

# LANKA ENVIRONMENT FUND



**IMPACT REPORT**  
**2025**





# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OUR MISSION &amp; VISION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROJECT MAP</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IMPACT SNAPSHOT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>OUR WORK</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Areas of Impact</b>	<b>10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Terrestrial Ecosystem Conservation</li><li>• Marine Conservation</li><li>• Effective Waste Management</li><li>• Responsible Tourism</li></ul>	
<b>Learning and Assessment</b>	<b>37</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ground Scoping for Global Programmes</li><li>• Climate Financing</li><li>• Environmental Impact Assessments</li></ul>	
<b>OUR PARTNERS</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>FINANCIAL SUMMARY</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>WHAT'S NEXT</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>OUR TEAM</b>	<b>55</b>

Cover Image: Sri Lankan Leopard Cub,  
Kumana National Park Fazry Ibrahim



## FOREWARD

The Lanka Environment Fund is an affiliate member of Conservation Collective, a global ecosystem of local foundations funding effective grassroots conservation initiatives to protect the environment, restore nature and build climate resilience.

Working across four areas of impact, the LEF supports grassroots organisations within Marine Conservation, Terrestrial Ecosystem Conservation, Effective Waste Management and Responsible Tourism. We have many individuals and organisations in research, policy, education, and outreach who are conducting critical work to conserve and protect one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world.

The LEF is rooted in facilitating funding opportunities and support for excellent initiatives enabling potential and greater impact. As a nexus between international and local organisations, businesses and corporates, LEF is developing a system that can help make a difference on the ground. Since LEF's inception in 2019, we have supported 28 organisations working across the island's vast and breathtaking land and sea scapes.

Despite being one of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots, financial support towards conservation initiatives in Sri Lanka is scarce. Large environmental INGO's that would typically operate in a biodiversity hotspot aren't present. The LEF has been filling this void by raising funds locally and globally, while acting as a conduit for international funding to be deployed in Sri Lanka.

As conservation administrators, we not only ensure that high-impact projects are delivered in an ethical and transparent manner but we also actively support local conservation groups with applying for grants to scale conservation initiatives.

Additionally, in several instances, the LEF has facilitated and coordinated collaborative coalition-based approaches to conservation efforts.

In spite of the numerous set backs experienced by Sri Lanka since we launched the LEF in 2019, we are extremely proud to have mobilised over \$1.5 million towards local conservation projects, all making a positive impact on the ground.

If you are already a part of this journey, thank you for your support and belief. If you haven't joined us yet, please consider being a part of the LEF family and contributing positively towards the conservation and restoration of Sri Lanka's flora and fauna.



Vinod Malwatte  
Executive Director

## OUR VISION

Established in 2019, the Lanka Environment Fund is a Not-For-Profit Organisation that supports existing conservation initiatives in Sri Lanka with their work by providing grant funding and acting as a conduit for international funding to have an impact locally.

As conservation administrators, the cornerstone of our mission is the empowerment of local communities, backed up by investment in the local environment. Since our inception in 2019, the LEF has been responsible for mobilising over \$1,500,000 towards 30 conservation projects in Sri Lanka.

## OUR STRATEGY

We strongly believe that supporting local conservation groups is the only way to make a positive impact and bring about long-lasting change.

In order to support local conservation efforts, we raise funds locally and globally from individuals and businesses that care and see the value of conserving Sri Lanka's flora and fauna.

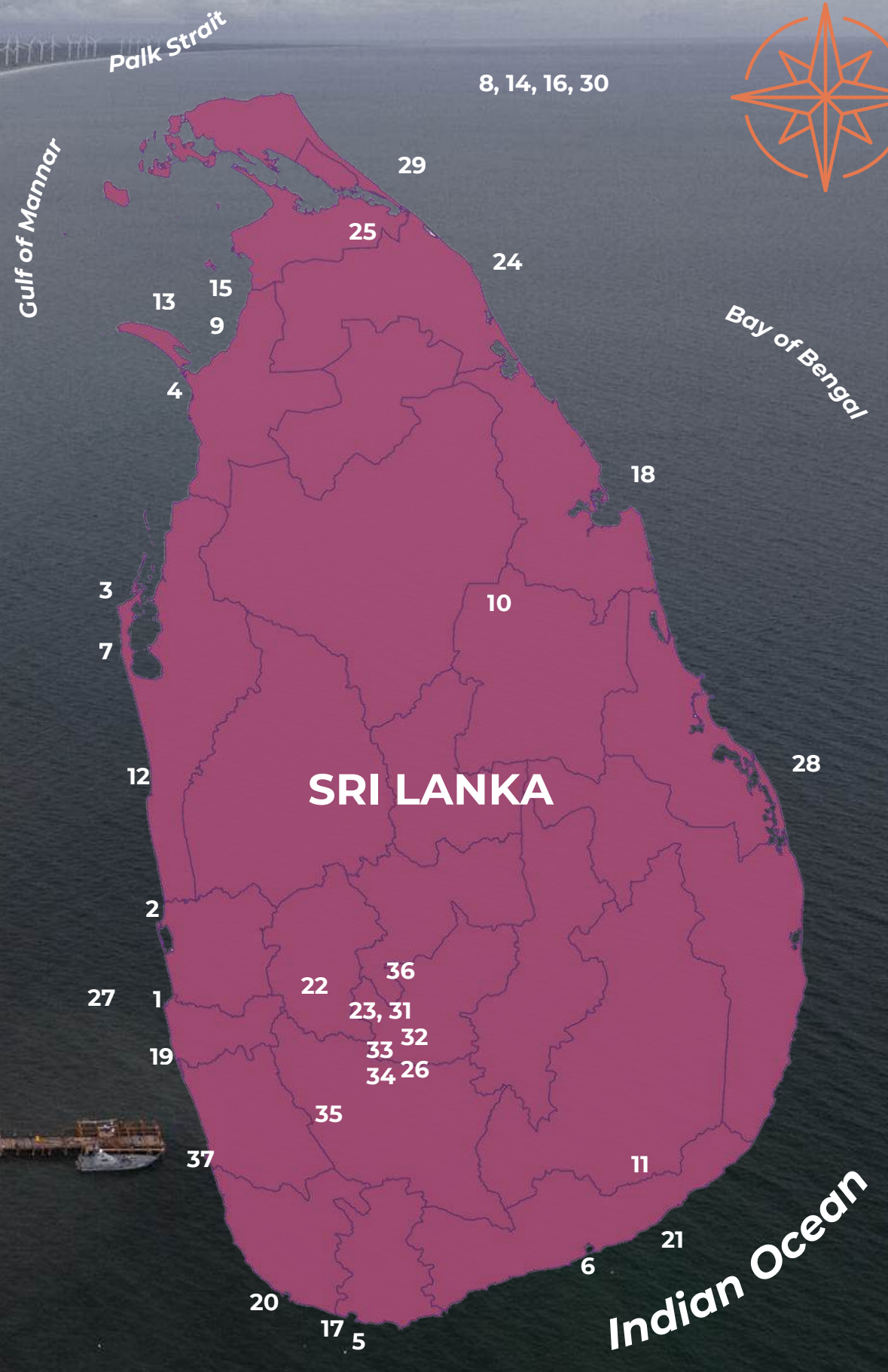
LEF ensures maximum transparency, accountability and impact by working closely with the most effective conservation organisations in Sri Lanka.



# PROJECT MAP

30 projects | 23 partners

- 1 - Pearl Protectors - Cleaner Seabeds, Colombo
- 2 - Pearl Protectors - Cleaner Seabeds, Negombo
- 3 - Pearl Protectors - Cleaner Seabeds, Kalpitiya
- 4 - Pearl Protectors - Cleaner Seabeds, Mannar
- 5 - Pearl Protectors - Cleaner Seabeds, Ahangama
- 6 - WNPS - Mini-series on Human-Elephant Conflict, Hambanthota
- 7 - BRT & EFL - Project COLIBRI, Kalpitiya
- 8 - Pearl Protectors - Nurdle Free Lanka
- 9 - Assessing Seagrass Distribution and Blue Carbon Stocks, Vidattaltivu Nature Reserve
- 10 - FEO - Habitat Restoration, Wasgamuwa National Park
- 11 - FEO - Habitat Restoration, Yala (Lunugamvehera) National Park (Block 6)
- 12 - WNPS - Accelerated Natural Regeneration of Mangroves, Anawilundawa
- 13 - Mannar Region Systemic Solutions (MARESSOL), Mannar
- 14 - SCAR - Trilingual Bushmeat Campaign
- 15 - Mangrove Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods Forum, Vidattaltivu Nature Reserve
- 16 - Sustainability & Best Practices Guide for Small and Medium Tourism Stakeholders
- 17 - Oceanswell - Analysis of Whale Populations, Mirissa
- 18 - Oceanswell - Human-Whale Interactions, Trincomalee and Mirissa
- 19 - Love a Tree Foundation - Wonders of the Wetland, Colombo
- 20 - SCAR - Biodiversity Monitoring, Koggala
- 21 - Leopocon - Biodiversity Monitoring, Yala National Park
- 22 - Leopocon - Biodiversity Monitoring, Yatiyanthota
- 23 - Leopocon - Biodiversity Monitoring, Ginigathena
- 24 - Leopocon - Biodiversity Monitoring, Mulaithivu
- 25 - Leopocon - Biodiversity Monitoring, Killinochchi
- 26 - WWCT - Corridors for Conservation, Central Highlands
- 27 - BRT - Biodiversity and Mapping of Urban Reefs, Colombo
- 28 - SPM and Kabadivella Connect - Mapping of the Informal Waste Sector, Batticaloa
- 29 - EIA and SEIA on Explosive Remnants of War in Northern Sri Lanka, Muhumalai
- 30 - Good Life Foundation - Project Hyacinthesis
- 31 - WNPS PLANT nurseries - Ginigathena
- 32 - WNPS PLANT nurseries - Welimada
- 33 - WNPS PLANT nurseries - Bandarawela
- 34 - WNPS PLANT nurseries - Nawalapitiya
- 35 - WNPS PLANT nurseries - Ratnapura
- 36 - Women in Travel Collective - Pekoe Trail
- 37 - Hog Deer Restoration - Honduwa Island and Appaladuwa Island, Lunuganga, Bentota






# IMPACT SNAPSHOT

Since 2019, the LEF has raised over USD \$1,500,000 towards grassroots impact projects across Sri Lanka.

TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION

**52.5 KM** designated as conservation corridors in the Central Highlands

**100+** individual leopards identified in the Central Highlands



**1** Scoping circular solutions study for Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

**2** female-driven plant nurseries supporting endemic reforestation efforts

MARINE CONSERVATION

**185** hectares of Urban Reef Habitats assessed across **5** reef sites

**10** years of survey data analysed documenting **12** Cetacean Species

**4** remote cameras deployed to monitor returning fauna in mangroves

**1** Supreme Court stay order securing protection of Vidattaltivu Nature Reserve

EFFECTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

**283** volunteers mobilised

**11** nurdle polluted sites

**2000 KG+** of marine litter removed from seabeds

**1.5 tonnes** solid waste redirected away from landfills

**1580 KG** of ghost nets recovered

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

**32** operators recorded providing illegal "swim-with-whales" tours

**1** media feature raising public awareness on impacts of illegal "swim-with-whales" tours

**2** aquatic habitats restored within National Parks

**40** hectares of grazing habitat restored in a National Park



# OUR WORK

Insight into LEF success stories

unicef Negombo Fish Market Marla Tomorug

# AREAS OF IMPACT

## Terrestrial Ecosystem Conservation

Sri Lanka, renowned for its rich biodiversity and stunning landscapes, places a significant emphasis on terrestrial ecosystem conservation. With diverse habitats ranging from lush rainforests to dry coastal plains, the country hosts a myriad of endemic species.

Initiatives encompass habitat restoration, anti-poaching campaigns, ground-breaking research and community engagement to foster sustainable coexistence between humans and wildlife.

**These efforts also focus on strengthening Protected Area (PA) management, improving ecological connectivity, and supporting research and monitoring to inform long-term conservation planning.**



Mugger crocodile, Kumana NP Ananda Chanmugam

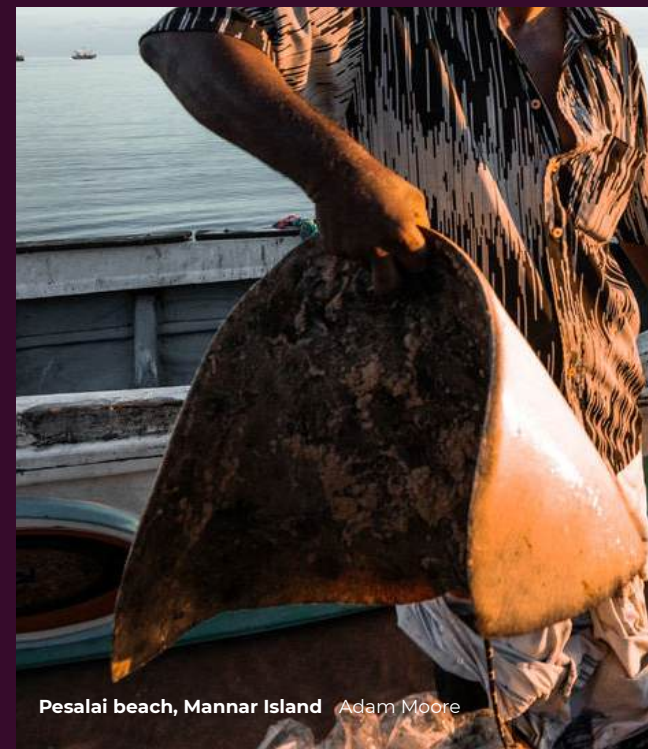
## Effective Waste Management

Effective waste management in Sri Lanka is an urgent priority, given the challenges posed by rapid rural urbanisation and population pressures on the landscape. Public awareness campaigns and circular solutions play a crucial role in fostering change towards responsible waste disposal practices.

**While systemic challenges persist, the LEF is committed to working with different tiers of local actors within waste management systems to safeguard the environment from landfills and ensure sanitation for future generations.**



Informal waste collector, Batticaloa Hafsa Jamel



Pesalai beach, Mannar Island Adam Moore

## Marine Conservation

Marine conservation is of paramount importance to Sri Lanka, with an ocean territory eight times larger than its landmass, an extensive coastline and vibrant marine biodiversity. The island nation boasts diverse marine ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangroves, salt marshes and seagrass beds which support a plethora of marine life.

**By safeguarding its marine ecosystems, Sri Lanka aims to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of its coastal environments and the livelihoods that depend on them.**



Whale watching boats, Mirissa Harbour Hafsa Jamel

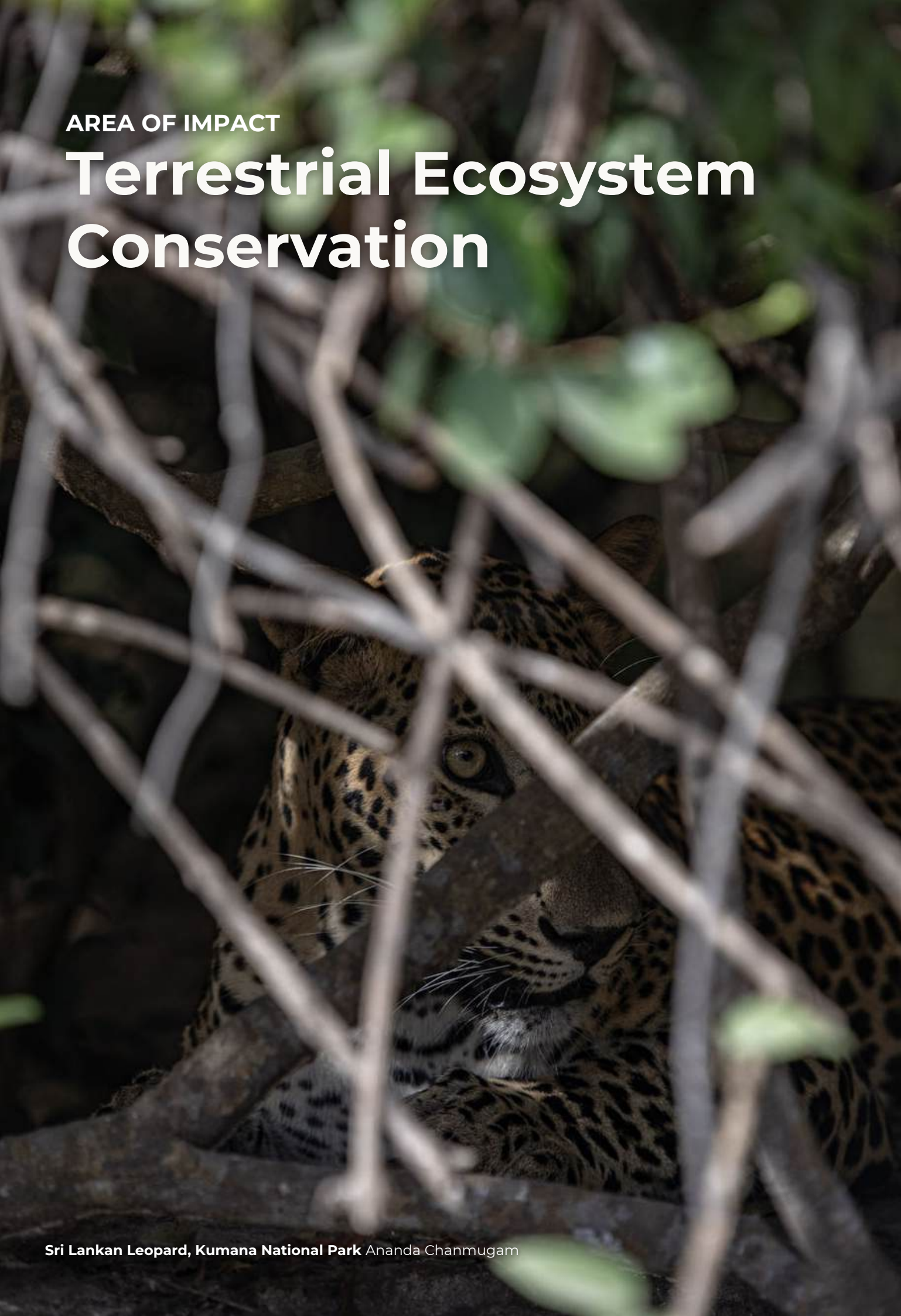
## Responsible Tourism

Sri Lanka's diverse natural and cultural heritage makes it an ideal destination for responsible tourism initiatives. If Sri Lankan tourism is to thrive an approach that emphasises community involvement, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation needs to be adopted.

**The LEF is committed to ensuring that tourism contributes positively towards the conservation of natural resources, and supports responsible wildlife tourism, thereby making Sri Lanka the ideal destination for responsible tourism.**

AREA OF IMPACT

# Terrestrial Ecosystem Conservation



Sri Lankan Leopard, Kumana National Park Ananda Chanmugam



A man-made lake infested with Water Hyacinth, Ehetuwewa, Kurunegala  
Tashiya de Mel



Tea estates bordering montane forests, Maskeliya Yanik Tissera

## CORRIDORS FOR CONSERVATION

**Grantee:** Wilderness & Wildlife Conservation Trust  
**Duration:** October 2023 - 2028  
**Funding for 2025:** \$46,033 via Oak Foundation



Sri Lanka's Central Highlands faces habitat fragmentation from tea estates and rural urbanisation, limiting species like endemic leopards to isolated forest patches, threatening their populations and wider biodiversity.

LEF has supported the WWCT since 2019 to establish three vital biodiversity connections with several more to be unveiled in the coming years. This collaboration has grown into LEF's Legacy Project.

### THE PROJECT

Monitoring leopards, the island's apex predator, in this mixed use habitat revealed valuable insights into the broader ecosystem. Over 100 individuals were identified along with other threatened and endemic species such as the Fishing Cat, Indian Pangolin, Rusty Spotted Cat and Golden Palm Civet.

These corridors revealed important data relevant for tackling human-wildlife conflict. Analysis of leopard scat samples showed 93% of their prey were wild animals, easing worries about domestic animal safety, promoting coexistence and underscoring the corridors' importance.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Through funds mobilized by LEF via Conservation Collective's partnership with the Oak Foundation, we hope to increase connectivity in this highly fragmented mixed use landscape, provide safe havens for biodiversity to thrive in, rewild the native vegetation that was once lost and foster a sense of environmental stewardship amongst local tea estate communities. The next phase of this project will span from 2024 to 2028.



Gathering scat samples, Maskeliya Yanik Tissera

## AREA OF IMPACT; TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION

**100+**  
Individual leopards identified across research sites

**35**  
wire snares removed from landscape

**5**  
endemic plant nurseries established

**17**  
awareness campaigns for estate communities

**356**  
students engaged through 'Forest Guardians'

**28**  
hectares of degraded land restored

A rare montane leopard Yanik Tissera

## THE PARTNER

The Wilderness & Wildlife Conservation Trust (WWCT) has worked in Sri Lanka to conserve leopards, under the umbrella conservation model, for over 20 years. Their seminal work in the Central Highlands has led to increased landscape connectivity, better informed estate communities and the restoration of degraded landscapes.



Himbilyakada lake, Handungamuwa, town bordering Wasgamuwa National Park, Fazry Ibrahim

## HABITAT RESTORATION OF WASGAMUWA & LUNUGAMVEHERA

**Grantee: Federation of Environmental Organisations (FEO)**

**Duration: August 2023 – ongoing**

**Funding for 2024/2025: LEF (including \$4,001 allocated to Lunugamvehera and \$798 allocated to Wasgamuwa)**

Since August 2023, the LEF has been supporting the Federation of Environmental Organisations (FEO) to implement habitat restoration initiatives in two key Protected Areas: Wasgamuwa National Park and Lunugamvehera National Park (Yala NP Block 6).

