

90 DOTS FOR THE RIGHTS OF NATURE

48 Specific cases with a legal impact

27 General recognitions with a legal impact

15 Selected initiatives with no legal impact

OVER HALF OF THE INITIATIVES ARE CONCENTRATED IN LATIN AMERICA

Central and South America

52

North America

13

Europe

11

Asia

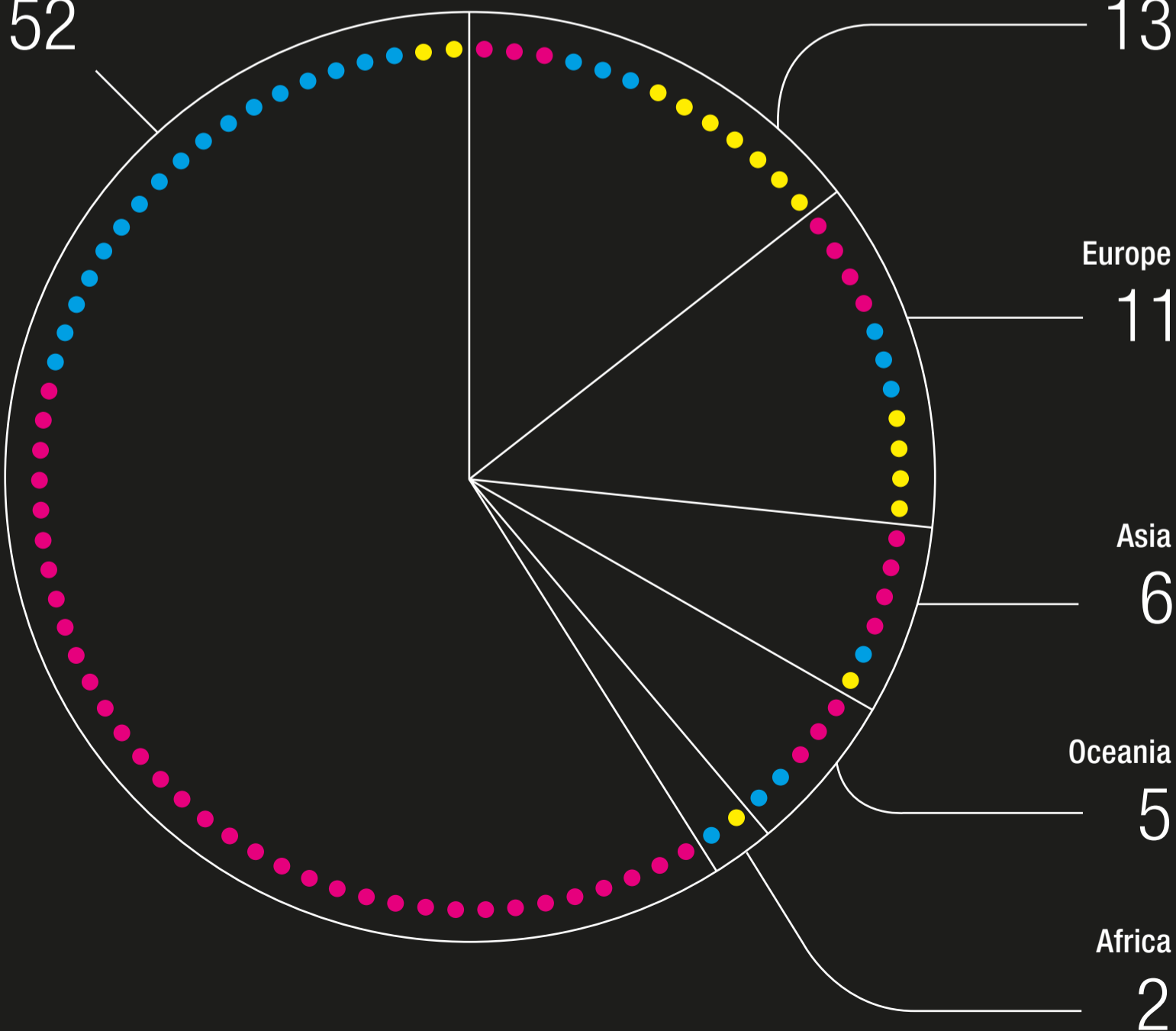
6

Oceania

5

Africa

2



CASES BY COUNTRIES

AMERICA

USA

1972

● The Sierra Club environmental organisation files a suit against the approval of a ski resort in Mineral King Valley in Sequoia National Park

