



WWF

BULLETIN

COLOMBIA

JUNIO

2014

# inaction 19

ISSN: 2145-7654

Latin America's economic development  
must not wipe out the territory





Mary Lou Higgins  
Program Director  
Subregional Amazonas  
Norte & Chocó - Darién WWF

# The Court's long silence

More than three months have passed since the Constitutional Court held the public hearing in La Pedredra, a municipality in the Amazon region of Colombia, with indigenous communities, the Attorney General and other state institutions, to collect testimonies and input to make a decision on the legal action brought against the declaration of the National Natural Park Yaigojé-Apaporis on the ground of improper consultation with the community. During the hearing it was evident that Cosigo Resources, the Canadian mining company that is interested in exploiting gold inside the protected area, interfered in the process by paying for the plaintiff legal action. The arguments and testimonies presented by the parties in the process will give the Court a legal base to decide in favour or the protected area.

Apart from deciding whether consultation respected legal standards, the Court should explore other questions that arise when studying this particular case. Why did the mining authority grant Cosigo Resources a mining title inside the protected area two days after the park was declared? The Ministry of Mines and other agencies were duly informed that a consultation process with indigenous communities in the region was being carried in order to declare the protected area. The Ministry of Mines even gave its prior concept on the process. Then, why did the government grant a mining title to a company in an area that could not be exploited?

The Constitutional Court has ruled in similar cases (Case T-129, 2011) that citizens, businesses (bold added) and the state have the responsibility to protect the natural and cultural diversity and that the “exploitation of natural resources may not result in prejudice of individual or collective welfare, nor can lead to damage that threatens the diversity and integrity of the environment as a whole.” Did Cosigo Resources act in good faith when it interfered with the state’s interest to defend natural resources?

Furthermore, is the mining title granted to Cosigo Resources legal, constitutional and attends to the principles of ethics and integrity in public administration? It is the time for the Court to go further, and declare that the mining title granted to Cosigo Resources is unconstitutional since it was granted in a protected area. It is worth remembering that in Colombia, by constitutional mandate, natural parks are declared forever and mining activities within its boundaries are expressly prohibited.

The Constitutional Court should analyse not only whether the consultation process was legal but also if the mining title granted to the mining corporation was legal. With the ruling the Court can reaffirm the constitutionality of Natural Yaigoje Apaporis National Park.

We look forward to the court ruling. Hopefully its long silence means that they are preparing a landmark judgment that will mark a milestone in the history of Colombia’s environmental protection.



© Rodrigo Duran Bahamon

## ADDITIONAL NOTE:

We are happy to announce that SOCO, the British oil company, will stop its exploration in Virunga National Park, the oldest protected area in the African continent and home to mountain gorillas. Furthermore, SOCO made a commitment to refrain from operating within any area declared as a World Heritage site by UNESCO. Cosigo Resources, the Canadian mining company should follow SOCO’s example and do the same.

To learn more  
on the case of Virunga  
click here







# Bitá, the first protected river in Colombia

There is a river that crosses the state of Vichada and is considered one of the most biodiverse and best conserved rivers in the country. Bitá River, a tributary of the Orinoco River has 450 km of length and is practically intact.

Though Colombia has more than 50 protected areas none of these protect a river from its headwater to its mouth. Bitá River would be the first protected river in the country and would establish an unprecedented and innovative conservation policy. For the first time the government will protect ecological flows in the middle of a development scenario.

The state of Vichada is located in the Orinquíá, a region that has been targeted as the new focus for agro-industrial development. For that reason, this is a revolutionary conservation initiative. It seeks to protect a river that does not have direct threats but that will be vulnerable and will suffer the pressure of agro-industrial development. Protecting the river before it's too late is a measure that will ensure sustainable development in the region.

The Humbolt Research Institute for Biological Resources, environmental authorities, and NGO's such as WWF signed a voluntary agreement on April 24, 2014, to protect the Bitá River. Yet, this initiative is still to be developed. One of the major challenges is to create a legal frameworks that guarantees that its protection becomes mandatory.

© Fundación Omacha



© Dexter B. Dombro





Fernando Jaramillo,  
Vice President of  
Corporate Affairs of  
Bavaria

# SABMiller subsidiary in Colombia is committed to water stewardship

Bavaria, SABMiller subsidiary in Colombia and the largest brewery in the country, partnered with WWF to determine how much water they use to produce one bottle of beer. WWF measured the water footprint of its five principal brands: Águila, Águila Light, Poker, Costeña y Pilsen.

