

While he has worked with the bighorn sheep in Canada and the porcupine in Italy, his home country, his passion has always been carnivores and when the opportunity arose he went to Argentina to join a young group of biologists who set out to study little-known carnivores. From the moment he heard about the Andean cat and learned that it was a practically unknown species, he decided to do his best to contribute to unveiling the secrets surrounding it. He quickly realized that investigating its ecology was not going to be enough to guarantee that this cat would not disappear and he was one of the promoters of the creation of the Andean Cat Alliance. Despite having to wait eight years to be able to observe his first Andean cat, for two decades Mauro has dedicated himself to understanding the ecological and conservation requirements of the Andean cat and raising awareness in both local communities and society in general, together with his wife María José Merino (who is also part of AGA). During these years he has also contributed to train a large number of researchers and conservationists, including some of the current members of AGA. Since 2013 he is leading projects that aim to involve local communities in the conservation of the Andean cat and its natural habitat, favoring a sustainable community development and peaceful coexistence with carnivores. However, she also tries to dedicate time to her 10-year-old daughter and to work on other carnivore species, such as the grey fox, geoffroy's cat and puma, and on the conflicts between carnivores and human populations.