

Celebrating
130 years



Annual Report 2023

01 January to 31 December 2023

**PROTECT
PRESERVE
PROSPER**

Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

Established 1894

OUR PARTNERS



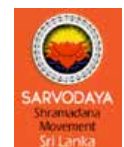
KUNAL AMALEAN



AJITA DE COSTA



KUMBALULOWA



OFFICE BEARERS 2023

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Mr. Jehan CanagaRetna

Vice Presidents

Mr. Graham Marshall
Prof. Sampath Seneviratne

Hon. General Secretary

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Ms. Rapti Dirckze

Hon. Treasurer

Mr. Niran Mahawatte

Hon. Assistant Treasurer

Mr. Krishantha Athukorala

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Mr. Dilshan Hettiaratchi
Dr. Nirmali De Silva (December 2023)
Mr. Dev Wijewardane
Ms. Devika Wijesinghe Rohana
Dr. Chaturangi Wickramaratne
Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage
Prof. Sevvandi Jayakody
Mr. Keshan Perera
Mr. Revan Weerasinghe
Mr. Riaz Cader
Mr. Supun Lahiru Prakash
Prof. Deepthi Wickremasinghe (Co-opted)
Mr. Sohan Patrick
Mr. Shehan Ramanayake

Immediate Past President

Mr. Spencer Manuelpillai

Hon. Editor - Loris

Mr. Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne

Hon. Editor - Warana

Mr. Sanjaya Weerakkody

Hon. Auditors

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PROTECT PRESERVE PROSPER

It is with immense pride and gratitude that we share our work, achievements and the milestones we reached during the past year in our collective mission to protect and preserve our environment through unwavering dedication, collaboration and a shared passion for conservation. The Committee, alongside our partners, members and employees, worked hard to achieve these outcomes. Our work to preserve our natural habitats will bear fruit in years to come.

We decided a few years ago that habitat restoration and species conservation through science will be the priority of the Society. We already see how our commitment has produced results in key areas, such as in our work on mammalian species and critically endangered endemics. Within the broad four areas of the Society's work, ecosystems are likely the most important as they offer refuge, hope, regeneration and new life whilst anchoring the survival of so many species of fauna and flora.

The Anawilundawa Accelerated Natural Regeneration of Mangroves Project (ANRM) was recognised as an integral component of the World Restoration Flagship Award presented to Sri Lanka by the United Nations Environment Programme. The robustness of the science-based approach on which our flora and fauna regeneration initiatives are based was one of the main selection criteria for this prestigious recognition. The site is the focus of extensive scientific research and discovery, and 14 undergraduate research projects are currently underway there. Our leadership and facilitation were key to the success of this project. The UN-acclaimed mangrove project is our way of giving back to nature—helping it to heal after years of neglect and abuse.

We are also enthusiastic about our remarkable progress in restoring and nurturing critical ecosystems across the island. All projects conducted by WNPS are integral to our efforts in protecting and enhancing rainforests and nature reserves. Each has an impressive story to tell.

ROAR, our earliest restoration project, now boasts a forest cover at over twenty feet in height and has multiple species in occupancy. This is a great blueprint for community engagement in conservation. PLANT has spearheaded private conservation in Sri Lanka and has a footprint of over 2,500 acres. It is backed by many partners and is home to over 50 critically endangered and endangered species. Green Isle is restoring critical suburban ecosystems amidst rapidly diminishing marshy habitats. Through all of this, the WNPS now leads private sector ecosystem restoration in Sri Lanka, an area we hope to accelerate into the future.

With continued community engagement that fosters a sense of ownership and pride in protecting our shared environment, we have ensured that our work is carried forward. Collaboration is at the heart of our success. We are grateful for the partnerships forged with like-minded organisations, government agencies, volunteers, donors and stakeholders that empower us to meet our lofty goals. Together, we amplify our impact and achieve greater conservation outcomes than ever before.

Whilst celebrating these successes, we recognise that our work is far from over. The challenges to these delicate ecosystems are always evolving, requiring ongoing dedication, innovation, scientific approaches and collaboration. Fragile natural ecosystems in Sri Lanka are under siege and slowing the tide will require the best of efforts from those passionate and willing.

In the year ahead, we will remain focused on our mission to “Protect, Preserve and Prosper” our most valuable treasure—our natural eco-systems.

OUR IMPACT

The Society contributes towards 12 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) by balancing the needs of people and planet to create sustainable growth and progress.



Goal: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Our Contribution: Seeking to reduce hazardous chemicals, and minimise air, water and soil pollution and contamination.



Goal: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Goal: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Our Contribution: Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers and lakes.



Goal: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Our Contribution: Providing opportunities for employment in surrounding communities.



Goal: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

Our Contribution: Enhancing scientific research, and upgrading technological capabilities.



Goal: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Our Contribution: Strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's natural heritage.



Goal: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Our Contribution: Encouraging the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, and ensuring that people have the relevant information and awareness to enable sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.



Goal: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Our Contribution: Improving education, awareness and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation and impact reduction.



Goal: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Our Contribution: Sustainably managing and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems.



Goal: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage

forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Our Contribution: Integrating ecosystem and biodiversity values into development activities. Mobilising resources to promote the sustainable management of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded national habitats, and substantially increase reforestation. Halting the loss of biodiversity, protecting and preventing the extinction of threatened species, taking action to end poaching and trafficking, reducing the impact of invasive species and increasing opportunities for sustainable employment in communities.



Goal: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Our Contribution: Promote and enforce laws for sustainable development.





Dear Member,

**NOTICE OF THE 130th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE WILDLIFE & NATURE PROTECTION SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA**

The Annual General Meeting of the **WILDLIFE & NATURE PROTECTION SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA [Ceylon]** will be held on **Saturday May 11, 2024**, at the **Lavender Hall, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH)**, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, commencing at **5.00pm**. All Ordinary Members and Youth Members of good standing and Life Members are entitled to attend and vote at the AGM. Junior and Honorary Members may attend but are **NOT** entitled to vote. Admission to the meeting will be on production of a valid membership card.

AGENDA

1. Reading of the notice convening the Annual General Meeting.
2. Two minutes silence in respect of our absent friends in 2023.
3. Apologies for inability to attend the AGM.
4. Adoption of the Minutes of the 129th AGM held on May 27th, 2023.
5. Matters arising from the Minutes.
6. Adoption of the Report of the Hon. General Secretary for 2023.
7. Adoption of the Statement of Accounts for 2023.
8. Matters relating to Preserving Land And Nature (Guarantee) Ltd.
9. The President's address.
10. Election of members to the General Committee.
11. Election of Office Bearers.
12. Election of Auditors.
13. Resolutions for which due notice has been given.
14. Conferment of Honorary Life Membership.
15. Any other matters for which due notice has been given.

Rapti Dirckze,
Hon. General Secretary
March 30, 2024



130 YEAR JOURNEY OF WNPS



1894

Birth of the Ceylon Game Protection Society.



1900

Government proclaims the Yala and Wilpattu Reserves under the Forest Ordinance following constant pressure from the Society.



1929

Emblem changes from the face of the European red deer to the head of a sambhur.



1949

Successful advocacy results in the establishment of a Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC).



1967

First non-governmental organisation (NGO) to become a full-fledged member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Nature Resources (IUCN).



1955

Name changed to Wildlife Protection Society of Ceylon.



1976

Warana, Sri Lanka's first Sinhala nature conservation magazine, is published.



1994

The Society commences the Monthly Public Lecture Series; celebrates 100 years with a centenary dinner with H.E. President J.R. Jayewardene as Chief Guest.



2009

The Reforestation of a Rainforest (ROAR) initiative commences.



2017

The revamped ROAR project is launched.



2022

- Commencement of Leopard Research and Conservation Project;
- Commencement of Endemic Species Conservation Project;
- Direct purchase of our first land for conservation under PLANT through international fundraising.



2023

- Successfully spearheads the battle to stop the export of 100,000 macaque monkeys.
- Launch of the Directory of Marine Protected Areas.



1930

Name changed to Ceylon Game and Fauna Protection Society.

1936

First issue of the journal Loris published.



1938

- Championed by the Society, Yala and Wilpattu are declared as National Parks.
- Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO) is passed into law, with the Society invited to sit on the statutory Fauna and Flora Protection Advisory Committee.

1968

First NGO in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) to be incorporated by an Act of Parliament.

1970

Renamed Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Ceylon, later Sri Lanka.



1972

- Working closely with the DWC, the Society is instrumental in the establishment of Udawalawe National Park.
- Successful campaign to save the Sinharaja National Park from destructive exploitation brings Society national acclaim.



2019

Celebrates 125th Anniversary through a gala dinner with Saba Douglas-Hamilton as the keynote speaker.

2020

Preserving Land and Nature (Guarantee) Ltd. (PLANT) is established.

2021

- Pilot started for the Light Repel System (LRS) to mitigate Human Elephant Conflict;
- Sri Lanka Leopard Day declared as August 1st on a WNPS proposal;
- Dr. Jane Goodall does a guest lecture for the June monthly lecture series.



2024

- Historical partnership with the National Zoological Gardens on a conservation project of the Asoka Pethiya has to be in italics
- The Anawilundawa Accelerated Natural Regeneration of Mangroves (ANRM) Project is recognised as an integral component of the UN World Restoration Flagship granted to the DWC's Mangrove Restoration Project.

“MAKE A DIFFERENCE” – ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HON GENERAL SECRETARY

As I sit quietly in a campsite at Kumana National Park and reminisce about the last year, 2023, I realise it was one of mixed accomplishments for conservation. The serene flow of the Kumbukkan Oya and the tranquility of the jungle, with all its stimuli, reinforced in me one of life’s greatest lessons: Mother Nature is here to stay. She does not need us, but we need her.

I write these thoughts on behalf of our General Secretary who resigned in September last year due to a job commitment overseas. I am honoured to say some of us on the Committee are preparing to hand over the reins of the WNPS to the next generation, ushering in a new era of governance that the Society has hitherto not experienced. The decision taken a few years ago to make science the main driver of conservation has paid dividends. WNPS has transformed our country’s wildlife with significant findings based on empirical evidence, data and research.

But our struggles are not over, owing to the Government of Sri Lanka’s (GOSL) ad hoc policies that do not rank conservation of our natural resources as high priority. We continue to partner with like-minded organisations and individuals to achieve the common goal of conservation. This was demonstrated through the Society-led campaign—assisted by local and international organisations—to stop the export of the toque macaque. Our activism caused the GOSL to abandon the plan. While the toque macaque’s impact on the agricultural sector is severe, it is unfortunately a problem created by humans.

We are proud to have had a significant positive impact in all spheres of conservation in the past year. We demarcated over 2,500 acres of privately owned land for conservation; promoted a better understanding of our leopards and their behaviour; scored a win through a UN Restoration Flagship Award for our mangrove restoration programme; and recorded success in mitigating human-elephant conflict via the Light Repel System.

We also carried out trailblazing work on conserving critically endangered endemics as well as advocacy efforts and legal action to promote conservation.

Our critically endangered endemic species project in partnership with Hemas Holdings is to conserve 52 of our 415 critically endangered endemics from the IUCN Red List in a span of five years commencing in 2023. We will attempt to lower their critically endangered status by increasing their habitats or breeding patterns or the environments they inhabit to enable them to live freely without encumbrance.



The Kumbukkan Oya – Kumana National Park



Arjuna at Yala National Park
© Spencer Manuelpillai

The exuberance of the Youth Wing and their engagement with youngsters countrywide is nothing short of fabulous. All of this was accomplished through Committee members willingly contributing time, effort and resources as volunteers alongside the few WNPS paid employees.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Human-elephant conflict has reached unparalleled heights compared with any previous year. In 2023, the death toll among elephants was 476 elephants while 169 humans also lost their lives. The last two decades have seen the death of a record number of elephants in Sri Lanka.

The Society is trying to change the objectives of this Subcommittee from mitigating conflict to enabling coexistence. You may ask what WNPS is doing about these deaths? In all honesty, there is little we can do in the short term as we have no legal jurisdiction. As described in the Human-Elephant Coexistence (HEC) Subcommittee report, here are the objectives we are striving towards: deploying science, as far as possible, to minimise the incidence of human-elephant conflict; resorting

to legal mechanisms, including court actions; and playing on the human emotional factor to reduce the incidence of human-elephant conflict.

We believe that, until the Sri Lankan farmer sees the elephant in a different light, we risk the extinction of this magnificent species in the next three to four decades. The last official census of elephants conducted in 2011 by the Department of Wildlife (DWC) indicated that there were around 5,700 in Sri Lanka. If you consider that since 1992, 6,830 elephants have been killed, it quickly becomes apparent that the future of the country’s elephants is dire.

We must therefore devise a system for the farmer to understand that the very animal he is trying to kill has potential as a revenue generator. It is in creating this mindset that elephants can be conserved. This paradigm shift will be challenging. But it is the only way: the farmer must be assured of revenue to conserve this landmark species.

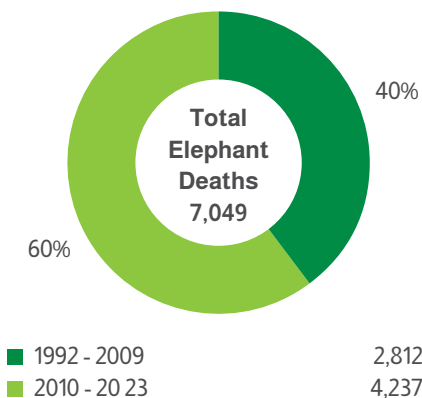
The first of its kind in Sri Lanka, the Society’s own privately managed tracts of land under the auspices of the “PLANT” Subcommittee have proven to be a tremendous boost to conservation in Sri Lanka. In a nutshell, the aim of PLANT is to privately protect lands so that they become forest corridors, connecting reserves and other protected forests while increasing the landmass under conservation. Furthermore, the PLANT team conducts biodiversity studies, reforestation activity, education and awareness programmes whilst protecting buffers of rivers and streams to provide diverse species a better chance for survival. Our goal of achieving 100 acres by end-2022 and 1000 acres by 2030 has been exceeded with around 2,500 acres currently falling under the footprint of PLANT. We are fully funded and have partnered with both international and local organisations and individuals to achieve this incredible growth in privately funded conservation areas around the country.



The Marine Subcommittee’s work predominantly rests on the regeneration of a mangrove ecosystem in Anawilundawa. It got its just reward when the project (and Sri Lanka) was awarded a United Nations Restoration Flagship Award for 2024. The UN Decade (2021 to 2030) on Ecosystem Restoration (hereafter the Decade) is a global effort aimed at restoring the planet and ensuring “One Health for People and Nature”. The Decade unites the world behind a common goal: preventing, halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. The key criteria to choose Sri Lanka and the project by the UN were science as the leading driver; multiple partners in the project; revival of total ecological systems; the setting up different expert panels; and, finally, the involvement of youth leaders and future “restorers” of our planet. WNPS is leading the science-based work on the project with a variety of local and foreign partners.

The Youth Wing (YW) Subcommittee, with Keshan leading the team, has been exceptional in achieving an unprecedented level of success since its inception in 2018. The goal here is to educate school children and thereby reduce adverse environmental impacts through instruction and awareness programmes. Today, they have successfully engaged over 158 schools covering more than 7,500 students across the country. The establishment of a Northern Province Subcommittee is another feather in our cap and the Society, through the YW, will continue to engage with these young people.

Period	Total Elephant Deaths
1992-1999	949
2000-2009	1,863
2010-2019	1,602
2020-2023	2,635



“MAKE A DIFFERENCE” - ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HON GENERAL SECRETARY

There are efforts to create additional Subcommittees countrywide, like the one in the Northern Province. Partnering with the British Council, the Youth Leadership for Climate Action (YLCA) programme selected groups between the ages of 18-29 to deliver sustainable and inclusive community interventions to address climate change in three districts. Training was conducted in Kalutara, Ratnapura and Nuwara-Eliya districts with the participants presenting their intervention strategies to their communities. The YW will continue to engage with these youth to ensure that these bear fruit.



help the Society and Sri Lanka develop a critical knowledge base of ground activity of the *Panthera pardus kotiya* in these areas. We are also in the process of launching a study of small cats - the jungle cat, the rusty spotted cat and the fishing cat. This study will be crucial to enhance our knowledge regarding the behavioural patterns of these small cats.



It began with the reforestation of a five-acre patch of deforested and burnt-out land in Dikhena, a Kalutara district village, which belonged to the Forest Department. This restoration project follows the principles of “relay floristics facilitation”, where groups of species successively appear and disappear from a site. It is the first of its kind as a reforestation experiment in Sri Lanka. The work also involves the community, engaging with local schools and providing alternate income sources whilst ensuring the property develops into a mature rainforest. We can proudly say that we do now have a semi-mature forest.



The WNPS GC at the Green Isle site

The work of the Society on behalf of Sri Lanka’s apex predator, the leopard (*Panthera pardus kotiya*), falls under the purview of the Wild Cat Subcommittee. Again, I am pleased to report groundbreaking initiatives to understand the coexistence of leopards and people in human-dominated landscapes. As described in their report, the Subcommittee launched the following range of activities: raising awareness among communities living in proximity to leopards; building long-term and substantive networks within these communities; developing a database of leopard activity in the vicinity of these communities over a five-year period; surveying citizens in these communities using scientific methodologies; and documenting leopard activity near these communities via camera traps. Gathering this information in a scientific manner will

All of Sri Lanka’s rainforests are on the Southwest side of the country. They are amongst the world’s most biodiverse and rare ecosystems. As in many other countries, they are under severe threat. This seriously endangers the endemic animals and plants in these rainforests. The Restoration of a Rainforest (ROAR) is a project that launched the Society’s scientific research in this crucial area.



The Green Isle project that the Society launched in the Attidiya marshland has faced some challenges in recent years and the Society conducted an introspective study to determine the reasons for these struggles. The project provides the critically endangered purple-face leaf monkey (langur) a secure habitat by seeking to restore biodiversity and the habitat so that it can thrive. I am happy to report that the project has resumed with renewed vigour with our team receiving reports of langur sightings at this location. This is heartening news. Habitat restoration is the priority of this project, and we are optimistic our efforts will have a positive impact on this location in coming years.

The work of the Wild Kids Subcommittee, the group in the Society with the youngest members, has been an absolute breath of fresh air. With the field trips to the Elephant Transit Home (ETH) and backyard photography competitions, they have deepened their understanding of the natural world. The observations and comments of children on the environment are so honest. Arguably, the natural world will be in a better place if some of these observations are followed through. One of the key highlights of this Subcommittee's activities in 2023 was the Astro Camp, where more than 150 kids were hosted by the Astronomical Society of the Colombo University to promote their inquisitiveness about space and our universe.



The Legal Subcommittee had a busy year and was guided by the following objectives: generating legal briefs to increase awareness about environmental law within the legal fraternity and the citizens of Sri Lanka; seeking justice through public litigation; and litigating deleterious environmental matters in Sri Lanka. The Society is engaged in 13 cases with six of them still active. We have had some success with a few of these cases, as detailed in the Subcommittee's report, and without the support of the legal fraternity, we could not have achieved these wins. Although legal action should ideally be the last resort, in Sri Lanka it is often the first course of action. We also signed a landmark agreement

with the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) to support WNPS on litigation involving critical national issues. It also establishes a contact list of BASL environmental lawyers that WNPS District Representatives can approach, to initiate action in their respective areas, sets up orientation programmes to enhance the knowledge of lawyers on environmental issues and connects WNPS with members of the junior bar so that we can contact and recruit interested young lawyers to work on environmental and wildlife-related matters.



The Climate Change (CC) Subcommittee commenced operations under the leadership of Prof. Deepthi Wickremasinghe. Just as with the other Subcommittees, we are confident the CC will be a force to be reckoned with. Advocacy on behalf of the climate is a key priority and we are already in discussion with other organisations for large-scale projects on climate change, an essential requirement for the future. Educating and raising awareness of the changing climate amongst schoolchildren is another important priority as, once they are more environment-conscious, they will be able to initiate the path of mitigating some of the adverse impacts of climate change.

The Society continues a brisk programme of field trips to assorted destinations in Sri Lanka, notwithstanding the many challenges of organising them. It is not easy to please everyone on these excursions, but the planning team gets positive reviews from

most participants afterwards. We are moving towards more science-based field trips—to promote conservation ideals going forward and I hope our membership will accept it in a positive manner. As the world shifts to more digital interactions, member meetups seem less important. But we do plan to have one or two in-person gatherings in the new fiscal year.

We have partnered closely with the DWC on numerous conservation initiatives, specifically on legal matters, advocacy, research and at the Elephant Transit Home (ETH). Research being conducted to devise a methodology to study the antimicrobial resistance of bacteria in the gastrointestinal tract of both captive and wild elephants has produced meaningful results. Over the last 25 years, the emergence of resistant bacteria is one of the major health issues of elephants. The research allowed us to recommend the best type of antibiotics for elephants. We are continuing the life insurance policy for all DWC staff (more than 2,300 employees) for the fourth year. All this enables the Society to build the relationships with the sole legal entity in our country mandated to conserve our wildlife.

The Society also created history by partnering with the National Zoological Society in the month of March 2024 to conserve the critically endangered endemic species *Systemus asoka*, commonly called the "Asoka Pethiya or Asoka Barb" which was first discovered by our very own Rohan Pethiyagoda in a stream in Kithulgala in 1998.



“MAKE A DIFFERENCE” - ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HON GENERAL SECRETARY

Administering the Society's daily operations today is different to any other era in the WNPS's 130-year history. However, it is of utmost importance to credit the Society's previous leaders with paving the way for us to strive towards better governance and greater conservation. Modern demands far outpace prior expectations and instituting proper structures and protocols at the Society's office is paramount. The commitment necessary to ensure WNPS remains informed of all emerging and current trends related to conservation and Sri Lanka's natural resources has reached a level of complexity that makes it difficult for an honorary position to fulfill. Although we have a few individuals at the Society who volunteer some 30 hours per week, on average, this is not sustainable. My recommendation is for the Society to be restructured into three categories under a CEO—with Science, Legal and General Administration being these categories. In my experience, this is the only way WNPS can achieve the level of professionalism needed to function in this demanding 21st century environment. Moving in this direction will require close work with our allies, partners, and donors to fund this major administrative and financial overhaul.

The office team, presently led by Rangika, plays a big part in our quest towards excellence in administration and governance. Whilst there is a lot more to achieve in terms of operational efficiency, I know that under Rangika's leadership there will be even greater levels of good governance. The WNPS is now a fully-fledged organisation with 31 employees on its payroll. It is no easy task for any manager and much depends on Rangika's skills. She has the support of her office team, and we thank them for their continued commitment to the Society's goals.

I thank our partners who have been the reason for the Society's success in our conservation efforts. It is important that we continue to collaborate for the future of our country's environmental sustenance. It takes a lot for an organisation to choose to support conservation so I must thank those decision-makers that made it happen. We appreciate your commitment.

Being on the Society's General Committee requires an absolute passion for conservation and, simply put, "getting the job done." We are fortunate to have such individuals playing distinct roles on our current committee and I want to recognise the contributions of those that helped transform the Society's activities. Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne has been a colossus in taking on the mantle of governance, administration and the management of PLANT. He also stepped in as Editor of the two last volumes of LORIS. Spencer Manuepillai and Graham Marshall contributed greatly towards bringing about professionalism and governance related to their respective responsibilities, often exceeding the call of duty. Keshan Perera has managed the Youth Wing with a skill far beyond his age and it is comforting to know that the Society's future and that of conservation in Sri Lanka lie in the hands of people like him. Devika's commitment has been unwavering, and I know those little ones will always remember "Aunty Devika". Professors Sampath, Enoka, Sevvandi and Deepthi have elevated the Society's scientific foundation to impressive levels and WNPS is fortunate to have such renowned subject matter experts on hand.



Attidiya Marshes - Site of the Green Isle

We cannot forget the roles played by Dev, Supun, Revan, Riaz, Sohan and Shehan who will be the future of our Society. Our finances are safe with the advice and due diligence conducted by Dilshan, Krishantha and Niran.

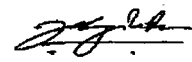
I would like to thank two individuals who have provided their skill and time gratis: Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya for all his advice on matters relating to elephants and Rohan Wijesinha, who has lent his literary skill, at the drop of a hat.

A sincere appreciation to Dr. Malik Fernando whose work on the protected area marine directory has been a feather in the cap to the Society's work on the marine environment. Dr. Malik has also continued his advisory role to the Committee which has been nothing short of extraordinary.

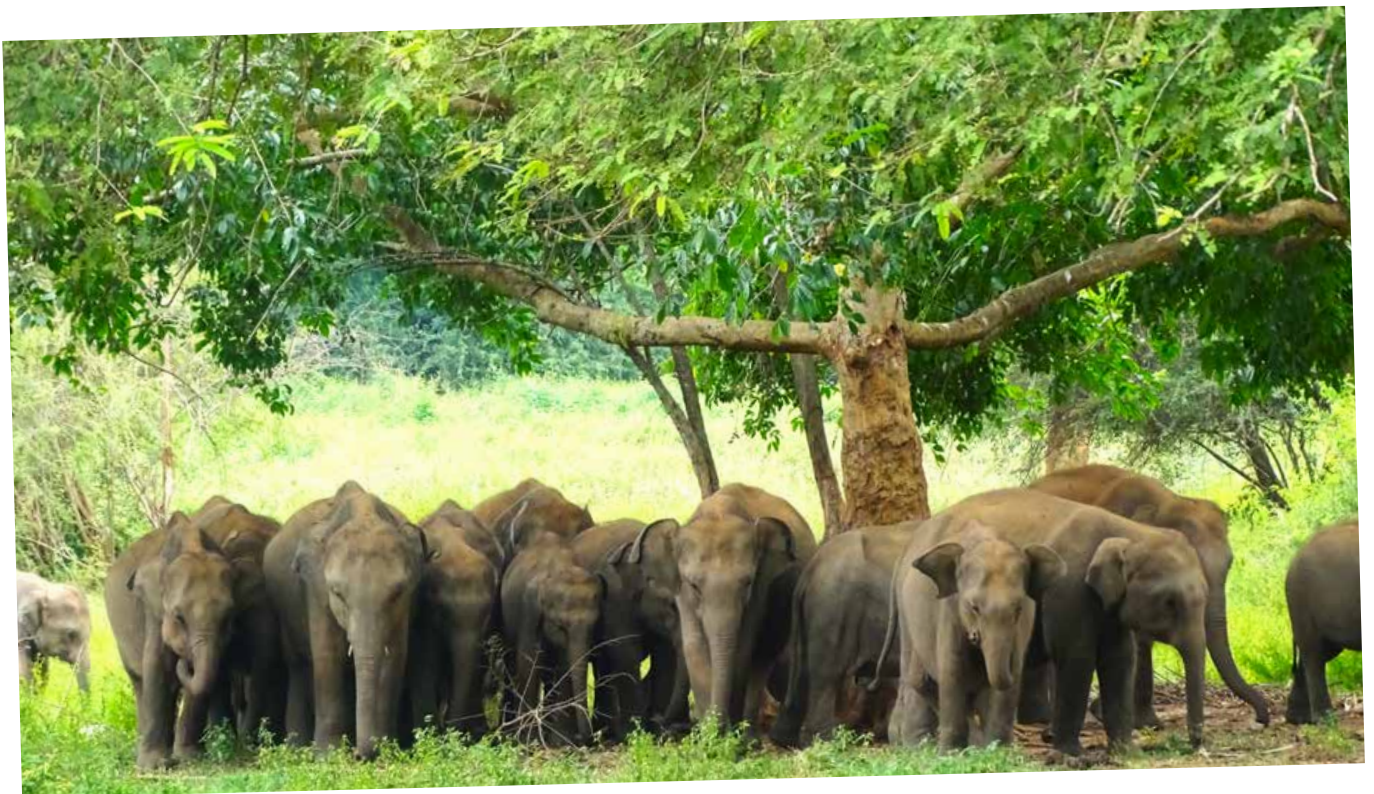
Without passion and commitment to "make a difference", it is best not to serve on the WNPS Committee as it can detract from the dedication of others. So, while we urge members to be a part of the Committee or Subcommittees, please do so with a desire to make that difference. We no longer have reason to blame the pandemic which ought to have taught us many lessons. Alas, we humans have returned to our unhealthy habits and continue to destroy Mother Earth. The wanton ravaging of our natural habitat continues. All we, at the Society, can do is to try and slow it down. We will not be able to change the mentality of our current crop of political leaders. As conservationists, and conservation organisations, we must contest the "wrong" and to do our best to do what is "right." Our Society's efforts will help shape the future of conservation, provided we work with the same passion "to make a difference".

"Think about the consequences of what we do each day, of what we buy, what we wear. Does it harm the environment? Does it cause animal suffering? Is it cheap because of child slave labour?"

Jane Goodall



Jehan CanagaRetna
President



Elephant Calves at ETH. By Sandamali Dissanayake

THE WNPS GENERAL COMMITTEE FOR 2023



Seated L to R:

Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne, Prof. Sampath Seneviratne (Vice President), Niran Mahawatte (Treasurer), Jehan CanagaRetna (President), Graham Marshall (Vice President), Devika Wijesinghe Rohana, Spencer Manuelpillai

Standing L to R:

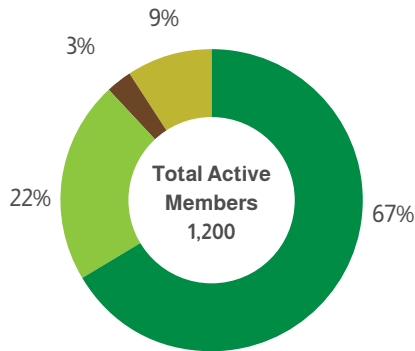
Shehan Ramanayake, Keshan Perera, Krishantha Athukorala (Asst. Treasurer), Revan Weerasinghe, Dev Wijewardane, Supun Lahiru Prakash, Prof. Deepthi Wickremasinghe

Absent:

Dilshan Hettiaratchi, Dr. Nirmali de Silva, Prof. Sevvandi Jayakody, Dr. Chaturangi Wickramaratne, Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage, Riaz Cader, Sohan Patrick

MEMBERSHIP

The Society had members across the following categories in the year 2023:



Active Life Members	798
Active Ordinary Members	259
Active Youth Members	34
Active Junior Members	109

In the year 2023, the WNPS had an active membership of 1,200 people who participated in the Society's diverse activities.

We rely on annual member subscriptions for our day-to-day operations. Each member's contribution directly supports crucial administration costs, including maintenance of the head office and bungalows and staff salaries.

As in previous years, the WNPS faced obstacles transitioning ordinary members to the new financial year in a timely manner. We therefore strongly

encourage our members to renew their membership prior to the 31st of December to help the Society to sustain ongoing wildlife and environmental conservation efforts.

Ordinary members have the option of pre-paying for multiple years (combined) or to acquire life membership after five consecutive years of ordinary membership. Our membership is crucial to ensuring the Society's continuity, with each annual subscription serving as a significant source of revenue that propels us forward, regardless of its magnitude.

PLEDGE YOUR SUPPORT

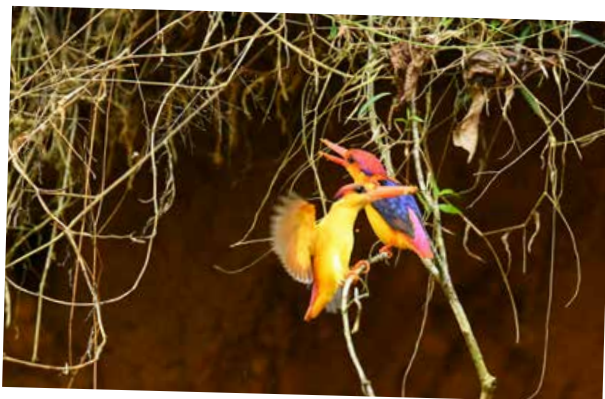
We appeal to our members to show their support to the WNPS through two avenues:

Increased Volunteer Participation:

We invite more of you to volunteer and become actively involved in any of our 13 Subcommittees. Your participation is invaluable in advancing our conservation initiatives.

Increased Donations:

We encourage our members to consider making donations toward the various causes we are committed to. Every contribution, regardless of size, plays a vital role in driving forward our mission to protect and improve the natural environment.



© Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne

OBITUARIES

The Society has no record of any member passing away in the year 2023. In the event there has been a member who has passed away, we regret the omission of his/her name owing to the Society not being notified.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

Jehan CanagaRetna

- Board Member, Greenpeace South Asia 2022 – onwards
- Country Representative - Rainforest Alliance - 2021 onwards

Prof. Sampath Seneviratne

- Committee member Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka
- Member of Sri Lanka Ecological Association

Mr. Supun Lahiru Prakash

- Member of the Botanical Society of America
- Member of the Director Board of Muthurajawela and Negombo Lagoon Development Foundation and the Muthurajawela Visitor Centre, Sri Lanka

Prof. Deepthi Wickramasinghe

- Vice President - Sri Lanka Water Partnership and Steering Committee member, SA Water Partnership (Affiliated to global Water Partnership)
- Committee member, South Asia Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes (SAADRI)
- Committee member- Sri Lanka, Global Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN)

MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2023

The General Committee convened eleven (11) times during the year (2023).

The following is the attendance of each Committee member from January–May 2023, and the new Committee from June–December 2023.

Committee Member	January to May 2023		June to December 2023	
	Meetings	Present	Meetings	Present
Mr. Jehan CanagaRetna	5	5	6	6
Graham Marshall	5	4	6	5
Prof Sampath Seneviratne	5	5	6	4
G. Jeremy Godrick*	5	5	6	3
Niran Mahawatte	5	4	6	6
Krishantha Athukorala	-	-	6	4
Caryll Tozer	5	3	-	-
Zaineb Akbarally	5	5	-	-
Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne	5	5	6	6
Spencer Manuelpillai	5	5	6	6
Dilshan Hettiarachchi	5	3	6	5
Dr. (Mrs) Nirmali de Silva	5	3	6	3
Dev Wijewardane	5	5	6	5
Devika Wijesinghe Rohana	5	3	6	6
Revan Weerasinghe	5	5	6	6
Prof. Sevvandi Jayakodi	5	2	6	2
Dr. Chaturangi Wickremaratne	5	-	6	4
Keshan Perera	5	4	6	6
Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage	-	-	6	6
Supun Lahiru Prakash	-	-	6	6
Riaz Cader	-	-	6	5
Prof. Deepthi Wickremasinghe	-	-	6	3
Shehan Ramanayake	-	-	6	6
Sohan Patrick	-	-	6	6

* G. Jeremy Godrick resigned in September 2023

EXECUTIVES & STAFF OF THE SOCIETY - 2023

As the WNPS continues to grow, we are expanding both our reach and team strength to accommodate an array of diverse projects. The Society has increased its staff to include 30 people dedicated to various initiatives.



Name	Designation	Location
Amasha Yatagama	Project Coordinator - Youth Wing	Head Office
Ayesha Indurangani*	Project Coordinator (September 2023)	LRS
Bhagya Nanayakkara*	Senior Research Executive (August 2023)	Head Office
Chathura Omathamudali*	Centre Coordinator (April 2023)	Panama
Damith Susantha	Bungalow Keeper	Yala
Dilip Samantha	Electrical Technician	LRS
Diluksha Soysa	Project Coordinator - PLANT	PLANT
Gihani Hettiarachchi	Project Coordinator - LRCP	Head Office
Guwani DE Zoysa	Administration & Finance Executive	Head Office
Ivan Prematilleke	Office Assistant	Head Office
Jayathri Gunasiri	Executive Projects	Head Office
K Kiritharan*	Centre Coordinator - LRCP (November 2023)	Kilinochchi

MEMBERSHIP

Name	Designation	Location
Kowshayini Pathmanathan*	Project Coordinator (January 2023)	Head Office
Lasanthi Kanthika*	Project Coordinator (July 2023)	Head Office
Madhushanka Bandara	Assistant Project Coordinator	PLANT
Malitha Prasanna	Centre Coordinator - LRCP	Kalawana
Mohomed Firas	Project Officer	Head Office
Nilma Heshani	Centre Coordinator - LRCP	Sigiriya
Oshada Kushman	Field Engineer	USFS - Anawilundawa Project
P.S.D.R.M.Palinda*	Centre Coordinator - LRCP (September 2023)	Kalawana
Pasindu Fransisku	Centre Coordinator - LRCP	Panama
Pasindu Piyali	Project Coordinator	ROAR/Green Isle
Pavithra Attanayake	Senior Executive - PLANT	Head Office
Pavithra De Silva	Assistant Accountant	Head Office
Rangika Perera	Senior Manager – Administration and Sustainable Initiatives	Head Office
Rathnam Yuthahari	Assistant Centre Coordinator - LRCP	Kotagala
Sachini Boraluwa	Legal and Documentation Assistant	Head Office
Samangi Alawattagama	Project Coordinator - Marine	Head Office
Sanadamali Dissanayaka	Project Coordinator	Ali Pancha
Sanjaya Weerakkody	Project Manager - Conservation of Endemic Species	Head Office
Sanjeevani Jayawardana	Field Accounts Assistant	USFS - Anawilundawa Project
Shaznine Ramiz	Senior Executive - Research	Head Office
Sinnathamby Ranjith	Centre Coordinator - LRCP	Kotagala
Thilina Kumarasiri	Senior Research Officer	ANRM Project
Thilina Roshanara	Centre Coordinator - LRCP	Belihul Oya
Uditha Egodauyana*	Centre Coordinator (January 2023)	Belihul Oya
Upuli Madarasinghe	Field Officer	HEC
Waruni Tissera	Research Officer	USFS - Anawilundawa Project

*Resigned



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Ecosystems

Horton Plains National Park

© Spencer Mahuepillai

MARINE SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Graham Marshall (Chair)
Maxime Wickramasinghe

Co-opted:

Dr. Malik Fernando
Dr. Jagath Gunawardana
Sharon D'Silva
Medisha Gunawardena
Susantha Udagedara
Samangi Alawattagama
Ashan Karunananda
Chalani Marasinghe
Shanaka Goonatilake

Coordinator:

Samangi Alawattagama

1. ACCELERATED NATURAL REGENERATION OF MANGROVES (ANRM) PROJECT, ANAWILUNDAWA

The WNPS is currently in the fourth year of collaboration with the DWC and Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, in the capacity of principal partner and scientific advisor, to restore 45 hectares of mangrove habitat, destroyed for shrimp farms in the Anawilundawa Ramsar wetland. The WNPS also plays a pivotal role in securing sponsor partners for the project in which all activity is funded.

The year 2024 began on a momentous note for the Anawilundawa project as Sri Lanka received a United Nations Flagship award for its sustained efforts on the planned mangrove habitat restoration programme. This award was presented to Sri Lanka at the United Nations Environmental Assembly in Nairobi on February 27, 2024.



Obtaining soil cores for carbon analysis

and our General Committee, for her leadership in formulating the scientific process of this flagship project and her steadfast dedication and guidance in its implementation

Scientific Research and Exploration

The site serves as a valuable research platform for students and researchers from the Wayamba University conducting undergraduate research, with a focus on topics such as microplastic contamination, biomass estimation, and mangrove pollen studies. Some studies explore potential for products such as pencils and edibles to be derived from the mangrove ecosystem, Ongoing research underscores the site's significance as a hub for scientific inquiry and knowledge on mangrove ecosystems and related issues.

Research staff have expanded their efforts to cover gastropods, bivalves and birds, alongside other species, leading to noteworthy findings. Simultaneously, surveys are being conducted on soil and water quality, phenology, butterflies, birds and marine species such as gastropods and bivalves. This comprehensive approach to data collection reflects the research team's dedication to understanding various aspects of the ecosystem and its inhabitants. It will foster a deeper understanding of the area's biodiversity and ecological dynamics.



45

Hectares of Land being restored



13

Partners



Sri Lanka's revolutionary approach towards mangrove restoration is primarily underpinned by science-driven methodologies, with a focus on reviving ecosystem services. This two-pronged approach is designed to restore the balance and connectivity of the entire ecosystem. Involving youth as researchers and future restoration leaders, and the mobilisation of multiple stakeholder groups spanning the government, NGOs, the private sector, academia and the community, have resulted in a new paradigm of restoration that is built for the future. The UN, in its efforts to restore global ecosystems, has been observing and judging ongoing global initiatives of countries pursuing restoration agendas. Sri Lanka was recognised for its continued focused actions and the Anawilundawa project was one of the initiatives singled out as its connectivity ethos and strong scientific basis resonated with the UN's evaluation criteria for the award.

We extend our gratitude to Prof. Sevvandi Jayakody, head of the National Mangrove Expert Committee



Biodiversity surveys conducted by the field science team and undergraduates



The gastropod and bivalve study successfully led to the detection of an invasive bivalve species *Mytella strigata* for the first time in Sri Lanka. Interestingly, this species was discovered within shrimp farms in the area under investigation, highlighting the significance of ongoing ecological surveys in uncovering the presence and impacts of invasive species on wetland ecosystems. The identification was made by Dr. Malik Fernando, a WNPS Past President and a Member of the Marine Subcommittee. DNA studies are planned to confirm the identification.

Ecosystem services/ Livelihood Enhancement

Beekeeping, mangrove charcoal for pencils and mangrove-derived sweets are some of the ecosystem services being evaluated for their potential to enhance the livelihoods of surrounding inhabitants. Programmes to train and empower women in mangrove communities will soon be conducted. These initiatives underscore the project's commitment to environmental conservation, research and community development by leveraging the benefits of ecosystem services.



Beekeeping program conducted for community

MARINE SUBCOMMITTEE

Revitalising Nature: Restoration Activities

Canal excavations in the Southern and Central sections of the site were completed in phase 1 of the project. We are delighted to report that natural regeneration has now begun in blocks 6, 7 and 8. Seed planting in these blocks was conducted by the field science team with the help of DWC officials and the surrounding community, who planted 2500+ *Rhizophora mucronata* seeds, 100+ *Nypa fruticans* seeds and 3000+ *Avicennia sp.* seeds in the plots.

The canal excavation on plots 13 and 14 at the Northern end of the site was recently completed under the supervision of the Resident Field Engineer and science team with local community participation.

2. MARINE CHATS & LECTURES

Marine Chats:

Marine Chats are a series of informative yet informal presentations by experts in the marine ecosystem's diverse fields. Topics covered in these quarterly sessions range from great predatory sharks to the tranquil seagrass meadows.

In 2023, Marine Chats switched back to in-person sessions from online ones. This welcome change prompted the attendance of many enthusiastic junior members with the informal format being an ideal opportunity to learn and interact with speakers.

We express our special thanks to Rex De Silva, Susantha Udagedara, Arjan Rajasuriya and Dr. Malik Fernando.

Marine Chats will continue in 2024.

3. LAUNCH OF THE DIRECTORY OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Dr. Malik Fernando led a dynamic team from the Marine Subcommittee to compile the Directory of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) of Sri Lanka which was launched at the WNPS monthly lecture in December 2023.

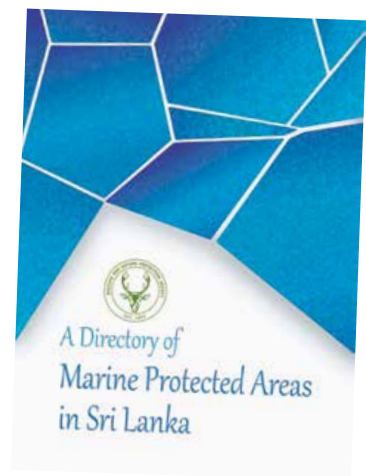


Initial stages of mangrove regeneration



Newly dredged canals

Extensively researched, it provides an in-depth insight into the 29 identified protected areas with detailed maps and descriptions of their distinctive features. It can be accessed on the WNPS website and promotes greater understanding and appreciation of Sri Lanka's marine ecosystems and conservation efforts. This initiative was a response to the perception that, although there is widespread awareness and understanding of terrestrial protected areas, education on marine protected areas is significantly lacking. This is particularly concerning for an island where there is 7.5 times more ocean area than land. This comprehensive document aims to address this gap by providing a deeper understanding of Sri Lanka's marine protected areas.



Directory of Marine Protected Areas

THE MOUNT LAVINIA ROCKY SHORE STUDY

The study aspired to document and monitor the recovery of intertidal flora and fauna along the Mt. Lavinia rocky shore and was concluded in March 2023, three years after it was launched. Dr. Malik Fernando presented an abstract of the findings at the 28th International Forestry & Environment Symposium held at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, positing that biodiversity was re-establishing itself after being obliterated by the beach nourishment exercise. The research provides valuable insights into the ecological dynamics and recovery processes of intertidal ecosystems, thereby boosting conservation and management efforts.



Mount Lavinia rocky shore study

SEAGRASS AWARENESS

5. We are proud to record that Mr. Susantha Udagedera, Sri Lanka's foremost seagrass expert and WNPS Subcommittee Member, was responsible for mooted the declaration of World Seagrass Day which was celebrated for the first time on March 1st, 2023. The Subcommittee produced informative content to commemorate World Seagrass Day, which was celebrated in Negombo on March 1, 2024, together with recognition of UN Restoration Flagships Award celebrations. The Marine Subcommittee played a pivotal role and was the lead communications partner to the Ministry of Environment for both events.

Project Partners and Sponsors

The WNPS, as the DWC's principal science partner, receives invaluable support and guidance from the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka which is the scientific advisory body for the project. We are grateful to sponsors including the Sri Lanka Navy Hydrography Unit, LEF, Hayleys Advantis, CEFAS (UK) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (Australia). Their support facilitates critical scientific activities, infrastructure and equipment.

"*Grateloupia lithophila* - one of the pioneer species of seaweeds to re-establish at Mount Lavinia."

We especially acknowledge the sponsors of specific plots, including Hemas Consumer Brands, and Star Garments, for plots 6 and 8, respectively. Appreciation is extended to our new sponsors, the United States Forest Service (USFS) for funding equipment, infrastructure and scientific research and CMA CGM Shipping for funding regeneration of plots 13 and 14.



Participation of project partners

REFORESTATION OF A RAINFOREST (ROAR) SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Prof. Sampath Seneviratne (Chair)
Dr. Nirmali de Silva

Co-opted:

Dr. Hashendra Kathrichchi (Plant specialist)
Nimasha Samarasinghe (Secretary)
Prof. Lakdas Fernando
Ravindi Galagamudali
Dr. Iroja Caldera
Ms Ayeshma Adikari (Communications)

Coordinator:

Diluksha Soysa (Up to July 2023)
Pasindu Ranadeera (July 2023 onwards)

RATIONALE

As conservators of air and soil, rainforests generate their own climate and create rain and rivers. Forests collect water during the monsoons, minimising flooding and softening the impact of droughts. The tall canopies and deep, strong roots of native trees help prevent landslides, especially in the hill country. The conservation of rainforests in catchment areas is critical to mitigating the effects of climate change, ensuring water and food security and preserving global biodiversity. In addition to providing vital ecological services, rainforests serve as vital economic and recreational resources.

Sri Lanka’s rainforests are on the South-West side of the country. Being in the per-humid zone of the tropics, they are amongst the world’s most biodiverse

and rare ecosystems. But they are heavily fragmented and are constantly encroached upon, placing our rainforests under severe pressure and endangering endemic fauna and flora.

As a unique model for protecting and restoring rainforests, WNPS started a project called ROAR—Restoration of a Rainforest. The ROAR site is located at Diyakothakanda, a five-acre land surrounded by a rainforest. Following several previous attempts in 2009, the current phase of the project commenced in 2016. In the year 2019, the site work continued based on the technique of Relay Floristics (also known as accelerated reforestation or forest farming), which involves a succession of incoming and outgoing plants leading to an equilibrium of the rain forest habitat.

This reforestation programme, which also supports surrounding communities in the Dickhena area, is now in its eighth year. For their labour, the ROAR Committee pays these villages daily wages, generating income for them. Moreover, the Dickhena School benefits from ROAR’s wider resources such as university professors, researchers and donors. Whilst supporting the school’s vital learning infrastructure, ROAR conducts science workshops, field classes, tree-planting programmes and research work to uplift the education and wellbeing of these schoolchildren.



Oligodon calamarius / Templeton’ Kukri Snake

SCIENCE

A student from the Open University of Sri Lanka conducted an intensive study on faunal diversity at a ROAR site and recorded several new species.

Two botanists from the ROAR Committee, Prof. Hashendra Kathriarachchi and Dr. Iroja Kaldera, visited the school and the site to see the progress. They started a one-year study to evaluate regeneration in the forest plot.



WNPS YOUTH WING FIELD VISIT

Members of the WNPS YW visited ROAR site and the Runakanda forest reserve as a part of their field excursions. This was possible because our forest plot now serves as a living, regenerating field laboratory for forest ecology.

LIBRARIAN TRAINING WORKSHOP AT THE DICKHENA SCHOOL

A librarian training workshop was conducted at the Dickhena Kanishta Vidyalaya on April 28th, 2023, coordinated by Prof. Lakdas Fernando (ROAR Committee). Resource persons were the Moratuwa University’s Librarian and Assistant Librarian.



Binara flowers blooming at the site

VISIT OF THE DEPUTY BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE ROAR SITE AND DICKHENA SCHOOL

The Deputy British High Commissioner and the Director of the British Council of Sri Lanka, together with the ROAR project’s main donor, Mr. Ajitha de Costa, visited the Dickhena School and forest plot as part of an event organised by the school. The guests planted trees at the ROAR site to mark the occasion.

About 800 plants, including the endangered *Dipterocarpus hispidus* (“bu-hora”), were planted in the plot this year. A special focus has now been given to zone C which has seen the worst erosion and degradation. A new nursery was established to facilitate planting in the higher elevations of zone C. The lower zone (A) has now started to see the features of a young forest.



A THREE-DAY FIELD CLASS ON BIODIVERSITY AT THE ROAR SITE

For the Colombo University’s BSc zoology major students, Prof. Sampath Seneviratne conducted a three-day field class on tropical biology and restoration ecology at the ROAR site. A visiting scholar from Harvard University, USA, also participated in the programme. Students studied forest regeneration and its impact on faunal diversity using varied field techniques.



While thanking the initial sponsors: NatureLife International, Rotary Club Colombo West, Teejay Lanka PLC and Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, we gratefully acknowledge the present donor Mr. Ajita de Costa for his support and encouragement.

GREEN ISLE SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Dr. Nirmali de Silva - Chair
(Up to November 2023)

Sohan Patrick - Chair
(November 2023 onwards)

Co-opted:

Bavi Sivakumaran
Subhahnu Kehelgamuwa
Ravindi Galagamamudali

Coordinator:

Diluksha Soysa
(Up to July 2023)

Pasindu Ranadeera
(July 2023 onwards)

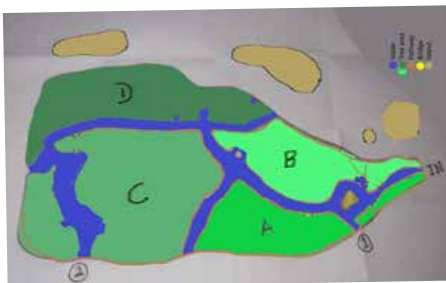
The Green Isle (GI) project was initiated by the WNPS in collaboration with the DWC at the Bellanwila-Attidiya sanctuary. LG Abans Pvt Ltd, the main sponsor, has backed this initiative since 2019 in a five-year partnership.

The GI is a 40-acre area inside the 372-acre Attidiya Wetland Sanctuary where a habitat restoration programme supporting species conservation is in progress. The project has several objectives (as referenced in the GI proposal in 2018-19). There have been four WNPS project coordinators for the GI project since 2019. This report presents its progress during the relevant period.

The below image is a drawing of the GI area. It shows the segmentation of the islands and the pathways that the GI team has cleared for accessibility and research purposes.

The project's primary focus has been to remove invasive trees and to plant native plants in the GI. During 2019–2020, more than 1,400 plants were planted along with the uprooting of selected invasive trees. And 322 plants were planted between September 2020 and January 2021.

As of July 2021, a total of 503 plants were found at the site while some plant tag numbers were missing. During this period, some had died due to the cleaning and waterways creation programmes of the Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation (SLLDC). Nevertheless, the success rate of tree planting is still encouraging. In July 2021, a total of 270 plants were added to the site. From 2022 to 2023, this number was 640. With the sponsorship of Abans, the GI project managed to add about 2,632 plants from 2019 to 2023 inside the site and about 1,200 trees with the help of multiple other



Map of Green Isle



Trees being planted by our workers and members



Steady progress of a planted tree



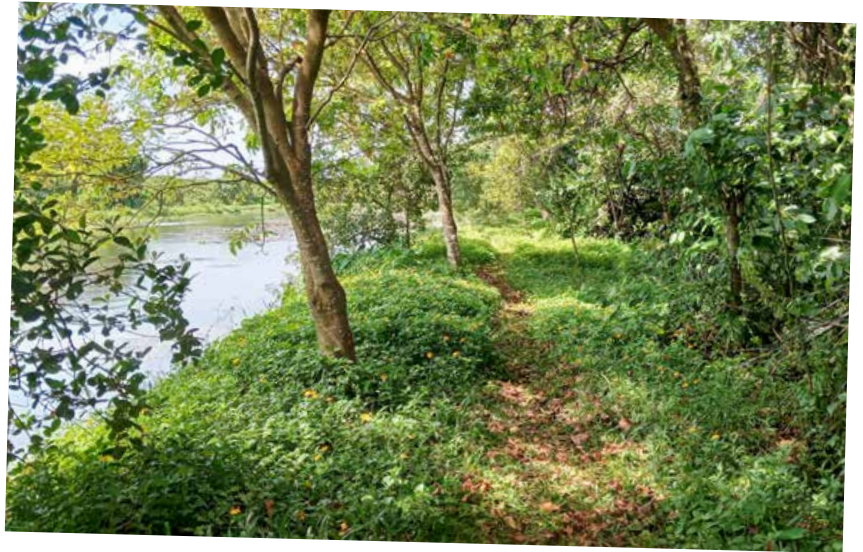
donors. Most of these trees are now more than 15ft high, showing the success of the programme.

The project has the added objective of creating pathways inside the GI site that allow visitors to walk and observe the wilderness closely. These eco-friendly, visually appealing pathways will be an ideal nature love attraction. As it is on the capital's outskirts, we believe the site can attract far more visitors than we see today. The nature trails will promote this.

The GI is a collective of islands with water bodies running across and around. To enable easy access, the team installed wooden bridges connecting the isles and providing an adventurous nature trail.

Another objective is to draw the purple-faced leaf monkeys into the GI area. To date, a few purple-faced leaf monkeys have been identified wandering around the site and one active resident pair was seen within. There were also a few sightings of otters, fishing cats and pythons recorded in recent times. In January, a pack of jackals was observed.

The Green Isle is home to over 100 species of trees, many of them which are endemic, but also includes indigenous, vulnerable and threatened species as well. The growth in number of these trees is largely due to the multiple tree planting programs which are done periodically.



Nature trail in one of the paths at Green Isle



Wooden bridges on one of the paths at Green Isle



"Annona glabera" or Pond Apple trees that were planted before and during the project phase.

PRESERVING LAND AND NATURE (PLANT)



Committee:

- Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne (Chair)
- Dilshan Hettiaratchi
- Prof. Sampath Seneviratne
- Zaineb Akbarally
- Jehan CanagaRetna
- Spencer Manuelpillai
- Dev Wijewardane
- Tami Flamer-Caldera
- Udena Wickremesooriya
- Caryll Tozer
- Chaminda Senewiratne
- Shanik de Silva
- Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage
- Roshan Perera

Board Members:

- (WHO ARE NOT ON THE OPERATING COMMITTEE):*
- Prof. Ranil Senanayake
 - Dr. Malik Fernando
 - Shevon Gooneratne

Operations Team:

- Madhushanka Bandara
- Pavithra Attanayaka
- Sashini Paranagama
- Diluksha de Soyza

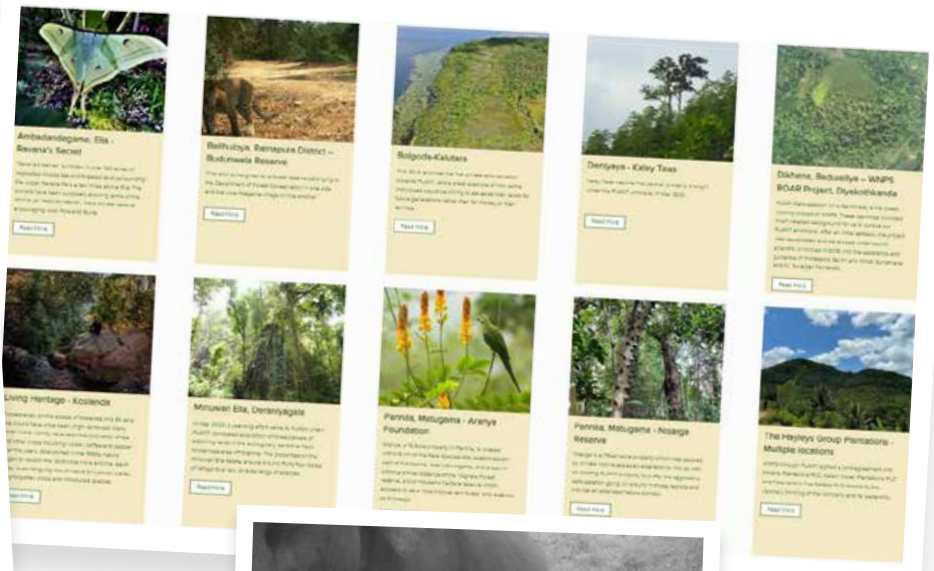
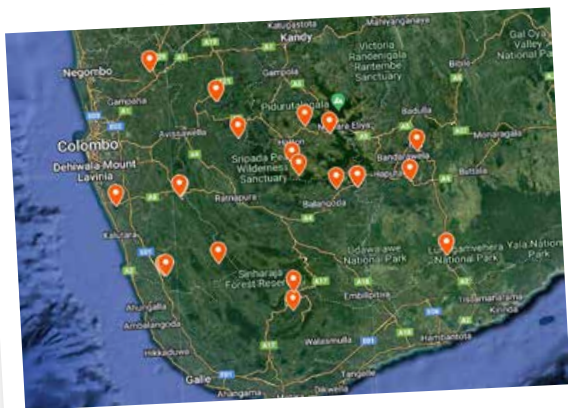


BRINGS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

In just over three years since inception, our aspiration to create a revolution through “private conservation” is taking root to a degree that we could scarcely have imagined. Although the initiative was always ambitious, and the desire was to cover at least 1,000 acres in a decade, considerable hard work, passion and commitment have begun to bear fruit with more volunteers joining, and more partners and individuals beginning to appreciate and support this journey. **Having exceeded a coverage footprint of over 2,500 acres by last year, the focus shifted to increasing our emphasis on forest corridors and reforestation within these properties.**

The incredible year gone by has seen us undertake work on multiple forest corridors, new properties and new scientific studies.

PLANT has expanded and now operates in over 20 locations, and we are continually adding to this list. During 2023 alone, work commenced on establishing around 13 kilometres of new forest corridors to complement our existing locations. This includes creating over 140 acres of new forest. These passages will in future provide a critical lifeline for range-restricted species who need connectivity for their survival. We welcomed six new partners to our journey, including international ones, and raised over Rs. 30 million for our work. **We are thrilled that our fundraising efforts also enabled us to directly purchase 16.5 acres of land off Belihul Oya**, which consisted of 15 consolidated small properties bordering our Budunwela location, thereby **tripling our very own conservation land there.** This is a critical elephant and animal corridor (see pix) which came under threat by potential gem miners, and we intervened to purchase the adjacent lands outright.



A 20-Acre Donation!!

We also had our first gift of land, thanks to Mr. Chanake Seneviratne who donated almost 20 acres of extremely valuable Bolgoda waterfront property in Bandaragama for us to own and conserve into the future. Mr. Seneviratne said it would make his late father happy and proud as they both had shared this dream for the property. We hope his selfless gesture will be the start for many others to consider having their lands protected into perpetuity for future generations to enjoy as conservation spaces. Many people possess land which is invariably passed down through family but could serve Mother Lanka in a different manner. We often see that it is not the size of the wealth possessed but the size of the heart that decides if people will give selflessly to conservation.



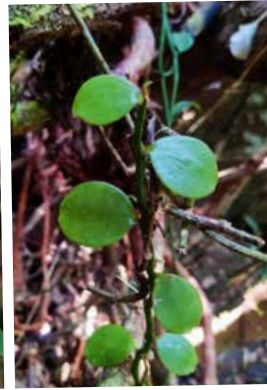
Science Kicks In

Rapid biodiversity assessments were done in six locations by leading scientists and their teams, and we saw endemism rates of between 28-32% on our properties. Further studies will yield more exciting news in other locations. PLANT is giving hundreds of species new hope for survival.

Several significant observations of critically endangered species were made. In the IUCN Red List, the Critically Endangered (CR) status is assigned to a species that is on the edge of extinction where, without active conservation efforts, it could go extinct soon. These are great examples of the positive conservation impact PLANT is bringing about in Sri Lanka. The enormous bu-hora (*Dipterocarpus hispidus*) is a CR and endemic species. Bu-hora is the largest tree found on the island and its leaf is represented on our PLANT logo. Three critically endangered and endemic plants, *Strobilanthes rhytisperma*, *Calophyllum cuneifolium* and *Vanilla moonii*, were observed.



Strobilanthes rhytisperma



Vanilla moonii



Saccolaimus saccolaimus



PRESERVING LAND AND NATURE (PLANT)

The record of the very rare nelu species, *S. rhyrisperma*, is one of the few recent records of this species over several decades and bears testimony to the expansion of the distribution range of this species. The only native (endemic) vanilla species in Sri Lanka, *V. moonii*, is a rare wild orchid with a beautiful brown flower. The critically endangered subspecies of the purple-faced langur (*Semnopithecus vetulus ssp. nestor*); the critically endangered pouched tomb bat (*Saccolaimus saccolaimus*); the nesting pair of critically endangered slaty-legged crane (*Rallina eurizonoides*); the endemic Kandyan shrub frog (*Pseudophilatus rus*) and Gannoruwa shrub frog (*Pseudophilatus zorro*); and fish species such as the Western laubuca (*Laubuca varuna*), which is another endemic and critically endangered fish with a restricted distribution; are just some examples of species under the protective conservation umbrella of our locations. PLANT properties are also home to many endangered species. This endemic and endangered golden palm civet (*Paradoxurus zeylonensis*) was captured on camera by D. Danushka at Minuwan Ella.

We are proud that the paper submitted by Prof. Sampath Seneviratne and his team on their discovery of a nesting colony of the critically endangered pouched tomb bat (*Saccolaimus saccolaimus*) on one of our PLANT locations—a discovery of the species in that area after over 100 years—was picked as the cover story for the Department of Wildlife’s journal, WILDLANKA, published in December 2023. This indirect nod to the role of private conservation and the work of PLANT is extremely encouraging for us.

Strategic Collaborative Partnerships for Conservation

The year saw some exciting new initiatives. We kicked off work on the establishment of a potential nine-kilometre forest corridor on the banks of the Maskeliya Oya which runs through the Horana Plantations estates and

links up with the Peak Wilderness. This ambitious project will be quite challenging on many fronts and the teams have their work cut out for them. The Horana Plantations team are fantastic co-partners on our journey. New partners for this project already include Teejay Lanka PLC (pictured below at the MoU signing) who wish to protect the sensitive waters of the Kelani River (Maskeli Oya being one of the Kelani River’s major upstream tributaries), Enrich Tea and Food Exports (who are committed to sustainability and whose commitment to high quality food and tea exports also entails a high degree of care for the tea plantation environment), UK based Traffi (the hand protection specialist company who are funding our reforestation work for the Stockholm segment of the corridor and very committed towards sustainability), and Midaya Ceramics among others.

Horana Plantations agreed to release land strips parallel to the Maskeliya Oya waterway. Creating a forest reservation of 30-50 feet on each side of the waterway, this forest will connect to the Peak Wilderness, enabling wildlife to travel through and access protected spaces with minimal human contact. Issues such as the recent leopard incidents in the hills are often caused by the inability of animals to travel across locations without human interaction. The project is broken into five units based on the five different estates through which the Oya runs. For it to succeed, we plan to simultaneously work on each segment. Plant nurseries were identified, and the project was formally launched in late December 2023. Already, over 4,000 trees were planted during the initial few weeks.