Most companies that measure their water footprint aim to become more efficient and reduce their water consumption. Bavaria already became 27% more efficient. Yet, the partnership between WWF and Bavaria goes further, it focuses on water stewardship, a process that demands collective and governance actions.

Measuring their water footprint, allowed Bavaria to identify its risk and in which part of the chain they have to act in order to reduce their impact. For example, it allowed Bavaria to understand in which part of the production process they were consuming more water and which are their scarcity risks.

Although we speak of water footprint as a unit, when we measure it we are in fact measuring three individual footprints. The green water footprint measures the amount of water used in agricultural production; the blue water footprint measures the use of water from rivers, lakes and aquifers; and the grey water footprint measures water contamination as a result of an industrial process. Results from Bavaria state that 81% of their footprint is green, 10% blue and 9% grey.

Bavaria is leading the path towards corporate sustainability. The first step was to measure their water and carbon footprint. The second was to communicate their findings and share their experience with peer organizations and key stakeholders. But the path is long. Bavaria has decided to take the challenge and therefore, after presenting the results of their water and carbon footprint, declared that where most might end their work where they are just beginning.



If you want to make the report on the water footprint of Bavaria click here: [http://www.wwf.org.co/sala\\_redaccion/publicaciones/?221190/Huella-hidrica-en-Bavaria-identificando-riesgos-para-la-construccion-de-una-estrategia-de-custodia-del-agua](http://www.wwf.org.co/sala_redaccion/publicaciones/?221190/Huella-hidrica-en-Bavaria-identificando-riesgos-para-la-construccion-de-una-estrategia-de-custodia-del-agua)



© Alcaldía de Ricaurte, Nariño

## Guiza River Basin, an example to follow

With the technical support of WWF, the Colombian government and different ethnic groups gathered to develop the Guiza river basin management. This basin is located in Nariño, a border and multicultural state in the Colombian Pacific. The basin management plan agreed between the government and the communities, has been recognized by the Ministry of the Environment as a model to follow.

Basin management is vital to ensure water availability and to reduce scarcity. More than half of the world's population depends on watersheds for domestic consumption, food production and electricity. In this case, the communities were the ones that promoted the need to establish a management plan for the river basin. Before, agricultural waste was thrown to the river and there was no organized waste disposal. People were concerned about water pollution and therefore decided to organize a Citizen's Action Dialogue (a democratic participation mechanism that allow citizens to present claims to governmental authorities) in 2006. One of the most significant results of this event was the commitment to elaborate a management plan for the river basin.

In Colombia, river basin management plans with community participation are unusual. The Guiza river basin management plan was the first one to include indigenous communities in Nariño. Furthermore, it was successful in integrating Afro communities, farmers and the Awa indigenous communities. For that reason, the Ministry of Environment chose this basin management plan as an example to follow.

Watershed management in the country is still at a developmental stage. According to the Ministry of Environment only 115 of the 411 watersheds in the country have a management plan. Much remains to be done yet the Guiza river basin management plan has played an important role since it will be used as an example of how to integrate communities into decision making processes in the development of watershed management plans.





Mary Lou Higgins Program Director  
Subregional Amazonas Norte & Chocó - Darién WWF

## Semana Forum, a seminar to discuss the future of agribusiness in Colombia

The forum *Challenges of the agricultural sector in Colombia: how can we build together*, organized by Semana magazine was held on April 29, 2014. Members of the government, businessmen, opinion leaders, NGO's, academics and farmers discussed a diagnosis of the state of agriculture and rural areas in Colombia, and analysed the challenges to overcome to increase competitiveness and profitability.

Mary Louise Higgins, Director of WWF Colombia, was invited to the forum as a representative of civil society. In her speech she remarked how the agricultural sector in Colombia has expanded without taking into consideration strategic ecosystems in the country. She also invited the people who assisted the forum to think about the environmental services that are needed for agricultural production since, even though Colombia is perceived by others as a global food producer, it remains unknown what the impacts of expanded industrial production will be on water sources, land and biodiversity. For more information about the Forum, please visit:

