



WHITLEY FUND FOR NATURE

PR DOSSIER

2015

Contents

[Whitley Award Winners](#).....3-4

[PR: Boosting Winners’ Profiles](#).....5

[2015 PR Impact](#).....6-7

[Coverage of the Whitley Fund for Nature](#).....8-13

[Coverage of the Awards week \(General\)](#).....14-40

Media coverage by winner:

[Dino Martins \(Whitley Gold Award\): People, plants and pollinators: protecting the little things that power the planet](#).....41-76

[Arnaud Desbiez: Giant armadillos as a flagship species for the conservation of tropical scrublands in the Brazilian Cerrado](#).....77-116

[Rosamira Guillen: Proyecto Titi: expanding conservation efforts to protect the cotton-top tamarin in northern Colombia](#).....117-161

[Panut Hadisiswoyo: Conservation villages: building local capacity for the protection of Sumatran orangutans and their habitat, Indonesia](#).....162-189

[Jayson Ibañez: Preventing further decline of the Philippine eagle on Mindanao Island](#).....190-197

[Inaoyom Imong: Saving Cross River gorillas through community-based conservation in the Mbe Mountains](#).....198-213

[Ananda Kumar: Elephant messengers: using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in southern India](#).....214-268

[Pramod Patil: Community conservation of the great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert, India: a landscape level approach](#).....269-319

[WFN Coverage of the Awards](#).....320-337

[Media Coverage of Partnership Funding Winners](#)338-398

[2014/15 Media Coverage of Previous Winners](#).....399-509

2015 Whitley Award Winners

WFN celebrates dynamic local conservation leaders working in biodiversity-rich, resource-poor countries through Whitley Awards of £35,000 in project funding over one year. The Awards are the result of a competitive process and are presented by our patron, HRH The Princess Royal, at an annual ceremony in London. Each year WFN also gives a previous winner the prestigious Whitley Gold Award, a funding and profile prize worth up to £50,000, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to conservation.

Eight Whitley Awards were given in 2015 with thanks to our donors:

Dino Martins *Whitley Gold Award*

Winner of the Whitley Gold Award donated by the Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature

Arnaud Desbiez

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by Garden House School Parents' Association

Rosamira Guillen

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by Sarah Chenevix-Trench

Panut Hadisiswoyo

Winner of the Whitley Award for Conservation in Ape Habitats donated by the Arcus Foundation

Jayson Ibañez

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by The Shears Foundation in memory of Trevor Shears

Inaoyom Imong

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by the Garfield Weston Foundation

Ananda Kumar

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by WWF-UK

Pramod Patil

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by The William Brake Charitable Trust in memory of William Brake

2015 Whitley Award Winners



Left to right: Jayson Ibañez (**Philippines**), Ananda Kumar (**India**), Pramod Patil (**India**), Panut Hadisiswoyo (**Indonesia**), Arnaud Desbiez (**Brazil**), Rosamira Guillen (**Colombia**), Inaoyom Imong (**Nigeria**), Dino Martins (**Kenya**).

Location Map of 2015 Winner Projects



PR: Boosting Winners' Profiles

As well as providing winners with significant financial support, WFN works to accelerate the career paths of Whitley Award recipients by helping them to raise their profile, expand their network and inspire others.

Through Boffin Media, we provide winners with professional training for radio, TV and print interviews; whilst also offering speech training with speech coach Caroline Black. This ensures winners can communicate the impact of their work and raise awareness of conservation issues at the local and national level. We also work with a specialist environmental PR agency, Firebird, to secure media coverage for winners both in the UK and in their home countries.

Recognised internationally as a highly prestigious prize, receiving the Whitley Award gives winners a platform from which to highlight their work. Winners frequently tell us that the achievement of, and associated media coverage from winning the Award has given them increased access to and more authority with decision-makers, and has led to new funding opportunities.

This dossier showcases the PR success of the 2015 Whitley Award winners, Partnership Funding winners and previous winners who have received coverage this year, which has reached audiences numbering several million people.



2015 Whitley Award winners receiving professional media training from Boffin Media trainers; sponsored by HSBC

2015 PR Impact

PR Coverage Summary*:

- **205 items in total**
- 171 articles online (excluding social media interactions, e.g. comments, likes, retweets)
- 14 broadcast features, including TV and radio interviews
- 6 items in magazines
- 14 items in international newspapers

**These figures are based on UK and international coverage tracked by WFN and Firebird PR; without a formal media monitoring service in place they represent a conservative estimate. Not all coverage will be captured, especially internationally, and some audience reach figures are unavailable.*

Coverage highlights include:

- BBC Radio 4 Saturday Live (90 minute interview with Gold Award winner Dino Martins)
- Newsweek (EMEA Circulation: 70,000)
- Guardian Online (15 million visitors per month)
- BBC online
- Mongabay online
- Geographical online
- BBC World Service Africa – 2 radio and 2 TV interviews in English and Swahili
- Kenya Airways Msafiri magazine feature on Dino Martins (Circulation: 300,000)
- Philippine Star – leading print and digital magazine in The Philippines
- Times of India online – the third largest newspaper in India
- Radio Caracol and website - one of the main radio networks in Colombia

Liaison with London-based embassies and consulates over PR plans and attendance at the media briefing and Awards Ceremony, as well as winners' affiliated university, NGO and media PR contacts.

Media Attendance on Wednesday 29th April 2015:

- Pre-awards press conference attendance - 11 journalists
- Evening Awards Ceremony attendance - 11 journalists

Name	Media
Maria Editha Regalado	Philippine Star
Marcell Lames	Sonshine Media
Marcy Mendelson	National Geographic News
Ray Tang	Rex Features
Karl Mathiesen	The Guardian
Chris Fitch	Geographical
Kate Green	Alpha Press
Jessamy Calkin	Telegraph Magazine
Yasmin White	Icon Films
Hannah Flint	Mail on Sunday
Zeynita Gibbons	Antora News Agency
Tim Herbert	National Geographic Kids
Dr Amy-Jane Beer	BBC Wildlife magazine
Stephen Hull	Huffington Post
Mercedes Osma	Columbian Embassy Press Office
Richard Addis	Newsweek
Bunmi Akpata-Ohohe	Africa Today Magazine – UK



COVERAGE OF THE WHITLEY FUND FOR NATURE

General

Print.....	9
Websites.....	10-13

Print

Newsweek – Business Magazine
10th July 2015 and 17th July 2015

Circulation of 70,000 across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA)



NB. The featured photo is from the project of 2015 Whitley Award winner, Panut Hadiswoyo.

Websites

Mail Online – News Website

2nd August 2015

224 million monthly visitors

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3182586/RACHEL-JOHNSON-Don-t-blame-idiot-shot-Cecil-guilty.html>



Rachel Johnson: Don't blame the idiot who shot Cecil - we're all guilty

When we were small, we'd test my father by asking: 'If you had to save an animal species or us, Dada, which would you choose?'

My father (an environmentalist, conservationist and one of the first jolly green giants) would always say that he'd elect to save the last pair of mountain gorillas in Congo ahead of his children.

Though we minded at the time, I agree, and never more so than now.

On his LBC radio show, presenter James O'Brien puffed and asked: 'Why do we care more about the death of a lion than the death of a migrant in the Chunnel,' as if our priorities were awry for minding so passionately about the killing by crossbow of a much loved lion, and not caring about the dying of a nameless, faceless Sudanese.



One miserable American gun-toting speck of a rampant, predatory and destructive species paid £35,000 to take out a superb, rare and valuable male of an endangered one.

But I'm not sure that this is some moral confusion, emanating from British people's famed preference for four-legged creatures great and small over their fellow man.

The world recoiled from the actions of the trophy-hunter, Walter Palmer, a dentist from Minnesota. There is global outrage over sickening images of a noble beast, slain for the gratification of a member of Safari Club International.

I grieve for Cecil as I used to sob over the last days of Aslan in the Narnia books – or still feel a bit thoughtful on Good Friday in church. I find an almost Christian symbolism in the untimely death of the lion. But I also think there's one unacknowledged reason it makes us all quite so pierced with sadness: collective guilt.

We as a race must be held responsible for the fact that the human population is soaring – to a projected 9.7 billion in 2050 – while the population of wildlife species has crashed by 52 per cent since 1970 (around the time my father – the author of seven books about population – was explaining to us in the kitchen on Exmoor why animals mattered more than his children).

When it comes to big cats, the African wild lion population – the Asian lion being virtually extinct, existing in the wild only in the Gir forest in India – is thought to be down to 15,000 from about 200,000 30 years ago.



I grieve for Cecil as I used to sob over the last days of Aslan in the Narnia books – or still feel a bit thoughtful on Good Friday in church.

In a more perfect universe, both animals and human beings would have a right to life. But the existential threat to the animal kingdom is far greater than the risk to us, and the sorry tale of Walter Palmer and Cecil therefore sums up the inhumanity of man to the rest of the planet. One miserable American gun-toting speck of a rampant, predatory and destructive species paid £35,000 to take out a superb, rare and valuable male of an endangered one.

Cecil's extinction stands as a rebuke, or should do, for every time we've ever done anything to leave the world a poorer, more polluted, less natural place, whether its dropping litter, taking a long-haul flight, filling the oceans with Evian bottles, or blasting a beautiful creature in the wild. And we all have.

But this doesn't mean we don't care about Cecil as if he was our own cub, and feel murderous at his taking.

As for the Sudanese man's death – it's tragic, as are all such deaths of those in search of a 'better life'. We care about that too. But it's been caused not by one foolish man, but by war and the population explosion in Africa – the latter an endemic crisis that our politicians don't have the guts to grip for fear of being called politically incorrect, as David Cameron was when he described the seething crowds heading for Britain as a 'swarm'.

'You can definitely quote me as saying the Minnesota dentist should himself be shot with a bow and arrow and left to die a lingering death!' my father said.

I know of old where he's coming from, but it's not just the dentist in the dock. It's us. We are all Walter Palmer, with his pearly whites that seem to follow you round the room.

Let's hope this is a turning point that will lead to an overdue end to poaching, trophy hunting, and the illegal trade in wildlife.

In the meantime, instead of trolling the pathetic Palmer, we should support wildlife charities like the World Wildlife Fund, the Whitley Fund for Nature or the research unit at Oxford University that tries to protect lions in the wild.

Cecil died for all our sins. It's up to us to make sure he did not die in vain.



The Whitley Fund for Nature - making a difference to conservationists and scientists

Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) awards over £600,000 to conservation heroes. Here are some of WFN's fantastic science and environment features from the latest recipients of more than £600,000 of funding from the prestigious Whitley Fund for Nature. Working in developing countries where pressure on natural resources is high, the challenges conservationists face are immense; from fighting bureaucracy, crime and corruption - often at great personal risk - to protecting habitat, resolving human-wildlife conflict, and developing sustainable alternatives for local communities.

Over the past 20 years, WFN has provided nearly £12 million of funding and training, recognizing more than 170 conservation leaders in over 70 countries, supporting a range of projects to conserve endangered species that are founded on scientific evidence and community engagement.

With so much information at hand, we have created a table detailing the key countries and species benefiting from WFN grants in 2015, and the conservation experts and former Whitley Award winners who have secured the funding.

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Each year Whitley Awards, often referred to as the 'Green Oscars' and worth £35,000 in project funding over one year, are awarded to seven conservation leaders. As Whitley Award alumni, the best of these individuals are eligible to apply for further funding available from WFN.

COVERAGE OF THE AWARDS WEEK

General

Print.....	15
Websites.....	16-40

National Geographic Kids – UK Magazine
24th May 2015
Circulation of 70,000
Readership of 190,000

MEET THE... Conservation Heroes!

Three amazing animal activists tell us about the species they've taken to heart...



Rocandra Guilla is saving... COTTON-TOP TAMARINS

There are fewer than 7,400 of this monkey left in small fragments of forest in Colombia, South America. Luckily, Rocandra is giving them a helping hand.

“As a young woman, I dreamed of building homes for people – I was an architect. But then along came cotton-top tamarins! I was thrilled by these tiny, cute-monkeys with Elvis-style hair. And then I found out they're from the very same place I was born and raised: they're South Colombian – like me – and yet I'd never even heard of them! So, when I then discovered they were losing their forest home, and were just a step away from extinction, I was shocked – and determined to do something about it.”

Now she's helping Rocandra runs **Proyecto Tito**, an organization that helps protect the tamarins and their habitat. It's working: Over 17 years of forest has been protected, more than 2,000 kids have been educated about tamarins, and now eco-friendly jobs have reduced the need to cut down the forest. Good work, Rocandra!



Jayson Riazar is rescuing... PHILIPPINE EAGLES

The national bird of the Philippines is in danger with its 400 remaining nesting sites at risk from deforestation and hunting. Over half of the eagles live on Mindanao Island, where Jayson works with local people to protect his favourite bird...

“I first saw photos of this bird in **National Geographic** as a teen. I was captivated! Its flamboyant crest feathers and massive beak instantly caught my imagination. My classmates decorated their books with photos of fast cars, but mine were covered in eagles! I saw my first wild eagle as a young biologist in 1996. As it glided past, I got goosebumps! Many years have passed, but the feeling hasn't changed – I am still thrilled to observe these beautiful birds. And future generations might not have this luxury.”

Now he's helping Jayson employs locals from 14 villages to guard eagle nests from hunting and logging. He's also set up **Local Conservation Areas** to look after 500km² of eagle habitat. This work, together with education and welfare programmes, helps lift people out of poverty.



Ananda Kumar is helping... ASIAN ELEPHANTS

Every year in India, elephants kill around 400 people, and more than 100 elephants are killed in revenge. This conflict is due to animals being forced to share their habitat with humans. But Ananda has a solution...

“One night in the Anamalai Hills, a family woke up to some strange noises – there was an elephant call in their bedroom. “Natural experiences like this are often cited to portray elephants as problem animals. But when I realized the consequences that they they just said – if we'd known elephants were nearby, we would have been better prepared. Even after elephants had bargued into their homes, they didn't complain. And my husband said that there's a chance for people and elephants to share spaces, and that conflict can give way to coexistence.”

Now he's helping Ananda has helped set up an **Elephant Information Network** in the Anamalai Hills, southern India. The early warning system alerts communities when elephants are nearby, via texts, phone calls and warning lights, so they can safely avoid them. Clever!



All these inspiring projects were winners of the 2015 **Whitley Award** from the **Whitley Fund for Nature**, a charity that funds vital grass-roots conservation projects around the world. The prize money will allow the winners to expand their amazing work even further!

30 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS

Websites

e-Turbo News - News Website

25th April 2015

<http://www.eturbonews.com/58113/finalists-whitely-fund-nature>



Finalists for the Whitley Fund for Nature

Two Africans are this year again among the finalists nominated for awards by the Whitley Fund for Nature.

Inaoyom Imong from Nigeria has been nominated for the Whitley prize for his work to protect Cross River gorillas in the Mbe Mountains.

Dr. Dino Martins from Kenya will also be awarded a special Gold Award for his work on the relationship between pollinators and the use of harmful agricultural pesticides, which has led to new legislation to protect bees as well as more sustainable and productive farming practices that benefit both people and pollinators in East Africa.

The Whitley Awards are prestigious international prizes which honour exceptional individuals who, through their outstanding conservation work in developing countries, are redefining the way people engage with the natural world in the 21st century. Selected from a field of 174 applicants from all over the world, the seven wildlife conservationists shortlisted this year for the chance to win an award and a share in project funding worth £245,000 are:

Arnaud Desbiez (Brazil; giant armadillos);
Rosamira Guillen (Colombia; cotton-top tamarins);
Panut Hadisiswoyo (Sumatra; orang-utans);
Jayson Ibañez (Philippines; Philippine eagles);
Inaoyom Imong (Nigeria; Cross River gorillas);
Ananda Kumar (India; Asian elephants);
Pramod Patil (India; Great Indian Bustard).

The charity's patron HRH The Princess Royal will announce the final results at a special evening ceremony hosted by television presenter Kate Humble and attended by Sir David Attenborough on Wednesday 29 April at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

HRH The Princess Royal will also present an additional prize, the Whitley Gold Award worth up to £50,000 in project funding, to Dr Dino Martins, whose work on the relationship between pollinators and the use of harmful agricultural pesticides has led to new legislation to protect bees as well as more sustainable and productive farming practices that benefit both people and pollinators in East Africa.

Wildstory – Environmental Blog

30th April 2015

<http://amyjanebeerwildstory.blogspot.co.uk/2015/04/celebrating-conservation-green-oscars.html>



Celebrating conservation – the ‘Green Oscars’

The Whitley Fund for Nature is a small charity that claims to punch well above its weight in terms of conservation outcomes. Last night I found out why.

Swanky award ceremonies are not my natural habitat. The mere act of digging out a frock and footwear I can't run, climb, or ford puddles in is alien. But the Whitley Awards have more than a little red (should that be green) carpet cachet about them and wellies, I sensed, might not be de rigueur. The proceedings were hosted by Kate Humble, presented by HRH The Princess Royal, in the presence of Sir David Attenborough. The eight conservationists from around the world being presented with their awards had certainly scrubbed up, swapping their usual khaki shirts, caps and bush hats for formal attire in their national style, and they looked wonderful.

I'm not accustomed to commenting on fashion - but there is a first time for everything and this event was very much about people. There was talk of wildlife, of course, in particular the species being helped by the diverse projects the prize money will benefit – Philippine eagles, Asian elephants, cotton-top tamarins, Cross River gorillas, great Indian bustards, giant armadillos, Sumatran orangutans and the pollinating insects of Kenya - but for this one night the spotlight shifted from the animals to individual Homo sapiens who devote their lives to saving them. The grant recipients are already used to cajoling, persuading, educating, and campaigning on behalf of wildlife in their own countries and their own tongues – and as part of their week in London they've also received further media training. It showed – without exception they were engaging, inspiring and passionate. There is sometimes a gulf between scientists and conservation practitioners and the public they need to engage. Not so here. Language barriers seemed non-existent, which made for great communication but did make me wonder how WFN deal with applications from non-English speakers.

Kate Humble repeatedly referred to the event's ability to dispel gloom – and undoubtedly the £1.1 million dished out by WFN this year will make a difference. It was nice to enter this bubble of goodwill. But award winner Panut Hadisiswoyo also reminded us that it was a bubble, when he appealed to the entire audience to act to halt the devastation of Indonesia's remaining forests – which continues at a rate few of us can truly comprehend to meet the insatiable global demand for palm oil. Behind the accolades and the smiles, there is grim desperation. The fate of species and ecosystems depends on our lifestyle choices, our votes, our and our willingness to understand the provenance of the consumables we take for granted. WFN money is helping on the ground, but turning the tide takes more than cash. Here's hoping that the gift of publicity will be equally well used.

The winners...

Ananda Kumar - using modern communications including text alerts and mobile operated warning lights as part of an innovative Elephant Information Network in the tea growing regions of India's Western Ghats. Human-elephant conflict in India costs hundreds of lives (human and elephant) every year in India. Early warning can make a critical difference in the outcome of encounters.

www.nct-india.org

Jayson Ibanez lost his heart to the huge and flamboyant endemic Philippine eagle as a boy. 19 years later he is still striving to save the remaining 400 pairs that remain in the wild, establishing Local Conservation Areas and engaging local people as forest guards and bringing tangible economic and social benefits to communities in which eagle conservation takes place.

www.philippineaglefoundation.org

Former architect Rosamira Guillen's career to an abrupt new turn when she met her first cotton-top tamarin – a tiny, endemic, and critically endangered Columbian primate. Her organisation has already protected 1700ha of habitat and offered local communities education and alternative incomes that reduce pressure on the remaining forest. The cotton-top population is stabilising.

www.proyectotiti.com

In Nigeria, Inaoyom Imong was once a hunter. Now he is Director of the Cross River Gorilla Landscape Project, working directly with local communities to ensure that the forests of Mbe Mountains are shared sustainably with our great ape cousins.

www.wcsnigeria.org

Medic turned bird conservationist Pramod Patil struck a chord when he addressed Sir David Attenborough 'Sir David is my favourite human being on this Earth... I love you'. There is also no doubt which is his favourite bird – the great Indian bustard. Pramod is also inspiration in his own right – taking a landscape level approach to the conservation of this critically endangered species in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan.

www.bnhs.org

The enigmatic giant armadillo is now recognised as a flagship species for the tropical scrublands of Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil – thanks to the passion of Paris-born Arnaud Desbiez. He'll be using the WFN grant money to conduct vital outreach and education and create more protected areas in the threatened Cerrado landscape.

www.giantarmadillo.org.br

Panut Hadisiswoyo leads on the development of conservation villages in part of Sumatra known as the Leuser Ecosystem – the only place on earth where orang-utan, elephant, tiger and rhino still coexist.

www.orangutancentre.org

The big prize of the night went to Dino Martins – a previous award winner, who was presented with a Gold Award worth £50,000 to support his ongoing work for pollinators. With it, he'll tackle the import and use of unregistered pesticides in Africa, training thousands of farmers in sustainable practice, and educating over 200,000 schoolchildren and university students in the importance of pollinators and sustainable agriculture.

www.naturekenya.org www.discoverpollinators.org

Mongabay – News Website

30th April 2015

2.7 million unique visitors per year

<http://news.mongabay.com/2015/04/7-conservationists-win-whitley-awards/>



The awards, presented at a ceremony today by HRH Princess Anne, were given to conservationists in six countries:

- Panut Hadisiswoyo for his efforts to protect Sumatran orangutans in Indonesia's Leuser Ecosystem;
- Pramod Patil for community conservation of the great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert, India;
- Rosamira Guillen for cotton-top tamarin conservation in northern Colombia;
- Arnaud Desbiez for giant armadillo protection in the Brazilian Cerrado;
- Inaoyom Imong for protecting Cross River gorillas in Nigeria's Mbe Mountains;
- Jayson Ibañez for helping protect the Philippine eagle on Mindanao Island; and
- Ananda Kumar for developing communication systems to reduce human-elephant conflict in southern India.

Each award is worth £35,000 in project funding. The Whitley Fund for Nature together with other foundations, individuals, and organizations provide the prize money.

Whitley also bestowed the £50,000 Whitley Gold Award 2015 to Dino Martins for his work to encourage small farmers to adopt pollinator-friendly farming approaches in East Africa. Martins was a 2009 Whitley Award winner.



The Princess Royal and 2015 Whitley Awards recipient Pramod Pati, India at The Royal Geographical Society, London, 29th April 2015.



Ananda Kumar. Image credit Ganesh Raghunathan.



Panut Hadisiswoyo.



Inaoyom Imong.



Arnaud Desbiez (left) releasing a giant armadillo.



Dino Martins.



The Princess Royal and 2015 Whitley Awards recipient Jayson Ibanez, Philippines at The Royal Geographical Society, London, 29th April 2015.



Rosamira Guillen. Image credit F Pardo.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, congratulated this year's class of winners.



I sette ambientalisti premiati ai Whitley Awards

Si è svolta la premiazione che ha consegnato gli “Oscar della natura” a sette ambientalisti impegnati nella conservazione della fauna selvatica.

Gli animali un tempo occupavano ogni angolo del pianeta, senza alcun limite se non quelli imposti dalla mano imparziale di madre natura. Oggi devono invece affrontare enormi sfide per sopravvivere e far fronte alle minacce dirette e indirette dell’uomo. Ci sono però persone straordinarie che hanno deciso di dedicare la propria vita alla difesa degli animali più minacciati.



Proprio per premiare l'indispensabile lavoro di queste persone, volto alla salvaguardia di un patrimonio prezioso e comune, sono stati istituiti i [Whitley Awards](#), sorta di Oscar internazionale della protezione della natura. Il premio è organizzato dal Whitley Fund, organizzazione no profit del Regno Unito che sostiene progetti di conservazione in tutto il mondo.

“Il Whitley Fund è unico, finanzia le iniziative più efficaci e meritevoli, per le quali ogni centesimo conta”, ha dichiarato Sir David Attenborough, il celebre divulgatore scientifico britannico. La cerimonia di premiazione si è svolta il 29 aprile alla Royal Geographical Society di Londra e i premi sono stati consegnati dalla principessa reale di Gran Bretagna, Anna. Sette sono stati gli ambientalisti premiati per i propri sforzi per proteggere la fauna selvatica in pericolo. Ogni vincitore ha ricevuto un assegno di 35mila sterline per finanziare il proprio progetto

Panut Hadiswoyo, per il progetto di conservazione degli oranghi (*Pongo abelii*) nell'ecosistema di Leuser, un territorio situato nella Sumatra Settentrionale, in Indonesia, l'unico posto del mondo abitato da elefanti, oranghi, tigri, rinoceronti e altre incredibili varietà di animali.



Pramod Patil, per la difesa della popolazione di otarda indiana (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), uno degli uccelli più grandi e più minacciati del mondo. Oggi sopravvivono in natura meno di duecento esemplari di questo magnifico volatile.



Rosamira Guillen, per la salvaguardia del tamarino edipo (*Saguinus Oedipus*), scimmia dalla buffa chioma bianca diffusa nel nord della Colombia e classificata “in pericolo critico” dalla [Lista Rossa](#) della [Iucn](#).



Arnaud Desbiez, per gli sforzi per proteggere l'armadillo gigante (*Priodontes maximus*), uno dei grandi mammiferi meno conosciuti e più misteriosi al mondo, nel Cerrado, grande savana equatoriale brasiliana.



Inaoyom Imong, per la tutela del gorilla di Cross River (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) nelle montagne della Nigeria. Questo primate, la specie di gorilla più rara al mondo, è ormai sull'orlo dell'estinzione, sopravvivono allo stato selvaggio circa 300 esemplari.



Jayson Ibañez, per l'iniziativa di conservazione dell'arpia (*Harpia harpyja*) nell'isola filippina di Mindanao. Questo maestoso rapace è l'aquila più grande del mondo ed è in grado di ghermire in volo prede grandi come un bradipo. L'arpia è minacciata dalla deforestazione che ne sta riducendo drasticamente l'areale.



Ananda Kumar, per lo sviluppo di un innovativo sistema di comunicazione che consente di ridurre il conflitto uomo-elefante nel sud dell'India. Ogni anno muoiono per questi incidenti circa 400 persone e 100 elefanti. L'iniziativa prevede l'impiego di scout che monitorano gli spostamenti degli elefanti e tramite sms avvisano gli abitanti consentendo loro di pianificare spostamenti sicuri.



2020 Education – Educational Website

30th April 2015

<http://2020education.org/profiles/blogs/local-heroes-the-whitley-awards-and-conservation>



Empowering young people to address global issues through local projects .

[2020 members](#) [media](#) [partners](#) [groups](#) [2020 outside ring](#)

Local heroes, the Whitley Awards and Conservation

Conservation is a journey not a destination, and for a couple of hours on Wednesday evening, 7 Whitley Award winners shared their journeys with us – often from that moment that triggered their consciousness that something must be done- and then that realisation if not now, when? And if not oneself, who?

The Whitley Awards is a celebration of local heroes, working with communities all around the world, often defying the odds, and knowing that lots of little actions – small battles won – will ultimately lead to a much greater victory for conservation.



It also creates an extraordinary network of people, innovations and causes. Sometimes they were champions of a single species - a bellwether for the health of a whole habitat, and whose own survival will ensure the survival of many other species beneath their 'umbrella'; others worked amongst communities and schools to raise awareness of our interdependence and sustainable ways out of poverty.



There was Ananda Kumar who is using mobile phones and SMS messaging to reduce conflict between communities, farmers and the wild elephant herds in Southern India; Jayson Ibanez is helping to protect the last of the 400 nesting pairs of Philippine eagle – a national symbol and victim of the inexorable deforestation; Rosamira Guillen protecting the cotton-topped tamarind in Colombia; Inaoyom Imong, hunter turned conservationist working in the forests of southeastern Nigeria to protect the Cross River Gorilla; Pramod Patil, doctor turned zoologist, working with communities in the Thar desert to protect the Great Indian Bustard; Arnaud Desbiez, French zoo-keeper who had ended up becoming one of the world's experts on the Giant Armadillo of Brazil and understanding how to help this species survive as it teeters on the verge of extinction; Panut Hadisiswoyo who is planting trees and rescuing Orangutans in Indonesia; and Dino Martins, an entomologist from Kenya making a difference to the lives of farmers and insects in East Africa and shaping national and international policy on pesticides.



Every every journey starts with a single step and that was true for each of these winners. Many of their journeys had started with a childhood dream, or a sense of wonder as a result of an encounter with an animal or a part of the world. They had taken small steps, sometimes seemingly inconsequential steps, that would take them on a journey around the world and that would leave ripples in their wake they could never have dreamed of.



Pesquisador do Tatu-Canastra recebe Prêmio Whitley pelo trabalho de conservação da espécie no Pantanal

Arnaud Desbiez é um dos sete vencedores de uma das premiações em meio ambiente mais prestigiadas no mundo

Do IPÊ

O pesquisador Arnaud Desbiez, coordenador do projeto Tatu-Canastra realizado por meio do IPÊ - Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas e do Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, recebeu no dia 29 de abril o Whitley Award. Um dos mais prestigiados da conservação ambiental mundial, considerado o "Oscar do meio ambiente", o prêmio foi entregue em cerimônia na Royal Geographical Society, em Londres. O pesquisador foi reconhecido pelo seu trabalho para conservar o tatu-canastra, também conhecido como "tatu gigante", no Pantanal do Mato Grosso do Sul, região de Nhecolândia.

Apesar de ser uma das mais antigas espécies de mamíferos na terra - um verdadeiro fóssil vivo - é muito difícil avistar um tatu-canastra (*Priodontes maximus*) em ambiente selvagem. Até recentemente, muitas pessoas não estavam cientes sobre a existência da espécie e a maioria das informações sobre ela era superficial. No entanto, desde que Arnaud criou o Projeto de Conservação do Tatu Canastra em 2010 e iniciou o primeiro estudo ecológico de longo prazo sobre a espécie, novas informações surgiram, como o comportamento entre pais e filhotes de tatus, além do papel da espécie como "engenheira do ecossistema".

O Prêmio Whitley permitirá a Arnaud expandir os esforços de conservação do Pantanal para o bioma Cerrado. Esse bioma é o segundo maior ecossistema do Brasil depois da floresta amazônica e tem a flora mais rica entre as savanas do mundo. No entanto, apenas 2,2% do Cerrado está sob proteção. Ao longo dos últimos 35 anos, mais de 50% do ecossistema foi transformada em pasto ou terras agrícolas plantadas com culturas de soja e cana-de-açúcar. Ali, Arnaud e sua equipe irão coletar dados para apoiar a criação de uma rede de áreas protegidas e enfrentar ameaças à sobrevivência das espécies.

Edward Whitley, fundador do Whitley Fund for Nature, disse: "O calibre dos vencedores do Whitley os este ano é excelente. Embora cada um enfrente notáveis e diferentes desafios em seus países de origem, esses indivíduos excepcionais são apaixonados por

garantir um futuro melhor para as pessoas e animais selvagens. Os prêmios Whitley são uma celebração de seus esforços e realizações".

Arnaud é um dos sete indivíduos a ser agraciado com uma parte do prêmio no valor total de £ 245.000, doado pela Associação The Garden House School Parents. Outros vencedores do Whitley Awards 2015 são:

Panut Hadisiswoyo - Indonésia

Aldeias de conservação: reforço das capacidades locais para a proteção dos orangotangos de Sumatra e seu habitat, Indonésia - Prêmio Whitley para Conservação de Habitats Ape doado pela Fundação Arcus.

Pramod Patil – Índia

Conservação da comunidade indiana no deserto de Thar, Índia: uma abordagem a nível de paisagem. O Prêmio Whitley doado por William Brake Charitable Trust, em memória de William Brake.

Rosamira Guillen - Colômbia

Projeto Titi: expandir os esforços de conservação para proteger o *Saguinus oedipus* no norte da Colômbia - Prêmio Whitley doado por Sarah Chenevix-Trench.

Inaoyom Imong - Nigéria

Salvando gorilas de Cross River, através da conservação baseada na comunidade nas montanhas Mbe - Prêmio Whitley doado pela Fundação Garfield Weston.

Jayson Ibañez - Filipinas

Prevenir o declínio da águia filipina na ilha de Mindanao - Prêmio Whitley doado pela Fundação Shears em memória de Trevor Shears.

Ananda Kumar - Índia

Mensageiros do elefante: o uso de sistemas de comunicação inovadores para permitir a coexistência entre humanos e elefantes no sul da Índia - Prêmio Whitley doado pelo WWF-UK.

* Com informações do Whitley Fund for Nature.

Sobre Arnaud Desbiez

Arnaud Desbiez é biólogo e trabalha do Pantanal brasileiro desde 2002. Francês, passou pouco tempo em seu país natal, dedicando-se a trabalhos em países diversos como Belize, Argentina, Bolívia e Nepal. Especialista em gestão de recursos naturais sobre temas que vão desde a caça ao manejo do solo, Arnaud Desbiez trabalha atualmente no Brasil, no Pantanal, levantando dados inéditos sobre um dos mais raros mamíferos da América do Sul: o tatu- canastra. O pesquisador também é um dos membros da IUCN/SSC Breeding Specialist Group e da subcomissão da IUCN/SSC Species Planning, além de outros grupos de especialistas de espécies.

Les Whitley Awards 2015 : récompense des actions de protection des animaux



Les 8 gagnants des Whitley Awards 2015 © Whitley Fund of Nature

Le Whitley Fund of Nature (WFN) consacre chaque année les leaders de projets de conservation d'espèces menacées dans les pays en développement. Cette fondation caritative anglaise a ainsi offert une bourse d'un montant de 35.000 livres à chacun des 7 finalistes, lors de la cérémonie de reprises des Whitley Awards - surnommés les Green Oscars - le mercredi 29 avril 2015. Les gagnants ont été sélectionnés parmi 170 participants. Chaque projet protège une espèce menacée d'extinction causée par le braconnage ainsi que par la destruction de son habitat. Ils diffèrent les uns des autres par les stratégies de conservation adoptées. Deux grandes tendances semblent se détacher de ces projets : la sauvegarde grâce à la recherche scientifique pour sauver les espèces méconnues et la protection par la construction de réseaux locaux.

Une sauvegarde par la recherche

3 gagnants des Whitley Awards ont construit leur projet sur la recherche scientifique. Rosamira Guillen, seule femme récompensée, est la directrice de la fondation Proyecto Titi qui a pour objectif de protéger le Pinché à crête blanche (*Saguinus oedipus*) en Colombie. Avec l'argent du Whitley Award donné par la fondation Sarah Chenevix-Trench, Rosamira et son équipe vont identifier les nouvelles parties de la forêt où vit ce primate et qui sont donc prioritaires dans la préservation.

Jayson Ibanez est le directeur de la Philippine Eagle Foundation et agit pour la protection du Pithécophage des Philippines (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*), emblème national du pays. Avec son Whitley Awards, Jayson et son équipe vont collecter des données sur les nids présents sur le territoire afin d'améliorer la stratégie de conservation. Enfin, Arnaud

Desbiez a créé en 2010 le Giant Armadillo Conservation project, première étude sur le long terme des tatous (*Priodontes maximus*), dans la région du Pantanal au Brésil. Cette étude a permis de cartographier l'habitat de ce mammifère. Avec son Whitley Awards, Arnaud Desbiez souhaiterait créer des zones protégées afin d'assurer la protection de l'espèce.

La sauvegarde des espèces par le réseau local

Trois autres gagnants se sont engagés dans la protection d'espèces déjà connues mais qui sont en danger critique d'extinction. Ils favorisent le développement d'un réseau local et l'éducation des populations. Ancien médecin, Pramod Patil a rejoint la Bombay Natural History Society, en Inde, pour protéger l'Outarde à tête noire (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), oiseau vivant dans le désert du Thar. Avec ce prix, il souhaite développer un réseau pour augmenter l'engagement des gens dans la protection de cet animal.

Panut Hadisiswoyo est le fondateur du centre d'information sur les orang-outans (*Pongo abelii*) en Indonésie et le directeur du Community Agroforestry, Reforestation and Education programme (CARE). Il travaille dans la forêt de Leuser, seul lieu au monde où cohabitent orangs-outans, éléphants, tigres et rhinocéros. Panut encourage la population à protéger la forêt à travers un réseau de villages nommés "Conservation villages". Il compte investir le montant de sa récompense dans l'élargissement du nombre de villages présents dans le réseau. Enfin, Inaoyom Imong est le directeur du Cross River Gorilla Landscape Project - pour la protection des gorilles (*Gorilla gorilla diebli*) - au sein de la Wildlife Conservation Society au Nigeria. Il œuvre pour la sauvegarde de la forêt la plus diversifiée d'Afrique contenant des gorilles et des chimpanzés, située à la frontière du Cameroun.

Deux projets... à part !

Deux projets semblent sortir du lot. Le premier est celui de Ananda Kumar. Il dirige le Anamalai Elephant Programme en Inde dont le but est de réduire le conflit entre l'éléphant d'Asie (*Elephas maximus indicus*) et l'homme. Mêlant innovation et protection de l'espèce, il a développé un Elephant information Network qui a pour but d'avertir la population par sms de l'emplacement des éléphants afin d'éviter les collisions dans les plantations en Inde ainsi que sur les routes. Avec le Whitley Award donné par WWF-UK, il va continuer de développer ce réseau afin de diminuer le nombre de morts chaque année.

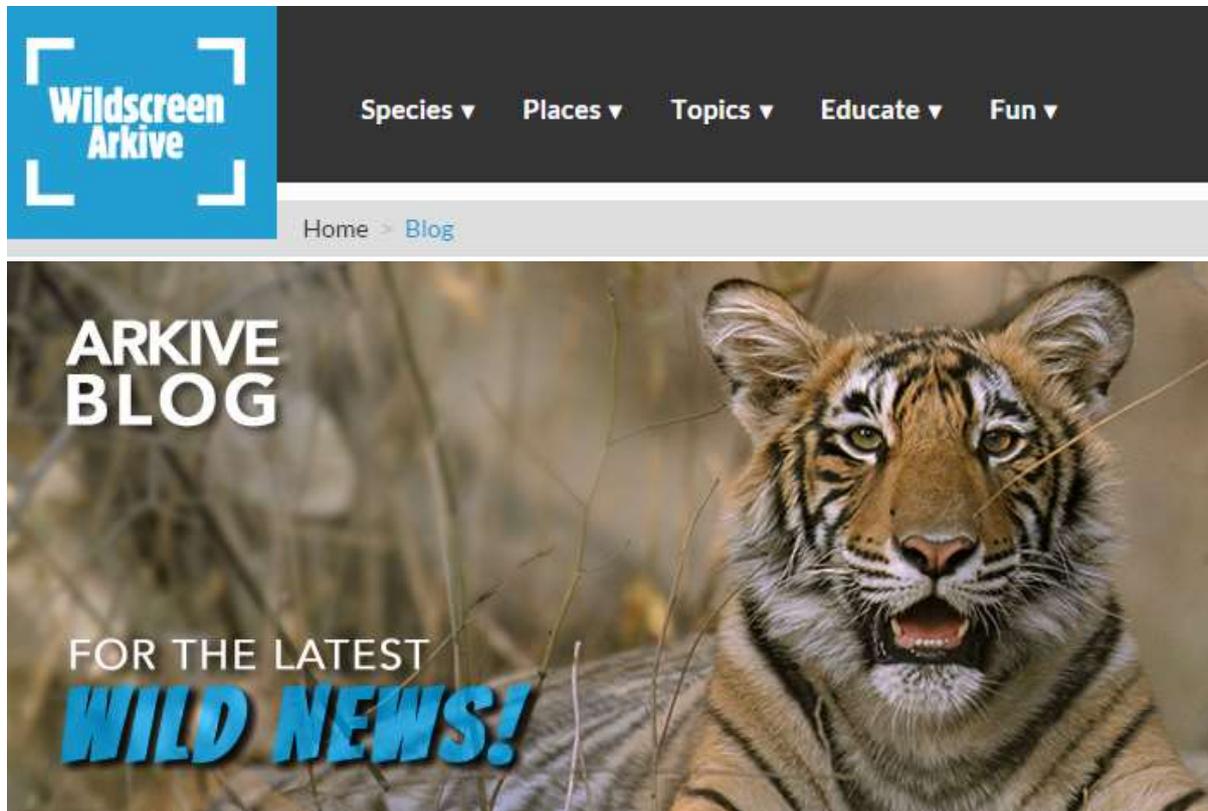
Enfin, le Whitley Fund Nature a récompensé un huitième projet. Dino Martins a reçu le Whitley Gold Award remis par l'organisation the friends and Scottish Friends of WFN dont la bourse est de 50.000 livres pour sa persévérance depuis plusieurs années pour la protection des insectes pollinisateurs - abeilles, papillons- au Kenya. Déjà finaliste en 2009, cet entomologiste, et président du Insect Committee of Nature Kenya, travaille avec les fermiers kenyans afin d'adopter une agriculture soutenable, respectueuse des pollinisateurs, en premier lieu en supprimant l'utilisation de pesticides. Il utilisera l'argent de ce prix pour soutenir davantage d'agriculteurs kenyans et éduquer les populations.

Arkive Blog – Conservation Blog

19th May 2015

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Spotlight On: 2015 Whitley Award Winners

The prestigious Whitley Awards is hosted by the [Whitley Fund for Nature](#) which offers awards and grants to outstanding nature conservationists around the world. These awards aim to accelerate the career paths of recipients by helping them raise their profiles, network, and inspire others.

This year's Whitley Awards were held on April 29, 2015. The Arkive Team had the amazing opportunity to interview some of this year's [winners](#) whose work focuses on several species ranging from tiny tamarins to gigantic gorillas.

The winners were all asked the same question: How is winning the Whitley Award going to help your ongoing projects?

Pramod Patil



India – Community conservation of the great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert, India: a landscape-level approach

Well, currently I work in six Indian states, but I feel that the Thar Desert in Rajasthan is the most important landscape for the long term conservation of [great Indian bustards](#). We are going to use this funding specifically in the Thar Desert to work with the communities. Our prime targets are to work with the communities in different ways such as awareness, capacity building, then networking and also empowering the forest department to conduct anti-poaching activities effectively.

Ananda Kumar



India – Elephant messengers: using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in southern India

We are trying to strengthen out elephant information network and develop early warning systems for the people to send us elephant information in at once so that fatalities due to [elephants](#) can be substantially reduced. This will be done in collaboration with the state forest department and the plantation companies, corporate sector, farmers, and people who are working in tea and coffee estates. It's a collective effort. The Nature Conservation Foundation, where I work, cannot do it alone. We really need to take different people along with us, different stakeholders. This will lead to a lot of positive results.

Arnaud Desbiez



Brazil – Giant armadillos as a flagship species for the conservation of tropical scrublands in the Cerrado

The Whitley Awards is going to make a huge difference for our project. It recognizes a team effort. It's going to help us expand the project from the pantanal, the world's largest wetland, to the Cerrado, an environment which is scrublands and forests .What we're going to do in the Cerrado is look for the last populations of the [giant armadillo](#). That is important because thanks to our outreach and communications work with the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, giant armadillos have been declared as one of the indicator species for protected areas. So the state is using a

system with a lot of indicator species of plants, bats and birds, and for mammals giant armadillos are one of five indicator species. So we really need to get out there and map the distribution of these last animals which could create protected areas.

Inaoyom Imong



Nigeria – Saving Cross River gorillas through community-based conservation in the Mbe Mountains

This award is for the communities I work with, those close to [gorillas](#) that have the commitment to protect the forest and these gorillas. The award has come at an excellent time. Right now I am working with other communities providing the support that they need to enforce local laws that they have made themselves to protect their resources. I want to create awareness among local people, especially in helping them acquire the skills they need to pursue alternative livelihoods that are more sustainable. So winning this award will help me to expand on all of these efforts. It means having more effective communication

with more communities, more people and better protecting the forest and gorillas living around these communities.

Panut Hadisiswoyo



Indonesia – Conservation villages: building local capacity for the protection of Sumatran orangutans and their habitat, Indonesia

Our big project is saving the orangutan habitat, saving the forest and saving the [orangutans](#) from extinction. I actually want to expand our approach in working with local people to establish more conservation villages where we tackle the root causes of deforestation and forest degradation. So we want to introduce sustainable farming and livelihoods to local communities. There are alternatives to their livelihoods that will not destroy the rainforest. Our ultimate goal is to alleviate pressures on the forest by developing alternatives for the local communities. Secondly, I want to restore the degraded habitat

of the orangutan in the protected areas by planting trees and improving the understanding of locals. Third, I want to educate the people about the importance of rainforest protection and orangutans. People represent hope. I still really believe that local people want to protect the remaining forest. That makes me feel more encouraged that hope is still there and people actually want to do good things.

Rosamira Guillen



Colombia – Proyecto Tití: expanding conservation efforts to protect the cotton-top tamarin in northern Colombia

For the last 15 years we have been in one area within the distribution of [cotton-top tamarins](#) in Colombia and we've been wanting for a long time to expand to other locations. So our specific mission with the support we are getting from the Whitley Awards is to reach these places and start working with the people there. Because with more support we can continue expanding to more places in the future and reach further with our conservation work. Specifically, there is this area called San Juan which is about two hours away from where we are right now and that is our next focus for conserving cotton-top tamarins in Colombia.

These amazing individuals have already achieved so much for conservation and through the Whitley Awards are able to advance their work further. Their inspirational work truly embodies the essence of what it means to be a [conservation hero](#). The Arkive Team congratulates all of the winners and hopes that Arkive's followers are inspired to find their inner conservation hero.

Dino Martins

Kenya

2015 GOLD AWARD WINNER

2009 Whitley Award winner

People, plants and pollinators: protecting the little things that power the planet

Winner of the Whitley Gold Award donated by the Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature

Broadcast.....	42-44
Print.....	45-47
Websites	48-75
Joint coverage with Inaoyom Imong.....	76

Broadcast

BBC World Service – TV Interview

30th April 2015

Presented by Sophie Ikenya



BBC Swahili Service – Radio Interview
30th April 2015



Radio 4 –Saturday Live
16th May 2015

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05v6cyg>

Approximately 2.1 million listeners per week

Presented by Richard Coles and Aasmah Mir

Featured guests include **Dino Martins**, Chris Tarrant, Glenys Newton, Iain Lauchlan, Guy Chambers and Daniel Parker.

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Chris Tarrant

Presented by Richard Coles and Aasmah Mir.

Chris Tarrant has been a household staple since the mid 70s when he shook up Saturday mornings with children's TV series *Tiswas*. He went on to do Capital Radio breakfast show and was the presenter of ground breaking quiz show *Who wants to be a Millionaire*, which ran for 15 years, presenting many other programmes along the way. His latest project has been a labour of love - a book about his father's experience in the second world war. But it's a story he only uncovered after his father's death. He'll be talking about writing his father's story, his links with those Millionaire winners and slowing down after a stroke.

Listener Glenys Newton won a story telling competition with a story from her childhood, in which her Uncle Meirion's car - with her family inside - was attacked by lions at a Safari Park. She's passionate about family stories, and people's lives. She relives what happened at the Safari park, and how it has inspired her love of storytelling.

Dino Martins is an entomologist whose mission is to highlight the key role of pollination in the world. Growing up in rural Kenya his passion was insects from a young age. This enthusiasm, combined with hard work and some luck meant he got an education which culminated with a PhD at Harvard University in America. Over in the UK to receive the 2015 Whitley Gold Award from Princess Anne, he talks about his extraordinary journey which begins and ends in Kenya.

Print

The Traveller: Msafiri – Kenyan Airways In-flight Magazine
Circulation: 300,000
November 2015

Page 1/3

HABARI TALKING POINT

MEET...

Dr Dino J. Martins

Award-winning scientist Dr Dino J. Martins talks to *msafiri* about his career as an entomologist and the importance of his work

NAME: DR DINO J. MARTINS | **AGE:** 38 | **PROFESSION:** ENTOMOLOGIST & EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGIST | **ORGANISATION:** MPALA RESEARCH CENTRE AND NATURE KENYA | **AREA OF WORK:** FORESTS IN WESTERN KENYA, DRYLANDS OF NORTHERN KENYA | **WEBSITES/EMAIL:** WWW.DISCOVERPOLLINATORS.ORG | WWW.NATUREKENYA.ORG | WWW.MPALA.ORG | OFFICE@NATUREKENYA.ORG

Q As an entomologist, how did you become interested in insects?

My earliest memories are of insects! I spent a lot of time watching and chasing after them as a child growing up we didn't have television, so after school I would spend my time watching insects.

I was incredibly lucky to grow up in Eldoret, a rural area in Western Kenya, where I was able to see first-hand the connection between nature, people and farming at an early age. My favourite activity was, (and still is), spending time in the bush looking at insects!

Q Why are insects so important?

As Professor E. O. Wilson stated so eloquently some time ago: "Insects are the little creatures that run the world." This is truer than ever in Africa where insects pollinate wild plants and crops, disperse seeds, help build soil and recycle nutrients through the whole ecosystem. Understanding biodiversity is essential for sustainable development and conservation.

DID YOU KNOW?
INSECTS POLLINATE WILD PLANTS AND CROPS, DISPERSE SEEDS, HELP BUILD SOIL AND RECYCLE NUTRIENTS THROUGH THE WHOLE ECOSYSTEM.

EDITION 118 NOVEMBER 2015



is – not today. Frankly speaking, without the insects, our life on this planet would be untenable.

Q How does your work help Kenya's farmers?

Farmers are at the very frontline of conserving nature in East Africa. Choices made by farmers on what they do with their land, how they plant and manage crops and how they manage pesticides have a huge impact on insects like bees. Over two-thirds of the crops we grow in East Africa depend on pollinators, and most of these are wild insects, mainly bees.

Farmers are our greatest allies in the conservation of biodiversity in East Africa. Most of the forest habitats, for example, are surrounded by small-scale farmers whose actions can go a long way to either protect or degrade the forests, and of course the many endemic species they are home to. Our main message shared with farmers is to celebrate the biodiversity that underpins the life support systems of the planet, to get them, and in fact everyone, to understand the connection between their own lives, food production and wild insects.

We work with farmers performing a simple experiment where we bag one flower and leave one open to insects, then watch what develops over the next few days or weeks depending on the crop. It is always uplifting to see the moment a light goes on in the farmers' eyes when they see the connection between insects visiting the flowers and the yields they enjoy. Working to help conserve pollinators and restore habitats has seen yields increase up to ten-fold on some crops, such as passionfruit and watermelon.

WINNER!

WHITLEY GOLD AWARD
The award will enable us to scale up our work on the conservation and awareness of pollinators in East Africa and tackle the use of harmful pesticides.

Q You recently won a prestigious Whitley Gold Award presented by HRH The Princess Royal in London. How do you feel about winning this award worth £50,000?

I am very honoured and deeply humbled to have been recognised with the Whitley Gold Award, donated by the Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature. I take this award as recognition for the immense contribution by pollinators, insects, and small-scale

HABARI TALKING POINT

LEFT:
Honeybee
visiting a
passionfruit
flower



farmers in rural areas around the world, to biodiversity. So I am receiving it, I feel, on their behalf; I am simply the messenger and it is the bees and farmers who are the real heroes here.

Q How will you be using your award funding to help your work and what do you hope to achieve in the future?

The Whitley Gold Award will enable us to scale up our work on the conservation of pollinators in East Africa, tackle the use of unregistered harmful pesticides and raise further awareness among farmers, school children and the general public about this important ecosystem service that puts food on our plates and nutrition in our bodies. We will be developing some practical tool-kits and information for farmers that will be distributed freely through various print and digital media channels. For now, those interested can download a copy of our book on pollinator conservation, with a foreword from Professor Judi Wakhungu, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources in Kenya, from this link: [HTTP://DISCOVERPOLLINATORS.ORG/POLLINATORS/POLLINATOR-HANDBOOK/](http://discoverpollinators.org/pollinators/pollinator-handbook/)



RIGHT:
The incredible
flower mantis

OUR MAIN MESSAGE ...
IS TO CELEBRATE THE BIO-DIVERSITY THAT UNDERPINS THE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF THE PLANET & THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEIR OWN LIVES, FOOD PRODUCTION & WILD INSECTS.



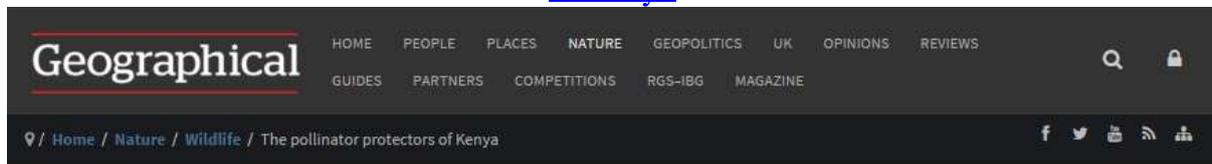
RIGHT:
The coriander
lycaenid wasp

Websites

Geographical – News and Features Website

30th April 2015

<http://geographical.co.uk/nature/wildlife/item/1012-the-pollinator-protectors-of-kenya>



The pollinator protectors of Kenya



Wild bee visiting an eggplant flower, Kenya

Pollinating insects are facing a global crisis, attacked with pesticides by farmers around the world. But work being undertaken in Kenya is showing how farmers and insects could live together in harmony

Passion fruit farmers in Kenya are very protective of their crops, not least because of their financial investment.

They are understandably not thrilled therefore when they discover beetles flying around their fruits. As a result, many Kenyan farmers will treat their crops with pesticides on a regular basis, to kill the beetles and protect the crops.

Unfortunately, they aren't beetles. They're carpenter bees, very large and heavy insects, which are essential for pollination of the passion fruit crops. And yet, they give farmers the impression that their crops are under attack by hungry beetles, so their resulting pesticide-based intervention has led pollinator numbers to decline dramatically.

'There is a lot of traditional knowledge around pollination, but in the small-scale farming community, the challenge is putting it in the context of food production and sustainability,' Dr Dino Martins, a Kenyan entomologist tells *Geographical*. Martins is Chair of the Insect Committee of Nature Kenya, and has spent the past fifteen years working with farmers in East Kenya, explaining the importance of pollinators – such as the carpenter bee – to crop production, and helping farmers identify those essential pollinators from pests.

'There is a lot of misinformation about pesticides, and that's one of the biggest challenges we need to address,' Martins continues. 'People have been told "Just spray a little pesticide every week, it's good for your crops." And that's not true. There are very strict ways you're supposed to use pesticides, and you should absolutely not spray when the pollinators are around.'

Once farmers understand the importance of pollinators to their crops, the pesticide problem evaporates. Martins describes a small mango farm in the Kerio Valley in northwest Kenya, where over a thousand pollinator species can be found in just a few hectares. 'That mango farmer gets up to a thousand mangoes per tree,' he explains. 'Each mango sells for two or three dollars. That's three thousand dollars per tree per year in mangoes. No pollinators, no mangoes. So he's willing to do everything to protect the habitat because he's exporting mangoes and making a lot of money off it.'



Dino Martins with Kenyan farmers (Image: WFN)

It's estimated that one out of every three bites of food we take is dependent on the work of pollinators, and it has been calculated to be worth up to \$250 billion annually to the global economy. But at a more local level, killing pollinators with pesticides has a significant impact on yields – and therefore profits – for these Kenyan farmers.

Dino Martins conducts experiments with the passion fruit farmers. From a crop yield of only 4kg, which he describes as 'miserable', his intervention enabled a tenfold increase, to between 40kg and 50kg. 'Once you do that, that farmer becomes the biggest spokesperson for bees,' he smiles.

These successes have been achieved with measures such as tracking the behaviour of different pollinating insects, and then educating farmers about when, if they are going to use pesticides, they should spray their crops so as to not harm the pollinators. Additionally, he has made farmers aware of alternatives to commonly-used pesticides, either ones which are simply less toxic, or more natural fixes, such as introducing predators to hunt the genuine pests.

His successes include reducing pesticide use by up to 75 per cent on over 500 farms – all of whom have experienced increased crop yields – while ten per cent have stopped using them altogether. One farmer burst into tears after Martins explained the damage which pesticides do to agricultural land, announcing that he had applied over 25 tonnes of pesticides to his land in recent years. He has now gone fully organic.

'What is incredible,' continues Martins, 'is when we actually put in simple things like hedgerows, protecting habitats, managing pesticides, working with farmers to create actual nesting sites for bees, protecting the existing ones, bringing bees in if need be: the yields go up, the health of the farm improves, and the income for the farmer improves.'



Martins was helped with his work as a winner of a Whitley Award in 2009, from the **Whitley Fund for Nature**, and his continued contribution to conservation was recognised this week as the Gold Award winner at the 2015 Whitley Awards. The £50,000 prize money will enable him to scale up his operations; training new farmers, educating students, and continuing to lobby the Kenyan government to develop legislation to ban several highly toxic pesticides.



Kenyan conservationist feted for work with insects



Martin has won the coveted Whitley Gold Award and was feted by HRH the Princess Royal Anne on Wednesday night at the Royal Geographical Society in London

NAIROBI, Kenya, Apr 30 – Kenyan conservationist Dino Martins has won a Sh7.3 million award for his efforts to preserve pollinators.

Martin has won the coveted Whitley Gold Award and was feted by HRH the Princess Royal Anne on Wednesday night at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

“Dino Martins is a truly worthy winner of the 2015 Whitley Gold Award. Against enormous challenges, he has transformed the lives of farmers in Kenya, through his work promoting the importance of bees and other pollinators which put food on our tables and money in farmers’ pockets,” Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, enthused.

The award, the Fund administrators stated, would help Martins further his work by enabling him raise the awareness of more farmers on the necessity of preserving the lives of pollinators such as butterflies, moths, beetles, wasps and bees.

“The Whitley Gold Award will enable Dino to expand his conservation efforts to a new level: working with 4,000 additional farmers; tackling the importation, use and spread of unregistered pesticides entering Africa and; educating 200,000 people about the importance of pollinators and sustainable agriculture,” WFN explained.

The holder of a PhD from Harvard, Dino has spearheaded the development of legislation to specifically protect bees from harmful pesticides and is a Technical Advisor to the UN Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

He first won a Whitley award in 2009 and went on to win additional funding from the WFN in 2011.

The latest feather in his cap is the highest recognition one’s conservation efforts can get from the WFN.

“The Gold Award singles out outstanding people achieving significant conservation impact,” the charity makes clear.

Paula Kahumbu is another Kenyan conservationist who has won a Whitley prize, in 2014, for her work to combat poaching through the #HandsOffOurElephants campaign. Martins might be working on conserving much smaller animals, but the WFN made clear that his work is just as important:

“One of every three bites of food we eat is dependent on pollinators. The provision of this free ‘ecosystem service’ is worth an estimated \$250 billion annually to the global economy. Without pollinators, the planet’s food security would be at risk, with significant livelihood ramifications; and billions would need to be spent to pollinate crops artificially. However, the increased use of agricultural pesticides and loss of natural habitats has led pollinator numbers to decline dramatically.”



Kenya: Conservationis Bags Sh7.3 Million Whitley Environmental Award

A Kenyan conservationist has been awarded a £50,000 (Sh7.3 million) environmental prize for raising awareness of the importance of pollinators.

Dino Martins received the Whitley Gold Award from HRH Princess Royal at the Royal Geographical Society, London on Wednesday.

Martins was honoured for helping local communities adopt sustainable farming practices.

He has worked with "4,000 additional farmers; tackling the importation, use and spread of unregistered pesticides entering Africa and; educating 200,000 people about the importance of pollinators and sustainable agriculture," said Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature.

Martins' efforts led to the development of Kenya's first legislation protect bees from harmful pesticides.

"Against enormous challenges, he has transformed the lives of farmers in Kenya, through his work promoting the importance of bees and other pollinators which put food on our tables and money in farmers' pockets," Whitley said.

Martins, who deals in insect conservation, won the 2009 award.

He holds a PhD from Harvard University and is the Technical Advisor to the UN Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

He also heads the Insect Committee of Nature Kenya and was recently appointed to the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

The award was donated by The Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature.



Kenyan scientist awarded for saving pollinators



Samba Turkana bee, which Dr Martins discovered

A Kenyan scientist has won the prestigious Whitley Gold Award in recognition of his work with local communities to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, and encourage the adoption of more sustainable farming practices that conserve pollinators, boost crop yields, and benefit people and livelihoods in East Africa.

Working at both the local and government level, his efforts have led to the development of Kenya's first legislation to specifically protect bees from harmful pesticides.

The scientist, Dr Dino Martins received the Sh7.3 million (£50,000) award Wednesday evening in London from Princess Anne, HRH The Princess Royal.

The award is donated by The Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature, to Dr Dino Martins, a 2009 Whitley Award winner and insect conservationist from Kenya.

One of every three bites of food we eat is dependent on pollinators. These tiny insects – bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, flies and beetles – play a critical role in crop pollination. The provision of this free ‘ecosystem service’ is worth an estimated \$250 billion annually to the global economy.

Without pollinators, the planet’s food security would be at risk, with significant livelihood ramifications; and billions would need to be spent to pollinate crops artificially. However, the increased use of agricultural pesticides and loss of natural habitats has led pollinator numbers to decline dramatically.

Dino holds a PhD from Harvard University, is Chair of the Insect Committee of Nature Kenya, Technical Advisor to the UN Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO), and has recently been appointed to the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

The Whitley Gold Award will enable Dino to expand his conservation efforts to a new level: working with 4,000 additional farmers; tackling the importation, use and spread of unregistered pesticides entering Africa and; educating 200,000 people about the importance of pollinators and sustainable agriculture.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said:

“The calibre of this year’s Whitley Awards winners is simply outstanding and Dino Martins is a truly worthy winner of the 2015 Whitley Gold Award. Against enormous challenges, he has transformed the lives of farmers in Kenya, through his work promoting the importance of bees and other pollinators which put food on our tables and money in farmers’ pockets.”

Dino joins an elite group of conservationists who have won the coveted Whitley Gold Award for grassroots conservationists working against tremendous odds in developing countries.

Dino has also received additional WFN Continuation Funding in 2011.

These follow-on ‘continuation funding’ grants are awarded competitively to winners seeking to scale up their effective conservation results on the ground. Each grant is worth up to £70,000 (Sh10.2 million) over two years.

The final accolade – the Gold Award - singles out outstanding people achieving significant conservation impact and recognizes them with WFN’s top profile and PR prize.

The Star Online – Kenyan News Website
1st May 2015

<http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/kenyan-bags-sh73million-whitley-environmental-award>



Kenyan bags Sh7.3million Whitley environmental award



A beneficiary of sustainable farming practices poses at her farm.

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The award was donated by The Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature.



Dr Martins advocates for conserving insect pollinators.



Kenyan Scientist Awarded for Saving Pollinators

A Kenyan scientist has won the prestigious Whitley Gold Award in recognition of his work with local communities to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, and encourage the adoption of more sustainable farming practices that conserve pollinators, boost crop yields, and benefit people and livelihoods in East Africa.

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Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said:

"The calibre of this year's Whitley Awards winners is simply outstanding and Dino Martins is a truly worthy winner of the 2015 Whitley Gold Award. Against enormous challenges, he has transformed the lives of farmers in Kenya, through his work promoting the importance of bees and other pollinators which put food on our tables and money in farmers' pockets."

Dino joins an elite group of conservationists who have won the coveted Whitley Gold Award for grassroots conservationists working against tremendous odds in developing countries.

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The final accolade - the Gold Award - singles out outstanding people achieving significant conservation impact and recognizes them with WFN's top profile and PR prize.



Nigerian Researcher Leads Effort to Protect World's Rarest Gorilla

Inaoyom Imong of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Nigeria Program has won the prestigious Whitley Award for his work in protecting the Cross River gorilla, Africa's most endangered great ape.

The Whitley Award, donated by the Garfield Weston Foundation and worth £35,000 (approximately \$54,000) in project funding, was presented to Imong on April 29th by HRH The Princess Royal in a ceremony held at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

The prize is given annually to individuals in recognition of noteworthy achievements in conservation.

Imong is one among several winners at this year's Whitley Awards, organised by the Whitley Fund for Nature, a UK-registered charity that champions outstanding grassroots leaders in nature conservation across the developing world.

Imong is the Director of WCS's Cross River Landscape Project based in Nigeria. Under Imong's direction, the initiative works with local communities around the Mbe Mountains to protect the forest and its population of Cross River gorillas, a subspecies that only occurs along the mountainous border region of Nigeria and Cameroon.

Classified as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the Cross River gorilla (*gorilla diehli*) numbers fewer than 300 individuals throughout its range and is the rarest of the four subspecies of gorilla.

Imong has also helped establish the Conservation Association of the Mbe Mountains, a group comprising the nine communities who traditionally own the Mbe Mountains and are working to turn the area into a designated wildlife sanctuary.

"We congratulate Inaoyom Imong for his well-deserved award, which is also a tribute to conservation in Nigeria," said Dr. Elizabeth Bennett, WCS' Vice President for Species Conservation. "Recognition of his work is extremely important to garner support vital for the continued survival of the Cross River gorilla and the other wild denizens of the biodiverse Cross River landscape."

Wildlife Direct: Baraza – Kenyan NGO Newspaper

22nd May 2015

<http://baraza.wildlifedirect.org/2015/05/22/kenyan-conservationist-dino-martins-wins-2015-whitley-gold-award/>



Kenyan conservationist, Dino Martins, wins 2015 Whitley Gold Award



Dino Martins receives the Whitley Gold Award from HRH Princess Royal

Dr. Dino Martins, an insect conservationist from Kenya, has been awarded the prestigious Whitley Gold Award in London. The £50,000 award was given to him in recognition of his work with local communities to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, and to encourage the adoption of more sustainable farming practices that conserve

pollinators, boost crop yields, and benefit people and livelihoods in East Africa.

Dr. Martins works at both the local and government level and his efforts have led to the development of Kenya's first legislation to specifically protect bees from harmful pesticides.

Pollinators play a key role in the ecosystem; one of every three bites of food we eat is dependent on pollinators. Tiny insects like bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, flies and beetles – play a critical role in crop pollination. The provision of this free 'ecosystem service' is worth an estimated \$250 billion annually to the global economy. Without pollinators, the planet's food security would be at risk, with significant livelihood ramifications; and billions would need to be spent to pollinate crops artificially.

“The calibre of this year's Whitley Awards winners is simply outstanding and Dino Martins is a truly worthy winner of the 2015 Whitley Gold Award,” said Edward Whitley, the founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature. “Against enormous challenges, Dino has transformed the lives of farmers in Kenya, through his work, promoting the importance of bees and other pollinators which put food on our tables and money in farmers' pockets”.

The Whitley Gold Award will enable Dino to expand his conservation efforts to a new level: working with 4,000 additional farmers; tackling the importation, use and spread of unregistered pesticides entering Africa and educating up to 200,000 people about the importance of pollinators and sustainable agriculture.



Dino Martins gives his acceptance speech after receiving the Whitley Gold Award, at a ceremony in London on 29 April

Dino joins an elite group of conservationists who have won the coveted Whitley Gold Award for grass-roots conservation, working against tremendous odds in developing countries.

Dino won a Whitley Award in 2009, before going on to receive additional WFN Continuation **Funding in 2011**. **These follow-on 'Continuation Funding' grants are awarded competitively to winners** seeking to scale up their effective conservation results on the ground. Each grant is worth up to £70,000 over two years. The final accolade – the Gold Award – singles out outstanding people achieving significant conservation impact and recognizes them with WFN's top profile and PR prize.

“Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people – passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits,” Sir David Attenborough, a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature said.

The **Whitley Awards** are prestigious annual international prizes presented to individuals in recognition of their achievements in nature conservation. Each Award Winner receives a prize worth £35,000 in project funding over one year. The charity's patron, HRH The Princess Royal, presents the Awards each year at a special ceremony in London. The awards have been presented annually since 1994. Since then, the Whitley Fund for Nature has given over £11 million to conservation and recognised more than 170 conservation leaders in over 70 countries.

Congratulations Dr. Dino Martins!

One man's mission to create a buzz around the power of pollinators

How well do you know your pollinators? Can you tell the difference between a pest that could damage a crop or an unusual species of bee that forms a vital part of the pollination cycle? With more than 1,000 species of pollinators in Kenya, mistaken identity is commonplace. Farmers have a tendency to liberally spray pesticides thinking they're doing the right thing to kill off the pest that will damage their crop. However, the reality is very different because those 'foes' are not enemies at all; in fact they are the 'heroes' of agriculture.

Entomologist and conservationist Dr. Dino Martins, a native Kenyan, has recently been honored with the Whitley Award for his work as a pollinator champion, helping spark a cultural change in farming practices to improve yields, crops and the well-being of families.



“Kenya is this amazing country filled with all this diversity; large animals, small animals, wildlife and insects. Most farmers view insects as pests but in reality most of the insects that farmers have on their land and around their crops are useful,” Martins tells www.freshfruitportal.com.

“They re pollinators of the crops, they are predators of the pests, are involved in nutrient cycling in the soil and are basically keeping the whole system running.

“Really understanding the richness of the farming system as a habitat and connecting management of that as

productivity and also with conservation, has really been the essence of the work we're doing in Kenya.”

A case of mistaken identity

Martins travels vast distances around the African country at a grassroots level to pass on knowledge that will help farmers grow better quality mangoes, or increase the yields of papayas, passionfruit or any one of the main fruit crops of the region.

Remarkably what he demonstrates is quite simple. But the simple things in life can often be the most rewarding.

“Misidentifying pollinators as pests is one of the challenges we face. While many farmers have very good traditional knowledge of insects, many insects are hard to tell apart; they are very small, some are scary and people don’t spend that much time looking at them. So how do you tell what actually is contributing to your farm versus what is a challenge and a pest?”

“And that’s a big issue. Not just for farmers by identifying the pests or the pollinators but it has huge ramifications.”

Using Martin’s analogy, think about it this way. What happens when you get sick? You go to the doctor for treatment and medication. But what happens when a Kenyan farmers’ crops gets sick?

“They start pouring chemicals all over their plants, often without thinking about diagnosing the problem correctly and people use pesticides far too liberally, not just in Africa but all over the world.

“Often the problem is not what they think it is. It could be a blight caused by a little bit of fungus so pesticide is not the way. One of the key things from identifying the species correctly as the pest or the pollinator, and then making good decisions on your farm, is that it protects not just the environment, the water and the soil but your health and that of your family.”

By engaging Kenyan farmers, Martins has shown them a natural way to increase yields and produce better quality fruit that will be well received on both domestic and export markets.

“While many conservationists see farmers as the enemy, my argument is that farmers are actually the ones who will change the world because they have this huge power in their hands. They are right at the interface of nature and technology.”

“There’s a wide range of crops like mangoes, papaya, coffee beans, watermelons, passionfruit, the squash family, other cucurbits and traditional vegetables. Many plants have separate flowers on the same plant and so require very high pollination to be successful.

“With watermelon, 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 grains of pollen need to land on the stigma to really produce a really robust watermelon that has a really nice shape, a nice color and nice flavor and that is part of what we we have done.”

He says there is no point in a scientist doing an experiment, getting data and publishing it because “that doesn’t make a difference in the system whilst really getting the farmer involved does”.

Breeding experiments that empower growers to see for themselves

By actually going into the field armed with some nets and bags, Martins shows farmers first-hand the difference getting good pollination can make to yields.

“Farmers are busy and we can’t expect them to drop what they are doing and do research but we simply have a net bag that we exclude pollinators from certain flowers and next to

them we have flowers that we tag that the pollinators come to and the farmer then has to watch what happens over the next few weeks and that is a hugely eye opening is for people.

“Farmers are blown away. I wish I could capture the look on some of their faces when the joy, surprise and excitement come together when they realize ‘those bees I’m keeping in a hive or those things that are nesting in the wall of my house or those wasps whose nests are an annoyance or insects that occur on my farm that I didn’t even know existed are really what’s producing the yield that I’m harvesting’.”

Martins worked with farmer Francis Kiplagat from the Kerio Valley who produces mangoes, bananas, avocados, pigeon peas and leafy vegetables as well as raising cattle on a small scale.

As one of Martin’s ‘champion farmers’, Kiplagat is widely considered one of the most exemplary farmers in the region and often sought out for farming advice.

“We walk and work alongside the farmers and we identify ‘champion farmers’ because they’re the ones who are already trusted in the community, holders of indigenous knowledge and savers of seed. Both men and women and it’s not hard to identify their farms.

If you look at Google Earth you can often see a farm that looks healthy and one that doesn’t look very healthy, it’s amazing because the signature is evident even from the satellite.”

He says the team works alongside Nature Kenya, and also has ‘farm and field schools’ as well as field days.

This ripple effect can be extremely persuasive, especially in remote communities where word of mouth and seeing for oneself has a much greater impact.

“When farmers realize that by cutting out unnecessary pesticide use and correctly identifying pollinators as ‘friends’, yields of crops dramatically go up.



“We have seen people become very excited by learning. For example, one of the mango farmers has really become such a champion not just for pollinators but for rain water harvesting, terracing, soil conservation, protecting bird life, planting hedge rows and for all these good agricultural practices that make the place extremely rich.

“It absolutely transforms their lives and that’s the power of this. I can show a strong impact on

yield, that's what the farmer cares about. For example, in passionfruit farming in the Kerio Valley we have managed to get a ten-fold increase on some farms and that was simply because people were misidentifying the pollinators as pests and killing them.

Watermelon production is another success story. Martin details how farmers were previously harvesting misshapen watermelons with bad coloring and a lack of flavor.

“They were blaming this on ripening issues but it turns out that most of the quality of the fruit is very much driven by the pollination so if you don't have adequate pollination in terms of the biology of those plants then you get the misshapen watermelons that don't have very good flavor and so on.”

Other learning tools

Dr. Martins also hosts structured learning programs inviting agricultural officials to join farmers in workshops that discuss all types of farming practices.

“We encourage farmers and communities to have more regional local gatherings so we give them the information and the publications translated into local languages so they can also have their own dialogue about all of this and share it with others in the community.

“The look on a farmer's face when they first take a look through the microscope is priceless. We take a microscope into the field or a little hand lens and just show them and say 'look at this plant bug' and they are just blown away. People don't realize aphids are animals, giving birth, and are a huge part of the interaction in agriculture even though they are so tiny. Once you realize that, your understanding of the world is expanded and then how you manage your farm in response to that absolutely changes.”

The Whitley Award

Dr. Martins is very modest about his achievements, preferring to call himself 'a messenger' but really he has been responsible for providing a free eco-system service and agricultural masterclasses to thousands of people over the years; a priceless contribution to the conservation of his homeland.

Receiving the £50,000 (US\$ 78,879) Whitley Award at a London ceremony last month was a big deal, not least for its recognition of his work to conserve pollinators, boost crop yields and partly contribute to Kenya adopting its first legislation to specifically protect bees from harmful pesticides.

“Without pollinators, the planet's food security would be at risk, with significant livelihood ramifications; and billions would need to be spent to pollinate crops artificially,” says a Whitley Awards statement sent to www.freshfruitportal.com.

“One of every three bites of food we eat is dependent on pollinators. These tiny insects, bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, flies and beetles, play a critical role in crop pollination.

“The award is given in recognition of Dr. Martin's work with local communities to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, and encourage the adoption of more sustainable farming practices that conserve pollinators, boost crop yields, and benefit people and livelihoods in East Africa.” The Whitley Gold Award will enable Dr. Martins to expand his conservation efforts to a new level by working with 4,000 additional farmers; tackling the importation, use and spread of unregistered pesticides entering Africa and; educating 200,000 people about the importance of pollinators and sustainable agriculture.

The Hoopoe - online blog by the Natural History Book Service
15th June 2015

<http://blog.nhbs.com/title-information/on-the-importance-of-pollinators-in-east-africa-an-interview-with-whitley-gold-award-winner-dino-martins/>



On the importance of pollinators in East Africa: an interview with Whitley Gold Award winner Dino Martins



Dr Dino Martins is an entomologist and evolutionary biologist with a PhD in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology from Harvard University. He is also well-known in his native East Africa where he works to educate farmers about the importance of the conservation of pollinators. It is this work that recently won Dr Martins the prestigious Whitley Gold Award presented by the Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature. His book, *The Pocket Guide to the Insects of East Africa* has just been published by Random House Struik. What's more, he takes great photos, the majority of those in the book being his own.

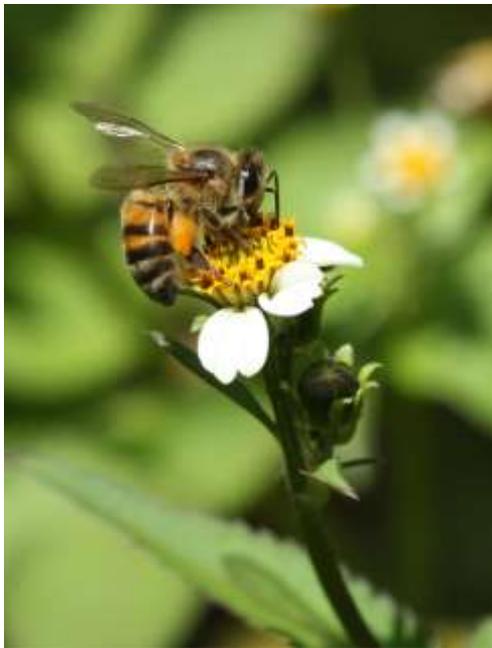


Cuckoo wasp and lycaenid butterfly on coriander flowers in Turkana, Northern Kenya – photo credit: Dino Martins

Congratulations on winning the award – how did you become involved in entomology, and what does this award mean to you personally?

I am very honoured and deeply humbled – I take this award as recognition for the immense contribution by pollinators (mainly insects) and small-scale farmers in rural areas around the world to biodiversity. So I am receiving it I feel on their behalf. My earliest memories are of insects, as I spent a lot of time watching and chasing after them as a child. This award will enable me to scale up our work on the conservation of pollinators in East Africa, and also raise further awareness among farmers, school children and the general public on how this important ecosystem service puts food on our plates and nutrition in our bodies.

You work extensively with the East African farmers, educating them about the importance of pollinators for healthy crop yields – what is your main message to them?



Our main message to farmers is to celebrate the biodiversity that underpins the life support systems of the planet. Farmers are our greatest allies in the conservation of biodiversity in East Africa. Most of the forest habitats, for example, are surrounded by small-scale farmers whose actions can go a long way to either protect or degrade the forests, and of course the many endemic species they are home to. We want to get farmers and everyone to understand the connection between their own lives, food production and wild insects. We do a simple experiment where we bag one flower and leave one open to insects, then watch what develops over the next few days or weeks depending on the crop. It is always uplifting to see the moment a light goes on in the farmers' eyes when they see the connection between insects visiting the flowers and the yields they enjoy. Working to help conserve pollinators

and restore habitats has seen yields increase up to ten-fold on some crops, such as passionfruit and watermelon.

Entomology may be perceived as a less glamorous area related to wildlife conservation, but it is so essential globally – what is the appeal, and the importance of your field for world biodiversity?

As Professor E. O. Wilson stated so eloquently some time ago: “Insects are the little creatures that run the world”. This is more true than ever in Africa where the large mammals are important, but also depend on insects that pollinate wild plants, disperse seeds, help build soil and recycle nutrients through the whole ecosystem. Understanding biodiversity is essential for sustainable development and conservation in Africa today. I feel that we are uncovering a previously ‘hidden’, somewhat unrecognised sphere of biodiversity: that of the rural farming landscape. When farmers create hedgerows of natural plants, protect patches of forest or grassland, or work together to create on-farm habitats we are finding that some of these landscapes are especially rich in pollinators.

For example, on one mango farm in the Kerio Valley we have recorded over 1,000 different species of flower-visiting insects. This farmer harvests up to 12,000 mangoes weekly that earn him thousands of dollars. Without pollinating insects there would be no income on this farm. Watermelon farming brings in over 10 million US \$ annually to just one county (Baringo) in Kenya's Rift Valley. Scaling this up globally means that a huge part of our food production and especially high-value crops like nuts and berries are dependent on wild insects.

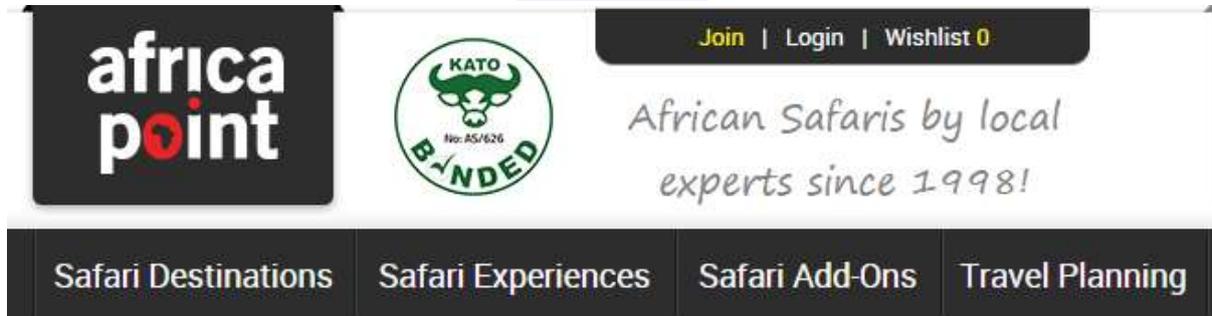
Do you feel confident that enough is being done to protect our pollinators?

There is a lot of interest in pollinators today that has come about from regional initiatives, including the Global Pollination Project managed by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. There is also an on-going assessment of pollinators by the IPBES (I am a coordinating lead author for one of the chapters). Locally, many farmers, gardeners, beekeepers and enthusiasts are working to create habitats, provide nesting sites and learn about the pollinators around them. This is very inspiring and heart-warming to see. In East Africa, where we have a huge diversity of bees and other insects, one of the challenges is actually just identifying them, and this is where we are working with farmers – so that they can recognise that the diversity on their farms is of direct benefit to them and their families. Major challenges remain in terms of better understanding and managing pesticides and also farming in ways that are compatible with nature while scaling up food production worldwide.

What is coming up for you next, following this award, and the publication of your book, *Pocket Guide to the Insects of East Africa*?

I am back in Kenya now after an amazing few weeks in London. I am very much looking forward to getting back into working with farmers and completing a number of other books including 'The Bees of East Africa: A Natural History', and 'The Butterflies of Eastern Africa' with Steve Collins. A book we launched digitally on pollinators is also due to be printed shortly, but can also be downloaded here.

The Pocket Guide to the Insects of East Africa is being very well-received here and abroad, and I have had hundreds of messages saying how exciting it is to finally have a book on insects for the region. On the work front I have just been appointed the Director of the Mpala Research Centre in Laikipia, Kenya and am looking forward to getting more entomology projects going there.



The banner features the 'africa point' logo on the left, a circular 'KATO BANDED' logo with a bull's head in the center, and a navigation bar on the right with 'Join | Login | Wishlist 0'. Below the navigation bar is the text 'African Safaris by local experts since 1998!'. At the bottom of the banner is a dark navigation bar with four white text buttons: 'Safari Destinations', 'Safari Experiences', 'Safari Add-Ons', and 'Travel Planning'.

To The Point: Chat With Dino J. Martins

When nature calls, I don't think there is anyone who doesn't heed (pun intended). So when this happened to Dino in his teen years, he did exactly that - he followed Mother Nature. Today, the very humbled Dino has the Whitley Gold Award 2015 nesting in his pocket. Yet he feels this is not his effort alone but that of pollinators and small-scale farmers in rural areas around the world who contribute to biodiversity every day. Arthur Ashe famously said, "Success is a journey, not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome." It is the little things you do that matter. Have you done your bit?



Dino with farmers

How did you get involved with conservation?

My earliest memories are of insects, as I spent a lot of time watching and chasing after them as a child growing up in Western Kenya. I have always had a deep love of nature and interest in natural history. I started [becoming involved in conservation](#) as the Chair of the Young Farmers Club at Uasin Gishu Secondary School in Eldoret. We started a tree nursery and would go out to collect seeds of trees so as to propagate seedlings. Sometimes it was hard to find old, mature trees that produced high-quality seeds – especially of the indigenous species. I quickly realised that the forests and riverine areas we visited were being decimated by charcoal burners and land grabbing, so this got me involved.

I was very lucky to get to travel to the US for my further education at Indiana University through the support of my foster parents. I had longed to visit the Amazon rainforest and was able to do so as an undergraduate research assistant. The incredible diversity and also the heart-breaking destruction of the rainforest made me even more committed to conservation.

When I returned to Kenya after completing my studies, I became involved with [Nature Kenya](#) (The East Africa Natural History Society) and wrote articles for the East African Wildlife Society magazine (Swara), which got me more and more involved working with communities in rural areas, mainly small-scale farmers. So incredibly my work has grown from rural Eldoret to international projects all through a focus on insects.

I recently was selected as the Gold Winner for the annual Whitley Awards. I am very honoured and deeply humbled to have been recognized with the [Whitley Gold Award](#) presented by the Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature. I take this award as recognition for the immense contribution by pollinators (mainly insects) and small-scale farmers in rural areas around the world to biodiversity. So I am receiving it, I feel, on their behalf.



Dino With a group of farmers from Turkwel

What do you love most about your work?



I love [being out in nature and spending time walking in the wilderness](#). It is such an honour and privilege to be able to observe living things doing what they have been doing for millions of years. I also really enjoy teaching and working with students and rural farmers. Our main message is to get farmers and everyone to understand the connection between their own lives, food production and wild insects. We work with farmers doing a simple experiment where we bag one flower and leave one open to insects, then watch what develops over the next few days or weeks depending on the crop. It is always uplifting to see the moment a light goes on in the farmers' eyes when they see the connection between insects visiting the flowers and the yields they enjoy.

Eggplant Farmer from Turkwel

What are some of the exciting moments in your work?

Finding a new or rare species and being able to watch its behaviour and understand its biology is perhaps one of the most exciting aspects of my work. Last year, for example, we described a new bee species from Turkana, called *Samba turkana*, in honour of the region's cultural and biological diversity. Being able to watch the bees in the wild was an incredible honour – realising that no other scientists had ever been able to do this. Sharing the joy and wonder of discovery and appreciation of nature is the other most exciting thing about my work: it is a real pleasure to see when students go out to make discoveries for themselves and their communities through the simple support and teaching one provides.

What's your favorite conservancy/national park/travel destination?

Any place that has high insect diversity is a favourite destination – I am especially fond of the Kerio Valley, Mt Elgon, Kakamega Forest and Laikipia where I spend a lot of time.



A Carpenter Bee (Xylocopa) on coffee flowers in Kerio Valley

What do you think are the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in conservation?

Conservation is ultimately about two things: interactions and populations. Interactions include things like pollination, which is responsible for one in three bites of food that we enjoy. In Kenya today we have a huge diversity of pollinators, most of them wild insects. For example, on one mango farm in the Kerio Valley we have recorded over 1000 different species of flower-visiting insects. This farmer harvests up to 12,000 mangoes weekly that earn him thousands of dollars. Without pollinating insects, there would be no income on this farm. Watermelon farming brings in over 10 million US \$ annually to Baringo County alone in Kenya. The most pressing issues we need to address are the lack of knowledge about biodiversity and the need for sustainable development.

What needs to be done to address these issues?

I think the best way to solve problems is through creating knowledge. This means we need students and farmers, and teachers and scientists to all work together to understand the world around us and come up with practical solutions to the problems we face. I would really like to see Kenya as a country and more Kenyan students take a greater interest in science and conservation. We need to provide opportunities for more young people to enter science, as this is the best way to make discoveries and solve problems. We also need to work with universities, museums, conservation organisations, schools and the general public to create an environment that fosters science and learning so that we can develop as a country and do so sustainably. The government has an important role to play in this sector to encourage more people to participate and also actively facilitate the right kind of research.



A Honeybee on the flowers of Coffee Arabica in Kerio Valley

Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

A book we launched digitally on pollinators is also due to be printed shortly, but can also be downloaded [here](#). The Pocket Guide to the Insects of East Africa has also been published and it has been very well-received here and abroad, it is available from local bookshops. Basically, my main message is please go outside into your farms and gardens and appreciate the amazing insect diversity that we are all blessed with. If you can, spend just five minutes a day watching insects and your life will be immensely enriched and your eyes will be opened to the wonders of the world around us.

Joint Coverage with Inaoyom Imong

Broadcast

BBC Africa – Radio Interview

Presented by Fred Dove

29th April 2015

Weekly Audience of 96 million

<https://soundcloud.com/bbcafrica/gorillas-and-insects>



**Arnaud Desbiez
Brazil**

**Giant armadillos as a flagship species for the
conservation of tropical scrublands in the Brazilian
Cerrado**

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by the Garden House School Parents'
Association



Websites.....	78-107
Joint coverage with Rosamira Guillen.....	108-116

Websites

Globo.com – News Website

26th April 2015

<http://g1.globo.com/mato-grosso-do-sul/noticia/2015/04/pesquisa-de-tatu-canastra-em-ms-disputa-oscar-verde-na-inglaterra.html>

globo.com | g1 | globoesporte | gshow | famosos & etc | vídeos

≡ MENU

G1

MATO GROSSO DO SUL



Pesquisa de tatu-canastra em MS disputa 'Oscar Verde' na Inglaterra



A pesquisa sobre tatu-canastra realizada no Pantanal sul-mato-grossense desde 2010 é uma das finalistas do “Green Oscars” (Oscar Verde). O prêmio é destinado aos conservacionistas do mundo e será entregue na quarta-feira (29), na Inglaterra, pela princesa Anne, filha da rainha Elizabeth II.

Francês de nascimento, mas brasileiro de coração, Arnaud Desbiez, de 40 anos, iniciou a pesquisa sobre o tatu-canastra

em 2010 quando uma organização não governamental (ONG) escocesa fechou parceria com uma ONG brasileira para estudar a conservação da espécie na região do Pantanal.

“É a grande confirmação pela comunidade internacional, principalmente porque é um animal que pouco conhece. É um prêmio internacional”, disse o coordenador da pesquisa que disputa pela primeira vez um dos maiores prêmios na área ambiental.

O prêmio foi disputado por quase 200 pessoas e sete chegaram à final. Além de Arnaud, disputam a final pesquisadores da Filipinas, Colômbia, Indonésia, África e Índia. A cerimônia vai ser no prestigioso Royal Geographical Society in London.

Projeto

O tatu-canastra tem o hábito de viver embaixo da terra e em baixas densidades populacionais. O comportamento contribui para que a espécie ameaçada seja muito pouco conhecida.

O projeto “Tatu-Canastra – Pantanal” é o primeiro projeto de pesquisa a longo prazo dedicado a conhecer sua ecologia neste bioma utilizando radiotransmissores, armadilhas fotográficas, levantamento e pesquisa de suas tocas, monitoramento de indivíduos e mapeamento de sua área de uso, além de entrevistas com a comunidade local.

Recentemente, o projeto expandiu seus estudos a outras espécies de Xenarthras, como tamanduás e os tatus como por exemplo o tatu-de-rabo-mole (*Cabassous unicinctus*).

O tatu-canastra, junto com outras espécies de Xenarthras, é considerado um dos embaixadores da biodiversidade brasileira, servindo como excelente modelo para a educação ambiental e programas para iniciativas de conservação de espécies ou preservação de biomas nacionais e internacionais.

Arnaud tem uma equipe de quatro pessoas, composta pelo biólogo Gabriel Massocato e pelos médicos veterinários Danilo Kluyber e Renata Santos. Apesar disso, apenas o idealizador vai representar o Brasil.

O próximo passo, é expandir a pesquisa do tatu-canastra para a região do Cerrado. “O Pantanal é mais conservado e o Cerrado teve mais impacto da civilização”, explicou o pesquisador.

Biografia

Arnaud Desbiez é formado em biologia pela McGill University, no Canadá, e doutor em “Manejo de biodiversidade” pela Universidade de Cranfield, na Inglaterra. O pesquisador já passou por Belize, Bolívia, Argentina, Nepal, França, Inglaterra, Estados Unidos da América, Canadá.

