

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

IUCN NL



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword • 3

Our members • 10

Our strategy • 16

Vigorous policy for nature (1) • 18

The Dutch Action Agenda for Biodiversity presented to Minister Schouten • 19

Soil Calibration Centre opened • 21

Green Election Debate: young people challenge politicians • 23

Responsible value chains (2) • 26

SoyChaco: making soy production sustainable in Argentina • 27

Report: 'Sustainable production and consumption better than exclusion for sustainable fats and oils sector' • 29

New EU forest law must stop global deforestation • 31

Protected areas (3) • 34

Nature conservation success: a new generation of cheetahs in Iran • 35

Drones monitor reforestation in Ghana • 37

The biking birder gets off to a flying start • 39

Community governance (4) • 45

Female leadership in nature conservation • 46

Experts: involve local and indigenous communities in protecting the jaguar • 48

Beekeeping as a win-win solution around Virunga National Park • 50

Importance of communities in meeting climate and biodiversity targets • 52

Right to nature (5) • 54

Fund support (women) Environmental Human Rights Defenders in need • 55

Tracking dogs deployed in the fight against illegal jaguar trade in Suriname • 58

Webinar informs policymakers, politicians and companies about regulations against human rights violations • 60

Conservation finance (6) • 62

Funding for natural climate solutions • 63

Biodiversity integration in the Dutch financial sector • 65

Making the charcoal value chain more sustainable in Ghana • 67

About us • 69

FOREWORD

NATURE IS STRONG AND RESILIENT. DESPITE THE ONGOING BLATANT DESTRUCTION OF ECOSYSTEMS, NATURE RETURNS WHERE AND WHEN IT IS GIVEN SPACE. ALL OVER THE WORLD, PEOPLE ARE STANDING UP FOR A HEALTHY, GREEN AND SAFE LIVING ENVIRONMENT, ALSO AGAINST IMPORTANT INTERESTED PARTIES AND AGGRESSION. THESE PEOPLE ARE A GREAT SOURCE OF INSPIRATION AND HOPE FOR A JUST, SUSTAINABLE WORLD.

At the time this annual report is being published, that just and sustainable world feels very far away. For the first time in decades, a country on our continent attacked another country, causing immense suffering and destruction. The consequences for people and nature are far-reaching.

We continue to work to bring about that just, sustainable world, and significant steps were taken in 2021. At the global level, the link between the climate and biodiversity received additional attention, such as at the climate summit in Glasgow where halting deforestation was a key issue. At the IUCN World Conservation Congress, which took place again after five years, more than 5,000 professionals gathered to set the common agenda for nature and biodiversity. IUCN NL, together with its members and partners in the South, made a significant contribution.

We also launched new international cooperation programmes, such as Forests for a Just Future, aimed at the sustainable and inclusive management of tropical forests, and Eyes on the Amazon - an innovative cooperation led by our partner Foundation for Conservation and Sustainable Development (FCDS) in Colombia, to combat forest crime and improve the territorial rights of indigenous peoples. As over the past 20 years, we were able to secure crucial nature areas with the help of the IUCN NL Land Acquisition Fund.

In the Netherlands, with Naturalis and the Delta Plan for Biodiversity Restoration, we ensured that climate and biodiversity received explicit attention in the Dutch elections to the House of Representatives. We also launched the joint Dutch Action Agenda for Biodiversity, containing more than 150 contributions from companies and civil society organisations to international biodiversity targets. Together with the Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW), Wageningen University and Research (WUR) and the Dutch Butterfly Conservation, the world's first Soil Calibration Centre for Biodiversity Assessment was launched. Our work increasingly features in the news, including all the national newspapers and the Jeugdjournaal (youth news).

We implemented changes in our organisation in 2021, so we could continue to operate effectively, with a broader funding base. On the one hand, by structurally reducing our costs, which meant that we were forced to say goodbye to several valued colleagues. On the other hand, by investing in new initiatives and financiers. We are proud of the commitment with which all our employees have contributed to these drastic changes.

Thus, we have laid a strong foundation for another powerful contribution to a just and biodiverse world in 2022, together with our members, partners and financiers.



Angélique Laskewitz



Coenraad Krijger

In the Netherlands, with Naturalis and the Delta Plan for Biodiversity Restoration, we ensured that climate and biodiversity received explicit attention in the Dutch elections to the House of Representatives.

2021 IN A NUTSHELL

85



initiatives by local partners
funded for **4.96 million euros**



152

pledges made by Dutch organisations, in which they pledge their contribution to the biodiversity targets for 2030, were handed over to the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

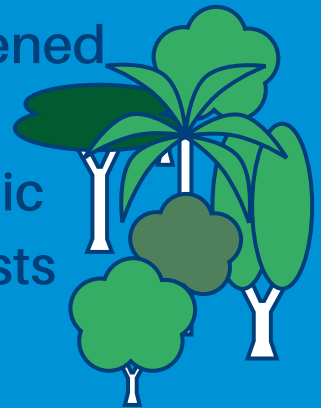
10



environmental defenders in three countries were supported with our emergency fund

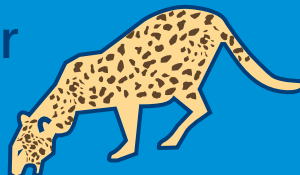
21

organisations strengthened their capacity under the strategic partnership Forests for a Just Future



5

jaguar traffickers were arrested in Bolivia as a result of our undercover investigation as part of Operation Jaguar



2021 IN A
NUTSHELL

3 areas of 800
hectares of nature
were purchased
in Mexico, Brazil and the
Philippines



30 sessions were organised
with **32 partners** in the IUCN NL
pavilion at the IUCN World
Conservation Congress in Marseille



11 policy measures
were implemented
to protect nature



20.000 kilometres



were covered by the fietsende vogelaar
(Biking Birder) to raise money for the IUCN NL
Land Acquisition Fund



260 organisations, including IUCN NL,
urged banks not to finance the
pipeline that Total wants to build
in East Africa

10.9 million in income

11.7 million in expenditure of which



92% (10,754,901 EUR) was spent on objectives

8% (337,167 EUR + 610,687 EUR) was spent on fundraising, management and administration

NEW PROJECTS

New

Eyes on the Amazon •

• € 975,000 • NORAD

Continuation of the Dutch
Action Agenda for Biodiversity

• € 90,000 • Ministry of
Agriculture, Nature and Food
Quality

Extension of Virunga Youth •

\$ 150,000 • 11th Hour
Foundation

Coastal protection nature-
based solutions with carbon
credits • € 24,200 • RVO

Making NL Soy more
sustainable • € 84,000 •
Ministry of Agriculture, Nature
and Food Quality

Coordination and technical
support Collaborative Soy
Initiative • € 26,400 •
Collaborative Soy Initiative

2021 IN A
NUTSHELL**40 member organisations****6 Supervisory Board members:**

- Angélique Laskewitz (Chair)
- Franc van den Berg (Vice-Chair)
- Luc Bas
- Daan van Cann
- Merel Soons
- Teo Wams

4 Management Team members:

- Coenraad Krijger, Director
- Cas Besselink
- Liliana Jauregui
- Hans van Zijl

34.63 fte
average
workforce



Average age:

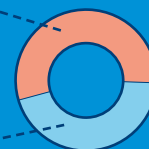
45 (youngest employee: 24
oldest employee: 64)

0 new employees
joined the
organisation in 2021

5 interns

55.1% female

44.9% male



6 →
employees left the
organisation in
2021

6 → left
during 2021

2 → left
as of 1 January
2022

2021 IN A
NUTSHELL**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

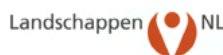
COVID-19 also had a major impact on our work and that of our partners in 2021. We still mostly worked from home, international meetings were mostly cancelled or organised digitally and there were far fewer opportunities to go into the field with our partners. The pandemic had a particularly severe impact on the work of our partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the (indigenous) communities they work with. For example, some, often remote, communities – especially the women in these communities – were restricted

in their movement, making it more difficult for them to earn a living or to access information and social services. The lockdown also led to a rise in the illegal exploitation of nature and violations of human rights in a number of countries. People were hit even harder in countries with poor healthcare and where there are conflicts. Therefore, IUCN NL supported partners to help them deal more effectively with the consequences of the pandemic, such as capacity building in (the use of) digital communication tools and online safety. Partners were thus better able to adapt to the changing reality and continue their important work.



OUR MEMBERS

IUCN NL serves as the platform for Dutch members of IUCN (the National Committee of the Netherlands) and actively works with them to safeguard important nature and biodiversity, in the Netherlands and beyond. As a platform, we facilitate knowledge sharing and promote the joint defence of shared interests. In 2021, we worked with several members on an exploratory study on the possible return of the Dalmatian pelican to our country. The World Conservation Congress also took place in Marseille in 2021. An inspiring joint programme with experts, partners and member organisations was held in our pavilion. In 2021, IUCN had 40 members in the Netherlands.



Links

[Amazon Conservation Team](#)

[ARK Natuurontwikkeling](#)

[ARTIS](#)

[Avalon](#)

[Bears in mind](#)

[Black Jaguar Foundation](#)

[Both Ends](#)

[Carmabi](#)

[Chimbo Foundation](#)

[Commonland](#)

[DCNA](#)

[EAZA](#)

[Floron](#)

[IBED](#)

[IVN](#)

[IFAW](#)

[KNNV](#)

[LandschappenNL](#)

[Leo Foundation](#)

[Milieudefensie](#)

[Naturalis](#)

[Natuur & Milieu](#)

[Natuurmonumenten](#)

[NVBT](#)

[Nederlandse Vereniging van Dierentuinen](#)

[Ouwehand Zoo Foundation](#)

[Prince Bernard Chair](#)

[Rewilding Europe](#)

[RAVON](#)

[Rijksoverheid](#)

[Staatsbosbeheer](#)

[SOVON](#)

[Tropenbos International](#)

[Van Tienhoven Foundation](#)

[De Vlinderstichting](#)

[Vogelbescherming](#)

[Waddenvereniging](#)

[Wetlands International](#)

[WWF](#)

[Zoogdiervereniging](#)



Partners

• Stichting Het Zeeuwse Landschap • ARK
Natuurontwikkeling • Rewilding Europe •
Agentschap Natuur en Bos • Natuurpunt •
LandschappenNL • Diergaarde Blijdorp Pelican
Way of LIFE

THE NETHERLANDS APPEARS SUITABLE FOR THE RETURN OF THE DALMATIAN PELICAN

In all probability, the Netherlands is a suitable breeding ground once more for the Dalmatian pelican. This is the conclusion drawn by Dutch and Flemish researchers following an exploratory study commissioned by a consortium of nine nature organisations, including IUCN NL and several Dutch IUCN members.

