

Conservation Champion Award



Guadalupe Del Río speaks about Alternare's conservation efforts for monarch butterflies. Credit: Alternare

Nature conservation is inherently a social process operating in a social context. As such, it is people who will determine its success or its failure. Recognizing this fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service International Affairs Program supports on-the-ground projects around the world to promote wildlife and habitat conservation by working with local partners. These individuals are not only at the forefront of conservation efforts, but for most, this is a lifetime mission, not a mere job. Through their unwavering commitment, they achieve great accomplishments with very little resources and frequently with great personal sacrifices.

In recognition of these individuals the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in association with the Organization of American States, created the Conservation Champion Award to honor individuals or groups that are making outstanding contributions to the conservation of species, habitats, or ecological processes across landscapes in the Western Hemisphere.



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Meet the Conservation Champions



Credit: Alternare

Guadalupe Del Río Pesado Executive Director, Alternare (Mexico)

For over 30 years, Guadalupe Del Río Pesado and Alternare, A.C. have worked to empower the local communities in and around Mexico's Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve to take conservation action. Alternare provides sustainable natural resource management skills to thousands of subsistence farmers in the Reserve, resulting in them becoming the drivers of conservation.



Credit: Proyecto Titi

Rosamira Guillen Executive Director, Proyecto Titi (Colombia)

Rosamira Guillen has made outstanding contributions to the conservation of Colombia's critically endangered Cotton-top tamarin through the successful implementation of field research, scientific assessment of habitats, and education programs that engage local communities in action-based programs. She helped to establish the Day of Cotton-top tamarin, a national holiday in Colombia.



Credit: Heidi Ruffler

Marleny Rosales-Meda and Maria Susana Hermes Calderón Founders, ORCONDECO (Guatemala)

ORCONDECO has helped more than 100 Maya-Q'eqchi' communities implement locally-driven wildlife management programs and promote sustainable economic growth. Thirty Maya-Q'eqchi youth have been trained to deliver one of their programs, which now reaches over 2,200 children in 56 elementary schools and high-schools every year.