



SYNCHRONICITY
EARTH

SPOTLIGHT 2016/17

Vision

An Earth where all life is valued, celebrated and flourishing.

Mission

We act to address overlooked and underfunded conservation challenges for globally threatened species and ecosystems.

We do this through:

Research

We identify priorities and gaps in funding and action for biodiversity conservation.

Action

We develop conservation programmes and coordinate funding to address the most urgent challenges.

Funding

We provide guidance and fresh approaches to help donors understand and fund work to conserve wildlife and wild places.

Inspiration

We engage creatively with others to highlight the importance and wonder of nature and to challenge the status quo, so that all life on Earth is valued.

Bringing Conservation to Life

Eight years in, Synchronicity Earth feels like it has arrived. Aligned with our purpose, our work has never felt more important.

Implementing our idea – to create a platform that calls attention to, and supports overlooked and underfunded conservation challenges for globally threatened species and ecosystems – was never going to be a simple task. But, the need was so great, we had to act.

In fact, the need is far greater than it has ever been. We are losing species and ecosystems at an ever-increasing rate, and unless we continue to act and address these urgent issues, much of our rich and vibrant natural world will be gone.

When we started Synchronicity Earth we knew one thing to be true – that we would never solve these problems alone. That is why we work across a vast, and diverse, network. Our partners: scientists, foundations, donors, artists, businesses and academics, are what make us strong. As does our team.

Just as we believe that diversity of knowledge and ideas are key to solving the problems we face, true collaboration

is also essential. Synchronicity Earth aims to cultivate relationships where everyone plays to their strengths. We have never wanted to reinvent the wheel – we just want to get it spinning in the right direction.

Our vision of an Earth in which all life is valued, celebrated and flourishing, can only be achieved when we are all working together, in harmony with nature.

As donors, you play a vital role in this collaborative process and in our total success. We are immensely grateful for your support over the last eight years. With you by our side, we can serve our purpose, and help bring species and ecosystems back from the brink.

Please enjoy this overview, which we hope will help bring Synchronicity Earth's work to life.



Yours truly,
JESSICA & ADAM SWEIDAN
FEBRUARY 2018





We hope that our stories will encourage you to be part of our work protecting and regenerating an array of species and habitats around the world.

Welcome to our Spotlight



We have set out to give you some of the highlights of our work from the past year and some examples of the wonderful partner organisations we fund. Synchronicity Earth was founded to assist donors to give well to environmental conservation and we do this through extensive

analysis of what is needed and what is missing. Our work encompasses oceans, forests and freshwater as well as projects focused on single species conservation and you can find out much more about all of them on our newly launched website – do [take a look](#).

This year saw the beginning of a transition to producing strategic programmes of funding, where we identify a range of organisations and approaches that tackle specific conservation problems and then set about raising collaborative and pooled funding. This has been particularly successful for our Congo Basin programme, which was launched in May 2017. The Congo Basin is home to Earth's second largest area of contiguous rainforest (covering 1.8 million km²) and the amazing Congo River. It contains Africa's largest peatland and a wonderful array of species, yet it is now under increasing threat. Given the history of conflict in the region, it can be a challenging area to work in and has received a fraction of the funding that Latin American and South East Asian forests have received. We consider the Congo Basin a priority region for increased action so we are working closely with other funders to support local and international groups undertaking a range of activities, from supporting indigenous peoples' rights to forest protection and developing sustainable livelihoods. We are very excited about the progress of this work and will be talking more about the outcomes next year.

We also have programmes for the protection and conservation of the High and Deep Seas, Amphibians (the most endangered class of vertebrates), the White Bellied Heron (a Critically Endangered bird) and we will be re-launching our Freshwater programme later this year. This approach requires deep analysis of threats and responses, and close long-term collaboration with a range of donors. Please get in touch if you would like to hear more about this approach and any of our programmes.

Our team continues to evolve and we welcomed [Dr Simon Stuart](#) in January 2017 as our Director of Strategic Conservation. He comes to us with a depth of conservation experience across a huge range of species. His previous role as Chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission, involved coordinating a network of more than 7,500 experts from all over the world to monitor species populations and coordinate conservation action plans. He has already had a tremendous impact on our work and we are excited to have his expertise on board.

In the summer we said goodbye to Laura Miller, who after six incredibly productive years as our Executive Director decided to move on to new challenges and we thank her for the huge contribution she made during her time with us.

The natural world should inspire all of us with wonder. Often, it is only when we are on holiday, or out enjoying our local countryside that we pause to take in its beauty and abundance. At Synchronicity Earth, we believe we can all be conservationists and the natural world needs each and every one of us. We hope that our stories will encourage you to be part of our work protecting and regenerating an array of species and habitats around the world.

CATHERINE BRYAN
Interim CEO and Trustee

Synchronicity Earth around the World

At Synchronicity Earth, we take a truly global approach, identifying regions and ecosystems that are high in biodiversity but also highly threatened, working to conserve them and the incredible species that make them unique. This map provides an overview of some of the most urgent areas of our work.

Regeneration

This portfolio is designed to fund regeneration of heavily degraded forests, corals, mangroves and wetlands, bringing life back to regions where biodiversity has been lost. It is particularly aimed at businesses looking to bolster the environmental aspect of their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) credentials and contribute to projects that have a positive impact for both nature and local communities in areas of high biodiversity around the world.

Regeneration Partners:

Jocotoco Foundation
Cambugan
Hutan
Mangrove Action Project
Mabuwaya Foundation
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
International Tree Foundation

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High & Deep Seas

The high seas cover 64% of the ocean's surface, while the deep sea makes up 90% of our planet's marine environment. Our analysis of over 1,000 marine grants from leading ocean funders between 2012 and 2016 showed that less than two per cent went towards protection of the high and deep seas. The high seas lie beyond national boundaries so they are open to exploitation, essentially free from effective regulation or oversight. We are working with NGOs and existing alliances to push high and deep seas conservation up the agenda to start protecting these vast ecosystems which are so often overlooked.

