

# Annual Report

2025





Dear readers,

When the conservation goal for the Golden Lion Tamarin was defined, back in 2005, the year 2025 seemed very distant. Scientists and the AMLD team gathered in a workshop and determined that, in order to save the species, we would need to reach a population of at least 2,000 tamarins, in an area of at least 25,000 hectares of protected and connected forests, by 2025.

In these twenty years, a lot has happened. The context of biodiversity conservation worldwide remains challenging, and we are living in times of climate change within a concerning geopolitical scenario. Even so, the situation has changed significantly for the golden lion tamarin, and it has changed for the better.

Today, we have more than 48,000 hectares of protected forests. The latest census conducted by AMLD, in 2023, indicates that there are around 4,880 tamarins in the wild. Our greatest challenge continues to be forest fragmentation and the need to restore and connect the remaining fragments. There is still no large fragment of 25,000 hectares with 2,000 tamarins living freely. But we are working hard to achieve this goal.

In 2025, many steps were taken in this direction. The GEF Private Areas project, in partnership with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Programme, began with the ambition of making a significant leap forward for the conservation of the species, strengthening the participation of rural landowners and further integrating local communities into this effort.

In 2025, the 30th COP – United Nations Climate Change Conference – brought together representatives from around the world in Belém (Pará), in the Amazon. AMLD, which is part of the coordination of the Atlantic Forest NGOs Network, was present and helped create the Atlantic Forest House. The space served as a platform to showcase the actions of organizations working to protect the

biome and to discuss strategies for conserving one of the most threatened ecosystems on the planet.

Locally, we consolidated the Jennifer Mickelberg Corridor, one of the most important in the Environmental Protected Area Rio São João/ Mico-Leão-Dourado landscape, which is integrating the largest remaining lowland forest fragments. There, another federal RPPN was created by AMLD and ICMBio. The protected area ensures the conservation of the 100 hectares of Fazenda Santo Antônio in perpetuity, along with the restoration of 20 hectares.

The work does not stop. Together with several local partners, we are creating the Golden Lion Tamarin Trail, a long-distance route to connect various tourist attractions and rural initiatives for hikers and cyclists. The Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park is already a reality and attracts tourists from all over the world. Coming soon is the Ecological Restoration Reference Center, a space to connect restoration with scientific research, environmental education, and ecotourism, sharing with the public the challenges and beauty of planting forests. We continue our efforts in environmental education and agroecology. AMLD is now a partner of the Cultural Refrigerators, community initiatives for local development and culture.

It was a year of much learning and reassessment of our goals and objectives. This is work carried out by a competent and dedicated team, and it is only possible because we have committed partners, whether they are funders or those involved in implementing our strategic planning in the field. To all of you, our sincere thanks. Here's to the next 20 years.



Luís Paulo Ferraz  
Executive Secretary, AMLD

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Laila Mureb

### Communication

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### Ecotourism

Anderson Ribeiro

### Environmental Education

Nandia Xavier Menezes (coordinator)

### Social Engagement

Nelson Barbosa dos Santos (coordinator), Rodolpho de Moraes Pinto and Rubens Ferreira

### Knowledge and Information Management Laboratory

Mateus Nunes

### Monitoring and Management

Andreia Fonseca Martins (coordinator), Ademilson de Oliveira, Elisamã Moraes, Jadir Hilário Ramos, Moisés do Vale Souza, Renato Xavier de Oliveira and Camila Rezende

### Forest Restoration

Carlos Alvarenga Junior (coordinator)

### Young Apprentice (Jovem Aprendiz)

Rayane Vieira

### Text

Duda Menegassi

### Photographies

Andréia Martins and Luiz Thiago de Jesus

### Review

Luís Paulo Ferraz and Lou Ann Dietz

### Graphic Design

Natalia Rey

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# 1. A new chapter of investment in the home of the golden lion tamarin

The year 2025 marked a new cycle in the Golden Lion Tamarin Conservation Program, aimed at strengthening social engagement and the participation of rural landowners in biodiversity protection. Phase 2 of the GEF Private Areas Project – Conserving Biodiversity and Rural Landscapes - was launched, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The project's pilot area in the Atlantic Forest is the São João River Basin/Golden Lion Tamarin Environmental Protection Area (APA), where AMLD acts as co-executor of activities, which focus on five thematic axes: agroecology and sustainable livestock, biodiversity monitoring, ecological restoration, ecotourism, and land use management.

The project also includes cross-cutting education/communication actions across all axes, with the aim of strengthening environmental awareness, encouraging active participation, and promoting behavioral change.

With implementation scheduled through June 2026, the project marks the beginning of a new chapter of investment in the golden lion tamarin's habitat, with actions built in a participatory manner and involving multiple local sectors.

