

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Dear Jocotoco Supporters,

The past year was challenging for people and nature. In Ecuador, tragic human losses were accompanied by deep social costs: within weeks, families went hungry and communities adjacent to our reserves lacked basic medical supplies. Not surprisingly, hunting and illegal logging soared outside of the reserves, as people turned to exploiting natural resources in their time of need.

The pandemic highlighted the resilience of Jocotoco's conservation work. Employees whose regular work was to host tourists shifted to applied conservation and, despite the pandemic, we accomplished important conservation goals and made excellent progress towards others.

Even though travelling was severely restricted within Ecuador, we managed to expand our reserve network by 1,263 hectares. This expansion included establishing our 16th reserve to protect the recently discovered and highly threatened Blue-throated Hillstar. In our Canandé Reserve, we started to reforest two critically endangered Magnolia species, both with known population sizes of less than 30 adult trees. At several reserves, we built dozens of nest boxes to provide rare parrots with safe breeding locations. These examples highlight how Jocotoco combines the protection of land with targeted conservation actions for the most threatened species. Our two-pronged approach allows us to protect and rebuild the healthy ecosystems that we all depend on ultimately.

We are incredibly grateful for the unprecedented levels of support for our Save the Chocó Campaign. Hundreds of individuals around the world contributed to protecting critical habitat in the Chocó. Last year, we purchased 691 hectares of Chocó rainforest and are now evaluating the purchase of another 23,000 hectares. When this transaction is completed, Jocotoco will have doubled the area we conserve in our reserve network.

At Jocotoco we see the unprecedented levels of support as evidence that the world at large is increasingly engaged in our collective need to protect nature. The fires around the planet and the Fridays for the Future

Movement put a spotlight on the complex issue of climate change. Here, Jocotoco is working with the Ecuadorian government to develop international carbon offsets that will protect forests for at least 20 years.

2021 began with extremely exciting news! For the next few years, we will host a large research consortium funded by the German Research Foundation. Scientists will study the fundamental question of how ecosystems renew themselves after deforestation. Where better to study natural regeneration than in the extremely diverse Chocó rainforest that Jocotoco is protecting?

Our conservation successes are very much a team effort. Jocotoco is no longer a small organization. The continuous annual expansion of our reserves means that we now employ 65 people, the majority being park guards, to ensure the ongoing protection of our 16 private protected areas. We hope you enjoy reading about our accomplishments over the past year in the following pages. We won't mention all of the 50 or more on-going projects but will touch on the highlights.

Thank you for the energy and commitment you bring to Jocotoco's conservation efforts.

Sincerely,

Dr. Martin Schaefer, CEO

**“Our conservation strategy works,
endangered species rebound.”**





MISSION

Our mission is to protect some of the most threatened species and habitats on earth. Jocotoco accomplishes its mission by purchasing strategic properties for the establishment of private, strictly managed, protected areas, restoring degraded systems and by also helping communities to protect their natural resources.



JOCO-RESERVES

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Tapichalaca | 9. Chakana |
| 2. Buenaventura | 10. Ayampe |
| 3. Yunguilla | 11. La Esmeralda |
| 4. Canandé | 12. Copalinga |
| 5. Yanacocha | 13. Tesoro Escondido |
| 6. Utuana | 14. Jocotoco Galápagos |
| 7. Jorupe | 15. Las Balsas |
| 8. Narupa | 16. Cerro de Arcos |



 Jocotoco manages a total of 16 Reserves in Ecuador.





CORE VALUES

Fundación de Conservación strongly believes that preserving the biodiversity of Ecuador has an intrinsic value. We carry out our belief through the creation of protected areas and our work with communities in the buffer zones of our reserves. We also believe in people: it is the people who inspire and who achieve conservation successes. We strive to provide the opportunities for personal growth to all staff, contractors, and volunteers. Our work is guided by treating others and ourselves, honestly, transparently and fairly. We always strive for effectiveness and excellence.

El Oro Parakeet (*Pyrrhura orcesi*)
listed Endangered (IUCN Red List) E





24,628

**HECTARES PROTECTED IN
OUR RESERVE NETWORK**



**117 SPECIES
OF AMPHIBIANS
PROTECTED**

1,600,000

TREES PLANTED!



