We are delighted to welcome you to the 2023 Whitley Awards Ceremony at the Royal Geographical Society to celebrate our new cohort of winners in our 30th Anniversary year.

Over these 30 years the Whitley Awards have grown because of the partnerships that we have made. Our wonderful supporters have provided generous and sustained funding, and over this period this funding in turn has enabled the Awards to support the work of some 200 winners across 80 countries. This is why the theme for this evening’s Ceremony is #PartnersForPlanet.

Recently, we have seen increased recognition that it is local people who are instrumental to long-term conservation success; the understanding of which informed our approach all those years ago, when we began supporting local conservation leaders to provide their effective, sustainable, and equitable solutions in their home countries. As many of the challenges we face as a planet have grown, so has our ambition and determination to support the extraordinary tenacity of our winners.

Tonight, we are delighted to welcome six new Whitley Award winners to our network. These inspiring leaders spearhead community-based conservation projects in some of the most biodiverse, yet vulnerable places on Earth. This week, we are hosting a series of events to celebrate their remarkable achievements for people, wildlife and climate, and to help them leverage the success of their Whitley Award win. In addition to £40,000 in project funding, we will provide each winner with PR support, networking opportunities, communications and speech training, and introduce them to our dedicated network of fellow conservation leaders across the globe. We look forward to following the accomplishments and careers of this new cohort of winners in the years to come.

We want to thank you, our fantastic donors, for your committed and generous support of the charity and our winners. Looking ahead to the next 30 years, we feel a great sense of optimism knowing that together and with the next generation, we can continue to tackle the challenges that our planet faces.

Thank you for being our #PartnersForPlanet, and we hope you all enjoy celebrating with us this evening.
The Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) is a fundraising and grant-giving nature conservation charity offering recognition, training, and grants to support the work of proven grassroots conservation leaders across the Global South.

**OUR MISSION**

1. Find, recognise, and fund grassroots conservation leaders across countries rich in natural resources but lacking in financial backing for conservation.

2. Champion and repeat fund impactful winners.


4. Raise awareness of the work of winners and spread the message that we can all make a difference to conservation.

**OUR OBJECTIVES**
WFN gives three types of grants that enable grassroots conservationists to scale up their work and protect threatened wildlife.

30 years ago, WFN became a pioneer in the sector as one of the first charities to channel funding to locally-led projects in the Global South. We support courageous changemakers who are collaborating with communities in their home countries to conserve wildlife and habitats.

Our rigorous and renowned application process identifies inspiring individuals with staying power, who can combine the latest science with tenacious leadership and a collaborative approach. Through our laddered funding, we provide conservationists with a sustainable means of scaling their impact.

WFN helps to catalyse conservation progress by incubating winner talent and offering support to develop their skills and confidence as leaders.

During the Awards week, WFN provides winners with training and networking opportunities to help them leverage their success.

The charity's flagship prizes, Whitley Awards are won competitively each year following a worldwide search. Applications are assessed by an expert academic panel, and winners receive £40,000 in project funding over one year. In addition, the awards provide profile, new connections and training – all tools that winners can use to better protect the natural world.

Continuation Funding is available to Whitley Award alumni. These follow-on grants enable winners to expand effective projects, respond to changing needs, and collaborate with other conservationists. Applications are invited annually and awards applied for competitively, with grants worth up to £100,000 over two years. We also offer dedicated grants to directly support projects delivering nature-based solutions to address climate change and biodiversity loss together, and in collaboration with communities.

Each year, a past Whitley Award and Continuation Funding winner receives our top prize, the Gold Award, to recognise their outstanding contribution to conservation. Gold Award winners are international advocates for biodiversity, pioneering large-scale projects and acting as mentors to new Whitley Award winners. The prize is worth £100,000.

Whitley Award winners receive media training in print, radio and TV, and professional speech coaching. This helps them to effectively communicate their work to an international audience and capitalise on the media spotlight following their win. Winners also report an uptake in media interest within their home countries, often leading to front page coverage in national and regional newspapers.

WFN provides online and in-person training in some of the core skills necessary for the delivery of successful projects including the use of evidence in project design, monitoring and evaluation. In addition to ongoing career development support, all winners gain access to pro-bono legal assistance from the Thomson Reuters Foundation and the opportunity to apply for funding to explore a legal issue, supported by Richard Buxton Solicitors, further bolstering their capacity.

We hold events for winners to network with contacts they could partner with in future to cultivate success – including potential funders, collaborators, journalists, their country Ambassadors and members of UK and international conservation NGOs. Whitley Award winners spend the week together with their cohort, forming strong bonds that flourish well beyond the ceremony.

The Whitley Award has had an incredible impact on my conservation effort.

ABDULLAHI HUSSAIN ALI, 2020 WHITLEY AWARD WINNER

Magic happens when someone gets a Whitley Award.

PURNIMA DEVI BARMAN, 2017 WHITLEY AWARD WINNER

COMMUNICATION

PROJECT DELIVERY

NETWORKING
WFN accelerates the careers of conservationists by welcoming them to the world stage.

In addition to receiving project funding, Whitley Award winners are championed through a global PR campaign to garner media coverage of their work. Tailor-made films narrated by WFN Trustee, Sir David Attenborough, and endorsement from high profile supporters including WFN’s Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, further raises their profile, alongside WFN’s digital communications which have wide international reach.

This increased visibility draws attention to environmental issues and builds local pride in projects on-the-ground, increasing community participation. It helps winners to inspire philanthropic support from new sources, kick-starting a snowball effect that continues to bolster project funding. As their profile is raised, winners also have the chance to connect with other conservationists to share approaches, results and resources. Lastly, greater credibility helps winners to better influence environmental policy on a regional, national and international scale.

94% of winners tell us that winning a Whitley Award increased their profile.

79% of winners feel the Award increased access to in-country media.

79% of winners say the Award increased their access to international donors.

70% of winners reported that winning increased access to national decision makers.

98% of participants in our 2022 WND training agreed they were confident in applying what they had learnt to their conservation work.
Through our Winner Network Development programme, we are connecting our alumni to accelerate their collective success.

