



Women for Conservation Women's Month Highlights

April 5, 2023

Dear Lee and Population Connection family,

This International Women's Month we have had a whirlwind of successes, and I am happy to report that we achieved many wins for wildlife and for women. Women for Conservation partners with rural communities to lead grassroots workshops in conservation education, sustainable livelihoods, and reproductive healthcare, enabling community members to act as stewards of nature and protect critical biodiversity.

This March, I flew back to my home country to visit a few of our project sites. I was delighted to attend W4C's second Women's Entrepreneurship Fair, La Sierra es Mujer, in our partner community, La Tagua, near our El Dorado Nature Reserve. This uplifting celebration brought over one hundred women from our sustainable livelihood workshops together to promote their eco-friendly microbusinesses and to share inspiring conservation stories. Located in the stunning Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range in northern Colombia, our El Dorado Nature Reserve is one of the most biodiverse sites on Earth; we're working together with women to preserve this extraordinary ecosystem and to build a community centered around women's leadership for conservation. In our sustainable livelihood workshops, women learn to make artisanal crafts and gain skills in culinary arts, and they've started small businesses that provide much-needed income without placing additional stress on natural resources.



W4C group and the wetland they are organizing to rewild, ProAves Reserva Arrierito Antioqueño

During my trip I also had the pleasure to meet with a new Women for Conservation women's group near our ProAves Arrierito Antioqueño Nature Reserve. They're organizing an exciting new grassroots campaign to restore a wetland previously drained and damaged by a former mining operation before we established our reserve. This reserve protects one of the last known habitats of the endemic and critically endangered Chestnut-capped Piha (*Lipaugus weberi*), among several other threatened migratory and endemic birds. The reserve is also critical to protecting amphibians and is home to 7 threatened species, 4 of which are in danger of extinction. Several of these species may even be previously unknown to scientists.

Our local Women for Conservation group is organizing to bring water back to this drained lake and begin a multi-year process of restoring native species. The women are starting their own plant nursery to grow the native species needed to restore this crucial wildlife habitat. This wetland restoration project will empower new women conservation leaders while helping dozens of endangered and endemic species to thrive.



Chestnut-capped Piha (CR)
Lipaugus weberi



W4C has begun work restoring water to the wetland

We know that healthy ecosystems require healthy communities, and have found that facilitating access to reproductive healthcare is one of the most impactful ways we can empower women while reducing strain on limited natural resources. We recently expanded our family planning programs to our partner community near our ProAves El Paujil Nature Reserve, effectively serving 60 women in Puerto Pinzón, Boyacá.



W4C's first family planning event in Puerto Pinzon, Day 1

Many of the women in this community lack access to reproductive healthcare due to financial and transportation barriers. We received feedback from women who are grateful to be able to plan their families in order to pursue education, career opportunities, and join our conservation workshops. Our free and accessible family planning programs have helped many rural women across Colombia and lead to the well-being of our partner communities.



ProAves El Paujil Reserve partners with the local Puerto Pinzón community to protect one of the last known habitats two critically endangered species - the Blue billed-curassow (endemic) and the Brown spider monkey.



W4C's Sierra Leone reforestation project for 100 women

In global news, I am excited to share that our reforestation training for 100 women in Sierra Leone has begun and has received overwhelming support from our partner community. It is inspiring to see so many women passionate about reforestation in their community, and we couldn't be more delighted to empower 100 more women leaders through conservation training and transferable skills they can utilize for the rest of their lives.

We are all proud to have accomplished so much in such a short time, and each success for conservation is made possible by the support of our donors like you! I wish I could take you with me to visit these amazing places in my country and meet the wonderful people whose lives we have positively impacted through W4C's programs. We want you to know that we carry you with us in our hearts as you are part of our ever-growing W4C family.

Although we are in a race against time to save our planet, we are making incredible progress through our grassroots projects. Thanks to your generosity and support, we are changing the course of history and working together to positively impact women's lives and conservation efforts.

Thank you for all your love and dedication to this cause,

With gratitude,

Sara Inés Lara and team