



WWF

FACTSHEET

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SERRANÍA DEL CHIRIBIQUETE NATIONAL PARK

Chiribiquete National Park, now the largest tropical rainforest national park in the world, is located in the heart of the Colombian Amazon.

Created first in 1989, the park was expanded to reach a total of **4,267,878 hectares** under protection in July 2018.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Chiribiquete National Park is home to a large number of species of flora and fauna with high levels of endemism and it has a broad range of pictorial, rock art archaeological sites. Chiribiquete is also home to indigenous communities that have been uncontacted or are living in voluntary isolation. These communities continue to use pictorial ritual art in these rocky shelters.

Recognizing the singularity and diversity of its ecosystems, and exceptional cultural characteristics that provide evidence of the presence of humans for many millennia, Chiribiquete was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in July 2018.

WHAT MAKES CHIRIBIQUETE SO IMPORTANT?

Serranía de Chiribiquete currently supplies 31% of the Colombian Amazon's superficial water and after the expansion, its forests are estimated to store approximately **454 million tons of carbon** in their canopies alone. Roughly 60% of this carbon, equaling 171 tons, has been added through the park's expansion in July 2018.

NATURAL VALUE

- Chiribiquete National Park is **the only protected area in the world that simultaneously connects** the Orinoco savannah, the Andes mountain range, the Guyana Shield, and the Amazon forest ecosystems and it constitutes an enclave with contrasting and complementary adjacent ecosystems.
- It is home to **30% of the ecosystems and flora of the Colombian Amazon**, as well as 30% of the bat diversity and 10% of the country's known butterfly diversity.
- Geologically, Chiribiquete constitutes **a window into the origin of the Earth** and Colombian geology. Chiribiquete's majestic landscape has several rock plateaus, or tepuis "**tepuyes**," that emerge from flatlands and humid forests, reaching a height of up to 900 meters and hosting high levels of endemism. Tepuis "**Tepuyes**" are **the continent's oldest rock formations**.
- Chiribiquete makes a key **contribution to climate change mitigation** by regulating rainfall and temperature patterns and keeping millions of tons of carbon stored in its canopy and soils.
- Though there is still much to discover about Chiribiquete's wealth, **researchers have already found thousands of species**, including 1,801 plant species, 82 mammal species, and 238 fish species, dozens of them endemic and several threatened, among them the lowland tapir, giant otter, the giant anteater, the woolly monkey, and the jaguar.



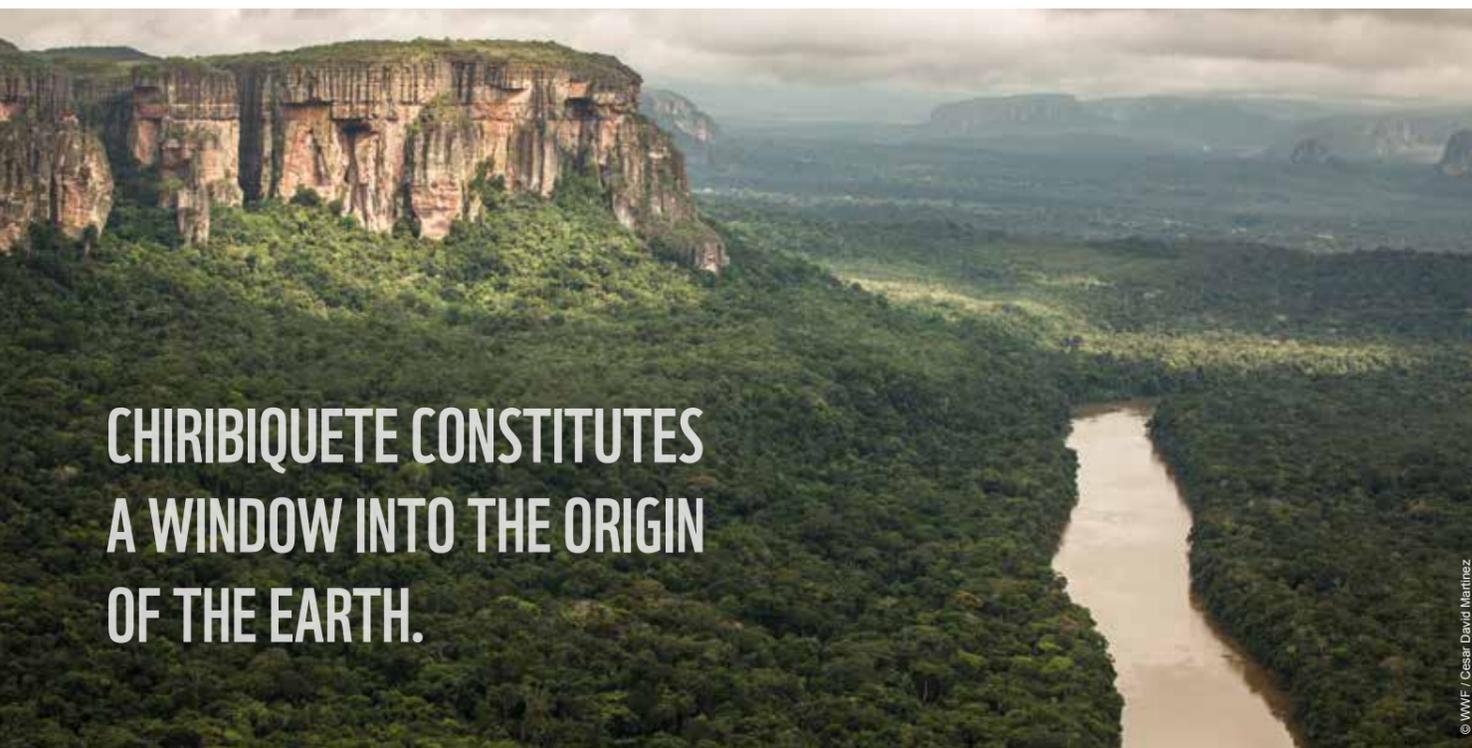
CHIRIBIQUETE FORESTS ARE ESTIMATED TO STORE APPROXIMATELY 454 MILLION TONS OF CARBON IN THEIR CANOPIES ALONE.

