

2019

ANNUAL REPORT

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- 1 A Message from NatureServe's President
 - 2 Measuring Conservation Progress
 - 3 Fighting Fire with Science
 - 4 Around the NatureServe Network
 - 5 NatureServe by the Numbers
 - 6 Supporters & Business Partners
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NatureServe

2550 South Clark Street, Suite 930, Arlington, VA 22202

A Message from NatureServe's President

Dear Friends of NatureServe,

I want to thank you for your generous support. I know you are receiving our 2019 Annual Report during the COVID-19 pandemic and hope that you are healthy and safe. During this unprecedented time, we have all learned more about the connection between public health and biodiversity. With this in mind, we should reflect on the countless benefits that healthy ecosystems and rich biodiversity provide us and take action to continue to protect nature. Modern medicine has depended on discoveries from the natural world since the 18th century and we continue to rely on plants and other organisms as sources for healing. Our connection to the natural world is indeed precious. With your continued support, NatureServe will continue to protect our planet's biodiversity and thereby promote our shared health and well-being.

For those of us working in conservation, the news can be depressing at times. The more we learn, the worse the threats to biodiversity seem to get, including climate change, habitat degradation, and invasive species. The obstacles to saving native species from extinction and preserving ecosystems keep growing.

But at NatureServe, we are eternal optimists. We see opportunities to bring together data, science, and technology to help solve one of the most important environmental challenges of our time, the mass extinction of untold numbers of species. That's why we develop the information, tools, and expertise needed to change the trajectory of extinction and the loss of ecosystems.

In 2019, NatureServe released iMapInvasives, a new mobile-enabled tool developed in collaboration with our Network partners, which is being used across the country to help find, identify, and manage invasive species, one of the greatest threats to biodiversity, human health, and economic prosperity.

Also last year, we released the findings of our Map of Biodiversity Importance, a huge undertaking involving partners from across our Network. This effort utilized the latest in machine learning with on-the-ground science to create predictive models of suitable habitat for the most endangered species in the United States. These models provide unparalleled information on where the most at-risk species are likely found, and the maps created from them can point the way to strategies for preventing extinction. By giving us more accurate information on where species may be, these models also give us more information needed to reduce conflict in conservation.

As nature's tech firm, NatureServe works at the cutting edge of science and technology to support decision-making in

conservation. We have deep relationships with some of the biggest technology companies on the planet, all of whom want to bring their technology to bear on solutions for saving species and ecosystems. Amazon Web Services, Microsoft, SAS, and Esri have all made large investments in NatureServe, and big announcements about the outcomes of these relationships are coming soon.

NatureServe is driven by three key questions—what is it? where is it? and how is it doing?—which allow us to address a crucial fourth question—what can we do to help? One of the tools most used by our partners to find answers to these questions is NatureServe Explorer, the web-based access point to our data on the nearly 100,000 species and ecosystems we track. With support from several donors, including Environment and Climate Change Canada, we have just relaunched Explorer with the newest techno-wizardry in the background that allows users to find exactly the information they seek.

Despite the existential crises around us, I am so excited to be at NatureServe at this critical time for the organization. With so many great things happening here, I encourage you to subscribe to our electronic updates, visit our website often, and donate to NatureServe to help us help the planet.



Sean O'Brien, Ph.D.
President & CEO

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About the Cover: *Trillium georgianum* was selected to honor the memory of Tom Patrick, the Georgia Wildlife Conservation Section's first botanist and the foremost expert on the *Trillium* species of Georgia. As an integral member of the NatureServe Network, Tom had an unwavering commitment to the conservation of native plants and ecosystems. *Trillium* species are iconic wildflowers of spring, and while many are common, some, like *T. georgianum*, are at risk. The name *Trillium* is derived from the numerous "threes" the genus exhibits: three leaves, three sepals, and three petals. Look for updated conservation information on all North American *Trillium* species in NatureServe Explorer. Cover photo by Jim Fowler; Georgia Dwarf Trillium (*Trillium georgianum*), NatureServe Global Status: Critically Imperiled (G1).

Measuring Conservation Progress



Vicuña (*Vicugna vicugna*). Photo by Walter Wust, ACCA-Conservación Amazónica.

