



SPECTACLED BEAR  
CONSERVATION

2024

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# ANNUAL REPORT



# About This Report

This report is a celebration of the remarkable impact you made possible in 2024. Thanks to your generosity and because you choose to care about conservation in Peru, spectacled bears have safer habitats, local people have new opportunities, and critical ecosystems are being protected.

Bears play a crucial role in ecosystems as seed dispersers, promoting forest diversity and regeneration

## About Spectacled Bears

Spectacled, or Andean, bears are known for their unique facial markings that resemble glasses. They are the only bear species in South America and the largest carnivore on the continent. However, they are one of most vegetarian members of the bear family. As excellent climbers, they spend much of their time scaling trees, steep cliffs and mountain terrain.

Spectacled bears play a strategic role in preserving biodiversity. They are highly adaptable and live in some of the most biodiverse and highly threatened ecosystems on our planet. Safeguarding bears and their extensive habitat ensures the survival of countless other species and wild places.

Spectacled bears are a vulnerable species facing serious decline. They are struggling to survive the harsh reality of habitat loss. Their forest homes are being rapidly damaged or destroyed by agriculture and mining development, wildfires, and increasing tourism. Growing human-wildlife conflict also threatens their future.

Spectacled bears need our help

# Letter From The Founder

**First off, thank you!** Your support is vital to SBC's mission of securing a bright future for spectacled bears in Peru. We aim to protect bears and preserve the rich ecosystems they inhabit. Together with our dedicated team, local communities, landowners, and government partners, and you, we are making a meaningful impact on the crucial habitats that sustain both bears and the incredible biodiversity around them.



Conserving bear populations in Peru goes beyond saving a single species; it involves protecting vital ecosystems. As a keystone species, bears help maintain habitat balance, influencing biodiversity and the well-being of countless other wildlife. Their declining numbers highlight broader environmental challenges. By safeguarding bears, we ensure a resilient future for both wildlife and the communities that rely on these resources.

The past year brought significant challenges, including habitat loss from wildfires, agricultural expansion, poaching due to human-bear conflicts, and funding difficulties. These factors provide essential context for our ongoing efforts and showcase our commitment to overcoming obstacles with resilience.

In 2024, human-caused wildfires, worsened by severe drought, threatened our conservation area in northern Peru, endangering forests that support an endangered bear population and jeopardizing the well-being of local communities. Your immediate support enabled us to respond swiftly, reinforcing our commitment to direct action. This crisis underscored the importance of SBC's landscape-level approach aimed at protecting over 150,000 acres of critical habitat. Our research and monitoring initiatives help us understand the ecological needs and threats facing bear populations. This work provides valuable insights into bear behavior and habitat use, informing our conservation strategies. We are also securing key feeding sites through private land purchase and enhancing threatened equatorial dry forest areas, while expanding community empowerment programs to forge lasting partnerships with thousands of people living alongside bear habitats.

Our comprehensive approach is crucial for safeguarding spectacled bears and protecting biodiversity while supporting local livelihoods. Your unwavering support empowers SBC to pursue these ambitious initiatives that create lasting change. Every success we achieve for spectacled bears and every acre of habitat we secure is possible because of your generosity. It inspires our team daily, motivating us to continue our vital conservation work. Thank you for your commitment to protecting wildlife and our planet for future generations. Together, we are creating a sustainable future where both wildlife and people can thrive.

With warmth and gratitude,

Robyn Appleton  
President and Founder



## ABOUT SBC

SBC is a Peruvian non-profit organization that combines habitat protection, community-based initiatives, and research into a conservation approach that makes a strategic impact for spectacled bears and other wildlife that live in bear habitat.



## Our Mission

To conserve and protect spectacled bears and their habitat in Peru through scientific research, education, and collaboration with local communities, government, and landowners.

## Where We Work

### LAQUIPAMPA, NORTHERN PERU

SBC is protecting the endangered Tumbes bear population (known for the Tumbesian ecoregion it inhabits). The population is geographically isolated from the core bear distribution in the Andes and is the only one inhabiting the equatorial dry forest ecosystem.

### MACHU PICCHU HISTORIC SANCTUARY

SBC collaborates with the Peruvian government and local communities to conserve bears and other wildlife in and around the protected area.



# Letter From Our Executive Director

Your care for wildlife and your commitment to conservation is the thread that weaves together everything we do. In 2024, thanks to your support, our integrated research, habitat protection and community empowerment initiatives made a significant impact for spectacled bears.



**Habitat Protection.** With the help of generous supporters, we secured funding to purchase and protect Calicantro, a vital 5,000-acre private land parcel that holds a key feeding area and secures habitat connectivity for bears in northern Peru. The purchase will be completed in 2025. We also achieved a milestone in our habitat enhancement program when first detection of a bear using an artificial waterhole we constructed confirmed this is a promising action for increasing water availability and improving conditions bears need to survive and thrive in the dry forest.

