KBA

KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

KBA PROGRAMME ANNUAL REPORT 2022

KBA PARTNERS:

BirdLife International · IUCN · American Bird Conservancy · asa · Conservation International · Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund · gef · NatureServe · Rainforest Trust · re:wild · RSPB · WCS · WWF

FOREWORD

This year was special for biodiversity. The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was finally signed in December 2022. This framework consists of 4 goals and 23 targets. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) will play a major role in helping achieve several of these targets and contribute notably to achieving goal A. The 'coverage of KBAs by protected areas and other area-based effective conservation measures (OECMs)' is a component indicator for Target 3. The 'status of KBAs' is also a complementary indicator for targets 2 and 3, and the 'proportion of spatial plans that incorporate KBAs' is a complementary indicator for target 1. The KBA Partnership advocated strongly for KBAs to be specifically recognised in Target 3, as sites of particular importance for biodiversity, but parties demonstrated that much needs to be done to enhance their awareness of the importance of KBAs in meeting target 3 at national level. The language "areas of particular importance for biodiversity" is liked for its simplicity, but was not enough to help achieve Aichi Target 11. The need to continue to promote the value added by KBAs in guiding the establishment of new protected areas in sites of high value for biodiversity cannot be overstated.

New KBAs are being identified on all continents now, with 24 KBA National Coordination Groups (NCGs) established working on national assessments of their KBAs. It is exciting to see the diversity of places, ecosystems and species being considered for their KBA status. Supporting the establishment of new NCGs is a key focus for expanding the value and impact of KBAs.

It is also good to see that KBAs are becoming more widely known and used by the private sector and donors. KBAs are now being used by more than 15,000 private sector companies through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) and the KBA data are being made available to more than 200,000 companies through the RepRisk filter.

Bezos Earth Fund support to the KBA Programme, through BirdLife International, started in 2022 and is supporting the assessment of KBAs in three Congo basin and four Andes countries led by KBA National Coordination Groups. This significant grant is also supporting the development of training tools and webinars as well as the redesign and re-launch of the World Database of KBAs which was achieved in mid 2022. We are very grateful to Bezos Earth Fund support to the KBA Programme and it has allowed us to scale up our activities in 2022 helping us to identify potentially 800-1000 new KBAs.

The European Union also has started funding projects to identify KBAs across Europe including the establishment of KBA National Coordination Groups in five countries. Going forward, it is critical that the KBA Partners mainstream KBAs identification and support of NCGs into their in-country conservation initiatives and fundraising. This report summarises some of our work across the world to identify these globally significant sites and we hope you enjoy reading about the progress being made.

Naomi Kingston & Paul Matiku,
Co-Chairs KBA Committee

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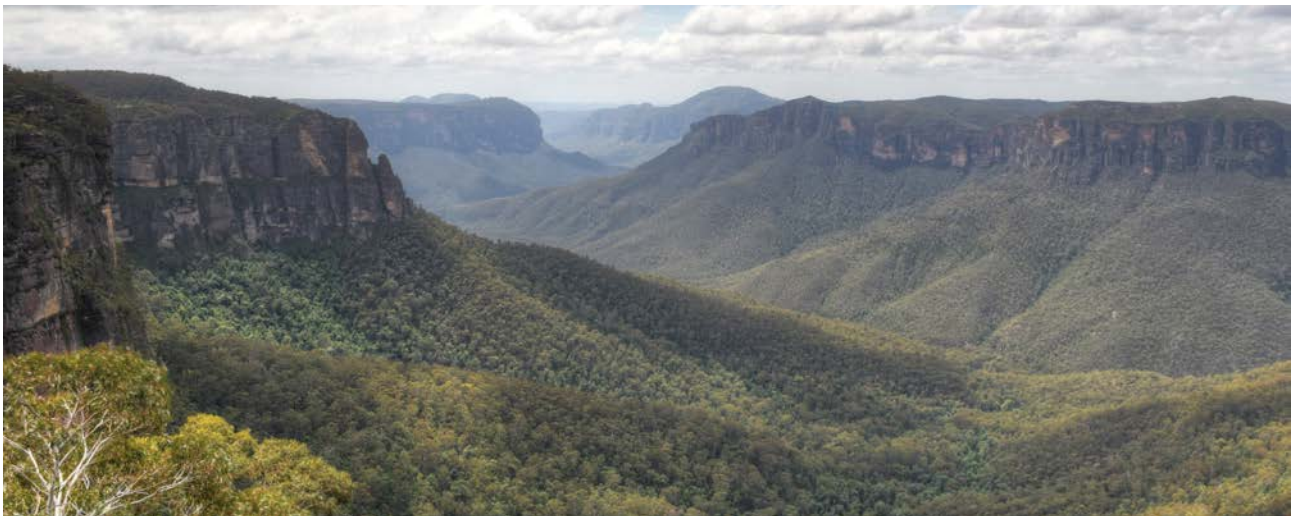
KBA PROGRAMME

The Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Programme is an ambitious attempt to identify, map, monitor and conserve the critical sites for global biodiversity across the planet. Led by 13 international conservation organisations that form the KBA Partnership, this programme aims to support each nation of the world to identify KBAs within their country and to support identification of KBAs on the High Seas. This is providing a blueprint of sites for conservation that contain globally important populations of species or globally significant areas of ecosystems, and sites of outstanding ecological integrity or irreplaceability. Knowing, with precision, the location of those places that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity is critical information for a wide range of end users across society, from national decision makers to private companies, as well as for use by international conventions and, ultimately, to direct conservation actions to halt further losses and address existing and emerging threats.

A Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA Standard) published by IUCN in 2016 establishes a consultative, science-based process for the identification of globally important sites for biodiversity worldwide. Sites qualify as global KBAs if they meet one or more of 11 criteria in five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and, irreplaceability. The KBA criteria have quantitative thresholds and can be applied to species and ecosystems in terrestrial, inland water and marine environments.

The vision of the KBA Programme is a comprehensive network of sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity that is appropriately identified, correctly documented, effectively managed, sufficiently resourced and adequately safeguarded. A seven-year strategic plan was developed in 2018 which guides the KBA Programme and provides indicators to measure progress. This report summarises some of the key achievements made towards the implementation of the KBA Programme and strategy in 2022.



344 KBA PROPOSALS
REVIEWED IN 2022

KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

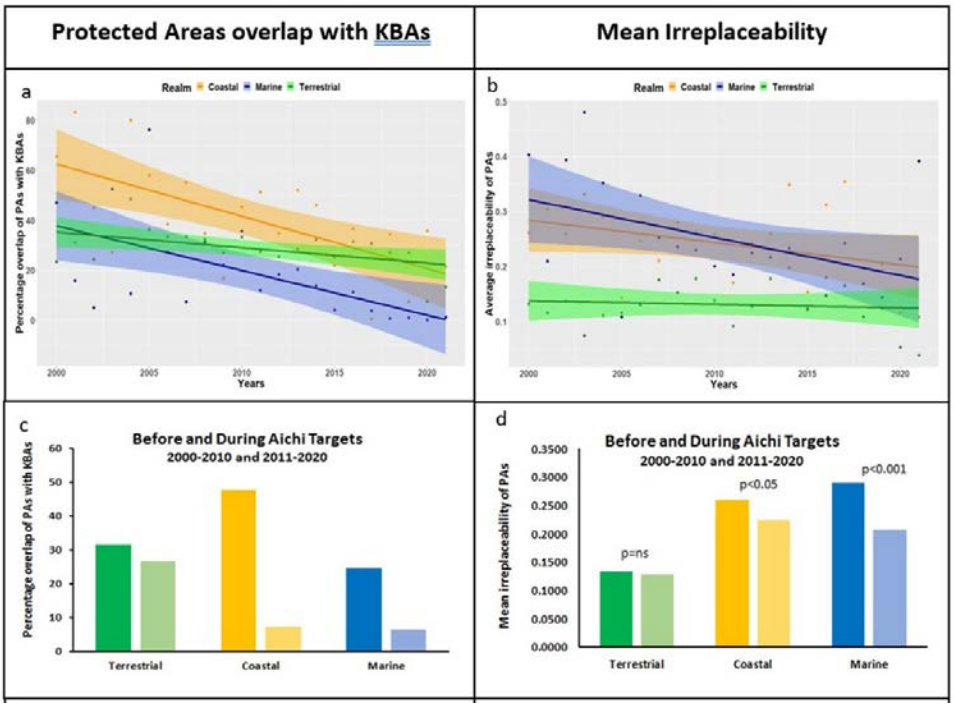
In December 2022 the negotiations by parties on the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) were completed following an intensive set of meetings and events throughout the year leading up to COP15. The result is a set of four long-term goals to 2050 and 23 targets for 2030 that aim to achieve a mission *'To take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet by conserving and sustainably using biodiversity, and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources, while providing the necessary means of implementation'*.

