



WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

EMERGENCY AMAZON FIRE FUND REPORT

March 2020



THE AMAZON FIRES

The Amazon is a region of superlatives. It is the largest rainforest in the world. A tenth of all species on Earth live here. 2,300 species of fish are found across the basin – more than the entire Atlantic Ocean. The Amazon rain forest is also home to 30 million people, including Indigenous and traditional populations. But the Amazon is undeniably a region on the brink. Deforestation, after years of decline, is once again on the rise. Unprecedented droughts are happening with increasing frequency. Dry seasons are hotter and longer. According to many notable scientists, the Amazon is close to a tipping point past which it will no longer be able to sustainably support itself.

Last year's fires brought the fate of the Amazon into sharp focus. The flames wreaked havoc as they crossed borders and jumped rivers.

On the ground, volunteers worked arduously to put out fires with little or no training and often without basic equipment like masks and boots. Local communities lost their homes, land, and livelihoods. It was an environmental disaster of global proportions.

To have the fastest response possible, we set up an emergency fund through which 100% of monies raised would go directly to local civil society organizations, communities, and Indigenous peoples at the front lines of the fires. This report outlines what enabled these fires, and what actions WWF and partners have taken to aid in response and recovery.

THANKS TO YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS, WE RAISED ALMOST \$1.5 MILLION IN THE US FOR FIRE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IN A FEW SHORT WEEKS.



FIRES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

It's a vicious cycle. As deforestation increases and climate change continues, the impacts of droughts intensify, which increases the risk of forest fires. Fires not only release the carbon stored in the forest, adding to emissions, but they reduce the ability of forests to absorb carbon. Forest fires and increased temperatures threaten the ability of the Amazon to act as a carbon sink, further exacerbating the global climate crisis.

27,027 sq miles

of land burned in the Brazilian Amazon in 2019, totaling 14% higher than the average over the past three years

