



IWT Challenge Fund Newsletter

The Enforcement Effort

Biodiversity team member monitoring the Helmeted hornbill nest, Credit: Planet Indonesia

**We recently launched a
dedicated website for
IWT Challenge Fund projects.**

**Visit
iwt.challengefund.org.uk
to find out about all of our
projects, see past editions of
the newsletter, and more!**

iwt.challengefund.org.uk

gov.uk/guidance/illegal-wildlife-trade-challenge-fund-iwtcf

The Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) is a serious criminal industry worth up to £17 billion each year, threatening both wildlife and people. Funded by the UK Government, the IWT Challenge Fund tackles the illegal wildlife trade and, in doing so, contributes to sustainable development in developing countries. It funds projects which address one or more of the following themes:

- reducing demand for IWT products
- ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents
- strengthening law enforcement
- developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT



#EndWildlifeCrime



A hill myna displayed outside a home in Western Borneo, Indonesia, Credit: Planet Indonesia

Contents

Publicity and information about the IWT Challenge Fund	3
Introduction	4
Project articles	5
Don't forget the judges!	5
Strengthening disincentives for engaging in wildlife crime through community ranger programmes	7
De-snaring saves wildlife in Uganda	9
Is a single song worth a silent forest?	11
Deterring wildlife crime - the life of a community ecoguard in Gola Forest National Park	14
Newsletter contacts	15



Community-led SMART patrol, Indonesia, Credit: Justin Grubb

Publicity and information about the IWT Challenge Fund

For more information about the IWT Challenge fund, please visit iwt.challengefund.org.uk or gov.uk/government/collections/illegal-wildlife-trade-iwt-challenge-fund

If you would like any further information about the IWT Challenge Fund, please email IWT-Fund@itsi.co.uk

If you would like to submit an article about your project for a future edition of the IWT Challenge Fund Newsletter, please email an article of no more than one side of A4, alongside any pictures, to IWT-Newsletter@itsi.co.uk

Publicity and referencing the IWT Challenge Fund

We kindly remind project leaders that if they are publicising their work then it is important that they make every effort to recognise UK Government support through the IWT Challenge Fund. This is important as it helps us to ensure the IWT Challenge Fund retains a high profile and to secure continued Government funding.



A SMART patrol documenting and destroying songbird traps found in a protected area, Indonesia, Credit: Justin Grubb

Introduction

The illegal wildlife trade (IWT) not only impacts biodiversity but can also lead to insecurity for local communities that find themselves caught in the crossfire. Until recently, IWT was not considered a serious criminal offence, with many organised crime groups taking advantage of loopholes in the law. The introduction of stricter sentencing coupled with greater community involvement in law enforcement efforts has started to tackle IWT-related activity at its source. In this edition of the newsletter we highlight projects working on strengthening law enforcement by improving the

capacity of rangers, local judiciary, and other on-the-ground enforcement efforts.

In this edition we focus how projects supported by the IWT Challenge Fund are tackling the trade by improving law enforcement both at the community and judiciary level. From the frontlines to the courthouse, join us on a journey to improve the enforcement effort and put an end to wildlife crime.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the *IWT Challenge Fund Newsletter!*



*Judges matter for conservation,
Credit: J. Schwanke*

Don't forget the judges!

Enforcement often focuses on front-line conservationists: park rangers, community patrols, customs agents, investigators, and prosecutors. In contrast, judges are often overlooked, despite being both arbiters of law and triers of fact.

In most countries, the outcome of environmental cases is decided upon by a panel of judges. Across many criminal, administrative, and civil courts, judges play unique roles in evaluating evidence, weighing arguments, interpreting laws, and deciding verdicts and sentences - yet, we have very little information on what most judges think about the illegal wildlife trade (IWT).