Last year, in collaboration with the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the global Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP), NatureServe launched the BIP Dashboard, a game-changing, interactive online tool that visualizes trends over time in critical indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Indicators, or evidence-based measurements, allow us to assess the health and integrity of biodiversity and identify trends across time and space. For many years, NatureServe's Biodiversity Indicators Program has advised users at multiple levels—from global policy forums such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, to national and regional governments, to organizations working at a local scale—on how best to use data-driven, scientific indicators to measure progress toward their conservation milestones and targets.

Unfortunately, a recent United Nations report concluded that we are not yet on track to meet the biodiversity goals for conserving nature and achieving sustainability set for 2020 and beyond.

The BIP Dashboard is being actively used by policy-makers around the world to adjust course to meet those goals. The Dashboard provides a central access point

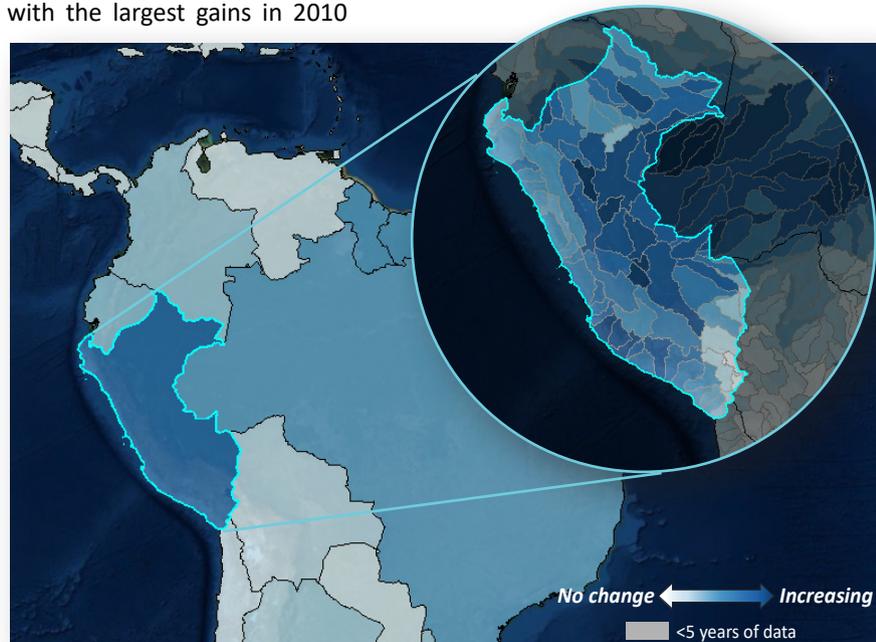
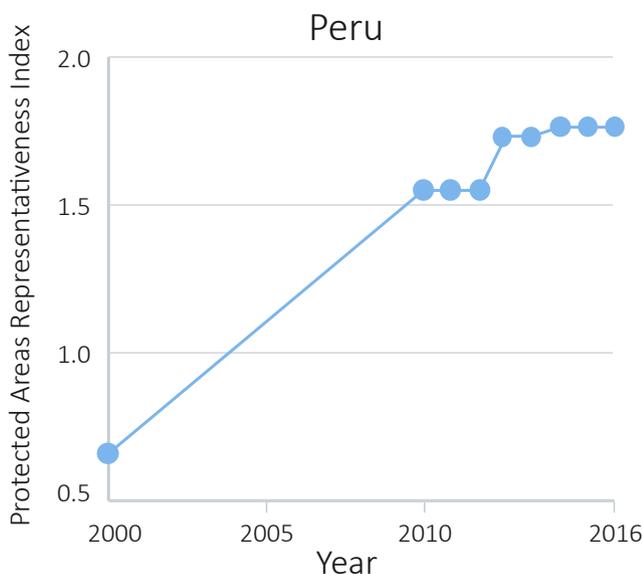
to trustworthy, scalable biodiversity data that is used to track and report on national and global progress. Using the latest advances in information technology and data visualization, the Dashboard's dynamic map allows users to customize indicator visualizations at any scale—globally, nationally, within specific watersheds—with the click of a button. Users can export data and graphs for reporting under multilateral environmental agreements like the Convention on Biological Diversity. In fact, many nations used the Dashboard last year to help prepare their national status reports to the Convention.

