

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



**Creating a Future**

**Coexistence**

**Collaboration**



**WCN**

Wildlife Conservation Network

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*Thanks to Pooja Menon for her work as Marketing and Communications Coordinator in 2019.*

## WCN WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING:

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati for their ongoing pro-bono legal support.  
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The photographers who allow WCN to use their stunning photos to advance conservation.  
Our committed volunteers, without whom we could not do what we do.



A Grevy's zebra, the largest and most endangered species of zebra in the world. Our Partner, Grevy's Zebra Trust, works to protect this species and its habitat.

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# 2019: Hope for Wildlife

**We look back at 2019 as a year of hope.** In the face of complicated global challenges, our community of conservationists and donors proved that together, we are helping wildlife and people thrive. With big ideas and big hearts, through hard work and teamwork, we protected wildlife and wild places on nearly every continent on Earth. We are proud to share some of these achievements in our 2019 Annual Report.

This year, WCN expanded our efforts to protect wildlife and found important ways to strengthen conservation through collaboration. With pangolins being poached at catastrophic levels, WCN partnered with Save Pangolins to create the Pangolin Crisis Fund (PCF). The PCF funds projects aimed at stopping the illegal trade that threatens all pangolins with extinction. We also teamed up with Disney to convene over 90 conservation experts at the Lion Footprint Forum, providing an unprecedented opportunity for them to unite around solutions to recover Africa's lions. Finally, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our donors, **we concluded the year having raised over \$24 million to save wildlife.**

**Our biggest reasons for hope came from our Conservation Partners and the grantees supported by our Crisis and Recovery Funds.** Often at great personal risk, conservationists battled the illegal trade and bushmeat poaching that imperils wildlife in Africa and Asia. Working hand-in-hand with local communities, they improved thousands of lives through education and employment. In big cities and remote villages, they inspired countless people to care about, and care for, wildlife. Thanks to their efforts, we saw saiga antelope populations rise and human-cheetah conflict fall; 50,000 trees were planted in forests in Colombia while 1,800 poaching snares were removed from forests in the Congo; hard-hitting campaigns helped clean up penguin colonies and rallied support for sharks; investigations supported by the Elephant Crisis Fund led to the arrests of several major ivory traffickers while the Lion Recovery Fund issued one of its biggest grants to help save Senegal's last remaining lions. In 2019, our Partners and Funds protected thousands of animals and safeguarded entire ecosystems around the world.

We know that there will always be big, complex issues to tackle, but we start 2020 confident that the conservationists we support have the experience, tenacity, and vision to take on any challenge. It is their courage and dedication, together with the steadfast support of our donors, that will always give us reasons for hope.

Thank you for all that you do for wildlife.



Jean-Gaël Collomb, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



Charles Knowles  
President and Co-founder

# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to protect endangered wildlife by supporting conservationists who ensure wildlife and people coexist and thrive.

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"When we founded WCN 18 years ago, we created it with a focus on **transparency, efficiency, and collaboration**. With all aspects of our work, we continue to embody values that reflect our deep respect for our donors and a belief that we can only save endangered species by working together."

— Charles Knowles, President and Co-founder, WCN

# OUR MISSION IN ACTION

CREATING A FUTURE | COEXISTENCE | COLLABORATION

We find conservationists who deploy the most effective solutions to save wildlife, and we provide them with support to bring those solutions to life. Through our **Partner Network** and our **Crisis and Recovery Funds** we are **creating a future for wildlife**.

Conservation is as much about helping people as it is about helping wildlife. We support conservation work that invests in the well-being of local communities and fosters **coexistence between people and wildlife**.

No one organization or person can save wildlife alone, so **we emphasize collaboration**.

WCN connects conservationists and supporters and acts as a convener for individuals and institutions, creating a community working together to save wildlife.



## Partner Network

Our Partner Network is a select cohort of on-the-ground conservationists who operate on the frontlines and have the know-how to make wildlife conservation work.

We offer these conservationists ongoing, in-depth support, providing the financial resources, tools, and services they need to effectively protect wildlife.

## Crisis and Recovery Funds

We establish Crisis and Recovery Funds when we see a need and an opportunity to protect threatened wildlife across a larger landscape. By investing in specific, time-bound projects from institutions big and small, we harness the power of multiple organizations working to save a species throughout its entire habitat.

# 2019 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

With support from our donors and through the strength of our network, we have had a greater impact on wildlife conservation than ever before.

**93%**

Percentage of WCN funds that went to support programs in the field.

**\$24+M**

Amount raised for conservation in 2019.

**17**

Number of wildlife Conservation Partners.

**114**

Scholarships awarded to date to emerging conservationists across 37 countries.

**4★**

Rating WCN received from Charity Navigator, America's leading independent charity evaluator—a top ranking amongst wildlife conservation nonprofits.

**374**

Number of projects to date supported in 38 countries by the Elephant Crisis Fund, Lion Recovery Fund, and Pangolin Crisis Fund.

**50+**

Number of field conservationists who have attended WCN workshops.

**3,000+**

People from 32 states and 13 countries who attended our Wildlife Conservation Expos and other events in 2019.

**84**

Number of countries from which WCN has received donations.

