



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

GLOBAL NATURE FUND (GNF)
International Foundation for
Environment and Nature

13 **COMPANIES AND STANDARDS ORGANISATIONS**

in the food sector, environmental organisations and others founded the “Food for Biodiversity” association, initiated by the GNF, on the 3rd of March 2021, the World Wildlife Day. Amongst them are sector leaders such as the REWE Group, Kaufland and Lidl.

2,330 **KILOMETRES**

is the stretch completed in training by the German Eight rowing team in the lead up to the Olympic games in Tokyo, thereby ensuring a donation for the GNF of the same number in Euros provided by Wilo SE, the main sponsor of the German rowing flagship and supporter of our Living Lakes Germany Network.

100,000 
MANGROVE SEEDLINGS

were raised by the partners in the SAIME project („Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems“) in five nurseries in India and Bangladesh by June 2021 and subsequently planted on the approximately 50 project farms.

30 **PRESS RELEASES**

were published by the GNF throughout the time covered in this report. Additionally, 1,045 posts on social media resulted in 1,250 new followers for our profiles.

10,421 
LIKES

were given to the GNF social media posts in January 2021 on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, where FUMS, a magazine for football and humour, announced their match day donation for the GNF. Bets on events in the Bundesliga not only meant a lot of attention online for our work but also resulted in an income of 500 Euros.

28 
COUNTRIES

The number of countries in which the GNF carried out projects throughout the past year. Ten of these are in Europe, seven in Africa, six are in Asia, four in Central America and one in South America.

400,000 **EUROS IN DONATIONS**

is the total amount reached by the “Drinking Cups for Drinking Water” initiative in March 2021. This sum goes towards the GNF drinking water projects in Africa. Normally, volunteers of this initiative collect the deposit for drinking cups from the attendees of Hannover 96 football home games. It is remarkable that this success happened during the Corona lockdown which made it impossible for fans to enjoy this amazing pastime in the stadium.

113 **LAKES AND WETLANDS**

are part of our global Living Lakes Network. The GNF coordinates the work of the network and can count on the support of 138 partner organisations in aquatic conservation projects across the globe.



Dear friends of the Global Nature Fund,

There are no more so-called white spots on the maps of our planet Earth. Even polar regions, tropical rainforests and deserts are changed by “modern humans”. For a long while, the wild natural environment was perceived by Homo sapiens as rather eerie, dangerous or even hostile. Nowadays, the power balance seems to have drastically changed. Research and technology have made it possible for humans to have control over the natural environment.

However, the conquest and transformation of nature is increasingly leading to contradictions. On the one hand, economic growth and technological progress provide shelter, food and security to an increasing number of people on earth. On the other hand, the greatest threats to our society in the 21st century are man-made; climate change, dwindling clean water, species extinction and military conflicts are now the biggest issues.

This may sound like the usual warning of so-called eco-pessimists. However, more and more scientists concur to the conclusion, that the planetary situation is very serious due to a worsening ecological crisis. Nevertheless, a sufficiency strategy aimed at less consumption unfortunately still lacks enough support or it is dismissed as unrealistic or unrealizable. The fairy tale of eternal growth of the social market economy and the belief in technical progress are almost irrefutable.

Since the publication of the Club of Rome (“The Limits to Growth”, 1972) and the “World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity” (1992) however, there has fortunately also been some development. The messages of the environmental movement of the 1980s and 1990s have finally reached mainstream society. Every serious political party addresses climate change mitigation and intergenerational justice in their program. At the same time, it can be observed that while the ecological movement has matured, its protagonists have aged. Therefore, one urgent task is to mobilize young people to get involved in environmental institutions, associations or movements – such as Fridays for Future.

The projects of Global Nature Fund are generally based on four main pillars: aquatic conservation, climate change mitigation, protection of biodiversity and involvement of the local population, especially the young generation. Unfortunately, a strong participation of young people in essential political decisions about our future is still clearly lacking – especially on a global level. However, creative and motivated young people in particular are vital for the future of our society. That is why the GNF is currently devoting particular attention to this fourth pillar.

Support us in this!

Best



Udo Gattenlöhner
Executive Director

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In the Living Lakes Network we are associated with 113 partner lakes and wetlands all over the world. Learn more:



www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes

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Living Lakes & Water

“We Save the Lakes of the World” is the mission of the global Living Lakes Network since its launch in 1998. This partnership of organisations based at lakes and wetlands is committed to the protection of aquatic ecosystems. The unique pledge is to respect our blue planet and do everything to guarantee the continued existence of water bodies as a basis for human life.

The majestic Lago de Atitlán, Guatemala, with its namesake volcano in the background. Our “Threatened Lake of the Year 2009” is one of many examples highlighting the beauty of endangered inland waters worldwide – and the need to preserve them.

LIVING LAKES 2030: OUTLOOKS FOR HEALTHY WATER BODIES GLOBALLY

Dr Thomas Schaefer

Living Lakes Biodiversity and Climate Programme – well prepared for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

A six months long preparation phase in 2021 marked the start of a GNF project that until 2027 will substantially contribute to the preservation and restoration of lakes and wetlands through a Living Lakes Biodiversity and Climate Programme (LLBCP). A wide range of measures under the project, promote the protection of biodiversity and preserve essential ecosystem services such as water and food for people living near lakes. The focus will be on capacity building in ten countries around the world. The global reach of the project will improve understanding of lakes and wetlands as valuable habitats worldwide. In addition, together with our on-site partners, we will try to influence policies for lake protection at different levels of government. Eleven Living Lakes partner organisations from India, Cambodia, Colombia, Malawi, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and South Africa are participating in the project. During the preparation phase, the relevant ministries in these countries, the national Ramsar contact points for wetland protection and the German embassies have already been intensively involved in the planning.

By promoting traditional sustainable cultivation techniques, the GNF is supporting the local population around Lake Malawi in securing their livelihoods.



Alarming facts on the state of wetlands

Freshwater ecosystems are crucial for biodiversity on our planet. Lakes and other wetlands are important carbon sinks and provide a wide range of other ecosystem services. Despite national legislation and international conservation conventions, over 50 percent of global wetlands have been lost over the past 100 years and at an alarming rate. Since 2000, this process has accelerated even more.

The current IPBES (International Panel of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) report has confirmed the dramatic loss of species and ecosystems. 85 percent of our wetlands have already been lost or are degraded. The loss of wetlands is therefore progressing even more rapidly than that of forest ecosystems, yet much less recognised. Lakes and wetlands are hotspots of biodiversity and they are con-

nected to surrounding landscapes via rivers and groundwater systems. Aquatic ecosystems are directly related to biodiversity and the conditions of surrounding grassland, savanna, and forest ecosystems. When these habitats are degraded, it is not only biodiversity that is getting lost. Immense amounts of CO₂ enter the atmosphere and accelerate climate change.

What do we want to achieve?

1. Concrete measures – innovative approaches to the restoration of lakes and wetlands and the reduction of negative impacts

A total of 20 innovative solutions such as sustainable cultivation of rice in the Philippines, the promotion of traditional cultivation practices in the three African project countries, and the world's highest plant-based wastewater treatment plant on Lake Titicaca will contribute directly to wetland conservation. At the same time, we are also creating models for the protection of biodiversity that are generally applicable. We are implementing the measures of our Living Lakes project in ten countries, in addition to so-called 'replication measures' in ten further lake regions, which will be selected in the course of the project.

2. Transfer of knowledge and technologie

South-South Cooperation is a new key word. In the Living Lakes Network, we will bring this approach to life in the coming years. Regular seminars, workshops, field visits and international conferences provide and disseminate solutions for global lake management and sustainable use of resources. The project partners offer a wide range of knowledge and experience which we will use to organize and ensure the involvement of further experts from national and international public institutions, NGOs and science.

We are applying similar approaches within the LLBCP in the participating countries. Stakeholders from agriculture, fisheries and other sectors are informed on the impacts and potential current and future consequences of unsustainable economic activities. Using participatory approaches, we will



At Lake Titicaca, bordered by both Bolivia and Peru, the worldwide highest plant-based wastewater treatment plant will be created with assistance from the GNF.

endeavour to strengthen the acceptance of project measures and objectives among the local communities and raise awareness of solutions to protect the indispensable services provided by wetlands.

3. Focus on the next generation of lake managers

The LLBCP will specifically focus on the education and training of young people. We have made an agreement with the Environmental Campus Birkenfeld, Germany, to regularly let students of the new "NGO Management Course" participate in the project. We are also setting up a Living Lakes Academy to train young people from public institutions and NGOs in nature conservation and environmental protection. This is the implementation of an idea that was first introduced at the 2008 Living Lakes conference at Lake Poyang in China. A training program aimed at young environmental leaders in different countries will enable these people and other young activists located at lakes and wetlands to gain new experience and knowledge that will advance the development of environmental and conservation organizations.

4. Lobbying for better legislation, management plans and their implementation

Even the best conservation measures cannot succeed without political support. The project therefore creates a network with other international initiatives to influence administrations and governments to participate effectively in the protection of lakes and wetlands. The partners provide information and project results on effective wetland management on a digital exchange platform. Continental Living Lakes networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America support the regional implementation of the strategies. The activities form a worldwide campaign for the protection of lakes and wetlands in order to preserve these unique habitats around the globe.



Dr Thomas Schaefer

is a biologist, sustainability manager and has been actively involved in nature conservation for 36 years. As the head of the "Living Lakes & Water" and "Nature Conservation" departments at the GNF, he is particularly committed to Living Lakes in Germany and worldwide.

FLASH LIGHT STUDY “BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN GERMAN LAKES”

Dr Thomas Schaefer

It is relatively easy to observe biodiversity on and around water bodies. A trained eye may realise quickly if and how many birds, dragonflies or plant species are present at lakes, rivers or wetlands. The biodiversity below the water surface is interesting as well. Many of us have already learnt about the concept of food webs in lakes in biology classes at school. Phyto- and zooplankton, insect larvae and other small organisms, snails and mussels, fish but also plants such as stonewort live in the water and are part of a complex web of feeding relationships and other dependencies.

on non-biotic factors that do not involve living organisms and how the increase in temperature will affect underwater food webs.

Supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, GNF evaluated information and analyses from all over Germany and beyond in the flash light study “Biodiversity and Climate Change in German Lakes” and conducted interviews with many experts. The results are heterogeneous. Lakes in Germany are very diverse and the effects of climate warming depend too much on whether a lake is deep or shallow, whether there are extensive shallow water zones or steep shores, and whether there is seasonal tem-

With the help of such measuring kits, committed citizens have been recording visibility depths as an indicator of water turbidity and algae development at numerous lakes in Holstein Switzerland, Germany, for more than thirty years as part of the lake monitoring program. This data is invaluable for climate scientists.

e.g. from mapping to determine biological quality under the EU Water Framework Directive before we can predict what effects climate change will have on aquatic animals and plants. However, what is already clear today is that the relationships are complex and predictions difficult. Alarmingly, hardly anyone from the interviewed group of experts expects positive effects. It is important that we at GNF show through our project works that there are (for now!) still pathways to halt this downward spiral. But, we do need to identify these actions quickly and then follow them resolutely.



www.globalnature.org/en/flash-light-study-lakes-and-climate-change

This biodiversity is already suffering, as many studies have proven. The food webs are dependent on characteristics of lakes. Temperature, nutrient concentrations, pressures due to effluent discharges and so-called thermal stratification are important factors. The effects of climate change are obvious: the water is generally getting warmer. However, we still know too little about what effects this has

perature stratification. What is certain, however, is that changes are already visible and measurable today, including changes in biodiversity that we do not fully understand so far, but which are alarming.

It is still too early to draw a conclusion on what impact climate change will have on underwater biodiversity. We will have to wait for further research and results,

NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN FLAMES – The Pantanal is “Threatened Lake of the Year 2021”

Bettina Schmidt

It is a sad record: The Pantanal in Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia is the first wetland to be nominated as “Threatened Lake of the Year” for the second time by the Global Nature Fund and the Living Lakes Network. After one of the most severe droughts of the past sixty years in the Brazilian summer from December 2019 to March 2020, dramatic fires over the following months destroyed about one third of the total area of the largest inland wetland on earth.

It is not unusual that fires occasionally occur in the Pantanal. Unfortunately, it is also a common practice for farmers to clear cultivated areas by fire. However, these fires are increasingly spreading to natural areas. Experts agree that a large pro-

portion of the devastating fires in 2020 were caused by arson to open up new agricultural land. Livestock, sugarcane and soybean farming are booming in Brazil – fuelled by huge overseas demand and pushed by the government of President Jair Bolsonaro, whose economic policies systematically undermine Brazilian and international conservation and environmental laws. To preserve what is left of the UNESCO World Heritage Site with its unique biodiversity, a rethink and decisive action is needed by the people on the ground, but also in North America and Europe – where the primary consumers of these products live.

For the long-term preservation of the Pantanal’s natural land-



scape, environmental protection laws in Brazil must be enhanced, existing regulatory measures must be better implemented, and violations must be punished more consistently. In addition, more information is required in North America and Europe about the fact that we all contribute massively to the use of non-sustainable production methods in South America with our consumption and dietary choices. For example, three-quarters of the world’s soy is used as feed to produce hamburgers, sausages and cheap cutlets. Additionally, almost all of the feed soy in Germany and the EU comes from South America.

Wetland inferno: In order to stop the destruction of the Pantanal, strong commitment by the local population is necessary, as is a rethink in Europe.



www.globalnature.org/en/living-lakes/threatened-lake-2021

PRESENTING CERTIFICATES ONLINE – The Lakes of Holstein Switzerland are “Living Lakes 2020/2021”

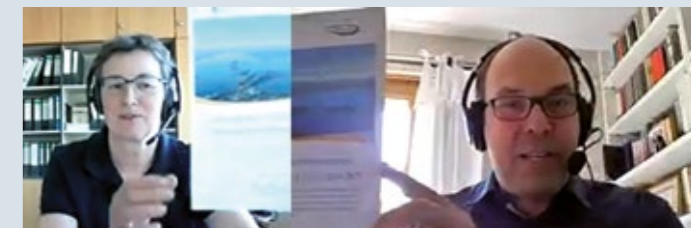
Bettina Schmidt

The partner organisations of the Living Lakes Network Germany would have liked to all meet at the beautiful Lake Plön for an official ceremony to nominate the “Living Lakes 2020/2021”. However, as in-person events in 2021 were still not possible due to Corona, Dr Thomas Schaefer presented the certificate for the lakes of Holstein Switzerland virtually to Hanna Kirschnick-Schmidt, managing director of the “Wasser Otter Mensch” association.

The virtual award ceremony was the start of an online seminar series as part of the Living Lakes Network Germany, which highlighted exciting topics and show-

cased projects for the protection of lakes and wetlands throughout the seasons of 2021. In June, the focus was on the current population development of the otter in Holstein Switzerland. In autumn we took a closer look at the topics of microplastics and nutrient retention in the area. In winter the topics of biodiversity & climate change in lakes were on the agenda.

This work within the network is supported by the Wilo-Foundation. We are also very grateful that the athletes from the German Eight rowing team are ambassadors for the Living Lakes Network Germany.



Dr Thomas Schaefer (right) presenting the award certificate for “Living Lakes 2020/2021” virtually to Hanna Kirschnick-Schmidt from Wasser Otter Mensch e.V.



German Website: www.globalnature.org/de/lebendige-seen-2020



Bettina Schmidt

holds a diploma in Biology and coordinates the Living Lakes Network, while also working as a project manager in the “Living Lakes” and “Nature Conservation” departments at the GNF.

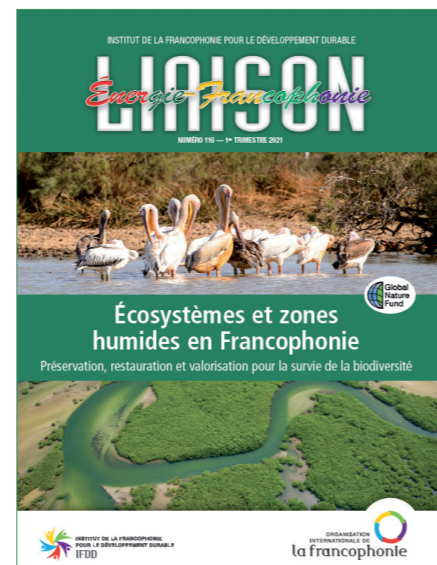
LIVING LAKES AND THE FRANCOPHONIE ON EFFECTIVE GLOBAL CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS

Dr Thomas Schaefer und David Marchetti

In order to effectively implement projects in the Living Lakes Network, a common language is vital. In Commonwealth countries and in Latin America this is hardly a problem. However, out of 113 Living Lakes partners, 22 are part of the Francophonie, the international association of French speaking countries and territories. This includes West African states, where the high population growth means that sustainable development is challenging. Lakes and wetlands here are particularly under pressure and are threatened habitats due to overuse and pollution.

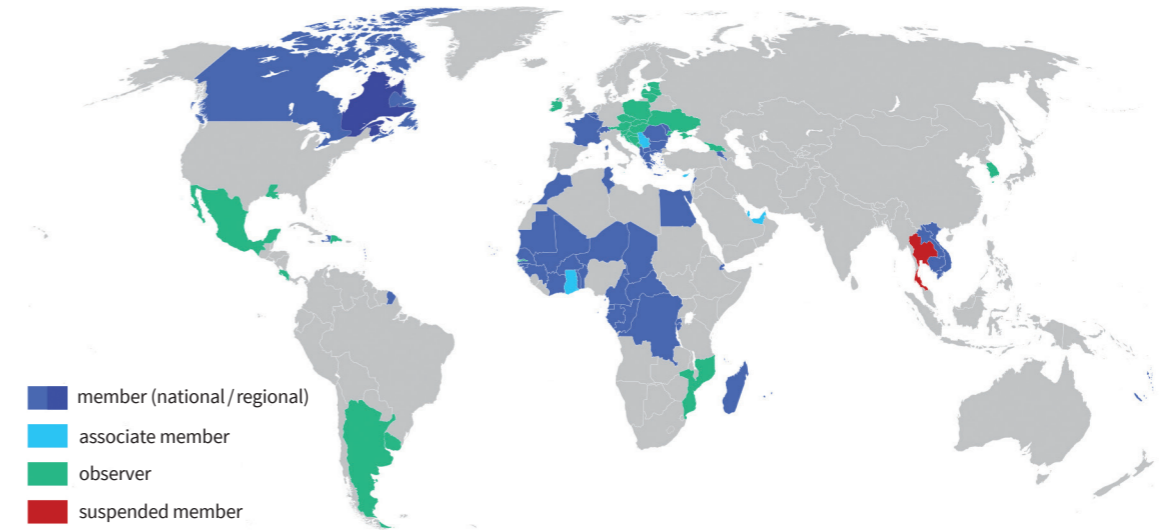
Documents in French – for a significant proportion of the world

This is enough reason for the GNF to address the francophone world better. Together with the Francophonie Institute for Sustainable Development (Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable, IFDD) we have released a publication. In the special issue of the IFDD series “Liaison Énergie-Francophonie” with the title “Écosystèmes et zones humides en Francophonie” with the title “Écosystèmes et zones humides en Francophonie – Préservation, restauration et valorisation pour la survie de la biodiversité”, six Living Lakes partner organisations presented their work. In charge of editing were the Canadian Anne Lévesque and Paul Judex Edouarzin from Haiti. The special issue is divided into four parts: important ecosystems, the role of wetlands, challenges for the Francophonie, and initiatives for the protection of wetlands.



Innovative and informative partner work: The joint publication by IFDD and the Global Nature Fund on ecosystems and wetlands in the French-speaking world.