Indicators included in the BIP Dashboard help us measure, monitor, and predict pressures or threats to biodiversity and ecosystem health. They also inform and evaluate our conservation efforts and measure the benefits of those actions to human communities. The Protected Area Representativeness Index, for example, measures the degree to which a protected area adequately encompasses the full diversity of habitats and ecosystems in a given region, helping planners select new proposed areas or modify the borders of existing ones. The trend line graph below shows that between 2000 and 2016, Peru greatly improved the degree to which its protected areas represent the nation's biodiversity, with the largest gains in 2010

and 2012. The finer-scale country map shows which areas have contributed most to those improvements, and the regional map compares Peru's progress to other countries.

Also in the past year, NatureServe began working with partners in Southeast Asia and the Tropical Andes to apply our visualization tools and technology to create new dashboards for these regions. These dashboards help decision-makers visualize trends and achievements in user-friendly formats to facilitate more forward-looking, responsible conservation action.

2020 promises to be a busy and exciting year for the Biodiversity Indicators Program. We have extended our partnership with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre and are working to develop a new global Target Tracker that will equip policy-makers with information about the latest trends and emerging issues to inform more effective and timely conservation action. The Target Tracker will directly serve the next phase of the Convention on Biological Diversity, transforming the current backward-looking reporting and assessment process to a continuous, forward-looking process that improves transparency and produces better outcomes for biodiversity.



The BIP Dashboard offers users many options for visualizing a given indicator. Both the graph and the map above depict change in the Protected Area Representativeness Index, which measures the degree to which protected lands represent the biodiversity of a region. The graph shows change over time for the country of Peru, while the map compares improvements in different areas. Darker blues indicate greater improvements, showing that Peru has had the greatest gains in the region. The inset map shows that within Peru, the greatest gains have been in the Andes and Amazon rainforest, areas rich in biodiversity. Data source: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

LAC Spotlight

Fighting Fire with Science



Photo by Carlos Pinto, Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza.

In 2019, unusually severe forest fires raged around the world, destroying natural landscapes and nearby human and wildlife communities in catastrophic blazes. Media reports about record-breaking fires in California, Australia, and the Amazon analyzed the human-induced and natural causes of these events, drawing attention to the negative effects of both climate change and deforestation on ecosystems vital to sustaining biodiversity and humanity. Less widely reported were the devastating fires that consumed millions of acres of vegetation in Bolivia, a megadiverse country with some of the most extensive tropical forests in the world. NatureServe Network program Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN) works in Bolivia to monitor and prevent forest fires and deforestation in some of the world's most overlooked, biodiversity-rich ecosystems.

Since 2011, FAN has utilized its SATRIFO (Monitoring and Early Alert System for Forest Fire Risks) program to monitor and report on forest fires in Bolivia, providing local stakeholders with information about active fires, imminent risks, and historical trends. "At FAN, we decided to make our science more relevant to society by providing local communities with interactive maps and reports that are updated daily through a free web-based application, allowing them to make more informed decisions about fire prevention, control, and response," said Natalia Calderón, Executive Director of FAN. The SATRIFO program focuses on fire monitoring and prevention, using a

combination of remotely sensed data, climate and ecological data, and state-of-the-art statistical models to predict which areas are most prone to fire.

In 2019, FAN reported that an area equivalent to the state of West Virginia (15.8 million acres) burned in Bolivia, nearly double the annual average. Although fires set by humans to clear land for agriculture and manage pasturelands have been common in Bolivia for decades, a perfect storm of factors converged last year to intensify the destruction. Unusually dry conditions resulting from cyclical weather patterns and exacerbated by climate change made large swaths of degraded, vulnerable vegetation into tinderboxes. Recent national policies and high demand from foreign economies incentivized expansion of the agricultural frontier, which increased the use of slash and burn techniques to clear land. In combination, these factors created not just more fires, but hotter, more extensive fires that burned out of control.

