



**RUFFORD SMALL GRANT COSTA RICA
2021 CONFERENCE REPORT**

**CHALLENGES OF LOCAL CONSERVATION
PROJECTS IN A POST-PANDEMIC SCENARIO
IN LATIN AMERICA**



**HEREDIA, COSTA RICA
ORGANIZER: DAMIÁN MARTÍNEZ FERNÁNDEZ**

INTRODUCTION

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic produced large-scale social and economic impacts in Latin America and in the rest of the world. In 2020, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) identified important effects for biodiversity and natural resources in the region. Variations in the presence of tourists, illegal exploitation of natural resources, relaxation of environmental regulations and reduction in budgets are some of the effects that have occurred.



Local conservation initiatives have great potential to become promoters of human and environmental well-being. In addition, they can be catalysts for biodiversity recovery processes. But the current scenario of the pandemic forces us to rethink the work of these initiatives in the current context of rural communities, protected areas, urban and coastal areas.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

Through the Rufford Foundation (RSG) a forum was held to discuss, among colleagues and RSG fellows in Latin America, the challenges and perspectives of local conservation initiatives in a post-pandemic scenario. The activity took place at the Hotel Bougainvillea in Heredia, Costa Rica, with a limited attendance and a virtual component which was broadcasted live on Facebook LIVE from the MarColabLATAM profile.

AGENDA

Five lectures were presented, and two discussion forums were held, with the participation of 12 national and international speakers.

DESAFÍOS DE LOS PROYECTOS LOCALES DE CONSERVACIÓN EN UN ESCENARIO POST PANDEMIA EN AMÉRICA LATINA

Hotel Bougainvillea, Heredia, Costa Rica | Via Facebook LIVE @MarColabLATAM

- A G E N D A -

- 8:30 - 9:00 am. **Inscripción de participantes**
- 9:00 - 9:10 am. **Bienvenida. Damián Martínez - Fernández;** Organizador. **Josh Cole Rufford**
- 9:10 - 9:30 am. **Perturbación Antropogénica y la Dinámica de las Interacciones de Enfermedades Infecciosas: El Valor de Conservación para Reducir su Riesgo. Gustavo Gutiérrez (Costa Rica)**
Rector Universidad de Costa Rica. Catedrático en genética molecular y genética de la conservación de animales silvestres.
- 9:30 - 10:00 am. **La Nueva A-Normalidad y lo que la Naturaleza Precisa: Gaia Escuchada. Rodrigo García Pingaro (Uruguay)**
Fundador de OCC. Hope Spot Champion por Mission Blue. Coordinador para Latinoamérica y El Caribe de World Cetacean Alliance.
- 10:00 - 10:30 am. **Conservación de Murciélagos en Centroamérica. Bernal Rodríguez (Costa Rica)**
Director del Centro de Investigación de Biodiversidad y Ecología Tropical (CIBET-UCR).
- 11:00 - 12:00 pm. **Conversatorio: Los Retos de Investigar en Tiempos de Pandemia. Modera: Michelle Soto.** Comunicadora de medioambiente y ciencia.
Participantes: 1- Andrea Montero (Costa Rica), 2- Mario Espinoza (Costa Rica), 3- Catalina Molina (Costa Rica).
- 12:00 - 2:00 pm. **Almuerzo**
- 2:00 - 2:30 pm. **La Conservación Marina en Tiempos de Covid-19. Joanna Alfaro (Perú)**
Pro Delphinus, miembro del Grupo de Especialistas en Tortugas Marinas del UICN. Miembro de la Facultad de Universidad Científica del Sur.
- 2:30 - 3:00 pm. **La Pandemia del Covid-19 y la Conservación de Especies Migratorias: El Caso de las Tortugas Marinas. Didiher Chacón (Costa Rica)**
Manejo y conservación de espacios marino costeros y especies marinas clave.
- 3:00 - 4:00 pm. **Conversatorio: Investigación, Comunidades y COVID-19. Modera: Michelle Soto.** Comunicadora de medioambiente y ciencia.
Participantes: 1- Daniela Rojas (Venezuela), 2- Marta Cambra (España), 3- Diego Gómez (Colombia), 4- Michelle Monge (Costa Rica).
- 4:00 pm. **Cierre. Damián Martínez - Fernández;** Organizador

Invita: **Rufford Foundation** Con apoyo de: **MARCOLAB**



IMPACT OF THE RSG CONFERENCE

The event was attended by 22 people, including former RSG grantees, researchers, representatives of institutions, non-governmental organizations and officials of the national environmental authority (SINAC-MINAE¹). In total there were representatives from 14 institutions, and from four different nationalities.