**61,000+**

Number of people in local communities around the world provided with education opportunities by WCN's Conservation Partners.

**125+**

Number of wildlife species protected by WCN Partners around the world.

**1,120**

Number of staff and members of local communities around the world provided with employment opportunities by WCN's Conservation Partners.

—  
"WCN is truly one of the most extraordinary organizations in the world. I am just so glad to have been associated with it from the beginning."

—Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE

# WCN PARTNERS AND PROGRAMS

## GLOBAL REACH

TO DATE

### CRISIS AND RECOVERY FUNDS



**ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND**  
**SAVE THE ELEPHANTS & WCN**  
*Africa and Asia*



**LION RECOVERY FUND**  
**WCN & LEONARDO DICAPRIO FOUNDATION**  
*Africa*



**PANGOLIN CRISIS FUND**  
**WCN & SAVE PANGOLINS**  
*Africa and Asia*

### MULTI-CONTINENT



**GLOBAL PENGUIN SOCIETY**  
**LED BY DR. PABLO BORBOROGLU**  
*Worldwide (based in Argentina)*



**MARALLIANCE**  
**LED BY DR. RACHEL GRAHAM**  
*Worldwide (based in Belize)*



**SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**  
*As of 2019, WCN has awarded 114 scholarships to promising conservationists from 37 countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.*



**SMALL WILD CAT CONSERVATION FOUNDATION**  
**LED BY DR. JIM SANDERSON**  
*Worldwide*



### LATIN AMERICA



**ANDEAN CAT ALLIANCE**  
**LED BY DR. ROCIO PALACIOS**  
*Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru*



**PROYECTO TITÍ**  
**LED BY ROSAMIRA GUILLEN**  
*Colombia*



**SPECTACLED BEAR CONSERVATION**  
**LED BY ROBYN APPLETON**  
*Peru*

### ASIA & EASTERN EUROPE



**SAIGA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE**  
**LED BY ELENA BYKOVA & DR. E.J. MILNER-GULLAND**  
*Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Russia, Uzbekistan*



**SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVANCY**  
**LED BY DR. RODNEY JACKSON**  
*Bhutan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia*



### AFRICA



**CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA**  
**LED BY REBECCA KLEIN**  
*Botswana*



**CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND**  
**LED BY DR. LAURIE MARKER**  
*Namibia*



**ETHIOPIAN WOLF CONSERVATION PROGRAM**  
**LED BY DR. CLAUDIO SILLERO**  
*Ethiopia*



**EWASO LIONS**  
**LED BY DR. SHIVANI BHALLA**  
*Kenya*



**GREVY'S ZEBRA TRUST**  
**LED BY BELINDA LOW MACKEY**  
*Kenya*



**NIASSA LION PROJECT**  
**LED BY DR. COLLEEN BEGG & KEITH BEGG**  
*Mozambique*



**OKAPI CONSERVATION PROJECT**  
**LED BY JOHN LUKAS**  
*Democratic Republic of Congo*



**PAINTED DOG CONSERVATION**  
**LED BY PETER BLINSTON**  
*Zimbabwe*



**SAVE THE ELEPHANTS**  
**LED BY DR. IAIN DOUGLAS-HAMILTON & FRANK POPE**  
*Kenya*





**Creating a  
Future for  
Wildlife**

# RECOVERING GRASSLANDS, RECOVERING WOLVES

Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program | ETHIOPIA

It was morning in Delanta when a few local herders arrived at Esubalew’s door. Located in the Ethiopian highlands, Delanta boasts a landscape of rolling, bright green hills mingled with rocky mountaintops. For years, these mountains held a small population of Ethiopian wolves, but disturbing news that the wolves were gone had reached the herders. While elsewhere herders might celebrate the loss of a predator, here jackals are the sheep-killing villains and wolves are a source of pride. Because Esubalew is an Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program (EWCP) “Wolf Ambassador”—a community member who monitors wolves and represents EWCP in remote villages—the group came to him for answers. Esubalew confirmed that in 2016, rabies and canine distemper outbreaks killed a lot of wolves. But there was more to the story. There were signs the wolves were recovering.

Since the outbreaks, conservationists suspected wolves in Delanta might be extinct, but EWCP never stopped monitoring and protecting this habitat. Then, in 2019, through patience and perseverance, Esubalew discovered two wolves in the area. When EWCP experts were alerted and came to Delanta,

they found not only this couple, but an entire den sheltering five playful puppies. While EWCP is exploring the origins of this new family, one thing is clear: rebounding grassland is making Delanta attractive to wolves again.

In parts of the Ethiopian highlands, a special grass called “guassa” covers the hillsides in thick, shaggy bushels. Guassa is favored by rodents, Ethiopian wolves’ main prey, so it makes for excellent wolf habitat. It’s also valuable to people who use it for thatching, rope-making, and weaving. Since guassa fetches a good price in local markets, families can supplement their income by growing and selling it. These benefits to people and wildlife are at the root of EWCP’s “Guassa Gardens” initiative, which provided seedlings and training to 70 families cultivating guassa in Delanta. These families planted their seedlings about three years ago; this year was their first guassa harvest.