Each year, new Whitley Award winners join our network of influential conservationists leading projects in some of the most biodiverse places on Earth.

“I’m very proud to be a member of this inspiring community of Whitley alumni.”

Luis Rivera, 2011 Whitley Award Winner
Welcome to the
WHITLEY AWARDS
2023

30TH ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY PROGRAMME

7PM RECEPTION
8PM CEREMONY

Tom Heap & Kate Humble, Compères
30 years of WFN: A conversation between Sir David Attenborough and Edward Whitley
Edward Whitley, Founder
Finalist speeches, and films narrated by Sir David Attenborough
Presentation of the Awards by HRH The Princess Royal
Announcement of the Whitley Gold Award
HRH The Princess Royal, Patron

9.15PM SUPPER & MEET THE WINNERS

SPEAKERS

The Princess Royal has been Patron of the Whitley Fund for Nature since 1999. During her 24 years as Patron, she has met over 100 Whitley Award winners, and has visited recipient projects in Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Malaysia, China, and Ghana to see their work first-hand.

PATRON,
HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL

WFN Ambassador Tom Heap is a well-known television and radio presenter, using his platform to draw attention to the issues facing our planet and to advocate for solutions. He is presenter of Sky News’ The Climate Show With Tom Heap, the principal voice of Costing the Earth on BBC Radio 4, and author of the 2021 production and book, 39 Ways to Save the Planet.

COMPÈRE,
TOM HEAP

WFN Ambassador Kate Humble is best known for her work on programmes such as Springwatch, Countryfile, Lambing Live and recently, Kate Humble’s Coastal Britain. Kate was recognised on the Woman’s Hour Power List 2020 for inspiring multiple generations of viewers. She also runs Humble by Nature, a rural skills school on a working farm in the Wye Valley.

COMPÈRE,
KATE HUMBLE

Dr. Shivani Bhalla is the Founder and Executive Director of Ewaso Lions. Through her work promoting human-carnivore coexistence, she has helped to reverse a decline in lion populations in northern Kenya, earning her a Whitley Award in 2014, and subsequent rounds of WFN Continuation Funding. This year, she has been recognised with the Whitley Gold Award for her outstanding work in championing local leadership in conservation.

FOUNDER,
EDWARD WHITLEY

Dr. Shivani Bhalla is the Founder and Executive Director of Ewaso Lions. Through her work promoting human-carnivore coexistence, she has helped to reverse a decline in lion populations in northern Kenya, earning her a Whitley Award in 2014, and subsequent rounds of WFN Continuation Funding. This year, she has been recognised with the Whitley Gold Award for her outstanding work in championing local leadership in conservation.

PATRON,
HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL

WFN Ambassador Kate Humble is best known for her work on programmes such as Springwatch, Countryfile, Lambing Live and recently, Kate Humble’s Coastal Britain. Kate was recognised on the Woman’s Hour Power List 2020 for inspiring multiple generations of viewers. She also runs Humble by Nature, a rural skills school on a working farm in the Wye Valley.

COMPÈRE,
KATE HUMBLE

Dr. Shivani Bhalla is the Founder and Executive Director of Ewaso Lions. Through her work promoting human-carnivore coexistence, she has helped to reverse a decline in lion populations in northern Kenya, earning her a Whitley Award in 2014, and subsequent rounds of WFN Continuation Funding. This year, she has been recognised with the Whitley Gold Award for her outstanding work in championing local leadership in conservation.

WITH MANY THANKS TO SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, WFN TRUSTEE AND NARRATOR OF THE 2023 WINNER FILMS

Britain’s best-known natural history filmmaker, Sir David Attenborough’s distinguished career in broadcasting spans 70 years. In January 2006, WFN were honoured to welcome him as a Trustee. Sir David impresses audiences around the world to preserve our planet, through ground-breaking series such as BBC’s Planet Earth II, Netflix’s Our Planet and most recently Wild Isles, which combine stunning footage with sombre truths about humanity’s impact on the environment.

WITH MANY THANKS TO SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, WFN TRUSTEE AND NARRATOR OF THE 2023 WINNER FILMS

Britain’s best-known natural history filmmaker, Sir David Attenborough’s distinguished career in broadcasting spans 70 years. In January 2006, WFN were honoured to welcome him as a Trustee. Sir David impresses audiences around the world to preserve our planet, through ground-breaking series such as BBC’s Planet Earth II, Netflix’s Our Planet and most recently Wild Isles, which combine stunning footage with sombre truths about humanity’s impact on the environment.

WITH MANY THANKS TO SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, WFN TRUSTEE AND NARRATOR OF THE 2023 WINNER FILMS

Britain’s best-known natural history filmmaker, Sir David Attenborough’s distinguished career in broadcasting spans 70 years. In January 2006, WFN were honoured to welcome him as a Trustee. Sir David impresses audiences around the world to preserve our planet, through ground-breaking series such as BBC’s Planet Earth II, Netflix’s Our Planet and most recently Wild Isles, which combine stunning footage with sombre truths about humanity’s impact on the environment.

WITH MANY THANKS TO SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, WFN TRUSTEE AND NARRATOR OF THE 2023 WINNER FILMS

Britain’s best-known natural history filmmaker, Sir David Attenborough’s distinguished career in broadcasting spans 70 years. In January 2006, WFN were honoured to welcome him as a Trustee. Sir David impresses audiences around the world to preserve our planet, through ground-breaking series such as BBC’s Planet Earth II, Netflix’s Our Planet and most recently Wild Isles, which combine stunning footage with sombre truths about humanity’s impact on the environment.

WITH MANY THANKS TO SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, WFN TRUSTEE AND NARRATOR OF THE 2023 WINNER FILMS

Britain’s best-known natural history filmmaker, Sir David Attenborough’s distinguished career in broadcasting spans 70 years. In January 2006, WFN were honoured to welcome him as a Trustee. Sir David impresses audiences around the world to preserve our planet, through ground-breaking series such as BBC’s Planet Earth II, Netflix’s Our Planet and most recently Wild Isles, which combine stunning footage with sombre truths about humanity’s impact on the environment.

