

RAINFOREST TRUST®

VOLUME XI: 2019



WALTER ELÍAS VICENTE BARRONDO
CONSERVATION GUARDIAN
PAGE 14

**GUARDING VITAL ECOSYSTEMS
AROUND THE GLOBE**

GUARDIANS OF THE RAINFOREST



Many consider creating and establishing protected areas the most difficult aspect of conservation. But Rainforest Trust recognizes that the continued protection of a site is an equally arduous and essential component.

For this reason, Rainforest Trust launched the Fellows & Guardians Programs in 2018 to provide additional support

to our partners who put themselves on the front lines of conservation every day. Fellows are local project managers and future conservation leaders. Guardians, many of whom are featured in this newsletter, are forest rangers. These are some of the hardest working people in conservation. The Rainforest Trust Fellows & Guardians Programs are the organization's way of investing in them.

You can invest in this important program and these local conservation heroes by making a gift to **Guardians of the Rainforest**. Your support will provide these dedicated individuals with necessary tools, training, technology, supplies and more.

Gifts to **Guardians of the Rainforest** will be separate from the Conservation Action Fund, which enables Rainforest Trust to create protected areas. Any gift returned in the enclosed remittance envelope will be dedicated to this purpose in celebration of **World Ranger Day, July 31st**. You can also choose to make a gift to this fund online via www.RainforestTrust.org.

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**RAINFOREST
TRUST®**

We purchase and protect threatened tropical habitats to save endangered wildlife through local partnerships and community engagement.

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to another issue of the Rainforest Trust Newsletter!

Usually, the pages that follow this welcome letter are filled with stories of our direct conservation action in saving rainforests across the tropics. The words you are accustomed to reading in previous issues describe pressing threats to habitat and how we work together with our partners to achieve positive outcomes, all through your support. The rich accompanying images would show panoramic cloud forests, dense understory and the many species within those successfully protected areas. We all feel relief reading that a Critically Endangered bird, mammal, turtle or plant will have a secure place to live now and into the future.

But in this issue, we are taking a different path through the forest. On these pages, we are going to tell you a bit about the people who rise every day and go to work protecting these precious landscapes.

The work of Rainforest Trust Conservation Guardians — forest rangers and protected area managers — begins after creating a protected area. Their work is often dirty and rarely glamorous. Days and nights are spent working tirelessly in often difficult and dangerous conditions patrolling, surveying and clearing invasive species from the reserves. There are many late nights and early mornings monitoring wildlife populations. Countless snares and traps set by poachers are removed and illegal logging stopped. Their jobs are defined by time spent away from their families, traveling far and wide to hold community meetings, helping indigenous peoples reclaim their land rights and in some cases their very livelihoods.

The simple truth is our protected areas would not succeed without forest guards and rangers. We celebrate their hard work every day, and hope you will join us. July 31 is World Ranger Day, when we acknowledge and give thanks for the hard work and sacrifices they make every day for nature.

Guardians in Ecuador, Guatemala, Brazil and Nepal provide perspective on what it takes to maintain a protected area, to engage a community, to pull a snare up from the forest floor, and to protect land and species for future generations.

We share how innovative technology is deployed to help ensure smooth, efficient and effective collection and analysis of data in protected areas, making them safer and more secure.

We will introduce you to women who are leading conservation efforts and making a difference in our, and their, protected areas.

In closing, we thank you for your continued support of our mission, and our vision. Together — with you, our partners and Guardians — we will create, maintain and sustain protected areas for species, for communities and for our planet.

With warm regards and sincere appreciation,

MARK GRUIN



ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



WHAT GUARDIANS DO

Rainforest Trust Conservation Guardians are the dedicated employees of our local partners. They safeguard Rainforest Trust-funded projects from deforestation through applied conservation work. Although the nature of their day-to-day work varies by region, country and project, their duties include:



ECOLOGICAL MONITORING

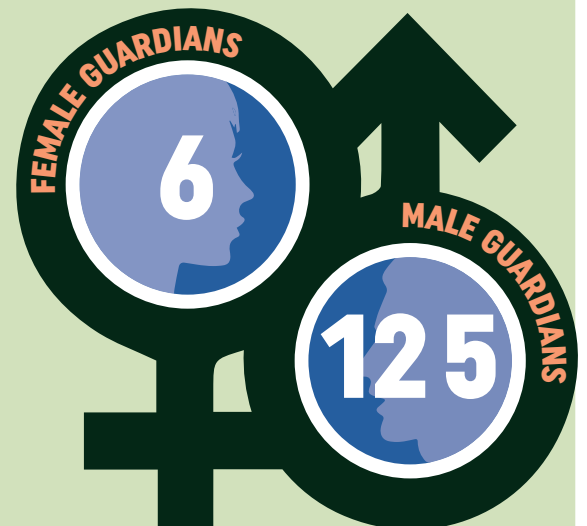
- Wildlife Population Studies
- Vegetation Surveys
- Invasive Species Management
- Wildlife Behavioral Studies