The return of this species to the Netherlands would be the icing on the cake of nature restoration and offers great opportunities for nature appreciation and tourism,' says Mark van der Wal, who participated in the project group involved in the [study](#) on behalf of IUCN NL.

NATIVE SPECIES

The Dalmatian pelican is a native species that lived in the Netherlands until the fifteenth century. This spectacular species lived near river estuaries and in peat bog along the coast. But like other large, iconic species such as the beaver, crane and white-tailed eagle, the Dalmatian pelican disappeared due to hunting and the destruction of its habitat.

SUFFICIENT SUITABLE HABITAT

'The study shows that there is enough suitable habitat for an independent population in the Netherlands,' Mark explains. 'Flevoland with its border lakes and the IJssel estuary, the Frisian and Overijssel lake district and the lower river district around Biesbosch, Haringvliet and Krammer-Volkerak seem to be the most suitable areas for this species.'



Dalmatian pelican © Paul Sprengers via Pixabay

FOLLOW-UP STUDY NEEDED

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the Dalmatian pelican will return to our country on its own. It will need to be reintroduced. A follow-up study is required before serious consideration can be given to reintroducing the species. We are currently examining whether there is any enthusiasm for a follow-up study.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about the study related to this iconic bird? Check out our [website](#) or contact Mark van der Wal.

E-mail: mark.vanderwal@iucn.nl.



IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

In September 2021, the IUCN World Conservation Congress took place in Marseille. IUCN NL's presence was visible at the IUCN Congress as we had our own pavilion in which our experts, partners and members shared their knowledge with the global community of conservationists.



We shared our knowledge at the world's largest nature conservation congress.

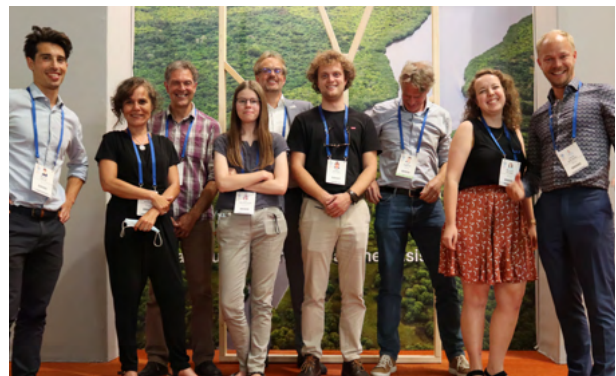
PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR PARTNERS AND MEMBERS

In the IUCN NL pavilion, we organised a six-day programme of substantive and social sessions on the work we do with our partners to protect nature and the people who depend on it worldwide.

'Our own work was highlighted during the sessions, but above all we wanted to give Dutch IUCN members and our partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America the opportunity to talk about their approach and contribution to global nature conservation,' reveals Coenraad Krijger. There was also a live stream of most of the sessions, which you can watch again on our [YouTube channel](#).



IUCN NL team members and partners at the congress



Part of the IUCN NL team at the IUCN NL pavilion

ABOUT THE IUCN CONGRESS

The IUCN Congress brings the community of conservationists together: it is attended by international experts in the field of science, policy and nature conservation practice. The Congress is held every four years and gives IUCN's 1,400 member organisations, including states, civil society organisations and indigenous people, the opportunity to determine, through a democratic process, the most pressing issues in conservation and actions to address them.

At the congress, the global nature conservation community set the agenda for the next decade and beyond, with a clear message for the climate and biodiversity summits that took place later that year: use nature as the foundation for tackling the pandemic, climate and biodiversity crisis.

NO DRILLING FOR GAS UNDER THE WADDEN SEA

During the Members' Assembly, IUCN's highest democratic body, the members adopted a resolution calling on the Dutch government not to start any new gas extraction operations under the Wadden Sea. 'The Waddenvereniging took the opportunity to submit an urgent motion just before the congress, calling on the Dutch government to abandon the announced plan to drill for gas under this UNESCO World Heritage site,' says Coenraad. IUCN's statement has an impact on the further decision-making process of Dutch politicians.

● [Read the Marseille Manifesto here](#)

● [Read the new IUCN Programme 2021-2024 here](#)

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about the National Committee of the Netherlands or about our work with Dutch IUCN members?

Check out our [website](#) or contact Coenraad Krijger.

Email: coenraad.krijger@iucn.nl.



Wadden sea © Frank Vassen

OUR STRATEGY

OUR GOAL:

To safeguard nature as the basis for all life on earth.

FROM 2020 TO 2024 INCLUSIVE, OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE:



OUR STRATEGY

THE CORE ELEMENTS OF OUR APPROACH:

- We adopt a long-term, targeted, **integrated landscape approach**, which takes into account all relevant factors and brings together all relevant stakeholders.
- In the landscape, we strive to make optimal use of the myriad of goods and services provided by healthy ecosystems to address major societal challenges using **nature-based solutions**.
- We link nature conservation to the **broader societal agenda** and integrate social justice and local economic development objectives in our work, embracing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the overarching framework.
- We take a **gender-responsive approach**, underpinned in IUCN's comprehensive rights-based framework, to promote gender equality through our conservation efforts.
- We use our position in the conservation arena to **build bridges from local to international levels of decision-making**, connecting local and grassroots organisations with governments, global initiatives and platforms.
- We **embed nature conservation in local, social agendas**, cultivating local ownership and bottom-up actions, empowering civil society organisations, raising awareness and mobilising stakeholders.

1

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY 1



Vigorous policy for nature

Conserving and restoring biodiversity requires robust nature policy. Not only in our country, but also internationally. This is why we advocate for Dutch policies that prioritise nature and biodiversity.

Country: **The Netherlands**

SDG • 14 • 15 • 17

Partners

• Delta Plan for Biodiversity Restoration • MVO
Nederland • Naturalis Biodiversity Center



THE DUTCH ACTION AGENDA FOR BIODIVERSITY PRESENTED TO MINISTER SCHOUTEN

2021 marked the beginning of the UN Biodiversity Summit. Here, world leaders will establish biodiversity targets for 2030 and reach a new convention on biological diversity. In the run-up to this UN summit, IUCN NL, Delta Plan for Biodiversity Restoration and MVO Nederland collected pledges from Dutch organisations, which collectively form an important contribution for our country to achieve the 2030 biodiversity targets.

On Thursday 16 September 2021, we presented the [Dutch Action Agenda for Biodiversity](#) during the Tijd voor biodiversiteit (Time for Biodiversity) symposium in Naturalis Biodiversity Centre. Earlier that week, the Action Agenda was presented to outgoing Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) Carola Schouten.

Watch the video of the Action Agenda being handed to the Minister [here](#)

 **WATCH VIDEO**

PLEDGES BY OVER 150 DUTCH ORGANISATIONS

The Dutch Action Agenda for Biodiversity lists pledges made by more than 150 Dutch companies, civil society organisations, knowledge institutions, local authorities and citizens on how they will contribute to the global biodiversity targets for 2030. These contributions could focus on strengthening biodiversity in and beyond the Netherlands.

‘In order to halt the loss of biodiversity in the Netherlands and worldwide, ambitious and binding targets must be set during the Biodiversity Summit,’ states Coenraad Krijger, director of IUCN NL. ‘But setting targets is not enough. Greater effort, decisiveness and broad social commitment are required. The Dutch Action Agenda for Biodiversity constitutes an important building block for the Netherlands to achieve the targets.’



Corine van Impelen, Coenraad Krijger and Hayo Haanstra during the Time for biodiversity symposium

Time for biodiversity symposium

The Dutch Action Agenda for Biodiversity was presented during the Tijd voor biodiversiteit symposium in Naturalis Biodiversity Centre. Professor of Natural Capital Koos Biesmeijer, CEO of the Rabo Carbon Bank Barbara Baarsma, behavioural scientist Reint Jan Renes and chair of the Young Climate Movement Werner Schouten, among others, shared their views on what is needed to bring about change. The well-known Kenyan scientist and politician Richard Leakey, who passed away in early 2022, closed the symposium with striking words, reminding those present of their responsibility to preserve the planet with all its biodiversity for future generations and to look beyond our national borders in doing so.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about the Dutch Action Agenda for Biodiversity or the UN Biodiversity Summit? Check out our [website](#) or contact Maxime Eiselin.

E-mail: maxime.eiselin@iucn.nl.



Partners

- **Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO-KNAW)**
- **Centre for Soil Ecology (CSE) • Wageningen Plant Research (WPR) • the Dutch Butterfly Conservation**



SOIL CALIBRATION CENTRE OPENED

What is needed for healthy soil? This will be revealed by the Soil Calibration Centre, which was officially opened on 20 May 2021. The new research facility is part of the Onder het Maaiveld project initiated by IUCN NL, which aims to restore soil life in the Netherlands.

Soil biodiversity in the Netherlands is rapidly diminishing due to intensive land use. This contributes to major problems such as the disappearance of insect and bird populations, reduced natural pollination of crops and increased susceptibility to diseases and pests. That is why IUCN NL wants to bring the soil back to life - literally and figuratively - through Onder het Maaiveld. With the ultimate goal: a living soil as the basis for our existence in the Netherlands.

'At least a quarter of all the earth's species live in the soil,' explains project leader Fanny Verkuijlen. One tablespoon of soil can contain thousands of species. All this life ensures the soil fulfils a number of vital functions: such as providing a source of food for plants, water storage, water purification, acting as a climate buffer, and of course, pest control. Rich, healthy soil life is essential for everything that lives above ground: plants, birds, and people too.

