



# Making an Impact

## 2020 Annual Review



We would like to express our deep appreciation for the generous support of our Honorary President, HIH Princess Takamado of Japan, whose commitment and personal interest in birds and conservation contributes enormously to BirdLife's progress and achievements. We are extremely grateful for the generosity shown by our Founder Patrons, members of BirdLife's Rare Bird Club and Advisory Group, without whom we could not continue protecting sites and species around the globe. We also thank our corporate supporters and BirdLife Species Champions who have helped us with major initiatives.

BirdLife is grateful to the 96 Partners who made their annual contributions to the running of the Secretariat. In addition, the following organisations contributed to the Partner Emergency Support Fund: American Bird Conservancy, BirdLife Cyprus, BirdLife Malta, BirdLife Sweden, Centre for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP, Montenegro), Czech Society for Ornithology, DOF/BirdLife Denmark, NABU (Germany), Natagora (Belgium), RSPB (UK), SOS/BirdLife (Slovakia) and VBN (Netherlands). Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the support of the following BirdLife Partners who have contributed through fundraising and unrestricted financial contributions to the global conservation programmes: The RSPB (UK), VBN (Netherlands), Audubon (USA), Natuurpunt & Natagora (Belgium), NABU (Germany), Birds Canada, SVS/BirdLife Switzerland, LPO (France), LIPU (Italy), DOF/BirdLife Denmark, SOF/BirdLife Sweden, and SEO/BirdLife (Spain).

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Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*  
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# BirdLife International

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**Pacific** Margaret West

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Partnership for  
nature and people

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership. Together we are over 115 BirdLife Partners worldwide – one per country – and growing, with almost 11 million supporters, 7,000 local conservation groups and 7,400 staff.

Find out more at: [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)

# A message from our Chair

It is my pleasure to bring our 2020 Review to you which captures the effectiveness of BirdLife's diverse global family in delivering conservation of birds and biodiversity around the planet.

It has, of course, escaped no one's attention that 2020 has been an epochal year as the global community has struggled to face the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impact on our lives. Very quickly, the BirdLife Partnership moved to remote working, joining much of the planet in building new online ways of doing business. As you can well imagine, a laptop on a dining room table is not conducive to conservation fieldwork. But BirdLife's Partners quickly found new ways to share best practice digitally, facing increasing funding and community mobilisation restraints with innovative and imaginative webinars and group chats in lieu of physical gatherings.

Humankind's abusive treatment of nature is at the root of the COVID-19 pandemic – and BirdLife stepped up to the challenge of telling that story and proposing the ideas and strategies for recovering from this disaster by putting nature at the heart of the massive resources being mobilised around the globe to restore our economies and our lives. Through our leadership in the Green Recovery movement – using innovative financial mechanisms and flows, multinational, regional and national political collaboration – we are leading the way.



Over the coming year we are preparing for our 2022 Global Partnership Congress and our 100th Anniversary. With our planet's existential crises becoming ever more acute, we are refining and distilling our strategy for the next decade, further integrating our key pillars of Species, Sites, Systems and Society to better bring our unique strengths as the most diverse global family of over 115 national Partners to bear in the battle to save the planet, her birds and her biodiversity.

I hope that in reading through this Annual Review you will get a flavour of the dynamic and singular work the BirdLife International Partnership is doing to secure our future.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias'.

**Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias**

Chair, BirdLife Council

# A message from our CEO

As Braulio has written, 2020 has been an extraordinary year. COVID-19 has shown us how essential it is to step up our game and further mobilise the unique elements of the BirdLife Partnership. I have been especially proud of our solidarity in the last year. We all stepped up to provide emergency financial support to those Partners who were especially hard hit by the pandemic (read more on [pg. 46](#)).

From our role as the world's authority on birds for the IUCN's Red List ([pg. 12](#)) to continuing our critical work leading on Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) ([pg. 24](#)), we are at the forefront of making science the spark for better policies and public awareness. But we are determined to go further. The stakes have intensified and the pandemic is profound proof that our work is more critical than ever.

With our local to global structure in the very strands of our DNA, our innovative ideas have powered a growing movement to change the way we treat our planet. 2020 saw the launch of our #1Planet1Right campaign, calling the UN to recognise the basic human right to a healthy planet ([pg. 50](#)) and we are leading the way on green recovery pilot projects. Our network of Partners in Europe and Central Asia also demonstrated our incredible collective impact, providing key contributions to the EU's 2030 Biodiversity strategy, work that has been echoed globally through our lobbying on a Post-2020 Nature Agenda.

And of course birds, our beautiful birds. From combatting the bird trade in Asia ([pg. 16](#)) to our work with local farmers to protect grassland bird species in South America's Pampas ([pg. 38](#)),



throughout this Review you'll find countless examples of our work to save species and their habitats.

With our 100th Anniversary fast approaching in September 2022, suffice it to say that being BirdLife's CEO is the privilege of a lifetime. 2020's work is seminal not only to the Global Biodiversity Framework but to the UNFCCC Climate COP and the UN Human Rights Commission. 2021 will set the rules of the game for the next decade, and BirdLife is ready to push for more ambitious agreements that set the true transformation our planet needs. I draw strength and insight daily from the amazing BirdLife family and the incredible work we do every day to secure a healthy and sustainable future for our planet.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Patricia Zurita'. The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

**Patricia Zurita**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 2020 Highlights

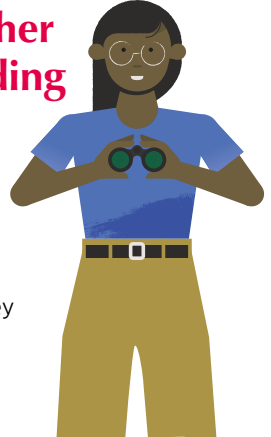
BirdLife brings together over **115 Partners** from across the globe and is the largest partnership for nature in the world. We are driven by our belief that local people – working for nature in their own places, but connected nationally and internationally through our global Partnership – are the key to sustaining all life on earth. This unique local-to-global approach delivers high-impact and long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people. Here is a look back at some of our highlights from 2020...

## Global Bird Weekend



**Knitting together the global birding community**

On 17 and 18 October 2020, tens of thousands of people from across the world donned their binoculars and ventured out to their local patch to record as many birds as they could, contributing to citizen science and raising money to help BirdLife stop the illegal bird trade in the first ever Global Bird Weekend. The event was a huge success, with...



**7,166**  
species recorded  
– a new world record!

**Over 33,000** people participating



across  
168  
countries

**£23,000** raised

to stop  
illegal  
bird trade  
through  
the event



## It's time to make a healthy planet a human right

The COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of the close relationship between the health of the planet and human health.

So in April, we launched our **#1Planet1Right** campaign, calling for the recognition of a healthy environment as a human right.



**118,443** signatures and counting

**+800** organisation signatures on a joint letter to the UN Human Rights Council

### Endorsements

from **Patagonia** and **David Boyd**, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

Find out more about **#1Planet1Right** on [page 50](#)

## Keeping connected to our Partners and supporters online

With lockdowns and social distancing leading to the cancellation of in-person events, we launched our hugely successful **Conservation Webinar Series in April 2020**, giving the public the opportunity to hear from our experts in a safe, digital environment.

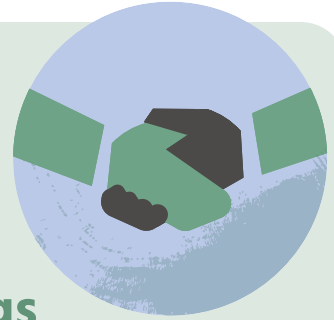
**8** webinars held in 2020

**2,488** participants

Awareness raising on topics ranging from the Asian bird trade and the African vulture crisis, to the perils birds face when migrating between their breeding and wintering grounds.



