

Candela Fracchia

Rewilding Argentina



Argentina

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Candela works for Rewilding Argentina in Iberá Park, where she is responsible for the reintroduction of red-and-green macaws, bare-faced curassows, giant anteaters and collared peccaries, all of which were locally extinct. Her role primarily involves monitoring and tracking the released animals, organising daily activities with volunteers, and explaining the projects to journalists and donors. As reintroduced animals often move to cattle ranches, forestry areas and villages, she also visits local residents to keep them informed and maintain good relations. Additionally, a project to restore native trees is underway in the Yermalito Reserve. This area was previously affected by deforestation and fires, so several species of tree are being planted and relocated to help accelerate the reforestation process.

Ignacio Gutierrez

Rewilding Argentina



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Ignacio, known as Nacho to his friends, is the conservation coordinator of the Patagonia Azul Project, a coastal marine restoration and conservation project led by Rewilding Argentina. The project's mission is to establish and expand marine protected areas in Argentine Patagonia and develop the country's first marine ecosystem restoration initiative. Nacho's role involves coordinating programmes that monitor marine fauna, such as whales, pinnipeds, sharks and seabirds. He also leads efforts to restore islands and seabeds in areas where these ecosystems have been severely damaged by the introduction of invasive species and uncontrolled seaweed extraction.

He and his multidisciplinary team of six, comprising biologists, field technicians and a captain, live in a biological station within the protected area on which they work. Nacho also works closely with other Patagonia Azul Project leaders, government authorities, local and international researchers, and other NGOs.

Rodrigo Patrón

Ambá Uruguay



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Rodrigo Patrón is one of the leaders of Ambá, a Uruguayan organisation dedicated to reconnecting people emotionally with nature and regenerating ecosystems. In a country with a weak conservation tradition and one of the lowest levels of protected areas in the Americas, he seeks to promote a comprehensive conservation model inspired by Rewilding Argentina's work. He coordinates strategies and leads community processes in two large conservation landscapes in Uruguay: the islands of the Uruguay River, which is shared by Uruguay and Argentina, and the eastern mountains of Gran Parque Carapé.

Rodrigo is deeply involved in designing experiences that bring local communities closer to conservation and the full nature model, generating strong links between ecological regeneration and local development. His work involves coordinating with local authorities, political actors and technicians, as well as rural communities. He always prioritises horizontal dialogue and involvement from the territory. He firmly believes that conservation is only possible if it is rooted in communities and presented as a vital opportunity for the future.

Christopher Cuthbert Christopher

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Christopher Cuthbert is a Tanzanian national who joined the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) in 2021 as part of the Serengeti Ecosystem Development and Conservation Project (SEDPC). He has a Master of Science degree in Natural Resources Assessment and Management from the University of Dar es Salaam, as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Ardhi University in Tanzania. This combination of academic backgrounds enables him to contribute to FZS's vision of a world where wildlife and wild lands are cherished and sustainably protected for their intrinsic and economic value to present and future generations. During his four years at FZS, he has been responsible for coordinating and ensuring the compliance of all FZS land use planning activities with different legal frameworks at international, national, district and village levels. He has facilitated the preparation of land plans in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem. This includes preparing over 6,000 Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy (CCRO) for the Serengeti district. He believes that participatory and integrated land use planning is a vital approach to protecting the Serengeti ecosystem by balancing human needs and wildlife conservation. In the spirit of Michael Grzimek's words, 'The Serengeti Shall Never Die', Christopher champions integrated and participatory land use planning to ensure the ecosystem's survival for future generations.

Saidy Mubamba

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Saidy Mubamba is a Zambian conservationist who holds a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management from Copperbelt University in Kitwe, Zambia, and is currently studying for a Master's degree in Project Management at the University of Lusaka. He has worked as a Conservation and Operations Supervisor (COS) for African Parks in Kafue National Park for five years, leading a team in areas such as law enforcement, technical operations, community mobilisation and finance. He is also responsible for addressing and resolving interpersonal conflicts within teams, managing road infrastructure and fire management, and implementing and monitoring all ongoing projects at a sector level. He provides feedback to the Field Operations Manager and stakeholders.