### WASGAMUWA NATIONAL PARK

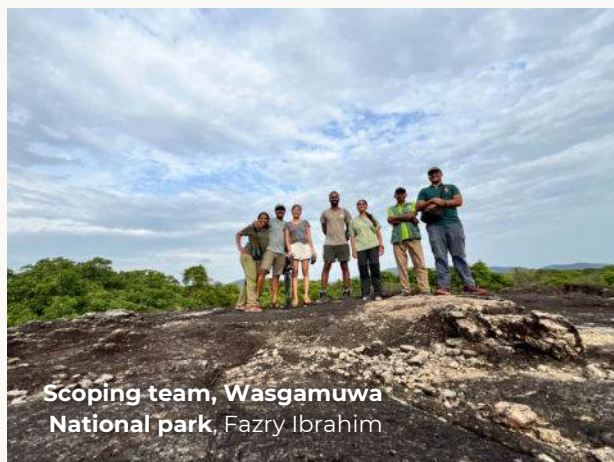
Spanning approximately 40,000 hectares across the Matale and Polonnaruwa Districts, Wasgamuwa National Park lies against the backdrop of the Knuckles World Heritage Site and is bordered by the Mahaweli Ganga. The park encompasses riverine forests, evergreen forests and grasslands, supporting a rich diversity of endemic and non-endemic species. However, much of its aquatic ecosystem has been threatened by the spread of Invasive Aquatic Alien Species (IAAS).

LEF funding enabled the restoration of two key water bodies within the park: Kok Abe Lake and Wavul Abe Lake. Clearance of invasive aquatic plants at Kok Abe Lake was completed in mid-August 2023, followed by a year-long maintenance phase beginning at the end of August. Clearing of Wavul Abe Lake commenced at the end of September 2023, also followed by one year of maintenance.

Results have been highly encouraging, with Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) staff reporting the return of numerous wildlife species to the restored reservoirs, demonstrating early signs of ecosystem recovery and improved habitat quality.



Wavulebey, Wasgamuwa National park, FEO



Scoping team, Wasgamuwa National park, Fazry Ibrahim

### LUNUGAMVEHERA NATIONAL PARK (YALA NP BLOCK 6)

In Lunugamvehera National Park, where approximately 20% of its 23,500 hectares had been infested by Invasive Alien Species (IAS), halting the rapid spread of these plants was a conservation priority. Species such as *Lantana camara* and *Eupatorium odoratum* were inhibiting the growth of native vegetation, reducing grazing grounds and threatening elephants, other herbivores and their interconnected ecological food webs.

Through LEF funding, FEO cleared and committed to maintaining 40 hectares of land as part of a broader 900-hectare restoration commitment. Post-clearance data shows increased habitat resilience, regrowth of native plant species and the return of deer and elephants to the restored areas. The project's success was recognised with the "Helping Native Species Thrive" award at the 2023 Collective Awards.

Beyond ecological restoration, the project has delivered strong socio-economic benefits. Over 30 workers from five nearby villages were employed for IAS clearance, initially supporting post-COVID-19 recovery and now providing an additional, sustainable source of income. An environmental leadership programme was also launched in Lunugamvehera, with the first cohort of students completing both phases, including module evaluations, project management training and environmental problem-solving components.

### Integrated Impact

Together, these restoration initiatives address both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, strengthening ecosystem resilience in two critical Protected Areas in Sri Lanka. By restoring water bodies, regenerating native vegetation and engaging local communities, LEF and FEO are safeguarding biodiversity, supporting wildlife populations and enhancing livelihoods — ensuring long-term conservation outcomes for both nature and people.

### THE PARTNER

The Federation of Environmental Organisations (FEO) has been actively working in 6 national parks across Sri Lanka, to restore the ecosystem from invasives, train jeep drivers and safari guides with nature interpretation skills, while also working with schools in buffer communities to learn more deeply about the unique ecosystems they reside in.



Yala National Park, Block 6, FEO



WNPS  
PLANT

AREA OF IMPACT: TERRESTRIAL CONSERVATION

## BIODIVERSITY MONITORING

**Partners: Small Cat Advocacy & Research (SCAR), Leopocon, The Parrotfish Collective (PFC) and the Wildlife & Nature Protection Society (WNPS)**

**Duration: October 2023 - Ongoing**

**Donation: 30 remote cameras for biodiversity monitoring**



Biodiversity monitoring plays a critical role in wildlife management inside and outside the formal Protected Area network. Through the deployment of remote cameras, conservation organisations are able to understand hard to observe biodiversity movement patterns, identify threats such as poaching and utilise images for public awareness campaigns. More importantly, remote camera imagery can provide the building blocks for the improvement of land use management practices and policies.



Remote camera images, courtesy of Small Cat Advocacy & Research (SCAR) and Parrotfish Collective

## FEMALE DRIVEN NATIVE PLANT NURSERIES

**Grantee: WNPS PLANT**

**Duration: January 2025 - May 2028**

**Funding for 2025: \$17,356 via LEF towards 2 nurseries**

The Female-led Native Plant Nursery Initiative has seen steady progress since its launch. Supported by Otter Fonds and the LEF, the program is on track to launch 5 nurseries. Several key milestones since the project's inception include:

Successful project launch and grant awarding, formalising the partnership with all five selected entrepreneurs

- Completion of a 3-day residential technical training focused on species identification, propagation, nursery management, and operational planning
- Finalisation of site assessments, onboarding procedures, and buy-back guarantees, ensuring stable operations for the nurseries
- Unified footprint design and commencement of infrastructure construction across all five sites, guided by detailed layout plans and field supervision
- Initiation of early seed and seedling collection, enabling the ladies to begin preparing the first batches of restoration-ready plant material



Female Entrepreneurs learning about endemic plants to grow in their nurseries, photo's courtesy of PLANT

### THE PARTNER

WNPS established PLANT to directly own, conserve, and preserve lands or help set aside privately owned lands through partners, in a manner that enhances all forms of wildlife and nature, as well as to hold land in trust, on behalf of future generations.

Beyond ecological impact, the program is also providing meaningful livelihood opportunities and leadership roles for rural women, fully aligning with the vision and objectives of both Otter Fonds and LEF. PLANT's urgent need to build long-term corridor restoration efforts requires a consistent supply of over 100,000 native montane trees in the coming years.

### THE PROJECT

Scientific equipment including remote cameras, play a pivotal role in biodiversity monitoring, are a significant cost for conservation groups. The LEF have invested in 30 remote cameras, which have been deployed around the island. This initiative allows conservation groups to borrow the remote cameras from the LEF Remote Camera Bank, deploy them for the monitoring period and then return them to the LEF, thereby allowing another conservation group to utilise them, when required.

## RESULTS



**30**  
cameras  
deployed



**10,000+**  
remote camera  
images analysed



**15+**  
sites at which  
remote cameras  
were deployed



**5**  
local conservation  
organisations  
supported

### THE PARTNERS

We have loaned remote cameras to Small Cat Advocacy & Research (SCAR), Leopocon, The Parrotfish Collective (PFC), and the Wildlife & Nature Protection Society (WNPS) to monitor biodiversity in wet, intermediate and dry zone climatic zones.

AREA OF IMPACT

# Marine Conservation





Colombo, Sri Lanka Blue Resources Trust

## BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT MAPPING OF URBAN REEFS IN COLOMBO

**Grantee:** Blue Resources Trust  
**Duration:** Jan 2025 - September 2025  
**Funding for 2025:** \$7,922 via LEF

### THE PROJECT

This project represents one of the most comprehensive assessments of urban reef systems in Sri Lanka, focusing on reefs located off the coast of Colombo. The study addresses a critical knowledge gap around the distribution, condition, and ecological significance of reefs in a highly urbanised marine environment.

Surveys across **five reef sites** revealed a clear gradient in reef health linked to distance from shore.

- **Nearshore reefs** were heavily impacted by sedimentation, untreated wastewater, and coastal development, resulting in low coral cover and poor water quality.
- **Offshore reefs** supported higher coral cover, greater habitat complexity, and more diverse coral and fish communities, including reef areas previously undocumented in size and extent.

Despite lower coral cover, sandstone reefs displayed high species diversity and structural complexity, highlighting their importance as fish habitats and potential climate refugia.


Offshore reefs, particularly the Gingiripita reef complex, showed coral cover comparable to some of Sri Lanka's well-known shallow reefs, underscoring their ecological value. The findings will be used to inform potential improvements in the management of Colombo's urban reef systems. Key interventions identified include reducing land-based pollution and wastewater impacts on nearshore reefs, mitigating anchor damage and fishing pressure on offshore reefs, and improving the inclusion of deeper and sandstone reef habitats in marine spatial planning and environmental assessments.

Building on these results, there is a strong opportunity to expand the research to additional reef sites and across seasons, supporting more effective, evidence-based conservation and long-term management of Sri Lanka's urban marine ecosystems.

### THE PARTNER


Blue Resources Trust (BRT) is a Sri Lankan marine research and conservation organization that promotes science-based decision making to facilitate the sustainable use of marine resources.

## IN NUMBERS

**5** reef sites surveyed  **~185** hectares of reef habitat mapped

**77** coral species recorded

**6300+**  fish counted on transects

**50%**  coral cover reported on offshore reefs

 **200+** reef fish species documented

Colombo, Sri Lanka Nishan Perera



Image Courtesy of Andi Cross and Adam Moore, Edges of the Earth

## ANALYSING WHALE SPECIES COMPOSITIONS

**Grantee:** Oceanswell  
**Duration:** February 2024 - December 2025  
**Funding for 2024/2025:** \$3,000 via LEF

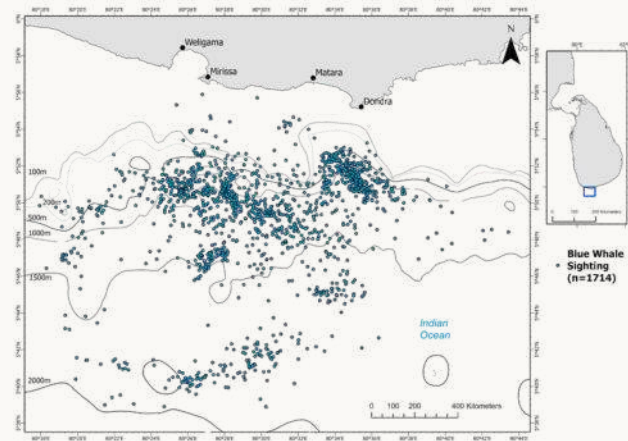
### THE PROJECT

The project analysed over 10 years of cetacean survey data collected off Sri Lanka's southern coast to understand changes in whale and dolphin species composition, distribution, and relative abundance. LEF supported the analysis and synthesis of long-term data, while all fieldwork was conducted under permits issued by the Department of Wildlife Conservation, and funding from several partners and grants

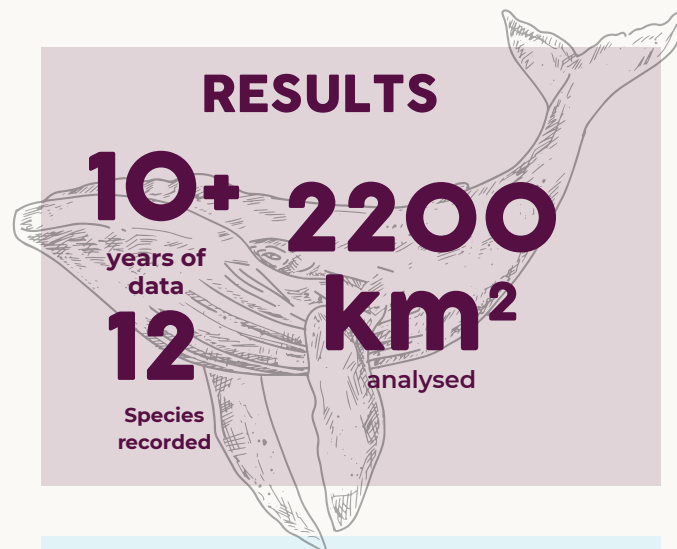
Using data from field surveys conducted between 2012 and 2024, the study mapped long-term sighting patterns across a 2,200 km<sup>2</sup> offshore area and standardised survey effort to enable robust comparison over time.

