

# Wildlife Corridors Brazil

Mid-year report 2021



# Restoring the Atlantic Forest to bring back wildlife

**No other large tropical forest has suffered as much loss as Brazil's Atlantic Forest.**

WeForest's project in Pontal, in partnership with Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPÊ), grows tree corridors to connect the remaining forest fragments and bring back the wildlife that call this region home. These include more than 40 amphibian species, 100 mammal species and 350 bird species.

At the time of writing, our restoration areas had been hit by an unexpected and **unprecedented cold snap** that affected much of the southern regions of Brazil. Temperatures dropped as low as  $-1.2^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $29^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), and all sorts of crops (coffee, sugarcane, corn, citrus, pasturelands) were damaged along with some of our young trees. The project team is assessing the seedlings to evaluate the extent of the impact and decide next steps.



Our Wildlife Corridors project

**Our goals for the Wildlife Corridors project:**

So far in 2021:

We completed the restoration of

**151.86 ha**

(representing 283 000 trees growing)

and continued the restoration of

**120 ha**

(representing 230 000 trees growing)

(March-June planting season)

By 2030:

Protect and restore

**5,200 ha**

**10,400,000** trees

using Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) and framework planting

# What's new in Pontal?

## Recent highlights from the field

This is project manager Cris with an Embaúba tree (*Cecropia* sp.). We know tapirs have been around when we find these fast-growing trees broken (inset), as they love to eat the fresh leaves at the top. But it's not a problem: the hardy Embaúbas usually resprout, and eventually feed the tapirs again. And as tapirs also eat a lot of other fruits, they contribute to our work by leaving other types of seeds in their droppings, such as palm seeds, to regenerate spontaneously in our restored sites!



Since the beginning of 2021, the project has completed 151.86 ha of restoration and continued work in a new restoration area of 120 ha. The larger area covers Estrela and Agua Limpa farms in the North Corridor, and 283 000 seedlings were planted between March and July. The new area of 120 ha is at Sao Paulo Farm, also in the North Corridor. The restored area is a very long, thin plot of 300m x 3km linking two forest fragments. In the northern part, researchers have found a population of endangered black lion tamarins, so we're very excited to know that our work here will help this animal migrate and thrive!

Preparation started in February, but planting was delayed because there was much less rain than expected. By May, planting had been put on hold because of the threat of drought conditions, and resumed in July with the arrival of rain. About half of this area has now been planted and is expected to be finished by the end of 2021.

January

February

March

April

May

June



Key

Restoration activities

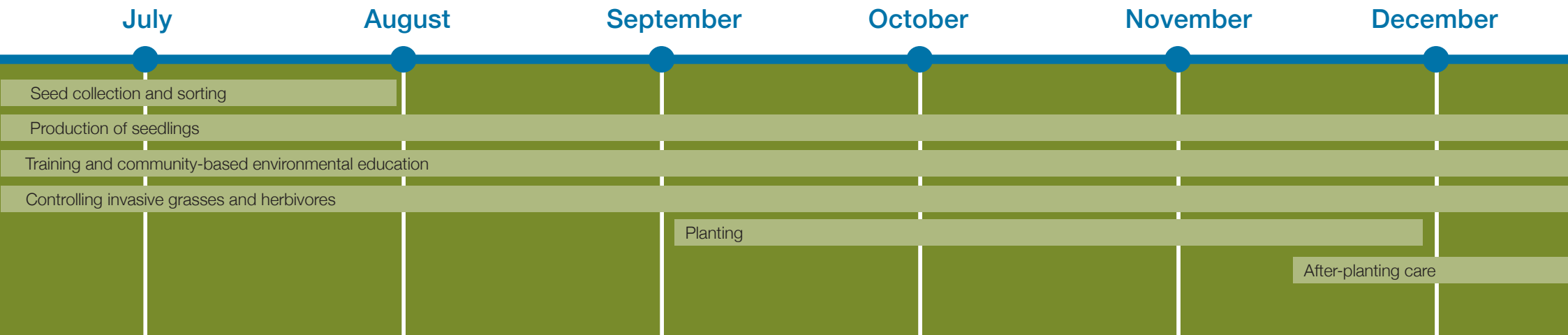
Mapping and monitoring, etc



The devastating frosts that hit much of the south west of Brazil in July affected some polygons more than others, especially the newly planted ones at Agua Limpa farm. On our latest visit we found that some seedlings are valiantly resprouting (inset), and will now have to survive the dry season and make it to the start of the rainy season. When it starts to rain again (September-November) and the resprouting seedlings get stronger, we will run another evaluation to estimate the actual mortality after the frost.

To evaluate the development of already restored sites, consultancy firm Embira has assessed the vegetation structure and biodiversity in 9 polygons that were planted in 2019 and 2020, 2016 and 2017 and 2014. They look at indicators such as vegetation cover, the density of naturally regenerating individuals as well as the planted ones, and how much of the restored areas are covered with invasive grasses. The results will provide invaluable information to help us select the best species for future planting. Early results show that the density of trees and number of species in naturally regenerating sites are well above expected.

The two research projects ongoing in the project landscape are progressing well. ‘Soundscapes’ with Rainforest Connection is recording species-specific patterns to identify the presence or abundance of up to 50 species. The NewFor project, which aims to create a high-resolution carbon map of new forests in São Paulo State, has collected soil samples, evaluated water infiltration and assessed vegetation structure and biodiversity, and is now ready to start building the carbon stock models.



# What's next?

- Finish the planting of the 120 ha Sao Paulo sites with 230 000 seedlings.
- Establish another 110 ha for ecological restoration, representing 220 000 trees, in the next rainy season (October-March) at Estrela Farm and elsewhere.
- A workshop in botanical identification with the plant nursery staff will be provided to address best practices in species identification and framework species selection.
- In early October – bird breeding season – 120 audio recording devices will be installed within restored polygons and forest fragments with RainForest Connection.
- IPÊ and WeForest are contacting landowners to discuss converting the important forest fragments in their properties into Natural Private Reserves. A brochure which explains the importance and the benefits of converting these forest fragments, including farmers' eligibility for payment for Ecosystem Services, will be ready in October. A webinar at the end of the year will involve specialists and Natural Private Reserves owners, who will share their experiences to provide farmers with practical advice.

Watch this [video](#) by Project Manager **Cristina Yuri** to learn more about our progress in Pontal this year.

## How do we know our restored forests are growing and making an impact?

Every hectare under restoration is mapped with GPS points to generate polygons (areas on a map) that are assigned to sponsors. Permanent monitoring plots are established in our sites and our forestry and science teams conduct surveys to monitor progress of biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity, among other indicators. Where social impacts are also critical, we measure socio-economic indicators such as the number of beneficiaries, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our [Why and How](#) webpage for more information.

Stay up-to-date with our new-look [Wildlife Corridors map](#), and check out the photos on [Flickr](#).