KBAs are most relevant to Target 1 on spatial planning, Target 2 on restoration, Target 3 on expansion of protected and conserved areas to 30% coverage of land and seas, and Target 4 on species conservation. There are specific KBA indicators in the GBF for targets 1,2 and 3, with the *'Coverage of KBAs by protected and conserved areas'* as a component indicator for Target 3 and a complementary indicator for target 3 when applied to migratory species. *'The status of KBAs'* is a complementary indicator for targets 2 and 3 and the *'Proportion of spatial plans using KBAs'* is a complementary indicator for Target 1.

During the year negotators pushed hard that KBAs should be recognised (with other approaches) in Target 3 as *areas of particular importance for biodiversity*, the phrase which had been used in Aichi Target 11 (protection of 17% of land and 10% of seas). Sadly, no agreement could be achieved on defining this phrase in the final negotiations. Recent guidance on each of the Targets has been published online by the CBD and for Target 1 *areas of high biodiversity importance* have been defined as including KBAs but it has not been defined clearly for Target 3. As we show elsewhere in this report, the failure to define *'areas of particular importance for biodiversity'* led to a decline in the biodiversity value of sites protected under the Aichi targets because the focus of the target became the percentage coverage rather than the quality of sites.

We need to make sure that up to 2030 that we do not make the same mistakes if we are to achieve Goal A of the GBF to halt human-induced extinctions. The Bezos Earth Fund support to KBA identification in the Andes and Congo Basin (featured in this report) will go some way to ensuring that efforts to achieve 30% of land and seas covered by protected and conserved areas by 2030 (30 x 30) in these important countries for biodiversity will focus on globally significant sites.

KBAs CAN GUIDE WHERE 30 X 30 OCCURS



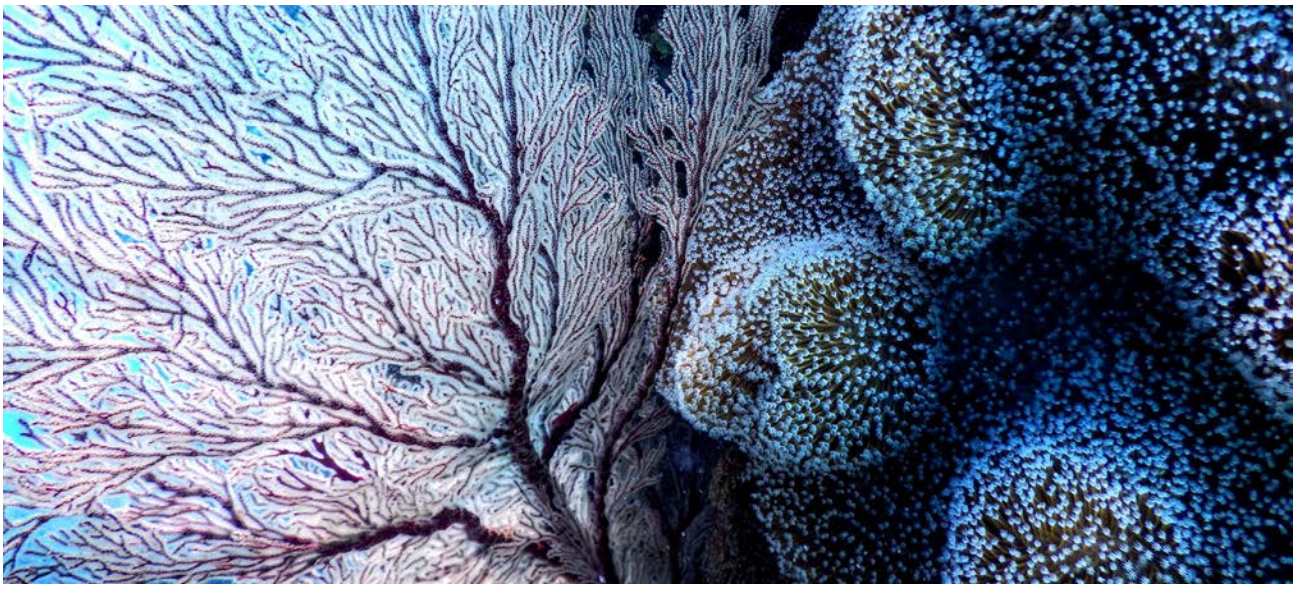
The Kunming-Montréal GBF established Target 3 to *'Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water,and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, … recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities including over their traditional territories'*.

The phrase *'especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity'* was used because it had been used for Aichi Target 11 of the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and was acceptable to most nations. However, this phrase was not defined by CBD and as a result is applied differently in different countries making impossible any comparison between countries or regions of the world.

We analysed trends in biodiversity value of protected areas established in the ten years before the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and over the lifetime of that plan and showed a negative trend for terrestrial, coastal and marine sites over time in protected area overlap with KBAs. In particular there were significant reductions for coastal and marine sites during the plan period. We also show significant declines in the irreplaceability values (Baisero et al. 2021[1]) of protected areas for coastal and marine sites during the period of the plan. These results are a concern as it shows that protected area expansion tended to focus on the percentage area component of Aichi Target 11, but not the quality of sites.

If we are to succeed in achieving Goal A of the Kunming-Montréal GBF and halt extinctions and bend the curve of biodiversity loss, we need to make sure we put the 30% protected and conserved areas in places that are important for conserving biodiversity. KBAs provide a transparent and scientific approach to identifying sites of importance for biodiversity and they should be used to guide the 30 x 30 to achieve conservation in sites that will contribute to halting biodiversity loss and extinctions.

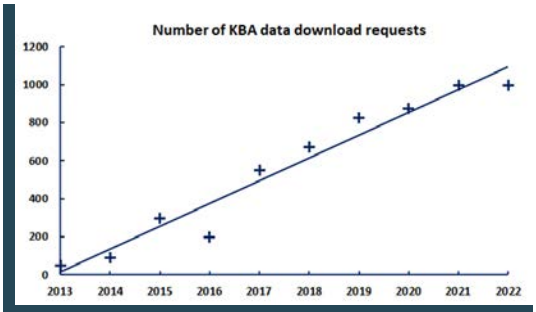
1 Baisero, Schuster & Plumptre (2021) Redefining and Mapping Global Irreplaceability. Conservation Biology. 36:e13806

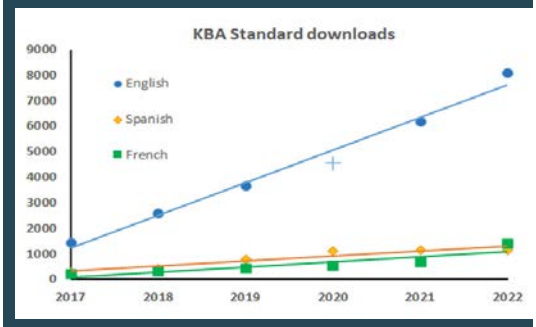


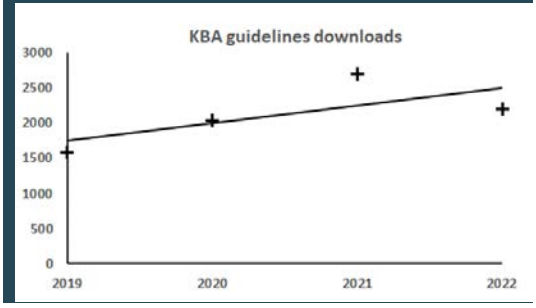
TOOLS TO SUPPORT KBA IDENTIFICATION

World Database of KBAs

With grants from the Bezos Earth Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation to BirdLife International we were able to redesign the World Database of KBAs (WDKBA), transitioning all the data to a new platform and building in the ability to query and download subsets of the data for further analysis by the scientific and conservation community. Improvements to the KBA dashboard were made to better query the data and show the results in a graphical format. The ability to propose KBAs directly into the WDKBA was also built, which allows us to link to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species data. This enables us to provide the threat status, taxonomy and other relevant data to KBA proposers, applying the KBA criteria automatically to the data on global and site populations provided by proposers. The WDKBA is also now accessible in English, French and Spanish to support greater use and enable proposals for sites to be made in these languages.







