



**WORLD
LAND
TRUST**

Charity Number 1001291

**Saving land.
Saving species.**

Issue No. 77 Spring 2024
worldlandtrust.org



WLT NEWS

World Land Trust Spring Newsletter 2024



As we step into spring, a time of change and new beginnings, I am delighted to share with you the first of many exciting strides forward for WLT. With the formal launch of the new brand identity in this, our new extended WLT News, we hope to truly demonstrate the incredible impact of our collective community, and share with you, our supporters, the wonderful achievements you have helped make happen.

As CEO, overseeing the decision to rebrand was not taken lightly. But taking this time to really evaluate ourselves and what we stand for has brought home the message we want to convey as an organisation, to ourselves and to everyone around us. The new brand is the result of an 18-month-long journey on what WLT means to us and everyone we work with, and I believe the spirit of WLT is captured in our overarching brand sentiment “Actions that create incredible chain reactions”. It illustrates how the impact of every tree planted, every acre preserved, and every species protected ripples throughout the world and gives hope for the future.

You will have noticed there is a new face on our front-cover: developed entirely in-house, our new logo/emblem places the Red-eyed Tree frog at the helm. Iconic and universally popular, tree frogs are found on all continents (except Antarctica); they are representative of the reach of our global community, from our conservation partners and the people local to their reserves, to our supporter network of friends, legacies, businesses, fundraisers, and our trustees, staff, and patrons. We believe this refresh of our logo will elevate our popular appeal, gaining us more recognition and wider support, whilst capturing the essence of what WLT stands for—dedication to the protection of wildlife and habitats – in a positive and friendly way.

This is also the first edition of our newly redesigned newsletter. This new format has been developed to allow us to better share stories directly from our partners, hear from the people at the heart of conservation activities, and showcase some of the wider work and research our partners do alongside what is directly supported by WLT. We have also taken the opportunity to highlight the work supported by the Action Fund which, alongside all our programmes, is on the frontlines of conservation, directing vital resources to our partners when they are most urgently needed. World Land Trust are a bridge between our supporters and our partners on the ground and, through these newsletters, we hope to share with you the rich global tapestry that is our community. From artwork by young rangers in REGUA’s Brazilian Atlantic Forest, a site visit walking in the footsteps of Jaguars in Guatemala with trustee and supporter Philip Shapiro, to a day in the life of Asociación Armonía’s rangers in the Bolivian savannas— these are stories that show how a community of people who care about our world are making it a little bit better each day.

We are confident that these changes will propel WLT forward along our growth journey and our supporters can be assured that we will continue our work with confidence in our cause, transparency in what we do and optimism for all the positive changes we make.

We hope you like this carefully created change as much as we do.

Dr Catherine Barnard, CEO

Contents

News from the Field

- 4 Action Fund Updates
- 6 Positive news stories
- 10 Partner Postcards
- 12 Partner Spotlight: ORCT
- 14 Site Visit: Philip Shapiro visits Guatemala

Science and Nature

- 16 Species in the Spotlight: Red Mangrove
- 18 Species in the Spotlight: The Maned Wolf
- 20 Armenia’s corridor of trees
- 21 Partner Research

People Power

- 22 Nick Hollis rows across the Atlantic
- 23 Sam Bell’s ‘Camp and Run’ challenge
- 25 Leaving a legacy
- 26 Corporate Spotlight

WLT Community

- 28 Framing nature
- 30 Staff Opinion Piece
- 31 Read, Listen, Learn



Conservation in action

News from our Action Fund Partners

With all the planning and preparation in the world, the nature of conservation often means the unexpected can arise without warning. Our Action Fund is there to provide urgent conservation resources to our partners wherever and whenever they are most needed.

Fundação Kissama

Partnering with WLT in 2022 to establish a conservation area at Mount Moco, Fundação Kissama is committed to ensuring the long-term survival of Angola's Afromontane Forest. With only 700 ha remaining, this forest is one of the most threatened habitats in the region. With over 10% of the remaining forest occurring in the Mount Moco area, the project will provide a foothold for the specialised, endemic biodiversity

within the forest, such as the largest-known population of Swierstra's Francolin. With dry weather worsening each year due to climate change, forest fires are an ever-increasing threat to the landscape. Supported by our Action Fund, Fundação Kissama has successfully installed 22.7 kilometres of firebreaks so far. These are created by removing vegetation to create tracts of bare earth. With nothing to catch,

FPWC (Foundation for the Protection of Wildlife and Cultural Assets)

Among many incredible milestones, our partnership with FPWC has seen the planting of an incredible 60,000 fruit-bearing trees in Armenia's picturesque region of Vayots Dzor. This marks

the first step towards FPWC's ambitious commitment to plant a total of 700,000 trees in the coming years. The trees will not

only contribute to the region's ecosystem but also serve as a vital food source for wildlife. While primarily supported by our Plant a Tree programme, FPWC explained "The Action Fund has provided essential support for rangers and maintenance activities in and around the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge, helping us to scale up reforestation efforts. Our strategic partnership with WLT, underscores the collective commitment to sustainable environmental practices and the preservation of natural habitats."

Snow Leopard Foundation

Since 2022, WLT has worked with the Snow Leopard Foundation (SLF) to expand the Protected Area network in Pakistan with the management of Bashqar Gol and Shandor plateau as a Biosphere Reserve. So far, the project's milestones included the successful preparation of socio-economic and ecological reports, conducting camera-trapping studies, collecting genetic

samples and performing analysis to confirm the presence of a wide diversity of species. Camera trap footage has captured some iconic species, such as the Snow Leopard, Brown Bear, Grey Wolf, Ibex and Lynx. This is supported by the initiation of a community-based wildlife surveillance system, marked by the selection and training of 12 Community Wildlife Guards,

forest fires are unable to spread and burn themselves out. These breaks must be strategically placed and continually maintained and monitored by our partner.

Last Autumn, FPWC organised the rescue of a bear cub and a young bear from snares discovered during tree planting activities. Snares were set near villages, in areas where most human and wildlife conflict occurs. The young bear was treated for minor injuries before being released. Due to his small size, the cub was taken to the Wildlife Rescue Centre managed by FPWC for care and monitoring before returning him safely to the wild a few days later.

adding another layer to the project's impact. The proposed Bashqar Gol Biosphere Reserve is now well underway, with core zones identified for their good habitat quality and low human impact. These collective efforts highlight the substantial impact of the SLF project in achieving its mission with the support of the Action Fund.



The Snow Leopard Foundation, Chitral, Pakistan

Empowering tomorrow's conservationists

Students from the schools of Laspur Valley performed at the International Snow Leopard Day Celebration. The event promoted wildlife awareness and showcased SLF's vital work.

Conducting surveys



Aquatic species are captured and released as part of an ecological survey of Bashqar Gol.



Empowering communities for conservation

Dr Ali Nawaz, Director of SLF, engages with residents of Laspur Valley during a community meeting, to emphasise the importance of local participation in conservation efforts.



Safeguarding livestock and wildlife

A vital vaccination campaign unfolded across Laspur Valley. The collaborative effort between SLF and local communities aims to protect livestock while also preventing disease transmission to wildlife.

Conservation in action



Big Life Kenya

Our partner Big Life Kenya is committed to saving the Greater Amboseli ecosystem's Eselengei wildlife corridors. The preservation of these wild lands is essential to roaming wildlife, including one of the greatest populations of elephants left in East Africa. Through WLT's Action Fund, Big Life is working to secure vital land, keeping it free from development, poaching, and other human disturbance. Recently, Big Life's mobile team

of Rangers, in a joint operation with Kenya Wildlife Service and the National Environment Management Agency, assisted with the arrest of 10 people for violating land use regulations – including constructing permanent structures, fencing, and drilling boreholes without permits. Incidents such as these, if left unchecked, can cause irreversible damage and disruption to wildlife migratory routes.

NCSM (Naturaleza y Cultura Sierra Madre)

Our partner NCSM is supporting the creation of the Pitayal Coastal State Reserve in the coastal lowlands of Sonora, Mexico. The Pitayal is a unique ecosystem characterised by the Pitaya Cacti, which bears fruit also known as dragon fruit. Declaration of the area as a State Reserve requires the approval and engagement of countless stakeholders, from governments to local community groups. To help foster positive connections between local communities, the Masiaca

indigenous community of Sirebampo held the Pitaya Fair 2023. The fair aimed to raise awareness of pitaya harvesting and its uses. It highlighted local Yoreme Mayo traditions and the importance of the conservation of El Pitayal to maintain the services it provides. NCSM delivered a presentation outlining why the area is a priority for conservation and gathered support for the creation of a state-protected reserve.