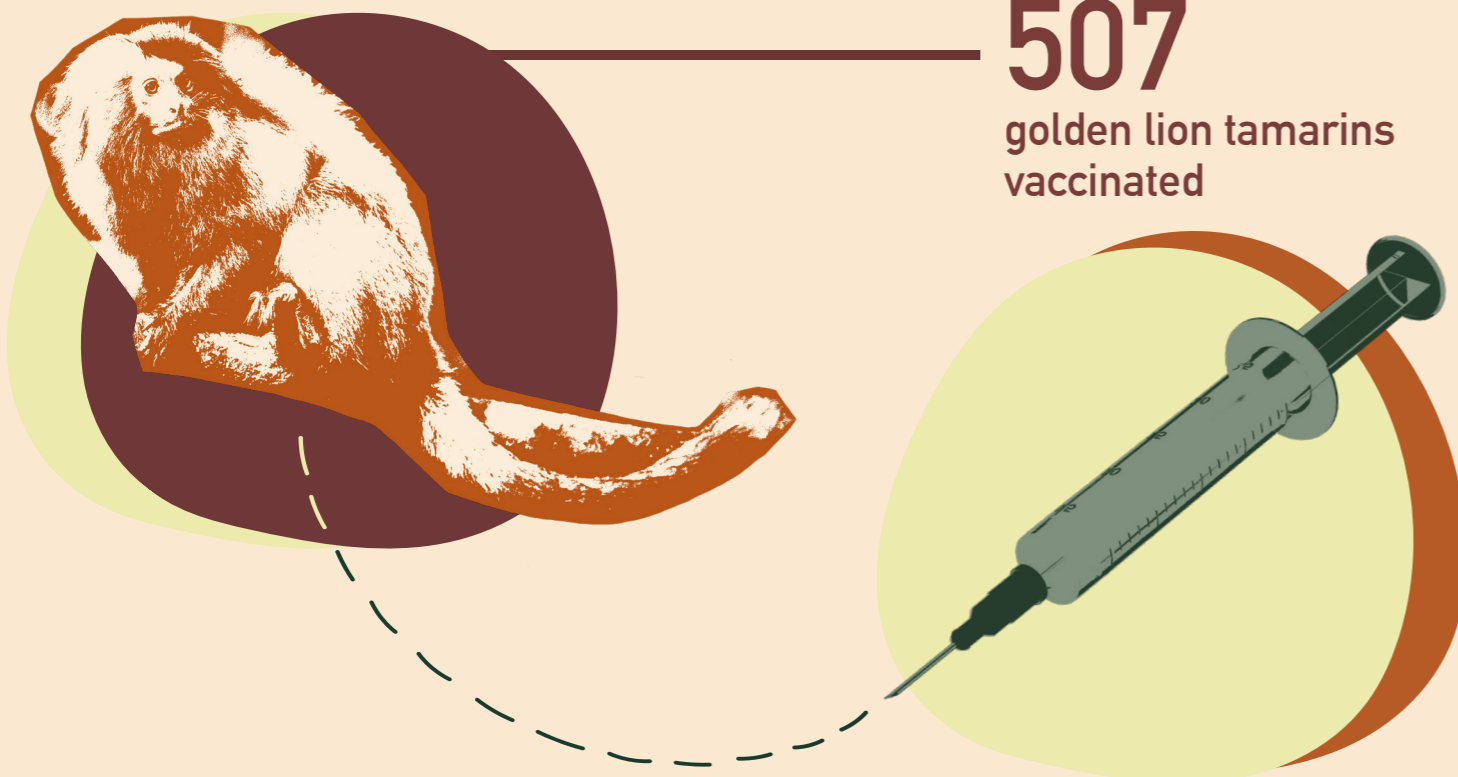
The overall coordination of the GEF Private Areas Project is carried out by the Secretariat for Biodiversity, Forests and Animal Rights of Brazil's Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (SBIO/MMA), with financial management by the International Institute for Sustainability (IIS).



## 2. Monitoring and management of golden lion tamarins

Management and monitoring efforts for the golden lion tamarin are one of the pillars of AMLD's work to ensure the recovery and conservation of the species in the wild. According to the latest census conducted by AMLD in 2023, there are approximately 4,800 golden lion tamarins in the São João River Basin region, the Association's main area of operation. Throughout 2025, the Metapopulation Management Program continuously monitored 24 groups of golden lion tamarins, totaling 156 individuals. The data collected allow for a better understanding of population size, demography, spatial distribution, and even threats.

Among the program's core activities is the vaccination of tamarins in the wild against yellow fever, a disease that, during the last outbreak between 2016 and 2018, decimated about one-third of the primate population. By the end of 2025, 507 animals had already been immunized against the virus, including 52 in the municipality of Cabo Frio. The vaccination work is the result of a joint effort involving AMLD, Fiocruz, the ICMBio Center for Research and Conservation of Primates and Xenarthrans (ICMBio/CPB), the Rio de Janeiro Primatology Center / INEA (CPRJ), and the North Fluminense State University.



### Citizen science

Knowledge generation is no longer a task restricted to scientists. Citizen science has been gaining increasing prominence and demonstrating the power of involving society in data collection. In December, AMLD launched the MICOnciência citizen science network, through which residents report sightings of golden lion tamarins and the southeastern maned sloth via a dedicated WhatsApp channel. This information will contribute to mapping the species distribution and protecting these two species, which are endemic to the Atlantic Forest and classified as endangered.

Eight residents from rural districts where tamarins are present (Gaviões, Bananeiras, Cambucaes, and Visconde) were trained by AMLD and will serve as volunteers supporting participatory monitoring through MICOnciência.

The network launch event was held online. To contribute, individuals who spot either species should submit their report through the WhatsApp channel (at +55 22 99750-7749) and follow the step-by-step automated response system, available 24 hours a day, providing data, images, and the location of the observed animal. The system also helps users identify the species in case of doubt. All information will be subsequently validated by a team of specialists.

## A second chance

Wildlife trafficking is one of the main threats to the species. In just the past three years, authorities confiscated a total of 37 golden lion tamarins from international traffickers. In 2025, 12 of them – originating from seizures in Suriname and Togo and repatriated by the Brazilian government – were given a second chance after undergoing rehabilitation under human care at the Rio de Janeiro Primatology Center (CPRJ).

The selection of tamarins fit to return to the wild, among all those seized in recent years, followed criteria established by specialists from the National Action Plan (PAN) for the Conservation of Atlantic Forest Primates and Sloths, coordinated by ICMBio.

The first two pairs were released on August 8 in the municipality of Macaé and are being monitored by telemetry during their readaptation to the Atlantic Forest. The remaining eight (four females and four males) returned to the wild in the following weeks. The releases were led by AMLD, in partnership with the Northern Fluminense State University Darcy Ribeiro (UENF).

Just months later, in December, one of the females gave birth to twins. Three other pregnant females were also recorded, renewing hope for the successful establishment of the new groups in the forest.