19,305 sq miles

of land burned in Bolivia in 2019, much higher than in previous years



This is roughly equal to the size of the state of Mississippi

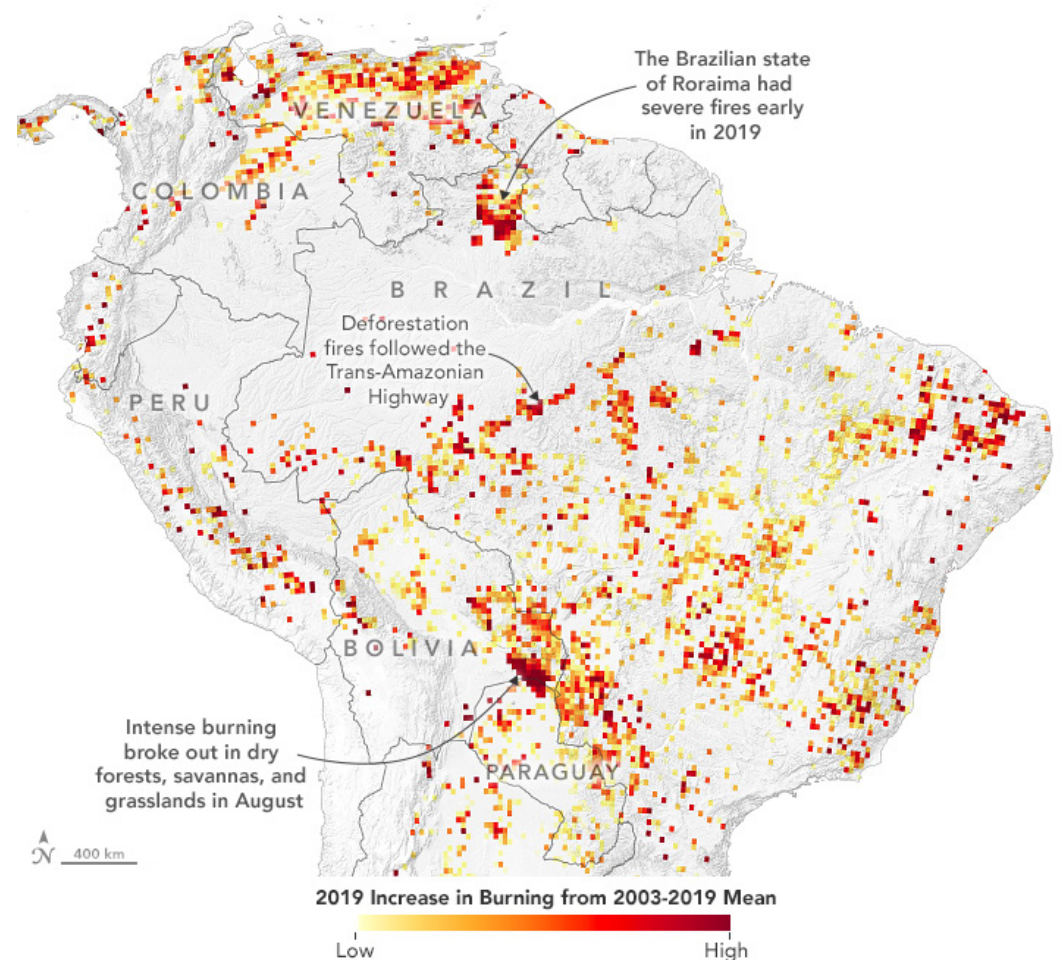
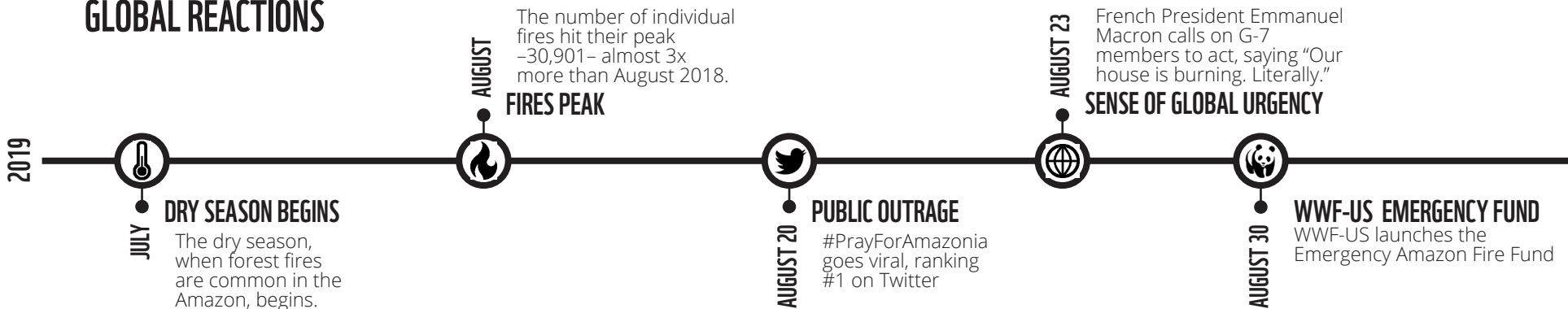


