

FALL/WINTER 2019-2020

# PASO PACÍFICO

MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR CONSERVATION





## WHERE WE WORK

---

### THE EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC



The Pacific Coast of Central America borders the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETC), a realm of great ecological richness. One of eight marine ecoregions worldwide, this area contains more than one-third of the Earth's cetacean, sea turtle, and seabird species. Millions of Central Americans depend on its natural resources.

Where we work, the ETC's nearshore marine ecosystems have unique features such as major sea turtle nesting colonies, humpback whale breeding grounds, and reefs of soft corals like the one pictured above. In addition, the mangrove forests found along the coast of the ETC provide vital habitat for birds, fish and even hawksbill sea turtles. The ecological health of the ETC is vital to Central America's social and economic wellbeing.

Front cover: A young golden-mantled howler monkey (*Alouatta palliata palliata*) gazes down from a tree. Photo by Hal Brindley.

Dear Friends,

Have you ever tried writing a slogan? Fourteen years ago, when Paso Pacífico had just been incorporated on paper, we needed a great one. I thought a lot about it. We planned to restore ecosystem processes, revive habitats and connectivity, and help people deeply sense their relationship to nature. But what slogan could convey all that?

Our vision was always about "connection." That word felt right. With much discussion, we settled on "Making Connections for Conservation." Soon after, a highly-awarded marketing expert told us we needed to go bolder, with something like "Saving the World." We ignored his overblown suggestion.

As the years have passed, our slogan remains plain yet profound. If the wildlife in our forests could talk with you and me, they would whisper, not yell, to remind us how we are all linked. That is how our organization works: small connections lead to big impacts.

Through your support, our connections empower local communities and protect plants and animals without a voice. Simple and mighty, connectivity across systems is bringing about long-lasting change—and so our slogan is right for us.

We are deeply grateful for our connection with you. Your gestures of support, big and small, make a difference on the ground. We hope you enjoy reading about your impact in this newsletter.

Thank you,

Sarah M. Otterstrom, Ph.D.

Founder & Executive Director







Members of Paso Pacífico's bird team photograph a beautiful painted bunting (*Passerina ciris*) netted during our winter monitoring. It was later released. This species is of conservation concern in the United States but is one of the more abundant migratory species at our Mono Bayo Reserve.

## FROM THE FIELD



### Bird Team

#### Training Workshop

Paso Pacífico birding staff, board members, and collaborators work together to monitor and protect both migrant and resident birds. This photo was taken during a 2016 training with Cornell Ornithological Labs on the use of eBird, an online citizen science reporting platform.

If you live outside the tropics, there is a change in your neighborhood during the early weeks of fall. As the days shorten and the nights cool down, billions of birds take flight and head to their overwintering grounds. Their departure reminds us of the cycles of life that connect everyone, from Canada to Argentina.

Last month, the journal *Science* published a major analysis of population trends in North American birds since 1970. The study documented the loss of 1 in 4 birds. This shocking number highlights an urgent need for action. Even species considered common, like sparrows, warblers, and finches, are in decline.

Fortunately, the paper's authors provide a road map to stop the declines. First, they shared seven simple steps we can take in our homes to help birds (visit [3billionbirds.org](http://3billionbirds.org) to learn more). The paper also states that we must look beyond summer breeding grounds is to rescue bird species. Upon the paper's release, its authors publicly urged people to support conservation groups that protect bird habitats in Latin America.

Paso Pacífico has protected and studied birds for over a decade. In fact, we just marked ten years of long-term bird monitoring in partnership with the United States Forest Service

International Institute for Tropical Forestry. To perform this work, our team members walk through forest and across farmland along permanent routes called transects, recording bird observations at regular intervals. Semiannually, we participate in international bird counts with Junior Rangers and community members. Each migration season, members of our bird team also net, examine, and release birds at places called MoSI stations. This work helps track the what, where, and why of bird population declines, which point to where we can most effectively protect endangered birds.

One species of conservation concern is the wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*). While people in the eastern United States may often hear this species, its population has declined by 62% over the past five decades. We often observe this species along the transects, and our records of its overwintering habitat contribute to scientific knowledge of its migratory patterns. We are also actively protecting it: we have created a private reserve and reforested hundreds of acres of wood thrush habitat. Though government funding has ended for our longterm monitoring program, Paso Pacífico hopes to continue this effort through support from individuals like you.



