

notes from the field

SUMMER 2016



Exciting
New
Territory

SPECIAL
EDITION



WCN

Wildlife Conservation Network

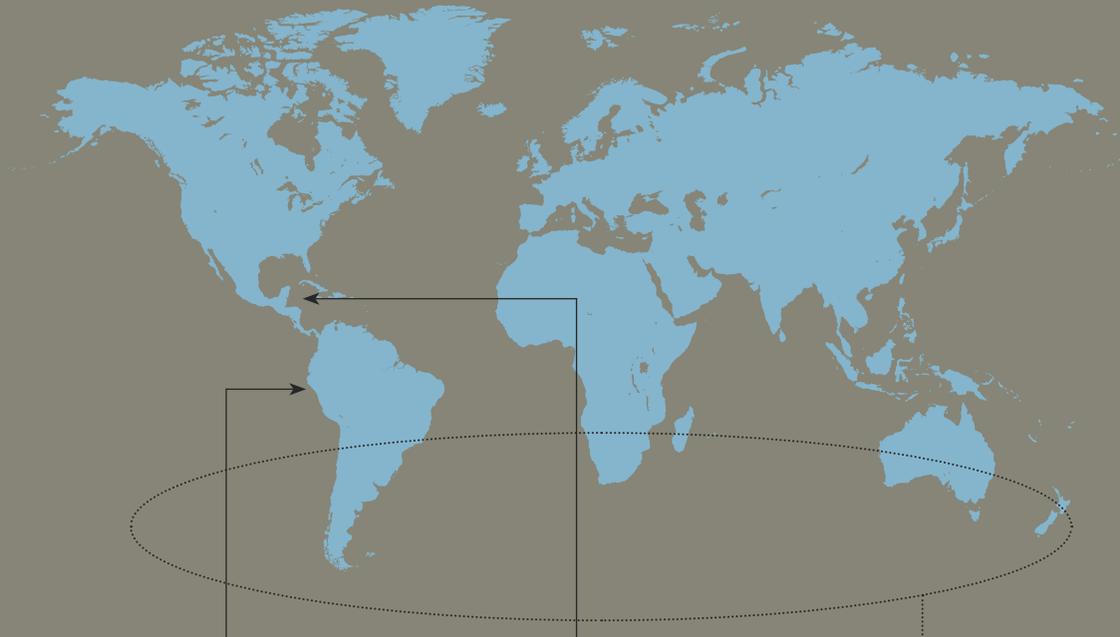
Expanding the Network

WCN STEPS INTO EXCITING NEW TERRITORY

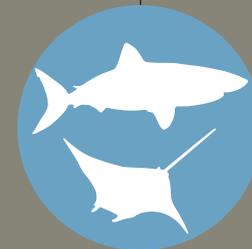
It's no exaggeration to say that the WCN network of conservationists, donors, and staff approach their commitment to protecting wildlife with equal parts passion and compassion. We are also driven to diversify and broaden our impact. This year we are proud to share that our network is growing; we are supporting new species through three highly effective conservation entrepreneurs: spectacled bears, championed by Robyn Appleton of Spectacled Bear Conservation in Peru, all penguins, whose conservation is hard fought by Dr. Pablo Borboroglu of Global Penguin Society, based in Argentina, and sharks and rays, defended by Dr. Rachel Graham of MarAlliance, based in Belize. While each of these conservationists brings something new and different to WCN, they also strengthen the core values of partnership and entrepreneurial innovation that are hallmarks of WCN.

As we welcome these partners we find ourselves stepping into exciting new territory — literally **expanding our reach into new geographies and doubling our presence in South America**. The addition of Spectacled Bear Conservation marks the first time bears join the ranks of the iconic animals our partners protect. Penguins also represent a landmark addition to our network as the first birds to accompany the fifteen plus mammals we support. Additionally, both MarAlliance and Global Penguin Society represent WCN's most significant venture off land and into the oceans as partners focused on marine conservation. These partnerships afford us the opportunity to carry out multi-species conservation, bolstering the protection of several species of sharks and rays as well as all eighteen species of penguins. With the effects of climate change, overfishing, and pollution rapidly altering conditions in our oceans, there is no better time to apply our model of conservation to protecting marine life.

We are thrilled to be bringing these conservationists into our network and are eager to support them as they protect extraordinary endangered animals on land and at sea. **We are honored to introduce Robyn, Pablo, and Rachel to you. ■**



1st BEAR
CONSERVATIONIST
PARTNER
SPECTACLED
BEARS
PERU



1st MARINE
CONSERVATIONIST
PARTNER
SHARKS
AND RAYS
WESTERN
CARIBBEAN



1st BIRD
CONSERVATIONIST
PARTNER
18 PENGUIN
SPECIES
WORLDWIDE



Spectacled Bear Conservation



Predrag Vuckovic



Feeding the Bears

First by motorbike and later on foot, Robyn Appleton spent months in northern Peru's dry forest looking for spectacled bears. Without seeing so much as a paw print, it looked like she might not be in bear country after all. Until finally...at last, Robyn saw one far in the distance. Appearing as a tiny black dot moving along the face of an enormous vertical rock wall, this bear was rock climbing, and moving steadily in Robyn's direction. Hours later, it was only a few yards away.