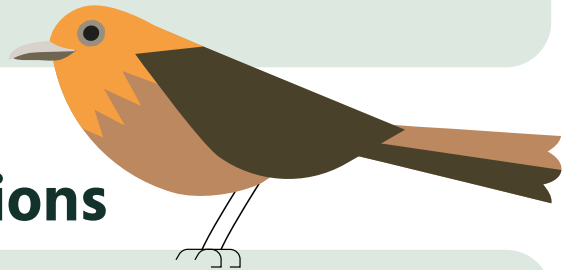
## Developing our next 10-year strategy in the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic



Work to develop our new 10-year Strategy began in late 2019 and, despite the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote consultations with the Partnership were held throughout 2020.

Extensive discussions took place with BirdLife's Global Council, potential donors, and Regional and Programme meetings were held for Secretariat and Partner staff. The new Strategy will be adopted in 2022.

meetings involving over **110** partners across **6** regions and all continents



## Preventing extinctions

**645**  threatened species

helped by BirdLife's Preventing Extinctions Programme.

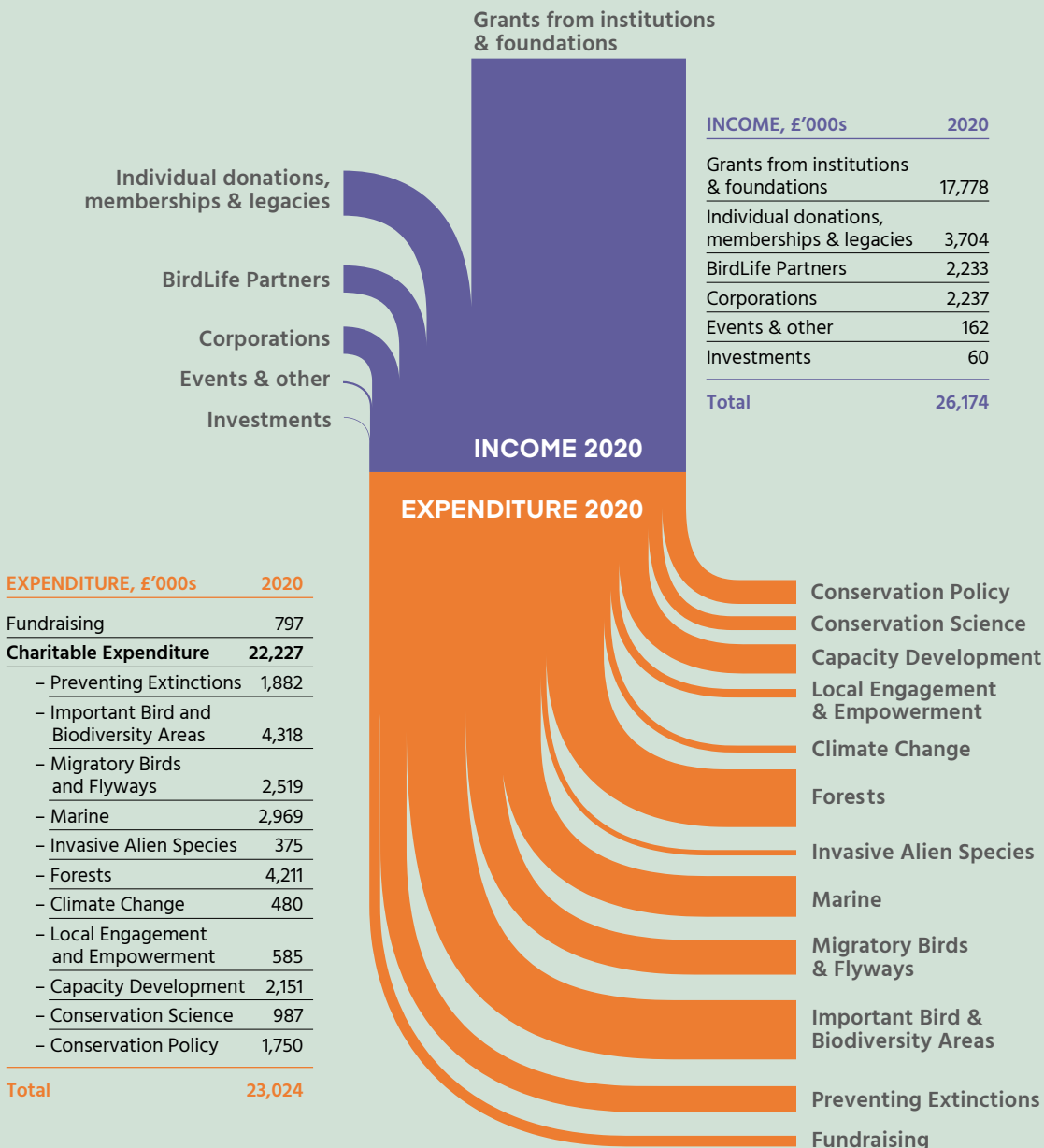
The Tahiti Monarch population exceeded

**100** birds for first time in decades

Find out more on [page 19](#)



# Financial Results



# Species



© Wade Tregaskis, Flickr

# Saving threatened species from extinction

There are over 11,000 species of birds on earth. From Emperor Penguins lumbering across the frozen Antarctic wastes, to hummingbirds flitting between flowers in the American tropics, they can be found in every country and habitat. Their visibility, beauty and stunning diversity has been a source of inspiration to humans for millennia. But today, one in eight bird species is threatened with extinction.

By understanding birds, we can understand the state of the planet as a whole. Birds react quickly to change, providing a vital “early warning system” for ecosystems in trouble – and often leading us to the source of the problem. Bringing together research from scientists across the world, BirdLife tracks the changing fortunes of bird species globally. As the authority for birds on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, we can quickly detect declining species and act to protect them before it’s too late.

The action we take is as diverse as the birds themselves. But thanks to nearly a century of experience from our network of Partners in over 115 countries, we have the power to make a real difference, reversing the fates of not only threatened bird species, but also the wildlife and people they live alongside.

## In 2020...

The Bombay Natural History Society (BirdLife in India) released eight captive-reared White-rumped Vultures to bolster wild populations of this Critically Endangered raptor.

The Junín Grebe and Seychelles Paradise-flycatcher came off the Critically Endangered list thanks to protection of vital habitats.

The Raso Lark was found to be breeding successfully on its new home of Santa Luzia island in Cabo Verde, following a translocation programme to expand the range of this Critically Endangered songbird.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (BirdLife Partner) helped to rescue three unique species of lizard from Mauritian islands following a devastating oil spill, airlifting them to a captive breeding facility.

BirdLife’s advocacy helped to establish a landmark international agreement to protect African-Eurasian vultures from poisoning, adopted this February by the Convention on Migratory Species.

## Species

# The Red List

**“How can we secure a healthy, sustainable future for nature and people? What do we need to do, and where? To figure that out, we first need to understand how nature is doing right now.”**

**Anna Staneva**

Senior European Species Conservation Officer



Every year, BirdLife gathers the latest information on bird species across the world in order to update their conservation status on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Collaborating with national Partners, ornithology experts and local residents in remote locations, our scientists determine whether a species' prospects have improved, declined or stayed the same. From this, we can pinpoint where to focus our action, and make deductions about the state of nature as a whole.

