iberá. In the north of Iberá, the first red-and-green macaw chicks were born in the wild, 150 years after their extinction in Argentina, as part of the Red-and-green Macaw Reintroduction Project. In addition, we began a new program for rural communities in the interior of the wetlands to ensure that the majority of families are able to benefit from the new economy being generated by the park and its wildlife.





One of the red-and-green macaw chicks born in 2020, rests on an Ibirá Pitá (tree species) in between some of its first ever flights; it is accompanied by its father. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.



PARK



3

POSTS
FINISHED—2 new
and 1 rebuilt—4thPUBLIC-ACCESS
GATEWAY
COMPLETED

All the work on the fourth Gateway to Iberá Park, the Carambola Gateway, which unites the protected area with the community of Concepción del Yaguareté Corá, **was completed**. The park ranger headquarters and the Carambolita public camping area were inaugurated; these facilities are important to ensure control and vigilance of the protected area and so that visitors and local businesses (entrepreneurs) have a space for public use. In the camping area, all of the trails were finished, complete with interpretive signs and a viewpoint with benches close to the port; these amenities

complement the barbecue sites, bathrooms and tent platforms already constructed. Twenty kilometers of roads and drainage systems were maintained within the core area. These will allow an alternate route for the people of Concepción to access the park and, for the National Park Administration, a better means of preventing cows and buffalo from straying into the park from neighboring pastures. One section of the road (14 kilometers) was donated to the provincial government for public access.



After being completely destroyed by a natural fire, the Lechuza Cuá refuge—a key site for local tourism providers—was rebuilt in a style harmonious with the vernacular architecture of the area, with the help of the Iberá Committee and Fundación Rewilding Argentina. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.

With the support of the provincial government, the Lechuza Cuá hut was rebuilt in the local architectural tradition after being completely destroyed by a fire in August 2020. The hut has been outfitted with all of the furniture and other necessities so that local tourist operators can use it and to guarantee that it is in good condition for their guests. Two outposts in strategic locations in the wetlands were finished, Post Medina and Post

Plumero. At the second, 50 kilometers of fencing was also installed to keep cattle out of the park's lands. The objective of these works is to equip the Gateway with public use and access infrastructure, while working with the inhabitants of the nearby hamlets so that they can benefit economically by providing services related to nature-tourism. In addition, the outposts have been strategically located for future monitoring of the jaguars.



The Carambolita campsite at Portal Carambola in Iberá Park, is free and open to the public and has platforms for setting up tents, barbecue areas equipped with grills, and a network of trails that run through woods and meadows to the Juli Cue port, from where it is possible to embark by boat to enter the esteros or wetlands. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.



The jaguars Karai and Porã, cubs of Mariua, are at ease playing in their 75 acre (30 hectare) enclosure, a few months before they begin their life of liberty, free and wild in Iberá Park. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK

WILDLIFE

3

NEW FOUNDING POPULATIONS

RED-AND-GREEN MACAW,
BARE-FACED CURASSOW
AND COLLARED PECCARY



2

FIRST RED-AND-GREEN MACAWS BORN IN THE WILD



1

INTERNATIONAL BIRD QUARANTINE BUILT



1

COLLARED MANED WOLF

1

CONSOLIDATED GIANT OTTER REPRODUCTIVE COUPLE



4

JAGUAR CUBS BORN IN THE JAGUAR REINTRODUCTION CENTER



63

RESCUED AND RELEASED ANTEATERS



Four **jaguar** cubs were born in the Jaguar Reintroduction Center after two different females spent around three months each sharing an enclosure with a male (all three jaguars were donated by Brazilian institutions). These cubs, together with their mothers, will be the first jaguars to be released in Iberá Park after 70 years of local extinction. The names of the cubs were chosen by the local people via social media campaigns. All names are in native Guaraní language: Karai means “a special being with a divine power,” Porã—“full of beauty and kindness,” Sãso—“a free spirit” and Sagu’a—a “wild or indomitable”.

Local villagers visited the Jaguar Reintroduction Center and saw jaguars for the first time, expressing great excitement after the visit. The closest neighbors to the Center are periodically visited by team members who share information about the jaguar project and answer any concern that may arise. Strong involvement and close communication with the people who will coexist with the jaguar are key to ensure the success of the project.



▶ WATCH VIDEO

The first three **red-and-green macaw** chicks were born in the wild, 150 years after being driven to extinction in Argentina. Two of the chicks survived and have thrived with the constant care of their parents and of the monitoring team who helped the first-time parents during the chick's first months of life. A second core population of red-and-green macaws was founded in Yermalito Reserve (Northern Iberá) with the release of the first five juvenile animals, out of which four survived. In order to increase the survival rate of released macaws, a new anti-predator training has been incorporated into the intensive preparation that the birds undergo before being freed into the wild. (This is in addition to the flight and native fruit recognition training). The first individuals that received the augmented training will be released in 2021. Sixteen nest boxes were installed within the home range of the reintroduced macaws to facilitate breeding success attempts.



Six orphaned **giant anteaters** were rescued and are being raised in the rescue center until they are ready to be released. Three juvenile anteaters were released and more than 12 births have been registered in the park.

The two **pampas deer** populations keep growing. Prescribed grass burning has been carried out to provide them with more nutritious pasture. At least nine births were registered in both populations in 2020, although we estimate that the total number of cubs born in that period is significantly higher.

The first core population of **bare-faced curassows** was founded in Yermalito Reserve with the release of nine individuals. Just three months after the release, the first mating attempts were observed; two breeding pairs subsequently built nests and laid their first eggs. Administrative procedures are being completed to bring more curassows from Brazilian institutions during 2021.



The ecology studies of **maned wolves** were initiated with the capture of the first individual, who was fitted with a VHF-GPS collar, becoming the first maned wolf in Argentina being monitored with this technology. The information collected by the collar indicated that the animal's territory encompasses 30 km² of dense grasslands where he feeds almost exclusively on fruits, insects, and small vertebrates. This information is very valuable to conserve this vulnerable species in Iberá Park. Since the first experience was a success, four additional individuals will be captured during 2021.





The first breeding pair of **giant otters** was formed. A male from Denmark was transferred from the quarantine facilities near Corrientes city to San Alonso Island, joining the female that had been living in the pre-release enclosure since July 2019. The pair became inseparable from the first day, and have copulated on several occasions. The female gave birth to two cubs, who unfortunately were found dead in their den. Cub mortality

is normal in first-time parents, especially during the first weeks after birth, so it may take a few attempts for the pair to successfully give birth and raise their offspring. This first reproductive attempt confirms that both parents are fertile and that the female is capable of successfully completing a pregnancy, which is key for their long-term reproductive success.



The fifth core population of **collared peccaries** was initiated in Yermalito Reserve with the initial release of four individuals. They are being monitored by camera traps and have adapted incredibly well to their new territory, which includes large forest patches and abundant food. Seventeen births have been officially registered in the five reintroduced populations, although we estimate that the total number is significantly higher since we do not monitor every released individual. Seventeen additional peccaries were donated by private institutions and will go through quarantine before their release. These animals will supplement the Carambola and Yermalito existing core populations.



The giant otters Coco and Alondra are already an inseparable couple and are successfully acclimatizing to the environments of Iberá Park. They are expected to form the first family of giant otters after more than 30 years of extinction in Argentina. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.

REGENERATIVE ECONOMY



The **Iberá Committee**—made up of the provincial government and foundations, and in which Rewilding Argentina is the executive coordinator—implemented two programs to generate real and significant employment opportunities in the communities that surround Iberá Park: The Cooks of Iberá and the Artisans of Iberá. Because of the support and assistance that both programs gave to small businesses and entrepreneurs, they were able to sell all of their products and services during this challenging year.

The objective of the **Cooks of Iberá program** is to recover pride in local identity and heritage by placing value on the traditional art and practice of planting and harvesting native foods and creating dishes with typical local ingredients. Around 140

cooks and 217 artisans took part in the program, generating a source of significant employment for women and men. The program is widely recognized as its participants regularly present examples of traditional cuisine at festivals, parties, and private homes, for tourists and locals alike.

The **Artisans of Iberá program** brings together artisans from different localities with the objective of building their technical skills and use of materials, building capacity in business, marketing and product presentation. Cultural Centers have been built or are being built in the seven communities of Iberá to provide a special place for the artisans, where they can work, learn, exhibit and sell their crafts.



The Iberá brand has been adopted by neighboring towns, tour operators, businesses, and many people who are proud to be part of this great region, and who seek to market their products and services as part of a revitalized natural ecosystem. PHOTOS: BELY GUEVARA, LEO BAYOL, TERRIER FILMS, AND MATÍAS REBAK.

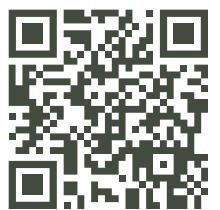
“ I carry in my soul the passion for what I do. Being recognized as an artisan is something that fills me with pride. Belonging to the Iberá Artisans Network allows me to do my art and create my handicrafts, made from native grasses, known to visitors, which makes me feel privileged. My village has changed a lot since the creation of Iberá Park. Today, there are many opportunities for our young people who want to learn and advance in many fields. In the past, these youth had to leave their village and their family to find work or to be able to study. ”



Petrona Romero
Artisan of Concepción



PHOTOS: JOSÉ SOSA.



▶ WATCH VIDEO

COMMUNITIES



A new program for the well-being of the rural communities in the interior of the wetlands was initiated. These people who live deep in the marshes no longer depend on cows for economic survival, but cattle raising is an integral part of their heritage. Therefore, a local person with a recognized track record in ranch management was contracted as a community leader and to help to improve the subsistence livestock production for these families. In the first phase, in order to understand better their livestock practices, he participated in their seasonal management and vaccination, helping with all the tasks of herding, roping and moving the cows to corrals. In the future, the families will be provided with recommendations for how to re-

duce the number of animals while increasing their quality and thus their income.

By working collaboratively, other economic alternatives are being identified to complement traditional livestock raising. Improvements in the families' housing are being made, without losing the architectural heritage of these rural communities and an emergency plan to deal with prolonged floods and extreme droughts is being developed. In the last ten years, climate change has contributed directly to a noted increase in the migration of rural families to cities. Increasing the resilience of these families so that they can adapt to new economies and ensure their long-term well-being is important at this stage of the Iberá project.

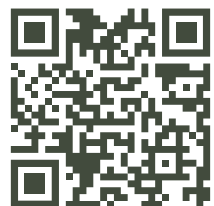


Before the day of their visit to the Jaguar Reintroduction Center on the Island of San Alonso, the local inhabitants of neighboring farms only knew of this great feline via the stories that they heard from their ancestors. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.



PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.

The 20 families living on islands in the interior of the marshlands are visited weekly (this year, 25 meetings were held in the islands) and two times a day they are contacted by radio. For this, the families were provided with walkie-talkies, solar panels and batteries, and a tower with a repeater was built so that the signal can now cover a range of 500,000 acres (200,000 hectares). To help the families have better access to services and contact with the closest town, Concepción, a 40 hp boat was bought which provides transport to town twice a month.



▶ WATCH VIDEO



"Yerbalito" is a 1,234-hectare section of the San José ranch, located in the northeast of the Iberá Reserve, which has some of the largest patches of intact forest in the region, as well as grasslands, flooded grasslands, and wetlands. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.



IBERÁ

OBJECTIVES 2021

- Protect the 2,916 acres (1,180 hectares) of the Yermalito Reserve as a Provincial Park.
- Create the first core population of jaguars.
- Re-activate tourist services.
- Incorporate members from the families living inside the marshlands, who will coexist with the jaguar the closest, to the new local economy.



IBERÁ

LIVES, REWILDED

THE STORY OF JUAN

After spending the first years of his life dedicated to agriculture and livestock, Juan today spends his days engaging local people in conservation and supporting a new inclusive and regenerative economy in the Iberá wetlands.



Juan Aguirre and Alfredo "Keneke" Zalazar share a traditional mate while enjoying one of the unique natural spectacles of Iberá: a sunset over the grasslands and wetlands of the Carambolita campsite, in the Carambola Gateway of Iberá Park. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.

