



The Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica



POSTCARDS

FROM THE

FIELD

GALA 2020



PHOTO: @NICKHAWKINSPHOTOGRAPHY

Welcome to the 5 Great Forests of Mesoamerica: WCS is working with governments and indigenous and local communities to safeguard the 5 Great Forests, which span from Mexico to Colombia and are critical for wildlife, carbon sequestration, clean water, and food security to five million people.





5 GREAT FORESTS INITIATIVE

2030 GOALS

0 extinction
of species

10 MILLION
hectares of land
protected

500,000
hectares of forest
restored

0 illegal
cattle
ranching



MAYA FOREST

PHOTO: CHRIS PACKHAM



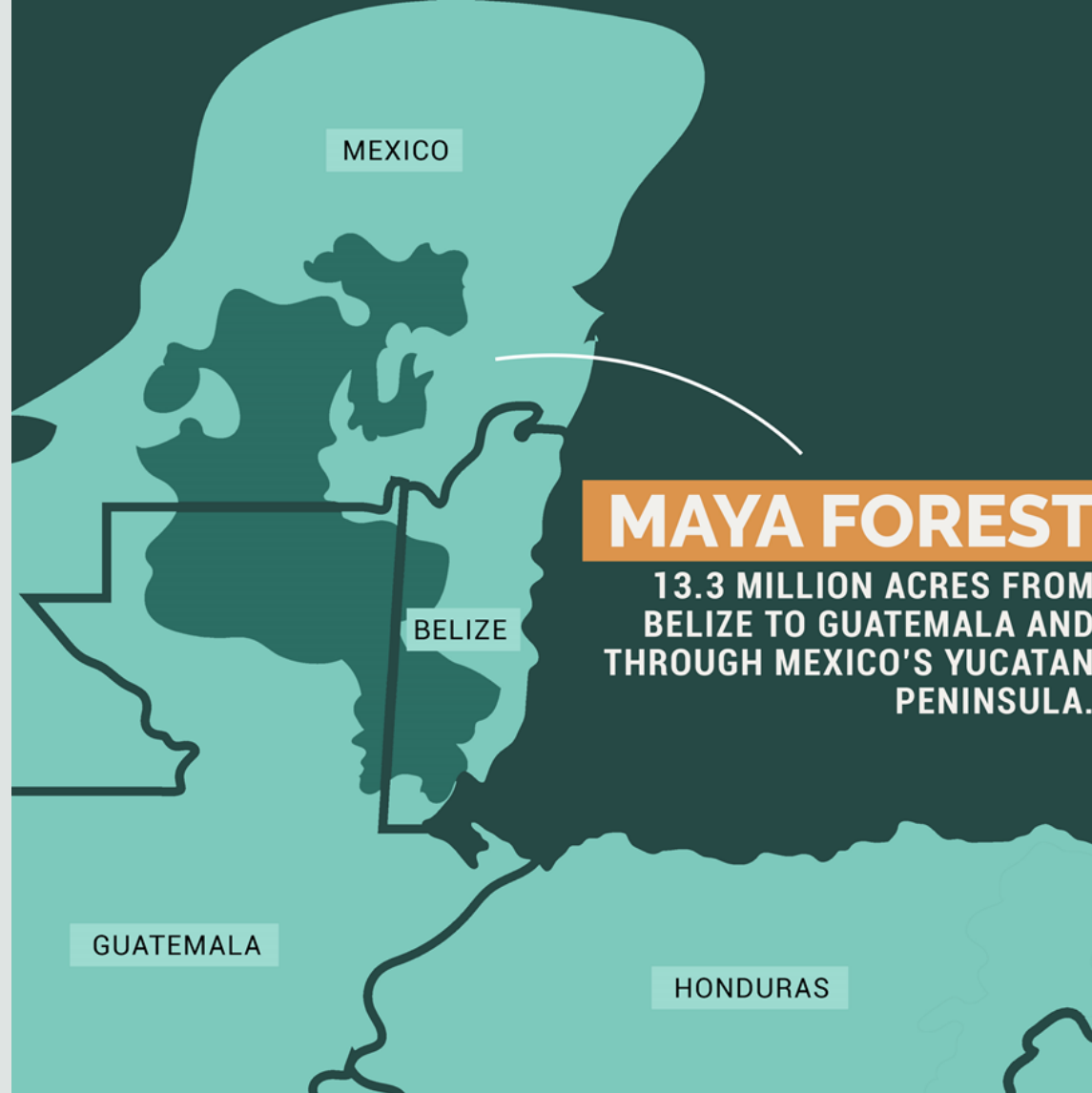
PHOTO: @LEVI.NOVEY



PHOTO: @THEWCS

The Maya Forest is the largest remaining tropical forest in Central America, a 13.3 million acre forest that spans three countries. It is home to unique wildlife—including Scarlet Macaws, Jaguars, White-lipped Peccaries, and Central American River Turtles—and boasts thousands of archaeological sites.





