

WALLACEA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



Donors and Partners Gather for Wallacea Hotspot Final Assessment

There was an impressive turnout for the 17 September final assessment meeting hosted by Burung Indonesia, CEPF's Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for the Wallacea Biodiversity Hotspot. The highly engaged group of government, donor and partner stakeholders participated in the gathering in Jakarta to acknowledge achievements and consider the path forward following completion of the CEPF four-year, US\$2.6 million investment in marine Key Biodiversity Areas in the hotspot.

The investment was funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies Vibrant Oceans Initiative, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, the Nimmick Forbesway Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation.



Participants included representatives from:

- CEPF global donors the World Bank, AFD, the European Union and the Government of Japan via the Embassy of Japan.
- Wallacea regional donor Walton Family Foundation.
- Indonesia's ministries of national development coordination (BAPPENAS), marine affairs and fisheries, environment and forestry, and villages.
- The Indonesia national environment fund (BPD LH).
- The embassies of Germany and the United Kingdom.
- USAID.
- UNDP.
- The International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Government.

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- Djarum, a tobacco, agriculture and agribusiness company.
- Yayasan Konservasi Indonesia.

The event generated much discussion and plans for future collaboration.

This meeting followed events held the prior week in Manado, North Sulawesi, for grantees, including a photo and poster exhibit on grantee achievements that was open to the public.

Overall CEPF has invested US\$9.5 million over 10 years to support implementation of a conservation strategy for the hotspot.

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MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL ASIA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Grantee Works with Foresters, Communities and Reserve Managers



The grant to the Kyrgyz Association of Forest Land Users (KAFLU) came to an end in February 2024 with important results and experiences to share. KAFLU worked in and around Kyrgyzstan's Surma-Tash Nature Reserve. Equidistant from the capitals of Bishkek, Dushanbe, and Tashkent, the nature reserve is about as "central" as one can be in the Mountains of Central Asia. The reserve is 66,000 hectares and is bordered in part by a forest concession of 111,000 hectares managed by the Uch-Korgon Forestry Company. Both the forestry land and the reserve are home to globally threatened tree species of wild almond (*Amygdalus bucharica*) and wild apricot

(*Armeniaca vulgaris*). These plus other indigenous species of drought-resistant plants can be found in the gravelly soils of the region.

KAFLU worked with the reserve managers, forestry estate managers and the people of the rural communities of Kotormo and Maidan—roughly 4,000 households relying on farming and livestock—to better manage the Key Biodiversity Area in which they live. KAFLU, as a group made up of foresters, perhaps had closest links to the Uch-Korgon company and started there. KAFLU explained to the managers that the wild almond and wild apricot are protected, and that with simple mitigation measures the company could avoid damaging individual trees and groves. KAFLU then enlisted the company's support in creating a micro-reserve of 1 hectare within the forestry estate around a grove of wild trees—yes, only 1 hectare, but legally protected under Kyrgyz law. The company then created an "artificial glacier" abutting the micro-reserve. A less dramatic name, perhaps, might be a "large pile of snow and ice," easily created during the winter, to ensure continued flow of water to the area through the summer. The company then established a nursery for these two threatened tree species for replanting within the forestry estate, in the nature reserve and elsewhere.

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KAFLU then worked with the communities, raising their awareness about the importance of the threatened tree species and the value of the state nature reserve. KAFLU provided training and equipment for beekeeping and seedlings and saplings for commercially viable species of apple, apricot, almond and raspberries. In turn, community members provided labor for the nursery and the micro-reserve and agreed to keep their livestock out of the nature reserve.

KAFLU helped the reserve update its management plan for the first time in several years and also facilitated the completion of a Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool in late 2023, the first time such a measurement has been done for the park and a baseline for future work.

KAFLU's holistic and respectful approach to its partners has improved the management of over 177,000 hectares of land.

INDO-BURMA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Project Results in 11 Fish Conservation Zones

The River Mun is one of the largest and longest rivers in northeast Thailand. It is an important habitat for many migratory fish and inhabited by an abundance of fish species, many of which are on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It is also the source of livelihood for hundreds of local fishermen.

After the Pak Mun dam was built on the River Mun in 1994, local communities realized that the closing of the dam's sluice gates was preventing fish from migrating up and down the river and that fluctuating water levels were flooding fish spawning grounds. As a result, 30 fish species disappeared from the area and fishers experienced significantly smaller catches.

In order to find a solution to declining fish populations, the Mekong Community Institute

Association (MCI) is currently implementing the "Strengthening Community Fisheries Conservation in the Lower Mun River, Thailand" project, with support from CEPF and IUCN. The project aims to create a platform for all stakeholders to convene and discuss solutions to challenges they've faced because of the dam. The project has brought together village leaders and local administration—including the Department of Fishery—for the first time.