Long and lean, with extended claws perfect for climbing cliffs, this spectacled bear, whom Robyn named Laura, would be the foremother to nearly everything the Spectacled Bear Conservation (SBC) team would learn about the species' behavior, biology, and habitat. The only bear species in South America, and highly endangered, spectacled bears are extremely rare; by observing Laura, Robyn began to understand why there were so few bears left. It wasn't poaching or pollution that was their primary threat, it was starvation.

Spectacled bears have an extremely limited diet, with only two or three things on the menu; the most important of which is a fruit called sapote. Extensive habitat

loss largely from agricultural pressures had all but eviscerated the sapote. Without sapote the bears become emaciated, their cubs can't survive, females don't go into estrus, and their breeding is halted. Laura lost three of her cubs to this famine. Watching this happen was heartbreaking for Robyn, but it showed her what needed to be done to save these bears.

Cutting right to the heart of the problem, SBC established a conservation plan to protect bears and the indispensable sapote: a dual focus on using scientific research to learn about the bears and the resources they need to be healthy, and building partnerships with the local people who can help restore and protect bear habitat. By improving the quality of life of local people and helping to foster their pride and enthusiasm for bears, SBC is building a way forward for bears to once again thrive, healthy and well-fed, in a home full of sapote. ■

Learn more at:
wildnet.org/wildlife-programs/spectacled-bear



**SPECTACLED-BEAR
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY
PERU**

Robyn monitors a bear fitted with a GPS collar prior to it waking up. Collaring is necessary to understand these little known bears.



DR. RACHEL GRAHAM
MARALLIANCE

A New Image for Sharks



Rachel T. Graham



Pete Oxford

Most of us have never encountered a shark in the ocean; we've only seen them on television or in the movies. On screen the shark, with its muscular body and rows of jagged teeth, plays the part of the villain—either a savage thug or a sleek and cunning assassin, but always portrayed as a killer. Dr. Rachel Graham, founder of the international marine conservation organization, MarAlliance, wants to change that.

Rachel has always loved sharks—and bats and snakes and just about every misunderstood creature kept off the “cute and cuddly” list. In 1998 Rachel’s natural curiosity about sharks exploded into

a decades-long career when she literally bumped into a whale shark while working on a fisheries project in Belize. Massive and imposing, though essentially harmless, very little was known about whale sharks at the time, so Rachel set out to discover as much as possible. Using early satellite-tagging technology she followed their movements, and as the whale sharks left Belize, Rachel went with them. Eighteen years and a Ph.D. later, she is now one of the preeminent experts on the species.

Rachel had remarkable success with whale sharks—their populations and areas where they congregate are now protected in several countries. Whale sharks’ reputation as gentle

“The only thing to fear about sharks is their disappearance from the oceans.”

giants certainly helped conservation efforts, but Rachel knew that other shark species were feared and fished unsustainably, posing a major challenge to their conservation.

In 2004, Rachel turned her attention to preserving a variety of marine species and to understanding and changing negative perceptions of what she calls “toothy” sharks. She worked to recast sharks from villains to magnificent animals, as critical to the health of the oceans as lions are to the savannah. She took this work further in 2014 by founding MarAlliance to improve the conservation of threatened sharks

and rays. Through working closely with the people who live and fish in coastal areas, and focusing on sound science and policy reform, MarAlliance is taking on marine conservation from all angles. Their message is clear: the only thing to fear about sharks is their disappearance from the oceans. ■

Learn more at:
wildnet.org/wildlife-programs/shark-ray



DR. PABLO BORBOROGLU
GLOBAL PENGUIN SOCIETY

Protecting Penguin Habitat, Big and Small



Dr. Pablo Borboroglu was destined to study penguins. Growing up in Argentina he was raised on his grandmother's stories of childhood trips to the Patagonian coast, meandering along dirt roads in a horse-drawn wagon for the chance to see the penguins. Intrigued and inspired, Pablo's career began to take shape around protecting these endearing animals. Penguins even led Pablo to his wife, who he first met on a remote island research site; she was studying sea lions while he, naturally, was researching penguins.

In 1998, Pablo discovered a tiny penguin colony in Patagonia — home to only six pairs of penguins. Reckless beach-goers and fishermen had all but destroyed the colony, leaving piles of trash and burning down bushes where penguins nest. By this time, Pablo had founded the conservation organization, the Global Penguin Society (GPS). GPS considers no penguin colony too small to protect. Working with landowners and the local government, GPS helped designate the area as a legally protected wildlife refuge. Subsequently, as the garbage was collected and a small, responsible ecotourism operation was established, the colony returned to nest again.

