

# Guatopo and Macarao National Parks

## Caracas, Venezuela

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Bosque La Elvira, Guatopo. Photo: Cortesía de BioParques

**Site:** Guatopo and Macarao National Parks are located in the southeast of the city. Macarao National Park is part of the Coastal Mountain Range and includes the rivers Macarao, San Pedro and Jarillo. The park contains semi-deciduous forests, evergreen forests and cloud coastal forests. Guatopo National Park consists of deciduous and evergreen forests.

Important fauna species found within the park include the water opossum, three-toed sloth, anteater, and the endangered Giant Armadillo. Various carnivores have been reported, including the jaguar, the greater grison,

striped hog-nosed skunk and the kinkajou. There are also at least ten species of bird considered endemic or with limited distribution and more than 50 species of bats. The predominant tree species are represented by the genus *Guarea*, *Gustavia*, *Inga*, *Ocotea* and *Tabebuia*.

**Project:** In 1600, when Caracas consisted of four main streets and had 2,000 inhabitants, water was distributed from a system of pipes made out of clay covered with calcium carbonate. Today, the city consumes an average of 17 thousand litres of water per second and it is estimated that the average resident uses 500 litres of water per day.

## WATER AND PROTECTED AREAS CASE STUDIES

As Caracas grew and the demand for water increased, the water authorities looked to protecting the catchment area around the city to ensure continued supplies of water. In 1926 Macarao was declared the first National Forest to protect the source of the San Pedro, Macarao and Lagunetas Rivers. The forest was declared a national park in 1973. The Guatopo National Park was declared in 1958 also with the purpose of protecting water sources (the Lagartijo, Taguaza, Taguacita and Cuira Rivers) for the city.

**Benefits:** Today, both parks continue to supply a constant flow of freshwater to the Venezuelan capital. The water generated by the park is collected in the Lagartijo, La Perez, Taguacita, Cuira and Taguaza dams.

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**Credits:** This case study was taken from the report: World Bank/WWF "Running Pure: The importance of forest protected areas to drinking water ". ([www.panda.org/protection/arguments](http://www.panda.org/protection/arguments))



Bosque El Lucero, Guatopo. Photo: Cortesia de BioParques

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