Given how much effort is invested in the preparation of IWT cases, it seems strategic that proportional effort

“ Given how much effort is invested in the preparation of IWT cases, it seems strategic that proportional effort should also go into understanding the people who make many of the ultimate decisions in those cases

”

should also go into understanding the people who make many of the ultimate decisions in those cases. Some NGOs are investing in judicial training focused on wildlife trade laws and the importance of biodiversity. There are also efforts to review historical case verdicts, to examine how judges have ruled over time. These types of efforts serve not only to build capacity and concern, but also provide insights about “what works” in court, and can reveal a judge's individual biases.

Related insights from judges are especially important when we introduce new concepts in court, which judges may not yet be familiar with. Most countries do not have specialised environmental courts or judges, so they are unlikely to be familiar with many of the nuances of conservation law. For example, judges may not be familiar with recent updates to the wildlife code, or of how non-traditional laws (e.g. anti-corruption and anti-money laundering laws) might relate to the IWT. There are also laws that rely heavily on individual judicial discretion, in which judges can set the fines and imprisonment within the determined scale stated in legislation, and environmental lawsuits in which judges can determine what types of remedies the court can grant. Moreover, just because the law states certain rights, this does not mean that judges will adjudicate in the ways we hope they will.



Illustration used for hypothetical illegal tiger trade case, Credit: J. Schwanke

“

Related laws exist in many countries and could be used to hold those who commit IWT offences responsible for paying compensation, making apologies and undertaking conservation actions - however, such laws are rarely used in most places, and almost never used to tackle IWT

This is true in the context of our work with **Conservation Litigation**, where we are proposing new strategies that capitalise upon existing environmental liability laws. Related laws exist in many countries and could be used to hold those who commit IWT offences responsible for paying compensation, making apologies and undertaking conservation actions. However, such laws are rarely used in most places, and almost never used to tackle the IWT. As such, we are very uncertain of how judges might respond.

Rather than wait potentially decades for test cases to emerge to help evaluate the success of this strategy, we conducted mock trials and interviews with 32 Indonesian judges. Fortunately, we were encouraged by our findings!

Our new article in *Biological Conservation*, “**Poacher pays? Judges’ liability decisions in a mock trial about environmental harm caused by illegal wildlife trade,**” presented judges with a hypothetical IWT case and asked for their opinions about possible verdicts. Notably, we were interested in whether judges would allow a civil lawsuit to hold the responsible parties liable for undertaking 11 different types of remedial conservation actions.

”

We had expected judges to be very reluctant when presented with new legal strategies. Indeed, many of our conservation colleagues warned that, even though Indonesian law says these kinds of lawsuits are legal, “judges would likely reject them”. However, virtually all of our respondent judges were receptive, and for eight of the eleven claims, over 60% of the respondents indicated that each claim would be likely to be accepted.

This suggests that our proposed strategy - one that many colleagues were reluctant about - is actually worth testing and highlights why we might want to start taking greater interest in judges.

Written by Jacob Phelps, Rebecca M. Nichols and Rika Fajrini. This article features project **IWT061** “Wildlife in Indonesia, Loss, Damage, & Sanctions (WILDS)”, led by University of Lancaster, working in Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico and Vietnam.



Tiger Protection and Conservation Unit personnel on a patrol at Ipuh River, Indonesia, Credit: Kerinci Seblat National Park

Strengthening disincentives for engaging in wildlife crime through community ranger programmes

Across the world Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) are either working for, or have established their own, ranger programmes to help reduce the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT). Over 20 examples of these programmes are documented on the **“PeopleNotPoaching” website**.

This website was set up through the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist group (IUCN SULi) project (IWT060) “Learning and Action Platform for Communities and IWT” (see iied.org for more info). The examples are diverse, showing the many ways communities can effectively lead or support law enforcement efforts against wildlife crime.

A prominent approach across many of these initiatives is for IPLCs to either form or work for (both paid a salary and as volunteers) ranger programmes. Although we have many different examples on the platform, we’ve found that programmes broadly fall into the following four categories:

- Community rangers working in partnership with formal law enforcement agencies
- Community-led patrols, such as self-formed monitoring or intelligence networks
- Initiatives that seek to retrain ex-poachers as rangers, and
- All-women community ranger groups.