MCI has supported local organizations and district authorities to establish 11 fish conservation zones (FCZs)—a type of freshwater protected area where fishing and other human activities are restricted to protect important habitats. Research shows that FCZs reduce overfishing and protect important fish spawning grounds. They also result in increased fish populations and improved food security and income for local communities.

MCI Director Teerapong Poman emphasized the importance of local communities' involvement in river management, allowing them to share knowledge about the river and its ecology. Since the establishment of the FCZs, many members of the local fishing communities have reported a rise in the number of purchases of fishing boats and equipment—a sign that the fishing economy is thriving again. MCI continues to work closely with the communities to identify new FCZs and provide support in maintaining existing sites.

TROPICAL ANDES BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Gender Equity Subject of Multiple Projects

Three recent experiences show the value of working with a gender perspective in the Tropical Andes Hotspot. The organizations Yunkawasi in Peru, the Consejo Regional Tsimané Mosekene (CRTM) in Bolivia, and Fundación Calima in Colombia, within their own territorial and social contexts, have made significant progress in gender equality, a key pillar for the investment of CEPF.

In Peru, the Yunkawasi organization had the task of executing the project called "Participatory Conservation Planning and Action in Cordillera de Colán, Peru." The project increased the income of six women members of the Cooperativa Agraria Cordillera de Colán (CAC Colán). This was achieved through the improved production of 30 hectares of coffee resulting from eight sessions of field schools and technical assistance during the harvest.

In addition to this, 15 CAC Colán female members strengthened their capacities for the management and control of coffee quality. They received theoretical and practical agronomic and commercial teachings on the coffee production chain.

Daida Díaz Vilchez, a member of the CAC Colán, said the workshops were valuable because they provided knowledge on topics such as the best techniques for growing coffee and the varieties and qualities that exist. Putting into practice what they learned, the participants managed to improve their harvest.

"As women, we are also grateful for the talks and training on gender equality. We have talked about our rights and they have given us a lot of support in this project," she said.

In Bolivia, the project "Implementing the Pilon Lajas Management and Indigenous Life Plan, Bolivia," executed by the Consejo Regional Tsimané Mosekene, also had highlights linked to gender equality.

Forty Indigenous women from four communities are extracting essential oils after receiving training and equipment through the project. Participants built a laboratory that is already in operation.

"Although we have not been able to work with all communities, we have started with four in which women have been strengthened and now we know more about our rights. Within our territory we have three Indigenous peoples and there is little participation of women. But thanks to this project we have strengthened and united ourselves during this time," said the vice president of the CRTM, Magaly Tipuni.

Finally, in Colombia, Fundación Calima executed its initiative "Conserving 13 Endangered Amphibian Species of the Serranía de los Paraguas in Colombia." Through the project, training sessions taught local residents about amphibian monitoring. Out of the 177 participants, 88 were women.

"Our project gained a lot thanks to the increasing inclusion of women, who provided different knowledge and a new perspective to work on amphibian conservation within the area (Serranía



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de los Paraguas),” said Jhon Jairo Ospina Sarria, project coordinator.

At the beginning of 2023, a workshop on gender equality was also conducted for members of the Calima Foundation, interns, members of Águilas Crestadas and the Serraniagua Corporation—six women and eight men in total. The initiative, as well as the work that the Calima Foundation had already started since 2019, resulted in an internal document published in 2023 with guidelines to promote gender equality, inclusion and strengthening of the participation and decision-making of women in activities in all projects developed and managed by the foundation.

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Campaign and Livelihoods Development Aid Turtles

A grant to Yayasan Penyu Indonesia (the Indonesian Sea Turtle Foundation, or YPI) came to an end in February 2024. The project was based in the district of Pagimana, on the northern shore of the peninsula formed by Central Sulawesi. The area, renowned for its coral reefs and marine biodiversity, looks north into the Gulf of Tomini and the Togean-Banggai Islands.

Among the several globally threatened marine species in the area is the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), a species that is formally protected by Indonesian law. Turtles are hunted by some people, but they also are often caught accidentally in fishing nets. There are buyers for the turtles who illegally sell the shells, meat and even live animals. Meat and shells make their way into local markets, with shells often crafted into highly polished bracelets.