COVID-19 safety and prevention protocols were implemented, such as social distancing, use of face masks, hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.

The presentations were transmitted on Facebook LIVE from the MarColabLATAM profile (<https://www.facebook.com/MarColabLATAM>), where the recordings were posted. These publications had a reach of 2003 and 750 people respectively, as well as 265 and 158 interactions ("likes", comments and shared content).



2 Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación-Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía



The digital news "Ojo al Clima" of the Seminario Universidad, published two notes based on this event. The notes are available at the links:

- 🌐 www.ojoalclima.com/covid-19-desafio-la-continuidad-de-los-proyectos-de-conservacion-local
- 🌐 www.ojoalclima.com/la-conservacion-como-medida-para-prevenir-futuras-pandemias



La Nación published Science in times of pandemic: environmental projects suffered from lack of funding and restrictions

- 🌐 <https://www.nacion.com/ciencia/medio-ambiente/ciencia-en-tiempos-de-pandemia-proyectos/NFDCDWU27FHJHB6GS3L5TLV2LI/story/>

PRESENTATIONS



Anthropogenic Disturbance and the Dynamics of Infectious Disease Interactions: Conservation Value to Reduce the Risk.

Gustavo Gutiérrez Espeleta, Costa Rica. Rector of the University of Costa Rica. Professor in Molecular Genetics and Wildlife Conservation Genetics.



Marine conservation in times of COVID-19.

Joanna Alfaro Shigueto, Peru. Pro Delphinus. Member of the IUCN Sea Turtle Specialist Group. Faculty Member of the Southern Scientific University.



Bat Conservation in Central America.

Bernal Rodríguez, Costa Rica. Director of the Biodiversity and Tropical Ecology Research Center (CIBET-UCR).



The new A-normality and what nature needed: Gaia listened.

Rodrigo García Píngaro, Uruguay. Founder of the Organization for the Conservation of Cetaceans. Hope Spot Champion by Mission Blue. Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Cetacean Alliance.

La pandemia del Covid-19 y la conservación de especies migratorias: el caso de las tortugas marinas



The COVID-19 pandemic and the conservation of migratory species: the case of sea turtles.

Didiher Chacón, Costa Rica. Specialist in management and conservation of coastal marine spaces and key marine species.

ENCUENTRO PRESENCIAL Y VIRTUAL DESAFÍOS DE LOS PROYECTOS LOCALES DE CONSERVACIÓN EN UN ESCENARIO POST PANDEMIA EN AMÉRICA LATINA

LIVE MarColabLATAM



ALGUNAS DE NUESTRAS CHARLAS:

RODRIGO GARCÍA PÍNGARO 🇸🇻

La Nueva A-Normalidad y lo que la Naturaleza Precisaba: Gaia Escuchada.

BERNAL RODRÍGUEZ 🇨🇷

Conservación de Murciélagos en Centroamérica.

Invita:
The Rufford
Foundation

Con apoyo de:
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LIVE MarColabLATAM



ALGUNAS DE NUESTRAS CHARLAS:

GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ 🇨🇷

Perturbación Antropogénica y la Dinámica de las Interacciones de Enfermedades Infecciosas:

El Valor de Conservación para Reducir su Riesgo.

Invita:
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LIVE MarColabLATAM



ALGUNAS DE NUESTRAS CHARLAS:

JOANNA ALFARO 🇨🇷

La Conservación Marina en Tiempos de Covid-19.

DIDIHER CHACÓN 🇨🇷

La Pandemia del Covid-19 y la Conservación de Especies Migratorias: El Caso de las Tortugas Marinas.

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DISCUSSION FORUMS



Researching challenges in pandemic times.

Moderated by Michelle Soto Méndez, journalist. Participation of: Andrea Montero, Costa Rica. Mario Espinoza, Costa Rica. Catalina Molina, Costa Rica.



Research, Communities and COVID-19.

Moderated by Michelle Soto Méndez, journalist. Participation of: Daniela Rojas, Venezuela. Marta Cambra, Spain. Diego Gomez, Colombia. Michelle Monge, Costa Rica.

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NUESTROS CONVERSATORIOS:

LOS RETOS DE INVESTIGAR EN TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA

Moderado por Michelle Soto comunicadora de medioambiente y ciencia.