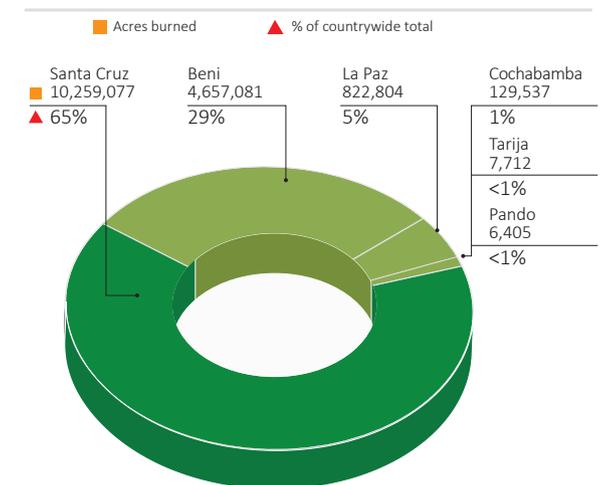
The region most affected in 2019 was Santa Cruz, where 65% of Bolivia's burned acreage was concentrated. Santa Cruz is home to the world's most extensive and best preserved tropical dry forest, the Chiquitania, an ecosystem that supports as much biodiversity as the Amazon but is much less understood. Many of the 4,000 plant and 1,600 animal species known from the Chiquitania are endemic to the region, and scientists are only beginning to understand and identify them. Over 2 million animals perished in last year's Chiquitania fires, including endangered

maned wolves, big cats like jaguars, ocelots, and pumas, as well as giant anteaters, otters, and armadillos. The damage caused to this unique ecosystem by the 2019 fires highlights the importance of FAN's work to establish protected areas in Santa Cruz, where activities like cattle ranching, soy farming, and logging are driving deforestation and fires.

Through its community monitoring and fire response program, FAN works with Bolivia's communities to promote best practices for fire prevention, monitoring, and response. The SATRIFO early alert system disseminates data to communities about imminent fire risks to prevent new fires. Local community leaders use this information to coordinate and plan the controlled burns vital to their agricultural livelihoods in an environmentally responsible way. FAN's efforts have not only increased community involvement, engagement, and understanding of fire risks, but have empowered communities to invest in solutions that balance the economic needs of ranchers and farmers with the preservation of Bolivia's unique biodiversity.

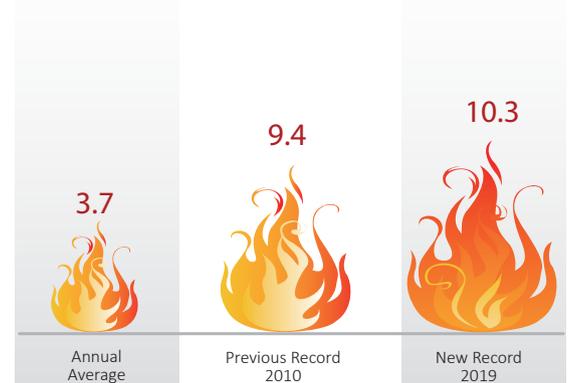
"At NatureServe, we are working to replicate these efforts in other regions by helping FAN share its experience and by building the human capital that will strengthen the network and ensure progress toward a more sustainable world," said Dr. Miguel Fernandez, Director of NatureServe's Latin America and Caribbean Programs.

Area Burned by Jurisdiction



Santa Cruz

Millions of acres burned



The area affected by fires in Santa Cruz in 2019 was the largest on record.

Santa Cruz, home to the Chiquitania tropical dry forest, experienced record-breaking fires in 2019. Fires affected 10.3 million acres of land, almost three times the annual average in that jurisdiction. Of the total acreage burned in Bolivia, 65% was in Santa Cruz. Figure source: Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza.



Around the NatureServe Network



The **Oregon Biodiversity Information Center, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Colorado Natural Heritage Program, and NatureServe** ecologists collected data on vegetation and soils for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring program. The NatureServe team collected data in northeastern California from 100 sample plots established to monitor fuel loads and post-wildfire vegetation response. These data help BLM understand vegetation condition and make better decisions to conserve biodiversity on its lands. Fieldwork will continue through 2022.

Photo by Patrick McIntyre, NatureServe.



NatureServe coordinated the formation of the Americas-BON, a new regional arm of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON). GEO BON is a global leader working to improve the availability of biodiversity data to decision-makers in support of policy, and the Americas-BON will work collaboratively to facilitate data alignment between national and global efforts to improve outcomes for biodiversity worldwide. Director of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Programs Dr. Miguel Fernandez and board member and LAC Section Council member Dr. Carlos Zambrana-Torrelío organized the coalition of governmental agencies, universities and research institutes, and non-governmental organizations in 23 countries across the Americas.

Photo by Conservación Amazónica-ACCA.



