

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council  
Virtual Meeting  
Wednesday 9 October 2024  
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)  
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Brussels and Paris Time  
9:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. (+1 day) Tokyo Time**

**Impacts of CEPF Investment on Globally Threatened Species**

**Background:**

Globally, more than 45,000 species are threatened with extinction, according to the [IUCN Red List](#). These include 12% of all birds, 26% of all mammals and 41% of all amphibians. Over the last 500 years, human activity has led to the extinction of more than 800 species, and the current rate of extinction is between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than background rates. This matters. Not only because species are valuable, beautiful and irreplaceable in their own right, but also because they contribute directly to human well-being, as a source of food, materials and medicine, and they are the key building blocks of ecosystems that deliver services essential to human societies.

Species conservation has been identified as a priority for CEPF investment in almost every ecosystem profile. As such, it has been a major focus of one-in-four grants awarded to date (785) and the main focus of one-in-eight (403). Since inception, 1,344 globally threatened species have benefitted from conservation actions by CEPF grantees. These actions have been diverse, ranging from threat reduction to captive breeding and reintroduction. These actions have been broadly spread among taxonomic groups, with 21% of the species benefiting being plants, 19% birds, 16% invertebrates, 16% amphibians, 15% mammals, 7% reptiles and 6% fishes.

The hotspot with by far the most species conservation grants has been Indo-Burma, with 178 and counting. This reflects the fact that Indo-Burma has the largest human population and highest rates of deforestation of any biodiversity hotspot. It is located in Southeast Asia, which has been [identified](#) as the top priority region for averting imminent species extinctions. Vertebrate extinction risks in the region are higher than anywhere else on the planet due to a combination of rampant degradation and loss of natural habitats, and high demand for wildlife and wildlife products for luxury consumption, medicine, pets and trophies.

With CEPF support, civil society organizations in the Indo-Burma Hotspot have taken actions benefiting 98 species since 2009. These comprise 38 mammals, 23 birds, 18 plants, 16 reptiles and three fishes. Through continuous support from CEPF and other

fundings, for a decade or more in some cases, population declines have been slowed, halted or reduced. Thanks to monitoring of population data (where this has been feasible and cost-effective to do), CEPF grantees have produced verifiable evidence of the positive impacts of conservation investment.

One eye-catching impact was the increase in greater adjutant (*Leptoptilos dubius*) — the world's second rarest species of stork — at Prek Toal waterbird colony on Cambodia's Tonle Sap lake. This population has increased from only 50 breeding pairs in the early 2000s to 200 pairs today. Supported by CEPF grants since 2009, this result was made possible by sustained efforts by Wildlife Conservation Society and partners to reduce hunting pressure and protect critical habitat. A key inflection point was in 2016, when CEPF supported an emergency response to an outbreak of forest fires during El Niño conditions, which threatened the nesting colony. These efforts, together with the work of conservationists in northeast India, led to the IUCN Red List status of this species being downlisted from Endangered to Near Threatened in 2023.

CEPF Managing Director Jack Tordoff will present an overview of CEPF investment in species conservation in the Indo-Burma Hotspot and examples of impacts on key populations of globally threatened species.