**94 SPECIES
OF MAMMALS
PROTECTED**



**118 SPECIES
OF REPTILES
PROTECTED**



Green Thorntail (*Discosura conversii*)

listed Least Concern (IUCN Red List)

LC



1,067 BIRD SPECIES,

**OR 10% OF ALL BIRD SPECIES WORLDWIDE
ON 0.00016% OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE!**





JOCO-RESPONSE

At the start of the pandemic, many communities in rural Ecuador blocked the entrance to their villages to counter the influx of people from the cities who were fleeing the risk of virus transmission. In response, Jocotoco launched a “Help Us Support Our Neighbors” campaign to help the communities around our reserves cope with COVID 19. Many people responded to this emergency request. We were able to move food, masks, protective gear and medical supplies across the isolation barriers to those most in need. We also created temporary jobs for people to help with guarding the reserves and to do reforestation work.

Conservation is also supporting communities when they need us most.






15,990
**SEA TURTLES
HATCHED**

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



FANNY DE LA CRUZ CANANDÉ RESERVE

In 2018, Fanny de La Cruz was hired to take care of tourists at our Chocó Lodge. However, because the pandemic put ecotourism on hold, she swapped her kitchen utensils for field gear in 2020!

Fanny is the first from our Canandé Reserve to become part of Jocotoco's reforestation program. She has learned to germinate critically endangered Magnolia trees and manages our native tree nursery and also monitors reforestation plots throughout the Chocó.





117
ENDANGERED PARROTS
HATCHED FROM OUR
NEST BOXES IN
2020



LAND PURCHASE

In 2020 we expanded our reserve network by 1,263 hectares. The most significant expansion was of 691 hectares in our Canandé Reserve through our Save the Chocó initiative. For the first time in over a decade we were able to expand our Jorupe Reserve by 222 hectares. We thank Antonio Paez, our administrative director, for helping us to make this expansion possible. Smaller parcels were added to Tapichalaca (92 ha), Narupa (66 ha), Las Balsas (53 ha), and Buenaventura (41 ha). All of these purchases are important, as they allow us to protect more habitat and increase the connectivity to other protected areas.

CERRO DE ARCOS – A New Reserve!

This year we created our 16th reserve at Cerro de Arcos (named for the dramatic arching rock formations) by purchasing the first 50 hectares to protect the habitat of the recently discovered Blue-throated Hillstar.

In 2017, Jocotoco's first Executive Director, Francisco Sornoza, discovered this hummingbird species, which is critically threatened by habitat loss in its tiny range. With a population of less than 250 adults, our work is essential to restore the original habitat and grow the hillstar's most important food plant, a lovely orange flowered shrub called the chuquiraga!

CANANDÉ

Over the past four years Canandé has grown from 2,400 hectares to 7,850! However, in response to the rapid acceleration of logging in the lowland Chocó, Jocotoco initiated a campaign to "Save the Chocó." Through this effort, negotiations on an additional 23,000 hectares estate are underway and we secured purchase agreements with 30 land owners so far.

LAS BALSAS

At Las Balsas we have now acquired 104 hectares to protect roosting sites of the critically endangered Lilacine Amazon, an Ecuadorian endemic parrot. The birds roost in the carob woodlands along the river and by day disperse into the hills to forage and nest. Our monitoring efforts have demonstrated that seasonally Las Balsas holds up to 95% of the global population of Lilacines!





**FEWER THAN 200
ADULTS SURVIVE**

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED



NEST BOX PROGRAMS

In a number of Jocotoco reserves, nest sites for cavity nesters (for rare parrots in particular) are few and far between because the large, older trees with suitable cavities have long been cut down. By providing nest boxes, Jocotoco boosts their reproductive success.

At Buenaventura, our nest boxes have helped more than 550 young El Oro Parakeets to fledge in the last decade, increasing the population by nearly 25%.

At Tapichalaca, the program has also been very successful for Golden-plumed Parakeets. The White-breasted Parakeets are still shy.

At Las Balsas, we have recently placed nest boxes out for Lilacine Amazon and Great Green Macaw. Pacific Pygmy-Owls, Spectacled Owls, and Red-masked Parakeets have immediately adopted these boxes, highlighting the need for cavities for more common species as well.

GREAT GREEN MACAW POPULATION INCREASES!

Our guards at Las Balsas Reserve have confirmed that we are protecting a small but apparently thriving population of the equally critically endangered Great Green Macaws – the last remaining wild population of the *guyaquilensis* subspecies. Fewer than 30 birds of this subspecies survive! We have been supplementing the wild population with 21 captive-reared birds over the last three years. Two new macaw nests were found this year, making for a known total of three, and every individual produced young in 2020!

