

# WCS 2030

SAVING WILDLIFE  
AND WILD PLACES  
IN A RAPIDLY  
CHANGING  
WORLD





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# MISSION, VISION, VALUES

In 2020, we evaluated outcomes and lessons learned from the past decade of the Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS) work in order to assess where the opportunities for greatest conservation impact lie looking ahead to 2030. In this process, we affirmed our commitment to our mission, vision, values, and core strategies.

## MISSION

WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature.

## VISION

WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth.

The world is facing three major crises today: the loss of biodiversity, climate change, and the pandemic. They are all interrelated, with many of the same causes and solutions. Our vision is to not only protect the last of the wild, but also to actively restore wildlife and wild places—both for their own intrinsic value, and so that they can provide the full range of services that support environmental and human health and well-being. We seek to help build more sustainable cities, connect people with nature, and work with partners to build a global movement to save wildlife and wild places.

## VALUES

Integrity

Respect

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Innovation

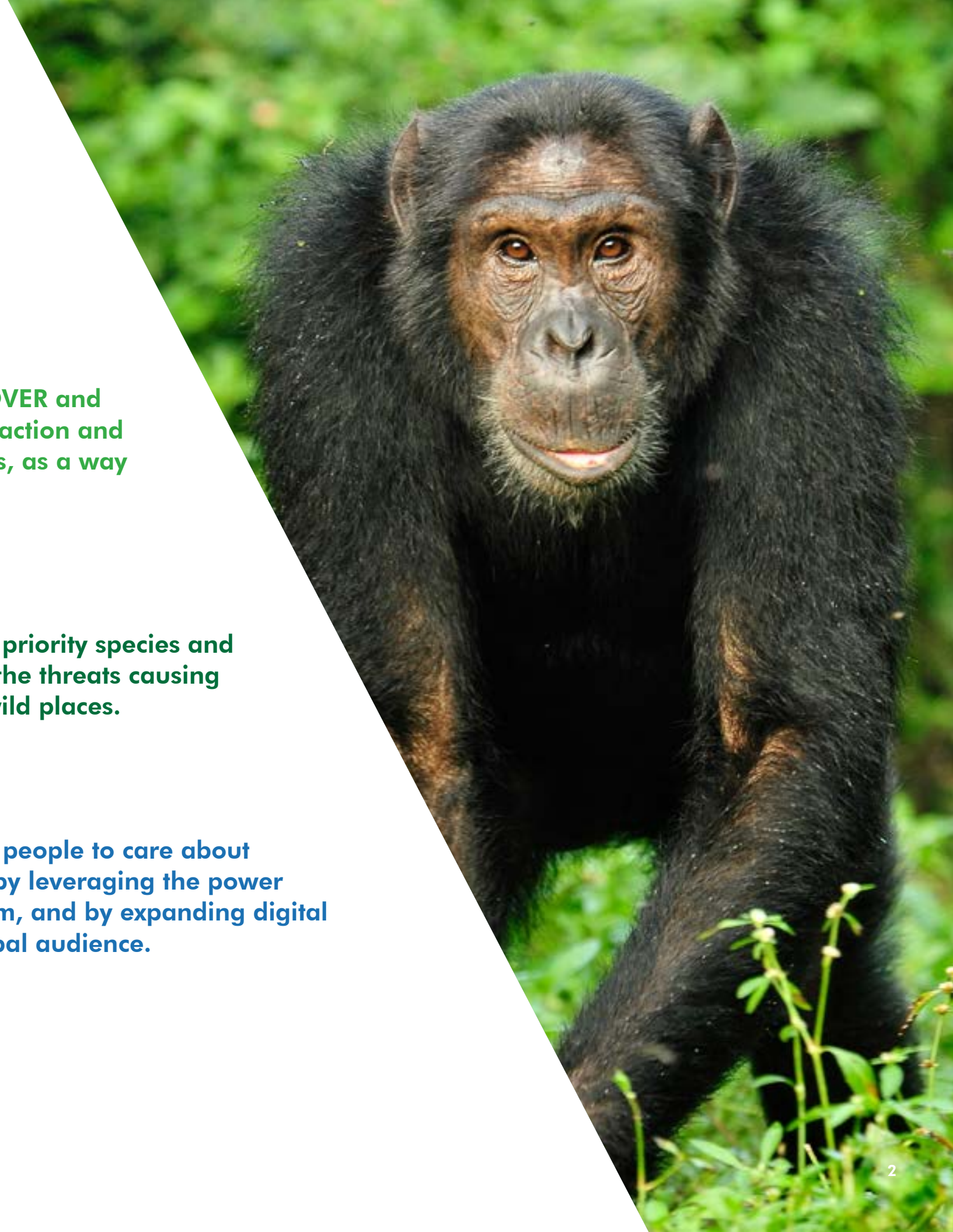
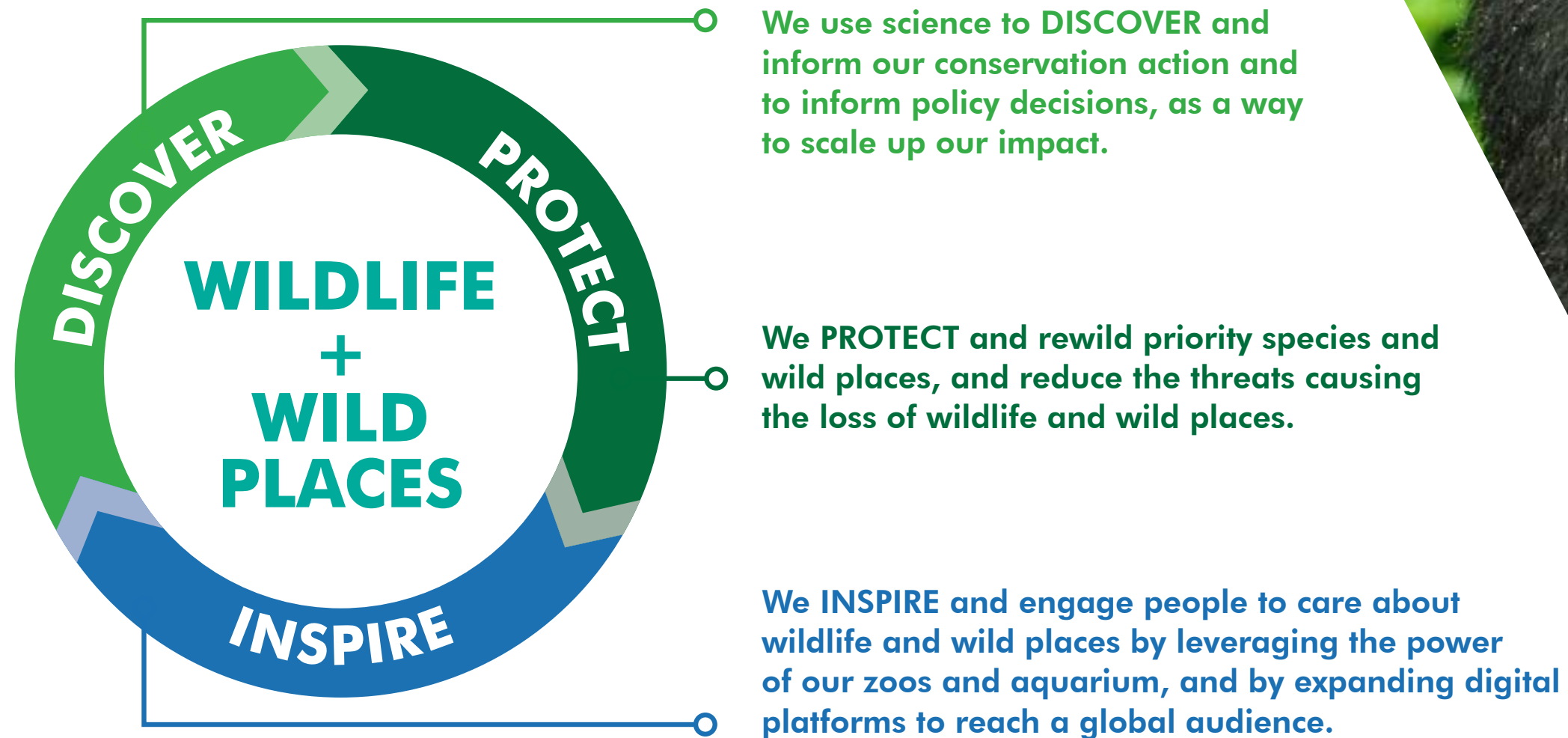
Collaboration