Local schoolchildren take a moment in their day to appreciate the birds. Donors like you made it possible for these children to have binoculars, which they received in exchange for slingshots.



The ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), a common "backyard bird" in North America, can journey thousands of miles to Central America. This female was photographed by our staff.

We are also seeing exciting results from another project: our seasonal surveys for wintering willow flycatchers (*Empidonax traillii*). Lab results from the genetic material we have collected reveal that more than half of the sampled willow flycatchers are of the southwest subspecies, which is federally endangered. This indicates that conservation efforts in Nicaragua can have a great impact for these birds! We are now working to encourage local farmers to protect small wetlands, willow bushes, and other patches of habitat for willow flycatchers. Funding through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act made much of the work on this species possible.

This research and the resulting conservation actions have been a team effort. Morgan's Rock Hacienda & Ecodge and members of Nicaragua's Private Reserve Network are among our valued local partners. We are also grateful to the international partners mentioned previously and to the Southern Sierra Research Station, the Institute for Bird Populations, the American Bird Conservancy, the Richland Center–Santa Teresa Sister City Project, and the University of Nevada, Reno.

And of course, we thank you for supporting our efforts to protect wintering habitats in Nicaragua and El Salvador. We encourage you to join our efforts today to expand bird survival tracking at this link: [pasopacifico.org/birdsurvival](http://pasopacifico.org/birdsurvival).

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### ALLISON CONNOR

Allison Connor is an accomplished artist and teacher who uses her art to advocate for wildlife. She has two masters degrees and is a Silicon Valley Artist Laureate.

When Allison is not sharing her expertise in the arts and the humanities with her students at San Jose City College, she volunteers for bird conservation and development efforts in California and Nicaragua. She regularly assists scientists at bird-banding stations and participates in citizen science bird counts.

Recently, she designed a coloring book of birds and mammals for groups like us to use in Nicaragua. We admire the way that Allison connects her passion for the arts with her love of nature.

When asked about Paso Pacifico, Allison says she values our work with local communities, especially how we build future conservationists through our Junior Ranger program.

We are honored and grateful to have Allison Connor as a donor and friend to Paso Pacifico.





# DID YOU KNOW?

- December through March, some humpbacks congregate off the Pacific Coast of Central America. In summer, they feed from California to British Columbia.
- These whales are slow! A humpback whale feeds at about 0.2–3.5 miles per hour.
- Every humpback's flukes have a unique pattern. This "fingerprint" helps scientists track whales over time.
- Most humpback whales migrate every year. Some go up to 11,600 miles each way.
- Female humpback whales are larger than males.



David Alfaro  
Fotografía

## THANK YOU, RECENT DONORS!

*This list includes those who supported us from March through August 2019.*

Douglas Abraham  
Tam Adams  
Jamileth Aguilera  
Brian & Connie Aikens  
Margaret Alldredge  
Daniel Amiri  
Betsy Bachman  
Joan & Bill Bailey  
Linda Bobolia  
Jacqueline Burge  
Keith Buzzard  
Fred & Judy Bysshe  
Erin Calfee  
Alexa Calfee  
Vickie Campbell  
Bear Capron  
Fabien & Dine Castel  
Richard & Rebecca Cegelski  
Mei Chan  
M. Jahi Chappell  
James & Mee Chung  
Alex & Anne Cole  
Bernie & Darlene Conway  
Heloisa Farme &  
Renato D'Amoed  
Diane Dempster &  
Bill Raffin  
Dawood Dhada  
Victoria Dompé-Evans  
Victoria Dunch  
Norm & Christine Engstrom  
Miranda Estensen  
Lynn Fischer

Tom Galdabini &  
Colleen Waterhouse  
Stephanie Gardner  
Barbara George  
Robert Goettler  
Maren & Aaron Gonter  
George & Amy Gorman  
Jodi Grass & Kevin Doss  
Letitia Grenier  
Martha Groom  
Sarah Grunewald &  
Ryan Shields  
Vana Guidotti & Kevin Wells  
Ellen Guillén  
John Hankins  
Cameron Hashemi  
Rachel Hawkins  
Gary & Pat Hedden  
Carol Hiland  
Sally Hinshaw  
Holly Hinton  
Camille Holly  
Barbara Holzman  
Nicole Jurjavic  
Florian Klein  
Frank Kling  
Woodwyn Koons &  
Dmitri Siegel  
Teresa Lang  
Angie LeCrone  
David & Pamela Lee  
Kim Livengood  
Levi & Rebecca Lloyd