CENTRAL LOCATION FOR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SOIL BIODIVERSITY

With Onder het Maaiveld, we are bringing the importance of soil biodiversity to the attention of a wide audience. 'The Soil Calibration Centre is an important tool to achieve this,' says Fanny. 'It

will be a central location for all knowledge about the biodiversity of Dutch soil. The Soil Calibration Centre maps the state of biological properties of Dutch soil and provides references for improving soil biodiversity.'

SOIL CALIBRATION CENTRE AT TWO SITES

The Soil Calibration Centre is split between two sites. At the Lelystad site many different field experiments are carried out, such as strip cultivation, agroforestry and two tiny forests. At the NIOO-KNAW in Wageningen, there is a soil ecotron where the rehabilitation of Dutch soil and soil biodiversity of different soil types (sand, clay and peat) is studied and analysed at the molecular level.

During the opening, which was largely digital due to Covid-19, filming took place from both locations. The digital tour and other parts of the programme can be viewed at www.ijkcentrumbodem.nl.

What does the Soil Calibration Centre do?

This video explains what the Soil Calibration Centre is:



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about our Onder het Maaiveld project? Check out our [website](#) or contact Fanny Verkuijlen.

E-mail: fanny.verkuijlen@iucn.nl.



Measurements being taken in the field at the Wageningen location of the Calibration Centre, at the NIOO-KNAW

Country: **The Netherlands**

SDG • 4 • 14 • 15

Partners

• **Naturalis Biodiversity Center • Delta Plan for Biodiversity Restoration**



Corine van Impelen, Coenraad Krijger and Hayo Haanstra during the Time for biodiversity symposium © Rafael Martig/Het Groene Verkiezingsdebat

GREEN ELECTION DEBATE: YOUNG PEOPLE CHALLENGE POLITICIANS

On 4 March, in the run-up to the Dutch parliamentary elections for the House of Representatives, IUCN NL, Naturalis Biodiversity Centre and Delta Plan for Biodiversity Restoration organised the Green Election Debate. During the debate, young people and experts challenged politicians to really tackle the biodiversity and climate crisis. At the centre of the debate was the plea uttered by young people to strive for a liveable planet during the elections to the House of Representatives. Together with experts, they engaged in a debate with eleven politicians from left wing to right wing, in the only election debate in which nature and climate took centre stage.

STRUCTURAL INPUT FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Not a single biodiversity target we agreed on 10 years ago, has been fully achieved. The generations that are currently at the helm do not seem to be losing sleep over this, but young people are.' Aniek Moonen of the Youth Climate Movement kicked off the debate with this statement. The next issue was how to give young people a structural voice in climate and biodiversity policy.

MINISTRY OF CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY

'The Dutch policy on climate and biodiversity is too fragmented to be effective. This is also apparent from the stagnation of biodiversity restoration in the Netherlands. For all other vital matters in our society, there is a specialist ministry. A ministry that brings together all the ecological knowledge, powers and budgets to solve the climate and biodiversity crisis is urgently needed,' says Coenraad Krijger, director of IUCN NL.

This plea was endorsed by Frank Wassenberg (PvdD): 'Nature restoration must be tackled integrally with a ministry for climate and biodiversity that assesses policy in consultation with other ministries. This would allow you to prevent policies that harm the climate or biodiversity.' Frank Futselaar (SP) prefers to focus on a different aspect: 'Make sure there is enough money, set ambitious targets and centralise nature policy.'

INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF BIODIVERSITY

Koos Biesmeijer, scientific director of Naturalis, called for more attention to be devoted to education and research. 'Invest much more in research and education on climate and biodiversity and make it accessible to everyone.' Tjeerd de Groot (D66) agreed that more knowledge is needed to tackle the biodiversity crisis in the right way. 'A great deal of knowledge is provided to farmers by feed producers and pesticide manufacturers, farmers need more ecological knowledge.'

REDUCE CONSUMPTION AND MAKE CONSCIOUS CHOICES THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL TAX

Eva Koffeman, UN Youth Representative for Biodiversity and Food, concluded the debate with a final statement on reducing consumption. Cees de Jong (CDA) advocated for reduced consumption



The Green Election Debate © Rafael Martig/Het Groene Verkiezingsdebat


and financial incentives to reduce the environmental footprint, but does not support a meat tax. Hermen Vreugdenhil (CU) and Ellen Verkoelen (50PLUS) do, and want to use the proceeds of the meat tax directly for sustainability.

● [Watch the aftermovie of the Green Election Debate 2021](#)

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about our work on vigorous policy for nature? Check out our [website](#) or contact Coenraad Krijger. E-mail: coenraad.krijger@iucn.nl.





**‘Invest much more in research
and education on climate and
biodiversity and make it accessible
to everyone.’**

Koos Biesmeijer, Naturalis

2

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY 2



Responsible value chains

We work with governments, companies and civil society organisations on responsible value chains, both in the Netherlands and abroad.

Country: **Argentina**

SDG • 12 • 15

Partners

• Solidaridad • Fundación Vida Silvestre • Zuivel NL (the Sustainable Dairy Chain) • Cefetra



SOYCHACO: MAKING SOY PRODUCTION SUSTAINABLE IN ARGENTINA

The Gran Chaco region of Argentina is an important habitat for the jaguar, the giant armadillo and other endangered species. But the growing demand for soy is reducing their habitat. With the SoyChaco project, IUCN NL works with partner organisations, the Dutch dairy sector and agricultural commodity trader and transporter Cefetra on sustainable soy production and nature conservation in Gran Chaco.

Every year Argentina loses 21,500 hectares of forest and grassland, approximately the surface area of the municipality of Amsterdam. Of these, 4,000 hectares are affected by the, partly illegal, conversion of ecosystems for soy production. This not only reduces the habitat of endangered and vulnerable species, it also increases the effects of drought and flooding. With failed harvests as a result.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

Sustainable soy production is in the interest of people and nature. IUCN NL is involved in SoyChaco as the coordinator of a collaboration that invests in a responsible soy value chain. With partner organisations Solidaridad and Fundación Vida

Silvestre, the Sustainable Dairy Chain and the Dutch company Cefetra, we promote conversion-free and responsible soy production in the Argentinian part of Gran Chaco.

‘We do this by connecting responsible farmers from the area with Dutch and European traders, and in doing so get more farmers in the region on board with sustainability. We also promote nature conservation and forest restoration,’ explains Heleen van den Hombergh, senior agro-commodities adviser at IUCN NL.

SPRINGBOARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The vast majority of the world’s soy production is used as animal feed. The Netherlands is an importer of soy for both human food and animal feed. The feed concentrates that Dutch dairy cattle receive in addition to their grass rations contain soy meal and soy hulls, for example.

The Dutch dairy sector is a frontrunner in supporting responsible production: since 2015, the sector’s soy footprint has been fully certified by the Roundtable on Responsible Soy Association (RTRS). Now, together with IUCN NL and partners, the sector is working on the next step, which involves direct support for a high-risk landscape using a so-called area mass balance approach.

The aim of the cooperation between the Dutch dairy sector and other parties is to serve as a springboard to make soy production in Gran Chaco more sustainable and the related nature conservation and restoration.

VULNERABLE AREAS

It is important to invest in vulnerable areas. Heleen: ‘The choices made in the Netherlands and Europe can improve the impact on vulnerable areas such as Gran Chaco. For IUCN NL and Solidaridad, it is

important that supermarkets and dairy brands do not remove all the soy from vulnerable areas from their chains due to social pressure or legislation, but instead invest in sustainable production and nature conservation where it counts.’

TOWARDS 100% CONVERSION-FREE SOY

SoyChaco is a pilot project that focuses on how sustainable solutions can be scaled up on the way to 100% conversion-free and responsible soy, and the role landscape programmes can play in this objective.



Soy plant

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about how we are working to make the soy value chain more sustainable? Check out our [website](#) or contact Heleen van den Hombergh. Email: heleen.vandenhomberh@iucn.nl.



Country: **worldwide**

SDG • 2 • 12 • 13 • 15 • 17

Partners

• Volac Wilmar • M&S, Unilever • Upfield • WWF-UK



Report: 'SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION BETTER THAN EXCLUSION FOR SUSTAINABLE FATS AND OILS SECTOR'

Boycotts on specific fats and oils, such as palm oil or soy, are an oversimplified solution to a complex problem, according to a new report published on 7 July 2021, by the Edible Fats and Oils Collaboration. Heleen van den Hombergh, senior expert agro-commodities at IUCN NL, was closely involved in compiling the report.

The '[Breaking down fats and oils](#)' report is a world first: it analyses all major vegetable oils and animal fats consumed worldwide as a single system and compares their impact on the environment, people and food. The report states that an in-depth analysis is required to assess all factors associated with each ingredient - both positive and negative.

INDUSTRY MUST REDUCE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT

The coalition behind the report calls on the international food industry to take the social and environmental risks of oils and fats - and the related financial risks - seriously and to take steps to reduce this negative impact.

'The EU, governments, financial institutions and companies all have to take into account the interrelatedness of the edible oil crops on the global market, especially their ecological and social connections,' Heleen explains. 'From Indonesian to Latin American and European forests and ecosystems, there's a need to focus on sustainable production and responsible consumption rather than exclusion. No single oil crop is the sole problem or silver bullet.'

- [View the interactive version of the report here](#)

COOPERATION AND INVESTMENT NEEDED

The climate and biodiversity crisis will increase the pressure on the fats and oils system. In order to tackle the challenges, cooperation and investment are needed to make the entire value chain and complete landscapes more sustainable, as well as a responsible level of consumption.

The Edible Fats and Oils Collaboration is an initiative of Forum for the Future aimed at accelerating the sustainable production and consumption of edible fats and oils. Members of the partnership include Volac Wilmar, M&S, Unilever, Upfield, and the NGOs WWF-UK and IUCN NL.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about how we are working towards responsible value chains for palm oil and soy, for example? Check out our [website](#) or contact Heleen van den Hombergh.

E-mail: heleen.vandenhombergh@iucn.nl.



Rainforests are cut down for the production of palm oil. This destroys the habitat of the orangutan, among other species

NEW EU FOREST LAW MUST STOP GLOBAL DEFORESTATION

The European Commission published a legislative proposal on 17 November 2021. The new EU Forest Law requires companies that market palm oil, soy, beef, leather, wood, cocoa or coffee in Europe to prove that no deforestation or forest degradation has taken place in the production of their products. The Commission's proposal still has to be adopted by the European Council and the European Parliament and is the subject of heated debate.