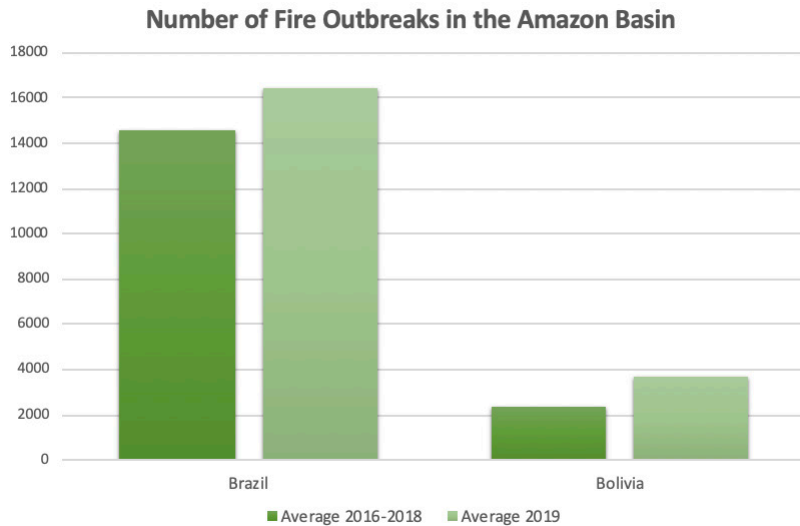
Figure 1: Forest fire outbreaks in the Amazon basin during 2019 Source: NASA Earth Observatory

GLOBAL REACTIONS



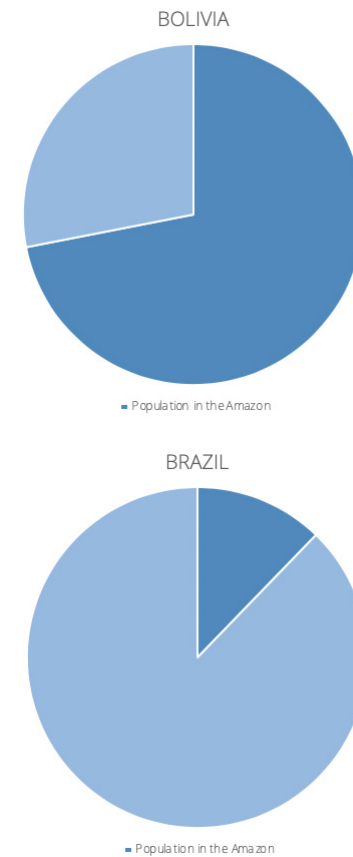
ON THE RISE

Fire incidence in the Amazon in 2019 was higher than 2018, particularly in Brazil (30%) and Bolivia (81%) respectively. It was also higher than the average over the past three years in these same countries.



Source: INPE and Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN)

Respective percentage of the population in the Amazon



SEPTEMBER 7



LETICIA PACT

Alongside Indigenous groups, leaders of seven Amazon countries signed the Leticia Pact, pledging to protect their shared forests. It commits leaders to more regional coordination, innovation, technology, and deeper engagement of Indigenous people and women.



OCTOBER 24

FIRES CONSIDERED CONTAINED

Fires still burn but seem to be under control. Brazil's "Guarantee of Law and Order Operation", which deployed the nation's armed forces to control blazes, concludes.

OCTOBER 26



AMAZON SYNOD OF BISHOPS

Pope Francis convenes a Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazonian Region of 200 bishops, Indigenous leaders, and climate experts to discuss the Amazon. The synod highlights the need for just, inclusive, sustainable development as well as theological literature on "ecological sins."

THE EMERGENCY AMAZON FIRE FUND

WWF formed an emergency fund to drive critical resources to the people at the front lines of the dramatic fires, specifically to local civil society organizations that represent and work with Indigenous peoples and local communities to protect the Amazon.

The fund helped provide:

- Firefighting equipment including gloves, protective goggles, dampers, coastal pumps, machetes, chainsaws, water pumps and hoses
- Food, water, and medical supplies for impacted communities
- Communication radios and GPS
- Car rentals and fuel to deliver supplies to remote areas
- Equipment and training to monitor ongoing fires and provide alerts to those at risk



FINANCIALS

Thanks to the generous support of donors who resourced WWF-US's costs associated with distributing funds in Amazon countries, 100% of donations went directly to response and recovery of Earth's largest rain forest.

\$1,444,149

was raised and allocated to our partners in the field in Brazil and Bolivia through the Emergency Fire Fund.

\$297,381

was raised to support fire response capacity in WWF-Brazil and WWF-Bolivia. This included efforts to safeguard communities from any unintentional environmental and social risks.