Caroline & Dave Lujan  
Kelly & Colin Lynch  
Yanett Macias  
Sheila McMahon  
Liz Mering  
Melanie Miller  
Kelsey Miller  
Will Mistretta  
Brad Nahill  
Andrea Neal  
Nancy & Dick Noble  
Carol & Rob Norris  
Eric Olson  
Ethan & Megan Otterstrom  
Dushyant & Rina Patel  
Haydee Perez  
Patricia Pietrzyk  
Amy Pizzolatto  
Omer Rains  
Lotte & Kevin Roache  
Rick Rutherford &  
Sarah Otterstrom  
Robert & Diane Rutherford  
Sarah Rutherford-Bundy &  
Rafer Nelson  
Steve Rutledge & Julie Beer  
Karan Saneinia  
Ben Schapiro  
George & Jane Schmidt  
Mark Schwartz &  
Sharon Strauss  
Carmen & Andrew Seligman  
Grace & Joseph Shaia

Jody & Bill Sherrard  
Joan Silaco  
Zac Smith  
Laurel Smith  
Philip & Kathryn Smith  
Rick & Kathy Smith  
Stephanie Spehar  
Connie Sween  
Marc Talisman  
Jimmy Tallal  
Lauren Tartaglia  
John & Mary Catherine  
Taylor Siebel  
Ron & Sissy Tietz  
Michael Tlusty  
Joyce Tollefson  
Gerald Urquhart  
Terry & Mary Vogt  
Dana Werner  
Ann Wheeler  
Michael Whitaker  
Matt Whitmire  
Danielle Whittaker  
Kim Williams-Guillén &  
Paul Buzzard  
Susan Wolstencroft  
Kristin Womack  
Valerie Woodard  
Scott & Cathy Woolley  
Kenneth & Athelia Woolley  
Melody Yeatts  
Heather York  
Carolyn Younger





## WHO FUNDS OUR PROJECTS?

Since 2012, Paso Pacifico's community ranger program has included women who now patrol beaches, manage turtle nurseries and lead our Junior Ranger program. Through support from the Kathryn B. McQuade Foundation, which focuses on making sustainable improvements in women and children's rights, education, and welfare, we have expanded training and leadership opportunities for the five women rangers on our team.

In 2015, we began working with women fishers to help them improve their livelihoods through sustainable aquaculture. That program has grown thanks to investments from the Waitt Foundation and the Loyal Bigelow and Jedidiah Dewey Foundation. Recently, the PRBB Foundation, an organization focused on empowering women and their communities, joined the effort as a donor partner.

Thanks to these generous foundations and the support from people like you, biodiversity and communities are reaping the benefits of expanded female leadership.



## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MONTHLY SUPPORTERS

We are excited to announce the Canopy Club, a new recognition for those friends who give monthly. These exceptional people act on their love for the planet by donating on a regular basis. We deeply appreciate their meaningful gifts, which sustain our programs and help us to plan ahead. Thank you to our Canopy Club members, listed to the right, for helping us climb higher!

Would you like to join the Canopy Club by becoming a monthly donor? Scan the QR code at right or visit the link below to join the movement:

[pasopacifico.org/canopy](http://pasopacifico.org/canopy)



## CANOPY MEMBERS

Felice Berenson  
Nan Busse & Tobey Kaplan  
Lynn Crew & Aaron Miller  
Kai Ewert  
Jill Forman & David Young  
Ben Fryer & Laura Reynolds  
Leila Gass  
Tess Herman  
Jennifer Hicks  
Elaine Hurd  
Traci Jennings  
Ruth Lee

Jonathan & Elizabeth King  
Mary Ann O'Connor  
Alice O'Connor  
Seth Riley  
Grace Robinson  
Derek Schlereth & Rebecca Tinsley  
Christine Schmidt & Bob Brewer  
Henkel Smith  
Mitzi & Tom Vaughn  
Patty Turnage  
Ginger Woolley  
Eliza Woolley

*Monthly donors as of August 2019*





Paso Pacífico team members explore a forest site where the critically endangered black-handed spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) was recently rediscovered in El Salvador.

## RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- After a years-long drought of confirmed sightings in southwestern Nicaragua, our camera traps recorded a jaguar once more. Other exciting camera trap observations include a high abundance of smaller predators such as ocelots. We are grateful to the Los Angeles Zoo & Botanical Gardens for its unflinching support of this program.
- Bird-counting is better with the whole family. Our Junior Rangers, together with many parents and Paso Pacífico staff, gathered together to observe birds on Global Big Day. During this international citizen science event, they recorded 83 species across 4 transects in the Paso del Istmo.
- Yellow-naped Amazon parrots in the Paso del Istmo are congregating in numbers we have never seen before. Known as roosting, this behavior is important for social learning amongst young birds and their families. We recorded 50 parrots in one location and 63 parrots at another. This heartening success was made possible by longterm partners such as the Loro Parque Fundación and by donors like you.
- Thanks to a grant from the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, we have launched an effort to protect the black-handed spider monkey in eastern El Salvador. We are awaiting permits but we are looking forward to studying the resident critically-endangered subspecies and joining forces with local communities.
- Thirty-two new yellow-naped Amazon parrots are now flying free! Our parrot program had another record season, despite fierce poaching. Three *polluelos* came from our new program in Metapán, El Salvador, and were protected in partnership with the Enrique Figueroa Foundation.
- The International Coastal Cleanup is underway at beaches and rivers in Nicaragua and El Salvador from August through December. As the national coordinators for these two countries, we are organizing cleanups in partnership with the Ocean Conservancy and other groups.
- In El Salvador, we organized a national meeting focused on addressing the crisis with the yellow-naped Amazon parrot. One result of this meeting was the formation of a national alliance to study and protect this species. In coming months, our network members will collaborate with plans and protocols to protect these beloved birds. Our meeting and training was made possible by a grant from the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund.
- We joined people across the globe in celebration of World Oceans Day. Our California office organized a public event on the beaches near our headquarters. More than a hundred people attended this event, which also helped raise local awareness of Paso Pacífico. Local organizations, bands, and environmental leaders all participated with enthusiasm.



## USA

P. O. Box 1244 • Ventura, CA 93002-1244

Phone: +1-805-643-7044

Email: [info@pasopacifico.org](mailto:info@pasopacifico.org)

Web: [www.pasopacifico.org](http://www.pasopacifico.org)

## NICARAGUA

Carretera a Masaya Km 12.4

Residencial Villas del Prado, Casa No. 7

Managua, Nicaragua

Phone: +505-2279-7072

## EL SALVADOR

C/o FUNZEL

Resd. Altos de la Cima, Calle #2

Casa No. 21, Antiguo Cuscatlan

La Libertad, El Salvador

Phone: +503-2566-6148

Follow Us on Social Media:



## Board of Directors

**Christine Schmidt**, President  
University of California, Berkeley

**Derek Schlereth**, Secretary  
David Suzuki Foundation

**Teresa Lang**, Treasurer  
South Pole

**Sonia Ortega**  
National Science Foundation

**Eric Ponçon**  
ECOM Agroindustrial Corp. Ltd

**Chris Ayotte**  
Home Depot, Inc.

**Juan Marco Álvarez**  
Banco Industrial Guatemala

**Armando Vega**  
Ganadería Llanogrande

**Christy Reich**  
Lexington Commercial Holdings  
Rare Equine Breed Preservation Project

## FEATURED STAFF

These conservation managers play a vital role in facilitating our projects and managing our field staff.

### Program Managers

Liza González

Regional Director

Nohémi Velásquez

Administrative Manager, Nicaragua

Marcos Calero

Jaguar and Bee Conservation Coordinator

Julio Collado

Coastal Community Coordinator

Jairo Coronado

Sea Turtle Conservation Coordinator

Jarinton García

Cardenas Coordinator

Karen Lacayo & Yajaira Elena Vargas

Environmental Education Coordinators

Oswaldo Saballos

Macaw Conservation Coordinator

Marlon Sotelo

Biodiversity Coordinator

Yorlin Vargas

Oyster Project Coordinator

[pasopacifico.org/donate](http://pasopacifico.org/donate)