

Updates on recent partnerships, funding and grants.

EAST MELANESIAN ISLANDS BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

On 26 November 2019, 800 hectares of Sirebe tribal land in Choiseul Province of the Solomon Islands was declared as the country's first protected area covering tropical forests. The Sirebe Tribe will also be the first tribe in the country to trade carbon credits. CEPF grantee Natural Resources Development Foundation (NRDF) has been working with the Sirebe Tribe to introduce this scheme, called the Nakau Programme, so that the Sirebe community can sell carbon offsets and conservation credits, thereby switching from forest clearance to a conservation model that protects forests.

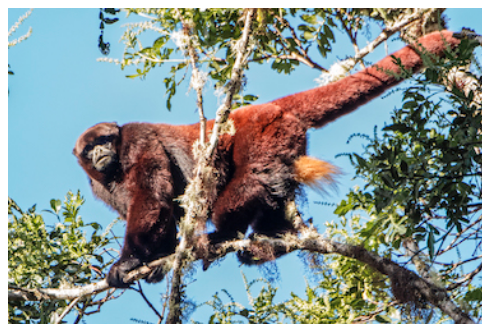


Following this success, the Government of the Solomon Islands [declared the country's second forest conservation area](#), the Siporae Tribal Forest Conservation Area, on 29 January 2020. The area covers 660 hectares of tropical forest on the remote island of Choiseul. NRDF reports that the success of these two new community protected areas is a watershed moment for the country, as they are the first protected areas conserving terrestrial habitat. Further, the two new conservation areas are serving as models for other indigenous communities who want to protect their land from logging and oil palm.

The Padezaka and Vuri tribes recently fulfilled all requirements to obtain legal protection of their land from the Government of the Solomon Islands. In total, more than 6,000 hectares are expected to come under protection, with support from CEPF.

TROPICAL ANDES BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

In January, Peru's government announced the creation of the Bosque Montano de Carpish Regional Conservation Area in an area that not long ago saw some of the country's highest deforestation rates. The degree will conserve 50,559 hectares along the watershed of the Peruvian Amazon. Located 400 kilometers northeast of Lima, Bosque Montano de Carpish is well known for its rich biodiversity; the area is home to an array of endemic birds and to plant species native to Peru.



Supporters of the move are hopeful that its newly won protected status will draw tourists and provide a source of revenue for local communities. The effort to win the designation was spearheaded by CEPF grantee Nature and Culture International and local community leaders who work closely with local committees to control deforestation. [Read more](#)

MADAGASCAR AND THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



In December, the echo parakeet (*Psittacula eques*)—found only on the island of Mauritius—was “down listed” from Endangered to Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. In the late 1980s, there were as few as eight individuals remaining. Today, there are between 750 and 800 individuals.

This achievement represents 50 years of effort by both international and local conservationists. CEPF has supported the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and Ebony Forest, helping set up two release sites, Vallée de Ferney (Bambou Mountains) and Ebony Forest in Chamarel. The conservationists in Mauritius have great hopes that birds at these sites will get established successfully and breed, helping reach the next milestone, 1,000 birds.

[Read more](#)

In separate news, the contract for the regional implementation team in the hotspot— Fondation Tany Meva—has been extended through the end of the current investment phase, 30 June 2022 .

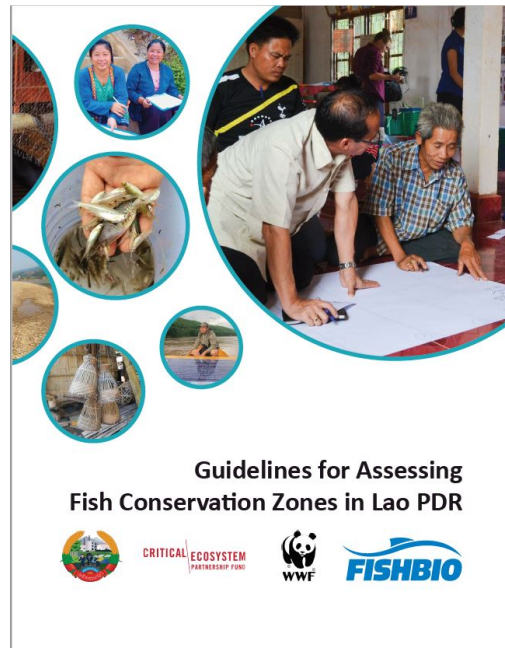
INDO-BURMA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Inspired by the success of co-management approaches for marine resources, such as Locally Managed Marine Areas, conservationists in landlocked Lao PDR have developed a model for community-managed Fish Conservation Zones (FCZs). Over the last decade, with support from CEPF and other donors, more than 1,300 FCZs have been established and formally recognized by the government, and hundreds more were established informally by local communities.

The approach is widely considered to have been successful, with many communities reporting increases in fish catch per unit effort, and reductions in illegal fishing practices (for example, the use of electricity to stun fish). Nevertheless, there was a need to move the management of Lao FCZs onto a stronger evidence base, leading to better management of individual FCZs and greater donor support for the FCZ approach.

This gap was addressed by CEPF grantee FISHBIO, which recently published a set of guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of FCZs in Lao PDR. Developed through an extensive process of stakeholder consultation and field testing, the guidelines were produced in the form of a handbook as well as a more detailed guidebook.

