



2023  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



[www.tma.earth](http://www.tma.earth) / [info@tmalliance.org](mailto:info@tmalliance.org)

# LETTER TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Dear TMA Supporters,

The closing of 2023 officially represents the conclusion of my first decade as Executive Director of TMA. During this period I have had the privilege of leading a conservation program that's having an undeniably positive impact on the globally threatened Pacific Forest of Ecuador, and working alongside one of the most dedicated teams in conservation. Some of the challenges we've faced over the past ten years include: working on a shoestring budget, dealing with a massive earthquake that devastated local communities, and a global pandemic that claimed many lives and shut down the global economy. Yet, throughout all of these immense challenges, our team and the communities we work with came together to continue to advance our conservation mission.

Over the past few years alone we have more than doubled our annual budget, expanded the size of the Jama-Coaque Reserve by 1,200 acres, took on the responsibility of protecting and managing a second protected area in the Pata de Pajaro Reserve, and launched an innovative and impactful community reforestation program with local farmers. In 2023, we also embarked on one of our most important and ambitious projects to date - the creation of the 100,000-acre Capuchin Corridor. What was once a distant dream of ours, has now become a reality.

All of these achievements are largely thanks to our international network of supporters, the community members we work alongside, and our devoted field team in Ecuador. This is our strength as an organization. We are a highly motivated, local field-based team that puts communities front and center. With many of the world's most biodiverse ecosystems threatened by unsustainable human activities and countless species pushed to the brink of extinction, the time to join hands with local communities to balance their needs with the needs of nature has never been more urgent.

As we step into 2024, I look back at our achievements of the past year with immense gratitude for all of our supporters that make this work possible. We couldn't continue this important work without your ongoing support, and hope to continue our journey together over the years ahead.