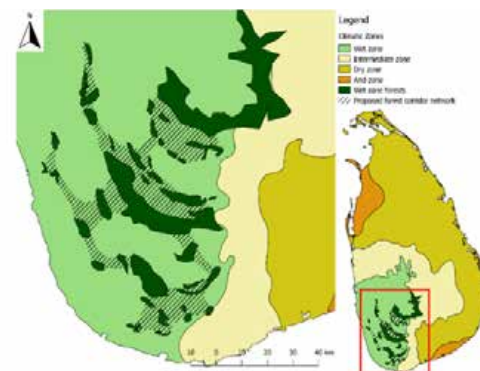


Former President J.R. Jayewardene and his wife, Elina, owned a fair part of the Kumbaloluwa Estate in Mirigama and would spend considerable time there. At the invitation of its current owner, his grandson, Pradip Jayewardene, WNPS PLANT engaged through an MoU to develop a plan and build a perimeter forest corridor around the existing estate (which primarily comprises of coconut and rubber). Although the Mirigama area is still green, it is largely agricultural and under immense development pressure. The WNPS has seen many such areas destroyed rapidly and, through PLANT, we now attempt to intervene at the earliest feasible stage to salvage whatever is possible. Separately,

SPA Ceylon wished to spread fruiting plants across the country and funded the planting of many fruit trees across multiple PLANT locations through an agreement. Surrounded by the magical forests on its own estate, Living Heritage Koslanda is a unique luxury boutique hotel, who has partnered to strengthen its forested environment while also supporting us through a plant nursery, etc.

Activity within existing locations was equally intense. The first phase of reforestation was concluded in the Minuwan Ella location, which is owned by PLANT while MAS extended their

partnership for our work there for two more years. With over 150 endemics on that 44-acre location alone, it is our crown jewel on the conservation front. Reforestation with thousands of trees was also done across Kaley Teas, Aranya, Nisarga, Ravana's Secret, Issengard, ROAR and multiple Hayleys locations. PLANT's guiding vision is the **Emerald Trails** where it keeps developing forest corridors to connect protected areas in the endemism-high South-West of the country. **PLANT is acutely in need of more funding and partners to take this journey forward, and invites more donors to support our work.**



©Emerald Trails Map developed by WNPS and PLANT



PRESERVING LAND AND NATURE (PLANT)

Mobilizing People, Communities, Entities and Agencies

Our vision to scale private conservation cannot succeed without engaging and mobilising large numbers of people and communities. In addition to a strong, competent Board of Directors, PLANT operates through its leadership team, which is totally voluntary, and comprises a fantastic mix of skills and backgrounds. Conservationists, Academia, Lawyers, Marketeers, IT and Financial professionals, Youth, Business leaders, Biologists and Entrepreneurs are among the many aspects represented in the 30-strong operational team. PLANT has also hired three full-time field staff, and we have six people from local communities who are compensated for providing engagement, planting, oversight on the ground and other work at some of our locations. Exciting and novel activities such as “canopy crusades” and “forest raids” were conducted on some of our premises to draw in ad hoc volunteers to help with smaller activities connected with our broader mission. This is an essential first step to onboard them as bigger contributors to our journey. Our future focus will also be on Community engagement in aspects of reforestation and plant nurseries, with ongoing work at the ROAR site in Badureliya serving as a great example.



Storytelling – a Critical Component for Wider Engagement

PLANT has undertaken a major task to educate the nation on the value of private sector conservation. As such, regular communication of initiatives and best practices is critical along with the need to inspire other partners, donors and volunteers to join in. We are proud of the information on the website www.plantsl.org which was developed last year with the assistance of the Wharton Business School, USA. Additionally, press articles, social media posts, our Instagram page and magazine

pieces and interviews have been helpful in our journey. We thank the writers, personalities and our own teams who helped along the way. PLANT also presented its work via “Kaleidoscope with Savithri Rodrigo”, through LMD, at Rotary meetings and more.

Property protection is difficult, and we try hard to both educate and engage relevant parties as part of this process. This year, many signboards were installed around properties countrywide, customized with the relevant Partner logo where applicable.



Our Benefactors

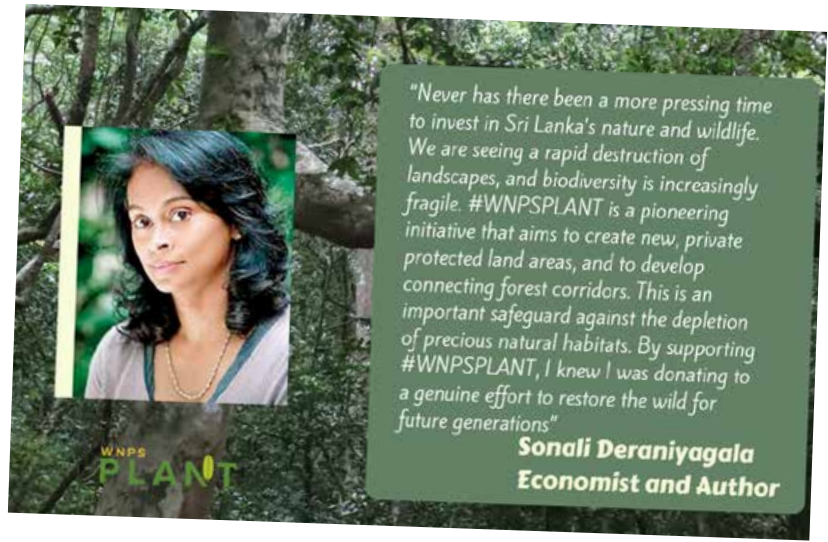
PLANT benefited from many partners and donors whose contributions are critical for our future sustainability. An increased number of donors personally contributed towards land acquisition and were key in our efforts to protect the Budunwela corridor. Past donors include Sonali Deraniyagala who shared these words with us.

Other donations over this period and the first two months of 2024 included the following: The Quick Response Fund for Nature and partners-over Rs. 8.3 mn/ Mr. Kunal Amalean-Rs. 4.7 mn / Dr. Sarala Fernando - Rs.1.7 mn / Prof. Trevor Price Rs. 1.0 mn / Rahula Dassenaieke - Rs. 1.0 mn / Mr. Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne -Rs.1.0 mn / Mr. Dayasiri Warnakulasooriya -Rs. 0.5 mn / Ms. Anusha Fernando -Rs.0.1 mn.

Our Corporate donors included MAS (funding reforestation in Minuwan Ella), SPA Ceylon (reforestation through fruiting plants), Teejay Lanka PLC (one phase of the Maskeliya Oya Project), Enrich Tea and Food Exports (one phase of Maskeliya Oya Project), The Traffi Group (the Stockholm phase on the Maskeliya Oya project), and the Hayleys group (land plus infrastructure and people for reforesting).

Additional land and other partners who continued their support through ongoing work are Kaley Teas, Nature’s Beauty Secrets, Aranya Foundation, Sarvodaya, Issengard Biosphere Reserve, Nisarga Reserve, Maskeliya Plantations, Kelani Valley Plantations, Ravana’s Secret, Rainforest Trust, Retrace Hospitality and the Climate and Conservation Consortium. We thank them sincerely.

We are also deeply indebted to the University academia and undergraduate teams who helped with our biodiversity studies, with special thanks to Prof. Sampath and Prof. Enoka.



Plant nurseries are critical for us, and we have been developing our own as well as partner-led nurseries. Our philosophy of using exclusively region-specific plants means we need to mix and match with great care as we nurture more regions back to wilderness. This period was filled with intense work and, while the sheer scale of what we have undertaken could frighten most, the WNPS and PLANT teams have been embracing the challenge and almost relishing the opportunity to do more, and to have bigger and more impactful outcomes on Sri Lankan conservation. More corridors, new partnerships, “ in-situ” species conservation and species reintroductions are among the many initiatives planned for the coming periods.





Species Focus

Cleo at Wilpattu
© Spencer Manuelpillai

HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE (HEC) SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Supun Lahiru Prakash (Chair)
 Jehan CanagaRetna
 Dev Wijewardane

Co-opted:

Rohan Wijesinghe
 Maya Situnayake (Rapporteur)
 Dhanushka Ekanayake
 Chandima Fernando
 Upuli Madarasinghe
 Sandamalee Dissanayake
 Jayathri Gunasiri
 Stuart Abela
 Parami Peiris

Human-elephant conflict is a serious socioeconomic and conservation problem in Sri Lanka. Globally, Sri Lanka has the highest elephant and second-highest human deaths annually owing to this persistent clash. The endangered Asian elephant subspecies endemic to Sri Lanka continues to suffer habitat loss and fragmentation countrywide and the highest number of annual elephant deaths recorded in history rose for the fourth consecutive year in 2023.

According to the first national survey of elephants in 2011, Sri Lanka had 5,879 elephants. Since 2012, however, official statistics show that 3,740 have died. The rapid escalation of the death rate is a huge challenge for elephant conservation; a faunal species with a long gestation period has lost a very high proportion of its population within a very short period.

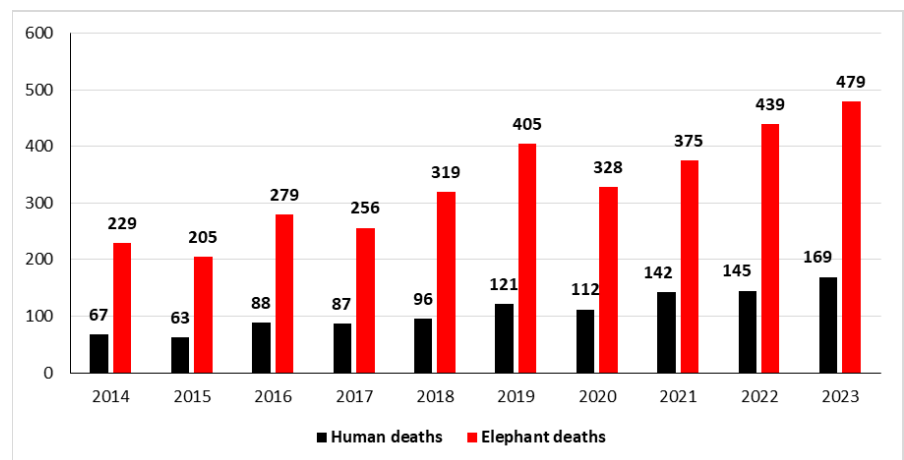
Nevertheless, the government has failed to appoint a Presidential Task Force to carry out the December 2020 'National Action Plan for the Mitigation of Human-Elephant Conflict' (NAP) which proposes a critical, holistic approach to the issue. A Presidential Committee headed by former Director General of Wildlife Conservation Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya to facilitate and oversee the NAP's implementation had little success as the expected authority and funds were not granted.

The WNPS continues to give top priority to the human-elephant conflict and elephant conservation. The HEC Subcommittee focuses on mitigation and conservation in line with the following strategies:

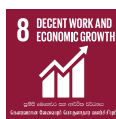
1. Lobbying for strengthening the legislative framework on elephant conservation and human-elephant conflict mitigation;
2. Empowering inter-sectoral collaboration in human-elephant conflict mitigation;
3. Stimulating stakeholder engagement in elephant conservation and human-elephant conflict mitigation;
4. Promoting scientifically proven low-cost human-elephant conflict mitigation measures;
5. Enhancing scientific understanding related to the matters of elephant conservation.



© Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne



Human and elephant deaths caused by the human-elephant conflict in Sri Lanka, 2014-2023.



HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE (HEC) SUBCOMMITTEE

STRENGTHENING THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON ELEPHANT CONSERVATION AND HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MITIGATION

WNPS and the HEC Subcommittee steadfastly maintain that the NAP should be implemented through a Presidential Task Force. We work closely with other environmental and civil society organisations to achieve this target.

The Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) filed a writ application (CA/Writ/26/2020) in May 2020 seeking justice for elephants in Sri Lanka. The Court of Appeal directed that proposals be designed to mitigate human-elephant conflict and for elephant conservation. Once finalised, these will be presented to Court for consideration. We hope that the necessity of implementing the NAP will be a key aspect in their proposals to be presented to the Court.

We have also identified the need for a National Policy for the Conservation and Management of Wild Elephants in Sri Lanka. The existing draft policy dated 2017 falls short of requirements. The Subcommittee closely follows developments related to this policy process.

EMPOWERING INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION IN HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MITIGATION

'Ali Pancha' Project

Fostering 25 Orphaned Elephant Calves

The 'Ali Pancha' project, an annual sponsorship scheme to provide nutrition essential to the healthy development of 25 orphaned elephants at the Elephant Transit Home (ETH) in Udawalawe, was successfully completed in October 2023.

Anti-Microbial Resistance Testing

The project sponsored research to understand which varieties of antibiotics work safely and effectively in the treatment of elephants. The paper was titled "Anti-Microbial Resistance Testing on Enteric Pathogens of Enterobacteriaceae; E. coli & Salmonella Species in Wild and Rehabilitating Elephants in Sri Lanka". The principal investigator was Prof. N.P. Sunil-Chandra (Emeritus Professor of Medical Microbiology). It was co-investigated by Dr. Vijitha Perera, Senior Wildlife Veterinarian, DWC, Sri Lanka. The study aimed to determine the status of anti-microbial resistance to E. coli and Salmonella species in 404 elephants in the wild (n = 349), semi-captive juvenile elephants (n= 19) at the ETH, and captive elephants (n= 36) in zoos and a cultural procession.

The results indicate that wild elephants as well as semi-captive elephants are rarely exposed to antibiotics. It finds that the impact on the spread of anti-microbial resistance to fecal E. coli of elephants through current veterinary practices and the environment is negligible.

Also under this project, five light repel systems (LRS) were established in selected locations in the Hambantota district to protect farmers' homes and cultivations from incursions by elephants (see LRS section for more details).

Smart Collars for Elephants

Elephants chosen for release back to the wild were tagged with smart collars to gain a better understanding of their range and roaming behaviour; and to scientifically evaluate and understand their reintegration into the wild. The possibility of using smart elephant collars to mitigate human-elephant conflict was also researched at Udawalawe National Park through a method conceptualised by Dr. Aruna Ratnasuriya. It examined

whether the collared elephant could be guided back into the jungle through a text message sent to the collar's GSM engine and using onboard hardware to apprehend the animal. The collar has elephant-locating capability via GPS technology. This proved very effective but its wider testing has been stopped by the DWC for procedural reasons.

Protection of Managed Elephant Reserve, Hambantota

Around 70 percent of elephant home ranges lie outside protected areas and managed elephant reserves (MER) have been introduced for the conservation of elephants that live beyond protected areas. The first MER was included in the Greater Hambantota Development Plan nearly a decade ago but is yet to become a reality. Consequent to a strong push by the Walawa Left Bank United Farmers' Organisation and 86 other farmer bodies that carried out a satyagraha for over 100 days, a special gazette notification (2222/62 dated April 9, 2021) was published declaring the Hambantota MER. However, this gazette is also of no effect as the authorities have still not issued regulations to demarcate the boundaries of the reserve. Human activities harmful to elephants continue inside the reserve, rendering both elephants and local communities helpless.

The WNPS HEC Subcommittee in collaboration with the Tropical Ecosystem Research Network (TERN) launched a project to study the status quo and to devise possible measures to safeguard the Hambantota MER. Local community-based organisations were involved. Through a capacity-building workshop, informal community leaders received hands-on experience with the equipment used for field data collection in conservation research.

We express our sincere gratitude to the Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG) and its parent company, the China Merchant Foundation (CMF). Their unwavering dedication to promoting human-elephant peace, demonstrated through their partnership and generous sponsorship of the Ali Pancha project, is truly admirable.

The Gathering

“The Gathering” is an HEC Subcommittee initiative bringing together conservationists, scientists, other experts and like-minded persons who want to create a positive change in the human-elephant conflict. While the WNPS coordinates the sessions, the goal is to provide exposure and a platform for others in the field to talk about their work and to build a network to foster collaboration towards sustainably mitigating human-elephant conflict. We conducted two such events this year with the following objectives:

1. To serve as an open platform for participants to discuss the NAP and its implementation challenges;
2. To achieve multi-stakeholder agreement on the NAP's key principles to ensure alignment;
3. To empower knowledge and data-sharing among participants;
4. To provide opportunities for collaborative projects;
5. To discuss why funding needs should be addressed by the development sector.



Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage at the capacity-building workshop for informal community leaders to safeguard the Hambantota MER.

SESSION 03

Venue: The Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC)

Date: April 4th, 2023

Focus Area: Grassroots-level success stories in human-elephant conflict mitigation

The event was moderated by Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya, former DWC Director General, with eye-opening presentations by Mr. Sameera Weeratunga, Ms. Upuli Madarasinghe and Mr. Dhanushka Ekanayake on grassroots-level success stories in human-elephant conflict mitigation.

Counting over 18 years of experience in biological sciences, wildlife conservation, and social services, Sameera is an expert in wildlife in and around Udawalawe. He has contributed to publications and numerous studies under the Udawalawe Elephant Research Project (UWERP). His focus areas are mainly ecology, conservation and the behaviour of Asian elephants in Udawalawe National Park.

Ms. Upuli Madarasinghe was born and raised in Colombo and moved to Mahindapura in Seruwavila to work on mitigating human-elephant conflict. Back then, the conflict was rampant and one of her main challenges was to find a solution that didn't negatively impact people or elephants. The village was surrounded by 1,200 acres of paddy fields and other farmlands. Elephants raided these fields every night. Upuli described how she built trust and relationships with communities and how, relying on the experience and understanding gained in the process, brought them to a point where there are no conflicts between elephants and farmers.

An industrial management graduate, Mr. Dhanushka Ekanayake has worked in the apparel industry for over 10 years. Dhanushka joined the WNPS to contribute towards conservation. He has coordinated the setup and maintenance for the LRS project over the last two years and is a member of the HEC Subcommittee.



*Elephant electrocution in the Sabaragamuwa District
© Sameera Weeratunga*



LRS installation in Seruwa, Bibile

HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE (HEC) SUBCOMMITTEE

SESSION 04

Venue: The WNPS head office

Date: August 12, 2023 (World Elephant Day)

Focus Area: Land-use trends, elephant behaviour and human-elephant relationships

Prof. Shermin de Silva kicked off the programme with a comprehensive presentation titled "From Global to Local: Land-Use Trends, Elephant Behaviour and Human-Elephant Relationships". She is a Professor in the Department of Ecology, Behaviour and Evolution at the University of California, San Diego. She directs the Udawalawe Elephant Research Project and is the President and Founder of Trunks & Leaves (Inc). She espouses evidence-based conservation and education outreach in Asia. A member of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, she has served on the Asia Region Board of Directors of the Society for Conservation Biology (2015-2018). Her research interests span ecology, behaviour and social science, with an increasing focus on how people and wildlife can safely coexist.

Mr. Chandima Fernando, a member of the WNPS HEC Subcommittee, provided an update on WNPS's ongoing project "Monitoring the Body Condition of Elephants in Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks". Dr. Prithviraj Fernando briefed the gathering on the progress in implementing the NAP. Dr. Fernando is the Chairperson, Trustee and Scientist at the Centre for Conservation and Research, Sri Lanka, and is a Research Associate at the Smithsonian Institution, USA. He is also a Member of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of IUCN. In 2022, Dr. Fernando was appointed NAP Chair. At present, he is a Member of the Presidential Committee appointed to facilitate and oversee the implementation of the NAP.



Prof. Shermin de Silva delivering her presentation at the 4th "Gathering"



A section of the conservationists, scientists, experts and like-minded people who took part in the 4th "Gathering"

STIMULATE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION AND HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MITIGATION

World Elephant Day 2023 Cartoon Campaign

On World Elephant Day 2023, the WNPS, in collaboration with veteran cartoon journalists from national newspapers and news websites, had a unique campaign to harness the power of cartoons to educate stakeholders—most importantly, the public—about the need to prioritise elephant conservation and to help mitigate the escalating human-elephant conflict.

Cartoons can convey technical information and facilitate communication of the biological and social sciences in a single visual frame. This makes them a powerful medium by which to reach a

wider audience. Through this art form, the WNPS sought to impactfully illustrate the challenges faced by elephants in their coexistence with humans. The campaign's objective was to shed light on the urgent need to conserve elephants while finding effective ways to minimise conflicts between humans and these magnificent creatures.

Dr. Prithviraj Fernando and Prof. Devaka Weerakoon, two of Sri Lanka's leading elephant researchers and conservationists, shared this concept with interested cartoon journalists along with detailed presentations on elephant protection and the significance of human-elephant conflict management. This helped form a strong foundation to inspire and spark the artists' creativity.

The cartoons were published throughout the week starting August 7, 2023, leading up to World Elephant Day on the 12th. The campaign ended with the Sunday editions of the 13th. The WNPS then exhibited the cartoons at the following locations on the 12-13th August.

- The Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage
- The Elephant Transit Home, Udawalawe
- The University of Vavuniya
- The Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya
- Galle Dutch Fort
- The Galgamuwa Animal Welfare Statue Premises
- Uhana town
- Ampara Public Market Premises
- Nabadagaswewa Junction, Sooriyawewa

The strategic selection of locations meant the campaign's message reached a diverse audience, sparking conversations and inspiring action to protect elephants and to help change conflict to coexistence.

Veteran cartoonists Asanga Indunil, Dayan Kottachchi, Dharshana Karunathilake, R. C. Pradeepkumar, Avantha Artigala, Hasantha Wijenayake, Anjana Indrajith, Mifraz Muzammil, Susil Perera and Wasantha Siriwardena participated in the campaign.

We express sincere appreciation to Anim8 for fulfilling our printing requirements, Midaya Packaging for bridgeable boards, and to our conservation partners the DWC, Department of National Zoological Gardens, University of Vavuniya, Galgamuwa Pradeshiya Sabha, The Young Zoologists' Association of Sri Lanka, the Wildlife Conservation Society-Galle, the Youth Exploration Society of Sri Lanka, Ahinsa Sri Lanka, the Nature School and Liyana Arachchi Entertainments for organising the exhibitions.



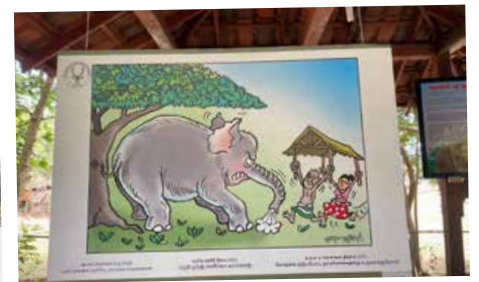
The concept of the "World Elephant Day Cartoon Campaign" was shared with cartoon journalists in a briefing at the CR & FC



World Elephant Day Cartoon Exhibition at the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage



World Elephant Day Cartoon Exhibition at the Galle Dutch Fort



World Elephant Day Cartoon Exhibition at the University of Vavuniya



World Elephant Day Cartoon Exhibition at the Galgamuwa Animal Welfare Statue premises



HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE (HEC) SUBCOMMITTEE

Assisting Local Communities of the Maduru Oya National Park

Divuldamana is a village in the Polonnaruwa district near the Maduru Oya National Park that suffers from frequent elephant attacks. The WNPS provided a solar-powered energiser and a power cabin, to the value of Rs. 324,875, was given to the village at the request of four farmer organisations and the DWC rangers of the area to strengthen the existing linear electric fence.

PROMOTE SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN LOW COST MITIGATION MEASURES

Light Repel System (LRS)

The WNPS has continued rolling out the LRS across more sites and is gathering data to measure the system's efficacy. The systems have been monitored in average of around 453 days (Range 350-627) so far and the data gathered is promising. We will soon be able to publish a peer-reviewed research article in a reputed scientific journal on our findings. In addition to regular data collection, a questionnaire survey is being conducted to study the perception of the beneficiaries and other villages regarding LRS and the levels of conflict over the study period.

The main challenge we've had to deal with are the people whose assets we are trying to protect. Their level of engagement and proactivity are a cause for concern as they expect all maintenance activities to be done for them and are largely uninterested in maintaining the fence despite the results shown. However, the Society decided to continue working with the chosen LRS recipients as we need to commence the scientific paper to conclude if it is indeed an option to mitigate conflict.

An electrician from Bandagiriya who started collaborating with us on the LRS joined the project team as a full-time employee. He has already rolled out the LRS across several sites and is also responsible for regular maintenance.



Official handing over the solar-powered energiser and a power cabin to the farmer organisations in Divuldamana, Polonnaruwa



We also enlisted an electrician in the Wilachchiya area to perform routine maintenance across those sites. Having a technical person in Wilachchiya allows us to respond to issues faster as well as mitigate the risk of having a single person across the technical details of the LRS.

We have established six new LRS systems during the year 2023 in Pahala Mattala, Aluth Gan Ara and Andarawewa (three sites) in Hambantota district and Ehetuwewa in Anuradhapura district. We passionately believe that the LRS is a positive option to mitigate human-elephant conflict and farmers who are benefitting from it are optimistic that it is the only solution. Whilst we do not completely agree with their mindset, it is an option the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) could surely use in the future.



LRS construction site.
Credits: Dhanushka Ekanayake



Working LRS site.
Credits: Dhanushka Ekanayake

Summary of Each District

Kurunegala	One system was established in Ehatuwewa to protect a farming family's property. They have maintained it well and we have gathered data for 607 days. Elephants broke through the LRS site while it was in operation only thrice during the study period.
Badulla	Two systems were established in Mahiyanganaya to protect the properties of a disabled soldier and a farmer. Data was gathered for 600 and 474 days, respectively. Elephants broke through the LRS site while it was in operation only four times during the study period in the oldest site and only once in the second.
Batticaloa	The site at Chenkaladi has proved challenging as elephants have continuously broken through the fence. The reason may be that this LRS was constructed as a linear fence due to geographical issues and availability of electricity. Elephants did not try to enter the site through the protective side, only doing so from the other side. However, when they return to the wild after raiding, they damage the LRS system. We have spent significant funds on maintenance. Due to cost overruns, we decided to reduce the protected area to the school. During the study period of 360 days, elephants entered the control site on 89 days and broke through the LRS site while it was in operation on 34 days.
Anuradhapura	Three sites were established in Wilachchiya to protect families of farming families. We gathered data for 471 days, on average. The number of days when elephants broke through the LRS site while it was in operation were 10, 17, and 1 day(s), respectively, providing clear evidence of the link between poor fence maintenance and elephant raids. One more LRS system was established more recently in Ihala Weli Wewa and shows promising results during the short period of study.
Moneragala	Three sites were established in the Bibile area to protect the families of wildlife officers who depend on their home garden crops. We have gathered data for 449 days, on average. The days elephants broke through the LRS site while it was in operation were 3, 1, and 2 day(s).
Hambantota	Seven sites were established in Bandagiriya, Andarawewa, Pahala Mattala, Alut Gan Ara and Andarawewa and data gathered over 367 days, on average, (Range: 330-458) shows excellent results with less than two days, on average, when elephants broke through during the study period (Range: 0-3).



New, more durable light covers than the previously used shower heads have been introduced and will be helpful in reducing fence maintenance cost significantly © Supun Lahiru Prakash



HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE (HEC) SUBCOMMITTEE

#	Location	District	Number of data collected days	Control site break-in		LRS site break-in		% of break-ins when LRS site is compared with control site
				Days elephants broke through the control site	% to total number of days	Days elephant broke through LRS site when it was working	% to total number of days	
1	Ehatuwewa	Kurunegala	627	89	14%	3	0%	3%
2	Mahiyangana 01	Badulla	620	208	34%	4	1%	2%
3	Mahiyangana 02	Badulla	494	42	9%	1	0%	2%
4	Chenkaladi	Batticaloa	380	89	23%	34	9%	38%
5	Wilachchiya 01	Anuradhapura	495	81	16%	10	2%	12%
6	Wilachchiya 02	Anuradhapura	493	61	12%	17	3%	28%
7	Wilachchiya 03	Anuradhapura	486	31	6%	1	0%	3%
8	Bibile 01	Moneragala	467	26	6%	3	1%	12%
9	Bibile 02	Moneragala	469	11	2%	1	0%	9%
10	Bibile 03	Moneragala	470	13	3%	2	0%	15%
11	Bandagiriya	Hambantota	478	38	8%	1	0%	3%
12	Andarawewa	Hambantota	444	39	9%	2	0%	5%
13	Pahala Mattala	Hambantota	368	17	5%	3	1%	18%
14	Aluth Gan Ara	Hambantota	368	19	5%	2	1%	11%
15	Andarawewa 01	Hambantota	350	15	4%	1	0%	7%
16	Andarawewa 02	Hambantota	350	50	14%	2	1%	4%
17	Andarawewa 03	Hambantota	350	52	15%	0	0%	0%



A farming family sustaining seasonal and perennial crops in the home garden due to protection of the LRS system in Aluth Gan Ara, Hambantota © Supun Lahiru Prakash

Mitigate Human-Elephant Conflict by Changing Community Perceptions

A project was initiated by the HEC Subcommittee in Ehetuwewa area in the Anuradhapura district to mitigate human-elephant conflict by changing community perceptions. It was originally conceptualised and practised by Ms. Upuli Madarasinghe, a member of the HEC Subcommittee. The project aims to change the perceptions of human-elephant conflict victims regarding elephants in a positive manner; to modify the environment of conflict villages to reduce human-elephant encounters; and to improve the socioeconomic conditions of victims to enable them to bear the loss and damage caused.

Ms. Madarasinghe lives in the community and closely monitors the ground situation and possible mitigation measures. The village tank, the 'Athpatiya Wewa', was cleared of alien invasive species and other excessive water plants to increase carrying capacity and both humans and elephants enjoy the benefits.



Field visit organised for the formal and informal village leaders in Panakkava and Ihala Weli Wewa regarding establishing and maintaining a community-based electric fence to protect villages from elephant raids.



Some injuries and deaths caused by elephants are the result of accidental encounters on roads. To reduce these by increasing visibility in Panakkava and Ihala Weli Wewa villages, clearing the undergrowth within a 5-10 meter strip on either side of rural roads was done. In addition, solar-powered streetlamps were installed to provide more visibility and security.

A field visit was conducted on February 17, 2024, for formal and informal village leaders in the area to learn how to establish and maintain a community-based electric fence. They got the opportunity to visit a village in Thirappane, Anuradhapura, to obtain first-hand experience with the system and to discuss it with the fence management committee.



Eradication of Elephant Mortality and Injury Due to Railway Accidents

Members of the HEC Subcommittee met with the President and some other office bearers of the Locomotive Operating Engineers Trade Union along with two Locomotive Operating Engineers of Trincomalee and Batticaloa railway lines where elephant mortalities are frequently reported. The objective was to discuss possible measures to reduce elephant mortalities and injuries due to railway accidents. A questionnaire survey was carried out to get their opinions and attitudes towards reducing such accidents.

ENHANCE SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING RELATED TO THE MATTERS OF ELEPHANT CONSERVATION

Survey of the Body Condition of Elephants

A survey was conducted in Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks and Hurulu Eco Park to assess the body condition of elephants. The great gathering of elephants in these national parks is influenced by water from the Moragahakanda irrigation project and elephants have lost their feeding grounds as the Minneriya and Kaudulla reservoir beds are no longer exposed during the dry season as they are used to store excess water.

NEEDS AND FUTURE PLANS

- A Presidential Task Force should be set up to implement the NAP; or the expected authority and funds must at least be granted so that the Presidential Committee appointed in 2022 to facilitate and oversee the NAP's implementation can do its duty.