Planet Madagascar

Since 2022, WLT has supported Planet Madagascar in restoring fragile ecosystems through community-based forest restoration in Ankarafantsika National Park, North-West Madagascar. This project takes place in an 8,000 hectare management zone where there are eight different species of lemur, four of which are Vulnerable, one Endangered, and two Critically Endangered. Through the support of the Action Fund, Planet Madagascar

have created a forest corridor that connects forest fragments and expands vital lemur habitat. Ongoing feedback and guidance has helped to make the forest restoration program as successful as possible, with high survivorship of seedlings and improved monitoring techniques. The nurseries, run by local community members, have nearly 30,000 sprouted seedlings belonging to 15 plant species almost ready to plant.

A safe home for lemurs and sustainable livelihoods for local people with Planet Madagascar



Community planting

151 community members were employed by Planet Madagascar to plant over 60,000 native seedlings, transport supplies and maintain the planted seedlings throughout 2023. This diligent maintenance was a great success for the future trees, as the seedling mortality rate for 2023 was less than half the previous two years.

31 members of the Women's Cooperative Tontolo Maitso, working closely with Planet Madagascar, received a total of 1,000 citrus tree seedlings to help towards their long-term financial stability.

Seedling maintenance and monitoring



10 community members were trained as supervisors to monitor and collect data related to the seedling health.

More than 86% of the seeds planted within Planet Madagascar's five nurseries sprouted successfully. 16 community members are employed as permanent project assistants and nursery managers. They are trained in seed collection, seed processing and planting, and maintaining the sprouted seedlings until their plantation into the restoration zone.



Forest Patrol

Forest patrols are regularly carried out by a team of 18 forest rangers. These are conducted to reinforce forest restoration efforts to avoid damage from fire and other human disturbances. This project has supported over 430 forest patrols so far, during which more than 125 lemur groups have been found.

This year, the number of threats decreased considerably. Only one case of wildfire touched the management zone, compared to four the previous year.

18 kilometres of the existing firebreak was successfully maintained by more than 30 community members during 2023, seven kilometers of which were funded by WLT supporters.

Community building and awareness raising



More than 100 adults and children assisted in celebrating the importance of forest conservation and restoration, and the importance of their contribution to Planet Madagascar's activities during the Healthy Forests Day event.

The Zebu cart is one of the most important forest restoration tools. It can access any type of road, especially during the rainy season. The carts are used by the project staff to make the five-hour trek from the village to the restoration zone, transporting supplies and seedlings that would otherwise have to be carried by hand.

Positive News

from the Field

Fledglings are Flying Back from the Brink of Extinction in Bolivia

The palm groves of Bolivia's Llanos de Moxos savannas are home to one of the rarest species on Earth - the Blue-throated Macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*), thought extinct until its rediscovery in 1992. Our partner Asociación Armonía has safeguarded the largest known wild population of this species, and an array of other tropical birds, at the Barba Azul Reserve.

Following 2023's macaw breeding season, 15 chicks have successfully flown from their Nest Box programme at the nearby Laney Rickman Reserve - the most yet in a single year. With an incredible 128 macaws now having joined the wild population since the programme began in 2005. The 2016 census estimated the wild population to be up to 480. Today, though still Critically Endangered, thanks to tireless conservation efforts that number is steadily growing, and it is estimated there may now be as many as 700.

Blue-throated Macaws have been driven to near extinction by habitat loss, hunting, and the

illegal pet trade. By constructing and monitoring artificial nesting boxes, the programme provides breeding pairs with a suitable nesting place where eggs are protected from predation. Throughout the breeding season, rangers such as those supported by our Keepers of the Wild programme, (whose days you can read about on pages 10-11), ensure chicks are healthy and well-fed until they are ready to fledge.

Thanks to our partner's unwavering efforts, the IUCN listing for the Blue-throated Macaw wild population has changed from declining to stable as numbers are rapidly climbing.

Protection for Pangolins

The dedicated advocacy of WLT partner KTK-BELT has resulted in the creation of a Special Community-based Pangolin Conservation Area (CBPCA) in eastern Nepal. The 13,086-ha protected area in the forests of Kerabari Rural Municipality is home to the Critically Endangered Chinese Pangolin and the Endangered Indian Pangolin, two of the most trafficked mammals in the world, and will, in time, help to

reduce the threat from poaching. The management of the area will also strictly limit the use of harmful pesticides, single-use plastics, noise pollution, and human disturbance from tourists and construction.

Pangolins have become Critically Endangered over the past century. Shy and solitary, they are relentlessly hunted for their armoured scales or captured for the illegal pet trade. Although much needed legal protections to the highest level have been created, they remain

threatened by the degradation of their forest homes. Through these new measures, it is hoped that Pangolins and the countless other species they live among will thrive in a safe habitat, away from human disturbance.

The new CBPCA represents 42% of the total pangolin habitat targeted for protection. Its creation is a vitally significant milestone towards the goal of declaring the entire Kerabari area an Indigenous and Community Conservation Area.

This KTK-Belt is being funded in its entirety by a grant to WLT of £250,000 from the People's Planet Trust - a foundation that is part of the Peoples Postcode Lottery.

Managing Bolivia's protected areas with Community Guardians

With support from WLT's Action Fund, Fundación Natura Bolivia (FNB) has created three protected areas located in the Bolivian Chaco: the Héroes del Chaco Historical and Wildlife Reserve, the Guajukaka Life Area, and the Quebracho Colorado Natural Integrated Management Area.

To manage these protected areas, FNB leads an initiative called "My Forest, My First Job" that recruits young people to become Community Guardians - with 25 currently active. These people follow routes in strategic

areas of the protected areas, armed with a smartphone and guided by special software that allows them to record biodiversity, medicinal plants, changes to the land, and human activity. This data is then sent to the municipal government and to FNB. A Community Guardian recently recorded a deer species (*Mazama americana sarae*) that had not been observed in a long time. This programme emphasises the value of bringing young people back to their natural surroundings and to build on the knowledge of those with

News from the Field



more experience. This simple, low-cost method means that municipalities with minimal resources can still effectively manage their protected areas.

'A Green Flock' A letter from Roberto Pedraza Ruiz (Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda, Mexico)

"For a change, the Sierra Gorda (or Fat Mountains in English) in Mexico, lives up to its name. Here, in spite of the threats and challenges to nature conservation (the toughest ones being derived from the climate crisis), endangered species are still present, others come to visit, and its forests continue to have a wild and loud soundscape.

Silent forests are one of the many sad symptoms of the sixth wave of mass extinction. Hearing the strong voices of the Military Macaws (*Ara militaris*) - which are on the IUCN Vulnerable-Red List - is a privilege and a powerful incentive to conserve them.

It is in the vast mountainous territory of Sierra Gorda where, thanks to the support of WLT, Grupo Ecológico can protect much of its rich 'ecodiversity'. This is both through the network of private reserves we protect, and two Carbon Balanced projects in which local forest owners are the main beneficiaries and allies of these carbon capture initiatives.

Throughout these landscapes, the Military Macaws are indicators of ecosystem integrity. We have a resident population of approximately 40 pairs in the high mountains. Each year though, a several-month long migration of macaws takes place. The birds fly from Mexico's northeast to visit the extensive forests here, as well as three of the reserves that we protect; Las Canalitas, Cañón del Fresno and Hoya Verde. Every year, I impatiently await their arrival. When they do come, Keeper of the Wild ranger Abel Reséndiz alerts me - he is always watching out and knows some of their favourite perches to rest on. On the last occasion, they literally invaded the small village where Abel resides.

As a wildlife photographer who knows the species well, it was a unique experience for me to witness large groups of them moving from tree to tree within the village, literally in the gardens of the houses. The local residents respect them and do not attack them thanks to environmental education. It was chaotic and

confusing to try to count them in flight. But we estimate that 120 macaws were showing off that morning, immersed in their daily agenda: eating, screaming, preening, kissing, regurgitating to each other the tastiest fruits, sunning themselves, fighting for a tiny branch and moving as a group to a new tree with more food.

The Sierra Gorda is part of the great Eastern Sierra Madre, and I can't imagine them without the strong voices and colours of the macaws. As long as these illustrious travellers continue to cross this way, the mountains and forests will remain alive and wild, and we must redouble our protection efforts to keep it as such."



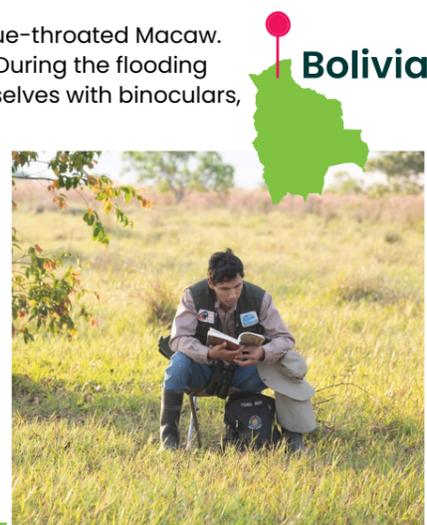
Partner Postcards

"My name is Jhulian and I am writing this to you from the bird-filled Barba Azul Nature Reserve. As the sun rises, we start with a nutritious breakfast to keep us energised throughout the day. We gear up for work, dressing in special attire that protects us from the sun, mosquito and horsefly bites - this helps us to traverse the endless flooded grasslands typical of the rainy summer season in the area.