Depois de passar por tantos países, o francês veio para Brasil há 13 anos quando foi escolhido para desenvolver uma pesquisa sobre porco monteiro e plantas forrageiras, em Corumbá, município distante 415 quilômetros da capital. O projeto foi desenvolvido pela Embrapa Pantanal.

“Concorri um trabalho e vim para Pantanal. Achei que fosse ficar dois ou três anos”, disse. Mas a decisão de escolher o país para morar aconteceu mesmo quando Arnaud se apaixonou. Hoje ele é casado com uma brasileira e tem dois filhos. “Me considero brasileiro, já tenho até família aqui”, ressaltou.

O Correio News - News Website, Brazil

27th April 2015

<http://ocorreionews.com.br/portal/2015/04/27/projeto-pantaneiro-de-preservacao-do-tatu-canastra-e-finalista-do-oscar-verde/>



Projeto pantaneiro de preservação do tatu-canastra é finalista do ‘Oscar Verde’



Um projeto sul-mato-grossense está na final de um concurso internacional conhecido como Oscar Verde, o Green Oscars. Mais de 200 projetos de todo o mundo disputaram o título e sete estão na final, entre eles o Tatu-Canastra Pantanal, um projeto de pesquisa pioneiro sobre o animal.

O prêmio para o melhor projeto ambiental sobre conservação será entregue na próxima quarta-feira (29), em Londres, na Inglaterra. O evento será comandado pela princesa Anne, a filha da rainha Elizabeth II.

Além do projeto sul-mato-grossense, concorrem ao prêmio pesquisadores da Philipinas, Colômbia, Indonésia, África e Índia.

O francês Arnaud Desbiez, de 40 anos, é o fundador do projeto, que começou efetivamente em 2011, em solo pantaneiro.

TATU-CANASTRA

O Tatu-Canastra é a maior espécie de tatu existente. Devido ao seu comportamento de viver embaixo da terra e em baixas densidades populacionais, contribuem para que esta espécie ameaçada seja muito pouco conhecida.

Hoje o Projeto Tatu-Canastra – Pantanal é o primeiro projeto de pesquisa em longo prazo dedicado a conhecer sua ecologia neste bioma utilizando radiotransmissores, armadilhas fotográficas, levantamento e pesquisa de suas tocas, monitoramento de indivíduos e mapeamento de sua área de uso e entrevistas com a comunidade local.

Recentemente, o projeto expandiu seus estudos a outras espécies de *Xenarthras*, como tamanduás e os tatus como por exemplo o tatu-de-rabo-mole (*Cabassous unicinctus*). O tatu-canastra junto com outras espécies de *Xenarthras* são considerados embaixadores da nossa biodiversidade, servindo como excelentes modelos para a educação ambiental e programas para iniciativas de conservação de espécies ou preservação de biomas nacionais e internacionais.



Projeto Brasileiro Ganha O “Oscar Verde”



Arnaud Desbiez, coordenador do Projeto Tatu-Canastra, uma iniciativa do Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPÊ) e da Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, recebeu na semana passada o Whitley Award. O prêmio, conhecido também como “Oscar Verde”, é um dos mais prestigiados do mundo na área da conservação ambiental e foi criado para apoiar financeiramente os trabalhos que atuam na preservação de espécies ameaçadas de extinção.

Desbiez foi reconhecido pelo seu trabalho de conservação do tatu-canastra, também conhecido como tatu-gigante, no Pantanal do Mato Grosso do Sul, região de Nhecolândia. O tatu-canastra é um animal robusto, dotado de enormes garras que servem para cavar buracos em busca de formigas e cupins. Seu corpo é coberto por uma carapaça coriácea que o protege contra predadores. Pode pesar até 50 quilos e chega a medir 1,5 metro de comprimento (incluindo a cauda).

Apesar de seu tamanho e de sua grande área de distribuição é um animal raro de ser observado. Porém, essa história começou a mudar quando Arnaud criou o Projeto de Conservação do Tatu Canastra em 2010 e iniciou o primeiro estudo ecológico de longo prazo sobre a espécie. Novas informações surgiram e a importância da espécie como engenheira do ecossistema foi revelada.

Agora, Arnaud pretende expandir os esforços de conservação do Pantanal para o Cerrado, ambiente que funciona como uma ponte entre Amazônia, Pantanal, Mata Atlântica, Caatinga e Pampas, compartilha animais e plantas com todos esses biomas e é habitat de espécies endêmicas. Arnaud e sua equipe irão coletar dados para apoiar a criação de uma rede de áreas protegidas e enfrentar ameaças à sobrevivência das espécies.

Arnaud foi um dos sete vencedores do Whitley Awards que dividem o prêmio no valor total de £ 245.000 (35 mil libras esterlinas, cerca de R\$ 160 mil, para cada projeto).



Projeto Tatu Canastra ganha o ‘Oscar Verde’ pelo trabalho de conservação da espécie no Pantanal



Tatu-canastra (Priodontes maximus) – Foto: projeto Tatu-Canastra

Arnaud Desbiez, coordenador do **Projeto Tatu-Canastra**, uma iniciativa do Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPÊ) e da Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, recebeu hoje (29) o **Whitley Award**. O prêmio, conhecido também como “Oscar Verde”, é um dos mais prestigiados do mundo na área da conservação ambiental e foi criado para apoiar financeiramente os trabalhos que atuam na preservação de.

O prêmio foi entregue em cerimônia na Royal Geographical Society, em Londres. Desbiez foi reconhecido pelo seu trabalho de conservação do **tatu-canastra**, também conhecido como **tatu-gigante**, no Pantanal do Mato Grosso do Sul, região de Nhecolândia.

O **tatu-canastra** é o maior membro de sua família (Dasypodidae). É um animal robusto, dotado de enormes garras que servem para cavar buracos em busca de formigas e cupins. Seu corpo é coberto por uma carapaça coriácea que o protege contra predadores. Pode pesar até 50 quilos e chega a medir 1,5 metro de comprimento (incluindo a cauda).

Apesar de seu tamanho e de sua grande área de distribuição é um animal raro de ser observado. A espécie é visada por caçadores e o desmatamento está destruindo o seu habitat. Além disso, passa a maior parte do tempo embaixo da terra. Há quem diga que é uma criatura mitológica, outros acreditam que não exista mais. Porém, essa história começou a mudar quando Arnaud criou o Projeto de Conservação do Tatu Canastra em 2010 e iniciou o primeiro estudo ecológico de longo prazo sobre a espécie. Novas informações surgiram e a importância da espécie como engenheira do ecossistema foi revelada.



Arnaud Desbiez (esquerda) e Danilo Khyber (direita) coletam dados e tiraram amostras de sangue de um tatu-canastra anestesiado. O animal foi solto após o procedimento – Foto: Foto: Kevin Schafer/ Projeto Tatu Canastra



Arnaud Desbiez (esquerda) e Danilo Khyber (direita) soltam um tatu-canastra no Pantanal após pesar, medir e tirar amostras de sangue –Foto: Kevin Schafer

Projeto Tatu Canastra

Agora, Arnaud pretende expandir os esforços de conservação do Pantanal para o Cerrado, ambiente que funciona como uma ponte entre Amazônia, Pantanal, Mata Atlântica, Caatinga e Pampas, compartilha animais e plantas com todos esses biomas e é habitat de espécies endêmicas. Segundo o Ministério do Meio Ambiente, o Cerrado ocupa cerca de 22% do território nacional, abriga as nascentes das três maiores bacias hidrográficas da América do Sul (Amazônica/Tocantins, São Francisco e Prata), e é reconhecido como a savana mais rica do mundo em termos de **biodiversidade**. Arnaud e sua equipe irão coletar dados para apoiar a criação de uma rede de áreas protegidas e enfrentar ameaças à sobrevivência das espécies.

Edward Whitley, fundador do Whitley Fund for Nature, disse: “O calibre dos vencedores do Whitley este ano é excelente. Embora cada um enfrente notáveis e diferentes desafios em seus países de origem, esses indivíduos excepcionais são apaixonados por garantir um futuro melhor para as pessoas e animais selvagens. Os prêmios Whitley são uma celebração de seus esforços e realizações.”

Arnaud é um dos sete vencedores do **Whitley Awards** que dividem o prêmio no valor total de £ 245.000 (35 mil libras esterlinas, cerca de R\$ 160 mil, para cada projeto).



Arnaud Desbiez recebe o Prêmio Whitley da princesa Anne da Inglaterra, em cerimônia de gala realizada na sede da Royal Geographical Society, em Londres – Foto: Whitley Fund for Nature

Outros vencedores do **Whitley Awards** 2015 são:

- Panut Hadisiswoyo, da Indonésia por seu projeto de conservação com orangotangos de Sumatra
- Pramod Patil, da Índia, que luta pela preservação de uma ave do Deserto de Thar
- Rosamira Guillen, da Colômbia, pela conservação do *Saguinus oedipus* no norte do país
- Inaoyom Imong, da Nigéria: que vem defendendo os gorilas nas montanhas Mbe
- Jayson Ibañez, das Filipinas: por prevenir o declínio da águia filipina na ilha de Mindanao
- Ananda Kumar, da Índia: pelo trabalho para permitir a coexistência entre humanos e elefantes no sul da Índia

PAX TAG Pangolin, Aardvark & Xenarthra Taxon Advisory Group
29th April 2015

<http://www.paxtag.org/whitley-awards-honor-world-leading-nature-conservationists-annual-green-oscars-celebrations/>



The Whitley Awards honor world-leading nature conservationists at its annual 'Green Oscars' celebrations



London, UK: 29 April 2015 – Seven leading conservationists have been honored at the annual Whitley Awards at a special ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, in which HRH The Princess Royal presented these prestigious international prizes in recognition of their inspiring efforts to protect the natural world.

For more than 20 years, the Whitley Fund for Nature has provided funding, training, and recognition to some of the world's most dynamic conservation leaders, supporting a range of projects rooted in strong science and community engagement. Working in developing countries where pressure on natural resources is high, the challenges they face are immense; from fighting bureaucracy, crime and corruption – often at great personal

risk – to protecting habitat, resolving human-wildlife conflict and developing sustainable alternatives for local communities. As Sir David Attenborough, a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature explains: “Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people – passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits.”

This year’s winners of the ‘Green Oscars’ were selected from a field of 174 applicants, and included **Arnaud Desbiez** of Brazil for his project “**Giant armadillos as a flagship species for the conservation of tropical scrublands in the Brazilian Cerrado.**” The PAX TAG is proud to have officially supported Arnaud’s work since 2013.



Arnaud Desbiez receiving his 2015 Whitley Award from HRH the Princess Royal, 29 April, 2015

The other 2015 Whitley Award winners hail from Colombia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Nigeria and India, and the species they are working to protect range from Critically Endangered primates and birdlife, to Asian elephants in addition to Arnaud’s work with giant armadillos. The winners will be awarded £35,000 each in project funding by (approximately \$54,000 US at current exchange rates) the Whitley Fund for Nature to support their achievements in conserving some of the world’s most endangered species.

Congratulations, Arnaud, for an award well-deserved!

Planeta Sustentavel – Environmental Website

29th April 2015

<http://planetasustentavel.abril.com.br/noticia/ambiente/projeto-tatu-canastra-leva-whitley-award-na-inglaterra-859700.shtml>

Projeto Tatu-Canastra leva o Whitley Award na Inglaterra



A princesa Anne da Inglaterra entregou hoje o Prêmio Whitley de conservação ambiental ao pesquisador Arnaud Desbiez, em cerimônia de gala realizada na sede da Royal Geographical Society, em Londres. O prêmio, disputadíssimo entre conservacionistas de todo o mundo e conhecido por aqui como Oscar Verde, foi concedido pelo Fundo Whitley pela Natureza (Whitley Fund for Nature - WFN), que tem a princesa como patrona e Sir David Attenborough como padrinho

Além do troféu e da homenagem, a premiação se traduz em recursos para financiar a continuidade dos trabalhos de conservação. Neste caso, são 35 mil libras esterlinas (cerca de R\$ 160 mil) cujo destino é financiar a expansão da pesquisa com o tatu-canastra do Pantanal para o Cerrado. "Estamos muito felizes com esse prêmio, que reconhece a dedicação e o trabalho de nossa equipe", disse Arnaud Desbiez, por telefone. "É fantástico ver nosso tatu sendo premiado entre grandes espécies carismáticas, como elefantes, gorilas e orangotangos".

O reconhecimento faz valer a extenuante rotina de pesquisa, nada fácil, mesmo para profissionais pacientes e persistentes como o coordenador, Arnaud Desbiez, o biólogo Gabriel Massocato, os veterinários Danilo Kluyber e Renata Santos, e outros colaboradores eventuais.

O tatu-canastra (*Priodontes maximus*) é um animal muito tímido e ressabiado: geralmente sai da toca depois da meia noite e, antes de sair, trata de virar o focinho para todos os lados, para farejar se não tem nada estranho nas redondezas.

Caso suspeite da presença de gente querendo seguir seus passos mato adentro, onde quer que vá procurar cupins para se alimentar, o tatu não sai da toca 'nem com reza brava'. O bicho volta para o buraco e fica lá, por horas ou dias até! Aí o jeito é acompanhar os bips da antena de telemetria, em silêncio, enquanto as horas passam.

Desde 2010, Arnaud Desbiez e sua equipe seguem, marcam, medem, fotografam, filmam e estudam tatus-canastras no Pantanal Sul, contando com a parceria e o entusiasmo dos proprietários da Fazenda Baía das Pedras. Nestes cinco anos, eles conseguiram acompanhar do acasalamento ao nascimento de um filhote de tatu-canastra. E gravar o primeiro passeio do tatuzinho fora da toca. Também conseguiram registrar e comprovar a função da espécie na modificação de ecossistemas, beneficiando diversos outros animais, conforme contei na reportagem "O engenheiro oculto", publicada na edição de maio de 2014 da revista **National Geographic Brasil** e reproduzida aqui, no site do **Planeta Sustentável**.

Sem contar todo o trabalho de **educação ambiental** e aproveitamento das informações obtidas em campanhas de conservação, que já mobilizaram mais de 65 mil pessoas. No Pantanal, pude acompanhar algumas palestras de Arnaud para plateias de peões pantaneiros e crianças, o que me motivou a dividir com ele a autoria da cartilha ***Tem tatu na toca?***, publicada em 2014 e utilizada em uma campanha educativa pela **Sociedade de Zoológicos e Aquários do Brasil (SZB)**.

Com novos recursos proporcionados pelo Prêmio Whitley, certamente assistiremos à multiplicação de iniciativas como essa, atingindo um público maior e atraindo a devida atenção para uma espécie brasileira tão interessante quanto pouco conhecida.

Além de Arnaud Desbiez, hoje também receberam o Prêmio Whitley os seguintes conservacionistas:

- **Panut Hadisiswoyo**, da Indonésia, por seu trabalho de proteção aos orangotangos de Sumatra e seu habitat
- **Pramod Patil**, da Índia, pela conservação da abetarda Indiana, uma ave do Deserto de Thar
- **Ananda Kumar**, também da Índia, pela luta por uma coexistência pacífica entre elefantes e homens
- **Rosamira Guillen**, da Colômbia, que trabalha com o sagui-cabeça-de-algodão;
- **Inaoyom Imong**, da Nigéria, por sua defesa dos gorilas das montanhas Mbe e
- **Jayson Ibañez**, das Filipinas, pela proteção da águia das Ilhas Mindanao.

E ainda será entregue um prêmio especial no valor de 50 mil libras, o **Whitley Gold Award**, foi concedido a **Dino Martins**, do Quênia por seu projeto com polinizadores.

Royal Zoological Society of Scotland – NGO Website

29th April 2015

<http://www.rzss.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/press-release?urlName=giant-armadillo-project-coordinator,-arnaud-desbiez-wins-whitley-award>



Giant armadillo project coordinator, Arnaud Desbiez wins Whitley award

The Latin America Coordinator for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Dr Arnaud Desbiez, has been awarded the equivalent of a 'green Oscar' for his work on the RZSS Giant Armadillo Project.



Today, Wednesday 29 April, Frenchman Arnaud was announced as a winner of a Whitley Award by the Whitley Fund for Nature, a prestigious environmental prize worth £35,000 of funding, for his work to conserve the rarely sighted giant armadillo in Brazil.

HRH Princess Royal will present the award at a ceremony this evening at the Royal Geographical Society, London.

The Giant Armadillo Project was established in 2010 and prior to this the species, which has a status of Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, was poorly studied. Indeed, virtually nothing was known about the species' reproduction before camera-traps were set up close to the den of a monitored female which has enabled scientists to observe and follow their behaviours. In 2012 the camera-trap captured the first ever photograph of a young giant armadillo and in 2013 the team managed to follow the birth and parental care of baby giant armadillo Alex with his mother. The team still continues following Alex to this day.

Dr Arnaud Desbiez, Latin America Coordinator for RZSS and based out in the Brazilian Pantanal, said:

"I am honoured to receive this award and hope that it helps to raise awareness of the plight of the giant armadillo and the vital conservation work that is currently taking place. It is testament to the hard work of the team out in Brazil and the ten year support of conservation charity the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland who invest in individuals and initiatives like me."

O Estado online – News Website, Brazil

30th April 2015

<http://www.oestadoonline.com.br/2015/04/projeto-de-preservacao-do-tatu-canastra-no-estado-recebe-premio-internacional/>



Projeto de preservação do tatu-canastra no Estado recebe prêmio internacional



Desbiez mede animal monitorado no Pantanal (Foto: Reprodução/Facebook).

O coordenador do projeto Tatu-Canastra, Arnaud Desbiez, recebeu nessa quarta-feira (29) um dos prêmios mais importantes sobre conservação animal. Conhecido como “Oscar Verde”, o prêmio Whitley Award foi entregue pela princesa Anne, da

Inglaterra, durante cerimônia realizada em Londres. O projeto, desenvolvido na região de Nhecolândia, no Pantanal do Mato Grosso do Sul, é uma iniciativa do Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas de da Royal Zoological Society of Scotland. , recebeu hoje (29) o Whitley Award.

O projeto teve início em 2010 com um estudo de longo prazo sobre a espécie e revelou que o tatu é um grande conservador do ecossistema. O tatu-canastra (Dasypodidae), ou tatu-gigante, é um animal robusto, dotado de enormes garras que servem para cavar buracos em busca de formigas e cupins. Seu corpo é coberto por uma carapaça coriácea que o protege contra predadores. Pode pesar até 50 quilos e chega a medir 1,5 metro de comprimento, incluindo a cauda.

O animal é alvo de caçadores e sofre com o desmatamento que destrói seu habitat. O tatu-canastra passa a maior parte do tempo embaixo da terra.

Desbiez recebeu além do troféu e da homenagem, o valor de 35 mil libras esterlinas, o que corresponde a R\$ 160 mil que irão financiar a expansão da pesquisa com o tatu-canastra do Pantanal para o Cerrado.



Projeto que estuda o tatu-canastra no Pantanal é o vencedor do Oscar Verde



Tatu-canastra é chamado pelos zoólogos de *Priodontes maximus*, é a maior das espécies. (Projeto Tatu-Canastra no Pantanal)

O projeto sul-mato-grossense que estuda sobre o tatu-canastra é o grande campeão do Green Oscar. O prêmio foi entregue ontem na Inglaterra e mostra reconhecimento internacional a pesquisadores e conservacionistas de todo o mundo. No

Brasil, o troféu é conhecido como Oscar Verde.

O trabalho desenvolvido na região de Aquidauana há cinco anos, disputou com 200 projetos de todo o mundo e ficou entre os sete finalistas. O pesquisador Arnaud Desbiez recebeu o troféu das mãos da princesa Anne da Inglaterra, em cerimônia realizada pelo Fundo Whitley pela Natureza (Whitley Fund for Nature - WFN).



Além do reconhecimento pelo trabalho feito, o projeto ainda ganhou 35 mil libras esterlinas, o que equivale a R\$ 160 mil, para serem investidos na expansão da pesquisa sobre o tatu-canastra do Pantanal para o Cerrado.

"Estamos muito felizes com esse prêmio, que reconhece a dedicação e o trabalho de nossa equipe", disse Arnaud

Desbiez, por telefone a revista National Geographic. "É fantástico ver nosso tatu sendo premiado entre grandes espécies carismáticas, como elefantes, gorilas e orangotangos", concluiu.



Projeto pantaneiro de preservação do tatu-canastra leva o 'Oscar Verde'



O projeto desenvolvido em solo sul-mato-grossense pelo pesquisador francês Arnaud Desbiez foi o grande vencedor do prêmio Whitley Award, conhecido em todo o mundo como o Oscar Verde. O projeto Tatu-Canastra Pantanal concorreu com mais de 200 pesquisas de todo o mundo e levou o prêmio na noite de ontem (29), em Londres, na Inglaterra.

Pesquisador recebeu prêmio das mãos da princesa - Foto: Divulgação/WFN

Pela conquista, o pesquisador recebeu das mãos da princesa Anne, filha da rainha Elizabeth II, um troféu e 35 mil libras esterlinas (R\$ 160 mil), que poderão ser investidas no projeto.

O prêmio é organizado pela Whitley Fund for Nature - WFN (Fundo Whitley pela Natureza). Durante o evento, um vídeo sobre o projeto desenvolvido em solo sul-mato-grossense foi apresentado. **Você pode conferir a produção clicando aqui.**

TATU-CANASTRA

O Tatu-Canastra é a maior espécie de tatu existente. Devido ao seu comportamento de viver embaixo da terra e em baixas densidades populacionais, contribuem para que esta espécie ameaçada seja muito pouco conhecida.

Hoje o Projeto Tatu-Canastra – Pantanal é o primeiro projeto de pesquisa em longo prazo dedicado a conhecer sua ecologia neste bioma utilizando radiotransmissores, armadilhas fotográficas, levantamento e pesquisa de suas tocas, monitoramento de indivíduos e mapeamento de sua área de uso e entrevistas com a comunidade local.

Recentemente, o projeto expandiu seus estudos a outras espécies de Xenarthras, como tamanduás e os tatus como por exemplo o tatu-de-rabo-mole (*Cabassous unicinctus*). O tatu-canastra junto com outras espécies de Xenarthras são considerados embaixadores da nossa biodiversidade, servindo como excelentes modelos para a educação ambiental e programas para iniciativas de conservação de espécies ou preservação de biomas nacionais e internacionais.



Projeto pantaneiro de preservação do tatu-canastra leva o 'Oscar Verde'



Pesquisador recebeu prêmio das mãos da princesa

Projeto pantaneiro de preservação do tatu-canastra é finalista do 'Oscar Verde'

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Zootripper – Zoo Information Website

1st May 2015

<http://zootripper.be/?p=1364>



Arnaud Desbiez Wins Whitley Award Worth £35,000 Presented By HRH The Princess Royal

The Latin America Coordinator for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Dr Arnaud Desbiez, has been awarded the equivalent of a ‘green Oscar’ for his work on the RZSS Giant Armadillo Project.

Today, Wednesday 29 April, Frenchman Arnaud was announced as a winner of a Whitley Award by the Whitley Fund for Nature, a prestigious environmental prize worth £35,000 of funding, for his work to conserve the rarely sighted giant armadillo in Brazil.

HRH Princess Royal will present the award at a ceremony this evening at the Royal Geographical Society, London.

The Giant Armadillo Project was established in 2010 and prior to this the species, which has a status of Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, was poorly studied. Indeed, virtually nothing was known about the species’ reproduction before camera-traps were set up close to the den of a monitored female which has enabled scientists to observe and follow their behaviours. In 2012 the camera-trap captured the first ever photograph of a young giant armadillo and in 2013 the team managed to follow the birth and parental care of baby giant armadillo Alex with his mother. The team still continues following Alex to this day.

Dr Arnaud Desbiez, Latin America Coordinator for RZSS and based out in the Brazilian Pantanal, said: “I am honoured to receive this award and hope that it helps to raise awareness of the plight of the giant armadillo and the vital conservation work that is currently taking place. It is testament to the hard work of the team out in Brazil and the ten year support of conservation charity the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland who invest in individuals and initiatives like me.”

About RZSS' Giant Armadillo Project:

- The Giant Armadillo Project aims to establish the first long-term ecological study of giant armadillos in the Brazilian Pantanal wetland, and other Brazilian biomes in the future. The main goal of the project is to investigate the ecology and biology of the species and understand its function in the ecosystem using radio transmitters, camera traps, burrow surveys, resource monitoring, resource mapping and interviews.
- The ecological study was the first to photograph a baby giant armadillo in 2012 and now to follow and observationally study the year of its life.
- Dr Arnaud Desbiez is a conservation biologist who has been working in the Brazilian Pantanal since 2002. RZSS has been funding Arnaud's work since 2005 he was made their Regional Conservation and Research Coordinator for Latin America in 2010.
- Follow Arnaud's video diaries from the Pantanal as he searches for the elusive Giant Armadillo at rzss.org.uk/armadillodiaries
- The new information captured by the camera-trap is extremely important and demonstrates how rare, and how much care each baby giant armadillo requires. Females therefore produce very few young and each animal is extremely precious. This helps to explain why giant armadillos have become extinct in so many areas throughout their range – too few young are born and the removal of any individual has huge consequences on the population.

University of Kent – University Website

7th May 2015

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/dice/news/index.html?view=1750>



Conservation ambassador wins Whitley Award 2015

The 2015 Whitley Awards were held on 29th April at the Royal Geographical Society where winners were presented with their awards by HRH The Princess Royal.

DICE alumnus [Arnaud Desbiez](#) was the winner of the Whitley Award donated by the Garden House School Parent's Association for his work in Brazil with Giant armadillos. This prestigious award celebrates Arnaud's work in setting up



the [Giant Armadillo Conservation Project](#) in Brazil's Pantanal, the largest wetland in the world. The successful project has now expanded to the Cerrado where the giant armadillo is facing considerable threat from rapidly decreasing habitat making them more susceptible to extinction at a local level.

The [Whitley Awards](#) recognise outstanding nature conservationists around the world, celebrating conservation leaders, projects and community involvement. Winners of a Whitley Award are granted prizes of up to £35,000.

Visit the [Whitley Fund for Nature website](#) to find out more about the awards, Arnaud and to hear his acceptance speech.

Featured image is [courtesy](#) of the Whitley Fund for Nature and shows The Princess Royal and 2015 Whitley Awards recipient Arnaud Depbiez, Brazil at The Royal Geographical Society, London, 29th April 2015



Conservacionistas e ativistas dos direitos animais falam a mesma língua?

Zoos na conservação



"O termo 'sequestrar' animais na natureza também é uma constante nos ataques que recebemos. Claro, ignoram o fato de que muitas vezes a retirada temporária da natureza pode ser a única chance de sobrevivência de muitas espécies."

Temos no Brasil um bom exemplo de que o recurso arrecadado por zoos e aquários possibilita a conservação de espécies na natureza. É o Projeto Tatu-Canastra, coordenado pelo biólogo Arnaud Desbiez. O projeto, desenvolvido no pantanal, tem obtido dados importantes e inéditos sobre uma espécie que era pouco conhecida. Este projeto acaba de receber o Whitley Award, o "Oscar Verde", e tem 80% do seu financiamento proveniente de zoos. Como diz o próprio Arnaud "sem zoos, sem projeto".

A Sociedade de Zoológicos e Aquários do Brasil (SZB) fez em 2014 o Ano do Tatu, em parceria com este projeto, para divulgar entre os visitantes de zoos a importância da conservação dos tatus brasileiros. Uma parceria que permitiu que a mensagem do projeto tivesse um alcance que dificilmente alcançaria de outra forma.

O termo "sequestrar" animais na natureza também é uma constante nos ataques que recebemos. Claro, ignoram o fato de que muitas vezes a retirada temporária da natureza pode ser a única chance de sobrevivência de muitas espécies. O Amphinian Ark é uma

entidade que busca assegurar a sobrevivência e diversidade das espécies de anfíbios com foco nas que não podem atualmente ser protegidas nos ambientes onde vivem, e eles indicam que pelo menos 500 espécies no mundo todo precisam ser resgatadas imediatamente na natureza para evitar que sejam extintas.

A SZB criou uma força-tarefa, Zoos Unidos pela Conservação de Anfíbios, e vamos começar a buscar parcerias com universidades para começar projetos de resgate e reprodução em cativeiro, sob a orientação do Amphibian Ark.

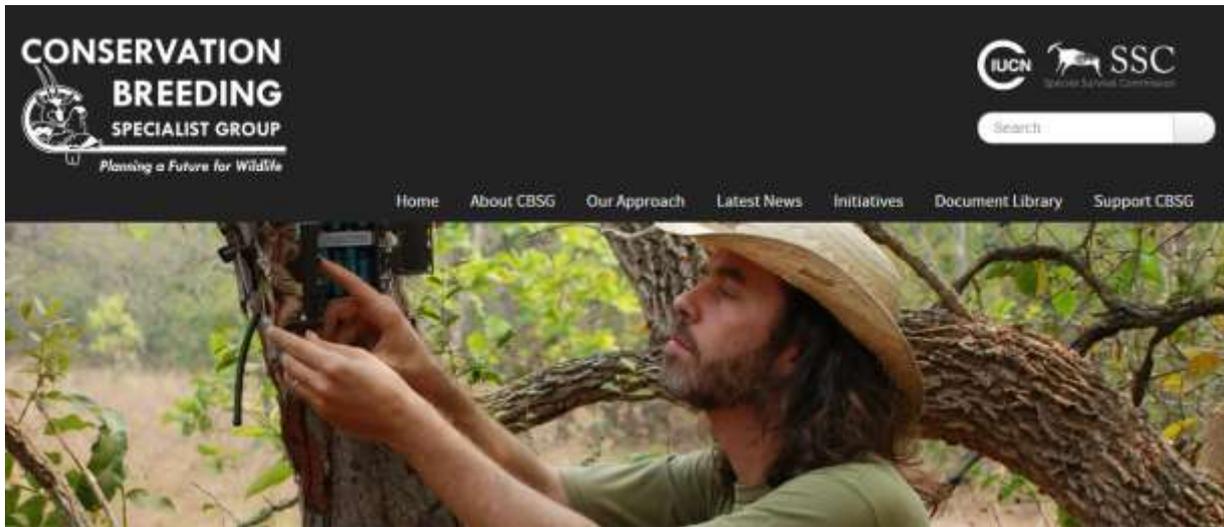
O mutum-de-Alagoas (*Pauxi mitu*) é um bom exemplo de uma espécie que só existe por causa da intervenção humana. Os últimos três indivíduos selvagens foram retirados da natureza praticamente enquanto a mata atrás deles era derrubada para o plantio de cana. Hoje o Programa de Reprodução em cativeiro é um sucesso e em breve a espécie deve ser reintroduzida em sua área de ocorrência. Se olharmos a questão do mutum-de-Alagoas pelo prisma da ética de liberação animal, o resgate das últimas aves na natureza nunca deveria ter sido feito, pois seus defensores em geral fazem a afirmação – antropomórfica -- que têm "certeza absoluta" de que "os animais prefeririam estar extintos do que confinados para o resto da vida". Este é um exemplo do direito individual de cada animal colocado acima das prioridades de conservação e, mais, acima da razão e da coerência.

Os zoos brasileiros acabam de se juntar ao programa de reprodução em cativeiro da espécie, e também queremos auxiliar nos trabalhos de reintrodução.

Na SZB, acreditamos que o futuro dos programas de conservação de espécies ameaçadas é o "One Plan Approach" (ou Plano Único, em tradução livre), proposto pelo Grupo Especialista em Reprodução para a Conservação (CBSG), da IUCN. Esta é uma estratégia que propõe trabalhar a conservação de espécies de forma integrada, através do desenvolvimento de estratégias de manejo e ações de conservação por todas as partes envolvidas, seja dentro ou fora da área de ocorrência das espécies, o que inclui programas de cativeiro.

Ainda temos esperança que conservacionistas e ativistas da libertação animal possam encontrar uma forma de colaboração e trabalho conjunto, para combater o inimigo comum que é o uso insustentável dos recursos naturais.

Finalizo com uma ótima citação de Hutchings: "Aderir a uma filosofia que enfatiza a reverência à vida, mas ignora as condições para que ela exista, faz com que você seja infiel às suas próprias ideias".



CBSG Brasil Convenor Wins Whitley Award

Arnaud Desbiez, CBSG Brasil Convenor and Conservation Project Manager for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, won a Whitley Award for his pioneering work studying elusive giant armadillos in Brazil's Pantanal. The Whitley Award is a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, and was presented to Arnaud at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London at the end of April.

Despite being one of the oldest mammal species on earth – in effect a living fossil - very few people will ever spot a giant armadillo (*Priodontes Maximus*) in the wild. Until recently, not many people were aware that the species even existed, and most of the information about it was anecdotal. However, since Arnaud, a former zoo keeper, founded the Giant Armadillo Conservation Project in 2010 and started the first ever long-term ecological study of the species, new information about parenting behavior and their role as 'ecosystem engineers' has emerged. Over 65,000 local people have been directly engaged in an awareness-raising campaign, and subsequently authorities in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul have selected the giant armadillo as an indicator species for the creation of protected areas.



The Whitley Award will enable Arnaud to expand conservation efforts from the Pantanal – the largest continuous wetland in the world - to the Cerrado biome, a plateau of tropical scrubland, gallery and dry forests. This biome is Brazil’s second largest ecosystem after the Amazon rainforest and has the richest flora among the world’s savannahs. Yet only 2.2% of the Cerrado is under legal protection and deforestation rates here are even



higher than in the Amazon: over the last 35 years, more than 50% of the ecosystem has been transformed into pasture or agricultural lands planted with cash crops such as soy and sugar cane. Here, Arnaud and his team will collect data to support the creation of a network of protected areas and tackle threats to the species’ survival.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “The calibre of this year’s Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements.”

Arnaud is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 by winning the Whitley Award donated by The Garden House School Parents’ Association. Congratulations Arnaud!

Check out the video (narrated by David Attenborough!) about Arnaud's work:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vhuk3tfn_x8

The Guardian Online – News Website

29th June 2015

15,151,839 visitors per month

Circulation 85,429 daily

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/radical-conservation/2015/jun/29/famous-baby-giant-armadillo-found-dead>

The image shows the top portion of a news article on The Guardian website. At the top right is the logo "theguardian" in white on a dark blue background, with "Winner of the Pulitzer prize 2014" written below it. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for "home", "environment", "wildlife", "energy", "pollution", "climate change", "UK", "world", and "all". Underneath the navigation bar, the text "Conservation Radical Conservation" is visible. The main headline reads "Famous baby giant armadillo found dead". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "After two years of recording the surprising relationship between a baby giant armadillo and its mother, scientists have found the juvenile dead in the Brazilian Pantanal."

Almost a year and a half old, here is Alex after being fit with a GPS tag. The juvenile giant armadillo died this month after being attacked by what researchers believe was a puma.

For almost two years, Alex the giant armadillo has been the most famous of his little-known and cryptic species. Born in June of 2013, photos and videos of

Alex appeared across the global media, including the BBC, National Geographic and [Mongabay](#). From Alex and his mother, Isabelle, researchers learned that giant armadillos are far more parental and familial than long believed.

Two weeks ago, researchers found Alex dead.



“I was truly very sad,” said Arnaud Desbiez, the head of the [Pantanal Giant Armadillo Project](#), the first long-term study ever of these mysterious animals. “[Alex] was mortally wounded by a predator most likely a puma and died inside one of his mother’s old burrows.” Desbiez and his team became worried when photos from a camera trap outside the burrow showed that Alex had not left it for several days.

Ominously, one of the photos caught a vulture peering into the burrow. “My heart sank as I saw that picture,” said Desbiez. “I went to smell the entrance of the burrow. I was devastated. I smelled a faint smell of rot instead of the sweet, strong acrid smell of a giant armadillo. I could not believe this was happening. I was in total shock.”

The next day the team dug out the burrow. Inside they found Alex’s body. From a necropsy, the team believes that Alex was attacked by a puma.

“He managed to escape the predator, but suffered a deep wound between the shoulder blades. Too weak he sought refuge in an old burrow and did not have the strength to even dig,” said Desbiez. “He died inside the burrow after agonising for two days.”

For most of history, giant armadillos (*Priodontes maximus*) have been almost more myth than reality. The only member of the genus *Priodontes*, the world’s largest armadillos are massive and undeniably impressive. They can weigh more than 30 kilograms, grow longer than 1.5 meters and sport six-inch claws that make a velociraptor’s look diminutive. But as one of the most cryptic mammals in South America, scientists knew next to nothing about them.

Desbiez’s project – for which he recently won a prestigious [Whitley Awards](#) presented by David Attenborough – has changed all of that.

Alex’s contribution to science



Giant armadillos are frequently killed by cars, a growing problem for many species in Brazil. Photograph: Pantanal Giant Armadillo Project

It’s safe to say that scientists have learned more about giant armadillos from Alex and Isabelle than any other individuals before. Their relationship demolished previous ideas of giant armadillo behaviour. Researchers thought young giant armadillos might spend six months with their mother. But Alex lived in burrows with his mother for more than a year, and even at the time of his death remained close to her.

“Alex was still living in his mother’s territory and although for the past five months he was digging his own burrows he showed no signs of getting ready to disperse,” said Desbiez.

In addition, at almost two Alex was not yet sexually mature.

“Many questions still remain,” said Desbiez, who is also the [Conservation](#) Project Manager for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland. “How long would he have stayed with his mother? When was his mother going to have her next baby? When was Alex going to reach sexual maturity?”

All these questions take on massive importance because they are key to determining how quickly giant armadillos reproduce and, subsequently, how endangered they might be. Currently, the IUCN Red List considers giant armadillos as Vulnerable, which is partially based on the idea that giant armadillo generations last seven years.

But Alex’s death reiterates just how fragile giant armadillo lives can be, despite their heavily-armoured bodies. Before Alex, Isabelle had another baby – also documented by the team – but this infant was quickly killed by a male giant armadillo (later named Hannibal) looking to mate.

“This is the second birth we have followed. Both ended tragically,” said Desbiez who added that through these mortalities “we realise once again how hard it is for these rare ancient creatures to survive.”

Although it survives in many environments across South America – the Pantanal, the Amazon and the Cerrado – giant armadillos are naturally rare. They also face a rising tide of threats. People kill giant armadillos for food, for their claws and, at least in the Pantanal, because the species is believed to bring bad luck. Giant armadillos are also increasingly run over by cars on expanding road networks. And, of course, the species suffers from the widespread habitat loss and deforestation that imperils many other animals worldwide.

Finally, according to Desbiez, the giant armadillo is imperilled by ignorance. “The general public does not know this species exists or when shown a picture believe it is already extinct,” he said. “This should be considered a threat as the species [could] go extinct without anybody caring.”

Given how cryptic and elusive the species is there are currently no real estimates of how many giant armadillos remain on the planet. Still, scientists believe the population has probably fallen by at least 30% in the last 25 years – and continues to decline.



Here Isabelle nuzzles a 2-month-old Alex. Photograph: Pantanal Giant Armadillo Project

Desbiez said people could help the species by [spreading the word about giant armadillos](#) and even visiting the project’s [research site](#) in the Pantanal. The project doesn’t just focus on giant armadillos, but also the southern naked-tailed armadillo, both the six-banded and nine-banded armadillo, the southern tamandua and the other giant in the Xenartha Order – made up of armadillos, sloths and anteaters – the giant anteater.

In its sixth year, the project has been largely [funded](#) by zoos across the world. Desbiez says the team's wealth of data once again proves the importance of supporting long-term research on species.

“Why shouldn't we get attached to our subjects?” Desbiez said when asked about his personal attachment to Alex. For a long time, biologists frowned on personal attachments to their subjects – and some still do. But then came Jane Goodall. The iconic primatologist shocked the scientific world not only with her findings, but by giving chimps names instead of numbers and treating them as individuals with distinct personalities.

Relationships between giant armadillos are more intimate than imagined. “I feel no shame in saying I felt devastated to discover Alex died. Very sad indeed,” said Desbiez. “It is these strong emotions and connection to our study animals that give us the drive and strength to work so hard on behalf of their conservation.”

Embracing such personal attachments has become far more common among conservationists. For one thing, it is arguably more honest for researchers to admit personal attachments to their subjects rather than pretend such feelings don't exist – when obviously they do.

“[Field conservationists] work in difficult remote conditions, long hours, isolation, insect bites, intense heat, we have to overcome so many challenges. It is the emotional connection to the species, and yes sometimes individuals, that make all these sacrifices worth it on a day to day basis while in the field,” noted Desbeiz.

Desbiez and his team weren't alone in feeling a bond with little Alex. Many supporters of the project became attached to him through the team's routine updates from the field.

“I am in tears,” wrote Karin Schwartz, a conservation biologist with George Mason University who has visited the project. “I have followed Alex's story since his birth, enjoying those first pictures with such excitement and reading...with anticipation of the discoveries that [were] made from observing his development...Yet through these stories, we're all the richer.”

Danni Parks, Award Manager for Whitley Fund for Nature, called Alex “a great ambassador for the species,” noting that while this is a “small consolation” for the loss of Alex it is also “far reaching.”

Although Alex's death is a tough setback for the Pantanal Giant Armadillo Project, Desbiez said the work to illuminate the private lives of these little-known animals will continue.

With the grant from the Whitley Awards, the project is now expanding from the Pantanal into Brazil's Cerrado. A vast tropical savannah, the Cerrado is one of the most threatened ecosystems in South America due to industrialised agriculture. Specifically, the team will be focusing their efforts in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul.

“Thanks to our communication efforts [giant armadillos] have been selected by the state as one of the mammal indicator species for the creation of protected areas,” said Desbiez. “A species few knew of five years ago will now be championing habitat conservation.”

The fact that giant armadillo presence could mean the establishment of new parks in [Brazil](#) proves the success not only of the project’s research, but also of their relentless educational and community outreach.

New parks to safeguard giant armadillos would also be a fitting testament to the power of one little armadillo that captured the imagination of people in Brazil and beyond. A celebration of Alex. Although his life was brief, his impact will not be. Hopefully.



Alex with dirt on his head coming out of the burrow. At a year-and-a-half he was still living with his mother. Photograph: Pantanal Giant Armadillo Project



Arnaud Desbiez (left) with David Attenborough (right) at this year’s Whitley Awards. Photograph: Whitley Fund for Nature



Alex’s first steps out of the burrow beside the much larger Isabelle. The team believes he was about 24 days old in this camera trap photo. Photograph: Pantanal Giant Armadillo Project

Joint Coverage with Rosamira Guillen

Websites

Latin America Bureau

29th April 2015

<http://lab.org.uk/c0nservationists-win-prizes>



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Two Latin American conservationists win awards

With all the environmental destruction occurring in Latin America by agri-business, mining and road-building, it is good sometimes to know that there are extraordinary individuals who are managing, against the odds, to stem and even reverse the damage.

Today (29 April 2015) two of these individuals were among the seven winners of the prestigious Whitley Awards, also known as “Green Oscars”. Sir David Attenborough, a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people – passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits.”



Arnaud Desbiez, French in origin but now permanently settled in Brazil, works with giant armadillos in the Pantanal wetlands. “Giant armadillos?” I asked him. “I’m afraid I’ve never even heard of them.” “You’re not alone”, he laughed. “They’re very secretive creatures and for some years it was thought that they had become extinct.” Arnaud said that the 50-year-old owner of the ranch where he often stays in the Pantanal had never seen one, though she had lived there all her life.

It's hard to imagine how this can happen: as its name suggests, the giant armadillo is large – 1'50 metres long and weighing the same as the average Labrador (50 kilos). But it lives underground during the day and only leaves its den cautiously at night. "It's the kind of species that can become extinct without anyone noticing", said Arnaud. Even so, Arnaud and his team have managed to film a female armadillo with a baby offspring.



"We knew so little about them when we began this project", said Arnaud. "We didn't realise that they usually had only one baby and that the young armadillo spent many months living in the mother's burrow. Each individual is really precious." This low rate of reproduction makes the species very vulnerable and explains why the animal, found from Venezuela to northern Argentina, has gone extinct in so

many areas. It is on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Arnaud will use his prize money of £35,000 to create more protected areas for the giant armadillo, moving into the cerrado, a region greatly devastated by cattle rearers and soya farmers. Protecting their habitat, he said, is important, not just for the giant armadillo itself, but for other species, as the armadillo acts as an "ecosystem engineer", that is, it modifies the habitat for other species. "The armadillo burrow stays at a stable 25°C, which means that it becomes an important refuge from the heat for other animals", said Arnaud. Ocelots, crab-eating fox, various lizards, tortoises, and the weasel-like tayra have all been discovered using the deep burrow as a refuge.



The other Latin American award winner works with a very different species – the cotton-top tamarin, a tiny monkey, weighing less than a pound, which is also threatened with extinction. The Colombian Rosamira Guillen, from Fundación Proyecto Tití, says that the main problem facing the cotton-top tamarin is habitat destruction. "Only 7% of its habitat - the tropical dry forest -

remains", she said. "Most of the forest has been destroyed by deforestation, mining and farming."



Rosamira said she would use her prize money, also £35,000, to extend their conservation work among communities. “We are getting more and more people involved”, she said. “We’ve been helping them find other sources of income, such as making eco-mochilas (eco-satchels) from plastic bags.” The women running this project have crocheted 3.5 million plastic bags into remarkably attractive bags, winning awards for their work.

More recently, they have developed a project for turning plastic into posts, so that the families won’t have to cut down the forest when they build fences. They also work a great deal with schools, holding festivals in which children dress up in cotton-top tamarin costumes.

“We have achieved a lot but we need to do more, particularly replanting forest and creating corridors between the forest fragments”, Rosamira told LAB. She is hopeful that, with the end to the prolonged civil war in Colombia, new opportunities will arise. Until recently, the Foundation only worked around the city of Cartagena in the far north, a part of Colombia which was relatively unaffected by the violence; but now they are planning to extend their conservation work to other areas which until recently were so dangerous that no community work could be undertaken.



Projetos de proteção ambiental no Brasil e Colômbia levam prêmio britânico

A colombiana Rosamira Guillén e o francês Arnaud Debiez receberam nesta quarta-feira o prêmio britânico Whitley, estimado em 54.000 dólares, por projetos de preservação do sagui-cabeça-de-algodão na Colômbia e do tatu-canastra no Brasil.

O prêmio, um dos maiores do mundo em seu campo, foi entregue a eles na Sociedade Real de Geografia em Londres pela princesa Anne, filha da rainha, patrona da Fundação Whitley.

Além disso, outros projetos de conservação foram premiados na Índia, Nigéria e Filipinas.

Segundo um comunicado da Fundação Whitley, Guillen e seu projeto para salvar o sagui-cabeça-de-algodão (*Saguinus oedipus*) no norte da Colômbia "estão fazendo a diferença na sobrevivência desta espécie em perigo e seu habitat através de pesquisa e educação".

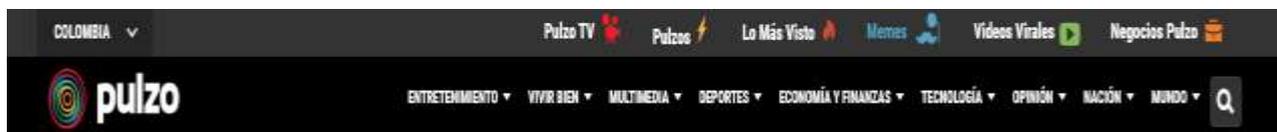
O projeto conseguiu "a proteção de 1.700 hectares de floresta, e criou um programa nacional de conservação para proteger este pequeno macaco" de cabeça branca.

Enquanto isso, Debiez trabalha no Pantanal do Mato Grosso, uma das maiores áreas úmidas do mundo, na proteção do tatu-canastra (*Priodontes maximus*), um dos mamíferos mais antigos da Terra, um "fóssil vivo" nas palavras dos organizadores do prêmio.

Eles destacaram o trabalho de Desbiez, um ex-funcionário de zoológico, que criou em 2010 seu programa para a proteção e a pesquisa desta espécie, raramente vista em liberdade.

A campanha fez com que "cerca de 65.000 pessoas da região se envolvessem diretamente em campanhas de sensibilização" sobre o perigo de extinção deste animal "e as autoridades do estado de Mato Grosso do Sul (sudoeste) selecionaram o tatu gigante como um indicador para a criação de áreas protegidas".

O prêmio servirá para expandir o programa do Pantanal até a região do Cerrado, mais a leste.



Proyecto colombiano para la protección del mono tití gana el premio británico Whitley

El galardón, uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito, reconoció la labor de Rosamira Guillén.

También el francés Arnaud Debiez recibió el premio, dotado con 54.000 dólares, por su proyecto de conservación del armadillo gigante en Brasil.

El reconocimiento les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de Londres por la princesa Ana de Inglaterra, la hija de la reina, patrona de la Fundación Whitley.

Además, se premiaron otros proyectos de conservación en India, Nigeria y Filipinas.

Según un comunicado de la Fundación Whitley, Guillén y su Proyecto Tití para salvar al tití de cabeza blanca (*Saguinus oedipus*) en el norte de Colombia "está marcando la diferencia en la supervivencia de esta especie gravemente amenazada y su hábitat mediante la investigación, la educación".

El proyecto ha logrado "ya la protección de 1.700 hectáreas de bosque, y se ha creado un Programa nacional de conservación para proteger a este pequeño mono" de testa blanca.

Por su parte, Debiez trabaja en el Pantanal de Mato Grosso, uno de los humedales más grandes del mundo, en la protección del armadillo gigante (*Priodontes Maximus*), uno de los mamíferos más viejos de la tierra, un "fósil viviente", en palabras de los organizadores del premio.

Estos destacaron el trabajo de Desbiez, un antiguo cuidador de zoo, desde que en 2010 creó su programa para la protección y la investigación de esta especie muy rara de ver en libertad.

La campaña ha logrado que "unas 65.000 personas de la zona participen directamente en la campañas para concienciar" del peligro de extinción de este animal, "y las autoridades del estado de Mato Grosso do Sul (sudoeste) han seleccionado al armadillo gigante como un indicador para la creación de áreas protegidas". El premio servirá para expandir el programa desde el Pantanal a la región del Cerrado, más al este.



Premio británico a la protección de monos y armadillos en Colombia y Brasil

Se premiaron también otros proyectos de conservación en India, Nigeria y Filipinas.



Foto: Archivo

El premio, uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito, les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de Londres.

La colombiana Rosamira Guillén y el francés Arnaud Debiez recibieron este miércoles **el premio británico Whitley**, dotado con 54.000 dólares, por proyectos de preservación del mono tití blanco en Colombia y del armadillo gigante en Brasil.

El premio, **uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito**, les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de Londres por la princesa Ana de Inglaterra, la hija de la reina, patrona de la Fundación Whitley.

Además, se premiaron otros proyectos de conservación en India, **Nigeria y Filipinas**. Según un comunicado de la Fundación **Whitley**, Guillén y su Proyecto Tití para salvar al tití de cabeza blanca (*Saguinus oedipus*) en el norte de Colombia "está marcando la diferencia en la supervivencia de esta especie gravemente amenazada y su hábitat mediante la investigación, la educación".

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El premio servirá para expandir el programa desde **el Pantanal** a la región del Cerrado, más al este.

La Prensa
30th April 2015

http://www.prensa.com/buena_noticia/Colombia-Brasil-premio-proteccion-armadillos_0_4197330445.html

Jueves, 19 de noviembre de 2015

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Colombia y Brasil ganan premio por la protección de monos y armadillos

También se premiaron otros proyectos de conservación en India, Nigeria y Filipinas.



El mono tití de cabeza blanca es una especie amenazada en Colombia.

La colombiana **Rosamira Guillén** y el francés **Arnaud Debiez** recibieron el **premio británico Whitley**, dotado con 54 mil dólares, por proyectos de preservación del mono **tití blanco en Colombia** y del **armadillo gigante en Brasil**.

El premio, uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito, les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de **Londres** por la princesa Ana de Inglaterra, la hija de la reina, patrona de la Fundación Whitley.

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**Rosamira Guillen
Colombia**

**Proyecto Tití: expanding conservation efforts to
protect the cotton-top tamarin in northern Colombia**

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by Sarah Chenevix-Trench

Broadcast.....	118-122
Websites.....	123-152
Joint coverage with Arnaud Desbiez.....	153-161

Broadcast

Caracol Radio – Colombian Radio Station

29th April 2015

http://caracol.com.co/radio/2015/04/29/entretenimiento/1430301720_739883.html



Proyecto colombiano para la conservación del mono tití gana el premio Whitley

La directora de la fundación colombiana Proyecto Tití, Rosamira Guillén, recibió hoy en Londres el prestigioso premio de naturaleza Whitley Award por promover la conservación del mono tití cabeciblanco y de los bosques tropicales en Colombia.

Londres, 29 abr (EFE).- La directora de la fundación colombiana Proyecto Tití, Rosamira Guillén, recibió hoy en Londres el prestigioso premio de naturaleza Whitley Award por promover la conservación del mono tití cabeciblanco y de los bosques tropicales en Colombia.

La fundación lleva trabajando en el terreno desde el año 1985, por lo que se sienten "muy honrados" de recibir el premio, ya que "eso va a permitir ampliar el trabajo a nuevas áreas donde habita el tití", reconoció en una entrevista a Efe Guillén.

El mono tití es una especie autóctona de la costa norte de Colombia y está "críticamente amenazada" debido a la pérdida de los bosques tropicales, provocada por la extensión de actividades como la ganadería, la agricultura, la minería y el urbanismo.

La Fundación Proyecto Tití trabaja para tratar de reducir esas amenazas que afrontan los titís mediante "la investigación del animal en su hábitat natural en el noroeste de Colombia y la protección del bosque", afirmó Guillén.

Guillén destacó que también trabajan para educar a la gente de la región para que comprendan el peligro de extinción al que está expuesto el mono tití, ya que está "a un paso" de la desaparición.

"Ofrecemos alternativas a la población para que puedan convivir con el mono tití", señaló Guillén, y puntualizó que pretenden hacer viable económicamente la conservación de los recursos naturales de la región para evitar la caza del animal y la destrucción del bosque.

Para Guillén, es fundamental que la población local encuentre recursos para vivir al margen de la caza del mono tití y de la tala del bosque tropical.

El galardón Whitley Award es un prestigioso premio que promueve la conservación de la naturaleza y está dotado con 35.000 libras (48.000 euros), lo que permitirá que la organización amplíe su trabajo y generará nuevos apoyos de otras instituciones.

"Necesitamos trabajar en más áreas, llegar a más personas para proteger más bosque tropical y eso sólo lo podemos hacer con respaldo institucional y el apoyo financiero", agregó Guillén.

La directora de la Fundación Proyecto Tití destacó que este premio supone "un trampolín para darse a conocer a nivel internacional"

Además, Guillén matizó que esperan que este premio, junto con el compromiso del Gobierno colombiano y la población, ayude a garantizar que "este pequeño primate, que sólo vive en Colombia, pueda tener un futuro a largo plazo". EFE

Emisora Atlantico – Radio Station, Colombia

30th April 2015

For audio of radio broadcast, click on link below:

<http://www.emisoraatlantico.com.co/local/25746-proyecto-para-la-conservaci%C3%B3n-del-mono-tit%C3%AD-gana-el-premio-whitley.html>



Proyecto para la conservación del mono tití gana el premio Whitley



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Bluradio – Radio Station, Colombia

4th May 2015

For audio of radio broadcast, click on link below:

<http://www.bluradio.com/#!98255/proyecto-titi-ganador-del-prestigioso-premio-ambiental-whitley-awards>



Proyecto Tití, ganador del prestigioso premio ambiental The Whitley Awards

Rosa Emira Guillén, que hace parte del **Proyecto Tití**, contó en **BLU Verde** que su iniciativa para preservar a los primates americanos fue premiada por **The Whitley Awards**.

“Es algo así como el Premio Óscar del medio ambiente y la conservación que entrega una ONG inglesa llamada Whitley Fund for Nature”, explicó Guillén.

Advirtió que en las últimas tres o cuatro décadas se ha afectado mucho al mono tití, por lo que hizo énfasis en que es importante conservar el bosque “porque los tití cabeciblancos son utilizados como un embajador de todo el ecosistema”.

“Para salvar el tití hay que salvar su bosque y hay que proteger nuestro propio futuro”, finalizó.

Websites

El Dia – News Website, Colombia

29th April 2015

<http://eldia.es/agencias/8076162-COLOMBIA-NATURALEZA-Proyecto-colombiano-conservacion-mono-titi-gana-premio-Whitley>



Proyecto colombiano para la conservación del mono tití gana el premio Whitley

Londres, EFE La directora de la fundación colombiana Proyecto Tití, Rosamira Guillén, recibió hoy en Londres el prestigioso premio de naturaleza Whitley Award por promover la conservación del mono tití cabeciblanco y de los bosques tropicales en Colombia.

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La batalla por salvar al mono tití, nuestros “primos temperamentales”



Guillén recibió el prestigioso premio británico Whitley. "Me parecía imposible que habiendo crecido y vivido en Barranquilla jamás en mi vida había sabido que existía esta especie".

Es temperamental, valiente y luchadora.

Líder nata de varias generaciones, cien por ciento colombiana.

Tamara es una mono tití cabeciblanca, una especie cuya estructura familiar es sorprendentemente similar a la humana, que sólo existe en Colombia y que está a un paso de desaparecer.

La extraordinaria matriarca es uno de los animales estudiados por el Proyecto Tití, cuya coordinadora Rosamira Guillén acaba de recibir en Londres uno de los galardones ambientales más prestigioso de Reino Unido, el premio Whitley.

El Proyecto Tití no sólo estudia la especie en peligro crítico, *Saguinus oedipus*, sino que ofrece alternativas económicas a la población local para combatir las principales amenazas que enfrenta: la destrucción del bosque y la caza para el comercio ilegal de especies silvestres como mascotas.

"Se me paran los pelos de punta", dijo Guillén a BBC Mundo.

"Es algo que me llega al corazón, sentir que todo el esfuerzo y el trabajo que hacemos con nuestro equipo los ayuda a aquellos que no tienen voz".

Para Guillén, el encuentro con los monos tíes cabeciblancos fue un caso de amor a primera vista.

"Me enamoré"

Guillén se graduó en arquitectura en Colombia y viajó a Estados Unidos a estudiar paisajismo.



Los monos tití cabeciblancos están en peligro crítico, la última categoría de amenaza antes de la extinción en el medio silvestre".

A su regreso, su primer trabajo fue remodelar una exhibición del zoológico de Barranquilla. Allí "se enganchó" con la defensa de la vida silvestre y acabó siendo directora del zoológico.

Fue entonces que conoció por primera vez a los monos tíes cabeciblancos, de los que nunca había oído hablar en la escuela, la secundaria o la universidad.

"Me enamoré de la especie, me parecía imposible que habiendo crecido y vivido en Barranquilla jamás en mi vida había sabido que existía esa especie que sólo vivía en un pedacito de Colombia y nadie conocía".

Mientras pocos en Colombia hablaban de los titíes, miles de estos primates acabaron en laboratorios y zoológicos de Europa y Estados Unidos.

Investigaciones médicas

Se estima que en la década de los 60 y 70 unos 30.000 titíes cabeciblancos fueron exportaron a Europa y Estados Unidos para estudios médicos.



Tamara, una matriarca temperamental que ha dado a luz a 12 pares de gemelos y sigue sorprendiendo a los científicos.

"En algún momento se descubrió que la especie desarrollaba espontáneamente el cáncer de colon y fue tomada como modelo para buscar una cura para la enfermedad", explicó Guillén.

"Pero después vinieron enfermedades como el SIDA y la investigación quedó prácticamente en la nada, por eso hay tantos titíes en zoológicos estadounidenses y europeos".

A Guillén le parecía increíble que el único proyecto para defender la especie había sido fundado por una bióloga de EE.UU.

Anne Savage, experta en conservación de *Disney Animal Kingdom*, había conocido la especie en EE.UU. Tras visitar Colombia en los 80 y ver el grave riesgo de los pequeños primates decidió fundar el Proyecto Tití.

Savage es aún consultora del proyecto y los muñecos de peluche de monos titíes se venden incluso en los parques de Disney.



Las mujeres de la comunidad Los Límites hacen muñecos de peluche de titíes para obtener ingresos.

La defensa de la especie en Colombia ha requerido múltiples estrategias, según Guillén. "Primero trabajamos mucho con las autoridades para proteger el bosque de la deforestación por agricultura, ganadería, minería y otras actividades".

También se provee de ingresos a las comunidades para que puedan alimentar a sus hijos sin cazar y vender titíes como mascotas.

Las mujeres de la comunidad "Los Límites" hacen desde muñecos de peluche de titíes hasta ecomochilas de bolsas plásticas usadas. Para hacerlas recogieron más de tres millones de bolsas de plástico, descontaminando bosques y ríos locales.

Por último, Guillén busca que los niños "se enamoren de los titíes" y cambien actitudes respecto a la conservación del bosque.

"Papá, mamá e hijos"

Para confeccionar mochilas se recogieron más de tres millones de bolsas plásticas de bosques y ríos.

El proyecto también publicó estudios científicos con resultados sorprendentes.

Pero observar a los titíes -rápidos, diminutos y en las alturas de los árboles- no es nada fácil.

Para seguir diferentes grupos familiares los científicos colocan transmisores como pequeñas mochilas en uno de los integrantes.

Los investigadores descubrieron que los monos titíes cabeciblancos tienen más en común con sus parientes primates, los seres humanos, de lo que se pensaba.

"Viven en familias, papá, mamá e hijos. Cuando los hijos crecen así como a nosotros nos dicen bueno, chau, ellos se van y forman su hogar", señaló Guillén.

"Aparte son muy territoriales como nosotros en nuestras casas y todo lo aprenden de sus padres".

La mamá tiene por lo general gemelos en el medio silvestre una vez al año y todo el mundo en la familia ayuda a cuidarlos y cargarlos, explicó Guillén.

"Se toman turnos y eso ayuda a los jóvenes a aprender a cuidar a sus hijos".

"También tienen vocalizaciones, su propio idioma y lo aprenden de sus padres. Tienen un tití que siempre vigila y avisa, ¡viene un águila! o ¡viene una boa! Y salen corriendo todos. Entre ellos se cuidan mucho. Hay mucho de la estructura social que se parece a nosotros los humanos".

"Boquiabiertos"

Pero es mucho lo que todavía no se sabe, como ha demostrado la matriarca Tamara, que sigue dejando a los investigadores "boquiabiertos".



Guillén quiere que los niños "se enamoren" del mono tití cabeciblanco y de la naturaleza.

"El proceso en general es que la hembra se debilita con la edad y viene otra hembra joven y la retira, pero ella tiene un temperamento muy fuerte y sigue dominando a su grupo. Es una líder nata", dijo Guillén.

En el medio silvestre los monos titíes viven entre 5 y 7 años, pero Tamara sigue activa. "En los 14 años en que la hemos venido observando ha tenido 12 partos, o sea 24 'bebés'".

Para la arquitecta, el Proyecto Tití muestra que es posible lograr al mismo tiempo el bienestar de las comunidades y la conservación de la especie.



Cada 16 de agosto se celebra el Día Nacional del Mono Tití.

Pero los titíes siguen en peligro crítico en fragmentos de bosque y la presión de la agricultura es constante.

¿El sueño de Guillén?

"Me quedaría tranquila si viera redes de bosques conectadas donde están los titíes y que esas redes de bosque estén protegidas, que la gente soluciona su situación económica y el tití tiene su hábitat".

Los monos titíes cabeciblancos están calificados como en peligro crítico, la última categoría de amenaza antes de la extinción en el medio silvestre.

LATIN AMERICAN Herald Tribune

Colombians Honored for Effort to Preserve Endangered Monkeys

LONDON – Rosamira Guillen, director of Colombia’s Titi Project, traveled to London to accept the Whitley Award, given in recognition of the foundation’s efforts to preserve the cotton-top tamarin and tropical forests.

The foundation has been doing field work since 1985 and it is “honored” by the award, which “will allow us to expand efforts to new areas where the titi lives,” Guillen told Efe in an interview.

The cotton-top tamarin is a species of titi monkey native to Colombia’s northern coast that is “critically threatened” due to the loss of tropical forests amid encroachment by cattle ranching, farming, mining and urban sprawl.

The Titi Project foundation works to mitigate those threats through “research on the titi in its natural habitat in northwestern Colombia and protection of the forest,” she said.

Guillen said the group also makes efforts to educate the local population on risks facing the titi monkey, which “is one step” away from disappearing.

“We offer the community alternatives for coexistence with the titi monkey,” Guillen said, stressing the need to provide residents with livelihoods that don’t require the hunting of titi monkeys and the cutting of tropical forests.

The Whitley Award is accompanied by 35,000 pounds (\$54,000), funds Guillen said will be used to expand the foundation’s efforts and pursue support from other institutions.

Guillen said she hopes that the award and a commitment from the Colombian government and people will secure “a long-term future for this tiny primate that exists only in Colombia.”

EL HERALDO

Inicio Local Región Judicial Deportes Rincon Juniorista Opinión Secciones Revistas

Proyecto que promueve conservación del mono Tití gana el premio Whitley

La directora de la fundación Proyecto Tití, Rosamira Guillén, recibió en Londres el prestigioso premio de naturaleza Whitley Award por promover la conservación del mono



tití cabeciblanco y de los bosques tropicales en Colombia.

La fundación lleva trabajando en el terreno desde el año 1985, por lo que se sienten "muy honrados" de recibir el premio, ya que "eso va a permitir ampliar el trabajo a nuevas áreas donde habita el tití", reconoció en una entrevista a Efe Guillén.

El mono tití es una especie autóctona de la costa norte de Colombia y está "críticamente amenazada" debido a la pérdida de los bosques tropicales, provocada por la extensión de actividades como la ganadería, la agricultura, la minería y el urbanismo.

La Fundación Proyecto Tití trabaja para tratar de reducir esas amenazas que afrontan los titís mediante "la investigación del animal en su hábitat natural en el noroeste de Colombia y la protección del bosque", afirmó Guillén.

Guillén destacó que también trabajan para educar a la gente de la región para que comprendan el peligro de extinción al que está expuesto el mono tití, ya que está "a un paso" de la desaparición.

"Ofrecemos alternativas a la población para que puedan convivir con el mono tití", señaló Guillén, y puntualizó que pretenden hacer viable económicamente la conservación de los recursos naturales de la región para evitar la caza del animal y la destrucción del bosque.

Para Guillén, es fundamental que la población local encuentre recursos para vivir al margen de la caza del mono tití y de la tala del bosque tropical.

El galardón Whitley Award es un prestigioso premio que promueve la conservación de la naturaleza y está dotado con 35.000 libras (48.000 euros), lo que permitirá que la organización amplíe su trabajo y generará nuevos apoyos de otras instituciones.

"Necesitamos trabajar en más áreas, llegar a más personas para proteger más bosque tropical y eso sólo lo podemos hacer con respaldo institucional y el apoyo financiero", agregó Guillén.

La directora de la Fundación Proyecto Tití destacó que este premio supone "un trampolín para darse a conocer a nivel internacional"

Además, Guillén matizó que esperan que este premio, junto con el compromiso del Gobierno colombiano y la población, ayude a garantizar que "este pequeño primate, que sólo vive en Colombia, pueda tener un futuro a largo plazo".

Colombians honored for effort to preserve endangered monkeys



A female cotton-top tamarin carries on her back two 3 weeks-old cubs. EFE/File

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La batalla por salvar a nuestro primo, el mono tití

La colombiana Rosamira Guillén lidera el Proyecto Tití, que busca salvar a estos diminutos primates



Los monos tití cabeciblancos están en peligro crítico, la última categoría de amenaza antes de la extinción en el medio silvestre".

Para confeccionar mochilas se recogieron más de tres millones de bolsas plásticas de bosques y ríos.



Cada 16 de agosto se celebra el Día Nacional del Mono Tití.

Es temperamental, valiente y luchadora. Líder nata de varias generaciones, cien por ciento colombiana.

Tamara es una mono tití cabeciblanca, una especie cuya estructura familiar es sorprendentemente similar a la humana, que sólo existe en Colombia y que está a un paso de desaparecer.

La extraordinaria matriarca es uno de los animales estudiados por el **Proyecto Tití**, cuya coordinadora Rosamira Guillén acaba de recibir en Londres uno de los galardones ambientales más prestigioso de Reino Unido, el premio Whitley.

El **Proyecto Tití** no sólo estudia la especie en peligro crítico, *Saguinus oedipus*, sino que ofrece alternativas económicas a la población local para combatir las principales amenazas que enfrenta: la destrucción del bosque y la caza para el comercio ilegal de especies silvestres como mascotas.

"Se me paran los pelos de punta", dijo Guillén a BBC Mundo.

"Es algo que me llega al corazón, sentir que todo el esfuerzo y el trabajo que hacemos con nuestro equipo los ayuda a aquellos que no tienen voz".

Para Guillén, el encuentro con los monos titíes cabeciblancos fue un caso de amor a primera vista.

"Me enamoré"

Guillén se graduó en arquitectura en Colombia y viajó a Estados Unidos a estudiar paisajismo.

A su regreso, su primer trabajo fue remodelar una exhibición del zoológico de Barranquilla. Allí "se enganchó" con la defensa de la vida silvestre y acabó siendo directora del zoológico.

Fue entonces que conoció por primera vez a los monos títes cabeciblancos, de los que nunca había oído hablar en la escuela, la secundaria o la universidad.

"Me enamoré de la especie, me parecía imposible que habiendo crecido y vivido en Barranquilla jamás en mi vida había sabido que existía esa especie que sólo vivía en un pedacito de Colombia y nadie conocía".

Mientras pocos en Colombia hablaban de los títes, miles de estos primates acabaron en laboratorios y zoológicos de Europa y Estados Unidos.

Investigaciones médicas

Se estima que en la década de los 60 y 70 unos 30.000 títes cabeciblancos fueron exportaron a Europa y Estados Unidos para estudios médicos.

"En algún momento se descubrió que la especie desarrollaba espontáneamente el cáncer de colon y fue tomada como modelo para buscar una cura para la enfermedad", explicó Guillén.

"Pero después vinieron enfermedades como el SIDA y la investigación quedó prácticamente en la nada, por eso hay tantos títes en zoológicos estadounidenses y europeos".

A Guillén le parecía increíble que el único proyecto para defender la especie había sido fundado por una bióloga de EE.UU.

Anne Savage, experta en conservación de Disney Animal Kingdom, había conocido la especie en EE.UU. Tras visitar Colombia en los 80 y ver el grave riesgo de los pequeños primates decidió fundar el Proyecto Títí.

Peluche

Savage es aún consultora del proyecto y los muñecos de peluche de monos títes se venden incluso en los parques de Disney.

La defensa de la especie en Colombia ha requerido múltiples estrategias, según Guillén.

"Primero trabajamos mucho con las autoridades para proteger el bosque de la deforestación por agricultura, ganadería, minería y otras actividades".

También se provee de ingresos a las comunidades para que puedan alimentar a sus hijos sin cazar y vender títes como mascotas.

Las mujeres de la comunidad "Los Límites" hacen desde muñecos de peluche de titíes hasta ecomochilas de bolsas plásticas usadas. Para hacerlas recogieron más de tres millones de bolsas de plástico, descontaminando bosques y ríos locales.

Por último, Guillén busca que los niños "se enamoren de los titíes" y cambien actitudes respecto a la conservación del bosque.



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El proyecto también publicó estudios científicos con resultados sorprendentes.

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La lucha por salvar al mono tití

Tamara es una mono tití cabeciblanca, líder entre su especie, valiente, que ha parido gemelos en 12 ocasiones. (Proyecto Tití / BBC)



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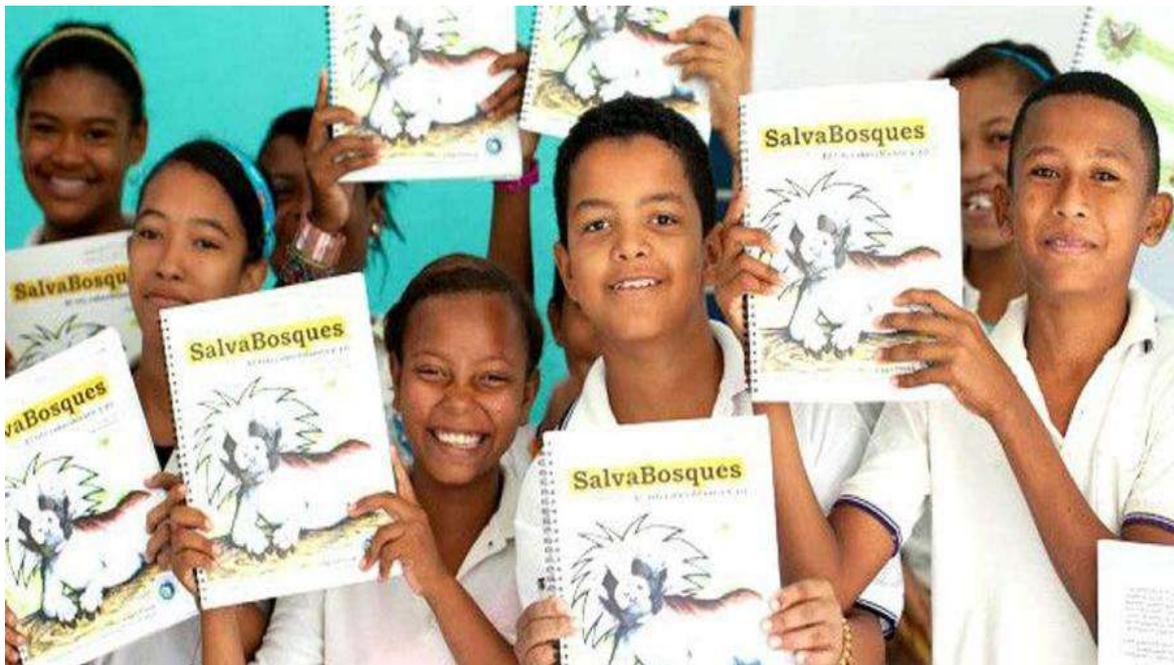
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Investigaciones médicas



Los niños tienen un papel bien importante en el presente y futuro del mono títe cabeciblanco. (Proyecto Títe / BBC)

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<http://www.eltiempo.com/estilo-de-vida/ciencia/proyecto-titi-gana-el-premio-whitley-award/15687137>



Proyecto Tití gana el premio de naturaleza 'Whitley Award'

Esta organización protege a esta especie que se encuentra en peligro crítico de extinción.



Foto: Carolina Holguín

Los niños de la comunidad se disfrazan y bailan imitando los movimientos del animal.

La directora de la fundación colombiana Proyecto Tití, Rosamira Guillén, recibió hoy en Londres el prestigioso premio de naturaleza Whitley Award por promover la conservación del mono tití cabeciblanco y de los bosques tropicales en Colombia.

La fundación lleva trabajando en el terreno desde el año 1985, por lo que se sienten "muy honrados" de recibir el premio, ya que "eso va a permitir ampliar el trabajo a nuevas áreas donde habita el tití", reconoció Guillén.

El mono tití es una especie autóctona de la costa norte de Colombia y está en amenaza crítica debido a la pérdida de los bosques tropicales, provocada por la extensión de actividades como la ganadería, la agricultura, la minería y el urbanismo. (Lea también: Tití, el monito colombiano que clama protección)

La Fundación Proyecto Tití trabaja para tratar de reducir esas amenazas que afrontan los titíes mediante la investigación del animal en su hábitat natural en el noroeste de Colombia y la protección del bosque. Guillén destacó que con el proyecto también educan a las personas de la región para que comprendan el peligro de extinción al que está expuesta esta especie.

"Ofrecemos alternativas a la población para que puedan convivir con el mono tití", señaló Guillén, y puntualizó que pretenden hacer viable económicamente la conservación de los recursos naturales de la región para evitar la caza del animal y la destrucción del bosque.

Es fundamental que la población local encuentre recursos para vivir al margen de la caza del mono tití y de la tala del bosque tropical. El galardón Whitley Award es un prestigioso premio que promueve la conservación de la naturaleza y está dotado con 35.000 libras (48.000 euros), lo que permitirá que la organización amplíe su trabajo y generará nuevos apoyos de otras instituciones.

"Necesitamos trabajar en más áreas, llegar a más personas para proteger más bosque tropical y eso sólo lo podemos hacer con respaldo institucional y el apoyo financiero", agregó Guillén. Además destacó que este premio supone "un trampolín para darse a conocer a nivel internacional".

Finalmente Guillén dijo que esperan que este premio, junto con el compromiso del Gobierno colombiano y la población, ayude a garantizar que "este pequeño primate, que sólo vive en Colombia, pueda tener un futuro a largo plazo".



El Proyecto Tití

Ayudar a proteger este pequeño mono del Caribe colombiano es también conservar el planeta.

Mono tití cabeza blanca, de cabellera desordenada. Primate, primo del Homo sapiens humano. Míralo a los ojos y sentirás su familiaridad. Quienes lo han hecho señalan su parecido con el científico Albert Einstein o con Don King, el empresario de boxeo.

Pero el Homo sapiens parece destinado a acabar con la naturaleza de este pariente, de cualquier otro y con la suya propia; destruirla para reemplazarla, quizás en un futuro, por tecnología, mientras todavía hoy, en selvas y bosques, hace desaparecer nichos, tala árboles.

Elimina especies y familias enteras de animales, que reemplaza por vacas condenadas a dar carne y leche; o cultiva por negocio y convierte en muebles toda la madera de ese hábitat en el que tantos animales han sobrevivido, antes de que llegue la hidroeléctrica a quitarles el agua, o la mafia a cazarlos como mascotas de Indias y presas de laboratorio.

El hombre ha ocupado la tierra y adiós, flora y fauna; adiós, primates queridos, miles y miles en extinción. Adiós, selvas y bosques de Madagascar, Vietnam, Indonesia y América Latina.

Son tiempos de leña y de carbón vegetal, de minería y de urbanización, lenguaje de ciudad. El índice de deforestación en Colombia es uno de los más altos del mundo: ¡120.933 hectáreas de bosque natural al año!

El destino biológico del *Saguinus oedipus* o tití cabeciblanco, que, además de reproducirse, dispersa por los bosques secos tropicales del Caribe colombiano semillas de árboles como la ceiba, el campano, el hobo y el macondo, se encuentra muy amenazado. En 1973, el cabeciblanco ingresó a la lista de los primates en vías de extinción y pasó, en el 2008, al preo-cupante grupo de extinción crítica.

En 1985, Anne Savage, bióloga estadounidense de Disney Animal Kingdom, vino a Colombia, se enteró de la situación de esta especie y creó el único programa que existe para conservarla: el Proyecto Tití, una fundación dirigida por la arquitecta Rosamira Guillén, que acaba de recibir el prestigioso premio Whitley por promover la conservación del mono tití cabeza blanca y de los bosques tropicales que habita.

Son 35.000 libras esterlinas de premio, que le caen muy bien a la fundación de Rosamira. Ahora ella podrá ampliar sus actividades de protección del mono, buscar sólidos apoyos nacionales y concientizar poblaciones que aprendan a convivir con animales sin cazarlos ni devastar los bosques donde viven.

En sus 30 años de trabajo, la fundación ha consolidado dos áreas de conservación del mono tití en Colombia: la hacienda El Ceibal, en Santa Catalina de Alejandría (Bolívar), y Los Rosales, en Luruaco (Atlántico), donde viven protegidos por lo menos 300 títes, un diez por ciento de los que habitan el país.

Esta especie de mono ha sido introducida en el Parque Natural Tayrona.

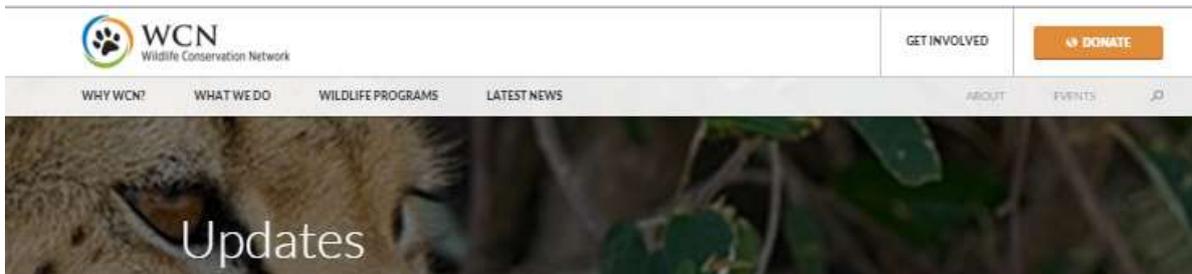
Si el mal hombre ha destruido los bosques, y con ello el hábitat de numerosos animales como el mono tití cabeciblanco, lo que debe hacer el buen hombre es recuperar y conectar los bosques.

Algo ideal sería devolver su entorno natural a estos animales, construirles un bosque o una selva, así no parezca tan fácil. Siempre es más fácil destruir que construir. Rosamira lo ha dicho: “En 10 años podría formarse un bosque en el que los animales logren encontrar comida, pero no podrían quedarse a dormir en él porque necesitan de árboles más grandes como refugio. Por lo menos tomaría 30 años tener un bosque en óptimas condiciones”.

Bosques mejores y más extensos, para multiplicar en ellos a esos monos títes. Es lo que la fundación anhela. Por lo pronto, y para estimularse, capacita artesanas que los fabrican de peluche y los envían por avión a las tiendas de Disney, donde se venden en beneficio del proyecto.

Wildlife Conservation Network – NGO Website
7th May 2015

<http://wildnet.org/updates/rosamira-guillen-wins-whitley-award>



Rosamira Guillen Wins Whitley Award



Rosamira Guillen of Proyecto Tití has been honored with the Whitley Award, a major recognition for her work conserving the endangered cotton-top tamarin.

The cotton-top tamarin is threatened by habitat destruction and hunting for the illegal pet trade but, under Rosamira's leadership, Proyecto Tití has protected more than 1,700 hectares of forest and created education programs that increase awareness and discourage families from keeping exotic pets.

The Whitley Fund for Nature provides awards and grants to the world's most dynamic conservation leaders, supporting projects that are founded on good science, community

involvement and pragmatism. The Award is given to passionate individuals who can create long-lasting conservation impacts on the ground.

The Whitley Fund for Nature has put together a fantastic video about Rosamira's work narrated by Sir David Attenborough, which can be viewed below.

Sir Attenborough, who is a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said, "Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people - passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits."

"With the support of the Whitley Award, we will be able to do much more for the cotton-top tamarins," said Rosamira. "We'll be able to take our work into other areas where cotton-tops still exist in the wild, protect more forests, educate more kids, get them really excited about conservation, and give more people opportunities to make a sustainable living."

Congratulations to Rosamira and the rest of the Proyecto Tití team for this much-deserved recognition and all of their impactful work.

EL HERALDO

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El Tití inspira dos proyectos productivos



Las crías son cargadas durante las primeras nueve semanas de desarrollo.

Comunidades vecinas de la reserva ambiental elaboran artesanías y peluches con material reciclable para cuidar el hábitat del primate. La especie es única de la Región Caribe y solo quedan unos 7.000.

A pesar de su escaso tamaño, el tití cabeciblanco, debido a la protección que tiene como especie en peligro de extinción, se ha convertido en una especie de guardián que protege el bosque tropical y a las especies que habitan su ecosistema. Pero, además, ha cambiado el estilo de vida de los pobladores que rodean su hábitat.

En octubre de 2013 la Corporación Autónoma Regional del Canal del Dique, Cardique, declaró mediante un decreto 422 hectáreas de bosques como Parque Regional Natural, como una forma de proteger el ecosistema en el que habita el primate.

“La medida no solo protege al tití, sino además un ‘pulmón’ de la Región Caribe y otras especies que viven de este bosque”, manifiesta Rosamira Guillén, directora del Proyecto Tití.

Además de su labor como ‘defensor del bosque’, otra de las características que hacen importante al tití es que por su dieta a base de frutas sirve como reforestador, al trasladar semillas de los frutos que consume a diferentes lugares de su hábitat.

Por otro lado, alrededor del primate se mueve una industria que beneficia a las familias que ya no talan los árboles del hábitat para convertirlos en leña, ni los capturan para venderlos como mascotas.

Como parte de la labor para preservar y cuidar el tití, el proyecto ha capacitado a los habitantes de corregimientos y municipios que viven alrededor del parque natural el Ceibal para que generen ingresos siendo cuidadores del ecosistema.

Unidades productivas

El Proyecto Tití adelanta con las comunidades de los corregimientos y municipios que circundan la reserva regional dos estrategias de negocios y tienen en etapa probatoria otras dos.

Un grupo de 45 mujeres son las encargadas de elaborar llaveros, peluches y ecomochilas para sostener a sus familias.

Ana Isabel Castillo recuerda los inicios de las unidades productivas en el año 2003 y cómo se ganaban la vida antes de vincularse a la iniciativa. “Primero fuimos 25 las que decidimos asistir a la capacitación. Nos dedicábamos a trabajar en casas de familias en Cartagena y Barranquilla, pero decidimos cambiar nuestro estilo de vida”, afirma la mujer del corregimiento de Los Límites, en Luruaco.

En la pequeña población está asentada la sede del Centro Artesanal de Conservación Ambiental donde se reúnen para acopiar los productos que cada ‘socia’ va elaborando en su casa.

“Nuestro labor también protege el medio ambiente porque reciclamos bolsas para convertirlas en algo duradero, como un bolso o una mochila. Antes cortábamos árboles y los convertíamos en leña”, apunta Castillo.

Para un bolso playero utilizan unas 250 bolsas medianas. Trocean cada una de tal forma que la vuelven una tira enrollada.

Girleza Guzmán, una mujer del corregimiento el Hobo, en el municipio de Santa Catalina (Bolívar), asegura que cuidar al tití y su hábitat es de “las mejores cosas” que le han pasado. “Ahora somos nuestras propias jefas, distribuimos nuestro tiempo y podemos estar pendientes de nuestros hijos y sobre todo de nuestros maridos”, comenta.

Ella hace peluches de felpa y llaveros con forma de titíes. En un día pueden hacerse entre 2 y 3 muñecos.

Recuerda que en vacaciones de junio del año pasado tuvieron que armar “350 peluches en 15 días” para exportarlos a Estados Unidos.

Disneyland, en el estado de la Florida, es su principal aliado y comprador. La bióloga Anne Savage, directora de conservación para Walt Disney Park and Resort, es quien realizó los contactos para expandir el mercado.

Otro proyecto de recuperación es el de recolección de botellas plásticas vacías. Alfredo Martínez es el encargado de realizar esta labor junto a un ayudante. El joven habitante de Los Límites recoge de 150 a 180 kilos semanales que a través de una máquina trituradora convierte en picadillo para vender a empresas.

“Con ese plástico triturado pueden crearse estacas para delimitar terrenos. Con eso las personas evitan estar cortando árboles para armarlas y consiguen un poste que resiste agua y sol”, explica el asistente de programas comunitarios.

La historia

La primera vez que Anne Savage, una joven estudiante norteamericana, vio un tití cabeciblanco fue en 1981 en el campus de la Universidad de Wisconsin Madison, en el centro de Estados Unidos.

Lo más probable es que el pequeño primate fuera uno de los entre 20.000 y 40.000 individuos que fueron exportados en los años 70 a Estados Unidos para investigaciones biomédicas. Debido a que desarrollaron adenocarcinoma de colon, un tipo de cáncer con origen en células de tipo epitelial o glandular, fueron usados como animales de laboratorio.

Por el riesgo en que fue puesta la población, fue declarada En Peligro (EN) en 1973. Según la Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (UICN), actualmente esta variedad de primate se encuentra en Peligro Crítico de Extinción, al borde desaparecer en estado silvestre. (Ver recuadro)

Para Savage su encuentro con el pequeño mamífero fue amor a primera vista y en 1985 fundó el Proyecto Tití en Colosó, municipio del departamento de Sucre.

“Al comienzo fue complicado porque había que generar conciencia en los habitantes de la zona de que había que proteger al tití”, recuerda la bióloga vía telefónica.

Luego de establecerse y conseguir el reconocimiento de la comunidad que vivía alrededor del bosque seco tropical de la zona, apareció otro obstáculo para la estrategia de conservación: la guerrilla.

“Aunque no fuimos amenazados directamente, la presencia de la guerrilla en la zona era muy fuerte por eso tuvimos que movernos”, explica Savage.

En 1999 el proyecto fue trasladado a Santa Catalina, un municipio de Bolívar colindante con el departamento de Atlántico. Desde entonces han enfocado sus esfuerzos “en la generación de conocimiento científico sobre la biología y la ecología del tití cabeciblanco”, señala Rosamira Guillén.

“Hemos trabajado intensivamente en la sensibilización de las personas sobre la importancia de esta especie y de su conservación, las amenazas que enfrenta y las posibles soluciones para garantizar su supervivencia en el largo plazo”, agrega.

Según el último censo realizado entre 2012 y 2013, la población de los pequeños primates llegaba a unos 7.000, 400 menos que el sondeo entre 2006 y 2007.

Especie endémica

El tití cabeciblanco es una especie de primate ‘del Nuevo Mundo’ o platirrino, de hábitos diurnos y territoriales, que habitan solamente al borde de los bosques o en las selvas secundarias en el noroccidente de Colombia, en un territorio sumamente limitado, entre el río Atrato y el bajo río Cauca y río Magdalena, en los departamentos de Atlántico, norte de Bolívar, Sucre, Córdoba y norte del Urabá chocoano (ver mapa).

“Sus características son únicas. Hay especies parecidas pero no como la que tenemos acá en la costa”, asegura la directora del proyecto **(ver infografía)**.

Joint Coverage with Arnaud Desbiez

Websites

Latin America Bureau

29th April 2015

<http://lab.org.uk/c0nservationists-win-prizes>



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Two Latin American conservationists win awards

With all the environmental destruction occurring in Latin America by agri-business, mining and road-building, it is good sometimes to know that there are extraordinary individuals who are managing, against the odds, to stem and even reverse the damage.

Today (29 April 2015) two of these individuals were among the seven winners of the prestigious Whitley Awards, also known as “Green Oscars”. Sir David Attenborough, a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people – passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits.”



Arnaud Desbiez, French in origin but now permanently settled in Brazil, works with giant armadillos in the Pantanal wetlands. “Giant armadillos?” I asked him. “I’m afraid I’ve never even heard of them.” “You’re not alone”, he laughed. “They’re very secretive creatures and for some years it was thought that they had become extinct.” Arnaud said that the 50-year-old owner of the ranch where he often stays in the Pantanal had never seen one, though she had lived there all her life.

It's hard to imagine how this can happen: as its name suggests, the giant armadillo is large – 1'50 metres long and weighing the same as the average Labrador (50 kilos). But it lives underground during the day and only leaves its den cautiously at night. "It's the kind of species that can become extinct without anyone noticing", said Arnaud. Even so, Arnaud and his team have managed to film a female armadillo with a baby offspring.



"We knew so little about them when we began this project", said Arnaud. "We didn't realise that they usually had only one baby and that the young armadillo spent many months living in the mother's burrow. Each individual is really precious." This low rate of reproduction makes the species very vulnerable and explains why the animal, found from Venezuela to northern Argentina, has gone extinct in so

many areas. It is on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Arnaud will use his prize money of £35,000 to create more protected areas for the giant armadillo, moving into the cerrado, a region greatly devastated by cattle rearers and soya farmers. Protecting their habitat, he said, is important, not just for the giant armadillo itself, but for other species, as the armadillo acts as an "ecosystem engineer", that is, it modifies the habitat for other species. "The armadillo burrow stays at a stable 25°C, which means that it becomes an important refuge from the heat for other animals", said Arnaud. Ocelots, crab-eating fox, various lizards, tortoises, and the weasel-like tayra have all been discovered using the deep burrow as a refuge.