Veronica Mtoka

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Veronica is a highly skilled natural resources and GIS professional, renowned for her leadership in community-driven conservation and her inclusive, participatory approach to field projects. Over the past four years, she has led the 'Green Recovery Conservation Challenge', a sub-project of the wider 'Emergency and Recovery Support for Biodiversity in Tanzania (ERB)' initiative, which is funded by the German Development Bank (KfW). Focusing on the Serengeti National Park and its surrounding communities, the project addresses environmental challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.

Veronica's core mission is to promote innovative, sustainable solutions that balance conservation with local livelihoods. She collaborates with a team of over six people to advance three key goals: Grow Back Better: Strengthening the ties between communities, tourism and conservation by providing market access and supporting local initiatives. Clean Back Better: Improving waste management and recycling in the Serengeti ecosystem. Fix Back Better: Preserve the park's unique global value through responsible tourism and sustainable development.

Her daily responsibilities involve engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, from park staff to high-level government officials, and interacting with individuals from local communities. As community-based work relies heavily on collaboration, she must have strong relationship-building skills to work with diverse groups, including communities, donors, government agencies and NGOs.

Kelvin Kayula

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Kelvin is an Operations and Conservation Supervisor (OCS) in Kafue National Park. He joined African Parks in December 2022 after graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from Copperbelt University in Kitwe, Zambia, and has served in this capacity ever since. In 2024, he completed Basic Field Ranger Training with African Parks, which expanded his skillset to include direct involvement in law enforcement operations within the park.

As an OCS, he coordinates logistical operations across Kafue National Park, assists with the management and maintenance of park infrastructure, vehicles, equipment and tools, and is responsible for conservation management and staff supervision. He also leads operations in the absence of the Field Operations Manager. He is deeply passionate about conservation, and his time at African Parks has further strengthened his commitment to protecting Zambia's natural heritage. A career highlight came in 2023 when he successfully rehabilitated seven lion cubs whose mother had been tragically killed by snare wires. Under his supervision, the cubs thrived in a predator boma and developed the ability to hunt independently—a rewarding and defining moment in his conservation journey.

Magomba Kudakwashe

Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority/African Parks



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Magomba is a Zimbabwean national employed by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA). He joined the authority as a ranger and has since risen through the ranks, most recently being promoted to the position of Senior Area Manager/Head of Law Enforcement at Matusadona National Park. Since 2019, this park has been co-managed by ZPWMA and the African Parks Network under the Matusadona Conservation Trust. Magomba holds a diploma in wildlife management and a master's degree in ecological resources management. He previously worked for the ZPWMA in Hwange, Gonarezhou, and the Chipinge Safari Area Intensive Protection Zone. His current responsibilities include coordinating law enforcement and operations, and working closely with government and local authorities, communities, and other key stakeholders to ensure the effective, sustainable management of Matusadona National Park and its surroundings.

Tatenda Noreen Muchopa

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Tatenda recently joined the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) as Technical Advisor on Programme Development in the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor (STC). This is a vital wildlife corridor connecting Gonarezhou and Kruger National Park within the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area. After over two decades of planning, the STC has yet to reach its full potential, and Tatenda's role is pivotal in advancing its development. She collaborates closely with local communities, conservation partners, and stakeholders to promote ecological connectivity and community-based conservation initiatives.

A seasoned expert in natural resources management and GIS, Tatenda holds an honours degree in natural resources management and an MSc in geographical information systems (GIS) from the University of Leeds. With over ten years' experience in conservation GIS, environmental analysis and mobile data collection, she has developed a strong background in geospatial science. Her passion for community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) is evident in her leadership of major CBNRM programmes in the Southeast Lowveld and the Mid-Zambezi Valley. These programmes have empowered communities through sustainable and impactful conservation enterprises. Driven by her commitment to biodiversity conservation and geospatial science, Tatenda is well-placed to effect positive change in the Sengwe-Tshipise Corridor and beyond. Her blend of technical expertise, passion for nature and dedication to community empowerment makes her an invaluable asset to FZS and the STC initiative.

