

Mexico



Mexico makes up only one percent of the Earth's land area but is home to an amazing one-tenth of all of the species known to science. It is also a major center for plant origins and domestication, and a key plant and faunal dispersal corridor. Its rainforests are among the richest reservoirs of biological material on the planet and its diverse habitats are home to a broad array of wildlife including many seasonal residents that migrate to and from the U.S. and other areas. The U.S. and Mexico share 450 species listed under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and 119 species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These species depend on Mexico for their survival, including sea turtles, gray whale, bats, condor, jaguar, manatee, pronghorn, desert sheep, insects (such as the monarch butterfly), and a large variety of migratory birds.

This astonishing biodiversity faces increasing threats, such as deforestation, unsustainable land-use practices, and illegal wildlife trade. In response, the Service launched the Wildlife Without Borders – Mexico program to build Mexico's human and institutional capacity to conserve and manage species, habitats and ecological processes of global importance, through training associated with nature reserves and other high - diversity areas.

The Wildlife Without Borders – Mexico program represents a cooperative effort between the United States and Mexico to preserve our shared natural heritage through an interdisciplinary approach including sustainable natural resources, adaptive management, conservation biology, environmental education and outreach.

The program's goal and objectives are addressed through three Signature Initiatives: 1) Managing for Excellence (to train nature reserve/natural resource managers); 2) Stewards



Community based conservation initiative in Mexico.

Credit: Centro Campesino para el Desarrollo Sustentable, A.C.

of the Land (to train nature reserve owners/users); and 3) Voices for Nature (to train key stakeholder groups).

The program aims to achieve these goals through joint projects with universities, research centers, non-governmental organizations, private industries, local communities and indigenous people. This is accomplished by: 1) developing specific skills of natural resource managers, addressing critical gaps in formal, and non-formal training, and increasing the number of trained personnel; 2) promoting training that links sound management practices to economic alternatives for buffer-zone communities; and 3) raising the level of awareness and capacity to deliver conservation of key stakeholder groups.

The Wildlife Without Borders – Mexico program provides an efficient delivery mechanism for the conservation of the unique natural resources shared between the U.S. and Mexico.



Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) rest on a tree.

Credit: Montgomery, Allen

Since its inception in 1995, 332 projects have been funded with more than 10 million, which has been leveraged with more than \$25.5 million USD in matching and in-kind contributions. Examples include:

- In the Baja California Peninsula, the San Diego Natural History Museum project conducted a Bi-National Environmental Education Program between the US and Mexico has trained more than 4,000 teachers on the implementation of the “Our Natural Heritage Bioregional Pride” environmental education curricula, which focuses on the Tijuana River Watershed, species and ecosystems of the region.
- In Mexico City, the WWF-TRAFFIC project provided 100 wildlife enforcement authorities throughout Mexico with the tools, materials and fundamental knowledge to promote and implement decentralized capacity building activities at the intra-institutional level to monitor and control illicit wildlife trafficking. As a result, one national capacity building “train the trainer” workshop was implemented for government officials from the most relevant regions in Mexico linked to the regulation, monitoring, control and conservation of natural resources in the country.
- In Guerrero, Grupo de Estudios Ambientales, A.C. trained 300 peasant farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to sustainably harvest wild agave plants (*Agave cupreata*) as a non-timber forest product from the dry forest, while generating an alternative and sustainable source of income for their families. In addition, over 400 members of the communities benefited from a non-formal education program on the conservation of dry forest species such as agave and copal trees (*Bursera* spp.) and pollinators such as bats, birds and insects in Guerrero, Mexico.



A Pronghorn in Mexico (*Antilocapra americana*). Credit: USFWS

- In Michoacan, Alternare, A.C has trained over 3,000 peasant farmers from the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve in sustainable natural resources use, including reforestation, restoration, soil and watershed conservation, and organic production techniques, as a way to protect the monarch’s wintering habitat in Mexico.
- In Chiapas, the Tierra Verde Naturaleza y Cultura, AC project strengthened the environmental culture of the indigenous residents of La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve and the technical skills of park rangers to monitor important mammal species such as jaguars, tapirs and bats, manage the area, and deliver environmental education adapted to the residents’ language and cultural traditions.



Community based conservation initiative in the State of Campeche.

Credit: Fundación Haciendas del Mundo Maya, A.C

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Mexico Program Funding from 2006 through 2013	
Total Number of Grants Awarded	146
Total Funds Distributed through Grants	\$5,420,000
Total Matching/In-kind Funds Leveraged by Grants	\$11,356,000
Total Number of Habitats and Ecosystems Addressed	7

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