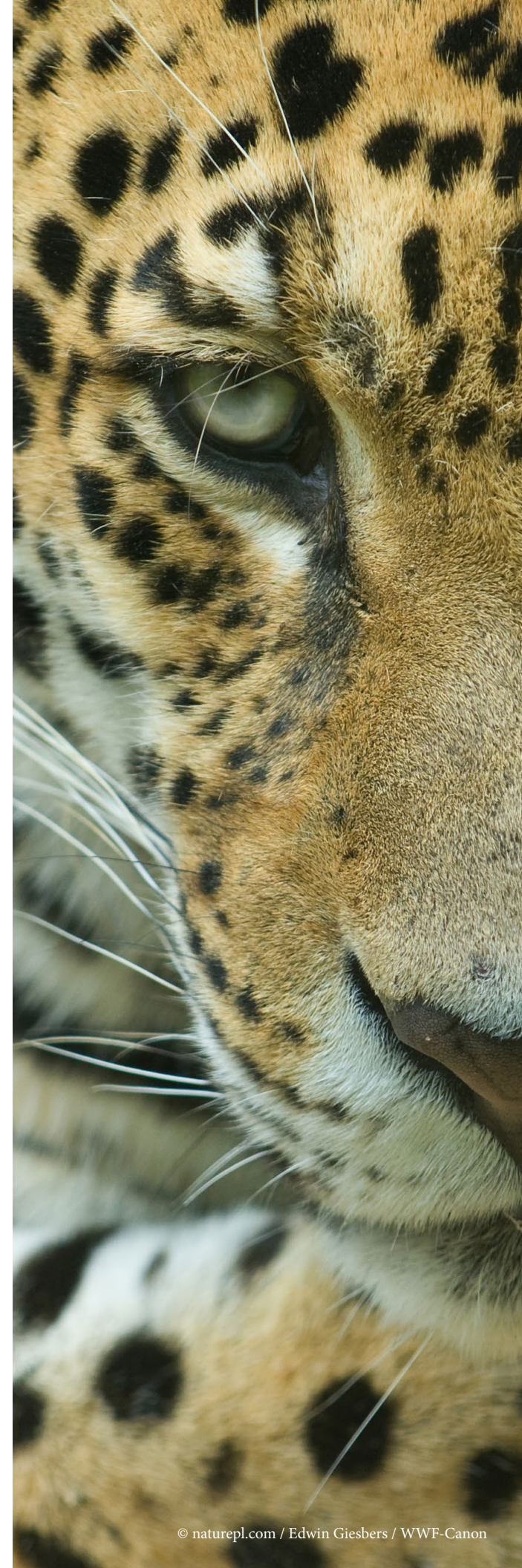
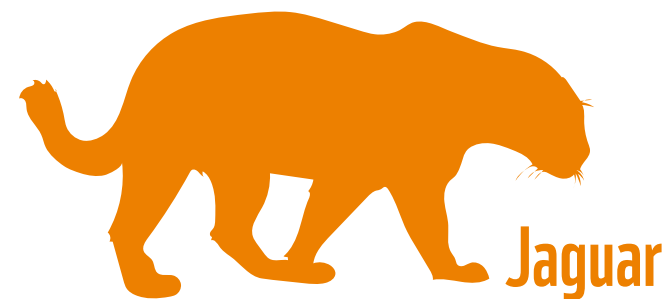
For more information  
read memoirs  
Forum on:



## United for jaguar conservation in the Amazon

For the first time in the history of the region, different organizations formed a partnership for the conservation of one of the most emblematic species in Latin America, especially in the Amazon: the jaguar. During May, The Wildlife Conservation Society WCS, Panthera Foundation and WWF organized a workshop in Quito, Ecuador, that was attended by representatives of the host country, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela and the Guianas. In this event, participants presented the latest findings of the species and shared previous experiences of jaguar conservation that aims to increase the species population, habitat integrity and the welfare of indigenous and peasant communities living in the Amazon.

The jaguar is the largest cat in the continent and its most significant populations live in the Amazon, the largest tropical forest in the world where you can find one out of ten species on Earth and where 30 million people from 350 different ethnic groups live. Currently, a million hectares of the Amazon rainforest are being deforested, polluted and destroyed, which results in the fragmentation of the jaguar's habitat. These threats along with illegal wildlife trafficking are dramatically decreasing jaguar populations. Only if multiple stakeholders join their efforts and work in the same direction, this species will be successfully conserved.







