

# Biodiversity

Equinox Gold is committed to protecting the species and habitats of the areas in which we operate and promoting conservation of local biodiversity. We adhere to all local and federal regulations and apply the RGMP on Biodiversity, Land Use and Mine Closure, as well as the TSM Biodiversity Conservation Management protocol. We give special consideration to locally threatened species and critical habitats at all Equinox Gold sites.

Equinox Gold operates near some important ecosystems including the Amazon Preservation Area in Maranhão, Brazil and the Caatinga in Bahia, Brazil; Zopilote Gorge near our Los Filos operations in Mexico; and the Mojave National Preserve in California, USA. Equinox Gold carefully manages its activities to minimize and mitigate both short- and long-term adverse impacts on the flora and fauna in these areas. Prior to commencing construction and operations, we develop a baseline inventory of flora and fauna to understand the biota of significance, both ecological and cultural. With this understanding, we develop management plans to mitigate or eliminate harm where possible.

At all of our mines, our biodiversity management plan includes monitoring and reclamation of habitats for local protected species. Before we disturb the land we conduct biodiversity impact assessments to understand our site's characteristics, allowing our local teams to ensure that native fauna and significant floral elements are identified and relocated during clearing procedures. We also maintain plant nurseries to grow native species that will be used for progressive reclamation.

In Brazil, as required by law, we create conservation areas by purchasing undisturbed land to protect natural ecosystems. Not only do we protect these conservation areas from development, hunters, poachers and illegal small-scale mining activity, they also allow us to document the biological wealth of these areas and their importance and to contribute to the maintenance of regional biodiversity, while minimizing the impact to local populations of important species of fauna and flora.

## Protecting the Bat Population Near Mercedes

Bats play an important role within Mexico's ecosystems, particularly as pollinators of local plants including agave. In the communities around Equinox Gold's Mercedes Mine, sap is harvested from agave plants and used to make bacanora, a popular alcoholic beverage that is important to the economy in Sonora State, Mexico. The bats are also a critical contributor to local agriculture, consuming pests that can damage crops.

Decommissioned mine shafts provide excellent habitat for a wide variety of bat species. At Mercedes, a comprehensive program initiated in 2008 focuses on the identification and monitoring of bat populations in the region. A variety of methods including physical surveys, ultra-acoustic detection, video recording, automatic cameras with infrared and thermal sensors and an electronic bat counter are used to track the numbers, distribution, behaviours and migration parameters of 20 bat species that live in or migrate through a Bat Protection Area near the mine. Mercedes sponsors the program and the mine's environmental team actively participates in the monitoring programs, helping to protect local species and contribute to global research about bat migration and behaviours.



Near Santa Luz we have purchased and now protect compensatory land in the Caatinga region, the only exclusively Brazilian biome; a large part of its biological heritage cannot be found anywhere else in the world. We have also protected habitat near Castle Mountain for the desert tortoise.

In adherence to our Environment and Climate Change Policy, we seek partnerships with local communities, NGOs, government and academia to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes. At Castle Mountain, for example, we have partnered with local communities and NGOs to protect local bighorn sheep and golden eagles. At Mercedes, our efforts have focused on the protection of important bat species.

## 2021 Performance

At Castle Mountain, we partnered with the Californian Big Horn Sheep Conservation Society to install watering points for big horn sheep within our mining lease. The Castle Mountain team also established a partnership with the town of Searchlight in Nevada to transplant Joshua trees into their community. This initiative expands beyond regulatory requirements to salvage the species from mine lands, while enhancing community green spaces with the Joshua tree, which has become an iconic symbol of the American desert.



## Conserving Wildlife in California

The Desert Bighorn Sheep Wildlife Project is a partnership with species experts such as the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) that work in the area near our Castle Mountain Mine in California, USA. From the arid desert of the Mojave to the snowy heights of the Sierra Mountains, California is home to many distinct populations of bighorn sheep.

In 2021, Castle Mountain's employees and about 30 SCBS volunteers installed a new wildlife guzzler system at the mine site – an artificially created water source that allows the animals to find consistent freshwater in the otherwise arid region. The Desert Bighorn Sheep rely on these guzzlers, particularly during drought years.

Castle Mountain is also conducting golden eagle surveys as part of our baseline environmental studies. The golden eagle is a protected species that requires careful monitoring and management. In 2021, we partnered with experts from the American Eagle Research Institute, which outfits the eagles with GPS devices that can track the eagles' movements for up to three years, allowing more detailed monitoring of their behaviour.

We also mitigate any potential impacts to the threatened desert tortoise at both our Castle Mountain and Mesquite mines. We ensure that all of our operational areas are fully fenced with 'tortoise-proof' mesh and enforce stringent speed limits on access roads to reduce risk from vehicles. Our site employees are trained to identify and report tortoises found onsite and trained biologists are employed to identify tortoise dens, so the tortoises can be relocated to suitable habitat outside the mine boundaries.