The reintroduction of these trafficked animals into the forest had a strong impact among the public on AMLD's social media and in the media in general. It was an exemplary case of coordination among various governmental and non-governmental organizations for biodiversity protection. The involvement of institutions such as the Federal Police and the Ministries of the Environment and Foreign Affairs has been essential in combating the international trafficking of Brazilian wildlife species.



## Integrated management

Populations maintained outside the species' natural environment (ex situ), in places such as zoos and research institutions, play a fundamental role in the conservation of endangered species. Populations under human care have been central since the beginning of efforts to save the golden lion tamarin from extinction, serving as the basis for reintroduction and population reinforcement in the wild from the 1980s through the 2000s. To this day, they are considered insurance populations for this primate.



In October, the Brazilian federal government approved the Integrated Population Management Program for the Golden Lion Tamarin, which establishes criteria for the integrated management of ex situ and in situ populations of the species. The program is overseen by a group of specialists coordinated by Dr. Carlos Ruiz Miranda, professor at UENF and president of AMLD's deliberative council. The Association also holds a seat in the group dedicated to research and monitoring of populations in the São João River Basin, occupied by technical coordinator Laila Mureb.

Currently, tamarins can be found in 167 zoos and aquariums around the world, mainly concentrated in North America, Europe, Brazil, and Australasia (Australia, New Zealand, and Asia). All of them, regardless of location, are owned by the Brazilian government, under the coordination of ICMBio, the federal agency responsible for the management and conservation of threatened wildlife species.



To maintain the genetic and demographic health of this ex situ population, it is globally managed with a target size of around 500 individuals. Management is conducted within the framework of zoo associations: the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) in North America, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), and the Zoo and Aquarium Association (ZAA) of Australasia. The ex situ population of threatened Brazilian animals, such as golden lion tamarins, is managed by ICMBio with support from the Brazilian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZAB).

Reinforcing this partnership, in October AMLD hosted staff from eight zoos in the United States, who were able to see firsthand the work carried out by the Association to conserve the tamarin in its natural habitat. This is the second edition of this exchange visit between zoos and the AMLD team, organized by partner NGO Save the Golden Lion Tamarin (SGLT). The initiative is aimed at zoo staff who already participate in or wish to participate in the golden lion tamarin conservation program.



### 3. Connectivity and Ecological Restoration of the Atlantic Forest

Restoring lowland Atlantic Forest and, in doing so, recovering the habitat of the golden lion tamarin is a central part of AMLD's strategic planning to ensure the long-term conservation of the species. In 2025, ecological restoration advanced in two key areas in the municipality of Silva Jardim: Fazenda Perdida, a property neighboring the Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park, acquired by AMLD in 2023 and already integrated into the park; and the Jennifer Mickelberg Ecological Corridor, in the rural district of Gaviões, which will connect the two largest forest blocks of the tamarin's habitat, totaling more than 20,000 hectares.

At Fazenda Perdida, 20.67 hectares were planted: ten with funding from Exxon-Mobil and another 10.67 under the GEF Private Areas Project. In total, more than 34,000 native Atlantic Forest seedlings were planted. Part of these were planted in October by a group of staff from zoos participating in the golden lion tamarin conservation program, as well as by around 70 students from local public schools.

In the Jennifer Mickelberg Corridor, over 15,00 seedlings were planted across 9.34 hectares throughout the year. The goal is to restore a total of 20 hectares in the corridor by 2026.

Planting on the property – formerly pastureland acquired in 2024 – was carried out by the local team of Coopgaviões (Cooperative of Agroecological Workers of Gaviões), with funding from individual donors mobilized by our partner organization in the United States, Save the Golden Lion Tamarin (SGLT). The forest corridor honors a key AMLD partner, biologist Jennifer Mickelberg of Zoo Atlanta, who passed away in 2023.

Both areas under restoration have been granted protected area status, recognized as Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPNs), which ensure the perpetual protection of the properties, totaling approximately 170 hectares (see more in Public Policies).

In parallel with seedlings planting on the corridor, AMLD plans to carry out an environmental enrichment next year on 3.73 hectares of the RPPN by planting dif-

ferent tree seedlings in three sections of the property where a few species, such as the cambará, currently dominate, with the aim of increasing species diversity within the ecosystem.

In total, the restoration provided forest-friendly jobs for 15 people, including workers and nursery staff, one company, and one agroecological cooperative.

Over the years, AMLD has already restored more than 480 hectares of the biome in the São João River Basin, in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

**+ 480 hectares**  
of Atlantic Forest restored





Jennifer Mickelberg  
Corridor  
**Before**



Fazenda Perdida - **Before**

Jennifer Mickelberg  
Corridor  
**After**



Fazenda Perdida - **After**

## 4. Family farming and social engagement

Agroecology was one of AMLD's central agendas in 2025 and received key support from the GEF Private Areas Project, with the objective of promoting conservation on private properties, focusing on the development of sustainable production systems in the São João River Basin Environmental Protection Area (APA).

Throughout the year, the project implemented four Agroforestry Systems (SAFs) with crops such as coffee, orange, and cocoa, and carried out management actions in four others. The eight demonstration units, located in the municipalities of Silva Jardim, Macaé, Rio Bonito, and Casimiro de Abreu, incorporate best practices for sustainable landscape management and the recovery of native vegetation on family farms. Implementation and management work was carried out through agroecological collective work efforts (mutirões) organized by AMLD, with the participation of dozens of rural producers. In total, twelve community mutirões were held throughout the year, mobilizing 215 people.

At the same time, the training of rural landowners was the focus of the 4th edition of the Agroflorestar Course, offered by AMLD to 35 farmers from the region, with the goal of promoting the implementation of agroecological systems. Eight workshops were held, covering topics such as fertilization, intercropping, soil care, and pruning.



Training for family farmers from the municipalities of Silva Jardim, Casimiro de Abreu, and Macaé included a visit to the Integrated Agroecological Production System (SIPA), better known as the Agroecological Farm Km 47, in Seropédica. The site, managed by Embrapa Agrobiologia, was established in 1993 and integrates animal and plant production activities across 70 hectares. During the visit, held in September, rural producers were able to learn about the different SAFs at the Agroecological Farm, crop intercropping systems, fertilization schemes, and vegetable production.