- The area is considered a key site for the conservation of healthy populations of **charismatic and endangered species**, including the jaguar, the pink dolphin, the tapir, the macaw and the giant newt.
- The area is of great importance as **a connecting point for the stability of South America's jaguar population**, whose presence is very important for the indigenous communities, who consider the park to be "The Great Maloca of the Jaguar."
- The expansion will contribute to the protection of under-represented habitats in the protected areas system that support a large number of species, **including 708 plant species, 30 species of mammals, 410 species of birds, 41 species of reptiles and 216 fish species, among others.**
- The park is also unique for its high levels of endemism of amphibians and freshwater fish, which are two of the most endangered groups of vertebrates in the world.

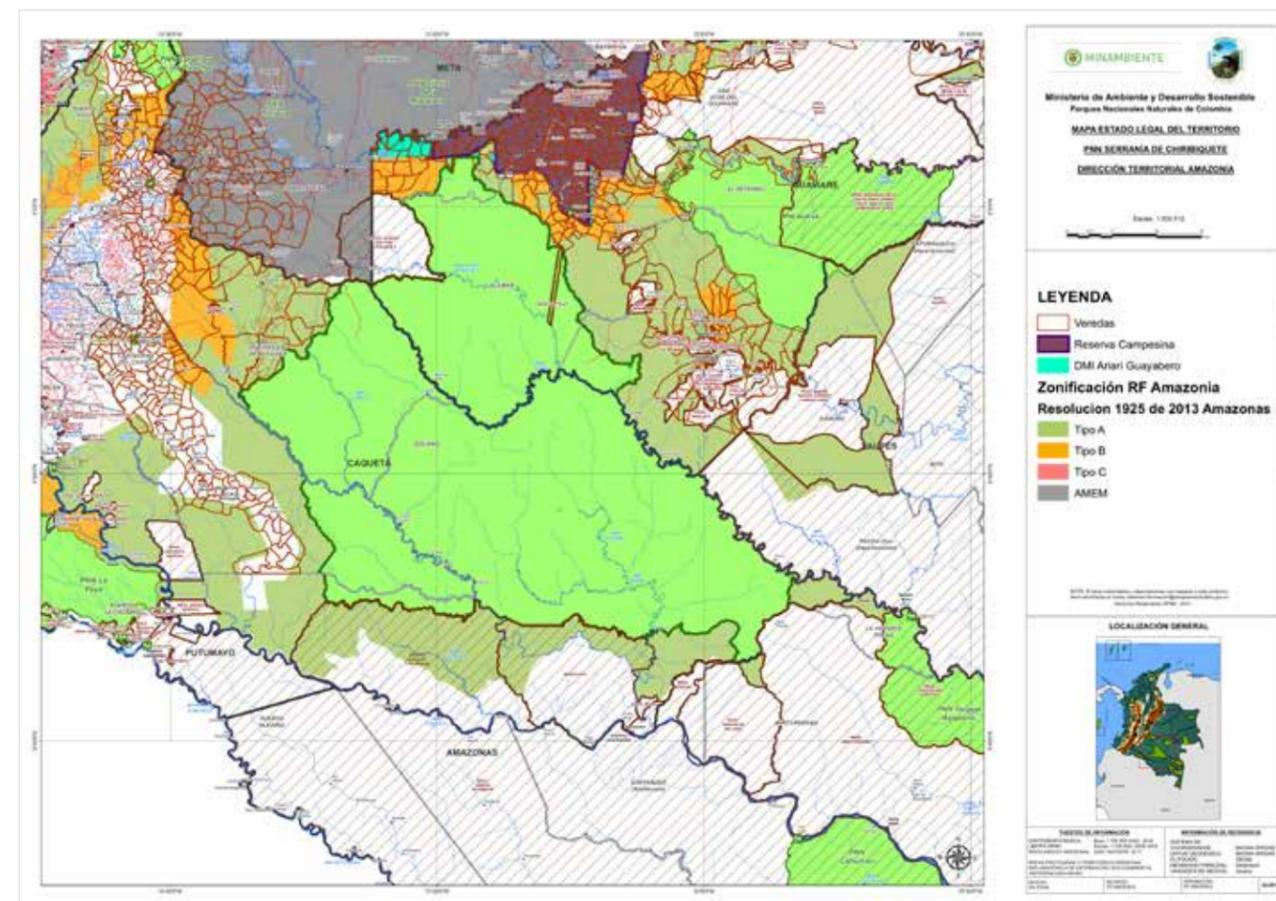
CULTURAL VALUE

- **Indigenous communities in voluntary isolation** inhabit Chiribiquete. Expanding the protected area will allow for the conservation of zones where indigenous peoples of the Uitoto, Carib, and Arawak linguistic families reside.
- Chiribiquete National Park is an **archeological heritage site of international importance**. It contains the oldest, largest, densest and most impressive archaeological pictographic complex in America – there are 50 monumental murals, including more than **70,000 different representations, some more than 20,000 years old.**
- These pictograms show hunting, battle, dancing, and ceremonial scenes, and **many of them are related to the cult of the jaguar**, seen as a symbol of power and fertility.
- It holds enormous cultural wealth related to myths of origin, chamanism, ceremonial places and strategic sites. For indigenous thinkers, Chiribiquete is considered "the world's shore, **the cosmogonic territory where the world begins and ends.**"

Communities from areas surrounding Chiribiquete National Park depend heavily on the services it provides.



CHIRIBIQUETE CONSTITUTES A WINDOW INTO THE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH.



CHIRIBIQUETE IN “POST-CONFLICT” TIMES

In Colombia’s 52-year civil war, more than 7 million people were displaced and disputes over natural resources were often at the center of the conflict.

Colombia’s protected areas—national parks, regional parks, and private reserves—were hit especially hard. While Chiribiquete National Park has been maintained in an exceptional conservation state given its geographic isolation, limited access, and ancestral cultural rules which have stopped any modification or alteration to the area for centuries, overall nearly 70% of the 60 million-acre system of Colombia’s protected areas was in conflict zones.

