

ACTIVITIES OF THE FOUNDATION

Dear all,

Thanks to the use of a common set of indicators across all our projects, for the first time, it has been possible to estimate the impact of the foundation. Thank you to all our partners for their fantastic work in such a difficult period. Impact is what any donor is looking for. Breaking records in terms of numbers of trees planted is often making the headline news, but this has little interest unless you are a forester and plan to harvest these trees in the future. Some tree species are extremely difficult to grow and require expert knowledge; species and genetic diversity are key; community engagement is needed; and survival over the long term is most important. And we need skilled partners to cover all these aspects!

We are happy to announce that, following the last call for proposals, we have approved 23 new projects covering a range of new species and countries. Therefore, our impact will continue to grow.

Collectively we can continue to influence the way reforestation is done, ensuring that threatened tree species are not forgotten. The upcoming IUCN World Conservation Congress will be an opportunity to reiterate that message.

Sincerely,

Jean-Christophe Vié
Director General

New projects: The third call for proposals of the Foundation generated once again a considerable interest from conservation organisations around the world. We received project proposals targeting a total of 424 globally threatened tree species in 49 different countries and would like to thank all the organisations that submitted a proposal. However, a selection had to be made and, after careful analysis, we selected **23 projects** targeting **183 threatened species** (30 Critically Endangered, 65 Endangered and 88 Vulnerable) in **14 countries**.

The full list of selected projects along with a map showing the location of all the field projects is available [on our website](#). Some of them are funded indirectly through the [Global Trees Campaign](#). A detailed description of the new projects will be available [on our website](#) soon.

A new call for proposals will be published early September!

Impact 2020: The Foundation has selected different indicators to assess its impact and asks all its beneficiaries to quantify their impact using the same indicators. The data is then extracted and compiled from the annual progress reports submitted to the Secretariat. The results for 2020 are as follows:

Direct actions at species and habitat level:

- 371 threatened tree species conserved in-situ in 40 countries.
- 288 threatened tree species conserved ex-situ in 24 countries.
- 204'124 seedlings of 196 threatened species transplanted and/or protected in situ in 34 countries.
- 31'908 mature individuals of 208 threatened species protected in situ in 34 countries.
- 288'761 hectares of production landscape under enhanced management in 25 countries.
- 692'295 hectares of protected areas under enhanced management in 27 countries.
- 39'630 hectares newly protected in 5 countries.

Threats reduction:

- 5'884 people benefited from alternative livelihoods activities.
- 10'086 people were targeted by concrete awareness raising actions.
- 613'994 hectares are better protected against illegal logging in 8 countries.

Enabling conditions:

- 146 organisations have improved organisational capacity.
- 4'102 people directly benefited from education and training activities.
- 9'065 tree species assessments were published on the IUCN Red List.
- 774 species descriptions were published in various floras.
- 75 action plans for the conservation of threatened trees were developed.
- 48 scientific papers were published.

These very encouraging results would not be possible without the hard work of our project leaders and their teams who are tirelessly fighting for the conservation of threatened trees and forests around the world. **Many thanks for all their efforts!**

World Conservation Congress (September 3-11, 2021): Held once every four years, the IUCN World Conservation Congress brings together several thousand leaders and decision-makers from government, civil society, indigenous peoples, business, and academia, with the goal of conserving the environment and harnessing the solutions nature offers to global challenges. IUCN and the French government have decided to maintain the WCC in Marseille with a hybrid in-person and virtual format. Fondation Franklinia will be present in Marseille as we believe that it is important to be a part of this key milestone for nature conservation. It is also a unique opportunity to meet representatives of organisations from many countries around the world. Unfortunately, this year, it will be impossible for many to travel but if you are attending, do get in touch with us to meet on site! To learn more about the Congress, click [here](#).

NEWS FROM THE PROJECTS

Madagascar – Precious woods



The Malagasy flora is one of the most diverse in the world but also one of the most threatened. The Foundation supports several projects in Madagascar including one on the conservation and sustainable management of the precious wood genera *Dalbergia* and *Diospyros*. Missouri Botanical Garden with the support from Franklinia and other donors has established field gene banks for their *ex situ* conservation and for future restoration and reforestation efforts. To learn more about this project and these field gene banks, click [here](#).