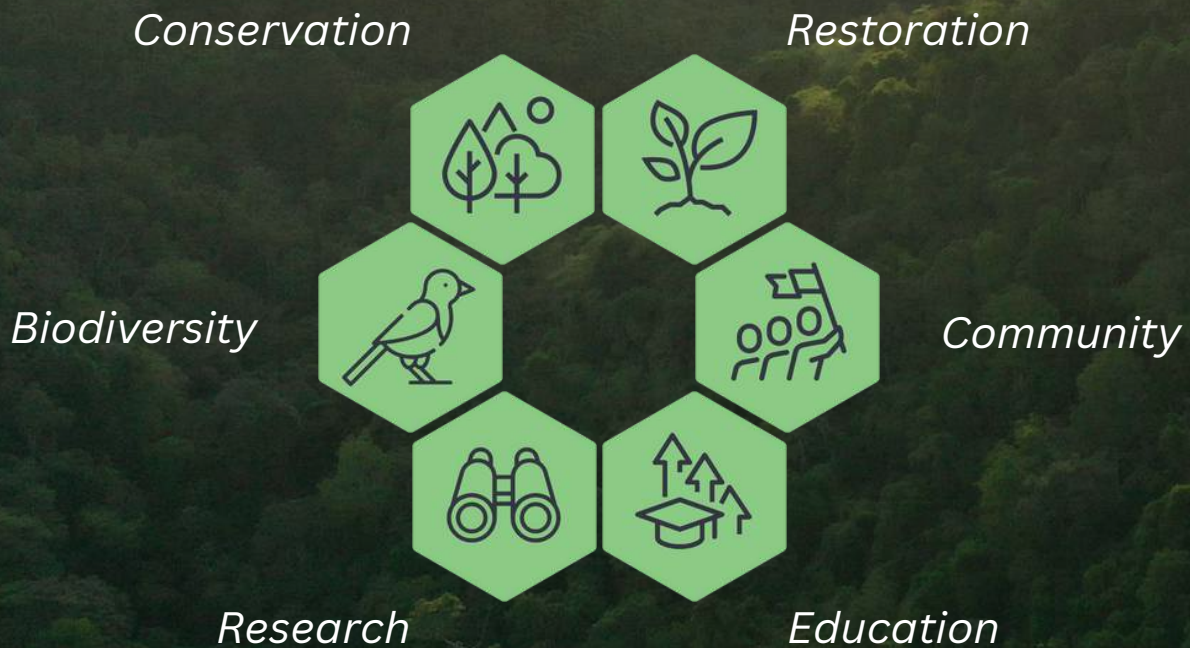
Ryan L. Lynch  
Executive Director



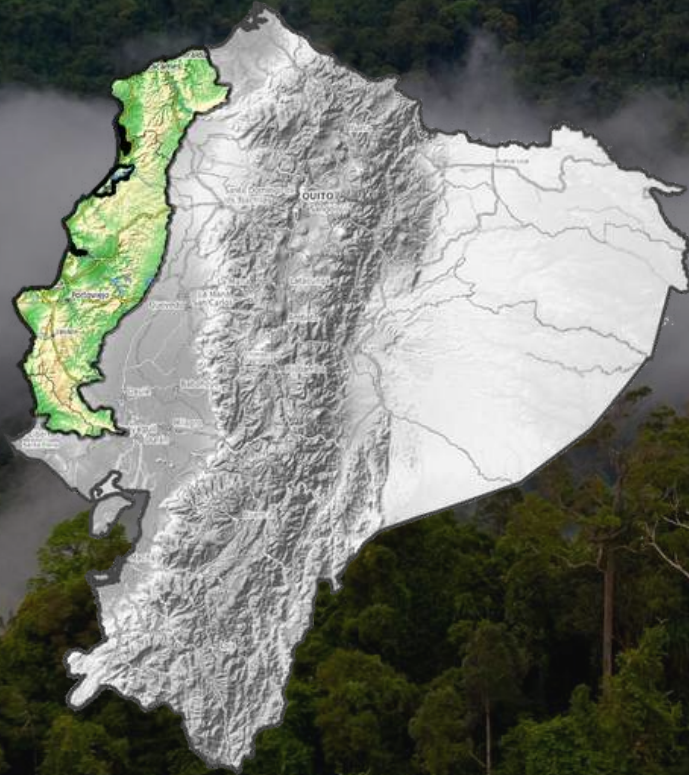
# MISSION & VALUES

Our mission is to preserve the last remnants of the Pacific Forest of Ecuador and work with local communities to restore what has been lost. Our holistic approach combines active forest conservation, restoration, and management with community-based and led activities that address the underlying socio-economic drivers of deforestation.

## TMA's Holistic Approach



# SAVING THE PACIFIC FOREST



The Pacific Forest is an ecologically distinct region that straddles the equator on Ecuador's coast. The region is characterized by a diversity of forest types (Choco rainforest, moist evergreen forest, tropical deciduous, and premontane cloud forest) in a small geographic area, which is largely a result of local climatic conditions and a series of coastal mountain ranges that are completely isolated from the adjacent Andes Mountains. These unique biophysical conditions promote one of the highest rates of species endemism (i.e. species found nowhere else on Earth). Unfortunately, endemic species tend to be more prone to extinction due to their limited geographic distribution. The rate of deforestation in the Pacific Forest over the past 50 years (only 2% remains) is one such threat, which is what makes it the frontline of conservation and the global extinction crisis.

# BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



## Pacific Forest

946+ Bird Species

176+ Reptile Species

202+ Mammal Species

146+ Amphibian Species



A low-angle photograph of a large tree trunk in a forest. The tree trunk is the central focus, extending from the bottom towards the top of the frame. The background is filled with dense green foliage and branches, creating a textured and layered appearance. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded forest environment. The text 'CONSERVATION PROGRAM' is overlaid in white, bold, uppercase letters, centered horizontally and positioned in the upper-middle section of the image.

# CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Protecting rainforest is the simplest and most effective way to save biodiversity, combat climate change, and ensure the continuation of life on Earth.



