



WORLD
LAND
TRUST



Promoting ecosystem
connectivity in
Nangaritza
Our Carbon Balanced
project in Ecuador



Country: Ecuador

Partner/Organisation:
Nature and Culture Ecuador
(NCE)

Biome

Tropical and subtropical moist
broadleaf forests

Ecoregion

Eastern Cordillera Real montane forests

Habitats

The Nangaritza area of the Eastern Cordillera Real montane forests consists of flat-topped mountains protected by steep slopes and flatter, riverine valleys. The region contains a mix of primary and secondary forest and pasture along a gradient of degradation following the downward slope of the terrain.

Global prioritisation

The project falls into the Tropical Andes Biodiversity Hotspot and is also recognised as part of the Cordillera del Cóndor/Alto Nangaritza Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).

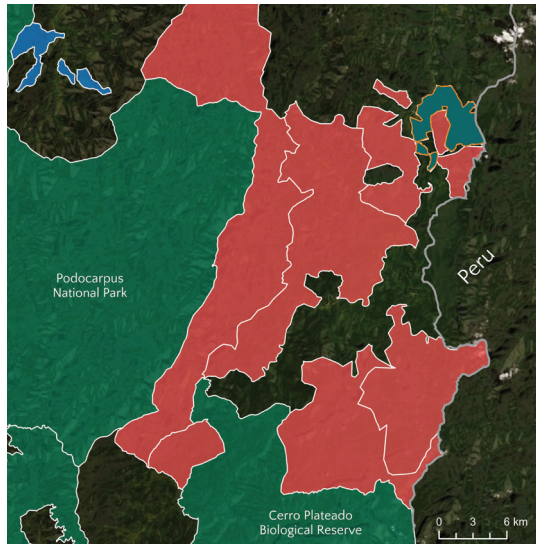
Project summary

Nangaritza Valley in south-eastern Ecuador is the last intact biological corridor between the Andean cloud forests of Podocarpus National Park to the west and the vast lowland Amazonian rainforests to the east in Peru. Nangaritza's foothill forests have some of the highest levels of plant diversity in the world, as well as very high diversity of amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds. As well as its biodiversity the area has rich cultural values due to the Shuar indigenous territory, traditions and language. Despite its importance, Nangaritza is threatened by deforestation (at a rate of 1-2% per year) from agricultural expansion and gold mining, with a highway under construction likely to further accelerate these threats. This five-year project will expand the Maycú Reserve through the purchase of 1,235 acres (500 ha) of land to ensure connectivity with indigenous lands across the lower Nangaritza Valley and restore degraded habitats through reforestation. The project will further promote conservation management of the Alto Nangaritza indigenous territories by developing conservation management plans and support the consultation process for the creation of a 49,000-acre (20,000 ha) nationally recognised indigenous community reserve, which will protect the valley from future legal mining concessions. The project provides an important opportunity to complete and secure conservation objectives that WLT has been funding for over 10 years. This will be funded through the Carbon Balanced programme with an expected annual climate benefit of 15,368 tCO₂e.

Main threats to the area

Forests in the region have been degraded by landowners from local farming communities who clear land for cattle grazing. This has occurred in the valley bottoms and riverine areas most suited to agriculture. These riverine areas are also a target for unregulated, illegal gold mining, as well as being the focus for national concessions for international mining operations being issued by the Ecuadorian Government. In the absence of the project, forecasts show that deforestation rates are likely to continue to increase.

Orange-throated Tanager



- Maycu_Reserve
- Community or Indigenous Reserve
- Protected Area
- Other Partner Reserves
- International Border



Kingsbury's Rocket Frog



Biodiversity

This isolated transition zone between the Andes and Amazon means Nangaritza has very high species endemism, with 40% of plant species unique to the region. Nangaritza contains spectacular biodiversity including rare and threatened bird and mammal species, as well as an abundance of amphibian and reptile species – many of which are endemic – with still more yet to be discovered.

Local communities

The indigenous Shuar people have lived in the Nangaritza Valley for generations, but the region has also been colonised by farming communities over this time whose main livelihood is cattle rearing. The farming community population continues to increase. Selective timber extraction and mining also provides additional sources of income to local households. Several traditional territories important to local indigenous communities are located either wholly or partly within the Nangaritza Valley. A number of protected indigenous reserves have been established in the region, but as the reserves are located on isolated mountaintops, the valley's threatened riverine areas still do not have the level of protection they require.

Main methods for land protection

Land purchase, land declaration, reserve management, ecosystem restoration.

Partner/NGO

NCE is part of Nature and Culture International (NCI) whose mission is to conserve Latin America's most extraordinary yet highly threatened ecosystems and cultures by saving endangered habitats, strengthening local capacity, and helping communities preserve their way of life. NCE is based in southern Ecuador and works through local staff and with local governments and communities. NCE became a WLT partner in 2010. Since then, WLT have supported a variety of activities including funding rangers, creating private reserves through land purchase, and protecting land through the declaration of regional protected areas. NCE projects supported by WLT include forest protection in the Tumbesian dry forests and Andean cloud forests; watershed protection through the purchase of key areas that safeguard water supplies; the recognition of Water Protection Areas (including a 70,000-acre (28,000 ha) reserve for the newly discovered Blue-throated Hillstar (CR) in 2019); and research projects in NCE's San Francisco Scientific Station studying many aspects of tropical forests.

Key species¹

Kingsbury's Rocket Frog (*Allobates kingsburyi*, EN), Amazonian Harlequin Frog (*Atelopus spumarius*, VU), Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagioenas subvinacea*, VU), Jaguar (*Panthera onca*, NT), White-necked Parakeet (*Pyrrhura albipectus*, VU), White-lipped Peccary (*Tayassu pecari*, VU), Orange-throated Tanager (*Wetmorethraupis sterrhopteron*, VU), Cinnamon-breasted Tody-tyrant (*Hemitriccus cinnamomeipectus*, VU), Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*, VU), Royal Sunangel (*Heliangelus regalis*, EN), *Anolis podocarpus* (VU).

¹ The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species includes categories of Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT) and Least Concern (LC)

UN Sustainable Development Goals advanced by this project