Gabon



The kevazingo (*Guibourtia tessmanii*) is an emblematic threatened tree species from Gabon highly sought-after on the international market for its wood. Illegal logging poses a real risk to the survival of this species.

Take a greater look [in this article](#) at how our partners in Gabon have strengthened the capacity of the Gabonese civil society and local communities in the fight against the illegal exploitation of kevazingo.



A flower bloom of the rare tree species *Karomia gigas* gives new hopes to one of the most threatened tree species in the world. As the flower appears to be inside out, which is different from other sorts of bloom of this family (Lamiaceae), botanists are unclear about whether it intends to attract pollinators, self-pollinate, or if it is just due to a young plant forming its first bloom.

Nevertheless, the appearance of a flower on species grown in gardens is a huge step forward for the conservation of this species as it allows to cross pollinate and therefore produce the much-needed seeds for the *in situ* restoration of their populations. To learn more about this amazing change in its survival perspectives, click [here](#).



Costa Rica – *Ocotea montevertensis*



The Monteverde Institute aims to restore the declining populations of the Critically Endangered *Ocotea montevertensis* through population reinforcement and natural regeneration.

To learn from field biologists how to assist the natural regeneration of *Ocotea montevertensis* click the link to this short [video](#) and visit their website [here](#).



Neglected tree species - Red alert for endangered trees



As we have already entered the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, an ever-growing number of forest restoration and tree planting projects are being implemented. While this is an obvious step forward towards caring for our forests, we must not forget to preserve irreplaceable threatened species from extinction at the hand of human induced pressures. With the support of Fondation Franklinia, Fauna & Flora International has been taking action, over the past two decades, to bring some of the most endangered and least-known trees in the world back from the brink of extinction. To learn more about Fauna & Flora International and to get a in depth look at the conservation of 3 threatened trees species that were saved from extinction, click [here](#).

Mexican daisy trees



Mexico is floristically the fourth most species-rich country in the world, and Asteraceae is the most diverse vascular plant family in this country. The species exhibits a wide range of growth forms, but the tree-like habit, appropriately named daisy trees, is heavily underestimated. As very little was known about their precise species number or conservation status in Mexico, our partner Instituto de Ecología (INECOL) and colleagues updated the list of known Mexican daisy tree species, summarized their very diverse uses, presented a general panorama of their present and future distribution, and discussed their conservation status. With 149 daisy tree species, Mexico ranks second at a global level; within the country, their greatest diversity is found in central and western Mexico. The article can be read [here](#).

INECOL is the leading organisation for the assessment of Mexican tree species and submitted more than 1'000 assessments to the IUCN Red List during the last 2.5 years.

Cambodia - Illegal logging in Prey Lang forest

We received worrying news from the projected implemented in the Prey Lang forest landscape in Cambodia where our foundation supports local communities. A local media posted a video about illegal logging in the area that can be watched [online here](#). Ouch Leng, former Goldman Environmental Prize winner, and other “activists” calling for the “preservation of their ancestral heritage forest” were arrested earlier this year. A local newspaper article can be read [here](#).



Unfortunately, a vast majority of the project proposals that we receive mention ongoing illegal logging and this is a wide spread ongoing problem not only affecting tropical regions. Other examples were reported from Europe and the United States by various media. One example reported by Le Monde is the situation occurring in Romania where a widespread traffic has been reported. The article is only available in French and available [here](#).

Another interesting case occurred in the Olympic National Forest in the US and tree DNA was used to convict two men of stealing the valuable trees from public lands and selling them to local mills. The article can be read [here](#).

Protecting an endemic Critically Endangered palm tree in Vanuatu

NYBG

Vanuatu is a unique place with a rich but poorly known flora but also a very rich human culture. With over 120 languages, it has the world's highest linguistic density per capita. Working in such a country requires spending time on site and become familiar with local cultures and, in particular, understand practices of land ownership and management.