High & Deep Seas Partners:

Bloom Association
DSCC
High Seas Alliance

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Amphibians

Amphibians are the world's most threatened class of vertebrate: scientists believe that over 40% of species are globally threatened. To address this, the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) was launched in 2011, and has since built a global partnership, for coordinated conservation action. Synchronicity Earth has supported the ASA from these early days because we consider it to be the most strategic way to combat amphibian extinctions.

Amphibian Partners:

ASA
ARLA

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White-bellied Heron

Many of Asia's species, from the iconic tiger to the less well-known species like the White-bellied Heron (WBH), are at risk of extinction. Following an initial workshop in 2014, the Species Conservation Strategy for the White-bellied Heron was created, bringing together information on the species and providing a blueprint for the global action needed to prevent its demise. Creation of the Strategy marked the start of a hard road back to a healthy and viable population of White-bellied Heron and has helped us to pave the way for other collaborative initiatives throughout Asia.

Freshwater Partners:

Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN)
Southwest Forestry University
White-bellied Heron Working Group

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Congo Basin

Home to the earth's second largest rainforest and Africa's second longest river, the Congo Basin is a priority region, globally, for forest and freshwater conservation. Synchronicity Earth has created a Congo Basin Programme: a long-term, collaborative philanthropic approach, that supports partners working on the ground.

Congo Basin Partners:

DGPA
FLAG
FPP
Grain
Green Development Advocates
Life Mosaic
Mbou mon Tour
Reseau CREF
Struggle to Economize Future Environment (SEFE)
Well Grounded

READ MORE ON PAGE 10

Freshwater

Rivers, lakes and wetlands cover less than 1% of the Earth's surface, yet are home to almost 10% of all known species and are fundamental to the lives of all terrestrial species. Synchronicity Earth has been supporting freshwater conservation since 2012, working across three focal themes: raising the profile of freshwater conservation and biodiversity; reducing negative impacts of large-scale dams; and restoring and protecting freshwater habitats.

Freshwater Partners:

IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Unit (FBU)
IUCN Freshwater Conservation Sub-Committee (FCSC)
Living Rivers Association
International Rivers Africa Programme (IRAP)
International Rivers Global

READ MORE ON PAGE 8

Our Impacts at a Glance

Our vision at Synchronicity Earth is 'an Earth where all life is valued, celebrated and flourishing'. To do this we fund a wide range of activities from policy work all the way through to on the ground conservation and captive breeding. Our particular focus is bringing awareness and funding to the overlooked and underfunded. To give you a flavour of the breadth of our work and the partners we fund, here are just a few examples of what our support helped our partners achieve during 2016 and 2017.

Amphibians Programme



- Synchronicity Earth not only contributes core funding to the [Amphibian Survival Alliance](#), which was set up to better coordinate conservation data and action for amphibians, but one of our team, Dr Helen Meredith, is the Executive Director of the organisation. In July 2017 the ASA agreed a 5-year Strategic Plan, under Helen's leadership, which lays out a road map for effective conservation.
- We have also co-funded work to update the red-list status of 221 amphibian species in priority areas, which is essential for conservation planning.
- In addition, Synchronicity Earth has set up an Amphibian Fund to bring more long term funding to this important work.

Congo Basin Programme

- We have been a key funder for [International Rivers' Africa Programme](#) since 2012, opposing development of the Inga 3 hydropower dam. Their work has been influential in the decision-making processes of governments and businesses, presenting alternative energy options to deliver distributed energy across the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa. They have worked



with communities to help them understand the impacts of this large-scale project and have worked with other NGOs to raise concerns with the World Bank. The World Bank suspended funding for the project in 2016.

- One of the first grants for our Congo Basin Programme went to [GRAIN](#), which works to support local sustainable food systems, to host a community meeting in Sierra Leone. The workshop brought together participants from across Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cameroon and Gabon working to resist the expansion of agro-industrial oil palm plantations in West and Central Africa. It also included community groups, sharing experiences and seeking to support greater female involvement.

Freshwater Programme



- We are the only organisation supporting core costs for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [Freshwater Biodiversity Unit \(FBU\)](#), enabling its small team to attend key meetings to raise the importance of freshwater biodiversity conservation in water policy and governance initiatives – an often overlooked priority. Through tenacious activity at the 2016 World Conservation Congress, the FBU worked with other freshwater groups to get action on coordinating freshwater work across the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- We contributed funding for an [International River Gathering](#) in Tbilisi, Georgia co-hosted by International Rivers, a long term partner of Synchronicity Earth. This funded travel costs to enable increased participation from small local groups. The meeting provided an essential forum to share best practice and has influenced the new strategic plan of International Rivers, emphasising the need to support local organisations working to protect rivers.
- The Mekong River is increasingly under threat from hydropower development, pollution and over-harvesting. Our partner in Thailand, The [Living River Association](#),

works with local communities supporting Fish Conservation Zones on the Mun and Mekong rivers. They have coordinated 17 groups, along with Chiang Rai University to develop a proposal for a designated national wetland (1,400 hectares) on the lower Ing river basin. This is the first stage of a long process towards achieving national recognition.

High and Deep Seas Programme



- In 2016, and after several years of painstaking work (with support from Synchronicity Earth and other funders), the [Deep Sea Conservation Coalition](#) and [Bloom](#) managed to secure agreement from the European Union to ban the destructive fishing practice of bottom trawling below 800 metres in the northeast Atlantic, with new areas closed to fishing.
- We have contributed funding to the work of the [High Seas Alliance \(HSA\)](#) throughout the two year PrepCom process at the United Nations, preparing ground work for a treaty to protect the Oceans. This finally culminated in July 2017 in an official recommendation to the United Nations General Assembly to progress to an Intergovernmental Conference. This is the next phase towards developing a full High Seas Biodiversity Treaty.