YPI led the response to this issue by working with fishers and market sellers in the region. For both sets of stakeholders, there were issues of awareness and issues of alternative sources of income because, illegal or not, the turtle products represent a livelihood to someone. YPI first raised awareness among fishers and the broader community, running a campaign called “keren tanpa sisik,” or Cool Without Scales, to change popular attitudes about buying turtle-derived products. YPI then promoted two livelihood activities. For fishers, YPI provided training and inputs for seaweed farming—a sustainable alternative to making money from an illegally hunted or sold turtle. To help sellers of turtle products in the market, YPI took a simple approach: improve the physical condition of the market itself. YPI rebuilt a public restroom and fixed the market stalls, making it easier for vendors to sell more legal products to offset lost income from selling illegal turtle products.

By the close of the project, the number of vendors selling turtle products in the Pagimana market had decreased from 12 to three. Further, 25 men and eight women were participating in the seaweed cultivation effort, with the potential to increase their monthly income by \$37, or roughly 33%.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Promoting Community-Led Sustainable Tourism in Jamaica's Cockpit Country

The recent successful completion of a project supported by a CEPF small grant to the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency (STEA) marks a significant milestone in promoting sustainable community-driven tourism in Jamaica's Cockpit Country Key Biodiversity Area.

STEA is actively using eco- and community-based tourism as strategic tools to promote the sustainable use of Cockpit Country. This not only provides alternative income-generating opportunities for local communities but also ensures the preservation of the landscape and biodiversity.



With support from a CEPF small grant, STEA carried out a market assessment of three Cockpit Country communities—Bunker's Hill, Madras, and Sawyers—evaluating their potential as valuable additions to the offerings of its affiliated social enterprise, Cockpit Country Adventure Tours (CCAT), and developed a marketing strategy. In emphasizing the integration of proposed tourism initiatives with residents' daily lives, the strategy focuses on preserving and enhancing each community's unique natural heritage. It recommends approaches to safeguarding the Cockpit Country's biodiversity while maximizing income opportunities for both residents and STEA through sustainable tourism offerings.

STEA has made significant strides in executing the marketing strategy, leveraging social media to promote eco-tour packages and collaborating with other communities to develop innovative tourism products. This progress has been recognized with a follow-up implementation small grant, which will enable STEA/CCAT to enhance the existing community tourism product through additional marketing and training for community members.

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MEDITERRANEAN BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Advisory Committee Helps Shape 2025-2030 Mediterranean Basin Strategy

On 14-15 June 2023, the CEPF Mediterranean Advisory Committee gathered in Hyères, France, to develop the upcoming strategy for CEPF investment in the Mediterranean Basin from 2025 to 2030.

This pivotal meeting brought together members from key donor and civil society organizations, including IUCN MED, Conservatoire du Littoral, Tour du Valat, BiodivEarth, European Forest Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Fondation Hans Wilsdorf, Audemars-Watkins Foundation, and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. Their collective aim was to shape the future direction of biodiversity conservation in this critical region.

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The meeting's primary objective was to establish a strategic framework for the next phase of CEPF investments in the Mediterranean Basin. Discussions focused on identifying priority areas for conservation, addressing pressing environmental challenges, and enhancing collaboration among regional initiatives.



Throughout the two-day event, participants reviewed the outcomes and lessons learned from phase II and examined the evolving geopolitical and donor landscape in the region. Members shared their objectives and visions for the next five years, fostering potential collaborations.

However, the core of the discussions centered on defining CEPF's ecosystem profile for 2025–2030, emphasizing the importance of synergies and collaboration. The outcomes of the Hyères meeting are expected to play a crucial role in guiding CEPF's investments in the Mediterranean Basin over the next five years. The finalized strategy, set to be published later this year, will chart the course for CEPF's efforts in the region, reinforcing its commitment to conserving global biodiversity.

CEPF thanks Conservatoire du Littoral, whose team supported the logistics for the organization of this meeting and provided a fantastic venue on the protected sites of the Salines de Hyères.

MADAGASCAR AND THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

CEPF and RIT Conduct Supervision Mission to Mauritius



In June, CEPF and the regional implementation team (RIT) held their third supervision mission, this time to Mauritius. Coordinated by FORENA, the RIT partner in Mauritius, the main objectives of the mission were to visit ongoing projects, meet with selected organizations in Mauritius and Rodrigues whose grant contracts are in the process of being finalized, and meet potential grantees. The team also exchanged views with other donors and local authorities. But above all, the mission took stock of the portfolio in order to adapt the strategy for effective and impactful CEPF investment throughout the hotspot.

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French Minister of State Visits La Vallée de Ferney Project

On 18 May 2024, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, the French Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships, visited La Vallée de Ferney project in Grand Port, Mauritius. She was accompanied by the French ambassador to Mauritius and a delegation from Agence Française de Développement (AFD). The La Vallée de Ferney project aims to restore 20 hectares of degraded forest, reforest 10 hectares of pasture, and promote sustainable land management through its pilot agroecological farm.