HUMAN-ELEPHANT COEXISTENCE (HEC) SUBCOMMITTEE

- WNPS supports the Presidential Committee led by Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya, tasked with facilitating and overseeing NAP implementation, to carry out pilot projects to erect protective fences around villages and cultivations. This is a concept of Dr. Prithviraj Fernando who has experimented with it for over a decade. Around 50 village electric fences and 25 paddy field electric fences are installed in the Kurunegala, Hambantota, Trincomalee and Anuradhapura districts and have operated successfully for up to 15 years. The idea is to fence the village and keep the jungle free so the elephants can roam their traditional ranges.
- The LRS, which we, at WNPS, have been experimenting with for the last three years, has yielded satisfactory results in six districts. Currently, we have an 82% efficacy rate. The Subcommittee will continue to maintain these systems while collating and analysing the data received from the various sites to ensure success. We will publish a peer-reviewed research article in a reputed scientific journal on our findings so that we can pass on the concept to the government as another effective tool for conflict mitigation.
- Legal proceedings to secure landmark judgments against perpetrators of elephant killings are being pursued. For good reason, we cannot publicise the details.
- In the project "Mitigating Human-Elephant Conflict by Changing Community Perceptions", we are working on a method of engaging with villagers, to try and make them see the elephant in a different light. The objective is to promote the understanding that humans and elephants can coexist. We are trying this out in the Anuradhapura district and hope to publish our results within two years.
- We continue working with farmer communities to provide them with immediate assistance to make their lives less stressful, thereby ensuring the lives of elephants are also less stressful.
- In collaboration with the DWC's ETH and the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, the team conducted research on anti-microbial resistance to gauge the resistance levels of wild, captive and elephants that feed on garbage.
- We are experimenting with a collar system, again alongside the ETH, to determine whether it can be used as an early warning system to mitigate conflict between villagers/farmers and elephants. This experiment is ongoing, but it will not be until the end of 2024 before we can assess its success.
- The fifth session of "The Gathering" is scheduled for March 2024 to discuss the outcomes of the project to study the status and to explore possible measures to protect the Managed Elephant Reserve, Hambantota.
- The survey of the body condition of elephants in Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks and the Hurulu Eco Park will continue for another year.
- The "Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation and Endangered Asian Elephant Conservation Programme" will be conducted in and around the Kala Wewa National Park.
- The Subcommittee continues to work in partnership with other like-minded organisations.



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WILDCAT SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage
(Co-Chair)
Riaz Cader (Co-Chair)
Spencer Manuelpillai
Jehan CanagaRetna

Co-opted:

Deepthi Bulankulame
Milinda Wattegedara
Prabash Chiran
Rukshan Jayewardene
Sankha Wanniatchi
Thilanka Dassanayake
Pavithra Attanayake
Zaineb Akbarally

Project Coordinator:

Gihani Hettiarachchi

Centre Coordinators:

Nilma Heshani
Sinnathambi Ranjith
Rathnam Yuthahari
Thilina Dilsara
Pasindu Fransisku
Malitha Dissanayaka

WNPS LOLC MULTI-REGIONAL LEOPARD CONSERVATION & RESEARCH PROJECT:

This flagship conservation project on the island’s apex predator studies the coexistence of leopards and people in human-dominated landscapes. Beginning in mid-2022 and continuing throughout 2023, it is the single largest such programme outside of the protected wilderness areas and began in mid-2022, continuing throughout 2023, with the following objectives:

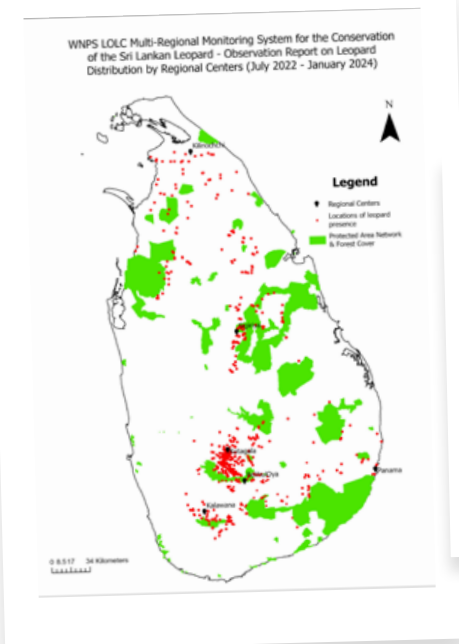
1. Raising awareness amongst local communities in regions where negative human-leopard interactions are recorded and encouraging active participation in ongoing conservation efforts.
2. Building a long-term network among selected local schools around the respective WNPS regional centres to organise and carry out biodiversity conservation-related programmes and mini-projects.
3. Collating and developing a database on leopard-related incidents.
4. Completing citizen science data collection on leopard distribution and stratifying human-leopard conflict areas based on the same.

Areas requiring immediate awareness development were identified and programmes conducted for schoolchildren, estate communities in the hill country, farming communities in the dry lowlands, the public sector and village communities. Locations were selected for setting up camera traps next year and field observations were carried out to gather indirect signs of leopard presence.

Sinhala and Tamil language posters were displayed on notice boards in rural schools and public areas around the six WNPS regional centres to educate about legal protections afforded to leopards and to publicise the hotline that can be used to notify the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) about any leopard-related incident.

In total, there were 72 Sinhala and Tamil language programmes conducted with the participation of 7,990 students, the respective Grama Niladharis and regional DWC officers. They were conducted by WNPS Regional Centre Coordinators in Panama, Kilinochchi, Sigiriya, Kotagala, Belihuloya and Kalawana.

One of the year’s highlights was the WNPS’s contribution, alongside the DWC and the local estate, in reuniting a leopard cub with its mother in Kotagala. The abandoned cub was found in the Errol Division of the Yuillefield Estate on February 26, 2023, and after multiple attempts, the reunion took place on the fourth night.



Awareness programs - Estate community

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

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8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

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15 LIFE ON LAND

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17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

සුරක්ෂිත සහ සාර්වජන උපයෝජනවලට ප්‍රවේශයක් සහ සාධක සහතික කිරීම

WILDCAT SUBCOMMITTEE

We thank LOLC for their continued commitment and support to WNPS for the conservation of the Sri Lankan leopard.

WNPS hopes in 2024 to build on all its previous work on leopard conservation; to deploy camera traps across selected areas in and around human-dominated landscapes to further study leopard movements; and to continue to strengthen our relationships with local stakeholders.

Leopard Education and Awareness Programmes in the Hill Country

Thirteen awareness programmes were organised by the Rainforest Alliance (RA) and conducted by the WNPS in the Bogawantalawa and Kotagala Plantations. Topics included identification of the leopard and other wildcats; importance of forests; how to report leopard sightings and related incidents; and precautionary actions to avoid leopards intruding into residential areas.



RA Leopard education programs - Kotagala Plantations

Sri Lanka Leopard Day

To commemorate Sri Lanka Leopard Day which falls on August 1, the WNPS carried out a wide range of activities during the month. Among them was an interschool competition involving seven leading schools in Colombo aimed at raising awareness about leopard conservation and engaging students in endeavours that promote understanding, appreciation and species protection. Janadhipathi Balika Vidyalaya won 1st place with St. Bridget's Convent and

Brightly College winning 2nd and 3rd places, respectively, in the leopard conservation challenge.

Separately, awareness programmes were conducted in 60 schools in rural areas where human-leopard interactions are recorded, reaching 7,083 participants with sponsorship from Classic Wild. Topics ranged from WNPS and its role in Sri Lanka's conservation, wildcats in Sri Lanka, leopard ecology and threats to this species to dealing with incidents in residential areas, engaging with the DWC, legal protection and noteworthy case studies.

WNPS brought down Dr. Vidya Athreya, one of India's foremost researchers on coexistence between humans and leopards, to deliver its monthly lecture and to attend meetings and workshops with local conservationists, DWC, plantation management companies and WNPS field staff.





“Cat Chat”, a panel discussion with Dr. Sriyanie Miththapala, Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage and Dr. Vidya Athreya, offered an enlightening evening for participating researchers and others regarding possible conservation methods for the leopard and Sri Lanka’s other wild cats. The event was hosted by Jetwing Colombo Seven on August 6. A meeting on mitigating human-leopard interactions was held with the Planters’ Association of Ceylon on August 8.

Dr. Vidya delivered the Nations Trust WNPS Monthly Lecture, “Leopards: Our Adaptable Neighbours”, on August 10 at the BMICH. She also trained field staff of the Leopard Research and Conservation Project on August 8 at the WNPS head office and held discussions with DWC officials.

She participated in the Advisory Committee meeting along with Dr. Rohan Pethiyagoda, Dr. Sriyanie Miththapala, Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage, Rukshan Jayewardene and Spencer Manuelpillai at the WNPS head office to evaluate the progress of the multi-regional monitoring system and other impending projects. Dr. Vidya’s travel expenses were sponsored by Dilmah Tea.

From August 13-14th, a field workshop on responsible reporting on wildlife and conservation-related topics was held for 16 local journalists at Horton Plains National Park (HPNP). Accommodation was hosted by the Blackpool Hotel. Participants engaged with local wildlife experts, DWC officers and the HPNP Park Warden to deepen their understanding of the relevant subject areas.

We extend a special thanks to Akram Cassim and the Colombo Jewellery Stores which donated proceeds from the sale of 130 limited edition leopard pendants towards WNPS’s leopard conservation initiatives.



Training and Certification of Safari Jeep Drivers in Yala National Park Block I

A comprehensive training was carried out for 741 safari jeep drivers of Yala National Park Block 1 from September to December 2023 to ensure they follow park rules to safeguard wildlife while improving visitor satisfaction. Participants who completed the programme were registered with the DWC and, from January 1, 2024, only certified drivers are allowed to operate inside Yala Block 1. The course was sponsored by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), run jointly by the WNPS and the DWC and coordinated by Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya. There were also workshops for 33 DWC volunteer trackers working in Yala Block I while another event was held in Colombo for local wildlife photographers.



Yala jeep driver training program

The Small Cats Project

WNPS aims to launch a new conservation initiative on the three small cats of Sri Lanka—the fishing cat, the jungle cat and the rusty-spotted cat—by partnering with a selection of hotels and tourism service providers that operate in the periphery of areas where these animals are found. The project envisages gathering additional information on the distribution of the three species, the threats they faced and potential mitigation measures alongside awareness programmes for local communities in selected parts of Sri Lanka. Funded by Classic Wild, the Small Cats Project is scheduled to start in February 2024.

UNDP & LOLC General Insurance: Livestock Compensation Programme

To tackle revenge killings of leopards in response to livestock attacks, WNPS plans to introduce a compensation programme in 2024 with UNDP and LOLC General Insurance support, and by working with the regional DWC field offices and veterinary officers. It will first run as a pilot in the cultural triangle covering Sigiriya, Dambulla and Minneriya, after which we hope to expand it in the long-term to other regions where this issue is seen.



School awareness programs



Distributing posters

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ENDEMIC SPECIES SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

- Jeremy Godrick - Chair (Upto September 2023)
- Shehan Ramanayake - Chair (October 2023 onwards)
- Jehan CanagaRetna
- Prof. Sampath Seneviratne

Coordinator:

Sanjaya Weerakkody

In stark contrast to this rich biodiversity in species in terms of numbers, there is a less positive outlook for the future of many of them. One-hundred-and-ninety endemic faunal species and 225 endemic floral species are listed as Critically Endangered (CR) or are in higher categories on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List [based on data from National Red List 2012, Global IUCN Red List, the National Red List 2020 (Fish) and the National Red List 2020 (Plant)]. Human impact—or “anthropogenic activities” such as habitat degradation, pollution and over consumption of resources—all lead towards decreasing populations.

The conservation strategy includes activities that reduce mortality by protecting existing habitats, enriching habitats to potentially increase or improve breeding patterns, and conducting research to better identify why the species has CR status.

PROGRESS

Ten projects kicked off in 2023 targeting three faunal and seven plant species. The focus is to increase their population, range, or habitat quality by eliminating direct threats to them using advanced scientific methods. Five more projects were in the pipeline at the year’s end.

THE CHALLENGE:

Sri Lanka’s unique biodiversity is shaped by its historic and geologic isolation from the continental landmass, topography and climate. Despite being located close to the mainland, the island is considered to possess one of the highest rates of biological endemism in the world.

According to the “Biodiversity Profile–Sri Lanka 2019”, Sri Lanka has 48.8% endemism in spiders; 98% endemism in freshwater crabs; 44.6% endemism in odonate; 14.4% endemism in ants; 12.7% endemism in butterflies; 89.1% endemism in land snails; 62.9% endemism in freshwater fishes; 89.1% endemism in amphibians; 68.2% endemism in reptiles; 15.4% endemism in resident birds; 20.2% endemism in land mammals; and 28.9% endemism in flowering plants.

As endemic species are generally restricted in distribution, these threats pose a greater risk of extinction in comparison with more widely distributed species. Many Sri Lankan endemics are point endemics existing within a small radius (area of occupancy is less than 10km²) and several species are only found in ex-situ conditions such as botanical gardens since they have been erased from natural habitats (for example, *Alphonsea hortensis* is only found at the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens). This heightens their risk of extinction.

OUR STRATEGIES AND APPROACH

The WNPS and Hemas Holdings PLC have partnered to launch a new conservation project aimed at preserving critically endangered Sri Lankan endemic species. Its scope is to implement conservation activities for 52 species over a period of five years, with the species selected based on the IUCN Red List. WNPS intends to cover a minimum of 10 species per annum, starting from January 1st, 2023.

Updates from this initiative include production of *Cryptocoryne walkeri* plantlets using the tissue culture technique, after which they were hardened inside the newly built greenhouse facility at the Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka. The first was planted on the riverbank of the Loggal Oya and the second batch is hardening in the greenhouse. This project helps to reduce the extinction risk by increasing the population of the *Cryptocoryne walkeri* and area of occupancy.

The *Aneuretus simoni* population is found at the edge of the Mithirigala Forest Reserve. Two more colonies were established inside the core forest area to reduce the effects of anthropogenic activities such as dumping of garbage and removal of dead sticks (breeding substrate). A clean-up was carried out to remove the garbage deposited near the existing populations of *Aneuretus simoni*, and since removal of dead sticks has a negative effect, an awareness session was held at the Mithirigala Kanishta Vishyalaya to educate the youth.

OUR RESPONSE

In 2022, WNPS partnered with Hemas to direct resources towards endemic species conservation. Hemas embraced the challenge of endemism conservation due to its importance to Sri Lanka’s natural heritage.

Mesua stylosa is found in just one location of Sri Lanka—Walawwatte, Wathurane, near the Bulathsinhala town—meaning that it faces a high risk of extinction. In the first stage of this project, ten plants were established at the Seethawaka Botanical Gardens as an ex-situ conservation measure.



Arhopala Ormistonii (Butterfly)

Ormiston’s oakblue (*Arhopala ormistonii*) is arguably one Sri Lanka’s rarest butterflies. This endemic species was first collected in 1917 by W. Ormiston from Nakiyadeniya, Galle, and described by N. D. Ridley in 1920. It was not recorded for nearly a century since the first collection and was rediscovered only recently.

At present, Ormiston’s oakblue has been observed in only three locations, two of them riverine forest areas in the Eastern intermediate zone in and around Gal Oya National Park. The only known location of the species in the wet zone of Sri Lanka is Wathurana (also known as Walawwewattha-Wathurana) where it has been seen on a few occasions. Due to its limited and fragmented distribution range and declining habitats, Ormiston’s oakblue is listed as a national CR species. This project aims to increase habitat quality at the Wathurana swamp forest by removing invasive species and growing more hosts and feeding plants.



Ormiston's oakblue

Aneuretus simoni (Ant)

Aneuretus simoni was recorded by Emery in 1893 from an ant collection situated in Peradeniya and Kandy. The species was recently reported from the Mithirigala Forest Reserve in the Gampaha district, the Indikada Mukalana Forest Reserve in the Colombo district and Lenagala Forest Reserve in the Kegalle district. *Aneuretus simoni* is at great risk of losing conditions favourable to it in its known habitats owing to destruction of forest edges and misuse of forests. Many of this species’ observed habitats are in forest reserves and yet they are exposed to various forms of pollution and disturbance.



Aneuretus simoni

This project aims to implement conservation activities at Lenagala Forest Reserve and Mithirigala Forest Reserve. The population at Mithirigala Forest Reserve is confined to the edge of the forest and faces a greater threat due to declining habitat quality. Therefore, enhancing habitat quality by removing garbage and establishing a population in the core area of the forest are the main objectives. Additionally, steps will be taken to declare these two locations as “highly sensitive areas” in consultation with the DWC and the Forest Department of Sri Lanka.



Conducting an awareness program at Mithirigala Kanishta Vidyalaya



Participants engaged in the Mithirigala Forest Reserve clean up



CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ENDEMIC SPECIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Systemus asoka (Fish)

Asoka barb (*Systemus asoka*) is an endemic freshwater fish that is categorised as CR under the latest National Red List (2021) of Sri Lanka's freshwater fishes published by the Biodiversity Secretariat.

The Asoka Barb was first described in 1989 from Kelani River at Kitulgala. The species has a restricted distribution range, being found in just two major localities of the inland wet zone. Other than the type locality, it is found only in Deraniyagala in the same range of its extant. Both areas belong to the Kelani River basin where Kitulgala is in the main stem while Deraniyagala is in Sitawaka river, a substream of the Kelani River.

The species' survival is heavily threatened by various anthropogenic activities. Therefore, raising awareness among key stakeholders—including neighbouring communities, schoolchildren and public officials—is one of the project's main goals. The population will be increased through captive breeding and introduced to suitable locations.



Asoka Barb - *Systemus asoka*



Impatiens subcordata



Propagation trials at Haggala Botanical Gardens

Impatiens subcordata (Plant)

Impatiens subcordata was first published in the Campanian Botanical Magazine in 1836 based on a specimen collected by George Arnott Walker-Arnott without a locality. Except for a few early collections made between 1836-1906 around Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts, this species remained elusive for nearly 110 years, leading to it being categorised as a Possibly Extinct (CRPE) species in the National Red List 2012. However, during the last eight years this species was recorded by field botanists from several locations around the Nuwara Eliya district. Based on these observations, it was declared as CR in the National Red List 2020, downgraded from CRPE in MOE, 2012.

Many of these locations are water-associated habitats, mostly outside of protected areas, except the Kikiliyamana Forest Reserve. Hence, they are



subjected to anthropogenic activities. Additionally, natural causes such as climate change-induced mass floods have affected the species. Therefore, these few populations are threatened with extinction from their original habitats. Based on field observations, the population in Kabaragala (in Mandaramnuwara) has been rapidly declining since the waterfall associated with it is frequently visited by locals and tourists. Further, due to its attractive flowers and miniature nature, visitors collect them as ornamental plants.

This project aims to investigate different propagation techniques to produce plantlets and to introduce them into suitable habitats for in situ conservation. The existing populations at Kabaragala and the Black Forest will be conserved with community participation. The species will also be conserved through ex situ measures at the Haggala Botanical Garden.

Cryptocoryne walkeri (Plant)

Cryptocoryne is the aquatic plants genus with the highest number of endemic plants in Sri Lanka, among them *Cryptocoryne walkeri* is considered as critically endangered. The species mainly occurs in the South-Western lowlands, evergreen rainforests, Central midlands and Central Western lowlands in the semi-deciduous monsoon forests that experience seasonal changes in precipitation. A few are scattered in dry zone riverine forests. However, critically endangered *Cryptocoryne walkeri* has only two localities in Sri Lanka. One is the bank of the Mahaweli River in the Gannoruwa-Hallolluwa area and the other is the Badulu Oya catchment area. It has been observed that the natural population has dropped dramatically with time owing to exploitation and habitat destruction. Therefore, there is an urgent need to act for the conservation of these valuable resources.

Under this project, tissue culture technique is adopted to produce plantlets. These will be established under ex situ (Seethawaka Botanical Garden and the Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka) and in situ conservation (Badulu Oya catchment area) strategies.



Students visiting the aquatic plant house



Cryptocoryne walkeri



Opening of the green house facility



Aponogeton jacobsenii (Plant)

The genus *Aponogeton* 'kekatiya' (*Aponogetonaceae*) is a threatened group of aquatic plants that has been over-exploited from the wild for ornamental purposes. This has caused a decline in wild populations. Besides illegal collection, habitat degradation due to anthropogenic activities has also contributed in the recent past.

Aponogeton jacobsenii is confined to the Horton Plains National Park and is the second rarest *Aponogeton* species with an extent of occurrence (EOO) of 6.521 km² and area of occupancy (AOO) of 4 km². Although the plant was once found in abundance in the Nuwara-Eliya district, including in Lake Greogry, populations are now confined to the Horton Plains National Park and a few isolated patches in the Pattipola area. The healthy populations within the National Park are confined to a stretch of the Belihul Oya river that flows through the park.

Recent observations indicate that the habitat quality of the Chimney Pool at Horton Plains National Park, which harbours the largest population of this species, is decreasing due to soil erosion and sediment deposits. Therefore, one objective of this project is to restore the habitat of the Chimney Pool and prevent further accumulation of sediments. Since the population is restricted to a small area, plants will be introduced to suitable habitats to boost the population and range of distribution



Collecting seeds of *Aponogeton jacobsenii* for propagation



Aponogeton jacobsenii flower



Aponogeton jacobsenii grown plants

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ENDEMIC SPECIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Vanilla moonii (Plant)

Vanilla moonii was named in recognition and honour of the work of Alexander Moon who made a massive collection of the herbarium and wrote a “Catalogue of the Indigenous and Exotic Plants Growing in Ceylon”. *V. moonii* is an endemic orchid species and is categorised as CR in the National Red List, 2020. As it faces an extremely high threat of extinction from the wild, it was listed as endangered (EN) in the 2012 National Red List. But it was listed as CR in the 2020 National Red List since the populations are severely fragmented, continue to decline in area of occupancy, extent of occurrence and habitat quality. This orchid species is distributed in a minuscule area of a lowland wet zone and specific microclimatic environmental conditions are needed for proper growth.

This project aims to protect the *Vanilla moonii* population at Dombagaskanda Forest Reserve, starting with a proper scientific survey of plant distribution and evaluation of threats to the population. Preliminary studies revealed that anthropogenic activities are heavily threatening the survival of the species. Awareness programmes will be conducted to educate the people and artificial propagation techniques will be used to increase species population.



Vanilla moonii plant



Vanilla moonii flower

Stemonoporus moonii (Plant)

The populations of some endemic flowering plants in Sri Lanka have been reduced to single locations. *Stemonoporus moonii*, commonly known as “hora wel”, is one such species now reported in just one area. It is important to note that the entire genus *Stemonoporus* is endemic to Sri Lanka. This species, listed as CR in the IUCN Global Red List and in both the 2012 and 2020 National Red Lists, is found only in a privately owned site in Walawwatte, Wathurane, near the Bulathsinhala town.

As the population is reduced to only a few individuals, it is expected to propagate the species through this project. They will be planted in suitable habitats to help maintain healthy numbers to conserve genetic diversity. Further, as an ex-situ conservation measure, this plant will be introduced to the Seethawaka Botanical Garden.



Stemonoporus moonii plant



Stemonoporus moonii flower

Mesua stylosa (Plant)

Mesua stylosa, commonly known as “Suwanda” in Sinhala, is another such species reported from a single location. This species, which is closely related to our national tree, *Mesua ferrea* (Na), is listed as CR in the IUCN Global Red List and in both the 2012 and 2020 National Red Lists. A natural population of this species is reportedly only found in a privately owned site in Walawwatte, Wathurane, near the Bulathsinhala town.

As the population is reduced to only a few individuals, it is expected to propagate the species through this project. They will be planted in suitable habitats to help maintain healthy numbers to conserve genetic diversity. Further, as an ex-situ conservation measure, this plant will be introduced to the Seethawaka Botanical Garden.



Mesua stylosa

Alphonsea hortensis (Plant)

Alphonsea hortensis H. Huber (Annonaceae) is a species endemic to Sri Lanka categorised as Extinct in the Wild (EW) in the National Red List of Sri Lanka 2020. It is found only in cultivation and conserved ex-situ exclusively at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya which has just six individuals. The urgency of a recovery plan—defined as a comprehensive practical plan of action to safeguard a species against further loss or deterioration of its remaining gene pool—is intensified by this situation. The reintroduction of *A. hortensis* is essential to protect its genetic diversity and conserve its ecological contributions.

The main strategy to save *A. hortensis* (Annonaceae) from extinction will be to collect seeds for propagation, to rear enough plants in the nursery and to establish them in suitable environments. Distribution modelling revealed the possibility of introducing *A. hortensis* to lowland up to mid-elevation wet zone areas. Therefore, *A. hortensis* will be initiated to PLANT properties in the country's wet zone.



Alphonsea hortensis



Citizens and Communities

YOUTH WING



Committee Members - Youth Wing

Chair:

Keshan Perera

Asst. Chair:

Shontaal Manuelpillai
(Up to October 2023)

Shuaib Naufel (from October 2023)

Secretary:

Zaydhameed Fajurdeen (from
February 2023 - May 2023)

Sihasara Karunarathne (from May
2023 - October 2023)

Joanne Peter (from October 2023)

Treasurer:

Shenaya Perera (from October 2023)

Members Participation Subcommittee Co-Leads

Tania De Silva

Jeremy Reckerman

Rushaidha Huzair

Conservation Subcommittee Co-Leads

Sajani Jayakody

Pasindu Abegunawardhana

Yeshara Gunawardana

Public Relations Subcommittee Co-Leads

Shayane De Silva

Chamikara Wagawatta

Northern Regional Committee Co-Leads

Himasha Abdul Wahid

Priyatharshani Tharmakulasingam

Project Coordinators

Pavithra Attanayake

Mohamed Firas Mohamed

Amasha Yatagama (joined January
2024)

Project Mentors

Kalutara: Sathya Wickramasinghe

Ratnapura: Nipunika Nethsarani

Nuwara Eliya: Mithun Sanochana

Editorial

Hansini Amarasuriya

Shashyaka Jayasuriya

Gayashini Dissanayake

42

School programmes conducted for
5665 students

73

Youth climate community leaders
trained

21

Youth climate interventions from
Kalutara, Rathnapura and Nuwara
Eliya trained

05

Youth Climate Action Projects
From Kandy and Gampaha

22

Sustainability projects initiated in
schools



Conducted a school awareness program by Team Earth Friends of YLCA Phase 1- Challenge Grant

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Quality Education - Educating youth on environmental conservation.



Sustainable Cities and Communities - Training youth leaders for sustainable community interventions.



Climate Action - Addressing climate change through community-based initiatives.



"Young Conservationists"- Career Guidance workshop held at University of Colombo

YOUTH WING

SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

The Youth Wing's (YW) most celebrated project, since its inception, has been the education of schoolchildren to reduce environmental impacts through awareness and exposure. We have successfully engaged with schools every year, covering a total of 158 and adding 42 new schools into the YW's fold in 2023.

Awareness sessions were conducted in 10 schools in Hambantota, 10 in Anuradhapura, and 10 in Gal Oya with support from the Lanka Environment Fund (LEF) through the WNPS Human Elephant Coexistence (HEC) Subcommittee. The goal was to create an understanding of HEC, thereby promoting attitudinal change amongst youth, focusing on formulating workable solutions for coexistence.

The Inner Wheel Club of Colombo joined with the YW to conduct awareness programmes in two schools in the South. The concept was to plant over 40 native trees in their gardens and to hand these over to the respective institutions for maintenance. Ten more programmes were held in Deraniyagala in schools surrounding WNPS PLANT property.



School awareness sessions done with the collaboration of Inner Wheel Club of Colombo

The objective for 2024/2025 is to have continuous engagement with schools through encouragement of student organisations and citizen science initiatives.

School Programs (U.S Forest Service (USFS) -Small Scale Sustainability Projects)

The continuation of the grant received in 2020 from the USFS aims to establish sustainability projects in schools and communities already engaged with the YW. The project drivers are schoolchildren. The programme aims to equip Sri Lanka's youth with the technical tools and skills to implement small-scale projects. Long-term, this initiative expects to inculcate the ethos of conservation, sustainability and green practices amongst youth, which can be scaled up in future to be profitable models.

Sustainability projects were carried out in 2022 and early 2023 in 22 schools across the Western, Southern, Eastern, Northern, and North Central Provinces. The breakdown is as follows:

- Western Province - 4 schools
- Southern Province - 5 schools
- Eastern Province - 1 school
- Northern Province - 7 schools
- North Central Province - 5 schools

The projects were based on five toolkits prepared by the YW on bio-fencing, waste management, organic farming, beekeeping and reforestation. Some schools undertook many projects that overlapped with each other to increase the long-term sustainability of these initiatives, as well as to enhance their benefits to the schools and neighbour communities. The activities were planned and monitored by the schoolchildren themselves, inspiring surrounding inhabitants to follow suit with community-wide environmental actions.

The YW continuously monitors these projects in partnership with the schools to ensure the required standards are met.



"Beautiful garden, managed waste" project at Vidyaloka Maha Vidyalaya, Anuradhapura

YOUTH PROGRAMMES

Youth Leadership for Climate Action (in Collaboration with the British Council)

Youth Leadership for Climate Action (YLCA) is funded by the British Council in Sri Lanka, with WNPS, as the delivery partner for the districts of Kandy, Gampaha, Kalutara, Ratnapura and Nuwara Eliya. The project envisages equipping selected groups between the ages of 18 and 29 with the knowledge and skills to deliver sustainable and inclusive community interventions addressing climate change. Training programmes were held district-wide in three phases. The participants designed and presented plans for their chosen communities which were/are to be implemented by them.

Following the success of phase 1 of this collaboration with the British Council in the Gampaha and Kandy districts, phase 2 was launched where five of the best-

performing interventions from the WNPS received further funding to heighten the impact of their projects under the YW's guidance.

Three other districts— Kalutara, Ratnapura, and Nuwara Eliya— received community training and developed climate action interventions. This amounted to 73 participants and 21 interventions including innovative methods for waste management, biodiversity, ecosystem protection and conservation, and community empowerment to address climate change.



YLCA Phase 2 training programs

The trained youth from the five districts received other opportunities to engage in climate action via networking events, awareness programmes and field workshops, forging links with government and non-governmental officers and organisations to maximise the success of their interventions.



Calido beach conservation project by Team Kalugantota of YLCA Phase 2- Kalutara district

MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Members' Participation Subcommittee focused on improving member engagement through a variety of events throughout the year, including:

- **Poetry Competition 'InkQuest'** – In celebration of World Poetry Day and the International Day of Forests. A two-day field visit to the Runakanda Nature Reserve and Diyakothakanda ROAR project site with the participation of 20+ WNPS members.
- **Wild Walk Trash Talk** – A morning nature walk by the YW on the fourth Sunday of every month in different Colombo wetland parks. It is a flagship project of the Members' Participation Subcommittee, encouraging WNPS youth to widen their skills and knowledge

on the biota. The venues are the Beddagana, Diyasaru and Attidiya Wetlands, and the walks are guided by youth wildlife field experts.

- **Eco Guardians** – To create awareness about urban fauna in Colombo schools, students were given opportunities to create their own initiatives within their school communities centred around urban fauna. The first awareness programme was successfully held on January 18th, 2023, attended by 120 students of the Day Bridge International School. Firas and Amasha, the YW Project Coordinators, facilitated the workshop.

Public Relations Subcommittee

The Public Relations Subcommittee focused on growing the YW's reach and social media presence through online and physical campaigns, including:

- World Environment Day campaigns were carried out on all YW social media platforms to educate the public on relevant topics.
- An interactive Instagram quiz is held every Friday called 'Trivia Friday'.
- **'Cries of the Wild-Voiced out Version'** – This video series is a novel step in conservation storytelling and monthly news roundups. It was launched in October 2023 to maximise on modern interactive trends.

YOUTH WING



Celebrated World Environment Day with the Girl Guides

Conservation Subcommittee

The Conservation Subcommittee prioritised expanding the YW audience's knowledge base with accurate scientific information through multiple avenues:

- The Youth Internship Programme is a collaboration with the Base for Enthusiasts of Environmental Science and Zoology (BEEZ) to promote careers in the environmental sciences for post-A/L students. It was held at the Colombo University premises.
- Developed a toolkit for a new citizen science programme in schools with Ayeshma Adikari, a Colombo University graduate.

Northern Regional Committee

The Northern Regional Committee worked to improve youth engagement in the five districts of the Northern Province through several endeavours:

- Assistance in monitoring the small-scale sustainability projects done in Jaffna schools.
- World Elephant Day: A lecture to commemorate World Elephant Day was conducted by Dr. S. Wijeyamohan with over 40 participants.
- World Water Day: A webinar was held to commemorate World Water Day with Dr. Subramaniam Prabagar on the topic of "Accelerating change to address the water and sanitation crisis for the benefit of all living beings".