Use of KBA data continued to increase at a steady rate with 995 downloads of data in 2022. Downloads of the KBA Standards in English, French and Spanish also increased steadily. The KBA Guidelines v1.2 were published in 2022 clarifying certain criteria, in particular Criterion C on ecological integrity, and these were made available in French and Spanish.

Training courses in the application of KBA criteria

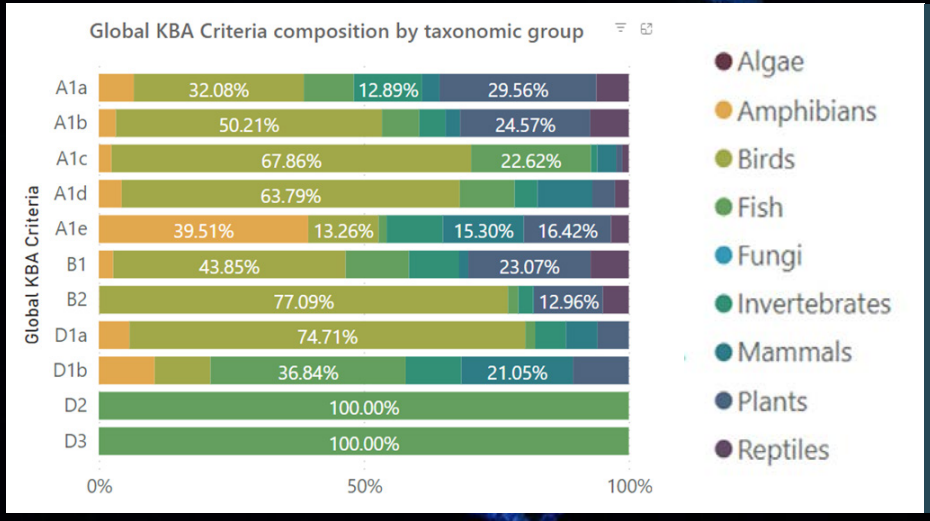
A KBA Training officer, Samridhi Rijal, was recruited with Bezos Earth Fund support, and she has been revising and updating the training materials for in-person training courses, learning from application of these materials in the Congo Basin and Andes. She developed specific materials for Criterion C following the revision of the guidelines and several webinars to help explain the system of proposing KBAs online and the review process. Webinar training materials which include training on accessing the World Database of KBAs, proposing KBAs and Criterion C are available on the Key Biodiversity Areas Community YouTube site.

The online training course on the Identification and delineation of Key Biodiversity Areas was finalised in early 2022 and has subsequently been translated into French, Spanish and Portuguese. The course is comprised of eight modules with case studies, practical exercises and short tests of knowledge. An Advanced Practitioner option is also available with associated exam.

A total of 661 people were trained in applying the KBA Criteria in 2022; 404 during in-person training events, 119 attending webinar training events and 138 through the online courses.
In-person training courses were provided in Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon and Republic of Congo together with Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru with support from the Bezos Earth Fund. In addition, RSPB and CEPF supported in-person training in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria. IUCN also provided training in Algeria, Additional online training was provided in Angola, China, and to several West African countries at the same time.

Seven webinars were provided on various topics that were recorded and uploaded to the KBA Community You Tube site. These focused on topics relevant to the development of the Global Biodiversity Framework as well as how to use some of the tools that were being developed to propose KBAs.

661 people were trained in how to identify KBAs in 2022



A1: Threatened species;

B1: Geographically restricted species;

B2: Co-occuring restricted range species;

D1: Aggregations of species

D2: Ecological refugia

D3: Recruitment sources

United Arab Emirates the **first country** identifying KBAs across multiple taxonomic groups **in the Middle East**

IDENTIFICATION OF KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

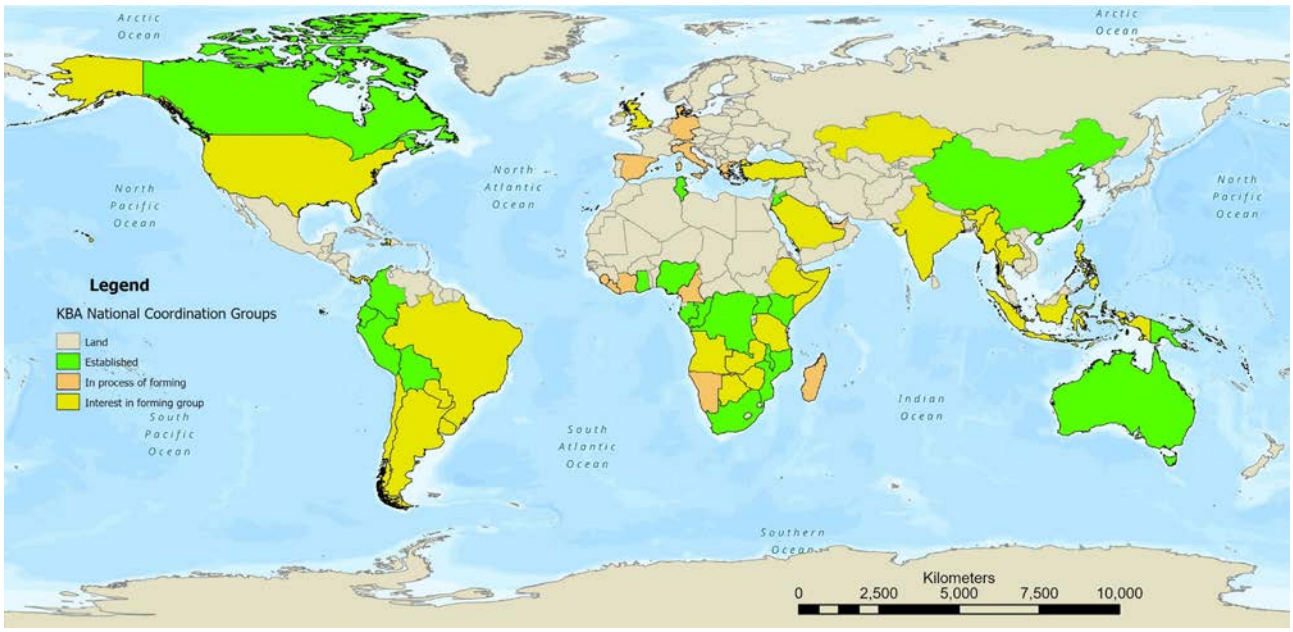
The IUCN Regional Office of West Asia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCaE) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and along with the technical support from the Biodiversity Assessment and Knowledge Team and Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation have just finalised a comprehensive review and reassessment of their Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). After a long process of consultation and review with national and international experts and stakeholders (Including academics, Ministry staff, international organizations, among others), nine sites were found to qualify as Global KBAs, bringing the total number of KBAs in UAE to 14, with five sites qualifying as Regional KBAs.