The analysis documented 12 cetacean species, with blue whales and spinner dolphins accounting for the majority of sightings. Species distributions were examined in relation to environmental variables such as water depth, distance from shore, sea surface temperature, and chlorophyll concentration, highlighting the importance of deep offshore habitats for cetacean populations. A map of blue whale distribution developed through this work has been selected for inclusion in the Esri Map Book, Volume 40.

The findings provide one of the most comprehensive long-term spatial analyses of cetaceans off southern Sri Lanka to date, strengthening understanding of how key species use offshore habitats over time.



Blue Whale Distribution off Southern Sri Lanka Map produced by Tharusha Neththipola and Dr. Asha de Vos.



### THE PARTNER

Oceanswell is Sri Lanka's first dedicated marine conservation research and education organisation, founded to advance scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and empower local leadership in ocean stewardship.



Anawilundawa Ramsar Sanctuary Monica Pelliccia

## REGENERATION OF MANGROVES IN THE ANAWILUNDAWA SANCTUARY

**Grantee:** Wildlife and Nature Protection Society  
**Duration:** 2021 - Ongoing  
**Funding for 2024/2025:** \$7,253 via LEF

### THE PROJECT

The Anawilundawa Sanctuary, a vital mangrove ecosystem on Sri Lanka's northwestern coast, suffered extensive degradation due to intensive shrimp farming in the 1990s. A collaborative restoration effort led by the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS), Wayamba University, the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC), and corporate partners is now restoring this landscape through the replanting of native mangrove species. This project was recognised as a UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Flagship for 2024, highlighting its significance as a model for science-based restoration.

The success of the project is evident in the recovery of mangrove stands representing 13 of Sri Lanka's 21 mangrove species, achieved through science-based restoration approaches. These include hydrological interventions supported by the Sri Lankan Navy, ongoing water quality monitoring, and phenological surveys that guide adaptive management.

In support of this work, LEF has contributed multi-parameter water quality monitoring equipment on two occasions, strengthening long-term ecological monitoring at the site.

As the Accelerated Natural Regeneration of Mangroves (ANRM) programme enters a new phase, the return of fauna has been increasingly observed across the restored areas. In response, LEF supported the next stage of monitoring by donating four remote cameras to enable systematic documentation of wildlife recovery. Alongside ecological gains, local fishers report improved catches, students gain hands-on research experience, and community members actively contribute by collecting seeds, managing nurseries, and participating in mangrove planting.

### THE PARTNER

Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS), established in 1894, is Sri Lanka's oldest nature protection organisation working across wildlife, forest, and marine conservation through research, advocacy, education, and community engagement



## MANGROVE CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FORUM

Since 2020, LEF has worked through the Mangrove Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods (MCSL) Forum, in collaboration with local conservation organisations including the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS), Environmental Foundation Limited (EFL), Federation of Environmental Organisations (FEO), The Pearl Protectors, and the Parrotfish Collective (PFC), to collectively advance the protection, restoration, and sustainable use of Sri Lanka's mangrove ecosystems. While the forum's work spans multiple mangrove landscapes, a significant focus has been on the Vidattaltivu Nature Reserve (VNR) due to the scale and frequency of threats facing this ecosystem.

VNR, Sri Lanka's third largest Marine Protected Area (MPA), is located along the northwestern coast and supports ecologically significant habitats, including those critical to the locally critically endangered dugong and migratory bird species along the Central Asian Flyway. Despite its protected status, repeated proposals to de-gazette parts of the reserve for aquaculture development prompted sustained advocacy and coordinated action by the forum.

In response, the MCSL Forum supported public awareness campaigns, media engagement, and legal action by member organisations, culminating in a Supreme Court stay order in 2024 and the subsequent revocation of the proposed gazette. In parallel, LEF has promoted nature-based solutions within VNR, including supporting a seagrass assessment to inform potential blue carbon initiatives, while continuing to engage partners to strengthen long-term conservation outcomes.

### PARTNERS



AREA OF IMPACT

# Effective Waste Management





Mount Lavinia Beach, Colombo Marla Tomorug

## NURDLE FREE LANKA

**Grantee: The Pearl Protectors**  
**Duration: July 2025 – Ongoing**  
**Funding for 2025: \$3,822 via Lanka Environment Fund**

Following the MSC Elsa 3 maritime incident, in which large quantities of plastic resin pellets were released into the marine environment, nurdles continue to wash ashore along Sri Lanka's western coastline months after the spill. Such incidents highlight the transboundary and long-lasting nature of marine plastic pollution, driven by shipping accidents, inadequate containment during transport, and gaps in spill prevention and response mechanisms.

### THE PROJECT

In response, LEF rapidly mobilised funding to support The Pearl Protectors' Nurdle Free Lanka campaign, aimed at mitigating the ongoing impacts of the spill through targeted cleanups and public engagement. During the reporting period, 11 volunteer-led cleanups were carried out across Wellawatta, Dehiwala, Mount Lavinia, and Moratuwa, mobilising 283 volunteers and removing over 183.5 kg of nurdles from affected beaches.



Images Courtesy of the Pearl Protectors, showcasing volunteers participating in Nurdle Clean ups



## CLEANER SEABEDS FOR SRI LANKA EXPEDITION

**Grantee: The Pearl Protectors**  
**Duration: July 2025 – Ongoing**  
**Funding for 2025: \$2,042 via a Community Fundraiser**

### THE PROJECT

Cleaner Seabeds for Sri Lanka (CSfSL), led by Pearl Protectors, addresses underwater marine litter and ghost nets through targeted cleanup efforts across Sri Lanka's coastal ecosystems. The initiative was initially supported through grant funding from Depeche Mode, Hublot, and the Conservation Collective as part of the Memento Mori Tour charity initiative, enabling large-scale seabed cleanups and removal of ghost nets from ecologically sensitive areas.

Building on this foundation, CSfSL has now transitioned into a model that places greater emphasis on locally driven fundraising and community partnerships. Lanka Environment Fund is working closely with The Pearl Protectors to support and test this approach as a complementary financing pathway for continued seabed protection.

As part of this effort, LEF partnered with Ceylon Sliders and The Pearl Protectors to host a community fundraiser in Ahangama, engaging local businesses and stakeholders and raising LKR 683,751 / \$2042 to directly support ongoing cleanup and restoration activities. This evolving model strengthens local ownership of marine conservation while supporting the long-term sustainability of Cleaner Seabeds for Sri Lanka.

### THE PARTNER

The Pearl Protectors is a youth-led marine conservation organisation. Established in 2018, The Pearl Protectors seek to reduce plastic pollution and conserve the marine environment through youth engagement, volunteerism, awareness and advocacy.



South Palagala reef, Marla Tomorug

# MAPPING OF INFORMAL WASTE MANAGEMENT IN BATTICALOA

**Grantee:** Kabadiwalla Collective and SPM Foundation  
**Duration:** January 2025 - March 2026  
**Funding:** \$39,805 via Depeche Mode and Hublot

Sri Lanka, being an island nation with a population of roughly 21.76 million people, produces over 250,000 tonnes of plastic waste annually, out of which 36% is recovered by informal recycling solutions.

Plastic pollution has become one of the most pressing environmental challenges in Batticaloa, adversely affecting both the region's natural beauty and the well-being of its residents. Once-pristine beaches, rivers, and public spaces are now tarnished by plastic waste. This pollution disrupts local livelihoods and poses health risks to the community.

## THE PROJECT

This mapping was conducted to identify informal waste collection clusters across Batticaloa, gather baseline data on recyclable and non-recyclable waste flows, and strengthen community-based plastic collection through schools and institutions. The findings support evidence-based reporting and policy recommendations to better integrate and support the informal sector in local waste management systems.



Images, courtesy of SPM Foundation, capture informal waste management actors working with schools at pop up recycling drives.

## LOOKING AHEAD

All data gathered through this project is being analysed by the technical and traceability partner, Kabadiwalla Connect, who will be supporting the scaling of the programme in the next phase. The baseline data has been presented to universities and local government, with the aim of further supporting informal waste management sectors in establishing stronger recycling linkages.

## THE PARTNER

SPM Foundation is social enterprise based in Batticaloa, the SPM Foundation's mission is to reduce plastic waste by promoting recycling, upcycling, and community-led environmental initiatives.



Images, courtesy of Gap R&D showcasing their stakeholder discussions

# URBAN E-CLEAN TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE E-WASTE MANAGEMENT

**Grantee:** Gap HQ  
**Duration:** January 2024 - August 2024  
**Funding for 2025:** \$3,000 via LEF

Sri Lanka has experienced rapid growth in the use of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) over the past two decades, driven by increased economic activity, consumer demand, and technological change. This surge has significantly contributed to the generation of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), now recognised as one of the fastest-growing waste streams in the world.

E-waste in Sri Lanka arises from both domestic consumption and the import of second-hand equipment, with approximately 5% of total electronic imports being used items. Common e-waste items include household appliances, IT and telecommunication equipment, and lighting equipment. Due to the humid tropical climate, high temperatures and dust, the lifespan of electronics is often shorter than in temperate regions, accelerating the transition of devices into waste.

## THE PROJECT

This small grant was a ground scoping of the e-waste collection presently ongoing in Sri Lanka, and was intended to inform and design better interventions to prevent leakage of hazardous chemicals and metals in the open environment.

This environmental implication report clearly show that the mismanagement of e-waste in Sri Lanka still poses severe environmental degradation, health risks of the population, and socio-economic losses.

The lack of an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework, the lack of engineered disposal facilities, poor enforcement, and low awareness of the population, pose impacts on both society and the environment.

These gaps have enabled the continuation of hazardous activities like open burning, uncontrolled dismantling, and dumping in unlined sites, which have resulted in toxic air emissions, leaching of heavy metals into water and soils, loss of biodiversity in sensitive ecosystems, and socio-economic impacts on communities that depend on informal recycling and agriculture.