The other Latin American award winner works with a very different species – the cotton-top tamarin, a tiny monkey, weighing less than a pound, which is also threatened with extinction. The Colombian Rosamira Guillen, from Fundación Proyecto Tití, says that the main problem facing the cotton-top tamarin is habitat destruction. "Only 7% of its habitat - the tropical dry forest -

remains", she said. "Most of the forest has been destroyed by deforestation, mining and farming."



Rosamira said she would use her prize money, also £35,000, to extend their conservation work among communities. “We are getting more and more people involved”, she said. “We’ve been helping them find other sources of income, such as making eco-mochilas (eco-satchels) from plastic bags.” The women running this project have crocheted 3.5 million plastic bags into remarkably attractive bags, winning awards for their work.

More recently, they have developed a project for turning plastic into posts, so that the families won’t have to cut down the forest when they build fences. They also work a great deal with schools, holding festivals in which children dress up in cotton-top tamarin costumes.

“We have achieved a lot but we need to do more, particularly replanting forest and creating corridors between the forest fragments”, Rosamira told LAB. She is hopeful that, with the end to the prolonged civil war in Colombia, new opportunities will arise. Until recently, the Foundation only worked around the city of Cartagena in the far north, a part of Colombia which was relatively unaffected by the violence; but now they are planning to extend their conservation work to other areas which until recently were so dangerous that no community work could be undertaken.



Projetos de proteção ambiental no Brasil e Colômbia levam prêmio britânico

A colombiana Rosamira Guillén e o francês Arnaud Debiez receberam nesta quarta-feira o prêmio britânico Whitley, estimado em 54.000 dólares, por projetos de preservação do sagui-cabeça-de-algodão na Colômbia e do tatu-canastra no Brasil.

O prêmio, um dos maiores do mundo em seu campo, foi entregue a eles na Sociedade Real de Geografia em Londres pela princesa Anne, filha da rainha, patrona da Fundação Whitley.

Além disso, outros projetos de conservação foram premiados na Índia, Nigéria e Filipinas.

Segundo um comunicado da Fundação Whitley, Guillen e seu projeto para salvar o sagui-cabeça-de-algodão (*Saguinus oedipus*) no norte da Colômbia "estão fazendo a diferença na sobrevivência desta espécie em perigo e seu habitat através de pesquisa e educação".

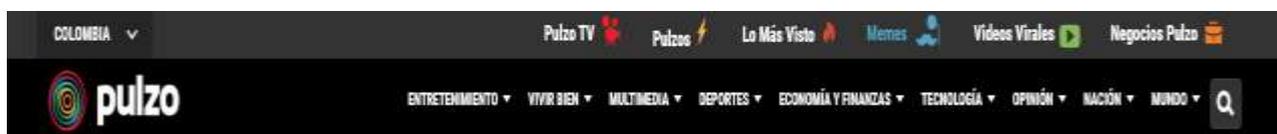
O projeto conseguiu "a proteção de 1.700 hectares de floresta, e criou um programa nacional de conservação para proteger este pequeno macaco" de cabeça branca.

Enquanto isso, Debiez trabalha no Pantanal do Mato Grosso, uma das maiores áreas úmidas do mundo, na proteção do tatu-canastra (*Priodontes maximus*), um dos mamíferos mais antigos da Terra, um "fóssil vivo" nas palavras dos organizadores do prêmio.

Eles destacaram o trabalho de Desbiez, um ex-funcionário de zoológico, que criou em 2010 seu programa para a proteção e a pesquisa desta espécie, raramente vista em liberdade.

A campanha fez com que "cerca de 65.000 pessoas da região se envolvessem diretamente em campanhas de sensibilização" sobre o perigo de extinção deste animal "e as autoridades do estado de Mato Grosso do Sul (sudoeste) selecionaram o tatu gigante como um indicador para a criação de áreas protegidas".

O prêmio servirá para expandir o programa do Pantanal até a região do Cerrado, mais a leste.



Proyecto colombiano para la protección del mono tití gana el premio británico Whitley

El galardón, uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito, reconoció la labor de Rosamira Guillén.

También el francés Arnaud Debiez recibió el premio, dotado con 54.000 dólares, por su proyecto de conservación del armadillo gigante en Brasil.

El reconocimiento les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de Londres por la princesa Ana de Inglaterra, la hija de la reina, patrona de la Fundación Whitley.

Además, se premiaron otros proyectos de conservación en India, Nigeria y Filipinas.

Según un comunicado de la Fundación Whitley, Guillén y su Proyecto Tití para salvar al tití de cabeza blanca (*Saguinus oedipus*) en el norte de Colombia "está marcando la diferencia en la supervivencia de esta especie gravemente amenazada y su hábitat mediante la investigación, la educación".

El proyecto ha logrado "ya la protección de 1.700 hectáreas de bosque, y se ha creado un Programa nacional de conservación para proteger a este pequeño mono" de testa blanca.

Por su parte, Debiez trabaja en el Pantanal de Mato Grosso, uno de los humedales más grandes del mundo, en la protección del armadillo gigante (*Priodontes Maximus*), uno de los mamíferos más viejos de la tierra, un "fósil viviente", en palabras de los organizadores del premio.

Estos destacaron el trabajo de Desbiez, un antiguo cuidador de zoo, desde que en 2010 creó su programa para la protección y la investigación de esta especie muy rara de ver en libertad.

La campaña ha logrado que "unas 65.000 personas de la zona participen directamente en la campañas para concienciar" del peligro de extinción de este animal, "y las autoridades del estado de Mato Grosso do Sul (sudoeste) han seleccionado al armadillo gigante como un indicador para la creación de áreas protegidas". El premio servirá para expandir el programa desde el Pantanal a la región del Cerrado, más al este.



Premio británico a la protección de monos y armadillos en Colombia y Brasil

Se premiaron también otros proyectos de conservación en India, Nigeria y Filipinas.



Foto: Archivo

El premio, uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito, les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de Londres.

La colombiana Rosamira Guillén y el francés Arnaud Debiez recibieron este miércoles **el premio británico Whitley**, dotado con 54.000 dólares, por proyectos de preservación del mono tití blanco en Colombia y del armadillo gigante en Brasil.

El premio, **uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito**, les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de Londres por la princesa Ana de Inglaterra, la hija de la reina, patrona de la Fundación Whitley.

Además, se premiaron otros proyectos de conservación en India, **Nigeria y Filipinas**. Según un comunicado de la Fundación **Whitley**, Guillén y su Proyecto Tití para salvar al tití de cabeza blanca (*Saguinus oedipus*) en el norte de Colombia "está marcando la diferencia en la supervivencia de esta especie gravemente amenazada y su hábitat mediante la investigación, la educación".

El proyecto ha logrado "ya la protección de 1.700 hectáreas de bosque, y se ha creado un Programa nacional de conservación para proteger a este **pequeño mono**" de testa blanca. Por su parte, Debiez trabaja en el Pantanal de **Mato Grosso**, uno de los humedales más grandes el mundo, en la protección del armadillo gigante (*Priodontes Maximus*), uno de los mamíferos más viejos de la tierra, un "fósil viviente", en palabras de los organizadores del premio.

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La campaña ha logrado que "unas 65.000 personas de la zona participen directamente en la campañas para concienciar" del peligro de extinción de este animal, "y las autoridades del estado de **Mato Grosso do Sul**(sudoeste) han seleccionado al armadillo gigante como un indicador para la creación de áreas protegidas".

El premio servirá para expandir el programa desde **el Pantanal** a la región del Cerrado, más al este.

La Prensa
30th April 2015

http://www.prensa.com/buena_noticia/Colombia-Brasil-premio-proteccion-armadillos_0_4197330445.html

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Colombia y Brasil ganan premio por la protección de monos y armadillos

También se premiaron otros proyectos de conservación en India, Nigeria y Filipinas.



El mono tití de cabeza blanca es una especie amenazada en Colombia.

La colombiana **Rosamira Guillén** y el francés **Arnaud Debiez** recibieron el **premio británico Whitley**, dotado con 54 mil dólares, por proyectos de preservación del mono **tití blanco en Colombia** y del **armadillo gigante en Brasil**.

El premio, uno de los más importantes del mundo en su ámbito, les fue entregado en la Sociedad real de geografía de **Londres** por la princesa Ana de Inglaterra, la hija de la reina, patrona de la Fundación Whitley.

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El proyecto ha logrado la protección de mil 700 hectáreas de bosque, y se ha creado un programa nacional de conservación para proteger a este pequeño mono de testa blanca. Por su parte, Debiez trabaja en el Pantanal de Mato Grosso, uno de los humedales más grandes el mundo, en la protección del armadillo gigante (*Priodontes Maximus*), uno de los mamíferos más viejos de la tierra, un **fósil viviente**, en palabras de los organizadores del premio.

Éstos destacaron el trabajo de Desbiez, un antiguo cuidador de zoológico, desde que en 2010 creó su programa para la protección y la investigación de esta especie muy rara de ver en libertad.

La campaña ha logrado que unas 65 mil personas de la zona participen directamente en la campañas para concienciar del peligro de extinción de este animal, y las autoridades del estado de Mato Grosso do Sul (sudoeste) han seleccionado al armadillo gigante como un indicador para la creación de áreas protegidas.

El premio servirá para expandir el programa desde el Pantanal a la región del Cerrado, más al este.

Panut Hadisiswoyo Indonesia

Conservation villages: building local capacity for the protection of Sumatran orangutans and their habitat, Indonesia

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Indonesian government must halt road through orangutan reserve, says green prize winner

Plans for major Aceh road that will dissect the last place on Earth where critically endangered orangutans, elephants, tigers, and rhinos exist together must be revised, says Panut Hadisiswoyo, Whitley award winner



Sumatran orangutan with a baby in Leuser National Park, Aceh. Photograph: Romeo Gacad /AFP/Getty Images

The winner of a major conservation prize has called on the Indonesian government to halt a road-building plan that threatens the last place on Earth where elephants, rhinoceros, tigers and orangutans live together.

The plan for the Ladia Galaska road network has been approved by the Aceh government, but requires consent from the central minister for home affairs to go ahead.

Panut Hadisiswoyo, who won a £35,000 [Whitley Award](#) on Wednesday for engaging north Sumatran communities on orangutan conservation, said the development would be a disaster for the densest remaining population of Sumatran orangutans.

“The spatial plan must be cancelled and must be revised to include the Leuser ecosystem so that development is in line with the conservation goals in Sumatra,” said Hadisiswoyo. The plan currently makes no mention of the precious ecosystem it threatens.

If approved, the roads would connect the east and west coasts of Aceh, severing the ecosystem in nine places. Hadisiswoyo said the fragmentation of forests by roads and plantations meant mostly-tree dwelling orangutans would have to come to ground - making them vulnerable to poaching and predation. Eventually, small groups would become cut off and genetically isolated, making their survival untenable.

“The consequences will be a risk for orangutans. Many forests will be converted into plantations and this will be bad for the survival of the orangutan and for the viability of their long-term population. Forests will be fragmented, they’ll be cleared for plantations.”

A [past study predicted](#) the Aceh government’s road building plans, and the plantations, poaching, development and logging they will facilitate, would result in the loss of at least a quarter of the remaining 6,600 Sumatran orangutans by 2030.

“It’s a massive issue — an enormous assault on the last place on Earth where orangutans, elephants, tigers, and rhinoceros still exist. It’s truly precious real estate,” said Bill Laurance from James Cook University. He authored [a recent study](#) that found the road network would increase the area of forest at high risk of deforestation by 40%.

“These species are all critically endangered – especially the Sumatran tiger and rhino. They are sitting on a precipice, staring straight into the void of extinction. The 400km road network known as Ladia Galaska would open up like a flayed fish some of the most critical surviving habitat for these four species,” he said.

Last year, 1.3 million people [signed a petition](#) asking Indonesia’s president to reject the spatial plan, which has been championed by Aceh’s president [despite conservationists’ claims](#) it is in breach of Acehese law.

Hadisiswoyo also called on the government of [Indonesia](#) to implement a moratorium on logging and new permits for palm oil plantations.

Hadisiswoyo’s community engagement in aid of orangutan survival was rewarded at a ceremony in London on Wednesday. His [Orangutan Information Centre](#) has worked to engage the local community in the survival of orangutans. Amongst other things, his programme has trained 150 Muslim preachers to use conservation-minded Quranic verses during their sermons.

Antara News – News Website

30th April 2015

<http://www.antaraneews.com/berita/493681/aktivis-lingkungan-indonesia-terima-penghargaan-dari-putri-anne>

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PEMANASAN GLOBAL FLORA FAUNA

Aktivis lingkungan Indonesia terima penghargaan dari Putri Anne



Petugas Yayasan Orangutan Sumatera Lestari dan BBKSDA Sumut mengevakuasi orangutan sumatra (*Pongo abelii*) di Desa Kuala Musam, Langkat, Sumatera Utara. Orangutan betina berumur 20 tahun tersebut dievakuasi setelah terisolir di perkebunan sawit. (ANTARA FOTO/Irsan Mulyadi)

London (ANTARA News) - Pendiri dan Direktur Yayasan Orangutan Sumatera Lestari, Panut Hadisiswoyo, mendapat penghargaan *Whitley Award* dari *Whitley for Nature Fund*, sebuah lembaga swadaya internasional di Inggris yang mendukung upaya konservasi alam di seluruh dunia.

Penghargaan diberikan kepada aktivis lingkungan Indonesia itu oleh Putri Anne, keluarga bangsawan Kerajaan Inggris, pada hari Rabu malam, dalam satu upacara yang diadakan di gedung Royal Geographic Society di London.

"Senang dan bangga berhasil mengharumkan nama Indonesia di dunia Internasional," ujar Panut kepada Antara London, Rabu malam usai penerimaan penghargaan yang dihadiri DCM/Wakil Dubes RI untuk Kerajaan Inggris Raya dan Irlandia, Anita Luhulima.

Panut terpilih menjadi penerima penghargaan Green Oscar serta dana dari The Arcus Foundation sebesar 35 ribu Poundsterling, karena dedikasi yang tiada henti selama 15 tahun menyelamatkan orangutan sumatera dan habitatnya di kawasan ekosistem Leuser di provinsi Aceh dan Sumatera Utara.

Atas dedikasi dan komitmennya, populasi orangutan Sumatera semakin terlindungi dari perburuan dan insiden konflik. Sementara masyarakat lokal mendapat peluang peningkatan ekonomi dan kapasitas melalui kegiatan pelatihan pertanian berkelanjutan, restorasi hutan, patroli pengamanan hutan, pengembangan agroforestry, dan penanggulangan konflik antara manusia dan orangutan.

Walau upaya perlindungan orangutan ini terus dilakukan oleh Panut dan tim nya, namun ancaman terhadap orangutan dan hutan tropis Indonesia masih terus berlangsung. Hal ini karena ekspansi perkebunan ke hutan tropis di Indonesia terus masih terjadi.

Panut menyatakan bahwa penghargaan ini merupakan bentuk pengakuan atas komitmen terhadap upaya perlindungan orangutan Sumatera dan hutan tropis Indonesia.

Dikatakannya penghargaan ini juga merupakan pesan dan himbaun penting kepada semua pihak di Indonesia terutama pemerintah Indonesia untuk benar-benar menjalankan penghentian (moratorium) pemberian ijin perkebunan di kawasan hutan tropis Indonesia.

Dengan luas perkebunan sawit yang sudah mencapai 10 juta hektar, produksi buah sawit sudah mencukupi untuk memenuhi permintaan pasar domestik dan internasional. Tragis bila peningkatan luas perkebunan diproyeksikan menjadi 13 juta hektar pada tahun 2020, karena berarti tiga juta hektar hutan tropis akan dialihfungsikan menjadi perkebunan selama lima tahun ke depan, katanya.

Sebelumnya, lanjut Panut, selama empat tahun terakhir, Indonesia sudah kehilangan hutan seluas 1,3 juta hektar per tahunnya seiring dengan peningkatan perkebunan sawit di Indonesia. Ini harus dihentikan, bila tidak nasib hutan tropis Indonesian beserta ribuan spesies penting dan keanekaragaman hayati Indonesia akan terancam punah.

Whitley Award merupakan *Green Oscar*, sebuah penghargaan internasional kepada para pelaku dan aktivis konservasi yang telah memperjuangkan upaya penyelamatan keanekaragaman hayati dan spesies dari kepunahan melalui pendekatan holistik yang melibatkan masyarakat lokal melalui kegiatan pembangunan berkelanjutan dan perlindungan habitat alam.

Seruu – Conservation Website

30th April 2015

<http://indonesiana.seruu.com/read/2015/04/30/248209/aktivis-lingkungan-indonesia-terima-penghargaan-di-inggris>



Aktivis Lingkungan Indonesia Terima Penghargaan di Inggris



Foto: Istimewa

London, Seruu.com - Pendiri dan Direktur Yayasan Orangutan Sumatera Lestari, Panut Hadisiswoyo, mendapat penghargaan Whitley Award dari Whitley for Nature Fund, sebuah lembaga swadaya internasional di Inggris yang mendukung upaya konservasi alam di seluruh dunia.

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CHANGING TIMES

HOLISTIC JOURNALISM THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Sumatran environmentalist wins Whitley Fund for Nature award

The director of the Orangutan Information Centre (OIC) in Sumatra, Panut Hadisiswoyo, has won a prestigious Whitley Fund for Nature award.



The Princess Royal presented Hadisiswoyo with the 2015 Whitley Award for Conservation in Ape Habitats, which is donated by the Arcus Foundation, at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society in London yesterday (Wednesday).

The Whitley Fund says their awards honour “exceptional individuals who, through their outstanding conservation work in developing countries, are redefining the way people engage with the

natural world in the 21st century”.

Hadisiswoyo has been awarded £35,000 (about 54,000 US\$), which will be used to expand the OIC’s network of conservation villages and its Community Agroforestry, Reforestation and Education (CARE) programme to a new region bordering the Gunung Leuser National Park.

The OIC will establish sustainable agriculture schemes with 100 farmers, and plant 66,000 trees at the new site. The team will also focus on raising awareness about the importance of orangutan and forest conservation in an education project that will reach 1,200 people in communities surrounding the park.

Hadisiswoyo said the award was a recognition of the OIC’s commitment to protecting the orangutans and tropical rainforest in Sumatra into the indefinite future.

In his speech at the award ceremony, he said that the forest provided clean water and protection from natural disasters. “I would like to dedicate this Whitley award to the orangutans, the forest, and the people of Sumatra,” he said. “I am now calling on everyone who is in a position to take action to work together with me to save what remains of my country’s rainforest.”

The renowned environmentalist, Sir David Attenborough, who is a trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “Whitley award winners are simply exceptional people –

passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits.”

Hadisiswoyo with Sir David Attenborough.



Helen Buckland, director of the OIC’s UK-based sister organisation, the Sumatran Orangutan Society, was at the award ceremony. She said: “It was absolutely wonderful to watch Panut receive his award. We set up the OIC with Panut 15 years ago, and we’ve been on an incredible journey with him and his team ever since. I am so proud of what we are achieving in Sumatra, and this award will really help to shine a spotlight on the threats facing orangutans and their precious habitat.”

Hadisiswoyo is one of seven people who were awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 (about 378,000 US\$).

The founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, Edward Whitley, said: “The calibre of this year’s Whitley awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements.”

Hadisiswoyo founded the OIC in 2001 and leads the CARE programme, which works with people living around the national park. Through successful interventions with farming communities, such as training in agroforestry and organic farming techniques, farmers have increased crop yields by 25 percent and improved their profit, reducing people’s need to expand farmland into the forest.

More than a million trees have been planted on degraded land, enabling the return of orangutans and other endangered species to areas that had been deforested for oil palms.



The IOC’s new project is focused on Bukit Mas, which is next to the national park. “Agroforestry training will empower the agricultural community of Bukit Mas to increase productivity and profitability from existing croplands in this area, where farming is the primary driver for deforestation,” Hadisiswoyo said. “Reforestation activities will restore vital damaged orangutan habitat, and community-wide education and outreach will inspire the people to become guardians of the forests. *Hadisiswoyo at the OIC restoration site in the Sei Betung area.*

“Our holistic approach will result in decreased pressure on the ecosystem, providing greater security for orangutans and the many other species that share the habitat.”

The Gunung Leuser National Park lies within the Leuser Ecosystem, which is the only place on earth where Sumatran orangutans, rhinos, elephants, and tigers co-exist in the wild.

Hadisiswoyo called for immediate action to save the Ecosystem, which is critically endangered by oil palm expansion and a new spatial plan for Aceh, which will open up swathes of protected forest to road building, mining, and palm oil and timber concessions.

“The award is not the end of our fighting against this expansion, but it is the beginning of the collective actions we are taking together with the local communities, NGOs, and the government. We must keep forest as forest.”

The Leuser Ecosystem is an area of tropical lowland rainforest that covers 2.6 million hectares and straddles the border of Aceh and the neighbouring province of North Sumatra. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has identified it as one of the world’s most irreplaceable areas. It is home to the densest populations of orangutans anywhere in the world, and plays an important role in mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration.



The Leuser Ecosystem. (Photo by Paul Hilton.)

The Gunung Leuser National Park also lies within the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra UNESCO World Heritage Site, which, in 2011, was placed on the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger.

There are some 4,000 plant species in the park, along with about 100 species of mammals, and more than 350 bird species.

Hadisiswoyo called on the Indonesian government to safeguard the survival of the country’s remaining forests by banning forest clearing for oil palm plantations. “The moratorium on logging and new plantation permits must be implemented by law enforcement. Plantation expansion must be stopped.”

In just 25 years, 48 percent of forests in Sumatra have been lost because of logging, infrastructure development, and agricultural development, Hadisiswoyo says, and this has had devastating consequences for biodiversity. “Despite being protected under Indonesian law, the Leuser forests are still subject to high levels of illegal encroachment.”

Over the past decade, nearly five million hectares of forest in Indonesia have been replaced by oil palm plantations.

Ten million hectares of oil palms are currently being cultivated in Indonesia and this number is projected to increase to 13 million hectares by 2020. “The palm oil industry

has been growing in an unsustainable way,” Hadisiswoyo said. “There is enough unforested land in Indonesia that is suitable for oil palm cultivation, and there is more than enough land available to meet the projected growth in the industry over the coming decades; and so expansion into rainforests is not necessary at all.”

Hadisiswoyo says that, as deforestation continues, the threat to orangutans increases. “This critically endangered species is protected under Indonesian law, but is increasingly being seen as a pest that needs to be exterminated. Trapped in tiny patches of forest surrounded by oil palms, cut off from viable areas of habitat, orangutans resort to raiding crops to find food for their survival.

“For smallholder farmers, this can really threaten their livelihoods, and we have seen that the retaliation can be fatal. Conflict incidents occur and many of the orangutans that we have evacuated have bullets lodged in their bodies, and many die from their injuries.”

The number of stranded orangutans raiding plantations has been increasing year by year, Hadisiswoyo says, and the resulting human-orangutan conflict is a by-product of deforestation. “Plantation development is destroying tropical rainforests and endangering the existence of orangutans and many other animal species in Indonesia. It is a pattern that we see repeated all over the world.”

With the CARE project, which began in 2011, Hadisiswoyo and his team aim to tackle the root cause of forest degradation at Bukit Mas by engaging with the community to alleviate pressures on the forest and establish more sustainable livelihood opportunities, based on the protection, restoration and non-extractive use of the ecosystem.

“We aim to bring community, NGO, and government stakeholders together to rehabilitate degraded land within the national park, and promote action by communities adjacent to the forest to sustain natural ecological services,” Hadisiswoyo said.

Members of the OIC team will provide training in natural forest restoration techniques and will work with the community and the national park authority to restore 50 hectares of degraded national park land with indigenous tree seedlings. They will establish a new tree nursery to produce native tree seedlings for planting in degraded areas.

“As well as being critical habitat for the Sumatran orangutan and countless species of fauna and flora, the Leuser forests constitute an ecosystem on which four million people in Sumatra depend for valuable ecological services,” Hadisiswoyo said.

“There is an urgent need for conservation action in order to retain viable wild populations of the critically endangered Sumatran orangutan. Vast tracts of their remaining habitat have been degraded.”

The industrial-scale conversion of forests to oil palm plantations and other crops is responsible for the loss of huge areas of forests, Hadisiswoyo says, but, in many areas of Sumatra, local communities are chipping away at crucial orangutan habitat one or two hectares at a time, which can quickly add up to vast areas becoming farmlands.

A group of farmers from the Bukit Mas village have encroached into the national park to expand the land on which they cultivate oranges.

“The local community only relies on monoculture practices, without knowing of the benefits to be derived from improved methods, which allow for greater output from a smaller plot of land,” Hadisiswoyo said. “There is a lack of understanding of the value of the ecological services provided by rainforest ecosystems, and limited sustainable livelihood options for forest-adjacent communities.

“An ecosystem that is well maintained brings numerous benefits, such as effective water catchment and protection from floods and landslides.”

Working with the local community, Hadisiswoyo hopes that, over the next five years, he will be able to develop a better early detection system to prevent and resolve conflict related to natural resources so that deforestation in the Leuser Ecosystem will be prevented and human orangutan conflict will be reduced.

Education is a vital element. It is crucial, Hadisiswoyo says, that people are well informed about the value of forests and biodiversity so they can be motivated to support their protection and stop seeing forests simply as an expendable resource.

Under the CARE programme, education and outreach activities are intended to reach at least 1,200 community members and 600 students from 12 local schools.

Biodiversity surveys will be conducted so that the impact of restoration can be assessed, and the OIC will monitor any human-wildlife conflict and develop prevention and mitigation action plans.



Rescue in March 2014 of a young male orangutan isolated on farmland in Langkat, North Sumatra.

“The integrity of the Leuser Ecosystem is the main priority in my work,” Hadisiswoyo said. “Conservation is never easy to accomplish as there are barriers, including a lack of commitment on the part of the government to protect natural resources.

“However, this is the battle that I must keep fighting; and I will never lose hope in my efforts to defend Sumatran orangutans and their rainforest home.”

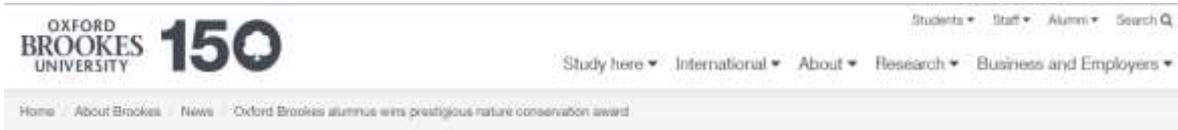


Hadisiswoyo receiving his award from the Princess Royal.

Oxford Brookes University Website

1st May 2015

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/about-brookes/news/oxford-brookes-alumnus-wins-prestigious-nature-conservation-award/>



Oxford Brookes alumnus wins prestigious nature conservation award



Brookes alumnus Panut Hadisiswoyo, Director of the Orangutan Information Centre (OIC), an Indonesian conservation organisation set up by Oxford charity the Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS), was honoured on Tuesday evening (29 April) for his remarkable contribution to wildlife and rainforest protection in Sumatra.

The Whitley Awards, established in 1994, recognise dynamic and effective grassroots conservation leaders, and have awarded £11 million to projects around the world over the last 20 years.

At last night's Whitley Awards Ceremony, Panut's award was presented by HRH The Princess Royal (Princess Anne) at the Royal Geographical Society.

'I am deeply honoured. I am committed to being a champion for the critically endangered Sumatran orangutan, and this award will really help to shine a spotlight on the rainforests

of Sumatra, one of the world's most precious, and most threatened, biodiversity hotspots.' Panut Hadisiswoyo, Director of the Orangutan Information Centre.

This award acknowledges Panut's work to establish a network of 'conservation villages' in the tropical rainforests of the Leuser Ecosystem of Sumatra, Indonesia. Sir David Attenborough, a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: "Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people - passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits."

Panut said "I am deeply honoured. I am committed to being a champion for the critically endangered Sumatran orangutan, and this award will really help to shine a spotlight on the rainforests of Sumatra, one of the world's most precious, and most threatened, biodiversity hotspots."

This was not Panut's first brush with Royalty. He was awarded a scholarship to attend Oxford Brookes University in 2007, where he studied on their unique Masters course in Primate Conservation.

During his time as a student at Oxford Brookes, he had the opportunity to meet the Queen at Buckingham Palace when MSc course was awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize, which recognises excellence in UK universities.

Helen Buckland, Director of SOS said: "I have worked alongside Panut for almost a decade, supporting him and his team in delivering frontline conservation programmes that have a real impact on the fate of the Sumatran orangutans and their forests.

"It is truly fantastic to see his remarkable commitment and passion for the cause honoured with such a prestigious award."

SOS and OIC conservation programmes in Sumatra include rainforest restoration, with more than 1.5 million trees planted to regrow lost orangutan habitat, orangutan rescue and community-led conservation and livelihoods projects.

Panut will be speaking at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History on Monday 11 May at 6.30pm at an event organised by the SOS entitled 'Spotlight Sumatra'. For more details and tickets please visit the SOS website.



Penggiat Lingkungan Sumut Raih "Green Oscar"



(Analisa/istimewa) DIABADIKAN: Direktur Yayasan Orangutan Sumatera Lestari (YOSL), Panut Hadisiswoyo diabadikan bersama Princess Anne usai menerima penghargaan Whitley Award atau 'Green Oscar' di Gedung Royal Geographic Society London, Inggris.

Medan, (Analisa). Berkat dedikasi dan komitmen terhadap penyelamatan orang utan Sumatera penggiat lingkungan asal Sumatera Utara, Panut Hadi Siswoyo menerima penghargaan Whitley Award atau 'Green Oscar' di London Inggris. Penghargaan itu diserahkan langsung oleh salah seorang keluarga bangsawan dari Kerajaan Inggris Princess Anne.

“Penghargaan ini merupakan bentuk pengakuan komitmen saya dan lembaga terhadap upaya perlindungan orang utan Sumatera dan hutan tropis Indonesia. Namun penghargaan ini juga merupakan pesan dan himbaun penting kepada semua pihak di Indonesia terutama pemerintah agar benar-benar menjalankan penghentian (morato-

rium)pemberian ijin perkebunan di kawasan hutantropis Indonesia,"ungkap Panut yang juga Direktur Yayasan Orangutan Sumatera Lestari (YOSL) dalam siaran persnya yang diterima *Analisa*, Jumat (1/5).

Lebih lanjut dikatakan,luas perkebunan sawit yang saat ini sudah mencapai sekira 10 juta Ha, kapasitas produksinya dinilai sudah mencukupi untuk memenuhi permintaan pasar dalam dan luar negeri. Dia akan sangat menyesalkan, jika pada tahun 2020 luas lahan perkebunan sawit bertambah menjadi 13 juta Ha.

"Jika luas perkebunan sawit semakin bertambah hingga mencapai 13 juta hektare pada tahun 2020 mendatang, setidaknya Indonesia akan kehilangan 3 juta Ha hutan tropisnya pertahun,"jelasnya.

Kehilangan Hutan

Sebelumnya, ujar Panut dalam kurun waktu empat tahun terakhir Indonesia kehilangan sekira 1,3 juta Ha hutan tiap tahunnya. Jika kondisi ini terus berlanjut, diyakininya kelangsungan keanekaragaman hayati beserta ribuan spesies lainnya bakal terancam punah.

Sebelumnya, Panut terpilih menjadi penerima penghargaan "Green Oscar" berkat dedikasi yang tiada henti selama lebih dari 15 tahun melakukan usaha penyelamatan orang utan Sumatera dan habitatnya di Kawasan Ekosistem Leuser yang ada di provinsi Aceh dan Sumatera Utara. Berkat usaha mulianya ini, populasi orang utan Sumatera terlindungi dari aktifitas perburuan sehingga memperlambat kepunahannya.

Selain itu, dia juga terlibat dalam program menciptakan peluangpeningkatan ekonomidan kapasitas melalui kegiatan pelatihan pertanian berkelanjutan,restorasi hutan, patrolipengamanan hutan, pengembangan agroforestry serta penanggulangan konflik antara manusia dan orang utan.

The Bicester Advertiser – News Website
7th May 2015

http://www.bicesteradvertiser.net/news/12937120.Former_student_praised_for_his_work_in_saving_rare_orangutans/

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Former student praised for his work in saving rare orangutans



AN EAST Oxford charity campaigning to save endangered orangutans in Indonesia has praised the work of a former city student.

The Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS), in Cowley Road, aims to protect orangutans and their forest habitats in Sumatra, Indonesia.

It was set up in 1997 and in 2001 co-founded its Indonesian-based charity partner Orangutan Information Centre (OIC).

Director of the OIC Panut Hadisiswoyo, a former student at [Oxford Brookes University](#), was honoured last month at The Whitley Awards, which celebrate conservation projects around the world.

He walked away with the Conservation in Ape Habit award for his work creating conservation villages in tropical rainforests of the Leuser Ecosystem of Sumatra.

Director of SOS Helen Buckland said: “I have worked alongside Panut for almost a decade, supporting him and his team in delivering frontline conservation programmes that have a real impact on the fate of Sumatran orangutans and their forests.

“It is truly fantastic to see his remarkable commitment and passion for the cause honoured with such a prestigious award.”

Mr Hadisiswoyo, who studied primate conservation at Brookes, was presented his award by Princess Anne.

He said: “I am deeply honoured. I am committed to being a champion for the critically endangered Sumatran orangutan, and This award will really help to shine a spotlight on the rainforests of Sumatra, one of the world’s most precious, and most threatened, biodiversity hotspots.”

Both charities run conservation projects which include forest restoration and orangutan rescue.

The Oxford Times – News Website

7th May 2015

http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/news/12937120.Former_student_praised_for_his_work_in_saving_rare_orangutans/

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Oxford Mail

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Former student praised for his work in saving rare orangutans



AN EAST Oxford charity campaigning to save endangered orangutans in Indonesia has praised the work of a former city student.

The Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS), in Cowley Road, aims to protect orangutans and their forest habitats in Sumatra, Indonesia.

It was set up in 1997 and in 2001 co-founded its Indonesian-based charity partner Orangutan Information Centre (OIC). Director of the OIC Panut Hadisiswoyo, a former student at Oxford Brookes University, was honoured last month at The Whitley Awards, which celebrate conservation projects around the world.

He walked away with the Conservation in Ape Habit award for his work creating conservation villages in tropical rainforests of the Leuser Ecosystem of Sumatra.

Director of SOS Helen Buckland said: “I have worked alongside Panut for almost a decade, supporting him and his team in delivering frontline conservation programmes that have a real impact on the fate of Sumatran orangutans and their forests.

“It is truly fantastic to see his remarkable commitment and passion for the cause honoured with such a prestigious award.”

Mr Hadisiswoyo, who studied primate conservation at Brookes, was presented his award by Princess Anne.

He said: “I am deeply honoured. I am committed to being a champion for the critically endangered Sumatran orangutan, and This award will really help to shine a spotlight on the rainforests of Sumatra, one of the world’s most precious, and most threatened, biodiversity hotspots.”

Both charities run conservation projects which include forest restoration and orangutan rescue.



Baby Orangutan Loses Everything So Someone Could Make \$8



Sometime in 2012, an infant orangutan was kidnapped in the forests of Indonesia.

During the incident, the orangutan's mother was likely murdered: The bond between a mother orangutan and her child is powerful, and a mother won't let her baby be taken from her without a fight.

The captors — who were local fishermen — immediately sold the fragile infant to an employee of a

large palm oil plantation company situated in the area, Jessica McKelson, director of the quarantine station at the conservation group Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme (SOCP), told The Dodo.

The transaction was not uncommon. Nor was it expensive: The cost of the life of the mother and the illegal sale of the orangutan was less than \$8, McKelson says.

SOCP, along with local police, eventually rescued the little orangutan from his predicament and named him Gokong.



Gokong was weak, dehydrated and malnourished. He was in such bad condition that, although he was a year old, "he had the appearance and weight of a 5-month-old and weighed only 800 grams," according to SOCP's senior veterinarian Yenny Saraswati.

Gokong was immediately brought to SOCP's Batu Mbelin Care Centre (the quarantine station which is part of the center) in February 2013, and joined a group

of nearly 300 orangutans who have been rescued, rehabilitated and sometimes released back into the wild since the center's inception in 2002. ([Read this recent article on Mongabay about the rare prosecution of a wildlife trader, caught with a baby orangutan in a bag.](#))

"We refer to these orangutans," says McKelson, "as the 'lucky survivors.'"

Another organization in the region advocating for the protection of the Sumatran orangutan is the [Yayasan Orangutan Sumatera Lestari \(Orangutan Information Center/OIC\)](#), founded in 2001 by conservationist Panut Hadisiswoyo.

In an email to The Dodo, Hadisiswoyo says that the illegal orangutan trade devastates the tenuously-existing species because, aside from targeting the babies, "in order to get the babies, poachers have to kill the mothers." And orangutans breed very slowly, so any hunting pressures can hurt the population.

Each year, says Hadisiswoyo, about 30 orangutans are confiscated from illegal keeping in Sumatra. Like McKelson, he refers to them as "lucky ones ... They were given a second chance at life through rehabilitation process. But there are still many other orangutans that can't be saved by our team."



Orangutans recently rescued from palm oil plantations by OIC

Orangutan Information Center

Today, there are a total of 47 orangutans at the SOCP quarantine station. They range from 1 to 30 years of age. Most are somewhere between 2 and 4 years old.

Unfortunately, however, SOCP is seeing an influx of orangutans who are under the age of 2, like Gokong.

The central threat against these orangutans? People. But more specifically, habitat destruction, spawned by the commercial timber industry, small-scale logging (legal and illegal) and the conversion of the orangutan's habitat into palm oil plantations, according to a 2009 TRAFFIC report.

Palm oil is no small issue: it's the most-consumed vegetable oil on the planet, in everything from cookies to shampoo. The industry is reportedly the single largest driver of Indonesia's deforestation, which can leave orangutans homeless or, worse, captured or killed.

A more recent study by the University of Maryland notes that 23,000 square miles of Indonesian virgin forest were decimated between 2000 and 2012 — and the rates of loss are accelerating despite a 2011 moratorium on deforestation implemented by the Indonesian government. The forests were cleared in part for palm oil plantations, the study notes. (You can also see forest loss around the globe at UMD's innovative Global Forest Change.)

An area particularly vulnerable to habitat destruction is the Leuser Ecosystem, says Ian Singleton, director of SOCP. It is the main stronghold of the Sumatran orangutan and, Singleton says, "it is more threatened than ever before."

Singleton describes Leuser not only as vital to the orangutan's survival but as a truly unique ecosystem: "This is the only place on earth where the Sumatran orangutans can be found living side by side with Sumatran tigers, elephants and rhinos."

USAID/IFACS

Unfortunately, Singleton adds, Leuser is being undermined by the local government itself, which means that protecting orangutans from the illegal wildlife trade and insatiable commercial development — like palm oil production — takes extraordinary effort.



Deforestation for oil palm development, Sumatra, Indonesia (Mongabay)

Gokong was taken from an area near the Tripa peat swamp forests, which has one of the highest densities of orangutans anywhere in the world and "has facilitated a unique culture of tool use," according to The Orangutan Project. But, unsurprisingly, the Tripa peat swamp area was recently opened up for palm oil plantations. This caused illegal poachers and other opportunists who came across wildlife to illegally sell animals, including Gokong, says McKelson.

"The population of wild animals is exposed and driven to extinction," says McKelson. "Nothing survives the process of habitat conversion to palm oil development because all the habitat is cleared, burned ... and drained."



Freshly cleared forest for palm oil (Mongabay)

She also adds that the penalties against those who do traffic the orangutans is woefully weak: Gokong's captor, for example, should have been convicted of having a critically endangered species. But SOCP knows of only three convicted cases in the organization's history — and in the case of Gokong, neither the fishermen nor the palm oil plantation worker were prosecuted.

The plight of the Sumatran orangutans

There are some 6,600 wild Sumatran orangutans in the region, estimates McKelson, and SOCP's mission is to confiscate, quarantine and reintroduce all the illegally held orangutans back into the area whenever possible. (For those who cannot be returned into the wild, SOCP is building a lifetime care center called Orangutan Haven.)

Returning these rehabilitated orphans into the wild is time sensitive: The Sumatran orangutan is a critically endangered species that has seen a decline in population of at least 80 percent in the last 75 years, according to the IUCN, and that's quite possibly an underestimate. The commercial trade of orangutans is prohibited but that legislation, like many wildlife laws, is flouted, and orangutans like Gokong end up in the illegal pet trade and in individual homes.

And what these primates endure can be absolutely appalling.

"[They] are often found in inadequate living conditions, [living] in bamboo boxes or cages to chicken coops," says McKelson. Sometimes they are chained around their neck or waist and tethered to a tree. "They have no choice but to spend their time in complete isolation and often during this process they naturally learn to develop a conditioned dis-attachment and seek no attention from people."

McKelson says, ironically, SOCP doesn't want to undo this process, since the best way to rehabilitate the orangutans is to encourage the primates to socialize and thrive in the company of their kind.

Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme

When orangutans come to the Batu Mbelin Care Center, they often enter with a host of physical afflictions beyond being malnourished and underweight. "We commonly see wounds from the chains many are kept in by their illegal owners," says McKelson. And on the more extreme end of the scale, she says, "we see animals who've suffered extreme violence at the hands of their captors."

For example, SOCP has cared for one infant whose nose had been chopped off with a machete. One female orangutan has Hepatitis B, "most likely from biting her captors," McKelson says.

Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme



After Gokong arrived at the quarantine, he required 24-hour care. He developed a strong affection for his human caregiver, which was worrisome. Now, though, says McKelson, Gokong spends increasingly more time frolicking and growing up with pals his own age: Nadya, Siboy, Jagai, Cece and Bulan.

His friends are helping him to be a wild orangutan. And he is learning valuable skills like nest building, problem solving and being independent.

Gokong is also learning how to access and utilize vitally important muscles in his body, says McKelson.

So one day, if he is lucky enough to return to the wild, he will know how to climb a tree.



Jayson Ibañez
Philippines

**Preventing further decline of the Philippine eagle on
Mindanao Island**

**Winner of the Whitley Award donated by The Shears Foundation
in memory of Trevor Shears**



Websites.....191-197

Websites

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30th April 2015

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Filipino wildlife conservationist one of 7 nominees in Whitley Awards 2015

DAVAO CITY, Philippines – A Filipino wildlife conservationist has been chosen from a field of 174 applicants from all over the world to be one of seven finalists in the annual Whitley Fund for Nature or WFN.

The WFN is a United Kingdom-registered charity that champions outstanding grassroots leaders in nature conservation across emergent economies.

The prestigious international prize honors exceptional individuals who, through their outstanding conservation work in developing countries, are redefining the way people engage with the natural world in the 21st century.

Jayson Ibañez, head of research and conservation development of the non-profit Philippine Eagle Center, was nominated for his work on “Preventing further decline of the Philippine Eagle on Mindanao Island.”

Ibañez will have the chance to win the Whitley Award 2015 and a share in funding worth £245,000.

The six other nominees are Arnaud Desbiez (Brazil, giant armadillos); Rosamira Guillen (Colombia, cotton-top tamarins); Panut Hadisiswoyo (Sumatra, orangutans); Inaoyom Imong (Nigeria, Cross River gorillas); Ananda Kumar (India, Asian elephants), and Pramod Patil (India, Great Indian Bustard).

The awarding ceremony was to be held in special ceremonies at the Royal Geographical Society center in London yesterday.

Princess Anne, the Royal Princess and patron of the Whitley Fund for Nature, will present the winner among the seven finalists this year.

Ibañez in 2007 did the study on Philippine eagle *Pithecophaga jerreryi* breeding biology, diet, behavior, nest characteristics and longevity estimate in Mindanao Island.

PEF has been at the forefront of producing the first captive-bred Philippine eagles.

The PEF has so far produced 25 captive-bred eagles, although a number of them did not survive. The Eagle Pag-asa, the first ever eagle bred in captivity, turned 23 last January and is still kept in a large dome at an eagle center here in Davao City.

The population of the giant raptor has reportedly been placed at less than 1,000 including those sighted in the wild and the 36 eagles that have been kept in captivity at the Philippine Eagle Center in Barangay Malagos, Calinan district.

These Philippine eagles are mostly sighted in the remaining forests of Mindanao and Samar.



Phl Eagle conservationist wins award in London



Jayson Ibañez poses with Princess Anne during the Whitley Award 2015 ceremonies at the Royal Geographic Society in London.

LONDON – Her Royal Highness Princess Anne presented to Jayson Ibañez, research and conservation head of the non-profit Philippine Eagle Foundation, the Whitley Nature Award 2015 in ceremonies held at the Royal Geographical Society here Wednesday night.

Ibañez, cited for his work to prevent the further decline of the Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) in Mindanao, received £35,000 in project funding donated by the Shears Foundation in memory of Trevor Shears.

The award is organized by the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN), a UK-registered charity that champions grassroots leaders in nature conservation in the developing world.

Princess Anne, a WFN patroness since 1999, cited how £11 million has been extended to 170 wildlife conservationists who have received the Whitley Awards since 1994.

“The conservation effort involves the cooperation among the local community and the local government,” Anne said as she stressed the need to conserve almost extinct species.

Ibañez is the second Filipino to receive the Whitley Award. In 2014, Tess Gatan-Balbas was cited for her work on Philippine crocodiles.

Also winning with Ibañez this year are wildlife conservationists from Brazil, India, Colombia, Nigeria and Indonesia. Each one will also receive the £35,000-funding for their respective projects.

The seven winners were chosen from among the 174 conservationists who applied for this year’s awards.

Sir David Attenborough, Britain’s best-known natural history filmmaker who also attended the awarding ceremony, noted the importance of grassroots conservation.

“The secret of the Whitley Fund for Nature is that they find exceptional grassroots conservation leaders. Whitley Award winners come from around the world and come from a range of backgrounds, but they all have, in common, a fierce commitment and determination to make a real difference to local people and wildlife in their own countries,” Attenborough said.

The Philippine Eagle, the country’s national bird and the world’s largest eagle, also took center-stage during the awards night as a picture of the majestic raptor was used as cover photo for the program.

Ibañez told The STAR that he plans to use the WFN money to enable community conservation activities in seven existing nesting sites and set up additional nesting sites in the mountains of Zamboanga, Bukidnon, Davao and North Cotabato provinces.

Philippine eagle helped by Whitley Award



The most magnificent eagle left in the world has been having a hard time of it. The conservation effort requires a recruitment of hearts and minds, as the national symbol of the Philippines becomes more and more endangered. The Whitley Awards often make a difference, so we can look forward to an improvement in this desperate situation. We await the result in Mindanao with great interest!

More or less the longest eagle known, the great Philippine eagle, *Pithecophaga jefferyi* is also critically-endangered. The Whitley Awards celebrate their 20th anniversary this year by giving their prestigious gongs to 7 experts who have contributed much to the conservation of animals like this.

Philippine eagle image; Credit: © Shutterstock



Elephants, the Indian bustard, South American monkeys, giant armadillos, gorillas, orangutans and even a people, plants and pollinators project also figure among the magnificent seven award-holders. Detail of such dedicated work is all-important, to be found here, [for all awards since 2011](#), with accompanying photographs.

The eagle is one of the most critical cases of conservation we face, notwithstanding the obvious big feature animals such as the elephants and oranges included in Whitley this year. Mindanao is a large island, with many ethnic groups, selling their land to entrepreneurs as often happens in poor rural communities. The resultant loss of habitat for large predators has impacted the Philippine eagle heavily. The few remaining nest sites (7 are going to be protected) have to be heavily protected, largely against the ignorance of those who have lost animals to the great bird.

Jayson Ibanez is the Philippine Eagle Foundation Research and Conservation Director. He has established local conservation areas with many of the people living throughout the eagle's enormous range. 350 are employed to simply stop the hunting while 450 households have had low income supplemented and their villages improved in terms of water supply, health services and education. In this way the 400 pairs of eagles that the Philippines hope to conserve are being protected by their human neighbours instead of being destroyed by revengeful farmers. The end result of this project is improved lifestyle for humans and improvement in the holistic ecology of the island.



Setting free Pamana on Independence Day

The flight of Philippine Eagle Pamana on Friday, Philippine Independence Day meant a lot of things to the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) and its partners.

As it spread its wings to glide, it reignited national pride, accentuating its namesake: heritage.

The critically endangered Philippine Eagle is found nowhere else in the world except in only four islands of our country. PEF estimates that there are only 400 pairs remaining in the wild. Deforestation and shooting and trapping—all are human induced activities—are the looming threats to the eagles’ survival.

“Our national bird, the Philippine Eagle, is every inch a Filipino as each citizen of the archipelago,” Jayson Ibanez, PEF research and conservation, director said in his speech during the release event here Friday.

“A life of freedom is fundamental to the wellbeing of wildlife too,” he said.

The estimated 30,000 hectare forest, a UNESCO World Heritage site, will be home to Pamana as she claims her freedom and independence again after being under the care of PEF. The area was chosen because of quality of habitat.

The flight of Pamana also signified the continuing success of the science behind her rehabilitation in the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Davao since she was rescued from the mountains of Gabunan Range in Iligan City. She arrived in the center in April 2012.

According to PEC curator Anna Sumaya, she was found by a local perched on a tree near a creek, appearing weak and docile; it was later found out that she had a gunshot on her left breast and on her left wing.

“As one of a few hundred birds living in Mindanao island, her release would not only mean ending a life in captivity and human dependence. Her survival and eventual breeding will also reduce the extinction chances of her kind,” said Ibanez.

Ibanez also said that survival and breeding of every individual bird is important to prevent the extinction of the critically endangered Philippine Eagle; likewise, maintaining connectivity and inter breeding between groups living in different forests are also key to the species' survival.

Pamana is predicted to connect the existing eagles together and re-establish gene flow among them.

Pamana bears the bloodline of eagles in Lanao del Norte region, 245 km northwest of Hamiguitan. "If Pamana survives and breeds with a resident bird, bloodlines would mix. This is generally good for the eagle population as wildlife genetics would predict," said Ibanex.

Pamana's release also reflects good use of technology for the environment; people who are looking after her are constantly being given information about her plight through the GPS satellite tag and a radio transmitter. These devices allow for remote monitoring and location tracking. Technology use for the Philippine Eagle expands to the community too: for example, a telco brand has a mobile service that allows its subscribers to donate to PEF via an electronic wallet through text messaging.

As Pamana took flight, everyone is reminded of their own responsibility to take care of the environment.

She strongly represents conservation and biodiversity—things about the environment that we are reminded to be concerned about as responsible citizens.

As she soared from the branch where she was perching on for about 10 minutes, everyone was also given a sense of security—that she will be safe in her new home.

Dennis Salvador, executive director of PEF, is expecting a high survival chance for Pamana because Mt. Hamiguitan is a protected area. This gives a better level of enforcement and awareness among the communities and stakeholders alike.

Having Pamana in the wild, according to Department of Tourism region 11 director Roberto Alabado III, means being able to strengthen efforts to turn Davao Region into an ecotourism destination. Tourists will be drawn to visit—but what's more important is that the collective effort to protect the environment should be maintained. The area won't be open to mass tourism. Protection of the environment remains to be at the core of this tourism effort so that people will actually have something to enjoy.

All these—and perhaps more—are why Pamana and the rest of the Philippine Eagles matter to the community. As the eagles soar, pride and a sense of awareness for the environment is reignited among all of us.

Inaoyom Imong Nigeria

**Saving Cross River gorillas through community-
based conservation in the Mbe Mountains**

**Winner of the Whitley Award donated by the Garfield Weston
Foundation**



Websites.....	199-212
Joint coverage with Dino Martins.....	213

Websites

The Guardian Nigeria – News Website

27th April 2015

<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/04/nigerian-nominated-for-whitley-funds-for-nature-awards/>



Nigerian nominated for Whitley Funds for Nature awards

NO fewer than seven wildlife conservationists from a field of 174 applicants from all over the world have been shortlisted for the prestigious international Whitley Funds for Nature (WFN) awards and a chance to share in project funding worth £245,000.

Among the lucky winners is a Nigerian, Inaoyom Imong from Cross River state who was nominated for his work to protect Cross River gorillas in the Mbe Mountains. Other winners are Arnaud Desbiez (Brazil; giant armadillos); Rosamira Guillen (Colombia; cotton-top tamarins); Panut Hadisiswoyo (Sumatra; orangutans); Jayson Ibañez (Philippines; Philippine eagles); Ananda Kumar (India; Asian elephants) and Pramod Patil (India; Great Indian Bustard).

A press release signed by Susannah Penn for Firebird Public Relations, and made available to The Guardian in Calabar, said, “Dr Dino Martins from Kenya will also be awarded a special Gold Award for his work on the relationship between pollinators and the use of harmful agricultural pesticides, which has led to new legislation to protect bees as well as more sustainable and productive farming practices that benefit both people and pollinators in East Africa”.

According to her, the Whitley Awards are prestigious international prizes, which honour exceptional individuals who, through their outstanding conservation work in developing countries, are redefining the way people engage with the natural world in the 21st century.

She said: “The charity’s patron The Princess Royal will announce the final results at a special evening ceremony hosted by television presenter Kate Humble and attended by Sir David Attenborough on Wednesday 29 April at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

“The Princess Royal will also present an additional prize, the Whitley Gold Award worth up to £50,000 in project funding, to Dr Dino Martins, whose work on the relationship between pollinators and the use of harmful agricultural pesticides has led to new legislation to protect bees as well as more sustainable and productive farming practices that benefit both people and pollinators in East Africa”.



Nigerian Researcher Leads Effort to Protect World's Rarest Gorilla

Inaoyom Imong of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Nigeria Program has won the prestigious Whitley Award for his work in protecting the Cross River gorilla, Africa's most endangered great ape.

The Whitley Award, donated by the Garfield Weston Foundation and worth £35,000 (approximately \$54,000) in project funding, was presented to Imong on April 29th by HRH The Princess Royal in a ceremony held at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

The prize is given annually to individuals in recognition of noteworthy achievements in conservation.

Imong is one among several winners at this year's Whitley Awards, organised by the Whitley Fund for Nature, a UK-registered charity that champions outstanding grassroots leaders in nature conservation across the developing world.

Imong is the Director of WCS's Cross River Landscape Project based in Nigeria. Under Imong's direction, the initiative works with local communities around the Mbe Mountains to protect the forest and its population of Cross River gorillas, a subspecies that only occurs along the mountainous border region of Nigeria and Cameroon.

Classified as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the Cross River gorilla (*gorilla diehli*) numbers fewer than 300 individuals throughout its range and is the rarest of the four subspecies of gorilla.

Imong has also helped establish the Conservation Association of the Mbe Mountains, a group comprising the nine communities who traditionally own the Mbe Mountains and are working to turn the area into a designated wildlife sanctuary.

"We congratulate Inaoyom Imong for his well-deserved award, which is also a tribute to conservation in Nigeria," said Dr. Elizabeth Bennett, WCS' Vice President for Species Conservation. "Recognition of his work is extremely important to garner support vital for the continued survival of the Cross River gorilla and the other wild denizens of the biodiverse Cross River landscape."

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/inaoyom_imong_a_grassroots_effort_to_save_africa_as_most_endangered_ape/2876/



A Grassroots Effort to Save Africa's Most Endangered Ape



The Cross River gorilla population in equatorial Africa has been pushed to the brink of extinction. In a Yale Environment 360 interview, a Nigerian scientist working to save the gorillas describes how local villagers are vital to protecting these apes.

The Cross River gorilla holds the lamentable distinction of being the world's rarest ape. Inhabiting an arc of mountainous forest along the Nigeria-

Cameroon border, this primate was thought by scientists to be extinct until it was rediscovered in the 1980s. Today, fewer than 300 members of the Cross River subspecies exist, most squeezed into high, rugged terrain as rising human populations hem them in.

Leading the fight to save these beleaguered apes is a Nigerian scientist who comes from Cross River State and knows its forests — and its people — intimately. Inaoyom Imong, director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's [Cross River Gorilla Landscape Project](#), is taking the practice of local community engagement to a new level as he and his colleagues work to pull the Cross River gorillas back from the brink.

In an interview with *Yale Environment 360*, Imong — who last month received an international award from the [Whitley Fund for Nature](#) — describes the remote region in which [three population groups of Cross River gorillas](#) live, explains how stepped-up ranger activity is relieving pressure on the gorillas, and discusses how local residents living in rural Nigeria and Cameroon hold the key to saving this magnificent ape.

Yale Environment 360: What's unique about this subspecies of gorilla that you study?

Inaoyom Imong: This is a very poorly known subspecies of gorilla. It is found only in the border region between Nigeria and Cameroon — quite a large landscape, 12,000 square kilometers, and most of it is still forest. The actual area occupied by the gorillas is

very limited, mainly because of human disturbance, so the population is very fragmented. There has been a long history of hunting these animals that has forced them to use only hilltops as refuge areas. Most of the population is already within protected areas, but one-third still live outside of protected areas in community land without any formal protection.

e360: A lot of your research has looked at why Cross River gorillas remain more or less isolated in these smaller groups even though their forest habitat is fairly continuous. What's keeping these gorillas isolated?

Imong: There's still a lot of good forest that these gorillas can use, so we could have seen a more even distribution. The main factor driving the fragmented distribution is human disturbance, hunting, encroachment on the habitats. So even though there is still good forest, just the human presence in those areas and the threat to their existence makes them retreat to these high lands and difficult terrain. Despite increased conservation efforts, increased protection and increased awareness among local people, there is still opportunistic hunting of these gorillas.

e360: What's it like to see a Cross River gorilla in the wild?



*African Conservation
Foundation/Wikimedia Commons
This Cross River gorilla is in captivity
at Limbe Wildlife Center in Cameroon.*

Imong: Seeing one in the forest is actually like Christmas for me. I've been working in these areas studying Cross River gorillas for over 12 years now, and I have seen them only twice in the forest. However, our eco-guards in the Mbe Mountains are now seeing them more often. They go out every day patrolling the area and that is probably an indication that hunting in the Mbe Mountains has continued to decline. So they are probably a bit less shy compared to 10 years before. But it's really rare to see these animals. Many conservationists, many researchers have been here and worked for years and have not seen these gorillas.

e360: But the fact that that the eco-guards are seeing them might indicate that they're getting used to a human presence that's not dangerous to them?

Imong: We have three base camps from which eco-guards go out on patrols on a daily basis. And so, for example, the gorillas are probably not hearing as many gunshots as before, which would be a sign that it's safe for now. So [they] are maybe moving into areas where they previously didn't move so much. They're probably gradually moving out into more accessible areas, losing a bit of the fear. But we are not currently making any conscious effort to habitually follow the animals. We avoid contact with them as much as possible because we don't want to habituate the gorillas yet [to our presence]. Because even though hunting has gone down, there is still opportunistic hunting.

e360: A lot of your work is in the Mbe Mountains. Can you talk a little bit about what that area is like and how is it important to this subspecies of gorilla?

Imong: My work actually spans the entire range of the Cross River gorilla population in Nigeria. The Mbe Mountains is where we are trying to protect the gorillas and the habitat through community-based action. These mountains are particularly important because they not only have this small population of gorillas inhabiting the area, but it is also a critical corridor linking two other gorilla sites in Nigeria — the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary and the Cross River National Park. So protecting the forest in the Mbe Mountains is protecting the corridor that will allow the gorillas to move between these two localities. Obviously, gene flow is very important for such a fragmented population, so it's important that individuals are able to move between these small, isolated groups to exchange genetic material and to maintain a viable population overall.

e360: What's life like for people in these communities where you work?

Imong: People around there are very dependent on the forest for their subsistence — gathering forest products, subsistence agriculture. There is also a long history of conservation effort in the area and people are committed now to protecting the gorillas. They take very strong pride that they have gorillas in their forest. And that is the main attraction for me, the fact that people themselves realize the value of what they have in the forest and the value of the gorillas. People have heard how gorilla-based tourism is bringing revenue to communities in Uganda and Rwanda, and so they are hoping that by protecting their forest they are protecting gorillas and they may be able to add some benefits in the future.

e360: Are the poachers typically local, and are they hunting for subsistence or are they selling the meat?

Imong: Most of them are local people, coming from communities living right next to the park or the Mbe Mountains. And hunting is mainly for subsistence. Depending on how much a hunter kills, he will sell part of that to get income. Historically, hunting gorillas was purely for subsistence. There are many areas where selling gorilla meat was actually prohibited. Gorillas were historically hunted because hunters gained a little bit of status in society by killing gorillas. So for example, during traditional ceremonies, a hunter who had killed a gorilla will dance with the skull, for example, or other parts that he has kept. He will gain respect by killing gorillas. It was mainly for these reasons that people hunted gorillas. But as populations increased, as people became more interested in economic gains rather than cultural incentives, people began to hunt gorilla meat to get income. But even now, not many people who kill gorillas would openly sell gorilla meat. It is sold in secret because people are aware that this is a protected species that should not be hunted.

e360: Is there a demand that's coming from outside west or central Africa for gorilla meat or gorilla parts?

Imong: We haven't actually seen hunters come in from farther than central Africa. But more and more, we are seeing gorilla parts being trafficked, especially from Cameroon into Nigeria — gorilla skulls, limbs, all kinds of parts — mainly, we hear, for purposes of rituals. And we really worry about this new development, because if the focus is now on parts, then we might have a crisis on our hands because it's so much easier just to take the skull or hand of a gorilla and move between places, rather than carry the whole body of the animal to sell as bush meat. We're looking into how we can get security agents sensitized, aware of these developments at the checkpoints.

e360: The communities in the Mbe Mountains set up a wildlife sanctuary back in 2005, is that correct?

Imong: Yes. The communities realized that it would be difficult to do this by themselves, so they invited other stakeholders like the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). They formed the Conservation Association of the Mbe Mountains. Over the years, WCS has been providing technical support and some funding to these communities. WCS employs 14 eco-guides, who are themselves retired hunters or ex-hunters who now protect the forest. They are based permanently in the forests. We have established base camps for them, and they go out from these base camps on a daily basis, conducting anti-poaching patrols and also helping to monitor the wildlife.

When rangers — or eco-guards in the Mbe Mountains — apprehend a person, they usually confiscate shotguns from them and any live cartridges or wire snares. In the case of the Mbe Mountains, such a person would then be reported to the community; eco-guards don't physically arrest somebody because they are not armed. They will take the particulars of the hunter, return to the community and report to the conservation association, and the communities will deal with that person. In the case of the national park or the wildlife sanctuary managed by the government, arrests will be made of such a hunter and then later [prosecution] ...

e360: What are some of the activities that seem to be most effective at engaging these communities in protecting this area?

Imong: One of them is promoting conservation awareness. It is important that everyone in the community is aware as much as possible of the value of the Cross River gorilla. So we are doing very vigorous conservation education — through regular community meetings, through forming conservation clubs in schools, talking to children to assert the idea of conservation to them early in life. We are helping to build the next generation of passionate conservationists, hopefully.

The other thing we do is support alternative livelihoods, so people no longer hunt as they used to. We are advising people to adopt more sustainable farming practices. So, for example, we have helped train ex-hunters in beekeeping. Some people want to keep chickens or goats. We are helping equip them with the skills that they need to be able to adopt these alternative livelihoods. We are limited by funding, so we are not able yet to scale up to the level that we know would have the desired impact, but we have had a good start and the communities appreciate this effort.

e360: Has anything you've tried not worked in terms of community-based conservation, and more broadly, what are some of the challenges that you face doing this kind of work?

Imong: The approach we have taken in the Mbe Mountains is to get all of the nine communities that claim traditional ownership of the forest to work together. As you know that can be very challenging — getting different people, sometimes with different interests, to come together and work together as one unit. That has been a challenge, but we have managed to overcome that in the sense that all the communities have a single, common goal of protecting the forest, but also hopefully in future gaining some benefits from there.

e360: You mentioned hoping that the community wildlife sanctuary could be a model for other conservation efforts in Africa. Are the communities in the Mbe Mountains outliers in terms of their enthusiasm for this conservation?

Imong: I don't think these communities are unique. It's a question of first talking to people, getting people to understand why it is important to protect the forests and the wildlife around them. It is also important to have the communities themselves make a commitment. This is not an imposed idea. This is an idea that actually came from the communities. And I know there are many other communities that would want to protect their forests. What is missing sometimes is somebody to go in and talk to these communities. It is a long process. It took a long time for me to go around to all of these nine communities. We had really lengthy discussions to get everybody on board. Sometimes the mistake is going into a community and looking to find one person who is very active and trying to work with that individual. What we've done here is actually getting whole communities involved. I'm sure this can be replicated elsewhere.

e360: It sounds like person-to-person communication is key to ensuring that success.

Imong: It is really key. In the early years I would spend weeks living with the people — sleeping in their houses, eating what they eat, and very slowly getting their ideas and then advising and pointing out areas where things could be improved. It took a long time to build that trust. When I go to the Mbe Mountains now, in any community, I feel that people trust what I am saying to them. We've managed to build a really good working relationship.



Protecting the great ape



In Nigeria, critically endangered gorillas are getting a lifeline, by virtue of a conservation project providing safe passage between two protected areas.

Southeastern Nigeria is home to some of the most immense biodiversity in Africa. The tropical montane forests in this part of the continent spread far and wide across the Mbe Mountains, which run close to the border of Cameroon.

Two designated protected areas in this region are the [Cross River National Park](#) and the [Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary](#), both of which are home to the critically-endangered Cross River gorilla. There are less than 300 such animals left in existence, making them the most threatened ape in all of Africa.



Traditionally, these gorilla populations would cover the whole Mbe Mountain region, and so the gorillas are naturally drawn to crossing the entire area. But the separation of the region into different parks has left gorilla populations increasingly isolated from each other. Attempting to navigate the narrow corridor between the

Cross River National Park and the Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary has proved a dangerous activity for them to undertake – with this unprotected region also a hotspot for hunters catching animals for the illegal bushmeat trade.

‘Protecting and maintaining this corridor is critical for the overall survival of the population,’ Inaoyom Imong, Director of the [Cross River Gorilla Landscape Project](#), emphasises to *Geographical*. ‘They need to go across.’

Imong grew up in these forests, hunting with his father. ‘They’re my gorillas, it’s my



forest,’ he says with a smile. ‘I was always super excited about the sheer diversity of the forest. My father would describe the different plants, their medicinal value, the animals and birds. I was really intrigued by all of these.’

After moving away to study Conservation Biology, he returned home to find the

pressure of growing human populations had left the forests very different to how he remembered. ‘I was shocked to go back into the same forest where I used to hunt with my father and, due to hunting, could no longer see many of the animals I used to see commonly,’ he says. ‘At that point I felt like I needed to do something.’

“The communities take extreme pride in having gorillas in their forests. They will brag to other communities that do not have gorillas in their forests”



The growth of the illegal bushmeat trade (an estimated 900,000 reptiles, birds and mammals are sold each year for bushmeat around the Nigeria–Cameroon border) and the deforestation which accompanies local people’s subsistence farming, has resulted in a genuine threat to the continued

existence of the Cross River gorilla. Imong hopes to change this.

Together with the Nigerian [Wildlife Conservation Society](#), he began engaging with local communities to educate and motivate people about the potential environmental damages of hunting and deforestation, as well as the detrimental impact which it was having on the Cross River gorillas.



‘The really interesting thing here is that the communities take extreme pride in having gorillas in their forests,’ he explains. ‘They will brag to other communities that do not have gorillas in their forests. And they realise the forest is valuable, because they get a lot of products from there.’

Imong hopes his project can educate people about alternative sources of income. For example, people have been greatly encouraged by news about countries like Uganda and Rwanda, where investing in gorilla protection is making money for people from [‘gorilla tourism’](#).

‘I’m going to support the communities to make that happen,’ he continues. ‘But also to further strengthen law enforcement and increase the work that I’m already doing; raising awareness amongst the communities, taking school kids into the forest on field trips, giving them that experience in the forest. They are always excited when I take them into the forest and I point out all these things. They go back home to their parents and talk to them and there is increasing interest and support for conservation in this area.’

Securing the Mbe Mountain region as a community wildlife sanctuary, engaging local people, and creating patrols of eco-guards to enforce the new legislation, looks to be essential in ensuring the long-term survival of the Cross River gorilla. Then, Imong can legitimately aspire to future generations being able to enjoy the same wildlife forest experience he grew up with.

Inaoyom Imong is a winner of a 2015 Whitley Award, from the [Whitley Fund for Nature](#)



Mail & Guardian Africa – News Website

5th June 2015

<http://mgafrica.com/article/2015-06-02-world-environment-day-success-stories-from-africa/>



World Environment Day: Clap, clap, African success stories from the past 12 months

These stories are not sexy enough for the big headlines, but probably will do more to secure your future than anything else.



That beautiful green roof, Jinja, Uganda. (Photo/JJ/Flickr).

CELEBRATED every year on June 5, World Environment Day is the UN's principal vehicle to encourage worldwide awareness and action for the environment. Currently many of the Earth's ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change, pushed by high population growth and exploitation for economic development.

This is highly visible on the African continent where stories of environmental degradation are prevalent, but there is more.

In celebration of World Environment Day we take a look at the success stories from the past 12 months which look set to transform the status quo and launch countries into a greener future:

Boost for rarest ape

Inaoyom Imong of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Nigeria Programme has won the prestigious Whitley Award for his work in protecting the Cross River gorilla, Africa's most endangered great ape. The Whitley Award, donated by the Garfield Weston Foundation and worth about \$54,000 in project funding, is given annually to individuals in recognition of noteworthy achievements in conservation.

Classified as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the Cross River gorilla numbers fewer than 300 individuals throughout its range and is the rarest of the four subspecies of gorilla. The recognition for his work was vital in garnering more support for his efforts and the funding will ensure the continued survival of the rare ape.



Inaoyom Imong

War on blood ivory rages on

Kenya, Ethiopia, and Congo (Brazzaville) burned tons of stockpiled ivory, sending a strong message against elephant poaching and ivory trafficking. President Uhuru Kenyatta said the burning attests to Kenya's continuing effort to put ivory beyond economic use and is consistent with international norms regarding disposal of seized contraband. Meanwhile, China - the leading importer of illegal tusks - gave further hope to Africa's elephants when they announced they would phase out their legal domestic ivory market.

Massive restoration in Ethiopia

At the UN Climate Summit an alliance of governments, companies, and civil society issued the New York Declaration on Forests. This declaration included a pledge to restore 350 million hectares of deforested and degraded landscapes by 2030. Ethiopia was not to be outdone, making one of the most significant pledges.

The country set a target to restore 15 million hectares of degraded and deforested land into productivity by 2025 - that's about one-sixth of the country's total land area, a swath larger than the whole of Malawi. Not only does this pledge position Ethiopia as a global leader in the restoration movement, but following through on this pledge could yield environmental, social, and economic benefits for communities throughout the country.

Rwanda to cash in for climate change

Rwanda launched the “Fund for the Environment and Climate Change”, a groundbreaking initiative and the biggest of its kind in Africa. The fund will be the engine of green growth in Rwanda, mobilising and channeling domestic and international financing to public and private environment and climate change projects.

The green fund will support projects that align with the country's commitment to a strong and prosperous green economy. Currently the fund has received over 1,000 funding submissions, mobilised over \$75 million, approved 18 projects and trained over 750 stakeholders in proposal development. By 2020, it aim to raise US \$100 million per year, create 5,000 green jobs in Rwanda and prevent the emission of thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere.

Joint Coverage with Dino Martins

BBC Africa – Radio Interview

Presented by Fred Dove

29th April 2015

Weekly Audience of 96 million

<https://soundcloud.com/bbcafrica/gorillas-and-insects>



**Ananda Kumar
India**

Elephant messengers: using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in southern India

Winner of the Whitley Award donated by WWF-UK



Broadcast.....	215
Print.....	216-223
Websites.....	224-257
Joint coverage with Pramod Patil	259-268

Broadcast

Radio Mango, Dubai – Radio Interview

Subject: An elephant story

5th May 2015

<https://soundcloud.com/radio-mango-uae/an-elephant-story>



ಗಜ ಸಂಘರ್ಷ ತಪ್ಪಿಸಿದ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಿಗೆ ಗ್ರೀನ್ ಆಸ್ಕರ್

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10 ವರ್ಷದಲ್ಲಿ
ನಡೆದಿಲ್ಲ ಕಾಡಾನೆ ದಾಳಿ

• ವಿನೋದಕುಮಾರ್ ಬಿ. ನಾಯ್ಕ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು: ಅನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾನವ ಸಂಘರ್ಷ ತಡೆಯುವಲ್ಲಿ ಪರಿಣಾಮಕಾರಿ ಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತಂದಿರುವ ಮೈಸೂರು ಮೂಲ ಡಾ.ಅನಂದಕುಮಾರ್‌ಗೆ ಗ್ರೀನ್ ಆಸ್ಕರ್ ಎಂದೇ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧಿಯಾಗಿರುವ 'ವಿಶ್ವ ಪ್ರಶಸ್ತಿ' ಸಂದಿದೆ. ಬ್ರಿಟನ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಬುಧವಾರ ನಡೆದ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಡಾ.ಅನಂದಕುಮಾರ್ ಹಾಗೂ ಗ್ರೇಟ್ ಇಂಡಿಯನ್ ಬಸ್ನರ್ಸ್ ಹಕ್ಕಿಗಳ ಸಂರಕ್ಷಣೆಗೆ ಶ್ರಮಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಮಹಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರದ ಪ್ರಮೋದ ಪಾಟೀಲ್‌ಗೆ ಗ್ರೀನ್ ಆಸ್ಕರ್ ಪ್ರಶಸ್ತಿ ಪ್ರದಾನ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು.



ಮೈಸೂರು ವಿವಿಯ ಪ್ರಾಣಿ ಮನಶಾಸ್ತ್ರ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದ ನಂತರ ಅನಂದಕುಮಾರ್ ಕೊಯಮತ್ತೂರು ಸಮೀಪದ ಅನಮಲ್ವೆ (ಅನೇಗಳ ಬೆಟ್ಟ) ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾನವ ಸಂಘರ್ಷ ಕುರಿತಂತೆ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದರು. 221 ಚದರ ಕಿಲೋಮೀಟರ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪುಟ್ಟಕೊಂಡಿರುವ ಈ ಬೆಟ್ಟ ಸಾಲುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಕಾಡನ್ನು ಕಡಿದು ಕಾಫಿ ಮತ್ತು ಟಿ ತೋಟಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. 70 ಸಾವಿರ ಜನ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ, ಸುಮಾರು 2 ಸಾವಿರ ಅನೇಗಳ ವಾಸ್ತುಗಳ ಈ ಪ್ರದೇಶ. ಇಂತಹ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಮೈಸೂರಿನ ನೇಚರ್ ಕನ್ಸರ್ವೇಶನ್ ಫೌಂಡೇಶನ್ ಎನ್ನುವ ಸರ್ಕಾರೇತರ ವೈಜ್ಞಾನಿಕ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ತಂಡದ ಮೂಲಕ ಅನಂದಕುಮಾರ್ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಆರಂಭಿಸಿದರು. ಕಳೆದ 10 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಕಾಡಾನೆಗಳ ನಡವಳಿಗೆ ಕುರಿತಂತೆ ಸಂಶೋಧನೆ ನಡೆಸಿ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ಎಂಎಸ್ ಅಧಾರಿತ ಮುನ್ಸೂಚನಾ ಉಪಕರಣವೆಂದಾಗಿ ಅನಮಲ್ವೆ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಳೆದ ಅನೇಕ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಕಾಡಾನೆ ದಾಳಿಯಿಂದ ಯಾರೊಬ್ಬರೂ ಮೃತಪಟ್ಟಿಲ್ಲ. ಈ ತಂತ್ರಜ್ಞಾನ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಂಘರ್ಷ ತಗ್ಗಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ನೀಡಿದ ಕೊಡುಗೆ ಗಮನಿಸಿ ಗ್ರೀನ್ ಆಸ್ಕರ್ ಪ್ರಶಸ್ತಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಅನೆ ದಾಳಿಯಿಂದ ಮೃತಪಟ್ಟ ಬಹುತೇಕ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಅನೆ ಇರುವಿಕೆಯ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಇಲ್ಲದಿರುವುದೇ ಕಾರಣ. ಅನೆ ಇದೆ ಎಂದಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಯಾರೂ ಹೋಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಆದ್ದರಿಂದ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಮನೂಚನೆ ನೀಡುವ, ಚಾಗ್ರತೆಯಿಂದ ಓಡಾಡುವ ಅರಿವು ಮೂಡಿಸುವ ಯೋಜನೆ ರೂಪಿಸಿ ಅದನ್ನು ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತರಲಾಯಿತು. ಈಗ ಕಾಡಾನೆ ದಾಳಿಯಿಂದ ಮೃತಪಡುವವರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಗಣನೀಯವಾಗಿ ತಗ್ಗಿದೆ. ಸಂಘರ್ಷ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗಿದೆ.



• ಡಾ.ಅನಂದಕುಮಾರ್, ವನ್ಯಜೀವಿ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಿ



ಎಸ್‌ಎಂಎಸ್ ಮಾಹಿತಿ: ಅನಂದ್ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ಎಸ್‌ಎಂಎಸ್ ರವಾನಿಸುವ ತಂತ್ರಾಂಶ ವಿಶಿಷ್ಟವಾಗಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಅನಂದ ಕಳೆದ 10 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಈ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನೇಗಳು ಯಾವುದೇ ತಿಂಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಗೆ ವಲಸೆ ಹೋಗುತ್ತವೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಅರಿತುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ ಅಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಅನೇಗಳು ಓಡಾಡುವ ಹಳ್ಳಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಜನರ ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವೆಲ್ಲವನ್ನೂ ಓಂದು ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್ ರೂಮ್‌ನಿಂದ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅದೇ ರೀತಿ ಅನೇಗಳ ಓಡಾಟ ಕಂಡುಬರುತ್ತಿದ್ದಂತೆಯೇ ಗ್ರಾಮಸ್ಥರು ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್ ರೂಮ್‌ಗೆ ಸಂದೇಶ ರವಾನಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅಗ ಅನೇಗಳ ಗುಂಪು ಮುಂದೆ ಆ ಹಳ್ಳಿಯಿಂದ ಯಾವ ಹಳ್ಳಿಯ ಕಡೆಗೆ ಪ್ರಯಾಣ ಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ವಿಶ್ಲೇಷಿಸಿ ಆಯಾ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ ಹಳ್ಳಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಎಸ್‌ಎಂಎಸ್ ಸಂದೇಶವನ್ನ ಕಳಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದಾಗಿ ಆಯಾ ಭಾಗಗಳ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಅನೇಗಳು ಬರುವ ಮನೂಚನೆ ಸಿಗುವುದರಿಂದ ಅತಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಚಾಗ್ರತೆಯಿಂದ ಓಡಾಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. ರಾತ್ರಿ ಹೊತ್ತು ಸಂಚಾರ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಅನೆ ದಾಳಿಗೆ ಸಿಟ್ಟು ಜನ ಸಾಯುವುದು ಭಾರಿ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಆಗಿದೆ. ಎಸ್‌ಎಂಎಸ್ ಮೂಲಕವಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಕೆಬಲ್ ಟವಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಹ ಅನೇಗಳ ಓಡಾಟದ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರತಿ ಗಂಟೆಗೊಮ್ಮೆ ಬಿತ್ತರ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಇಮ್ಮೊದರ ಜತೆಗೆ, ಅನೇಗಳು ಓಡಾಡುವ ಊರುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅತಿ ಎತ್ತರದ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಂಬವೊಂದನ್ನು ಹಾಕಿ ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ಕೆಂಪು ಲೈಟ್ ಆಳವಡಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಯಾವ ಊರಿನ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅನೇಗಳು ಓಡಾಡುತ್ತಿವೆಯೋ ಆ ಊರಿನ ಸ್ವಯಂಸೇವಕನೊಬ್ಬ ಆ ಕೆಂಪು ಲೈಟ್ ಆನ್ ಮಾಡಿಡುತ್ತಾನೆ. ಇಡೀ ರಾತ್ರಿ ಆ ಲೈಟ್ ಉರಿಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದಾಗಿ ಓಂದೊಮ್ಮೆ ರಾತ್ರಿ ಊರಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ಜನರಿಗೆ ದೂರದಿಂದಲೇ ಆ ಕೆಂಪು ಲೈಟ್ ಕಂಡು ಊರಿನ ಸುತ್ತಮುತ್ತ ಅನೇಗಳು ಬಂದಿವೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ಅರಿವು ಉಂಟಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಆ ಚಾಗ್ರತೆಯಿಂದ ಮನೆ ಸೇರುತ್ತಾನೆ ಅಥವಾ ಪಕ್ಕದ ಹಳ್ಳಿಗೆ ತೆರಳುತ್ತಾನೆ. ಈ ವಿನ್ಯೂತನ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಗಳಿಂದಾಗಿ ಅನಮಲ್ವೆ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಡಾನೆ ದಾಳಿಗೆ ಸಿಲುಕಿ ಸಾಯುವ ಹಾಗೂ ಗಾಯಗೊಳುವವರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಶೂನ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಇಳಿದಿದೆ. ಅನಂದ ಮಾಡಿರುವ ಸಂಶೋಧನೆಗೆ ಊರಿನ ಜನರೂ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ಕೃತಜ್ಞತೆಯಿಂದ ಸಹಕಾರ ಮುಂದುವರಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಕನ್ನಡದ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಿ ನೆರೆಯ ತಮಿಳುನಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಇಂತಹ ಸಾಧನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ ಅನುಭವ ಮತ್ತು ಜ್ಞಾನವನ್ನ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಆರಣ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳೂ ಬಳಸಿಕೊಂಡಲ್ಲಿ ಇಲ್ಲಿನ ಅನೆ-ವನವಳ ಸಂಘರ್ಷವನ್ನೂ ತಗ್ಗಿಸಿ ವನವಳು ಹಬ್ಬುತ್ತದೆ.

ಜಮೀನು, ಪೊದೆಗಳ ಅಕ್ಕಪಕ್ಕ ಹೋಗುವಾಗ ಗುಂಪಾಗಿ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅನೇಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಗ್ರಾಮಸ್ಥರಿಗೆ ಮೊದಲೇ ಸಿಗುವುದರಿಂದ ಜನರೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮುಂಚಾಗ್ಯತಾ ಕ್ರಮ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದರಿಂದ ಅನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾನವ ಸಂಘರ್ಷ ಕಡಿಮೆಯಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

Title: Indian wins England's Whitley Award

DINAKARAN
2/5/2015 RNI Regn.No.33699/77 Postal Regn No. CB/002/2015-2017

இந்தியருக்கு இங்கிலாந்தின் வைட்லி விருது

வால்பாறை, மே 2: வால்பாறை பகுதியில் என்.சி.எப் என்ற தன்னார்வ ஆராய்ச்சி மையம் வனம் மற்றும் வனவிலங்கு மனித மோதல் குறித்து கடந்த 20 வருடமாக ஆராய்ச்சிகள் மேற்கொண்டுவருகிறது. டாக்டர் ஆனந்தகுமார் ஆராய்ச்சியின்படி வால்பாறையில் மனித விலங்கு மோதல்களை தடுக்கவனத்துறை மற்றும் தனியார் நிர்வாகங்கள், ஊடகங்கள் இணைந்து நடவடிக்கை எடுக்கப்பட்டது.

அதனடிப்படையில் யானைகள் ஊருக்குள் வந்தால் மனித உயிர் சேதத்தை தடுக்கும் வகையில், பொதுமக்கள் அறிந்துகொள்ள எஸ்.எம்.எஸ் மூலமாகவும், எச்சரிக்கை லைட் மற்றும் சைரன் மூலமாகவும், உள்ளூர் தொலைக்காட்சிகள் மூலமாகவும், பொதுமக்கள் எளிதாக அறிந்துகொள்ள ஏற்பாடு செய்யப்பட்டது.

அவர்களும் யானைகள் வந்தால் மற்றவர்களுக்கு தெரிவிக்கும் வகையில் எளிதான தொழில்நுட்பத்தில் கருவிகள் அமைத்து, எஸ்டேட்கள் தோறும் அவற்றை பொருத்தினர்.



வால்பாறையில் மனித விலங்கு மோதல் தவிர்ப்பு குறித்து ஆராய்ந்த ஆராய்ச்சியாளர் டாக்டர் ஆனந்தகுமாருக்கு இங்கிலாந்தின் வைட்லி விருது வழங்கப்பட்டது.

இந்நிலையில் கடந்த 10 ஆண்டுகளாக மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்ட முயற்சியால் தற்போது மனித விலங்கு மோதல் குறைந்து உள்ளது. உயிர் இழப்புகள் முற்றிலும் குறைந்து உள்ளது.

இங்கிலாந்தில் உள்ள வைட்லி நிறுவனம் இத்திட்டத்தை பாராட்டியும், உலகளவில் இருந்து பெறப்பட்ட 175 திட்டங்களில், வால்பாறையில் செயல்படுத்தப்பட்டு வரும் மனித விலங்கு மோதல் தடுப்பு இத்திட்டத்தை தொடர்ந்து செயல்படுத்த ரொக்க விருதான ரூ. 33.5 லட்சத்தை என்.சி.எப். ஆராய்ச்சியாளர் டாக்டர் ஆனந்தகுமாருக்கு வழங்கியுள்ளது.

Dinamani – Tamil Newspaper
2nd May 2015
Title: Britain honours Indian elephant

DINAMANI 2/5/2015

யானை ஆராய்ச்சியாளருக்கு பிரிட்டன் அமைப்பு விருது

பொள்ளாச்சி, மே. 1: வால்பாறை பகுதியில் புதிய தொழில்நுட்பத்தைப் பயன்படுத்தி யானை-மனித எதிர்கொள்ளலைக் கட்டுப்படுத்தியதற்காக தமிழ் யானைகள் ஆராய்ச்சியாளருக்கு, பிரிட்டனைச் சேர்ந்த வன உயிர் அமைப்பான விட்லி பன்ட் பார் நேச்சர் விருது வழங்கியுள்ளது. வால்பாறை பகுதியில் யானை-மனித எதிர்கொள்ளலைத் தவிர்க்கும் விதமாக செல்லிப்பேசி மூலம் குறஞ்செய்தி உள்ளிட்ட பல்வேறு நடவடிக்கைகள் இயற்கை பாதுகாப்பு அமைப்பின் யானைகள் ஆராய்ச்சியாளர் ஆனந்தகுமாரின் முயற்சியால் நடைபெற்று வருகிறது. இதனால், கடந்த 2013-ஆம் ஆண்டில் இருந்து இதுவரை வால்பாறை பகுதியில் யானை-மனித எதிர்கொள்ளலால் உயிரிழப்பு ஏற்படவில்லை.

ஆராய்ச்சியாளர் ஆனந்தகுமாரின் இந்த முயற்சியைப்பாராட்டி பிரிட்டனைச் சேர்ந்த விட்லி பன்ட் பார் நேச்சர் என்ற அமைப்பு, அவருக்கு புதன் கிழமை விருது வழங்கியது. இங்கு



பிரிட்டன் இளவரசி ஆனிடிடம் இருந்து விருதைப் பெறும் யானைகள் ஆராய்ச்சியாளர் ஆனந்தகுமார்.

விருதை எலிசபெத் ராணியின் பேத்தியான இளவரசி ஆனி வழங்கினார். யானை ஆராய்ச்சியில் தொடர்ந்து ஈடுபட ஆனந்தகுமாருக்கு ரூ.33 லட்சம் நிதி உதவி வழங்கப்பட்டது. இந்த விருது இந்தியாவைச் சேர்ந்த இருவருக்கு வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. அதில், அனந்தகுமார் லைவர் உயிர்

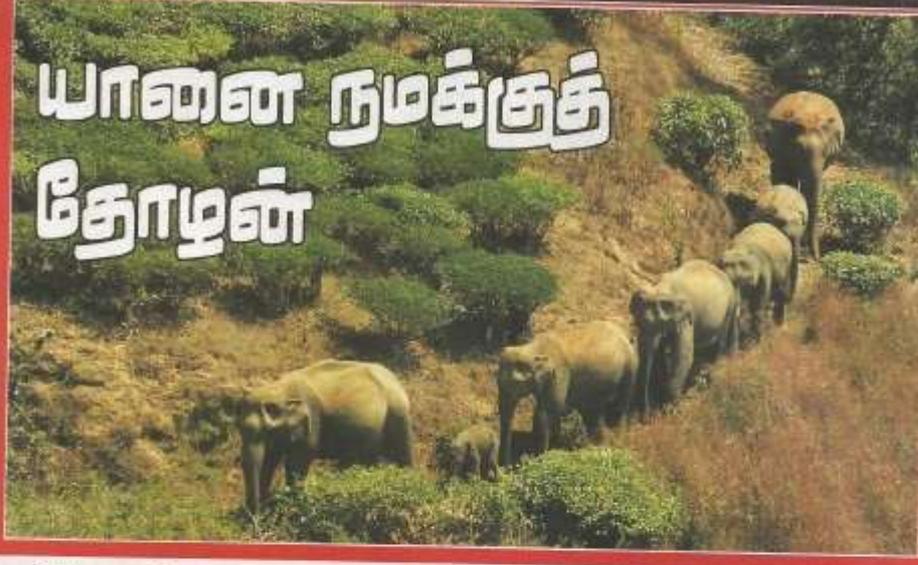
Partners in conservation

That wildlife conservation efforts cannot succeed in the long term without the proactive involvement of local communities living in and around forest areas has been a well-established fact. The latest lion census conducted in Gujarat reaffirms this. The exercise has shown a 27 per cent rise in the feline's numbers, which now stand at 523, compared to 411 in 2010. Forest officials acknowledge that this conservation success story would not have come about without support from the Maldharis, a nomadic tribe of cattle-rearers, and also farmers living in the vicinity of the Gir National Park. Lion territory in Gujarat spans some 22,000 sq km across four districts – Junagadh, Bhavnagar, Amreli and Gir-Somnath. This covers 2,600 villages with an approximate population of 7,00,000. Lions now frequent more villages than in the past, with about 167 of them found roaming outside the protected forest area, creating hardly any conflict situations. The lions have actually helped control the population not only of nilgai, its principal source of food, but also of wild boars, which frequently destroy standing crops. Thus, they have benefited the local communities. These communities have reciprocated by protecting the animals from poachers, resisting retaliation when lions prey on cattle, and even building parapet walls around farm-wells to minimise the accidental death of lions that may fall into them.

Although humans and animals have coexisted for ages, the story has not always had a happy ending. Challenges posed by human casualties, and damage to crops, buildings and so on from wildlife intrusions have led one group of conservationists to argue that villagers residing in forest areas ought to be sent out. But another group insists that such a move will result in the loss of goodwill of local communities, impeding conservation efforts. The question is how goodwill could be generated when fear of the animal itself looms large. In Gir, it has become possible to inculcate a sense of pride and ownership among local communities regarding the animal. They share a virtual spiritual bond with the lion. Down south in Valparai, Tamil Nadu, meanwhile, there has been a gradual decline in human fatalities caused by wild elephants after early-warning systems that use text messages and flash light alerts were deployed with help from forest-dwellers within a 2-km radius of herd locations. The Nature Conservation Foundation that has been working on this has found that often it is lack of awareness about the animal's presence that results in casualties. When the 2006 Forest Rights Act upheld the forest-dwellers' traditional right to land, conservationists resisted it over concerns of habitat fragmentation. But as testimonies from Gir and elsewhere demonstrate, making local communities active partners can create a win-win situation on the conservation front.