**Research.** We deployed 10 GPS collars, the first fitted on spectacled bears in Peru's protected areas. We achieved this important milestone in collaboration with Peru's government to strengthen conservation management in and around two of the country's most biodiverse national parks—the Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary and the Laquipampa Wildlife Refuge (LWR). The valuable data we are collecting is informing our long-range plans and the next phase of the collaring program in 2025.

**Community Empowerment.** In the second year of SBC's veterinary outreach program, our team conducted the first treatment campaigns in remote mountain villages near key bear habitat. We treated 300 domestic animals and livestock, reducing the risk of disease transmission to bears in shared forests. These interactions also raised awareness of animal care and welfare among children and pet owners while providing opportunities to educate ranchers on grazing practices that minimize conflict with bears.

Your incredible generosity towards our wildfire emergency in northern Peru enabled us to immediately respond to local needs for supplies and support, reach 90% of residents near bear habitat with wildfire prevention education, and establish the foundation for a permanent training and response program for local villages.

Thank you for making this progress possible and for being part of our journey towards securing a future for spectacled bears in Peru.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alexander More', is written over a white background.

Alexander More  
Executive Director



## Collaboration Across Acres

Spectacled bears require large, contiguous habitat areas for survival spanning vast elevation gradients, ecosystem boundaries, national park borders and property lines. This makes long-term conservation success a journey of ongoing collaboration with local communities, government, private landowners, and YOU.

Together we are creating a future for bears and other wildlife in Peru with conservation action across 150,000 acres of habitat. These landscapes hold some of the most threatened and biodiverse ecosystems on the planet.





## Laquipampa, Northern Peru—75,000 acres of habitat

Our conservation area (“the Laquipampa Conservation Landscape”) represents the remaining viable habitat for the endangered Tumbes bear population inhabiting the seriously threatened equatorial dry forest ecosystem. It comprises Indigenous-owned land, the Laquipampa Wildlife Refuge national protected area, and a private land parcel in the center called Calicantro that holds a critical feeding site and secures habitat connectivity. Thousands of people live in and around this landscape.

In 2024, SBC secured the funding to purchase and protect Calicantro, which is a significant milestone on the road to permanently securing the Laquipampa Conservation Landscape.

**Long-term vision:** secure the Laquipampa Conservation Landscape through continued bear monitoring, private land purchase and enhancement, and expanded community empowerment initiatives that ensure long-term coexistence between people and Tumbes bears.



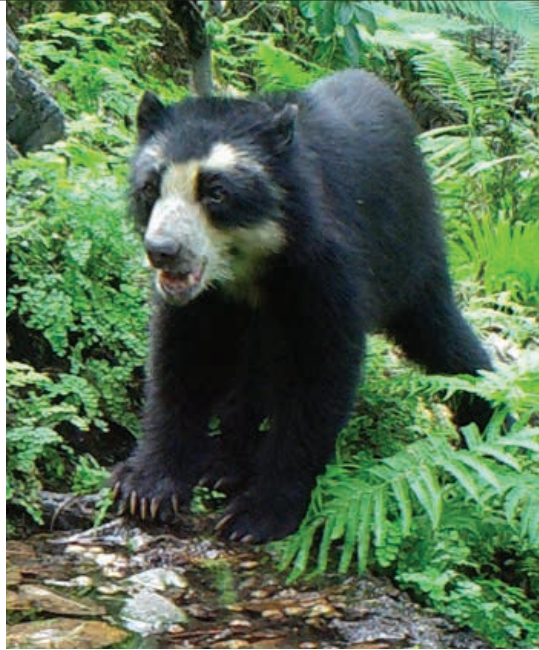
## Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary—80,300 acres of habitat

The Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary (“Machu Picchu”) is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a national protected area preserving Peru’s cultural heritage and biodiversity. The park hosts 25% of all Peruvian birds, 15% of all Peruvian mammals and 20% of all Peruvian flora. Millions of tourists visit each year, and the park has been home to villages for generations.

