

Finding Species 2012 Annual Report

www.findingspecies.org

OUR MISSION & APPROACH

Finding Species' mission is to:

Uniquely contribute to the resolution of critical environmental, conservation and biodiversity concerns through aesthetically beautiful, scientifically significant photographs. Finding Species approaches these large-scale challenges building from four cornerstones: photography, science, technology and partnerships.

Photography: We photograph species that need to be accurately identified because they are endangered, new to science, native to unique regions, or invasive and therefore harmful to other species. We photograph habitats that need to be seen due to human encroachment. Finding Species ensures that each photographic portrait is of the highest aesthetic quality.

Science: We write profiles of species to accompany our photographs. We also write articles about biodiversity science. We use non-technical language to make field identifications easier and ultimately encouraging science accessible for all.

Technology: We pioneer standardized methods and use professional equipment to make our photographs a permanent archive for humanity. We employ digital technologies and printed media in innovative ways reaching diverse and world-wide audiences. Our projects reconnect the public with their local and global biodiversity, some even creating citizen scientists data sets that can tell a story about climate change.

Partnerships: The combined creativity and knowledge of interdisciplinary teams is essential to our success. Finding Species' board, staff, and volunteers come from different disciplines in biology, photography, policy and finance. We actively build partnerships with government agencies, conservation organizations, museums, research scientists and universities, communities and schools.

From these four cornerstones, Finding Species undertakes educational projects, conservation campaigns, and scientific research. Through all our programs, Finding Species makes the natural world and its species and habitats uniquely compelling, and threats to them undeniable, so that each person is inspired to learn about and help protect them.

Institutional History & Current Personnel Strengths



Finding Species (www.findingspecies.org) was founded as a project in 1996 and formally incorporated in the United States as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 2003. We have had an office in Takoma Park, Maryland, and a South American office in Quito, Ecuador, since 2003. We incorporated our Quito office with the Ecuador government in 2007, a very lengthy process, with the Quito office officially designated as a non-profit branch of Finding Species. In 2009, the Board of Directors decided to expand our South American operation, and run all of our projects and operations, and most of our fundraising effort, from our Quito office.

The Board made this decision for several compelling reasons: a) the extremely high biological richness in and density of threatened species and imperiled ecoregions in South America; b) the degree of conservation threat there from deforestation and climate change; c) the extent of conservation need, in terms of more conservation focus/effort being required; d) the extent and diversity of financial support that we are garnering and foresee as very likely for our projects in this region; and e) the highly successful leadership and intense productivity of our Quito personnel.

Developing Species Methodologies



In 2012, the Board of Directors hired Pablo Jarrin to the position of Executive Director of Finding Species. The Board of Directors considers him to be a highly qualified to run the Ecuadorian office with a background working with non-profits, educational institutions and research stations. The Ecuadorian office has been faced with Ecuador's changing political environment that is becoming inhospitable for international NGO's to operate. Pablo has worked diligently to complete and/or close all projects and legally withdraw our offices from Ecuador by the end of 2012.

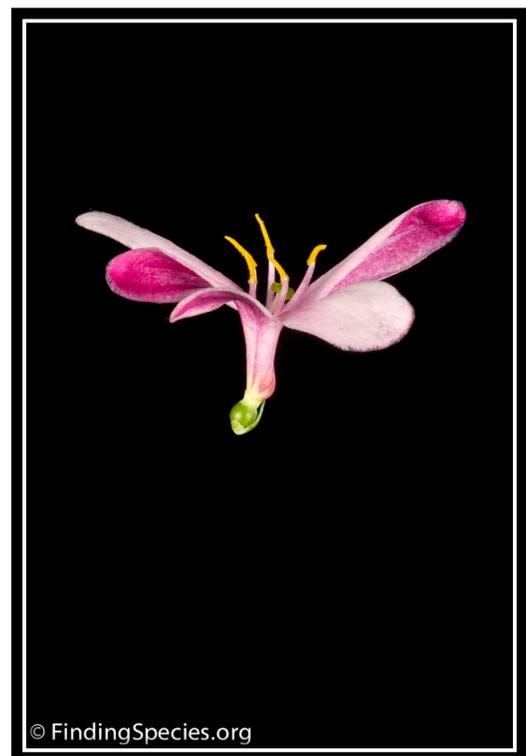
The organization has eleven full-time and part-time staff and several volunteers and associates of photographers, scientists, policy analysts, and financial experts, and operates with an annual budget of approximately \$371,603 for 2012. Our diverse members serving on the Board of Directors bring expertise in a broad range of areas critical to the organization's success. With the combined knowledge and experience of our staff and Board, Finding Species is able to form partnerships with conservation organizations, scientists, research institutions, and government agencies to foster multi-faceted initiatives to stem the tide of species extinctions.



Institutional Description

Finding Species is a respected organization which operates in mega-diverse countries; a sought-after partner for conservation initiatives that values open communication; works with partners ranging from federal and local governments, local communities, in country government to non-government organizations, scientists, and United Nations institutions such as UNESCO and UNDP. Finding Species operates with minimal overhead, prioritizing key areas of program investment.