The taxonomic groups that were assessed through the identification process included Mammalia, Birds (Aves), Amphibia, Reptilia, Chondrichthyes, Gastropoda, Insecta and a 22 additional species that were believed likely to trigger the KBA criteria. Out of these species, 8 species triggered the KBA criteria thresholds: *Oryx leucoryx; Gazella arabica; Gazella marica; Dugong dugon; Phalacrocorax nigrogularis; Asaccus caudivolvulus; Asaccus margaritae*; and *Ptyodactylus ruusaljibalicus*. The KBA assessment identified two KBAs for Dugong (D. dugon) and these are the first KBAs for Dugong in the Middle East.

The project also established a KBA National Coordination Group with coordination and support from MoCCaE, that will be responsible for monitoring the KBAs in the future and keeping the KBAs updated, including identifying additional KBAs as species distribution data improve. The UAE is at the vanguard of biodiversity conservation, demonstrating a committed stance through multiple and complementary initiatives. These include identifying KBAs, developing a National Red List, and designating protected areas. These initiatives serve to fill knowledge gaps about the country's biodiversity, with their outcomes serving as critical resources in shaping future policies and plans. This, in turn, aims to enhance the country's economic benefits, such as bolstering the growth of eco-tourism. Moreover, MoCCaE has gone a step further by collating these projects into a unified GIS platform. This tool serves as a valuable resource for a variety of stakeholders including researchers, private sector companies, NGOs, and decision-makers. It offers a comprehensive database to explore and expand scientific understanding of biodiversity, paving the way for informed decisions on preservation and sustainable practices.

24 Countries have now established KBA **National Coordination Groups**

GROWING NUMBERS OF KBA NATIONAL COORDINATION GROUPS



Wherever countries are interested in making comprehensive assessments of their KBAs it is recommended that they establish a KBA National Coordination Group (KBA NCG). A KBA NCG coordinates the KBA work in country and ensures that the process is nationally driven and owned. KBA National Coordination Groups (KBA NCGs) were established in twenty-four countries by the end of 2022, adding 10 new countries to those established at the end of 2021. An additional 11 countries are in the process of establishing KBA NCGs at present, including five in Europe with funding from Biodiversa. There is also more general interest from many more countries. A key requirement is the need for funding to catalyse these groups and start the process of KBA identification and this delays the formation of some groups, but an increasing number of donors are supporting these processes.

Establishing KBA NCGs takes more time and resources but the effort is worth it as these groups can help promote KBAs within their country, play a role in monitoring and working to conserve the sites in the long term, and can promote their recognition in national policy and legislation. A good example of this is Mozambique which undertook a KBA assessment between 2019-2021 and has subsequently recognised their sites in their National Territorial Plan for the country and have made KBAs offset sites, so that companies having negative impacts can fund the conservation of these sites as offset projects.

A total of 345 KBAs were reviewed of which 122 were nominated and 78 confirmed as global KBAs in 2022. Data on many additional sites, particularly spatial data on their boundaries, were improved in 2022 to address errors and improve accuracy. More than 800 sites are under proposal development which the KBA Regional Focal Points are supporting and reviewing. Increasing training in how to make proposals is improving the documentation of sites and will hopefully increase the number of sites that are confirmed once nominated.

CANADA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SUPPORT KBA IDENTIFICATION

The Canadian KBA Coalition, led by WCS Canada, Birds Canada (Birdlife in Canada) and NatureServe Canada, has identified well over 950 candidate KBAs to date, with over 80 of these already appearing on the Canadian KBA registry. With an advanced national program, there is capacity and expertise to ensure that the identification of KBAs across this vast country is an inclusive and collaborative process, and especially including Indigenous Peoples.

The lands and waters known as Canada have been the homelands and traditional territories of hundreds of distinct Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. All KBAs here are on Indigenous territories, and the KBA Canada Coalition recognises the importance of ensuring that Nations and communities around these sites have an opportunity to meaningfully engage and collaborate in the work of identifying KBAs. Indigenous-led conservation is a necessary and effective means of halting and reversing biodiversity loss, and including Indigenous collaboration in the identification of KBAs can help result in gains in not only conservation, but also reconciliation.

The Canadian KBA Coalition reaches out to Indigenous Nations and communities around all sites that are assessed as likely to meet KBA criteria. The KBA Coalition works to ensure that communities and groups are aware of what KBAs are and how they might support existing conservation or land-use goals, through a mix of directed outreach and regional and national workshops. Where there is capacity and interest from Indigenous groups, KBA Coalition is collaborating with Nations and communities on the development of KBA proposals. As a globally recognized standard for recognizing important areas for biodiversity, KBAs are often of interest to Indigenous groups because of how they can support decision making and help attract recognition or additional funding to areas.

In some cases, Nations are working with KBA Canada staff to ensure that KBA proposals go beyond describing biodiversity and also highlight past or existing relationships between people and lands, water, and animals and plants (for example, Nahanni National Park Reserve: Old Pots KBA). In other cases, Nations are co-proposing KBAs alongside KBA Canada staff (like Yat'aayi Héen Candidate KBA, a warm spring containing a unique lake chub population which is being co-proposed with the Taku River Tlingit First Nation). In northern territories and coastal British Columbia, First Nations are working with the KBA Canada Coalition and partners like BC Nature with the goal of having KBA designation

support the government's recognition of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas that Nations have established. In southern Ontario, Indigenous communities are interested in how KBAs can provide a focus for compiling biodiversity information to speed up decision-making and draw in funding for land-based learning opportunities with youth.

With the sheer number and uniqueness of different Indigenous cultures across Canada, the Canadian KBA Coalition faces a large challenge in engaging Indigenous Peoples. Yet alongside that challenge is an incredible opportunity to support Indigenous-led conservation, and to highlight historically-overlooked and incredibly important voices and perspectives – something that will benefit all users of KBA information.

Plants now form 25% of all species that trigger KBA status in the **World Database of KBAs**

BEZOS EARTH FUND SUPPORT TO THE KBA PROGRAMME

The Bezos Earth Fund generously supported the KBA Partnership with a grant of $5 million USD to BirdLife International in 2022. This support is funding comprehensive assessments of KBAs in four Andean nations (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) and three Congo-basin countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Republic of Congo) as well as supporting the development and re-design of the World Database of KBAs (see page 8).

KBA National Coordination Groups were established in each of the seven countries, in many cases formed with representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, Protected Area Authorities, scientific institutions and conservation organisations. In Gabon and Republic of Congo these National Coordination Groups were approved by government, providing a strong endorsement for their actions to identify globally significant areas for conservation. Training courses in applying the KBA Criteria were held in each country and these led to follow-up webinars and application of the criteria to data sets that were compiled on different taxonomic groups. In all countries mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and plants have been assessed, and in some countries freshwater and marine fish, insect groups, corals and molluscs have also been assessed where data exist.

Experts have been working to re-assess all the 580 KBAs identified previously and have identified 352 candidate KBAs using more than 3,000 species. This has been a huge effort compiling data across each country for many more species than those identified as likely KBA triggers and systematically applying the KBA criteria to each species. The KBA criteria have not yet been applied to ecosystems because of the lack of coherent ecosystem maps across both regions, but Criterion C on ecological integrity is being applied in Gabon and Republic of Congo.

In 2023 each KBA National Coordination Group will finalise the identification and re-assessment of KBAs and formally propose these for publishing in the World Database of KBAs. Bezos Earth Fund support in both regions is supporting other organisations to support governments to use these sites to increase the area of protected and conserved sites to meet each country's obligations to achieve 30% coverage by 2030. The project is making the proposed new KBAs available to these institutions as and when they are confirmed.

