

## CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report

<b>Organization's Legal Name:</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society
<b>Project Title:</b>	Protection of River Tern and Black-Bellied Tern in Myanmar
<b>Grant Number:</b>	CEPF-110253
<b>Hotspot:</b>	Indo-Burma II
<b>Strategic Direction:</b>	1 Safeguard priority globally threatened species by mitigating major threats
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$20,000.00
<b>Project Dates:</b>	January 01, 2020 - May 31, 2021
<b>Date of Report:</b>	August 02, 2021

### IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

The main partners involved in the project were:

1. Forest Department (FD)
2. Local communities at each site (Chindwin and Ayeyarwady rivers).

1. Forest Department (FD)

Tern conservation activities were conducted in two different sites in Ayeyarwady and Chindwin Rivers. In the Chindwin River, the terns' conservation was conducted with FD staff from the Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary and WCS worked together with the Takaung Township FD at the Ayeyarwady River site. The FD staff mainly participated in community engagement, awareness programs, threat monitoring, and nest monitoring activities.

2. Local Communities at each site

The local community members played a major role in nest monitoring and guarding during the entire breeding seasons of the tern nest in both Ayeyarwady and Chindwin River. In addition, the community members were closely involved in conservation education programs at villages near the breeding sites, as well as reporting threats to the FD and collaboration on threats monitoring.

### CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Planned Long-Term Impacts: 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
We will raise awareness of the importance of riverine biodiversity in at least 12 key villages,	Black-bellied Tern conservation awareness was conducted in February 2020 at both breeding sites in

Impact Description	Impact Summary
and secure additional funding and support to sustain conservation efforts beyond the 2020 nesting season, using international and local mechanisms (such as RAMSAR and community conservation) to build a longer-term conservation program.	Ayeyarwady River. A total 7 villages had conservation awareness activities by WCS, Community, and Forest Department. The River Tern conservation education program had been conducted for 10 villages in 2018, but unfortunately, there was no chance to continue this work under this project, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. Additional funding was secured, through the French government, to support the program in future years. Draft RAMSAR site designation paperwork was submitted to the Forest Department for the Upper Chindwin site in January 2021.

Planned Short-Term Impacts: 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
WCS will continue its nest monitoring and community nest production schemes, continue with its awareness programs and work with partners to find long-term future conservation strategies. During the nesting season from January - May 2020, we will protect at least 30 nests of two species which are Critically Endangered in Myanmar.	32 Nests were monitored and protected during the project period. Some awareness programs were completed, despite the limitations of the pandemic, and funding for future conservation approaches was secured.

### Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The project faced major unexpected challenges during the nest monitoring and breeding conservation schemes, which prevented the field teams from completing their conservation works in both sites. In 2020 March, the global COVID-19 pandemic reached Myanmar, and the government announced emergency measures and lockdowns in several cities forced many activities to stop. However, we were able to continue some work remotely, through our links with local communities for the breeding site protection measures. This was due to our close relationships with local community members, developed over several years. In 2021, our survey teams could not reach the field sites in 2021 breeding season, due to the political conflict and the takeover by the military government, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Again, we worked together with the community for nest monitoring and protection at both sites - though these efforts were limited, due to the worsening political conflict, and the shutdown of communications and the banking system. The safety of our partner communities was prioritized, and some survey activities were reduced.

## PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES

### Overall results of the project:

The nest-protection program worked on two species - River Tern (*Sterna aurantia*) and Black-bellied Tern (*S. acuticauda*). A total of 32 nests of the two highly threatened bird species were protected during the 2020 and 2021 nesting seasons.

River Terns were only located in the Upper Chindwin, between Homalin and Kamti. In 2020, our community partners protected 10 River-tern nests, and in 2021, we located and

protected 21 nests. Sadly, all of the nests failed in 2020 due to flooding of the nesting sites. In 2021, only 5 nests of 21 failed, and we were able to verify 10 chicks fully fledged.