Accountability and Transparency





# CORE STRATEGIES





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Less than a quarter of the planet remains wild. One million species are at risk of extinction. The climate crisis is accelerating. And the devastating COVID-19 pandemic has revealed connections between the destruction of nature, the wildlife trade, and human health.

Nature is sending us a message. Are we listening? Can we find better, smarter ways to protect our planet's wildlife and wild places—and ourselves? How can we be part of the solutions that the world needs?

The WCS 2030 Strategy is our answer to these questions. With this new strategy, we will build on WCS's strengths and experience over the past 125 years and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver our mission and vision. We will link our work more explicitly to the global policy agenda, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—and lead the charge in defining that agenda and bringing it to fruition.

Never before has WCS's mission been more urgent and relevant, and no other conservation organization is better positioned to help tackle these interconnected challenges than WCS.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## STRATEGIC GOALS:

Over the next decade, our strategic goals are to:

- Protect and rewild species and Nature's Strongholds, in partnership with governments and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
- Reduce threats to wildlife and wild places
- Inspire support for conservation through our four zoos and aquarium: The Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo, Queens Zoo, and New York Aquarium
- Leverage our impact through science and policy

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

We have identified five priority initiatives where we can have the greatest impact in coming years:

- Nature's Strongholds
- Forests and Climate Change
- One Health
- Gateways to Nature
- Wildlife Connect

Our choices now will determine whether elephants, lions, rhinos, great apes, and other iconic species go extinct—or survive and eventually flourish. Our choices will also influence the well-being and survival of human communities across the globe.

With WCS 2030, we will scale up our impact, connect people to nature, and help build a more sustainable future for wildlife and wild places—and ourselves.

**We Stand For Wildlife®**



# WHERE WE WORK

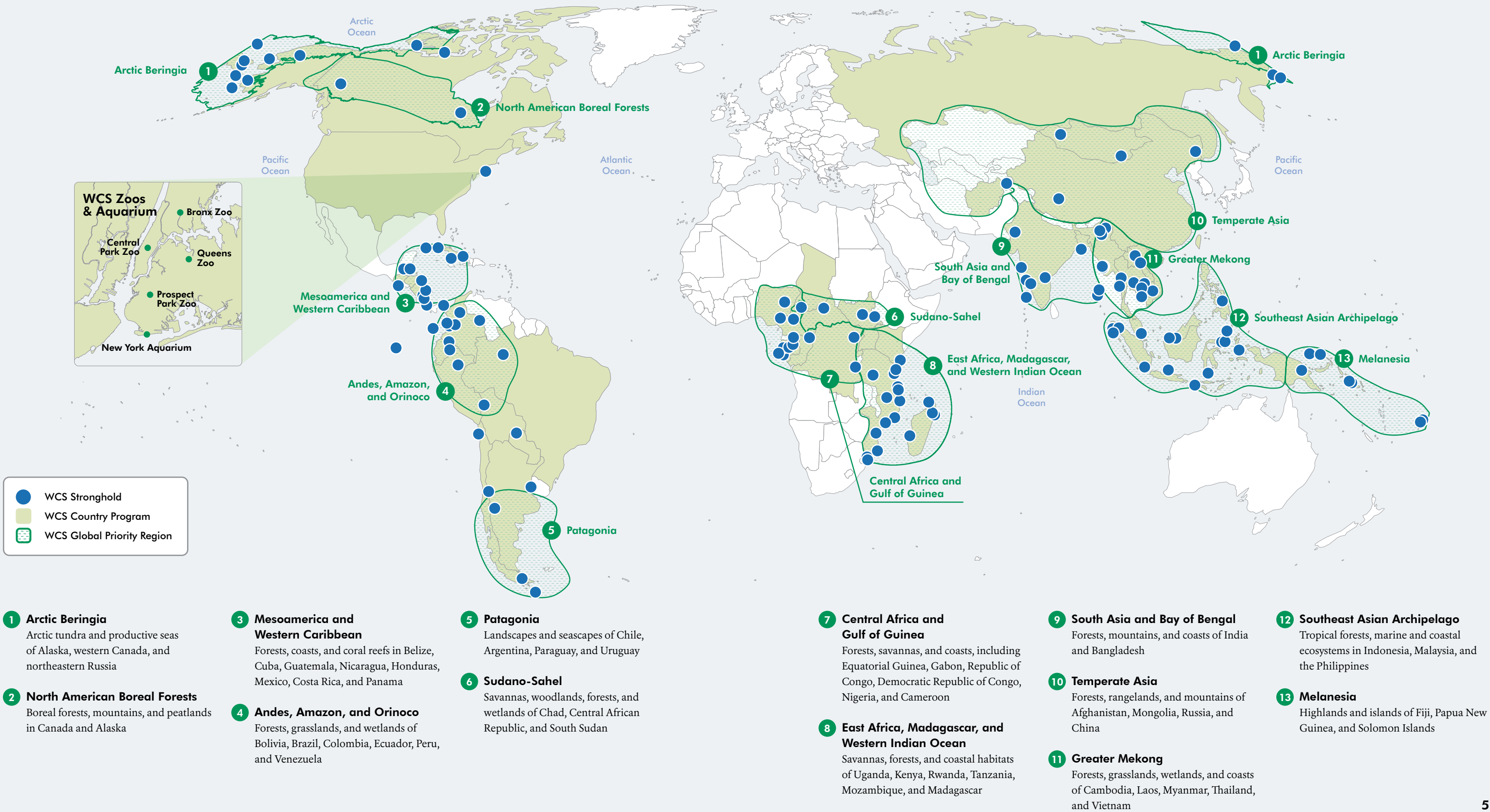
50+ COUNTRIES AND ALL THE WORLD'S OCEANS

Number of Employees

4,000+

Total Area of Wild Places in Which WCS Works

26,000,000+ km<sup>2</sup>





# OVERVIEW

## A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

Our planet is changing at a speed and scale never before seen in human history. When WCS was founded in New York in 1895, the world population stood at 1.5 billion and 83 percent of humanity lived in the countryside. Many were desperately poor and disconnected from the larger world.