In addition, a training exercise was conducted with 27 extension technicians from the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company (EMATER-RJ), the State Secretariat for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), and the municipal agriculture departments of Rio Bonito, Silva Jardim, and Casimiro de Abreu, for the application of IATA – the Agroecological Transition Assessment Tool – and for the development of an Agroecological Transition Plan. The training, held between November 4 and 6 within the framework of the GEF Private Areas Project, included both theoretical and practical classes delivered in partnership with EMATER-RJ.



In promoting this agenda, AMLD hosted in May the Expanded Meeting of the Political Coordination of the Agroecology Articulation of Rio de Janeiro (AARJ). The two-day meeting brought together farmers and local organizers, members from various regional groups that make up AARJ, as well as representatives from the municipal agriculture departments of Silva Jardim, Casimiro de Abreu, and Rio das Ostras. The event aims to strengthen political coordination in support of agroecological sustainability in strategic territories of the state.



## Sustainable livestock farming

While AMLD's work with agroecology has continued for decades, the promotion of sustainable livestock farming represents a new challenge for the Association, made possible through the GEF Private Areas Project. The first step was a diagnostic assessment of livestock practices in the golden lion tamarin's range, conducted by Nature Invest, a specialized consultant group.

The study focused on analyzing the productivity of existing pastures and farms, including both beef and dairy cattle, and identifying opportunities to improve production through the adoption of good environmental practices. It also highlighted the absence of technical assistance and rural extension initiatives promoting best practices, animal welfare, training courses, and technological development in the sector.

Among the recommendations of the assessment are: the recovery and proper management of pastures; improved water management in production areas; technical training for producers; promotion of good environmental practices, such as maintaining forest in Permanent Preservation Areas and Legal Reserves; and strengthening institutional partnerships involving research, technical assistance, and pilot projects in both dairy and beef cattle production.

The project plans for 2026 include the implementation of a demonstration unit for sustainable pasture management with best practices on a property neighboring the Golden Lion Tamarin Park. The main objective is to share these practices, increasing productivity on smaller pasture areas.



## 5. Environmental Education

Since its founding, the Environmental Education Program has been a central part of the work of the Golden Lion Tamarin Association, fostering environmental awareness and behavioral change favoring nature conservation. In 2025, the Golden Lion Tamarin Park welcomed 991 students and teachers from both public and private schools.

High school students from Colégio Estadual Sérvulo Mello, in Silva Jardim, took part in a special activity celebrating World Environment Day (June 5). The students had the opportunity to observe golden lion tamarins in the wild, learn how primate monitoring works, and gain a better understanding of the species' behavior. They also contributed to the restoration of the Atlantic Forest by planting seedlings at Fazenda Perdida. The group also took a full tour of the park's attractions. These activities were supported by ExxonMobil and the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO).

The year also marked the return of the Forest Guardians project. This initiative, aimed at training young environmental monitors, involved around 90 fifth-grade



students from four municipal schools in Silva Jardim. Over the course of five sessions, students learned about the Atlantic Forest, its threats, its flora and fauna, and its rivers, and had the opportunity to observe birds, golden lion tamarins, and plant native tree seedlings.

In its 13th edition, AMLD's Rediscovering the Atlantic Forest course graduated a group of 29 educators from the municipalities of Silva Jardim, Casimiro de Abreu, Rio Bonito, and Macaé. In total, there were eight in-person sessions in which participants in this continuing education program were engaged in group dynamics, outdoor activities, lectures, and they had the opportunity to learn about the golden lion tamarin, the Atlantic Forest, and how to bring nature into the classroom.

Rediscovering the Atlantic Forest is a continuing education program funded by



Copenhagen Zoo, with support from the municipal governments of Silva Jardim, Rio Bonito, and Casimiro de Abreu.

In its seventh year of partnership, the park also welcomed another group from Project Dragonfly, Miami University in the United States. The group, composed of 14 students, was introduced to AMLD's work and had the opportunity to study the golden lion tamarin and the Atlantic Forest. Over 10 days, the group participated in monitoring and management activities for the tamarins, agroecology, restoration, environmental education, ecotourism, and social engagement.

Project Dragonfly's Earth Expeditions course is a transformative education initiative – an undergraduate program in Community Engagement in Conservation – that takes students to different destinations to follow successful conservation projects and initiatives around the world.



## School gardens

Investing in environmental education also means promoting awareness and a sense of belonging among people. With funding from EDF power solutions, AMLD supported the implementation of gardens in three public schools in Silva Jardim. The initiative, which began in May at Escola Municipal Cambucaes and Escola E.M. Gaviões, and continued in June at Escola E.M. Durval Palmeira, aims not only to encourage healthy eating in school meals but also to engage the school community in agroecological practices.

AMLD donated seedlings and seeds of vegetables such as kale, chicory, broccoli, and lettuce, and provided support in planting, irrigation, and the construction of garden beds. The expectation is to expand the project to other schools and areas in the region.



## 'Geladeiras culturais'

'Geladeiras Culturais' (or Cultural Refrigerators, in free translation), are spaces for social engagement and transformation that feature activities such as reading workshops, sewing classes, tutoring, English lessons, and even psychological support. They also function as community libraries and are now AMLD partners in promoting environmental education and sustainable development.

With support from the GEF Private Areas Project, AMLD is investing in the structuring and consolidation of three 'Geladeiras': Varginha, Centro, and Aldeia Velha. Strengthening these spaces is considered vital for promoting critical thinking and informed debate on topics such as sustainability. Initiatives in the communities of Imbaú and Gaviões are also supported, using alternative formats to traditional libraries.

In June, the Varginha initiative welcomed students from Miami University, an AMLD partner, for a community immersion experience with around 25 children. Activities included reading, ballet, a fashion show, and the planting of a community garden.