Bezos Earth Fund support has helped to identify **352 candidate**, and **re-assess 580 KBAs** for more than **3,000 species** in **7 countries**

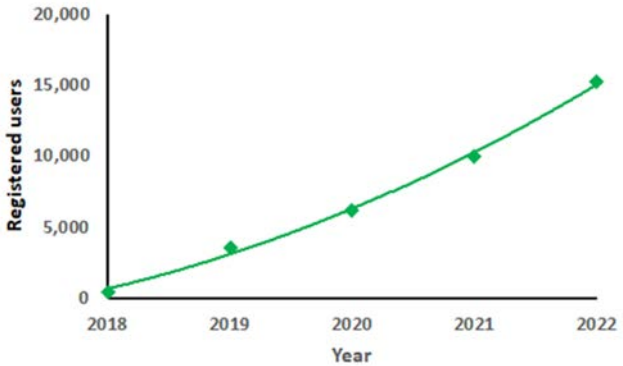
INCREASING USE OF KBAs BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Private Sector Companies will increasingly need to disclose their impacts on nature, and target 15 of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework states that companies will *'regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, …along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios …in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production'.* Services based on KBA data are provided to the private sector through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) which provides industry-specific reports that enable companies to assess their exposure and risks for impacts on biodiversity. IBAT provides data on KBAs, the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the data in Protected Planet on the world's protected areas and OECMs.

Safeguard policies exist for many institutions, many of which follow the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standard 6. This document recognises KBAs as likely Critical Habitat and also recognises Alliance for Zero Extinction sites (KBA qualifying under sub-criterion A1e) as no go areas for financing projects that would have a negative impact on biodiversity. The more than 130 banks that have signed up to the Equator Principles also follow this Standard. What this means is that companies that are looking for funding for projects from these banks need to demonstrate they will have no negative impacts on KBAs as part of their operations. In Mozambique a Ministerial Diploma 55/2022 was published that includes KBAs as avoidance sites for development projects and as priority offset receiving areas.

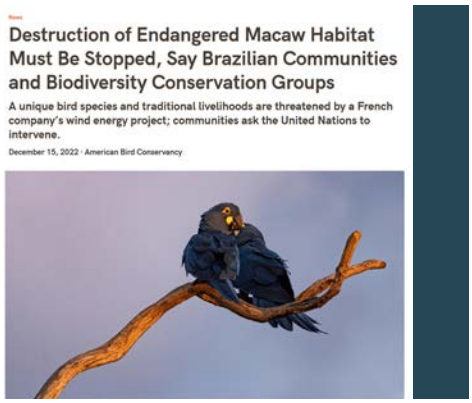
During 2022, the number of registered users on IBAT continued to increase and numbered more than 15,000 companies by the end of the year. Companies pay to subscribe to IBAT at different subscription levels, and these funds are used to support the maintennace and capture of new data for the three main databases used by IBAT, thereby generating sustainable financing for the data compilation and management. In 2022, $300,000 USD was generated for the World Database of KBAs and KBA Programme from IBAT subscriptions.

KBA data were provided through IBAT to other platforms in 2022, notably to 'RepRisk', a site used by more than 200,000 companies to manage their reputational risk. Other sites are developing methods to support companies to disclose their impacts on biodiversity and KBAs are being promoted as important locations to avoid. These include the Task Force for Nature-related Disclosures (TFND), Science-based Targets Network (SBTN) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). KBAs were also recognised as important sites for biodiversity in the EU Taxonomy in 2022 for Sustainable Activities and it is recommended companies have no negative impacts on KBAs and implement mitigation measures to ensure no negative impacts on biodiversity.



In 2022, **73,130 reports** using KBA data were generated by IBAT users to guide site risk assessments.

CONSERVING THREATENED KBAs



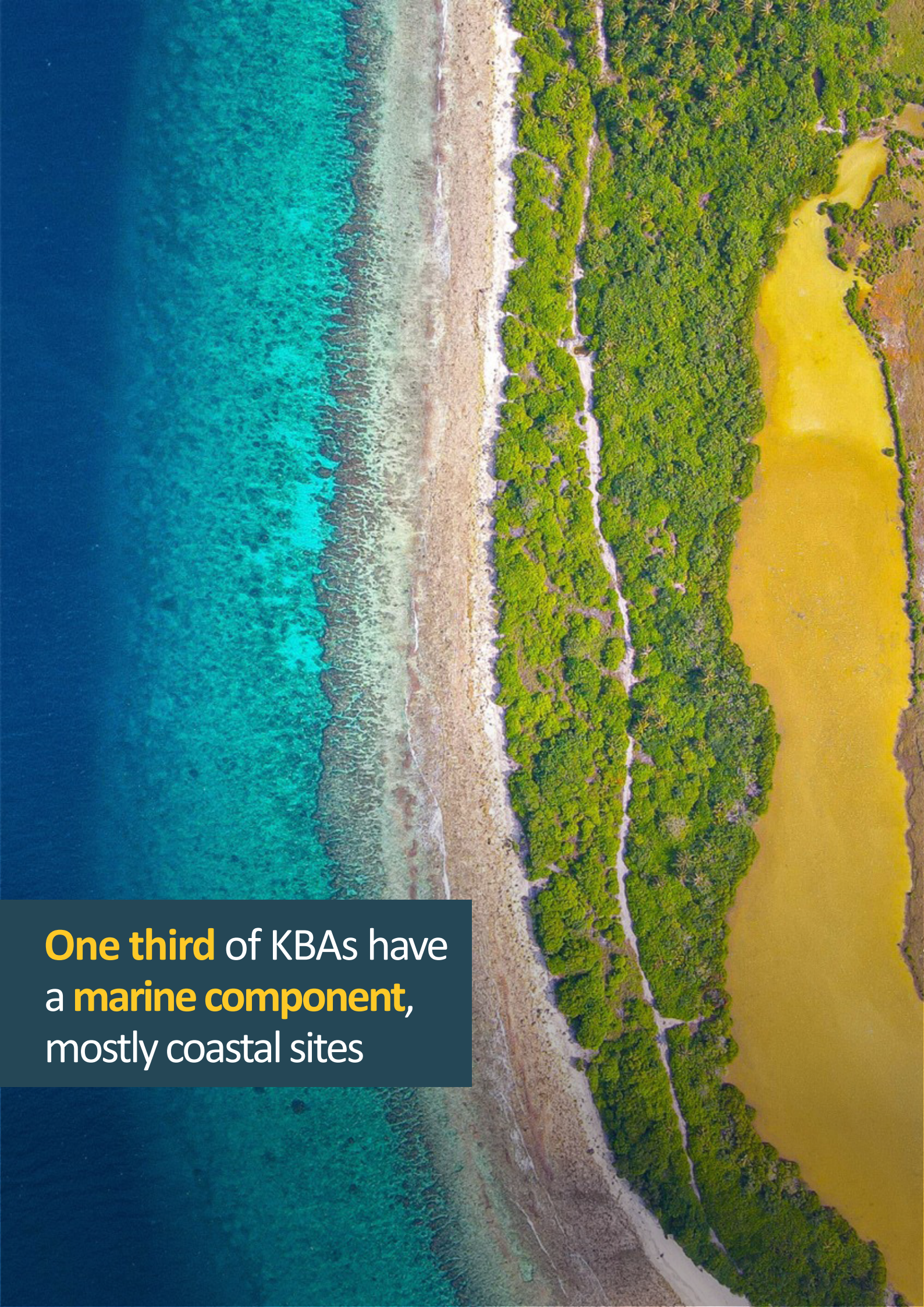
The KBA Programme has a 'Red Flag Working Group' that responds to requests for help tackling major threats to KBAs. The group prioritises cases where there is a local partner who is working to combat the threat to the KBA, where that local partner is actively seeking international support, and where such international support from KBA partners could meaningfully add value to the efforts of the local partners. In 2022, the group worked on 10 cases of major threats to KBAs, conducting a range of interventions targeting strategic leverage points.