யானைகளைப் புரிந்துகொண்டால் ஆபத்தில்லை!

யானை நமக்குத் தோழன்



வீடில் பாண்டியில் யானை தாக்கி இருவர் பலி, வீடுகள் சேதம்' -இந்தச் செய்தியை நாம் பல நேரம் திணைக்கணில் வாசிப்பது உண்டு. அது நமக்கு செய்தியாக இருக்கலாம். ஆனால், ஆனைமனைப் பகுதியில் உள்ள தேயிலைத் தோட்டங்களை நம்பி வராமல் 70,000 மக்களுக்கு அது தினம் தினம் அச்சம் தரும் திகழ்வு. இந்தப் பகுதியில் கடந்த 19 வருடங்களில் மட்டும் 39 பேர் யானை தாக்கி மாணம் அடைந்துள்ளனர்.

"இதில் 35 பேருக்குத் தாங்கள் யானையின் அருகில் இருக்கிறோம் என்பதே தெரியாதது காரணமாகத்தான் விபத்து ஏற்பட்டுள்ளது" என்று கூறும் அனந்த குமார், இந்தப் பகுதி மக்களுக்கு யானையிடமிருந்து நற்காத்துக் கொள்ள பல் முன்வெச்சரிக்கை முறைகளை (Early Warning System) உருவாக்கியுள்ளார்.

இந்த ஆண்டிற்கான Whitley Nature for Fund நிறுவனத்தின் கீர்ஸ் ஆஸ்கர் என்று அழைக்கப்படும் Whitley Award, அனந்தகுமாரின் முயற்சிக்கு வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. தார்ப் பாலைவனத்தில் உள்ள

பறவை வகைகளைப் பாதுகாத்த ப்ரமோத் பட்டேல் என்ற மற்றொரு இந்தியருக்கும் இவ்விருது வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

"கடந்த இருபது வருடங்களாக நான் ஆனைமனையில் வசித்து வருகிறேன், 12 வருடங்களாக யானைகளின் குணங்களைப் புரிந்தும் படித்தும் வருகிறேன். சுமார் 120 வருடங்களாகத்தான் மனிதர்கள் இங்கு வசித்து வருகின்றனர். ஆனால், இந்த மிகப்பெரிய மாற்றத்தை ஏற்றுக்கொள்ள யானைகளுக்கு இது குறுகியகாலம்தான்..." என்று கூறும் அனந்தகுமார், ஆனைமனைப் பகுதியில் நடந்துவரும் மனிதன் மற்றும் யானை முரண்பாடுகளைத் தவிர்க்கும் செயல்களில் இறங்கியுள்ளார்.

Nature Conservation Foundation என்ற அமைப்பில் விஞ்ஞானியாக பணிபுரியும் அனந்தகுமார், முதலில் யானைகளை நேரடியாகக் கண்காணித்து மக்களுக்கு அது பற்றிய தகவல்களைத் தெரியப்படுத்தி உள்ளார். ஆனால், அது வெறும்

வாய் வார்த்தையாக இருந்தால் மக்களிடம் முழுமையாகச் சென்றடையவில்லை. இதைப் பயனுள்ளதால் மாற்ற கேட்கும் ஊடக யானைகள் நடமாட்டத்தை அறிவிக்க ஆரம்பித்தார்.

"சில வருடங்களில், மக்கள் சேட்டிளைட் டெவிலிஷனிற்கு மாறியதால் கேட்கும் ஊடக யானைகளைக் கைவிடப்பட்டது. அதே நேரம்





செல்போன் பிரபலமாகி இருந்தது. அதனால், ஒரு செய்திச் சேவையைத் (Bulk Message Service) தொடங்கினோம்" என்கிறார்.

அனந்தகுமாரின் குழு, அரசு அதிகாரிகள், தேயிலைத் தோட்ட நிர்வாகிகள், கிராமக் குழுக்கள் அனைவரையும் ஒருங்கிணைத்து யானைத் தகவல் பிணைப்பை (Elephant Information Network) உருவாக்கியுள்ளனர். இதன் மூலம் இந்தக் குழுஞ்செய்திச் சேவையை மக்களுக்கு தமிழிலும் மொழிபெயர்ப்பு செய்து அனுப்பி வருகின்றனர்.

அனந்தகுமார் எஸ்.எம்.எஸ். சேவையேடு நிறுத்திக் கொள்ளவில்லை. சில நேரங்களில் தொடர்பு துண்டிக்கப்பட்டால் என்ன செய்வது என்றும் யோசித்தவர்கள். ஒரு வார்ட்சிம்ஸ் சொன்ன கதையினால் உந்தப்பட்டு, ஒளிரும் விளக்குகளைக் கொண்டு எச்சரிக்கை ஒலி எழுப்பும் கருவியை தகுந்த இடங்களில் மக்களின் உதவியோடு நிறுவியுள்ளார். அதை மக்களே இயக்கும் வகையில் அவர்களை ஊக்கப்படுத்தியுள்ளார்.

'லண்டனில் உள்ள 'Royal Geographical Society' இல் நடந்த விருது பெறும் விழாவில் வால்பாறை போன்ற பகுதிகளில் கண்டிப்பாக மக்களும் யானைகளும் ஒன்றாய் வாழ முடியும். சுற்றுச் சூழலை நிலையானதாய் மாற்ற அறிவியல் மட்டும் போதாது. அது மக்களிடமும் சென்று அடைய வேண்டும். ஆனால், பயணம் நீண்டது. டிசெனில், சகவாழ்வு என்பது ஒரு நீண்ட தூரப் பயணம், இலக்கு அல்ல (Coexistence is a journey, not a destination) என்று கூறியுள்ளார் அனந்தகுமார்.

இந்த எஸ்.எம்.எஸ்., சிவப்பு விளக்குக் கருவிகள் முறையால் பல உயிரிகள் காப்பாற்றப் படுகின்றன என அப்பகுதி மக்கள் மகிழ்ச்சி அடைந்துள்ளனர். பரிசுத் தொகையான 30000 (சுமார் 2 மில்லியன்)ஐ கொண்டு சத்தியமங்கலம் போன்ற பகுதிகளுக்குத் தன்னுடைய சேவையை விரிவுப்படுத்த உள்ளார் அனந்தகுமார்.

பார்த்த ஞாபகம் இல்லையோ?

போட்டி, எண் - 8

சரியான விடை

1. வடிவேலு
2. கவுண்டமணி
3. சந்தானம்

தலா 250 ரூபாய்

பரிசு பெற்ற வாசகர்கள்

1. எஸ். ஜஸ்வர்யா, சென்னை- 115
2. ம. மலர்க்கொடி, ஜேட்பாளையம்
3. ஜி. ஜோதி, பெருங்குளம்
4. ச. சித்திரைச்செல்வி, திருவாரூர்
5. இரா. தேன்மொழி, உச்சிநத்தம்
6. எஸ். சிவலாசம், வானியம்பாடி
7. புதுவை. ச. புகழேந்தி, கர்யமாளிக்கம்
8. மேட்டுப்பாளையம் மனோகர், சென்னை - 18
9. கே. ராகுல், அட்டப்பட்டி
10. ஏ. தண்டபாணி, பழனி

புதிய தலைமுறை 63
21 மே 2015

Websites

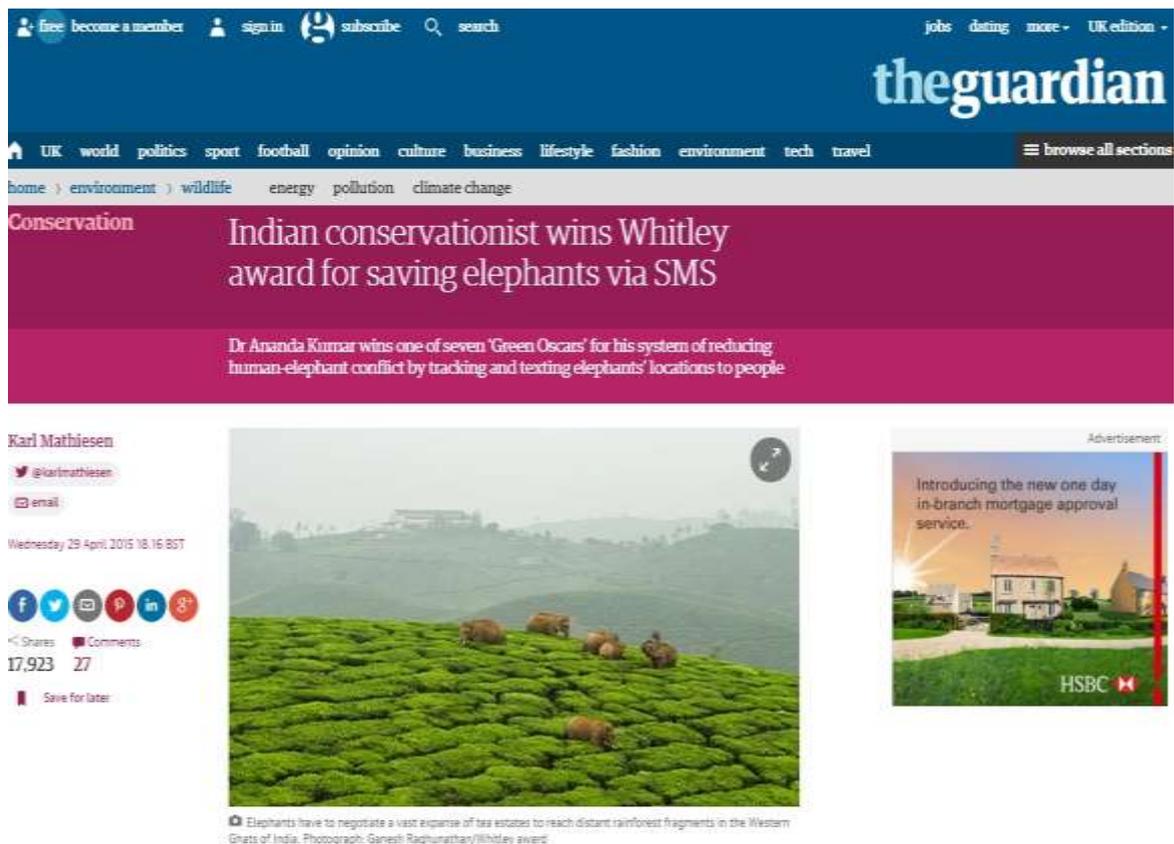
The Guardian Online – News Website

29th April 2015

15,151,839 visitors per month

Shared 17,922 times

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/29/indian-conservationist-wins-whitley-award-for-saving-elephants-via-sms>



The screenshot shows the top of the Guardian website with the logo and navigation menu. The main headline reads: "Indian conservationist wins Whitley award for saving elephants via SMS". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "Dr Ananda Kumar wins one of seven 'Green Oscars' for his system of reducing human-elephant conflict by tracking and texting elephants' locations to people". The article is by Karl Mathiesen, dated Wednesday 29 April 2015 18:16 BST. It has 17,923 shares and 27 comments. The main image shows a herd of elephants on a tea plantation. A small advertisement for HSBC is visible on the right side.

On the Valparai plateau in southern [India](#) people live in fear of unexpected encounters with giants in the dark.

As dusk settles, tea and coffee pickers collect rations from the townships run by the corporations that own the plantations and drift back towards their colonies. Buses drop workers on the roads and they make the precarious walk through the dark to their homes. “They are scared. If I am there I am really scared,” said conservationist Dr Ananda Kumar, who created an SMS warning system to help workers live safely among elephants. On Wednesday at a ceremony in London, his work won a £35,000 Whitley Award, dubbed a ‘Green Oscar’.

“That’s where the accidental encounters occurred. Most of the incidents. It’s very difficult to make out elephants in the dark. It’s a huge animal and looks like a rock and will be standing very still when they notice people.”

On the Valparai, high in India's Western Ghats, tea and coffee companies have flattened 221 sq km of prime rainforest for their plantations. The cleared land is now home to 70,000 workers, who live surrounded on all sides by the rugged, deeply forested Anamalai (Tamil for 'elephant hills').

But the 2,000 elephants who inhabit those hills don't recognise the multinational companies' claim to the plateau. Every year around 100 elephants use the plantations as a pathway to get to other parts of the rainforest.

"Elephants are strongly related to their ranges, this is scientifically established. It's a part of their home, which is lost to plantations because of historical exploitation," said Kumar, who has spent a decade working on a system of text messages, television alerts and warning lights that keep track of elephants as they move through the plantations. The programme won the [Whitley award](#) for its novel and pragmatic approach to the elephant-human conflict, which kills 400 people and more than 100 elephants across India every year.

If they are startled or feel threatened, elephants can be very dangerous. In the small community of Valparai, 41 people have been killed since 1994. The problem, said Kumar, was that people simply did not realise elephants were nearby.

"Out of 41 deaths, 36 people did not know there were elephants. If these people had known about the elephants' location, all these people would have been alive," Kumar told the Guardian. "Human habitations will also get hit by elephants. They will break from the outside, towards the kitchen. Obviously they are looking for [food]. Suddenly the people will hear a sound in the middle of the night at the kitchen side. It's a very traumatic experience."

Even so, people want to learn to live with elephants rather than drive them away. "There is a gentle perception of elephants," Kumar said, because of their manifestation as the Hindu god Ganesh. "People are really tolerant."



Ananda Kumar's project protects elephants and humans.

In a decade, Kumar's warning system has cut the rate of deaths from three per year to just one. It is seen as an exemplar in the efforts to tackle the India-wide conflict between elephants and humans.

A team of trackers, called the conflict response team, watches over elephants as they pass through the plateau, they are assisted by Tamil Nadu forestry department workers and local informants, who act as extra scouts for the programme. Information is relayed via a hotline, manned by Kumar's appropriately-named colleague Ganesh. The

hotline receives over 1,000 calls each year, many of them not seeking information about elephant locations but providing word of elephant sightings to their neighbours.

When an elephant is spotted, alerts are sent via text message to all those who reside within a few kilometres of an elephant's location. At 5pm each night, local TV stations broadcast the locations of all elephants on the plateau. The warnings also go out to volunteer wardens in each colony, who operate red warning beacons that light up via text message. This allows people to plan their trips and let visiting friends know to beware.

“The local communities have adopted this. Government has responded positively. It is a collective effort that is actually making it a win-win situation, both for elephants and for people,” said Kumar. Even incidents of elephants damaging property have reduced by half as the people embraced a philosophy of living with elephants and made food stores more secure.

Kumar said the challenge was not removing dangerous elephants but making habitat safe for both elephants and humans. He believes the perception of the [deranged rogue elephant](#) that has pervaded much the elephant conflict debate in India had been thoroughly debunked by science and the results of his programme.

“There are no problem elephants, there are problem locations,” he said.

Kumar and seven other grassroots conservationists from Africa, Asia and South America will receive their awards from Princess Anne at a ceremony in London hosted by television naturalist Kate Humble and attended by David Attenborough in his role as a Whitley trustee. Kumar said the money would be used to explore how the model that has worked so well in Valparai can be expanded into other areas.

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Indian conservationist wins prestigious Whitley Award

A single man's fight to protect elephants has reduced man-animal conflict in Tamil Nadu.

Indian conservationist Ananda Kumar has used innovative communication systems to reduce man-elephant conflict in southern India (Photo: Whitley Fund for Nature website).



Ananda Kumar is a happy man these days. And he has every reason to be. For, Kumar has recently been awarded the Whitley Award, dubbed a “Green Oscar”, for creating an SMS-warning system to help tea and coffee plantation workers live safely among elephants.

Man-elephant conflict is a common phenomenon in Valparai plateau in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore district. Here, people live in perpetual fear of unexpected encounters with elephants in the dark.

With forests gradually giving way to agricultural fields and human habitations, man-elephant conflicts have risen across India. In many places, elephant corridors have been proposed to ensure the safe and free passage of tuskers from one forest to another. Every year, 400 people and more than 100 elephants die across India, according to news reports.

In many states like Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha, village residents resort to traditional methods to scare jumbos away. This includes lighting firecrackers and beating drums at night. However, in many cases these measures fail to act as elephants plunder homes and fields, often trampling unlucky victims.

Valparai - the conflict zone

Valparai, located in the Western Ghats, has numerous tea and coffee plantations. Beverage companies have transformed 22,000 hectares of prime rainforests for setting up their estates. Around 70,000 workers, who work in these plantations, live in an area surrounded on all sides by the forested Anamalai hills.

As dusk falls, these workers make their way back to colonies after a hard day's work. But their journey is fraught with danger as there is a chance of encountering elephants on the way.

“They are scared. If I am there I am really scared,” Kumar was quoted by the media as saying. “It’s very difficult to make out elephants in the dark. It’s a huge animal and looks like a rock and will be standing very still when they notice people.”

About 2,000 elephants inhabit the Anamalai hills. Conflicts usually take place when every year these animals use the plantation route to reach other parts of the forest.



“Elephants are strongly related to their ranges, this is scientifically established. It’s a part of their home, which is lost to plantations because of historical exploitation,” Kumar added.

The conservationist has spent 10 years working on a system of text messages, TV alerts and warning lights to keep track of elephants during their movement.

According to Kumar, if elephants are startled or they feel threatened, they can be very dangerous. In Valparai, 41 people have been killed since 1994.

“Out of 41 deaths, 36 people did not know there were elephants. If these people had known about the elephants’ location, all these people would have been alive,” Kumar said.

But animals like the elephant occupy an important place in religion in India and people learn to live with elephants rather than drive them away. “There is a gentle perception of elephants,” Kumar said, as they are considered a manifestation of the Hindu god Ganesha.

The success story

In a decade, Kumar’s warning system has cut the rate of deaths arising out of man-elephant conflicts to just one from three per year. It is being considered a novel idea in reducing conflicts across India.

The conservationist has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning mechanism to alert people when the animals are nearby.

A team comprising trackers, known as the conflict response team, watches over the elephants. It is assisted by the Tamil Nadu forestry department workers and local informants. Information is relayed via a hotline, monitored by Kumar’s colleague. The hotline receives over 1,000 calls each year. Many of these calls provide information about elephant sightings.

When an elephant is spotted in a particular area, alerts are sent via text messages to all people who reside within a few kilometres. At 5pm every day, TV stations broadcast the locations of elephants. The warnings also reach volunteer wardens, who operate red-warning beacons that light up via text messages. This allows people to plan their trips accordingly.

“The local communities have adopted this. Government has responded positively. It is a collective effort that is actually making it a win-win situation, both for elephants and for people,” said Kumar.

Incidents of elephants damaging property have reduced by half, he added.

Kumar’s challenge was not removing dangerous elephants from their habitats, but making both tuskers as well as humans feel safe in their habitats.

This is only the start of an exciting journey for him. Kumar will now use the award money to explore how the Valparai model can be replicated elsewhere.

Indian wins Whitley award

Conservationist Ananda Kumar, who created an SMS warning system to help workers live safely among elephants wins global recognition



Elephants in Valparai PHOTO: Ananda Kumar

Dr. Ananda Kumar wins one of seven ‘Green Oscars’ for his system of reducing human-elephant conflict by tracking and texting elephants’ locations to people. On the Valparai plateau in southern India people live in fear of unexpected encounters with the giants in the dark.

As dusk settles, tea and coffee pickers collect rations from the townships run by the corporations that own the plantations and drift back towards their colonies. Buses drop workers on the roads and they make the precarious walk through the dark to their homes.

“They are scared. If I am there I am really scared,” said conservationist Dr Ananda Kumar, who created an SMS

warning system to help workers live safely among elephants. On Wednesday at a ceremony in London, his work won a (pounds sterling) 35,000 Whitley Award, dubbed a ‘Green Oscar’.

“That’s where the accidental encounters occurred. Most of the incidents. It’s very difficult to make out elephants in the dark. It’s a huge animal and looks like a rock and will be standing very still when they notice people.” On the Valparai, high in India’s Western Ghats, tea and coffee companies have flattened 221 sq km of prime rainforest for their plantations. The cleared land is now home to 70,000 workers, who live surrounded on all sides by the rugged, deeply forested Anamalai (Tamil for ‘elephant hills’).

But the 2,000 elephants that inhabit those hills don't recognise the multinational companies' claim to the plateau. Every year around 100 elephants use the plantations as a pathway to get to other parts of the rainforest.

“Elephants are strongly related to their ranges, this is scientifically established. It's a part of their home, which is lost to plantations because of historical exploitation,” said Kumar, who has spent a decade working on a system of text messages, television alerts and warning lights that keep track of elephants. The programme won the Whitley award for its novel and pragmatic approach to the elephant-human conflict, which kills 400 people and more than 100 elephants across India every year. Kumar and seven other grassroots conservationists from Africa, Asia and South America will receive their awards from Princess Anne at a ceremony in London. Kumar said the money would be used to explore how the model that has worked so well in Valparai can be expanded into other areas.

The New Indian Express - News Website

4th May 2015

http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil_nadu/TN-Environmentalists-Wins-Green-Oscar/2015/05/04/article2796434.ece



TN Environmentalist Wins 'Green Oscar'

Ananda Kumar, a wildlife scientist from Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) working to mitigate human-animal conflict in Valparai, has received the Whitley Award, given by the UK-based Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN).

Called the 'Green Oscars,' the annual Whitley Awards for efforts on conservation were presented to Ananda Kumar and seven others on April 29 in London. The award for Anand Kumar, worth 35,000 British pounds, was donated by WWF-UK.

Another Indian, Pramod Patil also won the award for community conservation of the great Indian bustard in Thar Desert.

Anand Kumar and his team have been working for nearly 10 years to facilitate human-animal coexistence in Valparai. They have been using innovative communication systems to give early warnings to people about the presence of wild elephants and their movements in the area. On an average, around 400 people and over 100 elephants are killed every year due to human-animal conflict. Anand Kumar has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning system to alert people when elephants are nearby, minimise negative human-elephant interactions and increase people's tolerance of elephants.

The system informs local people of elephant movement through SMS, local cable television and red light indicators placed at strategic areas.

On finding the system a success at Valparai, Anand and his team have expanded the project to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Anand Kumar expressed happiness on receiving the award and attributed the success to effective team work.

"The decrease in the number of people getting killed and cases of property damage is the result of the collective effort of the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, tea and coffee plantation companies, and the people of Valparai in proactively sharing information on elephants," he told Express. "The award will motivate us to carry out more studies and work for the welfare of the people as well as wild elephants," he added.

mathrubhumi.com

PRAVASI MATHRUBHUMI PRINT EDITION E-PAPER ENGLISH

കാട്ടാനയില് നിന്ന് രക്ഷപ്പെടാം; എസ്.എം.എസ്. വഴി



കൊച്ചി: നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടില് ഓരോ വർഷവും കാട്ടാനയുടെ ആക്രമണത്തില് പെട്ട് മരിക്കുന്നവർ അനവധിയാണ്. വനാതിർത്തിയില് കഴിയുന്നവരാണ് മിക്കവാറും ഇരകള്. കാടിന്റെ ഇരുളില് ആന എവിടെ നിൽക്കുന്നു എന്നറിയാതെ, അതിന്റെ

മുന്നില് ചെന്നു പെടുന്നവരാണ് ഏറെയും. തങ്ങളു് പോകുന്ന വഴിയില് ആനയുണ്ടെന്ന് മുൻകൂട്ടി അറിയാനായാലോ? വിലപ്പെട്ട ജീവന് ബലികഴിക്കാതെ രക്ഷപ്പെടാം. അതിനുള്ള മാർഗമാണ് ഡോ. ആനന്ദകുമാറിന്റേത്.

ചാലക്കുടിക്ക് കിഴക്ക്, കേരളത്തിന്റേയും തമിഴ്നാടിന്റേയും വനാതിർത്തി പ്രദേശമായ വാൽപ്പാറയില് തമിഴ്നാട് സർക്കാറാണ് ഡോ. ആനന്ദകുമാറിന്റേ മുന്നറിയിപ്പ് സംവിധാനം ഫലപ്രദമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നത്. വാല്പ്പാറയെന്ന തീരെ ചെറിയ സ്ഥലത്ത് 1994 മുതല് ഇതുവരെ ആനയുടെ ആക്രമണത്തില് മരിച്ചത് 41 പേരാണ്. അതില് 36 പേരും ആന നിൽക്കുന്നതറിയാതെ അവയുടെ മുന്നില് പെട്ടുപോയവരും. ആനയുടെ സാന്നിധ്യമറിഞ്ഞാല് ജീവന് രക്ഷപ്പെടുത്താമെന്നുറപ്പ്. ഈ ചിന്തയാണ് ആന ഗവേഷകനായ ആനന്ദകുമാറിനെ മുന്നറിയിപ്പ് സംവിധാനത്തിന്റേ ആവശ്യകതയില് കൊണ്ടുചെന്നെത്തിക്കുന്നത്. പത്തു വർഷത്തെ അധ്വാനമായിരുന്നു അത്. ആദ്യം ടെലിവിഷനില് അറിയിപ്പുകളു് കൊടുത്തു. തോട്ടങ്ങളില്, അവയുടെ അതിരിലെ കാട്ടില്, എവിടെയൊക്കെ ആന നില്പുണ്ട് എന്നായിരുന്നു അറിയിപ്പ്. പറഞ്ഞും എഴുതിക്കാട്ടിയുമുള്ള അറിയിപ്പ് തൊഴിലാളികളു് ശ്രദ്ധിക്കാന് തുടങ്ങി.

അടുത്തതായി, മൊബൈൽഫോണുകളില് മുന്നറിയിപ്പ് എസ്.എം.എസ്. നൽകി. തോട്ടം തൊഴിലാളികളുടേയും കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങളുടേയും

മൊബൈൽഫോൺ നമ്പറുകളിൽ ശേഖരിച്ചു. ജനവാസമേഖലയ്ക്ക് അടുത്തോ തോട്ടങ്ങളിലോ ആനയിറങ്ങിയാൽ അപ്പോൾത്തന്നെ ഈ നമ്പറുകളിൽ മുഴുവൻ സന്ദേശം അയയ്ക്കുന്നതായിരുന്നു രീതി. ടെലിവിഷൻ എപ്പോഴും ഓൺ ചെയ്തിരിക്കണമെന്നില്ലല്ലോ. അതിനാൽ എസ്.എം.എസ്. കൂടുതൽ ഫലവത്തായി. ഇതിനും പുറമെ, തൊഴിലാളികളുടെ സഞ്ചാരപാതയ്ക്കരികിൽ ആധുനിക വിളക്കുകളും സ്ഥാപിച്ചു. വഴിയിൽ ആനയുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ വിളക്കു തെളിക്കും. ടൗണിലും മറ്റും പോയി, രാത്രി ബസ്സിറങ്ങി വരുന്നവർക്ക് വെളിച്ചം കണ്ട് അറിയാനാകും വഴിയിൽ ആനയുണ്ടെന്ന്.

ആനകുമാറിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിലുള്ള ഈ യത്നത്തിന് ഫലമുണ്ടായി. 2012ൽ വാൽപ്പാറയിൽ ആനയുടെ ആക്രമണത്തിൽ ആരും മരിച്ചില്ല. 2013ൽ രണ്ടു പേർ മരിച്ചെങ്കിലും അത് കാട്ടിനുള്ളിൽ പോയവരായിരുന്നു. 2014ലും ആരും മരിച്ചില്ല. ഈ മുന്നറിയിപ്പ് സംവിധാനം ലോകം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുകയും ആനകുമാറിന്റെ സേവനത്തെ അംഗീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. 'ഗ്രീൻ ഓസ്കാർ' എന്നറിയപ്പെടുന്ന 2015ലെ വിറ്റ്ലെ അവാർഡിന് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കണ്ടുപിടിത്തവും സേവനവും അർഹമായത് കഴിഞ്ഞ ദിവസമാണ്. മനുഷ്യരെ മാത്രമല്ല, ആനകളെക്കൂടി രക്ഷിക്കുകയാണ് ഈ മുന്നറിയിപ്പു സംവിധാനത്തിന്റെ ഉദ്ദേശ്യം. 'വനാതിർത്തികളിൽ കഴിയുന്ന ജനങ്ങളെ പരിഭ്രാന്തരാക്കി എപ്പോഴും തൊട്ടടുത്ത കാട്ടിൽ നിന്നുള്ള ആനകളുടെ ആക്രമണം എപ്പോഴാണെന്ന് പറയാനാവില്ല. തേയില, കാപ്പിത്തോട്ടങ്ങളിൽ പണിയെടുക്കുന്ന തൊഴിലാളികൾക്കും തൊട്ടടുത്തുള്ള കടകളിൽപോയി സാധനങ്ങളെ വാങ്ങി മടങ്ങിവരുന്നവർക്കും ബസ്സിറങ്ങി കാട്ടിനുള്ളിലൂടെ തങ്ങളുടെ കുടികളിലേക്കു വരുന്നവർക്കും ഭീതിയാണ്. മുന്നറിയിപ്പുകൾ മാത്രമാണ് പോംവഴി. അത് ഫലപ്രദമായി ചെയ്യാനാകും' - അദ്ദേഹം 'മാതൃഭൂമി'യോട് പറഞ്ഞു. .

THE HINDU

System warning animal presence wins Green Oscar



Ananda Kumar receiving the Whitley Award instituted by WWF-UK at a function in London recently. Photo: Special Arrangement.

An early warning system that has saved precious human lives and reduced damage to property in the Valparai plateau, home to second largest elephant population in the country, has bagged the prestigious Whitley Award, or the Green Oscar, for 2015.

Beginning 2002, Ananda Kumar, a scientist with Nature Conservation Foundation, began studying elephants in the fragmented landscape where large expanses of rainforest were cleared for plantations in the late 1800s.

The plateau is also home to about 75,000 workers, who often came in direct conflict with the elephants, mostly early in the mornings or night hours, as they step out for various reasons – driving the community into a fear psychosis.

“The early warning system, introduced in 2006, has three measures in place right now,” says Mr. Kumar. Whenever elephant movement is noticed, the hotline run by his team, receives a message and is immediately passed on to residents within a few km radius on a daily basis. Around 3,000 families are connected to this bulk SMS facility, he says.

Based on the database built over the years, information about elephant presence is also communicated as a crawl on local cable TV network. This reaches nearly 5,000 families, mostly in conflict-prone zones.

Additionally, there are mobile operated light indicators covering 220 sq.km, which is more than half of the plateau. “The average number of lives lost due to elephants has come down from three (2.8) per annum from 1994-2002 to an average of about one (1.2) for the period between 2003-1015,” says Mr. Kumar.

“It is a collective work as the efforts would not have been possible without the support of the Forest Department which has a Rapid Response Team to protect lives and property,” he says. The plantation companies and local people are also big contributors to the conservation efforts, he emphasises.

The elephants also attacked ration shops, noon meal centres and kitchens of households, leaving property damaged. In the last four years, the damage to property has declined by half compared to previous years. In fact, there are mobile ration shops now.

By empowering the local community with location specific information, Ananda Kumar and his team, including Ganesh Raghunathan, have turned zones of conflict into co-existence.

As a next step, Mr. Kumar and his team is in the process of collecting data and understanding the human-elephant relationship scientifically in Sathyamangalam region to reduce crop damage.



Green Oscar' Awarded to the Indian who is solving Human-Elephant Conflict using a Mobile Phone

Ananda Kumar came up with an interesting solution to the human-elephant conflict using a mobile phone. The average number of deaths has drastically after Ananda's intervention. Here's how he did it.

Life in Valparai plateau in southern India is not an easy one. People are now used to sudden encounters with giant elephants. With such unexpected encounters, both humans and animals fear for their safety leading to larger destruction and loss of life. For centuries, elephants have existed in the thick forests, and with these rainforests getting converted into tea plantations, the animals are left with no choice but to intrude the human space. Though it is not possible to track and control the movement of both humans and animals, it is better to be prepared in advance and avoid mishaps.

A wildlife conservationist Ananda Kumar has come up with an innovative solution to this conflict, where he has managed to save several lives with the help of a simple mobile phone.



Ananda Kumar won the Whitley award 2015 for his mobile phone solution to elephant-human conflict.

Always interested in the field of animal behaviour, Kumar was first introduced to this work by his professor. “I used to watch monkeys and really liked to observe their behaviour, and gradually developed my interest in this field,” Kumar recalls. But it was his stint with a local plantation company that hired him to deal with elephant-human conflict that gave a better shape to his passion.

“I observed elephants. They are very intelligent creatures and love to live in peace. Their encounter with humans is inevitable; it is the negative interaction that causes damage. People have been co-existing with them for centuries and this is what they should do now. It is the helplessness of both animal and human that creates panic. If people are empowered to deal with such situations than such destruction will not happen,” says Kumar.

Ananda then started his work to solve this issue, and along with two more wildlife conservationists, came up with an interesting solution. The crucial part was to track the elephant and let people know its presence to avoid any conflict. With the help of local people and the government, he managed to implement a solution where the location of the elephant was shown on TV as a tick crawl, which helped people to be aware of the elephant presence and plan their outdoor activities in a more informed way.

But what about the people already out in the field? Kumar started a mobile SMS service where the users are notified via text messages about the elephant presence in a particular area. The messages are sent in both English and Tamil language.

“And for those who did not even have a mobile phone or were out of network area, we installed lights. These lights blink whenever there is an elephant in a 2 kms radius,” says Kumar.

These lights are operated through three registered mobile numbers. One of these numbers is of Kumar’s team and the other two numbers are of local citizens selected by the residents. Started in 2002, this service has already reached out to over 3,000 mobile phone users and saved several lives.

Before the implementation of this service, Valparai plateau in Tamil Nadu recorded an average three deaths annually due to elephant-human encounters. After this programme came into the picture, the average number of deaths has gone down to just one per annum.

The innovative service has reduced the number of fatal incidents drastically.

“Even if a message is delivered to one number, that person can forward it to his family and friends, which will eventually reach out to a larger number of people. People can plan their activities accordingly as they are prepared. There is also less panic among people,” he says.

In his many years of service in this field, Kumar has observed that there is a high level of tolerance among both elephants and humans and they do not attack each other without provocation. “The elephants do not enter the house if there is someone inside. Similarly, humans do not attack the elephants first; they generally try to save their own lives and

run away. This shows that both of them can co-exist only if the right intervention is done and people are enabled to deal with the situation in an appropriate manner,” says Kumar.

Though reaching out to the people was initially a difficult task, as any new idea takes time to get acceptance. But the instant impact of the service built trust among the people. Gradually, dangerous encounters and incidents of damage to property and life started falling after introduction of this early warning system.

Kumar has recently received the Whitley Award for his extra ordinary contribution in reducing human-elephant conflict. The award, which is called the “Green Oscar”, is yet another feather in Kumar’s hat.

He plans to further strengthen the warning system of elephant presence, extend it to include other animals, and expand his area of work to different regions of Karnataka and other states.

“Every animal is unique and its behavior is different too. We want to understand that and approach them accordingly. We also want to reduce the crop damage due such conflicts,” he says.

Having effectively solved one of the most crucial issues, Kumar advises people to be more patient and have better understanding of their local region. He is now working in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve, a forest-farm landscape that supports subsistence farmers at risk of elephant crop damage. To know more about his work, contact him at – anand@ncf-india.org

The Alternative – News Website

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<http://www.thealternative.in/society/green-oscar-goes/>

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alternative.in^β

And the ‘Green Oscar’ goes to...

This prestigious Whitley Award winner shows us that with technology, teamwork, creativity, and passion, even elephant-sized problems can be solved!



On 29th April, 2015, India’s very own conservation leader, **Mr. Ananda Kumar** from the Nature Conservation Foundation received the prestigious **Whitley Award** (also called the ‘Green Oscar’) from Her Royal Highness Princess Royal for his pioneering work in enabling human-elephant coexistence in southern India. This is a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, awarded at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London.

Each year in India, 400 people and more than 100 elephants are killed as a result of human-elephant conflict. Ananda’s **Elephant Information Network (EIN)** acts as an early warning mechanism to alert people when elephants are nearby, minimizing negative human-elephant interactions, and increasing people’s tolerance towards elephants.

This was achieved with the help of his team at the Nature Conservation Foundation, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, the tea and coffee plantation owners and staff, and the local residents of Valparai. This truly collective effort has saved the lives of many people

and elephants. It is a shining example of how much can be achieved through partnership between stakeholders and using basic technology to achieve major outcomes.

The Alternative caught up with Mr. Kumar to find out more about this unique conservation model.

Could you tell us what triggered the setting up of the Early Warning System? What was the scenario that led to this project?

The Valparai taluk is primarily dominated by tea and coffee plantations planted 120 years ago. The plantations are surrounded by rainforests, which is the primary habitat for elephants. 70,000 people are dependent on these plantations for their livelihood. But this impinges on the critical habitats for elephant movement, blocking their corridors and feeding routes. Elephant movement is interrupted by people's movement.

In the daytime when people are working, elephants can't move around. So they move around during late evenings which is when the most number of accidental encounters take place.

Between the years 1994-2015, 41 people died out of which 36 were unaware about the elephant's presence. This triggered elephant information network to reduce these surprise encounters.

This is a unique model because it involves a collective effort from everyone involved. How did this come about?

The deaths due to elephant encounters was something that caused enough worry to locals that made them look for a solution. The Tamil Nadu Forest Department was very eager when we came up with our plan and supplied ample support to us. The plantation companies also joined in without hesitation. This was based on the understanding that there are no problem elephants, only problem locations. People and elephants should share space without friction. If we understand problems at a location level, we can design effective mitigation measures, involving collective effort from everyone.

How does the Early Warning System (EWS) work?

This is a multi-level information network that has been developed over 3 years. EWS is carried out in three ways.

1. Information on the location of elephants is displayed in local channels as a crawl at the bottom of the screen. The crawl message includes a number that you can call in case you need help.
2. If there is an elephant wandering near a settlement, intimation is made through bulk SMS – both in english and tamil – to those who are willing to receive it. We have a useful local service provider which has systems in place to ensure that messages are sent out. If the inbox is full, it makes upto 3 tries to send the message again.
3. We've also installed flashing LED lights which can be operated only by 3 registered SIM numbers. This is set up in 24 locations. 1 trustworthy person in the community is appointed. If someone knows about an elephant presence within a 1-2 Km radius, they will call this person, and this person will activate the flashing LED lights as a warning. Voice based systems performing a similar task are now set up in 8 locations.

Can you take us through how an elephant's presence is detected and what happens once a warning is issued?

We have trained personnel who manually go out to track the location and routes of elephants on a daily basis. The Tamil Nadu Forest department's Field Staff give updates about elephant locations. They have a Rapid Response Team who also monitor elephant movement. If they find that a settlement is under threat by an elephant, the Range Officer divides their team who then go to these settlements. They don't use confrontational noisy trucks and firecrackers to scare the elephants away. Instead, they issue a soft response by turning on the engine of vehicles and talking loudly to each other. Elephants are sensitive enough to understand that there's a risk and they take a different route.



How much has the EWS and EIN succeeded in its aims?

In Valparai, no one complains about elephants anymore. It has really boosted the confidence of people. It has also brought down the pressure on elephants. It has made the locals less fearful and helps them plan their outdoor activities.

They have gone from asking about elephants' locations to actively providing information about elephants. The participation has not only been active, but also accurate. 98% of their elephant reports were true warnings. People have even started forwarding messages to friends and neighbours (the database has currently has 3000 families), widening the outreach.

Damage to property has decreased by more than 50% (elephants attack places where large amounts of food is stored).

Tourists have access to the information from the TV crawls, and the plantation owners responsibly discourage them from going anywhere near elephants.

Before the project, the average number of people killed due to elephant encounter between 1994-2002 was 3 per year. After the EIN was set up (2002-2015), the average went down to 1 per year, with some years reporting 0 deaths (2010, 2013, 2015).

What are the future plans for this project? How do you plan to take it forward and sustain its successes?

This year we want to make our systems stronger. We want to train more people about how to escape, how to interpret elephants' warning noises, and teach them about elephants' behavioral patterns so that they can read indicators. We also want to sensitize people and enforce the idea in them not to ignore the signals, and to stay away if there is a warning.

There is much to be learnt from initiatives like these which use the bottom-up model of conservation. With technology, teamwork, creativity, and passion, even elephant-sized problems can be solved!

You can also read about [other initiatives that are tackling human-elephant conflict](#), [Trunk Call for the conservation of elephants](#), [why domestication of elephants is not the best idea](#), [reasons not to ride a jumbo](#), and pick up some books to [teach your kids about elephants](#).



ecologic

reasoned reconciliation between people and nature

NCF's Ananda Kumar Wins Whitley Award

For his extraordinary work on mitigating human-elephant conflict in the Valparai plateau, Ananda has been awarded the prestigious **Green Oscar** at a ceremony in London last month.

Since 2002, Ananda has been studying elephants in the plateau where large expanses of rainforest have been flattened by tea and coffee plantations. Home to 75,000 workers, Valparai is also inhabited by 2,000 elephants who use the plantations as a pathway to get to other parts of the Anamalai rainforest.



Elephants have to pass through tea and coffee plantations to get to other parts of the Anamalai rainforest
To increase people's tolerance of elephants and reduce unexpected encounters in the dark, Ananda's early warning system called the 'Elephant Information Network' ensures

that text alerts are sent to people who reside within a few kilometres from where an elephant is spotted. Elephant locations are also broadcast on local TV stations in the evenings, and red warning indicators placed in strategic locations on the plateau light up via SMS.

The warning system has reduced the average number of human deaths due to surprise encounters with elephants from three to one in the past decade. Incidents of elephants damaging property have also reduced by half, now that locals are better informed about their locations.

To know more about Ananda's work on human-elephant coexistence, watch this lovely short film:





The screenshot shows the top section of the Gulf Times website. At the top left is the logo "GULF TIMES" in red, with a small sailboat icon between the words. Below the logo is a horizontal navigation menu with red buttons for "Home", "Qatar", "Region", "International", "Sport", "Business", "Features", "Opinion", and "PDF". Below the menu is a breadcrumb trail: "Home > International > India > Conservationist wins 'Green Oscar' for SMS warning system". At the bottom of the screenshot is a regional navigation bar with buttons for "US/Latin America", "UK/Europe", "India" (which is highlighted), "Pakistan", "ASEAN/Philippines", and "Rest of World".

Conservationist wins 'Green Oscar' for SMS warning system



Ananda Kumar

On the Valparai plateau in southern India people live in fear of unexpected encounters with giants in the dark.

As dusk settles, tea and coffee pickers collect rations from the townships run by the corporations that own the plantations and drift back towards their colonies. Buses drop workers on the roads and they make the precarious walk through the dark to their homes.

“They are scared. If I am there I am really scared,” said conservationist Dr Ananda Kumar, who created an SMS warning system to help workers live safely among elephants. Last month at a ceremony in London, his work won a £35,000 Whitley Award, dubbed a ‘Green Oscar’.

“That’s where the accidental encounters occurred. Most of the incidents. It’s very difficult to make out elephants in the dark. It’s a huge animal and looks like a rock and will be standing very still when they notice people.”

On the Valparai, high in the Western Ghats, tea and coffee companies have flattened 221sq km of prime rainforest for their plantations. The cleared land is now home to 70,000 workers, who live surrounded on all sides by the rugged, deeply forested Anamalai (Tamil for ‘elephant hills’).

But the 2,000 elephants which inhabit those hills don’t recognise the multinational companies’ claim to the plateau. Every year around 100 elephants use the plantations as a pathway to get to other parts of the rainforest.

“Elephants are strongly related to their ranges, this is scientifically established. It’s a part of their home, which is lost to plantations because of historical exploitation,” said Kumar, who has spent a decade working on a system of text messages, television alerts and warning lights that keep track of elephants as they move through the plantations.

The programme won the Whitley award for its novel and pragmatic approach to the elephant-human conflict, which kills 400 people and more than 100 elephants across India every year.

If they are startled or feel threatened, elephants can be very dangerous. In the small community of Valparai, 41 people have been killed since 1994. The problem, said Kumar, was that people simply did not realise elephants were nearby.

In a decade, Kumar’s warning system has cut the rate of deaths from three per year to just one. It is seen as an exemplar in the efforts to tackle the India-wide conflict between elephants and humans.

A team of trackers, called the conflict response team, watches over elephants as they pass through the plateau, they are assisted by Tamil Nadu forestry department workers and local informants, who act as extra scouts for the programme. Information is relayed via a hotline, manned by Kumar’s appropriately-named colleague Ganesh. The hotline receives over 1,000 calls each year. Many of them not seeking information about elephant locations but providing word of elephant sightings to their neighbours.

When an elephant is spotted, alerts are sent via text message to all those who reside within a few kilometres of an elephant’s location. At 5pm each night, local TV stations broadcast the locations of all elephants on the plateau. The warnings also go out to volunteer wardens in each colony, who operate red warning beacons that light up via text message. This allows people to plan their trips and let visiting friends know to beware.



After Success in Valparai, NCF's Jumbo Warning System to Start Work in STR

CHENNAI: After tasting success in mitigating human-elephant conflicts in Valparai, wildlife scientist Anandkumar and his team from the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) have now expanded their mission to minimise the risk in the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

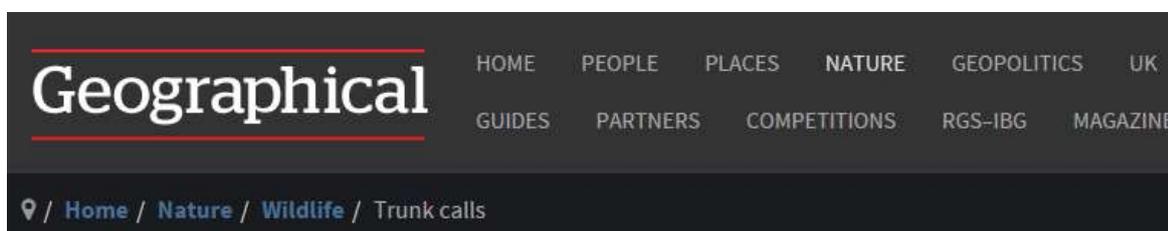
“We tell villagers to be tolerant and resolve the negative human-elephant conflicts,” says Ananda Kumar. The team, along with Forest Department officials, is planning a visit to 26 villages around Velamandi reserve forest area near Sathyamangalam. Spread across 130 sq km, Velamandi also comes under the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, home to an estimated 12,000 pachyderms. It is also inhabited by 30,000 villagers, most of whom are subsistence farmers growing cucumber, banana, jasmine, tobacco and other crops.

“The villagers have been reportedly facing problems from elephant herds entering their farmlands and destroying crops. We have already begun our campaign there,” Anandakumar says.

After the conflict hotspots are identified, villagers would be provided Elephant Information Network (EIN), an early warning system that alerts them about the pachyderms’ movement through SMSs, local television and red-light indicators.

Anandakumar was awarded the prestigious Whitley Award, known as the ‘Green Oscar’, last month in London for developing this system. “We have received complaints from people, but there is a lot of mismatch in the flow of information between villagers and officials. We have taken the last two years’ records of man-animal conflicts in the area. We will first identify the problem hotspots. In the next stage, we’ll look if there is a repetition in the pattern. Accordingly, we will take the further course of action ,” he told Express.

He further adds, “We are looking at spatial and temporal characteristics, where we will be able to know the location, size, population, land pattern, time of interaction as well as type of crops. This will help us understand the main reason behind the conflict. However, the process may take some time.” The problem of man-animal conflict can be solved if one delves into the root cause. We’ll call the villagers for a meeting on this,” he says.



Ganesh Raghunathan

An elephant early warning system is preventing deaths across India's tea and coffee plantations

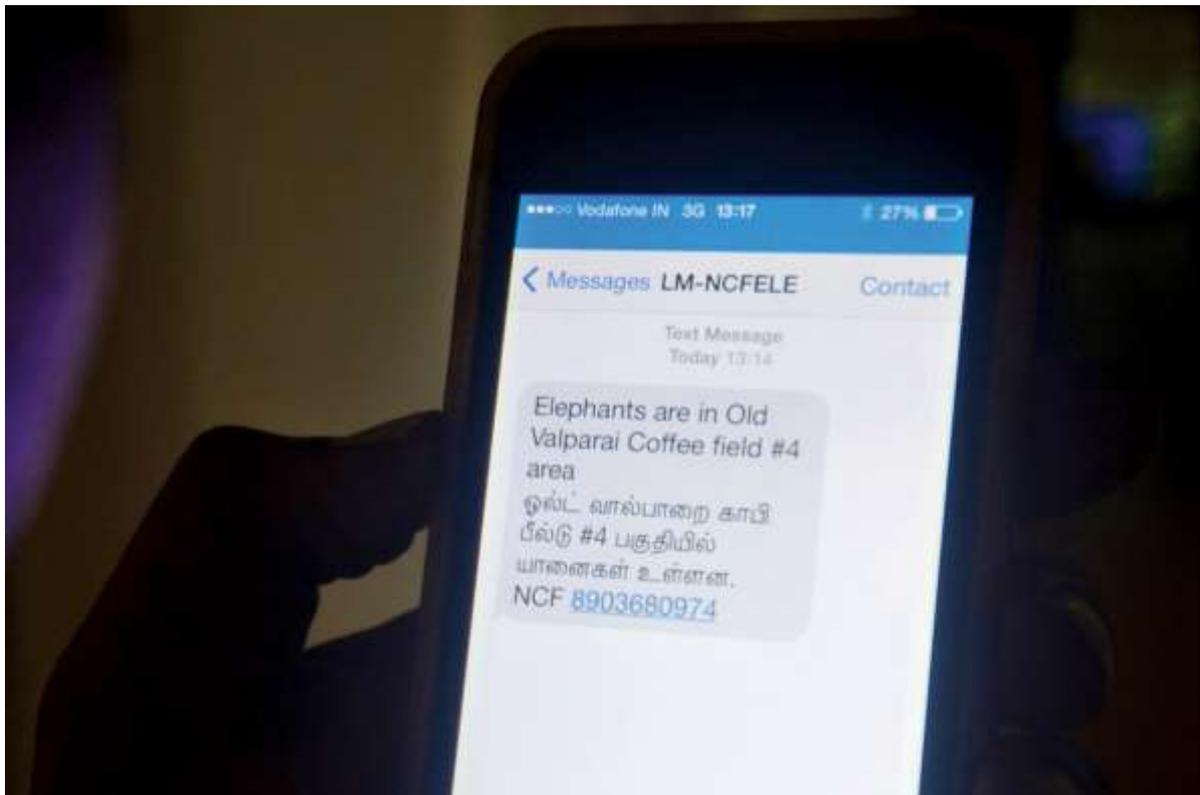
Trunk calls

In rural India, someone walking home after a day at work may spot a flashing red light in the distance. At the same moment, an SMS text message might appear on their mobile phone. The meaning of these alerts is simple: elephants are nearby, be careful.

As both human habitats and tea and coffee plantations in southern India have spread outwards into the surrounding rainforest, people – especially plantation workers – are more frequently coming into accidental contact with wild elephants. This conflict has serious repercussions, with more than 400 people and 100 elephants killed each year as a result.

Enter Ananda Kumar, a scientist at India's Nature Conservation Foundation, and his 'Elephant Information Network'. Launched on the Valparai plateau in the Anaimalai rainforest, where 75,000 people share the land with between 80 and 100 elephants, the network tracks the animals and enables real-time sharing of their locations to anyone in the near vicinity who could be directly affected. All of which is a far cry from the early days, when alerts appeared only as pop-ups on local television channels. Users now engage with more modern technologies, such as mobile phones, mobile-operated beacons, and Google Maps.

'The message goes like this: "There are elephants in such-and-such tea estate",' says Kumar. 'There's no need to panic, but people do need to be aware. What we want to get across to people is that there are no problem elephants, just problem locations.'



Example text message (Image: Ganesh Raghunathan)

By raising awareness and minimising unintentional encounters, the system enables a more peaceful coexistence between humans and elephants in the region. From an average of three human deaths annually prior to the programme's introduction in 2002, this has dropped to an average of only one per year. Kumar is now expanding his network across India, adapting the system to work in other regions where human habitats are increasingly overlapping with elephant ranges.

This article was published in the **July 2015** edition of Geographical Magazine. Ananda Kumar is a winner of a 2015 Whitley Award, from the **Whitley Fund for Nature**



Early Warning System Is Reducing Human-Elephant Conflict in India

New program uses text messages and LED lights to improve life for both elephants and humans.

Several years ago, as a masters student studying ecology, I took a trip with friends to the Anaimalais (literally, Elephant Hills, in Tamil) in the Western Ghats, a mountain chain running down peninsular India. One day we were careening down a hillside to the town of Valparai in the last bus of the day (or rather the night), trying to peer at the shadows the headlights threw up and spot wildlife. It was all very exciting, but I cannot imagine what would have happened if we had come across an elephant standing on the road.

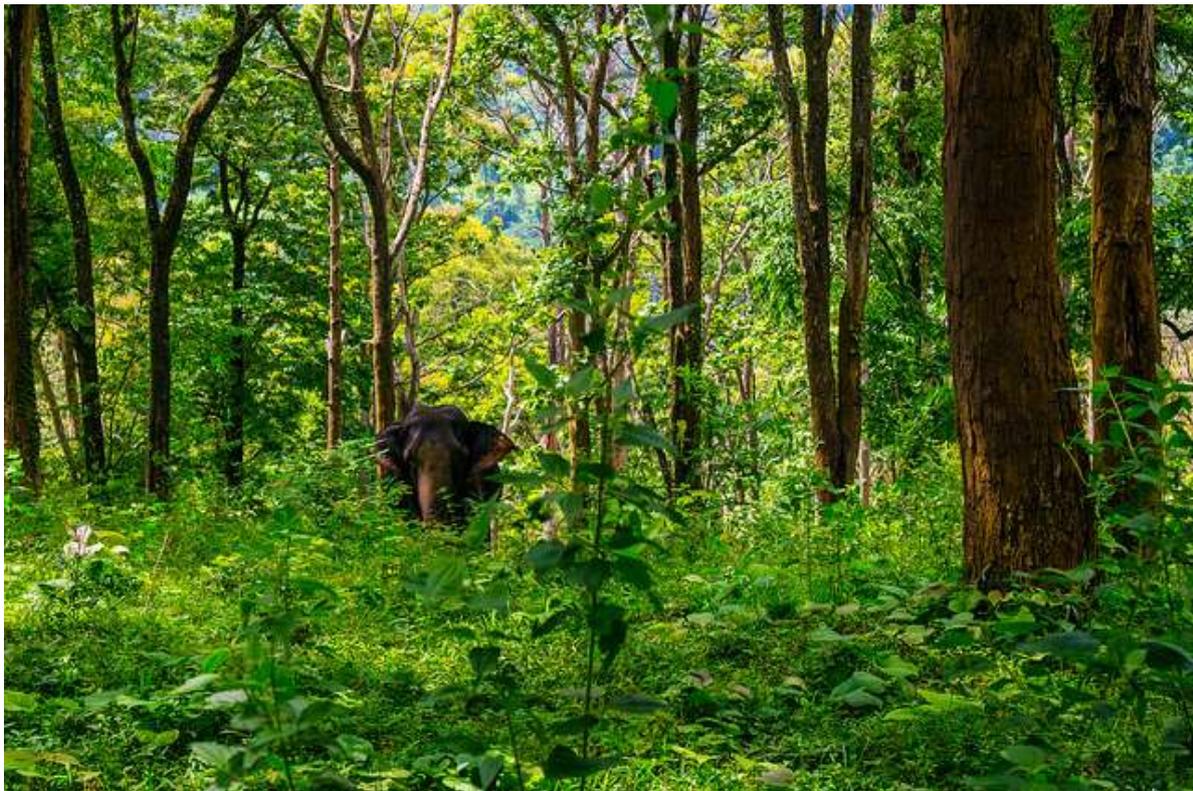


Photo by [Thangaraj Kumaravel](#)

Encounters with elephants and other wildlife in India are not rare. Often, animals enter human-modified landscapes, which the media frequently presents as a case of animals “straying” out of their habitat into human areas, requiring them to be chased back. Of

course, these human-wildlife interactions can result in escalating conflict, even leading to death — of both humans and animals — and damage to property. Sometimes the situation gets so bad that authorities are pushed to capture or kill the animal. For example, in February 2015, a tiger in Tamil Nadu was declared a man-eater after it killed a farmer and tea estate worker, and was put down. In other cases, the animals are captured and sent to zoos. On occasion, animals like the *nilgai* (an Asian antelope) are temporarily declared vermin in a specified region and people are allowed to kill them if they enter their property and destroy crops.

A 2015 Whitley Award-winning [initiative](#) in the Anaimalais shows how this conflict can be reduced and co-existence made possible. The program, which focuses on human-elephant conflict, was developed and implemented by the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), a wildlife and conservation research organization.

Valparai, a town in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is an unassuming jumble of houses spread over several hillsides. The 220-square-kilometer Valparai plateau is known for its tea and coffee plantations, created by the British more than a century ago by clearing the rainforest. With the tea industry booming (though the last two decades have seen a reversal of fortunes), human population increased. With growth came roads, construction, and electricity. The plateau is surrounded by forests, most of which are protected areas. Today, the plateau is a mosaic of plantations dotted with clusters of houses (known as labor lines) for tea workers, and forest fragments. The plateau is also part of the home range of some 100 elephants that regularly cross the plantations to reach forests on the other side, leading to run-ins with humans. The human population of the plateau — mostly plantation employees — is about 70,000.

Elephants have learned that the labor lines are usually an easy source of food, as people grow bananas and store food grains in the ration shop, a center where government-subsidized food items are distributed to the poor. Schools are also popular with the elephants as they have a pantry. Often, people returning home at the end of the day encounter elephants on the roads or in the plantations, occasionally leading to human injury or death.

“In 2002, we started this project by tracking the elephants and understanding their behavior,” said M. Ananda Kumar, lead researcher on this project. “Our research showed that the elephants tend to follow certain routes faithfully, sticking to the streams and the little patches of tree cover along these waterways, as they cross the plantations.”

The elephants, say NCF, tend to spend the daytime resting and feeding in the forest fragments and then move at night. The tea gardens do not offer shade and so the elephants do not spend much time there. However, when they move across these landscapes or come into human settlements, people are scared and try to drive the animals away. This typically takes the form of loud noises to scare the elephants, including beating drums and bursting firecrackers. The stressed herd scurries away to the next plantation or settlement, and the cycle begins again. While these incidents usually don't result in death of either humans or elephants, they produce a lot of stress for both. Human deaths and injuries can, however, occur when people startle elephants, often on

the roads in twilight. Perceiving a threat, the elephants may react by attacking; there have been incidents of elephants throwing or pushing vehicles off the road.

“People’s tolerance of elephants has come down. The loss of property is not something viewed lightly, either by people or by the plantations’ management who are duty-bound to pay for the damages in the labor lines,” says Kumar. Plus, the media sometimes plays up this drama, feeding people’s hysteria. People, then, clamor for the government to take action, but the government has few options.

To understand what drives the conflict, Kumar and his colleagues, Ganesh Raghunathan and Sreedhar Vijayakrishnan, mapped the incidents of human deaths and found that out of 41 victims between 1994 and 2002, 31 had been unaware of the presence of the elephants prior to the incident. Plus, many of these run-ins took place between December and February, which coincides with the time when elephants frequently traverse the plateau. Many of these encounters took place on the road. NCF realized that what was needed was a good early warning system by which people could avoid run-ins with elephants, as well as education programs on elephant behavior and the best way to react in the event of an elephant encounter.

NCF initiated a two-part project. First, in partnership with the State Forest Department, plantation management (there are seven plantations on the plateau), and community members, NCF began sending out bilingual text messages (in English and Tamil, the local language) reporting elephant movement. Information on elephant locations was provided by the Forest Department, researchers, and community members. The messages went out to community members living in the area who were registered with the warning network. The information was also broadcast on local television channels warning people to avoid those areas or at least be vigilant.

The second phase of the project was to set up LED lights in 24 areas frequented by elephants and humans. The lights are operated by calling a number from a mobile phone — if someone sees an elephant, they call the number and the light is activated, alerting locals to the fact that there is an elephant in the region. The forest department, on its own initiative, has set up six additional lights, for a total of 30. The LED lights began functioning in early 2011 and were initially operated by researchers. Since then, volunteers from the community have taken over. “The community of course must have a sense of ownership on this endeavor and be able and willing to continue with it even if we are not working in this area,” says Kumar. “We are also hoping to hand over maintenance of the infrastructure to the plantations.”

The forest department has also set up a rapid response team and helpline to ensure that not only property and human lives are protected, but also that elephants are not harmed. “Our team reaches the hamlet within five minutes of being called,” says Asokan, the divisional forest officer for Anaimalai Tiger Reserve. “We then ensure no firecrackers are set off or stones thrown. People are requested to move away and we keep watch on the elephants until they move of their own accord into the forests.” He adds that the trust and confidence people have in his team has grown over the last few years.

Since the early warning system began functioning, human deaths have dropped by over 50 percent; there were, on average, three deaths per year between 1994 and 2002, compared to an average of 1.2 deaths per year since. In fact, in 2010 and 2013, no deaths were reported.

Much of this initiative is focused on human safety. So far, there has been little assessment of the impact on the elephants. How stressed are they? How are elephant populations faring since the warning system was installed?

Recently, however, an effort has been made to collect this data. In the last few years, NCF has started to analyze cortisol, the “stress hormone,” in elephant dung samples. The preliminary results indicate that human interaction is a stressor for elephants. Specifically, researchers have observed that elephants that have experienced a run-in with humans tend to have higher levels of cortisol for 48 hours than those that have not. The researchers have also noted that the herds seem to be spending more time on the plateau than before, which could be an indication that they feel safer.

Bolstered by the success of this project, the government is looking to replicate it in other regions where human-elephant conflict is an issue. Of course, the model might require tailoring to local situations, but the major gain has been that the government is now contemplating co-existence models instead of relying on knee-jerk reactions to conflict.

The Deccan Herald

17th November 2015

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/512219/treading-lightly-around-jumbos.html>



Treading lightly around jumbos

Nestled in the captivating Anamalai ranges, spanning over 220 square kilometres, is the scenic town of Valparai.

Home to elephants and humans for decades, its forests were cleared to make way for tea and coffee plantations during the British Raj, which means people have lived and worked here for over 120 years now. Continuous deforestation measures have resulted in fragmented forests, which means that elephants have to pass through the areas that are now populated by humans.

While this has led to some instances of property damage, occasional accidental encounters between humans and elephants have turned fatal. Since 1994, there have been 41 human deaths due to such encounters in this region. On an average, property damage incidents were recorded to be around 135 per year. Measures premised on a sophisticated understanding of the situation were required to alleviate these concerns.

Around 13 years ago, Ananda Kumar, a scientist with the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), set out to find solutions specific to the landscape and its inhabitants. He engaged in dialogues with the local residents and to gain a deeper perspective, he studied several aspects of the nature of elephants and people.

Ever since, he has been working interminably to find ways to mitigate the issues surrounding human-elephant interaction. One of the means to achieve this was by disseminating information on elephant presence. This, he realised, could potentially save lives.

Signalling the presence

Hence, the first warning system was devised in 2006. Information was displayed as a crawl on local cable TV. Although this worked well, over a period of time, the more popular DTH systems were replacing local cable TV. This gradually necessitated a new warning system.

In 2011, with the help of Gupshup Enterprises, a bulk SMS system was introduced to send out information as text messages to the subscribed users. Mobile phones were

becoming more prevalent, proving to be effective channels of communication. Ananda and researcher Ganesh Raghunathan have been implementing these warning systems for many years now.

When the bulk SMS warning system was rolled out, the NCF team was inundated with calls. “Earlier, the calls were mostly to enquire about elephants. Things changed around 2014. Now we have more callers giving us information about elephant presence. Change in calling pattern shows that the people are more willing to participate,” says Ganesh.

The evolving understanding of the team has been strategic to the success of this programme. “We noticed that many people who walk back home from bus-stops, with no real-time information of elephant presence, could be in danger. Thus, we decided to place Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) lights in a few key locations and use this to warn people of elephant presence in a radius of one or two kilometres,” recalls Ganesh.

These lights were designed in association with Niagara Automation, Coimbatore. “The GSM-based elephant alert red indicator lights can be switched on by calling the number. Initially, we used to operate these lights, but to encourage local participation and keep it sustainable, we asked the estate representatives to take the charge,” explains Ganesh.

In all, information about elephants comes from four quarters — primarily the NCF team, followed by local residents, the Forest Department and the estate management. Apart from this, the NCF team also has a conflict response unit, wherein their trackers venture out every morning to track movements of the elephants.

Similarly, the forest department has an anti- depredation team which tracks the elephants at night. This team also responds to calls on the Forest Department’s helpline. Sometimes, if the elephants are passing close to residential areas, the team places its vehicle between the elephants and the residents, much in advance, as a precautionary measure.

Generally, in areas where food meant for human consumption is stored, the residents had to deal with a few instances of property damage caused by the elephants. The grocery stores and home kitchens were especially more susceptible.

The NCF team initiated dialogues with the grocery shop owners, and requested them to avoid storing food when the elephants were present in the area. Moreover, the management of some estates have ensured that no work is carried out in the sections of the estate where the elephants are present. Work is resumed only after the elephants move away on their own.

All these changes are taking effect and there is a steady decline in the numbers of incidents. On an average, the number of human deaths has come down from 3.5 to 1.6 per year. Property damage incidents have reduced to 60 per year.

His consistent efforts have gained Ananda the prestigious Whitley Award (also known as the Green Oscars) this year and the NCF programme has received support from the Whitley Fund for Nature, The Rufford Foundation and Elephant Family.

The NCF team's accomplishments are a testament to the fact that substantial improvement in the living conditions of people and wildlife can be achieved with the use of improved technology, people's participation and greater awareness.

A lot of progress has been made but some challenges still remain. Determined people are working constantly to make this unique experiment sustainable for years to come. Hopefully, this unruffled spirit of Valparai will remain for posterity.

Joint Coverage with Pramod Patil

Zee News - News Website, India

30th April 2015

Shared 403 times

http://zeenews.india.com/news/eco-news/two-indians-win-whitley-awards-for-wildlife-conservation_1587633.html

Two Indians win Whitley Awards for wildlife conservation



London: Two Indians have been awarded with the prestigious Whitley Awards for their contribution to wildlife conservation.

Dr Ananda Kumar, a conservationist from India, was awarded the prize, in honour of his work using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in southern India.

Another winner of the Whitley Award, dubbed 'Green Oscar' is Dr Pramod Patil. He has been awarded for his work to protect the iconic great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert.

HRH The Princess Royal presented the awards and each of them receiving a Whitley prize worth £35,000 at a ceremony in London on Wednesday 29th April.

Each year in India, 400 people and more than 100 elephants are killed as a result of conflict.

Dr Ananda has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning mechanism to alert people when elephants are nearby, minimise negative human-elephant interactions, and increase people's tolerance towards elephants.

As part of the system, a trained conflict response team tracks elephant movement and conveys this information to people via text messages, calls and mobile-operated red light indicators placed in strategic locations.

Fatal encounters and incidents of damage to property in the area have already fallen, since inception of this early warning system, and these positive results have encouraged Ananda to expand his project to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Once flourished across the Indian sub-continent, the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) has been declining day by day due to poaching, loss of grassland habitat and lack of community involvement

After first sighting the species in 2003, Pramod, a doctor at the time, made the decision to leave medicine and devote his life to conserving the great Indian bustard.

By working with communities in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his team at the Bombay Natural History Society are helping to change opinions, develop positive relationships between authorities and local people, and enable better management of the land on which both community livelihoods and bustards depend.

His work is collecting crucial information about the species, and engaging people with anti-poaching activities.

Dr Pramod and Dr Ananda are among the seven conservationists to have been awarded the Whitley Awards for their efforts to protect wildlife in developing countries.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on Wednesday at the Royal Geographical Society, London, hosted by television naturalist Kate Humble.

Jagran Josh - Website

30th April 2015

<http://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/ananda-kumar-pramod-patil-won-whitley-awards-for-wildlife-conservation-1430393989-1>



Ananda Kumar, Pramod Patil won Whitley Awards for wildlife conservation

Two Indians namely Dr Ananda Kumar and Dr Pramod Patil on 29 April 2015 won the prestigious Whitley Awards (also known as Green Oscar) for their contribution to wildlife conservation.

The awards were presented at a ceremony in Royal Geographical Society, London. The winners of the award received a Whitley prize worth 35000 pound.

Kumar was honoured for his work of using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant co-existence in Southern India. Patil, on the other hand, was honoured for his work to protect the iconic great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert, Rajasthan.

They are among the seven conservationists who were awarded the Whitley Awards for their efforts to protect wildlife in developing countries.

Other winners of the 2015 Whitley Award are:

- **Panut Hadisiswoyo:** Honoured for his efforts to protect Sumatran orangutans in Indonesia's Leuser Ecosystem
- **Rosamira Guillen:** Honoured for cotton-top tamarin conservation in northern Colombia
- **Arnaud Desbiez:** Honoured for giant armadillo protection in the Brazilian Cerrado
- **Inaoyom Imong:** Honoured for protecting Cross River gorillas in Nigeria's Mbe Mountains;
- **Jayson Ibanez:** Honoured for helping protect the Philippine eagle on Mindanao Island

Work of Dr. Ananda Kumar

To minimise negative human-elephant interactions and increase people's tolerance towards elephants, Kumar developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN). This network acts as an early warning mechanism to alert people when elephants are nearby.

Under the network, a trained conflict response team tracks movement of elephants and conveys the information to people via text messages, calls and mobile-operated red light indicators which are placed in strategic locations.

The success of the warning system helped Ananda to encourage his project to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Work of Dr. Pramod Patil

Patil, a doctor by profession, in 2003 made a decision to leave medicine as a profession and devote his life to conservation of the great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), the population of which is declining at a high speed due to poaching, loss of grassland habitat and lack of community involvement.

Patil and his team at the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) started working with State Forest Department in the Thar Desert helped people to change their opinions and develop positive relationships between authorities and local people, and enable better management of the land on which both community livelihoods and bustards depend.

His work is collecting crucial information about the species, and engaging people with anti-poaching activities.

Whitley Awards

The Whitley Awards is an annual award given by the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN). The award recognises and celebrates effective national and regional conservation leaders across the globe. The awards are amongst the most high profile of conservation prizes - they have been called the Green Oscars.

Edward Whitley founded the Whitley awards in 1994.

Delhi Daily News – News Website

30th April 2015

<http://www.delhidailynews.com/news/Two-Indians-win-prestigious-Whitley-Awards-1430405666/>



Two Indians win prestigious Whitley Awards

Two Indians have been conferred with the distinguished Whitley Awards for their efforts to conserve wildlife.

Dr. Ananda Kumar was presented the prize, in honor of his work allowing human-elephant coexistence in southern India by utilizing progressive communication techniques.

Dr. Pramod Patil has been awarded for his work to protect the long-lasting nice Indian bustard in the Thar Desert.

Kumar has established an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which serves as an early warning mechanism to warn individuals when elephants are nearby, minimize hostile human-elephant interactions and improve individual's acceptance for elephants.

Since launch of this early warning system, deadly encounters and injury incidents to property have reduced. These positive results have encouraged Kumar to extend his system to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

The number of the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) has been dwindling because of poaching, lack of natural habitat and lack of group involvement. By collaborating with communities in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Patil and his team on the Bombay Natural History Society are working to develop productive relationships between authorities and residents and allowing higher management of the areas on which bustard rely.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was organised on the Royal Geographical Society, London on Wednesday and hosted by TV naturalist Kate Humble.

2 Indians Presented ‘Green Oscar’ Whitley Awards 2015 in London



This year’s Whitley wildlife conservation awards have been given to two Indians — Dr Ananda Kumar and Dr Pramod Patil.

Anand kumar was known for his innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence, while Pramod Patil was awarded the prize for his yeoman service to protect Indian Bustard in the Thar Desert.

The Whitley Award, also called “Green Oscar” was presented with a cash prize of £35,000 at a ceremony in London on Wednesday at the Royal Geographical Society, London, hosted by television naturalist Kate Humble.

Praising Dr Anand Kumar’s early warning about the elephants, thus saving nearly 400 people and about 100 elephants from conflict every year, won acclaim at the awards ceremony.

Ananda Kumar’s Elephant Information Network (EIN) helps send out early warning alerts to people when elephants are nearby. The message goes to people via SMS, phone calls and mobile-operated red light indicators placed in strategic locations. He has extended this network in south India, including the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Another saviour was Pramod Patil, who left his medical profession and took upon himself the drive to protect the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) which has been on the wane due to poaching.

Involving some communities in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his team at the Bombay Natural History Society have brought together concerted efforts to save the species from poaching.

Dr Pramod and Dr Ananda are among 7 conservationists given the recognition at the Whitley Awards 2015 ceremony.

Bharat Press – News Website, India

30th April 2015

<http://bharatpress.com/2015/04/30/two-indians-win-whitley-awards-for-wildlife-conservation>

Two Indians win Whitley Awards for wildlife conservation

London: Two Indians have been awarded with the distinguished Whitley Awards for their contribution to wildlife conservation.

Dr Ananda Kumar, a conservationist from India, was awarded the prize, in honour of his work utilizing progressive communication techniques to allow human-elephant coexistence in southern India.

Another winner of the Whitley Award, dubbed 'Green Oscar' is Dr Pramod Patil. He has been awarded for his work to guard the long-lasting nice Indian bustard within the Thar Desert.

HRH The Princess Royal introduced the awards and every of them receiving a Whitley prize value £35,000 at a ceremony in London on Wednesday twenty ninth April.

Each yr in India, four hundred individuals and greater than one hundred elephants are killed because of battle.

Dr Ananda has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning mechanism to alert individuals when elephants are close by, minimise adverse human-elephant interactions, and improve individuals's tolerance in the direction of elephants.

As a part of the system, a educated battle response staff tracks elephant motion and conveys this info to individuals by way of textual content messages, calls and cellular-operated purple mild indicators positioned in strategic places.

Fatal encounters and incidents of injury to property within the space have already fallen, since inception of this early warning system, and these constructive outcomes have inspired Ananda to broaden his undertaking to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Once flourished throughout the Indian sub-continent, the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) has been declining daily because of poaching, lack of grassland habitat and lack of group involvement.

After first sighting the species in 2003, Pramod, a physician on the time, made the choice to go away drugs and dedicate his life to conserving the good Indian bustard.

By working with communities within the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his workforce on the Bombay Natural History Society are serving to to vary opinions, develop constructive relationships between authorities and native individuals, and allow higher administration of the land on which each group livelihoods and bustards rely.

His work is amassing essential details about the species, and interesting individuals with anti-poaching actions.

Dr Pramod and Dr Ananda are among the many seven conservationists to have been awarded the Whitley Awards for their efforts to guard wildlife in creating nations.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on Wednesday on the Royal Geographical Society, London, hosted by TV naturalist Kate Humble.

Bharat Press – News Website

1st May 2015

<http://bharatpress.com/2015/04/30/two-indians-win-whitley-awards-for-wildlife-conservation/>

BHARAT PRESS

Two Indians win Whitley Awards for wildlife conservation

London: Two Indians have been awarded with the distinguished Whitley Awards for their contribution to wildlife conservation.

Dr Ananda Kumar, a conservationist from India, was awarded the prize, in honour of his work utilizing progressive communication techniques to allow human-elephant coexistence in southern India.

Another winner of the Whitley Award, dubbed ‘Green Oscar’ is Dr Pramod Patil. He has been awarded for his work to guard the long-lasting nice Indian bustard within the Thar Desert.

HRH The Princess Royal introduced the awards and every of them receiving a Whitley prize value £35,000 at a ceremony in London on Wednesday twenty ninth April.

Each yr in India, four hundred individuals and greater than one hundred elephants are killed because of battle.

Dr Ananda has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning mechanism to alert individuals when elephants are close by, minimise adverse human-elephant interactions, and improve individuals’s tolerance in the direction of elephants.

As a part of the system, a educated battle response staff tracks elephant motion and conveys this info to individuals by way of textual content messages, calls and cellular-operated purple mild indicators positioned in strategic places.

Fatal encounters and incidents of injury to property within the space have already fallen, since inception of this early warning system, and these constructive outcomes have inspired Ananda to broaden his undertaking to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Once flourished throughout the Indian sub-continent, the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) has been declining daily because of poaching, lack of grassland habitat and lack of group involvement

After first sighting the species in 2003, Pramod, a physician on the time, made the choice to go away drugs and dedicate his life to conserving the good Indian bustard.

By working with communities within the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his workforce on the Bombay Natural History Society are serving to to vary opinions, develop constructive relationships between authorities and native individuals, and allow higher administration of the land on which each group livelihoods and bustards rely.

His work is amassing essential details about the species, and interesting individuals with anti-poaching actions.

Dr Pramod and Dr Ananda are among the many seven conservationists to have been awarded the Whitley Awards for their efforts to guard wildlife in creating nations.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on Wednesday on the Royal Geographical Society, London, hosted by tv naturalist Kate Humble.



Photo Gallery

[Home](#) > [Photo Gallery](#) > [Whitley Awards 2015](#)

Whitley Awards 2015



The Princess Royal and 2015 Whitley Awards recipient Ananda Kumar, India at The Royal Geographical Society, London on 29 April



The Princess Royal and 2015 Whitley Awards recipient Dr Pramod Patil, India at The Royal Geographical Society, London on 29 April

May 7, 2015

Pramod Patil
India

**Community conservation of the great Indian bustard
in the Thar Desert, India: a landscape-level approach**

**Winner of the Whitley Award donated by The William Brake
Charitable Trust in memory of William Brake.**

Print.....	270-275
Websites.....	276-310
Joint coverage with Ananda Kumar	311-319

Print

The Indian Express - Indian Newspaper
31st March 2015

Puneite among finalists for 2015 Whitley Awards

Dr Patil has been chosen for his work on community conservation of Great Indian Bustard in Thar desert

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

PUNE, MARCH 30

CITY-BASED Dr Pramod Patil is among the two nature conservationists from the country who have been finalised for the 2015 Whitley Awards to be held at Royal Geographical Society, London, on April 29. Patil, who is a doctor by profession and a conservationist by choice, has been chosen for his work on community conservation of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) in the Thar desert.

The other Indian Ananda Kumar has been short-listed for his work on Elephant messengers who use innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant co-existence in Southern India. The Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) is a UK registered charity giving awards and grants to outstanding nature conservationists around the world. Whitley Awards, the prestigious international prize, honours exceptional individuals who through their outstanding conservation work in developing countries are re-defining the way people engage with the natural world in the 21st century.

Other contenders for these 'Green Oscars', presented by HRH The Princess Royal, hail from Brazil, Colombia, Republic of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Africa. The species that these conservationists are working to protect range from small pollinators to giant armadillos and elephants; and from birds to primates. The finalists were selected from a pool of 174 applicants from all over the world. Apart from Patil and Kumar, the finalists include Arnaud Desbiez (Brazil; giant armadillos); Rosamira Guillen (Colombia; cotton-top tamarins); Panut Hadisiswoyo (Sumatra; orang-utans); Jayson Ibañez (Philippines; Philippine eagles) and Inaoyom Imong (Nigeria; Cross River gorillas).

The award ceremony will be hosted by television presenter Kate Humble and attended by Sir David Attenborough. HRH The Princess Royal will also present an additional prize, the Whitley Gold Award worth up to £50,000, to Dino Martins, whose work on the relationship between pollinators and the use of harmful agricultural pesticides has led to new legislation to protect bees as well as more sustainable and productive farming practices that benefit both people and pollinators in East Africa.



PRAMOD PATIL

बाह्य परिसर
कापूरकोळमध्ये वाहतूक कोंडी
सातपु, मा. १० : पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ (का. १०) येथे फिरकी (का. १५) विभाग वाहतूक कोंडीत उरवतो हेच होतं. येथील वाहतूक सुटणे हेच विभागावरून काढण्याचा प्रयत्न होत आहे. विभागाच्या सुटण्यामुळे पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे. याबाबत विभाग कोंडी होत आहे.

मेट्रोच्या अहवालावर निर्णय नाही

वनाज-रामवाडी मार्गाबाबत मुख्यमंत्री फडणवीस यांच्याकडे प्रश्न पडूनच

पुणे, मा. १७ : अखेरचा काळपर्यंत पुणेकरांचा फडणवीस यांच्याकडे प्रश्न पडूनच मेट्रोच्या अहवालावर निर्णय होऊ शकतो. मुख्यमंत्री फडणवीस यांच्याकडे पुणेकरांचा प्रश्न पडूनच मेट्रोच्या अहवालावर निर्णय होऊ शकतो. पुणेकरांचा प्रश्न पडूनच मेट्रोच्या अहवालावर निर्णय होऊ शकतो.



मेट्रोच्या अहवालावर निर्णय नाही. वनाज-रामवाडी मार्गाबाबत मुख्यमंत्री फडणवीस यांच्याकडे प्रश्न पडूनच.



पुणेकरांचा प्रश्न पडूनच मेट्रोच्या अहवालावर निर्णय होऊ शकतो.

शाळेत चोरी
पुणे, मा. १८ : शाळेत चोरी होऊन पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे. याबाबत विभाग कोंडी होत आहे.

अनधिकृत बांधकामांचा प्रश्न 'जैसे थे' च

पुणे, मा. १८ : अनधिकृत बांधकामांचा प्रश्न 'जैसे थे' च आहे. पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे. याबाबत विभाग कोंडी होत आहे.

स्टॉलच्या वादातून हाणामारी

तुळशीबागेतील घटना; नगरसेविका पाटील यांच्यावर गुन्हा

पुणे, मा. १७ : तुळशीबागेतील घटना; नगरसेविका पाटील यांच्यावर गुन्हा दाखल झाला आहे. पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे.

कापूरकोळमधील मृत्यू
पुणे, मा. १७ : कापूरकोळ येथे मृत्यू होऊन पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे.

अनधिकृत बांधकामांचा प्रश्न 'जैसे थे' च
पुणे, मा. १८ : अनधिकृत बांधकामांचा प्रश्न 'जैसे थे' च आहे. पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे.

स्टॉलच्या वादातून हाणामारी
पुणे, मा. १७ : तुळशीबागेतील घटना; नगरसेविका पाटील यांच्यावर गुन्हा दाखल झाला आहे.

फुटबॉल
पुणे, मा. १८ : फुटबॉल खेळ होऊन पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे.

तेवीस लाखांचे मोबाईल लंपास
पुणे, मा. १८ : तेवीस लाखांचे मोबाईल लंपास होऊन पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे.

माऊलडोक'च्या संरक्षणासाठी ५० लाख
आंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तरावरून सहकार्य 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' पुरस्कारप्राप्त डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील यांची माहिती

केवळ ३ दिवसांमध्ये केस गळणे थांबवते

मेथुराज विज्ञान केंद्राचे डॉ. मधुसूदन शिंदे यांचे शोध

मेथुराज

जापान घ्या

महाराष्ट्र राज्य धरीका पब्लिक, पुणे

Web site: http://ajp.com.mhatharaj.com

'ई' निविदा सूचना

अधिकृत सूचना

अभिजितच्या 'सुसाइड' नाट्यावर अखेर पडदा

पुणे, मा. १७ : अभिजितच्या 'सुसाइड' नाट्यावर अखेर पडदा पडला आहे. पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे.

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बाणारीच्या विद्यार्थ्याचा दुरुविक्रमाने मृत्यू

पुणे, मा. १७ : बाणारीच्या विद्यार्थ्याचा दुरुविक्रमाने मृत्यू झाला आहे. पुणेकरांना कापूरकोळ येथे वाहतूक कोंडी होत आहे.

IN FOCUS



**Saving the
 Bustard**

The recently announced Whitley Awards, organised by the Whitley Fund for Nature and widely regarded as the Green Oscars, saw two Indian conservationists being recognised for their work. In this issue, we bring you a first person account of one of the winners, Dr. Pramod Pati and his years of hard work and dedication that went behind conserving the Great Indian Bustard.

PHOTO: CHANDAN DEB

The summer of 2007 changed my life forever. A Nilow bustard (IAD) fed about a bird called *Ardeotis* (Morpho-species of the Great Indian Bustard, which is a large bird and is also known as the "Indian ostrich"). As a budding birdwatcher, I became immensely curious. I immediately referred to The Book of Indian Birds by Salim Ali. I found the bird highly interesting and finally got a chance to visit the famous bustard sanctuary near Sagar in Maharashtra during the rainy of 2007.

My first sighting of the bustard was a fascinating one – a huge male standing miserably close to us in the display cage and that too very close to us it was like at first sight, it turned out to be the most memorable bird-watching day of my life. The moments are so fresh even today that they play in my mind as if all of everything happened just last week. We were lucky to see 17 different individuals in one day! However, it is difficult to see even one. After this last-making interaction with the Great Indian Bustard, Mumbai became my second home. Mr. Bhagat Malviya, guide at Mumbai, became my first guru in the world of the Great Indian Bustard. I spent enormous amounts of time with him, learning more about the bustard. I think I was more attentive while listening to his experiences than I had ever been during my medicine lectures in the college classroom. Spending time with him also allowed me to understand the ground level issues related to bustard conservation better.

My second major step towards the work I have done to conserve the bustard was visiting the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). A friend of mine was working on the Project Ostrich for the PFI. In with the BNHS. Thanks to him and the rest of the BNHS staff, I spent some fruitful days in the BNHS library. I also got to meet Dr. Anand Baburao, the Director of BNHS. Discussion with him made me understand the bustard conservation issues more clearly and made more sense about it. I also got to read several reports by him, which helped me to understand global scenarios of the conservation of the species. I remember him telling me that it is essential to work with the local communities to protect this endangered bird. It was hard for me to understand the logic behind this at that time, as I was of the



Green
 Issue
 Changes



IN FOCUS



belief that to protect any species all you have to do is declare a sanctuary. But as I started discussing bustard sanctuaries, I began understanding why Dr. Tabatabad had said what he had.

Creating dialogues with the local communities which share the landscape with the Great Indian Bustard was probably the most important step I have taken so far in understanding the bird's conservation issues. As a doctor, I was comfortable in reaching out to people and getting close to them was also easy for me. These were several times when I gave free medication and consultation to local people and this earned me their trust. Meanwhile I received a grant from Indian Wildlife Conservation Network (IWCN) and started the first ever conservation project of my life. It was during this project that I understood that for a landscape dependent species like the bustard, an exclusive protected area approach is not going to solve the problem completely. Issues related to land use, development, livelihoods and poaching are also associated with the species and the people living across Great Indian Bustard habitat. My initial work was with the local people living in bustard habitat areas of Maharashtra and the Maharashtra Forest Department. The primary work that needed to be done was habitat surveys, scientific population census, and most importantly creating a bond of trust between local people and the forest department. The forest department was extremely open to undertake these practical conservation approaches and helped a lot. We were successful in several initial projects. Also at the same time I was able to share about my conservation work and express my outlook on contemporary issues related to the Great Indian Bustard on various print and online platforms. This process also helped me do my theoretical homework on various related issues, such as free-ranging dogs, power lines, poaching, hunting, and the Great Indian Bustard in Pakistan. Both state level and national media were also helpful in raising various issues at the same time and I began understanding the importance of media to wildlife conservation.

One of the biggest support I got was from a couple of Chief Commissioners of Forest (Wildlife) of the Maharashtra Forest Department at that time. They undertook some very basic steps for habitat management of grey bustard habitat in

the case of the Hairy Bustard Sanctuary such as sporting work trees. The local people and the politicians were against the conventional logic of conservation. However, through monitoring efforts in the reserved area, we were able to prove that the bustard numbers were increasing in these areas. This was a major boost to the path-breaking and country's first ever habitat restoration project. Scientific surveys and census also helped as in finding another important area for the Great Indian Bustard, Sangemud, which needed protection. Thanks to the then Secretary of Wildlife of Environment and Forest, Mr. Pradeep Chole, this area is now a protected area and is being managed primarily for the Great Indian Bustard. We also successfully completed a project on community-based protection of the bustard's habitat, which led private grazers also being protected by their owners. This helped to provide additional safe habitat for the Great Indian Bustard before the necessary funds could be made available for land acquisition.

Unfortunately, a couple of issues (in my personal opinion) thwarted the Great Indian Bustard conservation in Mumbai. A proposed irrigation canal, cutting across the prime breeding area of the Great Indian Bustard, will only be the death nail for the bustards. But before any work on the canal started, rumors surrounding the former banning the proposed canal because of the bustard led to loss of community support for the Great Indian Bustard. All the efforts and initiatives up to this point went down the drain. People even started talking of killing the bustards if they don't get the canal and the water. The second setback came when it came into light that the local political entities were against the conservation of the bird and de-notification of the Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary became a top political agenda during the ensuing elections. The Great Indian Bustard is the only bird species in India which has also protected areas designated for its conservation. Unfortunately, we have lost the bustard from four of these. At all these places community resentment seems to be the major reason.

Thanks to the support of IWCN, Wildlife International and Key of Society for Protection of Birds (KSPB) I got a chance to work on a national level project for the Great Indian Bustard. This gave me a rare opportunity to understand the issues

involved in the conservation of the bird across all sites in India. This also helped me in understanding the contemporary issues of conservation related to Great Indian Bustard conservation. Unfortunately, the situation is not all that promising. The population of bustards is declining rapidly at all locations and there is an urgent need of positive government action. It is essential to take a national level assessment of the efforts and success of all range states as per the guidelines prepared for the recovery of species. Availing these efforts will help the range states in fulfilling the expectations of the Species Recovery Program of the bustard.

Rajasthan is going to be the last battleground for the long term survival of the species. The state has the largest population of the bustard and the most extensive Great Indian Bustard habitat in the world. However there is a need of landscape level approach in saving the species in the Thar Desert. Under the leadership of the CEO, Wildlife, Jaipur, An. Gehlvel Nagar (Chowdhury), the Rajasthan Forest Department is taking efforts to protect the habitat. Research done by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has helped us understand the recent distribution of the Great Indian Bustard in the Thar Desert. There is also a need to give community based conservation programs top priority. It is extremely important as most of the bustard's habitat lies outside protected areas of the Desert National Park. Community reforestation, soil conservation and bird food/ baits, desecrated areas, creating, establishing self-poaching mechanisms and some of the action plans that need urgent implementation. Starting power lines and windmills could also pose a big threat to the bustards. Even impact of pesticides on the Great Indian Bustard is still not studied and we need to understand this issue better. Stabilizing



tagging of birds can reveal vital information on bustard's ecology, especially understanding the movement of the birds. We will also help us understand whether the bird migrates between India and Pakistan. Bustards have been seen on the other side of the border and the survival of bustards in Pakistan has been a matter of debate for quite some time now. Protecting the Great Indian Bustard in the long run is dependent on how safe we manage to keep the bird's landscape, both in protected areas and privately owned areas. Efforts are also being made to protect some bustards in enclosures, but the urgent need to conserve the bird's habitat in non-protected areas cannot be dismissed. The Great Indian Bustard has a future only if the forest department and the local communities work hand-in-hand and not against each other.



Green
Landscape
Changes

Websites

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<http://maharashtratimes.indiatimes.com/maharashtra/kolhapur-west-maharashtra/green-oscer-pramod-patil/articleshow/46720511.cms>

MT ▾ महाराष्ट्र मुंबई ठाणे पुणे कोल्हापूर अहमदनगर नाशिक जळगाव नागपूर इतर

महाराष्ट्र टाइम्स

कोल्हापूर

आपण इथे आहात - होम » Maharashtra » Maharashtra/Kolhapur » Green Osker Pramod Patil

'ग्रीन ऑस्कर'साठी प्रमोद पाटील यांना नामांकन

Maharashtra Times | Mar 28, 2015, 07.00 AM IST

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मोहसीन मुल्ला, कोल्हापूर

संकटग्रस्त माळढोक आणि गिधाड या पक्षांच्या संवर्धनासाठी अनेक वर्षे काम करणारे कोल्हापुरातील पक्षितज्ज्ञ डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील यांना 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' पुरस्कारासाठी नामनिर्देशन मिळाले आहे. लंडनस्थित 'व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर' या संस्थेच्या वतीने दिला जाणारा हा पुरस्कार पर्यावरण क्षेत्रातील अत्यंत प्रतिष्ठेचा मानला जातो. भारतातून डॉ. पाटील आणि हत्ती-मानव संघर्षाबाबत कार्यरत असलेले म्हैसूर येथील नेचर कॉन्झर्व्हेशन फाउंडेशनचे तज्ज्ञ डॉ. आनंद कुमार यांचेही पुरस्कारासाठी नामनिर्देशन झाले आहे.