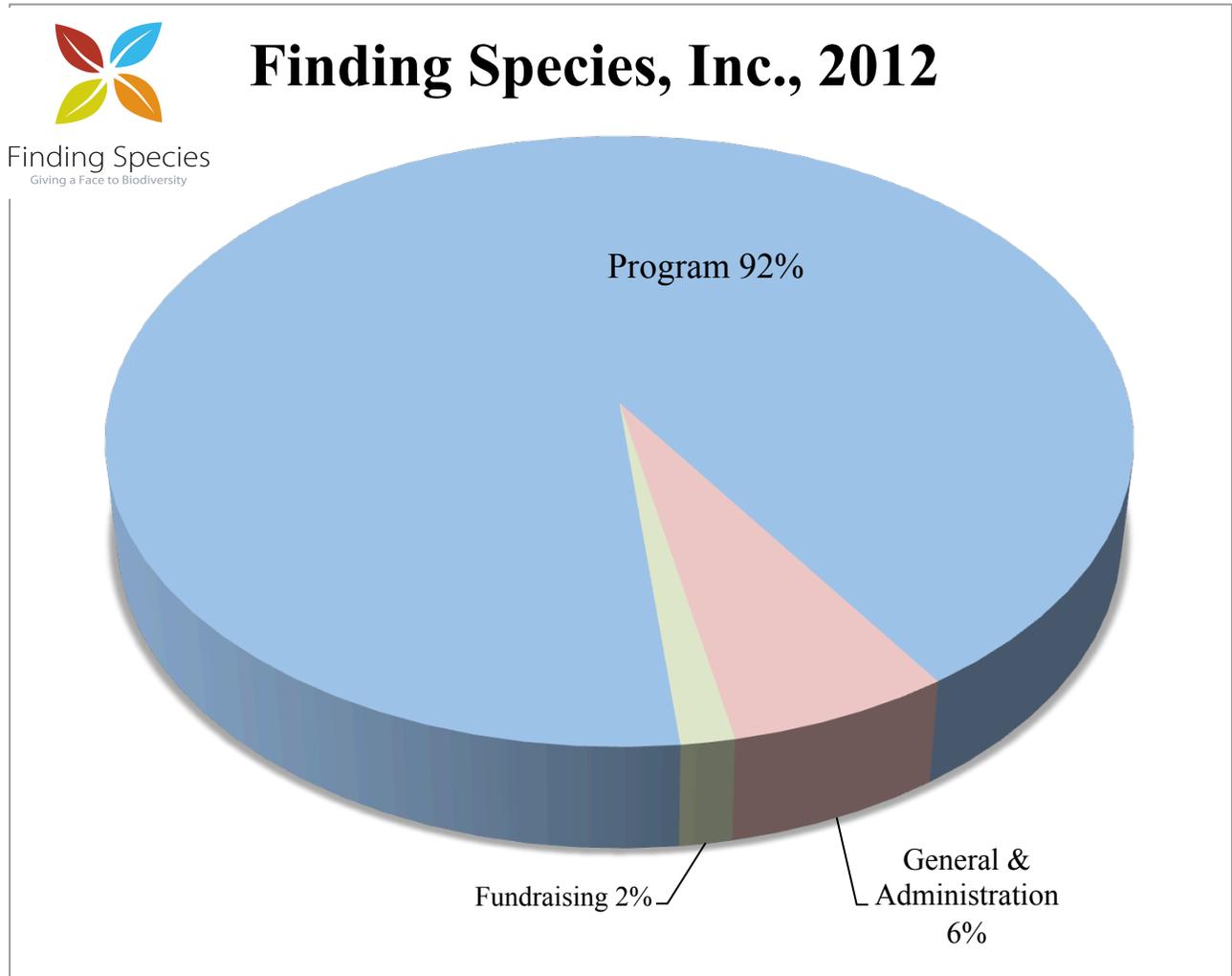
The organization employs a diverse staff, each of whom are well-known experts in their academic fields. Finding Species is responsible for effectively maintaining and training them, building their capacities both in country and internationally. Finding Species is unlike many other conservation organizations, with most of its staff in Ecuador—including members of the management team—and with at least two-third of our annual budget dedicated to programs in Ecuador. Along with the United States, we have chosen to work in Ecuador because it ranks among the ten most biologically diverse countries in the world and its diversity is critically threatened, with the highest deforestation rate in Latin America, yet are regrettably closing this office. We are legally recognized as a non-profit by the governments of each country, and view government agencies as important partners for achieving our mission. We will be closing all paperwork with the Ecuadorian government in 2013 to legally close the Ecuadorian office.



© FindingSpecies.org

OPERATIONS & 2012 SUPPORT

Finding Species has 11 staff members in Maryland, Texas, and Ecuador. Annual budgets have ranged from approximately \$400,000 – \$600,000. The annual budget for 2012 was \$371,603. An estimated support for Finding Species in 2012 is synthesized in the following chart.



INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Issue that Finding Species is Addressing: Species extinction is occurring on an unprecedented scale—on every continent and at rates 1,000 times greater than in the past. From 1970 to 2005, tracked populations of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles—from around the world—dropped by more than 25%. Our phenomenal biodiversity is under siege from human activities—habitat destruction, global climate change, and introduction of invasive species, pollution, and unsustainable harvesting of natural resources. Stemming this trend is among the world’s most critical environmental challenges. Finding Species is dedicated to documenting and sharing the imagery of species and their habitats.

Population growth, migration, market economy and lifestyle development have increased pressure on natural resources unsustainably. According to FAO, about 13 million hectares of forest are cleared each year worldwide, and South America is the region that loses more of these forests. North America comes in second. For this reason LeafSnap is an incredible tool that helps document where citizen scientists locate and identify trees and encourages the use of technology in nature.

Images are indispensable in capturing attention, communicating conservation needs, and catalyzing action. A book of photographs by Ansel Adams of Kings Canyon, California, was shown to President Franklin Roosevelt, and turned him into a key supporter of designating the area as a national park. Photographs showing the beauty of the species and habitats of the Tongass National Forest, and threats from ongoing clear cutting, were exhibited for members of Congress, and given to them in books. These were essential in spurring changes to logging regulations and in the creation of untouchable zones. Recently, photographs of polar bears in distress have generated widespread public concern about loss of Arctic ice and have generated demand for an endangered species listing for these bears.

Given the quantity of visual information that surrounds us today, it is even more important that biodiversity images can stand out and be easily shared with key decision makers and the public. There is a critical role for an organization that integrates science and photographic art—and that takes strategic advantage of emerging web technology—to produce and disseminate captivating biodiversity images that catalyze action for threatened areas and endangered species. Finding Species has responded to this need, developing a unique approach that "gives a face to biodiversity."

A Solution—Finding Species and Its Mission: Creating compelling photographs of imperiled species and habitats, we work through partnerships, science and environmental education to:

- Conserve the planet's biodiversity,
- Preserve cultural heritages that are intertwined with nature and diverse species, and
- Sustain human well being by safeguarding ecosystem services for all.