One key example was the campaign to halt oil exploration and drilling by ReconAfrica in the Okavango Delta region in Namibia (with plans for Botswana also) which could have posed an enormous threat to the delta and its wildlife, including the likelihood of pollution from spills, wastewater as well as opening up of the region through increased roads. Re:wild led a successful campaign in collaboration with the KBA Partnership and other institutions (such as National Geographic Magazine) and amplified local community voices from Namibia and Botswana urging a halt to the drilling. The campaign brought in celebrities such as Leonardo Di Caprio and Prince Harry to highlight the violations that the company were engaging in, both against the environment and against the local communities living in the region of the drilling. As a result, ReconAfrica's share price tumbled and they have had to pull out of Namibia.

Another case involved the threat of mining in the Intag Valley region of Ecuador. The government had granted a mining concession to a Chilean company in this highly biodiverse site but there had been no consultations with the local communities. The indigenous communities in the area had long been opposing the mine, and Re:Wild supported them to take the company to court. In March 2023 the provincial court ruled that Chilean copper producer Codelco and Ecuador's Empresa Nacional Minera (ENAMI EP) had violated communities' constitutional right to consultation as well as the rights of nature and cancelled their mining licences. Ecuador recognises the rights of nature in its constitution and grants individuals and communities the right to defend these rights on behalf of nature.

Other cases that the group have been tackling include the threat of logging to EBO forest in Cameroon, the conversion of forest to sugar cane in Bugoma Forest in Uganda, and the last remaining site for Spix Macaws in Bahia, Brazil which was threatened by a wind farm that had the potential to increase mortality of these critically endangered birds.

The KBA Programme is planning to establish a fund to support the protection of KBAs under threat. Anyone interested in supporting this fund should contact the KBA Secretariat.



One third of KBAs have a **marine component**, mostly coastal sites

KBA PROGRAMME PRIORITIES FOR 2023

With the signing of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) at COP15 the KBA Programme will be supporting implementation of actions that will help achieve the targets, particularly targets 1, 2 and 3 as well as supporting the achievement of Goal A. In 2023 and 2024 countries will be aligning and revising their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to the GBF and we will be working to encourage a) the establishment of KBA National Coordination Groups, b) systematic KBA identification across multiple taxonomic groups, c) monitoring of KBAs and d) their long-term conservation are incorporated as actions in NBSAPs.

A monitoring protocol for capturing information about changes on the ground in KBAs has been finalised by the KBA Technical Working Group which will be implemented in the World Database of KBAs in 2023. At the end of 2022 an MOU was signed between the KBA Partnership and Planet to develop remote sensing capabilities using their high resolution satellite imagery also. These two monitoring tools will enable the global conservation community to measure how well KBAs are being conserved and will enable us to measure the 'Status of KBAs', one of the complementary indicators of the GBF.

Funding from the Bezos Earth Fund in the second year of the two-year grant will enable the KBA National Coordination Groups in the seven focal countries to finalise their assessments of KBAs and formally publish them in the World Database of KBAs. Funding from Biodiversa and the EU Horizon grants will also support scoping of candidate KBAs across Europe and support the formation of KBA National Coordination Groups in Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, and Denmark. South Africa and Mozambique will also be supporting the development of a KBA Programme and spatial planning for biodiversity in Namibia and Malawi with support from AFD starting in 2023. The nascent KBA national Coordination groups in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu will hopefully also receive funding support from USAID to make assessments of their KBAs among other Pacific islands.

2023 will see a significant increase in the number of KBAs in the World Database of KBAs. In Canada proposals for 497 new KBAs will be made together with re-assessments of 568 existing KBAs. South Africa will also be submitting 350-400 KBAs for the country, many of which will be new KBAs. We expect about 580 re-assessments of KBAs from the seven Bezos focal countries together with about 350 new sites to be published also. In Mozambique, a third phase of the KBA programme started in 2022 to collect data from sites that are considered candidate KBAs and to obtain the information needed to identify them. A national database of KBAs and biodiversity was published to guide planning for biodiversity in the country and this will be further developed in 2023.

Training webinars will be developed to help guide KBA proposers in the use of the Word Database of KBAs proposal portal and these will be given to the KBA Community as well as KBA Regional Focal Points who will start making the reviews of proposals in the database. More and more countries are supporting sharing of expertise in KBA identification. In 2022 Canada helped with KBA training in the Congo basin; Mozambique helped with training in Sao Tomé and Principé as well as translating KBA training materials into Portuguese, and in 2023 South Africa and Mozambique will be helping train in Namibia and Malawi. The KBA Partnership is looking to grow these collaborations in different regions of the world.

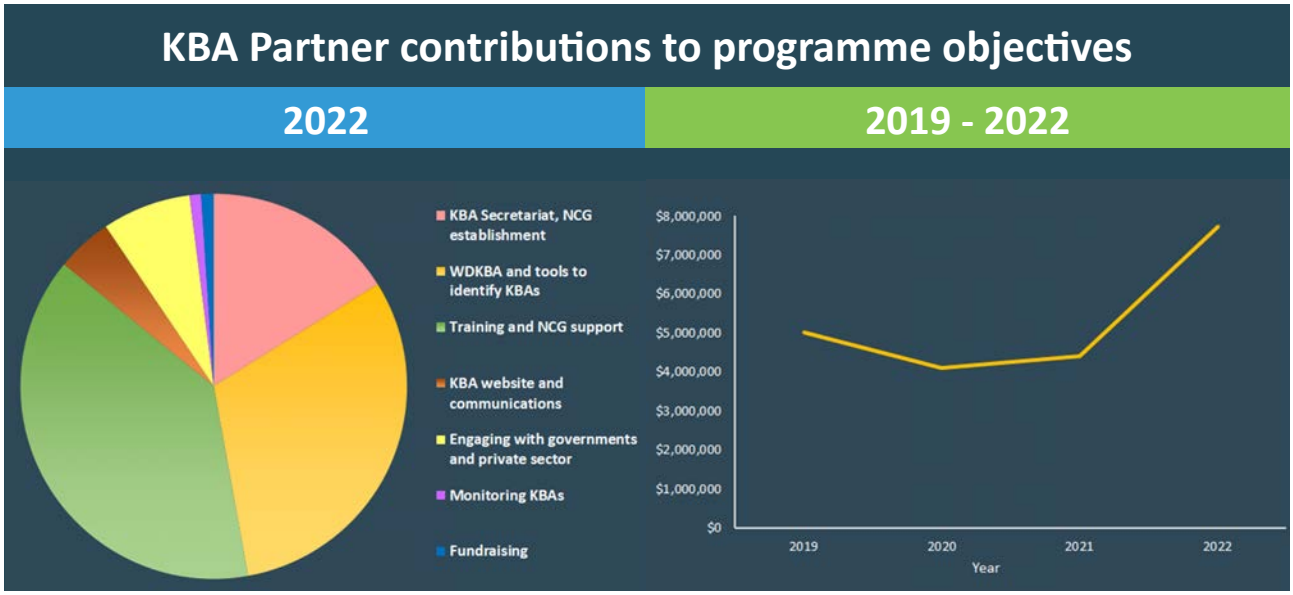
KBA Partners **raised $7.75 million** in 2022 for KBA identification and monitoring