Spending more time on the island is exactly what happened to Gregory Plunkett from the New York Botanical Garden. He was in Vanuatu when the covid pandemic emerged and could not leave the country. In [this video](#), he explains the progress made in protecting *Carpoxylon macrospermum*, an endemic Critically Endangered palm tree.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

- **There will never be enough trees to offset our carbon emissions.**

Across the world, governments, companies and conservation charities have pledged to conserve or plant a massive number of trees. However, the truth is that even if we maximized the amount of vegetation on earth that would still only be enough to offset 10 years of our current CO₂ emissions. Furthermore, by rushing to plant an increasing number of trees we could be inadvertently damaging very forest properties that make them so crucial to our well-being. To understand this problematic, we first need to understand that forests are so much more than just carbon stores. In fact, they are extremely complex green webs that bind together the fate of millions of species. To survive and thrive in the future with the threats and realities of climate change, we will need to understand and accept our place in this web. To access the full article, [click here](#).

- **“Green” carbon policies can potentially hurt forests.**

“Green” carbon policies are increasingly being adopted by big companies to offset the environmental damage they cause. While reducing CO₂ concentrations is imperative, a carbon-centric view cannot promote a transition to a sustainable future as we depend on forests for so much more than just carbon storage. Furthermore, carbon policies may actually bring further destruction upon forests ecosystems and people that inhabit them. [This article](#) explains how this might happen and how a change from business-friendly policies to recognizing the importance of indigenous communities in forest restoration is needed to promote the transition to a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

- **2021, a decisive year for forest conservation?**

According to the 2020 Global Forest Review, 12.2 million hectares of rainforest, including 4.2 million of primary forest were lost in 2020 alone which is 12% more than in 2019. This accelerated destruction of forests needs to be addressed in the hopes of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050, first of all by reducing the events of voluntary deforestation but also by reducing what is called “imported deforestation”. Europe is solely responsible for 16% of the loss of forests around the globe through the products that are imported (such as cocoa, palm oil and soybean). If the pathways to reduce deforestation seem simple enough in theory, the debates over what is the best to restore degraded forest ecosystems is still raging. [This article](#) by Serge Muller from our partner organisation, the Paris Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle depicts the current discussions within the scientific community on deforestation and reforestation but also what is at stake politically in 2021.

- **How to combat deforestation?**

Outside of temperate and boreal areas, the rate of deforestation never ceases to increase, driven by financial objectives, increase in the world’s population and the increase in demand for products that drive deforestation. The French Institute of International Relations recently published a new study identifying the strategies that have to be employed to tackle deforestation. Among these strategies that need to be implemented, we can find the need for a strict limit on the demand of products that drive deforestation, the development of ecological fiscalité favoring zero deforestation, agricultural practices and sustainable logging, as well as the creation of a common agenda for food security and a reduction of the rate of deforestation within developing countries. Read more about this study [here](#).

- **Only 3% of the worlds’ ecosystems remain intact.**

A new study combining three datasets of species loss suggests that only 3% of ecosystems around the globe remain ecologically intact with healthy populations of all their original animals (and possibly plants?) and with undisturbed habitat. Furthermore, only 11% of the remaining functionally intact areas are included in protected areas and only 4% are designated as Key Biodiversity Areas. The study also provides a possible solution that could help restore the functionality of degraded areas; reintroducing a small number of important species such as elephants or wolves could help restore the ecological “intactness” of the Earth’s land to 20%. With fast progress towards the completion of a global assessment of the world’s tree species, it will probably be possible to incorporate trees in such analyses in the near future. Read more [here](#).

- **Is the extinction of some species inevitable?**

Some conservation prioritization methods rely on the assumptions that current conservation needs overwhelm the financial resources available and that, therefore, not all species can be saved from extinction and that a conservation triage scheme is necessary to guide resource allocation. However, the improvement of political frameworks for species conservation, the establishment of new funding mechanisms and the emergence of many non-governmental organizations with rapid small-grant responses, give hope that greater financial resources could be given to biodiversity conservation in the future with the explicit goal of zero human-induced extinctions. The foundation was involved in the article and trees included. The article can be found [here](#).