Donations came from:

3,300+

individuals and private foundations

30+

companies through direct gifts or employee-giving programs

BOLIVIA PARTNERS RECEIVED FUNDS

NATIONAL PROTECTED AREA SERVICE (SERNAP)
APCOB
FUNDACIÓN CONSERVACION DEL BOSQUE CHIQUITANO (FCBC)
FUNDACIÓN AMIGOS DE LA NATURALEZA (FAN)
NATIVA
FUNDACIÓN PARA EL DESARROLLO PARTICIPATIVO COMUNITARIO (FUNDEPCO)
SOCIEDAD BOLIVIANA DE DERECHO AMBIENTAL (SBDA)
CENTRO DE INVESTIGACION DEL CAMPESINADO AGRICOLA (CIPCA) NATURA
MUSEO DE HISTORIA NATURAL NOEL KEMPF MERCADO
REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS JURÍDICOS E INVESTIGACIÓN SOCIAL

WWF OFFICES RAISED ADDITIONAL FUNDS

WWF - UNITED KINGDOM
WWF - NETHERLANDS
WWF - BELGIUM
WWF - DENMARK
WWF - SWEDEN
WWF - JAPAN
WWF - MEXICO
WWF - AUSTRALIA
WWF - HONG KONG
WWF - CHINA
WWF - FINLAND
WWF INTERNATIONAL

BRAZIL PARTNERS RECEIVED FUNDS

ASSOCIAÇÃO DE DEFESA ETNOAMBIENTAL KANINDE
INSTITUTO KABU
ASSOCIAÇÃO DOS MORADORES DA RESEX DO RIO IRIRI (AMORIRI)
TERRA DO MEIO
BRIGADA VOLUNTARIA ALTER DO CHÃO
SOS AMAZÔNIA, FUNDAÇÃO VICTORIA AMAZÔNIA (FVA)
COMISSÃO PRO ÍNDIO (CPI)
REDE XINGU+
ASSOCIAÇÃO DOS POVOS INDÍGENAS JIAHUI (APIJ)
TERRA INDIGENA YAWANAWA
TERRA INDÍGENA BOCA DO ACRE APURINA (IIEB)
ASSOCIAÇÃO DOS MORADORES E PRODUTORES DA RESERVA EXTRATIVISTA CHICO MENDES EM XAPURI (AMOPREX)
ASSOCIAÇÃO DOS MORADORES E PRODUTORES DA RESERVA EXTRATIVISTA CHICO MENDES DE ASSIS BRASIL (AMOPREAB)
ASSOCIAÇÃO DO POVO INDÍGENA TENHARIM - MOROGITÁ (APITEM)
ACS ORGÂNICOS
RECA
IDESAM
APSIRE / XAVANTE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

VICTORIA AMAZON FUND (FVA)

BRAZIL

Where: Amazonas

- Anavilhanas National Park (1,351 sq miles)
- Rio Negro State Park North Sector (563 sq miles)
- Rio Negro Sustainable Development Reserve (398 sq miles)
- Puranga-Conquista Sustainable Development Reserve (297 sq miles)

In the Manaus Metropolitan region, the main cause of burnings are the use of fire to clear land to accommodate the growing city, which has grown by over 25% in just a decade. As the city encroaches on the Lower Rio Negro Mosaic forests, land is also cleared to accommodate timber, livestock, and soybean industries.

On the front lines of the fire was the Victoria Amazon Foundation (FVA), which both trains the Rio Negro brigade and raises awareness to prevent and reduce fires. The small group of mostly volunteers cover an area over 2,600 sq miles, or twice the size of Rhode Island.

Thanks to WWF's Emergency Fire Fund, the FVA was able to purchase critical equipment, such as helmets, gloves, goggles, radios and a GPS, and train volunteers as they prepared to fight the fires. They also developed fire risk warning bulletins, launched a fire awareness and prevention campaign, and held a series of fire management and prevention workshops designed to help community members understand the risks associated with clearing forests using fire.