**“The Andean Condor has been found in local folklore since 2,500 BC. To lose it now would be a tragedy for South American culture and ecosystems alike.”**

**Ian Davidson**

Regional Director, BirdLife in the Americas

## BirdLife findings inform EU strategy

At the EU Green Week in October, BirdLife released a population status assessment of Europe's birds as part of the EU State of Nature report: a momentous collaborative project that involved over 200,000 people from across the EU, around 60% of which were citizen science volunteers. For

birds, such initiatives included the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme, a joint initiative of the European Bird Census Council and BirdLife, which gathers information about 170 widespread breeding bird species in Europe, and the International Waterbird Census, which monitors the wintering populations of wetland birds.

This report provides valuable insights into the successes and shortfalls of conservation in the EU, and will inform the EU Biodiversity Strategy for the next decade. BirdLife's population status assessment will also form part of the European Red List of Birds update, initiated in 2020 for completion in 2021.



## Alarm raised for iconic raptors

The **Andean Condor** *Vultur gryphus* headed the list of well-known raptors found to be in steep decline in this year's global Red List update, sparking fears that the crisis that brought many Asian and African vultures to the edge of extinction has spread to new continents and species. This majestic scavenger, which can live for up to 70 years, has seen rapid population declines in recent years due to persecution and poisoning, and this year was moved from Near Threatened to Vulnerable. This new classification underlines the need to scale up conservation work and collaborate with governments to strengthen anti-poisoning laws.

The **Secretarybird** *Sagittarius serpentarius* was one of three African savannah raptors classed as Endangered, along with the Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* and Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*. Habitat loss and degradation, poisoning, poaching and disturbance are all likely factors in these declines, but more research is needed to identify the root causes and the most efficient way to address them.

On a more positive note, the **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* is no longer considered threatened thanks to decades of dedicated conservation work. Legal protection under the EU Birds Directive led to an action plan across its range, including large-scale reintroduction projects and community education. While poisoning and persecution are still an issue in some locations, its revival provides an inspiring model for large-scale raptor conservation around the world.

# Species

**“While any species being listed as threatened is obviously bad news, it doesn’t have to be a tragedy. For many, the road to recovery begins here. The issues flagged by the Red List should form the focus of further research and action.”**

**Dr Ian Burfield**, Global Science Coordinator (Species),  
BirdLife International



## SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

### Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

**RED LIST STATUS:** Endangered

**THREATS:** habitat loss, poisoning, poaching, disturbance

**FAST FACT:** This striking African savannah raptor towers at 1.3 metres tall, and is famed for its method of stomping on prey such as mice and snakes to kill them. It is thought to have got its common name from the appearance of having quill pens tucked behind its ears.

## Species

# Combatting the Asia bird trade

“The COVID-19 pandemic is like a double-edged sword. It led to closures of wildlife markets in some cities and brought many city-dwellers closer to nature as they were unable to travel. Yet, in other cities, demand for pet birds increased as city-dwellers craved engaging pastimes. Some rural areas saw increased hunting and trade to make up for lost ecotourism incomes. Our bird trade work had to navigate these pressures while facing movement restrictions that made our work a lot harder.”

**Anuj Jain**, Preventing Extinctions and Bird Trade Coordinator, BirdLife Asia

The trade in wild birds – living or dead – is a multi-billion dollar industry that constitutes a major threat to the survival of numerous species. And as the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us, the trafficking of wild animals is also a direct threat to humanity. Despite the challenges of 2020, our Partners have made great progress on existing projects. The Malaysian Nature Society interviewed forest communities to understand local attitudes and threats to the Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (Critically Endangered), and mapped out remaining hornbill strongholds. Burung Indonesia completed field surveys of the White Cockatoo *Cacatua alba* (Endangered) in the North Maluku province, and is working with local people to develop alternative sustainable livelihoods and greater water security.

## A passage to India

In 1990, the Indian government completely banned the capture and trade of native birds – however, a black market in more than 100 species of exotic birds has sprung up in its place, many of them wild individuals smuggled in from abroad. In 2020, the government announced an amnesty whereby owners could voluntarily declare all exotic pets. But will this amnesty improve the implementation of CITES, or lead to a surge in illegal trade? BNHS (BirdLife in India) began a project to evaluate the impact of this declaration, using the new information on threatened species, consumers and supply chains to provide advice for policymakers.





# 1/3

of bird species are affected by international trade

Helmeted Hornbill © Craig Ansibin, Shutterstock

## The big picture

While we know of its impact in Asia, the wild bird trade also appears to be growing rapidly in many other countries. However, the reasons behind this upsurge, and its repercussions, remain poorly known in many parts of the world.

In 2020, BirdLife launched a comprehensive global overview of the wild bird trade. Supported by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, this publication will cover all kinds of bird trade – international or domestic, legal or illegal – and use the results to guide conservation policy and practice. We are working with major research and conservation

organisations such as TRAFFIC, the IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, and the University of Cambridge. Additionally, the Cambridge Infectious Diseases interdisciplinary research centre will provide expertise on the transmission risks of zoonotic diseases through trade.

We have already started assembling data from published papers, and are exploring new sources such as databases on illegal activity. We are also in contact with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to discuss the participation of national authorities in the study.

# Species

## Restoring island habitats

“2020’s challenges highlighted the value of BirdLife’s approach of working alongside national Partners and local communities, ensuring knowledge and resources are available where they can make the greatest impact. This method of engagement also creates growing social acceptance of the rapidly-advancing technologies and methods used in invasive species control, as people witness the benefits to biodiversity and their livelihoods.”

**Steve Cranwell**, Programme Manager, Invasive Alien Species



## Operation restoration: success

Back in 2015, BirdLife launched its most ambitious Pacific island restoration project to date: removing introduced predators from the remote French Polynesian islands of Acteon & Gambier. In November 2020, SOP MANU (BirdLife in French Polynesia) and the BirdLife Invasive Species team returned to find threatened birds bouncing back. The Polynesian Ground-dove *Alopecoenas erythropterus* (Critically Endangered) has spread from a single stronghold to three flourishing populations across the islands. Five new seabird populations have established themselves, and the number of nesting Polynesian Storm-petrels *Nesofregatta fuliginosa* (Endangered) has doubled. These five restored islands give hope for future restorations elsewhere, showing the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of restoring several islands at once.

## Tahiti Monarch bouncing back

The population of Tahiti Monarch *Pomarea nigra* has finally passed the 100 mark again after more than 20 years of conservation effort. The Critically Endangered songbird numbered just 12 birds

in 1998, requiring dedicated effort from SOP Manu, the French Polynesian government and several thousand volunteers to bring it back from the brink. Now, the effects of habitat restoration and invasive species control are beginning to show, and translocation to a rat-free site is being investigated.

## A safe space for Cabo Verde seabirds

Cabo Verde, a volcanic island chain about 600 kilometres off the coast of Senegal, is a breeding hotspot for eight seabird species, including three found nowhere else on earth. Research from BirdLife's Cabo Verde Seabird Project found that invasive species are a significant threat to these colonies. This year, SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) successfully carried out a project to remove feral cats from the island of Santa Lucia. Similarly, the Cabo Verde Seabird Programme was able to continue its work controlling cats and rats on the rugged, mountainous cliffs of Fogo Island – a key habitat for the Cape Verde Petrel *Pterodroma feae*. These successes would not have been possible without the collaboration of local NGOs and the Cabo Verdean people.



“The real shift in this program was taken thanks to the massive involvement of the inhabitants of Tahiti.”