Today, the human population has reached 7.8 billion, poverty has declined, and more than half of us live in cities. Billions have entered the middle class, driving incredible demands for food, water, materials, and energy. New technologies have transformed our lives—connecting people across many divides, and changing patterns of education, work, recreation, and thought. We are increasingly aware of how these changes impact nature. Further, we see how they heighten the inequities among people and between nations.

## Fewer wild places, less wildlife

We live in a world with fewer wild places, less wildlife, and a worsening climate crisis. And within urban areas, people are increasingly disconnected from the rest of nature. The human footprint has grown dramatically, to the point that less than a quarter of the planet remains wild. A 2019 United Nations report confirmed that as many as 1 million species are in danger of extinction by the end of the century.

## Some progress – but not enough

The world has made important progress creating protected areas, which now cover 15 percent of land and 7 percent of the ocean. Yet even with this progress, many ecosystems are not well protected as they are poorly funded and not managed effectively. Wild populations of many species continue to decline inside and outside of protected areas, driven by habitat transformation and overexploitation.





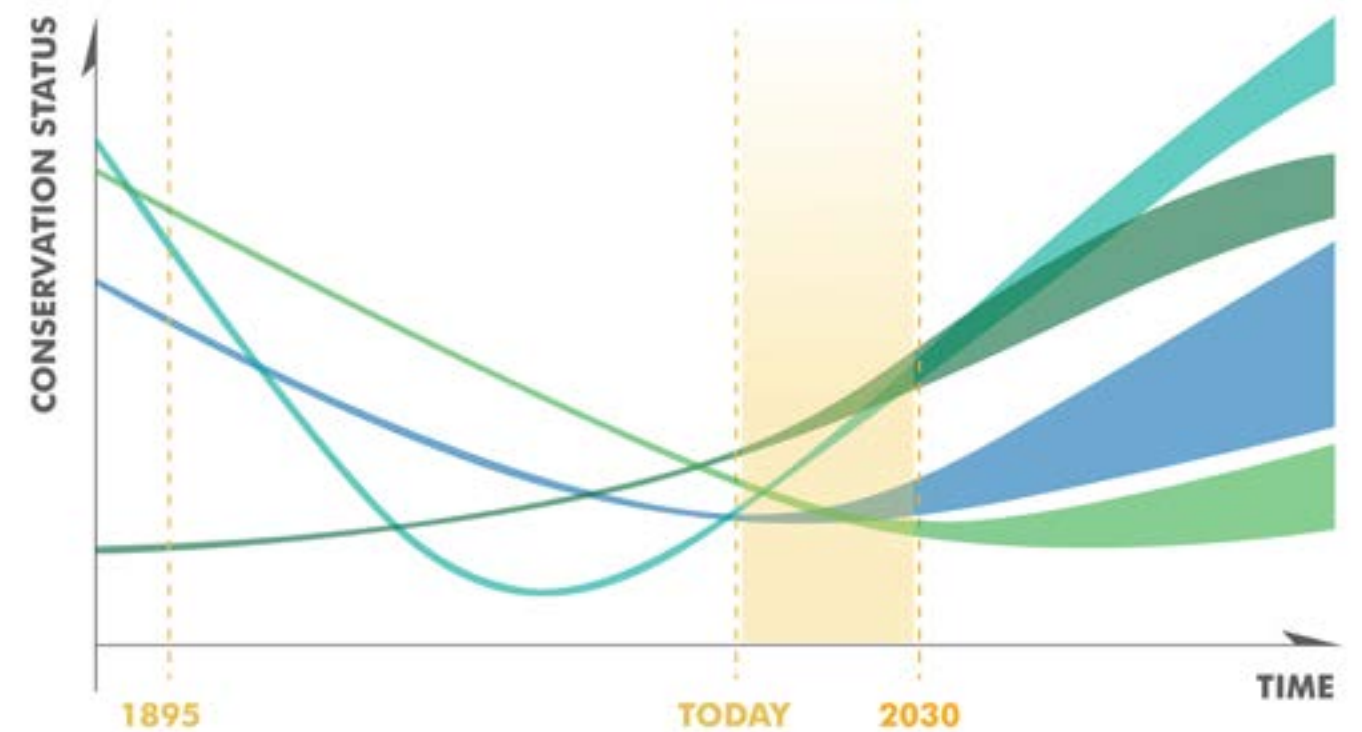
# OVERVIEW

## WCS 2030 – our vision and strategy for the future

We must take action now. Never before has WCS's mission been more urgent and relevant, and no other conservation organization is better positioned to help tackle these challenges than WCS (see **Appendices 1 and 2: WCS By the Numbers and Why WCS?**).

We aim to bend the curve upward for wildlife and wild places—in order to help nature recover and thrive. Today, many species and wild places continue to decline; for those, we will counter threats and conserve intact ecosystems. For others, we see opportunities to restore and rewild. WCS 2030 is our vision and strategy for the future.

**We seek to build a future that is carbon-neutral and nature-positive, more equitable, and sustainable.**



*This figure depicts a model of the decline in biodiversity over the past century and predicts a possible breakthrough through protection and rewilding, as explained in [this landmark paper](#).*