IUCN NL contributes to effective measures against deforestation and ecosystem conversion in supply chains, also at the EU level.

EU Member States are collectively responsible for more than one third of global imports of products that cause deforestation. 'This legislative proposal gives a clear responsibility to traders and companies to prove that they comply with the national legislation of producing countries, and that no deforestation occurred in their value chains. Until now, Europe had no legislation to combat deforestation. Therefore,

this is a big step forward, although the details of how the law will be implemented is most important,' says Heleen van den Hombergh, senior expert agro-commodities at IUCN NL.

IUCN NL has been campaigning for years for better corporate policies and regulations to combat deforestation and ecosystem conversion, to respect human rights, and to apply sustainable agricultural practices, including in the soy and palm oil chains.

LOOKING BEYOND BANS ON DEFORESTATION

'This proposal focuses on deforestation, but the conservation of other ecosystems and respect for labour and human rights is also important,' says Heleen. 'Special attention to small farmers and marginalised groups is justified, for example in the case of palm oil, so as not to exclude them and to involve them in sustainability efforts. Excluding high-risk areas as a whole is not the best scenario either: support for landscape programmes, including forest conservation and restoration, is needed to make a real impact at the local level.'

FOCUS ON MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT


The wait is now on for the European Council and the European Parliament to approve the law. IUCN NL hopes that the deforestation law will be supported by as many European institutions, companies, national governments, NGOs and nature conservation organisations as possible. 'We will continue to closely monitor the situation and push for the positive impact of this law,' says Heleen.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about our approach to the EU Forest Law? Check out our [website](#) or contact Heleen van den Hombergh.
E-mail: heleen.vandenhombergh@iucn.nl.



IUCN NL has been campaigning for years for better corporate policies and regulations to combat deforestation



‘This proposal focuses on deforestation, but the conservation of other ecosystems and respect for labour and human rights is also important.’

Heleen van den Hombergh

3

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY 3



Protected areas

Nature is the foundation for all life on earth. This is why we work with local partner organisations to connect, restore and conserve nature.



Cheetahs have been sighted for the first time in a long time in an area that has been secured with our support.



NATURE CONSERVATION SUCCESS: A NEW GENERATION OF CHEETAHS IN IRAN

Cheetahs have been sighted in Touran Biosphere Reserve in Iran for the first time in a long time, in an area secured with the help of the IUCN NL Land Acquisition Fund. Cubs were even captured on camera traps by the Iranian Cheetah Society. This is an encouraging development, as less than 40 cheetahs are estimated to live in the whole of Iran.

The Asian cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) is a subspecies of cheetah and is slightly smaller and lighter than its African counterpart. The species is Critically Endangered and is only found in Iran, in the desert-like mountainous areas in the east of the country.

‘Using camera traps, our local partner organisation Iranian Cheetah Society monitors the presence of cheetahs in the two confirmed habitats: Miandasht Wildlife Refuge and Touran Biosphere Reserve,’ explains Marc Hoogeslag, senior expert on nature conservation at IUCN NL. ‘Based on their images and observations, it is believed that no more than 30 cheetahs live in the two areas combined.’

MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED HERDS OF CATTLE

This low number is largely due to the one hundred plus herds of cattle that grazed in the Touran Biosphere Reserve every year, accompanied by shepherds and dogs. These herds grazed more than

the area could handle, so the cheetah's prey, such as the gazelle, moved higher into the mountains to find food. 'There, the winters are riskier and it is much harder for the cheetah to hunt than in the open,' Marc explains.

The presence of cattle posed two additional risks: poachers could pose as herdsmen looking for their cattle or suitable grazing areas, and the large number of sheepdogs was another problem. 'Asian cheetahs were caught and killed by dogs and humans,' says Marc.

BUYING UP GRAZING PERMITS

To save the species from extinction, the Iranian Cheetah Society decided to buy the herdsmen's grazing permits and then protect the area. With the support of the IUCN NL Land Acquisition Fund and in association with the Iranian Ministry of the Environment, the cattle were moved to an area on the edge of the Touran Biosphere Reserve.

RETURN OF THE ASIAN CHEETAH

'Moving the cattle soon paid off,' Marc says proudly. 'The camera traps prove that the Asiatic cheetah has returned to the secured area. Five different animals were captured in 2021, including a mother with two cubs. The family was spotted by park rangers and has been repeatedly captured by camera traps in the area.'

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Animals Today discussed the project with Morteza Pourmirzai, Iranian Cheetah Society director. [Read the interview](#). To learn more about our Land Acquisition Fund, please visit our [website](#) or contact Marc Hoogeslag
E-mail: marc.hoogeslag@iucn.nl.



A cheetah with her cub © Iranian Cheetah Society

Country: **Ghana**

SDG • 5 • 13 • 15 • 17

Partners

• A Rocha Ghana • Tropenbos Ghana • GIZ

DRONES MONITOR REFORESTATION IN GHANA

Drones are increasingly being used to monitor landscapes, including in central and northern Ghana. Here the **Forest Landscape Restoration through a Sustainable Wood Energy Value Chain** project is restoring 700 hectares of forest. IUCN NL applies innovative technology to measure the impact. Drones are used to monitor the integrity of the forest, as well as adjacent nature areas, and the impact of reforestation, fire, logging, cattle and agriculture.



CONSERVATIONISTS LEARN TO WORK WITH DRONES

Maxime Eiselin who works on innovative technologies at IUCN NL, explains why drones are used: 'The pixels of satellite images are too coarse to map saplings accurately, so drones with high precision cameras offer the ideal solution. We introduced this technology and trained local nature conservation organisations on how to control the drones and use the images. It enables them to actually see what

developments are taking place in the landscape and the progress being made in landscape restoration.' These advances are also shared with the local communities. Afterwards, our partners talk to the people so that they are aware of the latest developments in the area.

IMPROVED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OF NATURE AREAS

Drones are a relatively cheap and simple technology for monitoring large, inaccessible areas. Monitoring is carried out by entering coordinates in the drone, which subsequently flies the programmed route on autopilot. 'The large overview of the forest landscape that our partner organisations obtain by using the drone in their area helps them manage the areas efficiently,' explains Maxime.

In the coming years, it is expected that the use of drones for nature conservation will increase and be used for more purposes. Drones will increasingly be used for ecosystem restoration projects. A good

example of this is the assessment of the risk of forest fires. If a lot of grasses grow high in a specific area, we can take measures to ensure they do not catch fire in the dry season and turn into a major forest fire. On the subject of these developments Maxime says: 'Insight into the state of nature can be gained in a short period of time. I think that in the near future, most site managers will be working with drones.'

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about how we restore a landscape in partnership with communities? Check out our [website](#) or contact Maxime Eiselin.

E-mail: maxime.eiselin@iucn.nl.



Seedlings on a charcoal plantation being prepared to be repotted © A Rocha Ghana



The biking birder raised over 10,000 euros in no time through his bicycle tour of Central and South America.



THE BIKING BIRDER GETS OFF TO A FLYING START

Since November 2021, Koen de Geus has been cycling through Central and South America to raise money for nature conservation through the IUCN NL Land Acquisition Fund. On the way, he visits nature organisations that have bought or expanded a nature area with the support of the Land Acquisition Fund.

Koen de Geus (31) actually planned to go backpacking in 2020. Confined to his home by the COVID-19 pandemic, he discovered bicycle tours: long-distance cycling tours lasting several days in the countryside. This was a good match for his passion for birdwatching. Thus, 'the biking birder' was born. 'Bicycle touring and birdwatching is an ideal combination,' says Koen. 'You are surrounded by nature all day, and you can watch birds on the way. My destination is always a beautiful nature reserve, I take my tent, and when I see a nice spot or a bird hide I stop and take out my binoculars.'

Meanwhile, Koen also became increasingly aware of the importance of a strong ecological foundation with a high level of biodiversity. 'The way we treat the planet is not sustainable, and neither is a round-the-world trip with lots of flights,' says Koen.

RAISING MONEY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION ON A TOURING BIKE

Koen decided to travel in the greenest way possible: on a touring bike. Moreover, he wants to use his special trip to raise as much money as possible for nature conservation. He was inspired by our ambassador Arjan Dwarshuis, who broke the world record for birdwatching in 2016, when he observed almost 7,000 different bird species in 40 different countries in one year and raised over 43,000 euros for the conservation of endangered bird species.

Koen opted for IUCN NL's Land Acquisition Fund. 'It's simple, but extremely effective. In some cases,



The Biking Birder will be cycling 20,000 km to raise funds for the IUCN NL Land Acquisition Fund

you can protect endangered nature with just a small amount of money. Local nature organisations do this in close cooperation with neighbouring communities, so that they also contribute to and benefit from nature conservation.'

DESTINATION 20,000 KM AWAY

He left Cancun, Mexico, in November. His destination is 20,000 kilometres away, in Argentina. He expects to arrive in Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, after cycling for about a year and a half. In the first two months, Koen saw over 400 birds, including

almost 220 lifers: species you see for the first time in your life. Like his absolute favourite: the harpy eagle. 'I have seen some truly stunning animals. And not just birds. I snorkelled with manatees, saw ospreys, red spoonbills, and howler monkeys too.'

IN TOUCH WITH NATURE

'It is fantastic to cycle through countries I have never been to. In an environment with birds and nature that I have never seen before. Because you are on a bicycle, you are very in touch with nature. You are outside all day and you talk to the locals who don't

usually speak to tourists.’ However, all that glitters is not gold: along the way, Koen also sees the effects of deforestation and declining biodiversity. ‘But that is precisely why I am cycling,’ Koen emphasises, ‘to conserve the nature that is still here.’

INCREDIBLY EFFECTIVE NATURE CONSERVATION METHOD

Koen is extremely impressed by the projects he has visited along the way. ‘In all those projects, nature has been secured thanks to the Land Acquisition Fund. I see with my own eyes that this is an incredibly effective nature conservation method. The threats to these species are extremely topical: the king vulture is losing its habitat due to logging, eggs of the yellow-naped amazon are being poached or nature is under pressure due to a port’s expansion. The Land Acquisition Fund has made it possible to secure crucial pieces of nature, where these threats have been averted and the vast level of biodiversity protected.’