Juan was born in Concepción del Yaguareté Corá, a small town 27 kilometers from Portal Carambola, one of the gateways of Iberá Park. As a boy, he was raised in the countryside and always loved the agricultural life, but over the years, he became more and more interested in conservation as he got to know Iberá Park and its many gateways, especially Carambola. He says, “I think that the Carambola Gateway will be something very beneficial for the local communities in the future, because it improves well-being for all through nature tourism and also it makes it possible for people to fully experience Iberá Park.”

Juan attended a rural primary school with his brother. They would get up at six in the morning and travel eight kilometers each way on horseback as it was the only mode of transport available to get to school. At 26, he studied agriculture at a Technical school in Concepción del Yaguareté Corá.

While still in school, he began to work at Fucosa, a Correntine foundation dedicated to livestock health, and in the middle of 2020, he joined the Rewilding Argentina team as the Community Outreach Coordinator. As a local, Juan knows

Iberá Park and the Carambola gateway well, and through his previous work with livestock health, has built trusted relationships with the residents of the small communities in the wetlands. In his daily work, Juan keeps the local people informed about the species reintroduction projects being carried out in Iberá Park. He comments that “as a Correntino and native of Concepción del Yaguareté Corá, I feel very proud about the reintroduction of the jaguar in Iberá and especially here in Carambola.” He says that the residents of the region identify very strongly with the jaguar, which is a symbol of the town of Concepción, and are proud that the jaguar is once again living in Iberá Park.

Juan’s day-to-day activities also include helping local people develop their tourist ventures, such as preparing traditional dishes and excursions into the wetlands in a canoe pulled by horses. He is a link between locals and tourist service providers (and agencies). “I can’t imagine doing anything else in my life; I am very satisfied with what I do and feel really at home with the Rewilding Argentina team,” Juan proudly comments.

“To people all over the world—we invite you to come and discover Iberá Park. It is a truly beautiful place, and we are eagerly awaiting your visit.”

Juan Aguirre
Community Outreach Coordinator,
Carambola Gateway, Iberá Park.





The algarrobos or carob trees, located on the banks of rivers and lagoons in the former Estancia La Fidelidad, were intensively logged in the past. Today, there remain a few trees more than 100 years old that survived from this era, mostly specimens which were ignored by the loggers due to some defects like twisted trunks. The regenerated forests are mostly made up of 10 to 20-year-old trees which now grow with the protection provided by El Impenetrable National Park. PHOTO: HERNÁN POVEDANO.



EL IMPENETRABLE

PROJECT



ECOREGION BEING RESTORED

Dry Chaco

PROJECT START

2014

CURRENT PROTECTED AREA

316,295 ACRES
(128,000 HECTARES)

TOTAL CARBON STORED

28.2 MILLION
METRIC TONNES

REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS

Jaguar
Lowland Tapir
Red-footed Tortoise

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Pedro Núñez

WILDLIFE PROJECTS COORDINATOR

Gerardo Cerón

DONORS

DOB Ecology

THE LAST CHACO FOREST FRONTIER

El Impenetrable National Park is located in the Chaco region, the second largest forest in South America and a key area for biodiversity conservation. It is also one of the world's most rapidly expanding agricultural frontiers. The Chaco has suffered some of the most extensive deforestation and environmental degradation in the world—80% of this ecoregion in Argentina has already been deforested. Native herbivores such as the guanaco, marsh deer and pampas deer have been pushed out and are regionally extinct, while jaguar populations have been dramatically reduced with only an estimated 20 individuals remaining in the whole region.

In 2014, El Impenetrable National Park was created through the efforts of local organizations in partnership with the local and national governments. Since 2017, a Rewilding Argentina team has been based inside the national park with the objective of reducing the threats to wildlife (majorly poaching), restoring wildlife populations, and engaging with the communities and families living around the park.

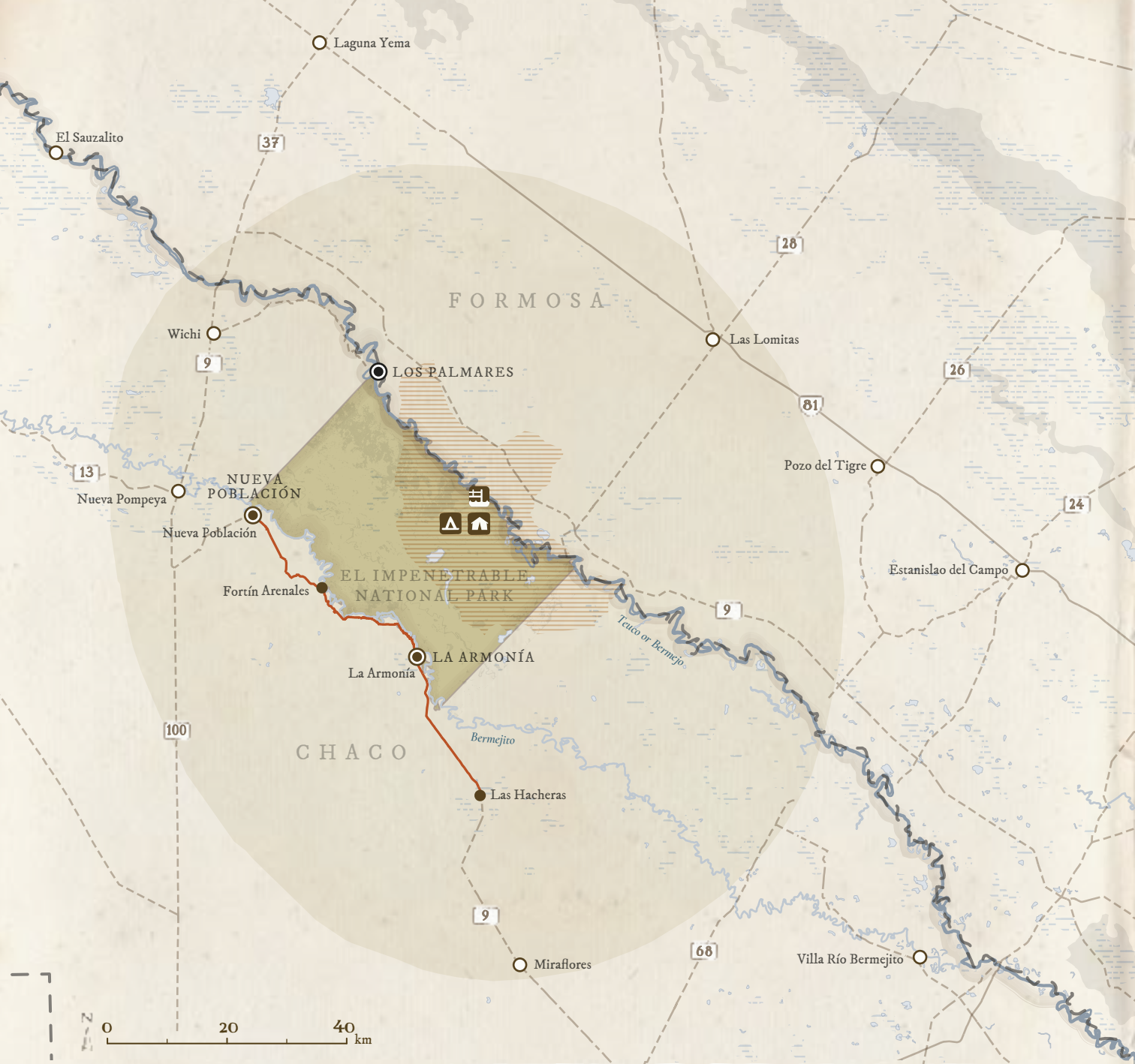
The main focus of the year was Qaramta, a wild male jaguar who was identified within the boundaries of the national park in 2019 (where the species had been thought to be extinct). This jaguar represents hope for the recovery of the species in the Grand Chaco of Argentina. In addition, the presence of this jaguar in the park was the best “letter of introduction” possible to the local people, who are falling in love with the images of the big cat, their fear being replaced with hope for economic development generated by its emblematic presence.

The closure of El Impenetrable National Park due to Covid-19 related restrictions posed a significant challenge to the new local economy just emerging in communities near the park. This challenge gave birth to the “Entrepreneurs by Nature” program which aims to identify local skills and develop an array of non-timber products and services accordingly, while generating well-being for the entrepreneurs and their families.






















In El Impenetrable National Park, there is a healthy population of tapirs. These large mammals are relatively easy to see, which contributes to the ability to market El Impenetrable as a first-class nature tourism destination. PHOTO HERNÁN POVEDANO.

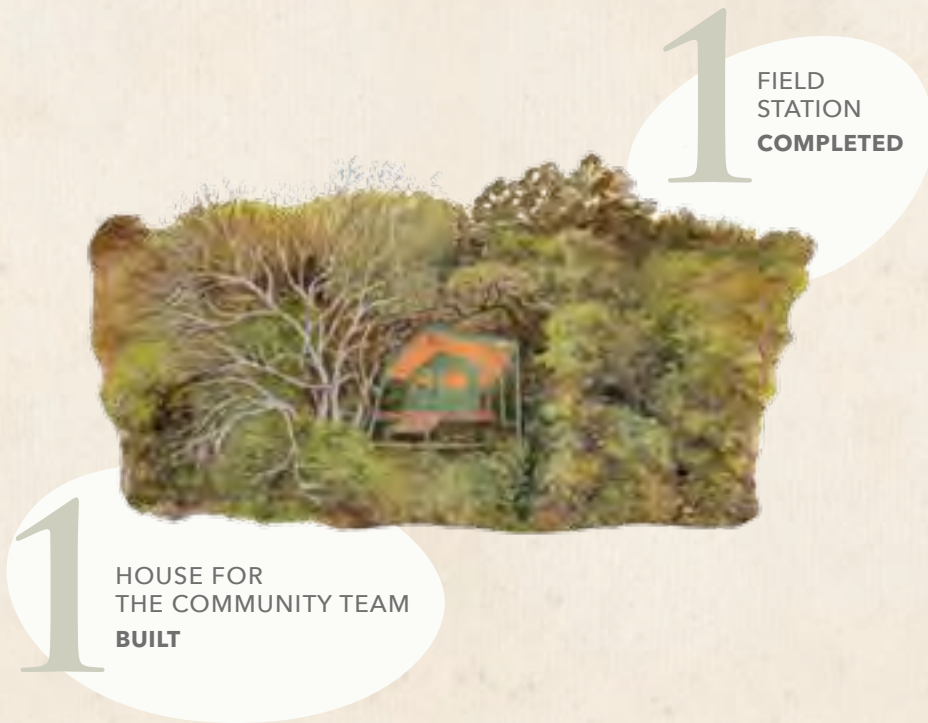


KEY

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
|  | National Park |  | River |
|  | Influence Zone |  | Lagoon |
|  | Gateway |  | Marsh |
|  | Field Station |  | Grassland |
|  | Pier |  | Provincial Boundary |
|  | Camping |  | Paved Road |
|  | Scenic Route |  | Dirt road |
|  | Wild jaguar's influence zone |  | City or Town |
| | |  | Hamlet |



PARK



All the work related to the **El Teuco Field Station** (a multifunctional center for research, training and tourism promotion) was completed. Within the station, 500 meters of elevated pedestrian footbridges were built so that wildlife can cross these areas on the ground without having to modify their route. Seven removable tents were installed (in case the river changes its course and the station has to be relocated), using a construction system that leaves no trace, minimizing impacts and protecting the fragile ecosystem of the El Impenetrable National Park.

During the construction process, several training courses were given for the local people, including workshops on plumbing, carpentry, sewing and energy, so that the communities could acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that

will allow them to be in charge of future construction projects in the region.

All the work on housing was completed for the Rewilding Argentina Communities Team located in Paraje La Armonía, the gateway to El Impenetrable National Park. The main house features a water collection roof and thermo-panel and gets its energy from a solar panel system that was installed for the entire neighborhood. It also has a community garden where group trainings are held. The presence of the community team in the area has allowed a bond of trust to be built with neighbors, a crucial first step in the work to develop regenerative economies and to advance the Entrepreneurs by Nature program that seeks to secure the well-being of the 250 families that live around the protected area.



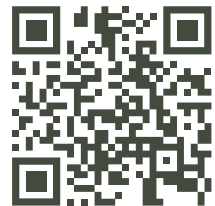
The Rewilding team working to establish a biodiversity baseline in El Impenetrable National Park have identified, as of December 2020, 364 species of arthropods. The species *Psecus sumptuosus*, which is part of this list, is a "jumping spider" that is able to learn, recognize and remember colors, skills that make it a strategic hunter. PHOTO: GERARDO CERÓN.