# OVERVIEW

**“The health of our planet hinges on the intertwined relationships among humans, animals, and the environment.”**

Chris Walzer, WCS Executive Director of Global Health

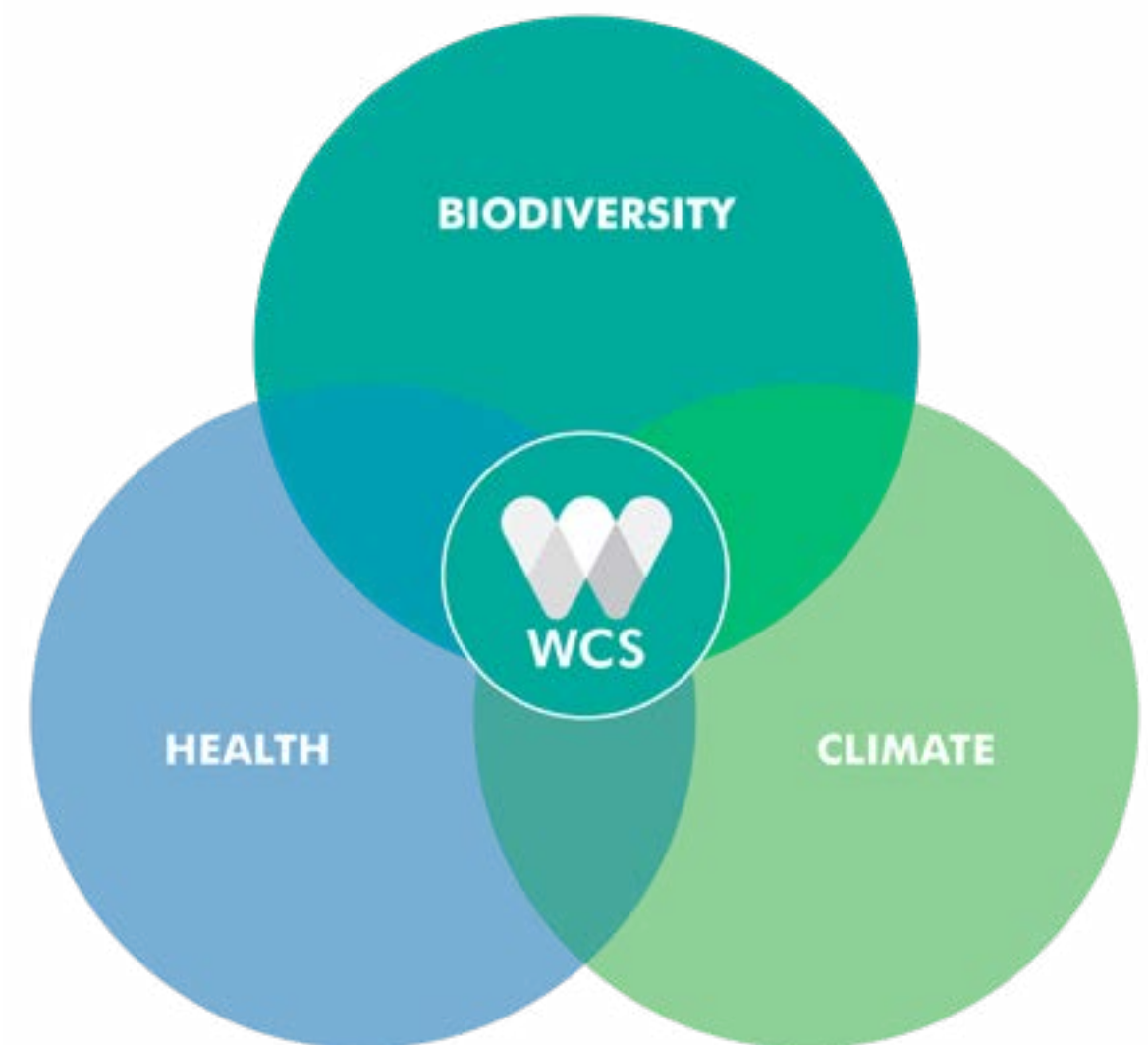
## CHANGING CONTEXT, NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

Our 2030 strategy is designed to focus our work, take advantage of new opportunities, scale up our impact, and help advance bold global goals. The context has changed since we developed our WCS 2020 Strategy, offering new opportunities for progress, outlined below:

### ✓ **Three interrelated global crises demand systemic solution**

One million species are at risk of extinction. Global climate change is accelerating, threatening the lives and the future of people and wildlife across the planet. And every corner of the planet has been struck by COVID-19, a zoonotic-origin disease directly linked to the trade in wildlife for human consumption.

We increasingly understand that the three global crises we face—biodiversity loss, climate change, and the pandemic—are interconnected and require a systemic solution. WCS can help find solutions to these challenges by drawing upon our global scope, our scientific and technical expertise, our education programs, and our ability to connect global policy with action on the ground. For example, protecting intact forests and restoring the integrity of terrestrial and marine ecosystems address all three crises. We also need to prevent future pandemics by bringing an end to the commercial trade in wildlife for human consumption and reducing the fragmentation of forests.





# OVERVIEW

## ✓ New openings for scaling up impact

The United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity is in the process of adopting a Global Biodiversity Framework for the next decade. Ambitious goals on the horizon that WCS can help define and advance include zero-net loss of natural ecosystems by 2030, with a net recovery by 2050—and “30 x 30,” which seeks to expand protected and conserved areas to cover 30 percent of land and sea by 2030. Additionally, the UN adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 which have become a global framework adopted by all UN member states. WCS aims to contribute to achieving these goals (see **Appendix 3**).

Nature-positive climate solutions have begun to take center stage, with growing political and financial commitments at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in 2021. The European Union has adopted the European Green Deal and announced a goal to become carbon neutral by 2050, while the United States rejoined the Paris Agreement. Several European countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and Norway, have increased their funding for environmental issues. Economic growth in the United States has spurred private philanthropy from individuals and foundations for climate change, social justice, and recovery from the pandemic. WCS seeks to leverage these goals and resources to scale up our conservation impact.

## ✓ Changing attitudes create constituency for conservation

A growing youth movement focuses intently on climate change, with millions of people demanding action from political leaders and corporations. We also see changes in people’s choices, including increasing interest in plant-based diets and a growing interest in animal welfare.



# STRATEGIC GOALS

WCS's four strategic goals are informed by our assessment of the rapidly changing world, the urgency of the three existential crises we face, our unique strengths, and the new opportunities that we can leverage to scale up our impact.





# PROTECT AND REWILD

## Saving Nature’s Strongholds

WCS is at the vanguard of the movement to protect, restore, and rewild the most critical strongholds for nature—from the rapidly changing Arctic, to the lush intact forests of the Congo Basin, to the coral-studded reefs of Melanesia. We have identified a global portfolio of more than 60 Nature’s Strongholds, which we define as areas of intact wilderness on land and at sea with the greatest biodiversity, ecosystem integrity, and resilience to climate change. Our goal is to help conserve at least 50 percent of the world’s terrestrial and marine biodiversity across these strongholds. Within that portfolio, we will focus our work on those places where our scientific analyses have shown that we can have the greatest impact on the protection, restoration, and rewilding of Nature’s Strongholds. This will require us to effectively manage core protected areas and advance other conservation measures, and ensure successful stewardship and management of the lands and waters surrounding them. Deepening and broadening our conservation alliances with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities will be critical to this effort; we will co-create strategies to protect their rights and needs and ensure that we adhere to social safeguards.


### WHAT ARE NATURE’S STRONGHOLDS?

Areas of intact wilderness on land and at sea with the greatest biodiversity, ecosystem integrity, and resilience to climate change


## Protecting priority species

We will work to protect WCS priority species across their ranges, and ensure that their populations are stable or increasing over time. The focus will be on those Nature’s Strongholds where WCS works, but will extend beyond them to support range-wide species conservation and recovery. We will do this by tackling key threats including habitat destruction, unsustainable hunting and wildlife trafficking, and in some cases, supporting species’ recoveries through supplemental captive breeding, reintroduction, and habitat restoration.

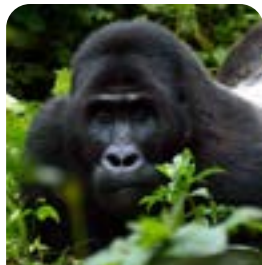
## WCS GLOBAL PRIORITY SPECIES




Big Cats



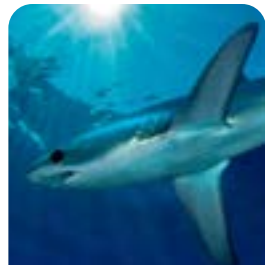
Elephants



Apes



Whales and Coastal Dolphins



Sharks and Rays



## REDUCE THREATS TO WILDLIFE AND WILD PLACES

Saving wildlife and wild places requires that we understand and reduce the direct and indirect causes driving biodiversity loss, including habitat loss and degradation, unsustainable hunting and collection of wildlife, climate change, pollution, and invasive species. WCS will promote solutions for a more sustainable future, including the use of nature-positive solutions to climate change, reducing illegal wildlife trade, promoting a One Health approach, and accelerating the transition toward more sustainable cities.

