


Nomination form for BIG Biodiversity Champion 2023

Nominee Name	Martha Alexandra Rueda Esteban
Award category	Established professional (more than 5 years working on biodiversity-related projects/effort)
How many years working on biodiversity-related projects/effort?	Since 2013 to 2022 She has been working with dry to very dry forests in Colombia, focusing my efforts in the Tatacoa Desert, Huila, Colombia.
Project(s) person is nominated for	Biodiversity and Population Dynamic Studies Across Dry Forests in Colombia
Nominee Organisation	Biosphere Colombia Universidad de los Andes
Nominator name (can be same as above), organisation & email for contact	Biosphere Colombia / Biosphere.colombia@gmail.com Universidad de los Andes / rj.rueda32@uniandes.edu.co
Describe how the nominee best meets the following criteria (no more than 50 words each):	
Engaging	The main problem she had to face during the study was trying to include community, government, tourism and economic needs to the protection of biodiversity. She had to listen to everyone's needs and expectations to manage the understanding of the importance in the protection of life and ecosystem.
Inspiring	As a professor, she has inspired more than 15 students to continue with her perseverance and work with conservations and biodiversity in different countries. She has managed to change the management of tourism across the Tatacoa Desert, the mayor's office is now training guides and changing the requirements of tourism.
Enthusiastic	She is an enthusiast to the core, she has managed to keep the interest in the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem even during the changes of government (presidents and mayors). She has managed to persevere with the project even when she thought it was lost and

	declared local extinctions.
Creative	In 2016, local extinction of a spider species was declared, I was then when the efforts increased and she began with the programs to include tourists and guides, even if the ecosystem is privately owned, tourists can make a change if they understand. In 2022, the spider was recorded again.
Knowledgeable	She has given talks about this project in National and International Institutes, she even took an internship in UC Berkeley to train in genetic methods for understanding biological networks in an ecosystem. She performed part of the genetic research in UC Berkeley and continues to expand and learn.
Outcomes driven	In 2016 local extinction was declared for a spider species and the decrease of many others. She worked along with the governors to make a change in tourism and train the guides to protect and teach the tourist about biodiversity and conservation. In 2021, the species was recorded again.
In 100 words provide a summary of how this nominee has gone the extra mile to enrich and enhance biodiversity on this project	
<p>When she started the project, tourism was not a main income of the Desert. But with the years, there was an increase in construction, tourism and exosystemic change that was not sustainable, and many conditions changed. A decrease of many vertebrates and invertebrates was recorded, her research focused in one spider species (<i>Latrodectus</i>). She worked hard to change and train community to recover the ecosystem and has seen the effects over the years.</p>	
Please attach a photo	
	
<p>Photo by: Martha Alexandra Rueda Esteban, Tatacoa Desert, Date: 11-07-2016</p>	