"I learned that clearing our properties without fire is much more useful and interesting for us. Without fire, one can use the land for a much longer time, have a sustainable product, and reduce the risk of the flames escaping to the forest."

Cledson Roberto do Amaral
Resident of the Pagodão community



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

RÍO BLANCO

Bolivia

Last year Bolivia suffered a major forest fire emergency: 4,472 families were impacted, including the 161 families that were forced to evacuate due to compromised air quality. The damage done to the area threatened valuable timber species, copaibo resin, and cusi, whose oil is raw material used by women in the area to make soap and other goods.

The region hardest hit was Santa Cruz, which had been experiencing months of intense droughts. Communities faced fires without water. The wells had been dried up, and the fires' smoke and debris contaminated any remaining natural water sources. Since the start of the drought, over 30 communities in this region had to rely on tank water to sustain their populations.

In Bolivia's Chiquitano Dry Forest region, over 5 million acres of forest were impacted by the fires. The fires brought on public health concerns and economic losses as they tore through the forest biome. Communities, like Río Blanco, have been without water for months, and due to their remote locations, water can be up to a two-hour drive away.

With WWF's Emergency Fire Fund, local communities and key partners secured critical equipment and transportation to stop the fires and provide access to their homes. The remoteness of the area, coupled with the physical destruction caused by the fires, impeded communities' ability to access emergency services. The fund also enabled partners to purchase desperately needed water, food, and medical supplies and transport them to the impacted communities.

"The fire cornered the entire community, and that was upsetting. Everything that was green close to the community has burned. There was a lot of smoke, and so we couldn't see well. The students couldn't go to classes, and that made us sad. The fire kept going, as if wanting to devour the whole community."

Lucas Ariqui

Treasurer of the Palmarito La Frontera Indigenous Community



“We received a lot of support from WWF. They helped us with food and medical supplies, and also with water, so everyone can drink, because our water was very contaminated.”