### Advancing nature-positive solutions to climate change

The climate crisis is impacting people and wildlife across the planet; reducing those impacts has become the global imperative of our time. WCS's work protecting and restoring key strongholds benefits wildlife, people, and climate. Our priority is to expand our work on nature-positive solutions to the climate crisis, including mitigation through the conservation of intact forests, peatlands, and coastal ecosystems, as well as adaptation to the impacts of the climate crisis across our priority landscapes and seascapes.

### Promoting One Health solutions to prevent the next pandemic

Our health-related work will build on our core strength in veterinary medicine, with an expanded program to reduce and mitigate wildlife diseases and zoonotic spillover across the human-wildlife-livestock interfaces; consistent with our One Health approach and the Berlin Principles WCS helped develop in 2019 before the pandemic hit.

### Halting unsustainable hunting and fighting wildlife crime

We will scale up our efforts to prevent unsustainable hunting and combat wildlife crime, including stopping the killing, the trafficking, and the demand for target species. We will help strengthen law enforcement and criminal justice responses to the trafficking of priority species and help reduce demand for target wildlife species in key countries.

**WCS's One Health approach recognizes the linkages between the health of people, animals, and the environment**





# INSPIRE SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION THROUGH OUR ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

Our zoos and aquarium are core to advancing our mission and make WCS distinct from other global conservation organizations. They connect people in urban environments to animals and nature—inspiring millions of visitors every year to save wildlife and wild places.

## The power of zoos

The Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo, and Queens Zoo have created many innovative, immersive nature-based exhibits over the decades linking our zoo-based and field-based conservation work. We are a leader in zoological science, animal care, animal welfare, and education. As we look ahead to 2030, our goal is to build upon this strong foundation through our Bronx Zoo Master Plan and our Bronx Zoo Strategic Plan, ramping up with innovative new exhibits that enrich and personalize the visitor experience; expanding the zoo's role as a platform for learning and community engagement in New York City; and collaborating with partners to engage broader audiences on the importance of nature and their role as citizen advocates for the natural world.

**WCS's zoos and aquarium connect millions of visitors to animals and nature every year**

## New York Aquarium and the New York seascape

With renovations at the New York Aquarium now complete following the extensive damage from Hurricane Sandy, we will strengthen our work in the New York Bight—which extends from Montauk, NY to Cape May, NJ—to protect key species and reduce threats to marine wildlife. We will also promote the aquarium as a gateway to nature, activate it as a community hub, and create content that educates people on how to live sustainably on a rapidly urbanizing planet.

## Expanding virtual access, expanding our audience

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transition in all aspects of our lives. We will expand our digital content including virtual tours of our zoos and aquarium, education programs, and career development programs—ultimately connecting people to our global work. We will find ways to expand our audience across the United States and globally, including through new technologies and partnerships.

## Galvanizing the AZA network

In order to expand our reach and impact, WCS will take the lead in elevating three priorities for the more than 200 zoos and aquariums accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA):

- Strengthening long-term sustainability of animal populations
- Increasing investment in field conservation
- Building awareness and action for conservation and sustainable development





## LEVERAGE OUR IMPACT THROUGH SCIENCE AND POLICY

### Advancing evidence-based conservation

We have a strong tradition and track record in conservation science which gives us a comparative advantage that informs our conservation work—both in the field and in our zoos and aquarium. We will focus our science on key questions and issues identified throughout this strategy and use this science to support, measure, and improve the impact of our work. WCS is making a strong push to increase the number of peer-reviewed scientific papers in open-access publications, which will be critical as we address the biodiversity and climate crises as a global community.

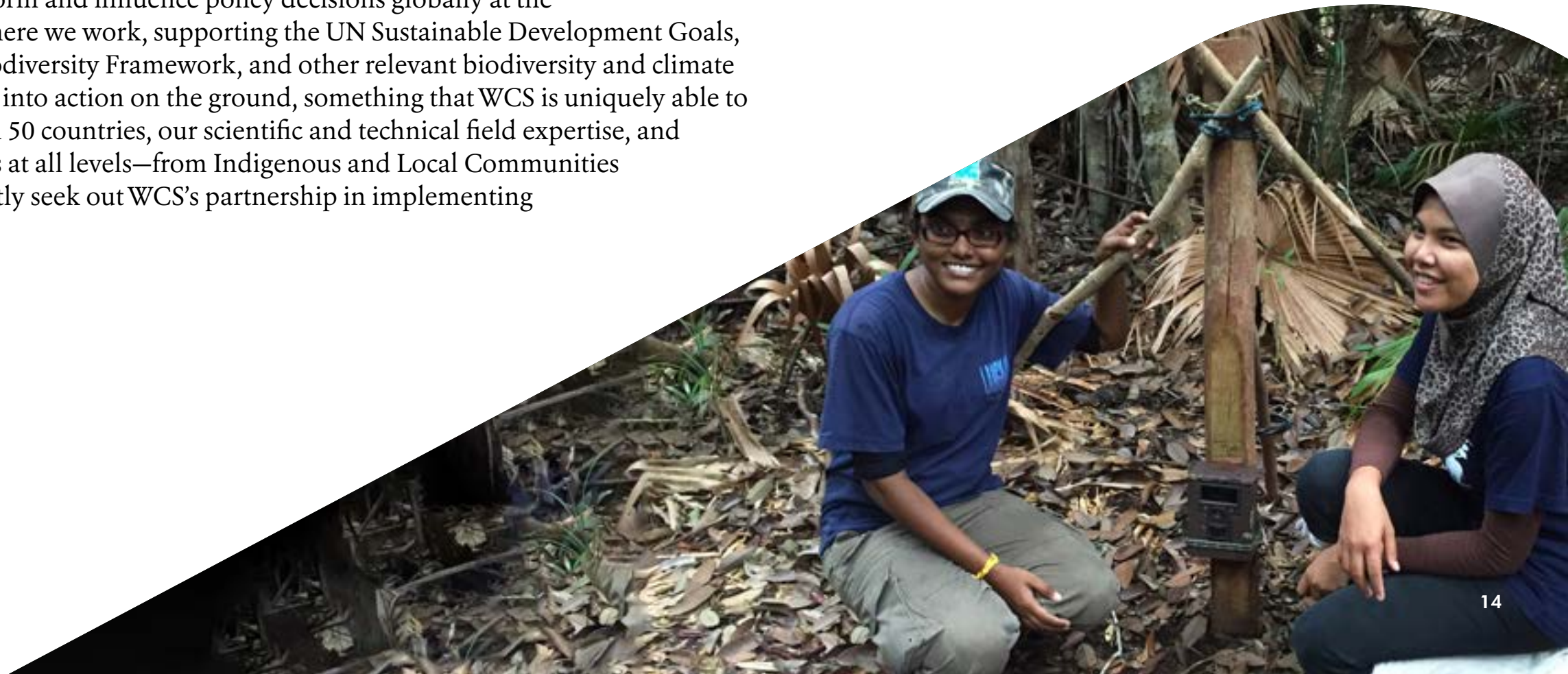
**WCS publishes 425+ articles  
each year in peer-reviewed  
scientific journals**

### Training future conservation leaders

WCS will elevate the role of science in conservation practice and help train the next generation of scientists, conservationists, and wildlife health experts—with a special emphasis on groups that have been previously underrepresented—in order to build a more diverse pipeline of future conservation leaders globally. We will expand our partnerships with universities, private sector companies, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities around priority themes for our mission and strategy.