## 6. Public Policies

In 2025, the golden lion tamarin gained two private protected areas managed by AMLD. The announcement was made in November during the UN Climate Conference (COP30) in Belém, with the recognition of Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPNs) located in the municipality of Silva Jardim, totaling approximately 170 hectares of protected habitat for this primate.

These include the RPPN Parque do Mico II, covering 70 hectares and recognized by the Rio de Janeiro State Environmental Institute (Inea-RJ), which expands the already established Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park; and the RPPN Jennifer Mickelberg Corridor, covering approximately 100 hectares, recognized by ICMBio, in the rural district of Gaviões.

The reserve certificate was presented in Belém, at Casa da Mata Atlântica, directly to AMLD's Executive Secretary, Luis Paulo Ferraz, who attended COP30.

At the same time, in coordination with Inea-RJ, 47 Environmental Reserve Quotas (or CRAs, see below) were issued for the RPPN Parque do Mico, a 151-hectare reserve created in 2024. The launch of these quotas – the first in Brazil – took place in December during an event organized by the state agency, with participation from AMLD and the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) team of the GEF Private Areas Project, as well as representatives from public agencies, the private sector, research institutions, and civil society. AMLD is working in partnership with Inea-RJ and the Brazilian Forest Service to disseminate the initiative and promote the issuance of new CRAs in the state.

### What are CRAs?

Environmental Reserve Quotas – commonly referred to as CRAs – are a form of payment for environmental services. The program in the state of Rio de Janeiro is implemented by Inea-RJ, with support from the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) and the GEF Private Areas Project. Legislation supporting CRAs allow deficits in Legal Reserves on rural properties to be compensated through the purchase of credits representing preserved native vegetation in other areas where there is a surplus.

The first CRAs in Brazil are being issued in areas already formally designated as RPPNs. In this way, landowners who have voluntarily chosen to conserve their forests receive financial support to protect them. This incentive is also expected to encourage the expansion of RPPNs across Brazil.

Another important public policy instrument is the National Action Plans for Conservation (PAN), coordinated by ICMBio. In June, the second cycle of the PAN for Atlantic Forest Primates and Maned Sloths (2025–2030) was approved, including a list of 14 target species, among them the golden lion tamarin and the southeastern maned sloth, both species that AMLD helps to monitor and protect.

AMLD also participates in forums of non-governmental organizations, such as the Atlantic Forest NGO Network (currently serving on its coordination group), the Atlantic Forest Restoration Pact, and the Climate Observatory Coalition, in addition to serving as an Advanced Post of the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve.

In recognition of more than three decades of AMLD's work – not only for the gold-





golden lion tamarin but for the entire Atlantic Forest – AMLD was given the Muriqui Award, presented in May by the National Council of the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve. The award is one of the most prestigious honors for environmental initiatives in Brazil.

## Golden lion tamarin at COP30

AMLD participated in the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Belém, Pará. As a member of the coordination of the Atlantic Forest NGO Network (RMA), AMLD highlighted golden lion tamarin conservation at COP30. The Atlantic Forest House, organized by RMA in partnership with the University of the Amazon (UNAMA), hosted a parallel program to the conference, featuring panels on ecological restoration, biodiversity conservation, climate, and land-use planning.

AMLD's Executive Secretary and RMA representative, Luís Paulo Ferraz, took part in the panel "Landscape connectivity as a strategy for climate change mitigation," alongside Carlos Eduardo Marinello, Chief of Staff of the National Secretariat for Biodiversity, Forests and Animal Rights of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MMA); Ana Paula Silva, from the Atlantic Forest Restoration Pact; Clayton Lino, International Cooperation Coordinator of the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve; and Vagner do Nascimento, president of the Traditional Communities Forum.

The event also marked the drafting of the Atlantic Forest Letter, submitted to the MMA. The document presents a historical and critical overview of the degradation of the Atlantic Forest, along with an urgent call for a zero-deforestation target in the biome. RMA also took part in the Climate March, a public demonstration through the streets of Belém, alongside more than 70,000 people from various national and international organizations.



## New railway route

The main current threat to the Golden Lion Tamarin Conservation Program implemented by AMLD is the proposed construction of a railway connecting Rio de Janeiro to Espírito Santo. The EF-118 railway aims to link the municipality of Nova Iguaçu, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, with Santa Leopoldina, in Espírito Santo, passing through Porto do Açu. AMLD is working to advocate for an alternative route that does not compromise the connectivity of Atlantic Forest remnants on which the golden lion tamarin depends for survival.

Following technical statements and mobilization by AMLD in public hearings, it is expected that the initially proposed route – which would pass through forests of the União Biological Reserve, the Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park RPPN, and forest fragments on private properties that protect the species' habitat – will be revised in coordination with the National Land Transport Agency (ANTT) and the Ministry of Transport. The process is ongoing, and we await the auction scheduled for 2026, which will define the concessionaire responsible for the project.

## 20 years of Save the Golden Lion Tamarin (SGLT)

A sister organization of AMLD and an international partner, Save the Golden Lion Tamarin (SGLT) celebrated two decades in May. The NGO, based in the United States, is led by Lou Ann Dietz, James Dietz, Benjamin Beck, Andrew Baker, and Inês Castro, who are also among the founders of the Golden Lion Tamarin Association. The organization supports fundraising efforts, strategic planning alongside AMLD, management of the population living under human care in zoos, and the promotion of golden lion tamarin conservation to international audiences.



**Long live SGLT!**

The golden lion tamarin is grateful for the partnership and dedication!

## 7. Ecotourism and the Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park

Throughout 2025, the Golden Lion Tamarin (GLT) Ecological Park attracted more than 3,000 visitors, including tourists, school and university students, and event participants. Visitors enjoyed trails, points, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Ecological Restoration Tower, the Forested Overpass Viewpoint, and the Golden Lion Tamarin House. A cycling trail is one of the park's new features, inaugurated in February, with a length of 14 kilometers.