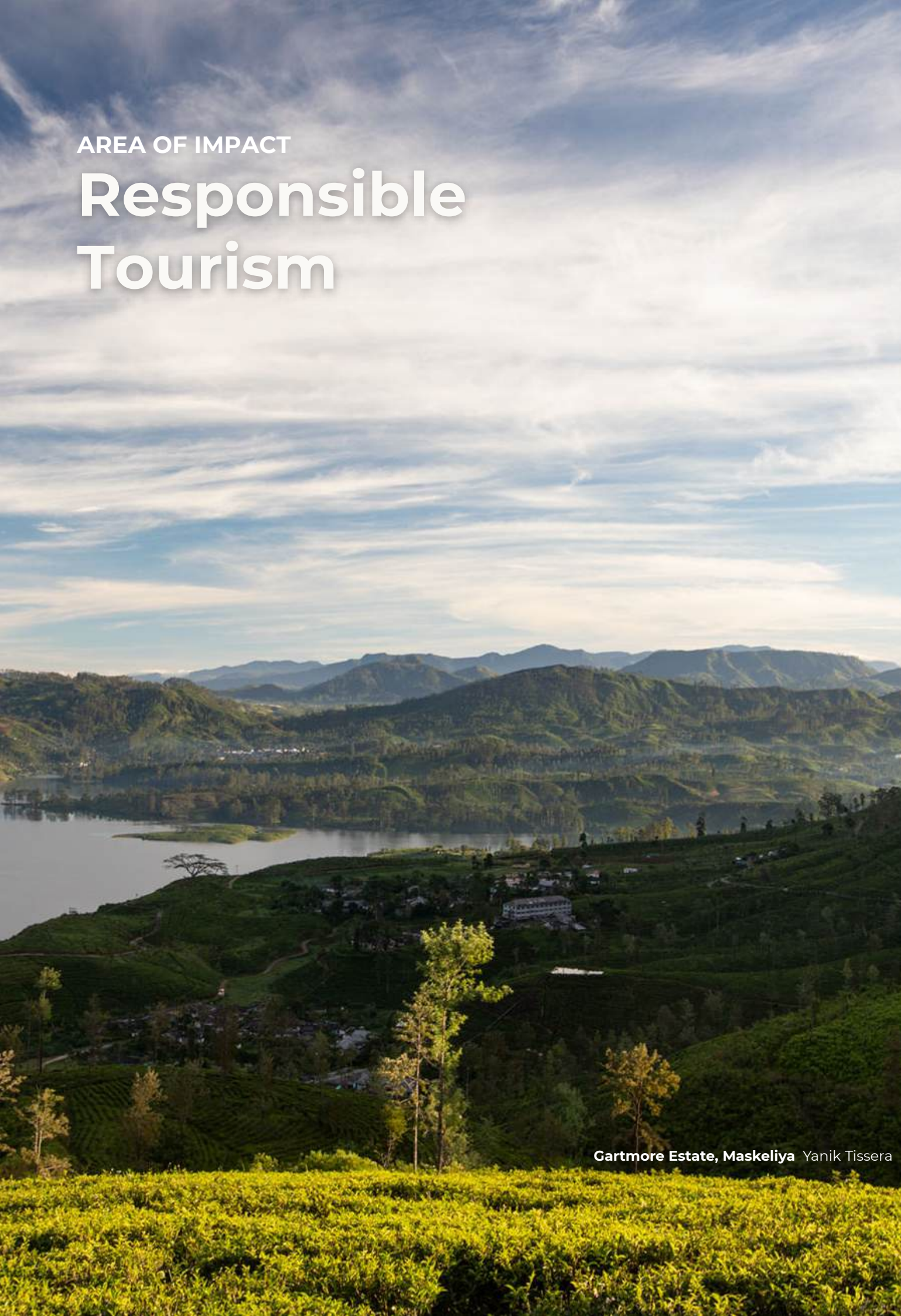
## THE PARTNER

Gap R&D is a dynamic research and development center dedicated to advancing sustainability, innovation, and resilience through interdisciplinary collaboration.

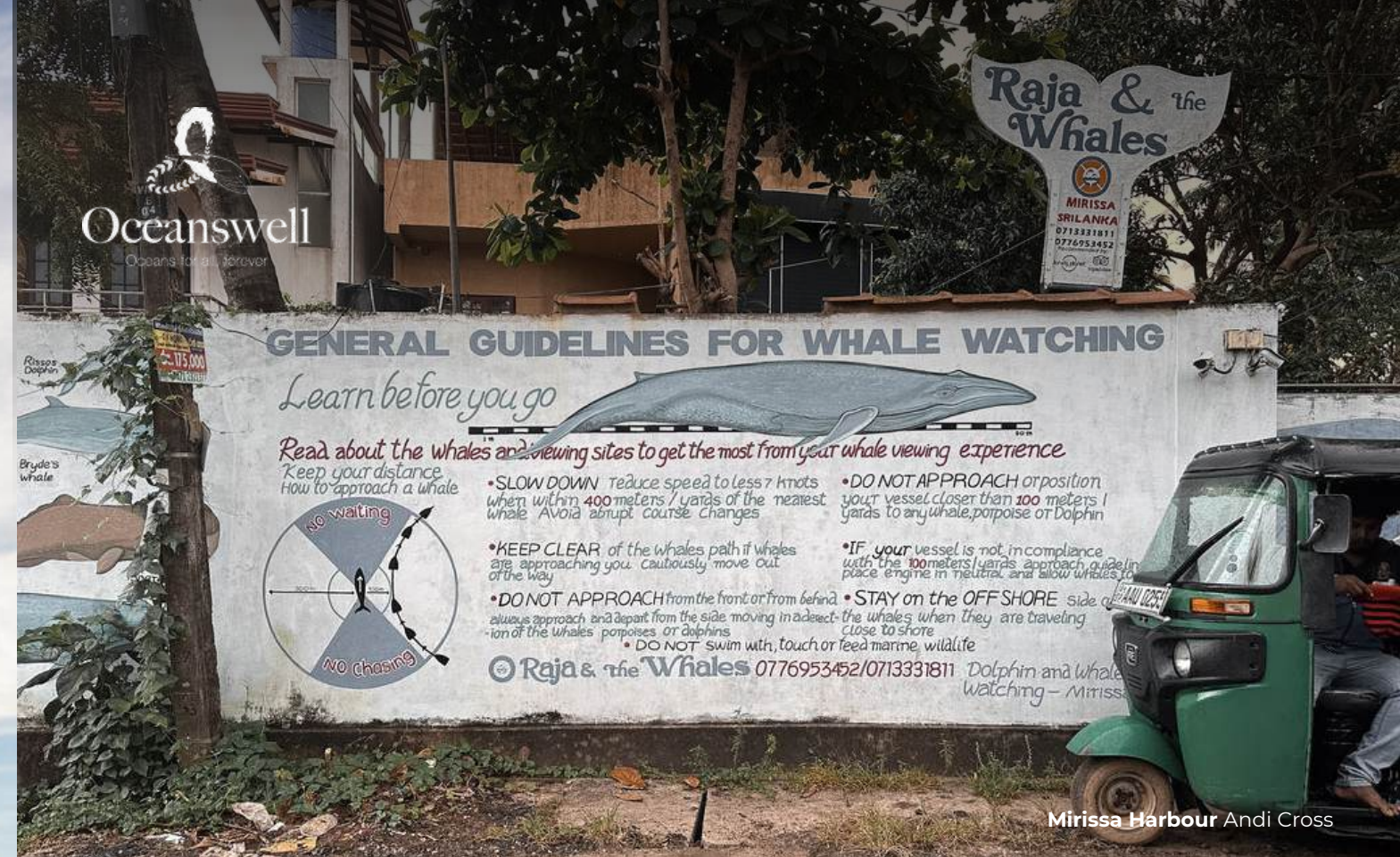


AREA OF IMPACT

# Responsible Tourism



Gartmore Estate, Maskeliya Yanik Tissera



Mirissa Harbour Andi Cross

## HUMAN-WHALE INTERACTIONS IN WHALE WATCHING TOURISM

**Grantee:** Oceanswell  
**Duration:** November 2023 - April 2024  
**Funding for 2024/2025:** \$2,000 via LEF

Sri Lanka's waters support several whale species that underpin a thriving whale-watching tourism industry. However, the rapid growth of unregulated "swim-with-whales" tours has raised concerns about animal welfare, visitor safety, and compliance with national regulations, which prohibit in-water interactions without explicit approval from the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC).

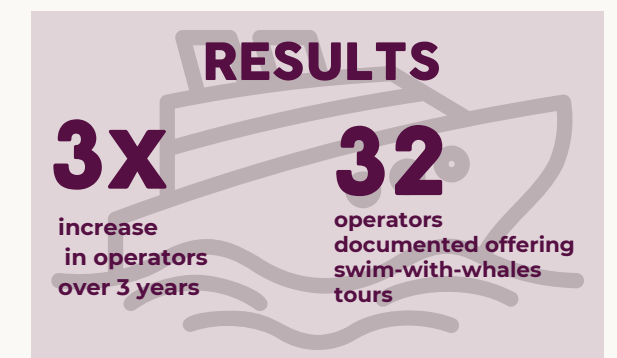
### THE PROJECT

With support from LEF, Oceanswell conducted an assessment of "swim-with-whales" operations in Mirissa and Trincomalee to understand the scale, legality, and impacts of these activities. The study documented widespread non-compliance with existing regulations and observed clear behavioural disturbance in whales during "swim-with" interactions, including abrupt diving and avoidance responses, particularly among mother-calf pairs.

The study also highlighted economic implications, as many unregulated operators avoid licensing, insurance, and tax requirements, creating unfair competition for compliant local businesses.

The project strengthens the evidence base needed to support improved enforcement, responsible tourism practices, and more effective regulatory oversight.

LEF continues to engage with Oceanswell to explore how these findings can inform conservation interventions and policy dialogue. Key insights from the study have also been shared through public-facing infographics and featured in the Daily FT to broaden awareness around responsible whale-watching practices.



### THE PARTNER

Oceanswell is Sri Lanka's first dedicated marine conservation research and education organisation, founded to advance scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and empower local leadership in ocean stewardship.

# LEARNING & ASSESSMENT



As part of our organic growth, we have expanded our Areas of Impact to include Learning and Assessments, a dedicated stream that supports third-party, global and local organisations seeking to work, or already operating in Sri Lanka. Through this platform, we provide evidence-based insights, technical services, and capacity building to ensure programmes are locally grounded and strategically aligned.



A homemade Illegal Trap Gun Paul Hilton

## LOCAL SCOPING FOR GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

The LEF supports global environmental programmes by grounding them in local realities. Through on-the-ground scoping, community engagement, and context-specific research, assessments of environmental risks, social dynamics, and institutional capacity are conducted to ensure global initiatives are relevant, inclusive, and implementable at the local level.