Mornings here are dedicated to patrolling various areas of Barba Azul. We look at our camera traps carefully placed across different habitats and conduct maintenance on the trails that both we and our visitors use to observe birds and animals. We do this using all-terrain vehicle and occasionally drones for patrols in the more distant areas. We check for any updates, lost neighbouring livestock, or unauthorised entries.

In the afternoon, we prepare for the monitoring of the Critically Endangered Blue-throated Macaw. Today, we are conducting the monthly monitoring in the furthest night roosts. During the flooding season, this task requires a commute of six hours on horseback. We equip ourselves with binoculars, the Bolivian Bird Guide to identify what we observe along the way, water, a flashlight, notebook, pen, a camera, and a *tapeque* with dry food. Progress on horseback is slow due to the roughness of the flooded grasslands. We reach the monitoring point as evening falls and silently observe the Blue-throated and Blue and Yellow Macaws, which have arrived from different parts of Barba Azul. We count them until nightfall before returning to the ranger station in darkness - being very cautious of snakes and caimans that may be hunting at this time in the water. Once safely home, we embrace the pleasant fatigue that envelops us at night, allowing us to rest and face the activities of the next day."

Tapeque: Snack or provisions that travelers carry for the road, composed of biscuits, dried meat, dried cassava, or fruits.



- Jhulian Machuca Medía, Reserve Ranger
Asociación Civil Armonía (Armonía), Bolivia

A day in the life of the Planet Madagascar nursery team

"I am Mamy. Planet Madagascar's in-country Director, and help oversee our plant nurseries. A typical day at the nursery involves collecting seeds from the forest surrounding our community, which we will later plant in our nurseries. Collecting the seeds ourselves helps us to save on project costs and also to ensure that we are planting species that are local to our area.

We are also tasked with cleaning the nursery, and removing any grasses that are growing within it. We fill our growing bags with composted soil and tend to the sprouted seedlings by ensuring that they have enough water and appropriate sunlight. We also keep track of how many seeds we have germinating in our nurseries, how many new sprouting seedlings there are, and how many have died.

As we create our organic compost ourselves, we visit these bins daily to see how they are doing. Our compost is made up of green leaves, hay, leaf litter, and cattle dung, so if we need to add additional materials, we do that. As we approach planting season, we begin to reduce the amount of shade in the nurseries so that the seedlings get accustomed to the dry, hot environment. It is hard work, but it is also very exciting to see the plants grow and eventually get planted into the forest corridor that helps connect forest, reduce erosion, and save lemurs near our community."



- Mamy Razafitsalama
Planet Madagascar

Mustansar's Commitment to Forest and Wildlife Conservation

"Greetings from the enchanting landscapes of Laspur Valley in Upper Chitral! **I'm Mustansar Hussain,** a passionate wildlife watcher deeply committed to forest and wildlife conservation.

My love for nature sparked my journey, leading me to witness the unfortunate consequences of the illegal hunting of wildlife and deforestation in the nearby mountains. I have qualifications in FSC (Pre-Medical) and FSC (Pre-Engineering) and transitioned to becoming a trekking tour guide in Chitral. For the past two years, I have been employed by the KPK Wildlife Department and played a vital role in collaboration with the Snow Leopard Foundation (SLF) to support habitat protection, wildlife research, community involvement, legal protections, climate change mitigation and wildlife rehabilitation.

Recently, I collaborated on a Chitral University research project supported by SLF Chitral, focusing on detecting large carnivore animals and Pallas cats in Bashqar Gol. My dedication to wildlife and conservation has flourished through SLF's workshops and training, where I actively contribute to conserving and breeding snow leopards, Himalayan ibex, and other local wildlife.

In 2023, with SLF's support, I took on the challenging yet rewarding task of continuous camera trapping for several months. Enduring twelve-hour walks on mountain paths, I successfully captured rare footage crucial for wildlife conservation and research. I don't see preservation and protecting wildlife as just a job but as a life goal. I believe valuing and conserving nature aligns with the essential goal of sustaining ecosystem services for the benefit of all. Grateful for the trust and encouragement from SLF and the KPK Wildlife Department, I continue my journey, driven by a profound commitment to the natural world."



- Mustansar Hussain (with support from Ali Nawaz)
Snow Leopard Foundation

"My name is Alan Aranea and I write from the wildlife refuge, La Esperanza, located on the marvellous southern Atlantic Coast. Here, the sun rises towards the sea and sets in the mountains, both offering me wonderful flashes of colour to admire. The days here are a constant adventure and in the lonely moments I connect with my surroundings; from a bird to a plant, to the wind and the sea.

I never feel alone here as I am always in the presence of animals - from the Guanaco calves which approach the facility daily, to the small colony of sealions which we observe and count periodically. I am often in the company of the orcas who pass our shores. One of the most fascinating things I have seen was a group of orcas near the shore teaching the smaller ones to hunt.

Our work at FPN involves constantly caring for the environment and the ways of life it supports. The monitoring of Pumas and Guanacos is something I deeply value. We keep their habitat healthy and protect them from poachers, an important task in a region where extensive livestock farming predominates.

At FPN, we have a motto: "To know in order to conserve". We cannot protect what we do not know, so my work is not only helping to monitor the 6,800 hectares and 12 kilometres of protected coastline, but to interact with the human inhabitants of the region, to engage them in respecting and learning about nature and the importance of protecting its flora and fauna. It is because of this that I feel my work in La Esperanza wildlife refuge is not just a livelihood, but a way of life."



- Alan Aranea, Ranger at La Esperanza wildlife refuge
Fundacion Patagonia Natural (FPN), Argentina

The Floral Kingdom in the Heart of South Africa

Adding to an already exciting year for Overberg Renosterveld Conservation Trust (ORCT), they joined our Buy an Acre programme in early 2023, and their incredible achievements are set to continue.

Renosterveld, one of the richest botanical habitats in the world, is teeming with wildflowers and spectacular birds – however, only 5% of this floral haven remains today.

Thanks to its fertile clay soil and quartz crystal outcroppings, the veld is home to an astounding number of endemic plants, some so rare that they occur only on a single hillside. From delicate pink *Hesperantha kiaratayloriae*, vibrant *Lachenalia barbarae* cape

cowslip, to cheerful *Polhillia curtisiae*, the rich annual and perennial bulbs, shrubs, and grasses of renosterveld are a rich tapestry of renewal. As for wildlife, the dense, bushy scrub makes an ideal foraging and nesting place for 150 bird species, such as the endemic Cape Clapper Lark, or the Vulnerable Southern Black Korhaan. It also shelters an abundance of winsome mammals, from aardvarks and bushpigs, to the tiny Cape Rock Sengi.

Named for the Black Rhinoceroses who roamed the

plains hundreds of years ago, renosterveld once carpeted the lowlands of South Africa's western cape. Today, 95% has been destroyed by monoculture farming, transforming into an area now known as the Overberg Wheatbelt. Since 2012, ORCT has been dedicated to the long-term conservation of this extraordinary ecosystem through active partnerships with the Overberg's landowners.

The Harriers of Haarwegskloof

The wonders of this resiliently beautiful biome are best experienced in ORCT's Haarwegskloof Nature Reserve. Made up of 70–80% untouched land, more than 500 plant species blanket the reserve, which is also the largest nesting ground for the Endangered Black Harrier, one of South Africa's rarest birds. ORCT have been working to conserve and research this species. This charismatic raptor has experienced significant population declines over the last few decades, driven mostly by the loss of the renosterveld habitat in which it nests. Newer threats include collisions with wind turbines – which are on the increase in the area – as well as climate change.

Recent modelling suggests that the Black Harrier population sits at just 1,300 individuals. Outside of their work with WLT, ORCT, together with other raptor biologists, is leading a GPS tagging project and has, to date, fitted 15 adult harriers with tags – with additional tags to fit in 2024. Once enough data has been collected, ORCT will collaborate with partners Dr Rob Simmons and Dr Megan Murgatroyd to analyse and publish the results. This information will feed into a larger conservation plan for the species, which will be developed by the Black Harrier Task Force, a collaboration between several NGOs and research associations, which the ORCT is currently chairing.

A Corridor of Renosterveld

Last year, with the help of WLT's Buy an Acre programme and other generous supporters, ORCT secured the landmark purchase of Plaatjieskraal farm after 16 years of negotiations. Now, combined with the adjoining Haarwegskloof, these Critically Endangered remnants make up the largest connected stretch of Eastern Rûens Shale Renosterveld in the world. ORCT director Dr Odette Curtis-Scott, whose passion and research for renosterveld has spearheaded conservation efforts, believes that the future of the veld lies in this connectivity. It is the long-term ambition of ORCT to develop a wildlife corridor southward from the reserve all the way to the De Hoop Nature Reserve. ORCT hopes to engage farmers in realising the value of their native renosterveld remnants, a haven for plants and wildlife and a symbol of South African heritage, no matter how small. Their future work will also include researching pollination networks in renosterveld, and carrying out novel research on fires and grazing to understand how these activities can be mimicked for conservation purposes.