WITH MANY THANKS TO SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH, WFN TRUSTEE AND NARRATOR OF THE 2023 WINNER FILMS
WINNER SELECTION

This year, WFN received 68 Whitley Award applications from 31 countries. We would like to thank our Judging Panel and External Assessors, who kindly offer their expertise voluntarily to decide the final shortlist.

JUDGING PANEL
Edward Whitely, OBE
Founder and Chair of Trustees, WFN
Dr. Shivani Bhalla
Executive Director, Ewaso Lions; 2023 Whitley Gold Award winner
Marianne Carter, MSc
Director, Conservation Capacity and Leadership, FFI
Damian Fleming, MSc
Deputy Practice Leader for Forests, WWF International
Matthew Hatchwall, MSc
Advisory Board Chair and Conservation Consultant, DICE
Janice Law, MSc
Head of Grants, WFN
Dr. Dino Martins
WFN Trustee, 2015 Whitley Gold Award winner and CEO, Turkana Basin Institute
Dr. Andrew Terry
Director of Conservation and Policy, ZSL
Victoria Thompson
Acting Director, WFN

EXTERNAL ASSESSORS
Dr. Paul Barnes
Programme Manager, EDGE of Existence Programme, ZSL
Dr. Sanjay Gubbi
Programme Head, Holémaphi Nature Foundation; 2017 Whitley Award winner
Dr. Simon Lyster
Chair of Conservation International, UK
Dr. Munir Virani
CEO, Mohamed Bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund; 2018 Whitley Award winner

INTRODUCING THE WINNERS
1. YULIANA BEDOLLA, MEXICO
2. ALBERT SALEMGAREYEV, KAZAKHSTAN
3. SERGE ALEXIS KAMGANG, CAMEROON
4. TULSHI LAXMI SUWAL, NEPAL
5. MAMY RAZAFITSALAMA, MADAGASCAR
6. LEONARD AKWANY, KENYA
7. SHIVANI BHALLA, KENYA
   (GOLD AWARD WINNER)

Application origin 2023
- Africa 62% (42)
- Asia 22% (15)
- Americas 15% (10)
- Europe 1% (1)
Total applications - 68

Application focus 2023
- Terrestrial 71% (48)
- Marine 19% (13)
- Freshwater 10% (7)

Gender (applicants identifying as)
- 50 males (74%)
- 18 females (26%)
Ten seabird species concentrate their entire breeding population on Mexico’s islands, making it the country with the world’s second highest number of breeding endemic seabird species. However, the introduction of invasive species can be catastrophic for island ecosystems, with ongoing biosecurity measures needed once the invasive species have finally been eradicated. Using her Whitley Award to protect crucial seabird breeding sites on two key Mexican Pacific islands, Yuliana and her team will:

+ Prevent the introduction of invasive mammals on San Benito Oeste and Natividad islands, involving local fishing cooperatives in biosecurity protocols
+ Build the conservation capacity of local women, training six members from two communities in seabird monitoring, invasive species detection and project planning
+ Conduct surveys to confirm the ongoing absence of invasive rodent species
+ Evaluate breeding success of the Black Storm-Petrel and Black-vented Shearwater together with community leaders
+ Raise awareness of nocturnal seabird species and the importance of nesting site protection, encouraging widespread adoption of biosecurity measures

**ISLAND LIFE**

The islands of Mexico and their surrounding seas provide crucial habitats for one third of the world’s seabird species. The San Benito Archipelago and Natividad Island host 13 breeding species, the largest abundance of seabird breeding pairs in the Baja California Pacific Islands and together, support more than one million individuals of eight nocturnal seabird species. Natividad Island shelters 90% of the endangered Black-vented Shearwater breeding population and San Benito Archipelago represents the most important colony of the Black Storm-Petrel. These islands are also inhabited by small fishing cooperatives and their families, who are invested in protecting their island home.

**INVASIVE PREDATORS**

In the past, the Baja California Pacific Islands were threatened by invasive mammals such as goats, rabbits, cats and rodents that decimated seabird populations, where the latter two extirpated at least 27 seabird colonies. Thanks to restoration efforts over the last two decades, San Benito Oeste and Natividad islands are currently invasive mammal free. Nevertheless, there is a high risk of accidental re-introduction, mostly of rodents, because of the constant stream of people, equipment and materials between the mainland and the islands. To ensure long-lasting effects, island biosecurity protocols for both islands were jointly developed with fishing cooperatives to prevent, detect and respond to incursions of invasive alien species, but their implementation did not include the active involvement of local people.

**LOCAL STEWARDSHIP**

Yuliana and her NGO Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI) will directly engage communities in implementing biosecurity measures, ensuring the absence of invasive species across the islands. Community conservation awareness will be raised through educational initiatives, and a women’s leadership group will receive further training, bolstering local capacity to monitor and protect seabird nesting sites, and manage conservation projects. With grants available from the Mexican government for community conservation initiatives, Yuliana and her team are working towards a future where local people can lead on the protection of their islands embedding sustainability into their efforts to secure these fragile island ecosystems.
Kazakhstan’s desert-steppe ecosystems are especially vulnerable to climate change. They must be protected and restored, and their natural resources used sustainably in the future.

Albert and his team will apply evidence-based approaches to find solutions, using his Whitley Award to:

- Map the distribution and management practices of all major water resources in and around the Bokey Orda-Ashiozek Protected Area, and gather data on livestock and saiga distribution in relation to them.
- Assess the extent and nature of saiga-pastoralist conflict over water in 15 key hotspots, combining scientific evidence with stakeholder consultations.
- Build trust among pastoralists, protected area staff, and local government in the evidence gathered, and together co-design solutions to shape future water resource management.
- Share project findings with national and international agencies to inform saiga conservation strategies across Kazakhstan and in neighbouring range states.