©Edna Guerrero  
Bellanira Yara sembrando maiz

## The story of Bella and the Jungle won journalism award.



Edna Guerrero  
Practicante de Comunicaciones

Edna Guerrero, communications intern at WWF Colombia based in Mocoa, Putumayo, won an environmental journalism award for her story Bella and the Jungle. The article narrates the life of Bella, a women that dedicates her time harvesting and reforesting her land located in Putumayo, an Amazon state where cattle ranching is threatening the buffer zone of La Paya National Park. According to the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) there were 24,263 livestock that occupy 24,404 hectares of pasture in the municipality where Bella lives in.

Bellanira Lara, owns 60 hectares located in the buffer zone of the protected area. Contrary to what her neighbours have been doing, she has preserved 20 hectares of natural forest and in the remaining land she has planted cedar, cocoa and other tree species. She has received technical assistance from WWF and the government to develop, implement and manage sustainable production systems that do not have negative impacts on the protected area.

Edna wrote Bellanira's story for her graduate thesis. While developing her research she became familiar with WWF's work in the region. Afterwards, she joined the organization as an intern.

To read her story  
visit this site:



© OCDE



To read the  
report visit:

## Colombia needs to improve its environmental practices to become an OECD member

re. Yet, becoming part of this organization for countries with good practices, is not that simple. Colombia must demonstrate, among other things, good environmental performance and sustainability policies.

Colombia, with the collaboration of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) asked the OECD to develop an assessment of Colombia's environmental performance. The assessment highlights the opportunities and challenges that face the country and highlighted 48 recommendations, that focus on the need to strengthen inter-sectoral work in areas such as mining, biodiversity, green economy and environmental governance.

Overall, the OECD recognizes as opportunities for Colombia: its position as the second most most biodiverse country, with forest covering more than half the territory, its abundant water and improved access to water services; its low CO2 emissions from fuel combustion per unit of GDP due to heavy reliance on hydropower; and its potential to convert resources from well-managed minerals, metals and fossil fuels into infrastructure investment. Moreover, the report highlights as the key environmental challenges for the country: the extensive cattle farming contributing to land degradation, deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions; the poorly-regulated extractive industries, damaging human health and the environment; climate change vulnerability, bringing significant economic, environmental and social costs; the poor environmental integration within the national policy framework: and the wide disparities in income, land-holdings and access to environmental services.

The OECD assessment recommends eliminating incentives that encourage extensive cattle ranching and the implementation of taxes to agrochemicals. Furthermore, it recommends ministries to be more accountable for the environmental impacts of their policies, promoting the use of environmental taxes, phasing out subsidies and tax exemptions that harm the environment. Finally, the OECD suggested that Colombia should work to improve coherence between economic and environmental policies.





© WWF

## Colombia regained its Tuna fleet capacity

Having spent several years on the blacklist, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) allowed Colombia to annually harvest over 2000 m3 of tuna, meaning it regained its fleet capacity for this resource.

Currently, tuna in the eastern Pacific is at its maximum exploitation point. The tuna fleet in this region has a capacity of 158,000 m3, which exceeds the natural productivity of the resource. This situation is alarming, therefore, the Commission has tried to establish fishing practices to regulate the use of Fish Aggregating Devices FAD (artificial floating objects) for tuna capture.

The National Fisheries Authority of Colombia (AUNAP), with support from WWF, has been leading different processes that aim to ensure sustainability of tuna fisheries in the Pacific. Last semester they organized two national workshops that intended to develop a national plan for the use of FAD's and sustainable tuna fishing strategy in Colombia. They also organized in April 2014 an international workshop in Cartagena where they discussed the fleet capacity of the tuna fleet in the eastern Pacific. The information gathered at these workshops will be presented to the Commission, whose Assembly will meet in Lima in June 2014.



Yolanda Kakabadse, Presidenta Internacional WWF  
© Richard Stonehouse / WWF-Canon

## Key article Latin America's economic development must not wipe out the territory

On May 17 the Colombian journal El Tiempo interviewed Yolanda Kakabadse on the environmental situation in Latin America. WWF's president talked about the region's conflicts over its natural resources, the development model based on extractivism, the conservation of the Amazon, and the politicians' environmental accountability, amongst other topics. For more information read the interview:

**Interview with the President of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Yolanda Kakabadse.**

The world shows three signs that convince Yolanda Kakabadse that saving the planet depends on every person.

She recently heard Pope Francis say that wasting food was stealing from the poor; she also recalled Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang's disposal of punishing whoever throws food away, and recently found a sign at a Swiss hotel warning customers that any food from the buffet that was left on the plate would be charged.