*Below: Ethiopian wolves are returning to Delanta. Top right: Local families cultivate and harvest guassa to sell in markets. Bottom right: New guassa fields being planted in Delanta.*



## WHY I’M PART OF THE WCN COMMUNITY



**Téa Malia Megill**

“When I heard that elephants could become extinct, I knew I had to help, so I started a lemonade stand to raise money for elephants. I have raised over \$10,000 and donated 100% of my profits to the Elephant Crisis Fund because they are making sure that there will still be elephants in the world when I grow up.”

— Téa Malia Megill

In Delanta, the Guassa Gardens initiative is restoring habitat that had been rapidly shrinking from agricultural encroachment. The process is based on traditional methods of managing grasslands, and has already been successful in other areas. Communities in South Wollo, near Delanta, have implemented a traditional management system wherein they let the grasses grow, keep grazing livestock away from the highlands, and communally regulate the harvest. When EWCP’s staff surveyed South Wollo in 2019, they were dumbfounded. The slopes were almost entirely free of livestock and guassa was flourishing. Better still, they started seeing healthy wolves in areas where the habitat had previously been degraded.

South Wollo’s progress is a great indication that grassland restoration can work in Delanta. Many families in Delanta are already eager to plant guassa and the local government has actually suggested switching from agriculture to guassa in some areas. In Delanta and throughout the highlands, EWCP sees guassa as the key to a better future for Ethiopian wolves. ■

# SECURING LAND FOR BEARS

Spectacled Bear Conservation | PERU

Justina's cub is never far from her side, hovering close like a shadow. Mother and cub spend most of their time in the mountains, but at dawn, and again at dusk, they make their way down to eat. Biology has blessed these bears with lean bodies and massive claws to maneuver Peru's steep cliffs, yet cursed them with almost total dependence on a singular food source. The sapote fruit comprising their entire diet for half the year grows at the base of the mountains, near the farms that blanket rural Peru. As agriculture expands, this precious food source is increasingly jeopardized. Life for spectacled bears here is a house of cards; remove sapote and the bear population will topple. Conservationists at Spectacled Bear Conservation (SBC) are determined to prevent this from happening. This year, they formalized a plan to acquire land to protect the sapote groves, create continuous bear habitat, and ensure bears have a future in the dry forest.

Access to sapote is especially important for bears with cubs, like Justina. Without sapote, mothers can't lactate, which threatens the lives of their cubs. Dry forest bears already have high cub mortality and genetic disadvantages that make them prone to reproductive challenges—they breed infrequently and with low success. This is because years of destruc-

tive agriculture have left the dry forest fragmented; cut off from other bear populations, these bears have become inbred. In 2019, SBC analyzed over 10 years of their data, finding that inaccessible food and genetic isolation has made bears highly compromised and susceptible to disease. Additionally, the agriculture responsible for consuming and fragmenting the bears' habitat has already started destroying sapote at an alarming rate. Thankfully, there is a simple and available solution to this dual problem: buy the land before it's gone.

SBC identified strategically located land parcels that wealthy land-owners are keen to sell. One section of land will connect dry forest bears with higher elevation bear populations. This connectivity will give dry forest bears access to additional food sources and genetically diverse breeding partners, thereby improving the population's long-term health. The other section of land is at the base of the mountains where the sapote grows. Purchasing this land will form a buffer between encroaching agricultural development and intact sapote groves. SBC plans to buy this land as soon as possible, then continue purchasing additional land over time. This would create a more contiguous bear habitat that SBC can sustain through their ongoing community engagement efforts.



Conservation solutions are not typically this clear-cut, but for dry forest bears, the equation is simple. There is private land in the dry forest that offers the bears connectivity and access to sapote, both of which are critical to the population's survival. This land is for sale. If SBC purchases it before it is lost to agriculture, they can secure a future for Justina, her cub, and all of Peru's dry forest bears. ■

*Above: Justina and her cub captured by a camera trap. Below: Acquiring land in Peru before it is lost to destructive agriculture is vital to protecting sapote, the dry forest bears' primary food source.*



Ensuring a future for endangered species is a huge task. Our Partners' successes in 2019 make us hopeful.

PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



**PROYECTO TITÍ**

Proyecto Tití purchased 64 acres of forest, expanding the Los Titíes de San Juan reserve to a total 475 acres of protected cotton-top habitat. They also created a sapling nursery in the reserve, planting 50,000 new trees in vital forest corridors.



**SAVE THE ELEPHANTS**

Save the Elephants reports the number of elephants in northern Kenya has recovered to where it was before poaching hit the area 10 years ago. Now an estimated 7,347 elephants live in the region.

**CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND**

Cheetah Conservation Fund assisted in the rescue of 44 cheetahs from traffickers in 2019. They are currently rehabilitating 38 cheetahs in Somaliland and building a new facility to increase their capacity to save more.



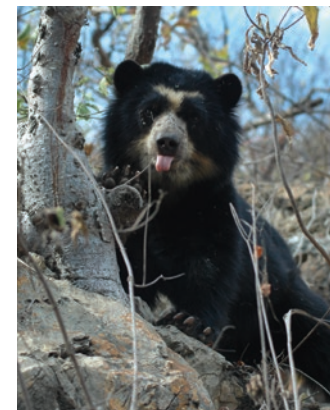
**ETHIOPIAN WOLF CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

To prevent rabies outbreaks, EWCP vaccinated Ethiopian wolves from 18 packs as well as 3,500 domestic dogs in 34 villages near wolf habitat.