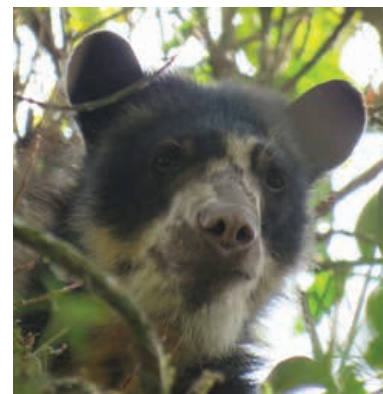
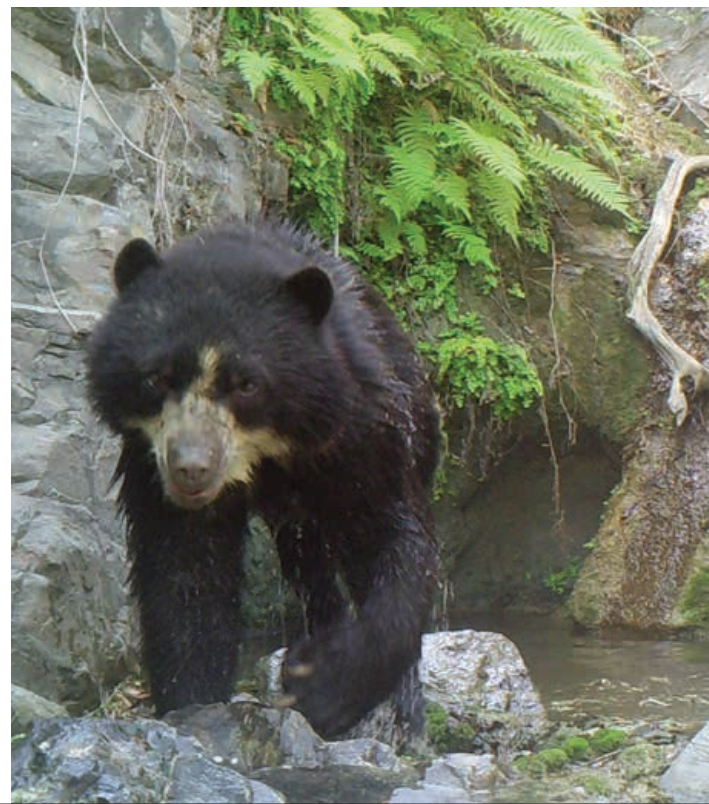
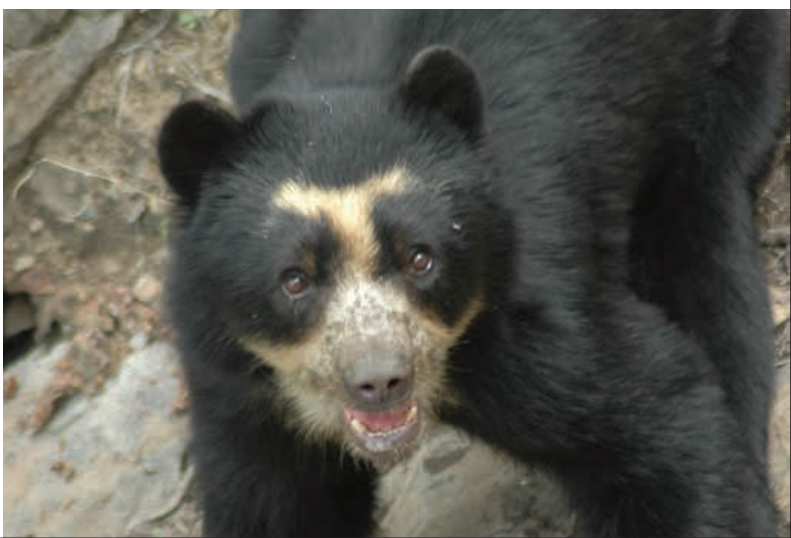
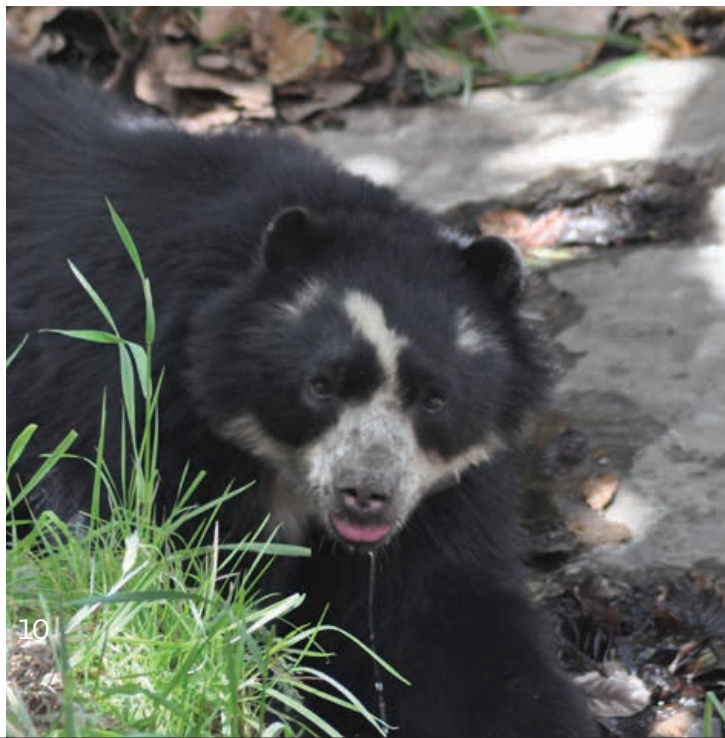
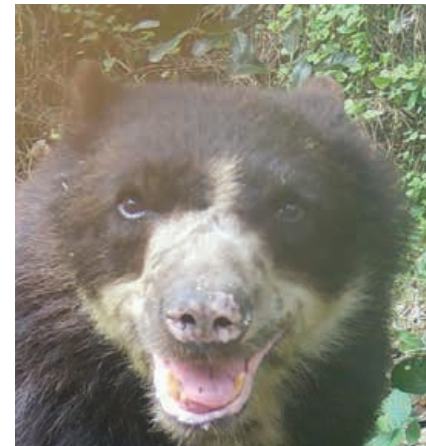
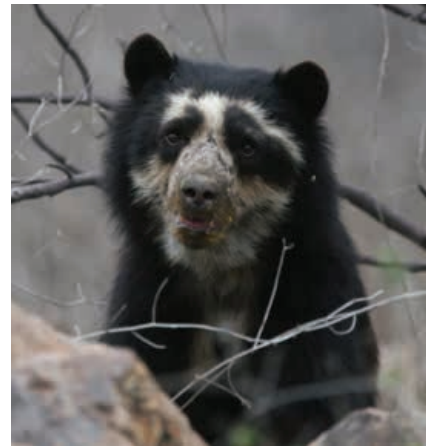
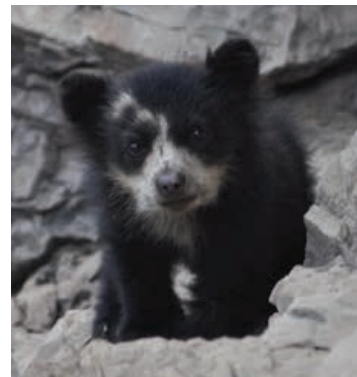
In 2024, SBC continued collecting the scientific data on bears urgently needed by Peru’s government to strengthen conservation actions in and around the park.