Our work bridges global ambition with lived experience, thereby helping programmes adapt to ecological conditions, cultural contexts, and community priorities so they deliver meaningful, lasting impact.

## Conservation Finance

Conservation finance focuses on developing sustainable, long-term funding mechanisms to support the protection and management of nature beyond short-term project grants.

In Sri Lanka, where public conservation funding is increasingly constrained, LEF has prioritised conservation finance to help build resilient financing pathways that can sustain biodiversity, livelihoods, and ecosystem services over the long term.



Anawilundawa Ramsar Sanctuary Monica Pelliccia



EIA Briefing and Planning Session, Mehak Sangani

## Environmental Impact Assessments

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) help understand how ecosystems and communities are affected by development, land-use change, and past disturbances, and support informed decision-making.

LEF offers coordination of conducting EIAs as a specialised service, working with partners to generate evidence that guides environmentally responsible planning and long-term sustainability.



Wasgamuwa National Park bordered by the Mahaweli River Paul Hilton



Hafsa Jamel, Programmes Manager, delivering a presentation on "Channeling funding to Conservation"

## LOCAL SCOPING FOR GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

### Global Park Defence by Global Conservation

**Duration:** July 2024 to August 2025  
**Partner:** Global Conservation

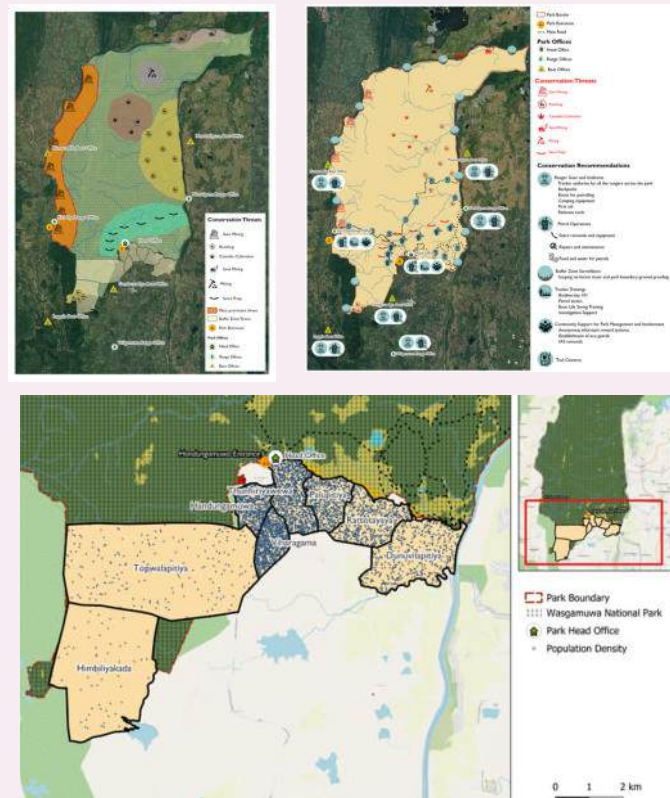
In hopes of securing the long-term conservation of Wasgamuwa National Park, the LEF, through the support of Global Conservation (GC), carried out a scoping assessment with the eventual aim of rolling out GC's Global Park Defence (GPD) program to increase ranger patrols and park protection effectiveness in critical ecosystems. GPD is a scalable system with technology and training tailored to each park, dramatically increasing the effectiveness of rangers and park authorities in protecting their world heritage.

The preliminary threat assessments were conducted through three approaches,

1. Literature reviews
2. Preliminary scoping of WNP park road networks
3. Socio-economic assessment

#### THE PROJECT

The rollout of the Global Park Defence system depends on the collaboration of all stakeholders to secure the identified threats, such as the Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC), lack of park resources, and dependence of natural resources of communities living in proximity to the park border. LEF has proposed a 3-phase approach to engage front-line defenders and rangers to fill in the gaps, which can ensure more park visitation, tourism opportunities as well as long term conservation of critical ecosystems. With GC committed to \$50,000, which amounts to 50% of the Year 1 budget, LEF is actively looking for \$50,000 of match funding to make this 5-year project a reality.



Maps created to identify threat hotspots, population pressure, and possible intervention for the programme roll out.

## CONSERVATION FINANCE

### Advancing Conversations on Conservation Financing

In response to growing financial constraints facing conservation in Sri Lanka, LEF has focused on advancing dialogue, evidence, and relationships that support more sustainable and diversified conservation financing approaches.

LEF hosted a Knowledge Symposium on Conservation Finance, on 7 March 2025 to mark World Wildlife Day, in partnership with the Centre for a Smart Future and Blue Resources Trust. The symposium brought together practitioners, researchers, and policy actors to explore emerging financing mechanisms such as biocredits, debt-for-nature swaps, and conservation trust funds, at a time when public financing for conservation is under increasing pressure.



Images by LEF highlighting a simulation exercise at the World Wildlife Day Knowledge Symposium, designed to explore the complexities of conservation finance

An interactive pre-symposium simulation exercise encouraged participants to engage with real-world trade-offs and decision-making challenges, fostering practical discussion on how conservation finance tools function in complex governance contexts.

Alongside convening dialogue, LEF has supported the generation of technical evidence to inform future financing pathways. In collaboration with the Blue Marine Foundation, LEF funded a seagrass and blue carbon assessment within the Vidattaltivu Nature Reserve, led by Susantha Udagedara, providing a first step towards quantifying carbon stocks and exploring nature-based financing opportunities linked to ecosystem protection. This work complements ongoing efforts to position protected areas within longer-term sustainable financing frameworks

LEF has also continued to engage in soft diplomacy by maintaining regular dialogue with government stakeholders, participating in national and international conferences, and supporting access to technical conversations that often remain limited to English-speaking audiences. This has included translating key documents into Sinhala to improve accessibility and inclusivity in conservation and financing discussions.

Collectively, these efforts reflect LEF's role as a connector and facilitator, working to ensure that conservation financing conversations move beyond theory towards practical, context-appropriate solutions that can support Sri Lanka's biodiversity over the long term.



Site Visit to a Post-Mine Clearance Area in Muhamalai Mehak Sangani

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

### Assessment of Explosive Remnants of War

**Funder:** HALO Trust  
**Duration:** October 2024 – March 2025  
**Funding for 2024/2025:** \$15,524 via German Humanitarian Assistance through HALO Trust

LEF led a comprehensive Environmental Impact and Socio-Economic Assessment of post-conflict landscapes affected by explosive remnants of war in Northern Sri Lanka, in collaboration with The HALO Trust. The assessment brought together ecological and social expertise, with environmental analysis led by Dr. Devaka K. Weerakoon and socio-economic research undertaken by the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA). The study focused on Kokkuthoduvai, Muhamalai, and three islands within the Jaffna Lagoon, areas shaped by decades of conflict, demining activities, and increasing climate pressures.

The assessment examined how conflict, mine clearance, and post-clearance land use have influenced both ecosystems and community livelihoods. Ecological surveys found that manual demining methods resulted in minimal vegetation loss, while mechanical demining required targeted soil restoration to ensure long-term land productivity. Sensitive ecosystems, including lagoon habitats, mangroves, forest reserves, and island systems, were identified as priority areas for ecological restoration and post-clearance monitoring.



Key Personnel Interviews Conducted as Part of the Socio-Economic Analysis.

Socio-economic findings highlighted a strong dependence on natural resource-based livelihoods, limited income diversification, and high vulnerability to climate-related shocks such as floods and droughts. While communities expressed confidence in mine clearance efforts and awareness programmes, the assessment identified persistent challenges linked to infrastructure gaps, market access, and limited livelihood options, particularly for youth. These constraints risk undermining long-term recovery if not addressed alongside clearance activities.

#### Funding Facilitated by



Sampling sites for the Environmental Impact Assessment at Muhamalai and Nagarkovil Dr. Devaka Weerakoon

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



## OUR PARTNERS

Our work goes on with the support of funders, strategic partners and grantees, all working together to protect Sri Lanka's ecosystems

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

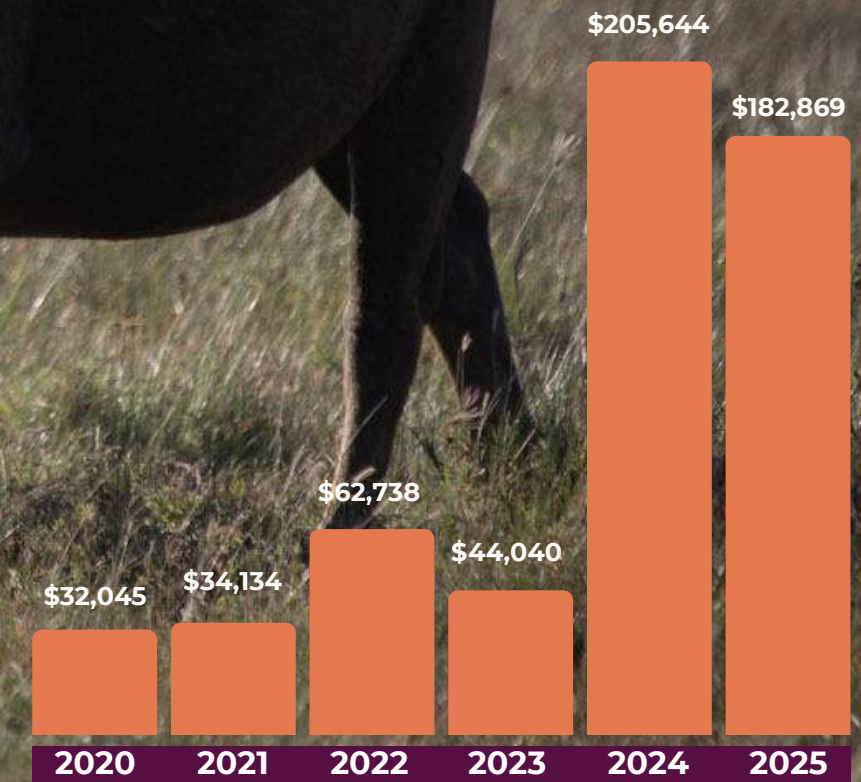
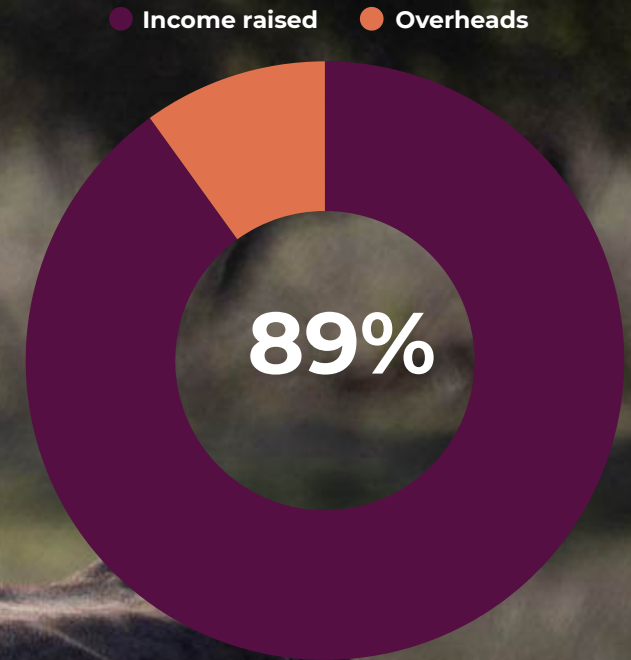
The LEF is hugely grateful to all of our supporters, both great and small; they are the lifeblood of our organisation and our work would quite simply be impossible without them. We ensure that the majority of funds go directly to grassroots projects and initiatives, making an immediate and positive impact across Sri Lanka.