MAGNIFICENT STEPPES

Kazakhstan’s desert-steppe ecosystems represent some of the largest and most intact steppe grasslands in the wider Central Asian region. However, they are also vulnerable to climate change and desertification. The country’s newest protected area is the Bokey Orda Reserve and Ashiozek Sanctuary in West Kazakhstan. Spanning more than 650,000 ha, it is home to a diverse array of bird and mammal species, including the world’s largest population of saiga antelope, and contains globally important soil carbon stocks. The protected area is bordered by small villages and farms where local pastoralists depend on the landscape as grazing grounds for their sheep, cattle and horses, as well as for freshwater resources.

COMPETING FOR RESOURCES

Reaching a low of 50,000 individuals in the mid-2000s, the saiga antelope has recovered to over 1.3 million individuals. Despite this work being a global conservation success story, recently recognised by the UN as one of its inaugural World Restoration Flagships, there is now mounting pressure on the government to actively control saiga populations, where increasing numbers are in direct competition with pastoral communities for the region’s natural resources, threatening local livelihoods. Escalating incidences of saiga-pastoralist conflict mean solutions are urgently needed.

A MULTI-PRONGED STRATEGY

To address the rising conflict, Albert and his team at the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) will use participatory approaches that combine scientific monitoring with community mapping to gather data and inform an evidence-based response. They will research overlapping distributions of livestock and saiga antelopes, identifying key conflict hotspots using drones and camera traps. By engaging pastoralists, protected area management staff, and local government, they will seek to understand stakeholder perceptions of the conflict and together, find sustainable and equitable solutions. With protected area management in the country traditionally being top-down, Albert’s combination of science and community participation is novel in Kazakhstan, and will provide an apt case study to apply to other landscapes across the saiga’s range.

95% of the global saiga population. Kazakhstan holds over 95% of the global saiga population.

Critically Endangered, the saiga antelope suffered one of the most drastic declines ever recorded for a mammal – but thanks to nearly two decades of conservation efforts, the species has made an astonishing recovery in Kazakhstan. However, there is now increased competition for pastures and water between saiga and pastoralists, escalating human-wildlife conflict. Albert and his team will apply evidence-based approaches to find solutions, using his Whitley Award to:

- Map the distribution and management practices of all major water resources in and around the Bokey Orda-Ashiozek Protected Area, and gather data on livestock and saiga distribution in relation to them.
- Assess the extent and nature of saiga-pastoralist conflict over water in 15 key hotspots, combining scientific evidence with stakeholder consultations.
- Build trust among pastoralists, protected area staff, and local government in the evidence gathered, and together co-design solutions to shape future water resource management.
- Share project findings with national and international agencies to inform saiga conservation strategies across Kazakhstan and in neighbouring range states.

BUILDING TRUST IN DATA: FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR SAIGA ANTELOPE AND PEOPLE IN WEST KAZAKHSTAN

Acbk.kz
@ACBK_Kazakhstan
@acbk.kz
For centuries, lions have captured the imagination of people all over the world. Often described as “powerful” and “majestic,” they are one of the most emblematic species and are associated with many cultural beliefs and values. However, encroachment and habitat fragmentation have caused significant population declines, with small, divided populations now scattered across a few hotspots in West and Central Africa. They are a keystone species and their dwindling numbers will have an immense impact on the entire ecosystem.

The Bénoué ecosystem stretches over three national parks and 32 hunting zones, with formal protection of the giraffe, elephant, giant eland, lion, leopard and spotted hyena. Despite conservation measures by the government, the landscape continues to face severe threats including poaching, lion bone trafficking, illegal mining, agriculture, and wildfire. There are also increasing numbers of illegal livestock within protected areas, which is causing immense human carnivore conflict as lions come into contact with herders and their cattle. The area is one of the three remaining strongholds for large carnivores in West and Central Africa and a key linkage between these savannah landscapes. It is clear that urgent action is needed to preserve remaining lion populations and their natural habitat.

Working in the area since 2009, Dr. Serge Alexis Kamgang leads the only lion conservation project in the region. Tackling human-lion conflict and ineffective wildlife management, Serge and his team will gather vital data on lion and prey populations using camera traps and satellite collars, and will strengthen the capacity of park authorities to reduce pressures from habitat fragmentation and transhumant livestock. To assist park staff, they will train young community members as lion guards, who monitor movements of lion and cattle, document cases of depredation, and identify conflict hotspots, warning herders when lions are near. Finally, Serge and his team will conduct educational campaigns on the importance of lion conservation, building a positive future for the region through inclusive conservation.

The Bénoué ecosystem in northern Cameroon is a critically important area for lions and large mammals. However, habitat fragmentation and declines in prey populations, along with an increase in people and livestock in the region is leading to escalating human-wildlife conflict, threatening already dwindling lion populations. Serge and his team are working with stakeholders, combining local knowledge with technology to mitigate the rising tensions. With Whitley Award funding, they will:

- Train 45 park guards and six community lion guards, who work together to monitor lion and cattle movements, and mitigate human-lion conflict and other pressures
- Improve the knowledge of 1,500 stakeholders on the status and distribution of lion and their prey in the Bénoué ecosystem to inform future management
- Raise awareness of lion conservation among 30% of the local population through educational campaigns

KING OF THE SAVANNAH

For centuries, lions have captured the imagination of people all over the world. Often described as “powerful” and “majestic,” they are one of the most emblematic species and are associated with many cultural beliefs and values. However, encroachment and habitat fragmentation have caused significant population declines, with small, divided populations now scattered across a few hotspots in West and Central Africa. They are a keystone species and their dwindling numbers will have an immense impact on the entire ecosystem.

THE BÉNOUÉ ECOSYSTEM

The Bénoué ecosystem stretches over three national parks and 32 hunting zones, with formal protection of the giraffe, elephant, giant eland, lion, leopard and spotted hyena. Despite conservation measures by the government, the landscape continues to face severe threats including poaching, lion bone trafficking, illegal mining, agriculture, and wildfire. There are also increasing numbers of illegal livestock within protected areas, which is causing immense human carnivore conflict as lions come into contact with herders and their cattle. The area is one of the three remaining strongholds for large carnivores in West and Central Africa and a key linkage between these savannah landscapes. It is clear that urgent action is needed to preserve remaining lion populations and their natural habitat.