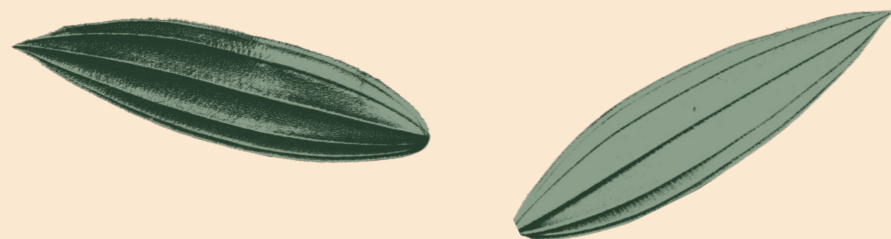
Observing golden lion tamarins in the wild – known as “The Tamarin Trail” – is another highlight of the ecotourism program. The tour, which attracts visitors from around the world, is always conducted with AMLD staff, who are responsible for tracking the tamarins and ensuring the safety of both the animals and visitors. The activity follows a strict safety protocol that includes mandatory distancing from the animals, a limited number of participants per visit, and alternating observation days (Thursdays and Saturdays). In addition, visitors must present proof of yellow fever vaccination in advance, and there is a health protocol for COVID-19 prevention, which includes at least two vaccine doses and the use of masks during the tour.

The list of attractions will grow with the creation of the Golden Lion Tamarin Trail, announced in November and currently in the mapping and implementation phase, carried out with support from the GEF Private Areas Project, aiming to promote landscape integration within the São João River Basin Environmental Protection Area (APA).

The trail, which will span approximately 140 km, already has an official logo following the signage standards of the Brazilian Trails Network, as well as an established governance structure composed of representatives from AMLD, ICMBio, the Tourism and Environment Secretariat of

Silva Jardim, civil society representatives, the municipality of Rio Bonito, associations, lodging owners, rural landowners, and designated leaders for each section of the trail.

In November, the first section of the trail was opened, covering 12 km and linking the GLT Park to the center of Aldeia Velha, crossing pasture areas undergoing ecological restoration. The inaugural hike of the route, which can be completed in about four hours, was held as a free event with the participation of approximately 90 people.





The trail is expected to be fully implemented by 2026 and will be part of the Volta ao Rio, a long-distance trail that will connect protected areas across the state of Rio de Janeiro.

To support visitor services, AMLD has four environmental guides, all local residents, trained by the Association to lead tours.

The park is open to visitors from Thursday to Saturday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., by prior reservation, which is made online through AMLD's website via the Eco-booking platform, responsible for managing sales. All ecotourism revenues contribute to the maintenance of the park itself, staff salaries, and other fixed costs.

The full list of attractions and activities can be found on AMLD's website or on the Parque do Mico app, available for Android and iOS.

The park's schedule featured a total of 13 events, all free of charge, with highlights including Mico com Arte (GLTs with Art) in April, which, in addition to classic outdoor activities, offered a cultural program with the launch of two poetry books, a literary workshop, a musical performance, and games. The project, supported by ExxonMobil and FUNBIO, aims to help structure the park and enable the realization of all these events.

A staple of the GLT Park calendar, another edition of Um Dia no Parque (A Day in the Park), a national campaign celebrating Brazil's protected areas, was held in July and welcomed around 300 participants.

The 2nd Birdwatching Festival of the Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park, held in November, brought together hundreds of people for a day dedicated to birds. In addition to observing the various species found in the park, visitors attended the launch of the book *Birds of Southeastern Brazil*, by authors Daniel and Gabriel Mello (the Mello Brothers), who also led birdwatching activities.

In addition, a 'famtour' was held in May, organized by the agency Tour pelo Mundo, with 18 tourism professionals. The visit aimed to present the attractions of the Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park to agencies and guides, so that the destination can be included in their travel offerings.

The ecotourism agenda was not limited to the park itself but also included participation in external events considered strategic for strengthening the area as a tourism destination.

AMLD's Ecotourism Advisor, Anderson Ribeiro, presented an overview of the GLT Park at Avistar, the largest birdwatching event in Latin America, in May. The Golden Lion Tamarin Trail was also featured during ExpoRio Turismo in June. In August, AMLD participated in the Transforma Ecoturismo Seminar, organized by Sebrae Rio, with the presence of industry entrepreneurs and public managers. The Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park was one of the topics presented during a panel on ecotourism trends.

AMLD also took part in the VIII Forum of the Caminho dos Veadeiros, held in Cavalcante, Goiás, in December, with a presentation in the roundtable "Governance and tourism promotion experiences of long-distance trails in Brazil."



## 8. Research

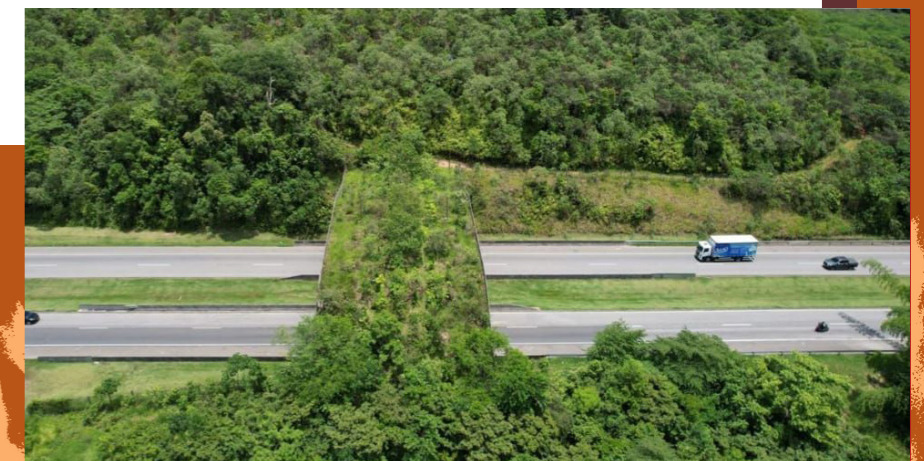
The Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park has established itself as an important area for the development of research. In 2025, several studies were conducted with AMLD's support, including master's theses, doctoral research, and undergraduate research projects. The studies covered topics such as monitoring of mammal and herpetofauna communities, surveys of bees and pollination, and forest restoration.