Wetlands, lakes, rivers, sub-surface groundwater, swamps, moors, estuaries, deltas, tidal zones, mangroves and man-made constructions such as fish ponds, rice fields, reservoirs and saltmarshes are amongst the wide variety of aquatic ecosystems that provide huge benefits for the entire human population on a daily basis. They are the breeding ground for biodiversity and provide local people with water and fish. The food security of hundreds of millions of people depends on them – a vivid example of indispensable ecosystem services. Wetlands also serve as buffers against the growing risks of increasing natural disasters such as flooding. Moreover, thanks to their enormous carbon storage capacity, they are invaluable for climate change mitigation.



The map of global Francophonie members clearly shows how important it is to include this significant language zone, if international efforts for environmental protection and wetland conservation are to be successful.

Working together to conserve habitats that are close to collapsing

The importance of wetlands in the francophone world is summarized by the articles in the issue. They also emphasize the threats to which wetlands are increasingly exposed. In French-speaking countries, as elsewhere, the situation of many aquatic habitats is precarious. It is part of an alarming global phenomenon highlighted by the Ramsar Convention in its 2018 report on the state of wetlands. Since, as already mentioned, 85 percent of the world's former wetlands have already been destroyed, valuable animal and plant species that depend on the unique habitats are also dying out along with these habitats. Sooner or later, we as humans will also suffer from this self-inflicted loss.

From Mexico to Madagascar, through Haiti, Canada, Djibouti, Senegal, Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, the authors of the IFDD publication advocate for a reversal of the trend and promote the building of alliances and working for transboundary agreements. Experts from these countries share their research findings, which paint an accurate and uncompromising picture of the state of wet-

lands, but also encourage political and citizen action for their conservation and restoration. It is essential that important organisations involved in the conservation of wetlands, such as the Global Nature Fund, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the MAVA Foundation share their analyses and testimonies on these valuable habitats and join forces to turn the tide.



www.ifdd.francophonie.org/publications/liaison-energie-francophonie-ecosystemes-et-zones-humides-en-francophonie-preservation-restauration-et-valorisation-pour-la-survie-de-la-biodiversite

The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) represents one of the largest language zones in the world. 54 members, 7 associate members, and 27 observers account for more than one third of the member states of the United Nations. The IFDD was established as a sub-organization of the OIF to initiate and support capacity-building initiatives that promote partnerships in energy and environment. It publishes the quarterly journal *Liaison Énergie-Francophonie*.

The publication has particular traction thanks to prominent contributions by Martha Rojas Urrego (Secretary General of the Ramsar Secretariat), Bruno Oberle (IUCN Director General) and André Hoffmann (President of the MAVA Foundation). In the publication, the authors emphasize the great importance of lakes and wetlands worldwide – in contrast to the disregard that they unfortunately still too often experience in Germany, Europe and beyond.



David Marchetti

joined GNF in 2019 to advance our work as a project manager in the areas of Nature Conservation and Living Lakes & Water.

Sustainable Development

Environmental protection does not work without an understanding of the people that share habitats with other organisms and use the natural resources. We can only find a path to a more environmentally conscious future if we have a keen eye for the needs of our fellow humans; a fact that is particularly relevant in our sustainable development & development cooperation work where we find collaborative solutions for a more sustainable life all around the world.



An employee of a tree nursery providing refreshment to delicate mangrove saplings. This afforestation effort is part of SAIME, the GNF project for more sustainable shrimp aquaculture.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION & THE PANDEMIC

Udo Gattenlöhner

We had very much hoped that we would no longer have to talk about the pandemic in our current Annual Report. Unfortunately, it is still prevalent in 2021 and it is still massively restricting our society and people in every country across the world. These restrictions are also affecting projects of the GNF that involve partner organisations in the global South. This applies to our partner NEWS in India, as well as the Fundación Humedales in Colombia and ACADIR in Angola. We have discovered that developing countries in particular are struggling with this additional challenge, and the people in these countries are suffering greatly.

In addition to the problems which many developing nations unfortunately already face, e.g. poverty, hunger and insufficient health care, further pressure now comes from the effects of climate change and the long lasting pandemic. This particularly affects the poorest population of these countries, for whom even basic needs such as food,

clean water or health often represent luxury goods. Densely populated countries such as India and Bangladesh were strongly impacted by the pandemic. Although more sparsely populated countries such as Botswana or Mongolia initially experienced lower rates of infection, the global effects of the pandemic have significantly affected the people in these countries – and new sources of income, e.g. ecotourism, have completely ceased.

We are in close contact with our project partner organisations and carry out continuous risk assessments in order to adapt the planning of joint projects to changing conditions. We receive news from our partners all across the world regarding the situation in light of the pandemic. Their view on what is happening must be part of an annual activity report from the second year of COVID-19, which is thus not only a recap of our work in nature conservation over the past year, but also a document of a historical time full of challenges.



Maksudur Rahman, Chief Executive of Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS) informed us:

“COVID-19 has put massive pressure and stress on the people in Bangladesh and has highly impacted our economy. Access to essential products such as food and medicine, has become more difficult, particularly for the poorer people. However, we stay optimistic as we have also perceived that COVID-19 gave BEDS a great scope of learning of how valuable and important global partnerships are for our future.”



Thato Morule, Chief Executive Officer of the Kalahari Conservation Society, a non-profit NGO in Botswana, tries to see positive aspects in spite of the challenges:

“We have learned from the crisis that effective management of projects and partnership with international organisations is crucial. And it helps a lot to know that you are not alone.”



Julia Pérez Sillero from Fundación Humedales in Colombia:

“We have established intensive and regular communication with all our project partners, but even this could not prevent significant delays in our work. In some areas, insecurity has increased as many economic activities have come to a standstill. There is a strong ‘informal’ economy in Colombia and rural communities have received little aid or subsidies. But as an organisation we have learned to better deal with unpredictable situations. And it was good to see that the team responded flexibly and professionally.”



Together with project partners like the Fundación Humedales, the GNF has been in action all across the globe to benefit the environment and people. This is a snapshot from our efforts to establish sustainable fisheries management at the Río Magdalena, Colombia.



In the Kubango-Okavango district, one of the poorest regions in Angola, we are supporting pilot projects for organic farming. This benefits the local community and other inhabitants of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Okavango delta, amongst them the elephants that are shown on the title page of this activity report.

The GNF and partners have remained operational. However, the prolonged restrictions of the Corona crisis, which were difficult to plan for, led to noticeable organisational and financial issues. With regards to our projects, this has meant a significantly longer time investment, as well as additional duties in planning, communication and project management. All of this has financial consequences for the responsible organisation. However, it is not only in terms of costs, but also in terms of income, e.g. from donations and public subsidies that we are seeing significant losses due to the crisis.

The reflex is understandable and completely natural; in times of crisis, we keep together what we have to get us and our loved ones through the difficult times. However, there is also a counter-

reflex, a reaction to big challenges, a different bond that we want to appeal to: let us share with each other what we have. Let us make sure no one gets left behind, particularly not the vulnerable and those that care for them.

Please support us with your donation:



www.globalnature.org/en/donations

Let us be there for each other and hopefully the pandemic will soon cease to impact global development cooperation, so it will not need to be part of our Annual Report 2022.



Udo Gattenlöhner is an agricultural scientist and has been working with the GNF since 1999 and since 2001 as Executive Director. He coordinates various projects for sustainable development in the global South.



A large family of Asian elephants in their natural habitat.

THE ELEPHANT DILEMMA

Thies Geertz und
Laura Maeso Velasco

The habitat of Asian elephants is becoming increasingly small. The construction of infrastructure, the expansion of settlements and agricultural fields are reasons for the increasing conflicts between the large mammals and the rural population, leading to great losses on both sides.

Habitat for elephants has become sparse

With the support of the Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU) e.V. and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), GNF is working on measures to diffuse land use conflicts between people and elephants in the border region between Nepal and India. On their prowls, the large animals repeatedly come close to settlements and wreak havoc on the fields of the already very poor rural population.

Ramesh Kumar Thapa, elephant expert with the Nepalese GNF partner organisation Bright Nepal, explains that elephants roam close to cultivated areas and settlements near the forest, particularly during harvest time. He further states that the cause is the loss of habitat and that only a few decades ago, there were large, connected woodlands in the Nepalese Terai lowlands. According to Thapa much of this has now been cleared for acres and settlements and people are encroaching more and more into the elephants' habitat. The competition for habitat regularly claims the lives of villagers, who are sometimes surprised by the herds at night and trampled when trying to drive away the large animals. Conversely, those affected kill elephants in retaliation and thus spark a continuous bloodletting of the Asian elephant population in the Nepalese lowlands, which already consists of no more than 150 animals.

Government programs are not enough

There is a government compensation program for damage to life and limb. According to Thapa, however, the bureaucratic hurdles are just too high for the villagers that often belong to the marginalised indigenous Tharu community. As the animals constantly traverse the border between India and Nepal, responsibility is often passed over to the other country in light of the lack of protective measures. Thapa further states: "Here, it is apparently Indian elephants that are destroying the harvest in border villages in Nepal, there it is presumably Nepalese elephants that are wreaking havoc on the clay houses in border villages in India. In practice, there is a lack in communication and exchange between the responsible bodies in India and Nepal, e.g. between the respective forest authorities. This unfortunate situation is the consequence of a structural problem that we want to solve with a cross-border initiative."

Ramesh Kumar Thapa is sure that he can reach this goal together with the GNF. The partners of the project have indeed set some ambitious goals for themselves. Within two years,

they want to reduce the number of violent encounters by 75 percent. This requires the use of innovative protective measures, the exchange of information on the movement patterns of elephant herds, and effective coordination of measures across state borders. For this purpose, new elephant conservation groups are continuously forming with the participation of the population on the Indian and Nepalese side, while representatives of protected area and forest authorities are engaging in ongoing dialogues. Ajanta Dey, project manager of the GNF partner organisation Nature Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS) in India, explains that such an exchange between India and Nepal regarding this issue used to only happen every two years, which of course is much too infrequent. The conditions are actually good, as the governments of India and Nepal signed a bilateral agreement on species conservation just two years ago. The task is now to back up this agreement with concrete measures for cross-border elephant conservation.