Alcides Pinto Supayabe
Cacique, Río Blanco Community

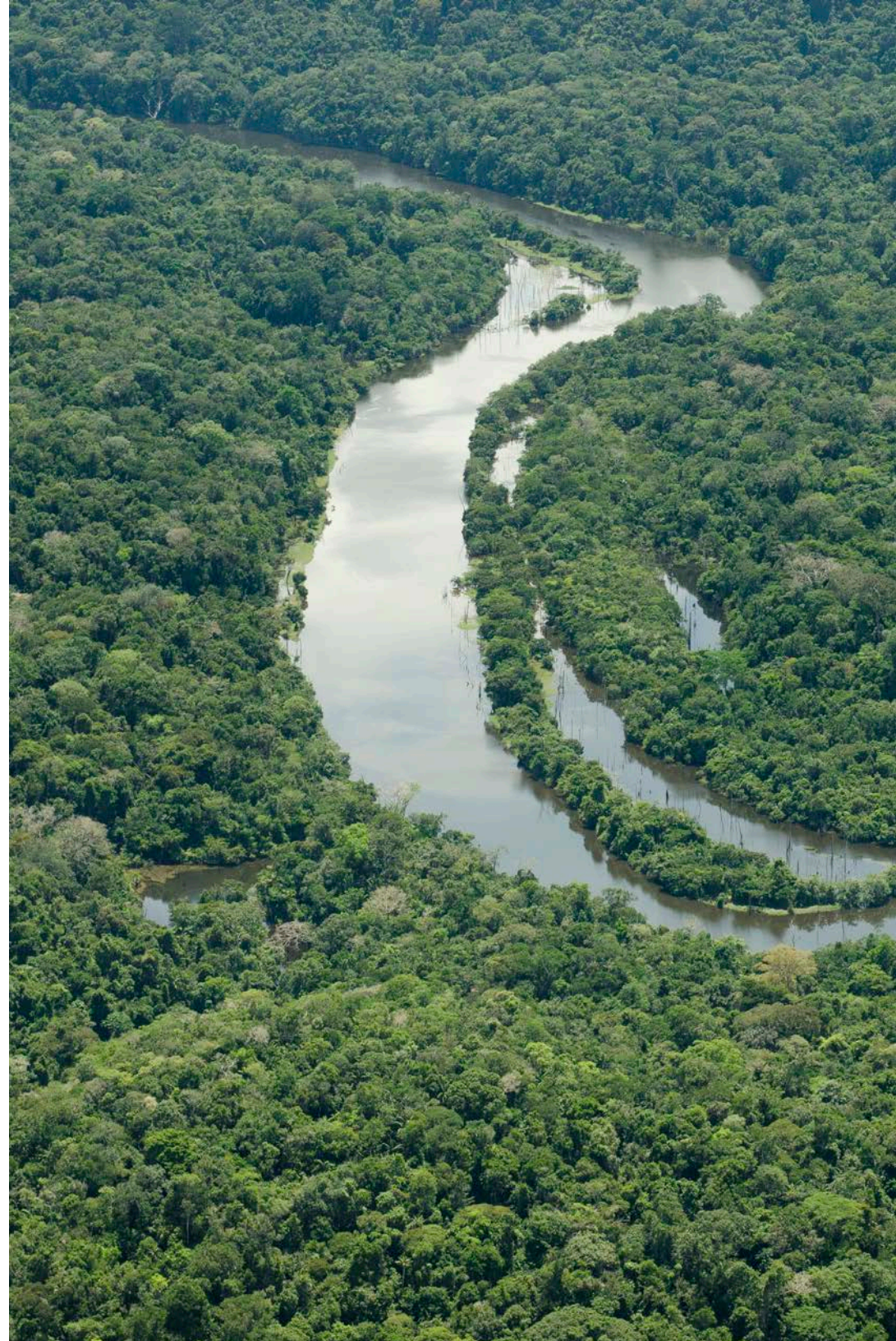


THANK YOU

We are profoundly grateful for your generosity. Your support equipped volunteers fighting these fires. It helped families who lost their homes and livelihoods. In the face of this devastating ecological crisis, your gift also offered hope. These fires remind us that conservation progress is both fragile and needed now more than ever before. WWF continues to work towards securing the amazing ecosystems within the Amazon, for people and for nature. Thank you for making this work possible and for your commitment to protecting life on Earth.

“What happened is distressing, but there isn’t another option than to keep going, to restore or to conserve. We need to do something to continue forward, because we can’t live without our forests, without our animals, without our trees, and much less without water.”