WILDLIFE



The movements and behaviour of Qaramta, one of the last jaguars in the Argentine Chaco, were followed closely. Qaramta (whose name means “indestructible” in the indigenous Qom language) will be key in the recovery of the jaguar in this region where it is nearly extinct. The territory covered and the prey hunted by Qaramta was studied and analyzed via information from the GPS satellite collar that was placed on the jaguar last year. This male stayed largely anchored to the national park because of the presence of Tania, a female captive jaguar who was brought from Iberá for this purpose. Working with people from local communities, a breeding enclosure of four acres (1,7 hectares) was built, which allows the wild male

to pair with the captive female, as there are no wild females in the region. As far as we know, this kind of wild-captive mating had never been tried before with any large predator. The two jaguars spent four days together and multiple mating attempts were recorded. The goal is for the female to have cubs. Once the principle threats to wildlife within the national park have been eliminated, the cubs will be released into the wild to begin to generate a new population of this species in the Argentine Chaco.



▶ WATCH VIDEO



The Operations team of the El Teuco Field Station in El Impenetrable National Park, made up primarily of people from local communities, erected 940 meters of a 7-meter high perimeter fence in record time to create a system of enclosures to help recover the jaguar in the Argentine Chaco. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.

To ensure the eventual release and survival of the future cubs, a strong **communication campaign** was launched, aiming to create a sense of provincial pride for the return of the jaguar. The campaign featured a series of videos showing the full story of Qaramta and Tania, from the construction of the pens to the mating of the jaguars; a song dedicated to the jaguars and a music video produced by a Chacoan singer; a series of Instagram live events with selected influencers; a music

spot broadcast on local radios; and a calendar for local people. Additionally, more than 130 press articles about the return of the jaguar to the Chaco province were published in regional newspapers. The articles focused on different strategic stakeholders supporting the reintroduction of the species, and in the case of politicians, highlighted the importance of this support as an important and laudable part of their policy.

EL IMPENETRABLE WILDLIFE

The **red-footed tortoise** is the largest land turtle in Argentina. Like other tortoises, it fills an important ecological role in the ecosystem as a consumer and disperser of seeds. In Argentina, the species is virtually extinct and although it might still survive in a few relict populations in the country, none are currently known. In order to reverse the process of extinction of this species in El Impenetrable National Park and probably in the whole Argentine Chaco region, a project was designed and approved for its reintroduction. The first individuals who will be liberated in this project have already been secured and will be brought to Argentina from a rescue center in Paraguay.

The population of **tapirs** that live in the national park were studied by using camera traps and data from satellite collars placed on four individuals. Their movements within the park were analyzed along with their dependence on available water. The information that was collected is very useful to better understand the ecology of this species and to improve strategies for its conservation. It is estimated that the population of tapirs of the park has good potential as a source of individuals to repopulate other areas where the tapir has disappeared.

A project to restore grasslands was presented to the **National Parks Administration**. The baseline study of biodiversity in the park continues: 68 species of plants, 65 species of arthropods, 22 species of birds, two species of fish, and four species of mammals were added to the species list during 2020. So far, 390 species of plants, 396 species of arthropods, 345 species of birds, 66 species of fish and 53 species of mammals have been recorded in El Impenetrable National Park.



The sicario spiders (*Sicarius boliviensis*) appeared on the planet 100 million years ago and in 2020 they were recorded for the first time in Argentina within El Impenetrable National Park, by Dr. Iván Magalhaes. This species, which stalks its prey by camouflaging itself in the dust, can live up to 15 years.

PHOTO: GERARDO CERÓN.



By placing collars with satellite technology on tapirs—for the first time in Argentina—the Rewilding team is able to study the biology and behavior of the species in El Impenetrable National Park, which then allows them to develop more effective conservation strategies. PHOTO: GERARDO CERÓN.

REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

**NEW PROGRAM:
ENTREPRENEURS
BY NATURE**



2,500

KG OF CAROB PODS
COLLECTED BY
25 FAMILIES

12

NEW
LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

As a response to the lack of tourism in the region due to the pandemic, a new program, called **Entrepreneurs by Nature**, was developed to expand the economic opportunities in communities surrounding the park. The program focuses on diversifying and strengthening local economies by developing products that have added value, a territorial brand and back-stories of how they enhance social welfare for local families. These products can be the engine of a new economic and social resurgence in regions marginalized by the traditional economy. The pride and social well-being that can be perceived among those engaged in this program engenders positive cultural identity and inspires in-migration to these rural towns, offering an inclusive future for women and youth.

A study was done to identify renewable, non-wood products that can be exported from the region. Mistol, carob and chañar were among the food products that were identified and a first trial collection of carob pods was carried out, with the

goal of eventually marketing the carob powder. In total, 2,500 kgs were collected by 25 families who benefited economically from this non-wood product that the forest around them provides. In terms of non-food products, the following were defined: woven and knitted wool handicrafts, wood handicrafts, decorative furniture, and ceramics. The complexities of manufacture (such as production time, design, the commitment of the artisans, etc.), the needs of the market and potential marketing channels were analyzed. Each of the participants in the program received several trainings, weekly support by the Communities Team of Rewilding Argentina, work tools and raw material (such as wool and looms for weaving), help with defining their final products, details of how to complete them, analysis of cost structure and final price, among other assistance. A total of 12 entrepreneurs developed unique handicrafts which were expressions of their cultural identity; the final pieces were sold in three different centers.



Francisco "Pancho" Monte is one of the "Entrepreneurs by Nature", a program of Fundación Rewilding Argentina, which promotes regenerative economies in areas surrounding National Parks through environmental education, capacity building in artisanal techniques and helping entrepreneurs develop products and services that can build the economy and regenerate the environment. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK



Peleros—a traditional part of a horse saddle—produced by the weavers of El Impenetrable National Park region, have become popular in one of the most important regional handicraft stores in Buenos Aires. PHOTO: COURTESY OF "FACÓN".

COMMUNITIES



The **Entrepreneurs by Nature program** also has the goal of improving the well-being of the families involved. A socio-economic survey of 217 families was conducted to define the most critical needs to improve their welfare. The results included access to potable water, food security (principally the need for vegetable gardens and chicken coops), renewable energy, and the legalization of land ownership/property titles. The long-term objective is for at least 50% of the families that surround El Impenetrable National Park to be part of the program and to generate regenerative economies that will contribute to their social welfare.

In terms of **food security**, a program of building gardens and chicken coops was developed to assure a diverse and balanced diet, and at the same

time, mitigate threats and decrease conflicts between the local fauna and domestic animals. Four gardens and two functioning chicken coops were built. Five workshops on building, planting and managing vegetable gardens were given for each family participating in the project.

A diagnosis of the current situation of **property titles for each of the park's neighbors** was made and with this information, the process of legalization was initiated. In addition, the construction of the Workshop School was started. Located on the banks of the Bermejito River just a few meters from the park entrance, this will be a space for trainings in trade and services, environmental educational talks, and a center for the exhibition and sale of handicrafts.



Through the creation of gardens and chicken coops, promoted by the Communities Team of Fundación Rewilding Argentina, families around El Impenetrable National Park have begun to produce their own fresh food; this higher quality diet has contributed to an improvement in health and well-being. PHOTO: CONSTANZA MOZZONI.



▶ WATCH VIDEO



In 2014, the 128,000-hectare El Impenetrable National Park was created, although it was only in 2017 that it was possible to enter and protect the area. In order to truly conserve a large, representative portion of this ecosystem and provide enough territory for sustainable populations of large mammals, including the jaguar, the park needs to expand to include the north bank of the Bermejo or Teuco River, which is currently outside of the northern boundary of the park. PHOTO: DOUGLAS TOMPKINS.

OBJECTIVES 2021

- Incorporate new tourism providers around the national park.
- Carry out a fundraising campaign with the goal of acquiring at least 32,000 acres (13,000 hectares) of key strategic lands in order to expand El Impenetrable National Park and to reduce the hunting of wildlife.
- Oversee the birth and management of the first jaguar cubs.
- Expand the work with local communities in two new locations: Nueva Población and El Chañar.
- Incorporate new products into the El Impenetrable territorial brand.





Captive jaguar "Tania" in El Impenetrable National Park. PHOTO: MATÍAS REBAK.

EL IMPENETRABLE

LIVES, REWILDED

THE STORY OF ZULMA

Zulma believed in the power of El Impenetrable National Park to provide opportunities to the local people from the very start. Today, she is happy that she chose to stay and that she is working to help more people to base their economy in non-extractive activities.



All the members of Zulma's family help to care for the garden they created with the help of the Foundation's Communities Team, as they transition to a more independent, healthy and environmentally friendly diet. PHOTO: ALEJANDRO AQUINO.

Zulma always knew that El Impenetrable National Park would be important for the local communities. “That’s why I stayed here even when my family wanted me to leave. Everything I do, I do for my children and I knew that the park was going to create opportunities for everyone here.”

Zulma was born in Castelli, in the Province of Chaco and grew up with her parents and her seven siblings in Campo Alegre—a farm located six kilometers from Paraje La Armonía—which is a small community located at the gateway of the park. She and her siblings rode horseback to the school in La Armonía every day.

After marrying, she, her husband and children moved to La Armonía to be close to the school. There, they built a house, and her husband worked for 14 years as a logger. After her husband died, Zulma had to go to work. She worked in the town of Castelli because there were not many opportunities in the small community of La Armonía prior to the creation of the national park. Later, she met Pedro, the project coordinator, and began to work in Rewilding Argentina.

Zulma’s job involves a variety of responsibilities including cooking and visiting members of the local communities who create wooden and woven handicrafts. “I really like visiting with people; I am very happy with my work and I love that I am always learning new things.”

As a girl, Zulma could not have imagined doing work so connected to nature, but today she greatly enjoys it. With the creation of the park, she says “it was something very beautiful, because I began to understand the value of nature, of the plants and the animals, and I learned many things.”

She adds “before I began to work (in the park), I had no experience with wild animals. But as we began to understand the value of wildlife through our connection with the park and the Foundation, we decided to align ourselves with conservation.”

Zulma believes that in the future many more people will come to visit the Park and adds that “all of the community will be united and moving forward with the park as an economic engine.” She says that she “is happy to be part of the Rewilding Argentina team” and hopes that in the future her children will be able to work with her in El Impenetrable National Park.

“I really like visiting
with people; I am very
happy with my work
and I love that
I am always learning
new things.”

Zulma Argarañaz
Local Community Leader,
El Impenetrable National Park.





The Tierra de Colores trail, in the Cañadón Pinturas Gateway section of Patagonia Park, leads hikers towards a surprising landscape dominated by uniquely vibrant tones, hidden in the folds of the arid Patagonian steppe. PHOTO: FLORIAN VON DER FECHT.



PATAGONIA

PROJECT



ECOREGION BEING RESTORED

Patagonian Steppe

PROJECT START

2011

CURRENT PROTECTED AREA

444,340 ^{ACRES}
(179,818 HECTARES)

TOTAL CARBON STORED

114,8 ^{MILLION}
METRIC TONNES

REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS

Puma, Guanaco, Austral Rail,
Wolffsohn's Viscacha, Huemul Deer

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Mauro Prati

WILDLIFE PROJECTS COORDINATOR

Emanuel Galetto

DONORS

Freyja Foundation,
Wyss Campaign for Nature,
Elsa Rosenvasser Feher

THE LAND OF COLORS

Although the Patagonian steppe covers around a quarter of Argentina, only 0.2% 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 first-class tourist infrastructure and public access to protected areas, and promoting authentic nature-tourism experiences such as hiking and viewing large mammals in the wild. Towards this end 444,000 acres (180,000 hectares) have already been acquired, out of which 257,000 acres (104,000 hectares) were already donated to the government and are legally protected.

The project is centered in two priority areas: the Buenos Aires Lake Plateau and the Pinturas Canyon, both with their respective public access gateways. Most of our activities this year were focused on developing the Pinturas Canyon Gateway. There, the Patagonian steppe is transformed into a surprisingly diverse landscape, made up of imposing cliffs with panoramic views of the Andean foothills, hills layered with varicolored earth and deep canyons.