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Community Outreach
- Environmental Education
- Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge Studies

PROTECTED AREA DEFENSE

- Anti-poaching Patrols
- Anti-logging Patrols
- Snare Removal
- Perimeter Maintenance





NEW RESERVE PROTECTS BONOBOS IN CONGO RAINFOREST

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is home to the Congo Basin, the second largest tropical rainforest in the world. Despite having some of the highest biodiversity levels on Earth, the Congo Basin is one of the world's least protected and most vulnerable forests.

The DRC also suffers from widespread poverty — a result of decades of war and infrastructure neglect. The country's interior communities have had to fend for themselves, and many residents make a living from traditional fishing or small-scale agriculture. This combination of poverty, isolation and a lack of resources is a challenge to wildlife conservation. But new laws offer communities the right to partner with conservation groups to manage their own forests.

With this in mind, Rainforest Trust and local partner Amis des Bonobos du Congo (ABC), also known as Lola ya Bonobo in the United States, set out to create the Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve in the Équateur Province. And in April, the governor of the province signed a declaration to designate the site as a protected area.

Ekolo ya Bonobo, covering 117,412 acres of mostly swamp forest, is home to wild Endangered Bonobos. The Bonobo, the closest living relative of the Chimpanzee, is endemic to the DRC's rainforests. Besides Bonobos, the forest contains Giant Ground Pangolins, Leopards, Grey Parrots and three of the DRC's four crocodile species. Bushmeat hunting is a significant threat to wildlife like crocodiles, monkeys and antelopes. But while

Bonobos suffer from habitat loss and poaching throughout the DRC, they have not been the direct targets of poaching in this area. This stems from both local taboos and increased awareness led by ABC's community engagement programs.

The communities of Ilonga-Pôo, Baenga and Lisafa are the customary owners of the forest, though most of the protected area is remote and uninhabited. Though these towns are closest to the forest, most hunters come from outside the region. But community leaders had limited influence to enforce protection commitments. Communities will now manage the new reserve alongside ABC. Eventually, they hope to secure recognition of the protected area with the national Environment Ministry, which will then also help manage the reserve.

The reserve will train anti-poaching patrols with the legal right to prosecute hunters. It will also monitor wildlife over time and investigate biodiversity hotspots. But only significant and sustainable improvements in the communities' economy will ensure long-term biodiversity protection. Hence, the project will continue to carry out community-led socioeconomic work that will guide effective and sustainable development efforts.

This project was made possible through gifts to the Rainforest Trust Conservation Action Fund and the SAVES Challenge. Special thanks to Harvey and Heidi Bookman for their leadership support.



PARTNER RETREAT

RAINFOREST TRUST HOSTS FOURTH ANNUAL PARTNER RETREAT

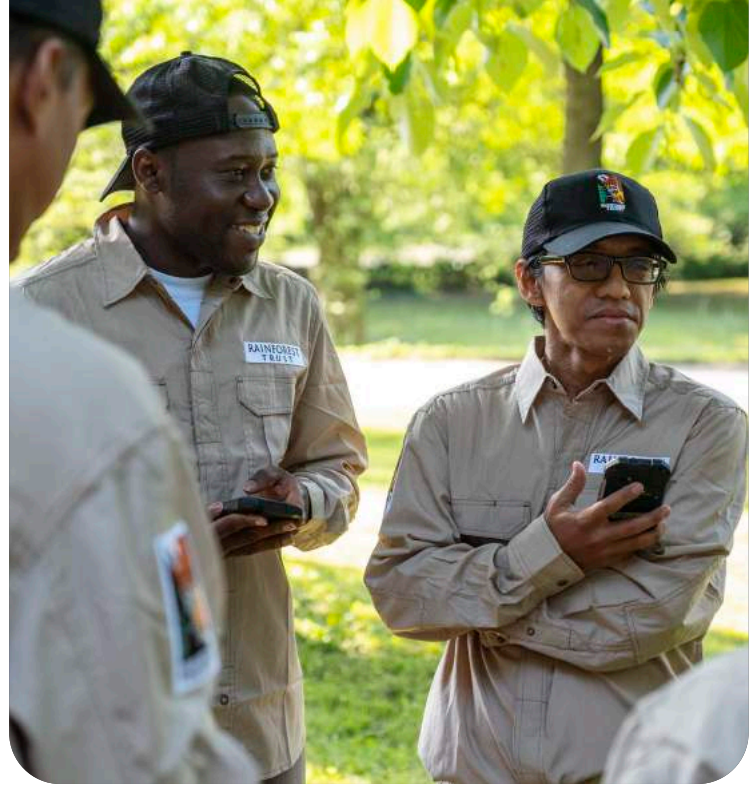
In May, Rainforest Trust held its fourth annual Partner Retreat at the International Conservation House in Warrenton, Virginia. The Partner Retreat is a week-long opportunity for dedicated conservationists in the global Rainforest Trust network to connect with one another and with Rainforest Trust staff. Each day, retreat participants attended training and seminars in a variety of conservation management and outreach.