**SOP Manu** (BirdLife in French Polynesia)



## Species

# Saving Marion Island's Seabirds: The Mouse-Free Marion Project starts taking shape

In the early 19th century, house mice were accidentally introduced by seal hunters to South Africa's sub-Antarctic Marion Island. Over the last 200 years, the mice have damaged the ecosystems of the island, caused dramatic declines in the native invertebrate populations, and depleted the seed stock of some indigenous plant species. More recently, the mice have started attacking the island's globally important seabirds.

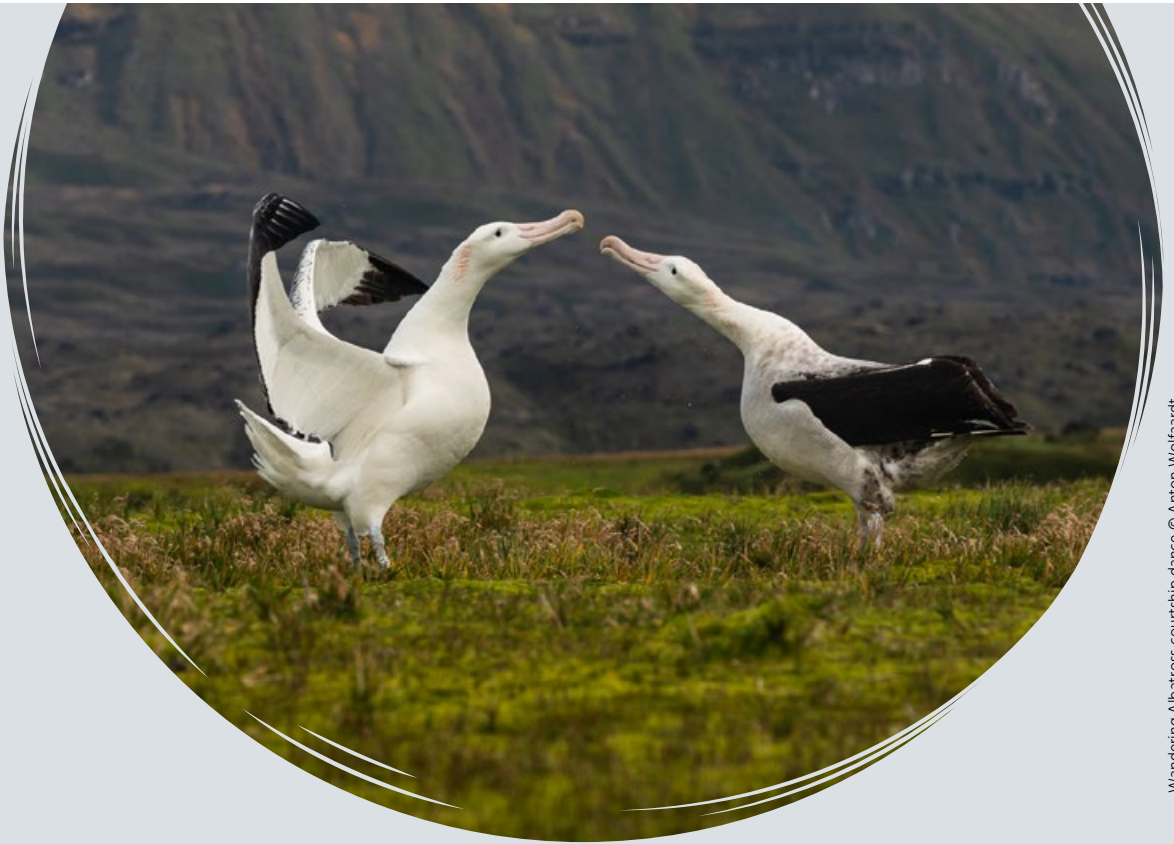
Over the past 30 years there has been a 530% increase in the densities of mice on Marion Island due to an increasingly warm and dry climate and lack of natural predators. This population boom has led to the mice exhausting the island's supply of invertebrates, which they usually prey on in the winter months, leaving them to search for alternative food sources. The defenceless seabirds on the island are literally 'sitting ducks', and as on several other islands, the mice have begun to prey on them.

The scale and frequency of attacks on seabirds have been increasing since they were first observed in the early 2000s, and have escalated dramatically in the last five years. On Gough Island, mice are estimated to eat two-thirds of eggs and chicks - some two million each year - and even attack adult birds. Left unchecked on Marion Island, the mice are likely to cause the local extinction of 18 of the 28 seabird species that breed there, including the charismatic icon of the open ocean, the Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*. The Prince Edward Island group, of which Marion Island forms part,

is home to almost 50% of the world's Wandering Albatrosses, with Marion alone supporting a quarter of the global population. BirdLife South Africa are hard at work to eradicate the mice to safeguard the island's globally important seabirds and facilitate its ecological restoration. A rigorous and systematic process has been followed to determine the feasibility of eradicating mice from Marion Island. Based on the outcomes of the feasibility study, draft operational and project plans have been prepared, and planning towards an eradication operation is underway.

The Mouse-Free Marion Non-Profit Company has recently been established to initiate and implement the project, which is being undertaken as a partnership between BirdLife South Africa and South Africa's Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. In February 2021, Dr Anton Wolvaardt was appointed as the Mouse-Free Marion Project Manager. Anton has worked for over 25 years in the field of seabird conservation, a journey that started at Marion Island in 1994/95, when he spent a year monitoring the island's seabirds.

The project has gained significant momentum in recent months, but there remains a lot to do between now and the target date for the eradication, which is during the austral winter of 2023. Marion will be the largest island by far on which an attempt will be made to eradicate mice in a single exercise. Consequently, the logistical and planning demands are substantial, and there is an urgent need to raise the outstanding funding required for the project. To find out more, visit [www.mousefreemarion.org](http://www.mousefreemarion.org).



Wandering Albatross courtship dance © Anton Wolfaardt

“We know from the efforts that have preceded ours to eradicate rodents from islands that the conservation benefits are massive. There are many reports showing how these islands are rebounding, often more rapidly than expected, following the eradication of the introduced rodents. The Mouse-Free Marion project is an opportunity to leave a similar conservation legacy, and our planning has benefited hugely from the lessons learned and experience gained from these other operations. I am humbled and delighted to be part of this important endeavour, an endeavour that will involve many organisations and individuals working in partnership towards the aim of securing a positive conservation future for Marion Island and its globally important biodiversity.”

**Dr Anton Wolfaardt**, Mouse-Free Marion Project Manager

# Vital Sites



© Travel | Peter Shutterstock

# Protecting vital sites for birds and beyond

The sight of an Arctic Tern swooping overhead is joyous and awe-inspiring, bringing to mind visions of wide skies and open horizons. And there's a good reason BirdLife chose the Arctic Tern for our logo. As the bird with the longest migration – from the North pole to the South pole – the entire earth is its home.

Most birds don't stay in one place – we share the birds we see in our daily lives with multiple communities, countries and even continents. And so it follows that protecting the habitats birds rely on takes global collaboration. To this end, BirdLife has identified some of the most important sites for birds across the world – a network of over 13,000 Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). These sites have formed the foundation for a wider partnership of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs): vital habitats for all life on earth.

As part of this work, we coordinate the actions of our national Partners along the world's major migration flight paths, or 'flyways', creating linked chains of safe habitat for birds to feed, breed, rest and refuel on every step of their journey. Throughout, we involve local communities in the protection of important sites, giving them a sense of ownership and responsibility for the land they share.

Scientists from the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) attached lightweight, paperclip-sized satellite trackers to the European Storm-petrel – the UK's smallest seabird – revealing its movements for the first time and identifying vital feeding habitats.