### Informing global and national policy—and putting it into action on the ground

We will use our knowledge and networks to inform and influence policy decisions globally at the intergovernmental level and in the countries where we work, supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and other relevant biodiversity and climate agreements. We will also help put those policies into action on the ground, something that WCS is uniquely able to do. Because of our global presence in more than 50 countries, our scientific and technical field expertise, and our longstanding working relationships, leaders at all levels—from Indigenous and Local Communities to regional and national governments—frequently seek out WCS's partnership in implementing conservation policies.





# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategies are about making choices and identifying priorities. The WCS 2030 Strategy builds on the thinking, outcomes, and lessons learned in our WCS 2020 Strategy. It reflects the evolution of our own thinking and the world around us, and highlights the relevance of our work to some of the biggest challenges facing our society and the planet. We have identified five priority initiatives where we can have the biggest impact in the coming years.



# NATURE'S STRONGHOLDS

An initiative designed to protect over half the planet's biodiversity across a portfolio of the world's most important and intact wild places.

## Protected areas are essential—but we need more

Protected areas are the single most effective mechanism for ensuring the survival of species and ecosystems when managed with a scientifically rigorous, adaptive approach and an enduring commitment by partners on the ground. However, many protected areas lack effective management, and most are not large enough to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem benefits over the long term, especially given the effects of climate change.

## Safeguarding half of life on Earth

That is why we must protect and restore larger, landscape-scale wilderness areas that are exceptionally resilient and intact: Nature's Strongholds. We have identified a global portfolio of more than 60 essential strongholds spanning 9.6 million square kilometers across Africa, Asia, and the Americas with the highest biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, where the data indicate that WCS can have dramatic conservation impact and protect half of life on Earth. We will conserve these strongholds—protecting, reconnecting, and rewilding to secure the future for at least 50 percent of all species. This will contribute toward the global policy goal of conserving at least 30 percent of the planet by 2030.

## Evidence-based strategy

We have developed an evidence-based strategy for conserving these wild places and recovering species populations over the long term. WCS will increase the areas within Nature's Strongholds that are legally protected and strengthen their management, including ramping up enforcement. We will improve policy and enforcement to combat the unsustainable and illegal trade in wildlife, timber, and fish across WCS strongholds. We will conduct a broad range of activities depending on the unique species and habitat needs at each site, including: conducting data-driven anti-poaching patrols; training local rangers; reducing human-wildlife conflict; supporting local community partners and ensuring

sustainable livelihoods; providing scientific guidance to help governments establish, manage, and link protected areas; directly restoring forests and other habitats; and ensuring representation of Indigenous Peoples while helping them secure land rights.

## Partnerships are key

Partnerships with governments and with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are vital to ensuring the effective management and conservation of these landscapes and seascapes, and enhancing connections between them to improve their effectiveness and resilience to climate change.

**WCS will conserve the planet's most important strongholds in order to protect at least 50% of all species**

## Strengthening alliances with Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Peoples currently manage or have rights to over a quarter of the world's land surface in many wilderness areas on Earth; for hundreds of endangered mammal species, more than half their ranges are within Indigenous lands. WCS is currently supporting over 200 communities of Indigenous Peoples in 39 countries in their efforts to secure and exercise their legitimate rights to govern and steward their hereditary lands. To succeed, we will deepen and broaden our conservation alliances with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and ensure that we co-create strategies to protect their rights and needs and while enforcing our social safeguards.



# FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

An initiative designed to use nature-positive solutions to help solve the climate crisis.

## The climate crisis is the defining challenge of our time

Across the globe, people and wildlife are feeling the impacts of the climate crisis, from changes in extreme temperatures and rainfall to the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. It has become the predominant challenge of our time, with a growing number of governments and companies making it a priority. The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change set a goal to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases through voluntary commitments, aiming to limit the rise of global temperatures to less than 1.5 degrees C.

## Intact forests play a critical role in the climate fight

Nature-positive solutions can contribute as much as 30 percent of the climate change mitigation needed by 2030—especially through preventing deforestation and protecting intact forests, which are massive carbon sinks for the planet. These vital solutions complement the importance of making a rapid transition away from fossil fuel dependence. Intact forests help mitigate climate change by removing billions of tons of excess CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere each year and directly cooling hot tropical air—saving the global economy tens of trillions of dollars by avoiding the costs of additional climate change.

But intact forests are undervalued, and have received limited attention and funding. WCS research has revealed that the benefits of saving intact tropical forests are six times higher than current methods assume, yet nature-positive solutions receive only 8 percent of climate mitigation financing, with very little of that targeted to intact forests.

## We must act now to save intact forests

Only 40 percent of the world's remaining forests (1.7 billion hectares) can be defined as highly intact—that is, not significantly disturbed by human activity—and they're disappearing fast. Without intact forests, there is no viable pathway to carbon neutrality by 2050.

## WCS's plan

WCS has a plan to stop the loss of highly intact forests by 2030, securing a major essential sink, ensuring that their 510 gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> stay out of the atmosphere, and protecting half of the world's terrestrial biodiversity.

Our three-part strategy is to:

- Advance rigorous science for measuring and valuing intact forests that informs global standards.
- Catalyze global action by securing new policy commitments, billions of dollars of climate change funding, and financial mechanisms that incentivize and reward intact forest conservation, working with forest champion countries.
- Accelerate and scale up protections immediately in the world's most important intact forest countries—where the carbon value and projected losses are greatest—together with community, Indigenous, and government partners, so that all forest strongholds are secured, anchored by large, climate-friendly landscapes delivering global climate change mitigation and resilience.

**WCS has a plan to stop intact forest loss by 2030**

This strategy will enable us to ensure the long-term security of carbon stocks equivalent to more than 101 gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, and as a result, prevent emissions and lost sinks totaling billions of tonnes by 2050.



# ONE HEALTH

An initiative to address the interconnections between animal, human, and environmental health and help prevent future pandemics.

## What the pandemic has taught us

The COVID-19 pandemic—which has caused unimaginable suffering around the world—has brought into sharp focus the direct relationship between wildlife and human health. More than 70 percent of emerging infectious diseases in humans and livestock have their origins in wildlife, a situation made worse by the degradation of natural ecosystems and the commercial trade in wildlife for human consumption.

Markets and other points along wildlife trade chains pack together wild and domestic animals that would never normally come into close contact, with stressful and unsanitary conditions increasing the chances of “spillover events” where pathogens move between animal hosts, then jump to humans; the end result can be zoonotic-origin diseases like COVID-19. WCS research on field rats in Vietnam found that the percentage of animals infected with at least one of six different coronaviruses increased significantly as they moved along the supply chain from the wild to markets to restaurants.