2006

● The dumping of toxic wastewater is banned in Tamaqua Borough, Pennsylvania, on the grounds that it is a violation of the rights of nature

2010

● Pittsburgh is the first major city in the United States to enact a local law that recognises the rights of nature

2016

● The Ho-Chunk Nation votes for the first time for a rights of nature tribal constitutional amendment

2017

● First lawsuit filed in a federal court to obtain recognition of the legal rights of the Colorado River ecosystem

● The Ponca Nation of Oklahoma approves a customary law that recognises the rights of nature

2018

● The White Earth Band of the Chippewa Nation in Minnesota adopts the law on the Rights of the Manoomin (wild rice), a traditional staple crop of the Anishinaabe people

2019

● The residents of Exeter, New Hampshire, enact a law that guarantees the rights of nature, including the right to a "a stable and healthy climate system"

● The residents of Nottingham, New Hampshire, enact a law that guarantees the rights of nature, including the right to be free of "chemical trespass"

● The Yurok tribe launches the process to recognise the legal rights of the Klamath River

2020

● The Menominee Native American tribe in Wisconsin asserts that the Menominee River has the right to exist naturally, to evolve without being polluted and to carry out its functions as an ecosystem

● The General Council of the Nez Perce tribe passes a resolution recognising the Snake River as a living entity that has rights

CANADA

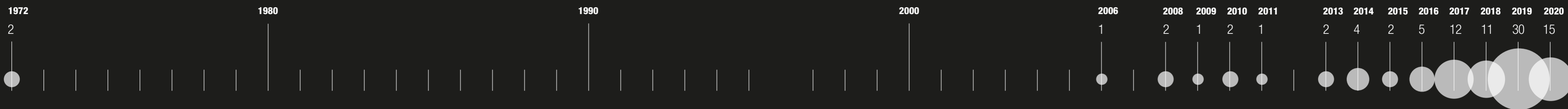
2020

● The Tsilhqot'in Nation enacts a law on Esdilahg Sturgeon River in accordance with the rights, including to waters, of the aborigines of the Tsilhqot'in people



A CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENT

Number of cases per year



MEXICO

2010
● Suit filed in defence of the rights of the sea and against the oil spill by the international oil company BP in the Gulf of Mexico

2014
● The constitution of the state of Guerrero recognises the rights of nature

2017
● The Constituent Assembly of Mexico City votes to include the rights of nature in article 18 of the new constitution

2019
● The Congress of the state of Colima approves an amendment to the state's constitution to recognise that no political or economic interest shall take precedence over the interest of the rights of nature
● The judicial district of the state of Oaxaca determines the protection of the Atoyac and Salado rivers

2020
● Bill to grant legal personhood to the Magdalena River in Mexico City

EL SALVADOR

2019
● The country's Legislative Assembly approves a pronouncement that states that forests are living entities

2020
● A proposal to recognise the rights of nature is submitted by a number of NGOs to the Legislative Assembly
● The Si por los Derechos de la Naturaleza NGO works on the declaration by the Legislative Assembly to recognise the rights of the Lempa River, the most important river in the country

GUATEMALA

2008
● The Congress of the Republic receives a proposed law on the indigenous management of sacred places in Guatemala by Oxlajuj Ajpop, the Council of Leaders consisting of Mayan language communities

2019
● The Constitutional Court issues a non-anthropocentric verdict that recognises the cultural and spiritual relationship between the indigenous population and water

BELICE

2017
● Law to approve an indefinite moratorium in order to preserve the Barrier Reef as World Heritage and to recognise it as a subject of rights in the future

COSTA RICA

2020
● The city of Curridabat grants citizenship to pollinators, trees and native plants

BOLIVIA

2009/2010
● Law on the Rights of Nature passed by the Legislative Assembly of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