In past years, the retreat focused on capacity building for chief executives and organizational leaders in conservation. But this year's event focused on Rainforest Trust Conservation Fellows. "We changed the program this year as a reflection of our commitment to the Fellows and Guardians Programs," said Mark Guin, Acting CEO of

Rainforest Trust. "We developed course content directly related to them to reinforce their personal and professional growth."

During past retreats, Rainforest Trust offered workshops covering high-level topics like fundraising strategies and long-term conservation planning. But Fellows are on the front lines of conservation and spend much of their time working in the field. So instead of packing in as much detail as possible throughout the week, the agenda focused on a few practical conservation management topics, especially related to monitoring, patrolling and anti-poaching skills.

In addition, Fellows learned various methods of conservation communications. The Rainforest



Trust Outreach team developed a series of in-depth communications workshops to refine the Fellows' skills and contribute to their organizations' outreach. Workshop topics included written storytelling and best practices for social media. The team also interviewed each Fellow about their work to better understand and share their inspiring stories with the world. The Fellows were encouraged to share what they learned with their Guardian counterparts at project sites. Rainforest Trust's digital experts offered courses on filming and photographing wildlife in their natural habitat, including the use of drone technology.

The retreat offered staff the opportunity to talk with the Fellows face-to-face. This type of interaction is usually difficult due to their busy schedules or remote locations. Throughout the week, Fellows met with the Rainforest Trust Conservation team in small groups to discuss their conservation projects.

Feedback from partners has confirmed that sharing stories from the field and socializing is

an important part of any retreat. So in addition to the daily lunches and dinners, Rainforest Trust staff volunteered their time to show the Fellows around Virginia. "For some of the Fellows, this was their first time traveling outside their country," said Gruin. "Interacting with people from other cultures is so important for growth, not only amongst the Fellows, but for our staff." Social activities included a local winery tour, walking around Historic Old Town Warrenton and visiting popular stores and restaurants.

The Fellows left with enhanced outreach and monitoring techniques, along with field supplies provided by Rainforest Trust. The retreat was an important success for all involved and Rainforest Trust plans to continue hosting Conservation Fellows at future retreats. "We hope the Fellows apply what they learned throughout the week in their work and find further motivation to continue paving the way in conservation," said Gruin. "We recognize that our Fellows are the future of conservation and want to provide them with all the tools and training necessary to succeed."

GUARDIANS

WALTER ELÍAS VICENTE BARRONDO

Walter works as a park guard for Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO) at the Cerro Amay-Chimel Cloud Forest Reserve. Read Walter's conservation story on [page 14](#).



MESSIAS GOMES DA SILVA & FAMILY

For generations, Messias Gomes da Silva's family owned all of Rio de Janeiro's Lagoinha Valley, fusing the family's ancestry to the rainforest. Read about Messias' familial connection with the land on [page 11](#).



PETGA FEUKEU EMILIE LAURE

As a field assistant for our partner Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society, Petga supports eco-health education and outreach activities associated with Douala-Edea National Park. Read more about Petga's work on [page 10](#).