WORKING TOGETHER

Working in the area since 2008, Dr. Serge Alexis Kamgang leads the only lion conservation project in the region. Tackling human-lion conflict and ineffective wildlife management, Serge and his team will gather vital data on lion and prey populations using camera traps and satellite collars, and will strengthen the capacity of park authorities to reduce pressures from habitat fragmentation and transhumant livestock. To assist park staff, they will train young community members as lion guards, who monitor movements of lion and cattle, document cases of depredation, and identify conflict hotspots, warning herders when lions are near. Finally, Serge and his team will conduct educational campaigns on the importance of lion conservation, building a positive future for the region through inclusive conservation.

Lions are so special to me. Ecologically, they are a top predator, playing an important role in regulating ecosystem balance and services.

SERGE ALEXIS KAMGANG

The West and Central African lion is a lighter build than the cousin in East and Southern Africa.

A 2015 survey found there were only 250 lions remaining in the entire Bénoué ecosystem spanning over 30,000 km².

@BiodiversityEnvironmentSustainableDevelopment

bioedd.org
Pangolins are the most trafficked mammal in the world. Widely targeted for their use in traditional medicine, poaching has long been seen as the main threat to the Chinese pangolin. However, an increase of forest fires is now threatening their habitat in Nepal. To tackle this, Tulshi will implement the first ever initiative to assess the impact of forest fire on the species, while working with communities on fire mitigation, habitat restoration and alternative livelihoods. With her Whitley Award, she and her team will:

- Estimate pangolin abundance and population density and the impact of forest fires on the species across 4,000 ha
- Train 10 ‘Community Pangolin Conservation Groups’ to monitor pangolins and their habitat, and prevent forest fires
- Restore pangolin habitat by planting and monitoring 20,000 mixed tree saplings
- Raise conservation awareness, reaching thousands of households and over 500 schools in the region
- Provide microfinancing opportunities for 100 households to develop forest-friendly alternative livelihoods

**PEOPLE AND PANGOLINS: MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL CONSERVATION IN CENTRAL NEPAL**

**MOUNTING THREATS**

Nepal is home to two species of pangolin: the Chinese pangolin and the Indian pangolin. They have been found in 61 districts, mostly in the human-dominated landscapes of eastern and central Nepal. Both endangered globally, with the Chinese pangolin critically so, they are still highly threatened by illegal poaching and hunting for the trade of their scales and meat, despite being protected by national law. To make matters worse, forest fires are on the rise in Nepal, with an average of over 3,000 fire incidences annually. Mostly caused by human activity in the forest, including illegal poaching, hunting, and grazing, the fires are destroying pangolin habitat, with a general lack of conservation awareness exacerbating the issue.

**PANGOLIN PROTECTOR**

Dr. Tulshi Laxmi Suwal has been leading pangolin research and conservation efforts in Nepal for over 15 years, conducting the first ever PhD study on the species in the country. In 2016, Tulshi led the National Pangolin Survey, and worked with the Nepalese government to develop a pangolin monitoring protocol and national action plan for pangolin conservation. Using this as guidance, Tulshi and her team at the Small Mammals Conservation and Research Foundation will be the first to assess the impact of forest fires on pangolin populations, covering three districts in central Nepal.

**COMMUNITY APPROACH**

Integrating community needs with conservation priorities, Tulshi and her team will train local conservation groups on fire protection and habitat monitoring, and will restore fire-impacted forest by planting 20,000 saplings. They will raise conservation awareness across the region and support local incomes by offering micro-financing opportunities to develop and diversify livelihoods, reducing pressures on the forest. Results from this project will help to shape future fire mitigation measures, safeguarding the future of this charismatic but threatened species.
I want to continue saving animals from extinction, but also providing assistance to the people that live alongside wildlife.

MAMY RAZAFITSALAMA

Madagascar is a global conservation priority as one of the most biodiverse places on the planet. It has also seen one of the most drastic forest losses, with nearly half of its natural forest cover disappearing since the 1950s due to habitat degradation, slash and burn agriculture and fires. Using his Whitley Award, Mamy and his team will:

- Protect 8,000 ha of forest in Ankarafantsika National Park from fire, grazing and extraction incidents through community patrols
- Maintain over 16 km of firebreaks to limit the spread of uncontrolled fire, protecting important lemur habitat
- Provide green livelihoods support for 35 women to alleviate poverty and reduce pressures on the forest
- Raise awareness across 10 communities about the impact of fires on lemurs, forests, and people through educational programmes

GLOBAL HOTSPOT
Madagascar is the fourth largest island on Earth and contains a remarkable number of unique fauna and flora, with 90% of its plant species existing nowhere else. It is also home to over 110 species of lemur, of which 94% are threatened with extinction. The country’s rich fauna and flora is juxtaposed against extreme poverty and malnutrition which drives deforestation and habitat loss as the country’s people are reliant on its natural resources for survival.

FORESTS UNDER THREAT
In Western Madagascar, the primary driver of deforestation is fire, approximately 95% of which is caused by humans. Ankarafantsika National Park in the northwest is one of the largest remaining fragments of western primary forest, but it is under threat from fire, slash and burn agriculture, logging, domestic grazing and construction. It is also home to eight lemur species, five of which are threatened with extinction. Protecting the remaining continuous forests and forest fragments in the park is critical if lemurs are to stand a chance of survival.

GRASSROOTS SUCCESS
Mamy and his team at Planet Madagascar are dedicated to finding grassroots solutions to protect their homeland’s forests and unique biodiversity. Building on previous work, they will bolster local capacity to protect the forest through ongoing patrols and maintenance of fire breaks – gaps in vegetation that act as a barrier to slow or stop the progress of forest fires. The team will also support women from the communities around the park with alternative livelihoods through a cooperative focussed on processing citrus and sugar products, reducing poverty while alleviating pressure on the forest. Lastly, Mamy and his team will grow their reach, running educational programmes, stakeholder meetings and radio broadcasts across 10 communities on the impact of fires on biodiversity, forests and people.