**Long-term vision:** create a 1.5 million-acre UNESCO Biosphere reserve surrounding Machu Picchu in collaboration with government, local Indigenous communities and other stakeholders.





Every Bear Matters  
Your generosity is securing their future



## Impact By the Numbers

**300**

domestic animals and livestock treated through SBC's veterinary program

**10**

GPS collars deployed, the first ever on spectacled bears in Peru's protected areas

**+10,000**

of people living near in or near the Laquipampa Conservation Landscape engaged in wildfire prevention education

**76,000**

acres of critical bear habitat designated as a Key Biodiversity Area based on SBC's field data, highlighting it as an international conservation priority.

**1st**

bear detected using SBC's waterholes built to enhance water availability for bears in the dry forest

**+600**

lives impacted by sustainable income from the Felti program

# Tracking Peru's Bears: GPS Technology Transforms Species Protection



The night was quiet around the camp in Machu Picchu, but Isai Sanchez, SBC's Field Manager, was wide awake. After many days of patient waiting, sleep was elusive because he knew the alarm could sound at any moment, signaling a bear had entered the trap and it was time to move. Then it happened.

The team of four leapt from their tents, grabbed the backpacks ready with equipment and supplies and raced towards the trap, expertly navigating the narrow, rocky trail by the light of their headlamps. The intensity of the moment sent the same surge of adrenaline through Isai's veins as it had during his first collar deployment. The privilege of another intimate encounter with a wild bear left him breathless. **But equally thrilling was knowing that every GPS collar represents more vital data that will help protect the species.**

In 2024, during the first phase of a multi-year program, SBC fitted GPS collars on 10 spectacled bears across Machu Picchu and the Laquipampa Wildlife Refuge in northern Peru. This marked the first time that collars were deployed on bears in Peru's protected areas—a continuation of the landmark collaboration between SBC and SERNANP (Peru's Protected Area Service) to strengthen conservation management in two of Peru's most biodiverse parks.

GPS collars transmit daily location data, allowing SBC to identify science-based conservation actions far more rapidly than with camera traps alone, which provide only periodic snapshots every few months. **With the pressing challenges of deforestation and mounting human pressure on habitat, rapid data collection has never been more important.** The program's primary goal is tracking bear movements across the landscape and identify key resources (food, water, denning sites) both within and beyond park boundaries. Understanding how bears use unprotected habitat outside the parks provides the foundation for working with neighboring communities to reduce human-wildlife conflict and secure long-term habitat protection.



Deploying GPS collars requires a dedicated team effort. Our team is pictured here in Machu Picchu with Kalea the bear (while she was sedated), who was the first bear we fitted with a collar in 2024.

But GPS collars also yield additional scientific benefits beyond location data. Fitting collars while bears are sedated creates the opportunity to collect health data including body weight and measurements, as well as blood and hair samples that contribute to genetic profiling of bears in Peru. **With multiple bears collared at the same, we also can study population dynamics and make novel comparisons between wild bear populations**

— an important contribution to scientific knowledge of the species.

As Kalea, Linda, Pachito, Joe, Merry, Mogly, Artidor, Branch, Sofo and Denis wander through the forest wearing GPS collars, their paw prints have become more than mere impressions in the soil. Every step these bears take through the forest represents hope, as the scientific data they generate will help protect them and their habitat.