Together with the forest authorities, the newly established elephant conservation groups are assessing the movement patterns of the elephants, identify-

ing hotspots of conflict and coordinating measures of defence. At the same time, experts are assessing the effectiveness of individual measures, which include archaic practices such as digging trenches and burning chilli pods or fireworks, and making suggestions for the implementation of new methods. Dey explains that they are, for example, currently working on a novel data protected early warning system in order to reduce the risk of encounters with elephants. According to Dey, villagers can benefit from this system by being alerted through their mobile phone or a siren about an approaching herd of elephants and thereby gain even just a small head start of a few crucial minutes ahead of the elephants.

Is there a happy ending for elephants and humans in the Terai lowlands?

Much depends on how effectively the damage caused by elephants can be avoided. Ramesh Kumar Thapa: "Experience has taught us that peaceful coexistence between elephants and humans is possible. Ensuring wildlife corridors for elephant



One of the newly founded elephant conservation groups (in Nepali: Hatti Mero Sathi).



www.globalnature.org/en/elephants-himalaya



Thies Geertz

is a biologist and project manager at the GNF, working on integrated community development in various countries, where the consequences of climate change are already being felt.



Laura Maeso Velasco

is an environmental scientist and has been part of the GNF since 2017. She is working on the topics of drinking water, water treatment, as well as protecting biodiversity.

MANGROVE FORESTS PROTECT COASTS, HUMANS AND THE CLIMATE

Ralph Dejas

The catastrophic effects of the tsunami in December 2004 dramatically showed the world how fragile coastal regions are. In May 2021, when India was hit by two typhoons within only a couple of days, more than two million people in West Bengal and in the East Indian province of Odisha had to flee to emergency shelters. Within only a few hours, they lost all of their belongings.

The destruction of mangrove forests and coral reefs, improper use of natural resources, urbanisation and irresponsible types of tourism enhance the negative impacts of global warming which already can be clearly felt in Southeast Asia. These mangrove ecosystems, however, are incredibly important as they provide shelter and breeding grounds for a myriad of fish and crab species, stabilise large amounts of sediment and thereby protect people living at the coast and further inland from erosion, tropical cyclones and storm surges. They are also an important tool against climate change as healthy mangrove forests store up to 1,000 tons of carbon per hectare, which is more than any other forest.

Mangroves along the Sundarban (Bengali for “beautiful forest”) coast in the largest connected mangrove forest on Earth stretching from East India to Bangladesh.



SAIME – A project for healthy mangroves and more sustainable aquaculture

Much of the worldwide decline of mangroves in tropical coastal regions has to do with the increased consumption of shrimp. The production of shrimp requires large-scale deforestation and more than a third of all mangrove forests along tropical coasts has been lost since the 1980s. Unfortunately, the local population often does not get to share in the profits of the large aquaculture companies. As a result, we have been using the Integrated Mangrove Aquaculture (IMA) approach in our project SAIME (Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems) since 2019. In collaboration with our local partners BEDS in Ban-

gladesh and NEWS in India, we have launched a comprehensive afforestation program in the Sundarbans, the biggest mangrove forest on Earth.

As part of the project, SAIME volunteers have already raised more than 100,000 mangrove seedlings in 5 tree nurseries and planted them in the approximately 50 IMA pilot farms. As a project partner, Naturland e.V. is bringing in aquaculture expertise. SAIME also promotes smallholder cooperatives and has established a North-South dialogue with the source of the demand, in order to create awareness of production methods in Europe. The close knowledge exchange with the newly founded “Food for Biodiversity” initiative and the food sector in Germany are also an important contributor to the overall aim.

INTERVIEW

Dr Stefan Holler, Naturland e.V., interviewed by GNF project manager Ralph Dejas



Dr Stefan Holler has been working as an aquaculture expert at Naturland e.V. since 2007.

“In many countries, smallholder aquaculture is an important source of income, which is also true for the shrimp production in Asia. Protecting mangroves is a hugely important aspect of environmentally friendly shrimp production and is why we are promoting this protection in the SAIME project. We are recommending that customers in supermarkets only purchase products from organic aquaculture or sustainable fishery.”

Naturland is one of the biggest organic farming associations in Germany and also operates on an international level. How has Naturland developed over the past decades and where are its core competencies?

Naturland was founded in 1982 by 10 environmental pioneers. Today, more than 100,000 farmers in 60 countries across the globe are operating based on our guidelines. Those are the numbers. Regarding your question about our competencies, when it comes to organic farming, Naturland has diversified repeatedly and carried out pioneering work in the social sector, organic fair trade, or currently in the hot topic of organic insect cultivation. The first guidelines for organic aquaculture which were developed by Naturland in 1996 as a response to the drastic situations at fish farms, are also part of our important work, as is the certification process for truly sustainable fishing that we launched in 2007.

In terms of fishing practices and aquaculture, Naturland has gained internationally renowned expertise. What defines sustainable, organic production in these sectors and how is this monitored and certified?

The basic principles of the Naturland aquaculture production sites include the careful selection of sites, fair conditions for the species, respecting animal rights, and low stock densities. Organic food and a ban on genetic engineering, chemical additives and hormones are further important

prerequisites. Apart from the rearing itself, the Naturland guidelines also cover the processing of fish and other seafood. Additionally, there are also strict social standards for all employees. This is also implemented in fishing that is certified by Naturland, although there are of course no other standard production guidelines for this sector. In this case, Naturland works closely with scientists and nature conservation organisations to define criteria specific to the individual fishery, which consider the respective target species as well as the entire ecosystem. In both aquaculture and fishing, monitoring is carried out locally once a year by government-accredited inspection bodies.

The organic market is booming. A sustainable lifestyle is important to many people. The amount of land used for organic farming is continuously growing. What are the developments in fishing and aquaculture?

Organic aquaculture products are still niche products. The proportion of aquatic products that have organic certification is only at about one percent of the world's production, with strong regional differences. In Ireland for example, a majority of salmon and mussel production is already certified as organic. In many countries, smallholder aquaculture is an important source of income, which is also true for the shrimp production in Asia. Protecting mangroves is a hugely important aspect of environmentally friendly shrimp production and is why we are promoting this protection in the SAIME project. We recommend that customers in supermarkets only purchase products from organic aquaculture or sustainable fishing. The WWF buying guides for fish and other seafood are a good help for this:

www.fishforward.eu/en/seafoodguides



www.globalnature.org/en/shrimps-mangroves



Ralph Dejas

holds a diploma in geography and is a project manager in GNF's “Sustainable Development & Development Cooperation” department. Additionally, he coordinates the initiative “Biodiversity in the Food Sector” in the “Business & Biodiversity” department.

Business & Biodiversity

Companies share a private sector responsibility towards the preservation of the environment that forms the basis for our lives. Luckily, there are a myriad of options for them to realise this, e.g. by committing to a supply chain free of deforestation, sustainable procurement of workwear garment, insect-responsible regions, or biodiversity-friendly business parks. GNF lends support to managers during the transformation of companies into future-oriented green businesses.

Blue suits in masses – but where do the raw materials for workwear come from and under which social-ecological conditions are they produced and processed? The GNF project “Fair Wear Works” for sustainable textile supply chains is one of many examples of our innovative approaches in favour of corporate commitment to biodiversity.



The protection of biodiversity in the agricultural and food sectors is a central focus for the GNF “Business & Biodiversity” department.

BUSINESS, BIODIVERSITY AND CORONA – Positivity instead of doom and gloom

Stefan Hörmann

There is a risk that because of the Corona crisis, the issue of environmental protection and nature conservation has become less important to companies – at least that is what many fear to be a consequence of this pandemic. All the better that there are managers who are using the time to prepare for the future. The cinema operator Kinopolis for example furthered their sustainability strategy during the pandemic, which was developed with the support of the GNF. The introduction of a system offering reusable drinking cups at the cinemas, as well as a transition to green energy are merely two measures to ensure movies can be enjoyed sustainably.

The food industry is also focusing more than ever on issues related to climate change and biodiversity protection. GNF was strongly involved in the development of a business initiative for the preservation of biodiversity which resulted in the founding of the “Food for Biodiversity” association, on the 3rd of March 2021, the World Wildlife Day. Over 20 companies and organi-

sations are now committed to the aims and measures in order to better protect species and hab-



itats in agriculture and promote biodiversity. Reaching these goals rests on members tackling a few different issues. For example, measures include the adding of criteria for the protection and promotion of biodiversity along the supply chain to purchasing and standard procedures, and supporting farmers in implementing these criteria.

On the 3rd of March, the World Wildlife Day, representatives of 13 companies and institutions signed the founding charter to launch the “Food for Biodiversity” association.



Stefan Hörmann

is an administration scientist and leads the “Business & Biodiversity” department at the GNF, as well as our office in Bonn. He has been working with the GNF for the protection of biodiversity for more than 20 years now.