There are over 110 different species of lemur in Madagascar, found nowhere else on the planet.

It is estimated that Madagascar has lost 60% of its natural forest cover between 1953–2014.

Lemurs are considered the world’s oldest primates, with roots tracing back over 70 million years.
My heroes are the local youth, women and men I work with towards the conservation of Lake Victoria, its rivers and associated wetlands.

---

Lake Victoria is the largest freshwater lake in the tropics and second largest in the world. However, it is facing a plethora of threats including overfishing, habitat degradation, wetlands loss, introduced species, climate change and pollution, compromising its fish stocks and diversity – with ripple effects keenly felt by those who depend on it for their livelihoods and food security. Through grassroots fishery interventions, Leonard will use his Whitley Award to:

- Establish 3,000 ha of freshwater community fish reserves to protect and restore healthy fish populations
- Build the capacity of five Beach Management Units (BMUs) and associated communities for effective fisheries co-management and governance, reducing unsustainable fishing practices by 60%
- Train 200 BMU members in alternative green livelihoods, reducing fishing pressure by 40%

FRESHWATER IN FREEFALL
Lake Victoria, a key global biodiversity hotspot, spans across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. With more than 500 species of fish, it is the second most productive inland fishery globally and supports over 4 million people whose livelihoods are tied to its value chain. The most recent Living Planet Report stated that freshwater populations have fallen by 83%, the largest decline of any species group, and Lake Victoria is no different: there are now less than 200 native fish species remaining, with the ecosystem, associated livelihoods and food security hanging on by a thread.

SAVING NATIVE FISH
Fishers are increasingly exploiting small species and intensifying fishing efforts, with impacts on the native populations. Weak fisheries co-management structures also impede effective sustainable fishery management, endangering the main food source, tilapia. Leonard founded Ecofinder Kenya in 1995 to motivate and place responsibility of conserving Lake Victoria’s aquatic ecosystem and associated fish species in the hands of local fisherfolk communities. The project engages grassroots stewards to save native fish and three primary indicator species, all Critically Endangered, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of their livelihoods.

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT
A Lake Victoria native, Leonard and his team will establish a network of community-driven fish reserves in Winam Gulf, protecting 1,400 km² of key freshwater biodiversity. The reserves will include no-take fish breeding zones, riparian buffer zones for land-based uses and designated community fishing zones. They will also build the leadership and technical capacity of existing Beach Management Units (BMUs) for more effective co-management of local fisheries, aiming to reduce illegal fishing and other unsustainable practices. Lastly, by training BMU members on alternative green livelihoods and greening the fish value chain, Leonard and his team will reduce pressure on fish stocks while protecting local incomes. With 281 BMUs in total across Lake Victoria in Kenya, this project’s approach has great potential for scale up across the region.
Locally-led conservation is the only solution we have to the current biodiversity crisis. We need to be investing in local leaders from all demographics to provide their contribution to conservation.

Donated by the Friends of WFN.

CATALYSING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR LOCALLY-LED CONSERVATION

Kenyan conservationist Dr. Shivani Bhalla has dedicated her life to promoting coexistence between people and wildlife in northern Kenya. Founding Ewaso Lions in 2007, Shivani and her team have spent nearly two decades addressing lion declines through their community-initiated and led solutions, which now cover over 4,500 km². Through their efforts, the Ewaso landscape is now one of the only regions in northern Kenya where lion numbers are increasing outside of protected areas.

Shivani has long recognised that local leadership is crucial for sustained solutions. Through Ewaso Lions’ various programmes being designed and led by Samburu community members from across all demographics, it has ensured that their conservation interventions are sustainable, culturally appropriate, and truly beneficial for people as well as wildlife. Globally, however, while many projects recognise the importance of community engagement, it is still rare to find conservation programmes actually being led by people from the communities where projects are operating. There is an urgent need for conservation practitioners to address this gap.

Building local leadership and ownership needs to happen at multiple levels – in each conservation initiative, it matters how teams are hired and trained, how transition and mentoring of the next generation is addressed, and how sustainable avenues of knowledge transfer and funding are achieved. Offering up Ewaso Lions’ model of locally-led programming to improve others’ conservation practice, Shivani and her team will collaborate with the Ewaso community and conservation practitioners from across the globe, including WFN alumni, to develop an open-source framework which lays out clear pathways for conservation practitioners to build skills within their teams to ensure that conservation decision-making happens at a local level. Sharing the framework across international channels, this project will catalyse a movement of community-led conservation globally, with the ultimate goal that for local communities, conservation will become a way of life.

Having attended 2022 Whitley Gold Award winner Charudutt Mishra’s PARTNERS Principles training in ethical community engagement, Shivani is building upon and complementing this initiative with her 2023 Gold Award – a wonderful example of the ripple effects and collaboration that WFN seeks to foster through its global Winner Network.

A Whitley Award winner in 2014, Shivani received Continuation Funding in 2016 and 2019. With the support of WFN and other partners, Shivani and her team have:

- Stabilised lion populations across the Ewaso landscape over the last 10 years through community-led programmes, with 50 lions recorded in 2022, up from 11 known lions before 2008
- Scaled up lion monitoring efforts to cover 4,530 km², and partnered with the Kenya Wildlife Service to conduct the first National Carnivore Survey in Kenya – a first of its kind in Africa – with findings shaping conservation actions
- Reduced disease transmission to wild carnivores by maintaining the health of domestic dogs, to achieve a healthier balance between people, livestock, and wildlife
- Reduced human-wildlife conflict and significantly increased positive attitudes towards lions among Samburu warriors, bringing retaliation killings in the region down to zero in 2021 and 2022
- Formed the ‘Mama Simba’ initiative, designed by and for Samburu women, to reclaim their place as protectors of wildlife through environmental literacy and lion habitat recovery activities
- Invested in a new generation of conservationists, educating local children on wildlife and the environment through the widely popular Ewaso Lions’ Kids Camp
- Reignited communities’ pride in the wildlife they live alongside, bringing over 1,500 members on safaris - many of whom have never seen wildlife up close in a safe environment

With her Whitley Gold Award, Shivani and her team will galvanise a global movement to ensure that conservation decision-making and leadership happens at the local level, while deepening the cultural values of communities which have always lived alongside wildlife. They will:

- Conduct community interviews and workshops across 25% of the Ewaso landscape, identifying key transferable components of community-led conservation.
- Empower and train 150 community members to drive forward community-led conservation efforts in northern Kenya.
- Develop a global community conservation framework by exchanging capacity with 25 conservation leaders across the world, including WFN alumni, and engage them as advocates.

ewasolions.org
@ewasolions
@ewasolions

SHIVANI BHALLA
KENYA
CONTINUATION FUNDING

Our largest stream of giving, Continuation Funding offers past Whitley Award winners follow-on grants to expand their effective conservation solutions and respond to changing needs.

