



Annual
Review



2018

CONSERVATION ATLAS



DEAR FRIENDS, OLD AND NEW:

We can't believe it's been two years already since we started Conservation Atlas and began our journey to visit protected lands and remarkable projects in thirteen countries. A month ago we left Romania, where we were documenting the work of Foundation Conservation Carpathia (FCC), and returned to the US to begin a new chapter of our lives and of our organization. This means that our time on the road has finally come to an end.

It's now time for Conservation Atlas to settle and begin the change toward becoming a more useful resource for you and for everyone looking to explore new nature destinations in a responsible way. We now have a new website and have started putting together the plan for an international conservation festival based in the US. Throughout this year we will continue to post stories and catch up on the interviews and films we did in 2018 from New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Scotland and Romania. Our first short film, "Conserving Iberá", based on an interview with Kristine McDivitt Tompkins will hopefully continue to be shown in more festivals before being published online. Several other short films will be released this year as well. Hosting new speaking events and photo exhibits are also part of the next steps, as is forming partnerships with other blog and media outlets to post our stories.

As the year is coming to an end we wanted to thank you all for being by our side and for following our journey, and to send our gratitude to those of you who donated to our organization. We wish you an excellent new year where you'll have the chance to be inspired by the beauty of our natural world, close and far!

Best Wishes & Happy Holidays,
Andreea & Justin Lotak
Founders of Conservation Atlas



OUR MISSION:

To support the protection of wildlands and biodiversity by expanding the public's awareness of conservation efforts around the world. We promote responsible travel, which we see as one of the greatest methods of connecting humans with the natural world, ensuring that the long-term value of conservation will benefit local communities, biodiversity, and future generations.

We envision Conservation Atlas as a resource to inspire and connect travelers with important projects supporting conservation efforts. We want to continue to: make the case for sustainable tourism as an important tool for local economic development; explore the ways in which organizations and governments are working to protect the world's natural heritage; and to create materials and events that inspire and educate audiences of all ages.

NUMBERS IN 2018:

6 COUNTRIES VISITED

40 CONSERVATION LANDS &
PROJECTS

46 INTERVIEWS

1,000 NEW FRIENDS ON
FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM &
BLOG

OVER 46,000 PEOPLE
REACHED THROUGH OUR
CONTENT

2 NEW MEMBERS IN THE BOARD OF
ADVISORS

2 FESTIVAL SELECTIONS FOR
OUR FIRST SHORT FILM,
"CONSERVING IBERÁ"



OUR PARTNERS IN 2018

This year again we had the honor to document the outstanding conservation work of a dozen organizations which will hopefully continue to be our partners in the long run.

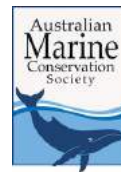
In addition, we're grateful for partnerships and pro-deals from the private sector.

We are especially thankful for our first two Board of Advisors members, **Bruno Garcia**, Marketing Advisor, and **Cliff Moorman**, Legal Advisor.

We continue to stand by the "Nature Needs Half" initiative:



We couldn't have done our work without them:



Special thanks for premiering our Iberá film in New York City:



Corporate partners:



CONSERVATION ATLAS presents:

CONSERVING IBERÁ



AN INTERVIEW WITH
KRISTINE MCDIVITT
TOMPKINS



THE FIRST SHORT FILM

This year marked the beginning of a new passion – that of making short films about the projects we visited. We're looking forward to new festival selections after premiering in NYC at the Wildlife Conservation Film Festival in October with "Conserving Iberá: An Interview with Kristine McDivitt Tompkins". This one is a 10 minute film based on an interview with the president and founder of Tompkins Conservation about one of their most remarkable projects: rewilding the wetlands of Iberá in northern Argentina and turning those lands into a national park. We were also selected from thousands of submissions for the 9th edition of the annual Green Fest in Belgrade, Serbia. This year the film will be available online on our platforms.

In 2019 we're working on putting out three more short documentaries: one from New Zealand, another from Indonesia and one from Romania.

TE ARAROA TRAIL IN NEW ZEALAND

In early January 2018 we started hiking almost 500 km (300 mi) on sections of the Te Araroa (TA) trail, from its southernmost point outside Bluff all the way to the Queen Charlotte Track at the northern tip of the South Island. While hiking this long-distance trail, we wanted to understand what difference such a project can make for conservation and for the local communities. Long distance trails give visitors the opportunity to connect on a more intimate level with the landscape and the biodiversity that they get to discover at a walking pace. Coming soon is a short film which includes interviews with TA backpackers and local residents.

Nearby Fiordland National Park, South Island



Rainbow Lorikeet, Wet Tropics of Queensland
UNESCO Heritage Site

AUSTRALIA

We spent several weeks in Australia along the east coast, exploring sections of the Wet Tropics of Queensland UNESCO Heritage Site, and learning about the state of the Great Barrier Reef. After the barrage of bad news regarding the unavoidable death of one of nature's wonders, local organizations are working to put out a message of hope about the reef. Both the private and the government sectors have gotten strongly involved in finding solutions and mitigating the crisis, and it now seems that there is some chance of survival for the Great Barrier Reef. Interviews and stories will soon be published on the blog.