'ग्रीन ऑस्कर'साठी प्रमोद पाटील यांना नामांकन
फोटो रोऊन करा

पाटील हे सध्या पुण्यात कार्यरत आहेत. पर्यावरण संवर्धनात उल्लेखनीय काम करणाऱ्या जगभरातील एकूण १७४ जणांकडून आलेल्या अर्जातून सात जणांना नामांकित करण्यात आले आहे. लंडन येथील रॉयल जिऑग्राफी सोसायटीमध्ये २९ एप्रिल रोजी पुरस्कार वितरण होणार आहे. 'व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर' या संस्थेने २५ मार्च रोजी ग्रीन ऑस्कर पुरस्कारासाठीची नामांकने जाहीर केली आहेत.

पाटील यांनी माळढोक पक्षाच्या संवर्धनासाठी केलेल्या कार्याची दखल घेऊन नामांकन करण्यात आले आहे. पाटील व्यवसायाने डॉक्टर असून, त्यांचे शिक्षण एमडीपर्यंत झाले आहे. एमबीबीएसपर्यंतचे शिक्षण कोल्हापुरातील राजर्षी छत्रपती शाहू गव्हर्नमेंट मेडिकल कॉलेजमधून तर एमडीचे शिक्षण पुण्यातील भारतीय विद्यापीठाच्या मेडिकल कॉलेजमध्ये झाले आहे. ३१ वर्षीय पाटील माळढोक संवर्धनासाठीच्या स्टेट कॉन्झर्व्हेशन प्लॅन, केंद्र सरकारच्या नॅशनल बस्टर्ड रिक्व्हिरी प्रोग्रॅम या कार्यक्रमात बॉम्बे नेचर हिस्ट्री सोसायटीच्या सहकार्याने काम करत आहेत. 'बर्ड लाइफ इंटरनॅशनल' या जगातील पक्षांसंदर्भात काम करणाऱ्या 'ग्लोबली थ्रेटन्ड बर्ड फोरम'साठी त्यांनी माळढोकची सद्यःस्थिती आणि अचूक आकडेवारी दिली. त्यामुळे माळढोकची नोंद सर्वधिक संकटग्रस्त गटात होऊ शकली आहे. नान्ज येथील अभयारण्यात त्यांनी लोकसहभागाने माळढोक संवर्धनाचे प्रयत्न सुरू केले आहेत.

अन्य नामांकने

अर्नाड डेसबिझ (ब्राझील), रोजमिरा म्युलियन (कोलंबिया), पॅन्ट हॅडसीओयो (सुमात्रा), जॅसन इबनेझ (फिलिपाइन्स), इनीयोम इमॉंग (नायजेरिया). याशिवाय केनिया येथील मधमाशांच्या संवर्धनावर काम करणारे दिनो मार्टिन यांना सुवर्णपदक जाहीर करण्यात आले आहे.

'जगातील अत्यंत प्रतिष्ठेच्या पुरस्कारासाठी नामांकन झाल्याचा नक्कीच आनंद आहे. त्यामुळे जैवविविधता संवर्धनासाठी काम करण्यासाठी अधिक प्रोत्साहन मिळेल.'

- डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील पक्षितज्ज्ञ

मोबाईल ॲप डाउनलोड करा आणि राहा अपडेट

प्रत्येक ताजे अपडेट जाणून घेण्यासाठी महाराष्ट्र टाइम्सच्या फेसबुक पेजला लाईक करा

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मराठी तरुण 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' स्पर्धेत...



माळढोक, गिधाडांच्या संवर्धनासाठी केलेल्या प्रयत्नांची पोचपावती

गेली अनेक वर्षे संकटग्रस्त माळढोक आणि गिधाड या पक्षांच्या संवर्धनासाठी कार्यरत असलेले कोल्हापुरातील पक्षीतज्ज्ञ डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील यांची जागतिक पातळीवरील 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' पुरस्कारासाठी नामनिर्देशन झाले आहे. लंडनस्थित 'व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर' या संस्थेच्या वतीने दिला जाणारा हा पुरस्कार

पर्यावरण क्षेत्रातील अत्यंत प्रतिष्ठेचा मानला जातो. भारतातून प्रमोद पाटील यांच्यासह हत्ती-मानव यांच्या संघर्षाबाबत कार्यरत असलेले म्हैसूर येथील नेचर कॉन्झर्व्हेशन फाउंडेशनचे तज्ज्ञ डॉ. आनंद कुमार यांचेही या पुरस्कारासाठी नामनिर्देशन झाले आहे. पाटील हे सध्या पुण्यात कार्यरत आहेत.

पर्यावरण संवर्धनात उल्लेखनीय काम करणाऱ्या जगभरातील एकूण १७४ जणांकडून आलेल्या अर्जातून सातजणांची नामांकने ग्रीन ऑस्करसाठी झाली आहेत. २९ एप्रिल रोजी लंडन येथील रॉयल जिऑग्राफी सोसायटीमध्ये पुरस्कार वितरण होणार आहे. 'व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर' या संस्थेने २५ मार्च रोजी ग्रीन ऑस्कर पुरस्कारासाठीची नामांकने जाहीर केली आहेत.

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३१ वर्षीय पाटील माळढोक संवर्धनासाठीच्या स्टेट कॉन्झर्व्हेशन प्लॅन, केंद्र सरकारच्या नॅशनल बस्टार्ड रिकव्हरी प्रोग्रॅम या कार्यक्रमात बॉम्बे नेचर हिस्ट्री सोसायटीच्या सहकार्याने काम करत आहेत. 'बर्ड लाइफ इंटरनॅशनल' या जगातील पक्ष्यांसंदर्भात काम करणाऱ्या 'ग्लोबली थ्रेटन्ड बर्ड फोरम'साठी त्यांनी माळढोकची सद्यःस्थिती आणि अचूक आकडेवारी दिली. त्यामुळे माळढोकची नोंद क्रिटिकली एंडेन्जर्ड स्पेसीजमध्ये म्हणजेच सर्वधिक संकटग्रस्त गटात होऊ शकली आहे. नानज येथील अभयारण्यात त्यांनी लोकसहभागातून माळढोक संवर्धनाचे प्रयत्न सुरू केले आहेत.

The Hindu – News Website
30th April 2015

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/pune-ornithologist-pramod-patil-bags-green-oscar-for-conservation-of-great-indian-bustard/article7178316.ece>

THE HINDU

Pune ornithologist bags Green Oscar



Pramod Patil, winner of the Whitley Fund for Nature award, with schoolchildren at an awareness programme on protection of the Great Indian Bustard. Photo: Special Arrangement

In recognition of his work on conservation of Great Indian Bustard. Pune-based ornithologist Pramod Patil has won with the prestigious Whitley Award, popularly known as the ‘Green Oscar’ for his work on the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard .

The awards were presented on April 29 at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The winners each received cash prizes of £35,000 and a memento from the U.K.-based Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN).

Nine winners from eight countries (a joint winner from Kenya) were presented the awards by WFN’s royal patron Princess Anne in the presence of 450 guests that included eminent English naturalist Sir David Attenborough.

Dr. Patil bagged the prize along with Dr Ananda Kumar, a wildlife scientist with the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), who has worked extensively in Valparai in Coimbatore to facilitate human-animal coexistence.

Dr. Patil was the winner of the Whitley Award donated by The William Brake Charitable Trust for his project titled ‘Community conservation of the great Indian bustard in the Thar desert, India: a landscape-level approach.’

In 2003 Dr .Patil decided to leave medicine as a profession and devote his life to conservation of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) .

Lamenting the fact that the bird, once abundantly found in grasslands across the Indian sub-continent, had been driven out of its habitat, Dr. Patil ascribed poor planning and failure to involve the local community as factors that led to the Great Indian Bustard disappearing from several protected areas.

Capacity building

With most of his work centered around the Thar desert in Rajasthan (which hosts the largest surviving population of the bustard), Dr. Patil plans to use the project funding for capacity building.

Dr. Kumar's Whitley prize was donated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-UK, for his project on 'Elephant messengers: using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in Southern India.'

Noted for his passionate work on elephant conservation, Dr. Kumar and his team have come up with innovative communication systems that give early warnings to people about the presence of wild elephants and their movements in Valparai.

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प्रमोद पाटील यांना 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' प्रदान

पुणे: माळढोक आणि गिधाडांच्या संवर्धनासाठी झटणारे पक्षीतज्ज्ञ डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील यांना लंडनमधील व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर या संस्थेचा 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' पुरस्कार नुकताच प्रदान करण्यात आला. रॉयल जिऑग्राफी सोसायटीमध्ये या पुरस्काराचे वितरण झाले.

पर्यावरण संवर्धनासाठी कार्य करणाऱ्या जगभरातील 174 जणांकडून आलेल्या अर्जातून सात जणांना नामांकित केले होते. संस्थेने मार्चमध्ये पुरस्कारांसाठी नामांकने जाहीर केली होती. सन्मानचिन्ह, सुमारे 33 लाख 76 हजार रुपये (35000 पौंड) असे पाटील यांना दिलेल्या पुरस्काराचे स्वरूप आहे. माळढोकच्या संवर्धनासाठी पाटील यांनी केलेल्या कार्याची दखल घेऊन त्यांना हा पुरस्कार दिला आहे. पुरस्काराची रक्कम माळढोक संवर्धन प्रकल्पासाठी दिल्याचे पाटील यांनी सांगितले.

पाटील हे व्यवसायाने डॉक्टर आहेत. कोल्हापुरातील राजर्षी छत्रपती शाहू गव्हर्नमेंट मेडिकल कॉलेजमध्ये त्यांनी शिक्षण पूर्ण केले आहे, तर एमडीचे शिक्षण पुण्यातील भारती विद्यापीठाच्या मेडिकल कॉलेजमधून घेतले आहे. केंद्र सरकारच्या राष्ट्रीय माळढोक संवर्धन प्रकल्पात ते बॉम्बे नेचर हिस्ट्री सोसायटीच्या सहकार्याने कार्यरत आहेत. राज्य सरकारच्या माळढोक संवर्धन प्रकल्पातही पाटील यांचा सहभाग आहे. जागतिक स्तरावरील बर्ड लाइफ इंटरनॅशनल संस्थेच्या "ग्लोबली थ्रेटन्ड बर्ड फोरम"साठी पाटील यांनी माळढोकची सद्यःस्थिती आणि आकडेवारी दिली आहे. त्यानंतरच सर्वाधिक संकटग्रस्त पक्ष्यांच्या यादीत माळढोकची नोंद झाली. लोकसहभागातून नान्ज येथील अभयारण्यात माळढोक संवर्धनाचे प्रयत्न त्यांच्या सहकार्यातून सुरु आहेत.

आतापर्यंत केलेल्या कामाची पोचपावती या पुरस्काराच्या रूपाने मिळाली आहे. 'आपल्याला आवडते, तेच करायचे', या तत्त्वाने वाटचाल केली तर यश हे मिळतेच, याचीच प्रचिती मी आज घेतली आहे. या पुरस्काराच्या रूपाने देशातील माळढोक वाचविण्यासाठी आंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तरातून सहकार्य लाभणार आहे. तसेच माळढोक संवर्धनासाठी अधिकाधिक प्रोत्साहन मिळाले.



सकाळी : ७.५७, १०.५७
दुपारी : १२.५७, २.५७, ३.५७
संध्याकाळी : ४.५७, ५.५७, ७.५७

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प्रमोद पाटील यांना 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' प्रदान



पुणे : माळढोक आणि गिधाडांच्या संवर्धनासाठी झटणारे पक्षीतज्ज्ञ डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील यांना लंडनमधील व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर या संस्थेचा "ग्रीन ऑस्कर" पुरस्कार नुकताच प्रदान करण्यात आला. रॉयल जिऑग्राफी सोसायटीमध्ये या पुरस्काराचे वितरण झाले.

पर्यावरण संवर्धनासाठी कार्य करणाऱ्या जगभरातील 174 जणांकडून आलेल्या अर्जातून सात जणांना नामांकित केले होते. संस्थेने

मार्चमध्ये पुरस्कारांसाठी नामांकने जाहीर केली होती. सन्मानचिन्ह, सुमारे 33 लाख 76 हजार रुपये (35000 पौंड) असे पाटील यांना दिलेल्या पुरस्काराचे स्वरूप आहे. माळढोकच्या संवर्धनासाठी पाटील यांनी केलेल्या कार्याची दखल घेऊन त्यांना हा पुरस्कार दिला आहे. पुरस्काराची रक्कम माळढोक संवर्धन प्रकल्पासाठी दिल्याचे पाटील यांनी सांगितले.

पाटील हे व्यवसायाने डॉक्टर आहेत. कोल्हापुरातील राजर्षी छत्रपती शाहू गव्हर्नमेंट मेडिकल कॉलेजमध्ये त्यांनी शिक्षण पूर्ण केले आहे, तर एमडीचे शिक्षण पुण्यातील भारती विद्यापीठाच्या मेडिकल कॉलेजमधून घेतले आहे. केंद्र सरकारच्या राष्ट्रीय माळढोक संवर्धन प्रकल्पात ते बॉम्बे नेचर हिस्ट्री सोसायटीच्या सहकार्याने कार्यरत आहेत. राज्य सरकारच्या माळढोक संवर्धन प्रकल्पातही पाटील यांचा सहभाग आहे. जागतिक स्तरावरील बर्ड लाइफ इंटरनॅशनल संस्थेच्या "ग्लोबली थ्रेटन्ड बर्ड फोरम"साठी पाटील यांनी माळढोकची सद्यःस्थिती आणि आकडेवारी दिली आहे. त्यानंतरच सर्वाधिक संकटग्रस्त पक्ष्यांच्या यादीत माळढोकची नोंद झाली. लोकसहभागातून नान्नज येथील अभयारण्यात माळढोक संवर्धनाचे प्रयत्न त्यांच्या सहकार्यातून सुरू आहेत.

आतापर्यंत केलेल्या कामाची पोचपावती या पुरस्काराच्या रूपाने मिळाली आहे. 'आपल्याला आवडते, तेच करायचे', या तत्त्वाने वाटचाल केली तर यश हे मिळतेच, याचीच प्रचिती मी आज घेतली आहे. या पुरस्काराच्या रूपाने देशातील माळढोक वाचविण्यासाठी आंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तरातून सहकार्य लाभणार आहे. तसेच माळढोक संवर्धनासाठी अधिकाधिक प्रोत्साहन मिळाले.



प्रमोद पाटील यांना 'ग्रीन ऑस्कर' प्रदान

सोमवार ४ मे २०१५

पुणे : माळढोक आणि गिधाडांच्या संवर्धनासाठी झटणारे पक्षीतज्ज्ञ डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील यांना लंडनमधील व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर या संस्थेचा "ग्रीन ऑस्कर" पुरस्कार नुकताच प्रदान करण्यात आला. रॉयल जिऑग्राफी सोसायटीमध्ये या पुरस्काराचे वितरण झाले.

पर्यावरण संवर्धनासाठी कार्य करणाऱ्या जगभरातील 174 जणांकडून आलेल्या अर्जातून सात जणांना नामांकित केले होते. संस्थेने मार्चमध्ये पुरस्कारांसाठी नामांकने जाहीर केली होती. सन्मानचिन्ह, सुमारे 33 लाख 76 हजार रुपये (35000 पौंड) असे पाटील यांना दिलेल्या पुरस्काराचे स्वरूप आहे. माळढोकच्या संवर्धनासाठी पाटील यांनी केलेल्या कार्याची दखल घेऊन त्यांना हा पुरस्कार दिला आहे. पुरस्काराची रक्कम माळढोक संवर्धन प्रकल्पासाठी दिल्याचे पाटील यांनी सांगितले.

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- डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील, पक्षितज्ज्ञ

स्त्रोत - सकाळ सोमवार ४ मे २०१५



Environmentalist wins Green Oscar

PUNE: City-based ornithologist Pramod Patil has been conferred the prestigious Whitley Award, popularly called the 'Green Oscar', for his work on the conservation of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard.

Patil was among seven conservationists who were conferred the award worth £35,000 at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London last week. The award is presented by The William Brake Charitable Trust.

Among those present were renowned nature filmmaker David Attenborough. Another Indian, Ananda Kumar, who has worked on elephant conservation, was also an awardee.

Patil is a physician by training and it was only after his first sighting of a Great Indian Bustard in 2003, that he decided to give up a career in medicine and work for the conservation of the rare bird.

"It is really sad that the species that was abundantly found in grasslands across the sub-continent has been edged out of 90% of its habitat," Patil said.

He pointed out that not only has the species fared poorly because grasslands are often thought of as wastelands, but poor planning and failure to involve the local community has resulted in the Great Indian Bustard disappearing from several protected areas.

Poaching and habitat loss from livestock grazing and agricultural encroachment have also contributed to its decline.

"Saving pockets of grasslands here and there will not save the species, nor serve the community, and so we need a landscape-level of thinking," he added.

Most of Patil's work is focused on the Thar desert, where the largest remaining population of the bird is found. He plans to use the project funding that accompanies the award for capacity building of the forest department to tackle poaching and set up anti-poaching teams by involving locals.

He also wants to establish a participatory network to gather information on status, range and threats to the bird and shore up awareness programmes.



प्रमोद पाटील



पर्यावरण रक्षणाचे काम हे एखाद्या व्रतासारखे असते. पेशाने डॉक्टर असलेल्या एखाद्या व्यक्तीने ते हाती

पर्यावरण रक्षणाचे काम हे एखाद्या व्रतासारखे असते. पेशाने डॉक्टर असलेल्या एखाद्या व्यक्तीने ते हाती घ्यावे, समर्पण वृत्तीने ते काम करावे अशी उदाहरणे कमी असतात. २००३ मध्ये प्रमोद पाटील यांनी माळढोक पक्षी प्रथम पाहिला व नंतर ते आपण डॉक्टर आहोत हे विसरूनच गेले. मूळ कोल्हापूरचे व सध्या बॉम्बे

नॅचरल हिस्ट्री सोसायटीचे अधिकारी असलेले डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील यांना त्यांनी गिधाडे व माळढोक, रानपिंगळा पक्ष्यांच्या रक्षणासाठी केलेल्या कामासाठी यंदाचा व्हाइटली पर्यावरण पुरस्कार जाहीर झाला आहे. लंडन येथील 'व्हाइटली फंड फॉर नेचर' या संस्थेच्या वतीने तो दिला जातो. निसर्गाने त्यांना साद घातली व त्यांनी पक्षीशास्त्रज्ञ व्हायचे ठरवले. आययूसीएन या संस्थेच्या प्रजाती संवर्धन समितीचे ते प्रमुख आहेत.

माळढोक (अरडेओटिस नायग्रीसेप्स) पक्षी आता नष्ट होण्याच्या मार्गावर आहेत. त्यांना वाचवण्यासाठी त्यांनी ज्या उपाययोजना सुचवल्या आहेत त्यांच्या आधारे लवकरच माळढोक संरक्षण धोरण जाहीर होत आहे. त्यांच्या मते आता जमिनीचा वापर बदलला आहे. त्यामुळे लोकांनीच पुढाकार घेऊन माळढोक, गिधाडे यासारख्या पक्ष्यांना वाचवले पाहिजे. पाटील यांचे शिक्षण एमडीपर्यंत झाले आहे. एमबीबीएसपर्यंतचे शिक्षण कोल्हापुरातील राजर्षी छत्रपती शाहू सरकारी वैद्यकीय महाविद्यालयातून तर एमडीचे शिक्षण पुण्यातील भारती विद्यापीठाच्या वैद्यकीय महाविद्यालयात झाले आहे. नान्नज वन्यजीव अभयारण्यात त्यांनी माळढोक पक्ष्यांच्या वाढीसाठी प्रयत्न केले आहेत. इंग्लंडच्या रॉयल सोसायटी फॉर प्रोटेक्शन ऑफ बर्ड्स अँड बर्डलाइफ या संस्थेसमवेत ते काम करीत आहेत.

राजस्थानातही गवताळ प्रदेशाची निर्मिती करून तेथे माळढोक पक्ष्यांची निपज वाढवण्याचे त्यांचे प्रयत्न आहेत. त्यासाठी त्यांनी स्थानिक लोकांना हाताशी घेऊन काम केले आहे. गवताळ भाग कमी झाल्याने माळढोक पक्ष्यांची संख्या कमी झाली. माळढोक पक्ष्यांची शिकार रोखण्यासाठी त्यांनी स्थानिक लोक, वन अधिकारी यांना माहिती दिली. माळढोक पक्षी ११ राज्यांत सापडतो. २०१३ मध्ये तो आंतरराष्ट्रीय निसर्ग संवर्धन संस्थेच्या (आययूसीएन) धोक्यातील पक्ष्यांच्या यादीत आला. सध्या भारतात २५० माळढोक आहेत व त्यांची संख्या कमी होत चालली आहे. महाराष्ट्रात हा पक्षी चंद्रपूर, नागपूर व सोलापूर भागांत सापडतो. त्यांच्यासाठी ८५०० चौरस किलोमीटरचे अभयारण्य तयार करण्यात आले आहे. पण त्याचा काही उपयोग झाला नाही, कारण स्थानिक लोक या अभयारण्याच्या विरोधात आहेत.



BNHS scientist receives Whitley Award for work on Great Indian Bustard

MUMBAI: The Bombay Natural History Society scientist Dr Pramod Patil has won the Whitley Award for his research project on conservation of the Great Indian Bustard. Dr Patil works as advocacy officer on the Great Indian Bustard Project of BNHS. This prestigious annual award, which is in the form of a project grant, is often referred to as Green Oscar. Earlier, Dr Deepak Apte, Chief Operating Officer, BNHS, had also received the Whitley Award and Whitley Continuation Grant.

The grant supports the conservation and advocacy work for the critically endangered iconic species of Indian grasslands, Great Indian Bustard (GIB). HRH The Princess Royal presented the Whitley Award worth £35,000 to Dr Pramod Patil at a grand ceremony in Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to protect GIB in Thar Desert, Rajasthan. Dr Patil is one of the seven individuals worldwide to have received the grant this year. Edward Whitley, Founder of Whitley Fund for Nature, said; "The calibre of this year's Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, they are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife."

Sir David Attenborough, Trustee, Whitley Fund for Nature, added; "Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people - passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits." After first sighting the species in 2003, Dr Patil, a medical doctor by training, made the decision to devote his time to conserving the species. By working with communities in the Thar Desert and the state forest department, Dr Patil and his team from BNHS-India are helping to once again create favourable situation for the species by developing positive relationships with local stakeholders and enabling better management of the habitat. Dr Patil's team is also collecting crucial information about the species and engaging people to prevent poaching.

Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) once flourished across the Indian sub-continent. But factors such as loss of grassland habitat due to unsustainable developmental works; alienation of local populations who were earlier co-existing with GIBs, due to faulty conservation policies of various governments; the resultant poaching and destruction of eggs have pushed the species towards extinction in 90% of its original range. The estimated surviving population consists of fewer than 250 individuals with eroding support among the locals and developmental works looming large over the landscape.

The Hans India – News Website

7th May 2015

<http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/2015-05-07/Whitley-Award-for-BHNS-scientist-149402>



Whitley Award for BHNS scientist

Mumbai: As BNHS continues its mission of nature conservation it has received another feather in its cap. Dr Pramod Patil, working as Advocacy Officer, on the Great Indian Bustard Project of BNHS, recently received the Whitley Award 2015. This prestigious annual award, which is in the form of a project grant, is often referred to as Green Oscar. Earlier, Dr Deepak Apte, Chief Operating Officer, BNHS had also received the Whitley Award and Whitley Continuation Grant.

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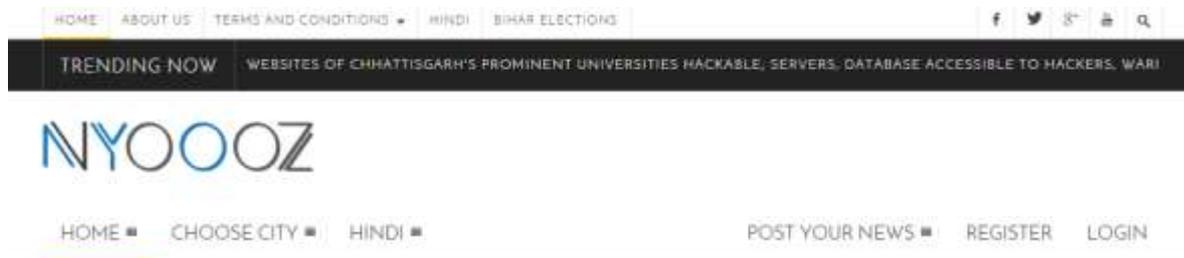
Dr Patil’s work

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Nyooz – News Website, India

7th May 2015

<http://www.nyooz.com/mumbai/100727/bnhs-scientist-receives-whitley-award-for-work-on-great-indian-bustard>



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Friday, May 08, 2015 AT 10:58 AM (IST)

Tags: vi1

पन्नास वर्षापूर्वी महाराष्ट्र, राजस्थान आणि अन्य काही राज्यातल्या गवताळ प्रदेशाचे वैभव असलेल्या माळढोक पक्ष्यांची संख्या सातत्याने कमी होत आहे. माळढोकला संरक्षण देऊन तो वाचवायसाठी गेली दहा वर्षे प्रयत्नांची पराकाष्ठा करणाऱ्या बॉबे नॅचरल हिस्ट्री सोसायटीच्या प्रजाती संवर्धन समितीचे प्रमुख डॉ. अनिल पाटील यांचा अलोकडेच आंतरराष्ट्रीय पुरस्काराने लंडनमध्ये गौरव झाला. लंडनच्या रॉयल जिओग्राफिक सोसायटीच्या सभागृहात प्रिन्सेस रॉयल यांच्या हस्ते त्यांना दोन लाख पंचेचाळीस हजार पांडाचा पुरस्कार देण्यात आला आहे. बौन ऑस्कर असा लौकिक असलेला हा पुरस्कार लंडनमधील व्हाईटली फंड फॉर नेचर ही संस्था देते.

डॉ. प्रमोद पाटील मूळचे कोल्हापूरचे. कोल्हापूरच्याच राजर्षी छ. शाहू वैद्यकीय महाविद्यालयातून ते एमबीबीएस झाले. पुण्याच्या भारत विद्यापीठाच्या वैद्यकीय महाविद्यालयातून त्यांनी एमडी पदवी मिळवली. 2003 मध्ये त्यांनी माळढोक पक्षी प्रथमच पाहिला आणि ते या पक्ष्याच्या प्रेमात पडले. गवताळ कुरणाची घटती संख्या, योग्य संरक्षणाचा अभाव, चोरटी शिकार यामुळे भारतात आता हा पक्षी दुर्मीळ झाला आहे. देशात सध्या फक्त 250 माळढोक पक्षी शिल्लक आहेत. महाराष्ट्रात चंद्रपूर, नागपूर आणि सोलापूर जिल्ह्यात तो आढळतो. माळढोक आणि रानपिंजळ्याचे संरक्षण आणि संवर्धन करायसाठी डॉ. पाटील यांनी डॉ. असद रेहमानी आणि वॉशिंग्टनच्या नॅशनल झुऑर्लॉजिकल पार्कच्या तज्ञ सारा हेलगर यांच्या सहकार्याने या दोन्ही पक्ष्यांच्या जीवनशैलीचे सूक्ष्म निरीक्षण केले. त्यांचा रहिवास, त्यांना असलेले धोके, प्रजनन याचेही संशोधन केले. इंग्लंडच्या रॉयल सोसायटी फॉर प्रोटेक्शन ऑफ बर्ड्स अँड वर्ड लाईफ या संस्थेसाठी काम करताना डॉ. पाटील यांनी माळढोकच्या रक्षणासाठी उपाययोजनाही सुचवल्या. 2013 मध्ये त्यांनी आंतरराष्ट्रीय निसर्ग संवर्धन संस्थेच्या धोकादायक यादीत माळढोकचा समावेश करून घेण्यात यश मिळवले.

भारतातल्या माळढोकच्या रहिवासाच्या प्रदेशातच गवताळ प्रदेशाची निर्मिती करून त्यांची निपज वाढवावी, यासाठी त्यांनी स्थानिक शेतकऱ्यांचे सहकार्य मिळवले. माळढोकच्या संरक्षणाचे प्रशिक्षणही स्थानिकांना दिले. माळढोकचे महत्त्वही त्यांना पटवून दिले. जमिनीच वापर बदलल्यामुळे माळढोक या देखण्या आणि डॉ. सलीम अली यांनी मार्शलस वॉक असे विशेषण दिलेल्या पक्ष्याच्या संरक्षणासाठी सरकारकडूनही सहकार्य मिळवण्यात त्यांनी यश मिळवले आहे. सोलापूर जिल्ह्यातल्या नान्नज परिसरात 850 किलोमीटर क्षेत्रात सरकारने जाहीर केलेल्या माळढोक अभयारण्याला स्थानिकांचा असलेला विरोध कमी करायसाठी त्यांनी या भागातल्या शेतकऱ्यांशी सातत्याने संवाद साधला आहे. सरकारने माळढोक आणि गिधाडांच्या संरक्षणासाठी सुचवलेली उपाययोजना स्वीकारली आणि स्थानिकांनं सहकार्य दिल्यास, या दोन्ही पक्ष्यांची संख्या वाढू शकते, असा विश्वास डॉ. पाटील यांना आहे.

mid-day

Mumbai Diary: Saturday scene

With many people leaving the city to spend summer vacations in other, probably cooler, places, their unoccupied homes are ripe targets for burglars.



Corporator Vikas Mhatre with police officers after distributing the cameras. Pic/Shrikant Khuperkar

With this in mind, corporator Vikas Mhatre of the Kalyan Dombivili Municipal Corporation's ward number 65 has distributed closed-circuit cameras to some 200 housing societies in the area.

Mhatre has paid for the cameras out of his own salary, and this has encouraged society office-bearers as well, to take proactive measures in ensuring safety and security.

Step up for media

The Salman Khan case has been a field day, literally, for the media who have been camping outside his residence, the court, and anywhere else the actor might be spotted.



Photographers get a leg up via ladders. Pic/Pradeep Dhivar

Photographers and cameramen have been seen perched on walls and even in trees, and we would not be surprised if flat-owners with residences overlooking strategic areas started renting out their rooms with a view.

We may not be at that stage yet (or if we are, this page hasn't yet heard about it!) but the spirit of enterprise was very much present in the vicinity of Khan's residence in Bandra (West), where throngs of people, fans, gawkers and media alike, were waiting for him to leave for the court.

A shopkeeper in the area decided to make the most of the situation, and offered ladders for rent at the princely sum of Rs 400 for the day. For the camera wielders, this was heaven-sent as it offered a whole new vantage point. And it was a small sum to pay for the privileged position.

BNHS officer gets 'Green Oscar' for bustard project

It's a feather (virtual, of course) in the cap for the Bombay Natural History Society, as its advocacy officer, Dr Pramod Patil, recently received the Whitley Award 2015, which is in the form of a project grant and is often referred to as the Green Oscar.



Dr Pramod Patil receiving the award from HRH the Princess Royal, Princess Anne. Dr Patil is working on the Great Indian Bustard Project of the BNHS. Earlier, BNHS COO Dr Deepak Apte had also received the Whitley Award and Whitley Continuation Grant. The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, presented the Whitley Award worth £35,000 to Dr Pramod Patil at a ceremony in London's Royal Geographical Society recently.

The grant supports the conservation and advocacy work for the critically endangered iconic species of Indian grasslands, Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*). Dr Patil, one of seven individuals worldwide to have received the grant this year, is a medical doctor by training and decided to devote his time to conserving the Great Indian Bustard after first sighting the species in 2003.

The Great Indian Bustard once flourished across the Indian sub-continent. Man-made factors such as loss of grassland habitat due to unsustainable development, faulty conservation policies, poaching and destruction of eggs have pushed the species towards extinction in 90 per cent of its original range.

The bird doctor



Pramod Patil

What drives Pramod Patil, a doctor who gave up his profession for the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard?

“It was love at first sight,” says Pramod Patil. A doctor, he first visited the Nannaj sanctuary in Maharashtra in 2003. It was a monsoon day and the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) was dancing in the grassland. “It was a fascinating experience,” recalls Pramod, speaking over the phone from Pune. From that moment on, his life took a drastic turn. He devoted his life to the four-

foot-tall bird that walks and runs the grasslands of our country. Pramod won the Whitley Award, popularly known as the ‘Green Oscar’, in April this year for his efforts in the conservation of the GIB. He was presented the award at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The award carried a cash prize of £35,000 from the U.K.-based Whitley Fund for Nature.

Pramod has been actively involving the people of Nannaj in the conservation of the bird, whose numbers are drastically reducing due to poaching and habitat destruction, for the last 13 years.

“I felt sad when I found out that my favourite bird was collapsing in number,” he says. He spent hours at the grasslands, observing the birds, photographing and sketching them in his notebook. He also visited the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) to learn more about the bird.

“The males have a white-coloured neck and grow a pouch through which they produce a booming call to attract females. This can be heard for over a kilometre,” he observes.

Pramod’s frequent visits to Nannaj got him acquainted with officials from the forest department and the locals. He initiated discussions on protecting the bustard — with help from farmers and forest guards, whom Pramod calls his “guides”. He chalked out a roadmap for the conservation of the GIB.

“We looked into proper monitoring of their numbers, habitat management, and community and school-level awareness programmes,” he explains.

The GIB, that’s among the heaviest flying birds, is sought after for its meat. “Hunting it is considered a status symbol by the locals,” says Pramod. “Shrinkage of grasslands is another reason for their depletion. They are present in six States in India, with the Thar in Rajasthan being a major stronghold,” he adds. Lack of support from the community is yet another reason for the present state of the GIB. Pramod addressed the issue by taking the bird to the people.

He conducted awareness camps in schools, brought out books on the bird in the local language, gave audio-visual presentations, printed posters, stickers...all in an effort to create an interest for the bird amidst the local community, which Pramod hopes will eventually translate into an urge to protect them. The school teachers and children are “messengers” who spread the word, he feels. He also set up a network of local coordinators who gave him field-level data by monitoring the bird in their localities.

Along the way, Pramod provided free medical consultation for people from nearby villages. He plans to use the funding from the award to work on a larger scale with institutions such as the BNHS and focus on the GIB of the Thar in the future. He continues to carry out medical research, although he doesn’t practise medicine for a living. He adds: “When you love something, you invest everything in it.”



Pune ornithologist raises £52,000 to save the Great Indian Bustard

PUNE: City-based ornithologist Pramod Patil, who was recently awarded the prestigious Whitley Award popularly dubbed the 'Green Oscar,' has managed to raise £52,000 for the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard.

"Of this, £35,000 is a part of the award. While I was in London I was also able to meet a lot of conservationists of international organisations. One of them, the Royal Society for Protection of Birds, has pledged another £17,000 that will be disbursed through the Birdlife International," Patil said.

Patil said he hoped the award and the opportunity to interact with international organisations would raise the profile of the critically endangered species and the need for its conservation.

"We also got an opportunity to see the international trends in conservation. For instance, there is a focus on landscape level conservation, instead of a few restricted areas. There is also a trend of identifying a flagship species and work towards its conservation with a large habitat being preserved as a result," he said.

Increasingly, a decentralised mechanism for conservation - distributing funds and decision-making to the local level instead of concentrating it with the government - is also being promoted. There is also a thrust towards involving local communities in conservation, Patil said.

"In India some of these strategies like community-based conservation have been identified when it comes to a species like the Great Indian Bustard, but not been implemented," he said.

Patil is planning to use most of the funds raised by him in these kind of initiatives, but hopes that government help will also come through.

"The bulk of this funding will be used for projects in the Thar desert, where the largest remaining population of the Great Indian Bustards is found. However, other areas that serve as a habitat for the bird will also be covered as and when the need arises," he added.

Patil fears that the Thar desert will be the location where 'the last battle' for the survival of the species will be fought. This is why the focus primarily will remain in the area.

The Great Indian Bustard is a species that cannot be protected by demarcating a certain area as a protected area. It utilises the entire landscape and is affected by changes in the land-use pattern, irrigation, cropping-patterns and problems like over grazing, he said.

Speaking about the recent sightings of three birds at the Great Indian Bustard sanctuary at Nanaj, which has witnessed a dramatic decline in population in recent years, Patil said that the sanctuary was an important breeding area for the bird.

The forest department has initiated some measures to improve the habitat of the birds, but it remains to be seen if it will have an impact, he said.

The Hindu – News Website
21st May 2015

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/52000-to-save-the-bustard/article7228857.ece>



£52,000 to save the bustard



The Great Indian Bustard

Pramod Patil, a Pune-based ornithologist, has earmarked the £35,000 prize money he got with the Whitley Award for conserving the bird. A U.K. charity is contributing the rest.

Pramod Patil, a city-based ornithologist, plans to help conserve the great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigricaps*) with £52,000 (about Rs. 50 lakh).

While the £35,000 prize money he got with the Whitley Award for his work to save the critically endangered bird has gone into the corpus, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds of the U.K. has promised him £17,000 for his conservation efforts in the Thar desert.

The money will be channelled through BirdLife International, an international non-governmental organisation involved in conserving birds and their habitats.

Echoing the urgency to protect the rapidly declining numbers of the species, Dr. Patil proposes to spend much of the money in the desert, which hosts the largest surviving population of the bird.

“The bulk of the funds will have to be devoted to projects in the Thar desert as it is one of the last refuges of this great bird. But other areas that serve as a habitat for the bustard will certainly be covered, if and when that need arises,” says Dr. Patil, whose experience while visiting London to receive the Green Oscar (as the Whitley Awards are popularly known) confirmed his views of landscape-level conservation.

Ruining the fact that the great Indian bustard, once abundantly found in grasslands across the Indian subcontinent, had been driven out of its habitat, Dr. Patil said poor planning and failure to involve the local community sounded the death knell for the bustard, which has been disappearing from several protected areas.

“The focus is on decentralisation as a solution to conservation, disbursing funds and decision-making at the local-level instead of merely vesting authority with the government,” he said.

Keywords: [great Indian bustard](#), [Whitley Award](#), [Pramod Patil](#)

The Better India – Positive News

9th July 2015

<http://www.thebetterindia.com/27902/how-did-a-medical-doctor-become-a-messiah-of-the-great-indian-bustard-the-story-of-dr-pramod-patil/>



How did a Medical Doctor become a Messiah of the Great Indian Bustard? The Story of Dr Pramod Patil.

A passionate wildlife conservationist, Dr. Pramod Patil recently won the Whitley Award (or the ‘Green Oscar’) for his work related to saving the the Great Indian Bustard. He shares some milestones from his journey in this interview.

The Whitley Award is a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 (approximately Rs. 35 lakhs) in project funding. The [Whitley award](#) is given to conservationists from developing countries to support projects based on science and community involvement.

It was awarded recently to Dr. Pramod Patil at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to protect the iconic Great Indian Bustard.



Dr. Pramod Patil receiving the Whitley Award from Princess Anne at a ceremony in London

The Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) once flourished across the Indian subcontinent, but today, fewer than 250 birds remain in the most densely human populated desert in the world, the Thar.

Here, Dr. Patil shares why he chose a different path, his love for the birds, and his amazing experiences.

Being a medical doctor by education, how did you turn to wildlife conservation? Was there a defining moment? Tell us about your personal journey.

I was interested in birds as a child and even participated in a bird-watching camp organized by WWF-India. However, there was a gap after that. While studying medicine in Sholapur, a friend told me about a huge ostrich like bird in the Sholapur grasslands. I was surprised and very excited. We travelled a long distance to see the bird, but after spending a long and disappointing day, just as we were thinking of going back, all of a sudden a large bird landed in a grassland ahead of us. To our greatest surprise it was the stunning Great Indian Bustard!

We stood spellbound as it walked a magnificent walk that Dr.Salim Ali used to call the 'Marshal's walk'. It started drizzling and the bird started a dance display to attract his mate. I fell in love with the bird, and even today that picture is alive before my eyes. I started visiting the sanctuary regularly, studying the bird, drawing, talking to local people, volunteering for a local NGO Nisarg; my journey from a casual birder to a conservationist began in earnest.



Dr. Patil (first from left) in the field with his colleagues
Photo: Siddhesh Surve

How do your family and friends see your chosen career path?

They see it with a lot of curiosity. They are happy with my chosen path and they support me in my work. There is a fallacy about 'career' that people suffer all their life. The fallacy is that if you invest a large amount of time or money in something you should continue to do it even if you don't like it. But I think the important thing is to do what you like and take the courageous decision to do it.

Congratulations on winning the prestigious Whitley award. How did you feel when you heard that you have been chosen for the 'Green Oscar'? What does winning this award signify for you and the work you are doing?

My first feeling was that of the sense of responsibility that I will now have to fulfill and the pressure of expectations I will have to face. It was followed by happiness, lots of happiness of course! This award is significant in several ways. It gives recognition to your work at the global level. It altogether changes people's perspective of yourself and your work. Several institutions and people come forward to support your work.

Second thing, because of such awards, you come in contact with several international institutions and experts working in this field. You become a part of their network. This is a huge benefit. You get an understanding of the global level. These great organizations are working worldwide. Being a part of their network, you learn their method of working, their attitude, their ideology. You understand how to apply global solutions to local problems.

When you personally meet the stalwarts of your field it has a very deep effect on you. Though I was in contact with them for several years, meeting them in person is exceptional. Thus, this award brings you great support from all walks of life but also increases your responsibility many folds.



Dr. Patil speaking at the Whitley Award function

How does your medical training help in the field of conservation?

I have realized that medical education helps conservation in many ways. Being a doctor, people give you a lot of respect, they allow you to enter their lives, they discuss with you many medical and personal problems. I help them through counseling and proper guidance. Without medical training it would have been difficult to gain the confidence of the local people and other stakeholders. My medical education helped me in the most constructive ways in the efforts of bustard conservation. In medical science we are taught community medicine, a doctor is community-centric by default.

How did you decide to work on the Great Indian Bustard?

I had fallen in love with the bird at first sight. I wanted to know more about it. Dr. Asad Rahmani of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) warmly opened the BNHS library for me. I continued interacting with local people, local experts, NGOs, conservationists. I started working with the forest department, with Mr. Parihar, YLP Rao, NK Rao, and forest guards, all of who were very supportive.

One name I would particularly like to mention is that of Mr. Bhagwat Mhaske, a forest guide at the Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary, Sholapur. He opened the treasure trove of information he had gathered over 30 years of observing the bird's behavior for me. He was my on-field guru and I feel especially blessed to have met him.

Over time, working together with many people, many institutions helped, we were able to put policies in place for the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard.



The Great Indian Bustard
Photo: Wikipedia

What are the challenges you are facing while working on the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard?

The greatest challenge is the declining support of the local people. Local people's involvement in conservation is of utmost importance but the same is disappearing. They don't love the bird as much as they used to. There are several reasons behind this. They have lost confidence in the system. Winning their trust, getting them involved in conservation is the biggest challenge before us. Other challenges are loss of habitat and poaching.



Creating awareness about conservation among local people

Photo: Noor Khan

Can we save the Bustard?

Yes! We can definitely save the bustards. There are several examples worldwide in which the last 30 or 50 birds or even only a couple of birds were remaining and they were saved and successfully brought back from sure extinction. Only one person, one institution, or one award cannot do it. We need joint efforts of all stakeholders. I would say we can certainly save a species if our willpower is strong enough and our efforts are sincere enough.

Please share with us some of the memorable experiences you had while working in this field.

I was in the Desert National Park, Rajasthan. Local people hold a grudge against the Great Indian Bustard as it is perceived to have stopped their development. One day, while we were hanging out, we saw a shepherd grazing his sheep. We deliberately asked him provocative questions like, “You don’t like Great Indian Bustards and this sanctuary. You would be happy to remove its sanctuary status, wouldn’t you?”

To our surprise, he said, “You are fools, you don’t understand. Thanks to the Godavan, the land is protected as a sanctuary and since it is protected we are able to graze our sheep; our sheep are our livelihood. If the status of the sanctuary is removed, this land will be used for other developmental activities that will destroy the land and our livelihoods.”

He loved the ‘Godavan’ (bustards are called ‘Godavan’ locally) and he explained how grateful he was to have this land protected by law. This is the approach we need to work on to get the support of the local people. I felt elevated after listening to this old, wise shepherd. There are many such memories of people and wildlife.

Your sketches are superb. How did you develop an interest in this beautiful art?



Drawing was my favourite subject during school. The credit for it goes to my school teacher, Kushe sir. Only when I started bird watching did I realize that going into the field, sitting at one place observing birds, and drawing birds had become my hobby. The Great Indian Bustard is a magnificent bird, it displays in a very prolific manner, its postures are very unique, it is a very good subject for sketching. That’s how I got involved in this sketching business. I’ve drawn thousands of sketches of bustards and other grassland birds.

A sketch of the Great Indian Bustard by Dr. Patil

What message would you like to give to our readers?

I think people are very important in one’s life. Whatever little I could achieve is because of different people who guided me, supported me and helped me at different stages throughout my life. Your true wealth is the people around you. No matter how many awards you get, how famous you become, you have to live with people. You are going to need them.

The Indian Express – News Website

1st August 2015

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/magazine/Wingman-of-the-Great-Indian-Bustard/2015/08/01/article2950485.ece>

Wingman of the Great Indian Bustard



Pramod Patil went to Nannaj Wildlife Sanctuary in Solapur in Maharashtra to see the Great Indian Bustard in August 2003 at the suggestion of a friend. It was love at first sight. “The bustard was four feet tall. It had a black coloured cap of feathers. Its neck was white and the wings and body were brown,” says Patil.

Since it was the breeding season, it had its tail up to attract the female. It did a little jig in a circle and let out a mating call, which “could be heard far away,” says Patil. What he didn’t know then was that it was the beginning of a fascination with the Great Indian Bustard. A trained doctor, he gave up his profession and became a full-time conservationist working to preserve the bird.



Sadly, the Great Indian Bustard is on the “critically endangered” list; there are less than 250 in India. They can be found only in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. “It is one of the rarest birds in the world,” says the 30-year-old.

He blames poaching for the bustard’s dwindling numbers.

“Its meat is regarded as a delicacy. The bird can survive only in open grasslands, which are becoming lesser, thanks to rapid industrialisation. The bustard often hits electrical lines and gets electrocuted. It is a slow breeder, it lays one egg a year,” he says.

Its egg is the size of five poultry ones and looks like a round stone. “Since they lay it in the open, it can be trampled upon by grazing animals,” says Patil. “It takes one month for it to hatch and a year for the hatchling to move away from the mother.”

Patil is also involved with the Bombay Natural History Society, BirdLife International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In the Thar Desert, he is doing surveys, meeting villagers and making them aware about the need to care for the bustard. “We have been successful in developing an extensive network of support,” he says. “We are also conducting workshops and training programmes for government staff.”

It is not easy to get close to a bustard. “It is one of the most alert birds, because it has been attacked so often,” says Patil. Once while he was in a camouflaged hide made of grass and plants in Solapur at 3 am, “a bustard suddenly poked its head through the window. It was so close, but it did not realise I was there. It foraged a bit and went away,” he says. Patil made a sketch of it.

Patil was presented with the Whitley Award—otherwise known as the Green Oscar—for his work in the Thar Desert by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne on April 29 this year at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The 35,000 pounds prize money was donated by The William Brake Charitable Trust.

At the awards ceremony he met naturalist David Attenborough. “I told him that by listening to him during his famous television programmes I got interested in wildlife,” says Patil. “Attenborough said, ‘I think my voice triggered a passion that was already there’.

Doctor dedicates life to save Great Indian Bustard



It was a sort of proverbial love at first sight for Dr Pramod Patil. In 2003, he first saw a Great Indian Bustard (GIB) at Nannaj in Solapur district in Maharashtra. Since then, he has not looked back and this 30-year-old doctor has decided to dedicate his life to GIBs. These majestic birds are critically endangered and highly threatened and facing extinction.

Patil, who completed his MBBS some nine years ago, is a diabetologist and runs a clinic in Pune. For the doctor, saving GIB has become passion and mission. “Having a medicine background and a knack for communication and being gadget savvy gives me an edge,” he said. Being a doctor, people respect him. “In medical science, we are taught community medicine and a doctor is community-centric by default and nature conservation is all about community involvement,” he said.

Patil remains determinedly adamant to reverse their decline by winning the support of local communities, government officials and experts in the task of protecting the bird, together with its vanishing grasslands, said the Sanctuary Asia magazine about him, when it conferred him with the coveted Wildlife Service Award.

“We have to act now....time is against us,” Patil told Deccan Herald. As of now, around 200 of GIBs are left in the country and if efforts are not made in the next few years, these would be extinct. In fact, if this unfortunate thing happens, after cheetah, it would be the next big animal or bird to be extinct from this part of the globe.

The Indian Bustard or GIB (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) lives in short-grass plains and deserts in large arid landscapes. It is now confined to only eight pockets in five Indian states--Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The largest population of about 100 birds can be found in Jaisalmer, Barmer, and Bikaner districts in Rajasthan where it is the State Bird. Remaining population number less than 30 birds each.

In Madhya Pradesh, it appears to have disappeared. GIBs figure in the International Union of Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) “Red List of Threatened Species for Birds”. The former Director of BNHS-India, Dr Asad Rahmani had been a foremost researcher of GIBs and the baton has now come to young naturalists like Patil.

Patil, who works as an Advocacy Officer on GIBs for BNHS-India, recently received the

Whitley Award 2015, which is often referred to as the Green Oscar. The grant supports the conservation and advocacy work for the critically endangered iconic species of Indian grasslands, GIB. The Princess Royal presented the Whitley Award purse of £35,000 to Patil at a grand ceremony in Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to protect GIB in the Thar Desert, Rajasthan. Patil is one of the seven individuals worldwide to have received the grant this year.

A couple of months ago, during an interview with Deccan Herald, Dr M K Ranjitsinh, the first Director of Wildlife Preservation of India and the member secretary of the Task Force that formulated the Project Tiger, too had expressed concern over the falling numbers of GIBs. “This is something very sad. We have to ensure that GIB is not extinct,” he had stated.

Adds Patil: “When we speak of protecting GIBs, these are not just GIBs. We are speaking in terms of protecting other species that are found in habitats of GIBs like the grasslands and shrublands besides sand dunes. These birds are often found associated in the same habitat as blackbuck.” Poor planning and lack of community involvement are resulting in public opposition to conservation and the GIB has disappeared from four protected areas designated for its conservation.

Poaching and habitat loss from livestock grazing and agricultural encroachment have also contributed to its decline, according to the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN), which is a UK registered charity offering Whitley Awards and ongoing support to outstanding nature conservationists around the developing world.

In 2014, Patil received the Wildlife Service Award of Sanctuary Asia. Patil is a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission of India, where his vast knowledge on the behaviour and ecology of the bustard helped formulate creative solutions that are now being implemented by central and state governments.

About how it started, he said that in 2003 he visited Nannaj and fell in love with the bird. “I still remember, it was August 15, 2003, I could then see 17 of them....today around four are left there,” he said.

GIBs can be saved from extinction, he insists. But there are some big, genuine and complex problem areas. “One of the biggest reasons is that there is a declining support of the local people. Their involvement in conservation is of utmost importance but the same is not the case here. They don’t love the bird as much as they used to. There are several reasons for this. They have lost confidence in the system because of complexities in land rights issues. Other challenges are loss of habitat and poaching. Community involvement is going to be the deciding factor,” he added.

The bird is also facing another critical threat of loss of habitat due to encroachment resulting from the expansion of agricultural fields and alteration of the habitat for urbanisation and industrial infrastructure. These result in the habitat loss for the birds, which lead to the decrease, dispersal or migration in the population.

According to Patil, all bustard sanctuaries share common problems such as change in land use pattern, habitat loss, increased disturbance to breeding, and alteration of habitat due to plantations or overgrazing, among others. No population of bustard is safe in India and, therefore, can't be guaranteed against extinction. GIB is a slow breeder, produces only one chick per breeding season. This makes the species vulnerable for local extinction in an unexpected calamity.

Asked about conservation plans, he said: "Conservation breeding programmes of Pygmy hog (*Sus salvanius*) and Asian Gyps Vultures have been feasible in India. Similarly, conservation breeding of GIB can become a success story provided that a professional attitude and scientific basis is followed from the beginning. Although individual states may be eager to plan for conservation breeding, support and commitment from Ministry of Environment and Forests and Central Zoo Authority is absolutely essential."

The Times of India – News Website

15th October 2015

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/The-movie-was-made-to-save-critically-endangered-Great-Indian-Bustard/articleshow/49379530.cms>



'The movie was made to save critically endangered Great Indian Bustard'



Ornithologist Pramod Patil with the Whitley Award, popularly called the 'Green Oscar'.

Ornithologist Pramod Patil has been conferred with the prestigious Whitley Award, popularly called the 'Green Oscar', for his work on the conservation of critically endangered Great Indian Bustard. He speaks on the challenges he encountered to make the movie.

What does your film focus on?

The film's main objective is to save critically endangered Great Indian Bustard in Thar desert. It focuses on conservation perspective and urgent need of action necessary to save a specie along with role of funding which has been generated by 'Whitley Fund for Nature'.

Do you feel that with this movie you have spread your message?

This movie has been narrated by Sir David Attenborough and was made by ICON FILMS is very important for spreading awareness. This film is being used for awareness. The film is spreading message about the work that shall help to gather more support for species in the red list. Great Indian Bustard is India's most magnificent specie and it is on the verge of extinction. Saving it in the Thar Desert in Rajasthan is very essential to conserve them. The movie focuses on the importance of Thar desert in saving such species.

What makes this win special to you?

This is one of the most respected awards in wildlife conservation field; out of some 170 works, only eight got selected across the world. This funding is large enough to easily support sustainable conservation programme for endangered species.

Is it hard for one to make a movie on animals?

It's not easy to make films on wild animals as they are not under your control, luck plays a major part. Hard work is essential and weather conditions are not easy to predict, getting permissions to film endangered creatures is more difficult.

What were some of the challenges you encountered while making this movie?

It was difficult to get footage of Great Indian Bustard as it is a very shy bird. We also tried to contact some other filmmakers and we were fortunate enough to get some help from David Stanton from Goa. The time was another limitation. Things were managed in really less time. All thanks to my friend Kiran Ghadge.

What is the most pressing environmental issue in India currently?

The most pressing issues in India for environment and wildlife is the loss of habitat. We need to have rational, scientific approach of wildlife management. Lack of community support to conservation is another important issue.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

What do you find to be rewarding? Being in wild areas is the most enjoyable part of my work. I get a chance to go into solitude because of my job. Doing what you like is key to happiness and I think I have found it. I can't imagine myself without being connected to wildlife. The most rewarding thing is to see people's life improving through wildlife conservation.

Why do you want to make movies in the environment sector?

Movies are the best way to spread awareness and sensitise people for conservation. It has got much wider reach.

How did you enroll yourself in the contest?

Whitley Fund for Nature is one of the biggest awards in wildlife field in the world. There was a process through online submission and then a strict scrutiny from national and international referees and independent assessment was undertaken. The selected few were quizzed on conservation and endangered species.

What's the next big movie you are working on?

We are trying to get the movie done by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, USA. If we get through the pre-filming process then things can start working on ground soon.

Joint Coverage with Ananda Kumar

Zee News - News Website, India

30th April 2015

Shared 403 times

http://zeenews.india.com/news/eco-news/two-indians-win-whitley-awards-for-wildlife-conservation_1587633.html

Two Indians win Whitley Awards for wildlife conservation



London: Two Indians have been awarded with the prestigious Whitley Awards for their contribution to wildlife conservation.

Dr Ananda Kumar, a conservationist from India, was awarded the prize, in honour of his work using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in southern India.

Another winner of the Whitley Award, dubbed 'Green Oscar' is Dr Pramod Patil. He has been awarded for his work to protect the iconic great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert.

HRH The Princess Royal presented the awards and each of them receiving a Whitley prize worth £35,000 at a ceremony in London on Wednesday 29th April.

Each year in India, 400 people and more than 100 elephants are killed as a result of conflict.

Dr Ananda has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning mechanism to alert people when elephants are nearby, minimise negative human-elephant interactions, and increase people's tolerance towards elephants.

As part of the system, a trained conflict response team tracks elephant movement and conveys this information to people via text messages, calls and mobile-operated red light indicators placed in strategic locations.

Fatal encounters and incidents of damage to property in the area have already fallen, since inception of this early warning system, and these positive results have encouraged Ananda to expand his project to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Once flourished across the Indian sub-continent, the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) has been declining day by day due to poaching, loss of grassland habitat and lack of community involvement

After first sighting the species in 2003, Pramod, a doctor at the time, made the decision to leave medicine and devote his life to conserving the great Indian bustard.

By working with communities in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his team at the Bombay Natural History Society are helping to change opinions, develop positive relationships between authorities and local people, and enable better management of the land on which both community livelihoods and bustards depend.

His work is collecting crucial information about the species, and engaging people with anti-poaching activities.

Dr Pramod and Dr Ananda are among the seven conservationists to have been awarded the Whitley Awards for their efforts to protect wildlife in developing countries.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on Wednesday at the Royal Geographical Society, London, hosted by television naturalist Kate Humble.

Jagran Josh - Website

30th April 2015

<http://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/ananda-kumar-pramod-patil-won-whitley-awards-for-wildlife-conservation-1430393989-1>



Ananda Kumar, Pramod Patil won Whitley Awards for wildlife conservation

Two Indians namely Dr Ananda Kumar and Dr Pramod Patil on 29 April 2015 won the prestigious Whitley Awards (also known as Green Oscar) for their contribution to wildlife conservation.

The awards were presented at a ceremony in Royal Geographical Society, London. The winners of the award received a Whitley prize worth 35000 pound.

Kumar was honoured for his work of using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant co-existence in Southern India. Patil, on the other hand, was honoured for his work to protect the iconic great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert, Rajasthan.

They are among the seven conservationists who were awarded the Whitley Awards for their efforts to protect wildlife in developing countries.

Other winners of the 2015 Whitley Award are:

- **Panut Hadisiswoyo:** Honoured for his efforts to protect Sumatran orangutans in Indonesia's Leuser Ecosystem
- **Rosamira Guillen:** Honoured for cotton-top tamarin conservation in northern Colombia
- **Arnaud Desbiez:** Honoured for giant armadillo protection in the Brazilian Cerrado
- **Inaoyom Imong:** Honoured for protecting Cross River gorillas in Nigeria's Mbe Mountains;
- **Jayson Ibanez:** Honoured for helping protect the Philippine eagle on Mindanao Island

Work of Dr. Ananda Kumar

To minimise negative human-elephant interactions and increase people's tolerance towards elephants, Kumar developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN). This network acts as an early warning mechanism to alert people when elephants are nearby.

Under the network, a trained conflict response team tracks movement of elephants and conveys the information to people via text messages, calls and mobile-operated red light indicators which are placed in strategic locations.

The success of the warning system helped Ananda to encourage his project to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Work of Dr. Pramod Patil

Patil, a doctor by profession, in 2003 made a decision to leave medicine as a profession and devote his life to conservation of the great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), the population of which is declining at a high speed due to poaching, loss of grassland habitat and lack of community involvement.

Patil and his team at the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) started working with State Forest Department in the Thar Desert helped people to change their opinions and develop positive relationships between authorities and local people, and enable better management of the land on which both community livelihoods and bustards depend.

His work is collecting crucial information about the species, and engaging people with anti-poaching activities.

Whitley Awards

The Whitley Awards is an annual award given by the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN). The award recognises and celebrates effective national and regional conservation leaders across the globe. The awards are amongst the most high profile of conservation prizes - they have been called the Green Oscars.

Edward Whitley founded the Whitley awards in 1994.

Delhi Daily News – News Website

30th April 2015

<http://www.delhidailynews.com/news/Two-Indians-win-prestigious-Whitley-Awards-1430405666/>



Two Indians win prestigious Whitley Awards

Two Indians have been conferred with the distinguished Whitley Awards for their efforts to conserve wildlife.

Dr. Ananda Kumar was presented the prize, in honor of his work allowing human-elephant coexistence in southern India by utilizing progressive communication techniques.

Dr. Pramod Patil has been awarded for his work to protect the long-lasting nice Indian bustard in the Thar Desert.

Kumar has established an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which serves as an early warning mechanism to warn individuals when elephants are nearby, minimize hostile human-elephant interactions and improve individual's acceptance for elephants.

Since launch of this early warning system, deadly encounters and injury incidents to property have reduced. These positive results have encouraged Kumar to extend his system to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

The number of the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) has been dwindling because of poaching, lack of natural habitat and lack of group involvement. By collaborating with communities in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Patil and his team on the Bombay Natural History Society are working to develop productive relationships between authorities and residents and allowing higher management of the areas on which bustard rely.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was organised on the Royal Geographical Society, London on Wednesday and hosted by TV naturalist Kate Humble.

2 Indians Presented ‘Green Oscar’ Whitley Awards 2015 in London



This year’s Whitley wildlife conservation awards have been given to two Indians — Dr Ananda Kumar and Dr Pramod Patil.

Anand kumar was known for his innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence, while Pramod Patil was awarded the prize for his yeoman service to protect Indian Bustard in the Thar Desert.

The Whitley Award, also called “Green Oscar” was presented with a cash prize of £35,000 at a ceremony in London on Wednesday at the Royal Geographical Society, London, hosted by television naturalist Kate Humble.

Praising Dr Anand Kumar’s early warning about the elephants, thus saving nearly 400 people and about 100 elephants from conflict every year, won acclaim at the awards ceremony.

Ananda Kumar’s Elephant Information Network (EIN) helps send out early warning alerts to people when elephants are nearby. The message goes to people via SMS, phone calls and mobile-operated red light indicators placed in strategic locations. He has extended this network in south India, including the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Another saviour was Pramod Patil, who left his medical profession and took upon himself the drive to protect the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) which has been on the wane due to poaching.

Involving some communities in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his team at the Bombay Natural History Society have brought together concerted efforts to save the species from poaching.

Dr Pramod and Dr Ananda are among 7 conservationists given the recognition at the Whitley Awards 2015 ceremony.

Bharat Press – News Website, India

30th April 2015

<http://bharatpress.com/2015/04/30/two-indians-win-whitley-awards-for-wildlife-conservation>

Two Indians win Whitley Awards for wildlife conservation

London: Two Indians have been awarded with the distinguished Whitley Awards for their contribution to wildlife conservation.

Dr Ananda Kumar, a conservationist from India, was awarded the prize, in honour of his work utilizing progressive communication techniques to allow human-elephant coexistence in southern India.

Another winner of the Whitley Award, dubbed 'Green Oscar' is Dr Pramod Patil. He has been awarded for his work to guard the long-lasting nice Indian bustard within the Thar Desert.

HRH The Princess Royal introduced the awards and every of them receiving a Whitley prize value £35,000 at a ceremony in London on Wednesday twenty ninth April.

Each yr in India, four hundred individuals and greater than one hundred elephants are killed because of battle.

Dr Ananda has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning mechanism to alert individuals when elephants are close by, minimise adverse human-elephant interactions, and improve individuals's tolerance in the direction of elephants.

As a part of the system, a educated battle response staff tracks elephant motion and conveys this info to individuals by way of textual content messages, calls and cellular-operated purple mild indicators positioned in strategic places.

Fatal encounters and incidents of injury to property within the space have already fallen, since inception of this early warning system, and these constructive outcomes have inspired Ananda to broaden his undertaking to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Once flourished throughout the Indian sub-continent, the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) has been declining daily because of poaching, lack of grassland habitat and lack of group involvement.

After first sighting the species in 2003, Pramod, a physician on the time, made the choice to go away drugs and dedicate his life to conserving the good Indian bustard.

By working with communities within the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his workforce on the Bombay Natural History Society are serving to to vary opinions, develop constructive relationships between authorities and native individuals, and allow higher administration of the land on which each group livelihoods and bustards rely.

His work is amassing essential details about the species, and interesting individuals with anti-poaching actions.

Dr Pramod and Dr Ananda are among the many seven conservationists to have been awarded the Whitley Awards for their efforts to guard wildlife in creating nations.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on Wednesday on the Royal Geographical Society, London, hosted by TV naturalist Kate Humble.



Photo Gallery

[Home](#) > [Photo Gallery](#) > [Whitley Awards 2015](#)

Whitley Awards 2015



The Princess Royal and 2015 Whitley Awards recipient Ananda Kumar, India at The Royal Geographical Society, London on 29 April



The Princess Royal and 2015 Whitley Awards recipient Dr Pramod Patil, India at The Royal Geographical Society, London on 29 April

May 7, 2015



WFN COVERAGE OF THE AWARDS

Whitley Fund for Nature
30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/2015/04/2015-whitley-award-winners/>



The screenshot shows the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text "WHITLEY FUND FOR NATURE" on the left, a search bar labeled "Search WFN" on the right, and a menu of links: "ABOUT US • WINNERS' PROJECTS • EVENTS • MEDIA • APPLY FOR FUNDING". Below the navigation bar is the WFN logo, which consists of the letters "WFN" in a large, bold, serif font, with a monarch butterfly graphic integrated into the letter "N". To the right of the logo are several smaller monarch butterfly graphics. Further right is a "Donate" button. Below the logo and butterflies, there is a breadcrumb trail "HOME > NEWS" and the main article title "Whitley Award Winners 2014" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below the title is the date "8 May, 2014". On the right side of the article header, there are social media icons for email, print, Facebook, and Twitter.

The 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on 29th April at The Royal Geographical Society in London. The Ceremony was hosted by Kate Humble with the Whitley Awards presented to the winners by WFN Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, in front of over 450 guests including Sir David Attenborough.



Left to right: Jayson Ibañez (Philippines), Ananda Kumar (India), Pramod Patil (India), Panut Hadisiswoyo (Indonesia), Sir David Attenborough, Arnaud Desbiez (Brazil), Rosamira Guillen (Colombia), Inaoyom Imong (Nigeria), Edward Whitley, Dino Martins (Kenya)

The Winners of the 2015 Whitley Awards are:



Winner of the Whitley Gold Award donated by The Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature, [Dino Martins](#), Kenya – People, plants & pollinators: protecting the little things that power the planet



Winner of the Whitley Award donated by the Garden House School Parents' Association, [Arnaud Desbiez](#), Brazil – Giant armadillos as a flagship species for the conservation of tropical scrublands in the Cerrado



Winner of the Whitley Award donated by Sarah Chenevix-Trench, [Rosamira Guillen](#), Colombia – Proyecto Tití: expanding conservation efforts to protect the cotton-top tamarin in northern Colombia



Winner of the Whitley Award for Conservation in Ape Habitats donated by the Arcus Foundation, [Panut Hadisiswoyo](#), Indonesia – Conservation villages: building local capacity for the protection of Sumatran orangutans and their habitat, Indonesia



Winner of the Whitley Award donated by The Shears Foundation in memory of Trevor Shears, [Jayson Ibañez](#), Philippines – Preventing further decline of the Philippine eagle on Mindanao Island



Winner of the Whitley Award donated by the Garfield Weston Foundation, [Inaoyom Imong](#), Nigeria – Saving Cross River gorillas through community-based conservation in the Mbe Mountains



Winner of the Whitley Award donated by WWF-UK, [*Ananda Kumar*](#), India – Elephant messengers: using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in southern India



Winner of the Whitley Award donated by The William Brake Charitable Trust in memory of William Brake, [*Pramod Patil*](#), India – Community conservation of the great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert, India: a landscape-level approach

Photographs of the winners receiving their awards, along with images of their work can be found [*here*](#).

Whitley Fund for Nature

30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Kenyan conservationist wins 2015 Whitley Gold Award for his extraordinary work protecting bees and other pollinators that play a vital role in powering our planet

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present the prestigious Whitley Gold Award worth £50,000, donated by The Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature, to Dr. Dino Martins, a 2009 Whitley Award winner and insect conservationist from Kenya. The Award is given in recognition of his work with local communities to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, and encourage the adoption of more sustainable farming practices that conserve pollinators, boost crop yields, and benefit people and livelihoods in East Africa. Working at both the local and government level, his efforts have led to the development of Kenya's first legislation to specifically protect bees from harmful pesticides.

One of every three bites of food we eat is dependent on pollinators. These tiny insects – bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, flies and beetles – play a critical role in crop pollination. The provision of this free 'ecosystem service' is worth an estimated \$250 billion annually to the global economy. Without pollinators, the planet's food security would be at risk, with significant livelihood ramifications; and billions would need to be spent to pollinate crops artificially. However, the increased use of agricultural pesticides and loss of natural habitats has led pollinator numbers to decline dramatically.

Dino holds a PhD from Harvard University, is Chair of the Insect Committee of Nature Kenya, Technical Advisor to the UN Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO), and has recently been appointed to the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

The Whitley Gold Award will enable Dino to expand his conservation efforts to a new level: working with 4,000 additional farmers; tackling the importation, use and spread of unregistered pesticides entering Africa and; educating 200,000 people about the importance of pollinators and sustainable agriculture.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: "The calibre of this year's Whitley Awards winners is simply outstanding and Dino Martins is a truly worthy winner of the 2015 Whitley Gold Award. Against enormous challenges, he has

transformed the lives of farmers in Kenya, through his work promoting the importance of bees and other pollinators which put food on our tables and money in farmers' pockets.”

Dino joins an elite group of conservationists who have won the coveted Whitley Gold Award for grassroots conservationists working against tremendous odds in developing countries. Dino won a Whitley Award in 2009, before going on to receive additional WFN Continuation Funding in 2011. These follow-on ‘Continuation Funding’ grants are awarded competitively to winners seeking to scale up their effective conservation results on the ground. Each grant is worth up to £70,000 over two years. The final accolade – the Gold Award - singles out outstanding people achieving significant conservation impact and recognizes them with WFN’s top profile and PR prize.

Sir David Attenborough, a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature, added: “Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people - passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits.”

Visit www.whitleyaward.org to find out more.

Whitley Fund for Nature

30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Conservationist wins a Whitley Award for his work to save Brazilian ‘living fossil’ from local extinction

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present a Whitley Award, a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, to Arnaud Desbiez at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to conserve the rarely sighted giant armadillo in Brazil.

Despite being one of the oldest mammal species on earth – in effect a living fossil - very few people will ever spot a giant armadillo (*Priodontes Maximus*) in the wild. Until recently, not many people were aware that the species even existed, and most of the information about it was anecdotal. However, since Arnaud, a former zoo keeper, founded the Giant Armadillo Conservation Project in 2010 and started the first ever long-term ecological study of the species, new information about parenting behaviour and their role as ‘ecosystem engineers’ has emerged. Over 65,000 local people have been directly engaged in an awareness-raising campaign, and subsequently authorities in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul have selected the giant armadillo as an indicator species for the creation of protected areas.

The Whitley Award will enable Arnaud to expand conservation efforts from the Pantanal – the largest continuous wetland in the world - to the Cerrado biome, a plateau of tropical scrubland, gallery and dry forests. This biome is Brazil’s second largest ecosystem after the Amazon rainforest and has the richest flora among the world’s savannahs. Yet only 2.2% of the Cerrado is under legal protection and deforestation rates here are even higher than in the Amazon: over the last 35 years, more than 50% of the ecosystem has been transformed into pasture or agricultural lands planted with cash crops such as soy and sugar cane. Here, Arnaud and his team will collect data to support the creation of a network of protected areas and tackle threats to the species’ survival.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “The calibre of this year’s Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements.

Arnaud is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 by winning the Whitley Award donated by The Garden House School Parents' Association.

Sir David Attenborough, a Trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature, added: "Whitley Award winners are simply exceptional people - passionate individuals who are committed to achieving positive environmental impact and long-term conservation and community benefits."

HRH The Princess Royal will also present the Whitley Gold Award 2015 - a prestigious profile and funding prize awarded to a previous Whitley Award winner in recognition of their outstanding contribution to conservation. The Whitley Gold Award is donated by The Friends and Scottish Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature and is worth £50,000.

This year's recipient is 2009 Whitley Award winner, **Dr. Dino Martins from Kenya** for his project - People, plants & pollinators: protecting the little things that power the planet. Dino is working with local people to raise awareness and encourage the adoption of more sustainable farming practices that conserve pollinators, boost crop yields, and benefit people in East Africa. Joining the Judging Panel to assist in selection, the Gold Award winner also acts as mentor to new Whitley Award winners receiving their Awards in the same year.

Visit www.whitleyaward.org to find out more.

Whitley Fund for Nature

30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Conservation leader from Colombia wins 2015 Whitley Award

“Green Oscar” awarded for conservation of cotton-top tamarins

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present a Whitley Award, a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, to Rosamira Guillen at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of her work to protect cotton-top tamarins (*Saguinus oedipus*) in northern Colombia.

Rosamira, a native of Colombia, is Executive Director of Fundación Proyecto Tití, an organisation which promotes the long-term conservation of the cotton-top tamarin, one of the world’s smallest primate species. Found only in isolated forest fragments in Colombia, the cotton top tamarin faces the threat of habitat loss caused by cattle ranching and hunting for the illegal pet trade. One of Rosamira’s biggest challenges has been working with local communities to develop sustainable livelihoods in handicraft and recycling that generate income whilst reducing people’s dependency on forest resources.

Proyecto Tití is making a demonstrable difference to the survival of this Critically Endangered species and its habitat through research, education and alternative livelihood programmes: over 1,700 hectares of forest have been protected to date, and a National Conservation Programme has been developed to protect this little monkey. Recent surveys indicate that the cotton-top tamarin population is stabilising as a result, and the programme is now expanding to identify and protect new priority habitats.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “The calibre of this year’s Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements.”

Rosamira is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 by the Whitley Fund for Nature, winning the Whitley Award donated by Sarah Chenevix-Trench.

Whitley Fund for Nature
30th April 2015
<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Conservation leader from Sumatra wins 2015 Whitley Award Prize awarded for conservation of Sumatran orangutans and their 'Jungle Book' habitat

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present a Whitley Award, a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, to Panut Hadisiswoyo at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to establish a network of 'conservation villages' in the tropical rainforests of the Leuser Ecosystem on Sumatra, Indonesia.

Described as a real-life Jungle Book, and the only place in the world where the Critically Endangered Sumatran tiger, elephant, rhino and orangutans co-exist, the Leuser Ecosystem is one of the largest and most biodiversity-rich expanses of forest in South East Asia. In 2014, the Leuser Ecosystem was identified as one of the world's most irreplaceable protected areas. Yet despite this and legal protection, the Gunung Leuser National Park is subject to high levels of illegal encroachment by surrounding communities, logging and wildlife poaching.

Panut addresses this problem head on. He founded the Orangutan Information Centre in 2001 and leads the Community Agroforestry, Reforestation and Education programme (CARE), which works with people living around the National Park. Through successful interventions with farming communities such as training in agroforestry and organic farming techniques, farmers have increased crop yields by 25% and improved their profit, reducing people's need to expand farmland into the forest. More than a million trees have also been replanted, enabling the return of orangutans to these areas.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: "The calibre of this year's Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements."

Panut is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 by the Whitley Fund for Nature, winning the Whitley Award for Conservation in Ape Habitats donated by The Arcus Foundation.

Whitley Fund for Nature

30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Conservation leader from the Philippines soars to success at 2015 Whitley Awards Prize awarded for conservation of one of the world's largest eagles

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present a Whitley Award, a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, to Jayson Ibañez at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to prevent the further decline of the Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) on Mindanao Island in the Philippines.

Despite the eagle's status as a national symbol of the country, there are fewer than 400 adult pairs of the endemic species remaining, with more than half of them found on Mindanao Island in the south of the archipelago. The Philippine eagle and indigenous communities on Mindanao share a similar plight: both the raptor and people have lost their traditional forest territory to commercial logging, agricultural development, illegal land sales, and more recently, open-pit mining.

Jayson aims to improve the well-being of both the Philippine eagle and remote tribes through his work – showing that conservation and poverty reduction can go hand-in-hand. To date, more than 450 households have benefitted from Jayson's work, with increased income through sustainable livelihoods, and improved access to clean water, health services and education. With nearly two decades of experience conserving Philippine eagles, Jayson and his team at the Philippine Eagle Foundation are expanding their holistic work, which manages key eagle nesting sites as 'Local Conservation Areas' with the help of local people employed as forest guards to reduce the loss of eagles to shooting, hunting and trapping, and prevent further deforestation.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: "The calibre of this year's Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements."

Jayson is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 by the Whitley Fund for Nature, winning the Whitley Award donated by The Shears Foundation in memory of Trevor Shears.

Whitley Fund for Nature

30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Conservation leader from Nigeria wins 2015 Whitley Award “Green Oscar” awarded for conservation of Africa’s most endangered great ape

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present a Whitley Award, a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, to Inaoyom Imong at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to protect the Critically Endangered Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) in Nigeria.

Globally recognised as a hotspot for primate, amphibian, bird and butterfly species, the tropical rainforests of south-eastern Nigeria are home to the Cross River gorilla, Africa’s most endangered great ape, with only 300 estimated to remain in the wild. These primates and their habitat are under threat from lack of legal protection, deforestation and hunting to supply the illegal bushmeat market.

As Director of the Cross River Landscape Project at the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Nigeria, Imong leads a community-based conservation project in the Mbe Mountains to protect the forest and its fragile population of Cross River gorillas. Imong has established the Conservation Association of the Mbe Mountains (CAMM), which brings together people from nine different communities in a joint effort to manage the Mbe Mountains area and secure its legal status as a community wildlife sanctuary. Imong’s efforts have not only kept the gorillas from being hunted – not a single gorilla has been poached since the inception of the project – but built capacity for their future conservation. Imong is helping people establish alternative livelihoods as eco-guards to improve the protection and monitoring of Cross River gorillas and other wildlife; giving people a sense of ownership over the conservation of the forest.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “The calibre of this year’s Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their achievements.”

Imong is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 by the Whitley Fund for Nature, winning the Whitley Award donated by the Garfield Weston Foundation.

Whitley Fund for Nature

30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Conservation leader from India wins 2015 Whitley Award “Green Oscar” awarded for enabling human-elephant coexistence in southern India

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present a Whitley Award, a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, to Ananda Kumar at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work using innovative communication systems to enable human-elephant coexistence in southern India.

Ananda and his team at the Nature Conservation Foundation plan to build on the success of their work in the Anamalai Hills, where 70,000 people’s livelihoods rely on tea and coffee plantations, and human fatalities from accidental elephant encounters pose a serious threat. Each year in India, 400 people and more than 100 elephants are killed as a result of conflict. Ananda has developed an Elephant Information Network (EIN) which acts as an early warning mechanism to alert people when elephants are nearby, minimise negative human-elephant interactions, and increase people's tolerance towards elephants. As part of the system, a trained conflict response team tracks elephant movement and conveys this information to people via text messages, calls and mobile-operated red light indicators placed in strategic locations. Since inception of this early warning system, fatal encounters and incidents of damage to property in the area have already fallen, and these positive results have encouraged Ananda to expand his project to the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “The calibre of this year’s Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements.”

Ananda is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000, winning the Whitley Award donated by WWF-UK.

Whitley Fund for Nature

30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/media/press-releases/>



Press release

Indian scientist soars to success at 2015 Whitley Awards

Prize awarded for conservation of iconic Asian species: the great Indian bustard

London, UK: 29 April 2015 – HRH The Princess Royal will today present a Whitley Award, a prestigious international nature conservation prize worth £35,000 in project funding, to Pramod Patil at a ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society, London, in honour of his work to protect the iconic great Indian bustard in the Thar Desert.

The great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) once flourished across the Indian sub-continent, but poaching, loss of grassland habitat and lack of community involvement has resulted in local opposition to conservation activities and pushed the species from 90% of its original range. The estimated surviving population consists of fewer than 250 individuals competing for space in the most densely human-populated desert in the world. After first sighting the species in 2003, Pramod, a doctor at the time, made the decision to leave medicine and devote his life to conserving the great Indian bustard. By working with communities in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan and the State Forest Department, Pramod and his team at the Bombay Natural History Society are helping to change opinions, develop positive relationships between authorities and local people, and enable better management of the land on which both community livelihoods and bustards depend. His work is collecting crucial information about the species, and engaging people with anti-poaching activities.

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “The calibre of this year’s Whitley Awards winners is outstanding. Although they each face remarkable and different challenges in their home countries, these exceptional individuals are passionate about securing a better future for both people and wildlife. The Whitley Awards are a celebration of their efforts and achievements.”

Pramod is one of seven individuals to have been awarded a share of prize funding worth £245,000 by the Whitley Fund for Nature, winning the Whitley Award donated by The William Brake Charitable Trust in memory of William Brake.

Whitley Fund for Nature
30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/2015/05/speeches-from-hrh-the-princess-royal-edward-whitley-at-2015-ceremony/>

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Speeches: HRH The Princess Royal & Edward Whitley

6 May, 2015

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WFN Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal gave a wonderfully reflective speech to over 450 guests at the end of the 2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony last week. Her Royal Highness emphasised how important Continuation Funding is to WFN alumni in enabling them to scale up their vital work.



WFN Founder, Edward Whitley opened the Ceremony by highlighting some of the amazing achievements of past Whitley Award winners over the last year.

Whitley Fund for Nature
30th April 2015

<http://whitleyaward.org/2015/05/whitley-awards-2015-ceremony-highlights/>

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2015 Ceremony Highlights

13 May, 2015



Watch highlights from the **2015 Whitley Awards Ceremony**, which was held on 29th April at The Royal Geographical Society in London. Top wildlife TV presenter, Kate Humble compered the evening and the Whitley Awards were presented to the *winners* by WFN Patron, HRH The Princess Royal. In total, **£295,000** in project funding was awarded to support grassroots conservation work in seven countries.

Photos of the winners and their work, as well as photos taken at the Ceremony can be found [here](#).



**MEDIA COVERAGE OF WINNERS
SUPPORTED THROUGH
PARTNERSHIP FUNDING BY
FONDATION SEGRÉ**

Partnership Funding donated by Fondation Segré



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<u>WFN Coverage</u>	339-350
<u>Charudutt Mishra</u>	351-360
<u>Pablo Borboroglu</u>	361-372
<u>Fernando Trujillo</u>	373-379
<u>Çağan Şekercioglu</u>	380-398

Whitley Fund for Nature Website
Updated in July 2015

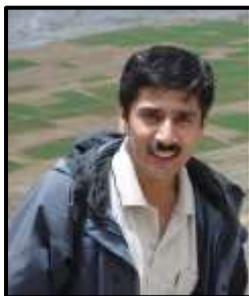
<http://whitleyaward.org/about-us/partnership-funding-by-fondation-segre/>



Partnership Funding by Fondation Segré is an exciting new grant type endowed by Fondation Segré and managed by Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN), which recognises and provides further funding to support the work of four of WFN's most successful previous Whitley Award and Continuation Funding winners. Over three years, grant funding totalling €1,500,000 will deliver urgent conservation activities to conserve snow leopards in India, penguins in Argentina, freshwater dolphins in Colombia and large carnivores in Turkey.

This new funding offers grants of €337,500 per project over three years (€112,500 per year per project) to outstanding, Whitley award winning conservation leaders and reflects the quality, scale, urgency and financial need of their work. This support provides much needed funding to projects that are having a real and measurable impact on endangered wildlife and local communities.

The four projects receiving Partnership Funding are:



Charudutt Mishra

2005 Whitley Gold Award Winner

2014 Partnership Funding Winner

Project: From grassroots to global: Realising a conservation vision for snow leopards across their range

Organisation: [Snow Leopard Trust](#)

In 2013, [Charu Mishra](#) played a key role in bringing together the governments of all 12 snow leopard range countries for an international summit in Kyrgyzstan. The summit resulted in landmark commitments to protect these iconic cats, whilst acknowledging community involvement as a key principle for the future of snow leopards.

Fewer than 7,000 snow leopards remain in the wild due to loss of habitat and wild prey, human-wildlife conflict and poaching. A lack of funding, political and industrial awareness and scientific information hinder conservation efforts.

“We envision a world where conservation of snow leopards and their mountain habitats are given a high place in the global agenda. Partnership Funding by Fondation Segré will help us ensure our philosophy of community-based, science-led conservation is embraced across Asia.” Charu Mishra

Over the next three years Charu’s project will:

Secure three globally important snow leopard landscapes of 5,000 to 10,000 Km² and increase the number of communities involved in conservation partnerships by 20%.

Initiate a programme for producing snow leopard friendly cashmere that brings together the industry and the cashmere producing herders.

Reduce poaching of snow leopards and prey through new initiatives involving enhanced training and support for rangers.



In its first year Charu’s project has made the following progress towards its goals:

Goal 1: Create the next generation of snow leopard conservation leaders in the most important range countries.

- Four young conservationists, including three women, have been hired in India, Pakistan and Mongolia and will each complete a PhD and be given hands-on conservation training.

- Four new studies have been initiated on: ecosystem services in snow leopard landscapes; the effect of climate change on grassland dynamics and the implications of this for snow leopards and their prey; the global cashmere industry and its environmental impact; and understanding the correlates of tolerance among local people towards snow leopards and their prey.

Goal 2: Generate political support for conservation of snow leopards and their mountain habitat in all twelve range countries.

- Snow leopard range country governments have identified 23 priority landscapes covering nearly 500,000 km² – almost 25% of snow leopard habitat – to be secured for snow leopard survival by 2020.
- Through Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP), and the newly set up Secretariat, all range countries are, for the first time, engaged in unified communications, decisions, and best practices towards snow leopard conservation.

Goal 3: Catalyse government-sanctioned protection of key snow leopard landscapes in 3 of the 5 most important range countries.

- Three core conservation habitats that are key for population connectivity have been identified in Mongolia, India and Pakistan. All three countries have

prioritised these habitats for further attention and management planning by SLT has begun.

- A programme encouraging rangers and local communities to combat poaching was launched in collaboration with the Government of Kyrgyzstan and a new 3-year grant has been secured to scale-up the programme nationally to cover all 20 of the country's wildlife reserves.

Goal 4: Help develop a more sustainable cashmere industry for the benefit local communities and the snow leopard habitat.

- SLT are beginning to gain a clearer understanding of the potential (and challenges) for communities to engage with the production of snow leopard friendly cashmere and have begun reaching out to international buyers.

Goal 5: Enhance social carrying capacity for snow leopards by strengthening community-based conservation initiatives in key snow leopard landscapes.

- Over 4,700 herder families are being directly engaged in community-based conservation initiatives, and over 1,240 children living in snow leopard habitats have been reached through environmental education.
- Over US\$1 million has been raised through the sale of locally produced handicrafts through the NGO's programme, Snow Leopard Enterprises, boosting income for communities living alongside snow leopards.
- Following discussions with villagers in India, a new 200 km² reserve has been established where only low-level grazing is allowed.

Goal 6: Improve scientific understanding of the ecology of the snow leopard and associated biodiversity, and the threats they face, to enable better conservation management.

- 20 snow leopards have been GPS collared to track their movements. This is higher than all other previous collaring studies put together!
- The first-ever study was launched on disease ecology of snow leopards.
- A multi-country study into the impact of climate change and grazing on snow leopard habitat has begun.
- The first study on the role of religion and culture in influencing peoples' attitudes towards snow leopards was undertaken.
- The first economic valuation of a snow leopard landscape was carried out, which will help to develop social and economic policies for protecting their habitat.
- Four manuscripts have been accepted into peer-reviewed publications, shedding new light on snow leopard population dynamics, hunting behaviour, wild prey monitoring, and the influence of livestock on snow leopard habitat use.



Pablo Borboroglu

2010 Whitley Award Winner

2014 Partnership Funding Winner

Project: Fostering global penguin conservation

Organisation: [Global Penguin Society](#)

With the Global Penguin Society, [Pablo Borboroglu](#) has established the world's first international coalition for the protection of penguins. By uniting scientists, conservationists and decision makers across the Southern Hemisphere, Pablo is giving penguins a voice.

Over half of the 18 species of penguin are listed as 'Vulnerable' or 'Endangered' by the IUCN. Threatened by poor fisheries management, pollution and climate change in the oceans, penguins also face pressure on land from coastal development and introduced predators.

“The survival and protection of penguins can only be secured by fostering integrated ocean conservation through science, management and community education. This grant will help us to go a long way to achieving this.” Pablo Borboroglu

Over the next three years Pablo's project will:

Stabilise and recover penguin populations through targeted community and science-led conservation in Chile, Argentina, Galapagos, New Zealand and South Africa, benefitting eight species.

Improve scientific understanding of penguins to provide cutting-edge information to policy makers to help secure new legal protection and improved management of penguins and their habitat in four countries.

Raise awareness of penguin conservation at the local and international level through targeted education programmes and the mainstream media.



Over the past year Pablo has made the following progress towards achieving his project goals:

Goal 1: Improve scientific knowledge on critical aspects of the biology and ecology of penguin species in order to make fact-based recommendations to guide conservation action.

- 147 king penguins were counted in Chile's recently established Strait of Magellan colony. GPS staff are designing visitor guidelines for the site, and penguins are being tracked to determine feeding routes.
- Breeding areas for the Vulnerable Humboldt and Near Threatened Magellanic penguin were identified during surveys in Central Chile. Pablo and his team are working with authorities to ensure responsible ecotourism measures are put in place that are sensitive to penguin needs.
- The El Pedral colony in Argentina has seen an increase in breeding pairs from just 6 in 2007 to 1,362 in 2014 – a huge success following the work of GPS to improve understanding, and manage this colony.
- GPS have established the first ever study to identify feeding corridors and food sources for the Fiordland penguin in New Zealand, in order to underpin management and ocean protection.

Goal 2: Promote informed decision-making regarding the management of penguin species and its habitats. We will offer knowledge and experience of skilful professionals of the international penguin community to governments and landowners to influence and improve decisions that affect management and conservation actions.

- The IUCN Penguin Specialist Group has now been established, and a core group of experts from every relevant region has been appointed. Co-chaired by Pablo, and Dr. Boersma, the group will provide a strong, organised platform for informing international penguin conservation at policy level.
- Pablo addressed the United Nations at the 'One Ocean' symposium in New York in March this year. At the symposium he highlighted the ecological and financial reasons for the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and why science is fundamental to their design. You can watch his speech which encourages increased commitments to marine conservation here, Pablo speaks at 2.26: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/one-ocean-achieving-sustainability-through-sanctuaries/4097144985001>. A photograph of Pablo speaking at the event is below.
- Progress has been made towards the creation of a MPA around the Punta Tombo Magellanic penguin colony in Argentina. Home to 400,000 breeding pairs, it is the largest Magellanic penguin colony in the world, but numbers have declined by 20% in the last 20 years. An agreement has been signed with Provincial Government to prepare all the technical and legal documents to create the MPA and work to support these documents has begun.
- In partnership with the Government of Argentina, GPS have submitted a nomination to UNESCO for the designation of the 'Blue Patagonia Biosphere Reserve', which has been recommended for approval by the Advisory Council. Once created, the Reserve will encompass 3.1 million ha of marine and coastal habitat in Central Patagonia, Argentina, protecting 20 penguin colonies and 40% of the global population of Magellanic penguins across an area the size of Belgium. *Update: Pablo has now received confirmation that the 'Blue Patagonia Biosphere Reserve' has been approved by UNESCO. This is a huge achievement!