World Elephant Day | 2023
"When the elephants walk, the forests walk with them."
யானைகளுடன் நட்பான நிலப்பரப்புகளை உருவாக்குதல் : வனவிலங்கு பாதுகாப்பு மற்றும் மனித தேவைகளை சமநிலைப்படுத்துதல்
12 AUGUST 2023
07:00PM - 08:00PM
DR. S. WIJAYAMOHAN
SENIOR LECTURER,
UNIVERSITY OF VAVUNIYA
Youth Wing of The Wildlife and Nature Protection Society
Aishwarya Alagarajy

World Elephant Day - Webinar 2023

Other

- CYOB (Carry Your Own Bag) – A YW and WNPS PR Coms. initiative which showcased the importance of reducing and re-using by “carrying your own bag” to minimise polythene use. These bags are sold at the monthly WNPS lecture for Rs. 800.
- Forty species selected during a biodiversity assessment at PLANT Aranya Nature Village & Nisarga Reserve, Matugama, Sri Lanka, will be depicted on stickers and book name tags to be distributed among children to raise awareness on Sri Lanka’s native and endemic species. Production is to be completed.
- In collaboration with the Biodiversity Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment, a drama, quiz, and an art mural competition were organised by the YW on July 26th, 2023, to commemorate International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem.
- In collaboration with the WNPS Wild Cats Subcommittee, “Save the Sri Lanka Kotiya”, a leopard conservation challenge, was held for schools in Colombo to mark Sri Lanka Leopard Day. Students organised their own campaigns on several themes related to the Sri Lankan Leopard. The winning schools were given awards at the WNPS public lecture on August 10th.
- In collaboration with the WNPS Marine Subcommittee and the Leo Club of Sri Lanka Technological Campus, a birdwatching and field exposure programme was conducted in the Anawilundawa mangrove restoration site with 25 children from the Lankabroek Children’s Foundation, Andigama.
- Awareness and training were conducted for over 600 Girl Guides in Colombo on World Environment Day covering general topics like climate change, deforestation, pollution and waste mismanagement, and Sri Lanka’s biodiversity. Priority was given to the subject of successful women in science and environmental studies.

This year, the YW focused on widening its circles to include youth from around the country. The goal is one step closer with the formation of district clubs in Kalutara, Ratnapura, Nuwara Eliya, Gampaha and Kandy via the connections made through the YLCA programme. Although the YW mainly operates from Colombo, its impact is widespread owing to the contributions from its regional and district clubs.



Environment Camp of the Girl Guides from President’s College Homagama



Celebrated International Day of Mangrove Conservation by educating students representing Environmental Pioneer Brigades from 10 schools

WILD KIDS SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Devika Wijesinghe (Chair)

Co-opted:

Dilhani Agalawatte
 Buddhi Jayasuriya
 Dilai Joseph

Coordinator:

Jayathri Gunasiri

A YEAR OF DISCOVERY AND ENGAGEMENT (2023-2024)

The past year has been an extraordinary journey for the members of Wild Kids, filled with thrilling adventures and enriching experiences that have deepened their connection with the natural world. As we look back on the events that unfolded, it's clear that 2023-2024 was a year of unparalleled growth and exploration for our young enthusiasts.

A Day at the Museum offered a treasure trove of knowledge as our members explored the wonders of science and history. From interactive exhibits to hands-on activities like scientific drawing and plaster casting, this immersive experience ignited a passion for discovery and learning.



Astro Night: Night Sky Observation Camp conducted by the Astronomical Society of The University of Colombo



A Day at the Museum: A Visit to the Science and Environment Museum at the University of Colombo

The highlight was undoubtedly the AstroCamp at the CR & FC grounds, which captured the imagination of over 150 participants. Hosted by the Astronomical Society of the University of Colombo, this captivating night sky observation left our young stargazers in awe, sparking a newfound curiosity about the cosmos and our place within it.

A visit to the Elephant Transit Home in Udawalawe provided a heartwarming opportunity for our kids to witness firsthand the compassionate care provided to injured and orphaned elephants. In a gesture of gratitude, the children eagerly participated in a cleanup at the car park, demonstrating their commitment to environmental stewardship.



Story Telling: The Story of the Bar Reef was narrated by Manesha Udawatte



A Visit to the Elephant Transit Home in Udawalawe



Birding with Wild Kids at Beddagana Wetland Park provided a thrilling dawn excursion for our budding ornithologists, allowing them to observe the diverse avian species thriving in their natural habitat. Meanwhile, the celebration of **World Wetlands Day** with young environmentalist Nulara Ekanayake and her inspiring 3G concept left our kids captivated, reinforcing the importance of protecting these vital ecosystems. It is with great pride and admiration that we acknowledge Nulara Ekanayake as an exemplary Wild Kids Member. Her passion, leadership and dedication serve as an inspiration to us all, reminding us of the profound impact that individuals can have when they commit themselves to the cause of environmental conservation.

The Annual Backyard Wildlife Photography Competition once again showcased the talent and creativity of our members, with over 3,000 entries from 788 participants capturing the beauty of wildlife in their own backyards. **Nature's Little Artists**, led by Dilai Joseph, and **The Story of the Bar Reef**, narrated by Manesha Udawatte, provided unique opportunities for our kids to express their appreciation for nature through art and storytelling.

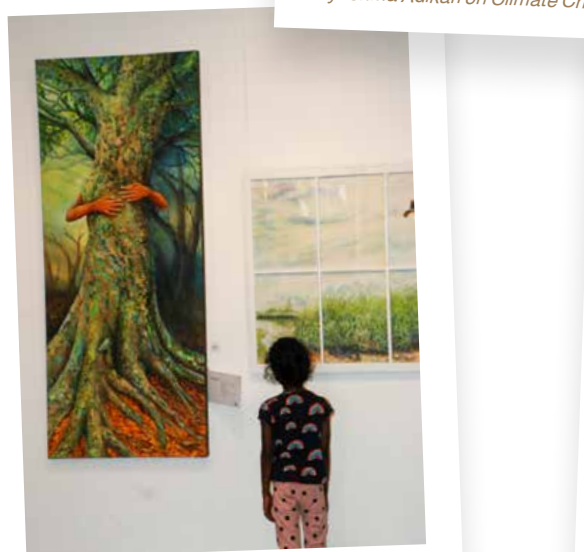
Online presentations on topics such as **Flaming Flamingos** by Hasitha Katugaha; **What's the Buzz?** by Ashinsa de. S. Wijeyaratne; and **Kids for Climate Action** by Ayeshma Adikari; enriched our members' understanding of pressing environmental issues, empowering them to become advocates for positive change.

As we reflect on the past year, it's evident that Wild Kids have embraced their role as stewards of the environment with passion and enthusiasm. Through exploration, education and advocacy, they are shaping a brighter future for our planet and inspiring others to join them on this vital journey.

Here's to another year of discovery learning, and conservation with Wild Kids!



Climate Action for Kids: Online presentation By Ayeshma Adikari on Climate Change



Nurture's Little Artists: Art Workshop at "Corridors of Time" Art Exhibition



What's the Buzz: Online Presentation on Pollination by Ashinsa De S Wijeyaratne

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Dev Wijewardane (Chair)

Co-opted:

Shaznine Ramiz

- Access to MS Teams is included in the licence and can be used for video calls and meetings;
- The WNPS already has an Office365 instance which includes 10 free licences that are used by office staff.

The ability to centralise document storage, too, will make management significantly easier. Any additional licences that we might require will need to be funded by projects or Subcommittees.

Website

The website needs a facelift, and a rework has already commenced. The layout will be cleaner, more contemporary, and information will be easy to find. The challenge has always been to create content covering the WNPS's broad range of work. We hope to have regular updates from each Subcommittee regarding progress on the many ongoing initiatives.

Discussions are ongoing with eBEYONDS, our current website technology partner, to decide which platform to use and how/where the

site will be managed and hosted. Key determinants will be cost, supportability, ease of use and availability of support services.

Technology in 2024-25

We anticipate that technology will play a bigger role in the WNPS in the coming year. This requires volunteers from the IT field, a luxury we currently do not enjoy, to join the Technology Subcommittee and work with other Subcommittees to identify how IT can simplify routine tasks or publicise the great work that is being done.

To begin with, IT can facilitate citizen science initiatives and support data-gathering. These are quick wins that are achievable even with our current toolset. An example of a successful initiative would be the nurdle surveys conducted shortly after the X-Press Pearl disaster.

We welcome you to get in touch if you would like to join the WNPS IT Subcommittee.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology across the WNPS expanded last year with many Subcommittees and projects using the tools currently available to us—Zoom, Office365 and the Google suite of products—in their daily tasks. No new tools were added during this period. Our technology partners, Vishmitha and eBEYONDS, continue to support our email platforms and website, making themselves available to us, as required.

Email

We have been using the same email platform over the last few years despite the growth in the WNPS's headcount and workload. In recent months, we have experienced a few performance issues that prompted us to look for alternatives. The options that we considered included upgrading the platform to a newer version, migrating to the Google suite of products or expanding our Office365 footprint. All of them come at a cost.

It was decided at the January General Committee meeting to choose the Office365 option based on the following criteria.

- Office365 is a "Software as a Service" solution which will be maintained by Microsoft, ensuring uptime;
- The Office365 licences give us access to One Drive which can be used to store all WNPS documentation;
- The licence includes the Microsoft Office Suite of products which are used day-to-day;



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WNPS DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE (DR) SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

G. Jeremy Godrick - Chair
(Up to September 2023)

Jehan Canagaretna - Chair
(September 2023 onwards)

Co-opted:

Priyanwada Rathnayake
Chandika Wickremathilake
Rohantha Samarasinghe

Coordinator:

Jayathri Gunasiri

The DR sub-committee is a key nucleus of the society in keeping our ears to the ground for any activity that has a negative environmental impact to our country. Whilst we have had several instances that there has been success, it is a very hard road to concur. The DRs should play a bigger role but administratively as a Society, we must get the equation right. Personally, I believe that we must have paid DRs, which is quite different to the reason the DR sub-committee was created in our history. Currently, the environmental destruction in our country is so high that having volunteers to do the job does not always suffice. Again, if the DRs are not passionate to make a change in the work we do, it is always an impossible task to achieve.

Our DRs around the country have been assisting other Sub-Committees to achieve their work goals in the locality they live in. They also work independently on conservation programs in their locality such as school programs, working with the communities have been some of the highlights of the year. However, there is a lot more to do and this will be an area of concentration in 2024.

EHATUWEWA village - upper part of 288, Ehatuwewa village in the Anuradhapura district. This village that has a lot of human elephant conflict has been chosen by the HEC Sub-Committee as an important location to try a unique method to convince the villager that living in harmony with elephants is a must. We have placed a DR in the village who lives with them. Upuli Madurusinghe is an important individual that will hopefully provide a breakthrough where she hopes to change the mindset of the villager about the elephant. As part of the work she does, we would be helping this village counter the problems they have that are creating the conflict. The society funded the cleaning of the only drinking water source in the village, the "Athpatiya Tank" so that both the villagers and the animals do have a drinking water source. We are also planning to clean up the tank again in 2024. The village had no streetlamps and in 2023, a female villager got killed by an elephant as she had bumped into the elephant that was on the main road of the village. WNPS installed seven solarpowered streetlights in response to the villagers' request. We have also installed a Light Repel System (LRS) in the locality and have bigger plans in 2024 and 2025 with this village to make it an example of co-existence for the country.



Athpatiya Wewa in Ehatuwewa

WNPS DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE (DR) SUBCOMMITTEE

GHOST NET REMOVING PROJECT IN SENANAYAKA SAMUDRAYA, IGINIYAGALA, AMPARA

This project has been conducted for the 2nd time in 3 years with WNPS funding the removal of ghost fishing nets at Senanayake Samudraya in Gal Oya National Park, Ampara District. Our DR of the area who is also a Temporary Tracker (ironically, he has been in this position for more than 10 years), has spearheaded the project with the help of our coordinator and removed these ghosts' nests from the Senanayake Samudraya.

Ghost nets are a significant environmental crisis, entangling aquatic life and threatening ecosystems. These discarded fishing gears ensnare species including fish, aquatic mammals, crocodiles, and birds, causing injuries, suffocation, and death. They also lead to habitat destruction, negative

economic consequences, and environmental pollution. The fishing industry loses valuable gear when nets are abandoned, and the nets capture aquatic life, reducing fish stocks and affecting fishing communities. Nylon and other nonbiodegradable polymers worsen water contamination, allowing microplastics to get into the food chain and endangering human health. The Society would like to engage with the fishing community to explore ways of stopping these Fishermen abandoning their nets in the water. This needs to be sustainably worked out with a reprocessing company of nylon, so that the nets can then be sustainably recycled ensuring that both the fisherman (sells the old nets) and environment has a win win situation.

We have a lot more to do in the future and the Committee does have the DR sub-committee in its sights as a priority.



MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVES

FIELD TRIPS

Jayathri Gunasiri, the WNPS Field Trip Coordinator, successfully organised eight field trips throughout 2023. The Society has observed consistent participation from several members as well as non-members, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the trip structures, choice of locations and overall services provided. These outings, which combine recreational activities with valuable education in wildlife and conservation, have proven particularly popular with those who have difficulty planning their own trips.

As indicated in previous years, income generated from field trips has helped to cover various administration costs of the Society. We are grateful to the participants who regularly join us on these excursions and we encourage those who have not yet experienced this enjoyable, educational adventure to consider joining us in the coming year. We warmly welcome suggestions towards improving our field trip services.

Field Trips Conducted in 2023			
Months	Venue	Resource Person	Accommodation
January	Horton Plains	Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage and Sankha Wanniatchi	The Blackpool
February	Mannar	Prof. Sampath Seneviratne	Hotel Agape
March	Sinharaja	Sanjaya Weerakkody	Blue Magpie Lodge
April	Gal Oya	Srinath Amarasinghe	Monty Hotel
May	Yala	from Kulu Safaris	Kulu Safaris
June	Maduru Oya	Ashan Wijethillake	Mansala- Mahaweli Bungalow, Dehiattakandiya
August	Wasgamuwa	Rukmal Rathnayake	Lavendish Wild Safari
November	Kahadamodara	Rukmal Rathnayake	Back of Beyond



MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVES



GATHERINGS

The member gathering for the year 2023 was held immediately after the 129th Annual General Meeting on May 27th, 2023 at the New Hall of the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training institute. Attendees participated in activities and games, including a raffle draw. These gatherings provide an excellent opportunity for fellow Society members and like-minded people involved in conservation efforts to connect.



BUNGALOW SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Jeremy Godrick - Chair
(Up to September 2023)

Jehan CanagaRetna - Chair
(September 2023 onwards)

Co-opted:

Rangika Perera

Guwani de Soyza



If there is ever a shortcoming in our administration, it is in the management of the Society's bungalows. Whilst two of the three are in operation, it has been a struggle managing escalating costs and competition, especially from other accommodation near wildlife parks. There are more than 500 hotels, bungalows and short-stay rooms around Yala National Park alone, and unlike in the past, the Society bungalow is no longer the most sought-after option for members. Our General Secretary leaving mid-year was an additional blow to bungalow management.

PALATUPANA (YALA)

We renovated the bungalow in 2022 with Society funds and kind donations from a few longstanding members. We are, however, struggling to earn a return on our investment for numerous possible reasons including increased competition, efficiency of bungalow management and the quality of the experience we can provide. We do have unique "visitors" that could draw clientele, such as the tusker "Lokeshwara" who takes an occasional jaunt to the property to feed on tamarind and fallen palmyra fruits. In 2023, thankfully, income against expenditure rebounded to a healthier value, in comparison with previous years. We aspire to put more effort into making Palatupana a comfortable option to the benefit of our membership.

UDAWALAWE

In the last five years, we have leased out Udawalawe bungalow to a person from the community. Members receive the same benefits that they receive from bungalows (such as discounts) that the Society runs on its own. COVID-19 and the country's economic crisis caused severe financial challenges. But we managed to keep our losses to a minimum as we had leased out the property. The lessee renovated the bungalow at his cost. Still, we struggle to

entice members there. In 2023, we shared the renovation cost with the lessee, thereby showing a loss of around Rs. 70,000. The bungalow is ideal for six to eight people and offers a beautiful view along with strong winds during most of the year.

WILPATTU

This bungalow has been the most cumbersome to manage for many reasons once we made a decision to advertise for a tender to let the bungalow out on lease. While a major shortcoming is better left unmentioned, we didn't manage the process in getting the bungalow up and running. The COVID-19, the economic crisis and cost escalations burdened the lessee we had chosen through the tender process and forced them to pull out as we too could not get the relevant documentations in time. As the Society focused more on science-driven work, the Wilpattu bungalow fell to neglect. Whilst this is no excuse, our objective for 2024 is to renovate this accommodation and make it available to our membership as soon as possible during the year.

Table depicts profits/losses in the last five years:

5-YEAR SUMMARY OF BUNGALOW ACCOUNTS (Rs.)					
Bungalow	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Yala	(92,670)	(173,795)	(201,552)	(853)	497,912.00
Wilpattu	173,000	(91,642)	(87,774)	(675,172.18)	(580,380.21)
Udawalawe	(11,370)	48,262	2,198	(70,194)	(69,894.00)
Net Profit/ (Loss)	68,960	(217,175)	(287,128)	(746,219.18)	(152,362.21)

We need the membership to support our bungalows in two ways: patronise them as much as you can to support our conservation activities; provide us with other constructive support, as soon as possible. We urge like-minded people to help us manage them. If you are one such person, please contact our office and join the Bungalow Subcommittee.



Platform Initiatives

Misty morning, Ella
© Nilupuli Heiyantuduwa

THE NATIONS TRUST WNPS MONTHLY LECTURE



Committee:

Spencer Manuelpillai (Chair)
Jehan CanagaRetna
Prof. Sampath Seneviratne

Office Team

Rangika Perera
Ivan Prematilleke et al.

Technical Support Team:

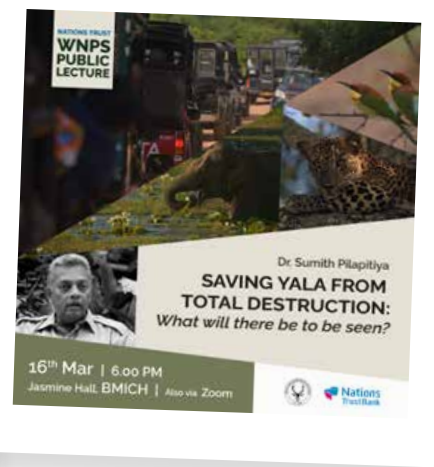
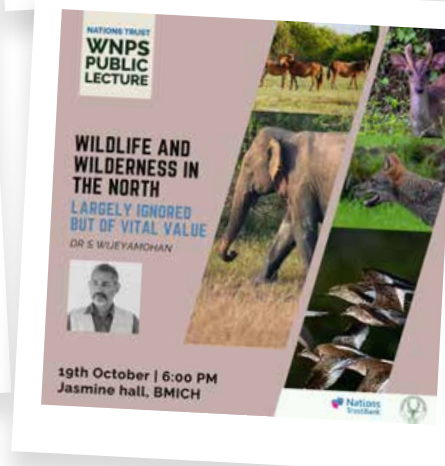
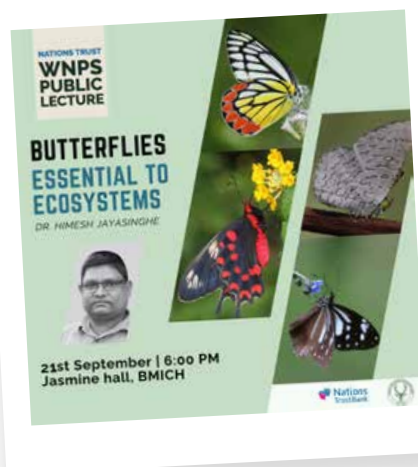
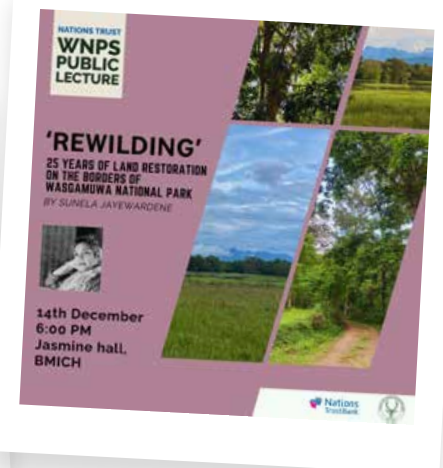
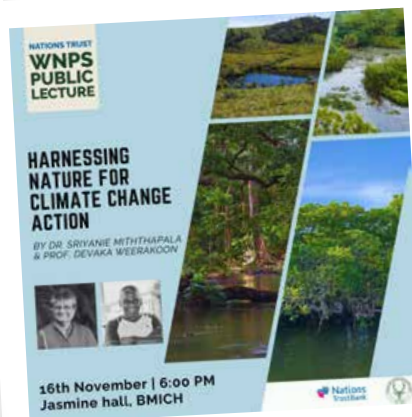
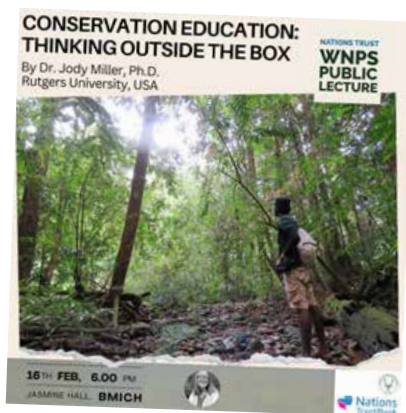
Dev Wijewardane
Pavithra Attanayake
Shaznine Ramiz

The WNPS has conducted its monthly lecture series for nearly three decades. The wealth of knowledge and information shared in a mere 60 minutes by a lineup of scientists, researchers and conservationists could be the most rewarding, unparalleled learning experience in conservation circles this side of the globe. In the last nine years, we've benefited immensely from support extended by the Nations Trust Bank which allowed us to scale up the event in every way.

The talks covered a wide variety of conservation topics in 2023, bringing to the fore the deep-rooted issues that we, as a country, face in protecting our wildlife and habitats. They continue to

inspire conservation initiatives, with each of the Subcommittees taking on the various challenges highlighted. For instance, after Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya drew attention to the deteriorating situation at Yala National Park in his March 2023 lecture, the Wild Cats Subcommittee worked with him to implement a driver training programme in October the same year.

These lectures are an important avenue to publicise WNPS success stories and ongoing projects, showcasing the tangible outcomes of dedicated conservation work. This not only instills hope but also empowers attendees to contribute actively to the protection of wildlife and nature.



THE NATIONS TRUST WNPS MONTHLY LECTURE

Month	Date	Title	Speaker
Jan	19th	Living in the Only Wetland Capital in the World.	Dr. Chethika Gunasiri
Feb	16th	Conservation Education: Thinking Outside the Box.	Dr. Jody Miller
Mar	16th	Saving Yala from Total Destruction: What will be there to be seen?	Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya
May	18th	Wildlife: Is it Truly Wild? The Dilemma of Wildlife Welfare and Ethics in the Present Era.	Prof. Tharanga Thoradeniya
Jun	15th	The Future of Nature in Sri Lanka.	Dr. Kelum Manamendra-Arachchi
Jul	20th	The Sloth Bear in Sri Lanka: Ecology, Conservation & Human Dimensions.	Dr. Shyamala Ratnayeke
Aug	10th	Leopards: Our Adaptable Neighbours	Dr. Vidya Athreya
Sep	21st	Butterflies: Essential to Ecosystems.	Dr. Himesh Jayasinghe
Oct	19th	Wildlife and Wilderness in the North & the East: Largely Ignored but of Vital Value.	Dr. S. Wijeyamohan
Nov	16th	Harnessing Nature for Climate Change Action	Dr. Sriyanie Miththapala and Prof. Devaka Weerakoon
Dec	7th	Rewilding: 25 Years of Land Restoration on the Borders of Wasgamuwa National Park.	Ms. Sunela Jayewardene

We express our sincere appreciation to the panel of resources for the year 2023:

Dr. Chethika Gunasiri, Dr. Jody Miller, Dr. Sumith Pilapitiya, Prof. Tharanga Thoradeniya, Dr. Kelum Manamendra-Arachchi, Dr. Shyamala Ratnayeke, Dr. Vidya Athreya, Dr. Himesh Jayasinghe, Dr. S. Wijeyamohan, Dr. Sriyanie Miththapala, Prof. Devaka Weerakoon and Ms. Sunela Jayewardene.

The WNPS monthly lectures serve as a dynamic platform for knowledge dissemination and community engagement. The impact is multifaceted, ranging from heightened awareness and informed decision-making to inspiring direct involvement in conservation initiatives. By addressing diverse topics and perspectives, these lectures contribute significantly to shaping a more environmentally conscious and proactive society in Sri Lanka.

A sincere appreciation to Rangika Perera for her eloquent introduction of the lecture series during the year.



DIGITAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



Committee:

Spencer Manuelpillai (Chair)
Supun Lahiru Prakash

Co-opted:

Dhisal Kapuge
Sankha Wanniatchi
Sharleen Suwaris
Reihan Stephen
Upekshi C. Perera

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN CONSERVATION: A CLOSER LOOK AT WNPS IN 2023

The widespread destruction, environmental damage, poaching, snaring, trafficking, etc., every day around the country kept the communication team busy 24/7 throughout the year under review. With the economic crisis as the biggest scapegoat, the authorities turned a blind eye to rampant deforestation, encroachment and much greater destruction.

STRATEGIC MESSAGING

The WNPS Coms team recognised the importance of clear and compelling messaging to engage diverse audiences. The team took on some large battles whilst fulfilling other strategic communication requirements.

Through a collective effort, we stalled plans to export 100,000 toque macaques to China. The WNPS took the issue to the global media and gathered the support of over 176 global conservation organisations, eventually securing an assurance by the Minister in court that the move would not go ahead.

Similarly, the WNPS in a collective effort with like-minded organisations halted a musical disturbance planned near a protected area. The awareness of the event’s negative impact created through a multimedia campaign helped to have the event cancelled and, more importantly, stopped another destructive precedent from being created.

The team carried out multiple campaigns to celebrate World Seagrass Day, Wetland Day, etc. An effort which rightfully stands out is the celebration of Sri Lanka Leopard Day, particularly as the WNPS is responsible for proposing and having it declared. As a part of this campaign, a special media field training was held at Horton Plains, with Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage, Sankha Wanniatchi and Park Warden Sisira Rathnayake as resource persons.



WNPS toque macaque press conference led by Prof. Dittus



Digital media coverage has grown phenomenally, with over 107,000 followers on Facebook. The team published over 400 pieces of content including impactful video materials. On Instagram, the follower base has exceeded 8,000, all organically grown. Our presence on other platforms, including LinkedIn, X, Threads and YouTube, has kept the conservation message upfront with global audiences.



DIGITAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS

Digital campaigns—including the anti-game meat initiative, the “Behave Like Animals” campaign to change crowd behaviour at Horton Plains, the Yala jeep driver programme, etc.—were effective in the last year.

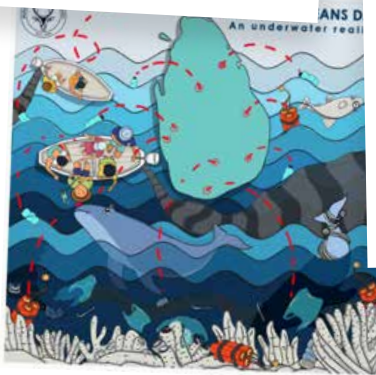
CONSERVATION THROUGH ART

The team partnered with two of Sri Lanka’s leading artists to raise awareness through their work centred around heritage and nature. The campaign, leading up to an exhibition and sideline activities, appealed to a segment of the audience who hadn’t hitherto been too involved in environmental protection.

We are greatly indebted to our friends and colleagues in the mainstream and digital media. We continue to get their wholehearted support to all our requests to carry our releases, thereby amplifying our messages.

A special appreciation to CJ and Team Sarva who continued to support us with effective creative campaigns for the past eight years.

Spencer Manuelpillai
(Chair)



CLIMATE CHANGE SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Snr. Prof. Deepthi Wickramasinghe
(Chair)

Keshan Perera

Co-opted:

Dr. Chandana Wijayanama

Peumi Jayakody

Omethya Illeperuma

Sajini Withanage

Zayd Hameed

Nadil Subasinghe

BACKGROUND

The global phenomenon of anthropogenic-induced climate change is undeniably affecting Sri Lanka, as evidenced by rising temperatures and an increase in extreme weather events, including floods and droughts. Positioned among countries most significantly impacted by climate change, Sri Lanka must proactively address these challenges. In response to this urgent need, the WNPS in 2023 established a Subcommittee dedicated to climate change.

CHALLENGES

Despite our relatively short existence, we approach this vital issue with a commitment to think big and take meaningful actions. The Subcommittee recognises that education and awareness-raising, policy advocacy and scientific research are paramount as effective climate actions. By prioritising these, we aim to contribute substantially to mitigating the impacts of climate change and developing adaptive strategies for a more sustainable future in Sri Lanka and beyond.

OUR RESPONSE

Education and Awareness Raising—FutureGreen: Initiatives for Climate Justice

Education and awareness are essential components of effective climate action, empowering individuals, communities and societies to make informed choices, drive positive behavioural change and actively contribute to mitigating and adapting to the challenges of climate change.

Educating and raising awareness among school children is crucial to addressing climate change as it lays the foundation for a sustainable and environmentally conscious future. School-based environmental education fosters an understanding of the interconnectedness between human actions and the health

of the planet, nurturing a generation that values conservation, sustainable practices and ecological stewardship. Moreover, inspiring eco-conscious attitudes in school children contributes to a long-term cultural shift towards prioritising actions for sustainability—ensuring that the leaders and citizens of tomorrow are well-prepared and committed to tackling the complexities of climate change.

We launched the Climate Action Programme (CAP) and You-CAN (Youth Climate Action Network) in December 2023. Our first education programme at St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo, was a success and was attended by 300 schoolchildren.

Knowledge Products

We are developing a comprehensive booklet in all three languages—English, Sinhala, and Tamil. This supplementary reading material aims to empower young minds with a foundational understanding of climate change, its impacts and the importance of sustainable practices. Through engaging content, vivid illustrations and accessible language, it is a valuable resource to instill environmental awareness and promote responsible stewardship among schoolchildren.



Awareness workshop - schools



© Nilupuli Heiyantuduwa

CLIMATE CHANGE SUBCOMMITTEE

Guardians of the Marsh: Wetland Conservation in the Climate Change Era-Wetland Day Activities

WNPS's Wetland Day celebration successfully shared commitment to wetland conservation on World Wetland Day at Diyasaru Park, Talawathugoda on 2-3rd February 2024. Through an exhibition, events and knowledge-sharing, it not only raised awareness about threats to wetlands but also highlighted their pivotal role as solutions to climate change challenges.

A dynamic exhibition and a series of engaging activities captivated the attention of both adults and schoolchildren, creating a diverse and enthusiastic audience. The former was a visual feast, showcasing the importance and ecological significance of wetlands. It provided an immersive experience, delving into the delicate balance of these ecosystems and the various flora and fauna that call wetlands their home.

Taking the Next Leap

The Climate Change (CC) subcommittee is collaborating with the environmental education programme of the CEA to enrich the knowledge base and enhance the capacity of schoolchildren in the domain of climate change. As part of this initiative, there are strategic plans to revise and update the existing guidebook for children, incorporating more tailored and relevant activities. By aligning with the environmental education programme, the Subcommittee aims to create an impactful and engaging educational experience that not only raises awareness about climate change but also equips young minds with the knowledge and skills to contribute to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.



World Wetland Day Exhibition 2-3 February at Diyasaru Park



Let's Stop Wildfires and Their Devastating Damage

Climate change is intensifying the frequency and severity of wildfires worldwide, exacerbating their impact on ecosystems and communities. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and changing precipitation patterns create conditions conducive to the ignition and rapid spread of wildfires. These events pose immediate threats to biodiversity and human settlements and contribute significantly to overall greenhouse gas emissions, further perpetuating the cycle of climate change. The CC Subcommittee wishes to educate communities in vulnerable areas on how to reduce threats of wildfires.