For example, in Sumatra, Fauna & Flora International have partnered with Kerinci Seblat National Park authorities to form Tiger Protection and Conservation Units to reduce poaching of Sumatran tigers and help mitigate human-tiger conflict. The units are led by a national park ranger but are otherwise comprised of rangers from forest-edge communities, who have incredible tracking skills. The community rangers also manage local intelligence networks and over 80% of snares have been collected in the park through local tip-offs. The key to success is the trust developed both within the units and with the wider community who act as informants.

Although fewer than 11% of the global ranger workforce are women, we have several examples of all-women ranger groups on the PeopleNotPoaching website. A couple of these are well-known, such as the Black Mambas based in Balule Nature Reserve (South Africa) and the Akashinga programme based in the Lower Zambezi region of Zimbabwe. But other initiatives have also seen the positive impacts women rangers can have, including the North Luangwa Conservation Programme in Zambia, who employ women across a range of positions

“ Although fewer than 11% of the global ranger workforce are women, we have several examples of all-women ranger groups on the PeopleNotPoaching website ”

including as Wildlife Police Offices, Village Game Scouts, and canine handlers.

Last year, we held a webinar to hear more about some of these examples and to discuss challenges and opportunities to supporting **community ranger programmes**.

Key messages included always making the safety and wellbeing of community rangers the number one priority,

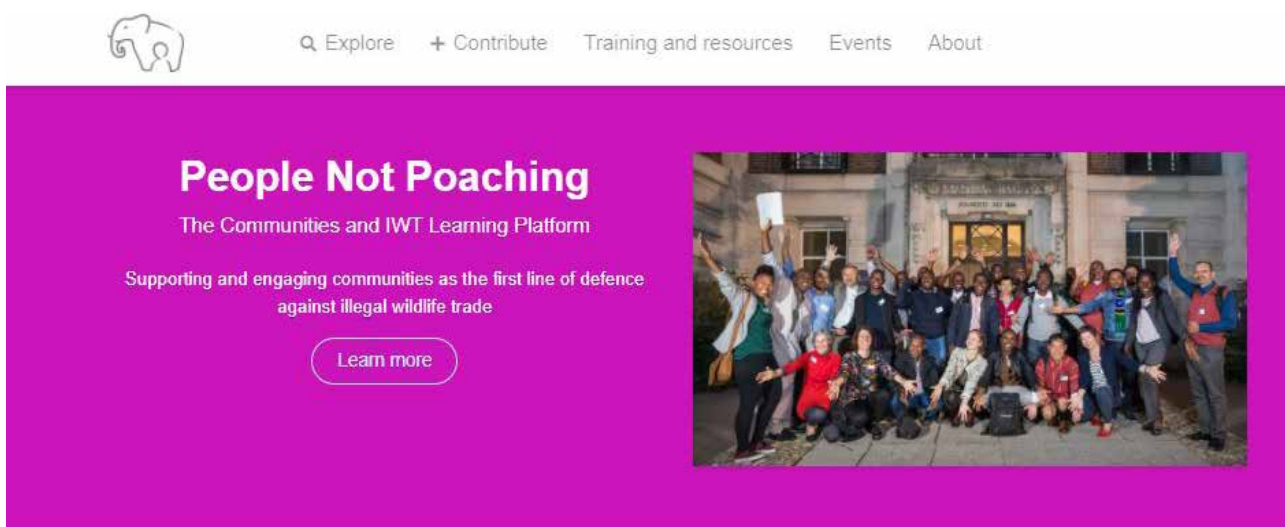
“
This means being more inclusive in how community rangers are perceived by thinking of their role as more than simply the ‘eyes and ears’ of law enforcement, and instead as full and active partners in conservation

”

and ensuring that ranger programmes are embedded within wider community engagement activities. This means being more inclusive in how community rangers are perceived by thinking of their role as more than simply the ‘eyes and ears’ of law enforcement, and instead as full and active partners in conservation – such as in Namibia where community rangers are committed to protecting black rhino because local people have decentralised rights and ownership over wildlife.