## 2020-2025

AT A GLANCE



## INCOME: OVERHEADS RATIO 2025

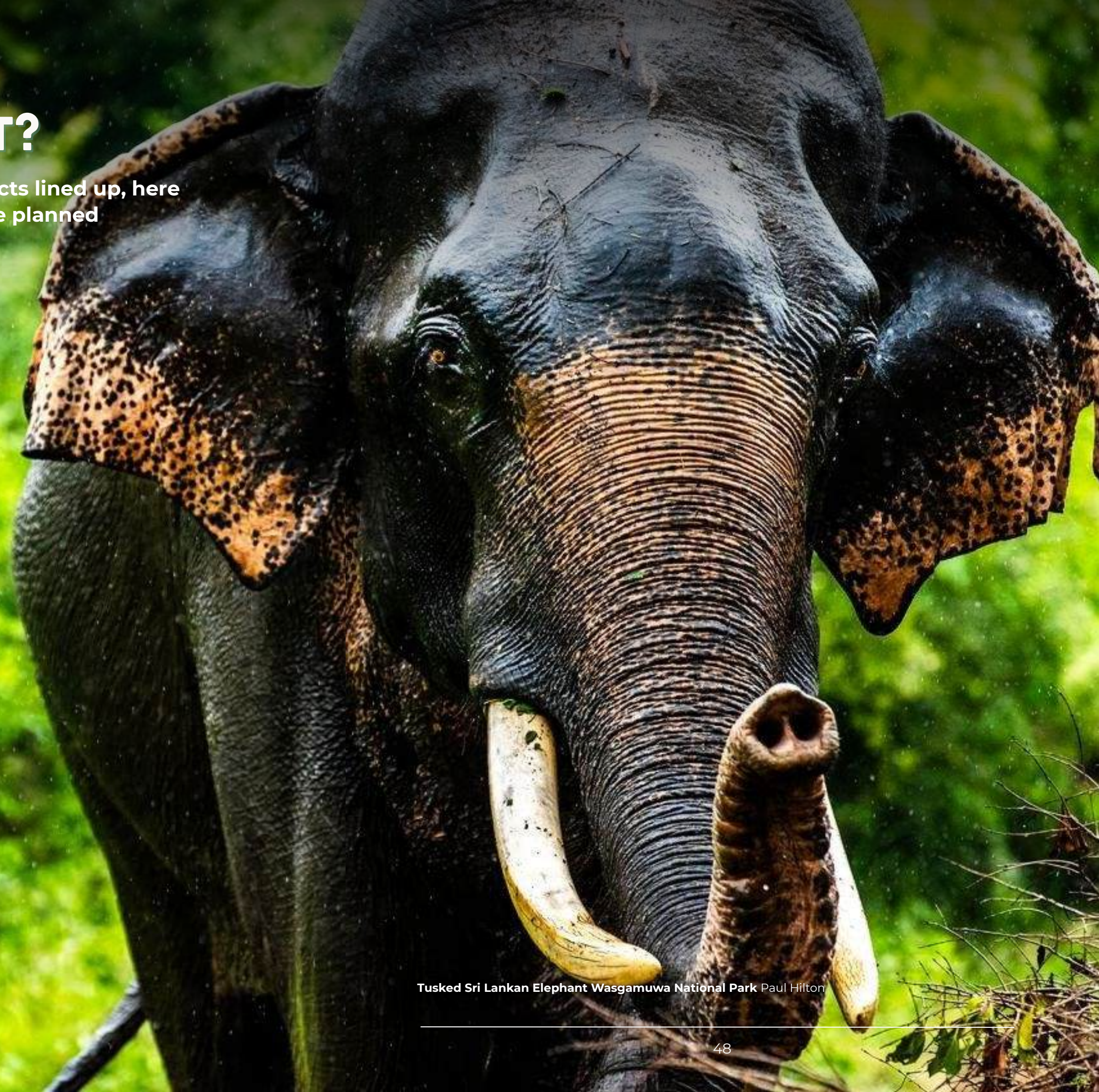


## TOTAL INCOME 2020-2025

Wild Buffalo, Kumana National Park Ananda Chanmugam

# WHAT'S NEXT?

2026 has a lot more new projects lined up, here is a glimpse into what we have planned



Tusked Sri Lankan Elephant Wasgamuwa National Park Paul Hilton



Scott Dunn

THE FOUNDATION FOR A GOOD LIFE

GOOD LIFE X



Gothutuwa Wetland Park Tashya de Mel

## HYACINTHESIS: Scoping Study & Accelerator for Circular Solutions in Sri Lanka

**Grantee:** The Foundation For A Good Life  
**Duration:** July 2025 - July 2028  
**Funding:** Scott Dunn X Conservation Collective partnership

Water hyacinth (WH), while invasive, presents significant potential to transform waterways and communities, with revenue streams estimated to contribute meaningfully to the betterment of livelihoods. Some of the success stories across the region are in handicrafts, furniture, biochar and compost, and paper products, such as biodegradable packaging that is predicted to grow into a USD 50 million industry by 2035.

Through a comprehensive scoping study to understand business opportunities and needs, policy landscapes and R&D case studies, the implementing partners are actively working on a data-driven strategy towards waterway restoration.

### THE PARTNERS

Foundation for a Good Life is an innovation and development catalyst, geared to build a new wave of life-enhancing initiatives in South Asia to catalyse a regenerative future.

The Federation for Environmental Organisations (FEO) has been working in partnership with the national body for conservation, the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) and local communities to actively restore critical habitats in 7 national parks across Sri Lanka.

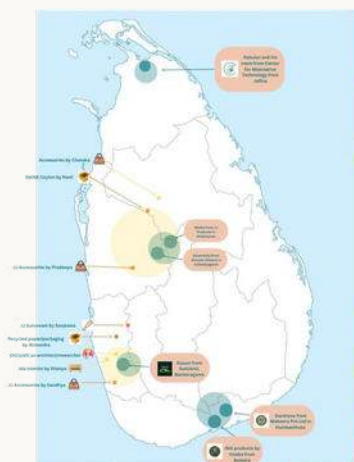
### WATER HYACINTH FACTS

ONE OF THE MOST INVASIVE PLANT IN THE WORLD

COVERAGE OF WATERBODIES IN SRI LANKA  
 ~45%

POTENTIAL TO CREATE A COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD

GLOBAL MARKET ACCESSIBILITY CAN INCREASE PROFITABILITY



Map of businesses working with natural fibres with an interest in working with Water Hyacinth found through scoping



A critically endangered Hog Deer, Honduwa Island, Benthotā Sakuna Gamage

## HOG DEER RESTORATION PROJECT

**Grantee:** WNPS PLANT and Geoffrey Bawa Trust  
**Duration:** December 2025 to December 2028  
**Funding:** \$14,151 via LEF

The Hog Deer (*Axis porcinus*) is a critically endangered species in Sri Lanka, once believed to be extinct until rediscovered only a few decades ago. These deer naturally inhabit riverine marshes, but the rapid loss of such ecosystems has forced them to adapt to cinnamon plantations, rice fields, and croplands, bringing them into closer contact with humans and increasing the risks they face. Today, they are found only in the Galle district, between the Bentota and Gin rivers.

This effort is proudly supported by LEF and co-funded by the Geoffrey Bawa Trust, reflecting a shared commitment to biodiversity conservation and ecological stewardship in Sri Lanka.

To safeguard the species, the Lunuganga Trust has launched the project “A Fighting Chance for the Critically Endangered Hog Deer” in collaboration with PLANT. The initiative combines ecosystem restoration on Honduwa Island with the creation of a new habitat on nearby Appaladuwa Island. Over the next three years, the Trust will remove invasive species, reintroduce native plants, and carry out ecological restoration to create sustainable habitats where hog deer can thrive. The objectives of the project include:

### Objectives

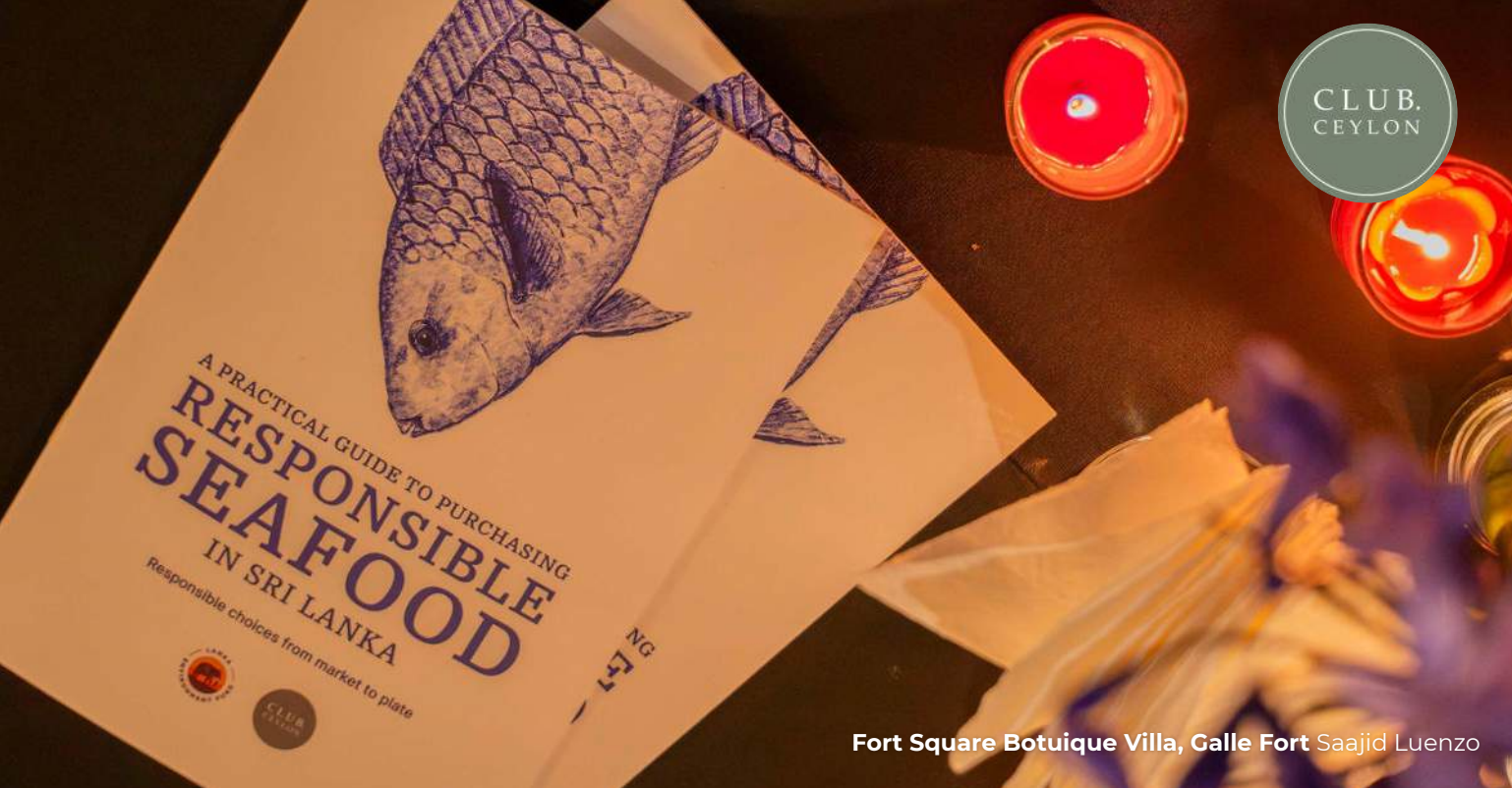
- Carrying out an ecological restoration programme focusing on the selective and strategic removal of between 750 to 1000 invasive trees and the planting of over 1875 saplings of native species.