A historic peace agreement, signed in late November 2016 between the government of Colombia and the guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, was designed to put an end to the conflict. With the end of the conflict, new pressures and development interests, including the expansion of the agricultural frontier, present a more intense threat.

The post-conflict scenario presents a critical opportunity to restore the health of the country’s protected areas, through initiatives such as Heritage Colombia, and prevent damage or loss to the many wild wonders that still exist, which is crucial for the maintenance of the Amazon, not only in Colombia but in the whole biome.

MAJOR THREATS FACING CHIRIBIQUETE TODAY

- Deforestation associated with land speculation, the expansion of the agricultural frontier, illegal timber extraction, and illicit crops, as well as unplanned settlements.
- According to latest figures on deforestation from The Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies about 66% of the country’s deforestation occurs in the Amazon.



WWF’S ROLE IN THE PARK’S EXPANSION

The WWF team has helped to ensure the required technical and governance elements for the expansion have been met, including considerations on climate change and ecosystem services.

Through **Heritage Colombia**, an initiative to drive an innovative financial mechanism to help create permanent protected areas around the globe, WWF aims to support Chiribiquete to achieve the IUCN Green List Management Standards to increase effectiveness through the adoption of innovative social and institutional governance schemes.

WWF has also made financial contributions towards the park’s expansion.

WWF participated in efforts to make Chiribiquete a World Heritage Site.

TIMELINE

- 1989** Serranía de Chiribiquete was declared a natural national park in **September of 1989**, with an area of **1,298,955 hectares**, in the departments of Guaviare and Caquetá.
- 2013** More than 20 years later, in August of 2013, the park area was expanded into the municipalities of Cartagena del Chairá, San Vicente del Caguán, and Solano in Caquetá and Calamar in Guaviare, reaching a total area of **2,782,354 hectares**.
- 2018** Today, almost 30 years after its creation, the park has added nearly 1.5 million hectares for a total of almost **4.3 million hectares**, making it the country’s largest national park and the world’s largest tropical rainforest national park.

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| | <p>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.</p> <p>www.panda.org</p> |
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