NDELLE LIZETT MESSAME

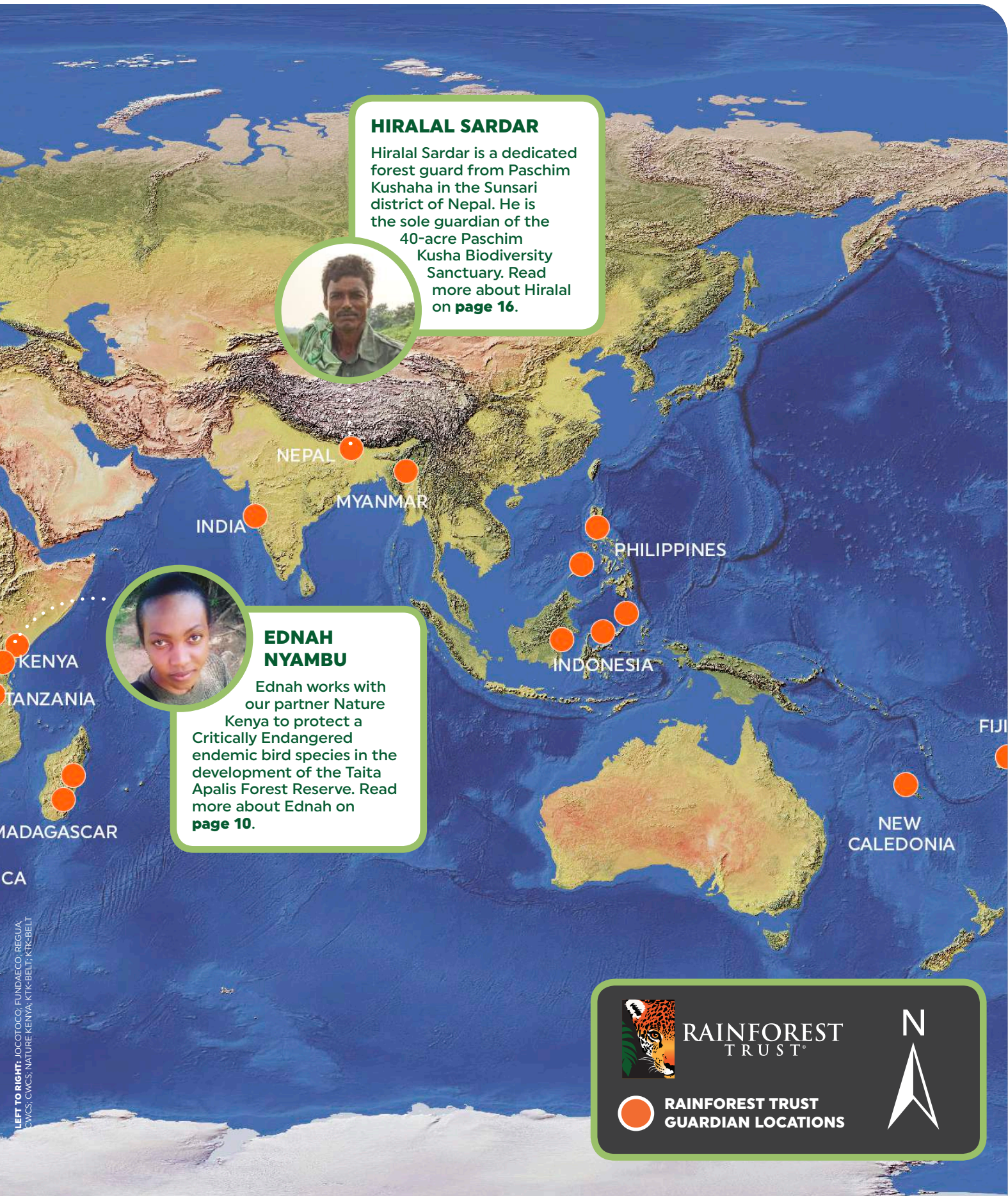
As a project assistant with our partner Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society, Lizett plans and implements field activities and species inventories. Read more about Lizett on [page 10](#).



WALTER GAONA

Walter works as a forest guardian at the Copalinga Nature Reserve in southern Ecuador. He recently attended a two-day training session led by the Ecuadorean Ministry of the Environment to become an honorary inspector. Read more about Walter on [page 9](#).





HIRALAL SARDAR

Hiralal Sardar is a dedicated forest guard from Paschim Kushaha in the Sunsari district of Nepal. He is the sole guardian of the 40-acre Paschim Kushi Biodiversity Sanctuary. Read more about Hiralal on [page 16](#).



EDNAH NYAMBU

Ednah works with our partner Nature Kenya to protect a Critically Endangered endemic bird species in the development of the Taita Apalis Forest Reserve. Read more about Ednah on [page 10](#).



LEFT TO RIGHT: J. LOCOTOCO, FUNDAECO; REGUA; CWCS; NATURE KENYA; KTK-BELT; KTK-BELT



RAINFOREST TRUST®



RAINFOREST TRUST GUARDIAN LOCATIONS



ECUADOR



ECUADOR NAMES WALTER GAONA HONORARY ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTOR

Walter Gaona works as a Conservation Guardian for Rainforest Trust partner Fundación Jocotoco at the Copalinga Nature Reserve in southern Ecuador. Rainforest Trust and Fundación Jocotoco created Copalinga in 2018, complete with an ecolodge for tourists. Walter spends much of his time maintaining trails for visitors and, as he says, "learning how life unfolds in the reserve."