Overall, the examples we have in our database show that, although there’s no one-size-fits-all approach, community ranger programmes can be very effective at reducing the IWT by empowering IPLCs to be involved in, and not against, law enforcement efforts.

Written by Olivia Wilson-Holt. This article features project **IWT060** “LeAP: Learning and Action Platform for Community Engagement Against IWT”, led by IIED, working in Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia.



Case studies

We have 115 case studies, here are some highlights



Unlocking Prosperous Livelihoods for Tomorrow (UPLIFT)



The Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkébé (TRIDOM) transborder forest



Forest Forces: Technology and Community-based Forest Crime Prevention in the Brazilian Amazon



Olderkesi Wildlife Conservancy

People not poaching homepage, Credit: IIED



A ranger holding a snare and recording its location in the park, Uganda, Credit: Isaac Kiirya

De-snaring saves wildlife in Uganda

In November 2021, Isaac Kiirya, the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)/Combating Wildlife Trafficking (CWT) Manager at WCS joined the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) law enforcement team for a 10-day de-snaring mission in Murchison Falls National Park. Isaac and the team encountered a giraffe that was struggling to free its front left leg from a wire snare and immediately had to launch a rescue mission in an effort to free the giraffe and save its life in time.

Isaac recounts the experience from the day stating that “when we saw the giraffe, we immediately contacted the Veterinary Unit of the UWA at the Park. When they eventually located us by following the GPS coordinates we gave them. Dr. Margaret Driciru, the UWA veterinary doctor, tranquilized the giraffe for easy management and using a pair of pliers, cut the wire snare off the leg. The wire snare had constricted blood flow and caused leg swelling as the giraffe struggled to get off the wire snare. To prevent infection and encourage faster healing of the affected leg, Margaret administered the injectable antibiotic to the giraffe and later reversed it after treatment. With the team standing out of its kicking range, the giraffe stumbled a little bit from the medication, but managed to gracefully walk off into the savanna grasslands of the park to re-join its family members who were grazing about 200m away”.

Murchison Falls National Park hosts approximately 50% of Africa’s Nubian Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis* ssp. *Camelopardalis*), with an estimated 1,495 individuals calling the park home - making the conservation of the species critical.

“ Murchison Falls National Park hosts approximately 50% of Africa’s Nubian Giraffe, with an estimated 1,495 individuals calling the park home - making the conservation of the species critical ”

Luckily, the Nubian giraffe (a Critically Endangered species) from Isaac’s encounter survived the wire snare ordeal. Poachers mainly target Uganda kobs, buffaloes, hartebeests, bushbucks, waterbucks and most recently the giraffe for bush meat. Unfortunately, these wire snares also physically injure and indiscriminately kill other threatened species in Uganda, including elephants and lions. Poachers strategically set wire snares along game trails, salt licks and near watering points to trap animals.

“The poachers suspend the loops of the wire snares from a tree stem, branch, small tree, or at the base of



The vet team administering the antibiotics and reversal dose, Credit: Isaac Kiirya

“
Since 2019, WCS has contributed to the removal of 1,746 snares, three wheel traps, and rescued several animals, including giraffes, Uganda kobs and hartebeests from these snares

”

a small tree to trap animals by the neck, leg, or torso. They eventually kill the animals using spears and pangas (bladed African tools like machetes),” says Isaac.

WCS is working in collaboration with UWA with support from the IWT Challenge Fund to conduct de-snaring missions to protect wild animals from snares. The activity is undertaken by a team of 12 rangers. They walk for six hours on foot daily, recording incidences of poaching, dead carcasses, collecting wire snares and wheel traps. The team uses a Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) installed on their android phones. These phones are also loaded with a cyber-tracker that enables protected-area managers to track exact routes, generate real-time reports to assess the performance of patrol teams, detect areas of high snare concentration and guide deployment of rangers.

Since 2019, WCS has contributed to the removal of 1,746 snares, three wheel traps, and rescued several animals, including giraffes, Uganda kobs and hartebeests from these snares. WCS has also sensitised 1,148 community members living adjacent to the national parks to wildlife offenses and penalties to minimise incidences of poaching, illegal trade, and trafficking.