2022 Continuation Funding winners:

Preserving Northeastern Turkey’s Wetland Biodiversity
Çagan Şekercioğlu
2013 Whitley Gold Award
£75,000 over two years

Community Outreach to Protect Hawkbill Turtles in the Colombian Pacific
Diego Amoroco
2010 Whitley Award
£35,000 over two years

A New Refuge for the Togo Slippery Frog
Caleb Ofori-Boateng
2019 Whitley Award
£70,000 over two years

Rare ‘Rere’: Saving the Critically Endangered Madagascar Side-necked Turtle
Juliette Veloso
2016 Whitley Award
£70,000 over two years

Strengthening and Scaling an Integrated Model for Gorilla Conservation and Human Health
Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka
2009 Whitley Gold Award
£70,000 over two years

Supporting Cotton-top Tamarin Conservation in Colombia Through Forest Restoration and Livelihood Improvements
Rosamira Guillen
2015 Whitley Award
£35,000 over one year

Above and Beyond: Securing the Grauer’s Gorilla’s Last Stronghold
John Kahekwa
2013 Whitley Award
£35,000 over one year

Sustaining Fragile Chimpanzee Populations in Southwestern Nigeria
Rachel Ikenye
2020 Whitley Award
£70,000 over two years

Community Guardians of the Helmeted Hornbill
Yokyok Hadiprakarsa
2020 Whitley Award
£70,000 over two years

Nature-based solutions

WFN supports work delivering nature-based solutions through dedicated Continuation Funding grants that address climate change and biodiversity loss simultaneously, and in collaboration with local communities.

These projects are protecting habitats such as forests, wetlands, peatlands, grasslands, mangroves, and seagrasses that conserve wildlife, store carbon, and offer an equitable and just future for society.

Sink or Swim: Protecting and Restoring Blue Carbon Sinks in Golfo Dulce’s Hammerhead Shark Sanctuary
Ilena Zanella
2019 Whitley Award
£100,000 over two years

From Source to Sea: Nature-based Solutions for a River Landscape
Lindy van Hasselt
1999 Whitley Award
£75,000 over two years

In 2022, we awarded:

£700,000
in Continuation Funding to 11 past Whitley Award winners

MORE THAN
334,000
people across
30,000km²
of the Global South

OF THIS,
£175,000
is specifically supporting projects delivering nature-based solutions

Continuation Funding from WFN is incredibly important because it allows ideas the time to mature and demonstrate they can be effective in conservation.

Dino Martins, 2015 Gold Award Winner & WFN Trustee
In our 30th Anniversary year, we reflect on some of the highlights of our shared achievements.

1993
The World Fund for Nature is established, with Sir David Attenborough and Lord Robin Russell as co-founders.

1994
The first Whitley Award, worth £15,000, is awarded to marine conservationist Amanda Vincent of Project Seahorse.

1995
The Whitley Laing Foundation is created as a stand-alone charity and sets about the task of raising further funds for conservation.

1996
The Rufford Foundation joins the Whitley Awards programme, sponsoring two major awards.

1997
In April, WHF The Princes Royal becomes Patron of the Whitley Awards Scheme.

1998
The Rufford Foundation and Whitley Awards Scheme together establish the Rufford Small Grants Scheme to provide ongoing support to conservationists with funding opportunities.

1999
The Whitley Award for People and Environment is introduced following support from WWF-UK.

2000
Launch of Continuation Funding grants programme, supporting previous Whitley Award winners to scale up successful conservation solutions.

2001
The first ever Friends Award is given, following generous support from individuals.

2002
The charity officially becomes the Whitley Fund for Nature, and Sir David Attenborough joins as a Trustee.

2003
Claudio (1999 Whitley Award winner) and Suzana Padua profiled by TIME Magazine as Green Century Heroes.

2004
The Whitley Laing Foundation has grown in size, and gone annual level of more than £1 million for the first time.

2005
The first ever Friends Award is given, following generous support from individuals.

2006
Carlos Vanegas Almazan, 2012 Whitley Award winner, is instrumental in Guatemalan declaring the Sierra Caral – one of Central America’s largest and most biodiverse remaining cloud forest – as protected area – the country’s first in 7 years.

2007
The amount raised by WFN since 1994 passes £10 million.

2008
Randal Amin, 2004 Gold Award winner, and his NGO, PRETOMA, play a key role in Costa Rica’s ban on shark finning.

2009
WFN celebrates 10 years of partnership with WWF-UK.

2010
WFN celebrates 10 years of partnership with WWF-UK.

2011
Total funds awarded since 1994 pass £15 million, supporting the work of over 1,000 conservationists in 70 countries.

2012
First-ever symposium for Whitley Gold Award winners held in Costa Rica – The View From The Frontline.

2013
Over £1 million awarded through Continuation Funding for the first time, supporting 15 previous winners.

2014
Launch of WFN NextGen to build a network of young people who are passionate about conservation.

2015
Carlos Vanegas Almazan, 2012 Whitley Award winner, joins the Whitley Awards Committee to help drive the conservation impact and catalysing careers.

2016
The Whitley Fund for Nature raises a record annual total of £3.2m.

2017
Sir Paul Rodriguez, 2003 Whitley Award winner, is elected Chair of the Species Survival Commission – the first person from outside of Europe or North America to hold this influential title.