Deforestation and Fire. Northern boundary of Yala NP

ii. Policy Advocacy

Our commitment to addressing the complex challenges of climate change and environmental preservation and ensuring human safety underscores the imperative need for robust policies. By working closely with government, we aspire to contribute to the development and enhancement of policies that prioritise environmental sustainability and safeguard the wellbeing of communities.

The CC Subcommittee aims to implement a programme designed to enlighten policymakers about the latest developments in climate change adaptation, risk-reduction strategies and resilience-building activities. The objective is to equip policymakers with up-to-date information that can be seamlessly integrated into their policy frameworks.

iii. Research

Research on climate change is indispensable for a country like Sri Lanka as it provides the essential groundwork for informed decision-making, robust policy formulation and strategic planning. Research allows for the identification of vulnerabilities and potential risks, facilitating proactive measures for adaptation and mitigation. Additionally, research enables the exploration of future scenarios, aiding in the development of sustainable strategies that address the evolving climate landscape. Ultimately, the benefits extend to enhancing the country's resilience, fostering resource-efficient practices, and establishing a more secure and sustainable future for its citizens. Thus, the CC Subcommittee has started investigating the impacts of climate change on the increase in ground surface temperature (GST) in selected districts. A study is underway on the impacts of drought on the Yala National Park to understand the impact of water scarcity on wildlife, etc.

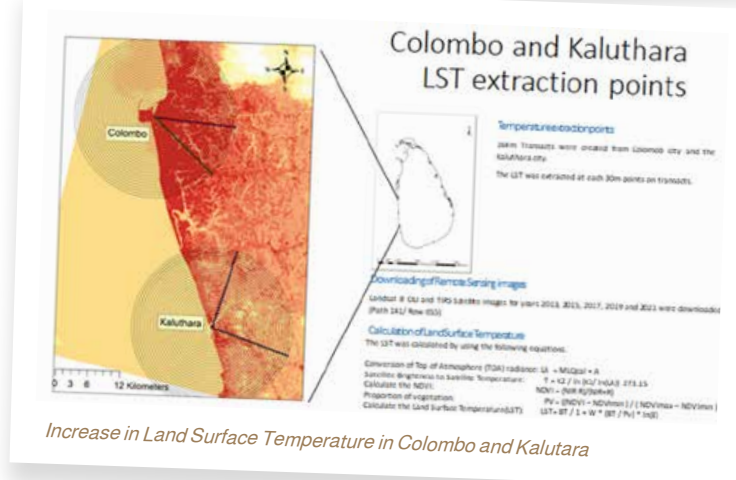
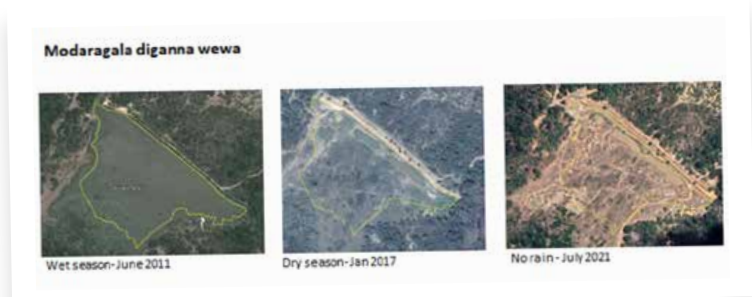
NEEDS AND FUTURE PLANS

- Continue programmes targeted at schoolchildren and expand initiatives to establish a network for youth and women's empowerment as this is crucial to fostering sustainable development and societal resilience.
- Initiate activities to reduce the carbon footprint in communities while promoting attitudinal and behavioural changes towards fostering a sustainable society.
- Collaborate with local government bodies, NGOs and private sector networks that share similar ideas to amplify the impact of our initiatives to protect nature, wildlife and planetary wellbeing.

- Forge collaborations and establish networks with like-minded agencies overseas to extend our impact beyond boundaries. This global network provides opportunities for knowledge exchange, innovative solutions and collective action on a larger scale, contributing to more effective and sustainable outcomes.

Research Findings:

Drought impacts on Yala National Park water bodies; changing contents of water from 2011-2021 (GIS/ RS images).



Increase in Land Surface Temperature in Colombo and Kaluthara



© Dhanushka Ekanayake

SCIENCE FOR CONSERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Dr. Chaturangi Wickramaratne
(Chair)

Co-Opted:

Dr. Muditha Senarath Yapa
Ashan Karunaratne
Treshan Galappaththy
Venuri Gunasinghe
Sanjeeva Rasika Muhandiram

Coordinator:

Bhagya Nanayakkara
(Up to July 2023)
Shaznine Ramiz
(July 2023 onwards)

The Science Subcommittee's main objective is to build up a scientific base to influence conservation and sustainable development in the country. This year, it focused on producing scientific evidence through literature reviews and expert consultations to support the WNPS Committee's diverse activities.

The Science Subcommittee engages with policymakers to integrate data and scientific information in the forming of more effective and inclusive policies and regulations to enhance environmental integrity and social welfare.

The Subcommittee had particular interest in conducting scientific studies on water quality in aquatic bodies which have reached marked pollution levels owing to increased land use modification, high industrialisation and changed behavioural patterns.

Aquatic ecosystems, including wetlands, are biodiversity-rich habitats that provide breeding, nesting and feeding grounds to a large array of species. Although they cover only 6% of the planet's surface, 40% of all flora and fauna live or breed in

wetlands. However, these ecosystems are also the most threatened, experiencing severe pressures from overexploitation and pollution, compounded by climate change impacts. Monitoring their health is paramount if we are to understand the conservation and restoration needs that can prevent further degradation.

In this regard, phytoplankton (algae), as bioindicators, provide unique information over other animal indicators since they fulfil their direct nutritional needs from these ecosystems and act as the base of aquatic food webs. This primary producer is the first group of organisms to respond to nutrient changes. Assessing the abundance and composition of the phytoplankton population can present vital information about water quality and thereby, the health status of a wetland or aquatic ecosystem. To monitor these water bodies using algae as an indicator, the Science Subcommittee successfully applied for an Idea Wild grant and is currently in discussions to acquire the equipment required for field studies.

The Science Subcommittee has a direct link with the Ramsar Convention and participates in the work of the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel. This provides opportunities to exchange knowledge and experiences on wetland management and is also a platform for showcasing success stories from Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the Anawilundawa

Mangrove Restoration project of the Marine Subcommittee, alongside other good management practices from the Colombo wetlands, are highlighted and included in upcoming publications of the Ramsar Secretariat. This is a noteworthy recognition of the significant efforts of local NGOs towards environmental conservation and for the achievement of human wellbeing.

Continuing from previous years, the Science Subcommittee worked with the Marine Subcommittee to finalise the data analysis and report on the impacts of nurdles from the MV X-Press Pearl catastrophe. Results from the initial study as well as inclusion of socioeconomic data were presented at the UK Ocean Country Partnership Program (OCP) workshop on Marine Pollution Emergency Response held jointly with MEPA. The manuscripts are under final internal review and will be submitted to a relevant journal within the next few months.



Mangrove Restoration - Anawilundawa

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Revan Weerasinghe (Chair)
Jehan CanagaRetna
Spencer Manuelpillai
Graham Marshall

Co-opted:

Caryll Tozer
Lasantha Withanage
Kushan Illangathilake
Sandamali Chandrasekara
Ruven Weerasinghe
Sachini Boraluwa
Taahira Lafir
Ravindi Galagamudali
Ruchini Jayasinghe

law. The second of these was on December 16th, 2023. Her Ladyship Justice Shiranee Tilakawardane shared her wealth of knowledge and experience on the topic “Environmental Justice, Education, Skills, Tools and Attitudes”. Young lawyers enthusiastic about environmental law actively were among the participants.



up before Hon. Justice P. Surasena, Hon. Justice M. Samayawardhena and Hon. Justice A. Obeysekere. The Court directed the GSMB to obtain “environmental clearances/ recommendations” from the CEA before issuing mining permits/licences to applicants (for sand, gravel, clay and soil). The case is fixed for argument.

2. Thalangama Writ Case – CA (Writ) 68/2022

WNPS and a group of concerned lawyers filed a writ petition against the elevated highway proposed to be built within the Thalangama environmental protection area, alongside other petitions filed regarding the same matter. When the case was taken up for support on March 25th, 2022, the 1st and 2nd respondents (CEA & Director-General of CEA) made an application to Court that they need to retain the services of the AG and sought further time. The WNPS counsels informed Court that they are challenging the legality of the entire project and its adverse impact on the environment, not confining their argument to just the area within which no environmental impact assessment (EIA) has been done to date. The Court gave permission to the said applications of the respondents and for them to file limited objections on or about July 29th, 2022. Counter affidavits were to be filed by August 30th and matter was fixed for support by September 15th, 2022. The state has moved for a date to file limited objections, having obtained instructions from the relevant authorities following the the EIA which is still ongoing.

Analysis – Total No. of cases – 13
Active No. of Cases at present – 6

The Legal Subcommittee employs a three-part strategy to target environmental conservation. The first component is to raise awareness within the legal fraternity and WNPS members regarding legal rights related to the environment. The second is to achieve justice for the environment and public through litigation. The third and final strategy is to advocate for justice in environmental matters. In the past year, the Legal Subcommittee actively undertook activities to implement and further these objectives.

LEGAL BRIEF

To increase capacity, participation and interest among the legal fraternity of Sri Lanka, WNPS envisioned and created the ‘Legal Brief’, a series of discussions where senior lawyers take up issues pertaining to the country’s environmental

CASES IN THE PERIOD 2019-2023

1. Sand Mining Case – SCFR 29/2020

EFL together with WNPS filed a Fundamental Rights application in the Supreme Court on June 6th, 2020, challenging the mining circular issued on 31/12/2019 by the Geological and Mines Bureau (GSMB). This circular amended the permits/license -issuing procedure by removing the safeguards in the Mines and Minerals Act 33 of 1992 as well as other GSMB safeguards and regulations related to sand, gravel and clay. GSMB, its Director-General, the Minister of Environment and Wildlife Resources, the Central Environmental Authority and the Attorney-General were named as respondents. The case was taken up on 15/02/2022 and the Court re-fixed the matter for support on March 22nd, 2022. It issued an interim order suspending the second part of circular No. 173/12/2019 that lifted the requirement of obtaining “environmental clearances/ recommendations’ from the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) in the GSMB’s mining permit/license issuance process until its final determination. The case (SC/FR/29/2020) was taken



Glossy Ibis on Thalangama Lake
© Dev Wijewardane



LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE

3. Soragune Writ Petition

WNPS together with Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) filed a writ action against DWC, CEA, the Department of Forest Conservation (DFC) and others regarding large-scale deforestation in Bogahapelessa Forest Reserve, Soragune. It has been reported that approximately 50,000 acres here were parceled out to influential businessmen and politicians on the pretext that these lands belong to the Nindagama of Soragune Kuda Kataragama Devalaya. This has had an obvious impact on the catchment area of Weli Oya. The respondents filed answers on 30/10/2023. Counter objections were filed on 14/11/2023 and written submissions are to be filed under the rules of the Court of Appeal. The case is up for argument on May 14th, 2024.

4. Vidaltivu Case

A petition has been filed by WNPS and EFL against the DWC for permitting construction of 14 concrete pillars within the Vidaltivu Nature Reserve. A WNPS team and seven other conservation organisations visited the site to gather evidence prior to filing action. An undertaking was obtained from the Attorney General that construction will not continue until a proper explanation is provided as to why the pillars were installed, in the first place. The matter will be taken up on May 15th, 2024.

5. Trenches Case

WNPS filed action seeking a writ of mandamus and prohibition from the Court of Appeal against the DWC and several other parties to quash the decision of the respondents to dig trenches along the borders of several national reserves. Notice was drafted and a date has been set for objections.



Spotted deer fallen into a trench

6. Monkey Case

Comments to media on April 17th, 2023, by Agriculture Minister Mahinda Amaraweera that some Chinese nationals had made a written request to his ministry to export Sri Lankan toque monkeys to zoos in China created a major uproar in the country. WNPS and several other organisations and persons filed a petition against this, resulting in the Court issuing notice to the Minister and entire Cabinet prohibiting such an action.

7. Deep Jungle Festival

WNPS, RARE Sri Lanka and the CEJ successfully prevented the “Deep Jungle Festival” organised in inside the Habarana jungle from February 17-20th, 2023. WNPS via a press conference alerted the public regarding the harm this festival would cause to wild animals. Letters of demand were also sent the DFC, DWC, Habarana police and other relevant authorities. The Habarana Magistrate Court finally granted an order preventing the event from going ahead.

Old Cases (Before 2019)

8. Wilpattu Road Case - SCFR 224/2010

WNPS, the Environmental Foundation Limited (EFL) and the Wilderness and Protected Area Foundation (WPAF) filed a case against the construction of two roads through the Wilpattu National Park. It would appear these roads were made for military purposes during the war. The case was taken up before the Supreme Court on January 24th, 2023 for arguments. Due to a change in public officials, the caption needed to be amended. It is to be filed before the next hearing.

9. Galgamuwa Tusker Case - B/1052/2017

This case is related to the killing of “Dala Puttuwa” in November 2017. The CID was instructed to conduct DNA tests via Genetech Institute but has still not submitted the full investigation report to the Attorney General to allow for filing of indictment/charges. As stated in the 2020 Annual Report, eight suspects were produced before Court and bailed out. The test carried out by Gentech Sri Lanka revealed that the DNA of the dead elephant matches the DNA of the tusker taken into custody.



© Dev Wijewardane

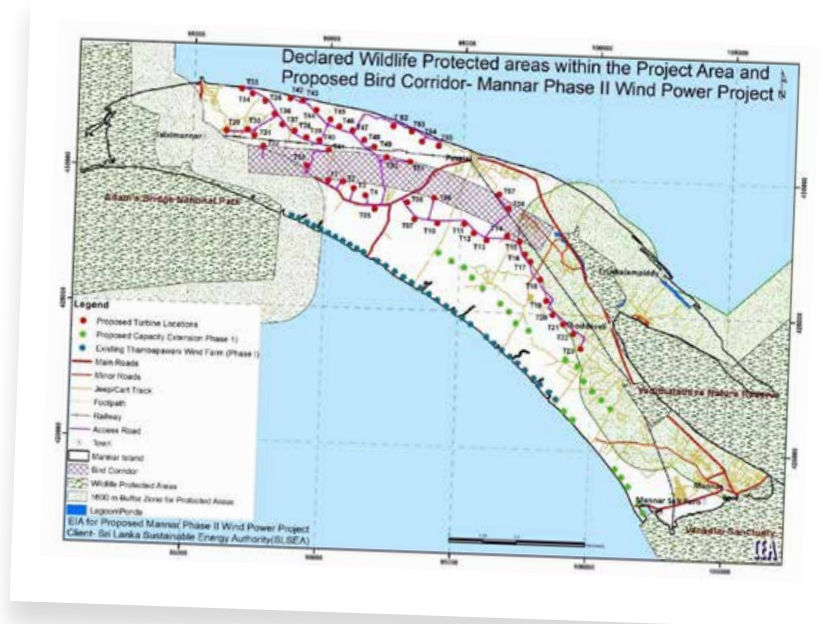
WNPS LEADS THE CHARGE IN “THE BATTLE FOR MANNAR”!!

Is nothing sacred in this country? Can our leaders not be responsible custodians for anything of value to Sri Lanka, be it Nature, Law and Order, ethnic integration or Economic prosperity of the nation? The WNPS initiated the fightback by calling for a Press conference on the 27th of February 2024, to reveal the massive damage being caused by the government's action and the significant flaws in the Manner Windfarm EIA and its process. Almost a politically brokered foregone conclusion, the proposed Adani Manner Windfarm is an unsolicited project and reeks of the same aspects of reckless negligence and questionable intents and the total ignoring of all the scientific data that we have seen on many failed projects in Sri Lanka (coupled without any care for the wellbeing of wildlife and in this particular case, the migratory birds or the local community).

Traffic police in the Sky? We would need hundreds of them to help guide the birds who are migrating in along the Central Asian highway, to have them ignore their DNA conditioning and instincts, and avoid the massive number of 220 meter (720 foot) gigantic windmills, and use the narrow yellow corridor that has been ridiculously kept aside as the pathway which all birds are supposed to use in future when they come into Sri Lanka via Manner. The authorities would have us assume that this is no different to landing in Katunayaka with air traffic controls.

There are 12 towers still marked within the path of this narrow ‘corridor’ as well!

Addressing the media at the WNPS Press Conference kicked off by Vice President by Graham Marshal on behalf of WNPS, Rohan Pethiyagoda very articulately presented the economic cloud which hangs over this proposal.



‘Why should SL pay in \$ for its own wind?’



WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ALL ABOUT?

This project looks at generating 6% of Sri Lanka's electricity demand through wind farming on the Island of Mannar. The Government intends to give the contract for this project to the Adani Group in India to construct 52 wind turbines in Mannar, which will generate about 250 MW of electrical power. While it sounds excellent, it truly isn't. That's why I've decided to speak up about it.

WHAT RED FLAGS ARE UP ABOUT THIS PROJECT AFTER THE EIA FOR THE PROJECT WAS RELEASED?

The EIA points to two huge problems. First, I don't believe that this EIA complies with what an EIA is meant to do according to the National Environment Act, No. 47 of 1980. Section 33 of the Act clearly states what an EIA is meant to do and this one fails on multiple counts. Secondly, the EIA, which is after all commissioned and presented by the Adani Group, claims that electricity will be sold to the Government at United States Dollars (\$) 4.6 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). However, the Minister of Power and Energy (Kanchana Wijesekera) is on record saying that the Adani Group is asking for \$ 9.6 cents and that he has managed to talk them down to \$ 8.7 cents. In other words, he's talking about paying twice as much as the Adani Group is claiming it is asking the Government for in the first place. So, there is a complete lack of transparency. This EIA has so many holes in it that it basically needs to be rejected and redone. The price for this electricity must be worked out through a transparent mechanism, rather than having a Minister negotiate things. We've been there before and that's how we ended up with the Mattala International Airport, the Colombo Lotus Tower, the Hambantota Port, and other kinds of silly, extravagant wastage and it's the people who end up paying the price for this. That's why I think that this system is full of holes and I want to contest it.

WNPS LEADS THE CHARGE IN “THE BATTLE FOR MANNAR”!!

WNPS Vice President, Prof. Sampath Seneviratne, speaking with good authority through his years of studying the migrant birds in manner, flagged many shortfalls in the EIA which had been presented. The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) on the proposed project grossly devalues the importance of Mannar. Although the EIA report proposed a narrow bird corridor at the interior of the island, GPS-tagged birds in Mannar Island show a wide use of the northern coast while moving between the protected areas in Mannar. Some of the main reasons for the EIA to miss this important movement corridor along the north coast are:

1. Wrong timing – the bird observations were done by observers walking in the forest on foot during the daytime from 6 am to 6 pm while the majority of the movement between protected areas happens between 6 pm to 6 am.
2. Wrong season – the EIA did not cover the critical migratory period of birds during this study. Therefore, the observers failed to see the movement of large numbers of birds, as resident birds typically do not move in large flocks in Mannar.
3. The globally accepted technologies for the study of bird movement that are available in Mannar were not used to map the movement tracks.
4. It is surprising that the Central Asian Flyway and the Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) of the United Nations were not stressed in the report.
5. Although the EIA report states that a thorough review of information is done, the publicly available and widely circulated information on movement patterns of critical species of the Central Asian Flyway in Mannar was not referred to and seems ignored. These satellite-tagged birds fly through the proposed wind farm.

Serious Environmental Concerns on Proposed Mannar Wind Farm-by Prof Sampath Seneviratne



Source: DailyMirror

- Proposed (Adam's) 250 MW Wind Farm in Mannar Island blocking the most important migratory bird corridor in Sri Lanka
- There are alternative sites in Mainland Sri Lanka with High wind energy potential and less ecological damage. 250 MW windfarms can go there to provide vital energy demand while not compromising the ecological and economic benefits in Mannar Island
- Mannar is amongst the four richest migratory bird regions in Sri Lanka, owing to its large aggregations of wintering waterbirds, including 20 globally threatened species that reach up to about one million birds
- Even though the EIA report proposed a narrow 'Bird Corridor' at the Interior of the Island, GPS-tagged birds in the Mannar Island show a wide use of the northern coast while moving between the Protected Areas in Mannar (Adam' Bridge Marine National Park, Veditalivu Nature Reserve and Vankalei Sanctuary)



The proposed narrow movement corridor for millions of migratory birds seems highly arbitrary and lacks support from currently available information in the EIA report on migratory birds in Mannar. The corridor is proposed conveniently away from the proposed wind farm based on no study and no data, as stated in the report itself. Expert in environmental law, Attorney-at-Law Dr. Jagath Gunawardana emphasized on the importance of public participation in the decision-making process surrounding the Mannar Wind Power Project. The purpose of the EIA is to identify potential environmental risks and propose mitigation measures to minimise adverse effects on the environment and local communities and with large-scale projects that have a national impact (like the Mannar Wind Power Project), EIAs are open for review and comment by the

public before the Central Environment Authority decides whether to proceed with the project.

Dr. Gunawardana shared among many other comments that, from a personal perspective, he had found that the EIA did not adequately address the ecological and social ramifications of the project, urging the public to do their research as well and use this period where the public could comment on and

raise concerns on the project. Interested parties can review the EIA report, which outlines the project's scope, objectives, and anticipated effects and submit their comments and feedback to the CEA within the specified timeframe.

Other luminaries like Prof. Nimal Gunatilleke have now added their voice of concern and made it clear that this is yet another Sinharaja disaster in the making.

Mannar Wind Farm Project: Another folly like Sinharaja logging project on the horizon?



Background

A wind farm consisting of 30 towers generating 100MW (Phase 1 – Thambapawani) was established on the southern coast of Mannar Island in 2020, with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The widespread criticism of this project due to its positioning within one of the main bird migratory corridors in the Asian region (detailed elsewhere in the article) was largely overlooked or ignored due to the economic priorities that prevailed at the time, as it happened with the now infamous Canadian-funded Sinharaja Mechanised Logging Project of the 1960s and 70s.

During Sri Lanka's worst health and economic crises in recent times, the billionaire Indian businessman Gautham Adani visited Sri Lanka and met with the then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa followed by a visit to the proposed renewable energy project site in Mannar on a Sri Lankan Air Force Helicopter. Subsequently, the Ministry of Power and Energy, Sri Lanka agreed to receive an unsolicited proposal for awarding the construction and operation of the Mannar Wind Power Project (Phase-II) and another in Poonaryn to Adani Green Energy Sri Lanka Ltd. (AGESL), as Build, Own, and Operate (BOO) projects for a period of 25 years for an approximate investment of \$ 500 million.

The proposed Mannar Wind Power Project (Phase-II) has a capacity of 250 MW and comprises 52 wind turbines of 5.2 MW capacity each. These are to be placed in parallel with the existing Thambapawani wind farm spreading across most parts of Mannar Island. The project is expected to generate 1048 GWh of energy annually. The Annual Energy Production (AEP) of the proposed wind farm is around 6% of the country's energy requirement.

Guest Column



By Prof. Emeritus Nimal Gunatilleke



© Udaya Karunaratne

WNPS LEADS THE CHARGE IN “THE BATTLE FOR MANNAR”!!

The WNPS is leading the charge, mobilizing media, communities, individuals, and others to take up arms and fight back hard in any manner possible to prevent this disaster from happening. Having submitted our formal objections to the flawed EIA, the WNPS will also be exploring legal and other means to ensure the project is not moved forward. At the point of publishing this Annual Report, we are in the thick of things, where the smear and counter campaigns against “doomsday environmentalists” are being thrown back at us. It would seem that standing up for the right thing would be a de facto classification as an agent of foreign parties. Let us stand tall as a community as we demonstrate our passion and determination to fight against this madness on behalf of our future generations. The WNPS General Committee remains firmly committed to this journey.



Among the critics of the international conservation agencies, Martin Harper, Chief Executive Officer, BirdLife International (BirdLife International is the world’s largest civil society partnership for nature with 122 independent partner organisations that operate in 118 countries with collectively over 3 million members) writing to the President of Sri Lanka says, “Your wonderful country is situated at the southernmost tip of the Indian Subcontinent in the Central Asian Flyway, serving as a crucial over-wintering ground for an estimated 15 million birds, representing 250 species, migrating across 30 countries, from the Russian Far East to eastern Europe through South Asia. Sri Lanka, being a signatory nation to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) has committed to safeguarding these migratory species.”



Donkeys of Mannar; a battle for hierarchy

PUBLICATIONS



Loris Editorial Committee:

Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne – Editor

Prof. Sampath Seneviratne

Arefa Tehsin

Rukshan Jayewardene

Prof. Devaka Weerakoon

Ashinsa de Silva Wijeyeratne

Jinashri Wijesundara

Warana/Waranam Editorial Committee:

Sanjaya Weerakkody – Editor

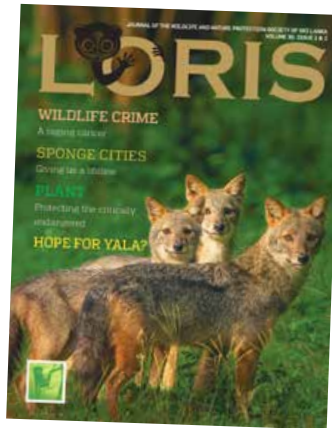
Gaya Kandasamy

Sethil Muhandiram

Vimukthi Gunasekara

Piratheepa Sivakumar

Deluxeani Kugathasan



LORIS

During the year, Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne released two issues of the Loris. The December 2022 Issue, Volume 29, Issue 6 (The Famed Twin Elephants of Minneriya National Park on the cover) was published in August 2023 as the resignation of our previous Editor caused a delay. The July and December 2023 issues were combined and Volume 30, Issue 1 & 2 (Golden Jackals at Mahaselawa in Yala on the cover) was published in January 2024. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Sriyan for his dedicated and tireless contribution in an honorary role.



WARANA WARANAM

Sanjaya Weerakkody, the Editor, published Volume 12, Issue 2 & 3 (December 2022) during the year 2023 owing to delays caused by several challenges in the previous year. He is currently working on Volume 12, Issue 4 & 5 as a collective publication. It was still in the editing process at the time of finalising the annual report. We would like to extend our gratitude to Sanjaya, who has also been generously dedicating his time in an honorary capacity.

The longstanding partnership between Nations Trust Bank (NTB) and the WNPS has been of immense value to the Society, providing ongoing support for the publication of the Loris magazine and the Warana/Waranam, as well as the e-publication of the Jungle Telegraph, the WNPS newsletter. All our publications are available on our website at: <https://www.wnpssl.org/publications/>.

We are happy to say that all our Loris journals are indexed by author name and subject and are available at <https://www.wnpssl.org/lorisindex.html>.



JUNGLE TELEGRAPH

The Jungle Telegraph (JT), prepared quarterly by our Senior Research Executive Shaznine Ramiz, is the Society's newsletter. It offers readers a summary of the work done by the Society's Subcommittees and is shared on our website and membership platform for broader reach. It serves as a record of the Committees' efforts for years to come.

FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE



Committee:

Jehan CanagaRetna (Chair)
 Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne
 Dilshan Hettiaratchi
 Graham Marshall
 Spencer Manuelpillai
 Sohan Patrick
 Devika Rohana

In 2023, WNPS achieved another remarkable milestone by exceeding Rs. 100mn in financial contributions for the first time in the Society's history. The Rs. 114.08 mn raised this fiscal year represents a nearly 25% increase from the Rs. 91.25m raised during 2022. While this growth is notably lower than the almost 400% surge observed between 2021 and 2022, WNPS remains committed to sustaining our fundraising efforts, continuing to prioritise science-based projects and actively pursuing international grants and funding

opportunities. Major donors in the last fiscal year include Hemas Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd., British Council, China Merchants Foundation, the Quick Response Fund for Nature (USA), LOLC Group and the US Forest Service, among others.

The fundamental guidelines for projects and collections have remained consistent since 2019, which is that all WNPS projects must be overseen by a committee member, with between 5%-10% of the total collection allocated for project support and general administrative expenses. Utilising these funds to enhance our administrative framework has enabled us to achieve improved outcomes promptly, with improved reporting for larger projects. Demonstrating sound financial management, corporate ethics, and dedication to hard work, the Society has maintained profitability since implementing the administrative changes, underscoring these as pivotal elements for organisational success.



Green Forest Lizard - Thalangama Lake
 © Dev Wijewardane

THE KEY SPONSORS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE YEAR 2023 (FIGURES ABOVE RS. 100,000/- ONLY)

NAME	SUB-COMMITTEE/PROJECT	AMOUNT (RS)
HEMAS MANUFACTURING PVT. LTD.	WORKSHOP MANGROVE/ANAWILUNDAWA MANGROVE RESTORATION /ENDEMIC SPECIES CONSERVATION	22,554,000
BRITISH COUNCIL	YLCA PHASE 1/YLCA CHALLENGE GRANT/ YLCA PHASE 2	14,711,094
CHINA MERCHANTS FOUNDATION LIMITED	ALI PANCHA PROJECT	13,436,045
US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES	ANAWILUNDAWA USFS PROJECT	13,028,278
QUICK RESPONSE FUND FOR NATURE	PLANT	7,300,000
KUNAL AMALEAN	PLANT/LEOPARD RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION /PUBLISHING "THE WAY OF THE JACKAL" /PRELIMINARY RESEARCH ON SLOTH BEARS	7,000,000
LOLC HOLDINGS	LEOPARD CONSERVATION & RESEARCH	7,000,000
STAR GARMENTS (PVT.) LTD.	ANAWILUNDAWA MANGROVE RESTORATION	4,098,600
COLOMBO JEWELLERY STORES	HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT/LEOPARD CONSERVATION & RESEARCH	3,775,000

NAME	SUB-COMMITTEE/PROJECT	AMOUNT (RS)
NATIONS TRUST BANK	PUBLIC LECTURE/LORIS JOURNAL/WARANA JOURNAL	3,720,000
AJITA DE COSTA	ROAR	2,700,000
SRI LANKA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	YALA JEEP DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM	2,432,000
CMA CGM	ANAWILUNDAWA MANGROVE RESTORATION	2,233,000
SUNDER CHANRAI	HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT	1,564,365
R. C. DE C. DASSENALIEKE	PLANT	1,000,000
PROF. TREVOR PRICE	PLANT	1,000,000
D.L. & F. DE SARAM	DUNG BEETLE RESEARCH	1,000,000
SAMPATH BANK	GENERAL DONATION	851,670
SPA CEYLON	PLANT- FRUIT TREE PLANTING	619,000
SEYLAN BANK	WILD KIDS PROJECT	525,000
SERENDIB SOURCING	LEGAL	500,000
DAYASIRI WARNAKULASOORIYA / MIDAYA CERAMIC COMPANY (PVT.) LTD.	PLANT	500,000
DILMAH CEYLON TEA COMPANY PLC.	PARTNERSHIP FOR DR. VIDYA ATHREYA'S VISIT TO SRI LANKA	300,000
CLASSIC DESTINATIONS PVT. LTD.	LEOPARD CONSERVATION & RESEARCH	300,000
JEHAN CANAGARETNA	LEOPARD CONSERVATION & RESEARCH /GREEN ISLE/GENERAL	271,500
SPENCER MANUELPIILLAI	LEOPARD CONSERVATION & RESEARCH / GENERAL	227,500
COMMERCIAL BANK	GREEN ISLE	176,800
H.DON CAROLIS & SONS PVT. LTD.	DWC INSURANCE SCHEME	150,000
GIHAN ILLANGAKOON	LIGHT REPEL SYSTEM (LRS)	150,000
INNER WHEEL CLUB	YOUTH WING SCHOOL AWARENESS AND REFORESTATION	135,190
AUSTRALIAN WAR ANIMAL MEMORIAL ORGANISATION	DWC RANGERS	119,539
LANKA ENVIRONMENT FUND	PRESS CONFERENCE FOR THE VIDDATHAL THIVU PROJECT/VIDEO PROJECT ANAWILUNDAWA	101,062
THARINDU WIJEYASENA	DWC INSURANCE SCHEME	100,000
MERCANTILE INVESTMENTS AND FINANCE PLC.	DWC INSURANCE SCHEME	100,000
SOHAN PATRICK	GREEN ISLE	100,000
CHALANA PERERA	PLANT	100,000
P B KAPUWATTE	WILDKIDS PROJECT	100,000
PAMELA PULLENAYEGEM	BODY CONDITION SERVEY OF ELEPHANTS - POLONNARUWA	100,000
TOTAL		114,079,644

FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE

Nations Trust Bank (NTB) continues to play a vital role in promoting societal wellbeing by actively supporting initiatives that raise awareness. Through esteemed public lectures, NTB effectively champions conservation education and awareness, solidifying its position as a cornerstone of societal progress. Additionally, NTB's ongoing collaboration with the Society includes invaluable support for the publication of prestigious scientific journals like LORIS and *Warana/Waranam*, along with facilitating the e-publication of the Jungle Telegraph. We extend our deepest gratitude to Hemantha Gunatilleke (CEO), Theja Silva (Group Company Secretary/ General Counsel) and Sanjaya Senarath (Head of Marketing) for their unwavering commitment and support.