# Generosity Fuels Wildfire Emergency Response

In the fall of 2024, wildfires raged across South America. The conditions were rife for out-of-control fires and the stakes were incredibly high for both people and wildlife. Tinder dry conditions coupled with dangerous slash and burn farming practices ignited most fires, including one extremely close to SBC's Laquipampa Conservation Landscape in northern Peru.



Remote areas of the Andes are often days away from government-supported fire response, leaving local people to face the threat alone without appropriate training or equipment. Fires can spread quickly from fields to adjacent forests and bear habitat.



**But your generosity extended far beyond emergency response.** Your support also helped lay the groundwork for SBC's permanent wildfire education and mitigation program that will empower local people with ongoing training and equipment to reduce fire risk and fight fires when they occur.

In the face of growing wildfire risk, you are helping build a safer future where communities have the knowledge, tools, and confidence to protect themselves and care for wildlife.

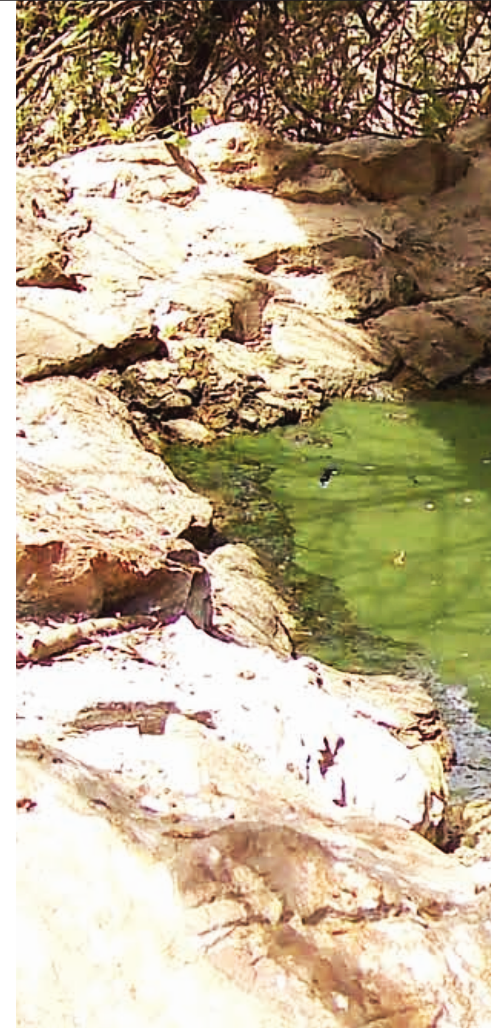
**In this moment of peril, the care and generosity of SBC's supporters provided funding for immediate emergency response.** The wildfire threatened the irreplaceable: homes, livelihoods, and the forests that provide the refuge for an endangered spectacled bear population and countless other species. With your support, SBC delivered supplies where they were needed most. We also reached 90% (or more than 10,000 people) of the local population with wildfire prevention education—broadcasting in Spanish and Quechua (the local Indigenous language) over the local radio station and running training workshops in villages alongside government agencies.



# Water is Life: Enhancing A Key Resource In The Dry Forest

Imagine the scene: it's early morning. The sun crawls over the mountain ridge and the strength of its rays hit the rocky creek bed. The heat slowly closes in, rising from the sandy soil and radiating down from above. As the day wears on, the temperature soars over 105°F. The closest water source where you can quench your thirst or dive in to cool off is 3 miles away. This is daily life for bears in the equatorial dry forest where the heat is relentless and water is scarce.

Our long-term monitoring has shown us that bears, particularly females and cubs, desperately need help to thrive in this environment. **That's why SBC's private land purchase and enhancement program is aimed at rapidly protecting critical habitat and improving availability of key food and water resources.**



SBC's waterholes have become vital resources for many dry forest residents. Our cameras have documented consistent use by endemic species like the Sechuran fox, to larger mammals like puma, deer and pampas cats, as well as opossum, anteaters, bats, and numerous other bird and amphibian species.

**In 2024, we reached a major milestone when we detected the first bear using waterholes constructed by SBC.** Built in 2022 on private land SBC purchased to protect a key feeding site, these artificial water sources were strategically placed along natural bear trails at the foot of the mountain where bears descend to feed on sapote fruit. We were thrilled to see camera trap photos of Justina, a breeding-age female, using the waterholes.

The extensive use of Justina's waterholes by other wildlife inspired us to apply this successful approach to another challenge we were facing.

SBC irrigates vegetation to encourage growth of algarobbo trees (a keystone species) and year-round availability of

overo fruit (another key food source for bears), among other plants to improve food resources for bears. However, foxes were damaging our irrigation system by biting through hose connectors, creating costly leaks in an environment where water is so precious. Suspecting they were simply trying to access water, we built additional small waterholes nearby. The results were overwhelmingly positive: hose damage decreased significantly, and we documented many species using these new water resources.