We understand that a habitat's small size should not mean it is overlooked; a tiny fragment of land can hold a wealth of possibilities. Supporters of WLT can help partners like ORCT to fulfil their vision with our Buy an Acre programme and ensure the continuity of this irreplaceable ecosystem.

Where the tropical forest meets the sea



WLT Trustee Philip Shapiro visits Guatemala

An impressive amount of the species living across Guatemala are endemic, meaning they aren't found anywhere else in the world. This includes 15% of the country's terrestrial vertebrate species and nearly 13% of its plant species. The country's rainforests host much of this wildlife, making them one of Central America's biodiversity hotspots. Guatemala's name itself stems from the Aztec Náhuatl term *Quauhtlemallan*, meaning 'land of many trees'. Today though, just 20% of Guatemala's lowland rainforests remain. WLT partner, Foundation for Ecodevelopment and Conservation (FUNDAECO) has been working for 33 years to restore, protect and conserve Guatemala's these species-rich Caribbean coastal ecosystems.



Philip Shapiro, WLT Trustee, had a pivotal role in helping FUNDAECO protect more habitat on the Caribbean Coast. In this interview, we learnt about Philip's recent visit to the region, his encounters with marine life, and the impacts of donations for people, wildlife, and biodiversity.

WLT: What was the purpose of your visit to WLT partner FUNDAECO in Guatemala?

Philip: In 2021, I made a donation to WLT to help FUNDAECO acquire land to extend the Laguna Grande Reserve (Laguna is Spanish for lagoon). My trip involved visiting the lagoon I helped protect and surrounding tropical lowland rainforests and mangroves. As someone who loves the sea, it can sometimes be quite tricky to help make an impact as an individual donor on marine life. Property relations governing the sea differ to those on land. As an experienced diver and marine photographer, I was therefore happy to be supporting FUNDAECO in their project which

benefits both marine and land environments. I was also excited to see how its "ridge to reef conservation strategy" works in practice.

WLT: Tell us a bit about the places you explored and what was happening there?

Philip: Starting from FUNDAECO's head office in the capital, Guatemala City, we travelled out to Laguna Grande in the Izabal region. Traversing the coastline, I counted numerous inlets etched into the coastline carrying water from the lush, green landscape out to the sea. I was reminded of the powerful origin story of the Laguna Grande Reserve. Originally, the area was bought by a logger who wanted to clear the forest for timber. However, due to financial issues, they eventually had to sell some of their land to the bank, allowing FUNDAECO to then purchase this land with WLT funding from donors such as myself. After visiting Laguna Grande, we later travelled to Tapon

Creek – another habitat that FUNDAECO helps to preserve. Here, the mangroves and damp forests open up into numerous gloriously white sandy beaches, from which we saw dolphins gliding through the water. This coastline is vulnerable to urban development for hotels and houses. It's therefore vital that FUNDAECO protect it.

WLT: Marine life is central to the work of FUNDAECO – what encounters with the sea did you have?

Philip: We went to a coral reef off Guatemala's coast called Corona Caimán (Cayman Crown) and when we dived down there it was simply incredible – amidst the stunning colours of the coral we saw Barrel Sponge (*Xestospongia muta*) and several species of Angel Fish. We then went to a second marine site which hadn't been properly explored yet. When we swam amongst the reef, it soon became clear that the quality of this coral reef was, in many ways,

in better condition than that of Corona Caimán. It was fun to be part of this sort of 'discovery' of a reef system for which – I later was told by FUNDAECO – they're going to apply for conservation status. It's very exciting.

WLT: Alongside your marine life encounters, did you see many wild animals on land?

Philip: In the rainforest the animals often heard us coming and tended to steer out of our way. We did see a troop of Howler Monkeys (*Alouatta pigra*) making their iconic calling sounds reminiscent of dinosaurs (or what I imagine they sounded like based on Jurassic Park!).



We also saw lots of interesting bird life too, including numerous hummingbird species, Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius montezuma*), and Red-capped Manakin (*Ceratopipra mentalis*). I would love to say a Jaguar walked across our path, but sadly this didn't happen, although we did spot a Jaguar footprint which was very cool!

WLT: How did it feel knowing you played a part in the protection of these species' futures and their habitat?

Philip: To stand there and see the Laguna Grande sign alongside the World Land Trust name was quite emotional actually. Especially knowing I am partly responsible for keeping safe the amazing flora and fauna that was around me. When you hear the story

about how the land was going to be logged, it made walking through this grand forest feel all the more powerful. Surrounded by the gushing sounds of water everywhere we turned, I couldn't help but wonder: without my own and other donors' funding, what would have happened to this habitat and its biodiversity? No doubt it would have been sold by the bank to someone else – perhaps with extractive intentions, or even completely felled or converted to pasture. This ecosystem is now secure because of something I helped do.

WLT: What did you learn from being there; did anything surprise you or offer you distinct perspectives?

Philip: I learnt so much! I saw how FUNDAECO's purpose was not only to protect nature, but also to improve outcomes for poverty-affected and marginalised people – especially indigenous people, women, and young people. I witnessed the importance of gaining trust from local people, something FUNDAECO had done from its establishment and continues to do through including and sharing benefits of its conservation programmes. Widespread poverty in the area means you cannot expect everyone to think about conservation in the same way. But thanks to FUNDAECO's support, microbusinesses and ecotourism businesses which help the environment have succeeded.

WLT: Global leaders have not given the biodiversity crisis the attention it warrants, nor are they responding to the climate crisis with the urgency it needs. Given this, what brings you hope for the future of nature conservation?

Philip: I get hope from seeing people in action who are truly making sustainable conservation models work. What FUNDAECO has achieved in Guatemala is really inspiring, bringing diverse local communities into the project. Biodiversity is rising on the political agendas and growing in importance. However, in the absence of concrete political action on biodiversity, I think it will have to be NGOs which take the lead. I think FUNDAECO is such a great example of this. For over 30 years, it has achieved so many meaningful outcomes whilst bringing local communities along their journey. If they can do it there, then there is hope for the world.

The single most effective action we can take to mitigate global warming is to avoid further loss of forests, particularly in the tropics. The Laguna Grande Nature Reserve is part of WLT's Carbon Balanced programme which protects life-sustaining forests, particularly mature ones, to store and sequester carbon. On page 16, we delve into Mangrove forests as a powerful carbon sink and what WLT partners are doing to secure their futures.



A Forest in the Waves

The Red Mangroves of Guatemala

In the coastal lagoons of Caribbean Guatemala, Red Mangrove trees (*Rhizophora mangle*) anchor themselves against the ebb and flow of the tide. Rising out of the water on their distinctive tangled roots, these forests protect the coastline and provide a haven for hundreds of species in FUNDAECO's Laguna Grande Reserve.

Keepers of the coastline

Growing in the shifting intertidal zones where freshwater meets the ocean, Mangrove shrub and tree species are uniquely adapted to thrive in environments so salty that most plants would not survive. Of the

more than 70 mangrove species, Red Mangrove trees grow further into the sea than the rest of their family. Standing on stilts of their namesake reddish-brown roots, they knit together the silty shore and shield inland areas from storm waves and tidal surges made worse each year by climate change. Mangrove's incredible ability to filter salt and pollutants from the water and cycle nutrients also makes these tropical, tidal forests one of the most productive ecosystems on the planet. While birds and reptiles populate the branches, nurseries of fish, crabs, and shrimp teem within the complex root systems. The shelter they create from weather and erosion also makes the ecosystem a perfect breeding place for the

Threatened West-Indian Manatee, their calves meandering calmly through the maze of canals and rivers within Mangrove forests of Laguna Grande.

Roots of salt and silt

Beyond their vital importance to wildlife, mangrove, like all wetlands, are exceptional carbon sinks. By channelling the carbon they capture deep into the silt, they sequester up to 10 times more carbon than other forest types. Unlike most trees, which release their stored carbon when they die, mangroves' silt-stored carbon can stay safely in the ground for millennia — but only if left undisturbed. Despite this, these ecosystems are

threatened by farming, harmful fishing practices and pollution. Vast tracts of mangroves are decimated each year to make way for cultivation, particularly large commercial shrimp farms and coconut plantations, their branches transformed from habitat to construction timber.

At Laguna Grande, FUNDAECO is protecting one of the last virtually pristine networks of mangroves, wetlands, and lagoons in Caribbean Guatemala. Its creation was first supported by WLT in 2009 and has since expanded with the help of our 2021 autumn appeal — Guardians of Nimla Ha', alongside individual donors like Philip Shapiro, who tells us about his visit to the reserve on page 14,

and the legacy of Kamila Zahno, whose story you can read about on page 25. The rainforests surrounding Laguna Grande are included in the project area of FUNDAECO's Caribbean REDD+ Project, certified by Verra's Verified Carbon Standard and supported by WLT's Carbon Balanced programme, which provides businesses and individuals with an effective method of fighting climate change.

