



SUPPORTING
CONSERVATION
LEADERS



Members of Sumatra's first all-women ranger team from Damaran Baru village © Manuel Bergmann

20 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION WINS IN 2020

1 Thanks to decades of marine conservation by 2011 Gold Award winner **Rachel Graham**, the **Belize Minister for Environment signed an agreement to phase out gillnet fishing** across the country by 2022. Rachel will help fishers transition to sustainable equipment that reduces bycatch of endangered sharks and rays, just as a new study has revealed that these charismatic species are disappearing at an alarming rate due to overfishing.

2 2016 winner **Farwiza Farhan** launched the **first all-women patrols in Sumatra**, to protect the precious rainforest and ecosystem services on which communities and wildlife rely. Farwiza also made major strides in creating a Leuser Ecosystem Spatial Plan to strengthen protection against development, which is expected to be passed by the Indonesian government this year.

3 **A new national park was created in Patagonia**, thanks to 2018 Gold Award winner **Pablo Borboroglu**. Argentina's 40th national park, it will protect valuable natural and cultural resources. The area encompasses five islands that provide habitat for 464 terrestrial and marine species including the northernmost Magellanic penguin colony on the southwest Atlantic Ocean.

4 2012 winner **Budiono** has succeeded in establishing a **new freshwater reserve in Borneo**, encompassing 43,117 ha of sustainable fishery zones alongside core conservation areas. It is vital to the recovery and improved management of riparian swamps and forests, which provide Irrawaddy river dolphin habitat, nursery sites for other aquatic life and help us to fight climate change by sequestering carbon.

5 WFN's inaugural Whitley Award winner, **Amanda Vincent**, **became the first marine conservationist to receive the Indianapolis Prize**. Over 30 years, Amanda has put a spotlight on trade in seahorses in the Philippines, tackled destructive fishing practices like bottom-trawling and influenced progressive marine management and policies with her NGO, Project Seahorse.

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It was quite the year for 2009 winner **Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka**, who received the **2020 St. Andrew's Prize, the Aldo Leopold Award and the Uganda Veterinary Association's World Veterinary Day Award**. As the founder of Conservation Through Public Health, her efforts to help both mountain gorillas and the communities surrounding Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda couldn't be more timely, with captive gorillas recently testing positive for COVID-19.

India's Supreme Court ratified a state government **decision to earmark the Sigur plateau as an elephant corridor**. 2001 winner **Vivek Menon** and his local champions contributed to this mammoth judgement, which will ensure safe passage for Asian elephants and reduce human-wildlife conflict in the region.

2006 winner **Gerardo Ceballos** was a **finalist for the 2020 Indianapolis Prize**. He was recognised for his effort over decades to expose and address species extinction – work which has contributed to a vital [new report](#) on the climate and biodiversity crises. Gerardo is reintroducing wildlife to important nature reserves in Mexico, particularly within the 500,000 ha Janos Reserve that's home to prairie dogs, black-footed ferret and bison.

During cold winters, two Bulgarian lakes host the entire global population of Red-breasted Geese. Following tireless efforts from 2019 winner **Nikolai Petkov** and his team, the Ministry of Environment has declared a **no-hunting zone around the Shabla and Durankulak lakes**, more than tripling the protected area to 350m.

Not all was lost in Brazil's devastating fires: 2015 winner **Arnaud Desbiez** and 2008 winner **Patrícia Medici** rescued and rehabilitated hundreds of animals from the blaze including lowland tapirs, giant anteaters and armadillos. Now they are establishing the **first community-led firefighting force in the Pantanal**. Last year Arnaud also featured in WFN Trustee, Sir David Attenborough's BBC documentary *Extinction: The Facts*, while Patrícia received our 2020 Gold Award.

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Migratory Red-breasted Geese take off in Bulgaria



Caleb Ofori-Boateng at work in Ghana during the COVID-19 pandemic

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12,132 acres were legally designated as a municipal-level protected area in Ghana, led by 2019 winner **Caleb Ofori-Boateng**. This includes habitat for the whistling frog, a Critically Endangered species endemic to Western Africa that was thought to be extinct for nearly 40 years, until its recent rediscovery by Caleb and fellow scientists.

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Grey Crowned Cranes enjoyed a record-breaking breeding year in Kabale, Uganda; 73 chicks fledged, thanks largely to the efforts of 2010 winner **Jimmy Muheebwa**. He is empowering local conservation champions to help manage the wetlands where this national bird resides.

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2014 winner **Shivani Bhalla** vaccinated 2,642 domestic dogs against rabies and canine distemper in Samburu County, Kenya. Numerous organisations contributed time, effort and resources to cover such a vast landscape and **stem the transmission of canine diseases to endangered wild dogs**. This 'One Health' approach to conservation balances the welfare of people, their domestic companions and wildlife.

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2010 winner **Angela Maldonado** was awarded the **2020 National Geographic Buffett Award for Leadership in Conservation, for preventing illegal wildlife trade across the tri-border of Colombia, Brazil and Peru**. She works with policymakers and law enforcement to help species such as the night monkey – used for unsubstantiated biomedical research and photo tourism – as well as with communities to reduce the extraction of natural resources from pristine forest.

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The Turkish government protected a further 350 km² of Mediterranean coastline thanks to 2017 Gold Award winner **Zafer Kizilkaya**. This significant expansion will help safeguard the most overfished sea in the world. Zafer has established sustainable fisheries while bringing this fragile marine ecosystem back to life, welcoming the return of sandbar sharks and Critically Endangered Mediterranean monk seals.

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2014 winner **Luis Torres** completed assessments to update the Red List status of some of Cuba's endemic plants. He documented strategies for the long-term survival of 15 species and began implementing recovery plans. Along the way, he **discovered 10 new plant species and rediscovered 13 presumed to be extinct**, one of which was last seen in 1864.

FoProBiM Director and 2014 Gold Award winner **Jean Wiener** **strengthened protection of Haiti's marine ecosystems** when he signed the country's first ever co-management agreement with the National Protected Areas Agency. In March 2020 Jean finally received the medal for his entry into the Order of Agricultural Merit as a Knight, in recognition of years of influential work on sustainable fisheries that protect Haiti's coastal resources.

Plans to log Ebo Forest in southwestern Cameroon were cancelled due to a collective plea to the government from 60 conservationists, including 2013 winner **Ekwoge Abwe**. He has worked in this 1,500 km² biodiversity hotspot since 2010, which is home to a gorilla population discovered so recently that scientists are yet to determine whether they are a new subspecies. The forest also forms the ancestral home of 40 communities and stores 35 million tonnes of carbon.

2005 Gold Award winner **Charu Mishra** consulted governments, herders, young people and conservationists in India to draft a **strategy for snow leopard-friendly cashmere production that will benefit both communities and the environment**. Charu has dedicated his life to conservation of snow leopards and their habitat, recently winning the E.O. Wilson Award. He also ran 100 miles, non-stop over 24 hours, to raise money for the Snow Leopard Trust during lockdown.

2017 winner **Purnima Barman** spread the message of conservation rather than COVID-19. Her project is **empowering 10,000 women living alongside the Greater Adjutant Stork in Assam, India**. They are improving their livelihoods by designing, making and distributing face masks embroidered with motifs of this unique bird, building local pride in a species that was once considered a pest.

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The elusive snow leopard, caught on camera in Asia © Paul Sangeorzan