This year was defined by an important alliance with the Provincial Government of Santa Cruz. In this respect, we donated 1,235 acres (500 hectares) which include the Cueva de las Manos (Cave of Hands)—a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the Pinturas Canyon; the donated land then became a provincial park. Communication through social media and regional and national press was vital in order to continue to position the region as a nature-tourism destination and to connect more of the local people with these extensive public parks. At the end of the season, more than 8,000 people came to discover this wildest part of the Patagonia steppe.

As this is a region devoted to livestock production, one of the biggest challenges continues to be to reduce the conflicts between pumas and sheep ranchers, while also having a healthy population of predators within the fragile Patagonia ecosystem. We strengthened our relationships with many of the neighboring ranchers by sharing with them the information about puma locations that we get from satellites monitoring the cats and by providing them with guard dogs for their flocks.

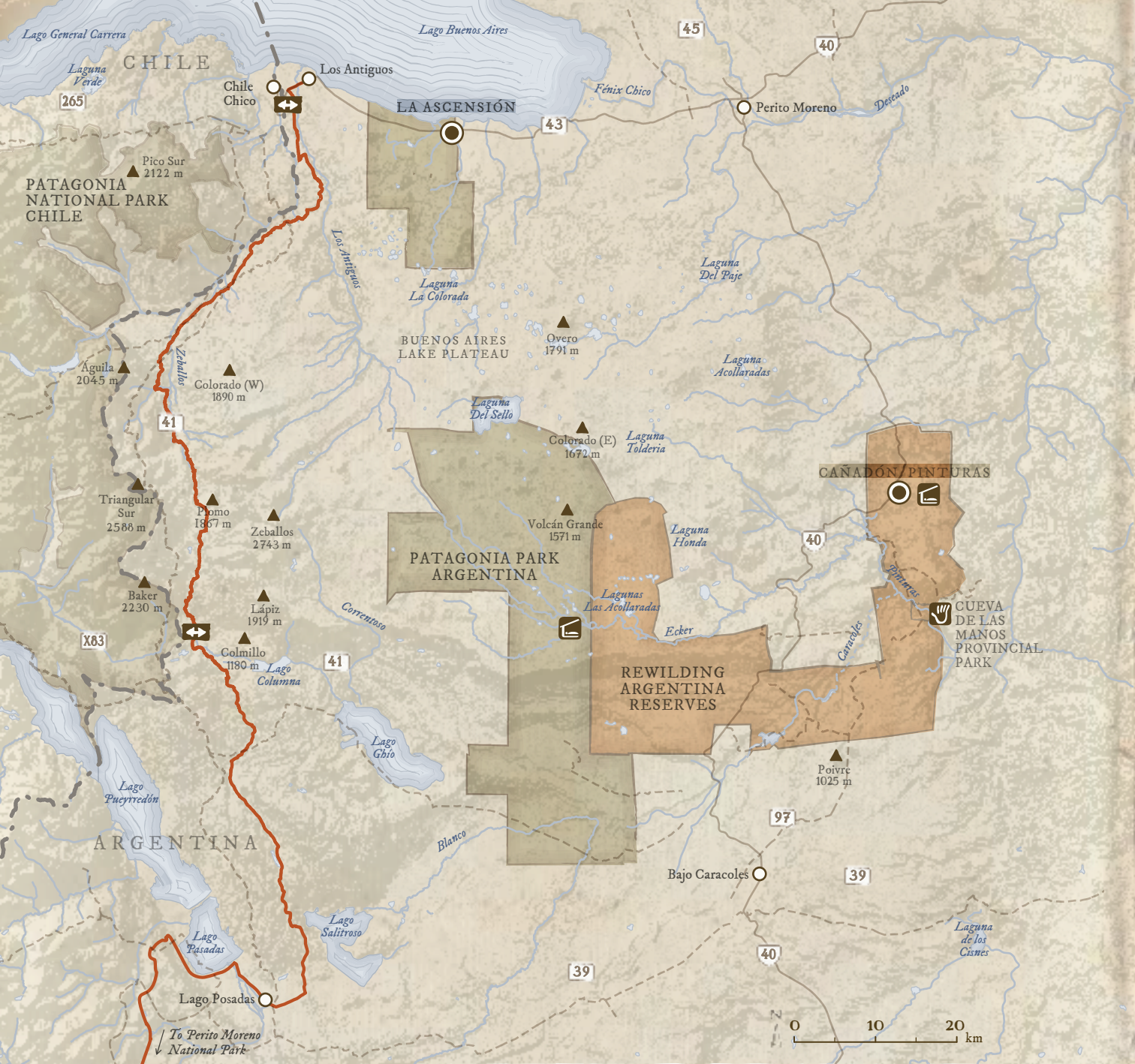




The renovated Bajada de los Toldos trail, which descends to the canyon and then crosses the Pinturas River, allows visitors to the Cañadón Pinturas Gateway of Patagonia Park to access the Cueva de las Manos Provincial Park, framed by sites of great cultural and natural value for humanity. PHOTO: FLORIAN VON DER FECHT.





► WATCH VIDEO





KEY

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
|  | Protected Areas |  | River |
|  | Gateway |  | Lake or Lagoon |
|  | Archaeological Site |  | National Boundary |
|  | Hut |  | International Crossing |
|  | Scenic Route 41 |  | Paved Road |
|  | Mount |  | Dirt road |
| | |  | City or Town |

PATAGONIA

PARK

1,235

ACRES
DONATED
TO THE GOVERNMENT



1

PROTECTED
AREA
CREATED

—Cueva de las Manos
Provincial Park—



1

GATEWAY
INAUGURATED

—Cañadón Pinturas—

Twenty years after Cueva de las Manos was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Rewilding Argentina donated 1,235 acres (500 hectares) that include the main cave area, conserving this most ancient archaeological site in Patagonia. With its more than 9,000 years of continuous occupation, the site finally belongs to the people and is protected as a Provincial Park. In order to open the new Provincial Park to the public—after six months of quarantine and closure—we collaborated with the provincial government on the maintenance of the infrastructure, painted the houses for the park guards and installed internet for visitors. In this participatory process, consensus was reached on the need for a new interpretative center for the Cueva de las Manos that will re-

flect the beauty and importance of the site, which will have a much lower visual impact than the current one and which will provide better service to visitors. The blueprint of the plan was approved by the provincial government and it is expected that it will be completed in the next three years.

The status of the National Historic Monument was expanded to include all of the middle basin of the Pinturas River, and the Charkamata Provincial Reserve was created. Both of these protection categories will, to a large degree, limit the expansion of mining across almost 1 million acres (400,000 hectares) of canyons and steppe, including many sites that were once occupied by our earliest human ancestors in the region.



The Governor of the province of Santa Cruz, Alicia Kirchner, accepts the donation by Fundación Rewilding Argentina of the lands that make up the Cueva de las Manos Provincial Park, which protects important archaeological and natural treasures of Argentina. PHOTO: GOVERNMENT OF SANTA CRUZ.

The Pinturas Canyon Gateway, the second public access gateway to the park, was re-inaugurated. Prior to the opening, all of the work on the La Posta de Los Toldos Refuge was completed and a chef from the nearby town of Perito Moreno was contracted to be in charge of the Auek Yenu café. All buildings were restored and all of the structures and landscaping were enhanced, unifying the aesthetic of all the buildings at this gateway headquarters. Signage was built and installed on the trails and their parking areas. The construction of a Route 40 Information Center was completed, which will help to attract the visitors who are traveling along this mythic route, as well as provide all the essential information for a great experience in this part of the park.

A new plan for a planetarium museum was approved by the provincial authorities and construction is ready to begin. The project was driven by Elsa Rosenvasser Feher, a recognized expert in

scientific communication and by the Spirit architecture and design team. The building, designed to be in harmony with the landscape, will be located near the canyons and will include 780 square meters of interactive exhibition halls. It will house a planetarium which will allow visitors to immerse themselves in the world of astronomy and the Patagonia night sky.

At the end of 2020, the governor of Santa Cruz, Alicia Kirchner, presented the book “Protected Areas of Northeast Santa Cruz”, which places new importance on the system of parks and reserves as the base of a new economy for the region. The book was declared by the Provincial legislative powers to be significant and of interest, as it supports a new vision for the region that is more attuned with the natural world. The book was created with the technical support and with contributions from the photographic team of Rewilding Argentina.



The Alero Charcamata site, which has great archaeological importance due to its cave paintings in a very good state of conservation, was used to demarcate the distinct territories of hunter-gatherers in their seasonal nomadism, giving the site even more significance in the evolution of regional rock art. PHOTO: FLORIAN VON DER FECHT.

PATAGONIA

WILDLIFE

RADIO
COLLARS
DEPLOYED

6

PUMAS

11

GUANACOS

20

KM OF FENCE
REMOVED TO
ENABLE GUANACO
MIGRATIONS



12

WOLFFSOHN'S
VISCACHAS
TRANSLOCATED

16

AUSTRAL RAILS
MARKED



70

ACRES OF
REED MARSHES
RESTORED AS
CRITICAL HABITAT
FOR AUSTRAL RAIL

The work of capturing and monitoring wildlife is a daily adventure. The ability to observe each detail of an animal is fundamental to be able to implement effective and rapid conservation actions.

The **puma** is the principal carnivore of the region and a keystone species in the Patagonia ecosystem. Its conservation is indispensable. On the other hand, the species is accused of coming into conflict with ranchers in the region, especially sheep ranchers, who blame it for predation on their flocks. In 2020, 11 additional pumas were captured, and VHF and GPS satellite radio collars were placed on six of them. This allows us to closely monitor a total of ten individual pumas. The data obtained shows that the pumas that were

captured within Patagonia Park have the greatest part of their territory within the park, and that 99% of their prey is wildlife, not livestock. The pumas that live in the park do not seem to be the source of the rancher-puma conflicts and livestock predation that they have been considered to be. Regardless, we will continue to work very closely with our neighboring ranchers in order to try to reduce the damage caused by pumas on their flocks. For this, we have donated two sheep guard dogs to the neighbor who has the largest number of sheep on his property. One of our proposed goals is for Patagonia sheep-ranchers to adopt rational methods to prevent predation on their animals, in order that pumas and livestock can better coexist.



The coexistence between pumas and livestock ranchers continues to be one of the greatest challenges in the region of Patagonia Park.
PHOTO: HERNÁN POVEDANO.



The use of sheepdogs, which is being implemented by neighbors of Patagonia Park in collaboration with the Foundation, has proven to be an excellent tool on the road towards peaceful coexistence between predators and ranchers. PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI.



By deploying collars with satellite technology on 26 guanacos, we are obtaining information about the movements and routes used by this large herbivore in the Patagonia Park region. PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI.

The **guanaco** is the largest herbivore of the Patagonia region, and in the past they amassed into vast herds for seasonal migrations, which today have mostly disappeared. In Patagonia Park, the guanacos appear to continue their seasonal movements, at least partially. During 2020, we captured 11 guanacos and equipped them with VHF and GPS satellite collars, increasing the total number of individuals that can be monitored to 26. This technology has allowed us to map one of the last migratory routes in the region and to work to remove obstacles to their movements, such as fences, which trap migrating animals and cause high mortality. The migrations, in addition to being an incredible visual spectacle, are essential to relieve pressure on the plants of their grazing lands and therefore to prevent erosion.

The **Wolffsohn's viscacha** is a rodent with a very restricted range, only inhabiting rocky cliffs. The species is threatened and has disappeared from many of these cliffs, mostly because it is hunted for its meat and pelt. Once a colony of the animals is extirpated from a cliff, it is very difficult for others to recolonize the area because colonies are isolated one from another. During 2020, 12 viscachas were captured and individuals equipped with VHF equipment in order to obtain the first information about the natural history of this species and to be able to create plans for its conservation. Sections of the canyon were identified where the species had been extirpated and reintroduction work is beginning. In this regard, three family groups were translocated to these rocky cliffs.