VAST BIODIVERSITY

As a result, he is enthusiastic about the vast biodiversity in the reserves he has visited so far. ‘There were 300 to 400 bird species in those areas. In addition to all the mammals, reptiles and insects. This shows that land acquisition is an effective way of conserving biodiversity.’

In less than two months, Koen has already raised 10,000 euros for the Land Acquisition Fund. ‘Being a humble person, I am happy that this money has been raised. I see with my own eyes how effective land acquisition is in protecting nature. The people who work in the projects are very passionate and everywhere I go I get such a warm welcome. Both factors motivate me to raise even more money.’ With these extra contributions, IUCN NL can finance additional purchases and increase management support for ongoing projects.

10.000 euros is just the beginning as far as Koen is concerned. Has this also made you feel enthusiastic?

● [Support Koen with a donation](#)

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about Koen’s adventure? Follow his journey via fietsendevogelaar.com or read his guest blog for Vogelbescherming (Birdlife Netherlands) ‘[Birdwatching on a bicycle through Central and South America](#)’

● [Interview Arjan Dwarshuis and Koen before departure](#)

The Land Acquisition Fund

Since 2001, the [IUCN NL’s Land Acquisition Fund](#) has enabled NGOs to buy or long-term lease threatened pieces of nature with the aim of expanding, connecting and safeguarding habitats for endangered species. We thank the Dutch Postcode Lottery and our donors for their contribution!





**Projects we were able
to support in 2021
thanks to the NPL**

More than 900 hectares of nature protected thanks to the Dutch Postcode Lottery

Thanks to the Dutch Postcode Lottery, in 2021 we were able to honour applications from NGOs in, for example, Mexico, the Philippines and Brazil. As a result, almost 900 hectares of nature can be better protected:

- In Mexico, the nature organisation Protección de la Fauna Mexicana A.C. can lease 700 hectares of grassland for 10 years. The area forms an important connectivity zone between two protected areas that are important for the survival of the endangered Mexican prairie dog and a number of bird species.
- In the Philippines, the Katala Foundation is able to expand the Palawan Forest Turtle Reserve by 17 hectares and establish a 73-hectare forest reserve, creating a contiguous protected area of 101.5 hectares. Some 200 species benefit from this, including endangered and vulnerable species such as the Critically Endangered Palawan pangolin.
- In Brazil, the organisation Sinal do Vale is going to safeguard 92 hectares of tropical forest. This purchase is part of a widely supported initiative to maintain a 'green belt' around Rio de Janeiro in an area under severe pressure. This reserve now provides safety for locally endangered species such as the puma and protects the water supply for the people living downstream.

Our achievements in 2021

Every euro counts towards providing endangered species with a better future

In addition to the annual contribution from the Dutch Postcode Lottery, in 2021, we received over 24,000 euros in donations from various people who support our Land Acquisition Fund. Thanks to their support in 2021:

- Forest was restored in Colombia and Ecuador;
- Women and youth are protecting sea turtles in Nicaragua;
- Park rangers can do their job even more effectively, thanks to additional camera traps, better equipment and training.

This benefits endangered species such as the cotton-top tamarin, the glass frog and the Persian leopard.

We are extremely grateful for the contributions - large and small - that we received from various donors last year. Whether it concerns land acquisition, forest restoration, or better equipment for park rangers, every euro counts towards providing endangered species with a better future.

● Contribute to nature conservation and support the Land Acquisition Fund



Blue-throated macaws © Daniel Alarcon

Brewr Tea contributes to safe passage for elephants

Brewr Tea donates 10% of its turnover to two charities, including our Land Acquisition Fund. 'The Land Acquisition Fund was an easy choice,' says founder Wout van Erp. 'Nature conservation and restoration is very important to us. Therefore, I am proud that Brewr Tea can contribute to better protection for endangered species through the Land Acquisition Fund.'

The first donation of €272.87 will benefit the Wildlife Trust of India. They deploy volunteers to prevent travelling elephants and local residents bothering one another. The donation will enable Wildlife Trust of India to train and properly equip one or two quick response teams. Elephants regularly pass through tea plantations there. Equipped with torches, whistles, reflective clothing and megaphones, the volunteer teams can keep the crowds at bay and guide the elephants. It means the elephants can pass by unhindered and man and elephant do not pose a danger to each other.



Wout van Erp of Brewr Tea hands over the donation
© Brewr Tea

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about our Land Acquisition Fund? Check out our [website](#) or contact Marc Hoogeslag.

E-mail: marc.hoogeslag@iucn.nl.



Human-elephant interaction in the Kolabari forest near the India-Nepal border in West Bengal © Mr. Avijan Saha



Elephant tracks in rice fields in Wayanad © Mr. Shajan

4

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY 4



Community governance

Many local and indigenous communities have been sustainably using and managing nature for generations. Together with local partner organisations, we are working on obtaining recognition of the rights and the participation of these communities, so they can continue to ensure sustainable nature conservation.

Countries: **The Philippines • Indonesia •**

Bolivia • Colombia • Uganda • Ghana

Women's groups

• **LILAK • Fundación PLURALES • CONTIOCAP • and others**

Civil society organisations

IUCN Ghana • A Rocha Ghana • Tropenbos Ghana • AFIEGO and others

SDG • 5 • 7 • 13 • 17

FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN NATURE CONSERVATION

Women play a key role in nature conservation: they often stand at the frontline to protect our earth. Women and girls, in all their diversity, are closely involved in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Yet, they continue to face discrimination and remain marginalised when it comes to decision-making processes concerning their forests, water and land. Too often, women are denied access to and ownership of natural resources and their benefits.



That is why IUCN NL focuses on inclusive management of natural resources, in which women and other marginalised groups also participate in decision-making processes.

We actively support women's groups and networks that stand up to protect their living environment, so they too can claim their rightful place in the public domain.

WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN NATURE MANAGEMENT

In recent decades, a large area of forest has been cut down to produce charcoal. The landscape is being restored by using commercial charcoal plantations, sustainable management and actively

planting specific tree species. Together with IUCN Ghana, A Rocha Ghana and Tropenbos Ghana, IUCN NL is committed to including women in sustainable forest management. Women and young people are now active members of the nature management committees in their communities. They help decide on the short and long-term management of the charcoal plantations. In addition, women's groups in particular benefit from the income from shea, which is in demand locally and internationally for use in personal care products.

- * Also read the article on [page 67](#) about our work to make the charcoal value chain in Ghana more sustainable.

ANCHORING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Together with our partners, we are also working hard to anchor women's rights in international standards. At the initiative of IUCN NL, our Indonesian partner Sawit Watch was invited to give a presentation on gender equality to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in order to raise awareness about this issue within this group. An important step towards boosting women's rights in the standards for sustainable palm oil.

INSPIRING AND POWERFUL ROLE MODELS

IUCN NL, together with WWF-NL, produced a [publication](#) about inspiring and powerful women in our international programmes who defy the status quo involving nature and women's rights. These women include [Diana Nabiruma](#) from Uganda who protested against the development of a new East African pipeline (EACOP), LILAK founder Judy Passimio from the Philippines who protects female indigenous conservationists, and Ruth Alipaz from Bolivia who raises awareness for human rights violations at the UN. By shining an international spotlight on these powerful women, IUCN NL contributes to their influence and safety.

Frederique Holle is a gender specialist at IUCN NL. 'It is inspiring to see how much mutual support and solidarity women's groups derive from exchanges, especially in times when civic space is getting smaller and smaller,' she says. 'Helping and supporting these groups is absolutely vital to get women's rights acknowledge and for nature conservation.'



Sign on a tree in Ghana calls attention to the protection of forest © Green valley CREMA association

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about gender equality or women's rights? Check out our [website](#) or contact Frederique Holle.

E-mail: frederique.holle@iucn.nl.





EXPERTS: INVOLVE LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN PROTECTING THE JAGUAR

From 25 to 29 October, the Royal Anthropological Institute organised a major interdisciplinary conference on the theme of anthropology and nature conservation. Experts and partners of the IUCN NL-coordinated project Operation Jaguar spoke about the importance of involving local and indigenous communities and their knowledge in protecting the jaguar.

Jaguars are the largest big cats in America. Besides their important role as the top predator in various ecosystems, they also have a special symbolic value for many indigenous communities. However, jaguars are increasingly under threat, mainly from the loss of their habitat, human-wildlife conflict and the trade in wild animals. The aim of our [Operation Jaguar](#) project is to combat poaching and the illegal trade in jaguars. Current efforts to protect jaguars are predominantly

informed and influenced by Western perceptions and scientifically-based protection measures. However, the importance of local and indigenous beliefs and knowledge about jaguars is often overlooked or not recognised by conservationists.

MORE THAN HALF OF THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY IS FOUND IN INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

To effectively protect biodiversity, it is necessary to involve all stakeholders and give them an equal say. Since more than half of the world's biodiversity is found in indigenous territories, it is crucial that we consult and include the traditional (ecological) knowledge of local indigenous communities in decision-making. This is the only way ecosystems and cultural diversity can be protected successfully.

'THE POWER OF THE JAGUAR' PANEL

During the [conference of the Royal Anthropological Institute](#) IUCN NL organised the panel discussion 'The Power of the Jaguar'. Anthropologists, conservationists, sociologists and filmmakers discussed what is needed to protect jaguars with an active, leading role for local and indigenous communities and their knowledge.

Liliana Jauregui of IUCN NL chaired the panel and looks back on the conference with pride. 'These kinds of cross-sectoral discussions are very valuable,' Liliana explains. All knowledge - traditional or scientific and from various disciplines - is needed to protect the jaguar. It was a privilege to bring together a unique and diverse group on the panel to open up new avenues for protecting this animal, starting with the perception of traditional societies.'

