

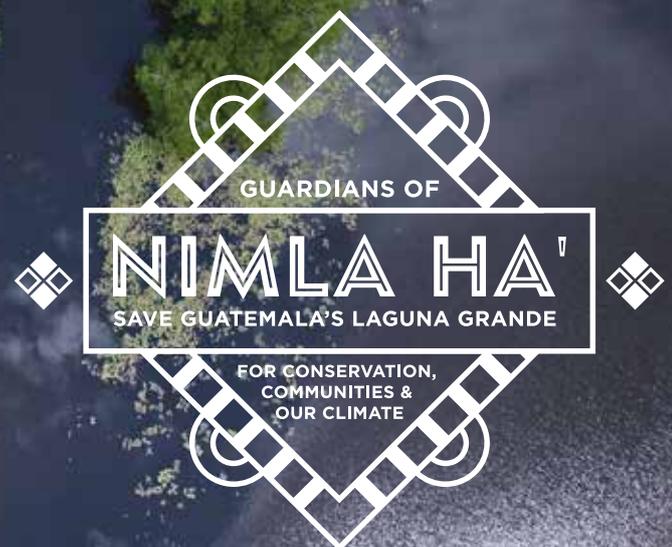
Saving habitats
Saving species
since 1989

worldlandtrust.org

**BIG
MATCH FUND
FORTNIGHT**

Big Match Fortnight is here!

Join us on 6 October for
14 days of double the
impact to save Guatemala's
Laguna Grande



Inside this issue:

- Guardians of Nimla Ha': Our new appeal to save Laguna Grande from logging
- £420,000! Win for orangutans as Borneo appeal more than doubles target
- Keepers of the Wild: Video opens window into lives of WLT-backed rangers
- COP26: What's at stake and how WLT supporters can fight climate change

WLT CEO Dr Jonathan Barnard on the chance to make history for nature again through BMF

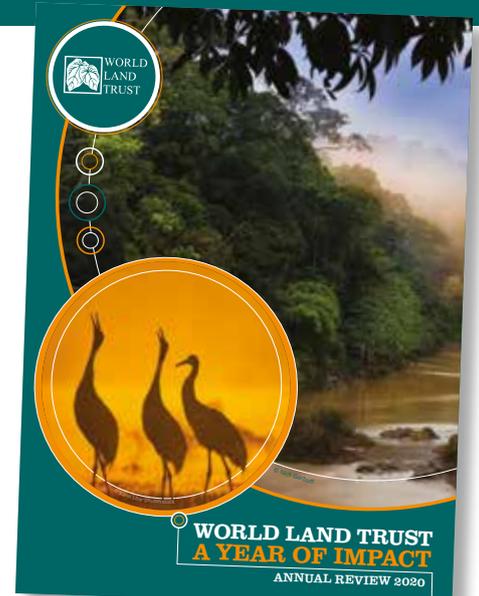
Big Match Fortnight 2021 is upon us and, once again, between 6 and 19 October our committed matchpot supporters will double your donations to our appeal to help save Guatemala's Laguna Grande. In the weeks ahead of COP26 (see back cover for what's at stake) and at a time when climate change is gripping the planet like never before, our campaign gives you the chance to protect the sort of landscape a warming world cannot afford to lose: a magnificent chain of forested lagoons, wetlands and mangroves; a rich carbon sink and hurricane barrier that feeds, via the Sarstún River, onto the Caribbean Sea.

For a sense of what we could achieve at Laguna Grande in October, it pays to look back at the places we've already saved together in 2021. The list is growing:



from Tanzania – where in April WLT supporters funded the saving of 49,000+ acres – to Borneo, where as we report on page 3, a surge of donations to our appeal helped to more than double our initial £150,000 target and save up to five plots of rainforest, up from the original two we were aiming for.

Looking further back, last year's Big Match Fortnight appeal (Save the Chocó) saw us raise an astonishing £925,000 when our target had been £500,000. What if we could make history for nature again in 2021, together?