We protect endangered species and habitats, using unique photographs and scientific information to develop and undertake projects that advance science, empower conservation, and foster education. Finding Species brings the natural world to a broad audience so that each person feels a part of that world and is compelled to understand and conserve it.

FINDING SPECIES PROGRAMS LIST

Finding Species^{ID}

Signature Species

Faces of Sustainable Development and Climate Change

FINDING SPECIES PROGRAM: FINDING SPECIES^{ID}

In *Finding Species^{ID}*, we collaborate with partners to develop unique and innovative technologies to identify species. In our role, we focus on taking standardized photographs and writing species descriptions that are at once scientifically accurate, archival quality, and accessible to the general public. These photographs and profiles document key taxonomic characteristics of each species, speed the accurate identification of species, and help build regional and global catalogue of species. In turn, this program promotes advances in both science and conservation.



Finding SPECIES^{ID}

Goals: Reconnecting people with the natural world, by making it easy and fun to identify and learn about species. Advancing scientific field research.

Featured Project & Accomplishment: In our *Native Plant Project*, Finding Species seeks to enable everyone to identify, learn about, and plant with native species. As part of this, we are collaborating with Columbia University, Smithsonian Institution, and University of Maryland on LeafSnap (Leafsnap.com). We have photo-documented and written profiles for trees of Washington, DC, and New York's Central Park. The photographs and profiles were launched in 2011 in the LeafSnap app, allowing users to identify and learn about regional trees and be citizen scientists by documenting tree distributions.

Additional unfunded work: We now hope to document all the trees of the US to expand LeafSnap. We also seek to document 250 horticulturally-suitable native species to create a website for gardeners and landowners to find out how to landscape with natives and how to build rain gardens and green roofs.

LeafSnap Project

Guide to Trees of Central Park, NYC, & Rock Creek Park, Washington, DC



The interactive Leafsnap website and application, www.leafsnap.com, is incredibly successful and within the first six months of its release on Earth Day, April 22, the iPhone application was downloaded by half a million people. It is now at well over a million. It is a free, interactive guide to trees, and currently features trees of Central Park and Washington, DC. LeafSnap will soon grow to cover the trees of the entire continental United States. The application is available for the iPhone, with iPad and Android yet to be released. LeafSnap continues to obtain major media coverage, including an article this spring in the New York Times with an image of the LeafSnap application screen featuring Finding Species photographs. Articles published in Smithsonian Science (May 2011), Huffington Post (June 2011), CBS News (June 2011), Popular Mechanics (July 2011) and countless more have ever-increased the popularity of this ingenious application. LeafSnap is the first in a series of electronic field guides being developed that demonstrate use of digital recognition technology. The LeafSnap electronic field guides aim to influence digital applications and mobile devices to build an increased understanding of and appreciation for biodiversity.

Finding Species is working directly with the Smithsonian Institution, Columbia University, and the University of Maryland. These institutions are working on the visual recognition software to help identify tree species from iPhone photographs based on their leaves. Finding Species produces the professional scientific photographs seen in the application and electronic field guide depicting photos of each species leaves, flowers, fruit, petiole, seeds, and bark. Leafsnap turns users into citizen scientists, automatically sharing images, species identifications, and geo-coded stamps of species locations with a community of scientists who will use the stream of data to map and monitor the population growth and decline of trees nationwide. Users of Leafsnap will not only be learning about the trees in their communities and on their hikes, they will also be contributing to science.

To identify a tree, it works best if users place a leaf on a white background to photograph. Engineers used digital recognition technology to devise an algorithm that could identify a leaf by its shape and features.

The image is uploaded to a server, and within seconds it returns a ranking of the most likely tree species a user has found, along with other characteristics to help confirm the tree's identity. Users make the final identification. The iPad version also includes a feature called "Nearby Species" to show all the trees that have been labeled by others near a user's location.

Leafsnap Project Details

From 2007–2012, Finding Species created sets of its Standardized Plant Photographs of Botanical Field Characters, corresponding metadata, and Plant Profiles (descriptive texts) for over 315 species for the woody plants of the DC area and the trees and shrubs of Central Park, New York City. These species included natives and non-natives (whether introduced, invasive, naturalized, or cultivated exotics), and represented trees, sub-shrubs, vines, and herbs.

In the summer of 2010, Finding Species documented over 20 of the tree and shrub species of the northeastern United States, including native and introduced trees. For this phase, Finding Species increased documenting work to include iPhone photographs and DNA collection. Throughout the years, Finding Species has pressed herbarium voucher specimens, whenever logistically feasible. These specimens have complete metadata and have been delivered to be ticketed, mounted, or accessioned by the Smithsonian Institution.

In 2011, Finding Species worked to finalize documentation of 185 tree and shrub species in the northeastern United States, through additional standardized plant photographs, iPhone photographs, DNA, and the input of metadata and creation of photographic thumbnails for the application. These 185 species were successfully launched to the public in the iPhone app on Earth Day, April 22, 2011.

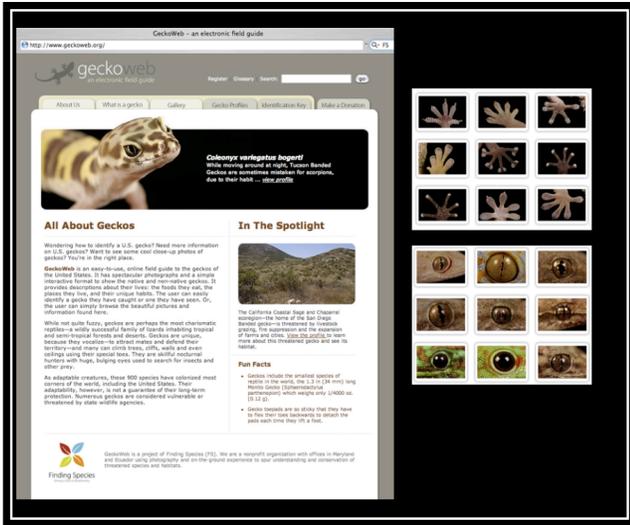
In 2012, Finding Species worked to finalize documentation of 25 tree and shrub species in the northeastern United States, creating 98 of its unique high resolution photographs and 599 iPhone photographs. Finding Species uploaded these images



along with the ~300 photographs delivered to the Smithsonian Institution in 2010 and 2011, Finding Species carried out the input of corresponding metadata, and created photographic thumbnails.