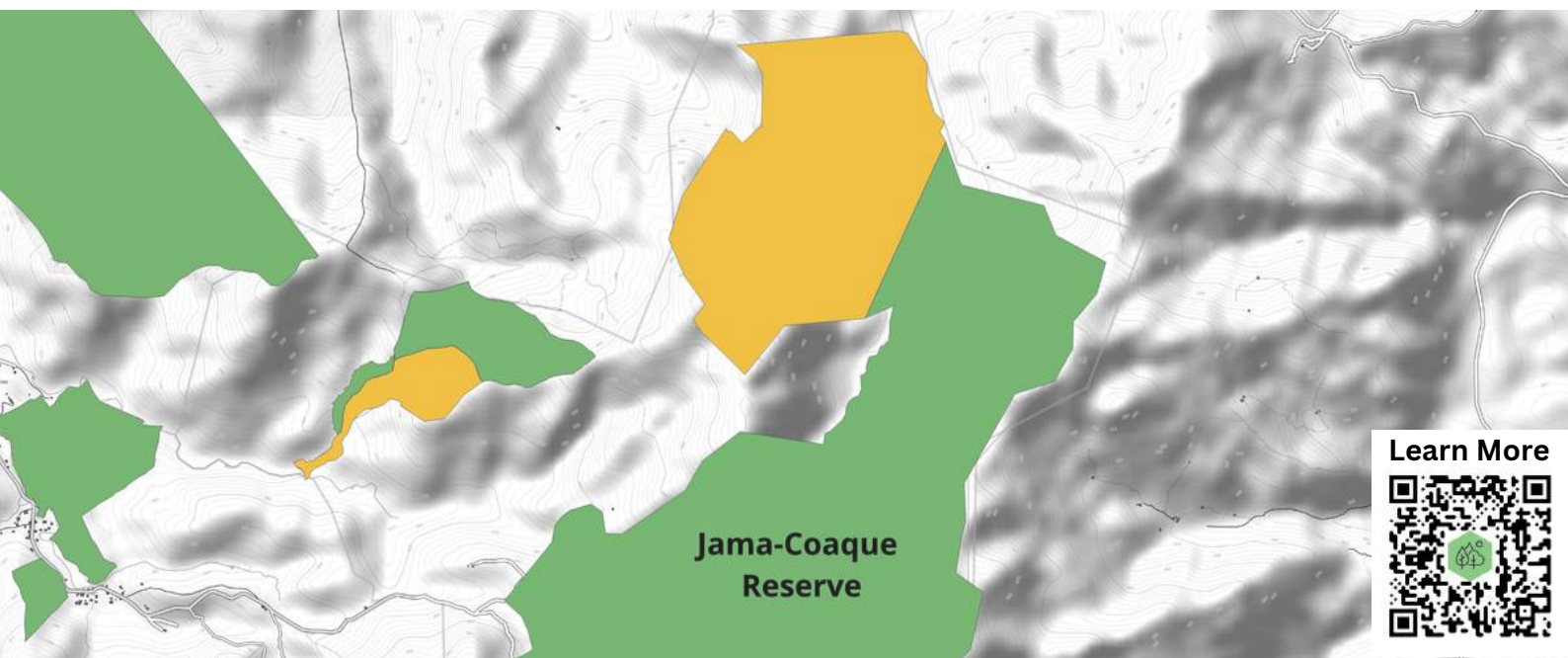
# LAND PURCHASE

This year we successfully purchased two properties to expand the size of the Jama-Coaque Reserve. The two properties collectively expand the Reserve by 174 hectares/ 430 acres. With these purchases, the Jama-Coaque Reserve now protects 1,024 hectares/ 2,530 acres of forest in the heart of the Pacific Forest.

The first property we purchased this year with the support of a new foundational partner was a strategic step northward as we establish the Capuchin Corridor. The property contains high-quality forest and extends our protection to a new watershed.

The second property, purchased with support of a new donor, was on our wishlist for many years. The property is strategically located along a forested corridor between the Jama-Coaque Reserve and our neighbors in the Lalo Loor Reserve.