The chance to save Guatemala's magnificent Laguna Grande follows a year of unprecedented impact by WLT supporters, which you can read all about in the Annual Review 2020 sent alongside this WLT News issue. Credit: WLT

NEWS FROM A SEASON OF CONSERVATION MILESTONES

Local people lead protection of quetzal habitat in Honduras



In need of some conservation optimism? It doesn't get better than the story of how local people and WLT partner AESMO were backed earlier this year by WLT supporter Puro Fairtrade Coffee to save 173 acres of Resplendent Quetzal habitat and a water source in Honduras, in a project where communities co-own and have a leading voice.

Documentary opens window into WLT-backed Guaraní reserve



Helping the Guaraní regain ownership of thousands of acres in Argentina in 2012 is a project we at WLT are particularly proud of, and earlier in 2021 we had the perfect excuse to revisit it: a short documentary (you can watch it on our YouTube channel) by Marcelo Viñas, a videographer who filmed this Indigenous community in recent years.

Rewriting Extinction: WLT joins campaign of stories to save the planet



What do Cara Delevingne, Yoko Ono, Ricky Gervais, Steve Backshall and Chris Packham have in common? All are among the many names backing Rewriting Extinction, a 12-month campaign that will use storytelling to fund the saving of nature through WLT and six other charities. Head on to the News section of our website to discover this amazing new project.

Looking to fund the next conservation good news story?

Donations to our Action Fund will support urgent land purchases, anti-fire kit and others wherever they're most needed. Visit www.worldlandtrust.org/donate for more info.

More than twice the funds for the life of Borneo!

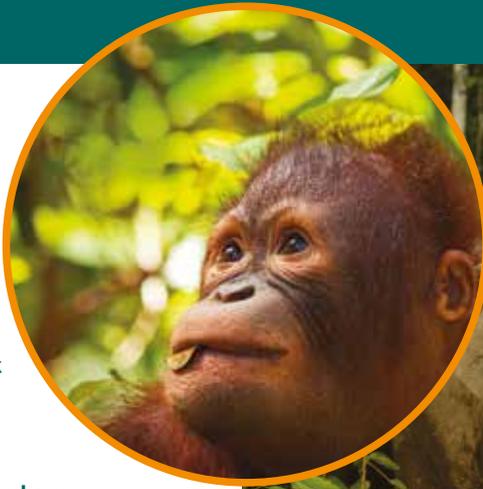
Orangutan corridor expansion secured as WLT appeal closes

We at WLT are simply delighted that our 'Saving Borneo's Orangutan Corridors' appeal has raised more than double the funds we had targeted, and done so in the space of only six weeks. Rainforest purchases that might have needed years to materialise can go ahead now – an expansion of corridors critical to Borneo's orangutans, achieved much sooner than we'd thought possible. And all of it thanks to you: the WLT supporters who continue to show the power of collective action.

The tide of support for our appeal was incredible as the weeks went on from its launch on World Rainforest Day (22 June 2021). We at WLT were thrilled that the campaign had only taken two weeks to raise its initial £150,000 target and even more delighted when events took another stunning turn: within weeks, the doubled £300,000 target had been reached – and surpassed – too. Once long-term commitments were factored in, the total of funds raised for the three-year project passed a whopping £420,000.

For the life of Borneo, the raising of more than twice as much funding holds major implications. Back in late June, the plan with our initial £150,000 target had been to fund HUTAN's purchase of two plots of rainforest: a 10-acre (4-hectare) expansion of the protected corridor of Pangli along the southern banks of the Kinabatangan River. But because of the boundless generosity of WLT supporters, the impact will go much further.

Now that the target has been more than doubled, HUTAN will be able to purchase and protect up to three extra plots of rainforest across the river to the north in Keruak, which they had been longing to safeguard. While negotiations remain underway, this total of five planned purchases by our partner – two in Pangli, three in Keruak – could see a maximum of



Our goal with the appeal had been to fund two plots of rainforest but because of the generosity of WLT supporters, we were able to more than double our target and can now fund three other plots across the river to the north.

65 acres (26 hectares) of rainforest saved by WLT supporters through this appeal: a crucial network of corridors, expanded in an area where 80% of primary forest has already been lost.