Lilacine Amazon (*Amazona lilacina*)

listed Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List) 






**115 NEST
BOXES ERECTED
IN 2020**

 Nest boxes provide homes for threatened parrots.



GALAPAGOS PETREL

At our San Cristobal Island Reserve in the Galapagos our field staff team found 26 active Galapagos Petrel nests this year. When we first started monitoring, four individuals (adults and young birds) were killed by feral cats. In response, the cats were humanely trapped and given to the National Park and there has been no nesting mortality since. Any mortality for this long-lived species which takes 5-6 years to mature, is a significant problem. Another threat has been the invasive blackberries that quickly overgrow the nest burrows. We are planning to build a house for volunteers to help with monitoring and invasive plant removal, but construction has been delayed by COVID-19 until the end of 2021.

26 ACTIVE  **GALAPAGOS PETREL** 
NESTS THIS YEAR!



JOCO-PEOPLE

THANK YOU MICHAEL

Before we introduce you to our new staff, please join us in thanking Michael Möens for his four-year tenure as our Conservation Director. Michael returned to Belgium with his family, but will continue to provide support to Jocotoco's board.

At the end of 2020 we welcomed three new dynamic and energetic people into leadership positions at Jocotoco.



VERÓNICA ENRIQUEZ, COO OF JOCOTOCO

With more than eight years of experience in community development projects in Ecuador and internationally, Verónica also brings a strong background in communications to the Jocotoco team! She holds a Master's in Sustainability focused on Environmental Management and Governance from Australia. Verónica joined Jocotoco in 2018 to oversee the management of our growing conservation project portfolio and at the end of 2020 due to her stellar performance and strength in leading teams, she was promoted to the role of COO for Jocotoco's Ecuador operations. Verónica is a passionate cyclist, enjoys riding in the mountains and playing bike polo. She is convinced that conservation is a lifestyle and loves exploring the paramos of Ecuador.



MATEO POMILIA, CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

Mateo brings diverse international expertise in biodiversity conservation, agroecology, and education. Over the past 15 years, he has led projects throughout Latin America, the United States and southern Africa. Mateo is the founder of a non-profit dedicated to women's education in the Chaco region of Bolivia. His conservation interests include the management of protected areas, ecological restoration and building upon local ecological knowledge. Mateo holds an MSc in Biodiversity Conservation during which he completed a thesis on the movement ecology of African wild dogs. He is an avid outdoorsman, polyglot, and singer-songwriter. Mateo will soon be releasing his second blues album.



WENDY WILLIS, DIRECTOR OF JOCOTOCO USA

During her formative years, Wendy lived in the Yucatan Peninsula with her Mexican grandmother where she developed a lifelong love of tropical climates and spicy food. As an adult, she has led an eclectic life of adventures that includes cleaning boats in Southeast Alaska, banding birds in Costa Rica, and co-creating two successful restaurants with her sister. Wendy worked previously with our partner American Bird Conservancy where she managed conservation projects in five Latin American countries. She brings a depth of knowledge and experience in the challenges faced by conservation NGOs like Jocotoco. Wendy was hired in September 2020 to manage our 501(c)3 in the United States, fundraise, and also lead a large Ecuadorian conservation initiative.





NOLBERTO ORDOÑEZ, PARK RANGER

Nolberto Ordoñez became the park guard of our newly established Cerro de Arcos Reserve in 2020. He enjoys monitoring the Blue-throated Hillstar and has found two nests of the four known for this rare and threatened hummingbird. Nolberto is also helping to plant and restore chuquiragua bushes, a high elevation flowering plant that is the most important source of nectar for the endemic hillstar. In his free time he likes to work on his farm.