● Jama-Coaque Reserve ● 2023 Purchases



Learn More

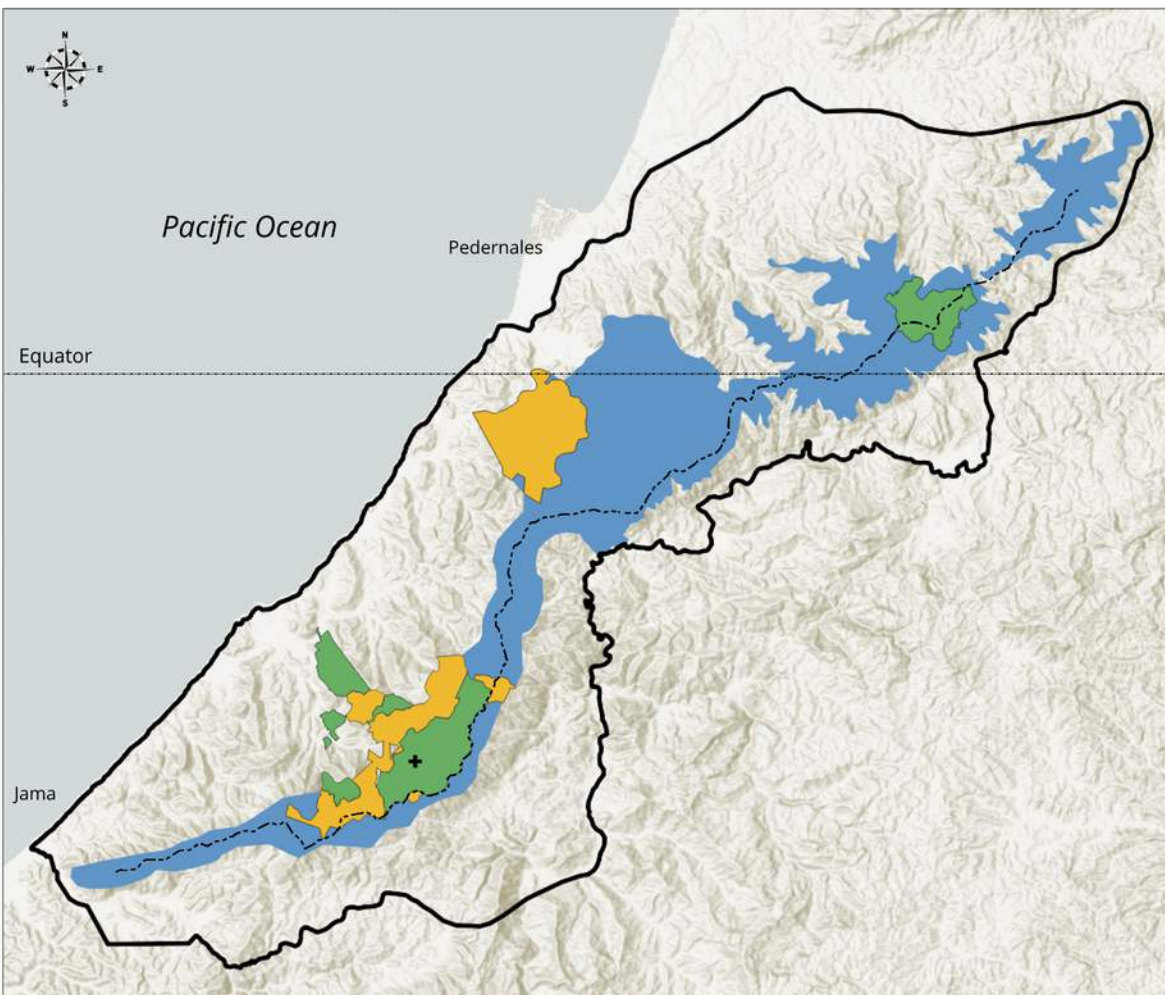




# CAPUCHIN CORRIDOR

Located at the nexus of the Choco rainforest and tropical dry forest along the equator, and surrounded by some of the highest rates of deforestation in South America, the 40,000-hectare (~100,000 acre) Capuchin Corridor represents our most ambitious project to date. What's at stake is one of the most biodiverse forests on Earth and one of the last populations of the Critically Endangered Ecuadorian Capuchin monkey.

This year represented a big step forward for the establishment of the Capuchin Corridor. In 2023, we added new members to the TMA team, purchased several strategic properties, expanded the number of communities we work with, conducted important scientific research on threatened species and forest dynamics, and began engaging local stakeholders and governments for the years ahead.



- + TMA Research Station
  - Capuchin Corridor - 40,000 ha
  - Coastal Cordillera
- TMA Land Purchase Status**
- Already Protected
  - Phase I Expansion
  - Phase II Expansion

Learn More







# Ecuadorian Capuchin

*Cebus aequatorialis*

The range of the Critically Endangered Ecuadorian Capuchin spans the coastal lowlands of western Ecuador and far-northern Peru, but only 2% of the forest in this region remains standing today. The forest of the Jama-Coaque Reserve, Cerro Pata de Pajaro, and the greater Capuchin Corridor are some of the last remaining intact habitats this species has left. As such, the survival of the Ecuadorian Capuchin quite literally depends on our ability to protect, restore, and connect these forests over the years ahead.