HUTAN Co-Founder and Co-Director Isabelle Lackman shared some words to thank WLT supporters for making this conservation breakthrough possible: "To those who donated I say this: HUTAN will work hard to safeguard the rainforest you've helped us to protect. We have already negotiated with Malaysia's authorities so that the new properties are incorporated as extensions to existing reserves, to ensure the maximum level of protection. Now, thanks to you, a future is possible where this area's orangutan populations can start to recover in a

landscape reconnected through corridors."

The raising of more than twice our initial target was made possible by countless individual donors – hundreds alone responded to just a single call for donations in our July eBulletin – as well as the artists, creatives, composers, journalists, businesses, schools and others who threw their weight behind our appeal. This global alliance to save the life of Borneo from habitat loss was led by WLT Patron Steve Backshall. During July 2021, the naturalist found the time while filming Snow Leopards to call on WLT supporters to save rainforests he had already played a major part in protecting back in 2017, when he helped triple the target of a separate appeal for the Kinabatangan alongside Olympic rower and wife Helen Glover.

Help bring new trees to the Kinabatangan

From all of us at WLT, thank you for supporting our Borneo appeal. Our partner HUTAN can now save up to five plots of rainforest – where our initial aim was two – and it's all because of you. The work goes on. Now that these orangutan corridors have been expanded, HUTAN's squads of tree-planting women will work hard to restore sections degraded after decades of deforestation – and your donations to our Plant a Tree programme could make the difference.

Guardians of Nimla Ha': Our new appeal at a glance



In eastern Guatemala, mountain streams trickle down to the Sarstún River and fill the Laguna Grande lagoon, before emptying out into the Caribbean Sea.

During this year's Big Match Fortnight (6-19 October 2021), your donations will be doubled for the protection of a landscape all around the *nimla ha'*, or 'great waters' in the Mayan Q'eqchi' language of local communities: a critical ecosystem chain linking the lagoon's seagrass meadows to mangroves and tropical forests.

WLT supporters already helped years ago to save the land on the eastern side of the Laguna Grande lagoon and this year, with your help, we can protect the habitats all along its western shores. This is a circle that we can and must close: this region has already lost 80% of its lowland forest and suffered two devastating storms in 2020, a climate change-driven impact that will only intensify. With timber extraction, cattle ranching and monoculture plantations all on the rise, Laguna Grande's role as a natural water filter, flood barrier and carbon sink must be secured.

This reserve has already delivered over a decade of benefits for conservation, climate and communities; now, by joining us and the Mayan Q'eqchi' people, you can also become a guardian of *nimla ha'* and ensure that land is protected all around these great waters for the benefit of all!

TARGET
£1,200,000

Our partner's plan

This appeal will fund FUNDAECO's tripling of the Laguna Grande Reserve created in 2009, from 1,668 acres to almost 5,000 acres. Our partner is looking to purchase three privately owned properties that would likely be sold for timber extraction if we don't act. If you help us fund two of these purchases, a private donor has pledged funding for the third – a chance, together with Big Match Fortnight, for you to make a greater impact at no extra cost to yourself. These properties will link Laguna Grande to the Cerro Sarstún CONAP Reserve and provide protection to the lagoon's entire edge for the first time.



The Laguna Grande landscape, a carbon sink packed with hundreds of species, is among the last of its kind in an area that has lost 80% of lowland forests.

**BIG
MATCH
FORTNIGHT**

-  Existing Laguna Grande Reserve
-  Proposed purchases through WLT appeal
-  Proposed purchase via private donor
-  Cerro Sarstún CONAP Reserve



A CHANCE TO SAVE THE TROPICAL HOME OF 700+ SPECIES

LAND

Laguna Grande's species list includes wildcats like the Ocelot, Puma, Jaguar and Margay. The lagoon itself is integral to the health of forests that support two Endangered primates – the Yucatán Black Howler Monkey and Central American Spider Monkey – as well as White-lipped Peccary and the Red-eyed Tree Frog.



WATER

Laguna Grande is the most important breeding and nursing area for the region's West Indian Manatees, a Vulnerable species with a low reproductive rate. The waters here have also been designated as a Fishery Restoration Zone. 94 species of fish serve as a sustainable food source for local Q'eqchi' communities and wildlife.