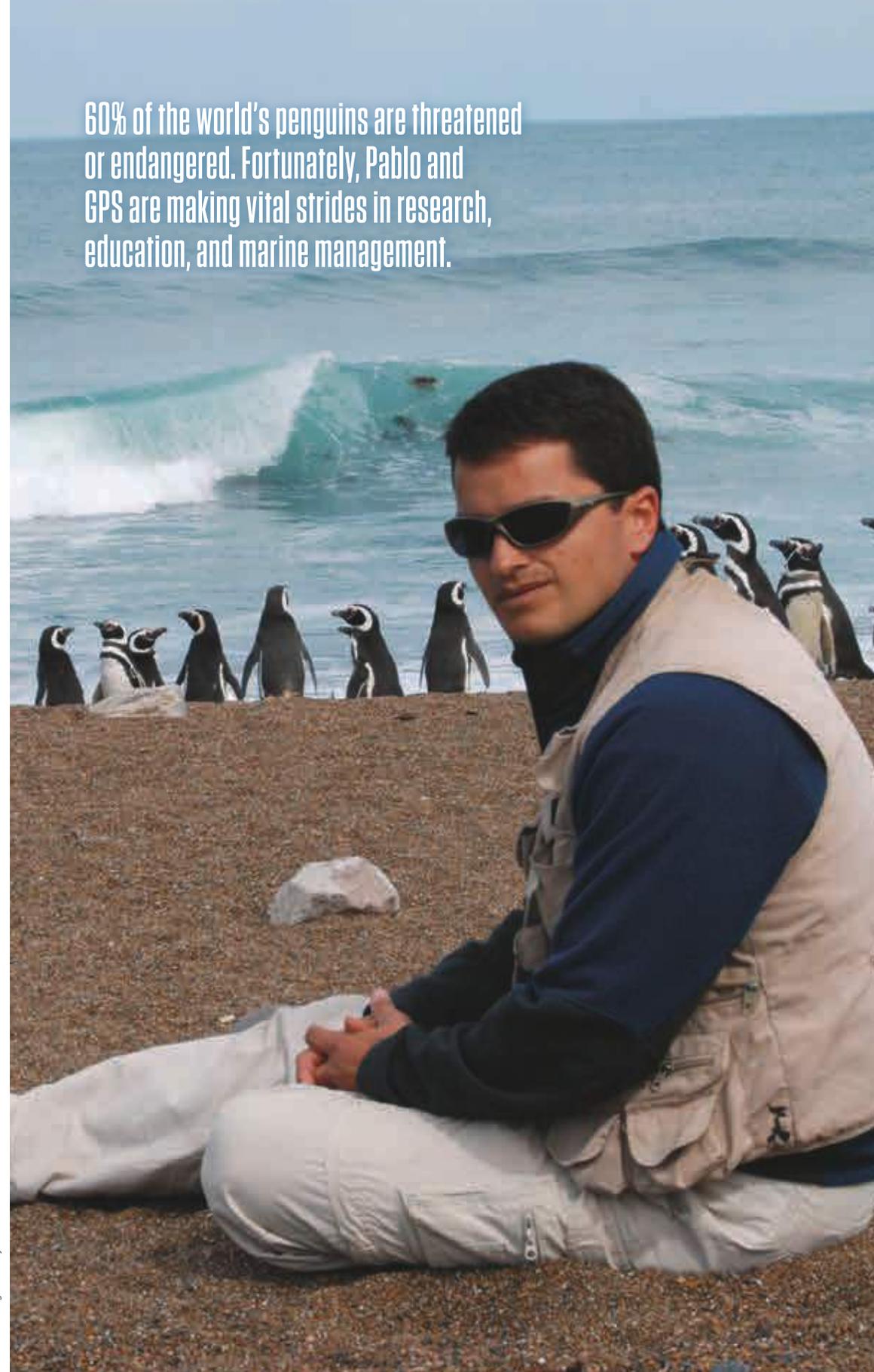
Years later, Pablo's success in protecting penguin habitat increased a thousand-fold. In July 2015, UNESCO approved a proposal developed by GPS and the government of Argentina to create a massive biosphere reserve along the coast of Patagonia called "Blue Patagonia." Roughly the size of Belgium and stretching 24 miles offshore, Blue Patagonia will ensure the protection of 40% of the global population of Magellanic penguins.

That Pablo chose to dedicate his career to penguins is extremely fortunate to the conservation of these fascinating birds. With the mounting effects of climate change, marine pollution, and poor fisheries management, 60% of the world's penguins are threatened or endangered. Fortunately, Pablo and GPS are making the vital strides in research, education, and marine management necessary for the survival of all eighteen penguin species around the world.

Penguins have greatly enriched Pablo's life, and he in turn has become one of their most exceptional and effective defenders. He can't help it, it's destiny. ■

Learn more at:
wildnet.org/wildlife-programs/penguin

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WCN protects endangered species and preserves their natural habitats by supporting entrepreneurial conservationists who pursue innovative strategies for people and wildlife to co-exist and thrive.

Invest In Wildlife Conservation

We greatly appreciate your dedication to protecting wildlife. Your kind support is vital to our Partners' heroic and enduring work in conservation.

WAYS TO GIVE

- ▶ Donate by mail, phone, fax or online
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We are honored to be the highest rated wildlife conservation organization by Charity Navigator, with four stars and a perfect score.



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