COLOMBIA

2016
● The country's Constitutional Court recognises the Atrato River as a subject of rights, protecting it against illegal gold mining and thus entailing its protection, conservation, maintenance and, if necessary, its restoration

2018
● The Supreme Court recognises the Colombian Amazon as a subject of rights and orders the creation of an Intergenerational Pact for the Life of the Colombian Amazon (PIVAC)
● The high Andean paramo ecosystem in Pisba, endangered by large-scale mining extraction, is recognised as a subject of rights

2019
● The First Criminal Court on the Cartagena Circuit orders the state to protect the lives of bees as pollinators

2019
● In Huila, the Municipal Civil Court recognises the Plata River as a subject of rights, and protective measures for the river and the local community are ordered
● The Administrative Court of Tolima orders the permanent cessation of mining exploitation of the Coello, Combeima and Cocora rivers and recognises them as individual entities and subjects of rights

2019
● The High Court of Medellín recognises the Cauca River, its basin and tributaries as subjects of rights
● The First Criminal Court of the district of Neiva recognises the Magdalena River as a subject of rights
● The Administrative Court of Quindío recognises the Quindío River, from its source, its basin and its tributaries to its mouth, as a subject of rights

2019
● The Colombian Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) recognises Katsa Su, the vast territory of the Awá people, as a subject of rights and a victim of armed conflict
● The Third Court of Sentence Enforcement and Security Measures in Cali condemns the violation of rights caused by the pollution of the Pance River and recognises it as a subject of rights

● The Fourth Court of Sentence Enforcement and Security Measures in Pereira recognises the Otún River as a subject of rights and rules that the right of residents living near the river to the environment is safeguarded
● The department of Nariño is the first in the country to recognise nature as a subject of rights

2020
● The Supreme Court of Justice declares the Salamanca Island Road Park protected area to be a subject of rights in order to protect it from deforestation
● The High Court of Ibaqué declares Los Nevados National Natural Park a special subject of rights for its protection, restoration and conservation

2020
● The High Court of Ibaqué declares the Las Herosas Paramo Complex a special subject of rights with an all-encompassing approach for its protection, conservation and preservation

● As a result of the collapse of a mine tailings dam that caused damage to ecosystems and the population, civil society movements work towards recognition of the rights of nature of the Paraopeba River

ECUADOR

2008
● Inclusion of the Rights of Nature in the Constitution of Ecuador

2011
● Court victory for the Valle de Vilcabamba concerning the violation of the rights of nature due to the construction of a highway by the provincial government of Loja Canton

2013
● Precautionary measures are taken to guarantee the rights of nature of the Samama Protective Forest in response to the adjudication of the Hacienda La Clementina

2016
● Precautionary measures are taken to protect the rights of nature threatened by the San Francisco Recreational Centre in Alamor due to the destruction of the mountain and the impact on local water

2018
● The Provincial Court of Sucumbios rules that mining activity be stopped in the territory of the Cofán indigenous people of Sinangoe and recognises that their right to prior consultation was violated

2019
● Two United Nations experts on the rights of nature address the courts of Ecuador, calling for the suspension of the construction of the tailings dams of the Mirador mining project in the Cordillera del Condor
● The Supreme Court agrees to hear the appeal over the crime against wild flora and fauna in the Galapagos and rules that the Chinese ship the Yuan Yu Leng 999, carrying 300 tonnes of protected species, must be seized

● A judge in the canton of Quevedo issues a protection order for farmers in the province of Los Rios against transgenic crops on the grounds that they violate life, health, work, a healthy environment and the rights of nature

2020
● In response to the threat of degradation posed by mining activity to the Los Cedros Biological Reserve, the Constitutional Court of Imbabura agrees to hear the case on the basis of the rights of nature
● The Constitutional Court orders that the rights of nature be protected to control pollution of the Alpayacu River

ARGENTINA

2014
● As a result of the protection case pursued by the AFADA association, the judicial authorities of the city of Buenos Aires recognise the orangutan Sandra as a subject of rights

2016
● Judge María Alejandra Mauricio, in agreement with the activists in the AFADA association of lawyers, declares the chimpanzee Cecilia a non-human legal person