GRAPHICS CO-CREATED BY WCS AND GWC

Success story: Over the past 10 years, 380,000 acres of the eastern Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala, which is part of the Maya Forest, have been recovered from illegal landowners—and from 2017-2018 reforestation outpaced deforestation for the first time in history! In 2019, the government of Belize approved the establishment of the Maya Forest Corridor, a critical step towards protecting the integrity of Central America's largest swathe of forest as part of the #5GreatForests of #Mesoamerica initiative.





PHOTO: JOHN POLISAR/WCS



PHOTO: GERMAN MEDINA



PHOTO: FUNDACIÓN KAHA KAMASA

The Moskitia of Honduras and Nicaragua harbors the second largest forest remaining in Mesoamerica, and one of the most storied wild places on the planet. It boasts unexplored ruins, is a bastion for iconic and threatened wildlife, and is one of Central America's most important strongholds of indigenous cultures.





GRAPHICS CO-CREATED BY WCS AND GWC

The Moskitia is also the region's most threatened large forest, having lost an estimated 30% of its forest cover over the past 15 years, primarily due to cattle ranching. The #5GreatForests initiative aims to turn this around to protect and restore this vital forest.





PHOTO: JEREMY RADACHOWSKY/WCS



PHOTO: @NICKHAWKINSPHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO: @NICKHAWKINSPHOTOGRAPHY

Indio Maíz-Tortuguero spans southeastern Nicaragua and northeastern Costa Rica. Indio Maiz was historically one of Nicaragua's most intact large reserves, but increased deforestation as the result of the illegal expansion of cattle ranching and land trafficking is threatening the forest and the wildlife that depends on it.





The indigenous Rama and Afro-descendant Kriol people share a communal title to more than 70% of the reserve and their culture and livelihoods also depend on its protection. Tortuguero National Park in Costa Rica is perhaps best known for the recovery of its jaguar population, where jaguars are often detected walking along the Caribbean beaches.

#5GreatForests #MesoAmerica #Forests4Life





LA AMISTAD

PHOTO: @NICKHAWKINSPHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO: CHRIS JORDAN/GWC



PHOTO: NICK HAWKINS/NAI CONSERVATION

La Amistad: Split between the countries of Costa Rica and Panama, La Amistad International Park is one of Central America's best examples of how two nations can work together to protect one of our planet's irreplaceable places while also incorporating the indigenous communities that live there.





GRAPHICS CO-CREATED BY WCS AND GWC

Because of its altitude and variety of microclimates, La Amistad and the surrounding forests, protected areas, and indigenous territories of the Talamanca region contain many species found nowhere else on the planet and harbor a diverse set of ecosystems, including tropical lowland rainforest, montane forest, cloud forest and oak forest.





PICTURE: YAGUARAPANAMA



SOURCE: YAGUARAPANAMA

The Darién Forest is a 17,014-square kilometer strip of forest and wetlands that cross continents from the Darién province of Panama in Central America to the Chocó department of Colombia in South America. It is home to a diverse community of wildlife, including this ocelot and Giant Anteater.



DARIEN FOREST

THE DARIÉN GAP IS A 160 KM (99 MI) LONG SWATH OF UNDEVELOPED FOREST AND WETLANDS WITHIN COLOMBIA'S CHOCÓ DEPARTMENT IN SOUTH AMERICA AND PANAMA'S DARIÉN PROVINCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA.



GRAPHICS CO-CREATED BY WCS AND GWC

The Darien Forest is increasingly threatened by deforestation, illegal wildlife harvests and timber trafficking. Much of Darién's forests are the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples, and are managed by indigenous peoples such as the Emberá, the Wounaan, and the Guna.



Our 2030 goals are to: protect 10 million hectares of forest; recover 500,000 hectares of forest that has been illegally claimed or cleared; and stamp out illegal cattle ranching.