One of the studies, conducted by biologist Giovanna Costa as part of her master's degree in the Graduate Program in Environmental Sciences and Conservation at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro - UFRJ, revealed that medium- and large-sized mammals – such as pumas, ocelots, pacas, and peccaries – quickly return to restored areas. The research used data collected by camera traps installed in the GLT Park.



### The first puma crossing on the forested overpass

In April, Arteris, the concessionaire of the BR-101 highway, released images of the first recorded crossing of a puma on the forested overpass. The news confirms the resilience of wildlife and the success of restoration and connectivity efforts. The overpass connects forest areas between the Poço das Antas Biological Reserve and the Golden Lion Tamarin Ecological Park. The structure, completed in 2020, was built as a mitigation measure required for the highway widening project. The section of BR-101 that crosses the golden lion tamarin's territory is the largest wildlife crossing complex in Brazil.



Scientific challenges related to forest restoration were the focus of a strategic meeting hosted by AMLD in June, together with representatives from the Lagos São João Intermunicipal Consortium (CILSJ), ICMBio, Inea-RJ, the Environmental Secretariat of Silva Jardim, and the Administration Secretariat of Casimiro de Abreu. The meeting aimed to identify knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to increase the effectiveness of restoration efforts.



Following this discussion, at the end of July, the Scientific Meeting of Managers and Researchers on Ecological Restoration in the São João River Basin/Golden Lion Tamarin APA was held, with support from the GEF Private Areas Project. During the event, restoration experiences and their challenges were presented, serving as inspiration for managers of public conservation units at all levels of government, as well as for RPPNs.

The meeting brought together around 70 participants, including managers from the municipalities of Casimiro de Abreu and Silva Jardim, representatives from the Golden Lion Tamarin Integrated Management Unit - ICMBio, RPPN landowners, nursery workers, university students, and researchers.

As a result of the event, recommendations were outlined to advance the restoration agenda in the Atlantic Forest, including strengthening local nurseries and the production of specialized native seedlings; evaluating ecosystem services, carbon dynamics, and habitat resilience; and integrating fauna as key indicators of restoration effectiveness.

This topic also guided the 1st Meeting of the PELD Project (Long-Term Ecological Research Project), held in October at AMLD headquarters. The event brought together researchers and technicians from different institutions and universities and marked the beginning of a scientific collaboration aimed at integrated forest restoration in strategic biodiversity areas within the São João River Basin/Golden Lion Tamarin Environmental Protection Area (APA).

In October, the Tamarin Park hosted four days of learning and research with the visit of a group of around 70 students from Geography and Biology programs, under the coordination of Professor Sueli Furlan, from the Biogeography course in the Department of Geography at the University of São Paulo (USP). The students formed groups and carried out field analyses related to fauna, flora, and the local community.



## Monitoring of howler monkeys and sloths

The golden lion tamarin is not the only endangered primate inhabiting the São João River Basin. Even more severely affected by yellow fever, the red howler monkeys (*Alouatta guariba*) are gradually recovering from the most recent outbreak of the disease. In partnership with the Connect Project, coordinated by UENF, AMLD's team has been monitoring howler monkeys in the region using drone flights equipped with thermal cameras. The data collected have made it possible to better understand the geographic range and landscape use of this arboreal primate in the area. In September, howler monkeys were recorded for the first time in the GLT Park.

Also in partnership with the Connect Project, led by UENF, researchers resumed monitoring of the endangered southeastern maned sloth (*Bradypus crinitus*) in September, using specialized drones to improve censuses. The initiative aims to assess the effectiveness of wildlife crossings over gas and oil pipelines that run through the São João River Basin APA. The species, alongside the golden lion tamarin, is included in the list of target species of the National Action Plan (PAN) for Atlantic Forest Primates and Maned Sloths (see more in Public Policies).

## 9. Communication

Communication plays a key role in disseminating AMLD's activities, promoting dialogue with civil society, and reinforcing environmental awareness messages. This work ranges from social media posts – the main platform for reaching the general public – to organizing and participating in events that help spread AMLD's work to specific audiences.

AMLD maintains active accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The most significant growth has been on Instagram, where AMLD surpassed 20,000 followers in 2025 – an increase of more than 3,000 followers in one year, with a total of 189 posts.

On Facebook, AMLD's page maintained its reach with around 26,000 followers. On YouTube, where eight videos were published, the channel reached 1,270 subscribers.

Content published by the Association across its social media platforms generated more than 250,000 views and reached over 100,000 accounts.

Part of the communication with international audiences – especially zoos worldwide – is led by Save the Golden Lion Tamarin (SGLT), AMLD's U.S.-based partner organization, which promotes AMLD's work through its own social media channels and newsletter, all in English.

AMLD's work was featured in both Brazilian and international media outlets, including in countries such as Denmark, Germany and the United States. In total, more than 90 pieces of content related to the Association were produced, with highlights including the creation of RPPNs and the release of trafficked tamarins back into the wild.



## **New communication channel via WhatsApp**

Alongside the celebrations of Golden Lion Tamarin Day in August, AMLD launched its official WhatsApp channel. The platform aims to bring the public closer to the organization, providing updates on ongoing actions and projects, news, event announcements, and even wildlife sightings captured by camera traps.