White-bellied Heron Programme

- Our White-bellied Heron Programme is working to conserve this Critically Endangered bird, which has a range across India, Bhutan and China. Our funding has engaged bird enthusiasts in India to assist in survey work, identifying potential new sites for the heron. In addition, we funded an initial survey in southern China by a team of scientists which has kick-started greater survey work within the region.
- Our funding is building local conservation skills and has funded training in captive breeding with a team from Prague Zoo, as well as funding living costs for a Bhutanese conservationist to undertake a masters course in conservation at Yale University.



Regeneration Funding Programme

- The reserve management team at the [Tesoro Escondido Reserve](#) in the Chococo forests of Ecuador have established a tree nursery as the first phase of their reforestation project. They have also been working hard on community engagement and education. In 2017, they ran environmental education programmes in three schools, and engaged local farmers to increase sustainable incomes from cacao farming.
- [Mangrove Action Project](#) successfully trained 36 participants at a 5-day workshop in Myanmar on mangrove restoration.
- By 2016, our long-term partner, [Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust \(WWT\)](#), had successfully bred around 100 critically endangered Madagascar pochards and gained support from eight local communities around Lake Sofia in Madagascar for a lake restoration and livelihood initiative, which is now underway.
- Funding for forest restoration in Sabah, Malaysia has assisted [Hutan](#) in planting over 30,000 seedlings to re-establish a forest corridor linking important orangutan habitat around extensive palm oil plantations. Their support for locally managed community nurseries has also supported local livelihoods.

Beyond our programmes

- [Birdlife International](#) have been working with local artists in São Tomé and Príncipe, an island off West Africa, to engage and connect local communities to their work to save critically endangered endemic bird species. During the Children's Day of Celebration in June 2017, they coordinated with local schools to establish the first nature club, encouraging young people to enjoy and conserve the wonderful wildlife and plants on the island.
- We contributed funding to the campaign by [Bismarck Ramu Group](#) and [Act Now](#) – two local groups in Papua New Guinea. This campaign has ensured that 52 planned agri-business leases threatening a significant proportion of the country's forests and indigenous communities have been cancelled.
- In 2015 Synchronicity Earth provided early stage funding to the [IUCN Red-list of Threatened Species](#) to re-design its user interface for its website. The design phase was completed at the end of 2016 and the new interface is now being tested.

Amphibians [web-link](#)

Scientists now believe that over 40% of amphibian species are globally threatened. They are often invisible within an ecosystem, however they have an astonishing beauty and variety and can be an important indicator for the health of ecosystems.

Amphibians face increasing threats from habitat loss, disease and climate change, yet receive little attention and funding for conservation. To address this, the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) was launched in 2011, and has since built a global partnership for coordinated conservation action.

Synchronicity Earth has supported the ASA from these early days because we consider it to be the

most strategic way to combat amphibian extinctions. We have prioritised funding the core operations of the ASA and one of our team, **Dr Helen Meredith**, is the Executive Director.

Our focus is very much on helping to build new conservation alliances to address gaps in the overall conservation effort, and the ASA is an excellent example of this strategy.

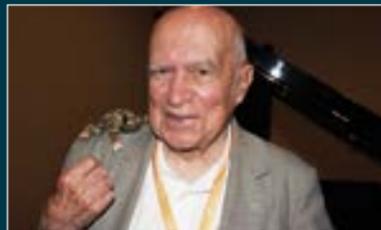


HIGHLIGHTS

In June of 2017 the ASA Global Council Meeting took place in Canterbury (United Kingdom) to move forward their 5-year Strategic Plan. Synchronicity Earth supported the ASA by providing funding and operational support for the conference. One of the priority action points to come out of the meeting was development of a tracking tool for amphibian conservation planning and action.



DR GEORGE RABB



In late July 2017, we received the very sad news that the man widely considered as the founding father of amphibian conservation, Dr George Rabb, had passed away. Just a few weeks before this, George had agreed with Adam Sweidan (Founding Trustee and Chair of Synchronicity Earth) that we could establish an Amphibian Fund in his honour. Find out more on our website.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT IUCN SSC Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA)

Synchronicity Earth is further showing its commitment by funding and contributing staff time to complete the Second Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA2). This is an initiative led by the IUCN SSC Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA) which updates the conservation status of all amphibians on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN Red List).

The support of Synchronicity Earth to ARLA has enabled 221 new and updated species assessments to be published for the six priority regions of Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Madagascar, Panama, and West and Central Africa. A total of 1,051 amphibian species are under review with Synchronicity Earth's support.



Amphibians face increasing threats from habitat loss, disease and climate change, yet receive little attention and funding for conservation.

Congo Basin web-link

The Congo Basin holds the largest rainforest in Africa and is home to an amazing array of species, including iconic species such as elephants, gorillas and bonobos. Beyond this there are over 450 mammal species, 1,300 bird species, 336 amphibian species and 400 reptiles, as well as 20,000 plant species.

Our research identified the Congo Basin as a priority region for forest and freshwater conservation, yet funding for mainland African forests is much lower than it is for forest protection in Latin America and Southeast Asia. At the same time, the region is home to some of the poorest and most politically unstable countries in the world where conflict and displacement continues to have a significant impact. All these factors make conservation work challenging, but we believe

that working to build local capacity to defend indigenous peoples' rights, land rights and forest rights are essential to protect this wonderful ecosystem and to support sustainable development.

Synchronicity Earth has developed the **Congo Basin Programme** to build collaborative funding and support for this region, building on our experience funding key partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2012.



HIGHLIGHT

In May of 2017 we held a small salon to launch our programme and we were delighted to welcome Samuel Nnah Ndobe, an independent researcher and consultant from Cameroon. Previously at the Center for Environment and Development in Cameroon, Samuel has worked extensively across the Congo Basin on issues such as industrial scale agriculture, logging, forest protection and gender and indigenous peoples' rights. He has an incredible grasp of the socio-political context within each country and is a key adviser for our work.