**PAINTED DOG CONSERVATION**

Painted Dog Conservation's anti-poaching units performed 712 patrols over 800 sq. miles. They removed 2,415 snares and saved five painted dogs caught in traps.



**SPECTACLED BEAR CONSERVATION**

Spectacled Bear Conservation discovered a new bear population 25 miles from a known group of bears. They are working to create a protected corridor that connects the two populations, improving genetic diversity for the species.



**SAIGA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE**

Saiga Conservation Alliance reports the number of saiga antelope in Kazakhstan has grown by 55%, raising the population to its highest in 20 years.

**OKAPI CONSERVATION PROJECT**

Okapi Conservation Project organized 430 ranger patrols inside Okapi Wildlife Reserve, removing 1,800 snares and dismantling 1,200 illegal mining and logging operations.



# ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND

Each year, tens of thousands of African elephants are killed for their tusks. This poaching is driven by an international ivory trade that thrives on crime, corruption, and greed. To end the ivory crisis, the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) invests in the most effective partners and projects in Africa and ivory consuming nations. The ECF encourages collaboration and delivers rapid support to stop the poaching of elephants and eliminate the trafficking and demand for their ivory.

As of year-end 2019, the ECF has supported:

**284** projects, and  
**78** partners, in  
**37** countries, with  
**\$22.2M** disbursed

#### 2019 Highlights:

- *US Fish & Wildlife Service worked with ECF partners to investigate and dismantle a major ivory trafficking network operating between East and West Africa, sending a strong message to criminals who trade in wildlife.*
- *Elephant poaching has reduced in almost all of the southern and eastern African sites protected by ECF partners.*

The Elephant Crisis Fund was created by Save the Elephants and WCN, in partnership with the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation.





**Promoting  
Coexistence  
Between  
People and  
Wildlife**

**Our Partners understand that communities need to benefit from protecting wildlife if we are to succeed.**

**PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS**



**NIASSA LION PROJECT**

Lion prides in Niassa National Reserve increased from two to seven, and snaring and illegal mining have decreased. This recovery allowed NLP to create a conservation tourism program to protect lions and generate income for local people.



**CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA**

Cheetah Conservation Botswana reduced conflict between herders and cheetahs by 75-100% by training 16 new livestock guarding dogs for local communities. Each dog will protect a herd from roughly 30 cheetahs in its lifetime.

**COEXISTENCE**

# A COTTON-TOP RESCUE

Proyecto Tití | COLOMBIA

Carlos Barrios was in the right place at the right time. It was early June, and he was walking through the forest on his property, his boots muddied from the rain-soaked dirt path. He reached a stream shallow enough to cross on foot, but as he gingerly took his first steps into the water a high-pitched screeching stopped him cold. A baby cotton-top tamarin was in the water struggling to pull herself onto a slippery rock. Cotton-tops are completely arboreal, they never intentionally come to the ground; this one was probably too young to properly maneuver around the forest and likely fell moving from branch to branch. Carlos knew if he left her, the cotton-top wouldn't survive. He scooped her up with his bare hand, enduring several bites from the nervous monkey, and carried her to his ranch. He then called Proyecto Tití.

Last year, Carlos signed an agreement with Proyecto Tití, an organization that protects endangered cotton-tops, pledging



*Previous Page: The baby cotton-top tamarin rescued from a stream by Carlos Barrios. Below: Carlos Barrios (in the yellow-striped shirt) contacted Proyecto Tití to return the baby cotton-top to its family.*



to conserve the forest on his land and to participate in Proyecto Tití's reforestation program. As Colombia's forests have depleted, primarily for agriculture and cattle ranching, cotton-tops have become trapped in isolated forest islands. Because cotton-tops never come to the ground, they need continuous forest to survive, so one of Proyecto Tití's primary strategies is to bridge these islands. They work with farmers, including Carlos, to protect, grow, and connect the forests on their land.

Were it not for his relationship with Proyecto Tití, Carlos would likely have kept the cotton-top as a pet or sold it. Demand for cotton-tops, who are characteristically small and cute, has made the pet trade another major threat to their survival. Proyecto Tití's community work educates people about the dangers of the pet trade and inspires them to keep cotton-tops in the wild. As a result, instead of profiting from the cotton-top's misfortune, Carlos contacted Proyecto Tití.

With two Proyecto Tití field assistants, Rodrigo and Aldair, Carlos retraced his steps back to where he found the baby cotton-top. Since cotton-tops are fiercely territorial, her family should still be nearby. Cotton-tops have unique vocalizations for different situations—grooming, begging for food, alarm calls for danger, etc.—when they hear a territorial call, they emerge to chase off the potential intruder. Proyecto Tití has collected recordings of these calls, so for three hours Rodrigo and Aldair walked around with speakers playing recordings of territorial calls. Sure enough, the family showed up to investigate.