The risk of viruses jumping between animals and people and causing new zoonotic-origin diseases has grown in recent decades as the increasing global movement of people and goods and the rampant destruction of habitats brings people, wildlife, and livestock into closer and more frequent contact. And that risk will only continue to grow unless we create a new global paradigm.

**WCS seeks global policy protections that recognize the foundational importance of intact, functioning ecosystems for the health of all**

## WCS’s strategy to end the commercial trade in wildlife

Now is the time to secure dramatic, permanent changes that will protect human health, economies, and security on a global scale, while also preventing the devastation of the world’s wildlife. To that end, WCS is advancing a four-pronged strategy to end commercial trade in wildlife for human consumption, particularly birds and mammals, including the closure of related markets. We continue to support subsistence hunting for household consumption and cultural identity by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

In key countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, we will:

- Strengthen and expand surveillance of potential pathogens at key points in the wild and along supply chains.
- Help law enforcement stop wildlife trafficking and disrupt criminal networks.
- Advance national policy and legislative reform, as well as global commitments aimed at ending the commercial trade in wildlife for human consumption.
- Expand the adoption of One Health approaches to our conservation work across priority landscapes, countries, and regions.





# GATEWAYS TO NATURE

**An initiative that focuses on the zoos and aquarium as places of innovation, to inspire and empower advocates for wildlife and environmental sustainability.**

## **Connecting people with wildlife, inspiring conservation action**

In an increasingly urban and technological world, people are more disconnected from nature. But just one visit to a zoo or aquarium has the power to spark a lifelong curiosity about animals and a passion for protecting them. WCS's four zoos and aquarium are uniquely positioned to kindle that spark—offering a gateway to nature, connecting people with wildlife, and inspiring environmental stewardship. Every day, we help thousands of visitors experience looking a tiger in the eye for the first time—or watching a squad of penguins zooming around in the water—or a group of young gorillas playing.

## **The Bronx Zoo: NYC cultural icon and community anchor**

Stretching across 265 acres of native hardwood forest, our flagship Bronx Zoo is a vast oasis at the heart of a metropolis where nature can be hard to come by. It is also a beloved New York City cultural institution that attracts people from every borough and beyond—most of whom will never be able to travel to Africa or Asia to see the planet's most iconic animals.

As a community anchor, the Bronx Zoo engages diverse audiences of every age and walk of life—and is inspiring a new generation of scientists, veterinarians, conservationists, and teachers who hail from New York City. Each year, we educate almost 2 million visitors at the Bronx Zoo, and teach more than 200,000 students about wild animals and nature through fun, hands-on educational experiences. And we connect more than 1,400 young people—most

**We will build on the  
Bronx Zoo's rich legacy  
of innovation and  
leadership to shape the  
zoo of the future**

of whom come from local, under-resourced communities—to volunteerships, internships, and paid work experiences, giving them a chance to succeed while making a difference for our planet.

## **The zoo-conservation connection**

The Bronx Zoo has been the keystone for WCS's global fieldwork since its inception, and remains the center of gravity for our impact. Our veterinarians and curators collaborate with our field staff to help breed and rewild species at risk around the world—ones that could otherwise disappear forever. For example, a century ago, the Bronx Zoo's bison breeding efforts played a pivotal role in saving this iconic species from extinction. More recently, captive breeding efforts led by our Bronx Zoo experts helped prevent the Critically Endangered Burmese star tortoise from being decimated by the illegal wildlife trade, growing the population from just a few hundred individuals to more than 17,000 today.

## **Expanding audiences, leading with innovations**

Going forward, we will continue to create new ways of increasing the number of visitors to our zoos and aquarium and ensure an inclusive and accessible experience for our diverse audiences. We will innovate audience engagements that expand our educational impact through all of our channels, on site and online. And we will focus on our zoos and aquarium as places for innovation, and collaborate and share with other zoos and aquariums accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums to scale up our impact.





# WILDLIFE CONNECT

**An initiative to create a strategy for increasing mission engagement through new digital technologies and partnerships that leverage our unique content to inspire advocates for wildlife, and generate support.**

The digital transformation of our society has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and people are increasingly accessing information through digital media and new technologies. From virtual worlds such as the metaverse to Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), tools that support content consumption are changing rapidly, and we need to leverage emerging platforms and technologies for mission engagement and impact.

## Dynamic partnerships

WCS stories originate from our zoos and aquarium, and from our field projects in more than 50 countries and across the oceans. We work with media and production outlets in New York City and around the world, including Discovery's Animal Planet, which produced five seasons of THE ZOO based on our zoos and aquarium in New York; PBS Nature on a series of essays by WCS staff; and President Obama's production company, Higher Ground, along with Netflix, on an impact campaign called Wild for All, which engaged millions on the value of nature.

Our goal is to find more partners—in traditional, digital, and social media, and in the technology sector—to activate our content and engage millions more to conserve wildlife and wild places.

**We will build a  
more diverse and  
expansive national  
and global audience  
for WCS**

## Content strategy

From our zoos and aquarium in New York to our global conservation programs, we have continuous sources of unique content. We will generate a strategy that addresses the highest and best use of that content for expanding audiences and creating greater mission engagement.

## Leveraging the power of new technology

We seek to revolutionize our communications capacity through partnerships and with a cutting-edge, in-house media lab to expand our digital, video, audio, and multi-media content across our owned channels. WCS is exploring how to ensure our brand and engagement presence in partnership with media and technology partners, and how emerging digital technologies can broaden mission engagement.





# APPENDIX 1: WCS BY THE NUMBERS

<div>FOUNDED IN</div> <div>1895</div>	<div>4,000+</div> <div>STAFF WORKING IN 50+ COUNTRIES</div>	<div>WCS HAS HELPED CREATE</div> <div>300+</div> <div>PROTECTED AREAS AROUND THE WORLD</div>	<div>425+</div> <div>PEER-REVIEWED SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS/YEAR</div>
<div>5</div> <div>URBAN WILDLIFE PARKS IN NYC</div>	<div>425M</div> <div>VISITORS TO OUR ZOOS AND AQUARIUM SINCE 1899</div>	<div>17K+</div> <div>ANIMALS AT OUR ZOOS AND AQUARIUM</div>	
<div>#1</div> <div>YOUTH EMPLOYER IN THE BRONX</div>	<div>60M+</div> <div>VIEWERS OF ANIMAL PLANET'S THE ZOO SINCE 2017 PREMIERE</div>	<div>150K+</div> <div>STUDENTS/YEAR IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS</div>	



# APPENDIX 2: WHY WCS?

WCS is the only organization that combines the world's largest network of urban wildlife parks with globe-spanning conservation of wildlife and wild places. The cross-fertilization between our zoo- and field-based work strengthens our ability to fulfill our mission. Below is more detail on our comparative advantages.

