

Tetrritories of Life: Key Facts About Our Protected Areas

From the snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Santa Marta to the majesty of Chiribiquete, where the rainforest holds ancient secrets, Colombia safeguards more than 50 million hectares of strategic ecosystems that regulate water and climate and contain 32% of the country's biological diversity. These protected areas are the refuge of our natural and cultural heritage. Discover what they are and why their conservation is the cornerstone of our future.

What are protected areas?

They are zones of great ecosystemic importance, essential for the long-term conservation of resources, thanks to factors such as their location, biodiversity, and endemic species.

Why are they important?



They conserve biodiversity and ensure its long-term preservation.



They help regulate the climate and water resources.



They can be a source of income for local communities, for example, through sustainable tourism.



Many are home to indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities. Their preservation involves protecting the cultures and traditions of these communities.



They are an important source of knowledge, as they provide valuable information about biodiversity and the environment.

National Natural Parks: Jewels in the Natural Crown

They are one of the main categories of protected areas in Colombia. These vast tracts of land preserve ecosystems, fauna, flora, and landscapes of great value that have been little altered by human activity. In our country, they are administered by National Natural Parks of Colombia.

Other Protected Areas



Nature Reserve: an area where primitive conditions of flora, fauna, and gea—inorganic, geological, or mineral elements—exist, and which is designated for the conservation, research, and study of its natural resources.



Unique Natural Area: considered a rare natural setting due to its special conditions of flora, fauna, and gea.



Flora and Fauna Sanctuary: an area dedicated to preserving wild plant and animal species or communities to conserve the genetic resources of the nation's flora and fauna.



Park Road: an area of land with a road that features unique scenic beauty or natural or cultural values, preserved for educational and recreational purposes.

Colombia's National Natural Parks³

It manages 65 protected areas, which together make up the National Natural Parks System (SPNN): 44 National Natural Parks (PNN), 2 Flora Sanctuaries (SF), 1 Wildlife Sanctuary (SF), 9 Wildlife and Flora Sanctuaries (SFF), 3 National Natural Reserves (RNN), 1 Unique Natural Area (ANU), 1 Park Route (VP), and 4 Comprehensive Management Districts (DMI).

What are the main threats to the PNNs in the Colombian Amazon?



Armed conflict: It affects the governance of protected areas and turns them into zones of dispute and illegal exploitation.



Illegal exploitation of natural resources: It impacts biodiversity and generates social conflicts.



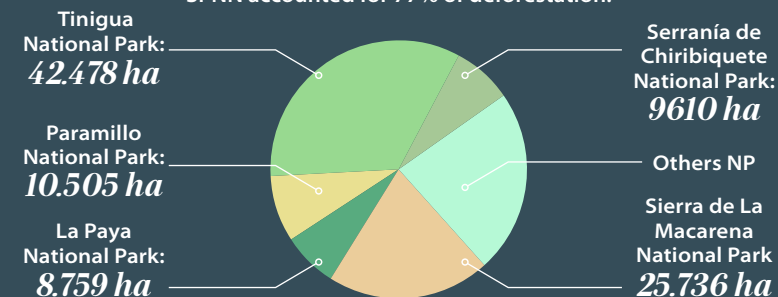
Land grabbing: creates socio-environmental conflicts, such as the displacement of local communities, and affects ecosystems of high environmental importance, biodiversity, and ecosystem services.



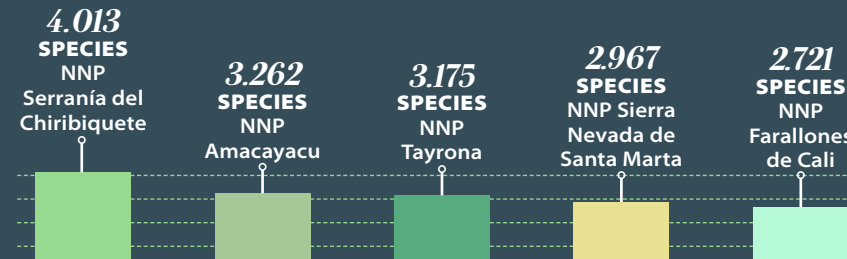
Infrastructure development and economic projects: These often cause conflicts driven by economic and political interests.

Sanctuaries at Risk: The Spread of Deforestation in the PNNs¹

From 2013 to 20232, just five protected areas within the SPNN accounted for 77% of deforestation.



Fauna and Flora in the National Natural Parks



National Natural Parks in Numbers

Colombia has **1.804** protected areas, covering 50,084,177.29 hectares (land and marine).²

There are **44** National Natural Parks in Colombia, covering 12,947,480.93 hectares.³

11 protected areas within the National Natural Parks System (SPNN) are located in the Colombian Amazon: 8 National Natural Parks, 2 National Natural Reserves, and 1 Flora Sanctuary.³

The Serranía de Chiribiquete NNP is the largest in the country, covering an area of **4.266.169** hectares.

32,22% of the country's biodiversity is found in the National Natural Parks.²

125.745 hectares of forest were lost in the National Natural Parks between 2013 and 2023.²

The protected areas of the Colombian National Natural Parks System (SPNN) total 38,865,081.66 hectares, representing

16,87 % of the national territory.³

- References**
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 2. <https://runap.parquesnacionales.gov.co/cifras>
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