A world of trees

The global importance of mangrove forests and their role in fighting climate change is increasingly recognised and was a key feature of last year's COP28 climate discussions. More

than 30 countries have now joined together in the Mangrove Alliance for Climate. This places mangrove forests at the forefront of nature-based solutions and brings us towards the Mangrove Breakthrough goal of protecting and restoring 15 million hectares of mangroves around the world. Alongside Guatemala's Laguna Grande Reserve, WLT is supporting our partner Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) to establish a Mangrove Conservation Hub in Kerala, India on an area already successfully secured by WLT. The hub's education programme will show local communities the incredible value of mangroves to people, wildlife, and the planet, as well as the countless natural benefits granted by thriving mangrove ecosystems.

A stranger in the forest

The Maned Wolf caught on camera

When checking camera trap footage in Brazil's Atlantic Forest it is not uncommon for REGUA field staff to see some surprises. From Margay and Ocelot to Crab-eating Fox and Northern Three-striped Opossum elusive animals have been known to pass by hidden camera lenses located in REGUA's Guapiaçu Ecological Reserve. But to see South America's largest canid here, outside its more usual range, has raised questions about the species' future.

In full view of the camera, a Maned Wolf (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*) is seen walking deer-like through the undergrowth before elegantly hopping over a fallen tree branch. Never seen before in the reserve, the sighting caused quite the stir at REGUA not only for its beauty, but because it was far from its usual habitat.

The Maned Wolf is endemic to South America, with Brazil being home to around 90% of its population. The animal prefers to roam in open areas such as grasslands and shrublands and is a significant icon of Brazil's savannah region called the Cerrado, where it inhabits open-canopy woodland. Growing up to 90cm tall, its gangly long black legs help it thrive in the Cerrado's high grasses. Tending to avoid areas with closed forest canopy, the fact that an individual was sighted in the densely forested Serra dos Órgãos mountains begs the question, what was it doing there?

A wolf only by name

Despite its common name, and though it's in the family of dogs, wolves and foxes, the Maned Wolf is not biologically considered any of these. Instead, it has the genus *Chrysocyon* all to itself. Following a distinct evolutionary history, its closest living relative is the small, heavily set South American Bush Dog. Rather than living in packs like other canids, the Maned Wolf is a solitary hunter and sustains up to half of its diet from fruits like loberia or "wolf fruit" (*Solanum lycocarpum*).

Pushed to the margins

The unexpected finding of a Maned Wolf in the forests of Guapiaçu is likely explained by wider issues of land-use change and habitat loss. Brazil's Cerrado, the Earth's most biodiverse



savannah, suffers from an ever-encroaching agricultural frontier. This is becoming such an issue in fact that conservation status of the species is now considered Near Threatened by the IUCN and is classified by Brazil's government as vulnerable to extinction.

Great swathes of the Cerrado have already been dramatically punctuated by farmland and pasture. Seemingly endless expanses of plantations growing soy are fragmenting the Maned Wolf's preferred habitat. The soy is destined to become feed for livestock in global markets, including to the UK, the subject of increasing environmental campaigning both in Brazil and in Europe. Researchers have found that these plantations are shrinking the suitable areas for the Maned Wolf to safely raise its young. Meanwhile, cases of wildfires are on the rise and have been linked to farming activity. Local conservationists are also concerned about the mounting cases of Maned Wolves being found drowned in deep agricultural irrigation channels after trying to cross them. Other threats to the Maned Wolf include infectious diseases spread by domestic dogs and retaliatory killings by humans when they prey on livestock, despite hunting of the species being illegal throughout its range.

A refuge in a fast-changing landscape

The camera trap footage of the Maned Wolf in Guapiaçu was taken by environmentalist and nature photographer Juran Santos. For over six years, he has been recording and monitoring the biodiversity in REGUA's Guapiaçu Ecological Reserve, assisted by REGUA's Keepers of the Wild ranger Rildo da Rosa Oliveira. Until now, they had not captured evidence of the Maned Wolf in the territory.

It is not yet understood exactly why the individual recorded at REGUA was passing through the reserve. Maybe it was in search of its preferred grassland habitat, or perhaps its foraging area has been forced to expand due to the pressures and degradation of its normal territory. What is certain though is that REGUA's reserve offers this special animal a safe refuge.

The generosity of WLT supporters for over two decades means that we have been able to continue helping REGUA protect the Atlantic Forest and its unique biodiversity. Donating to WLT's Keepers of the Wild and Buy an Acre programmes helps our partners like REGUA to better research how to conserve species and safeguard their future in a rapidly changing world.

Armenia's corridor of trees through the mountains

With the help of Plant a Tree supporters, our partner, Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC), is currently planting an incredible 700,000 trees across the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge in Armenia's mountain steppe.

The area in which the trees are planted is a vital biological corridor for 44 mammal species, including the Bezoar Ibex, Syrian Brown Bear, and Eurasian Lynx. For the Endangered Caucasian Leopard, the corridor offers irreplaceable safety from human conflict for Armenia's 10-13

remaining individuals, whose population now numbers less than 1,000 worldwide. From carefully selected seeds from the native forest ecosystem, trees such as Wild Almond, Willow-leaved Pear, Juniper, and Russian Olive will grow into a forest that will stand tall for centuries, providing food, water, and a protected, enduring, home for the refuge's wildlife.

But a forest doesn't grow just by planting seeds. The trees our supporters help plant are protected and monitored by dedicated staff for at least five

years, helping them to reach an age when they can flourish by themselves for years to come. However, long before trees can be placed out in the mountain valleys, they are grown from seed to sapling in a tree nursery. They are carefully managed by locally employed people who know the land and will benefit from the restoration. Trained and employed by FPWC, women from communities local to the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge shared with us a snapshot of life caring for seedlings in the tree nursery.

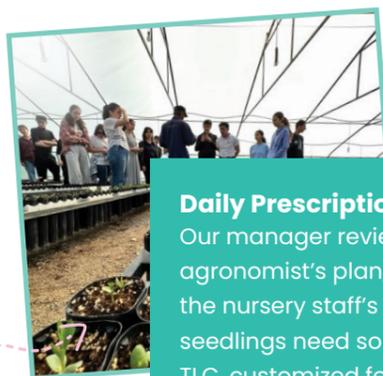
A day in the life of our nursery steward

Rise and Shine

The day begins at 5-6 AM, where our dedicated nursery steward dives into the world of nurturing green life.

Climate Check

The temperature and humidity within the nurseries and soil are meticulously monitored, guiding decisions on when to give our seedlings a refreshing drink—morning dew or evening coolness?



Daily Prescription

Our manager reviews the agronomist's plan, orchestrating the nursery staff's tasks. If seedlings need some extra TLC, customized fertilizer and pesticide mixtures are prepared.



Midday Climate Check

By noon, a re-evaluation of humidity and temperature guides decisions on additional ventilation, creating optimal environment for growth.



Seedling Scrutiny

A close inspection of roots, stems, and leaves identifies any signs of new diseases, changes, or anomalies, ensuring our saplings thrive.



Lunch Break and Afternoon Siesta

A quick and healthy refuel and a well-deserved break from 3-5 PM offers our steward respite during the hottest hours.

Evening Care

If evening irrigation is planned, our manager tends to the seedlings, providing them with essential nutrients and treatments.

Close and Clean

As the day concludes, the nursery doors are closed, the area is tidied, and our steward bids adieu to a day well-spent.

Restful Sleep

A restful night awaits our hard-working guardian, ready to embark on another day of cultivating a greener future.

WLT Partner Research

The 'Kenya Bird Map'

An ambitious project is in motion to map all of Kenya's bird species and describe their threatened status. Alongside their WLT-funded conservation projects, A Rocha Kenya and Nature Kenya are engaged in efforts to document Kenya's bird diversity. This has developed into an exciting joint initiative to create the 'Kenya Bird Map'. The initiative has involved collaborations with institutions such as the National Museums of Kenya and working with citizen scientists — volunteers from the public who submit findings from their own birding activities. The initiative is managed through the Bird Committee of the East Africa Natural History Society.

Almost 30 years ago bird records were collected from across Kenya that resulted in the book, "A Bird Atlas of Kenya" that mapped and described the status of all the 1,065 species of birds then recorded in the country. A lot has changed in the country since then. This new mapping project will generate an updated map to tell the story of how habitats and climate has changed alongside shifts in the distribution and status of Kenya's birds. We look forward to seeing how this powerful tool for conservation develops and helps our partners better understand and protect birds across the country.



Writing history: EcoMinga's scientific discoveries

WLT partner EcoMinga is often busy investigating and monitoring the biodiversity of its reserves in Ecuador. In 2023, Marco Monteros, EcoMinga's current Executive Director, co-authored an article describing an orchid species, *Telipogon pillaropatensis* – a large yellow and purple orchid pollinated by male flies that are tricked into thinking that its flower is a female fly. The species was previously unknown to science and was discovered in the areas protected by EcoMinga in the Río Pastaza watershed region.