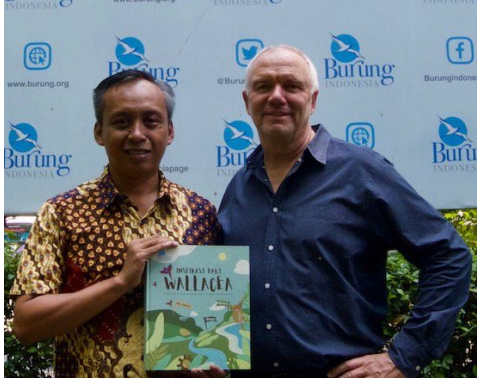
The guidelines are scientifically rigorous yet still appropriate for use by local actors. FISHBIO put a lot of effort into disseminating the results of the project and other work on community fisheries via the Mekong Fish Network (an online platform), which generated interest in FCZs among conservationists in



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other countries. As a model that delivers tangible benefits for human well-being and biodiversity conservation, FCZs have great potential for wider replication in the Indo-Burma Hotspot and beyond. CEPF is currently supporting efforts to replicate the approach in Costa Rica and India.

WALLACEA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



In early October, the regional implementation team, Burung Indonesia, held a series of events in advance of the portfolio's end in early 2020. Some 75 people from 50 different grantees and partners came together in Makassar, South Sulawesi, to summarize results, share lessons, and hold a targeted session on future directions and funding opportunities in the hotspot.

The following week in Jakarta, CEPF Executive Director Olivier Langrand joined for a one-day celebration of the hotspot. Three successive events were held at the new National Library of Indonesia. The day began with a briefing for donors by Olivier and the RIT, followed by a formal presentation in the building's theater discussing the thematic results of CEPF's work and the importance of Wallacea as a "hotspot." There were about 75 people in attendance from universities, Jakarta-based NGOs, and the government and private sector. In the evening, there was a public session attended by more than 250 people, largely university students, with videos highlighting the hotspot. This last session served as a "launch event" for a coffee table book on Wallacea.

MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL ASIA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

The regional implementation team (RIT) grant agreement with WWF Russia, and its subordinate partner ARGO, formally began on 1 November. Several staff from the RIT, WWF Russia's offices in Moscow and the CEPF Secretariat then gathered in Almaty, Kazakhstan, for a week of orientation and training.

The RIT will be led by Yelizaveta (Lizza) Protas (in blue in the middle). Lizza received a Master of Arts in Conservation Biology from Columbia University and is fluent in Russian and English. She was most recently based in New York City where she worked for the IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, serving as the SOS Central Asia Officer.

The RIT orientation focused on the respective roles and responsibilities of the RIT and Secretariat as well as the strategy for the first 18 months of operation. Borut Rubinić, the Balkans officer for the



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Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, participated. Borut, a Slovenian national and Russian speaker, will be available to the new Central Asia team as a mentor as the program takes shape.

GUINEAN FORESTS OF WEST AFRICA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

The mainstreaming strategy was finalized in February and is ready for dissemination. The strategy—which provides an action plan for the regional implementation team of how to best empower grantees to work with the local institutions that drive policy, rules, plans and investment—was guided by a two-day workshop held in Monrovia, Liberia in October.



Representatives from governments, donors (including Tiphaine Leménager who represents AFD on the CEPF Working Group), and the mining and forestry sectors attended the event, which ran concurrently with the mid-term assessment.

The 34 CEPF grantees who attended the mid-term assessment also had the opportunity to discuss with the workshop attendees how they could better work together to effectively engage with public policies and private sector practices.

A senior advisor for BirdLife International developed the strategy, which was used to guide the current open call for proposals in the hotspot.

EASTERN AFROMONTANE BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



In 2016, the Eastern Afromontane Regional Implementation Team awarded a small grant of about US\$19,000 to the Malawian organization Wildlife Action Group (WAG) so that they could better understand the biodiversity of the Dedza Forest Reserve Key Biodiversity Area. The grant involved training forest guards to identify and survey plant species as part of their patrols, with the idea being that people who better understand local ecology make better managers of the land. As part of the grant, WAG identified [28 different orchid species](#) in an area of 18,000 hectares.

The grant has now ended, but the work goes on. Forest guards continue their patrols and survey work, even without the support of CEPF. As of only January 2020, the guards have reported and photographed, with WAG confirmation, as many as 58 species of orchids in the forest reserve.

MEDITERRANEAN BASIN BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

In Albania, a coalition of NGOs headed by the Albanian Ornithological Society (AOS), Republica and PSEDA Iliria—and supported by other national and international NGOs—was successful in stopping a large and unsustainable tourism development project.



The project, known as “Divjakë Resort Albania,” would have built a tourism resort at the core area of Divjaka-Karavasta National Park, aiming to exploit 12 kilometers of coastline and bring up to 18,000 visitors per day.

The campaign supported by the CEPF-funded project “Let’s Make Divjaka Natural Again” led by AOS was able to convince the governmental structures, notably the Strategic Investment Committee headed by the Albanian prime minister, to refuse the resort proposal based on biodiversity concerns.

Nonetheless, the fight of the coalition continues as other development projects threaten Divjaka-Karavasta and other coastal, protected areas.

Recently, the government of Albania proposed a revision of protected area borders, threatening to shrink them and, thus, open them up to unsustainable transport, energy, tourism and intensive agriculture projects. The coalition of Albanian NGOs is now working at the national and international level to positively influence this policy.

Photos (top to bottom): Handing over of the protected area registration certificate. © NRDF 2019; Yellow-tailed woolly monkey (*Oreonax flavicauda*) in Peru. © Michael Tweddle; Echo parakeet. © O. Langrand; Wallacea book launch. © O. Langrand; Mountains of Central Asia RIT. © CI/photo by Dan Rothberg; GFWA Mid-term assessment group. © CI/photo by Marsea Nelson; Mount Kenya. © Sergey Yeliseev/Flickr Creative Commons; The orchid *Platycoryne mediocris*. © WAG; Narta Lagoon, north of Vlorë, Albania. © O. Langrand