

### NGS BIRD PROJECT

A few Small World Foundation sponsored activities counted on the participation of Javier Diaz. The San Martin de Amacayacu bird project, awarded with a National Geographic Explorer Grant, needed a technical assistant to get the digital elements organized, in particular the gathered stories for the book that we hope to be able to present in not too much time. Javier was in the community for a big month and also gave the Instagram and Facebook accounts a solid boost.

Javier: "To start, I think the cultural heritage of the Tikuna indigenous community as a whole has an incredible value, not only for the community itself, but also for the rest of society. San Martin's environmental guard

worked hard to collect and transfer local knowledge on culturally important birds between generations. The idea is to let this knowledge contribute in management plans for the ancestral lands and in the environmental education activities with the children in the community.

The excursions to the rainforest and the stories have had their emphasis on the birds with a role or occupation that can also have an educational message. This message is extra powerful with such a recognizable context and generates respect for the natural environment in which the story takes place, the community's ancestral lands. At the same time, it is easier to imagine that birds elsewhere in this region, on this continent or



elsewhere on the planet are also important and need respect.

Unfortunately, a lot of knowledge disappears with the death of the elderly people because the young ones have different interests. In this way, this knowledge can also not become part of local management plans, while it is such a crucial element for this because it is so suitable for the exact local context. Western arguments are less suitable, even though the aim (management or conservation for example) is the same.

We would like to tell you a little part of a story to show how interesting it is to conserve this cultural heritage, in particular with the involvement of young people and with emphasis on the fact that all of this is part of their own environment as it has been transferred between dozens or even hundreds of generations before them.

*"A young man, named, Chochímuré, had (after a long and fantastic story, of course) taken possession of the costume of the famous king vulture (photo on the previous page). When he put on this costume, he became the spiritual owner of the world above and boss of all vultures. He was then automatically given the important task to secure the planet by regulating the temperature. He is the guard of everything concerning the air, space, the sun and the atmosphere."*

In practice, this story translates in a sincere respect towards the king vulture. When people have hunted an animal, they regularly leave the guts on the forest floor for this impressive bird to eat and to make sure he can carry out his task properly. The message is clear: Climate change in the Tikuna culture relates to a lack of wellbeing of the king vulture.



## ANNUAL REPORT AND THE FUTURE

2023 obviously was a fantastic year for San Martin de Amacayacu and the Small World Foundation! After much “blood, sweat and tears”, 32.000 hectares of ancestral land were finally recognized as an addition to the already existing Ticuna Cocama and Yagua (TICOYA) indigenous reserve. With this recognition, the total size of this reserve has become more than 180.000 hectares of high and lowland Amazon rainforest of which only a tiny part is in permanent use by the 22 communities for housing or agriculture.

At this moment, small moves are being made to also get the recognition of the land (roughly 3.500 hectares) around the five communities Valencia, Puerto Esperanza, Veinte de Julio, Patrullero and Ticoya. This land should have been recognized when the TICOYA reserve was created. Back then and ever since, the Colombian government has created the image of this land indeed having been included in the reserve. At this point in time, nobody can really explain why this was not the case and now many time and energy consuming activities need to be organized to talk to the municipality of Puerto Nariño and some



private land owners about the precise location of the borders of the land that needs recognition.

The community would like to thank Floor van der Sluis (SWF secretary - left on the photo) and Marjolein Beers (SWF treasurer - right) for their efforts in 2023.

Below you will see all the expenses made in 2023 by Small World Foundation within the different categories:

Categories	Euro
Meetings San Martin	850
Environmental Guard	2.729
Environmental Guard education pro	1.833
Nat Geo bird project	4.387
Other	266
Total	10.064

The Small World Foundation funding was indispensable in the process of the recognition of the ancestral lands of San Martin de Amacayacu and Palmeras. This will not be any different in the ongoing process for the five communities. Therefore it has been decided that the Small World Foundation will stay operative for at least three more years (2024, 2025 and 2026). Instead of six newsletters per year, there will be three from this year on. This present newsletter (number 112) is the first of 2024. Number 113 is planned for the beginning of May and number 114 for September. We hope you will understand and will still support our efforts!

Since a few years, most support for the environmental guard team has come from Switzerland. Hopefully the guard will sustain the project autonomously in the long term without the need to involve the Small World Foundation. Incidental projects, such as the bird project, can of course keep counting on the administrative support of the Small World Foundation in the coming years.



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**Would you like to support the Tikuna indigenous community of San Martin together with the Small World Foundation and stay informed about local developments in this remote corner of Colombia?**

You can transfer a yearly amount of 20 euros (or more...!) to:

**Rabobank IBAN: NL28RABO0132726203**

**Bankaccount name: Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION** at Baarle-Nassau,  
Under the reference of 'newsletter' and your Name (BIC: RABONL2U)

Or check out the online contribution module on [www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page\\_id=68](http://www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68)

Do not forget to inform us by sending your name and e-mail to [smallworldfoundation@hotmail.com](mailto:smallworldfoundation@hotmail.com). For alternative (forms of) contributions you can also write to us via the e-mailaddress mentioned above. As mentioned before, all contributions will be exclusively spent on the development and implementation of local initiatives. We will inform you about these projects as much as possible via the newsletter.

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