New association for the protection of biodiversity in the food sector

The association “Food for Biodiversity” is also establishing a monitoring system for how biodiversity develops on farms and using the results to inform the further development of measures. The association carries out workshops for employees, farmers, agricultural advisors, and auditors, and raises awareness amongst consumers in Germany for the value of biodiversity in food production. Last but not least, the members of “Food for Biodiversity” also advocate better political frameworks that enhance the protection of biodiversity. The association is thus making a substantial contribution to reaching the goals of the German and European biodiversity strategy, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The preparations for founding “Food for Biodiversity” started in projects such as “LIFE Food & Biodiversity” which was funded by the EU LIFE program of the European Commission and the German Federal Environmental Foundation.



www.globalnature.org/en/food-for-biodiversity-association

STOP DEFORESTATION, PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY IN FOREST ECOSYSTEMS: it is time for the German economy to step up

Andrea Reuter und Steffen Kemper

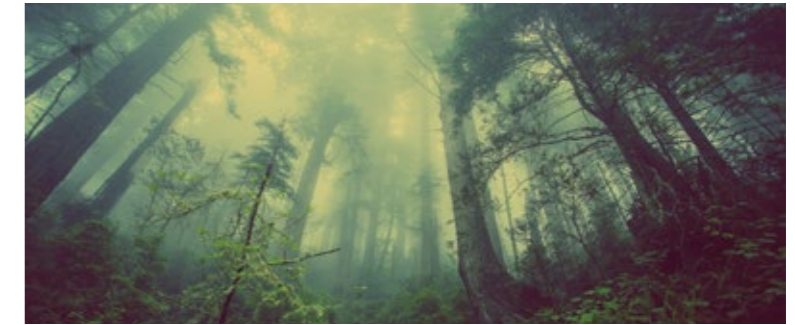
Together with long-term partner OroVerde, GNF has launched two brand new projects to promote afforestation and stop deforestation through investors and businesses. The market for sustainable investments is rapidly growing. In light of the climate crisis, forest funds and other investment options with a focus on forests are also receiving increased interest. More and more investors want to sustainably invest their money. What investment options are actually sustainable though? In order to facilitate sustainable investments, the European Commission has developed the EU taxonomy, a classification system to aid investors.

The EU taxonomy defines concrete technical assessment criteria for a total of six environmental goals, including the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. The basic principle of the new system is to promote at least one of the six goals, while simultaneously not neglecting the others. The GNF is analysing how the EU taxonomy can promote investments for the protection of forests and biodiversity, as part of a project that will run until March 2023 and is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. Additionally, the GNF is compiling an overview of the current offers across Germany. In earlier studies we were able to show that many providers failed to achieve economic returns while improving social and ecological conditions in forest regions. Our new case studies will investigate

whether there has been any improvement in the meantime.

ELAN for sustainable supply chain management

The protection of existing ecosystems is at least as important as restoring damaged forests. If it is possible for a restored forest to make the same valuable contribution towards biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation as an intact forest, it takes many years for this to occur. This is where the GNF comes in with the project “Deforestation-free Supply Chains – An Online Atlas for Corporate Sustainability” (ELAN), which was funded by the BMU and the National Climate Initiative. This project is particularly relevant when considering that a majority of products manufactured in Germany contains raw materials, which contribute to deforestation in other countries. The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the importance of deforestation-free supply chains



The forest can seem like a myth. The GNF project ELAN addresses how German companies can protect it, while also promoting biodiversity and combating climate change.

for climate change mitigation, and to support businesses in implementing measures towards operating without deforestation.

A preliminary analysis is intended to provide an overview of pre-existing voluntary pledges of German businesses. As a second step, GNF is developing an online portal, which companies can use as a sound source of information on how other businesses have developed supply chains free of deforestation and what supporting measures and instruments there are. Through round tables, presentations and a webinar series, the GNF will seek a knowledge exchange with market representatives and disseminate the results gained from this project. ELAN started in June 2021 and will run for a total of three years. In August 2021, Federal Minister for the Environment Svenja Schulze personally delivered the funding confirmation to the GNF and project partner OroVerde.



Andrea Reuter

has been working with GNF since 2015 and is part of a variety of projects that include options for the private sector to invest in forest and biodiversity preservation.



Steffen Kemper

holds an M.Sc. in agricultural sciences and started working with GNF as a project manager in the “Business & Biodiversity” department in 2021.



www.globalnature.org/en/deforestation-free-supply-chains



Throughout the production process of a textile, cotton will often travel all across the world which has negative impacts on humans and the environment.

FAIR WEAR? WORKS!

Tim Stoffel

Together with our partner organisation FEMNET e.V., the GNF launched the FAIR WEAR WORKS project in order to promote the sustainable purchase of textiles by businesses. Targeted purchase strategies can positively influence working conditions along global supply chains and reduce environmental impacts. A survey of businesses carried out as part of the project clearly shows a commitment of companies to become more sustainable. However, the responses also make it clear that many businesses still require support in the first steps towards the sustainable purchase of textiles. Particularly challenging apparently are the lack of information on reliable textile standards. This is where our FAIR WEAR WORKS project comes in, where we provide advice to businesses on how to adjust their purchasing process.

In conversation with Dr Viktor Konitzer (GNF), Marijke Mulder (FEMNET e.V) and Tim Stoffel (GNF) provide insights on the joint project.

How did your cooperation for FAIR WEAR WORKS come about?

Marijke: “Within the project, both organisations complement each other perfectly. FEMNET is an expert in textiles, advising communities in implementing fair and eco-friendly purchasing processes. The GNF has experience working with companies regarding the management of sustainable supply chains, focussing on environmental protection.”

Tim: “The need for advice on sustainable purchase in the private and the public sector is increasing. This requires expertise on social, as well as ecological challenges along global supply chains. In this regard we are indeed a good fit.”

Why are you focussing on the sustainable purchase of textiles?

Tim: “Purchasing sustainable textiles sends a clear signal both internally and externally that a company takes its responsibility towards people and the environment seriously. Observing environmental and social standards during production helps to minimize water consumption, the use of chemicals in cultivation and processing, and CO₂ emissions. With annual sales of over one billion euros in Germany, workwear in particular is an important driver for creating more sustainable production conditions.”

Marijke: “The textile industry is the fifth largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. Bad working conditions and low wages are a continuing issue in this industry. By purchasing sustainable textiles, businesses can make a significant contribution to climate change mitigation, while complying with human rights and environmental standards. All of this is actually comparatively easy.”

What are the precise measures you use to support businesses?

Marijke: “We explain the challenges of sustainable textile production to interested businesses but also present possible solutions through events and instructive materials such as our fact sheets.”

Tim: “We will continue to communicate recommendations for effective management in sustainable textiles through individual consultations until the end of 2022. We are contributing to a greater understanding of sustainable textiles and supporting companies in changing their purchasing processes.”



German Website:
www.globalnature.org/de/textileinkauf



Tim Stoffel

joined the GNF as a project manager in 2021 and is advising companies on the sustainable purchase of textiles. As an expert for sustainable and fair purchasing processes, he also discusses this topic in workshops, presentations, and publications.

„INSECT-RESPONSIBLE SOURCING REGIONS“: Keep the country buzzing

Tobias Ludes

Pollinating insects in Germany are not doing well. Alarming studies tell us that native insects are experiencing an immense loss in number as well as diversity, where three quarters of insect biomass were lost over the past 27 years. In contrast, 75 percent of global food crops are reliant on pollination by animals. Intensive land use, as well as the use of fertilizer and pesticides in particular, pose a threat to insect populations.

Effective insect protection at landscape level

The economic consequences are obvious; if insects like bees and bumblebees cease buzzing around, our food industry will soon also no longer be thriving. Therefore, the agriculture and food sector are charged with integrating solutions for the sustained protection of insects and pollinators in the regions where cultivation and procurement takes place. Such a huge task re-

quires excellent support, which is provided by our “LIFE Insect-Responsible Sourcing Regions” project. Funded by the EU Commission and coordinated by the Lake Constance Foundation, this project brings together the GNF, the Netzwerk Blühende Landschaft, the Bäuerliche Erzeugergemeinschaft Schwäbisch-Hall, and Nestlé Germany to achieve the common goal of ensuring the sustained protection of insects and biodiversity.

Carrying out this project allows for the development of exemplary solutions for biodiversity and insects-friendly agriculture on a regional level with the close involvement of land use stakeholders and to putting these approaches into practices. This project thus makes a valuable contribution to the implementation of the national biodiversity strategy, addressing all aspects that are listed as drivers for the loss of biodiversity in agricultural practices. By promoting this innovative method, the project particularly promotes the protection of insects on agricultural lands. Instead of limiting the suggested measures to individual businesses and supply chains, the LIFE IRSR approach aims to achieve an integrative system

across an entire landscape that will provide possibilities for regions to implement insect-responsible agricultural practices and provide sustained protection of insects and pollinators.

Seven regions as trail blazers for Germany and the whole of the EU

In collaboration with the agricultural sector, the food industry, local authorities and NGOs, the GNF and our partner organisations are setting up Insect-Responsible Sourcing Regions, which each implement individually developed regional Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) resulting in the protection of insects and biodiversity across a landscape. Through monitoring, the project team continuously records progress within the regions. In the Southwest, North and East of Germany there are already seven pilot regions that are part of the project and can inspire followers. This concept can be translated and replicated to all regions in Germany and indeed across the whole of Europe.



<https://insect-responsible.org/en>

Our Insect-Responsible Sourcing Regions



Seven pilot regions in Germany demonstrate how effective insect protection at landscape level can come to life.



Tobias Ludes

has been working as a project manager with GNF since 2016, with a focus on biodiversity-friendly agriculture in Europe and across the world.



GREEN INSTEAD OF GREY – INDUSTRIAL PARKS IN TRANSITION

Matthias Knüver

After more than four years of successful work, our “Green instead of Grey – Industrial Parks in Transition” project for biodiversity-friendly business parks is nearing its end. An open forum on sustainable city development was a fitting start to the last few months of the project and succeeded in finding enthusiasm for natural design, in old and new involved communities across Germany. The basis of “Green instead of Grey” is the interaction of three approaches: climate change adaptation, the preservation of biodiversity and enhancing the quality of stay. Together, these are to create valuable, living cityscapes and business parks.

It is all a question of design. This is a green roof on the premises of SOKA-Bau, one of the success stories of our “Green instead of Grey” project.

Longstanding experience in the sustainable greening of premises

Over the past two years, we reached many communities through events, forums and online meetings and were able to provide advice for the implementation of measures for green industrial parks. Additionally, we explained the legal frameworks, highlighted funding possibilities, and presented convincing arguments to businesses. For example, it is not yet common knowledge, although we hope to make it so, that an improved quality of surroundings can have positive effects on the health and concentration of employees. The same is true for the fact that many measures we regularly recommend (e.g. roof greening or unlocking) can make the microclimatic conditions more pleasant amidst temperature extremes.