KBA PROGRAMME FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2022

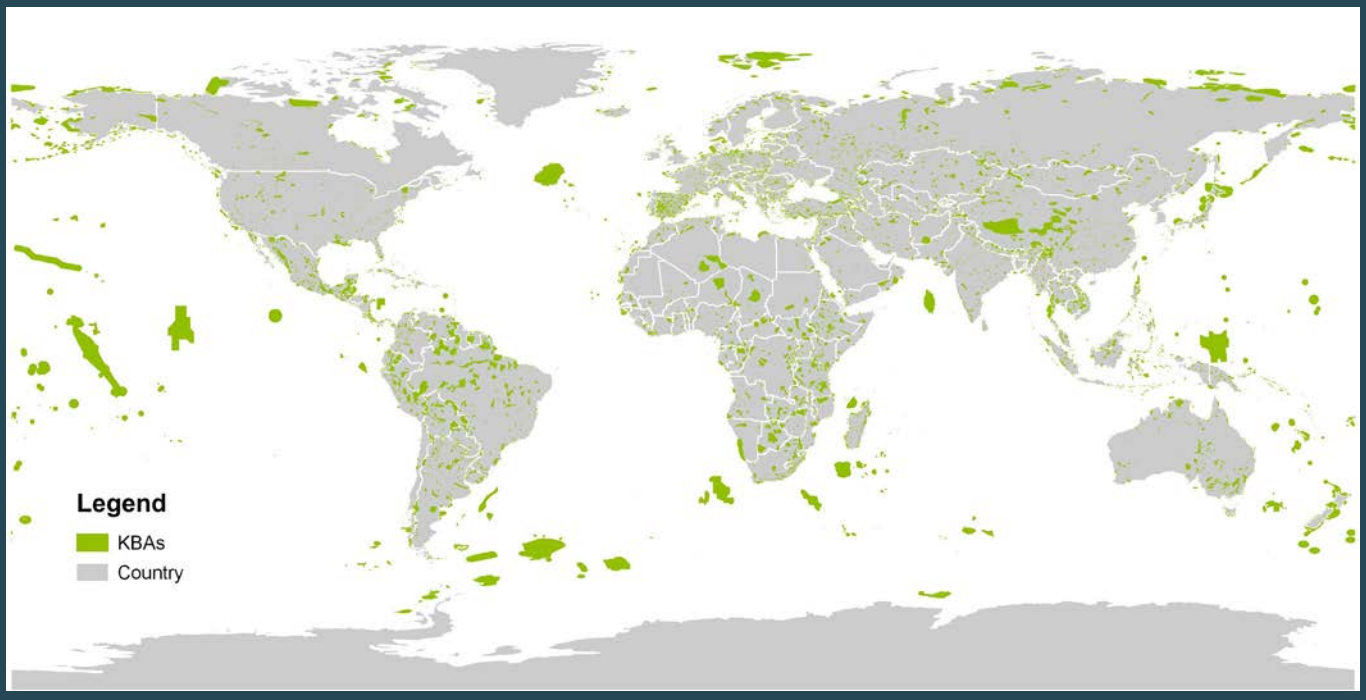
In 2022 the KBA Partners were able to significantly scale up investments in KBAs with the funding from Bezos Earth Fund. More than **7.75 million dollars** in both direct financing and in-kind contributions was made to the KBA Programme. The pie chart below shows the split between some of the main objectives in the KBA Strategic Plan: 1. support to the functioning of the KBA Secretariat including review and validation of KBAs and support to the establishment of KBA National Coordination Groups (KBA NCGs); 2. support to the database and tools such as revision of the KBA guidelines and development of training materials; 3. Training and supporting KBA NCGs to identify KBAs; 4. Communicating about KBAs to various stakeholders; 5. Engaging governments and private sector about the importance of KBAs; 6. monitoring and acting to protect threatened KBAs; and 7. Fundraising for the KBA programme. KBA Partner support to the conservation management of KBAs where they work around the world is not included here, but would increase the total significantly.

The KBA Partners developed a basic operating budget that estimates the basic costs needed to maintain the KBA programme which averages $1 million per year. This includes the core costs of the KBA Secretariat, review and validation of KBAs, supporting the establishment of new KBA NCGs, training in applying KBA criteria and supporting KBA proposal development, further development of the WDKBA, and supporting establishment of a KBA monitoring system. It does not include the costs of KBA identification processes in countries which average about $0.3-0.5 million USD across countries although the costs vary dependent on the size of the country and its cost of living.

We welcome additional organisations which are interesting in joining the KBA Partnership and contributing to identifying, mapping, monitoring and conserving these sites of global importance for biodiversity. Please contact the Head of the KBA Secretariat for more information if interested in becoming a partner (aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org).



Confirmed KBAs across the world



SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Research relevant to the KBA Programme is published by many of the KBA Partner scientists in both the peer-reviewed literature as well as reports. The list of publications here provides examples of some of those published in 2022.

Allan et al. (2022) The minimum land area requiring conservation attention to safeguard biodiversity. *Science 376*: 1094-1101. [Integrates KBAs as sites requiring conservation attention].

Breiner et al. (2022) Setting priorities for climate change adaptation of Critical Sites in the Africa-Eurasian waterbird flyways. *Global Change Biol. 8: 739–752*. [Critical sites = IBAs/KBAs]

Dahal et al. (2022) A validation standard for Area of Habitat maps for terrestrial birds and mammals. *Geoscientific Model Development 15: 5093–5105.* [AOH maps are relevant for KBA identification]

IUCN (2022a) *The conservation status of freshwater species and habitats in Key Biodiversity Areas at the Douro river basin*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. Available here

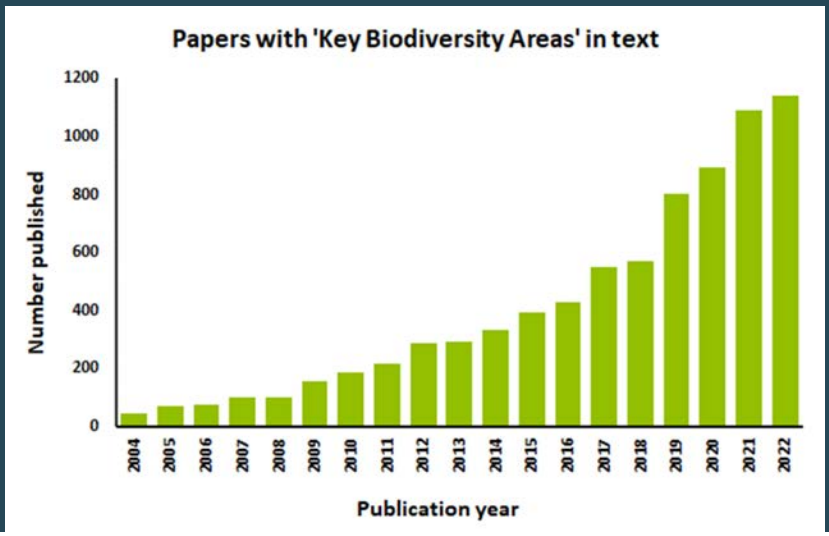
IUCN (2022b) *The conservation status of freshwater species and habitats in Key Biodiversity Areas at the Sebou river basin*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. Available here

Lim, D., Starnes, T. & Plumptre, A.J. (2022) Global priorities for biodiversity conservation in the United Kingdom. *Biological Conservation, 277, 109798* [Argues that KBA assessment in UK would be useful to identify globally significant sites]

Lumbierres et al. (2022) Area of Habitat maps for the world's terrestrial birds and mammals. *Scientific Data 9: 749*. [AOH maps are relevant for KBA identification]

Plumptre, A. J., et al. (2022). Response: Where might we find ecologically intact communities? *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change, 5*, [Response to critique of paper published in 2021]

The number of publications that include text about KBAs continues to increase steadily with more than 1,100 publications from web of science in 2022.



KBA SECRETARIAT AND KBA COMMUNITY IN 2021

Andrew Plumptre is Head of the KBA Secretariat, has worked in Africa for more than 30 years and helped Uganda make an assessment of its KBAs. He believes that KBAs will be key in guiding the next 10 years to identify where to conserve 30% of land, freshwater and seas.

Daniel Marnewick is chair of the KBA Community and also represents the KBA community in Africa. He works for IUCN on the Green list of sites and OECMs.

Adrián Azpiroz, is the Community representative for the Americas in 2021. Based in Uruguay at the Instituto de Investigaciones Biológicas Clemente Estable he has worked on the biogeography and conservation of birds in the region.

Boriana Mihova is the community representative for Europe and Central Asia. She is based in Bulgaria and works as an independent consultant.

Professor Yongyut Trisurat, professor at Kasetsart University in Bangkok is the KBA Community Representative for Asia. He has been involved in many projects to improve spatial knowledge and planning for biodiversity in Thailand.