*The driving force behind the development of this programme is **Dr Katy Scholfield**, our Co-Head of Programmes. Katy has been the principle lead on our forest work since 2011, as well as providing greater insight into the importance of local community support of biodiversity conservation.*

LOOKING AHEAD

Synchronicity Earth has successfully created funding partnerships for the first phase of the Congo Basin programme, and provided the first round of grants in December 2017. Over 2018 we will be looking to further develop this funding network to provide stable continuous funding to those working tirelessly to protect this beautiful region.

The Congo Basin is home to Earth's second-largest rainforest and to Africa's second-longest river.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Mbou Mon Tour

Mbou Mon Tour is a movement of villagers that has successfully established a holistic conservation programme to protect Endangered bonobos and other wildlife in a unique forest-savanna landscape in Mai Ndombe, Democratic Republic of Congo, whilst at the same time improving the wellbeing of local communities.

In a bid to protect the bonobos and their forest-savanna home a local chief, Jean Christophe Bokika Ngawolo, established a small community organisation "Mbou Mon Tour" (MMT) in 1997. Over the last twenty years, Jean Christophe and his team have established a successful education and awareness raising programme in local villages to revive the bushmeat taboo and protect bonobos. Local communities are fully committed to and engaged in MMT's conservation work.

In 2016, MMT hosted its first ecotourists to the site and this year it is establishing an agroecology programme. Both activities are part of efforts to improve not only the wellbeing of bonobos, but also that of local communities in isolated areas with high economic poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.



Freshwater web-link

Rivers, lakes and wetlands cover less than 1% of the Earth's surface, yet are home to almost 10% of all known species and are fundamental to the lives of all terrestrial species.

People have a long history of re-engineering natural water systems and the impact this has had on our rivers, lakes and wetlands has escalated over the past century. Freshwater systems have moved further and further away from the natural conditions in which species have evolved, resulting in widescale population loss of freshwater mammals, reptiles, fish, molluscs, odonates (dragonflies and damselflies), crabs and aquatic plants.



of freshwater conservation and biodiversity; reducing negative impacts of large-scale dams; and restoring and protecting freshwater habitats.

Synchronicity Earth has been supporting freshwater conservation since 2012 working across three focal themes: raising the profile



HIGHLIGHT

*In March, 2017, the **International River Gathering** took place in Tblisi, Georgia. Hosted by CEE BankWatch and International Rivers, it had been eight years since local activists working to protect the world's rivers last convened, and served as an opportunity for many to reconnect, to share their struggles and to learn from the experiences of others. One of our Conservation Research Analysts, **Merlin Veron**, attended to learn more about how local organisations are working to protect river systems, particularly the strategies they employ and the actors and processes they engage within their campaigns. The key focus of the conference was the continued development of hydropower dams, and the challenges that these infrastructure projects pose to river systems and the adjacent communities whose lives are so intricately connected to them.*

LOOKING AHEAD

Synchronicity Earth is further developing our freshwater strategy, which will focus on the core themes of: freshwater biodiversity conservation; empowering river dependent communities; and connecting freshwater biodiversity conservation and science to grassroots community-based activity.

We will launch our new Freshwater programme in 2018.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT International Rivers

We have been one of the key supporters of International Rivers' Africa Programme since 2012, providing funding towards their work to stop destructive dams and promote more sustainable water and energy solutions.

In 2016 International Rivers encouraged the World Bank to withdraw support for Inga 3 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Fomi Dam in Guinea. More recently they have conducted a study into the economic impacts of Inga 3. The report, which was published in June 2017, raised questions about the economic viability of the scheme and the likelihood of delivering energy solutions to the population at large. Instead the study showed that the DRC could achieve greater energy access for its population if it used the funds intended for Inga 3 on micro-hydropower and solar energy.



Freshwater systems have moved further and further away from the natural conditions in which species have evolved, resulting in widescale biodiversity loss.

High and Deep Seas web-link

The high seas cover 64% of the ocean's surface, while the deep sea makes up 90% of our planet's marine environment.

Synchronicity Earth strives to continually identify and address gaps within the conservation sector. Our analysis of over 1,000 marine grants between 2012 and 2016, from leading ocean funders, showed that less than two per cent went towards protection of the high and deep seas. The high seas lie beyond national boundaries so they are open to exploitation, essentially free from effective regulation or oversight.

Our High and Deep Seas Programme directs funding towards this important gap. We have identified and provide support for key organisations and alliances that are working to address the fundamental issues driving the overexploitation and degradation of this critically important and endangered ecosystem.

LOOKING AHEAD

Having secured funding for the first phase of our High and Deep Seas Programme, in 2018 we will be developing the strategy further, adding new partners and looking to secure additional funding.



HIGHLIGHT

*In October 2017, Conservation Research Analyst **Anna Heath** travelled to Malta to attend the Our Ocean conference. It gave her the opportunity to meet some of our partners who are based overseas (High Seas Alliance and Deep Sea Conservation Coalition) and allowed her to gain a broader understanding of work and initiatives taking place across governments, the private sector, NGOs and foundations within the marine space.*

At the conference, Synchronicity Earth co-hosted a 'Fundors Breakfast' side-event with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, bringing together key funders to share knowledge on gaps in ocean conservation and to improve future coordination.



The high seas lie beyond national boundaries so they are open to exploitation, essentially free from effective regulation or oversight.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

High Seas Alliance

Synchronicity Earth supports the High Seas Alliance (HSA) which is a coalition of 35 non-governmental conservation organisations as well as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). They have been using their expertise in policy, advocacy, and communications to lobby for a High Seas Treaty that has the ability to enforce strong conservation measures. Their purpose is to provide well-researched ways forward, as well as to sustain public pressure on governments to protect our common heritage.