AIR

As part of a key biological corridor for migratory birds, more than 100 species stop over in Laguna Grande throughout the year. Permanent residents include the Black Solitary Eagle, Ornate Hawk-eagle, Northern Mealy Parrot, Great Curassow and Keel-billed Motmot. There are also over 30 species of bat present.



Laguna Grande: An ally for people and planet

Saving an incredible place through Big Match Fortnight

When asked to explain the importance of wetlands, FUNDAECO's Nature Reserves Coordinator, Germanico Barrios, puts it this way: they are, in essence, "nature's kidneys".

Water that reaches these ecosystems is not released straight away, allowing time for a natural filtration and sedimentation process to take place that can even remove harmful agrochemicals and other pollutants. This purified water then flows to streams and rivers where both people and wildlife can drink safely. Wetland plants also benefit from this process, as they absorb nutrients from the water captured in the ecosystem. Some of these nutrients find their way to plants living in habitats connected to wetlands, like the mangroves and seagrass meadows downstream from Laguna Grande (There are three species of seagrass within the lagoon itself – an important food source for local manatees.)

Wetlands also act as carbon sinks by absorbing carbon dioxide from the air and sequestering it within soils, sediments and living vegetation. Coastal mangroves and seagrass meadows provide the same service and in fact can store more carbon per unit area than terrestrial forests. This so-called "blue carbon" can only continue to be captured if we keep crucial links in the ecosystem chain, like Laguna Grande, intact.

There are also climate adaptation benefits to consider. The water-holding capacity of wetlands like Laguna Grande helps to prevent or mitigate flooding and erosion, a vital contribution in hurricane-prone regions like Caribbean Guatemala. Much attention has been given in recent months to the future effects of climate change on our warming planet, decades or even centuries from now. But for many people – most in the developing world – the impact of climate change is already

being felt. Extreme weather events and erratic weather patterns are increasing in Guatemala, making the protection of Laguna Grande even more important for the communities that depend upon this ecosystem for everything from food to building materials to transportation, like the Q'eqchi'.

FUNDAECO oversee the safe management of Laguna Grande, but since our partnership began they have seen that providing aid to those living around the reserve is a critical part of the project. In one of Guatemala's poorest regions, 16 communities have been supported in the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods, including agroforestry systems and improved fishery management. Alongside local Indigenous association Amantes de la Tierra, FUNDAECO have also established two women's clinics to provide general health and family planning services, as well as education opportunities for local youth.

LAGUNA GRANDE'S LANDSCAPES: IN THE WORDS OF THOSE WHO KNOW THEM BEST



Tzuul (Mayan Q'eqchi' for 'Mountain')

Kich'e (Mayan Q'eqchi' for 'Forest')



Xmanki ha' (Mayan Q'eqchi' for 'Mangrove')

Pumpukil ha' (Mayan Q'eqchi' for 'Lagoon')



Roqui ha' (Mayan Q'eqchi' for 'River')



Maya Q'eqchi' community worker Marta Tiul Cabnal on why Laguna Grande is worth saving

To protect Guatemala's Laguna Grande is to also protect its people, as Marta Tiul Cabnal knows well. In a letter to WLT supporters, Marta tells of her own journey: from being among the first in her Maya Q'eqchi' community to graduate, to working with FUNDAECO so that local people benefit from conservation at Laguna Grande – a "majestic" landscape she invites you to help her save.

My work with FUNDAECO began in 2015, when I started volunteering for their 'Healthy and Empowered Women and Girls' Programme.

My three sisters and I had been the first people to leave our small Mayan Q'eqchi' community for our studies, and to graduate. From my home village by the Sarstún River I'd travel two hours by boat to the seaside town of Livingston, where I stayed three years and studied Sustainable Tourism. There were challenges like learning Spanish but witnessing the sacrifice my parents made to give us an education was what convinced me to volunteer for FUNDAECO, and start helping other local people.