Meanwhile, an extensive study authored by EcoMinga's Juan Pablo Reyes as well as Keepers of the Wild rangers and local community members, found that 26 different individual Spectacled Bears (*Tremarctos ornatus*) live in EcoMinga's Cerro Candelaria and Machay Reserves. The study was based on three years of camera-trap data and used facial-recognition techniques to identify the bears which are classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN. The study also revealed the abundance of feral dogs in these reserves, a problem that EcoMinga are working on addressing.

New bat species threatened by gold mining

A bat species previously unknown to science was discovered at the end of 2023 in the mountainous regions of the upper Amazon rainforest near the Nangaritzza River. It was found in the Maycú Reserve, a 2,190-hectare site which was acquired by Nature & Culture International, Ecuador (NCE) with the help of WLT.

The *Sturnira boadai* was encountered and recorded by researchers from the Catholic University of Ecuador, the Center for Health Research in Latin America and other research institutions. The bat has been categorised as Endangered due to its limited distribution within the forests surrounding the Maycú Natural Reserve on the border with Peru.

Protecting the Maycú Natural Reserve has never been more important, particularly given the ongoing pressures the area faces from illegal gold mining. Nora Sánchez Luzardo from NCI Ecuador reported that "this further emphasizes the urgent need for conservation efforts to safeguard these newly discovered species and their habitats from the destructive impact of illegal mining."



Fundraisers

Rowing the Atlantic for WLT: Nick Hollis' 721 Challenge

Nick Hollis has summited all seven of our planet's continents highest mountains, skied solo to the South Pole and – just recently – rowed across the Atlantic Ocean. As part of his '721 Challenge', Nick has gone to extreme lengths in aid of our living planet as part of an incredible world record attempt.

In the latest stage of his epic challenge, he took on the 'World's Toughest Row'. Beginning in the Canary Islands, Nick arrived in Antigua, disembarking from his boat after 50 days of rowing solo. Following some well-deserved rest, and whilst preparing for his final hurdle of skiing to the North Pole, Nick spared some time to share some of his 3,000 miles worth of stories with us...

WLT: Preparation seems to have been a fundamental part of your 721 Challenge. How did you get ready for rowing the Atlantic?

Nick: As a complete newbie to ocean rowing, the Atlantic Row was by far the most demanding event in terms of preparation. After sourcing and preparing my vessel, 'Kraken', I had to complete four different training courses and have 500 hours of ocean rowing experience in British waters. All in all, I did six months of intense physical preparation.

I can't recall a single weekend during this period where I wasn't training or working on the boat. This exhausting schedule continued until the morning of the race. However, as soon as the starting gun fired and I rowed out of San Sebastian harbour in La Gomera, the sense of relief felt incredible. Three years of pressure melted away, only to be replaced by a huge grin and a familiar feeling that something rather extraordinary was about to take place.

WLT: What did a typical routine look like on the boat?

Nick: Before the row started, I planned to row for two hours on

and two hours off. However, as a solo rower I quickly realised this wouldn't work. Nature dictates the schedule, not me. I sometimes needed to row for 22 out of 24 hours just to avoid moving backwards! As I moved closer to Antigua, the midday heat became unbearable, and I discovered I felt and performed much better when rowing at night.

To fuel all of this, I consumed around 6,500 calories per day, alongside lots of electrolytes and energy powders. Most of my food came as snacks like flapjacks, energy bars, trail mix and meal replacement drinks, which are easy to eat while rowing.

WLT: Did the row create any emotional challenges for you?

Nick: The entire journey across the Atlantic was an emotional rollercoaster. The scariest moments of the race all occurred in the first week. The relentless storm conditions required total focus to keep Kraken upright. During this period, I capsized twice, and the huge waves frequently pinned Kraken on her side.

I found that the distance I

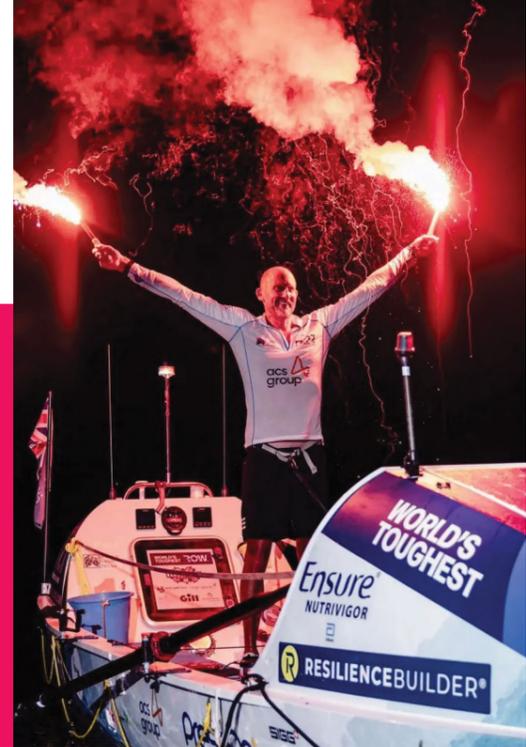
rowed each day particularly influenced my mood. As a solo rower, sleep deprivation was a significant challenge and as the days passed, I found myself becoming increasingly fatigued, with hallucinations becoming a frequent occurrence – not ideal when operating in such a dangerous environment.

However, despite rowing solo I didn't feel particularly isolated. I carried a satellite phone and spoke regularly with the ground team about the weather and navigational strategy. I was even able to talk with my parents just after Christmas.

When the going got particularly tough, I would think about how far I've come with 721 Challenge and the fantastic work World Land Trust are doing around the world to ensure future generations have the opportunity to explore and enjoy the natural world.

WLT: Being so intimately close to the water must have led to memorable encounters with marine life, what did you see out there?

Nick: In complete contrast to my South Pole expedition, which was incredibly hostile and appeared



devoid of life, the Atlantic Ocean was brimming with activity. Some of the most memorable nature highlights involved whales, for example when I was lifted about 0.3 metres high by one and then slid off its colossal back. I was also blessed to have a pod of whales visit me, breaching just metres away. Those moments will stay with me for the rest of my life. I also can't forget the superbly graceful flying fish bouncing from wave to wave and which could cover enormous distances, as well as the breathtaking sunsets, sunrises and starlit skies.

This ocean life also included snails and barnacles which clung to Kraken's underside. Having thousands of these critters

attached to the hull creates considerable drag, which can literally halve the speed. I had a weekly ritual of entering the water and swimming under the boat with a windscreen scraper to remove the barnacles by hand. Taking around 90 minutes each time, it really tired me out. It was worth it though – I went much faster afterwards!

WLT: Why is supporting WLT so important to you personally?

Nick: From a young age, I have been most content when immersed in nature. This was a driving factor in my decision to work as an expedition leader, where I led teams of people to some of the most beautiful places on earth. However, after

30 years of working and playing outdoors, I've seen firsthand the impact humans have on the planet and it's heartbreaking.

As the years passed, I felt an increasing sense of duty to do whatever I could to preserve the natural world for future generations to enjoy. WLT make a tangible difference in this sense and – having seen and met members of WLT's remarkable partner network – I'm confident no organisation in the world can do this better.

Everyone at WLT is incredibly inspired and proud of Nick – to donate to his extraordinary challenge, visit 721challenge.com

Sam Bell's 'Camp and Run' Challenge

One of our youngest Action Fund Heroes, 12-year-old Sam Bell, has been raising funds for WLT with his 'Camp and Run' challenge. Braving all weathers and no shortage of rain, nature-lover Sam ran an astounding 500 kilometres during 2023 and camped out for a total of 84 nights. When the snowflakes started to fall this winter, Sam was settling into his tent for the night and waking up buried under 10 centimetres of snow. With true outdoor spirit,

he considered this one of his favourite moments.

Having set out with the aim of raising £400 for WLT's Action Fund, Sam has so far raised more than four times his target. Now feeling "really happy and a bit tired," Sam is delighted at the amount of support he has received. You can donate to Sam's fundraising page until the end of April at: www.justgiving.com/page/sam-camps-and-runs



Take on an Ultra Challenge for WLT

WLT is excited to announce that we are now named as one of the 2024 Ultra Challenge charities. This means that people can enter themselves into an Ultra Challenge event to raise funds for WLT.

Whether you choose to walk, jog or run, there are a number of unique events across the UK. From the Isle of Wight to the Lake District, there are treks and trails of distances ranging from 10km

to 100km, with camping! Whilst some will lead you on stunning coastal paths, others go over rolling hills, and a few venture along historic trails.

The events are oriented around inclusion and accessibility for all experience levels. You can also decide to join either as an individual or as a team of friends, colleagues or family members. So, if you are keen to test yourself or do something

different to help secure a future for species, habitats and biodiversity, consider taking on an Ultra Challenge and raise money for WLT.

Visit www.worldlandtrust.org/fundraising to find out more and learn about other fundraising opportunities.



