

# The 2030 Road Map: Jaguar Conservation and Sustainable Development in a changing world

## Introducing the 2030 Jaguar Conservation Road Map

The highly successful Forum for Jaguar Conservation convened on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 in the United Nations Headquarters in New York city led to a document to guide range-wide conservation of the jaguar and the ecosystems upon which it, and humanity, depend. The Jaguar Conservation Road Map is that document. Drafted by globally recognized experts in jaguar and ecosystem conservation, each with decades of experience, jaguar range countries are invited to complete the document with their own national information and commitments. This initiative represents a new era with unprecedented levels of cooperation and coordination among all jaguar range countries to achieve successful, sustainable long-term conservation on the cross-continental scale.

### *Jaguar 2030 Objective*

*To strengthen the Jaguar Corridor across the range countries, by securing 30 priority jaguar landscapes by 2030, stimulating sustainable development, reducing jaguar-human conflict in human-dominated landscapes, and increasing the security and connectivity of core protected landscapes, thus meeting globally significant biodiversity goals*

**Background:** The jaguar is the largest cat and the apex terrestrial predator in much of the Western Hemisphere, from northern Mexico to northern Argentina. Jaguars play critical roles in the structure and function of ecosystems in which they live, and are a vital component of healthy, functioning animal and plant communities. A jaguar-focused conservation strategy serves as an effective conservation umbrella for biodiversity, forests, watersheds, and carbon. Jaguar numbers are a metric of effective protection of habitats that provide a wide array of ecosystem services to local communities, as well as being vital for climate mitigation. As such, jaguars constitute a cornerstone for biodiversity conservation, and for peoples' well-being.

In spite of this, jaguar populations are seriously threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, competition with human hunters for wild prey, retaliatory killings associated with livestock depredation, fear for human safety, and killing for trophies. These threats have exerted substantial pressure on the species and continue to decrease overall numbers throughout most of the jaguar's range. Concomitant with those losses are massive losses in biodiversity, increased vulnerability to extreme weather events, and increased vulnerability to global climate change. In short, as the jaguars loses ground, humanity loses its global support system.

The jaguar has now lost approximately 50 percent of its historic range, with an estimated seven million km<sup>2</sup> of tropical and sub-tropical habitat remaining. Retention of remaining intact ecosystems that contain jaguars has immense value due to the ecological services they provide. While a comprehensive economic valuation of these services is not yet available, the value of some prominent ecosystem services generated from jaguar habitats in Brazil has been estimated to exceed \$4 billion a year.

**Population Strongholds and Connecting Corridors:** The aim of the initiative is to ensure that jaguar population strongholds are fully protected, and also connected via a series of biological and genetic corridors into a single, large-scale ecological unit—the Jaguar Corridor. This Continental model has been

successful in accelerating knowledge of jaguar distributions and the challenges the species faces, while also advancing conservation tools employed in actions on the ground to secure stronghold populations.

The stronghold areas, also known as **jaguar conservation units, or JCU**s, and individual **corridors connecting them, work together** to maintain the viability of populations. A network of strongholds and connecting corridors can ensure the persistence of a single, interconnected range-wide meta-population. Stronghold populations generally occur in relatively intact habitat, most often within protected areas such as national parks, reserves and sanctuaries, but also include indigenous territories carefully managed forest lands, and conservation-oriented ranches. At a minimum, jaguar strongholds tend to have a high percentage of their land in areas with low human population densities and anthropogenic impacts.

**Working at multiple levels:** Securing jaguars across the whole Jaguar Corridor requires working within stronghold areas—including protected areas—as well as within the production landscapes that jaguars sometimes need to cross. It also requires working at different scales: landscape, national, transboundary, and regional levels.

**Large landscape planning and conservation tools:** At landscape level, ensuring the effective management of protected areas is key to defending jaguar strongholds. Many protected areas across the jaguar range currently have little in the way of capacity to deter agricultural incursions, poaching, logging, and other threats. Thus, there is a need to build capacities for managing, including patrolling, through training, infrastructure and equipment. In the human-dominated landscapes that connect population strongholds, high-potential linkage corridors can be identified. Integrated large-scale land planning and interventions that ensure safe passage for jaguars through the corridors will ensure connectivity. It can also ameliorate human-jaguar conflicts and build coalitions for the coexistence that is necessary in these areas.