My community is just 15 minutes away from Laguna Grande by boat so I know it well. We Maya Q'eqchi' call it Nimla Pumpukil Ha' and it's such a majestic place. Everyone who visits is always impressed by the nature they see: the lagoon itself, as well as the rivers where we swim and listen to the many visiting birds and howling monkeys; the forests and the mangroves my mum would bring me to as a girl; the Caribbean Sea further to the east, where it's easy to see birds, turtles and mammals like the Lowland Paca.

At Laguna Grande, biodiversity is everywhere. Jaguars are something you see, like the one my sister once spotted crossing the waters while she was fishing. Jaguars are also something you hear, like the calls my family and I once heard when we were together (I remember my mother telling me 'it's a Jaguar'.) There are crocodiles and of course there are also manatees, or Wakax ha' as we call them in Q'eqchi'. In the past we've run into them while canoeing, and I've sometimes seen them just a few metres from my house, which like every other home in my community is built on stilts over the river.

For us at FUNDAECO, protecting this landscape is about so much more than conservation. Myself, I've spent years now working with the communities in places like Cerro Blanco, Sarstún Creek or Barra Sarstún. With help from donations we've

been operating health clinics at all these locations to work with girls and women in particular. To care for mother nature begins with caring for ourselves and our own bodies as women, and so we try to use education to raise awareness around human rights, reproductive health, the importance of routine health checks and such.

This community work has had its challenges, but it's been so uplifting and motivating to see the results. When we look at the communities we've worked with we can see many of them now know how to harness their natural resources. Many, for instance, have created eco-tourism infrastructure, women's groups, craft workshops and agroforestry initiatives. It's such a joy to watch so many girls who, after being helped by FUNDAECO's 'Healthy and Empowered Women and Girls' programme, now have the chance to study and get scholarships.

To WLT supporters I'd say – if you help us protect Laguna Grande you will support this circle where conservation and communities go hand in hand. Our communities need their landscape: it is the air we breathe and our sustainable source of food and shelter. The life and natural resources of Laguna Grande are extraordinarily rich and not something that you find everywhere. If we at FUNDAECO don't act, if we don't continue to protect it, there's a chance that someone might ruin and pollute all this natural bounty in the future.

For the people around Laguna Grande, safeguarding places like this has been part of our culture for long. Our Maya Q'eqchi' ancestors used to observe a ritual known as *majejak*, where permission would be asked every time a tree was cut or crops were planted. That's something communities continue to practice

because we know the forest and animals do not belong to us – if we take, we have to ask first.

That's the bond that we can protect this year at Laguna Grande, with help from WLT supporters!

*Marta Tiul Cabnal
Gender and Social
Participation Regional Assistant at
FUNDAECO*



A celebration of our Keepers of the Wild

Stories from the field to mark World Ranger Day



Provita's Keepers of the Wild shield parrots in COVID-hit Venezuela

For the past 30 years WLT partner Asociación Civil Provita have worked diligently to safeguard Yellow-shouldered Parrots' nests, which require 24-hour surveillance during the breeding season. Venezuela's Macanao Peninsula is one of the last strongholds for a species that has been hugely impacted by the illegal pet trade – fewer than 6,000 individuals now remain in the wild. The first COVID-19 cases on Macanao were reported in May of last year, forcing most Provita staff to leave the peninsula. Withdrawing instead to the wilderness, a contingent of dedicated rangers stayed behind to fulfil their duty to their beloved birds despite a major scarcity of gasoline, intermittent water supplies, daily blackouts in electricity, and poor phone and internet connections. As it turned out, no nest was left unguarded in 2020, and 140 parrot chicks reached maturity thanks to the actions of Keepers of the Wild – a repeat of the all-time fledging record that had been witnessed in 2019!



New tree species named after Keeper of the Wild family in Ecuador

In just a single short trip to our partner Fundación EcoMinga's reserve in Ecuador, biologists recently uncovered no fewer than four new tree species, helped in no small part by our Keepers of the Wild who have now been honoured with their own place in the scientific canon. The new species have been classified within a single established genus, *Sciodaphyllum*. All four are restricted entirely to the Río Zuñac watershed and not one has a range greater than 8km². They also share the same conservation status: Vulnerable. We were thrilled to learn that one of the species, *Sciodaphyllum recaldiorum*, has been named in honour of the Recalde family. Abdon and Jesús Recalde (pictured above) were the first rangers hired to protect EcoMinga's reserves, just a few years after the organisation was founded in 2005. Abdon and Jesús have since retired, but passion for conservation runs deep in this family – Fausto, Santiago, and Jesús's son Darwin are all now employed as Keepers of the Wild in EcoMinga reserves.