2019
● The members of the Santa Fe provincial authority propose to amend its constitution to include the rights of nature

2020
● The Inter-American Court of Human Rights approves a non-anthropocentric ruling that recognises the protection of the rights of the indigenous communities of the Lhaka Honhat (Our Land) association to water, food, a healthy environment and cultural identity

AFRICA

UGANDA

2019
● The National Environment Act recognises that "Nature has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution"

NIGERIA

2019
● A number of organisations draft the law that recognises the rights of the River Ethiope, the first river to be recognised as a living entity in Africa

EUROPE

UE

2013
● The campaign for the European Citizen's Initiative for the Rights of Nature is launched

GREAT BRITAIN

2018
● The municipality of Frome enacts bylaws relating to the rights of the River Frome, to protect the river and its tributaries for the benefit of present and future generations

HOLLAND

2019
● The municipality of Nordeast-Fryslan approves a motion that proposes to grant special rights to the Wadden Sea

SPAIN

2020
● The municipality of Los Alcázares approves an initiative to recognise the rights of the Mar Menor lagoon

PORTUGAL

2017
● A petition to have the intrinsic rights of nature recognised is sent by citizens of Portugal to the president of the Portuguese Republic

SWEDEN

2015
● Parliament considers a motion to implement a proposal to incorporate the rights of nature into Swedish law

2018
● The Sami Parliament endorses the Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth

2019
● The municipality of Forshaga together with the Rights of Mother Earth NGO express their interest in declaring the Klarälven River a subject of rights

2019
● Verdict of the tribunal on the rights of Lake Vättern against the destructive impact of military and mining operations that violate the Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth

FRANCE

2016
● The Loyalty Islands in New Caledonia approve the province's environmental code, with aspects that recognise the rights of nature

2018
● A reform of the Constitution of 1958 and the 2004 Charter for the Environment is set in motion, to include amendments on the crime of ecocide and the principle of non-regression in relation to the environment

ASIA

BANGLADESH

2019
● The High Court grants legal person status to the Turag River, protecting it against the illegal establishments on its banks

INDIA

1972-1974
● Rise of the Chipko (Hug the Trees) green movement in response to the increasing exploitation of forest resources in the hills of Uttarakhand in the state of Uttar Pradesh

2017
● The High Court of the state of Uttarakhand recognises the Ganges River and its tributary the Yamuna as living and legal entities
● The country's High Court recognises the ecosystems of the Himalayas within its territory as subjects of rights

2017
● The Legislative Assembly of Madhya Pradesh declares the Narmada River a living entity and a lifeline of the state

2018
● The High Court in Uttarakhand agrees to grant the status of legal person or entity to animals in the northern part of the state

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

2017
● The Parliament of the state of Victoria recognises that the Yarra River is an indivisible living entity that deserves to be protected, as does its close connection with the Wurundjeri, its original owners

2019
● A member of the Parliament of Western Australia, Diane Evers, introduces the Rights of Nature and Future Generations Bill
● The Council of New South Wales resolves to include the rights of nature in its urban planning and other municipal operations

NEW ZEALAND

2014
● Te Urewera Park, ancestral territory of the Tuhoe Maori tribe, is recognised as a legal entity with all the rights of a moral person

2017
● The Parliament finalises the Te Awa Tupua Act, and the Whanganui River and Mount Taranaki obtain moral personhood as an ecosystem