According to Dr. Simon Nampindo, WCS Uganda Programme Country Director, “We seem to be making headway in tracking crime when it happens by combating illegal activities inside protected areas. However, the critical step is to prevent the wildlife crime from happening in the first place as it is much costlier to handle crime than it is to prevent it. We need to focus our investments on robust intelligence gathering, investigative capacity, and building a strong community network of informants so that we can stop these illegal activities before they happen”. WCS is committed to support UWA to efficiently and effectively combat wildlife crime in protected areas using SMART to improve law enforcement and save wildlife.

Written by Isaac Kiirya and Louisa Kiggwe. This article features project **IWT073** “Strengthening anti-poaching techniques and countering wildlife trafficking in Uganda”, led by WCS, working in Uganda.



Fairy-bluebird for sale in market, Indonesia, Credit: Planet Indonesia

Is a single song worth a silent forest?

Dozens of small, cone-shaped cages dangle from rafters high above the ground on a humid Indonesian afternoon. They contain songbirds. Small, chirping birds of a variety of species are pitted against one another for the sole purpose of determining which bird has the best and longest-lasting call. Beyond the cages, walls of men are shouting at their birds, believing duress encourages their birds to sing louder. Winners are judged by officiants, and owners can take home several thousand US dollars in prize money. With such high stakes, these songbird competitions are becoming more popular, and wild Indonesian songbird populations are becoming rarer.

“
Rooted in the “Golden Age” of Indonesia, owning songbirds is a symbol of sophistication and wealth and is a tradition that has expanded beyond the Island of Java over the last several centuries

Rooted in the “Golden Age” of Indonesia, owning songbirds is a symbol of sophistication and wealth and is a tradition that has expanded beyond the Island of Java over the last several centuries. Not all songbirds end up in contests; most remain in cages displayed prominently outside village homes. To feed this modern demand, poachers across Indonesia enter what forests are left in search of birds. The methods that are used are many but mainly consist of traps and lures. A thin tree bent over in the jungle with glue smeared on its bark catches the feet of a songbird, who struggles to get free, often leading to broken limbs and potential death in the process. Glue trapping is also indiscriminate, meaning it is not just songbirds that get trapped, other birds and tree-dwelling creatures also suffer. Once collected, birds are placed in boxes and bags, removed from the forest to be sold to middlemen who then traffic them into bird markets. Many birds are trafficked thousands of miles over several days to weeks, and many do not survive the journey. For every bird sitting in a cage outside of someone’s home, there are perhaps dozens, if not a hundred birds that didn’t survive that trip.

”
Among Javanese households alone, it is estimated that 75 million caged birds are kept. Across Kalimantan, 151 species of Indonesian songbirds have been recorded for sale in markets, although the number of birds kept among homes is hard to estimate.



A typical scene at a songbird competition in Indonesia, Credit: Planet Indonesia

“I am quite surprised when I see protected birds being traded in bird shops. My feelings are quite a dilemma, between sad and sorry to see that these birds are being traded and living in cages where they should live freely in nature.” Says “A”, the Wildlife Trade Unit Coordinator of Yayasan Planet Indonesia (YPI).

“
I am quite surprised when I see protected birds being traded in bird shops. My feelings are quite a dilemma, between sad and sorry to see that these birds are being traded and living in cages where they should live freely in nature

”

- Wildlife Trade Unit Coordinator, YPI

At YPI, we have a dedicated Wildlife Trade Unit actively engaged in curbing the illegal songbird trade. As supply chains for illegally sourced wildlife are complex and span across multiple nations with a diverse set of players, understanding where wildlife is sourced, the transit routes, and demand centres are crucially important. In addition, social and economic research surrounding the implications of the illegal songbird trade and its impacts on players is a major knowledge gap and creates barriers in the design and implementation of effective strategies

to combat it. To fill this gap, our team uses cutting-edge methodologies, technology, and techniques to better understand the trade so we can inform policy and program design through evidence-based research. Our team will conduct monitoring activities around the region to investigate shops that sell songbirds to understand which species are being sold, where they are being sourced, and who are supplying these animals to the sellers. The information gathered is reported to West Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), Gakkum, Agricultural Quarantine, local police, and other authorised institutions where the action will be taken and law enforcement made. Additionally, our Wildlife Trade Unit uses innovative advances in behaviour psychology and marketing to develop and implement behaviour change strategies that allow our programmes to address the drivers of songbird trading and reduce the demand for wild-caught birds.