The process of developing an international legally binding treaty is a long and complex one working with the United Nations. Maintaining the interest and engagement of the international community (and attracting funding) over many years is extremely challenging and the vital role played by NGOs to ensure that pressure is placed on decision-makers is generally poorly understood and easily overlooked. Beyond direct grants to the HSA, Synchronicity Earth is working to raise awareness amongst the funder community to help grow support for this ambitious, yet overlooked, initiative.



White-bellied Heron web-link

Population estimates suggest there are fewer than 250 individuals of this beautiful and culturally important bird species left in the world.

Many of Asia's species, from the iconic tiger to the less well-known species like the White-bellied Heron (WBH), are at risk of extinction. Pressures from increased human population and industrial development are resulting in continuing declines in wildlife populations across the region and urgent action is required to ensure their long-term survival.

Synchronicity Earth created the White-bellied Heron Working Group in 2014 to coordinate action to protect this Critically Endangered bird across its range states (India, Bhutan, China and Myanmar).

Following the first workshop in 2014, the Species Conservation Strategy for the White-bellied Heron was created, bringing together information on the species and providing a blueprint for the global action needed to prevent its demise. Creation of the Strategy marked the start of a hard road back to a healthy and viable population of White-bellied Heron and has helped us to pave the way for other collaborative initiatives throughout Asia.



LOOKING AHEAD

Synchronicity Earth has played a major role in the White-bellied Heron working group. The initial workshop organisation in 2014 and strategy development was led by **Gemma Goodman-Hattie**, Co-Head of Programmes and our species specialist. Gemma travelled to Bhutan in November 2017 to discuss progress on the construction of the captive breeding centre and to plan further field work and surveys for 2018.



Synchronicity Earth created the White-bellied Heron Working Group in 2014 to coordinate action to protect this Critically Endangered bird across its range states.

HIGHLIGHT

Following the decision to build a captive breeding centre in Bhutan for WBH, two members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), Bhutan, have undertaken training with Prague Zoo and Zlin Zoo in the Czech Republic to learn essential skills in captive breeding. Barun Chettri, the architect responsible for the design and construction of the centre, has visited multiple aviaries in the region, and learnt from global experts about different aspects of enclosure design. Meanwhile, Sonam Tshering of RSPN is focusing on the care of closely related species in captivity, from hatchlings to adults, to ensure successful planning and activity for the captive breeding project.

On the other side of the world, a conference was held in May 2017 by the WBH working group for amateur and professional birders in Northeast India. This meeting gathered data from people in the field on sightings

of WBH, to develop a better understanding of their distribution in the region. It also identified potential sites with suitable habitat where they could be found. This is a vital first step in developing a comprehensive plan for WBH protection and research in India, and will feed into a variety of future initiatives.

Finally, Indra Acharja from RSPN Bhutan was awarded a scholarship to join the Master of Forest Science programme at Yale University, starting earlier this year. This is a fantastic achievement for Indra, who has worked tirelessly on the research and conservation of WBH in Bhutan. This is a crucial step as it will provide training in research methods, analysis, and proposal writing. Synchronicity Earth is happy to be able to part fund Indra in this endeavour, along with the International Crane Foundation.

Regeneration [web-link](#)

The aim of this programme is to bring funding into regeneration of heavily degraded forests, corals, mangroves and wetlands, bringing life back to regions where biodiversity has been lost.

This funding programme is particularly aimed at those businesses that understand the importance of the 'E' in Environmental, Social and Governance requirements for business management. This framework is intended to contribute to a more sustainable economy, recognising "that the generation of long-term sustainable returns is dependent on stable, well-functioning and well-governed social, environmental and economic systems" (United Nations Principle of Responsible Investing).

Many businesses use carbon offsetting to reduce their overall CO₂ emissions, but this is a one-dimensional approach to the multidimensional environmental footprint of any business. At Synchronicity Earth we believe that whole ecosystem restoration has a greater positive environmental impact and truly builds a more sustainable future for everyone.

LOOKING AHEAD

We have particularly enjoyed working with businesses on this funding portfolio which has grown steadily from the first project funded in 2015. We have been able to present to business teams the results of their funding and arrange trips to projects. We will continue to build these partnerships in 2018 and we would love to hear from you if you would like to become part of this funding initiative.



HIGHLIGHT

*In July 2017, **Jim Petteward**, our Head of Communications, visited **Tesoro Escondido** in the Chocó region of northwest Ecuador, a project which Synchronicity Earth has supported since January 2017. The name means 'hidden treasure', and with its riotous flora and awe-inspiring fauna, it is easy to see why. **Dr Mika Peck**, a Conservation Biologist who is part of a team leading efforts to create a reserve to protect the Critically endangered Brown-headed spider monkey, calls Tesoro a 'hotspot within a hotspot'.*

*The research that **Dr Peck**, along with his former PhD student **Dr Citlalli Morelos-Juarez**, now Reserve Director, and others have been doing, has revealed a diversity of species that is truly breath-taking: three hundred species of tree per hectare; exceptionally rare animals such as jaguars, pumas, the Great Green macaw and the beautifully named Long-wattled umbrellabird; and a large proportion of the world's last remaining Brown-headed spider monkeys.*

Increasing conservation interest in this place has led to the creation of a research hub, built and maintained with the help of a dedicated local couple. This centre hosts a wide variety of people who come from far and wide to visit Tesoro: local parabiologists learning about the forest and its species, researchers, employees of various local NGOs and Foundations, farmers, funders and locals just dropping in for a chat.

Here was proof that effective conservation, while rooted in rigorous science, requires more than scientists. The growing involvement of local people and their curiosity to understand more about this extraordinary forest and its inhabitants brings real hope that Tesoro Escondido can be conserved, both for its incredible wildlife and for the people that depend on it.

