

Marsh Seedeater, by Pablo Rodriguez Merkle



Crowned Solitary Eagle, by Diego Grandi



## Protect Rare Ecosystems from Accelerating Destruction in Brazil

As multiple threats to biodiversity, water resources and human communities grow in Brazil, the destruction of the Amazon rainforest receives much media attention—and rightfully so. Other, lesser-known ecoregions in Brazil are also being destroyed, at an even faster rate. With our partners and donors, we are racing to outpace the multiple threats they face.

**The Cerrado**, the world's most biodiverse tropical savanna, hosts 5% of the world's plants and animals within 505 million acres in eastern Brazil. It faces the most aggressive soy expansion in the world and staggering numbers of cattle, which has resulted in deforestation of more than 20% of the biome's tree cover since 2020—most of it illegal, from human-caused fires in the northern portion of the Cerrado. In the past year, at least 98% of this deforestation and habitat destruction was due to illegal deforestation, mainly for soy production. Only 8% of the biome has any kind of protection.

The Cerrado is habitat for about 200 species of mammals, 860 species of birds, 180 species of reptiles, 150 species of amphibians, 1,200 species of fish, and 90 million species of insects and more than 11,000 plant species, nearly half of which are found only here.

**The Caatinga biome**, existing only in northeastern Brazil, is a 181-million-acre region of xeric, or semi-arid, shrubland and thorn forest adjacent to the Cerrado that supports significant numbers of endemic plant and bird species. It is threatened by deforestation from the quickly advancing agricultural frontier, mining and climate change. Added to the short rainy season, this rare biome is at great risk of desertification.

The Caatinga harbors a unique biota, with important endemic species. Caatinga contains over 1,000 vascular plant species in addition to 187 bees, 240 fish species, 167 reptiles and amphibians, 516 birds, and 148 mammal species.

The government of Brazil has requested support from Rainforest Trust's partner, Fundação Pró-Natureza (FUNATURA), to expand and create protected areas in these two critical biomes in Brazil to protect against surrounding threats. We seek \$1,730,593 to protect three proposed sites totaling a minimum of 1,190,000 acres. In the Caatinga, the project comprises a 366,200-acre expansion of the Serra da Capivara National Park and creation of the new 780,000-acre Jerumenha protected area. In the Cerrado, it proposes a 121,200-acre expansion of the Veredas do Peruaçu State Park.

### PROTECT THREE EXTRAORDINARY SITES TO THWART THREATS IN BRAZIL

**Expanding the extraordinary Serra da Capivara National Park** in the Caatinga by 366,200 acres will more than double its size to 685,070 acres. The remote park contains



**1,190,000**  
ACRES

**\$1,730,593**  
PROJECT COST

**\$1.45**  
COST PER ACRE

**79,105,466 mT**  
CO<sub>2</sub> EQUIVALENTS  
STORED

#### KEY SPECIES:

Dwarf Tinamou (EN),  
Crowned Solitary Eagle (EN),  
Marsh Seedeater (EN),  
Yellow-faced Siskin (VU),  
Minas Gerais Tyrannulet (EN),  
Tropeiro Seedeater (VU), Karimi's  
Fat-tailed Mouse Opossum (VU),  
Spanish Cedar (VU)





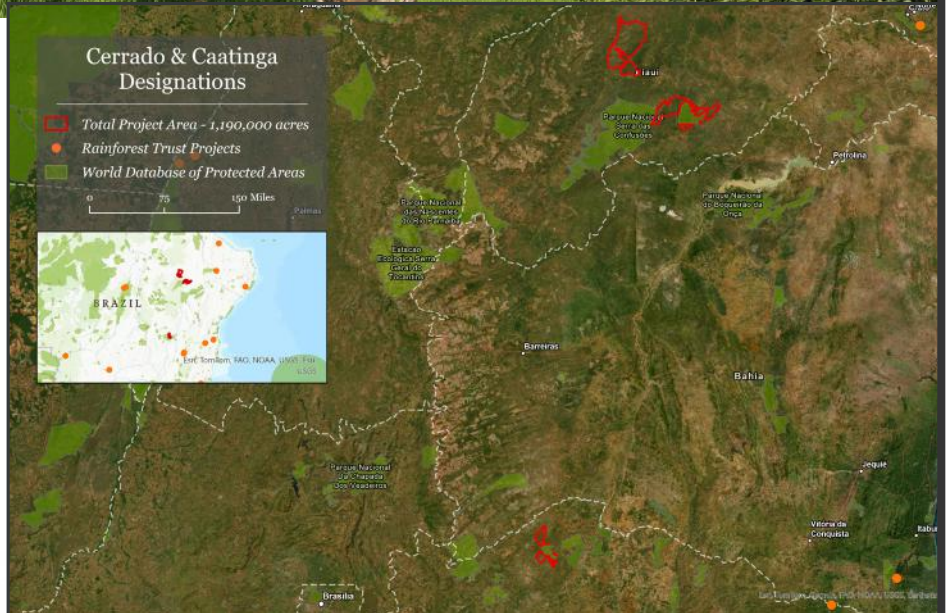
The Cerrado landscape of Brazil, by Duarte65

some of the oldest evidence of human presence in the Americas in its rich archaeological sites that date back 50,000 years. It is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its outstanding cultural and natural significance. This expansion plans to grant the highest level of national protection to some of the last remaining areas of highly intact, old-growth forest in the Caatinga, adjacent to the existing park and providing connectivity to the nearby 2-million-acre Serra das Confusões National Park.

The proposed **new Jerumenha protected** area of approximately 780,000 acres is expected to receive strict protection given its high biodiversity and importance to the Caatinga region as a water resource. Rates of deforestation and conversion of natural areas into pasturelands have been increasing, and poaching and illegal wildlife trade are dire threats. The project will be developed in partnership with local communities and will undergo full review and informed consent before designation. Protecting Jerumenha would increase the strictly protected area in the Cerrado-Caatinga transition zone by 86.5%.

**Expanding the Veredas do Peruaçu State Park** in the Cerrado by an estimated 121,200 acres will make it 2.6 times larger, to 197,066 acres. Situated at the headwaters of the Peruaçu River, it encompasses a unique formation of wetlands with palm trees known as "Veredas." The expansion areas are well-conserved and directly adjacent to the park. They are not yet significantly impacted by the surrounding agriculture, livestock, and logging. The severe regional water crisis of the last two decades makes protecting the headwaters of the Peruaçu River even more urgent, to prevent the main river channel from drying up and impacting the entire ecosystem.

This project offers an extraordinary opportunity to enhance and expand the protection of two of the most threatened, globally important ecoregions in the world. Its importance to global conservation, imperiled species and local communities cannot be overstated.



Serra da Capivara National Park in the Caatinga, by Carlos Santos Rodapebr