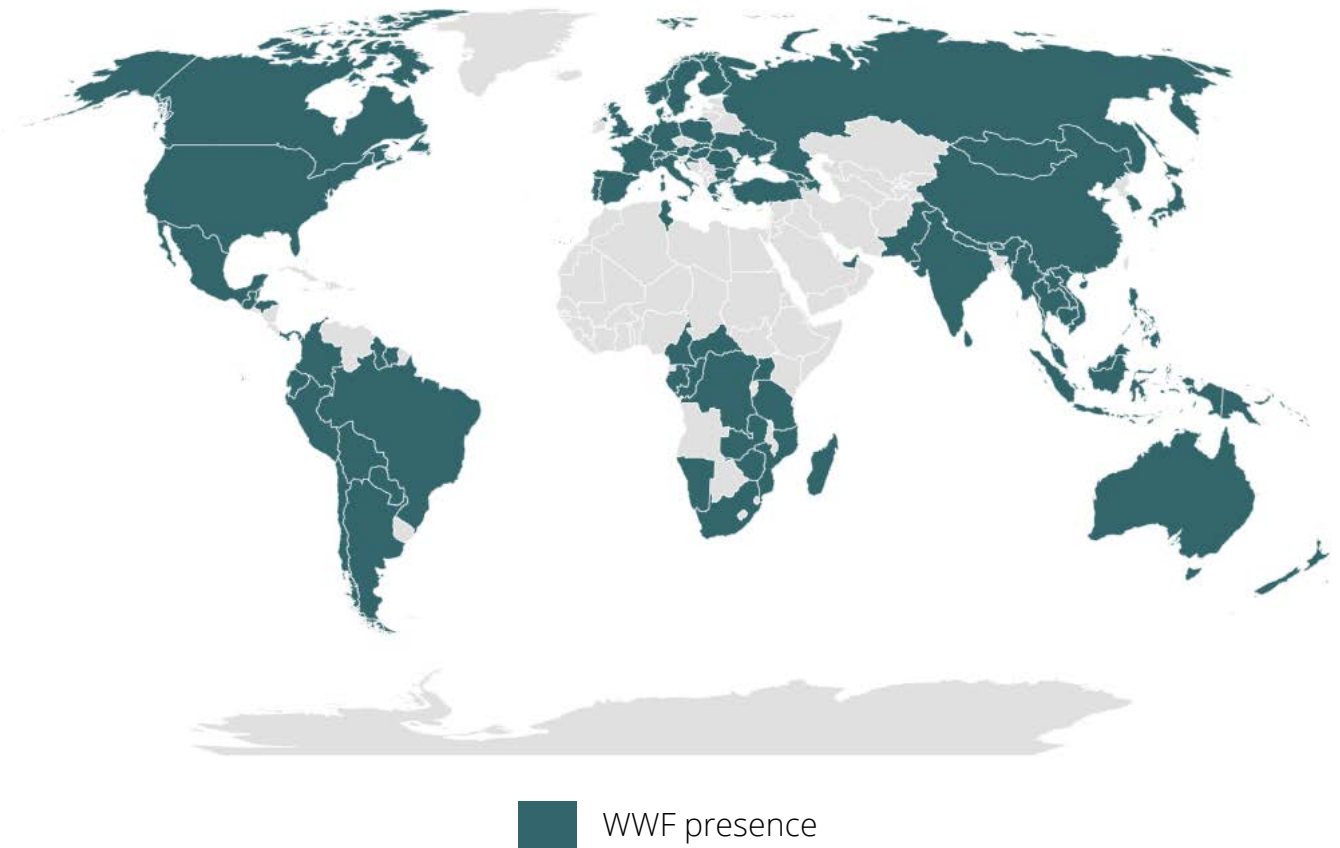
Polonia Supesi Cuasace
Secretary of the Río Blanco Community



ABOUT WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (WWF)

WWF is one of the world's leading conservation organizations, working in nearly 100 countries for over half a century to help people and nature thrive. With the support of more than 5 million members worldwide, WWF is dedicated to delivering science-based solutions to preserve the diversity and abundance of life on Earth, halt the degradation of the environment and combat the climate crisis.

Visit www.worldwildlife.org to learn more.



FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

WWF's vision is to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature. To ensure the human element remains at the core of our projects, we are committed to:

- **Human Rights.** WWF is a founding member and one of the first signatories of the 2009 Conservation Initiative on Human Rights, part of our commitment to respecting internationally recognized human rights and ensuring that WWF work does not lead to human rights violations.
- **Social Policies.** WWF is committed to three policies focused on inclusion: gender, poverty, and conservation, and the role of Indigenous peoples and conservation.
- **Safeguards.** WWF has adopted an Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework, which provides an institutional mechanism to identify a project's environmental and social risks, systematize good governance practices, and ultimately deliver better conservation outcomes while enhancing the well-being of local communities. The framework also establishes multiple culturally and linguistically appropriate mechanisms through which those affected by WWF's projects can raise their grievances and seek resolution.





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