Sampath Bank, our longest-standing donor, has provided unwavering support for over 20 years. We are deeply grateful for their enduring partnership, which is vital for the Society's continuity as it assists in efficiently managing our daily administrative tasks. Our heartfelt thanks go to Ayodhya Iddawela Perera (Managing Director), Tharaka Ranwala

(Senior DGM-Marketing & Customer Care), Dr. Lalith Weragoda (Chief Human Resource Officer), Darshin Pathinayake (Former AGM - Card Center), Shiran Kosinna (Current AGM-Card Center) and Nuwan Pathirana (Head of Sustainability) for their steadfast support.

Hemas Holdings PLC. stands out as an invaluable conservation ally, actively partnering with the Society on numerous crucial projects, thus making a substantial impact on biodiversity preservation in Sri Lanka. Their pivotal sponsorship for initiatives such as the "Critically Endangered Endemic Species" project and our Mangrove regeneration project at the Anawilundawa wetlands positions them as cornerstone of scientific endeavours for the Society in the years ahead. We extend our sincere appreciation to Kasturi Chellaraja-Wilson (Group Chief Executive Officer), Janakie Karunaratne (Lead-Corporate Affairs), Ishani Ranasinghe (Head-Group Sustainability and Corporate Communications) and Nishadee Ranasinghe (Senior Executive-Group Brand Communications and Sustainability) for their dedicated efforts in bringing this collaboration to fruition.

The British Council generously funded the Youth Leadership for Climate Action (YLCA) initiative, wherein the Youth Wing of WNPS served as the implementation partner across the districts of Kandy, Gampaha, Kalutara, Ratnapura and Nuwara Eliya. Equipped with comprehensive training, youth participants from various avenues for continued involvement and these interactions have been instrumental in amplifying the impact of their initiatives and advancing environmental sustainability efforts. We thank Orlando Edwards (Country Director), Sanjeevani Munasinghe (Head of Programmes) and Chameera Wickramasinghe (Programme Manager-Non-formal Education) for facilitating this partnership.

The Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG), in collaboration with its parent company's foundation, China Merchant Foundation (CMF), embarked on a monumental partnership with us in the last fiscal year, marking the largest collaboration in the Society's history at that point. Our partnership with CMF and HIPG remains steadfast, with the project commencing in 2022 and continuing in 2023. We extend our sincere thanks to



HIPG and CMF, especially to Johnson Liu (CEO), Ivy Deng (CMF), Jeevan Premasara (Senior GM HR and Admin), Buddhika Sandaruwan (Asst. GM, HR, Local Affairs and CSR) and Henry Liu (Executive Commercial and Marketing).

The US Forest Service remains committed to funding various projects, with last year's emphasis placed on the Anawilundawa mangrove restoration initiative. Their substantial contribution supported several essential components, including road construction, the establishment of a visitor centre, provision of rental staff vehicles and quarters, as well as the recruitment of three new field staff members. We extend our gratitude to Gayani Hewawasam, the Country Representative for US Forest in Sri Lanka, for spearheading this collaboration, along with the support of Stephanie Mann and Gendron Matthew from the US Forest USA office.

The Quick Response Fund for Nature along with Rainforest Trust, two US-based organisations, have been contributing immensely towards the success of our PLANT initiative by partnering to help us purchase our own land in two locations in the country. This partnership is one of a kind and a first for Sri Lanka. The due diligence that we went through to become a partner was intense and has paid dividends. The administration of these funds is through the engagement of RESOLVE in the USA. We must appreciate the trust placed in us and the engagement from Sanjiv Fernando (from Resolve), Steven Bernacki (of Rainforest Trust), and Carly Vynne (from Resolve) who believe in the PLANT vision and team. We are also grateful to Rahula Dassenaiyeke, SPA Ceylon and Prof. Trevor Price for their invaluable financial contributions towards PLANT that enabled the team to protect our country's biodiversity and forests.

In the second year of our collaboration, Lanka Orix Leasing Company (LOLC) continues to play a crucial role in supporting our research and conservation efforts, specifically focusing on understanding the ecology and behaviour of leopards throughout Sri Lanka. This ambitious five-year project aims to provide invaluable insights into the distribution of leopards. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Ishara Nanayakkara (Chairperson), Kapila Jayawardena (CEO), and Kithsiri Gunewardena (COO) for their pivotal contribution in making this collaboration a reality. Kithsiri continues to be a beacon of hope for our iconic species, the "Panthera pardus kotiya".

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Kunal Amalean for his generous personal donation in support of several critical initiatives. His contribution has been instrumental in funding PLANT, the Leopard Research and Conservation Project, facilitating the publication of the book "The Way of the Jackal" and initiating preliminary research on sloth bears in Sri Lanka. Two of these projects will commence in 2024.

In addition to our ongoing collaborations, Star Garments has also joined hands with us to contribute to the Anawilundawa project. Their support adds another dimension to our efforts towards the restoration and preservation of this vital ecosystem. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Senura Dharmadasa (Senior Manager-Group Sustainability and Compliance), A. Sukumaran (Managing Director) and Jeevith Senaratne (Director of Operations) for playing a crucial role in fostering this partnership.

Another esteemed partner that has joined our mission in Anawilundawa is CMA CGM. We extend our sincere appreciation to Lisa Outtier (Chief Sustainability Officer), Roshan Fernando (Business Process Manager), Kingsley Abeywickrama (Director/General Manager) and Sonali Nizam (Executive-Corporate Affairs) for their valuable contribution to this crucial endeavour.



© Nilupuli Heiyantuduwa

FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE

We also extend our sincere thanks to the Colombo Jewellery Stores (CJS), which teamed up to create and vend limited edition elephant and leopard pendants, with 100 and 130 of each being sold. The proceeds were graciously donated to support WNPS's Human-Elephant Conflict and Leopard Conservation & Research Project. This meaningful partnership, initiated in honour of World Elephant Day and National Leopard Day, demonstrates CJS's unwavering commitment to wildlife conservation. CJS has been a steadfast partner for WNPS over the past several years and we are deeply indebted to their CEO, Akram Cassim, for his passion.

Spa Ceylon and its co-founders, Shiwantha Dias and Shalin Balasuriya, have been a constant support to the Society, especially in our efforts to mitigate human-elephant conflict. We thank them for their ongoing generous contributions during the year. They also funded the reforestation of fruiting trees in our PLANT locations.

We acknowledge Ajita De Costa's continued support for the ROAR project, which plays a crucial role in rainforest reforestation efforts. We express our heartfelt thanks to him for his unwavering commitment.

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority has provided funding for a pivotal initiative: the Yala Jeep Driver Training Programme which serves the dual purpose of aiming to prevent wildlife fatalities caused by speeding drivers whilst also promoting eco-tourism within Yala National Park. Recognised as highly significant, this project underscores the commitment to both wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism practices in the region.

We express our gratitude to Sunder Chanrai for his generous contribution to promoting human-elephant coexistence. This support has been a beacon for the continuation of the LRS in Sri Lanka.



Fishing Cat
© Spencer Manuelpillai

Seylan Bank's "Tikiri Savings" programme in partnership with WNPS's Wild Kids has empowered the Society to engage with children aged five to twelve, fostering conservation education among the younger generation. This collaboration was another important step for the Society in 2023. Our heartfelt appreciation goes to Ramesh Jayasekera (CEO-Seylan Bank PLC.), Asitha Abeyaratne (AGM-Marketing and Sales) and Nalin Karunaratne (Senior Manager-Brand Marketing) for their unwavering support.

We continue our initiative to provide life and disability insurance to DWC staff, made possible through generous contributions from donors including Don Carolis and Mercantile Investments & Finance PLC., among others. We express our gratitude for their support.

Dilmah Tea's partnership with the Society, which facilitated the visit of Dr. Vidya Athreya from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) India, has been instrumental in advancing efforts to promote human-leopard coexistence. We thank Dilhan C. Fernando (Chairman, CEO) and Dilmah Tea for their support.

John Keells Office Automation (JKOA) has also been supporting the Society in different ways including helping the process of mitigating human elephant conflict through the funding of the LRS in addition to donating printers and multimedia projectors which enhanced our administrative effectiveness. We are indebted to Janoda Thoradeniya (Vice President/CEO) and Malik Edwin (Asststant Vice President/Head of Office Automation) for their support.

We extend our thanks to all our sponsors and donors for their generous support which has enabled us to pursue our conservation goals effectively.

Special thanks to Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne, Dilshan Hettiaratchi, Spencer Manuelpillai, Graham Marshall, Devika Rohana, Sohan Patrick and Zaineb Akbarally for their dedicated fundraising efforts which greatly contributed to our total collections during the year. We appreciate their commitment to advancing scientifically driven conservation projects in Sri Lanka.

The Society that was raising around Rs. 5-8 Mn less than a decade ago has been transformed drastically, professionalised and orientated towards high-impact projects. This has enabled the WNPS to achieve phenomenal growth that has in turn allowed it to prioritise science as the foundation of our ethos. The remarkable efforts of those mentioned above have been pivotal in our endeavours. We remain committed to achieving even greater milestones in 2024 in close collaboration with our partner community.

Jehan CanagaRetna

Chair – Fundraising Committee



TREASURER'S REPORT 2023

The Committee is pleased to inform members that the Society has delivered an income over expenditure of Rs. 521,701.65 in an eventful year. Our total assets at the end of 2023 stood at Rs. 76,510,194.03 which is an increase of Rs. 12,133,143.85 over the previous year.

We continued with many of our standard income-generating activities such as field trips, corporate lectures, and wetland walks, etc., during the year.

The Society witnessed an increase in direct expenses mainly due to a hike in operating expenses and salaries of office staff. The increased costs were mainly covered through higher interest income, donations, sponsorships and administration fees charged from project funds received.

The Society drew over Rs. 115 m during the year owing to the successful efforts of our Fundraising Committee and I especially thank our ex-President Sriyan, current President Jehan and the other Committee members for their contribution in this area.

I place on record my deep appreciation to my Honorary Assistant Treasurer, the President and the Executive Committee members, General Committee members and staff of the Society for their dedication and commitment.

I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank our corporate donors, the Society's outsourced accountants, Finance Team staff and the Society's auditors, Tudor V. Perera & Co, for their assistance and role in preparing the accounts.

Finally, we are most appreciative of our many donors and sponsors, thanks to whom we were able to undertake many conservation initiatives and actions during the year.

Thank you



Niran Mahawatte
Treasurer



© Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne

DONATIONS AND SPONSORS FOR 2023

All sponsorships for projects and events exceeding Rs. 100,000 are already detailed on pages (82-83) within the Fundraising Subcommittee report. The donors listed in this report have contributed amounts below Rs. 100,000.

FINANCIAL DONORS

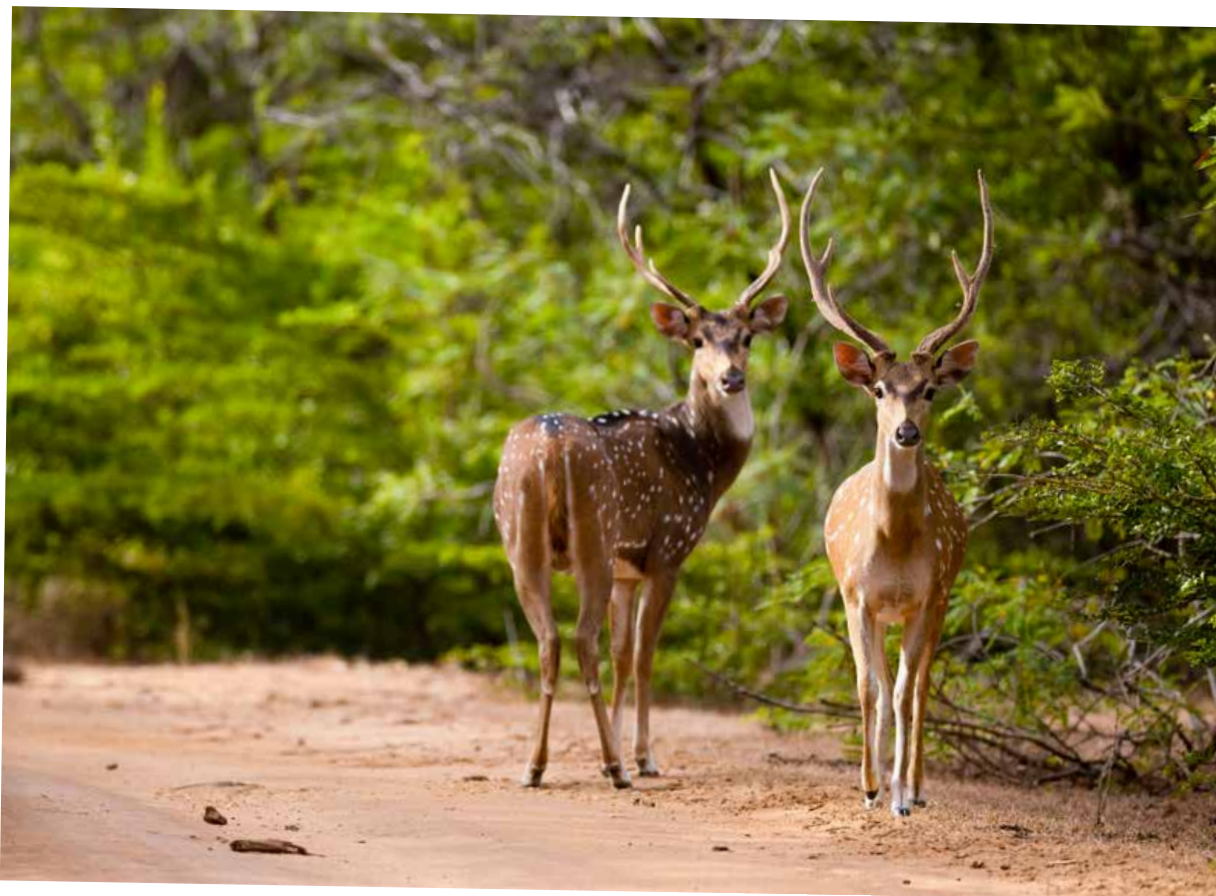
Name	Towards	Amount
B. Sivakumaran	General Donation	45,000.00
Sarath C. Edussuriya	General Donation	37,375.00
British School Colombo	General Donation	41,520.00
Dinesh C Aluthge	General Donation	20,000.00
Cmb Cruiser Club	General Donation	25,000.00
Lalith Kithulgoda Family	General Donation	25,000.00
St. Bridgets Convent	General Donation	30,000.00
Pauline Nivens	General Donation	15,995.00
Sithila Ayomi Dassanayake	General Donation	15,000.00
Asitha Goonetilleke	General Donation	5,000.00
Star Point Donation-Unknown	General Donation	41,606.00
Thisura Wijayananda	General Donation	5,000.00
Chandev Abeyratne	Dwc Insurance	20,000.00
Jith Seneviratne	Dwc Insurance	10,000.00
P Hariharan	Dwc Insurance	10,000.00
Marina Ferando	Dwc Insurance	10,000.00
Krishantha Athukorala	Dwc Insurance	25,000.00
Lalith Dassanayaka	Dwc Insurance	10,000.00
Sriyan De Silva Wijeyeratne	Dwc Insurance /Donation - Delivery Cost For Plant	50,000.00
Dinesh Sri Chandrasekara	Dwc Insurance	10,000.00
L D R Hettiarachchi	Dwc Insurance	25,000.00
Associated Electric Corporation	Dwc Insurance	75,000.00
Vinodh Wijetunga	Dwc Insurance	20,000.00
Chanaka Kulatunga	Dwc Insurance	10,000.00
M.i Perera	Dwc Insurance	50,000.00
Athik Marikkar	Dwc Insurance	25,000.00
Dilshan Hettiarachchi	Dwc Insurance	25,000.00
Dev N. Wijewardane	Dwc Insurance	20,000.00
Michael Tissera	Dwc Insurance	10,000.00
Lilanthi Alahendra	General Donation	30,000.00
Tusit Weerasooriya	General Donation	31,249.80
G Jalaldeen	General Donation	12,000.00
Natural World Explorer	Plant	35,000.00

TREASURER'S REPORT 2023

Name	Towards	Amount
Mas Intimates Digital Team	Plant	50,000.00
Dr. Malik Fernando	ANRM Project/Art Exhibition	65,000.00
Akram Cassim	Leopard	60,000.00
Nick Perera	Leopard	65,000.00
Total		1,059,745.80

MATERIAL GIFTS

Donors	Description	Items
John Keells Office Automation (Jkoa)	Donation	Viewsonic PA503XE projector
Irvin Weerackody	Donation	Old loris volumes – Complete bound volumes 1-12 and 14; Individual copies from volumes 13 and 15-17; 50th anniversary jubilee issue (Vol xvii no 3); Index to loris volumes i – x (1936 – 1966) - Compiled by G Douglas Austin.
Jehan CanagaRetna	Donation	Pedestal fan



Financial Statements

Common Kingfisher Yala

© Nilupuli Heiyantuduwa





REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF WILDLIFE AND NATURE PROTECTION SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

1. We have examined the Statement of Financial position Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka as at 31st December 2023 and the related statement of Comprehensive Income for the year then ended, together with the Accounting Policies and Notes thereon.
2. Respective Responsibilities of General Committee and Auditors
The General Committee is responsible for preparing and presenting these Financial Statements in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these Financial Statements, based on our audit.
3. In common with similar organizations, Society's system of control is dependent upon the close involvement of the General Committee, who have been appointed by the members. Therefore where independent confirmation on the completeness of accounting was not available, we have accepted assurances from the General Committee Members that all the Society's transactions have been reflected in the books of account.
4. Basis of Opinion
An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the said financial statements, assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by the General Committee Members, evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements, and determining whether the said financial statements are prepared and presented in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles. We have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of our audit.

We therefore believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

5. Opinion
In our opinion, so far as appears from our examination, the Society maintained proper books of account for the year ended 31st December 2023, and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, the said Statement of Financial Position and related Statement of Comprehensive Income and the Accounting Policies and Notes thereto, which are in agreement with the said books and have been prepared and presented in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Tudor V. Perera & Co.
TUDOR V. PERERA & CO.
Chartered Accountants.

Colombo.
Date: 04/04/2024

Tudor V. Perera & Co.
Chartered Accountants

+94 11 2828749
audit@tudorv.com / tax@tudorv.com
296/20, Shanthi Mawatha,
High Level Road, Kirulapone,
Colombo 06, Sri Lanka.

Partners :

S.M.N.L. Senanayake, B.Sc. (Pub. Admin), FCA
B.A.R.W. Senanayake, FCA
S.M. Deshapriya Senanayake, ACA, ACMA(UK)
L.M.V.S. Manaram De Mel, FCA
K.P.S. Dammika, ACA
M.T. Lantra

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31st December,

	Notes	Restated	
		2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
Funds Employed			
Accumulated Fund	5	14,757,710.50	14,236,009
Specific Funds	6	6,577,462.19	7,041,905
		<u>21,335,172.69</u>	<u>21,277,914</u>
Employment of Funds			
Property, Plant and Equipment	7	13,904,217.41	11,027,855
Specific Fund Investments	8	5,440,541.58	6,587,060
Fixed Deposit - NDB Bank		12,995,362.38	27,299,877
Investment in T/Bill Repo/Money Market		15,000,000.00	6,000,000
		<u>47,340,121.37</u>	<u>50,914,792</u>
Current Assets			
Stocks	9	643,457.28	376,867
Debtors, Deposits and Advances	10	4,225,409.08	3,354,894
Cash and Cash Equivalents	11	6,023,099.42	1,311,865
National Development Bank (Money Market Saving)		18,278,106.88	8,418,632
		<u>29,170,072.66</u>	<u>13,462,258</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and Accrued Charges	12	7,719,516.14	1,908,192
Income Received in Advance		449,338.00	449,338
		<u>8,168,854.14</u>	<u>2,357,530</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>21,001,218.52</u>	<u>11,104,728</u>
Non-Current Liabilities			
Retirement Benefit Obligation	13	831,650.00	495,925
Projects Repayable	14	46,174,517.20	40,245,681
		<u>47,006,167.20</u>	<u>40,741,606</u>
		<u>21,335,172.69</u>	<u>21,277,914</u>

Figurers in brackets indicate deductions.

The significant Accounting Policies and Notes from page No. 05 to 18 form an integral part of these Financial Statements.

It is certified that these financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the requirements of the companies Act No. 07 of 2007.

Paita

.....
Accountant

The General Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of these financial statements.

Approved and signed on behalf of the General Committee.

[Signature]

.....
President

Colombo.

Date: 04/04/2024

[Signature]

.....
Treasurer



STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the Year Ended 31st December,	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
Income		
Subscription	1,660,500.00	1,178,050
One time Life Membership	75,000.00	100,000
Donations	1,372,241.97	2,183,633
Entrance Fee	378,000.00	340,500
Profit on Sale of Greeting Cards, Books and Other Items	245,957.42	176,134
Interest on Investment	5,656,849.41	3,550,830
Other Income	109,800.00	15,115
Net Profit in Publishing "Loris" and "Warana"	167,961.16	77,086
Allocation of Income from Projects	7,469,162.52	2,293,053
Loss on Bungalow Operations	(152,362.21)	(746,219)
Amortization of Life Membership Fund	99,292.21	100,571
Surplus on Field Trips	40,362.00	469,803
Surplus/ (Deficit) on Seminars & Lectures	(590,047.77)	78,960
Surplus/ (Deficit) on Other Events	(211,191.97)	(1,300,993)
	16,321,524.74	8,516,523
Expenses		
Administration Expenses	11,438,608.71	7,525,446
Finance Expenses	110,584.38	41,812
Provision for Bungalow Expenses	1,650,000.00	-
Legal / Survey Charges	1,800,000.00	-
Annual General Meeting Expenses	800,630.00	569,334
	(15,799,823.09)	(8,136,592)
Income Over Expenditure for the Year	521,701.65	379,930
Taxation for the Year	-	-
Balance Carried Over to Accumulated Fund	521,701.65	379,930

Figurers in brackets indicate deductions.

The significant Accounting Policies and Notes from page No. 05 to 18 form an integral part of these Financial Statements.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the Year Ended 31st December,	Accumulated Fund Capital Rs. Cts.	Total Rs.
Balance as at 1st January 2022	13,918,607.30	13,918,607.30
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the Year	379,930.20	379,930.20
Adjustment	(62,528.65)	(62,528.65)
Balance as at 01st January 2023	14,236,008.85	14,236,008.85
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the Year	521,701.65	521,701.65
Balance as at 31st December 2023	14,757,710.50	14,757,710.50

Figurers in brackets indicate deductions.

The significant Accounting Policies and Notes from page No. 05 to 18 form an integral part of these Financial Statements.



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STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the Year Ended 31st December,	2023 Rs.	2022 Rs.
Cash Flow from Operating Activities		
Income over Expenditure for the Year	521,702	379,930
Adjustments for -		
Depreciation on Property, Plant and Equipment	1,021,246	630,471
Provision for Gratuity	335,725	83,425
Finance Income	(5,656,849)	(3,550,830)
Disposal Loss	-	92,149
Operating Profit / (Loss) before Working Capital Changes	(3,667,823)	(2,457,004)
Increase/Decrease in Inventories	(266,591)	70,137
Increase / (Decrease) in Deposits and Advances	(870,515)	(2,060,175)
Decrease in Accrued Charges	5,811,324	(4,031)
Increase in Projects Repayable	5,928,836	26,417,992
Cash from / (Used in) Operating Activities	6,935,231	21,966,919
Net Cash from / (Used in) Operating Activities	6,935,231	21,966,919
Cash Flow from Investing Activities		
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment	(4,007,962)	(1,306,250)
Withdrawal of Fixed Deposits	1,146,519	1,536,206
Interest Received	5,656,849	3,550,830
Invest for Project related Fixed Deposits	14,304,515	(27,299,877)
Invest for Investments in Treasury Bills	(9,000,000)	(6,000,000)
Net Cash Flow from / (Used in) Investing Activities	8,099,921	(29,519,091)
Cash Flow from Financing Activities		
Specific Fund Liability	(464,442)	(1,086,777)
Net Cash from Used in Financing Activities	(464,442)	(1,086,777)
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	14,570,709	(8,686,200)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Year	9,730,497	18,416,698
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Year	24,301,206	9,730,497
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Favourable Balances	24,301,206	9,730,497
	24,301,206	9,730,497

Figures in brackets indicate deductions.

The significant Accounting Policies and Notes from page No. 05 to 18 form an integral part of these Financial Statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. GENERAL

The Financial Statements of the Society have been prepared on the historical cost basis. In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. No adjustments have been made for inflationary factors affecting the Financial Statements. Figures and phrases relating to the previous years have been restated where necessary to conform to the current years presentation.

2. ASSETS AND THE BASIS OF THEIR VALUATION

2.1. Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, Plant and Equipment are shown at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is charged on written down value basis in order to write off the cost of such assets over their estimated useful lives.

Depreciation is charged in the year of purchase, whilst no depreciation is charged in the year of disposal.

2.2. Short Term Investments

Fixed Deposits, Call Deposits and Treasury Bills are reflected at cost.

2.3. Stocks

Stocks are valued at cost or Net Realizable Value which ever is less.

2.4. Debtors and Receivables:

Debtors and other receivables are stated at the values estimated to be realized.

3. LIABILITIES AND PROVISIONS

3.1. Current Liabilities

The liabilities which fall due for payment of demand or within one year from the Balance Sheet date are shown under the Current Liabilities.

3.2. Taxation

Provision for income tax has been made in accordance with the Inland Revenue Act No.24 of 2017.

3.3. Retirement Benefit Obligation

Provision for retiring gratuities have been made in the Account under the payment of Gratuity Act No. 12 of 1983 and is not externally funded.

4. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

4.1. All income have been accounted for on accrued basis.

4.2. Expenses incurred in running the Society and maintain the Fixed Assets have been charged to Revenue Account.



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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31st December	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
5. ACCUMULATED FUND		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	14,236,008.85	13,918,608
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the Year	521,701.65	379,930
Adjustments	-	(62,529)
Balance as at the End of the Year	14,757,710.50	14,236,009
6. SPECIFIC FUNDS		
6.1 Life Membership Fund		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	1,910,844.25	1,411,415
Add / (Less):		
Amortization of Life Membership Fund	(99,292.21)	(100,571)
Membership Fees Received	75,000.00	600,000
Balance as at the End of the Year	1,886,552.04	1,910,844
6.2. Scientific Research Fund		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	4,701,113.30	5,821,360
Add / (Less) :		
Interest Credited	338,674.99	482,132
Expenses & Disbursement	(1,125,482.50)	(1,682,076)
Dung Beetle Balance Transfer	498,900.00	-
Zoological Museum Expenses	(200,000.00)	-
Interest Receivable	-	79,697
Balance as at the End of the Year	4,213,205.79	4,701,113
6.3. Educational and Propaganda Trust Fund (Public Trustee)		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	-	511,550
Add / (Less) :		
Adjustments	-	(511,550)
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	-
6.4. Patron's Fund		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	429,947.12	384,356
Add / (Less) :		
Interest Credited	47,757.24	45,591
Balance as at the End of the Year	477,704.36	429,947
Total Specific Funds	6,577,462.19	7,041,905

As at 31st December	Fund Rs. Cts.	Investment Rs. Cts.	Difference Rs. Cts.
6. SPECIFIC FUNDS (CONTD...)			
6.5 Funds vs Investments			
Life Membership Fund - Note	1,886,552.04	1,985,844.00	99,291.96
Scientific Research Fund	4,213,205.79	3,000,506.31	(1,212,699.48)
Patron's Fund	477,704.36	454,191.27	(23,513.09)
	6,577,462.19	5,440,541.58	(1,136,920.61)

Note - Life Membership Fund

The Variance of Life Membership fund Vs Investment is due to the following reason,

As at 31st December	Fund Rs. Cts.
Life Membership Fund	
Amortization of Membership Fund	99,291.96
	99,291.96
Scientific Research Fund	
Fixed Deposit	(4,153,693.00)
Bhagya Salary	317,204.00
Interest Received	17,176.47
WHT Deduction	(1,992.02)
Petty Cash Expense	16,563.00
Fund Transfer	1,792,042.07
Camera Purchase	800,000.00
	(1,212,699.48)
Patron's Fund	
FD Interest Receivable	(23,513.09)
	(23,513.09)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31st December	2022	Additions	Disposal	2023
	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts.
7. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT				
Cost				
Building and Bungalow	11,538,576.46	3,288,172.00	-	14,826,748.46
Furniture and Fittings	435,975.54	-	-	435,975.54
Office Equipment	1,584,871.00	719,790.00	-	2,304,661.00
Project Assets	988,750.00	-	-	988,750.00
Sundry Asset	289,609.20	-	289,609.20	-
	14,837,782.20	4,007,962.00	289,609.20	18,556,135.00

As at 31st December	2022	Charge for the Year	Disposal	2023
	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts.
Depreciation				
Building and Bungalow	2,578,947.66	350,117.64	-	2,929,065.29
Furniture and Fittings	231,270.96	31,856.00	-	263,126.96
Office Equipment	827,951.76	425,784.00	-	1,253,735.76
Project Assets	-	205,989.58	-	205,989.58
Sundry Asset	171,756.54	7,498.85	179,255.39	-
	3,809,926.91	1,021,246.07	179,255.39	4,651,917.59
	11,027,855.29			13,904,217.41

As at 31st December	2023	2022
	Rs. Cts.	Rs.
8. SPECIFIC FUND INVESTMENT		
8.1. Life Membership Fund Investment		
a) Fixed Deposits - Nations Trust Bank PLC A/c. No.300100038287		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	-	700,000
Withdrawals	-	(700,000)
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	-
b) Fixed Deposits - Nations Trust Bank PLC A/c. No. 3001000037792		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	-	706,000
Withdrawals	-	(706,000)
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	-

As at 31st December	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
8.1. Life Membership Fund Investment (Contd...)		
c) Fixed Deposits - Nation Development Bank A/c No.108253135781		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	750,000.00	-
Add/(Less):		
Investment	-	750,000
Balance as at the End of the Year	750,000.00	750,000
d) Fixed Deposits - Nation Development Bank A/c No.108253530206		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	706,000.00	-
Upliftment	(706,000.00)	706,000
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	706,000
e) Fixed Deposits - Nation Development Bank A/c No.12510509342		
Investment	1,235,844.00	-
Balance as at the End of the Year	1,235,844.00	-
Total Life Membership Fund Investments	1,985,844.00	1,456,000
8.2 Scientific Research Fund Investment No.1		
a) Fixed Deposits- Bank of Ceylon - A/c.No. 368088		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	579,641.46	551,965
Add:		
Interest Credited	-	27,676
Upliftment	(579,641.46)	-
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	579,641
b) Fixed Deposits - National Savings Bank - A/C No.200801074334		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	-	1,881,958
Add:		
Interest Credited	-	15,510
Withdrawal	-	(1,897,468)
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	-