Grantee Update: TAFO MIHAAVO

TAFO MIHAAVO is an association of grassroots community organizations in Madagascar's Ambositra-Vondrozo corridor. The association is committed to improving the livelihoods of community members while safeguarding Madagascar's unique biodiversity.

Supported by CEPF, TAFO MIHAAVO is leading a project (October 2023–March 2026) that aims to strengthen the capacity of 10 local natural resource management organizations (VOIs). It also is promoting income-generating sustainable practices, such as rice-growing, beekeeping and fish farming for around 1,800 beneficiaries.

Key achievements include:

- 20 individuals from 10 VOIs trained to effectively implement updated management plan regulations and fulfill contractual obligations with the Regional Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development.
- Strengthened capacities of 10 VOI structures and the TAFO MIHAAVO association in transferred management areas. Sixty committee members were trained in association management and planning, as well as 40 patrol officers in communication and reporting systems. Additionally, 109 individual VOI members were successfully introduced to income-generating activities that support biodiversity conservation.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



Conserving the Ridgway's Hawk in the Dominican Republic

With an estimated population of fewer than 500 individuals on the island of Hispaniola, the Ridgway's hawk (*Buteo ridgwayi*) is one of the most threatened raptors in the world. CEPF is supporting The Peregrine Fund's efforts in the Dominican Republic to conserve this species in the Los Haitises National Park and its adjoining areas. Activities include preparing a 10-year species conservation action plan to manage 125 to 150 pairs of Ridgway's hawks in the wild, and carrying out environmental outreach and capacity development in 10 communities.

In May, The Peregrine Fund hosted a one-day outreach

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workshop that targeted the Municipal Environmental Office of Sabana-de-la-Mar and the local environmental authorities of this protected area, including the administrator and park rangers. With more than 20 people in attendance, the practical workshop was designed to increase knowledge of birds of prey in the Los Haitises National Park with a particular focus on the Ridgway's hawk. Topics included how to protect the species and minimize conflicts with humans.

The Peregrine Fund recently finalized the draft 10-year conservation action plan for the Ridgway's hawk, which is currently being reviewed by technicians, field experts, and environmental authorities. On 24 July 2024, The Peregrine Fund convened a workshop at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to formally present the plan for final validation by stakeholders. As part of its ongoing conservation efforts, The Peregrine Fund is advocating for 25 May to be officially designated National Ridgway's Hawk Day.

Young Caribbean Conservationists Trained in Project Planning and Fundraising

Ensuring a legacy of strong conservationists in the future requires investing in young professionals today. Fauna & Flora, in collaboration with the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP), recently conducted a five-day training workshop on project planning and fundraising for early-career Caribbean conservationists. The workshop was part of the CEPF-supported project "Building Caribbean Civil Society Capacity in Delivering Sustainable Financial Strategies."

Held from 24 to 28 June 2024 in Castries, Saint Lucia, the workshop brought together 16 dedicated professionals from several Caribbean countries, including Antigua and Barbuda, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and The Bahamas. Emphasizing practical, hands-on learning, the workshop armed participants with the skills to develop impactful projects and secure funding through small grants.

Learning to design clear and logical project frameworks is crucial, as it allows conservationists to ensure that their efforts are focused, measurable and capable of delivering significant conservation outcomes. Moreover, mastering fundraising techniques means they can access a broader range of funding sources, ensuring their projects are well-supported and sustained over time. Building on this course, facilitators will mentor participants as they prepare their own project proposals for submission to donors by May 2025.



Photos (top to bottom): Discussion session on grantee lessons learned. © Manengkel Solidaritas; Opening of photo and poster exhibit. © Manengkel Solidaritas; KAFLU's project communications specialist at raspberry seedling distribution in Kotormo, Kyrgyzstan. © KAFLU; Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). © Jeff Yonover; Fishing boats moored adjacent to fish spawning grounds in the middle of the River Mun in Khong Chiam, Ubon Ratchatani. © IUCN Asia; Pilon Lajas © Conservation International/photo by Haroldo; Caving attractions identified in Sawyers. © STEA; Sailus Village. © REKAM; Salines de Hyères. France. © Pierre Carret; Baie du Cap, Mauritius. © O. Langrand; Group photo with French Minister Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, the French Ambassador to Mauritius, members of AFD and the project team of La Vallée de Fernel © Laetitia Habchi / AFD; Ridgway's hawk (*Buteo ridgwayi*), Punta Cana. © The Peregrine Fund. Facilitator Martin Davies leading one of the training sessions. Saint Lucia, June 2024. © Eleanor Glass/FFI.