Though he enjoys working within the reserve, the more trying aspect of Walter's role is monitoring the 370-acre property for harmful activities. Rainforest Trust Guardians safeguard the protected areas we help create across the tropics. They are essential in this region of Ecuador, where premontane forests hold the greatest concentration of biodiversity in the country. But logging, mining, agriculture and human settlements threaten these habitats.

During his patrols, he likes to explore and observe the unique biodiversity. "In a healthy forest, you can find many things, among which I like to find very rare bird nests," Walter shared. At least 432 bird species live in Copalinga, along with monkeys, endangered frogs and butterflies. But the illegal wildlife trade threatens the resident wildlife. Walter said the most difficult part of his job is

blocking poachers and their dogs from entering the reserve.

But Walter now has more skills in combating illicit activities, along with the authority to take legal action against forest exploiters. In January, he attended a two-day training session led by the Ecuadorean Ministry of the Environment to become an honorary inspector.

"Being an honorary inspector means that I can act in cases of extraction and/or transport of wild species in the reserve and other places," Walter said. "After the training, I have legal tools to prevent these activities from happening." He learned tactics to handle poachers and other threats and received a license that underpins his work in Copalinga.

Walter shared his appreciation to the Ecuadorean Ministry of the Environment for recognizing his work protecting the rainforest. "For me it is an honor to have been taken into account in this space," he said. "I am also grateful for this designation because I can contribute to taking better care of our ecosystems."

GUARDIANS IN AFRICA

EDNAH NYAMBU, KENYA

What is a typical day like for you in the forest?

My day begins with an early morning hike to one of the largest refuges for the Critically Endangered Taita Apalis. Inside the forest, I patrol to assess forest disturbance from grazing, fuelwood fetching and logging. I also carry out bird monitoring through identifying and recording birds species both heard and seen to assess abundance in the forest.

What surprises you about your job?

I was surprised how willing and eager the local community is in wanting to learn more about the endemic species of the Taita Hills forest. Most importantly, they want to see the small bird, the Taita Apalis. I have seen the values of science through fieldwork and its contribution towards decision-making and knowledge generation, especially here in the Taita Hills.



NDELLE LIZETT MESSAME, CAMEROON

What is a typical day like for you in the forest?

As a woman conservationist, I feel very special because so many women shy away from this kind of job and consider it to be a dirty job. But they don't know what it feels like conserving nature and ensuring sustainability of our natural resources. In addition, ever since I started working as a conservationist, I noticed that the interest I have in protecting nature is adding to my capacity as a mother to protect every person around me.

What surprises you about your job?

A typical day in on patrol is tedious, especially when I have to make my way through a dense forest of twisted trees. But in the end, you find yourself happy for having contributed to the promotion of nature conservation.



PETGA FEUKEU EMILIE LAURE, CAMEROON

What is a typical day like for you in the forest?

What I like most about this work is participating in the protection of the environment, nature, animal species, plants and rare resources. I appreciate the opportunity to sensitize and integrate the community into conservation projects, thus making it possible to shift their values to the biodiversity of a region.

What surprises you about your job?

In the course of my work, I was surprised by the hospitality of the communities bordering the national park. They facilitate the work of conservation teams on the ground in remote areas and host people where there are no accommodation facilities.



BRAZIL

LAND & FAMILY: GUARDIAN MESSIAS GOMES DA SILVA

The Lagoinha Valley in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state is lush with Atlantic Forest, a diverse type of rainforest unique to South America. For generations, Messias Gomes da Silva's family owned the entirety of the valley, inexorably linking the family's ancestry with the rainforest. Over time, they sold the majority of the land, which they referred to as the Lagoinha Farm, to sharecroppers. When the family's deep connection with the land was severed, the rainforest began to suffer. Cattle pastures and housing developments caused immense deforestation in the region. Messias' family was able to keep a small portion of the land to live on. This is where he spent his childhood, learning the rich history of the property from his family.

Adulthood brought him to the city for better career opportunities, but he eventually returned

to the rainforest of his youth to care for his elderly parents. Messias began farming and regularly hunting nearby animals. Brazilian conservation organization and Rainforest Trust partner Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu (REGUA) took notice of his activities and offered him a position as a ranger. They hoped he would use the skills he developed hunting to monitor their protected areas. Through his work as a ranger, Messias witnessed firsthand the devastating impact poaching has on an ecosystem, which ultimately inspired him to study protected area management.