This progress confirms that building waterholes **is a priority conservation action to improve the survival conditions for spectacled bears and other wildlife in the equatorial dry forest.**



# Building Global Recognition of Biodiversity Value In Northern Peru

In addition to identifying effective conservation action to save spectacled bears, SBC's 17+ years of dedicated field research—tracking spectacled bears across mountains and forest, cataloguing other threatened and endemic species, and mapping critical habitat—achieved a notable milestone in 2024.

**Our comprehensive dataset provided the scientific evidence required to designate 76,000 acres of critical bear habitat as the Laquipampa-Salas-Jayanca Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).** SBC's research and data met the rigorous standards required for KBA recognition, elevating the international profile of this biodiverse landscape.

The KBA program identifies and maps irreplaceable natural sites, directing global conservation efforts toward protecting the areas most critical for preserving global biodiversity.

This KBA designation secures international recognition that SBC's Laquipampa Conservation Landscape represents a major conservation priority and is among the planet's most biodiverse areas.

This recognition reflects the power of your support: enabling years of rigorous field research that builds the scientific foundation essential for conservation success.

# Trust In Action: Veterinary Outreach Treats Animals and Engages People

SBC's veterinary outreach program in remote villages near bear habitat in northern Peru aims to reduce wildlife conflict and the risk of disease transmission from domestic animals and livestock to spectacled bears. In 2024, the program's second year, regular treatment campaigns improved the health and wellbeing of over 300 animals and cultivated trust and a shared purpose between SBC and local people—critical for safeguarding endangered bears.



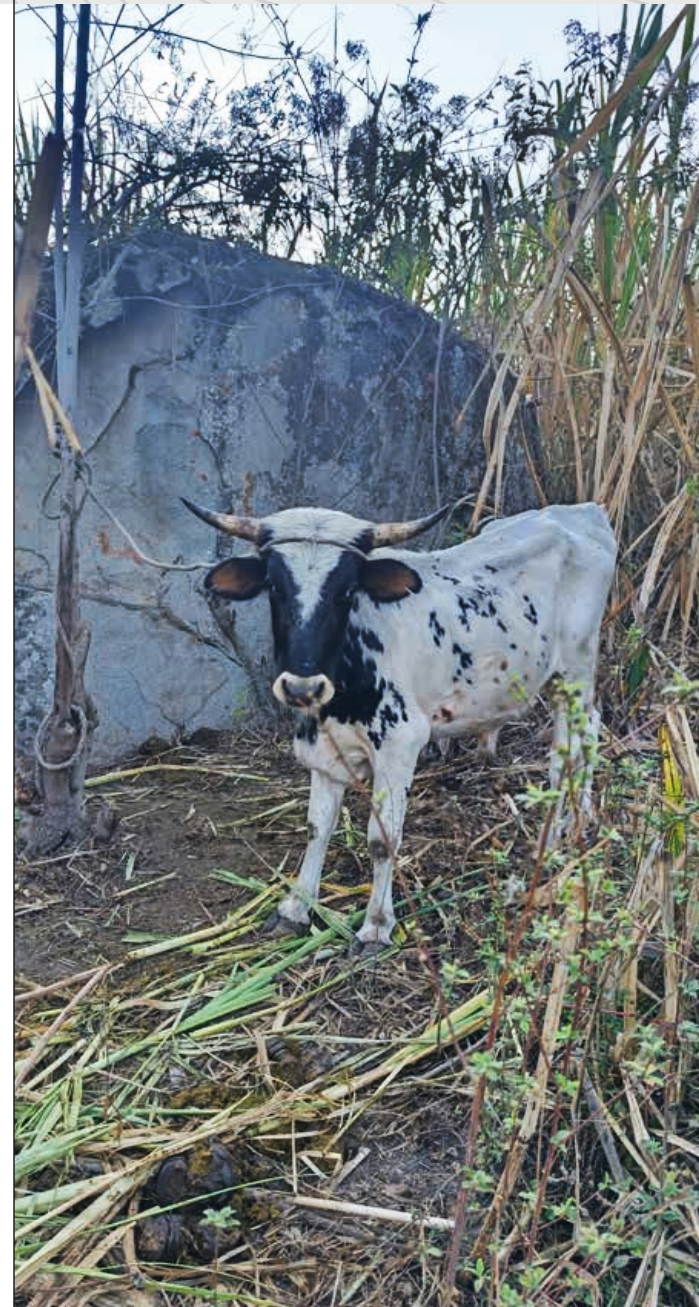
## Vet Care In The Wild

Zaida Aguinaga, SBC's veterinarian, doesn't work in a conventional clinic – she takes her animal care expertise directly into the mountains. During each campaign, Zaida provided a general health check and preventive care to her patients, administering deworming and parasite medications to address the threat of stomach and skin parasites that domestic animals can transmit to bears when they roam in the forests. Animals with injuries or serious infections received acute care and their owners learned to give the ongoing medication they needed to recover. Owners also received a card documenting their animal's condition and treatment date to establish continuity of care for future visits.