We disseminate the experience gained from our many years of working in the natural design of industrial parks through work-

shops for sustainability managers and climate change representatives of our partner communities. We provide advice on the principles and advantages of natural design for the company and community, as well as strategies for initial consultation sessions with businesses. It is important to impart knowledge and an intuition for the potential of any business premises, as this is the only way to identify appropriate measures for the particular company.

Entrepreneurs are often surprised by the options available to them. In our experience, there are practically always opportunities for more natural design elements and most managers are open to hearing good arguments and can be motivated to be more involved in environmental protection. In the process, they learn that natural design today means much more than a cosy spot for bees and flowers. During the dozen or so initial consultations in which we explained the benefits of green business parks to companies in our partner communities, we

discovered that there are a few measures that are particularly popular.

Specific tips for effective sustainability management

It is not very surprising that the particularly popular actions are those that enhance the companies’ image with regard to effective sustainability management and more specifically climate change adaptation and biodiversity. This includes planting shrubs in beds along the entrance area, perennial flowers on unused grassy areas, roof and wall greening, as well as nesting boxes for birds, bats or insects. We provide businesses with detailed information so that these measures are as effective as possible. Insect nesting aids, particularly the popular insect

splinters so that the wild bees are not injured, or know that the burrows have to be drilled along the seam of the wood, not against it? The GNF fact sheet was so popular that our partner community in Iserlohn has now made it available as a download on their website.

“Green instead of Grey – Industrial Parks in Transition” is also valued by companies, however, because by means of the previously mentioned series of measures, it not only strengthens sustainability management and thus a company’s image, but also helps improve the working atmosphere. We are particularly diligent in reinforcing this aspect. It allows businesses to convert the workplace into a diverse and future-oriented space, where employees can enjoy their job concentrated and creatively. Companies can thus present themselves not only as environ-

mentally conscious but can also be attractive employers when it comes to working conditions. This can be an important edge in the competition for qualified employees and is one aspect we want to emphasise. Our project promotes a sustainable coexistence on company premises as one part of the larger, comprehensive green transition.



www.globalnature.org/en/industrial-parks



A naturally designed roof garden where body, soul, and mind of the employees are at peace.

hotels, are often attached without expertise so that the animals can barely use them. The GNF has published a fact sheet with the most important details on how to establish such nesting aids. Who would otherwise think to check whether the burrows in the wood are clear of



Matthias Knüver has an M.Sc. in environmental management and has been a project manager with the GNF since 2019. He has worked on various projects addressing natural design of company sites, as well as sustainable agriculture.

Nature Conservation & Living Landscape



“Limiting global warming to ensure a habitable climate and protecting biodiversity are mutually supportive goals, and their achievement is essential for sustainable and equitable benefits to people.”

Summary of the co-sponsored workshop held by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in December 2020.

The natural environment we know from ads and picture books exists – and we are protecting it. For example, in Las Galeras, Dominican Republic, the GNF is carrying out the “Transforming Tourism” project for sustainable travel.

THEMES AND TRENDS – GNF PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN NATURE CONSERVATION

Dr Thomas Schaefer

A conservation agenda to solve human-wildlife conflicts

The growing population in Asia and Africa, successful conservation of iconic animal species such as elephants, rhinoceros, and lions, as well as limited resources like watering holes, lead to more and more conflicts. Animals end up in human settlements, leading to confrontations that can end deadly for both parties. Fishing with nets in the tributaries of our Living Lakes also has sad consequences when rare river dolphins and endangered manatees get caught in nets, destroy them, and die in them. Over the past 15 years, the GNF has been working with local partners to identify such conflicts and find methods to solve them. A prime example of this is our project for limiting human-wildlife conflicts between humans and elephants, on which Thies Geertz and Laura Maeso Velasco report in the chapter on Sustainable Development.



They look like creatures from another world, but we actually share this planet with the majestic manatees. At Lake Nokoué in Benin, the GNF is developing methods to ensure the protection of their population.

No protection of biodiversity without agriculture – no agriculture without the protection of biodiversity

Without agriculture and without the farmers, the protection of biodiversity is impossible. Therefore, the GNF is working with local partners and collaborators throughout the entire supply chain, to restore the protection of biodiversity into standard agricultural practice. Seventy percent of the massively accelerated global loss of biodiversity is ascribed to the intensive agriculture that our modern society carries out. The biological diversity is dwindling under the enhanced application of agrochemicals, the increasingly intense use of soil resources, and the expansion of agricultural lands into previously untouched natural areas. The latter is not only true for the well-known soy plantations in the Amazon, but also for natural grass lands and extensive pastures that are converted into arable land and thus can no longer support biological diversity.

Biodiversity and the supply chains of bananas and pineapples

As a result of the alarming loss of biodiversity, the food industry has become more aware of the issue and is now taking it more seriously. At GNF, we are working across the world and across sectors to develop and promote methods that enable more biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices and a conscious food industry. This particularly relates to large systems e.g., the cultivation of bananas and pineapples. Both products are examples of unsustainable agricultural practices in the tropics that result in significant negative environmental impacts. Social and ecological scandals in banana cultivation, for instance, have been regularly addressed in the media over the past few decades. Pineapples are also known as a product with cultivation practices that are particularly damaging to the environment. For example, pineapple growers in Costa Rica have been publicly accused of poisoning wells. However, large companies in the sup-

ply chains, from producers to food retailers, have recently done a lot to prevent the negative impacts of their operations and thus improved their image. Projects implemented by the GNF have contributed to this. In fact, biodiversity is also coming into focus for another reason: as a means of climate change adaptation.

Nine out of ten bananas are now more biodiversity-friendly

The GNF is particularly effective in identifying big levers to make biodiversity a mainstream issue. For many years now, we have been furthering this work with the main standards and businesses in the food sector. We analyse, advise and guide processes to establish effective criteria for biodiversity. As part of the “From Farm to Fork – Del Campo al Plato” project for example, we have been providing advice on all relevant standards in the banana and pineapple cultivation. As a result of our support, this guidance will include more biodiversity, and we are also providing advice on in-

roducing our biodiversity action plans as indicators of progress and means of monitoring success. The large supermarkets now no longer take risks, and demand high quality standards in the cultivation of the products. For bananas, we have now covered 90 percent, meaning that nine out of ten bananas offered in Germany are covered by enhanced biodiversity criteria. This is a number we are very happy with and proud of, too, because the GNF was actually one of the first environmental NGOs that worked together with standards and businesses to realise this outcome.



www.delcampoalplato.com



Precious banana cargo from a plantation in the Dominican Republic: a successful export product.

MORE BIODIVERSITY IN EU-CERTIFIED ORGANIC TROPICAL FRUIT – Our next big challenge

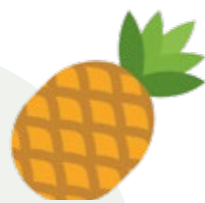
Dr Thomas Schaefer

So nine out of ten bananas in Germany are already more biodiversity-friendly, but what about the other ten percent? About one tenth of the bananas in Germany originate from EU-certified organic cultivation and therefore fulfil at least a few important criteria for biodiversity. For example, this cultivation does not use any pesticides which, in conventional agriculture, destroy flora and fauna directly on the fields and poison the soil and water bodies. Furthermore, sustainable soil management without the use of artificial fertilizers counteracts erosion and leaching of the soil.

However, there are a few aspects not covered by the EU certification for organic fruit produced outside of the EU. This includes supply chains free of deforestation, the protection of national parks, wetlands, and biotope networks, as well as measures for climate change adaptation. Even though all states now have nature conservation laws, mandatory frameworks such as the

Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive and the Water Framework Directive do not apply outside the 27 EU member states. Making these criteria mandatory for EU-certified organic products from overseas, for example as part of an “add-on”, is the next big challenge we intend to tackle. Until then, we recommend only bananas certified by the standards Demeter or Naturland and EU-certified organic fruit with the additional Fairtrade seal.

We are not yet as advanced in the cultivation of pineapples as we are with bananas. This is mainly due to the fact that European consumers do not yet demand end-to-end certification, so that, for example, only around half of the pineapples sold in Germany are certified as sustainable. A success for us is that the GNF is now cooperating with an important US standard company that also provides certification for some large pineapple brands in Germany.



25,000 Hectares of biodiversity-friendly cultivation

Our project work with banana and pineapple producers in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic is another success story. The “Biodiversity Check Agrícola” is a tool with which agricultural businesses can fully release their potential for biodiversity and which is used by more than 50 businesses on 25,000 hectares of banana and pineapple plantations. About half of these businesses have already developed a biodiversity action plan and are implementing the measures set out in the plan. Improved development of unused land on the plantations is in itself a very important issue. In particular, the larger plantations sometimes own several hundreds of hectares of land that are not used solely for the cultivation of fruit. As part of the biodiversity check, these areas gain a new importance whereby farmers can create a network of habitats both on and between the cultivated areas.

Biodiversity in subsistence farming

The Central European perspective, where understanding is largely centred around large-scale agricultural enterprises, doesn't really represent the global picture. The majority of global agriculture is still carried out through subsistence farming. Families cultivate small fields and gardens to be self-sufficient. Ideally, they can sell some of their produce on local markets and purchase clothes and school material for the chil-

A vegetable garden for subsistence cultivation is the basis of life in many countries of the world. Techniques that take biodiversity into account are also important to ensure consistent yields.



Guatemala is a country of fantastic contrasts with the roaring Pacific Ocean, high chains of volcanos, tropical forests, and deep lakes. The traditional knowledge of the Maya peoples helps preserve the natural treasures of these biodiversity hotspots.

dren from the proceeds. Of course, these farmers are no more resistant to the promises of agrochemicals than many extensive livestock and crop producers in the European Union. However, experience with repeated use of agrochemicals shows the benefits may be over-valued because chemicals are expensive and can have long-term disadvantages. Biodiversity-friendly production in farming is therefore becoming a more important part of our projects that we carry out with our Living Lakes partners and other people and organisations.