- Pablo's data, including the feeding routes, is helping to justify the enlargement of the Peninsula Valdes protected area in Argentina (which incorporates terrestrial and marine habitat).
- The African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan has been published. This is the first management plan for the African penguin. GPS supported activities to draft this Plan and will now assist the Government of South Africa in its implementation.

Goal 3: Reach communities and decision makers with a clear conservation message about penguin and ocean conservation.

- The project resulted in 71 pieces of coverage from international and national newspapers, to radio and television programmes.
- Eight scientific publications related to this project have been published in peer reviewed journals.
- GPS published an educational book entitled 'SEA MESSENGERS'. The book will be distributed free of charge in five Spanish speaking countries where penguins occur.
- An educational booklet was published containing information on penguins and ocean conservation for communities and schools located near colonies in Chile, Argentina and Namibia.



Fernando Trujillo

2007 Whitley Gold Award Winner

2014 Partnership Funding Winner

Project: Strengthening local and regional conservation initiatives for the protection of rivers & dolphins in South America

Organisation: [Fundacion Omacha](#)

[Fernando Trujillo](#) promotes trans-boundary conservation of freshwater habitats and their wildlife using river dolphins as a flagship in the Amazon and Orinoco basins, covering their entire global range across Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

South America's three species of river dolphin face increasing pressure as a result of competition with the fishing industry and are even killed for bait. Pollution and habitat loss from mining and the development of hydro-electrical dams is also a growing threat.

“Our project will integrate scientific research with grassroots and political action to conserve all of South America's river dolphins. Partnership Funding by Fondation Segré will allow us to work effectively and with high impact locally and nationally, and also across borders.” Fernando Trujillo

Over the next three years Fernando's project will:

Make it a legal requirement that assessment of potential impacts on river dolphins are incorporated in to all planning proposals for hydro-electric dams to reduce their impact. Provide scientific evidence to the Colombian and Brazilian governments to legally ban the unsustainable mota catfish industry, developing economic alternatives for local fishermen, including as dolphin watching guides.

Strengthen technical capacity for river dolphin conservation by training at least 120 researchers to use and communicate scientific data to initiate dolphin conservation projects.



Fernando has made the following progress towards his goals over the past 12 months:

Goal 1: Evaluate, monitor and communicate the status of river dolphins in South America.

- Three expeditions have been conducted to estimate abundance of river dolphins in the River Tapajos (Brazil), Orinoco (Venezuela) and Amazon (Peru/Colombia). In each river the following number of dolphins were observed respectively; 270, 118, and 1,155.
- 28 scientists from Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela have been trained in dolphin surveys, building in-country capacity for freshwater conservation.
- Surveys unveiled a new species of river dolphin. Studies are being undertaken to find out more about this exciting discovery.
- A database mapping active and proposed dams has been consolidated, highlighting where damming projects and dolphin habitat overlap.
- The first draft of protocols for river dolphin distribution and abundance estimation have been completed towards the inclusion of river dolphins in Environment Impact Assessments (EIAs). Doing so will ensure dolphins are considered when dams are being planned and steps are taken to mitigate their impact, or prevent harmful projects from going ahead in key habitat.
- Fishery agreements in the Tarapoto lakes systems (Colombia) have been consolidated, with 36 fishermen now conducting monitoring and enforcement to enable the sustainable management of these lakes and their resources, benefitting ~2,000 indigenous people.
- An initial draft of an Action Plan for river dolphins and manatees has been created and shared with the Government of Peru.
- Omacha has joined forces with WWF to estimate dolphin abundance, ensure their inclusion in EIAs, implement more sustainable fishing agreements, and develop an Action Plan for their conservation.

Goal 2: Provide Technical capacity building to strengthen river dolphin conservation.

- 24 researchers have been trained in the analysis of field data during two workshops held in Venezuela and Colombia.
- Omacha is collaborating with Seattle University by offering a PhD to a Brazilian student to analyse dolphin abundance and distribution data for South America.
- Agreements were made between researchers towards increased use of the 'South American River Dolphin Protected Areas Network', an online forum that amalgamates scientific data made available to government to aid national and binational decision making.

Goal 3: Grassroots capacity building to strengthen river dolphin conservation.

- A total of 57 fishermen have been trained by government in good dolphin watching practices in the Orinoco and Meta Rivers (Colombia) to promote local initiatives that encourage the conservation of dolphins or their habitat.
- Staff exchange trips have taken place between Omacha and other South American NGOs to share knowledge, and identify potential partners.
- 1,200 people have been reached by a mobile exhibition providing educational materials about dolphins in Colombia.
- A documentary about Fernando and his work was filmed by the Discovery Channel entitled, 'The Dolphin Protector'. The film is now being edited and we shall send you a copy when broadcast.

Goal 4: Find alternatives with the goal of banning the 'mota' catfish fishery.

- 190 mota fish samples were analysed. Results showed that mercury levels exceeded the limit set by the World Health Organization, making them unsafe for human consumption. An assessment by the Ministry of Health found 95% of samples contained significant levels of mercury.
- An international campaign was launched against trade in mota fish. More than 140,000 signatures have been sent to the Government of Colombia in support of avoiding trade in mota fish (to complement the Brazilian ban), and the Government have now officially recommended people avoid its consumption.
- Big supermarkets have stopped buying mota fish – a huge achievement which will not only benefit human health, but reduce the killing of river dolphins to be used as bait in the mota industry.



Çağın Şekerciođlu

Double Gold Award Winner

2014 Partnership Funding Winner

Project: Landscape conservation of large carnivores, Turkey

Organisation: [KuzeyDoga](#)

[Çağın Şekerciođlu](#) is in the top 1% of the world's most cited conservation scientists and oversees the largest active conservation project in Turkey which is protecting, connecting and restoring habitat for endangered wildlife, providing a vital corridor between Turkey and neighbouring Georgia.

North East Turkey is a biodiversity hot spot but receives little conservation attention. A relentless construction agenda threatens to dismantle environmental laws and wipe out wildlife populations, putting Turkey's biodiversity in crisis.

“Partnership Funding by Fondation Segré will support landscape-scale conservation of large carnivores in northeastern Turkey through research, awareness raising, environmental education and lobbying the government to create new protected areas, including completion of Turkey's first wildlife corridor”. Çağın Şekerciođlu

Over the next three years Çağın's project will:

Expand monitoring of wolves, bears and lynx to carry out the first assessment of their population size and habitat use by tracking movements using radio collars, camera traps and specially trained scat-detecting dogs.

Use scientific data to influence political decisions regarding Turkey's wildlife and advocate for the expansion of protected areas and the placing of road-crossing structures to reduce road mortality.



Educate local people and develop community conservation initiatives in carnivore habitat to reduce human-wildlife conflict and create village-based wildlife tourism.

In its first year Cagan's project has made the following progress towards its goals:

Goal 1: Create the next generation of conservation leaders in Turkey.

- A team of young experts has been established through the training of four Turkish MSc and university undergraduates who have benefitted from hands-on training as field assistants, and the recruitment of a PhD student.

Goal 2: Generate population estimates for large carnivores in this data-deficient region using population surveys, ecological research and mark-recapture analyses.

- For the first time in Turkey a trained dog was used to collect over 1,200 carnivore scats (droppings) from which DNA has been extracted to identify individual animals as part of a molecular mark-and-recapture study to estimate brown bear population size.

Goal 3: Track the movements and understand the habitat requirements of large carnivores in the region.

- GPS collars and crittercams (video collars) were fitted on 10 bears, 6 wolves, and 2 lynx to track their movements over the next 12 months and provide crucial information on habitat use, range and behaviour.
- This the first time crittercams have been used on wolves and lynx. This has led to significant media attention for the project and even deterred poachers from killing collared animals.
- One remarkable finding is that crittercams fitted to wolves have allowed the team to identify five separate dens, all with pups. This suggests successful reproduction and a high density of wolves living in Sarıkamiş forest, not far from town, indicating that wolves have learned to coexist with people despite poaching pressure.

Goal 4: Use camera traps to monitor mammal diversity and abundance.

- A network of 35 camera traps has been set-up to monitor long term changes in mammal biodiversity in the Sarıkamiş forest (a project that has been in planning for years, but only made possible through Partnership Funding).
- A total of 23,995 photos were collected from 65 stations, and are currently being entered into the project database for analysis.

Goal 5: Increase community Involvement.

- 267 community opinion surveys were conducted in 32 villages in the study area. The majority of respondents said they wanted to participate in future ecotourism opportunities.

- Outreach highlighting the importance of the project through presentations and stakeholder discussions have been conducted.
- The project was featured in more than 300 news pieces including local and national newspapers, radio and TV programmes. This included six documentaries on National Geographic Turkey, TRT Belgesel (national TV documentary channel), IzTV (dedicated documentary channel), CNN Turk (the most respected news channel of Turkey), and NTV.

Goal 6: Build political support for large carnivore conservation.

- The project was chosen as one of the five most successful United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects in the world and KuzeyDoğa was the only Turkish NGO invited to the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) 5th Assembly meeting in Mexico.
- Çagan received Turkey's top science prize from Turkey's President Erdogan in December 2014. Cagan was the first biologist and youngest person to receive the Special Science Award from the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey.
- The Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs has begun reforestation of the wildlife corridor, re-planting 50 hectares to date.
- KuzeyDoğa has provided wildlife tracking data to the Minister of Forestry and Water Affairs and government officers to convince them to build at least one overpass or underpass across the highway. Bisecting Sarikamis forest in a location frequently used by wildlife in order to decrease road kill. The ministry is currently undertaking a feasibility study.

[Charudutt Mishra](#)

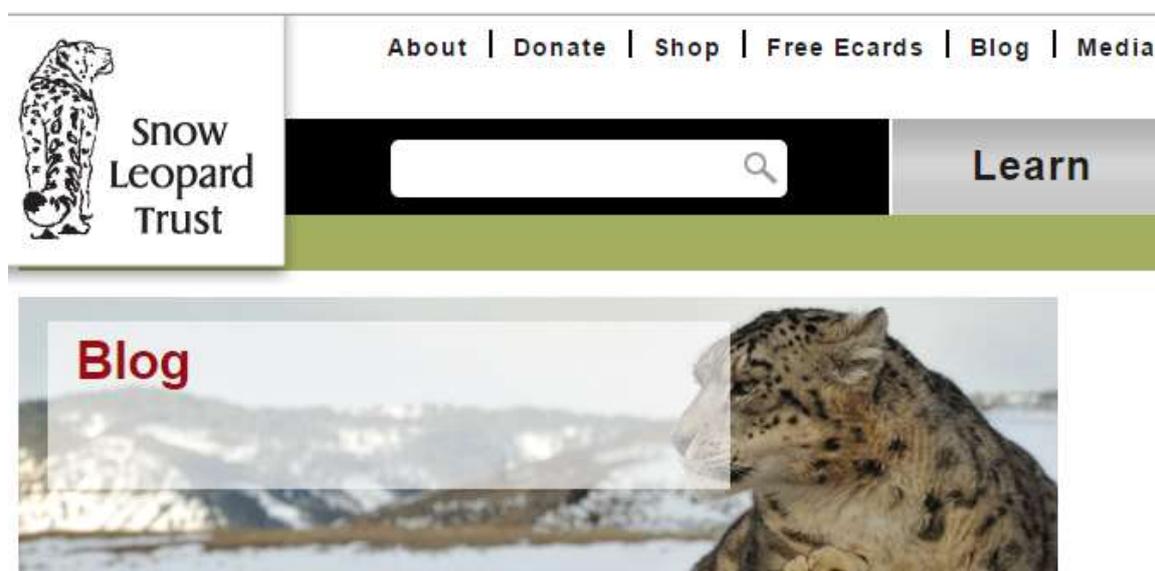
2005 Whitley Gold Award Winner, 2014 Partnership Funding Winner

Websites

Snow Leopard Trust – NGO Website

2nd March 2015

<http://www.snowleopard.org/anti-poaching-program-goes-national-in-kyrgyzstan>



[Anti-Poaching Program Goes National in Kyrgyzstan](#)

Government agencies, INTERPOL, and NGOs join forces with rangers and community members to confront illegal hunting of endangered species.

Less than a year after launching a [pilot program to fight poaching of endangered snow leopards and their prey](#) in Kyrgyzstan, the Snow Leopard Trust and its partners are 'going national' to cover all 19 of the country's state parks and nature reserves – thanks to a grant from the UK government's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund.

The project, known as the Citizen-Ranger Wildlife Protection Program (CRWPP), trains, publicly honors, and financially rewards park rangers and local community members who successfully apprehend illegal hunters. It addresses one of the most persistent threats to snow leopards and their prey species in the Central Asian countries: poaching by outsiders.

The Snow Leopard Trust has been working in Kyrgyzstan since 2002 with a dominant focus on community-based conservation, and more recently, with the Kyrgyz President for catalyzing range-wide governmental action for snow leopard conservation.

The organization's longest-running program in Kyrgyzstan, Snow Leopard Enterprises, has helped address the problem of hunting of snow leopards and wild ungulates by local community members. However, for many years, community members and rangers have expressed frustration at preventing poaching by outsiders.

“Our existing community-based conservation programs are not as effective against this outside threat,” says Brad Rutherford, Executive Director of the Snow Leopard Trust.

A Porous System Exploited by Illegal Hunters

Due to entrenched problems such as an under-resourced and underfunded wildlife conservation sector, lack of trained personnel and equipment, and low salaries for park staff, rangers and local people often feel socially and economically disenfranchised to control poaching in and around protected areas. In the past, this has supported a porous system easily exploited by illegal hunters.

In response, the Snow Leopard Trust, local NGO partner Snow Leopard Foundation in Kyrgyzstan (SLFK), and the Government of Kyrgyzstan developed CRWPP.



A snow leopard marks its territory in Sarychat-Ertash Nature Reserve

When cases of illegal hunting are recorded and filed by citizens, rangers, or teams of community members and rangers, CRWPP honors them in a public ceremony with certificates and a small cash reward.

CRWPP cash rewards provide incentive to rangers to apprehend poachers and follow-through filing cases. National recognition raises social profile and respect for rangers while publicly celebrating and positively reinforcing community collaboration and best practices.

“Although it involves a cash reward, recognizing the rangers’ and community members’ effort is an even more important aspect of the program,” says Whitley Award winner Dr. Charudutt Mishra, Science and Conservation Director for the Snow Leopard Trust.

Arrests and filing cause hassles and costs for poachers as an added deterrent, and placing cases on record is a critical first step towards stronger law enforcement.

In 2014, the Snow Leopard Trust signed a 10-year, three-way agreement with SLFK, and the Government of Kyrgyzstan to help manage this program into the future, and later that same year, [inaugural awards were conferred on a ranger-community member](#) team that had apprehended a hunter with a gun in Sarychat-Ertash Nature Reserve .

Major Expansion Thanks to UK Grant

Now, a new grant received in 2015 from the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund through the UK Government will enable us to begin massive nationwide expansion starting this spring. The grant will help provide for an endowment to support the program’s financial awards into the future, including a roughly \$250 US reward for cases involving endangered species.

“Park rangers are working hard under difficult circumstances to protect endangered wildlife in Kyrgyzstan. I’m very pleased that we’ll now be able to assist and empower them in their efforts across all 19 Protected Areas of the country”, says Kubanych Jumabai uulu, director of the Snow Leopard Foundation Kyrgyzstan.

Britain’s Animal Welfare Minister Lord de Mauley says:

“Poaching threatens the very existence of globally endangered species like snow leopards and damages the communities in which it takes place.

“Through this fund we are working with Kyrgyzstan to stamp it out by building up a national network of state rangers and supporting local communities to fight against the trade. This approach has already shown itself to be successful at reducing poaching in and around protected areas.”

One of the most exciting outcomes of the grant will be to enable a partnership with INTERPOL, the international police organization, to deliver quality training for rangers in law enforcement and investigative techniques.

“Despite their limited resources, park rangers in protected areas as well as our partner communities work hard to stop these outside poachers – but their efforts too often go unrecognized,” says Dr. Mishra. “This project therefore will be a huge enabler. We’re excited to grow this program and start a new chapter in conservation in Kyrgyzstan.

More information

Snow Leopard Foundation in Kyrgyzstan

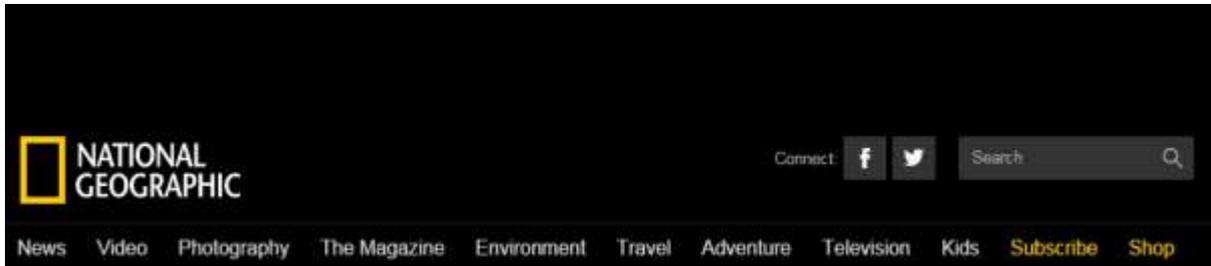
Leading the fight for the future of the endangered snow leopard in Kyrgyzstan, the Snow Leopard Foundation partners with international organizations such as the Snow Leopard Trust to better understand and protect this cat in this key range country.

Snow Leopard Trust

The Snow Leopard Trust, based in Seattle, WA, is a world leader in conservation of the endangered snow leopard, conducting pioneering research and partnering with communities as well as authorities in snow leopard habitat to protect the cat.

The Snow Leopard Trust's work in Kyrgyzstan is in collaboration with Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, with special support from Partnership Funding by Fondation Segré, managed by the Whitley Fund for Nature.

www.snowleopard.org



Small Changes in Livestock Herding Could Reduce a Big Threat to Snow Leopards

Stunning footage: three wild snow leopard cubs were caught on camera as they follow their mom to a watering hole in their rugged mountain habitat in Mongolia.

Reducing the losses suffered by farmers due to predation on livestock by snow leopards is a key to protecting the endangered cat. New research now shows that small changes in the way livestock are herded could make a big difference.

Snow leopard habitat is used extensively for livestock grazing and snow leopards sometimes prey on domestic livestock. Even when these events are not frequent, they cause significant economic hardship for herders and lead to retaliatory killings. Now, new research suggests there may be ways to avoid most of those livestock losses.

In a recently [published paper](#), a team of scientists led by Snow Leopard Trust researcher Örjan Johansson pinpoints how snow leopard predation on domestic livestock tends to occur, and suggests specific improvements to herding practices that could help prevent it.

“We knew that snow leopards like to eat ungulates, meaning both wild and domestic sheep and goats,” says Snow Leopard Trust researcher Örjan Johansson. “But beyond that, there are many open questions: How much of a snow leopard’s diet is made up of domestic species? How do the cats choose prey, and how much do they need? Are there diet differences between individual cats, or between males and females?”

“These questions are crucial for conservation,” explains Charu Mishra, the Trust’s Science and Conservation Director. “If we understand how snow leopards choose their prey and what factors influence these choices, we can do a much better job of helping local communities coexist with the cats. For instance, if we can predict where and when predation is likely to occur, we can focus our efforts there, which gives us a much better chance to prevent it.”

To get the answers they were after, Johansson and Mishra worked with colleagues from Panthera, the Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation and Grimsö Wildlife Research

Station. Over a span of 5 years, they followed a total of 19 snow leopards fitted with GPS tracking-collars in Mongolia's Tost Mountains – an unprecedented effort.

“Thanks to data from the collars, we could determine when and where a snow leopard made a kill,” Örjan Johansson explains.



With the help of numerous volunteers, the team was able to find more than 250 kill sites and identify the prey taken at each.

Previous studies have relied on scat analysis to get information about snow leopard diets. But “scats are anonymous,” Johansson says, “They give you an overview of what’s going on in a population, but they don’t tell you which cat left them, or when they were left, so you have no way of analyzing and comparing the predation patterns of individual cats. From scats, it is also not possible to separate instances of hunting from scavenging.” With data on the eating habits of individual cats, the researchers were able to paint a much more detailed picture in this new study.

“The first thing that jumps out is that 73% of all ungulates killed by snow leopards were wild. Only 27% were livestock,” Charu Mishra says. “This is a landscape in which livestock are at least ten times more abundant than wild prey, by at least an order of magnitude. And yet, the cats mainly prey on wild species.”

This suggests that snow leopards kill livestock opportunistically, but prefer wild ungulates.

Snow leopards can sometimes get inside poorly constructed corrals and cause extensive livestock losses, and the Snow Leopard Trust has been working with herders in several countries to improve corrals.

However, a significant portion of snow leopard attacks on livestock takes place in the pastures, *especially on stragglers that have inadvertently been left behind by herders.*

“Many of these livestock kills happened at nighttime, when the rest of the herd was safely back at the corral,” Örjan Johansson explains.

Livestock lost in the pastures during the day were usually killed in rugged areas, where herders could easily lose sight of them.



A former recipient of the Whitley Award, known as the “Conservation Oscar”, Charu Mishra knows from years of experience how complex wildlife conservation issues tend to be.

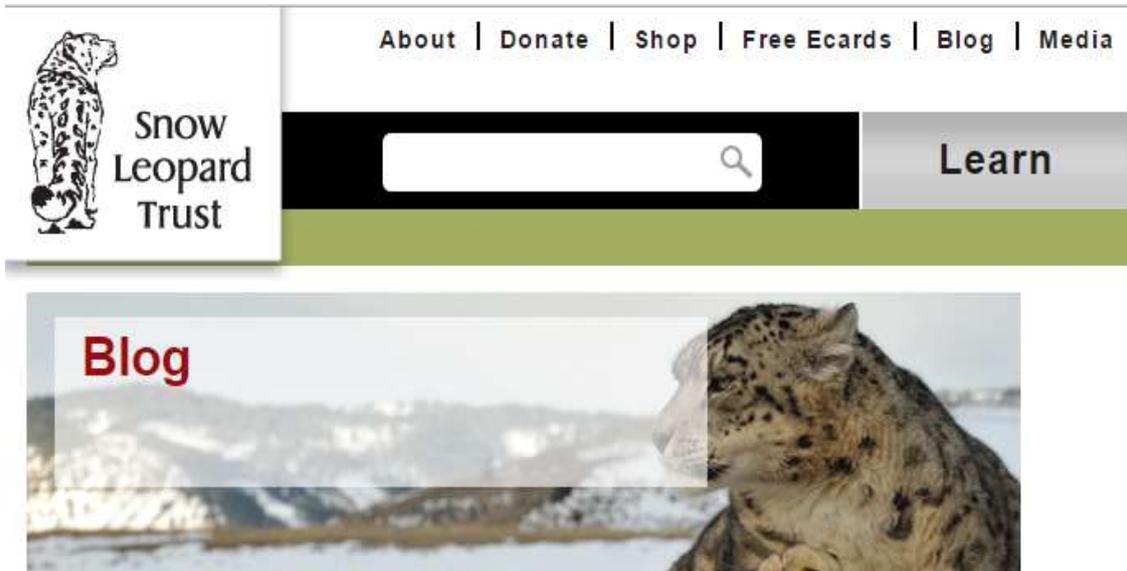
This new research, however, suggests fairly straightforward measures that could make a big difference: “A significant part of livestock losses out in the pastures could perhaps be avoided if very rugged areas

of the pastures could be avoided while grazing livestock, and if fewer stragglers were left behind at night,” he says.

If these small changes to herding practices are made and corrals are further improved to prevent cats from entering, livestock predation by snow leopards could be reduced significantly – to the benefit of cats and people alike.

Snow Leopard Trust Blog – NGO Website
31st August 2015

<http://www.snowleopard.org/snow-leopard-trust-scientist-nominated-for-indianapolis-prize>



Snow Leopard Trust Scientist Nominated for Indianapolis Prize

For the second time in his distinguished career, Dr. Charudutt (Charu) Mishra, the Snow Leopard Trust's Science and Conservation Director and a trustee of India's Nature Conservation Foundation, is among the nominees for the Indianapolis Prize, one of the world's most prestigious conservation awards. The nomination recognizes Charu Mishra's outstanding contributions to snow leopard science, community conservation, and global cooperation towards protection of Asia's great mountains.

"To be nominated for this prestigious award alongside many of the world's leading conservationists is a great honor", Charu Mishra says. "It is above all a testament to the outstanding work done by the dozens of scientists, students and community members in snow leopard habitat that I've had the privilege of working with."

While studying to be a wildlife biologist in his native India, Charu grew convinced that effective conservation needs to be people-centered. He began focusing his research on the interactions between wildlife and people in the Indian Himalayas. He has since published more than 70 influential research papers on wildlife and human ecology and conflict mitigation. He most recently co-authored a watershed paper about the impacts of international cashmere trade on wildlife across Asia.

While remaining firmly rooted in the scientific community, Charu has always been committed to applying the results of his research in the very communities he was studying. For example, when he found out that many herders felt they had no choice but to retaliate against snow leopards—one of the most iconic predators for India's high altitudes—Charu worked with them to create India's first community-managed livestock

insurance program, which has since become a widely-replicated model of incentive-based grassroots conservation.

More recently, he worked with colleagues in Kyrgyzstan to conceptualize and initiate an anti-poaching program to be implemented in all protected areas of the country in partnership with INTERPOL.

In 1996, Charu co-founded Nature Conservation Foundation, an influential NGO promoting science-based and socially-responsible wildlife conservation in India, and established the organization's High Altitudes program.

A Key Figure in Snow Leopard Conservation

Charu Mishra joined the Snow Leopard Trust in 2001 as the India Country Director, and in 2008 took over the responsibility to lead and manage snow leopard research and conservation across India, China, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, the top five snow leopard range countries.

In 2002, he was involved in helping establish the Snow Leopard Network, a worldwide alliance of over 500 individuals and institutions dedicated to the exchange of information towards snow leopard conservation. Charu became the Network's Executive Director in 2010.

In 2012 Dr. Mishra was invited to help facilitate an initiative of the President of Kyrgyzstan and the World Bank's Global Tiger Initiative to unify conservation efforts across all 12 snow leopard range countries.



Charu Mishra (center) with SLT Executive Director Brad Rutherford (left) at the 2013 Global Snow Leopard Forum

Charu was pivotal in helping draft the Bishkek Declaration for Protection of the Endangered Snow Leopard and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP)—a strategy that has catalyzed all 12 snow leopard range countries to commit to increasing snow leopard protection across 500,000 km² of core snow leopard habitat.

Bringing an outspoken and unwavering voice for local communities, Charu helped ensure that the Bishkek Declaration and GSLEP explicitly recognize the rights of local communities and the important role they play in wildlife conservation across snow leopard range.

A Champion of Community-Centered Conservation

Charu is recipient of the Whitley Gold Award (2005) and the Golden Ark Award (2008), and India's T.N. Khoshoo Award for Outstanding Contributions in the field of Conservation. He serves on the Editorial Boards of the Journals *Animal Conservation* and *Oryx*, and is a member of the IUCN's Cat Specialist Group. Today, his outstanding work and commitment are further recognized by his second straight nomination for the prestigious Indianapolis Prize.

“It's heartening to see so many community conservation practitioners among the nominees for this important award”, Charu says. “I firmly believe that the future of wildlife conservation lies in building true partnerships with the communities that live alongside the endangered species we seek to protect. The major challenge we face is to find ways to align the legitimate interests of these rural communities – to make a safe and sustainable living – with the equally legitimate interest of conservation, which is to safeguard the planet's biodiversity. I hope the Indianapolis Prize will contribute to advancing this concept.”

Acknowledgements:

Dr. Mishra's work is supported by the [Whitley Fund for Nature](#).

[Pablo Borboroglu](#)

2010 Whitley Award Winner, 2015 Partnership Funding Winner

Summary of media publicity achieved through the project

Over the first year of his Partnership Funding grant, Pablo Borboroglu's NGO, the Global Penguin Society (GPS), has had a strong presence in the international and national media. GPS has been featured in 49 newspaper articles, 17 radio interviews and 5 TV interviews. Please see selected coverage below.

Broadcast

UN Web TV - United Nations High-Level Symposium on the Oceans, New York
'One Ocean: Achieving Sustainability through Sanctuaries'
5th March 2015

<http://webtv.un.org/watch/one-ocean-achieving-sustainability-through-sanctuaries/4097144985001>

Pablo speaks at 2h 26m and highlights the ecological and financial reasons for the creation of Marine Protected Areas and why science is fundamental to their design.



NoticiasUno – Colombian News Channel

2nd November 2015

Matan delfines rosados para usarlos como carnada del pez Mota

Translated: Pink dolphins used as mota fish bait

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLWDFLe1LuY>



Websites

Diario Jornada – Patagonia News Website

4th June 2015

http://www.diariojornada.com.ar/131681/sociedad/Patagonia_Azul_se_presento_la_distincion_mundial_que_recibio_Chubut



“Patagonia Azul”: se presentó la distinción mundial que recibió Chubut

Con gran acompañamiento de organismos nacionales y ONGs, la Secretaría de Turismo y Áreas Protegidas del Chubut junto a Global Penguin Society (GPS) y el CENPAT-Conicet, presentó la nueva distinción que recibió la provincia.



Organizada por la Secretaría de Turismo y Áreas Protegidas del Chubut, se realizó este martes en la Casa del Chubut en Buenos Aires una presentación sobre “Patagonia Azul”, la última distinción mundial que recibió Chubut en este mes de junio de parte de UNESCO y que le significa contar con la Reserva de Biósfera más grande de la Argentina. Con este nuevo sello de conservación, Chubut cuadruplicó el porcentaje de hectáreas bajo conservación en sólo tres años, pasando del 6,3 al 28 por ciento.

A cargo de la presentación estuvieron la subsecretaria de Turismo del Chubut, Mónica Montes Roberts; el investigador de la Global Penguin Society y del CENPAT-Conicet, Pablo García Borboroglu; y Graciela Pien, coordinadora del programa MAB de la Secretaría de Ambiente de la Nación.

La subsecretaria Montes Roberts destacó que “esta distinción de la UNESCO sitúa a Chubut en los más altos estándares internacionales en materia de conservación”.

La funcionaria destacó “la voluntad política del gobernador Buzzi y del secretario de Turismo, Carlos Zonza Nigro, para que se pudiera llevar adelante el trabajo conjunto entre el Gobierno del Chubut con el CENPAT, GPS y los equipos técnicos de la Secretaría de Turismo y Áreas Protegidas de la Provincia”; e indicó que “esta gestión le ha dado a la conservación una importancia trascendental, con un Plan de Conservación que se estipuló hace tres años, que fue cumplido en su totalidad y superado ampliamente en las expectativas”.

En este sentido, Montes Roberts detalló que “con la incorporación de esta Reserva de Biósfera, que se suma a la creada el año pasado en Península Valdés y al Área Protegida Los Altares, pasamos del 6,3 al 28 por ciento de nuestro territorio bajo alguna figura de conservación. Esto significa un gran potencial para el desarrollo turístico sustentable de la provincia, para seguir apostando a la industria del turismo vinculado a la conservación y para seguir promocionando nuestro territorio a nivel nacional e internacional con numerosas distinciones de reconocidos organismos como la UNESCO”.

“Lejos de conformarnos, esto nos pone ante el desafío de profundizar este rumbo, planificando y gestionando para el desarrollo sustentable del turismo”, concluyó.

Una visión política ligada a la conservación de los recursos

La presentación contó con el acompañamiento de representantes de diversas instituciones vinculadas a la temática, como la Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Turístico, la Subsecretaría de Promoción Turística Nacional, Parques Nacionales y Ente Patagonia.

Además hubo acompañamiento de múltiples ONGs como Fundación Vida Silvestre, Foro para la Conservación del Mar Patagónico, Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Fundación de Historia Natural Félix de Azara, Foro para la Conservación del Mar Patagónico, entre otras.

Por su parte, el biólogo Pablo García Borboroglu reveló que “este trabajo surgió cuando le acercamos al gobernador Buzzi la idea de crear una reserva marina en Punta Tombo. Buzzi nos alentó a ir por más, a que trabajáramos para obtener el sello de Reserva de Biósfera de la UNESCO”.

García Borboroglu graficó que “esta zona protegida, de 3,1 millones de hectáreas, tiene el tamaño de la provincia de Misiones, o de Bélgica. Aquí se observa la mayor biodiversidad de todo el litoral costero argentino y, además de la gran cantidad de especies animales y vegetales, tiene el 40 por ciento de la población de pingüinos, sumado al valor histórico, arqueológico y paleontológico de la región, que son factores que tuvo en cuenta la UNESCO”.

“La condición de Reserva de Biósfera implica un compromiso con la conservación, el

desarrollo sustentable, la educación ambiental y la investigación”, explicó, añadiendo que “con esta, ya son 15 las reservas de este tipo en la Argentina, que se ubica en un lugar preponderante a nivel mundial”.

“La Reserva de Biósfera es una especie de sello de calidad, algo que agrega valor en lo turístico y en lo productivo, porque habla a las claras de un territorio donde el hombre disfruta y aprovecha la naturaleza al mismo tiempo que la cuida para las generaciones que vienen”, puntualizó García Borboroglu, al tiempo que destacó “el impecable trabajo técnico que llevó a que las autoridades de la UNESCO aprobaran por unanimidad y en un plazo muy corto la presentación de Chubut”.

Reserva de Biósfera

Contar con este sello otorgado por UNESCO implica ser distinguidos internacionalmente en materia de conservación, desarrollo sustentable, educación e investigación, teniendo en cuenta no sólo los recursos naturales y culturales, sino también la presencia del hombre y su incorporación para el desarrollo sustentable.

El proyecto fue presentado por Chubut en septiembre de 2014 por la Secretaría de Turismo y Áreas Protegidas de Chubut y contempla una superficie de 3,1 millones de hectáreas, 58% marinas y 42% terrestres.

Esta Reserva de Biósfera abarca al sector costero de mayor biodiversidad de todo el litoral marítimo del país y tiene una superficie semejante a Bélgica. Se extiende desde la Ruta Nacional 3 hasta las 24 millas náuticas y engloba 300 kilómetros de costa.

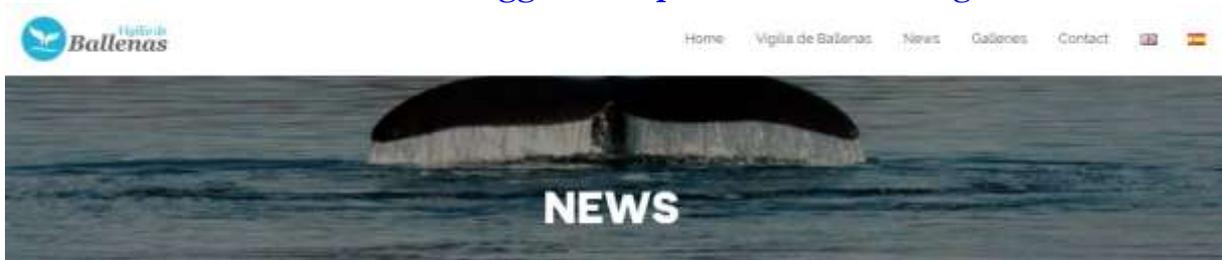
Es el sector costero de mayor biodiversidad del país, con 31 especies de mamíferos terrestres, 36 de mamíferos marinos, 67 de aves costeras y marinas, 65 de aves terrestres, 83 especies de peces, 130 de algas y 197 invertebrados marinos.

Este reconocimiento eleva la visibilidad y las oportunidades para el área, integrando ahora la Red Mundial de Reservas de Biósfera de UNESCO, formada por 651 reservas en 120 países alrededor del planeta. Es un orgullo para Chubut y para la Nación Argentina contar con esta distinción.

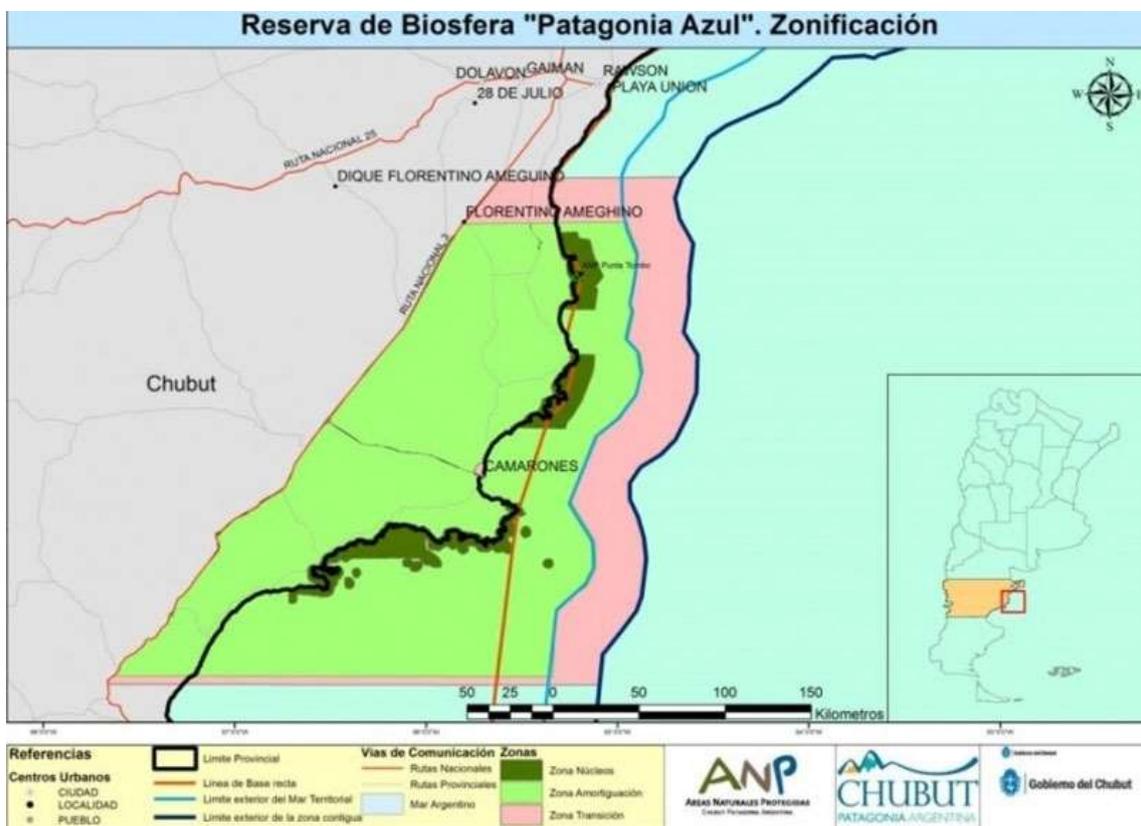
Vigilia de Ballenas – Whale Conservation Website

10th June 2015

<http://ballenas2015.com/view-news/9/chubut-the-biggest-biosphere-reserve-in-argentina>



Chubut, The Biggest Biosphere Reserve In Argentina



Chubut got the biggest Biosphere Reserve in Argentina designated by UNESCO called "Blue Patagonia" Biosphere Reserve means having a stamp of international standing in the field of conservation, sustainable development, education and research. The project was presented in September 2014 by the Ministry of Tourism and Protected Areas of Chubut and includes 3.1 million hectares, 58% marine and 42% terrestrial.

At its 27th session held yesterday in Paris, the International Coordinating Council of the Man and Biosphere Program (MAB) of UNESCO unanimously approved Patagonia Blue Biosphere Reserve. This nomination was submitted by the Ministry of Tourism and Protected Areas of Chubut and developed by the Global Penguin Society (GPS) with the contribution of professionals under the coordination of Pablo Garcia Borboroglu under agreement with CONICET.

In that regard, the Minister of Tourism and Protected Areas of Chubut, Carlos Zonza Nigro said: "It is a great achievement that we were expecting, is the third reserve for Chubut and two of them were nominated and approved by the management with Martin Buzzi , a governor who bets on sustainable development and who thinks about future generations who will continue enjoying our nature and also he bets on the development of the tourism industry related to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage "and said" we became important around the world, we are having a great impact with this and it is also a good way to promote Chubut, to be known as a destination and awaken interest in knowing our province.

He added: "This nomination is part of our Comprehensive Conservation Plan, which we consider as a central objective to increase the number of acres under conservation figures, we started with 6.2%, and with the approval of the Biosphere Reserve and Patagonia Azul another project from the Area Marina Tombo we will get a 30% before the end of the year, that is a great achievement for conservation and tourism in the province of Chubut. "

Similarly, the minister of Tourism referred to the new Biosphere Reserve: "This is a stamp of international standing in conservation but including human activities and tourism and economic development in the region" and he stressed that "the creation of the Biosphere Reserve Patagonia Chubut Blue imply to have the largest biosphere reserve in Argentina, with an area of 3.1 million hectares."

ABOUT PATAGONIA AZUL

This Biosphere Reserve covers the coastal area of greatest biodiversity of the entire marine coast of the country.

The investigator Garcia Borboroglu said, "This Biosphere Reserve has a similar dimension to Belgium or the province of Misiones. It extends from the National Route 3 to 24 nautical miles and includes 300 km of coastline. It has three centers: the coastal-marine area Punta Tombo, an intermediate area from Cabo Raso to Camarones Bay, and the third is the Interjurisdictional Marine Coastal Park managed between Chubut and National Parks Administration ".

He added that "by including these nuclei, it becomes the coastal area of greatest biodiversity in the country, with 31 species of terrestrial mammals, 36 of sea mammals, 67 of coastal and marine birds, 65 of land birds, 83 species of fish, 130 of algae and 197 of invertebrates. It also has archaeological and paleontological sites as a petrified forest, combined with precious cultural and historical values, as the site where the first official foundation took place in 1535 in Argentine territory and dozens of shipwrecks of European explorers. "

"The innovation in this figure is that it involves Biosphere resource conservation and economic realization of those who live there," the researcher said and indicated that "within an outstanding scenic beauty, the town of Camarones is the main human

settlement inside Biosphere Reserve, whose small population is going to be benefitted from this international seal of distinction."

This recognition raises the visibility and opportunities for the area, now integrating the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO formed by 651 reserves in 120 countries around the world. It is a proud to Chubut and Argentina.



Made for minds.

The perils of being a penguin in the modern age

Punta Tombo in Patagonia has become known as a coastal paradise for penguins. Yet the thousands of birds that migrate there yearly face threats from unsustainable tourism and climate change.



Punta Tombo is a small, sandswept peninsula about 1,600 kilometres (994 miles) south of Buenos Aires, best known - as its bright blue signs proclaim in English - as "Penguin Paradise."

Starting every September, hundreds of thousands of Magellanic Penguins migrate to these Patagonian shores to incubate their eggs and see their young off to sea. But it's not all paradisaical for these majestic birds, which are known for their ability to swim distances of up to 170 kilometres (106 miles) a day. On the contrary, they continue to face threats from climate change, local industry and unsustainable tourism.

Punta Tombo attracts more than 100,000 tourists annually, most of whom come to primarily see the penguins. High visitor numbers are generally considered a good thing - but in this instance, that's not without difficulties. "There's a problem of managing large numbers of people wanting access to penguin colonies," said Graham Harris, director of the [Wildlife Conservation Society's](#) (WCS) Argentina program.

He points out that while crowds of people have helped keep predators such as foxes and seagulls away from the penguins, tourism has also taken its toll. It has led to the construction of additional facilities on the peninsula, to greater use of already scarce water resources and to sewage being leaked into the sea. And although safe group sizes should not be larger than 15 people, buses carry more numbers on unofficial tours to the coast.



People might love penguins, but their presence among them is not all good

The WCS first promoted the idea of small-group tourism in the 1960s as an economic alternative to hunting. At that time, the Japanese firm "Hinode Penguin" was seeking permission from Argentina's government to kill the birds for their skins. They were spared this fate, and in the 1970s, WCS and Germany's Frankfurt Zoo donated the funds to build the first ranger station at Punta Tombo to serve as a lookout for the penguins.

Biosphere reserve victory

Things have come a long way since then. Just last month, local conservation groups succeeded in their long-term push to form a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Known as the "Blue Patagonia" reserve, it covers an area of 3.1 million hectares - about the size of Belgium - that also encompasses Punta Tombo. About 58 percent of the area is at sea, and 42 percent on land.

While it includes a sustainable management plan for each reserve in the area - including limited tour group sizes and waste management - biosphere reserve status is not legally binding.

Regardless, Pablo Garcia Borboroglu, president of the [Global Penguin Society](#) (GPS), welcomes the designation as a means of tackling existing problems.

"There will be a need to improve management techniques since there will be a need to report to UNESCO," he said.

Nonetheless, it is only a first step in protecting Argentina's coastal Patagonian penguins, the largest such colony in South America. Another crucial aspect is public awareness of the problems facing the birds.

Early education



Teaching youngsters about penguins is essential to conservation efforts

Borboroglu, who is a resident of Chubut province where Punta Tombo is located, says local children learn about the penguins and their environment at school. Every year, the local GPS chapter takes 700 children to see the birds and visit the newly renovated Penguin Interpretation Center.

The scheme has given the youngsters an insight into the majestic black and white creatures. "The Argentines used to be the worst-behaved around them," said Borboroglu, referring to harassing the wildlife. "Now, they're the best."

Dee Boersma, who has been director of the Magellanic Penguin Project at Punta Tombo since 1982, agrees that sustainable tourism can be effective.

"The good news is that visiting these penguins, when managed and done well, can educate people to help with their conservation," Boersma said.

But efforts don't stop there. Given that Magellanic Penguins nest as far as a kilometer inland from the shore, they often inhabit private property. The GPS and Wildlife Conservation Society are therefore working with landowners to protect these areas, and also put up cautionary signs for boats that sail past the birds' migratory corridors.

Protection at sea has already delivered results. In the early 1980s, nearly 80 percent of penguins found dead on the beach were covered in petroleum - yet when oil tankers were forced to move 40 kilometers further offshore, that figure dropped to 1 percent.

Other Threats

In a recent [University of Washington study](#), Boersma noted that climate change is responsible for up to 7 percent of penguin deaths. Because they have no sweat glands, they pant like dogs and dilate their blood vessels to give off heat through their feet and the flippers.



Penguins are struggling to adjust to climate change

"When it got hot, many penguins died because all their blood was being used to digest their food, and not for their feet and their flippers," said Boersma. In essence, they overheated.

Young penguins that are too big to be sheltered under their parents, but that don't yet possess waterproof feathers, are also susceptible to rainstorms.

Illegal fishing and over-foraging off the coast also poses a problem, as penguins and other local marine species need at least a third of available fish resources to sustain themselves. To save money, small ships also continue to dump oil into the sea instead of docking on shore.

"If we want [penguins' habitats] to have the protection they need, that's going to mean helping the government do the right thing," said Boersma. "Penguins don't have a voice, so people are going have to use their voice to help them."

Fernando Trujillo

2007 Whitley Gold Award Winner, 2014 Partnership Funding Winner

Summary of media publicity achieved through the project

Over the first year of project, 41 articles have been published online; 36 in 2014 and 5 in 2015. Coverage peaked during October 2014 coinciding with the Instituto Nacional de Vigilancia de Medicamentos y Alimentos (INVIMA) informing consumers about the risk of consumption of the mota fish due to bioaccumulation of total mercury. Fernando and his team have been featured in two TV documentaries and a film to be released in 2016. Please see selected coverage below.

Websites

Pro & Contra – Peruvian News Website

30th April 2014

<http://proycontra.com.pe/actualidad/realizan-taller-sobre-el-manati-y-delfines-de-rio/>



Taller sobre Manatí y Delfines

El Ministerio de la Producción, Ministerio del Ambiente y el Gobierno Regional de Loreto, con el apoyo de la Fundación Omacha, WWF, WCS, IBC, FUNDAMAZONIA, IIAP, ACOBIA-DWAZOO y SOLINIA, vienen realizando el II Taller: “Bases para la Construcción de un plan de acción en torno a Delfines de Río (*Inia Geoffrensis* Y *Sotalia Fluviatilis*) y Manatí (*Trichechus Inunguis*) en la Amazonía Peruana.

El taller tiene el objetivo principal de contar con un documento de gestión que permita establecer un Plan de Acción en torno a delfines de río y manatí en la Amazonía peruana, para el desarrollo de estrategias de conservación y desarrollo local.

Así como también el de conocer y actualizar las experiencias de investigación, protección, amenazas y necesidades de conservación de los delfines de río y manatí amazónico, consolidar y validar las bases técnicas para la aprobación de un Plan de Acción en torno a estas especies en la Amazonía peruana e identificar fortalezas y oportunidades con los diferentes actores clave para desarrollar estrategias de conservación y desarrollo local con énfasis en comunidades pesqueras.

Además se realizaron trabajos grupales sobre: Aportes y actualización para un Plan de Acción en torno a delfines de río y manatí en la Amazonía peruana y el día miércoles 30 se realizará la visita a la Fundación Iquitos – Centro de Rescate Amazónico y avistamiento de delfines en las desembocaduras de los ríos Marañón y Ucayali, inicio del Amazonas.

Es por ello que, la WWF, WCS y la Fundación Omacha, con el apoyo de Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, Whitley Fund for Nature y Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation han venido realizando desde el año 2006 evaluaciones de la abundancia de las tres especies de delfines de río (*Inia geoffrensis*, *Inia boliviensis* y *Sotalia fluviatilis*) en las cuencas de los ríos Amazonas y Orinoco.



La Universidad | Facultades | Programas | Investigación | Apoyo Financiero | Convenios | Admisiones

Pescadores brasileños utilizan delfines como carnada en la pesca de una especie carroñera que, según un estudio liderado por la bióloga Susana Caballero, acumula altos niveles de mercurio y genera problemas de salud. En Colombia se vende como si fuera el capaz del Magdalena.



En plazas de mercado, una arroba de mota cuesta entre 80 mil y 100 mil pesos según el tamaño.

Investigadores

Susana Caballero Gaitán, doctora en ecología y evolución con énfasis en genética de la conservación, Universidad de Oukland (Nueva Zelanda).

Fernando Trujillo, biólogo marino de la Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano, doctor en zoología en la Universidad de Aberdeen (Escocia) y director de la Fundación Omacha.

Rigoberto Gómez, químico de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia y profesor del Departamento de Química de la Universidad de los Andes.

Juan Camilo Cubillos Moreno, biólogo de la Universidad de los Andes y magíster en evolución, ecología y sistemática de Ludwig-Maximilian University en Munich, Alemania.

Cristian Camilo Salinas Zapata, biólogo de la Universidad de los Andes.

El frío quema. Es agosto, es Bogotá y el viento golpea. En los callejones de la plaza huele a verduras y a frutas. Al final del laberinto un olor revuelve la garganta, la temperatura cae más y la nariz se hiela. Son las 5:00 a.m. Algunos comerciantes se blindan con ruanas o chaquetas térmicas. Visten overoles, guantes y botas de caucho ante bagres del Amazonas, congelados, que sueltan un leve vapor. Pocos saben que, allí, hay una especie carroñera y dañina.

Pocos saben, además, que se engaña a la gente para venderle ese pescado oculto. Pocos saben de las consecuencias al consumirlo.

Entre la multitud, un desaliñado vendedor, muy ‘parlanchín’, dice: “Sí, hay bagre, nicuro, a la orden, qué busca”. René Bonilla se ufana cuando habla de pescado. Es santandereano y desde niño, junto a su papá, ha trabajado en el medio.

Frente al local que alquila, por un millón de pesos al mes, transitan destartaladas carretas cargadas de pescado y dejan, a su paso, el suelo hecho ‘mantequilla’. Tropiezan con todo: con la abultada clientela que manosea y observa fijamente la mercancía, con desenfrenados ‘bulteros’ que se abren paso a punta de ‘chiflidos’ y con vendedores ambulantes que se tercián atados de ajos y limones repitiendo: ‘a dos, tres en cinco...’ Diomedes Díaz se impone en el altavoz.

La capital apenas despierta y la plaza se mueve a mil: “Aquí, el ‘boleo’ empieza desde las dos”, dice un viejo vendedor de tinto y aguas aromáticas.

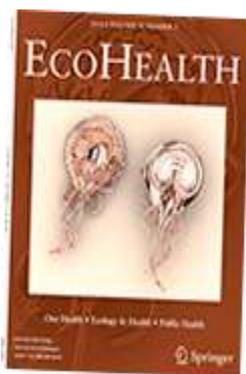
A sus 52 años, René se considera un gran estratega en el negocio. “Por ejemplo, el azulejo vale 70 mil pesos la arroba, es muy rico y muy parecido a la doncella del Magdalena, que vale 130 mil pesos”, afirma levantando sus pobladas cejas.

Sin embargo, su amplio saber popular no le da para reconocer que dentro de las cuatro canastas plásticas en las que expone doncellas, amarillos, yaques o cajaros y el par de ganchos en los que cuelgan racimos de nicuro o de capacetas, está la especie nociva que alarma a las autoridades de medio ambiente y de salud pública en Colombia y Brasil.

En un estudio de 35 comunidades pesqueras en el río Purus, del estado brasileño de Amazonas, se encontró que 144 delfines rosados se sacrifican al año para utilizarlos como carnada en la pesca del mota o piracatinga, como se le conoce en el país vecino: “Se sabe que extraen cerca de 15 toneladas por año y que 90% del cebo que utilizan es carne de delfín rosado”, explica la bióloga Sannie Brum, investigadora del Instituto Piagacu (Ipi), en un artículo publicado en el diario ABC de España, este año.

Investigación

Los investigadores publicaron el artículo Pig in a poke (gato por liebre): The ‘mota’ (Calophysus macropterus) Fishery, Molecular Evidence of Commercialization in Colombia and Toxicological Analyses, en la revista EcoHealth.



En la plaza, René se mueve como pez en el agua. Todos lo conocen. Ofrece mota con el nombre de capaceta, como los demás comerciantes. Y los clientes, dueños de pesquerías y restaurantes, lo hacen pasar por el capaz del río Magdalena, en donde hace más de 15 años escasea. “Son igualitos, la única diferencia son estas pecas”, dice el vendedor estrella con un silbido al final de cada sílaba.

El comercio pesquero en Colombia se inundó de mota y, a su vez, en Brasil aumentó el asesinato de delfines, pues su carne grasosa y de olor fuerte atrae la presa: “Los cortan en pedazos, los meten en una jaula y la hunden”, cuenta aterrado Fernando Trujillo, director de la Fundación Omacha, quien desde la década de los ochenta ha emprendido una complicada lucha en defensa de los delfines de agua dulce. “El delfín podrido –recalca– es devorado. Luego sacan la jaula llena de pescado”, concluye.

René se toma un tinto. Ya no tiritita. Dice que la capaceta es más rentable. “Capaz aquí ya no hay y si llega es muy costoso”, afirma con una pronunciada sonrisa de dientes separados.

Un domingo puede vender dos millones de pesos y al mes le pueden quedar hasta tres de ganancia. De ahí deriva el sustento para su esposa y sus dos hijos, Javier y Julieth, que viven en Bucaramanga.

Al mediodía regresa a su casa, una habitación del barrio Patio Bonito por la que paga 300 mil pesos mensuales.

“Hoy estuvo regular. Vendí apenas 200 mil pesos”, concluye.

Capaz que lo venden

Susana Caballero divide su tiempo entre la biología, su esposo y sus hijos: Gabriel, de 7 años y Simón, de 3. En sus palabras se percibe dulzura y no le apena tener muñecos de peluche. Desde su tesis de pregrado, en genética de ballenas jorobadas, se tomó en serio el papel de ‘sirena’. Eso le dijo un ‘piache’ (guía espiritual indígena): “Su misión es cuidar a sus hermanos los peces”, recuerda de aquel encuentro casual.

Son las 8:00 a.m.

Los expertos dicen:

...“El exterminio de delfines tiene por único objeto la captura de un pescado que se vende por solo 80 centavos de real, (unos 0,34 dólares) el kilo y que se ofrece en filetes principalmente en Colombia con otros nombres”.

Sannie Brum, bióloga e investigadora del Instituto Piagacu (Ipi), Brasil.

Lo dijo en: artículo publicado en el diario ABC de España

...“La minería con cianuro y mercurio trae problemas para los ecosistemas acuáticos y para toda la fauna. Muchos peces son consumidos por el ser humano”.
Sandra Bessudo, directora de la Agencia Presidencial para la Cooperación Internacional de Colombia.

...“Otro problema es poner a los pescadores como los asesinos de delfines. Son los grandes comerciantes de pescado quienes financian toda esta actividad”.
Sandra Beltrán, coordinadora de Investigaciones Científicas en Universidad de la Salle, Manaos, Brasil.

Lo dijeron en: documental ‘El pulso del río’. Fundación Omacha.

...“La información recopilada demuestra que hay niveles de mercurio que sobrepasan la normatividad. Nosotros hemos diseñado un programa de monitoreo en peces dulciacuícolas, entre ellos el mota, para conseguir información que nos permita evaluar el estatus sanitario del producto. Si existe un riesgo para la salud del consumidor, comunicaremos a las autoridades competentes, en este caso al Ministerio de Salud, para que decrete las medidas necesarias y así mitigar el problema”.

Mayra Andrea Arrieta, coordinadora del Grupo del Sistema de Análisis de Riesgos Químicos en Alimentos y Bebidas - Dirección de la Alimentos y Bebidas del Invima (Colombia).

Un rayo de luz traspasa la ventana de la oficina de Susana, bióloga de la Universidad de los Andes. También está Fernando Trujillo, director de la Fundación Omacha.

Juntos trabajan desde 1998. Ahora tienen un nuevo reto: “Demostrar que en el mercado y en los restaurantes no venden capaz del Magdalena sino mota del Amazonas y analizar si es apto para el consumo”, cuenta Susana.

La oficina es un estrecho océano. Delfines de madera, una sirena de trapo, tiburones dibujados a mano, manatíes de peluche y hasta un caballito de mar rodean el lugar. “Primero debíamos diferenciar qué era mota y qué era capaz”, dice la profesora de biología de la conservación y de biología en mamíferos acuáticos.

Empezaba 2009, dos de sus alumnos, Cristian Salinas y Juan Camilo Cubillos (ambos biólogos), se sumaron al equipo. Recolectaron muestras en Leticia y Puerto Nariño (Amazonas), en Puerto Inírida (Guainía), en Puerto López (Meta) y en Puerto Asís (Putumayo). Además, averiguaron por la existencia de capaz en restaurantes y mercados de Melgar, Girardot, Flandes y Honda, poblaciones aledañas al desnutrido río Magdalena y la respuesta fue positiva.

Quedaron boquiabiertos, pero en realidad era mota disfrazado de capaz, pues allí aquellas épocas de subienda y el sabor original del ‘viudo de capaz’ bañado con limón y guiso de

tomate con arroz y patacón son ahora una fantasía.

Fernando despliega la pantalla de su portátil y observa algunas fotos de la pesca de mota en el Amazonas y comenta: “En Colombia no se matan delfines, se pesca con vísceras de ganado. Y en la selva nadie se come ese pescado”. “Reunimos todas las muestras –recuerda Susana– y utilizamos una técnica de DNA barcoding (Código de barras moleculares) para verificar que era venta de mota”.

Luego se amplificó y secuenció el ADN *mitochondrial citocromo oxidasa I (COI)* – el gen que define la especie– y resultó que 90% de las 86 muestras examinadas eran de mota. “Solo tres de ellas se definieron como capaz. A la gente se le estaba engañando”, concluye la bióloga.

El nudo se desataba pero un misterio todavía rondaba la cabeza de los investigadores. Fernando, algo inquieto, insiste en mostrar un video hecho por la Fundación Omacha – que dirige actualmente–, en el que se ven decenas de mota escarbando las entrañas de un delfín muerto y dice: “Si es un pez carroñero que se come absolutamente todo, era importante un análisis de toxicología”.

Con el incremento en la minería artesanal e ilegal de oro y plata en el Amazonas, preocupaba el contenido de mercurio en el ambiente y en algunos peces.

Transcurría aquel 2009 y Juan Camilo, que actualmente trabaja con pesquerías en el Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute for Sea Fisheries (Alemania), realizó un análisis exhaustivo de las muestras. La idea era determinar las concentraciones de mercurio contenidas en los peces de la región. Eso lo supervisó Rigoberto Gómez, de la Universidad de los Andes. Los nuevos resultados aterrizaban la sospecha.

Susana descansa los codos sobre un libro gordo: *Introduction to conservation genetics* y sin despegar los ojos del computador señala una línea roja. “Según la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) –dice– para que un producto sea apto para el consumo humano debe tener un máximo en mercurio de 0,5 microgramos por gramo ($\mu\text{g}/\text{g}$). Encontramos que las especies de mota examinadas tenían entre 1,33 y 2,28 $\mu\text{g}/\text{g}$ ”.

Çağın Şekerciođlu

2008 & 2013 Gold Award Winner, 2014 Partnership Funding Winner

Broadcast

SongbirdSOS - Youtube

4th June 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyzSLVdhGsU>

The Messenger documentary featuring Çağın's work on birds in the Aras wetland.



Websites

The University of Utah News Centre

27th August 2014

http://unews.utah.edu/news_releases/utah-biologist-wins-turkeys-top-science-prize/



Aug. 27, 2014 – University of Utah biologist Çağan Şekercioğlu, who campaigns to save wetlands in his native Turkey, has won that nation's highest science prize, which is similar to the U.S. National Medal of Science.

Şekercioğlu is among five researchers picked for the top 2014 awards by TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey. Three researchers won the Science Award and two – including Şekercioğlu – won the Special Award, which is equivalent to the Science Award but for scientists who are from Turkey but working abroad.

“I am humbled to be the first ecologist, ornithologist and conservation biologist to receive Turkey's highest scientific honor,” Şekercioğlu says. “In Turkey, young people interested in science often choose engineering. I hope this award will inspire more young people to choose natural sciences in general and environmental sciences in particular.”

Şekercioğlu, an assistant professor of biology at the University of Utah, will travel to Ankara, Turkey, in late fall to pick up the award and a cash prize of 50,000 Turkish lira (about \$23,000) from Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is taking office as Turkey's newly elected president on Aug. 28 after serving as the nation's prime minister since 2003.

TÜBİTAK's annual prizes include up to eight Science Awards for significant contributions to the advancement of science, up to four Special Awards, up to four Services Award for those serving the development of science and technology and as many as 20 Incentive Awards for scientists under 40.

For 2014, 19 researchers won awards in the four categories. Şekercioğlu says his Special Award was the only one for natural sciences this year and only the second in that category since 2009.

Şekercioğlu, founder of the Turkish environmental organization KuzyDoğa Society, says he was invited to apply for the award last year when he met Turkish President Abdullah Gül and handed the leader 13,000 signatures collected by biologist's campaign to save the Aras River wetlands from a proposed dam. The wetlands are home to 258 bird species, 36 of which are threatened or endangered.

“If my receiving this award can convince the government not to destroy the wetlands where I do my science, the cycle will be complete,” Şekercioğlu says.

Şekercioğlu previously has been named a National Geographic Explorer and a National Geographic Risk Taker, won Turkey's first Wetland Science Award and the University of Utah's first Citizen Science Award, and is the only two-time winner of Great Britain's prestigious Whitley Gold Award, a conservation honor which was presented to him by Princess Anne in 2008 and 2013.

Information about Şekercioğlu's work to save the Aras River wetlands may be found [here](#).

Constantine Alexander – Environmental Blog

28th August 2014

<http://www.constantinealexander.net/environmental-politics/page/13/>



Sekercioglu to collect award in Ankara from nation's President.



[University of Utah](#) biologist Çağan Şekercioğlu holds a willow warbler as he talks with Turkish students at eastern [Turkey](#)'s bird-rich [Aras River](#) wetlands, which are threatened by dam construction. Şekercioğlu has won Turkey's highest scientific honor. Photo Credit: Emrah Coban

University of Utah biologist Çağan Sekercioglu, who campaigns to save wetlands in his native Turkey, has won that nation's highest science prize, which is similar to the U.S. [National Medal of Science](#).

Sekercioglu is among five researchers picked for 2014 the top awards by [TUBITAK](#), the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey. Three researchers won the Science Award and two – including Sekercioglu – won the Special Award, which is equivalent to the Science Award but for scientists who are from Turkey but working abroad.

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Today's Zaman – News Website

2nd November 2014

http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_turkeys-obsession-with-development-forces-migration-reduces-water_363308.html

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November 25, 2015, Wednesday

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Turkey's obsession with development forces migration, reduces water



Çağan Şekercioğlu -- a biologist, ecologist and environmental scientist -- spoke with Today's Zaman.

With Turkey shaken once again by yet another mining disaster, this week's guest for Monday Talk was not surprised. He says Turkey's “obsession with development” is threatening both humans and the environment.

“Ancient forests, endemic-rich Mediterranean scrubland, grasslands, coastal areas, marshes and rivers are disappearing, while overgrazing and rampant erosion degrade steppes and rangelands. The current ‘obsession with development,’ particularly regarding water use, threatens to eliminate much of what remains, while forcing large-scale migration from rural areas to the cities,” said Çağan Şekercioğlu, a biologist, ecologist and environmental scientist.

Eighteen miners have been trapped since last Monday in a flooded coal mine outside the town of Ermenek in Karaman province, about 110 kilometers (70 miles) north of Turkey's Mediterranean coastline.

A report by Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA) had warned that the basin was not appropriate for mining activities and that continuing to mine at the site would eventually cause flooding and potential deaths.

On May 13, Turkey was shocked by the explosion and blaze at a Soma coal mine in Manisa province. A fire that started in the mine rapidly depleted oxygen in the shaft, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of miners due to carbon monoxide poisoning. The main cause of the Soma mine disaster, according to official reports, was negligence. There was no refuge chamber in the mine and the mine operator did not provide workers with functioning gas masks.

Turkey has enjoyed an average of 6 percent growth since 2008 and the main engine behind this is its rampant construction sector, which damages forest land and water resources.

Answering our questions on a range of issues, from Turkey's endangered bird species to drying lakes and rivers, Şekercioğlu elaborated on the issues.

Congratulations on your award from the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK).

Thank you. It is an enormous honor to be the first biologist, ecologist and environmental scientist to receive the TÜBİTAK Special Award, which is Turkey's most important scientific award, along with its equivalent, the Science Award. I am only the second person to receive this award in the field of natural sciences because most of Turkey's scientists who work abroad are in the fields of engineering, health sciences, social sciences and the humanities. I hope this award inspires young students to study biology, ecology, zoology, ornithology, conservation biology and environmental sciences, which are especially important in this century of climate change and other environmental crises.

Your lab focuses on threatened biodiversity and ecosystems, the causes and consequences of bird extinctions. Since you started this work, how much change have you observed regarding threats to biodiversity and ecosystems?

Sadly, things keep getting worse. For example, with Professor Stuart Pimm and other colleagues, we published a paper in 2006 estimating that bird extinctions in the 20th century were 100 times higher than the natural background rate of extinction. However, a paper published by Professor Pimm and others this May estimates that current rates of extinction are 1,000 times higher than the natural background rate of extinction. I witness constant environmental destruction lately. In June 2012, deputy Sinan Oğan, who represents Iğdır's Tuzluca district, asked Minister of Forestry and Water Affairs Veysel Eroğlu in Parliament to protect the Aras River Bird Paradise. In response, Minister Eroğlu publicly said "It is our moral obligation to save this bird paradise." In 2005, I discovered the Aras River Bird Paradise on the Kars-Iğdır border. With my team and colleagues, we documented 252 species in eight years and 40 percent of Turkey's 802 land vertebrate animals. This is eastern Turkey's richest bird paradise, but is now threatened by

a dam and hydropower plant. With our www.savearas.org campaign, we collected 18,000 signatures and the Ministry of Forestry and Environment officially wrote to me that the Aras River Bird Paradise deserves nature conservation area status. However, the same ministry is planning to destroy it with the Tuzluca Dam. If the same ministry, through the State Waterworks Authority (DSİ), destroys it with the Tuzluca Dam, not only will it be hypocritical, but they will contradict their own decision, break their own wetland law and Minister Eroğlu will break the public promise he made to the nation in Parliament.

'Lake Kuyucuk finally dried up'

Is a similar type of study being done in Turkey?

With my colleagues, last year we did the first study of this kind in Turkey and published in open access format. This is the first time in Turkey the effects of climate change on the future distribution of a group of animals has been modeled. We used citizen science data collected by Turkey's birdwatchers and our article was covered by The New York Times. We showed that some bird species in Turkey will increase their distribution by more than 10 times, whereas others will decrease more than 90 percent. So there will be big changes. But because we had only birdwatcher data and there is no government support for bird monitoring projects, we could only estimate climate change effects on 29 of 474 bird species known in Turkey. If our government had such a project, we could predict which bird species and habitats will be especially vulnerable and take precautions accordingly. We could design protected areas so that we could also protect future locations where birds would move; and because there are excellent indicator species, by protecting birds, we would also protect their habitats and other biodiversity. However, there is no government project to do this in Turkey, even though the EU Bird Directive requires governments to keep track of their bird populations. In the US, the national Bird Banding Laboratory is a government-funded division of the Department of the Interior and 26 people work there. They send all bird bands for free. In Turkey, there is no such department and we even have to buy our own bird bands. These simple bands cannot be produced in Turkey and we have to get them from Poland. Sometimes we wait for more than a year and it hurts our research.

You were doing a study at Lake Kuyucuk Lake near Kars in northeastern Turkey, where the lake is a globally designated important bird and biodiversity area. You were counting birds on the lake, especially during fall migration. How is your work going there? Has it been completed?

Well, we had many successes there, but in conservation, you can never declare victory, because there are always threats. We had the area protected as eastern Turkey's first Ramsar [Convention] wetland, built Turkey's first bird nesting island and had it chosen as eastern Turkey's first European Destination for Excellence (EDEN). We wrote a proposal for a project to build a visitor's center and guesthouse in Kuyucuk village. The government funded it with TL 460,000 and Kuyucuk now has two guesthouses and 16 beds for tourists. There have been various festivals, the government built a new sewage system this summer and will cover the muddy village road with cobblestones. However, villagers continued to use the lake's water indirectly through wells and by using the main

spring that feeds the lake. The lake level fell from 13 meters in 1997 to one meter this spring. We warned the officials and villagers for many years but nothing was done, so after a hot and dry summer, Lake Kuyucuk finally dried up last month. While people were campaigning to save Lake Burdur [from drying up] decades from now, Lake Kuyucuk had already dried up; I was walking on the dry lake bed of Kuyucuk the same week people were doing the “water fast” at Lake Burdur. I am devastated. Where I counted over 40,000 birds and 20,000 ruddy shelduck in September 2004 dried out this summer and there were only a few hundred birds and 17 ruddy shelduck in September 2014. Even with September rains, there were only five hectares of water instead of 216 hectares. We had an emergency meeting and are trying to find a way to save the lake.

‘Natural areas converted into cash to benefit only few’

You have some alarming reports, like ‘Turkey's globally important biodiversity in crisis’ and ‘Turkey's rich natural heritage under assault.’ Would you elaborate on your concerns regarding each issue?

The first is an article in the peer-reviewed journal *Biological Conservation* and the other is in the peer-reviewed journal *Science*. After these articles were published in 2011, Turkey was ranked 106 out of 131 countries in Yale University's 2012 Environmental Performance Index, and was ranked 120 in Biodiversity and Habitat Conservation. The *Science* article is a summary focusing on all the environmental laws that have been changed in the last five years to make it easier to destroy natural areas through mining, construction and other building projects. Right now, there are no truly protected areas left in Turkey. If there is enough interest, one can begin construction in any protected area. If there is a law, it can be changed, and even in many cases where the courts decide to protect the environment, construction often goes ahead and nobody is able to stop it. Turkey's nearly 80 million citizens are losing our nature and globally important biodiversity so that our natural areas can be converted into cash for the benefit of few people. Turkey is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world, especially in the temperate zone. Turkey is the only country in the world that is almost entirely covered by three global biodiversity hotspots -- Caucasus, Irano-Anatolian and Mediterranean. However, Turkey's biodiversity is facing severe and growing threats, especially from government and business interests. The greatest threats to biodiversity have occurred since 1950, particularly in the past decade. Old-growth forests, endemic-rich Mediterranean maquis, grasslands, coastal areas, wetlands and rivers are disappearing, while overgrazing and rampant erosion degrade steppes and rangelands. The current ‘obsession with development,’ particularly regarding water use, threatens to eliminate much of what remains, while forcing large-scale migration from rural areas to the cities. According to current plans, by 2023, Turkey's rivers and streams will be dammed with almost 4000 dams, diversions and hydroelectric power plants for power, irrigation and drinking water. Unchecked urbanization, dam construction, draining of wetlands, poaching and excessive irrigation are the most widespread threats to biodiversity.

‘Building dams won't solve our energy problem’

Local communities in various parts of Turkey have been protesting against building of small dams on their rivers, and some of them have won their cases in courts. How do you evaluate this type of resistance against construction of dams? And how do you see the government's plans to build, small and big, hundreds of dams on Turkey's rivers?

It is very important that local people understand the critical value of water for their future and livelihoods. Many of these communities are rural, farming communities. Water is life. Once you lose your water and a corporation owns your water, you are finished, especially if you live in a rural area where your life depends on agriculture and livestock. Companies often trick people by promising them big sums of money, but people end up getting much less than they expect, losing their homes and living in poverty in cities. When we talked to people in Kars who had lost their villages to dams, most of them regretted their decision. When farmers who know how to live off the land lose their lands and homes, they use up the compensation money in a few years. After that, they have nothing left and many of them live in the slums of big cities. Officials try to justify dams by saying Turkey needs them for energy independence, but that's not true. Not only can we not have energy independence even if we built dams on all waters, but the government must emphasize solar power if it sincerely wants energy independence. Currently, about 24 percent of Turkey's energy comes from hydropower, but solar panels on only 12.5 percent of Urfa's non-agricultural land could produce 25 percent of Turkey's energy. According to a scientific paper by Professor Kamil Kaygusuz, the percentage of our energy coming from hydropower will drop to 20 percent by 2020, despite all these dams, because our energy consumption is growing too rapidly.

So are you saying we will destroy all our rivers and streams and it won't make a difference for our energy independence?

Building dams won't solve our energy problem. If Turkey truly wants energy independence, we need to focus on solar, wind, geothermal and other sustainable energy resources. Germany right now is obtaining about 30 percent of its energy from these sources and it has changed the entire [field of] energy economics. China is making a massive push toward solar and wind. The US built the world's biggest solar power plant in Ivanpah, California, last year; it can produce 396 megawatts of energy. For example, even if Aras River Bird Paradise is destroyed by Tuzluca Dam, this dam will only produce 20 megawatts of energy. However, Iğdır receives a lot of solar energy and has large, empty plains, where Turkey should be building large solar power plants. Urfa has started such an initiative. Turkey's solar energy economic potential is 2.5 times higher than hydropower, but currently solar panels produce less than 1 percent of the energy that comes from hydropower in Turkey. I do not understand why Turkey is wasting its solar and wind energy potential while destroying its rivers with dams and destroying the atmosphere with fossil fuels. I think the reason why is narrow-minded financial interests and the influence of a small minority.



Doğanın, Bilimin ve Geleceğin İzinde... Çağan Şekercioğlu

Henüz 40 yaşına bile basmadı ama o, dünyadaki “22 Risk Alan Kâşif”ten biri; Türkiye’nin ilk “Yaban Hayat Koridoru” projesini başlatan bir ekolog, ülkenin ilk National Geographic yaban hayatı belgeseli “Bozayının İzinde: Sarıkamış”ı çeken bir belgeselci, Türkiye’de ilk kuş halkalama istasyonunu kuran bir ornitolog, İngiltere’nin Çevre Nobeli olarak bilinen Whitley Gold’u Prenses Anne’in elinden iki kez alan ilk bilim insanı, TÜBİTAK Özel Ödülü’ne layık görülen en genç kişi ve ilk biyolog. Dahasını yazmaya kalksak liste uzayıp gidecek; en iyisi mi EKOIQ’ya verdiği röportaj ile daha da yakından tanıyalım Çağan Hakkı Şekercioğlu’nu... Doğanın, Bilimin ve Geleceğin İzinde...



Klasik bir soruyla başlayacağım ancak hepimizin merak ettiği bir konu var. Ülkemizde yakın geçmişe kadar kuş bilimi ve gözlemciliğinin bir meslek olduğunu dahi bilmiyorduk ya da ornitologların neler yaptığını... Çalışmalarınız sayesinde hem sizi hem de neler yaptığınızı çok daha iyi anlamış olduk. Çağan Şekercioğlu’nun kariyerine ve başarılarına bu alanda yön veren tecrübelerin ne olduğunu ve bunun

nasıl geliştiğini merak ediyoruz, bizimle paylaşır mısınız?

4 yaşından beri, büyüdüğüm Ataköy’de hayvanların peşinde koştum, böcek koleksiyonu yaptım. 14 yaşında İstanbul’da kuş gözlemeye başladım. 18 yaşında bursla başladığım Harvard Üniversitesi’nde entomoloji ve ornitoloji koleksiyonlarında çalıştım. Lisans tezimi Uganda kuşları üzerine yapmaya karar verdim ve tek başıma 20 yaşında üç ay Uganda ormanlarında kaldım. Kendim tasarladığım ve 4 ayrı araştırma fonundan destek aldığım lisans tezi projem, 15 yaşından beri atıf yaptığım Prof. Paul Ehrlich’i etkiledi ve beni o sene öğrenci almayacak olmasına rağmen özel bursla Stanford’da doktora kabul etti. Doktoram esnasında, dünyanın en kapsamlı “Tropik Kuş Radyo Takip Projesi”ni gerçekleştirdim ve tüm dünya kuş türlerini kapsayan en büyük kuş ekolojisi veri tabanını oluşturdum.

Bir röportajınızda Doğu Anadolu’da yürüttüğünüz kelebek araştırma gezisinin, sizin için bir dönüm noktası olduğunu belirtmişsiniz. Sizin için bu dönüm noktası neleri tetikledi, yaşamıyla ilgili neleri değiştirdi?

Doğu Anadolu bölgesinin araştırılmamış, el değmemiş olduğunu zaten biliyordum. 2001 yılında Harvard’daki hocamın ricasıyla yürüttüğüm kelebek araştırma gezisiyle bunu daha iyi anladım. Üç haftada yeni 8 kelebek türü keşfettik, birine benim ismim verildi. Ama kelebeklerin olması gereken yerlerin yarısında bitki örtüsü aşırı otlatmayla yok edilmişti. Belki bazı kelebek türleri keşfedilemeden yok olmuştu. Bu gezi, bana Doğu Anadolu’nun keşfedilmemiş doğal zenginliğinin ne kadar tehlikede olduğunu gösterdi ve uzun süreli olarak geri dönmeye karar verdim. Bu araştırma gezisinden sonra tekrar Doğu Anadolu’ya geldim ve bir araştırma gezisi daha yaptım. Ve gördüm ki Doğu Anadolu, basit önlemler ile var olan doğal zenginlik ve çeşitliliğini koruyacak nadir bir bölge. Bunun için 2005 yılında Doğu Anadolu’daki “ilk kuş halkalama çalışması”nı Kars’ta gerçekleştirdim ve 2006 yılında Doğu Anadolu’daki “ilk kuş halkalama istasyonu”nu Aras Nehri Kuş Cenneti’nde kurdum. 2007 yılında ise halen başkanlığını yürüttüğüm KuzeyDoğa



Derneği’ni kurdum.

Temel ekolojik sorunlara yönelik koruma tabanlı ya da katılımcı bir ekonomik sistem mümkün mü? Vaktinin çoğunu doğada geçiren bir bilim insanı, bize mutluluk ekonomisi konusunda ne tür değerlendirmelerde bulunabilir?

Araştırmalar, bir ülkenin ortalama gelirinin 1.5 misline kadar kazanmanın mutluluğu

artırdığını, bundan sonrasının ise böyle bir etkisinin olmadığını gösteriyor. İnsanlar yiyecek, barınma, eğitim gibi temel ihtiyaçlarını karşıladıktan sonra ellerinde kalan parayla temel olmayan ihtiyaçlarını karşılıyorlar. Yani ülkemizde ayda yaklaşık 3000 TL. Bunun üzerinde gereksiz tüketim başlıyor. Örneğin çalışan telefonları yerine 3000 TL verip en son modeli almak gibi. Bu da sonu bitmeyen bir yarış getirdiği için hem maddi sıkıntı yaratıyor hem de mutsuzluk. Diğer araştırmalar, insanların alışverişten değil, gönüllülük, seyahat gibi tecrübelerden mutlu olduğunu gösteriyor. Başka araştırmalar ise doğadan, yeşilden mahrum olan insanların mutsuz olduğunu ortaya koyuyor. Dünyanın büyük metropollerinde en az yeşil alan %1.5 ile İstanbul’da, biz de hâlâ AVM yapmaya çalışıyoruz bu alanlara. Halbuki bu oran, Singapur’da %47, Londra’da %38. Türkiye doğayı yok etmeye ve sınırsız açgözlülüğe tüketmeye yönelik yaşamaya devam edersek, ülke olarak hiçbir zaman mutlu olamayacağız, aşırı tüketimle dolu, betonla kaplı hayatımızda giderek artan öfkemizle bizi karanlık bir gelecek bekliyor.

Çağan Şekercioğlu’nun ya da KuzeyDoğa Derneği’nin çalışmalarını bu anlamda toplumda bir koruma bilinci oluşturma değil, içgüdüsel olarak bir araya gelmiş bir grup kahramanın doğayı koruma çabaları olarak değerlendiriyorum. Sizin bu konudaki net duruşunuz nedir?



Aslında her ikisi de benim için geçerli, ikisinin de olması gerekli. Toplumda koruma bilinci olursa doğaya verilen zarar azaltmak için güç birliği sağlanmış olur, diğer yandan da içgüdüsel olarak bu akıma destek verenler bilinci grupların doğru yönlendirilmesi için gerekli. KuzeyDoğa Derneği'nin amaçları arasında topluma; doğa koruma, doğanın varlığının önemi anlatmak ve doğa koruma çalışmalarını yapacak bilim insanlarının yetiştirilmesi var. İşte bu noktada içgüdüsel

olarak doğayı korumaya çalışanlar, belki de ileride doğa korumacı birer bilim insanı olacaktır. Ben bu yüzden ikisini de çok önemsiyorum.

Kuşların sayılarındaki artış ve azalmaların, çevre sağlığının göstergeleri olduğu ifade ediliyor. Son veriler neyi gösteriyor bizlere?

Türkiye'nin küresel iklim değişikliğine katkısı giderek artıyor. Yüksek miktarda kömür ve doğalgaz kullanmasından dolayı hızla yükselen sera gazı emisyonu, 1990'dan bu yana yaklaşık 2,5 kat arttı. Bunu azaltmak için ülkemizin güneş, rüzgâr ve jeotermal gibi alternatif, doğa dostu enerji kaynaklarına acilen ağırlık vermesi şart. Türkiye'de 29 kuş türünün, küresel iklim değişikliğiyle ortaya çıkan yeni şartlara nasıl tepki vereceğine ilişkin yaptığımız bilimsel analizde, bazı türlerin 10 kat azalacağı, bazılarının 10 kat artacağını gösterdik. Yani büyük değişiklikler oluyor.

Önümüzdeki 50 yıl içinde “Çam Baştankarası” (*Parus ater*) ve “Bıyıklı Ötleğen” (*Sylvia cantillans*) gibi hassas kuş türlerinin dağılım alanlarında %90'lara varan ciddi azalmalar öngörülürken, “Arap Bülbülü” (*Pycnonotus xanthopygos*) ve “Maskeli Örümcek Kuşu” (*Lanius nubicus*) gibi türlerde 10 kata ulaşan artışlar bekleniyor. Beni en çok heyecandıran projelerinizden biri de Türkiye'nin ilk National Geographic yaban hayatı belgeseli “Bozayının İzinde: Sarıkamış”... Bilmeyen ve izlemeyenler için belgesel hakkında kısaca bilgi verir misiniz?

“Bozayının İzinde: Sarıkamış” doğal yaşam belgeselinde, biri Türkiye'nin en büyüğü olmak üzere toplam 11 bozayı görev aldı. Çekimleri Kars'ın Sarıkamış ormanlarında tamamlanan belgesel, Nat Geo sayesinde Türkiye'nin yanı sıra dünyada 140 ülkede, yaklaşık 140 milyon kişiye ulaşarak Sarıkamış'taki yaban hayatını bozayıların gözünden aktaracak. Türkiye'de bozayılar konusunda yapılmış en kapsamlı araştırma çalışmasının belgeselleştirilmesi sayesinde, ülkemizin en büyük memeli kara hayvanı olan bozayılarının ekolojilerine, daha etkin korunmalarına ve insan- yaban hayat çatışmasının azaltılmasına ilişkin önemli bilgilere ulaşıldı.

National Geographic Channel Türkiye tarafından çekilen belgesel, sunduğum veriler ışığında projelendirilen Türkiye'nin ilk "Yaban Hayat Koridoru" projesi, Orman ve Su İşleri Bakanlığı'nın desteğini aldı. Bakanlık tarafından Sarıkamış ve Kafkas ormanları arasına 162 kilometre uzunluğunda ve 28 bin 542 hektar bü- yüklüğünde yeni bir muhafaza ormanı oluşturmak için çalışmalara başlandı. Türkiye'nin ilk, dünyanın ise sayılı yaban hayatı koridorlarından biri olan bu yeni orman ile vahşi hayvanlar için güvenli bir göç yolu için ilk adımlar atıldı.

"Yokolan Afrika" adlı elektronik kitabınıza da son aylarda tartıştığımız müşterekler çerçevesinde parantez açarak ayrı bir yer vermek istiyorum. Kitaptan biraz bahseder misiniz?

Yapı Kredi sponsorluğunda hazırladığım bu kitap, maalesef kitapta evrimden bahsetmemden dolayı Yapı Kredi Yayınları editörü tarafından iptal edildi. Doktoramın ilk senesini bu kitabı yazmaya ayırdım ve doktoram bir yıl uzadı. Kitabın girişinde açıkladığım evrim kavramını çıkarmamı istediler ama biyolojinin temeli olduğu için kabul etmedim. Kitap da iptal edildi!

Afrika'nın tüm temel ekosistemlerini araştırdığım toplam altı ayın sonunda, halen kara kıtanın muhteşem doğasına tanık olmanın eşsiz mutluluğu ile bu doğanın çoğunun yok olmak üzere olmasının ve kıtanın insanların karşı karşıya olduğu sayısız çevre sorununun verdiği üzüntü arasında bocalıyorum. Bir Uganda dağ gorilinin kahverengi gözlerinde geçmişimizi görmenin tüyler ürpertici heyecanı, bu muhteşem akrabalarımızın son sığınağı olan dağ ormanlarının günbegün fakir Afrikalılar tarafından yok edildiği düşüncesiyle çaresizliğe yol açıyor.

Madagaskar açıklarında, su altında etrafımı saran, akla gelen her rengi sergileyen balıkların çeşitliliğiyle kendimden geçmem, biraz sonra parçalanmış mercanların cesetlerini görmemle bitkinliğe dönüşüyor.

Kuzey Kenya'nın kurak bozkırlarındaki beklenmeyen canlı çeşitliğinin verdiği ümit duygusu, buranın bir deri bir kemik, yüzlerinde sayısız sineğin cirit attığı, fakir yerlileriyle tanışmamla yerini depresyona bırakıyor.

Belki de en can sıkıcısı, bu talihsiz kıtanın her derdine şahit olduğumda, Türkiye'deki benzer bir sorunun aklıma gelmesi "Biz de mi dönüşü olmayan, yok oluşa giden bir yoldayız?" sorusunun sürekli uykularımı kaçırması...



GPS Verici ve Crittercam Birlikte Kullanıldı Türkiye'nin ilk National Geographic yaban hayatı belgeseli “Bozayının İzinde: Sarıkamış”, aynı zamanda GPS verici ve Crittercam'den oluşan iki ayrı ünitenin bir tasma üzerinde birleştirilmesi gibi bir ilke de imza attı. Türkiye'de ilk kez kullanılan Crittercam cihazı, vahşi hayvanlar için tasarlanmış bir araştırma aracı. Dijital video kaydedici üstünde bir mini kamera lensi var. Videolar, ufak bir hafıza kartına kaydediliyor ve mikro işlemci kamerayı hayvana takılıyken istenen şekilde çalıştırmayı sağlıyor. İki adet lityum pil güç ve VHF yerini belli etmek için sinyal gönderiyor. Bu parçaların tamamı, su geçirmeyen ve darbelere dayanıklı, dış hasarı önleyici bir malzemeyle kaplı. GPS tasması ise hayvanın hızı, yeri, vücut sıcaklığı ve nabızı hakkında bilgi toplayabiliyor.

Tasmanın üst kısmında sıcaklık, hareket, yaşam ve kış uykusu sensörlerinin yanı sıra belli zaman aralıklarıyla hayvanın koordinatlarını cep telefonu mesajı olarak ileten GSM modülü de var. Büyük pil ünitesinin ömrü iki yıl kadar dayanabiliyor. Zamanı geldiğinde, otomatik açılma mekanizması tasmanın düşmesini sağlıyor.

Whitley Gold'u İki Kez Almaya Hak Kazandı

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Hali hazırda birçok türün azalmakta olan popülasyonu için büyük bir kaygı ve bu negatif trendi durdurmak için gösterilen birçok çaba mevcut. Ancak ironik bir biçimde, doğal hayat için, özellikle de kuşlar ve memeliler için, kayda değer en büyük tehditlerden biri aynı zamanda toplum tarafından en çok gözardı edilenler arasında. Ayrıca, türlerin azalması konusunda en çok

endişe duyan kişilerin büyük bir kısmı bu kritik probleme kendileri katkıda bulunmakta. Birçok hayvan popülasyonunun evrensel olarak azalmasında etkili bazı sebeplerin aksine, bu problemin faileri ne endüstriyel aktörler ne de uzağımızdalar. Aslına bakarsanız, onlardan birini evinizde ağırlıyor olabilirsiniz. Bu gayet ciddi tehlike evcil kedilerdir ve artık herkesin milyonlarca kedinin avladığı için yaban hayatı kaybının önemini kavrayıp bu duruma bir son vermesinin zamanı geldi.