After a legal battle spanning nearly three decades, the Spanish supreme court prohibited the construction of a highly destructive dam and reservoir on the Gallego river, thanks to advocacy from environmental organisations including our Spanish Partner, SEO/BirdLife.

The Key Biodiversity Area Partnership launched its new website ([keybiodiversityareas.org](http://keybiodiversityareas.org)), containing comprehensive information on all 16,000 sites, including how they are used by governments, businesses and the conservation community.

As part of BirdLife's Cabo Verde Seabird Project, nationwide surveys of the islands found over 30 new seabird colonies of seven different species and many new nests of unique and threatened species.

## Vital Sites

# Vital sites for birds

In 2020, one of the main priorities for BirdLife's Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA) Programme was to ensure that our database of vital bird habitats is up to date. To this end, the BirdLife Secretariat provided Partners with guidelines on the latest criteria for IBAs, when a site no longer qualifies, and how to identify marine IBAs. We also organised webinars for Partners on the IBA criteria, and presented the results of an exercise to check existing IBAs against the criteria of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) – vital sites for all life on earth.

## Training courses

Another highlight of 2020 was the creation of a training course on KBAs, funded by the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF). Eleven Modules and more than 40 practical exercises in four languages are now ready to be used for training interested experts on the KBA Standard and the KBA identification process. Two regional and several national training workshops have already used these materials successfully during the last year.

**“In 2020, important meetings and fieldwork had to be cancelled or rescheduled... on the other hand, BirdLife Partners had more time to conduct literature reviews and other desk-based jobs.”**

**Zoltan Waliczky,**  
Global IBA Policy Coordinator

**11**  
Training  
modules

in  
**4**  
languages

were  
created for  
the KBA  
training  
course

## KBA's recognised by international development bank

A major win last year came when BirdLife, alongside several other organisations, successfully advocated to include KBAs in the new environmental safeguard policy of the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**. KBAs are now specifically referenced as critical habitats under “legally protected areas or internationally recognised areas of high biodiversity value,” and the Bank will not finance developments that would lead to lasting loss of their conservation values.



© Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh



# Major Milestone for Guyana

**Local NGO, the South Rupununi Conservation Society, worked with indigenous communities to establish school wildlife groups and monitoring activities for the Red Siskin.**

This year, Guyana established its first Important Bird & Biodiversity Area: South Central Rupununi. This rolling savannah is a haven for Jaguars, Giant Anteaters and over 250 bird species, including the Red Siskin *Spinus cucullatus* (Endangered). This small, brightly-coloured bird was first spotted here in 2000, having been uprooted from most of South America by the caged bird trade. Its protection became the focus of a local NGO, the South Rupununi Conservation Society – an organisation that started out as a group of bird-loving friends, but, with the help of BirdLife’s Conservation Leadership Programme, grew into a powerhouse for research, advocacy and public engagement.

## Vital Sites

# Myanmar shorebirds get four-fold expansion in protected wetland

**Around a decade ago, experts from BANCA (BirdLife in Myanmar) and the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force discovered 200 Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Calidris pygmaea* overwintering in the Gulf of Mottama – 50% of the world’s population. Fast forward to 2020, and their advocacy efforts have resulted in this important shorebird sanctuary quadrupling in size.**

The Gulf of Mottama is a vast wetland of great diversity. Quenched daily by a tidal bore sweeping up from the Andaman Sea, the Gulf’s wetlands are extremely dynamic, with mud islands rising and vanishing in as little as a month. At low tide, the vast mudflats protrude for kilometres out to sea, dotted with thousands of shorebirds including large flocks of curlews, godwits and more. Determined to protect this precious habitat and the species that depend on it, BANCA and their collaborators decided to engage with the local community who they knew were hunting shorebirds. The team highlighted alternative livelihoods and offered seed funding for assets such as livestock, building materials and fishing boats to support these new ventures. The local government and village leaders were consulted about the site’s protection, resulting in the formation of Local Conservation Groups of enthusiastic members of the community.

The hard work paid off, and in 2017 the Myanmar Government designated around 42,500 hectares in the eastern side of the Gulf of Mottama as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. This success was a catalyst for further action, and the less-surveyed western site of the Gulf was identified as another area to conserve. In early 2020, after two years of consultation with local stakeholders, the Myanmar Government finalised the extension of the Gulf of Mottama Ramsar site, quadrupling the area to 161,030 hectares and extending it into the Bago Region, and further south in Mon State.

Thanks to the efforts of BANCA and its collaborators, the gulf is now one of the largest Ramsar Sites in Southeast Asia – a region where there are still large gaps in wetland conservation. Not only does this protect the site from harmful development, but it provides a framework and inspiration for stronger conservation action and engagement with local communities, and an opportunity for conservationists to gain a better understanding of how shorebirds use this vast wetland.

Although the Spoon-billed Sandpiper was the inspiration behind this advocacy, other threatened species will also benefit from this triumph, as will Myanmar’s coastal communities. Work to conserve the Gulf of Mottama will secure vital ecosystem services, such as clean water, climate regulation, and flood prevention, which local communities can rely on for generations to come.



**50%**

of the world's Spoon-Billed Sandpipers overwinter at the ulf of Mottama, making it the world's single most important wintering site for this Critically Endangered wader.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper © Butterfly Hunter, Shutterstock

## Vital Sites

# Introducing a Gamechanger for Forest Conservation

# The Forest Accelerator

Conserving and restoring tropical forests is essential if we are to protect people, habitats, and wildlife into the future. Through the BirdLife Forest Landscape Sustainability Accelerator, BirdLife and Partners are investing in the future of forest conservation.



Recognising that forest conservation efforts often fail to reach their full potential due to insecure funding cycles, the Accelerator is working to secure long-lasting, self-sustaining financial security. The Accelerator creates a safe space for landscape leaders to develop and test sustainable financing models at a landscape level, provides support and mentorship, and acts as a hub and matchmaker with investors, companies, and partners.

In 2020, the team were unable to travel due to the pandemic, but they adapted to this challenge and made the most of being constrained to desk work by investing in learning and strategy.

The Accelerator worked with a consultancy firm with expertise in conservation enterprise and business planning. Partners “bid” for time, explaining how they would use the consultants, and were matched with appropriate advisors to deliver specific outcomes. This covered several areas including coaching, strategy development, and reviewing and inputting to business plans.

This new, highly tailored approach was very successful and resulted in significant progress for the team including specific business strategies and finance plans now in place.



Landscapes don't just consist of mountains, forests, wildlife, and people. They are formed by the decisions people make.

The future of these landscapes is affected by these decisions, and one decision can have many knock-on effects.

### MAKE YOUR LANDSCAPE DECISION



The BirdLife Accelerator is investing in forest landscape teams, so that management decisions result in a future where people and forests can thrive.

## Vital Sites

# Safeguarding Seabird Strongholds



Tristan albatross © Amy Scholfield

**“In 2020, United Nations negotiations for a new global treaty for conservation in the high seas were postponed. To keep up momentum, BirdLife worked with the High Seas Alliance and with Partners under the STRONG High Seas Project to further distil the draft treaty text and to reach out to negotiators and other government officials to support their engagement and to advocate for stronger commitments to be taken. We saw this time as an opportunity to enhance the dialogue and expand the time window for advocacy.”**

**Carolina Hazin**, Global Marine Policy Coordinator

## Protected areas for penguins

In a collaborative new study led by BirdLife, scientists used satellite imagery, drone technology, and good old-fashioned counting to pinpoint some of the most important sites for penguins in Antarctic waters.