## **Global reach, long-term field presence, and partnerships deliver results**

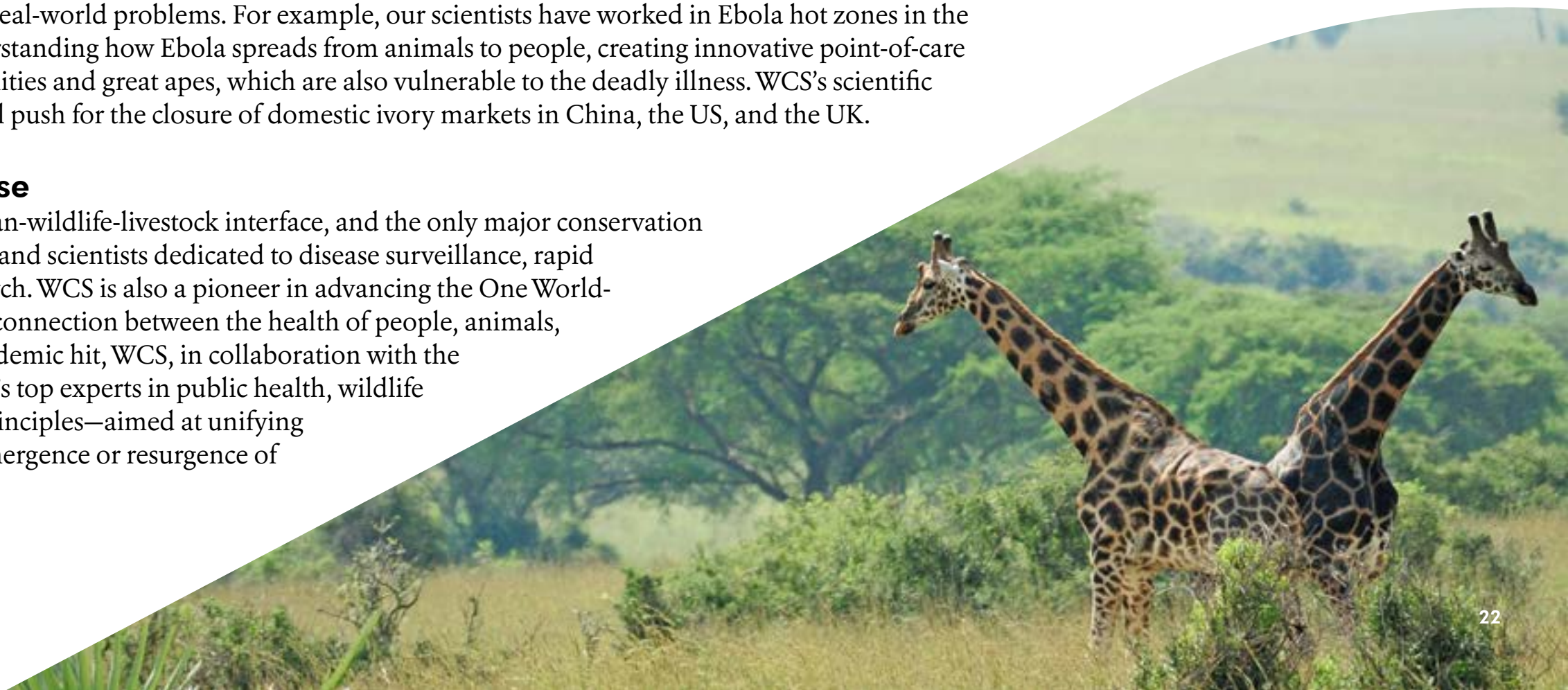
WCS has an unparalleled field presence of over 4,000 staff protecting wildlife and wild places on the frontlines in more than 50 countries, including 25 tropical countries supporting 459 million hectares of highly intact forest. An integral part of our success is our strong, durable partnerships that often span decades, making us trusted advisors to decision makers and stakeholders at all levels—from local and Indigenous communities, to local and national governments, to international policymaking bodies. We have created and managed hundreds of protected areas on land and at sea over the past century, and have helped species at risk of extinction—ranging from the mighty American bison to the tiny Kihansi spray toad—bounce back in the wild.

## **Strong science informs conservation strategies and policy**

Science has been in our DNA throughout WCS's proud 125-year history. We publish more than 400 articles each year in peer-reviewed scientific journals—and help train the next generation of scientists, educators, and conservationists. We rigorously measure our impact, and are committed to using our findings to solve real-world problems. For example, our scientists have worked in Ebola hot zones in the Congo for 15 years doing research aimed at understanding how Ebola spreads from animals to people, creating innovative point-of-care tests, and helping to reduce risks to local communities and great apes, which are also vulnerable to the deadly illness. WCS's scientific work informed and helped advance our successful push for the closure of domestic ivory markets in China, the US, and the UK.

## **Unparalleled wildlife health expertise**

WCS is the leading expert on diseases at the human-wildlife-livestock interface, and the only major conservation NGO with an international team of veterinarians and scientists dedicated to disease surveillance, rapid response, local training, and wildlife health research. WCS is also a pioneer in advancing the One World-One Health approach, which recognizes the interconnection between the health of people, animals, and the environment. Just months before the pandemic hit, WCS, in collaboration with the German government, brought together the world's top experts in public health, wildlife health, and wildlife trade to develop the Berlin Principles—aimed at unifying and strengthening global efforts to prevent the emergence or resurgence of diseases that threaten humans and animals.





# APPENDIX 2: WHY WCS?

## **Counter-wildlife trafficking and policy strength**

WCS has the largest global counter-wildlife trafficking presence of any conservation organization, with teams on the ground in nearly 30 countries. We partner with governments in source, transit, and consumer countries. WCS also is a global leader at the intergovernmental level in wildlife trade policy, including wildlife trafficking, and governments value our expertise in these issues, including through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). We have led globally on the inclusion of shark and ray species on CITES, and in combating illegal trade in sharks, freshwater turtles, tortoises, parrots, pangolins, and many other species.

## **First-class NYC-based zoos and aquarium connect millions to nature**

Our flagship Bronx Zoo—together with the Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo, Queens Zoo, and New York Aquarium— welcome 4 million people each year and set the standard worldwide for best-in-class animal care, innovative exhibits, and zoo-based conservation. Millions more around the world gain a window into WCS's work through Animal Planet's award-winning docuseries THE ZOO. We weave stories about WCS's science and conservation impact into the entire Bronx Zoo experience, educating and empowering people to take tangible action to protect the wild species they see during their visit.

In the last year, the Bronx Zoo reached nearly 2 million students, educators, parents, volunteers, and park visitors; many are low-income schoolchildren with limited access to safe outdoor spaces and quality science education. We offer educational opportunities to more than 800 New York City schools through our exhibits, hands-on science workshops, internships, and more, and provide more than 25,000 hours of science education coaching to K-12 teachers annually.

The Bronx Zoo is also an iconic New York City cultural institution with a national and international reputation. It serves as an anchor for the surrounding community, and we are the top youth employer in the Bronx, providing a growing group of diverse young New Yorkers with professional development opportunities to help transform their experiences with WCS into future careers.





# APPENDIX 3:

## HOW WCS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

WCS's work can contribute to achieving many of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), climate (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14), and life on land (SDG 15).

Furthermore, all the SDGs are relevant to our work with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, with 73 out of 169 targets directly linked to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. A growing number of governments are using them to allocate foreign aid, and many private sector companies are aligning their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices with the Sustainable Development Goals.

This figure developed by Johan Rockström and Pavan Sukhdev presents a new way of viewing the relationships between economic, social, and environmental aspects of the SDGs.