# CERRO PATA DE PÁJARO

The 4,333-hectare (10,707-acre) forest of Cerro Pata de Pájaro represents one of the last remnants of primary rainforest in the Pacific Forest. Known by few, other than a handful of scientists who visited the site in the early 1990s and those who live in the region today, Cerro Pata de Pájaro is a vital piece of our long-term conservation strategy in the Capuchin Corridor.

In 2023, after several decades of being neglected by the conservation world, our team took the reins to ensure the protection of Cerro Pata de Pájaro. During the year, our team carried out the first biodiversity survey in over 30 years, mapped the properties that had subtly invaded the periphery of the protected area, and met with communities and local leaders to discuss the importance of preserving the forests that cover the Cerro Pata de Pájaro mountaintop for its role in the local water cycle. We also employed several locals as park rangers to regularly patrol the protected area and protect it from illegal logging and hunting - activities that had been unnoticed and uncontrolled for many years.



A man wearing a blue baseball cap with a logo and a blue polo shirt is shown from the chest down, leaning over and planting a young green tree sapling into the soil. He is using his hands to firm the earth around the base of the plant. The background is a lush green field with other plants.

# REGENERATIVE AGROFORESTRY PROGRAM

Reforestation is about more than just removing carbon from the atmosphere. It's also an opportunity to restore biodiversity, feed people, and create sustainable livelihoods. We call this Regenerative Agroforestry.



# REGENERATIVE CACAO



Our team spent much of 2023 working with the 39 existing families in the program to ensure their success. Tree survival, biodiversity, and biomass surveys were conducted on all farms to track their progress. Many of the families who joined in the first year of the program (2020) already have trees that are 3-meters tall, and have had their first harvest of shade-grown cacao.

We also spent the summer months preparing to invite another 39 families to the program - a doubling of our current size! Our team interviewed and surveyed 109 new farms across five different communities in the Capuchin Corridor. Each of these communities are strategically located adjacent to one of the two protected areas we manage (Jama-Coaque Reserve and Pata de Pajaro).

Of the farms surveyed, we decided to invite 39 families to join the program in 2024, with the rest scheduled to join in 2025. We made a concerted effort to enroll more female farmers in the 2024 cohort, with 41% of new participants being female (just shy of our 50% goal).



Learn More



# REGENERATIVE AGROFORESTRY STATS

## General

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Number of farmers currently enrolled	39
Number of farmers to join in 2024	39
Number of female farmers	26
Number of family members supported	190
Number of participating communities	4

## Biodiversity/ Climate

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Number of hectares/ acres restored	27.24/ 67.31
Number of shade trees planted	4,212
Number of cacao trees planted	9,714
Estimated carbon benefit (tons CO2)	297

## Livelihood/ Economic

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Bridge payments made to farmers	\$51,936
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*"I'm extremely happy with the program. Nobody has given us a chance like this. Without the program, we wouldn't have this type of opportunity. The program has provided us with good work and we're already seeing results with our first production of shade-grown cacao."*

*- Mariano Ortiz,  
program participant*



**2020**



**2023**

# CAPUCHIN CACAO

We began construction of a large-scale cacao processing facility in the community of Camarones in November of 2023. The facility will be managed entirely by local community members and serve as a world-class processing center for all of the cacao produced by the participants of our Regenerative Agroforestry Program.

The fermentation boxes and drying racks are currently being installed, and the first batch of cacao will be processed by June 2024. The cacao produced by our network of farmers, known as Capuchin Cacao, will be available for purchase in the summer of 2024 by chocolate companies like To'ak and Mindo Chocolate who want the highest quality and most ethically sourced cacao on the market.



Learn More



An aerial photograph of a lush, green forested hillside. The forest is dense and covers most of the slope. In the lower part of the image, a small village or community is visible, consisting of several small, simple buildings with light-colored walls and dark roofs. The buildings are scattered across a clearing. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

# COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Conservation of the Pacific Forest will require global support, but local communities and stakeholders are the most important demographic as they are the ones who depend on and manage this ecosystem day-to-day.





# YOUTH EDUCATION

In 2023, we dramatically increased our investment in community-based programs thanks to a new foundational supporter. The first step of this work was to conduct a comprehensive census of the community of Camarones. The goal of this work was to collect baseline data on the economic, social, and education levels of each household to determine points of concern that social programs could address. The results of this work highlighted many complex issues, but the most worrying statistics related to the economic status of most families and the level of education.