Rodrigo and Aldair had the baby in a small carrier which they hoisted as high into the trees as possible. Hiding in the foliage, they watched as an adult cotton-top scurried towards the carrier, the leaves shaking beneath her weight as she dashed along the branches. In seconds the cotton-top had the baby in its arms and was carrying her through the trees. Just like that, the rescued cotton-top was home. ■

# THE SECRET TO COEXISTING WITH CHEETAHS

Cheetah Conservation Botswana | **BOTSWANA**



**T**here is a clearing on Callie's farm where wild antelope gather. Callie and his daughter Alida arrived at this clearing in late afternoon and watched a herd of kudu eat from the surrounding sage-colored shrubs, craning their necks to reach the clustered branches. This was a good place and the right time of day to spot a cheetah on the hunt. A few years ago, if Callie found a cheetah on his property he may have reached for his gun. Now, he stood with his daughter hoping to see one stalking its dinner. This is a dramatic transformation; for years Callie resisted Cheetah Conservation Botswana's (CCB) efforts to encourage him to coexist with carnivores on his farm. But CCB finally found a way to turn him around—a secret weapon—and she was standing right by his side.

Customarily, farmers in Botswana would no more welcome a cheetah onto their land than a bank would welcome a thief. A cheetah might eat livestock and livestock are valuable. Many farmers in the area

where CCB operates felt this way until CCB outfitted them with a livestock guarding dog, which often eliminated their conflict with cheetahs. Despite this success, a few farmers continued to struggle with the local cheetah population. Callie was one of them.

Farmers tend to be creatures of habit and tough as nails—except with regard to their daughters. This dynamic actually inspired CCB to start an intensive school program specifically focused on getting daughters of commercial ranchers excited about cheetahs. This year, CCB found a unique opportunity to connect with Callie through this father-daughter bond. When the Department of Wildlife translocated a cheetah that was caught on Callie's farm, she was named Alida after his daughter, giving this cheetah a special place in Callie's heart.

Before relocating Alida, CCB put a tracking collar on her to monitor her movements. CCB sends Callie's family maps of the cheetah's movements twice a week. Together, father and daughter keep tabs on

Alida's whereabouts, worrying about her safety, excited when she wanders back onto their property. The data from Alida's collar has given CCB insight into how cheetahs behave on ranches. They now have data proving that Alida prefers spending time where kudu congregate, rather than near livestock, indicating cheetahs favor eating wild antelope. This information has helped assuage Callie's fear that cheetahs were relentlessly preying on his livestock.

Monitoring Alida's activity has also helped Callie become more empathetic to carnivores. This attitude shift is particularly significant because Callie is very influential in his community and is often called upon for advice when other farmers are dealing with carnivore problems. Nurturing Callie's empathy for wildlife has encouraged him to tolerate carnivores much more, and his tolerance inspires other farmers to do the same.

Callie's perceptions about cheetahs have drastically improved. His daughter loves her cheetah namesake and since Callie loves his daughter, cheetahs will always be safe on their farm. ■



*Above: Callie, after finding a leopard on his farm, called authorities to help relocate it. In the past, Callie might have killed this leopard, but CCB has taught him the value of coexisting with carnivores on his land.*

## WHY I'M PART OF THE WCN COMMUNITY



### Singer Rankin

“I'm passionate about saving wildlife, but I want to make sure I support organizations that are also helping people. It's really important to me that WCN is so focused on connecting wildlife conservation with improving the lives of people around the world.”

— Singer Rankin



RECOVERING LIONS, RESTORING LANDSCAPES

# LION RECOVERY FUND

In just 25 years, we have lost half of all lions in Africa. But recovery is possible. The Lion Recovery Fund is a collaborative granting initiative with a bold vision to double the number of lions in Africa—bringing back the half we lost. The LRF gives conservationists the support they need to address the biggest threats to lions such as human-lion conflict, bushmeat poaching, and habitat loss.

As of year-end 2019, the LRF has supported:

**86** projects, and  
**35** partners, in  
**20** countries, with  
**\$6.3M** disbursed

#### 2019 Highlights:

- *The Lion Recovery Fund teamed up with Disney to convene more than 90 conservation experts from 18 countries at the Lion Footprint Forum. The forum had one clear and meaningful goal: unite the lion conservation community around concrete solutions to recover lions across Africa.*
- *LRF funding has contributed to the employment of 361 rangers. These rangers have removed 24,971 deadly wire snares that threatened lions.*

The Lion Recovery Fund was created by WCN, in partnership with the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation.



# Strengthening Conservation Through Collaboration

## WHY I'M PART OF THE WCN COMMUNITY



**Jon Mellberg**

“WCN teaches supporters that wildlife conservation is a complex space. Protecting animals and their habitat requires everything from alleviating land use and poaching pressures to empowering local communities and raising awareness. WCN recognizes that no single organization can manage these roles single-handedly, and I appreciate that it has the credibility and humility to untangle that issue by bringing together multiple conservation organizations and encouraging the productive exchange of ideas and support.”