Evcil, sahipli kedilerin aksine, sokak kedileri bazı ülkelerde doğal yaşam için kesin bir tehdit olarak kabul edilmiş ve popülasyonlarının kontrol altına alınması için oldukça fazla çaba gösterilmiştir. Sokak kedileri ya da insanlar tarafından doğaya bırakıldıktan sonra yabanileşmiş kediler, doğada az sayıda yaşayan gerçek yabani kedilerden çok daha fazla ve zararlıdır. Ne yazık ki sokak kedilerini kontrol etmek evcil kedileri kontrol etmekten çok daha zordur ve doğal hayat üzerinde olumsuz etkileri bulunur. Özellikle en tehlikeli yırtıcı olarak kabul edildikleri birçok adada, etki bakımından hemen ardından gelen fareler ile birlikte hayvan popülasyonlarında değişmelere sebep olmaktadır. Özellikle az sayıda yerli memeli yırtıcının bulunduğu (ve pek az yırtıcının kediler kadar etkin olabildiği) okyanus adalarında çoğu kuş ve memeli de yırtıcıdan korkma içgüdüleri bulunmaz ve yaygın olarak av olurlar. Örneğin, Yeni Zelanda'ya özgün bir ötücü kuş sınıfında bulunan dört türden biri olan Stephen Adası Çit Kuşu (*Xenicus lyalli*) popülasyonunun tamamı, adanın deniz feneri bekçisine ait tek bir kedi tarafından yok edilmiştir. Bir biyolog kedinin bekçiye getirdiği ölü kuşlardan birinin yeni bir tür olduğunu belirlediğinde artık kuşlar için çok geç olmuş, soyları tükenmişti. Sokak kedileri de Yeni Zelanda açıklarında yaşayan en az sekiz başka kuş türünün tükenmesine belirgin olarak katkıda bulundu. Diğer pek çok adada da durum oldukça benzer. Hint Okyanusu'nun subantarktik bölgesindeki Marion Adası'nda, tek bir kedinin her yıl ikiyüzden fazla deniz kuşunu öldürdüğü, toplamda yılda 600 bin kuşun öldüğü (mil-kare başına 15 bin) tahmin edilirken, Hint Okyanusu'nun güneyindeki Kergeuelen Adası'nda Pascal, kedilerin her yıl 1.2 milyon kuş ölümünden sorumlu olduğunu tahmin ediyordu. Sokak kedilerinin sebep olduğu zarar adalarla sınırlı

değildir. Örneğin Avustralya’da, her bir sokak kedisi yılda bin kadar yabancı hayvanı öldürmektedir. Avustralya’nın keseli hayvan ve kuş faunasını mahvetmekte olan 12 milyon civarı yabancı kedi bulunuyor. Sokak kedilerinin Avustralya’da yaşamasına engel olunması için büyük bir kampanya yürütülüyorsa da, çok iyi saklanabilmeleri tamamen ortadan kaldırılmalarını neredeyse imkansız kılıyor. Sokak kedileri diğer kıtalarda da yaşıyor ve Kuzey Amerika’da oldukça yaygın olarak bulunuyorlar. Örnek verecek olursak, yapılan bir çalışma, Stanford Üniversitesi’nin küçük kampüsünde çok sayıda omurgalı türü öldürmekte olan 2 bin yabancı kedinin yaşamakta olduğunu göstermiştir. Yaygın varlıklarına bir de kedilerin diğer yırtıcı memeli türlerine kıyasla oldukça doğurgan oldukları gerçeğini eklediğimizde (Büyük Britanya’da bir kedi 10 yıllık süre boyunca 120 yavru dünyaya getirdi), bu dünyanın her tarafında kırsal kesimlerde dolaşan, küçük memeli ve kuş popülasyonlarını tüketen (bunların yanında küçük miktarlarda sürüngen, amfibik canlı ve balık da yerler) milyonlarca etkin yırtıcı demektir. Ne yazık ki dünyanın birçok kısmında bulunan sokak kedisi nüfusu kesin olarak bilinmiyor ve bunların kontrol altına alınmaları ya da yerel doğal yaşam alanlarından uzaklaştırılmaları son derece zor.

Ne var ki, en az bunun kadar önemli bir konu olan evcil kedi salgını büyük ölçüde göz ardı ediliyor. Her ne kadar evcil bir kedi ortalama olarak bir sokak kedisine kıyasla daha az miktarda hayvan avlıyor olsa da, evcil kediler de küçük kuşlar ve memelileri avlar ve yoğun nüfusları dolayısıyla omurgalı popülasyonları üzerinde muazzam bir etkiye sebep olurlar. Evcil kedilerin küçük kuş ve memelileri avlamasının yarattığı etki üzerine yapılan az sayıdaki çalışmadan en bilinen olanı muhtemelen, bir İngiliz kasabasındaki 80 iyi beslenen kediden 78’i üzerinde çalışmış olan Churcher ve Lawton’ındır (1987). Ortalama bir ev kedisi evde bol miktarda yiyeceği olduğu halde her yıl 14 adet av getirdi ve bu bulgu diğer çalışmalarla da teyid edilmiştir (daha sonra Churcher ve Lawton, Dursetli bir kedi sahibinin gururla kedisinin yılda 400’den fazla ayrı av getirdiğini söylediğini bildirdi). Kediler yakaladıkları her şeyi eve getirmezler. Illinois’de yapılan bir araştırmada George, iyi beslenen evcil kediler tarafından yakalanan avların ancak yarısı kadarının eve getirildiğini buldu. Bunu göz önüne aldığımızda, ortalama olarak her yıl tek bir evcil kedi tarafından yakalanan hayvan sayısı 30 kadardır. Bu sayı çiftliklerde ya da diğer kırsal alanlarda yaşayan ve kendi besinini kendi temin etmesi beklenen evcil kedileri kapsamamaktadır. Bu kedilerin yakaladığı av miktarı muhtemelen vahşi kedilerinkine yakındır.

Bu ortalama rakam birçok ülkede bulunan çok yüksek evcil kedi popülasyonlarıyla çarpıldığında problemin ne denli büyük olduğu açıkça görülüyor. Şu anda A.B.D.’de 70 milyon kadar evcil kedi bulunuyor ve bunların hepsinin yeteri kadar beslendiğini ve beslenme ihtiyacından ziyade eğlence için avlandıklarını varsaysanız bile, hesapladığınızda karşınıza şok edici bir sonuç çıkacaktır; her yıl av olarak yakalanan iki milyar adet üzerinde hayvan. Bu kedilerin bir kısmının dışarıya çıkmasına kesinlikle izin verilmediği ya da avlanmak için çok yaşlı oldukları doğru, ancak evcil kedi nüfusunun çeyreği hiç avlanmıyor olsa bile, her yıl öldürülen hayvan sayısı bir buçuk milyardan fazla olacaktır.

Not: Bu yazımı 1997’de yazdım. 2013’de saygın bilim dergisi Nature Communications’da yayınlanan bir makale, bu tahminimin de ötesinde bir rakam hesapladı. Sadece ABD’deki evcil ve sokak kedileri yılda 1.4 ila 3.7 milyar kuş ve 7 ila 21 milyar memeli öldürüyor:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/29/130129-pets-cats-killers-birds-animals-science/>

Bu miktarın büyük kısmını fare, serçeler ve sığırcıklar gibi bilinen ve sayıları çok olan türler teşkil ediyorsa da, kediler çok geniş bir av türleri yelpazesine sahiptir ve her yıl milyonlarca sayıda çok çeşitli, nadir ve bölgelere özgü hayvan (Black Rail, *Laterallus jamaicensis* gibi) kediler tarafından öldürülmektedir. Evcil kedilerin avcılığı üzerine yapılan araştırmalar, ortamın daha zengin olduğu kırsal bölgelerde daha ziyade küçük memelileri avladıklarına işaret ederken, banliyö ve şehirlerde avladıkları hayvanların çoğunun kuş olduğunu göstermiştir. Genele bakıldığında, her yıl yaklaşık 800 milyon kuşun öldürüldüğü A.B.D.’de, birçok küçük ötücü kuş türünün yaşamasına elverişli alanlarda banliyö yerleşimlerinin yaygın şekilde var olması sorunun boyutlarını artırıyor. Kediler birçok hayvanın doğrudan ölümüne sebep olmakla beraber, bölgedeki yabancı yırtıcı hayvanlarla da rekabet ediyor. 100 milyona yaklaşan bir toplam nüfuslarıyla kediler A.B.D.’de var olan tüm yabancı yırtıcılardan daha yaygındırlar ve yılanlar, gelincikler, vaşaklar ve yırtıcı kuşlar gibi diğer yırtıcı hayvanlar için av olabilecek mevcut hayvan sayısını da büyük ölçüde azaltırlar. Bunların yanında, birçok rehabilitasyon ve tedavi merkezinde tedavi gören kuşların çoğu kediler tarafından yaralanmıştır. Eğer kısıtlı imkanlara sahip bu gibi merkezler, imkanlarının çoğunu kediler tarafından yaralanan hayvanların bakımlarına harcamıyor olsaydı, bu yüzden bakımları yetersiz kaldığı için ölen diğer hayvanların bir kısmını da kurtarabilirlerdi. Ayrıca, evcil ve sokak kedileri, pnömoni, kuduz, kedi lösemisi, gençlik hastalığı, Herpes virüsü, yuvarlak kurt, kancalı kurt ve toksoplazmoz gibi vahşi hayvanlar, insanlar ve özellikle hassas olan çocuklar için öldürücü olabilecek hastalıklar taşıyabilirler. Ayrıca özgürce dolaşmasına izin verilen bir kedi, kedi hırsızlığına ve çakallar (ve sokak köpekleri) tarafından avlanmaya de açık olur. Banliyö bölgesine yakın bir alanda, bir çift çakalın yaşadığı inde yaklaşık 20 adet kedi tasması bulunmuştur. Satıldıkları araştırma laboratuvarlarını kedinin sokak kedisi olduğuna ikna etmek için çalınan ev kedileri aç bırakılmaktadır. Kediye bir arabanın çarpması, diğer kedilerle kavga etmesi ve kaybolması da olasıdır.

A.B.D gibi vahşi yaşamı koruma konusunda nispeten sıkı kanunları olan (örneğin, koruma altındaki bir kuş türünü – ve yerli türlerin çoğunu – ölmüş olsa bile gerekli izin alınmaksızın evinize götürmeniz yasaklanmıştır) ve vahşi yaşama ilgi duyan, çoğunluğunu kuş gözlemcileri ve kuş besleyenlerin oluşturduğu on milyonlarca insanın yaşadığı bir ülkede yerel vahşi yaşamın evcil kediler tarafından katledilmesine bu denli az tepki gösterilmesi ironiktir. SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) gibi, hayvanlar dünyasının evcil hayvanlar, laboratuvar hayvanları ve diğer tutsak hayvanlardan ibaret olduğunu düşünmeye meyilli toplulukların milyarlarca hayvanı avlayan sokak kedisi popülasyonunun kontrol altına alınmasını engellemenin yanı sıra, evcil kedilere yönelik kısıtlamaları protesto etmek için harcadıkları büyük çabaları görmek çok üzücüdür. Örneğin, genellikle SPCA tarafından desteklenen “yabancı kedi besleme” programlarından biri San Francisco’daki Golden Gate Park’da bulunan Kaliforniya Bildircinlerinin (*Callipepla californica*) tamamen yok olmasına büyük katkıda bulundu. Ekolojik ve bütüncül bir bakış açısı edinip, kedilerin kontrolsüz biçimde yayılmasına izin vermenin bazıları halihazırda tehdit altında olan yüzlerce türden milyarlarca hayvanın kaybıyla sonuçlanacağını farkına varılması gerekiyor. Ne yazık ki, bu kritik konuda kedi besleyenlerden tepki alma korkusu ve duygusu sağduyuyu bastırıyor ve vahşi yaşam için

en büyük tehditlerden biri olan sokak kedileri kamuoyu tarafından çok az tepki görüyor ve kontrol programları yeterince desteklenmiyor...

Bu probleme bir son verilmesi oldukça basit ve evcil kedilerin herhangi bir zarar görmesi de söz konusu değil. Yapılacak en önemli şey, eğer yerel vahşi hayatın var olduğu bir çevrede yaşıyorsanız kedilerinizin dışarı çıkmasına izin vermeyin. Eğer çok sayıda kuşu bir yerde barındıran ve kedileri çeken bir kuş yuvası varsa, bu özellikle önemlidir. Eğer kediniz dışarı çıkmak zorundaysa bir tasma ile çıkarılmalı ya da en azından yüksek ses çıkaran (aksesuar amaçlı küçük zillerden söz etmiyoruz) ve uzak mesafelerden duyulabilecek ziller takılmalıdır. Kedinizin birçok kedinin yapabildiği gibi zilleri kolayca çıkaramayacağından emin olun. Herhangi bir hayvanı kovalıyor ya da size getiriyorsa, onaylamadığınızı açıkça gösterin. Ayrıca, kedinizin kısırlaştırılmış olduğundan emin olmalısınız. Not: Artık kedilerin kuşları avlamasını %81 azaltan ucuz kedi önlükleri de var: <http://catgoods.com/>

Artık kedilerin kuşları avlamasını %81 azaltan ucuz kedi önlükleri de var. (Kaynak: www.journonews.com)

Bir kediniz yoksa bile vahşi yaşamın bu şekilde yok edilmesini engellemek için yapabileceğiniz birçok şey var. Etrafınızda ya da dünyanın başka bir yerinde sokak kedilerinin kontrol altına alınması, nüfusunun sınırlandırılması ya da uzaklaştırılması ile ilgili projeleri ve böyle programlar yürüten kuruluşları destekleyin. Eğer çevrenizde başıboş şekilde dolaşan bir kedi görürseniz sahibini bulun ya da yerel yetkilileri hayvanın sahibini bulmaları konusunda uyarın. Bahçenize kedi girmediğinden emin olun. Tabii ki, kedi besleyenlerin de bu önemleri almaları gereklidir.

Bu büyük yaban hayatı katliamının sebeplerinin çok da karmaşık ya da önlemesi zor olmadığı açık. Diğer birçok çevresel sorun gibi, bireylerin kolektif eylemlerinden ya da eylemde bulunmuyor oluşundan doğuyor ve önüne geçmenin yolu basitçe gerekenleri yapmak. Eğer kedinizin avlanmasına izin verirsiniz, sokak kedilerinin kontrol altına alınması için herhangi bir şey yapmazsanız, kusurlu politikalara karşı sesinizi yükseltmezseniz milyarlarca kuşun, memelinin ve diğer birçok hayvanın anlamsızca katledilmesine katkıda bulunmuş olacaksınız.

2014/15 MEDIA COVERAGE OF PREVIOUS WHITLEY AWARD WINNERS

<u>Deepak Apte</u>	400-401
<u>Rándall Arauz</u>	402-409
<u>Shivani Bhalla</u>	410-416
<u>Ir Budiono</u>	417-419
<u>Jenny Daltry</u>	420-425
<u>Pruthu Fernando</u>	426-427
<u>Melvin Gumal</u>	430-444
<u>Paula Kahumbu</u>	445-469
<u>MD Madhusudan</u>	470
<u>Rodrigo Medellin</u>	471-482
<u>Ernesto Ráez-Luna</u>	483-484
<u>Suprabha Seshan</u>	485-493
<u>Eugene Simonov</u>	494-498
<u>Stoycho Stoychev</u>	499-500
<u>Amanda Vincent</u>	501
<u>Jean Wiener</u>	502-509

Deepak Apte

2008 Whitley Award Winner, 2013 Continuation Funding

Websites

The Hans India – News Website

2nd August 2015

<http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/2015-08-02/Dr-Deepak-Apte-is-the-new-Director-of-BNHS-167376>

THE
HANS  INDIA



HOME AP TELANGANA INDIA WORLD NRI BUSINESS SPORTS CRIME LIFESTYLE HANS VIDEOS EMPBANK

Dr Deepak Apte is the new Director of BNHS



Mumbai: Dr Deepak Apte has been appointed as the new Director of BNHS-India, which is one of the oldest NGOs in South Asia, engaged in the areas of wildlife research, conservation and nature education since 1883. The announcement was made yesterday by Mr Homi Khusrokhhan, President, BNHS, late in the evening. Dr Apte fills in the position left vacant after the retirement of the previous Director, Dr Asad R Rahmani.

Dr Deepak Apte, who has been working with BNHS since 1993, had an illustrious career till now. With MSc in Zoology and PhD in Marine Ecology from University of Mumbai, Dr Apte has played many roles in BNHS and initiated various programmes in research, conservation action and advocacy. He established a full-fledged Marine Conservation Programme in BNHS, apart from various conservation initiatives in terrestrial habitats across India. Prior to becoming the Director, he was the Chief Operating Officer and has previously worked as a Principal Scientist.

Dr Apte will now be responsible for managing the overall working of BNHS, including its future course of action, based on the in-house Strategic Initiatives. Commenting on the occasion, he said, “The job offers arduous challenge of not only strengthening the research and conservation action by BNHS, but also of maintaining the dignity and stature of the 132-year young organization. We aim to continue and expand the research and conservation opportunity at BNHS and to see the Hornbill House premises abuzz with the activity of scientists, conservationists and young researchers”.

Dr Rahmani served as the Director from 1997 and retired on 31st July 2015. Congratulating the new Director, he said, “I am delighted that the management and the interview panel have selected Dr Deepak Apte as the new Director of BNHS. He is a very fine marine biologist and a good administrator. I am sure he will continue the tradition of selfless service to the society and to the cause of nature conservation. I wish him success and looking forward to working with him”.

Dr Apte’s achievements till date

Dr Apte has worked on and completed nearly 30 field research and conservation programmes, which include coastal and inter-tidal areas, marine biodiversity, mangroves, tiger habitat, urban forests, EIA studies and green governance across India including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Lakshadweep and Andaman-Nicobar. He has published 45 peer reviewed publications and four books including ‘Sea Shells of India’ and ‘Field Guide to the Marine Life of India’.

Dr Apte has been honoured with several fellowships and awards from Department of Ocean Development, Govt of India; Whitley Fund for Nature, UK; AIT, Thailand; LEAD India and Smithsonian Institute and Duke University, USA. He is designated as PhD guide for Zoology, University of Mumbai. He has been the member of various committees including CBD NGO Alliance (COP-11) and Maharashtra State Biodiversity Board. He has been the editor of Defending Wild India and Green Governance newsletters. He has developed seven documentaries and coordinated distance learning courses in Ornithology and Marine Biodiversity Conservation. He has also contributed to several technical papers globally; has attended numerous seminars, training programmes and conferences and delivered several guest lectures.

-Atul Sathe, Assistant Director, Education & Communication, BNHS-India

Rándall Arauz

2004 Whitley Gold Award Winner, 2006, 2008, 2010 & 2013 Continuation Funding

Websites

La Nacion – News Website
23rd November 2014

http://www.nacion.com/sucesos/seguridad/Senasa-frena-exportacion-aletas-tiburon_0_1453054733.html

LA NACIÓN SUCESOS

Mapa del sitio Suscríbese Q

NACIONAL DEPORTES SUCESOS TECNOLOGÍA ECONOMÍA ENTRETENIMIENTO VIVIR MUNDO DATA OPINIÓN MÁS

→ ACCIDENTES CRÍMENES Y ASALTOS SEGURIDAD PODER JUDICIAL JUICIOS NARCOTRÁFICO DESASTRES

Senasa frena exportación de aletas de tiburón



Las autoridades únicamente pudieron abrir tres sacos con aletas. Cada uno de ellos contenía 200 piezas y pesaba 40 kilos. | PRETOMA PARA LN

El Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Animal (Senasa) frenó la exportación de una tonelada de aletas de tiburón al encontrar especies cuyo comercio es prohibido en Costa Rica.

El hallazgo fue hecho entre el miércoles y jueves pasados, cuando los funcionarios revisaron el cargamento que se encontraba en un almacén en el aeropuerto Juan Santamaría, Alajuela, listo para ser enviado hasta Hong Kong.

Rándall Arauz, del Programa Restauración de Tortugas Marinas (Pretoma), quien también participó en el operativo, dijo que solo pudieron revisar tres sacos de los 40 que componían el cargamento, pues la empresa exportadora no había completado la documentación para sacar el producto del país.

“Digamos que lamentablemente nos adelantamos con el operativo, pues la compañía que iba a transportar el producto aún no había presentado la declaración de productos con el contenido de los sacos; entonces no había delito”, dijo.

Arauz agregó que para evitar conflictos y mantener una buena relación con las empresas dedicadas al comercio de productos del mar, en conjunto con funcionarios del Senasa y del Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía (Minae), se llegó al acuerdo de devolver el producto a la empresa para que lo llevara a Puntarenas, y que esta semana de nuevo lo presente con toda la documentación correcta para que ellos puedan realizar la exportación.

Control. Rándall Arauz explicó que este hallazgo se produjo luego de que recibieron información confidencial sobre posibles anomalías con una exportación de un poco más de una tonelada de aletas de tiburón.

El especialista de Pretoma dijo que los tres sacos que se revisaron fueron tomados al azar. Preciso que uno de ellos tenía la palabra “blue” y contenía aletas de tiburón azul. En el segundo, con la palabra “treasure”, había tiburón zorro. El tercer saco era identificado con “pect 12-16”; este contenía 200 aletas de tiburón sedoso, seis de la especie martillo y cuatro de tiburón punta blanca oceánico.

La captura, retención, transporte, descarga y comercio de tiburón punta blanca oceánico



están prohibidos por la Comisión Interamericana de Atún Tropical (CIAT), y el comercio internacional del tiburón martillo está regulado por la Convención Para el Comercio de Especies Amenazadas (CITES). Ambos tratados son vinculantes para Costa Rica, señaló Arauz.

Maike Heidemeyer, una perita de Pretoma que participó del operativo, se mostró preocupada por este hecho, pues considera que deben existir controles en todos los eslabones de la cadena de comercio para garantizar el cumplimiento de las convenciones internacionales que buscan perpetuar la existencia de estas especies marinas amenazadas.

“Como ha quedado expuesto, en este momento no existen esos controles”, manifestó .

En un saco que tenía la palabra “pect 12-16” fueron encontradas seis aletas de la especie martillo y cuatro de punta blanca. | PRETOMA PARA LN

Las aletas de tiburón son un producto que tiene un alto precio en Hong Kong, lo cual ha generado que la pesca se intensifique.

En Costa Rica, para evitar esa pesca indiscriminada, la ley castiga con penas que van de seis meses a dos años de prisión a quien permita, ordene o autorice la descarga de aletas de tiburón sin el respectivo cuerpo o vástago.

Contra el aleteo de tiburones

El pasado miércoles 19, autoridades del Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Animal (Senasa), con la colaboración de la organización no gubernamental Programa de Restauración de Tortugas Marinas (Pretoma), asestaron un importante golpe a la exportación ilegal de aletas de tiburón. Al revisar tres de 40 sacos con el producto en un almacén del aeropuerto Juan Santamaría, destinados a Hong Kong, vía Miami, detectaron que parte del cargamento procedía de especies cuyo comercio está prohibido internacionalmente.

Durante la acción, lamentablemente, se produjo una falla de envergadura: al hacer la inspección, aún no había sido presentada la declaración con el contenido de los sacos. Por tal motivo, no se llegó a configurar un delito y el producto fue devuelto a la empresa de origen, en Puntarenas. De este modo, los responsables tendrán ahora posibilidades no solo de presentar la documentación correcta, sino, también, sacar de la carga las aletas de especies prohibidas y realizar la exportación del resto.

Tan serio error (queremos creer que solo fue eso), con su consecuente impunidad, genera preocupación. A ella se añade otra fuente de inquietud, mencionada por Maike Heidemeyer, una perita de Pretoma que participó en el operativo: si las aletas estuvieron a punto de ser embarcadas, la conclusión es que fallaron los mecanismos de supervisión previos. Estamos ante una muestra de que, a pesar de las convenciones y decisiones internacionales que protegen especies de tiburones y prohíben el aleteo, de la legislación nacional en la materia y de decretos destinados a mejorar los controles, aún estamos muy lejos de desplegar un instrumental de normas y acciones suficientemente robusto para frenar y penalizar severamente las violaciones que se cometan.

Esa práctica es sumamente cruel, depredadora y ambientalmente insostenible. Como la carne del tiburón es relativamente barata, pero sus aletas se cotizan a precios exorbitantes en algunos mercados asiáticos, lo más rentable es realizar pescas masivas, despojar al animal de esa parte, devolverlo mutilado al mar (lo cual garantiza su muerte) y transportar solo las piezas de alto valor.

Además de las prohibiciones y regulaciones internacionales, que nuestro país ha impulsado con vigor, la Ley de Pesca y Acuicultura, vigente desde abril del 2005, prohíbe el aleteo en Costa Rica. Fue un avance en relación con la legislación previa; sin embargo,

tiene enormes vacíos que la tornan, en parte, inoperante. El principal es que solo regula la pesca (la condiciona a que se capture el tiburón entero), pero no controla otras etapas del proceso, como el comercio, el etiquetado, la exportación y la importación. Además, no incluye adecuadas sanciones penales.

Tras varios años de inacción, durante la anterior Administración se emitieron dos importantes decretos, destinados a enmendar algunas de las debilidades. Uno obligó a descargar la pesca en muelles públicos, para mejorar los controles, el otro añadió a los requisitos para importar aletas la necesidad de una certificación, en que las autoridades aduaneras del país de origen hagan constar que esas partes se recibieron originalmente adheridas a los animales.

A pesar de esos avances parciales en normativa, los controles en el terreno son débiles; existen profesionales que se prestan para emitir certificaciones falsas, y el Instituto Costarricense de Pesca (Incopesca), como órgano rector, no tiene ni la fortaleza ni la voluntad de actuar como se debe.

Consideramos necesario, dentro del marco legal actual, hacer todo lo posible por combatir y sancionar el aleteo con el mayor rigor posible. Pero no basta con ello. Deben emprenderse otras dos iniciativas de mayor profundidad. Una es reformar la ley vigente, para actualizarla, adaptarla a los compromisos internacionales y cerrar los múltiples portillos existentes; otra es reformar Incopesca –incluyendo la composición de su directiva–, para que sea más imparcial, actúe estratégicamente, se convierta en un verdadero promotor de la buena pesca y se comprometa con frenar la ilegal, incluyendo el aleteo. Estamos ante responsabilidades ambientales, económicas, administrativas y legales, que no debemos eludir más.

Pretoma – NGO Website

5th February 2015

<http://www.pretoma.org/costa-rica-exported-411-kilos-of-hammerhead-shark-fins-last-december/>



Costa Rica exported 411 kilos of hammerhead shark fins last December

Last December 24, Costa Rica exported 411 kilos of hammerhead shark fins with a declared value of US\$52,857, under conditions that the Costa Rican organization PRETOMA describes as irregular and that violate the country's commitments as a Party of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).



Catch by longliners and the international commerce of its fins threaten the survival of hammerhead sharks.

Costa Rica played a major role during the last Conference of the Parties (CoP) of CITES in Bangkok, Thailand (March 2013), where it submitted a proposal with Honduras and

Brazil to list hammerhead sharks under Appendix II of the Convention. Such a listing would not ban international commerce of hammerhead shark fins, but would rather condition exports to the emission of a Non Detrimental Finding (NDF) on behalf of the exporting country which must scientifically guarantee that the allowed international commerce will not be detrimental to the populations in question, and that traceability mechanisms exist to guarantee abundance. The proposal was accepted, and an 18 month deadline was granted to the Parties for implementation (September 14, 2014). The December 24 export of fins did not meet these requirements for the following reasons:

- The country has not elaborated a NDF. Hammerhead shark products cannot be exported without a NDF.
- To overcome this hurdle, a “provisional” NDF was approved by the Costa Rican Fisheries Institute (INCOPECSA), the Ministry of Environment (MINAE) and the Council of Representatives of CITES Scientific Authorities (CRACCITES), in spite of the fact that CITES makes no such exceptions.
- The provisional NDF is nothing more than an INCOPECSA letter addressed to MINAE, void of technical foundation or bibliographic citations to sustain its subjective and capricious allegations. The provisional NDF requests an allowance to continue the unabated export of hammerhead shark fins, because few are caught anyway and no species export data exists, ignoring the reason why the species was listed under Appendix II in the first place.
- In spite of the provisional NDF’s technical deficiencies, the CRACCITES approved the exportation of the fins belonging to approximately 59 hammerhead sharks.
- Once the provisional NDF had been approved by the CRACCITES, MINAE proceeded to issue a CITES Permit for the export of 490 kilos of hammerhead shark fins. The amount of fins translates to approximately 490 sharks, almost ten times more than the quantity originally approved by the CRACCITES.
- No certificates were provided to guarantee that the 411 kilos of exported hammerhead shark fins were not obtained by “shark finning”, a requirement according to Regulation OSP-05-11 To Ban The Practice of Shark Finning in the Central American Integration System (SICA) Range Countries of the Organization of the Fishery and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA) and to the Constitutional Court (File 11-012-968-007-C). To support their claim that no shark finning had occurred, MINAE attached several Inspection and Landing Authorization Forms (FIADs) to the CITES permit which had been issued by INCOPECSA from May to November of 2014, which allegedly correspond to the exported fins. How can they claim that the shark fins exported last December 24 correspond to the fins landed up to 7 months before if no traceability system exists?

Fortunately, last January 15th the CRACCITES adopted a new Agreement, and rejected INCOPECSA’s request to extend the validity of the provisional DNP for six additional months (Minutes 01-2015 CRACCITES). Regrettably, the damage had been done.

“Even though we have been working for almost two years in close collaboration with the plethora of public institutions involved with CITES abidance (MINAE, INCOPECSA, Animal Health, Customs, Coast Guard, UNIP-University of Costa Rica) as well as other Costa Rican NGOs to write up a NDF based on the best available science, the pertinent authorities (INCOPECSA, MINAE, CRACCITES) decided to simply ignore the process” denounced Maïke Heidemeyer of PRETOMA. As Heidemeyer explains “the approval of a provisional NDF that guarantees the unabated export of shark fins from Costa Rica is a violation of the Precautionary Principle, which dictates that where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be

used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

“We have already become accustomed to these atrocities on behalf of INCOPECSA, but we are majorly disappointed at our MINAE authorities and the members of the CRACCITES”, said a troubled Randall Arauz of PRETOMA. “Instead of serving as a global model after successfully promoting these international agreements, we have shown that we really don’t take our CITES commitments seriously, which logically affects our credibility and reputation”.

PRETOMA calls on the high ranking national authorities to investigate this case and to duly punish those responsible, and while they are at it, to ban the exportation of shark fins until the country has a hammerhead shark NDF, and a traceability system exists that guarantees abundance to CITES.

Additional information:

- The scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) is catalogued as an Endangered Species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and their catch in the high seas by longline vessels and later international commercialization of their fins are acknowledged to be major threats to their survival.
- The Eastern Tropical Pacific population of scalloped hammerhead sharks was listed last August under the Endangered Species Act of the United States, because of which this country does not allow their capture, commercialization, nor transportation through its ports.
- Ecuador banned the capture of hammerhead sharks by its longline fleet, and limited the capture by the artisanal fleet to 5 individuals per day (Sub Secretariat of Fishery Resources, Ministry Agreement #116).
- Two additional species of hammerhead sharks were also listed under Appendix II of CITES (*zygaena* and *S. mokarran*) due their physical resemblance and consequent difficulty to distinguish them from scalloped hammerhead sharks.
- The scalloped hammerhead shark was listed under Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) during its CoP meeting last November in Quito, Ecuador, by initiative of Costa Rica and Ecuador, because of which the country should be working with its regional neighbors to stop and revert the extinction process faced by the species.
- Costa Rica is obligated to act under the Precautionary Principal, as signatory of the Rio Declaration where it is enshrined and which was adopted by the UN Conference on Environment and Development, as due to Conference Resolution 9.24 of CITES, among others.

Shivani Bhalla
2014 Whitley Award Winner

Websites

National Geographic News – Online Magazine
26th November 2014

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141126-lions-kenya-africa-science-samburu-conservation/>



Teaching Kenya's Warriors to Make Peace With Fast-Disappearing Lions

National Geographic Emerging Explorer Shivani Bhalla enlists locals to save lions.

Editor's note: [Shivani Bhalla](#) is one of National Geographic's 2014 emerging explorers, a designation that honors tomorrow's visionaries—those making discoveries, making a difference, and inspiring people to care about the planet.

The lion cubs are hungry, their mother even more so. With virtually no natural prey—gazelles, buffalo, or other grazing animals—left in her dwindling Kenyan habitat, the lioness approaches a herder's homestead in search of livestock.

She's successful, so tonight her family will eat. But will the herder retaliate with a gun, spear, or poison the next time she encroaches?

It's a conflict that plays out every day on the African savanna, one that conservation biologist Shivani Bhalla says may help wipe out lions in Kenya. (Videos: ["The Serengeti: Life on the Plains With the Vumbi Pride."](#))

As habitat loss drives more lions into areas inhabited by people, provoking revenge killings and driving the animals to the brink of extinction, Bhalla says the cats' survival depends on finding a way for them to peacefully coexist with humans.

Over the past 20 years, the number of lions in Kenya has dwindled to fewer than 2,000. If the trend continues, the animals could vanish from the nation within two decades. Their plight reflects that of lions in broader Africa, where they have disappeared from more than 80 percent of their historical range, declining from an estimated 450,000 animals in the 1940s to only about 20,000 today. (Related: ["Africa's Lions May Be Deemed Threatened in U.S.—Will It Help?"](#))

In an attempt to turn the trend around, Bhalla started an organization with a novel mission: turning local people from lion killers into lion protectors. [Ewaso Lions](#), founded in 2007, takes its name from a river that begins on the the slopes of Mount Kenya. (See ["Q&A: Explorer Shivani Bhalla Helps People and Lions Coexist."](#))

Among the primary targets of the group's work are young warriors of the Samburu people, who patrol huge distances each day to ensure the security of villages and livestock—and who are responsible for many lion killings. (See ["Samburu Warrior Graduation."](#))

"Although these warriors live in the bush and have vast information about wildlife activity, no one had ever asked them to be part of conservation efforts," says Bhalla, a fourth-generation Kenyan.

For her, taking the conservation movement out of parks and other protected areas and into local communities is key to the lions' survival. "Conventional wisdom says there is no hope for lions outside protected areas," she says. "I've seen exactly the opposite."

Bhalla's conservation career began in Samburu National Reserve in northern Kenya, a relatively small area where the wildlife also includes leopards, cheetahs, zebras, giraffes, and elephants. (Read ["Family Ties: The Elephants of Samburu"](#) in *National Geographic* magazine.)

"After six months I realized that most problems with lions don't happen in protected areas," she says. "So I packed up and moved to an area surrounding the reserve, where people and carnivores share the landscape."

Today, Bhalla lives and works in the Ewaso Ngiro ecosystem, which links the lions of northern Kenya with one of the last stronghold populations in the south. It's one of the few areas in Kenya where lions persist outside protected areas.

Her organization's homegrown staff has dramatically changed local attitudes, and the lion population she monitors has grown to 40 animals—the largest it's been in more than a decade.

Much of that success stems from the first program that Ewaso Lions created, which involves the participation of the Samburu people who give the local reserve its name. Called Warrior Watch, the program taps the locals' existing knowledge about lions while training them to be field scientists.

"These dedicated conservationists collect data on wildlife sightings, poaching, and conflict, tell communities why lions are important, and show them how to better protect livestock," Bhalla says. "I provide guidance, but nothing is more powerful than a warrior speaking directly to another warrior about why lions should be saved."

When she first came to the area, the Samburu complained about livestock losses and were constantly threatening retaliation. So Ewaso Lions shared with them creative tactics for reducing conflict and improving livestock protection. Its outreach programs raised awareness of the important role top predators like lions play in the larger ecosystem.

"Now, despite losing some of the camels, goats, and cows they depend on, these amazing people understand the long-term significance of leaving lions alone," Bhalla says.

One lioness that survived alone for years recently disappeared from the area where Bhalla's group works, only to return with cubs that she was raising on her own. Locals named the lioness Magilani, which means "the clever one."

When the lioness disappeared again and returned wounded, people came from everywhere, volunteering to help. "Elders even arrived offering their most precious resource—a cow—to keep this lion alive," Bhalla says.

Ewaso Lions has gained local trust and cooperation by giving back to communities, opening schools and a beadworking operation that attracts tourists.

And in return for their work, the organization teaches the Samburu to read and write, offering classes every Sunday for the past five years. Now virtually all the participants are literate.

The chance of an education led local women to say that they too wanted to join the lion conservation effort. So Bhalla's group started a program called Mama Simba ("mothers of lions") that offers literacy classes to women.

"We started school classes, and they've picked up reading and writing so fast it's unbelievable," Bhalla says. "They return to homes with no electricity and practice lessons every night by firelight."

In return for the classes, the women agree to be trained to deal with lions.

Samburu women encounter wildlife as they fetch water, collect firewood, and tend livestock. Male herders are often away, especially during the dry season, and when lions and other carnivores attack livestock, it's often women who decide how to respond.

One solution is to prevent such attacks in the first place. One Ewaso Lions program trains women to reinforce weak areas in their traditional thornbush livestock enclosures, making it harder for predators to break in and for livestock to stray out.

The project's radio-collaring study tracks lions' movements, relaying information about when the cats venture out of one stretch of habitat and where they go, letting Ewaso Lions participants know where to focus their efforts.

Another Ewaso program enlists women to pick up litter, which endangers curious lions and other wildlife and livestock that can ingest plastic bags from local stores.

During the program's first five-day cleanup, more than 200 women in four locations collected and sorted over 15,000 pieces of trash. Paper and plastic were sent to Nairobi for recycling, and the women received reusable canvas shopping bags.

But Bhalla believes that the most important population in the effort to secure the lions' survival is children. "They are Kenya's next generation of tour guides and wildlife conservationists," she says. "Without kids, conservation has no future."

Ironically, the area where her group works, which lures safari tourists from around the world, is unknown to most of the people who live nearby. So Bhalla created a camp program that takes local kids into the Samburu National Reserve.

"Most never rode in a car before," she says. "They kept asking why the trees and rocks were moving. I called all the park rangers, guides, and wardens and said, 'I'm arriving with the most important visitors you'll ever have—Samburu kids who've never seen a lion.'

"We showed them five the first day, and the look on their faces was complete joy," she says. "By the time they left, they were transformed, and this year twice as many will attend."

There are still occasional lion killings in the area, but the change she has seen among the Samburu keeps Bhalla going.

"Just when the challenges seem most overwhelming, I'll see a cub in an area shared by lions and people," she says. "I watch it grow and survive—and know something must be working."

December 5, 2014

HUFF POST GREEN

Edition: U.S.  230k  Newsletters

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PhD candidate at the University of Oxford; Founder, Ewaso Lions



Nashipai: Samburu's Famous Lioness

Posted: 12/03/2014 3:41 pm EST | Updated: 12/03/2014 3:59 pm EST

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I have known Nashipai for over 12 years. Throughout that time, this beautiful lioness has taught me everything I know about Samburu lions and has become a personal favorite of mine. I remember vividly the first time I saw her -- she was a two-year-old lioness who, together with her sister Nabo, was inquisitively playing with a tortoise shell. That was the day we named the two girls. Nashipai means "beautiful, joyful one" and Nabo means "one," because she had one big spot on her nose when we first saw her. Looking back on that day in 2003, it is amazing to think I have followed the lives of these iconic lionesses for over a decade.



During this time, Nashipai has had several litters of cubs. However, unlike her attentive sister Nabo, Nashipai has not always been the best mother and often will leave it to her sister to do the lion's share of the cub rearing. Yet, when it comes to hunting, we cannot fault her. Of the 40 lions that make up our study population, Nashipai is the most formidable hunter and has been seen bringing down giraffe, zebra and oryx all by herself.

But now Nashipai is getting old (in the wild, life expectancy for lions is typically between 10 and 14 years); the jovial, playful lioness I remember is now struggling to keep up with her youngest three cubs, her teeth are worn and, since January, she has been regularly attacking and killing livestock. The latter, in particular, concerns us greatly. Across Africa, lion numbers have been declining at an unprecedented rate and direct conflict with humans ranks among the most significant threats. In northern Kenya, lions like Nashipai are especially vulnerable because they typically live in or adjacent to areas inhabited by nomadic pastoralists. For the local Samburu people, livestock are their livelihoods, representing both wealth and status. When lions or other large carnivores prey on livestock, this understandably generates much anger and resentment. Often, herders will retaliate by fatally shooting, spearing or poisoning the lions. However, since 2007, [Ewaso Lions](#) have been working closely with the local people through a number of research and community-based programs. Thanks to the success of our outreach programs, such as [Warrior Watch](#), we have noticed a decline in the number of lions killed in retaliation over recent years. Our 15 Warriors are ambassadors in the region -- providing security for people and wildlife and encouraging people to tolerate lions, fulfilling our mission of promoting coexistence between lions and the people who share the same landscape.



So -- as you can imagine -- when Nashipai began to attack livestock, we were concerned about the safety of Samburu's most photographed lioness. Jeneria and his team of warriors were constantly out searching for her. We had also seen her cubs roaming alone for weeks, but no sign of the lioness. Finally, some of the guides who belong to our [Lion Watch](#) program reported that Nashipai had been spotted together with her cubs. We hope she remains safe. The Ewaso Lions team will continue to work together to ensure the protection of Nashipai and the other lions in Samburu.

Ir Budiono

2012 Whitley Award Winner, 2014 Continuation Funding

Websites

The Jakarta Post - News Website

28th April 2015

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/04/28/getting-close-and-personal-with-kalimantan-s-river-dolphin.html>



Getting up close, and personal, with Kalimantan's river dolphin



Courtesy of YK Ras

Hundreds of colorful houses, built on wooden poles, stand along the Mahakam River in East Kalimantan. Some villages seem to consist solely of bridges, connecting the various houses to each other.

The Mahakam river delta is important not only for migrating birds and a number of endangered species, but also for the traditional Dayak, Kutai and Banjar people who all live along the river and live off its fish.

The river is also home to the rare Mahakam pesut — a highly endangered freshwater dolphin species, which is slightly different from the Irrawaddy dolphins that are found in coastal areas in South and Southeast Asia.

Dutch researcher Danielle Krebs, who holds a PhD in research on the Irrawaddy dolphins, says she is conducting further research on the dolphin's specific DNA. She did her first research on the dolphins back in 1997 but kept coming back before finally moving to Samarinda after meeting Budiono, the founder of the NGO Rare Aquatic Species of Indonesia (RASI) Conservation Foundation.

“The decision to engage with river dolphins has influenced my life greatly as we got married and now have one daughter. Now, I have two major reasons for staying in Indonesia,” Krebs said.

Budiono established the organization in 2000, with the aim of protecting aquatic dependent flora and fauna and eco systems and enhancing human livelihoods through sustainable resource use. In 2012, he received the prestigious Whitley Award from the Whitley Fund for Nature. Budiono said the biggest threats faced by the dolphins are gillnet entanglement, boat collisions and noise and chemical pollution.

A more recent threat, he added, was the conversion of swamp areas into oil palm plantations — causing the dolphin habitat to decline and a decrease in local fish resources. The organization focuses on community awareness and knowledge, but also works with local fishermen to engage them in sustainable forms of aqua-culture.

Some people in Kalimantan have also started the “Save ” group, which now has over 5,000 members on Facebook, to raise awareness and organize trips to the river to spot the dolphin. “Many people still don't know about the dolphin, they just know the statue in Samarinda. They never see it and don't know that it's threatened. That's why these trips are useful, so people can see that it still exists and that it needs support,” said Innal Rahman, who is part of the RASI team and an active member who organizes trips to the river. The sights along the Mahakam River are also a tourist attraction, as many bird species and the proboscis monkey, endemic to the island of Kalimantan, can be seen from the riverbanks.

“There are many fishing villages here that have not yet been discovered by tourists. People are warm here and you always feel welcome. We saw a lot of birds, fish, macaques and proboscis monkeys and, of course, the dolphins,” said Anna Poledáková, a Czech volunteer currently working for a bear sanctuary in Balikpapan who joined RASI in one of the trips on the Mahakam.

“I also became more familiar with the threats to the Irrawaddy dolphin than as an ordinary tourist. The good thing about RASI is that they are working with local people, which is the only way to successfully conserve any wild species, in my opinion.”

On the trip, Budiono and his team talk to the locals and discuss the issues that they are

facing. RASI has also been conducting bi-annual population monitoring of the dolphin, mapping its core areas and consulting about certain protected areas with the villagers.

The efforts are vital since once the area is converted to oil palm plantations, it will lose its natural functions.

“There are no buffer zones between coal mining and palm oil and the natural wetlands of the villages. Villagers have to deal with bad water quality and have skin diseases after companies become active in their areas. Some villagers even have to leave their villages to find a healthier environment,” Budiono said.

On the last trip RASI made to the Mahakam, villagers in three subdistricts — Muara Muntai, Kota Bangun and Muara Kaman — agreed on the boundaries and regulations of the proposed protected area of 51,000 hectares, which also includes important fish spawning areas.

“We can only raise the alarm with the government but the actual work that should be done in the future is to re-examine permits and impose sanctions or closure on companies that are causing environmental damage to areas outside of their permit areas.”



Save the Mahakam group - *Courtesy of Innal Rahman*

[Jenny Daltry](#)
1999 Whitley Award Winner

Websites

Earth Island Journal – Environmental News Website
3rd February 2015

http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/elist/eListRead/in_conservation_work_reptiles_and_amphibians_are_the_underdogs



The screenshot shows the Earth Island Journal website. The main title is "Earth Island Journal" with the tagline "News of the World Environment". The navigation menu includes "Home", "Current Issue", "Latest News" (highlighted), "Archive", and "About". Below the navigation, there is a breadcrumb trail: "Go Back: Home > Earth Island Journal > Latest News > Post and Comments". The main content area features the article title "In Conservation Work, 'Reptiles and Amphibians Are the Underdogs'" by "BY DARYL GEORGE – FEBRUARY 3, 2015". Below the title, it says "A conversation with herpetologist Dr. Jenny Daltry".



Dr. Jenny Daltry has been exploring her love for reptiles since the young age of eight, and her interest has only grown with time. By the time she turned 25, she had earned her PhD from the University of Aberdeen in zoology and ecology and her thesis had been published in *Nature Magazine*. Not content with an academic career or an office job, Daltry has spent much of her professional life in the field. Now, as senior conservation biologist at Flora and Fauna International (FFI), Dr. Daltry's fieldwork has led her to dozens of countries, many in the Caribbean and southern Asia.

Daltry's work with critically endangered species has truly set her apart as one of the world's leading conservationists. She personally oversaw the Antiguan Racer Conservation Project, nursing a tiny inbred population of 50 Antiguan racer snakes on one island in Antigua a much healthier population of over 1,000 snakes spread over

several islands. This project rescued the species from the brink of extinction. Daltry was also one of the lead researchers involved in saving the Siamese Crocodile, a species once thought to be effectively extinct. Her work has been so influential that she was awarded the title of Officer of The Royal Order of Sahametrei for her services to the environment in Cambodia, and has received a number of other international awards including the Whitley Award from the Whitley Fund for Nature, a United Kingdom-based charity, and the Castillo's Prize for Conservation for the Crocodile Specialist Group.

Can you give me a bit of background on your work as a senior conservation biologist at Flora and Fauna International (FFI) and how you came to work for them?

Well, I actually joined FFI as a member when I was 11 years old. FFI is one of the world's oldest conservation organizations, founded in 1903, and I've always liked FFI because it is involved with issues impacting all types of wildlife. The mission is to help conserve threatened biodiversity across the whole world, so it's very diverse, it's a very dynamic organization, and I joined the organization as a staff member about 20 years ago. In my current role as senior conservation biologist, I work with teams across the world, helping to solve conservation problems and helping to find solutions to difficult problems that are threatening wildlife.

And what would you say has been the biggest surprise to you in your role as senior conservation biologist?

I think one of the biggest surprises is that even in the relatively short time — and I would say that 20 years is a relatively short time in conservation — we have seen some really positive results, and we have seen species pulled back from the brink of extinction, a huge increase in the number of protected areas established, and an almost exponential increase in the number of people throughout the world who care about wildlife, who care about conservation, and who are trying to join this battle to save nature.

So why do you care about animals, particularly the icky ones like snakes and crocodiles?

I've always been interested in nature from an early age. And it's all things, not just the icky ones! I love birds, I love mammals, I love fish, and I love wildlife generally. But I think what drew me to the reptiles and the amphibians is that they tend to be the underdogs, they tend to be the ones that fewer people give attention to. Especially when I was young, you didn't really hear that much about work being done on reptiles and amphibians. You know, pandas get the attention, the whales get attention, but reptiles and amphibians don't. Though in recent times, I have to say, I think more and more people are getting interested in them, and valuing them, and trying to conserve them and save them.

You've helped to save two critically endangered species, the Siamese crocodile and the Antiguan racer. How did you manage to save those species, and what type of approach do you think is useful in working to protect critically endangered species that, like you said, don't get the attention of pandas and whales?

Well that's a very big question [laughs].

Yes it is a very big question!

Well, I've been lucky to work with a lot of different species over the years, but probably the two I've spent the most time on, and that I've been most closely associated with, are the Antigua racer, a rare snake in Antigua, and the Siamese crocodile in Cambodia. And I do work on a lot of other projects, but those are the main long-running programs I've worked on.

How do you save them? They're both quite different situations. But in both situations, FFI was asked to come in and help. So that makes the battle a lot easier, because we are wanted there, and there are people there who care and want to make a difference. The thing is, we can't save these species on our own, all we can do is assist.

The power lies in the hands of the people in those countries. And if they don't want to save them, there's nothing we can do to save them. There has to be a seed of interest. So, in the case of Antigua, it was a staff member of the Forestry Unit, who's actually a member of the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), Kevel Lindsay, who contacted us to say they had this really rare snake, they didn't know how many were left, and asking if we could come and help. And similarly in Cambodia, the government of Cambodia had recently discovered this Siamese crocodile. And they wanted to know what they could do to conserve them, because they didn't think there were many left.

So that's really where both of those projects started. But in developing them, of course we needed a lot more people to come in, including the communities. There's only so much the government can do. You also need communities there to care and look after their environment and help these creatures to survive.

I know that you've mentioned in a couple of interviews that you love field work, but you have also managed to publish over 100 books and reports on many of the species that you've studied. How do you find the time to do all of this?

If you work in conservation, it's not a nine-to-five job. It is a seven-days-a-week job. But if you care as much as I do, it's not really a job. If you work on something you love, you never have to work a day in your life. I love what I do, and yes, I find the time.

I think writing and publishing is somehow the most difficult thing to find time to do. But it is important, because all of us in conservation, we rely on the lessons that other groups have learned, and if we share that information it helps other projects too. Because they may be working on a different species of snake, or a different species of crocodile, and you can tie them all together. And learning what we've learned, the mistakes and the successes, is important.

What would you say is your proudest or happiest moment as a conservationist?

The first one that comes to mind is actually from Antigua. I first started working in Antigua in 1995. At that time, very few people knew about the Antigua racer, and very

few people cared about the racer. And they were only on that one little island, Great Bird Island, and at that time there were only 50 snakes left. Some people said to me, don't even bother, it's hopeless, they're a snake that nobody likes, it's a tiny population, and it's just going to die out no matter what you do.

And the proudest moment was in 2003. By that time we had already started to introduce the racer to other islands. In 2003, I was on Green Island, the biggest island that the racers now live on, and that was the first time I had caught a racer there, and it was a baby. And it was like we had just saved a species, because this approach we were using was working, and now this species was on a much bigger island, and thriving, and breeding, and I just felt as if we had turned a corner and things would be okay.

So what would you say is your most surprising experience during your fieldwork?

Surprising [laughs]? Well I can tell you some scary and shocking ones, if that's what you want. I think perhaps a scary surprise was when I was working on Montserrat. It was the same year I had started working in Antigua, 1995.

Are you talking about the Soufriere Hills Volcano in Montserrat that erupted in 1995?

Yes. I was actually up the volcano that day, surveying amphibians, as we surveyed different parts of the country for two months. The day that the volcano really erupted for the first time, I was on the volcano itself, very high up. The whole sky went dark, the roar of it sounded like jet engines taking off, and there was debris coming down around me.

So yes, that was a surprise. Surprised that I'm still alive!

Good that you are, of course! In terms of your community work, what would you say is the biggest challenge in working with communities around the world?

I think that, the big thing, the universal challenge, the secret for anyone, whether it's in the UK or the Arctic, is just to listen, and not to start off saying, "this is what has to be done." To start by talking with the people and trying to understand what they're interested in, and what their needs are, and what their life's about. That's obviously more difficult to do when I'm working in places that speak languages I don't speak myself, so that's why I need to have really good translators, and a lot of sign language. But that's the first thing, to try and see things from their viewpoint, because you can't come up with solutions unless you understand where they're coming from.

And sometimes you can find really nice surprises that help. For example, going back to the work with the crocodiles in Cambodia, through talking with villagers I found out that they actually revered crocodiles in Cambodia. Some people think that if you kill crocodiles it brings terrible sickness and bad luck. These villagers then became really good allies for conserving the crocodiles. Now in Cambodia, there's village after village that's helping to conserve their crocodiles because, you know, they already have that interest in them and we've been able to build on that and support them to look after them.

So how important do you think it is to get community buy-in?

Oh it's crucial, just having legal protection or just having the government say "this is what you must do" isn't enough, you really need the people on the ground that are living in that habitat influencing the situation. You need their buy-in, and that can be difficult because they themselves can be very diverse. Not all communities work as a single machine — they can be made up of lots of different entities and individuals with very different opinions and very different interests, so it can be a challenge to bring people together to kind of get some consensus. So actually most of my work is 1 percent working with animals, and 99 percent working with people.

So what would you say are some of the lessons you have learned that would help conservationists get more buy-in from communities that they work in?

I think that education and raising awareness can play a really big role. I think that one of the successes that we had in Antigua was very much the work of the EAG, which just launched this massive campaign to show that the Antiguan racer is precious, is unique to the country, and is harmless. What I've always been told is that flagship species have to be something like a parrot, or something spectacular. And I think I learned a lot from Antigua. I learned that you could get people excited and interested in almost anything, but especially with creatures that are unique to them or only found in their country. So I think it's almost like promoting a brand, like Pepsi. It's just trying to get people familiar with the image, trying to get people excited and interested in it, and certainly no longer afraid of it, but starting to feel quite passionate about it, and proud of it. And I think that there are different ways of doing that like working with media or going around to schools.

I also think something that I've learned in this time is that even if you start off working on one species and one problem, it's wonderful how conservation programs can grow and often bring back lots of benefits to those communities. Tourism is an obvious one. We often hear about nature-based tourism. And there are some really good examples of that in Antigua. You know, the first island we restored now gets over 70,000 visitors a year spending over 5 million dollars a year just on boat fees going to the island.

But there can also be lots of other benefits. For example, in Cambodia with the Siamese crocodile, we've negotiated with local people to limit the types of fishing they do, because when they put out nylon nets, crocodiles can get caught and drown. So now in certain areas they only use traditional fishing gear to help avoid that conflict with crocodiles. That means that the fish population has increased and they now catch more fish than they used to, because they're going back to traditional methods that are more sustainable than modern techniques. So it's kind of funny, because I'm seeing time and time again that you suddenly see these benefits — communities benefitting from what started out as a project to save a particular species. And you can't always guess what those benefits will be, but it's amazing how many times there is suddenly a win-win for both the people and the wildlife.

How did that happen?

There's no reason for it, because my parents weren't scared of spiders, I've never had a bad experience, but if I see a spider running across the floor, I'll lift my feet up. I won't necessarily run screaming. The good thing about that is, I do understand why people are afraid of snakes. I think snakes are beautiful, but I do understand sometimes you just have that creepy feeling. And it's not always explicable. But it does mean I can sympathize when people find them scary, because I also have my fears that don't make any sense either.

What's your next destination?

That's a good question! I'm going to Anguilla, because using the techniques that worked in Antigua, we restored a very big island off the coast of Anguilla called Dog Island, which is about 510 acres. Part of the reason I'm going back there is to have a look at how it's changing, and to see if it has improved since we restored it.

Anything else you have to add?

I think the only thing to add, it's just something that bugs me I suppose, in terms of doing conservation work, is that it often requires funding. Most of the work often requires international funding to support it. It's very hard. Conservation work often takes many years. You can't just do it in one year or two years. Yet many donors often give just a one year grant, or a two year grant, and then want to fund something else. And I think it's really important not just for communities but also for donors to understand that sometimes you need to be in there for the long haul. And you can't necessarily solve everything straight away.

So, for example, with the Siamese crocodiles, they reach maturity in 15 years. So you can't save the species in two years, it's going to take at least 15 years for these animals to breed and increase their populations. We need to educate the people who support this work and try and find ways of long-term support because these things can't be solved instantly.

Pruthu Fernando

2009 Whitley Award Winner, 2013 Continuation Funding

Websites

The Indian Express – News Website

13th October

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/Translocation-of-Elephants-is-not-the-Solution/2015/10/13/article3076530.ece>



'Translocation of Elephants is not the Solution'

QUEEN'S ROAD: Dr Prithiviraj Fernando, well-known wildlife conservationist and researcher from Sri Lanka who has been studying the human-elephant conflict issue in the island nation for decades, was in the city recently. He shared his experiences with City Express and information about his award winning efforts to protect wild Asian elephants outside the protected areas amid rural communities.

Dr Fernando won the prestigious Whitley award, the top grassroots nature conservation prize for his efforts to save these majestic animals in the background of continuing conflict issues in the southern parts of the country. A medical doctor by profession, he has been pursuing his passion for conservation of pachyderms for two and a half decades in close association with Sri Lanka's Department of Wildlife Conservation. Presently, it is reported that more than 5000 elephants are surviving in the southern and eastern parts of this country along with heavy density of human population. With 75 per cent of elephants living outside the protected areas in the country, it is difficult to correctly estimate their population, says Dr Fernando. He adds, "Presently, 250 animals die every year in conflict situations with humans. For 60 years, we have been trying to mitigate and address these issues. Translocation is not the solution as it causes numerous problems and animals with their homing instincts return home after some time."

In the last 25 years, Dr Fernando and his team have tracked nearly 60 animals through GPS satellite collars and found that translocation results in more problems. "We studied the impact thoroughly and found that a single tusker in north west of Sri Lanka which was captured and translocated to a Park, left and came back. Another elephant captured north west, transported to another Park after two weeks of walking, came to seashore,

saw the sea and jumped in and was found by the Navy offshore. It was brought back and the elephant went back to doing what he wanted. However, after some time, it fell in a farm well and died.”



Dr Prithiviraj Fernando | Nagaraja Gadekal Even the deployment of electric fences does not address the conflict issue completely as villagers have been found to be feeding animals near the fence. Traditional age old methods are confrontational and causes bigger problems, Dr Fernando explains. "Bio-fences were a failure while bee and chilly fences worked in restricted situations. Compared to these, electric fencing is the most effective solution and nearly 2500

kilometers of fencing has been done with 60 per cent in forest areas. This is easier said than done as fencing too increased conflicts, maintenance was another big issue involving cost and material.” Sri Lanka has an unusual situation where the authorities are vested into two departments : wildlife and forest which has not helped in solving the conflict issue. There are only a few wildlife officers in this country to deal with the issue and large scale politically supported encroachments are thriving in the country and add to the problem, says Dr Fernando. With unplanned development in wildlife areas, the biggest level of conflict is when elephants kill the humans.

Working with farm societies in the villages of Sri Lanka, Dr Fernando and his team have come up with the concept of village electric fences wherein the people themselves decide where the structure is to be built, how the project is funded and constructed. Even seasonal fences are put up by farmers in paddy fields when they go in for cultivation and once the crop is harvested, the fence is removed and stored at home for the next season.

Wide ranging research

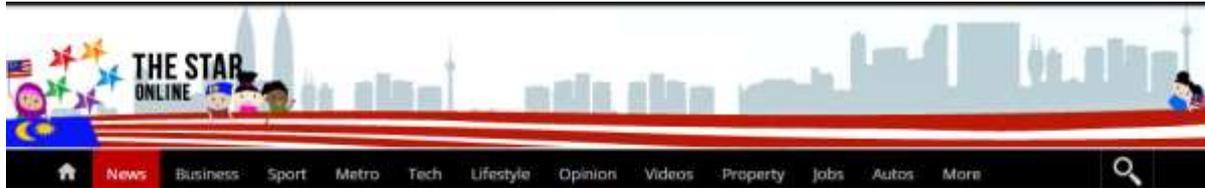
Translocation and elephant drives have worsened the problem of human-elephant conflicts in Sri Lanka. Concerted research by Dr Prithiviraj Fernando has established that pachyderms when translocated do not stay in parks. They returned to their original homes which may be in the midst of a human settlement and ranging over a wide area. Any kind of elephant drives from conflict areas towards Parks or protected areas, in fact, created the same issue or multiplied the problem. Studying an elephant drive that consisted of 107 animals including 30 tusked, they found that such efforts not only removed herds but also subjected them to intense sustained conflict.

[Melvin Gumal](#)
2014 Whitley Award Winner

Broadcast
WCS Malaysia Program Youtube Channel
2nd August 2015
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfemyYtsLvE>



The image shows a screenshot of a YouTube video player. At the top, the YouTube logo is visible with 'GB' next to it. A search bar and an 'Upload' button are also present. The video frame shows an elderly man, CM Tan Sri Haji Adenan Bin Haji Satem, sitting in a white chair with gold accents. He is wearing a white shirt and a dark blue vest. Behind him are the Malaysian and Sarawak state flags. A small inset video shows a thumbnail of the same man with a '1:53' timestamp. Below the video frame, the title 'CM Tan Sri Haji Adenan Bin Haji Satem's speech on orangutans in Sarawak' is displayed. Underneath the title is the channel name 'WCS_Malaysia Program' with a 'Subscribe' button showing 7 subscribers. To the right of the channel name, the view count '1,709' is shown. Below the video player, there are icons for 'Add to', 'Share', and 'More'. On the right side, there are icons for 'Like' (58) and 'Dislike' (2). At the bottom, the publication date 'Published on 2 Aug 2015' is shown, followed by the description 'The Chief Minister of Sarawak and Conservation of orang-utans and their habitats.' Below the description, the category is listed as 'People & Blogs' and the licence as 'Standard YouTube Licence'.



WCS organises run for orang utans

By YU JI
yuj@thestar.com.my
Photo courtesy of Wildlife
Conservation Society

KUCHING: Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Malaysia Programme is organising a run in tandem with its New York counterpart on April 25.

WCS Malaysia director Dr Melvin Gumal said "Run for the Wild - Orang Utans" in Kuching will be on the same date and time as "Run for the Wild - Gorillas" in the American financial capital.

The not-for-profit organisation is working with two local bodies: O-Run-Utan Running Club and the Swinburne Sarawak Running Club on their weekly run.

"As this is a first time for WCS, we will be keeping it small. This run will only include the aforementioned clubs and this will be a trial run for us to learn how to organise a bigger event for everybody on a later date," Gumal told Sarawak



Help them: Wild orangutan spotted in the Engkari-Telaus Community Conservation Landscape.

Metro.

The April 25 run here is a free event, he added, and would include a talk by WCS on the importance of orang utan conservation, which will be at the Dayak Bidayuh National Association headquarters at Jalan

Ong Tiang Swee.

The run, roughly 7km, also begins from the association headquarters.

"The O-Run-Utan Running Club is pleased to support efforts by WCS to raise this awareness that begins 'apily' with us!" said its Kuching president Alexander Liew.

Joshua Lai of the university's running club said love for nature should start from home and be taught to the young.

"We hope the event will raise awareness. University students definitely support wildlife conservation," Lai said.

Gumal, recipient of the 2014 Whitley Award for Conservation in Ape Habitats, said orang utans were among our closest relatives, the largest primates in Asia and the largest tree-dwelling animals in the world.

"Their resemblance to humans means that they have long been the subject of local myths and legends, and anecdotes about their lives pep-

pered the writings of early explorers and naturalists," Gumal said.

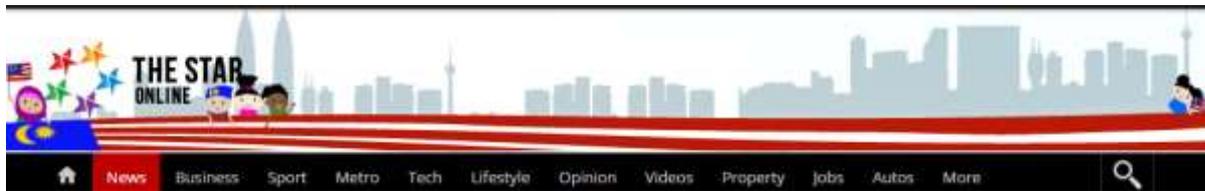
Once widespread throughout Asia (over 12,500 years ago), orang utans now occur only in the tropical rainforests of Sumatra and Borneo.

As more of their habitat is converted for oil palm and rubber plantations, and other development, orang utan numbers and their range continue to decline, he said. Sarawak seems to be reversing the trend and wants more areas protected for orang utans.

"Wild orangutans are amongst the slowest breeding mammals on earth, with each female giving birth to their first offspring between the ages of 14 and 15 years, and only giving birth to a single offspring every eight years.

"Largely solitary and occurring at low densities, large areas need to be fully protected if orang utans are to survive."

For more information on WCS, facebook.com/WCS.Malaysia or wcsmalaysia.org.



SATURDAY
9 MAY 2015

OPINION | STARMETRO 3



Surprising moves

CM's willingness to hear the people out has earned him praises

ET CETERA
by Sharon Ling

HES done it again. Since becoming Chief Minister just over a year ago, Tan Sri Adenan Satem has surprised the public by being willing to engage with political opponents and critics on a range of issues, notably illegal logging and corruption.

Last year he welcomed a courtesy call from 13 DAP and PKR assemblymen, a historic first meeting of its kind between opposition members and the Chief Minister.

He has also received separate courtesy calls from state PKR and PAS leaders. Each time the opposition politicians came out singing Adenan's praises about his willingness to listen to them and discuss issues of common interest.

But this was nothing compared to the news of Adenan meeting Lukas Straumann of the Bruno Manser Fund (BMF) and Sarawak Report's Clare Brown in London earlier this week.

These are some of Sarawak's biggest critics, who have often attacked the state's environmental policies under previous Chief Minister Tun Abdul Taib Mahmud and were clearly disdained by his administration. Brown, for instance, was barred from entering Sarawak when she tried to come in 2013 for a court case.

Even Adenan has been dismissive of BMF, telling the State Legislative Assembly in his winding-up speech last week that he did not care about the

Swiss-based NGO because "their agenda is not our focus".

So public reaction back home was one of incredulity when photographs emerged on Facebook showing Adenan during a dinner at the Malaysian High Commission in London.

According to a report, the activists had "gatecrashed" the event and were welcomed by the Chief Minister for an informal chat instead of being turned away.

BMF then issued a statement lauding Adenan for reaching out to NGOs in his first official overseas visit and calling for international support to transform Sarawak's timber industry.

It said Adenan "surprised the public" in London with a pledge to save Sarawak's remaining forests and fight timber corruption.

In his speech, BMF added, the Chief Minister reiterated his determination to fight illegal logging and timber corruption "until the last log is accounted for" and that no more timber concessions would be given out.

"Adenan thus distanced himself surprisingly deeply from the policies of his predecessor, Taib Mahmud, who had abused Sarawak's natural resources during his 33-year tenure as Chief Minister," BMF said.

Taking a similar line, Sarawak Report says Adenan "astonished and wooed" the London audience with his policy



Pledge to save forests: Satem reiterates his determination to fight illegal logging and timber corruption until the last log is accounted for.

outlines. It greeted his speech with cautious optimism but pointed out that his policies must be followed by specific details and delivery.

It should be noted here that much of what Adenan was reported to have said in London has already been said many times back home. The points he made about not issuing any more timber concessions or oil palm plantations and his commitment to fight illegal logging are points he has repeatedly made in the past few months.

Nevertheless, if it is striking that he is not averse to meeting and chatting with foreign critics who would otherwise be seen as unwelcome guests. Not only that, he also said Sarawak was willing to work with NGOs who were sincere in wanting to help the state combat illegal logging and conserve the environment. In doing so, he is not only charming the public but winning over detractors, disarming them one by one.

Such openness in engaging with critics is unprecedented in Malaysia. It indicates maturity in leadership and confidence to reach out to potential adversaries.

Surely this approach of engagement and mutual discussion is better than trying to shout down critics or dismiss them altogether, as both sides would be able to listen to one another and even decide to work together where possible, or at least agree to disagree if no common ground can be found.

Sceptics might say that this is just a public relations stunt designed to attract voters in the run up to the impending state election.

But it can't be denied that Adenan's leadership style is a refreshing change from what we've been used to and that he's gaining in popularity as a result.

How much he can actually deliver remains to be seen but he certainly seems to be going about things the right way.



Run raises awareness on orang utan survival

By YU JI

yuj@thesun.com.my
Photos courtesy of Wildlife Conservation Society

KUCHING: A recent run by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) offered hope to the orang utans, highlighting human destructive forces upon our cousins in the jungle.

After a 7km run through Kuching, participants were presented with the facts of orang utan survival.

Runners, some still exhausted, were told that for every orangutan seen in captivity, six others would have died along the way. This was a unique event - to say the least - by WCS, teaming up with the O-Run-Utan Running Club and Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak Campus.

"Orang utans only give birth once every eight years. They reach sexual maturity between eight and 15 years old. With a lifespan of 30-35 years, most orang utans only have three or four babies in their lifetime," WCS Malaysia director Dr Melvin Gumal said.

Once widespread across Asia over 12,500 years ago, orang utans now are only found in the tropical rainforests of Sumatra and Borneo. Hunting and habitat loss due to human activities are reasons for the dwindling numbers of the great tropical apes. Today, there are no more than a few thousand orang

utans in Sarawak's jungles.

Hundreds took part in the "Run for the Wild - Orang Utan" event here on April 25, which was held in parallel with the "Run for the Wild - Gorilla" in New York.

The WCS events were aimed at raising awareness among groups of people whom might not usually be exposed to conservation issues.

The run here, could lead to larger events down the line.

"It was our first time with the run so we kept it small. This run only included the club's members and this will be a trial run for us to learn how to organize a bigger event for everybody on a later date," Gumal said.

"The O-Run-Utan Running Club is pleased to support efforts by WCS to raise this awareness that begins 'upily' with us," said its Kuching president Alexander Liew.

Gumal, recipient of the 2014 Whitley Award for Conservation in Ape Habitats, said orang utans were among our closest relatives, the largest primates in Asia and the largest tree-dwelling animals in the world.

"Their resemblance to humans means that they have long been the subject of local myths and legends, and anecdotes about their lives peppered the writings of early explorers and naturalists," Gumal said.

For more information on WCS, facebook.com/WCS.Malaysia or wcs.malaysia.org.



For a good cause: Participants of the run, organised by Wildlife Conservation Society, in Kuching.



Paying attention: Gumal giving a talk on the environment after the run.

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2單位攜手合作 加強野生生物保育工作

(本报古晋18日讯)砂森林局与国际野生生物保护学会(Wildlife Conservation Society, 简称WCS)签署谅解备忘录,为双方未来将透过科学研究、保育教育、资讯共享和能力建设,共同实践及加强野生生物保育项目与活动,确保砂州野生

生物保育计划取得全面的成效。

在是项谅解备忘录下,砂森林局肩负的贡献与责任包括为国际野生生物保护学会提供专业技术及行政服务,以协助该单位在保护区内展开的保育活动及发展。

配合双方顺利展开和执行野生生物保育工作,国际野生生物

保护学会也为砂森林局提供持续性的野生生物研究,并从旁协助砂森林局落实特定物种和栖息地的保育及关怀活动。

同时,双方著手规划长期合作方案,包括展开联合国全球环境基金(WN-GEF)项目,以及人猿研究项目。

增加國家公園數量

根据当局发布的资讯显示,双方近期在砂州展开的保育项目取得成效,例如在过去数年成功增加州内国家公园的数量,而最新国家公园为今年1月规划的武吉康纳(Bukit Kana)国家公园:非法伐木活动案件候审。

砂森林局与国际野生生物保护学会早在1959年开始往来,共同为砂拉越人猿生态进行研究,至今已建立长达40多年的夥伴关系。

◀砂森林局局长沙布安(左)和国际野生生物保护学会马来西亚项目总监梅尔文迪古玛(中)签署谅解备忘录,共同为砂拉越野生生物保育计划铺路。右为国际野生生物保护学会区域保护枢纽技术顾问玛胡拉奥。



Websites

The University of Adelaide Blog

26th November 2014

<http://blogs.adelaide.edu.au/environment/2014/11/26/burning-the-midnight-oil-conservation-of-orang-utans-tigers-and-elephants-in-malaysia-public-lecture-by-melvin-gumal/>



Burning the midnight oil – conservation of orang-utans, tigers and elephants in Malaysia: public lecture by Melvin Gumal



Over the past 20 years this veteran conservationist has been working with stakeholders at all levels of society to help protect the last remaining tropical rainforests in Malaysia, and the many wildlife species that depend on these forests for survival.

In this seminar, Dr. Gumal will speak openly about the successes and failures of conservation in Malaysia,

and in particular, the many important lessons that are not taught in school.

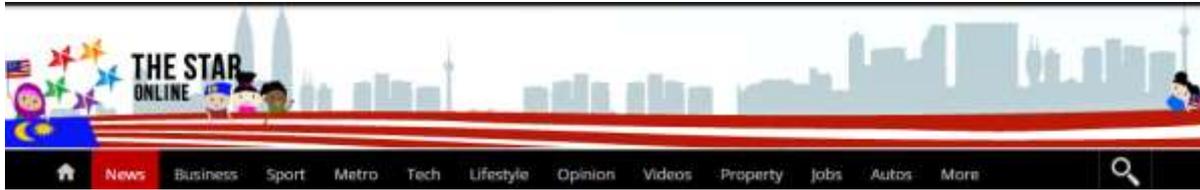
Orang-utans in Sarawak, and tigers and elephants in Johor and Pahang are among the iconic species that the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) works on in Malaysia. Over the last 10 years, the work included field research on population estimates, support for law-enforcement and policy development as well as regular conservation education with rural communities. This presentation will highlight WCS's ongoing efforts to save these species and their natural habitats as well realities faced by conservationists on the ground.

Dr. Melvin Gumal is the Malaysia Program Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society. In May 2014, Dr. Gumal was honoured with the [2014 Whitley Award](#), popularly known as the Green Oscars, for his work with the Sarawak Government in Malaysia to conserve orang-utan and their rain forest habitat.

Dr. Gumal has been Director of the WCS Malaysia Program since 2003. Prior to that, he worked with the Sarawak Forest Department for 15 years, where he initiated programs to engage local communities with park management through conservation education, developing alternative livelihood sources, business development as well as helping the communities learn English for use in eco-tourism and guiding.

“Whitley Award winners are successful because they don’t just watch and measure – they act! They are the conservation experts – not us – they know what to do and, more importantly, how to get it done.”

- Sir David Attenborough, trustee of the Whitley Fund for Nature.



Sarawak to be more ape-friendly

KUCHING: The Sarawak Government will embark on an orangutan-led environmental policy, promises Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem.

Aside from not approving any new logging licences and approvals for plantations, the ape-friendly policy should lead to there being more totally-protected and communal conservation areas at newly-found orang utan habitats.

Adenan, in a taped speech presented at the Great Apes Survival Partnership (Grasp) meeting in Kota Kinabalu yesterday, said the Batang Ai and Lajak-Entimau protected areas that border West Kalimantan, Indonesia, would likely be expanded based on new sightings.

The Chief Minister, who in the recording described himself as an “amateur naturalist” and a fan of BBC documentary maker Sir David Attenborough, pledged to “make decisions that are in the favour of nature”.

ADVERTISEMENT

“I am very concerned about the state of our orang utans and other mammals in Borneo. I am a naturalist by inclination and have made concrete decisions with regard to conservation of our natural resources, especially with regard to fauna,” Adenan said during the Grasp South-East Asia meeting.

“With regard to orang utans, we have happily discovered a few more areas of habitat. In fact, over and above the present ones at the Batang Ai and Lanjak Entimau landscape, they have discovered quite a few more in nearby areas. We will preserve those.”

Adenan said the state would totally prohibit commercial dealings in known orang utan habitats.

His speech was contained within the keynote address of Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Malaysia director, Dr Melvin Gumal.

Gumal told *The Star* that he was convinced that Adenan’s pledge around orang utans was one of the strongest made in the world.

“This is really good news because it means, from now on, wherever orang utans are found in non-protected areas, the consideration to conserve will be real.

“It also means non-consumptive activities such as eco-tourism would be prioritised. We already know there are new plans that consider these alternatives,” Gumal said.

Portions of Batang Ai are currently in a national park, while the Lanjak Entimau area is a wildlife sanctuary.

Joint public-private survey findings that ended in May last year have uncovered the existence of about 200 orang utans in and around Ulu Sungai Menyang, which is south of the existing protected areas.

The boundaries of Batang Ai National Park could also be widened westwards, where two other surveys have shown an estimated over 120 orang utans.

In a report in *The Star* a year ago, illegal logging was detected by indigenous communities living near the national park and staff of an international hotel chain that operates a five-star resort in the area. The report led to swift enforcement.

In March this year, the Sarawak Government announced a revised target of creating 1.5 million hectares of totally protected areas, which is slightly above 10% of the state’s landmass.

In the pipeline are some 20 new national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, including extensions on current ones like Kubah National Park, home to some of the world’s smallest frogs.

Earlier in the speech, Adenan also said a new scheme would welcome more foreign researchers and scientists into Sarawak.

The Borneo Post Online – News Website

5th August 2015

<http://www.theborneopost.com/2015/08/05/len-rm1-mln-a-year-spent-on-orang-utan-conservation/>

BORNEO POST *online*

THE LARGEST ENGLISH NEWS SITE IN BORNEO

Len: RM1 mln a year spent on orang-utan conservation



Sarawak has fewer than 2,500 orang-utans. – (Photo courtesy of Sarawak Forestry Corporation)

KUCHING: Sarawak spends about RM1 million on the conservation of orang-utans each year.

Assistant Minister in the Chief Minister's Office (Environment) Datu Len Talif Salleh who disclosed this, said the amount included salaries for conversation staff, management costs and maintaining research centres.

He said Sarawak has fewer than 2,500 orang-utans, the lowest number compared to the rest of Borneo island, with Sabah having about 15,000 and Kalimantan even more.

“Despite the relatively small number, Sarawak has put in a lot of efforts in conserving the primates,” Len told The Borneo Post yesterday.

As research has shown that there was quite an extensive presence of orang-utans in areas outside Lanjat Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary and Batang Ai National Park, he said there were proposals for the conservation parks to be expanded since two years ago.

He revealed that 14,200 ha near the international border with Kalimantan had already been gazetted but the state was facing some setback in extending Batang Ai National Park as the exercise would be seen as encroachment into native customary rights (NCR) land.

“To preserve the orang-utans, we do not allow the NCR to be converted into oil palm plantations.

“While we forbid them to turn their land into plantation, we have to come up with a solution that not only serves the purpose of conserving the wildlife there but at the same time, bringing in income to the locals.

“The government is also looking into other possibilities and presently the best possibility is to develop the area into an eco-tourism destination to ensure that income will be generated for the local land owners while at the same time, we don’t harm the habitat of the orang-utans,” said Len.

Len was commenting on the strong stance of Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Adenan Satem on the preservation of orang-utans which the latter expressed when interviewed by World Conservation Society (WCS) recently.

During the interview, Adenan called on all nature lovers “not to worry” as the Sarawak government would try as much as it could “to keep orang-utans safe and prosperous in our state”.

Calling himself an amateur naturalist and a fan of Dr Birute Galdikas, the late Dian Fossey and Jane Goodall as well as Sir David Attenborough, Adenan said he had been very concerned about the state of orang-utans and other mammals in Borneo Island.

“Now, as far as Sarawak is concerned, I have made certain decisions which are in favour of nature.

“I am a naturalist by inclination and I have made some concrete decisions with regard to conservation of our natural resources especially with regard to fauna,” said Adenan during the interview. One of the decisions, he said, was to ensure that there would be no more commercial plantations and encroachment or conversion of natural forests into estates.

“This is to protect the existing forest and forested areas, so that nature can run its natural course.” Another decision was to stop the issuance of timber licences, occupational licences and renewal of logging licences.

“This is to maintain selective logging. I will not allow anymore third entry or fourth entry into licensed areas.” Adenan said the intention was for “Sarawak to remain as it was with regard to our flora and fauna”. However, he welcomed any international groups such as WCS to do research on the national parks and sanctuaries in Sarawak.

The Borneo Post Online – News Website

6th August 2015

<http://www.theborneopost.com/2015/08/06/govt-testing-new-conservation-model-in-menyang/>

BORNEO POST *online*

THE LARGEST ENGLISH NEWS SITE IN BORNEO

Govt testing new conservation model in Menyang



SFD director Supian Ahmad (third right) presents a copy of 'Ensera Mayas Enggau Bansa Iban' to Sudarsono. WCS Malaysia director Dr Melvin Gumal is at fourth right.



The book 'Ensera Mayas Enggau Bansa Iban' contains 37 legends that depict the relationships between the orang utans and the Ibans in Ulu Menyang.

SRI AMAN: The state government has rejected applications for logging licence and oil palm plantation in Ulu Sungai Menyang Forest (Menyang) in favour of a new conservation model.

Permanent secretary of the Ministry of Resources Planning and Environment, Datu Sudarsono Osman, said usually

when the government deemed a forest was of high conservation value, it would gazette and declare the area as a national park or wildlife sanctuary, and extinguished all the locals' rights over the land.

For Menyang, however, a different conservation concept is used. Under this concept, the government allowed the affected community to continue to own the land, but the government would closely monitor development activities to ensure conservation efforts were not compromised.

"This model will be one of the first where we want to preserve the natural habitat of the orang utans and also acknowledge that there are already people there. They need to co-exist.

"So, it is about balancing the need for conservation and the need of the local community," he told The Borneo Post after officiating at the Ulu Sg Menyang Community Development and Conservation Workshop and launch of the book 'Ensera Mayas Enggau Bansa Iban' here yesterday.

Sudarsono said it had been found that the orang utans tended to live near human settlements, where they could easily find food, and in Menyang, the Iban community had co-existed with the orang utans for centuries.

"To preserve the area, the government has turned down applications for logging licence and oil palm plantation. That being the case, it has to find alternative economic activities to ensure the affected community derives sustainable income from their land."

As there had been eco-tourism activities in the area, Sudarsono said the government hoped to enhance these activities to ensure that the pilot model succeed.

"That is why we are getting all parties – the local community, the Forestry Department (SFD), Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC), Borneo Adventure (BA) and also NGOs, such as WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society), to be involved to make sure this is a success, where there is conservation, community tourism and co-existence with the wildlife."

“Once the model is proven successful, it will be replicated in other areas in future.”

He added that as the attempt was the first of its kind, his ministry would fast track it to ensure not only its success but that those affected would get a consistent high income.

Earlier, in his speech, Sudarsono said preservation and conservation of wildlife in Sarawak had been carried out since the 1950s, and six areas had been identified as orang utan sanctuaries or national parks.

These areas are Batang Ai National Park, Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary, Sedilu National Park, Ulu Sebuyau National Park, Maludam National Park, and Gunung Lesong National Park.

The government had also set up infrastructure, such as Orang Utan Conservation Excellent Centre at Ng Delok, Batang Ai, Semenggok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre, and Matang Wildlife Centre for the research and rehabilitation of orang utans.

Ulu Menyang, spanning 14,000 hectares, is situated beside Batang Ai National Park. Between late 2012 and early 2013, a survey done by SFD, SFC, BA and WCS found 995 orang utan nests and about 200, orang utans of the ‘pongo pymaeus’ sub-species were detected in the survey area.

“This sub-species is the most endangered species in the world. It has been estimated that the population of this species in Borneo is between 3,000 and 4,000.”

The Borneo Post Online – News Website

19th August 2015

<http://www.theborneopost.com/2015/08/19/mou-aims-to-promote-conservation-projects/>

BORNEO POST *online*

THE LARGEST ENGLISH NEWS SITE IN BORNEO

MoU aims to promote conservation projects



Sapuan (second left) and WCS director Melvin T Gumal exchange MoU documents.

KUCHING: The Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote and implement conservation projects and activities in various protected areas through scientific research, conservation education, information sharing and capacity building.

Forest Department director Sapuan Ahmad said the MoU aimed to provide technical expertise and administration services to WCS for the development and implementation of conservation activities in protected areas.

WCS will provide technical experts, advice and assistance for the development and implementation of conservation activities in protected areas, carry out research concerning wildlife and assist in preparing implementation plans for research and conservation activities concerning specific wildlife species and habitat.

“There has been a long working history between FDS and WCS since the 1959, when a letter from New York came to Sarawak Forest Department on the survey of orangutans in Sarawak,” Sapuan told a press conference.

“This MoU formalises all our work with WCS on orangutans and in 2015, it constitutes 4.5 decades of a wonderful working relationship.”

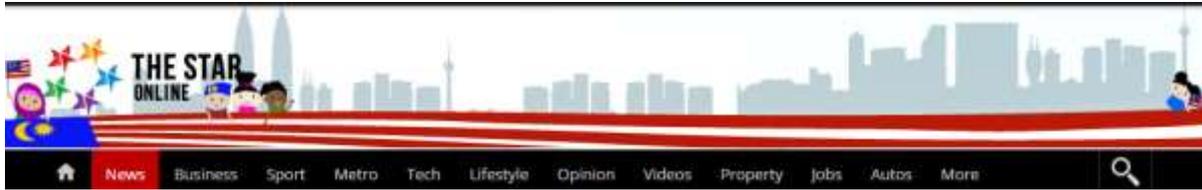
He said the department also worked with WCS on the Wildlife Master Plan Policy for Sarawak in the mid-1990s and more recently on the orangutan strategic action plan in 2010.

In addition, possible long-term collaboration activities that FDS and WCS are working on include the United Nations

Global Environment Facility projects and research activities on orangutans, he added.

The Star Online – News Website
24th August 2015

<http://www.thestar.com.my/Metro/Community/2015/08/24/Wildlife-a-priority-State-aims-to-lead-the-way-in-conservation/>



Sarawak aims to lead the way in wildlife conservation



Saving endangered species: (From left) Sarawak Forest Department director Sapuan Ahmad, Wildlife Conservation Society Malaysia director Dr Melvin Gumal and Dr Rao exchanging documents.

KUCHING: The Sarawak Government could become a south-east Asian leader in wildlife conservation if it follows through with its own policies.

A specialist on orang utans, who has documented the near extinction of the Sumatran sub-species, said the state government's resolve to stem natural destruction is commendable.

Dr Madhu Rao of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) described the plan to expand protected areas as laudable, but noted the government could run into development pressures from parties like the plantation sector.

The chief conflict between conservation and development was the suitability of low-lying forests as both orang utan habitats and also oil palm estates.

“Orang utan do not do well in upland areas so most of them are found in low-lying tropical forests.

“Unfortunately, these are also the very places good for oil palm plantations,” Rao said after witnessing a signing ceremony between WCS and the Sarawak Forest Department.

“I think it is really worth highlighting the strong need for political will when it comes to conservation.

“If the Sarawak Government can expand its protected areas, then it will be leading the way for governments in the region.”

Most south-east Asian countries have already lost their virgin forests and Thailand as well as Cambodia have already lost much of their wildlife, she said, adding Laos’ forests were also being felled at an alarming rate.

“Orang utan in Sumatra are nearly extinct. There’s a lot of pressure to open up land for plantations, which makes Sarawak’s pledge particularly refreshing,” she said.

After taking over as Chief Minister last year, Tan Sri Adenan Satem announced Sarawak aimed to have 1.5 million ha of protected areas, which is higher than the 10% of landmass recommendation by the United Nations.

Adenan launched an anti illegal logging campaign and acknowledged both the private and public sectors were engaged in corruption.

Last month, Adenan said he would pursue an orang utan led conservation policy for Sarawak.

During a recorded message presented at the Great Apes Survival Partnership in Kota Kinabalu, Adenan said he would “totally prohibit” commercial dealings in orang utan habitats.

“We have happily discovered a few more areas of habitat. In fact, over and above the present ones at the Batang Ai and Lanjak Entimau landscape, they have discovered quite a few more in nearby areas. We will preserve those,” the Chief Minister said.

In the pipeline are some 20 new national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, including extensions on current ones like Kubah National Park, home to some of the world’s smallest frogs. The state currently has 30 national parks, six wildlife sanctuaries and eight nature reserves, according to the Sarawak Forestry Corporation.

Paula Kahumbu
2014 Whitley Award Winner

Websites

The Telegraph – Online Newspaper, UK
18th October 2014

[http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/wildlife/11168036/Fighting-the-
elephant-ivory-poachers-of-Kenya.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/wildlife/11168036/Fighting-the-
elephant-ivory-poachers-of-Kenya.html)

8,283,000 visitors per month

The Telegraph

Fighting the elephant ivory poachers of Kenya

With the slaughter of elephants showing no sign of slowing in Kenya, Dr Paula Kahumbu is a conservationist who is taking the fight to the poachers



An elephant carcass at Ngwesi Conservancy, Kenya, where slaughter continues at a horrifying rate. Photo: David Chancellor

Dr Paula Kahumbu's eyes are blazing and she is jabbing her finger at the distant African horizon. At anyone, everyone, who is responsible for the elephant slaughter engulfing this continent. 'You realise that Kenya is now Africa's primary gateway for ivory smuggled to Asia,' she says. 'What that tells us is that organised crime has taken root in this country. It is corrupting the entire chain, from the wildlife areas to our ports.'

We are standing on the plains of the Maasai Mara, the most northern extension of the fabled Serengeti, one of Africa's most beautiful wildlife ecosystems. Out here today there is tranquillity: wildlife going about its business, uninterrupted by the predations of modern man. As the sun begins to set behind the hills, zebras, wildebeest, giraffes and a small herd of elephants head towards the Sand river for water. Above, eagles and vultures are riding the thermals like so many kites against a cobalt-blue sky. Right now the only predators these animals need fear are the lions, hyenas and occasional leopards that are part of the ecological chain.

But this serene snapshot of the African wilderness adhering to its ancient order contrasts starkly with the blizzard of recent reports of elephant, rhino and big-cat poaching. Over the past three years, more than 100,000 elephants across the continent were killed for their ivory. South Africa, which has 80 per cent of Africa's rhinos, is losing about three a day to poachers. Elsewhere lion, leopard and cheetah numbers are declining dramatically, and even less-endangered species such as giraffe and zebra are being hunted illegally for the shabby trade in skins and bushmeat.

A shocking study published in August by American academics states that Africa's elephant population has reached tipping point, that poachers are now killing more elephants than are being born, and the species is heading for extinction. According to the lead author, Colorado State University's George Wittemyer, 'We are shredding the fabric of elephant society and exterminating populations across the continent.'

Paula Kahumbu knows better than most that the African wilderness we are looking at – the idyllic Maasai Mara of so many tourist brochures – is under serious threat. For the past six years this vivacious Kenyan crusader has been playing a leading role in WildlifeDirect, the most creative, outspoken and politically active environmental NGO to emerge in recent years. Most African wildlife organisations – the AWF (African Wildlife Foundation), WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) and Tusk Trust, for example – are dominated by white Western males, all with the best intentions but required by African political protocol to remain polite, relatively docile and deferential to the political leaders. Dr Kahumbu is the opposite: confrontational, fearless and ready to tackle African politicians head on. 'In this country,' she says, 'the conservation world is dominated by people who aren't African Kenyans, and that has allowed the powers-that-be to look at it as a black versus white issue. So having me speaking out and enlisting Africans from all sectors has been an important change.'

Her approach has exposed her to personal danger, and she admits she has received what she calls ‘veiled threats’. ‘Dealing with issues that touch on organised crime, corruption and politics – and you can be sure these criminals are engaged with the political fraternity in Kenya – then that could be dangerous,’ Kahumbu acknowledges. ‘But the stakes are too high to back down now.’

She is equally emphatic about what needs to be done to stem demand. The most ‘blindingly obvious move in the short term’ is for the Chinese government to ban the domestic trade in ivory. ‘It would instantly reduce international demand by about 80 per cent,’ she says, ‘but at the moment the Chinese government is sending out mixed signals. It says it is trying to reduce demand by allowing organisations like WildAid to put out anti-poaching posters in subways and on the sides of buildings, but at the same time there are ivory exhibitions, they promote ivory markets and they recently started carving degree courses at Chinese universities. Everyone is terrified of upsetting China, but the situation is now urgent so there is no longer time for diplomatic niceties.’



Dr Paula Kahumbu with her mentor, Dr Richard Leakey, whom she has known since her schooldays. (Photo: Jeremy Boynton)

Kahumbu’s mentor is Dr Richard Leakey, the founder of WildlifeDirect and himself a militant conservationist, who 25 years ago ran the

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), surrounded at all times by five bodyguards. Midway through his term as the country’s wildlife guardian in the early 1990s, the light aircraft he was piloting crashed to earth, and as a result he had both legs amputated below the knee. To this day there remain suspicions that this was an assassination attempt.