LeafSnap would not be possible without our collaborations with local arboreturns and gardens. Finding Species collaborates with the U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.; Central Park, New York, NY; Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Massachusetts; Blandy Experimental Farm and State Arboretum of Virginia, Virginia; The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College; SCBI plot in CRC, Virginia; Mount Desert Island, Maine; San Antonio Botanical Gardens in San Antonio, Texas; Mercer Arboretum and Houston Arboretum in Houston, Texas

GeckoWeb A Guide to the Geckos of North America



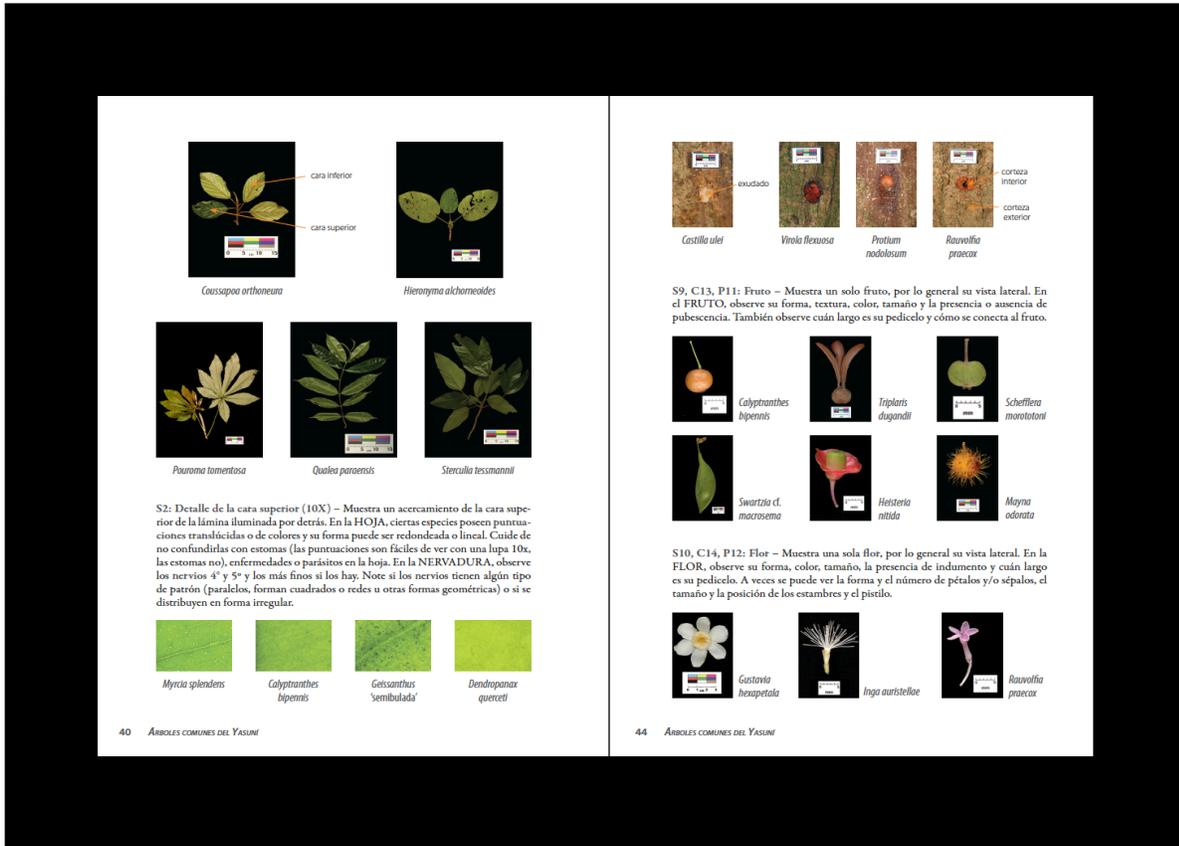
Finding Species created an educational, interactive website on the Geckos of the United States (www.GeckoWeb.org), in collaboration with two scientists and researchers, with the support USGS National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII). GeckoWeb has provided scientists and naturalists with a high-quality website to identify and study geckos and their threatened habitats in the United States. Finding Species located and documented species throughout the country, taking some of the most up-close, detailed images ever captured of these elusive species. GeckoWeb has been restored and every effort is being made to locate any missing species to photograph.

Further funding to photograph the remaining more elusive species is necessary to complete all the gecko species and transfer into an application. GeckoWeb is an education tool for the general public and Finding Species seeks to make it more user friendly when taking it on the go walking down a trail. GeckoWeb has many opportunities to also develop more detail within the website's searching functions and potentially include features like a photograph of a habitat zooming in to reveal the actual location of a gecko (in Flash Media Player). These habitat photos including Geckos were taken for existing Geckos that could be photographed in the wild.