A few years later, by pure coincidence, REGUA was offered one of the sharecropper-owned parcels of land from the Lagoinha Farm. Because of his rich family history in the area, Messias was able to provide valuable information regarding the geographical limits of the property and



teach REGUA about the intricate nature of the land. This brought REGUA to focus on mapping and acquiring the remaining properties of the Lagoinha farm. Messias sold them a section of the land that his family still owned, and they sought out other owners to convince them to sell their portions.

Eventually, REGUA successfully purchased 1,062 acres of the sharecroppers' land, which decreased anthropogenic threats to the region. REGUA partnered with Rainforest Trust in 2018 to complete two additional purchases, expanding the protected area by 225 acres. REGUA now protects the vast majority of the 2,350-acre Lagoinha Valley ecosystem. The organization continues to make land purchases within the region to safeguard vital rainforest. They have installed fencing around the property and have plans to implement proven ecological restoration techniques on areas that have suffered from deforestation.

Messias currently resides outside of the Lagoinha property and still contributes to the protection

of its unique habitat. He understands the importance of properly maintaining the rainforest to protect its biodiversity and ensure clean water access. The Guapiaçu watershed, which offers abundant streams of fresh water, flows within the reserve. This makes the protected area essential in guaranteeing sustainable water resources for the future. The communities of Lagoinha are beginning to understand REGUA's objectives and are helping to secure the property.

This monumental chain of conservation efforts occurred because of Messias' willingness to change his way of life and learn to protect the land he was raised on. He has passed down his knowledge and passion for conservation to future generations. His nephew, Matheus Gomes da Silva, is a young REGUA park ranger in the Guapiaçu Valley and Rainforest Trust Guardian. The history of the da Silva family and Lagoinha rainforest are forever intertwined. The family once owned the land, helped to fight for its protection and will now continue to ensure its survival in perpetuity.



BOTTOM: NJ LOCKE

SMART



INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY BOLSTERS CONSERVATION

One of the more recent boundary-pushing developments in technology is cross-platform integration. By allowing different devices to communicate with each other, such as a cell phone and a home security system, we can reduce digital "clutter" and streamline work.

But integration isn't just for convenience — it's also for improving efficiency, including in high-pressure, high-stakes situations. That's the idea behind SMART, the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool, a program bringing this new technological interface to conservation.

Data collection and analysis is the core of the SMART software. As rangers patrol a protected area, they can input everything from wildlife sightings to snares to actual encounters with poachers within seconds. Camera traps can also send notifications in real time, allowing for monitoring in otherwise inaccessible areas, day and night.

SMART then collates the data and looks for patterns. For example, the program notices if there is any correlation between the areas frequented by both wildlife and poachers. This analysis allows ranger teams to plan more effective patrol routes. The camera traps can also provide real-time alerts on both wildlife and poacher intrusions. This function can prompt patrol teams to send out an emergency crew to stop poaching and monitor individual protected animals.

Last month, Rainforest Trust's Partner Retreat included a SMART training program. Two experts from the conservation technology nonprofit Wildlife Protection Solutions trained participants in the classroom and through hands-on field exercises. They provided each participating Rainforest Trust Fellow with a pre-loaded, field-ready smartphone and an overview of the software. Practice field exercises took place in the forest around Rainforest Trust's office.

"The SMART training has immediate protection benefits," said Mark Gruin, Rainforest Trust's Acting CEO. "The Fellows will take a more-than-basic knowledge of the tool back to their organizations for more effective patrols and monitoring."

"Proper data analysis can provide optimization in any industry," said Rosie Faccione, Technology Coordinator for Wildlife Protection Solutions. "It just so happens that with conservation it translates to empowering the rangers and patrol teams, and ultimately protecting our planet's biodiversity more effectively."

SMART integration and data analysis has started bringing conservation into the new tech landscape. Future innovation can only connect more rangers with more wildlife and more opportunities for protection.

GUATEMALA

LOGGER TO CONSERVATIONIST: WALTER ELÍAS VICENTE BARRONDO

Born into a successful logging family in Guatemala, Walter Elías Vicente Barrondo understood since childhood that logging was essential for the survival of his family. Each day growing up, Walter accompanied his father on logging expeditions in the montane forest, and witnessed the fallen trees transforming into firewood, then into ash. And after years of watching his father's success, Walter was determined to become the most accomplished logger in his community. His dreams came to fruition — at just 15 years old, he was able to use a chainsaw perfectly and became renowned for his skill.

