



Conservation Coffee™

COFFEE AND CONSERVATION: WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

The finest quality coffee is grown at high altitudes, in areas known to be rich in biological diversity. One of the most important global commodities, coffee can have an enormous impact on the environment. However, when grown in an environmentally sensitive manner, it can be a powerful tool for conserving biodiversity. Conservation International's (CI) Conservation Coffee Program works with farmers in high-biodiversity regions to cultivate coffee with minimal impact on surrounding ecosystems. By adopting better growing practices, improving coffee quality, and selling directly to coffee roasters, farmers can increase their income while protecting the rich variety of life found in coffee producing regions.

WHAT IS CONSERVATION COFFEE™?

Conservation Coffee™ is grown, processed and marketed in a way that promotes biodiversity conservation while improving the lives of local people. The manner in which coffee is grown can have a significant impact on plants, animals and entire ecosystems. In addition to providing critical habitat for numerous species, Conservation Coffee™ farms contain a variety of other useful products, such as fruits, nuts, fibers and fuel, which also offer benefits to farmers and their families.

SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

CI's Conservation Coffee Program collaborates with community-based farmer cooperatives and links them with powerful market partners to promote conservation on the ground and to bring economic benefits directly to coffee producers who actively protect their environment. Current and previous market partners include Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Frontier Organic Coffee and Starbucks Coffee Company. These industry leaders provide critical technical assistance and market opportunities to farmers participating in the Conservation Coffee Program

Conservation Coffee™ beans grown by farmer cooperatives. Conservation Coffee balances the business of marketing and growing coffee with the preservation of the ecosystem in which it is grown.



WHERE CONSERVATION COFFEE™ GROWS

CI's Conservation Coffee™ Program is currently underway in Mexico, Colombia and Peru.

El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve, the last remaining cloud forest in southern Mexico, is the flagship site for the Conservation Coffee Program. CI works with local cooperatives to improve the livelihood of small-scale farmers and protect the reserve.

In addition to being the leading producer of high quality coffee, Colombia's growing regions are found in the Tropical Andes biodiversity hotspot—making this country an ideal location for CI's Conservation Coffee Program.

In Peru, CI is working with farmers to create a 'conservation corridor' between the Bahuaja-Sonene National Park and Tambopata National Reserve. In addition to restoring natural forest cover, the project is also helping to protect the watershed around the Tambopata and Inambari rivers.

Starbucks Coffee Company currently sells Conservation Coffee from each of these project sites - Shade Grown Mexico, Conservation Colombia and Starbucks Peru - at retail outlets internationally.

In an effort to replicate its success on a global scale, CI is collaborating with leaders in the coffee industry to integrate biodiversity conservation into their business management practices and purchasing preferences. These partnerships seek to demonstrate that the coffee industry can reduce its ecological footprint and contribute to conservation – creating a net benefit for the environment and the economy.

CONSERVATION COFFEE™ BENEFITS

Forests & Wildlife:

Diversified “shade” coffee fields benefit the biology of tropical forest ecosystems by providing a critical habitat for plants and animals. In Colombia and Mexico, researchers found 90 percent more bird species in shaded coffee fields than in those with none.

Soil:

Removal of trees exposes fragile soils to tropical rains causing erosion and leaching of soil nutrients. The presence of trees in Conservation Coffee™ fields reduces these effects by allowing the soil to retain higher levels of moisture and nutrients.

Water:

Farmers must remove the coffee bean from the cherry or fruit, a process which requires a large quantity of water and produces a residual cherry “pulp” that can contaminate local streams and deteriorate the habitat of aquatic plants and animals. Conservation Coffee™ farmers recycle pulp into organic fertilizer, reduce the amount of water used in processing, and purify water before returning it to rivers.

Farmers:

CI provides coffee farmers with technical assistance to improve agricultural techniques, thereby increasing crop yields and reducing reliance on fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers also receive access to much-needed credit, which allows them to directly export coffee beans to the international specialty coffee market where they can gain a better price.

CI'S MISSION

Founded in 1987, Conservation International believes that the Earth's natural heritage must be maintained if future generations are to thrive spiritually, culturally and economically. Our mission is to conserve the Earth's living heritage, our global biodiversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature.

Coffee farm and drying patio in Mexico's El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve. Conservation International works with small-scale coffee farmers to improve their livelihood and crop yield while preserving the region's biodiversity.



CONSERVATION COFFEE™ FACTS

- Coffee is an \$11 billion industry employing 20-25 million people worldwide.
- 40 percent of coffee fields in Mexico, Colombia, Central America and the Caribbean have been converted from diversified fields to sun-grown plantations in the past decade.
- Coffee is one of the most important agricultural commodities from the tropics.
- Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia and Mexico—the largest producers of coffee—are also considered megadiversity countries due to the high level of biodiversity found within their borders.
- More than 2.5 billion pounds of coffee are sold in the United States each year.
- The world drinks an average of 2.25 billion cups of coffee per day.
- There are more than 700,000 small coffee producers in northern Latin America.
- It takes approximately 4,000 coffee beans to produce one pound of roasted coffee.
- Coffee is an important export for over 50 developing countries, all of which are located in the tropics.

HOW TO LEARN MORE

For more information about CI's programs, please visit www.conservation.org. To contact CI's Conservation Coffee Program directly, call (202) 912-1000 or write to:

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