Emídio Vicente Sumbane

Conserve Global



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Emídio Vicente Sumbane is an ecologist and community development practitioner who is dedicated to building bridges between biodiversity conservation and human wellbeing in Mozambique. Having studied Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane and completed postgraduate training in Integrated Management Systems, he now heads up the Community Programmes portfolio at Conserve Global. His work focuses on the southern landscape of the Futi Corridor, a critical ecological and cultural area adjacent to Maputo National Park.

Emídio's core mission is to empower communities to take the lead in conservation efforts. Through his collaboration with local organisations such as the Associação Comunitária para Conservação – Corredor Futi (ACCCF), he helps establish the political, social and economic conditions required for the long-term stewardship of natural resources. This involves strengthening governance systems, promoting community health and education initiatives, supporting sustainable livelihoods and cultivating intergenerational leadership in conservation.

Much of Emídio's work involves complex social and institutional dialogue. He collaborates closely with government agencies, traditional leaders, conservation NGOs, researchers and donors to develop solutions that respect ecological integrity and community needs. He frequently engages in fieldwork, policy discussions and strategic planning meetings to help shape inclusive conservation models that are rooted in local values and rights.

He has held leadership roles in the education programme at Gorongosa National Park and made key contributions to the MozBio II project in the Maputo landscape. Through his voice and presence in national and international forums, Emídio champions a collaborative, equitable and forward-looking vision of conservation—one in which people and nature can thrive together.

Bester Muzeya

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Bester is a dedicated conservationist whose passion for nature was shaped by her upbringing in the local communities of Kabompo District in North Western Province, Zambia. Her hands-on experience of the environment from an early age fostered a lifelong commitment to conservation, leading her to earn a Bachelor of Education in Environmental Studies. She is currently serving as an Assistant Landscape Coordinator with the North Luangwa Conservation Programme, playing a pivotal role in community-led natural resource management.

Bester focuses on strengthening stakeholder collaboration, promoting good governance among local institutions in game management areas and advocating sustainable livelihoods that encourage responsible resource use. Her work ensures that conservation benefits reach those intended, creating a positive impact for both people and wildlife. With her extensive experience in community outreach, governance and institutional development, Bester is a highly skilled project manager, negotiator and communicator. She thrives in team settings, demonstrating strong leadership skills, the ability to write effective proposals and reports, and good public speaking abilities. She takes pride in accomplishing goals. Fluent in English and six Zambian languages, she bridges cultural gaps and fosters meaningful connections in conservation efforts.

Ohm Omene

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Ohm Omene is an agroforestry engineer by training and has a diploma in wildlife specialisation from the School of Fauna in Garoua. He is currently studying for a master's degree in ecosystem management and biodiversity. He embodies a blend of practical experience and scholarly expertise. He played a pivotal role in establishing the 8th National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). With seven years' experience as Provincial Coordinator — three with the Lukuru Foundation and four with the Frankfurt Zoological Society — Ohm has influenced project coordination and community engagement in the Maniema region of the DRC. He was responsible for coordinating various project components, managing field teams, fostering relationships with local communities, and overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of initiatives.

He initiated a project to facilitate safe passage for local residents across paths traversing Lomami National Park, thereby minimising conflicts between the community and park management. By addressing the concerns of local inhabitants, he not only safeguarded the park's biodiversity, but also enhanced community trust and cooperation, thereby illustrating the importance of inclusive conservation strategies. Currently, Ohm is deeply engaged in bonobo research, focusing on this endemic DRC species. He is leading a team that is habituating these primates to the presence of researchers — an essential step towards promoting sustainable tourism. His work seeks to balance wildlife conservation with economic opportunities for local communities, establishing a model for sustainable development.

Martin van Rooyen

African Parks



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Martin is the Conservation Manager at Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He leads the research and monitoring team, as well as conservation projects, and works closely with other departments and stakeholders. He holds a Master's degree in genetics, physiology and ecology from the Mammal Research Institute at the University of Pretoria. His formal training in genetics, physiology and ecology has given him a broad understanding of the threats to biodiversity and the ecosystems they inhabit. He has diverse conservation management and research experience, having worked with a variety of species in different environments, including critically endangered snails and flightless birds on remote Indian Ocean atolls, and lions and elephants in numerous African protected areas. In Garamba, he aims to harmonise conservation science and practice by using robust scientific evidence and critical thinking to inform effective monitoring and management strategies in this complex and diverse landscape.

