



Female Giant South American River Turtle © WCS-Brazil

Protect the World's Largest Population of Giant South American River Turtles

The sandbanks of the Guaporé River, running along the Brazil-Bolivia border, harbor Earth's single largest population of the Giant South American River Turtle, one of the largest freshwater turtles in the world that can weigh as much as 175 pounds. Each year, approximately 40,000 of these giants take to the banks in a massive nesting event known in Brazil as an "arribadas" and produce millions of hatchlings. This is the largest and most important nesting area in the world for this species, which is threatened by illegal consumption of its meat and eggs, growing river traffic, and deforestation and habitat degradation that impact water bodies across the region.

Turtles have long been an important source of food for communities in the Amazon, which has led to an unsustainable degree of turtle meat and egg consumption. Recent studies estimate that approximately 1.7 million river turtles are consumed annually in the state of Amazonas, Brazil. Our partner, Wildlife Conservation Society-Brazil (WCS-Brazil), has been working with riverine communities in the Amazon since 2014 to protect turtle nesting sites.

Rainforest Trust seeks \$967,186 to work with WCS-Brazil to establish the 22,606-acre Guaporé Turtle Refuge on the north side of the Guaporé River to protect the sandbanks and adjacent habitat for the Giant South American River Turtle. The project will also benefit the Bolivian River Dolphin (a subspecies of the Endangered Amazon River Dolphin), the Endangered Giant Otter, and the Vulnerable Yellow-spotted River Turtle. The area will be officially designated and managed by the Brazilian government as a Wildlife Refuge, with a management plan developed and implemented in collaboration with WCS-Brazil and local communities.

SAFEGUARD SIGNIFICANT POPULATIONS OF THREATENED TURTLES AND OTTERS

The Guaporé River population of Giant South American River Turtle is currently estimated to be between 40,000 and 75,000 females, which is approximately 30% of its global distribution. While already protected on the Bolivian side of its habitat, the target section of the Guaporé River lacks any form of protection in Brazil.

The Guaporé Basin is globally recognized as one of the most important strongholds for the Giant River Otter, not only for the numbers living there, but for its genetically distinct population. The same importance holds for the Bolivian River Dolphin, with an estimated population in the Guaporé Basin of 5,000 individuals.



22,606
ACRES

\$967,186
PROJECT COST

\$42.78
COST PER ACRE

6,430,988 mT
CO₂ EQUIVALENTS
STORED

KEY SPECIES:

Giant South American

River Turtle (EN),

Giant Otter (EN),

Yellow-spotted River Turtle (VU),

Orinoco Goose (NT)







The Guaporé River is the major tributary of the Mamoré River (within the Madeira River basin), which drains into the Amazon River.

HELP SUSTAIN TURTLE POPULATIONS THROUGH EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

The proposed project will support active protection and patrolling of turtle breeding areas, regulate boat traffic and people's access to the beaches, and collaborate with local neighboring Afro-Brazilian Quilombola communities to protect the turtles and generate income by promoting community-based tourism activities.

Drones, camera traps, and GPS devices will be used to monitor biodiversity, especially turtle populations, for example, to annually track the number of nesting females, to conduct broader biological surveys and enforcement, and to enhance understanding of turtle habitat use during both flood and dry seasons.

Guaporé Turtle Refuge

-  Proposed Area for Protection
-  Active Rainforest Trust Projects
-  Protected Rainforest Trust Projects
-  World Database of Protected Areas



Female Giant South American River Turtles nest on the beach © WCS-Brazil

