

Global priority regions for carnivore conservation

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Finding economical and practical solutions for conserving endangered carnivores is a continuous challenge for conservationists. In a study published by the peer reviewed open access journal, *PLoS ONE*, on August 27th, a team of Brazilian researchers define global conservation priorities that encompass socioeconomic and life-history factors for endangered carnivores.

The team, led by Dr. Rafael Loyola, examined four global [conservation](#) scenarios for carnivores based on the joint mapping of [economic costs](#) and species biological traits. They focused their analyses on 236 carnivore species (occurring in 661 ecoregions) based on variables such as population density, body size and litter sizes. By combining this information with the cost of acquiring land for protection, Dr. Loyola and colleagues were able to identify a combined solution in which both biological traits and economic costs were considered. This scenario planning helps to consider vulnerable carnivore species along side the desire to simultaneously minimize land acquisition costs.

The result of the selection procedure produced several options for areas where conservation of carnivores should be focused. They found that cost-effective conservation investments should center on 41 ecoregions around the world, if species most vulnerable to extinction are meant to be represented in areas with lower mean land cost. Many of these land regions include areas in Africa, Northern America, and Asia.

This study, the researchers believe, is the first step toward a biodiversity

maintenance strategy which is part of complex policy decisions. It is their hope that this study will be included in the wider effort to strengthen the scientific basis for conservational decisions.

More information: [dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0006807](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0006807)

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