

IN THIS ISSUE
Junior Rangers



You Helped 262 Children Fall in Love with Nature!

Your support made a lasting impact on young people and inspired environmental stewardship through the Junior Ranger program. **Because of your help, children continued to learn about wildlife, ecology, and leadership during the pandemic.**

In 2022, the program blossomed, and we're excited to tell you how. Early in the year, we opened enrollment in the communities we serve in southwest Nicaragua's Paso del Istmo wildlife corridor. And interest from parents and children exceeded anything we'd seen before: **262 children wanted to become Junior Rangers.**

Bolstered by donor support, our staff began holding classes in February. Children from the mountains made a special trip to the beach and met baby sea turtles for the



first time. They learned about marine life and that the turtle egg trade is neither sustainable nor legal. Many of the children shared these lessons with their families.

Youths from the coast visited local beaches and took a special field trip to the mountains, where they hiked lush green forests planted by our team. Using your gift, we also led Junior Rangers and their parents to the Mono Bayo Reserve, where they saw critically endangered

Your gift gave kids unforgettable experiences as guardians of endangered wildlife!

Continued inside right



A Baby Sea Turtle, a Child, and You

Three countries' rivers empty into western Central America's Gulf of Fonseca. They send extreme amounts of garbage into the gulf and its beaches. At Junior Ranger lessons, 11-year-old Jairo (right) of La Salvia learned how this causes damage to his community, his beloved sea turtles, and other wildlife. He started passionately helping with every cleanup, and encouraged his family and friends to pitch in too.

With your help, they cleaned their beaches this fall! Jairo is not the only child who improved beach habitats for sea turtles. 181 other young people participated in 24 cleanups at rivers, lakes and beaches near their villages in 2022! Thank you for making possible these beautiful changes.

Director's Note to You

Dear Friend,

I just returned from a conference for rangers who work for the U.S. National Park Service. There, I presented about the impact you made on nature conservation in Central America through the Junior Ranger program. **Your donation helped people in Central America work to shape a better future.**

This newsletter focuses on how you've recently helped the younger generation. While economic and political hardships affect the children in our program, you helped paint a brighter future for them. As Junior Rangers, children got to feel a sense of belonging and excitement about the world around them. Having confidence in who they are is associated with better mental health, and may help them stay rooted in their home communities.

Your support helped youth realize how important they are because they care for forests in the tropics. A recent report stated that temperate forests alone cannot significantly combat climate change in the near future. **But fast-growing, carbon-rich tropical forests, cared for by local communities, could still pull us back from the brink.**

Thank you for your support. I hope you enjoy this issue!



With gratitude,

Sarah M. Otterstrom, Ph.D.
Founder & Executive Director

"My favorite animal is the sea turtle because it travels all over the world . . . and it returns and lays its eggs at the beach where it was born." — A Junior Ranger





Above: Thanks to you, 11-year-old Jairo of La Salvia found a passion in caring for nature and encouraged his friends during 3 beach cleanups in 2022.

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black-handed spider monkeys up close at the Karen Warren and Susan White Spider Monkey Sanctuary. This special field trip helped the children learn about connections between watersheds and marine ecosystems, and gave them a close encounter with forest wildlife that they can protect throughout their lives.

All the children got to experience a new marine curriculum. With support from you and the Benedict Family Foundation, the children literally got their feet wet on rocky shores, learning about echinoderms (like starfish) and other unique creatures in the intertidal zone. The six-unit marine curriculum greatly enhanced our prior effort, which focused mainly on sea turtles.

Throughout the year, Junior Rangers also learned about birding and camera trap monitoring. Around thirty of them even got up early and participated in global birdwatching events (upper opposite page), spotting birds and recording data. Those morning walks were precious times for everyone, and we are so grateful to you for making them possible through your gift.

Our bright “guardians of nature” will ensure your donation’s enduring impact on the future and on their environment. **Thank you for empowering Junior Rangers and enriching their lives with your gift!**

What’s next for graduated Junior Rangers? You helped pilot ideas!

Junior Ranger Luz (right) discovered a passion for conservation and science. However, she had no options for exploring her interests after she completed the program. She continued to attend Junior Ranger meetings but longed for more.

But thanks to your gift, Luz and six other young people joined us for a three-month-long pilot program! They got to shadow field biologists and conservation technicians. For

example, Luz learned how to collect data on data sheets, and her friend Stiven got to set up camera traps where he had seen cat tracks.

At the end, they were recognized by our staff at a small awards ceremony. The seven students have stayed engaged and so we deem this pilot a success! With your support, we will expand this program next year to involve fifteen more teens. **Thank you!**





Help a Child Become a Junior Ranger!

Empower a child and enrich a life through nature education

A quarter of Central America's population are less than fifteen years old. Many of these youths and their families are suffering from limited educational opportunities and extreme weather events that impact fishing and farming.

But you can help each child create positive change.

Your gift today can teach children ages 8–13 about the wildlife, forests, and beaches near where they live. It can also give kids **golden opportunities** to give back to their hometowns by **planting native trees, cleaning beaches and riverbanks, and releasing baby sea turtles**. As they grow, they will use the knowledge you helped give them to create a more **sustainable economy and resilient landscape** in their region.

Your help is needed to support the **current class of young students**. Would you please make a gift to help at least one child?

Children who become Junior Rangers grow into better stewards of nature, and share what they learn with their friends and family. Please help a child become a Junior Ranger today!

YES! I WANT TO SPONSOR A JUNIOR RANGER!

Yes! Please use my gift to **support education for a Junior Ranger** and to benefit all the work of Paso Pacifico.

Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$25 to sponsor a Junior Ranger for part of the year
- \$75 to sponsor a Junior Ranger for part of the year
- \$450 to sponsor a Junior Ranger for the whole year
- \$_____ to help the Junior Rangers as much as I can!



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