**Region: Gran Chaco**

Countries included: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile & Paraguay

**Biodiversity and Global Environmental Benefits Regional Highlights:**

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| Country | Country-level biodiversity significance |
| Argentina | * Ranging from the Gran Chaco to Southern Patagonia, Argentina contains significant landscape range and biodiversity. Conservation is approached from an ecosystem perspective, with emphasis placed on positioning the country’s strategy within the dependence of livelihoods and sustainable production that drives the national economy. Argentina’s provinces belong to the Neotropical region (Yungas, Paraná Forest, Araucaria Forest, Chaco and Pampean provinces), the South American transition zone (Puna, Monte, Comechingones and Cuyan High Andean provinces) and the Andean region (Patagonian, Maule, Valdivian Forest, Magellanic Forest, Falkland Islands and Magellanic Moorland provinces).[[1]](#footnote-0) * In terms of range-size rarity, there are relatively few areas of importance, namely along the Chile-Argentina border in Patagonia, in the Northwestern Tucumán Province, and the Falkland Islands. * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate well below the global average, 33.31 to 44 percent, respectively. Large KBAs outside of/or partially within Protected Areas (PAs) are found throughout the country, with concentrations in marine areas, the Chile-Argentina border in Patagonia, and Northern Argentina throughout the Chaco region; and include: [Atlantic, Southwest 34 - Marine](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/30247)/[Atlantic, Southwest 40 - Marine](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/30936), [Península Mitre](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/19575), [Lago La Plata - Fontana](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/19487), [Cuenca del Río Salado](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/19370), and [Bajos Submeridionales](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/19565). PA protection of KBAs has risen from 2000, from 25.37 percent. Protected areas are moderately well connected. * Prioritization efforts have a dual track in Argentina. National top down decisions through consultations are built from national coordinating bodies such as la Comisión Nacional Asesora para la Conservación y Utilización Sostenible de la Diversidad Biológica (CONADIBIO); and legal decisions such as Ley 26.331, which provides resource transfers and financial resources to owners of native forests including IPLCs. Academic conservation prioritization efforts have been less visible, but highlight the vast potential benefits of protecting currently underrepresented areas endemic terrestrial vertebrates in the Gran Chaco.[[2]](#footnote-1) * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are high along the Patagonian Andes, Southern Patagonia region, Paraná River watershed, and Chaco region, and low throughout the arid and semiarid rangelands.[[3]](#footnote-2) * The primary land cover types are Shrubland - 126Mha; Agriculture - 78.5Mha; Sparse vegetation - 62.9Mha; Forest - 35.2Mha; Bare - 14.8Mha; Wetland - 10.7Mha; Grassland - 9.70Mha; and Water - 5.20Mha. * Argentina has 23 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Argentina.pdf?1589487716). * Argentina ranks just below the global average of ocean health, performing poorly in terms of its sustainable food provision. Argentina has a high number of marine species at risk, relative to the world. |
| Bolivia | * Bolivia is among the most biodiverse countries in the world, home to 6 percent of all species in the world.[[4]](#footnote-3) With a high level of genetic diversity, Bolivia’s endemic species represent just less than a quarter of their market exports.[[5]](#footnote-4) Bolivia is split into 12 ecoregions, subdivided into 23 sub-ecoregions. Bolivia’s ecoregions are diverse and include Amazonian-flood forests, mountainous areas, grasslands, various (semi-)deciduous, dry, and evergreen forests; positioned throughout the country’s varied altitudes.[[6]](#footnote-5) * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate greater than the global average, 56.23 to 44 percent, respectively. Large KBAs outside of Protected Areas (PAs) are found on state and district borders to the East and North and include: [Este de Río Mamoré](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/23874), [Lago Titicaca (Sector Boliviano)](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14364), [Tahuamanu](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14372), and [Lagunas Rogaguado y Ginebra](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/14397). PA protection of KBAs has slowly risen from 2000, from 50.02 percent. * The central corridor of Bolivia, or the Yungas ecoregion is of critical importance, with a concentration of 35 percent of diversity, comprising only 4 percent of the total country area. The regional importance is matched in terms of range-size rarity, with a conservation hotspot throughout the corridor. * Red Amazónica de Información Socioambiental Georreferenciada (RAISG) has provided land claim and rights information for IPLCs at this [webmap](https://www3.socioambiental.org/geo/RAISGMapaOnline/). * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are concentrated in the mountainous and forested corridors of the North and East. * The primary land cover types are Forest - 57.4Mha; Shrubland - 17.6Mha; Bare - 9.31Mha; Grassland - 8.92Mha; Agriculture - 8.24Mha; and Sparse vegetation - 7.40Mha * Bolivia has 11 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Bolivia-Plurinational-State-of.pdf?1589474344). * Bolivia is landlocked and thus has no marine data. |
