



## Six surprising facts about Costa Rica's natural treasures

- On World National Parks Day, FIFCO reaches more than 1,200 hours dedicated in 2024 to cleanup, maintenance and environmental education tasks in six protected areas, through its *Elegí Ayudar* volunteer program

Costa Rica, a country recognized worldwide for its extraordinary biodiversity, is home to unparalleled natural bounty in its protected wildlife areas (ASP). In these areas, the country protects a quarter of its land area and almost a third of its marine territory, covering 178,054 square kilometers.

Among the 152 ASPs administered by the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), 30 national parks have been created to date. These territories, located in the country's seven provinces, protect ecosystems of enormous biological, scientific, educational and tourist value, both nationally and internationally.

The Costa Rican company FIFCO is proud to contribute to the fundamental work of national parks, through the work performed by its volunteers in areas such as trail cleaning, infrastructure maintenance, donation of tools and environmental education. Through the corporate program *Elegí Ayudar* (I Chose to Help), during 2024 more than 150 volunteers, among FIFCO employees and shareholders, have dedicated 1,200 hours of work in six national parks distributed in the provinces of Cartago, Puntarenas, Alajuela and Guanacaste.

This August 24 is World National Parks Day. To celebrate this date, FIFCO shares six surprising facts about the protected areas it has had the privilege of collaborating with this year:

**1. Irazú Volcano National Park, a view of two oceans:** Irazú Volcano, with a maximum elevation of 3,432 meters above sea level in the province of Cartago, is the highest volcano in Costa Rica. On clear days, [it is possible to see](#) from its summit both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and even, with a telescope, Lake Nicaragua.<sup>1</sup> This 2024, FIFCO volunteers have worked on painting the crater's railing and cleaning and building a fence on the haunted tree trail, located in the Prusia sector.

**2. Carara National Park, sanctuary of the scarlet macaw:** Carara, whose name in the Huetar indigenous language means "river of lizards", is home to the only transitional forest in the Central Pacific, in Puntarenas. This park is a world-renowned destination for its avifauna, including the [endangered scarlet macaw](#) (*Ara macao*).<sup>2</sup> In addition, Carara was the first national park to have universal access trail that facilitates the visit of people with physical disabilities. This year, FIFCO volunteers have contributed to the maintenance of the trails and the transportation of stones, ensuring safe and accessible paths.

**3. Grecia Forest Reserve, a tribute to childhood:** Known as the "*Bosque del Niño*" (Children's Forest), the Grecia Forest Reserve, located in Alajuela, has a peculiar history. In 1979, the State acquired a 40-hectare farm and [named it Bosque del Niño](#), because eight hectares were

---

<sup>1</sup>[SINAC - Volcán Irazú National Park](#)

<sup>2</sup>[SINAC - Carara National Park](#)



reforested with exotic trees by children from neighboring communities, in commemoration of the International Year of the Child<sup>3</sup>. Throughout 2024, FIFCO volunteers have worked on trail maintenance and ranch cleaning, ensuring that this forest continues to be a place to encounter nature.

**4. Guayabo National Monument, millenary findings:** The Guayabo National Monument, located in Turrialba de Cartago, is one of the most important archeological sites in Costa Rica. Research conducted by the School of Archaeology of the University of Costa Rica has detected structures there that date back [more than 1,000 years](#)<sup>4</sup>, including wooden and palm constructions that were inhabited between 850 and 1150 AD. In 2024, FIFCO has worked to maintain trails and paint a classroom, helping to preserve this important archaeological site for future generations.

**5. Conchal National Mixed Wildlife Refuge, an example of public-private partnership:** This area of almost 40 hectares was created as a model to follow in the province of Guanacaste. It is an example of [public-private collaboration](#)<sup>5</sup> for conservation and environmental restoration, as 71% is owned by Reserva Conchal, FIFCO's hospitality division, and another 29% is State Natural Heritage. The refuge protects ecosystems associated with mangrove and dry transition to humid forest and is home to wildlife species such as howler monkeys, white-tailed deer, and woodpeckers. During 2024, the refuge's environmental education laboratory provided educational spaces for 36 children.

**6. Barra Honda National Park, portal to the depths of the Earth:** Barra Honda National Park, located northeast of the Guanacaste town of Nicoya, is the only one in Costa Rica with a complex of subway caverns [50% of which have been explored by scientists](#)<sup>6</sup>. Of the 19 caverns examined, only *Terciopelo* is open to the public, and offers an ideal experience for adventure tourism lovers. In February of this year, FIFCO volunteers created [an eight-kilometer protective perimeter](#) to defend the protected area's forests from forest fires. In addition, they collaborated by painting the park's dining room and cleaning the garden areas.

#### About FIFCO

FIFCO is a beverage and food company with 116 years of history, and operations in Costa Rica, Central America, Dominican Republic, Mexico and the United States, 5 manufacturing plants and 15 distribution centers. It has 3 business divisions that include *Florida Bebidas* (food and beverages), *Florida Hospitality* (real estate sector) and *Florida Retail* (retail sales). It exports to 10 countries around the world and has a portfolio of 2,000 products.

---

<sup>3</sup> [UCR – Grecia Forest Reserve](#)

<sup>4</sup> [UCR – Guayabo National Monument](#)

<sup>5</sup> [SINAC – Conchal National Mixed Wildlife Refuge](#)

<sup>6</sup> [SINAC – Barra Honda National Park](#)