- **Is it better to plant trees or let nature heal itself through regeneration?**

The obvious solution to restore forests has more frequently been to plant more trees. However, as explained in the article above about how “green” carbon policies might backfire, the obvious solution is not necessarily the right one. The alternative approach to forest restoring through tree planting is natural regeneration, a method that is considerably cheaper to implement, and have been proved to be efficient in recovering forest biomass and biodiversity. However, natural regeneration does not come without drawbacks, as regeneration often relies on animal species to act as seed dispersers whose populations have been severely depleted. When comparing the two methods, it was found that actively restored forests stored carbon 50% faster than naturally regenerated forests. While this is a considerable difference, there is truly no one-size-fits-all to ecosystem restoration and different approaches might be needed to tackle very distinct problematics. Read more about this 20-year study [here](#).

- **Global Conservation Translocation Perspectives.**

The IUCN SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group has published the seventh in their series: *Global Conservation Translocation Perspectives*. This new issue, produced in the same standardized format as previous years, gives insight on what has worked and what hasn’t work so well, thus, allowing practitioners to learn from past successes and most importantly failures to add to the arsenal of solutions for translocations and reintroductions across many different regions. Learn more about the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group and the four case studies on threatened tree species (*Araucaria angustifolia*; *Zelkova sicula*; *Amygdalus georgica*; *Abies yuanbaoshanensis*) [here](#). All benefited from support from our foundation.

- **Cooperation between trees.**

Suzanne Simard discovered in 1977 (click [here](#) to access the original paper published in Nature) that, contrarily to the dominant scientific narrative, trees were cooperating amongst themselves through complex networks of mycorrhizal fungi to share resources such as carbon, nitrogen, water and nutrients. Furthermore, she also discovered that trees might share more resources with their offspring than with unrelated seedlings. Read more about this fascinating discovery and the life of the accomplished ecologist Suzanne Simard [here](#).

- **A database for Euro-mediterranean trees.**

A project aimed to collate, homogenize, and verify datasets on tree species, their functional traits, and phylogeny, from existing but sparse datasets and complete them where possible for the Euro-Mediterranean area. The WOODIV database provides occurrences, functional traits, and sequences for three DNA regions, together with the modelled occurrences and a phylogeny for 210 Euro-Mediterranean tree species, including 44 “cryptic” tree species which are often neglected in existing forest databases. The article is available [here](#).

- **A new tool to measure the impact of conservation action.**

A paper was recently published in the journal *Conservation Biology* which, for the first time applies the IUCN Green Status of Species, a new tool complementary to the Red List, to measure how close a species is to being fully ecologically functional across its range, and how much it has recovered thanks to conservation action. In the paper, preliminary IUCN Green Status assessments for 181 species are presented. Our foundation supported a workshop dedicated to tree species to ensure that this promising new tool was perfectly applicable to trees. The paper is available [here](#). Information about the Green Status can be found [here](#).

- **Resurrecting the Judean palm tree.**

Forests of Judean date palm trees *Phoenix dactylifera* once covered ancient Israel, from Lake Galilee to the Dead Sea. The trees and their fruit was a symbol of the region but they became extinct by the Middle Ages. A team of scientists has succeeded in resurrecting the ancient tree using seeds collected more than 2000 years ago and found and stored 40 years ago. A video detailing this fascinating story can be watched [here](#).

- **Kew Declaration.**

In the previous issue of our newsletter we mentioned the “Reforestation for Biodiversity, Carbon Capture and Livelihoods” conference organised by Kew Botanic Gardens and BGCI on February 24-26, 2021 with the support of our foundation. This conference resulted in a declaration supported by hundreds of organisations which can be found [here](#).

The Declaration is most welcome as planting trees is not such a simple solution and planting the wrong trees in the wrong place can cause considerably more damage than benefits. It makes important requests to policymakers, reforestation financiers and practitioners, to develop policies and frameworks to prevent further deforestation and to ensure effective restoration strategies to protect biodiversity, mitigate climate change and improve livelihoods.

- **The risks of tree plantation in grassland and non-forest areas.**

Another detailed article expressing concerns over tree plantations and celebrations of million trees planted in record time can be found [here](#). The definition of a forest is rightly questioned and the risk of categorizing savannahs as degraded forest areas is highlighted.