

BIG GIFT to the EARTH 2013-2014



Peruvian Rainforest

Question: What acts like a giant set of lungs for our Earth, using up carbon and creating lots of clean, healthy oxygen for us to breathe?

Answer: The rainforest! For many years, Big Gift to the Earth funds—*with your help!*—have gone toward saving the Amazonian rainforest in South America. Our partners, Nature and Culture International, help us learn about and protect new sections of the rainforest every year. Every penny raised purchases and protects one square yard of critical habitat for very special plant, animal and human communities.

Where is our money going this year?

- Marañon Watershed, Cajamarca side of the river (last year we protected the Amazonas side of the river)
- Chinchipe River Regional Protected Area
- Cajamarca-Condor Tepuis Regional Protected Area



What is an endemic species?

A species is a type of plant, animal or insect. Endemic means it only lives in one location on our entire planet. There are many endemic species found in the rainforest especially adapted to survive there and nowhere else. When the rainforest is damaged or destroyed, what happens to the endemic species that live there? What can we do to save them?



Golden-plumed parakeet



Andean bear



Clown tree frog in a bromeliad

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What are tepuis?

Tepuis are flat-topped mountains that tower over the surrounding rainforest. Because they are so tall and the sides are so steep, plants and animals that live on *tepuis* have lived in isolation for a long time. Many are endemic species, living only on these tall mountains. *Tepuis* are sometimes called "Islands in the Sky".

What are some of the plants and animals we are protecting?

Podocarpus tree: one of the very few Latin American conifers (like a pine, spruce or Douglas fir tree). This beautiful tree is now endangered in Peru and Ecuador due to the high quality of its wood and the shrinking areas of undamaged rainforest in which it can live.

Bromeliads: tiny, bright flowers with stiff leaves that can grow on the ground, on other plants, on rocks and even in trees. They can absorb food and water from the air around them, so are sometimes called "air plants". They provide a home for tiny worms, snails, insects and frogs.

Sundews: a carnivorous plant (eats live things). Sundews have a sticky, moist surface and tentacles that help them attract and then digest insects! You may have heard of a sundew called the Venus Fly Trap. There are hundreds of different types of sundews, also called *Drosera*. Many of them live in the rainforest.

Spider Monkeys: long-limbed, long-tailed monkeys that live in the Amazonian rainforest. These monkeys live in large groups and find their food in the treetops. Spider monkeys are endangered due to hunting and shrinking habitat.

Lots of beautiful birds, including the Golden-plumed Parakeet, Spot-winged Parrotlet, White-chested Swift, Coppery-chested Jacamar and Orange-throated Tanager.



Podocarpus tree



Spider monkey



Coppery-chested Jacamar



For lessons & more rainforest info, visit EarthsBirthday.org