

NATURE PARKS IN PATAGONIA STRETCHING OVER 4.5 MILLION HECTARES



Chile is set to establish a network of 4.5 million hectares of nature parks in Patagonia, in order to protect and preserve the ecosystem and promote tourism in that area, according to a decree signed by President Michelle Bachelet.

In total, the new network will cover eight areas with an approximate total area of 4,519,713 hectares, which includes protected areas, new annexed territories, and private contributions such as that of the late US tycoon Douglas Tompkins, in Patagonia, at the southern end of the continent.

"Chile had to take this important step towards the protection and preservation of our biodiversity, our unique landscapes, the natural habitat to which endangered national species such as the larch, the huemul (regional deer) and the culpeo (Andean fox) are associated," Bachelet said after signing the decree in the commune of Cochrane, in the region of Aysén, about 1,600km south of Santiago de Chile.

The creation of the nature parks network represents an increase of 38.5% of the total surface of national parks, and an 81.1% of the total protected areas in Chile.

The park network will also promote tourism in Patagonia, the Chilean region most visited by tourists, where a significant percentage of the country's protected areas can be found.

It is estimated that these protected areas have been visited by more than 10 million tourists in the last four years, according to official numbers.

"78% of long-distance tourists said that nature is their main reason to visit Chile," said Bachelet.

Around 400,000 hectares that are now part of the nature parks in Patagonia, were **given to the Chilean state by the late philanthropist and American businessman Douglas Tompkins, who lived since the nineties in Patagonia** with his wife Kristine, who attended President Bachelet's presentation of the park network.

Douglas Tompkins died in a kayak accident on a lake, in December 2015. Before his death, he had promised to give the Chilean state the land he had acquired during his more than 20 years of life in the country.

Date: 2018-02-05

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/chilean-nature-parks-to-attract-tourists-news10465>