— Jon Mellberg

## COLLABORATION

# WORKING TOGETHER IN MANA POOLS

Painted Dog Conservation | ZIMBABWE



**M**ana Pools National Park is the jewel in the crown of the Mid Zambezi Valley. During the rainy season, as flood plains on the Zambezi River fill with water and transform into lakes, the park is virtually inaccessible. Painted Dog Conservation (PDC) is at the forefront of protecting painted dogs in Zimbabwe, but the rains have prevented them from operating in Mana Pools year-round. That changed this year; PDC built a permanent research base in Mana Pools, their second in Zimbabwe, making their work there more reliable and effective. PDC's stronger presence in the park has also sparked new opportunities with a long-time partner. In 2019, PDC collaborated several times with top tourism operator Wilderness Safaris; their work together has strengthened conservation for painted dogs in Mana Pools, providing a new beginning for one pack in particular.

The painted dog population in the Mid Zambezi Valley is Zimbabwe's largest and uniquely links Africa's distinctive southern and eastern populations, with Mana Pools at the center. Understanding these dogs gives conservationists valuable insight into protecting the species as a whole. With year-round access, PDC can consistently monitor this special population and more accurately document population estimates, distribution, and survival rates. Wilderness Safaris offers their guides and clients opportunities to participate in this monitoring. When they encounter painted dogs they can record details of the sighting, including photos, and share that information with PDC, thereby enhancing the data that informs PDC's conservation planning. Additionally, immediate reports of injured dogs helps PDC take action in real time.

PDC also collaborated with Wilderness Safaris to successfully relocate a vulnerable painted dog pack to Mana Pools. This pack had made a den near Mpindo village, almost 350 miles south of Mana Pools, where they had six pups. Close proximity to people gave the pack ample opportunity to prey on the villagers' goats. To mitigate the conflict, PDC relocated the dogs to nearby Hwange National Park, but they soon boomeranged back to Mpindo. With the dogs hell-bent on denning near the village, it was necessary to relocate them much farther away.

Mana Pools was an ideal place to bring the Mpindo pack, but the drive would take 12 hours over excruciatingly bumpy roads, putting undue strain on the dogs. It was safer and faster to fly. With logistical support from Wilderness Safaris, PDC flew all nine dogs to Mana Pools. Before they can be released, the pack needs time to acclimate to the new loca-

tion and for the pups to grow. PDC and Wilderness Safaris constructed a holding pen where they are housing the pack until they can be released in a few months. Wilderness Safaris generously paid for the pen and is assuming the cost of feeding the dogs. Once the pack is released, they will also help PDC with follow-up monitoring.



Whether relocating a specific pack or monitoring an entire population, PDC and Wilderness Safaris have demonstrated multiple ways to work together, improving conservation for Mana Pools' painted dogs with each collaboration. ■

*Previous Page: PDC staff relocating painted dog pups to their new home in Mana Pools. Above: The Mpindo pack getting used to their new surroundings. Below: With crucial assistance from Wilderness Safaris, PDC was able to safely transport the Mpindo pack by plane to Mana Pools.*





# FROM NETS TO NETWORKS

MarAlliance | WORLDWIDE

**D**r. Rachel Graham squints at the sunlight shimmering across the water. The sea off the coast of Belize is a collage of blues and greens that sparkle like gems, oscillating ripples of sapphire and emerald. Beneath the water's surface, eagle rays move like underwater birds, their fins flapping like wings, while tropical fish flaunt their colors amongst the crags and caverns of the MesoAmerican Reef. Unfortunately, due to unsustainable fishing practices, this incredible marine ecosystem is imminently threatened. As founder of the conservation organization MarAlliance, Rachel has been helping to build a transnational network of fishers that are working together to protect it.

Fishers are a primary source of, and thus a necessary solution to, the problem of unsustainable fishing. Moreover, they live and breathe the ocean, they are finely tuned to changes in marine

environments and have a deep understanding of issues affecting those ecosystems. Therefore, MarAlliance works with a network of fishers in two ways: advancing conservation through “fisher science” and improving fishing practices.

As MarAlliance has expanded their network of fisher scientists—fishers they've trained to gather data, identify species, and satellite tag sharks—the network has evolved. Fishers who underwent training have become trainers themselves, sparking a chain reaction of ‘fishers training fishers’ from Mexico through Central America. This multi-country network helps MarAlliance collect data much faster than they could alone and enables them to knit together their own research with insights from fishers. In turn, fishers

are paid well and benefit from learning new techniques and broadening their network of peers.

MarAlliance's transnational network of fishers was considerably strengthened in 2019. They've been video conferencing and using the platforms WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger to unite over shared hopes and challenges like fish population declines and pollution. As a result, fishers have reported feeling less isolated and better supported.

In 2019, MarAlliance also ramped up their work with fishers to transition them to sustainable fishing practices and away from using gillnets and catching sharks. Conservationists often refer



to gillnets as “walls of death,” which sounds dramatic until you realize it's accurate. Gillnets indiscriminately catch large numbers of fish and other marine life in one massive haul. As many governments, including Belize, are shortsightedly reluctant to ban gillnets, MarAlliance's work to help fishers abandon this practice is essential. Additionally, MarAlliance's approach of fishers and conservationists working together has led to important attitude and behavior changes in several fishing communities. Almost 80 local fishers in six countries have reported a reduction or cessation of gillnet use, or no longer target sharks.

