



Conservation is a global effort requiring global partnerships. Hundreds of organizations around the world are working to protect species, habitats, and ecological processes. This guide introduces some of the most influential, along with guidance for finding and evaluating organizations to support.

■ Major Global Conservation Organizations

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) | *New York, USA*

Website: [wcs.org](https://www.wcs.org)

Founded in 1895, headquartered at the Bronx Zoo. WCS manages 500+ conservation field programs in 60+ countries, protecting over 785,000 square miles of wild lands. Focuses on flagship species: gorillas, elephants, tigers, jaguars, snow leopards, and marine species. WCS's five NYC wildlife parks — Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, New York Aquarium, Prospect Park Zoo, Queens Zoo — generate public support and funding for global field programs.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) | *Gland, Switzerland*

Website: [worldwildlife.org](https://www.worldwildlife.org)

One of the world's largest conservation organizations, operating in over 100 countries. Focuses on protecting species and natural spaces, addressing climate change, and promoting sustainable food, water, and finance. Known for its Panda logo and flagship species campaigns. WWF's Living Planet Report provides biennial assessment of global wildlife population trends.

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) | *Gland, Switzerland*

Website: [iucn.org](https://www.iucn.org)

The global authority on the status of the natural world. IUCN maintains the Red List of Threatened Species — the most comprehensive inventory of species conservation status — and the Green List of Protected Areas. IUCN is a membership union of governments, NGOs, and expert commissions, with over 18,000 expert volunteers worldwide.

National Audubon Society | *New York, USA*

Website: [audubon.org](https://www.audubon.org)

Founded in 1905, dedicated to protecting birds and the places they need across the Americas. Manages a network of 450 chapters and nature centers. Audubon's focus areas include climate change, coastal and waterbird conservation, science (Breeding Bird Survey), and advocacy. NYC Audubon is an affiliate focusing on urban birds.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology | *Ithaca, New York, USA*

Website: birds.cornell.edu

World's leading center for ornithological research. Creator of eBird (the world's largest biodiversity data platform — over 1 billion bird observations) and Merlin Bird ID (free AI bird identification app). Citizen science programs include Project FeederWatch, Breeding Bird Atlas, and NestWatch.



The Nature Conservancy (TNC) | *Arlington, Virginia, USA*

Website: [nature.org](https://www.nature.org)

Works in over 70 countries protecting lands, waters, and species. Has protected more than 125 million acres globally and over 5,000 miles of rivers. Science-based approach; extensive private land conservation easement portfolio. Also addresses ocean health, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience.

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) | *Reston, Virginia, USA*

Website: [nwf.org](https://www.nwf.org)

America's largest wildlife conservation organization. Focus: wildlife habitat, water, climate change, and connecting people to nature. Runs the Certified Wildlife Habitat® program — enabling homeowners to certify their property as wildlife-friendly.

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) | *The Plains, Virginia, USA*

Website: [abcbirds.org](https://www.abcbirds.org)

Focused exclusively on bird conservation across the Americas. Key campaigns: reducing cat predation on birds, addressing window strikes, eliminating pesticide impacts, protecting important bird areas. Partners with Latin American organizations on habitat conservation.

Panthera | *New York, USA*

Website: [panthera.org](https://www.panthera.org)

Dedicated exclusively to the conservation of wild cats and their ecosystems. Manages the Jaguar Corridor Initiative (18 countries), Snow Leopard Program, and Tiger Forever. Anti-poaching, conflict mitigation, genetics research.

AZA (Association of Zoos & Aquariums) | *Silver Spring, Maryland, USA*

Website: [aza.org](https://www.aza.org)

Accredits over 240 zoos and aquariums in North America. Manages Species Survival Plans®. AZA-accredited institutions collectively contribute over \$230 million annually to in-situ conservation. Look for the AZA logo when visiting a zoo or aquarium to ensure rigorous animal welfare and conservation standards.

International Rhino Foundation (IRF) | *Asheville, North Carolina, USA*

Website: [rhinos.org](https://www.rhinos.org)

Focused on all five rhinoceros species. Manages habitat protection, anti-poaching programs, captive breeding coordination (Sumatran and Javan rhinos), and demand reduction for rhino horn.

Ocean Conservancy | *Washington DC, USA*

Website: [oceanconservancy.org](https://www.oceanconservancy.org)

Protects ocean ecosystems through policy, science, and community action. Organizes the International Coastal Cleanup — the world's largest volunteer event for ocean health. Advocates for sustainable fisheries, plastic reduction, and Arctic protection.



TRAFFIC | *Cambridge, UK*

Website: traffic.org

The world's leading wildlife trade monitoring network. Works at the intersection of conservation and law enforcement to ensure wildlife trade does not threaten species. Provides data to CITES and governments. Field presence in 30+ countries.

Bat Conservation International (BCI) | *Austin, Texas, USA*

Website: batcon.org

Dedicated to conservation of bats worldwide. Key programs: cave conservation, white-nose syndrome research, critical habitat protection. The collapse of bat populations in North America from WNS makes BCI's work especially urgent.

■ **How to Evaluate a Conservation Organization:** Before donating, verify an organization's effectiveness and financial accountability. Resources: **Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org)** — financial health, accountability, and transparency ratings. **GiveWell (givewell.org)** — evidence-based effectiveness reviews. **GuideStar (candid.org)** — full 990 tax filings and organizational data. The best conservation investments combine local presence, scientific rigor, community engagement, and transparent financial management.

■ **Final Summary**

Conservation is not the work of any single organization — it is a global movement of scientists, communities, governments, and concerned citizens. Find the organizations whose focus and approach resonate with you, verify their accountability, and support them consistently. Your contribution matters more than you may think.

■ **Related XVC Guides:**

- [WLD_23: How You Can Help](#)
- [WLD_13: Conservation Breeding](#)
- [WLD_05: The Extinction Crisis](#)



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