About 'The Power of the Jaguar' panel

The panel discussion took place digitally on 28 and 29 October. The following experts participated in the panel:

- Vanessa Kadosoe, NeoWild
- Dr. Melissa Arias, University of Oxford
- Maria Fernanda Puerto Carillo, Proyecto Sebraba
- Dr. Barbara Arisi, VU Amsterdam
- Dr. Glenn Shepard, Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi
- Prof. Felipe Sussenkind, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro
- Simon Velez Gonzalez, Canoa Films
- Cristina Argudin Violante, University of Southampton
- Dr. Lewis Daly, University College London

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The panel discussion was recorded and can be viewed on our [website](#). For more information, read the [article](#) that the leading international journal on nature conservation *Oryx* wrote in response to the panel. Want to know more about involving local and indigenous communities in nature conservation? Contact Liliana Jauregui. E-mail: liliana.jauregui@iucn.nl.



Country: **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

SDG • 1 • 8 • 15 • 16

Partner

• **IDPE**

BEEKEEPING AS A WIN-WIN SOLUTION AROUND VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK

Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the most biodiverse areas in the world and is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. However, the area in and around the park is also under pressure from conflicts, armed rebels, illegal activities and high population growth. With support from a project developed by IUCN NL, our partner IDPE started a beekeeping cooperative to reduce deforestation and support the livelihoods of communities around the park.



PRESSURE ON THE PARK

Many communities around Virunga National Park earn a living from fishing, livestock and agriculture. About 75% of them live below the poverty line.

Conflicts between humans and animals are common among communities who have their fields around Virunga National Park; the wild animals feed on their crops. This fuels conflict between the communities and the Virunga National Park authorities. There is also a lot of logging for construction and firewood, and so-called 'slash-and-burn' agriculture takes place, which involves burning everything and leads to degraded soil and threats to existing flora and fauna.

INTEREST IN A BEEKEEPING COOPERATIVE

IDPE conducted extensive field research. It revealed that several communities were interested in making beekeeping more professional, which was already happening on a small scale, and in establishing a cooperative.

Since the construction of the Matebe Dam in 2016, many hotels and businesses have opened in the area. Due to this development, the demand for honey has increased considerably. A litre of honey currently costs USD10 on the local market and non-professional beekeepers produce between 10 and 200 litres of honey during a harvest period. This makes beekeeping a serious alternative to other, less nature-friendly business models.

Through a community to community approach, people inspired each other to get involved. As a result, 900 men and women from different communities have already joined the cooperative. 'We hope that the beekeeping cooperative will unite people,' says project leader Paul Villaespesa.

REFORESTATION WITH FRUIT TREES

'In parallel with beekeeping, the communities will reforest the land with fruit trees,' Paul explains. 'This improves their livelihoods and facilitates pollination. Beekeeping can also help reduce human-wildlife conflict, because some animals in the region, such as elephants, do not appreciate the presence of bees' adds Paul.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about our work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo? Check out our [website](#), or contact Paul Villaespesa. E-mail: paul.villaespesa@iucn.nl.



Training for beekeepers near Virunga National Park © IDPE

Countries: **Indonesia • Uganda • Bolivia**

SDG • 12 • 13 • 14 • 15 • 17

Partners

• **WARSI • ECOTRUST • Fundación Natura Bolivia •
Nativa Bolivia • SBDA**

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITIES IN MEETING CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

Community governance is a highly effective form of nature conservation, and of great importance in achieving climate and biodiversity targets. The recent IPCC and IPBES reports also confirm that this is an affordable and essential part of the solution. To demonstrate it we developed three short inspirational documentaries.



2021 was an important year for climate and biodiversity: in October, negotiations began for the new CBD biodiversity targets and in November, a major climate summit (COP26) took place in Glasgow. 'These two events provided extra attention for the urgent challenge of turning the tide of biodiversity loss and climate change,' states Sander van AnDEL, senior expert in nature conservation at IUCN NL.

CONCRETE AND EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

Local and indigenous communities are key to creating concrete, effective and equitable solutions to the climate and biodiversity crisis,' says Sander. The recent IPCC and IPBES reports reveal that community governance is a highly effective and affordable form of nature conservation, simultaneously achieving many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The extent of deforestation in areas where indigenous communities live is sometimes much [lower](#) and the greatest successes in nature conservation and well-being are often achieved when indigenous and local communities are [in charge](#). IUCN NL brings these facts to the attention of a wide audience and actively supports this effective and equitable approach to nature conservation.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

Unfortunately, indigenous and local communities' right to land and natural resources is often not well documented and far from secure. 'In addition, indigenous and local communities have very limited access to international funds intended to achieve international climate and biodiversity targets,' explains Sander. 'And yet these communities are the key to creating concrete, effective and equitable solutions so the world functions within the planetary boundaries,' Sander continues.



 WATCH VIDEO

CONNECTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF NATURE CONSERVATION

'To demonstrate how communities contribute to nature conservation and thus to climate goals, we developed three short documentaries about our projects in Indonesia, Uganda and Bolivia,' reveals Sander.

In these countries, among others, IUCN NL enhances processes to connect different levels of nature conservation. We do this by enabling local civil society organisations, communities and local governments to work together on local nature conservation solutions.

In the three-part series, we showcase our approach and results in these countries. 'The ultimate goal of this approach is to connect local, national and international actors to achieve climate and biodiversity targets,' concludes Sander.

 WATCH THE THREE VIDEOS

Read Further

- **Story:** [Landscape restoration as a business in Uganda](#)
- **News:** [Autonomous indigenous government in Bolivia declares 1.2 million hectares as a protected area](#)
- **Publication:** [Call to COP26: Secure human rights in the fight against climate change](#)
- **Opinion:** [Make COP26 forest agreement a success with concrete short-term actions](#)

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about nature management by communities? Check out our [website](#), or contact Sander van Andel. E-mail: sander.vanandel@iucn.nl.



5

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY 5



Right to nature

Every person is entitled to have a say regarding their living environment, and nature itself has rights too. We advocate for the recognition of those rights and work to give citizens in developing countries a greater say by, for example, improving their security.

Countries: **Indonesia • the Philippines • Malaysia • Vietnam • Bolivia • Colombia • Democratic Republic of the Congo • Uganda • Ghana**

Partners:

• All partners involved in our Forests for a Just Future programme

FUND SUPPORT (WOMEN) ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN NEED

The work of conservationists and (women) environmental human rights defenders ((W)EHRDs), especially outside Europe, is increasingly hampered by violence and intimidation. This is why we established an emergency fund to support (W)EHRDs in acute need. Thanks to the fund, (W)EHRDs in Asia, Africa and Latin America are assisted if they find themselves in danger or face legal action. The fund is one of the successful initiatives from previous programmes that IUCN NL now applies across the board.

SDG • 16



Conservationists in acute need received appropriate assistance thanks to our emergency fund.



The emergency fund is part of the [Forests for a Just Future](#) programme. Project leader Maartje Hilterman explains: 'Every week, on average four people are killed worldwide because they stand up for nature. And a much larger group is silenced by violence, arrests, threats or lawsuits. We use the emergency fund to assist (women) environmental human rights defenders in acute need. The fund is used, for example, for legal assistance or for safe shelter.'

DEFAMATION BY LOGGING COMPANIES

For example, the emergency fund provided legal assistance to four board members of the Save Rivers civil society organisation in Malaysia. They were targeted in a defamation case by a logging company because their organisation helps indigenous groups protect their territories from clear-cutting. 'Thanks to the fund, they were able to hire a lawyer to defend themselves against the logging company's allegations,' says Maartje.

DEATH THREATS AND LAWSUITS

IUCN NL is also specifically committed to women environmental defenders who face additional gender-related challenges. We support them by improving their safety through network building, training and the quick response fund. One example is a female community leader from the Philippines who fought a mining company that was causing major environmental damage on her island. Since then, she has faced death threats and two lawsuits have been filed against her. 'Conservationists often do not have the means to cover the costs of litigation. Therefore, the emergency fund paid for four hearings, and the costs of transport and representation.'

TAKING FAMILIES TO SAFETY

Apart from legal assistance, the fund can also be used for emergency aid following a natural disaster. 'On 22 May 2021, the Nyiragongo volcano, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, erupted,' says Maartje. 'The lava flow was heading for the city of Goma, with a population of two million. Together with our local partner organisations, we set up an emergency plan to evacuate families in high-risk areas.' Thanks to the emergency fund, nineteen families were taken to safety.

Violence against (W)EHRDs

Violence against conservationists is a symptom of the increasingly fierce struggle for natural resources around the world. Conservationists are at risk because they speak out against the destructive impacts of, for example, mining or plantation construction. As conservationists try to protect their land, forest and water from the arrival of industry, they find themselves in the firing line.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about the emergency fund for (women) environmental defenders? Check out our [website](#) or contact Maartje Hilterman.

E-mail: maartje.hilterman@iucn.nl.



Training for beekeepers near Virunga National Park



Partners

- IFAW • Scent Imprint Conservation Dogs



TRACKING DOGS DEPLOYED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL JAGUAR TRADE IN SURINAME

From 15 to 25 November, a team of Dutch tracking dogs travelled to Suriname, with the support of IUCN NL, to assist investigating authorities in combating the illegal trade in wildlife, especially the jaguar. The team was invited by the Surinamese authorities and is part of our Operation Jaguar project, which combats poaching and the illegal trade in jaguars.

There are strong indications that the trade in jaguar products, especially their fangs, has increased dramatically in recent years. Jaguar populations in South America have declined by almost 25 per cent in the last 20 years. Whereas previously the jaguar was hunted incidentally, it is increasingly hunted deliberately. 'The illegal trade in jaguars and other wildlife, such as the recently discovered smuggling of songbirds at our international airport, is increasing dramatically and must be fought together,' said the Environment Desk of the Suriname Public Prosecutor's Office.

SPECIAL MISSION TO COMBAT THE ILLEGAL TRADE IN JAGUARS

In order to combat the illegal trade in wild animals and to increase its capacity to do so, the Surinamese Ministry of Spatial Planning Land and Forest Management carried out a special mission at the end of November, together with the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Surinamese Police Force, Customs and Airport Management Ltd, among others. Deployment of the tracking dogs is part of this special mission.

TRACKING DOGS ARE IDEALLY SUITED

The tracking dogs were trained to detect wild animals (and products thereof) specifically found in Suriname, such as sea turtles and jaguars, at the border posts and other checkpoints in Suriname. 'Tracking dogs are ideally suited to this task,' explains Wesley Visscher, the dogs' trainer and owner of Scent Imprint Conservation Dogs. 'They have an excellent sense of smell and can be trained to recognise up to 10 different odours.'

