



Organization of
American States



MESOAMERICA 2020

**Conservation Partnership of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and
the Organization of American States (OAS)**

**MESOAMERICA 2020 Anniversary Event
10:00am to 11:00 am**

Date: Monday September 21st, 2015

Venue: Hall of the Heroes, OAS Main Building 17th Street and Constitution Ave. NW,
Washington DC 20006

Meeting Objective: Celebrate one year of progress under MESOAMERICA 2020 and
present 2015 USFWS Central America grants and awards.

Agenda

- 10:00 – 10:10 am Welcome Remarks, H.E. Nestor Mendez, OAS Assistant Secretary
General
- 10:10 - 10:45 am Remarks by Invited Speakers
1. Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 2. Dr. Tom Lovejoy, United Nations Foundation
 3. H.E. Leonidas Rosa Bautista, Permanent Representative of Honduras to the OAS
 4. H.E. Patrick Andrews, Permanent Representative of Belize to the OAS
 5. Mnt. Pedro Carlos Álvarez Icaza Longoria, Coordinator, Biological Resources and
Corridors, National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity, Mexico
- 10:45 – 10:50am Presentation of 2015 Central America Conservation Hero Award
- 10:50 – 11:00 am Closing Remarks, Ambassador Dr. Neil Parsan, OAS Acting Executive
Secretary for Integral Development



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Background

Mesoamerica is a globally important region for biodiversity. With only 0.5 percent of the world's land surface, its variety of ecosystems and role as a bridge between North and South America results in Mesoamerica being home to a disproportionate share – about 7 percent – of our planet's biological diversity. Mesoamerica's forests serve as irreplaceable flyways for migratory birds, provide critical watershed and ecosystem services and help reduce the severity of climate change impacts. The forests of Mesoamerica are also home to spectacular species including quetzals, jaguars, macaws, Baird's tapirs, howler monkeys, and some 24,000 plant species, of which approximately 5,000 are found nowhere else on Earth.

Unfortunately, Mesoamerica is among the most threatened biological hotspots in the world. Nearly half of its natural habitats have been converted to agriculture or urban areas, and deforestation rates in the region continue to be high. Mesoamerica's protected areas are under intense pressure. Despite the threats and challenges, there is still hope for maintaining habitat connectivity through the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. Given the importance of Mesoamerica, it is critical that the governments and people of the region continue their collaborative efforts to save biodiversity, protect critical ecosystem services, promote peaceful cooperation, and foster regional economic growth and sustainable livelihoods within rural communities.

What is MESOAMERICA 2020?

In June 2014, the USFWS and the OAS launched their MESOAMERICA 2020 strategic partnership. The goal is to ensure the conservation of the last remaining biodiversity-rich ecosystems in the region. MESOAMERICA 2020 establishes partnerships with other key stakeholders and promotes regional cooperation in order to support effective on-the-ground conservation. One year later, we are pleased to celebrate progress under MESOAMERICA 2020 and to highlight the critical importance of Mesoamerica for global biodiversity conservation as well as for regional security and sustainable development. USFWS Director Dan Ashe will present projects funded in the region by the USFWS in 2015 under its Wildlife Without Borders-Central America Grants Program, launched in early 2015. He will also report on partnerships established with other entities and initiatives such as the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, the Mesoamerican Development and Integration Project, and a new regional cooperative agreement with the Wildlife Conservation Society. At this event, the Ambassadors of the Mesoamerican nations can renew their support and commitment to conserving the biological wealth of this region for the benefit of future generations of the Americas and the world.