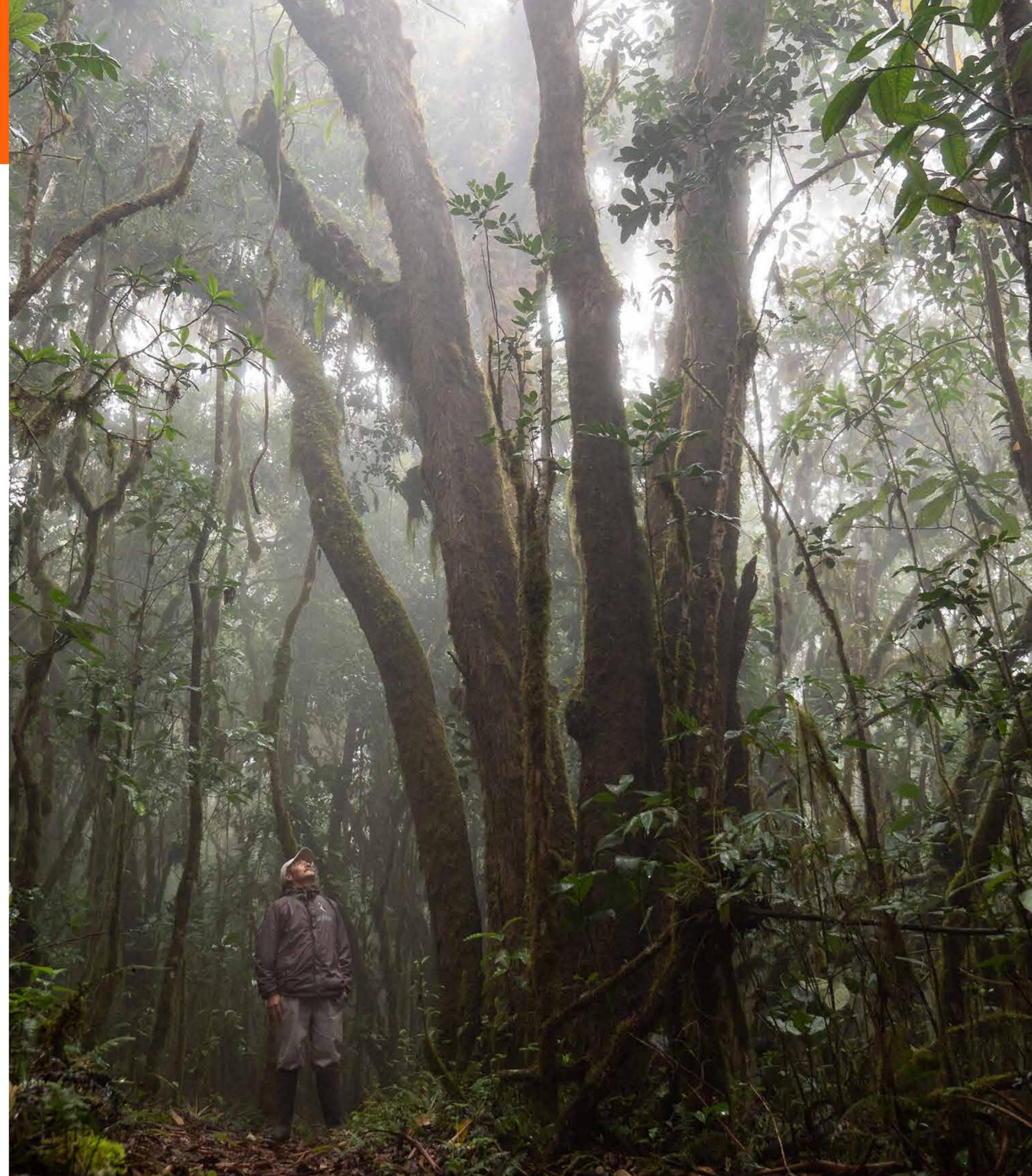


ANGEL OTAVALO, PARK RANGER

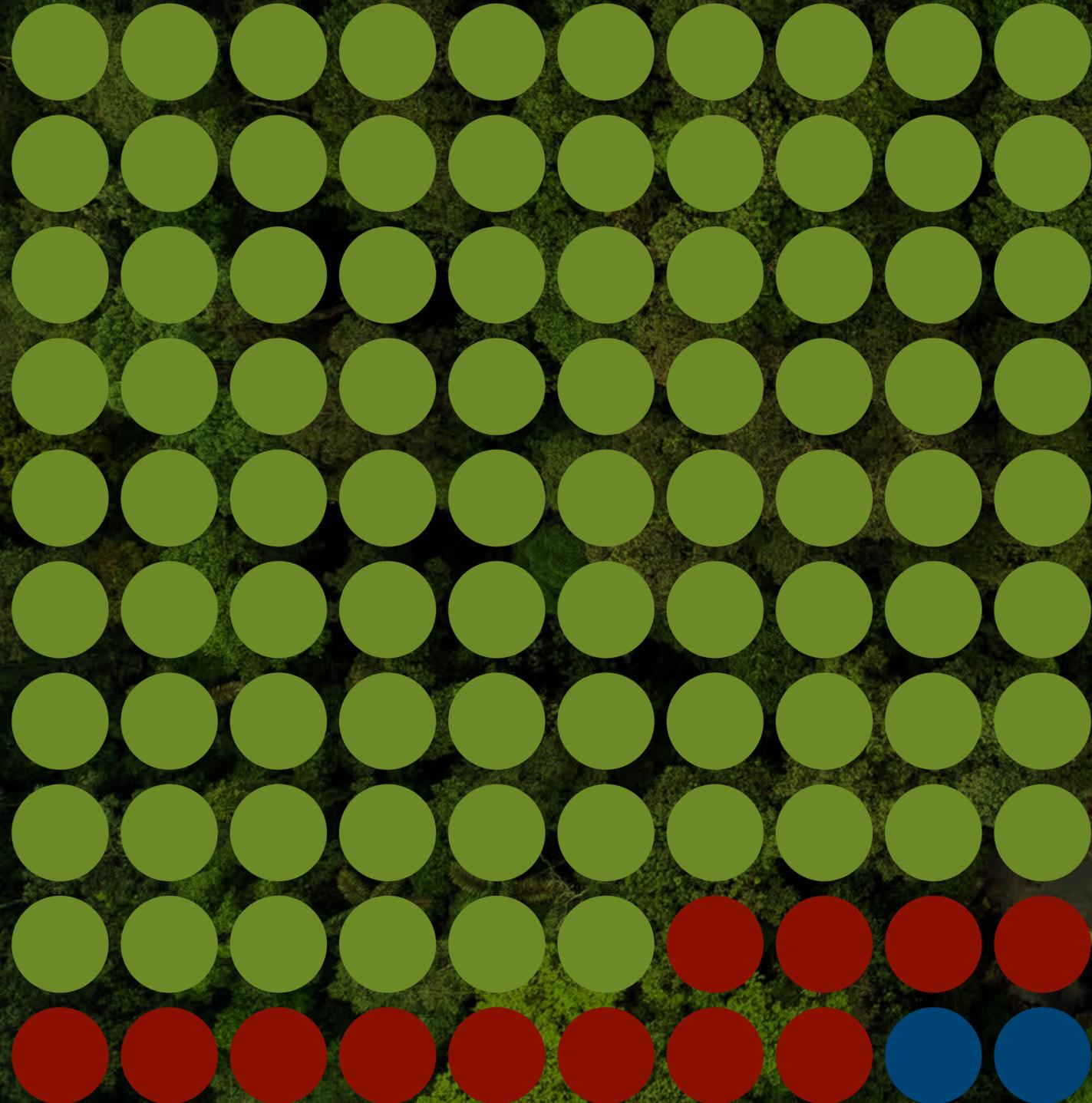
Angel Otavalo joined the Jocotoco team in August of 2020 as the guard for our Yunguilla Reserve. Formerly a landscaper, Angel enjoys learning about the protection of nature and how this benefits the conservation of endangered species such as the Pale-headed Brushfinch. He is responsible for patrolling, maintaining the trails, stocking bird feeders and accompanying visitors throughout the reserve. In his free time he enjoys gardening.



Enyalioides praestabilis LC
listed Least Concern (IUCN Red List)



STAFF BREAKDOWN



RESERVES 85

Park Guards	43
Reforestation	20
Tourism	16
Conservation	3
Reserve Managers	3

OFFICE 12

Tourism	5
Accounting	4
Admin	3

INTERNATIONAL 2

Development & Project Mgt.	1
Marketing	1

JOCO-FINANCES

2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Prior to the pandemic, revenue from ecotourism by our sister company Jocotours covered 20% of Jocotoco's operating costs. Additionally, Jocotours also contributed indirectly to our conservation efforts by paying half of our Quito office rent, covering the operating expenses of our reserves and funding the accounting salaries.

In an effort to curtail the spread of COVID-19, the Ecuadorian government set strict quarantine measures in place for the better part of 2020. Consequently, Jocotoco suspended ecotourism activities throughout our reserve network. Lack of tourism revenue reduced our income by \$110,000 USD. To adapt, we reduced our workforce to maintain resiliency throughout the pandemic. During this time Jocotoco also received financial support from long-term partners. We are incredibly grateful for the COVID relief support from American Bird Conservancy and MbZ Species Conservation Fund that provided support to cover a portion of operating costs throughout 2020.

As our reserve network continues to grow, we are actively fortifying our long-term financial sustainability by diversifying our income-generating streams. We advised the Ecuadorian government on the legal framework for carbon financing, approved in May 2021. Concurrently, we also established one endowment in the United States and are establishing one in Canada.