Muhammad Hilal Fikriansyah

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Hilal is an Indonesian national and a wildlife conservation professional specialising in wildlife research. He currently manages the Wildlife Protection Unit for the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) in the Bukit Tiga Puluh Landscape in Indonesia. He joined FZS Indonesia in 2020, bringing with him years of experience as a wildlife researcher. He is also a graduate of the Conservation Project Management Programme at Goethe University in Frankfurt.

The Bukit Tiga Puluh Landscape is one of the most biodiverse areas in Sumatra. However, it is under intense pressure from human activities, which makes it highly vulnerable to human-wildlife conflict. In this context, Hilal is responsible for designing and implementing wildlife survey and monitoring programmes, particularly for Sumatran elephants and tigers. He also manages human–elephant conflict mitigation teams and develops context-specific strategies based on field analysis. He plays a pivotal role in coordinating conservation initiatives with local government partners, including the Jambi Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA Jambi) and the Bukit Tiga Puluh National Park Authority. His work integrates scientific monitoring, strategic planning and collaboration with local communities to ensure the long-term protection of critical species and habitats in this threatened landscape.

Kevin Ramadhan Sandy

Leuser Conservation Forum Foundation



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Kevin Ramadhan Sandy is a dedicated conservation professional who serves as the Project Management and Reporting Coordinator at the Leuser Conservation Forum Foundation (FKL). In this role, he oversees the development of proposals and engagement with donors, as well as budgeting, compliance and reporting on results for multiple landscape-scale initiatives across the 2.6-million-hectare Leuser Ecosystem.

He works closely with the wildlife protection, restoration, research, education, database, finance and sustainability divisions at FKL to monitor grant implementation, track key performance indicators and provide timely narrative and financial updates to the philanthropic foundations and partners supporting Leuser Ecosystem conservation. Kevin's cross-functional coordination ensures that each programme meets donor requirements while maximising ecological impact and community benefit. He also helps FKL to continue field operations seamlessly by synchronising timelines across multiple donors and minimising funding gaps between grant cycles, thereby strengthening the organisation's mission to safeguard one of the world's last remaining strongholds for critically endangered Sumatran orangutans, tigers, rhinos and elephants.

Skye Cameron

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Skye is a conservation ecologist with over 15 years' experience working across non-profit, academic, government, and Indigenous-led conservation programs. She currently serves as the Regional Operations Manager for the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) in the Kimberley, where she leads a diverse team to deliver land management and biodiversity conservation across more than 4 million hectares. Her work integrates ecological monitoring, invasive species control, and fire management with strategic partnerships—particularly with First Nations communities—to support conservation outcomes that are ecologically effective and culturally grounded. Prior to this, Skye led AWC's science program in the Kimberley for five years, driving monitoring, threatened species research, and adaptive management in alignment with both AWC and First Nation partners aspirations.

Skye's background spans freshwater ecology, conservation physiology, and ecotoxicology, with a PhD from The University of Queensland. She has led research programs in remote northern Australia, including long-term biodiversity monitoring of Groote Eylandt in partnership with the Traditional Owners, Anindilyakwa people. Her career reflects a strong commitment to evidence-based, place-based conservation, with a focus on building collaborative partnerships and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems with scientific practice to deliver effective conservation outcomes.

Rebecca Diете

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Rebecca (Bek) joined AWC's National Science Team in 2021 to coordinate Conservation Land Management strategies and reporting across the AWC estate. She has recently been promoted to Regional Ecologist for the newly formed Central North Region. This role involves managing a small but growing team to deliver the science program (monitoring, research, and fauna reintroductions) for AWC sanctuaries and partnership areas in the Top End of the Northern Territory and western Queensland. Prior to joining AWC, Bek gained diverse experience in ecological research, conservation, academia, and land management working for the University of Queensland, state government, NGOs and consultancies. She completed her Honours research on invasive and native rodents in the Torres Strait, and her PhD on endangered species on an island in Arnhem Land.