- Conducting rapid biodiversity surveys on and around the island, including botanical and zoological surveys focusing on threatened or indicator taxa.
- Fencing off Appaladuwa from the mainland, to make it a secure location which can house the hog deer and work towards increasing population numbers of the hog deer.
- Engaging members of the local community, generating direct income for people from the Dedduwa area who assist to carry out invasive removal and planting.
- Restoring both terrestrial and mangrove ecosystems in the Dedduwa lake
- Leveraging existing relationships between the project partners and local universities/ research groups to maintain scientific monitoring of ecological interventions.

### THE PARTNERS



The Geoffrey Bawa Trust and WNPS PLANT have teamed up to deliver this collaborative project as their objectives as independent organisations align with the long-term focus of this project.



Fort Square Botuique Villa, Calle Fort Saajid Luenzo



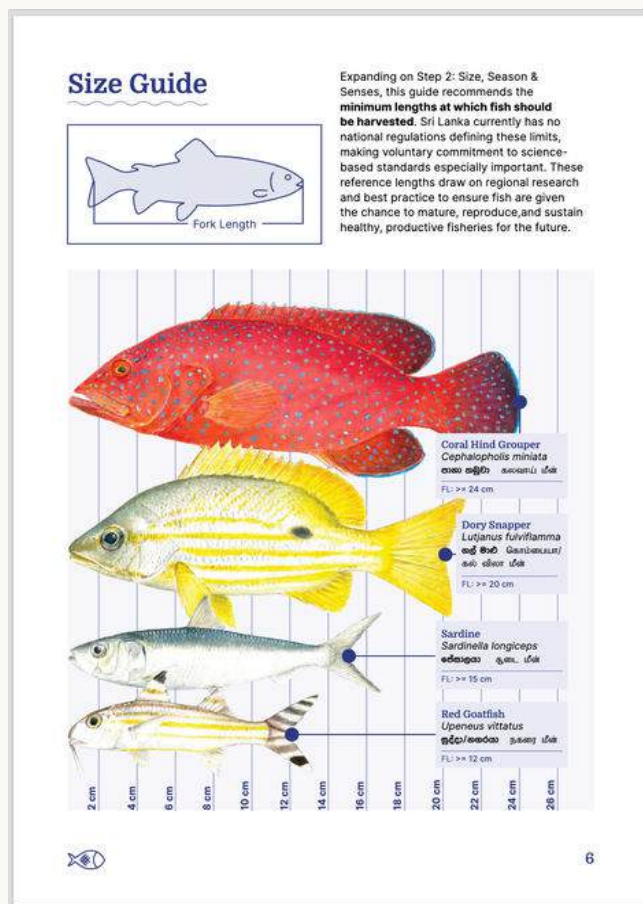
Female guides receiving their certification, Women in Travel Collective

## A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PURCHASING RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka's fisheries are fundamental to national food security, coastal livelihoods, and marine biodiversity. However, increasing fishing pressure, limited consumer awareness, and weak market signals have contributed to unsustainable harvesting of certain species. Addressing these challenges requires not only improved management at sea, but also more informed choices along the seafood supply chain, particularly at the point of purchase.

In 2026, the LEF will launch a handbook titled "A Practical Guide to Purchasing Sustainable Seafood in Sri Lanka" developed in partnership with Club Ceylon, to support responsible seafood purchasing across restaurants, markets, and households. The guide is designed as a practical decision-making tool that helps consumers and the hospitality sector understand how everyday purchasing choices can influence fishing practices and reduce pressure on overexploited species. The resource will be made available in Sinhala, Tamil, and English as an openly accessible public guide, ensuring broad reach across communities and sectors

By focusing on accessible, context-specific guidance, the initiative aims to normalise asking key questions about where seafood comes from, how it is sourced, and whether it aligns with sustainable fisheries principles. This demand-side approach complements regulatory and conservation efforts by using purchasing power as a lever for change.



A snapshot from the Guide showing recommended minimum size guidelines to support responsible seafood purchasing.

## FEMALE GUIDE ON THE PEKOE TRAIL TRAINING PROGRAM

**Grantee: Women in Travel Collective**  
**Duration: March 2026**  
**Funding: \$2876 via LEF**

In the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka stretches the Pekoe Trail, a 300 km long distance walking trail that blends breathtaking landscapes with the vibrant communities living along its path. More than a hike, it offers travellers the chance to discover both the natural environment and the culture of the local communities.

The Female Guide Training Program, created by the Women in Travel Collective (WITC) and led by experienced professionals in tourism and female empowerment, is a four-day program designed to empower 40 women from tea estate communities in Hatton, Ella, Nuwara Eliya, and Kandy. The program combines theoretical learning with practical trail guiding, safety and Red Cross training, and a visit to a tea factory to explore tea-making traditions and local heritage. Trainee female guides also learn about responsible travel practices, including minimising environmental impact, proper waste disposal, and respecting the flora and fauna along the trail, lessons that will later be shared with hikers, once the training has concluded.

The LEF is proud to support this initiative and the Women in Travel Collective by sponsoring essential gear, such as shoes, backpacks, and raincoats, ensuring trainee guides can safely and confidently operate on the trail.



A snapshot from the training of female guides along the Pekoe Trail.

The project's objectives include creating opportunities in tourism, contributing to women's financial independence and community well-being, promoting environmental stewardship by training guides to educate hikers on reducing plastic waste, respecting flora and fauna, and maintaining the trail, and fostering responsible tourism that benefits both the environment and local communities.

### THE PARTNER

The Women in Travel Collective aims to change women's lives by creating equal opportunities for women in Sri Lanka's Tourism sector.



Whaleshark Toby Matthews, Ocean Image Bank

## SHARKS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026

**Grantee:** Sharks International 2026  
**Duration:** 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2026  
**Funding:** \$ 5000 via LEF

We are proud to support Sharks International 2026, the world's leading conference on shark and ray research, which will be hosted in Sri Lanka for the first time. This also marks the first time the conference is being held in Asia, a region that is home to many of the world's most threatened elasmobranch species and some of the most complex marine conservation challenges.

Sharks International brings together a global community of scientists, conservation practitioners, educators, policymakers, and advocates to share research, foster collaboration, and shape the future of shark and ray conservation. Hosting the conference in Sri Lanka provides an important opportunity to centre regional perspectives and strengthen links between global science and local conservation priorities.

LEF's contribution will help subsidise 10 registrations for students from SAARC and other low-income countries, along with 10 registrations for national students, helping reduce barriers for early-career researchers and emerging marine conservation leaders to participate in an international scientific forum.



LEF Sponsorship Announcement for Sharks International 2026

In addition, LEF will co-host a practical capacity-building workshop titled "Driving Ocean Impact: A Practical Workshop for Fundraising for Marine Conservation" in partnership with the Manta Trust. The workshop is designed for practitioners working on shark and ray conservation, marine habitats, and coastal livelihoods, and will provide hands-on guidance on securing grants, engaging donors, and building partnerships to support measurable conservation outcomes. Through conference support and targeted skills-building, LEF aims to strengthen regional capacity and ensure conservation efforts are both scientifically grounded and financially sustainable.



# OUR TEAM



Daisy Honeybunn  
**Chair**



Vinod Malwatte  
**Executive Director**



Hafsa Jamel  
**Programmes Manager**



Mehak Sangani  
**Marine Programmes Manager**



Naduni Mallika Arachchi  
**Operations Manager**

## Steering Committee

Daisy Honeybunn (Chair) | Satish Selvanathan (Founding Chair) | Ben Goldsmith | Nirmal Madanayake | John Balmond | Chandan de Silva | Gabi Evioni | Pravin Mukhi | Vinod Hirdaramani | Jade Brudenell

## Advisory Board

Brita Stall, Smart Innovation Norway | Kendra Walsh, Conservation Collective

## OUR GLOBAL NETWORK



Lanka Environment Fund is a member of Conservation Collective, a global network of 20+ local foundations funding effective grass-roots conservation initiatives to protect the environment, restore nature and safeguard against climate change.

The environmental challenges facing our world can often feel daunting in their scale. Yet when people come together with a shared sense of purpose, ingenuity, and determination to protect nature, meaningful change becomes possible. At its best, conservation is a story of collaboration, optimism, and hope; people working together to protect the natural world and the communities who live within it.

Over the past year, we have continued to build on the strong foundations of our work, expanding both our partnerships and our capacity to deliver positive outcomes and lasting impact. This has included securing major new corporate partnerships, completing the initial stages of an innovative circular-economic initiative to tackle invasive alien species, working towards a comprehensive waste management solution for one of the island's administrative districts, and delivering a series of successful international fundraising events to help scale and support our work.

Alongside this, we produced and launched Sri Lanka's first Responsible Seafood Guide with one of the island's top chefs and leading advocates for the responsible use of seafood, funded new research into illegal whale tourism to help shape better tourism practices and mobilised funds to establish female-led native species plant nurseries that will help restore the island's montane and wet zone habitats, just a few examples of the wide-ranging work being delivered by our dedicated team at the LEF.

Come and join us and together, we can protect what matters most.

**DAISY HONEYBUNN**  
CHAIR OF LANKA ENVIRONMENT FUND

Malabar Pied Hornbills, Kumana National Park Daisy Honeybunn

# THANK YOU

to all our donors and supporters.  
We couldn't have done it  
without your generous support.



## FOLLOW US

 @lanka environment fund

 @lanka.environment.fund

 lankaenvironmentfund.org

 operations@lankaenvironmentfund.org

The Lanka Environment Fund is a charity registered in Sri Lanka (GA 00213160) and an affiliate of the Conservation Collective, a charity registered in England and Wales, charity number 1185925.