The **Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves**, together with several partners, collaborated to conserve the state's rarest orchids, including the southern lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*), white fringed orchid (*Platanthera integrilabia*), rose pogonia (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*), and small white lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*). Conservation actions included seed banking, genetic analysis, and mycorrhizal research to support propagation, with the ultimate goal of reintroduction into suitable habitat. These activities are key to safeguarding Kentucky's 43 orchid species, particularly since 30 species are of conservation concern at the global, national, or state level.

Southern Lady's-Slipper (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*), NatureServe Global Status: Vulnerable (G3). Photo by Orchi.



Scientists from the **Montana Natural Heritage Program, Natural Heritage New Mexico, and Nevada Natural Heritage Program** coauthored a paper in *Nature Climate Change* on the factors that allow local populations of the American pika (*Ochotona princeps*) to adapt to climate change. Using NatureServe Network data on the locations of pika populations, the authors found that local geographical context is more important than genetic lineage in predicting responses to climate change—a surprising result because scientists usually invoke genetics to explain variation among populations.

American Pika (*Ochotona princeps*), NatureServe Global Status: Secure (G5). Photo by Frédéric Dulude-de Broin.



To help prevent their extinction, the **Wisconsin Natural Heritage Program** worked to establish new populations of rare plants and augment or reestablish existing ones. They collected seeds from wild populations of three species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and then planted the seedlings at new or former sites. To increase genetic diversity, botanists hand-pollinated species such as the eastern prairie white-fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) that suffer from inbreeding depression. The program also established a statewide citizen science initiative aimed at collecting data on rare plants. Most volunteers revisit known occurrences of rare species on public lands, but lucky volunteers have also discovered new populations.

Eastern Prairie White-Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*), NatureServe Global Status: Imperiled (G2). Photo by Joshua Mayer.



NatureServe, Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre, New York Natural Heritage Program, Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory, and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife began to assess the conservation status of hundreds of Northeastern flower flies (family Syrphidae), important pollinators of native plants in eastern and northern forests and boreal tundra. Pictured at left is the black haireye (*Psilota klymko*), a newly described flower fly species that in 2019 was named for Atlantic Canada zoologist John Klymko, who first suggested it was a new species.

Black Haireye (*Psilota klymko*), NatureServe Global Status: Not Ranked (GNR). Photo by John Klymko, Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre.



The **California Natural Diversity Database** released a new management framework for its Spotted Owl Observations Database, which tracks both the Northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), a federally threatened species, and the California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), a California Species of Special Concern. In 2019, they updated 1,200 spotted owl sites and 200 activity centers based on new field data, and added another 9,000 spotted owl records to the database. These data increase our understanding of spotted owl distributions and inform environmental reviews of timber harvest and management plans that might impact the species.

Northern Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), NatureServe Global Status: Vulnerable (T3). Photo by Emily Brouwer, National Park Service.

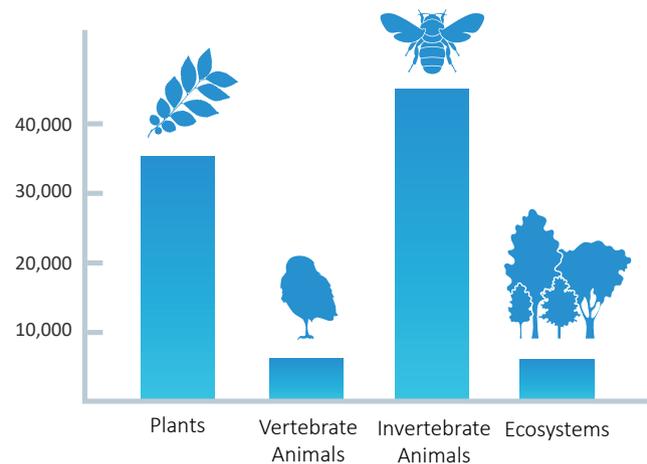
NatureServe by the Numbers

When it comes to protecting our natural heritage, knowing is half the battle. This is why the NatureServe Network is driven to answer three major questions: What is it? Where is it? How is it doing? NatureServe Explorer, our online guide to species and ecosystems, contains nearly 50 years of biodiversity information making us uniquely qualified to answer these critical questions.

What is it?