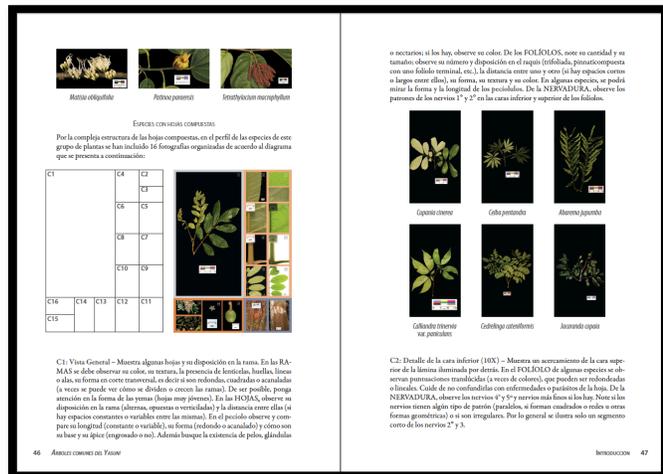


Common and Conspicuous Trees of Yasuní

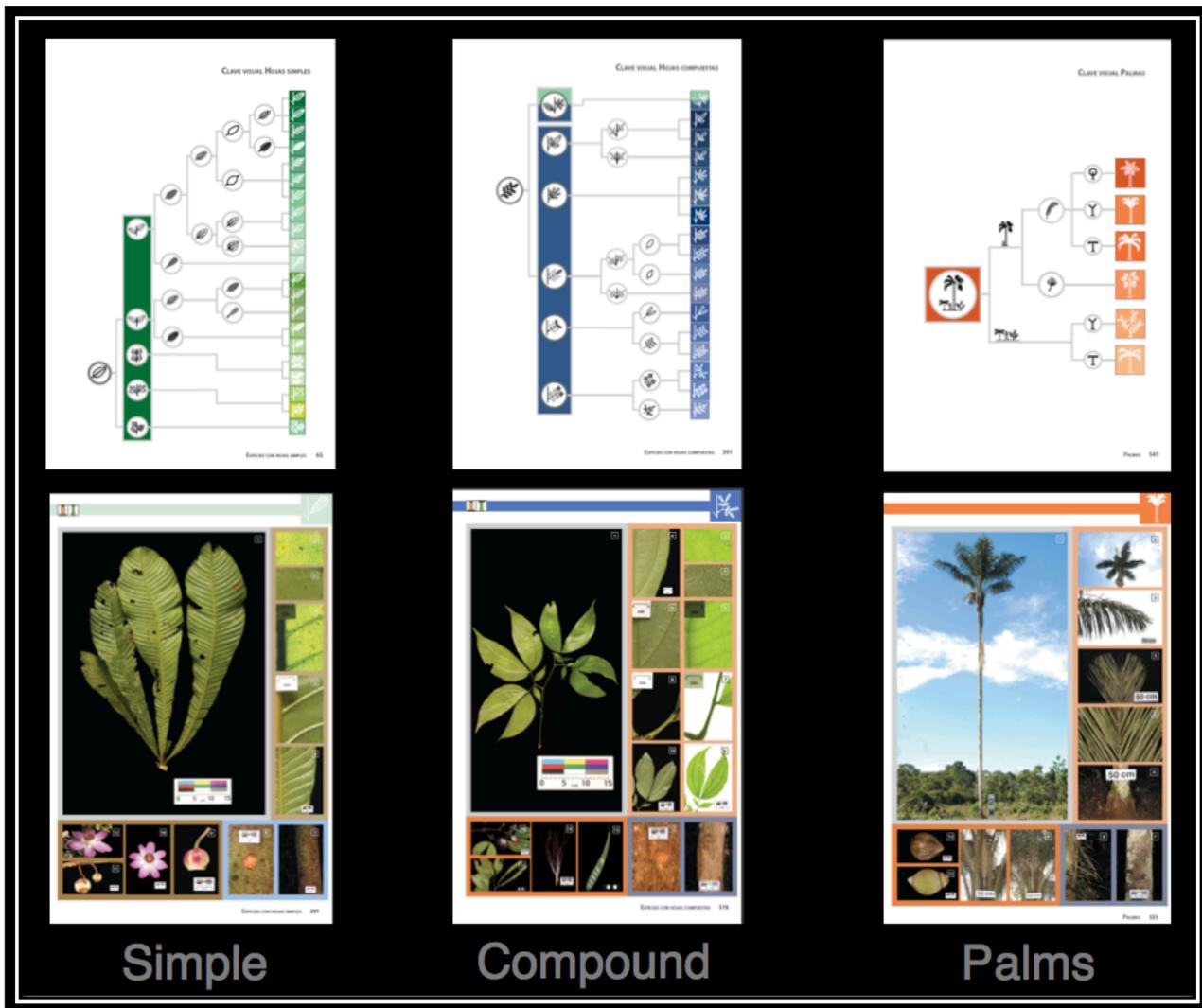
Common Trees of Yasuní, 1st edition in Spanish, Arboles Communes del Yasuní



Finding Species was founded on the photographic body of work documenting the countless species in Yasuní Biosphere Reserve. Located in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Yasuní is known to be the most biodiverse place on earth (Global Conservation Significance of Ecuador's Yasuní National Park published in PlosOne, <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0008767>). More trees grow in a single hectare (2.47 acres) of upland rainforest in Yasuni—655 species—than in the continental US and Canada combined. In 25 hectares, the number of tree species rises to 1,100. "In just one hectare in Yasuní, there are more tree, shrub, and liana (woody vines) species than anywhere else in the world," said Gorky Villa.



Layout for the book, *Arboles Comunes del Yasuní* book.



The Common Trees of Ecuador classifies trees simply by leaf structure providing an easy to use field guide in a complex environment. It will be published in Spanish, English and the indigenous language of Yasuní's Huaorani. Botanists, photographers and Huaorani have collaborated to find, identify, photograph and document this first edition of trees.

The authors are Finding Species Gorky Villa Munoz and Margot Bass along with and Hugo Navarrete and Nancy C. Garwood. These authors are recognized worldwide as experts in the field and have years of experience in scientific research in the Yasuní National Park. The book is in its final stages of editing with potential Ecuadorian government funding through Yatachy University for publication. The release of this book will be distributed to all schools, museums, research centers and institutions free of charge.

FINDING SPECIES PROGRAM: SIGNATURE SPECIES

Signature Species seeks to protect native, endemic or endangered species and their habitats, bringing biodiversity to the public, local communities, and governmental authorities to change daily practices and promote conservation policies. Signatures Species highlights the biocultural value of nature, building understanding of the relationships between culture, economy, and environment, and the scientific importance of species. The program involves local communities in conservation processes of priority areas and endangered species.

Reconnecting with the Wildlife in and around Quito Quito, Habitat Silvestre



The project seeks to recreate a relationship between citizens and their natural environment that has been lost due to urban growth in Ecuador's Capital city, Quito. By raising the profile of plant and animal species that are native and endemic to the area, Finding Species is expanding the environmental awareness of the local citizens and promoting beneficial environmental practices. We are also working together with the local government of Quito natural heritage office, to construct the concept of natural heritage and prompt it to the public agenda to achieve the preservation needs.