Exploration, tourism and unsustainable fishing all threaten Antarctic wildlife. While a network of large Marine Protected Areas has been on the cards for some

years, it has not yet been approved, with some countries having a say in Antarctic issues claiming insufficient evidence of threats. This new paper added considerable weight to ongoing negotiations, calculating that if the protected areas were designated, high-quality penguin habitat under permanent safeguard would increase by 49%–100%, depending on the species.



Chinstrap penguins. © Christian Aslund

## Ground-breaking technology

Throughout 2020, BirdLife has been advocating for the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount to be designated as a Marine Protected Area by the OSPAR Convention. This remote area of the high seas would have gone unnoticed were it not for the collaboration of hundreds of scientists that shared their data in our Seabird Tracking Database. The movements of satellite-

tagged birds showed that the area was an important feeding ground for up to 5 million birds of 23 species, many travelling thousands of kilometres to winter there. The area is being considered as an area in need of protection for its rich and abundant biodiversity, which would make it the first high seas Marine Protected Area identified from tracking data.

# 135 SPECIES

followed by our  
Seabird Tracking  
Database

## History in the making

In November, UK overseas territory Tristan da Cunha – a remote island chain in the South Atlantic – was declared a Marine Protection Zone, safeguarding habitat for millions of seabirds, fish and mammals. Three times the size of the UK, this species-rich, pristine seascape will be one

of the world's largest protected areas. This success was made possible thanks to two decades of international collaboration between governments, NGOs and the local islanders, instigated by the Tristan da Cunha government and the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK).

Stretching across 687,247km<sup>2</sup> of land and sea, 90% of the marine area will be a complete “no-take zone”, where fishing and other extractive activities are prohibited. This will benefit 25 seabird species that breed on the islands, including four globally threatened albatross species.

## Changing Systems

# Changing the systems that govern our planet



**50 stakeholders** including **BirdLife** make up the the **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Energy Task Force**. Governments, investors, scientists and the private sector are working to make the renewable energy industry safe for birds and biodiversity.

When we look at some of the biggest threats to birds – intensive agriculture, logging, climate change – they all have something in common. They're not the actions of individuals – they are part of vast global systems. But rather than trying to reverse the damage retrospectively, what if conservation was already integrated into these systems?

What if action to safeguard nature was incorporated early on in the planning stage? And what if the needs of human beings could be met sustainably, without sacrificing the natural world?

BirdLife knows that nature conservation doesn't happen in a vacuum, and we are already striving to make it an intrinsic part of the way the world is run. At its core, BirdLife may be a small organisation, but we can quickly and efficiently mobilise the action of over 115 Partners across the world, creating a power for social change far greater than the sum of its parts.

We work with businesses, governments and financial institutions to help them understand their dependencies on nature and ensure that their ecological impact and footprint is as small as possible. Whether we're advising renewable energy companies on the safest locations to build wind farms, or helping local people to earn carbon credits for sustainable forestry, we are planting seeds of change wherever they are needed.

## In 2020...

BirdLife Europe lent its support to the #WithdrawTheCAP campaign to overturn Europe's new, unsustainable Common Agricultural Policy, engaging the public through social media and presenting an open letter to the European Commission President.

In the sub-Antarctic, intrepid expeditions and satellite tracking revealed new data on important feeding and breeding zones for seabirds and seals, helping planners to minimise the overlap between fisheries and wildlife.

Our new animation, launched at the Global Landscapes Forum, used imaginative graphics to explain landscape conservation and our innovative work to support communities in tropical forests (see [pg. 29](#) for more).

The Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (BirdLife Partner) represented BirdLife at the Great Ethiopian Run sports event, using the opportunity to call for bird-safe renewable energy infrastructure.

## Changing Systems

Greylag geese © Björn Olesen



# EU finally ban lead in wetlands

On 25th November 2020, the European Parliament voted to ban the use of lead ammunition in wetlands across the EU. 362 MEPs voted in favour of the ban, 292 against, and 39 abstained. This long-awaited ban will help to improve the health of our natural environment by preventing lead from poisoning wetlands and wildlife, and work is underway to extend the ban to all lead ammunition in the EU.

Lead shot consists of tiny round bullets which hunters spray from their shotguns. Only a small proportion of the lead hits the target, and the rest is scattered into nature. Within the EU it is estimated that 18,000 to 21,000 tonnes of lead end up in the environment every year due to hunting.

Lead has been used in ammunition and fishing tackle for decades despite awareness of the terrible impact it has on humans, wildlife, and the environment. In the EU, an estimated one million waterbirds are killed each year due to lead shot poisoning. Waterbirds including swans, flamingos, ducks, and geese tragically confuse lead pellets for small particles of stone or sand which they swallow to act like teeth in the gizzard - a specialised stomach constructed of thick, muscular walls



used for grinding up food. On top of this alarming figure, raptors and scavengers, such as owls and eagles, are also killed or weakened after eating prey contaminated with lead shot.

Although the ban is very welcome news, it could and should have been implemented much sooner. The need to ban and remove lead from nature has been acknowledged by conservationists for decades. The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) – an intergovernmental treaty administered by the UN – has been working towards a ban on the use of toxic lead ammunition since it was established some 25 years ago. Their Contracting Parties (82 countries, including the EU and its Member States) were supposed to have phased out the use of

lead ammunition in wetlands by the year 2000. However, this was disrupted through tactics employed by the hunting-weapons industry and parts of the hunting lobby. So, while we should celebrate this victory, going forward it is crucial that decision-makers recognise these tactics of delay and follow science in a timely manner.

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) is assessing the health and environmental risks posed by lead bullets in hunting and outdoor sports shooting, as well as lead used in fishing sinkers and lures, and may conclude that an EU-wide restriction is justified. BirdLife is ready to support the ECHA, and we count on decision-makers to act swiftly and definitively to protect the natural world.

## Changing Systems

# Building a climate-resilient future



“Combining science and community engagement to design solutions for the landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi is a

powerful approach. Communities now have a chance to restore the degraded hillsides and riverbanks through planting appropriate trees and grasses – as well as fruit trees that improve people’s livelihoods – while pushing back impacts of climate change.”

### Ken Mwathe

BirdLife Africa Policy and Communications Coordinator

### Mapping a plan of action

In 2020, BirdLife Africa completed its three-year CRAGs project in Rwanda and Burundi. Supported by the MacArthur Foundation and the Nature Conservancy, the project aimed to collaborate with local communities to build their resilience against climate change by restoring their land. This work was carried out on the ground with ABN (BirdLife in Burundi) and the Rwanda Project Office.

Over time, intensive agriculture and small-scale mining have eroded the soil around the Lake Kivu and Rusizi River basins in Rwanda and Burundi, turning the waters a muddy brown and reducing the agricultural yields and fishing catches of local people. To combat this, project staff involved local community groups in ‘sediment fingerprinting’ – a pioneering method of sampling soil and river water to identify erosion hotspots. Next, they conducted vulnerability assessments with nearby residents in their local languages to identify which sites were most at risk of soil erosion, and how to address this.

### What are CRAGs?

CRAGs (Climate-Resilient Altitudinal Gradients) are high altitude areas rich in biodiversity and ecosystem services which are expected to be resilient to climate change until at least the year 2100.

These landscapes are likely to occur everywhere; ranging from the very steep slopes in the Lake

Kivu and Rusizi River Catchments (Rwanda, DRC and Burundi), to the more gentle hillsides around Lake Victoria (Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania). However, these mountains are under increasing pressure from climate change and unsustainable land use practices. If these gradients remain dangerously vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, the well-being of humans and natural ecosystems is threatened.