| Chile | * Chile’s extreme range from the Northern Atacama Desert to Southern Patagonia creates highly variegated landscapes, with recent analysis identifying 30 ecosystems.[[7]](#footnote-6) Ecosystems that are dominated by native vegetation cover 76 percent of the mainland, with a further 17 percent covered by desert ecosystems. The central and southern regions of the country are considered a biodiversity hotspot and highly threatened.[[8]](#footnote-7) * Species biodiversity is relatively high, with one-fourth of species being endemic. The geographic scope of species range-size rarity is relatively sparsely distributed throughout the country, with areas of importance in Patagonia and along the Chile-Argentina border in Patagonia. Easter Island has a high level of endemism and is of high biodiversity importance. * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate well below the global average, 33.88 to 44 percent, respectively. Large KBAs outside of/or partially within Protected Areas (PAs) are found throughout the country, with concentrations in Southern marine areas, and Regions of Coquimbo, Aysén, and Magallanes y de la Antártica Chilena; and include: [Coastal hills south of Chañaral](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/47085), [Coquimbo desert scrub](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/47086), [Quinchele Inland and surrounding sea](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/27324), [Coyahique Alto-Coite](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/27326), [Pacific, Southeast 29 - Marine](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/30319). PA protection of KBAs has risen from 2000, from 28.99 percent. Protected areas are increasingly well connected in Southern Patagonia. The marine environment of Easter Island is a KBA and within Chile’s PA system. * At a national level Chile has emphasized the restoration of degraded ecosystems, buffer zones, and connectivity. While several iterations of national biodiversity prioritization exist, the current database of these efforts are found [here](http://bdrnap.mma.gob.cl/buscador-rnap/#/busqueda?p=1255) (Designación on this site allows the user to identify which prioritization effort the areas were mapped under). Tensions between national priorities, the influence of Private Protected Areas (PPAs) and Indigenous Peoples Organizations have a long history in Chile. Future PPA and conservation work more broadly needs to be cognizant of how private property regimes inhibit park–people partnerships.[[9]](#footnote-8) National conservation efforts often do not recognize contributions of Indigenous Peoples. A longstanding struggle for the Mapuche peoples is their rights to the lands and territories, in the Region of the Araucanía and Los Ríos.[[10]](#footnote-9) * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are high along the Patagonian Andes/Southern Patagonia region, and low throughout the country’s Northern regions. * The primary land cover types are Forest - 24.5Mha; Shrubland - 20.6Mha; Bare - 15.1Mha; Sparse vegetation - 13.9Mha; Agriculture - 6.30Mha; Grassland - 3.45Mha; Permanent Snow and Ice - 3.04Mha; and Water - 3.02Mha. * Chile has 14 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Chile.pdf?1589487716). * Chile and Easter Island rank just below the global average of ocean health, performing poorly in terms of its wild caught fisheries food provision. Chile has a high number of marine species at risk, relative to the world. The Chilean marine-coastal ecosystems; however, have high productivity conditions due to coastal upwelling along most of the Chilean coast. This system was highlighted in WWF’s Global 200 prioritization effort. |
| Paraguay | * Paraguay has a divide in its landscape due to the Brazilian shield and Andean depression, creating the humid forests and temperate dry forests. While there is not a complete inventory of Paraguay’s species, the current estimates find a high level of plant species that are endemic to the region (69 percent).[[11]](#footnote-10) * The geographic scope of species range-size rarity is relatively sparsely distributed throughout the country, with no major regional areas of importance. Areas bordering the Paraguayan Chaco have some species importance. * Key Biodiversity Areas within the country are protected at a rate much below the global average, 23.31 to 44 percent, respectively. Large KBAs outside of/or partially within Protected Areas (PAs) are found throughout the country, barring the north of the country which has few KBAs; and include: [Pilar](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/29751), [Arroyos y Esteros](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/20540), [Paso Curuzú](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/20538), and [Pirizal](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/20399). PA protection of KBAs has risen from 2000, from 20.34 percent. PAs are less connected in Paraguay than other countries in the region. * The Indigenous Peoples of Paraguay led by Paraguay's Federation for the Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples (FAPI), have produced a digital map of their territories, available [here](https://www.tierrasindigenas.org/Mapa). This map outlines current legal status and PA coverage, and indicates land that is not yet protected or legally titled. * Stores of irrecoverable carbon are slightly below the regional average, with higher concentrations directly North of Asuncion and along Río Paraguay. * The primary land cover types are Forest - 16.3Mha; Shrubland - 11.8Mha; Agriculture - 10.1Mha; Wetland - 3.42Mha; and Grassland - 1.54Mha * Paraguay has 6 ramsar sites with additional context [here](https://rsis.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/rsiswp_search/exports/Ramsar-Sites-annotated-summary-Paraguay.pdf?1589487716). * Paraguay is landlocked and thus has no marine data. |

1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11646/zootaxa.4341.3.6> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Map on Pg (4). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ddi.12497> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-56681-8_13> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Sarmiento, J., R. Bigorne, F. Carvajal-Vallejos, M. Maldonado, E. Leciak y T. oberdorff. (Eds.). 2014. Peces de Bolivia/Bolivian fishes. IRD-BioFresh (EU). Plural editores, Bolivia. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=bo#facts> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/bo/bo-nr-05-es.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-017-1393-x> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/cl/cl-nr-05-es.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Christopher Serenari, M. Nils Peterson, Tim Wallace, and Paulina Stowhas "Indigenous Perspectives on Private Protected Areas in Chile," Natural Areas Journal 37(1), 98-107, (1 January 2017). https://doi.org/10.3375/043.037.0112. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. <https://www.iwgia.org/en/chile.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=py> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)