71% of the families in Camarones live on less than \$150/ month and only 23% of individuals complete primary school. With this data in hand, we designed a number of community programs aimed at improving access to education and job opportunities.



Learn More



# SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**44%**

Of kids abandoned school because their parents couldn't afford the cost of transportation.

This year, with support from one of our foundational partners, we initiated a transportation service for the kids of Camarones after learning that nearly half of the kids weren't attending school due to the prohibitive cost of transportation. Most families in Camarones live on only a few dollars a day, but local buses charge \$2/ kid to bring them to/ from school. Most families have at least 2-3 kids, so the total cost of sending their kids to school exceeds their total monthly income. With financial support from TMA, 47 kids who previously abandoned their studies, have now returned to school.



# CAMARONES WOMEN'S GROUP

At the start of the year, our Administrative Director Carla Rizzo formed the Camarones Women's Group. The group, which is made up of local women of all ages, is aimed at providing a safe space for discussion and to develop more female leaders in the community. The group met every other month in the Reserve to spend time together and discuss their concerns and desires for the future.

Some of the achievements of the Camarones Women's Group include the formation of a student-parent group to organize transportation to/ from school, the design of a safe recreation area for local youth, and the organization of an end-of-year party. Through these community-based activities, more women will be involved in local governance and eventually rise to become local leaders.





# CAMARONES RECREATION CENTER

One of the many topics of concern that came out of the Camarones Women's Group is the fact that local youth don't have many safe spaces to play and learn in the community. Working together with a group of mothers and their children, we began to tackle this issue by designing a youth recreation area on a property TMA owns in Camarones. In a participatory manner, and led by our partners from Taller General (a architecture firm from Quito), we spent much of the year designing the elements that will become Camarones' first and only youth recreation center. The multi-use space will provide areas where local youth can play and learn while participating in TMA's education projects. With the design now complete, construction will take place during the summer of 2024.





# COMMUNITY TEAM PROFILES

## Andrea Chica

Andrea was born and raised in the coastal town of Bahia de Caraquez, which is 1-hour from the Jama-Coaque Reserve. She moved to Camarones in 2019 after marrying a local. Soon after her arrival, she demonstrated an interest in helping with our childhood education program. Today, she runs the program, and the kids absolutely love her.



## Julexy Mera

Julexy is in her final year at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabi in Pedernales, where she studies biological sciences. She joined the TMA team in 2023 as part of our work in the Cerro Pata de Pajaro Reserve. Throughout the year she has played a critical role in collecting and managing data, in addition to conducting in-person interviews with leaders in more than 40 local communities.





# RESEARCH PROGRAM

An active research program that uses cutting-edge remote sensing technologies is mandatory for better understanding and managing one of the most biodiverse and threatened ecosystems on Earth.



# BIOACOUSTICS

This year we teamed up with our friends at Rainforest Connection and the McCracken Lab at Texas A&M Corpus Christi to expand our use of conservation technologies in the Jama-Coaque Reserve. Two distinct bioacoustic projects were implemented in order to better understand and protect the biodiversity of the Reserve:

1. Guardians: Seven acoustic devices that are powered by AI and machine learning were placed in the canopy of the Jama-Coaque Reserve and Pata de Pajaro in order to detect illegal logging or hunting in real-time. The minute a Guardian detects the sound of a chainsaw or gun it sends a message to our Park Rangers, who can jump to action.
2. Regenerative Landscapes: A network of 30 AudioMoth recorders were placed across the landscape to better understand how land-use and forest type impacts local avian communities, with a particular focus on threatened species.



# Grey-backed Hawk

*Pseudastur occidentalis*


The Grey-backed Hawk is an Endangered raptor found in western Ecuador and far northern Peru, which is a region that has experienced one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world. It is estimated that only 250-999 mature individuals remain in the wild today - highlighting the vital importance of TMA's ongoing research and conservation efforts in the Pacific Forest of Ecuador.



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# AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

With support from our partners at Texas State University and the aquatic ecology lab at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, we conducted the first comprehensive aquatic biodiversity survey of the entire Camarone River basin. The study collected data on the fish and decapod communities of the river, coupled with an environmental characterization (i.e. water quality) of the ecosystem.