## Planting seeds of change

Acting on solutions suggested by residents, project staff set up seedling nurseries at priority sites. With the help of local leaders, they mobilised entire communities to plant a total of 1,293,267 seedlings on farms, gardens and public land. The seedlings consisted of a mixture of fruit trees – whose produce could be directly eaten and sold – and agroforestry trees, which bind the soil and shade the ground, allowing livestock or crops to be farmed underneath. An assessment in September 2020 showed that 82% of agroforestry trees and 74% of fruit trees had survived and were thriving. This is a particularly high success rate for this type of project.



“For a long time, we had been at the mercy of heavy rain and strong winds which in turn affected our livelihoods.”

**Tharcisse Vyamungu**  
Agroforestry farmer, Burundi

Rwanda and Burundi. © Providence Akayezu

## Beyond borders

Our CRAGs project may have drawn to a close in Rwanda and Burundi, but its legacy is long-lasting. The trees will continue to protect the land for years to come, and local communities now have a greater sense of ownership and respect for their land – as well as the skills and knowledge to protect it. With increased incomes from farming, they will be less likely to resort to illegal mining, logging or other practices that damage forests.

In turn, BirdLife now has close contacts in the area, and the groundwork has been laid for future collaborations. We also have the skills and experience to expand the project to other parts of Africa’s great lakes and beyond. To this end, in 2020 the project published a report with suggestions on how to scale up the CRAG approach in areas with similar issues and challenges. New research on sediment fingerprinting and vulnerability assessments has also been published as a result of the project.



**85%**  
of agroforestry trees survived – a very high success rate for this kind of project

© Jean De Dieu Bucankura

## Changing Systems



Saffron-cowled blackbird chicks. © Inés Pereda

South America's Pampas grasslands are home to a thriving wealth of wildlife found nowhere else. These verdant, sweeping plains absorb vast amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, creating "carbon sinks" that help to fight climate change. They replenish and filter ground water, and provide nourishment and employment for millions of people.

# Preserving the Pampas

At last, this invaluable landscape is getting the recognition it deserves. In 2020, BirdLife secured approximately half a million dollars of funding from the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bobolink Foundation. This will be used to pursue nature-based solutions to environmental challenges across the grasslands of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

### Bird-friendly beef

This year's funding will support over 500 ranchers managing 1.6 million acres of land. Working through the Alianza del Pastizal (Grassland Alliance) – a collaboration between BirdLife Partners SAVE Brasil, Aves Argentinas, Guyra Paraguay and Aves Uruguay – we help ranchers improve their pasture management practices. This nature-friendly approach to farming not only allows grassland birds to thrive, but has already increased the amount of carbon stored in the soil.

As part of this project, we have reached a new agreement with a major shopping chain to sell natural grass-fed beef to its clients in Brazil and

Argentina. SAVE Brasil has received an additional \$1 million from national Brazilian foundation FUNBIO to work with ranchers to strengthen and expand their natural grass-fed beef practices.

### Saving the Saffron-cowled Blackbird

Though livestock ranching has been a way of life in the region for centuries, in recent years agriculture has intensified. 50–70% of the Pampas grasslands have been destroyed over the last century – many of them converted to soybean plantations – with devastating impacts on wildlife. In 2019, the Saffron-cowled Blackbird *Xanthopsar flavus* was classed as Endangered for the first time. Thankfully, the cultural shift to more nature-friendly ranching practices has led to an expansion in nesting habitat for six globally threatened bird species, including the Saffron-cowled Blackbird.

With areas of marshland left undisturbed for large stretches of time, there is hope for the species – and for the many migratory birds that rely on the area during the winter months.

“If we don’t keep ranchers ranching and find viable ways to compensate them for keeping grasslands in their native state, they will be replaced by monocultures of soybean and timber plantations – and we will permanently lose specialised grassland birds. We call our approach ‘keeping grass, green side up.’”

**Ian Davidson**, Regional Director, BirdLife in the Americas



South American ranchers. © A. Patera

“Worldwide, native grasslands are acknowledged as the largest, most endangered and least protected ecosystem; consequently grassland birds show some of the steepest declines. Over the last 20 years at BirdLife Americas we have been searching for solutions to protect this working environment.”

**Pedro Develey**, SAVE Brasil



Saffron-cowbird blackbird. © Inés Pereda

# Working with Society



© Flickr Nicolas Mirguet



# Working with society to make a difference

We need the natural world far more than it needs us. Nature provides the food we eat, the water we drink, the joy that enhances our lives. Millions of people depend on nature for their livelihoods. And though we humans may be wreaking havoc on our environment, we are also the key to restoring it.

BirdLife is proud of our grassroots approach to conservation. We support national Partners on the ground who have unique insights into their own country's culture, politics and biodiversity. By providing funding, training and knowledge-sharing platforms, we empower local conservationists to reach their full potential and maximise their impact.

Beyond this, we unite the force of the BirdLife Partnership to influence governments, work with international agreements, and engage with the private sector to bring about smarter and more sustainable decision-making. Our advocacy lays the groundwork for better environmental and social policies. We work alongside indigenous people, local communities and youth groups, turning the public into champions for nature. By fostering talent that is already there, and plugging organisations into the combined power of the BirdLife family, we help to create a just and equitable society where everyone can benefit from the services that nature provides.

## In 2020...

15,000 birdwatchers contributed to the first full report on the state of India's birds via the eBird app. The report, co-authored by BNHS (BirdLife in India) showed an increase in Indian Peafowls, and widespread declines in raptors.

Dailus Laurence, the Chief Warden of Cousin Island Special Reserve and employee of Nature Seychelles (BirdLife Partner), won the prestigious African Ranger Award for his dedicated leadership.

Over 30 BirdLife Partners came together to form an Environmental Education Community of Practice, sharing experiences, expertise and innovation to engage children and young people in nature conservation.

The American Bird Conservancy joined the BirdLife Partnership, becoming our second Partner in the USA and bringing decades of experience maintaining protected reserves across the Americas.

Our Spring Alive children's education programme rose to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by running online nature classes and weekly craft activities for children across Africa and Europe.

## Working with Society

# Introducing Hatch

## boosting conservation from the ground up



Working to protect nature invariably involves working with people. That's why BirdLife puts local people and civil society at the heart of conservation. It may sometimes have taken a back seat in our communications, but this work is crucial; a global network of effective environmental organisations and trained professionals is a vital force to protect and sustain the world's nature and people.

Unfortunately, very little funding for environmental conservation goes beyond projects to include the lifeline needed to support the growth and sustainability of its existing organisations and leaders, let alone give them the space for creativity and to find new solutions.

And with at least one million species of plants and animals now threatened with extinction, the world needs strong, sustainable conservation organisations more than ever. So we've upped the ambition of our

hitherto behind-the-scenes work with people and organisations, and we've called it Hatch.

Launched in October 2020, Hatch is a BirdLife Partnership initiative that supports the growth and performance of environmental civil society organisations around the world. Harnessing the collective power of the BirdLife Partnership, we provide customised support to individuals and organisations so that they can accelerate and grow their impact.



**BirdLife believes that empowering and connecting national civil society organisations is essential for sustainable and cost-effective biodiversity action. Through Hatch, we create transformational growth in the core strengths of Partners, as well as develop tools to impact civil society globally.**

*Julius Arinaitwe*

Director of Partnerships, Communities and Capacity Development, BirdLife International

## Widening fundraising horizons through eco-tourism and sustainable agriculture



CZIP (BirdLife in Montenegro) received a grant to set up an eco-tourism company called Monticola (the genus name for rock thrushes). While the impact of COVID-19 proved challenging and shifted focus from international to domestic tour guests, its first tour was still very successful and profitable.