In the face of imperiled fisheries and political inertia, these grassroots networks are working to safeguard ocean life: fishers are connecting with each other to learn new techniques and share experiences; conservationists and fishers are exchanging vital information about marine ecosystems. These collaborations are a source of hope and a driving force behind MarAlliance's work to protect our oceans and their wildlife. ■



**Above: MarAlliance staff working with fishers to satellite tag a hammerhead shark, part of their “fisher science” work. Bottom right: MarAlliance uses the fisher network to locate areas for gathering data.**



Our Partners establish close relationships with local communities and collaborate across many industries to successfully protect wildlife.

## PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



### EWASO LIONS & GREVY'S ZEBRA TRUST

Ewaso Lions and Grevy's Zebra Trust worked together to reroute a proposed oil pipeline and sections of a proposed highway to protect crucial wildlife habitat in Kenya. Through these collaborations, conservationists help infrastructure agencies consider wildlife in their plans.



### SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVANCY

Snow Leopard Conservancy's coalition of scientists and indigenous communities, Land of Snow Leopard, confirmed that snow leopards have returned to parts of Mongolia, Russia, and Kyrgyzstan.

### MARALLIANCE

MarAlliance confirmed the presence of the critically endangered sawfish in Central America and the Caribbean, and are developing an action plan with local communities to protect this species.



### SMALL WILD CAT CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation led the second Small Wild Cat Conservation Summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This is a monumental step toward raising awareness for underrepresented cat species around the world.

### GLOBAL PENGUIN SOCIETY

Global Penguin Society cleared several tons of plastic garbage from penguin breeding grounds in Patagonia. They also convinced beach resorts to eliminate 10,000 plastic straws and 10,000 single use cups, a 90% reduction rate.



### ANDEAN CAT ALLIANCE

Andean Cat Alliance worked with government agencies to print the Andean cat's image on currency in Peru and Bolivia. This greatly raises public awareness and support of the Andean cat and ties it to the national identity of both countries.

# PANGOLIN CRISIS FUND

Despite their relative obscurity, pangolins have the unfortunate distinction of being the most illegally trafficked wild mammals in the world. They are hunted to supply a rampant illegal global trade in their scales, meat, and body parts. All eight species of pangolins are now threatened with extinction. The Pangolin Crisis Fund (PCF) invests in the best projects to stop the poaching of pangolins, stop the trade and demand for pangolin products, and raise the profile of this little-known animal.

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In its first seven months, the PCF has supported:

**4** projects, and

**4** partners, in

**2** countries, with

**\$113,500** disbursed as of  
year-end 2019

- 
- *The PCF was launched in 2019 and is dedicated to saving the most illegally trafficked mammal in the world, the pangolin, from extinction.*
  - *Current PCF projects involve working with South African farmers to install safe electric fences that don't endanger pangolins, and reducing the demand in Asia for pangolin parts used in traditional medicines.*

The Pangolin Crisis Fund was created by Save Pangolins and WCN, in partnership with the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation.

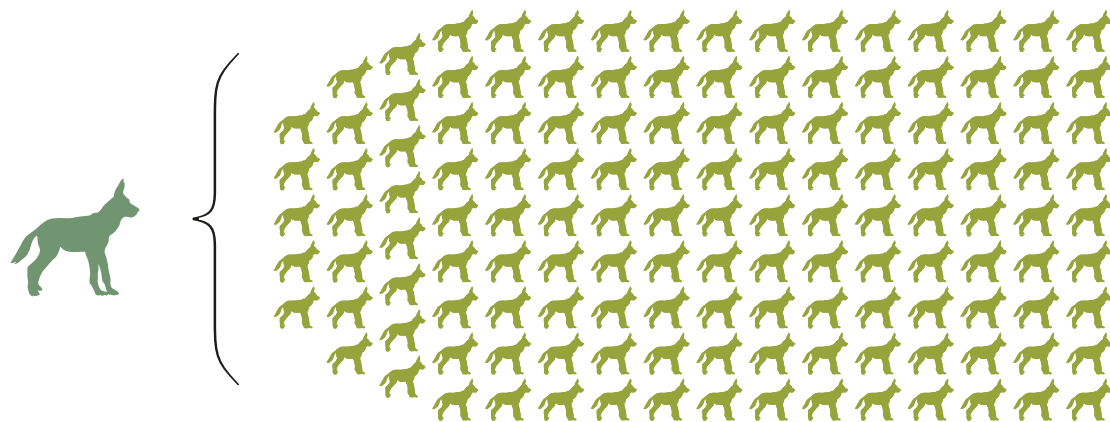


# EVERY INDIVIDUAL MATTERS

Everyone can make a difference for endangered wildlife.  
Saving even a single animal can greatly impact the recovery of an entire species.