Operation Ocelot

Mission Two

WLT's 'Operation Ocelot' programme, endorsed by WLT patron Steve Backshall, has been a roaring success so far. To take part in Operation Ocelot, organisations and individuals simply measure a nearby area, such as their school playground, or local town, then design fundraising activities to protect the same size area of rainforest through our Buy an Acre programme.

The first round of the programme, Mission One supported the protection of Guatemala's Laguna Grande (read more on pages 14 and 15). Mission Two is now in full swing and will help our partner REGUA (page 18) to preserve some of the last remaining 7% of Brazil's Atlantic Forest. Throughout 2023, 22 schools, academies, scout groups, and colleges created their own fundraising activities including sponsored runs, "bake offs", bake sales, and wildlife themed STEM/STEAM weeks.

St. John's C of E Primary School rallies for the rainforest

Taking part in Mission Two, St. John's C of E Primary School created their Rainforest Enrichment Week. From creating artwork while learning about the exciting species who live deep in the rainforest such as Pumas, Oncillas, and of course, Ocelots, to writing letters calling for an end to deforestation, all year groups eagerly participated in the spirit of conservation.

Through all their activities, St. John's have raised an incredible £4,826 for Brazil's Atlantic rainforest. Their latest endeavour was a sponsored 'Run for the Rainforest', for which students gathered sponsors with their knowledge and dedication to protecting the rainforest.



Jack is climbing 100 mountains in 50 days

Inspired by his wildlife hero, WLT Patron Steve Backshall, young fundraiser Jack Adams has been traversing the country, creating and completing challenge after challenge. Jack started fundraising for WLT in 2021 for Operation Ocelot Mission One and, with support from his mum, Caroline, is now on his fifth fundraising challenge!

Caroline told us "As a family, we like to watch wildlife programmes, which also highlight the effects of pollution and wild habitat loss, which our family all feel very strongly about and wanted to help where we could. Jack likes to know he can help make a difference to wildlife and the homes where they live."

In 2022, Jack climbed 11 mountains in 10 days. Conquering Cader Idris (the highest mountain in south Snowdonia), the Glyderau and Tryfan, he climbed

through the night to watch the sunrise from Snowdon on one of the hottest days of the year. Next, Jack completed the Three Choirs Walk - a 100-mile loop through Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, linking all the counties' cathedrals together through farmland and the scenic Malvern Hills. Now Jack has taken on his astounding 100 Mountains in 50 Days challenge. Spending weekends and school holidays climbing mountains in the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia. He is due to finish this year and is already planning his next fundraising challenge! We can't wait to see what he'll do next.

Jack's passion for making a difference for threatened habitats and the wildlife they support, along with a love of running, climbing and walking are what motivates him to use his endless energy raising essential funds for some of the world's most threatened ecosystems. Learn more about how you can take part in Operation Ocelot on our website: www.worldlandtrust.org/operation-ocelot

Leaving a legacy: giving back to the Earth

Remembering World Land Trust in a will is a powerful act. It will ensure that you leave behind a gift to the Earth that endures; protecting habitats, species, and biodiversity long into the future. This is something that WLT supporters can do which will have a profound significance for our living planet.

Kamila Zahno was first drawn to WLT through Sir David Attenborough's patronage and chose to include WLT as a charity in her will. Kamila lived in London for much of her life and had a long career in the Third Sector. She wrote an autobiography, Chasing Ghosts, which unravels her heritage and ancestry as someone who was adopted. Kamila's work in the community and voluntary sector meant that she particularly valued WLT's holistic approach to conservation. "WLT isn't just about land, and it's not just about wildlife; it's about the whole which includes people as

well, including engendering trust with local communities which is what I was trying to do in my work."

When including WLT in your will, it's up to you how much money you want to leave, and you can also discuss how you would like this to be spent. Any amount will have far-reaching effects. As Kamila herself noted, "you can give quite small amounts and it will have great impact. For example, £5,000 would employ a Keeper of the Wild for an entire year."

Kamila's specified that she wanted her legacy to contribute towards both the running of WLT, something that she was passionate about having worked for charities, as well as the protection of the Laguna Grande Reserve in Guatemala (you can read more about this reserve on page 14). Commenting on her contribution to conserving this biological hotspot, she said "I



love the idea that there will be a little part of me in South America and that my spirit will live on. I am really excited to think what my legacy can do, and how much forest it will save!"

When creating a legacy with WLT, your generosity will live on in the species and ecosystems which you help to save. To make will-writing an accessible and easy process, WLT has partnered with Farewill who offer a free online will-writing service. You can access this, and more resources, including hearing more about Kamila's story on our website: www.worldlandtrust.org/leave-a-legacy

Updates on what some of WLT's patrons have been up to lately

David Attenborough

Starting the New Year off with a new discovery, David Attenborough narrated the Giant Sea Monster documentary aired by the BBC. The programme sees an animated Attenborough join fossil hunters on an excavation of a giant piosaur skull on Dorset's Jurassic Coast, an animal described as 'an underwater T-Rex'.



New Year special of Taskmaster, Taskmaster New Year Treat, where we saw him come an impressive second place, finishing with 18 points - well done Steve!

Chris Packham

Chris has been busy acting for the climate, and in December 2023 he announced the start of his legal challenge to the UK government for delaying action to meet key net zero policies and proposals. In January 2024, Chris returned to BBC's Winterwatch to co-



present four nights of engaging live episodes showcasing the diversity of UK habitats and species, themed 'Resilience and Renewal'.

David Gower

David remains active in the cricket world and was featured in an article by The Telegraph which explores his career and changes to the commentating of cricket, as well as touching on his work with children's charity Go Beyond.



Honeyflow

Cedar Anderson and his dad Stuart spent 10 years inventing the Flow Hive, and then launched it to the world with a record-breaking crowdfunding campaign in 2015. Their innovation would revolutionise backyard beekeeping, allowing honey to be harvested directly from a beehive without disturbing the bees.

From humble beginnings in a shed near Byron Bay, Australia, Cedar and Stu's company Flow has grown to encompass a global community of customers and fans. In keeping with its founders' environmentalist roots — Stu took part in some of the first ever rainforest protection protests and Cedar had once flown a paraglider for Greenpeace in Sumatra — part of Flow's mission is to advocate for bees and the other pollinators that play an essential role in sustaining life on Earth.

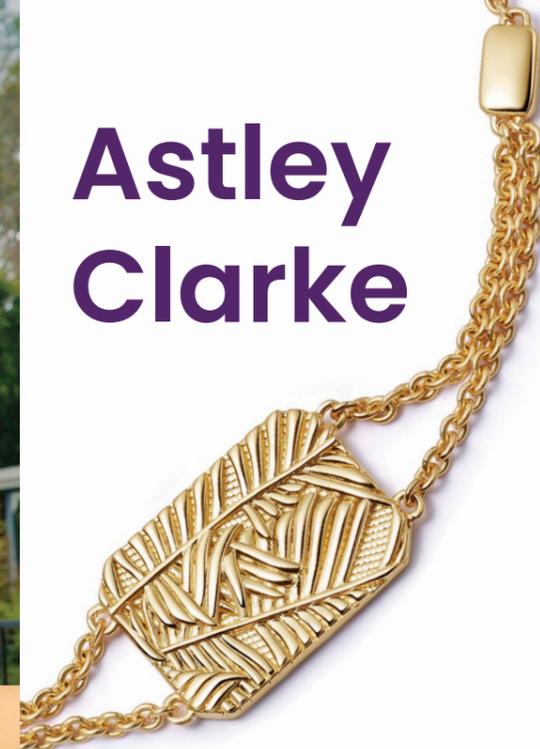
A key part of this eco-centric ethos is its "Billions of Blossoms" programme, through which the company partners with charities and NGOs to protect and create biodiverse pollinator habitat. 50% of the profits from Flow's online beekeeping course are directed to partner organisations running high quality conservation and reforestation projects worldwide.

WLT were among the recipients of the inaugural "Billions of Blossoms" funding round in 2021. This support has continued through 2022 and 2023, with contributions to date totalling nearly £14,000. Honeyflow explained that it chose to partner with WLT because of the Trust's "exceptional track record protecting threatened habitats in a wide range of regions and thorough approach to conservation (the patronage of Sir David Attenborough also helped to solidify our admiration!)". Flow supports WLT's Buy an Acre programme, with funding projects in Brazil, Argentina, Kenya, and South Africa.

Flow is committed to minimising its ecological footprint — its factory runs on solar electricity, and timber offcuts from manufacturing "Flow Hives" are upcycled to create pollinator houses for native bees. To strengthen its overall dedication to doing business ethically and sustainably, Flow obtained B-Corp certification in 2018. The company was included in the environment category of B-Corp's "Best in the World" list in 2019 and 2021, underscoring its ongoing efforts to make a positive impact on the planet.



Astley Clarke



As a jewellery brand that tries to put the environment and people at the centre of what it does, Astley Clarke have been supporting WLT since 2017. CEO Scott Thomson studied Industrial and Natural Resource Chemistry at university and has always been keen to keep the environmental impacts of the businesses he has been involved with to a minimum.