Maya cultivation goes 21st Century

We are very lucky to be part of a particularly exciting project at Lake Atitlán in Guatemala, which we launched in 2021 together with our Living Lakes partners at the Asociación Vivamos Mejor. As early as 2006, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) presented the so-called Patio-Hogar-Milpa, a concept for Guatemala that combines ancient Mayan with modern knowledge about sustainable agriculture. At its core is the skilful combination of different crops in the home garden (“patio”) and on small fields (“milpa”), which the Maya peoples already practiced successfully centuries ago. Much of this knowledge has been lost in everyday life over the past decades but is now being brought back to life.

Our partners at the Asociación Vivamos Mejor are bringing these traditional practices back to the indigenous villages situated within the chain of volcanos surrounding Lake Atitlán and are positively providing some climate change adaptation measures to the villages. El Niño and

La Niña, the Pacific weather systems, already put the lives of people in Central America to the test repeatedly, and global warming just adds to the unpredictability of these phenomena. Droughts and floods are increasing. The new old Patio-Hogar-Milpa approach will significantly increase the range of crops available to the people, for example by adding fruit trees. Individual farming families are also attending training in mushroom cultivation and beekeeping, which opens up new income opportunities and is another way of becoming more resilient to changing environmental conditions.



www.globalnature.org/en/agriculture-guatemala

NATURE EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE!

Dr Thomas Schaefer

“We can only appreciate and protect what we know.” In times when digital information is available in abundance, this slogan of natural education still applies. We know this because it crops up a lot when we address important issues as part of our work with the Conservation & Living Landscapes department at the GNF. We require an inclusive natural education that all people can get involved in, with or without a disability. “Do we not have more important topics than natural experience for people with disabilities? How big is the target group? Is it even worth the effort?” These are questions that we are unfortunately still being asked in 2021. They leave no doubt as to why there is such

slow progress when it comes to barrier-free natural experience in Europe. However, through our work we have learnt that everyone profits from good, digitally available information, easy access with mobility and walking aids for the elderly, as well as accessible and legible text in the provided information material.

New concepts for small conservation centres

At the beginning of our “Nature without Barriers” project for inclusive nature experience, there were at least some offers for people with mobility impairment in nature reserves. However, barrier-free communication offers for the visually impaired,

developed with support from the GNF offer a significantly simpler introduction to the topic of barrier-free nature experience and provide plenty of information on the implementation of measures:

- An interactive presentation provides an initial overview over the most important action points
- Our barrier-free website www.nature-without-barriers.eu includes examples in four different languages that illustrate how information can be presented to be fully inclusive
- A handout on natural education lists practical advice on work with different groups
- A system for self-analysis



The majestic Tatra National Park in the south of Poland on the border to Slovakia is a magnet for the hiking enthusiasts in Poland. Soon it will also be able to experience the park without barriers.

deaf, and people with learning disabilities were rare. They are particularly important to us because barriers do not only affect mobility. People with visual or hearing impairment, and people with learning disabilities are excluded from many natural experience offers. Tools recently de-

veloped with support from the GNF offer a significantly simpler introduction to the topic of barrier-free nature experience and provide plenty of information on the implementation of measures:

- Two documents provide concrete guidance for adapting existing offers for people with different needs

People with a wide range of disabilities were consulted in our

There are many ways through which impaired people can experience nature, e.g. with a family of wild cats to pet at the Erlensee nature reserve, Germany.



“Nature without Barriers” project as experts and have provided a valuable feedback to us conservationists. We have also received repeated confirmation from disability associations that our concepts are good and purposeful. The publications also always take the limited resources of environmental education centres and nature reserves into consideration. We highlight that accessible nature experience is possible even with limited resources, so that all people can enjoy it.

In practice, the information conveyed by the GNF and our partners has proven valuable. Environmental educators in several EU member countries have analysed educational trails in accordance with our project materials and developed new methods for inclusive accessibility. Examples of this include sign language in the Black Forest National Park, Germany, audio information stands in the zoological and botanical gardens of Torún, Poland, and barrier-free

access to the Bachledka pathway through the treetops in the Tatra Mountains of Slovakia. Across Europe, more and more initiatives show that with courage and creativity, the access to nature experience is possible and can be rewarding.

Polish national parks for everyone

As of 2021, we are able to translate our own interpretation for barrier-free natural experience into practice and through that, can further our own competencies. In collaboration with federal funds for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities in Poland and ten Polish national parks, we are developing measures for inclusive nature experience. In Poland, wildlife and nature play an important role in the tourism sector. Hiking is a favourite national pastime. 23 national parks attract 60 percent of all domestic tourists. The Tatra, Krkonoše and Wolin national parks for example recorded about seven million visitors in 2015.

There is hardly any information on the accessibility of these nature experience areas for people with disabilities. This is where the “Protected Area – Accessible Area” project comes in. It will further the development and direct implementation of actions to enhance the accessibility of wildlife and nature parks in Poland for people with disabilities. Ten specific initiatives for barrier-free nature experience will be developed when national park centres apply for funds from the project and receive subsidies for the implementation of measures.

In this work, we are looking at the bigger picture. We consider natural experiences and the service chain as connected parts and are developing an integrated model for the implementation of measures that can be applied to all Polish national parks. The model takes into account the great diversity of Polish nature parks in terms of landscape, location and size. In addition to the 23 national parks, there are currently 123 further nature parks that can apply for one of the ten spots in the pilot phase of the project.

Financial and personnel resources are important considerations. This was one of the reasons why the GNF was invited to be part of this project, as the pragmatic approach in the “Nature without Barriers” project convinced the Polish founders of this project. Additionally, all the results of the project have been translated into Polish, which is a huge benefit for the start of this new project.



www.nature-without-barriers.eu/en

“There is one effect that I have been observing in many people. They say they have now not flown at all in over a year and it actually was not too bad. They did not have to jet to every meeting or fly to London for the weekend to go shopping. It would be nice if we could continue this way after the crisis.”

**Gregory B. Waldis in conversation
with Dr Viktor Konitzer, GNF
Communications Manager, June 2021**

Starting in 2005, Swiss actor Gregory B. Waldis played the main role of Alexander Saalfeld in the first ever German Telenovela “Sturm der Liebe” which was watched by millions. Waldis also performs on stage in the theatre and in recent years has turned his hobby of photography into his profession. Additionally, he is an advocate for nature conservation. One aspect of the work of the GNF is of particular importance to him.



Gregory, how did you experience the pandemic, personally and professionally? Covid-19 of course also affected the creative industry, which is dependent on an audience.

Personally, the hardest thing for me was not seeing my mother for almost a year. She lives in Switzerland (*Waldis lives in Berlin, ed. note*). I could have travelled there, it wasn't forbidden, but I thought I would rather not. Last week I finally visited her again and the joy of reunion was huge. As an actor, I experienced the pandemic in that I got to act in the theatre less. In television on the other hand, we saw that many colleagues from the theatre suddenly were available for filming. The competition was much bigger (*laughs*). Those with fixed employment at a municipal or state theatre were doing comparatively well, at least financially, but there are also many colleagues who normally live from hand to mouth, so to speak. For them it was really a hard time. Of course, we also need to

see our experiences in perspective. I am particularly referring to your drinking water projects at the GNF. When I see the many countries on Earth where not all people have access to clean water, I appreciate just being able to open the tap. These countries were also affected by Corona. With that in view, I can't be upset by the pandemic in Germany, nor the measures that were implemented to combat it.

Do you have the impression that the pandemic caused any changes with regard to environmental protection, climate change mitigation, use of resources or sustainable living?

There is one effect that I have been observing in many people. They say they have now not flown at all in over a year and it actually was not too bad. They did not have to jet to every meeting or fly to London for the weekend to go shopping. It would be nice if we could continue this way after the crisis. As I am getting older, I do have to say I now believe much more in change because I have experienced it. In the 80's, I attended demonstrations against nuclear power stations where we were told to forget about our renewable energies because they would never account for more than five percent of our power supply. Of course, it did not really work out the way we thought it would, where we would demonstrate and a year later everything would be shut down. However, if I had known then that nuclear power stations would pretty much be history in Germany 40 years down the line, I would have thought that, yes, change can happen after all. Sometimes it just takes quite a long time. Of course, we have to put every effort into the cause. By the way, I have always thought something is not quite right with the term environmental protection. Just as we were talking, I thought actually it should be called habitat preservation. The environment, or the planet, does not really care whether we survive or not. I feel

like the term environmental protection distances me from the environment. I feel differently about the term habitat preservation. When I hear that term, I think if I do not make a change now, then in ten years I might not have any running water anymore, perhaps no electricity, maybe even not have a place to live. The habitable area might become so scarce that I will not be able to afford it anymore.

As an actor and a photographer, do you have a special relationship to what you call habitat preservation?

I love nature and have been cast many times because of this. Filming in the countryside, on Mallorca, climbing up mountains or generally working outside is an occasional bonus that makes me very happy, when I do get options like these. On the set itself, it is noticeable that environmental protection is much more common than it used to be. Even the producers have noticed that money can be saved through environmental protection. Providing reusable cups means having to buy and set out less, which is just cheaper overall. Actors are suddenly willing to carpool to the set instead of being picked up in a limousine. There is now even an award for the most sustainable production which is helping to shift people's attitude. A lot of this has to do with the role model idea. When people see that things suddenly are different on set, they might also start changing off set. As a portrait photographer, I am particularly interested in the people. I want my pictures to really show and highlight the person that is captured by my lens. A friend of mine who does astrophotography notices environmental change much more. He told me that light pollution has changed his entire business over the last twenty years. It is just always very light. Ultimately, because of his work my friend has become an environmentalist.

Stage, television and photo camera are his profession, he feels at home in nature – and calls on all of us to protect it: Gregory B. Waldis.



Can you tell us how your connection with the Global Nature Fund came about?