Participantes:

- 1- Andrea Montero
- 2- Mario Espinoza
- 3- Catalina Molina

Invita: **Ruffor** Foundation

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NUESTROS CONVERSATORIOS:

INVESTIGACIÓN, COMUNIDADES Y COVID-19

Moderado por Michelle Soto comunicadora de medioambiente y ciencia.

Participantes:

- 1- Daniela Rojas
- 2- Marta Cambra
- 3- Diego Gómez
- 4- Michelle Monge

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the current panorama of the Latin American region and the experiences presented at this event, the following conclusions and recommendations were generated:



The **Rufford Foundation's support** was highlighted in the professional development of many researchers who today are recognized researchers in the region.



Collaborative work is necessary to keep conservation, research and sustainable development issues on the local, regional and global agenda during and after the pandemic.



Conservation is the best measure to prevent future pandemics, its benefits are greater than the costs and it also boosts local economies for the well-being of communities. Biodiversity loss leads generalist species to have a series of interactions between humans and animals that, in some way, intervene with vector diseases.













The **importance of biodiversity in our daily lives** should be emphasized and we should recognize the ecosystem services it provides.



The **interrelation between ecological, social, cultural and economic aspects is key to a project's success**. For example, tourism has always aided research and conservation efforts, either by facilitating boat transfers or supporting data collection. With the economic set back from the pandemic, tour operators and guides could not help as much as before, so it is necessary to innovate in how not to lose those interrelationships.





-  The **training and education of new generations of local researchers and conservationists** should continue to be promoted.
-  There is a shared responsibility between researchers and communicators to **deliver results to society**.
-  The **participation of communities and local leaders in the projects** is essential. For example, health and safety protocols limited the number of people in means of transport used directly in research, so the implementation in the field of several land and marine projects were at risk.
-  The increase in virtual activities is known to cause mental and emotional exhaustion. However, most of the participants expressed that it also encourages the **inclusion of actors from remote areas** who previously had no representation in regular meetings.
-  Promote and maintain processes of environmental education and citizen science. **The weight of conservation processes should be led by local stakeholders**, such as communities and park rangers.
-  Today more than ever, it is necessary to maintain and promote the generation of information to **provide authorities in each country with adequate inputs for decision-making**.
-  The **adaptation** of research projects towards a **health component and a green economic reactivation** is important.
-  The **involvement of local leaders** in data collecting and eventually decision-making helps to **ensure long-term projects**, despite eventualities.
-  It is urgent to invest in **reducing the digital gap** in order to advance in conservation processes in rural areas with limited access to technology.
-  Under virtual work schemes, **conflict management becomes complicated** since the tools are very impersonal.







LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



CONTROL DE ASISTENCIA

Desafíos de los proyectos locales de conservación en un escenario post pandemia en América Latina

Lugar: Hotel Bougancilla, Santo Domingo, Heredia, Costa Rica

Tipo: Actividad presencial y virtual



No	Nombre	Institución	País	Firma
1	Daniela Muñoz	Marcel	CR	
2	Javier Soto S.	SIAC	CR	
3	Guillermo Gutiérrez	UCR	CR	
4	Guillermo Gutiérrez	UCR	CR	
5	Michelle Soto Mendez	UCR	CR	
6	Jorge D. Ramírez	Costa Rica Wildlife Fund	CR	
7	Daniel Chaves	LAST/VIDECAST	CR	
8	MARU ESTANISLAO MENDOZA	UCR / CIMAR	CR	
9	Heber Pérez	Cucumayo	CR	
10	José Daniel Valencia Villalobos	CUCUMAYO	CR	
11	Patricia Gallardo B.	ACOS	CR	
12	Victor E. Arce Navez	ACOS	CR	
13	Diego A. Gómez	SIAC	CR	
14	Rafael Bone Gromin	UCR	CR	
15	Andrea Montero Lombardi	FAICO	CR	
16	Jimmy Bonaventura Aragón	UNA	CR	
17	Michelle Monge Velasco	UNA	CR	
18	Guillermo Jaramila A.	SIAC	CR	
19	Daniela Rojas-Camacho	CREMA	Venezuela	



No	Nombre	Institución	País	Firma
19	Jairo Sanchez R.	SIAC	Costa Rica	
20	Adriana Molina Arzate	Consuelo Valley	CR	
21	Marta Cambra	UCR	España	
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PRESS NOTES



Energía ▾ Biodiversidad ▾ Agropecuario ▾ Gente ▾ Mundo ▾ Más ▾ 🔍

Salud

El próximo 6 de marzo, Costa Rica cumple un año del primer caso de COVID-19

La conservación como medida para prevenir futuras pandemias

por Michelle Soto Méndez



*En un ecosistema sano, las especies se regulan a otras, manteniendo el equilibrio.
(Créditos: Miriet Abrego Zúñiga)*