Years later, during a village meeting in Chimele, community leaders selected Walter to lead a group of tourists on a field trip through a local reserve that protected cloud forests. They invited him to visit the protected area before the trip and gave him full access to the grounds. Upon his first visit, Walter was amazed by the richness of life within an undisturbed rainforest. The expansive variety of animals and plants forced him to acknowledge nature in a way he never had before. What stood out most prominently to him were the enormous trees looming overhead, acting as guardians to the fragile ecosystem.

While leading the excursion, Walter was genuinely surprised by the eco-tourists' interest and appreciation for the remote cloud forests. He had the opportunity to learn from them about the unique biodiversity and the important role trees play in the habitat. He was also educated on the many threats they face from deforestation, including logging. This recognition was an alarming wake-up call for Walter. He felt partially responsible for some of this damage and was compelled to play a part in protecting the remaining forest.

Motivated by the same drive that made him one of the most successful loggers in his community, Walter shifted his career focus to forest conservation. He worked with forest technicians to develop management plans and learned how to use GPS to monitor protected areas. He was eventually recommended to work as a park guard for FUNDAECO. He is currently stationed at Cerro Amay-Chimele Cloud Forest Reserve, a Rainforest Trust-supported protected area that safeguards one of the largest areas of intact cloud forest left in Central America. As a Guardian, Walter is now able to spend his life protecting the forest ecosystems that he once took for granted.



THAILAND

STRATEGIC LAND PURCHASE TO PROTECT SPOON-BILLED SANDPIPERS

Scientists consider Thailand's Inner Gulf, a Key Biodiversity Area, the region's most important habitat for shorebird abundance and diversity. Part of the reason for that distinction is sites like Pak Thale. Pak Thale is a 123-acre coastal area along the western gulf dominated by flat salt pans. As the origin point for salt production from salt pans in Thailand, a tradition dating back over 800 years, the habitat has an important commercial history. Tides bring water over the flats, leaving shallow pools. Workers then harvest salt and other minerals as the sea water evaporates.

For millennia, before high-density development dominated the coast, these salt pans were essential to birds. This parcel of land, while small, is vital to the East Asian-Australasian Flyway — the most threatened flight path for migratory birds in the world. Birds following flyways need regular stopover sites to rest and refuel. But global economic development, compounded by the increasing impacts of climate change, threatens to destroy most stopover habitat.

Several globally threatened migrant bird species — including the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper and the Endangered Great Knot, Spotted Greenshank and Far Eastern Curlew — need habitats like this to survive. Pak Thale hosts

over 7,000 waterbird species during the winter. So while no mineral harvesting takes place on the land any longer, these birds offer a different economic opportunity.

Birding — or birdwatching — is an international ecotourism industry. People travel with the express purpose of seeing rare birds like the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, often investing in local protected areas and enlisting community members as guides. Ecotourism, if managed well, can be a boon to conservation and local economies. Rainforest Trust and partner Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST) recognize the opportunity to protect birds in Pak Thale while promoting sustainable ecotourism that benefits local communities. We are seeking to purchase 19.5 acres in Pak Thale this year.

The Inner Gulf of Thailand is in a unique position among habitats along the flyway because some of the key sites are still undeveloped and available for purchase. Rainforest Trust and BCST are working to save a key part of the habitat for resident and migratory bird species, as well as ecotourists hoping to marvel at their beauty.





HIRALAL SARDAR: PROTECTING THE SANCTUARY HE CALLS HOME

Hiralal Sardar was born in Paschim Kushaha, the Sunsari district of Nepal. For most of his life, he worked for local landowners as a farmhand. Although he has no formal education, his work experiences led him to understand the region and its people in a unique way. Hiralal's history with the area caused him to begin working with Rainforest Trust partner KTK-BELT on the Koshi Tappu Conservation Project.

Hiralal was asked to be a guardian for the Paschim Kusha Biodiversity Sanctuary, a 40-acre parcel that Rainforest Trust helped to purchase in 2018, adjacent to the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Sanctuary. The two protected areas are composed of vital riparian habitat and home to 485 recorded bird species. They are widely considered to be two of the most important water bird reserves in South Asia.

Hiralal currently serves as the sole guardian of the sanctuary. The majority of his work is dedicated to protecting the sensitive bird habitat against human and livestock intrusion. His patrolling has led to a pronounced reduction in the cutting of *Typha* grass, a native plant beneficial to wildlife. *Typha* forms the architecture of "playgrounds" and resting sites for many endangered birds in Koshi Tappu. Hiralal's patrolling has suspended other harmful anthropogenic activities in and around the Paschim Kusha Biodiversity Sanctuary such as waste proliferation and poaching.

