

Saola Update, March 2015: Saola in the news, and some new blood.



March 2015

Dear Friends of the Saola,

Here are some recent notes from the world of Saola conservation:

SWG annual report

The SWG's 2014 Annual Report can be downloaded here:

<http://www.savethesaola.org/>

We had a good year, but much work remains. We owe abundant thanks to George Allez for adeptly handling the report's layout and design.

In the news

This week, the Los Angeles Times published an editorial on the wildlife trade in Southeast Asia, and in particular its impact on Saola. See:

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-debuys-wildlife-trafficking-southeast-asia-20150313-story.html%23page=1>

New book on Saola conservation

The author of the LA Times editorial is William deBuys, a New Mexico-based writer of environmental subjects (www.williamdebuys.com/); or rather, a scientist-poet (or vice-versa).

His first book (River of Traps) was one of three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize, America's most prestigious award for literature and journalism. His newly published book, The Last Unicorn, is about Saola and its conservation. It's a beautifully written, lyrical account, and includes a

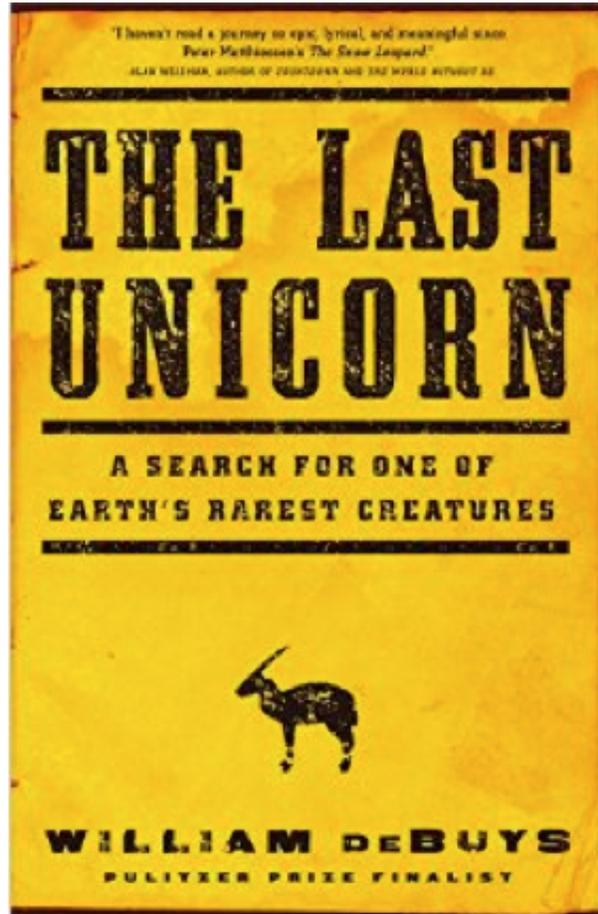
portrait of people and places of Nakai-Nam Theun National Protected Area in Laos, the largest block of forest remaining in Laos or Vietnam. The Huffington Post recently reviewed the book:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/evaggelos-vallianatos/saola-hunted-trapped-and-_b_6793806.html?utm_hp_ref=tw

Thanks to the SWG's long-time supporter and conservation ally, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (in particular Jack Tordoff), for encouraging Bill deBuys to write the book, and for providing him with funds for some of his research. You can 'meet' the author and see him on his research trip for the book, and some of the conservation issues he encountered, here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MCVQBIG4jc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIZgvcZeMUQ>



"Bill deBuys has a real gift for storytelling. And this story, the quest for an animal that was driven to the point of extinction almost as soon as it was "discovered", is a true adventure. Bill's powerful prose leads us deep into the wilderness in an almost unknown part of the world."

— Dr. Jane Goodall

"The Last Unicorn celebrates the marvels of the great forest and its wildlife, and William deBuys enlivens its pages with perceptive accounts of local people and cultures. DeBuys...searches the landscape for glimpses of what we must hope is an enduring future for the natural treasures surviving in these remote mountains."

—Dr. George B. Schaller

Some new SWG members

As the scope of the SWG's work expands, so does our membership. We are pleased to have welcomed several new members in the past few months. This new cohort strengthens the SWG's highest immediate priority of stronger site-based protection, and one of our main long-term priorities, establishment of a Saola conservation breeding program. The new members

are:

Nguyen Duc Tu: Tu is based in Hanoi with the IUCN Vietnam Programme. He brings much conservation experience in Vietnam to the SWG.

Crispian Barlow, WWF Greater Mekong's Species Enforcement Technical Advisor.

Dr. Camille Coudrat, founder and director of Project Anoulak (<http://www.conservationlaos.com/>), which focuses on conservation of Nakai-Nam Theun NPA.

And these internationally respected authorities in the husbandry of wild hoofstock:

Terry Hornsey, Chair of the Cattle & Camelid Taxon Advisory Group of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria. Terry is based in the UK at Africa Alive!, which is part of Banham Zoo;

Nick Lindsay, Senior Curator, and Conservation Breeding & Reintroduction Programme Manager, Whipsnade Zoo and Zoological Society of London;

Dr. Pat Thomas, Associate Director of the Bronx Zoo, and Vice President & General Curator of the Wildlife Conservation Society

Douglas Richardson, Head of Living Collections, Royal Scottish Zoological Society's Highland Wildlife Park;

Jeff Holland, Curator of Mammals, Los Angeles Zoo;

Andy Blue, Associate Curator of mammals, San Diego Safari Park.

We welcome them all, and are grateful for their contributions.

May this find your own endeavors thriving.

Sincerely,

Bill

William Robichaud

Coordinator

Saola Working Group

IUCN SSC Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group