The **austral rail** is an almost unknown bird that inhabits the rare reed marshes, known as “juncales”, of the arid Patagonia steppe. Currently, very few of these reed marshes that are critical habitat for this bird remain, having been mostly destroyed by the overgrazing of livestock, by fire, or because water has been diverted to irrigate pastures. We are restoring the marshes which shelter the last populations of the austral rail, in order to try to increase their numbers. A few individuals have been marked in order to obtain some basic information of its biology and ecology, which is largely still unknown. This will allow us to work towards the reintroduction of austral rails, translocating the birds to reed marshes where the species has disappeared.

Little is known about the austrail rail (*Rallus antarcticus*), a small bird threatened with extinction that inhabits certain reed wetlands of the Patagonian steppe. Currently, we are monitoring some individuals to obtain information about behaviour so we can design strategies to help conserve the species. PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI.

The **huemul** deer is the most threatened deer on the American continent. Only 2,000 individuals survive in the forests of the Andean foothills in the Patagonia regions of Chile and Argentina. Although the huemul is protected in several national parks in the country, its numbers continue to decline and it has actually disappeared from several conservation areas. With the objective of understanding more of this species' particular ecology and to be able to better understand the causes of its decline even in protected areas, a project was developed to capture, collar and monitor several individuals with satellite technology. The project has been approved in Chubut Province and remains to be approved by Santa Cruz Province and the National Parks Administration.

The huemul (*Hippocamelus bisulcus*) is the other great herbivore of Patagonia, along with the guanaco. In the past, it inhabited the Patagonia steppe, including the Pinturas River canyon, where it was common until the late 1800s. Hunting, competition with livestock for pasture, and the diseases introduced by cattle and sheep, drastically reduced the huemul population, relegating it to the most inaccessible areas of the Andean Cordillera in southern Chile and Argentina, where the last 2,000 deer now survive. PHOTO: HERNÁN POVEDANO.





In addition to being an economic engine, nature tourism promotes the coexistence between people and wildlife in a wild, vital and naturally beautiful environment. In Patagonia Park, where animals are protected, guanacos quickly lose their fear of humans and allow themselves to be photographed at close range in the vicinity of the La Posta de Los Toldos refuge. PHOTO: FLORIAN VON DER FECHT.

REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

NETWORK
OF NATURE
TOURISM
CREATED



"LET THE WILD
DISCOVER YOU"
COMMUNICATION
CAMPAIGN
DEVELOPED

During this year, we intensified the work we are doing together with the Tourism Directorates of the communities surrounding the park and with the National Parks Administration. Working together, the **"Network of Nature Tourism"** was created with the objective of strengthening links in regional communication and to promote the tourism destination to provincial, national and international markets in a unified way. This work has already resulted in a great increase in the number of visitors to the Pinturas Canyon Gateway—8,421 visitors entered the gateway, 70% Argentinean and 30% of foreign origin.

Together with the tourism authorities of the province, a **Tourism App is being developed for the Province of Santa Cruz**, which will function as an alternative to brochures. The app will show the tourist attractions of the region—its towns, parks and reserves, hiking and backpacking options, and places to view wildlife. The app will be able to be used offline, due to the general lack of internet and mobile phone service in the region.

Patagonia Park became **the most emerging tourist destination in northeastern Santa Cruz**. To reach this status, more than 60 articles were published about nature tourism, local wildlife and communities. Signage was also placed in the airports of the region and along Route 40, indicating the proximity of Patagonia Park. Numerous talks about Patagonia Park were organized and held at the regional and national Universities.

A communication campaign, **"Let the Wild Discover You"**, was developed with the goal of positioning the Pinturas Canyon gateway in Patagonia Park as a unique destination for hiking and wildlife viewing and as the engine to drive local economies. Themed outings were led by teams made up of ambassadors, nature guides, and local tourist operators; where they presented environmental education events led by the project's scientific team; held cultural and artistic events; had themed conversations via social media; and created an audiovisual presentation that is shown daily at the gateway and that invites visitors to learn about the "Economy of Nature" model.

COMMUNITIES

3

NEW LOCAL
ENTREPRENEURS
**WORKING IN
THE PARK**



**"YOU ARE
AT HOME"
PROGRAM
DEVELOPED**

We helped and supported the first local businesses at the Pinturas Canyon Gateway—El Choique and Auek Yenu. In the first case, after several months of training, the entrepreneur launched his business of guided visits and wildlife viewing in the park with support to develop his brand and marketing skills. There was also work done in the consolidation of the Auek Yenu café business, including capacity building in accounting, marketing and cooking.

On the education side, **collaboration with educational institutions** allowed for the dissemination of digital materials about the region (the Patagonia Park book, magazines about wildlife watching, brochures). Additionally, talks were given in various schools; public polls were held to

select the names of the two captured pumas; and a calendar with a map of the park circuit and illustrating native species was created and distributed to the municipal government of Perito Moreno. And lastly, the first **International Puma Day Festival** was held, oriented towards local communities.

The **"You are at home"** program was created jointly with the municipalities with the goal of highlighting the importance of connecting the communities with their public, natural spaces. To accomplish this, visits to protected areas by people from local communities were encouraged through activities that highlighted the healing power of natural spaces and the fact that parks are public spaces.



"You are at home" is a program promoted by the Patagonia Park Communities Team whose mission is to connect people with natural spaces through hiking, wildlife watching and environmental education. PHOTO: MELISA QUINTERO.



Facundo Epul is a native of Perito Moreno and through his new business, El Choique, he offers guided wildlife viewing excursions, a favorite activity for visitors who come to the Cañadón Pinturas Gateway in search of experiences in nature. PHOTO: CANOA FILMS.



In addition to its scenic value, the Zeballos volcanic complex is at the center of a geological interpretative circuit in the region near Patagonia National Park. It has great potential for mountain activities and with access via trails starting from Route 41 that link the complex to the rest of the meseta. PHOTO: FRANCO BUCCI.



PATAGONIA

OBJECTIVES 2021

- Support the creation of Monte Zeballos Provincial Park, in order to protect 148,000 additional acres (60,000 hectares).
- Begin the study and monitoring of huemul deer.
- Reactivate post-pandemic tourism services.
- Find a local entrepreneur to take on the concession of the La Posta de los Toldos Refuge.
- Develop the Cueva de las Manos Interpretive Center and design the displays and other content.



PATAGONIA

LIVES, REWILDED

THE STORY OF ROCÍO

Rocío was born in Perito Moreno in Santa Cruz Province. Her great-grandparents were among some of the first Spanish settlers who came to the Argentine Patagonia region at the beginning of the 20th century. When they arrived, the farm on which Rocío was raised (and where she still lives) was a woodland of calafate and molle bushes.



Rocío Navarro, coordinator of the Communities program, educates the future guardians of the Cañadón Pinturas Gateway. One of the goals of the creation of the Patagonia Park is to restore the connection that neighboring communities have with nature, with the land and wildlife. PHOTO: MELISA QUINTERO.

When she visualizes her childhood, Rocío remembers always being connected to the land, planting potatoes, harvesting peas, making up stories while climbing the fruit trees or feeding the farm animals. “In my memory, I always see myself as a little girl playing in the alfalfa fields, looking up and seeing the Lake Buenos Aires Plateau in the distance. It was an absolutely unexplored place for me and my family; we had no access to it. I wondered if it was really that light blue color as it appeared from miles away, if it was water or mountain.”

As she grew older, she began to see the changes that her home was going through. The woodlands of calafate and molle bushes were replaced by alfalfa fields and domestic animals, and then the mining industry arrived and new neighborhoods for the workers were built which covered the irrigation ditches. She knew something was wrong.

In her teens, Rocío became an inveterate environmentalist. A talk given in her high school by a neighbor to raise environmental awareness changed her life. At university she studied performing arts and during this time, she and friends formed a youth group that used art, performance and protest to put the environmental problems of the region on the political and social agenda. “We realized that mining was continuing to advance and what we were doing was not enough to deal with it. I had to pause and rethink how I could build the world that I wanted, because it was obvious that staying in the trenches was no longer productive. I already knew what I did NOT want for this place, I needed to build what I did want.” Together with her partner, they started a bio-construction and permaculture project, an initiative that allowed them to use their own resources to begin to build “that world”.

“One day I read in the news that a Foundation that works to create Parks was concerned about a

mining company that had been exploiting the area for several years. I felt an urgent need to be a part of that effort. These people had arrived who shared my convictions and I could not miss the opportunity to meet them. I sent them a message and the next day Carolina called me, who was coordinating the Patagonia Park project at that time. From then until now, we have done a lot of great things.” Rocío has been working at Rewilding Argentina since 2018. She worked for a year as a volunteer and then became part of the communications team.

Rocío currently is in charge of the community-outreach program at Patagonia Park. “My mission is to involve the neighbors of the park so that they can learn, experience and reconnect, rediscovering the natural wonders of their homeland, expanding the narrow thinking that they had become accustomed to and opening them to new possibilities, to new horizons so that they can find ways—economic, social, recreational—to sustain a lifestyle that

respects the environment and future generations.” One of the Patagonia Park team’s great achievements in 2020 was the creation of the “Nature Tourism Network” that aims to strengthen communication collaborations across the region so that it can present a unified front in promotion as a tourism destination to provincial, national and international markets. Rocío also works with entrepreneurs, educational institutions and local communities.

“I dream of a great Park that protects this land where we were born and raised. For me, Patagonia Park is and will always be the place where wild and thriving nature is accessible to all people, regardless of their social status. A place where children are not separated by great distances from these wild landscapes, only imagining what they are like. A place where we can continue to reaffirm our roots. A place where the word ‘future’ exists.”

“Each one of us
is important in the work
to build a more beautiful
planet, and personal
experience has taught me
that the key is to feel
part of these efforts
and take action. We can
always dream and
we can always do.”



Caleta Hornos, 29 kilometers south of Camarones, in Patagonia Azul, is the site of the first attempt to found a stable colony in present-day Argentina. It was called Nueva León by Simón de Alcazaba y Sotomayor and his expedition, who were forced to land there in 1535, even before the founding of Buenos Aires. PHOTO: DARIO PODESTÀ.



PATAGONIA AZUL PROJECT



ECOREGION BEING RESTORED
Patagonian Steppe, Argentine Sea

PROJECT START
2019

CURRENT PROTECTED AREA
49,975 ACRES
(20,224 HECTARES)

TOTAL CARBON STORED
2,05 MILLION
METRIC TONNES

REWILDING SPECIES PROJECTS
Gracilaria Algae, Puma

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Diana Friedrich

WILDLIFE PROJECTS COORDINATOR
Lucas Beltramino

DONORS
Arcadia Fund, Lisa Holmes, Dona Bertarelli,
Quincey and Dan Imhoff, Tompkins Conservation

A SEA OF POSSIBILITY

Patagonia Azul occupies a coastal area where two of the largest western boundary currents of the world ocean (the Brazil and the cold and nutrient rich Malvinas currents) converge. These currents give rise to the highest productivity and biodiversity rates in the Argentine sea. The sandy beaches, rocky coves, and over 60 islands included in the project provide key breeding, feeding and migration sites for a wide diversity of marine birds, mammals, fish and invertebrates.

The project area is immersed in the 7,660,000-acre (1,900,000 hectares) UNESCO Patagonia Azul Biosphere Reserve and also contains the Interjurisdictional Patagonia Austral Marine Coastal Park (PIMCPA). Although these conservation categories confirm the conservation value of the region, their protection is insufficient and inadequately enforced, leaving most of the landscape and its biodiversity vulnerable to harmful human activities such as industrial fishing, invasive exotic species, and hunting. In the sea, bottom trawling for shrimp is destroying the seabed, depleting fish stocks, and creating untreated organic waste that contaminates local groundwater. On land, a century of intensive sheep ranching has led to the desertification of the fragile Patagonian steppe and threatened the remaining top predators and herbivores.

The Patagonia Azul project seeks to promote the restoration of ecosystems and the transformation of the local economy from extractive to restorative. The objective is to create soundly managed parks on land and sea, restore ecosystems and boost a local regenerative economy within the rich coastal ecosystem of Patagonia Azul.