WildlifeDirect has accused Kenyan officials of protecting the international poaching networks. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Kenyan and Tanzanian ports are the main ivory gateways to the major consumer markets in China and, as Kahumbu says, ‘You can’t move ivory in that volume as an individual. You have to be connected to criminals, freighting companies and corrupt officials at the ports. We know they’re turning off the scanning machines.’

The organisation has also been instrumental in the introduction of stringent new laws in Kenya to punish wildlife-trafficking offences, as well as increasing the penalties for possession of ivory or rhino horn from a paltry 40,000 Kenyan shillings (£279) to 20 million shillings (£139,000). These are now the most severe penalties on the continent.

The country's Chief Justice has also agreed to review the filing system for wildlife crime after WildlifeDirect found that in 70 per cent of recent cases files were missing, misplaced or simply thrown away.

WildlifeDirect has harassed the government into banning Furadan, an agricultural insecticide that in recent years has been responsible for poisoning hundreds of lions, hyenas, vultures and other animals. And Kahumbu has successfully put pressure on the Kenyan courts to halt government plans to go ahead with a Chinese-built four-lane highway through Nairobi National Park, the country's oldest wildlife reserve.

Just as important as this brave and brazen confrontation with a corrupt, complacent establishment has been WildlifeDirect's use of social-media platforms to engage Kahumbu's fellow Kenyans in citizen conservation. The conventional colonial view is that black Africans are not interested in wildlife conservation. Kahumbu says WildlifeDirect's social-media traffic 'completely undermines that stereotyping'. It gives voice to some 120 conservation projects that share their daily challenges through blogs, podcasts, tweeting, video diaries and the rest. As a result, donors are contributing small but significant amounts directly to the grass-roots conservationists as they never have before.

This work is also creating stark awareness of the poaching horrors that are now commonplace across the continent. When seven mountain gorillas were found brutally slaughtered in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Virunga National Park in 2007, local villagers mourned their deaths intensely, and the rangers who discovered the bodies of these animals they had known well posted their life stories and photographs. Their moving WildlifeDirect blogs had a profound effect. According to Kahumbu, 'That story went from the blog to the cover of National Geographic and raised half a million dollars for the rangers.' It also led to the local guerrilla armies in this war-torn region agreeing to protect the gorillas in the future.

'What we did with the gorillas was to make people aware of the specific horrors behind the statistics,' Kahumbu says. 'So when a rhino was poached at Ol Pejeta, I was in discussions with the Lewa board [the local conservation body]. I insisted they come with me to see the carcass, and I uploaded pictures of the board members looking at a rhino that had had its face chopped off. That's pretty powerful. By the time we got back to Nairobi that story was all over the news. It really affected people.'

Kahumbu has a lot in common with Obama. Like the US President, she is the child of a black Kenyan father and a white Western mother, her father part of the first generation of Kikuyu to be educated in Western universities. And like Obama, she has excelled academically, acquiring a bachelor's degree at Bristol university and her doctorate, in elephant behaviour, at Princeton. She is also a powerful orator, a lecturer at Princeton and author of the children's book *Owen & Mzee*, the true story of a hippo and a tortoise that became inseparable friends.

Throughout her formative years, Leakey was a profound influence. They were near neighbours when she was a schoolgirl in Nairobi's Karen suburb, and she remembers going to his house with her siblings – she was one of nine children – and testing him out on identifying animals they had found or seen. 'He was never wrong,' she says. Years later, after her mother had sent her to secretarial college 'because we couldn't afford university and that was regarded as the best career option for young women in those days', she turned to Leakey for advice and help in escaping a fate that for her was horrifying.

'I ran away from college after three months and decided I wanted to be a wildlife ranger and work for George Adamson [the conservationist, author and rehabilitator of lions]. Richard persuaded me to intern instead with some scientists, and he promised that if I did well he would find a way of getting me a scholarship to study at university.'

Her early studies and fieldwork involved primates, and she wrote her masters papers on the monkeys of the Tana River Primate Reserve. But, like so many African conservationists, she became increasingly fascinated with elephants. This is a sentiment echoed by most of the wildlife people I have met over the years. There is something about elephants and elephant behaviour that sets them apart from other animal species. Perhaps it is their intense family bonds, or the fact that they mourn their dead, or that they can communicate over vast African plains. Whatever it is, elephants represent something special. For Kahumbu they are 'mystical creatures. And they seem aware of us. They look us in the eye.'

The turning point in her life came when, in-between degrees, as an employee of Leakey's KWS, she was tasked with counting and measuring the ivory stockpile in the country's vaults. This was in preparation for Leakey's internationally televised burning of the tusks in 1989, an event that remains the boldest anti-trade statement in wildlife conservation. Kahumbu found her grisly auditing exercise heartbreaking. 'We were weighing and measuring tusks from elephants no older than three or four years old. At that stage I was deciding what to do for my doctoral thesis, and I thought there would be no point in studying elephants because they were on their way to extinction. I was thinking that even back then!'

The 12 tons of tusks were assembled into what Leakey deemed 'a macabre sculpture' and, in front of the world press, the country's president, Daniel arap Moi, set it alight. This publicity stunt proved a major turning point in Kenyan conservation, helping to stem the tide of poaching ripping through east Africa in the 1980s. It also gave the young Paula Kahumbu an incentive to study the animals she loved and to begin working on her doctoral thesis, on the relationship between elephants and their habitats.

'I am at my happiest out here in the bush,' she says as we head out from Cottar's 1820 tented camp, where we are staying, on to the Maasai Mara plains. She admits this is something of a cultural anathema; for a long time her fellow Kenyans asked her why she would want to work in wildlife conservation. 'They would say, "Why are you doing this? How can you go back to the bush – don't you know that's where we came from?"' There was huge cultural discouragement. I just laugh at them.' But times are changing and, as her social-media campaigns have proved, modern Africans do not suffer the same cultural cringe about the wilderness as earlier generations of post-colonial Africans.

We have now been joined by Leakey and are doing what so many safari-goers do – cruising through this sun-drenched landscape watching the wildlife from the comfort of a Toyota Land Cruiser. Only, today, the plains are somewhat lacking in fellow foreign travellers, for the terrorist bombing campaign that has plagued Kenya over the past two years has led to travel advisories from the British and American governments, and resulted in a significant fall in tourism.

The presence of tourists is a significant deterrent to poachers, and both Leakey and Kahumbu express concern about the knock-on effect of a major tourist downturn. Kahumbu says that if tourists stay away not only are there 'fewer eyes in the park', but there is less money to support ranger patrols. The last time there was a crash in tourism, following the post-2007 election violence, WildlifeDirect raised \$80,000 to restore patrol levels. If this international stay-away continues into 2015, it is agreed that a great deal more will be needed to plug the gap.

As we potter through the Maasai Mara at a leisurely pace, Kahumbu and her mentor argue like a well-worn married couple. Their mutual respect is palpable, and the bickering is good-humoured. But Leakey is concerned about her safety. 'For the record,' he says, 'there are people in Kenya who would rather Paula wasn't doing what she's doing.' He says she should have a bodyguard. She says she wouldn't think of it. Then she concedes that rubbing up against the authorities can be dangerous and recalls a friend who, a few years ago, spoke out against the government and was arrested and treated badly. 'He was so affected by the experience that he disappeared from the scene.'

One of the crucial lessons Leakey has taught his pupil is the art of thinking big, acting accordingly, and so maintaining a high profile. Kahumbu has learnt how to market conservation ideas. Leakey has always had a great reputation as a peerless gatherer of donor funding for his causes, whether they be paleo institutions or conservation organisations. When he was head of the KWS in the late 1980s he managed to persuade international donors, led by the World Bank, to contribute \$150 million to Kenya's conservation efforts, at a time when the West was decidedly wary of giving money to east African governments. Even today he is tirelessly raising funds for his ambitious science institute at Turkana in the north of Kenya.

Kahumbu has a similar flair for attracting publicity and supporters for her organisation. Last year she secured Kenya's First Lady, Margaret Kenyatta, as a patron of WildlifeDirect, and recently she managed to persuade the regional airline Safarilink to carry her hands off our elephants logos, but has failed to persuade the national airline, Kenya Airways. She has also convinced the airport authorities to carry warnings in the country's four international airports about the criminality of, and stringent new laws attached to, possession and transportation of ivory.

This being Africa, there have, of course, been major setbacks. Much of the dramatic branding and artwork that has carried the WildlifeDirect campaigns over the past few years was a collaboration between Kahumbu and Patrick Richer, an Australian art director who was married to a Kenyan and lived in Nairobi. But Richer was murdered in an armed robbery in his home last November, and talking about her friend and his cruel demise stops her in her tracks. 'We lost his genius,' she says quietly, 'and unfortunately all of our artwork, which was on his computer.'

Outspoken and engaging though she is about everything to do with conservation, Kahumbu seems oddly diffident about her private life, though she is proud of her 21-year-old son, who is serving in the US Navy. In a recent interview for a Kenyan website she described her status as single. In fact, in May 2010, she married the journalist Peter Greste under the acacias at Nairobi National Park. He is one of three foreign correspondents recently jailed by the Egyptian authorities. When I ask her how she feels about this, she shrugs it off, saying, 'We broke up in 2010.' And that's all she wants to say on the subject, though they are still married.

Two days in the Maasai Mara is all the time Kahumbu can afford, for there are meetings, emails, blogs, conference calls and publicity campaigns to attend to back in Nairobi. So the next morning we bounce along the corrugated dirt road heading for the Cottar's camp airstrip, and I ask her whether, in the face of all the gloomy statistics we've been discussing, she is optimistic about the future of Kenya's wildlife. 'I'm optimistic that we'll start pushing the dealers away from Kenya by making it difficult to operate here. And that's a new beginning.' And with a flashing smile, she boards the Cessna Caravan and is gone. 'An unusual woman,' Leakey says as we head back to camp.

Some weeks after our trip, I get a call in my London office from Kahumbu. She is extremely animated. She tells me that a report on Kenya's wildlife security that was commissioned by the government cabinet secretary Judi Wakhungu has just been published. It confirms everything she and Leakey have been saying about the KWS, the supposed guardians of Kenya's wildlife.

The report accuses KWS senior managers of incompetence, citing a breakdown in communications with wildlife NGOs and wildlife conservation experts, and the fact that 50 per cent of the organisation's vehicles were not being deployed in the field. It also claims that the intelligence networks, fundamental to anti-poaching successes in Leakey's heyday, had completely broken down and that staff were poorly supervised and demoralised. In short, according to Kahumbu, the KWS is not fit for purpose.

‘It is worse than we thought,’ she says. ‘It’s shocking. Nepotism, corruption, mismanagement of finances and much more.’ She believes, however, that wildlife crime ‘can’t be defeated by KWS alone. The government needs to look at this as an issue of national security. It requires all law-enforcement agencies to work in a strategic, coordinated way, and we need to work with neighbouring countries. President Kenyatta has to take the lead on this.

‘It’s war now. We are losing our national heritage; we are losing our elephants. It’s happening inside our national parks; rangers are being shot by other rangers because they’re poaching. We have to act now.’

The Guardian Online - Newspaper, UK
18th November 2014

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/18/elephants-wiped-out-interpol-most-wanted-eco-criminals-list>

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Elephants are being wiped out, but not enough people seem to care

Progress on wildlife poaching is slow because there is little public pressure. Let's hope Interpol's 'most wanted' eco criminals list will help



Bibi van der Zee

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 Jump to comments (160)



'The forest elephant population has dropped by 62% since 2002.' Photograph: Philimon Bulawayo/Reuters

I asked a senior environmental journalist the other week what he thought was the single most under-reported environmental issue. He replied, unhesitatingly, wildlife poaching. "It's as if the wildlife is just being hoovered out of Africa," he said. "In the 1960s people campaigned around whales and wildlife. The Daily Mail actually put rhino poaching on their front page. But now there just doesn't seem to be the same level of interest." Dr Paula Kahumbu, a wildlife campaigner based in Kenya, echoes his sentiment, but adds that the UK public is still more active than most areas of the world. "Not a single African leader has spoken out on this," says Kahumbu. "The silence is deafening."

The scale of the “hoovering” is hard to comprehend. Take elephants, for example. In Africa, where some but not all of the poaching is concentrated, elephants are being slaughtered at a rate of 20,000-25,000 a year, from a population of just 420,000-650,000. The forest elephant population has dropped by 62% since 2002. There is a word for the killing of elephants (elephanticide) and a word for destruction of the natural world (ecocide) but oddly enough – given our magnificent form in this area – there doesn’t seem to be a word for killing off a whole species. We probably need one.

And then there are the other species we “hoover” up, from illegal logging and the dumping of hazardous waste. Taken altogether, a UN report earlier this year estimated that the cost of these crimes is \$70-213bn annually. So these are not small operations, not a few farmers sneakily chopping down a few trees to augment their subsistence income, or the odd fisherman going over his quota. These are international cartels systematically and illegally stripping our natural resources and selling them on for profit. Some of them are running parallel drug and human trafficking operations. There is even evidence that some of this income is supporting terrorism. “The illegal trade in natural resources is depriving developing economies of billions of dollars in lost revenues and lost development opportunities, while benefiting a relatively small criminal fraternity,” says the UN. This is big business.

Will the publication on Monday by Interpol of a Most Wanted list for environmental fugitives begin the process of bringing to justice the people who mastermind some of these crimes? They are (even though mugshots are never the greatest) a pretty unprepossessing looking bunch, and include the Russian Sergey Darminov, wanted for allegedly running an illegal crab fishing operation that pulled in \$450m, or Dutchman Nicolaas Duindam, who is said to have been involved in a trafficking ring bringing in wildlife from Brazil.

In some cases, the crimes detailed on the list belie a far more complicated story, such as that of Feisal Mohamed Ali. He is wanted simply for “being found in possession of 314 pieces of ivory weighing more than two tonnes”, according to Interpol, but, according to Kahumbu, his activities also allegedly include other extremely serious crimes. Kahumbu, along with other campaigners, is elated at the publication of the list. “It sends out an extremely powerful signal,” she says, “that the international authorities are taking this seriously.”

It’s a start – a really encouraging and powerful start. But the truth is that it is the lack of public and political interest that is the real danger. On a recent visit to Tanzania, Chinese government officials were alleged to have bought so much illegal ivory that local prices doubled, although Chinese officials denied any involvement in the illegal ivory trade. The UK government pledged £10m in December last year to help clamp down on illegal international poaching, but has not yet, according to Kahumbu, paid up. (I rang Defra and it said that £1m has been allocated so far, that a further £4m will be allocated “very shortly” and that the rest will be going out in the next 12 months.)

Why is it all so slow? Because there is such little public pressure to do anything else. Wildlife is just old hat, and nowadays it's food security and climate change that grab the headlines. Without public pressure, politicians will let this slide. So where will the public pressure come from?



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The barbaric capture of baby elephants for zoos in China shocks the world

Are there no limits to the cruelty that humans are prepared to inflict on their fellow creatures in the natural world? When there is money to be made, apparently not

Paula Kahumbu with Andrew Halliday

Tuesday 16 December 2014 18.40 GMT

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In a [recent article for the BBC](#), George Monbiot quotes the words of the pioneering conservationist Aldo Leopold: “One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds.” These words have a particular resonance to those of us engaged in what sometimes seems a losing battle to save the world’s dwindling populations of elephants, rhinos, and other large mammals.

In a developing scandal, the Zimbabwe Parks and [Wildlife](#) Management Authority (ZPWMA) has reportedly captured several dozen baby elephants for export to zoos in China and possibly also the Middle East.

According to Zimbabwe Conservations Taskforce director Johnny Rodrigues, the elephants are between two-and-a-half and five years old and are being sent under conditions of tight security by container trucks to Maputo in Mozambique for transfer to a livestock sea freighter bound for China.

In a further twist it is reported that Australian Hank Jenkin, a former top official from CITES, which is supposed to regulate the global trade in endangered species, is now working as a consultant to procure “hundreds” of elephants for Chinese zoos and safari parks. Sadly, this is not the first report I have heard of the supposed gamekeepers of CITES turning poachers.

Are these baby elephants “ivory orphans” taken as they stand grieving at the bloody corpses of their mothers and sisters? Or were they dragged forcibly from their mothers, or stolen away in the night? We do not know.

But whatever the circumstances of their capture we can hardly imagine the physical and emotional torment these animals will suffer: confined, alone and frightened on the long voyage to China.

Elephants are among the most intensely social of all large mammals. Elephant mothers suckle their young for five years, which means that many of the elephants bound for China, some as young as two-and-a-half years old, were not physically prepared to be separated from their mothers.

But the emotional bond between mother and offspring lasts much longer. Elephant researcher George Wittemyer reports how a female elephant is still intimately bonded with her ten year old daughter. Bonds between sisters can be just as strong: Juvenile female African elephants are often fascinated with newborn calves; they help out in caring for them, and will even suckle them.



Elephant mother, daughter and young calf, Amboseli National Park, Kenya. Photograph: Paula Kahumbu/Paula Kahumbu / WildlifeDirect

Adult elephants form deep bonds with each other, which last for decades. According to Cynthia Moss, founder of the [world's longest running elephant research project at Amboseli](#), these bonds play a vital role transmitting communicating social and ecological knowledge from one generation to another.

Elephants take care of the sick and comfort the dying. [The film Echo](#) tells the story of Eli who was born deformed and survives because of the love and attention he gets from his mother and sisters who would not leave him behind.

My own research has involved decades of delight in getting to know elephants – and discovering that it is a two-way street: the elephants get to know me as well. They remember the looks, smells and sounds of researchers. And even now, I am still continuously surprised by their intelligence and thoughtfulness.

Recently I watched 66 year old grandmother Barbara guard her sleeping granddaughter from the feet of playful youngsters, then position her body to cast a shade from the scorching sun. The group could not move on until the 5 day old baby had rested.

To call these behaviours “almost human” only reveals the unlimited arrogance of our own species. Scientists can study elephant behaviour, and we can all marvel at it. But we can never know, and cannot even begin to imagine the profound underlying emotional and spiritual bonds among elephants.

If you think the baby elephants in the photos look sweet, you cannot imagine just how sweet they look to a mother elephant, or the anguish she feels when her calf is stolen from her.

Zimbabwean officials have defended their actions by saying that the export of live elephants is not illegal. It should be. Thankfully many countries around the world are now taking action to prohibit elephants from being held in zoos and circuses. But China stands apart from this wave of change and seems to be going backwards.

Likewise, Zimbabwe's actions ignore lessons that have been learned long ago in other countries. The practice of taking baby elephants, once common in South Africa, was banned there when the results of research in Kenya were presented to the authorities and convinced them of the horrific psychological suffering and trauma involved.

The driving spirit behind Zimbabwe's actions may well be President Mugabe, who is on record on more than one occasion as saying that Zimbabwe's wildlife "needs to start paying dividends". Another top official put it more bluntly: "We are not interested in wildlife... we want cash."

As a counter-argument, conservationists often point out that the most profitable use of wildlife is to leave it where it is, where it can generate sustainable incomes from wildlife tourism.

I have made these arguments myself, and will no doubt continue to do so. But as I reflect on the plight of these baby elephants and the suffering of their families, I ask myself: why do we have to commoditise the natural wonders of our planet?

Why can we not simply live and let live, and be content with the privilege of sharing our world with these marvellous fellow creatures?

It is sometimes said that elephants are like humans. Maybe. But what is certain is that we humans need to learn to be more like elephants.

CNN - News Website

7th April 2015

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/07/opinions/paula-kahumbu-china-ivory-elephants-extinction/index.html>

'We don't buy panda products - so the Chinese should get their hands off our elephants'



The majestic African elephants are in trouble as wildlife experts say poachers are slaughtering as many as 25,000 of them a year because of their ivory tusks. If things don't change soon the African elephant could be extinct within decades, experts warn.

Kenyan conservationist Paula Kahumbu is the Executive Director of WildlifeDirect and heads the "Hands Off Our Elephants" campaign. The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely hers.

(CNN)Elephants could be [extinct in the wild within a few decades](#), leading experts warned late last month in Botswana at the Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, which gathered 150 delegates from countries that are sourcing, transiting and demanding ivory.

The participants signed onto 15 new commitments to stop the slaughter of elephants which have been hailed as significant not only for Africa but globally.

Yet, some conservationists feel unless China -- the leading [consumer of ivory](#) -- commits to ending the ivory trade, elephants will be doomed.



I am one of them. I started working on elephant conservation when I was a teenager at the National Museums of Kenya. My job was to measure every piece of ivory in the national stockpile.

After two weeks of handling thousands of blood encrusted tusks, I was persuaded that the time for elephants was up.

I had already seen the photographs of mutilated elephants on the headlines of our local newspapers, but now I had the scientific proof that poachers had been gunning down most adult elephants, and were also taking down baby elephants with tusks no more than six inches long.

I remember the disgust, shame and horror I felt at what was happening to an animal that I had never even seen in the wild.



Officials, activists and conservationists, including Paula Kahumbu, before the destruction of six tons of confiscated ivory during the U.S. Ivory Crush in Commerce City, Colorado, on November 14, 2013.

Progress and regress

My boss, renowned conservationist Richard Leakey, put up a spirited fight and shocked the world by setting the entire Kenyan ivory stockpile alight -- the world rallied around Kenya, elephants were listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and trade in ivory was banned globally.

Within months, legal and illegal ivory markets collapsed and the price of ivory plummeted. At that time Japan was the major consumer and everyone said they could not be moved because the use of ivory was rooted in their culture. They were wrong. The demand for ivory collapsed and poaching of elephants and trafficking of ivory declined sharply and elephant numbers began to recover.

Over the next 25 years, elephant populations seemed safe and conservationists heaved a huge sigh of relief.



But international agencies, including some major conservation NGOs, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature began to suggest that some elephant populations did not deserve to be on Appendix I -- and they even supported renewed sales of ivory.

The first "experimental one-off sale" took place to Japan in 2002. Although the ivory markets in Japan were fairly small, and the controls in that country good, conservationists warned that opening up partial ivory trade was sending the wrong signals, and that it would trigger a demand that could not be contained.

And that is exactly what happened after a second "one-off sale" to China took place in 2008.

Kenya fought valiantly to stop these sales from happening. I headed the Kenyan delegation in 2000 and 2002 and I remember the intense debates at CITES in which the Kenya delegation sought to win global sympathy and support -- "with due respect to our sister from Kenya," the Zimbabwean delegate said, "she is just too emotional." Their argument was that the southern African countries had valuable ivory stocks, and the sale

would not affect the rest of Africa. They promised that the funds would be ploughed back into elephant conservation.

To assuage the fears of Kenya, Mali and many other countries, it was agreed that if the ivory sales caused any spike in poaching, CITES would shut down the markets. It was faulty thinking from the start -- you could not shut down a sale after it had happened. Nevertheless, millions of dollars were spent (mostly on western expatriates) to create a monitoring system now called MIKE (the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants).

Out of control

Now, 12 years after that first one-off sale, which is just one fifth of the lifetime of an elephant, poaching is out of control and elephant populations are plummeting towards extinction.

In response to the escalating poaching, some countries have strengthened their law enforcement through private and public efforts. In Kenya, there is a new punitive law, increased numbers of rangers and suspected ivory kingpins are being arrested. The poaching is down, but we are fully aware that we're only scratching the surface.

Every African country has its own independent strategy and government responses are slow and clumsy. Yet, poachers and dealers are smart, know the loopholes and the means to corrupt officials.

We know that we cannot save elephants when the demand for ivory continues to rise in Asia. We know that the demand must be extinguished but no one dares to ask for this. It requires the Chinese government to be a friend to Africa and it requires courage.



DANIEL HAYDUK/AFR/GETTY IMAGES

'Hands off our elephants'

We do not have time to politely persuade the generations of buyers to give up their addiction for ivory. The only solution is a permanent ban on domestic and international trade in ivory across the world.

My Chinese friends warn me that their government is stubborn, and that China will only follow actions of other countries -- two months after the U.S. crushed six tons of ivory, China crushed 6.1 tons of ivory.

It made no difference whatsoever.

I am sick of all the repeated mistakes we keep making with the Chinese in an effort to not offend. The Chinese are waging a war against Africa by decimating our elephant herds. They are using the force of their economy to threaten us. We cannot afford to respond with politeness. We must defend what is ours and express ourselves clearly about elephants now.

We don't buy panda products, they should get their hands off our elephants.

National Geographic Voices – Blog Website
27th April 2015

<http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2015/04/27/things-r-elephant-heated-debate-in-kenya-gets-to-the-heart-of-what-it-will-take-to-save-the-species/>



“Things R Elephant”: Heated Debate in Kenya Gets to the Heart of What It Will Take to Save the Species



Debate moderator John Sibi-Okumu (middle) gestures in the debate session between Paula Kahumbu and Charles Onyango Obbo. Photo by Emmanuel Muasya/WildlifeDirect

In Kenya, when you hear that “Things are Elephant,” it means there’s a major problem. That’s why we chose this as the title for the first ever debate of its kind, organized by [WildlifeDirect](#), on the future of elephants.

On the afternoon of April 25, in a school hall in Nairobi, two highly charged teams—who had traded emotional Tweets the days before—went head to head. The only thing they agreed on was the need to save elephants.

The need to save our elephants has never been greater: Only today, in Thailand, three tons of illegal ivory from Kenya was seized at a port in eastern Thailand. The ivory was shipped from Mombasa, but it's not clear if it originated in Kenya or elsewhere in Africa. Elephants are a big deal for my country, Kenya, which is renowned for its spectacular wildlife. Despite its conservation history, Kenya is listed among the world's eight most complicit countries as a source of ivory, and it's a major contributor to the illegal transiting of ivory out of Africa.

Something is very wrong.

As the CEO of WildlifeDirect, I lead a national campaign—Hands Off Our Elephants—to transform results in Kenya, and we're best known for our advocacy for better law enforcement, especially in the court rooms.

Our campaign, whose patron is First Lady Margaret Kenyatta, has had major impact. For example, on March 3, President Uhuru Kenyatta set 15 tons of ivory alight and promised to destroy the rest before the end of 2015.

We patted ourselves on the back for lobbying for what was the boldest move by any African president to date.

But less than 24 hours later, a full-page article appeared in a major local newspaper by respected columnist Charles Onyango-Obbo titled, "Don't Burn Ivory, Sell it to Pay for Conservation."

Furious, I hounded Charles on Twitter and met with him to "re-educate" him about why burning ivory was the right thing to do. He would have none of it and argued that the president was a fool.

So I challenged him to a duel—a public debate. We promoted the event with a poster depicting two super heroes fighting. The title of the debate: "Things R Elephant: The Great Debate on the Future of Elephants."

Though Kenya is surely home to more elephant experts than any other country in the world, my colleagues were not at all happy and begged me not to go ahead with the debate.

They asked: What if the conservationists lose in the public eye in spite of fielding the stronger team? Remember: Even the best teams lose to weaker teams!

And: An all-out debate inviting all sorts of pro traders and free thinkers might not have the desired outcome. We risk opening up the proverbial can of worms and having the public go in a completely different direction.

These comments only egged me on. Trained by Richard Leakey, I'm known for my determination and stubbornness. (Just today, for the third time, Leakey has been appointed chairman of the Kenya Wildlife Service.)

My team, arguing for the ivory trade ban and the burning of stockpiled ivory, included ecologist Winnie Kiiru and activist Irungu Houghton.

The opposition, arguing for openly selling elephants and their ivory, was made up of Onyango-Obbo, economist Kwame Owino, and writer Carla Wanjiku.

Let the Sparring Begin!

For two hours, we sparred on three topics: Are Elephants special? How can we save them? How can we stop the demand?

United States Ambassador Robert F. Godec framed the last theme by describing the global crisis and the role the U.S. is playing. He asked us to give three concrete examples of actions we'd take if we were in power.

So I'm chewing over my thoughts, listening to Charles, who comes up with the most ludicrous suggestions. He says: Ban the parks, ban the Kenya Wildlife Service, and stop burning ivory."

I smile. He's made it easy. I call for a national strategy to end trafficking of wildlife products, reform in the wildlife authority, and a global ban of ivory into perpetuity.

Charles insists that it's my fault that elephants are in trouble because everything we're doing as conservationists isn't working, and therefore we should try radical solutions.

He says, "Just sell the ivory and use the funds to support better conservation."

The audience is cheering!

I say, "Charles, your argument is completely illegitimate. We can't sell the ivory even if we want to, unless you're asking the Kenya government to sell it illegally into the black market.

"But," I continue, "even if we could sell it, it would be like selling cocaine seizures to pay for rehabilitation of drug addicts." With this argument, I win the audience back to my side. Charles falls silent.

Charles's team's viewpoint won the debate in CITES 2002 when southern African nations and China persuaded the world that the sale of ivory would help elephants. An auction took place in 2008 and triggered the worst slaughter elephants have ever been victim to.

The Genius of a Debate

Debating may be a risky approach, but it's a genius way of creating public awareness, buy-in, and participation. The event drew 350 people. Another 2.2 million were reached on Twitter, and 366 people followed us on the youtube livestream.

We generated hundreds of questions and comments, and through the process, I learned three important lessons.

First, the public in general is simply not well enough informed about why elephants are special or why they are in trouble.

Few Africans have ever been to their national parks and experienced the magic of wild elephants. This includes our lawmakers.

Scientists publish important findings in inaccessible journals and use unintelligible jargon; as a result, science isn't informing important decisions in Africa.

Journalists however, with their limited knowledge and their devil's advocate approach, can provoke dangerous thinking because of their power to influence leaders through their massive audiences.

If we really care about saving elephants, then we need to get smart about educating and supporting journalists to be more effective in addressing complex issues like wildlife trafficking.

Second, as scientists we shy away from confrontations. Yes, it was scary to debate these important issues live with smart opponents, and yes, we could have lost the debate. But we gained enormous knowledge about what citizens think and care about.

Conservationists must find the courage to face their fears and do what needs to be done regardless.

Finally, I discovered to my horror that ignorance is killing elephants. There's huge need to reach, educate, and enlist the support of millions of people across Africa who vote for their leaders and drive political decisions.

One member of the audience, a man from Masai Mara, told us that *Nat Geo Kids* magazine is a staple for his children, who are being raised in the U.S. He concluded that children in Kenya who see wildlife only as a threat are willing to kill animals because they simply have no alternative education.

"There is no Paula in Maasai Mara," he lamented. He said that putting a magazine in the hands of every one of the million school kids who live near parks would transform their understanding and give them new appreciation.

I immediately began to think about how we can reach a million Kenyan school kids.

When Will We Draw a Red Line for Elephants?

For me, the juiciest part of the entire debate was an outburst by a 28-year-old, Chief Nyamweya, who exploded on stage with an unexpected emotional tirade.

I watched in horror as my normally calm friend, fighting back tears, shouted: “When are we going to draw a red line for elephants?”

He threw the microphone on the table and stormed off the stage.

We sat in shocked silence for a few moments. Then I realized that what he was suggesting—a new heightened urgency status for elephants—was supremely powerful.

In recent years, several southern African countries have bowed under pressure from the demand for ivory in China and Japan to sell their ivory. It’s asserted that “sustainable use” of elephants is the right approach for poor African countries struggling to finance the growing costs of fighting elephant poaching. South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia have all sold ivory to China.

Imagine if the tables were turned? China would never accept the argument of sustainable use for pandas. Indeed nobody would.

Nyamweya was asking a simple and obvious question: Why don’t elephants have the global status of pandas?

The idea has stuck. We now plan to follow up with another #Tweet4Elephants event—perhaps a 12-hour opportunity for anyone around the world to participate in creating a #Redline4Elephants.

If you’d like to support us, please contact me at paula@wildlifedirect.org

Paula Kahumbu is the CEO of WildlifeDirect, a Nairobi-based conservation charity founded by Richard Leakey. She received her doctorate from Princeton University where she did research on elephants. In 2011 she was selected as a National Geographic Emerging Explorer, and she won the National Geographic/Buffett Award for Leadership in Conservation. In 2012 she launched the Hands Off Our Elephants Campaign, which is widely recognized for its successes in advocacy and in engaging Kenyans to support the protection of elephants. Last year she won the Whitley Award and the Order of the Grand Warrior, a presidential honor.

MD Madhusudan

2009 Whitley Award Winner, 2012 & 2014 Continuation Funding

Print

BBC Wildlife Magazine
December 2014 issue



CASE STUDY

KARNATAKA

Two researchers at India's Nature Conservation Foundation, MD Madhusudan ('Madhu') and Sanjay Gubbi, won a prestigious award from the Whitley Fund for Nature in 2011 to study the factors influencing human-leopard conflict in the south-west state of Karnataka.

The researchers are using GPS collars to understand how leopards captured in well-populated areas and released into more natural habitats respond to such translocation, which is widely used as a conflict-management tool in Karnataka. The project also encourages the media to provide less sensational accounts of encounters with leopards, and runs a public-awareness campaign, distributing pamphlets and posters to over 200 villages. "We should never forget the devastating cost that some of our poorest people pay for wildlife conservation," says Madhu. "So it's crucial to get local people on board."

- Visit www.ncf-india.org and www.whitleyaward.org

Above: provided there's shelter, leopards can raise young in a wide variety of landscapes.

Left: Sanjay Gubbi examines a male leopard wearing a radio-collar.

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44 BBC Wildlife

Rodrigo Medellin

2004 Whitley Award Winner, 2011 Continuation Funding, 2012 Whitley Gold Award Winner

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The New Yorker Online – News Website

6th February 2015

<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/rodrigo-medellin-bat-man-mexico>



THE NEW YORKER

NEWS CULTURE BOOKS & FICTION SCIENCE & TECH BUSINESS HUMOR CARTOONS MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 6, 2015

THE BAT MAN COMETH

BY TIM SOHN



Rodrigo Medellin was recently at the Explorers Club, in New York, for the American premiere of a BBC documentary about his work.

On a blustery night last week, just after the blizzard that wasn't, Rodrigo Medellín was in the second-floor library of the Explorers Club, on Manhattan's Upper East Side, for the U.S. premiere of "The Bat Man of Mexico," a BBC documentary about him and his work. It was the opening night of the second annual New York Wild Film Festival, and the documentary, which had won the prize for Best Exploration Film, was the evening's main event. Medellín, who is fifty-seven, wore a gray blazer with a silver lapel pin in the shape of a bat. He spent about an hour wading through a sartorially mixed crowd—topcoats and puffer jackets, generous helpings of tweed, some Gore-Tex, occasional fur—engaging in small talk with club members, filmmakers, and other attendees. When he finally made it over to the tequila bar, he seemed relieved. "Do you know who owns this tequila company?" he asked. He took a sip. "It's the guitar player from ZZ Top. But it's actually quite good."

The tequila tasting was a nod not only to Medellín's Mexicanness—he is a professor at the National Autonomous University, in Mexico City—but also to the film's protagonist, the lesser long-nosed bat, which ranges over much of Mexico and the American Southwest and is the primary pollinator of agave plants. The animal's dwindling population once threatened the agave crop, and thus tequila production; it was placed on the U.S. endangered-species list in 1988 and designated a threatened species in Mexico in 1994. In the past twenty-two years, however, thanks in large part to Medellín and his American conservationist counterparts, the bat has rebounded. In Mexico, it is in the process of being de-listed. That success helped earn Medellín the "bat man" title, which he has embraced, though it has been a long time coming—this is a man, after all, who kept vampire bats as a child, occasionally feeding them his own blood.

Sipping tequila just out of earshot were Tom Mustill, the film's thirty-one-year-old British director, and his girlfriend, Amy Cooper, who for most of the shoot was a member of the crew. They wandered over and began reminiscing about making the documentary. "A project like this isn't always pleasant, and we were all exhausted by the end," Medellín said. They had spent three gruelling months zigzagging across Mexico, following the bats as they hopscotched from cave to cave on the thousand-mile journey from their roosts, in central and southern Mexico, to their birthing grounds, in the Sonoran Desert, near the Arizona border. There was the heat, filth, and humidity of the caves, which ravaged the cameras and the filmmakers both. There were the cockroaches. There were the bat bites and emergency rabies shots. ("That was, like, the one thing my mother said before I left: don't get rabies," Cooper said. "Oh, well.") There was the encounter with a group of Danes who were filming a reality-TV couples show on a beach near a crucial mating site. (The Danes let the Brits use their drone for some aerial shots, until it crashed into the Pacific.) There was Mustill's brush with a coati, a relative of the raccoon, which bit his leg and which he likened to "a testosterone-crazed badger." And then there was the guano. Guano in their cameras, guano in their eyes, guano in their lungs, guano in their dreams. "It was so humid that you couldn't wear many clothes," Mustill told me of their time in the caves. "So you're mostly exposed, and there's just a constant rain of pee and shit from the ceiling." (He wrote an essay on the subject after the shoot, a connoisseur's taxonomy of bat feces.)

Shortly after 7 o'clock, at the sound of a gong, the tequila reception drew to a close and we were ushered into the screening room, across the second-floor landing, just past the seven-foot-tall polar bear. Suspended from the vaulted ceiling was a wooden sledge that Robert Peary and Matthew Henson used in their 1909 North Pole expedition. (The club's grand mansion, on East Seventieth Street, is filled with this sort of bric-a-brac—tusks and shields and spears and carvings, photographs and busts of famous club members, a zoo's worth of taxidermy. It feels like a ready-made Wes Anderson set.) Nancy Rosenthal, the New York Wild Film Festival's founder and a former producer for National Geographic Television, stepped to the lectern to welcome us. The N.Y.W.F.F., she said, had drawn more than two hundred submissions from twenty-seven countries; only a tenth had made the cut. "We are bringing all things wild to one of the most urban cities on Earth," she said to the packed room of a hundred and thirty or so. "Have you taken a selfie with the polar bear outside?"

The evening's program got under way with a short film about a famed mountain biker peddling and hopping his way up a craggy ridge on the Isle of Skye, followed by another short about the plight of the Colorado River, explored through the prism of a paddleboard journey. Then it was time for the main event. As the lights went down and the film began to play, Medellín, sitting next to Mustill and Cooper in the front row, smiled and gave Mustill a playful punch in the thigh. Cooper squeezed Mustill's hand. Onscreen, Medellín proclaimed, "I am the bat man." The crowd cheered. An audience member behind him shouted, "Yeah!"

I attended two nights' worth of the festival's sold-out three-day program, and the viewers were almost uniformly that enthusiastic. "It's a great festival because it has both adventure and conservation components," Mustill told me later. "So often, they're in separate festivals, and with the conservation films it can be a bit of an overdose of earnestness." "The Bat Man of Mexico," which aired last year in the United Kingdom as part of BBC Two's "Natural World" series, covers serious ground, intellectually, geographically, and scientifically, and is narrated by the father of nature filmmaking, David Attenborough. It's beautifully shot, full of sweeping landscapes and intimate close-ups of nectar-drinking bats, and some sequences are technically and technologically astounding, like the infrared footage of a bat pup's birth in a subterranean nursery, or of a rat snake, hidden in a crevice in a cave wall, snatching a bat and swallowing it whole.

But the film is in no danger of an earnestness overdose. Many of its lighter moments come courtesy of Medellín, who proves a charismatic and articulate guide. "Caves are my perfect place," he says, early in the film. "Caves are an incredibly peaceful place." The next shot is of the cave floor, where he sashes ankle-deep through excrement. ("And Rodrigo knows his guano," Attenborough intones a couple of minutes later.) Later, the film cuts from a shot of the crew's Mexican boat captain shucking fresh oysters on the beach to Medellín, having arrived in the mating cave, pointing out the "big testicles, ready for action" on a captured male. The audience was still laughing as he turned the bat over and rubbed his finger on a dark patch on its back. "Very oily," he says. "They put feces and urine and saliva there, and that is very attractive to the females. They are going to come and take a whiff of that and just fall in love with this guy." A Mexican love song plays as the bats couple on the ceiling.

The film's climax comes when hurricanes disrupt the bat migration and the crew temporarily loses track of its quarry—at first, not even Medellín can find the bats. During the post-screening Q. & A., Mustill explained that what had seemed a stroke of terrible luck actually solved a problem: the film needed more drama, which the lost-and-found bats provided. “Rodrigo has saved the bats,” he said. “So how do you hold people’s attention? That’s the end of a film, not the beginning of it.” Losing the bats, though it left them “disconsolate,” he said, “gave us a sort of hook and a story and something that would hopefully keep people with us.”

The audience was with them, and wanted more. “After your success with bats, what are you on to next?” one woman asked. “Well, we’ve been working on jaguars for quite a while, too,” Medellín responded. “We have four thousand jaguars in Mexico, and we have some plans, maybe”—here he turned toward Mustill, smiling—“to go film.” The crowd applauded, and a woman behind me shouted, “Jaguar film!”



Conservationists urge Mauritius to halt cull of threatened fruit bat



A government cull of tens of thousands of bats has no scientific basis and is putting the survival of the species at risk, coalition says

The Mauritius fruit bat is said to be causing ‘severe damage’ to the island’s fruit crops. Photograph: Jacques de Speville/WWF International

Conservationists are calling for an end to a government cull of tens of thousands of fruit bats

in Mauritius that they say is putting the survival of the threatened species at risk.

Authorities began shooting 18,000 Mauritius fruit bats (*Pteropus niger*) on 7 November, despite protests and even though the species is protected on the Indian Ocean island and listed as vulnerable by the IUCN, the world’s conservation union.

The government claims the cull is necessary because the number of bats has soared to almost 100,000 and is causing significant economic damage to the country’s lucrative fruit crops of banana, pineapple, lychee and mango.

But a coalition of conservation groups is calling for an immediate halt to the cull of the bats - also known as flying foxes - and says there is no scientific evidence to justify it.

“This catastrophic cull of the Mauritius fruit bat is indefensible and must end now,” said Frederick Kumah, WWF African regional director. “The people of Mauritius do not

support this cull and nor do the world's scientists and conservationists. There is no acceptable reason to continue with this destruction.”

The cull plans to kill 20% of the population by the end of the month, but the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation estimates the population is closer to 50,000, meaning the cull could wipe out almost 40% of the species.

The NGOs, which include the African Conservation Centre, African Wildlife Foundation, Birdlife International, Conservation International and WWF, say the government has double-counted the number of bats.

Announcing the cull last month, environment minister, Jayeshwur Raj Dayal, said the bat was no longer an endangered species and “the aim is about getting the balance right so that we can continue to have a sustainable bat population but also agricultural production”. Local fruits are a source of income for many people, and the impact of bats was “quite severe”, he said.

Agro-industry minister Seeruttun Mahen Kumar is also reported as saying: “I can reassure you that my government will do nothing to put at risk the very existence of fruit bat in Mauritius.”



The Mauritian government claims the fruit bats are seriously damaging fruit crops, a claim that conservationists say is overblown. Photograph: Jacques de Speville/WWF International

Bats are known to play a crucial role in the ecosystem by pollinating flowers and dispersing the seeds of many plants, some of which are found only in Mauritius. While

farmers says the bats are damaging more than 50% of their crops, IUCN research shows that fruit bats account for no more than 14%, and the vast majority of fruit losses comes from late harvesting, high winds and other fruit-eating animals such as rats and birds.

“Killing bats in Mauritius goes against common sense and global trends protecting bats and valuing the critical environmental services they provide,” said Rodrigo Medellin, co-chair of the IUCN bat specialist group. “Mauritius cannot afford to see this fruit bat go extinct as it would have a devastating impact on biodiversity.”

They also warn that the cull is also being conducted during the season when many females are pregnant or feeding their young.

Habitat loss, hunting and cyclones have all posed threats to the bat in recent decades, which has already been lost from the nearby islands of Rodrigues and Réunion. It was listed as endangered by the IUCN in 2008 and downgraded to vulnerable in 2013 after its population began to recover, but this included a provision that the population would not be culled in future.

But by drastically reducing overall numbers, the conservationists warn this cull could seriously threaten the bat's long-term survival by leaving the species more vulnerable to sudden shocks such as cyclones, which have been predicted to increase in frequency and intensity.



The Mauritius fruit bat has already been lost from the nearby islands of Rodrigues and Réunion. Estimates differ over its remaining population. Photograph: Jacques de Speville/WWF International

“This decision sets a dangerous precedent - it could be one of the first times that culling of a globally threatened species

has been authorised against all the scientific evidence and when there are more effective alternatives available,” said Dr Simon Stuart, chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

Netting fruit crops, along with other approaches including reducing tree sizes, using deterrents and planting break crops have successfully been implemented elsewhere, they say.

“This cull threatens to destroy Mauritius’ enviable reputation for effective and science-based conservation as well as the future of the fruit bat and all the plants that depend on it,” said Nanie Ratsifandrihamanana, country director of WWF Madagascar. “This mass cull is a short-sighted decision taken for non-scientific reasons, but if it is not reversed immediately it could have catastrophic long term consequences.”

According to a study on the island, 80% of the population opposes the cull and more than 125,000 people have signed an online petition against it.



Opinion: Killing Thousands of Flying Foxes Only Hurts the Environment

A plan to cull bats on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius could make flooding there even worse and cause other problems, two scientists argue.



The Mauritius flying fox lives only on the tiny island of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. On the island of [Mauritius \(map\)](#), in the Indian Ocean, lives a curious-looking bat. It's called a flying fox because it's rather large, with a wingspan of 2.5 feet (0.7 meter) and a fox-like face.

Native only to this tiny nation half the size of Rhode Island, the Mauritius flying fox (*Pteropus niger*) has been described as “flying liquid gold” after its yellow fur.

But it's not just pretty to look at. Bats such as the Mauritius flying fox provide crucial benefits to ecosystems, such as pollinating flowers and dispersing seeds of many plant species, some of which are found only in Mauritius. This is also important for restoring forests that have been destroyed. (Also see "[To Know Bats Is to Love Them.](#)")

The [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) lists the species as [vulnerable](#), but until 2013 it was classified as endangered. The change was due to a combination of factors that included a provision of not culling the population in the future.



The flying fox—named for its fox-like face—is large for a bat, with a wingspan of 2.5 feet (0.7 meter).

Today, several experts estimate the species numbers in the few tens of thousands at best. The government of Mauritius has published a figure of 90,000, [though that number is disputed by some, including the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.](#)

Now, [Mauritius's government is in the process of killing as many as 18,000 bats](#) on the unsupported belief that they are causing major damage to lychee and mango fruit crops, which are a main driver of the country's economy. Part of the cull will also occur inside protected areas.

However, there is little scientific data examining and quantifying the actual causes of fruit loss. In 2014, a pilot project by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation investigated the impact bats and other animals (such as birds and rats) have on fruit crops. The results revealed that [bats' damage to fruits is "fairly low."](#)

Here's why we believe killing these bats is wrong:

Bats help forests. Less than 2 percent of Mauritius is still forested. [Deadly floods that affected the island in 2013](#) were likely worsened by widespread deforestation. Without forests, torrential rains wash off, erode, and flood vast areas, as well as damage human infrastructure.

Because they spread seeds and pollinate flowers, flying foxes are vital for regenerating lost forests. Killing them is against the logic of a nation with a vision of welfare for its people and for nature.



Meet the little red flying fox, a bat with a wingspan of up to three feet. Its wings take a lot of work to maintain - and one missed approach while getting a drink can land this bat in the mouth of a crocodile.

The flying fox is still vulnerable. The species is very much at risk of natural phenomena such as cyclones, as well as human pressure such as deforestation. Killing flying foxes makes no sense, given its very recent and tentative reclassification by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and puts the species at an even greater risk.

Two species of flying fox have already gone extinct on Mauritius, and it surely does not want to go down in history as the country responsible for the first extinction of a flying fox in decades. ([See 16 awesome pictures of bats.](#))

Bats aren't evil. Bats still suffer from an unjustified negative image, and thousands of people are working hard to change this. Today, scores of countries have successful bat-conservation programs around the world, which has improved the outlook for many species.

Consequently, beneficial services provided by bats, such as seed dispersal, pollination, and pest control, are on the rise. Killing Mauritius flying foxes not only sends a mistaken message, it also signals a disconnect of Mauritius with the modern world. ([Read why we have nothing to fear from bats.](#))



The Mauritius flying fox has been described as “flying liquid gold” after its yellow fur.

It's inhumane. When government officials kill flying foxes, the mortality does not end there: Many of those bats are lactating females, and their babies are doomed to a slow, starving death. Many bats will only be wounded and not killed immediately, so many more bats will die than only those immediately killed.

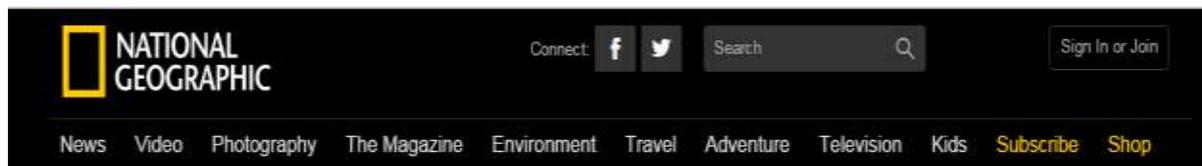
It goes against science. The government of Mauritius has a strong history of making management decisions based on solid scientific evidence, consulting with the best experts for policy and implementation. We urge the government of Mauritius to reconsider the decision and halt the cull before it is too late and the species becomes critically endangered.

[Ernesto Ráez-Luna](#)
2008 Whitley Award Winner

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Q&A: Peruvian Ecologist Vows "You Fight Until You Fall Dead"



As Peru relaxes environmental safeguards, a prominent ecologist explains why he resigned from his government post.

Manú National Park, in Peru's southern Amazon region of Madre de Dios, contains one of the largest remaining tracts of unlogged rain forest. Peru recently weakened many of its policies protecting the environment.

Photograph by Enrique Castro-Mendivil, Reuters/Corbis

COCHA CASHU BIOLOGICAL STATION, Peru-Ernesto Ráez-Luna, a prominent Peruvian ecologist and environmentalist, has spent his career fighting for the Amazon rain forest. In 2011, he was appointed as an adviser to Peru's Ministry of the Environment. In this role, Ráez-Luna was involved in organizing the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP20) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—the world's most important climate meeting; Peru is hosting the COP20 in December.

But in July, Ráez-Luna resigned over the administration's support of a law that, to the horror of environmental groups around the world, rolled back many green policies established in Peru during the past decade. The Ministry of the Environment, which was created in 2008, lost its authority to establish nature reserves protected from mining and oil development. On September 20, protesters marched on the environment ministry's headquarters in Lima, demanding green reforms before the UN Climate Summit in New York City.

National Geographic interviewed Ráez-Luna in Manú National Park, one of the largest remaining tracts of unlogged rain forest, where he is "recharging his batteries" in nature after his stint in politics.

You resigned because you could not support a law that reduced or removed fines for companies that break environmental laws, among other rollbacks of environmental protections. Why did President Ollanta Humala's administration enact such a law in the first place?

The government blames the decline in our economic growth—a decline of only a few months—on too many environmental rules and red tape. This was a version of events promoted by a group linked to extractive industries that published a lot of newspaper articles and gained the ear of the president. This was officially Peru's year of "corporate responsibility and climate commitment," and I was the liaison between the ministry and civil society. I couldn't tell them lies about this law.

Besides repealing this law, what needs to be done to help the rain forest?

We need protected areas. You cannot strictly protect 100 percent of the forest because native people have a right to stay. And people will want to build roads and mine the oil and gas under the forest, and I think that you can do that with a very small impact. The technology is available; you can have development and protection of the forest. But is it done that way? No.

But we also need to change consumption patterns. We are losing the rain forest because of the boom in the middle class of China and their desire to eat more pork. Our soy feeds the pigs, and we grow the soy on what used to be rain forest. (Editor's note: Ráez-Luna is referring to the Brazilian part of the Amazon; Peru doesn't export soybeans.) So it is about changing our own lives. You can't drive an SUV and call yourself an environmentalist, for example.

How do you rank climate change as a threat to the Amazon rain forest?

Climate change is a real thing, and we are causing it. There is no doubt. But there are things that happen today—not in five years or 50 years—that are killing the rain forest: deforestation linked to agribusiness, unsustainable mining, pollution with pesticides and fertilizers. The old threats are still there and they are as powerful as ever. It becomes problematic when you can get money to address them only if your proposal somehow involves climate change. Still, some of the models are very grim. They suggest that the climate that sustains the rain forest will change so much that all this around us now will be gone. And you look at the gap between what needs to be done about it and what we are doing—this meeting in Lima will just produce a draft of an agreement that probably won't go into effect until 2020—probably we will not escape this fate.

If the odds are that the rain forest is doomed, then why fight for the Amazon?

You fight until you fall dead. It is not about the odds; it is a matter of how you lead your life. If you fight for the right, then when you die you can rest in peace.

Suprabha Seshan

2006 Whitley Award Winner, 2012 Continuation Funding

Websites

Indian Quarterly – Online Magazine

17th August 2015

<http://indianquarterly.com/people-of-the-rain/>



People of the Rain

How we experience the rain shapes our perception of it and how it affects us, writes **Suprabha Seshan**. Open yourself to it, and it may change your world.



We who've known the monsoon rain in Vayalnad shall for ever feel its waters pocking our dark bodies. Hard rain, day after day, month after month, permeates our thoughts and dissolves our skin, as it does the forest where we live. This rain runs through every pore and every niche, every rootlet and vein.

This monsoon, another kind of monsoon, is mostly a memory now, but one that shall live as long as we do, as long as there are Paniya people here, and Kurchiyas, and the tales of early migrant settlers; as long as there are men and women who sing its song.

We are syncretic with rain. We can be called a rain culture. It's no secret among us that it is these mosses and trees, these lianas and orchids, these dark-leaved glowing canopies gusting with the wind, who call the rain in from the sea.

In Vayalnad, we anticipate eight months of rain in a year. The two monsoon periods last for six months, bracketed by many weeks of local thundershowers. The onset of the wet period is marked by cobra lilies, its end by the fallen petals of Impatiens flowers. Six hundred centimetres of rain can be expected.

During the southwest monsoon, from June to September, the nights are exhilarating, hammered by wind and savage dreams. Streams swell and leeches stalk on trails through snapping forests. Tree frogs multiply. Invisible cicadas whine deafeningly through the thick air, shrieking at the sudden arrival of hard rain.

By November, the northeast monsoon gives way to sun and warmth with short spells of thunderous rain that brightly coloured butterflies dance in. Tracks disappear as leaves fall from tall trees that turn pink, crimson and rusty red. In this dry season, all seasons converge. There is leaf fall, and new growth, and flowers and fruit.

The accepted and current name for this district in the Western Ghats of Kerala is Wayanad. It is derived, some people say, from *vayalnad*, meaning land of fields. Others say it comes from *vayunad*, from the land of winds. Normally I use all three interchangeably. However, here I've used *vayalnad*, mostly because I like the sound. It's closest to rain.

There is a near-constant amount of water on the planet across geologic time. It moves, changes form: if not within you, it is under you, around you, above you. Seven billion human bodies store over 200 billion litres of water. These too are part of the planet's hydrosphere, the combined mass of water found on, under and over the surface of the planet. Your eyes make you believe that there is an inside and an outside. But close them, relax, feel the ebb and flow; feel the rocking of your mind as you fall asleep. In and out are just convenient mental devices, for the skin of your body knows otherwise. There can be no damming of this water.

They who know us, know the rain. We who call the rain, know the sea. Those who know rivers, call the clouds. We are mist, we are river, we are moss and human. The sea knows the rivers which carry our waters thence. So it is that the sea knows this Vayalnad.

The streamlet from this little hill gathers along with countless other rivulets to join the Kabinipuzha and then the Kaveri, until it reaches the sea on the other side of the peninsula. Every person on its way drinks a molecule of me, and of trees and other creatures of this forest. What a loop of water we conspire to be!

When I think of resilience I think of rain. I believe that as long as there is water on the planet, as long as the planet spins, it will rain. On land, the cooling effect of a mantle of plants in the path of the wind culls the rain from the clouds that stream in from the ocean during the monsoon. The Russian scientists Anastassia Makarieva and Victor Gorshkov have proposed that it isn't temperature difference between land and sea that drives wind patterns, as conventional meteorology concludes. It is the presence of forests which breathe faster during summer that causes sea-to-land air currents to form. They call this breathing action of the forest which moves the rain a "biotic pump". Their theory, once controversial, is slowly gaining ground.

But they warn: if you remove the forests, you will remove the rain. So long as there are resilient plants, there will be rain. As long as there is rain, there will be the biosphere. The resilience of one leads to the resilience of the other: an ecological tautology.

In order to survive the painful and unceasing awareness that the planet is going down, I fashion little stories, born of little observations from this land where I live and extrapolate to the rest of the world. For instance: plants create an air-conditioning effect on a once barren hillside; their transpiration creates a little cycle of mist and coolness and seeps of groundwater which lead to moss and other plants and more transpiration, building up to local thunder bursts. A forest grows over a very long period of time. Life begets more life. I believe our future lies in these *refugia*, these remains of wild nature. Here we will nurture each other, nurture the water, as we do the plants and the children and the forest, and this culture of the rain.

“Ende koottare, mimikree cheyyam.” (Pretend you are the rain.) You are these raindrops that hammer so hard, your sounds can be heard from afar, a million leaves thrashing the drums of your descent. You are the trees receiving this rain, breaking the flow, harnessing its tide, guiding it down to the leaf litter below. You are the twigs, the branches and boles, the soaring buttresses of trees where epiphytes grow. You are the lichen, the orchid, the fern cloaking the trees, soaking the rain, absorbing its fall.

Now pretend you are the rain dancing. Soil receives you, revels in you, absorbs you, as you pour down boles into the ground, further and further seeping, running, gurgling through root and rock, to bank to stream, to river to sea. You are the gleaming drop, perfect hydrant bursting upon cuticle, slipping down drip tips to humus: the musty mother of all beings in this forest. You are the surging sea water racing on a wind powered by the sun, spun by the planet’s Coriolis force; thunderous, savage, mighty, unstoppable airborne sea. You are the shafts of sunshine intermingled with greens of every hue, the shifting shapes of light and water and air and chlorophyll. You are the flow, the fall, the crashing and the howling of a rainforest in the monsoon.

We are the rain. We are all things between and beneath that looming thunderhead. Here it comes.

Today, the cicadas begin thrumming at dawn, earlier than usual. Rain has been imminent since. In the blue-grey light filtering through the forest canopy, a whistling thrush appears, hopping on the trail. He stops to sing. Fluted notes carry far, the intervals impossible to imitate, sweet, so very sweet. He hops closer to where I sit on the stone wall. Large leaves of ginger plants dip to occasional drops. Clouds move grimly over the valley, their low black bellies bulging with rain.

Now pretend you are a *tavala*, a luminous loving he-frog, a *Rana*, singing your heart out in the rain. You are not alone, there are ten thousand others in this forest. *Chrew-chrew-chrew-chrew-chrwick*, *Rana*, sweet *Rana*, sitting on a lily leaf asking for love.

Pretend you are a gap in the rain. A woman walks with a dog. A pond, quiet at first, comes to life as she bends down, pauses, is still. Mating grasshoppers flick past her nose, mating frogs chirrup on the lily leaf. Large brindled ants in pairs on a mossy wall, orange-tip butterflies flick dancing, fat bluebottles bumping their blue bottoms on lily pads. Picture-winged flies skate like helicopters landing. *Rana* peeks out. *Chrwack-chrwack*.

Now pretend you are a *karinkorangu*, a Nilgiri *langur*, a bundle of black fur swinging, hurling through this light-edged leaf world, now under rain, unfathomable. You hoot and clamber through the breaking boughs, as winds come racing in through these creaking giants.

Mongee, we cry in joy, as we jump down the bank into the undergrowth, unmindful of wet, the leeches, the bank. Everybody, sooner or later, creeps through the bush here under the gaze of the mighty ones, feeling the bark with roughened hands, hewn from years of jungle life. We are shape-shifters of the jungle, now human, now beast.

I stood looking in from the verge when I called the she-*langur* and clucked and hooted. I watched her turning her ebony face, her perfectly chiselled miniature face, delicate, impassive, before bounding on to rest on a bough, legs crossed, toes hooked, arms loose, our lady of leisure. Then I bounded behind and below her, in a rush of green and brown and wind and cold straight through my hammering heart, eager and happy, giving the woods the weight and size of my straggling limbs to match her joy within the trees.

When my body, my trunk and my branches were rooted and firm, free and secure, my arms a languid leaping form, light but strong; when I was a *langur* upon the tree, and then the tree under the *langur*; I crashed through the verge, keeping pace under her, thinking bush, thinking branch, thinking slope and weight, thinking food as I spied a pale pink mushroom. What am I, *Ammey*, swinging simian spelling the forest with breath and limbs and soul?

Today I'm on a hill, asleep at dawn. I dream of Vladimir Nabokov and my problems with taxonomy. I am lying between some dogs and tussocks of grass.

Nabokov is standing at a podium, writing, his work laid out like a jigsaw puzzle. I am a collector of humans and I'm there to collect Nabokov. I'm writing a "Taxonomy of Human Beings" for collection, conservation and research. I am there to meet him, my book of notes heavy in my pocket. As I approach the podium, my book gets heavier and heavier, and finally so heavy that I can't walk. I am weighted down, pinned to the ground. The book opens out and there is a card index and an electronic database and a folded map of humanity, which flutters out. It opens and becomes bigger and bigger and grows into a winged creature full of veins. At the end of each is a shard of world truth, numbered one, two, three, and so on. I tell him I need writers for my conservation project and I am there to collect him, to pin him down at the end of one of the veins.



He laughs at me and says, “I work first vertically, then sedentarily and then supine. You are an idiot woman for thinking I will do only the animals.”

I awaken to sun on the hill. Twelve fairy bluebirds, spiky golden heads of a thousand stalks of grass, the wind singing through it. Dreams open into the clouds this morning. Furry grass blades play with dog rumps and a human face, filtering the pre-monsoon dawn light onto brown skin. The morning news is raucous. I lie on the hill, curled up and dream-heavy. Eyes meet patterns dissolving, a single flickering stroke of light through one side of a leaf. Stroke becomes coin becomes green, shiny leaf skin. I think I shall work on the taxonomy of leaf light. I’ll work exclusively supine, lying skin to skin with a grass stalk in the quiet rain.

Strange things happen in this forest. A bug sucks and then pees. Droplets of bright water shoot out of its bum and fall rain-like on the forest floor. I saw it today with my own eyes. Orange and black bug on a Heliconia leaf, shadow-spangled, tumbling in the gusting wind, peeing.

It rains even when it’s not raining in the jungle. The bugs are peeing.

I sat with R during lunch today to talk about rain. He is of the Kurchiya people, a hunter-cultivator tribe who have been in Vayalnad for a couple of hundred years, brought as fighters by the Malabar chieftain Pazhassi Raja to stand against the East India Company’s invasion of these mountains. There are tales within tales to be told about these rebellions, the alliances and counter-alliances between Hyder Ali and the English, between the English and the rajahs, and the rajahs with the Nairs and the Kurchiyas and the Mullukurumbas. Fierce battles were fought in the forest where I live.

R’s descriptions of rain during his childhood are anecdotal evidence that patterns have shifted. Now the rain and the dry period are no longer distinct in the way they used to be. Everything is topsy-turvy; there is a merging of the seasons.

He told me an old Kurchiya saying for hard rain: “Agathu vechcha kaalu poratthu vekkulle.”(Feet placed indoors, do not place outdoors.) Then he added that a real hard rain is *chendikoda maya*, or “drummed rain”.

He said Kadars had lived in this forest. There is evidence of their presence. His forefathers spoke about them. He added that the Kadars had

undergone *vamshanaasham* (extinction). I told him that there are Kadars elsewhere. He reiterated that the Kadars of this forest became extinct. He didn't know how this had happened. We wondered if they had been slaughtered outright, or if they'd caught some disease. I said there are many ways to destroy a people, like spreading small pox wrapped in blankets (given as gifts), or through slavery, or displacement. It later struck me that there is indeed such a thing as an extinction of a people in a place, if we recognise that there is a uniqueness to every people in every place; that the Kadars of this forest are different from the Kadars of the Thrissur forests. And so it must be recorded that the Kadars of this forest are extinct.

Ecological literacy is a term coined to describe the ability to read or understand the natural environment in which a person lives, an ability that requires systems of recognition based on categorisations that derive meaning from the lives and behaviours of non-humans in the environment. It is now widely accepted that this cognition of nature is as varied as the landscapes and cultures of this planet.

It is a fact that people here in this forest read, understand and act upon the natural world in different ways. The Paniyas notice things that the Kurchiyas don't, the Kurchiyas notice things that settlers don't, and the settlers see signs that urban-born naturalists don't, who notice things that I don't, and of course, *langurs*, frogs and praying mantises note things that humans don't. Furthermore, infants, children, men and women (with their gendered lenses) have various "systems" of attending to things, based on their enculturations and experiences. Thus there are many scripts, and many alphabets, and a mind-boggling sea of languages, all in one place. The human tribes of Vayalnad, and the thousands of plant and animal species of this same place, all recognise and understand different things, and yet conspire to cohabit in a meaningful way, to create the culture and meta-culture of this place. Perhaps I could be forgiven then, for being overwhelmed by the myriad tales and languages I hear and "read" on a daily basis, from following the tracks of countless lives lived in this one place, tracks left across spiralling loops of time.

I've been 22 years in this forest. I find "reality" becomes more complicated: richer, fuller, many-voiced, polyphrenic (many-brained), even syncretic. Some time ago, I began to discard my species lists and science-speak, not so much in an act of rebellion, but rather, just by absorbing the speeches of others and from relating with different humans and non-humans who note different things. Over time, my own personal baggage, my mental frames of yore; in other words, my habitual ways, became less fixed. I've undoubtedly had more fun this way, and also found more meaning, just by falling into a convivial and inclusive thought and speech.

We are entrained to different ways of seeing born from different kinds of experiencing. My fear is that this diversity of human experience is itself in danger of being driven extinct, of becoming subject to *vamshanaasham*. My work is to be a bulwark, like Pazhassi Raja, against this flattening and forgetting, through a community that actively sustains and cultivates both mind diversity and biodiversity.

It is evident to all old peoples anywhere that plants can heal the world, if only we let them be.

I fantasise of another land, without evil, without hubris, that will be born from the debris of the old one.

It is evident that Earth, this ancient and humiliated Earth, begs to bear life. She is collapsing from the ceaseless gouging of her skin, her organs, and yet she is full, still fertile and carrying.

Meanwhile, the Paniyas sing their migration song and go to the dying river to catch the ailing snails. They dance in that slow shuffle dance that they have danced since the beginning of time—shuffle shuffle step, shuffle shuffle step—playing their *cheeni* and *thudi*, which from afar resounds with grief, a grief that, to me, mourns the slaying of this world.

From Africa they came (paleoanthropologists say), the first people of this land. Watching them catch fish in the stream, I feel I'm witness to an ancient and timeless action: this is how they've caught fish for aeons.



I see them walking around Gondwanaland, eating river snails and river fish, sea fish and sea snails, sea crabs and land crabs, leaves and roots, walking the dry, windy coast of one peninsula and then the wet, windy coast of another, the craggy sides of creaking continents; walking and walking and walking, these old peoples. They skirt forests and rivers and mountains of granite, sampling the abundant fruit of rainfed lands, this monsooned land, these old winds bursting with rain hitchhiking to the green mountains across the vast water: sky rivers meeting earth rivers, rushing thence to the uninterrupted ocean.

According to blind old Kangan of the Paniyas of this forest where I live, this is how the Paniyas came here, how they came to be:

Manakottu uthappe, Choru podi kettipoya
Illathirimanjathu poyi, Kunyukuttine uruvakki
thiricha Arenathageku aanum ponnun,
Arenameetheku angaleyum pengalum aayi
Adunthoo ellarum kandarinjum ketarinjum,

Namma volichattu kandey “In a jackfruit leaf, he bundled up his rice and went To Illathirimanjam he went, where he met the children’s mother They were sister and brother, as they were also male and female From there everyone came to know, our light was seen.”

Adunthoo patthu kulathuna adaara thirikaan, Pathu moonave moonathi Pathu makkaku nadapa naadu, Ilapa tanalu, Pudipa kombu Enni adakuva boodu muthachi Ketti kalippa kaavum kallum Achi adakuva kulavum kunyi kuttiyum

“Then ten families came forth, from the next ten ancestors male and female Land to walk for all these ten, shade to sit, branch to hold To comfort themselves, a sacred place To make and play, some groves and deities Uthappa and Uthamma [first father and mother] gave these to their children.”

Old blind Kangan died a few days ago, taking with him this old song. Young Paniyas today don't sing much anymore. What irony that his song should be sung into this machine, held in the hand of a wayward naturalist hunting for stories, like other baubles from the forest. I asked the children of Kangan's hamlet recently if they know the Paniya migration song, to which they replied, sorrowfully, “No”.

I live with gardeners who serve the wild plants of these mountains. It can be said they serve the forests, and thus the rain and all the places all this rain goes to. Over the years I've tried to understand why they do what they do. I offer here a synopsis of our never-ending conversations on the tricky subject of the future.

One friend: “I went to the *karachchi* grass. I went to the *mala*, to the *puzha* and the *koda*. I went to the marten, the trogon and the crested serpent eagle. I went first to the night light and then to the dawn light, to talk about what we leave them when we die. I think about this all the time.”

Me: “We need to write a long list of instructions to the children coming after us, if there be children anywhere on earth. What will they do? How will they live? When you and I die, you there on your side of the hill, and me here on mine, what will remain?”

A second friend: “Can I leave this hill full of flowers? Can I leave it full of spores? Can I leave it ripe and ready, bursting in every direction, fecund for another 500 years? Can I leave the garden to the forest? Can I leave the forest to the rain, and the rain to the forest? The people to the land, and the river to the trees? Can I leave the elephants to the *vayanavu*, the cobra to the mound, the land to the bees?”

Me: “I know when the last breath is gone from your body there will be dreams migrating, secrets flying, from one valley to the other. Secret forest, secret garden, secret spores, secret wind, secret waters full of secret blessings. I know your love, I watch its action all the time. But not only do the plants speak with us. The breath of life with which we began, the quadrillions of bodies born to this world, work furiously, as machines accumulate all around.”

A third friend: “This is why I do what I do today. I think about all the people of this place, my plant friends, my animal friends, my river friends and others. And the slivers of time left, they get narrower. A decade is one quarter the time it was when I was born.”

And this sanctum? It will flourish for a time, but not for long without its humans. Sanctuaries are inseparable not only from plants and animals, from water, light, fungi and soil, but also from humans.

Here I declare my philosophy: the merging of bodies and minds in the way of the wild, where symbiotic life—those long-term interdependencies between different species—yields syncretic life; in other words, together-thinking between different species, peoples, entities, groups and ecologies; where endless diversity leads to endless possibilities for all, including you and me.

Merge minds with the rain, take root in the land, and see. When you enter the wild like this, you gain not just a single new identity. You gain many. Of rain, and flower, and frog, and moss, and bee.

We speak today of the rain, the water that falls upon the ground from the sky. While it is safe to assume that somewhere in the world it is raining, it is not safe to assume that it will rain here forevermore in the way it always has. Depending on where you are, you might have to get used to deluges, to savage droughts or vengeful clouds. Be prepared to move, for water is all-powerful. It can sweep you away or make you crawl miles on your knees for a single drop; it can freeze your insides or hammer your skull wide open. The blue planet's waters are playing hard in this endgame of our collective lives. Forget your bank balance. Make a boat. Keep your children safe, and afloat.

Suprabha Seshan lives at the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary and works as an educator and restoration ecologist. She was winner of the 2006 Whitley Award and is an Ashoka Fellow. She occasionally travels to give a talk titled “Rainforest Etiquette in a World Gone Mad”.

Eugene Simonov

2013 Whitley Award Winner, 2015 Continuation Funding

Broadcasts

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25th March 2015

4 minute broadcast

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00w940j>



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The Telegraph – Online Newspaper, UK

20th October 2014

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/vladimir-putin/11174610/Vladimir-Putins-tiger-heads-south-for-the-winter.html>

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The Telegraph

Vladimir Putin's tiger heads south for the winter

Russian president Vladimir Putin's Siberian tiger deepens its 'defection' to China by heading south, confirming speculation it will winter abroad



Vladimir Putin assists with the tagging of a Siberian tiger in 2008 Photo: REUTERS

A rare Siberian tiger released into the wild by Vladimir Putin is moving further into China, according to trackers, indicating the animal will continue its "defection" to spend the winter abroad.

Kuzya, a 23-month-old male, was last "seen" on Saturday via tracking device 30km east of Yichun, a city in northeastern Heilongjiang province, south of where it crossed the Amur River earlier this month.

Orphaned as a cub, Kuzya's reintroduction to the wild in May was personally overseen by the Russian president.

Though bilateral relations have warmed lately following Russia's spat with the West, the "defection" has raised tensions over the animal's welfare.

Tiger pelts and bone are valuable commodities in China, with poached carcasses fetching more than £6,000.

Russian scientists are concerned that Kuzya could develop a taste for livestock, reducing its chances of surviving in the wild. On October 15 Xinhua, a state-run agency, heightened fears when it reported Kuzya had raided a hen house in Luobei county, killing five birds.

Eugene Simonov of the Rivers with Boundaries Coalition, who is coordinating search efforts, said Kuzya was falsely accused.

"He didn't eat the chickens," Mr Simonov told *The Telegraph*. "I checked the exact time they claim the coop was ravaged and at that time the tiger was 35km away."

While once abundant in the forests of East Asia, the Siberian tiger was hunted to near extinction. China has fewer than two dozen tigers in the wild. In Russia it's estimated there are around 450 animals roaming the Far East, up from just 40 in the 1940s.

Simonov said that the forests of northeast China make suitable habitat. "No one knows what the tiger has in mind, but if it doesn't return China is a nice place to live," he said



Putin's tiger believed to be photographed in China

Infrared cameras at a nature reserve in Heilong jiang province have captured photographs of a Siberian tiger.

The images were caught at Taipinggou Nature Reserve in Luobei county, Chen Zhigang, director of the reserve, told Chengdu Commercial Daily on Wednesday.

"In the past month, the remains of wild boars and deer that were hunted by giant animals were found in the reserve. There has never been a tiger here and it may be Kuzya," said Chen.

Kuzya, one of three Siberian tigers released in Russia, was reported to have reached the reserve on Oct 9, according to GPS satellite data disclosed by a Russian researcher. Three tigers were released into the wild by Russian President Vladimir Putin in May when he visited an animal care center in his country's eastern region of Amur.

Kuzya and the two others, Ilona and Borya, were fitted with GPS collars so that researchers could track their movements.

Sixty infrared cameras have been set up across the nature reserve in the hope of capturing tiger images or tracks.

Russian researcher Eugene Simonov said, "According to the latest GPS updates from Russia, Kuzya's tracking device indicates he entered the Taipinggou Nature Reserve, so there is a possibility that the images are of him.

"As far as I know, there is a good ecological environment and sufficient food in the reserve for Kuzya," Simonov added.

His only fear for Kuzya is the traps used to catch other animals.

"I'm afraid he may be hurt by the traps, but I know that for the past month, a team of forestry officials has been working to clear the traps, which can ensure his safety," Simonov said.

Chen added: "We will send the photos to Russian experts as soon as possible and we have reported the sighting to relevant departments. We have also notified local farmers about the tiger's presence and told them to safeguard themselves and avoid scaring the animal."

Simonov said that according to the latest GPS updates, Usyin has also reached the Sino-Russian border. He was released into the wild in June and is Kuzya's elder brother, he said.

Taipinggou Nature Reserve, which covers 20,000 hectares, is a provincial-level reserve that will soon be upgraded to the national level.

Fewer than 500 Siberian tigers remain in the wild.

In November 2010, then-premier Wen Jiabao and Putin, his then-counterpart in Russia, agreed on the goal of trying to double the world's wild tiger population by 2022 to save it from extinction.

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14th November 2014

[http://www.standartnews.com/english/read/back to nature rhodope mountains become the seventh rewilding area in the eu-6313.html](http://www.standartnews.com/english/read/back%20to%20nature%20rhodope%20mountains%20become%20the%20seventh%20rewilding%20area%20in%20the%20eu-6313.html)

STANDART

Back to nature: Rhodope mountains become the seventh rewilding area in the EU



"The Rhodope Mountains are located southeast of Bulgaria's capital Sofia. It is a very beautiful area and it is one of Europe's real biodiversity hotspots, with huge rewilding potential," explains Stoycho Stoychev, Conservation Director of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds and a member of the Rewilding Rhodopes team. The area is also connected ecologically to the extensive wild lands south of the border, in

Greece: the slopes of the Rodopi and Orvilos Mountains. Towards the west, the Rhodopes reach to the wild Northern Pirin and Rila Mountains, with their famous Pirin and Rila National Parks.

"This entire region forms the core of the Rila-Rhodopean Mountain Massif – the largest, compact mountain formation in the Balkans, extending over more than 40,000 km² (4 million hectares). However, during the first years of working in this area, our activities will mainly be focused on the eastern part of this mountain range ('Eastern Rhodopes'), which is about 1.4 million hectares in size," continues Stoycho Stoychev.

"Based on a 10-year vision, the rewilding work will focus on letting nature in the Rhodopes again more be shaped by nature's own ways, the natural processes, and particularly so by allowing for natural grazing, carnivory and scavenging to be back and

drive the system", says Frans Schepers, Managing Director of Rewilding Europe. "Delivered through the local native key wildlife species – fallow deer, red deer, wild living horses, wolves, brown bears, several vulture species (black vulture, Egyptian vulture and griffon vulture), a high number of raptor species and the small-sized but extremely important Souslik or European ground squirrel", he continues.

In addition to supporting this wildlife comeback, there will be work done to protect the remaining old-growth forests and to promote much more natural management regimes in the protected areas and hunting concessions. There will also be a lot of work done to support the local entrepreneurs in their efforts to connect their businesses with wildlife, wild nature and wilderness. Within the area, four priority areas have been selected where the rewilding work will start off: Chernoochene, Madzharovo, Studen Kladenets and Byala Reka.

"We hope these priority areas, in total some 100,000 hectares, can then serve as practical and inspirational examples for the wider rewilding landscape in the region", says Stefan Avramov, Rewilding officer at Rewilding Rhodopes.

Rewilding history here

The concept of rewilding is already quite well known in this area. The efforts here will build on the experiences from and achievements by the New Thracian Gold (NTG) project, which was active in the Eastern Rhodopes between 2009 and 2014, where ARK Nature and the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), were the key partners.

Among its main achievements to date can be mentioned the successful reintroductions and restocking of large grazing mammals like red deer, Tarpan horses, Karakachan horses and fallow deer as well as a grazing experiment with European bison. This has led to around 55 Tarpans now roaming freely in two sites, and more than 50 fallow deer and 20 red deer roaming three sites here. The NTG project also produced an Eastern Rhodopes nature travel map, a Nature Travel Guidebook for wildlife lovers (Crossbill Guide) that covers both the Bulgarian and Greek parts of the Eastern Rhodopes) and a Trans-Rhodope biking & hiking tourist map, all in order to promote the area as a quality nature tourism destination.

For the webpage of the program go to:

<http://www.rewildingeurope.com/news/rhodope-mountains-in-bulgaria-become-the-seventh-rewilding-area/>

[Amanda Vincent](#)

1994 Whitley Award Winner, 2006 & 2012 Continuation Funding

Print

Philippine Daily Inquirer

15th June 2014



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Jean Wiener

2008 Whitley Award Winner, 2010 Continuation Funding, 2014 Whitley Gold Award Winner

Websites

WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation News Website

15th January 2015

<http://us.whales.org/blog/2015/01/story-of-whale-in-haiti>



Home > Blogs > courtney.vail > A story of a whale in Haiti

A STORY OF A WHALE IN HAITI

15 JANUARY 2015 - 6:44PM

Over the course of the past several days, the news of a humpback whale and his ultimately short journey in Haitian waters began to surface and received with great interest by whale researchers and enthusiasts worldwide. However, this interest escalated quickly to concern when the news broke that the whale was in poor condition, had been harassed and harpooned by locals, and eventually stranded and died.



Reports of a whale lingering in the shallow Fort Liberté Bay surfaced on Saturday, January 10th, although other accounts suggest the whale may have been in the area for several days prior. This bay on Haiti's northern coast has a narrow entrance to the Atlantic Ocean, which may have resulted in the whale becoming disoriented or sequestered in the area and unable to find his way out. During his time in the bay, he was reportedly harassed and eventually harpooned by local fishermen, potentially out of fear or as an opportunistic and unfamiliar food source.

The injured and exhausted whale eventually did find his way out and subsequently stranded approximately 27 kilometers (17 miles) west of Fort Liberté off the coast of the small fishing village of Caracol. There, through the intervention of FoProBim (Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine), a conservation organization operating in Haiti, authorities attempted to halt any further injury or destruction of the whale, and coordinated efforts to push the whale back to sea with the rising tides. However, the whale—injured and already in compromised health—died just hours later and did not make it through Saturday evening.

We have few details about the whale, and even fewer details about the circumstances that brought him to the northern coast of Haiti. Images shared with WDC indicate that the whale was already in poor condition prior to entering the bay. The whale was grayish in color, appeared thin, and had a significant infestation of cyamids (whale lice)--all signs that the whale's health was compromised. What we do know is that humpback whale appeared to be a juvenile male that has not been identified as a known individual in the North Atlantic or Gulf of Maine humpback whale catalogs. Understanding that the whale may have been ill also raises concerns for human health had the locals attempted to consume the meat after his demise.

We also know very little about the reception of the whale in Fort Liberté, one of the oldest cities in the country and located close to Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic. Fort Liberte Bay is relatively narrow and shallow, and it is quite possible that the whale was disoriented and stuck within the bay where he was met by locals who were unfamiliar with such a large animal. The injured whale may have been received similarly in Caracol, the small fishing village even further west of the border where the whale finally stranded and died.

Through the coordination of FoProBim representatives in Caracol and with the cooperation of the Ministry of Environment in Haiti, the carcass was buried. The bones will eventually be retrieved for educational and scientific purposes so as not to encourage the illegal targeting of whales for food.

Despite Haiti's close proximity to Hispaniola, where thousands of North Atlantic humpbacks winter in the warmer waters of the Dominican Republic each winter, marine mammals are relatively unstudied and unknown in Haitian waters. Whales and dolphins may be legally protected from capture and harm under Haiti's fisheries laws, but they are uncommon in Haitian culture or daily life.

Newborn humpbacks often take their first breath in the safe haven of the Sanctuario de Mamiferos Marinos de la Republica Dominicana, a humpback whale sanctuary off the northern coast of the Dominican Republic. Established in 1986, this Sanctuary serves as a stronghold for the species, and protects an important primary migratory corridor for these magnificent creatures. The rest of the year, these whales migrate to colder, fish-rich waters of the North Atlantic between New England, Canada, Iceland and Greenland.

Although this story of a whale in Haiti had an unfortunate ending, it is reflective of a greater need to raise global awareness to the value and importance of protecting marine mammals and other marine resources. It is crucial to remember that Haiti remains a country that is struggling under the burdens of socioeconomic, environmental and political sufferings. But it is also important to note that there are other, more hopeful, stories about whales and their emerging relationships with local communities in Haiti.

WDC's interest and involvement with Haiti started from a vision inspired by Ms. Jamie Aquino, an educator in Florida. Motivated by both the Haitian community and marine environment that surrounded her, she first collaborated with WDC to develop an outreach program to connect her students with youth in Haiti. With a focus on supporting local communities within Haiti and the marine environment, Jamie launched the Pier2Pier project in 2007 which has now grown into the [Haiti Ocean Project](#).



This project has grown into a coalition that represents over seven years of exploratory and collaborative work between educators, marine mammal specialists, non-profit organizations, and members of the Haitian community. The collective interested in the protection of Haiti's marine environment and development of economic and educational opportunities both promotes Haiti's natural beauty and provides alternative incomes to local communities.

In working with the local fishermen and youth in places like Petite Riviere de Nippes and Petit Goave, there is a growing and inspired appreciation of whales, dolphins and other marine creatures such as sea turtles and sharks. The result is a change from fear of these creatures to one of growing fascination. Through outreach, children in these villages now conduct beach cleans and fishermen have been known to release sea turtles from their nets.

Furthermore, almost nothing is known about marine mammals in Haitian waters. A review of scientific literature reveals scant information regarding marine mammal populations in Haiti. However, based on field information from local fishermen, WDC and collaborators have documented the consistent presence of sperm whales in the Gulf of Gonave. As marine mammals are migratory animals and the North Atlantic humpback whale population continues to recover, it is clear there is a necessity to expand the focus on marine mammals in Haiti to assess populations and extend protections to populations across their ranges.

In light of this recent and most unfortunate incident with a whale in Haiti, it naturally turns our focus towards identifying possible solutions and outcomes that might result from this challenging event. Haiti can benefit from focused attention on cross-border collaboration with authorities, organizations and whale researchers both in the Dominican Republic, and worldwide. The Dominican Republic harbors useful models in protecting both whales and their habitat, while developing an economy based tourism centered upon the appreciation and protection of whales, dolphins, and the marine environment.

The Haiti Ocean Project and its partners, including WDC, have laid the foundation for a marine mammal sanctuary in Haiti, and have presented this concept to government authorities. Indeed, these discussions may now be timelier than ever. With the involvement of local communities and the assistance of worldwide collaborators, including experts from the Dominican Republic, this concept can become a reality.

We hope that the tale of this whale in Haiti, and the legacy it leaves behind becomes one of optimism and hope—hope for an increased awareness of the importance of protecting whales and for the people of Haiti to benefit from protecting their magnificent natural resources.

Daily Mail – News Website

8th June 2015

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3114857/In-northern-Haiti-conservation-efforts-focus-coastlines.html>

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Wires Home

In northern Haiti, conservation efforts focus on coastlines

CARACOL, Haiti (AP) — Only little fish are pulled from the coastal waters off Haiti. In this overfished area of northern Haiti, fishermen who want a catch big enough for a meal say they must travel three hours in a boat to the Dominican Republic, where they scour the reefs of a national park and risk arrest, beatings or even death.

"Going over there is the only way we can feed our families," fisherman Wilfrid Desarme said in Caracol, where the sandy beach is lined with small wooden boats that replaced similar ones seized or torched by Dominican sailors who caught Haitians poaching there with rusty spear guns and fine-mesh nets.



In this photo, fishermen clean fish in the waters of Caracol Bay before selling to fish vendors near Cap Haitien, Haiti. Over the decades, impoverished Haiti has gained a reputation as an environmental wasteland. The country has only about 2 to 3 percent of its original forest cover, most of it lost because trees were cut down to make charcoal for cooking fuel. Its waters are severely overfished, leaving only small, young fish to catch. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)

Over the decades, impoverished Haiti has gained a reputation as an environmental wasteland. The country has only about 2 to 3 percent of its original forest cover, most of it lost because trees were cut down to make charcoal for cooking fuel. Its waters are severely overfished, leaving only small, young fish to catch. Coral reefs are clogged with silt washing into the sea from denuded hills.

Now, Haitian conservationist Jean Wiener is leading a homegrown campaign to protect the country's northern coastal areas, including barrier reefs and threatened mangrove forests that serve as crucial spawning grounds and nurseries for fish and crustaceans.



Wiener, who studied biology in the United States before returning to Haiti in 1989, saw his profile rise this year when he was among six global activists who received the prestigious Goldman Environmental Foundation award. The \$175,000 prize awarded by an international jury was a big boost for his nonprofit organization, which has six staff members.

In recent years, the 50-year-old activist has successfully fought to create the country's first protected marine areas, including Three Bays National Park. The roughly 80,000-hectare (19,700-acre) zone carved last year out of northern Haiti's overfished Caracol, Limonade and Fort Liberte Bays includes as much as 20 percent of the country's remaining mangroves, which are now illegal to chop down.

But no one enforces the legislation Wiener helped push through in 2013 to protect the mangroves, and he acknowledges there's a long way to go before the new protected marine areas become more than lines on a map. Like many sea sanctuaries around the globe, Haiti's new protected zones are "paper parks," without adequate resources to enforce restrictions.

"For our marine environment, right now at least, there's no law enforcement whatsoever," Wiener says.

Still, scientists have high hopes that the sprawling Three Bays park can eventually help rebuild severely depleted fish stocks and make Haiti's coastal ecosystems more resilient to a warming planet with rising seas and acidifying oceans. There's been plenty of research

showing fishermen eventually haul in more fish when a patrolled marine reserve nearby provides a safe haven for fish to grow.

Haiti's new park "contains the most extensive and healthiest coral reefs and other marine and coastal habitats in the country," says Maxene Atis, conservation coordinator for The Nature Conservancy's central Caribbean program.

If the government agrees to provide a few rangers to patrol Three Bays, Wiener says his Foundation for the Protection of Marine Biodiversity could secure the funding to pay their salaries.

The stakes for Haiti's environment are especially high in the coastal areas. Wiener's group last year prepared the first comprehensive report on Haiti's remaining mangroves and found destruction was "extreme" because the trees were being used by people dependent on charcoal for cooking.

To help ease pressures for charcoal and fuel wood, another nonprofit group called Carbon Roots International works with dozens of Haitians at an eight-acre property near Three Bays to manufacture briquettes made primarily from sugarcane husks. These charcoal briquettes are cheaper than the traditional ones made from mangrove and other types of wood and allow farmers to make money off their agricultural waste.

Haiti's northern coast suffers from the harvesting of coral offshore for construction material and soil erosion that deposits smothering silt along the coastal shelf. It's also threatened by effluent from the slowly expanding Caracol Industrial Park that was built after southern Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake with more than \$124 million in U.S. investments and is anchored by a South Korean textile company.

In the face of the diminishing fish populations, Wiener says he is developing alternative livelihoods for local fishermen. Right now he's looking just at honey production, but before the end of the year he hopes to introduce seaweed and oyster production as options.

For now, Haiti has one booming fishing sector left. Near the mouth of a river in Limonade, villagers gather by the hundreds nightly to hunt translucent "glass eels," using scoops fashioned from mosquito nets. The baby eels, which look like noodles with tiny dark eyes, are not eaten in Haiti, but sent by brokers to Asia, where they are fed a high-protein diet to speed their growth. Haiti's unsustainable export market for the globally endangered eels started in 2012, kick-started by Korean businessmen at the industrial park.

Scientists say that overfishing of the tiny eels mirrors that of sea cucumbers, a lumpy invertebrate that is consumed in China as an aphrodisiac. Starting about a decade ago, Haitians overfished and exported that species so quickly in the country's waters that local fishermen say they haven't seen it in years.

Despite the many challenges, Wiener is optimistic because he believes most Haitians share a strong interest in rebuilding the country's ravaged environment.

"We can't be constantly counting on others to do things for us because a lot of (non-Haitian) people don't have a vested interest in seeing anything change whereas we really do," he said.

At Caracol's fishing village, 60-year-old fisherman Jacqueson Cadet hopes for an easier life for his grandchildren.

"We must make changes or else we won't have any fish or any fishermen left here," Cadet says wistfully, looking at the lapping waves. "Nobody wants fishing to be an old dream."



In this photo, a fisherman cleans fish in the waters of Caracol Bay before selling it to fish vendors near Cap Haitien, Haiti. Fishermen who want a catch big enough for a meal say they must travel three hours in a boat to the Dominican Republic, where they scour the reefs of a national park and risk arrest, beatings or even death. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)



In this photo, fisherman Wilfrid Desarme, 30, carries a fishing spear and a bucket of fish after a day's work at Caracol Bay near Cap Haitien, Haiti. Desarme says he used to fish on Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic, but that he was run off by Dominican soldiers who beat him and even shot at him as he ran away, leaving his boat behind. He eventually got a new boat, and still takes the risk of fishing in Dominican waters, because he says there's not fish on the Haiti side. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)

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