This project began in March, 2010, and Finding Species Ecuador's first accomplishment was a publication in a national circulation magazine. This publication issue addresses topics concerning environmental sustainability in Quito, such as water, transportation and biodiversity. Naturalists, artists, researchers and cultural managers collaborated to create a campaign to project the images into society by means of traveling exhibits, 6 types of leaflets, 3 types of posters and 7 types of postcards.

The key objective of this project is to provide evidence that native biodiversity has played a crucial role in the culture and tradition of Quito. Finding Species promotes a new relationship with Quito's natural heritage by respecting the city's biodiversity and re-connecting people with the landscape and biodiversity.

Reconnecting with the Wildlife in and around Quito seeks public outreach on flora and fauna species through documenting biodiversity and habitats in a photographic artwork. Finding Species exhibits this work in the city and suburbs to evoke awareness. Four traveling exhibits began last September 2011 and continued through May 2012 in public arenas like the public transportation system in Quito. At these exhibits leaflets and descriptions were made available to convey the message, "wild Quito".

Species descriptions and posts via blog and social media present Ecuador with detailed information in not only photographic work, but also natural history species descriptions. As this project was nearing completion the Ecuadorian government provided funding for the project to continue with Finding Species personnel and continue to document the species in and around Ecuador. Thus, continue the conservations efforts and out reach into a booming technological age. After the trolley car advertisement-like displays educating the masses (as seen below), there were also printed materials like posters and post cards that were displayed throughout Quito in an effort to broadcast to the public as a whole about their native, even endemic, environment in and around their city.

One of the major achievements of this project is that the city council on June 7th formally declared 13 fauna species as natural emblems of the city. The joint work of Finding Species with the city government natural heritage office coordinated the work of scientists and naturalists for this declaration.



Collage of the images used in the public temporary displays conducted in Quito transportation system

Related Links/Posts:

Rana Marsupial Andena, August 1, 2012

<http://quitohabitatsilvestre.wordpress.com/2012/08/01/rana-marsupial-andina/>

Lobo de Paramo, July 31, 2012

<http://quitohabitatsilvestre.wordpress.com/2012/07/31/lobo-de-paramo/>

Culebra Bobo, July 17, 2012

<http://quitohabitatsilvestre.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/culebra-boba/>

Colacintillo Colinegro, July 9, 2012

<http://quitohabitatsilvestre.wordpress.com/2012/07/09/colacintillo-colinegro/>

Quilico, July 5, 2012

<http://quitohabitatsilvestre.wordpress.com/2012/07/05/quilico-2/>

Quinde Herrero, July 6, 2012

<http://quitohabitatsilvestre.wordpress.com/2012/07/06/quinde-herrero-2/>



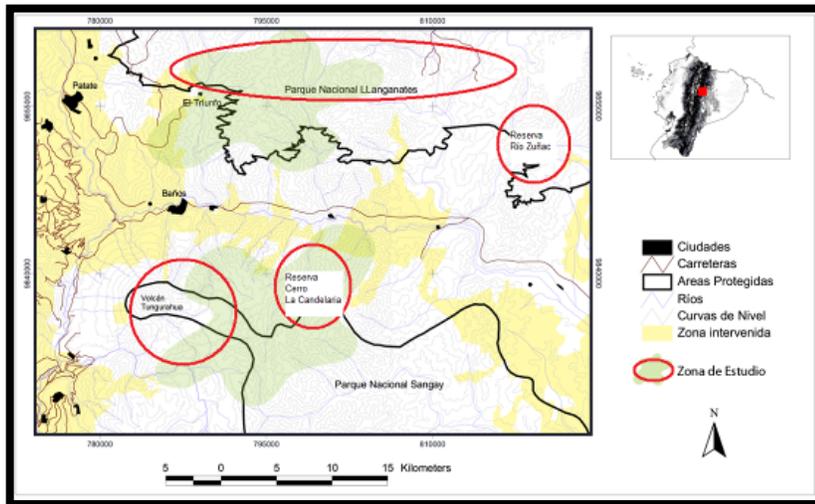
The Andean Tapir, is among the world's most endangered large mammals. Hunting, habitat destruction, and cattle pose the greatest threats to its survival. It is hunted because its large size and dark coat make it appear dangerous, and because it is believed to have aphrodisiac properties.

Save the Andean Tapir: Conservation of the Andean Tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*) on the Eastern Slopes of the Central Andes of Ecuador



Camera trap installation in San Antonio de Puntzán. They were also installed at Reserva Río Zuñag

Finding Species Ecuador has worked diligently to *Save the Andean Tapir*, among the most endangered large mammals on the planet. With the IUCN Tapir Specialist Group and a local NGO, we have established population data, engaging communities through photographs and workshops to reduce hunting while collaborating with national and local governments to improve park management. Finding Species has trained park rangers where the tapir is still found sharing our photographs and projects as research is ongoing and communication is key. Finding Species has donated all camera traps for the continued research of this critically endangered species.



Regions of study for the *Conservation of the Andean Tapir*

Finding Species built a strategic alliance among scientists from the IUCN Tapir Specialists Group (TSG), community leaders, and local government authorities to improve knowledge and conservation status of the Andean Tapir, a species considered Critically Endangered. The tapir resides exclusively in Llanganates and Sangay National Parks (and the immediate surrounding areas) located in the cloud forest of Ecuador’s Andes Mountains.

The main project goal was to work with the communities around the parks to stop illegal hunting and promote better practices to conserve the Andean Tapir habitat. Finding Species used scientific information and our trademark images to into an educational campaign in 26 communities, reaching more than 1,500 people.