Because of his ties to the region, Hiralal initially faced challenges informing the local communities about conservation. "When I first started and was wearing a KTK-BELT shirt, people didn't listen to me because I am their neighbor. I used to have to scold people not to graze their animals in the sanctuary," said Hiralal. "But now they are proud of how beautiful the sanctuary has become and how many birds are here now. Many people say it's the one place where you can see many rare birds in just a 40-acre site."

Although he has made great strides in protecting the reserve, Hiralal and other Koshi Tappu guardians are still trying to minimize threats. "The biggest problem is that we need to control grazing," said Hiralal. "If we can create enclosures and round up the thousands of feral cattle in and around the reserve, *Typha* and other grasses will come back and the habitat can naturally revive. I've been amazed by how quickly it grows back."

Hiralal plans to protect and improve the sanctuary for years to come. "I hope I can continue to be a guardian of Paschim Kusha until I am old and see this sanctuary become the best place for people to visit when they come to Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve."

EXPANSIONS

CERRO AMAY CLOUD FOREST RESERVE GUATEMALA

Rainforest Trust and FUNDAECO completed another strategic land purchase, expanding the Cerro Amay-Chimel Cloud Forest Reserve in Guatemala by 951 acres. The new area will become a smaller reserve within the Cerro Amay Reserve known as Reserva Ecológica 4 Chorros.



EL PAUJIL RESERVE

COLOMBIA

Rainforest Trust and Fundación ProAves purchased 1,178 acres in Colombia's Magdalena Valley, expanding the El Paujil Reserve. The reserve houses primary Magdalena rainforest and provides vital habitat for many threatened species that live nowhere else, like the Critically Endangered Blue-billed Curassow and the Magdalena Spider Monkey.



NUMBALA CLOUD FOREST RESERVE

ECUADOR

Rainforest Trust and Naturaleza y Cultura Internacional purchased 498 acres of rainforest to expand the Numbala Cloud Forest Reserve. The expanded protected area houses some of the last stands of Podocarpaceae, a family of giant conifers logged for their high-quality wood.



NARUPA RESERVE ECUADOR

Rainforest Trust and Fundación Jocotoco purchased 158 acres in the Napo bioregion of northeast Ecuador.

The reserve was originally established in 2006 to save a large block of eastern Andean foothill forest. Now, it protects old-growth and young secondary woodlands and abandoned pasture which will, in time, regrow into rainforest.



GUATEMALA

COLOMBIA

ECUADOR

NUMBALA RESERVE

NARUPA RESERVE



GEOMETRIC TORTOISE PRESERVE SOUTH AFRICA

Rainforest Trust and South Africa Tortoise Conservation Trust expanded the Geometric Tortoise Preserve by 58 acres through a land purchase. The reserve houses the largest Geometric Tortoise population in the world.

SOUTH AFRICA

GEOMETRIC TORTOISE PRESERVE

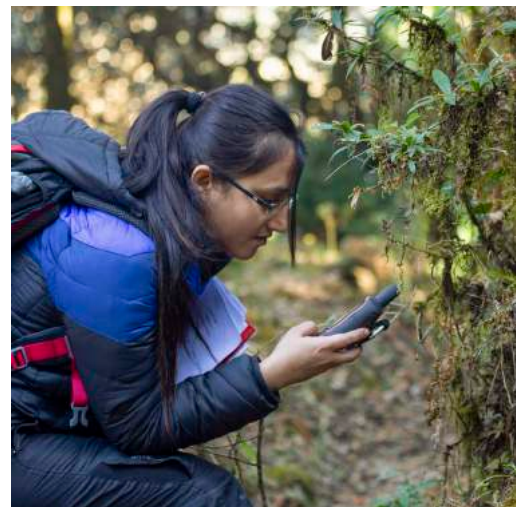
UrgentProtection

Support the conservation work of Rainforest Trust and its partners around the world.

IN CELEBRATION OF WORLD RANGER DAY, JULY 31, SUPPORT RAINFOREST TRUST'S CONSERVATION GUARDIANS

RAINFOREST TRUST CONSERVATION GUARDIANS are the dedicated forest rangers employed by our local partners. They spend their days and nights safeguarding the areas we help protect. They prevent poaching and ward off loggers to stop deforestation. They monitor wildlife and work to restore habitat. They clear trails and proudly identify endangered species for visitors. They engage and educate their local communities about conservation. And now these dedicated conservationists need your support.

Rainforest Trust Conservation Guardians do everything they can to protect the forest and its wildlife. Your gift to the Guardians of the Rainforest will help empower our Guardians to continue to save wildlife, work with communities and protect their corner of the planet.



Please use the enclosed envelope, or visit RainforestTrust.org/donate to make a donation.