By chance I got to talking with your director Udo Gattenlöhner and I thought, ah, these are obviously people who are concerned with nature conservation on a deeper level than the big players in this field sometimes appear to be. I appreciate the deliberate and well thought out approach of the GNF because I myself am like that, or at least would like to be like that.

Why do you think the GNF stands out of the range of environmental organisations and institutes, as worthwhile of supporting by donating?

This is related to my previous answer. I appreciate the fearless approach to the complex bigger picture which shows in the work, as well as the communication. I am convinced that this approach in the end is also more successful. Additionally, your Living Lakes and Water work is just very important to me personally and I am emotionally invested in it. I was born in the mountains but seeing a lake makes me go berserk with joy. There is nothing better than being able to help preserve these habitats by donating to the GNF.

“Ensuring sufficient funding for our current projects remains challenging. The consequences of the pandemic are reaching us with some delay. Some of the funding calls were and still are not possible as originally planned, visits to project areas and partners are not possible due to travel restrictions or local project partners are limited by COVID-19 regulations. The consequence of this is a backlog of tasks in the projects that we need to address in the next year to still meet the project goals. Fixed expenses of our foundation that are not tied to projects still need to be covered despite financial restrictions. This includes rental of spaces, wages, accounting, IT, and more. The balance between the completion of tasks and securing the necessary funds needs to be found anew every year. This has become significantly more challenging in the years of the pandemic.”

Report by Manuela Uhde

Securing Funds

The Global Nature Fund and our projects are funded by various sources. Within our project proposals, we try to cover all necessary expenses with public or private funds. At the same time, we often require third party funds or need to use our own capital to finance projects. Procuring these without a membership framework is not easy. That is why we are dependent on additional donations and funds from the private sector that allow us to keep our foundation over water even in difficult times, and to achieve a certain degree of planning security for the next few years. We are thankful to all that support us in this way.

Applying funds

In 2020, we carried out almost 30 projects with our team of 22 employees. Our focus is on important current issues such as the protection of biodiversity, sustainable economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and securing basic needs for our existence, such as healthy nutrition and clean drinking water. We do not shy away from working with companies to reach these socio-political goals. We are grateful for our partners within and outside of the Living Lakes Network that help us fulfil our tasks.

Transparency

Our Annual Report is an overview of our project work and finances. We therefore voluntarily submit our annual financial statements for auditing by an independent auditor. Both the profit and loss statement, and the balance sheet are prepared in accordance with the German Commercial Code and foundation law. Two very important criteria for this are maintaining the capital of the foundation and applying the funds of the foundation in accordance with the charter. The results of the audit will be provided as an audit report and disclosed to the regulatory authority. Additionally, we observe the voluntary publication requirements of the Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft (ITZ), and our annual progress report, as well as the charter are available on our website. The GNF Annual Report is circulated to all current sponsors, funders and collaboration partners and can be requested by any other interested parties.

One of the 2021 GNF fundraising mailings.



Manuela Uhde has been working with the Global Nature Fund since 1998 and has been part of shaping the foundation since the start. She heads the department of Marketing, Finances & Administration at the GNF and is the contact person for private sponsors.

WE THANK OUR COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Public Funds – Germany



European Union



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Foundations / Associations



Business Cooperations



Standards



Further Cooperation Partners



This year again, we have worked with a variety of project partners around the world in a spirit of trust to achieve our goals for international nature conservation and environmental protection. Learn more about our partners here:

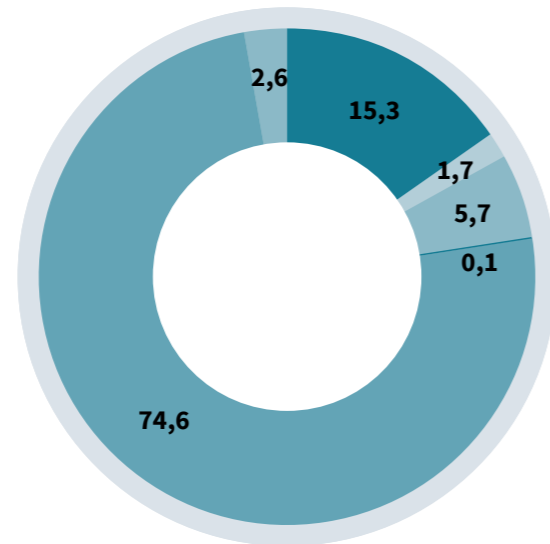


www.globalnature.org/en/cooperations/project-partners-2020-2021

PRESENTING THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

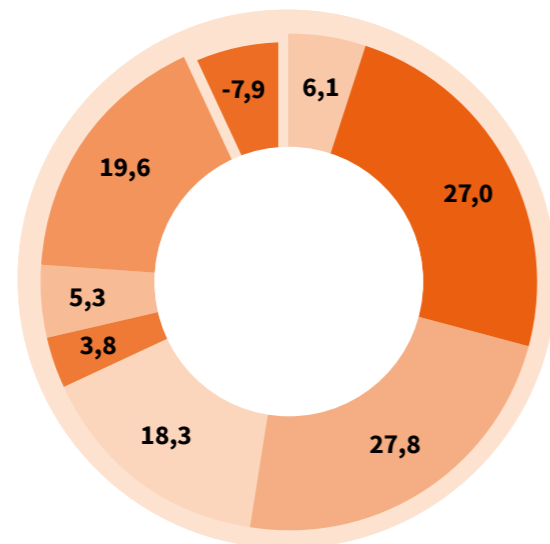
For the fiscal year of 2020, the Global Nature Fund received a full detailed certificate from the independent auditing company Koch & Eicken GmbH. The results of the audit are presented in the audit report on the end of year accounts, as well as the explanatory report.

The total balance on the 31st of December 2020 was 5,028,252.17 Euros (6,346,728.40 Euros in the previous year). The income according to the profit and loss statement was 2,891,728.81 Euros. There is thus an excess of 339,656.72 Euros (loss in the previous year was 224,167.73 Euros). After calculating the necessary accruals of 567,223.31 Euros, the withdrawals from reserve funds thus amount to 227,566.59 Euros (addition to the reserve funds in the previous year was 182,063.21 Euros). The free reserves on the 31st of December 2020 thus amount to 373,456.61 Euros (601,023.20 Euros in the previous year). The overall foundation balance after taking new funding into account is 437,638.04 Euros (417,638.04 Euros).



Budget 2020 - Revenues in EURO

15,3 %	Donations private and from companies	443.185,38 €
1,7 %	Sponsoring (with VAT)	50.000,00 €
5,7 %	Other allowances	164.447,73 €
74,6 %	Project grants (from public sector)	2.157.296,59 €
0,1 %	Projects honoraries (with VAT)	2.240,00 €
2,6 %	Other revenues (interest, fines)	74.559,11 €
100 %	Total	2.891.728,81 €



Budget 2020 - Expenses in EURO

6,1 %	Living Lakes & Water	175.170,35 €
27,8 %	Business & Biodiversity	803.336,76 €
27,0 %	Sustainable Development & Development Cooperation	781.548,44 €
18,3 %	Nature Conservation & Environmental Education	529.392,91 €
3,8 %	Fundraising & Public relations	108.912,61 €
5,3 %	Administration	153.711,02 €
19,6 %	Accruals to the following year	567.223,31 €
-7,9 %	Withdrawals from reserves	-227.566,59 €
100 %	Total	2.891.728,81 €

Global Nature Fund, Fritz-Reichle-Ring, 78315 Radolfzell Balance Sheet 12/31/2020

ASSETS	12/31/20 €	previous year €
A. FIXED ASSETS		
I. Tangible Assets		
° Operating and Office Equipment	1.775,30	3.425,24
II. Financial Assets		
° Financial investments	306,78	306,78
B. CURRENT ASSETS		
I. Stocks		
° Ongoing projects	3.127.566,59	5.175.878,80
II. Receivables and other assets		
° Receivables from deliveries and services	10.150,00	12.163,44
° Receivables from EU-projects	537.061,88	75.434,64
° Other receivables and assets	2.843,62	2.843,62
	550.055,50	90.441,70
III. Cash on hand and bank balances		
° Cash on hand	278,78	284,60
° Sight deposits	348.231,80	477.977,83
° Time deposits	993.236,85	583.056,84
	1.341.747,43	1.061.319,27
C. ACCRUED ITEMS		
	6.800,57	15.356,61
Total of Assets	5.028.252,17	6.346.728,40

LIABILITIES	12/31/20 €	previous year €
A. EQUITY CAPITAL		
I. Foundation Capital		
° Endowment Capital	86.919,62	86.919,62
° Increase in Endowment Capital	350.718,42	330.718,42
	437.638,04	417.638,04
II. Reserves		
° Free Reserves Balance carried forward on 01/01/2020	601.023,20	418.959,99
° Withdrawal from free reserves Balance 12/31/2020	-227.566,59	182.063,21
	373.456,61	601.023,20
B. NOT YET CONSUMED DONATIONS AND ALLOWANCES		
° Not yet used donations and allowances	0,00	0,00
° Long-term donations and allowances	1.775,30	3.038,60
	1.775,30	3.038,60
C. PROVISIONS		
° Provisions for pensions and similar obligations	0,00	0,00
° Other Provisions	54.633,90	39.026,95
	54.633,90	39.026,95
D. LIABILITIES		
° Advance payments received on projects	3.716.355,84	5.165.392,53
° Liabilities from deliveries and services	10.263,52	17.007,79
° Liabilities from allowances	0,00	0,00
° Liabilities from donations and grants not yet consumed for the intended purpose	8.737,23	40.789,44
° Other liabilities	425.391,73	42.811,85
	4.160.748,32	5.266.001,61
E. ACCRUED ITEMS		
	0,00	20.000,00
Total of Liabilities	5.028.252,17	6.346.728,40

Marion Hammerl, President
Radolfzell, 20 July 2021

TOGETHER FOR NATURE CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: THIS IS THE TEAM OF THE GLOBAL NATURE FUND

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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