"We need to change small habits. On the current rhythm of consumerism, all around the world, we are destroying the planet", she commented, and recalled that a third of the world's produced food goes to waste.

Food, water and energy are the three focal points of the work of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the largest non-government organization in the fields of conservation and environmental stewardship of the planet, which Kakabadse has presided over the last four years.

Aware of the challenges it faces, the Ecuatorian expert is optimistic about the continent's potential.





© Richard Stonehouse / WWF-Canon

“We don’t have to wipe out our territory and destroy biodiversity, because there lies another economic potential”, she maintained, in a conversation with El Tiempo.

Kakabadse, who was also the head of the Ministry for the Environment of Ecuador and the president of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), gave her opinions on the regional policies and the shared commitment to conserving the Amazon.

**On several opportunities you have talked about politician’s responsibility with the environment. How willing are they to defend it and find the resources needed for its protection in Latin America?**

There’s an array of projects: from the ones that don’t make it past discourse to those which are in fact tangible. There are governments that now promote conservation as part of their development model.

In general, one can see there is a greater number of people preassuring their political representatives so to keep their promises and show results.

For example Costa Rica. They decided, twenty years ago, that conservation would be the country’s main attraction, and they put forward a whole process of ecotourism that became their national brand.

Nonetheless, I believe the most important thing that has been done in the past twenty years is the action of local governments; they are taking an active role managing their natural resources.

**Colombia, Brasil, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador share one of the planet’s key ecosystems. How do you perceive the joint work for the Amazon?**

I believe we are in a risky situation. Many citizens still do not realize that the moment an ecosystem disappears or its functions become weak, it’s human beings who is in danger. If there’s no water, there will be no human beings. Neither will there be food supplies and the more vulnerable communities will be the most afflicted by this.

Amongst the Andean-Amazon nations there’s a huge responsibility. Work needs to be done on the basis of a common vision. Large measures of regional public policy are not needed, because it’s complicated, instead the vision must be shared.



**The growth of latin american economies has been propelled, to a large extent, by mining-energy and extractivist industries, how to bet on them without making the cost lethal for the territories?**

The subject is not if there is to be an exploitation or not. Oil and mineral extraction is key for industries and it’s taking place in fragile landscapes. It is necessary to decide where it is convenient. We have to understand which are the conditions that generate conflict and begin to work when the smoke shows, not when there is already a fire burning. That way is more expensive and harder.

The leadership is not only in the hands of the government, but also in the hands of the indigenous community, in local representatives. It’s key to understand that this is everyone’s responsibility. The core of this understanding is dialogue.

**The Worldwide Fund for Nature is one of the non-government organizations with the largest prescence in the world. In a global scenario, which are the most critical points and sectors?**

One of the biggest threats is overfishing. But one can also see a link between producers and consumers. More and more the market demands that products from industries pass by certification processes. Consumers demand that fishing, wood extraction and farming respect sustainable principles.

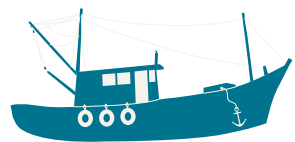
**It is with great expectation that the public awaits the summits to discuss climate change, alarming reports are presented, but on occasions the changes perceived by the citizens are few. What’s not right?**

Each of the conferences has particular expectations. I believe that not all of them have made progress because within them have filtered all kinds of interests of political nature, party as well as economic, that don’t allow the progress that we would want.

What I believe is that the population is in fact telling its leaders to not be irresponsible, and that’s important, because the citizens are the ones who vote, who legitimate governments.

However, we are often not just in recognizing achievements. For example, in the United States, national legislation has been very slow, but at state level like California and the northeast we can see significant changes, even as valuable as if they had been undertaken by the whole country.

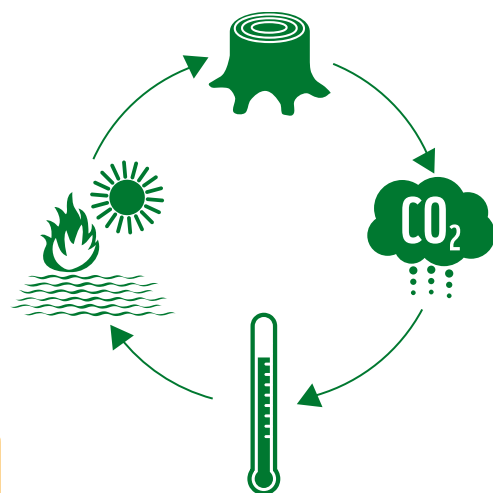




One of the greatest threats is the over-fishing

**You have been involved in the environmental agenda for more than three decades. What has changed from the 70's activism to the 21st century?**

Towards the end of the seventies there was zero conscience about conservation. We were going towards the roots of the problems then, showing evidence in front of governments in favour of regulating the use of agrochemicals, for example. Now, we build alliances with the private sector as well as governments, we learn from other global experiences.