Often, protected species need to be removed from wildlife markets or are confiscated en route. In such cases, these birds will be taken to our new Wak Gatak Songbird Rehabilitation Centre in Pontianak to receive medical treatment and rehabilitation for release back into their native environment. Dr. Happy Ferdiansyah of YPI leads this centre’s efforts in returning valuable birds back to the wild. “I am very motivated and excited when the rescued birds reach the “fit to be released” stage and are declared “capable of surviving” post-release, because the effort to care for them from quarantine, rehabilitation, to the habituation period takes a lot of time, energy, thought, and of course, financial resources,” he says.

“

To protect songbirds in their home range, we partner with vulnerable rural communities in West Kalimantan, Borneo through the Conservation Cooperative model to provide both financial and non-financial services to help build more resilient livelihoods

”

Just recently, the team confiscated nearly 3,000 songbirds by working with the military, police, and quarantine authorities leading to several arrests of traffickers and poachers. Many of these birds ended up at our Songbird Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre where they received medical care, rehabilitation, and were eventually released back into the forest.

To protect songbirds in their home range, we partner with vulnerable rural communities in West Kalimantan, Borneo through the Conservation Cooperative model to provide both financial and non-financial services to help build more resilient livelihoods. Doing so reduces dependency on natural resources, thus bolstering surrounding biodiversity as well as mitigating the threat of external pressures from wildlife traders. Among programmes such as Village Savings Loans, human health and education aimed at stabilising local economies, we also support village-led ranger patrol units called SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) patrols. These units, composed of Conservation Cooperative community members, a government official, and a YPI representative, make up the first line of defence to prevent birds from being illegally removed from protected areas. Local SMART patrols cover great distances and spend a significant amount of time in forest areas, deterring potential poachers from entering the area in search of birds. When illegal traps are encountered, these community-led patrols will document and destroy them. Additionally, when songbird poachers are confronted, the team will collect information to develop solutions and alternative livelihood opportunities.

Hairul Rohim, SMART Patrol Supervisor of YPI explains, “through the Conservation Cooperative, we will approach perpetrators to ask what is their reasoning for catching songbirds. If the individual says the reason for which they are catching songbirds is to fulfil their daily needs or to cover their children's education, then we will help offer productive business opportunities to help increase their

income resiliency so they can stop catching songbirds in the wild.”

Reforestation and agroforestry programmes are another way songbirds benefit in their home range through community-led Conservation Cooperatives. By restoring once degraded habitats, the communities we support are creating more usable habitats for wild songbirds. Since 2015, the communities we support have planted over 150,000 seedlings to restore valuable forest ecosystems. Additionally, we partner with farmers to provide training on organic and semi-organic agriculture. This method of food procurement not only increases yield for farmers but increases biodiversity within the surrounding area, providing food for the songbirds. In return, the songbirds provide valuable ecological services to the farmers. “Songbirds have a very important role in forest ecosystems, apart from helping pollinate plants, songbirds can also function as insect control in the area so that insects can be stable and not become pests for farmers,” Rohim adds.

“

Songbirds have an essential role in ecological processes in nature which are very difficult (or even impossible) to be replaced by the role of other species or man-made tools

”

“Songbirds have an essential role in ecological processes in nature which are very difficult (or even impossible) to be replaced by the role of other species or man-made tools,” says Ferdiansyah. Songbirds such as the straw-headed bulbul are incredibly important for the environment and by taking an active and holistic role in addressing the illegal songbird trade through education, market research, judicial support, rescue and rehabilitation, habitat protection and restoration as well as supporting the development of partner communities’ social and economic resilience, we are taking a stand, along with the communities we serve, against the IWT.