But Zaida's growing connection with people is proving to be as important as her connection to her patients. From knocking on doors to offer veterinary care, to teaching children about animal care to discussing grazing practices with ranchers – **every interaction raises awareness about animal welfare and builds SBC's role as a trusted community partner.**



SBC's veterinary campaigns provide care for both beloved pets and essential livestock in remote mountain villages near bear habitat



## A story of growing trust

When a local rancher witnessed an encounter between a spectacled bear and one of his cattle, his response revealed the power of the trust built through SBC's veterinary program. A year earlier, such an incident might have ended with retaliation and harm to the bear—a common response when livelihoods are threatened. Instead, something remarkable happened: the rancher immediately contacted SBC.

This reaction was particularly significant given the mounting pressures both ranchers and bears faced in 2024. Drought conditions had reduced food availability in pastures, forcing cattle deeper into the forests to graze and dramatically increasing the likelihood of conflict. This makes the program's focus on livestock management more urgent than ever.

Our response team promptly visited the village, surveying the area and working closely with the rancher to develop an alternative grazing plan to keep his herd away from areas of known bear activity. This pivotal interaction demonstrated how our veterinary work builds the trust essential for protecting both bears and local livelihoods.

# Connecting Children With Nature

Educating children on spectacled bears, the wonder of local forests, and the importance of caring for nature and animals is key to empowering communities in conservation and promoting successful long-term coexistence.

In 2024, we engaged children through visits to SBC's conservation center, school presentations and hands-on participation in veterinary campaigns.





## What Is The Power of Felti ?

Since 2010, SBC's Felti alternative livelihood program has empowered women and transformed lives. The program creates sustainable income opportunities for women, builds trust between SBC and local people, and strengthens conservation efforts for spectacled bears.



**Sustainable Income Generation.** Felti empowers women with a vital income source in remote areas where there are few, if any, economic opportunities. Women consistently invest their earnings in three key areas: nutritious food for their families, essential healthcare, and their children's education—investments that create ripple effects across generations.



### Community-wide Economic Impact.

Felti improves community well-being.

In 2024:

- **106** women participated as artisans in the program
- **530** family members benefited indirectly, as each artisan typically cares for a household of children and extended family
- **16%** average community participation rate, demonstrating significant local engagement and strengthening female empowerment and inclusion in rural areas



**Amy** represents the program's long-term potential. Her Felti income enabled her to pursue independent study, and she is now completing her Business Administration degree. Thanks to Felti, Amy is building toward a professional future that seemed impossible just a few years ago.

**Betty** channels her love for family into every Felti she creates. Her income from Felti flows directly into her family's future: funding her daughter's higher education, supporting her son's schooling, and providing care for her granddaughter. Her story exemplifies how one woman can cultivate opportunities for the next generations of her family.



Each artisan has her own story that reveals the true power of Felti.

**Olga** uses what she earns for something more urgent: caring for her mother's health. The medicine is expensive, but thanks to her Felti income, Olga has been able to maintain her mother's treatment, and with what's left, contributes to her household's food security. Amidst the difficulties, Olga has found her hands can provide ways to care for those she loves most.



**Yenni**, a single mother of three, has discovered entrepreneurship through Felti. The program provides more than income—it has offered her a foundation for growth. With her earnings, she began raising goats and turkeys and sells the meat in local markets. Her journey demonstrates that with courage and determination, a mother can also be an entrepreneur, provider, and role model.

### Growing Production And Our Local Supply Chain

- Our artisans craft nearly **30,000 products** annually, reflecting 200% production growth since 2019 as Felti expands to more villages near critical bear habitat
- We source wool from small family farms in the Andes, including from villages near bear habitat, creating additional economic benefits where they are needed most