At Synchronicity Earth we believe that whole ecosystem restoration has a greater positive environmental impact and truly builds a more sustainable future for everyone.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Hutan

Regeneration support for [Hutan's reforestation work](#) in the Sabah region of Malaysian Borneo began in 2015. Hutan has worked for many years to conserve Critically Endangered orangutan populations in the areas that have been severely impacted by extensive deforestation for palm oil plantations. Their reforestation work is reconnecting areas of forest that have been isolated by the expansion of plantations, reconnecting orangutan populations as well as those of many other forest species.

Local community-run nurseries produce seedlings of 38 local tree species and the Hutan restoration team, mostly comprising women from the local communities, have planted over 31,000 seedlings to date, with our Regeneration funding providing significant support.

Young trees grow quickly in this part of the world and the Hutan team closely monitor the success rate of planting and how quickly local species begin to repopulate replanted areas. The next stage of regeneration will provide nest boxes for Hornbills, which distribute key tree species seeds in their faeces. It seems that passing through the digestive system of the hornbill is an important trigger for seed germination, so Hutan are putting this to work.



A year of programmes, partners and conservation networks

Simon Stuart, our Director of Strategic Conservation, reflects on his first year at Synchronicity Earth



In January 2017, I joined Synchronicity Earth after over 30 years working in the International Union for Conservation (IUCN), the umbrella body for conservation encompassing governments, non-governmental organisations and specialist scientists. I

had spent the previous eight years as Chair of the [IUCN Species Survival Commission \(SSC\)](#), an expert network of over 7,500 scientists working on an enormous array of issues and programmes, including the well-known [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#).

My arrival at Synchronicity Earth was a huge transition for me, adjusting to an organisation with a team of ten rather than thousands. But it has also been a hugely enjoyable experience and I am very grateful to Adam and Jessica for reaching out to me and encouraging me to join them in Synchronicity Earth's exciting journey.

Becoming part of the team

Much of my time has been spent supporting Synchronicity Earth's priority focus on amphibian conservation. Frogs, toads, salamanders and newts comprise the most threatened class of vertebrates worldwide, and are greatly neglected in conservation efforts and have been a focus of mine for a number of years. One of our team, Dr Helen Meredith, is the Executive Director of the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) and I have worked closely with her as Deputy Chair of the ASA Global Council to move the five year Strategic Plan of ASA forward. However, in late July, we had the very sad news that the man who

really founded global amphibian conservation, [George Rabb](#), had passed away. He had been an early mentor to me in my conservation career and those of many others. Amazingly, a few weeks before, George had agreed with Adam Sweidan (Founding Trustee and Chair of Synchronicity Earth) that Synchronicity Earth could establish an [Amphibian Fund](#) in his honour. We are now working to secure financial support for this fund.

I arrived at Synchronicity Earth with the role of Chair of the [Asian Species Action Partnership \(ASAP\)](#), an initiative to raise the profile of and support for conservation for Critically Endangered species across southeast Asia. This fits perfectly with the species focus that Synchronicity Earth has had from its inception, with current projects in Asia supporting conservation of White-bellied Heron, Bornean Orangutan, Philippine Crocodile and pangolins. We will look to expand this in the coming years, leveraging my role with ASAP and the network that Synchronicity Earth has already established in the region.

It has been a huge privilege working with the Research and Conservation team: Gemma Goodman-Hattie, Katy Scholfield, Helen Meredith, Anna Heath, and Merlin Veron as well. I think I have learnt much more from the team than I have been able to give them. Each member of the team has made critically important contributions. Gemma has spearheaded an innovative and impressive conservation initiative on one of Asia's most threatened and neglected species, the White-bellied Heron. Katy has developed a new programme in the Congo Basin and has assembled an unparalleled network of grassroots organisations to implement it. Helen spearheaded the ASA planning process. Anna has developed SE's new high and deep seas programme, and Merlin is doing likewise for freshwater biodiversity – both of these being great achievements for two people who have been with the organisation for just over a year.

Moving forward broad conservation initiatives

My role at Synchronicity Earth also enables me to stay very involved in several other initiatives in the broader conservation community as part of Synchronicity Earth's priority to increase its conservation impact. I Chair the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Committee for the newly-established [KBA Partnership](#) of 11 conservation organisations, where our focus is on identifying the most important sites for biodiversity conservation worldwide, using the new IUCN KBA Standard which was formally adopted in 2016. KBAs are rapidly becoming a critical 'currency' for conservation action, and will help to direct conservation to where it is needed most, and it is excellent to have Synchronicity Earth engaging at this early stage.

On behalf of Synchronicity Earth I am also taking part in two IUCN processes that are likely to have huge impact going forwards. The first is to develop the criteria for an IUCN Green List of Species to complement the Red List (which measures species' extinction risk). The Green List will seek to measure how effective conservation is at achieving its targets for each species. The second is IUCN's emerging policy process on Synthetic Biology, which is about the impacts, both positive and negative, that modern genetic engineering techniques are likely to

have on nature, and how we should develop policies to maximise the positives, and minimise the negatives.

Working from Bath and cycling for species

On my arrival we established a small team in Bath, where we share an office with [Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust \(DWCT\)](#). This builds on my role as a member of the Conservation Committee of DWCT and provides an additional springboard for Synchronicity Earth and DWCT to build collaboration in the coming years. Synchronicity Earth established the Durrell Fund at the end of 2016 to support their outstanding species conservation work and we will be funding some of their work in 2018.

Before finishing, I must mention that in July and August, my wife Ann and I cycled the length of the UK (1,000 miles, 1,600 km) to raise funds for SE and A Rocha UK. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and hopefully helped to raise the profile of Synchronicity Earth. I wanted to do something that was both very different and yet similar after leaving IUCN, and thanks especially to Adam and Jessica for making this possible. I hope that I can make a major positive impact as Synchronicity Earth grows in the coming years. It is a huge privilege to be part of this journey.