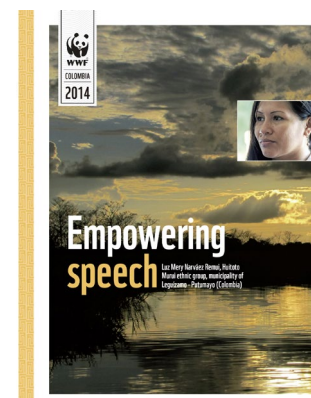


**Yolanda Kakabadse,**  
President of the Global  
Fund Wildlife

**Learn history and geography from the planet**

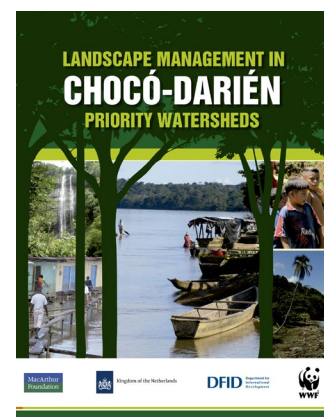
Yolanda Kakabadse, president of the World Wide Fund for Nature, convinced that individual changes also depend on environmental education. To her, education depends as much on public policy as on the day-to-day classroom. “Already one can see in many schools that teachers begin to generate interest for the planet’s wellbeing.” Nonetheless, she warns that environmental education must not be understood as a different subject, but as part of history, geography or Spanish. “Why must we learn the subject and predicate of a phrase such as “the house is green,” if we can say “the stingray is an endemic animal of the Amazon”, said the expert.

## Publications WWF-Colombia



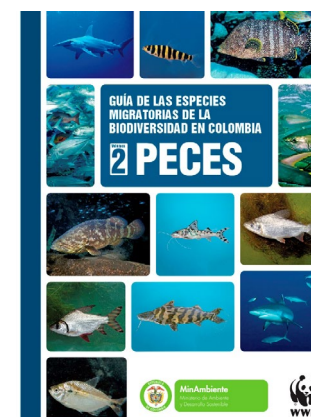
The story “Empowering speech” is about Luz Mery, indigenous leader, and the transformation she experienced throughout the implementation of the Putumayo Tres Fronteras project. It could be the story of Cléber, Riascos, Willy, Juan Leonel, Edier, Hernán or any other of the project but Luz Mery was the woman participating since the beginning of the project in 2009. Her progress, achievements and challenges, and her outstanding participation in the Citizen’s Action Dialogue (CAC), made her the story’s central character.

For more  
information  
click here



The Chocó-Darién ecoregional complex spans across approximately 17 million ha, from Eastern Panamá to Northwestern Ecuador. It is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, recognized for its multitude of forest and freshwater ecosystems, including mangroves, estuarine forests, lowland and montane rain forests. These distinct features all contribute to its renowned biological singularity. Landscape Management in Chocó-Darién Priority Watersheds is an assessment of the pressures and threats that currently suffers one of the most biodiverse places in the world.

For more  
information  
click here



WWF-Colombia published the book “Migratory fishes of Colombia,” the second in the series “Colombia’s migratory species guide”, written under the framework of an agreement with the Ministry of Environment. The guide records a total of 169 migratory species.

For more  
information  
click here





nectados



**FOR A  
LIVING  
PLANET**

wwf.org.co



**Why we are here**

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature

[panda.org](http://panda.org)

Participation WWF-Colombia in the International Environmental Fair (FIMA). 4 to 7 June 2014

© 1986 Panda Symbol WWF – World Wide Fund For Nature (Formerly World Wildlife Fund) © "WWF" is a WWF Registered Trademark WWF International, Avenue du Mont-Blanc, 1196 Gland, Switzerland.  
Tel. + 41 22 364 9111 Fax +41 22 364 0332. For contact details and further information, please visit our international website at [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)

© Ferny Díaz / WWF-Colombia