Daniele Baisero, Data Analyst for the KBA Secretariat, has extensive experience with spatial biodiversity analyses at a global scale. He is currently developing innovative tools to assist in identifying KBAs for all biodiversity across the world. He believes in visionary approaches.

Tim Davenport, Regional Focal Point for East and Central Africa has been working in Africa for more than 27 years. He works on KBAs because he is convinced that the KBA model perfectly combines science and national interests, to enable conservation policy.

Simmy Bezeng, Regional focal point for Western and southern Africa is from Cameroon but works for BirdLife South Africa. He has been engaging governments across Africa in undertaking national red list assessments and KBA identification.

Jeannot Kivono, Reional Focal Point for Francophone Africa, is based in Goma, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo where he has been engaged in many biodiversity surveys with Wildlife Conservation Society.

David Diaz, Regional Focal Point for Latin America up to May 2022 stepped down and was replaced by **Cecilia Tobar Suárez**.

Marcelo Tognelli, is Regional Focal Point for North America. He is the International Conservation Project Officer for American Bird Conservancy, and works to conserve wild birds and their habitats in the region, supporting ABC's KBA work.

Catherine Numa, started as Regional Focal Point for the Mediterranean, North Africa, and Middle East in 2020, is keen to learn from committed conservationists from the region and to contribute to converting data into actions to guide conservation.

Mike Crosby, Regional Focal Point for South East Asia has been working with the BirdLife International Partnership on the identification, documentation and conservation of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (or IBAs) since the late 1990s.

Mark O'Brien, Regional Focal Point for Australasia and Pacific islands, enjoys working with experts across a range of taxa and believe that KBAs provide great opportunities for focussing conservation efforts and controlling developments here in the Pacific.

Technical Working Group

Penny Langhammer, Co-Chair of the Technical Working Group and Executive Vice President of Science and Strategy at GWC, has been one of the key drivers in establishing the KBA criteria and Global Standard.

Olivia Crowe, Co-Chair of the Technical Working Group and Global Science Coordinator (IBAs & KBAs) for BirdLife International, leads the technical working group with Penny to provide guidance on the technical methods for applying the KBA criteria.

KBA Consultative Forum



Giulia Carbone, was Chair of the KBA Consultative Forum up to the middle of 2022. Two Co-chairs were recruited to replace her: **Amandine** Favier from WWF and **Corli Pretorius** from UNEP-WCMC.

Standards and Appeals Committee

Charlotte Boyd is chair of the Standards and Appeals Committee (SAC) which is independent of the KBA Secretariat. This committee publishes the guidelines and resolves issues over interpretation of the KBA Standard.

KBA Committee Members in 2022:

Chair KBA Committee: Naomi Kingston and Paul Matiku

Chairs Technical Working Group: Penny Langhammer & Olivia Crowe

Chair Standards and Appeals Committee: Charlotte Boyd

American Bird Conservancy: Mike Parr & Amy Upgren

Amphibian Survival Alliance: Helen Merideth & Penny Langhammer

BirdLife International: Melanie Heath, Stu Butchart, & Zoltan Waliczky

BirdLife South Africa: Daniel Marnewick

Conservation International: Neil Cox and Daniel Juhn

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund: Olivier Langrand & Jack Tordoff

Global Environment Facility: Mark Zimsky

IUCN: Jane Smart, Giulia Carbone, Tom Brooks & Thom Starnes

NatureServe: Healy Hamilton

Rainforest Trust: James Lewis and Erin McCreless

Re:wild: Wes Sechrest, Penny Langhammer & Matt Foster

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds: Dieter Hoffmann & Jo Gilbert

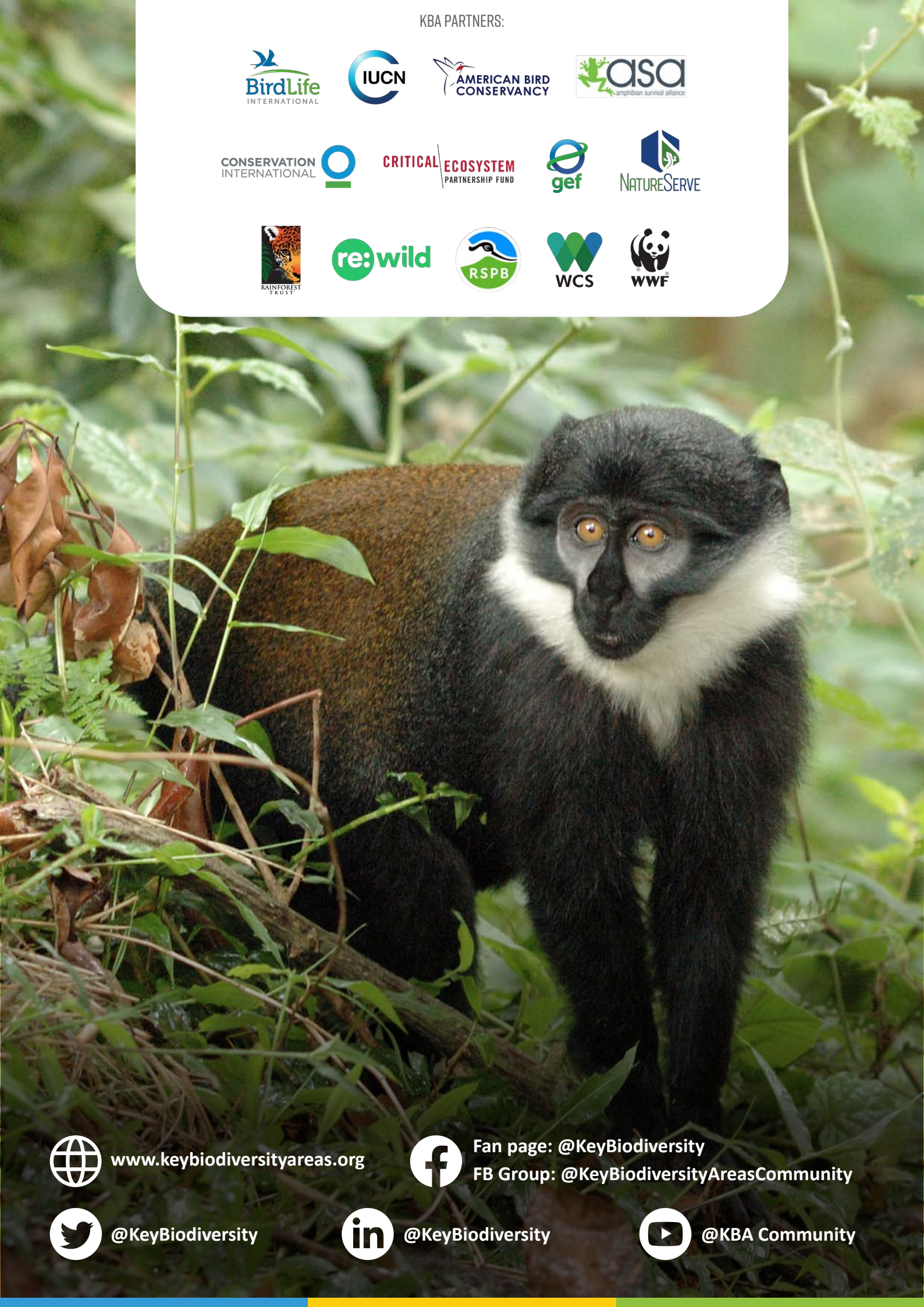
Wildlife Conservation Society: Sue Lieberman & Justina Ray

World Wide Fund for Nature: Wendy Elliot & Marco Lambertini

WCPA and SSC both have observer status on the KBA Committee and support the Chair of the SAC.

KBA PARTNERS:

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL
IUCN
AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY
asa amphibian survival alliance
CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL
CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND
gef
NATURESERVE
RAINFOREST TRUST
re:wild
RSPB
WCS
WWF



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