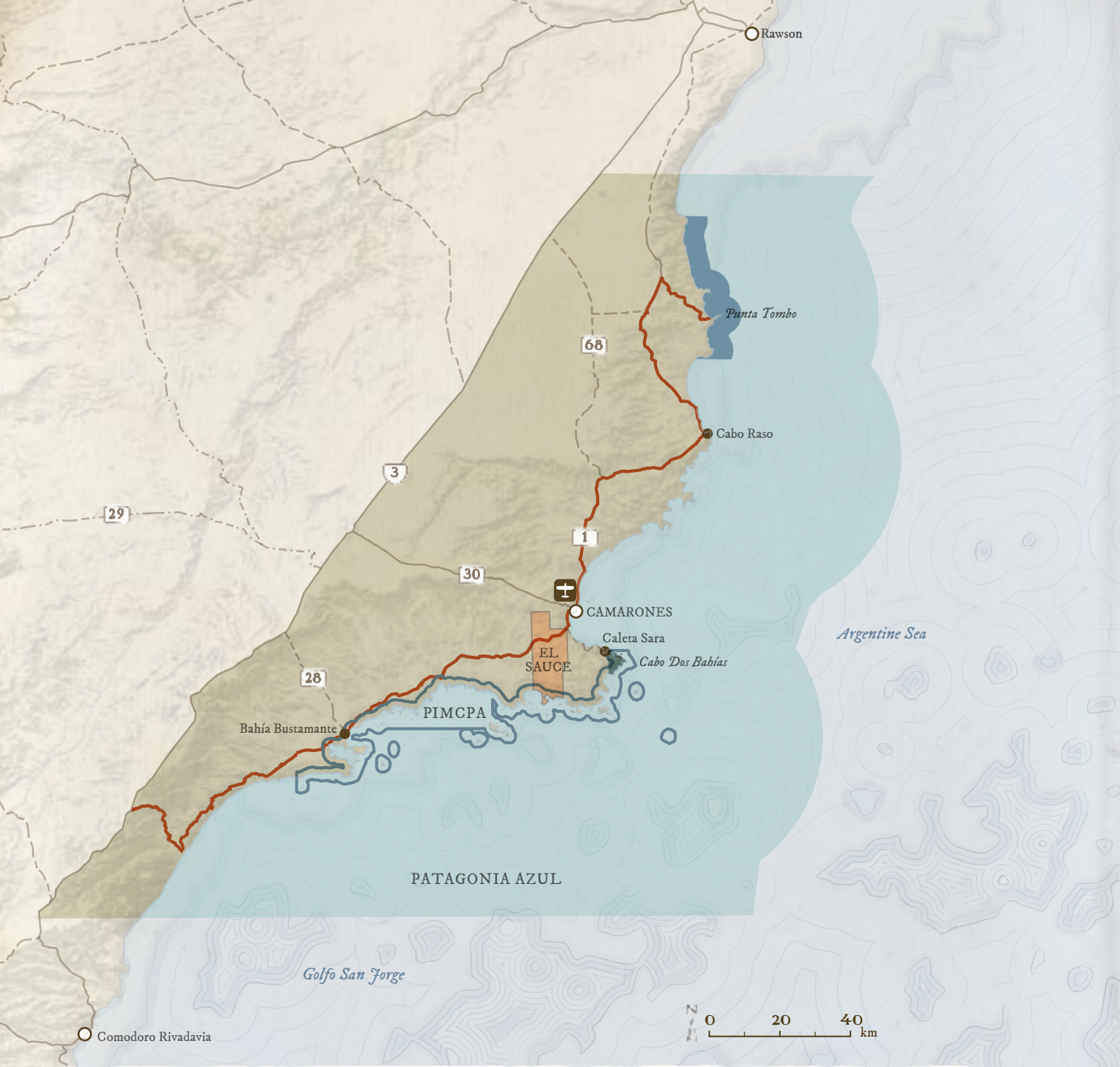
The year 2020 was a year of construction and growth for the Patagonia Azul project—construction not just of infrastructure, but of a young and passionate team that grew strong in the face of the well-known ecological crisis that the world is going through. We slowly became part of the community by suggesting and becoming involved in community projects in a very genuine way, because the local reality directly affects our daily lives. We learned that as a large organization, we can support the community in many ways, but that there is nothing more important than being part of the change that we are promoting.

At **sea**, we explored the subaquatic ecosystems and concluded that it is possible to start restoring some of the damage that was done, mainly to the algae prairies. In the **islands**, we observed a high environmental deterioration, mainly of the flora, caused by introduced invasive species. We are developing a project to remove such species.


















The beach cleaning projects that we do together with the group "Amigos del Mar" from Camarones have a tangible positive impact on the community's own environment and are an excellent tool to connect and promote environmental education in the community. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.

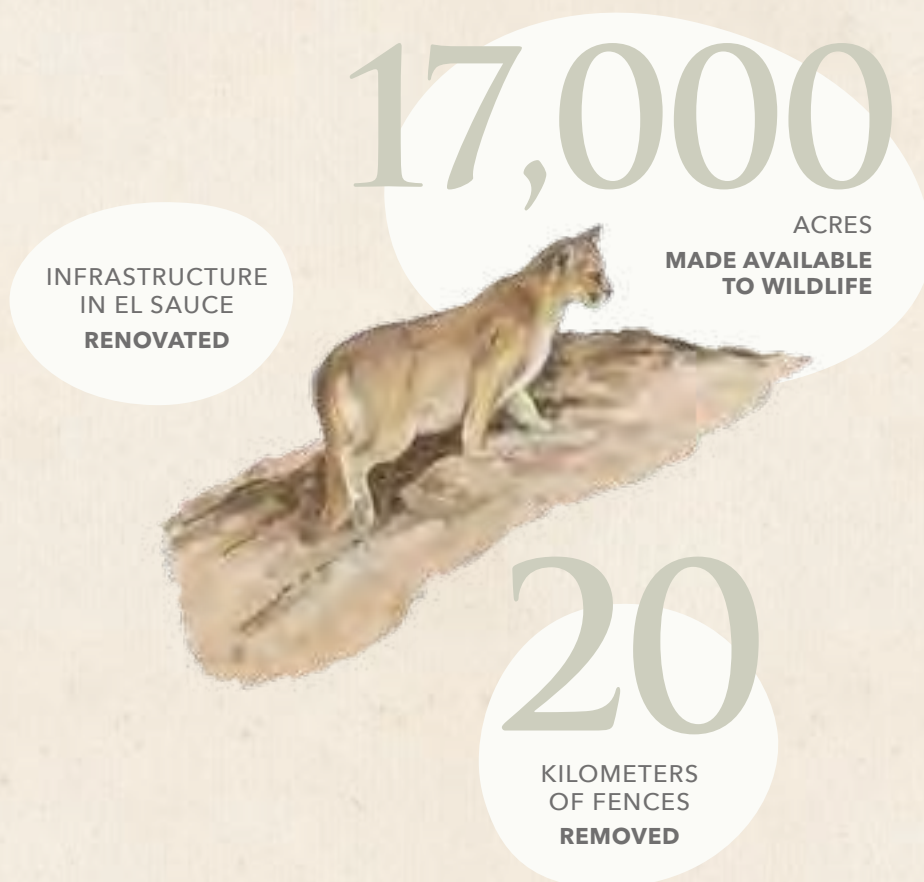


KEY

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
|  | Biosphere Reserve -Terrestrial Area- |  | Scenic Route |
|  | Biosphere Reserve -Marine Area- |  | Paved Road |
|  | Provincial Park |  | Unpaved Road |
|  | Marine Protected Area |  | Dirt Road |
|  | PIMCPA |  | Town |
|  | Rewilding Reserve |  | Hamlet |
| | |  | Airfield |



PARK



El Sauce is the first property that was acquired by the Patagonia Azul Project. **Several new construction projects** enhanced the property's much needed infrastructure. Existing accommodation units were renovated, making space for at least 12 permanent workers. Water, gas and energy systems were reconstructed and a storehouse was built for the boat and scuba diving equipment. In total, 30 kilometers of roads were maintained over the year with new equipment that was purchased, such as a backhoe loader and a tractor. Additionally, **20 kilometers of fences were removed** clearing 17,000 acres (7,000 hectares) of coastal land for

to be used exclusively by wildlife. Also, much garbage and old useless infrastructure was removed. An artificial wetland that was invaded by Tamarix species was restored by removing 3,2 acres (1,3 hectares) of densely grown thicket, and the dam wall was repaired so that the rainwater accumulates again, attracting a large variety of wildlife and waterfowl. A campsite was designed and its construction has begun.

The Patagonia Azul team welcomed a **new community development manager**, as well as new workers within logistics and maintenance: the team grew rapidly from four in 2019 to 11 people.

PATAGONIA AZUL PARK



The infrastructure of the old headquarters of the El Sauce ranch is being renovated, respecting the local architectural tradition. The use of materials and colors in tune with the surroundings ensure that the buildings blend in harmoniously with the landscape. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.



In 2020, 2,400 sheep were taken from the pastures of El Sauce, part of the Patagonia Azul project. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.



The removal of 20 kilometers of fence of the El Sauce ranch in Patagonia Azul will allow the native fauna to move freely through the park, which will also improve the health of the fragile Patagonian soil. PHOTO: LUCAS BELTRAMINO.

WILDLIFE

3
NATIVE
HERBIVORES
SPECIES
**BEING
MONITORED**



1
**COLLARED
PUMA**

1
PROJECT
TO ERADICATE
EXOTIC SPECIES
FROM ISLANDS
**PRESENTED TO
GOVERNMENT
AUTHORITIES**



1
PROJECT TO RESTORE
GRACILARIA ALGAE PRAIRIES
**PRESENTED TO GOVERNMENT
AUTHORITIES**

On land, we began to **study native fauna populations**, especially those that are often identified as coming into conflict with livestock production, specifically with sheep ranching. In El Sauce property, we have kept 3,000 heads of sheep and it is our intention to show that wildlife and livestock can coexist. To that end, we have devised ways of monitoring the wildlife to determine the number

of the main herbivores in the area—guanacos, lesser rheas and Patagonian maras—who are thought to compete with livestock for pasture. Since the ranchers in the area perceive the puma as a predator of sheep, we fitted a puma with the first GPS collar that has satellite connection, so that we can learn its movements and eating habits.



The Patagonia Azul Rewilding team deploys an Iridium GPS collar on a puma to evaluate the habits and movements of this feline in the region where it is considered a threat to sheep ranching. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.



The use of camera traps at Estancia El Sauce in Patagonia Azul, provides us with information that we use to study the abundance of herbivores in the region, such as the guanaco, the choique and the Patagonian mara. CAMERA TRAP PHOTO.



The Magellanic penguin is one of the seabirds that is most affected by the presence of exotic species on islands. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.



The Patagonia Azul Rewilding team plants gracilaria algae (*Gracilaria gracilis*) in an experimental study in Arredondo Bay, El Sauce Ranch.
PHOTO: MATÍAS DI MARTINO.

On the islands, we developed a project to eradicate invasive non-native species, starting with rabbits and cats. Cats prey on chicks and adults of the many species of seabirds that use the islands for nesting. Rabbits degrade nesting sites by consuming the vegetation (which acts as cover for the nests of many species). The numerous burrows they dig also reduces the area available for nesting. Eradication projects are being discussed with the National Parks Administration.

At sea, we are working to restore the marine meadows of the most over-exploited algae species in the area—*Gracilaria gracilis*. This species was heavily harvested in the past to produce agar and many of the underwater meadows where it once flourished have disappeared. We have designed a restoration project for two of the places where exploitation was most intense (Arredondo and Melo Bays), which is being reviewed for approval by the authorities of Chubut Province.



Southern right whales in Patagonia Azul. PHOTO: LUCAS BELTRAMINO.

REGENERATIVE ECONOMY

REGENERATIVE
RANCH MANAGEMENT
METHODS
BEING IMPLEMENTED



PARTNERSHIP
WITH LOCAL SCHOOL
TO CREATE
A REGENERATIVE OCEAN
FARMING PROJECT

Projects were scouted to create local, **small-scale regenerative products** to generate genuine, meaningful employment, train entrepreneurs, create a sense of pride and belonging, regenerate the environment and reduce impact of extractive activities.

The Patagonia Azul team partnered with the local school's mussel-farming project to create a **small-scale regenerative ocean farming project**. The aim is to add native species to the ocean farm, such as the macroalgae *Macrocystis*, *Gigartina* and *Gracilaria*, and shellfish such as oysters,

clams, scallops and other mussels, and to train entrepreneurs and develop products for sale at a local and regional level.