Keeper Lourdes Matoso from Paraguay writes to WLT supporters

"Nature has always been on my doorstep, but I didn't imagine I would end up in conservation. The moment I set foot in Guyra Paraguay's Chaco-El Pantanal Reserve and saw how wonderful it was, I knew this was it – the workplace I wanted to be a part of. Every day in the Paraguayan Pantanal I tour the reserve, set up and check camera traps, take pictures for Guyra's registries and monitor the reserve trails, making sure they're well cared-for. To me, it's not just a protected area; it's my second home. You cannot value what you don't know and now that I have discovered the reserve, I feel like taking care of it is the most important thing I can do. To the women considering a career in conservation, I'd say: we have an essential role to play. We must feel proud of fighting for a just cause: the protection of the natural world. I know that women can feel powerless at times and yet with Guyra I have seen the difference we can make – work hard, and anything is possible."

Head on to YouTube to meet our partners' Keepers of the Wild

Thanks to the supporters of our Keepers of the Wild programme, our partners can continue to defend the natural world, protecting threatened wildlife and landscapes for the benefit of all.

To hear directly from our partners' Keepers of the Wild, head to our YouTube channel (youtube.com/worldlandtrust) to watch a video featuring rangers from all around the world, sharing with us why they choose to protect nature in their own words – you don't want to miss it!

COP26: The world's 'last best chance'

What you can do for global climate in a crucial year

What is happening at COP26?

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) is due to be held in Glasgow from 31 October – 12 November, under the presidency of the UK. Leaders from almost every country on Earth will be committing to accelerated action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Chief among these goals is limiting the increase in global temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. To achieve this, commitments will be made to halve the world's emissions by 2030 and bring them to net zero by 2050.

What can WLT supporters do?

COP26 is being touted as “the world's last best chance to get runaway climate change under control”. Our planet has already warmed by 1.2°C since pre-industrial levels and the scientific consensus is that we only have until the end of this decade to avert a serious climate catastrophe.

Thankfully, with global attention turned to the single largest threat facing our society, climate action could soon be mobilised at the scale needed to save our planet – and with WLT, you can be part of the solution.

However you choose to support WLT, you'll be funding the nature-based solutions that the world needs at this pivotal moment. Laguna Grande, the landscape you can help to save through our Big Match Fortnight appeal (see pages 4-6 for more information)

is the latest WLT project to feature three such solutions that will be high on the agenda at COP26: fighting deforestation, protecting biodiversity and helping countries adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

The wetlands here in Caribbean Guatemala act as a natural water filter, flood barrier and carbon sink. This particular habitat plays a crucial ecological role by connecting the Laguna Grande lagoon and its seagrass meadows to mangroves and tropical forests, all of which counteract the harmful effects of greenhouse gas emissions. The reserve also provides habitat for threatened species like the Jaguar, West Indian Manatee and Ornate Hawk-eagle; and Indigenous livelihoods depend upon it, with 94 fish species acting as food source for local people.

Is there anything else that will help?

We can all do our part to keep global warming below 1.5°C. There are many relatively easy changes that will help to reduce your carbon footprint, such as switching to a renewable energy provider. If you have a car, try not to use it for every journey. Bicycles and public transport are much greener alternatives. Buying groceries from a local market will save on transport emissions, while switching to a plant-based diet – even for just one day a

week – will also have a net positive impact on the climate. Once you've made some changes, you can offset your unavoidable emissions through our Carbon Balanced programme. Your donations will go towards the protection of carbon-rich habitats under threat. By allowing our partners to save tropical forests in Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Vietnam, you will help keep huge carbon volumes on the ground – in the process saving land for wildlife.



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