Moving on to pastures new

After more than 6 inspiring years, in which she has helped to turn an idea into reality and driven our development as an organisation, Laura Miller, our Executive Director, decided that it was time to move on.

“Laura has taken us from our infancy to where we are now – a vital, robust and dynamic organisation with great ambition. We are immensely grateful to Laura for everything that she has done. Not only has she played an instrumental role in developing our approach, but she has cultivated and nurtured a terrific team.”

JESSICA SWEIDAN

We asked Laura how far she thought Synchronicity Earth's original vision had been realised:



“What excites me the most is the fact that we have supported people who work holistically – we have developed relationships with people who are the embodiment of our vision. So even a project that seems at first glance to be purely about species conservation – work to protect the Critically Endangered Madagascar pochard, for example – involves lake restoration and reforestation as well as captive breeding; and our

partners, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), engage local communities to figure out how ecological models of livelihoods are going to work for them; so people become part of the solution to environmental decline and have better lives as a result. It's just really lovely to see.”

[Read the full interview on our website](#)

Events & Networks highlights

The World Conservation Congress lands in Hawaii • September 2016

by Helen Meredith, Head of Amphibian Programme and Executive Director of the Amphibian Survival Alliance

The [World Conservation Congress](#) (in Hawaii) came hot on the heels of the [World Congress of Herpetology](#) (in China). Having just corrected 7 hours of jet lag East, I piled on another 11 hours of jet lag West, leaving me wondering whether the ensuing discussions about protecting our world would fly clean over my nodding head. However, Hawaii kicked off with the heart-warming news that Barack Obama had just expanded the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, making it the largest expanse of protected ocean in the world, and (at 583,000 square miles or 1,510,000 km²) the world's largest protected area for that matter.

So on to the reason we had assembled in Honolulu for that fine first week in September 2016. The World Conservation Congress takes place every four years, and is a meeting place for thousands of conservationists, policy makers, environmental activists, academics, artists, writers, government representatives, and anyone else who cares about the responsible stewardship of the Earth. This year's theme was "Planet at the crossroads". Opening every door was like walking through a portal to another world; lying on the other side could be anything from a serious board meeting of politicians, to a lively gathering of tribal leaders in elaborate national dress.

The days ahead afforded many reasons for optimism. I divided my time between meetings and sessions devoted to developing the activities and networks of the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA), and getting swept up into the wonderful world of conservation activities supported and promoted by Synchronicity Earth. It was this dichotomy that injected fresh life into my thinking regarding the way forward for ASA. Alliance building is clearly an art form, and I have much to learn as we move ahead. Many partnerships and initiatives were coming together across the Congress that promised new and positive ways forward for a wide variety of conservation causes. I even had the opportunity to spend part of an afternoon with Dame Jane Goodall, alongside my colleagues from the Amphibian Specialist Group. She showed us her favourite frog-themed comic strip and offered

the wise reminder that frogs are, in fact, very funny. Certainly too funny to be lost from the world, which is something I will bear firmly in mind!

We are blessed everyday on this Earth, just breathing in and out, and looking around us at the majesty we have inherited from our ancestors. The importance of cherishing it for future generations rings loud and clear through the ages. In my mind, this is why conservation is a celebration of being alive, and ultimately one of the most optimistic causes you can pursue.



The Last Chance Casino – betting against extinction • March 2017

By Jim Petteward, Head of Communications

In March 2017, we held our [Last Chance Casino](#), highlighting the extinction crisis and raising money for our partners working to conserve biodiversity around the globe. The evening was a decadent and – dare we say – slightly subversive way to introduce our guests to some of the less well-known and charismatic species that are slipping towards extinction. On the night, guests were given the opportunity to gamble for the future of life on Earth, rather than with it.

As well as raising around £100,000 for species conservation, Last Chance Casino was an opportunity for us to re-engage with some of the great artists we have worked with over the past few years. Our dear friend Clare Shenstone created a stunning set of playing cards featuring species on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, some of which feature on our brand new website: www.synchronicityearth.org.

The green shoots of conservation optimism • April 2017

by Jim Petteward, Head of Communications and Simon Stuart, Director of Strategic Conservation

The [Conservation Optimism Summit](#) in London in April 2017, was one of a series of #EarthOptimism events (e.g. in Cambridge, UK and Washington, D.C.) taking place to coincide with Earth day (April 22nd). In the face of an endless stream of negative, doom-laden stories about conservation and the environment, hope and optimism are needed more than ever. Conservation does make a difference, successes are real and need to be celebrated and with the right resources, approaches and determination, species can be brought back from the brink of extinction and vital habitats conserved and restored.

Synchronicity Earth presented a session on Art and Conservation as well as attending a wide range of talks. It was good to see that people generally were in no doubt as to the intrinsic value of nature but were also very open to working with communities and embracing economic values where this produces positive outcomes. It was not narrow-minded nor did there seem to be any blind optimism without evidence.

It was very original, almost a bit quirky in some senses – driven by Oxford professor, E.J. Milner-Gulland (now an adviser to Synchronicity Earth) and her team. As a result, it was very informal with a young demographic, highlighting the number of young people engaged and looking for ways forward. The summit showed not just the number of different initiatives going on, but also the strength and depth of innovation in some of the smaller organisations who took part.

This was a new way to present the important work the sector undertakes and is steadily growing into a new and exciting movement.

Conservation Optimism



Beyond the Horizon • October 2017

By Anna Heath, Research and Conservation Analyst

In October 2017 we welcomed two inspiring speakers, Ian Urbina and Mirella Von Lindenfels, to our event '[Beyond the Horizon](#)'. Ian, an investigative journalist with the *New York Times*, described the extraordinary and harrowing work he has undertaken over the past few years to document people's stories on the high and deep seas. His *Outlaw Ocean* series tells of trafficking, slavery and murder taking place far from the world's attention and he brought home the devastating human impact of our quest to plunder more and more of the ocean.