A recent push to develop with Lab Grown Diamonds and refusing to work with materials like brass and bronze — that inevitably end up in landfill — are all part of the brand's attempts to encourage consumers to buy less and better. Championing slow luxury fashion over disposable fast fashion is fundamental to its vision.

Scott tells us, "Having spent time in Africa, Central America and recently Borneo, it is clear to me that protecting the habitats of endangered species and advocating at the highest levels in Government is vital for future generations to enjoy the diversity that the planet has to offer, and that we have been lucky to enjoy in our generation".

Framing Nature

Creativity, images and artwork from our partners and supporters



▲ Staff from WLT partner Provita tag a Yellow-shouldered Parrot as part of a monitoring project. Thanks to WLT supporters, populations of this bird species are thriving on Venezuela's Margarita Island. A ranger involved in tagging said that "each of the parrots that have passed through my hands are daughters that nature has given me."



▲ Welborn's Snail-eating Snake (*Dipsas welborni*). In an exciting scientific find, the snake was found in Nature & Culture International, Ecuador Maycú Reserve in Southeastern Ecuador. Previously unknown to science, this arboreal snake is offered protection in Maycú from threats of deforestation and mining affecting the region (see page 21 for more information about the reserve).



◀ 2024 began with a week-long collaboration with artist Lisa Wood, whose art installation 'SHIFT AND CONSERVE' took centre stage at the National Mall in Washington D.C. The neon and steel sign oscillated with an important message about sustainability, illuminating the need for a shift in consumption habits. Visitors spoke with Lisa's team to learn more about how human activities and overconsumption are damaging the natural world, and how the work of our partners is helping to tackle this. Donations were encouraged to help safeguard threatened habitats – a positive conscious consumption choice.



▲ Community members who work with Planet Madagascar in their land restoration work came together within the Ankarafantsika National Park, to thank WLT and its generous supporters in a touchingly, creative way.



◀ Local children recently took part in REGUA's Young Ranger Programme and created a diverse collection of animal masks. They wore them to perform a play about all the animals who find a home in Brazil's rainforest.



◀ A Jaguar in the nighttime. Rangers at the Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative in Belize check on camera trap stations which they use to monitor the resident Jaguars. This image was taken in the 11,000 hectare Northeastern Biological Corridor, one of the largest of its kind in Central America.

Dreaming of felines

by José Rodrigo Castaño Díaz
(Founder and Director of Fundación Guanacas, Colombia)

*Dressed in sun and black night
he silently descended the mountain.
Hidden, he tensed his body like a steel spring,
and in one leap the courtyard was his.
He clutched his claws in the stones,
looked up to the sky and took water as if he were pulling
up earth.
All was silence, water, rocks.
His eyes lined up with mine;
and without a word, he told me he was staying...*

▼ WLT partner Fundacion Natura Bolivia co-organised a mural contest titled, "El Bajo Paraguá is forest, water, oxygen, food and life". Picking up their paintbrushes, 24 young talented people from the local area created three beautiful murals which captured the immense biodiversity of Bajo Paraguá protected area.



How do we best protect nature and local communities?

By Richard Cuthbert,
WLT's Director of Conservation

Global agreements to tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss often feel very distant from my daily work. This feeling is often shared by WLT's nature conservation partners on the front line of protecting land for biodiversity. Yet, two relatively recent and important agreements — the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) — produced outcomes which affect WLT and encourage us to ask ourselves how our work contributes to these global goals.

Most relevant to WLT under the Global Biodiversity Framework is the 30x30 Target. This seeks to protect at least 30% of land and sea by 2030 through effectively managed protected and conserved areas. WLT and our partners are already contributing to this with our existing reserves and with every new area that we bring into conservation. Crucially, this target and the COP28 meeting itself acknowledges indigenous land and traditional territories as pivotal for safeguarding biodiversity both in the past and into the future.

The interconnection between biodiversity loss, the climate crisis and local communities and livelihoods often brings questions around the best approach for protecting nature. Is it the establishment of "protected areas" by the state and local organisations? Or is land more effectively protected when managed by indigenous peoples or local communities? These questions are crucial in the decision-making processes within WLT and how we prioritise and determine which projects to support.

A recent scientific study evaluated the effectiveness of protected areas versus indigenous and locally



managed areas. Despite the extensive review, the outcome of the research was far from decisive. The authors concluded that both approaches can be effective for conserving nature, but that comparing the two is not easy. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, governance of land is subject to change (in recent years many protected areas have moved into community management). Secondly, conservation effectiveness is measured in a variety of ways. For example, indigenous and community projects more frequently measure social outcomes, whereas protected areas often focus on ecological outcomes (like forest cover). What is affirmed by the study is that what works for conservation is "super local and context dependent".

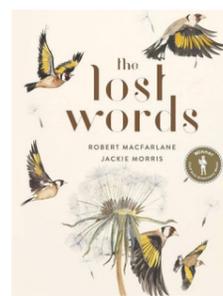
This last finding matches my own experience and is how WLT has been working for more than 30 years. Firstly, we know that local conservation organisations and networks are the most knowledgeable experts and understand what will work in their unique context. Secondly, our partners are committed to ensuring that if conservation projects are in territories where indigenous groups or local communities live, they are fully consulted and involved in how land is protected or managed.

From our first project in Belize to our most recent in South Africa, WLT's history is shaped by context-appropriate methods of conservation. Trusting our partners to select the most suitable sites and actions to protect the land, habitats and species is integral to how WLT works. Regardless of the approach taken, we will continue to ensure conservation benefits local, national, and global efforts to address the interwoven biodiversity and climate crises.

Read, Listen, Learn

Books, documentaries, and podcasts suggested by WLT staff

Books



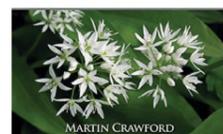
The Lost Words by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris

Gwynne Braidwood, Conservation Programmes Officer: "The Lost Words is a beautifully illustrated book of poems with words about nature which were removed from the Oxford Junior Dictionary in 2007. Following this original, several more books have been written and an album released called Spell Songs. This lovely project has evolved to take root in thousands of schools, creating awareness and engaging children in nature. I love that it is fighting back to restore language describing the natural world back into the language of children."

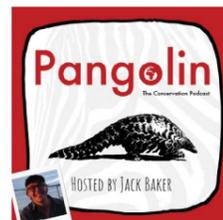


Creating a Forest Garden by Martin Crawford

Leila Pain, Senior Technical Officer: "I recommend this fantastic book, which is based on Martin's 20-year-old, 2-acre stunning agroforestry project that you can visit near Totnes. The book takes you step by step through the process of designing, implementing and maintaining a forest garden. Trees, shrubs, perennials, short-lived plants and fungi can all be integrated into one system to mimic the structure of a natural forest."



Podcasts



"Pangolin: The Conservation Podcast" by Jack Baker

Gabriella Rogers, Corporate Partnerships Officer: "In this podcast, Baker interviews different global conservationists exploring different species (not just pangolins!) and their stories. It is a really wholesome listen. They have also started doing episodes called reZOO which is a zoo review podcast which looks at the conservation work zoos are doing around the world."

Documentaries



Planet Earth III:

Join our patron, Sir David Attenborough on a journey through the ever-changing habitats of our world whilst exploring the unique challenges they face today. The storytelling is wonderful, and the series offers a thoughtful and much-needed insight into the ways that humans interact with the rest of nature and the lengths some people go to protect the world around them.

Episode three features the Maned Wolf which you can read more about on page 18. Episode seven features WLT partner Big Life Foundation, where Big Life's rangers and the elephants of Amboseli help share the story of human-wildlife encounters and conflicts.

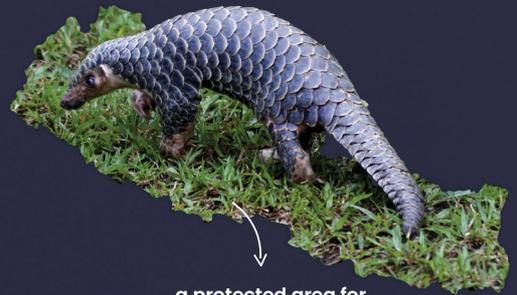


Whale with Steve Backshall:

Our patron Steve Backshall's passion for conservation shines through, as he leads viewers on an exploration of the lives, behaviours and habitats of these marine giants, and advocates for their protection. The documentary sheds light on the awe-inspiring beauty and complexity of these creatures and explains their central place in the marine ecosystem. The cinematography is mesmerising, immersing viewers in the vast, calm, underwater world, whilst providing informative content that is accessible for all ages and backgrounds. Whether a nature enthusiast, a marine biology student, or simply curious about the wonders of the ocean.

World Land Trust has funded

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corridor for 44
mammal species

The protection of over
12,936
species



a home to one of the rarest
species on Earth



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Printed by Carbon Balanced printer Kingfisher Press Ltd.

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