A few of the multitude of camera trap photos taken in the forest *San Antonio de Puntzán*

By developing workshops for community leaders and park rangers, Finding Species Ecuador was able to build capacity and promote alliances to protect this species. We were promoting the Andean Tapir's unique biology and innate charisma, to engage the local government into making the Andean Tapir the flagship species in the region. An important issue in the project is to generate novel scientific information on the Andean Tapir’s natural history to fulfill the important lack of information through the research conducted by the TSG scientists. The project is in its fourth and final year with Finding Species just as we were to orchestrate the transfer of a donated tapir from the LA Zoo to Ecuador’s Quito Zoo. The project was growing in accomplishments, recognition and funding. Finding Species is collaborating with Oscar Efrén Reyes Foundation and the Technological Center of Amazonian Resources- Fatima, and also has the support of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Relevant Links Include:

<http://www.ministeriodecultura.gov.ec/eventos/agenda-cultural/view/551/49.html>

http://www.thehouseofblogs.com/articulo/festival_de_la_danta_i-45416.html

www.tocadas.com

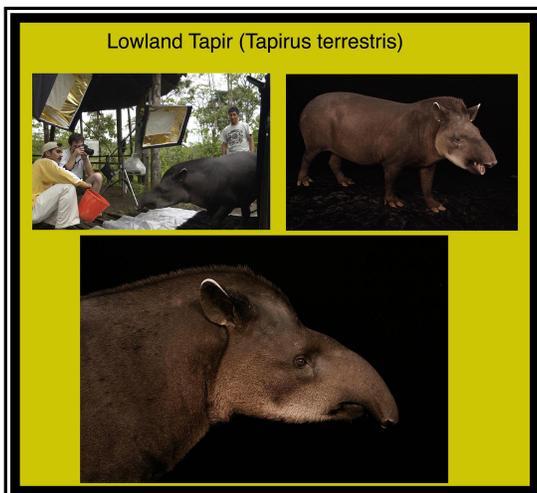
www.conciertosytocadas.com

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2sMX4541D0>



View of the pristine Amazon rainforest canopy of Yasuni National Park.

Save Yasuní Campaign



Finding Species has worked to protect Yasuni Biosphere Reserve in Ecuador, one of the most biodiverse parks in the world. Yasuni is threatened by industrial development, road-building projects, population growth and illegal logging and hunting. The main campaign strategies combine public education, media outreach, a traveling photographic exhibits, reports produced in collaboration with leading tropical scientists, and meetings with key decision makers. The organization has generated major national and international attention on the issue, and stopped a major oil road from being built in 2007 that has raised thus far this year \$116 billion dollars.

Sample "Signature Species" photographs by Finding Species.

The Lowland Tapir is a highly endangered species living in

Yasuni National Park.

Many campaigns that Finding Species Ecuador led will now be carried out by many other concerned Ecuadorian organizations as Finding Species was officially shut down with the Ecuadorian Government by the end of 2012. The Yasuni-ITT Initiative President Correa proposed raised over \$116 million before the end of the year and is of certain concern for Finding Species as we will continue to share photos and knowledge wherever we can to help. \$100 million was the goal proposed to keep the program alive, which is no drilling until the funds are raised. "Ecuador is proposing to *not* drill for an estimated 850 million barrels of oil in the Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputinin (ITT) blocs of Yasuni National Park if the international community pledges \$3.6 billion to a United Nations Development Fund (UNDF), or about half of what the oil is currently worth. The Yasuni-ITT Initiative would preserve arguably the most biodiverse region on Earth from oil exploitation, safeguard indigenous populations, and keep an estimated 410 million tons of CO2 out of the atmosphere." - Jeremy Hance, Mongabay.com.

As part of Finding Species Ecuador's legacy to conservation and for future generations to view the biodiversity of their own country, a permanent exhibit of 24 Yasuní Signature Species 4' * 5' prints were shared throughout Ecuador. The Finding Species team in Ecuador brought nature to the people, many of which had never seen this rainforest in their own country. The 24 Yasuní Signature Species 4' * 5' prints are now a permanent installation at the Museo de Botanico in central Quito, Ecuador located in Parque Carolina, Museo de Botanico in central Quito, Ecuador located in Parque Carolina. Directions and hours can be found here, <http://www.ecuador-travel.net/information.nature.htm>.



The collage represents the Yasuni Signature Species traveling exhibits shared with everyone. The collection of 24 photos was exhibited in public spaces like airports, museums, open-air events, public schools, parks, universities

Relevant Articles:

Bass MS, Finer M., Jenkins, CN, Kreft H, Cisneros-Heredia DF, McCracken SF, Pitman NCA, English PH, Swing K, Villa G, Di Fiore A, Voigt CC, Kunz TH, 2010. Global Conservation Significance of Yasuní National Park, PLoS ONE 5(1): 1–22.

<http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0008767>

Sampling of media coverage generated by Finding Species and by the coauthors on this article:

A Durable Yet Vulnerable Eden in Amazonia, New York Times

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/a-durable-yet-vulnerable-eden-in-amazonia/>

Thirst for Oil Imperils South America's Most Biodiverse Wilderness, ENS

<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/jan2010/2010-01-19-03.html>

Planet's most biodiverse corner under threat, Futurity.org

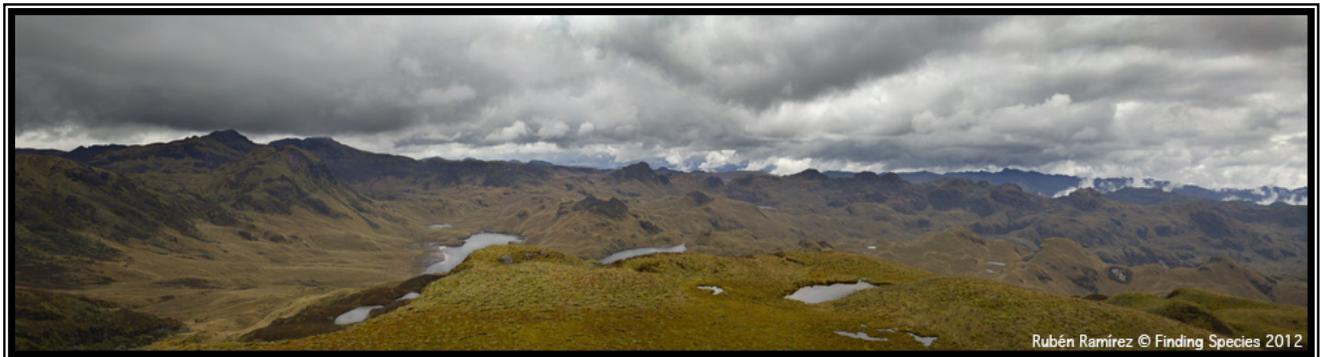
<http://futurity.org/top-stories/planets-most-biodiverse-corner-under-threat/#more-7753>