"I've been an investigative reporter for *The Times* for nearly two decades. In that time, I've never done more daunting reporting or witnessed a more urgent need for it."

Mirella, an award-winning communications expert, has been advising the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) campaign since 2004 and is one of the founders of the High Seas Alliance. A specialist communicator in environmental issues, particularly on the oceans, she co-founded the International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO) in 2006.

'Beyond the Horizon' was thought-provoking and at times shocking, but it did also provide hope. Armed with the right knowledge and supported by increasingly well-coordinated alliances and strategies, we believe that the tide can start to turn. The work of groups supported by Synchronicity Earth, and the impact of brilliant reporting like *Outlaw Ocean* can help to bring about change to protect our High and Deep Seas.

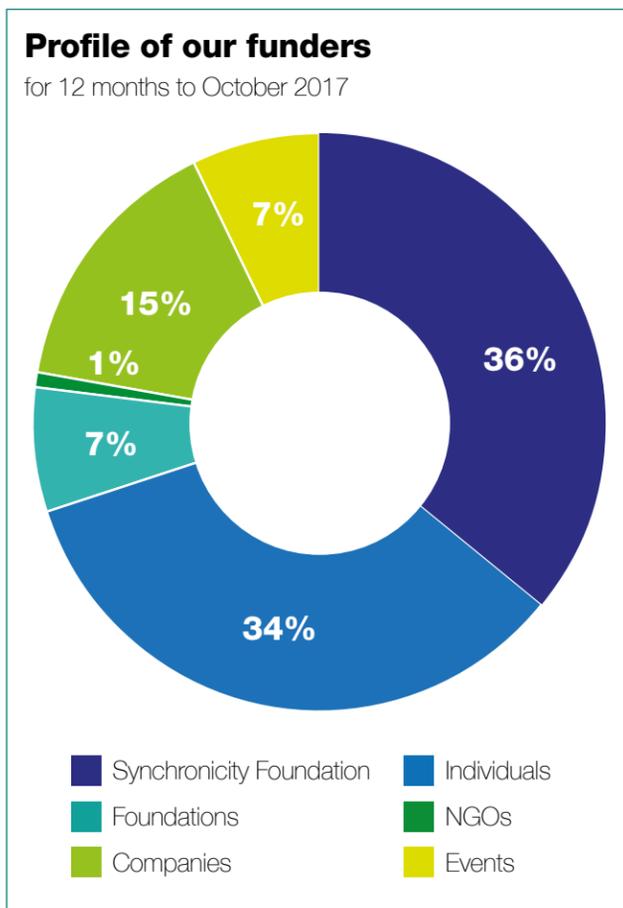
How are we funded

Synchronicity Earth is a charity registered in England and Wales (registration no.1132786), established in 2009 to assist environmental funders to give well and to increase funding for the environment. The charity is governed by a board of trustees, who work closely with the CEO and team, to develop strategy and implement our Vision and Mission.

We would like to thank all our donors; individuals, businesses and foundations, who have supported Synchronicity Earth and our programme funding and enabled vital conservation work to take place around the world.

Synchronicity Earth also receives unrestricted, philanthropic funding from the Synchronicity Foundation, which has enabled us to develop strategic funding programmes with effective organisations using analysis, research and a network of experts. In addition, we have built an infrastructure to manage funding, monitoring and reporting for donors.

We magnify this funding by offering our insights and programme research to those who would like to consider funding through us, without charge. Alongside the Synchronicity foundation, a range of donors contribute to our core costs as and support our programmes.



Partner organisations awarded grants

from Jan 2016 to June 2017

- Act Now
- Agroecology Fund
- Amphibian Survival Alliance
- ARLA
- Bioneers
- Bismarck Ramu Group
- Compassion in World Farming
- Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
- Forest Peoples Programme
- High Seas Alliance
- Hutan
- International Rivers Africa
- International Rivers Global
- Iruka & Kujira (Dolphin & Whale) Action Network
- IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Unit
- IUCN Freshwater Conservation Sub-Committee
- IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group
(via Bristol Zoological Society)
- Living Rivers Association
- Mabuwaya Foundation
- Mangrove Action Project
- Marine Safe
- Ocean Initiatives (Formally ORCA)
- Project Seahorse
- Resurgence
- Save Vietnam's Wildlife
- Southwest Forestry University
- Tesoro Escondido (Cambugan)
- Well Grounded
- Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
- Zoological Society of London – Finless Porpoise

To find out more about all of our Partners, please visit our website: www.synchronicityearth.org

How can I find out more?

Find on Social Media:
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
@SynchEarth

We were delighted to launch our new website in December 2017. We hope you will agree that it is visually stunning and brings you closer to the inspiring stories about the work our partners are able to do with our support. Please take a look.

www.synchronicityearth.org

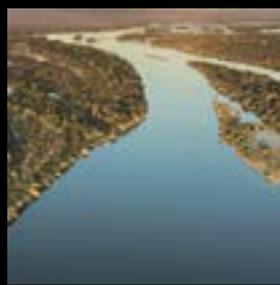
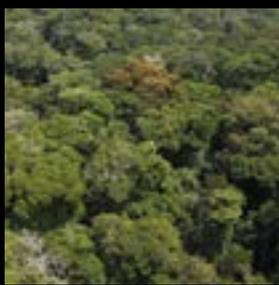
We welcome questions and enquiries about our work. If you would like to get in touch please contact: info@synchronicityearth.org

Or write to us at:
32a, Thurloe Place,
London,
SW7 2HQ

Or call us on:
Tel: 020 7581 0100

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SYNCHRONICITY EARTH

32a Thurloe Place, London, SW7 2HQ

Registered in England & Wales No 06952204

Registered Charity No 1132786

Printed on 100% recycled paper using vegetable oil-based inks
and 100% renewable energy • www.severnprint.co.uk
Designed by Banyan Design, Chalford • banyandesign.co.uk