INDONESIA

From scuba diving in West Papua, in the Raja Ampat Marine Park, to learning about on-the-ground efforts to help orangutans survive the devastation brought by palm oil plantations in Sumatra and Kalimantan, we got to experience some of Indonesia's most precious and fragile wild places. This beautiful country is at the forefront of environmental destruction, while at the same time struggling to protect some of the greatest biodiversity hotspots in the world. Indonesia is an example of a country whose nature conservation can be helped by tourism if it's done responsibly, but where right now travelers hold the greatest power of making the right choices in the absence of strong regulations. Aside from stories that we are publishing on the blog, we're also working on a short film about conservation areas in Indonesia.

Bornean Orangutans, Tanjung Puting National Park, Kalimantan Island

KAZAKHSTAN

The Betpak Dala steppe is a huge area almost the size of France. Several organizations have formed an international alliance to try to protect this area in its entirety, while initially focusing on a smaller 12.3 million acres (5 million ha) protected reserve, Altyn Dala, hosting what was the largest population of saiga antelope in the country. Sadly, in the spring of 2015 almost 90% of the already endangered saiga antelope population died as a result of an epidemic, but their numbers are now bouncing back. With the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) taking over the conservation efforts in the Altyn Dala Reserve and the larger Betpak Dala region, our plan was to head there on one of their tours and learn more about what's at stake in this extensive grassland/steppe.

ROMANIA

Home to the largest forests and populations of bears, wolves and lynx in the European Union, Romania is a treasure for conservation and for adventure travel. Unfortunately, the past few decades have seen a continuous destruction of the forest cover due to illegal cutting and to the timber industry, but there is still real hope to create here Europe's largest forest national park in the near future. This is the goal toward which Foundation Conservation Carpathia (FCC) is working, buying up forested lands, restoring natural forests that have been clear-cut, establishing sustainable population counts for various species, doing community work, building tourism infrastructure and more. We spent a few months filming and documenting the work FCC is doing in the Fagaras Mountains, where they hope to create the continent's equivalent to Yellowstone National Park and a wilderness reserve for the protection of large carnivores. Stories soon on the blog & in a short documentary.



Capra Lake, future Fagaras National Park



SCOTLAND

The main reason for our trip to Scotland was to meet and interview Paul Lister, founder of The European Nature Trust (TENT) and owner of the Alladale Wilderness Reserve. Paul has been involved in conservation work in Romania for a long time and is currently supporting the projects of Foundation Conservation Carpathia (FCC) through TENT. In Scotland he is involved in a similarly ambitious project to help bring back wild nature to Alladale Wilderness Reserve. Management of deer populations, relocation of red squirrels and a captive breeding program for Scottish wildcats, as well as using Highland cattle for preservation of biodiversity are some of the steps taken to begin a long process of restoring the original ecosystems of the Scottish Highlands. Once covered by lush forests, the hills are now bare due to human intervention over many centuries. There is one key species still missing that Paul and his team are hoping to bring back despite bureaucratic complications and controversy: the wolf, an apex predator that would play a key role in the return of the forest cover. Until then, a visit to Alladale today is still a beautiful journey to “the wild side of the Highlands”. Stories soon on the blog.

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION FESTIVAL

At the confluence of a celebration of conservation efforts and of traveling and exploring the world responsibly, this international festival will bring together conservationists, photographers, filmmakers, authors and storytellers in a week-long series of events. These events will inspire us and connect us, the public, with the good that is happening in the world of conservation and with extraordinary places that we can visit and where our money goes toward important causes and projects. This will be the next big step that Conservation Atlas will take starting in 2020. Updates on this project will be coming in 2019.

GOOD NEWS FROM 2018:

- Last year we wrote that Argentina had committed to protect 10% of its territorial sea by 2020. This December the Argentine Congress passed legislation that created two new marine parks: Yaganes and Namuncurá-Burdwood Bank II in the Patagonian Sea. Their creation was a coordinated effort of many national and international organizations like CLT Argentina, Mission Blue, Pristine Seas, Flora y Fauna Argentina and others. The marine parks accomplish the 10% goal and protect 37,000 sq mi (~96,000 sq km).
- In October, Hansjörg Wyss published an opinion in The New York Times announcing that he would donate \$1 billion to conservation efforts worldwide through the Wyss Foundation, *"to help conserve 30% of the planet in a natural state by the year 2030"*.
- Although we are far from solving the problem, 2018 was a year when many countries adopted or announced future bans on single-use plastics like bags, straws, coffee cups, and microbeads. Australia, the Galapagos, the UK, India, US cities and others have passed legislation that will help phase out single-use plastics. This is good news for oceans and coastlines drowning in plastic debris, and for all life on Earth.

In 2019 we are looking forward to new conservation areas being created and to more awareness of our impacts on the natural world. The protection and expansion of wild places help us all lead healthier lives, ensure livelihoods are not being threatened, keep us inspired and recharged, and most important, are essential for the survival of biodiversity.

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You are part of the beginning of our story

THANK YOU!

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