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31st December	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
c) Fixed Deposit - Sampath Bank A/C No. 30541		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	-	3,207,491
Add/(Less):		
Interest Credited	-	28,301
Withdrawal	-	(3,235,792)
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	-
d) Current Account - Nations Trust Bank PLC - A/c No. 100100007337		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	(966,979.98)	26,000
Add/(Less):		
Deposits and Transfers	4,753,642.58	(446,980)
Expenses	(3,760,662.58)	(546,000)
Balance as at the End of the Year	26,000.02	(966,980)
e) Savings Account - Nations Trust Bank PLC - A/c No. 200100060618		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	1,202,074.97	153,947
Add/(Less):		
Deposits and Transfers	1,726,683.59	1,035,773
Interest Received	45,747.73	12,355
Balance as at the End of the Year	2,974,506.29	1,202,075
f) Treasury Bill		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	3,334,356.14	-
Add/(Less):		
Interest Credited	205,643.86	334,356
Upliftements	-	3,000,000
Withdrawals	(3,540,000.00)	-
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	3,334,356
g) Fixed Deposit - National Development Bank - A/c No.108253530157		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	552,020.54	-
Add/(Less):		
Interest Credited	172,970.00	52,021
Upliftement	-	500,000
Withdrawals	(724,990.54)	-
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	552,021
Total Scientific Fund Investment	3,000,506.31	4,701,113

As at 31st December	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
8.3 Educational and Propaganda Trust Fund Investment		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	-	511,550
Withdrawals	-	(511,550)
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	-
8.4 Patron's Fund Investment		
a) Fixed Deposits - Sampath Bank - A/c No.6436947		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	-	384,356
Withdrawals	-	(384,356)
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	-
b) Fixed Deposits - National Development Bank - A/c No.108253288995		
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year	429,946.82	-
Interest Receivable	24,244.45	42,081
Upliftment	-	387,866
Balance as at the End of the Year	454,191.27	429,947
Total Patron's Fund Investment	454,191.27	429,947
Total Investment Value	5,440,541.58	6,587,060

As at 31st December	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
9. STOCKS		
Book and Magazines	111,400.00	110,900
Car Badges	27,000.00	6,650
Green T-Shirts	175,750.00	142,100
Tie - New	84,000.00	600
WNPS Logo Stickers	357.00	2,063
Ecocide T-Shirts	11,430.00	31,750
L/S Shirts	89,870.28	-
Hats	106,650.00	-
Mini Torch	37,000.00	-
Car Stickers	-	37,370
Greeting Cards	-	28,745
First Day Covers	-	16,014
Glass Water Bottles	-	675
	643,457.28	376,867

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31st December		2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
10. DEBTORS, DEPOSITS, ADVANCE AND RECEIVABLES			
Loans and Advances		146,673.36	122,920
Interest Receivable		1,247,054.12	993,431
Other Receivable	10.1	2,831,681.60	2,238,543
		4,225,409.08	3,354,894
10.1 Other Receivable			
Sponsorship - Public Lecture NTB		930,000.00	-
Withholding Tax Receivable		277,766.24	-
Receivable from BMICH		262,415.36	-
Receivable Balance of Black Pool Hotel		34,000.00	-
Sponsorship for Loris from NTB		650,000.00	-
Sponsorship for Warana from NTB		650,000.00	-
Refundable Deposit		27,500.00	155,000
WNPS Loan to Green Island Project		-	700,000
Federation of Environmental Organization		-	99,212
Public Lecture - December 2022		-	150,000
Dung Beetle - De Saram		-	183,750
Receivable from Life Member		-	581
Sponsorship - Preserving Land & Nature		-	1,160,000
Sponsorship - ENDEMISM Project		-	474,000
Printing (Loris)		-	(684,000)
		2,831,681.60	2,238,543

As at 31st December		2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
11. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS			
Favorable Balance			
Sampath Bank PLC		60,812.98	61,113
Sampath Bank PLC		39,358.66	39,959
Sampath Bank PLC		963,210.31	114,540
Seylan Bank		411,149.00	85,453
National Development Bank Youth (Wing Project)		25,000.00	46,000
National Development Bank		1,647,228.39	696,988
National Development Bank (Current Account)		2,298,124.33	164,597
Dr. Ravi Samarasinghe's Fund		3,215.75	3,216
Deposit Placed with NTB		500,000.00	-
Petty Cash		75,000.00	100,000
		6,023,099.42	1,311,865
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents		6,023,099.42	1,311,865

As at 31st December		2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
12. CREDITORS AND ACCRUED CHARGES			
Provision for Bungalow Renovation		1,650,000.00	-
Other Payable	12.1	558,109.17	681,231
Advances Received	12.2	4,871,556.90	714,556
Consignment Basis Payable		7,200.00	7,200
District Representative Payable		482,718.00	505,205
Unidentified Credits		149,932.07	-
		7,719,516.14	1,908,192
12.1 Other Payable			
Telephone		58,659.15	-
Other Payables		22,000.00	-
Payroll Service Fee Payable		297,341.25	-
Water Bill		6,000.00	-
Electricity Payable		24,833.77	-
Bungalow Keeper - Payable		19,775.00	560,145
Kudakalliya Field Trip - Refund		3,500.00	3,500
Salary Payable		46,000.00	60,000
Zoom - November		80,000.00	57,586
		558,109.17	681,231
12.2 Advances Received			
Advance Bookings - Bungalows		50,000.00	169,500
Security Deposit - Udawalawe		60,000.00	60,000
Advance Rent Received - Udawalawe		-	4,500
Advance Received - Field Trips		14,056.00	13,556
Advance Received - Projects		4,510,000.00	-
Subscription Received in Advance		237,500.90	467,000
		4,871,556.90	714,556
13. RETIREMENT BENEFIT OBLIGATION			
Balance as at the Beginning of the Year		495,925.00	412,500
Add: Provision for the Year		335,725.00	83,425
		831,650.00	495,925
Balance as at the End of the Year		831,650.00	495,925

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31st December	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
14. PROJECTS		
14.1 Roar Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	505,972.05	53,256
14.2 Wild Cat Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	(7,892.28)	94,722
14.3 WNPS Youth Wing Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	(40,043.62)	701,797
14.4 Legal Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	431,765.44	715,585
14.5 Green Island Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	(1,027,466.21)	501,141
14.6 Elephant Light System Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	1,199,857.00	342,632
14.7 Marine Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	37,782.48	114,466
14.8 Plant Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	13,913,617.03	12,606,699
14.9 Anawilundawa Wetland Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	1,828,654.59	441,779
14.10 USFS Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	3,530,179.42	4,707,198
14.11 DWC Insurance Scheme		
Balance as at the End of the Year	75,789.21	13,038
14.12 ENDEMISM Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	14,922,187.98	(131,372)
14.13 Mangrove Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	47,790

As at 31st December	2023 Rs. Cts.	2022 Rs.
14. PROJECTS (CONTD...)		
14.14 Wildkids Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	127,543.96	(19,297)
14.15 HEC Documentary		
Balance as at the End of the Year	883,073.71	2,500,000
14.16 Leopard Research Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	11,424.08	(1,465,564)
14.17 Rainforest Alliance Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	548,827.90	777,773
14.18 Elephant Survey Polonaruwa Dist		
Balance as at the End of the Year	90,782.50	193,350
14.19 Ali Pancha Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	5,567,658.40	14,945,877
14.20 Forest Mapping Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	-	2,455,150
14.21 British Council - YLCA Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	3,196,260.46	649,660
14.22 Anawilundawa USFS Project		
Balance as at the End of the Year	1,943,469.59	-
14.23 Inner Wheel Club Programmed		
Balance as at the End of the Year	68,160.00	-
14.24 Yala Jeep Driver Programmed		
Balance as at the End of the Year	(1,633,086.49)	-
	46,174,517.20	40,245,681

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- We convey sincere gratitude to all our sponsors/donors listed in the Fundraising Committee Report (refer pages 82 to 83). Without the partnership of these organisations and individuals, WNPS would not be the force we are today.
- In addition to those in the Fundraising Committee Report, we acknowledge and recognise the valuable contributions from all parties that collectively supported us in carrying out vital conservation efforts, at scale.
- We are immensely thankful to our valuable WNPS members who contributed in terms of membership fees, additional donations and their precious time and effort on behalf of the Society's activities.
- In addition to the financial donors to PLANT, who are acknowledged in our Fundraising Committee Report, we greatly appreciate the engagement and partnership of our non-financial donors including The Wharton Business School through Penn International Impact Consulting, The Hayleys Plantations through Horana and Kelani Valley Plantations and Talawakelle Tea Estates, Kale Teas, Sarvodaya, Aranya Foundation, The Climate and Conservation Consortium, Issengard Biosphere Reserve and Ravana's Secret.
- Our special thanks go out to the parties below who invested their valuable time and effort to make our year, activities and this Annual Report a success:
 - Dilmah Tea, for providing a variety of teas for the attendees at the Society's Monthly Lecture Series at BMICH.
 - Studio Lakdam, for video coverage of the Monthly Lecture Series.
 - eBEYONDS, for their work on our website.
 - Printcare PLC, for printing of the Loris.
 - M G Printers, for printing of the Warana/Waranam.
 - All our Subcommittee Chairs, for compiling their activities for the Annual Report. We thank the supporting editorial team- Rangika Perera, Shaznine Ramiz, Jehan CanagaRetna, Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne- for their amazing commitment, hard work and a job well done.
 - Anjum Cader, Renata Daniels and the staff at Optima for their expertise with the design and formatting of Loris and Warana/ Waranam, as well as the editing, final write-ups, design, formatting and printing of the Annual Report 2023.
 - Tudor V. Perera & Co. for their continued services as the Honorary Annual Auditors of the Society.
 - The amazing photo contributors, along with inputs from our Committee Members, our Project Coordinators, partners and their respective social media sites.
- Finally, there is a dedicated team behind all activities administered through the WNPS head office. We convey our heartfelt appreciation to each one of these staff for their contributions to our conservation efforts.



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MINUTES OF THE 129TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 27TH MAY 2023

Following the notice dated March 30, 2023, the 129th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka (WNPS) was summoned at 5.00 pm on May 27, 2023, at the New Hall of the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute, 114, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 7.

The AGM was conducted both physically and virtually to enable the participation of members out of Colombo or overseas. Admission to the meeting was validated by checking attendees' names and membership numbers both physically and virtually.

The meeting commenced at 5:20 pm.

The following members were present:

Physically Present

Jehan CanagaRetna, Niran Mahawatte, Graham Marshall, Jeremy Godrick, Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne, Spencer Manuelpillai, Sevvandy Jayakody, Enoka Kudavidanage, Dev Wijewardane, Sampath Seneviratne, Keshan Perera, Devika Rohana, Revan Weerasinghe, Nirmali de Silva, Lakdas D. Fernando, Rohan Wijesinghe, N.M.T.S. Nissanka, Priyal Perera, A.R.J. Gooneratne, Niranjana Dias Bandaranayake, Shuaib Naufel, Sankha Wanniatchi, Rukshan Jayewardene, Ajith Ratnayake, Sihal Munidasa, Menake Jayawardane, Tharanga Fernando, Riyaz Sangani, Prasanna M. Jayawardhana, S. Rodrigo, Prasanjit Perera, Tami Flamer Caldera, Rahula Dassenaieke, Shahid Sangani, Rex De Silva, Siobhan Manuelpillai, Caryll Tozer, Farzana Khan, K.R.M. Fernando, Siobhan Manuelpillai, Donald Sinclair, Rangika Perera, Bhagya Nanayakkara, Guwani De Zoysa, Pavithra Attanayake, Diluksha Soysa

Present Online

Zaineb Akbarally, Ashinsa de Silva Wijeyeratne, Maxime Wickramasinghe, Sherani Ruberu, Darrel Bartholomeusz, Medisha Pasan Gunawardena, Leonie Solomons, Thilan Jayatilake, Indraraj Ratnasabapathy,
By invitation – Sethil Muhandiram, Tharani Katugampola, Ravi Amarasinghe, Lalith Senanayake, Sharleen Suwaris, Sithasara Karunaratne, Domani Manuelpillai, Sachini Boraluwa, Mohamed Firnas, Deepthi Bulankulame

ITEM 1 – READING OF THE NOTICE OF CONVENING THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The WNPS Hon. Secretary Mr. Graham Marshall commenced the meeting at 5.20 pm by reading the notice of the 129th AGM of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka:

"The Annual General Meeting of the WILDLIFE & NATURE PROTECTION SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA will be held on Saturday May 27, 2023, at the New Hall, Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute, 114, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 7, commencing at 5.00 pm."

He stated that the AGM will be held as a physical meeting but that a zoom link will be provided exclusively for those who cannot attend and for overseas members. He stated that all Life Members and Ordinary Members, Youth Members and Life Members of good standing are entitled to attend the meeting and vote. He added that Junior and Honorary Members of good standing are eligible to attend the meeting but are not eligible to vote on any resolutions.

ITEM 2 – LEST WE FORGET

The General Secretary then requested all those in attendance to observe two minutes of silence in memory of Members who passed away in the recent year.

- Ms. L.R. Muttettuwegama
- Mr. V.P. Malalasekara

The Society has no record of any other Member passing away in the year 2022. In the event there has been another Member who passed away, we regret the omission of this person's name owing to the Society not being informed.

ITEM 3 - EXCUSES

Names of the Members who wrote in indicating their absence were read out by General Secretary

- Capt. S Senthooorselvan
- Dilshan Hettiaratchi
- Yohan Dissanayake
- Vimal Tirimanna
- Siri Abeyratne
- Dr. Malik Fernando
- Raminal Samarasinghe
- Supun Lahiru Prakash
- Mohan Samarakoon
- Shiranee Tilakawardane
- Sujit CanagaRetna
- Shanthini Abeyesundere
- Mandi Daluwatte

ITEM 4 – ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 128TH AGM

The General Secretary then called for the adoption of the minutes of the 128th meeting of the WNPS. As no issues were raised regarding the minutes, it was adopted as follows:

Proposed: Rex de Silva (2557)

Seconded: Mr. Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne (8223)

MINUTES OF THE 129TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ITEM 5 – ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE HON. GENERAL SECRETARY FOR 2022

The Hon. General Secretary next called for the adoption of the Report. As there were no further matters arising from the report, it was taken as adopted.

Proposed: Prof Lakdas Fernando (6472)

Seconded: Mr. Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)

ITEM 6 – ADOPTION OF THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2022

There were no matters raised regarding the Statement of Accounts for 2022 and therefore it was taken as adopted.

Proposed: Tami Flamer Caldera (9038)

Seconded: Dr. Nirmali de Silva (11428)

ITEM 7 – MATTERS RELATING TO PRESERVING LAND AND NATURE TRUST (PLANT)

Preserving Land and Nature Trust (PLANT)

It was proposed by the WNPS General Committee that the below persons, as per the articles of association of PLANT, be nominated as Board Members for the 2023/24 year.

- a) Mr. Sriyan Joseph de Silva Wijeyeratne (8223) - Chair
- b) Mr. Pradeep Dilshan Rajeeva Hettiaratchi (10709)
- c) Ms. Inez Caryll Tozer (12090)
- d) Dr. Cyril Malik Fernando (2816)
- e) Ms. Zaine Akbarally (12529)
- f) Mr. Shevon Charles Perera Gooneratne – Non-Member, NIC 683092649V
- g) Dr. Ranil Senanayake, Non-Member - NIC 194301901764

As no issues were raised, it was adopted as follows:

Proposed by – Prof. Sampath Seneviratne (12900)

Seconded by – Shahid Sangani (12199)

ITEM 8 – THE PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS

The Hon. General Secretary invited the President Mr. Jehan Canagaretna to deliver his address, which is appended at the end of this report.

The President then invited Prof. Lakdas Fernando to be the Chair Pro-Tem for the subsequent elections.

ITEM 9 – ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Prof. Fernando stated that, as no other nominations were received nor were the proposed nominations contested and remained unopposed, the Office Bearers for 2023/2024 would be as follows:

Nominee	Post	Proposer	Seconder
Jehan Canagaretna (10810)	Hon. President	Sriyan De Silva Wijeyeratne (8223)	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)
Prof. Sampath Seneviratne (12900)	Hon. Vice President	Graham Marshall (12067)	Jehan Canagaretna (10810)
Graham Marshall (12067)	Hon. Vice President	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)	Dev Wijewardane (12804)
Jeremy Godrick (13299)	Hon. General Secretary	Jehan Canagaretna (10810)	Sriyan De Silva Wijeyeratne (8223)
Niran Mahawatte (11248)	Hon. Treasurer	Dilshan Hettiaratchi (10709)	Graham Marshall (12067)

ITEM 10- ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

There were six vacancies for the General Committee, and they were duly proposed, seconded and elected unanimously as follows:

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Dev Wijewardane (12804)	Sriyan De Silva Wijeyeratne (8223)	Dilshan Hettiaratchi (10709)
Dr. Chaturangi Wickramaratne (13345)	Zaine Akbarally (12529)	Graham Marshall (12067)
Prof. Sevvandi Jayakodi (13644)	Graham Marshall (12067)	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)
Supun Lahiru Prakash (13569)	Rohan Wijesinha (10100)	Jehan Canagaretna (10810)
Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage (12620)	Jehan Canagaretna (10810)	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)
Sherani Ruberu (13407)	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)	Jeremy Godrick (13299)

Prof. Fernando reminded all those present that the office bearers will commence their term after the AGM and with the first General Committee Meeting as per section 7 of the Constitution. He, therefore, suggested that the previous office bearers preside for the remainder of the meeting.

President thanked Prof. Lakdas Fernando for serving as the Chair Pro-Tem. He also expressed gratitude to him for initiating the changes within the WNPS that made it possible for it to become a more effective conservation organisation.

ITEM 11 – RESOLUTIONS FOR WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN, WHICH WERE ADOPTED AT THE AGM

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

1. District Representative Membership Fee Waiver

Clause 13.2 of the Constitution provides for the appointment of Members of the Society as Honorary District Representatives. However, there are suitable people who are nonmembers, who have the capacity to fill these positions. It is proposed to appoint such nonmembers as Honorary District Representatives (DRs) to fulfill the requirements of a DR, with the status of a Member, the membership fees being waived at the discretion of the Committee.

Resolved that:

Section 13 Honorary District Representatives, Clause 13.2, be amended to read: “The Committee shall at such meeting appoint members of the Society, or nonmembers, as Honorary District Representatives (‘DRs’) for each district at the discretion of the General Committee. There may be one or more than one DR appointed for each District.

- a) Honorary District Representatives so appointed who are not members of the Society shall have the status of a member for the purpose of discharging their duties as described in Clause 13.5; and,

- b) all entrance fees and annual subscriptions shall be waived for the period of holding such office, at the discretion of the Committee.”

Proposed: Jeremy Godrick (13299)

Seconded: Jehan CanagaRetna (10810)

2. Increasing of the General Committee Maximum Number

It was proposed that the maximum number to serve on the General Committee be increased from 18 to 23 with effect from the AGM of 2023.

Resolved that:

In Section 6 Management, Clause 6.1 (a), the words “...and not more than 12 other members;...” be replaced by the words “... and not more than 17 other members;”

Proposed: Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne (8223)

Seconded: Graham Marshall (12067)

No objections were raised regarding the resolutions.

ITEM 12 – CONFERMENT OF HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

There were no nominations submitted by the General Committee.

ITEM 13 – ELECTION OF AUDITORS

The Hon. General Secretary stated that, as the WNPS was satisfied with the Auditors, it is proposed to continue with M/S Tudor Perera & Company-Chartered Accountants of No 296/20, Shanthi Mawatha, High Level Road, Kirulapone, Colombo-6, to continue their good work for another year.

Proposed by: Spencer Manuepillai (11229)

Seconded by: Prof. Lakdas Fernando (6472)

ITEM 14 – OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters to be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.00 pm



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THE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT - JEHAN CANAGARETNA

Thank you, Prof. Lakdas, for serving as the Chair Pro-Tem. And thank you for starting the change in the Committee of the Society that has now become truly a conservation organisation.

Good evening, dear members,

The privilege of holding the post of Presidency of the Society is no easy task and I welcome the challenge with grace and honor. In the current-day context, running the committee and the Society's activities have become more like a full-time role for a few of us and, if not for those committed individuals, we would not see the results we see today.

A few years back, the EXCO of the Society decided to challenge the status quo and commit the Society towards the field of science as its priority. With this idea, projects with wild cats, HEC, marine, endemics, PLANT and ROAR are leading the charge on scientific measures which are now showing results.

The Society reached a significant milestone never seen before by achieving donor funding of about LKR 100m and the drive to continue this trend will be seen in the coming year, as well.



© Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne

We must be thankful to all our donors, both local and international, who have believed in the work that we have proven to do. Large projects, like the HIPG's "Ali Pancha," Hemas' "Saving our Critically Endangered Endemics"; LOLC's "Leopard Research and conservation"; Hemas and Hayleys association with "Regenerating Mangroves in Anawilundawa"; PLANT's partnerships with Rainforest Trust and Quick Response Fund; and the Youth Wing's collaboration with US Forest Services and British Council; dominated the work that the Society has been engaged in. We hope that the results will serve a better future in conservation.

PLANT - Preserve Land and Nature the Guarantee Company created under the umbrella of WNPS -has grown exponentially, far exceeding the expectation of 100 acres by end 2022 to achieve over 2,500 acres under partnership. This initiative is the first of its kind in Sri Lanka where private land protection to connect forest patches is happening with both private sector and government sector involvement.

I would be failing greatly if I do not mention the commitment and passion that both our Past Presidents, Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne and Spencer Manuelpillai, have shown to push the boundaries of the Society to higher limits. Their unwavering push for excellence has benefitted the work the Society is engaged in, but we must be incredibly careful in our future in how we find replacements for such passion and commitment.

I would like to thank all the General Committee Members of 2022/23 for the commitment to their work in the last year and welcome the new Committee Members of the coming year. A special nod to Graham, Keshan, Jeremy and Devika. We will continue to push our way forward with science being the priority as we now have in our midst three Professors actively engaged in science work in universities in our country.

The Annual Report 2022 on our website will outline the work we did last year.

The Society needs the support of its membership and, frankly, it is disappointing to pull daggers to get its membership involved with our projects or to simply get connected with the work we do. It is sad to see that a handful of members support the worthy causes that your Society is in the forefront of in our country, to protect our wildlife and environment. Whilst enjoying the abundance of wildlife we have, most are guilty of killing the very goose they enjoy watching/photographing. I hope we do change in the future and realise the importance of conservation for the betterment of our future generations.

I would like to leave all our members with this thought for the future. It is getting harder and harder to find passionate, committed individuals to volunteer in the Committee. With the volume of work increasing yearly - we now have more than 25 paid employees - the future must lead to a fully full-fledged office with a CEO, Head of Science and Head of Legal, whilst the Committee stays focused on strategy, networking and fundraising. This would be a vision to think of. We are not far away from this situation.

Lastly, I would like to show my appreciation to the office staff for their continued commitment to the priority of the Society - conservation. For those who are here, please stand up for a quick round of applause.

Thank You.

I hope you will stay back for "The Gathering". Your Committee and office team have taken the initiative to cater to forty people, despite only hearing back from seven people.

Jehan CanagaRetna

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - NOTICE UNDER RULE 10.1.3

As already informed to you, in a notice dated March 29th, 2024, The Annual General Meeting of the WILDLIFE & NATURE PROTECTION SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA [Ceylon] will be held on Saturday May 11th, 2024, at the Lavender Hall, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, commencing at 5.00 pm.

IN TERMS OF RULE 10.1.3

The Annual Report for 2023 and the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting will be available online from 11th April 2024. It will be e-mailed to those who provide their e-mail addresses and request for same. As a conservation organization, we discourage the circulation of the printed version of the Annual Report, however any member who is really in need of a hard copy may send their request, in writing, to the Administrative Secretary, or call over at the Office and collect a copy once the 3rd notice has been sent.

IN TERMS OF RULE 6.3, THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS RETIRING ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Jehan CanagaRetna
2. Graham Marshall
3. Dr. Nirmali de Silva
4. Dr. Chatu Wickremasinghe
5. Niran Mahawatte
6. Spencer Manuepillai
7. Dilshan Hettiaratchi

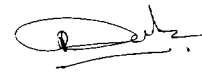
There are ten [10] vacancies in the General Committee and the retiring members are eligible for re-election. The Hon. General Secretary will receive nominations to the General Committee, duly proposed and seconded by any two [02] members entitled to vote at the AGM, provided such candidate has the required qualifications, together with the candidate's written consent.

The Hon. General Secretary will also receive nominations for the honorary posts of President, two Vice Presidents, General Secretary, and Treasurer, duly proposed and seconded by any two [02] members entitled to vote at the AGM. Candidates must have the required qualifications, at the time of election, and should express their consent, in writing, to be so nominated.

Any members wishing to move a Resolution at the AGM may submit such resolution duly proposed and seconded by any two [02] members entitled to vote at the AGM.

All nominations and resolutions should reach the Society's Head Office by 12.00 pm on 21st April 2024, by email, post or by hand.

If there are any queries related to the accounts, please convey it in writing, to the HGS at least two weeks prior to the AGM so that all necessary responses, with relevant documentation, can be made available at the AGM.



Rapti Dirckze,
Hon. General Secretary

April 11, 2024



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130TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - NOTICE UNDER RULES 10.1.5 TO 10.1.9

April 21st, 2024

Dear Member,

130TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

As per the WNPS constitution, please find the 3rd notice under rule 10.1.5 to 10.1.9 constituting the election for the General Committee, the appointment of the Office bearers and duly proposed and seconded Resolutions to be presented at the AGM on the 11th of May, at 5.00 pm at the Lavender Hall, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07.

The following nominations were received for the vacancies of the General Committee and for the posts of Office Bearers by the current General Committee. These names were ratified by the present General Committee of the Society at its last Committee Meeting.

There were no other nominations received from the general membership for any of the notified vacancies on the General Committee or for those of Office Bearers. Neither were there any other, duly proposed and seconded, Resolutions submitted by the general membership within the constitutionally approved time frame of 20 days prior to the date of the AGM.

NOTICE UNDER RULES 10.1.5 TO 10.1.9 OF THE OBJECTS & RULES NOMINATIONS TO THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

Nominee	Proposer	Secunder
Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)	Graham Marshall (12067)	Devika Wijesinghe Rohana (12920)
Dilshan Hettiaratchi (10709)	Niran Mahawatte (11248)	Krishantha Athukorala (13009)
Prof. Deepthi Wickramasinghe (13916)	Jehan CanagaRetna (10810)	Prof. Sampath Seneviratne (12900)
Riaz Cader (11839)	Prof. Enoka Kudavidanage (12620)	Sankha Wanniatchi (12806)
Sohan Patrick (13318)	Revan Weerasinghe (13404)	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)
Shehan Ramanayake (11564)	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)	Supun Lahiru Prakash (13569)
Sajani Jayakody (13885)	Keshan Perera (13300)	Sohan Patrick (13318)



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Kindly note that Seven (7) valid nominations were received for the Ten (10) vacancies. The Committee will fill up one of those positions by co-opting Ms. Nilupuli Heiyantuduwa (13909) into the Committee at the 1st General Committee meeting held after the AGM in May 2024.

The membership has nominated two individuals by following the protocol of the AGM and the General Secretary has received the nominations in the stipulated time frame.

Nominee	Proposer	Secunder
Sankha Wanniatchi (12806)	D M C V Prabash (12293)	Pavithra Attanayake (13271)
Medisha Gunewardena (12093)	Dr. Malik Fernando (2816)	Prof. Sevvandi Jayakody (13644)

With the above two individuals, the General Committee of twenty-three (23) fulfills the constituted number.

NOMINATIONS AS OFFICE BEARERS

Nominee	Post	Proposer	Secunder
Graham Marshall (12067)	President	Jehan CanagaRetna (10810)	Devika Wijesinghe Rohana (12920)
Prof. Sampath Seneviratne (12900)	Vice President	Graham Marshall (12067)	Dev Wijewardane (12804)
Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne (8223)	Vice President	Jehan CanagaRetna (10810)	Devika Wijesinghe Rohana (12920)
Rapti Dirckze (12657)	Hon. General Secretary	Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne (8223)	Spencer Manuelpillai (11229)
Krishantha Athukorala (13009)	Treasurer	Niran Mahawatte (11248)	Dilshan Hettiaratchi (10709)

Kindly note that [5] valid nominations were received for the [5] vacancies for the Executive Committee.



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130TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - NOTICE UNDER RULES 10.1.5 TO 10.1.9

Preserving Land and Nature Trust (PLANT)

It was proposed by the WNPS General Committee, the below individuals as per the articles of association of PLANT to be nominated as Board Members for the 2024/25 year:

- a) Mr. Sriyan Joseph de Silva
Wijeyeratne (8223) - Chair
- b) Mr. Pradeep Dilshan Rajeeva
Hettiaratchi (10709)
- c) Ms. Inez Caryll Tozer (12090)
- d) Dr. Cyril Malik Fernando (2816)
- e) Ms. Zaineb Akbarally (12529)
- f) Mr. Shevon Charles Perera
Gooneratne – Non-Member, NIC
683092649V
- g) Dr. Ranil Senanayake - Non-Member,
NIC 194301901764

Proposed Resolutions

1. Increasing of the Wild Kids Membership fee

It is proposed that the annual subscription fees for the Wild Kids category be increased. Owing to a surge in administrative expenses, raising the membership fees for the Wild Kids category is essential to facilitate seamless operations. The new rate has been adopted by the General Committee and is presented for approval by the members as required by the Constitution Section 5 – Subscriptions, clause 5.3.

Membership approval requested for the annual subscription fee for Wild Kids Members to be increased from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1,000/- per annum with effect from the AGM of 2024.

Proposer: Devika Rohana Wijesinghe
(12920)

Seconded: Keshan Perera (13300)

2. Inclusion of WNPS Office Team in the Committee Photograph for the Annual Report

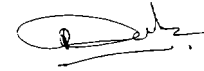
It is proposed that the key team from the WNPS Head Office be included in the Photograph of the General Committee in the Annual Report, renaming from 'GC photo' to 'GC and WNPS Head Office Core Team' photo.

**Submitted for approval by the
membership.**

Proposer: Sriyan de Silva Wijeyeratne
(8223)

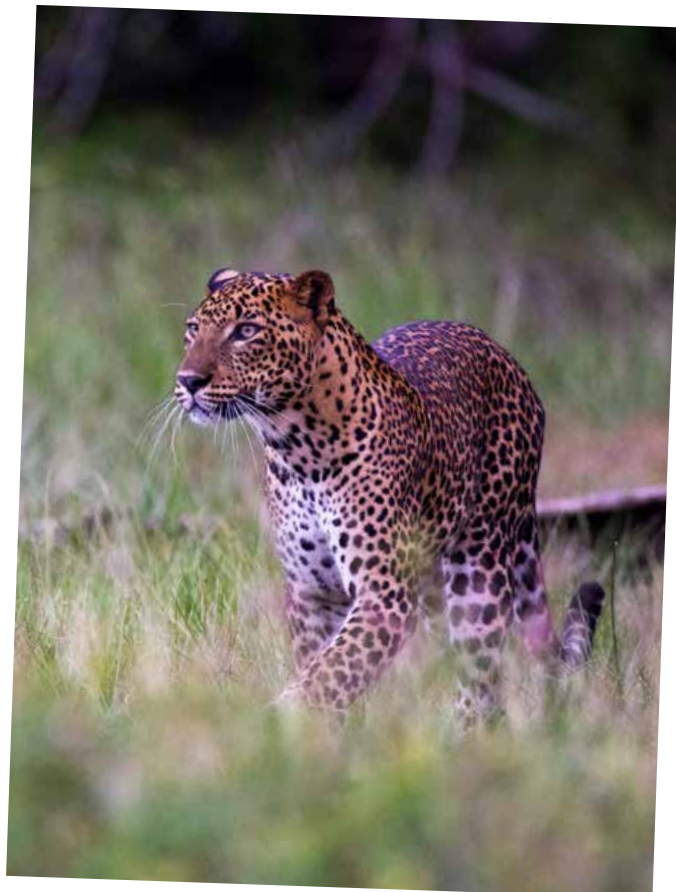
Seconded: Jehan CanagaRetna (10810)

As already announced, the AGM will be held as a physical AGM on Saturday, the 11th of May, at 5.00 pm at the Lavender Hall, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07.



Rapti Dirckze,
Hon. General Secretary

April 21, 2024



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In Sri Lanka, more than 400 endemic plant and animal species are listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN, which means that these species have a high risk of extinction. With the support of Hemas Holdings PLC, WNPS has embarked on a partnership to drive conservation and rehabilitation projects of 50+ species with a view to remove them from the critically endangered list through a 5-year project.



Wildlife & Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

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