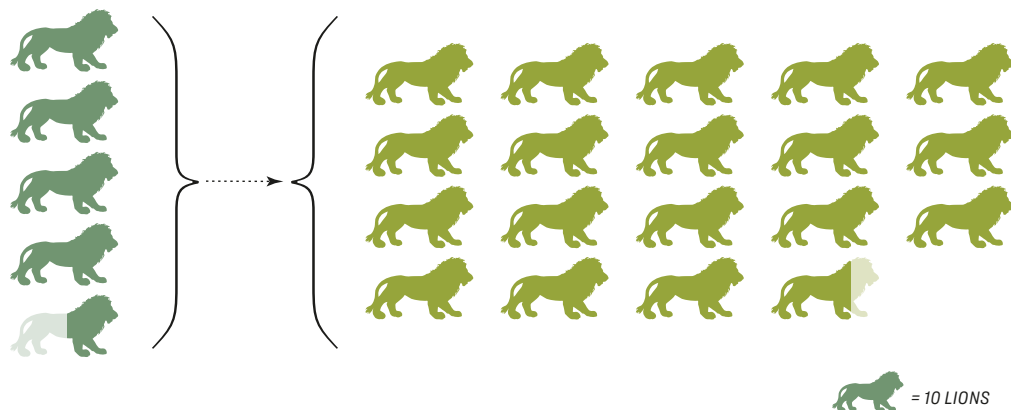
## PAINTED DOGS

Vusile, an orphaned painted dog, was rehabilitated by our Partner, **Painted Dog Conservation**, in 2008. Because she was saved, she went on to have pups, grand-pups, great grand-pups, and so on. A total of 137 dogs have been traced back to Vusile as of today.



## LIONS

Since beginning their anti-snaring work with lions in 2008, Lion Recovery Fund grantee **Zambian Carnivore Program** has removed snares from 44 lions, resulting in 187 cubs born from these lions or dependent on them when the lion was saved from the snare. This data is from 2008 through 2019.



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## Statement of Revenue and Expenses

CALENDAR YEAR ENDING 2019

### REVENUE

|                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Contributions – Donor Designated | \$ 19,838,031        |
| Contributions – Undesignated     | \$ 3,605,694         |
| Income from Activities (Net)     | \$ 869,166           |
| Income from Investments          | \$ 1,063,813         |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>             | <b>\$ 25,376,704</b> |

### EXPENSES

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Program Grants and Services | \$ 23,342,962        |
| Management and General      | \$ 1,529,243         |
| Fundraising                 | \$ 189,134           |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>       | <b>\$ 25,061,339</b> |
| <b>Change In Net Assets</b> | <b>\$ 315,365</b>    |

## Statement of Financial Position

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2019

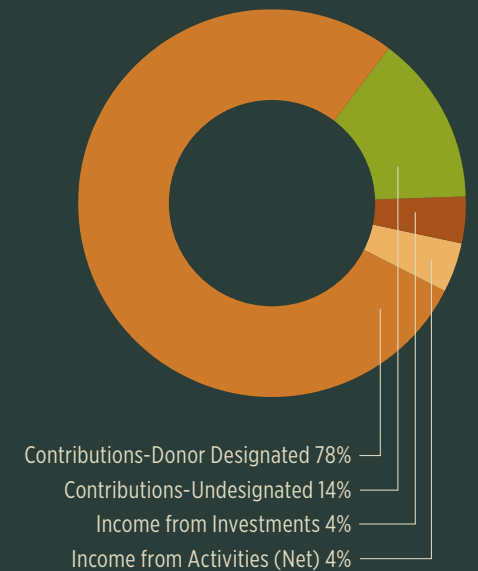
### ASSETS

|                                   |                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unrestricted Cash and Equivalents | \$ 4,100,714         |
| Restricted Cash and Equivalents   | \$ 13,277,231        |
| Grants and Pledges Receivable     | \$ 1,796,600         |
| Scholarship Fund                  | \$ 2,015,531         |
| Mary S Boardman Fund              | \$ 2,118,484         |
| Property and Equipment (Net)      | \$ 90,211            |
| Other Assets                      | \$ 330,435           |
| <b>Total Assets</b>               | <b>\$ 23,729,206</b> |

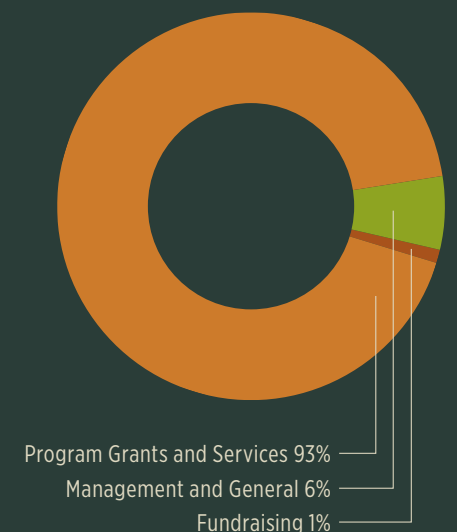
### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities | \$ 3,428,676         |
| Beginning Assets                         | \$ 19,985,165        |
| Change in Net Assets                     | \$ 315,365           |
| <b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>  | <b>\$ 23,729,206</b> |

## 2019 TOTAL REVENUE



## 2019 TOTAL EXPENSES



WCN maintains Charity Navigator's highest possible 4-star rating. Charity Navigator is America's leading independent charity evaluator, and rates over 8,000 charities on their Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency.

Complete financial reports are available upon request. Wildlife Conservation Network is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 organization - #30-0108469



# WCN

Wildlife Conservation Network

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