

Kate Stokes Memorial Trust 2022 Newsletter

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21 December 2022

Dear Friends,

This has been another challenging year for environmental organisations globally. Conflict in Ukraine and elsewhere, the ongoing COVID pandemic, and dire economic circumstances have led many of these organisations to concentrate on efforts closer to home.

Queen Elizabeth II marked her Platinum Jubilee by instigating the Green Canopy initiative in 2021, but sadly died this year before the impact of extensive tree-planting could be fully appreciated. COP27 closed

with agreement on a Loss and Damage fund; a victory for climate-vulnerable developing countries.

After 13 years with the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP), latterly as Executive Manager, Stu Paterson left CLP in June to become CEO of The Rufford Foundation, a UK registered charity which funds nature conservation projects across the developing world. We are delighted for Stu. And thrilled that he will continue as a Trustee of the Kate Stokes Memorial Trust.

We welcome Olivia Couchman as CLP's new Executive Manager. Olivia was previously with the Zoological Society of London and is well known for her conservation and capacity building expertise.

It was with regret that the Trustees accepted the resignation of Robyn Dalzen as a Special Advisor. Robyn was instrumental in setting up the Trust and Award with Ken, Sue, Antony and Marianne in 2006. We all thank Robyn for her 16 years of inspiration, engagement and support.

Trustees

Sue & Antony Stokes
Marianne Carter
Andy Brock-Doyle
Stuart Paterson



Kate

2022 Winner: 'School of Mahseers': Nurturing a conservation ethic in children of Baagi village, Nayar River Valley, Uttarakhand, India

At the confluence of Ganga and Nayar Rivers in the hilly state of Uttarakhand in Northern India, the team is working with over 95 children from a village school to encourage pride and protection for the endangered, golden mahseer fish, aka the 'tiger of the river'.

Four teachers who have received training in conservation education are implementing new environmental activities into the routine curriculum. The school's Eco Smart Clubs have become 'Mahseer Clubs', to teach conservation activities such as painting competitions. Now, a symbolic

pond is being designed by students, with support from teachers trained by the project, to demonstrate freshwater ecosystem functioning.

On World Fisheries Day in November, the team led teachers, students and women from the community on a visit to a Mahseer Conservation Awareness & Hatchling Release Event, jointly organised with the Uttarakhand Fisheries Department. The children released 8-month-old mahseer hatchlings into the Ganga River, so as to inspire, empower and engage them as 'protectors' of mahseer

and its critical habitats.

Drafting is underway on the design of a conservation education manual, mahseer activity sheets, a comic book and handouts on other fish species of Uttarakhand.



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Trust Annual Review

The 2022 Award selection meeting and AGM was held in London in May. It was a great pleasure that all but one of the Trustees were able to meet in person for the first time since 2019.

There were fewer applications than usual for the Award this year, but the quality remained high and four applications were given detailed consideration. The 2022 Award was made to a project led by Saurabh Dewan in Uttarakhand, India (please see the article overleaf).

The 2021 Award project in Mexico is complete. The team adapted brilliantly to ever-changing conditions imposed by the authorities due to the pandemic. Team leader Edna González Bernal's reports and photographs of the activities over the past 18 months have shown such hope for the local Chinantec community.

The 2020 Award to the Mangabe Reserve team in Madagascar has also been completed, but had to be considerably altered and restricted in its objectives. It is hoped the continuing involvement of the team

in the area will deliver positive benefits and change for the impacted communities.

The Trust's finances and investments remain secure, with sufficient reserves on hand to fund the 2023 and 2024 Awards. The Trust is even more indebted this year to its many friends for their continuing support and encouragement. Support and encouragement which, in turn, enables the Trust to fund teams of enthusiastic young environmentalists to conserve threatened biodiversity and to inspire and educate local communities in so many countries.

2021 Project: Reconnecting with Nature in a Chinantec community in Mexico



During 2022 we were finally able to deliver a snake identification workshop, an amphibian festival, and a pilot communitarian guide workshop. These activities will generate positive long-term and active attitude change towards conservation of local herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians).

La Esperanza is a community where people can encounter a variety of reptiles and it is important to reduce the conflict between humans and snakes. The snake identification workshop addressed this issue very successfully.

We conducted a four day Amphibians Festival in April, which focused on sharing information about agrochemical pollution, amphibian diversity and conservation through talks and workshops. In Mexico, Children's Day is celebrated on 30 April, and games were designed for kids to learn about amphibians, their diets, reproduction, habitats, risks, and conservation importance. Through a mural painting with native frogs and natural elements (see above) we connected people to nature that surrounds them daily but can be unperceived. It was very impressive to see what art can achieve. Everyone can now

identify 'La Esperanza Treefrog'.

In September we started a pilot four day programme to train young people to offer amphibian observation tours and to generate much-needed income. Trainees learned how to identify species and their habitats, with workshops on species at risk and biosecurity to ensure that amphibians are not harmed.

Finally a [video on all the activities](#) has been made to ensure local people can recognize their involvement in a major amphibian and biodiversity conservation project.