SSCW (BirdLife in Syria) received funding for a feasibility study into a pilot beekeeping project that will hopefully lead to future sources of unrestricted income from this sustainable activity. Sixty hives will be purchased and located in the Aleppo region, alongside beekeeping equipment and training.

## Investing in future leaders: the BirdLife Partnership Leadership Programme

In 2020 BirdLife partnered with the not-for-profit organisation Common Purpose to develop the BirdLife Partnership Leadership Programme, bringing together and providing training for 40 staff from the BirdLife Partnership in senior leadership roles and emerging leaders who are expected to take on senior leadership roles in the near future.



## Working with Society

In **2020**  
we provided

**19**

Strengthening plans, helping Partners to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and where to focus their efforts.

**17**

Technical Assistance Grants, supporting the development of strategic plans, brand and marketing materials, human resource management and much more.

**46**

small, medium and large catalytic grants.



**// The complexity and urgency of environmental challenges facing the world require leaders who have the vision, character and competencies to shape the future. This is why we are investing in developing BirdLife's future leaders who can rise to the challenges of a rapidly changing world.**

*Lenke Balint*

Head of Communities and Capacity Development,  
BirdLife International



## Working with Society

# Facing the Challenge

The BirdLife Partnership may be vast, but in times of need, we can act fast. In 2020, our small, streamlined fundraising team sprang into action, raising money for Partners that needed it most.



### Emergency response grants

COVID-19 was a huge challenge for BirdLife Partners around the globe. The charity sector saw a reduction in donations across the board, and on top of this, many Partners had to cancel or rearrange their planned operations, or adjust to completely new ways of working. Through the difficult months after restrictions were first introduced, our Hatch programme was able to offer seven BirdLife Partners COVID-19 emergency response grants. These grants are designed to provide basic support that allows the continued function of the organisation, such as remote working.

Outcomes included better internet connections for Palestine Wildlife Society, Syrian Society for the Conservation of Wildlife and Guinean Ecologie, and installing video conferencing systems and a computer for Biosfera (BirdLife in Cabo Verde). The grants were also used to cover office rent and staff costs.





© Biosfera

CSSL is becoming increasingly able to influence donors and policies – and comparable national strategies – with a staff team that is developing their skills to deliver programmes in country as part of the BirdLife *family*.

**Dr. Sheku Kamara** CEO, CSSL

## Strengthening Partners

This year, phase one of our Hatch programme for the Mediterranean and West Africa drew to a close. Funded by the MAVA foundation, the programme successfully strengthened the operations of 12 organisations in the Mediterranean and seven in coastal West Africa. Through grants, workshops and training sessions, we have left Partners better equipped to improve their branding, build new collaborations and find long-term, stable sources of income. We secured a further €943,376 from the MAVA foundation for phase two.



© CZIP

Montenegro Partner workshop

## Working with Society

BirdLife is proud to be part of the Conservation Leadership Programme. Working with Fauna & Flora International and WCS, we give early-career leaders from developing countries funding and training to tackle pressing conservation challenges.



# Tomorrow's leaders

## Team Awards

In 2020, the Conservation Leadership Programme gave out Team Awards to 19 projects across the globe. As well as kickstarting brand new projects, we also gave out three Conservation Follow-up Awards, which aim to take existing projects to the next level. 40% of these projects involved globally threatened species or sites that are a direct priority to BirdLife.

For example, one team plans to tag Red-breasted Geese in Kazakhstan with specialist

solar-powered satellite transmitters. These devices will uncover valuable information on the timing of migration, the number of birds, and the impacts of illegal hunting – allowing us to plan protective measures at migration rest stops.

## Outstanding careers

Every year, the prestigious Marsh Awards are handed out to individuals or organisations that go above and beyond to make a difference for social, cultural and environmental causes. This year's winners

included two former members of the Conservation Leadership Programme.

Dr. Ravinder Kaur was granted the Marsh Award for Terrestrial Conservation Leadership for her work developing artificial nest boxes for threatened hornbills in Borneo, Malaysia. Meanwhile, Natia Javakhishvili received the Marsh Award for Early Career Conservation for a campaign to create safe habitats for the Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* on the steppes of eastern Georgia.

**\$342,830\*** awarded for **19** projects



**Africa**



**Eurasia**



**Asia & the Pacific**



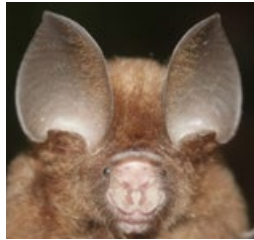
**Latin America & the Caribbean**

\*provided by the Arcadia Foundation



***“The award will enable us to obtain additional equipment to monitor the geese during migrations.”***

**Ivan Zuban**  
Conservation Leadership Programme award winner



Short-tailed Roundleaf Bat  
© Chidiogo Okoye/SMACON



© Francisci Homern

***“After COVID-19, it is more vital than ever to use what we have learned from past experiences.”***

**Dr Mariane Kaizer**  
Researcher, Brazilian primates

### Timely research

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit, two Conservation Leadership Programme projects suddenly became increasingly relevant. Bat specialist Iroro Tanshi dedicated her 2020 project to saving the only known population of Endangered Short-tailed Roundleaf Bats in Nigeria. Tragically, evidence of an ancestral version of COVID-19 in bats has led to widespread bat culling. Iroro used her expertise to raise awareness that bats are not a danger to humans. Elsewhere, a 2018 project on Yellow Fever in Brazilian monkeys showed how illegal hunting, wildlife trade and habitat destruction all contribute to the transmission of disease between humans and animals.



2020 CLP awardee, Iroro Tanshi.  
© Benneth Obbitte/SMACON



Rhinoceros Hornbill © Björn Olesen

## Working with Society

# ONE ONE

# PLANET RIGHT

With the United Nations General Assembly set for September, in 2020 BirdLife launched our most ambitious campaign to date.

**#1Planet1Right** is a global movement calling for the United Nations to add the right to a healthy natural environment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



The original **Declaration of Human Rights** was forged from the ashes of humanity's last global crisis, World War II. In 2020, we strove to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic with a similarly symbolic and decisive political change.

Our **#1Planet1Right** campaign united the voices of the entire BirdLife Partnership, calling on the United Nations to include the right to a healthy natural environment as an urgent topic at the UN Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, and ultimately enshrine it in law. By the time our appeal was presented at the Biodiversity Summit, it had become a global movement endorsed by thousands of citizens, hundreds of organisations, and prestigious figures including TV presenter **Chris Packham**, author **Margaret Atwood**, and **Dr David Boyd**, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment.

“The right to a healthy planet, as a universally recognised human right would be a powerful addition to the toolkit for saving the planet. The right to a healthy environment already provides the foundation for much of the progress we are seeing in different nations around the globe. What we need to do now is seize this moment of global eco-crisis to secure United Nations recognition of this right so that everyone, everywhere benefits. The human right to a healthy planet, if recognised by all nations, could be the most important human right of the 21st century. This is why I wholeheartedly endorse the #1Planet1Right campaign.”



Dr. David Boyd,  
UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

OVER  
**100,000**  
citizens from across  
the world signed  
our petition

**800**  
civil society and Indigenous  
Peoples organisations  
signed our appeal to the UN  
Human Rights Council

“Governments need to guarantee clean air, clean water and thriving nature as a universal human right, and we must give voice to the trees and rivers and all the natural ecosystems that life depends on.”



Yvon Chouinard,  
Founder of Patagonia  
clothing company

# Together we are BirdLife International

## Partnership for nature and people



[www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership. Through our unique local-to-global approach, we deliver high-impact and long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people