2018
WFN celebrates its 25th Anniversary, holding the Hope Gala at the Natural History Museum which raised an additional £1 million for conservation.

2019
2010 Whitley Award winner Rodolfo Medellin welcomes 12 winners on stage during his keynote speech.

2020
WFN launches a specific funding stream to support nature-based solutions to climate change.

2021
The Whitley Awards Ceremony is held virtually for the first time, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022
The charity is first in-person Regional Winner Ceremony is held in Kandy, bringing together WFN’s Africa-based winners as part of its new Winner Network Development Programme.

2023
WFN reaches a grant-giving milestone: over £20 million awarded to over 200 conservationists across 80 countries.

WFN’s Ambassador programme is launched, with Ai Weiwei, Sophie, Tom Heap, Kate Humble and Lord Robin Russell introducing their longstanding and generous support of the charity.

WFN’s Ambassador programme is launched, with Ai Weiwei, Sophie, Tom Heap, Kate Humble and Lord Robin Russell introducing their longstanding and generous support of the charity.

WFN celebrates its 30th Anniversary. See pages 34-35 for more details.
LOOKING AHEAD

As we look ahead to the next 30 years, we know that it is only together that we can tackle the challenges that our planet faces. Thank you for being our #PartnersForPlanet.

Celebrating 30 years
WFN would not be where we are today without the strong partnerships we have formed with our global network of winners, and our wonderful supporters. This November, we will be holding a series of events to celebrate those partnerships and the impact they have had on conservation – and crucially, to focus on priorities to address the environmental challenges of the coming years. Please stay tuned to @WhitleyAwards and sign up for our e-letter for updates as plans develop.

Increased funding ambition
Over the past 30 years, WFN’s impact has grown substantially, channelling over £20m to more than 200 conservationists in 80 countries. Demand from the Winner Network for Continuation Funding continues to grow, and each year new conservationists join this network. We want to increase what we offer in support to our alumni – through project funding and through our Winner Network Development Programme. To meet this goal, we are increasing our fundraising target over the coming years, seeking to raise £3m per year by 2025 in response to conservation need.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

DONATE TO WFN
We are a charity completely reliant on donations, with no capital endowment. The more we raise, the more support we can channel to wildlife conservationists leading solutions for people and planet in their home countries. Together, as #PartnersForPlanet we can protect and restore nature, securing its future.

To support WFN, visit whitleyaward.org or get in touch with WFN’s Head of Partnerships, Georgie White at georgie@whitleyaward.org.

WFN NEXTGEN
Our newest programme, WFN NextGen, offers young people who are passionate about conservation an opportunity to be a part of an engaged and supportive community helping to raise vital funds to safeguard our planet. Steered by an international, cross-sector, youth committee, WFN NextGen supports young fundraisers to achieve their goals through sporting challenges, arts events, or comedy nights, channeling the energy and enthusiasm of youth into tangible change for nature.

NextGen also hopes to leverage the passion and dedication of our network by building new partnerships with people, brands and influencers; bringing like-minded people together to learn and talk about environmental issues, solutions, and successes.

To register your interest, please email WFN’s Fundraising Officer, Lily Himmelman at lily@whitleyaward.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

DONATE TO WFN
We are a charity completely reliant on donations, with no capital endowment. The more we raise, the more support we can channel to wildlife conservationists leading solutions for people and planet in their home countries. Together, as #PartnersForPlanet we can protect and restore nature, securing its future.

To support WFN, visit whitleyaward.org or get in touch with WFN’s Head of Partnerships, Georgie White at georgie@whitleyaward.org.

WFN NEXTGEN
Our newest programme, WFN NextGen, offers young people who are passionate about conservation an opportunity to be a part of an engaged and supportive community helping to raise vital funds to safeguard our planet. Steered by an international, cross-sector, youth committee, WFN NextGen supports young fundraisers to achieve their goals through sporting challenges, arts events, or comedy nights, channeling the energy and enthusiasm of youth into tangible change for nature.

NextGen also hopes to leverage the passion and dedication of our network by building new partnerships with people, brands and influencers; bringing like-minded people together to learn and talk about environmental issues, solutions, and successes.

To register your interest, please email WFN’s Fundraising Officer, Lily Himmelman at lily@whitleyaward.org.
### Income and expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2022 FUNDS</th>
<th>2021 FUNDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£’000</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME FROM:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading activities</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENDITURE ON:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants awarded</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other charitable activities</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and governance</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net income/(expenditure)</strong></td>
<td>(41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds brought forward</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds carried forward</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Balance sheet at 30 June 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2022 FUNDS</th>
<th>2021 FUNDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£’000</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash and deposits</strong></td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Debtors</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors due within one year</td>
<td>(102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net current assets</strong></td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total net assets (= Total Funds)</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extracted from the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2022; a full copy of which is available on the WFN website.
THANK YOU

We are so grateful for the generous support of our donors, sponsors and partners, including those who choose to remain anonymous.

WHITLEY AWARD DONORS

The Corcoran Foundation
Goldman Sachs Morris Family Foundation
The Friends of the Whitely Fund for Nature

RICHARD BUXTON SPONSORS

The Foundation for the Promotion of Wellbeing
The Benindi Fund
The Sarah and Patrick Wills Foundation
The Constance Travis Charitable Trust

THE FOUNDATION OF WELLBEING MAJOR DONORS

The Badenoch Fund
The Britta & Jeremy Lloyd Family Charitable Trust
Charles and Ruth Prowden
The Rebelalais Trust

TROY SWEET MANAGEMENT SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Caroline Black & Associates
Boffin Media

MAJOR DONORS

Richard & Annemarie Revell
Eugénie White
Matthew and Lucinda Webber
Lord James Russell

SPONSORS & PARTNERS

TABLET OPTIMISM
THOMSON REUTERS
(milliynds)
We need the work of the Whitley Award winners to succeed, and we need to help them to whatever extent is possible.

SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH,
WFN TRUSTEE