92,887

Tracked Species and Ecosystems

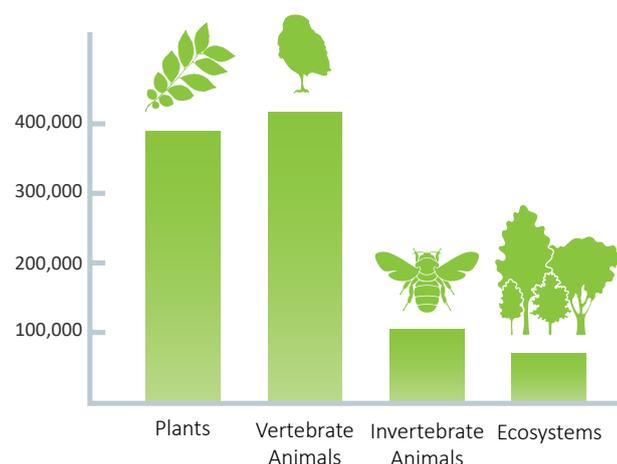


Before any conservation action can be taken, we first need to know what we are trying to protect. The NatureServe Network maintains records on North American plants, vertebrates, and invertebrates like pollinators and freshwater mussels. Our ecologists also measure and track the health of ecosystems; the finest-scale ecosystem, called the “association,” is shown here.

Where is it?

976,493

Documented Locations

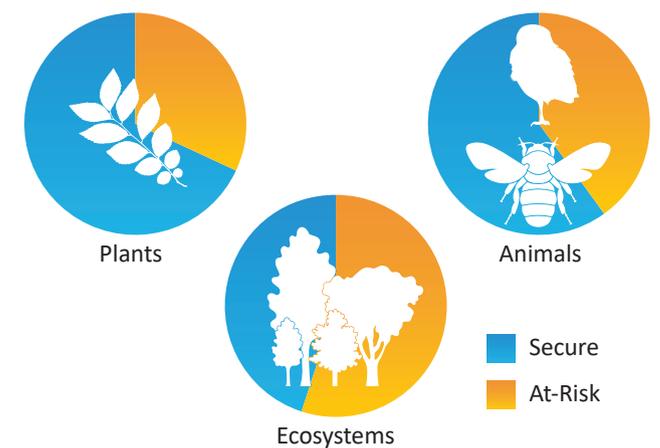


This second question is crucial for identifying where protection and management actions are needed to benefit biodiversity. Expert NatureServe Network scientists—over 1,000 in all—document precise locations of tracked species and ecosystems. Conserving these locations assures the continued survival of critical landscapes and their inhabitants.

How is it doing?

32%, 40%, 55%

Percentage of Plants, Animals, and Ecosystems at Risk



NatureServe assigns global conservation status ranks to species and ecosystems using a five-point scale from critically imperiled (G1) to secure (G5). This analysis, which includes comprehensively assessed species groups only, shows that alarming numbers of plants, animals, and ecosystems are classified as ‘at-risk’ (GH, G1, G2, G3).