The results of the study were promising and offer a glimpse into the health of the entire aquatic ecosystem. Biodiversity numbers ranged from medium to high across the system, and water quality was extremely high in the Reserve and only dropped to moderate near a local shrimp farm in the community. With these results, we are already working with our partners to pursue additional funding to continue and expand this research over the years ahead.





# FIELD TEAM PROFILES

## Moises Tenorio

Moises has spent the past few years managing all of TMA's field research projects. On any given day he can be found deploying camera traps, conducting biomass surveys, or climbing high into the rainforest canopy to manage our network of acoustic recorders. He's also an excellent birder and eco-tourism guide for visitors to the Reserve.



## Ediberto Marquez

Edilberto was one of the first people to join our team more than a decade ago. As a Camarones native, he's been walking and monitoring the forest of the Jama-Coaque Reserve long before it had a name. In his previous life, he was an avid hunter, but now he puts those skills to use to protect the incredible diversity of species that call this forest home.

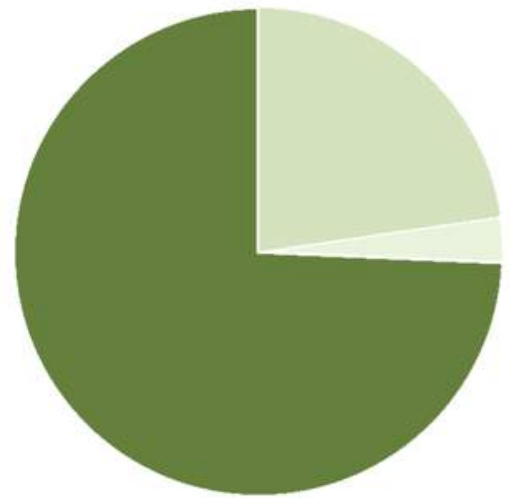


# FINANCES

## \$642,482

TOTAL REVENUE

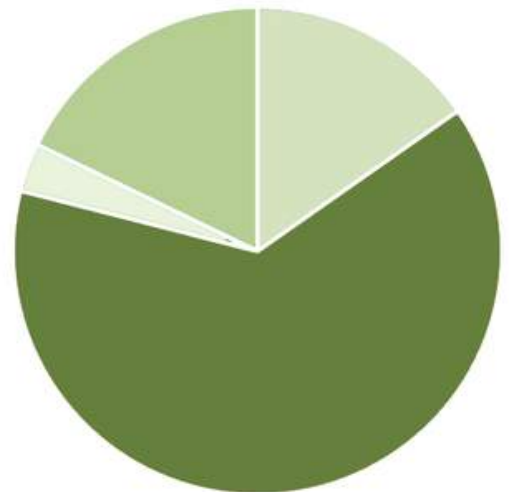
- Grants: \$477,311
- Donations: \$145,904
- Program Services: \$19,267



## \$690,534

TOTAL EXPENSES

- Grants to TMA Ecuador: \$440,000
- Payroll: \$122,987
- Program Expenses: \$105,422
- Office: \$22,125



## PAST 5 YEARS



# OUR TEAM

## Management Team

Ryan Lynch

Jerry Toth

Carla Rizzo

Betty Estupinan

Jorge Guerra

Dany Murillo

Edilberto Marquez

Sixto Lopez

Moises Tenorio

Carlos Vite

Andrea Chica

Jose Luis Medina

Mario Lopez

Wilson Vite

Carlos Robles

Pablo Bermudez

Luis Madrid

Julexy Mera

Benilda Reynel

## Board of Directors

Isabel Davila

Gavin McKay

Matt Arnoldy

Erica Dorn

Anjali Oberoi

Pamela Goldhagen

Ximena Martinez



# THE FUTURE OF THE PACIFIC FOREST DEPENDS ON YOUR GENEROSITY

Our ability to continue our conservation and restoration efforts in Ecuador is only possible thanks to the support provided by our international network of donors and partners. As we expand our efforts across the Capuchin Corridor and greater Pacific Forest, your support is more important than ever.

## How You Can Help

Help save the Pacific Forest and build an ecological legacy for future generations by making a tax-deductible donation on our website, donating stocks or cryptocurrencies, or giving from your donor advised funds.

### Donate Here



[www.tma.earth](http://www.tma.earth)

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Third Millennium Alliance  
36900 Bodily Ave.  
Fremont, CA 94536

### Contact:

[info@tmalliance.org](mailto:info@tmalliance.org)

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