



Dahl's Toad-headed Turtle © WCS



Dahl's Toad-headed Turtle © Turtle Survival Alliance

Save the Critically Endangered Dahl's Toad-headed Turtle from Extinction

The Critically Endangered Dahl's Toad-Headed Turtle is restricted to four separate locations within an isolated region near the north coast of Colombia. It is among the world's top 25 most endangered turtles, with an estimated global population of around 2,000 individuals.

This semi-aquatic species inhabits streams and ponds within tropical dry forest—Colombia's most threatened ecosystem. What once covered an area three times the size of Hawaii has been reduced by agriculture, urban expansion and cattle ranching to dislocated fragments. Only 4% of Colombia's original tropical dry forest remains intact, another 5% is highly fragmented, and the rest has been destroyed. This ancient species is hanging on in small, isolated groups, separated from each other and the opportunity to breed and maintain the genetic diversity that will sustain the species long-term.

In 2019, with support from Rainforest Trust, our partner Wildlife Conservation Society-Colombia acquired a 297-acre property to establish the world's first—and only—protected area for the conservation of this critically endangered species, Reserva Natural La Carranchina. However, the 60 individual turtles in residence are now outgrowing this relatively small area. Researchers estimate an individual turtle's home range may be as large as about 75 acres. Tracking devices have documented that some of the turtles at La Carranchina are moving outside the reserve to unprotected land.

Rainforest Trust and our partner, Wildlife Conservation Society-Colombia, seek \$272,299 to expand the existing La Carranchina Reserve by purchasing 250 acres directly adjacent to the current reserve. The expansion area will give the turtles access to additional natural ponds and streams, allowing their population to grow and thrive. It is urgent that we act now. The owner of the plot has recently received an offer from an agribusiness company that would convert the tropical dry forest into cassava plantations.

GIVE IMPERILED TURTLES A CHANCE AT SURVIVAL

Purchasing the additional habitat quickly will mean turtles can be relocated from one of the other unprotected habitats to bolster genetic diversity at La Carranchina. The proposed expansion would, according to experts, raise the capacity of the reserve up to 200 turtles—10% of the global population—and significantly increase the global conservation outlook for the species.



250
ACRES

\$272,299
PROJECT COST

\$1,089.20
COST PER ACRE

KEY SPECIES:

Dahl's Toad-headed Turtle (CR)

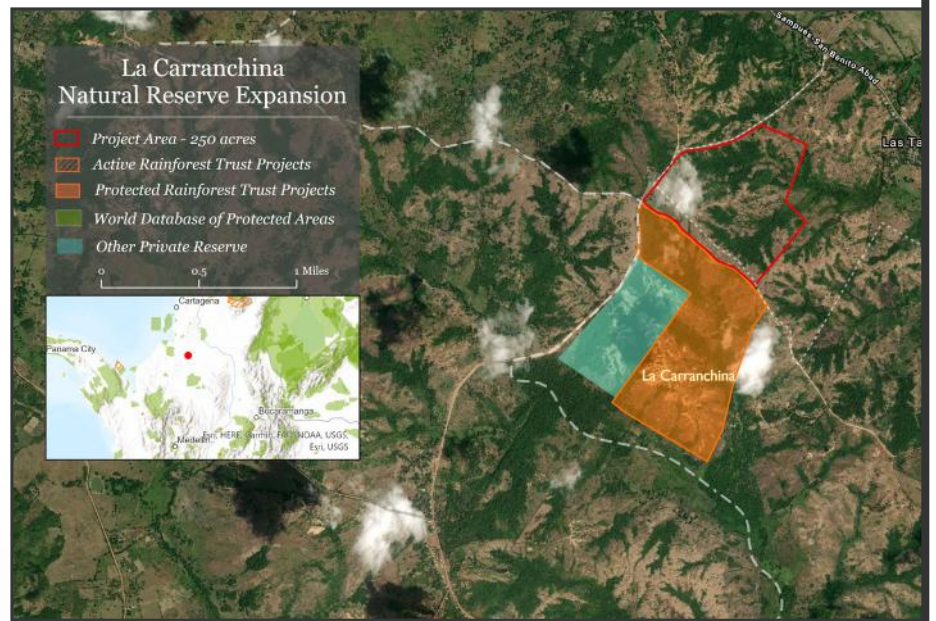


Dahl's Turtle fitted with a transmitter to track species movement in real time © Turtle Survival Alliance

Our partner began a genetic rescue program for the Dahl's Toad-Headed Turtle in 2020, when 20 individuals from other genetic units were translocated to the Reserve. Three years is not enough time for a full population recovery, however positive progress has been made. Some of the relocated turtles were carrying eggs, which recently hatched, producing seven hatchlings that are growing well and will be incorporated into the population.

SUPPORT CAPACITY-BUILDING AND LIVELIHOODS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The existing La Carranchina Reserve engages with local community members in activities such as habitat restoration, honey-bee collection, and species monitoring. Additional pilot plots for agroforestry, beekeeping activities, and other activities that align with conservation will be developed in the expansion. These techniques can be replicated by local residents on their own lands.



The reserve project area © Turtle Survival Alliance