BRASIL

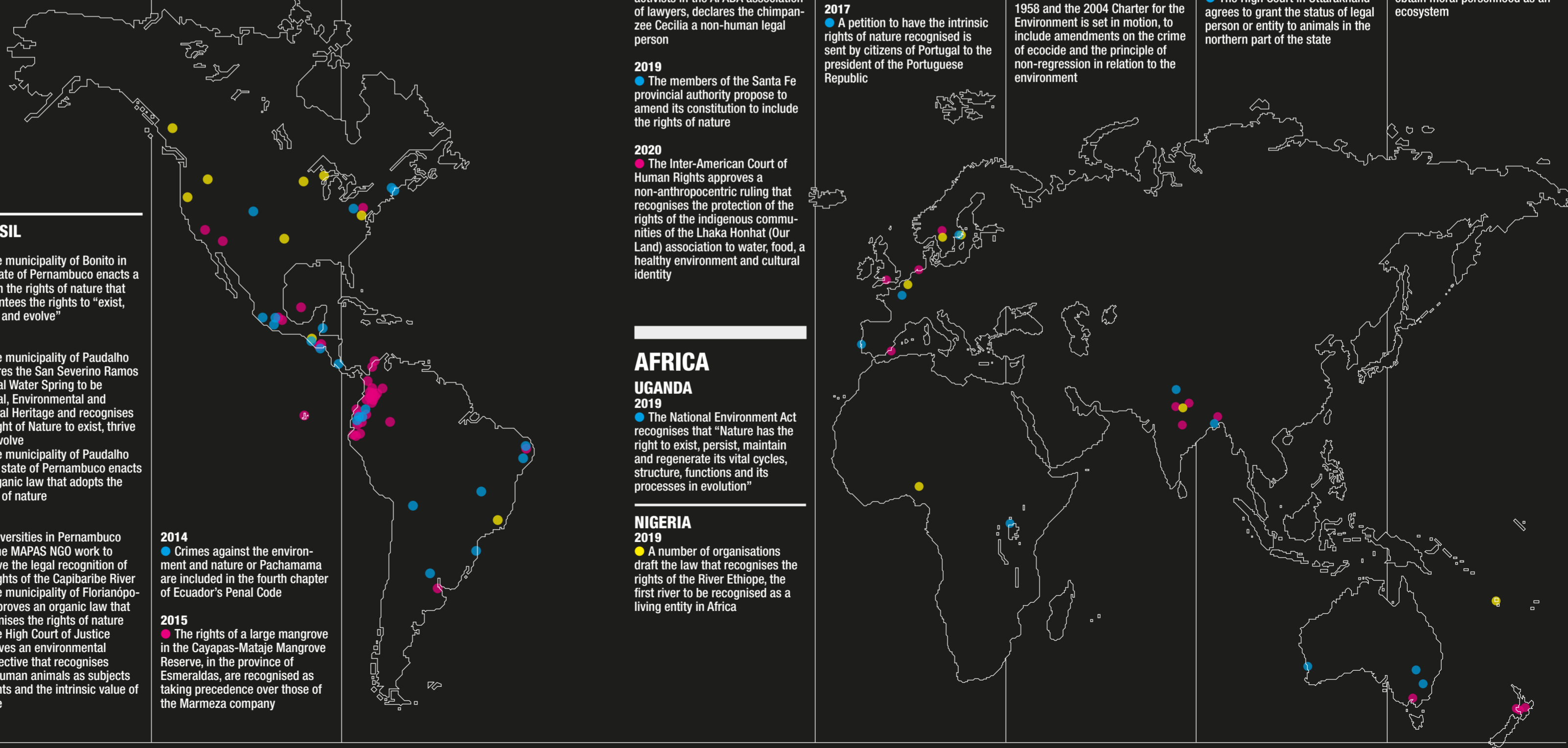
2017
● The municipality of Bonito in the state of Pernambuco enacts a law on the rights of nature that guarantees the rights to "exist, thrive and evolve"

2018
● The municipality of Paudalho declares the San Severino Ramos Natural Water Spring to be Natural, Environmental and Cultural Heritage and recognises the right of Nature to exist, thrive and evolve
● The municipality of Paudalho in the state of Pernambuco enacts an organic law that adopts the rights of nature

2019
● Universities in Pernambuco and the MAPAS NGO work to achieve the legal recognition of the rights of the Capibaribe River
● The municipality of Florianópolis approves an organic law that recognises the rights of nature
● The High Court of Justice approves an environmental perspective that recognises non-human animals as subjects of rights and the intrinsic value of nature

2014
● Crimes against the environment and nature or Pachamama are included in the fourth chapter of Ecuador's Penal Code

2015
● The rights of a large mangrove in the Cayapas-Mataje Mangrove Reserve, in the province of Esmeraldas, are recognised as taking precedence over those of the Marmeza company





Google maps showing
the geolocations
of the initiatives



Video of the creation of
the planisphere using
bacterial cultures



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