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

In this [radio-interview](#) Elske Swets, head of communications at IUCN NL, talks about the role of tracking dogs in detecting wildlife crime. The [tv-programme Koffietijd](#) also featured the tracking dogs. On our [website](#) you can read more about how we combat poaching and the illegal trade in jaguars. For more information, please contact Liliana Jauregui.

E-mail: liliana.jauregui@iucn.nl.



Detection dog Bruce in action © Freddy Schinkel

Country: **Worldwide**

SDG • 5 • 10 • 15 • 16

Partners

• ActionAid • Asser Institute • Milieudefensie • MVO Platform • SOMO • WO=MEN

WEBINAR INFORMS POLICYMAKERS, POLITICIANS AND COMPANIES ABOUT REGULATIONS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS



Regulations are currently being drafted at the national, European and UN level to ensure that business activities do not take place at the expense of human rights. To give NGOs, policymakers, politicians and companies an insight into these developments and how they are linked, IUCN NL organised a webinar on the regulations' complementarity.

Companies have a responsibility to ensure that the conduct of their business activities does not adversely affect human rights. Yet serious violations of human rights by companies are commonplace.

‘It is difficult for victims of human rights violations to hold the companies that are responsible accountable because of all kinds of legal barriers,’ explains Antoinette Sprenger, senior expert in environmental justice at IUCN NL. An internationally binding UN human rights treaty aimed at companies could change this.

COMPLEMENTARITY OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF LEGISLATION

In addition to this treaty at the UN level, the European Union and several Member States are also working on legislation that forces companies to take measures in their business operations to prevent human rights violations and environmental pollution in their value chain. ‘We organised a webinar for NGOs, policymakers, politicians and companies to discuss the relevance of these different levels, show how they are linked and how they can be mutually reinforcing,’ says Antoinette.

We did so together with ActionAid, Asser Institute, Milieudefensie, MVO Platform, SOMO and WO=MEN. There were several workshops, led by experts and professors from Dutch universities, with expertise in, for example, international & European law, corporate social responsibility and women’s rights. ‘During each of the workshops, one of the levels of legislation was explained and discussed. Attention was devoted to the fact that the regulations developed at the national, European and UN level are complementary and therefore need to be aligned: they cannot be considered separately,’ says Antoinette.

Therefore, it is important that those who are working on these regulations are aware of what is happening at all levels. Thanks to the webinar, policymakers, politicians and companies are now better informed about what is involved in the regulations, which require companies to take measures in their business operations to prevent human rights violations and environmental pollution in their value chain. ‘We hope this will provide sound and binding regulations at the different levels. We remain committed to this objective,’ concludes Antoinette.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about our work to improve the legal position of environmental defenders? Check out [website](#) or contact Antoinette Sprenger. E-mail: antoinette.sprenger@iucn.nl.



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6

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY 6



Conservation finance

We bridge the gap between local entrepreneurs that contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation, and public and private investors. This is how we mobilise more money for nature conservation and restoration.

Countries: **Uganda • Ghana**

SDG • 1 • 12 • 13 • 15 • 17

Partners

• ECOTRUST Uganda • A Rocha Ghana

FUNDING FOR NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

In Ghana and Uganda, IUCN NL supported local nature organisations in investing in nature-based solutions to climate change. We did this by advising our local partners on suitable business models for nature-based solutions. Efforts have also been made to recruit entrepreneurs who have a business plan for climate adaptation that can be applied in the partners' landscapes.



'Companies and banks would not usually invest in these types of entrepreneurs because of their limited size and the financial risk involved. But by scaling up and combining projects, local nature organisations and entrepreneurs make it interesting and feasible for financial institutions to invest in these kinds of projects,' explains Jan Willem Den Besten, who leads this initiative at IUCN NL.

SCALING UP PROJECTS

It is possible to scale up small projects because different parties work together. 'The key to sustainable planning and managing of a landscape is to bring communities, companies and governments together,' says Jan Willem. 'They need to collectively identify shared values.'

IMPROVING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The landscape restoration that our Ugandan partner organisation ECOTRUST is working on with farmers is a successful example of a nature-based solution. 'By restoring vulnerable forests, we can improve the climate resilience of the area, which is crucial for the farmers and animal species in the landscape,' says Jan Willem.

COOPERATIVE FOR FOREST RESTORATION

According to ECOTRUST, the most important requirement for success is to unite farmers and other inhabitants in a cooperative, in which men and women are equally represented, that takes care of the forest. The cooperative has a detailed management and monitoring plan that it uses to manage the forest. The plan helps reduce threats to the forest and ensures that it can grow and recover.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about climate finance?

Check out our [website](#) or contact Jan Willem den Besten.

E-mail: janwillem.denbesten@iucn.nl.



 WATCH VIDEO



ECOTRUST works with farmers to restore fragile forests in Uganda

Country: **The Netherlands**

SDG • 14 • 15

Partner

• VBDO



BIODIVERSITY INTEGRATION IN THE DUTCH FINANCIAL SECTOR

IUCN NL and VBDO interviewed five banks and thirteen asset owners and asset managers with headquarters based in the Netherlands. Despite the [warning from De Nederlandsche Bank](#) that financial institutions may face financial consequences if they do not take sufficient action against biodiversity loss, only 28% of the Dutch financial institutions surveyed have started to assess the financial risks of this loss. None of them use scenario analyses for biodiversity loss in strategic risk management.

These and other findings were presented in the theme study 'Biodiversity integration in the Dutch financial sector: Why it's critical to be proactive and invest in nature'. The study outlines the importance of biodiversity and explains why biodiversity loss is a misunderstood risk.

● [Download the report](#)

SCALING UP ACTIVITIES TO PROTECT NATURE

‘Biodiversity is declining at a rapid pace worldwide. To turn the tide, nature conservation activities must be scaled up,’ says Heleen van den Hombergh, who was involved in writing the report on behalf of IUCN NL. ‘Companies and financial institutions have a key role to play.’

Nevertheless, the study shows that only five financial institutions in the Netherlands have a biodiversity policy in place with specific proactive elements to prevent harmful practices by their companies or clients in which they invest. The banks are taking the lead, while only two investors follow a special list of standards and conventions to prevent biodiversity degradation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

‘Now is the time to act,’ states Heleen. ‘Financial institutions must not wait for legislative measures or ‘the right data’, but act on the best practices already available in the market.’

The report contains five recommendations for financial institutions to create a positive impact on biodiversity:

1. Be proactive instead of reactive;
2. Apply lessons from campaigns to combat deforestation to other causes of biodiversity loss;
3. There is huge potential for nature-based solutions; but remember that reforestation does not always equate to tangible positive effects on biodiversity;
4. Work together to make progress on standard settings;
5. Advocate for nature conservation in general.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about how we bridge the gap between nature conservation organisations and financial institutions?

Read more on our [website](#) or contact

Heleen van den Hombergh.

E-mail: heleen.vandenhombergh@iucn.nl.



Measuring the impact on biodiversity with the new STAR method

An increasing number of companies and governments want to know how they can help prevent the loss of biodiversity and how they can make a positive contribution to protecting and restoring biodiversity. The STAR method, co-developed by IUCN NL, helps make their species conservation actions measurable. Curious about how the STAR method works and how it can be used? Read more on our [website](#).

Country: **Ghana**

SDG • 11 • 12 • 13 • 15 • 17

Partners

• A Rocha Ghana • Tropenbos Ghana • IUCN Ghana
• GIZ



Charcoal is the main source of energy in Ghana. In recent decades, a lot of deforestation has taken place due to the demand for charcoal. Together with GIZ, IUCN NL and its partners are working on a holistic approach to make the charcoal value chain more sustainable.

MAKING THE CHARCOAL VALUE CHAIN MORE SUSTAINABLE IN GHANA

In the '[Forest Landscape Restoration through a Sustainable Wood Energy Value Chain](#)' project, IUCN NL focuses on restoring forests degraded by charcoal production. The approach involves different restoration methods depending on the area and the needs of the communities in Central and Northern Ghana.

LANDSCAPE RESTORATION STRATEGIES

Areas are restored by planting trees, by assisting in natural restoration by weeding the land or by allowing the area to recover naturally. Another method used is agroforestry, where trees are combined with agriculture on the same plot. This

method gives farmers the opportunity to grow additional trees or plants. The needs and possibilities differ from one farmer to the next and depend on the types of trees planted. For example, farmers can choose between mango or shea. Other forest areas are being restored by systematically planting native trees.

CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE

Barbara Hendus was involved in this initiative on behalf of IUCN NL. She says: 'The aim was to restore 700 hectares of land, which is comparable to about 1,400 football fields. We have already achieved this goal, which gives me confidence for the future of nature in Ghana.'

Our partners, A Rocha Ghana and Tropenbos Ghana have involved local communities in selecting the sites, as well as in growing seedlings and coordinating planting activities. 'This creates employment and income for the communities. A great boost for the local population and especially important for women and young people,' explains Barbara. In most households in Ghana, the man is still the main breadwinner and often women and youth have few opportunities to earn their own money. The work on the tree nurseries does offer that possibility.

We combat deforestation by supporting partner organisations in advocacy and advising communities on land use. IUCN NL and its partners help plant trees and restore landscapes that contribute to the livelihoods of local communities.



Planting activities create employment and income
© A Rocha Ghana



Tree nurseries offer women the opportunity to earn their own money © A Rocha Ghana

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about landscape restoration or sustainable charcoal plantations? Check out our [website](#) or contact Barbara Hendus.

E-mail: barbara.hendus@iucn.nl.



ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE

In 2021, 42 passionate employees (34.63 FTEs) worked in our office in the centre of Amsterdam. Our experts are trained in various disciplines, ranging from ecology to human rights and from communication to finance. They have a wide range of work experience, from fieldwork to scientific research, and from NGOs to businesses. All these different backgrounds provide diverse perspectives on solutions to the challenges of our time. We value this diversity of views, just as we embrace the different opinions among our Dutch member organisations and in the global union.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVENESS

We see diversity and inclusiveness as a great asset. We are proud of the great diversity of our workforce. The age range of our employees spans almost 40 years: with ages from 24 to 64, and they come from as many as eleven different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We have policies to promote and monitor gender equality, for example, in the areas of performance management and recruitment & selection. We strive for an equal gender balance in all layers of the organisation. In 2021, we employed 23 women and 19 men. Thanks to targeted HR policies, there is an even gender balance in leadership positions. The balance at the top of the organisation needs to be improved: our management team consists of one woman and three men; in 2021, the Supervisory Board consisted of two women, including the new chair, and four men. Improving the balance is a priority for the coming years.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to know more about our approach to gender equality? Download our [gender strategy](#).

INTEGRITY

Integrity is essential for achieving our goals and maintaining professional relationships with civil society organisations. This means we take strong action against breaches of integrity, and actively work to reduce the likelihood of such breaches. Our integrity officer and two confidential counsellors play an important role in this matter. In 2021, we rewrote the Dispute Procedure to create a more comprehensive Integrity System. It will be implemented in 2022. We also set up a whistleblower hotline at the organisation GIMD. They will also act as intermediaries for external parties next year, allowing them to report integrity violations anonymously.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to learn more about our organization? Download our [management report](#).

A GLOBAL UNION

IUCN NL is part of the world's largest and oldest union for nature conservation: the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). IUCN brings together the global experience, knowledge and network of 1,400 governments, civil society organisations, knowledge institutions, and over 18,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of nature and the required conservation measures.

Thanks to its unique composition, IUCN provides a neutral platform for working on solutions to the most pressing global problems such as the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems, climate change and poverty. The latest scientific insights and practical experience form the basis for these activities. IUCN's international headquarters are based in Gland, Switzerland.

In the Netherlands, IUCN NL serves as the platform for 40 IUCN member organisations, including large and small-scale nature organisations, the Dutch government and knowledge institutions.

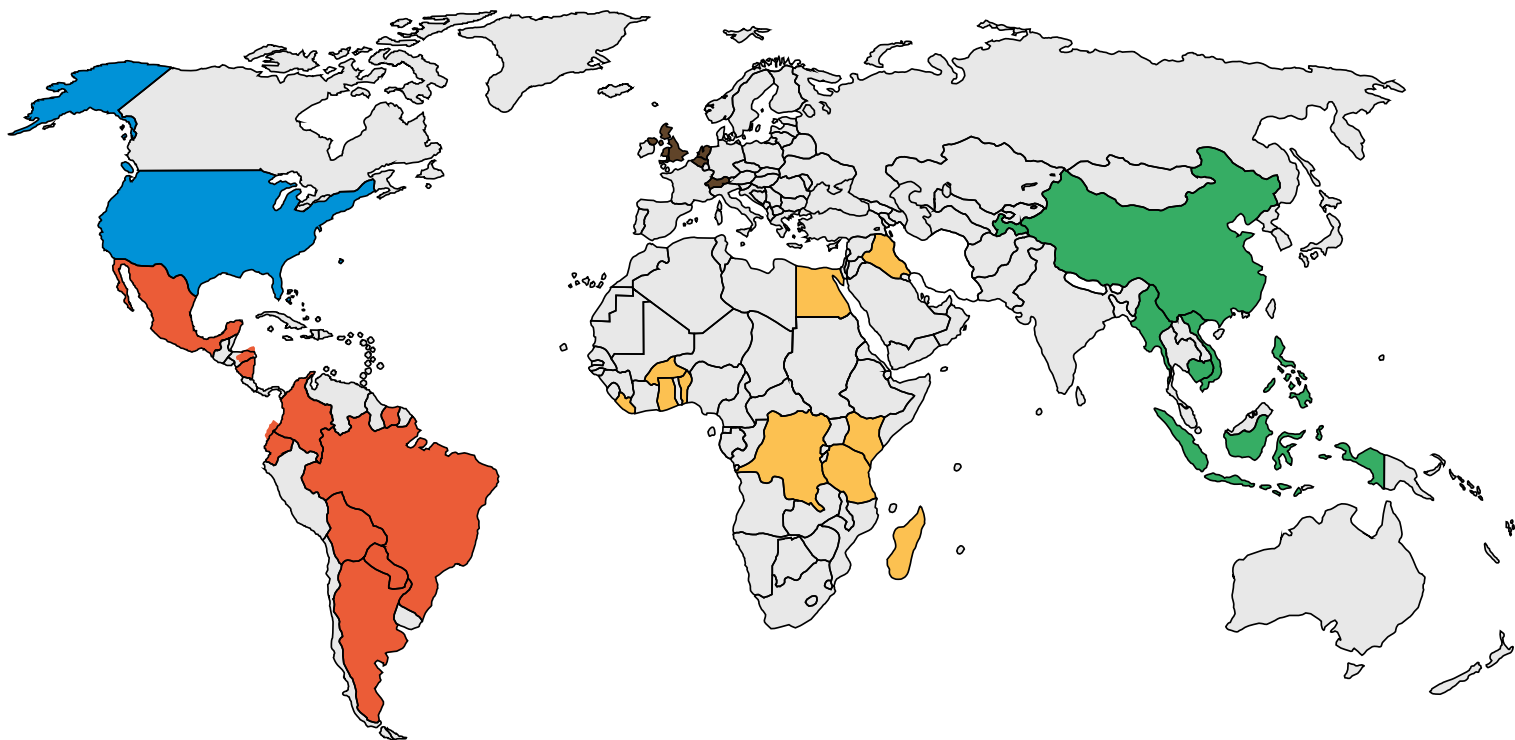
IUCN NL actively cooperates with local organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, Dutch member organisations and other parts of IUCN to safeguard important nature and biodiversity in those regions. Together, we develop international cooperation programmes and attract funding from various donors.



IUCN NL team

WHERE WE WORK

In 2021, we worked with our partners in **10 countries in Africa**, **8 in Asia**, **9 in Latin America**, **4 in Europe** and in the **United States**.



Latin America

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Colombia
Ecuador
Mexico
Nicaragua
Paraguay
Suriname

Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Congo (D.Rep.)
Egypt
Ghana
Kenya
Liberia
Madagascar
Uganda
Tanzania

Asia

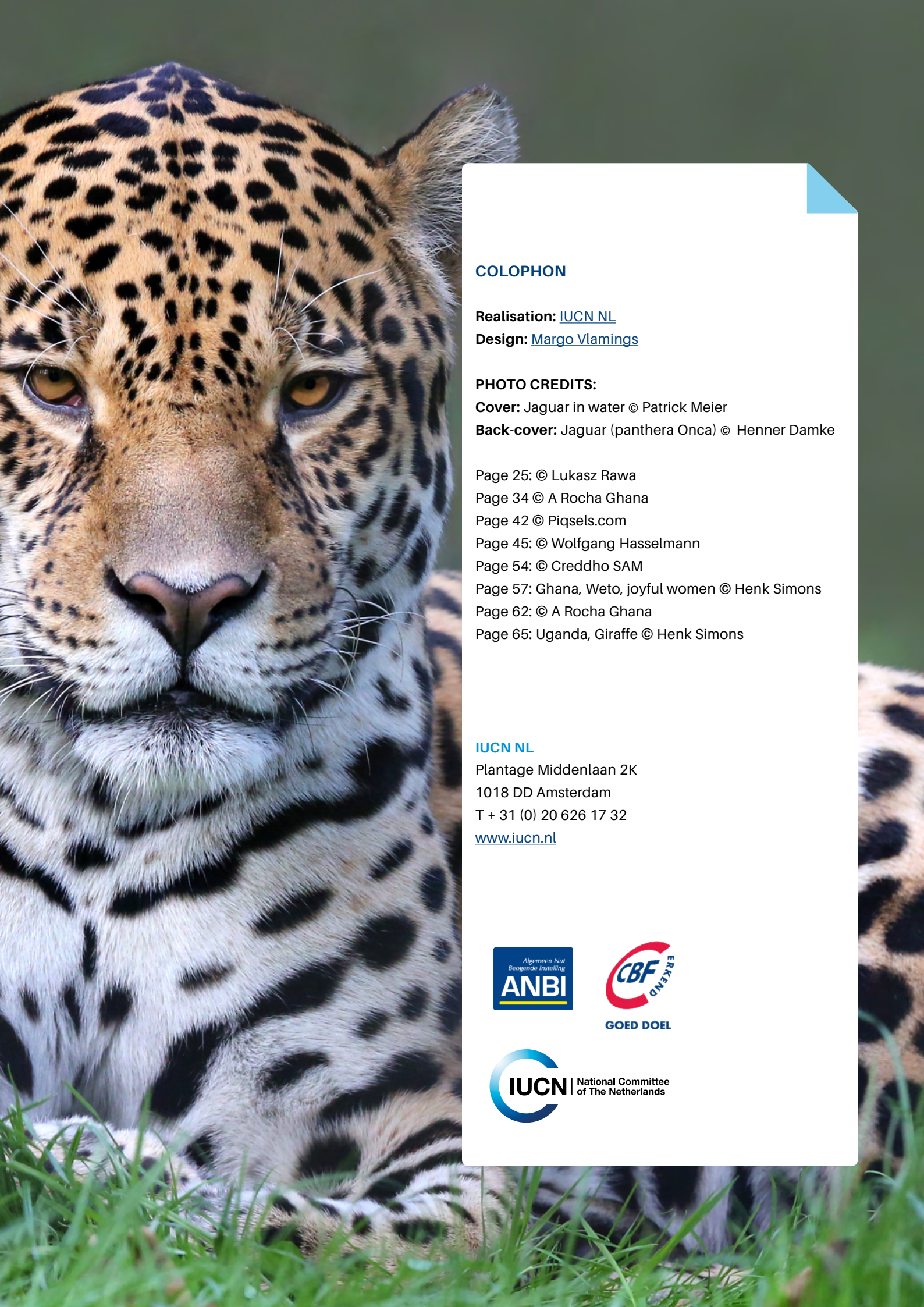
Cambodia
China
Philippines
Indonesia
Iraq
Myanmar
Tajikistan
Vietnam

Europe

The Netherlands
Belgium
The United Kingdom
Switzerland

North America

United States



COLOPHON

Realisation: [IUCN NL](#)

Design: [Margo Vlamings](#)

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