Energía ▾ Biodiversidad ▾ Agropecuario ▾ Gente ▾ Mundo ▾ Más ▾ 🔍

Ecosistemas

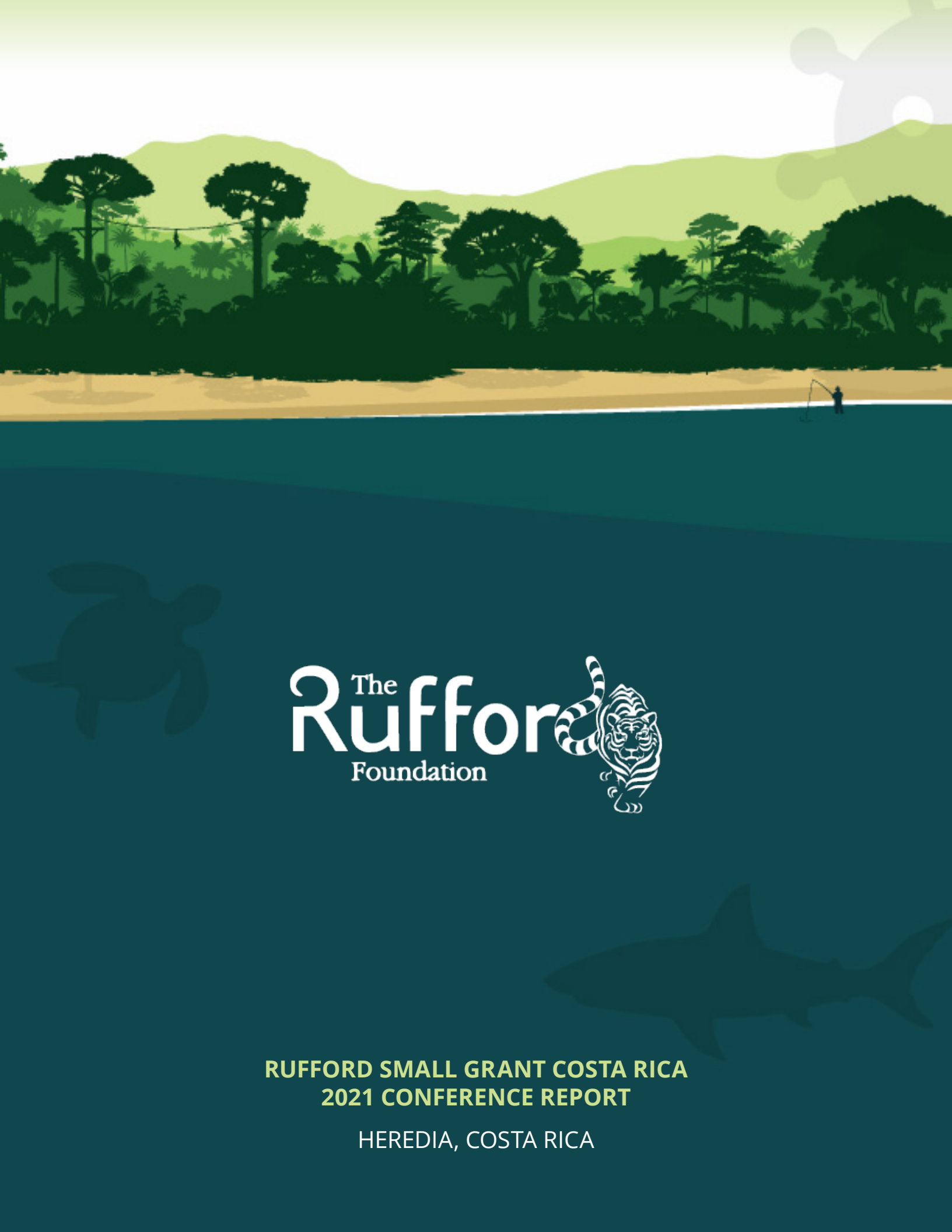
COVID-19 desafió la continuidad de los proyectos de conservación local

por Michelle Soto Méndez



*El proyecto de reforestación liderado por Fundación Keto se vio afectado durante la pandemia debido a los cierres de las playas y a la falta de voluntarios. (Foto: Daniela Linares / Fundación Keto / Archivo).
(Créditos: Daniela Linares / Fundación Keto / Archivo)*





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