REVENUE	2019	2020
Restricted Funds	\$1,865,711	\$1,096,993
Rent payments Jocotours	\$61,992	\$0
Land Purchase	\$407,913	\$909,766
Unrestricted Donations	\$128,737	\$171,186
TOTAL	\$2,464,354	\$2,177,945
EXPENSES	2020	
Reserve Management	\$408,491	
Conservation Projects	\$418,611	
Conservation Salaries	\$286,242	
Administrative Salaries	\$117,485	
Administrative Costs	\$42,123	
TOTAL	\$1,272,952	
LAND ASSETS	2019	2020
Number of Hectares Purchased	954	1236
TOTAL	\$12,498,584	\$13,408,351

*** IN 2020, JOCOTOCO INCREASED ITS OVERALL LANDHOLDINGS BY 5%**



SAVE THE CHOCÓ

SECRETS OF THE CHOCÓ

Through our conservation work at Canandé Reserve, the poorly known Chocó forest has started to reveal its secrets. As an example, researchers from Kew Royal Botanic Gardens and the Universidad Estatal Amazonica found 475 individual trees (>10 dbh) on a 1 hectare study plot. Of these trees, 320 belong to different species, indicating that almost every individual belongs to a different species. In general, plant diversity is astonishingly high in the Chocó. It harbors 11,000 species of plants, more than any other region in the Americas. Importantly, 22% of these are endemic, meaning they do not occur anywhere else. The high diversity of species implies that the density of seed-bearing plants is low. Being thinly distributed in the forest makes species vulnerable to extinction, particularly in the face of high deforestation rates. So far, 29 species are known only from the Canandé reserve.

In 2020, a researcher from the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany, discovered a large and conspicuous trap-jaw ant species in our Chocó lodge! The discovery of a new species in this well-known genus suggests that the Chocó contains many more secrets waiting to be uncovered!

BRINGING BACK FOUR TREES FROM THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION IN THE CHOCÓ



For the past year, our teams at Canandé and Tesoro Escondido reserves have focused on bringing back four critically endangered Chocó tree species. Only 16 *Magnolia canandeanana*, 7 *Magnolia dixonii*, 150 *Ecuadendron acosta-solisianum*, and 11 *Matisia palenquiana* individual trees of each species remain in the wild.

Our field staff worked diligently to collect seeds, germinate them, and raise saplings in our nursery. In 2020, Fanny de la Cruz (mentioned earlier in the staff highlights), and our park guards reforested more than 2,000 individuals of these four species!

Ateles fusciceps fusciceps  listed Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List)

LOOKING AHEAD

Our work during these times has shown us that each and every one of us can have a tremendous positive impact on the life of others, from humans to wildlife and plants. Looking forward, your support is allowing Jocotoco to initiate two large regional conservation projects, one in the Chocó and another in the megadiverse Andes-Amazon region of Ecuador.

These projects will protect two of Ecuador's most threatened hotspots of biodiversity. Jocotoco's major efforts are crucial now as deforestation and hunting around our reserves have increased dramatically since the start of the pandemic. COVID has highlighted the resilience and ingenuity of our team to rise above the challenges to work with communities around our reserves to protect nature.



Prisitimanti galdi LC
listed Least Concern (IUCN Red List)





 Sumaco Volcano vista point from a recently purchased property for the expansion of our Narupa Reserve.



MIL GRACIAS

Finally, we heartily thank our fellow Jocotoco board member Adela Espinosa and her husband Antonio Paez. Quito residents, they provided Adela's childhood home as a new (and beautiful) office for Fundación Jocotoco! In lieu of rent, payments will accumulate in a rainy-day fund for the Foundation and park guards. Adela and Antonio joined Jocotoco a little over four years ago, and how fortunate we are to have found them. This extraordinary couple has made a profound commitment to Jocotoco, and we are deeply grateful.

Jocotoco and our increasingly large and important conservation programs are thriving because of the efforts of people like Adela and Antonio and our dedicated and hard-working staff. But perhaps more than ever in times like these, we depend on supporters like you. We need you, and we thank you for your ongoing confidence in us and what we are doing to save an important part of the world's threatened biodiversity. With your help, next year can and will be even better!

With gratitude and "mil gracias,"

The Jocotoco Team

JOCO-PARTNERS



Fundación Jocotoco is tremendously grateful for the diversity of partners that supported our on-the-ground conservation efforts in 2020.

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