On regenerative ranch management, changes in management and wildlife-friendly ranching methods have been implemented on El Sauce to regenerate soil and vegetation and recover wildlife. The aim is to serve as a good example for neighboring ranches to experiment with new management methods and expand the regenerative culture beyond the project.



In Arredondo Bay, off the coast of El Sauce Ranch, the Patagonia Azul rewilding team explore the conditions necessary for restoring depleted algae prairies. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.

COMMUNITIES



Camarones, the community that is located in the project area, joined the **global Transition Movement**. A small group of ten local members was assembled to involve the local population in transitioning the town towards increased resilience by promoting local food production, renewable energy, bio-architecture with local materials and energy efficient housing, efficient water management and a local currency. The first step was to create an **urban agriculture project** that aims to produce local vegetables, educate about healthy food, involve people in working with the soil and connect with nature. Consequently, 3,000 hours of volunteering have been recorded by **Transition Camarones** in 2020. A municipal area has been handed over to the transition group, a 16x32m greenhouse has been built, INTA (Federal Agricultural Research System in Argentina) members have visited the project twice and given one workshop to ten people. Strategic alliances were built

with the local school, the National Parks Administration and the municipality.

Another group, **Friends of the Sea** was created to focus on education campaigns, waste reduction and management, and plastic pollution in the ocean. Eight large beach clean-ups have been organized, involving between 15 and 50 people at each event. A **recycling station** was donated to Camarones by the National Government and funds for a recycling plant have been requested.

Together, these two groups have accomplished the creation of a municipal committee that allows citizens and especially environmental organizations such as Rewilding Argentina, the National Parks Administration, Friends of the Sea and Transition Camarones to participate in environmental decisions. The committee has been successfully created.



The new greenhouse, more than 500 m², was built thanks to the Municipality of Camarones, the Transition team, the Camarones community and Fundación Rewilding Argentina. It will produce fresh organic vegetables for local consumption. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.



The Camarones group "Amigos del Mar" promotes care for the environment by cleaning beaches and open spaces in the community. In addition, they use environmental education to help reverse the environmental problems generated by marine-coastal pollution. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.



The sea as a school: the Foundation's "Club del Mar (Sea Club)" program promotes actions that connect the Camarones community with the sea and teaches them about the valuable nature that thrives below the surface. The spectacle of the underwater fauna captivates adults and children on a dive in the intertidal zones along the beaches of Camarones. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.



The small inlets and sandy beaches of La Península, on the Chubut coast, offer sublime views in an infinite range of shades of blue and green and a horizon without limits. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.

PATAGONIA AZUL

OBJECTIVES 2021

- Acquire land to increase the area under protection.
- Open the Camarones Gateway to the park to public use.
- Start the restoration project of the Gracilaria algae.
- Start the restoration of the islands.
- Start the regenerative ocean farming project.



PATAGONIA AZUL

LIVES, REWILDED

THE STORY OF ENZO

A high school teacher leading
the marine conservation movement
of a small coastal town.



Enzo is an expert diver and enjoys sharing his techniques and knowledge not only about diving but also about the marine wildlife that is part of the Camarones' ecosystem. PHOTO: MAIKE FRIEDRICH.

Enzo Bonanno was born in Camarones, a tiny coastal town that sits lost in the immense Patagonian steppe. When he was five years old, his family moved away but returned to Camarones when he was a teenager.

“My mom used to give me one of those big shells and tell me to hold it against my ear, and I would fall asleep listening to the sound of the waves and the wind. When we moved back I was turning 14, and as I saw that endless blue all the way to the horizon, and smelled the salty air, I knew I was coming home again.”

In high school he became interested in aquaculture and marine biology. After graduating, he moved seven hours away to get a degree in fisheries production and marine culture: “I started to realize back then that the damage fisheries are doing to entire ecosystems is massive.” Then he started working on fishing vessels to make a living. His observations made him think that everyone should be concerned about what is happening out in the ocean.

Enzo began to rethink his role in society, a life-changing process which led him to teaching. For the last four years he has been a secondary school teacher in Camarones, and the leader of the school’s experimental aquaculture farm focused on native fish and mollusks.

But his pet project is leading Friends of the Ocean, a volunteer group started by one of his students. It began as a small group of students cleaning beaches together, their latest project was organizing a festival to clean up the coast of Camarones. Half the town joined in.

For Enzo, Friends of the Ocean represents how action could change the youth perspective on environmental issues such as overfishing and climate change. He also sees it as an opportunity for his community to rediscover nature and pursue more sustainable development: “Camarones has yet to realize the value of what we have here naturally... Living within nature, without destroying it.”

“Camarones has yet to realize the value of what we have here naturally...
Living within nature, without destroying it.”

Enzo Bonnano

Enzo teaches in a high school in Camarones, works in a small aquaculture initiative, and leads a local environmental volunteer group.





PHOTO: JOEL REYERO.



SIN AZUL NO HAY VERDE

(NO BLUE, NO GREEN)

REWILDING ARGENTINA'S
MARINE PROGRAM

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Martina Sasso

DONORS

Patagonia, Oceans 5

THE WILD TIP OF SOUTH AMERICA

Winding 7,000 kilometers down the backbone of South America, the Andes mountain range reaches its southern end at Argentina's Península Mitre. Maritime travelers like Charles Darwin were the first to document this remote region. Since the voyage of the Beagle, these landscapes, unlike those in so many other parts of the Americas, have remained mostly intact with little human intervention. Today this wild and windy environment plays a crucial role in mitigating global climate change.

Thanks to its peatlands, Península Mitre is the most important carbon sink in Argentina; it stores 315 million metric tons of carbon. This is the equivalent of over three years of carbon dioxide emissions from all of Argentina, according to the most recent national survey. Moreover, Mitre has a unique marine ecosystem; it is located where the Atlantic and Pacific oceans meet Antarctic currents, creating a marine corridor that links the breeding and foraging grounds of many migratory species. Additionally, Península Mitre is home to 50% of Argentina's kelp forests, and also harbors endangered species such as the striated caracara (*Phalacrocorax australis*) and the southern river otter (*Lontra provocax*).

In 2018, we joined local organizations that had been working to protect the peninsula for over 15 years. Our collective vision is for Península Mitre and its surrounding waters to become a provincial park and a no-take marine protected area, in order to ensure the permanent conservation of its biodiversity and valuable ecosystems. Obtaining protected status is key to ensuring that this remote area will help mitigate climate change long into the future. In addition, the protected area will be a unique destination with the potential to become an engine for local economies via nature-based tourism.





95% of the peatlands in Argentina are located in the province of Tierra del Fuego, and are mostly concentrated in the Península Mitre, where 45% of the surface area is peat. PHOTO: JOEL REYERO.



KEY

Future Península Mitre
Terrestrial Protected Area

Future Península Mitre
Marine Protected Area

Isla de los Estados
Natural Reserve

Other Protected Area

▲ Mount

— River

— Lake or Lagoon

- - - International Boundary

— Paved Road

- - - Dirt road

○ Town



RESULTS

**TIERRA DEL FUEGO
DECLARED THE
CONTRACORRIENTE
DOCUMENTARY
OF PROVINCIAL
INTEREST**

**THE
SOUTHERN RIVER OTTER
WAS DECLARED AS
A PROVINCIAL
NATURAL HERITAGE
IN TIERRA DEL FUEGO**



**A PROVINCIAL DECREE
DECLARED
PENÍNSULA MITRE
OF ENVIRONMENTAL
INTEREST**

The project to create Península Mitre Provincial Park was re-proposed to the provincial legislature. The provincial government reviewed the project and expressed its support for the creation of the area, signing a Decree that provisionally declares Península Mitre of environmental interest until the law is approved. The Decree went into effect in December 2020, granting the area temporary protection.

We worked together with the Municipality of Tolhuin to **promote its development in the realm of nature tourism**. Tolhuin is in a strategic location for accessing the Península, and in order to help the local Tourism Directorate become ambassadors of this gateway to the future protected area, a network of trails, informative posters and brochures were proposed. The first trail and two brochures were completed, one with tourist information about the city and the other describing the options for nature tourism.

PENÍNSULA MITRE RESULTS

The documentary *Contracorriente* was filmed and screened to present the consequences of industrial salmon farming with the aim of preventing this industry from establishing itself in the Beagle Channel before it is too late. The documentary was declared of provincial interest by the Legislature of Tierra del Fuego. Participants in making and screening the film included the team from Fundación Rewilding Argentina, other organizations (FARN, Greenpeace, Patagonia, Oceana, Beagle Secretos Del Mar), the scientific community, members of the provincial government, and others involved in the fight against the destructive practices of salmon farming in our country and Chile, with whom we share the Beagle Channel and its fragile ecosystem.



Nudibranchs (*Nudibranchia*), commonly called “sea slugs”, are very commonly found in the Beagle Channel (Tierra del Fuego), where there are various species. PHOTO: BEAGLE SECRETOS DEL MAR.



To combat the diseases caused by overcrowding of fish in cages, the salmon farming industry uses antibiotics, anti-parasitics and chemicals that then enter the marine food chain and affect the health of numerous species, including humans. PHOTO: ÁLVARO VIDAL.

The environmental and socio-economic consequences of consuming farmed salmon are increasingly understood to be devastating for cultures and ecosystems, similar to the impact of other intensive and extractive production systems around the world. Because of this, we presented to the National Food Commission a **formal re-**

quest to correctly label all products produced by aquaculture (salmon farming and other artificial aqua-farming) so that consumers be informed and can exercise their right to choose what they consume but also what production system they want to support.

PENÍNSULA MITRE RESULTS

The **huillín**, or southern river otter, is a species of otter endemic to Patagonia that is classified as critically endangered. It lives only in Patagonia, and the last 50 otters are distributed in three populations across the Province, one in the Tierra del Fuego National Park, another in Isla de los Estados and a third in Península Mitre.

The species has become an emblem of conservation in Tierra del Fuego. When we started working here, the importance of its role as the top predator of the Province's coastal ecosystem was largely unknown. In a place where exotic species

unfortunately abound, the beaver and American mink were more known and “popular”. But thanks to the help of Dr. Alejandro Valenzuela, a CONICET and UNTDF specialist, we worked together to educate people about the importance of this incredible otter that, through its habits and behavior, connects the land and sea of Tierra del Fuego. **The Legislature of Tierra del Fuego declared the huillín a “natural heritage” of the province**, promoting its protection, research and reintroduction to more areas.



The southern river otter is a marine otter species declared Cultural Heritage in the Province of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. Science estimates that less than 250 individuals remain in Argentina, 20 percent of which inhabits Tierra del Fuego's Argentine sector. CAMERA TRAP PHOTO.

PENÍNSULA MITRE

LIVES, REWILDED

THE STORY OF MARTINA

A dreamer since birth, Martu approaches conservation from a different perspective, creativity. Under her leadership, the first two marine national parks in the country were created, and Argentines are starting to fall in love with the forgotten Argentine Sea.



Martu and Rewilding Argentina's members share a traditional "mate" with the world-renowned biologist George Schaller during his visit to Patagonia Azul, Chubut, before the appearance of Covid-19. PHOTO: BETH WALD.

Martina (Martu to many) was born in Buenos Aires and grew up surrounded by many siblings. Her childhood was divided between Argentina and Uruguay, so she got to know both countries well as a child. Her early years were also infused with a lot of nature, thanks to the influence of her mother and her grandparents, who greatly appreciated the natural world. Martu remembers that they would always choose to visit places of natural beauty like Misiones instead of making trips to destinations like Disney. Since a little girl, she has learned to appreciate and enjoy the wonders of nature in Argentina and other countries.

“(As a girl), I imagined a life traveling and exploring nature and solving problems that would in the future help solve global issues.”

This prediction, without doubt, reflects her current work. Martu coordinates the Marine Program “Sin Azul No Hay Verde”. Following a career as a creative advertising agent and movie director, Martu also studied conservation in order to dedicate herself to the protection of biodiversity in the midst of the growing extinction crisis. In 2017, she began to work with Rewilding Argentina as one of the founders of the marine conservation program. Together with a multidisciplinary team, she led the creation of the first protected marine areas in Argentina. Currently, the marine program is focused on adding more marine and coastal protected areas within Argentina’s jurisdiction and halting the advance of industry and development that is damaging marine ecosystems and impeding their ability to function.

