



Neblina Reserve, NW Ecuador, Tropical Andes

Prepared for Parkwood Leisure, July 2025



1. Introduction

This is a summary for Parkwood Leisure regarding its donation of £1,000 towards the management of Rainforest Concern's 7,000 acre Neblina Cloud Forest Reserve in NW Ecuador, Tropical Andes – the most biodiverse region on Earth.

2. Background

The ultimate goal of the Chocó Andean corridor project is to form a corridor of continuous protected forest from Mindo Reserve, close to the capital Quito in the south, to the Awa Reserve on the Colombian border in the north. Rainforest Concern has been working on the southern phase of the corridor project since establishing the Neblina Reserve in 2002. The goal of the southern phase of this project is to provide a forest corridor linking the Cotacachi-Cayapas Reserve to the north, and the Maquipucuna, Mindo and Pululahua reserves to the south.

This region lies within the 'Tropical Andes' biodiversity hotspot; the most species rich of any of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots. It is predominantly tropical montane cloud forest, which accounts for just 2.5% of the world's tropical forests, but is home to more than 35,000 species, half of which are endemic, meaning their distribution is restricted to just this region. It also contains one-sixth of the

Earth's plants and ranks first in the number of bird, mammal, freshwater fish, and amphibian species. In addition, the Neblina Reserve lies in a Key Priority Area within the Tropical Andes hotspot - the Intag Tosian Key Biodiversity area. This designation reflects the high biological importance of the Intag region.

3. Ecological importance

The Neblina Reserve is located in the Intag area of north west Ecuador; an area listed as a Key Biological Diversity Area, one of the highest global conservation priorities and as 'of exceptional importance as a repository for a disproportionate part of the world's biodiversity' Gentry (1992).

The cloud forests of the Intag area offer essential habitat to many rare and endemic species. According to DECOIN, more than 28 species of mammals and birds in the Intag area are seriously threatened - including four species of cats, olinguito (new to science in 2013), two species of monkeys and mountain tapirs. Among the many endemic species are the Andean, or 'spectacled', bear and the iconic cock of the rock. Threatened bird species include Endangered black-and-chestnut eagles, plate-billed mountain toucans, the Esmeraldas Woodstar hummingbird, and the umbrella bird.

Biological surveys continue to reveal the importance of the Intag cloud forests. In 2016, a research project funded by Rainforest Concern discovered a frog, the Harlequin Longnose frog, thought to have gone extinct in 1989. In 2019, a second survey found a frog so rare it was not yet listed on the IUCN Red List. The 'confusing rocket frog' is the only species of the genus *Ectopoglossus* in Ecuador.

4. Threats

The cloud forests are at risk of serious environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. Smaller scale threats include unsustainable agriculture due to cattle, fires to clear land for farming, logging. Poverty and lack of education are aggravating factors. Larger threats include mining concessions, road building and climate change.

Habitat defragmentation means that cloud forests can no longer maintain their water retaining properties. Endemic flora and fauna become susceptible to extinction and fragmented forest is more easily accessible for hunting, logging and other activities, further damaging biodiversity.

5. Activities and timescales

The main project activities are the management of the 7,000 acre reserve, which includes the training of local forest guards, creating and maintaining forest pathways and bridges, installing and monitoring camera traps, local community liaison, coordinating school visits and monitoring wildlife, including the critically endangered black-and-chestnut eagle.

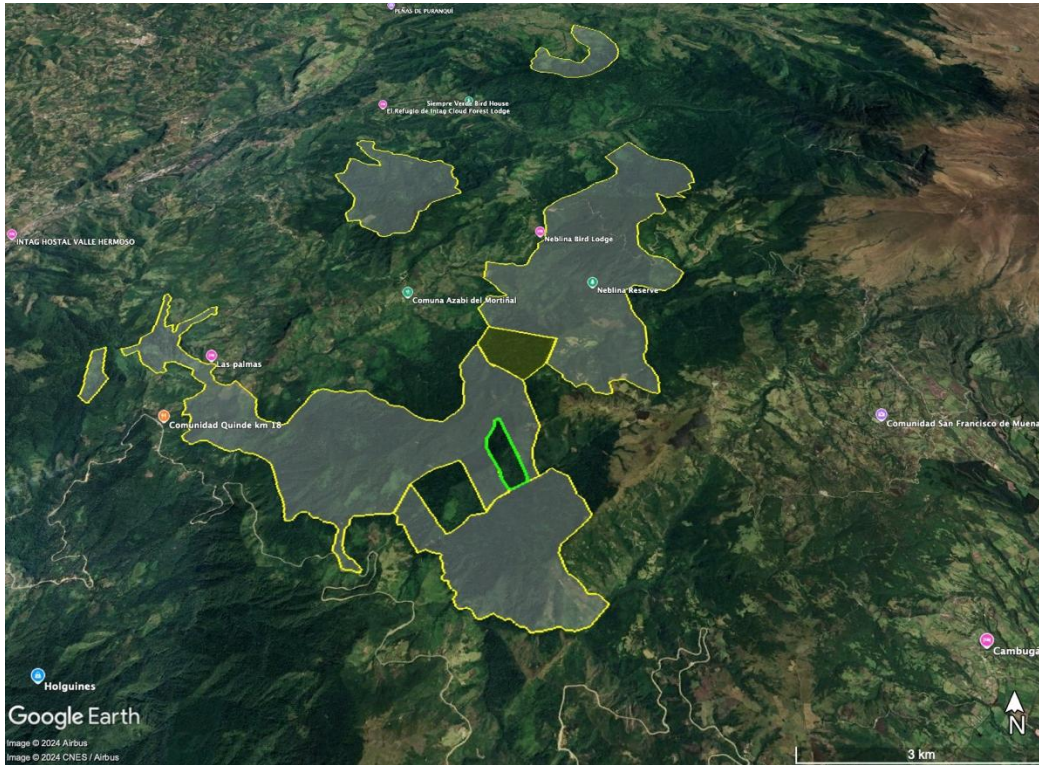
Protection and monitoring

Rainforest Concern's policy is to ensure the long-term protection and management of the forest, which includes:

1. Regular patrols of the reserve by forest guards
2. Research and data collection
3. Put in place legal protection (Rainforest Concern now has been awarded SNAP Protected Forest

Status for three areas of the reserve)
Community outreach and education

Map of Neblina Reserve - The map shows the proposed land purchases (in green) and the extent of the Neblina Reserve (yellow).



Recent camera trap images from the Neblina Reserve show how the reserve is providing vital habitat and acting as an ecological corridor for many threatened species. Among species seen were Andean bears (more than ten individuals have been seen using the reserve), oncilla and puma, all on the IUCN Red List.



Figure 1: Oncilla are a solitary species. This photo, showing two oncilla demonstrates that the reserve is home to breeding pairs of oncilla



Figure 2: Adult black-and-chestnut eagle (right) and juvenile on nest (left)



Figure 3: Puma are frequently caught on the camera traps. Listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, they are thriving in the Neblina Reserve



Figure 4 : Dwarf brocket deer are listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. We also have evidence of breeding pairs at the reserve.



Figure 5 : In January, a mature male jaguar caught on camera trap at Junin community reserve in the Intag-Toisán cloud forests, just 25 kms from the

Parkwood Leisure Donation

Parkwood Leisure's kind donation of £1,000 in 2024 helped to fund the protection of the Neblina Cloud Forest Reserve and the unique biodiversity that depends on the forests for survival. Your continued support would be very much appreciated.

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