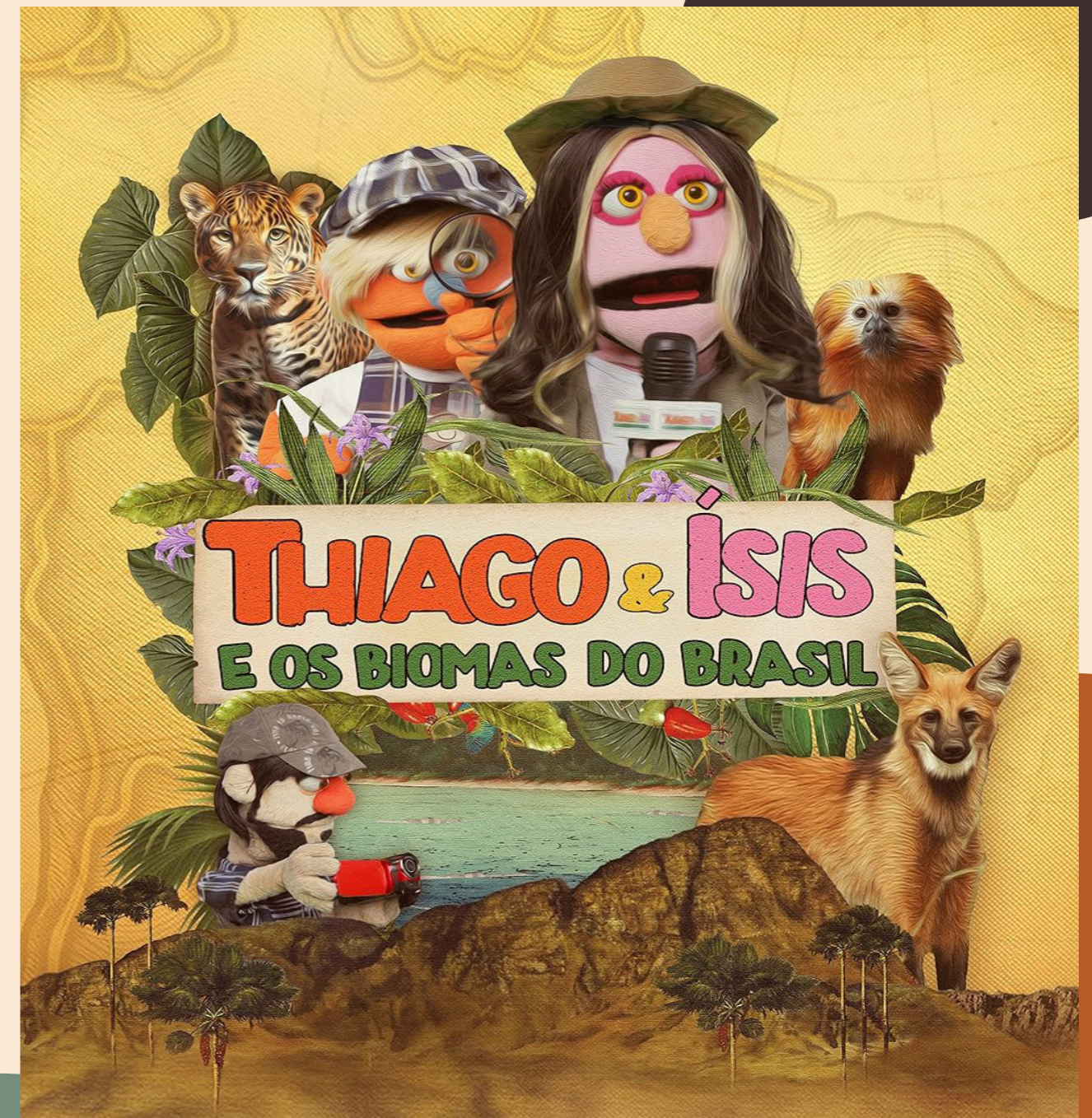


The year also marked the premiere of the full-length film Thiago & Ísis and the Biomes of Brazil in Brazilian theaters and at international film festivals. Directed by João Amorim, the feature film tells the adventures of two children in a playful way alongside different animals of Brazilian fauna, including the golden lion tamarin – and, with it, AMLD's work.

In celebration of International Golden Lion Tamarin Day (August 2), AMLD organized a special screening of the film at the Zezé Macedo Theater in Silva Jardim. The free screening filled the theater with children and adults. The program was supported by the Tourism Secretariat through the Silva Jardim City Hall.

There was also the premiere, in September, of the second episode of Rastro dos Bichos ("animal tracks") on TV Cultura. Hosted by award-winning nature photographer Adriano Gambarini, the episode presents the golden lion tamarin and the history of conservation efforts led by AMLD.

The protection of the tamarin was also featured in the web series Segredos de Silva Jardim ("Silva Jardim secrets"), produced by Semente Livre Produções for Instagram, with appearances in episodes about the GLT Park, species monitoring, agroecology, and the wildlife overpass.





## 10. Acknowledgments to partners and donors

The AMLD team, including members, board members, and staff, along with the more than 4,800 golden lion tamarins living in the wild, would like to express our deep gratitude to our partners who believe in our work and help make this conservation effort a reality. We are especially grateful to our local partners, both public and private, as well as local communities, farmers, educators, and many others, without whom this work would not be possible.

In 2025, AMLD, directly and through Save the Golden Lion Tamarin (SGLT) and the Lion Tamarins of Brazil Fund (LTBF), received funding from the following institutions and individuals:

## Supporters of the Golden Lion Tamarin Conservation Program in 2025

(Institutions that contributed US\$20,000+)

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## SGLT Board

Toni Allen, Kara Arundel, Andrew Baker, Benjamin Beck, Karen Bonnin, Inês Castro, Nancy de Moraes, James Dietz, Lou Ann Dietz, Christine Engels, Kenton Kerns, Moira Tamayo

## Zoo support network

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Global Population Manager: Dr. Kristin Leus (Copenhagen Zoo)

International Studbook Keeper: Kenton Kerns (Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute)

Europe Regional Coordinator: Matt Ford (Twycross Zoo)

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