# Our Team



**Robyn Appleton**  
Founder and President



**Alexander More**  
Executive Director



**Kate McIvor**  
Community Outreach and  
Communications Director



**Isai Sanchez**  
Finance & Operations  
Director



**Perpetua Aguinaga**  
Felti Assistant



**Jessica Appleton**  
Felti Market Coordinator



**Robert Appleton**  
Felti Market Coordinator



**Pablo Chero**  
Field Assistant



**Francisco Aurich**  
Lawyer



**Solanch Vasquez**  
Felti Operations  
Coordinator



**Zaida Aguinaga**  
Veterinarian



**Javier Vallejos**  
Field Photographer /  
Bear Tracker



**Johan Saire**  
Field Support



**Susana Hernandez**  
Felti Support



**Olga Mio**  
Operations Support



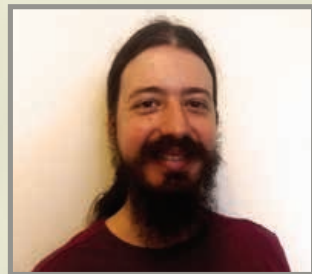
**Maria Taco**  
Student



**Irina Cerna**  
Research & Conservation  
Specialist



**Carmen Tucto**  
Research & Conservation  
Specialist



**Marcelo Segall**  
Data Analyst



**Julio Chero**  
Parabiologist



**Marcelo Benites**  
Communications Intern



**Georgina McCandlish**  
Felti Sales Manager



**Corina Montalvan**  
Felti Trainer and Quality  
Control Specialist

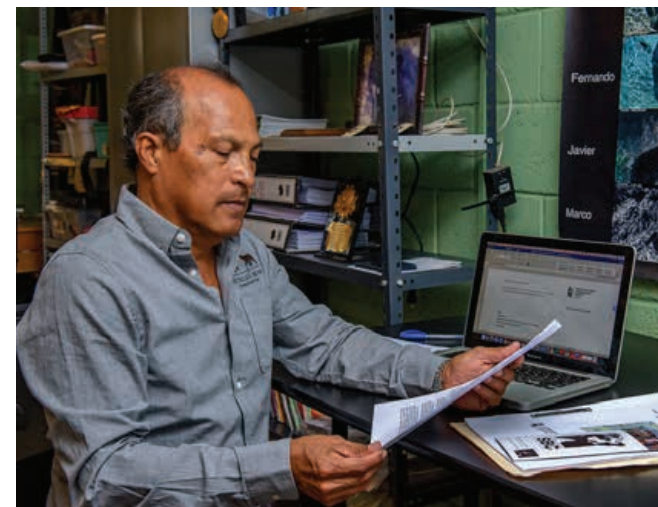


**Felicita Purihuan**  
Felti Community Specialist

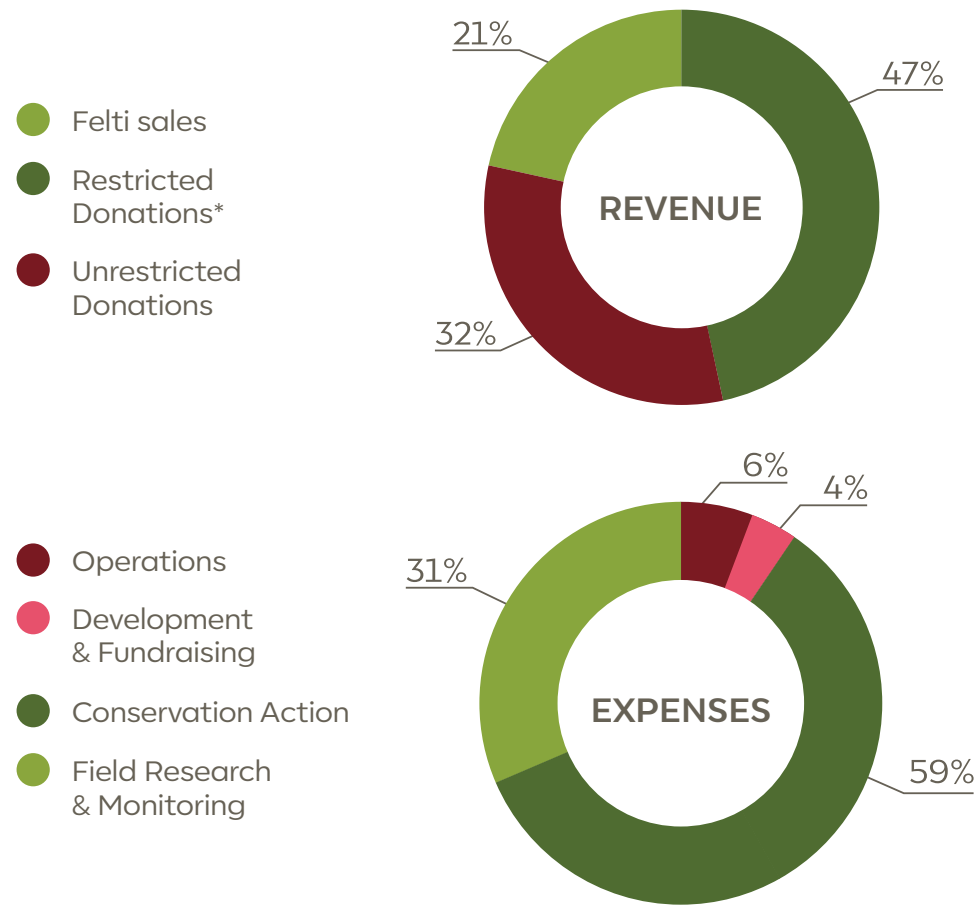


**Fanny Vallejos**  
Felti Assistant

# A Day In The Life Of Bear Conservation



# Financial Overview



\* Restricted funds for land purchase

Thank you for everything you make possible for spectacled bears. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and support in so many ways. Every action you take is changing the world for the better and creating a brighter future for wildlife in Peru.

Photos: SBC, Michell Leon

Spectacled Bear Conservation Society - Peru  
[www.sbc-peru.org](http://www.sbc-peru.org)