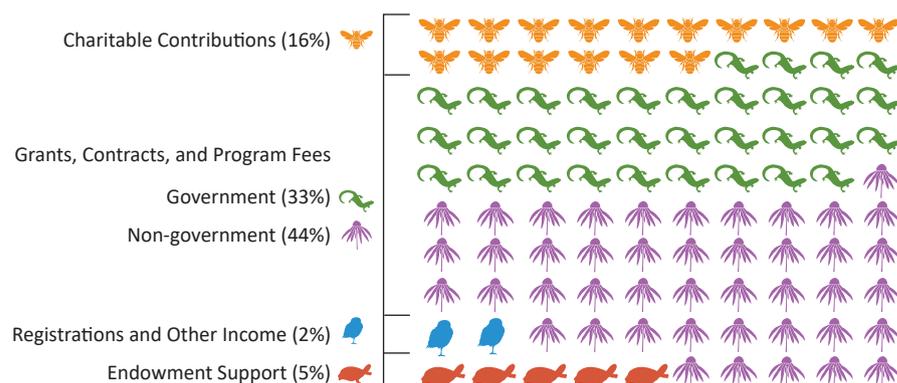
Financials

July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019

Revenue

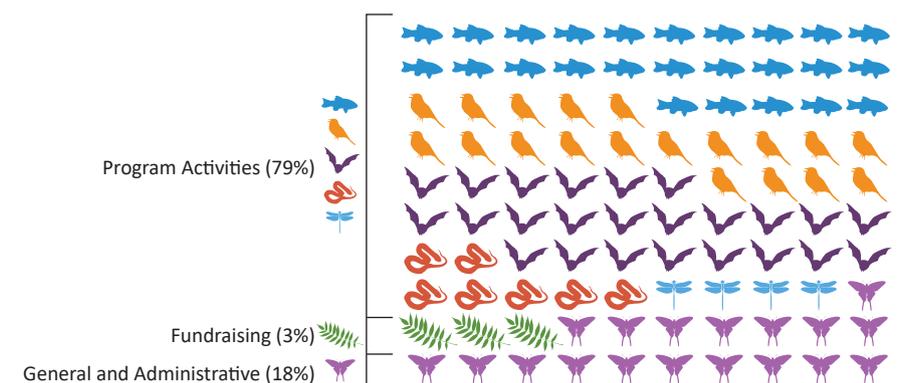
Charitable Contributions*	16%	\$1,489,700	
Grants, Contracts, and Program Fees			
Government	33%	\$2,974,700	
Non-government	44%	\$4,011,000	
Registrations and Other Income**	2%	\$194,800	
Endowment Support	5%	\$442,300	
Total Operating Revenue		\$9,112,500	

*Charitable contributions include individual donors, corporate sponsors, and grants from foundations
**Other income includes membership dues, rental income, investment income, and royalties



Expenses

Program Activities			
Scientific Data and Methods	25%	\$2,347,100	
Technology Research and Development	19%	\$1,844,800	
Conservation Products and Services	24%	\$2,280,400	
Network Capacity Building	7%	\$716,100	
Program Development	4%	\$388,100	
Fundraising	3%	\$244,200	
General and Administrative	18%	\$1,749,600	
Total Expenses		\$9,570,300	



Supporters & Business Partners July 1, 2018–December 31, 2019

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Nathan Walker
Whitney Weber
Georgia Welles
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Jonathan Wilfong Jr. & Wendy Baker
Irvine Wilson
Loretta Wilson
Colin Winkler
David Withers
Dottie & Kenneth Woodcock
Erik & Elizabeth Woodworth
Henry Woolsey
Jianyu Wu
Bruce Young
Jean Young

Foundations & Nonprofits

American Forest Foundation
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Bat Conservation International Inc.
Botanic Gardens Conservation International
Burton & Maud Goldfield Family Foundation
Carroll Petrie Foundation
Center for Biological Diversity
Chesapeake Conservancy
Conservation Innovation Center
EarthShare
Environmental Defense Fund
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
Gulf of Mexico Alliance
Helen Clay Frick Foundation
International League of Conservation Photographers
International Union for Conservation of Nature
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Langar Foundation
Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation for the Americas
Mt. Cuba Center, Inc.
National Council for Air & Stream Improvement, Inc.
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Nature Saskatchewan
New River Conservancy
Open Space Institute
Regina Bauer Frankenberg Foundation
Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought
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Schwarz Family Gift Fund
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The Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation
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The Nature Conservancy
The Research Foundation for The State University of New York
TisBest Philanthropy
TOSA Foundation
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Wildlife Conservation Society
World Conservation Monitoring Centre
World Wildlife Fund

Government Entities

Arizona Game and Fish Department
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
Inter-American Development Bank
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
Maryland Environmental Trust
Missouri Department of Conservation
Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
New Hampshire Department of Natural & Cultural Resources
New Jersey Department of

Environmental Protection
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry
Pennsylvania Game Commission
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
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U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. National Park Service
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Corporations & Universities

Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Amazon Web Services
AmazonSmile
Barr Engineering
Chevron
Cornell University
Definitive Logic
DNV GL
Drax Biomass
Duke Energy
EDF Renewables
Environmental Solutions & Innovations
Enviva
Esri
ExxonMobil
FIFRA Endangered Species Task Force
Florida State University
Gage Cartographics
GHD Group
Google
GreenWood Resources
Hancock Natural Resource Group
IBM
MGA
Microsoft
Network for Good
Noblis
North Carolina State University
ONEOK
Oregon State University
Plus Delta Partners
Rayonier
SAS
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania
Sierra Pacific Industries
Skytec
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Tobi.com
Trent University
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Virginia Military Institute
Waterborne Environmental
Weyerhaeuser
Xcel Energy

NatureServe recognizes those who have left charitable bequests, established charitable trusts, or used other forms of planned giving to support our work. To learn more about the NatureServe Heritage Circle, which honors those who have made this commitment, please visit www.natureserve.org/support-us/planned-giving.