Ecuador makes \$116 million to not drill for oil in Amazon

http://news.mongabay.com/2012/0102-hance_yasuni_donations.html

Project to leave oil in ground under Yasuní park reaches \$300m

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/nov/23/yasuni-oil-ground-project>



Two hours East of Quito is the area known as 'the virgin wilderness'. This photo was taken at the highest point on the road to Papallacta (4,000 m). The area is part of the Cayambe-Coca National Park and is the primary fresh water reserves for Quito.

Headwaters of the Amazon

Finding Species Ecuador contributed to the conservation of the Amazon and the Eastern Andes to strengthen environmental policies, programs and projects through local governments. Finding Species aims to document the use of water by human populations and how the habitat is changing and its threats. The study of the hydrological cycle in the Oriental Andes and the Amazon determines its effect on human life. Finding Species documented the origins of the Amazon River from its source in the Ecuadorian Andes to Alto Napo in the territory of Ecuador by means of pictures and videos. Thus, highlighting the importance of interconnection between ecosystems spanning the tributaries of the Ecuadorian Amazon and their connection to human activities and their environmental impact. By encouraging local government decision makers to consider reducing the environmental impacts between the Andes and the Amazon in their policies and programs, Finding Species minimized impacts on the environment and protect these vital waterways. A key issue is to promote attitudinal some changes

among the inhabitants of the cities settled on the banks of the rivers of the eastern slope and to manage natural resources in an appropriate manner by means of awareness. Ecuador is already working with National Coordinators of the Initiative for Regional Infrastructure Integration, IIRSA, since they have started commercial travel along the Napo, and IIRSA could pose a serious threat to the Ecuadorian Amazon.



The lagoon of Loreto is also part of the water system that produces water for Quito and to a small hydroelectric plant. As can be seen in the photo the water level has decreased significantly even though this image was taken during the winter, when there is abundant rainfall.

Eight photographic expeditions have transpired since 2011. These expeditions include; rising of the Aguarico River - San Miguel River and Putumayo River, Cayambe, lagoon of San Marcos (rising Rio Quijos), Oyacachi river (rising Rio Quijos), Rio Quijos and Papallacta springs (paramo of the Virgin), Antisana (rising Rio Quijos), Rio Mulatos and Pisayambo Lakes, Banos and Puyo (Pastaza River Springs), and Sangay National Park (Palora River rising). These photos will be available online in the near future given additional funding to the project..

In November 2011 Finding Species signed an agreement with CONGOPE (Consortium of provincial of the Ecuador autonomous governments) that allows us to convene and consult decision-makers and technicians of the provincial governments about the needs and expectations of water resources in tributaries of the Amazon basin. A strategic partner of the project is the OECS Association, who made a documentary video of the basins tributaries of the Amazon, which can be viewed on Finding Species website at <http://www.findingspecies.org/headwateramazon.html>.

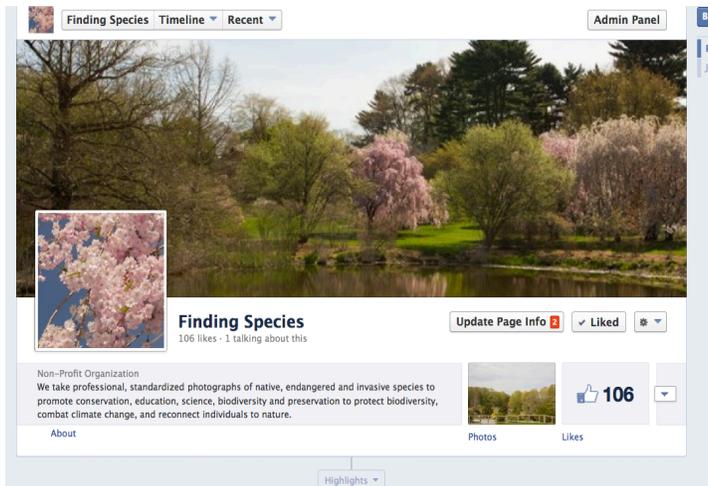


The hydroelectric project, Coca-Codo-Sinclair, provides Quito with approximately 1,500 megawatts of power. The project dammed and diverted part of the Coca river turbines to run generators, water returns down stream in the region of Reventador

Ecuador Ministerio del Ambiente Maps Quito, Ecuador

Finding Species photographs were used for regional maps of Ecuador with Finding Species photographs of species representing the depicted areas in each map. Each photograph was accompanied by a species description. Ecuador has yet to release the maps.

Finding Species Social Media FaceBook



Finding Species US established a FaceBook Page that generated 106 likes within the first month. As projects like LeafSnap grow and with the closure of the Ecuadorian office there was a need to define a Finding Species US FaceBook Page. that embodies the LeafSnap Project and focuses on the emerging and growing US Projects. Thus, leaving Ecuador with its legacy FaceBook webpages where in 2012 posts depicted conservation efforts for the completion of projects like Quito Habitat Silvestre, the Galapagos, Yasuní Campaign and general Ecuadorian conservation efforts.

Finding Species Online:

- Finding Species Official website, refer to articles page for a listing of publications and articles, <http://www.findingspecies.org/index.html>
- Social Media: Finding Species Non-Profit Organization FaceBook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/FindingSpeciesUS>
- LeafSnap, an interactive field guide to the trees of northeastern US, <http://leafsnap.com/>
- Finding Species Ecuador legacy FaceBook-
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Finding-Species/113516358678351>
<https://www.facebook.com/finding.species.3?fref=ts> (as a friend)