**The benefits of national commitments:** An enabling environment for jaguar conservation at national levels will facilitate advances at the landscape and corridor levels. Actions needed at national level include: identification of jaguar population strongholds, recognition of connective corridors between them, implementation of protective measures to secure population strongholds, and of conflict mitigation measures in human-dominated corridors. This necessitates multi-sectorial integrated land use planning that accommodates development priorities while ensuring biodiversity protection, retention of forests and their carbon, and watershed conservation. Together, these contribute to stable, or increasing populations of jaguars, and a healthy environment for humans.

**Uniting for a range-wide vision:** Coordination among range countries is a crucial at two distinct, yet complementary, levels. These are: (i) regional level, including range-wide vision development, action planning (including goal setting), harmonization of monitoring and evaluation protocols, and sharing of proven tools for coexistence, forest management, protected area law enforcement, and control of wildlife trade; and (ii) transboundary coordination among sub-sets of countries, through landscape-level cooperation within and between JCU and corridors, national-level protocols and agreements.

**Sustainable development and sustainable financing:** Fundamental to reaching this vision is sustainable financing. A key part of this involves ensuring the adequacy and sustainability of protected area financing systems. In addition to the ongoing costs of managing protected area systems, which are key to protecting core populations, are the costs associated with conserving jaguars across production landscapes. There are strong arguments for ensuring that such costs are internalized into private and public sector investment decision making. Energy and transportation infrastructure development should aim for no net loss in biodiversity, with jaguars an excellent metric for success of forest and wildlife conservation at large scales. Thus, sustainable financing is a mixture of adequate public investments in sustainable development goals, additional private funding, and orienting national development actions to accommodate biodiversity and jaguars.

**A range-wide approach:** Jaguar 2030 is a range-wide effort of range country governments, nongovernmental and inter-governmental organizations, local communities and the private sector around a shared vision to conserve jaguars and the valuable ecosystems upon which they, and we, all depend. The jaguar range countries agree, with support from interested organizations, to work together to counter the multiple threats to jaguars, including habitat loss and fragmentation, livestock conflict, and the growing trafficking of jaguar parts—helping to preserve the natural and cultural heritage that jaguars and their habitats represent for many Latin American cultures.

**The Four Pathways to Jaguar Conservation:** Like the highly mobile jaguar itself, that travels from prey patch to prey patch and from reserve to reserve, the Roadmap involves four complementary and mutually reinforcing Pathways—including priority actions and targets at regional, national and landscape levels and actions aimed at achieving financial sustainability:

- ❖ Pathway #1: Range-wide coordination in support of protection, connectivity, scaling up and enhancing ambition
- ❖ Pathway #2: Development and national-level implementation of range countries' national strategies, including priority JCU strengthening plans, improved national-level enabling environments and national contributions to transboundary efforts
- ❖ Pathway #3: Scaling up of conservation-compatible sustainable development models in JCUs and Corridors, including transboundary landscapes
- ❖ Pathway #4: Enhancing the financial sustainability of systems and actions aimed to conserve jaguars and associated ecosystems

Despite its length, the Road Map is a highly readable document, divided into discrete easily digestible and accessible sections. Each of the Pathway outlines a series of actions that are clearly presented in Section Two of the Document. . .

**The Road Map to the future:** Taking advantage of the newly energized sense of collaboration across the jaguar range and with the aim of creating a clear informational baseline for all stakeholders, the Roadmap also provides detailed information regarding jaguars and their range. This includes a set of country profiles, transboundary profiles highlighting shared and contiguous JCUs and, finally, a comprehensive listing of baseline actions, organized by individual Pathway. The Road Map is a foundation, upon which each individual country can build, and from which countries can collectively coordinate, to accomplish jaguar and biodiversity conservation at unprecedented levels, uniting species conservation with sustainable development goals for tangible impacts at local, national, and regional scales.