

Dr. Rocío Palacios / *General Coordinator*

She considers herself a crazy cat lady, and celebrates it with pride. From an early age she was interested in wildlife, particularly felines. She gave her first presentation at an environmental congress at the age of 11, formed and participated in several NGOs, and studied biology at the National University of Córdoba, where she also completed her doctoral thesis on the Andean cat in northern Patagonia.

She considered herself a lover of the jungle, until she discovered the magic of the desert. She arrived in the Andes in 2003, researching Andean cats and developing a deep conviction to protect the mountainous environment and the species that inhabit it. She worked for the Wildlife Conservation Society and for the Argentine National Parks Agency, always as a member of the Andean Cat Alliance.

After discovering the presence of the Andean cat in northern Patagonia in 2005, Rocío coordinated the initial research in the area, along with the training of staff of protected areas. In 2018, she was awarded the Disney Conservation Hero prize for her work with the Andean Cat Alliance. She is currently part of the cat specialist group of the IUCN and the Argentine Society of Mammalogy. Rocío lives with her two-legged and four-legged family, and with them continues her mission of protecting the Andean cat and its environment.