This work is done in partnership with BKSDA Kalimantan Barat who is the management authority of the Gunung Niut Nature Reserve. They are also one of the major government stakeholders in IWT related issues.

Written by Justin Grubb. This article features project **IWT077** “Reducing Illegal Wildlife Trafficking through a Community-based Conservation Approach”, led by Yayasan Planet Indonesia, working in Indonesia.



Ecoguards collecting data in the Gola Forest National Park, Credit: RSPB

Deterring wildlife crime - the life of a community ecoguard in Gola Forest National Park

Gola Forest National Park in north-west Liberia protects a substantial portion of the remaining Upper Guinean rainforest habitat left in West Africa. It is home to significant populations of threatened species, among them forest elephants, chimpanzees, pygmy hippos, Diana monkeys, white and black-bellied pangolin, and the iconic white-necked picathartes (rockfowl). The area is also home to a large rural population who live on the fringes of the park and are among some of the most economically deprived communities in West Africa.

In collaboration with the Forest Development Authority (FDA) and Society for Conservation of Nature Liberia (SCNL), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) established a community ecoguard programme in rural towns on the boundary of Gola Forest National Park in 2020. The programme targeted young women and men from communities living in the rainforest and enlisted them to be part of a Community Support System for Biodiversity Conservation. Apart from serving as a platform for capacity building for the youth, the ecoguard scheme provides an alternative livelihood source that is a deterrent to wildlife and forest crime. Forty ecoguards were trained in key aspects of patrol monitoring including navigation, surveillance of illegal activity, species identification and bio-monitoring. Ecoguards work with FDA rangers to conduct multi-day patrols in the Protected Area during which they record any illegal activities taking place such as hunting, logging, mining and farming. Observations of priority species of conservation concern are also recorded and include elephant, pygmy hippo, chimpanzee and any of the eight species of monkeys that occur in the Gola landscape.

In November and December 2021, RSPB staff based in Liberia delivered two detailed training exercises on patrol protocols and on the use of the SMART Mobile application to the Gola Forest National Park community ecoguards. The training focused on practical aspects of using an electronic patrol monitoring software (SMART) and was followed by a 4-5 day patrol exercise where teams deployed the SMART Mobile app on a mission. Post-patrol feedback was extremely positive from all ten teams, and most of the ecoguards were able to use the app to collect and save data during patrols. With support from the IWT Challenge Fund, these young men and women are able to derive an income as forest guardians and to play a direct role in protecting and conserving the forest ecosystem.

The establishment of the community ecoguard programme, and the implementation of SMART mobile as a patrol monitoring system have been two key achievements during this project. However, RSPB and partners hope to continue this work and expand the programme across the Greater Gola landscape, as well as to increase the regularity and intensity of both ecoguard and law enforcement patrols in the protected area.

This will not only act as an effective deterrent of wildlife and forest crime but also allows those employed to foster a closer, more positive connection with nature than many other alternative livelihoods available to forest communities.

Written by Tarik Bodasing. This article features project **IWT078** "Combating IWT in the Gola Sierra Leone-Liberia Transboundary Landscape", led by RSPB, working in Liberia.



Forest guards on patrol in the Gola Forest National Park, Liberia, Credit: RSPB

Newsletter contacts

For any queries on project applications or existing projects please contact our IWT Challenge Fund Administrators (NIRAS-LTS International) at IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk

This newsletter is produced on a biannual basis. To include an article on your project in an upcoming edition, please contact us at IWT-Newsletter@ltsi.co.uk

The UK Government's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund provides financial support to practical projects around the world which are:

- reducing demand for IWT products
- ensuring effective legal frameworks
- strengthening law enforcement
- developing sustainable livelihoods to benefit people directly affected by IWT

The IWT Challenge Fund has committed over £28m to 103 projects around the world since it was launched at the London IWT Conference in 2014.