“I imagined a life traveling and exploring nature and solving problems that would in the future help solve global issues.”

Before joining the Rewilding Argentina team, she worked in an advertising agency and at the Buenos Aires Zoo. Martu remembers that while she first heard about Rewilding Argentina from a colleague, she became personally involved in the conservation efforts of the foundation through her experience at the Buenos Aires Zoo. Animals from the zoo were sent to different organizations, including to Rewilding Argentina, and in 2017, she met Sofia Heinonen (Executive Director) and

learned more about the work of the foundation. She decided then to begin a new chapter in her life and to dedicate all her energy and creativity to the field of conservation.

“Since I was a girl, I always imagined a life of travel, moving from one place to another. I wanted to be in contact with nature, but I didn’t want

to be a veterinarian or a biologist. I wanted to be in a more creative field.” Her great challenge was how to have a life in which she was connected to nature. She happily affirms that “for the last few years, I have been working on what I really like; I have been able to use everything I absorbed as a girl, the knowledge I gained studying advertising and film, as well as what I learned studying conservation at the Naturalist School of Argentina. I am able to put everything together and apply it to the fascinating world of conservation.”



Martina Sasso
Marine Program Coordinator

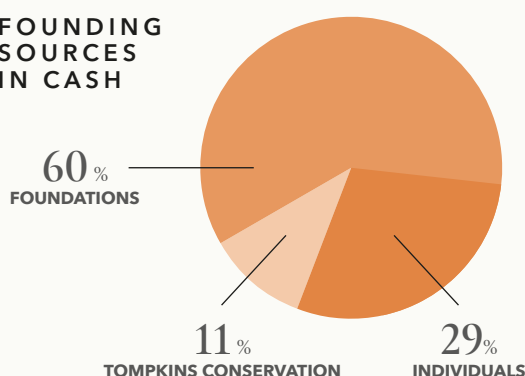


PHOTO: JOEL REYERO.

OUR FINANCIALS

These statements show financial information for the fiscal period from April 1st, 2020 to March 31st, 2021. Within that period, Fundación Rewilding Argentina received donations for the amount of USD 12 million (USD 5 million in cash directed to local projects and USD 7 million in-kind). Money from foundations accounted for 60% of the funding to support our ongoing projects, while individual donors and Tompkins Conservation consisted of 29% and 11% respectively of the total funding, as shown in the chart below.

FOUNDING SOURCES IN CASH



The in-kind donations are made largely of the donation of shares of The Conservation Land Trust Argentina SA (CLTA) to Fundación Rewilding Argentina. In November 2020, Tompkins Conservation approved this donation, a result of the many years of collaboration in the protection and creation of parks in northern Argentina. The gift includes almost 70,000 acres for future donation to the National Park Administration to complete Iberá National Park and the donation of almost 42,000 acres of land and equipment which will support local conservation activities in the long term, and will make possible our commitment to continue their conservation efforts started more than 20 years ago.

The reduction of 69% of our total annual expenses is due to the land donations made to the National and Provincial Parks Administrations. In the previous year, we donated 114,000 acres for the creation of Aconquija National Park, La Ascensión Wildlife Reserve and Iberá Park (Rancho 11 Property) while in this same period we donated 1,235 acres to create Cueva de las Manos Provincial Park.

BALANCE SHEET

| ASSETS | 03.31.21 USD | 03.31.20 USD |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash and Banks | 2,400,529 | 2,682,178 |
| Short Term Investments | 189,989 | 151,458 |
| Other Receivables | 5,187,674 | 44,118 |
| Total Current Assets | 7,778,192 | 2,877,754 |
| NON-CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Other Assets | 1,202,965 | – |
| Fixed Assets | 13,499,818 | 11,455,534 |
| Total Non-Current Assets | 14,702,783 | 11,455,534 |
| Total Assets | 22,480,975 | 14,333,288 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | |
| Total Current Liabilities | 236,720 | 275,020 |
| Equity (per related statement) | 22,244,255 | 14,058,268 |
| Total Liabilities & Equity | 22,480,975 | 14,333,288 |

STATEMENT OF INCOME

| RESOURCES | 03.31.21 USD | 03.31.20 USD |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| For General Purposes | 86,494 | 89,050 |
| For Specific Purposes | 12,068,662 | 17,164,971 |
| Miscellaneous | 189,064 | – |
| Total Resources | 12,344,220 | 17,254,021 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Administrative Expenses | (431,651) | (530,762) |
| Operating Expenses | (4,484,548) | (16,307,505) |
| Fixed Assets Depreciation | (362,782) | (194,490) |
| Total Expenses | (5,278,981) | (17,032,757) |
| Other income | 59,809 | – |
| Financial and Holding Results | 1,026,622 | 296,231 |
| SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR | 8,151,670 | 517,495 |

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY


| CAPTIONS | FOUNDER’S CONTRIBUTIONS | | | OTHER ASSETS REVALUATION RESERVES | RETAINED EARNINGS | TOTAL |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| | CONTRIBUTIONS | CONTRIBUTION ’S ADJUSTMENT | TOTAL | | | |
| USD | | | | | | |
| BALANCES AT MARCH 31, 2019 | 218 | 3,176 | 3,394 | – | 13,537,379 | 13,540,773 |
| Surplus for the year | – | – | – | – | 517,495 | 517,495 |
| BALANCES AT MARCH 31, 2020 | 218 | 3,176 | 3,394 | – | 14,054,874 | 14,058,268 |
| Other Assets Revaluation Reserve | – | – | – | 34,317 | – | 34,317 |
| Surplus for the year | – | – | – | – | 8,151,670 | 8,151,670 |
| BALANCES AT MARCH 31, 2021 | 218 | 3,176 | 3,394 | 34,317 | 22,206,544 | 22,244,255 |

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

| CHANGES IN CASH | 03.31.21 USD | 03.31.20 USD |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Cash at Beginning of the Year | 2,833,636 | 3,990,336 |
| Cash at End of the Year | 2,590,518 | 2,833,636 |
| NET DECREASE IN CASH | (243,118) | (1,156,700) |
| REASONS FOR CHANGES IN CASH | | |
| OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Collections of Resources for General Purposes | 99,720 | 85,460 |
| Collections of Resources for Specific Purposes | 5,796,665 | 16,784,594 |
| Contributions | (487,723) | – |
| Donations | – | (13,892) |
| Payments of Suppliers | (3,649,129) | (3,034,614) |
| Payments of Salaries and Social Contributions | (1,252,198) | (1,300,964) |
| Payments of Tax Liabilities | (60,962) | (30,762) |
| Financial Results Collect | 2,579,649 | 1,291,225 |
| Inflation Adjustments | (1,011,645) | (1,247,330) |
| Collection from Sales of Fixed Assets | 300,839 | – |
| NET CASH FLOW PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES | 2,315,216 | 12,533,717 |
| INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES | | |
| Fixed Assets Purchases | (2,558,334) | (13,690,417) |
| NET CASH FLOW USED IN INVESTMENTS ACTIVITIES | (2,558,334) | (13,690,417) |
| NET DECREASE IN CASH | (243,118) | (1,156,700) |

* These financial statements include the audited financial statements of the foundation for the year ended March 31, 2020 and non-audited financial statements at March 31, 2021. These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Argentine GAAPs and were converted into dollars at the exchange rate at closing. The audited annual financial statements and the auditor's report thereon are available for inspection at the company's registered office. The directors take full responsibility for the preparation of the summarized financial statements and the financial information has been correctly extracted from the underlying annual financial statements.



A full-page photograph of a family walking through a vast, eroded landscape. The terrain is characterized by deep, winding gullies and ridges in shades of orange, red, and grey, suggesting a dry, possibly volcanic or desert environment. In the foreground, a man in a bright blue jacket, a small child in a dark jacket, and a woman in a grey jacket and red pants are walking away from the camera on a dirt path. The sky above is a clear blue with scattered white clouds. The overall mood is one of exploration and connection with nature.

Rewilding restores the natural world,
it brings well-being to local communities
and above all, it brings joy to our souls.

Richard Preston

THANK YOU

Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do. We deeply rely on an array of people and organizations on every step we take. To all of you, THANK YOU. You make us stronger.

FISCAL SPONSORS

Tompkins Conservation
Lookfar Conservation

DONORS

Arcadia Fund
Artis Zoo
DOB Ecology
Dona Bertarelli
Ellen and Duncan McFarland, The Bromley Charitable Trust
Elsa Rosenvasser Feher
Fidelity Investments® Charitable Gift Fund
Fondation Segré
Freyja Foundation
Global Wildlife Conservation
Lisa Holmes
Marin Community Foundation
Mimi and Peter Buckley
National Geographic Society
Oceans 5
Pablo A. Meglioli
Parrot Wildlife Foundation
Patagonia
Quincey and Dan Imhoff
Ruben Altman and Elvira Museri
Sue and David Rockefeller
The Habrok Group
Tompkins Conservation
Wyss Campaign for Nature

IN-KIND DONORS

Tenaris
Ternium
Viviendas Roca

NATIONAL DONORS OF INDIVIDUAL SPECIMENS

Bioparque de Olavarría
Direcciones de Fauna de las provincias de Chaco, Tucumán, Salta y Entre Ríos
Ecoparque Buenos Aires
Reserva Experimental Horco Molle
Temaiken Bioparque

INTERNATIONAL DONORS OF WILDLIFE SPECIMENS

Associação Onçafari (Brasil), Criadouro Onça Pintada (Brasil), NEX No Extinction (Brasil), Refugio Faunístico Atinguy (Paraguay), World Parrot Trust (United Kingdom), International Studbook for Giant Otters, Parken Zoo (Eskilstuna, Sweden), Budapest Zoo & Botanical Garden (Hungary), Gilvskud Zoo (Denmark).

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Gobierno de Corrientes, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de Chaco, Dirección de Fauna de la Provincia de Chaco, Ministerio de Turismo, Administración de Parques Nacionales, Dirección de Parques y Reservas de Corrientes, Ministerio de Turismo de Corrientes, Dirección de Comercio Exterior (SENASA), Dirección de Fauna y Áreas Naturales Protegidas (Chaco), Secretaría de Ambiente y Producción Sustentable (Salta), Dirección de Fauna de la Provincia de Salta, Dirección de Fauna de la Provincia de Tucumán, Secretaría de Estado de Ambiente de Santa Cruz, Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros de Santa Cruz, Secretaría de Estado de Responsabilidad Social de Santa Cruz, Secretaría de Estado de Turismo de Santa Cruz, Secretaría de Estado de Cultura de Santa Cruz, Consejo Agrario Provincial (Santa Cruz), Dirección de Fauna Silvestre y Áreas Protegidas, Delegación Técnica de APN Patagonia Sur (Calafate), SENASA Delegación Corrientes.

SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS, AND NGOS

Centro de Reasilvestramiento Aguará (Estación Biológica de Corrientes), Instituto de Biología Subtropical (IBS, Conicet), Dirección de Epidemiología y Análisis de Riesgos (SENASA), Estación Experimental (INTA Mercedes), Instituto de Biotecnología, Laboratorio de Hemoparásitos (INTA Castelar), Servicio de Análisis Clínicos de la Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias (Universidad Nacional del Nordeste), Cátedra de Patología Animal (UNNE), Hospital de Clínicas (Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias, Universidad Nacional del Nordeste), Servicio de Cirugía y Anestesiología (Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias, Universidad Nacional del Nordeste), Servicio de Electrocardiografía, Ecografía y Radiografía (Corrientes), Centro de Investigación y Transferencia (CIT Formosa - CONICET y Universidad Nacional de Formosa), Laboratorio de Diagnóstico de Enfermedades Infecciosas (Facultad de Ciencias Veterinarias, Universidad de Buenos Aires), Instituto de Virología Dr. José María Vanella (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba Laboratorio de Biología de la Conservación), Clínica Veterinaria Dei Gratia, Clínica Veterinaria del Sol, Zoológico de Huachipa (Perú), IUCN Otter Specialist Group, Turtle Conservancy, European Association of Zoos and Aquarium (EAZA), EAZA Giant otter EEP.

TEAMS WORKING IN THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Parque Nacional Iberá, Parque Nacional El Impenetrable, Reserva Don Luis, Parque Nacional Patagonia.

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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