Black-bellied tern (BBT) nests were targeted in the Ayeyarwady river, at the two sites previously identified - in Takaung and Ye Nan Chaung. Unfortunately in 2020, BBT could only be found in one of these sites, with 4 adults located in Takaung. No nests were located. In 2021, only 3 adult birds were found, with one nest. This nest was protected by WCS and our community partners and three chicks hatched, and subsequently fledged.

We monitored the nature of threats to river-bank nesting birds, including River Terns and BB Terns. Local communities note that the heavy rain in the monsoon season has been shifting unpredictably, and that the river pattern has been changing every year, providing both good and bad breeding grounds for the terns and other species. As a result of changing the flow of river, the islands change and vary, and the sandy plains change. From 2017 to 2019, the Namaithaing breeding site in the Chindwin River had the highest number of nests, but in 2021, the river-patterns changed, and only 3 nests were located. These changes in flooding and rainfall patterns seem to be the main threat to the breeding bird species' nests, eggs, and chicks. IN addition, there are some other natural threats, such as predators like crows threatenning terns and other bird species by eating chicks and eggs.

The areas with River Tern nests in the Upper Chindwin have also seen an increasing number of gold mining workers living on the islands, and therefore threatening the birds. At these settler camps, children and dogs are the main threats to the destruction of River Tern's eggs. At the time of hatchling, the main threats are predators such as crows. Illegal electric fishing in rivers and streams, and fish and shrimp harvesting using mosquito spray bottles also pose a threat to the scarcity of food for River Tern birds.

In the project area, we conducted awareness raising, including Education awareness raising, engaging with schools and providing materials like exercise books, T-shirts, and setting up signboards about important river-reliant species. With participation of our above partners, we participated mostly in nest conservation activities at project areas from start to end of the breeding season. This was only achieved in 7 villages, due to restrictions on movements and gatherings, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Results for each deliverable:**

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1.0	Continue community nest protection activities for River Tern and Black-bellied Tern at three sites in the Ayeyarwady Basin, working closely with the Forest Department and local communities.	1.1	Report on the Nest Monitoring and Protection covering all 3 sites, at least 30 nests (25 River Tern and 5 Black-Bellied Tern).	32 nests were protected during the grant period. Unfortunately, BBT were not located at one of the sites in 2020 or 201, so this work only covered two sites.
2.0	Build community support for sandbar-nesting bird species through education and outreach activities.	2.2	Report on awareness activities, covering at least 12 villages.	Awareness activities were only conducted in 7 villages, due to COVID-19 restrictions in force in Myanmar.
3.0	Explore and secure funding sources for a continuation of species conservation efforts, leading to a long-term program to restore populations of the two species.	3.1	At least one Approved Project Document confirming additional funding secured for 2020-2022 to continue long-term protection.	Project Document approved in April 2020, confirming additional funding for the period 2020-2024 from the French government (AFD)
2.0	Build community support for sandbar-nesting bird species through education and outreach activities.	2.1	Grievance Mechanism documented and communication materials created for it's dissemination	Mechanism documented in Burmese, and coordinated with our broader national safeguards program.

**Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:**

The methodology used in the survey period was regular monitoring to and around the island and record the species we sighted. In addition, we surveyed for Black-bellied tern and other bird species for a total effort of 2613 kilometres of survey. River Tern surveys were conducted around the islands of Linpha area down to near the Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary, covering some 80 Kilometres along the Upper Chindwin River.

The project produced some simple training materials for nest protection from predators. However, this approach was not taken, as we assessed in our pilot work that the predation risk was low, and the risk of nest disturbance was high.

## PORTFOLIO INDICATORS

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
1.1	Number of priority species with pilot interventions for core populations transformed into long-term conservation programs.			2	Pilot nest-protection programs for both species, at both sites, were transformed into longer-term conservation programs.

## GLOBAL INDICATORS

### Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID*	Latitude	Longitude	Country	Original Total Size (Hectares) **	New Protected Hectares ***	Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion
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\*World Database of Protected Areas

\*\*If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

\*\*\* This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.

## Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

KBA Name	KBA Code	Size of KBA	Number of Hectares with Improved Management
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## Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

Name of Production Landscape	Latitude	Longitude	Hectares Strengthened	Intervention
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## Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

Number of Men Trained	Number of Women Trained	Topics of Training
6		Biological survey methods. Nest protection, and data management. Patrolling methods for fisheries officers, including SMART.

- **Cash Benefits:**

Number of Men – Cash Benefits	Number of Women – Cash Benefits	Description of Benefits
3		Three men received cash benefits for conducting monitoring and patrolling in the Black-bellied Tern and River Tern conservation project areas.

## Benefits to Communities

View the <b>characteristics</b> column below with the following corresponding codes:	View the <b>benefits</b> column below with the following corresponding codes:
1- Small Landowners	a. Increased Access to Clean Water
2- Subsistence Economy	b. Increased Food Security
3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples	c. Increased Access to Energy
4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples	d. Increased Access to Public Services
5- Recent Migrants	e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change
6- Urban Communities	f. Improved Land Tenure
7- Other	g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge
	h. Improved Decision-Making
	i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Type of Benefit									Country	Number of Males Benefitting	Number of Females Benefitting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i			

### Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

## Policies, Laws and Regulations

View the <b>topics</b> column below with the following corresponding codes:			
A- Agriculture	E- Energy	I- Planning/Zoning	M- Tourism
B- Climate	F- Fisheries	J- Pollution	N- Transportation
C- Ecosystem Management	G- Forestry	K- Protected Areas	O- Wildlife Trade
D- Education	H- Mining and Quarrying	L- Species Protection	P- Other

No.	Name of Law	Scope	Topics															
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

### **“Other” Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Country/ Countries</b>	<b>Date Enacted/ Amended</b>	<b>Expected impact</b>	<b>Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment</b>
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### **Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices**

A company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

<b>Name of Company</b>	<b>Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice</b>	<b>Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted</b>
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### **Networks and Partnerships**

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

<b>Name of Network/Partnership</b>	<b>Year Established</b>	<b>Country/ Countries</b>	<b>Established by Project?</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
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### **Sustainable Financing**

Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

Name of Mechanism	Purpose	Date Established	Description	Country/Countries	Project Intervention	Delivery of Funds?
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### Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site
Sterna	acuticauda	Black-bellied Tern	EN	Nest protection, habitat protection, monitoring.	Decreasing

## LESSONS LEARNED

Our existing relationships with local communities were essential in delivering this project work, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

There are some unexpected challenges in the project area during this year, beyond the global pandemic, which will inform our future work.

In the Black-bellied Tern conservation project area, local people observed flooding of the nest islands, increased cattle grazing, and increased small scale gold mining. Another significant threat found in the nesting island every year is netting to trap birds where they roost in the nesting island.

On the other hand, the nesting island has become bigger each year, so may provide more locations for Black-bellied Tern nesting.

According to this year's River Tern research, the number of nests has increased a bit in 2021, and River Tern nests are constructed only on Linpha island, situated at east of the Linpha Village Turtle Conservation Camp. The villagers of the Linpha village are familiar to conservation activities. Thus, there are more good opportunities for River Tern to survive here than on other islands.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, since February 2020, we followed strong COVID-19 prevention guidelines to prevent further spread. This included limitations on travel and field-work, limited sizes of gatherings, as well as protective equipment. We provided Face Shields, Face masks, hand sanitizer and soap to our partners and used them in our working environment. Social distancing was the first step in protecting further spread, so we also limited our use of vehicles. We followed strict protocols for our field-work, which was reviewed by our Management team before any field access was permitted.

There were no other social or environmental safeguards issues during the project.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING

<b>Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD)</b>	\$72,800.00
<b>Breakdown of Additional Funding</b>	We have received a grant of 1.5m EUR from the French government, which includes a component for Ayeyarwady

	River biodiversity protection. We estimate the proportion of that work specifically towards protection and monitoring of these two bird species, as above (72,800). This amount covers the period 2020-2024.
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**INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY**

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

Wildlife Conservation Society, Myanmar Program <[wcsmyanmar@wcs.org](mailto:wcsmyanmar@wcs.org)>